



**EYE ON THE
STORM**

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CALM BEFORE THE STORM



THE STORM



THE AFTERMATH

BOB RAUSCHENBERG GALLERY

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THE HOUSATONIC MUSEUM OF ART

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Eye On the Storm

The barrage of endless data from the most intense hard news to the silliest of social media is something we all must muddle through on some level each day. Depending on one's needs or interests only a small percentage of said information is of any use, and an even smaller amount of it actually leaves us with palpable, lasting effects. What is most amazing is that somehow, every bit of the images and information has some potential use to someone out there, and it's up to the individual to pick and choose what benefits, bothers or beguiles them.

Then there are some who use this never ending stream of mayhem, mind games and minutiae to reflect, extrapolate or re-present that very same cornucopia of comments to enhance, enliven or elucidate their own thoughts and ideas. When this occurs, it may be considered Contemporary Art, and it is a sampling of this thought provoking work that makes up the exhibition ***EYE ON THE STORM***.

D. Dominick Lombardi, Curator



MARCUS JANSEN, THE STORM (2011), OIL ENAMEL, WOOD AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS
48" X 36"
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COURTESY: UNIT A - CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE, FORT MYERS, FL



ANITA ARLISS, TOUCH (2011), OIL PAINT & MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS, 24" X 32" X 1.5"

The *Calm Before the Storm* includes mixed media works such as *Touch*, by **Anita Arliss**, where we see a haunting stillness right before the occurrence of a disruptive event. It's like a bubble of unknowing, a tenuous calm on the precipice of disaster that contains innocence and trust. Arliss has that knack for bringing her audience right up to the edge, where various levels of consciousness reside, and the slightest change of our awareness spawns an endless array of scenarios.

Leah Oats has more of a sense for the cinematic gesture, and how simple, everyday sequences of thoughts or events can be disrupted by subtle changes such as a rogue breeze or a sudden, unearthly quiet. There is also that element in her work that suggests the unseen, an imperceptible convergence of parallel universes as a possible cause of the unpredictabilities that break the tempo of life.



LEAH OATS, TRANSITORY SPACE, PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, (2011), DIGITAL COLOR PHOTOGRAPH

Nightfall, an oil on linen painting by **Holly Sears** represents what looks to be a meeting of minds. Here, three crows congregate in a marshy valley, standing regal and knowing, confident and cool in the mist of dusk – a metaphor for darker days ahead. Aside from the sheer power of this image, and with all of Sears' work, there comes an understanding that all living things have a soul, and that all souls are equally sensitive and complete.



HOLLY SEARS, NIGHTFALL (2000), OIL ON LINEN, 30" X 19"

Isak Applin breaks down life into magical moments of divergent rhythms and brilliant color. Even when he is at his most subtle, as with works like *The Letter*, Applin presents us with a most curious comfort zone where sparks fly and emotions run deep. This is the time when the calm before the storm is at its most arresting, and the peace can send shivers down your spine.



ISAK APPLIN
THE LETTER (2011)
OIL ON PANEL
9" X 12"

Simple perfection is attained in **Arcady Kotler's** *Drop*, an acute representation of universal energy and equilibrium. The tilt in the orb, which refers to the axis angle of our own planet, is a most potent reminder that there is always a chance of universal radical change.



ARCADY KOTLER, *DROP* (2012), ROPE, 8" X 18" X 18"

With any storm that beckons on the horizon, we understand that perfection, like peace, is easily disrupted and that disruption, if viewed from afar, and without prejudice or worry, is quite beautiful.

The Storm can manifest itself in many ways. With the collages of **Chambliss Giobbi**, the storm has its greatest effect on the human psyche.



CHAMBLISS GIOBBI, *Portrait of Fisher Stevens I* (2007)
COLLAGE AND MAGIC-SCULPT ON ALUMINUM PANEL
60" X 60" X 2"
COURTESY OF 101 EXHIBIT, MIAMI, FL

In his subjects, the intricacies of one's personality explode, twist and reconnect in an endless dance of deconstruction. Holding it all together is a magnetic core of unflinching obsessions, hypnotic hallucinations and holistic transversals that flood this artist's unencumbered trajectory of thought.

In **Arnold Mesches' *Shock and Awe 3*** (2011), we see a car engulfed in flames as its wicked blaze burns our eyes and its black shell haunts our thoughts. As is the case with much of Mesches' work, the *SHOCK AND AWE* series included, it is the vulgarity of falsehoods and the pain in truth that comes to the fore.



ARNOLD MESCHES
SHOCK AND AWE 3 (2011)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 9" X 12"

Marcus Jansen's *The Final Walk* shows a blindfolded Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* as she navigates a most treacherous and tenuous landscape. Here, her four remaining senses will be assaulted, challenged and infiltrated exposing her understanding of reality, while her hope for a happy ending fades and her anxiety grows. Somehow she remains physically unscathed, at least for the time being, while her mind expands to grasp the newly found depth of her imagination.



MARCUS JANSEN, *THE FINAL WALK* (2012), OIL ENAMEL, WOOD AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS, 96" X 58"
© 2012 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK, VG BILD-KUNST, BONN, COURTESY: GALLERIE URBANE, DALLAS, TX

Marci MacGuffie has her sights set on the input of information, as it is filtered through one's daily experiences. Much comes in – too much – and we might do our best to cut through to the essence of structure, beauty and bliss via meditative processes. MacGuffie's art that we do still have a level of control even in the worst of storms. But we have to maintain a sense of place, time and function or we will lose our center and collapse.



MARCI MACGUFFIE, DECOY (2010), INK, WATERCOLOR AND PENCIL ON PAPER 22" X 30"

Rebecca Reeve's photographic series *Milton* reveals the reclusive world of a 66-year-old veteran. In this subject's environment, the



REBECCA REEVE, MILTON (2007-10), ARCHIVAL PIGMENT INK PRINTS 20" X 20" EACH

lack of socialization is replaced by interior spaces filled with elevated and ritualized common objects. These 'stations' or organized areas that are packed with the detritus from the lives of both him and his cohabitants enable him to cope with the day-to-day monotony of his existence that would otherwise consume his mind.

D. Dominick Lombardi: *Urchin #36* and *#4* remind us that there is little or no chance of escaping being 'connected'. We may be enjoying a quiet moment in some bucolic rural area where the sights, sounds and smells of nature surround – still, we are lost in our thoughts, in our personal history burdened by the stresses of communication that muddle our serenity. *Urchin #43* and *#46* show that the expansion of technology and data can mess up a good nap, even if you are 'man's best friend'. How much do our pets understand? Are they absorbing any of the vast changes in the world, and if so, how can they express to us what they are experiencing when we ourselves are so distracted and disconnected?



D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI, URCHIN #36 (2011) SAND, ACRYLIC MEDIUM, OBJECTS AND ELECTRIC LIGHT, 29" X 26" X 21" COURTESY OF 101 EXHIBIT, MIAMI, FL

In *Power Nap*, **Ernest Concepcion** looks at sleep too, as he alludes to the invasive effects of information overload. Concepcion reminds us with his visions, that the constant reminders of natural and man made disasters that we see, hear and read about everyday can take over anyone's dreams. Concepcion can also be quite humorous in an irreverent way, as *OMG Christ II* will attest. Here we see one of the most emailed, texted and tweeted abbreviations in the context of full-blown, head-on, ultimate frustration in the person of Christ himself.



ERNEST CONCEPCION, POWER NAP (2011) ACRYLIC ON PAPER, 30" X 22"

Shawn Huckins uses popular textable abbreviations as well, only in this instance, they are superimposed against highly traditional, classic portraiture. Perhaps this is a commentary on the influence of the sound bite to sway opinion by simplifying complicated ideas. Which, if true, is an indictment against the present state of mind with respect to how little we see past our initial preconceptions.



SHAWN HUCKINS
MRS. ALEXANDER CUMMING:
DGN'T GO THERE, GIRLFRIEND. (2012)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 28" X 26"

Rashaad Newsome embraces technology as he goes with the trends that further his obsessions. Capturing the energy of a flood is a risky business, yet Newsome moves the river's banks through the fertile ground of heraldry, hip-hop, bling and booty resulting in hypnotically beautiful videos that foster pride and power.



RASHAAD NEWSOME, DEVICES (2011), SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO WITH SOUND, RUNNING TIME: 3:22
© COPYRIGHT OF THE ARTIST, COURTESY OF MARLBOROUGH CHSELSEA, NEW YORK, NY

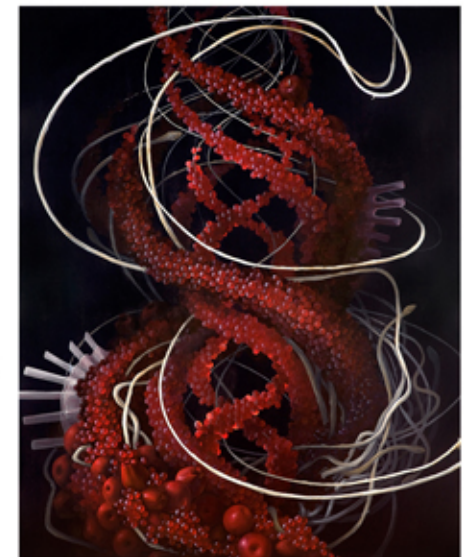
Video artist **Richard Höglund** channels the more spiritual side of who and what we are as it relates to our immediate natural environment.



RICHARD HÖGLUND, DRAG YOURSELF ALONG THE ROAD / SHAVE YOUR HEAD / BURN YOUR CLOTHES / BATHE IN THE SEA (2010), DIGITAL VIDEO OF ALTERATIONS OF A 120 MM BLACK & WHITE NEGATIVE, SOUND, 11:26
COURTESY OF GALLERY DIET, MIAMI, FL

But unlike his predecessor, the painter and visionary Charles E. Burchfield, Höglund filters his ideas in a more conceptual manner. *Drag yourself along the road/Shave your head/ Burn your clothes/ Bathe in the sea* can be looked at as a mystifying mantra for a manageable world replete with any and all possible paths to salvation.

Mia Brownell takes the storm to a molecular level, creating paintings that show a turbulent world where the DNA of plants and animals mix. With transgenics, and the unnatural or ungodly aspects that implies in mind, Brownell forces us to come face to face with the absurdity of it all. It is, after all, the technology that we quite literally consume.



MIA BROWNELL, STILL LIFE WITH FIRST FRUIT (2010)
OIL ON CANVAS, 60" X 48"

D. Jack Solomon's acrylic on canvas painting *Riverwalk* alludes to the unnatural rhythms of the contemporary world, progressions that can be tied together with paint and brush, the contrasting values that play against

subtle color modulations and swift transitions. The result is a dance between two meandering extremes, which project a precipitous depth in perspective that is both unnerving and liberating.



D. JACK SOLOMON, RIVERWALK (2008), ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 38" X 50"

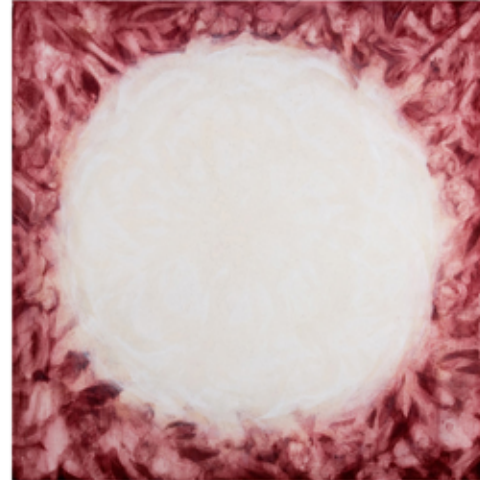
Jonathan Beer presents this new age of awareness as organized chaos. His vision includes both patterns and disruptions that relate in their universal state, whether it is through geometry or color. On the other hand, the contrast between the safe and the sinister is the main take here, and as is often the case, our voluntary or involuntary actions can lead to a profound revelation, or an all-consuming chain of unrelenting and troublesome events. All in all, it remains the luck of the draw.



JONATHAN BEER, ROMANTIC GROVE (2011), OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 55"

Like all storms, the skies will clear and *The Aftermath* will come. Some will be left worse for wear as the overbearing intensity of the outside world takes its toll. **Susan Breen** creates ethereal symbols

that shed light on the very center of the human psyche. Unlike the campy 1966 film *Fantastic Voyage* that used psychedelic effects and dubious situations, Breen boils down her information to an ever-dwindling concentric core that takes us to the energy source of certain mental states such as claustrophobia, kenophobia, and in this exhibition, with the paintings *For Agoraphobia* and *Challenge to the Dark*.



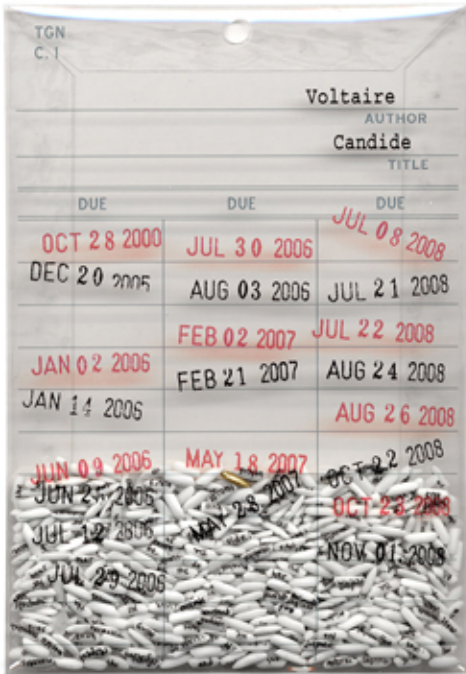
SUSAN BREEN, FOR AGORAPHOBIA (2008)
OIL ON WOOD PANEL, 20" X 20"
COURTESY OF WOODWARD GALLERY, NEW YORK, NY

Patricia Smith sees future city planning as having a decidedly biomorphic aesthetic. As our seas reach unimagined heights, and the desire for a new 'normal' is controlled by nature's overwhelming ebb and flow, an innovative approach to inhabiting our planet will most definitely be defined by function. As a result, a hip new pragmatism will follow – one that only a few of the most fortunate and formidable can enjoy.



PATRICIA SMITH, TEMPORARY SELF ABSORBING RELIEF TERMINAL (2010), INK AND WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 42" X 30"

Another, more contemplative and obsessive post storm world order is expressed with **Trong Nguyen's** *Library*, where the artist, in an attempt to put all the pieces back together again, writes individual chapters or the complete text of various books, word for word, on individual grains of rice. Like the film *Fahrenheit 451*, where individuals memorized entire books for future generations to enjoy, Nguyen shows that same spirit of preservation with a decidedly unconventional twist. Nguyen's hand cut paper grocery bags, *Portable Confessionals* (2012), are "cheap" stand-ins for higher callings. They serve as a reminder that counter-reformations begin with personal calls-to-action, and one in which the private is reborn equally (and playfully) in public.



TRONG NGUYEN, *LIBRARY* (2007-PRESENT), RICE KERNELS, INK AND MYLAR, 5" X 3.5" X 0.25" EACH

Melanie Vote imagines the aftermath to be closer to fantasy than fact. Here, little people take bits and pieces of broken toys, twigs and time and turn it into something expressive like a dance. The debris may also be turned into something much more significant like a home as they renew and revitalize the fractured worlds of the suspiciously missing giants. Other times it all falls apart as some are devoured by their own, post-storm fears and desires.



MELANIE VOTE, *FROG BALLET* (2012), OIL ON PANEL, 17" X 15"



Many of **Paul Gagner's** paintings, such as *Repository* (2011), suggest the transition between loss and recovery. By using books as the symbol of the intelligence of an organized society, Gagner reveals one trait most of us have, which is to treasure the past, its stories and its lessons.

PAUL GAGNER, *REPOSITORY* (2011), OIL ON CANVAS, 50" X 60"

Swallowtail (2000), an oil on linen painting by **Holly Sears**, represents tragedy in a distinctly romantic way. By using a grouping of fallen butterflies in a peaceful clearing, Sears takes the finality of the situation to an otherworldly level, heightening our awareness to a state we once owned as innocent children, when the world seemed so immediate and ambiguous.



HOLLY SEARS, *SWALLOWTAIL* (2000), OIL ON LINEN, 19" X 30"



The ruin of time will leave its indelible mark, a concept that is most obvious in the works of **Tim Merry**. With works like *Pompeii*, we have the ever-changing volley of aesthetics registered as degradation and neglect. As a result, a well-hardened attraction is formed as scarred and scraped surfaces are left shattered, open, vulnerable. With this comes a mysterious tale, which reveals a residue of persistent human emotions and gestures that wash across the everyday.

TIM MERRY, POMPEII (2010)
MIXED MEDIA, 48" X 72"

Karen Shaw moves the overblown aspects of the culture of the contemporary sports figure into a new realm where repurposing trumps name recognition. By picking apart team uniforms, especially those specific to individual stars, she raises the symbolic nature of the sports garment to a more spiritual level. In so doing, Shaw allows us to see popular culture for what it really is – moments in time that come and go like the swallows of Capistrano.



KAREN SHAW, HOOP SHIRT (2006)
UNRAVELED NBA T-SHIRT & STEEL
BASKETBALL RIM, 43" X 18" X 22"

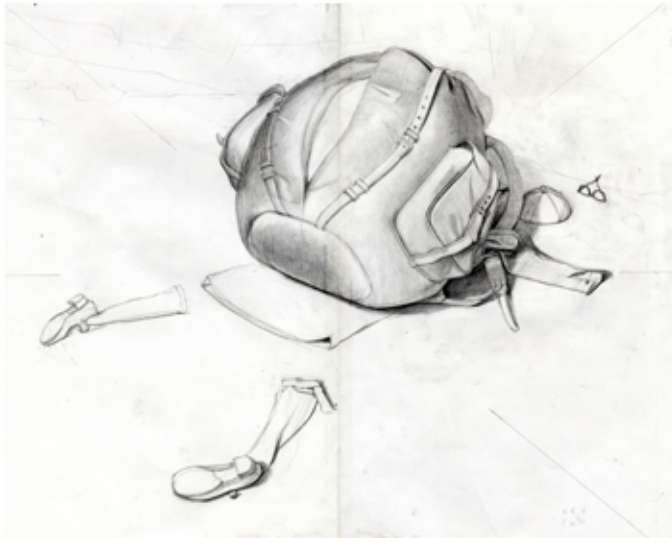
With these fresh interpretations, through the artist's eye on the storm, comes a very different, and perhaps better and more challenging understanding of the world around us. After all, aren't we all in this together?

D. Dominick Lombardi



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MELANIE VOTE, METAMORPHOSIS (2010), GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 22" X 26"

FRONT COVER:
SUSAN BREEN, CHALLENGE TO THE DARK (2009), OIL ON PAPER, 50" X 38.5"
COURTESY OF WOODWARD GALLERY, NEW YORK, NY

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