

Appalachian State University Faculty Biennial 2006

February 3 - March 18, 2006

Catherine J. Smith Gallery and Gallery A at Turchin Center for the Visual Arts

The Catherine J. Smith Gallery and the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts collaborated on this exhibition of works by the faculty of Appalachian State University's Department of Art. Xandra Eden, Curator of Exhibitions at the Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro serves as guest curator for this exhibition. An accomplished curator, Eden has published reviews and articles in various magazines and written exhibition catalogue essays for museums throughout the country. In addition to selecting the work and laying out the exhibition, Eden authored an essay placing the extraordinary work of Appalachian's faculty within the context of current contemporary visual arts research.

Artists Exhibiting at Turchin Center for the Visual Arts

Jun Baba, Mary Babcock, Joe Bigley, Lynda Lea Bonkemeyer, Maryrose Carroll, Vicky Grube, Judy Humphrey, Samina Iqbal, Scott Ludwig, Robin Martindale, Edison Midgett, Ali Raza, Jody Servon, Marianne Suggs

Artists Exhibiting at Catherine J. Smith Gallery

Kathleen Campbell, Maryrose Carroll, Chris Curtin, Alison Denyer, William DePauw, Lynn Duryea, Karin T. Eberhardt, Daniel Filippone, Tim Ford, Elissa Graff, Jeana Eve Klein, Gary Nemcosky, Una Pett, Mary Prather, Lisa Stinson, Jim Toub, Barbara Yale-Read, Margaret Yaukey

For the *Appalachian State University Faculty Biennial*, a diverse group of artworks has been assembled in two galleries. The exhibition at the **Turchin Center for the Visual Arts** reflects investigations of personal and cultural identity inspired by events of the recent past. In the **Catherine J. Smith Gallery**, the dichotomy between manmade and natural worlds is addressed, as are investigations of symbolic form and portraiture.

Marked by war, terrorism, and natural disaster, 2005 was a year that will not be forgotten. Whatever joy or tragedy we may have experienced in our private lives, it was unavoidably compounded by devastating global events such as the terrorist bombings in Bali and London, the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, and the earthquake in Kashmir. These events evoked compassion for peoples suffering across the globe. Made all too aware of the power of nature and the fragility of human life, many of us found ourselves on unsteady ground and turned to the arts for meaning and solace. In this exhibition, the temperament of the past year seems to be expressed. Works that are highly personal speak beyond the personal to the universal, works that depict the familiar do so in unusual ways that create new meaning, and other works articulate the enduring pleasure and hope we find in contemplating the natural world.

The role of family, culture and history in forming personal identity is examined in the **Turchin Center for the Visual Arts**. Family is the subject of **Vicky Grube's** large-scale painting, *Family Portrait* (2004) and **Lynda Lea Bonkemeyer's** mixed media landscape/portraits, *It's Always Summer*, *Littlest Bird*, and *Do You Remember?* (all from 2005), which recall the innocence and burgeoning resolve of individuality that typifies childhood. Coming to terms with the inevitable passing of those we love is central to **Mary Babcock's** video stills, *days before. playing ghost. the manicure.* (2005), which gently document the everyday interaction she had with

her mother in the weeks just prior to her death. As Babcock states, "I spent the last three weeks of my mother's life by her side. Though she did not want to die, she was not afraid of death. It was one of the most creative acts of my life." **Maryrose Carroll's** *the deep red of my excited heart* (1998) stands as an intimate memorial to Paul Carroll. A sculpture of a large apple alludes to the original sin in the Garden of Eden; surrounding it, her husband's passionate poem, *Song After Making Love*. And, **Jody Servon** examines the complex emotions produced by her father's illness in *How do you deceive yourself?* (2005), an installation of drawings and small sculptures.

In **Jun Baba's** *The Memory of Shadows* (2005) two hollow cast-glass forms suggest both loss and metamorphosis through their cocoon-like semi-opaque shapes. The accompanying solid glass tower sculpture seems stoical in comparison. **Joe Bigley** encases found organic forms within crudely stitched coverings and welded steel cages in, *In Finite Pursuit* and *Leatinsoap* (both 2005), conveying both a protected and imprisoned nature. **Marianne Suggs** contemplates the collapse of another protective structure in her collage series, *Walls That Fail* (2005). Although the original inspiration for these works was an old brick wall in Wilmington, in September 2005 they came to reflect the collapse of the retaining wall along Lake Champlain in New Orleans. **Judy Humphrey** similarly examines the effect of Hurricane Katrina on our perception of the world through pinhole photography in *Southern Cracker: After Katrina* (2005). **Robin Martindale's** *Aerial Views* are sculptural wall works reminiscent of the flooded terrain of New Orleans from above.

Samina Iqbal overlays complex patterns of personal and post-colonial Pakistani identity in her digital print on silk works, *Visible Prayers* (2003), just as **Ali Raza** comments on the cultural paradoxes produced in contemporary Pakistani life in his large-scale diptych paintings, *Nothing special except painted in U.S.A.* and *Men at their best & my lucky cricket club* (both from 2001). **Scott Ludwig** takes a slightly distanced approach to the changing cultural landscape of the Middle East by investigating the relevance of Jelaluddin Rumi's poetry to contemporary times in *Lessons of History (13 Minutes in the Life of a Turkish Movie Star)* (2005) in which a young actress appears to negotiate the space between personal privacy and public persona. In these turbulent times, **Edison Midgett's** *Dacchau* photographs reframe a tragic history that must not be forgotten.

In the **Catherine J. Smith Gallery**, nature is the inspiration for many works including **Kathleen Campbell's** *Relics from the Garden* from 2004, a series of dream-like surreal juxtapositions of the body and the natural world. **Alison Denyer** studies the voluptuous shapes of various gourds through her delicate graphite on paper drawings from 2004, while **Elissa Graff's** delicate tree pendants reflect a treasured nature. **Gary Nemcosky's** walks on the beach produced the playful found object series *Hatteras Hash* (2005), in which he creates a sense of place through a formal presentation of detritus from the natural world. **Lisa Stinson** contemplates the lines made in the landscape that mark the passage of time, such as changes in the tide or the tilling of soil, in *Watermarks #2* and *Summer Solstice*. The shifting quality of light falling across a landscape of leafy trees takes center stage in **Jim Toub's** *Eastbrook #1 and #2* oil on paper works. And, image and word flow across a meandering landscape in **Barbara Yale-Read's** *Milkweed* and *Sun Poem* (both 2005).

Chris Curtin's *Exit Strategy #2* (2005) is a mystery box that each viewer opens privately, a la the alien suitcase in the film *Repo Man*, only to encounter a riotous whirring of miniature fan blades. **Lynn Duryea** tackles the symbolism imbedded through the history geometric form in her terracotta and steel sculpture *Middle A* (2003) and her mixed media work *Flat Form* (2004).

Mary Prather makes skillful use of the raku firing method in *Smoked Vessel(s)* (2002), which appear as ancient artifacts unearthed from some archeological dig. **Tim Ford** appears to quote artists and classic genres of the past in his mixed media works, including *Self-Portrait, Decaying Still-Life*.

The exhibition at the Catherine J. Smith Gallery includes a number of unconventional ruminations on portraiture and figuration. **Margaret Yaukey** makes unusual use of materials such that rigid substances appear pliable and organic in *Self Portrait*. **William DePauw** pieces together semblances of bodily organs with manmade building blocks in his ceramic sculpture, *Building a Body* (2005). Another work, *Head* (2004) similarly appears as an innovative perception of figuration. **Karin T. Eberhardt's** photographic series, *St. Louis Cemetery No. 1* combines images of the graveyard sites and stone plaques that we use to memorialize the passing of individual lives with x-rays of human bones (alluding to the bodies that lie beneath). **Jeana Eve Klein's** *Superlative Series* (2004) examines the cyclical nature of life conveyed by the ancient standing stones at Pentre Ifan, Wales. In this series of works, Klein invents a personal history for each rendering. In a more traditional vein of the genre of portraiture, **Una Pett** delivers an evocative portrait, *Penney* (2004) and **Daniel Filippone** creates detailed representations of construction workers busy at their day-to-day tasks, the workers apparently oblivious to their peril, in *The Welder* and *I-Catching* (both 2005).

Faculty biennials provide a great opportunity for students to view and discuss artwork produced by their teachers. They also give other faculty at Appalachian State and the Boone community a chance to engage with the many ideas and practices being explored and taught within the Art Department. I would like to thank the Appalachian State University Art Faculty for inviting me to serve as curator for this exhibition.

Xandra Eden
Curator of Exhibitions
Weatherspoon Art Museum

About the Juror

Xandra Eden came to the Weatherspoon from The Power Plant, Toronto, where as assistant curator she organized national and international exhibitions such as *Emma Kay: The Story of Art* (2005) and *Republic of Love* (2004), a group exhibition that explored 21st century notions of desire and longing. Other recent exhibitions include *Jay Isaac* (2005) at CUE Art Foundation, New York, and *The Cave and the Island* (2004) at White Columns, New York, and Galerie Kunstbuero, Vienna. Eden has published reviews and articles in various magazines and written essays for exhibition catalogues, including *Bounce/In Through the Out Door* and *Marla Hlady*. Eden earned her Master of Arts degree in curatorial studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, one of the foremost programs of its kind, and holds a BFA in Studio Art from SUNY Purchase.