



FELLOWSHIPS

THE GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION'S MARY L. NOHL FUND

FOR

INDIVIDUAL

ARTISTS 2003



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Dick Blau
Michael Howard
Mark Mulhern

Paul Amitai
Peter Barrickman
Mark Escribano
Liz Smith

SEPTEMBER 10–DECEMBER 12, 2004
INSTITUTE OF VISUAL ARTS
3253 NORTH DOWNER AVENUE
MILWAUKEE, WI 53211

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 2003, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation used a portion of a bequest from artist Mary L. Nohl to underwrite a fellowship program for individual visual artists. The program, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowships for Individual Artists, provides unrestricted awards to artists to create new work or complete work in progress and is open to practicing artists residing in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee or Washington counties.

Nohl, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, died in December 2001 at the age of 87. Nohl rarely exhibited her work, yet she gained national recognition for her art, much of which was housed in and around her home in Fox Point on the shores of Lake Michigan. Her bequest to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, by supporting local visual arts and arts education programs, keeps Nohl's passion for the visual arts alive in our community.

Seven fellowships were awarded in 2003: three for established artists (Dick Blau, Michael Howard, Mark Mulhern) and four for emerging artists (Paul Amitai, Peter Barrickman, Mark Escribano, Liz Smith). This first group of Nohl Fellows was selected from a field of 176 applicants by a panel of recognized visual arts professionals working outside the four-county area: Barbara Hunt, executive director of Artists Space in New York City; Tim Peterson, founding director/curator of Franklin Art Works in Minneapolis; and Lorelei Stewart, director of Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The panelists spent three days reviewing work samples and artists' statements, making studio visits, and talking to local artists. The willingness of the jurors to travel to Milwaukee, engage with the local visual art community, and to learn alongside us as we all participated in a very new process was inspiring; their suggestions will shape future competitions.

The Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowships are administered in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Peck School of the Arts and Visual Arts Milwaukee (VAM!). The program owes much of its success to the volunteers—Milwaukee artists, curators and arts administrators—who established guidelines for the fellowship competition; organized and administered the jurying process; assisted with the curation of the exhibition; and participated in the production of the catalogue.

The exhibition this catalogue documents represents the culmination of a year's work by seven artists; it also reflects the work of the many volunteers who came together to create and sustain this program.

Polly Morris
Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



ESTABLISHED ARTISTS

Dick Blau DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

Sometime around 47 or 48, I began to dread turning 50. Then, as I turned 49, my feet suddenly gave out. I cried bitterly over the loss of my sexy shoes; even worse the orthopedic shoes didn't help; nor did any of the other treatments I underwent over a miserable year. Frustrated by my inability to fix my aging feet, I decided to do something about my too-large breasts and belly. Right after my 50th birthday I had plastic surgery followed by a two-month convalescence. While I was recovering, a new foot doctor recommended surgery; so as soon as I had recovered I went back into the hospital and under the knife again. This time it was a four-month recovery—six weeks in a wheel chair, six weeks on crutches, six weeks walking with a cane. By the time I reached my 51st birthday, I was no longer worrying about my lost youth.

While this sounds like a solitary drama, it was actually something Dick and I did together. He went to every doctor's appointment and stayed with me during the five hours of my plastic surgery; all that hard year he took care of me. The way his care mixed with desire taught me a new sexiness—not the shiny one associated with youth but the darker intimacy of the vulnerable body.

Dick took me to Paris for my 50th birthday; he pushed me in a wheelchair so we could stroll the boulevards. On the morning of my birthday, we lay in our hotel room overlooking the Boulevard Montparnasse and made a list of everything wrong with both our bodies, competing to see who had the longer list. We started laughing and ended up shtupping.

These pictures come from the period where Dick and I learned about mature love. They have three locations: the house where we live with our children, Max and Ruby, the hospitals and doctors' offices of my surgeries, and the hotel where we went once a month to get away from the kids so we could have loud, long sex with the lights on.

Jane Gallop
Distinguished Professor

ARTIST STATEMENT

I've been making pictures of Jane forever. We hooked up the first time 25 years ago this November. We never wanted to get hitched, but we certainly did get tangled. Out of this tangle have come a couple of kids, a body of art, and a book.

Living With His Camera (Jane Gallop and Dick Blau, 2003) views Jane within the context of the family, but she is more than just a mother. I want to use this occasion to flesh her out. I begin with a few photographs from that time long ago, but the show is mainly about the drama of Jane's reaching the age of distinction.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dick Blau has a B.A. in English from Harvard College (1965) and a Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University (1973). He is co-author of three books. *Bright Balkan Morning: Romani Lives and the Power of Music in Greek Macedonia* (photographs by Dick Blau, text by Charles and Angeliki Keil, soundscape by Steven Feld, 2002) and *Polka Happiness* (Keil, Keil, and Blau, 1992) explore cultures through music, dance and image. In *Living With His Camera* he uses photography to look at the emotional structure of domestic relations. Blau is a professor in and co-founder of the Department of Film at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

CHECKLIST

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. <i>Wright and Bremen</i>
1980
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 7. <i>Max in Jane's Lap</i>
1989
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 13. <i>Hotel Metro with Cane</i>
2002
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |
| 2. <i>Silk Blouse</i>
1980
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 8. <i>Prep</i>
2002
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 14. <i>Hotel Raphael</i>
2004
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |
| 3. <i>Striped Couch</i>
1980
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 9. <i>Surgery</i>
2002
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 15. <i>Trocadero</i>
2003
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |
| 4. <i>Cornered</i>
1985
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 10. <i>Doctor's Office</i>
2003
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 16. <i>Hi Hat</i>
2003
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |
| 5. <i>The Night Before Max</i>
1986
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 11. <i>Hotel Metro in Tub</i>
2003
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 17. <i>Breakfast with Toast</i>
2004
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |
| 6. <i>Chenille Robe</i>
1984
11" x 14"
silver gelatin print | 12. <i>Hotel Metro on Bed</i>
2003
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print | 18. <i>Removing Stitches</i>
2002
31" x 44"
pigment ink jet print |



ABOVE: *Breakfast with Toast*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Hotel Metro on Bed*, 2003





ABOVE: *Hotel Raphael*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Hotel Metro with Cane*, 2002



Michael Howard

THE IMAGE AND ITS INSCRIPTION: PAINTING'S "BECOMING-PLACE"

Consider, to begin with, the construction site as locus: a zone, sequentially layered, of excavation, of grounding, of erecting, of cladding, of capping. Next, consider the construction site as a confluence of disparate sensations: a dialectics of orderliness and commotion, regulation and clamor, organization and tumult. Michael Howard's fixation on this space raises, for his viewer, probing, provocative, allusive, even baffling questions.

The location of Howard's image, the place where the image resides, cannot ultimately be determined since the image itself is the result of a set of conditions, what Gilles Deleuze might call "resonances and interferences." The sensory awareness we have of Howard's paintings is not holistic; instead, it is fragmentary, it resists surety, it plays with our desire to fuse. He presents us with a pictorial space that, rather than operating "as window," is fraught with things diagrammatic.

Howard's work reveals its history of process, a building up from the canvas ground of what the French refer to as *touche*. But the physicality of a painting is never such a straightforward matter. Perceptually speaking the painted surface is akin to a threshold, a kind of non-place the poet Mallarmé called the "nothing" realm, beyond reality, where pure form is laid bare. As physically specific as Howard's paintings are, then, their immanence transcends their materiality.

Howard's recent work presents us, more than ever before, with momentary, even disconcerting sensations: a block, a screen, what the artist himself calls a "scrim"; linear constructs that literally deconstruct; color that is explanatory yet evocative. Hence the work's draw, the realization that one is experiencing the painter's metaphorical signification of these construction sites as places to explore the uncertainty of visual perception, encounters with architecture and with *other*.

**Alan White, Professor and Head, Department of Art
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**

**Ron Buffington, University of Chattanooga Foundation Associate Professor
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**

ARTIST STATEMENT

PAINTING/BEING/SURFACE

The I is above all else a bodily I, it is not only a surfaced being but is itself the projection of a surface.

SIGMUND FREUD

Light is to the eye as image is to the canvas: the projection upon and illumination of one body by another. The other comes to be no less substantiated, indeed often more, as the surface comes to be a stunning site/sight of inscription. As daunting (and paralyzing) as the *potential* of inscription may be at times, still more impressive is what has occurred/is occurring. The occurrence on that surface (and the possibility of occurrence), held in suspense, is the life of a painting. The response to a painting's surface, to act toward or react toward this *circumstance* (literally "circular standing" or "around standing") is no less compelling or ephemeral than the eye of a storm. The surface of the painting is where the painting is understood to be, though in actuality the surface is an open, mirroring center; the pivot point for a visual palindrome. The surface is an interval, or as Gaston Bachelard says, "...the surface separates the region of the same from the region of the other." It is a definitive threshold, a point formed by a convergence, which is itself infinite like the vanishing point in perspective; a point where the viewer, the self, is constructed. It comes to be a space defined by construction, a housing; inhabited, haunted, and open.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michael Howard was born in 1963 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He studied at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (B.F.A., 1988) and the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning at the University of Cincinnati (M.F.A., 1991). He received the Betty Bowen Award in 1998 in Seattle, Washington and a purchase award from the University of Cincinnati. In August 2003 Michael Howard had his second solo exhibition at the Francine Seders Gallery in Seattle. His work has also been exhibited at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, the Grand Rapids Art Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and at galleries in Atlanta and Chicago. Michael Howard maintains a studio in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he holds a faculty position in Fine Arts at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

CHECKLIST

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1. <i>Habisch Site</i>
2004
9 ¹ / ₂ " x 19 ³ / ₈ "
oil on canvas | 5. <i>Praiber Site</i>
2004
11" x 14"
oil on canvas | 9. <i>Nehler Site</i>
2004
5 ¹ / ₈ " x 12 ¹ / ₄ "
oil on canvas | 13. <i>Brayton Site</i>
2004
16 ⁷ / ₈ " x 17 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ "
oil on canvas |
| 2. <i>Lumins Site</i>
2004
17 ¹ / ₄ " x 40 ¹ / ₄ "
oil on canvas | 6. <i>Mavrix Site</i>
2004
15 ¹ / ₄ " x 34"
oil on canvas | 10. <i>Midler Site</i>
2004
7 ⁷ / ₈ " x 9 ¹ / ₄ "
oil on canvas | 14. <i>Corfeld Site</i>
2004
oil on canvas |
| 3. <i>Raynar Site</i>
2004
9" x 17 ³ / ₄ "
oil on canvas | 7. <i>Lindsor Site</i>
2004
48" x 72"
oil on canvas | 11. <i>Telsen Site</i>
2004
17 ³ / ₁₆ " x 19 ¹ / ₈ "
oil on canvas | |
| 4. <i>Stefans Site</i>
2004
8" x 8 ¹ / ₈ "
oil on canvas | 8. <i>Postler Site</i>
2004
36" x 72"
oil on canvas | 12. <i>Krison Site</i>
2004
16 ³ / ₄ " x 18 ¹ / ₂ "
oil on canvas | |



ABOVE: *Lumins Site*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Stefans Site*, 2004





ABOVE: *Raynar Site*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Habisch Site*, 2004



Mark Mulhern

AN ALPHABET OF HUMANNESS

Mark Mulhern's recent paintings show the hand and the mental journey of the artist, not so much in any confident painterliness that speaks of creation, but more in the scarring and layered scribbles that constitute the murkier realm of hesitation, degradation and passage. Rather than coming into being with a sense of authority, Mulhern's paintings appear to slip away, gravitating back toward the muck of pre-creation: think of Redon's flower paintings.

We catch the people in Mulhern's compositions mid-stride as they hesitantly pass through vacant worlds. The indeterminate backgrounds provide veils of hue that suggest fluidity and timelessness. Mulhern's people occupy these spaces with an endless flow of mundane gesturing that the artist abstracts or simplifies into an alphabet of "humanness." We recognize each "letter"—hands in pocket, tense shoulders, the swinging arm of an urban gait.

These paintings investigate how our bodies speak a formal and symbolic language without words. The angles, slants, diagonals and curves of our human interactions and movements form sentences of comings and goings that parallel the push and pull, foreground/background, representation/abstraction, line/color, age-old conversations of the painting process itself. Mulhern brings to the discussion a quiet sense of contemporaneity, a humble and thoughtful sway of normal Joes whose physical presence is unheroic and easy to read.

The anti-climactic moments these paintings hold are just the ones we want to be conscious of because they form the bulk of our lives. Within the process of painting, Mulhern assures us, we can find and celebrate the graceful rhythms and overlooked poetry of our everyday lives.

Debra Brehmer
Writer and art historian

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work deals with the human figure and its place in time. The figures in my work are caught in subtle gestures that suggest introspection and unselfconscious states of being. I want the viewer to identify with the figure through an empathetic relationship with the gesture. The isolation of the figure in the field is meant to limit and simplify the visual information, focusing the viewer on the subtle language of the body. Like the experience of a traveler in a foreign country whose language skills are not proficient, I want the viewer's sensitivity to body language to heighten for the sake of connection.

The field the figures occupy acts as both a container and a veil through which the figures emerge or recede. For the most part, the field is neutral and atmospheric, made up of layer after layer of thinly applied paint. The push/pull process of working the figure into the right location enriches the surface and creates the emotional tone of the work. I am trying to make paintings that require and reward patient looking; they are made slowly and work on the viewer over time, gradually revealing nuance. The moment fixed on the canvas is both quiet and fleeting, a reflection of our ephemeral condition.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mark Mulhern was born in Portage, Wisconsin in 1951. He attended the Layton School of Art (B.F.A.), the University of Wisconsin at Madison (M.F.A.) and Atelier 17. As an undergraduate, Mulhern focused on drawing and the figurative tradition; his graduate studies were a continuation of this desire to learn to draw and to understand through drawing. As a printmaking major he studied etching, working in black and white; the resistance of the medium increased his stamina and instilled a love of prints. Mulhern left graduate school feeling that he knew how to draw and how to work. In 1976–77, he spent an expansive and formative year in Paris and southern France. There to study viscosity printing with Bill Hayter at Atelier 17, Mulhern came away with a strong desire to paint. Since that time he has continued to work within the figurative tradition, making paintings that express his experience of being in the world.

CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Burghers of Calais</i>
2002
78" x 90"
oil on canvas | 5. <i>Pilgrimage</i>
2004
54" x 60"
oil on linen |
| 2. <i>Studio Work Table</i>
2002
78" x 90"
oil on linen | 6. <i>Bowler</i>
2002
54" x 60"
oil on canvas |
| 3. <i>First Warm Day at the Zoo</i>
2004
60" x 70"
oil on linen | 7. <i>Morning Coffee</i>
2003
54" x 66"
oil on canvas |
| 4. <i>Outside of the Cinema</i>
2004
60" x 54"
oil on canvas | 8. <i>Piazza</i>
2004
48" x 48"
oil on linen |



ABOVE: *Young Actress*, 2004
OPPOSITE: *Orange Purse*, 2004





ABOVE: *Arrivals*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *First Warm Day at the Zoo*, 2004





EMERGING ARTISTS

Paul Amitai

CULTURE: A MUSEUM EXPERIENCE?

Paul Amitai uses video and sound of tourist sites and entertainment destinations to construct narratives that explore collective understandings of history and popular culture. In many of his projects, the mundane is made into quiet spectacle and the line between history and fiction is blurred. His multi-channel video installations portray the pedestrianism of sightseeing but, when combined with technology and improvisation, also present an alternative material culture. The installations are comprised of documentary footage, original composition and sound elements. By (re)examining tourism, Amitai challenges stereotypes and reveals a constantly shifting production of mass culture and cultural commodity.

Amitai scrutinizes tourist locations and leisure sites that feature exhibitions about local indigenous histories (Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago; Museum of Westward Expansion, St. Louis; and the Potawatomi Bingo Casino, Milwaukee, among others), shooting from vantage points that obscure the “real-time” experience. The commerce of the entertainment industry—in the guise of historical accuracy—is isolated in a (re)articulation of the museumgoer’s social interaction with public display, amusement venues, and those around them. Amitai’s quasi-investigative and slightly voyeuristic presentations establish a distance that raises questions about institutional practice and the viewer’s expectation, rather than the historical accuracy of the displays. This precise distance imparts a sense of anxiety by exposing a disparate cultural memory in place of a more comfortable collective memory. His work often emphasizes Western notions of “progress” and assertions of the “civilized” as projected onto past or other cultures—that are without cultural agency. The viewer—observing another viewer—is left questioning philosophical concepts of preservation and progress.

Amitai compresses time and space to expose places of leisure as tenuous sites of artifice and fictionality. Rather than accept what is presented as cultural authenticity, Amitai asks who is complicit in the “marketed” cultural (mis)representation that refuses to recognize the plurality of contemporary society. Paul Amitai’s work explores problematic institutional practices and subverts monolithic interpretation to create zones of discomfort where we are forced to question the role and responsibilities of societies’ most treasured institutions. The spectator is left with a desire for a new visual discourse on history and its material manifestations.

Shannon Fitzgerald, Curator
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

ARTIST STATEMENT

My artistic practice examines the intersection between cultural representation, consumption and vicarious experience. By processing the video-audio material I collect and re-presenting it in an installation space, I create the conditions for reinterpretation: to construct alternate cultural narratives, recontextualize mass media representations and reexamine forgotten or suppressed collective memory. My work is not about any one culture, but rather the construction of culture. It reflects my own struggle to make sense of marginal cultures whose characteristics are mediated by codified representations such as those found in ethnographic displays at natural history museums.

Old World expands upon the issues with which I have been grappling, but shifts the scale of the work by moving from interior (museum space) to exterior (landscape). *Old World* is both a subjective document and a reconstruction of a site of reenactment (the pioneer homestead of Old World Wisconsin), a location found at the border of cultural memory, history and narrative.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paul Amitai's video-sound installation art has appeared in exhibitions in New York, Chicago, St. Louis and Milwaukee. He is also an active musician, performing electronic and improvised music in clubs and galleries around the region. Amitai has written on electronic arts and culture for *New Art Examiner*, *Signal to Noise*, MTV, *Shepherd Express* and the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. He has also worked as a curator, organizing film screenings at the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, and creating the New York Festival of Electronic Composers and Improvisers at the Knitting Factory, New York.

CHECKLIST

1. *Old World*, 2004
Multi-channel video and sound installation



ABOVE: *Old World*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Westward*, 2003



Peter Barrickman

SUPERSENSIBLE SCENARIO

The quotidian, the organic, and the galactic coexist dreamily in Peter Barrickman's paintings, resting momentarily as they float past one another through calm spaces where gravity barely exists. Transience and transience reign; both the nature and location of animals, vegetables and minerals are subject to change. Like chameleons of the uncanny, they drift between the real and the imaginary. What could be a banal scene is odd, and scale and size follow a different set of rules that makes strange good sense.

Preternatural juxtapositions also appear convincingly normal. In one painting, a crimson meteor glides through the air on a diagonal trajectory, leaving a pink trail behind it, narrowly missing a paper loop chain, and hovering over a miniature mountain with pine trees and a waterfall. To the right of the meteor, a crystalline structure replicates itself. Below this, beautiful, abstract drawings float. The sum total could easily be a confusing jumble of objects, but is instead a graceful spacescape.

Elsewhere, a view into a storefront window becomes a game of perception. The monarch butterflies poised mid-flight in the window exist at the intersection between man-made paper decoration and actual butterfly flutter. The sky blue and light gray swaths of fabric above them billow in a puzzling, awkward fashion. Looking at them incites dizziness, followed by the realization that these makeshift curtains, and the upper half of the interior scene depicted behind them, are upside down. The wafts of fabric, when flipped around, become drop cloths draped over lumpy piles of stuff, with a metal shelf, an old magazine rack and an easel behind them.

In a sunny scene of a parking lot, a moment of recognition and role-reversal occurs as a bird that looks a lot like a Brancusi quizzically eyes a figurative sculpture. The sculpture, with one arm withered and the other on its hip, stares at the three cars in the parking lot. Another sparse landscape features big books that lie about restlessly amongst minimalist sculptures and a half-built house. Imitation and mimicry create a subtle dialogue through which comparison between the objects melts away into playful, kinetic elegance.

In Peter Barrickman's universe, objets trouvés not only possess the ability to turn into works of art; they can come to life. The concrete is plastic, furniture sits on the ceiling, pretty patterned backgrounds are deep, otherworldly outer space. Whether in abstract landscapes, in curious interiors, or somewhere up in the sky, conglomerations of disparate elements unify into unlikely scenes of beauty.

Kiki Anderson
Writer and gallery director

ARTIST STATEMENT

This is a shopping list, a format I hope we're all comfortable with. A statement about my paintings in this exhibition can be crock-potted out of the following ingredients:

- 1 plastic model of the human experience as it could appear in space. Get the one that is donut shaped. It puts outer space at the center, as opposed to previous models that had people mysteriously floating in space.
- 1 stereo LP of eyewitness accounts. These are recordings of the ticket holders in stadium seating looking out through eyes in the heads of people we've wondered about. Audience members should be specific and (hopefully) aghast about what they've seen.
- 2 copies of Annette Sharpe's *Don't Let the Pros Wreck It for the Amateurs*
- 1 copy of *The Snow Chef Named Gawd* by Greg Brust. (Check Amazon for this.)
- 1 video documentary tracing the history of mass production alongside the evolution of the home repair of mass produced items. The video concludes by implausibly framing human evolution as nothing more than a series of gradual repairs dictated by a vague, moving carrot.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Peter Barrickman is a painter, filmmaker and actor. His work has been shown at Soup and Cinema in Riverwest, Darling Hall in Walker's Point, The Green House in Chicago, Passerby in New York City and La Panaderia in Mexico City. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee film school, he was awarded a fellowship to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and is now attending the M.F.A. program at Bard College. His work was reviewed recently in *Street Cave* and *Art Papers*.

CHECKLIST

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. <i>Study Center</i>
2004
30" x 24"
oil, acrylic and
pencil on wood | 5. <i>&@&@</i>
2004
73 1/4" x 49 1/4"
oil and paint pen on canvas | 9. <i>Untitled</i>
2004
47" x 67"
oil and acrylic on canvas |
| 2. <i>Yellow Parking</i>
2004
20" x 16"
acrylic, ballpoint pen
and pencil on wood | 6. <i>Old at Old Kindergarden</i>
2004
30" x 22"
acrylic on textured board | 10. <i>Tour Meeting</i>
2004
18" x 24"
acrylic on paper |
| 3. <i>Snow Chef</i>
2004
30" x 24"
acrylic on canvas | 7. <i>Untitled</i>
2004
47 1/4" x 44"
acrylic on canvas | 11. <i>Tree</i>
2004
18" x 24"
acrylic on paper |
| 4. <i>One Possibility</i>
2004
30" x 24"
acrylic on canvas | 8. <i>Untitled</i>
2004
50" x 42"
oil and acrylic on canvas | 12. <i>Bedtime Abstraction</i>
2004
24" x 18"
acrylic on paper |



ABOVE: *Snow Chef*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Study Center*, 2004

Mark Escribano

BEYOND THE ORGANIC

Late one night a violent fire starts in a house where a family is sleeping. The father suddenly awakens to the sound of knocking on his bedroom door. He flings the door open but sees nothing—just fire. He helps his family to escape. Once safe, they realize they owe their lives to some unseen helper. Was it a dream? A ghost?

This story is both miraculous and eerie. If true, it provides tangible evidence that other worlds may exist, and this is indeed a haunting idea. To know that our reality may be just one of many is bizarre enough; to know the benefits of an otherworldly crossover is even more unnerving.

Escribano's work is similarly spectral. His pieces reveal darkness that both shrouds his characters and also hints at their inherent humanity. These expressive qualities are greatly enhanced by his desire to allow fate to steer the creative process. Escribano's works emerge through a complex series of intuitions and coincidences. Reading the omens and following their guidance is a haunted system, and the resulting artworks are indeed ghosts. Alive, evocative, sometimes unexplainable, but undoubtedly manifested to communicate: if not a word of warning then perhaps a message of wonder and great delight.

This delight contributes to a characteristic vaudevillian feel in Escribano's works. Alternate personae, masks and comic routines allow the bizarre to mingle with the banal—surprising juxtaposition lending itself to comedy. Disparate elements from diverse sources combine, insinuating the possibility of narrative. Thus it's not a matter of undertaking an organically finished composition, since the "aesthetic" takes form solely as a result of the artist's taste, power of selection and focus.

In one of his earlier pieces, *The Folly Den*, Escribano introduces the spectator as an indeterminate third element—a "partial" consciousness who can never arrive at a clear view of the highly eroticized but obscure proceedings. The observer's involvement, as in most modern art, completes the work—but one doesn't know just how. Interpretation remains open because something is being created through a novel combinatorics—and there's nothing pre-existing, nothing "organic" with which to compare the result.

Shana McCaw
Artist and writer

Kelly Mink
Curator, Guerilla Gallery, Milwaukee WI

ARTIST STATEMENT

I produce art as a means of pursuit. I find myself attracted to certain re-emerging qualities in art that have developed with the intention of going beyond the communication of literal meaning. Attempting to create abstract visual metaphors for varieties of "fear," "endeavor," "discomfort" or "pleasure" fascinates me. I enjoy forcing aesthetic combinations as they move from the sub-conscious to the conscious and then re-configuring them into new wholes with the addition of the occasional pie I might find cooling on a windowsill. The historic or personal events I re-depict in interactive multimedia installations have been subjected to this process of filtering and delay. *Sulcus Circus*, as an example, was inspired by Dr. Meshberger's discovery of a long-standing misinterpretation of a well-known image in the Sistine Chapel and a trip to El Junque rain forest in Puerto Rico.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mark Escribano is a Puerto Rican born artist who studied filmmaking and photography at the University of South Florida. He studied dance under Manolo Vargas in Mexico City and began producing performance and installation art when he moved to Milwaukee in 1998. He currently works in multi-media with a focus on film and video, often utilizing a combination of low and high technology to produce spatial experiences. His current projects include a series of short 16mm films and a docu-portrait of three Milwaukee area artists and brothers. Escribano was one of the artists recognized in the book *Convergence (Performance Art in Milwaukee)* by Pegi Taylor.

CHECKLIST

1. *Sulcus Circus*, 2004
Wood, paint, mirror, glass, lights, plaster, and video





ABOVE: *The Folly Den*, 2001
LEFT: *The "S" Pace*, 2003

Liz Smith

BETTER THAN POETRY

The aim of the artist is to extract from fashion the poetry that resides in its historical envelope, to distill the eternal from the transitory.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, *THE PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE*

Taking color palettes and patterns from fashion sources, nature, illustrations from children's books, music and any other influence she might encounter (including the weather), Liz Smith makes paintings that are a collection of impulses, ideas and references. These disassociated signs co-exist within her paintings as an index of her experience developing the pictures. Combining an array of sometimes incongruent shapes, lines and forms, Smith deftly layers them to develop restive compositions. Free to move in and out of her visual index, Smith applies figurative and abstract elements simultaneously, experimenting throughout the painting process in order to find the balance between these formal elements. Neither accepting fashion's proscriptive aesthetic nor denying mediation's cosmetic allure, Liz Smith strikes a kind of equilibrium by finding the dissonance in "good taste" and harmonizing the potential incompatibility of her references. And though the compilation of various forms could devolve into a morass of lost intent, Liz Smith's paint application provides the segmented collection of her denotations with a necessary unifying structure.

Liz Smith fixes the transitory nature of her subjectivity to the eternal liminality of her painting's space. It is the feisty drive of this subjectivity that is conveyed in these paintings. They are strident, discursive and fluid. They are even funny sometimes. Nevertheless, these paintings convey restless perception, compelled by a desire to represent their reality through the collection of temporal influences that required their creation in the first place. By embodying her experience in this way, Liz Smith creates paintings that describe her contemporary aesthetic with vitality, authority and clunky grace.

Andrew Falkowski
Painter

ARTIST STATEMENT

I paint to create idealized environments of emotion, using color and line to build my own visual vocabulary. The space is occupied with what I consider ideal combinations of form and color that describe, in a non-linguistic way, an unknown place. I would like my work to go beyond the surface and describe its own reality.

I inform this process by using elements of nature, fashion, and contemporary media to see how they contradict or harmonize with each other. I trust my intuitive process of merging disparate references. I begin each painting without planning, yet each becomes a replica of a mood or moment. I enjoy leaving my process of painting visible, incorporating the inherent properties of paint with various sensations of color. If I have made a successful painting, then it offers a few hints in an otherwise complicated space.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Liz Smith grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She received her B.F.A. in painting from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1999, and her M.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2002. She has exhibited extensively in cities throughout the United States, including Washington, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Chicago. She currently lives and works in Milwaukee with her husband and fellow artist, Elliott Oliver.

CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Powdered Smarts</i>
2004
20" x 22"
oil on canvas | 4. <i>Double Dutch</i>
2004
40" x 42"
oil on canvas |
| 2. <i>Splendor</i>
2004
10" x 12"
oil on canvas | 5. <i>If So, Maybe, Later</i>
2004
40" x 42"
oil on canvas |
| 3. <i>Linger, Later</i>
2003
18" x 20"
oil and marker on canvas | 6. <i>We're Doing It</i>
2004
40" x 42"
oil on canvas |



ABOVE: *Splendor*, 2004

OPPOSITE: *Powdered Smarts*, 2004



SUITCASE
EXPORT FUND
FOR
INDIVIDUAL
ARTISTS 2003

THE GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION'S MARY L. NOHL FUND

WILLIAM J. ANDERSEN traveled to Beijing, China, to take part in the Red Gate Gallery Residency Program and mount a solo exhibition of his paintings in their Pickled Art Centre.

STEPHANIE BARBER curated "Objective Complement," a show of fourteen Milwaukee artists and filmmakers at the Zoolook Gallery in New York City. The show was part of an artistic exchange with New York artist Soon-Hwa Oh, who curated an exhibition of New York work at Milwaukee's Jody Monroe Gallery in December, 2003.

TRAVIS GRAVES exhibited two sculptures in the 59th Juried Exhibition at the Sioux City Art Center in Sioux City, Iowa.

KAREN GUNDERMAN was one of ten national and international artists selected to exhibit in the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts exhibition, "Biomimicry; the Art of Imitating Nature" at the Herron Gallery, Herron School of Art, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

PAINTER STEVE HOUGH attended the opening of a group exhibition that included his work at Kontainer Gallery in Los Angeles.

ARIANA HUGGETT traveled to Utica, New York for an exhibition of her paintings at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute.

XAV LEPLAE attended screenings of his film, *I'm Bobby*, at the Sundance International Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

FRANKIE MARTIN created an installation that integrated sculpture, music, drawing and performance at Little Cakes Gallery in New York City.

NATE PAGE created site-specific works for an international group show at the Hotel Pupik in Schrattenberg, Austria.

MAT RAPPAPORT created a site-specific video installation using four screens and eight audio sources for "Index @ Post," an invitational group show at the Post Gallery in Los Angeles.

ROY STAAB exhibited five large Epson prints of environmental water works and created an installation for his solo show at the non-profit ecoartspace gallery in Beacon, New York.

FRED STONEHOUSE attended the opening of a show of his recent works on paper at the Howard Scott Gallery in New York City.

WILLIAM A. SUYS, JR. traveled to Santa Fe, New Mexico for a residency and to show his paintings at the Peterson Gallery.

RINA YOON exhibited ten large-scale drawings and prints in an invitational exhibition entitled "Figure and Psyche: Four Artists Plumb the Depths" at the Catherine G. Murphy Gallery of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota.

THE INSTITUTE OF VISUAL ARTS

Since 1996, the Institute of Visual Arts (Inova) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has established an international reputation as a contemporary art research center. The mission of the Institute of Visual Arts is to engage the general and university publics with contemporary art from around the world through exhibitions and programs. The Institute is recognized for the high quality of its programs and for the opportunity it offers artists to experiment in the creation of new work.

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INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF VISUAL ARTS

BRUCE KNACKERT

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Visual Arts Milwaukee (VAM!) links local visual arts organizations to increase the quality of local artistic presentation and production as well as to bring greater local, national and international attention to Milwaukee's institutions and artists. The Mary L. Nohl Fund Individual Artist Fellowships and Suitcase Export Fund are the major projects of VAM!.

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