

Collaboration and Interaction are concepts I am always seeking to apply to the process of art making, as well as to the description of the gallery space. Throughout the planning of an artwork or project I am keenly interested in involving others, just as through an exhibition I hope to provide an environment that facilitates audience creativity and exchange. I believe this approach demystifies both the artwork and the artists, making the experience of ART in its entirety more accessible.

In an attempt to facilitate all these creative, collaborative, and participatory elements, I have assigned myself the position of an event participant and organizer. Through such a role I collaborate with an indefinite number of other artists and “non”-artists to cohesively produce an event that is varied in sights and experiences, the majority of which thrive on an audience/artist relationship. With an array of media and themes along with solicited participation, the audience is able to experience work in a visceral and direct way. Additionally, a critical element of all the events is a sense of humor, something that is commonly considered a great equalizer. By means of all these tactics, the audience and the artists come to involve one another. A unique environment for group socialization is conjured.

Specifically to Heights Art Gallery, a portion of these events can be seen as extensions and reinterpretations of the still work, all ideas for their execution being collaborative. The main devices used are costumes and performances, to be seen both on exhibit and in use throughout the run of the show.

Alex Tapié

Alex Tapié is a fifth year student at the Cleveland Institute of Art and will be graduating this May. The daughter of a comedian and game show host, Alex’s childhood was spent playing with her father’s made for T.V. make-up as well as writing and acting in her own mock television commercials, mainly ads for string cheese. Additionally, her laundry was always dirty, as she changed her outfit countless times a day to suit her ever alternating moods. Shifting to her adult and professional life, Alex’s first exhibition outside of CIA’s campus was a collaborative event filled with absurdities, and planned with cohort Heather Quesada titled Art + Antics. This multi-faceted event could be seen on one night only at the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood’s Parish Hall. Her second event, PANOPLY, could be seen again along with her sidekick and others, on March 15th at the Grog Shop. These days when Alex isn’t putting her shoes on the wrong feet or making up her own words, she may be found tangled in the cord of her laptop. She has been known to regularly devour whole cans of garbanzo beans, as well as read while driving. “Give and Take” will be her third exhibition.

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Sign up for Heights Arts email newsletter at www.heightsarts.org!

Give and Take

A Cleveland Institute of Art BFA showcase
April 19—May 31, 2008

Kaile Green
Emma Kern
Zena Pesta
Heather Quesada
Alex Tapié

Participate and party at the Gallery with the artists!
Free! All Ages!

Saturday April 26, 7:30 pm

Zena Pesta: *Powdered Wig Tea Party*

Saturday May 3, 7:30 pm

Kaile Greene: *Fantasy Forest Frenzy*

Saturday May 10, 7:30 pm

Emma Kern: *Mad Lib Mayhem*

Saturday May 24, 7:30 pm

Alex Tapié and Heather Quesada: *Colossal Costume Conclusion*

Gallery Hours:
Wednesday—Saturday 12—9 pm
Closed Sunday—Tuesday

HEIGHTSARTS

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Kaile Green

Kaile Green is an enameling artist and fifth year BFA student at The Cleveland Institute of Art. Kaile never gave her love for the arts a second thought, from the time she was a child she knew she was going to go to art school to pursue her dream of becoming a famous artist. Today Kaile has a great love for enameling and can be found hiding in the art studio with her kiln, copper, and a few pictures of drag queens in the Enameling Department at CIA. Kaile Green someday hopes to become, if not famous, at least a well known artist in her field making a good living creating her art work.

A lot of my work begins with the Personal. I am interested in personal thoughts and feelings, specifically my own, and translating these into visual imagery. A lot of my work begins with sketches and ideation, which I then select and translate into visual image or symbol typically through the use of more abstract, natural, or organic forms. Using mostly enamel and sometimes wood or other materials, I create a visual language that is both personal to me and accessible to the viewer.

Emma Kern

Emma Kern is a Cleveland-based artist who is currently completing her five year BFA degree at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Her favorite pastimes are telling stories through the use of appliqué and drinking excessive amounts of coffee. When she isn't attending to these important activities, Emma can be found huddled in her living room, researching exotic pathogens or cataloguing other people's Internet activities.

Every day, as people move through their daily routines, they encounter hundreds of signs and symbols that subtly guide them and shape the way they respond to this constant barrage of stimuli. In semiotics, the study of signification and communication, a sign is defined as, "something that stands for something else, to someone, in some capacity". Symbols are the culmination of human beings' complex system of senses, taking in to account sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, along with more specific things like images, gestures, and experiences. Signs serve as the building blocks of narratives, providing each person with a unique visual catalogue of stories built from an accumulation of life experiences. My work places itself within this narrative context, using appliqué panels to tell a story that falls somewhere between fantastical and autobiographical. Stylistically, I draw on the comparisons between appliqué story quilts and graphic novels. By altering the type of stitch from an invisible fold over to a black wrap, the reference shifts from historical quilting to the bold, black-outlined style of comic books. This combination, because of its familiarity and history of accessibility, serves to further encourage close interaction between the art and the viewer.

Using the familiar and historical storytelling tradition of fiber work, I address contemporary subject matters such as technology and virtual social networking. I am interested in the ways individuals can form complex social systems with people they have never met face-to-face, based only on the carefully edited images and written words that populate Internet communities. As the evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar wrote, "We have developed language as a substitute for physical intimacy".

Editing, and the information that is not given, is an important aspect of my work. The most successful symbols are often the ones that offer less detail, because they are more readable to a wider range of people. Humans, as demonstrated by Gestalt psychology, have a, "form-forming capability of the senses, particularly with respect to the visual recognition of figures and whole forms instead of just a collection of simple lines and curves." They are capable of seeing themselves in anything- two dots and a line are sufficient to provide all the necessary information for a face. By leaving the narrative open within my panels, I allow the viewers space to write themselves into the story. It is important to leave a certain level of ambiguity throughout the storyline, because when a person is confused they become more resourceful, and therefore more invested in the thing which has precipitated the confusion. It is important to maintain this interconnectedness between the viewer and story panels, since the act of viewing and inevitable involvement completes the cycle of image cataloguing which is so vital to identity

construction. I, as the artist, have developed my life story through a conglomeration of events and interactions with people. Instead of being an individual, I am simply a unique construction of many bits of pre-existing personalities. By presenting my narrative to an audience, I am putting these now altered pieces back into the greater social consciousness. The give and take is a desire to hear, to be heard, and to connect- whether through close personal interaction, or simply through an identification with symbolic words and imagery.

Zena Pesta

Zena Verda Pesta was born on September 12, 1983 in Garfield Heights, Ohio. She grew up in a small Appalachian city in southern Kentucky called Somerset, her home until seventeen years of age. And no, she did not owe her life to the company store and she was not "born a coal miner's daughter". Her college career started when she moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 2001. She was soon immersed in ceramics, a material she found intriguing and necessary to her development. Cuyahoga Community College laid the foundation for her art school career. Zena soon found herself in the intensive five-year program at The Cleveland Institute of Art. In the Spring of 2007, she packed her tools, investigations, and even tried to take her mason stains to the Southern Hemisphere. Her studies at Australian National University gave her an opportunity to work under Janet Deboo, among other professionals, with whom she intends to carry a continual dialogue. While in Australia, she exhibited at the ACT Craft Gallery and was engaged in various projects. Zena is currently preparing for her BFA thesis show (a research project in honor of many childhood years of porcelain doll collecting, baton twirling, and beauty pageantry) appropriately named, "Oh My Gawdy", taking place in May at The Cleveland Institute of Art.

*I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay
Ain't it sad
And still there never seems to be a single penny left for me
That's too bad
In my dreams I have a plan
If I got me a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to work at all, I'd fool around and have a ball
Money, money, money
Must be funny
In the rich man's world
Money, money, money
Always sunny
In the rich man's world
Aha-ahaaa
All the things I could do
If I had a little money
It's a rich man's world
-ABBA*

Heather Quesada

Heather Quesada comes from a long line of conquistadors and meat market owners. This daughter of a son-of-a-butcher got a taste of the real world (or perhaps the old world) as she spent early her days playing amidst sides of beef and doing drawings on patty paper. She learned important lessons about hard work and perseverance, working a sausage stand at 8 years old to earn money for a doll that she would play elaborate games of dress-up with for years come. It is perhaps because of this that Heather is today a fifth year at the Cleveland Institute of Art, majoring in Drawing, and happens to make work that closely resembles a large scale game of dress-up. She is also a strict vegetarian.