



— DANIEL BALLESTEROS



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Our identity expands and is enriched as the places in which we feel at home – if only temporarily – are multiplied.

– Yi-Fu Tuan

Though houses are the backdrop for many of the photographs I make, it is the idea of the common that I am investigating. The camera, with its ability to crop, compose and selectively focus, allows me to see my surroundings in new ways. It helps to expand my awareness of what I know and who I am.

Daniel Ballesteros was raised in Saint Louis, Missouri where he received his BA in Electronic and Photographic Media from Webster University. After living and working in Santa Fe, Chicago, and New York, he began his study at the University of Connecticut for his MFA in Studio Art concentrating in photography.

ARTIST STATEMENT

BIOGRAPHY

BLAKE SHIRLEY



BLAKE SHIRLEY



← BLAKE SHIRLEY →

Using images of detailed moments that slip into abstraction, I am exploring my mistrust of perception and memory. In this series of paintings I overlap fragments of mundane images, distort and shift scale relationships, and emphasize abstract space to refer to this uncertainty. This process of layering and obfuscating parallels my struggle to create meaning and make sense of myself, and my surroundings.

Blake Shirley was raised in Gallup, New Mexico. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Utah and is soon to receive his Master of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Painting and Drawing from the University of Connecticut.

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ARI TABEI



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Art is a means of survival.

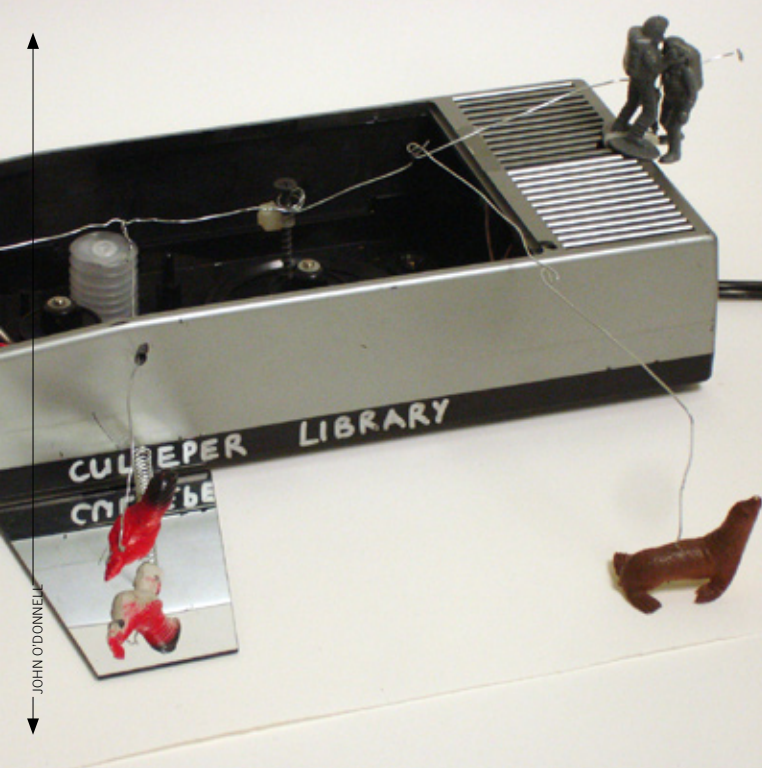
– Yoko Ono

I make garments to nest my own home, my own little world. I cocoon inside the garments to heal and nourish myself so that I regain strength to survive when I emerge from the garments. Interacting with the garments I invent ritualistic play, that revive my childhood experiences and interpret the influences of my culture. In my current series of garments, I use different materials and processes to explore specific meanings. With these materials, I package my body to disconnect myself from reality, but also to tie myself down to it. Using video, I record my ritualistic play, exposing my struggle and desperate hope to get through today.

Ari Tabei was born and raised in Tokyo, receiving her undergraduate education at Sophia University (BA '97.) Traveling back and forth between Tokyo and the United States, Ari attended the Post-baccalaureate Program in Studio Art at Brandies University in 2001, participated in the Vermont Studio Center Residency Program in April 2004, and will receive her MFA from University of Connecticut in sculpture and video performance art in May 2007.

ARTIST STATEMENT

BIOGRAPHY



JOHN O'DONNELL



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The art I make reflects my wide-eyed and childlike view of the world as I negotiate the mundane and existential obligations of life. By augmenting recently antiquated technologies (record players, movie projectors, VHS cassette tape-rewinders, low-voltage motors) I playfully animate miniature astronauts, toy animals, bisected globes and artificial carrots. This creates a cast of characters, with the astronaut as a lonely scientist or pitiful everyman.

I create my work through play, salvaging, collecting and organizing useless objects, then animating them to create a visual dialogue that marries childish toiling and spontaneous invention.

I address the humorous foibles of intellectual pursuits and efforts to explain our world through science. I employ surveillance cameras, televisions and mirrors to emphasize the frivolous and reflective nature of the quest for knowledge.

I hope this work reminds people of childhood discovery, when research was pursued not for answers or goals, but simply to avoid being bored.

John O'Donnell was conceived on Halloween, born on his father's birthday and raised in Montana where he was fascinated by his surroundings and science. As a child his ambitions were to be a "surf boarding mad scientist with a mohawk." To help him reach this goal he would perform science experiments, build machines, draw maps and invent creatures that might live in these locations. He has maintained a wide-eyed interest in his environment and has translated it to various bodies of artwork that continue to evolve.

John is an MFA candidate at the University of Connecticut and received his undergraduate degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. As an undergraduate he focused primarily on printmaking, poetry and magic potions. He still practices printmaking along with video art, mechanical sculptures and stupid drawings.



REBECCA PARKER



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REBECCA PARKER

My current work focuses on relationships that connect women to one another. I explore the complications inherent in dynamics of gender, age, and time that identify contemporary women. I use performance art to address specific roles and gestures that visually signify womanhood. Each performance or performative act redefines and challenges notions of what it means to be a woman.

Rebecca Elizabeth Parker was born and raised in Eastern Tennessee. The cultural, social, and geographical landscape of this region continually influences the direction of her work. She received her undergraduate degree in ceramics with a minor in Women's studies from Middle Tennessee State University. After graduation Rebecca worked as a museum educator at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. She carried her interest in clay, performance, women's studies and art education into her graduate studies at the University of Connecticut. She is currently a candidate for the MFA program focusing in installation, performance and video.

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BIOGRAPHY

INVITATION

5 - 7 PM

University of Connecticut

A COLLECTION OF SIMILAR

HOUSES

MFA Exhibition 2007 William Benton Museum of Art

30 MARCH - 6 MAY

WELCOME



The collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context.

– Susan Stewart in *On Longing*

Five graduate students work, study and practice in close quarters for two years, and discover that as artists each, in similar ways, collects pieces of experience and brings them home to play.

Looking beneath the family picture album, DANIEL BALLESTEROS seeks a deeper history in black and white photographs that conjure collective memories of home. The edge of a towel, a broken fence, polished floorboards by the door, these details blur and clarify before a gaze which lingers, like a child's, outside of time.

JOHN O'DONNELL doodles, draws and makes prints, assembling images into pages of humorous hieroglyphics and comical codes. He creates video snippets of fascinating absurdity and cobbles together junk into weird worlds that, like their inventor, fumble for coherence.

Drawing on a vast collection of well-worn habits of femininity, REBECCA PARKER performs domesticity upside down, and intimacy

inside out. With material at once metaphoric and everyday, she embodies the minute and monstrous complexity of our relations, both immediate and archetypal.

The uncertain spaces of BLAKE SHIRLEY's paintings float with fragments of everyday life. Blown apart by doubt in the certainties that once pinned everything down, his domestic landscapes in gentle free fall invite a new kind of standing still and watching carefully.

ARI TABEL uses paper and fabric, latex and vinyl, video and performance to piece together her past and her present, the discipline and distraction of a cross-cultural existence. In an effort to find her place, she wraps herself in robes as big as houses, enacting her own always shelter of temporality.

With this exhibition, five artists invite us in to see what they bring home. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn how they make and unmake and make themselves again from all that they pick up or that tags along behind.