

Alchemy

Collage & Assemblage



Snap Crackle Pow!

An exhibition of drawings

two exhibitions

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An exhibition of drawings

April 12 - May 31, 2008

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A R T S

516 Central Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
www.516arts.org

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FRONT: Tony Fitzpatrick, *Wish*, drawing, collage on hand made paper,
collection of Alison Moore
BACK: Maureen Burdock, *Have Sex Or I'll Kill You Both!*, india ink on paper

Introduction

Artists working with collage are often asked, “why don’t you draw these images instead?”, as if collage were somehow cheating and drawing would be a more respectable or legitimate form of art. The two exhibitions at 516 ARTS explore the use of appropriation through collage and assemblage and its place in the history of art, as well as how these mediums, together with drawing, offer a highly creative, pieced together vocabulary for cultural dialogue.

It is an honor to work with art historian Kathryn M Davis, guest curator of the drawing exhibition titled *Snap Crackle Pow!*. She takes an adventurous look at contemporary drawing in New Mexico through the lens of feminism and the Beat Generation. Both exhibitions explore playful and rebellious approaches to art making, featuring artists with highly refined skills and wacky sensibilities. The two different approaches to image making, collage and drawing, both require the same attention to the formal elements of art.

Alchemy looks at the historic development of the collage and assemblage mediums and showcases contemporary artists who work with cutting, gluing and assembling disparate images and objects to create something entirely new and original. A process akin to alchemy unifies the elements these artists mix together.

Many of the artists use vintage materials to create experimental works with a contemporary feel. The act of collecting materials is a key part of the collage process. This exhibition looks at the artist as collector and transformer of sorts, reassembling old pieces into new objects. The studio is like a laboratory where the artists find inventive ways to breathe new life and meaning into materials

“Collage is a mode of perception, a multi-dimensional language with aesthetic implications that span the histories of art, architecture, literature, and music...The basic principle of juxtaposition forms the foundation for an art of limitless associative possibilities. Collage allows the artist to explore simultaneously the mysterious spaces between high art and popular culture, text and image, figuration and abstraction, past and present, two and three-dimensional space.” —Pavel Zoubok

that are discarded, found or non-traditional. Strange juxtapositions reveal unexpected combinations to the viewer, creating an element of surprise. In appropriating imagery, the artists change the meaning of their materials; they break the rules and mix things up, upsetting the natural order, going against tradition and toying with perception.

The collage aesthetic is ever expanding in the contemporary art world as digital technology grows and changes how artists work with materials. This exhibition focuses specifically on artists using traditional, non-digital techniques to look at the origins of the medium and its continued contemporary applications. Bryan Konefsky has been invited to curate a program of collage films as part of this exhibition, which he appropriately titled *Cut Up or Shut Up!*. His international selection of short films spanning the past 70 years is a foray into the cut and paste aesthetic, which is innately part of the film medium.

These artists employ both narrative and abstract approaches, exploring a variety of recurring themes such as animals, mythology, the cosmos, mechanics, the past and the passage of time, all of which relate back to the idea of collage as a transformative process with a dream-like, magical quality. Some of the artists are more focused on cutting up and others more on assembling, but all find their own unique balance on the spectrum of destruction and creation.

Suzanne Sbarge
Executive Director/Curator

ALCHEMY

Collage & Assemblage

curated by Suzanne Sbarge

Miriam Wosk, *Objects of Passion* (detail)
2000, paper collage & acrylic on rice paper, 56 x 51.5 inches



Dada's Children

by Robert H. Wilson



Collage and its cousin, assemblage, weren't exactly born of Dada; Picasso and Braque got a jump on the movement by a couple of years. But the practice of appropriation and reconstruction was adopted and fostered so exuberantly by the Dadaists, they deserved legal guardianship. Dadaist collage was unapologetically political. Its iconoclastic way of treating art and its materials—scrounging, cutting, tearing, nailing, gluing...misrepresenting—was meant to

fly in the face of high art just as its message was meant to affront a society complicit with inexorable descent into an atrocious war.

Dadaists faulted the mainstream of art (at that time Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism, but also art that had historically placed itself above the urgencies of social and political discourse) for being a "moral safety valve," a "compensatory phenomenon," "a way of deadening man's mind," and "thoroughly obsolete." Max Ernst, one of Dada's most emphatic adherents, said in retrospect, "Dada was a rebellious upsurge of vital energy and rage; it resulted from the absurdity, the whole immense stupidity of that imbecilic war."

And so, when I began my research for an essay to accompany *Alchemy: Collage & Assemblage*, an exhibition of thirteen artists curated by Suzanne Sbarge at 516 ARTS, I had a Dada inspired chip on my shoulder regarding the place and perception of collage and assemblage within the larger world of today's visual arts. The collagists of Dada intentionally placed themselves outside the mainstream. What is their legacy today? Do they have affiliation still with Outsider Art, or are they all back in the main house? And if they are back in, how did they get there?

To help answer these questions I went to see my friend Frederick Hammersley. Fred is arguably Albuquerque's most notable artist, a Modernist, one of the original California Hard Edge Abstractionists. Modernism was in its third decade when Dada emerged, and its artists made up the mainstream that Dadaists railed against. Ironically, Fred was born in 1919, perhaps the apex year of Dada.

Of anyone I know, Fred is the most fun, and perhaps perceptive, to talk to about art. But more to the point, I assumed Fred would stand and deliver for the mainstream. I know he is an unfaltering student of the masters, and that his standards for legitimate art are high. I can tell when he's genuinely impressed and when he's just being polite. And I expected Fred to stand for certain principles of fine art, principles that I then would argue the Dadaists (in their time) and collage artists (thereafter) threw out the window in favor of a different kind of conceptual, outsider statement.

My assumption began to unravel even before I set our chicken salad sandwiches on Fred's kitchen counter. I asked if he'd ever seen Watts Towers. "Oh, marvelous!" he said—he'd actually met the man, Simon Rodia, had actually shaken his hand. This led to a discussion about assemblage and Outsider Art, which led Fred to a story about *Art Brut* and the work of a certain homicidal maniac (the art work, that is) done while in prison. Fred remembered a page filled with delicate line drawings of tiny fairies. A judgmental thought about art with fairies crossed my mind, and I went fishing for more. I asked, "What did you think of that work, really, in the context of fine art?" Without a moment's hesitation Fred raised his eyebrows with authority and said, "Tops."

"Dada was a rebellious upsurge of vital energy and rage; it resulted from the absurdity, the whole immense stupidity of that imbecilic war." —Max Ernst

Fred has always said there are seven tools available to the artist: line, shape, form, color, value, pattern and texture (LSFCVPT). He taught me that LSFCVPT is a good way to look critically at art, as well as make it. I'd always assumed, though, he was referring to art made in the tradition of the Masters: Classical, Renaissance, Romantic, even Modernists, but not the "outsiders". And I assumed that Dadaists, collage-makers front and center, broke the rules of LSFCVPT in order to make socially relevant statements.

As I danced around the issue of how Dada rejected high art, it was Fred who more precisely stated that, in essence, Dada's method was a flip of the bird to mainstream art, specifically Modernism. But, bird or no bird, Fred as much as said there is no getting away from LSFCVPT, and the next two hours of looking at art with him showed me that. It also became clear that like or dislike is not necessarily a function of how well LSFCVPT is applied. I responded coolly to work that Fred found superb, drawings by an artist I thought was a German Expressionist though turned out to be the Berlin Dadaist, George Grosz. And I showed him hard punch Hairy Who paintings that made him bite his tongue to remain polite. I came away from Fred's knowing that there are elements, beyond the basics, that determine appeal for any given viewer, for any given piece of art. *Alchemy: Collage & Assemblage* is filled with those elements, even while it stretches the limits of LSFCVPT.



Each artist in the *Alchemy* group uses a variety of materials that are uniquely their own, and application techniques that are just as personal; but the visual tools by which their images are established are the inescapably universal ones Fred listed. Maritta Tapanainen appropriates parts of images from reproductions and uses

Each artist in the Alchemy group uses a variety of materials that are uniquely their own, and application techniques that are just as personal; but the visual tools by which their images are established are inescapably universal...

It is important to recognize that in the context of art history, Dada collage and assemblage influenced the mainstream just as Outsider painters, sculptors, photographers and movie makers have: by assimilation.

them as line, shape, form, etc., in semi-abstract pieces that have the feel of graphite and charcoal drawings—which begs the question: why not do them as drawings? I will answer for Tapanainen and all the other artists in this exhibition: process is inextricably linked to product. Her search and discovery of imagery in reproductions, whether pragmatically or intuitively, drives conception and construction of her final images. Sbarge, as curator, uses the term "alchemy" to describe the process by which each artist reassembles old pieces into new objects.

Similarly, the collages of Ingrid Freidenbergs, exquisite abstracts of fabric and newsprint evocative of the Dadaist Hans Arp, demonstrate an eye as highly tuned to the principles of image making as master draughtsmen and painters. Andrew Ginzel, Bebe Krimmer, Brooke Steiger, Leonard Stokes and Miriam Wosk stretch the aesthetic in dramatically different directions but rely on the same principles, and Gonzalo Fuenmayor, even working in three dimensions, uses color and form like a painter, cutting up and reassembling his own paintings and drawings.

Reminiscent of Dada, appropriation forces (or enables) artists to respond to and integrate with their world. Tony Fitzpatrick is a born Chicagoan who collects images from newspapers, magazines, musical scores, matchbook covers and other advertising materials, and has used them in collage-drawings, powerful in their mixture of reverence and irreverence, that lay bare the soul of his native city. His images for *Alchemy* focus similarly on New Orleans.





Holly Roberts appropriates images from her own photographs and assembles them in mixed media works on painted surfaces. She collects her materials with a camera, and her delight at the transfigurative possibilities of those “found” images prompts the process of assembly. Whether it’s Ann Dunbar’s colorful bits of the detritus of modern life (plastic hair curlers, my favorite), Michael Pajon’s pieces of vintage Americana, or Andrea Volkoff-Senutovitch’s antique items and photos from her “soup of objects”, the materials collected contribute social relevance as well as visual meaning to the finished piece.

As to the question of whether collage and assemblage are back in the mainstream since the raucous days of Dada, I would answer emphatically: “It depends.” Every form of art has its good, its bad and its ugly; its naïve and its educated spheres of influence; its insiders and its outsiders. Assembled art is no different. Each of its artists is judged by his or her individual merits. But it is important to recognize that in the context of art history, Dada collage and assemblage influenced the mainstream just as Outsider painters, sculptors, photographers and movie makers have: by assimilation.

It is often the case that high fashion assimilates street fashion. Dada and the street are similar in that both have provided what Ernst called “vital energy” to their assimilators. The energy of Dada influenced Modernism not only by inspiring artists who used collage and assemblage—Rauschenberg, Johns, Kienholz, Cornell, even Motherwell and Warhol—but also by inspiring a new philosophy, among Modernists and Postmodernists, about how art is made. Pollock maintained that the process of making art was as important as the art itself, a philosophy that both echoed Dada and presaged Postmodernism. Hockney, who described himself as a “traditional painter”, became a Postmodernist when he began to collage Polaroid images and copy machine prints. Assemblage was the forerunner of Installation, a decidedly Postmodernist form of art.



Directly or indirectly, Dada has exerted profound influence on contemporary art, especially but not exclusively on artists working in collage and assemblage. These art forms are no longer considered art outside the mainstream, as they were meant to be considered in the time of Dada, but the *Alchemy* exhibition pays homage to certain outsider ideals of Dada: the use of materials rooted in society, the intent to make societal observation and criticism, and the artist’s dedication to an energetic vision—a constant “rebellious upsurge of vital energy”. □

Robert H. Wilson writes fiction, poetry and essays about art. He is a sports medicine physician who specializes in arthritis and the aging athlete. His poems appear in *Harwood Anthology* and *A Bigger Boat* (in press from UNM Press).

Ann Dunbar

Albuquerque, New Mexico

"I have always been intrigued by the beauty of common household items such as clothes pins, measuring cups, tape measurers, spools of thread, curlers, etc. I love collecting things that would normally be tossed out to give them a new life, a new story. I start each piece with a central object, then add objects that go with the color, theme, texture or material. The pieces grow and begin to tell a story of chance. I love making my artwork as much as I love collecting the objects that go into it. Collecting is half the fun, and it's always a surprise to see how the objects fit into a piece of artwork."

Ann Dunbar graduated with distinction from the University of New Mexico with a B.A. in Art. She has taught abroad in Istanbul, Turkey, as well as directed her own private art school. She currently teaches at Bosque School in Albuquerque. Her work has been shown in many galleries throughout the United States and is in numerous private collections, and she has received several awards.



That Doggie in the Window
2007, mixed media/assemblage, 31 x 21 inches

Tony Fitzpatrick

Chicago, Illinois

"The statement is the work."

About the New Orleans series

"If one takes a little time and looks through Henri Schindler's books about New Orleans, one realizes that in carnival, there is a codified history of the imagination of this holy city—and that of Spain and France for that matter. Mardi Gras is important because it links this bold new world with the old world. It is an intersection of many cultures changing their shape."

Born in Chicago in 1958, Tony Fitzpatrick is a former prizefighter, a poet, an occasional movie actor and a self-taught artist. Described as "larger than life", his creative endeavors extend to his being a popular radio personality in Chicago, the author of several volumes of poetry and the founder of the World Tattoo Gallery in Chicago and his own Big Cat Press. Fitzpatrick has many national solo shows to his credit. His characteristic style arises from various sources, including Haitian art and culture, children's books, field guides, circus posters and tattoo designs. His work is in numerous major collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.. His work is represented by Pierogi Gallery in New York City.



The Mercy Seat
2007, drawing, collage on hand made paper, 9 x 6 inches
collection of Steven Conrad

Ingrid Freidenbergs

Lakeville, Connecticut

“World War I changed the face of art. Collage was born and became a fresh and vibrant way to comprehend the shattered world. World War II changed my life, so no wonder that collage has become my mode of expression as well. The family farm disappeared, fortunes were buried and scattered. So we too were scattered around Europe, then America, picking up pieces of culture and cast off debris along the way. Collage reassembles such pieces, making order from chaos and neglect. My work is the restructuring and rejoining of parts – from the past, from private passions and from the lost. I want my work to have a long freight train of memories, associations and affections. The subject matter, though usually focused on color, texture and form, is meant to be evocative of moods, experiences and remembrances. To juxtapose elements and to have the whole become greater than the sum of its parts – that is my pleasure.”

Ingrid Freidenbergs was born in Latvia in 1944 during World War II. The first seven years of her life were spent living in Displaced Persons Camps throughout Germany before her family was finally able to emigrate to Long Island, New York. She was educated through the 1960s and 1980s in New York receiving a B.A. and M.S. from City College, an M.A. and Ph.D. from Long Island University and a Certificate in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy from New York University. Freidenbergs has had many solo and group exhibitions in the United States and France. Her work is represented by Bachelier Cardonsky Gallery in Kent, Connecticut.



Quantities of Material
2002, mixed media, 5.5 x 6.75 inches

Gonzalo Fuenmayor

Miami, Florida

"Collage plays a vital role in my work. The imagery used in my drawings comes from different sources, but through drawing are somehow flattened out, leaving no trace of their origin. These drawings are then cut out, dislocated, shuffled, and rearranged in order to create absurd narratives within the work itself. The end result becomes a collage of a collage, where paper and imagery playfully collide."

Gonzalo Fuenmayor was born in 1977 in Barranquilla, Colombia. He received his B.F.A. in Fine Arts and Art Education from the School of Visual Arts in 2000, where he was awarded a full tuition scholarship from the Keith Haring Foundation, and an M.F.A. from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 2004. His drawings are included in the Flat Files of the Drawing Center, and recently received an Honorable Mention from Premio Fernando Botero in 2007. Fuenmayor has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Colombia and Europe. Recently he participated in the *VI Salon Internacional de Dibujo* at the Museum of Modern Art of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic as well as *Drawing the Line* at The Mills Gallery in Boston.



Technicolor Geographies (detail)

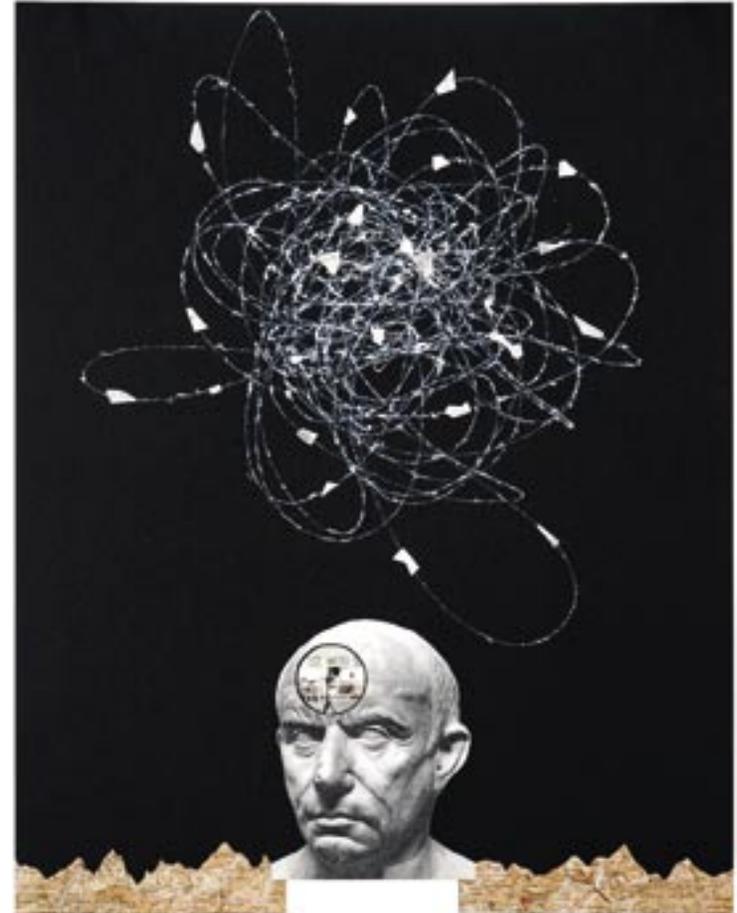
2007, mixed media and cut out paper on paper, each 15 x 22 x 4.5 inches

Andrew Ginzel

New York, New York

"Collage has been an integral part of my work from the very beginning. While most of the projects from the past twenty years involve a large and often architectural public scale they are all created with a collaged sensibility. The intimate studio work represented in the attached images is independent of these large works yet they are often the progenitors of ideas and elements which can arise and be incorporated as the large works are created. Perception is a compendium of collaged sensations, thus collage has always seemed like a particularly honest manner in which to raise questions about seeing."

Andrew Ginzel has invented a diverse range of works internationally for museums, galleries, performances and private and public architectural spaces. Often working in collaboration with Kristin Jones, large-scale works include *Metronome* on Union Square and *Oculus*, a constellation of stone and glass mosaics in the underground labyrinth of the World Trade/Chambers Street Subway station in Manhattan, projects in the Kansas City and Tampa Airports and public buildings nationwide. Awards include the Rome Prize, three NEA grants, a Pollock Krasner grant and Rockefeller Foundation fellowships. Ginzel teaches at the School of Visual Arts and his work is represented by Frederike Taylor Gallery in New York City.



Bebe Krimmer

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"For me, the process of collage is painting with paper."

The art career of Bebe Krimmer spans 50 years. She has exhibited in major museums and galleries, and her works are included in collections in the United States and abroad. Regionally her works can be found in the collections of The Capital Art Collection and New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe. She explores language and subject through the main visual language of collage. Citing the influence of improvisation in jazz—harmony, tension, color, scale, shape—her multi-layered collages work like rhythms, where one layer plays against another. Her work can be enjoyed on several levels; it leads viewers to the discovery of a less obvious idea or element, and is exemplified by a unique structural complexity. Krimmer's work is represented by Packer Schopf Gallery in Chicago and Chiaroscuro Gallery in Santa Fe.

Astronomy Plate 218 (detail)
2007, mixed media, 37 x 34 inches, photo by Pat Berrett



Holly Roberts

Corrales, New Mexico

"The large concerns in my life are at the core of my work—the degradation of the environment, spiritual meaning in a world of polarized and extremist religions, the stress and fear of aging and the daily fears and anxieties of being alive in the world today. Through my work, which allows me to process the world through my eyes and hands, I am able to make some greater sense of the confusion and beauty of the world around me."

Holly Roberts, born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, earned an M.F.A. from Arizona State University in 1981. Known for her heavily painted black and white photographs, Roberts' work has taken a different direction in recent years. She continues to work intuitively, painting an abstract landscape before applying her signature photo fragments. She uses muted colors of paint and photographs to create images that are filled with humor, irony and mythology. Her pieces are nationally and internationally exhibited and have been published in two monographs with a third due in 2009. She has twice received National Endowment for the Arts fellowships. Her work is represented by Etherton Gallery in Tucson and Zane Bennett Contemporary Art in Santa Fe.



Snake Boy

2007, mixed media on panel, 20 x16 inches

Brooke Steiger

Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Working with collage provides the opportunity to give new life and significance to humble or discarded materials. Like many artists, I am a hunter and collector of treasures in the environment. Scraps of paper, branches, seedpods, small knots of metal flattened by tires stay in my possession for years, sitting in dark drawers or leaning in the corner waiting to find their place and meaning as part of a new composition. Collage requires a considered approach to these objects in order to reveal unexpected forms and associations."

Born in 1971 in Denver, Colorado and raised in Oregon, Steiger attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, where she received a B.F.A. in 1994. She spent a year in Florence, Italy as a Rotary Scholar studying intaglio, woodcut and paper conservation at Il Bisonte, Scuola Internazionale d'Arte Grafica. In 2002, Steiger received an M.F.A. in printmaking from the University of New Mexico. She attended the Tamarind Institute of Lithography, where she received certification as a Tamarind Master Printer. She gathers inspiration from multiple sources and enjoys working in a variety of mediums, including drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture and installation. She is represented by Sara Smith Contemporary in Corrales, New Mexico.



Native Bird

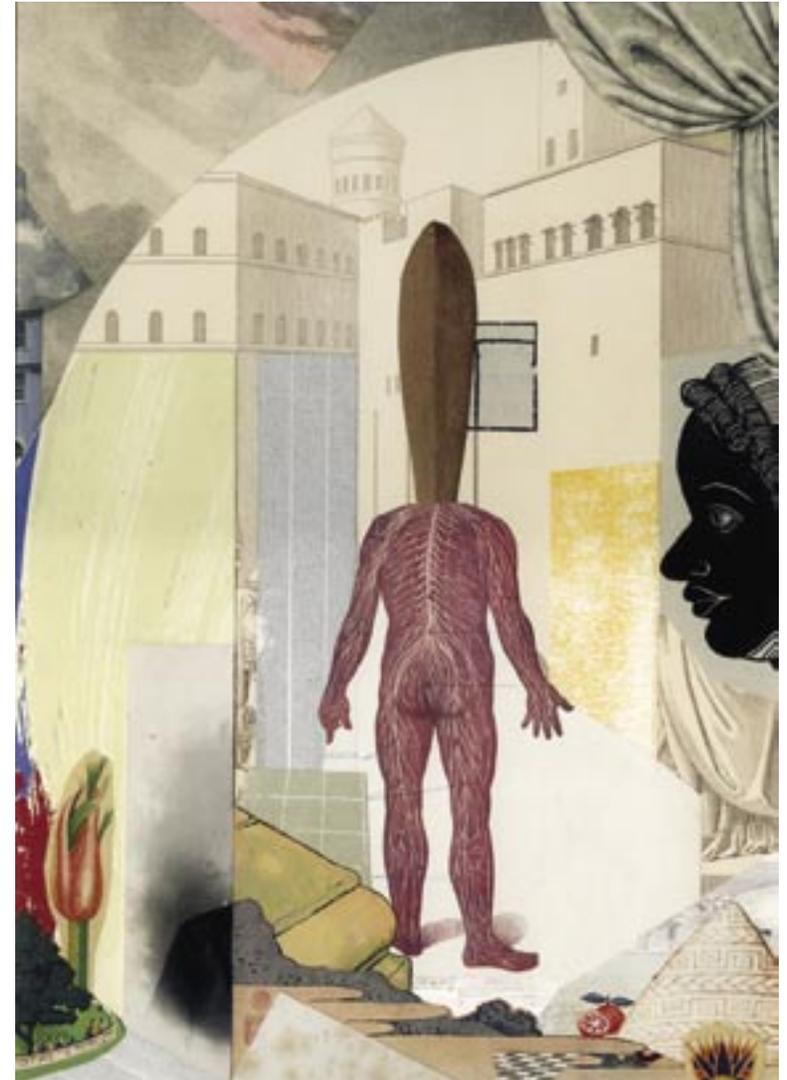
2007, mixed media on board, 7.75 x 7.75 inches

Leonard Stokes

Pleasantville, New York

"Though trained as a painter I have been a collagist for more than 30 years. I regard myself as a chef who cooks with whatever is in the cupboard or refrigerator (leftovers, essentially). The practice of using material from the past has been common throughout the history of music (sampling is a recent manifestation), and within the plastic arts gained importance with the advent of collage during the early years of the last century. I endeavor to bring elements of disparate provenance together so that they interact to form new worlds. Each fragment is an 'actor' who auditions for a role in a 'play' that is being improvised during the tryout. Ultimately, my concerns lie with the poetics of color, form, light and space. Each viewer (myself included) is invited to create a narrative—once the image has been composed and presented to the world."

Leonard Stokes graduated with a B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Yale School of Art and Architecture in the 1960s. His work has been exhibited extensively in New York, as well as in other cities around the country, including numerous solo exhibitions, most recently showcasing his digital montages at FXFOWLE, New York. His work is found in many corporate and public collections and has been reviewed in national publications such as *Art in America*, *ArtNews*, and *The New York Times*. Stokes is currently Professor of Visual Arts at Purchase College (SUNY) School of Art and Design. His work is represented by Jason McCoy, Inc. in New York City.



Spearhead
1996, paper collage, 15 x 10.5 inches

Maritta Tapanainen

Los Angeles, California

"I was born in Finland of Karelian heritage, raised in Canada and have since lived in Europe, Central America and in the harsh, expansive beauty of the Mojave Desert. I travel when possible—journeys to South East Asia, Cuba and most recently Japan. These changing environs have infused me with an awareness and respect for the variety of cultural experience and have contributed to my approach to collage. Extracted vestiges of delicate contours trace lifelines with organic origins. Accumulated fragments of pods, cells, tendrils and anatomical detail work to invent an intricately woven otherworldliness. Small evidences of civilization revealed in structural and mechanical artifacts are overwhelmed by this proliferating growth infused with the interconnectedness of all things, the tenacity of existence and its perpetual renewal."

Maritta Tapanainen is an artist and graphic designer specializing in book design in addition to her extensive artistic career using the language of collage. Her collages employ a somber palette of black, white and sepia tones, and lie at the heart of an obsessive process of collecting that has stretched over 30 years. She has had numerous solo exhibitions in California, New York and Japan and has exhibited extensively on both coasts of the United States. In 2004 she received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant. Her work is represented by Pavel Zoubok Gallery in New York City.



Equilibrium (detail)

2002, collage on board, 9.25 x 10.5 inches

Andrea Volkoff-Senutovitch

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"I am a collector and caretaker of objects with soul. I work with assemblage and collage because I am a storyteller by nature. These objects are my pen, the rhythm of my ink. There is a certain alchemy that happens—a type of magic, a secret language spoken when these objects are assembled in particular ways. They re-tell the archaeology of their travels—the owners that touched them, the reasons they sing. They are maps, songs in D minor, a soup of intentions, a mix of melancholy, laughter, love, loss, hope and despair. They are made of dreams and moments of brief awakening."

Andrea Volkoff-Senutovitch was born in Española, New Mexico in 1961. She is an experimental artist working in three-dimensional assemblage sculpture and photography. Her ancestry of Russian and Armenian aristocracy has been poetically documented with her art and surroundings. She is a self-taught artist and recently began formally studying sculpture. Her work is in numerous private collections and has been shown in galleries in Louisiana, New Mexico and California. Her passion for antiquity has led her to acquire an extensive collection of antiques, which have also become part of her work as a designer and stylist. Her home in Santa Fe is a living museum of exotic and curious *objets d'art* from around the world.



Reliquary Ship

2005, mixed media, x-rays, sails, 48 x 48 x 24 inches, photo by James Hart

Miriam Wosk

Los Angeles, California

"My work emerges out of a desire to explore the interconnectedness of all of nature, and to discover a certain order in the chaos of life. These spiritual and surreal art works are both symbolically autobiographical as well as an investigation into the patterns of human experience and perception. By transforming simple materials, paper collage, jewels, wallpaper, and old natural history charts into objects of beauty and power, I search for a balance between spontaneity and design, the decorative and the profound, the sacred and the mundane, life and death. Art writer Peter Clothier notes that my work reminds us of the most basic of truths by stating, 'Our lives are at once fraught with almost intolerable beauty and threatened with decay...our greatest potential as human creatures lies in the ability of our consciousness to hold both simultaneously in mind, with clarity and equanimity.'"

Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Miriam Wosk attended the University of British Columbia and continued her education in New York at the Fashion Institute of Technology, the School of Visual Arts and the New School of Social Research. She has shown her work extensively in solo exhibitions in southern California and has regularly exhibited across the country since the mid 1970s. Her work has been reviewed in many publications, including *L.A. Times*, *ArtWeek* and *Venice Magazine*. Her paintings and collages are in numerous private and public collections in New York, Vermont, California, Colorado and Canada. Her work is represented by Billy Shire Gallery in Culver City, California.

Big Red

2005, paper collage, crystals on natural history chart, 60.5 x 44.5 inches



Cut Up or Shut Up!

A collection of collage films

Joseph Cornell & Lawrence Jordan, New York

Courtney Egon, New Orleans

Janie Geiser, Los Angeles

Nik Kern, Germany

Lewis Klahr, Los Angeles

Lindsey Testolin, Albuquerque

Stan Vanderbeek, Baltimore

Virgil Widrich, Austria

"Collage films represent a profound sense of the cinematic in that they foreground ways in which disparate sounds/images are sutured together to create moving image stories." —Bryan Konefsky

Curated by Bryan Konefsky and Basement Films, *Cut Up or Shut Up!* is an international collection of collage films spanning over 70 years. The program focuses on the cut and paste aesthetic of collage and includes work by Stan Vanderbeek, who inspired Terry Gilliam's animation for the Monty Python comedy group, and Virgil Widrich, whose work titled *Fast Film* might be one of the most ambitious collage films ever made. The title *Cut Up or Shut Up!* is based on a 1972 text of the same name by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, in which the authors explored a cut-up technique of writing that they first popularized in the 1960s. This program is presented in conjunction with *Experiments in Cinema V. 3.0*, the third annual festival of international, experimental film (www.basementfilms.org/experiments).

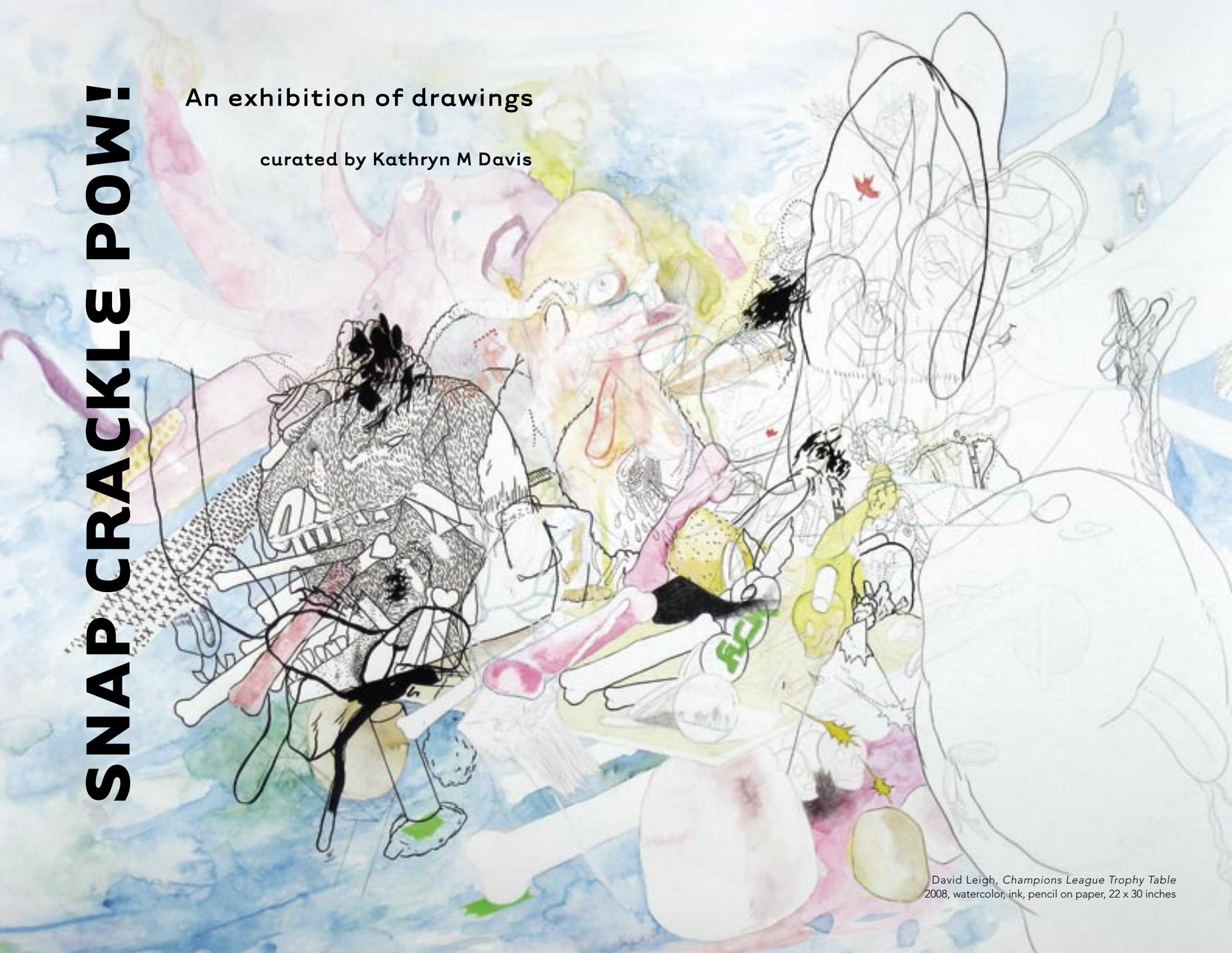
Lewis Klahr, stills from *Lulu*
1996, TRT 3 minutes, sound



SNAP CRACKLE POW!

An exhibition of drawings

curated by Kathryn M Davis



David Leigh, *Champions League Trophy Table*
2008, watercolor, ink, pencil on paper, 22 x 30 inches

Snap Crackle Pow!

An Investigation into the Pop Art of Drawing

by Kathryn M Davis

Gender is a construction, a balance of unknown—and generally unpredictable—proportions between nature and nurture. We learned these lessons as feminism forever changed art theory in the 1960s and '70s. From neo-Freudian psychoanalysis to notions of the male gaze in cinema, the place of women in art has been staked out and continues to develop in significance and practice. Recently, the art exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the opening of Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* (1974-79) in its new permanent home in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum have proven that nearly a half century of prominent women artists has changed the way we comprehend contemporary art. Yet we continue to witness inequality, if only in terms of sheer numbers of male versus female artists, in such noteworthy new museums as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Broad Contemporary Art Museum, where works by "insignificant numbers of women and artists of color"¹ are shown. According to the Guerrilla Girls, the BCAM at LACMA opened in February this year with 30 artists' works on exhibit: 97% of them were white, and 87% male. Out of the Broad family's foundation collection of 194 artists, the statistics are no better: 96% are white, and 83% male.

And here I am, a self-professed feminist and art historian, curating an exhibition of drawing with a ratio of 2:1 male to female artists. You'd think I would know better. It may horrify the reader even more to learn that I originally conceived of *Snap Crackle Pow!* as a "boys-only" show of drawings that might serve to connect young male draw-ers (a funny word, but it is how all of these artists identify, rather than as the more pretentious "draftsman") to comic books, bathroom-stall porn, and popular graphic arts as seen on breakfast cereal boxes and cartoons every morning. My purpose was, and to a certain degree still is, to demonstrate and hopefully demystify the exclusion of girls from this kind of art



as well as to serve as an initial foray into how boys bond through their drawing skills and what they choose to draw. As a female, I have been confounded and fascinated by boy bonding, and I saw an exhibition of a certain type of drawings as a unique way to investigate the topic. Fortunately, Suzanne Sbarge, in her capacity as executive director of 516 ARTS, steered me away from a men-only exhibition. Once I began thinking about women as masters of the same type of drawing—very graphical and mark-heavy—I realized that indeed the world of art is changing. Young women draw now: they grow up drawing and they keep right doing it in art schools and beyond—just like their male cohorts. The subject matter of girls differs, perhaps, yet the women in this show weigh in on the side of superheroes and intimate examinations of their own quotidian and fantasy

lives just as do the males. Ultimately, then, this became a show about drawing today as practiced by a fine group of emerging artists from Albuquerque and Santa Fe. With one exception, they are alumni of the University of New Mexico, the College of Santa Fe, and the Institute of American Indian Arts. One of the artists received a degree in digital production.

A significant underlying feature of the work of these six artists is its basis in popular culture as well as art history. From Roy Lichtenstein to Paul McCarthy, pop imagery has made its way into “fine” art. Think of Lichtenstein’s tightly organized, Ben-day Dot paintings based on comic-book romances and action-packed war stories featuring muscular hunks and their forlorn yet shapely women; and McCarthy’s actions involving body fluids (or worse) as well as his later, loosely sketched, spurting penises. It’s not a far stretch from there to the high priest of “comix”: Robert Crumb. Crumb is actually rather mild in his eroticism compared to some, but sex was always there in his work of the ‘60s and ‘70s—male heterosexuality looking for (and more than a bit intimidated by the thought of) some lovin’ with a voluptuously healthy woman. Crumb’s burgeoning curmudgeonliness and his sentimentality seem at odds, but it’s what make him so precise in his observations of the human race. Add to the mix Charles Bukowski’s tales of masculinity in an unraveling society, rather frighteningly close to the actual life of Jackson Pollock in post-World War II America, or at least the public’s perception of him as the model for a “real” artist: a hard-drinking, womanizing, unrelenting scoundrel. Bring them all together for a malleable definition of maleness as flawed, even deviant, while becoming more tenderly vulnerable in the 21st century. Before postmodern art was recognizable as such, the Beats wrote and howled and hitched across the country. Of course the sexuality of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs was more complicated—and more openly gay—than Crumb’s or even Bukowski’s, but the Beats were, clearly, a “boy gang.” It was the poet Ginsberg who said, “The social organization which is most true of itself to the

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artist is the boy gang.” I’m not sure that’s accurate any longer, but I do recall feeling, as a little girl in elementary school, that there was a social hilarity and ease among my boy classmates that we girls didn’t seem to share. We passed notes; they drew pictures that were absolutely verboten to our eyes. What the heck were they drawing? And what about it was so satisfying?



So, how do young women fit into this fine mess? In order to answer that question, I should first discuss the male artists in this exhibition. The four, two from Santa Fe and two from Albuquerque, have something in common that seemed to make a group show a no-brainer. I knew of Luke Dorman and Clayton Porter first, when they were classmates at the College of Santa Fe. From the start, Luke's drawings blew me away, and I could still kick myself for not having bought a piece of his before he graduated. Doodles, really, Luke's marks came out of a world existing entirely in his own head, and although it was a bizarre world, the objects in it were rendered with an intelligence that could easily be overlooked because of their humor—very Crumb-esque in that sense. Since those days, Luke has taken on art history and gained a much larger scale in his drawings, as if all his historical research has given him confidence that he too, like his peers across the centuries, has something to say. Last year, in an exhibition at EVO Gallery in Santa Fe, Luke drew himself as Venus in a

monumental, two-story version of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, thus describing his own passage into a litany of mark-makers. In this exhibition, we see Luke as Cain from the biblical narrative of the "marked" elder brother at the beginning of his wanderings over the earth. As Luke puts it,

For a boy, drawing is a way to explore themes and subject matter that we are forbidden from indulging in.... I wondered how this way of drawing would translate to adulthood. What are the things that we, as adults, desire but are forbidden from indulging in and how do they differ from those things we want as boys? In the drawing for this exhibition, I cast myself in the role of Cain, wandering the land searching for a place to establish a new life—one in which these seemingly inaccessible desires, represented by my band of followers, can be attained.

As close friends, it is natural that Clayton Porter would explore an arena similar to Luke's: desire and its fulfillment and denial. Clayton's subjects are the Hindu god Ganesha, the Remover of Obstacles, and the mice who frequently accompany the elephant god. Clayton states that,

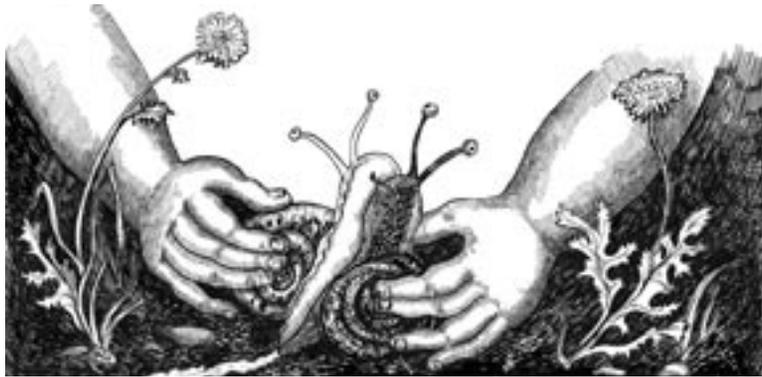
The mouse as a symbol often refers to evil, plague, and the slow destruction of man's "good" works. The mouse has several interpretations when accompanying Ganesha but for me the mouse as a symbol of desire and havoc is the most relevant.

As a curator, I find it interesting to note that, according to Clayton's bio,

[he] always had a gift for drawing but it was not until he realized his hatred for public schools combined with his passion for collecting comic books that Clayton decided to become an artist. For years he only drew in the style of comic-book artists but he soon found other mediums. When Clayton came to Santa Fe to get his B.F.A., he discovered the world of fine arts.

With Luke and Clayton, my investigation into drawing and its roots in boyhood and pop imagery is translated, almost literally, into physical expression. While there might be a slightly less obvious translation in the works of Larry Bob Phillips and David Leigh, I have admired their work for several years, first learning of the two as partners in the alternative gallery space, Donkey Gallery, in the Barelas neighborhood in Albuquerque. Larry Bob's direct drawing on the overhang

With Luke and Clayton, my investigation into drawing and its roots in boyhood and pop imagery is translated, almost literally, into physical expression.



above the main floor of 516 ARTS is mark-making at its purest, and I knew I could trust his art to function as the viewers' introduction to my exhibition. Larry Bob describes his art:

The goal in my recent body of work has been to create a form that has plasticity and transformation as its explicit focus, using a cartoon language that responds to psychedelic impulses...

Larry Bob, like Luke, revisits art history:

Painters like Bonnard, Braque and Van Gogh ... understood that the mark or brushstroke had a destructive agency that had to be grappled with, and that the resolution of painting problems lay in a very complex and fine balance. My work also owes much of its grounding to more recent shifts in thinking and looking, like the coy cartooning of every kind of hopeful historical modernism in the 1990s, the mind-numbing sensory overload that has been the hallmark of the new psychedelia in the 2000s and the pervasiveness of the graphic novel in recent years. All of these developments constitute in my mind an exciting break with the past.

Larry Bob's unique use of flatness in his drawings contrasts with the figures one recognizes within his spaces, and I find that he successfully challenges our apprehension of the layers of meaning we attribute to dimensionality in painting and drawing today. David Leigh, a bright curator and writer as well as artist, is aware of the near impossibility of making art that doesn't simply borrow from the discursive language but somehow transcends it, manages anyway to create drawings that are deceptively and simply beautiful. As he puts it, they

... are a bit absurd and freewheeling. Usually beginning with some grand idea, the drawing dissipates and fizzles into an aesthetic meandering of good intentions and craftsmanship, removed quite a distance from what was originally embarked upon.

Maureen chooses to believe in the decency of people, despite what we may see around us.

Staring at David's artworks can be an absorbing and revelatory experience where nothing, and everything, is as it seems.

The journey through good intentions in art brought me to the works of Maureen Burdock, a teller of tales of good and evil. Maureen's drawings, while comical, lack the cynicism of Crumb; they are the antithesis of a Bukowski yarn. Put simply, Maureen chooses to believe in the decency of people, despite what we may see around us. Is this a "feminist" attribute? She affirms,

The drawings in this exhibit are part of a graphic novel series called The F Word Art: Five Feminist Fables for the 21st Century. Each book tells the story of a super-heroine who fights oppression in her native country. The stories are based on contemporary issues; they take place in five countries around the world... Though the issues are serious, humor is an important ingredient to make the drawings communicate not just the problems, but also the intelligence and goodness of human nature that make transmutation possible.

Story boards and word balloons further her explorations into the effectiveness of comic book and graphic novels, but it is truly her drawings that inform her narratives. The same is true for Rose Simpson, who uses no text, no extraneous marks: this artist simply makes art. She draws like an angel with a good right hook, and it was with delight that I added her to the exhibition *Snap Crackle Pow!*. I want to close with this quote from Rose's statement about her art:

The footsteps I take in life find their way with sonar of expression—I beep; it bounces and returns to me. Using an intuitive understanding of the paths keep growing. That path is my pursuit of truth. □

¹ "Letter to Eli," www.guerillagirls.com, March 1, 2008

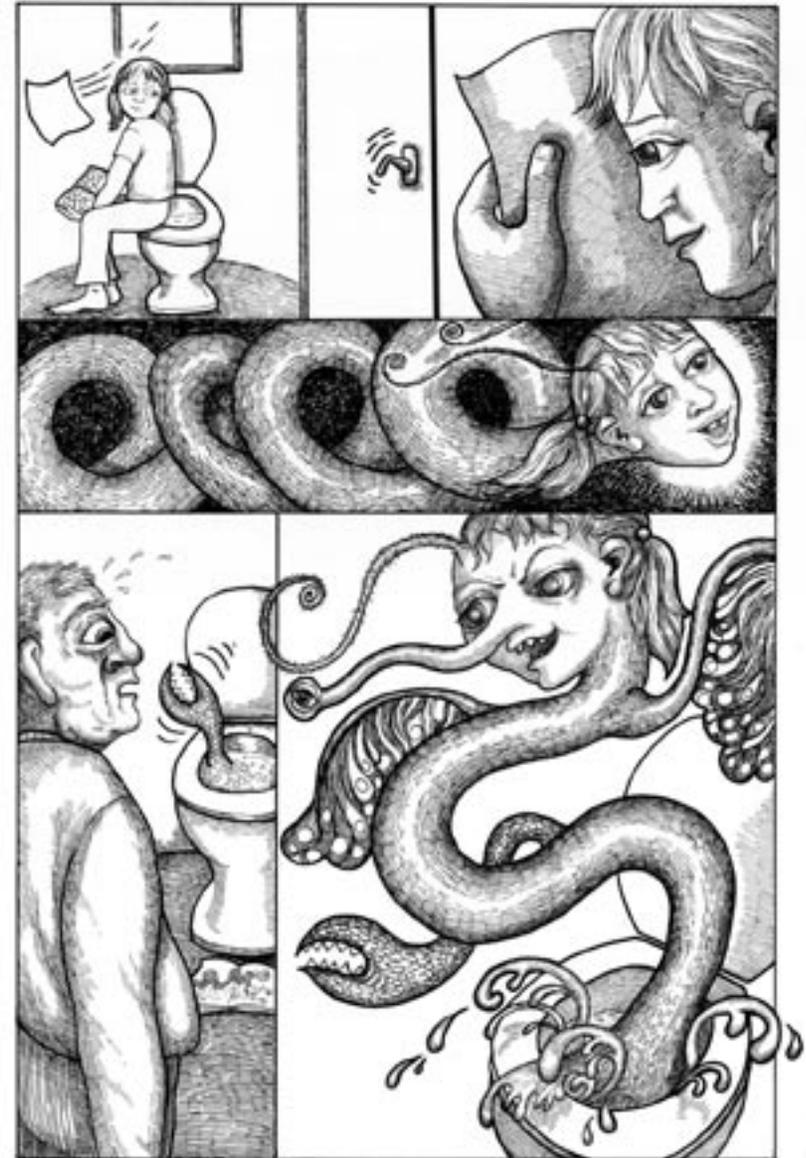
Kathryn M Davis, art historian, specializes in modern and contemporary American art. She is an arts writer for local and national publications, editor, and independent curator. Davis has over a decade of experience in the field of art theory, and is currently working at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe and hosting a radio spot, *ArtBeat*, on blu 102.9. Davis holds an M.A. in the Art of the Americas from the University of New Mexico.

Maureen Burdock

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"The drawings in this exhibition are part of a graphic novel series called The F Word Art: Five Feminist Fables for the 21st Century. Each book tells the story of a super-heroine who fights oppression in her native country... Though the issues are serious, humor is an important ingredient to make the drawings communicate not just the problems, but also the intelligence and goodness of human nature that make transmutation possible. These pieces are from the series Mona's Little Smile. Mona is somewhat autobiographical but goes far beyond that, as she can fly and turn penises into mushrooms. I grew up drawing as a way to deal with problems, and as a way to get attention, because I was really good at both drawing and saying outrageous things through art. Some of the drawings in Mona are based on pictures I drew when I was eight or nine years old."

Maureen Burdock was born in Germany and spent the first years of her life in Europe during the cold war era of the 1970s. Born Koch-von Reitzenstein, Burdock adopted the name of this root as an adult interested in folk medicine. She has always been a prolific artist, constructing large-scale, multimedia exhibitions about themes of war and its effects on civilian populations. She has won awards for her work and had numerous solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Her influences include Hannah Hoch, John Heartfield, Kaethe Kollwitz, Phoebe Glockner and Diane DiMassa.



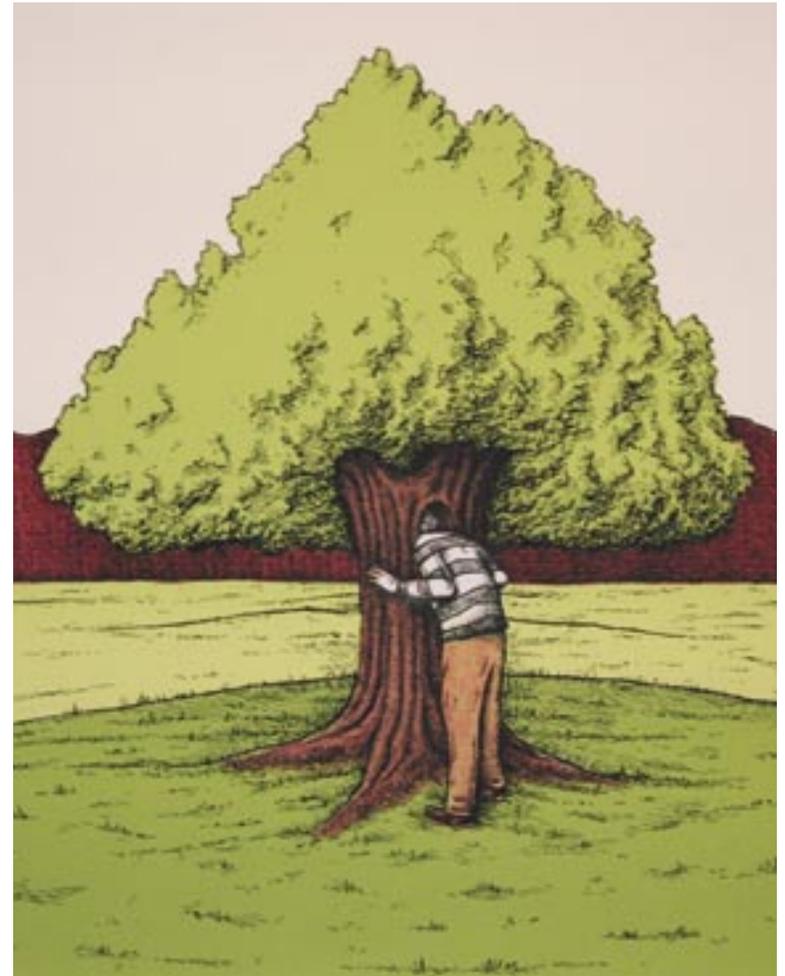
*Toilet Monster Sequence from Mona's Little Smile
2007-08, india ink on paper, 20 x 14 inches*

Luke Dorman

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"For a boy, drawing is a way to explore forbidden themes and subject matter relating to sex and power roles that we are shown from a very young age, but...we hold as fantasies until we can act them out much later in life. There is a special power in drawing these fantasies, not only because it gives them visual form, but through the act of drawing we are literally creating, with our own hands, the thing which we desire. I wondered how this way of drawing would translate to adulthood. What are the things we desire as adults but are forbidden from indulging in and how do they differ from those things we want as boys? In my interpretation, it seems that many carnal desires carry over, but the very nature of desire takes on more complexity as we get older. In the drawing for this exhibition, I cast myself in the role of Cain, wandering the land searching for a place to establish a new life—in which these seemingly inaccessible desires, represented by my band of followers, can be attained. The desires run the gamut from physical pleasures and overindulgence to the desire for fame, immortality and affection."

Originally from Austin, Texas, Luke Dorman moved to New Mexico in 1999 to attend the College of Santa Fe. After graduating, Dorman was drafted by the local chapter of Mensa, but finding it to be a little slow for him, he founded a new group called "Super Mensa: Smart to The Extreme." He is obsessive about music, owns a weed-whacker, and enjoys making art when not obsessing about music or whacking weeds. His work is represented by Evo Gallery in Santa Fe.



Looking For A Place To Get Lost (detail)

2008, 6-color lithograph, 14 x 19 inches, edition of 10
collaborating printer Brandon Gunn, courtesy of Tamarind Institute

David Leigh

Albuquerque, New Mexico

"I make shrouded narrative drawings that are a bit absurd and freewheeling. Usually beginning with some grand idea, the drawing dissipates and fizzles into an aesthetic meandering of good intentions and craftsmanship, removed quite a distance from what I originally embarked upon."

David Leigh is originally from Fort Worth, Texas. After receiving a B.A. in Art History from Arizona State University, he attended the University of New Mexico, where he received an M.F.A. degree in painting and drawing. He has been included in a number of exhibitions both in and out of New Mexico. Leigh has been co-director of Donkey Gallery in Albuquerque since 2004.

David Leigh's First Dream (detail)
2007, graphite on paper, 22 x 30 inches



Larry Bob Phillips

Albuquerque, New Mexico

"The goal in my recent body of work has been to create a form that has plasticity and transformation as its focus, using a cartoon language that responds to psychedelic impulses... What surfaces from the psychedelic sludge must not only be poignant and surprising, but have the force of the real, and happen at the right intervals. My recent bodies of work revisit themes of French painting at the turn of the last century. Painters like Bonnard, Braque and Van Gogh...understood that the mark or brushstroke had a destructive agency... and that the resolution of painting problems lay in a very complex and fine balance. My work also owes much of its grounding to recent shifts in thinking and looking...such as the mind numbing sensory overload that has been the hallmark of the new psychedelia and the pervasiveness of the graphic novel in recent years. All of these developments constitute in my mind an exciting break with the past."

Larry Bob Phillips was born in 1973 in Canyon, Texas. He attended the Kansas City Art Institute from 1991 to 1995 where he studied drawing under the calligrapher/ photographer Carl Kurtz. In 1996, Phillips moved to New York City where he worked as a carpenter for eight years. After September 2001, Phillips began looking for ways to reinvest in his art career. He was admitted to the M.F.A. program at the University of New Mexico in 2003 and founded the Donkey Gallery with David Leigh and Sherlock Terry.

Ermine (detail)

2008, ink on paper, 50 x 38 inches



Clayton Porter

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"Ganesh and Friends is a body of work that borrows from the Hindu deity Ganesh, his symbols and the animal that most often accompanies Ganesh, a mouse... The use of candy imagery in this work references objects of desire and its connection to the mouse and consumerism. The mouse as a symbol often refers to evil, plague and the slow destruction of man's 'good' works. The mouse has several interpretations when accompanying Ganesh, but the mouse as a symbol of desire and havoc is the most relevant for me. My work has always dealt with transience and loss, having roots with Vanitas or Memento Mori subjects. The mouse is a creature predisposed by nature to reconstitute the environment that it inhabits back into the earth's cycle of destruction and creation. For this reason, the mouse that I depict often has an enlarged mouth and teeth and seems ferocious."

Clayton Porter grew up in Colorado where he lived on a small farm on the eastern plains of Colorado Springs and also in the suburbs of the city. He always had a gift for drawing but it was not until he realized his hatred for public schools combined with his passion for collecting comic books that he decided to become an artist. For years he only drew in the style of comic book artists, but he soon found other mediums. When he came to Santa Fe to get his B.F.A. at the College of Santa Fe he discovered the world of fine arts. His work often merges the use of comic styles with that of conceptual fine art intentions.



Untitled

2008, graphite on paper, 22 x 21 inches

Rose Simpson

Santa Fe, New Mexico

"Expression is the boil-over of self that cannot find a place within the psyche: a reflection and a tool to learn from. The footsteps I take in life find their way with sonar of expression—I beep; it bounces and returns to me. Using an intuitive understanding of the paths, I keep growing. That path is my pursuit of truth. Un-learning our conventionalized existence becomes opportunities for change. Our relationships with all our environments need to be reevaluated and transformed into a positive manifestation. This is pertinent to our very survival."

Rose B. Simpson was born in Santa Fe in 1983 and raised among an extended family of artists in Santa Fe and on the Santa Clara Pueblo Reservation. Being from both Indigenous American and Anglo descent, with art and philosophy primary in both families, she pursues the pure expression of truth through many forms of art including ceramic sculpture, printmaking, drawing, writing, music and dance. Her work is often influenced by the struggle between two worlds that most modern Indigenous peoples survive through: traditional and the colonialist perspective/assimilation. She has participated in many exhibitions, including the annual *Pop Life* events around the nation curated by Apache skateboard artist Douglas Miles, and *Relations: Indigenous Dialogue* at the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum in Santa Fe featured in *Art In America*. In 2007, she received a B.F.A. in Studio Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts. She has been selected by curator Lance Fung to participate in SITE Santa Fe's seventh international biennial exhibition, *Lucky Number Seven*.



Reservation

2008, pen on bristol, 17 x 14 inches

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