2012 ARTISTS OF THE MOHAWK HUDSON REGION

JUNE 28 – SEPTEMBER 8

UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

JUROR: NATHaniel THOMPSON
2012 ARTISTS OF THE MOHAWK HUDSON REGION

Amanda Bengle
Colin Boyd
Allen Bryan
Bennett Campbell
Paul Chapman
Yaminay Nasir Chaudhri
Mandi Coburn
Peter Crabtree
Chris DeMarco
Abraham Ferraro
Sarah Fuhrman
Mimi Czajka Graminski
Sarah Haze
David Hopkins
William Jaeger
Pooh Kaye
Tatana Kellner
Ingrid Ludt
Warren MacMillan
Mark McCarty
Nathan Meltz
Sanford Mirling
Gina Occhiogrosso
Philip J. Palmieri
Penny Perkins
Linda Pinkans
Alana Sparrow
Pamela Wallace
Sandra Wimer
Allen Yates
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acknowledgments

The University at Albany Art Museum is delighted to present the 2012 Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region, an exhibition that reflects the socially engaged perspective of this year’s juror, Nato Thompson. Recognized as one of today’s leading young curators, Thompson’s thoughtful and dynamic selections reflect his abiding interest in the intersection of art, politics, and space. It is no small feat to review over 300 entries and 1,400 images, videotapes, and installation proposals, and we are grateful to him for his insights and efforts. He joins a distinguished roster of artists, critics, and curators who have juried the Regional in its seventy-six years, one of the longest-running regional exhibitions in the country; they include Edward Hopper (1941), John Yau (1987), Dan Cameron (1997), Xu Bing (2000), Matthew Higgs (2009), and Charles Desmarais (2010).

We are grateful for major support of the exhibition and this catalogue to Charles M. Liddle III and The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region’s Nancy Hyatt Liddle Fund for the Arts; the University at Albany Alumni Association through the Grandma Moses Fund; University Auxiliary Services; and the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. In addition, over twenty businesses, individuals, and organizations contributed exhibition support, juror’s and purchase awards, gift certificates, and in-kind services, demonstrating their appreciation of how artists enrich life in our community.

Responsibility for the Regional is shared among the University at Albany Art Museum, the Albany Institute of History & Art, and The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls. We are grateful to Executive Director David Carroll and Deputy Director and Chief Curator Tammis K. Groft at the Albany Institute of History & Art, and to Executive Director David F. Setford and Chief Curator Erin B. Coe at The Hyde Collection.

Thanks also go to every artist who submitted work for consideration; the strength of individual entries is critical to the creation of an exciting exhibition. We are delighted that Albany Center Gallery and the Art & Culture program at Albany International Airport will present invitational exhibitions from the work of artists who submitted to this year’s Regional. In addition, I encourage you to visit Upstate Artists’ Guild, which is hosting a Salon de Refuse. These different lenses on the many strong submissions to the regional process provide meaningful opportunities for artists and audiences in the Capital Region. The larger the pool of artists whose work is presented, and the louder the dialogue about contemporary art, the stronger and more vibrant our regional arts community will be.

Thanks go to members of the University Art Museum staff: Corinna Ripps Schaming for curatorial oversight; Zheng Hu for superb exhibition and catalogue design; preparator Jeffrey Wright-Sedam and registrar Darcie Abbatteili for skillful installation; Ryan Parr for his tireless efforts on our first-time online submission process; Naomi Lewis, for exhibition coordination, and with administrative assistant Joanne Lue, for securing over $5,000 in artists’ awards; and Chloe Pfendler, the museum’s Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation intern, who assisted throughout.

We are deeply grateful to UAlbany President George M. Philip and to Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan D. Phillips for their ongoing support of the museum, and to Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs William B. Hedberg for his guidance and confidence in our mission and programs.

The University at Albany, the exhibition and artists’ awards sponsors, the museum staff, and our colleagues at the Albany Institute of History & Art and The Hyde Collection join me in congratulating all of the artists of the 2012 Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region. We would not even want to imagine a world without your creative ideas, your depth of thought, and your mind-bending perspectives on every aspect of contemporary life!

Janet Riker
Director
June 2012
Since January 2007, Nato Thompson has organized major projects for Creative Time such as Democracy in America: The National Campaign (2008), Paul Chan’s acclaimed Waiting for Godot in New Orleans (2007), and Mike Nelson’s A Psychic Vacuum (2007). Previous to Creative Time, he worked as Curator at MASS MoCA where he completed numerous large-scale exhibitions such as The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere (2004), a survey of political art of the 1990s with a catalogue distributed by MIT Press. His writings have appeared in numerous publications including BookForum, Art Journal, tema celeste, Parkett, Cabinet, and The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest. The College Art Association awarded him for distinguished writing in Art Journal in 2004. He recently edited Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011 (Creative Time and MIT Press 2012), which provides the first global portrait of a complex and not easily defined genre of cultural production. His new book Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the Age of Cultural Production is forthcoming from Melville House in summer 2012. Thompson holds a B.A. in Political Theory from the University of California at Berkeley and an M.A. in Arts Administration from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Yamdag Noir Chaudhri
A Damen Memory, 2011
Video still
The Swyer Companies $1,000 Juror’s Award

Yamdag Noir Chaudhri

(Pakhtun) art also very tied of this country.
Occupy Everything

“You can’t do that here,” says a police officer during the re-enactment of a local dance in a town square. “Did you ask the authorities? Where is your permit? Is this a wedding? You can’t do that here.” So goes the film of Yaminay Chaudhri, a captivating performance/intervention caught on video that brings the joys of the village into deep contestation at the urban center. Pleasure comes to find its opposition in the form of permits and police authority. After much cajoling, the officer relents and says, “I am tired of the government as well.” So the dance begins.

When can the dance begin again?

Here we sit in our private villages. We have our dances, sometimes shared on the Internet, sometimes forwarded as tweets. Sometimes we laugh at them on cable television or play them on our home gaming system, or sometimes we see them out of the corner of our eye drunk in the corners of the city. We are furtive creatures in a digital age, ever creeping into ourselves hoping to find the kinds of freedom we dream of in the crevices of our scattered minds. But the world outside is a monster. It is corralled, policed, seen from a distance, like the photos by Allen Bryan of the backs of trucks driving by on the freeway. It is on the go. Slipping past us. On the move and without much time to stop, to chat, to dream with us and gossip. It is just on the go.
Chris DeMarco

LEFT TO RIGHT
Sandy Hook 1 – 5, 2012
C-prints from film
12 x 18 inches each
Picotte Companies $500 Juror’s Award
And the public realm remains elusive. A phantom. The world outside our doors a mystery. The conspiracy must remain a theory because the world outside eludes us. We can’t stop long enough to truly look. We distract ourselves with jittery phone service. We stopped believing A.D.D. was an ailment as it became the global behavior. Can an ailment consume the majority? Chris DeMarco photographs crop circles. No wait, she doesn’t. She photographs what appear to be crop circles, but they have been left behind by the military. Strange rusted circles rusted in the earth and concrete reminding us of missions, maneuvers, and powers that we have little access to. What are they up to? We do not know. A lion sits supine on display glass, its body rendered inert under the eyes of a disengaged public. Linda Pinkans’s photo doesn’t just ask “what is nature?” but instead what is it to want to watch nature. And even hints at a sort of exhaustion by the lion. The watching of nature itself loses meaning as nature becomes a stand-in for a lost longing.

Without the public, our minds lose juice. They become dried figs, raisins in the sun. They become enamored with oxygen because they can’t breathe. Opinion polls gain in urgency as the country realizes it really doesn’t care. Opinion polls make us believe that we all truly have an opinion, that there is a public. The Situationists critiqued the Surrealists for believing that the infinite imagination remained in the dark corners of our cortex. They said, in essence, that if you want to change how you think, don’t see a therapist but instead change the city. But we can’t change the city. The city won’t let us. It’s in
our way. It won’t let us occupy the squares. It wants us always moving. We can’t sleep in front of the banks. We can’t challenge the rich where they live. We can’t dance in public.

So we hide in our homes. Nurturing our dreams on energy drinks, booze, and yoga. Hoping that the mind will unleash itself and make the day-to-day something uncanny. We become Ralph Ellison’s invisible man, hiding in our hearts. We take the intimate and make it perverse. Mimi Graminski crochets chess pieces. Mark McCarty photographs his wife in the shower. Her skin becomes a textural landscape, hypnotic and strange. Sanford Mirling twists objects into sexualized lugubrious acid trips, the velvet ropes of the elite turned into William Burroughs’s inspired orifices. Or the spectacle of Disney becomes a stand-in for past haunted memories in Amanda Bengt’s subtly terrifying paintings. As Thomas Kincaid passes away, we find his legacy in the haunting images of a supersaturated body politic unable to tear the fantasy from memory. The memory of mother is not like Dumbo’s mother but, in fact, is Dumbo’s mother. We are the lost children of a fabricated dream.

And the body becomes vulnerable and strange, a more captivating outdoors than the outdoors. Inside it is less watched. Warren MacMillan has the sexual fantasies of sadomasochist joy, pain, and wildness leaving the front door of the suburb. Women screw men with a soccer ball under the bed. Abraham Ferraro signs the dotted line with an analogue machine, the identity of the signer superseded by the mechanistic virtuosity of a Doctor Who-inspired robot. Philip Sanford Mirling loved her like he knew her. 2011 Plastic, velvet, steel, rubber vagina 49 x 32 x 13 inches $500 Juror’s Award by an anonymous donor
Palmieri paints bodies with bandages, the wounded trying to look A-OK. The beat-up body that is the public comes to say hello. And Sara Haze goes deeper still to the cellular level to witness the abstraction of forms that are the material culture of our bodies themselves. Strange to think we are made of small circular cells, when we feel we are made of fabricated dreams.

We are dreamers, but we can’t dream alone. We must escape the confines of our interior lives. Tatana Kellner makes a road that heads through nature. Out there. Through the mire of masked medical men and authorities, it is out there. In the unchartered terrain of the lived public. Bodies in space. Being together. Occupying together. Refusing the cranked-out dreams of a dying country whose only product is the manipulation of its people. Occupy. Occupy their lobbies. Occupy their offices. Occupy your office. Occupy your body. Occupy everything, because while dreams can save us, we can only have them together in public. We can only dance together with each other, our bodies, in public. Occupy everything.

Nato Thompson
Juror
May 2012
Allen Yates
Bang! Crash! Clap! Beachhead, Lanyard; Treadmill; Trippy Spin, 2012
Video still
Alvarez Dental $300 Juror’s Award in honor of Marijo Dougherty
Arthur Collins ‘48 Purchase Award, supported by the UAlbany Alumni Association for the University Art Museum

Pooh Kaye
Spring Cleaning, 2011
Video still
JKDorgan Arts $250 Juror’s Award
The Hyde Collection Purchase Award
Linda Pinkana
Jan 2, 2009
Digital photograph
11 x 20 inches
Austin & Co., Inc. $250 Juror's Award
Colin Boyd
American Bison, 2012
Wood, rope, beam, motor, screen, lamps
8 x 8 x 8 feet
Mayor Gerald D. Jennings $250 Juror’s Award
Albany Institute of History & Art Purchase Award

Warren MacMillan
House and Car, 2012
Digital drawing
5 x 7 inches
House with yellow fish, 2012
Digital drawing
5 x 7 inches
House, peeling wallpaper, 2012
Digital drawing
5 x 7 inches
Spectrum B Theatres/New World Bistro Bar $250 Juror’s Award
Bennett Campbell
Tulip Festival, Albany NY, 2011
Photograph
30 x 45 inches
St. Patrick’s Day, Albany NY, 2012
Photograph
30 x 45 inches
Albany Center Gallery Board of Directors $200 Juror’s Award in memory of Les Urbach

William Jaeger
Waves over Amalfi sidewalk, 2012
Video still
Renaissance Corporation of Albany $200 Juror’s Award
Allen Bryan  
*Wanted*, 2011  
Pigment print  
16 x 24 inches

Tanker 1230  
2011  
Pigment print  
16 x 24 inches

A. Grindle Custom Framing  
$100 Gift Certificate

Mimi Czajka Graminski  
*Conversation, Game*, 2012  
Installation, crocheted cotton  
Dimensions variable

Carrie Hedbad Gallery  
$100 Juror’s Award

Alana Sparrow  
*Identity Politics*, 2009  
Digital collage, archival digital print  
8 x 8 inches

Clement Frame Shop & Art Gallery  
$100 Gift Certificate