



**S O I L**

**2006**

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# COMMON GROUND

SOIL at Aqua Art Miami and Beyond

Jess Van Nostrand

SOIL has been producing imaginative shows in Seattle for eleven years, making it the city's longest-running and most ambitious artist-run gallery. I came to know SOIL as a guest curator in 2005 for the show *Girls Growing* and in 2006 for *SOIL at Aqua Art Miami*, and my admiration for its members and what they have accomplished together runs deep. Beyond showcasing the work of its artists, SOIL supports the work of those far beyond its membership, while asking little in return. Many established artists from a variety of disciplines have left their mark on the gallery's solid history, as demonstrated in the impressive 2005 survey *SOIL Artist-Run Gallery, 1995>2005*.

SOIL's gallery is a safe place for artists and curators to experiment, and they approached the Miami art fair with the same spirit. Their commitment to the organization's artistic growth and professional maturity is what drew me to SOIL as a guest curator and collaborator.

Acknowledging the vast differences in the work presented by SOIL members, I would like to emphasize connections that present new ways of looking at their work within the context of their fellow members. The intended result is twofold: to underscore SOIL's critical role as an influential contemporary art collective whose members create consistently thoughtful work; and to present a few ways of looking at their individual work. Within themes of geography, identity, space, and history, each artist presents a distinct voice and artistic approach. The larger picture is a dynamic group of perspectives loosely aligned by several central ideas.

Historical and domestic references unite Nicholas Nyland's energizing floor cloth with Saya Moriyasu's powerful chandelier that cradles ceramic figures in would-be candelabras. Architecture and the mapping of space are shared by the depth of Margie Livingston's grid-based paintings, the semi-fictional urban topography of Yuki

Nakamura's sculptures, Nyland's rhythmically patterned paintings, and the undulating city scenes by Thom Heilesen. Using a different perspective, Isaac Layman maps the surface of everyday domestic subjects, assembling a final image that reveals the process through reassembled parts; and Jennifer Zwick gracefully photographs museum walls that are charged with an energy of absence.

The most intimate work is reflected in Claire Johnson's imperfect donuts; Susie J. Lee's videos of loss, birth, and departure; Debra Baxter's physical self-portraits; Etsuko Ichikawa's psychological and material encounters; Satomi Jin's delicate treatment of what surrounds her; and Buddy Bunting's journey past a symbol of imprisonment via a symbol of freedom. Jana Brevick's metal skyscraper topped with disproportionately large antennas suggests an overpowering loss of privacy, and Sean M. Johnson's improbably balanced sculptures require the viewer's trust in more than just the visual.

Investigations into nature and the makeup of contemporary landscape penetrate the work of Kiki MacInnis, Chris Engman, and Vaughn Bell.

Bell's worm's-eye perspective of vegetation resembles urban landscapes anchored by their tallest building. MacInnis studies found objects from nature like a scientist, rendering them as abstract forms, and Engman displaces contemporary life in uninhabited land. Also in this group is Sara Osebold, whose textile installations illustrate the Alaska wilderness, and Chaune Peck, whose playful works slyly depict a future in which nature creates its own self-sustaining humanless environment. Ben Hirschhoff plays with nature's iconography, exposing clouds and similar forms as manmade plastic props, and Randy Wood carefully renders rock formations that present narrative possibilities within an interest in surface and texture.

There is much to be said about each artist and the way in which their work challenges assumptions about what a collective is and what SOIL's singular aesthetic might be. I encourage you to find your own meaning in the work, cultivated by a group that continues to prove the power of collaboration.

# DEBRA BAXTER

PROFILE BY **Nate Lippens**

Born Omaha, Nebraska  
Member since 2003

Debra Baxter's latest work continues her investigation of vulnerability, both materially and psychologically. In her previous bodies of work, it has taken the shape of clouds made of silk and powder puffs, being caught between emotional weather, dissipation, and beauty, and more recently flotation as a means of salvation or at least survival. Her latest work involves shelter, protection, and struggle. The materials have shifted to wood and alabaster—seemingly more sturdy than the cotton and vinyl of previous projects, but with a note of fragility involved in their construction. This fragility is also present in her video work.

*This will make you love me* is a shelter constructed of wood. The form is a kind of pared-down minimalism, curving up and around, connected in a sleek point. It plays on the security issues seen in Andrea Zittel's work and cheekily responds to Tracey Emin's tent with the names of her lovers written on it. Here, Baxter has written and erased on the wood "this will make you love me" with "you" crossed out. It's the correction and the erasure that highlight the complexity of her new work. *Untitled (Gene Simmons inspires me)* is an alabaster tongue, which is set upon two weathered

pieces of foam that reference cushions. The tension between the sexual and the domestic and between attraction and repulsion animates the sculpture.

The three-channel video *Sweetness* features distinct emotional states: a shadow walk that leads into oblivion or peace; a mud-wrestling scenario that is part feral, part lark, potently mixing sexuality and frustration; and an intimate close-up of a neck breathing that is by turns erotic, upsetting, and becalmed. The combination of the three separate states explore the friction and visceral beauty of Baxter's work.

Baxter's work estranges us from the familiar. She taps the vein of uncertainty, a shifting state where we are all placed in continuity with humankind. In this precarious interior landscape of longing and unresolved emotions, refuge and safety are reduced to the physical self rather than signs and codes.

Nate Lippens is a Seattle-based writer and the former visual art editor of *The Stranger*. His work has appeared in *Mobius*, *Yeti*, *No Depression*, *High Performance*, and *Face Review*. He is the recent recipient of the Hopgood Prize for Fiction and is completing a novel.



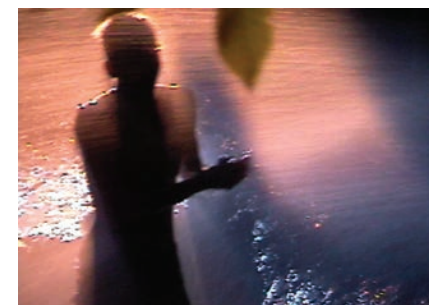
**This will make you love me**, 2006  
Wood, electrical cord, light bulb  
6 x 4 x 4 ft. (1.83 x 1.22 x 1.22 m)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Richard Nicol



**Untitled (Gene Simmons inspires me)**, 2006  
(detail)  
Alabaster, weathered foam  
24 x 22 x 25 in. (61 x 55.9 x 63.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Richard Nicol



Still from **Sweetness**, 2006  
Video

Courtesy of the artist



# VAUGHN BELL

PROFILE BY **Randi Hopkins**

**Born** Syracuse, New York  
**Member since** 2006

Our portable landscape arrived by mail, in two boxes. One contained a carefully packed wagonlike structure—low to the ground, on rather big wheels—with a long chain attached to one end, and the other held individual packages of dirt, rocks, and six cacti, alive and thriving after a long trip by UPS from Seattle to Boston. Following detailed instructions prepared and tucked into the package by artist Vaughn Bell, my gallery assistants and I built our *Portable Landscape*, a living, breathing desert sculpture that we could pull around the neighborhood, handily bringing environmental art into Boston's urban South End. In accepting the work, we also accepted the responsibility of giving it a good life for a month, of watering it and making sure that it got to see a bit of the world. For its part, well, plants just give a lot of pleasure to humans, don't they?

Bell continues the tradition of earth artists including Michael Heizer and Walter De Maria, but instead of heading into the desert on a motorcycle, or transporting steel rods to New Mexico, Bell assumes a caretaker's approach to the earth and its dynamic features, from lawns to mountains. In her art, she offers small selections of the landscape to viewers as a gift, and also as a task. Her work alters the traditional relationship among artist/artwork/viewer, and adds a new dimension to the artistic concept of "landscape." She accomplishes this with a sense of humor, and puts a fresh spin on our sense of place.

Randi Hopkins founded Allston Skirt Gallery in Boston with Beth Kantrowitz in 1999, and remains the gallery's co-director. The author of a weekly art column for the *Boston Phoenix*, Hopkins earned a BA from Brown University in 1980 and a JD from New York University in 1990.



**Portable Landscapes: Desert, Lawn, Crag, 2006**  
Ceramic, metal, plastic, soil, plants, leashes, hardware  
Each landscape approximately 20 x 18 x 16 in. (50.8 x 45.7 x 40.6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Richard Nicol



**Garment for Flora-Fauna Relationship, 2006** (photo of performance)  
Fabric, wire, soil, baby hemlock tree, water bottle

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Alyce Santoro



**Biosphere Built for Two, 2006**  
Plexiglas, soil, forest floor plants and organisms  
36 x 30 x 40 in. (91.4 x 76.2 x 101.6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Richard Nicol

# JANA BREVICK

PROFILE BY **Hahn Rossman**

Born Ogden, Utah  
Member since 2002

Jana Brevick's work reflects her diverse training (fashion design and traditional goldsmithing) and interests (obsolete technology, structure of cells, naive cartology) and deserves a new title: Experimental Interactionist.

Her working technique drives materials to suit the idea, using traditional techniques when applicable and discarding them like last season's darling if not. The closest analog is Man Ray's photograms, where what had been seen as a technical error was instead used to inform a new way of using existing materials. This aspect of her work is clearly experimental in nature and allows for her humor to shine through undisturbed by conventional application of materials or techniques.

Her long interest in jewelry has made her both attentive to the human form as backdrop to artwork and a participant in its use. Her pieces frequently involve kinetic elements, which requires viewer initiation. Questions of viewer versus participant are raised when you are asked to touch an object attached to another person!

Jewelry has also heavily influenced her delight in changing scales in a body of work, or sometimes in the same piece. *We Are Listening/We Can Hear You* is a prime example of this. It confounds the viewer with a clearly architectural form adorned with delicately made antenna in a precious material. The scale is indeterminate: are we to assume that it is a small machine or a looming building? It is at once charming and menacing.

These sorts of uncertain and uncanny moments are abundant in her work. They press the viewer/wearer into an active role in the experience and they challenge our perceptions of where artwork resides as well as from which material it is made.

Hahn Rossman, residing in the sunnier parts of Seattle, Washington, practices large-scale metalwork for experimental artists and architects. When he is not working or racing his bicycle, he is reading, dog-wrestling, and reinterpreting our world through rigorously tested theories. His birthright, be it Virgo or some unknown force, allows him to bandy criticism with the best of them.



**Personal Top-Secret Password Printer, 2006**  
Found printer, sterling silver, aluminum, ink  
4.5 x 6.5 x 5.25 in. (11.4 x 16.5 x 13.3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Jana Brevick



**Input Control Panel, 2006**  
Aluminum, steel, rubber, found input button, panel light cases, electric lights, sterling silver  
53.25 x 56.25 x 12 in. (135.3 x 143 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Jana Brevick



**We Are Listening/We Can Hear You, 2006**  
(detail)  
Sterling silver, steel screen, aluminum, wood  
79 x 6 x 6 in. (200.7 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Jana Brevick

# BUDDY BUNTING

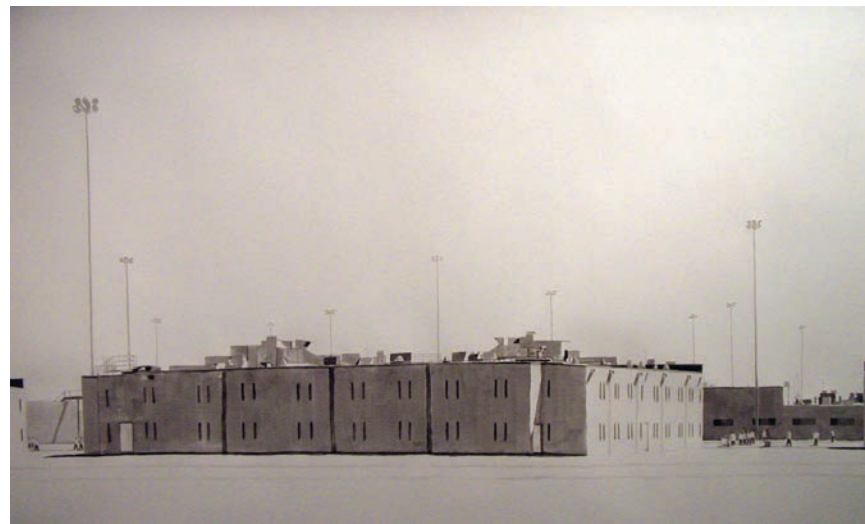
PROFILE BY **Regina Hackett**

**Born** Worcester County, Maryland  
**Member since** 2003

Buddy Bunting has created some of the most memorable images of repression since Leon Golub's paintings of mercenaries and police-state torturers in the 1980s. Using watercolor or black ink washes and working on paper, Bunting paints prisons, mostly in the West. His negative space is white and carries serious weight. Dark buildings appear to be flattening under it, and his scenes, some featuring prison guards, some just guard towers or police cars, have a bleached intensity, a furrowed, fierce depth, a shadowing that offers no relief from the heat hammering down. Bunting's skill is endless, but he feared being a hothouse, academic painter. What pulled him out of his own life's studio concerns was what he happened to see in Utah as he drove across the country to Seattle, a prison that seemed to quiver in waves of heat. "The pull of my interest in film and media images all fell into line" with this series, he said.

Are prisons necessary? Certainly on a metaphoric level: "In the prison of his days," wrote W. H. Auden in "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," "Teach the free man how to praise." There are more prisons in the United States than in any other western democracy. Bunting's portraits of them are not metaphors. They are stark yet dreamy images of our culture, flattening under our fear and aggression. As fragmentary representations, they encompass the whole.

Regina Hackett is a Seattle-based art critic who writes for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.



**California State Prison, Corcoran, 2006**  
(detail)

Ink wash on paper  
52 x 156 in. (132 x 396.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Buddy Bunting



**Self-Portrait While Driving at Night, Mohave Desert, 2005**

Ink wash on paper  
7.5 x 11 in. (19 x 28 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Buddy Bunting



**Cop Car, Night, Riverside County, 2006**

Ink wash on paper  
22 x 30 in. (56 x 76.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Buddy Bunting



# CHRIS ENGMAN

PROFILE BY **Greg Kucera**

**Born** Bellingham, Washington  
**Member since** 2004

A set of roadway turn signals appears in the desert. A makeshift ladder to nowhere rises out of a beach. Fifty auditorium chairs suggest a spectral audience. Individual footsteps scuff out the pattern of a squared-off spiral in a field of sand.

Chris Engman's alterations to the landscape of Eastern Washington are short-lived, theatrical actions, performed without the presence of an audience. Or perhaps it's fairer to say the artist is both the performer and the audience. We, as spectators not of the action but of Engman's documentation of it, are brought in late. We missed out on all the excitement: the thinking of the concept for the shot, the work of building it out, of photographing it, and then, of tearing it down.

But the curious circumstances of the artist's efforts remain. Captured in photographic stills, the action or construction is only related to us as a curious, recent historical event. While Engman considers the entire enterprise as art, the only parts of it that get offered to the larger audience are his large and impeccably printed photographs. Our role is not to participate but simply to witness.

Engman's actions in the landscape, and their odd props and crude constructions, behave more like the modest, contemplative "silueta" acts of Ana Mendieta than the elaborate tableaux of Gregory Crewdson. Over Engman's five years of making art thus far, the artist has captured the intimate theater of himself and a few close friends, replete with the oddest of props and sets, as he reveals his mysterious and intriguing narratives on a stage as vast as the whole outdoors.

Greg Kucera is the owner and director of Greg Kucera Gallery in Seattle. Since its modest inception in 1983 the gallery has grown out of its regional context and now shows emerging and mid-career artists side by side with artists who are highly respected and nationally known. On a side note, he has three cats affectionately named Untitled #1, #2, and #3.



**The Curve, 2006**  
Archival inkjet print  
48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm), ed. 6  
Courtesy of the artist and Greg Kucera Gallery



**The Empty House, 2006**  
Archival inkjet print  
48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm), ed. 6  
Courtesy of the artist and Greg Kucera Gallery



# THOM HEILESON

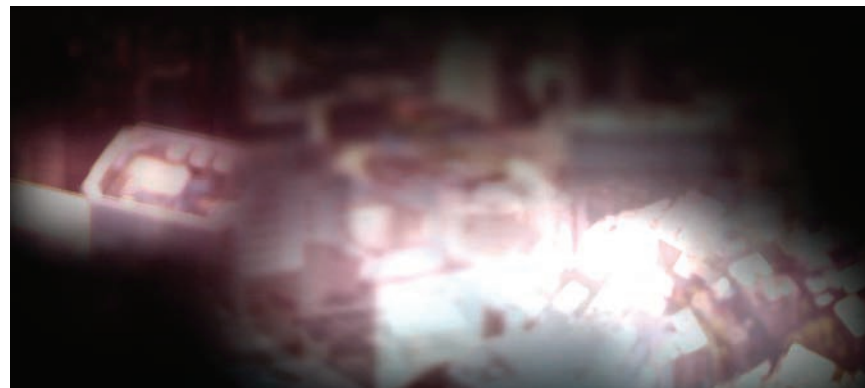
PROFILE BY **Fionn Meade**

Born Portland, Oregon  
Member since 2003

The liminal jitter and stutter found while walking through an industrial work site—whether being built or demolished—is transformed into visual poetry in Thom Heilesen's video projections and photographs. The viewer's desire for a ready signifier in the landscape draws them deeper into the territory of Heilesen's afterimages. Invited in but pushed repeatedly further on, we are enticed even as we begin to question our surroundings. His most recent video work, *Multiplicity*, continues his exploration of threshold sequences as the city is observed under construction during the day, wandered through at night, and then parsed into multiple video streams that form a one-channel projection; conflating the *flâneur's* fragmented attention span with the linear exactitude of a surveyor, moments morph in and out of the frame competing for our attention. As a time-based work, it builds on the urban abstractions of photographer Uta Barth and masterfully reimagines the simultaneity of the metropolis.

An investigation into the tension and hold of montage techniques is present in much of Heilesen's video work. *Cumulex™* (a collaborative effort with artist Ben Hirschkoff) compiles excerpts from television pharmaceutical advertisements promising a return to ideal health, and projects these sunny scenes onto a cloud-shaped wall sculpture—halcyon images of happy couples and smiling children all properly medicated glow blue across the surface. *101 Sunsets* similarly examines the apotheosis of a cliché as postcard-like images and stills are looped together at the frame rate of video (30 frames per second) to create the ultimate picture-perfect sunset. Whether embracing cool irony or the more painterly and complex abstractions present in his newest work, Heilesen continually mesmerizes by way of unease.

Fionn Meade is a writer and independent curator living in Seattle. Meade received his MFA from Columbia University, and his writing has recently appeared in *Bomb Magazine*, *The Stranger*, *NYFA Current*, and *The Phillip Review* (Vancouver, BC), for which he is a contributing editor. He also curates public programs for the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle.



**Multiplicity**, 2006  
(detail of video still)  
DVD video projection  
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist



**101 Sunsets**, 2004-2005  
DVD video projection, frame  
62 x 82 in. (157.5 x 208.3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Thom Heilesen



**Untitled (Substrata series)**, 2006  
Inkjet print  
20 x 20 in. (50.8 x 50.8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist

# BEN HIRSCHKOFF

PROFILE BY **Robert Yoder**

Born San Diego, California  
Member since 2006

The first time I saw Ben Hirschhoff's work I was struck by the tragically comic quality of its installation. His studio was filled with small ceramic figurines, each unimposing and almost precious, crowding each other as they clung to every available surface. Closer inspection revealed their subtle, peculiar wit. Absurd and yet familiar, they seemed to possess a quality of suspended innocence. As a group, they produced a haunting presence.

The scrap heap is Hirschhoff's pallet, which gives his work a DIY aesthetic reminiscent of a children's play. Whether working with slipcast ceramics, vacuum-formed plastic, or junkyard assemblage, the success of his work is based in the honesty of the material he uses.

His interest in performance and improvisation inspire him to create environments that simultaneously invite the viewer and confound him. With a sheet of black rubber, he creates a night sky and calls it *Black Rubber Sky*. Impossibly artificial, the work emphasizes the distance between the projection of the idyllic and the blatant reality of the existent material. The viewer is invited to bridge this expanse, but the overriding presence of the rubber surface is inescapable. The stars in *Black Rubber Sky* turn out to be holes in the rubber. Constellations that might once have provided nautical guidance or spiritual solace can now be read as desperately sought air holes in an otherwise suffocating scenario.

Robert Yoder was born in Danville, Virginia, and moved to Seattle to obtain an MFA from the University of Washington. His work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions at art galleries and institutions, including the Seattle Art Museum; CenterSpace, Austin, Texas; and Studio Voltaire, London. His work can be found in the collections of Microsoft; Boeing; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Nike; Hewlett-Packard; and others.



**Cloud Cover, 2006**

Sheet rubber, sheet metal, wood pallets, iron pipe, nails, screws, bark, paint, stain  
9 x 11 x 2.5 ft. (274.3 x 335.3 x 76.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Fred Muram



**Cloud Cover, 2006**  
[detail]

Sheet rubber, sheet metal, wood pallets, iron pipe, nails, screws, bark, paint, stain  
9 x 11 x 2.5 ft. (274.3 x 335.3 x 76.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Fred Muram



**Mechanical Dead Animal, 2006**

Vacuum-formed plastic, electronic components, flocking  
14 x 18 x 6 in. (35.6 x 45.7 x 15.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Ben Hirschhoff



# ETSUKO ICHIKAWA

PROFILE BY **Greg Bell**

Born Tokyo, Japan  
Member since 2005

The organic indeterminacy of the described space created in the installations of Etsuko Ichikawa defies the controlled processes she uses. The thread, plastic, or blown-glass lines in the work describe volumes. Her father was a tailor and thread was readily available. This familiarity translates into an ease of manipulation—thread is crocheted, woven, or cascading in drapes of hanging lines. Three-dimensional calligraphic forms appear to levitate across the room or the stage, in the case of Ichikawa's recent designs of the theatrical elements for an alternative performance group. These forms are also seen in the artist's pyrographic drawings, where she uses hot blown and sculpted glass as a drawing tool on wet paper.

Whether they are entire rooms or tabletop blown-glass domes, her installations achieve a certain balance or harmony within their environments. There is a dichotomy—control and chaos, rigidity and fluidity—that is also seen in the intangibility of the interplay of light and shadow through the translucency of both the carefully crafted glass and thread forms. There is a subtle stitching together of the abstract concepts and underlying psychology in her recent works—*Deai* (Encounter), *Funiki* (Atmosphere), and *Kokoro* (Feeling). Each work seems to capture a moment, but retains the element of movement, giving the viewer the opportunity to see the gesture. That expression of stasis and/or movement through the arrangement of forms reinforces Ichikawa's "investigation of what lies between the ephemeral and the eternal."

Greg Bell is a curator, writer, and artist working in Seattle.



**Forest Installation, 2006**

Styrofoam piping, fish line, pigment  
Stage dimensions 24 x 32 x 35 ft. (7.3 x 9.8 x 10.7 m)

Courtesy of the artist and Degenerate Art Ensemble  
Photo: kp-studios



**Forest of Deai, 2005**

Glass pyrograph on paper, thread  
11.5 x 9 x 28 ft. (3.5 x 2.74 x 8.53 m)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Jim Anderson



**Home for a Floating Feeling, 2004**

Glass, thread, paper, bead, wire  
10 x 9 x 9 in. (25.4 x 22.9 x 22.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, collection of Catherine Person  
Photo: kp-studios



# SATOMI JIN

PROFILE BY Tracey Fugami

Born Tokyo, Japan  
Member since 2005

In John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing*, he describes nature drawing as a way "to obtain quicker perceptions of the beauty of the natural world, and... preserve something like a true image of beautiful things that pass away, or which you must yourself leave."<sup>1</sup> Exploring the ephemeral quality of nature, Satomi Jin produces meditative large-scale drawings of fantastical organic forms.

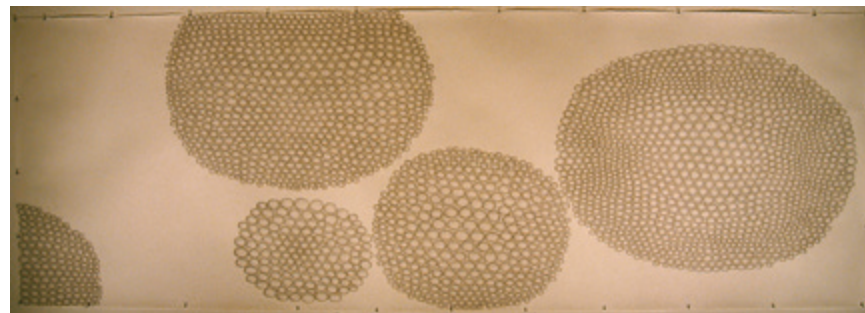
Jin's recent drawings feature clusters of imperfect circles, creating a honeycombed appearance. In the work *Millions*, the structures buoyantly float through large unidentified spaces. The cellular and microscopic forms breathe and pulsate. The overall appearance has a hazy and billowy quality akin to closing the eyes tightly and revealing bits of floating matter.

In 2003, partly inspired by Tim Hawkinson's drawings from the late 1990s, Jin created the *Farting Animal* series. Puffs and wormlike forms protrude from the backsides of various creatures. The fumes are rendered as a maze of lines and interlocking shapes, with similar structures dominating the composition, while the animals are depicted in an illustrative manner. The invisible is embodied and transience is physically evoked.

Jin's drawings are not precise scientific renderings, yet they possess a similar meticulous quality. The temporal characteristic of pen and paper echoes the fleeting temperament of the natural world. The conveyance of organic matter is accomplished through illustrating a gesture and sentiment as opposed to attempting a true rendering.

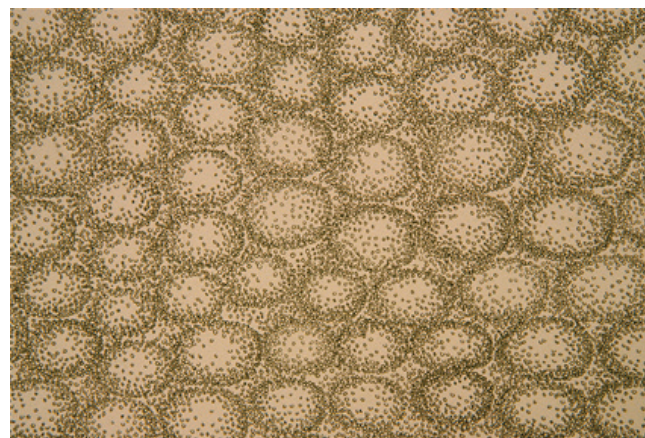
Tracey Fugami is a freelance arts writer and curator. She has contributed to *Afterimage*, *Art Papers*, *Sculpture Review*, and *Nikkei Heritage*, among other publications.

1. John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 1857 (reprint ed., New York: Dover Press, 1971), p. 25.

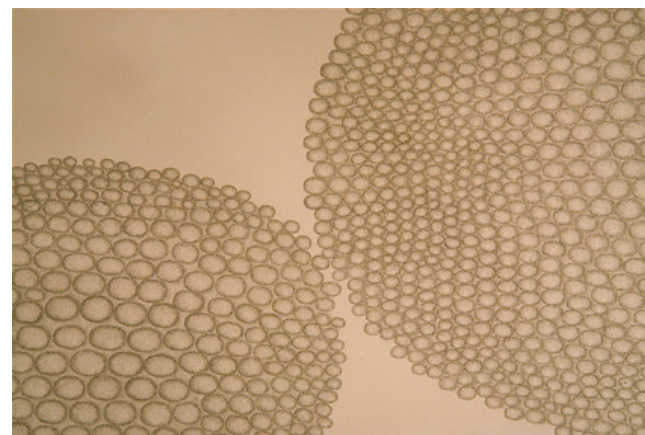


**Millions, 2005**  
Pen on paper  
51 x 180 in. (129.5 x 457.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Satomi Jin



**Millions, 2005**  
[details]



# CLAIRE JOHNSON

PROFILE BY **Jess Van Nostrand**

**Born** Bangkok, Thailand  
**Member since** 2003

A zealous observer and recorder of her surroundings, Claire Johnson seeks out opportunities to paint what is perceived as scary, ugly, or marginal. Outsiders often find their way into Johnson's paintings, and from her genuine sensitivity towards her subject matter, she conveys the beauty lying dormant under the surface. Hers are bold images from which the viewer finds it difficult to turn away.

In the *Donuts* series, Johnson reverses the approach, hyper-enlarging frosty, sweetly dripping donuts, exposing their tiny blemishes and fatty textures, making them into sinister circles of gluttony. Wonderment and care for what these enticing forms can become when rendered in paint supersede any cold notions of commercialism or the dictatorship of consumerism. Each donut is different from the next, creating a family portrait of exaggerated flavor, each one lovingly handled with Johnson's lifelike use of paint. As circular shapes with delicious connotations, they are simultaneously appealing and creepy, the double-edged existence that can be found throughout Johnson's work.

Johnson's drive to always become a better painter is most obvious in the careful way she explores every bit of surface in her subjects, from the wrinkled skin of someone's face to the bubbly icing on a white-glazed donut. And, like all Johnson's subjects, from transvestites to sock monkeys, her donuts have benefited from being in her care.

Jess Van Nostrand is an independent curator whose projects introduce emerging and established artists from the U.S. and abroad to the Seattle art community. Jess is the founder of the One-Eared Rabbit Collaborative at Joe Bar, a solo show program for unrepresented artists, and is vice chair of the Seattle alliance of ArtTable, the national organization for women leaders in the arts.



**coconut, 2006**  
Oil on panel  
11 x 11 in. (27.9 X 27.9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Claire Johnson



**white with sprinkles, 2006**  
Oil on panel  
11 x 11 in. (27.9 X 27.9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Claire Johnson



**white glazed, 2006**  
Oil on panel  
11 x 11 in. (27.9 X 27.9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Claire Johnson



# SEAN M. JOHNSON

PROFILE BY **Regina Hackett**

**Born** Columbus, Ohio

**Member since** 2005

Sean M. Johnson's sculpture reminds me of no other artist's, not Richard Serra's or Mark di Suervo's, with whom he has been compared, nor Martin Puryear's or Louise Bourgeois's, whom he has been advised to imitate. He's pioneering his own form of sculptural storytelling, although his work has the silky, off-the-beat buoyancy of Trisha Brown's dances, a clunky force merged with a slippery grace that produces an oddball brilliance.

In *New Sculpture Survey* at Howard House in July, he offered two pieces: *Scaling a Façade* and *Absence*. The former is a counter-balanced, crudely mismatched ladder. You don't need its back story to appreciate the pull of tonal shifts that resolve themselves into a freestanding clarity, but one side is blond wood for his white mother, and the other side sports black roofing shingles for his black father.

*Absence* features an old kitchen table of no particular charm, a banal object transformed by the manipulation of its feet. One side, set for dinner, hangs in the air unsupported by legs. The other side, set for nothing, has two feet resting squarely on the floor, and two more legs jutting out horizontally to balance a suitcase. Somebody left somebody, and *Absence* tells the tale with the hard economy and homey radiance of a blues song.

Johnson was raised in Ohio, went to Bowling Green State University intending to be a mathematician and got distracted by art. He entered the MFA program at the University of Washington in 2003 to study jewelry and graduated in 2005, moving sculptural mountains. He has been a SOIL member since last year and is now working on a piece in which a table balances on a beer bottle. I can't wait to see it.

Regina Hackett is a Seattle-based art critic who writes for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.



**Scaling a Façade, 2006**  
Ladder, shingles, wood  
2.5 x 12 x 5 ft.  
(76.2 x 365.8 x 152.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Sean M. Johnson



**Absence, 2006**  
Table, suitcase, flatware  
7.5 x 3 x 3.5 ft. (228.6 x 91.4 x 106.7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Sean M. Johnson



**Sean M. Johnson and Jason Wood**  
**Stunt n Growth, 2006**  
Tree, steel, rubber, rope, wood  
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Todd Simeone



# ISAAC LAYMAN

PROFILE BY **Chris Engman**

**Born** Yakima, Washington  
**Member since** 2005

Isaac Layman's depictions of everyday objects tell stories from the world of small things and small moments. And the story you get is never the one you expected.

In the world postulated by Layman's imagery, the things that matter are the things you can touch. Brooms, wrenches, books, and the like inform where and who we are. A house or workshop are containers for these important things, in much the same way that a lifetime is a steady stream of moments that in themselves deserve our full attention.

In *Extension Cord* Layman combines several such moments into one view that is impossible and yet feels somehow more complete. *Bookcase* takes this one step further, digitally weaving together several instances from many different points of view, in ways that are in turn subtle and obvious, seamless and patchwork.

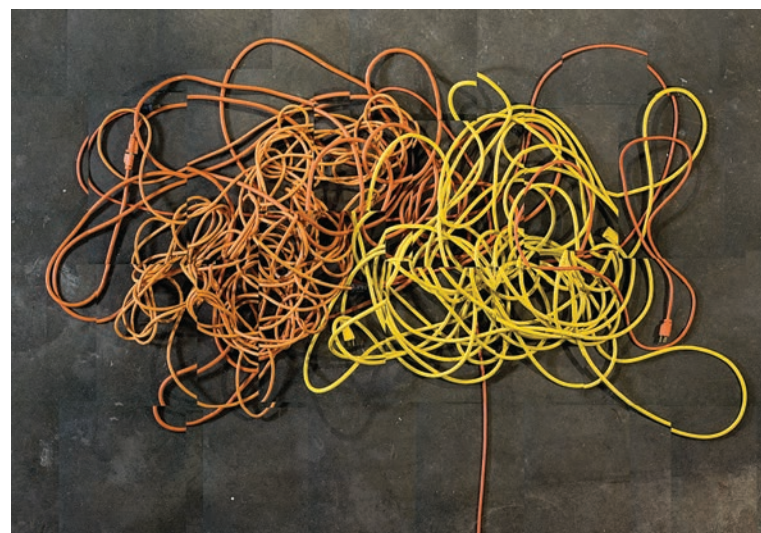
This Cubist approach to description has been adapted to fit a light-based medium and a contemporary context. Photography bears a misleading resemblance to sight and, by extension, to "realness." It is this ambiguous relationship that allows these images to describe objects in ways that trump our eyes, and make us question our assumptions about sight, specifically, and reality in general.

This work suggests that the relationship between a whole and its parts is rather more complicated than a sum. A whole, whether it be a whole picture or idea or principal, is a transitory and illusory thing, the subject of guesswork and constant revision. There is always, and in everything, another angle to consider.

Chris Engman is an artist and curator and a member of SOIL (see page 12). He lives in Seattle and is represented by Greg Kucera Gallery.



**Bookcase, 2006**  
Lightjet print  
48 x 61 in. (122 x 155 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist



**Extension Cord, 2006**  
Lightjet print  
48 x 69 in. (122 x 175.3 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist

# SUSIE J. LEE

PROFILE BY **Jen Graves**

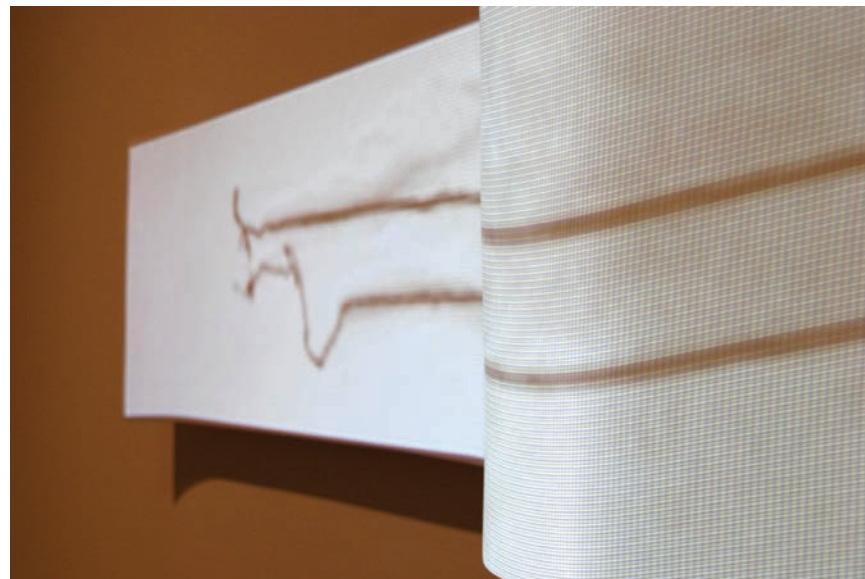
Born Hershey, Pennsylvania  
Member since 2006

Susie J. Lee observes separation in the ritualistic sense: she abides by its rules. When she projects video of a finger exploring a pliable surface onto a pillow of paper, the flesh, the paper, and the pixels of digital information are locked in a visual embrace, but one whose quietude only amplifies how far we have come from original touch. Lee pursues what we manage to cling to as primary experience slips away. There is both comfort and sorrow in the digital and the physical trying, but failing, to connect.

In the installation *Fermata*, the disembodied voices of two lovers whispering are heard in a dark room. Images of wet, crumpled paper emerge toward an opaque cast acrylic surface, the paper unfolding and refolding as one lover pleads for another moment together and the other lover denies the request repeatedly, while elongating the tryst. In the background is the faint nagging of a bell, but it slows, seeming to lose both its ability and its desire to mark time.

Lee masters her materials by devoting herself to prolonged experiments. Her final, spare pieces are the result of much unseen exploration and then resolute self-editing. In *Consummation*, the artist lit two strands of twine on fire and shot video of their smoking shadows tangling with each other as the burned bits fell to the floor. She turned the video on its side so the bits seem to fly off to the left, projected it on a strip of wood the length of her body that she shaped into a smooth curve, then played a lonely, one-handed arrangement of a Bach piano prelude lasting the precise length of the burning. Love and mortality and, faintly, even the ghosts of the smoking Twin Towers come to mind. It is all here, and gone.

Jen Graves is the visual art editor for *The Stranger* and has written for publications including *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, *Newsday*, and *Variety*.



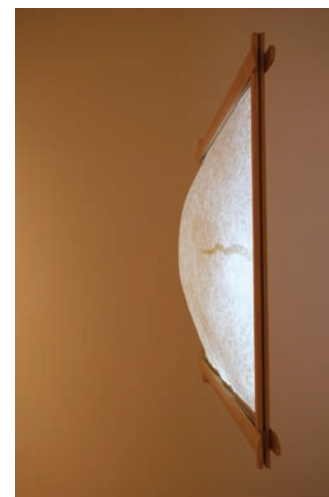
**Consummation, 2006**  
Video projection on wood  
14 x 62 x 7 in. (35.6 x 157.8 x 17.75 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: John B. Rogers



**Caesura, 2006**  
Video projection on wood  
11 x 36 x 7 in. (28 x 91.4 x 17.8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: John B. Rogers



**Noli Me Tangere, 2006**  
Video projection on handmade paper  
34 x 42 x 6 in. (86.4 x 106.7 x 15.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: John B. Rogers

# MARGIE LIVINGSTON

PROFILE BY **Suzanne Beal**

**Born** Vancouver, Washington  
**Member since** 2000

You can take the tree out of the forest, but you can't take the forest out of the tree. Margie Livingston cuts through the proverbial underbrush, examining nature firsthand with branches and twigs taken from their exterior environment and relocated to her urban studio. Investigating how natural elements are transformed by interior settings in which incandescent bulbs might substitute for the sun's rays allows the artist to literally see her models in a new light.

Artist and influential art critic John Ruskin advised his disciples to study nature attentively. Livingston has looked long and hard. But in contrast to artists of the nineteenth century, whose devotion to nature studies was manifested in lavishly detailed paintings of flora and fauna, Livingston limits her strokes to that which she deems absolutely essential: location, line, gravity, color and light. She references both city and landscapes using the structure of the grid to seamlessly bind disparate worlds.

Livingston's intricate three-dimensional models juxtapose organic form against architectural grid, this latter used to reference the studio, house, or metropolis—cool, artificial constructions that stand in stark contrast to the chaotic beauty of nature. It is a new take on the classic fairy tale of the city mouse and the country mouse, with plant life stealing the spotlight. The trees that line city streets with military precision are at odds with the vast untrammelled wilds depicted by the Romantics. Yet Livingston uses natural and urban space to metaphorically bridge historical and visual realms. Using minimal, formal means, she allows the viewer to ignore the vagaries of time and glimpse the essence of nature unbound.

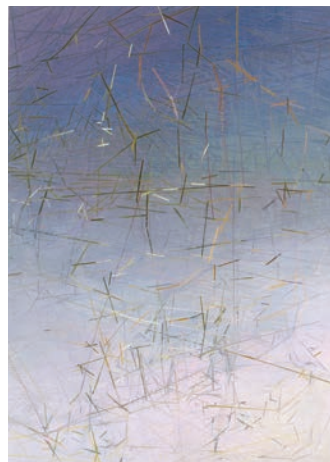
Suzanne Beal is a freelance writer and curator. Her writings on art and theater have been published locally and nationally in *Artdish*, *Seattle Weekly*, *Art in America*, and *Art on Paper*. Her current curatorial projects include the upcoming exhibit *Help Me, I'm Hurt* at the Kirkland Arts Center in September 2007.



**Structure (warm and cool 1),** 2005

Oil on linen  
30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

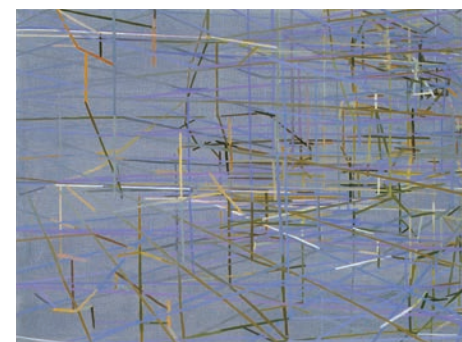
Courtesy of Greg Kucera Gallery  
Photo: Richard Nicol



**Structure (late autumn bright),** 2004

Oil on canvas  
60 x 44 in. (152.4 x 111.8 cm)

Collection of Vince and Jodi Ready  
Photo: Richard Nicol



**Structure (fog and rain),** 2005

Oil on canvas  
22 x 30 in. (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

Collection of Linda Hathaway Bunza  
Photo: Richard Nicol



# KIKI MACINNIS

Born New Haven, Connecticut  
Member since 2001

My work is based primarily on what I observe and transcribe in ink or paint. I study the same object and draw it over and over for long periods of time (months or years). The accretion of many separate experiences, repeated looking and drawing, alters my perception of the observed object. I am interested in how I come to know what something looks like and how that knowing shifts.

Several years ago I began drawing close-up studies of organic objects. I was interested to examine the overlooked marks and structure on ordinary stuff washed up on the beach or plant material quietly decaying in my yard. The marks and shadows were strange and unfamiliar. Since I could not generalize or guess at the correct shapes of something so unfamiliar (the dried remains of a foxglove root, for example) the process of transcribing the perceived shapes onto paper required concentrated looking. I was surprised to discover how much the drawings of sections of sticks and roots looked like human anatomy.

Recently I started painting the human figure from memory. These invented figures were unsuccessful. I began using sticks as stand-in models for small studies. I also made daily ink drawings of the human figure from photographs. The stick drawings, although painted from observation, and the photo studies began looking like each other. The final paintings of sticks look less botanical and more like the human anatomy I was unable to draw from memory.



**Falling Stick, 2006**

Chinese ink, acid free drawing paper  
35 x 23 in. (88.9 x 58.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Tony Bell



**Figure Studies, 2006**

Chinese ink, acid free drawing paper  
35 x 23 in. (88.9 x 58.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Tony Bell



**Falling Figure, 2006**

Acrylic on wood panel  
12 x 16 in. (30.5 x 40.6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Tony Bell

# SAYA MORIYASU

PROFILE BY **Katie Kurtz**

Born Portland, Oregon  
Member since 2006

The original materials for chandeliers were planks of spiked wood, candles, a hook in the ceiling, and a rope. Built as purely functional objects in the Middle Ages, they helped illuminate large, chilly stone churches. Then the wealthy and the craftsmen got hold of them and chandeliers became elaborate beyond necessity, a common trajectory for the life of a functional object. Fast-forward a few centuries and the functional object (at least what we have come to think of as such, as this term is increasingly debatable in a hyper-capitalist context) is built on failure and disposability. That is, objects are made with planned or stylistic obsolescence (pink refrigerators, iPods with nonreplaceable batteries,

a new season of fashion, and so on). Art enters somewhere in here and it is this space—between the functional and decorative, the necessity and the indulgence, the high and the low—that Saya Moriyasu explores. The Buddhist perspective she inherited from her father (also an artist) lends a spiritual dimension to this line of inquiry that Moriyasu has sustained through several bodies of work. Functional lamps stacked high in the center of a gallery resemble both department-store displays and altars; elegies to service workers memorialize their ghostly, transitory presence at banquet halls; and a “floating world” of ceramic sculptures is created literally and metaphorically atop planks of wood.

Katie Kurtz is a freelance writer based in San Francisco, where she is a regular contributor to the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and is currently in the graduate Visual Criticism program at California College of the Arts.



**Floating World, 2006**  
(detail)  
Plywood with stains & urethane, ceramic, underglaze, glaze, acrylic paint, wood  
4' x 3.75 x 3.75 ft.  
(1.2 x 1.14 x 1.14 m)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Saya Moriyasu



**Lamplight Lavish Gathering, 2005**  
Sculpture consisting of 36 lamps (ceramic, fabric, wiring, found and made lampshades) on 3 stacking tables, photo catalog, price scroll  
8.58 x 5.67 x 4 ft. (2.62 x 1.73 x 1.22 m)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Dirk Park



**Portraits of Ladies and Man Servant, 2003**  
Clay with underglaze, glaze, ribbon  
7 x 7 x 5 ft. (2.13 x 2.13 x 1.52 m)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Saya Moriyasu

# YUKI NAKAMURA

PROFILE BY **Jill Conner**

**Born** Kagawa, Shikoku Island, Japan  
**Member since** 1998

Since moving from Shikoku, Japan, to Seattle in 1995, Yuki Nakamura started to engage the subjective nature of art through a variety of anthropomorphic porcelain sculptures. In 2004, she traveled to La Napoule, France, and Novara, Italy, and expanded upon a personal affinity with erratic, cartographic lines that define land masses as seen on maps. *Fictional City* (2005) reminds us that abstraction, like a map, is a gradual, nonlinear process. This idea was recently extended further in a collaborative installation with Robert Campbell titled *Floating Plaster/City Motion* (2006). For this piece, the artist arranged bulky, cubic forms into the form of a ship that was transformed into a vast, rigid landscape as it was visually charged with an extensive interplay among video-projected images.

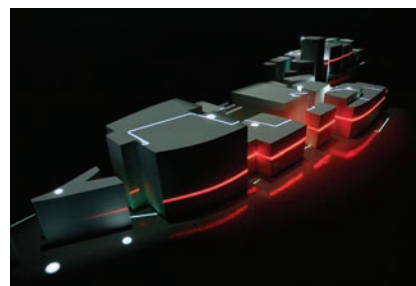
Nakamura has added a new facet to the visual identity of Northwest abstraction, transforming the appearance of this style—once known as an exclusive genre with hidden meanings—into a minimal, unembellished art form. *Dream Suspended* (2006) seeks to preserve the memory of her late brother, introducing his passion for the sport of soccer further into the shared global environment. In addition to her three-dimensional forms of art, Nakamura has investigated the boundaries of space, revealing art as a performative gesture that leads to a mutually traveled path, bringing artistic process to the surrounding world.

Jill Conner is an art critic and curator based in New York City and teaches at Parsons New School for Design. Her articles have appeared in national publications such as *Afterimage*, *ArtUS*, and *Sculpture*.



**Dream Suspended**, 2006  
Porcelain, neon wire,  
AC driver, wood  
9 x 7.33 x 4.67 ft.  
(2.74 x 2.23 x 1.42 m)

Courtesy of the artist and  
Howard House Contemporary Art  
Photo: Richard Nicol



**Yuki Nakamura and Robert Campbell**  
**Floating Plaster/City Motion**, 2006  
Hydrocal plaster, DLP projectors, DVD play-  
ers, DVD, laser  
9 x 16 x 12 ft. (2.74 x 4.88 x 3.66 m)

Joint project between 911 Media Arts Center  
and the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle

Courtesy of the artists  
Photo: Robert Campbell



**Fictional City**, 2005  
Plaster  
8.5 x 76 x 67 in. (21.6 x 193 x 170.2 cm)

Residency project at Novara Arte Cultura, Novara, Italy  
Courtesy of the artist and NAC  
Photo: Riccardo Del Conte



# NICHOLAS NYLAND

PROFILE BY **Jess Van Nostrand**

**Born** Lakewood, Washington  
**Member since** 2004

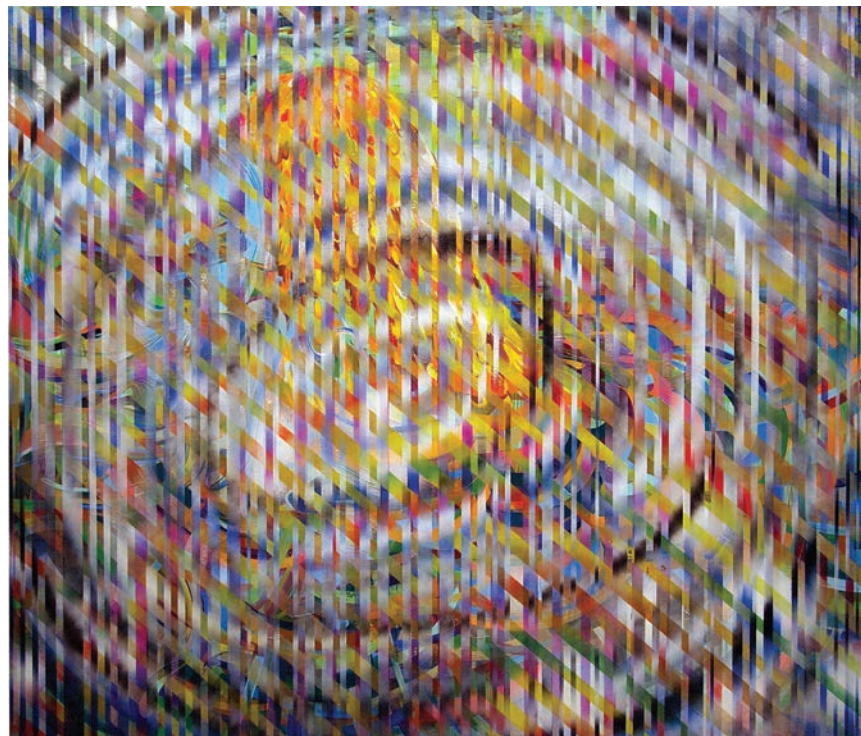
From the rich historical and visual resources of early American domestic craft and 15th-century Japanese painting, Nicholas Nyland weaves layers of paint, exploring the connection between the eye and the mind. Nyland's watercolors on paper present swift, wide brushstrokes within an asymmetrical composition, like a traditional Japanese landscape that has been exploded with contemporary abstraction. His intense oil paintings appear to be opposite, but are, upon closer examination, directly connected to their watercolor counterparts. These works present the energetic motion of his watercolors within overlapping strips of colors and patterns assembled across an entire canvas. The connection between these works lies in their foundation, the source of Nyland's ideas and forms, and in their treatment as parts of the same whole.

A tenet of the Fancy movement of late-19th-century America states that an important purpose of the domestic arts was to provide "dynamic mental activity" for the viewer that was "essential for the imagination." Nyland's paintings do this consistently and most apparently in his floor cloth titled *Passageway*, created for Aqua Art

Miami 2006 by using color, form, and line to evoke a visceral reaction in the viewer.

The playfulness and energy throughout Nyland's work call to mind the artist team of Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenzlinger, whose multilayered installations have transformed unlikely venues into wonderlands of visual stimulation with historical reference. Working in two dimensions, Nyland opens up space with a distinctive aesthetic, inviting the viewer to look beyond the surface.

Jess Van Nostrand is an independent curator whose projects introduce emerging and established artists from the U.S. and abroad to the Seattle art community. Jess is the founder of the One-Eared Rabbit Collaborative at Joe Bar, a solo show program for unrepresented artists, and is vice chair of the Seattle alliance of ArtTable, the national organization for women leaders in the arts.



**Untitled, 2006**  
Oil, enamel on canvas  
38 x 46 in. (96.5 x 116.8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Nicholas Nyland



**Untitled, 2006**  
Watercolor on paper  
9 x 12 in.  
(22.8 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Nicholas Nyland

# SARA OSEBOLD

Born Iowa City, Iowa

Member since 2005

A crisp chill in the air can spark the impulse to construct ideas. Sounds made by boots cracking the surface of a newly formed layer of ice (with its pops! and crunches) can stir something up. There's a little thrill when you suddenly realize the season has changed into the next due to an unmistakable sign like the faint smell of snow in November or the sprouting of crocuses pre-springtime. Animals burrow, grow a new coat, hibernate, migrate, then reemerge, shed, mate, store up, and migrate again. "How muskoxen navigate over their native landscape in darkness and snow, how they conceive of the space around them, is unknown" (Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*).

I'm fascinated by the phenomenon of instincts, by the mystery of cycles, and by the ways people/animals adapt, change, and acclimate according to what climate and landscape dictate. The sculpture and installation-based work I make reference landscape and its inhabitants and the vital ways an environment functions. I incorporate ideas of process through conceptual means. While the imagination has free reign, I am strongly influenced by aspects of the sciences, natural history, and the culinary. I combine carefully chosen materials/items together (wool felt, nori, stone, chocolate, water jars, coats, tables, sawhorses, fake fur, pots/pans, note cards, red thread, recorded sound) that result in a singular construction often accompanied by experimental and interactive components.



**Mountain Range, 2006**

Wool felt, basalt rocks, porcelain dishes, plastic wildlife  
372 x 191 x 4 in. (944.9 x 485.1 x 10.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Sara Osebold



**Making Greenland: Reindeer Grows, 2006**

(2 of 4 constructions)  
9 pots/pans, 2 coats, sawhorse, 600 Legos,  
nori, 70 note cards  
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Brian Lane



**Making Greenland: Landscape Emerges, 2006**

(4 of 4 constructions)  
9 pots/pans, 2 coats, sawhorse, 600 Legos,  
nori, 70 note cards  
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Brian Lane



# CHAUNEY PECK

PROFILE BY **Dirk Park**

**Born** Tacoma, Washington  
**Member since** 2005

Growing up in suburban Tacoma in the 1960s and '70s, I had nature and vistas all around me—huge tracts of undeveloped land loaded with trees and creeks that you could spend all day exploring. There was no question that this unspoiled world went on forever in the shadow of Mount Rainier.

Chaune Peck and I share a locale. We both lived in suburban settings that fostered a connection to the natural world. In the past twenty years, changes to the landscape have accelerated. Clear-cutting and overdevelopment are now the norm. Her work deals with these changes: the slow, steady eroding of the landscape and the relationship of the individual to these changes.

Chaune's plywood pieces *Mountain for Living* and *Two Spruces with the Light On* contain innocent iconography that illustrates a childlike, idealistic view of the natural world. These pieces are reminiscent of puzzles, directly rendered with simple forms depicting landscape as fairy tale.

In her installation *Melting Mountain*, she reframed an Internet article about a Swiss mountain glacier that is melting from global warming and being covered with an insulating blanket. Chaune's visual response is a sculpture that puts you inside the mountain, under the blanket. You become the glacier, reconnecting to a visceral empathy for our surroundings.

Chaune's art takes notice of and acknowledges a childlike powerlessness felt for our environment given the enormity of the problems we face. But this isn't cynical work. Chaune also invokes the magical possibilities of hope. For us inhabitants of the natural world, a simple act of noticing could lead to insight on how we can undo what we've done.

Dirk Park is an artist, the co-director and co-owner of Platform Gallery, and a co-organizer of Aqua Art Miami.



**Melting Mountain, 2006**  
Wood, spinnaker cloth, vinyl, foam  
7 x 15 x 6 ft. (2.13 x 4.57 x 1.83 m)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Chaune Peck



**Two Spruces with the Light On, 2006**  
Plywood, stain  
21 x 24 in. (53.3 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, collection of Elysha Rose Diaz  
Photo: Chaune Peck



**Mountain for Living, 2006**  
Plywood, stain  
15 x 18 in. (38.1 x 45.7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Chaune Peck



# RANDY WOOD

PROFILE BY **Suzanne Beal**

Born Hill Air Force Base, Utah  
Member since 2001

Randy Wood has a secret. He's harboring strange and wondrous creatures within the confines of his drawings and prints. All are mysteriously bound by the hint of a narrative left purposefully untold. Wood's past as a cartoonist and as the creator of comics such as *Randy Would* and the exuberantly titled *Kitties!!!* manifests itself in painting as graphic bursts of energy and cleverly condensed space. To this he adds an investigation of science and nature that deftly tows the line between high jinks and dark despair.

In YAY the alphabet takes the place of a conventional landscape. Wood's Stonehenge-like setting boasts boulders that mysteriously convene, forming the silhouettes of letters whose high-spirited message radically opposes the visual desolation they describe. The worms and skulls that punctuate his desert wasteland twist a would-be gregarious cheerleader's shout into wry cynicism. While observers of Wood's work are granted a bird's-eye view that reveals a message writ in stone, the creatures that litter his canvas blindly make their way through the rocky terrain, oblivious to any greater meaning.

Wood's images are brainteasers: while reasoning functions such as language are typically presided over by the left hemisphere of the brain, visual perception, artistic ability, and spatial perception are governed by the right. Forcing a strange convergence between word and image, Wood forces his viewer to shuttle between two incongruent messages: the significance of the optimistically written word is pitted against a visual personification of pessimism. In a mental East meets West, Wood is a gifted diplomat, acting as a mediator between radically opposed spheres, and in the process producing works of unique synergy.

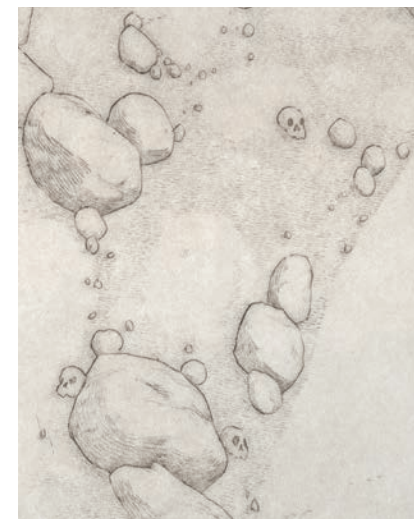
Suzanne Beal is a freelance writer and curator. Her writings on art and theater have been published locally and nationally in *Artdish*, *Seattle Weekly*, *Art in America*, and *Art on Paper*. Her current curatorial projects include the upcoming exhibit *Help Me, I'm Hurt* at the Kirkland Arts Center in September 2007.



**A, 2006**  
Watercolor, graphite  
26 x 20 in.  
(66 X 50.8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Andy Smull



**A, 2006**  
(detail)



**Yscape with skulls, 2006**  
(detail)  
Drypoint print  
6 x 9 in. (15.2 x 22.9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
Photo: Randy Wood

# JENNIFER ZWICK

Born Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Member since 2003

Jennifer Zwick's work is created for a very limited audience: herself as a child. She constructs scenarios that she would have connected with as a young girl. Despite the fact that digital methods are used in printing, the photographs are not manipulated. Zwick finds working in Photoshop to be too sterile: mistakes and their resolution are an essential part of her art, and she finds the results of creating physical scenes to be more complex.

In *The Explorers*, two young girls find themselves unsupervised in their living room. They cut open the carpet and smash through the floorboards, revealing a fecund area, where ferns and ivy grow unseen. Structurally, Zwick employed distinct compositional lines to keep the viewer's eye moving: from the older girl's downward gaze, to the fallen floorboard, to the upward slant of the younger girl's back, to the leaning shovel, to the rising line of the light leaking from the lampshade, to the downward line of the light, back up to the older girl.

*The Reader* is a hyperbolic view of Zwick's early years. The subject, in a pleasantly isolated environment, is dwarfed by stacks of books that rise in tandem with the surrounding trees. The books are bound in bright colors that glow in hues of candy, disparate from their subject matter: *Concrete in Transportation*, *Patriotism Limited: 1862-1865*; all will eventually be absorbed. Hints of future learning, further back in her stacks, show less academic lessons: *To Be A VICTIM* hovers behind her, in the midst of math and science and philosophy.

There is a certain naive quality to Zwick's work: while staying rooted in plausibility, the images are highly fantastical. Their subjects are unaware of the viewer, held in a heady preoccupation with their surroundings. These are worlds within worlds—those that the subjects created (smashing through floorboards, building towers of books), and those of the subjects, constructed by Zwick. This circular logic echoes the cannibalistic nature of her process: feeding off her own past ideas and emotions in order to reshape them for that past self.



**The Explorers**, 2005  
Archival inkjet print  
32 x 40 (81.3 x 101.6 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist



**The Reader**, 2005  
Archival inkjet print  
32 x 40 (81.3 x 101.6 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist

# EXHIBITIONS

## 2005 > 2006

### January 2005

#### Seeing Green

Curated by Tracey Fugami and Randy Wood

Brandon Ballengee  
Debra Baxter  
Buddy Bunting  
Diane Carr  
Tim Duch  
Larry Giacoletti  
Laura Stein  
Randy Wood  
Jim Woodring  
Jennifer Zwick

An exhibition bringing together urban artists from New York and Seattle who use imagery, both real and imagined, of the natural world to explore concepts of abstraction, realism, and politics.

### February 2005

#### Abstraction Obstruction:

#### Working the Meridians

Curated by Jeff Burgurt

Joe Ballweg  
Jennifer Braje  
Jeff Burgurt  
Chris Burnside  
Stephanie Dennis  
Dale Dolesji  
Chris Dunlap  
Eric Eley  
Seth Ely  
Clint Jukkala  
Sebastien Leclercq  
Chris Nau  
Tuan Nguyen  
John Parker  
Joanne Pavlak  
Brian Sharp  
Miriam Stephan  
Bill Wells

Jeff Burgurt presents 18 artists from across the country: Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle.

### March 2005

#### knock-off

A collaboration by Nina Zingale and Gina Rymarczuk

An installation of interrelated elements that initiated during the collaborators' 72-day excursion to Italy in 2003. The work playfully investigates, in a mix of scale and digital media, the notion of identity—religious, cultural, and national—coexisting with commerce and consumption.

### April 2005

#### They Will Be The Judge of That and Ghost Rocks

Randy Wood

Randy Wood's performance piece pairs a brush and ink drawing against two gerbils housed in a display case. The performance is accompanied by a series of brush and ink drawings.

#### Backspace Gallery:

#### Remote Control

Jana Brevick

### May 2005

#### Perspect

Laura Fritz

Mysterious, minimalist lab-like settings by Portland-based installation and video artist Laura Fritz.

#### Backspace Gallery:

#### Inside/Outside the Whale

Noah Simblist

### June 2005

#### Unearthing

Etsuko Ichikawa  
Sean M. Johnson  
Tuan Nguyen  
Sara Osebold  
Mary Simpson

SOIL presents the work of its five newest members in an exhibition of installation, sculpture, painting, and works on paper.

#### Backspace Gallery:

#### Helen Curtis: New Work

### July 2005

#### History and Prophecy:

#### A Bestiary for the 21st Century

Jessica Balsam  
Howard Barlow  
Shannon Eakins  
Justin Gibbens

The works featured in this show spin cautionary tales about the world we occupy. The artists use subjects of the animal kingdom both literally and as metaphor in playful, didactic, and sometimes terrorizing ways.

### August 2005

#### Girls Growing

Curated by Jess Van Nostrand

Judy Blotnick  
Margi Geerlinks  
Ginny Ivanicki  
Anya Janssen  
Claire Johnson  
Kipling West  
Barbara Wijnveld  
Jennifer Zwick

Artists whose work challenges clichéd vocabulary and old-fashioned ideas associated with girls growing up and women getting older, turning the tables on words such as "blossoming" and "blooming" and shining a new light on the reality of growing up as a girl.

### September 2005

#### Nocturnes

Curated by Fionn Meade

Cat Clifford  
Laleh Khorramian  
Lucy Raven  
Mary Simpson

Four artists who explore animation within their wider studio practice show new films that transport the viewer into "other worlds" entirely of the artists' making.

#### SOIL Art Auction

Organized by Monica Miller and Jana Brevick  
Laura Michalek, live auctioneer

Western Bridge, 3412 Fourth Avenue South

### October 2005

#### SOIL 1995-2005: A Retrospective

Curated by Nicholas Nyland

Jana Brevick  
Buddy Bunting  
Leslie Clague  
Paul Davies  
Jack Daws  
Chris Engman  
William Fellows  
Christian French  
Mandy Greer  
Thom Heileson  
Jenny Heishman  
Etsuko Ichikawa  
Claire Johnson  
John Kietlyka  
Karen Liebowitz  
Margie Livingston  
Kiki MacInnis  
Bret Marion  
Craig Miller  
Sean Miller  
Saya Moriyasu  
Yuki Nakamura  
Tuan Nguyen  
Nicholas Nyland  
Sara Osebold  
Eugene Parnell  
Demi Raven  
Jodi Rockwell  
Samantha Scherer  
John Seal  
Toi Sennhauser  
Juniper Shuey  
Katy Stone  
Bethany Taylor  
Blair Wilson  
Randy Wood  
Claude Zervas  
Ellen Ziegler

A celebration of the collective impact of SOIL's ten years as a catalyst and vital part of contemporary art in the Northwest.



**November 2005****Crime Scene**Curated by **Claire Johnson**

Denise Duffy  
Fourteen  
Claire Johnson  
Rich Lehl  
Tim Marsden  
Amy Ragsdale  
Demi Raven  
Bonnie Reid  
Larie Smoyer  
Kipling West

Artists from Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Canada respond to crime, investigation, and evidence.

**Backspace Gallery:****The Reader**

Jennifer Zwick

Four large-format photographs culminating in the title photograph, a constructed narrative consisting of 260+ library books and one small girl.

**December 2005****Catalog**Curated by the artist group **GRR:****Adriana Grant, Kristen Ramirez & Dan Rhoads**

Dawn Cerny  
Rutherford Chang  
Celeste Fichter  
Heather Hart  
Diane Jacobs  
Ron Lambert  
leneb  
Allison Manch  
Edward Ancher Nelson  
Karen Reimer  
Ariana Page Russell  
Dan D. Shafer  
Alice Tippit

An exhibit of work that engages with lists, enumerations, classifications, and categories. Twelve artists from six different cities, Seattle to Beijing, show work that includes photography, embroidery, watercolor, video, and installation.

**January 2006****Psychogeographies**

Vaughn Bell and Ron Lambert

Asking "In what place do we want to be?," this exhibition explores the construction of emotions and feelings of security in relation to our attachment to our environment. Through the use of sculpture and video, the show examines the rub between the places we encounter and the ways we interpret them.

**Backspace Gallery:****Hardline Organics – Part One**

Co-curated by **Craig Miller and Yuki Nakamura**  
Collaboration project by **Jenny Heishman, Etsuko Ichikawa, Craig Miller, Saya Moriyasu, and Yuki Nakamura**

Part one of a two-part show featuring collaborative sculpture pieces and drawings that deal with concepts of forms and spaces that would be hard or unlikely to ever be realized.

**February 2006****New Members Show**

Satomi Jin  
Isaac Layman  
Chaune Peck

**Backspace Gallery:****Mirage**

Nicholas Nyland

For his abstract wall painting, Nicholas Nyland employs traditional perspective techniques more common to representational imagery.

**March 2006****Stunt n Growth**

Sean M. Johnson and Jason Wood

A collaborative site-specific installation that transforms the space of SOIL, giving the story of a life lived and the effects of branching out in a controlled environment.

**Backspace Gallery:****Transplant**

Chris Engman

For this piece, Engman photographed a tree in Western Washington, produced a billboard-sized image of that tree, and transplanted it into an environment in Eastern Washington where only grasses and sagebrush grow.

**April 2006****PRESTO!****Singular Work, Varied Compositions**

Adam Bateman  
Jose Bold  
Corey Breneisen  
Brian Lane  
Jason Marchiava  
Sara Osebold

Six artists' works that change in composition each week throughout the month. As a tribute to all things building blocks and Lincoln Logs, bold and subtle transformations demonstrate versatility, mobility, and a sense of play in these works.

**Backspace Gallery:****Drawings**

Satomi Jin

Jin shows a new series of small drawings which she created every day in March 2006.

**May 2006****nooksandcrannies**Curated by **Etsuko Ichikawa**

Julie Custer  
Marc Dombrosky  
Etsuko Ichikawa

A site-specific installation exhibit in which each artist takes their own observations about the unique qualities of the space—cracks and holes in the floor, architectural structures, industrial elements, temporary furniture, the street scene, sound, light, and shadow—and interprets them through their own particular installation.

**Backspace Gallery:****Substrata**

Thom Heileson

Digital photographic work meditating on points of juncture and rupture between the ordered and the chaotic.

**June 2006****Hardline Organics – Part Two:****A Tale of Absurd Optimism**

Collaboration project by **Jenny Heishman, Etsuko Ichikawa, Craig Miller, Saya Moriyasu, and Yuki Nakamura**

Co-curated by **Craig Miller and Yuki Nakamura**

An interactive and immersive space using sound, objects, and projections. The project keys on the concept of absurd optimism and the ideals of futurism melded with each artist's own sensibilities.

**July 2006****The Artful Scheme of Happiness**An installation of drawings and ephemera by **Dawn Cerny and Alice Tippit**

A collaborative installation based on investigating the obsessions, interests, and amusements of a fictitious eccentric millionaire who can indulge in an unfettered pursuit of happiness.

**Backspace Gallery:****Notes from the field/  
17 prisons in California**

Buddy Bunting

Small watercolors, large-scale ink wash drawings, and video from the Scabland Project, based on travels to remote prisons in the American West.

**August 2006****Exploded View**Curated by **Nicholas Nyland and Tuan Nguyen**

Erica Bradbury  
Margie Livingston  
John Mills  
Leah Nguyen  
Tuan Nguyen  
Nicholas Nyland  
Bill Wells

An examination of the aspects, tangents, and side ventures that directly or indirectly inform each artist's body of work to give the viewer a fuller understanding of the artist's practice through these "exploded" elements.

**Backspace Gallery:****How Does Grass Grow?**

Chaune Peck

A series of quasi-experiments inspired by the unanswerable questions of nature, in which everyday materials re-created models of grass and mountains.

**September 2006****Tinker Tailor Jeweler Spy**

Jana Brevicek

A celebration and investigation of the spy mystique through the personal effects and mission objectives of the spy.

**Backspace Gallery:****Four Stages of Snow**

Sara Osebold

Objects and illustrations giving insights into the processes of snow falling from sky to earth.

**October 2006****Façade**

Curated by Chris Engman

Thom Heileson  
Shawn Landis  
Isaac Layman  
Anne Mathern  
Tim Roda  
Adam Satushek  
Ross Sawyers  
Todd Simeone  
Amir Zaki  
Claude Zervas  
Jennifer Zwick

A survey of contemporary photography that emphasizes the constructed and artificial nature of the medium.

**Backspace Gallery:****breath-memory**

New works by Etsuko Ichikawa

For this series of sculptural works, Ichikawa blew her own breath into molten glass to create glass bubbles, and imprinted the hot bubbles onto wood, which is one way to capture and eternalize the immediacy of a moment, a snapshot of one's life.

**November 2006****Opolis**

Thom Heileson and Salvatore Panatteri

An exhibition pairing the work of two artists working experimentally with photography and video, concentrating on the use of lens media and invented techniques to visually investigate the urban environment.

**Backspace Gallery:****Topology of Internal Light**

Yoshiyuki Paul Komada

Curated by Nicholas Nyland

Improvisation of line and color used to uncover fleeting thoughts and transitional moments.

**SOIL Art Auction**

Organized by Monica Miller

Laura Michalek, live auctioneer

Greg Kucera Gallery, 212 Third Avenue South

**December 2006****Malfunction:****Sentimental Ghost Is Missing**

Jesse Paul Miller and Brent Watanabe

Custom computer applications create randomly generated drawing, landscape, and character projections, with simultaneous accompanying soundscapes presented throughout the gallery.

**SOIL at Aqua Art Miami**

Curated by Jess Van Nostrand

Aqua Hotel, 1530 Collins Avenue  
Miami Beach, Florida

Founded in 1995, SOIL is a collective and a nonprofit gallery established, supported, and managed by Seattle artists. SOIL exists as an experimental venue for artists and curators to exhibit, develop, and advance innovative art of diverse media and content.

For more info, visit [www.soilart.org](http://www.soilart.org)

**SOIL ARTIST-RUN GALLERY**

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