

The Indexical Print

curated by
Andrew Thompson

this ↗

participating artists:

Cathryn Amidei
Jason Ferguson
Jay Fox

Ruth Koelewyn
Jeffrey Lancaster
Lee Marchalonis
Ellen Rutt

that ↘

January 17 to February 14

opening reception

Friday, Jan. 17th 5-6:30pm

open

Monday - Friday

10am - 5pm

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“...pronouns announce themselves as belonging to a different type of sign: the kind that is termed the index. As distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifters. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects...”

(Krauss, Rosalind, “Notes on the Index part 1”, October, Vol. 3
[Spring, 1977], pg. 70)

Notes on the Index was Rosalind Krauss’s attempt to corral some of the divergent, pluralistic themes in contemporary art of the late 1970’s under some unifying identifier: the index. Indexical art was defined as artworks whose physical and aesthetic manifestation was correlated and contingent upon specific conditions of the work’s subject matter or, as more broadly described, ‘the referent’ of the work. Artistic decisions like scale, shape, composition, color, etc became less about the artist’s assertion of their individual vision or agency and became more about finding meaning externally. Decision making was often deferred to forces that corresponded with physical or cultural conditions outside the artwork, that were more specifically indexed to the physical & contextual conditions of the referent. Included within this is the economic evaluation of the artwork and the potential for signification through the meaning of money as correlated to value systems outside of the traditional art market.

Under the guise of “the index”, the artist’s internal monologue of creative decision-making might follow like: “How big should the work be? As big as that.” “How much should the work cost? As much as this.” “What color should I use? The color of that.” “What shape should it be? It should be shaped like this.”

For this exhibition, The Indexical Print, Krauss’s notion of indexical art is being narrowed towards printmaking and other methods of image replication & reproduction that follow printmaking’s lead. In printmaking, the space of the artist’s direct work (the plate, stencil, or block, etc) is not that of the final product (a work on paper or fabric). The creative labor occurs in a realm of component parts and facsimiles that are coordinated and conducted by the artist to arrive at a result at the end of the series of processes. The artists in this exhibition might work a plate, or a digital image, or computer code to conduct the idea of the image into another medium or visual representation to physically manifest a visualization of their creative labor.

Andrew Thompson is a sculptor and installation artist, educator, curator, and musician based in Southwest Detroit. Thompson grew up in Kansas City, MO and received his BFA in Sculpture from the Kansas City Art Institute. Thompson moved from Cowtown to Motown to receive his MFA in Sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art. He has been exhibiting his sculptures and installations throughout Southeast Michigan for over a decade and helps to curate and coordinate shows at a number of venues including as an exhibition committee member with Detroit Artists Market. He is a lecturer at the Stamps School of Art & Design and has taught at a number of other schools, most notably for one year at Antioch College in Yellow Spring, OH.

Cathryn Amidei



Unreferenced IV is part of a series of works I've woven that come from pictures I've taken on my quotidian rambles. The urge to collect those things that capture my attention, disrupts the scale of their significance and the volume of these collections overwhelms my ability to assign context.

When I come upon these images, floating in that digital cloud, often by accident, or like a tarot card picked out of a sea of other images - I collage them with others in some attempt to stimulate something without attempting to swim upstream.

The composition is then modified, cropped, scaled up, screwed up and then deconstructed via color areas. I build a matrix where the image merges with structure and hints of "truth": a limb, a color, a line, and wishful re-recollections of things that never were, emerge or are let go.

A color is a weave, a pixel is a thread and the baseline for decisions is the resolution: 90 threads per inch, 28 inches in the width. Color is code, structure is code. First reduction, then transformation. Pixels of light become material. Material becomes warp and weft. I sling shuttles hour after hour and watch as the yarns merge, bend, blend and shift to recreate the past, line by line. Act upon act, compromises, accommodations, and relinquishment of authority; all of these discrete elements and events converge to create the thing that perceptually becomes a single whole.

The matrix holds and delivers.

Cathryn Amidei holds an MFA in Textiles from Eastern Michigan University and a BFA from the University of Illinois in Anthropology/Russian. She was faculty at Eastern Michigan University. Cathryn has been weaving in jacquard technique for 18 years. She is the current studio director of The Jacquard Center in Hendersonville North Carolina, and travels extensively teaching, and training users of the digital loom. She has shown her work in galleries and museums in the U.S. and abroad. She is a member of WSG in Ann Arbor.

Jason J Ferguson



The Nature of Being, is a full-scale reproduction of my entire skeletal system from MRI, CT, CBCT, and EOS scans. I collaborated with medical teams at the University of Michigan Health System and Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago to extract and replicate all 206 bones from my body. Thousands of images were compiled, processed using Simpleware Scan IP medical software, the bones were segmented from the surrounding tissue, each bone was 3D printed at a layer height of 100-200 microns and the skeletal system was reassembled. The potential for an artist to create an exact replica of something that exists within his or her body is a cutting-edge process that has only recently become accessible to individuals outside of the medical field. This ability has allowed me to produce sculptures that investigate my identity and mortality; take self-portraiture to a new level of embodiment; and build upon my growing collection of existential artworks.

Jason J Ferguson uses humor and an absurdist voice to look at moments where empirical science overlaps with systems of belief. Recurring themes in his studio include exploring the corporeal body, using monotonous and repetitive action to generate experiential works, and placing familiar objects within a new context to create uncanny situations. Ferguson often applies processes to common objects that appear, at first, to be unrelated. For example, he has applied medical procedures to domestic objects; used geological core sampling to study the accumulation of materials, and memories, in a historical piece of architecture over time; and he has created psychological works that combine the intimacy of a home with the public spectacle found at a county fair. His current work exploits the capabilities of CNC technology to generate objects of extreme precision. For example, *Being, nothing more...* is a CNC milled boulder that occupies the same volume as the artist's body at age 38. In *The Nature of Being (baby blue)*, Ferguson used medical software to extract and 3D print a full-scale replica of his entire skeletal system from MRI, CT, CBCT, and EOS scans. Jason J Ferguson's creative practice is broad and produces artifacts in the form of performances, photographic and video documentation, public interventions, and sculptural objects.

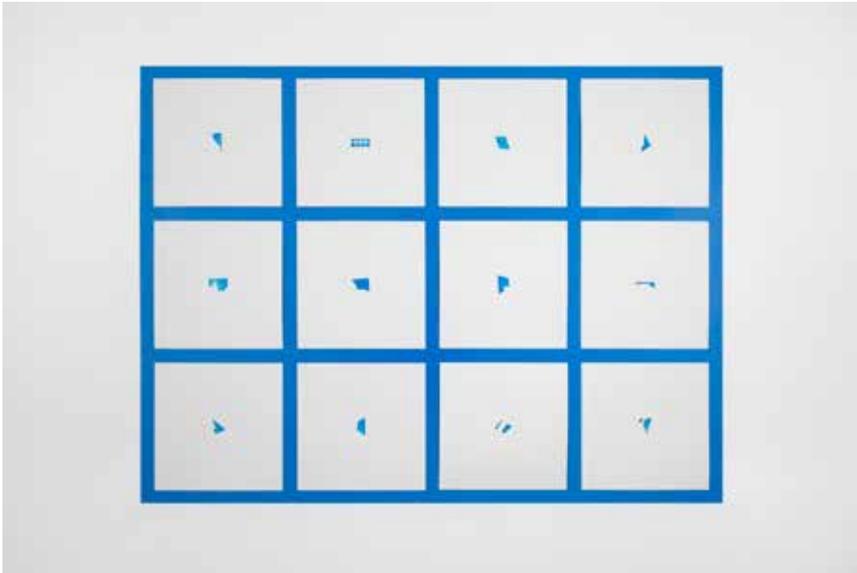
Jay Fox



As ever is an interactive installation where viewers are invited to remove stamps for their own use outside of the gallery. The gummed paper is letterpress printed and perforated so individual pieces may be removed from the whole. Using the ritual and symbolism of postage stamps this piece asks viewers to consider intimacy, distance, and communication.

Jay Fox is a printmaker, papermaker, and sculptor whose practice is guided by storytelling and objects of importance which take the form of ephemera and memorials. Originally from Morganton, North Carolina, Fox received his BFA in printmaking from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2008. In 2014, he received his MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Print and Narrative Forms. Jay is currently the press manager of the Small Craft Advisory Press at Florida State University after five years of working at Penland School of Craft as the Print, Letterpress, Books, and Paper coordinator.

Ruth Koelewyn



My work is currently focused on depicting the shape and character of the sky in a given place. In Detroit, looking out at Lafayette Park, it creates blue crowns around large buildings with open parks surrounding them. In Scranton, Pennsylvania, where I lived prior to my return to Michigan, it was a small triangle of blue seen between tightly packed houses when you looked up past the mountains.

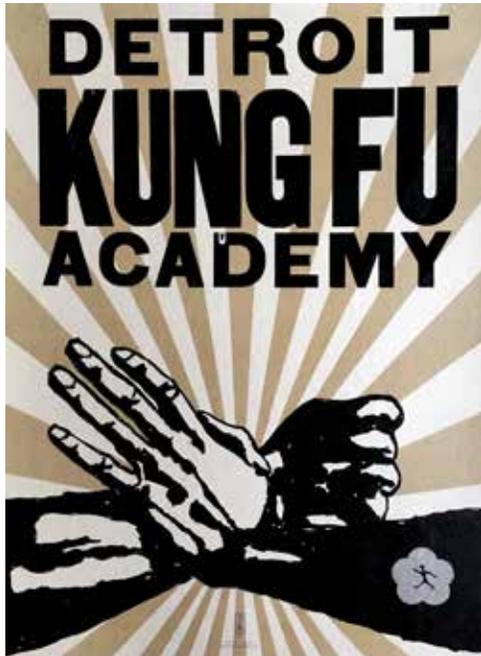
At Jazdow, a community in Warsaw, Poland where I worked in residence in May 2018, the sky was filtered and fragmented by the dense trees around the small houses. I am recording these characteristics because the sky, while helping to define a unique sense of space and place, is also something huge, outside ourselves, universal and ubiquitous. By putting the shape of the sky into drawings, collages and sculptures, I am making the sky a thing to hold, to understand, to identify as our own: a part of ourselves.

When we live in a place for a long period, or perhaps are just confined briefly with a limited view, the scenes through our windows or on familiar walks around a neighborhood become a part of our sense of self, our security and comfort. By focusing attention on these sentiments my work serves to make viewers aware of their kinship with the world around them.

By pulling the shapes of the sky formed by our structures into graspable forms, I offer a representation of the sky to inspire people to connect to the spaces they occupy and the people around them. It is a visual gesture to help people feel part of something larger than themselves.

Ruth Koelewyn's work uses familiar objects and events to reveal how our interactions with them shape ourselves and our context for living. In addition to her solo work, her practice includes both curatorial and collaborative projects. Ruth's work is regularly exhibited and has been supported by the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts, the Society of North American Goldsmiths, the Mondriaan Foundation, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. She studied at Syracuse University and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Lee Marchalonis



Kung Fu Detroit was made as a fundraising collaboration between neighbors Signal Return Press and Detroit Kung Fu Academy. I approached artist Kirill Slavin, the artist responsible for the image of the hands and an instructor at the Academy, to see if I could use his image in the design of a poster that could benefit and showcase both organizations. I designed and printed the posters in an edition of 150. Half the prints were given to the Detroit Kung Fu Academy, the remaining prints are for sale at Signal-Return.

The other image, printed from carved linoleum, is based on a photograph by Lauren Semivan of **Hamtramck Disneyland**, an outdoor folk art installation created by Dmytro Szylak (1920-2015). Still in process (color will ultimately be incorporated), this piece is intended as a potential fundraiser for Hatch Art, the non-profit organization that owns and maintains the property. Intended as a creative interpretation of Szylak's work, it is my intention that the prints exist as an affordable and attractive original amalgamation of creative approaches.

From the Hatch Art website: "When Dmytro Szylak passed away, his estate was in limbo and without a plan to protect or keep the art. There was an immediate outpouring of concern for the future of the site. A group of residents and artists formed a group, coming up with ideas to save this great local treasure. Through a lot of time and effort, driven by the energy and support of the community, this group was able to secure the property and is leading the effort with Hatch Art to maintain and continue the legacy of "Hamtramck Disneyland" for future generations..."

Lee Marchalonis is the Master Printer at Signal-Return Press, a letterpress studio in Detroit, and teaches Printmaking at the Stamps School of Art & Design. She holds a MFA in printmaking from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she also worked as a letterpress printer at Yee-Haw Industries. She has a graduate degree in Library Science and a certificate in Book Arts and technologies from the University of Iowa. She was a recipient of a year long Stein Scholarship at the Center for Book Arts in New York, and her work is in Special Collections libraries throughout the United States. She has collaborated on printed editions for many artists including Hernan Bas, Alison Bechdel, Leslie Dill, Henrik Drescher, Charles McGee, and Artemio Rodriguez.

Ellen Rutt



We protect that which we care for—when we deepen our connection to a place and its people, we become more invested in the preservation of its ecosystem. In my public murals, site-specific installations, paintings and wearables, I engage physical spaces to examine how environments create experiences, exploring how those experiences inform connection and identity. My recent “place paintings” are largely works on canvas made outside of the studio in a wide range of environments—from forests to deserts, to rural fields, to cities, to the inside of a Walmart, or a dumpster, to a recycling center or an abandoned building. I seek out locations that speak to Western consumption and the perceived nature/culture divide, and then work improvisationally, allowing the weather, architecture, and landscape dictate the mark making.

I carry raw canvas outside, tracing physical elements and recording textural data. I might wash the canvas in watered down mud or paint, leaving dry brush marks, letting the rain form droplets, or spray painting abstractions as the canvas hangs over a chain link fence. Through this process of rubbing, dragging, and throwing, I surrender to the physical environment, engaging the landscape in conversation in an attempt to illustrate the inseparability of natural and manmade systems. I explore physical touch as an action that can deepen our emotional connection to internal and external ecosystems; marks on the fabric surface of a canvas become evidence of joy, anger, and grief.

The “place paintings” are living, breathing embodiments of our planet in its current imperiled state. From rural Alabama to the lava fields of Hawaii, to Soho Manhattan and freeway underpasses in Detroit, I paint to deconstruct anthropocentric worldviews, drawing deeper connections between places that might initially seem to be culturally and geographically disparate. Adjacent to my exploration of physical contact, are deeper questions examining ownership, boundaries, trespass, and sociopolitical notions of belonging and permission. Sometimes my paintings are gestural and rough, other times energetic and unresolved, and still other times they appear systematic and organized; these tensions reflect the paradoxes that emerge as we navigate between modern society and the natural world in the era of climate change.

Ellen Rutt is a Detroit-based interdisciplinary artist and activist who has a BFA from the Stamps School of Art & Design. She makes bold mixed-media paintings, murals, installations and wearables. Her recent solo show “This Must Be The Place” was created in large part through a process of travelling the globe & capturing visual elements or ‘environmental mementos’ through direct tracing of the physical environment, both natural & human-made. Rutt has exhibited her work nationally and most recently completed her second artist residency at Temple Children in Hilo, Hawaii.