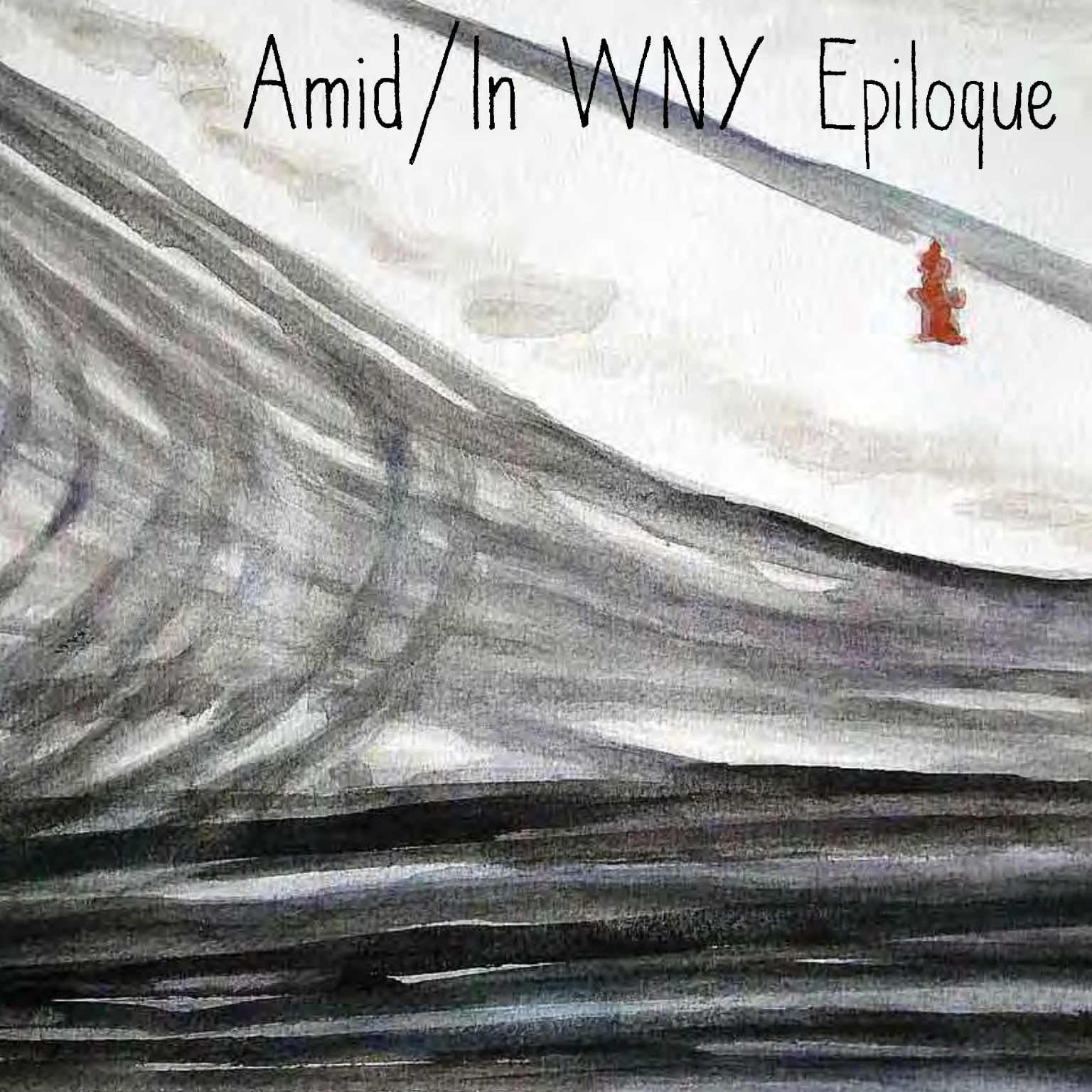


Amid/In WNY Epilogue



In preparing an epilogue exhibition to a seven-part series derived from over two hundred studio visits, we opted to mine that original research and revisit a certain number of artists. This final chapter of the long *Amid/In WNY* exhibition series was never conceived as a consolation prize. All the artists in *Epilogue* were not excluded from the original series because we didn't like their work—that's just how it played out as we curated, some things just didn't fit into what we were cobbling together. So it's more than satisfying to recall artists and even specific works which we wanted to see again. *Epilogue* fell together with the same speed we utilized in the past, confirming a final selection just a few weeks before we began installation. Accordingly, the final iteration is as weird and iconoclastic as any of those previous exhibitions.

John Massier

Dennis Bertram has developed a distinct visual language around the construction of what he terms "skyships." They are geometric and modular; rendered with a careful and deliberate hand. Kyle mentioned that he used one of Dennis' paintings as an example of perspective while teaching a 2-D design class because of the way he uses value and color in a measured way to make the skyships recede in space. The rigid structure in *Scaffold* seems to be anchored while the skyships in his three smaller paintings are untethered aberrations invading decomposing portraits.

Rebecca Wing

Alicia Malik's paintings of dead bugs bring to mind insects pinned to a board, but what keeps them from coming too near to that reference is their as-is posture. Rather than the primmed and mounted slumber of the taxonomic array, Malik's bugs have clearly keeled over into positions flattering or not.

Kyle Butler

Alicia Malik's insect corpses lie as a solitary figures in indeterminate spaces quietly speckled with visual noise. The way that she faithfully paints their bodies and the atmospheric fields she lays them to rest within seems close to reverent. Yet these bodies don't seem entirely lifeless; they are radiating with a low, ephemeral hum. In a mirror image of treatment, Bruce Adams, also painted a singular figure in an

atmospheric space but where Alicia's bodies are serene, Bruce's figure is expressive and dynamic. He enlivens the grand, romantic landscape behind him. The shimmering mountains feel ageless and indelible while the portrait's subject is captured in a moment on the cusp of something else. The twisted expression on his face and the collapsing torque of his body are postures that imaginably pass a moment later.

RW

While he typically paints in series, we opted to include one new work by Bruce Adams, partly because it's so dynamic we felt it more than ably illustrated his painterly chops and his thematic devices. Thinking about it now, the figure in this particular piece is more physically animated—and more facially expressive—than many of Adams' figurative depictions. The anguished expression of a gender-fluid figure set against a turbulent romantic background creates a churning emotional quality, connecting to art historical tropes while suggesting more contemporary personas. The awkward coiled hilarity of a powerful vacuum cleaner cuts against the works semi-tragic aspects like a sad trombone and the entire tableaux demonstrates the complex narrative inferences of which Adams is fond.

JM

Patrick Willett exercises a sort of routine admiration in his rendering of environments around him. He skirts the shallow reverence for beauty often inherent in landscape work, opting for spare depictions, leached of color and reduced to relatively few choice strokes. On occasion, he departs from that which is strictly environment, focusing instead on scenario or object (the lines drawn by traffic in a snowy intersection, a bundled rope), drawing from a place more of amusement than admiration.

KB

As has happened in our previous *Amid/In* exhibitions, certain connections don't become apparent until the works exist in the gallery. None of us would have anticipated the delightful sightline of Brita d'Agostino's clustered collage with Eric Simpson's illuminated sculptures in the background. Other formal connections—d'Agostino with Bertram or Krzystek—were anticipated and then confirmed once installed. Though mining entirely different

subject matter, Patrick Willett and Alicia Malik share a delicate sense of rendering and reverence while other formal threads of fragmented imagery dance through Dennis Bertram, Mizin Shin, Andy Krzystek, and Patrick Foran. Rosemary Lyons and Eric Simpson address spiritual questions from entirely distinct positions while the weird glamour of Bruce Adams finds connection with d'Agostino's alluring treatment of fragmented baubles.

JM

Brita d'Agostino's recent collages involve sifting through glamor magazines for image parts that fulfill a certain color criteria. The compositions that come of this could have been realized with any source material, or simply with paint, but what is interesting about the work is how its formalism is characterized by the source material: the color swatches bare a telltale opulence that wouldn't exist if she instead played such a formal game with copies of *National Geographic* or *Rolling Stone*.

KB

Rosemary Lyons' translation of the NIN song "Closer" into Latin (Proprior) is the articulation of pain and suffering into a dead language. Brita d'Agostino has similarly rearticulated the entrenched language of fashion magazines into compositional studies of color and movement.

RW

Dennis Bertram has recently been defacing older paintings of his with what he calls skyships, simple, architectural forms imposing themselves on what was previously a more straightforward figurative or landscape work. They are invasive and playfully malicious, despite their agreeable colors and clean edges.

KB

Patrick Willett's work exists in an interesting space because it predominantly depicts the region, often in views of the natural or post-industrial landscape, a not uncommon "regional" manner of artmaking. They don't invoke "contemporary" in an obvious way and, indeed, his wife suggested to him that one of the potential works we had selected didn't seem to her to be the kind of thing to show at Hallwalls. But it underscores how little that term "contemporary" means—in the manner of criticality or subject matter—and how quickly it fades away when

you are smitten with someone's line work. We all love the way Willett's works toy with representation and abstraction. His mark making can run the gamut from lush and full to barely there and it's the culmination of those choices that make his work sing. In a region where many, many artists paint and draw the regional geography, Willett has found a way to achieve his own ethereal treatment, less invested in literal depiction than in the fulsome emotion with which he perceives his subjects.

JM

Mizin Shin and J. Eric Simpson, both in the MFA program at UB, seem to always be working—whether late at night, over the weekends, or during holiday breaks. Shin has continued her impulse of translating two-dimensional prints into cubes. Factory production is expressed as a lively animation through the rounded line drawings of industrial equipment punctuated by pulsing lights. Simpson's work has transformed from performative actions and objects centered around consumerism and self-flagellation to stripped down minimalist structures that radiate soft blue light, but are articulations of the same train of thought. His monolith white sculpture is illuminated in the spaces that have been cut away while a single synth note drones hypnotically. The artificial glow of his sculptures is both present and eternal, a contrast to the blinking urgency of Shin's production cube.

RW

We had kept talking about Rosemary Lyons' calligraphic work that turns a song by Nine Inch Nails into a Gregorian choral manuscript. It was not just the obviously startling effect of that juxtaposition, but we were aware that the work derived from a specific and personal pain from her life, investing it with the epic and tragic notes appropriate to a canonical work. Because Lyons is extremely true to the historical form she is mimicking, there is a deceptive layer to the work—we can imagine someone disinterested in calligraphy passing it by without a thought, not realizing that its depths and pain are hiding in plain sight. Upon closer inspection, the NIN lyrics, finely rendered, describe a breadth of emotion with great clarity. Lyons' four panel piece is the mark of someone recording their state of mind—and the terrain of their heart—for posterity.

JM

I had been taken with Patrick Foran's monochromatic ink paintings since my first encounter with them over this past summer. In these newer works, Patrick has married his photo-realistic ability with explicit attempts to reveal the hand-rendered nature of his images. Part of that comes from mostly using different values of ultramarine blue or magenta as the palette for his paintings. However, his images taken from news sources and edited into compositions that obliterate the figure or obscure their context are evidence of his hand as an eraser; removing the repetitive visual information that distracts from media saturated by militaristic iconography.

RW

What's interesting about Eric Simpson's scrutiny of the allegiances between commerce and spirituality is that they are only a few, sarcastic degrees away from the actual thing. His tongue-in-cheek plays on the prosperity gospel, mega church branding, and predatory evangelism pervert the source material enough to be legible as critiques, but the real thing is only marginally less absurd. Simpson nudges religion towards capitalism to show how steeped they already are in each other.

KB

The reduction employed in Eric Simpson's sculptures is particularly astute and satisfying. One of the sculptures exhibited here was specifically constructed to showcase some of his double-backed Jesus Christ fragrance bottles, but his choice to exclude those smaller works and make the piece "more Protestant" is a savvy tip of the hat to the refined needs of minimalism. In extracting the element around which he originally built the piece, it becomes a more luminous and pointed sculpture remarking on the shared lure of religion and commerce.

JM

Andy Krzystek's work is affable in the sense that it doesn't bear down with its motivations. Maybe it's the acceptance inherent in his process: acting on present materials and present ideas *because* they are present. The work loosely orbits a printmaking, wheatpasting, basement show flyer look, but Krzystek's wandering pre-occupations divert him toward a more complicated layering of images and materials.

KB

We were all drawn to Andy Krzystek's chemical experimentation with commercial sign materials and the collage elements of brown paper plastered onto his paintings as surfaces onto which he paints figures, or suggestions of them. A painting with a mirror image of two ladies with wry smiles and side-eyes is connected at arbitrary points by lines that overlay the image, imposing structure on a loose drawing on an ad-hoc surface. The piled heap of unarticulated bodies in *Waiting through/Wading room* shares a quality of accretion with d'Agostino's collaged masses and the build-up of abstract space in Malik's paintings.

RW

Patrick Foran's work utilizes mediated and manicured appearances so as to spotlight the divisiveness of such cultivated images. His technical realism illustrates a competitive arena of identifying: multiple actors take on hyperbolic iterations of self as if to bolster their position against the other. He focuses on a general sort of political theater, one that is practiced by larger governmental and media authorities as well as by individuals.

KB

Mizin Shin uses the general question (and imagined schematics) of cookie production as an innocuous point of departure from which to expand upon much larger suggested themes about the connectivity between things and the necessity and implications of relationships. Its blinking lights suggest a path but do not resolve a sequence or direction and ultimately lead the viewer in an infinite loop of possibility. This suggests that it is less the beginning and ending that matters in a sequence, but the persistent illumination of shared relationships found along a path.

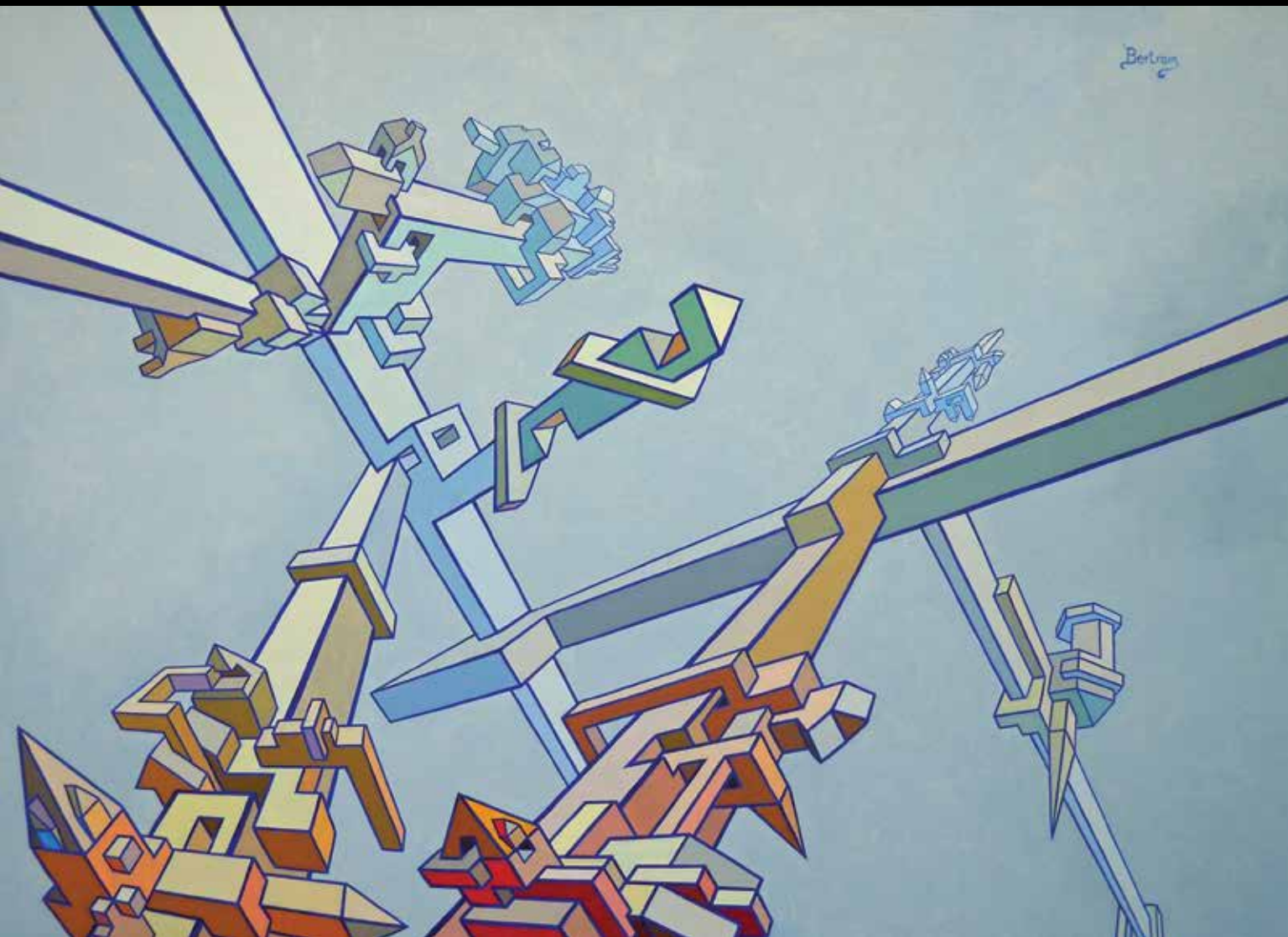
JM

The piece we included by Bruce Adams is charming in its awkward glamour. The figure is both theatrical and domestic (dressed to kill, but apparently hampered by chores), caught in an uncomfortable pose against a suspiciously grand backdrop.

KB



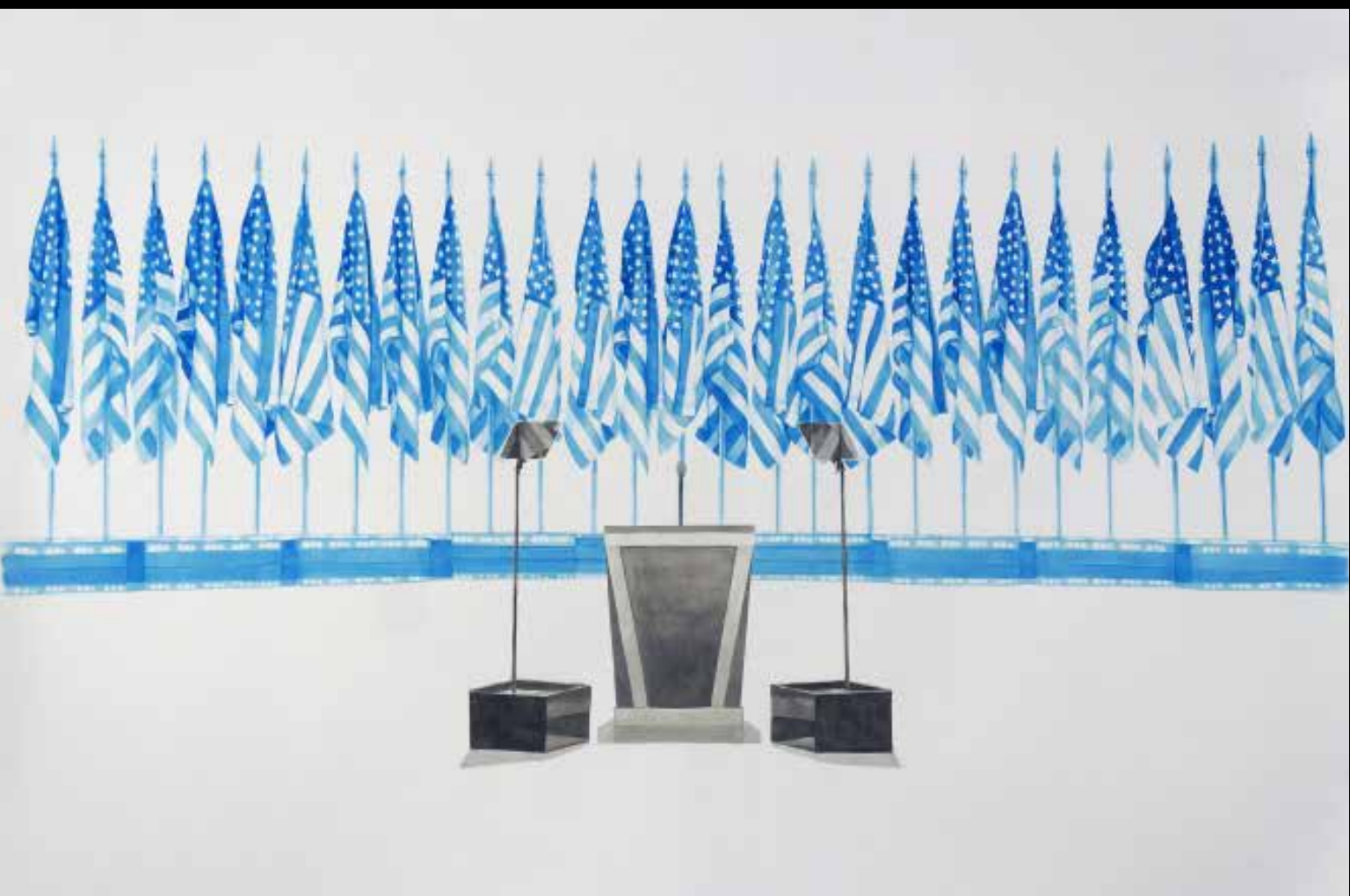
Bruce Adams
Untitled 029 (Shop Vac)
2016
oil on linen
72 x 48 in



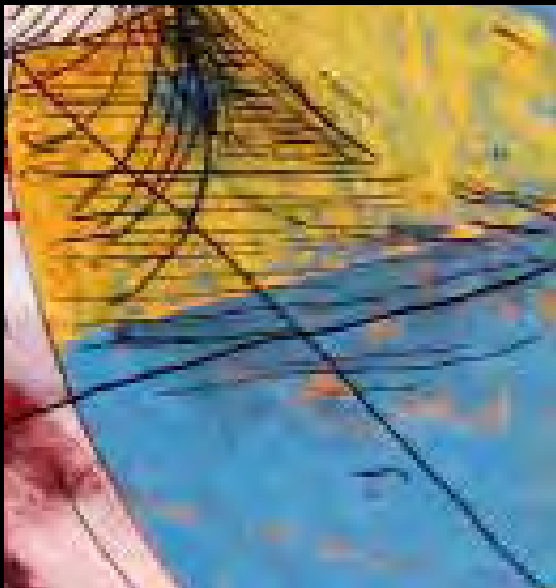
Dennis Bertram
Scaffold
2016
oil on canvas
48 x 60 in

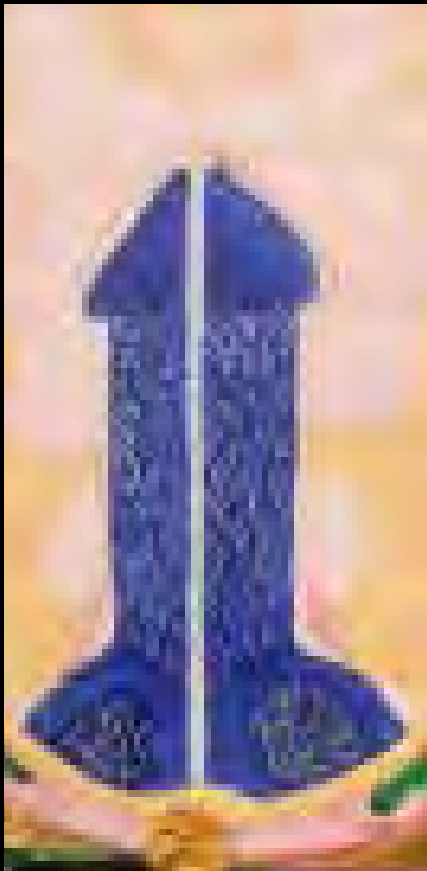


Brita d'Agostino
Gold Collage
2016
installation
dimensions variable



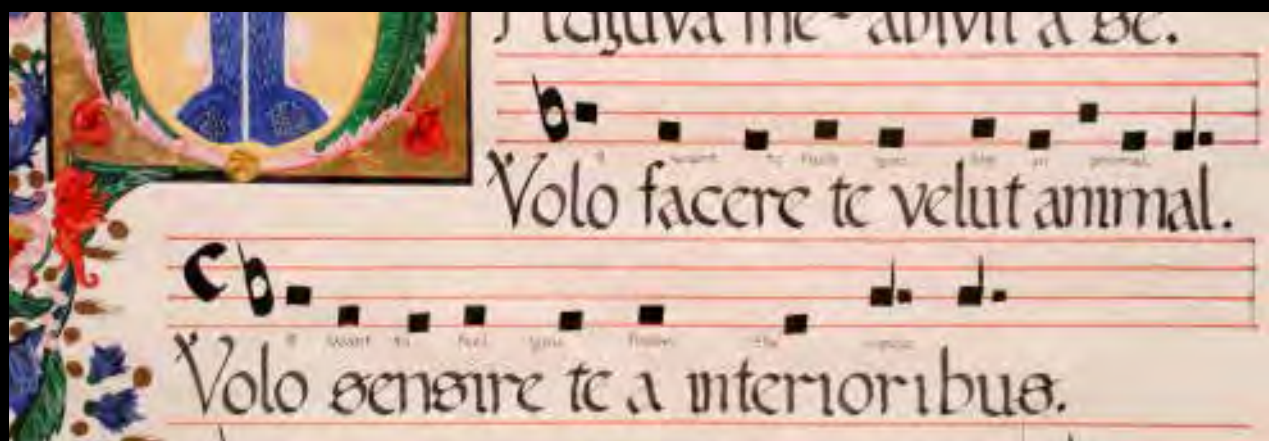
Patrick Foran
False Flag
2017
ink on paper
38 x 50 in







Andy Krzystek *Upwards through the cloud line*, 2016, oil pen on adhesive vinyl and wood stain, 48 x 48 in





Alicia Malik

Dust

2013

acrylic and oil on canvas

30 x 40 in



Mizin Shin

How things Are Made
2016

woodcut prints, tempered
hardboard, lights
34 x 34 x 34 in



J. Eric Simpson
Display Unit #1
2015
metal display shelving units,
peg board and LED lights



Patrick Willett

First Snow

2016

India ink and walnut ink on paper

11 x 17 in

Amid/In WNY Epilogue • curated by Kyle Butler, John Massier, Rebecca Wing • January 13 to February 24, 2017

Bruce Adams is best known as a conceptually based figurative painter who references various painting styles. In exploring the act of painting, Adams peels back the layers of meaning inherent in art making and viewing. He has exhibited extensively regionally and internationally, and his work is included in numerous private, corporate, and museum collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Castellani Museum, UB Anderson Gallery, and Burchfield-Penney Art Center. In 2007 Adams was given an extensive mid-career survey exhibition titled *Bruce Adams, Half Life 1980-2006* at the UB Anderson Gallery. In 2016, His most recent completed body of work titled *Myths and Lies* was exhibited in a solo exhibition at the Castellani Museum in 2014. Formally trained in art education at Buffalo State College, Adams extended his education through his long involvement in the contemporary art scene starting in the nineteen-eighties as director/curator of peopleart bfo gallery, and then with Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center as an Artist Advisory Committee co-founder, long-time board member, and board president. Adams' experience includes work as a painter, installation and performance artist, educator, arts advocate, and award winning critical writer. He was selected as a participant in the NYFA MARK Professional Development Program.. and the MARK Consultants Program. He is a lecturer at Buffalo State College. Adams' installations and performances have been staged in public venues such as Buffalo's First Night, the Urban Art Project, and most notably the Artists and Models Affair.

Born in the Netherlands but growing up in southern Indiana, Dennis Bertram's early interest in art was sidetracked for an academic career in health care. He returned to art in the late-1990's taking studio courses at Buffalo State College and the Steve Carpenter Art Center in Rochester, New York. He is best known for his abstract oil paintings with their complex imagery consisting of multivarious, imaginative architectonic structures. He exhibits with the Buffalo (New York) Society of Artists and the Buffalo Niagara Art Association and maintains a studio at Buffalo Arts Studio in Buffalo, New York.

Brita d'Agostino is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice incorporates a variety of media including collage, digital photography, installation, and interactive computer-based work. She has exhibited her artwork in venues that include the Aperture Foundation, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (MOCA), SF Camerawork, and the Houston Center for Photography. From 2007-2013 she worked for the Condé Nast publication WIRED Magazine where she created, researched, edited, and sourced the visual content for the publication online. She received her B.A. from in Art from Tyler School of Art, Temple University and her M.F.A. in Imaging and Digital Arts from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), and is an Assistant Professor at Daemen College in Amherst, NY.

Patrick Foran is an artist and educator whose recent work engages the mediated nature of disasters and emergencies in late capitalist societies, the aesthetic connections between sporting events and political demonstrations, and the facelessness of portraiture. Originally from Michigan, he studied English and Visual Studies at Cornell University (MA) and Art and Visual Studies at the University at Buffalo (MFA). He lives and works in Buffalo, NY.

Andy Krzystek b.1986, is Native to the Buffalo/Niagara Region whose work is based in a print, mixed media, and drawing. Krzystek completed a BFA in Printmaking at the university of Buffalo in 2011. In the years post graduation he has exhibited in Big Bear, California, Ft.Collins, Colorado, and Buffalo, New York. In 2014 He was featured in the Creative website www.INSPIREMEWITH.com. Currently he is deeply involved with the DIY Music and Art scene in the city of Buffalo.

Rosemary Lyons: My vision was an accident of genetics. Not only was my ocular acuity better than normal, blindness is the curse that my three sisters endure. A Roman Catholic upbringing taught me the beauty of ritual and mystery of language. I rejected what I saw as the hypocrisy of organized religion but was entranced by the language and art of the church. I remember trying to figure out the translation of the Latin text. Mother was a college educated English teacher so proper language was always in use. The study of Latin in high school enlightened me about language and its power. Words have always been important to me and I have incorporated text in my art for a long time. I decided at the age of ten that I would be an artist and the challenging journey goes on.

Alicia Malik is a Buffalo born artist with an affinity for insects. The small fallen comrades have been the predominate subject of her work for the last 5 years. Malik graduated from Daemen College with a BFA in painting and began as a teaching artist at both CEPA Gallery and Journey's End. She has also been a resident member and employee of 464 Gallery, managing the corresponding Studio 464 spaces

Mizin Shin is from South Korea. She graduated from Hong-ik University in Seoul with a B.F.A in Printmaking, and is currently in the M.F.A program at University at Buffalo where she has been teaching intaglio, collagraph, and screenprint courses. Shin is mainly working in intaglio, screenprint, relief print, and multimedia. Her work has been exhibited across America, the UK, and South Korea.

Since 2013 J. Eric Simpson has staged four solo exhibitions where he cross-pollinates his interests in Christianity, consumerism and Americanism. Seeing similarities in these topics, he wonders how these social structures shape human behavior and explores their ideological intertwinement. He has participated in a range of group shows including *The Measure of All Things : Rethinking Humanism through Art*, curated by Natalie Fleming & Van Tran Nguyen in 2016, *Patent Pending*, curated by Jon Whitfill in 2015 and the *Landarts of the American West* field research and exhibition, 2014-5 where he investigated alternative irrigation methods for crop production in the Southwest. In 2015 he and poet John Poch produced a collaborative artist book titled *Longsuffering* that is now collected by the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, Baylor University Libraries, The Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University. Simpson is a current recipient of the Mark Diamond Research Fellowship, 2016 and will be completing his MFA from the University at Buffalo in the Spring of 2017.

Patrick Willett is a contemporary American visual artist best known for his highly detailed work in watercolor and ink. Born in Buffalo, NY, Willett travelled extensively throughout the West, settled in Los Angeles, returning to Western New York in the early 1980s. Willett's work explores our sense of place and direction often focusing on the details of places and objects burned into our memory. Patrick's work is somewhat informed by his 20 + year career as an art director and graphic designer.

front cover image: Patrick Willett, *Winter Intersection*, 2015, Ink, graphite and watercolor on paper



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