



BROOKLYN COLLEGE THESIS EXHIBITION MFA 2013

12 (twelve) i/twlv/ is the natural number following 11 and preceding 13.

Curated by Rachel Gugelberger

To the Brooklyn College MFA class of 2013,  
It has been my pleasure to work with you.

You entered, anxiously wound, obedient to style, waiting to be shown the manual that would grant you some surety. You enlisted in a curriculum that concretized the premise of an arts education and were respectful of that exchange. You’ve been offered navigational skills, which have shaped your articulation.

You responded to uniform syllabi, aware they are constructed suspect of the imagination’s perimeter. You delivered a bobbling, hand-made product. Because you do things that are unique to yourself – contrary things.

You started by copying, learning to inhabit a voice that had certainty. You found your own, surprising, path through disillusionment and fatigue and were roused when you paraded that flayed, sometimes silly, armature which was the triumphant residue of your meanderings.

You countered that fear that breeds cynicism and while under scrutiny you gave yourself permission to fail, completely. You found that those fast held convictions that aligned your output with an approved stance crumbled under your own uncontrollable assault. You watched as your bitter faith now commanded you to do the opposite of what comfort would have demanded.

You learned that the embarrassment attached to engaging this process is only palatable when you understood that you were giving charity, extending solace, allowing the viewer identification with the illusion of any truth to which they could anneal their aspirations. You learned that this activity, to which you offer your existence, is not selfish. That it provides nutrition. And that we are grateful. We heard Louise Bourgeois tell us that her “philosophy” is “thank you, thank you much”.

In the face of global aesthetic reconfiguration you picked up the challenge. You soberly understood that there was no such thing as “the next Beatles”. That there is no “next” anything. That there is only you – you and your unsupported intuition....and your ambition to make something tangible that will verify the usefulness of your passage, and that may offer the viewer relief.

We learned that we are blessed to have Vito Acconci on our faculty.

Grace Hartigan said that there is your life, your art, and your career and never assume that they have anything to do with each other. If you want to be famous then there are considerations of strategy and luck. While although not entirely random, career outcomes are deceptive, as they are affected by a pragmatism masquerading as wisdom.

If success is the manifesting of your imperatives then you will not feel its’ thrill from adulation or income. That will happen when you sense that what you’ve contributed might be used, digested. So, Franz Kline’s 50-year-old retort to Frank O’Hara, that “painting has nothing to do with knowing - it has to do with giving” is, oddly, getting burnished to a shimmer in the currently timorous art dialogue.

Theoreticians remain stubbornly in the dark about this. They see this premise as a tired, existential scenario - as aping the heroic and therefore gender biased. It is their bias. Their stereotyping. They don’t understand that all persons are in diaspora and that there are three sexes: men, women and artists.

The MFA is supposed to confer a degree in “readiness”. As a group the Brooklyn College 2013 MFA class learned that one never feels ready - and yet must be prepared to report – as the alternative is for one’s work to be inconsequential. You learned that the thing in front of you, that didn’t look right, was true for that moment – and was therefore real news. You learned the error of waiting for critical direction, the following of which would leave you in the wake of the ship, vulnerable to dissection by the governing discourse. You learned that plans are counter-productive. That “ideas” are derived from the dominance of the verbal over the visual and as such, are to be avoided. You learned to disregard your own nausea at that recognition. You learned that you ARE the discourse.

Good luck to you all - with my best wishes,  
Archie Rand

## The natural number following 11 and preceding 13

Much has been said about the divergent artistic practices represented by Brooklyn College’s Master of Fine Arts class of 2013, but we should not expect less when working in a cross-disciplinary fashion that has become de rigueur. The works on view here—encompassing installation, sculpture, painting, photography, printmaking, video and sound—speak to this notion through the expansive range of influences and creative approaches of these 12 fiercely independent voices, which refreshingly span multiple generations.

That is not to say that these artists don’t hew to some convention. Indeed, nature—art’s original inspiration—remains a guiding light for many of them. Cecilia Whittaker-Doe’s paintings (underlain with silkscreen or monotype), for example, depict dreamy and meandering landscapes invented by streams of consciousness, yet they suggest a sense of place, an untouched symbolic natural world mapped from memory. For Nicole Donnelly, it is our complex relationship to nature, and specifically the awe, fear and anxiety that wild spaces provoke, that fuels her investigations into themes of impermanence in romantic and intimately scaled works, such as paintings on translucent panels, books and stop-motion animation. Using such materials as beeswax and linseed oil, and employing printing techniques that mimic natural processes, Donnelly engages us in the physicality of observation, speaking to the mutability of perception as we witness nature’s ongoing transformation.

From graphite rubbings of tree barks to a mountain range washed by light, the details of the natural world are what Jeannine Bardo is after. Through printmaking, papier-mâché and craft techniques—such as a woven rendering of a starry night sky—Bardo seeks to stir our appreciation of nature by creating a visual chronicle of the natural environment observed

through meditations on its characteristics. Anna Hoberman also seeks to collect and organize information, but her exploration is concerned with revealing human nature. In prints depicting composition notebooks and legal pads littered with doodles, initials, stickers and other personalizations, she captures, in tender detail and variation, just how much the simple and seemingly fleeting marks we make reveal about us.

Mitch Patrick, on the other hand, investigates digital materiality and our physical gestures as determined by our interactions with digital technologies and digital space. In the video *Inner\_manipulative\_substratums*, for example, Patrick depicts a sterile digital tableau that emulates the circumstances of its making, void of human-computer interaction. Inspired in part by Czech philosopher Vilém Flusser’s notion that technical images will supersede textual communication, Patrick investigates images through the use of text-based ASCII script, translating pixels and other digital marks from images of current events into a three-dimensional lexicon of patterns that evoke tablets and illuminated manuscripts.

The cacophony of visual stimuli and the deluge of information are reigned in by Samuel Jablon and Andrew Kennedy. Responding to the bombardment of public advertising campaigns in the city, Jablon employs mosaic tiles, paint and text to subvert advertising language. Distinctly urban and poetic, his manipulations speak to individuation in the face of marketing forces that coerce sameness. The obliteration of individuated experience is at the core of Kennedy’s paintings. Appropriating the formal language of illustration and the hysteria of the news cycle and social media surrounding current events, Kennedy combines portraiture and text into a composite of details that challenges the efficacy of media in conveying the complexity of the human condition.

Marked by an aversion to the idolatry of consumption and influenced by his experience as an art handler, John Ros’s contemplative site-responsive installations are comprised of humble building materials that he has collected and repurposed over the years, such as cardboard, paper, matte board, plastic, glassine, wood, drywall, plywood, acrylic, fluorescent lights and electrical cords. Existing as archival masses that underscore the binding relationship between consumption, waste and the body, these reductive works activate liminal or derelict spaces. Kate McGraw collapses space and time into site- and situation-specific alternative realms. In *Chouffe Mountain* (named after her cat), she crafts painting, drawing and performance into a meditative universe where cats stand in for forest gnomes, landscape is but a possibility, abstraction serves as a portal and the individual is the point of departure.

Much of the work here involves introspective, process-based practices that reflect on the possibilities of art while also revealing the idiosyncrasies, passions and anxieties that often characterize the artistic temperament. Featuring a predominantly soft palette and thinly dispersed translucent layers with subjects that vacillate between portraiture and lyrical abstraction, Nick Stolle’s paintings—both improvisational and engaged in investigating formal challenges—exude an ambiguity between angst and self-celebration. Found objects are minimally manipulated into a sculptural tableau of anthropological stand-ins, while “accidentally pretty” musical compositions express brief moments of dark sentimentality. There is little room for sentimentality in the comedic paintings of Alexander Doolan. Predicated on the viral capacity of the Internet in disseminating humor, Doolan celebrates the carnivalesque and captures its performative qualities in images that resemble paper-cutout animation stills. Delivered with a

sense of comedic timing enhanced by their large scale and Pop colors; Doolan’s paintings underscore the nature of humor as a perception based on human and societal norms. Working as a commercial fine-art photographer, Anthony Randell has had enviable access to art, informing and challenging his personal practice. Randell presents a raw confrontation that combines performance, photography and personal symbolism. Featuring a large-scale grid of photographs of Warholian monumentality, *Chief* incorporates the improvised participation of a mentor with elements of chance: 4x5-inch Polaroids of Vito Acconci with a broom are scanned into 8x10-inch transparencies, onto which Acconci contributes text on pieces of tape, which are then taped onto a cracked windowpane and re-photographed. Randell has, in turn, created a portrait of a picture of an artist as a metaphor for breaking through and establishing agency.

This year’s thesis exhibition presents works that are, by turns, conceptually rigorous, formally innovative, intimate, and in-your-face. Each artist provides a unique and personal reflection on our moment (and perhaps more specifically, their moment) in time. Or as Oscar Wilde once said, “A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament.” In the brief span that I have worked with these artists, some have engaged in sweeping, rapid changes while others have remained steadfast and resolute. I have relished being in on the process, as I know it now, for it could all change tomorrow.

- Rachel Gugelberger

I want to paint like I don't even know what a painting is, like I'm the first ever to do it...I couldn't even call it painting, I'd make some un-writable mouth-noise you could only spit out to approximate the alchemy an idea moves through when it transforms into paint. I want to paint like I've never read a book or never seen a movie. I want to make things that go beyond funny, past funny-funny and into the realm of the fun-fun-funnyfunfunniest (I mean that in every which way it can ever be meaningfully meant). I want to type my very own personal bible into the trans-languages & nano-styles of the pan-universal inter-intra-intro-net: I want to glorify human stupidity – long may it squelch the academies -- and praise and raise to the rafters its hysterical beauty.

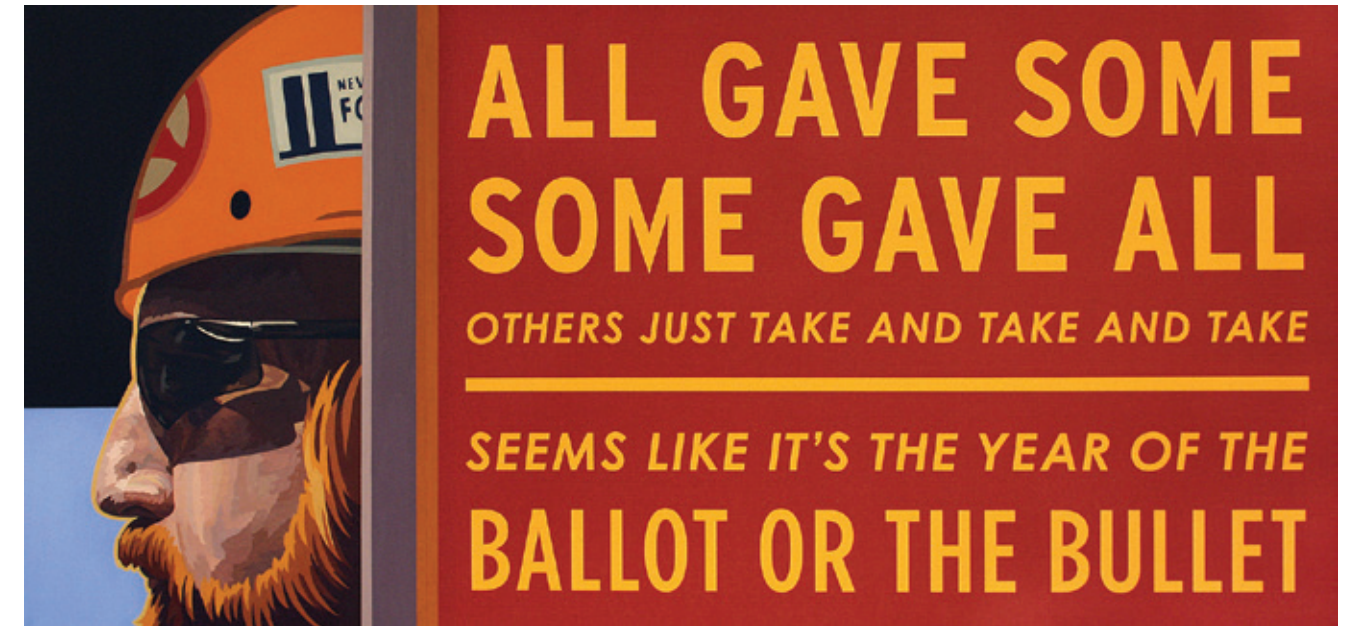
Alexander Doolan



*Sunburn*  
2013  
72" x 96"  
Acrylic on canvas

I have always had a moral concern I suppose – which would often morph into a political one. However, it has now become apparent that I should have a ‘social’ concern above all else. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to live a *human life*? What do we owe each other? What do we value in society? What does it mean to have a society or country? What do we *really* see when we look at one another? These are some of the questions I try to probe with my work. These questions are no doubt important – but in a time of decreasing social capital they are essential

Andrew V. Kennedy



*All Gave Some*  
2011  
50" x 24"  
Oil and digital print  
on canvas

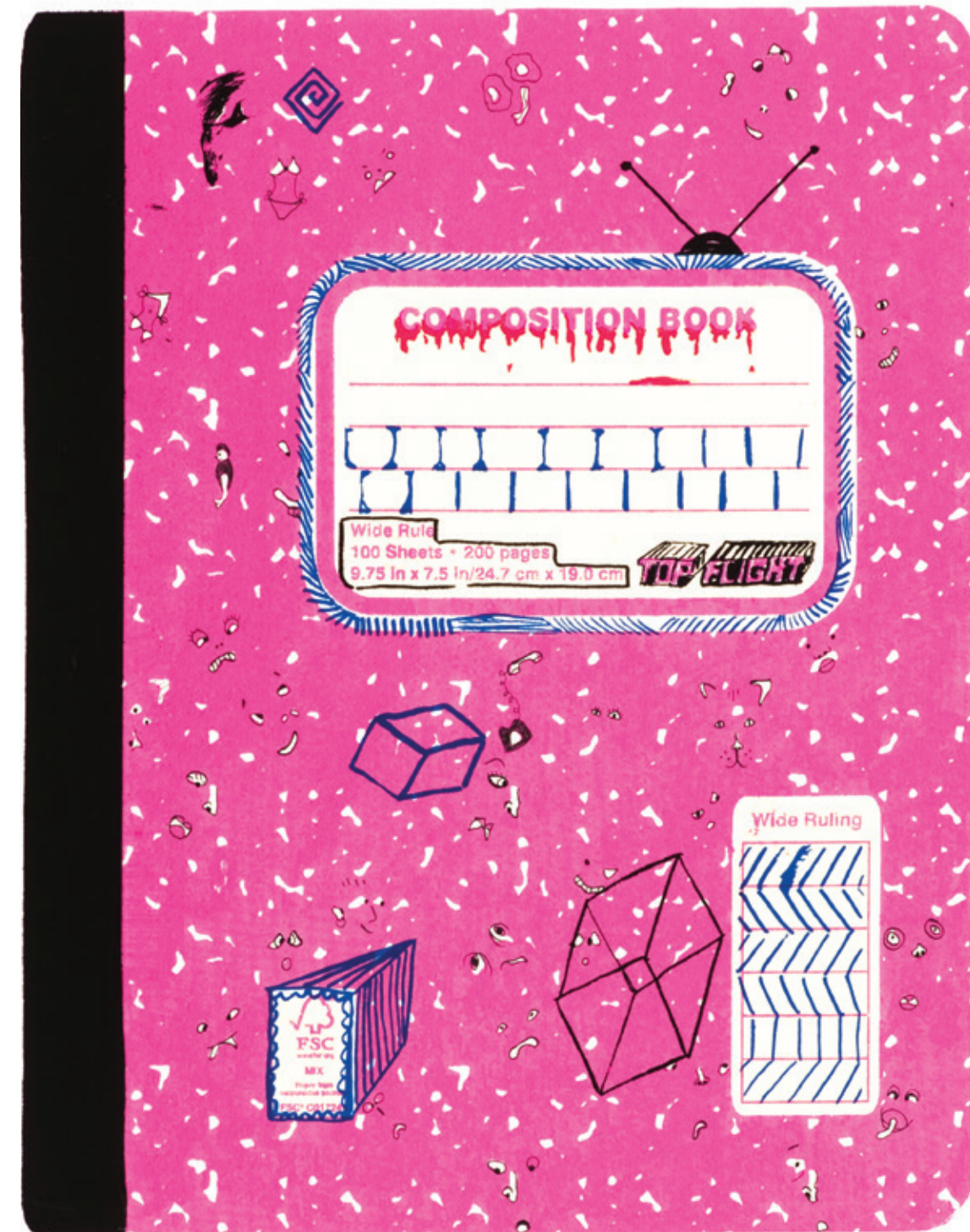


My recent prints consider the ways in which identity and nostalgia are connected to how we behave, the unconscious things we do, and the objects we collect. I'm interested in images and commodities that resonate with and are incorporated into a personality--why one doodles (and keeps these doodles), the elements amassed to define a visual identity. How much or little belongings tell us, how everyday items like key-chains on a backpack, magnets on a fridge, decals on a car bumper or stickers on a notebook, become outlets for expression and relate to our struggles to make our things and ourselves unique. The work becomes a portrait that can be seen as a distant memory or a Déjà vu. An eerie quality emerges when discerning the genuine from the fake. My prints are glimpses of a life's intimate space; I interject myself into this life and space to make it my own.

## Anna Hoberman

*Composition XI*  
2013

11 x 15 in.  
Silk-Screen with Pen  
& Ink on Arches Cover



I really didn't know what I was going to get by using expired, outdated, and old Polaroid film. It was chance. I knew it would be better than fresh film: it would scare the parts off an industry terrified of the uncontrollable—each sheet was unique, it was impossible to predict, it was its own kind.

The broom an every day object turns things upside-down. Smashing the window lets the stagnant old out, and breaths of fresh air, sunshine and whatever's outside in – it's a revelation of freedom from barriers, freedom of thought, and freedom of ideas. The window brings in the light but keeps out the cold. Is the cold so bad? The window makes you see outside but blinds your senses to what's really out there.

Vito seems nuts in a refuge-place of fucking comfort-cravers He's not. He doesn't say much, but has a lot to say. Chief the background figure in One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, said "juicy-fruit" – those words alone proved he was the opposite of nuts, he was actually the only one who wasn't nuts. Vito breaks/brakes the barrier -- let the shit hit the fan.

Anthony Randell

*I Have a Broom*  
2013  
12' x 12'  
inks on aluminum





Rural landscape has become metaphor, speaking to me of the border between untamed nature and domesticity. Old dairy land in the Hudson Valley, where I was raised, was a conflicted idyllic, taken over as it was by saplings now matured into full grown trees, and the lands purpose replaced by emerging subdivisions of domestic comforts. The perplexity of this overtaken landscape outside the boundaries of our yard intrigued me then and continues to give purpose in my art. My current paintings begin at arms length, almost in the third person, through a printmaking process. Painting over a print, changing the initial image, brings forth other forms as well as allowing for the passage of time to become evident in the work. The indulgent totality develops into a stream of consciousness that works alongside, over and around the printed image.

Cecilia Whittaker-Doe

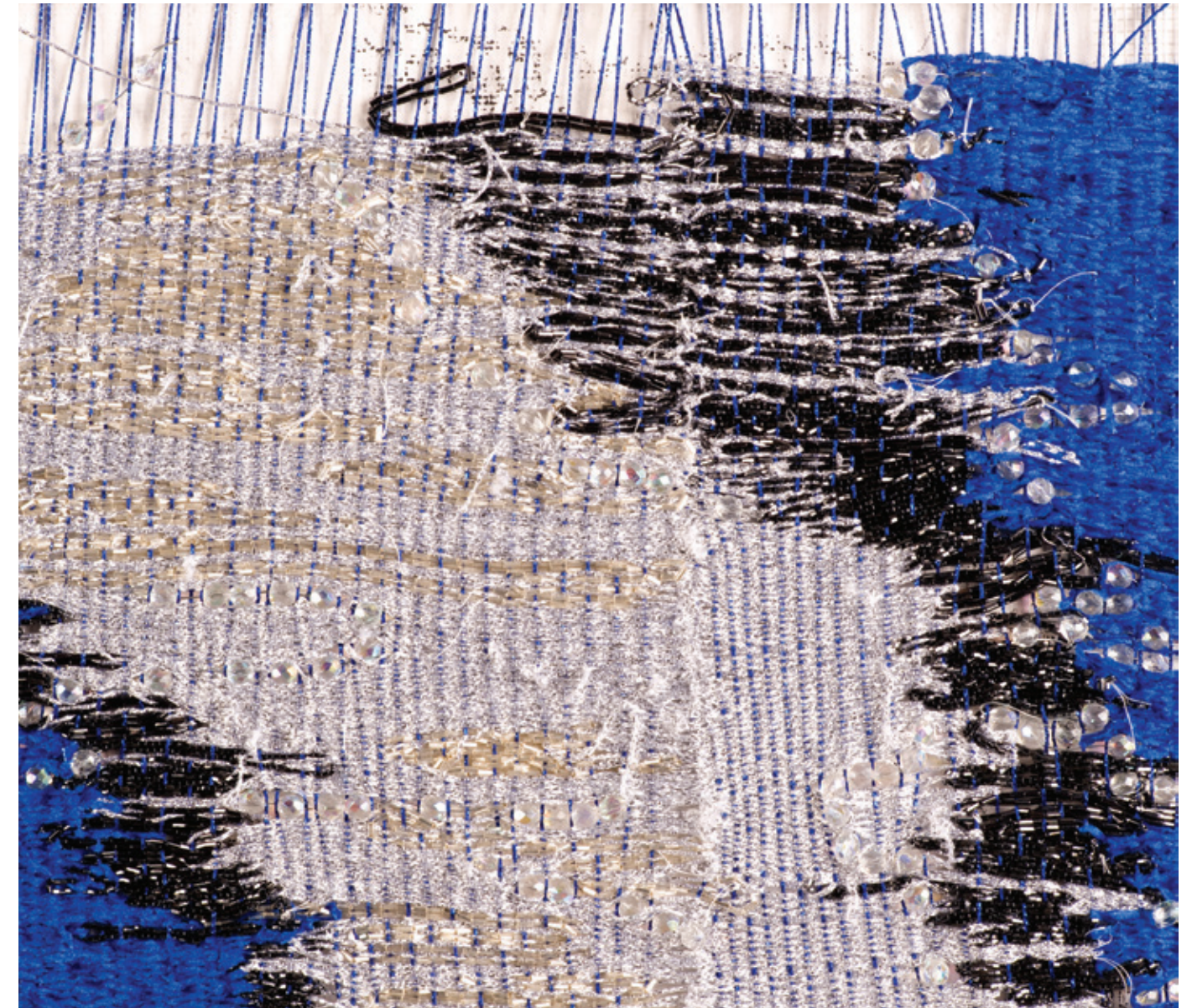
*Path*  
2012  
27.5" x 36"  
Silk- Screen,  
Mixed Media  
on Paper





I am interested in our relationships and connections to the natural world. Materials hold metaphorical and/or physical associations to the subject, used to abstract the natural environment and take it out of its element. The use of paper to steal an image from a tree as a rubbing highlights the symbiotic relationship we have with trees as well as life's continual cycles. Making my own mark over the lifted image underlines the arrogance of our own human nature as well as the shared alliance. The painting process is alchemical. With the landscape in mind, the canvas takes shape. Folded/ gathered/ rising from the flat plane it begins as a sculpture. Pigment is poured/ brushed/ dusted. The edifice unfolds and a painting emerges. Weaving forms structure, a web to gather what's been lost, warp and weft as a natural grid, order imposed with delicate fibers, ancient and modern, skin and bones. Seductive materials forgive imperfections and create a façade that can unravel with the pluck of one thread.

## Jeannine Bardo



*Off the Grid*

Size: 4'x4'

Metallic and chenille fibers,  
crystals, beads



my materials are collected, shaped, re-shaped, re-used and used again throughout years of progress in the studio. they become pieces which become materials – and pieces again. they travel through time, change their purpose, placement and meaning. recycled, humble pieces of my own detritus lay as reference,\* silencing the stimulation of mass media with scrutiny to the over-consumption of the corporate culture. the duality of the manufactured and the natural operate in tandem as the continuous push-pull frames endless contradictions. awareness to these subtleties becomes politic as it empowers us to the core of existence.

in a continual site-responsive process i move material through space which results in reductive spaces and objects that provide potential in their tension. the constants remain as light, rhythm and repetition. the tension created is the focal point and the defining line of perception and awareness. it activates the potential that lies in every moment. consciousness of this tension brings potential to form through the perceptual shifts in the moments between objects and spaces. silence helps quiet the noise to become better aware of each surrounding subtlety. awareness is the greatest tool to uncovering the power of potential.

\* some numbers: less than 2% of the worlds art is on view at any given time. 60% of the art in storage gets damaged by improper handling. museums and galleries waste astronomical amounts of building material and other reusable materials every year for the production of exhibitions. i have been an art handler for over 15 years.

John Ros

*compilation: the  
politics of awareness*  
2012  
144" x 84" x 16"  
mixed media  
installation



Welcome to Chouffe Mountain, where crescendo is intrinsically understood and a girl can have her hopes and dreams anyway and a delicious snack. There are some things that are never understood here like bad manners and litter. Like farming, however, Chouffe Mountain reaches out for polka dancing and the distant sound of babies laughing.

Zooming on a cloud through lucky charms intergalactica, one day, all the Chouffes found me clawing my way out of the gallows where Somewhere Over The Rainbow played in a loop behind their eyes in a wind-up music box version emerging from a lost plush toy somewhere in my mind's eye. Through a thicket of impossibly long courtroom trials and continuous whirling waltzes and spaceship interventions, the Chouffes spoke. "Come this way," they lament. "The kindest people felt ancient and were gone before you knew it."

I arranged special gifts before all the Chouffes to honor the infusion of spectrum and light, asking for understanding beyond form and Technicolor. On Chouffe Mountain, you can find what you're looking for because love makes a place a home.

Kate McGraw



*Chouffe Mountain*

2012 – 2013

72" x 105" x 72"

Mixed media



I create seamlessly looping videos which demonstrate the peculiar circumstances of digital observation. These videos display animated characters, objects, and previously made artworks placed within a tableau. The video environments are solely constructed in the computer as digital space is facilitating (if not replacing) our referencing habits to objects in reality. These video tableaux are calculated and sardonic; they serve as imagined demonstrations which catalog the effect digital form has on perception and detail the control certain technologies have on our relationship to art and culture. Another practice engages current events exclusively perceived through the transmission of digital images. By replacing every character contained within the ASCII code I design typographic symbols/marks that ultimately remove the legibility of the original set of ASCII characters - the results of this process are then output through digital processes. This body of work titled *Image Lexicons* is a reference to the idea contained within the German term bildpunkt, meaning picture-point and Vilém Flusser's theory of concretizing abstract particles through envisioning. In this practice I create my own sets of idiosyncratic marks to better understand our experience of visual history through digital propagation. The substance of digital images is of concern within this body of work to which importance is placed upon detailing images through a text-based practice.

## Mitch Patrick



*Inner\_manipulative\_substratums*

2013

1920 x 1080p

video and digital graphics,

I am a magical bag full of water and sticks, syrup and gunk, and these paintings, objects, and musical compositions which I have produced recently are physical manifestations of a yearning for love and security which borders on terror. Looking back, I find that I've been going about it all wrong, and for a long, long time. But that's okay.

I told myself that these were celebrations of love and humanness, but no. Maybe in just the right light. Most of the time, they were selfish little tantrums, masquerading as hallelujah songs, playing as altars to love and pain and awe. In truth they amounted to little more than bland valentines to myself. But, that's okay.

On to the next thing, learn from my mistakes, keep shoveling guff into holes. Try to step closer and closer to the scary bits, until they eat me whole, and I am nothing, and I see that there was nothing to be worried about this whole time. "Aw, shucks."

Nick Stolle

Clutching Various  
Graduate Level Art  
Objects.  
2013



*A wilderness... is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.*

-Wilderness Act of 1964

I am interested in our relationships to these places where we cannot remain, and in the curiosities, attractions, repulsions, and anxieties that we associate with the natural world. I try to build places in my work, to translate bits of wilderness and bring them inside. Painting and printmaking techniques mimic the layering and eroding processes that shape the earth, and can imply the changes in atmosphere that affect one's perception of reality. The structures of the pieces invite exploration by viewers, perhaps persuading them to come outside in their minds to a place where the wind is chewing on boulders, devouring the bones of the earth. Here, the landscape and its inhabitants are on the point of disintegration, evaporation. How long can you stay?

Nicole Donnelly

*Visitor*  
2013  
30"x10"x14"  
Wax, oil,  
and graphite on  
plexiglass

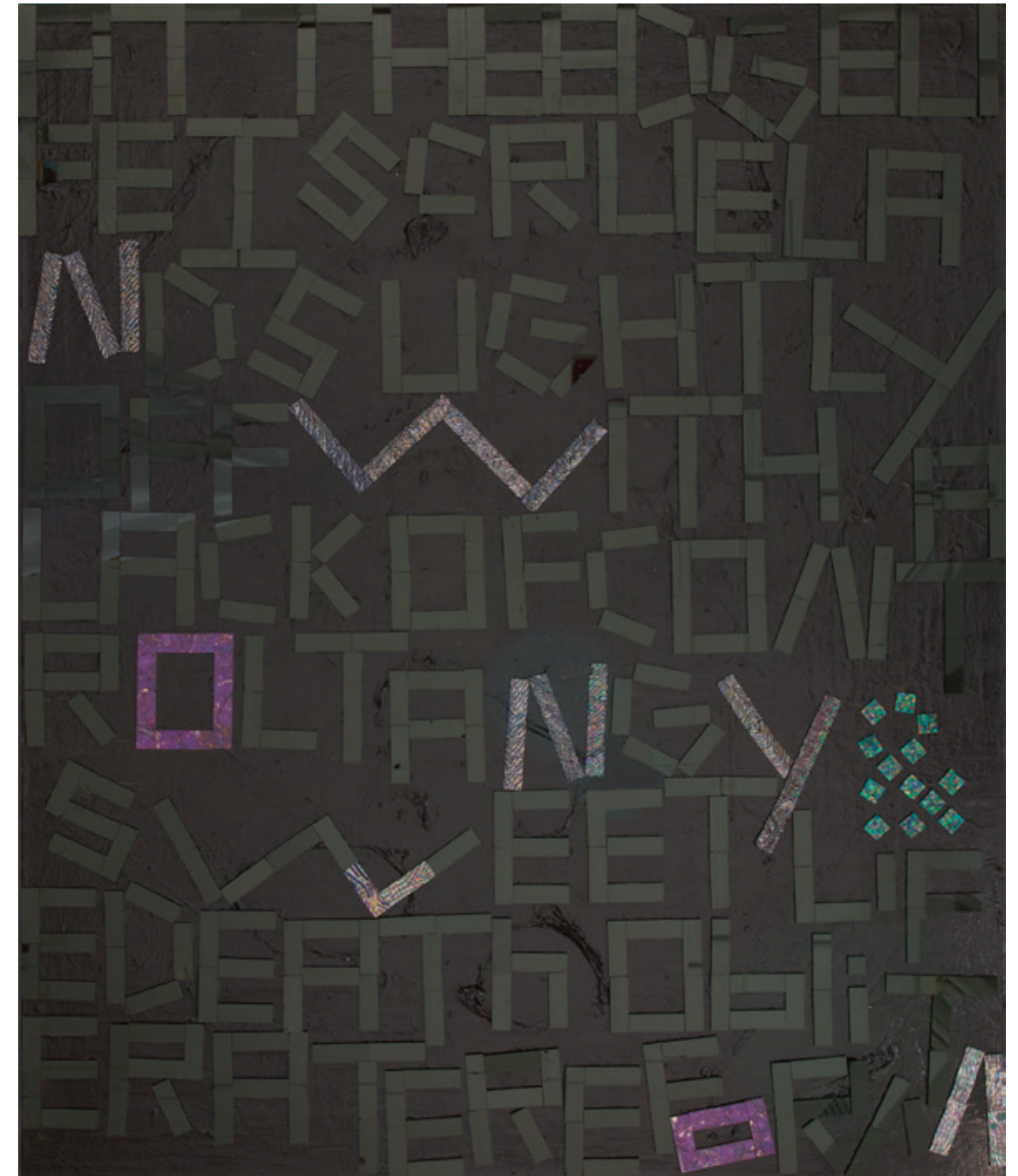




My work resists reading but it is readable. I  
chose the materials for their relationship to  
my personal history. I am a poet and there  
is a need to use language. I am an artist and  
there is a need to make.  
I pay attention to advertisements to reclaim  
language. I notice what sticks and stays with  
me...language is...free...it is usable...  
I take...what resonates...

Samuel Jablon

*I cant go on I must go on*  
2013  
62" x 52"  
acrylic, glass tile, mirror,  
precious stone, and  
opal on canvas





Brooklyn College MFA Thesis Exhibition 2013 Artists

Alexander Doolan

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Visiting Artists:

David Brody  
Paul Wackers  
Sarah Dorner  
Betsey Sussler  
Diana Al- Hadid  
Josephine Halvorson  
Julie Heffernan  
Jules de Balincourt  
Hilary Harnischfeger  
James Siena  
Caecilia Tripp  
D-L Alvarez  
Allison Weisberg  
genesis p-orridge  
Jill Moser  
Paddy Johnson  
Diana Cooper

Faculty

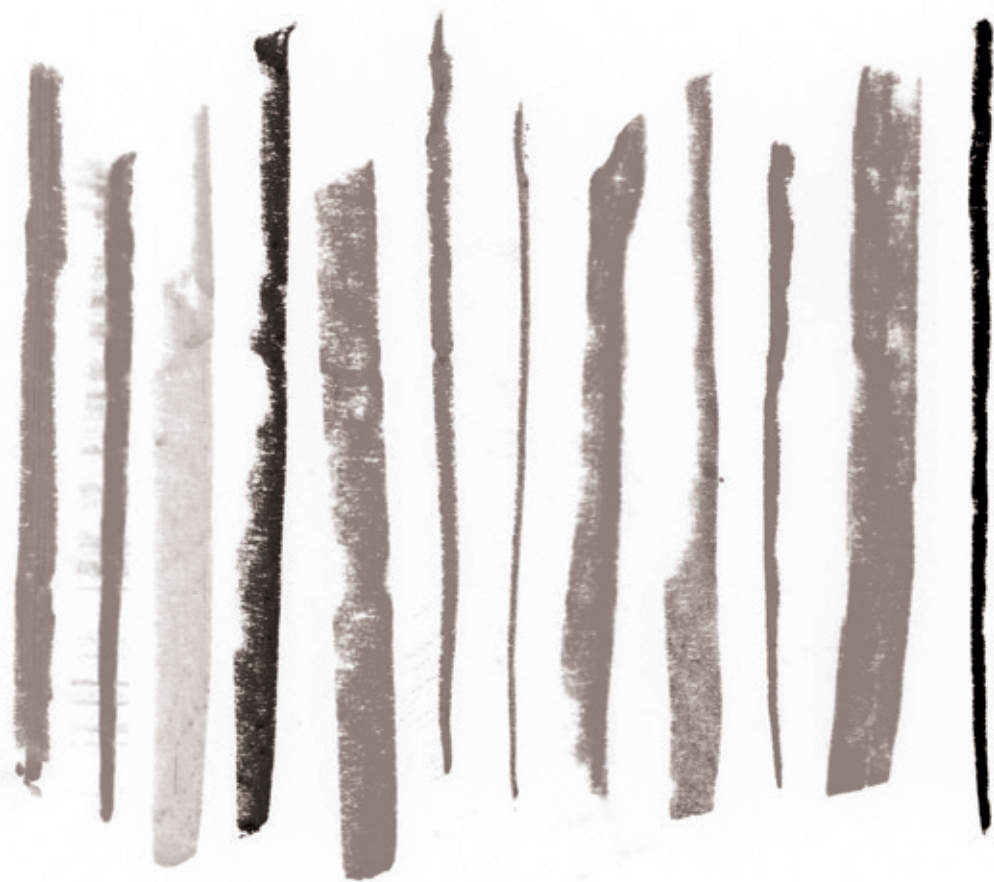
Vito Acconci  
Jennifer Ball  
Janet Carlile  
Mike Cloud  
Georgeen Comerford  
Patricia Cronin  
Karin Giusti  
Mona Hadler  
Ronaldo Kiel  
Lauren Kilroy  
Rachel Kousser  
Michal Mallory, Chair  
Jennifer McCoy, Graduate Deputy  
Archie Rand  
Douglas Schwab  
Malka Simon

Adjunct Faculty

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James Hyde  
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Josh Willis  
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