

# FRIENDS OF ART NEWSLETTER *Winter 2010*



## **Collectors Group Workshop**

*Betsy Stirratt and Nan Brewer discuss issues in buying student and faculty artwork*

Approximately thirty people joined the conversation with SoFA Gallery director Betsy Stirratt and IU Art Museum curator Nan Brewer as they discussed many questions and issues surrounding the purchase of student and faculty artwork. The SoFA Gallery provided an appropriate background, hung with a semester-opening exhibit of MFA student work. Stirratt spoke of a generalized increase in interest and sale of student work from her gallery over the years. Although the SoFA Gallery does not have a long-term (or exclusive) relationship with its exhibitors and takes a smaller percentage of sales than a commercial gallery, 2009 was the best year ever for the gallery in terms of sales. This is an important part of their operating budget.

Stirratt said that although the students produce work at a very difficult and demanding point in their careers, buyers may find it rewarding to cultivate a relationship, and students would almost certainly appreciate the interest of a studio visit. In the context of an upcoming Triennial Faculty group exhibit, Nan Brewer circulated a price list for faculty pieces, and discussed the relationship artists must maintain with their galleries, assisted by comments from Chicago gallery owner Thomas Robertello who was attending.

Should a buyer haggle over prices? (Not at student shows, please.) What guides a buyer's decisions? Will the student pieces ever be worth as much as later work? How does one track the progress of a student's career? The audience brought up many important issues of relevance. Both speakers stressed the

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importance of good record keeping for all purchases, with names, dates, and prices. The internet allows possibilities for following artists more easily than ever before. Getting your name on a favored artist's mailing list is an excellent way to maintain contact, but also requires an occasional reply, no matter how brief, to express a continued interest.

Students do go on to bigger careers, but usually student work will always be considered a form of juvenilia. However, Brewer said she was surprised recently to be contacted by a university mounting a career retrospective for an artist who took an MFA from IU in 1968, the last year that IU required graduating students to donate a piece to the Museum. The exhibiting university requested a loan of this donated student piece, which it considered an important work in the development of this artist's career.



*Nan Brewer and Betsy Stirratt answer questions and address concerns about collecting student and faculty work in a recent Collectors Group workshop held in the SoFA Gallery. View more photos and see a calendar of upcoming events at [www.fa.indiana.edu/foart](http://www.fa.indiana.edu/foart).*

## FOA Travel

### Chicago: Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913 – 1917

*Friday, May 14–16, 2010*

*only \$365 per person, includes:*

- Round trip bus transport to and from Chicago
- 2 night stay at Palmer House Hilton Hotel, steps away from the Art Institute (double occupancy required, single supplement adds \$170)
- Admission to *Matisse: Radical Invention* exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago
- Option for architectural boat tour of Chicago
- Option to join the Frank Lloyd Wright Tour in Oak Park

In the career of Henri Matisse, the time between his 1913 return from Morocco and his 1917 departure for Nice witnessed the production of the artist's most demanding, experimental, and enigmatic works: paintings that are abstracted and rigorously purged of descriptive detail, geometric and sharply composed, and dominated by the colors black and

gray. Typically works from this period have been considered as unrelated to one another, aberrations within the artist's development, or responses to Cubism or World War I. *Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913–1917* will move beyond the surface of paintings from this time to examine their physical production and the essential context of Matisse's studio practice. In shifting focus, the exhibition will reveal deep connections between works and demonstrate the artist's critical development at this time



*Henri Matisse, Bathers by a River, 1909, 1913, 1916, oil on canvas, 259.7 x 389.9 cm, Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection*



Near the end of his life Matisse acknowledged the significance of this period when he identified two works—*Bathers by a River* (1909–10, 1913, 1916–17) and *The Moroccans* (1915–16)—as among his most “pivotal.” Their importance resides not only in the formal qualities—what Matisse called “the methods of modern construction”—but also in the physical nature of the pictures. Each bears the history of its manufacture: multiple layers of paint from numerous revisions that Matisse worked especially by scraping and incising to near-sculptural handling. That few related sketches exist for many paintings in this period indicates the artist’s search for a new way of working, as does his temporary break in making sculptures. Rather than produce alternate versions of compositions in graphite, ink, clay, or paint, Matisse limited his exploration to a single canvas, which in its heavily reworked and abstracted final state suggests that the act of painting itself became an added subject for him.

The concept of *Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913–1917* evolved from a recently initiated investigation of the Art Institute’s *Bathers by a River* that employs new analytical and scientific technologies to uncover the evolutionary history of this painting’s creation. Thus far, this groundbreaking research has revealed much about Matisse’s methods of production as well as a number of unexpected connections with other works, most significantly, the Museum of Modern Art’s paintings *The Moroccans* and *The Piano Lesson* (1916). The Museum of Modern Art has now likewise engaged in an investigation of works in its collection. Through this partnership, new information about Matisse’s pigments, experimental techniques, and compositional choices has come to light. These findings hold the promise of a fundamental reassessment of Matisse’s experimental working through new, “modern” pictorial means and its impact on the rest of his career. The final form of the exhibition will depend upon this continually developing information.

The exhibition will include approximately 100 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints primarily 1913 to 1917 in order to consider fully Matisse’s meaning of the “modern construction.” In doing so, *Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913–1917* will be the first sustained examination devoted to the work of this important period.

The total cost will be \$365 per person (\$400 for non-members). The trip is a very popular one and may fill soon! Please reply by April 9. Fees are non-refundable after this date. Please confirm soon! Call Friends of Art office at 855-5300 or e-mail fo-art@indiana.edu

## Special Option for Chicago Trip A Frank Lloyd Wright Housewalk in Oak Park, IL

*Saturday, May 15, 2010*

The timing of this trip will allow interested members to sign up for the annual Frank Lloyd Wright tour in Oak Park. Every year the tour allows visitors to view several of the architectural gems that Wright worked on in the area. Members must make their own arrangements to attend this tour, including transportation to and from Oak Park. The tour tickets go on sale in January and sell out quickly, so reserve your spot soon!

To visit website for Frank Lloyd Wright/ Oak Park  
Tour go to [www.gowright.org/wright-plus.html](http://www.gowright.org/wright-plus.html)

From the website: “Join us for the 36th annual Wright Plus, an internationally renowned architectural housewalk featuring rare interior tours of eight private homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and his contemporaries, plus entry to three landmark Wright buildings. Enjoy interpretations based on in-depth research of the homes’ history and architecture, including discussions of the original occupants’ lifestyles.”

## IU Art Museum The Triennial 2010: Faculty Artists from IU’s Hope School of Fine Arts

*January 23 – March 7, 2010*

The Indiana University Art Museum presents The Triennial 2010, an exhibition of contemporary artworks by the talented artist-teachers of IU’s highly acclaimed Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts (SoFA) in the Special Exhibitions Gallery, January 23 through March 7, 2010. This large show offers an opportunity for south-central Indiana audiences to see artworks by more than forty artists representing the school’s ten different studio areas. While many of these award-winning artists exhibit nationally and even internationally-includ-

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# SoFA Gallery

## Ceramics Area Show

January 12 – 22, 2010

A new show of ceramic work in the SoFA Gallery is startling because of the personality and presence of some its pieces. The key to the inordinate pleasures of many pieces stems from beautifully realized surfaces, even those matched to a simple form. A high degree of skill and commitment to finish allows us a limpid view of the artists' intentions. Many of the surfaces here have the protective completeness and integrity of skin (and many play off of this reference).

The skin on Keira Norton's *Peachy Jean* is as flawless and unblemished as an egg. This complete smoothness invites a caress, as skin should, and plays into the seductive pose of this dolphin hybrid. The animal-into-human conceit has a cartoonish side, particularly in its disquieting sexuality (a coy fin modestly shielding an outsized pudendum), but a serious side, too. Dolphins are notoriously sexual creatures, even aggressively so with their keepers, and are said to have a very humanlike, sensitive and responsive skin surface. These points of contact, allied with a masterful execution, give gravity to a very whimsical concept. The artist's commitment is impressive.

Emily Loehle offers another example of commitment and execution that requires us to take a goofy idea seriously. *Udder Bra* is a four-teated arrangement that manages to fascinate more than it disturbs. The high gloss on the glaze makes one imagine what sound might emanate were these hung in a breeze like weird wind chimes. The subtle color shifts and the dancing variety in "direction" give the piece a kinetic charge.

The abstract simplicity of David Katz's *Modern Dependency*, a black slab intertwined with a white slab, requires certain qualities of surface to guarantee the success of the piece. The white shape

is all slippery organic, while the black is hewn in facets. Each view almost obscures opposing views, so as the viewer proceeds around the piece, the white piece shows up in unexpected places, almost seeming to slither into place, straddling the black shape.

Several pieces play off of process. The scored and slashed openings in Phil Haralam's *Things Keep Their Secrets*, for instance, emphasize the vulnerable, soft clay before firing, but the precision of angled cuts, in several rows, certifies his intention and downplays the impulsiveness of the cutting gesture. The openings allow a view of a gridded interior, with shapes that look much like windows, turning the viewing gaze inside out. In Ryan Shortridge's *Wood Fired Vase*, a firing mishap (presumably unintentional) has badly rent the entire clay

side, causing a queasy list to the form. The viewer's indecision about the artist's intention undercuts the impact considerably.

The listing or off-balance form appears again and again. Christine Golden's female form (*Skin*) stands on thickened, truncated legs, with a precarious lean and a groin that is vacated in the shape of a keyhole. The detail of face and hands offsets the anonymity of bald pate and white skin.

The animated roots of Annie Campbell's tree trunk (*Sling*) are described in lively patterns of bark and bare wood. The attached chain seems to be pulling the resistant form from the earth, like a Florida cypress from the swamp.

Another female torso exists in varicolored panels, attached by screws in some sci-fi version of a new humanity (Rob Kolhouse's *Version 7*). The torso has a very lifelike, sprung tension to her back, and the serene expression of an immortal machine. Her hands reach up, but for what? To remove a plate, to make an internal adjustment? The pleasures of contemplating the unique presences in this show are joined to the anxieties of transformation, perhaps the anxieties of hand-craftsmen working in an ancient material, as we hurtle toward an uncertain future in a post-human world.



Keira Norton, *Peachy Jean*, stoneware





*Jessica Westbrook, Untitled, photograph, 2009*

## INHABIT

*February 16 – March 12, 2010*

The INHABIT show at the SoFA Gallery brings together six contemporary artists to investigate the terms of a perennial artistic subject. From various angles, the artists look at environment and the human interchange with landscape, physical and psychological, and what that means to a sense of place and of identity.

One of the earliest dichotomies in the artistic treatment of landscape was the contrast between the garden, nature domesticated, and the wild, the romantic ideal of untamed nature. Stephen Cartwright looks at situations where this distinction might not be possible, through the laws of unintended consequence. In the long view, systems of nature are so interconnected that changes in one part will always cause ripple effects back through the whole. Using topographical data, he creates acrylic prototypes of formations that have been “massively altered” by human action. Cartwright says that the pieces in his “Lost Landscape” series reflect “former valleys that are now flooded by impounded Missouri River water.”

The pieces themselves resemble segments of a river, and so immediately transcend in their beauty the particularity of their origins. The layers of blue plastic give depth to the light and gradate the complex shadows beneath them. The hard-edged “stepping” between layers betrays the mechanical nature of their fabrication. This also represents the tension between the scientific discourse that informed the damming projects on the river (and, for that matter, provided the topographic data used by the artist) and the fluid nature of the river itself. The organic forms of nature like the circle will never yield to a final numerical equivalent (witness the infinite enumeration of pi).

The image of the river calls up philosophical echoes, too, such as Herodotus on the impossibility of stepping in the same river twice. One imagines the river taking the longest possible view of all, with the understanding that no ideal state can ever be imposed on a dynamic nature.

Elizabeth Gurdeman creates an installation that considers the history of the heroic ideal in landscape painting. Her “Sublime Landscape: Bringing the Beauty of Nature’s Colors Indoors” uses flat latex paint to sketch a landscape in schematic, uninflected forms. In her “American Horizons” paintings, a heroic vista is reduced to a single green line. Her work suggests that a painting tradition that began by celebrating the historic American wilderness ended (paradoxically) by domesticating the whole idea of the wild.

Gurdeman states, “My work is predicated on the power of attitude to affect the perception ... [It] questions how historic images of the national landscape influence the contemporary value of nature.” The concept of the American wilderness is of course elusive and subject to easy distortion. The myth of a depopulated continent, for instance, that manifest destiny drew us to conquer, is already a misunderstanding, since it was only the massive impact of small pox in the 16th century that created the illusion of wilderness. It is a deeply conservative mindset that continually re-imposes a born-again virginity on the wilderness, the notion that all culture begins when our culture begins.

The photographs of Jessica Westbrook take a laconic and droll look at the impositions of human industry and habitation on the natural world. She shows a strange kind of interpenetration between them, in spite of best efforts to impose strict boundaries. A massive array of clouds is reflected in the glass and steel façade of an office building. A mound of construction dirt is incompletely covered by what looks like Astroturf. In a paneled public bathroom, a paper towel dispenser is covered in faux wood contact paper. The loss of nature is compensated for by a swatch of fake nature pasted onto the object that devours nature.

In terms of habitation, it bears repeating that artists typically occupy some of the most restrictive and artificial spaces of all: the studio and the gallery. Efforts have long been underway to break free of these restrictions, witness Stephen Cartwright’s logging of 25,000 miles by bicycle across Europe, Asia, and the United States. We live in a world wired for sound and video with a 24-hour feed from around the globe, but each gain also somehow takes back in equal measure. Photography and the In-

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# FOA Book Discussion Group

*Scheduled for February 20*

The Friends of Art's new book discussion group will hold its first meeting on Saturday, February 20 from 1 to 3 pm in Conference Room FA007 in the Fine Arts Building. Parking is available in the IMU lots or in the library lot.

The book for this meeting is Sarah Thornton's *Seven Days in the Art World*, which Publishers Weekly called "an elegant, evocative, sardonic view into some of the art world's most prestigious institutions." The paperback edition of the book is available at a discounted price for FOA members at the FOA Bookshop.

In her introduction Thornton writes, "My research suggests that great works [of contemporary art] do not just arise; they are made — not just by artists and their assistants but also by the dealers, curators, critics, and collectors who 'support' their work." She studies how they do that by presenting seven one-day-in-the-life chapters that explore an art auction at Christie's in New York; a classroom critique of art students' work at the California Institute of the Arts; the annual contemporary art fair in Basel, Switzerland; the award ceremony for the Turner Prize at the Tate Britain museum in London; a day of planning and meetings for Artforum International magazine; visits to three studios and a foundry production facility for Japanese artist Takeshi Murakami; and the international art exhibit known as the Biennale in Venice. Several of the personalities featured in one chapter also reappear in another, allowing the reader to explore different facets of their artistic presence.

Thornton is a sociologist who previously published a book about modern dance clubs and the dance parties with electronic music and light shows known as raves. She also researched the role of branding in advertising. Thornton has a BA in Art History from Concordia University in Montreal, and has written articles about contemporary art for *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, *The Sunday Times Magazine*, and other publications.

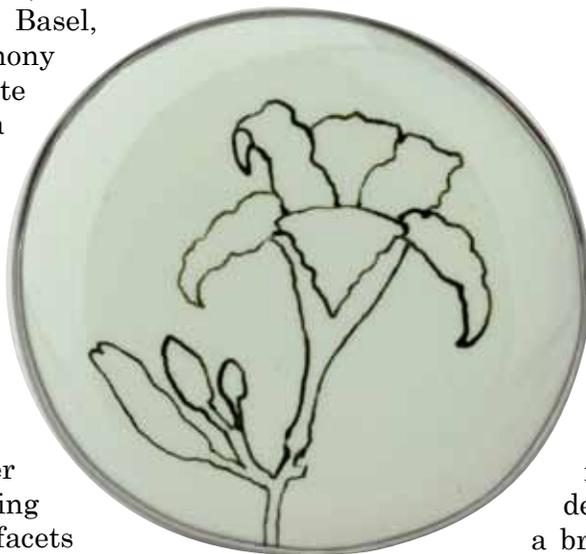
Our discussion questions for the February 20 meeting will include:

1. Thornton says she interviewed over 250 people as research for this book, and it is the quotes from those interviews that really make her chapters come alive. If you have a favorite quote, what is it and why did it impress you? If you come to our discussion on February 20 please bring the page number of your quote so you can share it with the group.

2. In her chapter about Takeshi Murakami Thornton quotes Andy Warhol's remark that, "Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art." What did you learn in this book that surprised you about the business of selling art?

3. If you could spend a day as a fly on the wall at one of the seven locations profiled in this book — a Christie's auction, the Basel Art Fair, the Biennale, the offices of Artforum International, the Turner Prize award ceremony, a classroom of the California Institute of Arts, or Murakami's studios — which one would you pick, and why?

After our discussion on February 20 we will also discuss future meetings and other books to discuss in the future — please bring your suggestions!



*Triennial, continued from page 3*

*Randy Long, Pastel Green Lily, 2009, brooch: enamel on copper. Photo: courtesy of artist*

ing recent and upcoming shows in Chicago, New York City, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, China, France, and Japan—the museum's exhibition brings their recent work home for their students, colleagues, neighbors, and a broader Midwestern audience to enjoy. This once-every-three-year exhibition not only offers a sampling of new and exciting contemporary art, but it also presents an occasion to interact directly with many of the artists through panel discussions, Noon Talks, Art-side Chats, and studio tours (see listing below for all related events and participating artists).

The Triennial 2010 is the perfect chance to see new creations by well-known artists, including emeriti faculty Barry Gealt, William Itter, Jerald Jacquard, and Bonnie Sklarski, as well as the work of new faculty members — Megan Abajian, Chris Barnard, Dolan Cleverley, Laurel Cornell, Todd



Frahm, Shelley Given, Kristen Martincic, Kevin O. Mooney, Tina Newberry, Amy Norgaard, Rob Off, Matt Repsher, Tom Walker, and Tony White-participating for the first time. The exhibition features a wide variety of media, from traditional oil paintings and enameled jewelry to computer-generated art and interactive installations, including an imposing kinetic sculpture with sound by printmaker Wendy Calman. The images' styles and themes likewise reflect the diversity permeating today's art world. While some of the artists turn to their local environs for inspiration, others are more global, philosophical, or conceptual in their approaches.

*Opening Lecture, Friday, January 22, 5:30-6:30 p.m.,  
Hope School of Fine Arts, Room 015*

In a lecture titled "The Persistence of Place: Modern Art in the Midwest," noted art critic and essayist on contemporary art James Yood will discuss the role that place plays in the development of artistic vision. Yood is Chicago correspondent for *Artforum*; a regular contributor to *Glass Magazine*, *Art on Paper*, and *Aperture*; and Adjunct Full Professor in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism and Director of the *New Art Journalism* in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

*INHABIT, continued from page 5*

ternet open onto a larger world, but also bury us under an avalanche of second-hand experience. One might compare the art gallery to the stage: one would hope to bring the world into and onto the theatrical stage, but in the end, it exists in an attenuated and highly stylized form. Witness the self-conscious gaze developed by Lauren Zoll's in her "Hole in the Wall" series, inspired by efforts to paint and patch her own studio walls. This is disquieting like watching people on TV watching TV.

Still, the results of such investigations are often more expansive and generous of meaning than a hesitant artist might imagine. Jieun Shin admits to feeling alienated from her Korean heritage, having a second-hand exposure to 18th century Joseon patchwork designs, mediated through a folk museum. In her "Proxy" series, she assembles a crowd of anonymous heads (taken from Ikea catalogs and assembly diagrams) on watercolor paper, and fills them with various patchwork designs. The poetry of the image manages to convey this visual heritage as partly hidden, only partially revealed by the lattice of occupied heads, but also constantly present in the thoughts and dreams of individuals. Moreover, the separate pieces of pattern add up to a whole, as the individuals are almost unavoid-

ably drawn into a fabric of community. Jieun Shin achieves an important insight: more than any other feature, our landscape is made up of other people. For good or ill, human nature is nature.

## Coming Events

*Friends of Art Calendar.*

- **January 12 – 23, 2010** The SoFA Gallery presents the first round of student area shows, featuring student work from the MFA Painting, Metals, Graphic Design, Ceramics, and Textiles Area programs.
- **January 22, 2010** Noted art critic and essayist James Yood presents a lecture in the FA auditorium at 5:30 pm. titled "The Persistence of Place: Modern Art in the Midwest." Yood will discuss the role that place plays in the development of artistic vision. Preview of the Triennial exhibit follows from 6:30 – 8 pm.
- **January 23 – March 7, 2010** The Triennial 2010 featuring Hope School of Fine Arts Faculty in the Special Exhibitions Gallery of the IU Art Museum.
- **January 30, 2010** The Fine Arts Library Benefit Dinner begins with slide lecture by Assistant Professor in History of Art, Dawna Schuld at 5 pm. in FA 015. Dinner begins at 6:30 pm in the Library. Her topic will be "Light, Space, & Eric Orr: the Primordial Minimal."
- **January 26 – February 6, 2010** The SoFA Gallery presents student work from Sculpture, Photography, Digital Art (DART) & Printmaking Area programs. An opening reception will accompany each exhibit, from 7 – 9 pm on Friday, January 29.
- **February 16 – March 12, 2010** The SoFA Gallery presents *INHABIT*. See review on page 5. Opening reception from 7 – 9 pm on Friday, February 19.
- **Saturday, March 6, 2010** Friends of Art will tour four faculty studios, including Rowland Ricketts, Paul Brown and Althea Murphy-Price. The tour will run from 10 am to 2 pm and will be followed by a box lunch. Register by March 1.
- **May 14 – 16, 2010** Friends of Art bus trip to Chicago to view "Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913–1917." The annual Frank Lloyd Wright house tour in Oak Park may be arranged as a separate option. Other options include a gallery walk on the westside loop, and an architectural boat tour, depending on interest. The house tour and the boat tour would incur an additional cost.



# Reply Form

To join the Friends of Art, renew your membership or to sign up a friend, select a category & return this form with a check made payable to: **Friends of Art/ IU Foundation**. Mail this form to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of Art**  
Fine Arts Building, FA 125  
1201 East 7th Street  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
foart@indiana.edu  
812-855-5300

- Please include me in the Faculty Studio tour on March 6 with lunch included for \$12
- Yes, I want to visit Chicago for the *Matisse: Radical Invention* exhibit (\$365 per person).
- I also want to attend the architectural boat tour of Chicago. I understand an extra cost applies.
- Renew or begin my membership at the indicated level:
  - Patron \$250
  - Donor \$100
  - Family \$50
  - Individual \$40
  - Student \$20

Your membership entitles you to receive:

- Invitations to IU Art Museum & School of Fine Art events.
- A 10% discount at the Friends of Art Bookshop & IUAM Gift Shop.
- Opportunities to travel at reduced group rate fares.
- Invitations to special events for Friends of Art members.
- Subscription to the Friends of Art Newsletter.

*Your membership expiration date is on address label*

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