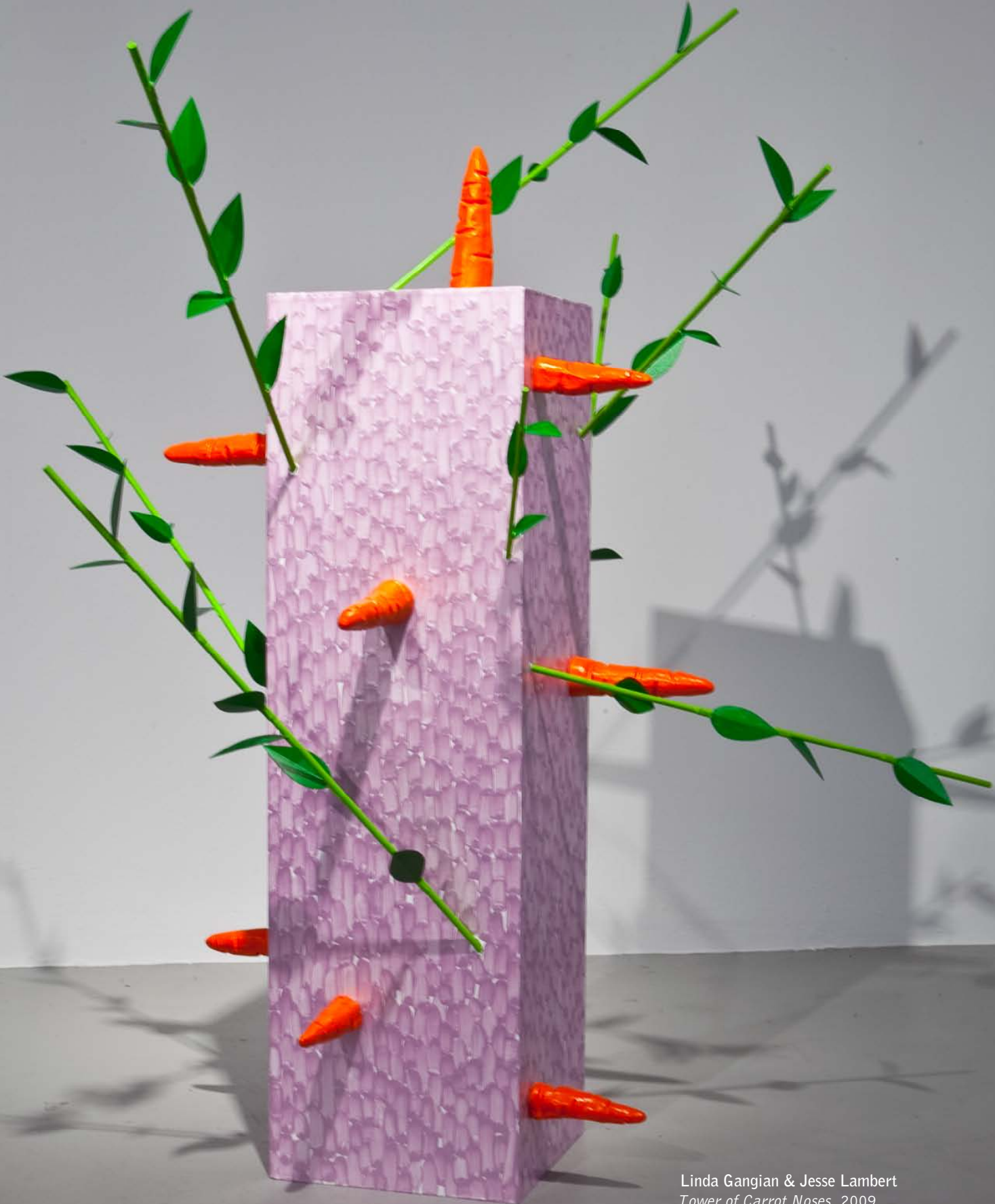


ARTSPACE PRESENTS

poken





Linda Gangian & Jesse Lambert
Tower of Carrot Noses, 2009
wood, paperboard, hydrocal and acrylic paint
42 x 44 x 42 inches

(un)spoken

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Maggie Michael and Dan Steinhilber
Untitled (Compass series), 2008-2009
Digital photograph on inkjet paper

Introduction

It's none of our business, really.

What two consenting adults choose to create in the privacy of their own studio is not for us to judge. And yet, here we are. Gallery 1 contains the painting, sculptures, and photographs that comprise a group of collaborative pieces made by three artist-couples, commissioned by Artspace for this exhibition. Six galleries containing each artist's individual work surround and anchor the collaborative pieces in Gallery 1, adding to our understanding of what each artist brings to his or her spouse's work.

(Un)spoken was inspired by the threads that invisibly tie each artist-couple's work together. The ties have less to do with subject matter than with emotive content as described by color and texture. Displaying these works together provides viewers with an opportunity to contemplate the artists' best efforts at empathetic and sympathetic self-expression.

The collaborative work in Gallery 1 is a demonstration of push and pull, give and take, compromise, and joyful understanding. Collaboration between spouses is perhaps also about a connection that precludes rational effort, one of a more interesting and elusive nature. The idiosyncrasies of each artist are amplified or carried out by his or her spouse; the work is compelling in its sense of freedom. It's as if, with the assignment of working together, the partners expanded their practices and moved beyond their singular comfort zones.

For an artist, drawing equally from a significant other's energy demands a braveness of spirit and a commitment to vulnerability. This is the nature of collaboration. Assuming that what is unspoken between two artists who share their lives will manifest in a work of art is tenuous. Perhaps it's the execution of the piece that matters most, this hopeful collaboration. The work itself inspires questions about what should and does remain unspoken in the delicate art of relations.

Jessica Buckley, Curator

Idyllic Yet Flawed

An unnatural light illuminates the slender threads of the spider web in Karen Dow and Chris Mir's painting, *Untitled* (2009) (fig. i). From the web's dense nucleus, an expansive network of radiant limbs spiral outward. Delicate filaments extend, connect, and segue into a kaleidoscopic landscape filled with facets of emerald, sapphire, amethyst, topaz, and agate. These brilliant planes scatter in layers throughout the canvas like bits of broken glass or New Year's Eve confetti on the floor, simultaneously revealing and concealing vestiges of the natural world.

The jumbled landscape that Dow and Mir create recalls the strange, quixotic world that Alice discovers in Lewis Carroll's 19th-century tale, *Through The Looking Glass*. Using a variety of techniques, including

doubling and temporal shifts in which past and present coalesce, Carroll allows readers to imagine the mixed-up, topsy-turvy world that Alice encounters. In their vibrant and spatially complex composition, Dow and Mir have envisioned a paradoxical place where the pastoral confronts the urban and the familiar meets the new. In his book, Carroll references an ever-changing and morphing reality, and Dow and Mir use the formal complexity of nature to reference the excess of a real and ethereal world.

The geometric patterns of the spider web are echoed in the form of the communications tower, yet neither of these structures conforms to our conventional logic. The normally fragile, unstable spider web appears rigid and fixed, while the tower looks pliable and unsteady. The space of Dow and



Karen Dow and Christopher Mir
Untitled, 2009
Acrylic on canvas

Mir's painting is knowable yet unknowable, legible yet undecipherable, definite yet ambiguous, and idyllic but flawed.

In some ways, *Untitled* (2009) is an exercise in the unity of opposites. In this painting, inorganic and organic matter mingle. An off-kilter industrial communications tower hovers next to a fractured spider web, through which flowers and leafy vines emerge. Dow's flat patches of color applied with a palette knife contrast with Mir's gestural brushstrokes of varying shades and tones. These opaque planes morph into soft, sensual petals throughout. Moments of spontaneity are balanced by areas created by measured precision; iridescent lines zip across the canvas while rigid edges enclose various geometric forms. And, while the formal languages of abstraction and representation are engaged in a constant banter throughout the picture, the work looks and feels decidedly complete, balanced, and elegant.

Achieving dynamic equilibrium in a work of art is a tricky task for any artist to accomplish. Such an endeavor becomes herculean when the creative effort involves the hands of married artists like Dow and Mir, who have contrasting artistic practices. Dow is an abstract painter, and Mir is a figurative one. While there is a considerable history of artistic collaboration, and artist-couples such as Jeanne-Claude and Christo, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, and Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, who have made art together, the six artists in *(un)spoken* heretofore have not.

Using the precepts of marriage as a framework for examining the complexities of partnership, creative expression, and notions of individual identity, independent curator Jessica Buckley, together with

Artspace, commissioned married artists Karen Dow and Christopher Mir (CT), Maggie Michael and Dan Steinhilber (DC), and Linda Ganjian and Jesse Lambert (NY) to collaborate on a new work for *(un)spoken*.

The painting, photographs, and sculptures that the artists produced are the visual results of the processes of communication, negotiation, compromise, and experimentation. The works reveal the coalescence of distinct points of view, and in a sense, become physical embodiments of the contemporary cultural discourse about marriage—a convention that is fraught with complexity, and whose meaning exists in a constant state of flux.

Marriage is the most peculiar of establishments. In Western culture, it is generally defined as a social institution under which two people establish their relationship through legal commitments, religious ceremonies, and public rituals. We like to think of marriage as a private matter predicated on the love between a couple, yet we often dismiss its legality and socializing impact on people. In her book, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and The Nation*, Yale University Professor of History and American Studies Nancy F. Cott reminds readers of the often overlooked yet revolutionary principle of marriage:

The whole system of attribution and meaning that we call gender relies on and to a great extent derives from the structuring provided by marriage. Turning men and women into husbands and wives, marriage has designated the ways both sexes act in the world and the reciprocal relation between them. It has done so probably more emphatically than any other single institution or force. The unmarried as well as the married bear the ideological, ethical, and practical impress of the marital institution, which is difficult or impossible to escape.ⁱ

Cott's passage suggests that the burden of marriage lies in the inescapable compromises that two people are expected, and legally agree, to take. Each verbally and mentally consents to allowing the union to assign them new roles, thus subsuming their individual identities.

Perhaps nowhere is the paradox of marriage more subtly articulated than in *Untitled (Compass Series)* (2009), a series of photographs taken by Washington DC-based artists Maggie Michael and Dan Steinhilber. Forgoing their chosen mediums—Michael is a painter and Steinhilber is a sculptor—for photography, the two installed a series of ink jet prints that spanned one of the gallery's long walls. Their photos depict places, events, and things that are intensely personal yet openly public. We see images taken at the Louvre, the public library, and at President Obama's inauguration.

While Michael and Steinhilber are often physically present in the images, the two never wholly appear in the same photo. Presence and absence are implied and personified by the objects they depict: a pair of hands intertwined; a shimmery tank top; rows of books; a museum label—all seemingly miscellaneous, yet specific items. The photos, while coded with private meaning, engage in a larger, public discourse about marital roles and gender. Each partner captures the other with a seemingly detached, documentary eye. For example, in one of the photos taken at President Obama's inauguration, Michael appears amidst a throng of puffy coats and knit caps. We learn her identity only through the process of looking and discernment. Michael's strawberry-red hair, clear blue eyes, and lime green scarf are her attributes, which we see repeated in various photos throughout the series. Interestingly, the pictures betray no emotional

drama by either partner. The two simply become objects for the camera and the subjects of our collective gaze. The photographs read like hieroglyphs, where elements of one refer back to another. Yet, despite their private dialogue, the photographs engage in the dialectic between subject and object and artist and model. By focusing on these juxtapositions, the couple disentangles itself from the larger, thornier contrasts of husband and wife, and man and woman.

As with the other two sets of artist-couples, Linda Ganjian and Jesse Lambert's collaborative sculptures similarly speak to the delicate art of compromise. For this exhibition, Ganjian and Lambert created a series of whimsical floor sculptures that incorporate the structural and formal language of architecture that underscores Ganjian's individual sculptures with the love of pattern, surface, bold colors, and gesture that characterize Lambert's abstract paintings.

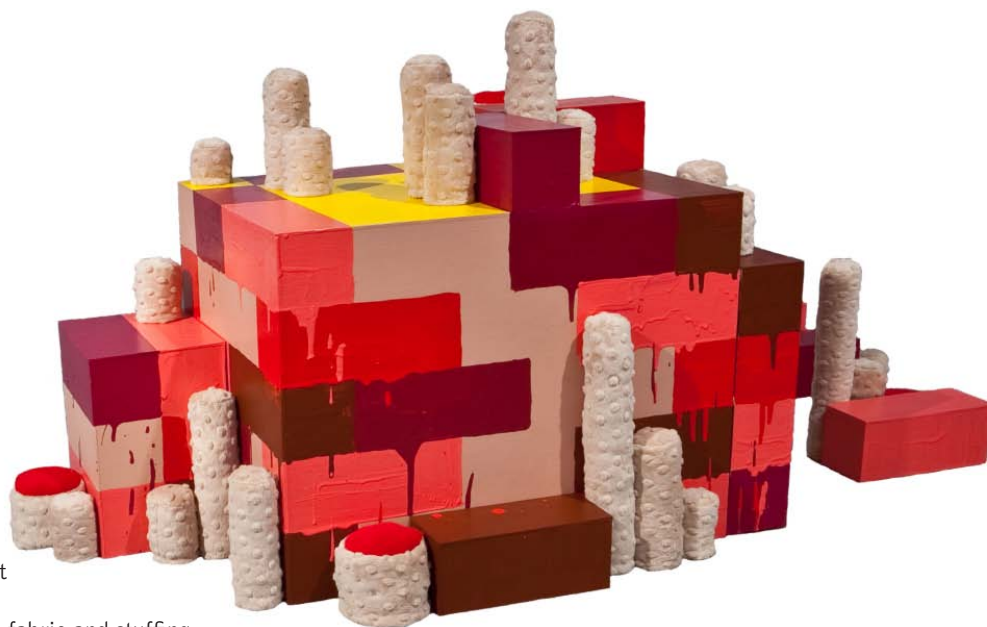
The artists were inspired by the designs and features of children's toys that appear in abundance throughout their home. Ganjian and Lambert's sculptures are composed of multiple bits and bobs that recall the colorful blinking lights, plush buttons, and random kinetic parts of toys. They use cardboard, paint, plaster, and wood to create sculptures that engage our childish selves. A tower of carrot noses, a broken column with a spiky tubular spine, and a glittery cube with squiggly appendages spread across the floor like errant Legos® and blocks that never quite make it back to the toy box. With their use of exuberant colors, wild forms, small scales, and placement of objects directly on the floor, the artists ask viewers to consider space from a child's point of view.

Ganjian and Lambert demonstrate how the ordinary can be made extraordinary through changes in materials, scale, and form, in ways that echo the Pop Art sensibilities that have long underscored the witty installations of Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen. Their animated ideas about materials and sculptures have monumentalized the forms of a spoon and cherry, a lipstick, a clothespin, bowling pins, and a handsaw, among many others.

While the works in *(un)spoken* engage in multiple private dialogues, they collectively participate in the ongoing historical debates about the production of art within a marital context. Issues of gender, individuality, influence, and authorship are continually addressed and questioned in these works. In their book, *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership*, art historians Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron refute the dominant view of creativity as a typically white male impulse.ⁱⁱ They examine how artist-couples such as Auguste

Rodin and Camille Claudel, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, and Willem and Elaine de Kooning, among others, manage to negotiate the social stereotypes of their assumed roles within a partnership. The authors contend that the collection of essays they present is an attempt to “rebut and de-romanticize the modernist myth that emphasizes the primacy of individual creative expression.”ⁱⁱⁱ Their findings challenge the cultural emphasis on solitary creation.

Feminist scholars were among the first to de-bunk the myth of the heroic, male artist-genius, defining the social constraints such as marriage that marginalized female artists. In her 1971 groundbreaking article, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”, art historian Linda Nochlin asked this very question.^{iv} Her article describes how social factors exclude women, limiting them from developing as professional artists in ways that allow them to achieve the same level of “greatness” that men historically have.^v British cultural histo-



Linda Ganjian and Jesse Lambert
Stack and Squeeze, 2009
 Wood, paperboard, acrylic paint, fabric and stuffing
 36 x 24 x 36 inches

rian Griselda Pollock expands on Nochlin's thesis in "Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art," (1988)^{vi} In this work, Pollock discusses how social conventions restrained women, and were reinforced by male-dominated cultural institutions such as academies and museums, and re-interprets canonical works of art through a feminist lens.^{vii} Nochlin and Pollock's efforts challenge the gender-based myopia that has been perpetuated over time by prominent male critics such as Giorgio Vasari, John Ruskin, Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, and Michael Fried, who championed select white male artists as genius-types whose expressive capacities were unparalleled.^{viii}

These critics, among many others, discounted important biographical facts, such as artists' relationships, in order to further their own theories. While biography isn't the only lens through which artwork should be interpreted, it can often illuminate a work's context and meaning. One of the most prominent examples of the perpetuation of the archetypal lone genius-artist is Jackson Pollock. American critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg championed Pollock's work as it exemplified the visual and conceptual language of Abstract Expressionism.^{ix} For them, Pollock's work subscribed to the Modernist, formalist rhetoric that works of art should be autonomous and self-reflexive.

In Pollock's case, both critics dismissed the significance of Pollock's wife, the painter Lee Krasner, to his art and life.^x In her contribute as Anne Wagner have re-examined the relationship between Pollock and Krasner, placing their work in more direct dialogue and re-presenting Krasner as a woman, artist, and wife whose life and career were subjected to the paradox

of marriage. In her insightful discussion of Krasner's production of art within a marital context, Wagner articulates the personal and professional difficulties that befell Krasner. Wagner writes:

Her [Krasner's] painterly ambitions demanded that she face up to Pollock, while social circumstance made the encounter, if not impossible, then at least highly unsatisfactory from Krasner's own point of view... her confidence in painting, not just as a practice she could control, but as a special category in which sex differences did not apply—was exactly what enabled her to keep on painting.^{xi}

Wagner suggests that Krasner's art was admittedly shaped by Pollock's painterly language; her work would always be seen as derivative of her husband's.

Pollock and Krasner are among the many artists who negotiated the social constraints of marriage while attempting to retain their individual forms of expression. By examining the complexities of collaboration, as Buckley's exhibition suggests, we can consider art in a clearer, more appropriate context. Whitney Chadwick writes that such an exercise allows historians to further untangle "the myths from the realities, the images from the lives, [and] the singular achievements from the collaborative processes".^{xii} Such endeavors are, however, as delicate, complex, and laborious as the weaving of a spider web.

Liza Statton
Artspace Curator



Furniture (rear view)

This portrait of Duchamp, probably taken by the artist's friend Hans Bellamy, shows the back of Duchamp's head with his characteristic pompadour haircut. The measurements for and construction of the bench are based on the artist's own body, but the form and color contrast strongly with his own image. The furniture becomes a space for himself in the office or one where he has been sitting. By 1921 Duchamp had already begun to work in sculpture, painting, and various other forms of art. It is possible that the image behind the glass is from before Duchamp's move to New York in 1915, or after he had been in New York since 1915. The image behind the glass is from before he had been in New York since 1915, or after he had been in New York since 1915. The image behind the glass is from before he had been in New York since 1915, or after he had been in New York since 1915.

Artist: Marcel Duchamp (photographed by Hans Bellamy, 1915)
 Location: Glass and metal on painted wood, 1915
 Medium: Glass, metal, wood, painted wood, inkjet printing, New York City



Maggie Michael and Dan Steinhilber
Untitled (Compass series), 2008-2009
 Digital photograph on inkjet paper

ⁱ Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3.

ⁱⁱ Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds, *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?', rptd. in Nochlin, *Women, Art, Power and Other Essays*, (Icon: New York, 1989), 145-75.

^v Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 341.

^{vi} Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge Classics, 2003), 15-17.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} See Clement Greenberg's review of Jackson

Pollock in "Review of Exhibitions of Modern Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock," in *The Nation* (January 24, 1948) rptd. in Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945-49*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 200-3.

^{ix} See the selected writings by Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg in "VA: The American Avant-Garde," in *Art and Theory: 1900-2000, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 563-94.

^x Anne Wagner, "Krasner's Presence, Pollock's Absence," in *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership*, eds. Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 242.

^{xi} Ibid., 244.

^{xii} Chadwick and de Courtivron, 7.

Karen Dow

HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT



EDUCATION

- 1998 School of Art, Yale University, MFA Painting
- 1997 Brandeis University, Post-Baccalaureate, Painting
- 1992 Marlboro College, BA Sculpture and Anthropology

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 *8 Views*, Bellwether Gallery, New York, NY
- 2004 *Color Coordinates*, Bellwether Gallery, New York, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 *Exile on Cottage Street*, Dusseldorf, Germany
- 3 Painters*, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
- 2004 *The Art of the Definite*, DC Moore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003 *Armory Show*, New York, NY
- Referential Abstraction*, John Slade Ely House, New Haven, CT
- 2002 *Insight/Onsite*, Artspace, New Haven, CT

Top Left: *April*, 2008

Acrylic on panel
30 x 23.5 inches

Lower Left: *March*, 2008

Acrylic on panel
23.5 x 18 inches

Right: *November*, 2008

Acrylic on panel
30 x 23.5 inches



Christopher Mir

HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT



EDUCATION

- 1997 Boston University School for the Arts, MFA Painting/Printmaking
- 1992 Marlboro College, BA Painting and Anthropology

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 *Endgame*, RARE Gallery, New York, NY
- The Dream of You is Real*, Barcelona, Spain
- 2008 *Love Lives Forever*, Schuster Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- Director's Choice: New Paintings by Christopher Mir*, Silvermine, New Canaan, CT
- 2007 *Dreams, Memories, Reflections*, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 *Full Circle: Ten Years of Radius*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
- 2008 *Uneasy Prospects*, John Slade Ely House, New Haven, CT
- 2006 *Hypervision*, curated by Denise Markonish, Westport Art Center, Westport, CT



Opposite Page: *Mirror*, 2009

Oil on canvas

31 x 29 inches

Left: *Midsummer Bloom*, 2005

Acrylic on linen

14 x 20 inches

Below: *Death is an Illusion*, 2008

Oil on canvas

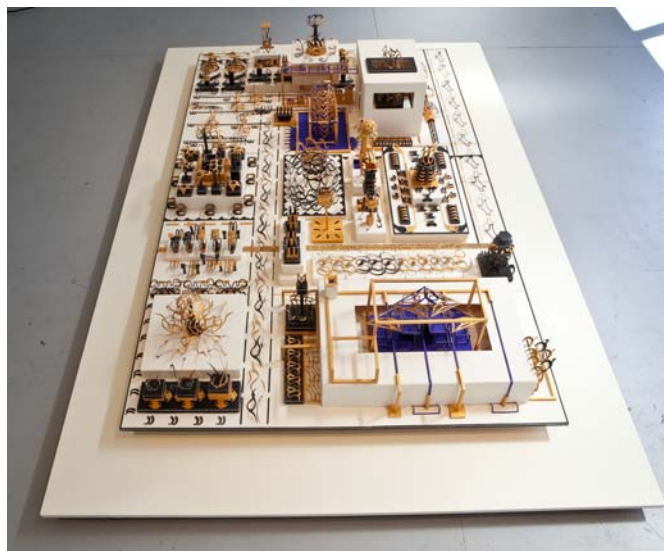
40 x 56 inches

Courtesy Nicholls Collection



Linda Ganjian

JACKSON HEIGHTS, NEW YORK



EDUCATION

- 1998 Hunter College CUNY, MFA
- 1992 Bard College, BA Painting

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 *Urban Designs*, eyewash@Boreas Gallery, New York, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 *10th Anniversary Summer Show*, Mixed Greens, NY
 - RoCoCo Pop*, Dean Projects and Crossing Arts, Queens, NY
- 2008 *The Brand New Deal*, Caren Golden Gallery, NY
 - The 183rd Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art*, National Academy Museum, NY
 - Artwalking: Bedford Avenue*, eyewash@Catbird
- 2007 *Tradition/Collision*, Alfred University, NY
 - EAF0Y: Emerging Artist and Fellowship Exhibition*, Socrates Sculpture Park, LIC, NY
 - Road Trip*, Mixed Greens, NY
 - Keep the Change*, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Rush Arts, NY
 - Weave*, Corridor Gallery/Rush Arts Brooklyn, NY



Left: *Avestan*, 2007
paper, acrylic, varnish, museum board and wood
36 x 60 x 12 inches

Right: *Maldive Tower*, 2008
paper, acrylic, varnish, PVC glue, museum board
and wood
13 x 31 x 13 inches

Jesse Lambert

JACKSON HEIGHTS, NEW YORK



EDUCATION

- 1998 Hunter College, MFA Painting
- 1993 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture
- 1992 Cooper Union, BFA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2005 Matter Gallery, Portland, ME
- 2001 Miller Block Gallery, Boston, MA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 *Post Dec*, Joseloff Gallery, University of Hartford, Hartford Art School, West Hartford, CT
Brooklyn Abstract, eyewash@ Supreme Trading, Brooklyn, NY
- 2006 NOVA Art Fair, with Klaus Von Nichtssagend Gallery, Chicago, IL



Top: *Calcified Shadows*, 2008
Acrylic and metallic paint on canvas
28 x 30 inches

Right: *What's Inside*, 2009
Acrylic and metallic paint on canvas
14 x 14 inches



Maggie Michael

WASHINGTON, DC



EDUCATION

- 2002 American University, Washington, DC, MFA
- 2000 San Francisco State University, MA
- 1996 University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, BFA with honors

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 *Open End*, G Fine Art, Washington, DC
- 2005 *Worse for the Better*, Lump Gallery/Projects, Raleigh, NC
(T)rain, Rule, Denver, CO

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 *Conversations* (curated by Sharon Loudon), Ambrosino Gallery, Miami, FL
Street Scenes: Art not Ads, mobile truck project in Washington, DC, curated by Welmoed Lanstra and Nora Halpren
Redefined: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Take Me to the River, Wichita Falls Art Museum, Wichita Falls, TX



Opposite Page-Top:
Nothing Says More, 2009,
Oil on canvas
30 x 38 inches

Opposite Page-Bottom:
To Heaven and Back, 2009
Oil on canvas
30 x 38 inches

Moral Exam, 2008
Vinyl record with cut text
6 x 13 inches

Dan Steinhilber

WASHINGTON, DC

EDUCATION

- 2002 American University, Washington, DC, MFA
1994 Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee, WI, BFA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 Cheekwood Museum of Art, Memphis, TN
Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, UT
Pulse Art Fair, Impulse Section, New York, NY
G Fine Art, Washington, DC
2007 Finesilver Gallery, Houston, TX
2006 Baltimore Museum of Art, Front Room, Baltimore, MD
Contemporary Arts Museum, Perspectives 151, Houston, TX

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 *Luminato*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada
5 + 5, Jewish Community Art Center, Washington, DC
2006 *Aisle 5*, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA
All Sentient Beings, d.u.m.b.o. arts center, Brooklyn, NY
Bunker Than Thou, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NB



Opposite Page:

Untitled, 2009

Polyethylene, fan, extension cord

17 x 7 x 7 feet

Top:

Untitled, 2009

Polyethylene

12 x 10 feet

Left: detail:

Untitled, 2009

Polyethylene

12 x 10 feet



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Printed on the occasion of the exhibition

(un)spoken

March 31 - June 6, 2009
 Artspace Commission

Book design by Caitlin McMahon
 Photography by Kelly Jensen Photography

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 New Haven, CT 06510
www.artspacenh.org

Left: Jesse Lambert
 Detail; *Streaming Trees*, 2008
 Acrylic and metallic paint on canvas
 60 x 66 inches

A large pile of colorful, crumpled paper and plastic waste is shown on a white surface. The waste is a mix of various colors including red, blue, green, yellow, and brown. The text "(un)s" is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

(un)s