

Home

Archive

Architecture

Design

Comment

<< BACK

CONTACT

SEARCH

FACEBOOK

TWITTER



Sarabeth Dunton, *The Places I've Been I'll Never Be Again*, installation shot, plastic blinds, San Diego coast, 2012.



Sarabeth Dunton, *Happy Trails to You: A Road Movie*, digital film still, 2012.

Artists Who Grow and Practices that Outlive the Gallery Space

By BLAIR SCHULMAN

The idea of a temporary or “pop-up” gallery in Kansas City is nothing new. Of more recent memory is the July 2012 *Under 21* exhibition at the Swope Interpretive Center comprising artists still in undergraduate school, curated by Hannah Cahow.

This short-term event included M.A. Alford (now known as Mark Allen), Lydia Bryan, and Reed Kyle, among others, created a 1960s style “happening” of work in every corner of the building with an “anything goes” vibe.

Before that was the beautifully curated *Congrats!* at Nine 11 Studio and Exhibition Space in April-May 2012. This show, curated by Sean Thomas Blott and Mitch Kirkwood, included 19 early-career and well-established artists in an environment that felt something like a carnival, a fully interactive experience. The latest temporary exhibition was *If Only A Fool* curated by Chris Daharsh at the City Ice Arts Building. Open for a fortnight in mid-February 2013, it featured works by Alli Litwicki, Andrew Ordonez, Stuart Smith and Emily Wilker.

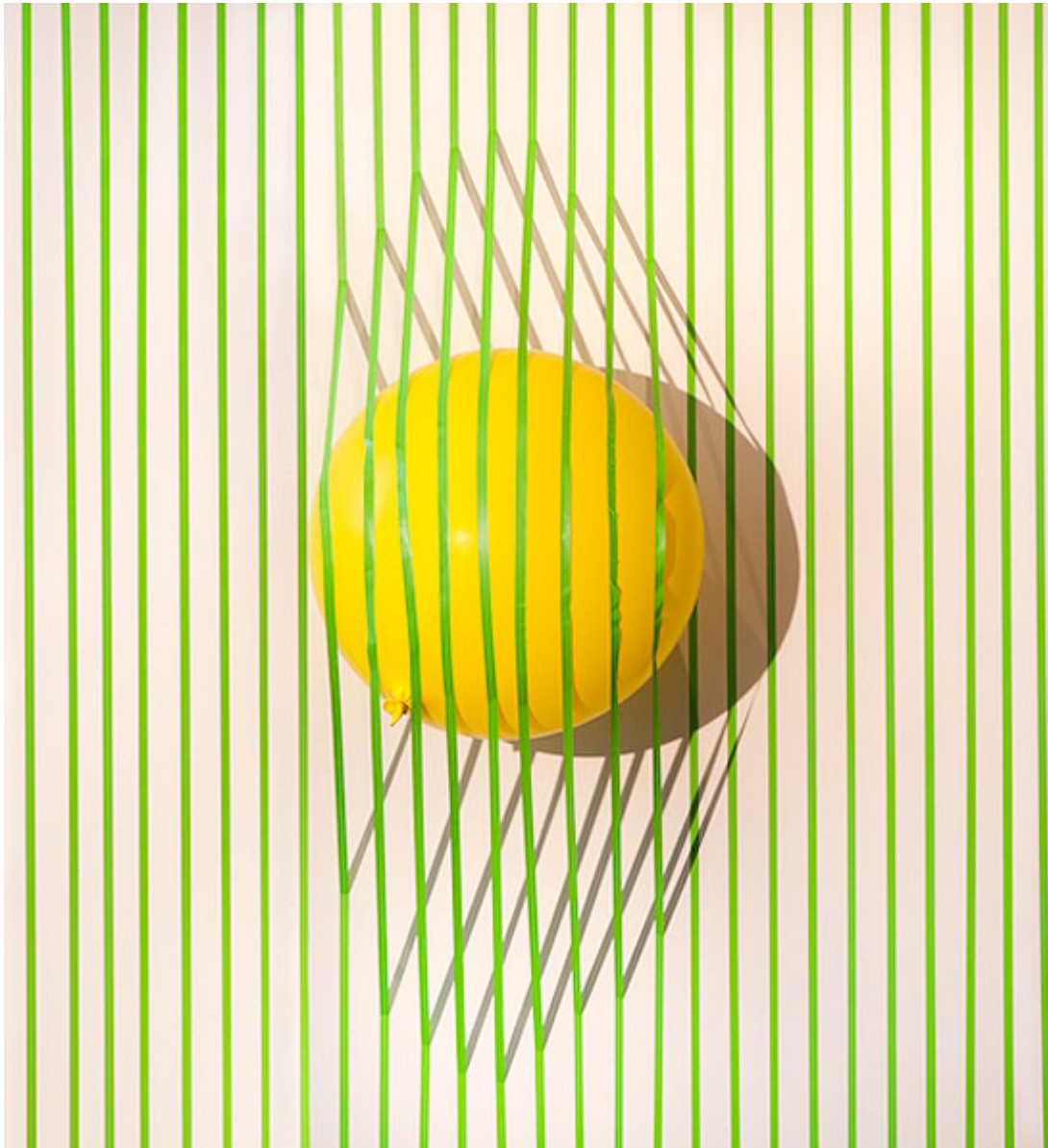
This abundance of space imparts a special identity to the community. A place where one can find walls and open doors to display the evolution of new and continuing work coming out of studios, basements, spare rooms and universities around the metro. From this, patrons, visitors and collectors have ample opportunity to experience new ideas that build on the city’s stake in the larger art ecosystem.

In 2011, artist Cory Imig and I were given an opportunity to find and show work from artists at a temporary space of our own.

The Hobbs Building, in the city’s West Bottoms district, is home to many artists and twice yearly they hold an open studios weekend. *Animals & Buildings* was the event Cory and I arranged, with the support of West Ninth, LLC and Mike Miller, the founding editor and publisher of *Review* and now publisher of *Art Tattler*, *Cupcakes in Regalia* and webmaster of *We Ain’t Stupid* (weaintstupid.org).

The artists we selected were Brett Chenowith, Sarabeth Dunton, Lori Raye Erickson, Jared Flaming and Ryan Haralson. Musician Tommy Lift created a subliminal ambience for the space. Hidden in the ceiling was a looped recording of gallery denizens at an opening, generating a faintly audible chatter. The juxtaposition of this effect was balanced by the crowd of artists and visitors roaming throughout the five floors below the *Animals & Buildings* sixth floor gallery.

Since then, I had a chance to catch up with some of



Cory Imig, *Failing Structure*, detail; 2012; artist tape and balloon; 30 x 10' x 20".



Brett Chenoweth, *Mythos of Logos*, 2013, Digital Photo/art - (Sunglass Head before Edit by Nicky No)

the artists involved. For the event, Brett Chenoweth's works on paper were a mythological connection to a dreamlike past. His ruins may represent the ending of an era but, like all ruins, they endure, providing a bridge to another time. Chenoweth has shown locally and nationally. His studies in literature, philosophy, and theology inform his work. He has been an art instructor in Kansas City and on the East Coast.

With a couple detours in his role as a single parent, Brett adds photography to the mix. Once a photo major in school, he reignited his love for photography while taking pictures for source material. As the iPhone emerges as a valid and present object for documentation, Brett is now primarily focused on mobile photography. An iPad allows Brett to "mix drawing, painting and photography together with ease and it is taking my work into new directions. Also, it's the perfect studio for a single parent!"

Locally, Brett shows his work at the Slap 'n Tickle gallery in the East Crossroads. He also continues teaching drawing and painting at the Kansas City Art Institute's Continuing Education program.

Sarabeth Dunton created intricate pen and ink drawings that mimic the growth and solidity of the home, inside and out. The series of drawings she showed at *Animals & Buildings* hinted at Neutra-inspired planks flowing into intricate Asian floral and mountainscapes, as East meets West.

These days, Sarabeth has moved beyond two dimensional mediums and is exploring video, performance, and photography. Still concentrating on themes of the domestic, she has become more interested in what those ideas mean when they are transported out of the home environment and into the world. The idea that we "carry certain tendencies and proclivities no matter where we are and how we think we have changed," says Dunton.

A new issue of exploration is travel. Her first foray is her project *The Places I've Been I'll Never Be Again* at Front Space Gallery (217 West 18th Street, Kansas City) opening March 1. This work takes household venetian blinds and transports them into new places and strange territories. Throughout her travels in much of the American Dakotas, Northwest, Plains and Southwest, she has worked with these inanimate objects as they begin to take on character of their own and start to reflect her own personal experiences encountered during this time away from home. Says Dunton, the "intimacy an artist develops with the materials they work with is very interesting; how something as mundane as household blinds can become emblems of experience...through manipulation by the hands of the artist they begin to use a shared language, that of the artist's intent and the object's limitations."

The main theme weaving throughout her work is



Brett Chenoweth, *Cartesian's Daughter* – Digital photo/art, 2013.

movement. The drawings shown in 2011 were fluid and kinetic, but contained by the dimensionality of two dimensions. Now the goal is to continue to explore the notion of movement through space and time, not limited by any particular medium.

Long established as a Kansas City artist, Lori Raye Erickson received a Charlotte Street Award and an Avenue of the Arts grant. Her work is infused with bright colors, text, numbers, sideshow freaks, and humor. For *Animals & Buildings*, her pieces embodied a carnival flair, without the representational imagery typical to most of her work.

Currently, Erickson is working on a three-person show for the Thornhill Gallery at Avila University in Kansas City (Dallavis Center, 11901 Wornall Rd. Kansas City), opening March 22. *This is Gonna Go Over Like a Lead Balloon* is new work shown in tandem with Douglas Schwietert and Joe Gregory.

Jared Flaming absorbs pop culture, history, philosophy and literature and its influence is prevalent. For *Animals and Buildings*, his graffiti-type patterning filled large-scale panels edge to edge, suggesting an undeniable permanence of space. He integrated youthful symbols and pentagrams into each piece.

Flaming received his BFA from University of Oklahoma, Norman, and is a candidate for his MFA at University of Kansas, Lawrence, this spring.

Since the 2011 show, Flaming has jumped mediums from wood carving and printmaking into oil painting. Alongside that, he has also invested himself heavily in working with digital mediums that compliment his painting to compose the images.

Flaming notes it has been a rather liberating factor as far as composing goes in that it allows him to construct any image as quickly as it comes to mind.

As far as influence goes, he has immersed himself in critical theory of the poststructuralist variety, namely Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Rosalind Krauss and others. This has helped him approach composing images from different angles and to take as his subject the act of image making itself. To borrow a phrase from Derrida, "It forces oneself to view painting from the side."

In tandem with theory, he has a growing interest in art history as materials for creating new works. This was an interest he had two years ago, but it has taken a much more centralized place in his new work.

Flaming is preparing for two exhibitions for the coming months. His Master's thesis exhibition will be in the University of Kansas School of Art Gallery the first week of April, and for May/June he is having a solo exhibition in the front gallery at the Leedy-Voukos Art Center in Kansas City. Exhibiting



new work in this show from the past year, Leedy-Voulkos will be his largest exhibition to date.

The seriousness of Ryan Haralson's subjects is punctuated with elements of good humor, bringing to mind the influences of Kenny Scharf. His subjects confront some harsh truths about ourselves; whether it be racism, classism or debt. For *Animals and Buildings*, Haralson inserted brightly colored hot air balloons in his work that gives us room to breathe and observe this seriousness from a higher plateau.

He is currently showing at the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City's historic 18th & Vine District. *•Beyond Words•*, a fusion of poetry, visual art and jazz runs through April 26, displays work that shows us his exploration of the historical and the subliminal.

An interdisciplinary artist, Cory Imig received her BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2008 where she studied fiber and sculpture. Cory also attended residencies at Virginia Commonwealth University and The Vermont Studio Center.

She has participated in numerous shows in the region, including, *Concept/OK: Art in Oklahoma*, curated by Liza Statton for the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition at the Hardesty Art Center in Tulsa. *New Frontier*, curated by Erika Lynne Hanson, Charlotte Street Foundation Paragraph/Project Space, the aforementioned *Congrats!*, and the *XOXO Salon Show* at Spray Booth Gallery, all in Kansas City.

Besides showing her own work, in 2011 Imig co-founded *PLUG* projects in Kansas City's Stockyards District. *PLUG* is a curatorial collaboration by five Kansas City artists. They have successfully exhibited challenging new work from artists both locally and across the country, while expanding the connections to area artists as part of a wider, national network. Their programming includes initiating critical dialogue between artists and the community with *Critique Nights* and the ongoing film series "Frames per Second".

Imig, art writer Theresa Bembnister and I, completed the 2012 Oklahoma Art Writing and Curatorial Fellowship in Oklahoma City. It is described as a "year-long program (that) offers access to leading regional and national curators, critics, and academics through public lectures and intimate, hands-on workshops".

Like *Animals and Buildings*, these singular opportunities for gallery events and exhibitions have the feel of "Let's go down to the barn kids, and put on a show!" With its DIY attitude, Kansas City has an exceedingly strong support system behind it that helps one another get things done, enhancing and solidifying the city's position within the nation's creative arts environment.

Jared Flaming, *I&*, 2012, 68 x 48", Oil on Panel.



Jared Flaming, *These/Those*, 2012, 68 x 48", Oil on Panel.



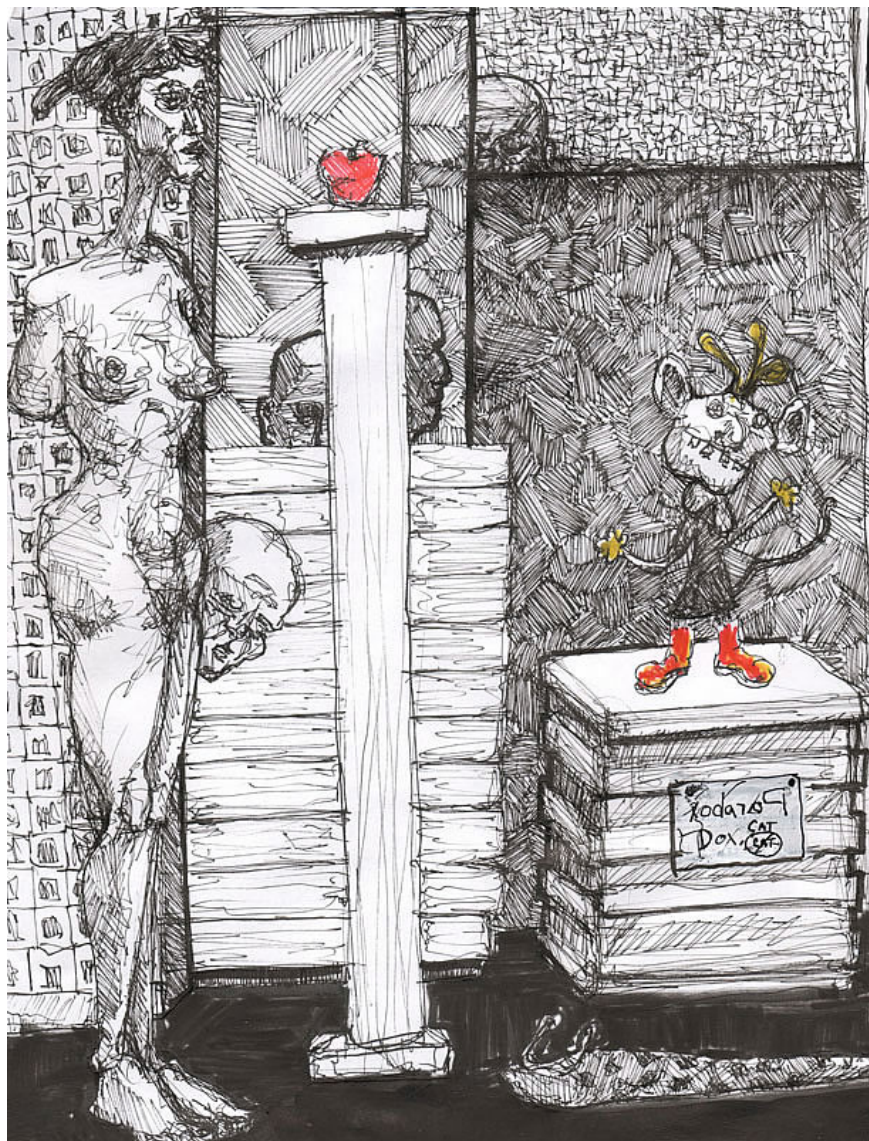
Ryan Haralson, *Fishpeddler* (detail), videostill from *Sketchbook Series with Ryan Haralson*, 2010, Produced by ITZU Media. © 2009, Camera Zac Eubank.



Ryan Haralson's Studio, videostill from *Sketchbook Series with Ryan Haralson*, 2010, Produced by ITZU Media. © 2009, Camera Zac Eubank.



Cory Imig, *Falling Structure*, 2012; artist tape and balloon, 30 x 10' x 20".



Brett Chenowith, *Schrodinger's Cat Dreams My Life*.

Conversations 1, First and Last Show at Animals and Buildings

Animals and Buildings
1427 West Ninth Street
Suite 600
West Bottoms
Kansas City
816-719-0614
Conversation, Part 1
May 13, 2011

By **BLAIR SCHULMAN**

Animals & Buildings, a temporary gallery in Kansas City's West Bottoms, hosts the exhibition *Conversation, Part 1* for two weeks, opening Friday, May 13, 2011. Artists in the exhibition are Brett Chenoweth, Sarabeth Dunton, Jared Flaming, Lori Raye Erickson, and Ryan Haralson.



Sarabeth Dunton, *Where the Light is Bright and Clear and Brittle: Guy Greene's Desert*, pen and marker on paper, 24 x 36".

Most of the artists have studios in the Hobbs Building. Animals & Buildings is on the sixth floor. The idea for the exhibition was to provide an larger exhibition space for Hobbs Building artists above and beyond the "pop-up" opportunities they create for themselves twice a year with Hobbs Building Open Studios.

Brett Chenoweth's works on paper are a mythological connection to a dreamlike past. His ruins may represent the ending of an era but, like all ruins, they endure, providing a bridge to our dreams and to another time.

Chenoweth has shown locally and nationally. His studies in literature, philosophy, and theology inform his work. He has been an art instructor in Kansas City and on the East Coast. He lives in Kansas City with his daughter and his dog.

Sarabeth Dunton creates intricate pen and ink drawings that mimic the growth and solidity of the home, inside and out. This series of drawings hint at Neutra-inspired planks flowing into intricate Asian floral and mountainscapes, as East meets West.

Dunton received her BFA in painting at the University of Michigan in 2006. A recent transplant to Kansas City, Sarabeth and her husband moved from New Orleans. She has lived in Michigan, Louisiana, Vermont, Greece, and India. Dunton has had work shown in Kansas City, Missouri; Ann Arbor, Michigan; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Paros, Greece.

Long established as a Kansas City artist, **Lori Raye Erickson** is a graduate of Kansas City Art Institute. She received a Charlotte Street Award and an Avenue of the Arts grant. Her work is infused with bright colors, text, numbers, sideshow freaks, and humor. This particular group of work embodies a carnival flair, without the representational imagery typical to most of her work.



Jared Flaming, *Discourse in a Public Forum*, 2011, Carved wood, spray paint, printing ink, 4 x 4'.

Jared Flaming absorbs pop culture and its influence is prevalent. Graffiti-type patterning fills his panels edge to edge suggesting an undeniable permanence of space. He integrates youthful symbols and pentagrams into every piece.

Flaming received his BFA from University of Oklahoma and is currently pursuing an MFA at University of Kansas. In 2008 he collaborated with Icelandic artist Jon Þór Birgisson and American artists Alex Summers, Marguerite Keys and Scott Alario to produce the limited edition book *Princes of Royal Blood* in Reykjavik Iceland. In 2011 he takes part in the traveling exhibition *Paper Politics* organized by the Just Seeds artist co-op in Brooklyn New York.

The seriousness of **Ryan Haralson's** subjects are punctuated with elements of good humor. His subjects confront some truth about ourselves; whether it be racism, classism or debt. Floating around these heavy truths, Haralson also inserts brightly colored hot air balloons that give us room to breathe and observe this seriousness from a higher plateau.

Haralson is a 2007 graduate of the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design with a BFA in Industrial Design. He has shown his work in and around Kansas City.

The exhibition is co-organized by **Cory Imig** and **Blair Schulman**.

Imig is an interdisciplinary artist currently working in Kansas City, Missouri. She received her BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2008 where she studied fiber and sculpture. After graduation Cory attended residencies at Virginia Commonwealth University and The Vermont Studio Center. She has participated in numerous shows in the Kansas City area most notably a two-person show, *Pitty Pattern*, at the Kansas City Public Library with artist Garry Noland in 2010.

Schulman is an art writer who has contributed to *Art Tattler*, *Review*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Fluent Collaborative*, and *Juxtapoz*.

The exhibition is made possible by Mike Miller and West Ninth, LLC.



Ryan Haralson, *Black Swan*, 2010 (detail), Mixed media on canvas, 2 x 2'.



Lori Raye Erickson, *Danger*.

