We are pleased to present the work of Justin Baker, Patrick Cuffe, Ben Godward, Jason Martinez, Emily Rauch, and James A. Van Duyne, Master of Fine Arts degree candidates for the spring semester 2007. A tradition since 1983, the M.F.A. exhibition is an important way in which the University Art Museum and the Fine Arts Department collaborate to enhance the academic environment at the University at Albany. The exhibition represents the culmination of these students’ intensive training and study in contemporary fine art practices. It provides an opportunity for them to exhibit in a professional museum setting and to share their efforts with the academic community, alumni, and audiences of the Capital Region.

We are very grateful to the Office of the Provost and the College of Arts and Sciences for support of the exhibition and this publication, as well as to the museum staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the exhibition process.

JoAnne Carson, Chair, Art Department
Janet Riker, Director, University Art Museum

1. Justin Baker
Untitled (two shapes)
Inkjet print
21 1/2 x 27 1/4 inches

2. Ben Godward
Po1r! Sauce, 2007
Rigid urethane foam, aluminum, and bought objects
44 x 40 x 30 inches

3. Patrick Cuffe
Pattern, 2007
Strei, bronze, ash, enamel paint
96 x 30 x 50 inches

4. James A. Van Duyne
Innoved Pritn, 2006
Painted MDF, wood
19 1/8 x 12 1/8 x 7 1/2 inches

5. Emily Rauch
Boaz In Annex (detail), 2007
Mixed media on wood
92 x 48 x 96 inches

6. Jason Martinez
Enslaved, 2007
Mixed media
30 x 30 inches
Justin Baker
In creating these photographs, I bring out the beauty in subjects we tend to ignore. The deteriorated industrial landscape is such a place of exploration; it’s a place of retreat. In silence, I navigate a terrain that is both beautiful and ugly. I take pleasure in the duality of this landscape, feeling both the history and the vitality. I see these spaces as a foundation, a backdrop.

Manipulating these photographs in the studio, I create an abstraction that questions the perceived reality of the image. The added elements in these landscapes are made from found discard, re-used as art objects. These once-important slivers of our world are re-injected with grace and humility. The result is a land that is disrupted. A land that is quiet and fit to wander.

Patrick Cuffe
I reach back into my personal history to ground myself; it is within this searching process that I find comfort in the real, the hand made. As society moves in the direction of virtual culture, I feel that people are losing contact with the tactile sense. People purchase things that cannot be passed down to the next generation. In a here today, gone later today society, there seems to be a lack of history in the objects that are being produced.

I intervene on behalf of the well made, making things that are impossibly perfect. Constructing with sheet rock allows me to build cheaply and rapidly, much like today’s industry. In contrast I use bronze, steel, and Mahogany in a traditional manner to replicate the pioneering industry.

Ben Godward
Recently my sculptures have started to respond to the slick and saturated media of the world we live in. They are reflections of myself, contradictory and impulsive. Carrying references to food, sex, and toxic sludge in their bright organic formations of foam, they are exacerbations of material excess and imperial gluttony. Pure carnival joy harmonizes unself-consciously with commodity culture. Their chaotic exuberance demands attention with vigor equal to that of our landscape.

Jason Martinez
My works depict a union between the sappy sweet and grotesque. I transform drawing, painting, and digital imaging by reinterpreting their relationships through the process of digital manipulation and excessive layering during installation.

The works illustrate my obsessive internal conflicts with mortality and precious interpersonal relationships. I am creating a world laced with visual elements of popular culture, coupled with familial ephemera, to compose this twisted fairy tale.

Emily Rauch
I build incept structures with abandon. I build aqueducts and bridges from memory, ignoring both the engineers and the voices in my head telling me what a girl like me should be painting.

My goals and process are unencumbered by common sense. Like an expressionist forced to collaborate on a tree fort, I realize that if it is going to get done, I need to do it myself. I build by “farmer method,” the resulting lack of precision bothering my carpenter-husband’s sense of order. Who needs a level? Home Depot sells angle braces. Mason’s twine comes in the exact oranges and pinks I crave.

I want my art to achieve the grandeur of the go-carts that we made when we were kids playing in the backyard of the center of the universe.

James A. Van Duyne
I reproduce specific living spaces at various scales in order to conquer my emotions with objects. I reconstruct details of my home at full scale as meditations on bittersweet memories. Homes can be presented as icons of psychology. A back room becomes a setting for mental projection. A hostile environment between roommates emerges as an installation of three closed doors. By reducing the working dimensions and simplifying the details of a living space, I gain power over that space and the remembered events. I push my work toward obsessive control and its resulting comfort. Angst and uncertainty are transposed into a physical form.