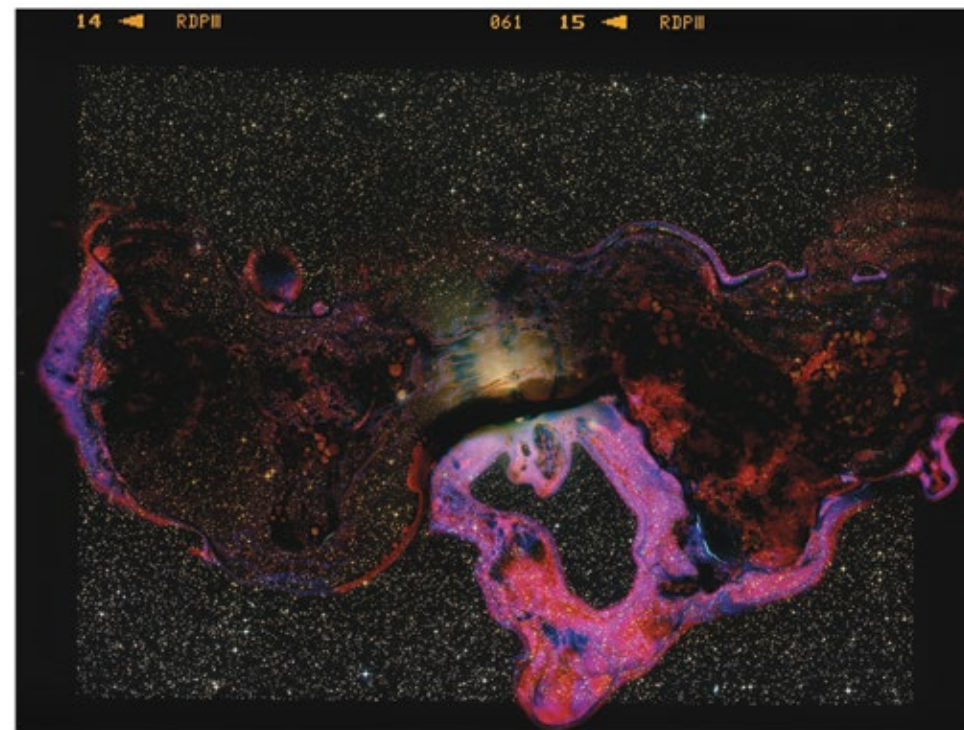


School Director's Statement

Congratulations to our Master of Fine Arts students in this graduation exhibition. Their artworks embrace and reflect key directions in contemporary art.

For three years, these exceptionally imaginative students have engaged our distinguished faculty and endured challenging critique sessions as well as sleepless nights preparing for semester reviews. They have stretched well beyond their initial perceptions of what art can be and its impact on an audience.

The MFA at USF is acknowledged as a premiere program among its peers nationally. Its uniqueness resides in a demanding curriculum of studio practice and inquiry coupled with critical studies seminars in the history of art and elective courses throughout the disciplines of a major research university.



Marcus DeSieno, A Photograph of the Little Dumbbell Nebula Eaten by Bacteria Found on My Gym's 20-Pound Dumbbells, 2014

Faculty welcome the prospect to connect with our students, responding to new concepts and working as collaborators as well as conductors to uncover fresh dimensions in the forms, objects, performances and images that are created. Our valued staff provides resolve and ingenuity in solving formidable problems, from bureaucratic labyrinths to one-of-a-kind projects.

The MFA program offers every graduate student the opportunity to work in any medium of materials and to select from among our eminent faculty for directed study contracts. Virtually unheard of at other institutions, this open invitation to explore, experiment and discover, leads to startling and innovative outcomes. The fruit of this philosophy toward graduate art studio studies, along with a varied student body from throughout the nation and beyond, endows this exhibition with the delightful and provocative staging of new art.

The unorthodox nature of many of the works has generated significant consultation and cooperation between the Museum staff and our students. We offer our gratitude for assisting these artists in realizing their envisioned realities and developing this exhibition.

And, again, congratulations to our graduating MFA students! The graduate studio experience affords the time and community to expand ideas about art and oneself, and the relationship of the two to the larger world. The University has benefited from your presence and we extend our sincere best wishes.

Wallace Wilson, Director
USF School of Art and Art History

Acknowledgements

The USF Contemporary Art Museum is proud to showcase *Sun Kissed*, the tenth MFA graduation exhibition to be presented at the museum. Each spring this tradition animates the end of the museum's season with expectation and enthusiasm, and this year's exhibition, featuring ambitious projects by the 2015 graduates, provides an exciting conclusion to the spring semester.

CAM is a destination where art aficionados, casual visitors, and USF faculty and students can encounter works by a changing variety of emerging and established artists throughout the year. Yet, when it comes to audiences, we regard our ongoing relationship with the School of Art and Art History and its graduate students as a very special one. CAM provides a critical component to their graduate educational experience, both as a museum that showcases global contemporary art within a two minute walk from their studios and classrooms, and as the site of their capstone experience, the MFA graduation exhibition.

In addition to exhibitions, CAM offers opportunities for students to interact with artists, curators and scholars representing diverse perspectives through lectures, colloquia, conversations and studio visits. It provides directed studies, graduate assistantships and internships that help students gain confidence and experience critical to the success of emerging artists. Through their participation in the annual MFA graduation exhibition, students come to understand the dynamic interplay of theory and practice that characterizes professional artistic practice and collaboration with institutions.

I am thankful to the CAM staff for their collaborative spirit in presenting this challenging exhibition each year, notably Tony Palms, Exhibitions Designer and Coordinator, who is responsible for its design in consultation with the students as well as Wendy Babcox, Associate Professor in the School of Art and Art History, and Wallace Wilson, Director of the School of Art and Art History. Don Fuller, New Media Curator, is recognized for his generous donation of time and talent in designing the extensive catalogue published by the School of Art and Art History that is the first collaboration between both Master of Fine Art and the Master of Art History graduates, while guiding them through the publication process; Peter Foe, Curator of the Collection, and Shannon Annis, Exhibitions Manager and Registrar, for introducing the students to professional standards and policies that museums are held accountable; Vincent Kral, Chief Preparator, for his management and installation strategies for the individual projects with assistance from staff Ian Foe, Eric Jonas, Jerimiah Mosely, Andrea Tamborello, students Juan Jimenez, Kelly Overstreet and Carlos Torres, and volunteer James Cartwright; David Waterman, Security Chief (and so much more), for his patience and good humor throughout the installation. Members of the Institute for Research in Art are recognized for their extended efforts to realize this exhibition: Margaret Miller, Director; Amy Allison, Mark Fredericks, Sarah Howard, Will Lytch, Noel Smith, Kristin Soderqvist, Megan Voeller and Randall West.

I am grateful to the graduates for making our final exhibition of the season so remarkable by sharing the culmination of their research and creative energy, which adds so much to the life of the university and to the community.

Alexa Favata, Deputy Director
Institute for Research in Art



Michael J. Bauman, Trident, 2014

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM | Institute for Research in Art

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Hours: M-F 10am-5pm, Sat. 1-4pm; Closed USF Holidays



Sun Kissed: 2015 MFA Graduation Exhibition, is sponsored in part by the USF School of Art and Art History. The Institute for Research in Art is recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural institution and receives funding through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Arts Council of Hillsborough County and the Board of Hillsborough County Commissioners. Energy efficient lighting in USFCAM galleries is made possible in part by a grant from the USF Student Green Energy Fund (SGEF). The USF Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.



Cover photo by Forrest MacDonald



2015 MFA Graduation Exhibition

Michael J. Bauman - Katina Bitsicas - Christine Compe
Marcus DeSieno - Roberto Márquez - Beth Plakidas
Janett Pulido Zizumbo - Curt Steckel - Jaroslaw Studencki

April 3 – May 2, 2015

Sun Kissed: 2015 MFA Graduation Exhibition



Katina Bitsicas, *Vitreous*, 2015



Janett Pulido Zizumbo, *Alexander Mora Venancio*, 2015 (photo: Leslie Reed)

MICHAEL J. BAUMAN - Davie, Florida B.F.A. Sculpture (2012) University of Florida

My work is an attempt to satisfy my desire for the absurd, exploring notions of masculinity and failure by creating a self-conscious mythos of cruel and illogical confrontations. An interdisciplinary practice of halogen-bright moments grounded within the everyday: a combination of sculpture, documented interventions, and still photography. The work does not stand apart from culture, but rather its underlying principles piggy-back onto shreds of reality, threads of evidence, and notions of the possible. Currently I am fabricating the world's smallest airboat, an icon of the paradise-paradoxes I was steeped in as a child. It is a structure of minute dimensions, of zero compensation, in which I will lead a quixotic quest through the charted "wilds" of the Florida Everglades, crossing through the thickest portion of the marshland, to reach radiant Miami. The expedition will attempt to displace the sublime unknown by embracing an exultant sardonic celebration of arrogance, emasculation, and fear.

KATINA BITSICAS - East Lansing, Michigan B.A. Studio Art (2011) Kalamazoo College Post-Baccalaureate in Digital Multimedia (2012) SACI Florence, Italy

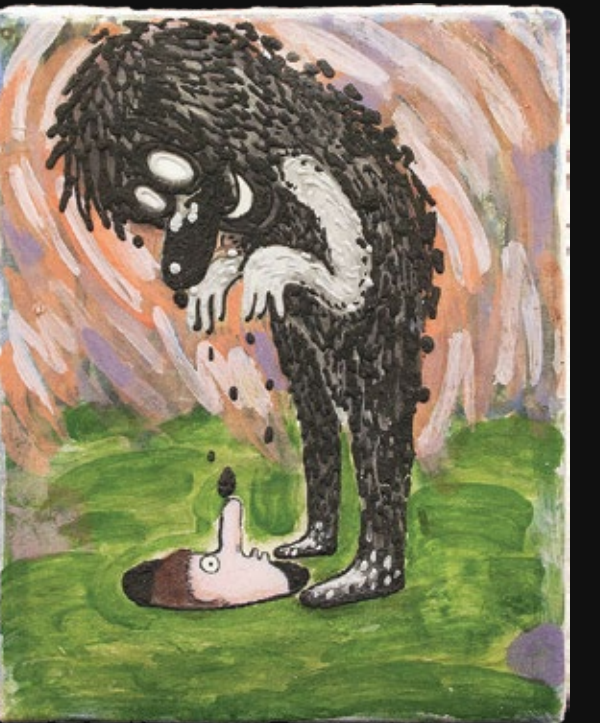
When processing trauma, our minds can distort memories, which creates a conflicted, erratic collection of these moments over time. I explore the curious relationship between memory and personal trauma on screen using cinematic images and sound. The content of my work is based on my own experiences, thereby challenging viewers to confront their own memories. By approaching the instability of memory through metaphor, I attempt to create video and photographic works that initiate a dialogue about our own impermanence and the beauty in mortality.

CHRISTINE COMPLE - Weston, Florida B.F.A. (2011) University of Central Florida

Having always been obsessed with the observation and representation of figures, I aim to rework modernist icons within the framework of my own identity, merging influences of the Classical past with the observed and imagined present to create a private world that fuses a tangible, daily existence with the fantastic and absurd. My work tracks classic Greco-Roman canons of muscularity and masculinity and its development and dispersal across our present popular culture to reach the apex of sport and sensuality. Through the investigation of the role of the male form and its range of effects on the viewer, connections can be made to fanaticism, temptation, a return to animal nature, celebrity worship, and other vices that pervade Western society. By composing spaces that combine embellished and disquieting historical content with private references, I seek to activate the viewer's awareness of the shifting filter between conscious and unconscious impulses.



Christine Comple, *Untitled*, 2014



Roberto Márquez, *Intimidación artificial*, 2014 (photo: Jennifer Miller)



Curt Steckel, *Performance Location #15 (Climbing)*, 2015

MARCUS DESIENO - Albany, New York B.A. Photography (2010) Marlboro College

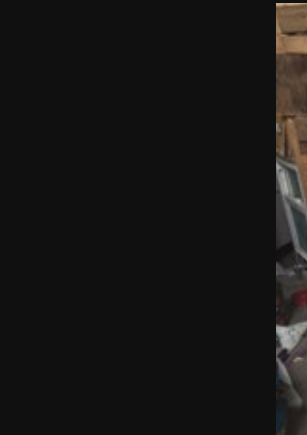
I often assume the role of the amateur scientist in order to investigate photography's historic relationship with science in regards to the notion of the invisible. Antiquated and obsolescent photographic processes are combined with contemporary imaging technologies to engage in a critical dialog on the evolution of photographic technology in relation to seeing. These obsolescent materials are subverted from their original function in order to re-examine photographic representation, the role of object-hood within photography, and ultimately interrogate the ontological nature of the medium itself.

ROBERTO MÁRQUEZ - Bayamón, Puerto Rico B.F.A. Painting (2005) School of Plastic Arts of Puerto Rico

With my work I aim to explore and expose learned behaviors: as a colonized individual cultural humor is used throughout in order to find and develop identities. This practice demonstrates the often careless and languorous qualities of the occupied identity, myself included. I try to be quick and precise when I approach the work, my movements are jokes, free flowing and easily discernible through a pathetic mode of mark making. At times the failure to articulate myself effectively results in multiple readings of the motifs and images in my work, allowing viewers to connect with their own thoughts, ideology and personal narrative.

BETH PLAKIDAS - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania B.F.A. (2012) Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Collecting is in my blood. I am the keeper of your unwanted secrets and I built this hive to honor them. *Go Home* shows my greatest accomplishments and my darkest secrets. Welcome.



Beth Plakidas, *Go Home*, 2015 (photo: Forrest MacDonald)

JANETT PULIDO ZIZUMBO - Chicago, Illinois B.F.A. Painting (2011) Illinois State University

I am always in a constant limbo and struggling with "the in-between." Because of this struggle, I am thoroughly intrigued by this moment of in-betweenness, by its ambiguity and its insecurity. As a Mexican-American, I want to bring forth to the viewer the constant limbo of being in two different edges, not being able to associate oneself to one culture or the other but become an intermediary of two different and often clashing environments. My work plays with the formal qualities of material to create realities that split in order to symbolize the way we struggle when being in limbo both mentally and physically. I juxtapose construction components such as wood and metal with paint including, resin, plaster, and canvas to create environments that imitate these multiple realities that are driven unto the surface. By manipulating materials to play a different role from what was initially intended, I push them outside of their common physical attributes and create playful environments that bring up questions as to the duality of things and how combined elements create a whole new set of facts.

CURT STECKEL - Davenport, Iowa B.A. Photography (2010) University of Northern Iowa

Photography and performance art are intertwined and many times rely on each other to provide validation. Most performances are viewed as documentation and not as live events, and I explore this tension. By not allowing anyone to view the performance live, the other veins of experiencing that performance are heightened. The work oscillates from the visual space to the non-visual as the viewers' reactions to it allow their personal narratives to alter what is in front of them. The viewers are activated by implanting themselves in the scenario and investigating the untold story between the object or the photograph.

JAROSLAW STUDENCKI (1988 – 2015) - Chicago, Illinois B.F.A. (2011) The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

In my recent work, issues of desire and the seduction of escape have been major underlying themes, both in my own experience of looking for security, and the larger population of Florida, which is a pinnacle for this sort of search of paradise. My photographs are an attempt to place myself within the equation of life's intricacies, while striving to create my own breed of poetry, fabricated by sequences of images of intimate moments and pedestrian glimpses, which rely on themselves to convey the comprehensive yet ambiguous story presented. Aware of the fact that I cannot speak for anyone but myself, I attempt to tread the thin line of fine art and documentary photography, the nature of both shifting so dramatically in the world of social media, to create a personal index based on formal aesthetic and the imperfect human authority.



Jaroslav Studencki, *Bride in Winter Haven*, 2014



Jaroslav Studencki, *Bride in Winter Haven*, 2014

Checklist <all works courtesy of the artists>

Michael J. Bauman
Blow Baby Blow, 2015
steel, airboat prop, engine
6 x 5 x 7 ft.

The Journey, 2015
video
infinite loop

Minute Dimensions, Zero Compensation, 2015
airboat, steel, oranges
16 x 16 x 6 ft.

Necessary Steps, 2015
mixed media
dimensions variable

Transport, 2015
digital print
44 x 66 in.

Michael J. Bauman and Kate Helms
Trophy Show, 2014
cast silicone alligator skins,
custom built installation trailer, T8
fluorescent lights, neon, astro turf,
performers
20 x 15 x 8-1/2 ft.
Presented only during opening
reception.

Katina Bitsicas
Vitreous, 2015
HD video and archival inkjet prints
video: 9:56 min.
prints: 30 x 36 in., each print

Christine Comple
Altar, 2015
etching with chine-collé, pen
30 x 25 in.

*Floater*s, 2015
pen and watercolor on paper
30 x 25 in.

Medal, 2015
etching
30 x 25 in.

Muscle Beach Party, 2015
monoprint with ink additions
30 x 25 in.

No Shoes/No Shirt, 2015
pen and ink on paper
84 x 144 in.

Christine Comple cont.
Untitled, 2015
monoprint
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
monoprint
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and coffee wash on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and watercolor on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and watercolor on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen, watercolor, photocopy transfers,
screenprint with puff additive
30 x 25 in.

Marcus DeSieno
A Photograph of a Star Cluster Eaten by Bacteria Found in My Saliva, 2014
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
16 x 20 in.

A Photograph of a Star Cluster Eaten by Bacteria Found on a Light Switch, 2014
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
32 x 40 in.

A Photograph of a Star Cluster Eaten by Bacteria Found on My iPhone's Screen, 2014
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
40 x 60 in.

A Photograph of Pandora's Galaxy Cluster Eaten by Bacteria Found in My Cat's Litter Box, 2015
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
40 x 32 in.

A Photograph of Saturn Eaten by Bacteria Found on an Adulterer's Engagement Ring, 2015
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
32 x 40 in.

Marcus DeSieno cont.
Untitled, 2015
monoprint
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
monoprint
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and coffee wash on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and watercolor on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen and watercolor on paper
30 x 25 in.

Untitled, 2015
pen, watercolor, photocopy transfers,
screenprint with puff additive
30 x 25 in.

Marcus DeSieno
A Photograph of the Footprint Nebula Eaten by Bacteria Found in My Toe Jam, 2015
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
14 x 8 in.

A Photograph of the Little Dumbbell Nebula Eaten by Bacteria Found on My Gym's 20-Pound Dumbbells, 2014
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
11 x 15 in.

A Photograph of the Medusa Nebula Eaten by Bacteria Found on a Mirror Inside a Sephora Store, 2015
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
11 x 13 in.

A Photograph of the Planet Venus Eaten by Bacteria Found Inside My Ex-Girlfriend's Vagina, 2014
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
36 x 45 in.

A Photograph of the Snake Nebula Eaten by Bacteria Found Inside the Confessional of My Childhood Church, 2015
archival pigment print of bacteria
grown on photographic film
25 x 18 in.

Roberto Marquez
2D Thoughts, 2015
Check this trick out, 2014
Cold drop, 2015
El Sireno, 2014
The first mix, 2014
Freedom It's a terrible thing, 2015
Friendly ghost, 2014
In the corner, 2015
Intimidación artificial, 2014
Me and my self, All by my self, 2014
Merry Christmas, 2015
Protest, 2014
Reminder, 2014
Reminder season 1, 2015
Something cute inside the mask, 2014
Untitled, 2014
Untitled, 2014
Untitled, 2015
Untitled (bright red), 2015
mixed media on ceramic
7-1/2 x 9-1/2 in. each

500 years of discussion, 2014
Chit chat, 2014
Trophies of failure, 2014
mixed media on ceramic
dimensions variable

Butthole on Ceramic, 2014
glaze on ceramic
7-1/2 x 9-1/2 in.

Close to disappear, close to do nothing, 2015
Coffee break, 2014
Cold ground, 2014
The complex, 2014
I don't know why, 2015
Inactive revolutionary, 2015
It's so mean!, 2014
mixed media on canvas
27 x 33 in. each

El garito, 2014
mixed media on ceramics
14 x 23 in.

Proud, 2014
mixed media on canvas
52 x 62 in.

Untitled, 2014
mixed media on canvas
26 x 32 in.

Untitled, 2015
mixed media on canvas
24-3/4 x 29 in.

Beth Plakidas
Go Home, 2014-2015
found and collected objects
13 x 20 x 11 ft.

Janett Pulido Zizumbo
Con Jaime Sí (With Jaime Yes), 2015
mixed media
48 x 52 x 24 in.

Fortaleza del Pueblo (Fortitude of the People), 2015
mixed media
120 x 36 in.

La Pila 1-5, 2015
enamel, plaster, styrofoam,
porcelain and plastic
dimensions variable

Por Atras (Right Behind), 2015
mixed media
68 x 40 x 17 in.

Publico Por Horas (Public for Hours), 2015
enamel, styrofoam, cement and acrylic
18 x 24 x 12 in.

Curt Steckel
Performance Locations #1-20 (Climbing), 2014-2015
archival inkjet prints
15 x 10 in., each print

Performance Object #1, 2014
archival inkjet print, mixed media
dimensions variable

Performance Object #2, 2015
archival inkjet print, mixed media
dimensions variable

Performance Object #3, 2015
archival inkjet print, mixed media
dimensions variable

Performance Object #4, 2014
archival inkjet print, mixed media
dimensions variable

Jaroslav Studencki
<checklist not available>

After a long struggle with acute depression, Jaro Studencki took his own life on March 26, 2015. One week away from the opening of the *Sun Kissed* exhibition at the USF Contemporary Art Museum, the tragic loss of our beloved student, colleague and friend is a burden that feels almost impossible to bear. We remember Jaro not only for his wonderfully sensitive photographs but for his kindness and gentle nature. We trust Jaro is at peace and he will remain forever in our hearts.