To resolve is often associated with attaining solutions or suggesting conclusions, yet a thesis is a premise, a proposition, or a theory, prompting an intensifying inquiry. The Thesis Exhibition of the Master of Fine Arts in Craft, re|solve, presents the culminating accomplishments of four MFA candidates, demonstrating a profound investment into longevity of practice and the richness of discovery. The diverse content and range of media on display reaffirm the resonant act of making and re-making in pursuit of creative achievement.

Congratulations to Max Gore, Byoung Hoon Kang, Emmi Russo, and Daniel Suarez.

Karl Burkheimer
Chair, MFA in Craft
I SEE US (wall), 2017
Detail
Slip-cast porcelain
thesis abstract

Wondering in Wander Land, Wandering in Wonderland

Utilizing my current nomadic lifestyle, my thesis inquiry seeks to find a midpoint between subjectivity and objectivity in art. My artistic role is focused on revealing what exists, not excavating what is. I seek an objective reality independent from my perception, yet paradoxically the impossibility to avoid the presence of the artist as a filterer, maker, and performer instills subjectivity into my work. Nevertheless, I present to the viewer my work as an objective phenomenon, not a one-of-a-kind aesthetic investigation, which is essentially an uncontrollable circumstance of creating art. Absurdly, my artistic journey is designed to fail through my banality, science, philosophy (Objectivism, Constructivism, Emergence, Clive Bell, and Material culture study), and other form of art (Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long, Chris Burden, Andreas Gursky, and Minimalism).
artist statement

Living a nomadic life is not a romantic circumstance, rather it is a realistic way of life with endless uncertainty and infinite tension. The banal or common objects of my surroundings become a thread linking myself to others in my adoptive foreign environment. My art practice concentrates on the objective observation to contemplate reality through an unavoidably subjectivity lens. I strive to create a pure object filtered through myself, incorporating a repetitive mechanical action of making in a randomly reactive procedure, working to reconcile subjectivity and objectivity in an art context. My work is the physical evidence of my ambivalence in terms of presence and absence of a sense of belonging to my environment.

I SEE US (wall), 2017
Slip-cast porcelain
12” x 12” x 3.5” (each panel)

I SEE US (floor), 2017
Slip-cast porcelain
18” x 64” x 18”
I SEE US (floor), 2017
Detail
Slip-cast porcelain
South, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 40"
thesis abstract

*Myth, Mimesis, and Circle Hooks* represents a body of work that is a mimesis of our cultural influences from advertising, signage, and print media. The paintings and images within this inquiry are the material evidence of an exploration that points to elements of myth and simulacrum existing within these media realms.

Utilizing multiple working processes, the approach to material, whether in painting, print, or collage, reference print media through a graphic or technical approach to material and composition. The divide between the work of the hand and that of print becomes blurred, becoming hybrid entities amongst painting, photography, and design. The simultaneous use of text and image and the reference to the print become part of the formal and conceptual dialogs associated within, though disparate formal approaches, are represented in the work. Drawing on influence from conceptualism, expressionism, pop art, regionalism, and precisionists—Will Barnet, Ed Rushca, Andrew Wyeth, Vassily Kandinsky, and Lawrence Weiner come to mind, providing reference both historically and formally.
The Oxbox, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 40"
Catfish, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
12" x 56"
These paintings are a portion of a body of work operating as a mimesis of our cultural influences from advertising, signage, and print media. Utilizing multiple working processes, the approach to material reference print media through a graphic or technical approach to material composition. The divide between the work of the hand and that of print becomes blurred, becoming hybrid entities among painting and design. The simultaneous use of text and image and the reference to the print become part of the formal and conceptual dialogs. Utilizing language and color indicators, this body of work draws on my past experiences both with fishing and design.

**artist statement**
Pleasure, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
26" x 26"
In the vein of montage (the technique of film-editing), this paper presents a series of ideas, recollections, works, and disparate quotations arranged in dialogue with each other. The overarching theme is a reevaluation of what history means in an interconnected world where data can be reproduced digitally and meaning is constantly manipulated. Several channels of work are analyzed: a movie that combines personal and public footage; the debasement of a colonialist book for children; a video-essay around (not about) the topic of rice; a series of .gifs which mash-up digital images from a variety of traditions; and an audio piece made up of interviews performed during the summer of 2016. Topics and processes underlying the creation of said works include: syncretism and context; the relationship between the private and the public; collage strategies like layering and distorting and their effects and affects; the difficulties of working from a colonialist and often racist tradition; the mapping of alternative futures while remaining aware of the past; Chaos Theory and Intersectionality; central and definitive narratives vs. open-ended and polyvocal storytelling; modes of representation and reception (from documentary truth to the decorative); language as a form of Public Commons; the obsession of history with progress; the work of art as information, and the cultural bit as described by the word meme. After tracking the sources of the .gif series as case studies, the paper proposes the possibility of applying craft methodologies to digital making, expanding the notion of work in regards to self-representation to allow the subject to locate themselves within a web of shifting meanings.
all work and no play, 2017
photocopy and stickers
8" x 11"

wave accident, 2017
laser-cut acrylic
4" x 3"
projection v reflection.gif, 2017
Digital collage
Dimensions variable

inocentes.gif, 2017
Digital collage
Dimensions variable
summer of same-oh, 2017
Digital audio
20 minutes and 24 seconds

batalla de los significados gif, 2017
Digital collage
Dimensions variable
artist statement

Trained and inspired by film editing, my work layers images, sound, and text, developing a dynamic montage focused on reevaluating history in an interconnected world of meta-data and fluid (manipulated) meaning. The topics and processes underlying my practice include: syncretism, the relationship between the private and the public, and the difficulties of working from a colonialist and often racist tradition. Utilizing collage strategies I am investigating definitive narratives vs. open-ended and polyvocal storytelling, mapping of alternative futures while remaining aware of the past. Chaos Theory, Intersectionality, and modes of representation and reception (from documentary truth to the decorative) are foundational in my creative language and the work of art as information.

I’d like to thank all the collaborators, the sources, known and unknown.
gifts and other gifts  
(The Battle of Signifiers), 2017  
Mixed media  
Dimensions variable
thesis abstract

In Search of Poetics in Painting

My inquiry delves into the poetics inherent in painting. I seek to attain a deeper understanding of the myriad ways the variables of painting inspire the emergence of poetics: medium, color, movement and mark making. Through my work I address the interplay and interrelatedness amongst these variables, since I believe nothing exists in isolation, but rather within a matrix. I am asserting that the poetics of painting is a metaphorical space that reveals itself within the bounds of various exchanges, for example, chance and intention. My research explores the countless ways new visual relationships, that are beyond language, unfold for viewer and maker. The practice that supports my work as painter and printmaker is based on process. It is within the bounds of will and allowance that my process unfolds and poetics emerges. My paintings and prints are in dialogue with contemporary painting discourse and influenced by contemporary painters, John Zurier, Amy Sillman; historical abstractionists, most notably Cy Twombly, Franz Klein and Agnes Martin. Failure, Resonance, Presence, Willing and Allowance are themes embedded in my work. The philosophical context that inspires my work is Eastern Mysticism, Taoism, Zen, and Existentialism. These form the cohesive membrane that inspire my practice as maker.
A Moon Rose Above Us, 2016
Oil on panel
24.5" x 24.5"
Begin—Again, Like the Moon, 2017
Oil on panel
24.5” x 49”

The End Is the Beginning, 2016
Oil on panel
13.25” x 13.25”
artist statement

New visual relationships are beyond language—embodifying concepts not yet put into words. So my challenge is to defy conventions and embrace the untried—respecting its power to bring me, and others, around to what it offers.

—Ben Dallas

The destroyed or lost is not readily restored, leaving us with only the remnants or fragments of what was. My work explores themes of change, memory and vulnerability within the layers of human existence. On exhibit are windows—that reveal the resonance between what was, what is, what is possible, and what we craft within the bounds of will and allowance.

My work evolves around constant change, represented through destabilizing the layers of paint through the mark making process. Removing and adding an element, layer, or choice of color starts to form an image. The layers form a built-up opaqueness acting as a bodily metaphor for the way my memories accumulate on the painted surface. Each canvas frames an abstracted window for the viewer to form their narrative around fragmented segments of my history. The paintings I create point to a unique vulnerability, found in the memories surrounding a journey from one continent to another.

Moment 2, 2017

File name: B2_18x18.tif

Oil on printmaking paper

17.5” x 17.5”
Moment 3, 2017  
File name: J3_18x18 print ready.ai  
Oil on printmaking paper  
17.5" x 17.5"

Moment 4, 2017  
File name: 3A_18x18mine.tif  
Oil on printmaking paper  
17.5" x 17.5"

Moment 6, 2017  
File name: B18x18.tif  
Oil on printmaking paper  
17.5" x 17.5"
About the MFA in Craft

Oregon College of Art and Craft’s MFA in Craft invites artists to advance their creative practice through two years of intensive study and exploration. Located in Portland, the program investigates problem solving through the manipulation of materials, taking advantage of specialized facilities in the areas of Book and Print, Ceramics, Drawing and Painting, Fibers, Metals, Photography, Wood, and Digital Fabrication. Highly skilled and motivated students work with dedicated faculty to develop their conceptual and expressive ability across diverse media. The full-time immersion program begins in January or September, and includes one mid-sequence summer term.

About Oregon College of Art and Craft

OCAC is a leading, uniquely small, mentor-based college where students are individually guided to become successful artists and professionals in the fields of creative practice, business, and industry. Students work in small classes with renowned faculty, artists-in-residence, and fellow students to explore innovative, cross-media approaches to making, experiential learning, and conceptual thinking. Located in Portland, our community reflects the ethos that values the hand-made, locally sourced, and ethically entrepreneurial. OCAC is a place where ideas are realized.