

MANIFEST v39



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MONOCHROME | (in)animate | Interior

MANIFEST

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY
AND DRAWING CENTER

volume 39

MONOCHROME

(in)animate: Paintings by Kirstine Reiner

Interior: Photographs by Andrea Hoelscher

MANIFEST is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

MANIFEST VOLUME THIRTY-NINE

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Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center

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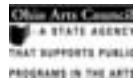
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MONOCHROME

September 25 - October 23, 2009

Curated by Tim Parsley

Stefan Annerel (Antwerp, Belgium)

Corey Baker (Medina, Ohio)

Jill Downen (St. Louis, Missouri)

Jessica Houston (New York, New York)

David Isenhour (New Smyrna Beach, Florida)

Robert Lansden (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Willard Lustenader (New Haven, Connecticut)

Robert Schefman (West Bloomfield, Michigan)

Sang-Mi Yoo (Lubbock, Texas)

John Zurier (Berkeley, California)

“Less is more.”

While cliché, this paradoxical truism is often offered as a remedy to that which has been deemed inflated, complicated, presumptuous, over-the-top, too much. When an endeavor takes on layers of complexity that overwhelm or alienate, the response is often, “Sometimes, less is more.” This diagnosis to simplify is a signal that breathing room is needed, the air has become polluted.

Around the middle of the 20th century, modern visual artists embraced this diagnosis and began the dismantling of the tradition of western art with its many-layered (and some would argue, burdensome) traditions and techniques. One strategy for dismantling was the intentional reduction of color, either in variety or hue. Gallery walls began to display monumental canvases of fields of solid color paired with confused viewers who tilted their heads, trying to make sense of the flattened surface. Perhaps most ambitiously deconstructive was the work of Robert Ryman who introduced the art world to square, white canvases painted... white. Not everyone understood or accepted this willful reduction of form. Too much was being thrown out. As Suzanne P. Hudson writes: “The feeling is that something has been sacrificed and devalued, whether tradition, method, or technical proficiency...” (Hudson, Robert Ryman: Used Paint, 2009)

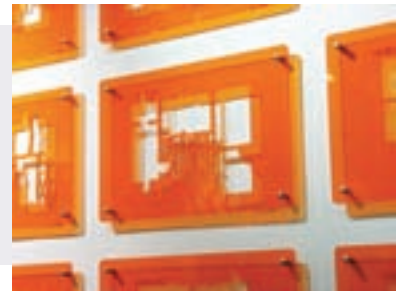
And yet, for the artists involved in this reductive approach, the result was anything but a simplification. In fact, for them it was an amplification of art's most unique characteristics. The eschewing of tradition and technique in service to other disciplines (history, religion, politics) was art's coming-of-age, its emancipation even.

While postmodernism has fractured (fragmented? divided?) the art world into countless art-making approaches, many current artists still utilize the tools of modernism in their creation of work. Recognizing the strength of form as an equally significant conveyor of content as representational imagery, abstraction as stayed in their vocabulary. In some cases, the "tools" of abstraction have been enlisted into the service of more traditional images.

One such tool is the reduction of color. Monochromatic, or near-monochromatic works of art, in some sense, have always existed in the forms of drawing, grisaille painting and marble sculpture. However, the use of a monochromatic palette as a significant contributor of a work's content is a more modern phenomena. The 10 artists in Manifest's Monochrome exhibition offer uniquely different approaches to art-making, however, they each recognize the direct power of a reduced palette.

In some cases, as in Corey Baker's "Alicia", the single color operates as a harness, focusing the viewers attention toward the representational content, eliminating the distraction of, say, blue, or red. Other works, like Robert Lansden's "Nothing to See, Nothing to Hide" and Sang-Mi Yoo's "New Village Floor Plans", make only supportive use of monochromatic strategy, using color to unify multiple components of the piece. The color field is represented, though developed beyond the canvas, in works like Stefan Annerel's "Navajo" and Jill Downen's "Hybrida" works.

John Zurier's, "The Blue of Her Cloak", offers perhaps the most representative work in the exhibit. The short video piece shows only a green sheet of paper laying on the floor. The paper has a monochromatic crucifixion scene printed on it. As the video progresses, the piece of paper is slowly covered in cascading dry blue pigment until the entire screen is





nearly covered, creating a digital color field. Referential to Christian iconography (Mary is traditionally cloaked in blue), the piece harkens back to painting's religious history while at the same time documenting, and literally portraying, the flattening of illusionistic space introduced by such approaches as the monochromatic color field. While some might argue his miniature history of painting comes up short, stopping with 20th century abstraction, Zurier keeps the conversation current with his use of video, playing the "loop" of painting's history on an HD screen, thus filtering the viewing experience through digital technology. We are given a simplified narrative of the pre-modernism transition to modernism, through a postmodern lens.



If all this sounds too complicated for such a simple piece of art (after all, it's just blue dust thrown on a green picture), perhaps you will be tempted to prescribe, "Less is more." If so, you will find yourself in the good company of the 10 artists on display for Manifest's first group exhibition of it's 6th season. However, in that company you may find that less is, in fact, more – and that with intentional simplification comes amplification of serious art.

Tim Parsley
September, 2009

Stefan Annerel
Antwerp, Belgium

NAVAJO
acrylic, adhesive tape, resin on panel and glass
46 x 40 cm, 2009



Corey Baker
Medina, Ohio

Alicia
oil hand painted on Plexi-Glass, 30" x 36", 2009



Jill Downen

St. Louis, Missouri



Hybrida 3

Hybrida 1 (opposite)
plaster on paper, 11" x 18", 2008



Jessica Houston
New York, New York



Jeudi 19 Juin 2008

November 20, 2008 (opposite left)

22 di Luglio 2008 (opposite right)
oil and pencil on newspaper on wood panel, 12" x 16", 2008



David Isenhour

New Smyrna Beach, Florida



Unnatural Selection

fiberglass resin, cast plastic, automotive finish, 24" x 48" x 8", 2007



Robert Lansden
New Orleans, Louisiana



Nothing to See, Nothing to Hide
felt-tip pen on paper, 30" x 22", 2007



Willard Lustenader
New Haven, Connecticut

White Cut-outs V
oil on linen, 20" x 36", 2009



Robert Schefman
West Bloomfield, Michigan

Geometry for Passion
charcoal, 60" x 40", 2007



Sang-Mi Yoo
Lubbock, Texas

New Village Floor Plans

Lasercut acrylic, drawing, Acrylic: 15" x 23"/ ea., Drawing: 18" x 24"/ ea., 2009

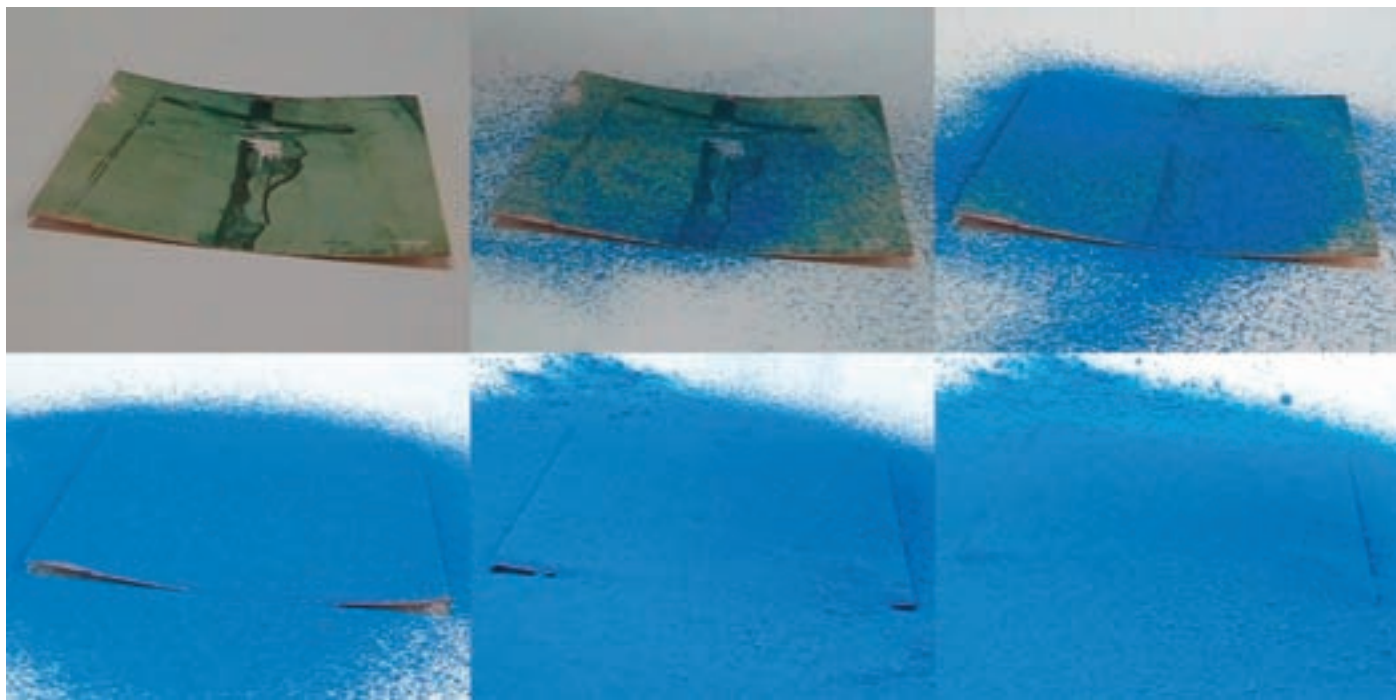


John Zurier

Berkeley, California

The Blue of Her Cloak

Video, 2'24", 2009 (six stills shown opposite)



(in)animate

Paintings by Kirstine Reiner

September 25 - October 23, 2009



Bio:

Kirstine Reiner was born in 1966 in Odense, Denmark. She received her BA degree in Illustration & Design at Kunsthåndværkerskolen, Kolding, Denmark in 1989.

Her works have been exhibited in museums and galleries internationally from California to New York City, including Washington D.C., Denmark, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Two of her drawings were featured in the most recently published International Drawing Annual 2007 produced by Manifest.

Reiner lives and works in San Francisco, California and teaches painting and drawing privately.

(in)animate comprises paintings of people and still life from the last couple of years. There are strong similarities in how I approach the two with much the same scrutiny of detail and hyper-interest. It is my goal to evoke the emotional qualities inherent in both my animate and inanimate subjects.

I work with live models most of the time when doing a portrait. It is essential to me to be inspired by the person directly, to get to know them both as a person and as a subject - psychologically and on the surface. I like to think of this process as a collaboration between us, a merge of two people to become one painting. I approach each subject not as an objective observer, but rather an empathetic participant. Not so much trying to "capture" the likeness of a person, I try to understand and feel the feelings of my subject, like a method actor who 'becomes' another person. Actually I'd like to use a new term, Method Painter, rather than the clinical "Realist Painter", to describe my style of painting. I am often familiar with my models before working with them, it is a friend or someone offering to sit for me. Usually people sit for me repeatedly and over a long period of time.

Before starting a still life I spend quite a long time considering which things to choose. I wait until the objects of choice have grown on me. Almost like with a person, I want to get to know them first. I want to see if they speak to me and I want to play with ideas of different objects relating to each other in a scenario charged with tension. During the often long period of time I work on the still life I like to imagine that the inanimate objects actually have a life of their own, however unusual this sounds.

The physical, tangible part of a painting is to me integral to the mental and emotional experience. I find that small, seemingly minor details make a significant difference to the experience of the subject. Like an artistic puzzle, details are observed and chosen, deliberated or played down depending on how it makes an intriguing whole.



Brainstorm

oil on panel, 44" x 22" (trapezoid shape panel), 2005



Glorious Reject no.1

tempera on panel, 11.75" x 11.75", 2006



Invitation

oil on panel, 17.75" x 23.75", 2007







Michael

oil on canvas, 28" x 22", 2008



Recognition

oil on panel, 17.75" x 23.75", 2006





Portrait Squared

oil on panel, 24.5" x 43.5", 2008



Union

oil on panel, 9.75" x 9.75", 2005



Wonderland

oil on panel, 17.75" x 23.75", 2007



INTERIOR

Photographs by Andrea Hoelscher

September 25 - October 23, 2009



Bio:

Andrea Hoelscher was born in 1968 in Marshalltown, Iowa. She received her BFA degree in photography and drawing from the University of Northern Iowa in 1992. In 1994 she completed an MFA degree from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Her solo exhibitions have included locations such as the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, Roanoke College in Virginia, E3 Gallery in New York City, Bromfield Gallery in Boston, UC Berkeley in San Francisco, and Artemisia Gallery in Chicago. She has exhibited internationally, in solo exhibits at the Free University in Berlin, and at the International Artists Center in Poznan, Poland.

Hoelscher has been the recipient of several awards including a 2007 grant from the Indiana Arts Commission, a 2003 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and a 1996 Fellowship for the Visual Arts from the New England Foundation for the Arts. From 1997 to 1998 she was supported by a Fulbright Grant for a project in Berlin, Germany.

Since 1995 Hoelscher has been engaged in teaching photography, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Currently she teaches at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville.

Since the 1990s I have been photographing architectural environments, both inside and out. My locations have been diverse, from Eastern Europe, Berlin, Montreal, Boston and Chicago, to sites closer to my new home in Southern Indiana in the U.S. I am fascinated with architecture, its builders, and its inhabitants. In their original forms, built spaces often reflect the values and aspirations of their designers. However they were planned, spaces inevitably evolve over time as their functions change and as users leave traces behind. Spaces often acquire new layers of significance that can obscure or contradict the original intentions of their builders. All of these meanings may also be trumped by the personal memories and emotions of the inhabitants of a space. My work challenges viewers to develop a more conscious awareness of the many connotations and ambiguities embedded in the spaces we build and occupy.

The photograph is commonly regarded as a true window to the past, a reliable aid to memory. The world seen in my photographs, however, is a subtly altered reality, often more fiction than fact. I photograph buildings and spaces, scan the negatives to make digital files, then enter the digital space in the images to mold their features in accord with my imagination. The process is somewhat like a set designer, borrowing from the syntax of familiar architectural styles and surfaces to construct strange contained worlds. In this series of panoramic photographs I linked discrete segments of space into larger maze-like expanses. I sorted through my photographs and selected portions of walls, doors or columns that fit together believably. The mind initially apprehends a united, seamless space, but the joints between frames usually are still discernable. The illusion of reality is subverted in my photographs, and the viewer is invited to question their objectivity, to make interpretations, or to invent stories.

My own approach to architecture and space expresses content that is both personal and universal. The many corridors and doors relate to the myriad passageways of the human mind, through which ideas, feelings and memories continuously pass and intersect. At the same time recognizable architectural forms and motifs speak of the common values and aspirations of the culture that I live in.



Upstairs

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 28", 2003



Hotel
pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 34", 2005



Cellar

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 31", 2003

Attic

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 37.6", 2003



Courthouse II

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 39.3", 2007

Rockport Courthouse

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 9 1/3" x 41", 2007



Public Bathroom

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 36.6", 2003



Entryway
pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 32.3", 2005



Antique Shop

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 9.3" x 41", 2007

Library

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 29.6", 2003



Museum I

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 9" x 41", 2004

Museum II

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 39.3", 2007



Renovation I

pigment ink-jet print on rag paper, 10" x 39", 2007







About Manifest

Founded in May of 2004, Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization headquartered in the urban neighborhood of East Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. The elegant street level exhibition space is minutes away from downtown Cincinnati, and the numerous academic institutions of higher learning in the region. It is also within easy walking distance of a diversely populated historic neighborhood with residents from all walks of life. The galleries are free and open to the public five hours a day, five days a week, presenting works by students and professionals from around the world. The Manifest Drawing Center Studio is located in the nearby Walnut Hills Essex Studios Complex.

Manifest is supported by grants and public donations and has the goal to support student professionalism, integrate the arts into the urban residential community and raise the bar on artistic standards. The mission also includes the exploration of the relationship between art and design, as well as the ongoing support and display of drawing in all its various forms.

Mission

Manifest stands for the quality presentation, experience, and documentation of the visual arts, engaging students, professionals, and the public from around the world through accessible world-class exhibits, studio programs, and publications.

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