23rd annual Critics' Residency Program

April 28 – June 20, 2009

Maryland Art Place

CONTENTS

RADIO (AFTER GIOTTO)
Bernhard Hildebrandt, 2008
single channel color digital video
from digital photographs with sound
1:57 minutes (looped)

Throughout its history, the *Critics' Residency* program has provided artists and writers with a unique opportunity to shape the understanding and appreciation of contemporary art and critical writing within the region.

Since its origination twenty-three years ago, the primary objectives of the *Critics' Residency* program have remained consistent: to foster the exchange of ideas between visual and literary disciplines, and to encourage a dialogue about contemporary art within the community.

In an era that manifests a rapid decline of traditional sources of published art writing and criticism, the continued need for the *Critics' Residency* program, and the relationships formed as a result of its collaborative nature, have become increasingly important.

In the pages that follow, writers Martin L. Johnson and Dylan Kinnett share their interpretations of the eight artists' work selected for inclusion in this year's program. Their contributions, coupled with an incisive essay by this year's critic, Vincent Katz, an exhibition of the artists' work, and a public forum comprise this intensive year-long program.

I wish to thank the artists and writers participating in the 23RD *Annual Critics'* Residency program for their commitment, Vincent Katz for his thoughtful insight, and MAP's Board of Trustees and staff for their role in realizing the program's continued success.

~ Julie Ann Cavnor
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Art For Difficult Times

VINCENT KATZ

Even in its most private moments, art is seldom completely solitary. Individuals may produce behind closed doors, but ultimately art exists in the wide-open spaces between artist and audience, creator and critic. Here, art becomes a dynamic communal act, fueled by the passion of its participants and subject to the tenor of the times.

The Critics' Residency Program at the Maryland Art Place, now in its 23RD year, has long celebrated this symbiosis. It is a privilege to have been given the responsibility to select the artists and writers for this year's exhibition. To my knowledge, MAP's is the only program to add a layer of critical interaction to the traditional selected, or juried, format. It is a difficult onus to select some, leaving out others – but part of the duty of the critic is to make distinctions.

I was presented with the work of 76 artists and 7 writers, which I evaluated in a blind selection process. I knew nothing of the identities of the candidates, beyond what might be gleaned from their work. In the end, I chose eight artists and two writers, a group intended to reflect a diverse range of mediums, modes of working, and training backgrounds. Among the visual artists: four painters, two photographers, one installation artist, and one artist who works in video, photography, and painting. For the writers, I looked for people who wrote clear, unconventional analyses, free of jargon.

Out of many talented candidates, the visual artists I chose had, in my opinion, developed a visible engagement with both technique and imagery. Among the painters – two figurative, two abstract – all four *use* paint for its painterly qualities, sharing an ability to make their chosen mediums appear fresh. If you look carefully, you will find subtle distinctions of textural gradations and personal tonal statements. And yet, the pictures are not secondary. The technique is inherently linked to the image.

The same could be said for the two photographers: differences of clarity, blurs, reflections, combine seamlessly with their images. In addition to displaying a mastery of their medium, both had the additional intriguing quality of creating work related to the history of image making, or, to put it another way,

were cognizant of a wide range of global visual expression, from abstract expressionism to artists, such as Gerhard Richter, who have painted pictures of photographs. The two artists who use other media, ranging from crocheted plastic to etched plastic substratum, share with the painters and photographers a broad-based dedication to craft and a sophistication of imagery.

I can see now that the criterion of worldliness was a key consideration in my selection process, perhaps at a less conscious, though just as operational, level. Primarily thought of as an awareness of what other artists have done in a range of periods and places and what they continue to do today, worldliness is also an issue of sensibility: how one processes and responds to information. Some artists are worldly while working with local subject matter, while others are provincial while working with apparently worldly subject matter. The literal can be taken as a sign of the insular, yet the local need not be restrictive. I think of Emily Dickinson, who spent most of her life in her family home in Amherst, Massachusetts, yet was able to create stunningly modern poetry in the mid-19TH century.

This issue of worldliness is of particular interest when considering the work of artists from a particular region. In this case, six of the artists were based in Baltimore, two in Washington, DC. Different personalities, attitudes, and philosophies towards art abounded, as did working conditions. Painter Kim Manfredi studies in the Maryland Institute College of Art graduate program, while painter Gil Jawetz works in a one-room, office-building studio just off a busy Baltimore strip. Lynn Rybicki paints under low, curved ceilings in her second-story suburban apartment; Jessie Boyko painted her canvases in a DC building dedicated for artists' studios. In Hampden, photographer Dottie Campbell keeps a second-floor office space in a converted Mill Centre building, while installation artist Bonnie Kotula has a studio in her home's converted bedroom and basement. Photographer Ken Ashton uses his DC home as a combination studio and showroom, and multimedia artist Bernhard Hildebrandt houses his large studio in a

SHADOW OF THE DOG / DETAIL
Gil Jawetz, 2007
oil on canvas
48 × 24 inches

SUFFUSE/SUFFICE / DETAIL
Bonnie Crawford Kotula, 2008
electrical circuitry, industrial plastic, produce packaging
dimensions vary

turn-of-the-century industrial building in Clipper Mill Industrial Park.

Their working situations placed varied constraints on the group. I was aware in some cases of a certain isolation, which can be difficult for an artist. While art can be created, or life lived, on one's own, it requires a different social disposition. Artists often like to work independently, yet there is a contravening need for contact with like minds, not to mention first-hand access to works of art in museums, galleries, and other artists' studios. Those we visited who worked in an art school or arts-focused buildings had the benefit of a more collegial atmosphere. Those who worked at home, or in non-arts buildings, were more on their own.

Coming from New York, where there is continual access to art and artists, I was struck by how private the art-creating experience can be. In 1948, when Willem de Kooning taught at Black Mountain College, he advised all his students to move to New York, much to the chagrin of art department head Josef Albers, who wanted to attract teachers and students to a remote corner of North Carolina. (I don't think many artists are moving to New York today, but quite a few are relocating to Berlin).

Of course, one's artistic realm depends not just on the physical but also the emotional world in which the artist operates. During studio visits, what came across clearly with all eight artists was an intense desire to create, no matter at what stage in their lives or careers they were and no matter under what physical conditions they were working. The work was a priority, and the circumstances were sought and made to fit the work.

To comment on their endeavors, I was drawn to two quite different writers, Martin Johnson and Dylan Kinnett. A self-described writer, editor, and information architect, Dylan is a web designer and published poet who is currently creating a style guide for internet writing. He holds a BA in Writing and Communications from Maryville College, where he wrote his senior thesis on hypertext literature. Dylan writes in a simple style that can be found among the better journalists. He attempts to bring in the philosophy of aesthetics while remaining open to the inherent unpredictabilities of the art he may confront. His is a common-sense approach to art, coupled with a fascination for the inner workings of the artist's mind.

Martin's work is similarly engaging. A Cinema Studies doctoral candidate at New York University, he has an AB in Modern Culture and Media from Brown and an MA in Folklore from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Martin impressed me by the professionalism of his published pieces in the *Baltimore City Paper*. I read his reviews of exhibitions at The Contemporary Museum and Maryland Institute College of Art and felt a kindred spirit there. Not that Martin and I would see eye to eye on particular artists or even which issues to stress, but rather I respected the fact that he had already taken responsibility for the basics of criticism: understanding the issues at play in an exhibition, reporting on the techniques and interventions of the artists, accurately describing the installations in visual terms. I found the clarity of his descriptions and analyses transparent and compelling.

This past October, Dylan, Martin, and I made studio visits to all eight artists, shepherded by the able and energetic Julie Ann Cavnor. It was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend, during which the diversity of the working situations must have made an impact on the two writers. After the visits, Dylan and Martin interviewed the artists and began their writing. They showed me two drafts, on which I made comments. Their final essays were further polished by a copy editor.

The process itself must have been instructive – to find that one's writing, while hopefully shedding some light on works of art and artists' modes of working, is also a social artifact. To come to fruition, a body of words, whether it be a catalogue essay, magazine review, newspaper article, or other text, only functions when it has been worked on and resonates with a group of interested parties. In other words, we are engaged in a collaborative act.

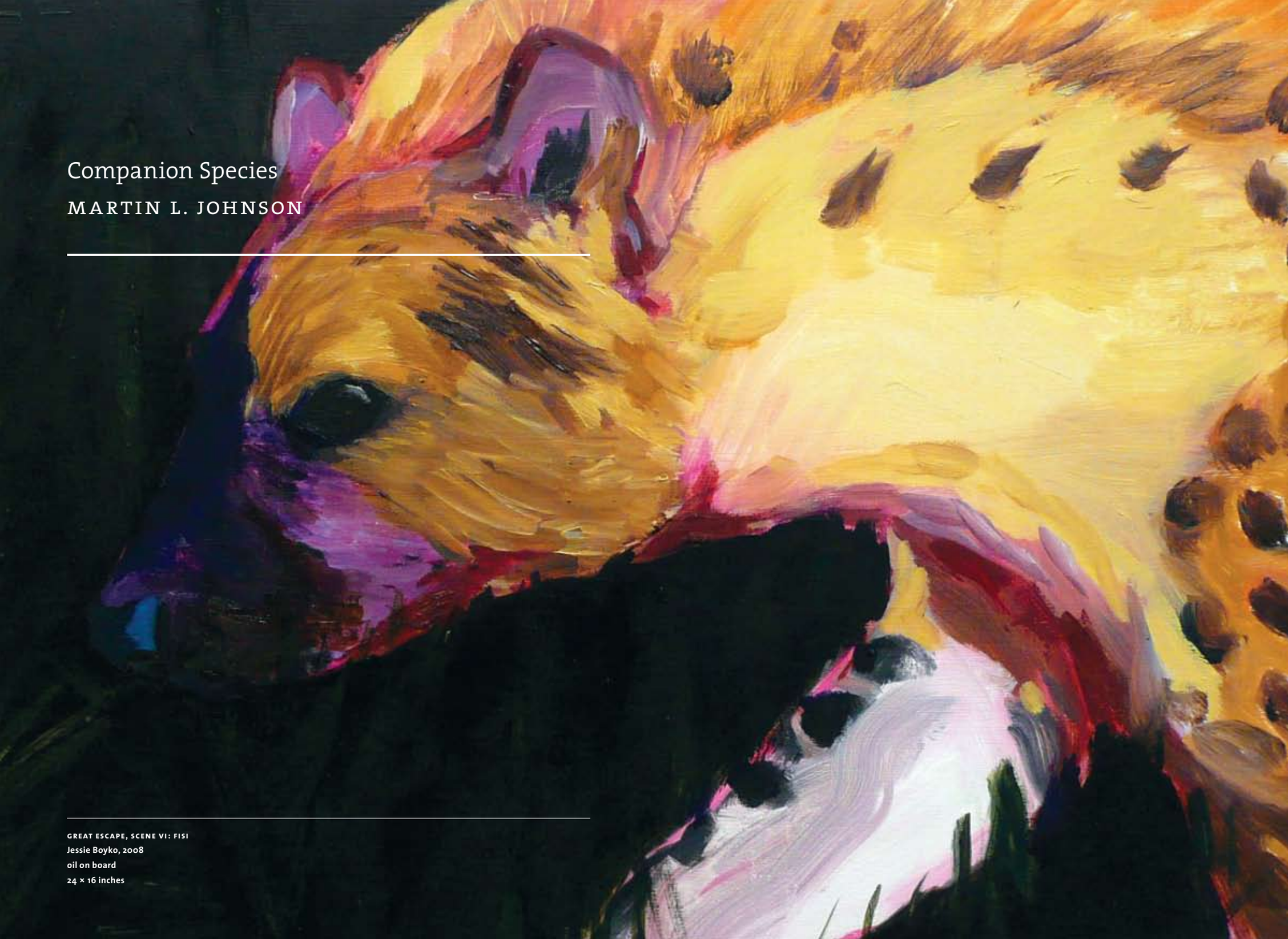
I can't say how Dylan's or Martin's writing developed as a result of this process. Certainly these two are willful enough, as any critic must be, to want to see the world through their already-existing lenses. While they seemed open to my suggestions, they did not try to write as I might have written. All criticism involves establishing a context for the work, but the sense of a context can differ. That being said, I feel I may have given Martin some focus to his writing, particularly when dealing with painting. Dylan, I hope, has learned that, in Fairfield Porter's formulation, all criticism is autobiography: one must put one's own neck on the line in order to save someone else (the artist) and thereby do a service to society.

For the exhibition artists, particularly those accustomed to more isolated working conditions, I think art's communal role may be clearer, thanks to MAP's program. The artists were already committed to the life of making art, but now the collaborative aspect of *showing* their work – defining, selecting, and having it defined and selected – may be more palpable for them. Meanwhile, each writer has been given an unparalleled opportunity (and responsibility) to interpret the work of four serious artists, their contemporaries.

MAP's program is not just admirable; I would hold it up as a model for other institutions to emulate. It not only promotes the work of local artists, giving them a high-focus exhibition in ample and hospitable spaces, but also provides them the unique benefit of interacting in a detailed, intimate way with commentators on their work. This is something every artist strives for; MAP has opened the way for such an experience. Fostering collaborative relationships and reinforcing the power of community, the program creates a critical support system for artists in today's challenging times. I know I learned from this experience a deeper appreciation of working *with* someone for a higher goal. For as John Donne put it, "No man is an island ...."

Companion Species

MARTIN L. JOHNSON



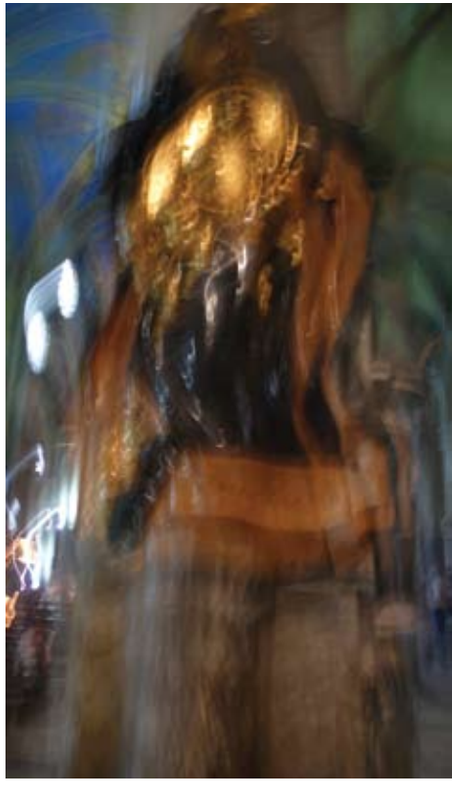
GREAT ESCAPE, SCENE VI: FISI
Jessie Boyko, 2008
oil on board
24 × 16 inches

Companion Species

MARTIN L. JOHNSON

In contemporary art, the multiple is a stabilizing force, both figuratively and financially. Many art forms are produced and sold in multiple editions, whether video art, installation art, prints, or photographs. Last year, the performance artist Tino Sehgal sold his 2003 piece *Kiss* to the Museum of Modern Art in New York after telling the curator how the work – which cannot be photographed, videographed, or described in writing – is to be performed, ensuring that it can be exhibited in perpetuity.

This essay will set aside the monetary reasons for producing multiple editions of a single work and will consider the multiple as an aesthetic and indexical challenge to modernist assumptions of art, assumptions that encourage evaluation of individual, solitary works, rather than analysis as part of a series or, as I will argue later, a species. While the four artists considered here – **Ken Ashton**, **Jessie Boyko**, **Bernhard Hildebrandt**, and **Gil Jawetz** – work in different mediums with different subjects and are at different stages in their careers, they are all interested in the multiple as a way to modify the relationship between the artist and the art spectator.



UNTITLED (STEREO SERIES) / TOP
Bernhard Hildebrandt, 2003
polyurethane enamel on plexiglas (left),
digital c-print on plexiglas (right)
43 × 96 inches

UNTITLED (S. MARIA SOPRA MINERVA-144) / BOTTOM
Bernhard Hildebrandt, 2008
archival ink jet print (multiple)
66 × 39.75 inches

HILDEBRANDT, who identifies himself as a painter, has more recently explored photography and video as a way to work out the relationship between originals and copies. In one of his recent series, two large, monochrome squares are placed next to each other. One is almost entirely white, without evidence of significant alteration, and is made of a material that is reflective in the right light. The other, in contrast, is full of lines and shadows, showing the marks of the painter's tool. But upon closer examination, you realize that the piece is in fact a trompe l'oeil, since the square that looks like a painting is in fact a photograph of its companion square, a snapshot from a particular time in its creation, as identified by its reflected light. Although the photograph, produced using a matte process so its surface is not reflective, appears at first to be the more lively of the two pieces, at second look, it draws the eye back to the original, allowing us to imagine yet more photographic copies showing different aspects of a complex, abstract work. Hildebrandt's wet-on-wet painting distorts the glossy sheen of the original plastic substrate, making minute alterations to the material base of the work that is then offset by the addition of the photograph beside it.

The multiple is made yet more explicit in Hildebrandt's video works. In *Ester*, the image of a female contortionist from a burlesque film from the 1950s is multiplied over and again, as if she is part of a Busby Berkeley musical, until she recedes into an abstract pattern of thighs, black shoes, and garter belts. Because mirrors were used to multiply the original image of the performer's body, it is difficult to tell where this optical manipulation ends and where Hildebrandt's digital treatment begins. In another series of works, Hildebrandt takes digital photographs with a consumer-grade camera and animates them, highlighting interplays of shadow and light that appear much like photographic ghosts. This echoes his interest in early photographic techniques like daguerreotypes and stereopticons, with Hildebrandt creating a magic lantern-type image that produces the illusion of movement as a visual effect that has no intention of convincing the viewer of its veracity. Just as the photographic processes that enabled Étienne-Jules Marey's chronophotographic works also paved the way for Victorian ghost photography, Hildebrandt's digital manipulations operate as experiments in the moving image that explicate and expose underlying photographic truths. At the same, these series of vernacular snapshots are able to make photographed objects mysterious.

Bernhard Hildebrandt

As a painter who specializes in dog portraits, Gil Jawetz's painting would seem distant from Hildebrandt's conceptual work. But Jawetz is not a traditional pet portraitist, one content with producing full-body likenesses of someone's favorite canine. Rather, Jawetz treats dogs, which are bred with such precision that they become genetic copies of each other as individual subjects that he paints only after spending an extended time with them. Rarely painting their full bodies, Jawetz instead focuses on the animals' faces, using broad strokes and minimal background detail, allowing him to capture their fleeting expressions, moments that might escape the quick flash of the camera. In *Blue Sky*, the face of what looks like a Great Dane dominates the lower half of the vertically oriented canvas while strokes of blue, which suggest clouds or sky, make up the remaining half of the painting. A shadow on the lower half of the dog's face suggests seriousness, as if he or she is posing for an official portrait, while the attentive ears convey a bit of levity. In *Walking Blues*, a blue dog is caught mid-step walking across a yellow background, creating a spontaneous portrait that matches the spontaneity of photography, albeit with painterly composition. When Jawetz paints humans and animals together, he works mostly in still life, producing images that are often based on photographs.

Because he works in the time-honored, and increasingly commercialized, practice of pet portraiture, Jawetz could easily find his work classified by color, painting process or simply breed of dog. Instead, Jawetz confuses these categories by painting animals and humans together. In her 2003 book, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Donna Haraway rejects the servant-master paradigm long used to describe the relationship between pets and humans. Instead, she argues for cross-species partnerships where biological and sociological models intersect. The selective, centuries-long breeding of dogs used to produce certain behavioral traits like herding or hunting are seen by Haraway as psychological disorders of these "companion species," so that a dog that constantly digs, herds or barks is treated, behaviorally or chemically, for these genetic traits. Where it was once possible to delineate between domestic and wild animals based on certain clear criteria, there are now many gray areas, with wild animals "domesticated" by television animal shows and household pets trained for competitive events or simply serving as companions. In a similar way, art criticism that was focused on single genres or mediums has been replaced by criticism that focuses on multiple modalities and mediums, creating species of artistic practice rather than individual works or multiples of those works. Contemporary art practices, particularly those that make use of found and everyday materials, might be thought of as mutts, species removed from modernist and historical art practices.

CHIN
Gil Jawetz, 2008
oil on canvas
48 × 24 inches

HOLD HER TIGHT
Gil Jawetz, 2008
oil on canvas
30 × 15 inches

GREAT ESCAPE, SCENE IV: COMA / TOP
Jessie Boyko, 2008
oil on canvas
65 × 60 inches

GREAT ESCAPE, SCENE V: ZEBRA AND HOUND / BOTTOM
Jessie Boyko, 2008
oil on canvas
120 × 60 inches

In a series of works by Jessie Boyko – part of a loose narrative that tells of a plane crash in Africa – landscape, dreamscape, and an "animalscape" interact uneasily and in quiet disorder in a mixture of figurative painting, illustration, and sketches. In the largest of the panels, hyenas, zebras, and household cats and dogs co-exist peacefully, in contrast to what one might expect to see in the "televisual" wild. In the most striking of the paintings, a smashed airplane with its tail on fire rests in a landscape of dry, yellow bush, an image so at odds with typical realism that it prompts symbolic readings. A hyena stands above the cockpit while two others are on the ground, one of these eyeing a zebra that was apparently killed by the crash. In the foreground, at an uncertain distance from the plane, three domestic cats react to something uncertain, an event perhaps not related to the crash. The light application of paint and the outlining of several birds in red gives the work some of the qualities of a sketch.

This effect is reflected in Boyko's process. She begins her paintings by covering the canvas with a wash of color, followed by a sketching of figurative elements directly to the canvas. Some of these sketchings are developed into fully rendered forms, while others remain in their original state, adding an element of ambiguity to the work. This is particularly true of her horizons, an element that visually connects several of these pieces. In one, the largest painting, the horizon is completely dark because of a storm, whereas in others the storm has yet to approach or already passed. The changing status of the sky, which occupies a large portion of some canvases but is barely visible in others, does more to upset the sense of narrative space than it does to establish it. Likewise, the colorful, abundant plant life seen in some works is reduced to just a few plants in others, as if the desert itself flowers and dies based on the perspective of the viewer.

The co-mingling of domestic and wild species occurs again in Boyko's more somber and larger painting, *Great Escape, Scene v: Zebra and Hound*, in which a large zebra, resting on its side, is accompanied by a hound dog, who is looking off toward the wilderness. Although a wash of light blue is visible in the background, the landscape is all in shades of gray, with raindrops seen on the left side and the animals crowded on the right. The movement of the storm is contrasted against the stillness of the animals, suggesting calm even as panic seems imminent. Although the various pieces in the series can be read together as a narrative, with the storm marking the passage of time, the spatial arrangement of the animals in each picture does not correspond to a unified narrative space. Instead, the mixed compositional strategies and perspectives produce a sense of multiple spectators, as if the visual plane prevents a single observer from viewing the collision of machine and earth, the wild and domestic, animal and plant life. Narrative gives way to questions of space.

Jessie Boyko

Similarly, Ken Ashton's photographic travel journals present themselves not as snapshot-based narratives, but instead as a species of photography, pieces that collect together similar objects to both classify and dislocate them from their original contexts. The result is not so much an index of objects as a new way of experiencing lived spaces. After spending many years documenting working-class African-American neighborhoods in Washington, DC, Ashton began his *Megalopolis* project in 1999, for which he visited cities and towns between Washington and Boston, looking for signs of life in what appeared to be desolate environments. In one photo, two chairs arranged just so indicate a corner hang-out, while a piece of a Christmas tree nailed to a telephone pole reveals a holiday celebration. Ashton rarely photographs people or animals, but is constantly looking for how the landscape might be affected by everyday activities. In another series of works, Ashton takes on the subject of movement itself, taking photographs from a train, allowing him to capture the still horizon while the foreground blurs into blacks and grays. Although the individual photographs can be read as documentary, taken as a series, it is clear that Ashton's art practice, particularly in pieces with several works appearing on a single page, is about joining different species of photographs together, not separating them into discrete, evidentiary moments. This is most evident in his travelogues, which purposefully collect images from a wide variety of locations to produce a barely readable narrative whole. By locating similar objects and spaces in different places and folding them into a narrative that is only fully known to Ashton, the work remains elusive, like a map without labels.

The thread that connects these artists is an interest in one of art's core questions: what is the relationship between representational images and the represented objects? Hildebrandt arrives at an answer by producing a work that captures an indeterminate object in a single instant and then hanging his representation beside his original to serve as a map for understanding or viewing it. Jawetz rejects the division between human and animal representation by offering animal portraiture that seeks to draw out the bodily essence, rather than the mere likeness, of his subjects, a goal that is only accentuated by his still life-like portraits of humans. In contrast, Boyko embraces species diversity by mixing the domestic and the wild, allowing her creatures to exist outside expectations of animal conduct, a move that is reflected in her use of multiple compositional and technical strategies. Ashton makes a similar move in his photographs, pushing the boundaries of their documentary nature to open up an aesthetic space where they can travel and inhabit fictional landscapes that are at once empty and full of human gestures. However, like the landscapes of Nicolas Poussin, Ashton's work always returns to the smallest of details – like an empty chair – that gains meaning with each repetition.

There's an unspoken affinity between Ashton's chairs, Boyko's cats, Jawetz's dogs, and Hildebrandt's hard surfaces as a result of their common status as objects that can be endlessly repeated, like an image in Photoshop but without the limits of computer memory. By engaging the concept of the repeatable image, these artists challenge us to multiply our own responses to their work, our response coming not at all at once, but in stages, over time, and across the horizons of our experience. When we view these works for the first time we feel that we've seen them before, but as we look closer we see that each return trip offers new findings. These multiples are never just copies of what came before.

megalopolis corridor #3
Ken D. Ashton, 2008-9
epson inkjet print
24 × 30 inches

megalopolis corridor #5
Ken D. Ashton, 2008-9
epson inkjet print
24 × 30 inches

Ken D. Ashton

Stepping Into the Stream

DYLAN KINNETT

DEEP WOODS DREAM
Dottie Campbell, 2009
pigment ink photographic print
24 × 36 inches

Stepping Into the Stream

DYLAN KINNETT

Liquid is one of the most abstract substances we know. It can take any shape, or none. It can resemble any of the other kinds of matter we encounter in the world, a solid, liquid, or gas. Water, blood, the other fluids that compose our bodies, these are universal human elements.

Liquids may be abstract in shape and form, but they have for us tangible associations. Those associations are thematic elements in the work of these four artists: **Kim Manfredi**, **Lynn Rybicki**, **Dottie Campbell**, and **Bonnie Crawford Kotula**.

Kim Manfredi is devoted to the creation of large, liquid blobs of paint. A skin forms as a still-wet sac of paint dries, looking like an organ. She presses things into the blob while it is still wet and breathes on it, causing it to become leathery. These blobs are the central figures of her compositions. By adding a new technique to the way the paint is handled, Manfredi is augmenting the type of images her work alludes to. That allusion is critical to understanding her work.

Manfredi's personal art history began at MICA, where she graduated in 1988 with a BFA in painting. Then, she became the head of a decorative painting business. It was there that she honed her mastery over different types of paint, and in a decorative context, developed a keener sense for the peculiar qualities of each medium. Now, she is an MFA candidate at the Hoffberger School of Painting. Here, she has begun to choose a history of art in which she can participate. She says that her newfound knowledge of art history and theory is critical. She says, "I would not paint what I paint without it."

In *Study of an Astronomer*, Manfredi alludes to paintings by Francis Bacon, whose paintings after *Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1946- c. 1970) allude themselves to an earlier painting by Velázquez (c. 1650). Perhaps it was the quality of Velázquez's brush strokes that attracted Bacon to reinterpret the portrait. That quality is seen in the folds of the fabric and the shadows on the wall, and, although greatly exaggerated by Bacon, is the clearest similarity between Bacon's paintings and that of Velázquez. Bacon has inspired other artists too, notably Damien Hirst, who says, "I think Bacon is one of the greatest painters of all time. He's up there with Goya, Soutine and Van Gogh: dirty painters who wrestle with the dark stuff." Hirst, like Manfredi, has chosen a history that includes Bacon. The flow of images from Velazquez, to Bacon, to Hirst definitely fit within a realm of "the dark stuff," although the imagery of each is stylistically very different.

For Manfredi, the allusion to these earlier works occurs in the imagery more than in stylistic interpretation. The allusion is clear in the relationship between the figure, which is often somewhat grotesque in her work, and the ground, which is often in a color similar to the colors Bacon uses.

In her figures, it isn't just the imagery that is bodily. In *Eating Eileen Gray* and *The Machine*, there appear to be teeth and perhaps scabs or excrement in the composition. The paint itself is flesh-like as well.

Another comment on history occurs in *Eating Eileen Gray*. Manfredi says that she often reflects on a particular person while she paints. In this case it was the famous furniture designer and architect, Eileen Gray. As a fore-runner of art deco, Gray's designs reached an unprecedented level of mass consumption, which continues to this day. In *Eating Eileen Gray*, the title alludes to that consumption. The images in the painting suggest teeth and tongues. The allusion, then, is less literal than with her allusions to Bacon. There are not any clear, visual similarities between Manfredi's painting and the work of Eileen Gray. Instead, we see forms evoking contemporary objects that are perhaps as fetishized now as Eileen Gray's brand was in her own time.

EATING EILEEN GRAY
Kim Manfredi, 2008
oil on canvas
42 × 36 inches

FLYING EILEEN GRAY
Kim Manfredi, 2008
oil on canvas
42 × 36 inches

THE MACHINE
Kim Manfredi, 2008
oil on canvas
48 × 60 inches

Lynn Rybicki says, when interviewed about the role of theory in her work, "I don't have time for that." These paintings are playful, like a whimsical dance, not contemplative. They keep the eye moving more than the mind. When asked about her influences, her list of artists goes on for several minutes.

Rybicki doesn't directly allude to any one of these influences, but her process and outlook are very much like that of the action painters of the mid-twentieth century. She paints quickly and often. She is a prolific painter. The compositions almost always begin with a large stroke of fluid acrylic paint that she has drip down the canvas. After she chooses the color for this stroke and paints it, it is allowed to dry. Soon after the paint is dry, the rest of the painting is constructed, in and around the gestural swaths of paint created during the session.

There is a similarity between this initial large stroke and Kim Manfredi's blob of paint. In both cases the aqueous forms are central to the composition. The way that the forms move as the paint dries is critical to the final outcome. In Rybicki's *Illuminance*, the composition began with what Rybicki calls a "new, exciting color," refering to the bright pink near the top of the image. In this painting, the watery strokes are reminiscent of rain, or clouds. The darker colors near the bottom of the image suggest a ground and a horizon. Associations of rain and landscape are prominent in these paintings. The large initial stroke is not controlled in its shape. The aqueous forms created by the wet paint are anything but geometric.

In *After the Rain*, the movement and drying of the blue paint is similar to the way water and clouds behave. Small patches of warmer colors seem to be breaking through the monochromatic blue, as sunlight through a spent cloud. A warm circle looks as though it could be the sun.

The circle is a prominent image in Rybicki's work. In a field of colors that reads almost like a landscape, is a circle a reference to a heavenly body, or is it something more? A circle, or in some cases the suggestion of a circle, has a strengthening effect on the composition.

Other artists have focused exclusively on the circle, such as Kenneth Noland, who uses the circle as the basis for an interplay of colors. Rybicki's circles serve a similar purpose, in that they help create an interplay, but this interplay is between forms and textures. The circle is a deliberate construction. The quality of the line around the circle suggests that it is being emphasized for compositional purposes.

These shapes are "encouraged" out of Rybicki's earlier, more watery strokes. They are emphasized by the lines around them. This is most clear in *Flowers*. It is as though the flowers were cultivated out of a fertile, moist field of blue and green paint.

With only a little bit of help from the titles, most viewers can recognize this cultivation process. Rybicki's visual themes are direct, accessible, and natural. There are no underlying concepts to these paintings other than those the viewer chooses to bring to them, just as a natural landscape is merely a landscape, there to be seen. Again, these paintings are about the flow of the eye, not the mind.

ILLUMINANCE
Lynn Rybicki, 2007
acrylic on canvas
40 × 30 inches

AFTER THE RAIN
Lynn Rybicki, 2006
acrylic on canvas
40 × 30 inches

FLOWERS
Lynn Rybicki, 2008
acrylic on canvas
14 × 11 inches

CAROUSEL
Lynn Rybicki, 2008
acrylic on canvas
14 × 11 inches

Dottie Campbell has an eye for the details of everyday life – details that usually go unseen.

Campbell is a photographer, but her photographs feel right at home among the abstract paintings of the other artists. Campbell's photographs usually involve reflections in water and ice, captured from the fleeting moments in which the subjects appear in nature.

Reflections are a prominent element in these photographs. The reflection is in water, which, unlike the metal in Campbell's *Iridic Impression*, has depth to it. That depth adds another layer to the experience of "really seeing." There is usually a leaf, or a twig, touching the surface of the water. It reminds you that this is the surface of the water, but beyond that surface is a disoriented space made of a reflection superimposed upon the bottom of the water.

In life, when we encounter a real object, not a photograph, we place it in our minds as an object. We name it. That is a tree. That is a truck. We determine its utility to us in the moment, become aware of its presence, and move on. Often we do not truly consider what it looks like.

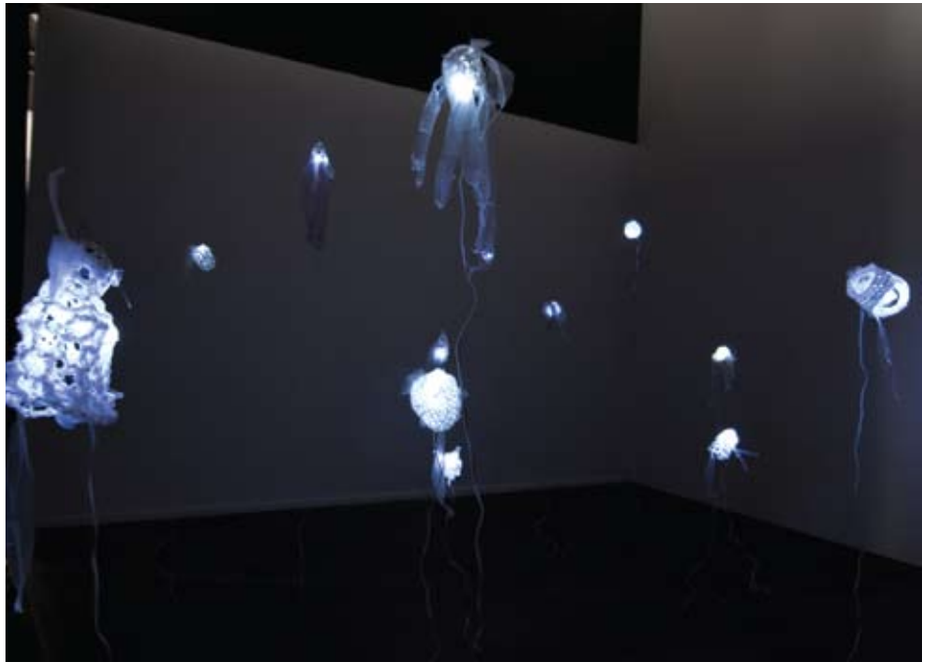
In a photograph, we may be tempted to do the same thing, but Campbell's photographs won't let us name what we see, so we can't move on; we're trapped. She stresses the importance of "really looking" and adds, "I want people to really look at it. I want to make people stop, consider: what is it made of?" At first glance, her images may not appear to be photographs at all, since they don't always depict a recognizable object. These photographs can be considered abstract for that reason. They are about color, and field, and form, like a painting. Recognition of the object takes time, the way it can take time to recall a dream or to make sense of it. It is an image, and it is something familiar, but it can't quite be identified, or dismissed. The experience forces the viewer to look hard, to look again, to ask "what do I see?" and to look in new ways.

In all of these photographs, that object recognition becomes relatively straightforward, with patience, in much the same way that the organic forms in Rybicki's paintings make clear associations. Campbell's *Iridic Impression* is an exception to that rule. It is the most challenging of her photographs here. There is no clear figure or ground. There is nothing in the composition that suggests a space or an object, except for the fact that the image depicts the surface of an object. Which object? In an example of what Campbell calls a patina painting, the subject is the rusty metal body of a decaying automobile. However, you may not be able to determine that from the image. This indeterminate quality is what makes it the most successfully abstract image of the group.

The effect of all of these photographs is to keep you really looking until you can identify the objects before you, and then to continue looking, to recall that feeling of recognition.

IRIDIC IMPRESSION
Dottie Campbell, 2009
pigment ink photographic print
36 × 24 inches

THE WATER DANCE OF TREES
Dottie Campbell, 2008
pigment ink photographic print
36 × 24 inches



28 / 29 SUFFUSE/SUFFICE
Bonnie Crawford Kotula, 2008
electrical circuitry, industrial plastic, produce packaging
dimensions vary

Bonnie Crawford Kotula

Bonnie Crawford Kotula creates sculptures that combine lights and found objects. An encounter with them is like struggling to predict, precisely, the flicker of candlelight: the height of the flame, its intensity, the way it moves in the air. What is going to happen next? Is there a pattern here? How does this work?

Kotula generally works in two modes. The more sculptural works are familiar territory for her. The more painterly canvas works, or "studies," are more experimental for her at the moment. She describes a progression in which her experimental work becomes integrated into more familiar territory, and then she will begin new experiments. In any case, the common element among all of these works is, of course, electric lights.

Kotula is fascinated with living organs and the workings of bioelectricity within them. Her sculptures are in some ways inspired by a recent, traumatic medical experience. She suffered from a condition known as tachycardia, which causes the heart to have an unusually fast beat. The condition is caused by a surplus of electricity supplied by the vagus nerve to the heart. A surgery was performed to correct the condition. Kotula was connected to a variety of electrical instruments to monitor her vital signs during the operation, while parts of her nervous tissue were cauterized to slow the flow of electricity to her heart. The surgery was successful, and it left the artist with a new appreciation of life, and bioelectricity.

Given the somewhat traumatic inspiration for these sculptures, they are surprisingly tranquil. She could easily have made them disturbing or horrific, since the idea of bioelectricity easily conjures associations with things like Frankenstein's monster.

In *Suffuse/Suffice*, crocheted plastic bags with tiny lights inside of them are suspended from the ceiling at various heights, in a darkened space. The lights brighten and darken at various speeds and intensities. Some blink. Others seem to fade in and out. Others are rarely illuminated. They seem like underwater creatures, deep in the ocean, communicating with each other via bioluminescence. One begins to suspect that being near these objects affects them, as breathing can affect the undulations of a flame.

Her studies are more like preserved specimens, pinned down by a collector. Glowing orbs are presented with their wires, batteries, and other working parts exposed, as though on display for scientific inquiry. The organic quality of these sculptures is occasionally literal, as evidenced by a work in progress at Kotula's studio. The found materials for this work include organic matter, such as a potato.

The potato acts as a resistor to the electric current. Over time, as the potato dehydrates, it loses its ability to conduct electricity and the current of electricity slows. This process can take several weeks. During that time, there is visual variety, an important element for any abstract composition. In this case,

that variety is arranged across time, which adds a new level of conceptual variety as well. There's an ominous overtone to this potato as well.

The potato is alive, so in this case the sculptures do more than to imitate living organisms – some contain living things. Over time, the potato dies. This organic form is abstracted in a different way. It is not a semblance of life. It is life, but that life is given a new context by the sculpture. And what a new context it is. Who ever heard of a potato that lights up!

These sculptures engender in the viewer a sense of wonder, much like the awe that can be inspired by nature itself. Some questions arise like, "how does this work?" But even as these questions subside as their answers become apparent, a lingering fascination remains.

These four artists share a common thematic element, but their histories differ. Art history is perhaps more a fluid progression than a linear one. There are multiple art histories. These histories can be chosen, or ignored, by an artist. They can be entered mid-stream. An understanding of this history – and of which history is important – can help to inform an experience of the artwork.

Unless something new occurs or is made, there is no real participation in history. It isn't enough merely to plot one's work into a system of influences. T.S. Eliot said that an artist "must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same."

To find the addition that Manfredi brings to her chosen history, look to her use of the paint itself. Lynn Rybicki participates in the tradition of action painting; look for gestural strokes that coax form from chaos. Dottie Campbell is also informed by a tradition of abstract painting; her photographs are surprisingly like paintings. Bonnie Kotula's sculptures are a distant descendant from the early expressionist, figural sculptures of artists like Rodin, but they are expressionist in that they relate to the artist's fears and emotions.

SLIP STREAM
Dottie Campbell, 2009
pigment ink photographic print
36 × 24 inches

Biographies

CRITIC, WRITERS, ARTISTS

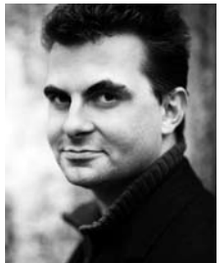
SUFFUSE / SUFFICE
Bonnie Crawford Kotula, 2008
electrical circuitry, industrial plastic, produce packaging
dimensions vary

VINCENT KATZ

Vincent Katz is an art critic, poet, and curator. Katz curated an exhibition on Black Mountain College for the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, whose catalogue, *Black Mountain College: Experiment In Art*, was published by MIT Press in 2002. In 2008, he curated *Street Dance: The New York Photographs of Rudy Burckhardt* for the Museum of the City of New York. Katz writes frequently on contemporary art and has published essays or articles on the work of Ghada Amer & Reza Farkondeh, Jennifer Bartlett, Jim Dine, Kiki Smith, and Cy Twombly. Vincent Katz and Vivien Bittencourt's documentary, *Kiki Smith: Squatting The Palace*, was screened at Film Forum in New York, at the 25TH Montreal International Festival of Films on Art, and at festivals in Milan, Naples and Florence. Katz is the author of ten books of poetry, including *Judge* (2007, in collaboration with Wayne Gonzales), and *Alcuni Telefonini* (2008, in collaboration with Francesco Clemente). Katz won ALTA's 2005 National Translation Award for his book of translations from Latin, *The Complete Elegies of Sextus Propertius* (2004, Princeton University Press). He was awarded a Rome Prize Fellowship in Literature at the American Academy in Rome for 2001-2002.

MARTIN L. JOHNSON

Martin L. Johnson was born in Ft. Benning, GA in 1979. By day, he is a doctoral candidate in Cinema Studies at New York University, New York, NY where he works on local film production and exhibition in the United States between 1912 and 1948. By night, he is a regular contributor to the Baltimore *City Paper*, where he writes film and art criticism as well as feature stories on everything from video game music to radical newspapers. After graduating from Brown University, Providence, RI with an AB in Modern Culture and Media in 2001, he moved to Greybull, Wyoming, a town of 2,000 people, where he was the editor of the weekly newspaper. From there, he went on to earn an MA in Folklore from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, which led to his discovery of legions of "home-talent" films produced by itinerant filmmakers in the early decades of the 20th Century.



DYLAN KINNETT

Dylan Kinnett was born in Bloomington, IL in 1980 and received a BA in writing from Maryville College, Maryville, TN in 2004. He has written a stage play about a street preacher, a hypertext novella, several published short stories, and the occasional limerick on a bathroom wall. He is also an accomplished performance poet. Kinnett is the founding editor of *Infinity's Kitchen*, a graphic literary journal of experimental literature. He works as the manager of web and social media initiatives at The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, MD.

Biographies

CRITIC, WRITERS, ARTISTS

KEN D. ASHTON

Ken D. Ashton was born in Ft. Lewis, WA in 1963 and received a BFA from James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA in 1986. His work is part of several public and private collections, including: The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and The Washington Post, Washington, DC. Ashton has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions in Washington, DC, which include such venues as: Civilian Art Projects; Flashpoint; Goethe-Institute; Signal 66; Troyer Fitzpatrick Lassman Gallery; and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Ashton is a 2006 recipient of the District of Columbia Small Project Grant awarded by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and was awarded an Arlington County Project Grant, by the Arlington County Arts Commission in 1993.

JESSIE BOYKO

Jessica Boyko was born in Evanston, IL in 1981 and received a BFA from Boston University, Boston, MA in 2004. She earned an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD in 2008, where she was the recipient of a Merit Scholarship from the Hoffberger School of Painting. Boyko has exhibited in several galleries within Maryland, including: Rosenberg Gallery, Goucher College, Towson, MD; and the Decker Gallery, Fox Gallery, and Pinkard Gallery of Maryland Institute College of Art. Recently, Boyko's work was included in a publication of *New American Paintings*, Mid-Atlantic edition. Boyko's work is owned by various private collectors throughout the nation.

DOTTIE CAMPBELL

Dottie Campbell was born in Trenton, NJ in 1952. She earned a BA in Visual Arts from Goucher College, Towson, MD in 1974, before earning a Certificate of Art in Photography from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, in 1978. She has exhibited her work internationally in the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum, Tokyo, Japan, and locally at Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD and Johns Hopkins University, Montgomery County Campus, Rockville, MD. Her photography is included in the private collection of the Hilton Hotel Corporation. Campbell's work is not limited to the medium of photography, as she also works in the fields of painting, fiber crafts, and jewelry design. Campbell is a 2007 First Place Prize recipient in the Landscape Category of the National Geographic Photography Contest.

BERNHARD HILDEBRANDT

Bernhard Hildebrandt was born in Fitchburg, MA in 1959. He received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI in 1984, before earning an MFA from the Hoffberger School of Painting at Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD in 1995. Hildebrandt's work has appeared in several solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally, a selection of which includes: C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD; Lenore Gray Gallery, Providence, RI; and Gallery Olym, Tokyo, Japan. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions throughout the United States including: the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; Feigen Contemporary, New York, NY; and The Lab@ Belmar, Lakewood, CO. A 2008 recipient of the Trawick Award given through the Trawick Foundation, Hildebrandt has also been recognized by the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts and by the Cooper Union School of Art, New York, NY.

GIL JAWETZ

Gil Jawetz was born in Phoenix, AZ in 1974, and received a BA in Psychology from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD in 1995. Jawetz has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions along the East Coast, including such varied spaces in Baltimore, MD as The Yellow Dog Tavern, Angelfalls Studios II, Gallery 321, Maryland Art Place and Antreasian Gallery. Other venues include: Slope Cellars, Brooklyn, NY; New York Studio Gallery, New York, NY; and Art for a Cause Gallery, Miami, FL. Jawetz regularly donates his work to animal rescue charities and published a book in 2008 entitled *Human(e) Beings*, which features his figurative paintings of people and animals.

BONNIE CRAWFORD KOTULA

Bonnie Crawford Kotula was born in Columbia, SC in 1980 and received a BA from the University of Maryland, College Park, MD in 2001, before earning an MFA from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD in 2008. Kotula has had solo exhibitions at the Greenbelt Community Center, Greenbelt, MD, and a site-specific installation at School 33 Art Center, Baltimore, MD. Recently, Kotula's work has appeared in several group exhibitions in the Mid-Atlantic region, in venues which include: Artscape, Baltimore, MD; The Gallery at Delaware County Community College, Media, Pennsylvania; and the Historical Electronics Museum, Linthicum, MD. Internationally, Kotula has participated in a group exhibition at the Anna Akhmatova Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia, and nationally at the Transformer Gallery, Washington, DC. In 2007, Kotula was awarded the RTKL Fellowship by the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and is a 2001 recipient of the Colonel Wharton Award given by the University of Maryland, College Park.

KIM MANFREDI

Kim Manfredi was born in Washington, DC in 1964. She earned a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD in 1998 and proceeded to earn an MFA from MICA's Hoffberger School of Painting in 2008. A Semi-Finalist of the prestigious 2009 Walter and Janet Sondheim Prize, Manfredi is also a two-time recipient of the Hoffberger and Polovoy Merit Scholarship in 2007 and 2008. Manfredi's work has appeared in numerous exhibitions throughout Maryland, including such varied venues as: the Howard County Arts Council, Maryland Art Place, Sheppard Pratt, Creative Alliance, School 33, Paperworks Gallery, Maryland Historical Society, Galerie Françoise e.s.f, and Gallery International.

LYNN RYBICKI

Lynn Rybicki was born in Oak Park, IL in 1951, just outside Chicago. She attended Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, earning a Concentration in Painting in 1981. Rybicki went on to earn a BS in Music Education at Towson University, Towson, MD in 2001. A featured artist for the Maryland State Arts Council Visual Artists' Registry in 2004, Rybicki has exhibited her work throughout the state, including in a recent solo exhibition at the James L. Pierce Gallery, Lutherville, MD; and in national juried exhibitions at Villa Julie College, Baltimore, MD; Circle Gallery of the MD Federation of Art, Annapolis, MD; and Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD. Rybicki's work is included in private collections throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

STAFF

Julie Ann Cavnor, Executive Director
Jessica D'Argenio, Development Assistant
Esther Kim, Program Assitant
Sofia Rutka, MSAC Registry Coordinator

MISSION

Maryland Art Place (MAP) is a not-for-profit center for contemporary art established in 1981 to: develop and maintain a dynamic environment for artists to exhibit their work, nurture and promote new ideas and new forms, and facilitate rewarding exchanges between artists and the public through educational leadership. In addition to presenting an average of ten exhibitions annually in its downtown gallery space, MAP organizes traveling exhibitions, and offers a variety of educational and performance opportunities.

DESIGN: Glenn Dellon / Dellon Design

LAVA LAMP / LEFT
Kim Manfredi, 2008
oil on wood
8 × 10 inches

MEGALOPOLIS CORRIDOR #2 / COVERS
Ken D. Ashton, 2008-9
epson inkjet print
24 × 30 inches

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8 Market Place, Suite 100, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

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