

MANIFEST™ v66

Deus Ex Machina

| Holding On (Nadia Sablin)

| Projections



MANIFEST™

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY
AND DRAWING CENTER

volume 66

Deus Ex Machina

Holding On

Photographs by Nadia Sablin

Projections



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

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Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center

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September 28 – October 26, 2012

Matthew Albritton
Ft Thomas, Kentucky

Nathalie Bertrams
Johannesburg, South Africa

Susan Bryant
Clarksville, Tennessee

Seder Burns
Allen Park, Michigan

Bryan Christie
New York, New York

Bryan Florentin
Dallas, Texas

Michael Gard
Valparaiso, Indiana

Marcella Hackbardt
Mount Vernon, Ohio

Laura Hennessy
McDonald, Pennsylvania

Bethany Pipkin
Greenville, North Carolina

Jim Shirey
Athens, Ohio

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FOTOFOCUS

Deus Ex Machina

(god from the machine)

Guest Curated by Dennis Kiel

Chief Curator at The Light Factory in Charlotte, North Carolina

Deus Ex Machina is an exhibit assembled from international submissions considered on a competitive basis by a broad jury and curatorial process. The call for entries sought submissions by artists using photography and the camera/machine to discover, document, and inspire experiences of the divine.

A popular story proving the mythical power of photography is the one which recounts indigenous natives' reactions to the process of having their image taken and reproduced on paper. They believed by taking their picture the camera was stealing people's souls. Of course modern society is numb to such apparent superstition. However, some truth may be at its core—the camera captures a unique transfer of light from the surface of the individual, and freezes it in a two-dimensional stasis, unmoving and unliving, a fragment of time and light. We are beholden to the primary source of light in our lives, the sun, and whether we admit it or not it is an unquestionable deity, a giver of life, and a destroyer.

With this exhibit Manifest explores how photography can not only capture divinity (using light), but also how it produces art objects that somehow replicate the living energy, the positive life-centered sublime and perhaps momentary experience, despite its non-living transitory nature as an art object.

For this project, Manifest received 316 entries from 106 artists from around the world. Our six-member jury winnowed the submissions down to a pool of semifinalists, from which guest-curator Dennis Kiel selected the final 13 works for inclusion.

Kiel states:

With this competition, I was extremely curious to see how the photographers would deal with this theme, one that asked them to “discover, document, and inspire experiences of the sublime (or the divine).” With that in mind, I was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the work and the wide variety of approaches offered by the photographers. Although narrowing down the list was not an easy task, I’m sure the visitors to this exhibition will be as pleased as I am with the final results...

All of the winning entries have the qualities that I look for in a good photograph. They are visually engaging, thought provoking, and in different ways, challenge the viewer to take a closer look and ultimately make those discoveries they never thought were there.



Matthew Albritton, Ft Thomas, Kentucky
Pilgrimage, film capture, digital print, 5" x 17", 2003



Nathalie Bertrams, Johannesburg, South Africa
Butterfly, pigment print on German etching paper, 23.6" x 35.4", 2012



Susan Bryant, Clarksville, Tennessee
Anticipation, digital print from scanned 4" x 5" collodion glass negative, 14" x 11", 2012



Seder Burns, Allen Park, Michigan
She Who Has No Name, archival inkjet print, 16" x 21", 2010



Bryan Christie, New York, New York
Aphrodite, mixed media, 20" x 13", 2012



Bryan Florentin, Dallas, Texas
Untitled 36, ultrachrome pigment print, 36" x 30", 2012



Michael Gard, Valparaiso, Indiana
Winter Mountainside - Alaska, giclée print, 16" x 24", 2004



Marcella Hackbardt, Mount Vernon, Ohio
Imminence, digital chromogenic print, 16" x 35", 2010



Marcella Hackbardt, Mount Vernon, Ohio
Spinning, digital chromogenic print, 26" x 34", 2010



Laura Hennessy, McDonald, Pennsylvania
Dictionary (Book series), aluminum print, 24" x 22", 2012



Laura Hennessy, McDonald, Pennsylvania
Peach (Loofah series), aluminum print, 30" x 30", 2012



Bethany Pipkin, Greenville, North Carolina
Echoed Plexus, digitally altered scanning electron micrograph, 6.75" x 25", 2012



Jim Shirey, Athens, Ohio
Precious Fruit, c-print on archival paper, 20" x 30", 2012







September 28 – October 26, 2012

HOLDING ON

Photographs by Nadia Sablin

This solo exhibition of Nadia Sablin's photographs is one of six selected from among 150 proposals submitted for consideration for Manifest's ninth season.

Of her work Sablin states:

For the past six years, I have been working on an extended photographic series in Russia and United States. Titled *Together and Alone*, it was completed in 2011. This body of work is based on the idea of a search for one's identity and the pain of separation from childhood. By making portraits of girls and women, I search for a way to reinterpret myself as an adult without losing the magic of childhood. By including photographs from both the former Soviet Union and the United States I am creating a reality whose location is psychological, rather than geographic, in nature. The resulting images are a blend of observation, performance, and autobiographic exploration. As a Russian-born artist, I closely relate to the format of the fairy tale, incorporating it into the imagery of the photographs and into the prose poem that introduces the work:

I was conceived, mistakenly, as a twin, although nobody knew this but me. There were two of us, in the womb, identical from our underdeveloped heads to our microscopic toes. She was a Russian girl, just like me, a secretly Jewish Russian girl, prone to emotion, impatient, bookish. She hid. I knew her well before we left. We conspired on hot days in the village, outwitted the demons in the marshes, looked for treasure among the reeds. We parted ways in '92, when I was brought to greener pastures, great-grandmother's pillows and iron skillet in tow. Our life packed in six check-in suitcases, three carry-ons. I was alone here in your new world, so I tried to replicate her, mold her out of my mother, out of American girls, out of mirrors. I search for her in images by Dutch painters, in stories by Marquez and Bulgakov. She lives off drywall, in an attic, in a well; she ascended to heaven, she is a mother by now, she walks the outskirts of St. Petersburg as a whore, she is still a child, while I've grown bigger, and am good at paying my bills on time. She is still breathing magic. She, the other one, is beautiful. Her braid is down to her feet like my aunties'. She brushes her hair one hundred times before bed. A wolf guards her virtue. I see her in the eyes of strangers. Her gestures overtake theirs for a split second, and she is gone before they know what has happened. With my trap, I wait for her to appear there, and if I'm quick enough, if I press the button at the right moment, none of this will be real. We will be together again, she and I, conspirators, sisters, laughers of derisive laughter, whole.



Showing a sampling of these images at Manifest as Holding On adds another layer of complication/completion to the series. The gallery's involvement with drawing and painting, which are both influences on my practice, was a strong impetus for me to propose this exhibit. The location of Manifest in Ohio speaks to the time I spent in the Midwest during my formative years. Much of the way I experience the United States and my identity as an American comes from living and going to school in the suburbs of a big Ohio city.

Nadia Sablin was born in the Soviet Union and spent her adolescence in the American Midwest. After completing an MFA degree at Arizona State University, she now lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and St. Petersburg, Russia. Her photographs have been shown at the Griffin Museum of Photography, Wall Space gallery and Jen Bekman gallery among many others.

This exhibit was sponsored in part by

FOTOFOCUS



Passion of Elora, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2010



Ivan and Ilya with their mother, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2010



Rita, archival digital print, 30" x 24", 2010



Bathers on the Borshchevik path, archival digital print, 30" x 24", 2011



Sasha with the Biggest Tree in Yampil, archival digital print, 30" x 24", 2010



Betsy Schneider and her Children, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2009



Izze in the Forest, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2008



Sonya and Sioma in their Play Room, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2011



Michelle's Daughters Eden and Teal in their Bedroom , archival digital print, 24" x 30" , 2010



Michelle in her Bedroom, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2010



Eddie Rivera and his Mother, archival digital print, 24" x 30", 2010

September 28 – October 26, 2012

Recep Akar
Istanbul, Turkey

Liam Alexander
Brooklyn, New York

Sama Alshaibi
Tucson, Arizona

David Beck
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Kim Burgas
New York, New York

Bryan Christie
New York, New York

Lucas Coffin
Fairview Heights, Illinois

Ed Midgett
Boone, North Carolina

Damon Mohl
Louisville, Colorado

Stefan Petranek
Indianapolis, Indiana

Hector Rodriguez
Hong Kong, China

Pierre St-Jacques
Brooklyn, New York

Danny Warner
Manhattan, Kansas



PROJECTIONS

Projections is an exhibit of 13 video-based works assembled from international submissions considered on a competitive basis by a particularly unique and difficult jury and curatorial process consisting of thirteen different jurors.

This is a first of its kind exhibit at the gallery, and we are excited that Manifest is able to share various ways in which artists' works are realized and presented simply through projected light. The projections were presented in different schedules across the four-week exhibit, including one day 'solo' exhibitions for each work, looped continually for a day, and various screenings of all thirteen works in sequence.

Total playing time for all works combined is approximately 2 hours.

For this competitive project, Manifest received 179 entries from 104 artists from around the world. Our jury winnowed the submissions down to the pool of thirteen finalists. The exhibit features works by artists from Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, New York, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Hong Kong, China, and Istanbul, Turkey.



Man, in his complicated and multi-dimensional Life, can make himself independent in intellectual terms only when he internalizes his experiences and develops awareness. The struggle man has with himself becomes meaningful when the historical development of his desire to lead himself is considered. This painful struggle whose winner and loser are the same, brings change and transformation within. "In-between" is a single channel video that has been produced starting off from this struggle.

Recep Akar, Istanbul, Turkey
In Between, 5'30", 2012





Over time, your perception of time changes more than anything else in your life ever will, because every “moment” you are alive your relationship to the duration of that moment changes. You can equate your perception of time at various moments of your life by multiplying the amount of time you have been alive by the amount of time that you have been alive, that number, $(A) \times (A) =$ your perception of time. A newborn experiences time at a rate of 1 the first moment it is born, 10 minutes later it is experiencing “time” at a rate 100 times faster, by 10 years old the rate is about 313, by 30 the rate is 2.514. Therefore, a 30 year old experiences that same “period of time” about 9 times faster than a 10 year old. So you may feel as though life is passing you by faster and

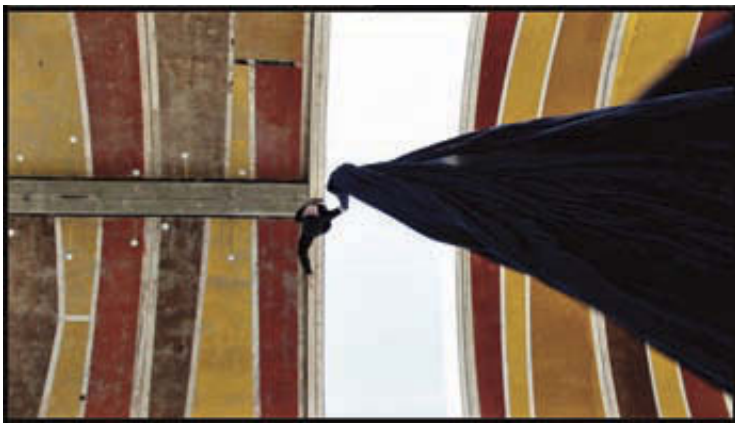
faster, well, it’s because it is. Your experience of one minute at age eighty is 64 times faster than it was when you were ten.

This constant change in your perception of time makes it near impossible for you to realistically interpret time over time, and therefore impossible for you to realistically interpret your life, your past, your present, and your experience of the time you spend on earth.

This piece “#AllYouHave” expresses this relationship with the perception of time that we all universally experience as a human race using the viewer and their experience of the piece as the medium.

Liam Alexander, Brooklyn, New York
#AllYouHave, 6’28”, 2011





“vs. The Brother” examines the rearing of opposite gendered siblings in Middle Eastern society as they move into adulthood. The video explores the idea of freedom and expectations of opposite genders; both are pressured into accelerated maturities and responsibilities, yet both are trapped in their narrowly defined roles. In the video, Alshaibi juxtaposes a race car going round in circles (known as ‘drifting’ or ‘donuts’) with the image of a veiled female climbing, spinning and almost disappearing along a black silk rope. At one point the driver steps out and then allows his car to complete a full turn unmanned before he jumps back behind the wheel; he too practically disappears amongst the car’s rising smoke. The contrasting spinning

movements of the airborne female alongside her male counterpart suggest she is stifled by the veil and social restrictions, but, in her own way, still seeks the same freedoms. Ultimately, both are trapped in the repetitive and circular performance of society’s expectations, continuing the cycle of social norms of acceptability. The work is a social observation on men in the Middle East who find their masculinity in risky and destructive ways amidst stifling economic, social and political conditions.

Sama Alshaibi, Tucson, Arizona
vs The Brother, 4’22”, 2011





"Logjam" (2010) is a 25 minute animated film created as a result of a 2010 residency with the St. Croix Watershed Research Station at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Logjam asks the viewer to contemplate the cyclical process of death and rebirth, while also discovering the calming effect of chaos. In order to accomplish this, I designed the animation to be studied like a moving painting that is meant to appear simultaneously solemn and hypnotic. A logjam is how a river communicates that it has lost its patience - that it has been pushed beyond its physical limitations as a source of life and power. It is a stopped moment in time – a point at which the

river holds its breath in frustration before once again letting it out in a panicked frenzy of activity. But in the Logjam animation, that moment lasts forever, shifting back and forth repeatedly, between victory and defeat. By visually focusing on the historical relationship between the environment and the logging industry, my goal was to have the viewer question exactly what is truly dying in Logjam's continuous symbiosis between humanity and nature.

David Beck, Menomonie, Wisconsin
Logjam, 25'1", 2010





Everyday, people being their days with objects of adornment and self-identifiers. We accentuate our eyes, or our lips. We wear colorful garb or t-shirts printed with the name of our favorite band or a funny joke. We state, "This is who I want you to think I am," based on our notions of how the outside world perceives these symbols. Such objects place each of us in a cultural, class, sex, and regional context.

Prosody is an exploration of obscuring signifiers, down to some of the most basic and biological - arms, legs, head. Wiping away any categorical context and easily recognizable forms that classify us as "human," we are left with pure biological and

reactive matter. Prosody asks, "How do we move when we become limited in our tools of self expression? When we can no longer even claim, 'I am human.'?" What parts of our bodies become activated as modes of expression when we are confined to vessels used normally for bodily functions and as containers for organs? And does our mind exist in this space?

Kim Burgas, New York, New York
Prosody, 4'50", 2012

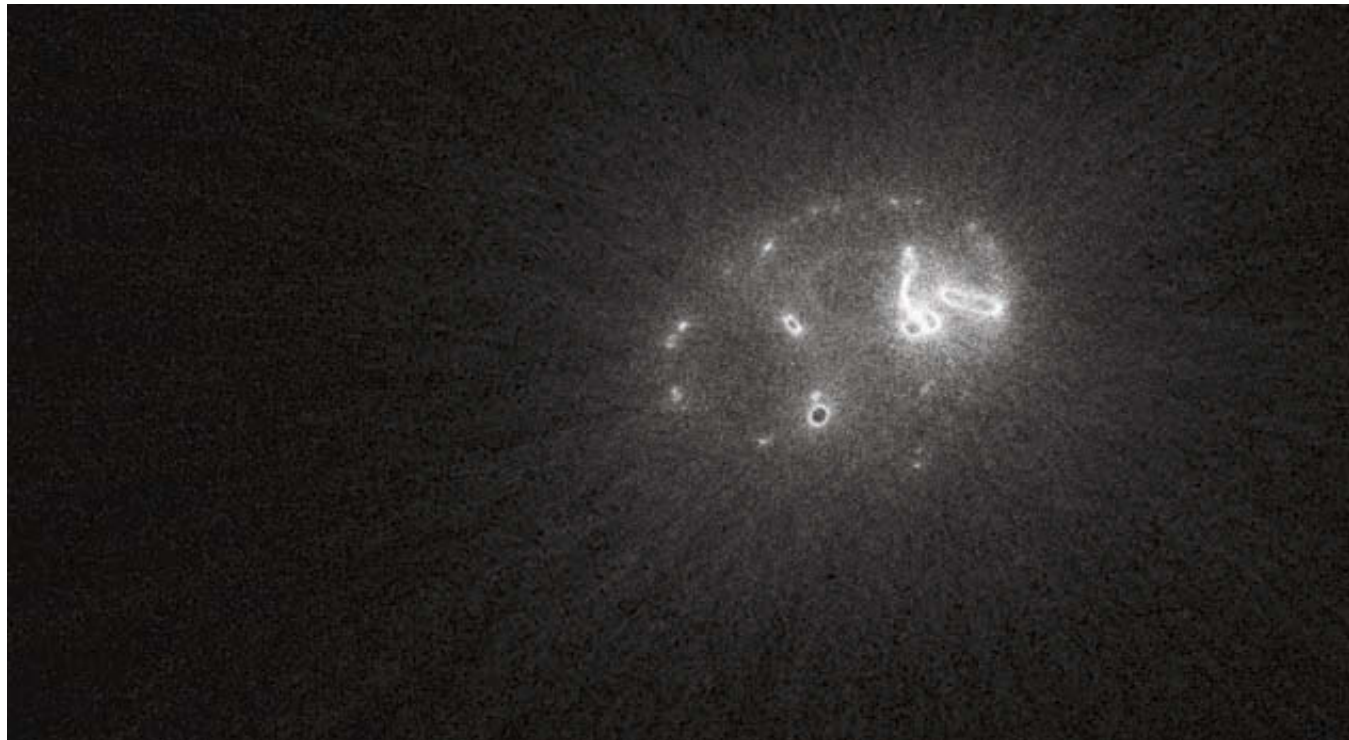




I'm most interested in the relationship between our energetic bodies and physical bodies. I explore where they intersect, where they are different, and where they are the same. I'm most influenced by Renaissance art. Da Vinci and Michelangelo are my biggest influences.

For me, art serves the same purpose as science and religion (or spirituality if you prefer); it has the potential to uplift humankind and keep our eyes open to the wonder of the world. In the end, I would like my work to bring about an awareness of the viewer's highest, deepest and truest self. All of my work is based on anatomically correct digital 3D models. I have been a scientific illustrator for 15 years and there has been an organic evolution from illustration to fine art in my work.

Bryan Christie, New York, New York
Arm_Loop, 3'11", 2012





Meritocracy is the American mindset. So long as one is willing to work hard, she or he can find success and happiness while overcoming adversities and combating circumstance. I have great compassion and admiration for the women and men of the working class. Through my art, I pay homage to such individuals, who devote their lives to work and their families.

"To Keep You Warm" was fueled by my own personal doubts and tribulations in aim to evoke questions of human mortality and what it means to achieve merit in today's society. The keys of the antique player piano were recorded individually in analog methods. The accompanying soundtrack was created by digitally routing the broken piano's notes to an electronic keyboard. Thus, giving the merittless a new purpose.

Lucas Coffin, Fairview Heights, Illinois
To Keep You Warm, 4'8", 2011





What comes after here? There? Where?
The work is meant to evoke apparitions of past ancestors,
friends and family who are no longer with us.

Except they are here, perpetually walking through the gallery,
but instead of looking at the work - the work is looking at you.
Say hello.

Ed Midgett, Boone, North Carolina
After Here, 19'17", 2012





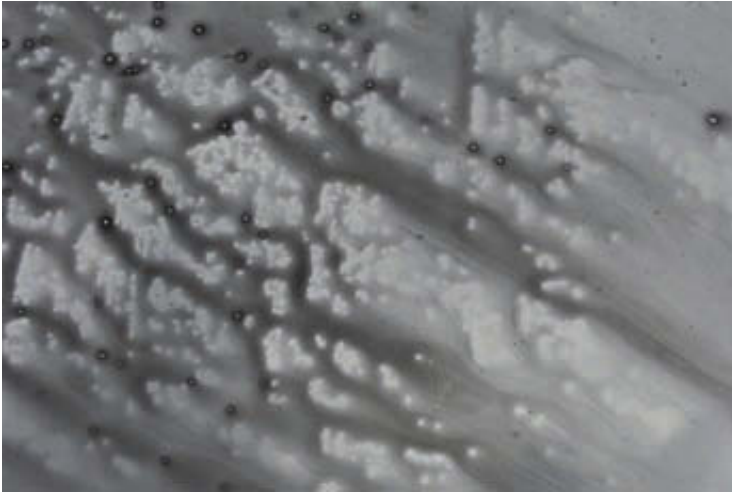
The Dust Machine is an imaginative visual journey through absurd technological eras of exploration, communication and isolation. It is a highly stylized, genre influenced, fifteen-minute meditation on technology and the nature of control.

Created over a three-year period at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the film was shot on two full-sized sets as well as twelve miniature sets that were mainly comprised of reclaimed materials and parts from local junkyards. It also involved filming underwater, through layers of glass and throughout the American west in desolate locations in Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California.

Damon Mohl, Louisville, Colorado
The Dust Machine, 15'20", 2011

The project has screened nationally and internationally in numerous film festivals. In 2011 it was a regional winner and nationally nominated in the Alternative Category for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 38th Annual Student Academy Awards.





Through a series of visual experimentations my work explores specific ordering systems within nature such as gravity, the genome, physical states of change in water, the dialectic between chaos and pattern, and the slippage between the microscopic and the cosmic. Through the processes of trace, mapping, impression and act, the work questions the metaorder of nature from the stance of a personal observer. The imagery I construct attempts to represent these systems in a way that challenges the viewers initial perception of seemingly banal phenomena. By recording the aftermath of acts, mapping the complexities of time, and observing the simultaneous temporality and permanence of these systems through the process of trace and impression, my artwork becomes equally entrenched between the annals of the laboratory and the altar of the sublime.

In "Blacksky," the viewer is presented with the illusion of natural patterns and processes through the introduction of water and ink. Syncopated to a melodic composition of vibrating glass, the video quietly transitions from the microscopic to the cosmic and back again in order to question one's stance towards nature and its myriad forms. Specifically, the video plays with the expanse of space, transitioning from cell-like representations to stellar abstractions that appear to move through black space. While I intend for all work to be visually enticing, this work comments on the fluidity that exists between scales on opposite ends of the special spectrum we inhabit.

Stefan Petranek, Indianapolis, Indiana
Blacksky, 12'2", 2006





"Inflections" is a real-time generative system that temporally rearranges video sequences to explore the transfiguration of gesture by algorithmic means. The software implements a motion tracking algorithm that analyzes the movement in a very short clip, a silent moment extracted from Bergman's film *Persona*, and reorders its frames in real-time using a pseudo-random process based on a mathematical equation known as the logistic map. The result is a transformation of the affective meaning of the actor's original gesture, which now takes on a halting, groping quality. This system also encourages the viewer to pay close attention to small variations in body language. "Inflections" defines cinema as an art of gesture and celebrates silence as a primal linguistic act.

Hector Rodriguez, Hong Kong, China
Inflections, (continuous), 2010-2012





A few years ago I would have said that my work was about structure, or more specifically about how one constructed one's world. Over time this has changed to a more simple and basic premise for my work. I want to explore these little daily moments that we all experience, these glances or gestures, in which there is a connection made with another. In these moments a small door opens up into a large new world that, if only for a second, makes us glimpse as what it means to be human.

"A Hidden Place for Fragile Things" takes place during one night where a family has taken on a couple of travelers. The

introduction of the strangers changes the dynamics in the home. Each character tries to put on a solid respectable front, yet the fragilities and secrets that each try to hide come through eventually. Ultimately the video deals with the vulnerability of human interactions and relationships. It shows how a given situation can dramatically alter itself given even small changes.

Pierre St-Jacques, Brooklyn, New York
A Hidden Place for Fragile Things, 12'14", 2008-2009





Stepping into the dawn of the bio-tech era, the short experimental animation piece “Aphasia Volutia” move through aesthetic and conceptual territories of our bared physical scaffolding: A frenzy of tiny nanoscopic bio-machines—pulsing with energy, boring holes, tendrils slipping quietly along—work at unknown tasks within a vast bodyscape of porous bone and watery ligament. Music is by eight-member Swedish experimental instrumental ensemble “Sickoakes.”

Locked in an ambiguous dance with the mechanical and technological ‘life’ that has become a large part of our cultural, physical and physiological architecture—this work attempts to

slip the edge between humanity and technology, where nanoforms quietly manipulate the electrical and biochemical impulses through which we sense (and make sense of) the worlds within and around us.

Are the nano-machines oppressive, or constructive? Autonomous or controlled? Symbiotic or parasitic? Thinking or rote? These questions are left to the viewer’s interpretation.

Danny Warner, Manhattan, Kansas
Aphasia Volutia, 1’59”, 2012



About Manifest

Founded in 2004 by professors and students from area Universities, Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization headquartered in the historic urban neighborhood of East Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. The 1000 square foot museum-quality street level gallery offers three distinct exhibition spaces, and is minutes away from downtown Cincinnati, and the numerous academic institutions of higher learning in the region. Its central location in the Woodburn Avenue district and DeSales Corner places it within an energetic, creative, and revitalizing community that includes other galleries, shops, restaurants and artists' studios.

The gallery benefits from its location within easy walking distance of a historic neighborhood populated by 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 of all kinds by student and professional artists from around the world. The Manifest Drawing Center Studio is located in nearby Madisonville.

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.

Manifest Gallery

...a neighborhood gallery for the world.

Manifest Press

...take every exhibit home.

Manifest Drawing Center

...because learning to draw is learning to see.

Manifest Artist Residency

...supporting individual artists, one year at a time.

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