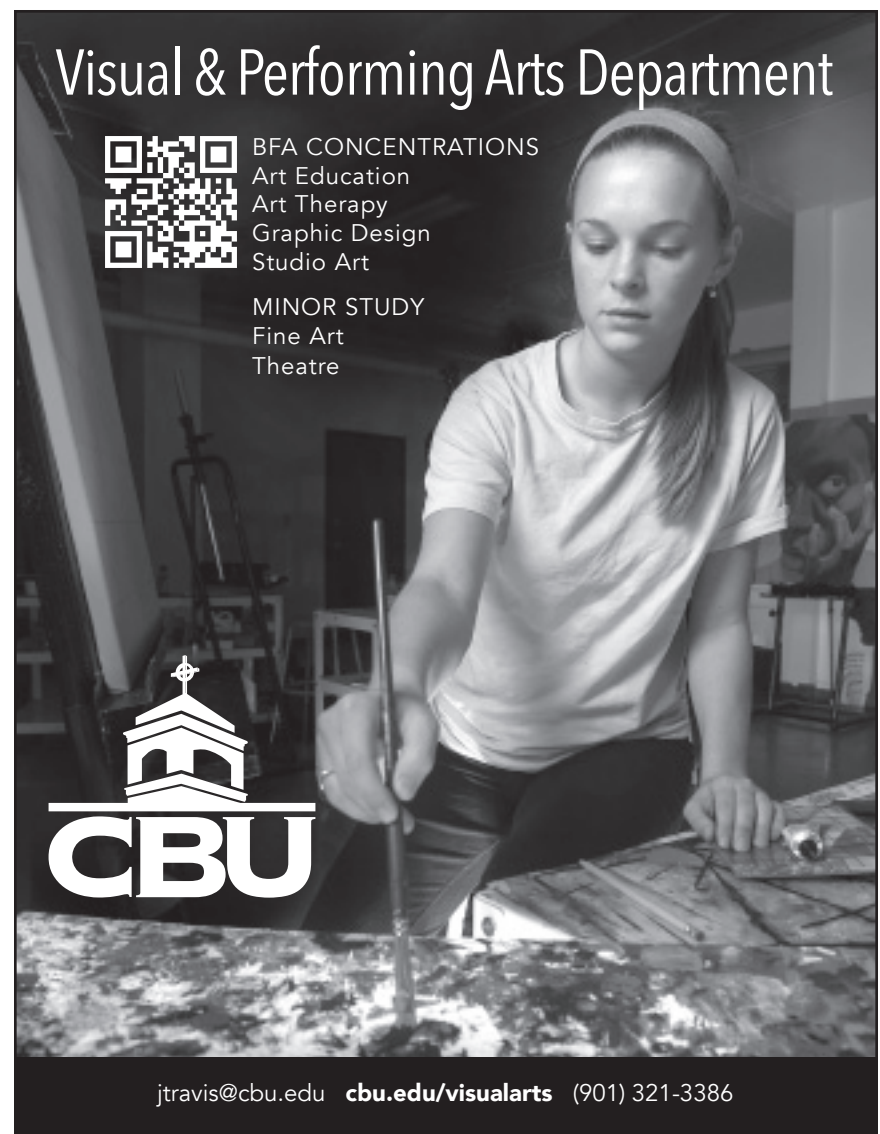



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Divide Light performance premiere,
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August 2008 . Courtesy Lesley Dill Studio.

- 05 Editorial
Chuck Beard
- 06 Regional Updates:
Nashville & Memphis
- 07 Regional Update:
Jonesboro & Mississippi
- 08 Interview: Rachel Bubis
Brian R. Jobe
- 10 Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling
M Kelley
- 12 Interview: Chad Alligood
Cynthia Nourse Thompson
- 14 *FuN HoUSe*
University of Arkansas, Little Rock
Julie McGuire
- 15 “Presence”
“A Different Kind of Landscape”
Brooks Museum, Blackberry Farm
Herb Rieth
- 16 *The Picture Never Changes*
Thea Foundation
Rachel Newell
- 17 Valerie Piraino’s *Reconstruction*
Crosstown Arts Gallery
Simone Levine
- 18 *Scary Monsters*
505 Union Artists Collective
Cara Sullivan

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Editorial

Hello, and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to enjoy another round of *Number:.* Today, as I write this, marks a new year all around. Literally, it is New Year’s Day and I believe there is no better time to write thoughts about this issue at hand. *Number: 77* marks a very cool crossroads for our organization in many ways. In the near future, there will be many positive transitions, positive artists doing amazing things, and a positive outpouring of continued support and success for the wonderful organization of *Number:.* that provides the most contemporary, cutting-edge, critical coverage of Southern art & artists found anywhere in the world.

For this very special go-round, *Number: 77* shines a light on the theme of curators, collectors, and collections. Together, all three work hand in hand to help make up the core of what art is in our society. As is always the case these days, nothing effects the world of artists more after actually creating their art than how and where the art is presented via curators and the collectors out there, new and old, that are willing to take a chance on good art to develop a collection. Yes, this is a very special issue indeed.

Within 77, you will read about several exhibitions making big splashes, both near and far. Oddly enough, if you visit *Number:.* often, it is no coincidence that you will see a few names over and over again. It is not because there isn’t enough art to be covered in our region-quite the opposite. There are some very talented artists and curators within our area that are doing such great things that you will definitely hear about them and their work for years to come. Think of it as a “you read about them here first” kind of deal if you want.

In Cara Sullivan’s review of *Scary Monsters* in Jonesboro, Arkansas, leave it to artist/professor/curator John Harlan Norris to startle your senses, fears, and thoughts about what art can be all in one fantastical show. In Julie McGuire’s review of *Funhouse* at UALR, you’ll go on a complete opposite thrill ride of sorts while experiencing dynamic visual art in ways that may force you to tackle the relationship between being in the moment and struggling with aspects of nostalgia at the same time. Speaking of new and old worlds colliding, nothing hit closer to home for this Nashvillian than reading M Kelley’s in-depth telling of the historical adventure of the historic Hatch Show

Print shipping over tradition, talent, and storytellers altogether for a once-in-a-lifetime exhibition and month long tutorial of sorts in *Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling, A Rare Look in London at an American Tradition of Letterpress.*

I could write about every single one of the special contributions for this issue, but I’ll save you time and words rambling so that you can experience it for yourself. After all, this is what experiencing art means to me ... taking the time to experience it for yourself.

Before I step aside and go from this absolute privilege of a post, I want to direct you to another observation that you may have made on your own in this issue without my help. You’ll notice that several of the contributing writers and people involved behind the scenes of a majority of art going on around our region are people that are either working with *Number:.* now or have donated their time and talents with *Number:.* and its mission in the past; this is no coincidence. Ladies and gentlemen, artists and art-lovers alike, I cannot stress enough how important the history, tradition, and class which *Number:.* provides for the larger art community at hand and how much it needs your continued support and donations (of time, words, and monetary means).

During the past two plus years, from the very first day I was given the most honorable position of Executive Editor, I have had the opportunity to see behind the curtain of the majestic machine of *Number:.* Although I had no clue what I was getting into at first, I have been pleasantly shocked nearly every single day since that first meeting at the heart, commitment, and resolve of everyone that makes *Number:.* the treasure that it is and continues to be. It is with an immense respect for the position, the paper, and people I don’t know yet that are just around the corner who will be able to take *Number:.* to its next level where it rightfully deserves that allowed me the decision to jump down and back from an editorial role to more of a consistent, contributing writer and supporter on the streets for *Number:.* yet again. I can’t thank Jennifer Gonzales & Nathaniel Hein and the *Number:.* gang enough for allowing me to meet and work alongside so many talented people in a different light than I thought possible before. I am forever in debt to them, and I promise to continue to help *Number:.* in its unique mission however time, energy,

and those still directly involved with *Number:.* permit. There truly is nothing like *Number:.* out there, now or ever before. *Number:.* is something more extraordinary than most of us every truly know or realize.

It may seem like most of us reaching out to everyone with calls for papers, ads, and donor money are crying wolf in between every issue Number: Inc. produces, but that is simply not the case. *Number:.* has been around for over 25 years, and I firmly believe that it will be around for another 25 plus more in some regular fashion or another. The constant call for support from YOU and others who truly appreciate everything *Number:.* is for much needed help from everyone to rally around each other and help *Number:.* do its job the best way it can. It is a constant call to allow us to help YOU. I can personally attest, from the inside out, that Number: Inc. does more with little to nothing than most thriving businesses, successful businesses that have been around only half the time that *Number:.* has. I don’t mean to sound like a broken record, but every single positive word and dollar given to Number: does more than you can know for promoting all of the wonderful art and artists of today for years to come.

Basically, it takes a village. If you or anyone you know loves to write objectively and critically about the visual arts, tell them to contact *Number:.* If you or anyone you know needs a solid platform to get the good word out about your creative endeavors, tell them to contact *Number:.* There is no good excuse other than time for everyone who wishes to be a part of this great thing called *Number:.* To do so, simply LIKE us on Facebook, SUPPORT us at www.numberinc.org, and enjoy this issue. Remember, *Number:.* is a functional magazine and organization as long as everyone gets involved as much as they possibly can with our online and print publications. If you have any questions or ideas on how to become part of *Number:.,* contact us via our website and help spread the word by sharing this issue with all of your friends who you feel would enjoy it. There are upcoming issues with multiple themes, interviews, reviews, features, and regional updates that need your thoughts, words, and submissions. So get to writing and help us help you.

Thanks for your time, and remember to be nice to one another. We’re all in this thing together.

Regional Update: Mississippi

University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, has a new Art Department Chair, Howard Paine. We wish him all the best! It is also noted that there were 3 student ADDY winners at USM. Congratulations Pam Vitteck, Deonica Davis, and Rodney Pevey!

The University of Mississippi has a new Art Department Chair as well, and we also congratulate and send our well wishes to Virginia Rougon Chavis (who has been teaching Graphic Design for UM). She is a graduate of Savannah College of Art and Design.

In other good news, Benny Melton, Graduate Student, who participated in *The Cedars 2nd Annual Juried Art Show*, was the grand prize winner. He said he was surprised when his name was called, but we knew he was one of our winners! Also, Terry Lynn, another Ole Miss graduate student, was included in the **Dixon Gallery and Gardens** exhibition titled *Present Tense: The Art of Memphis from 2001 till Now*.

For the Fall semester, the **Ole Miss Art Department** exhibitions included a *Juried Summer Exhibition*, the *Graduate Student Exhibition*, a visiting artist, Maude Schuyler Clay, and a pARTy auction of artwork held at the **Powerhouse** and hosted by our friend Wayne Andrews (who is in charge of the large spaces of the Powerhouse for numerous exhibitions and events). Last on the departments events was the BFA exhibition with four students showing in our gallery. We are looking forward to a busy and active spring moving forward in 2014.

The **Meridian Museum of Art** exhibited the work of the art faculty of the **University of Mississippi** Oct 16-Nov 30, 2013.

Delta State University Wright Gallery presented an exhibition titled *The Lunatic, The Lover And The Poet Are Of Imagination All Compact*, by Tom Lee (Memphis College of Art), Sheri Fleck Rieth (The University of Mississippi), and Herb Rieth (Pellissippi State Community College). It ran from Sept. 9–Nov. 1, 2013. The Delta State Art Department Faculty displayed their work Nov. 10-Dec. 13, 2013. The faculty members showcased the variety of work in which they were engaged.

The Mississippi Collegiate, juried by Kathryn Jill Johnson, University of Alabama, Huntsville, will be held at the **Mississippi Arts Center** in Jackson, MS, from Feb. 1-23, 2014.

The University of Mississippi Museum hosted an exhibition titled *Recollecting: 1980-2012, works by Ron Dale, Prof Emeritus*. Prof. Dale taught at the university for over 20 years, until his retirement. He continues to work and has a studio and gallery from which he sells work. *The Wellspring: Works by Hamlett Dobbins*, is on exhibit at the museum. Dobbins is a recent Rome Prize recipient. His work draws specifically from relationships with his two children, Milla and Ives. The exhibition is through Feb. 22, 2014.

The Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS, will be showing the work of Wyatt Waters through Jan 12, 2014. The works relive scenes he painted while in Italy. *The Mississippi Watercolor Society Grand National Exhibition* will be on display through January 5, 2014. The Scholastic Awards of 2014 will be presented Feb. 8–April 6, 2014.

Sheri Fleck Rieth is an artist and teacher that is currently the Associate Professor of Printmaking at The University of Mississippi.



Delta State Wright Gallery, *Apollo Versus Marsyas*, by Herb Rieth, Pellissippi State Community College, TN.

Regional Update: Nashville

If they haven’t already hopped on ABC’s *Nashville* boat, 2013 has certainly found many eyes following the wake of the actual city behind the hit television series. From the New York Times to the LA Times, writers and readers are eagerly dipping into the personality, movements, and uniquely southern style that makes tourists of most and transplants of many.

It’s no surprise then that the art scene feels the ripples, too. As growing features on online trendcasters and hotspots appear, Nashville’s opportunities have been a draw to curators, seeing many new faces both on and behind the gallery wall. As one example, the *Joint Project* series by Susan Sherrick (a transplant to Nashville with a curatorial background from New York) and Libby Callaway (a returnee to Tennessee roots after taking the fashion industry by storm) continues to merge familiar local faces with those well-known in recent art history. With their regular pop-up exhibits popular with the city’s contemporary following, it’s been a great move to highlight the South’s engagement with a broader contemporary dialogue and a way that Nashville’s increasingly global connections have worked to expose and include the local art community.

The artists and galleries themselves are hard at work. Perhaps best anticipated is the recent addition of **David Lusk Gallery** to a Nashville location in the coveted Wedgewood–Houston art scene. Efforts from their Memphis origins have long worked to highlight the work being done in the region; their *New Southern Vernacular* emphasis in their New York representation at this year’s Pulse Contemporary was considered by many art blogs as one of the highlights of the fair. To borrow the sentiments of critic Adrian Duran, it’s another step on the road many galleries, critics, and artists face when discussing the unique pressures on Southern artists to create work - and creating a new idea of what that work is and can be - in a region whose rise to fame has largely been glorified and powered by stereotypes. It’s a hot topic, more than relevant as our city both enjoys and repels the Nashville fame. The new David Lusk seems poised to join the ranks of their neighbor Zeitgeist in mission as well as in location. As Gallery Director, Dane Carder speaks of the “cumulative creative energy stirring in the city,” this might be one more vital substance in the creative catalyst that has brought Nashville to the spotlight. For most artists, this international spotlight has been beneficial to celebrating the Southern Contemporary. Nevermind the subtle artist cameos spotted on the walls of Nashville sets - “Was that KJ Schumacher’s work on Juliette’s wall? I think it was!” - there’s been a welcome and larger focus trend on collecting local. Though many projects are underway, the biggest and perhaps best example is the newly active **Music City Center**. Though the exterior has been the center of much aesthetic controversy, the interior without a doubt hosts one of the finest, thoroughly thoughtful, and most importantly, publicly accessible collections of area artists. It’s a pleasure to see showcased the work of talented local legends, these movers-and-shakers who, as if their technical prowess wasn’t merit enough, have more than earned their place carving Nashville’s cultural landscape into what it is today. It’s Nashville honoring its icons in a way we haven’t often seen outside of the music industry, and, like many recent choices, it changes the landscape of what we expect from our institutions.

And as a blossoming newcomer to the Nashville Landmarks category, venue **OZ** hopes to add to the landscape. Setting its vision as a destination for world-class contemporary art experiences, OZ has already booked major names such as Phillip Glass, and looks to support new creation and innovation in the arts as it moves forward with programming. Though we’re waiting for the reveal of the artist lecture series, it’s a brave new world for the *Brave New Art* line-up, and we’re ready to see it arrive.

M Kelley is a maker, thinker, and do-er based in Nashville, TN.



The new David Lusk Gallery location shares space in Zeitgeist’s Hagan Street Building, in Nashville, TN. Photo by Dane Carder.

Regional Update: Memphis

Here’s what’s happening at some of the local museums. **The Dixon Gallery and Gardens** closed *Ashe to Amen: African Americans and Biblical Imagery* on January 5 and up next is *Color! American Photography Transformed*. The exhibition includes over seventy photographs that document the transformation of color photography from the mid-nineteenth century to today. If you make it to the Dixon, also check out *Wait Watchers* in the Mallory/Wurtzburger Galleries. *Wait Watchers* is a series of photographs in which MCA professor Haley Morris-Cafiero carefully arranges her body in public places to make a statement about feminine beauty and societal expectations. Both exhibitions are on view at the Dixon until late March.

Speaking of photography, **The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art** closed their fall exhibition, *Shared Vision: The Sondra Gilman and Celso Gonzalez-Falla Collection of Photography* also on January 5. *Shared Vision* featured over seventy-five photographs that chronicled the history of photography over the last one hundred years. An Instagram exhibition titled, #memphisshared was organized in conjunction with *Shared Vision* that featured one-hundred-and-ninety-two cell phone pics shared by the Memphis community. Beginning February 15, *Dali, Illustrating the Surreal* will be on view at the Brooks. The exhibition features a collection of prints and films by Salvador Dali.

The Metal Museum has organized an exhibition called *Ha! Metalsmiths at Play* that represents the playful nature of select metalsmiths and how this humor is transferred into their work. The exhibition includes contemporary and historic pieces from the museum’s permanent collection. *Ha!* is on view through March 9.

Turning to the gallery scene, the **David Lusk Gallery** will feature landscapes by John Torina and abstract works by Lynn McCarty in January. You can see some of Torina’s work at <http://davidlusk-gallery.com/artists/john.torina/>. Haelim Choi Allen, assistant professor at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee is organizing an exhibition for **The Hyde Gallery** downtown. *herstories* will showcase artwork by regional women artists with a range of perspectives on the female experience. An opening reception will be held on Friday, January 31 at the Nesin Graduate School. *Newman 2...The Next Generation* is on view at the **Crosstown Arts Gallery** until January 11. This exhibition features street photography from the Don Newman collection. Stay up-to-date on upcoming shows at Crosstown on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CrosstownArts>.

To close, the alternative exhibition space **Glitch** is scheduled to unveil an exhibition on January 17 titled *The Girl Can’t Help It*. This happening features work by Jill Wissmiller, an artist currently writing a motion picture manifesto that demands a ban on projecting standard definition video on anything other than glitter. As always, there are many opportunities to engage with the visual arts in Memphis this time of year. Enjoy.

Jenny Hornby serves on the board of Number: Inc.



Margaret Jessie at the #memphisshared exhibition opening reception. Photo by Jenny Hornby.

Regional Update: NW Arkansas

The Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock has an interesting roster of exhibitions on view thematically based on portraiture and landscape. *Face to Face: Artists’ Self-Portraits from the Collection of Jackye and Curtis Finch, Jr* features one of America’s greatest collection of graphic self-portraiture from the collection of long-time Arkansas Arts Center supporters Jackye and Curtis Finch, Jr. From the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., *Portraiture Now: Drawing on the Edge* focuses on the intersection of contemporary drawing and portraiture. Both exhibitions run through February 9, 2014. *The Crossroads of Memory: Carroll Cloar and the American South*, February 28, 2014 - June 1, 2014, features works from major public collections as well as rarely viewed images currently residing in private collections. The show, curated by Stanton Thomas, Curator of European and Decorative Art at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, is organized by the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and the Arkansas Arts Center.

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art presents *The Artists’ Eye: Georgia O’Keeffe and the Alfred Stieglitz Collection*, a unique and varied assemblage of 101 works of art collected by O’Keeffe’s late husband, Alfred Stieglitz. Works on view range from African masks to Modernist paintings, all of which were donated to Fisk University in Nashville by O’Keeffe in 1949. The exhibition is on view through February 3, 2014. Particularly noteworthy is the current exhibition at **21cMuseum Hotel** Bentonville on view through February 2014. *Transporting Transformations: Cuba, In and Out* is a dynamic and often haunting survey of artworks addressing both personal and political issues of Cuban identity and Cuban experience— what curator Alice Gray Stites states is Cubania- the essence of being Cuban. Themes of endurance and preservation, hope and despair, isolation and connection are explored through compelling and provocative metaphors and imagery. **The Bottle Rocket Gallery**, a fresh and innovative new exhibition space in Fayetteville, showcases artists from outside Arkansas whose work can be described as controversial, confrontational or in some way challenging for viewers. Opening on Friday, February 7, Bottle Rocket will feature recent work by Marat Paransky.

The University of Arkansas Fine Arts Center Gallery presents *Faith and the Devil*, an installation by artist and visiting McIlroy Professor Lesley Dill, March 3 – April 4, 2014. Dill will present a lecture on Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 6:00 pm in the Stella Boyle Auditorium. Dill will be in residence during the spring semester teaching a course with Professor Cynthia Thompson and Professor David Chioffi. *Faith & the Devil* is a large-scale installation which investigates the philosophical and existential conundrums of evil and underlying faith in the world. Dill has worked with these themes across a decade of large-scale projects and exhibitions. In 2008 Dill conceived, produced, and directed an opera based on the complete works of poet Emily Dickinson titled *Divide Light*. **The Joy Pratt Markham Gallery** at the **Walton Arts Center** presents *Divide Light: The Operatic Performance Costumes of Lesley Dill*, curated by Cynthia Nourse Thompson. This is the premiere exhibition of costumes created by Dill from the performance of *Divide Light*. A reception will take place on Thursday, March 6 at 5:30pm. The screening of *Divide Light* begins at 5:30pm. The exhibition runs February 6 to April 13, 2014

Cynthia Nourse Thompson is Associate Professor and Curator at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.



Faith and the Devil, 2012, Courtesy George Adams Gallery, NYC. Photo by Adam Reich.

Interview: Rachel Bubis

Curator, Seed Space, Nashville, TN

Describe your experience thus far as Curator for Seed Space.

I helped open Seed Space over three years ago with Adrienne Outlaw (the Director). I was her intern at the time, but then transitioned into Curator. It's been a great experience doing curatorial work for such a non-traditional, artist-driven, non-profit space. I love working with the artists, seeing how they push their work in a new direction and respond to the challenges of the space. And it's been fun doing it all here in Nashville! I think Seed Space has really filled a void in the art scene here, especially when we first opened.

What are your goals for upcoming exhibitions? Do you have a particular exhibition program in mind?

Our original goal was to show work by both emerging and established artists that are underrepresented in Nashville. Over the past year we've started leaning more towards science/technology-based work involving video, robotics and computer software, which is not only underrepresented in Nashville but also happens to be what we find interesting right now. As far as goals, we'd like to do more collaborations in the future, working with other organizations and between writers, artists, critics, and curators.

Considering your experience as an art history student and writer, how does your background inform your curatorial role?

My art history background definitely helps me make connections and put work into context. It's easy to find aesthetic/conceptual familiarities in contemporary work that I recall from art history. This all helps in thinking about a piece's presentation and also helps in my writing. I write exhibition texts for each show, forcing me to understand the work better.



Rachel Bubis, Curator, Seed Space, Nashville, TN.

Have there been any unexpected facets to your job?

It's been a surprisingly huge learning curve. Since it's just Adrienne and I, we often have to pick up skills on the fly and learn as we go; things I didn't expect, like complications of lighting design or the delicacies of forming a 501(c)(3) board of directors. What's also been unexpected is the amazing response and support we've received from the community over the past few years!

I've heard of Community Supported Art (CSArt). What do *Number*: readers need to know about it?

CSArt is an art subscription service of locally produced art. Much like Community Supported Agriculture, where shareholders invest in a local farm and receive a crate of fruits and vegetables, CSArt Nashville asks shareholders to invest directly in the arts community with a buy local mentality. Basically, we sell crates of limited edition contemporary art pieces by local artists. Becoming a shareholder is a cool and affordable way to support the community, get introduced to artists, and start your own art collection. It's really a great deal. Some of these artists are internationally recognized, and their work usually sells for thousands of dollars. For CSArt, each work costs about \$50. There are still some available! You can read more about it and purchase a share at www.seedspace.org/csart.

Do you see Seed Space as part of a greater contemporary art movement in the Nashville area and, if so, how?

Yes. Since Seed Space opened, two other artist-run spaces have popped up just down the hall in other studios (our friends at Threesquared have been around, but have re-vamped their program, and the Ground Floor Gallery opened recently). There have



Ryder Richards, Breech exhibition (installation photo), March 17 – April 29, 2012.

been other interesting contemporary pop-up shows recently as well. We're the only non-profit organization though. In fact, I believe we're the only non-profit art gallery dedicated solely to contemporary art in Nashville, so it would be cool to see more of that.

How would you describe the relationship of Nashville's art scene to other statewide or regional art scenes?

At present, I feel that it's a little disconnected ... but getting better! This is actually one of the main goals of our programming; to establish a growing network of artists, writers, critics, and curators locally, regionally, and nationally. We try to do this by pairing out-of-town writers to write exhibition essays for local artists, and pairing local writers with out-of-town artists. We also bring in critic/curators to Nashville to give participatory public talks in hopes to create a stronger dialogue between Nashville and other cities.

On a related note, do you see Nashville as comparable to another U.S. city in terms of its art community (size, momentum, trajectory)?

Hard to say, but I don't think any city has the momentum of Nashville right now! It will be very interesting to see where we end up.

Are there any new ventures for Seed Space in the coming year that you can share with *Number*: readers?

We are working on offering some new professional development workshops in the future and also possibly taking Seed Space to art fairs. Aside from that, we just plan on hosting new exhibitions every 6 weeks and continuing our *Insight? Outta Site!* lecture series. Stay tuned!



Mandy Cano Villalobos, The May Hosiery Mill Project exhibition (installation photo), February 12 – April 1, 2011



Skye Gilkerson, The Portable Horizon Project exhibition (installation photo), October 2 – December 3, 2010. Courtesy of the artist.

Brian R. Jobe is an artist, educator, independent curator, and writer, based in Knoxville, TN.

Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling:

A rare look in London at an American tradition of letterpress

CHELSEA space, London, UK
November 11 - December 14, 2013

As a rare opportunity for print and music aficionados to view archive material, Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling was the printmaking institution’s first UK solo show. It was hosted by CHELSEA space, curated by Donald Smith and London-turned-Nashville transplant Jason Brown. For those lucky enough to be in the British Isles during the one month exhibition, from November 13th through December 14th, 2013, it was an amazing look into Hatch Show Print’s impressive legacy of over 134 years of printmaking history.

From all accounts, CHELSEA space is floor-to-ceiling windows and high walls – a deliberate choice towards an animated screen or vitrine rather than the standard white cube – lent a dynamic, conversational brightness that complimented the color and grid of the posters displayed. The chosen prints to display were pulled from both the Hatch archives and the shop’s selection of current work. Photographs from the opening night show a packed crowd enjoying over a hundred pieces, including a show table of memorabilia and a timeline of the print shop’s illustrious history.

For those familiar with Hatch Show Print, you already know that the unique space is almost single-handedly responsible for carrying the torch of letterpress through the lean years of offset and digital printing and for passing that torch to a new generation of Nashville artisan printers (many of which have moved on from their Hatch employment to start their own printshops and carry forward the future of print as an art form). For those unfamiliar with Hatch’s past, the shop has long been a pillar in Nashville’s music and culture. The shop originally opened in 1879 through the efforts of two brothers, Charles and Herbert Hatch. Pulling posters for everything from religious events to vaudeville in their distinctive, simple style of blocky type and clean color, the brothers flourished in an age when printing was the dominant advertising form. The shop continued to grow in the 1920s under Will Hatch (the son of Charles), whose talent as a master woodcarver captured the heart and faces of the greats in Jazz, Blues, and Country Music (which was also growing in popularity). The death of Will Hatch in 1952 saw the company relying on bread-and-butter design – advertisements for staples of Southern culture such

as movie theatres, laundries, grocery stores, and filling stations. All the while, they were encouraging the limited edition appeal of print posters as memorabilia to their old clients – as well as on old allies and supporters such as Gaylord Entertainment (who donated the company to become part of the Country Music Hall of Fame in respect for its longstanding involvement in the rise of Country Music). In 2013, Hatch moved to a spacious new location through the support of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Gaylord Entertainment. It allowed for a full retail space, space to showcase works in the new Haley Gallery, a classroom and workshop space for design, and of course the expanded workshop itself; fully laid out so that visitors can see the entire printing process from start to finished poster.

As a quick recap of the relief printmaking process, artists carve (into wood or linoleum) or etch (into metal) an image, created in reverse to make a negative that can then be coated with ink to produce a positive final print. Letterpress becomes a unique beast: these negatives – commonly referred to as blocks (when made from wood), plates (especially

when made from metal), or type (when the main feature is part of a larger set of alphabets, ornaments, symbols, or numerals) can be rearranged within a frame, and used over and over again in endless variation to create a multitude of prints. Hatch’s new location, expanded from the smaller shop on Third Avenue, still uses thousands of these vintage pieces as part of their active practice and creation of new designs as well as restrikes, or reproductions of the original design through using many of the original blocks to print, but this time on acid-free archival paper.

It is these restrikes, as well as the originals themselves, that make the Hatch posters such a hot commodity and rare experience. As ephemera on cheap papers, many prints did not survive being made and were tossed as the leftovers of disposable, temporary messages. Even if it’s possible – in many of Hatch’s historic posters, unique images were etched or hand-carved through hours of work, and not all blocks or composition examples remain. Recreating the image requires a massive investment of time, as letterpress relies on handset typography and human composition to create prints. The passion behind the labor is what leads to so much of Hatch’s unique style and instantly recognizable designs featured in the CHELSEA space show. It’s a beautiful discussion of who considers what to be valuable, why, (in the case of posters that can never be recovered now) when, and is a theme fitting to CHELSEA space’s mission of experimental curatorial projects in art and design, and its focus on re-reading and discussion of past forms; an ultimate celebration of a collection that thrives on the passions of key individuals.

One such key individual in Hatch’s present is Jim Sherraden. He has worked at Hatch since 1984 and has been the curator and manager of Hatch for the past 20 years. Along with the poster designs, Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling also features work by this master of woodcuts and the relief printing process.

Sherraden has long been known for his complex carvings, arranged in intricate patterns and often handpainted as part of the labor-intensive process of creating a monotype, or single unique print, from a block, and it’s this attention to process that drew curator Jason Brown’s eye. Sherraden’s personal inclusions express his individual, more monotype-based approach in the printmaking process where color seems washed onto and off of the blocks before layered multiple times. This process gives the final print an organic, antiqued look – it’s easy to see why Brown and Smith included them as part of the curation. Part of Hatch’s appeal are the imperfections and character of the old blocks making imprecise impressions, and Sherraden’s monotype style capitalizes on the physicality of the hand process and the visceral evidence of the artist behind the work. Though at first glance they may seem different from the relatively clean look in the other graphic prints, Sherraden’s works included in the exhibition featured his unique take on some of the iconic blocks, color palettes, and ink-application techniques that drive the Hatch aesthetic expressed in the other posters. It’s a decision that comments on the visual fingerprints that Sherraden’s management leaves on the shop, and reminds the viewer of the legacy of artistry and attention to craft that, despite the multiple production inherent in poster printing, maintains the fine art nature of the work as a whole.

As part of the exhibition, a series of musical performances, talks, and lectures were also scheduled during the show. During the festivities, Sherraden visited New North Press, a printshop in Hoxton, London. New North Press also works to reclaim heritage type and letterpress machines, including an Albion printing press. The visit gave Sherraden the opportunity to browse New North’s collection and will hopefully strengthen the connection between two shops with similar preservation goals.

It’s the sharing of information and fueled passion that connects the printmaking community. And in that spirit, Sherraden himself lectured at the Chelsea College of Art, remarking on some of the decisions and artistic choices that serve to preserve the sense of history and make such ventures possible. In his blog post detailing the lecture, Patrick Burgoyne, Editor of the British publication Creative Review, specifically highlighted Sherraden’s early decision to not add any new type to its collections. Though this choice makes physical sense in their workshop (any easy decision if you’ve ever seen the world-famous Wall of Type shelves that dominate the far side of their space), Burgoyne also pointed out the smart marketing sense: “All future posters would be produced using the existing stock of wood type, thereby keeping the distinctive Hatch aesthetic undiluted as well as offering new clients a direct link to the romance of its past.” It’s the kind of romanticism that fuels the revitalization of the letterpress and printmaking process; the authentic sense of connection that derives from the idea that new designs could use type once used to print celebrity posters; the appeal of designer as printer and printer as designer as a single connective style in memorabilia and the recent American trend towards bespoke objects created in the Heritage aesthetic; the consistency and familiarity of craft in knowing a collection of blocks so thoroughly. It’s a history of decisions that works to preserve the art and aesthetic intact, and as Burgoyne points out, since “Hatch [does not] allow any of its typefaces to be digitized,” ensures “that it is the only source.”

And as the only source, Hatch Show Print stands not only to remain a unique and active institution, but also as a starting flame for igniting craft and passion in new artists and audiences alike, across the pond as well as here at home, it lights the way for a bright future in printmaking.



Hundreds of prints on display as part of Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling at CHELSEA space in London. Photo courtesy of Jason Brown.



Jim Sherraden discusses his monoprints during the gallery talk. Photo courtesy of Jason Brown.



Hatch Show Print: Nashville Calling includes rare memorabilia and packaging designed by the company. Photo courtesy of Jason Brown.

Interview: Chad Alligood

A Creative Conversation

As the artistic landscape of North West Arkansas continues to evolve with the recent opening of the third location of 21c Museum Hotel in Bentonville, this progressive dialogue is amplified by the addition of innovative programming provided by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; of particular note is the greatly anticipated upcoming exhibition *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now*. The opportunity to interview Chad Alligood, Assistant Curator of Special Projects at Crystal Bridges, provided not only insight into his curatorial philosophy, but also on his desire to coalesce contemporary art and audience – one which Alligood describes as “a visual language that should be accessible to everyone and is about issues that matter today.”

Before discussing the *State of the Art* exhibition, I am interested in your previous experience. Prior to working at Crystal Bridges (CB), you have held positions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Smith College and the Cranbrook Art Museum. What drew you to the position as Assistant Curator of Special Projects at Crystal Bridges, and how have your previous ventures prepared you for this role?

In many ways, accepting this position at Crystal Bridges was like coming home. I’m a native of the rural South. I was born and raised in Perry, Georgia, a town of 9,000 and the home of the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Rodeo. I was the first in my family to attend college, and before my freshman year of college, I had never even visited an art museum. I followed the story of Crystal Bridges from its beginnings with keen interest. Because of my background, I connected immediately with its mission to make the power of art available to all in a setting that integrates that power with the beauty of landscape. The opportunity to join such an organization and contribute to this mission in my area of expertise comes along so rarely in our field. It was an absolute no-brainer, and I’m so proud that Crystal Bridges recently celebrated one million visitors – a significant number of whom are crossing the threshold of a museum for the very first time.

My prior experiences equipped me for this role in ways that I’m still discovering as the opportunities and challenges of this exhibition evolve. At the Guggenheim, I provided research support for large exhibitions of modern and contemporary art in the United States and abroad, giving me a background and context for understanding the wide breadth of artwork currently being produced across our country. At the Smith College Institute for Art Museum Studies and at Brooklyn College, I taught art history and museum studies to hundreds of students who, like my family and friends back in Georgia, had never visited an art

museum. I’m so fortunate to have gained from my students the understanding of what it feels like to enter a museum for the first time; it can be challenging, breathtaking, even intimidating. I keep these experiences at the front of my mind when I’m curating an exhibition. How can I foster the experience of meaning-making for all of our visitors in the presence of art? Which works of art (and artists) will resonate with our mission and our audiences? I used this approach in my role at Cranbrook Art Museum, where I worked directly with contemporary artists to bring their visions to fruition in the context of the gallery. In the shows I curated at Cranbrook, I always attempted to remain keenly aware of the wide variety of experiences visitors brought to their time in the galleries. Some are interested in history, while others are looking for visual delight. Some want plenty of textual guidance, while others ignore didactics entirely. This spectrum of responses is awesome – the idiosyncratic and personal ways that people move through the space of the museum reflect their personal investment in making their own experience. Our job as curators is to ensure that the widest possible cross-section of folks can find points of entry for that experience. I look forward to the challenge of curating the range of contemporary work we’re seeing into an exhibition that is challenging, inspirational, and legible to our audiences.

Having earned your bachelor’s degree in the history of art and architecture from Harvard University, how has the distinctive building designed by Moshe Safdie influenced the manner in which you curate?

The Crystal Bridges site – building, grounds, and trails – is a masterpiece in itself. The visitor’s movement through the galleries, with the palate cleansers of the stunning outdoor vistas in between, is one of the most unique experiences available in American museums. I consider myself quite fortunate to have such spaces available for the exhibition of contemporary artwork, but it’s a huge challenge, too. Our curatorial and preparatory staff continues to do a marvelous job in these spaces of telling a compelling story of the history of the United States through the works of art in our collection. The goal with *State of the Art* will be to make our galleries and outdoor spaces really sing with contemporary work; all of which present its own special challenges of display, education, and interpretation. **The visual union of 21c Museum and Crystal Bridges addresses different voices but also common voices. The collection of CB spans a vast chronology while the collection of 21c is comprised of living contemporary artists — how do you introduce or curate such a vast collection in both historical and contemporary terms?** In many ways, we anticipate that *State of the Art* will

extend the story of American art and culture that visitors already know and love from their previous visits to Crystal Bridges. From Martin Johnson Heade’s intimate depictions of the natural world to Asher B. Durand’s poignant reflection on friendship and loss to Nick Cave’s lively celebration of creativity and movement, the Crystal Bridges collection demonstrates themes that speak to a distinctly American point of view. In each new region we visit, we are finding contemporary American artists, still largely unknown outside of their local areas, who make work that elaborates on similar narratives using innovative materials and methods. This is the next generation of great American artists. There is no better place to bring them together in conversation than the galleries of Crystal Bridges, where they can be viewed and understood in the context of the themes and narratives that underpin the cultural history of our country.

This isn’t Crystal Bridges’ first foray into contemporary art: many who have visited us before will remember our popular exhibition *Wonder World: Nature and Perception in Contemporary American Art*. A significant number of our guests reported visiting *Wonder World* again and again, demonstrating a keen interest in contemporary art from our audiences. And, of course, you can always experience art of the 20th and 21st centuries from our collection in our much-loved Modern and Contemporary galleries. But *State of the Art* will reach beyond the scope of these contexts; featuring over 100 artists from across the United States, the exhibition will include only artworks created since the museum opened on 11-11-11. *State of the Art* will present a snapshot of American contemporary art production right now. Situated both within our galleries and in other settings throughout the museum buildings and grounds, the exhibition will offer a wide spectrum of encounters with American contemporary works of art, some of which will be shown publicly for the very first time.

***State of the Art* will give new context to contemporary — and give us all something to talk about for years to come. As a curator, what do you feel is lacking in the current conversation with contemporary art, and what conversations do you expect to commence as a result of this exhibition?**

When I mention to people that I specialize in contemporary art, I’m sometimes faced with confusion – or even negativity. I don’t get contemporary art is a common response. I’ve also heard it looks like my kid could do it and it doesn’t have anything to do with me. As a frequent viewer of contemporary artwork, I wholly sympathize with these responses. While finishing my PhD coursework, I lived in New York City. I often found myself looking at contemporary art in museums or

commercial galleries that left me feeling lost, unenlightened, and disconnected – and I’m an art historian by training! We began this journey across the country with the mission to find American artists who make work that has the opposite effect. We started looking for works of art that plainly reach out to the viewer; through the virtuosity of their technique, the inventiveness of their materials, their engagement with issues of direct and recognizable import to contemporary life, or any number of other ways. In short, we have been looking for works of art that are open rather than closed, that are accessible to the viewer rather than needlessly obtuse. And I’m very happy to report that we are indeed finding remarkable artists making astounding works of art, from Seattle to San Antonio to Savannah and all points in between. **This exhibition has been described as rare opportunity to explore how today’s artists from across the country are connecting with the past, with us, and with today’s major issues. CB is truly an iconic American art museum. From curating**



Chad Alligood, Assistant Curator of Special Projects, Crystal Bridges, Bentonville, Arkansas.

this exhibition, what have you experienced/ noticed through your travels across the United States visiting a multitude of artists studios — what are the major issues today’s artists are exploring?

What we’re finding on our research travels is nothing less than astonishing. Artists of every age, color, and creed making work that directly engages the issues and traditions that define contemporary life. We’ve encountered artists who are advocates in their communities, seeking to better their hometowns through their work. We’ve seen artwork that reflects topics of immediate and vital import to our everyday lives: from the environment to the economy, from the importance of family to the significance of community. We’ve met women and men, almost in equal measure, who are passionate about telling the human story through their own handwork, using remarkable techniques harkening back to the traditional roots of art. This variety reflects the remarkable diversity of artists currently working in the United States. The

most innovative and compelling works of art continue to naturally emerge from the studios of artists of all colors, creeds, ages, and cultural backgrounds. We didn’t specifically set out with an inclusionary bias, and we didn’t have to. The cross-section of artists we visit in any given region consistently represents one of our country’s greatest strengths; its unique and foundational cultural diversity. *State of the Art* will underline this strength by foregrounding the voices of the artists whose work will be on display. We are already working with our communications and educational teams to develop new and exciting ways for our audiences to connect with the artists we include. That’s one of the great advantages of working with contemporary artists ... they’re still alive! Rather than attempt to guess at their intentions and method, or pore over their correspondence and manuscripts in endless research, we can simply ask them directly. And we look forward to providing the opportunity for our visitors to do the very same thing. Many of the featured artists in *State of the Art* will visit Crystal Bridges over the course of the exhibition to participate in a variety of initiatives designed to give our audiences unprecedented insight into the artists’ practice.

What was your selection process and can you share the names of any of those selected for the exhibition?

Along with my co-curator, Museum President Don Bacigalupi, I have been traversing the country for months, meeting with contemporary American artists in their studios. At last count, we have visited 500 artists in over 100 cities and towns across 25 states ... and we’re only halfway through our journey. By the end of our travels, we will have met with over 1,000 artists in their studios, speaking with them while surrounded by their work and the materials they use to make it. Before we visit a region, we combine our own research from afar with recommendations from local insiders: curators, teachers, gallerists, artists, critics, and other people in the know about regional artistic communities. We then develop a priority list of artists to visit based on the criteria I outlined above. I’m not yet at liberty to share artists that will be in the exhibition, as our research remains very much in progress. But suffice it to say that the final list will reflect the vast array of styles and approaches that define American art at the current moment!

Has curating this show led to any new projects and what should we expect to see at CB in the future?

Indeed, one of the great challenges of this exhibition – of course, not every artist we visit can be included – is also one of its great strengths. We are developing a great repository of knowledge and research of contemporary art production across the country that can inform our exhibition programming for years to come. I look forward to continuing to introduce audiences in Northwest Arkansas to engaging and innovative contemporary artists even after the run of the exhibition, which spans from September 13, 2014 through January 5, 2015.

FuN HoUSe
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Gallery I
October 15 – December 10, 2013

Stepping into the *FuN HoUSe* exhibition was to enter into an eccentric world populated by works designed to surprise, challenge, and amuse the visitor. Unlike thrill rides, funhouses are participatory attractions where visitors enter and move around under their own power. Incorporating aspects of a playful obstacle course, *FuN HoUSe*, curated by University of Arkansas Art Department Gallery Director Brad Cushman, seeked to distort conventional perceptions of interpersonal relationships and startle people with unstable and unpredictable physical circumstances within an atmosphere of wacky whimsicality. Deploying strategies like exaggeration, fragmentation, and the layering of allusions, the artists in *FuN HoUSe* challenged representational codes while exposing shifting narratives with regard to domesticity, struggle, and nostalgia. Overlaid was the artist's personal narrative. The subjects then became loaded with meaning as the artists created fantastical, allegorical compositions. The narrative of *FuN HoUSe* was non-linear and recursive. Incidents were told and re-told in the light of new information or themes. Like an amusement funhouse, it was an exhibition in which the structure was a labyrinth; going over the same material, but starting from the outside and spiraling into the center of the story.

Heidi Schwegler offered themes of warped identity and personal struggle in her autobiographical narratives. *Her Passing Resemblance* was a series of luridly colorful photographs of a child's doll with an adult face, and the artist herself posed in a make believe party world (complete with hobby horse, birthday cake, and balloons). By replacing the doll's head with her own miniature version, then taking her doll self to a Sears portrait studio for photographic evidence, she not only explored the adult fascination with doll culture and collecting but also with the bizarre fetishism involved around inanimate objects.

Focusing on personal struggle, Schwegler's video *Hold*, channeled aspects of crisis as she appeared to literally wrestle



Chuck and George, *Tablescrappin'*, 2013, 12' x 12', mixed media. Image courtesy of the artist.

with a large, barely visible force. Her opposition, mixed martial artist Colt Combs, filmed with green screen, attempted to physically defeat the artist with a variety of chokeholds, pins, and takedown moves. The audio component highlighted the sounds of struggle itself; guttural grunts, shallow breathing, and painful moans.

Zina Al-Shukri also employed video to explore the complex relationship between San Francisco-based writers Kevin Killian and Dodie Bellamy, in *The Anecdotalists*. Although Killian is gay and Bellamy is a lesbian, the couple married and has an active heterosexual sex life. Al-Shukri revealed the vulnerable and emotionally open nature of this relationship by synchronizing moving and still imagery in a video projection of the couple onto a painted version of themselves. The audio linked to each portrait was provided through the privacy of headphones, as the dialogue discussing marriage and sex was as visceral and immediate as the authors' published works.

Dustin Farnsworth reinforced the one-two punch funhouse theme with his meticulously constructed post-industrial sculptures that layered images culled from the theater with the unapologetic grime of an apocalyptic society. *The Myth of Life* and *The Truth of Love* visualized the culmination of an unstable world dominated by bad decisions and environmental degradation. The large sculpture involved eyeless marionettes rowing a boat on the back of what looked like a post-industrial Loch Ness monster. Gallery goers were encouraged to physically push the sculpture as it pivoted in a circle (causing the marionettes to move back and forth in their boat, trapped in an endless cycle, blindly going nowhere).

Humankind's foibles and peccadillos played out in Farnsworth's bleak picture of the world in another work, *The Bones Of*, which consisted of a large theatrical interior with one lone individual, a middle-aged man, dipping hundreds of roses in black paint. The events of a society's collapse was presented on stage through this allusive lens with a dark undertone of abandonment, struggle, and decay.



Heidi Schwegler, *Passing Resemblance: Sears Portraits*, 2005, 8x10", digital print, Sears Portrait Photography. Image courtesy of the artist.

The most engaging and impressive work of the entire exhibition was *Tablescrappin'*; a 12' square interior setting installation by the artist duo Chuck and George. According to the artists, *Tablescrappin'* referred to swapping yarns and arguing around a table as well as scrapbooking, collecting, and piecing things together. This ambitious installation animated the artists' black and white prints to life by recreating a two-dimensional narrative space in a three-dimensional life-sized diorama, complete with a Duchamp-like peephole to view a complete miniature of the very installation. Full of ceramic self-portraits, hand-painted faux wood grain wallpaper, wooden floor, constructed living room furniture, and television set playing video versions of the characters seen in the prints hanging on the wall, the world of Chuck and George shimmered with regret, compassion, annoyance, frustration, pity and love – usually all at the same time, and never without a pervasive, deeply artistic irony about the near-impossible task of staying true to yourself and to the people who made you who you are. The fictional Chuck and George, inspired by longtime British art collaborators Gilbert & George, sat at a table and bravely peeled away the veneer of relationship bliss in a slightly off domestic setting. Think William Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode* meets MAD Magazine. It was that same mix of sophistication and subversive humor that marked the work of Chuck and George (who have been living, eating, playing and working together since 1990). But despite the graphic impishness – dangling genitals, scatological information, fleshy sores, vomit, debauchery, and the unashamedly crude portrayal of relationships – it's also intrinsically funny.

FuN HoUSe curator, Cushman correctly characterized this eclectic show as adorably perverse. Indeed, it is the unashamedly blunt and often perverse perspective on society that has rewarded works with such success and notoriety that often makes you want to come back for another go-through.

Presence
Blackberry Farm Gallery, Clayton Art Center
Maryville, TN
September 3 – 27, 2013
A Different Kind of Landscape
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Memphis, TN
April 17 – November 10, 2013

As we move through our days, we encounter a carved up and compartmentalized landscape. It is that way by nature, with rivers bisecting stretches of land and mountain crests serving as sharp demarcations for large areas. Increasingly, the landscape is mediated and circumscribed into smaller and smaller bits by the hand of humankind. Two recent exhibitions plumbed this idea on either end of the state of Tennessee, landscapes that themselves were sharply divided by contrasting topographies. In Memphis, the Brooks Museum hosted *A Different Kind of Landscape* with Maysey Craddock and Erin Harmon; and Kelly Hider's *Presence* was exhibited at Maryville College's Blackberry Farm Gallery in the Knoxville area. Though the work of these artists was very different, they all touched, in one way or another, on our environment. Harmon's and Hider's work about landscape existed in a tamed, circumscribed, and capricious sense.

The inclusion of children in Kelly Hider's photographic works was indicative of the nature of the landscape that envelopes them; one where they are not in danger. It was a fanciful and decorative nature, in a very mythological sense, despite it's photographic veracity. Nature exists as a kind of extended swaddling, much like the Garden of Eden, existing not in and of itself but in relation to humans. Without the children to center the work, the background nature would become a confusing swirl who's operating systems are not apparent enough to cypher from the photos. On top of this, Hider has added cheap costume rhinestones that bedazzle and entrance the audience, shifting our focus. The shift from natural system to decorative possibility was very important. The decorative impulse starts to overwhelm the background and, at times, as in *Two Great Lights*, it consumed the subject themselves. Or was it simply a mirror of the subject? A doppelganger of our nascent self, sitting on the neatly clipped grass that has, like Augustus Gloop, fallen into the consumptive and decorative world and become one with it. Despite it's light and airy quality, Hider's work functioned much like an airless vacuum of a bell jar, making them akin to Erin Harmon's landscapes in this respect.

Harmon's cut paper creepers engage in a distilled dance of life on death for us within carefully circumscribed arenas that remind me most of the topiary berms that make mall parking lots so agonizingly hard to navigate. The black expanses that served as a backdrop for the work also served to focus us on a plentiful array of whimsy and caprice in mark making, shape, and arrangement. This is not to say that it was not without hiccups, with some of the bushier elements rendered with a light source that was possibly the most prosaic aspects to an otherwise rich vocabulary of marks and color combinations. Mostly the background served to give us a foreboding sense of scale to the clever elements, giving them quite a bit of compositional wiggle room.

It is just under 200 years since the propositional vastness that was the Hudson River School, and about 125 years since the American Frontier was declared closed. With each passing century the lines draw further in, and Kelly Hider's and Erin Harmon's work explore the largely decorative notion of the American landscape today.



Kelly Hider , *Two Great Lights*, 2013, 32" x 48", Mixed Media. Courtesy of the artist.

Herb Rieth is an artist and educator living in Eastern Tennessee.



The Picture Never Changes
Thea Foundation
North Little Rock, Arkansas
October 28 - December 13, 2013

Dustyn Bork and Carly Dahl presented *The Picture Never Changes* and were first Arkansas artists featured in *The Art Department*, a series of exhibitions at the Thea Foundation. This exhibition, set in the heart of North Little Rock’s Argenta arts district, showcased ideas of a culturally rich society fluctuating between conforming to classical aesthetics and exploring modern definitions of beauty. A husband and wife duo, Bork and Dahl combined their experiences with printmaking as an emphasis to create series of works that both complemented each other and highlighted the artists’ individual expressions.

Bork’s *Space* series utilized contrasting colors and prints shaped to explore physical space. In each piece, bold colored prints with thick lines and geometric shapes combined with more subtle prints in softer, neutral colors, to echo both modern architectural designs and vintage patterns. In *Space no. 1*, Bork’s geometric print in shades of teal combined with a print of old, cracked stone. The texture of this piece stood out, as well as the idea of older architectural foundations harmonizing with modern styles. This harmony continued in the other works in the series. *Space no. 3* layered a warm geometric print over a cooler pattern, resembling peeling paint on the wall of an old building. The shapes and use of physical space really stood out; the layered diamonds gave a three-dimensional effect, suggesting the modern design was an architectural style building on the older, antique foundation. The ambiguous titles and stark white backgrounds of the series allowed for open interpretation of the images.

Dahl’s *Falling Girl* series explored the theme of female struggle for identity and purpose in an objectifying world. Her minimalist

style and use of the physical space complemented Bork’s *Space* series. All four pieces featured images of faceless girls in brightly colored dresses posed to show their loss of control. Dahl’s delicate graphite shading blended the images of these girls into the white backgrounds, emphasizing the struggle to find the ideal feminine identity. *Falling Girl (purple)* was a brush of graphite in a muted dress that almost disappeared into her background like a wisp of smoke. *Falling Girl (green)* and *Falling Girl (coral)* both stood out because of the contrast of the small image size on a larger background, showing how women can feel swallowed by material expectations and highlighting Dahl’s attention to detail. The brightly colored dresses on the images showed that these girls were recognized for their beauty but find themselves falling through a void society has created for them.

Similar to the *Space* series, Bork’s *Structure* series explored complimentary color schemes, blends of prints, and textures inspired by architectural elements. Mounted on wood surfaces painted in rich colors, these pieces echoed a more contemporary feel than the classic white backgrounds of the *Space* series. *Structure no. 1* immediately asserted the contemporary aspect of the collection, with its bright red background color. This red also showed up in bold geometrics over a detailed, vintage print in muted colors, a strip of sunset yellow anchored the entire piece. These warm colors suggested a strong contemporary energy balancing the vintage architectural feel of the muted serigraphy. Bork’s bold red also showed up in *Structure no. 2*, printed over a sky blue background with a light peachy vintage print. The vintage print blended into the blue background, while the rectangular shape of the red suggested a structural foundation influenced by vintage style and fueled by a contemporary edge. In this series, Bork built his own structures, celebrating contemporary abstraction and balancing the influence of reused foundations.

Dahl’s *Conform* series echoed the themes presented in each

Falling Girl serigraphy. In each one, blank-faced women were placed against detailed, patterned prints with the women’s dresses blending into the backgrounds. This visual example of conforming to surroundings showed another side of the struggle for female identity; instead of losing control of their lives, the women in these images were composed, resigning themselves to their invisibility. The most striking aspect of each piece was the three-dimensional detail separating the women’s dresses from their backgrounds, because it suggested that women can always retain their individuality no matter how much they are forced to conform. Likewise, the blank backgrounds couldn’t hide the different colors in Dahl’s falling girls.

Other pieces that supplemented the ideas in each series included Bork’s two *Section* paintings. They utilized the same themes and styles of the other prints but were broken into two sections showing classical and contemporary, balanced while retaining important aspects of their individuality. Dahl’s other four transfer prints featured her faceless women in leisurely poses showing the passive nature of traditional feminine roles with lots of detail and color; suggesting a hope for appreciation and understanding of true beauty in women. These pieces featured more of the artists’ originality, while still following the same themes as the other collections. All of these themes and ideas combined in the concept of a picture that never changes. Bork’s works showed foundations and structures balancing faithful traditions with contemporary innovations, and Dahl’s works showed that certain life struggles, such as realizing one’s identity never change and the true beauty of individuality, is a constant guiding force. Bork and Dahl keep this individuality in their works, even though they use similar themes, ambiguous titles of their pieces, and structures of their collections. Their works showed that an artist’s spirit is always reflected in these pictures and the influence never changes.



Carly Dahl, *Conform No. 1*, 2013, 14”x10”, Serigraphy with graphite on wood panel. Photo by Carly Dahl.



Dustyn Bork, *Space No. 1*, 2013, 22”x15”, Serigraphy, photo by Dustyn BorkPhotography. Image courtesy of the artist.

Valerie Piraino’s Reconstruction
Crosstown Arts Gallery
Memphis, TN
October 18 - November 30, 2013

With the exhibition *Reconstruction*, Crosstown Arts Gallery presented four installations by New York-based artist Valerie Piraino. Across these works, Piraino brought the aesthetics of domestic photographs into the gallery space by manipulating an exhibition element common to the home and the white cube — the frame. Piraino highlighted how the frame presents — or, so to speak, constructs — a work of art, insofar as framing an image invites the viewer to follow narratives of the subject, place, and time that converge upon the plane of an image. Invoking framing devices native to the domicile, Piraino not only employed picture frames but also other domestic ways of contextualizing images (such as clustering of frames on a wall, presenting images within the ovals of cameo portraits, and staging a slideshow). As Piraino drew these frames into the gallery, she reconstructed their appearance of retelling intimate family memories in their images. Yet, this appearance did not deliver personal or historical narratives to the public space of the gallery. Instead, Piraino withheld the presentation of concrete narratives so that they evaded the grasp of viewers; bringing to our attention how images with little intrinsic meaning can provide shimmerings of narratives when framed by the past.

Reconstruction began with *Arrangements*, a title which names Piraino’s focus on arranging picture frames along the gallery wall according to the organic logic of pictures arranged along the walls of a home. Combining this arrangement with cameo-shaped regions (akin to the matting style of traditional family portraits) of color, the frames invited the viewer to compose narratives about the familiarity of their images’ various forms of furniture. In effect, this furniture took on the appearance of something with sentimental value; something as familiar as the objects we dwell

alongside daily and something that we’ve come to know so well that its identity becomes entangled in autobiographical narratives. And yet, as they were displayed in the public space of the gallery, the furniture did not belong to any particular viewer. Indeed, with its style of craftsmanship, the furniture did not seem to belong to part of a particular time or place. Instead, these framed images highlighted a condition every viewer shares; the posture of projecting one’s own identity upon familiar objects and seeing these objects as reflections of her self.

In turning to *Flush*, the viewer found herself returned to this posture. *Flush* was constituted by a series of framed, cameo-shaped (once again, portrait-style) mirrors hanging at eye level, each with a small cameo disk at its center. On each disk was scribbled a single shorthand stroke; in the porcelain region below each mirror, a single word with a distinct connotation. Standing before each mirror, the viewer found her reflection. Yet, the cameo disk at the mirror’s center drew her attention to how the frame mediated her and her image. The shorthand stroke and scribbled word set a tone for this mediation, but were not substantial enough to provide a point of departure for a narrative. In effect, *Flush* provided the viewer with a series of threads for narratives about her self-portrait without patterns with which to weave them; once again, Piraino highlighted her viewers’ inclination to find familiar about themselves while withholding material to write into these narratives.

Along the back wall of Crosstown’s gallery was another series of images and frames. This time, the images were projected onto a wall of empty frames, arranged (as in *Arrangements*) like family pictures. Placed on antique wooden sidetables before these frames stood two slide projectors, projecting across the arrangement of framed images of the sort one might photograph while traveling. Entitled *With Pen in Hand*, this installation displayed pictures that, as the exhibition’s curator disclosed, were taken by Piraino’s grandfather. Piraino never knew this grandfather, and she inherited these slides when he died. Because she never heard the narratives of the who/what/when/where these images

depicted, the slides lost meaning for Piraino. Reconstructing them in the gallery space in a destructuring way, Piraino explored these slides’ meaninglessness by further obscuring them with her projection format. The arrangement of empty frames fractured the images projected across them. One frame contained a slide, inserting it into the image projected across the entire arrangement. Occasionally, images were oriented sideways or upside down. The slides’ images became trivial in their multitude; their scenic subjects of buildings and landscapes lacked any people to striate them with subjective stories. As they were reconstructed within the gallery space, the chasm born from the death of Piraino’s grandfather widened as the images became more obscured. Staring into it, the viewer was filled with a sense of loss as she realized that, in the absence of narratives to retell, inherited objects ultimately lack a personal connection.

Installed behind the partition one sees when entering 422 S. Cleveland, *A Pregnant Moment* was the final work of *Reconstruction*. It featured a single frame, installed about three feet above the ground and across the corner where the partition met the gallery wall, with a projector on a side table facing it. The corner bisected the frame. On one side of it was a printed photograph taken by Piraino’s grandfather of an attic ceiling and the same image was projected on the other side. This image was not aesthetically pleasing and exhibited no special use of perspective. It was the sort of image that was taken for no apparent reason. Creating mirror images across this corner, Piraino’s projection method distorted the image and further obscured its meaning. In *A Pregnant Moment*, the viewer experienced a dramatic sense of absence as she was completely unable to locate the orientation of its narrative. Nevertheless, the image remained before her; at least until the slide deteriorated. Yet, after its demise, the slide itself could live on as a vacant memory of Piraino’s reconstruction. How Piraino framed it, the viewer would evermore be captivated by Piraino’s presentation of the paradox created by the confluence of physical presence and narrative absence within the space of an image.



Installation view. Photo by Katie McWeeney.

Scary Monsters
505 Union Artists Collective
Jonesboro, AR
October 14 – November 8, 2013

The night after Halloween, a closing reception for *Scary Monsters* was held at the 505 Union Artists Collective (a second floor loft space in Jonesboro, Arkansas that also houses the Jonesboro office of the Cromwell architectural firm). This symbiotic relationship has benefitted art lovers in Jonesboro with a stable of quality exhibitions this year, not the least of which is *Scary Monsters*. Curator, and Assistant Professor of Art at Arkansas State University, John Harlan Norris, had been interested in putting together an exhibition focused on artists who are based in Jonesboro and the surrounding region. As he thought about the artists he hoped to include, a natural theme emerged; monsters. This exhibition showed a breadth of media: from ceramics, to painting and printmaking, to video work; all of which thoughtfully coalesced under the theme. And for an etymology freak like myself, it was a feast of diverse and nuanced definitions of the monstrous. Artists in the exhibition included Matt E. Ball of Jonesboro, AR, Charlie Inboden of Trumann, AR, Kelli Scott Kelley of Baton Rouge, LA, and Kimberly Kwee and David Smith of Little Rock, AR.

To start, we can certainly agree that a proper monster disrupts the natural order of things. In Kelli Scott Kelley’s mixed

media piece, *Interpreter*, a human/deer hybrid sat at a table communing telepathically with a squirrel.

The term monster is also synonymous with fiend, brute, demon, devil, and miscreant. In Charlie Inboden’s little sculptures, we found the miscreants of the exhibition. They were impeccably fabricated from cast and painted resin, their scale and material reminiscent of toys. One of them was a fat, winged devil, sticking his tongue out at the viewer and roasting a hot dog on the end of his pitchfork. Another was a brown, soft-serve-shaped turd wearing a diaper. And these were just two examples on a shelf displaying seven distinct personalities that may have been small in stature but appeared to be challenging the viewer to some sort of fright-night competition. Inboden’s sculptures were an all-out celebration of the monstrous, inspired by a dedicated, childhood fascination-cum-artistic endeavor.

As with Kelley, Kimberly Kwee’s work, in part, was inspired by storybooks, which can seem sweet but may be hiding darker passages. *The Lamb*, Kwee’s mixed-media piece on canvas, with its bright colors and fun patterns, patches of shiny, silver paint, and a darling line drawing of a lamb, was simultaneously sweet and foreboding. The red-orange paint was smeared, and punched holes scattered across the figure and background right through the canvas. Collaged bits of paper obscured the face of this creature, rendering it expressionless. Have you ever seen a spring lamb bouncing and leaping through a pasture? Now imagine it without a soul.

One of my favorite interpretations of the word monster comes from the Latin root monere; meaning to warn. In David Smith’s *View from a Monsanto GMO Lab Petri Dish*, eleven ceramic forms were arranged as if they were swimming on the wall. These Raku fired sculptures were conglomerates of cast human, plant, and animal parts. There were scales, frog’s legs, the bumpy skin of plucked chicken wings, ears of corn, strawberries, broccoli, and teeth ... so many teeth. The story of humans disturbing the natural order was the stuff of science fiction and reality. Though they were grotesque, as monsters should traditionally be, Smith’s morphing creatures admirably performed a service; to instruct us on the potential pitfalls of genetic engineering.

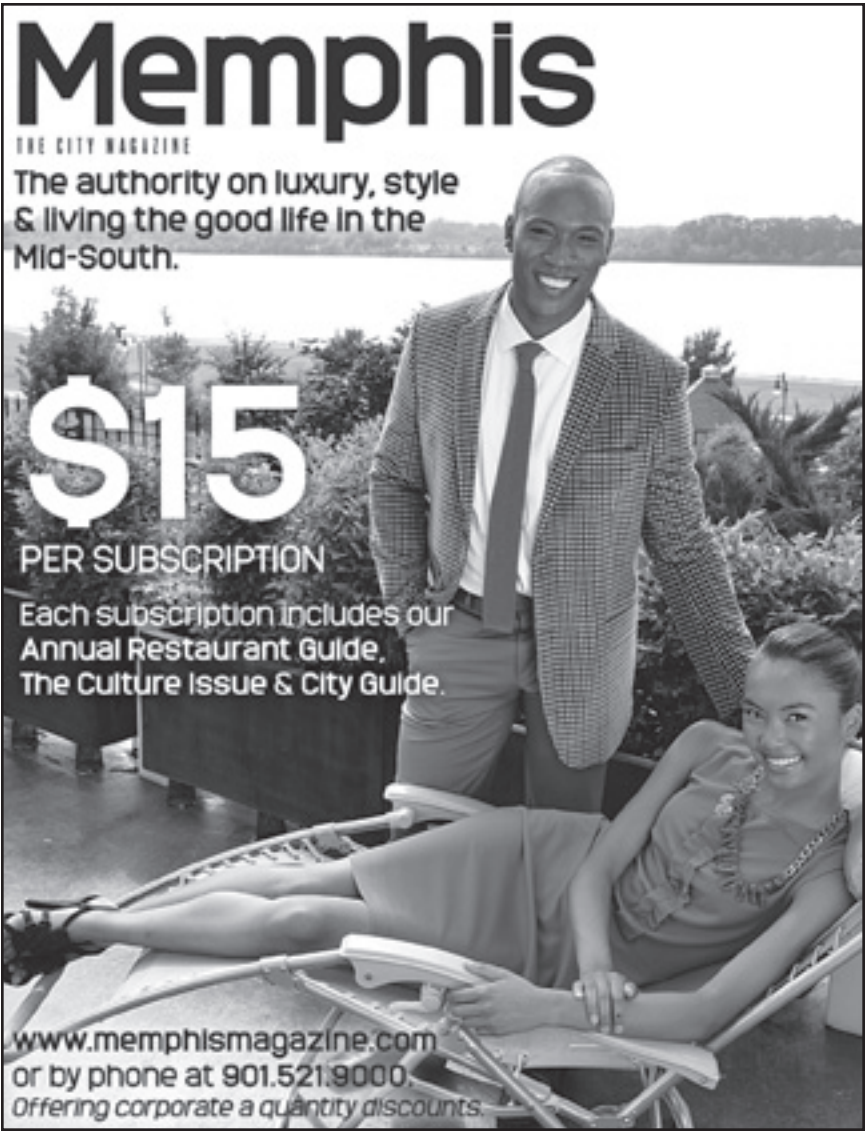
For painter, sculptor, and animator, Matt E. Ball, the scariest monsters are the ones in your head. Ball created the video *Where is Pinkus* in order to establish a positive association with a once disturbing hallucination he experienced. Ball created the character Pinkus the Pink Elephant to establish this new association. He stated, “after removing the predisposed, negative emotion, I found that the very way I perceived the images from the hallucinations started changing. I no longer saw them as frightening ... I began to see them in different ways.” The terror of being trapped in one’s own head far outweighs the terror of any traditional monster because it so closely mirrors the reality of a psychologically distressed culture. Ball’s video animations demonstrated the artist’s proactive response to crisis, and reminded us of our power to overcome our fears.



David Smith, *View from a Monsanto GMO Lab Petri Dish*, 2013, 12 x 8 Inches, Ceramic Raku.



Charlie Inboden, *Tabasco*, 2013, 5.25 x 5.5 inches, Resin and Mixed Media.

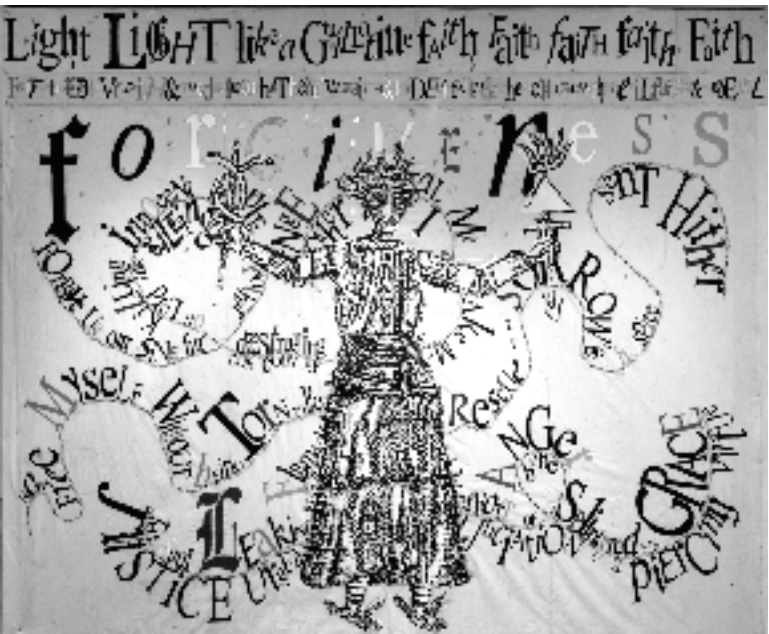
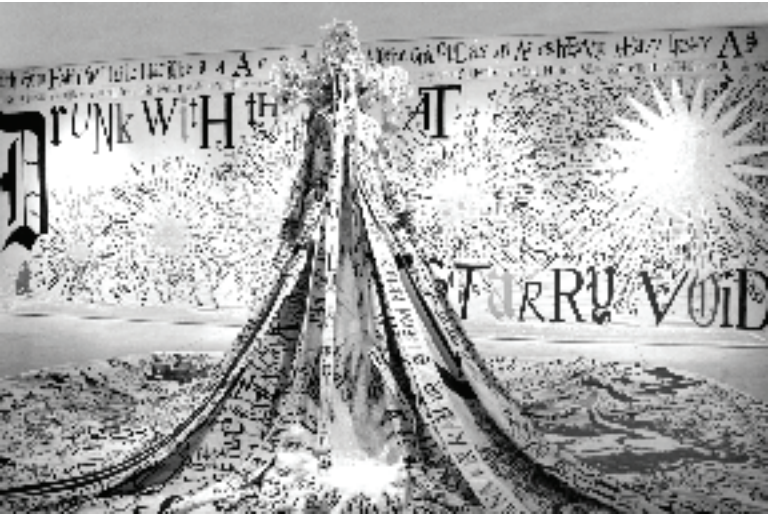


The University of Arkansas
Fine Arts Center Gallery presents

Faith and the Devil
An installation by Lesley Dill
March 3—April 4, 2014

Reception: Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.
Fine Arts Center Gallery

Lecture: Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
Stella Boyle Auditorium



Dill has been awarded the 2014 McIlroy Visiting Professorship in Visual and Performing Arts and will be in residence during the spring semester. This Professorship, established in 2006 through the philanthropy of Hayden and Mary Joe McIlroy and the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation, supports the teaching and work of a professional artist who imparts highly specialized knowledge essential to students’ artistic, educational, and career enrichment and is valuable to the community at large. For more information please contact the curator of the Fine Arts Center Gallery, Cynthia Nourse Thompson.

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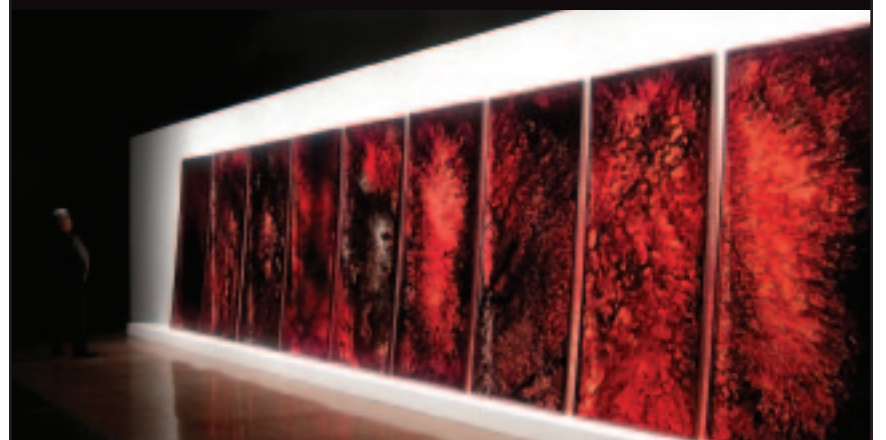
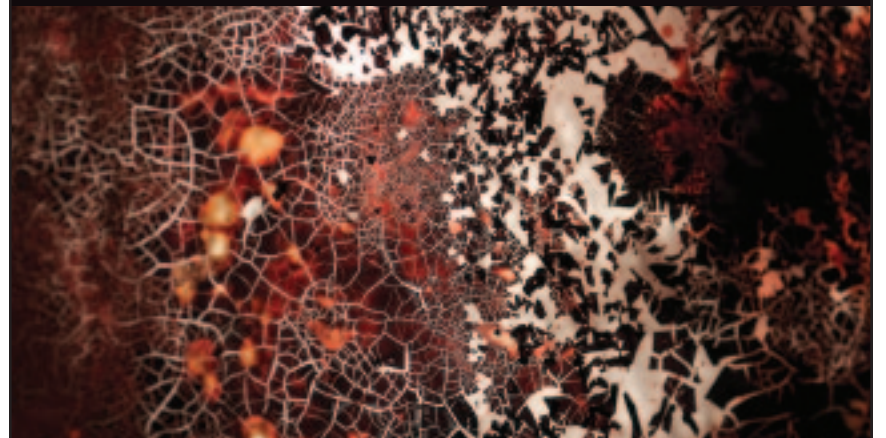
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