

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2012 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

SESSION 1G

A PANORAMIC LOOK AT ART: FROM CARTOONS AND ALLEYWAYS TO SKYLINES AND STREET VIEWS, AND FROM DUST AND CLAY TO GOLDEN HALOES AND RECURSIVE PATTERNS

*Session Moderator: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western
Washington University
Mary Gates Hall 251
1:00 PM to 2:30 PM*

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

From Earth to Vessel: Symbolism and Ritual in the Use of Clay Among the Tewa Pueblos of the American Southwest

*Emily Zach, Senior, Art History, Cultural Anthropology,
Western Washington University
Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Clay, as Barbara Babcock describes it, is regarded as a god-given, living and life-sustaining substance. Clay, she continues, is a material which one takes, makes, and gives with thanks, and which one never handles lightly. For the Pueblo peoples of the American Southwest, the medium is inseparable from their spiritual, artistic, and utilitarian practices. Their collection, use, and treatment of clay involves a complex system of ritual and respect — an observation that continues to inform present-day artists. Nora Naranjo-Morse, contemporary Tewa artist, retains the sacred nature of clay that Babcock describes. Drawing from Tewa cosmology, worldview, and daily life, I examine the deep significance of clay as a source of artistic production and cultural symbolism. My argument is that, even in the sterility of the gallery space, Naranjo-Morse invokes the spiritual, artistic, and utilitarian practice associated with the medium.

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Dust in Contemporary Art

*Katherine Gleason, Senior, Art History, Western
Washington University
Hilary Hamilton, Senior, Art History, East Asian Studies,
Western Washington University
Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Dust is something usually swept away and discarded after it falls. Most would not consider dust as a medium for artistic expression, yet artists have utilized dust in their work. For example, Duchamp used a year's worth of collected dust in his Large Glass. Indeed, Man Ray's photographs of the dust on Duchamp's piece are almost as famous as Large Glass itself. Additionally, Rauschenberg showcased dust in his series of White Paintings — monochrome canvases that act as, according to John Cage, "landing strips for dust motes, light and shadow." Dust is not merely a nuisance — it has the potential to add a layer of meaning to art, something that can be seen in recent artists' work. The shroud of dust on the crumpled covers of Tracey Emin's *Bed* transforms it into a piece of the past. To an even greater degree, Gosia Włodarczak explores the potential of dust in her series of covered pieces, aptly named *Dust Cover*. For Włodarczak, dust shows the collected presence of the energy of a space. In this presentation, we begin with an historical overview of artists' use of dust. We then consider these more recent artists' work: Emin and Włodarczak. Here, we discuss how such tiny particles add meaning; the collection of dust on the surface of these works documents the passage of time.

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Finding Infinity in Pattern

*Kaylie Piver, Senior, Art History, Western Washington
University
Elizabeth Etzkorn*

*Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Today, a number of artists have returned to drawing – in a big way. For example, Julie Mehretu uses swarming masses of lines and geometric shapes to document the urban environment in which she thrives. Her canvases are huge documents, often measuring more than ten feet in both directions. Likewise, Gosia Wlodarczak uses large-scale linear-line drawings. In her wall-covering installations, she brings forth a wide range of shapes and figures to create a visual atlas of her life. Common to these artists' works is a sense of infinite expansion. The artists' use of layering creates an unexpected depth that blurs the line between the artists' reality and the abstract. It is as if their drawings continue out into space and enter ours – the spectator in front of the work. Using the idea of infinite expansion, we compare these artists' work and discuss the underlying geometric structure within their explosive drawing fields and how it relates to the world around us.

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The Globalized Spectator: Investigating Google Street View Aesthetics and Applications

*Zachary Johnson-Guthrie, Senior, Art History, Western
Washington University*

*Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

In 2007 strange cars began appearing around the United States. Clad in eccentric color schemes and a curious cluster of cameras jutting from their roofs, these cars were in the service of Google's Street View project. As an extension of the company's Maps program, Street View has systematically photographed panoramic views of the roads of the United States and the World. Unsurprisingly, related projects, specifically utilizing Street View technology in the service of art, have sprung up. For example, The Google Art Project began as a way to bring museum collections to Internet users using Street View technology. Art Project allows "visitors" to "walk" through museum collections from all over the world, choose paintings and view them in excruciating detail. Alternatively, artist Jon Rafman culls images from Street View that range from the banal to the picturesque, often beckoning the viewer to formulate enigmatic and, at times, counter-cultural narratives out of the chaotic mash. In my presentation, I want to mediate these two projects, The Google Art Project and Jon Rafman's 9eyes. While I argue that Google Street View is an emergent medium for artistic investigation and a provocative new consumer technology, I ask if and how new media provide agency to their globalized users. Through the use of accessible new media technologies, Street View shifts the role of the user from static and passive to dynamic and active, but does it emancipate the spectator? Here my focus turns to Rafman's concept of the virtual sublime. Using the writing of critical theorist Elizabeth Grosz and Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben as a guide, I discuss Rafman's image "strings" in regards to the overall Street View project.

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The Masked Cartoon: Elements of the Grotesque in Victorian Representations of the Irish

*Philby Brown, Senior, Art History, Western Washington
University*

*Mentor: Julia Sapin, Art History, Western Washington
University, Western Washington University*

Illustrations of the Irish dating from the Victorian era were often layered with political commentary, making it important to differentiate between the art of caricature and that of cartoons. A defining characteristic of caricature is the emphasis on the grotesque, whereas in cartoons it is associated with comedic content. This research will examine the hidden nature of British political cartoons that demeaned the character of the Irish by veiling caricature under the guise of comedy. Through analysis of political caricatures from the mid to late-nineteenth century British publication *Punch* magazine, I will trace the emergence of the use of crude simian imagery to portray the Irish. The horrific appearance of such caricature had its basis in political suppression and was implemented in order to rationalize British sovereignty over Ireland. The art of caricature was a common tool for cartoonists, such as John Tenniel, to promote stereotypes and false sciences regarding the Irish. These caricatures also have far reaching implications, which went beyond the confines of the United Kingdom. Emigrating along with Irish immigrants, who fled their nation during the Great Famine, the stereotypical depictions of the Irish extended into the United States and even impacted the Kennedy administration. Caricature in America perpetuated the second-class status of Irish immigrants and created obstacles on the path toward assimilation.

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Marilyn Monroe's Halo: Examining the Semiotics Behind Warhol's Image

*Kate McKee, Senior, Art: Painting, Art History, Western
Washington University*

*Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Most people associate images of the halos with holiness or sainthood. Although heavily charged with religious symbolism, over the centuries, the halo as a personification of religious values has existed in a variety of forms. Moreover, throughout its history it has taken on very diverse meanings within an assortment of Western and non-Western art forms such as the mandorla used in Buddhist imagery or perhaps the more familiar Christian halo seen in images of Christ. In this research, I look deeper into the connotative and denotative meanings associated with its historical uses, identifying veiled messages hidden within its various forms. In my analysis, I utilize Saussure's study of semiotics as well as Roland Barthes "Myth Today." I seek to understand not only the history and progression of meanings associated with the halo, but how its form continues to circulate within modern-day culture. My contention is that Andy Warhol's Gold Marilyn Monroe reprises this age-old form. Examining Warhol's work reveals how on the one hand, the myth of the halo plays a role in its current definition and communication to the viewer. Yet on the other, I illustrate how Warhol manipulates and undermines the signified meaning of the halo and ultimately the form of the halo itself.

SESSION 1U

RESEARCH IN THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS: CRITICAL INQUIRIES INTO PRAXIS, CREATIVE PROCESS AND (RE)PRESENTATION

Session Moderator: Betsy Cooper, Dance

Meany Studio Theatre

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

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**“Entre en moi, toi ma multitude”/Enter into me you my
multitude: World Dance Styles and the Works of Ruth
St. Denis and Martha Graham**

*Kyla Thompson, Fifth Year, Art History, Western Washington
University*

*Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Like Picasso and other modern artists of the time American choreographers, Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham, have been accused of culling much of their work from the “exotic” sources of India and Africa. While this artistic borrowing, in the case of works like Picasso’s *Demoiselles D’Avignon*, has been explored and analyzed, similar artistic endeavors like St Denis’ 1913 *Bakawali Nautch* and Graham’s 1947 *Night Journey* have gone relatively uninvestigated in terms of their significance within the fields of dance and cultural studies. The re-examination of these influences and the analysis of their cultural specifics would go a long way toward an effort to restore the significance and cultural implications of dance in their respective cultures as well as in the work of St. Denis and Graham. This research aims through the critical historical context and formal analysis of these pieces to assert that there is much to be gained from understanding these works as not merely having occurred in reaction to outside cultural sources, but rather that they sit at the crossing of a multitude of influences. They are a result of and in turn the catalyst for innovation across cultures.

POSTER SESSION 2

Commons West, Easel 1

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Siege on Culture: The Future of Futurism

*Emily Garvin, Sophomore, Art History, Western Washington
University*

Maggie Samson

*Mentor: Barbara Miller, Art History, Western Washington
University*

It was 1909, a time of great economic and political instability, when Filippo Marinetti allegedly stumbled forth from the “maternal ditch” of industrial waste. With wild passion and exuberant fury, he penned the Futurist Manifesto. Encouraged by his young, well-educated friends, he rejected passivity, and called for the celebration of active living through battle, steel, and speed. He broadcasted his declaration in the Paris newspaper, *Le Figaro*. Such a direct, cutthroat approach, expressing the objectives of a group of artists who did not yet exist, took the art world by surprise. His zeal has since been imitated many, many times over. A century later, The Free Art Collective, a trio of British protest artists, revamped the work. By simply replacing words and phrases within the original document’s structure, Free reordered the Futurist Manifesto, making its demands fresh and relevant to contemporary art and culture. Through a comparison of Marinetti’s original Futurist Manifesto and Free’s New Futurist Manifesto, this paper aims to examine the evolving function of the manifesto, not only as a voice of artistic movements but also as a means of revealing cultural mentalities and concerns of a time and place.