

January 9, 2012

***Material Occupation* to open at the University Art Museum, University at Albany**

Featuring work by Caetano de Almeida, Sarah Crouner, Josh Faught, Elana Herzog, Marietta Hoferer, Sam Moyer, Anja Schwörer, and Melissa Thorne.

**February 7 through April 7, 2012**

Artists' reception on Tuesday, February 7, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

**Curator's Tour:**

Wednesday, March 14, 1:00 p.m.

**Related Art & Culture Talks (ACT) Programs:**

**Monday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.**

Lecture by exhibiting installation artist and sculptor Elana Herzog

Supported by UAlbany Center for Jewish Studies.

**Monday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.**

Lecture by Bob Nickas curator, critic, and author of *Painting Abstraction: New Elements In Abstract Painting* (Phaidon Press, 2009)

Co-sponsored by New York State Writers Institute. Supported by University Auxiliary Services (UAS).

All events are held at the University Art Museum. They are free and open to the public.

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ALBANY, NY--- The University Art Museum is pleased to present *Material Occupation*, an exhibition that includes eight contemporary artists who challenge the idea that abstraction is a rarified concept that bears little relation to everyday experience. Using a materials-based approach and tapping into the more decorative strains of modernism, these artists explore the cultural associations inherent in prosaic materials and familiar patterns. Traditional art-making gestures are replaced by actions equated with craftwork or domestic labor, such as staining, pasting, bleaching, mending, stretching, taping, weaving, and tearing. Drawing on a wide range of materials and references, these artists apply a keen eye and a steady hand as they transform paper, thread, old and newly woven fabric, industrial tape, and other ordinary materials into poetic abstract forms. The decorative, the contemplative, and the marginalized thus take precedence in work that proposes an alternative relationship to Modernist abstraction.

São Paulo-based artist, **Caetano de Almeida** creates optically-charged, patterned abstract paintings inspired by the vibrant and mismatched weave of Bahian textiles commonly found in his local markets. His latest geometric 'pollution' paintings are created by exposing masked fabric to the ambient pollution in his São Paulo studio.

Brooklyn-based artist, **Sarah Crouner's** hard-edged geometric canvases are stitched together from pieces of canvas and linen. Derived from fragments of famous abstract paintings, these works allude to patchwork and

domestic labor, while proposing a wry challenge to the seriousness of familiar modernist tropes.

San Francisco-based artist, **Josh Faught's** unruly, makeshift assemblages combine traditional craft (weaving, crochet, knitting, macramé, and Indonesian ikat) and rigorous abstraction. In tandem, they speak to his interest in theories of modernism, the queer and feminist deployment of traditionally domestic crafts during the 1970's, and current gay politics.

Brooklyn-based artist, **Elana Herzog's** recent site-specific installations transform discarded household elements and fabric scraps into new abstract forms that articulate the volume of the space they occupy. In response to the University Art Museum's open multi-level space, Herzog presents a bifurcated structure that begins on the first floor and reemerges onto the second. Playing fast and loose with what she refers to as the "future/pastness" of the museum's architecture, she references stairs, chandeliers, and mobiles while never losing sight of the formal properties of sculpture or the tenuous relationship between Modernism and technological progress.

German-born, New York-based artist, **Marietta Hoferer's** labor-intensive wall drawings, made from transparent tape of varying size and based in the structuring framework of the grid, fit squarely within a process-oriented minimalist continuum, while sharing an affinity with the design charts of such traditional handiwork as *petit point*, knitting, and carpet weaving.

Brooklyn-based artist, **Sam Moyer** transforms cheap rugs from Ikea into monochromatic wall-hung abstractions through the laborious process of picking individual threads from the rug's weave and then encasing them in black tar-like encaustic.

German artist, **Anja Schwörer** uses substrates of denim, velvet, and black canvas and a reductive process of waxing, folding and bleaching in psychedelic abstractions that draw upon a strong interest in alchemy and heavy metal music.

Los Angeles-based artist, **Melissa Thorne's** recent works use modest materials to interface with existing architectural structures. Working from patterns found in her built environment – rock walls, concrete facades, modular siding -- she makes paintings and site-specific wall paintings that amplify the tension between surface and structure. Based on a long-term fascination with interior textiles and wallpaper, her current works address the patterned materials used as exterior skin for buildings. Painting directly on the wall with watercolor and ink, Thorne creates delicate, meticulous paintings that simultaneously reference their original everyday source, and the complicated history of geometric abstraction.

Curated by Corinna Ripps Schaming, Associate Director/Curator, University Art Museum.

*Material Occupation* will be documented in a fully-illustrated catalogue with essays by Michelle Grabner and Corinna Ripps Schaming.

The exhibition and related publication are made possible with support from the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, The University at Albany Foundation, the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, and University Auxiliary Service (UAS).

For further information, please call 518-442-4035 or visit our website at [www.albany.edu/museum](http://www.albany.edu/museum).

**Museum Hours:** Tuesday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Wednesday - Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday noon – 4 p.m.

Free parking in visitor lot #1A off Collins Circle on Saturdays and for museum events is provided courtesy of the Provost's Office.

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