

# MANIFEST

v27



**rites of passage 2008**



# MANIFEST

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY  
AND DRAWING CENTER

volume 27

**rites of passage 2008**

*MANIFEST is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

**MANIFEST VOLUME TWENTY-SEVEN**

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**Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center**

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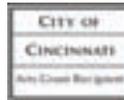
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# rites of passage 2008

April 18 - May 23

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Jen Adrion, Columbus College of Art and Design

Liz Beard, Miami University

Amanda Foran, Auburn University

Hei B. Ahn\*, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Joanna Lord, Miami University

Michael Meadors\*, East Carolina University

Jahaziel Minor, Art Academy of Cincinnati

Whitney Sage, Miami University

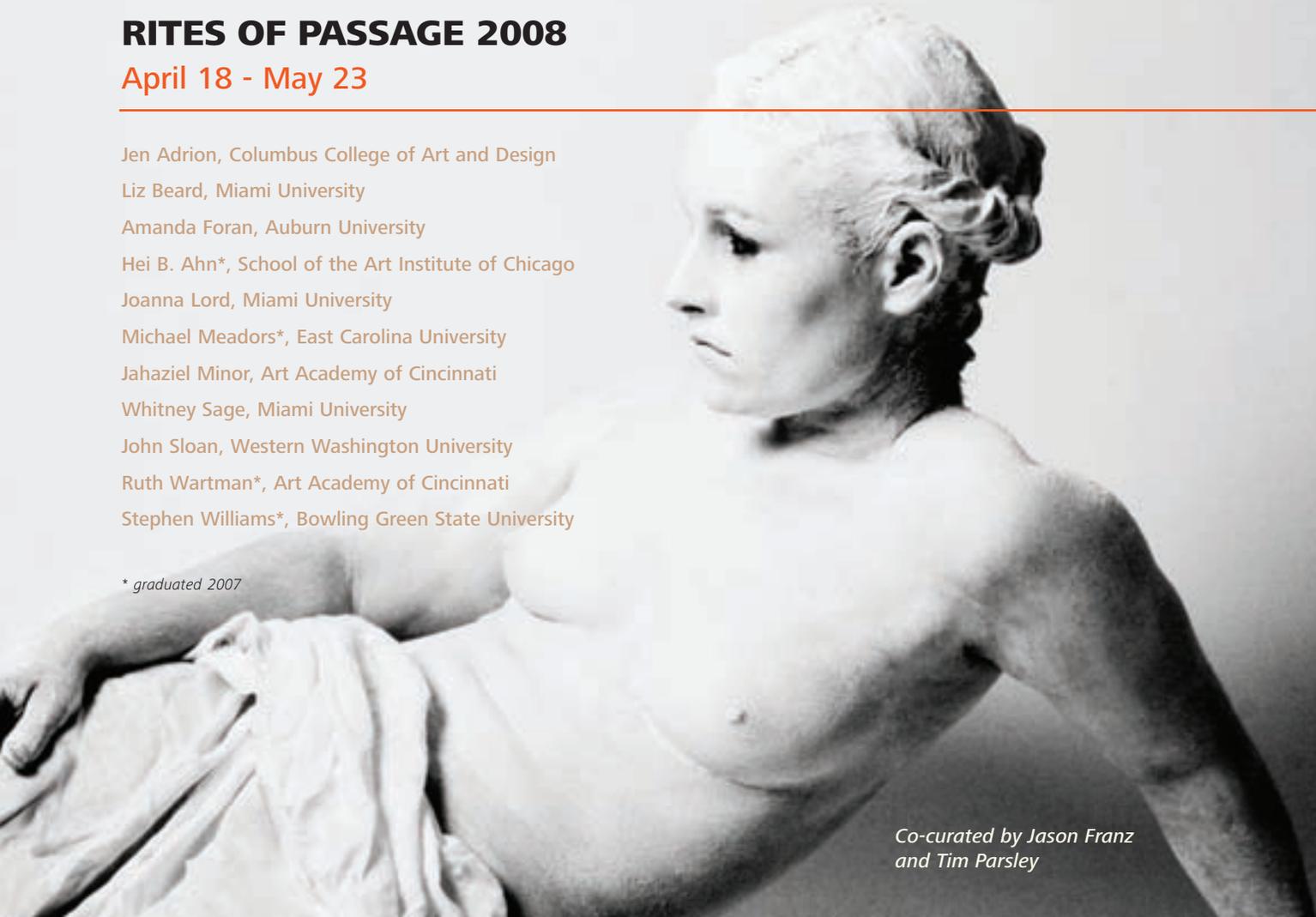
John Sloan, Western Washington University

Ruth Wartman\*, Art Academy of Cincinnati

Stephen Williams\*, Bowling Green State University

\* graduated 2007

Co-curated by Jason Franz  
and Tim Parsley



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Conceived and initiated in 2005, The Rites of Passage exhibits were developed in order to support student excellence by offering a public venue for the display of advanced 'creative research'; to promote young artists as they transition into their professional careers; and to bring the positive creative energies of academic institutions together in one neutral place.

With this fourth annual installment of the Rites series, Manifest now offers a \$300 best of show award to encourage and support excellence at this career level. Rites 2008 was open to students graduating or expecting to graduate in 2007, 2008, or 2009.

Over 360 submissions were received from 47 students from 25 colleges. The final selection includes 22 works by eleven artists from nine national college programs.



## Curatorial Statement

The artists represented in Manifest's fourth annual Rites of Passage student exhibition evidence a commitment to their practice that showcases the best an art student (or recent graduate) can achieve in the often confusing and whirlwind years of an undergraduate art degree. After reviewing a record number of entries from 25 undergraduate programs across the country, two intriguing themes arose in the works chosen for this exhibition.

First, a focus on the figure and portraiture, which ranges from the larger confrontational portraits of Liz Beard and Whitney Sage to the smaller narrative and socially-charged works of Michael Meadors and John Sloan. These artists are adding their efforts to the resilient and relevant tradition of figurative art.

A second theme that emerged from these works is that of motion and flight. Many of the works evidence dynamic movement depicted through abstracted architectural forms, swarming birds or the simple but elegant twirl of a young girl's hair. Seen together, the works spin around the room like so many tops set in motion by the flick of the artist's wrists.

These two themes, figures and motion, seem fitting for artists working on the front end of a life-long career. Anyone who works with the figure or portraiture knows the reflective, self-revealing potential of this kind of work. Portraits, even of people we do not know, often operate as mirrors. They offer a chance to reflect on our own identities-in-the-



making, something many of these artists have been doing quite routinely during the formative years of art training. Jahaziel Minor's Self-Portrait, with his pensive gaze and firm grip on the chair before a wall of famous works of art, invites us into the tense but necessary introspection of a young artist finding his voice in an ever-widening art world. Sage's Self-Portrait (dumb blonde) offers a more playful look at this initiation as we see her sitting awkwardly, studying intently a book entitled "how to paint" that she's holding upside-down.

These are years of dynamic motion as well, traversing back and forth between ideas and mediums, dead ends and new discoveries, until ultimately wings catch air and flight occurs. The movement of many of these works metaphorically parallels the dizzying, initial "take-off" into a career of art-making. Stephen Williams' large wooden sculpture, Lure, whips around the space, almost ready to lift off the ground and fly away from the gallery, were it not for the heavy anchor of stone holding it to the earth.

Rites of Passage includes artists worth following who are looking deeply and creating profoundly. Their work challenges condescending stereotypes of a "student exhibition" and gives the viewer the experience of art that is both contemporary and sophisticated. We are proud to showcase this extraordinary group of emerging artists as they launch into their promising future.

Tim Parsley

Assistant Director and Co-Curator for Rites of Passage





Jen Adrion, Columbus College of Art and Design  
***Highs and Lows***, latex on 12 panels, 48" x 36" x 2", 2008



## **Jen Adrion**

### Columbus College of Art and Design

Described as the art and science of preparing information so that it can be used by human beings with efficiency and effectiveness, information design is a broad term that includes specialties in many areas, including the visual representation of data.

My experience in the design industry has taught me to arrange data so that it serves as a descriptive or persuasive instrument. I carefully select data sets that illustrate my views on consumption, urban sprawl and renewal, socioeconomic and class divisions within cities, and current events.

Through printmaking, painting, mixed-media, and sculpture, I interpret these raw data sets into functional, attractive graphic forms. I make informed, deliberate aesthetic decisions that allow data and visually appealing design to coexist. The data points represented in my work always remain factually accurate, but are simplified to allow natural graphic patterns to emerge.

“Highs and Lows” charts the average high and low temperatures recorded in Columbus, Ohio during each month of the year. Length and color are used as descriptive elements, with each inch of length representing two degrees and each color representing a range of four degrees. Through this visualization, the cycle of Columbus’ climate becomes easy to understand.

## **Liz Beard**

### Miami University

At the start of this artistic endeavor, I hosted three informal photographed interviews with my brother, mom, and dad. The pictures taken documented various emotions characteristic to the individuals I interviewed. The photos I chose to paint capture moments significant to the relationship I have with that person. My decision to paint them four feet by six feet allows the viewer to concentrate on the importance of this moment. They are forced to consider it to a greater degree because of the size of the canvas.

For me, painting is a means of self-exploration and a challenging, yet fulfilling way to communicate. Painting as well as family is central to my development as an artist and person. My interaction with paint as well as my interaction with my parents and brother are never consistent, but will consistently develop, change, and grow. I have documented a moment in both.





Liz Beard, Miami University  
***Mother***, oil on canvas, 72" x 48", 2008



Amanda Foran, Auburn University  
***Greek Sculpture***, digital photography, 20" x 30", 2007



**Amanda Foran**  
Auburn University

We live a world full of ideas and depictions of people who represent the modern epitome of perfection. Western standards of the ideal have changed so drastically that a person trying to achieve a classical pose is virtually unable to do so in lieu of today's airbrushed models. The response to having one's picture taken is to react, not to the directions of posing as a Greek statue, but as a model for a magazine spread. These models are rarely comparable to average, healthy people; this woman is made to feel comfortable in her own body by posing as classical perfection. The presence of the female figure in contemporary art is questioned and brought to the surface as the model appears both conscious of the gaze, yet proud and uncompromising.

## Hei B. Ahn

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

I am interested in something that does not occur more than once or something that I can't make an exact definition of again. I am making the traces of life with my brush. Nobody can experience my moment, exchange with others, or have the same moment as someone else.

Pure psychology in my life is the pattern of expression in my art. My feelings and emotions show how my life streams. The patterns of them illustrate something is coming to pass, search, or grasp a moment close to something specific. Psychology never stops flowing at any moment even when I am unconscious. It is honest and expressive at the same time it is veiled. This is why I slowly and sometimes dramatically transfer my every ongoing neurotic impulse on a canvas or paper. I like to capture my psychology along every moment in time which will never be repeated in the same way. In my art all lines, shapes, marks, movements, and colors make an endlessly fluctuating world and I become a wanderer in that world.

No.24 and No.25 reflect the flow of psychology very well with the mood of watercolor. Senses of roving, fastening, tightening, and varying in unstable moments are well transmitted to the final moment.





**No. 24**, watercolor on paper, 18" x 24", 2008



Hei B. Ahn, School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
**No. 25**, watercolor on paper, 18" x 24", 2008



*Untitled*, acrylic and oil on panel, 24" x 24", 2008



Joanna Lord, Miami University  
**Untitled**, acrylic and oil on panel, 24" x 24", 2008

## **Joanna Lord**

### Miami University

Since the invention of the wheel, everything human beings have built has become a mirror of our existence, built to our scale, and meant to serve our wants and needs. As our codependence with machines grows, it is difficult to see either system survive without the other, but these works envision a legacy of mechanized systems free of their indentured servitude. Although machines retain their pre-existing identities, there is no longer a need to depend on a human scale. Parts can be moved around for efficiency, wires no longer need to be hidden in the wall, and eventually any semblance of human design disappears. Since we cannot place ourselves in the mechanical environment, these works become theater—machines happily perform tasks for us, though we may only watch. Envisioning machines work for their own fulfillment is entertaining in its absurdity, but also alienating and tragic in its futility. These works describe a legacy that is beginning to move past our own memory, into a time when we cannot enjoy what we create, nor control what we can build.



*Untitled*, acrylic on panel, 36" x 36", 2007

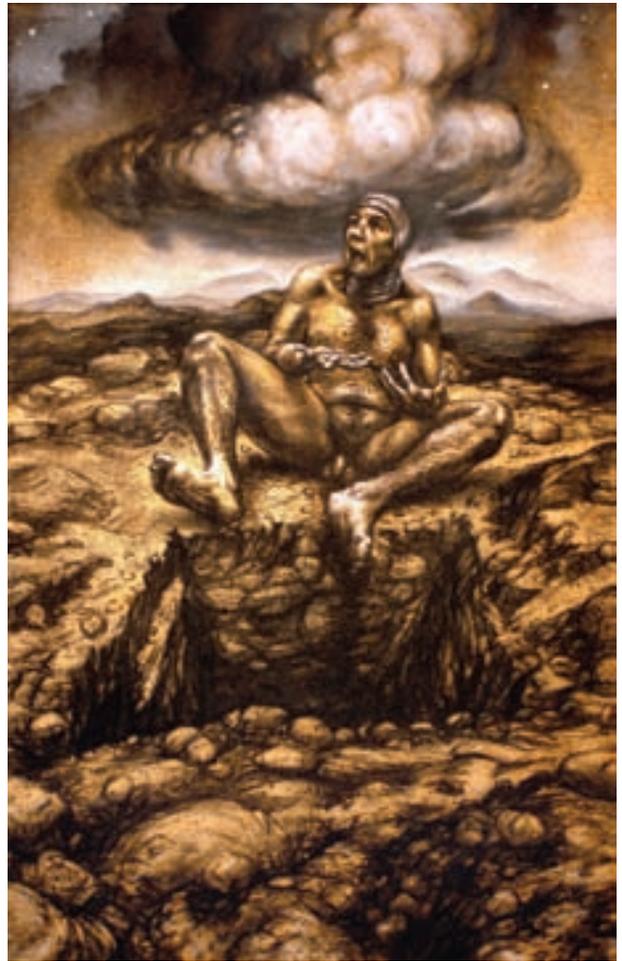


**Michael Meadors**  
East Carolina University

We are all lost souls in purgatory, freed to a lifetime in the grey abyss. Isolated and distracted by a consuming culture, we roam the streets searching for connection. These works are an exploration of man's tenuous relationship with the natural world and our place within the environment.

***The Coming Storm***

black and white charcoal on acrylic-toned Arches 180lb stretched water-color paper, 17" x 11", 2007



***No Matter How You Dress It Up***

black and white charcoal on acrylic-toned Arches 180lb stretched water-color paper, 17" x 11", 2007



## Jahaziel Minor

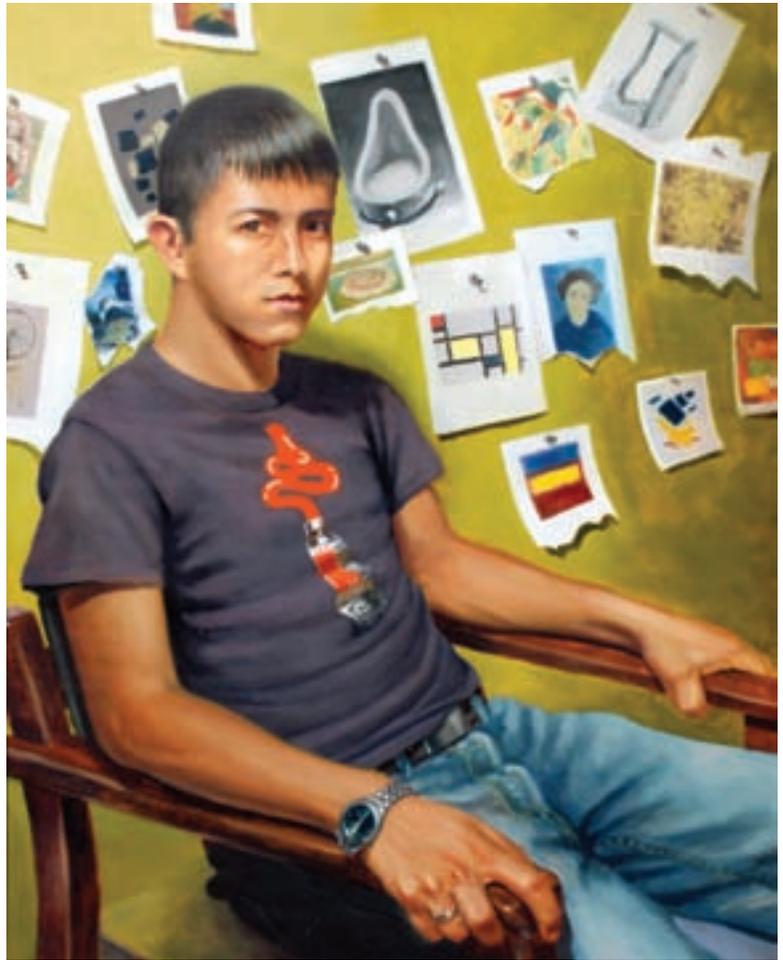
### Art Academy of Cincinnati

I have always been drawn to realism in art. The connection between viewer and subject is universally understood when looking at a portrayal of something from the natural world. My goal as an art student has been to concentrate on mastering techniques in painting and drawing in order to better capture the world around me. I work primarily in oils, focusing on portraiture and figurative works that have narrative qualities. The major objective of my work is to make traditional and/or classical paintings/illustrations with contemporary themes.

David is a colored pencil drawing composed of a plaster cast, potted plant, and drapery. The subjects are positioned against a brightly lit window partially darkened by pulled shades. The challenge of capturing subtleties in light and the cast's surface appealed to me as a draftsman. This drawing was intended to function as an exercise to push my technical ability in regard to rendering and accuracy of form.

Self-Portrait is an oil painting that divulges a little of my struggle as an academically minded art student in a post-modern art world. I am interested in how the viewer relates to the art works referenced in the background in context to the figure in the foreground. My posture and expression are telling of a silent struggle bubbling below the surface. The background begins to function as a doorway into my thoughts, and questions as an artist.

**David**, colored pencil on paper, 36" x 24", 2006



*Self Portrait*, oil on panel, 30" x 24", 2007



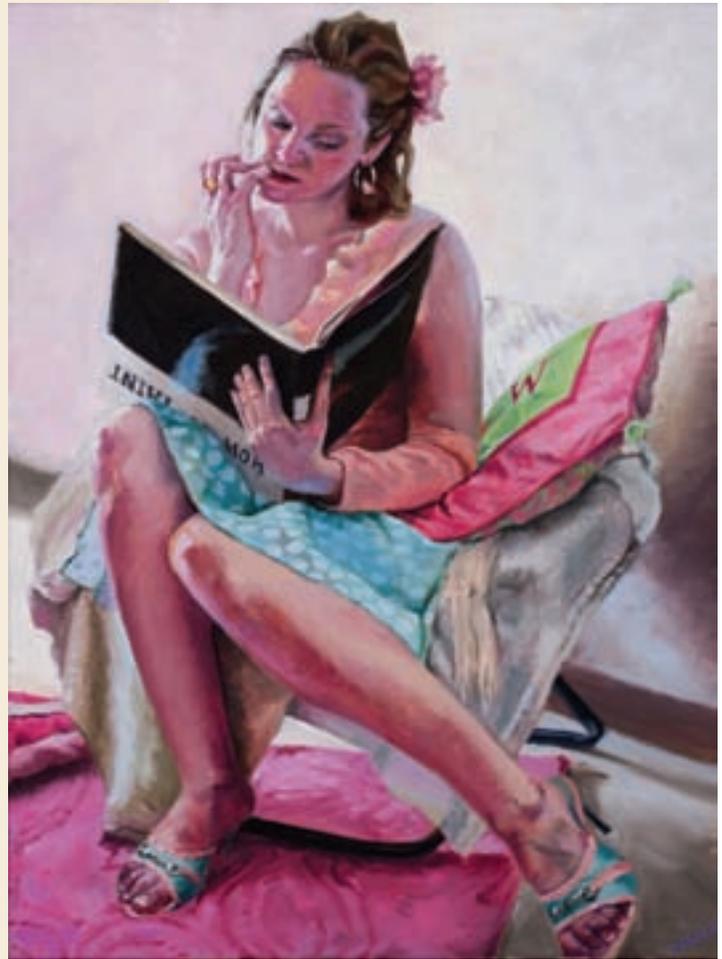
## **Whitney Sage** Miami University

The principal objective in the creation of my figurative work is to establish a strong personal connection between the viewer and the subject. While from separate series of works, these two works together best represent my exploitation of the figure and portrait to convey my own perceptions and emotional attachments to the characters represented, while still allowing them to stand on their own and perhaps incite other individual reactions from unattached onlookers. These paintings approach personal expression by means of completely different approaches, one utilizing theatrical staging and costume and the other by means of expressive mark.

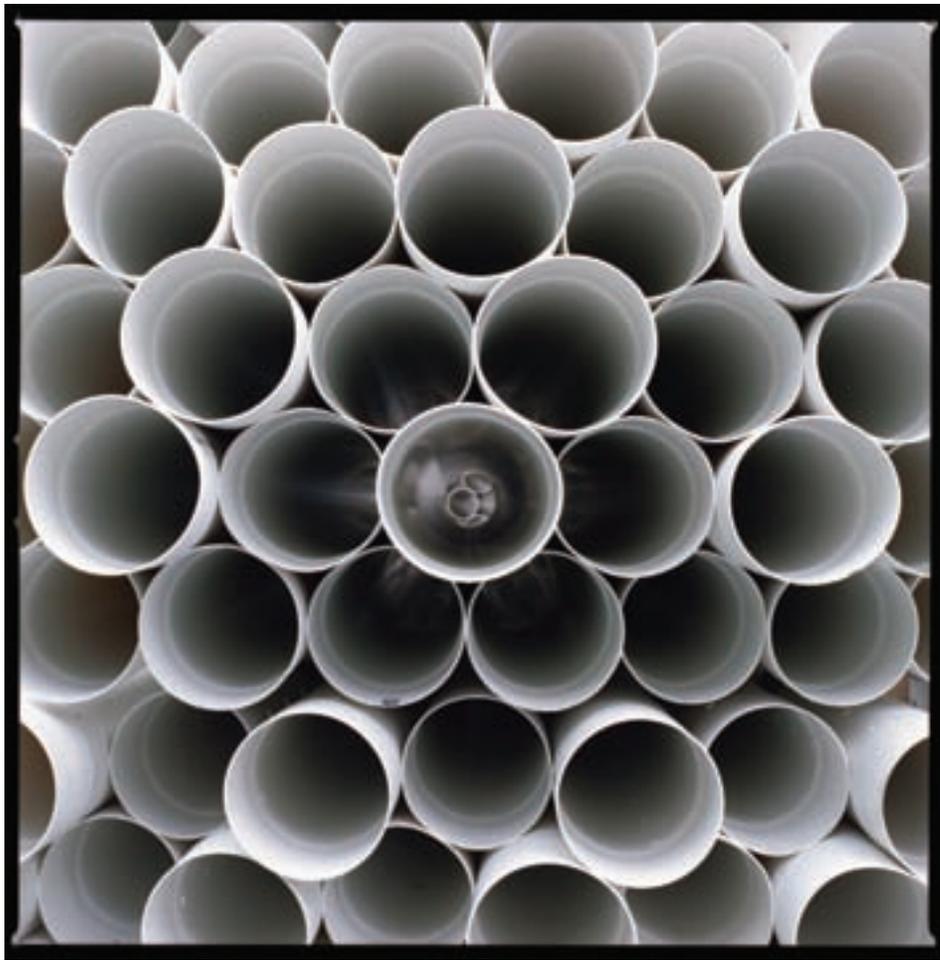
***Randy***, oil on panel, 60" x 53", 2007

In the work *Self Portrait (Dumb Blonde)*, I am addressing my own issues with stereotypes and creating a visual exploration into my own perceptions and anxieties. Having being kidded about being a “dumb blonde” for much of my younger years, I have always had some personal issues with insecurity and the how others perceive me. I meet my fear of misconception head on in this work as I juxtapose my own body into an atmosphere begging for stereotypical ridicule. I staged the clothes, body position and the color palette to strengthen the idea of super-femininity and frivolousness. The upside-down painting book in the figures lap also hints at a lack of intelligence and unawareness. The humor in the piece thus reveals itself in the idea that I am creating a meticulously rendered self-portrait that successfully conveys my self-doubts regarding my ability to paint. However, when you get past the humor of the piece, the idea of uncertainty and self-unawareness becomes prevalent. While I have always fought to stand out and go beyond stereotypical expectations, there has always been a lurking sense of self-doubt. While the clothes were individually chosen to receive a specific stereotypical reaction, they were also chosen from my wardrobe and are ones I have worn on several occasions. Feminine pinks throughout the piece were used to achieve a specific response, however they are found in pillows from my bed and the rug on my floor. While I am asking certain questions about how I am being perceived by others, I am also responsible for constructing the judgments that I fear.

In *Randy*, a large portrait I created of my brother, I approach the idea of personal expression through the portrait quite differently. In this painting I use aggressive and vibrant marks to speak to my brother’s young and spirited nature. The pose and lighting was chosen to convey both a sense of wisdom and adventure. My brother has always been a role model for me and I really wanted to use scale to give the viewer a sense of awe and importance.



*Self Portrait (dumb blonde)*, oil on canvas, 36" x 24", 2007



John Sloan, Western Washington University  
***Found Op Art no. 9***, archival pigment print, 20" x 20", 2007



John Sloan, Western Washington University  
*Plastica Erotica, circa 1999*, archival pigment print, 16" x 20", 2007



*Sophia's Drama Act I*, archival pigment print, 16" x 24", 2007



John Sloan, Western Washington University  
*Sophia's Drama Act II*, archival pigment print, 16" x 24", 2007



## John Sloan

### Western Washington University

Their lives exist as yours never will. An impossible image of beauty stamped into your mind as the ideal. You never quite understand that it is impossible to achieve, except in imagination.

Originally, I started photographing Barbie and Bratz dolls for very personal reasons. I have two daughters and most of the early work was about body image and the conflict I had allowing them to play with the dolls. The images in the doll series have evolved into an exploration of the manufactured culture of stereotypes and desire found in children's toys. During the time I was photographing the doll series, I also wanted to figure out a way to capture the intense personality of my youngest daughter Sophia in a way that was different from the typical genre of child portraiture. Instead of directing her to pose a certain way and smile, I told her to do whatever she wanted. The emotionally evocative images of this series, "Sophia's Drama," are the result of this technique.

The other image in this exhibition, "Found Op Art No. 9," is related to a series that I've just begun that attempts to capture Schopenhauer's various notions of the sublime through photography.

## **Ruth Wartman**

### Art Academy of Cincinnati

In my work, the crows and/or ravens act as mental or psychological self-portraits, but they're also my chosen messengers between the internal and external due to their perspective of flight. Furthermore I employ them for their menacing presence and feminine grace. For their black and blue shine – like a bruise or a stormy sky, the sea.

Perhaps paradoxically, painting forces me to look calmly, both into and past the mirror, as I struggle to exist comfortably in my own skin by means of introspection.

I sometimes have trouble seeing through my eyes, so I have to get distance in order to look up and out, so that I can look in and be. I perch on high for the lucid view. I take my cues from the crows.





*Just a Touch*, oil on panel, 13" x 12", 2007



Ruth Wartman, Art Academy of Cincinnati  
***Perch on High***, oil on panel, 13" x 12", 2007





*On the Move*, acrylic on canvas, 61" x 49", 2007





BEST OF SHOW AWARD

Stephen Williams, Bowling Green State University  
*Lure*, wood, stone, and rope, 108" x 180" x 108", 2007



# **Stephen Williams**

## Bowling Green State University

In this work the wishbone is used as a symbol for the childlike innocence and faith we all have as children but sometimes question or even lose as we get older. The wishbone forms represent discarded wishes, desires, and hopes anchored or held down by beliefs, ignorance, and fear of the unknown. My wish is to once again attain this childlike faith by luring that intangible spirit for whom all those wishes, desires, and hopes were "sent" to.

## *About Manifest*

Founded in May of 2004, Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization headquartered in the urban neighborhood of East Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. The elegant street level exhibition space is minutes away from downtown Cincinnati, and the numerous academic institutions of higher learning in the region. It is also within easy walking distance of a diversely populated historic neighborhood with residents from all walks of life. The galleries are free and open to the public five hours a day, five days a week, presenting works by students and professionals from around the world. The Manifest Drawing Center Studio is located in the nearby Walnut Hills Essex Studios Complex.

Manifest is supported by grants and public donations and has the goal to support student professionalism, integrate the arts into the urban residential community and raise the bar on artistic standards. The mission also includes the exploration of the relationship between art and design, as well as the ongoing support and display of drawing in all its various forms.

## *Mission Statement:*

Manifest enhances the role of art and design in society by cultivating and focusing the transformative power of creativity in the visual arts. Manifest benefits people in the global and local community, including professionals, students, and the public, by creating quality-centered experiences focused on contemporary visual arts and related activities in the context of creative exploration.

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