

ROUSE

MFA Graduation Exhibition 2010

Ariel Baron-Robbins
Toni Danette Billick
Maxim Maximovitch
Andrew Nigon
Victoria Lee Skelly
Stead Thomas
Carmen Tiffany

March 26 - May 8, 2010

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Foreword & Acknowledgements

The USF Contemporary Art Museum, Institute for Research in Art, is a nationally accredited museum, within the structure of a major metropolitan university. The museum is an exciting destination for students to see the works of established, as well as emerging artists, and provides a critical component to the educational process for all students, but is of special importance to the graduate students in the School of Art and Art History.

In conjunction with its exhibition program, CAM offers unique opportunities for students to interact with artists, curators and scholars through informal discussion sessions, lectures and colloquia. It also offers directed study and internship programs, providing real-life experiences that have valuable significance to the emerging artist. Given this context, students seek and benefit from the dynamic interaction of theory and practice, and fully engage as artists on the contemporary scene through the occasion of the annual MFA Graduation Exhibition.

In 2010, USFCAM is proud to showcase *ROUSE*, with new work by Ariel Baron-Robbins, Toni Danette Billick, Maxim Maximovitch, Andrew Nigon, Victoria Lee Skelly, Stead Thomas and Carmen Tiffany. Congratulations to these students, the School of Art and Art History faculty and staff, friends, colleagues and the community at large that support the artists in this first distinguished milestone in their professional career.

I thank the museum staff for their collaborative spirit in presenting this often challenging exhibition, notably Tony Palms who is responsible for its design in consultation with Robert Lawrence, Graduate Student Advisor and Assistant Professor in the School of Art and Art History, and Wallace Wilson, Director; Shannon Annis and Peter Foe for their assistance with the organization; Vincent Kral and CAM's undergraduate interns, Peter Abrami, Eric Jonas and Chas Smith for the installation; and to Don Fuller for his design work, including this publication.

Members of the Institute are recognized for their extended efforts to realize the exhibition and related programs and events: Margaret Miller, Director; Amy Allison, Lillyannette Moeller, David Norr, Noel Smith, Kristin Soderqvist, David Waterman and Randall West.

Alexa Favata | Associate Director, USF Institute for Research in Art

School Director's Statement

Congratulations to the Master of Fine Arts students in this exhibition; though relatively small in number, they represent one of the most creatively diverse classes of graduating artists in recent history.

For three years, these exceptionally imaginative students have engaged our distinguished faculty and endured challenging critique sessions as well as sleepless nights preparing for semester reviews. They have been stretched well beyond their initial perceptions of what art can be and its impact on an audience.

The MFA at USF is acknowledged as a premiere program among its peers nationally. Its uniqueness resides in a demanding curriculum of studio practice and inquiry coupled with critical studies seminars in the history of art and elective courses throughout the disciplines of a major research university.

Faculty welcome the prospect to connect with the students, responding to new concepts and working as collaborators as well as conductors to uncover fresh dimensions in the forms, objects and images that are created. Our valued staff provides resolve and ingenuity in solving formidable problems, from bureaucratic labyrinths to one-of-a-kind projects.

The MFA program offers every graduate student the opportunity to work in any medium of materials and to select from among our eminent faculty for directed study contracts. Virtually unheard of at other institutions, this open invitation to explore, experiment and discover, leads to startling and innovative results. The fruit of this philosophy toward graduate art studio studies, along with a varied student body from throughout the nation and beyond, endows this exhibition with delightful and provocative stagings of new art.

The unorthodox nature of many of the works has generated a tremendous amount of consultation and cooperation between the Museum staff and our students. We offer our sincere gratitude for assisting these artists in realizing their envisioned realities and developing this exhibition.

And, again, congratulations to our graduating MFA students! The graduate studio experience affords the time and community to expand ideas about art and oneself, and the relationship of the two to the larger world. USF has benefited from your presence and we wish you the very best.

Wallace Wilson | Director, USF School of Art and Art History



Ariel Baron-Robbins

I create multi-layered drawings using a variety of painting and drawing materials and methods. The layers gradually accumulate, obscuring what came before and releasing an active and gestural energy within the piece. Additionally, I have integrated digital technology into my practice; I use video to document the movements of my body as I engage in the process of mark-making. The choreography of my gestures in the video is analogous to those in my drawings; each records intuitive movement through a specific time and space.

BFA [2006] University of Mississippi. Hometown: Oxford, Mississippi





Toni Danette Billick

A ranch culture is rising, expressed by women who own their sexuality. My work involves various female personas who are shaped by the impact of ranch culture. They manifest via documented performances, photographs and video installations. My artistic vision embraces a transgressive, Utopian world of beings unencumbered by gender roles.

*BFA [2005] The University of Akron
Hometown: Akron, Ohio*



Maxim Maximovitch

I was born and raised in Russia, but at the age of sixteen my family and I moved to the U.S. Though I received my undergraduate degree in painting, upon entering graduate school I developed an interest towards digital media, particularly in interactive technology. My recent work deals with the idea of heterotopia, in which utopia and dystopia exist as one innate place.

*BFA [2007] West Virginia University
Hometown: Morgantown, West Virginia*

Andrew Nigon

Step right this way! Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, here He is! Showing, for the very first time, an act that can make the strongest of men gasp and noblest of women weep. Astounding! Unbelievable! Actually beyond belief! Here the remarkably small comes face-to-face with the remarkably huge, at what I dare say, is the erotic conclusion of a very, very old story. Yes, brothers and sisters, you too will bear witness to the one thing that makes the elephant charge His tusk in the misty mist and the dusky dusk. Have courage folks and step right up!

BFA [2004] Minnesota State University-Mankato. Hometown: Rochester, Minnesota





Victoria Lee Skelly

Through community-based art, I explore the intersections of visual experience and community participation. My methods are site-responsive and presently focused on beautifying a city park in the neighborhood of Sulphur Springs, Tampa. As an artist facilitator, I bring individuals together to develop functional art installments. It is here that social layers of Tampa unite – from city bureaucracy to neighboring youth – in order to establish sustainable designs that are created for and by the community. The processes of collaboration, versus a ‘final product’, provide the most valuable aspects of the work.

*BFA [2005] University of Montevallo
Hometown: USA and beyond (Army Brat)*

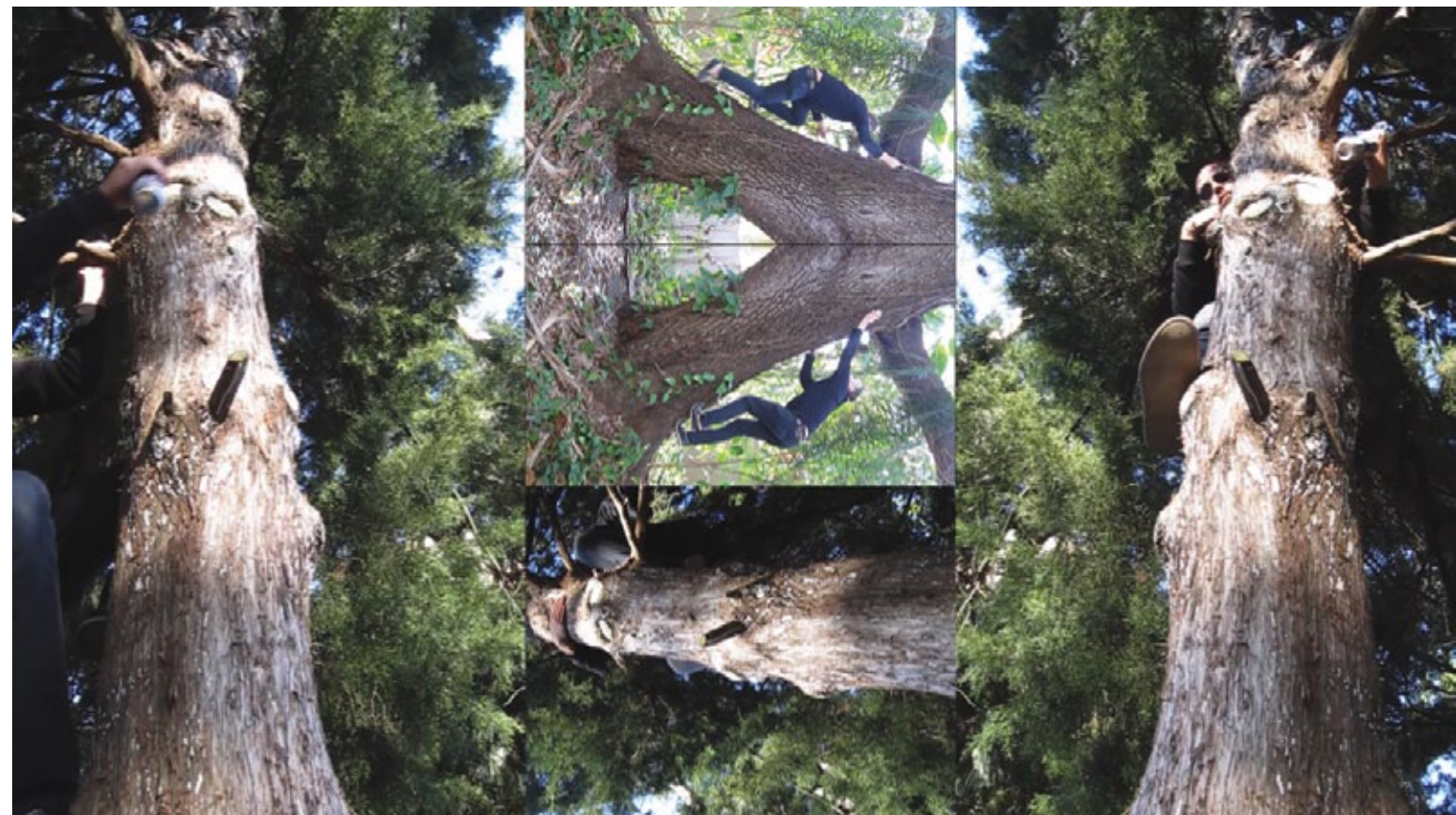




Stead Thomas

I employ a broad array of techniques and media to make work that exists in the indecision between activism and apathy. We live in a time where giants are collapsing and the lifestyle of the average American is greatly changing. My perspective is that of an individual caught in the middle of dissenting the new regime and playing ball with the new status quo. This body of work uses frustration and humor to explore the disappointment of living in a time where everything seems to have been already done.

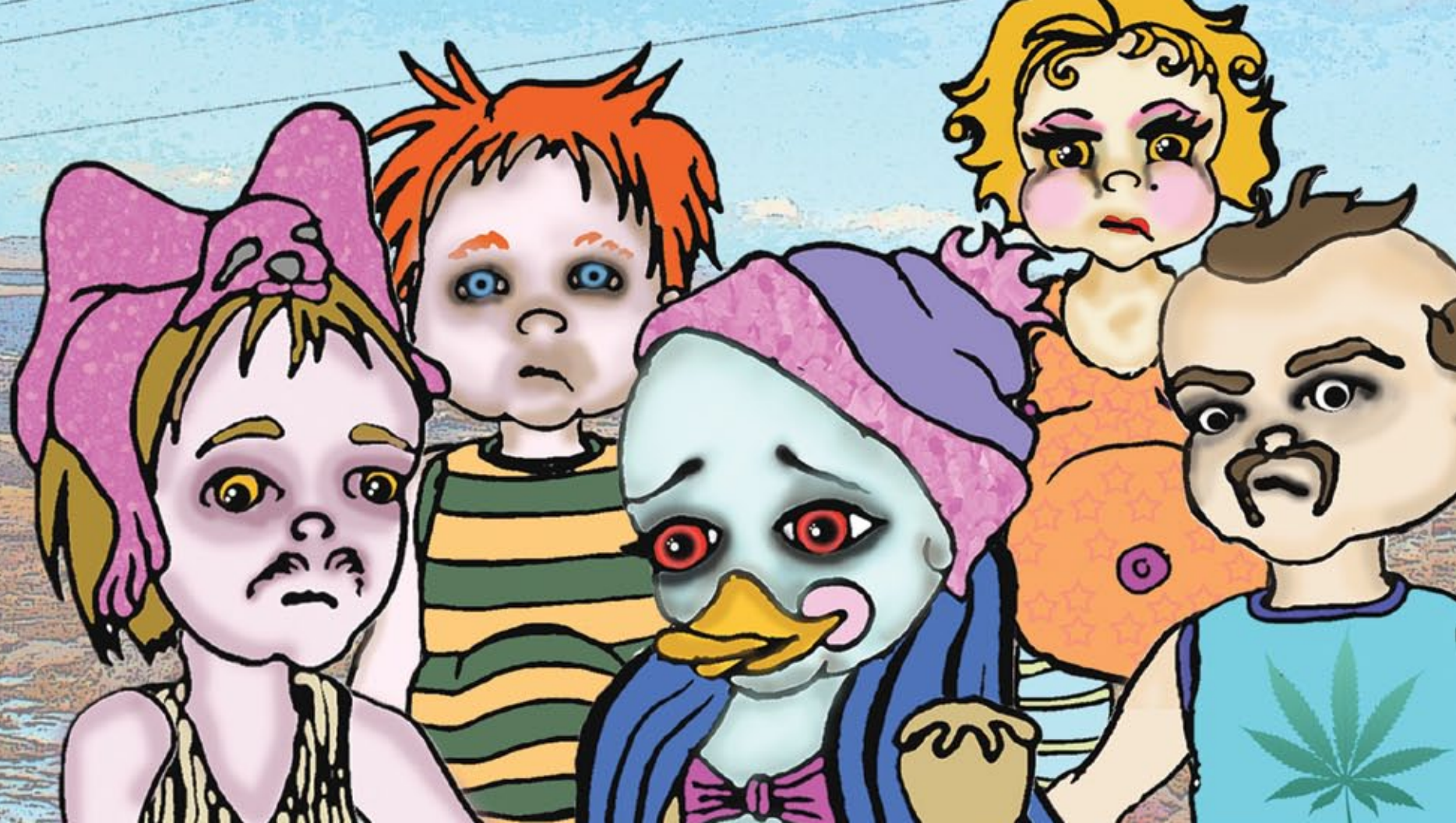
BFA [2006] Ringling College of Art and Design. Hometown: Sarasota, Florida



Carmen Tiffany

I contaminate the fantastical artifice and promise of children's media and toys with life's often visceral realities. Exploiting the societal underbelly of the rural American west, where I grew up, I create lineage between pathetic social entropies and utopian ideologies instilled in modern childhood. I reconstruct my memories and investigate the significance of childhood fantasy in relation to the destitute and isolated regions of culture.

*BFA [2005] Minnesota State University
Hometown: Casper, Wyoming*



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3RD YEAR MFA EXHIBITION

~~DEBRIS~~
~~SLIPSHOD~~
~~FUSE~~
~~MIXT~~
~~ENDGAME~~
~~OH OH~~
~~SHAKEDOWN~~
~~OPPIES~~
~~PIVOT~~
~~OLIO~~
~~RALLY~~
~~SPUR~~
~~TURNING POINT~~
~~AXIS~~
~~WOULD YOU LIKE FRIES WITH THAT?~~

~~COLLATERAL STRATEGEM~~
~~COLLATE~~
~~COLLATOR~~
~~COLLATERAL~~
~~COLLATERATION~~
~~COLLATE FOR ALL~~
~~COLLATE OR ALL~~
~~COLLATERAL~~
~~COLLATER ALL~~
~~COLLATE YOUR BALLS!~~
~~COLLATERAL STEW~~
~~PIVOTAL SLIPSHOD~~
~~PIVOTAL OLIO~~
~~PIVOT-TATLEY TION~~
~~COLLATERAL DESCENT~~
~~COLLATERAL ASCENT~~
~~MELD~~
~~MISHMASH~~
~~SIMULTANEITY~~
~~SYNECDOCHE~~

~~ARTIFICE~~
~~DIVERGENCE~~
~~DIVERGENT~~
~~FACADE~~
~~ADMIX~~
~~COMMIX~~
~~IMMIX~~
~~DETOUR~~
~~DEVIATION~~
~~STRESS~~
~~INDEPENDENCE~~
~~ODDS ENDS~~

~~OUTBOUND~~
~~OUTWARD~~
~~ETC.~~
~~ET AL~~
~~AHEAD~~
~~"AND EVERYTHING ELSE"~~
~~"UNTITLED"~~
~~MARGIN~~
~~AJ Hox~~
~~ROUSE~~
~~ACTIVATE~~
~~COLLATE~~