I just spent about 45 minutes scrolling through Instagram. I should’ve been writing this essay, but instead I was engaged in the infinite scroll, looking through at least a hundred images on my Samsung Galaxy before I finally give up and turn my attention towards my work. The ‘infinite scroll’ is really just a feature of Tumblr, among other social media sites, and a plug-in for Word Press, when having your user select “next page” seems absolutely unthinkable. It is also, as a former student of mine coined it, the rabbit hole of Internet use, where, rather than reading a book or watching a movie or getting some exercise, you are trapped, numbed and on auto-pilot following an endless stream of images like bread crumbs.

Instagram is particular of course, as it crops all of its images to the same dimensions before offering the user a small selection of filters capable of imbuing even the most banal of images with a twinge of longing. A kind of Vaseline lens for old Hollywood startets, the social media platform reinforces the connection between desire and old media by tapping into the look and feel of Polaroid, black and white, over-exposed film, seemingly unable to exhaust the people’s needs for a fix of atmospheric nostalgia. And that fix comes fast: dramatic architecture, neon signs, cities at night from airplanes and hill tops, long stretches of beaches, old things, cats, snow drifts, succulents, empty bottles and cans, lost stuff, and selfies of course (here and there, but not as much as the other stuff, the other little captures of life).

But the fix is fast and you can’t get behind the image very far. that cropping cuts out the information needed to place the shot, securing it as an image before it is much of a document. For the most part, the best of Instagram is the ability of the photographer to find and frame things so as to remove all context entirely; to divorce the thing in the frame from any real intention, and as it appears, wedged between photos of cats and cacti, from much signification. Drowned out by the sheer number of random images that are piling on top of one another, each one is rendered more and more formal. Flower is a just a shape, its meaning is relatively arbitrary. The feeling of flower however is a little more specific. With each passing image bathed in a golden light or an artful blur, the pleasantness of these images: happiness, beauty, quiet, and humor, is more palpable. Instagram delivers a dose of contrived affect.

Going back in time a few months, I encountered the fourth in a spate of very slow films that would inspire me to consider how our perception might be changing in relationship to the change in how, and how often, certain stimuli are delivered to us. Each of these films was made by a different artist in a different part of the world, yet they all seemed to share the common characteristic of a slow caressing of their subject with the lens; a methodical covering of a surface with a long, languorous “look” that while not as slow as Warhol’s Sleep, was certainly an exercise in close, protracted examination. A kind of pace that lay

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on the opposite side of the spectrum from the infinite scroll that indulges only seconds of retina time on the flat, unforgiving surface of a picture.

And yes, really, it was like a touch. And as I watched these films: David Hartt’s Stray Light, Laurent Montaron’s Short Study of the Nature of Things, Andreas Bunte’s Two Films About Pressure and Carrie Schneider’s Reading Women, I was able to be engrossed for longer than I (previously) would have been, suddenly deeply satisfied on some sensual level with the lens as prosthetic, handling and examining the world for me at a speed and scale that seemed like an indulgent gift. These cameras seemed, as a touch, to try and consider the object as thoroughly and closely as possible – to find the real object as though looking alone, if done slowly and methodically enough, could penetrate to the core secrets of the object itself. As the lens gazed and time elapsed, my eyes, my brain, let out a long breath to say: finally, I have some time with it.

There are other examples of this pace in the world of media from Norwegian Slow Television broadcasting a train journey in real time to the YouTube ASMR phenomenon where ladies whisper to you while slowly tapping wood blocks together or their nails on a variety of surfaces. While watchers of ASMR claim that the experience of these slow, soft sounds is a like a “braingasm,” viewers of Slow Television (20% of Norway’s TV audience), participate in the experience of the looooong shot by conversing through social media. A strange collapse of “real-time” between the always-on speed of communication of Twitter and Facebook with the methodical and meditative pacing of a live, unedited video feed that thrusts the simultaneity of the real into the foreground.

The prevalence of “close looking” in films, but also artworks in general, dovetails media exhaustion of the visual with a detachment of images from signification. One argument might be that the sheer number of images we ingest through media has loosened their relationship to a referent, another might be more philosophical, in line with the popularity of Object-Oriented Ontology and Speculative Realism, that artworks no longer “have any direct critical or political meaning...but that the assemblages and constellations of matter and worlds themselves...create discursive signification.”

Object-oriented art is an aesthetic “invested in exploring the potentialities” of things, in part or in assemblage, that opens up new spaces of possibility. Graham Harman, a key philosopher in Object-Oriented Ontology, claims that real objects and their qualities can never be known directly – their many facets, histories and possibilities could not be accessed simultaneously on the surface of things. Play along that surface however is where we get lost, absorbed, and begin to animate a new object through that encounter inside the “intentional space” of our minds.

The slow films I cite, Hartt’s careful panning of Chicago’s Johnson Publishing Company offices and its meticulously preserved 1971 interior; Montaron’s intimate gaze at (mostly obsolete) communications technology cut with wintry landscapes; Bunte’s examination of East German diamond manufacture and pressurized athletics facility and Schneider’s lacing together of women engrossed in reading books by women, are spare considerations of the space around their objects. These films are about the atmosphere that both cradles and circulates around them, the implied gaps that we as spectators enter into in our encounter with them. They are studies in ideological space, in character or tone, the affect of space that objects inflect. This journey into slow, close looking is an attempt to gather the affect of objects and the landscapes they operate in and provide the grounds for an encounter, that while never identical across spectators, will impart the powerful allure of things, and in all their shimmering, their potential to forge new relationships. Where else does ideology really coalesce after all, if not within the mind?

Where artwork is made, that is, the encounter that coalesces into the new object, the speculative object, was something that buoyed me through 28 studio visits with Indiana University’s MFA graduating class. Common subject matter or materiality was not going to emerge in a pool of students studying the spectrum of art and design in a culture that is saturated with images. If anything,
the struggle itself to make meaning, to wrestle with process and the negotiation between the glut of signs and signifiers, or histories and counter-histories, is the basis of being a maker. Making meaning is after all impossible, it is made in the encounter. To try and manufacture something that emerges from a relationship is to pressure an outcome that remains obstinately oblique to its forcing. In the studio, one can witness the artist’s encounter with their own vocabularies, their own fluencies, as they select from the objects that drift past them. What objects emerge from this liminal space are subject to the whole new struggle to make meaning that emerges in the “gallery” as the encounter between spectator and artwork is the simultaneous possibility of complete boredom or agitation.

The production of that space of encounter is the basis of Aaron Hegert’s digital image making. Quoting Trevor Paglan, Hegert writes: “humans create the world around them and that humans are in turn, created by the world around them.” Responding to perception as the moment in an encounter that creates new space and new meaning, Hegert culls from a history of visual contrivances meant to mask or disguise, from camouflage to standard Photoshop techniques. His process of making digital photographs breaks the script for these operations, misusing them or remixing to create suites of images that themselves disguise or obliterate a comfortable definition of “truth” in pictures.

On occasion, Hegert works with his colleague Zachary Norman (as well as Jason Lukas) on the project, Everything is Collective, a process of investigating the ever-changing nature of the photograph as object through a participatory process of creating images vulnerable to multiple readings. The trio make and remake their images as they circulate between them, stripping away the crust of signification with each re-consideration, each multiple exposure, each deliberate obfuscation. Alone, Norman’s project is not dissimilar, he too works to sever his images from the referent, avoid any mobilization of a narrative or string of associations as he builds photographs as some artists might attempt to build formal sculpture.

Katie Jacobs and Jared Gelormino are both artists engaged in the practice of sign mash-up in search of objects that might defy the tyranny of taste, value, or the age-old ideas of high and low. Jacobs invokes the culture of sport to speak to the atmosphere of faith and community generated by team athletics, a kind of belonging that, although appealing to a larger population, operates based on language, custom and participation not unlike the requirements of the art-world. Gelormino grabs from historical antiquities through to dollar-store tschotkes in an exercise in recasting histories and interrupting embedded associations in primarily ceramic objects. Both artists create somewhat totemic sculptures that speak to the power of the object to hold mystical or transcendent properties.

This reuse of imagery and objects to short-circuit their own meaning or logic is at play in the work of wearable artists Kyleigh Garman and Kelly Novak. Garman uses seed beads, a common craft material, as her building blocks for the construction of micro-worlds. Looking at rocks and minerals under high magnification, she re-interprets these images into new small sculpture forms that recast the micro-natural world into a sci-fi landscape. Similarly, Novak uses materials like bike tire tubing and the fluff from her red sweater cast in resin, to produce jewelry that in its encounter with the body expands the territory of the wearable to create new forms or line on the body of the wearer itself. Her bike tubing necklaces render iron-work like drawings against a torso, her rings made from looping weed trimmer line, erupt from the wearer’s hand in a gestural burst of line.

Ceramics 16 - 17  18 - 19

Metalsmithing & Jewelry 56 - 57

Digital Art 54 - 55
Alysha Kupferer analyzes the consumer through a focus on self — providing her own habits for contemplation and reflection. Removing all of her clothing from her home and neatly folding and piling her belongings in the gallery, she fashions a confessional portrait of herself through how and why she shops. Devin Balara takes up the patterns of suburban home life as another kind of spatial portraiture, recycling the mis-tints from home decoration projects and leftovers from home renovations to construct sculptural meditations on the process of personal reinvention through the often nonsensical cycle of improvements made through changes in home décor.

Other artists recapitulate objects from their “home” or personal space in order to invite new encounters through the recombination of the personal and public. Stephen Crimarco uses manufactured items that through formal qualities of color or shape recall the tropical West Indian art of his youth, and inserts them into his current Midwestern surroundings. The bright tableaus that he constructs in the forest near his home become way-finding devices, a process of relocating, and constantly reconstructing home from a collage of signs and experiences. Similarly, Sunetra Banjeee uses the Gamchha, a textile commonly used as a personal towel in India, but since re-cast as a fashion scarf as a means to support this specialized weaving industry, as a mnemonic object that recalls home and family. Installed on a line, each towel, as woven by Banjeee, is treated as a portrait of loved ones far away. Keegan Adams draws from his own body — meditating on themes of genetics and heredity through images that address the body as host for both unwanted conditions and unexamined ancestry. The conflation of these two things into the body as bearer poses questions about the burden of what is inherited and the struggle for coherence.

Liminality, rites of passage and the affect of uncertainty are common themes for many artists at IU. Mike Reeves addresses the liminal space between childhood and adulthood and the emergence and negotiation of desire. His paintings depict the anticipation vs. the trepidation around emerging sexuality through scenes of boyhood adventure alongside moments of solitude and repose. Using a color palette born out of a 80s pornography, Reeves sets a tone to the paintings that is a tainted nostalgia, acknowledging the anxiety of this coming-of-age. Similarly, Maria Korol moves between an illustrative and an abstract practice in a process of depicting charged moments from childhood and then distilling them to an affective palette. Her ink drawings recall scenes from
childhood that defy common idyllic portrayals of youth in favor of showing the unpleasantness of surmounting shame or not being in control. Her paintings reinterpret these moments through shape and color to contend with affect in the abstract as opposed to the illustrative.

Weaving together anime and video game imagery with classic portraiture, Zach Koch collapses fictive spaces into paintings that recall flashbacks or montages in film. As the past and future appear to meld and blend together, Koch’s compression or collapse of time creates an ambiguous space between history and fiction, logic and fantasy, alternate realities and IRL. Within these compositions, Koch depicts rites of passage and moments of anxiety, treating gamer imagery as a comforting, adaptive dimension. On the other hand, in Nathan Perry’s painted landscapes of displacement and destruction narrate a struggle to reconcile views of the afterlife. Dark paintings invoke survival in the absence of belief and certainty through images of shelter, from caves to trenches to shanties. Uneasiness permeates Perry’s work, suspending a viewer in a kind of purgatory, at the threshold of finding comfort or answers. Boredom, as an affect, or a state of ambiguity or limbo is addressed in Donny Gettinger’s sculpture and video work. Potential energy and emptiness coexist in simple metal sculptures of guns or a video of cars doing donuts. Both objects or activities speak to thrill-chasing and heightened experience, with Gettinger curious about the kind of boredom that emerges regionally, and particularly in the rural Midwest of his youth, and how that boredom manifests in a kind of circular, non-productive expressions of desire.

New looking might be one challenge to making art in an image-saturated culture. Christina Weaver and Natasha Holmes re-present materials through a shift in framing and an exaggeration of view. Collecting detritus on her daily walks, Natasha Holmes photographs these otherwise nondescript, throwaway objects to be magnificent. Resembling scientific photos of planets or molten metal, Holmes translates the mundane into the mysterious, lending a sense of significance and discovery to lint or plastic bags. Describing her work as an archaeology of absence, these photos elevate the missing encounter, the absent body, through their deferral into these found objects. Christina Weaver uses fabric to construct atmospheric landscapes, immersing the viewer in a closely cropped study of the folds and ripples of tulle and satin. Whether beneath the skirts or looking down upon them, Weaver’s jumble of cloth evokes stormy nights and sunsets, conflating the weather with the affective body that is absent from this discarded wrapping.

Gavin Rouille tackles new looking for political ends, rethinking the use of text as a means to literally change the perspective of the viewer. Creating signs, projections and mail art, Rouille designs anamorphic typography and a kind of analog lenticular signage that requires the viewer to re-situate their body in order to perceive the message. In Fallacy of Thinking, one angle reads: “I disapprove of you,” while the other: “I’m afraid of who I am.” As scale and proximity shifts for encountering these messages, from the handheld postcard, the intimacy of a quilt or the physicality of a public projection or billboard, the viewer is forced to perform their own perspective shift in order to read messages of self-acceptance or critique that highlight the self-imposed limitations capable of limiting or furthering injustice, discrimination and shaming.

Painters, Nakima Ollin, Nathan Foxton and Taylor Woolwine discover their imagery through the process of painting, revealing shapes and figures through reinterpretations of the landscapes they paint. Working in an open-ended fashion, their practices propose how one can see anew through the performance of painting. Foxton longs to find what lays beneath the surface of painting, allowing the building of an image, the seams, to show through. His scenes of groups engaged in adventure narratives reflect the process of discovery that he enters into in the studio. Ollin accepts accident and chance as methods for constructing an image, her paintings emerging from the suggested spaces found in the process, allowing herself to lose direction and the action of painting to take over. Taylor Woolwine sets up a system of constraints for painting, working and reworking a tableau that along with a repeated use of certain objects often incorporates previously finished paintings within the
context of the next work. No meaning crystalizes in Woolwine’s pictures, rather the studio-as-subject comes to fore with the viewer invited into the artist’s struggle to make images and the process of looking and relooking.

Seeing anew through process is also at the heart of the printmaking practices of Rachel Baxter and Kristy Hughes. Both artists collaborate with their materials and methods to produce unique “prints” that read more as drawings than traditional printmaking. Baxter allows materials to undergo their own mark-making process, using rust and toner to build up marks that she minimally directs through time and the use of spray adhesive and exposure to the wind. Chance is embraced and control minimized to a few set of decisions in the production of large-scale work whose marks read as more dramatic and physical than her process would suggest. Hughes also minimizes her material decisions to a few scrap strips of paper, stencils and rice paper to create subtle monoprints that read as faded Xerox copies. Laying down a drawing in reverse through found materials, Hughes builds up line and shape into subtle, ghostly images that speak to the potential of materials; her indirect arrival at an image, lead by her materials and process.

Lastly, designers David Orr and You Zhang both allow process, play and discovery to guide their practices, working responsively to the design problem. Zhang creates layered work that frequently uses the letterform as material or building block, creating design programs that utilize surprise as a means to deliver information. Orr applies a stripped down approach to his illustrations, creating bold, playful and super-flat graphics that are the result of his own self-stated formula: design = paying attention + playing around with what you observe (everything else is salt and pepper).

Needless to say, Orr’s formula may be applicable to the process of encountering art: art = paying attention + playing around with what you observe. In visiting these 28 up-and-coming artists, it was clear that there are no hard and fast rules for studio practice and what emerges from that place of experimentation. Rather, I observed a strong group of thinkers that are reimagining how to look to at the world, the problem of significance, and the experience of art itself as – not just as information but as an event that can give way to new understanding. Perhaps the speed at which images are coming at us is leading to practices and experiences that look to challenge the speed of our perception, asking us to slow down, look closely, look differently, and maybe see the world differently, or see it period.
“What our perception presents us with (at every moment) is an infinitely complex, dynamic, whole envelope of the world and our being in it.” – Robert Irwin

As a child growing up on the coast, I felt and still feel connected to its elusive edge. It is created, destroyed and maintained by the elements, forever in a state of flux. It was in this environment that I found the opportunity to understand the world, and my being in it. My artistic practice is directly linked to these experiences.

Printing outdoors or onto fabric exceeding my arm span takes authority out of my hands. As does the violent and immediate marks of a chainsaw used to carve a woodcut, or drawing with natural processes like rust or smoke. Struggling with these forces allows me the rare and cherished opportunity to be surprised by the visual outcomes; to bear witness and react to the most basic condition of our universe, change.

I continue with direct processes such as drawing or painting, taking ownership of the visual development of the piece with a more calculated hand. I find this reflective of an inherent quality of being human; attempting to find order in chaos. This continues until the point is reached where they hover somewhere on a spectrum between two rivaling adjectives. They are growing and decaying, present and fading, they are moments of transformation.

Through collaboration with these forces greater than myself, my attempt to harness them while simultaneously embracing the unexpected becomes embedded in the surfaces. There are areas that call on the visual language of nature and weather, where others dissolve completely into non-objectiveness or void. Playing with spatial shifts, textures, and movements, I aim to create a visual experience that consistently changes the perception of the viewer. The pieces are to be seen, as in one of the simplest fundamental experiences of our existence. Through this we are given the opportunity to search, question, and measure ourselves against the work. We search because we are not stagnant with ultimate understanding, but coaxed and encouraged by the hope that we can slowly step into a larger understanding of the world and our being in it.

Rachel Baxter

Untitled
Rust, spray paint, charcoal, pastel on fabric
2013
Entropy I
Rust, spray paint, charcoal, pastel on fabric
2013

Entropy II
Rust, relief print, charcoal, pastel on fabric
2013
The work that I make originates from my experiences in childhood play with string and paper. These simple materials held the potential to become anything I could imagine, and helped me to understand myself in my surroundings. In my play, I learned how to create, realizing the material’s potential to become something greater than itself. I still participate with paper and string by utilizing them in my artistic practice. They enable me the experience of discovering the infinite possibilities within limitations of simple materials and process.

In my play as a child and in my work as an adult, the materials and the experience that they elicit come hand in hand. They are in service to each other, just as the relationships of figure and ground on the picture plane inform one another. This is reflected in the work visually by the interplay of positive and negative space, the trace of material, and its surroundings that characterize it. As the traces of string or paper start to become apparent within the print, they dissipate into the ground, and another form emerges. Ground and figure are one and the same, as is material and experience.

Printmaking and the very act of printing are important to how I work. Printmaking is conducive to capturing history of process. In the print that is pulled from the press, the materials are no longer present; instead, they are referenced and remembered on paper. Printing and abiding by self-imposed parameters are important to how I work because it is during these moments that I discover the potential these materials hold. As I direct my attention to the slight variation of pressure from the press, the transparency of layers, and overall formal qualities of the work, I realize what the materials can become. The unrecognizable space and intangible reference of these materials allows the viewers their own experience of grasping the potential within the work.
Neither Object Nor Space Nor Line Nor Anything
Monotype
39 x 29 1/2 in
2013
The nature of the body is the focus of my work. I am a body in the world that is being constantly worked upon by forces that are largely enigmatic. The inexorable transformation is both internal and external and thus conditions both physical body and psychology and re-constitutes them into one bodily arena, the image. Within this arena I can investigate, question, and try to understand the conditions of my existence, two of these that predominate are my experience with type 1 diabetes and my native american heritage.

The body is the vessel of both physiology and history. The vessel becomes an uncanny container that is in constant flux. The impact of this is one of dislocation from the anchor that the body should be in relating to existence in the world. When the body is at the mercy of forces that are difficult to understand and relate to, how does one reclaim one’s own body, and by extension, one’s place in the world? My work explores this question.

My imagery presents the body in a highly iconic aesthetic that uses frenetic mark making as both flux, and, reclamation. The marks create a circular process of alteration, subtraction, and recreation. The depictions of the body are destructive and constructive at once, with authoritative passages and intricate layering of ghosts of previous layers. A furious balance of literal and symbolic elements combines to provoke allusions of flesh, degeneration, disease, struggle, and renewal.
Equality, social justice, and progressive politics on an individual level have been the broad focus around my creative process and research. The desire to engage in this work roots from my identity as a queer, transgender individual. I address these issues by focusing on both general facts and beliefs, and personal experiences with the intent to educate viewers. I utilize a broad range of methods and techniques for communicating and delivering my ideas so that I can reach as many different people as possible. These techniques have included; prints and posters, quilts and embroidery, pamphlets, postal works, stickers and free giveaways.

When I started this work, I aimed to highlight political and social inequities by exposing and mocking the people I believed to be the root of discriminatory practices. It wasn’t until I started to research social psychology, neuroscience, and new age spirituality that the connections between our beliefs, thoughts, and actions became clear to me, and I realized I had been heading in the wrong direction.

My current work aims to persuade a positive shift in focus by exposing the cause and effects of negative thinking and self-imposed limitations that create bad cycles, while subtly encouraging thoughts of peace and happiness through visually distorted positive affirmations. I have been working with these ideas through glow in the dark mediums, lenticular prints, and anamorphic typography. Using these techniques, I encourage my viewers to shift their point of view by requiring them to physically change their surrounding or perspective to read the work correctly. By presenting multiple entry points and attitudes, I encourage my viewers to take the hard road by assuming responsibility for their thoughts and thus the world around them.

Gavin Rouille

Printmaking

I'm A Real Boy
Silkscreen and Letterpress
2013
I use animals as a storytelling device to talk about human behaviour and emotions. We rarely pay attention to emotions (or don’t always have time to reflect on these) even though, as Martin Creed points out “feelings are the most important things in the world, just through being mysterious things that rule our lives”¹. To explore emotional responses, I use the animal to discuss and help symbolise basic feelings like fear or loneliness, which are often hidden in our culture. The animal living in social groups can be simultaneously “wild”, while also considering how to behave domestically within its group. I am interested in the domestication, or “taming” of emotions that happens through enculturation and the unknowability that emotions might have at their core.

A consistent part of my practice uses ephemeral non-traditional art materials as a deliberate choice to de-emphasise the pecking order, which traditionally placed some materials above others in Modernist Western art making. Ceramic, while a traditional art material, has tended to exist in a space between craft and “high” art. It has a similar liminal quality to that of emotions, when fired it is both permanent and fragile or breakable.

Wolf Head deals with emotional ambiguities, represented literally in the form of the wolf dog hybrid. Even though it is a large scale, the fact it is physically lower than us, and has “cuteness” enables us to feel some empathy or identification with it. The sounds emanating from the wolf’s mouth were recorded during a tailgating event and are human, creating an analogy between animals howling to locate themselves or communicate with others and humans expressing joy or pleasure through their communication with each other. The ambiguity between these sounds of joy and a sound of loneliness or fear is a site for exploration in my work.

Katie Jacobs

Australia Head - Collingwood Magpie
Ceramic (Earthenware with Glaze), mirrors, google eyes, aluminium foil
2013

Wolf Head
Ceramic (Earthenware with Glaze), Found Tree Stump
2013
The work I produce arises from a multilayered approach to studio art. The physical manifestation is a combination of found objects and hand built ceramic forms assembled in a dynamic and sometimes capricious manner. The finished product is a result of the sustained investigation of the conversation between handmade and found objects. Each piece contains a narrative that is particular to the history of ceramic art. Research is essential to my practice, I search out and deconstruct classic and contemporary ceramic archetypes, styles and individuals to realize and reimagine the essence and inspiration behind them. My work has an abundance of contrast and tension both formal and conceptual; this exposes trickster attitudes and my need to interrogate the history of art.
He Touched Every Part of It
Ceramic, mass produced ceramic object, wood, foam, paint, glue
2013
I make ink drawings of people interacting, often in embarrassing or absurd situations. In my drawings, I use satire in an effort to shed light and attack behavior that I found bothersome or unacceptable among people in the city I grew up in; namely Buenos Aires, Argentina. I use memory to analyze situations I lived; I also use stories I heard and even stereotypes that I believe hint at certain truths about my people. It is a way to connect with my past and my country—however skewed. I take cues from cartoons and the funnies. I use the storyboard presentation to create a complex sequence that doesn’t always add up. My ink drawings are literal yet they rely on a high level of graphic simplification, sliding tones, and fluidity of mark morphing different patterns, recognizable people, and objects into a visual stream-of-consciousness style.

Conversely, when I paint telling a literal story becomes a hindrance. Figures and objects tend to dissolve, become submerged in the texture of the paint, take on such an abstract look that they become unrecognizable. I allow the process of painting to be loose and open-ended, not driven by a predetermined idea or final goal. Even though the images are abstract looking, I still find myself thinking about people, stories, things that are ridiculous or have gone awry. A sense of the cartoonish is very much present and the ghost of the figure persists. My final aim is to create paintings that evoke a mood, a person, or situation without the literalness of the drawings.

Sunday at Grandma’s
Ink on paper
22x 30 in
Knot
Oil on panel
45x36 in

Tunnel
Oil on panel
46x36 in
In my most recent series of oil paintings I’m depicting transparent overlays, skewed geometric or uncertain perspectives (from 3D computer models I make), and digital imagery as wallpaper appropriated from multiple sources relevant to myself (and perhaps even more broadly, American culture) - from art history to anime.

With the idea of originality being suspect, I’ve developed a more pessimistic attitude about nothing being entirely new - where everything is derivative in some form or fashion. With the weight of originality lifted from my shoulders I use appropriated material in my artwork as a way of making it highly personal while having a degree of separation. The combination of imagery becomes something like a surrogate in place of myself within the work. In my world of painting, a high-quality jpg of a 19th century Ingres painting exists in the same virtual space as a screenshot from a 21st century kitschy anime and a still-frame from a popular video game. I’m inspired by these non sequiturs of digital information sharing a common virtual space and condensing them into a physical painting. Layers of paint converge together as if they were related to a literary flashback - it represents a point of singularity of image, symbol, and thought - or even more dramatically, a collapse of space and time.
Golden Boy
Oil on panel
8.5 x 12 in
2013

Friendzone
Oil on panel
10.5 x 10 in
2013
Through my “pink” paintings, I aim to assert and pay homage to a typically female aesthetic that is the product of cultural expectation, familial upbringing, and gender training. The pink paintings are distillations of an idea of prettiness, where symbols are literal and connotations are undeniable; sugary color palettes, fancy embellishment, and domestic materials are constants in these works. These ingredients function as motifs that refer specifically to “woman”. Hair and sensual pink fabrics allude to body and flesh and function as stand-ins for anonymous female figures.

With the recent introduction of fresh objects and still life materials, I discovered new interactions. I have been working to recreate specific childhood experiences, fancies, and fantasies in the studio via the still life genre. One painting references my father’s research laboratory that I felt privileged to spend time in as a child. For me it was a place of great mystery, danger, and extraordinary happenings, and it still is. I have gathered objects and artifacts in order to recreate a playful impression of the visual and tactile experience of the lab, incorporating my theatrical versions of things that stood out to me as a child- mouse specimens, a minty hospital color palette, curious vessels filled with colorful liquids, strange lighting.

Some form of observational fidelity has always been essential to my painting process. I view representation as both a personal challenge and an ode to what I am depicting. Faithfulness to my subject matter is as essential as capturing an accurate likeness in a portrait. Instead of painting people, I make portraits of stuff. I delight in the thingy-ness of things- the way they sit in space, how much they weigh, how light plays on them and moves through them, their colors, their textural quirks and particular tangibility.
Laboratory / Detail
Oil on Panel
46 x 46 in
2013

Untitled
oil on panel
48 x 36 in
2014
My paintings are expressions of suggested forms and spaces I perceive through the act of painting. My intention is to allow them to maintain their mystery and autonomy as painted things, concerned with and inspired by an abstract, subjective reality. The forms that begin to emerge remain inchoate, giving way to visual phenomena that are inherent to paint—amalgams of texture, shape and color. The paintings are marked by a dynamic compulsion to correct, negate and compensate static realities; a dissatisfaction with facile and uniform surfaces that lack the tension and balance created by opposing impulses. They need both accident and intention, uncertainty and deliberation. Most pieces start with simple formal objectives concerning color, composition or paint application, such as the contrast of a bold shape next to an atmospheric expanse of muted tones or the glow of warm transparent yellow against a heavy grey. These ideas are linked to imaginary or remembered landscapes and often hold an emotional or symbolic resonance. However, in a process that is characterized by openness and intuition, the original idea is often lost or transformed when the painting demands something different. Rather than communicate a particular idea or experience, each piece becomes an expression of the search itself, of a desire to find and see something new.
#14-2013, Survival Machine
Oil on Panel
6 x 7.5 in
2013

#1-2013, Life Boat
Oil on Panel
14 x 18 in
2013
In my recent work I have adopted everyday objects as subject matter, mostly functional items – umbrellas, ladders, cameras and projectors. I am interested in these objects in a purely visual sense, but they also carry associations of an inaccessible past. Many of my strongest visual memories stem from my families’ homes and their multitude of strangely beautiful collected things – military medals, a tin stand of umbrellas, a simultaneously eerie and beautiful doll collection. As a craftsman I am interested in the act of painting space from observation, and how so many variables exist in the process: shifting light, three steps left, or a twist of the neck can all radically change a painting’s trajectory. I intentionally and systematically seek out these variables while painting. By often changing my perspective and subsequently layering imagery, multiple objects are allowed to occupy the same exact physical space. In this way objects crystallize and fall apart in a way that relates to remembrance and forgetting, and to a chronological cycle of production and erosion.
In my paintings I portray my perspective of male sexuality seen through the eyes of preadolescent boys and sexualized women. I have attached myself to this period of my life because these were the formative years of my sexuality. As a boy I found Pornography in the woods, this was the onset for my separation of real women to those sexually idealized woman in the magazines. There was a sense of danger, adventure and excitement with these new images. It’s fun to do stuff that will get you in trouble. These ideas help to charge my paintings with sexual energy.

The other notion I want to address in my paintings is the loss of innocence I felt. Though this new imagery was fun and exciting something would never be the same. This landmark was the end of my innocence. Along with this loss came feelings of guilt and shame.

As I have become an adult many of these feelings are still with me. As a 32-year-old man I still feel like a teenager, I just have more life experience. There was no hard line to be crossed into adulthood. These vagaries are something I pursue in making paintings.

Michael Reeves

Ex-girlfriend
Oil and Acrylic on Panel
2013
Bathtub Pillow
Oil on Panel
2013

Babysitter
Oil on Canvas
2013
I believe that painting can be a ground in which the diverse and tangential aspects of a community can be brought together maximally as if divinely decreed. My hypothesis is that any number of spatial constructions can occur in painting, and that by building off of external observation I can construct experiences that words have not gotten to. Internal life is important to me, and my paintings come out of a world where I’m trying to reconcile with and incorporate the people outside of my head. It’s a little sappy. The goal is to synthesize a world where intimacy is found amongst my strange and wonderful community (a tribe), full of optical mixing. I want to combine depth of heart with bravado of paint handling.

My tribe of created characters derived from the people I care for, embark on a metaphorical journey beneath the surface of the earth (into a rhizome perhaps). This tribe is modern in character, composed of the era’s embodied masculinity: inventors, explorers, and philosophers. Painting as an act of self-portraiture shows me my desire and need for others to reveal my own internal dialogue. My final product is to have a work that perpetuates itself, not only colliding disparate elements but revealing something forgotten, neoblastically. My tribe looks for treasure, uncovers secret technology, and traverses loci. They take part in a search to reveal and cultivate what is hidden and broken; to share a passion that is ultimately not their own.

Nathan Foxton

Ashes
Oil on canvas
2.5 x 2.5 ft
Birthday Boscage
Oil on panel
11 x 8 in

First Fire
Oil on canvas
2.5 x 2.5 ft
Through painting I strive to extract my perception of the afterlife from my brain world. Though I was raised in the Mormon church I absorbed video games, cartoons and science fiction. My ideals of a spiritual environment are more influenced by pop-culture from my childhood. Instead of Saint Peter and the pearly gates I would prefer to visualize my approach to heaven as a flight into Bespin on a starship. After sustaining a loss of faith I no longer hoped for the alleged grandeur that awaits obedient mortals after death. While the absence of a deity makes for a more bleak outlook on my concept of life after death; the imagery from my childhood persists. Painting allows for me to explore the dissonance between my adopted imagery and struggle with faith.
Shard Guardians
Oil on panel
47.5 x 41.75 in
In the process of weaving, from dressing the loom to throwing the shuttle, every inch of the yarns I use passes through my fingers. My thoughts, memories, hopes, expectations and even loneliness are all transferred to the yarns through my touch, becoming an extension of myself.

My recent works focus on gamchha, a simple utilitarian cotton cloth common throughout all socio-economic levels of Indian society. It can be everything from a laborer’s towel, to a high-fashion scarf to an offering at religious ceremonies. It is a multipurpose cloth which the poor use for necessity, the middle class as a regular household item, and the rich as a fashion statement.

To me, gamchha embodies memories of my childhood — my mother drying me with gamchha after a bath or playing dress up wrapped in my mother’s gamchha as if it is a fine sari. My parents and siblings each had their own gamchha, distinguished by different patterns and colors of individual choice.

When I moved to the US, gamchha was an essential and I brought a few with me, but after years of use they became old and torn. Out of longing I decided to weave new gamchha for myself based on patterns similar to those I would always chose when buying them at home.

In our wedding ceremony the Hindu pandit bound my and my husband’s hands together with gamchha. Similarly, my gamchha are the bond between me and the family and home I am so far from. As I weave my memories and physical being into the cloth, I trace these personal collections and give tangible form to the people and places I long for. Drawing them closer to me, I feel their presence in the touch and smell of the cloth.

Sunetra Banerjee

Untitled
Hand-woven cotton yarns, loom
2013
Eternal bond
Hand-woven bamboo & fettuccina yarns
60 x 36 in
2013

My gamchha
Hand-woven hand-dyed cotton yarns
90 x 30 in
2013

Carnival of colors
Hand-woven hand-dyed cotton yarns
40 x 78 in
2012
Originally trained in consumer sciences, I understand how to manipulate human desires in order to turn a profit. But although I have been taught to analyze items based on their economic worth, my training as a textiles artist compels me to assign value based on less quantifiable measures. The miraculously generative process of making inspires sincerity toward materials.

In fall of 2012 I chose to do an experiment to investigate my consumer foundation. The prolonged challenge of buying nothing except food made me incredibly aware of how little I really need, and it allowed me to step outside of my consumer identity and analyze the factors in play.

As a consumer I am an individual; obtaining all of my needs through my own interactions with retail. But living within chosen scarcity I am dependent on my personal community. In the absence of product the community naturally lives within an exchange economy.

Thus my studio practice includes exchanges with others as well as honest analyses of myself. I work with the media of time, labor and value in suggesting hierarchies within exchanges. Although I work within alternate economies, I maintain a belief in the preciousness of materials and the labor of the hand. I challenge conventional systems of valuation by giving away my skills for free or applying myself to repetitive tasks with no economic worth.

I am not a unique creation, but simply the accumulation of a certain set of experiences. My thoughts and abilities did not spring from an unseen internal point – they developed through years of others brushing against me. Consequently, I understand my value is not determined through what I consume, but what I give.

I make. I do. I mend.

I want to fix so many things. (Make, do, & mend)
Free mending
2013
Confessional Self Portrait (detail)

Every One of Her Garments
2013

One Free T Inside
1 White T-shirt into 6 miles of yarn, 60+ hours
2013
These current works developed from and are driven by an obsessive interest in physical objects. Familial losses left me with an inclination of grasping at these tangible objects that hold a part of the now absent (person). This gouging lack of presence, caused by various circumstances, furthered a question of this antonymic situation. Turning to physical objects is a point of inquiry in order to investigate the model of what is thought to be there and what is thought to not. The objects have been selected for use as sensuous metaphorical stand-ins to create an exchange touching on presence/absence and emptiness. The majority of the objects are found in daily encounters, removed from their location and then emphasized and contextualized with photographic as well as lens less representation. The focus is narrowed again by an interest in the residue; a leftover of an item alludes to the objects absence. Some of the images are of what’s left over, and what’s left behind. I am placing them in the white cube, on the white wall, and on the pedestal as my own empirical data contemplating what is here and what is not, and alluding to importance. Everyday items, wrappings, packages, and their shadows, the transitory and the unimportant, are paused and made significant. Items are stripped of their recognizable context and examined as empty but beautiful, evidentiary shells.

This type of cataloging began as a diaristic approach, using packages and wrappings as a metaphorical stand-in for emptiness. Primary functions of those objects are to hold other objects, and as they are now empty, they are the material evidence of the absence of the original object. They now represent a lack.

There has been a profound interest in the meaning of things; often at the expense of interest in the way they present themselves sensuously. (Anthropology of Absence) These objects hold meaning. These objects tell stories. These objects are physical and tangible proof of connections. These objects have an aura from those who once made, possessed, or used them. Their presence is also evidence, of a past; a materiality of absence.

Natasha Holmes

Photography

Evidence of Absence x 6
Photography precariously occupies the space between realism and illusion. It is, therefore, an ideal medium for generating acts of deception. Successful relationships between people and, perhaps more importantly, between people and the observable universe require trust. When that trust is compromised, i.e. when our expectations of our environment and the phenomena associated with it are violated, a relational transgression occurs. This transgression creates a perceptual breakdown; one in which our perception of certain phenomena does not conform to our expectations of how those phenomena “should” appear. At this point, the process of unconcealing occurs. The disparity between how things appear and how they might actually be is brought into stark contrast. It is precisely this unconcealedness that I aim to induce with my work by intentionally generating phenomena that do not conform to expectations of how they should appear or occur.
Contemporary photography (at least within some of its sub-genres) is in an in-between state, one where the viewer of photography commonly deploys two conflicting systems of reading simultaneously. On the one hand, we now consider photographs to have a high possibility, even probability, of having been digitally manipulated – to the point where we judge photographs to be false until proven true. On the other, we still bring with us an expectation of some sort of indexicality within the photograph, an assumption that it will accurately depict something outside of itself. In my work I approach these conflicting systems, this grey area, as a practicable dimension in photography, one where the photographic image can function as both a reflection of one set of circumstances and the initiation of another.
My current body of work expresses my alienation in a foreign landscape. My isolation stems from the separation from my identical twin brother after 20 years together, and relocating to the mid-west which has resulted in feeling like an outsider, having grown up in Jamaica.

I consider my work to be ritualistic. While most rituals are associated with a religious custom, mine are a personal ceremony, rather than an appropriation of a religion. My repeated process of collecting, spray painting, installing the pieces outside in the forest, and photographing the installations is my ritual. By preforming these practices I feel closer to home, as home is not a geographic location but a sense of belonging. While the objects are conspicuously out of place in the forest, they eventually adapt to the landscape, just as I have adjusted to my surroundings. The objects themselves are mainly drawn from childhood memories and constructed into various forms and shapes. My color pallet is influenced from both the rich and vibrant Afro-Caribbean heritage of my homeland and from my past love of gaudy colored toys. The background is a reminder of where I come from, Jamaica. The islands original inhabitants, the Arawaks, named the island Xaymaca, meaning land of wood and water.

Using the forest as my studio is how I feel closer to home. After the photographs have been completed, I dismantle the objects. These installations are only relevant in photographs, as after they have been arranged and photographed in the woods they have served their purpose and start to devalue. The photograph is the moment just before the devaluation of the object.

Working in nature as oppose to the studio is an important aspect of my work. I relish the challenge of adapting to the outdoors rather than the sterility of the man-made studio. In the studio man adapts to the space around him – in nature one must adapt to the earth’s demands. Spontaneity allows for more vivid imagery; total control sterilizes them by predicating the final outcome. When a process lacks intuition it becomes too mechanical and while it is important to have strong technical abilities, work made without spontaneity becomes dull, unimaginative, and lacks an emotional aspect. Photographs without emotions and feelings just become a mathematical equation.

I hope for viewers to be able to relate to the experience of adjusting to the unusual not by changing one’s culture or lifestyle, but by finding home in the foreign landscape. Through image making I feel I can belong anywhere.

Stephen Crimarco

Photography

Yarn Archival Inkjet Print
36 x 24 in
“[Boredom] is a vital problem for the moralist, since at least half of the sins of mankind are caused by a fear of it.” - Bertrand Russell

My work examines the compulsion towards thrill seeking and debauchery that is at odds with the predominant Midwestern small town ethos. The rural country landscape is expansive and flat, simple and empty. This uneventful patch of Middle America provides a perfect breeding ground for mischief in the developmental stages of youth. Thinly veiled plainness, portrayed by popular images of the region mask the superabundance of revelers and the prevalence of cultural practices that are anything but wholesome.

I create structured environments influenced by my upbringing that explore desire and humor a youth-stricken sense of adventure. The employment of an expansive lexicon of materials is directed by each element’s capacity for narrative. Combinations of video, assemblage, printmaking, and installation are incorporated to immerse the viewer in physical processes of memory, transgression, and experience. The allure of hedonism compels me to explore the liminal spaces surrounding moments of indulgence, as these areas exhibit conflicts of morality. By representing these ambiguous settings with a “scene of the crime” aesthetic, viewers contemplate their own decency and predilection for prurience.

Donny Gettinger

Boys will be Boys
Steel
2013
Two Paths
Two channel video, monitor embedded in projection
2013

Two Paths / Detail
Two channel video, monitor embedded in projection
2013
The domestic space sets the stage for perpetual self-reinvention. Through my artistic practice I am investigating the tireless cultural and individual cultivation of domestic personas through material explorations in accumulation, assemblage, and resultant decay. Moving, remodeling, redecorating and rearranging all underpin an American self-definition through immediate surroundings and the material home. I feel that there are certain elements of the domestic space that serve as better indicators of one’s identity than the decorative elements that we typically employ to do so. These are the remnants of actual daily life - scuffs on walls, soap scum in the shower, a broken door knob, archives of holiday décor in the attic, worn paths on the hardwood - acting both as physical indications of the presence of human life and catalysts for re-invention and change. I aim to rescue the orphaned material by-products of home-improvement and re-deploy them back into the realm of the decorative in a way that negates function to reveal the driving forces of domestic aesthetics.

Self-invention seems to manifest itself most desperately within the sprawl of middle-class suburbia - a culture defined by status, ease, and success characterized by sameness and sporadically punctuated by fascinating and dysfunctional attempts at differentiation. This homogenized lifestyle engenders an acute awareness of difference between neighbors. The pursuit of unique identities within the sprawl accounts for public displays, as in lawn-care and the home’s facade, as well as self-preservation in private spaces through re-upholstering, refurbishing, and re-branding. Situational embellishment, exaggeration, and artifice epitomize the presence of material memory, obsession, and hysteria - all underscored by the calm composure of domesticity. My works echo processes of accumulation, degradation and ruination resulting from perpetual reinvention of the individual and group through material surroundings.

Devin Balara

Sculpture

Domestic Sediment
Fabric, Wood
2013
Never Stop Improving
Rejected Latex House Paint, Paint Rollers, Drywall
2014

Florida Snowflakes
Paper, Wood
4 x 8 feet x 4 in
2013
When I look for inspiration, I am especially drawn to the figures of boundless fantasy that can be built from the experiences of daily life. I strive to convert mundane scenes and objects into something special and thought provoking. I often begin a piece by trying to discover something that is out in the open yet concealed, something so obvious that people take it for granted. From the new viewpoint the observer can discover new imagination and possibilities in the theme of the work.

In addition to daily life, comics and animation have also influenced me a great deal. However, instead of creating a story with a plot I tend to create an environment that consists of components that are not sequential or obviously correlated. All the stories in the scene just keep happening in a cycle. This reflects the way I think. I tend to see things in a nonlinear way; this is revealed in some techniques I use such as, collage and fragmented images. Finally, having a sense of humor is the most important element of my work. Humor is the understanding of a profound idea that lies just behind absurdity. All of these are elements I value and often apply to my work.
Life
While you live, Shine.

A human being lives in an ecosystem. Every life is mutually correlated in the world. It is a truth of the cosmos that I understand. Mandala, a spiritual symbol in Buddhism and Eastern culture, represents the world. It shows a certain understanding of the world by human beings in a particular visual way. My work attempts to express life force within the world which always changes in a symbolic form of Mandala, the visual and cultural heritage, that human beings have used.

About the relationship between life and the world, the key point is harmony. Like in symphony, in my work, everything is dancing in balance showing a certain system in diversity and playfulness. Every life having its own unique form and feature, might has evolved from a primordial cell or a life. Thus, I strive to express the theme; ‘life force’ fully sophisticatedly in a simple way for ‘unity in diversity’ concurrently.

Every life image makes various patterns with its movements and shapes as time passes by. In the work, what made by the patterns and a mass of life images is the world itself. In other words, each life exists in the world, and the world consists of every life. Through the movement of life images in time-based media, I am eager to express the progress of changing between the beginning and the ending as the birth and the death in circulation.

In this series of works, I combine the idea; the relationship between life and the world, and the structure of Mandala image as the format of symbolizing that human beings have perceived the world to express life force for visualizing the natural law of the cosmos. This is a story of the relationship between the world and life.
My work is driven by the idea of how microscopic building blocks of forms are not considered to be an integral part of the object’s beauty since they cannot be seen by the naked eye. Growth and structure must be acknowledged. If tiny units were non-existent, our everyday surroundings would not be tangible.

Much of society has become too busy to stop and investigate their environment in depth. It is the miniature elements that come together to construct something beautiful that get overlooked. In order to appreciate beauty, one must acknowledge everything that has created it. My aim is to lure viewers in to view my work, direct their attention to the intricate manner of how a form is created and have a sense of fascination.

Kyleigh Garman
Landscape Ring
Foam, Acrylic, Sand, Paint, Seed Beads
2013
Molecules in Space
Foam, Acrylic, Seed Beads, Sterling Silver
2013

Fission
Foam, Acrylic, Sand, Paint, Seed Beads, Sterling Silver
2013
All objects carry a burden of intent. Locked into patterns of use and purpose, functionality often masks the traces of vibrant matter hidden below the surface. Through deconstruction of a material, original modules are decoded and set to new frequencies. By repurposing the functional object to pure form, the initial expectations of the object can be recalibrated, and elevated to the role of adornment.

My studies with alternative materials are propelled by the exploration of liminal spaces within urban and rural landscapes, and negotiating a relationship to the wearer. Grid patterning and modular construction fuel fractal and recursive patterning identified within my work.

Marginal intrigues stimulate my research. The peculiarities of the lived experience inform my concepts of industry and nature, connectivity, and alienation explored in my work. An earnest curiosity guides my hands and vision through the appropriate media and scale of the work I create.

Kelly Novak
Metalsmithing & Jewelry

Day 19
Innertube, Silver
2013
Design = paying attention + playing around with what you observe. That’s pretty much it. Everything else is salt and pepper.
Dead Soap Sandwich
Digital Poetry Broadside
2013

Cladistic Heraldry Vector Icon Set
2012
I see graphic design as visual art which provides solutions, and carries functions and esthetic to facilitate people’s life. I consider my works as visual games, I would like to use dynamic visual interpretations and incorporate typography to generate an adaptive solution for specific problem.

About style, in my opinion, I do not see it as a visual form that has to be applied to all of my designs. Contrarily, I think style should be created to be cohesive to the subject matter of the project, and that’s one of the conditions I think differentiate design from fine arts.
EXHIBITIONS

2014 MFA THESIS

March 25 - April 5
Devin Balara
You Zhang
Kyleigh Garman
Natasha Holmes
Zach Koch
Nathan Foxton

April 8 - April 19
Nakima Ollin
Hyejin Kang
Kristy Hughes
Mike Reeves
Rachel Baxter
Donny Gettinger

April 22 - May 3
Kelly Novak
Keegan Adams
Nathan Perry
Katie Jacobs
Catherine Chi
Taylor Woolwine

April 2 - April 13
Alysha Kupferer
Stephen Crimarco
Christina Weaver

April 16 - April 27
Gavin Rouille
Sunetra Banerjee
Aaron Hegert

April 30 - May 11
Zachary Norman
Maria Korol
Jared Gelormino

Grunwald Gallery
1201 E 7th St
Bloomington
IN 47406

IU Art Museum
1133 E 7th St
Bloomington
IN 47405
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