Faculty Exhibition 2004

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Boston University

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Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Visual Arts
Boston University 808 Gallery

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School of Visual Arts

December 9, 2004–January 28, 2005
Welcome / Walt C. Meissner, Dean ad interim, College of Fine Arts

The College of Fine Arts is very pleased to present the 2004 School of Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition. We are delighted to have the occasion to showcase and share the extraordinary talents of School of Visual Arts faculty with Boston University students, faculty, and staff, as well as the larger visual arts community.

This triennial exhibition assembles a wide range of works by painters, sculptors, graphic designers, and photographers who currently hold appointments as full-time, part-time, and visiting faculty in the School of Visual Arts. The exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience the breadth of practice and the diversity of expression in the work of our faculty members.

The timing of this exhibition is of special significance, as it coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the College of Fine Arts and the School of Visual Arts. David Aronson was the first chairman of the “Division of Art” (as it was then known). Over the years the School has attracted a most distinguished faculty of practicing, professional artists. Starting with the first exhibition in 1963, School of Visual Arts faculty exhibitions have become an anticipated and time-honored tradition.

Please join us in our celebration of both this landmark anniversary and the tremendous accomplishments of our distinguished School of Visual Arts faculty.
This exhibition is part of a yearlong celebration of the School of Visual Arts’ 50th Anniversary. It is reflective of the diversity, artistic vision, and professionalism of our faculty. Spanning genres and media, the work in this exhibition ranges from realism to abstraction, two to three dimensions, small to very large scale. Each is created in the voice of its maker. The exhibition represents the variety of thought and pedagogical influence present among the faculty. The opportunity for the richness of the collective expression to be viewed together is critical to understanding that variety.

Throughout the past fifty years, the School of Visual Arts has maintained a philosophy that observational drawing and figure study are the basis for training sound, competent young artists. While this tradition still exists, the School is continuing to work toward maximizing the learning experience for today’s student and is aware that sharing the faculty work in a venue such as this is sharing its own expansive artistic vision. The exhibition is the culmination of virtuosity and idiosyncratic visual thought.

The School of Visual Arts is recognized nationally and internationally for the quality of its faculty. Many of its members are represented by leading Boston, New York, and European galleries. Their work resides in personal collections, institutions, and museums worldwide. As teachers, our faculty are consistently rated highly by their students. It is this caliber of professionalism that makes our School outstanding. In this year of celebration, the faculty exhibition is a memorable reminder that striving for excellence still serves us well.

In 1954 Boston University made a momentous decision to reinvigorate its visual arts offerings by forming the Division of Art at the School of Fine and Applied Arts (now the School of Visual Arts at the College of Fine Arts). Prior to this time, the School’s curriculum had been devoted primarily to commercial applications of the visual arts. However, in the early 1950s, Boston University faced stiff competition. Student interest in the fine arts was on the increase, especially with the glut of veterans on the GI Bill. In Boston, those wishing to pursue higher education in the fine arts traditionally attended the Massachusetts College of Art, or the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA). At mid-century, both of these programs were going strong, and Brandeis University in nearby Waltham had just set up its own Department of Fine Arts in 1951.

In an effort to remain competitive and to establish a vital program in the fine arts, Boston University appointed painter David Aronson to direct its fledgling department. Aronson, a recent SMFA graduate, was the protegé of star teacher Karl Zerbe. A bona fide German Expressionist painter, Zerbe had taken the reins of the SMFA’s Department of Drawing and Painting in 1937 and quickly became the most respected leader in fine arts pedagogy in the Boston area. He believed in an education based on the mastery of materials and techniques, and the study of the human figure as the most important imagistic vehicle for expressing both personal emotion and universal humanistic values.

Aronson fully subscribed to this approach, which was reflected in his own work, as well as in the work of the several SMFA graduates he brought on board as faculty of Boston University’s Division of Art (herein the School of Visual Arts), among them painters Reed Kay and Arthur Polonsky, sculptors Lloyd Lillie and Harold Tavish, and sculptor/draughtsman John Wilson. These artists also were at the forefront of contemporary art in Boston through the 1950s and 1960s.

Under Aronson and his staff, Boston University rapidly developed a regional, and then national, reputation for training artists in the fundamentals of representational drawing, painting, and sculpture—with a primary focus on the human figure. Over the decades, some of the most gifted technicians in the American Realist tradition were selected to teach at the School of Visual Arts as faculty or as visiting artists, among them Rackstraw Downes, Janet Fish, Gregory Gillespie, John Moore, Walter Murch, George Nick, and Philip Pearlstein. As American university-level fine arts education, beginning in the late 1960s, increasingly drifted away from the teaching of seeing and drawing to considerations of content, context, and conceptualism, Boston University remained steadfast in its dedication to the idea that works of art should be as well wrought as they are well considered.

Another strong suit of much of the Boston University faculty has been Figurative Expressionism, the Boston “house style” which passed from Zerbe and the SMFA to Aronson and company at the School of Visual Arts. The Figurative Expressionists believed in the compelling expressive value of formal distortions of the human figure and other objects of perception, but they refused to stray into the nonrepresentational territory of their Abstract Expressionist contemporaries. Aronson’s original faculty was joined by painters Bernard Chaet,
Anne Harris, Jack Kramer, James Weeks, and Jerome Witkin; and sculptors Nick Edmonds, Marianna Pineda, Kitty Wales, and Elbert Weinberg—all of whom displayed expressionist tendencies in their work.

Boston University’s most important art historical contribution in its role as a bastion of Figurative Expressionism was in providing refuge to painter Philip Guston. Guston began his long career as a figurative artist who practiced a particularly biting brand of Social Realism into the 1940s. Yet this was soon abandoned in favor of Abstract Expressionism, which Guston practiced with a particularly gentle and lyrical style. In response to the political and social upheavals of the late 1960s, Guston changed his style, and began exhibiting new work which indicated to the reigning art establishment that he had clearly gone off the deep end. His paintings became huge, deliberately crude, and populated with cartoonish characters engaged in all manner of bizarre goings-on. This switch to figuration, expressionism, and narrative initially shocked and alienated just about everyone in the art world. Everyone, that is, save Aronson and his supporters at the School of Visual Arts, who recognized in Guston a fellow traveler and named him in 1973 to teach graduate students. Guston’s appointment allowed him respite from New York critics and validation for his new style until it eventually won over its detractors and paved the way for the international Neo-Expressionist painting movement in the early 1980s. Guston’s philosophy, based on values similar to Aronson’s, also stressed the artist’s pursuit of an individual muse to the exclusion of all other concerns. This insistence on artistic freedom empowered a generation of Boston University graduates, many of whom took their place in the local Neo-Expressionist vanguard.

While Boston University enjoys an established reputation for figuration, it has in no way turned its back on what are arguably the most significant contributions of twentieth-century aesthetics to the history of art: abstraction and its logical extension, total non-objectivity. Practitioners of these disciplines have invigorated the program at the School of Visual Arts by leavening representation with its other, thereby providing students the opportunity to explore issues of form, technique, and content at their most elemental levels. Over the years, Boston University has brought in particularly prominent visiting artists to address these issues: painters Gregory Amenoff, Grace Hartigan, Bill Jensen, Brice Marden, and Katherine Porter; and sculptors Tom Doyle, Lawrence Fane, William Tucker, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

Today’s teachers at the School of Visual Arts, as demonstrated by the work in the 2004 Faculty Exhibition, continue to advance the foundations of instruction established fifty years ago. Those who pursue the direction of naturalism include painters Richard Raiselis, Harold Reddicliffe, and Richard Ryan; and sculptors Isabel McVain and Christopher Untalan. The Figurative Expressionists, led by internationally acclaimed painter John Walker (who in many ways fills Guston’s shoes), include painter Dana Clancy and sculptors Batu Shariulidda and Douglas Shaw Elder. Abstraction is now taught by faculty: painters Hugh O’Donnell and Joel Werring, collage artist Alston Purvis, and printmaker Deborah Cornell, in addition to visiting artists.

The faculty of the School of Visual Arts at Boston University provides students with skills based on traditions of formal and conceptual excellence. I hasten to add, however, that these traditions are made germane to the arena of contemporary art by the activity of faculty members as practicing and exhibiting artists—regionally, nationally, and internationally—and by the accelerating integration of new digital technologies into older media. The application of the computer to the ends of art, and to the expansion of the possibilities of image-making, is explored most assiduously by Hugh O’Donnell and Deborah Cornell—and in the areas of graphic design and photography by Richard Doubleday and Stephen Frank, respectively—and points the way to the pedagogy of the twenty-first century and Boston University’s relevance in a changing art world.

Nick Capasso, Ph.D.
Curator, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park
Lincoln, Massachusetts

HANNAH BARRETT
La Gioconda, 2003
Oil on digital montage on panel
42 x 30 inches
DANA CLANCY
Flock, 2004
Oil on canvas on panel
22 x 24 inches

DEBORAH CORNELL
Leavings: DNA, 2004
Lithograph
22 x 30 inches
RICHARD DOUBLEDAY
Posters against impunity, 2004
La Octava Bienal Internacional del Cartel en México
Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City
40 x 28 inches

DOUGLAS SHAW ELDER
Wide Awake, 2004
Charcoal on paper
20 x 25 inches
STEPHEN FRANK
Red Light District, Amsterdam, 2002
Print made in 2004
Inkjet print
15 x 9.75 inches

LAURA GIANNITRAPANI
Leaves, 2004
Digital print
19 x 22 inches
HILARY HUTCHISON
Suspended Growth, 2002
Cement
28 x 28 inches

SAM LACOMBE
Blanchard’s, 2003
Oil on canvas
24 x 18 inches
JESSIE LEBARON
The Orchard, Spring, 2004
Oil on panel
12 x 12 inches

DAMON LEHRER
The Art School, 2003–2004
Oil on linen
94 x 126 inches
ISABEL McILVAIN
Untitled, 2003
Hydrocal
31 x 10 x 10 inches

HUGH O’DONNELL
She Writes Language in the Book of Trees, 2004
Oil on canvas
84 x 96 inches
ALSTON PURVIS
van Wyck, 2004
Collage mixed media
6.5 x 4.5 inches
(photo credit: Vernon Doucette, BU Photo Services)

RICHARD RAISELIS
Edgewater Twilight, 2002–2003
Oil on linen canvas
12 x 60 inches
Courtesy Gallery NAGA, Boston
HAROLD REDDICLiffe
Camera (II), 2004
Oil on canvas
14 x 21 inches
Courtesy Pepper Gallery, Boston

RICHARD RYAN
Woman with Targets, 2004
Oil on canvas
70 x 73 inches
Courtesy Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco
(photo credit: Stephen Petegorsky)
BARRY SHAUCK
Vinalhaven Island, Maine, overlooking the harbor from Carver’s home, Tuesday, August 6, 2002
Pencil, rapidograph, and pastel on binder’s board
8.5 x 19 inches

BATU SIHARULIDZE
Altar to Humanity, 2003
Bronze
5.25 x 15 x 6.75 inches
JUDITH W. SIMPSON
Crows at Summer Sunset, 2004
Acrylic on canvas
40 x 30 inches
(photo credit: Kalman Zabarsky, BU Photo Services)

RUTH STUART STARRATT
First Night, Sydney, 2001
Textile mixed media
48 x 56 inches
CHRISTOPHER UNTALAN
The Pugilist at Rest, 2004
Hydrocal
34 x 15 x 11 inches

JOHN WALKER
Pink Cloud, 2003–2004
Oil on canvas
84 x 66 inches
JOEL WERRING
Morning Ether, 2004
Oil on canvas
72 x 72 inches

HANNAH BARRETT
The Control, 2004
Oil on linen on panel
10 x 12 inches
X, 2004
Oil on linen on panel
9 x 12 Inches

DANA CLANCY
Figure of Speech, 2003
Oil on linen on panel
22 x 24 inches
Anthem, 2003
Oil on linen on panel
22 x 24 inches
Futures, 2004
Oil on canvas on panel
22 x 24 inches
Rich, 2004
Oil on canvas on panel
22 x 24 inches

DEBORAH CORNELL
Leavings: DNA, 2004
Lithograph
22 x 30 inches
Leavings: Maya, 2004
Lithograph
22 x 30 inches
Leavings: Site, 2004
Lithograph
16 x 26 inches

RICHARD DOUBLEDAY
Posters against impunity, 2004
La Octava Bienal Internacional del Cartel en México
Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City

DEBORAH CORNELL
Leavings: DNA, 2004
Lithograph
22 x 30 inches
Leavings: Maya, 2004
Lithograph
22 x 30 inches
Leavings: Site, 2004
Lithograph
16 x 26 inches

RICHARD DOUBLEDAY
Posters against impunity, 2004
La Octava Bienal Internacional del Cartel en México
Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City

STEPHEN FRANK
Red Light District, Amsterdam, 2002
Print made in 2004
Inkjet print
15 x 9.75 inches
Cheekula, Red Light District, Amsterdam, 2003
Print made in 2004
Inkjet print
15 x 9.75 inches

HILARY HUTCHISON
Suspended Growth, 2002
Cement
28 x 28 inches
Suspended Growth #3, 2003
Cement
42.5 x 41 inches
Untitled, 2004
Cement
20 x 20 inches

SAM LACOMBE
L.A. Vista, 2004
Oil on canvas
24 x 36 inches
Blanchard’s, 2003
Oil on canvas
24 x 18 inches
Armes, 2004
Oil on panel
8 x 10.5 inches

JESSIE LEBARON
The Orchard (#1–14), 2004
Oil on panel
12 x 12 inches
The Orchard (#15–16), 2004
Oil on panel
9 x 12 inches

DAMON LEHRER
The Art School, 2003–2004
Oil on linen
94 x 126 inches
ISABEL McLVAIN
Untitled, 2003
Hydrocal
31 x 10 x 10 inches

Patience, 1986
Bronze
34.75 x 8 x 7.5 inches

Simhadra Avadittaraasana, 1983
Bronze
12.5 x 14.5 x 15.5 inches

Sea Relief, 1984
Hydrocal
27 x 13.25 x 15.5 inches

Sea Relief, 1987
Hydrocal
44 x 18.5 x 3 inches

Sea Relief, 1982
Hydrocal
14.75 x 17.5 x 1 inches

HUGH O’DONNELL
She Writes Language in the Book of Trees, 2004
Oil on canvas
84 x 96 inches

ALSTON PURVIS
van Wÿck, 2004
Collage mixed media
6.5 x 4.5 inches

Fragile, 2004
Collage mixed media
20 x 12.6 inches

Stazione, 2002
Collage mixed media
6.5 x 4.4 inches

Construction, 2001
Collage mixed media
9.1 x 6.17 inches

Country Store, South Carolina, 2000
Photograph
6.15 x 9.15 inches

Liquor Store, South Carolina, 2001
Photograph
5.6 x 9 inches

RUTH STUART STAR-RATT
First Night, Sydney, 2001
Textile mixed media
48 x 56 inches

Low Tide, 2003
Textile mixed media
54 x 41 inches

CHRISTOPHER UNTAILAN
Clay, 2004
Hydrocal
18 x 24 inches

Rf., 2004
Hydrocal
15 x 30 inches

Bound Times, 2004
Hydrocal
22 x 7 x 7 inches

Ph. 2.6-8, 2004
Hydrocal
36 x 13 x 9 inches

The Pugilist at Rest, 2004
Hydrocal
34 x 15 x 11 inches

JOHN WALKER
Pink Cloud, 2003-2004
Oil on canvas
84 x 66 inches

Winter, Maine, 2004
Oil on canvas
84 x 66 inches

JOEL WERRING
Morning Ether, 2004
Oil on canvas
72 x 72 inches

By Form and Number, 2004
Oil on canvas
80 x 62 inches

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
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