pronto
The 32nd generation of OCAD’s Florence Program
2006 - 2007
IN 1974, the distinguished designer and painter, Franklin Arbuckle, founded the OCAD Florence Off-Campus Program. Over the decades, this individually-oriented program of directed study has offered access to hundreds of students seeking firsthand experiences with the great art and architecture of the Renaissance, as well as other periods represented in Florence and elsewhere in Italy. In addition, each student is provided with modest, collective studio space, available twenty-four hours a day, for the development of their personal art under the critical guidance of various OCAD studio professors.

During the Winter Semester 2007, I have had the great joy and challenge to be the studio instructor for twenty-six of the students who have participated in the Florence Program during the current academic year. It has been gratifying to assist in the development of the diverse studio practices of the third, fourth, and fifth year students who comprise this lively group. Through individual interviews, group critiques and discussions, and related activities, we have explored historic and contemporary issues and precedents relevant to current creative practices. In addition to the studio instruction, the program is fortunate to have the extraordinary Peter Porcal as professor of art history who shares his vast knowledge with students, and arranges pertinent field trips that greatly enrich the range and depth of the learning environment.

In order to communicate to a wider audience the exceptional value of the Florence Program to the comprehensive growth of the participants, this community decided to collaborate on a publication that would document its ambitious and varied studio efforts. Organized, designed, edited, and produced by participants, this engaging publication is a persuasive testament to the creative gifts and contrasting aspirations of these maturing artists who will soon take their places in the Canadian and international art worlds. I am deeply grateful to OCAD for affording me the opportunity to be part of the Florence Program, and to have had the pleasure of working with such talented, mutually supportive, and motivated individuals.

Ron Shuebrook
Florence Program Co-ordinator, Winter 2007
Florence, Italy
March 23, 2007
FLORENCE IS a city of impressions.

When I first arrived in Florence last August, I was taken by the colour of the city. It both surrounded me visually and enveloped me in a vibration specific to the energy of this colour. Naples yellow. (Shouldn’t it be Florentine yellow?).

Having returned to Toronto, I find myself reminiscing over the experience of being in Florence. Many thoughts have to do with the OCAD Florence study-abroad program – wondering about the students presently in Florence and the development of their individual bodies of work in the second academic semester, and recollections of the architectural and artistic presence of Florence encountered in the long ramblings through the city and its monuments that formed the structure of the art history program. Other thoughts are more emotive – but none the less significant – sounds and smells of the markets, the richness of the tapestry of the medieval streets, the play of light on the buildings, reflections of the cityscape upon the Arno, and of course, the colour that envelops one.

A few days before leaving Florence, I went into Paperback Exchange, an English-language bookstore located near the Duomo, to buy a couple of second-hand books for the flight back to Toronto. I ended up purchasing a novel set in Florence in the days after the flood of November 1966, a flood that devastated much of the historic centre of the city. The destruction to the city, with its irreplaceable treasures of Renaissance culture, was momentous with much of Florence’s cultural heritage being either damaged or irreversibly destroyed.

The novel made me recollect that the OCAD Florence study-abroad program is at least 30 years old, perhaps older, which would mean that it started soon after the devastation of the flood.

Florence then and Florence now. Even though the words of the novel put me into a space and time forty years past, much that was written could have been a description of the city as one experiences it today. In many respects, Florence is a city that lives in a timeless state, and it is perhaps this spirit of freedom from a specificity of time that makes the experience of being in Florence so powerful and overwhelming significant. An experience that has – and will – live in the psyche through one’s life. Which makes a novel of Florence of the 1966 flood touch one with a relevance that reverberates in the actual lived memory of the city. I realize that for myself and for students who have participated in the OCAD Florence program, we will eternally return to mnemonic utterances of this city, its architectural presence and artistic masterpieces, which repeated no matter how many times, will leave us with its magic of place.

My final impression of Florence in January 2007 was not the mad dash to the airport to catch a morning flight to Milan. Rather, the stillness of the early morning street, as I took my final recycling to the bins, the softness of the air that enveloped me, the warm light of early dawn. The beauty of these impressions startled me. Certainly they will remain timelessly not only in my memory, but also in my psyche.

Sarah Nind
Florence Program Co-ordinator, Fall 2006
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
March 2007
ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS. You may already not remember, but we have seen this year two famous examples of angels represented without wings. The first image was the beautiful Byzantine mosaic from the late sixth century in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna. In this mosaic we see Abraham surprised in his home by three beautiful young men. Without hesitation he sits them at his table and treats them with lamb and wine. He does not yet know that these three young men at his table are angels. They do not have wings.

The second example of angels without wings we saw is famous: they are Michaelangelo’s angels in his Last Judgement in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican; but now that you are leaving, I am thinking rather about Abraham’s angels. Young, gentle, beautiful as you all are.

It has been now more than twenty years that I have been with OCAD students in Florence. Year after year, hundreds of students. One can not remember now all their names even if I would like to remember them. One can not remember all of their faces even though some of them suddenly surface in my mind’s eye. Although what I do remember is that they were equally young, gentle, beautiful.

They say here about Abraham that when the three youngsters left his house, not having any visible wings, Abraham, suddenly and far a long time still, did hear in the silence of his home, flapping of wings. Good flight, children!

Peter Porcal
Resident Art Historian
Florence, Italy
April 2007
ABRAHAM ALEXANDER

My work serves as a form of documentation; a selective visual hard copy of the landscape and people I’ve encountered while living in Florence.

1. Found backgrounds | Robyn O. Digital C-print. 20.5 x 25.5 cm. 2006. 2. Venezia panorama. RC Print. 29 x 14.5 cm. 2006. 3. Manufactured landscape. 39 x 30.5 cm. 2006. 4. Hyper real coloured landscape. Digital Pigment Print. 30 x 21 cm. 2006.
KEVIN YOUNG-HOON BAE

The imperfect representation of the perfect creation.

JACOB CUTONE

The ‘philosopher’s stone’ is actually every layman.

My materials are all broken, worn and discarded by society. My sculptures are delicate. My found-object works are created as conversations. When it’s late the objects and I tell stories to each other.

JENNIFER DEGAN

Here I am. It might not be much, but it’s all I have. It may not be the quickest way or the best way, but it’s the way I understand. The Dictionary Project is an American college dictionary in which I have inked out all the words I do not know the definition of. The Times New Roman/Signature project is two long scrolls of paper, one which I filled with my signature and the other I hand copied and filled with the font Times New Roman.

1] Signature. Ink on paper. 5.5 x 254 cm. 2007.
2] Signature (detail). 3] Times New Roman. Ink on paper. 5.5 x 254 cm. 2007. 4] Signature. Ink on paper. 5.5 x 254 cm. 2007. 5] Dictionary. Ink on paper. 17.5 x 25.5 x 6.5 cm.
GIANNI DIENI

Toys are a reflection of our society. They illustrate what is going on around us and create that fantastical world where we can escape our everyday problems. I want my work to first take the viewer back to his or her most peaceful memory... where there are no worries... our childhood... a place of comfort for many of us... but not all of us. Closer examination of the work and its components should then awaken the viewer and cause them to consider the socio-political commentary made upon war and consumerism.

The beautiful toy played with by one child could have been made by the hands of another who lives a life of poverty, hunger, poor health, abandonment, and labour. How long can we afford to continue to ignore the disparity that is born of war and consumerism?
JONATHAN ELLIOTT

Through the practice of drawing I attempt to understand the way we relate to the architectural spaces that surround us. By drafting pattern into fragments of architecture, I contemplate the ideologies inherent to the space, questioning the compatibility of disclosed ideologies, the personal ideals, and values that we intuitively project into these spaces.

1 | Patterns in the Station. Mixed media on paper. 149 x 220.5 cm. 2007.
2 | Patterns in the Station (detail)
3 | Untitled. Oil bar and graphite paper. 149 x 208 cm. 2006.
KATIE HIGGINS

I moved into art through a series of events that stemmed from an earlier path in biology and psychology, appreciating most my studies in the field when I was closest to the environment and my subjects. Photography generates similar results for me and consecutively allows me to fulfill a creative path. I continue to be influenced by these two disciplines, concentrating on the environment, cultural landscapes and themes revolving around human relationships with the landscape. *Red Dress Series* concentrates on the mood and experience evoked by the green and natural landscape around me; using a red dress to convey a feminine presence and the powerful, harmonious and perhaps even empowering relationship between an individual [myself] and the landscape.

1, 2, 4, 5, 6 | *Red Dress Series.* Photographs. 33 x 48 cm. 2006. 3 | *Norma & Sally.* Sculpture. 40 cm height. 2006.
TATIANA K. N. I.

Zen says truth is a radical, personal realization— you have to come to it. The greatest revolution to man is to realize his own truth by separating himself from the “mind”. The mind symbolizes that part of our being which is taught since birth. There is another part of the self that is intrinsic. It exists outside of this conditioning. The path of separating oneself from one’s mind is a difficult one. As an artist, I am attempting to portray the emotional experience of shedding one’s identity to understand the nakedness that lies beneath. I refer to this as the “nightmare” aspect of enlightenment, because it is a shattering position to be in. As a viewer, it is your perogative to project the destination of the journey I am illustrating to you and translate this visual language to benefit your own understanding of self-awareness.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 | E3: Enlightenment, Emotion & the Ego.
(individual images within a series) 20.5 x 20.5 cm.
Digital Print. 2007.
bouncing on a rubber road with black canals
that lead like a pin stripe suit
the touch is metal the taste is smiles
and everything is dark
but the scratching feet that try to shuffle skip a part and the lights come on
    a bland blue is more of a complicated pinkish green which hides
on the fringe of a halogen blanket teasing the mechanics of this empty room
on this busy road where i walk alone
    reaching for my eyes imaging hair flowing past
possibly attached to something or a part of what i am now imagining
    this sublet picture i remember best from behind
    bouncing on a rubber road with black canals
i almost forgot to watch where i leave my heart.

SARAH KERNOHAN

I have been developing drawings that are an exploration and survey of the space within a relatively small area. These are mappings of spaces that may, or may not exist. I use some of the conventions of traditional map-making and draw references from topographic maps and the language of map-making; where line is used to indicate the structure of the landscape and graphic elements are used to indicate a human or cultural space. I build my drawings in layers, which allows me to develop an understanding of the structures within the spaces that I am mapping. By experimenting with scale, I am sharing my knowledge of these spaces. I am an amateur cartographer, exploring the potential of mapping as a personal act that can take on a multitude of forms.

1, 2| Infinitude Demur Part Two. Details. 3| Infinitude Demur Part Two. Ink and oil on paper. 140 x 255 cm. 2006. 4| Infinitude Demur Part One. Ink, watercolour, and coloured pencil on paper. 251 x 150 cm. 5| Infinitude Demur Part One. Detail.
BOEUN KIM

I find solace and escape through nature. I have memories and experiences of being among nature and recalling a sense of calm. I try to re-experience that feeling by evoking ephemeral imagery on translucent surfaces so that nothing is solid, like memories that are often very subtle. I yearn to escape and seek solace because sometimes life feels overwhelming... perhaps, I'm trying to escape from myself.

1| Whispers. Assorted fabrics. 100 x 50 x 30 cm. 2007.
2| The ridge. Acrylic on cotton. 100 x 30 cm. 2007.
3| Aura. Acrylic on cotton. 100 x 30 cm. 2007. 4| Those mountains... Acrylic on cotton. 100 x 90 cm. 2007.
NADINE KLAEGER

I appreciate the simplicity and the versatility of the book as an object. It can hold just about anything from trivial ideas and doodles, to the most fantastic story, always keeping its convenient form.

Through processes of sewing, drawing, and cutting away, I transform used books, adding new meaning and turning them into metaphors for the different values and beliefs people tend to have about themselves and the world.

1| Little Big Man (top) & With Time (bottom), ongoing. 2| Fragments of Yarn, 2007. 3| With Time, 2006. 4| Eigenartig, 2006.
JEN KLEMM

Ideas and impressions of Florence and myself intermingle as I allow my work to explore an intimacy with nature. Sourcing my own nostalgia, I have collected imagery that defines my relationship with various perceived characters, in a manner in which is specific to my own experiences. In an effort to suspend the viewer’s desire for a fixed meaning, as well as to relay the ornate conversation of this city, I have borrowed and reproduced patterns found from various sources, such as decorative paper, organic form, and my own photographs. These patterns are reproduced in the form of hand-cut stencils, which act as a ground or overlay for the additional imagery I incorporate into my paintings and drawings. The cultivation of an ornamental language and the comfort of allowing the naïve to once again become knowledge have resulted in these works and a place to remember as “home”.

1| Pigeons Promised. Acrylic, acrylic medium, photographic transfer, thread, and graphite on vellum. 91.5 x 61 cm. 2006. 2| Gori. Acrylic medium, thread, ink, acrylic medium, lettraset transfer, and marker on canvas. 2006. 3| Hare’s hairs. Human hair, gesso, acrylic paint, and acrylic medium on canvas. 30.5 x 30.5 cm. 2006.
KATELYN LANGILLE

The intrinsic relationship between decorative cast iron grates and the organic has proven to be the basis for my work. An example of floral forms in nature is perceived in the grates, which was the origin of my outdoor installations. The pairing of the organic flower in front the grate as well as the gated garden establishes a distinctive juxtaposition. This gives way to the notions of an improvised urban garden as well as a future garden where nature is protected. In a series of collages, a connection between the floral motifs found in the grate and to similar motifs in historical decorative fabrics is introduced. An amalgamation of photo transfers from the installations, floral patterns, motifs, and textile practices such as embroidery is successful in the series. The connection between the decorative and the organic has attested to be a motivating theme and has led to much creative fabrication.

1. 2| One by One [part of a series]. Photograph. 35.5 x 28 cm. 2006. 3| Jumping the Fence. Photograph. 28 x 35.5 cm. 4| Fleur Sous Fiore. Thread and mixed media on canvas. 58.5 x 48 cm. 2007. 5| Graphic Organic. Thread and mixed media on canvas. 48 x 38 cm. 2007.
6| Organic Sketches, Crisscross. Thread and mixed media on canvas. 40.5 x 124.5 cm. 2007.
JENNIFER LEO

This work explores relationships. To search through the struggle and movement of an external and personal identity, and the impulses and passions that move between them. The awareness of an inner and outer self and how I move in and out of them is what I express. Clusters of form and gesture explore this tension and the saturation and evocation of colour bringing it to life; complemented by open, blank spaces that puts this tension to rest. The objects and materials molded within them act as a possessive identity, which decorate and characterize the mind. I emerge myself in their spaces into an experience that is intimate and always changing.

1| Modern Painters. Acrylic and collage. 112 x 142 cm. 2007. 2| Untitled. Acrylic on Plastic Sheet. 122 x 172.5 cm. 2007. 3| In the Principality. Acrylic on Plastic Sheet. 116 x 122 cm. 2007.
BOGDAN LUCA

I am interested in exploring faces in transition. By asking my models to shake their heads while I photograph them I hope to glimpse at a face brought down from a symbolic level to the biological level of our bodies. Portrait painting has traditionally been concerned with capturing the sitter in a pose of fulfilled potential. I want to paint open potential; a face in-between two states.

1| Luca. Oil on masonite. 28 x 35.5 cm. 2007. 2| Colette. Oil on masonite. 28 x 35.5 cm. 2007. 3| Nadine. Oil on masonite. 28 x 35.5 cm. 2007. 4| Jake. 125 x 150 cm. Oil on canvas. 2007.
CAROLYN MCNEILLIE

I have a little box that’s labelled “fascinating differences between you and me.” I’d like for us to fill it. I’d like to take it home and find it empty.

KYLE MATUZEWISKI

Architecture. Landscapes. Human interaction between the two. How we shape the environment around us. How the environment shapes us. We have the ability to construct facades that reflect who we are in this world and our ideal structures identify us as individuals. The imagination allows us to dream of the infinite possibilities.

1) Klemm/Cottage. Graphite on mylar. 30 x 42 cm. 2007. 2) Katie/Cottage. Graphite on mylar. 30 x 42 cm. 2007. 3) Strasbourg Cathedral. Conte on packing paper. 76 x 114 cm. 2007. 4) Rouen Cathedral. Conte on Fabriano paper. 56 x 76 cm. 2007.
AMANDA NEDHAM

See them fighting for power [ooh-wee, ooh-wee, ooh-wa!],
But they know not the hour [ooh-wee, ooh-wee, ooh-wa!],
So they bribing with their guns, spare-parts and money,
Trying to belittle our
Integrity now.


1| *Untitled*. 24 cm tall. Mixed media. 2007. 2| *Untitled*. Mixed media. 50 x 70.5 cm. 2007. 3| *Untitled*. Mixed media. 30.5 x 35.5 cm. 2007. 4| *Untitled*. Mixed media. 30.5 x 35.5 cm. 2007.
ROBYN ORGAN

The figures I created were about coping. They were about coping with leaving home for the first time, the isolation of living in an unfamiliar country, and having to intertwine myself into a new existence. The things I would normally cling to in an uneasy situation—familiar faces, reassuring smells, warm bodies—felt like ghosts here. It raised a sense of panic in me when I couldn’t remember details of faces I’d been staring at my entire life: the curve of my mom’s nose, the placement of those faint brushes of brown on his nose. I began to obsessively gather “parts” from junk markets, the street, and the garbage; anything that was reminiscent. Scraps of fabric, rusty wire, and pieces of dolls started to naturally accumulate in my studio. They began to surround me; padding edges and hiding corners. I cut pieces from my own clothing and belongings; things from home, things my loved ones had seen me in, borrowed or washed for me. I began attaching, sewing, repainting, and resculpting. I was overanxiously trying to manipulate these scraps, these self-proclaimed gems of found materials, into what I wanted to see; my comforts. For a long time I struggled to transform life in Florence into something recognizable; to create something to appease the longing. I tried my hardest to cling, frantically and childishly trying to maintain the life I was comfortable with. What I produced was daunting and awkward company, parallels. My effigies were a result of anxiously, sometimes neurotically, gathering from my surroundings, taking pieces of the outside world and containing, boxing, and balancing. Controlling.

DAN ROCCA

An absurd effort to travel inter-dimensionally while remaining stationary.

A perceptual shift toward non-linear apprehension of vast chronicles.

A cyclical swap of polarity between actuality and reverie.

Continuing cultivation of a simultaneous perspective.

2, 3| Detail from book “In”. Found paint on paper. 2007.
4| Page 13 from “Love and Fear”: Personal Space. Ink on paper.
5| Page 24 from “Love and Fear”: Simultaneous Happening. Ink on paper.
6| Page 12 from “Love and Fear”: We Own it All.
7| Gatuscomm*: Raft of _____. Reconfigured meditation center. Found objects. Dimensions variable.
RON SHUEBROOK

Having lived in the historic center of Florence for the past several months, I have come into daily contact with the inspired achievements of the art and architecture of the Renaissance. The intimate watercolors that I have completed during this period have been stimulated, in part, by my direct encounters with this extraordinary visual heritage. I am keenly aware that these influential cultural models embody a faith in the mysterious and transcendent, and simultaneously exemplify aesthetic objectives that are rational and coherent. Although these recent paintings on paper have been produced in the most modest of studio conditions, they have continued my serious, long-term investigations into the potential of rigorous pictorial form to evoke meaning through immediate sensory experience and social referents.

1| *Inferno #2*. 22.5 x 14.5 cm. Watercolour on arches paper. 2007. 2| *Mid-day, Firenze*. 22.5 x 14.5 cm. Watercolour on arches paper. 2007. 3| *Early Spring, Firenze*. 25 x 15 cm. Watercolour on arches paper. 2007.
JENNIE SUDDICK

I explore the concepts of constructed and controlled spaces within environments, focusing on the ways in which humans, in their current cultural state, interact with nature. I feel that this is generally done through varying degrees of mediation, and raises the questions of what is real nature and how our perceptions of it are formed. The notion of the natural world has become kitsch, a diminished copy version of the original. From my observations, this idealized concepts of a perfect space and entity are generally accepted as authentic. My goal is to show the perceived flawlessness of nature, while simultaneously displaying the artificial form in which we access it, including tourism, museums and films.

1| Magic Postcard, v.e. of 19. 15 x 10 cm. 2007. 2| “The funny thing about tourism...” Installation. Ongoing.
ANASTASIYA SUKHINA

My work combines the immediate and the meditative in one. Sewing and beading are rhythmic tasks I can get lost in. At times, the imagery is repetitive. Most of the imagery utilized, however, is derived from quick immediate sketches or photographs I have taken. I strive to create a pictorial tale that is highly personal and engaging to the viewer. This is not necessarily a tale with a clear beginning, middle and end; instead it is a continuous loop that captures factual and invented fragments of my experience in Florence.

1, 2 Landscape Series [part of a 15 piece series]. Thread on fabric. 25 x 18 cm. 2007. 3 Untitled. Thread on fabric. 102 x 122 cm. 2006.
NIKKI WOOLSEY

It is my intention to make bedfellows of the silly and the solemn and thus beget art that imbues the everyday with a romantic absurdity.

With materials reminiscent of scientific apparatus, furniture, and organisms, I have invented artifacts of ambiguous museological identity that seem at once familiar and strange.

The uncanny potential of banal circumstance is realized in the cloakroom of Berlin’s Hamburger Bahnhof, where I was photographed in various stages of flaccidity.

Curtain Dance is a video in which I slink and twirl, ravelled in my bedroom’s drapery, to Marlene Dietrich’s “Johnny”.

LAUREN WRIGHT

I have always had strong interests in anatomy, physiology, and neurobiology, as well as the concepts of science versus spirituality and altered states of consciousness. In particular, I am fascinated with the brain’s capacity to imagine, dream, and hallucinate, while comprised entirely of cells and chemicals and trapped in a body made of flesh, bone, and organs. My work is a means for me to experiment and philosophize on these subjects. The work borders fantasy and reality and meshes together the beautiful and grotesque. Through a blend of automatism and careful dedication to detail I create biological and anatomical abstractions that are lush, visceral and psychedelic.

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