

# MANIFEST

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY  
AND DRAWING CENTER

# EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

*rites of passage 2006 part I*

## *Take a look around...*

Keith Hammersmith talks about his work in the context of formal aesthetics. What does that mean? In art, there are five elements that can be used to create and manipulate an image, and to control how the viewer looks at the piece. These Elements of Design are known as:

- Color
- Shape
- Line
- Value
- Texture

The Elements of Design work together to create Seven Principles of Organization. The Principles of Organization affect the overall **Unity** of the piece, that is, a balanced ratio between harmony and variety that create an overall sense of oneness. These principles are:

- Balance
- Proportion
- Dominance
- Movement
- Economy
- Harmony
- Variety

Now that you know what the Elements of Design and Principles of Organization are, consider them in the context of Hammersmith's piece. Begin with the Elements of Design, and identify how each element is used in this piece. Then using those answers, try to make sense of the principles of organization. To do this, you might begin by thinking of words or phrases that come to mind when you first look at the piece. For example, a word that may come to mind is "clutter." Now what Principle of Organization does this word refer to? The **variety** of materials and repetition of shape may be examples of what makes us feel this way! Continue this for each word that comes to mind. In the end, you should be able to answer how Hammersmith achieves Unity within this piece.

## *Think about it...*

Take it further than the formal aesthetics. Hammersmith uses wallpaper to construct this piece. What is the traditional use of wallpaper? Knowing that, do you think of this work any differently? Try stepping into the artist's shoes. What might Hammersmith want to say by using the materials in this way?

## *Take a look around...*

Next look at Kate Holterhoff's paintings. Think of a traditional portrait that you have seen before. How would you compare that portrait to these paintings? You may want to compare how the information within the two types of portraiture is presented.



What kind of comparisons did you make? Holterhoff says that “the tendency towards perfect draftsmanship in a composition, anatomical accuracy, and photo-realistic rendering of forms is regressive” to her. She leans towards abstraction as a form of expression.

How has Holterhoff chosen to portray these people? What connections do you see between the people in these paintings? You might consider how they are painted, how they are posed, or what they are doing. For example, in each painting, the eyes of the figure have been obscured. If you want to know why this is so, think about what eyes typically mean or represent. Think about what people associate with the eyes. Now, consider why Holterhoff may be obscuring them.

At the same time, you may also want to consider the Elements of Design and Principles of Organization. These concepts are important foundational elements of any composition. What is your reaction to the colors and shapes used here? What is the relationship between the figure and these elements?

***Think about it...***

You have considered the subject matter and form of the piece. Now consider the content, that is, what the piece is actually about. Holterhoff’s figures seem to be emanating from the background. Just as the Elements of Design and Principles of Organization are a part of the artist’s visual vocabulary, the fusion of figure and background is as well. What might this fusion represent? What else do these pieces make you think about?

***Take a look around...***

When you think of the human body, what ideas and/or images come to mind? Make a list of these things.

Now take a look at Ai-ling Chang’s photographic works. These works are a series of reconstructions of the torso of the human body. Look at Assembled No. 2. Chang says that she constructs unfamiliar images out of familiar ones in order to make people see again for the first time. What do you see in this image?



Compare Assembled No. 2 to Assembled No. 3. Make a list of the similarities and differences between these two pieces. Assembled No. 3 has a significant shift in color choice. In fact, it is different in color than all the other pieces in the gallery. How does the change in color change the way you interpret the image? Does it make it more recognizable for what it is, or less so? What may be the reason for this shift in color?

***Think about it...***

When you think of the human body, what do you immediately imagine? Make a list of these things, and look over them. Although Chang is interested in how we see the human body, something of significant importance is the act of seeing itself. How do we see, and why do we see the way we do?

***Consider this...***

Compare the work of the three artists. What do they have in common? How are they different? All three artists use fragmentation to create their images. How does the use of fragmentation work for the artists in the context of their work and ideas?