

“element - progress”
supplement to the exhibition

organized by galleryELL, curated by john ros, hosted by spool mfg.
for more information visit:
galleryELL.com
johnros.com

design of an exhibition:

there are many factors to consider when it comes to the design of an exhibition. while you walk through this space and contemplate the artwork, consider some of these important design elements that lend themselves to the whole exhibit experience.

successful exhibit design is typically unnoticable, allowing the artwork to take center stage.

1. flow: exhibition flow, or the flow of the exhibit narrative. elements include wall configuration and/or the “interior design” of the exhibit.
2. layout: part of curation is the actual layout of the artwork. considerations for layout include chronological, aesthetic, narrative, etc.
3. colour story: colour choices in paint for walls, floors, pedestals, signage, etc. affect the colour story and mood of an exhibit.
4. signage/text: including font choices, font colour, text layout, text panel design, labels and chats.
5. lighting: perhaps one of the most influential elements to an exhibit. poorly light artwork can destroy its effectiveness. dim lighting versus hotter lighting can change the mood of a space.

exhibition text:

at its core, “element - progress” is about space: the spaces inhabited by the artist, the art and the viewer, and how artist and viewer navigate them throughout their lives.

the exhibition’s title is intended to be enigmatic. congruent with the show, it is not meant to provide instant recognition or a passive experience for the viewer, rather it is meant to initiate contemplative dialogue within the mindspace.

“element” simply refers to the foundation or building blocks of any space. specifically, in the artist’s space, elements are materials that are utilized to build and create.

“progress” starts in the studio with each artist’s unique journey. with each new development, the artist evolves. this evolution introduces the artist to different experiences. whether creating ambitious new work or presenting a body of work for the first time, each artist in this exhibition is marking a new stage in their progression.

“element - progress” features spool mfg. as both muse and participant – its history, mission and momentum provides a plethora of information that assists us in negotiating space, right now.

artist statements:

JOEL BACON

for the past year i've been expanding on the familiar and the strange. a cross-mingling of rendered object and found artifact. color has appeared to great effect in a few of the recent works but still plays a supporting role. the newest work is a portrayal of my desire to "find" the artifact that points, like an talisman, to an organic underpinning to all living things. a structure or a code that anticipates life, a plastic darwinian parallel, a precursor to dna. of course on one level it is pure fantasy, but art is the combination of the possible and the impossible.

01. "find"
2011
mixed media
02. "tumble"
2011
mixed media
03. "wash"
2011
mixed media

NANCY HUBBARD

each piece starts with a hunch and grows from there. nothing is planned, leaving much to chance. sometimes this creates doubt, which forces me to make a decision; at other times it creates excitement, which compels me to try something new.

the work begins with making the gesso: each component carefully measured, mixed and applied painstakingly to the board, layer by layer, until the surface is built. artists have been using this technique for thousands of years - i always consider this as i claim it for my own. i lay down a cacophony of charcoal textures, lines and forms and then take them off. then i lay them down again. this process goes on until i find what i am looking for.

in hindsight, chance doesn't really play a role at all-ultimately, i can see that i knew where i was headed the whole time.

01. "unattended landscape vii", 2011
mixed media
02. "unattended landscapes v", 2009
mixed media
03. "dirge", 2006
mixed media
04. "unattended landscape vi", 2009
mixed media
05. "untitled", 2007
mixed media
06. "untitled", 2007
mixed media
07. "untitled", 2011
mixed media

ANNIE VARNOT

this body of work began in 2008 when i was an artist in residence at ross creek center for the arts in nova scotia, canada. i had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and was looking for ways to express my inability to process the possibility of death. i befriended a poultry farmer near the residency and collected his unsellable eggs. they were "unsellable" according to agricultural regulations because they were either dirty or irregularly shaped. some eggs had two yolks or had fecal matter or blood on their shells. i washed these eggs and hollowed them out, and during the process, i thought about caring for that which is unacceptable to nature and culture. i connected with these eggs as an artistic material that would act as a metaphor for my vulnerable psychological and physical experience. my long-term goal is to hollow 13,000 unsellable chicken eggs and create a dwelling wherein one may contemplate life's impermanence and heal from traumatic experiences. in the meantime, the eggs have infiltrated other, more discrete pieces, such as "birth of the unknown." its hollowed chicken eggs submerge in and emerge from cast plaster. the poetic suggestion of sexual organs and awkward growths is frozen in a place of awakenings and death, of the familiar yet unknown.

01. "birth of the unknown", 2011
sculptural installation
mixed media

02. "ohmoo" (in sickness and in health), 2010
mixed media

KARIANN FUQUA

in the summer of 2010, the worst man-made environmental disaster in u.s. history occurred in the gulf of mexico when the deep horizon oil drilling platform exploded, dumping approximately 200 million gallons of crude oil into the surrounding waters over the course of 87 days. the clean-up effort, which has partly been guided by misinformation and confusion, is still ongoing today. the national oceanic and atmospheric administration created a daily trajectory map of the constantly emerging oil and its movement on the surface of the water to aid in this effort.

using this data, i am creating drawn mappings of the movement of the oil spill to visually recontextualize the evidence of the disaster. i am doing so in an effort to explore ideas of control and chaos and about the uncertain future implications of such a catastrophic event. i am investigating the ambiguity and duality of a man-made disaster that conjures images of the sublime, where both the beautiful and the horrific intersect. through the layering of imagery and its constantly shifting location, i am engaging in a dialogue about the very nature of science, facts and data, and the validity and usefulness of its findings.

01. "87 days and still counting"
drawing installation (89 drawings)
2010-2011
ink on mylar / ink on duralar

JODI HAYS

eudora welty wrote about place as a thing that has influenced, nourished and instructed us. she further writes that "man can... suffer if he's exiled from it. (place is) as close to our living as the earth we can pick up and rub between our fingers, something we can feel or smell."

my work is informed by the physical and psychological landscape of exile. i employ landscape as a metaphor for the human experience of and necessity for community, speaking to issues of isolation and relationship. my studio practice not only revolves around my situation of place in the south and how it informs my work, but also a larger sense of place in the world.

i am drawn to images that one associates with marking temporary sites or fleeting action. leveraging the mundane, lowly objects transform into something else, something deeper. the work's constant thread is an inquiry into how quotidian images can explore personal circumstance and transcend themselves, a kind of aesthetic redemption.

01. "jefferson street, nashville, tn", 2011
drawing installation
mixed media
02. "all together in one place", 2011
sculptural installation
mixed media

KIRSTEN NASH

familiar, generic and loaded with cultural significance, the suburban parking lot is an archetype of our contemporary environment. as a motif, it has served as a vehicle for my exploration of space, memory and material.

i play with the juxtaposition of positive and negative, imagery and abstraction, line and ground, and deep space and the flatness of a canvas. the collision of the natural and artificial become metaphors for the creative process. appropriating the reductive quality of american minimal and conceptual painting, while referencing objects and places from the everyday, i hope to engage the viewer on more than one perceptual level. in the most successful pieces, the viewer is made aware of the delicate balance between his or her reading as the oscillation between the formal properties of the work and personal reverie upon life experience.

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| 01. "chopsticks", 2011
oil on canvas | 06. "i'm here", 2011
oil on canvas |
| 02. "butterfly", 2009
oil on linen | 07. "magnificent failure", 2008
oil on linen |
| 03. "grid in grey", 2010
oil on canvas | 08. "rhombus", 2011
oil on canvas |
| 04. "parking lot grid", 2006
oil on linen | 09. "blackboard", 2007
oil on linen |
| 05. "zig zag", 2008
oil on linen | |

RICHARD FEASTER

the poet and painter henri michaux wrote about the sense of being "piloted" while making art, and it is this sensation of flow that interests me most. i often see painting as a challenge to uncover some deeply hidden pictorial structure, and it is in this process of searching that i find myself working to reveal some larger truth about the nature of perception. only when i am convinced of the presence of an inherent connectivity within the work do i feel that the painting is going well. mistakes in the mark-making process prove to be most valuable in uncovering this structure, paradoxically, and what begins as a systematic series of marks can often devolve into a morass of broken arcs, half starts and erasures. the lines between painting and drawing become blurred. the animator's sketch comes to mind.

while i paint it feels like i'm mimicking the simultaneity of my everyday experiences. reflective surfaces work to this end, and metallic surfaces suggest to me mirroring, doubling, invisibility and glamour. i like the idea of a painting that cannot be viewed in one way only; one that provides different doors of entry for the viewer. different viewing angles and environments reflect light in ways that alter perception of a painting. this relates to the way we function in our environment, constantly looking into and through screens, veils of meaning, both literal and illusory, receiving and assembling scattered blobs of information, and making loopy associations between image, text and language. through painting i am able to relive and project this experience of confusion, depth and ecstasy, and, with luck, provoke within the viewer questions regarding these conditions. in this way viewing becomes an inclusive experience, not unlike free-jazz, open-source code or improvisational comedy.

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| 01. "little wing", 2009
mixed media on mylar | 04. "little minute gong", 2011
mixed media on mylar |
| 02. "event", 2011
mixed media on mylar | 05. "please transmit my best
remembrances", 2011
mixed media on mylar |
| 03. "feel, take one", 2011
mixed media on mylar | |

JOHN ROS, artist, curator

silencing the over-stimulation of mass media and the over-consumption of a commercially-driven society are the stimuli for my work. dichotomies of industry versus nature are predominant. constants remain as light, rhythm, repetition and the void.

the use of monochrome is directly linked to avoiding the sensationalistic; rather, providing a respite for contemplation. movement formally and minimally creates a language of nuance prioritizing the distance between subject and object - viewer and artwork. it is this understanding of place and environment that compels a sense of compassion and respect throughout my process.

as my work evolves, the search for the universal continues. the visualization and verbalization of the minimal, reductive and monotone are the catalysts in my attempt to attain the simplest form with the greatest breadth while achieving the perfect configuration in silent space. i continue to broaden this investigation in my practice as i undertake space as a whole - as object in my study.