EXHIBITION

MFA

1997

JANUARY 22 - FEBRUARY 22, 1997

UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY
STALLER CENTER FOR THE ARTS
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK
INTRODUCTION

This exhibition is the ninth in what is now a tradition of shows by students graduating from the Stony Brook Art Department's Master of Fine Arts Program. Only in its eleventh year, the program has already attracted top students from across the country and around the world. Of course, the location near the excitement of New York City is one factor in this early success. That proximity (and a direct train connection), without the daily pressures of study in the City, make Long Island's North Shore the best of all geographical worlds for artists. Our outstanding, internationally-known faculty has undoubtedly been attracted by similar features, as well as by the opportunity to teach highly qualified and motivated advanced students. Any graduate program is a partnership of professionals — some younger and less experienced who have come to learn, and others, older and more practiced, who engage them in a dialogue from which all emerge strengthened.

Any MFA curriculum combines rigor with freedom, but Stony Brook's is unique in several ways. First, it is connected with the Art Department's slightly older and also unique program in the history of art, theory and criticism. Nowhere else are advanced studio and art history and criticism students able to benefit from each others' courses and ideas. Second, proximity to New York City makes it possible for our students to do internships in practically any area of the art world and to immerse themselves in it during their course of study. Finally, Stony Brook's MFA offers opportunities for students themselves to be teachers. That experience requires a level of articulateness and sharing that can only sharpen communicative skills which by definition underlie the artistic enterprise.

The students in this year's exhibit exemplify the range and quality of the Stony Brook MFA program. They are from different backgrounds and different parts of the country. Their artistic concerns differ just as widely. They have succeeded in a rigorous program, yet each presents a clear direction and a strong personal consistency and presence. It is almost hard to imagine that they all pursued the same course of study. Yet the point is precisely that Stony Brook's MFA can foster and strengthen remarkably diverse and distinct individuals. Within its framework, students are able to grow to a level of maturity, and their work reaches toward a quality that poises them on the threshold of the professional art world. It is here that they develop the coherence and resilience so necessary to compete in that world, qualities they build upon the talent and interests that are their own. The purpose of an MFA program is thus no better embodied than by the first success an exhibition such as this one reveals. For where else can an ambitious young artist be both challenged by demanding teachers, discussion, and projects, and yet obtain the extended period (two to three years) for the intellectual concentration and protracted artistic effort necessary to pursue one's own artistic path effectively? Thus, while congratulating our students who are graduating, we may also take pride in Stony Brook's contribution. The success of that partnership can be witnessed in this year's show. May it prosper!

James Rubin
Chairman
Department of Art

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor James Rubin, Chairman of the Department of Art, and Professor Michele Bogart, Director of Graduate Studies, for their assistance with this exhibition.

Special thanks are also extended to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Mei Huang, Jamie Lin, and Mimi Ng, Gallery Assistants; Rosa Maria Eisler, Allyson Hoelzl, Hideki Kawahara, Lauren Poulos, and Yumiko Saito, Gallery Interns; Patrick Kelly, Production Manager, Liz Silver, Technical Director, and the Technical Crew, Staller Center, for exhibition lighting; and Mary Balduf, Gallery Secretary.

Most of all, I wish to thank Greg Bryson, Kelley Dean, Jason Nickel, and William Oberst for an inspiring MFA exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper
Gallery Director

Cover design: Jason Nickel and William Oberst

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My artwork will always be heavily influenced by my love of the natural world. The recent work explores organic forms and textures growing, decaying, existing within geometric structures. The juxtapositions of painting and sculpture allude to process, perception, and modes of representation. They are symbolic of my search for a harmony between wilderness and the modern world.
We cannot contend with objects around us, only relate to them. Their presence marks our presence. Through this idea, I can see a relation between the design of functional objects to the human body. The body is what we know best and is the easiest tool of communication.

There is a quality of perceiving an object when our vision takes us out of our physical bodies and into the object of our perception. We understand its reality by becoming it, and it in turn, temporarily becomes our “new body.”

Using this metaphoric quality, my sculpture literally constructs this process. The objects themselves have particular meaning, and this series focuses on those that relate to comfort, such as pillows, beds, sinks, running water, windows, doors, full containers, and light.
As an artist, I am concerned with the skeleton of things, the armature of the universe. I see my work as being a series of experiments with form, these forms being symbolic of something inexplicable and outside of mundane experience.

"Application. He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only.

Conclusion. If it were not for the Poetic or Prophetic character the Philosophic and Experimental would soon be at the ratio of all things, and stand still unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again."

W. Blake
Three Figures, 1996
Oil on linen, 54" x 72"
PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

1975  FACULTY EXHIBITION
1976  MICHELE STUART
     RECENT DRAWINGS
     SALVATORE ROMANO
1977  MEL PEKARSKY
     JUDITH BERNSTEIN
     HERBERT BAYER
1978  LEON GOLUB
     JANET FISH
     ROSEMARY MAYER
     THE SISTER CHAPEL
1979  SHIRLEY GORELICK
     ALAN SONFIST
     HOWARDENA PINDELL
     ROY LICHTENSTEIN
1980  BENNY ANDREWS
     ALEX KATZ
     EIGHT FROM NEW YORK
     ARTISTS FROM QUEENS
     OTTO PIENE
     STONY BROOK II, THE STUDIO FACULTY
1981  ALICE NEEL
     55 MERCER: 10 SCULPTORS
     JOHN LITTLE
     IRA JOEL HABER
     LEON FOLK SMITH
1982  FOUR SCULPTORS
     CECIL ABISH
     JACK YOUNGERMAN
     ALAN SHIELDS
     THE STONY BROOK ALUMNI INVITATIONAL
     ANN McCøy
1983  THE WAR SHOW
     CERAMIC DIRECTIONS: A CONTEMPORARY OVERVIEW
     CINDY SHERMAN
     THE FACULTY SHOW
1984  BERNARD APTEKAR: ART AND POLITICS
     ERIC STALLER: LIGHT YEARS
     NORMAN BLUHM: SEVEN FROM THE SEVENTIES
     EDWARD COUNTÉY 1921-1984
     CARL ANDRE: SCULPTURE
1985  LEWIS HINE IN EUROPE: 1918-1919
     FRANCESC TORRES: PATHS OF GLORY
     HOMAGE TO BOLOTOWSKY: 1935-1981
     FREEDOM WITHIN: PAINTING BY JUAN SANCHEZ/
     INSTALLATION BY ALFREDO JAAR
     ABSTRACT PAINTINGS REDEFINED
1986  KLEEGE: METAL SCULPTURE
     TOBY BUONAGURIO: SELECTED WORKS
     YANG YAN-PING and ZENG SHAN-QING
     EIGHT URBAN PAINTERS: CONTEMPORARY
     ARTISTS OF THE EAST VILLAGE
     TV: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS
     WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE SURREALIST MOVEMENT
1987  HANS BREDER: ARCHETYPAL DIAGRAMS
     MICHAEL SINGER: RITUAL SERIES RETELLINGS
     JUDITH DOLNICK/ROBERT NAITKIN
     MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE: THE HUMANITARIAN
     VISION
     MEL. ALEXENBERG: COMPUTER ANGELS
     STEINA AND WOODY VASULKA: THE WEST
     THE FACULTY SHOW '88
     LEE KRAESNER: PAINTINGS 1956-1984
     EDGAR BUONAGURIO: PERMUTATION AND
     EVOLUTION 1974-1988
1989  JOAN SNYDER COLLECTS JOAN SNYDER
     THE M.F.A. SHOW '89
     ROBERT KUSHNER: SILENT OPERAS
     HERMAN CHERRY: PAINTINGS 1984-1989
     HAITIAN ART: THE GRAHAM COLLECTION
     FIBER EXPLORATIONS: NEW WORK IN FIBER ART
     THE M.F.A. SHOW '90
     PRINTS BY PRINTMAKERS
     KIT-YIN SNYDER: ENRICO IV
     FANTASTIC VOYAGES
     POETIC LICENSE
1990  M.F.A. 1991
     FREDERICO AMAT and ROBERTO JUAREZ
     ADOLPH GOTTIEB: EPIC ART
     THE MONOTYPES OF ADOLPH GOTTIEB
     THE FACULTY SHOW '91
     NEW TRADITIONS: THIRTEEN HISPANIC
     PHOTOGRAPHERS
1991  M.F.A. SHOW 1992
     JULIUS TOBIAS
     REUBEN KADISH
     CITY VIEWS
     GEORGE KORAS
     M.F.A. SHOW 1993
     CONCEPTS WITH NEON
     WARREN BRANDT: A RETROSPECTIVE
     JOHN FERREN: IMAGES FROM NATURE
     WOOD
1992  M.F.A. SHOW 1994
     PAPER WORKS
     ROBERT RICHENBURG: ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST
     THE FACULTY SHOW '94
1993  MAURA SHEEHAN: DORA: BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY
     M.F.A. SHOW 1995
     EIGHTEEN SUFFOLK ARTISTS
     PAT HAMMERMAN and BURT HASEN
     art AND technology
     PRIVATE ART/PUBLIC ART: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE
     COLLECTIONS OF CITIBANK AND JOHNSON &
     JOHNSON
     M.F.A. SHOW 1996
     JOHN HULTBERG, VINCENT PEPI, and
     EDVINS STRAUTMANIS
     ROGER ARRANDALE WILLIAMS: THE AMERICAN
     TERRAIN
     KEITH SONNIER: ORIENTAL-OccIDENTAL