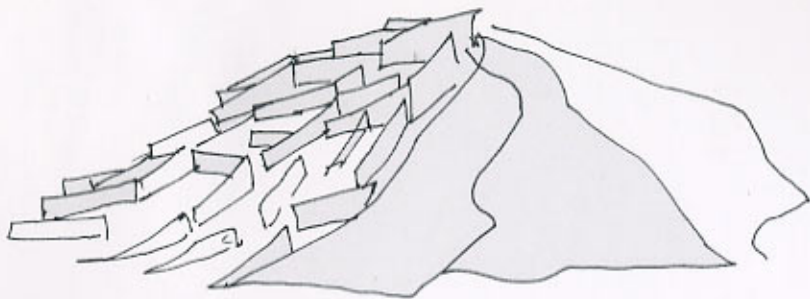




confabulations



September 4 - October 18, 2003

Curated by Peter Dudek, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Art
with the assistance of Andrea Merkx, MFA Candidate, Department of Art

Jay Batlle
Jimbo Blachly
Liam Everett
Robert Kocik
Anke Sievers
Nari Ward

The Bertha and Karl Leubdsorf Art Gallery at Hunter College
New York City

c o n f a b u l a t i o n s

**POODLE VICEROY SALAD DRESSING
NYMPHOLEPTIC SITZBATH
MUMMIFIED CADENZA FRICTION**

EROTICA.¹

Confabulations: a straightforward use of materials with the inevitable consequence of unpredictable form. A kind of unpredictability. An interest in low-tech, tactile configurations of forms and materials resulting in artworks of informal volatility. Not so abstract, somewhat philosophical and totally open to endless readings. Ephemeral? Perhaps, but more often a disinterest in “the archival” motivates and remains a resolute trait.

Collectively this roughshod consortium eschews any text-based programmatic analysis or critique; their approach has been to embrace the expanded reach of the “material erratic.” (Material erratic here indicates an interest in the wandering nature of materials, their inherent narrative ambiguity and the free-play of interconnectivity.) Complicating this erratic is a seemingly inconsequential selection of materials, implausible groupings and humble approaches to form making.

1. Arne Tardos, *The Dk-dk's Solitude*, New York: Granary Books, 2003, p.136.

**RIDICULOUS RIDGEPOLE RAFTERS
SECONDARY SHOTGUN CRAFTERS
I SMELL A RAT
FLEXOGRAPHY HAT
FLIBBERTIGIBBETS RAN AFTER²**

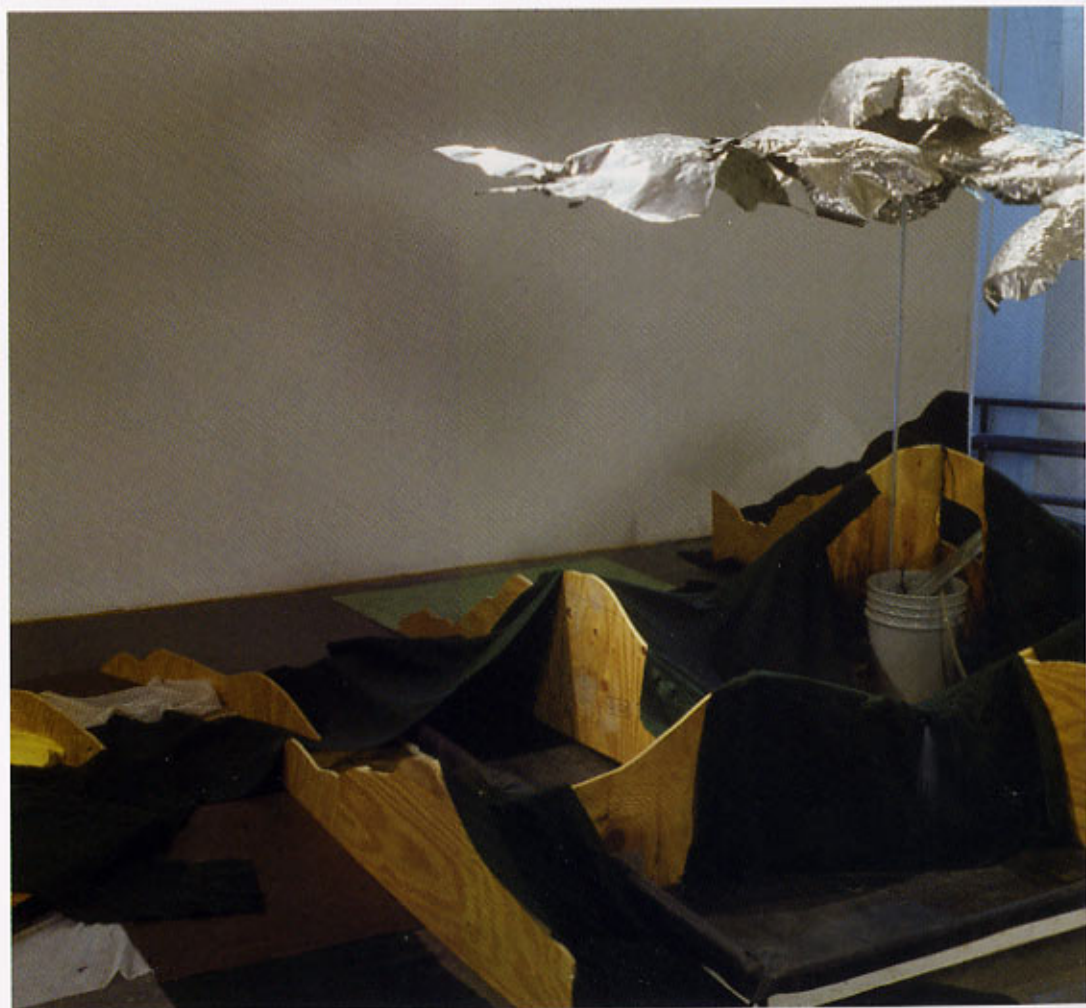
Often preferring the simply made to high-end fabrication, **Jimbo Blachly** has fashioned a large and unruly generous body of work, rich with disorderly intelligence. Inasmuch as anyone can arrange disarray, Jimbo has taken a shot at it, synthesizing free play with his desire to link the creative act to his central nervous system (*Zen?*). Within this fickle and capricious world an almost alchemical manipulation of natural materials prevails. Here, we are presented with the contiguous arrangement of painted wooden blocks – an appositive ordering producing a “color-field” of fractional formality. There, a ramshackle structure of leaky aluminum clouds and unnatural springs – a damp assemblage of scraps bits and pieces, odds and ends – forms a murky mindset. Follow this up with a structurally unsound pine needle sculpture and what you have is a faith-driven body of work – a belief that, despite the absence of empirical evidence, the center *will* hold. Endlessly confabulating within this untidy accrual are his drawings, (dark, evocative meanderings) which likewise tweak anecdotal elusiveness.

JIMBO BLACHLY



Mudblock, 1999

JIMBO BLACHLY



Damaged Cloud, 2002

JIMBO BLACHLY



Pine Needles, 1998

LIAM EVERETT

**FRANCIS PICABIA
POKERFACED STINGRAY
SODA JERK GRAVITY
POTTERY POETRY**

KETCHUP³

Liam Everett was in an exhibition I put together entitled, "American Sandwich," in 2001. It was an exhibit that elucidated the heroic legacy of American sandwich making and brought together a wide range of artists whose work had nothing whatsoever to do with food. Liam was a painter back then, or so I thought, producing searingly painted pencil portraits. His surfaces were roughed up applications of aluminum foil, lead pencil and paint. The physical and psychic qualities of his sitters resonated in those works – awkwardly isolated figures whose deeply etched features recall those of Samuel Beckett. In his recent activities, Liam engages idiosyncrasies typical of the "material erratic."

A pictorialist and storyteller throughout, Liam replicates scenes from his diary of visions. Cloaked figures...blown glass balls...piglets...disparate and oddly corporeal components that are gathered, arranged, disrupted, remade and left "undone" – an inchoate and rudimentary enterprise, teetering between folly and formalism. In his wall drawings, the quality of the found and the odd similarly exist. Airplanes, animals, cars: a fusion of images seamlessly spliced, grafted and otherwise amalgamated, bound to coexist yet until now denied that mutuality.



blown
glass
balls

blown glass ^{egg} form

- "untitled" 2002
- quilt, glass "egg" form, glass balls
- apx. 5' x 8" h 2" w
- blanket is wrapped on wood/foam
armature that stands freely.

LIAM EVERETT



Girl, 2003

LIAM EVERETT



French Wall Drawing, 2002

I THINK BEFORE I AM

Jay Battle has a dandyish flair for dithering with essentially nonessential twaddle. He reminds me of a character from a Fassbinder film that I saw long ago. The character that believed he looked exactly like an in-law of his and could pass for his twin, or for the man himself. Of course he didn't look like him at all, but that didn't stop him from killing his relative and adopting his identity.

That mind/body split proved fatal and in Jay's case has produced an art about art about identity piece that is haunted by the specter of none other than Jeff Koons and his vacuum cleaners of the "new." But that doesn't exactly explain the oddity before us. Florescent-lit paper mountains crafted from debt collection notices, with attendant dirt, enshrined in plexi, and accompanied by an asymmetrically split, double portrait. Placing this piece amongst the amiable ancestry of Jay's previous works, sculptures constructed from materials such as adjustable crutches and a bright blue ribbon, or, tongue depressors, a hot glue gun and a sock, this work finds comfort in the ability of objects to exceed language.

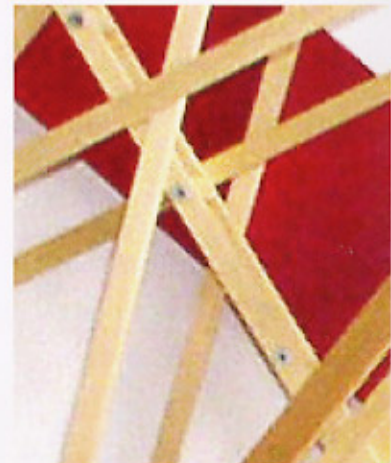
JAY BATLLE



Nato Picnic, 2002



Capitalistic Catapult, 2001



Never Eat Soggy Waffles (detail), 2002



Split, Never Eat Soggy Waffles, That's Where I Got My Divorce, 2002

MISSING SOCIAL SERVICES SERIES

ENFRANCHISEMENT RANCH

PASTURE FOR LLAMAS, SHEEP
AND ONE GOAT

PLATFORM FOR IDIOSYNCRATIC ERGONOMICS

DISJOINTED FOOTPRINT

POETIC PLAN
Scale: 1/4"=1'-0"

EARTH WALL

temporal decompression

LITERAL
MUDROOM

NONFUNCTION

same corner

UTILITY

OFFICE

EXAM

EXAM

LAB

OFFICE

- (R) recessed can fixture
- (P) pendant fixture
- (UC) undercabinet fixture
- (W) wall mounted fixture
- (Δ) smoke alarm
- (fL) fan/light fixture
- (Y) ceiling fan
- ↓ single pole switch
- ↓₂ three way switch
- ⊕ outlet
- ⊕ dedicated outlet
- Y phone jack

ELECTRIC PLAN (AS ALL PLANS)
SUBSUMED UNDER THE POETIC

ENSUPPLIED SIDING: 1/8" CURVED
UV RESISTANT POLYCARBONATE
CLADDING ALSO SERVING AS
EXTERIOR LIGHTING DIFFUSER

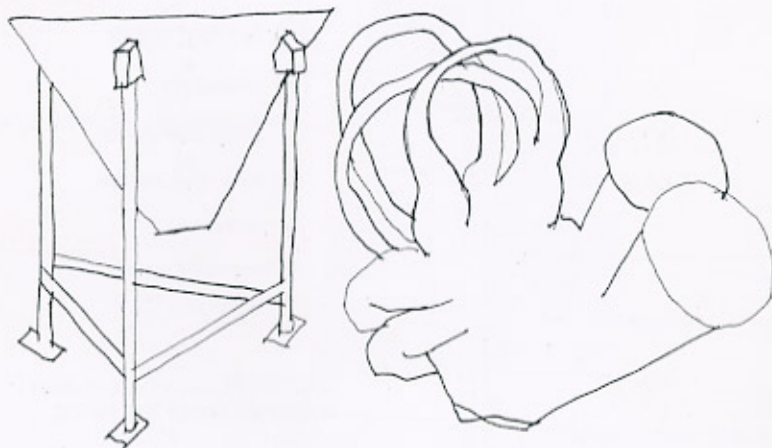
WHICH LONE DETAIL MAKES THE
ENTIRE BUILDING INEVITABLE ?

Robert Kocik, 2003

ROBERT KOCIK

COMPLEX AND NOISY UTTERANCES

Originally **Robert Kocik** was invited to submit ancillary text based works for the catalog but I couldn't keep him out of the show. The Lothario of the group, Kocik has been fully operational in the sculpture, architecture and poetry worlds, exhibiting his artwork, designing and constructing buildings and publishing his writings.



Graphic koans and verbal puzzles are the watermarks of his writing; they titivate and adorn the tongue, to enunciate these ornamental and beautiful toadstones is to put the concrete back into poetry. For "Confabulations," Kocik presents glossary posters full of redoubtable guff, words that here mean impressive nonsense, very impressive, in his Baroque (or is it Byzantine?), gathering of words and their (imagined?) definitions. Not one to let a dictionary or thesaurus limit his prose, Kocik, a man full of etymological embellishments and linguistic contortions, a self-taught lexicographer specializing in social/poetical discourse.

missing glossary

TRANSIENT PROSODIES Prosodies that find their inherent forms by operating outside themselves, advancing other areas (producing external effects).

METONYMANIA Crazy about transferring words from one context to another

MESOPATHIC PROSOPOPEIA A mediatory actor. Causing reactions between divergent spheres of activity (reactants) through the necessary invention of missing characters, intermediate speeches.

ABSCONDED ARTS Covert as distinct from overt acts of beauty.

REDUNDANT REFUNDING 'Creative' works that give us what we're already going to get. (A work that does not replace the death I already have becomes that which has been generating that death).

PLETHORIZE The act of filling out an obviously deficient perspective or practice.

SUPPLIANT SINTERING With one's art, to beg for changes.

SUPPLANTIVE BLOTTER Writing that replaces the formerly vital. Ruling out whatever's already there.

SUBSUMPTIVE PACKING Placing oneself under an unfamiliar influence in order to be rebuilt from the bottom up.

MISCIBLE ABYSM Depths completely absorbed by a particle placed in them.

MORTIFIED SONG Poem foregoing its musicality to tend to ulterior matters (and in doing so, gaining its fullest euphony).

DISINTERESTED EUTAXY The ability to accept any substrate. (Just as writing could be not only nonliterary, even nonverbal behavior.)

CANABALISTIC VERSE Eating its own for nourishment. Reading its own to write itself.

NONAFFINITIVE ENJAMBMENT Heterojunctions. Disjunct joint.

CATHARTIC CATACHRESIS Purged by improper use.

PALTRY POETRY Poetry that leaves too much to be imagined.

POST-ADAPTIVE PROSODY The impact of our works now leaves evolution too little time to react. Environment too unstable to rely on adaptation to inherited genres, types. Recognizing that there's no time to adapt.

INTRAPOETIC EXOTICISM The claim that those properties most intrinsic to poetry (such as number and music) are the most overlooked.

AUTO-ASSETIZE Self-credentializing. Experimental qualification. Intrinsically trained.

TRANSFECTION Those with the greatest respect for boundary unaffected by boundary.

QUICK THIXOTROPY Speaking all the languages within a language. Gift of ghosts.

ALTERITY ALIBI That which is the practice of something other than itself. The good you accomplished while you should have been doing that which you ultimately wouldn't have wanted to do.

ATACTIC EULOGY Life form made of its own detriments; of the odds against itself.

TO DENY THE MIND THE RIGHT TO INHIBIT

I saw the moon rise near the west and run a regular course eastward, so swift that in about a quarter of an hour she reached our meridian, when there descended from her a small cloud on a direct line to the earth, which lighted on a pleasant green about twenty yards from the door of my father's house (in which I thought I stood) and was immediately turned into a beautiful green tree. The moon appeared to run on with equal swiftness and soon set in the east, at which time the sun arose at the place it commonly does in the summer, and shining with full radiance in a serene air, it appeared as pleasant a morning as ever I saw.

All this time I stood in the door in an awful frame of mind, and I observed that as the heat of the day increased by the rising sun, it wrought so powerfully on the little green tree that the leaves gradually withered; and before noon it appeared dry and dead. There then appeared a being, small of size, full of strength and resolution, moving swift from the north, southward, called a sunworm.⁴

IN THE GRASPING LINGERING GRAPPLES

Anke Sievers is a medievalist at heart. With the pluck and mendacity that seemingly only an individual operating outside of the art world beltway could betray, Anke has extemporaneously posited an oeuvre that “although glaringly evident, escapes being determined.”⁵ Engorged frogs, embroidered phrases and quasi-religious watercolors are the random stuff of her distant and transient conurbations.

4: George McMichael, *Anthology of American Literature, The Journal of John Woolman*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974. p.213.

5. Henri Michaux, *Miserable Miracle*. New York: New York Review Books, 2002.

ANKE SIEVERS



Where To Go? 2003

ANKE SIEVERS

“He had no comeliness that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.”
(Isaiah 53:2)

Simultaneously autobiographical and rapturously ecstatic, her content, her sustenance, cuts through a deep vein rich with cryptic snippets from H. Bosch, everyday toil, biblical investigations and her own incongruous sensibility, calling out, trumpeting the exquisite charm of aesthetic ruminations.



Not Here, 2003

ANKE SIEVERS

In *The Land of the Living*, a rich selection of her drawings and wall-works provide a background for a crouching and mummified figure. This use of a sentinel, a “self-portrait” that celebrates life through the embalming of the flesh, and the variegated components of her drawings is typical of a persona instilled with allegory and metaphor, essential and persuasive tools for a fabulist of the New and Old World.



Michael The Archangel, 2003

CARDBOARD

Working it in a straightforward yet unpredictable manner, **Nari Ward** has been keeping busy making art out of almost anything. Without a material imperative, he has wandered his way through baby strollers, baseball bats, mufflers, fire hose, scrap metal, garbage bags and the like; super-sizing these materials into massive installations and congealed objects through acts of constructive destruction. Riffing on Sun Ra's utilization of arranged disorder, Nari confronts or surrounds viewers with a maelstrom of accumulation. The sum total of all that 'stuff' provokes an inexplicably hypnotic materialism. It only follows that misinterpretation and insight are the yin/yang of this aesthetic noodling.

Not one to shy away from full frontal content, Nari takes gruesome newspaper photographs of the chaos surrounding the dying and soon to be dead Robert Kennedy as the starting point for his recent drawings. Tissue paper snowflakes, (yes, snowflakes) and words used to describe snow flutter amidst these images of not so distant violence; traumatic moments calling on the present (all from an era of radicalism, confusion, brutality and joy).

On the flip side, his message in a bottle containment of obsessive scribbling has no such confrontational jolt. Instead, restive notations from a compulsive doodler are encapsulated, sealed from public access, privatized and preserved for future scrutiny.

NARI WARD



Amazing Grace, 1993. Collection of Deste Foundation

NARI WARD



Savior, 1996. Collection of Penny McCall Foundation



Geography Bottle Curtain, 2001. Courtesy of Deitch Projects

ENDNOTES

WHAT HE HAD THOUGHT HAD BEEN HIS WORK WAS JUST PRACTICE, AND WHAT HAD BEEN HIS PLAY WAS CLOSER TO HIS ART.

Julien Levy in 1962 speaking of Arshile Gorky

In the true style of confabulators, virtually every artist in this show gave me work that I neither asked for nor expected. Any predictable curatorial convention or control was thus effortlessly and thankfully subverted allowing the exhibition to become a staging area for new works and free exchange amongst artists not usually shown together.

MANY THANKS TO:

The gallery committee: Sanford Wurmfeld and his team for once again providing me with a platform for my projects.

The gallery director: Tracy Adler, as usual the prodding and supportive taskmaster, for her guidance and watchful jurisprudence.

The designer: Andrea Merckx, for her stylishly upmarket production values.

The artists: for providing an initially incremental escalation of artworks that exponentially took over the space.

To the many who helped finance this exhibition: Ann Lapidus, Mary Ellen Carroll, Marvin Rappaport, Virginia Zabriskie, Lisa Muskat, the Office of the President, the ubiquitous anonymous, and those who contributed after we went to press.

And to the unclassifiable: the adoringly divine and lovely Monika.

A SHORT STONE STORY OF GLACIAL ERRATICS AND RUSTIC MODERNISM

Once upon a time a rock was unearthed and carried away by a glacier. After a journey of many miles, moving across half a continent, this 'glacial erratic' came to rest in what is now known as New England. There, amidst new surroundings, it became a fieldstone. Ages later, a farmer clearing his pastures moved this stone to the edge of his property. Abutted with other rocks a stone wall was created. Years later, this pastoral scene and others like it were rendered by a generation of artists who came to be known as the Hudson River Painters. Early in the 20th century, during a period of intense urban growth, the countryside was developed, the wall dismantled and the stones disbursed. Subsequent urban sprawl continued to swallow up the landscape, however, despite the efforts of city planners to eliminate all irregularities from their design a small, grassy and roughly triangular plot of land remained, as if unplanned, amidst a heavily zoned municipal center. Time went by and the land, having been left unattended to, attracted the attention of an artist, a minimalist. He gathered some boulders, 'glacial erratics,' and in a triangular grid formation spread them out over the entire lot. Thereby creating a sculpture, a kind of public art exemplar of Rustic Modernism.



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between 9th and 10th Avenues at Dyre Street

hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 6 pm.

information: (212) 772-4991

Colophon

Designer: Andrea Merckx

This catalogue was produced using
QuarkXPress 6.0™. The Text was set
in Arial and Bodoni.

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