

1999

Senior Thesis Exhibition 1999

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SENIOR THESIS EXHIBITION

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The senior thesis exhibition is the capstone experience
for graduating studio art majors in the
Department of Art and Art History at the University of Richmond.

ZACHARY ARNOLD

ARTIST STATEMENT

When I sculpt or draw an image, I try to see under the skin. It is a chance to investigate the way hard bones and soft tissues combine to create a weight-bearing structure. I have always been intrigued by how things are built; creating a figure study is the equivalent to me of looking under the hood of a car and dismantling the engine to see how it works. I want to understand the coordination of bone, muscle, and skin, which make up a figure, and then expand that understanding into exploring the emotion I can impart into a work of art. The goal of my artwork is to portray an image in which the underlying structure can be clearly understood, whether in the strength of an arm, the subtle twist of a torso, or even the architecture of fantasy wings.

THESIS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF ANATOMY

My thesis has involved a year-long exploration of anatomy, focused mainly on the human body, with a series of investigations in sculpture and drawing. Through this process, I have grown in my understanding of the underlying structural form of the figure. My work demonstrates the interplay between bone, muscle, and skin as they combine to form an architecture of the body comparable to understanding the stages of construction of a building.

I want viewers to gain an appreciation of what occurs under the skin of the body. I am not concerned with detail, but rather I am focused on the weight-bearing, balance, and pose of a figure. My pieces allow the observer to understand how the underlying skeletal-muscular system of my figures work. This concentration on pose and stance has led me to a study of how to create an anatomical architecture that can portray emotion. I also want my works to have a sense of drama based on how I manipulate the pose. In viewing my works, there should be no questions as to the feeling of the moment or the structural integrity of the form.



ZACHARY ARNOLD

Fallen Angel (detail)

1997-98, bronze, 10 1/2 x 24 x 8 1/2 inches

ELIZABETH BAROODY

ARTIST STATEMENT

To define myself as an artist is like trying to describe what one sees; I am very straight-forward in my art, just as I am in my personality. When I start working on a piece, I do not plan what I am doing but rather I jump right in and let my perception of the landscape lead the way. When looking at my art, viewers should see my paintings for what they are with no hidden meanings and understand that I am exploring different ways of seeing landscapes.

THESIS: PORTRAIT OF LANDSCAPES

My thesis is to explore the possibilities of the landscape as derived from perceptual open-air painting. Landscapes have always been an interesting subject for me; I enjoy employing all the different colors and details that make a painting of a landscape come to life. In my work I want to create a place that the viewer would like to be at that moment. Studying the masterpieces of Impressionism has influenced me in my own landscape painting. Impressionist artists such as Claude Monet and Gustave Caillebotte had a way of capturing an open-air feeling in their work. Caillebotte's use of bold colors and Monet's fresh outdoor atmosphere have inspired me in my own landscapes.

Monet once said, "When you go out to paint, try to forget whatever objects you have before you — a tree, a field. . . Merely think, here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow. Paint it just as it looks to you. . . to give your own naive impression of the scene before you." This is what I am exploring in my portrait of landscapes.



ELIZABETH BAROODY
Winter by the James River II
1998, oil on canvas, 6 1/2 x 7 inches

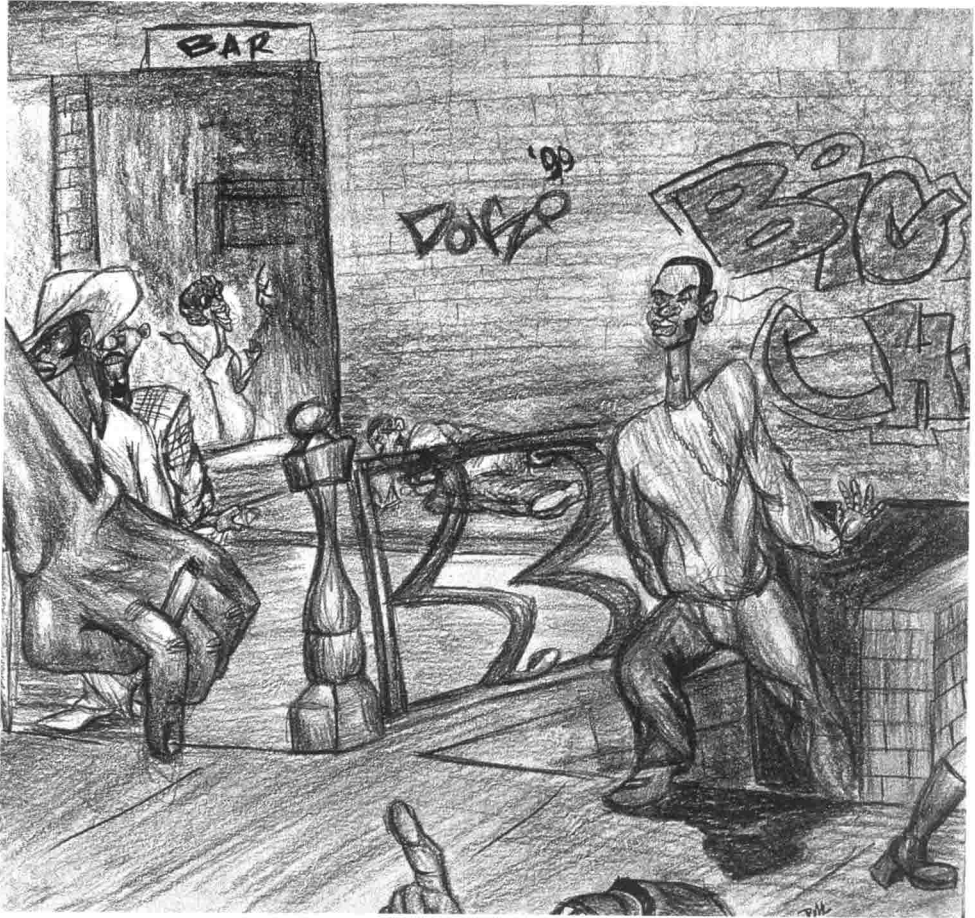
PARIS LENON

ARTIST STATEMENT

Art is my voice, and through that voice I am able to reflect on my experiences. I started by drawing only figures, and I now incorporate settings as well. I draw from my imagination and from experience including various events that I have seen or heard in my lifetime. My main interest is in cartoons. However, unlike the cartoons seen on Saturday morning television I want my cartoons to take on quite a different twist. My characters are presented in a different and maybe even serious world, and I examine elements of society in this way.

THESIS: VIEWS OF LIFE

My thesis is a presentation of a series of drawings and computer-generated images of cartoon-like characters placed in various settings. In the drawings, people are placed in different environments, such as street scenes and dance floors. My computer images are manipulated from scans of my drawn images as well as from photographs.



PARIS LENON

City Close-Up

1999, graphite on paper, 10 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches

ELISABETH NOTTURNO

ARTIST STATEMENT

The visual patterns in nature can be seen more easily when excess information is cast aside. For many, the abstracted form appeals more to our minds and senses than does life-like realism. There are two ways to get rid of excess information: through generalizing patterns and colors or through stripping away portions of the form. Sometimes the emotion may even be more intense as a result of this deletion of detail. In my work, I use complex repetition to breakdown the image's realism and to eliminate a sense of foreground and background. For me, the excessive repeating of form is what makes the image simple again.

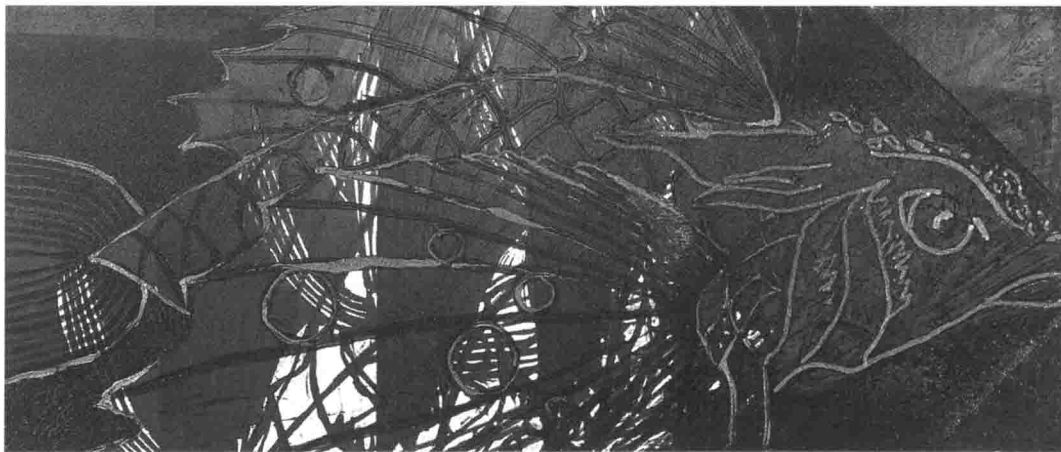
To achieve my goal with the viewer, there should be an emotional reaction rather than just recognition of what the image is. I feel reality is only important in the way it relates to life, and life has no respect for reality. I approach my art from the idea of what the subject could be rather than what the subject is or should be. In this way, potentiality is of greater worth than actuality.

THESIS: ODE TO SAINT FRANCIS

Traditionally in the Catholic faith, Saint Francis of Assisi is considered the patron saint of birds. The fish image that I have used throughout this body of work is the flying fish. Suspending fish images in the air in my work, I like the thought of putting my fish in a place where we do not expect to see them, and at the same time through the thesis title I am offering my flying fish the protection of a saint long associated as a protector of flying animals.

My thesis is to create a series of fish images presented as a multi-layered installation of prints combined with wire and strings of beads. Using linoleum blocks printed with inks and paint on paper and cloth, I have printed multiple images of fish placed one over the another. I attempt to catch the motion of life under the water, or more appropriately, the motion of being underwater. The layers of banner-like prints suspended from chicken wire and entwined with strings of beads are like the layers of water catching, trapping, and enclosing the fish.

So why fish? They exist in so many places and so many times. Fish are omnipresent: they appear in religion, in literature, in the home, and in the school. They have existed longer than humanity, are sometimes deadlier than mankind, and I feel that if they were only willing to come to the surface, fish could easily displace mankind's dominance. I can think of a fish as blood and gut and bone and as a series of chemical compositions: elements, atoms, electrons. As an artist, I can view a fish as shapes and dots and lines, but that does not describe the essence of fish. My works represent the underlying meanings of fish and the subtle and sometimes sublime impact of what they represent.



ELISABETH NOTTURNO

Sunbeam

1998, linoleum-cut and monotype on paper, 6 1/2 x 12 3/4 inches

AMY R. OSBORNE

ARTIST STATEMENT

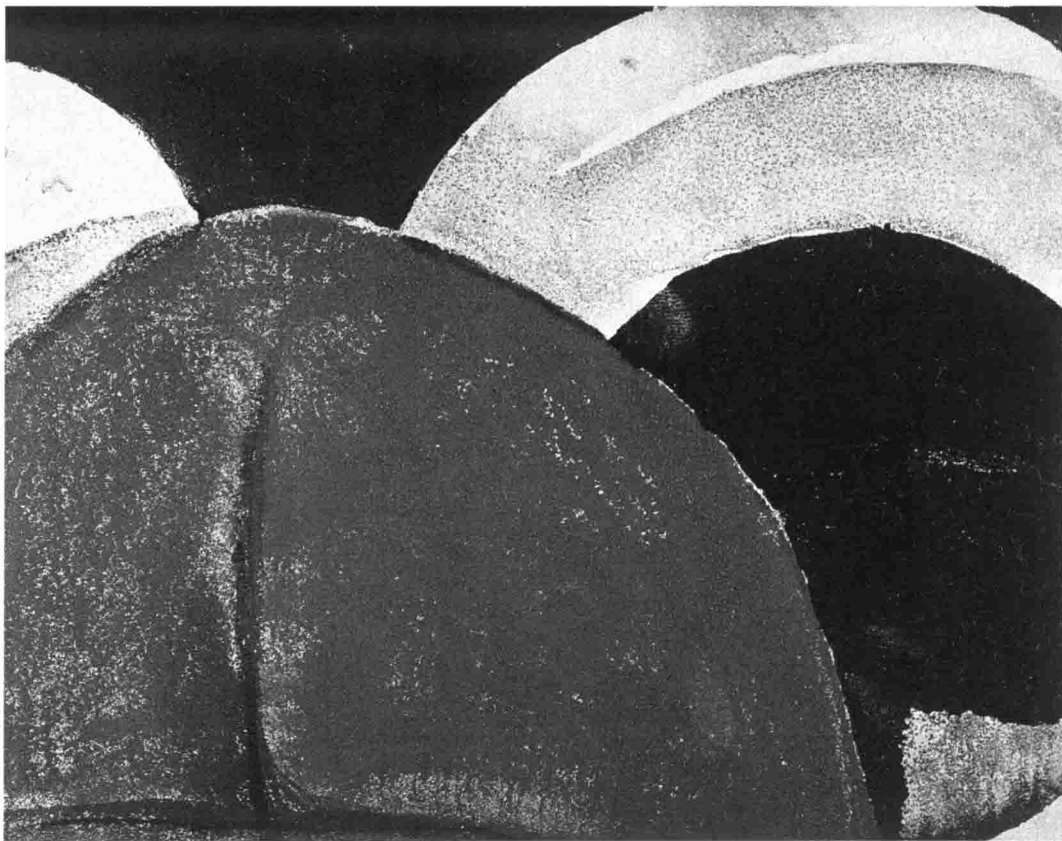
People take things too seriously, myself included, but I have found that I have been able to let go of my earnestness and stress through my art. Art is the one thing I try not to take too seriously in terms of content. Rather than having deep meaning, my images are meant to be seen as reflections of my sense of humor.

I mainly work in printmaking. My interests are the different textures that can be achieved in this process. Digital imaging also attracts me because it utilizes my interest in working with the computer as a tool for making art. In generating computer images there is a sense of play for me; I love the infinite possibilities in manipulating images. Most recently, I have been combining printmaking and computer-generated imaging which allows me to utilize manipulation tools on the computer while retaining a print quality and texture to an image.

THESIS: JUST KIDDING

The images that make up this body of work were born from my annoyance with people's near-obsession with certain things from our popular culture. There are two kinds of people in our society, those that enjoy "Tickle-Me-Elmo" and "Peep Bunnies," and those that prefer "Shoot-Me-Elmo" and find "Peep Bunnies" revolting. I am not making any serious social or political statement by using distorted images of stuffed animals (Elmo) and sugar-coated junk food (Peep Bunnies); the images are simply my personal reactions. I am presenting a lighthearted look at two of our country's mass-culture obsessions as seen through my dark sense of humor.

The prints primarily consist of monotypes, which started as lithographs. However, I found these lithographs to be too sedate, and I started adding the bright red that characterizes the commercial Elmo stuffed animal. I proceeded to crop the image, blow it up, shrink it down, reverse and change its colors, and even sew it together. My computer-generated images are much the same. I originally started out by adding small amounts of color to black-and-white photographs of "Peep Bunnies." What began as an idea to add color while still maintaining their black-and-white quality evolved into manipulations to and distortions of the original images. I eventually resorted to doing quilt-like images that are seemingly devoid of the bunnies altogether. These images themselves are rarely if ever, preconceived ideas. I approach each new piece as an experiment, in some ways capturing the sense of intrigue that children, and apparently some adults, find in Elmo and the Peeps.



AMY R. OSBORNE

iCu

1998, monotype on paper mounted on canvas, 11 x 14 inches

JENNA PALIN

ARTIST STATEMENT

My photography shows that there is beauty everywhere in the natural world, whether or not that world appears to be aesthetically pleasing at first glance. Through my black-and-white photography, nature appears to be a different place — one that is unusual and fascinating. My photographs are close-up images of nature that attempt to make the subjects unfamiliar to the viewer. In this way, viewers can begin to appreciate nature for its true beauty.

My photographs consist of ordinary objects in the natural world, such as trees, ponds, or even the earth, captured in such a way that they evoke a sense of mystery and curiosity. The close range of my photographs displays textures and gives the subjects an almost abstract look and feel. Most importantly, I want viewers to notice the small, almost mundane, elements of landscapes in such a way that they might stop and think just how fascinating nature can be, step back for a minute, and see the world as I do.

THESIS: THE NATURAL WORLD

This body of work is a series of black-and-white photographs of natural settings taken at close range in order to capture the beauty of the subjects while removing them from representation to abstraction. The mundane objects in the world can be appreciated in a different way when looked upon closely and out of their natural context. Photographers such as David Muench, Paul Caponigro, and Wynn Bullock were inspirations for my series. These artists seek out the natural beauties of the world and focus in on what is taken for granted every day. The smallest things, such as a pile of leaves or a single rock on the ground, are typically not thought of as beautiful. However, by capturing one of these subjects in a not-so-ordinary way, one is inclined to stop and think about what it is and how such a simple object can be so fascinating.

This series was taken in Richmond, Virginia, over the winter months. The images range from algae in a pond to a patch of grass with a single rock. They were all taken as close-ups, with the intention of dis-associating them from their natural settings in order to evoke feelings of wonder, curiosity, and appreciation. Black-and-white film is a necessary part in this process, for it can be more dramatic than color, since a variety of colors can distract from what is being conveyed and can give a false sense of beauty. My black-and-white photographs display their message through the use of light and texture. All of the prints are the same size in order to communicate a sense of order and simplicity. This is important to me due to the misconception that nature has no apparent order, and since these are photographs of the natural world, prints that are too large, too small, or differing sizes would distract from my message and theme.



JENNA PALIN

Pond Life

1999, gelatin silver photograph, 6 x 9 inches

CHRISTY YARNELL

ARTIST STATEMENT

I paint flowers because the colors, shapes, and intricate details are fascinating to me. Flowers seem so simple, but when looked at in depth, they are much more complex. The flowers I have painted express my thoughts and emotions.

I use the computer to recreate and "uncreate" my paintings. I scan my painting into the computer and use it as a starting point to create something far from the normal flower. The computer allows me to take the realistic, like the roses in my paintings, into something that is very unrealistic and fascinating. This "unrealism" intrigues me enough to also use the new digital image to create other pieces of art. I often take the computer-generated image and use it to create a new image in a different medium, whether it is a painting or a pen and ink stippled drawing. This allows me to be very adventurous in my art, and I use both painting and the computer to generate new images.

THESIS: SERIES OF ROSES

My thesis is to explore the structure and colors of flowers by very close-up investigations of these forms in painting and digital imaging. When I first started painting flowers it was the colors and the shapes that interested me. When I started to paint roses, I painted them for their intricate petal shapes and various colors. As time went on, I found that it was more than just the colors and shapes that held my interest, it was how the roses made me feel.

A rose, something thought of as so simple, is really very complex when studied closely. Traditionally, the rose symbolizes so many things. It is said that a red rose means love, a white rose means purity, a yellow rose means joy and gladness. A coral or orange rose means enthusiasm and desire, a pink rose means gentility and grace, a red and white mixture means unity, a burgundy means unconscious beauty, and a mixture of red and yellow means happy feelings. Regardless of its color, the rose conveys for me a message that "beauty is ever new."

The beauty of the rose I find very powerful. A rose provides us with more than a sweet aroma and something beautiful to view. When studied and captured in paint, I can arrange it in such a way that it may express thoughts and feelings. I began painting roses very small and intimately. I liked the delicate quality of the flowers, but I realized I wanted to express the power of a rose. My series culminates with one large-scale painting, "The Rose." This image shows the power of a "simple" rose with a painting that will last longer than a living flower.



CHRISTY YARNELL

Yellow Rose

1998, oil on canvas, 7 7/8 x 9 3/4 inches



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