RADCLIFFE BAILEY
OLAF BREUNING
ANNA CONWAY
MARK ESSEN
ADAM FRELIN
VALERIE HEGARTY
DAVID HERBERT
EMRE HÜNER
MATT LEINES
CAMERON MARTIN

UNCHARTED

September 15 – December 13, 2009
Curated by Janet Riker and Corinna Ripps Schaming

University Art Museum
University at Albany, State University of New York
Uncharted

Set against the larger context of travel and discovery, Uncharted features ten contemporary artists whose work considers the potentialities and perils of navigating unfamiliar waters. Transcending geographic exploration, the artists in Uncharted propose an imagined world of discovery and adventure that often parallels the artistic process itself. They deploy various media, including photography, painting, drawing, installation, sculpture, film, and video games, in artwork that is rife with possibility, fraught with anxiety, and ultimately, tempered by absurdity. Such are the results of beginning any new venture without a map.

Janet Riker and Corinna Ripps Schaming
CURATORS
About The Artists
By Corinna Rips Schaming

Radcliffe Bailey

Bailey’s emblematic sculptures and collages address the complexities of recorded history as it relates to African and African American themes. In Garvey’s Ghost (2008), a sculpture of a steamship covered in black glitter, Bailey references The Black Star Line, a failed steamship company operated by Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Association from 1919 to 1922. Garvey’s bold proposal to transport manufactured goods and raw materials among black businesses in North America, the Caribbean, and Africa became the linchpin of his vision for black economic independence. Unfortunately, Garvey’s ships proved faulty. Plagued by mismanagement and insurmountable financial obligations, the line folded in 1922. Bailey’s ship made with glitter, paper, and wood is a sculptural elegy to Garvey’s ill-fated enterprise. A boat that will never float, its haunting shadow form embodies the promise of moving forward despite predetermined conventions and societal constraints.

Olafr Breuning

In Breuning’s film, Home 2 (2007), the transformative power of travel is called into question through the superficial gestures of a globetrotting narrator who wants to meet and get to know the natives of the countries he visits but gives no thought to the perceptions of those he meets. Pandering to the camera with Borat-like obliviousness, he watches a traditional native dance and whispers, “This is what I came for!” The narrator’s supposition that he can cross cultural boundaries without consequence or reflection parallels the larger cultural tendency to view increased globalization as a singular path toward understanding the lives of others. While Home 2 reveals the callowness behind these assumptions, it conveys a sidelong empathy for the narrator whose naïve reactions to new sites and experiences point to the tourist in all of us.

Anna Conway

The haunting specter of obsolescence hangs over Conway’s meticulously rendered paintings. In Enfield, MA (2006), titled after a town that no longer exists, she depicts a large barren pit traversed by a white SUV and two men. At the bottom of the pit, a non-reflective pool of water lies motionless. Before the Civil War, the town of Enfield was one of the wealthiest towns in Massachusetts, but by the 1930s its economy had tanked. No longer vital to the region, the town became an easy target to make room for a new reservoir. After relocating the entire population and flooding the
vacated land, Enfield no longer registered on the map after 1939. In Untitled (2008), a mother nurses her child in the deep shadows of an empty moon-lit stadium. As in all Conway’s paintings, one wonders about the hidden motives behind her lone figures. Subsumed by unseen forces, they move like shell-shocked travelers across once familiar terrains. Are they resigned to a fate not of their making, or are they biding time until circumstances change? Embedded in Conway’s complex narratives and crystalline painted surfaces is the persistent message that to be out of step with one’s surroundings is not the end of the world; instead, it is often the impetus to forge something new and, perhaps, better than what came before.

Mark Essen
Essen’s short action video game, Flywrench (2007), provides a low-tech, immersive experience that defies the expectations of even the most adept player. Old school Atari-style graphics and a pulsating soundtrack make things feel deceptively simple and fun; the game involves the use of cursor keys to navigate a ship through a series of tight mazes and colored walls. Straightforward enough, but Essen uses these familiar elements as hooks to wrench unsuspecting players out of their comfort zone.

Mark Essen
Essen’s short action video game, Flywrench (2007), provides a low-tech, immersive experience that defies the expectations of even the most adept player. Old school Atari-style graphics and a pulsating soundtrack make things feel deceptively simple and fun; the game involves the use of cursor keys to navigate a ship through a series of tight mazes and colored walls. Straightforward enough, but Essen uses these familiar elements as hooks to wrench unsuspecting players out of their comfort zone.
and draw them into a universe of unpredictable sensations and thwarted goals. In a museum context, the user becomes a protagonist in a mutable experience enhanced by a community of onlookers. Ultimately, *Flywrench* plays it both ways: it is indeed a video game, but it is also an art work conceived with museum-viewing in mind. Projected to mural size, it provides an expanded field for interaction and engagement, while further blurring the line that separates artistic practices from larger cultural activity.

**Adam Frelin**

Frelin’s project titled *Diviner* (2009) includes a combination of photographs, sculptural props, and a short film. He weaves a complex narrative that ostensibly deals with the impact of tumultuous weather on specific locales in the Midwest region of the United States; upon closer reading, these fictional and documentary components form an affecting portrait of human desire run amuck. Here, as in Breuning’s *Home 2*, an amalgamation of inscrutable gestures moves the storyline forward into unforeseen directions. The protagonists’ unquestioning responses to events outside their realm of understanding or control are at once riveting and disconcerting. Both artists seem to reach a similar conclusion: when it comes to negotiating the parameters of contemporary life, we are lost, but so what?

**Valerie Hegarty**

Hegarty uses foam core and papier-mâché to create hyper-illusionistic installations based on well-known American landscape paintings ranging from those of Frederic Edwin Church to Mark Rothko. She begins by copying paintings from book
reproductions, then she pushes and mutates the paintings’ familiar components into unpredictable new forms, making it appear as if the masterpieces themselves have undergone a ruptured experience. Every aspect of these machinations is done by hand. In Rothko Reflection (2007), Hegarty violates the art historical canon on multiple levels as she embarks on her own oedipal quest to reshape the accepted narrative to suit her own vision. In her reconfigured Rothko, the familiar bands of his luminous color are now soaked and shredded. In giving the piece a literal title and presenting a mangled version of the original, Hegarty pokes at the foundations of non-objective painting and the modernist creed over which Rothko reigned supreme. By creating an illusion only to collapse it, Hegarty charts an alternative course by which to consider the conflicted legacy of American painting—a legacy that she both admires and itches to shake up.

David Herbert

Herbert uses unheroic raw materials such as Plexiglas, wood, Styrofoam, and cardboard to create skewed versions of American icons. For this exhibition, he has built an old-style wooden ship based loosely on the U.S.S. Constitution and crewed by a gang of Scrooge McDucks. The unlikely convergence of familiar histories is typical of Herbert’s work. In this instance, he conflates American myths surrounding the self-made man and American exceptionalism, while laying bare the thriftiness and resolve inherent in his own sculptural practice. Walt Disney’s creation, Scrooge McDuck, is the quintessential penny pincher, who overcomes a scrappy life on the poor streets in Scotland, comes to America, becomes a mega-tycoon, and reeks havoc on the spendthrifts in his midst. Launched in 1797, the U.S.S. Constitution, a wooden-hulled naval ship named after the Constitution by George Washington, was dubbed “Old Ironsides” after withstanding British canon fire in the War of 1812. Later saved from the scrapheap by Oliver Wendell Holmes’ immortalizing poem, it is still afloat today. However skewed, such emblems of pluck and might are the fuel that keeps the American Dream alive. The piecemeal inventiveness of Herbert’s sculptures points to the potential for either great or calamitous returns on the hubris inherent in our drives.

Emre Hüner

Hüner’s digitally animated film Panoptikon (2005) brings together a richly layered archive of hand-drawn objects, plants, and architectural components that form an imaginary reassembled universe. Using his sketchbooks as a personal encyclopedia, he culls ideas from a variety of sources: the Internet, books, films, and secondhand photos. Many of his images are generated in response to keyword searches for such terms as history, modernism, naturalism, colonialism, and technology. Hüner’s
ANNA CONWAY
Enfield, MA, 2006
Oil on panel
46 x 68 inches
Collection of Jacob and Suzanne Doff

DAVID HERBERT
Artist’s proposal for Holiday, 2009
Graphite on paper
18 x 22 inches
Courtesy of the artist

DAVID HERBERT
Holiday in process in artist’s studio
incongruous stew of whimsically rendered mechanical and human forms starts making sense when seen as a parallel universe to our own. Both are driven by a consumptive excess that can only spell disaster if left unchecked. There is something both retrograde and futuristic in Hüner’s hand; his images have a naïve look about them, but when seen in the aggregate, they become down-right threatening. As they float across the screen, jump cutting to an unknown destination, thoughts of redemption and ruin flicker by simultaneously. The suggestion lingers that we can save ourselves—if only we could shed our destructive impulses and reengage with the world around us through a more carefully observed and thoughtful existence.

Matt Leines

Leines’ drawings, paintings, sculptures, and banners are inhabited by an imagined pantheon of intrepid traveler-warriors. If you combined the attributes of pro-wrestlers and He-Men with those of ancient Celtic monks, and threw in a few Vikings and a Cyclops, you might begin to form a simplified vision of Leines’ characters. Add to the mix intricately patterned facial and bodily surfaces, brightly painted robes, chests emblazoned with medals and ribbons, and hair rendered seemingly by the follicle, and it becomes fair to say that these tough guys are insanely gorgeous, too. Leines unites far-flung cultural and historical sources in a one-man attempt to create mythic beings ready to do battle with whatever comes their way. Yet, there is something comic, wide-eyed, and vulnerable about Leines’ heroes, too. They wear their medals like decorative brooches, their limbs hang awkwardly at their sides, they carry their weapons like toys. Despite the posturing, in the end, they must face the charge alone.

Cameron Martin

Martin paints distilled images of luminous mountains and rock formations. Through a complex layering of paint, built by masking and spraying, he achieves seemingly impenetrable surfaces that are as alluring and foreboding as the terrains they embody. Hovering in craggy splendor, the large mountainous mass in Palintac (2007) evokes the specter of landscape painting, while channeling something altogether different. This is not nature as we know it. It is nature fading to black, an unnavigable expanse that belongs beyond the boundaries of time. Martin’s paintings of untrammeled landscapes speak to the pressure of millennia. At the same time, they contemplatively suggest that our romantic notions about nature and the sublime may have yet to run their course.
**ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Rodlief Bailey**


**Ola Breuning**


**Anna Conway**


**Mark Essen**


**Adam Frelin**

Frelin had a recent solo exhibition at Berris Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska (2009). Recent group exhibitions include Winners, Fiction, and Thieves of Samson Projects in Boston (2008), Evergreen Outdoor Sculpture Biennial at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore (2008), White Line for Tokyo International House of Japan in Tokyo (2007), Gitchi at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles (2006), Reckless Behavior at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles (2006), and Traffic at Exit Art in New York (2005). Frelin has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Gateway Foundation, the Skirball Foundation, the College Art Association, and the Albert Award in the Arts from The Herta Aipert Foundation. Frelin received a M.F.A. from University of California, San Diego, in 2001.

**Valerie Hegarty**


**David Herbert**


**Emre Hüner**


**Matt Leines**

Leines had recent solo exhibitions The Great Gates of Zenith at Roberts & Tilton in Culver City, California (2008) and The Righteous Age at Clementine Gallery in New York (2008). His recent group exhibitions include Rites of Passage at SCHUNCK Glasplast in Heerlen, the Netherlands (2009), and Robert Wilson’s Visions of the Frontier curated by Robert Wilson at IAVM in Valencia, Spain (2009). In 2002, Leines received a B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, Rhode Island.

**Cameron Martin**

Martin had recent solo exhibitions Ski Dubai at The Suburban in Oak Park, Illinois (2009); at Gallery Min Min in Tokyo, Japan (2008); Galerie Ruseum in Schwerin, Germany (2008); and Evergreen Outdoor Sculpture Biennial at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore (2008). White Line for Tokyo International House of Japan in Tokyo (2007), Gitchi at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles (2006), Reckless Behavior at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles (2006), and Traffic at Exit Art in New York (2005). Frelin has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Gateway Foundation, the Skirball Foundation, the College Art Association, and the Albert Award in the Arts from The Herta Aipert Foundation. Frelin received a M.F.A. from University of California, San Diego, in 2001.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Alejandro, 2005
Oil on panel
40 x 65 inches
Collection of Hugh J. Freund

Somebody Call Someone, 2004
Oil on panel
42½ x 78 inches
Collection of Todd Wider

Mark Essen
Flywrench, 2007
Windows EXE file
Courtesy of the artist

Adam Frelin
Diviner, 2009
Video, framed photos, vinyl, wood, metal, corn, and mud
Courtesy of the artist

Valerie Hegarty
Rothko Reflection, 2007
Foamcore, wood, wire, canvas, glue, papers, paint, gel medium, sand, and tape
89 x 60 x 5 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York

Water and Sand on Rust and Blue, 2007
Wood, canvas, paint, sand, and gel medium
48 x 33½ x 1½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York

Enfield, MA, 2006
Oil on panel
46 x 68 inches
Collection of Jacob and Suzanne Doff

Leonardo, 2006
Oil on panel
20 x 30 inches
Collection of Johannes VanDerBeek

10 x 8 x 8 feet
Collection of Artist Pension Trust, New York

David Herbert
Holiday, 2009
Wood, paper, and steel
12 x 12 x 4 feet
Courtesy of Postmasters Gallery, New York

Emre Hüner
Panoptikon, 2006
Video (DVD projection)
11 minutes, 18 seconds
Collection of Artist Pension Trust, New York

Matt Leines
Untitled 1–10, 2009
Acrylic on panel
26 x 16½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Roberts & Tilton Gallery, Culver City, CA

Cameron Martin
Double Satyr, 2008
Acrylic on canvas
61 x 50 inches, each panel
Courtesy of the artist

First Faktur, 2007
Acrylic on canvas over panel
24 x 24 inches
Collection of Roszell Mack III

Palmira, 2007
Acrylic on canvas over panel
56 x 63 inches
Collection of Roger Kas and Andrea Van Beuren

Valerie Hegarty
Overseas (Fireplace with Harpoons), 2006
Foamcore, paper, paint, glue, and gel medium
10 x 8 x 8 feet
Collection of Artist Pension Trust, New York
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The museum is grateful to the participating artists, their galleries, and lenders to the exhibition, whose generosity and cooperation made Uncharted possible. In addition, thanks go to Nicelle Beauchene at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, Allison Card at Metro Pictures Gallery, Lindsay Charlwood at Roberts & Tilton Gallery, Peter Emerick at Artist Pension Trust, Liz Raizes Sadeghi at Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, Sabrina Vanderputt at Jack Shainman Gallery, and Candace Worth at Worth Art Advisory for their help in facilitating loans to the exhibition.

Organizing an exhibition is a complex process, and I am grateful to the museum staff for their expertise as well as for the collaborative spirit and hard work they brought to the task. They were ably assisted by the Avery Arts Foundation Intern Ariel Willmott and student volunteers Jess Baint and Tegan Barron-Shashok. William Hedberg, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Miriam Tremenzozi, Associate Vice President for Community Engagement, were early and enthusiastic supporters of the exhibition as a part of the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial celebration and UAlbany’s Hudson 400 Theme Semester.

We are grateful to UAlbany President George M. Philip and to Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan D. Phillips for their on-going support of the museum and to University Auxiliary Services, Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial, and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for support of the exhibition and publication.

Janet Riker
DIRECTOR

The exhibition and publication were supported by the UAlbany Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, University Auxiliary Services, Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial, and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. The exhibition is held in conjunction with the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial celebration and UAlbany’s Hudson 400 Theme Semester.

Uncharted
September 15 through December 13, 2009
ISBN 978-0-910763-40-0
University Art Museum
University at Albany
State University of New York
Albany, New York 12222
(518) 442-4035 www.albany.edu/museum

COVER IMAGE:
Anna Conway
Enfield, MA, 2006, oil on panel, 46 x 68 inches
Collection of Jacob and Suzanne Doft

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Artist Pension Trust, New York
Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York
Jacob and Suzanne Doft
Hugh J. Freund
Roger Kass and Andrea Van Beuren
Roszell Mack III
Metro Pictures Gallery, New York
Postmasters Gallery, New York
Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA
Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
Thomas Struth and Tara Bray Smith
Johannes VanDerBeek
Todd Wider