

# This Month in the Arts

ART, ART HISTORY, TECHNOCULTURAL STUDIES, AND THE  
RICHARD L. NELSON GALLERY AND FINE ART COLLECTION

**UC DAVIS**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**APRIL 2010**

## EVENTS

### Liz Thomas, *Art Studio Program Lecture Series*

**Thursday**  
**April 1, 2010**  
**TCS Building**  
**4:30 pm**

Elizabeth Thomas is Phyllis Wattis MATRIX Curator at the UC Berkeley Art Museum, where she directs the museum's MATRIX series of contemporary projects by international artists, including recent and upcoming exhibitions with Paul Chan,

Martha Colburn, Omer Fast, Future Farmers, Brent Green, Mario Garcia Torres, Jill Magid, Ahmet Ogut, Trevor Paglen, Olivia Plender, Emily Roysdon, Tomas Saraceno, Allison Smith, and Tris Vonna-Michell, among others. Recent publications include an archival book project on the thirty year history of MATRIX as a collaboration with the New York design collective Project Projects. Previously, she was an independent curator and writer based in Pittsburgh, PA, organizing *The Believers*, a collaboration with Nato Thompson at MassMoCA, North Adams, MA; *The 'F' Word* at The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; and *Empathetic* at Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia. As Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at Carnegie Museum of Art, she worked intensively on the 2004-5 *Carnegie International*, as well as overseeing a series of project exhibitions with artists such as Cory Arcangel/Paper Rad, Edgar Arceneaux, Jesse Bransford, Christian Jankowski, Zon Ito/Ryoko Aoki, and Paul Wood/John Harrison. She also served as curatorial fellow at the Walker Art Center, was a founding editor of the Chicago arts and culture magazine, *TenbyTen*, and was program coordinator at the Washington Project for the Arts. She received her MA in Modern and Contemporary Art History, Theory and Criticism from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and her BA in Anthropology and Art History from George Washington University, DC. Ms. Thomas has written for numerous catalogues and publications; lectures often to audiences in museums, universities, and other public venues; and currently teaches at the California College of the Arts. She has served as nominator or jurist for many national awards and grants, including Creative Capital, Alpert Awards, Southern Exposure, Anonymous Was a Woman, and the Heinz Endowments, among others. In 2009 Thomas received a Curatorial Fellowship from the Andy Warhol Foundation to look at experimental modes of research, production, and presentation of contemporary art as a means to rethink the structure and intentions of the MATRIX program with regard to its mission of catalyzing new forms, ideas, and works by international artists.



All lectures in this series are free to the public and will take place at 4:30 pm in the Technocultural Studies (TCS) Building

### Marie Thibeault, *Art Studio Program Lecture Series*

**Thursday**  
**April 8, 2010**  
**TCS Building**  
**4:30 pm**

Much as the Romantics painted allegorical scenes of decayed civilizations overcome by the forces of nature to express anxiety about mortality, Marie Thibeault invites contemplation of our ecological fate in "Keeping Things Whole," a series of paintings and mixed-medium drawings inspired by photographs of Hurricane Katrina's destruction. Since the late '80s, when she was in the Bay Area painting semi-abstract earthquake-shattered landscapes, Thibeault has been fascinated with dramatic dissolutions of urban environments. The landscape cataclysmically rearranged by Katrina extends her investigation of the sublimity of collapsing form and dizzying chaotic spaces.

Thibeault gives us an entropic thrill ride rendered seductive by lush, high-keyed color, shifting perspectives and virtuosic brushwork. The violent processes of nature are suggested in the artist's furious flurries of drips, nervous free-floating lines and bold multi-hued slashes. Jazzy Hofmannesque blocks of color and evocative Rothko-like washes impart a modernist revelry to lay-ered, multiplying forms and delimited spaces. In this fluid atmosphere devoid of human figures, overturned and upended white mobile homes, flat fields and concrete slabs behave like so many Minimalist rectangles, while crosshatched brushstrokes double as jumbled stacks of lumber. Throughout, windows, doors, checkered floors and skeletal architectural fragments collide and overlap, sometimes submerged or bobbing in a blue and green water world as in *Sea* (2007), other times backlit by fiery reds, acid greens and phosphorescent yellows to suggest the kind of apocalyptic inferno seen in *Arena* (2007). In addition to this rich, painterly approach, the smaller mixed-medium pieces, with their ghostly fragments of transferred text, ensnare elements of mass communication among the imagery.

The sumptuous interplay between abstraction, representation and text in the works implies that no single language is adequate to fully convey the complex experience of natural or even human-made disasters. Engaging a spectacular artistic tradition, however, Thibeault asks that all the possibilities be kept open.



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## Lisa Claypool, *Where is Shanghai? Visual Art and the City*

April 14  
Art 217  
3:10 - 4:30pm

The city of Shanghai, today home to nearly 19 million people, is in the midst of a construction boom. But as the city continues to expand and reinvent itself, it gives the uneasy impression that it is transforming into a generic "non-place", a collection of impersonal

spaces of consumption, consumerism and communication that encourage a perpetual feeling of transience. The city, in other words, appears to be disappearing, even as it grows bigger; the "Paris of the East" of the modern era, celebrated for its polyglot, international character, and equally famous for its radical politics, is fast merging into a borderless, uniform global landscape marked by brand-name stores and fast-food restaurants that one also finds at airports and in shopping malls, the most concrete manifestations of the non-place. It is thus with some urgency that artists living in Shanghai ask: what, exactly, is the nature of this new urban reality? This paper examines the ways in which visual art may stave off that troubling sense of being less and less sure of where Shanghai is.



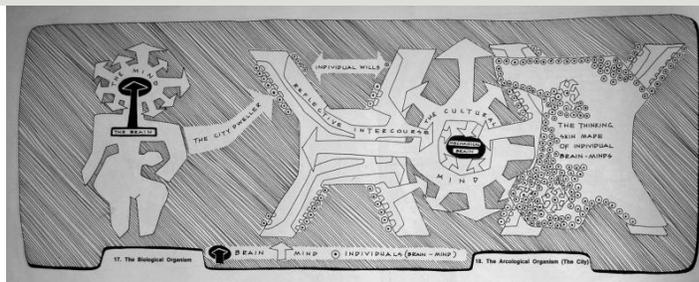
This lecture is in conjunction with Professor Katharine Burnett's Class AHI 163B, Chinese Painting. It is open to the public.

## Simon Sadler, *"Matrix vs. Möbius: An Art Historian's Guide to Recycling"*

Tuesday  
April 20, 2010  
Art 210D  
4:10 pm

This talk is about architecture and recycling, but it must dip its toe in philosophical waters. Does architecture and art suggest an ontology of recycling—in other words, among the many philoso-

phies of *being* that are represented in architecture and art, can we find one for recycling? At least two "ontologies of recycling" are immediately apparent. One is matrix-like, in which images and materials cycle round, stabilizing and destabilizing culture, tracked by iconology and iconography. Another is like a loop, in which the world is seen as an economy whose smooth cycles need managing. The rhetorics of the two are different: one revels in the messiness of the world, the other speaks of risk. My talk returns to the US counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s to locate a moment in the history of architecture and art when the two modes were harnessed as one to suggest an ontology of the *whole*. And this moment is, I suggest, the source of an existential dimension to recycling unnoticed amid the ubiquity of recycling's emblem of three curving arrows.



Simon Sadler is a member of the Art History Program at UC Davis.

## James Housefield, *Starry Messenger: Marcel Duchamp's Comet Haircut and Astronomy*

Tuesday  
April 27, 2010  
Art 210D  
4:10 pm

Marcel Duchamp shaved a comet into his head in 1921, transforming himself into a living artwork that influenced body art in the 1960s and '70s. This talk examines Duchamp's haircut as a sign of his interest in astronomy and as an avant-garde act. With his gesture, Duchamp embodied Galileo's title of the 1610 *Sidereus Nuncius*, transforming himself into a "starry messenger" upon the streets of Paris.

Duchamp's haircut commented upon the Romantic image of the artist as dandy. At the same time, the human comet made "celestial activity" perceptible to the human eye, much as Galileo described the ability of the telescope to make visible the invisible.

Galileo's treatise concerns the relationship of optics to our perception of the cosmos, a subject that inspired many of Duchamp's works. Duchamp's interest in optics is well documented, spanning from his time as librarian at Sainte-Geneviève, Paris (1913) through the unveiling of his final work, *Étant Donnés* (1944-68, on display in the Philadelphia Museum of Art since 1969). Little attention has been paid to the ways these interests coincided with his fascination with popular astronomy. This talk situates Duchamp's interest in astronomy in the context of literature (Stéphane Mallarmé), his fellow artists (Joseph Cornell), and contemporary developments in astronomy, including the construction of the Einstein Tower observatory near Potsdam, Germany, by Erich Mendelsohn (1919-21). Duchamp's interest in popular astronomy tells us much about the modern fascination with watching the skies in the decades preceding the race for space and the lunar landing of 1969.

James Housefield is an Assistant Professor in the Design Program at UC Davis



Toussure de 1919-Paris  
Marcel Duchamp

## Shana Moulton, *Art Studio Program Lecture Series*

**Thursday**  
**April 22, 2010**  
**TCS Building**  
**4:30 pm**

Shana Moulton creates evocatively oblique narratives in her video and performance works. Combining an unsettling, wry humor with a low-tech, Pop sensibility, Moulton plays a character whose interactions with the everyday world are both mundane and surreal, in a domestic sphere just slightly askew. As her protagonist navigates the enigmatic and possibly magical properties of her home

decor, Moulton initiates relationships with objects and consumer products that are at once banal and uncanny.

Shana Moulton works in video and performance. Moulton studied at the University of California, Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, where she received her MFA. Moulton has also recently attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine, and studied at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Her video work has been screened and exhibited internationally, including at The Armory Show Art Fair, New York; Smack Mellon, Brooklyn; Loop '05 Video Festival, Barcelona; Rencontres internationales Paris/Berlin, Paris; Aurora, Edinburgh; Dark Light Festival, Dublin; Impakt Festival, Utrecht; Internationale Kurzfilmtage, Oberhausen; Canada Gallery, New York; Bellwether, New York, and Art in General, New York.



All lectures in this series are free to the public and will take place at 4:30 pm in the Technocultural Studies (TCS) Building.

## Robert Manochian (Graham) (MFA candidate), *Charlie and the Rabbit*, Screening Dates

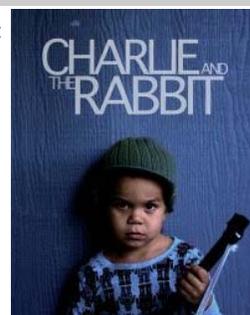
Robert Manochian's film, *Charlie and the Rabbit* which he co-directed by Rodrigo Ojeda-Beck, was shown this past January at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. The film is about Charlie, a four year-old, who loves Bugs Bunny and decides to hunt a rabbit of his own.

**4th Edition of the International Film Festival "Mauvais Genre"**

Showings:Tours, France: April 2nd - 5th 2010

**Florida Film Festival 2010**

Showings:Maitland FL: April 9th - 18th 2010



## Robert Manochian (Graham) (MFA candidate), *Symphony No. 1 in 4 Parts*, Screening Dates

**Nashville Film Festival:** Showings: Nashville TN: April 15th - 22nd

## EXHIBITIONS

### Gina Werfel, New Work

**Apr. 1 - May 4, 2010**  
**Adler & Co Gallery**  
**San Francisco**

Werfel's search for abstract compositions of color and form evolve from her outdoor observations. Her vantage point has been the literal landscape and her visceral response to it. In Werfel's new work, her exploration of scapes narrates a beguiling dialogue of space, energy, chaos and structure. The results are exhilarating, untamed, non-objective

panoramas.

Reception for the Artist Thursday April 1, 2010.



## Basement Gallery, Spring Senior Shows Schedule

<b>Apr. 25 - May 1</b>	Natalie Pillen, Sam Paulding, Cynthia Stepp, Chloe Wilson and Angelia Loi
<b>May 2 - May 8</b>	Karen Angel, Chris Jee, Mami Tomita and Shalley Duarte
<b>May 9 - May 15</b>	Kevin Frances, Sheng Lor and Kat Meler
<b>May 16 - May 22</b>	Nova Maldonado, Hannah Blazek and Carrie Persson
<b>May 23 - May 29</b>	Joelle Provost, Elizabeth Ottenheimer and Mikaela Watson
<b>May 30 - June 5</b>	Eric Hu, James Lillich and Michael Ramstead

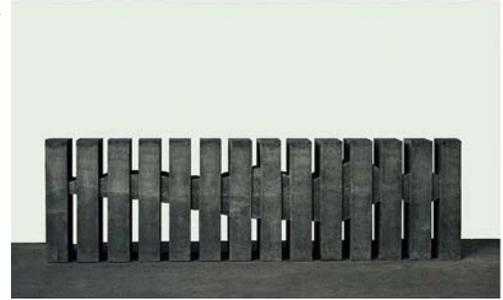
## Tom Bills, *New Cast Concrete and Steel Sculpture*

Mar. 16 - Apr. 24, 2010  
Don Soker  
Contemporary Art  
San Francisco

Don Soker Contemporary Art is pleased to announce *New Cast Concrete and Steel Sculpture* by Tom Bills. Bills continues to define sculpture through a simple presentation of mass, a commitment that has driven his work for more than 35 years. Bills investigates the capabilities of sculpture in today's high-tech environments to stand alone, its presence judged by reality, not the imagination. For him, sculpture has a "self". It is a visual addition to our psyche, not a roadblock requiring negotiation for passage.

In this new body of work, Bills uses the figure as the structural core to enable the idea of sculpture and encourage a personal response to the experience. An isolated human form is encased in concrete, frozen in the moment acting as precious cargo for the sculptural mass. We understand the inner form to be life yet accept the reality to be Art. Nothing more. We use the figure as a way into the artwork. The idea of life is powerful. Assigned to a work of art it presents a fresh look at every viewing.

Tom Bills received an MFA from Yale University and spent twenty-eight years in New York City before joining the UC Davis art faculty nine years ago. His works have been exhibited nationally and internationally and are installed in many public collections throughout the world. He has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and the Guggenheim Fellowship.



## Owen Smith, Richard L. Nelson Gallery

Mar. 18 - May 23, 2010  
Nelson Gallery  
University of  
California, Davis  
Art 124

Owen Smith is a nationally-respected Bay Area illustrator and artist. He is on the faculty in the design department of the California College of the Arts, in San Francisco. On view will be a range of recent drawings and paintings in his signature pulp fiction, 1930's style of realism. Owen Smith's illustration clients include *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, *Rolling Stone*, and the *New Yorker*, for which he has created 15 cover illustrations. He has recently completed work on a new children's book for Simon and Schuster.

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Image: Owen Smith, *Krays*

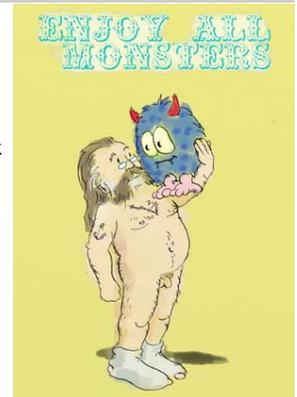


## Nayland Blake, Richard L. Nelson Gallery, Project Room

Mar. 18 - May 23, 2010  
Nelson Gallery  
University of  
California, Davis

Nayland Blake is a noted New York artist who spent a decade living in San Francisco into the late 90s. Known primarily as a sculptor, a large part of his current practice is blogging. He has kept up a near-daily diary of texts, photographs and most recently, cartoons on [www.naylandblake.net](http://www.naylandblake.net) for several years. This is the first-ever off-line exhibition of his autobiographical drawings cum cartoons, in which a philosophical character appears who greatly resembles Blake but also suggests Yogi and Smokey, the Bear(s). Original black and white drawings will be on view as well as digital images, in color, from cd. Blake is represented by Mathew Marks Gallery in New York and is the chair of the graduate program in photography at the ICP in New York.

Image: Nayland Blake, *Self 30*



## 18th and 19th Century British Satirical Prints, Nelson Gallery, Entryway Gallery

Mar. 18 - June 25, 2010  
Nelson Gallery  
University of  
California, Davis

Coordinated with the exhibition in the main gallery, which includes autobiographical cartoons and illustration-derived magazine covers and other paintings, this small show includes 200-year old social satire prints from the fine art collection.

Early satirical prints are important social documents that comically portray people and situations of interest to their contemporaries. The exaggerations created were not simply recordings of these people and events but were knowingly critical or infused with popular prejudices revealing the absurdities and hypocrisy of the subjects. Most often the prints were also titled so there was no possible doubt of their intended meaning. Because they sold singularly and cheaply, in large numbers, like comic books today, many have survived over the centuries. — from [www.ilab.org](http://www.ilab.org)

Image: Thomas Rowlandson, *The Last Drop*, 1811, etching with watercolor on paper



## Hong Zhang (MFA 2004), *From Beijing to Atlanta: 3 Sisters - 3 Artists – 3 Diverse Works on Paper*

Feb. 26 - Apr 3, 2010  
Whitespace  
Atlanta, GA

The three Zhang sisters, Ling, Bo and Hong, born during Mao's Cultural Revolution, when traditional cultural and historical artifacts were destroyed, reach back to ancient Chinese elements to create bold new artworks. Eldest sister Ling's rich oil paintings reflect her early experiences of Buddhist spirituality in Tibet.

Bo, a printmaker, juxtaposes precious traditional objects with utilitarian modern materials. Her twin, **Hong**, trained in fine Chinese painting, uses this time-honored technique to conjure exquisite, surrealistic images of human hair.



## Joshua Short (MFA Candidate), *MFA Selections: A Salute to Emerging Artists from Bay Area*

Mar. 6 - June 12, 2010  
di Rosa Preserve  
Napa

An exhibition showcasing the work of artists who recently completed their Master's of Fine Art degrees at Bay Area art schools and colleges. The artists included in the exhibition were chosen by a jury of arts professionals, from a pool of artists nominated by faculty from regional institutions. Artists include Joanne Hashitani, Leigh Merrill, Sandra Ono, Gina Tuzzi

and Andrew Witrak from Mills College; Carina Baumann and S. Patricia Patterson from San Francisco Art Institute; Jina Valentine from Stanford University; Aaron Maietta-Dehaven from UC Berkeley; **Josh Short** from UC Davis. Reflecting the diverse voices of young artists working today, MFA SELECTIONS will include works in a broad cross section of media, from painting and sculpture to video and installation. The works on exhibition are chosen with the artists, who may create and/or select works especially for the show at di Rosa's Gatehouse Gallery.



## Robin Hill, *By a Thread*

Feb. 6 - May 15, 2010  
San Jose Institute of  
Contemporary Art

*By A Thread* will be exhibited in the ICA's Main Gallery. The show includes work from artists Jody Alexander, Susan Taber Avila, Diem Chau, Lauren DiCioccio, **Robin Hill** Nina Katchadourian, Lisa Kokin, Beili Liu, Katie Lewis, Emil Lukas, Victoria May, Ali Naschke-Messing, Lisa Solomon, Hadi Tabatabai, Nicola Vruwink, and Allison Watkins.

"By a Thread" is not an exhibition about precise or technically proficient sewing, embroidery or any other form of needlework," says Cathy Kimball, ICA Executive Director. "Rather, it is an exhibition featuring contemporary art that uses thread as a medium to communicate the ideas, visions, and conceptual explorations of the participating artists.

In many cases, the artists included in the exhibition have found that the ubiquitous and centuries-old process of stitching can be used in innovative ways to create something new," explains Kimball.

Thus, the exhibition will feature the work of artists who give fresh consideration to the value and function of traditional handiwork. The show will include small two-dimensional pieces and large-scale installations, as well as a wide variety of sculptural works.



Image: Robin Hill, *Thread Drawing 4*, Wax and Pigment on Paper

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### Scholarships and Awards

**Julia Litman-Cleper** - \$1,000 Thiebaud Family Scholarship and Yale-Norfolk nominee

**Lauren Bechelli** - Chautauqua School of Art

**Claire Sloan** - \$1,000 Freemon Gadberry Award

**Thelonious Elliot** - Yale-Norfolk nominee

**Ryan Gallant** - Marcia Cary Anti-Gravity Award

**Mei Han** - Chautauqua School of Art

### PLEASE WRITE!

To let us know about upcoming Departmental events or shows, to let us know about your recent accomplishments, or to be added to our mailing list contact us at:

[visualarts@ucdavis.edu](mailto:visualarts@ucdavis.edu)

Submission deadline for May's Newsletter is  
23 April 2010