



Finding **Elsewhere**

SEPTEMBER 2018 / BOYDEN GALLERY





SMCM FACULTY EXHIBITION

Finding Elsewhere

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Kate Pollasch **GUEST CURATOR**

Tristan Cai

pages 9-11

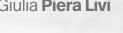


Sue Johnson

pages 12-14

Giulia Piera Livi

pages 15-17



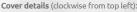
Jessye McDowell pages 18-20





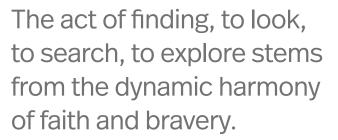
Lisa Scheer

pages 24-26



Sample Worlds by Sue Johnson; If the World is Pink Then all that We see may be Purple by Tristan Cai; Spare Room by Giulia Piera Livi; Gone by Lisa Scheer; Between Small Creatures Lie Vast Distances by Jessye McDowell; Mistaken Identity no. 9

A Celebration: The Origin of Life by Tristan Cai; Sample Worlds by Sue Johnson; Form by Giulia Piera Livi; Bad Light (Prism) by Jessye McDowell; ThreadStack no. 5 by Carrie Patterson; Gone by Lisa Scheen



Faith that in initiating an unknown pursuit, plans will meet failure, expectations will meet reality and foresight will be usurped by hindsight. Bravery, that despite the fragility of faith, one continues on and pushes through into the unknown and new states of being. This is an exhibition of the bravery and faith of studio practices that unhinge notions of reality, that question our senses and physicality, and unveil illusions of truth and time. However, this exhibition is not a remedy, as each artist unpacks and deconstructs subjects and content they manifest a kaleidoscope of new complexities, deeper dichotomies and stickier visual seductions. In this, we are invited elsewhere; to a non-space that suspends rules by walking through the threshold of ambiguity and into elusive planes of prismatic perception.

The six artists and professors in this exhibition, Tristan Cai, Sue Johnson, Giulia Piera Livi, Jessye McDowell, Carrie Patterson, Lisa Scheer traverse a range of mediums from digital modeling, printmaking and artist books, to painting and installation. While their use of formal choices of composition, color, subject, light and more vary widely, common thread lines run through each artist, pulling individual practices into the warp and weft of a multicenter group exhibition. This exhibition explores notions of reality and truth in relation to perception, time, technology and capitalism. In our current condition, truth and what is "real" have

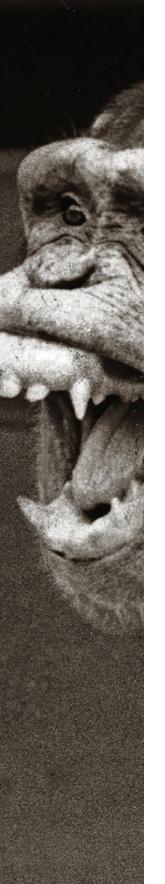
lost their shine and impenetrability, proving to be malleable with a strong predilection for manipulation. Traversing politics, science, health, and even hashtags in social media, "real" is not an absolute but a word of caution tipping one off to suspect. Yet some things still linger in the cocoon of reality; time, while able to fly by or drag on, seems to remain an ever-present constant, and nature, the grass between our toes and plants in the ground, seem unwaveringly real in the face of the virtual. In this exhibition, even those things that seem absolute and one dimensional are shown to be paradoxical. Tristan Cai, Jessye McDowell, Sue Johnson, and Giulia Piera Livi wade in the wake of instability that comes from questioning what is "real" and deconstruct the cultural domains that employ invisible guidelines of operation. From evolution to modern consumer culture, virtual reality to domestic décor, each artist intervenes on preconceived social constructs to unveil new perspectives. Carrie Patterson and Lisa Scheer look to memory, time, loss, and the body in space as platforms for transcendence and multivalent configurations. Together, the artists in this exhibition release the need for logic and normality, creating a constellation of enticing imagery and inspiring objects.

Jessye McDowell works across a range of digital platforms to question the divide between nature and digital, between the "natural world" and the "virtual world." The saturated surface, texture and sense of space within her work leaves one questioning; can you experience a place even if it isn't tangible? If I understand



how the light cascades across a metallic tree, or how gravity is re-written into new rules of habitation, have I participated in visiting a site of elsewhere? In creating her 3D rendered work, McDowell samples surface textures and materials, such as fabrics, leaves, and natural patterns, and cascades them across the environment like a tangible skin in a slick hyper-gloss

world. Through these visual breadcrumbs of familiarity, one wanders deeper into the environments, slowly shedding the need to distinguish between what has a referential context and what is virtual. In this, our societal drive to pin nature and virtual as rival opponents can de-escalate and alternatively cultivate a symbiotic state of fluctuating coexistence.



Tristan Cai's work also explores a chromatic composition of phantasmic saturation through digital platforms. Exhibiting two collections of works from A Celebration: The Origin of Life series, Cai's research-based project unpacks scientific developments in evolution and addresses how knowledge and narratives of the facts of human studies are ripe with imagination, assumptions, and created truths. Color is another false truth often wrapped in the allure of stability. The rainbow, the color wheel, the blue sky and yellow sun, these are seemingly foundational facts that have been in existence for generations. Cai studies the relationship between color and human evolution, tracing the perspective that human sight undertook

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drastic shifts when we moved from nocturnal to daytime activity and subsequently needed to develop green and blue cones to see green vegetation. But what if plants were not primarily green, what cones might we have developed to survive? Cai also studies the scientific thought that early earth was purple or pink, due to retinal, a halobacteria that could photosynthesize, and due to archaea-bacteria containing chlorophyll.

If the World is Pink, Then all that We see may be Purple, Cai manifests our could-be world with a blush and lavender topography, a lush reminder of how much of our knowledge is still theories or dreams with the potential for growth.

In his second body of work from *The Celebration: The Origin of Life*, Cai utilizes source images from San Diego Zoo's chimpanzee shows in the 1970s, restaged primate cognitive study experiments, and scientific texts to destabilize the difference between science, circus and animal entertainment, and imagination.

By layering diverse source materials and historical moments into one context, Cai's installation is a physical representation of how knowledge is built into society; source materials, references, facts, and fiction, blend together into one cohesive presentation that is institutionalized, learned, and trusted as fact.



Through a selection of works from multiple series, Carrie Patterson reorients perception and sight in a similar conceptual way to Cai's interest in how we build our realities into states of source material and narratives. In Patterson's *Breton House LightBox*, space and physicality are inversed. Each painting is based off 26 windows of the Breton house, representing what is seen within each window and populating that sight with weight, volume, and saturation. In this, the perception that a window is for passing through, for looking beyond and seeing the distant subject, is flipped on its ear. In *Total Station*, Patterson remembers the sensory and physical experi-

ence of Mulberry Fields in St. Mary's County, Maryland, both vertically and horizontally simultaneously. Her layered surface is a visual guidebook of multidimensional memory that defies human movement but speaks to a holistic reinterpretation available for translation. With the innate ability to release her work from the constraints of the picture plane, yet remain connected to the history of painting, Patterson translates composition and spatial memory into richly dynamic multilayered works.

History and memories are written by those with the pen and the voice, a subjective reality that leaves so much of our experiences wanting. Patterson's *Mistaken Identity* series addresses the subject of what



we choose to be concealed and revealed from public reception through twelve artworks made from her artists' proofs between 2004-2014. Stacked papers of varying colors and textures populate upward in totemic verticality across the square composition, regulating full visibility to only the top sheet of paper on each stack. For Patterson, each tier is made from the build-up of her self-identified artistic mistakes from past work; a visual manifestation of the labor, self-editing, and creative output that goes into her practice.



Lisa Scheer's abstract sculptural practice has spanned decades and can be seen in public spaces across the nation, including the Baltimore-Washington

International Airport, the Brooklyn Federal Courthouse, and the Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C. Her works elevate steel and aluminum to feel weightless in their forms that contort, tower, and arch outward in space. When she is working on her public commissions, Scheer works in direct dialogue with the environment that she is creating work to exist in, leading to monumental gestures that incite us to pause, look closely, and see the seemingly familiar in innovative ways. Departing from her public commission context, in this new body of work, Scheer bravely turns inward and explores mourning and loss through abstraction, motion and form.

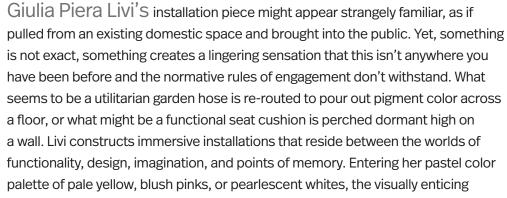
Time can seem to be swiftly definitive in relation to mortality; an absolute with no possibility for reversal. But, after the loss of an individual, memory and the ability to access their presence through the past can momentarily soften time and awaken points of connectivity long after someone is gone. In this, Scheer's upward arching and

swiftly shifting sculptural works defy their very titles, *Gone*, in their commanding and visually fluid physicality. For they are not gone, they are loyal to our presence in the

No small gesture is lacking in inspiration and that loss and mourning, while definitive in some ways, can also be challenged through memory and the act of building anew.

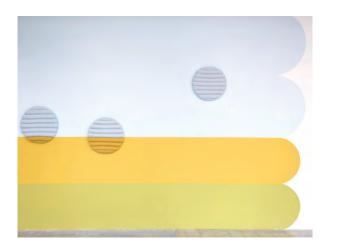
gallery, frozen with poetic motion and harmonizing with light and shadows to create an environment charged with powerful vulnerability. This body of work began with a seemingly small act; white silk billowing in wind. In recording the organic dance of fabric and air, Scheer generated outward into artistic gestures of intimacy and human-scale freestanding sculptures twisting with

curvilinear contours and towering verticality. In the physicality of this work, we see that no small gesture is lacking in inspiration and that loss and mourning, while definitive in some ways, can also be challenged through memory and the act of building anew.



surface calls forth the calm and comfort of home décor, yet how we inhabit these spaces is made illogical and peculiar to their referential context.

It is through the distortion and idiosyncratic configurations of objects that Livi's inhabitance reflects back to the modern history of interior home design. Looking to the period of 1950s-1970s western décor



history, minimalism and modernism blended together into a desirable mainstream style. Ideal domestic curation entailed capturing one's "lifestyle" in consumer goods where eclectic looking objects give an air of global cultural interest, paintings are chosen to match couches for overall harmony, and décor is marketed to serve self-expression through capitalist consumption and popular manufacturing. Livi's interventions jam that history while also challenging the art historical notion of what is considered painting. Livi began her career as a painter and employs soft fabric as textural skins across her objects to create a visual connotation between painting and sculpture – surface and object. Sewing colored fabrics into color-blocked compositions and linear forms, her objects are imbued with the artist's hand in the same manner as the painted surface. In Livi's installation, the allure of the familiar and approachable space leads to a subversive and playful place beyond the norm. It is in this hyper-cohesive color coated space that functional and artistic lay claim to the same objects – leaving us to wonder how the two perform in our homes, our stores, our galleries, and our self-identity.



Sue Johnson unpacks the deeply complex history of domesticity and its relation to gender, economics, and capitalism. Generated from an historical interest with the American Dream, post-World War II and the development of the modern housewife and consumer culture, Johnson creates a visual context for discussing when the American Dream became enmeshed in product purchases and material



culture. The Room With A View of Infinity, is part of the Ready-Made Dream project in which a domestic ideal drapes across the gallery with trompe l'oeil believability. In this oversized modern interior, everything has its place and intentionality, and yet the façade reminds us, just as in our own lives, that goods and décor offer a one-dimensional sense of self-completion, of "living the dream." Just as one can momentarily get lost in the oversized domestic window, an endless surface containing

its own *Endless Column*, Johnson pulls you back to the space at hand, to our current state, with a phone connected to nowhere, idly waiting for a call to come through – a symbol of potential, connection, absence, and distance.

From macro to micro, Johnson's artist book in a box nods to the subliminal adolescent training that prepares children to be good consumers and domestic keepers. Toys are often overlooked as integral tools that teach children how to be ideal citizens and conform to predisposed gender roles. Yet, a dollhouse, available for micro interior design and domestic-based imagination sets the stage for young children, often girls, to learn how to engage with one's home in adulthood. The furniture, preserved and presented like artifacts for a future world to understand our generation, are plastic ideals of top-line furniture and appliances circa 1950, a time of booming middle-class culture and marketing for interior appliance and domestic newness. In our current culture of constant phone upgrades, newest operating systems, and latest models of cars, Johnson's *Ready-Made Dream* showcases that even our wants and capitalistic desires are predisposed from early childhood.

I found myself re-reading the iconic book *The Lure of The Local* by Lucy R. Lippard as I was developing this exhibition. It was an interesting parallel voice to go along with my work since this exhibition is in many ways about the opposite of locality or specific places. But, I went to the book because I was developing an SMCM exhibition while physically being hundreds of miles from SMCM. For anyone who is a current student, professor or alumni of SMCM, they know the power this place holds in our lives. The way that environment can wash over our current state of being and reunite us all through memories of fields and pathways.

SMCM is an incubator for mindfulness, for dynamic self-discovery

SMCM is an incubator for mindfulness, for dynamic self-discovery and freedom, and for community building unlike most academic environments.

and freedom, and for community building unlike most academic environments. As much as this exhibition is not about SMCM in specific ways, working with these six professors reminded me that while the exhibition is Finding Elsewhere, we are all oriented by the centralized anchor of SMCM. In her text, Lippard states, "Place is what you have left." I find this to be a powerful statement rich with divergent meanings because it is both a beginning and an end, a departure and an imprint. Our place is SMCM, it is what we have, it is what we all have to leave, it is where we both get and leave our influences. Patterson, Scheer, Cai, Livi, McDowell, and Johnson have left so much on the foundation of SMCM, their influences ripple outward through students and community members across generations. But as this exhibition shows, they also open pathways for departure, as their practices and work transcend any one place or moment in history to transport us to states of elsewhere, to have faith and bravery in endlessly finding.

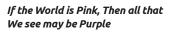
Kate Pollasch 10', Guest Curator

Elsewhere

Finding

Tristan Cai





From the series A Celebration: The Origin of Life 2016 - 2018 Digital Giclee Prints, Dimensions Vary





ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Tristan Cai (b.1985) is assistant professor of photography at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Cai creates research-based narratives that references the intersections of science, the human condition and our information culture. Intrigued by the role that images play in establishing history and knowledge, his works critically reflect on the ways which we construct reality based upon the mediation of popular media, institutional authority, interpretation and imagination. Cai has exhibited his works internationally at venues such as Phoenix Art Museum, Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul, National Museum of Singapore, Singapore and Noorderlicht Photography Festival, Groningen. His works are also in the collections of Center for Creative Photography, the Ngee Ann Kongsi, Singapore and the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris.



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A Celebration: The Origin of Life

A collection of Natural History Plates depicting Key Research done in Evolution Studies

2013 - ongoing

Plexiglass, archival Giclee prints in Douglas Fir box 10 x 13 inches each

A Celebration: The Origin of Life, celebrates scientific achievements in studying human evolution, while satirically bringing attention to the intricacies associated with the cultural interpretation of a complex subject such as evolution. Several of the composites featured in the project are created with source images from San Diego Zoo's chimpanzee shows in the 70's, while other photographs in the projects are re-staged scenarios from primate cognitive study experiments and digitally-manipulated landscapes.

Sue Johnson



Room With A View of Infinity

From the *Ready-Made Dream* installation project

201

Print on vinyl with found object (Sculptura "donut" or "handbag" phone)

96 x 96 inches









Ready-Made Dream: The Iconographia

Artist book in a box

201

Contents of box include 12 archival prints in folio, diagram printed on vellum and 1 piece of dollhouse furniture from Louis Marx & Co. circa 1950's. Deluxe edition also includes cyanotype diagram. 9 x 12 x 2 inches (closed box dimensions). Individual prints 9 x 24 inches and 9 x 37.5 inches

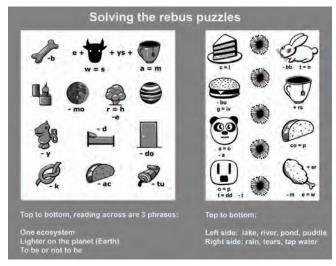
Edition of 10

Special Collections, Hilda C. Landers Library, St. Mary's College of Maryland

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sue Johnson (b. 1957) is a professor of art at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and has served as chair of the Department of Art & Art History (2002-06), coordinator of the Environmental Studies Program (2014-17), and was appointed as the Steven Muller Distinguished Professor of the Arts endowed chair (2003-07). Johnson earned a M.F.A. from Columbia University in painting and a B.F.A. in painting from Syracuse University. Her creative work, situated as it is at the intersection of art, science and popular culture, and focusing on such topics as the early modern museum, the picturing of nature and women, and investigating the domestic universe and consumer culture, defies easy categorization. Revisionist in method, her immersive installations, artist books and other artworks create plausible fictions that run both parallel and counter to canonical histories. Often invited by museums to develop research-based exhibition projects, Johnson has collaborated with the Pitt-Rivers Museum (Oxford, UK), The Rosenbach Museum and Library (Philadelphia, PA), Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum (Salisbury, UK), and the American Philosophical Society Museum (Philadelphia, PA). She is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Fellowship, a NEA/Mid-Atlantic Foundation Fellowship, four Individual Artist Awards from the Maryland State Arts Council, has twice been a Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, and has been awarded over 25 residency fellowships in Austria, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, France, and the U.S.





Wallpapers from *Sample Worlds*Two patterns: *To Be Or Not to Be* and *Water*2014
Silkscreen on found object (recycled wallpaper)
21inches wide by variable lengths

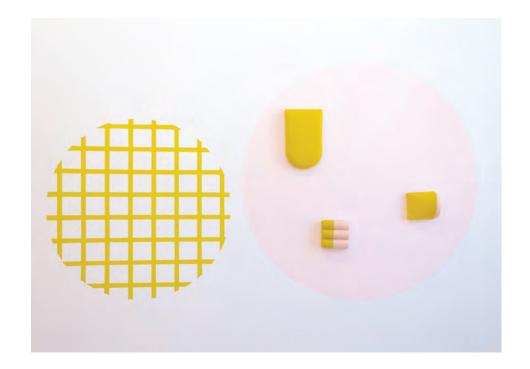
Giulia **Piera Livi**

15



Play Date

2018 Mixed media Installation 20 x 30 x 20 feet (total)

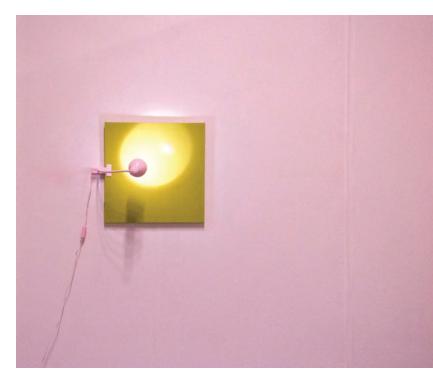


Form 2018

Wood, spandex, mesh, felt, MX dye, acrylic paint 4 x 8 feet

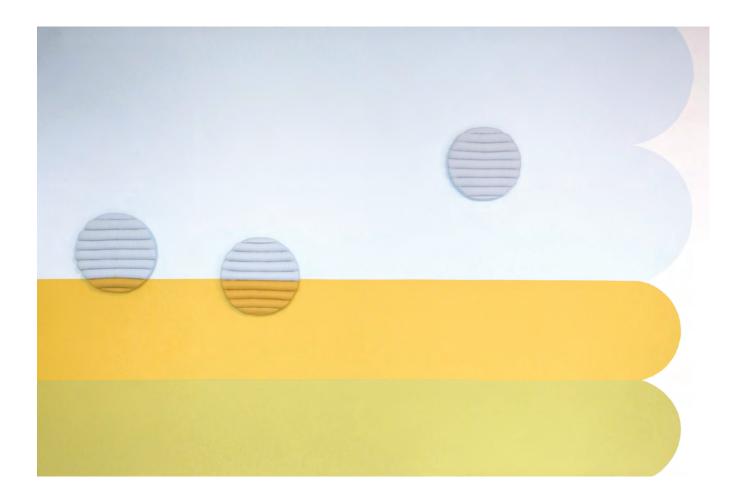
See Here

2017
Wood, linen, MX dye, spray paint, clamp light
3 x 3 feet



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Giulia Piera Livi (b.1992) is the 2018 SMCM-MICA Artist House Teaching Fellow at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Her work in painting and installation is an investigation of interior space and design, focusing on abstraction and accessibility. Her immersive rooms employ color and form to work out ideas of weirdly functional artwork and overly-curated home spaces. These spaces invite the viewer to interact with and live with the work, imagining lifestyles that are both retro and futuristic. Her installations center on the acute and the polite, the domestic and the utilitarian. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally with recent solo shows at VAE (Raleigh, NC), Arlington Arts Center (Arlington, VA), and School 33 Arts Center (Baltimore, MD).



Spare Room

2018

Mixed media installation

13 x 17 feet

Jessye McDowell



Bad Light (Prism)

201

Digital print on aluminum of 3D modeled image 42.667 x 42.667 inches





2017

Digital print on aluminum of 3D modeled image 40 x 30 inches

Future Sets (After Ruysch)

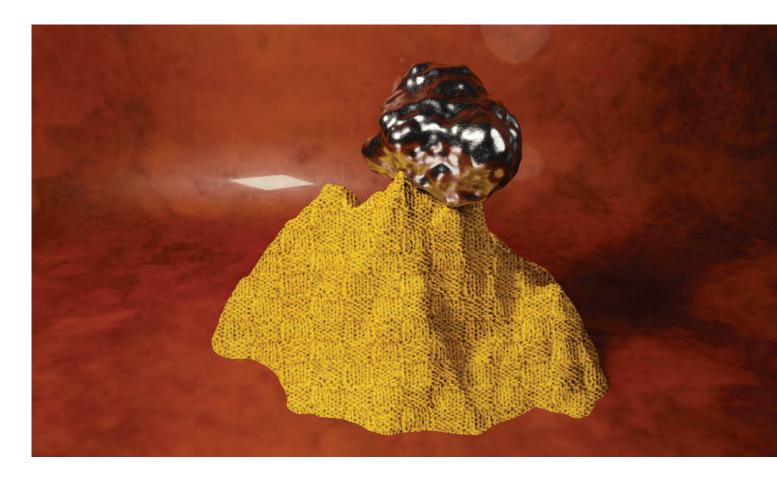
2018

Digital print on aluminum of 3D modeled image 31.5 x 40 inches



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Jessye McDowell is an artist working across digital platforms to examine the interchanges of cultural narratives, lived experience and digital life. Her work has been exhibited in both traditional and non-traditional spaces throughout the U.S. and abroad, including the SPRING/BREAK Art Fair (NYC), Essex Flowers Gallery (NYC), the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Detroit Artist Market, the DUMBO Arts Festival (Brooklyn, NY), StreeTVideOart (Sceaux, France), Mint Gallery (Atlanta, GA), Murray State University (Murray, KY), and the Front Gallery (New Orleans, LA). She was awarded an Emerging Artist Award from the Durham Arts Council (Durham, NC) and an artist grant from the Alabama State Council for the Arts. She has attended artist residencies at the Wassaic Artist Residency (Wassaic, NY); the Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT); Harold Arts (Chesterfield, OH); and the Acre Artist Residency (Steuben, WI). McDowell received an MA in Media Studies from the New School University in NYC, and an MFA from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She is currently an assistant professor of digital media & animation at St. Mary's College of Maryland.



Soft Body Hell

201

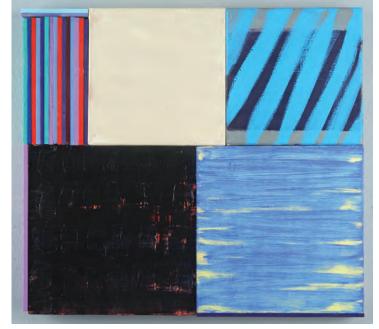
3D animated loop, dimensions variable

Carrie Patterson



Breton House LightBox no. 3
2016
Acrylic paint with cold wax on cardboard
48 x 30 x 5 inches





Total Station is a series of painted constructions of a remembered landscape, Mulberry Fields in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Like the electronic instrument used in surveying, Patterson measures distance both vertically and horizontally as a tool for exploring the idea of storing sensory memory and translating the experience to a remote interpreter off site.

Total Station no. 1

2018

Acrylic and oil on canvas and wood 34 x 24 x 3 inches

Total Station no. 2

2018

Acrylic and oil on canvas and wood 18 x 20 x 3 inches

ThreadStack no. 1

2018

Cardboard, Index Cards, and acrylic paint 7 x 10 x 3 inches

Mistaken Identity no. 9

2014

Artists proofs oil on arches paper $20 \times 20 \times 1.5$ inches





Patterson uses the text and markings on each card as a starting point to create small architectonic forms. ThreadStack is a term used in computer programming where a thread or path of execution is created by the programmer. Each thread has its own stack space that consists of memory contained in the thread but has potential to carry memory to parallel threads in the same program.

SMCM FACULTY EXHIBITION: **Finding elsewhere**

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Carrie Patterson (b.1970) is a professor of art at St. Mary's College of Maryland and was the department chair from 2011-2014. She earned a B.F.A in studio art from James Madison University and an M.F.A in painting from the University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, she was a student resident at The New York Studio School. For twenty years, Patterson has created geometric objects that embody a poetic, physical translation of place. Early in her career, Patterson combined abstraction with observation using forms found in vernacular architecture such as billboards, signs, and barns as source material. Through a slow process of mining a site for information, she remembers specific places by measuring distance and observing light by drawing, filming, and photographing. By 2010, her method of constructing paintings, layering paint on canvas, stacking wood and paper, became primary to her creative process. She maintains her practice, often incorporating memories of observed landscapes into her constructions and isolating color events or single gestural marks. Her work has been exhibited widely across the country with solo shows in Philadelphia, New York, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Florida, and Minnesota.





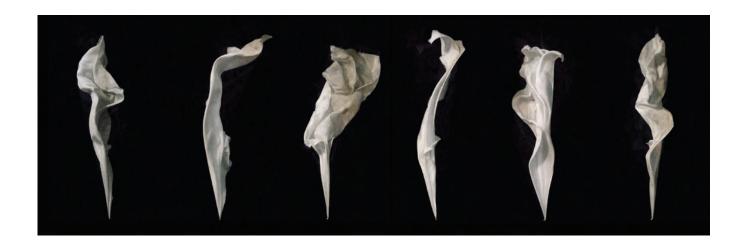
Breton House FloorStacks

2016
Acrylic paint with cold wax on cardboard
72 x 72 x 36 inches

FloorStack no. 2

2018 Cardboard, wood, paint 12 x 12 x 36 inches **Breton House LightBox** is a body of work consisting of six stacked cardboard paintings and six floorstacks. The scale, color, and mass of the paintings are based off of 26 windows of the Breton house. Each painting translates what is seen within each window as a solid mass rather than a window space that opens to another world. Cardboard serves as an abundant, strong, dense material. Each floorstack represents a remembered stacked view of each painting.

Lisa **Scheer**





Gone

2014 Video stills

Gone

2014 Installed video 8 min 30 sec





Gone (lead series) 2014-2018 Lead sheet and steel bar dimensions variable (average 5 x 3 x 3 feet) installed in rows of varying numbers

Gone (mesh series, #2)
2016
Stainless steel mesh
48 x 7 x 7 inches

Gone (mesh series)
2017
Stainless steel mesh
and lead weight
96 x 6 x 6 inches





ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Lisa Scheer (b. 1956) is a professor of sculpture at St. Mary's College of Maryland and is the current chair of the Department of Art and Art History. Scheer's artistic practice takes two distinct paths. One is outward in focus as it entails the creation of public, large-scale sculptures designed in response to the physical surroundings and human communities in which they are placed. The other, more inwardly focused, entails the creation of intimate works that arise from personally felt experience. Her current body work entitled *Gone*, is a rumination on impermanence, departure, and transfiguration. Scheer's work has been exhibited widely including one-person shows at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Phillips Collection, the American Institute of Architecture, and the Hemphill Fine Arts gallery in Washington, D.C. Her public commissions include works created for Reagan National Airport, the Eastern District Federal Courthouse in Brooklyn, NY, the BWI Airport in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Petworth Metro Station in Washington, D.C.









Gone (resin series)
2015-17
Painted resin on patinated copper bases
Dimensions variable

SMCM FACULTY EXHIBITION: **Finding elsewhere**

Finding **Elsewhere:** The act of finding, to look, to search, to explore stems from the dynamic harmony of faith and bravery.















