The AMA Art Museum of the Americas is proud to present this catalog illustrating new works of accomplished artists based in Baltimore and Washington, DC. AMA also takes pride in helping to develop the local creative environment through this project. We are grateful to the artists, the curators, the sponsors, and to the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, for making Corridor possible.

This exhibit highlights diversity and openness, artists engaging with their communities, and shared cultural experiences. Baltimore-based artists Bernhard Hildebrandt, Soledad Salamé and Joyce J. Scott, conceptualized an innovative selection process of artists for the exhibit, which is—in and of itself—a model of inclusion. We are herewith recognizing the value of partnerships beyond state borders and above the traditional paradigms of the curator-artist relationship, as a means for integration and improving cultural exchange.

Corridor turned the traditional roles of curators and artists around, having the artists themselves select their peers to also participate in the exhibit, ultimately inviting curators Laura Roulet and Irene Hoffman to select from the vast bodies of work that these talented artists have produced in recent years. The results are enticing in their breadth of media and content.

By engaging with the local arts scenes, AMA strives to play a valuable role in strengthening exchanges among those Latin American and Caribbean cultural communities that are so essential to the development of vibrant creative environments. In doing so, we wish to further the guiding values of our parent institution—the Organization of American States, OAS—by promoting peace, democracy, human rights, justice, and development. It is only fitting that AMA is hosting these exciting and talented artists, as we aim to provide a forum for the sharing of fresh ideas and progressive thinking throughout the Americas, including those found in our own backyard.

Corridor finds a comfortable home here with its impressive scope of cutting-edge work examining issues of migration, identity, diversity, privacy, and perception. As some of the strongest talents of the Baltimore-Washington corridor, these twelve artists—Martha Jackson-Jarvis, Brandon Morse, Phil Nesmith, Michael B. Platt, Susana Raab, Jeff Spaulding, Olheita DeVane, Bernhard Hildebrandt, John Ruppert, Soledad Salamé, Joyce J. Scott, and Sofia Silva—assume a leading role in shaping the vibrant, creative lives of our communities.

—Lydia Bendersky
Director, AMA/Art Museum of the Americas
Corridor is an exhibition of diverse work by twelve locally based artists that seeks to celebrate the depth of artistic talent in the region while also reimagining traditional curatorial models. Rather than beginning as a curator's concept, Corridor was conceived as an "artist-choose-artist" show by three Baltimoreans: Bernhard Hildebrandt, Joyce J. Scott and Soledad Salamé. The concept of these three artists was to develop a structure for an exhibition that allowed them and other artists to shape the final roster of participants. To develop the artist list, Corridor's initial three then invited three Washington DC area artists to join up, including: Martha Jackson-Jarvis, Phil NeSmith, and Jeff Spaulding. With six artists engaged, they then each invited one additional artist which added John Ruppert, Olitha DeVine, Sofia Silva, Michael B. Platt, Susana Raab, and Brandon Morse to the list. In the end, Corridor included twelve artists, six from Baltimore, six from Washington DC.

With Corridor's artists in place, two curators were then invited to make studio visits, select work, and develop the exhibition's installation and publication. Irene Hofmann, then Director of the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, and Laura Roulet, an independent curator based in DC, were invited to cross borders and each work with six artists from the other end of the Baltimore-Washington "corridor."

Corridor’s installation was designed to create a dialogue among works, to highlight existing artistic and collegial relationships, and to foster meaningful new connections in the region. As curators, we were intrigued by the artists’ choices of each other. Was the desire to include another artist based on stylistic affinities, media, gender, ethnicity, mentor relationships? Many factors came into play, reflecting the area’s artistic depth and regional demographics. Half are men, half women; one third are African-American, and one quarter are Latina. In all, Corridor presents cogent, relevant, and accomplished work that invites audiences to connect to the region’s vibrant art scene.

—Laura Roulet
—Irene Hofmann
An accomplished art educator and mixed media artist, Oleta DeVane is also the creator of an intricately-detailed series of spirit bottles and sculptures drawing on imagery from Afro-centric cultures. Several works connect the vital cultural lives of two troubled cities: Baltimore and New Orleans.

Saint for My City (2007-10), a looming assemblage built up from reclaimed or repurposed materials such as a Madonna figurine, African beads, broken mirrors and bullet shell casings, reflects both the artist’s empathy and prayers for her hometown of Baltimore. The names for deities in myriad belief systems spiral up the base of the sculpture: Oshun, Ra, God, Osiris, Zeus, Oggun, Poseidon. The spiral itself a reflection of West African cosmology that views the human soul in an unending cycle of life, death and regeneration. The Christian Madonna is transformed into a more Afro-masculine figure, adorned with a halo of beads and a fleur-de-lys, symbol of New Orleans, also a culturally vibrant city struggling back from calamity.

Often beginning with a candlestick as the base, DeVane’s spirit bottles are confabulations of color and brilliant materials, chosen for their symbolic value. Precedents for these sculptures can be found in African and Afro-Caribbean spiritual objects such as nkisi figures, Kongo packets and especially Haitian Vodou (also spelled Voodoo) spirit bottles, which migrated to the deep south of the United States in the form of bottle trees. All share the notion of embellishing a receptacle to attract and hold the “flash of the spirit,” in scholar Robert Farris Thompson’s words, and are associated with healing or protection.

Justice (2009) most directly references African Kongo and Afro-Atlantic nkisi objects, a form of miniaturized cosmos, which embody, attract and direct spiritual energy. The nails, shells, fish bones, toy soldiers, and beaded AIDS flags attached are evidence of ritual empowerment of the object. Justice is topped with the winged figure of St. Michael or an Archangel, who is venerated as the protector of soldiers. With its complex symbolism and binding method of assemblage, the sculpture becomes a syncretic object of veneration. As the artist explains, “I believe in the oneness of all things, my faith teaches about the connections and the unity of the spirit and I’ve had a long standing interest in how others worship.”

OLETHA DEVANE

Saint for My City, 2007-2010
mixed media, wood, mirrors, glass, fabric, shell casings, beads, plastic, rope, wax and polymer clay; 87” h x 13” base; Courtesy of the artist
With its fire-breathing king and Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold, Absinthe (2007) evokes the city of New Orleans and its reputation for hard partying. Built around an actual absinthe bottle, brought back from Prague, DeVane brings in the taboo and dissipating associations of this libation, famously known through paintings by 19th century French artists such as Edgar Degas. She incorporates a sickly green head of Vincent van Gogh, as a symbol of the creative life: experimental, addictive, sometimes ruinous.

Mother of two, DeVane’s daughter lived for eight years in New Orleans, and is the inspiration for Persephone (2007). Based on the Greek myth of the mother-daughter bond, this glittering, reflective bottle shows arms and a tail wrapping protectively around a daughter, with a beaded bouquet sprouting and sheltering at the same time. Beautifully fabricated, DeVane’s sculptures convey a deeply personal emotional and spiritual content.

—LR

LEFT:
Absinthe 2007
glass, beads, clay head, mirrors and wood; 28”h

ABOVE:
Persephone 2007
mirrored bottle, glass beads, shells, fabric, polymer clay, plastics and wood; 33”h

RIGHT:
Justice 2009
nails, shells, beads, fish bones, glass, painted clay toy soldiers, wood, paint, twine and encaustic; 29”h
Bernhard Hildebrandt is a collector and aficionado of early forms of photography, an artistic focus that clearly informs his own conceptual photography, painting and video that often examines the history of image making.

The L3 series (2010) featuring digital, monochromatic prints on Mylar and video evokes one of the earliest conflicts surrounding the development of photography, namely whether this new technology should be used for art or science. Photography was not accepted as a fine art on the same level as painting or sculpture, widely collected by museums, until well into the 20th century. Hildebrandt skillfully foregrounds these issues of shifting uses and valuations of photography.

The title of this series comes from the manufacturer of the most widely used model of whole-body scanner controversially adopted by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in 2009, with the source material of images downloaded from the Internet. Recently the focus of air passenger outrage over invasion of privacy and modesty concerns as well as undue exposure to radiation, whole-body imagery uses backscatter x-ray millimeter or terahertz-wave technology to “see” underneath a person’s clothing. In other words, a picture without a camera, just as the earliest forms of photography such as photogenic drawings and heliographs are.

L3 is inspired by the work of photographic pioneer Eadweard Muybridge, whose Animal Locomotion series (1877-85), which includes mammals of the human variety, and invention of the zoopraxiscope, are seen as the forerunners of animation and motion pictures. The Muybridge reference is strongest in the sequence strips and circular layouts of figures. Hildebrandt also animates the forms in the video depicting alternating male and female figures becoming irradiated and dissipating into pixilated bits, with an alarming soundtrack of electrical zapping.

The positive and negative views of “Him” and “Her,” recto and verso, may initially appear to be as un-aesthetically pleasing as Muybridge’s human locomotion series were to many a 19th century viewer. Yet Hildebrandt’s intention seems to be to relocate the beauty of the human form in a pose not that distant from Leonardo da Vinci’s famous drawing Vitruvius Man (c. 1490). The points of both artists being that our concept of ideal ratios and beauty originates in human proportions; the Classical and Renaissance precept that man is the mean and measure of all things. Reinventor of the man and woman diagrams left by Apollo astronauts on the moon, they beg the question: are the TSA Illustrations our contemporary Adam and Eve prototypes?

Overall the L3 series, with the figures ranging in scale and presentation from several inches in the sequences strips to blow-ups of 44 x 48”, effectively probes the implications of new technology in concert with human behavior. Just as Muybridge’s serial photographs of a horse galloping provided information beyond what the eye could see, and the Google Art Project allows for a higher resolution view of canvases than even the original painter had, technology requires constant adaptation of human perception, both of its uses and implications.

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—LR

OPPOSITE PAGE: HIP:	zoopraxiscope	2010
ABOVE (from left to right):
1. HER:	L3	2010
2. HER2:	L3	2010
3. HIM:	L3	2010
4. HIM2:	L3	2010
digital inkjet on Mylar mounted on Plexiglas; 44” x 48” each; Courtesy of the artist
Martha Jackson-Jarvis creates large-scale sculptures, public installations, and site-specific works that explore the evocative power of the natural world, the energy of materials, and the rich cultural and spiritual associations of objects and forms. Rocks, plants, wood, and earth are deployed by Jackson-Jarvis to create commanding works that suggest elemental forces and cycles of life. As a maker of objects imbued with power and energy, so many of Jackson-Jarvis’s aesthetic choices are guided by the textures, auras, and histories of her chosen organic materials. Bringing natural materials to new life as art objects, Jackson-Jarvis has researched and learned a number of centuries-old traditional artistic techniques, from African dung firing, to Japanese raku, to Italian mosaic. Jackson-Jarvis has mastered these skills and incorporated these cherished cultural traditions into her richly-layered works.

One of Jackson-Jarvis’s most recent works and one that has its first installation in Corridor is Vegan’s Talk/Cry Me A River (2011). In this large-scale installation, many materials, forms, and associations come together in a work that speaks of man’s precarious relationship to the natural environment. Vegan’s Talk/Cry Me A River begins at the gallery ceiling with a dramatic swarm of butterflies. From a black rubber armature, dozens of butterfly forms are clustered in flight with wings open. Replicated from old nature textbooks and printed on vellum, Jackson-Jarvis’s delicate butterflies evoke theories of sensitive dependence and the interconnectedness of all actions by all living things. From a sky filled with Monarchs in flight, Vegan’s Talk/Cry Me A River descends to the earth with three large cube-like forms that anchor Jackson-Jarvis’s work.
installation. Framed with steel, formed with concrete, and embedded with river rocks and volcanic stones, these imposing forms suggest geological history and reflect the endurance and permanence of the earth. Embedded within the top of each of these structures are several piercing images of cows. Capturing the direct gaze of these intense bovines, these portraits demand acknowledgment of an animal that is raised, often in alarming conditions, to serve and feed humans. From the earth’s rocks, stones, and animals, Vegan’s Table/Cry Me a River continues onto the gallery floor with a cascade of black rubber, articulated as if it were flowing water. Spilling across the gallery floor, black rubber becomes a series of silhouetted rivers and tributaries. While at once a source of life and energy, Jackson-Jarvis’s black rivers are also foreboding with ominous references to oil spills, waste-water, and rising tides. Linking sky, earth, and water in a cycle of beauty and danger, Vegan’s Table/Cry Me a River is a tour de force that speaks of the interconnectedness and fragility of life.

—IH

OPPOSITE PAGE AND RIGHT: Vegan’s Table / Cry Me A River (detail) 2011 river stone, volcanic stone, concrete, steel, rubber, vellum and chalk, 10’h x 14’w x 11’d
Brandon Morse creates mesmerizing real-time computer-driven videos in which architectural forms and natural phenomena are infinitely generated, expanded, and collapsed. Computer codes dictate the systems within Morse’s haunting works—the ever-shifting visual form in Morse’s preservation current moment—arguably, a moment that threatens the future of mankind and the planet we inhabit.

An early work such as Achilles (2008-09), defines Morse’s stark visual vocabulary and use of generative imagery and motion. In this work, a white skeletal architectural structure—reminiscent of so many modern high-rise buildings—emerges against the void of a black ground. No sooner does Morse’s tower form, than it succumbs to an unknown cataclysm that sends the building into seismic convulsions, bringing the mighty structure to the ground. While the dramatic visual of a collapsing building certainly has echoes of the World Trade Center attacks of September 11th, Morse’s references here are more universal and prophetic. Achilles, named after a great warrior who was brought down by a small hidden vulnerability, serves as a harbinger for disasters still to come, in a world where global financial systems have proven themselves precarious as our natural ecosystems and infrastructures of our aging cities.

In more recent works, Morse has begun to focus on developing systems and imagery that suggest large-scale natural occurring phenomena. In these works, extreme weather systems and geological shifts are evoked with exploding, flowing, and churning organic forms that speak of the power, fury, and unpredictability of the natural world. In Mariana (2010), plumes of matter seem to generate in an underwater environment as if at the dramatic and generative moment of a volcanic eruption deep underwater. Morse’s title for this work, adds further to this reading as it references the Mariana trench in the western Pacific Ocean—the deepest part of the world’s oceans and the edge of the largest tectonic plate. A center of seismic activity, this region has not only produced the Mariana Islands, it has also been proposed as a possible location for the disposal of nuclear waste. Although Morse’s Mariana seduces with its swelling underwater forms, there is an ominous tone inherent in these works as Morse probes the dangers of life on a changing planet.

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**BRANDON MORSE**
OPPOSITE PAGE AND ABOVE:

Achilles 2009

2 channel video loop, custom software, sound
Phil Nesmith is engaged in a rigorous exploration of some of photography’s earliest practices, creating a body of work that reflects a connection to direct image-making that we no longer experience in our post-darkroom age of rapid and digital image reproduction. Often using handmade equipment, conditions he breaks up himself, and glass plates similar to those used by early photographers in the 19th century, Nesmith produces images and unique photographic objects that possess an almost unfamiliar immediacy to light, space, and time.

In a recent series entitled Flight Patterns (2009), Nesmith employed one of the earliest photographic processes to create striking images that evoke fragility and transience. Flight Patterns is a series of dryplate photograms—images that are created directly on photosensitive black glass plates, without a camera or a lens. In the lineage of early 20th century artists like László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, Nesmith’s photograms were created from the shadows cast by objects placed on plates that have been exposed to light. Although the deliberate process of composing and developing photograms necessitates stillness, the subjects of Nesmith’s Flight Patterns appear anything but. Birds, bats, and flying insects populate the compositions of Flight Patterns, creating the illusion of flight momentarily arrested by a photographer’s shutter. Although such movement is a fabrication in Flight Patterns, Nesmith skillfully orchestrates these works, engaging us to believe in the fiction of a rare and fleeting moment.

Nesmith’s exploration of the expressive potential of early photographic techniques continues in Flow (2010), with a dramatic series that confronts the environmental realities of the worst oil spill in U.S. history. Travelling to the Gulf of Mexico in the summer of 2010, Nesmith brought vintage large-format cameras, wet plate collodion chemicals, black glass plates, and a makeshift darkroom to enable him to create unique glass plate positive images of the aftermath of the effects of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. All the images Nesmith created during a two-week period were shot and developed right from the vehicle that brought him to the Gulf’s oil-contaminated beaches and marshes and to the harbors where fisherman and clean-up vessels docked. The vintage look to Nesmith’s images of shrimp boats, barges, deserted beaches, and fisherman creates a powerful tension with the contemporary subjects depicted and urgent work being done in these images. Creating wet plate collodion images for this series, Nesmith chose a photographic process in use in the 1850s at the same time that oil was first discovered in the United States, when the nation’s lust for oil was still in its infancy. Although making images through this early technique was demanding and arduous for Nesmith, it was vital to his larger conceptual intent focused on exploring the historic arc of U.S. oil dependence.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Black (2009)
Black glass dryplate photograph with sandarac varnish; 18" x 19"

ABOVE:

Wetland I (2010)
Black glass wet collodion ambrotype with sandarac varnish; 7" x 5"
LEFT

Beach Pickers 2010
Black glass wet collodion ambrotype with sandarac varnish; 7” x 5”

BELOW

Impeded Destiny 2009
Black glass daguerreotype photograph with sandarac varnish; 19” x 16”

ABOVE

The Nordsea 2010
Black glass wet collodion ambrotype with sandarac varnish; 7” x 15”
Michael B. Platt is a masterful orchestrator of images and a gifted visual storyteller. With the African American female figure at the center of much of his imagery, Platt has created a body of work that speaks of the perseverance and power of the human spirit across time. Merging his background in printmaking and painting, Platt’s recent works employ digital image making processes that allow him to create richly-layered compositions and achieve haunting and evocative visual effects.

Platt’s works are often a fusion of two disparate photographic sources: figures staged in the studio and architectural sites from locations throughout the world. The studio figures are often made in simple diaphanous shift dresses as if to remove any particular historic specificity. Photographing his subjects in various states of movement—crouching, standing still, or leaping in the air—Platt captures his subjects articulating a range of emotions and silhouettes. In addition to these studio sessions, Platt also photographs architectural spaces that reveal the passage of time or that possess traces of a dark or troubled past. The peeling paint, crumbling doorways, or mysterious stains on the walls of Platt’s chosen locations imbue these tight, dimly lit interiors with foreboding and chilling associations to conflict or disaster. Digitally merging, painting, and manipulating these two photographic sources, Platt arrives at complex and layered works that place a cast of ethereal contemporary muses in dialogue with the potent echoes of history.

On the occasion of the exhibition Corridor, Platt has created a large-scale installation that features many of his striking signature image compositions printed on large fabric panels and hanging from the ceiling. Spanning the width of the gallery space, Falling Angels (2011) creates an evocative and immersive narrative of figure and built environment that moves through space and time and a range of expressions and emotions. Platt’s almost ghost-like protagonists appear across each panel in various states of movement and in relation to interior spaces and sweeping urban landscapes. While there are a few exuberant passages in Falling Angels, many of Platt’s figures appear in an inventory state of free-fall, imbuing this work with dark associations of disasters such as 911 or Hurricane Katrina. Accompanying Platt’s powerful cadence of images is a poem written by Platt’s partner and collaborator, poet Carol A. Beane. In touched at midnight, Beane evokes struggle, transformation, and transcendence, adding another arresting layer to the complex and captivating narrative of Platt’s Falling Angels.

OFTEN PAGE:
Falling Angels (detail) 2009-2011 pigment print on polyester mesh (detail) Courtesy of the artist and Tim Davis of International Visions Gallery, Washington DC

RIGHT:
touched at midnight... by Carol A. Beane accompanying poem
Falling Angels
2010-2011
pigment print on polyester mesh
with text by Carol Beane
5' x 25'
SUSANA RAAB

Susana Raab is an intuitive observer of everyday life and culture. With a camera in hand, she has created probing photographic series that reveal the essence of ordinary lives, bringing us to a greater understanding of our shared humanity. To create her series Consumed: Fast Food in the US (2009), for example, Raab traveled across the United States, photographing images that speak to the American obsession with fast food and the pervasive presence of this truly home-grown American industry. Images of Ronald McDonald, Colonel Sanders, and other iconic corporate symbols dominate these works. Often shot with a large flash, Raab’s images emphasize the highly commercial nature of the fast food business and the artifice that seduces a nation into the drive-thru. An exuberant shot of a hot dog eating contest at the annual Coney Island 4th of July Hot Dog Eating Contest, nostalgic images of “golden arches” on main street, and many poignant pictures of children being indoctrinated into the world of fries and shakes, create a portrait of a nation enamored of food fast, blissfully unaware of where this food comes from and undaunted by its potential health implications.

While series like Consumed or the related, Off-Season (2010), explore Americas and American cultural values from the perspective of a distant observer, in Raab’s most recent series, entitled Cholita, she takes us closer to her subject. Cholita is an ongoing series of photographs of coastal Peruvian culture and a stunning portrait of the Peruvian under-class. Born in Lima to a Peruvian father and an American mother, Raab has spent a lifetime trying to reconcile her history, her fractured identity, and her understanding of a culture still dictated by social structures imposed during Peru’s early colonization. Cholita—named after a derogatory slang term used to describe those of mixed race—is an anthropological look at Peru with the aim of presenting modern images often not associated with Peruvians. As Raab describes, “I wanted to dispel the common stereotype of the country as a quaint locale filled with picturesque natives wearing ponchos and leading llamas down mountain paths.” The direct and penetrating images of Cholita indeed present a revealing look at contemporary Peruvian life and speak to Raab’s empathy and connection to subjects she approaches in the neighborhoods, beaches, and markets of her lost homeland.

Above:
Cholita series 2011
C-prints; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
Club Terrazas, Lima, Peru; 20” x 24”

Right:
Cholita series 2011
C-prints
Julia, Playa Waikiki, Lima, Peru; 20” x 24”
Cholita’s subjects represent the underclass of modern Peru and reveal a proud and vibrant culture, not often the focus of an artist’s work, and a world away from the hyper-commercialized lives of their U.S. counterparts. With images that capture moments of leisure time, family gatherings, and everyday life, Raab’s Cholita upends disparaging cultural stereotypes and assumptions about Peru’s under-class that have been operating in the culture for generations.
River Jacks, a series of metal castings grouped with the original granite boulder, and two chain-link metal sculptures, Crucible and Gourd, represent the yin and yang of John Ruppert's sculptural practice. Ruppert is inspired by both geological phenomenon and the built industrial environment. One mode of sculpture shaped by glacial time and accident, another manufactured with machine precision. Together displaying the primary three-dimensional opposition between exterior form and interior volume, while utilizing an impressive array of materials.

Unsurprisingly an artist with a MFA in metals, Ruppert worked in jewelry-making early in his career, studying with Albert Paley, the blacksmith and sculptor responsible for the portal gates of the Renwick Gallery, and learned casting at an industrial foundry. While observing large pieces being cast in the foundry, he found himself attracted to the mistakes, the leaks and blowouts from the molds. This paradox between the human drive to shape and order the environment versus the natural proclivity towards entropy remains at the crux of his work.

River Jacks (2010) revels in materiality. Starting with a granite boulder found in nature, Ruppert casts the stone in aluminum, copper, bronze and iron, revealing how each material varies in color, density, and reflection of light. The weight of each boulder reminds the viewer that all metals originate in the earth, which the rough seams from the casting process reveal the temporal history of each piece. Perhaps alluding to Carl Andre’s Stone Field Sculpture (1977) in Hartford, Connecticut, in which thirty-six glacial boulders are arranged on the ground, echoing the gravestones in a nearby churchyard, River Jacks refers to geologic time rather than human life spans, yet offers these natural forms for contemplation. Clearly an inheritor of the legacy of such Minimalist sculptors as Carl Andre, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson in his use of the chain-link grid and unadorned materials such as stone and metal, yet Ruppert retains a primal connection with the natural world.

Related to the conception of Smithson’s “Non-site” sculptures from the late 1960s, Ruppert finds a way to bring massive sculptures, referencing natural sources and outdoor sites, into the white box gallery space. The chain-link pieces Crucible (2006) in galvanized, stainless steel and Gourd (2006) in aluminum marry the abstract beauty of geometric forms with the grotesque of industrial materials, specifically and most particularly “prison-grade” steel. Reminiscent of Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic domes and spheres, the structures can move, reconfigure themselves for lightweight strength and stability. The lattice structure allows the play of light to become a major feature of the work, again bringing in the temporal element.

Appreciated as a sculptor’s sculptor, Ruppert harnesses his technical skills in casting and welding to reveal the inherent range of his material capabilities.
Crucible 2006
anodized aluminum; 34” x 56”

River Jacks 2010
granite, aluminum, copper, bronze, iron; 18” x 40” x 16” each
Gulf Distortions (2011) develops Soledad Salamé’s focus on environmental issues and experimental combinations of technology with printmaking by engaging with topical subject matter. In her earlier multi-media installation, Where Do You Live, Three Thousand Miles of Maryland Coastline (2009), Salamé demonstrated the effects of global warming and rising ocean levels on the Chesapeake Bay. Gulf Distortions focuses on the latest and most serious disaster in the Gulf Coast: the BP Deepwater Horizon oil well blowout in April 2010. Soon after the oil spill occurred, Salamé and her husband photographer Michael Koryta set out for the region, intent on seeing and documenting the calamity for themselves.

The resulting photographs, from the Venice and Grand Isle areas of Louisiana, are transformed in a grid of dazzling silkscreens. Read in registers from top to bottom, they reveal a tranquil waterfront gradually cluttered and overcome with evidence of the fishing and oil industries. The serene natural scenes of marshes and trees disintegrate into the oppressive jungle of oil storage containers and smokestacks. This progression reveals the artist’s thinking process: “about nature and reality— fighting for a space.” A soundtrack commissioned by the artist consists of the driving music. Composer Brian Sacawa’s discordant sound components—blends saxophone, percussion, machine and wind sounds—echo the contrast between the tranquil, grassy landscape, the active shrimp boats and the visually raucous oil machinery.

This series represents Salamé’s second experimental use of a facsimile machine to transmit and fragment digital data. The 2009 exhibit Fax, presented by the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore invited artists to submit works that could be sent by fax. Salamé’s dense images became fractured as they were sent through busy fax lines. In this case, her digital photographs of the Gulf Coast are deliberately manipulated to simulate the effects of busy fax lines. The resulting printed images are then transformed by multiple silkscreens on opaque Mylar. Each image undergoes further depth through precise incisions in the Mylar, creating a shimmering silver layer evocative of light or oil on water. Consultation with Elissa O’Loughlin, a conservator at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, led Salamé to the discovery of “interference” pigments, a type of subtly shaded iridescent color. When the shades of pearl, blue and green are painted on top of the translucent Mylar, an evanescent surface effect is created. Evoke-associations with barcodes and DNA coding, Salamé draws parallels between organizational systems of the technological and natural worlds.
German printmaker Christiane Baumgartner provides an apt comparison, as she also translates her own photos and video stills of the urban or industrial landscape through several levels of distortion before transferring them into woodcuts. Both use new technology in combination with traditional printmaking media as a means of creating a sense of fragmentation and visual static.

The Gulf Distortions series combines Salamé’s deep concern for the environment with her mastery of graphic art. Adding the component of sound to this work contributes to the dark atmospherics of the piece, assuring that this latest Gulf disaster won’t fade too quickly from our attention.

—LR

(OPPOSITE PAGE AND ABOVE)
Gulf Distortions series 2011
silkscreen on mylar with interference pigments; sound; 22.5” x 32.5”
Joyce J. Scott belongs in the long, glorious tradition of African-American storytellers, who use their art to elaborate themes of racism, sexism and heritage. Incorporating genuine African sculptures, sometimes “export ware” designed for westerners, with her own glass and beaded creations, Scott tells her tales with astute, irreverent wit and fine artistry.

Both The Many Faces of Love #2 (2006) and Casta Family (2006) incorporate Mexican motifs or objects. The skeleton, evocative of Day of the Dead rituals, ties together the disparate components from the Old World of Africa and the New World of the Americas, with the many faces of love ranging from self-love to cultural and ethnic pride. Casta Family with figures of three different hues refers to a genre of Spanish colonial painting. Largely made in the 17th and 18th centuries, Casta paintings are records of racial mixing and social hierarchies. Most often portraying a white Spanish father and indigenous or black mother with mixed race child, Scott reverses the racial order, showing a blond mother and African father with mixed race progeny. While Casta paintings seemingly depict harmonious racial coexistence, they are actually ethnographic documents of social hierarchies reflecting the Spanish belief that “pure blood” parents produce inferior mixed-blood descendants. These works also reference the troubling history of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, dating from the colonial era, and persisting in myths of racial purity.

Joyce J. Scott
Cosmos 2010
peyote stitched beads; dimensions variable; Courtesy of the artist and Goya Contemporary

Casta Family 2006
peyote stitched beads, African sculpture, Mexican mask, fabric, stained glass; 27” x 17” x 15”
Like the "Bother/Sister Plays" of young playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney, Scott's work revitalizes Afro-Atlantic mythology and fables, investing contemporary characters and themes with mythic qualities. The free-hanging pieces Cosmos (2010) and White Noise (2011) tell complex stories of epic dimensions. Both are examples of Scott's method of piecing together images, drawn from myriad sources, by a web of what she calls "static lines, electricity, lines of communication." Cosmos is centered around the striking figure of a woman or goddess giving birth, perhaps modeled on a famous pre-Columbian Aztec sculpture. It's up to the viewer to draw the connections of this intricately composed creation myth. White Noise focuses on a giant Gulliver-like character, combining male and female figures with skeins of white, fuchsia, gold and pale blue beaded lines. Located within the feminist and African-American art movements that draw on craft and vernacular traditions, Scott's work entrances like the most enduring tale.

—LR

You First, You Last 2009
peyote stitched glass beads, glass; 14"h

The Many Faces of Love #2 2006
peyote stitched glass beads, wood, cast glass, wire and thread; 44.5" x 18" x 12"
Sofia Silva’s large-scale panoramic photographs of suburban mall parking lots and garages are depopulated as if after the blast of the fabled neutron bomb. Outstanding in their eerie anonymity and technical proficiency, they are striking, glossy objects, images of what French anthropologist Marc Augé would term “non-places.” Focusing on places of transience and flow, rather than stasis, with no historical markers, Silva brings her outsider perspective as an Argentinean to the vernacular North American landscape.

Silva records the emptied desolation of the suburban mall or parking lot that the rest of us seem to miss in our errand-running circuits. As an American precedent for mapping the strip mall hardscape, conceptual artist Ed Ruscha first documented a series of these utilitarian spots in *Thirty-four Parking Lots* in 1967. The lineage of contemporary German photography launched by Bernd and Hilla Becher, sometimes called the Düsseldorf School, is also present—Silva utilizes her outsider perspective as an Argentinean to the vernacular North American landscape.

Using a Tomiyama 6 x 24 cm panoramic camera, Silva stresses the long horizontal structures and linear details of the big box stores in *Sam’s Club* (2004) and *Mart* (2005). The uniform light of overcast skies give an overall white cast to the images, allowing the subtle inflections of color to stand out. The specks of primary red, blue and yellow found in *Sam’s Club* suggest a sly homage to Piet Mondrian, unintended by mall planners. The tile-patterned pattern of *Mart* engenders an elegant, Minimalist aura to the bleak, grimy wall.

The 2008 black and white series of parking lots, plants, store losing, and bank drive-thru, were shot with a Fujinon medium format camera, creating a newly proportioned frame. This series adds the element of dramatic lighting to the flatness and anonymity of the mall photographs. Silva uses the existing, garish fluorescent lighting to create a sharp contrast with the nighttime setting. The depopulated starkly lit environments are eerie and cinematic, as if film noir establishing shots. By emphasizing the found geometries in the nondescript architecture, Silva organizes and elevates the banal. Approaching the vistas of suburbia with anthropological insight, Silva brings her keen vision to our North American non-places.
Children’s toys, rubber hoses, bicycle parts, and plastic shipping pallets are just some of the materials that take on extraordinary new lives in Jeff Spaulding’s sculptures. In Spaulding’s works, everyday cast-offs become part of assemblages that both tap into childhood memories and express an undercurrent of tension and danger in our contemporary culture.

With a sense of adventure and an intuitive feel for the possibilities inherent in everyday objects, Spaulding’s creative process begins in the gathering of materials. The pursuit for new materials often takes Spaulding under Washington DC bridges and along the banks of the Potomac River in search of discarded objects. Lost artifacts of childhood and remnants from illegal dumping provide potential inspiration for new works. Back in the studio, a motley cast of found materials take on charged new meanings as Spaulding rearranges, merges, and re-contextualizes the detritus of everyday life. Depending on the direction of each new work, Spaulding’s objects might be painted, used to cast a mold for other objects, or left exactly as he found them, with all the evidence of a prior life and function intact.

Works like *Dark Flower* (2006) and *Pierce* (2006) are characteristic of the playful and provocative tensions that often exist in Spaulding’s sculptures. In *Dark Flower*, a child’s red plastic toy ball is fused atop an old black cannon ball in a simple yet loaded gesture that merges the vulnerable with the impervious, the toy with the weapon. *Dark Flower* is a reminder of how much we learn about conflict and warfare when we are still naive children playing in a sandbox. The innocence of youth is disrupted further in *Pierce*. In this work, a cheerful orange toy slide appears violated by the attachment of a small pink plastic form hanging from the end of the slide in an apparent piercing. As with so many of Spaulding’s assemblages, the initial reading of *Dark Flower* and *Pierce* is often one that elicits childhood nostalgia. As Spaulding’s subversions are noticed, however, the complexity of these works is revealed as once-innocent objects take on provocative new associations.
In one of Spaulding’s most recent works, he both augments the scale of his assemblages and responds to the specificity of an exhibition site. On the occasion of Corridor, Spaulding has created Raft (2011), a dynamic large-scale installation that spans a gallery space from wall to wall with a dramatic composition of dozens of black cast-off objects, assembled atop a series of plastic shipping pallets. The wheels of toy cars, milk crates, trash bags, and plastic hobbyhorses dominate this powerful work. Piled onto a number of shipping pallets that appear as if they have just been swept into the gallery space by the violent force of an ocean’s wave, this gathering of objects begins to read like desperate figures on life rafts, awaiting rescue. With echoes of Théodore Géricault’s iconic and devastating painting Raft of the Medusa (1818/19), Spaulding’s Raft speaks of our contemporary moment where childhood innocence is lost too soon, where everything is disposable, and where conflict and aggression are tolerated norms.
OLETHA DeVANE (b. 1950, Baltimore, Maryland)

Oletha DeVane received her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and MFA in painting from the University of Maryland in 1976. Since then, her work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Maryland and along the East Coast. The Regional's (LAF) Museum of African American History and Culture in Baltimore commissioned DeVane to create a video installation documenting Maryland's history of lynching in 1999. The piece was inspired by an earlier silent video installation of the same subject at Maryland Art Place (2002). DeVane has been involved in the Baltimore arts community through involvement in artist-run spaces, printmaking, installations, and sculpture.

She has been featured in the Baltimore Sun, Art Papers, and Washington Post. She has received numerous awards including the Corcoran Gallery of Art (2002), and Saatchi Online. She has taught as Adjunct Professor of photography and painting at the University of Maryland in College Park.

JACKSON (b. 1951, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Jackson’s (1951, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) work has been both nationally and internationally, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art (2002), and Saatchi Online. She has taught as Adjunct Professor of photography and painting at the University of Maryland in College Park.

BRANDON MORSE (b. 1952, Lynchburg, Virginia)

Brandon Morse is a Washington, DC-based artist. His work has been featured both nationally and internationally, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Madrid, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), in Richmond, Virginia. His work has been selected for VMFA’s Visions in the Visual Arts. Morse’s work is held in the collections of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Anacostia Museum in Washington, DC and the Baltimore Museum of Art. His work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions in galleries and museums throughout the United States and abroad, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; the Studio Museum of Harlem, N.Y; Noguchi Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art, N.Y; National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C; and the Grinstein Gallery, Norfolk, Virginia. Morse’s work includes a variety of media including sculpture, printmaking, painting, and video.

PHIL NESMITH (b. 1952, Nice, France)

Phil Nesmith is an award-winning artist who works primarily in photographic methods. His work utilizes consumerism and identity. Susana’s work has been exhibited internationally and nationally, at venues including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Madrid, the Photographic Resource Center in Washington, DC. His work has been the recipient of the White House News Photographers’ Project Grant, a DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Artist Fellowship, an Honorable Mention in Center’s Photographers’ Project Grant, a DC Public Art Commission, and a Public Art Commission, among others. His work is held in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of American History, the Photofilmed Media Center, the Center for Fine Art Photography, and the DC Public Art Bank.

She has received her MA in Visual Communications at Ohio University and holds a BA in English literature from James Madison University.

MICHAEL B. PLATT (b. 1948, Washington, DC)

Michael Platt is a West Virginia/Connecticut based artist. His work has been the recipient of the Corcoran Gallery of Art (2006) and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) Fellowship. Platt is the author of Flow, the critically acclaimed book, was reviewed by Flow. Platt was reviewed in Art in America, his photographs are in the collections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery of Art, and the Maryland Art Place. Platt teaches digital photography at Virginia State University and at the University of Maryland. Platt teaches digital photography at Virginia State University and the University of Maryland.

PHIL NESMITH (b. 1952, Nice, France)

Phil Nesmith is an award-winning artist who works primarily in 19th century plate photographic methods, such as wet collodion ambrotypes. He also works with combined chemical and digital methods. His work is held in the collections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Library of Congress' Print/Photograph Collection as well as the Collections of the. Platt teaches digital photography and digital printing at Howard University. Platt has been the recipient of the White House News Photographers’ Project Grant, a DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Artist Fellowship, an Honorable Mention in Center’s Photographers’ Project Grant, a DC Public Art Commission, and a Public Art Commission, among others. His work is held in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of American History, the Photofilmed Media Center, the Center for Fine Art Photography, and the DC Public Art Bank.

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She has received her MA in Visual Communications at Ohio University and holds a BA in English literature from James Madison University.
JOYCE J. SCOTT (b. 1954, Baltimore, Maryland)

Scott’s productions revolve around race, class, gender, politics, culture, and environment in a manner that is both humorous and thought-provoking. She is known for her involvement in social and political activism, and her work often addresses issues of oppression and inequality. Scott’s sculptures, installations, and mixed media artworks are characterized by their use of found materials and their ability to create a dialogue with the viewer. She has received numerous awards and accolades, and her work is represented in many public and private collections. Scott continues to be an influential figure in the contemporary art world, using her art as a platform for social change.

SOFIA SILVA (b. 1942, San Salvador, El Salvador, Argentina)

Silva studied Sociology and Art History at the National University of La Plata and subsequently studied Photography at the University of Buenos Aires, the International Center of Photography and with photographers Eduardo Giolitti and Lourdes Martín. She is an established freelance photographer currently based in Baltimore.

Rae Rugoff was the director of SITE Santa Fe, a contemporary art center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, from 2006 to 2011. During her tenure, she oversaw the artistic programming and strategic direction of the organization. Prior to joining SITE, Rugoff worked as a freelance writer and curator, and has contributed to numerous publications, including Artforum, Harpers Magazine, and The Village Voice. She holds a BA in Art History from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Masters degree in Art History and Criticism from the University of Chicago. Rugoff is currently based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she continues to work as a freelance writer and curator.
OLETHA D VANEE
Saint for My City 2007-10
mixed media, wood, mirrors, glass, fabric, shell casings, beads, plastic, paper, mixed media and polymer clay; 87" h x 13" x 13" base;Courtesy of the artist
Justice 2009
rocks, shells, beads, fish bones, glass, carved clay toy soldiers, wood, paint, tease and encasement; 93"
Abstinence 2007
glass, beads, clay bead, mirrors and wood; 68"
Perception 2007
monochrome, glass beads, shells, fabric, polymer clay, plastics and wood; 57"

BERNHARD HILDEBRANDT
L3 series 2010
HER:
L3	series
HIM:
L3	series
digital inkjet on Mylar mounted on Plexiglas, 44" x 48" each
L3:	invert
10.5" x 18"
L3:	sequence strips
30" x 36"
digital inkjet on Mylar, each
L3:	30" x 36"

MARTHA JACKSON-JARVIS
Vegan’s Table, Cry Me a River 2011
MM installation
river stone, volcanic stone, concrete, steel, rubber, vellum; 10’ h x 14’ w x 11’ d; Courtesy of the artist

BRANDON MORSE
Mariana 2010
generative video via custom software; Courtesy of the artist and Conner Contemporary Art

PHIL NESMITH
Attraction 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 22" x 15.5"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
Release 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 24" x 5"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
August Night 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 48" x 9.5"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
Proximity Effect II 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 24" x 5"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
Colony 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 20" x 8"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary
Unnatural Attraction 2009
sandarac varnished black glass dryplate photograms; 24" x 5"; Courtesy of the artist and Irvine Contemporary

JOHN RUPPERT
Moon Jaks 2010
granite, aluminum, copper, bronze, iron; 18" x 18" x 18" each; Courtesy of the collection of Chris McCurdy
Good 2010
soft male galvanized and stainless steel; 5 x 11" diameter; Courtesy of the artist and G. Conran Gallery
Crucible 2006
anodized aluminum; 36" x 24"; Courtesy of the artist and G. Conran Gallery

MICHAEL B. PLATT
Falling Angels 2000-2011
pigment print on polyester mesh with text by Carol Beane; dimensions variable; Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Grescha, Geneva

SUSANA RAAB
Cholita series 2011
c-prints
Eva, La Costa Verde, Lima, Peru 30" x 36"; Club Terrazas, Lima, Peru 30" x 36"; Luna, Pucusana, Peru 24" x 30"; Lunchtime, Lunapark, Lima, Peru 24" x 30"; Jump, Yoga Agua Dulce, Lima, Peru 30" x 24"; Shells, Playa Santa Maria, Lima, Peru 24" x 30"; La Mirada Fija, Pucusana, Peru 24" x 30"; Inca Dog, Pucusana, Peru 30" x 24"; Amigos, Mancora, Peru 24" x 30"; Paola and her Nanny, Playa Asia, Peru 20" x 24"; Jump, Playa Agua Dulce, Lima, Peru 24" x 30"; Lunchtime, Lunapark, Lima, Peru 24" x 30"; Courtesy of the artist, Michael Koryta and Goya Contemporary; sound composed by Brian Sacawa

JOYCE J. SCOTT
The Many Faces of Love #2 2006
people stitched glass beads, wood, rock glass, wire and thread; 40" x 10" x 10"; Courtesy of the artist and Goya Contemporary
The Feat, the Fine 2005
people stitched glass beads, glass; 14" x 6" x 6"
Casta Family 2006
people stitched beads; dimensions variable
Wilie Note 2011
people stitched beads; dimensions variable
SOFIA SILVA
sams club 2005
canvas, 30" x 36"; Courtesy of the artist and G. Conran Gallery
parking lot 2006
canvas, 36" x 48"; Courtesy of the artist and G. Conran Gallery
bank drive thru 2008
archival pigment print; 40" x 30"; Courtesy of the artist and G. Conran Gallery

SOLEDAD SALAMé
Gulf Distortions 2011
12 silkscreens on mylar with interference pigments; sound; 22.5" x 32.5" each; Courtesy of the artist, Michael Koryta and Goya Contemporary; sound composed by Brian Sacawa

JEFF SPALDING
Rain 2010
plastic, wood, steel installation; dimensions variable; Courtesy of the artist and G. Fine Art

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST
MARCH 24 - JUNE 26, 2011
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