

The
NECESSITY
of a
WANDERING
CONSCIOUS
NESS

The

NECESSITY

Megan Alley

May Beattie

Rena Collector

Jennifer Crowley

Samantha Stahl

of a

WANDERING

April 27 – May 20, 2012

THE TROUT GALLERY, Dickinson College

CONSCIOUS

NESS

Introduction

The title of this exhibition, *The Necessity of a Wandering Consciousness*, comes from a chapter by the social psychologist Daniel Wegner, in a book entitled *The Scientific Approaches to Consciousness*.¹ Wegner's text deals with the process by which the mind focuses and jumps, particularly as related to visual stimulus; conscious attentiveness is often at its most elusive when one tries to control it too much.

This is apropos in many ways to an artist and to the creative process in general. Rarely does anything progress in a straight line, or in a neat ascending graph. Full of fits and starts, working in the studio can seem a chaotic affair, full of dead-ends and neglected opportunities. Yet the process of bringing order to one's ideas and finding the logic and progression of those ideas, and most importantly the physical forms in which those ideas can best exist, is tremendously exciting. It can also be extremely difficult and vexing. It is not a simple translation of concept to real form; it is a dialog between materials and ideas, between the senses of sight and touch, and bringing a successful physicality to communicate an experience. What starts as a seed of an idea can lead an artist on a meandering path to unanticipated problems and results.

This is what these five young artists have been dealing with this year: how to order their process, how to best use their materials, how to deal with intense critical evaluation from multiple viewpoints, and ultimately how to best communicate what is inevitably a personal experience to diverse viewers.

I would like to thank all the members, faculty and staff, of the Department of Art & Art History, and particularly two visiting artist faculty, Kris Benedict and Anthony Wolking, for their work with our students this year.

Ward Davenny
Professor of Art

1. Daniel Wegner, "The Necessity of the Wandering Mind," in *The Scientific Approaches to Consciousness*, eds., Jonathan Cohen and Jonathan Schooler (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), 295.

Megan Alley

The forces that geometric shapes and lines generate from the point at which objects intersect are key to my work. I am interested in the tension that can develop from hovering objects, forms that appear potentially unstable, and the dynamics created from an object that is threatening contact with surrounding elements or the viewer. I try to force materials that have weight and structure to act in ways that defy the expectations set up by their materiality, and attempt to make them appear weightless and flexible. Metals, wood, and ceramics have a natural physicality that I often emphasize by leaving the surface of these materials unaltered.





Above:
 Untitled
 Steel, wire, aluminum
 1 x 2 feet

Left:
 Untitled
 Conduit
 6 x 8 feet

Opposite page:
 Untitled
 Bronze, steel
 1 x 4 feet

May Beattie

By reusing and reconfiguring natural and manmade materials, I try to create environments, new life forms, and potential new (mis)uses of common objects. Re-forming materials into the unintended can lead to strange and sometimes absurd or comical juxtapositions. I hope for a viewer, or participant in my work, to have an unexpected experience with these materials; something as simple as the motion of the air while walking by a piece can initiate movement in the piece and set up an interaction with the viewer. David Hume wrote, "Beauty is no quality in things themselves: it exists in the mind that contemplates them." It also exists in the actual or imagined physical contact with these things.





Above:
Forest of Estelles
 Plastic trash bags, glue
 10 x 10 feet

Left:
 Untitled
 Yarn and nails
 5 x 3 feet

Opposite page:
Touch
 Plastic trash bags, wire, glue
 4 x 4 feet

Rena Collector

Working with drawing, printmaking, and painting, I have developed a group of interdependent portraits and figure studies. As my collection of individual pieces grew, I became aware of the visual and narrative relationships the works have to each other. Placed in ambiguous settings, and often emerging from darkness into a single light source, figures seem to occupy a shared space. With similar features and fluctuating expressions, they appear related in a familial way. Though the relationships are not clearly defined, I strive to show that they still fundamentally exist and develop. Placing the pieces in a fluid, somewhat disheveled unit underscores a shifting dynamic between these figures, reflecting the significance, uncertainty, and changing nature of these relationships.





Above:
Group
 Mixed media
 3 ½ x 2 ½ feet

Opposite page, top right:
Smile
 Graphite on paper
 6 x 9 ½ inches

Opposite page, top left:
Holding
 Oil on copper
 3 ½ x 6 ½ inches

Opposite page, bottom:
Tilted
 Graphite on paper
 6 x 9 ½ inches

Jennifer Crowley

My portraits show people in a personal, intimate space, in a vulnerable situation, and there is not necessarily any invitation to the viewer to come closer. As the subject locks eyes with the viewer it is unclear whether it is a confrontational gaze, with the camera seen as an intruder, or a passive acceptance. By using a bird's eye view from an awkward height, I want to distort the viewer's perspective, making one feel as if they are peering in on someone only to find them alert. I try to use color and fabric as a painter would, drawing attention to specific elements and tying the composition together.





Above, left:
Emily
 Digital print
 22 x 18 inches



Above, right:
Andrew
 Digital print
 22 x 18 inches

Opposite page:
Anna
 Digital print
 22 x 18 inches

Samantha Stahl

There is a mysterious and wonderfully elusive world that is unveiled when it rains, which is both transient and visually ambiguous and strange. The main goal is not to represent a recognizable landscape, but to understand and explore a fleeting or specific moment of an experience. This idea began with more specific renderings of what one might actually see, but has evolved through the process to become more suggestive, expressive, and evocative. I experimented with a limited color palette and inconsistent applications of paint to create varying textures and perspectives to reflect various qualities of different atmospheric conditions. Ultimately, I hope these pieces not only represent my own personal reactions to these phenomena, but also allow for the viewers to share in the experience of creating these pieces as well.





Above:
 Untitled
 Oil paint
 24 x 26 inches

Left:
 Untitled
 Ink print
 8 x 7 inches

Opposite page:
 Untitled
 Oil paint
 24 x 18 inches

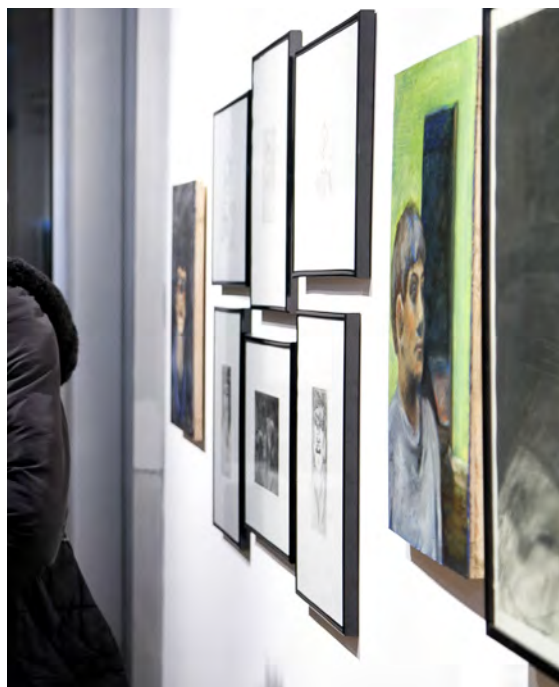


Works in Progress exhibition

Opening Reception

December 6, 2011

Goodyear Gallery





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Carl Socolow '77, Dickinson College

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