



SUM

MFA 2016 Thesis Exhibition
March 22 - April 9

Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery
Stony Brook University

Introduction

I believe in the complexity of the human story and that there's no way you can tell that story in one way and say, This is it. Always there will be someone who can tell it differently depending on where they are standing; the same person telling the story will tell it differently. I think of that masquerade in Igbo festivals that dances in the public arena. The Igbo people say, If you want to see it well, you must not stand in one place. The masquerade is moving through this big arena. Dancing. If you're rooted to a spot, you miss a lot of the grace. So you keep moving, and this is the way I think the world's stories should be told—from many different perspectives.

– Chinua Achebe, 1994

The creation of a work of art is an individual act of expression and interpretation wrought from many hours in the studio, as well as the result of collective and collaborative processes of consultation, mentorship and critique. What you see in the gallery today is the culmination of three years of experimentation with ideas, materials and techniques all directed towards telling individual stories of the human condition. Each one of these accomplished young artists has a unique voice that deserves to be heard.

This exhibition is one of the final requirements of our three-year Master of Fine Arts degree program at Stony Brook. Through their close interaction with faculty, our graduate students hone their skills and develop the means to express their personal vision. In addition to work in their own studios, the students have regular access to our digital and hybrid labs, foundry, kilns, darkrooms and presses, and they participate in an annual cycle of group and solo exhibitions at the Lawrence Alloway Gallery on campus. They have the advantage of being part of a large, world-class research university with centers not only in Stony Brook but also in Manhattan and the Hamptons. They enrich their practice through coursework in Art History and Criticism, as well as in Philosophy, Theatre and Music, among others, and by engagement with the Humanities Institute, the Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture, and Technology (cDACT) and the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics.

We wish to thank Karen Levitov, Director of the Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, for her energy in making this exhibit possible, and for her fresh perspective on the world of contemporary art. You may find some of the work challenging, intriguing or simply beautiful, but all of it reflects a deep commitment to the making of art. Do not stand in one place to try to take it all in. Walk around and enjoy.

Barbara E. Frank
Chair, Department of Art

Cover: Ye-Seul Choi,
Transformation, 2015
(detail)



Transformation, 2015 (detail)

Ye-Seul Choi

When I was a child, I secretly collected stones around my home. I wanted to pick them up, I wanted to collect them. The stones looked lonely and cute. I gradually perceived that they became like human beings to me. I felt an uncomfortable guilt because I moved them from their territory.

This is very similar to the experience of my working process. The materiality of an object is my inspiration at the beginning. The interaction between my work and myself allows me to create the abstraction. Since the abstraction is not relying on reality, the exploration of its ambiguity became an important motivation. I extract the ambiguity of the abstraction by emphasizing and revealing the ambiguity or decreasing and condensing. Because I see that each of my works have independent identities, the relationship that I have with them makes me the performer; the one who is the source of all their origin. Furthermore, the relationship supports me in creating artwork, and this is the reason why I want to accept myself as an artist.



Drift, 2015

Heather M. Cruce

I create large-scale ceramic installations. The installations are comprised of many ceramic pieces that I sculpt and carve to reference the fragility, beauty and finite existence of the human body as it relates to earthly landscapes. I aim to imbue the space with a sense of reverence and ambiguity, allowing the viewer to experience the work independently of direction. I build my sculptures to look as if they came from the earth—wood that has been weathered, stone like fossils that show debris and pigment, aged bone—all evidence of their time on earth.

Myda El-Maghrabi

What drives not merely the individual but our society as a whole? How do we regard our own experiences and, as an extension, how does that affect how we relate to the experiences of another? How do our individual motivations affect our societal motivations and vice versa? These core questions serve as the catalyst for my work. By developing artwork with this line of inquiry in mind, which includes research into contemporary as well as historic social criticisms, I come closer to finding answers to the questions that fuel my artistic practice. Throughout the process, I mine the many ways our human community operates—to resolve how it functions and dysfunctions; how its members connect or disconnect and what leads one group to disenfranchise another.

I would like to thank my mother and father, Yvonne and Stephanie for all the support they have given me over the years. I am forever grateful.



Work in process, artist's studio



Vivarium, 2015 (video still)

Victoria Febrer

My interest in visual images centers around the relationship of the universal and the personal. Rather than being in opposition to each other, these form a relationship that can lead to further insight, enriching our understanding of our place and position culturally, geographically, and chronologically. I investigate how memory behaves as the mechanism for storing and recalling the significance of common, or universal, images. I seek to activate personal memory by reducing images to their most basic components, which are then colored by the viewer's unique experience and point of view.

I most frequently work in series employing recurring images and printmaking methodologies, while using materials and media which provide an opposition to these reproductive processes. My work therefore begins with the establishment of a conceptual and procedural framework for this exploration into our experience of understanding images and the ideas that they recall.

Materials and processes where there exists both a cooperation with and an opposition to structured and recurring elements allow me to investigate the repetition of archetypes and the resulting anomalies.

Logan Marks

Employing antiquated remnants of utility, decayed materials recomposed into dioramic situations reveal constructive qualities of detritus and reflect on our role as creators and consumers. Concrete, wood and steel are combined with old electronics, plastic and paint in architectural, yet fragmented, forms influenced by industry and commerce. A shift in scale, function and purpose of materials offer the viewer a fresh perspective of the seemingly obsolete waste. Interactivity occurs through the exploration and inhabiting of a place. Immersed in a landscape, we consider our situation and our relationship to that place. Utilizing that which is around us defines how we operate, cooperate and exist.



Dripdropolis, 2013

Acknowledgments

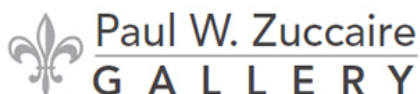
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I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Barbara Frank, Chair of the Department of Art, and Professor Nobuho Nagasawa, MFA Program Director, for their contributions to this exhibition.

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Most of all, I want to thank Ye-Seul Choi, Heather M. Cruce, Myda El-Maghrabi, Victoria Febrer and Logan Marks for their thought-provoking and beautiful work.

Karen Levitov
Director and Curator



Gallery Hours

Tues-Fri 12-4 pm, Sat 7-9 pm.
Closed Sun, Mon and Holidays.
Also open during intermission
and one hour prior to most
Staller Center season
performances.

Free admission.

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Front Image: Ye-Seul Choi, *Transformation*, 2015

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