

MIXINGITUP

RECENT HUNTER MFAs WORKING IN COMBINED MEDIA

IAN BURNS / JULES DE BALINCOURT / HELEN DENNIS / EZRA JOHNSON /
TOM KOTIK / JESSICA MEIN / BJÖRN MEYER-EBRECHT / WILLIAM POWHIDA /
ASYA REZNIKOV / RYAN ROA / ROSEMARY WILLIAMS /

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Curated by Tracy L. Adler, Mara Hoberman and Julia Moreno

April 2 – May 9, 2009

IAN BURNS

JULES DE BALINCOURT

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The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College

New York City

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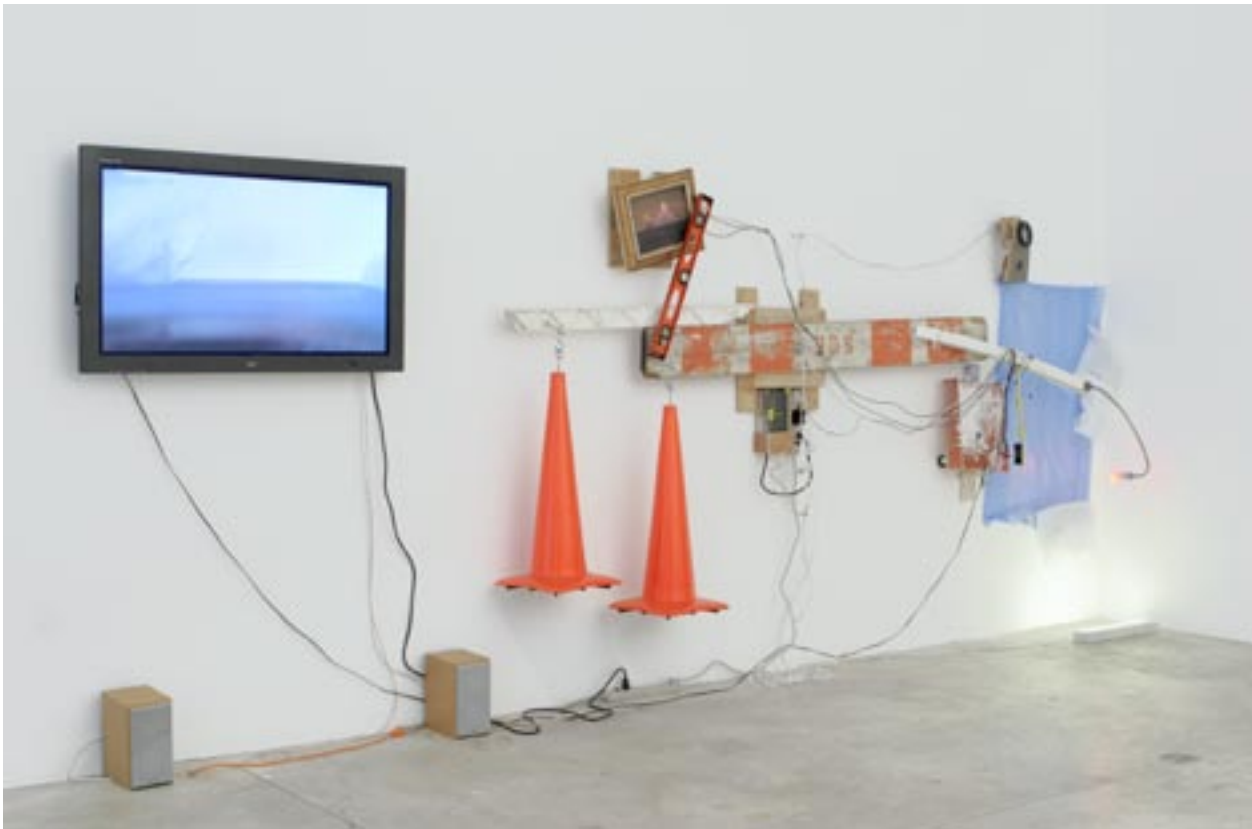
Mixing It Up presents recent work by eleven alumni of Hunter College's Masters in Fine Art program. Selected from the hundreds of graduates since 2000, this group shares a common tendency to push beyond the traditional classification of art according to distinct mediums: drawing, painting, sculpture, video, performance, etc. But, rather than disregard the physical specifics of the art object as a container for ideas or images, these artists deliberately fuse diverse artistic practices. The artists in this show fit into a generation of artists widely hailed as "post-medium" who take the concept and application of combined-media to the next level. Their work calls for a new vocabulary of compound terms such as "animated-painting," "sound-sculpture," or "photographic-drawing" in order to aptly describe the variety and blending of mediums and processes that are so essential to all of the works on view. The works included in *Mixing It Up* illustrate the collision of the flat and three-dimensional, the static and the animated, the handmade and the mechanically reproduced while testing the limits of old mediums and also locating new possibilities.

The notion of fluidity between mediums builds on the interdisciplinary education of Hunter College's MFA program in fine art, where students explore a wide range of materials and techniques. Painters, sculptors, photographers, printmakers and video artists intersect in Hunter's studios and classrooms and often work through multiple mediums during their time as students. Moreover, a considerable number of students enroll at Hunter intending to focus on a particular medium and then graduate working in a different area. In bringing together this particular group of recent Hunter MFAs, it quickly became clear that the decision to unite them in an alumni show dealing with post-medium tendencies was confirmed by the artists' shared memories of the collaborative and open-minded instruction they received as students at Hunter.

Since the MFA was instituted in 1981, approximately a thousand working artists have come through the program. Balancing technical skills and a spirit of material creativity with a strong theoretical bent, the MFA program encourages students to think critically about their work and the world around them. MFA candidates engage with professors in both studio art and art history, and share classes with MA students in art history. As part of the curriculum, MFA students attend lectures by world renowned artists, critics and scholars, and are exposed to all that the New York art world has to offer including some of the most significant art exhibitions and collections in the world.

IAN BURNS MFA 2003

Ian Burns's sculptures bring together low-tech materials to create works that belie their complexity. His kinetic constructions are complicated machinations that result in deceptively simple live-video feeds, in this case an iceberg protruding from an Arctic ocean as though shot from a passing ship. The iceberg is actually a white plastic bag filmed by a spy camera incorporated into the sculpture. This type of transformation is a hallmark of Burns's work.



Ian Burns

Ice (Version 3): Ode to Lady Jane, 2007

Video assemblage

73 x 188 in.

Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Marc and Andrea Glimcher

JULES DE BALINCOURT MFA 2005

Though Jules de Balincourt is usually categorized as a painter, he considers himself not so indebted to material. In the sculpture shown here entitled *Dying to heal you, healing to die you*, de Balincourt creates a unique fusion between a found wooden African figure, a side table and paint. The work functions as a kind of assisted readymade, incorporating diverse elements: part human, part furniture and part paint.



Jules de Balincourt

Dying to heal you, healing to die you, 2009

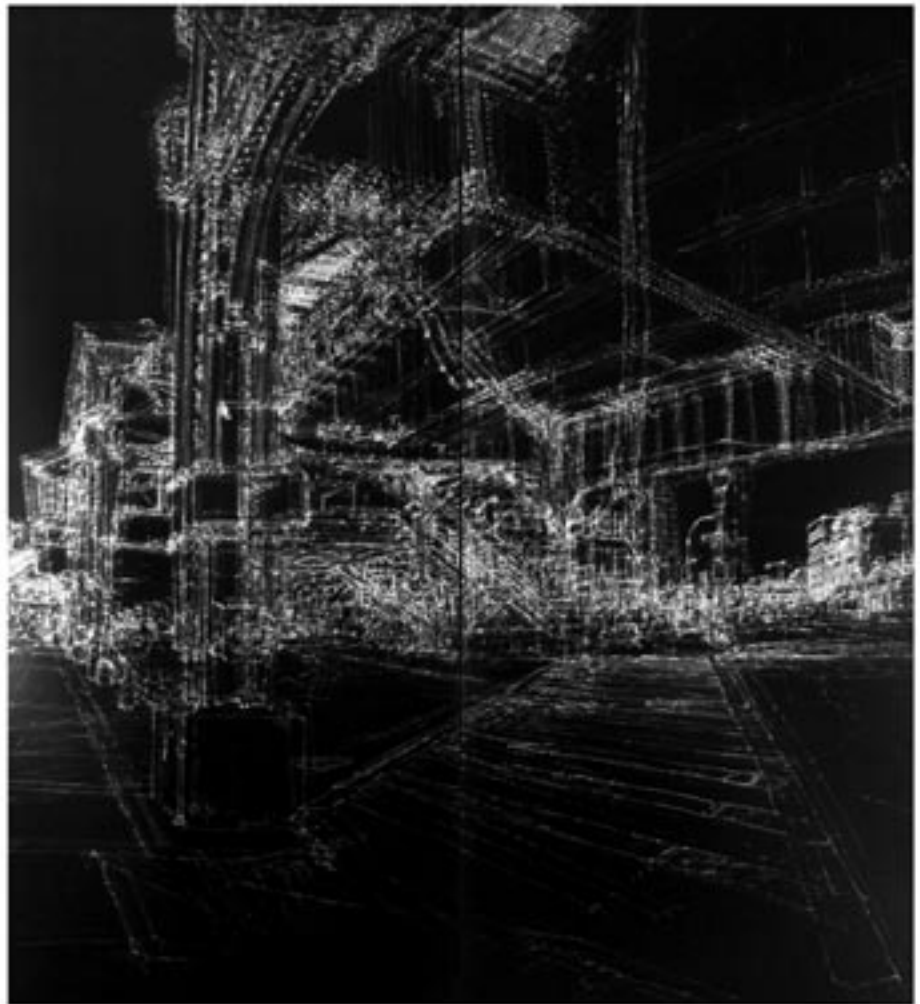
Mixed media, found African sculpture, table, enamel and acrylic paint

49 x 10 x 16 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Zach Feuer Gallery

HELEN DENNIS MFA 2005

Helen Dennis's "photographic-drawings" are the result of a unique multi-step process. Using a black Sharpie, Dennis makes line drawings on tracing paper which she then uses in the darkroom to create large-scale photograms. By overlaying photographic paper with the drawings and exposing them to light, the areas defined by the black marker are preserved in white while the surrounding space turns a deep black. The result is striking negative imagery resembling architectural blueprints—a motif that suits Dennis's preferred subject matter of complex structures such as the elevated track of the 45th Street Subway in Long Island City, Queens.



Helen Dennis

45th St. Subway – LIC Queens, 2006

Photographic drawing

72 x 72 in.

Courtesy of the artist

EZRA JOHNSON MFA 2006

Ezra Johnson's background is in oil painting, but he recently began incorporating digital video technology and animation into his work. *The Time of Tall Statues* is comprised of paintings and collages which Johnson animates using stop-motion photography. Through reductive and layering techniques combining paint and collage, Johnson achieves an animation that is richly textured and retains a handmade feel.



Ezra Johnson

Still from *The Time of Tall Statues*, 2009

Mixed media on canvas from video animation

48 x 62 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York

TOM KOTIK MFA 2004

Tom Kotik unites his passion for sculpture and music in his artwork. In his piece *Untitled (for Jan)*, Kotik incorporates two loudspeakers into a black music stand. By transforming loud music into low frequency, high amplitude signals, he expresses the physicality of silence—the viewer can no longer hear the music but can see and feel its vibrations. In this way, Kotik creates a destabilizing sensory shift, moving music from one sense (auditory) to another (tactile). In a less obvious manner, *Untitled (for Jan)* is also a moving family portrait: the music stand, which belonged to the artist's father, plays music from Kotik's own band for his late brother Jan, an artist and musician who passed away in 2007.



Tom Kotik

Untitled (for Jan), 2007

54 x 40 x 40 in.

Modified music stand, speakers, stereo, carpet, low frequency sound

Courtesy of the artist

JESSICA MEIN MFA 2007

Jessica Mein disrupts the inherently sequential quality of film by introducing elements of drawing, photography and collage directly into her animated works. By weaving these images into her short video loops, she reimagines daily scenes in which banal observations are transformed into mnemonic gestures. In the works shown here, *Ciguera* and *Natureza Morta*, Mein reflects upon the architecture and activities of South American life though employing this unique and layered method of interpretation.



Jessica Mein

Still from *Cegueira*, 2008

Video animation; 2:15 minutes

Courtesy of Simon Preston Gallery

BJÖRN MEYER-EBRECHT MFA 2002

Björn Meyer-Ebrecht appropriates imagery of modernist architecture and civil unrest from 1960s and 1970s in his sculptural installations. By creating collage-constructions in which deserted interior and exterior spaces intersect with rioting crowds, Meyer-Ebrecht points to the utopianism and sobriety inherent in the modernist aesthetic. Through these juxtapositions, he comments on an era of upheaval and change, and relates it to his personal history growing up in post-World War II Germany.



Björn Meyer-Ebrecht

Untitled, 2009

Two-part sculpture: Inkjet prints, foam core and wood

Table 1: 52 x 47 x 31 1/2 in.; Table 2: 52 x 59 x 39 1/2 in.

Courtesy of the artist

WILLIAM POWHIDA MFA 2001

In his drawings and paintings, William Powhida often incorporates text lampooning fame and the art world. Powhida's writings, represented in banners or as illusionistic tacked-on notes in what the artist refers to as a "comic *trompe l'oeil* style," are central elements around which his works are composed. *Judson Street* is a commentary about friends and roommates living as students under the same roof in Syracuse in 1998. His remarks and observations provide insight into the personalities of the house's inhabitants.



William Powhida

Contextual Painting: Judson St., 2006

Gouache and graphite on paper

36 x 42 in.

Collection of Kevin Keck and Jeff Parker

ASYA REZNIKOV MFA 2006

Asya Reznikov combines video and sculpture in *Matroshka*, a work that emphasizes the artist's Russian heritage. In a video presented in an open custom-made case, the artist packs and unpacks suitcases of decreasing size placed one inside another in a continuous video loop. By referencing the traditional Russian nesting dolls called *Matroshka* as her inspiration, and by adding Russian folk music, Reznikov comments on clichés of Russian cultural identity.



Asya Reznikov

Matroshka, 2008

Video installation

Courtesy of Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York

RYAN ROA MFA 2008

Upon first glance Ryan Roa's video *Incased* appears as a series of rotating, pixilated, digital images of mundane, if slightly nostalgic, household appliances. A blender, rotary phone, transistor radio, and table lamp each appear individually on the vertical flat-screen monitor and revolve like prototypes in a virtual showroom. Further inspection, however, reveals that the objects presented on screen are actually intricately crafted life-size models, which Roa constructs out of wood. Roa fuses sculpture with video by taking actual art objects and translating them into a virtual medium.



Ryan Roa

Stills from *Incased* (blender, phone, radio, lamp), 2008

Video and 40 inch flat screen monitor; 2:35 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

ROSEMARY WILLIAMS MFA 2005

Rosemary Williams's monumental installation transforms a two-dimensional photographic image into an imposing structural entity. *Home* is comprised of nine panels which, when mounted together on the wall, complete an image of a two-story suburban home in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The final image is a digital composite made from over 50 snapshots of the house, which Williams took from slightly different angles. The large scale (installed the piece is 10 feet x 21 feet 10 inches), the multi-dimensional perspective, and the fact that Williams affixes the image directly to the wall of the gallery's atrium, captures the physicality of Williams's subject matter and encourages a reading of this technically flat photograph as a sculptural and architectural work.



Rosemary Williams

Home, 2009

Digital print

120 x 262 in.

Courtesy of the artist

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Mara Hoberman, Curator
Julia Moreno, Curatorial Assistant
Phi Nguyen, Preparator
Tim Laun, MFA Building Studio Manager

The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery
Located in the Hunter West Building at the southwest corner of East 68th Street and Lexington Avenue
Hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 6 pm.
Information: (212) 772 4991 / www.hunter.cuny.edu/art/galleries

Hunter College/Times Square Gallery
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