

PRESS RELEASE**VISARTS****KAPLAN GALLERY****155 GIBBS STREET****ROCKVILLE, MD**

____ S C A P E

John M. Adams, Sabine Carlson, Michael Farrell, Heidi Fowler, Lisa Kellner, Karey Kessler, Kim Manfredi, Steven Pearson, Rachel Sitkin, Theo Willis and Elena Volkova

June 1 – August 10, 2012

Opening Reception: Friday, June 8, 7 – 9 pm

(May 24, 2012, Rockville, MD) VisArts at Rockville presents “____ SCAPE”. Slipping a variety of words into the blank of “____scape”, artists investigate the semantic origins of landscape as a condition, shape or idea rather than a depiction of scenery. This group exhibition of paintings, drawings and photographs is on view in the Kaplan Gallery from June 1 to August 10. The exhibition represents a broad arc of emerging to mid-career artists including: John M. Adams, Sabine Carlson, Michael Farrell, Heidi Fowler, Lisa Kellner, Karey Kessler, Kim Manfredi, Steven Pearson, Rachel Sitkin, Theo Willis and Elena Volkova.

For the artists in “____ SCAPE”, taking the “land” out of the landscape opens up the view considerably. These artists opt for a bigger picture and a wider definition of the forces and influences that shape artwork and life. In these “scapes”, horizon lines disappear. Space shifts from the intimate to the infinite. The transient and

temporal qualities of site, air, and memory slowly and subtly come into focus. Geology, geography, land use planning, hyper-connectivity and floods of data converge in painting.

“It is surprising to find how much latitude the suffix “-scape” gives each of the artists to consider the condition of existence,” said Susan Main, curator of the exhibition. “This includes landscape as an idea and a traditional fine arts genre, but also much more.”

It doesn't matter what word is dropped into the blank. By exploring the state of something else, these artists actually seem to get closer to the intangible qualities of the relationship between humans and their environment. They expose inner, outer and in-between “scapes”. They inch closer to the real.

Timescape:

Karey Kessler combines faint graphite lines, floating shapes of color and delicate atmospheric washes in her *Time* paintings in an attempt to capture the passage of time as it slips through the light and air penetrating the city.

Sitescape:

The transitory and impermanent inform John M. Adams' site-specific drawing that wraps around a wall and dives into a corner. Within sight of the drawing, his small horizontal painting floats on the wall. Attention travels between evidence of the hand marking the surface to the vast range of associations those marks conjure. Perception and the condition of site are determining factors.

Sensescape:

In Sabine Carlson's paintings and collage/drawings, time and space are here, there, everywhere and all at once. Dogs, helicopters, and trees, defying the laws of gravity and proportion, nose each other awkwardly hinting at the relationship between power and vulnerability.

Paintscapes:

To make his “1000 Layer Paintings” Theo Willis methodically and patiently applied one thousand layers of a single type of housepaint to small panels. The results are extraordinary stratascares of paint. Taking a year to construct, the paintings are transfixing geologic outcrops of paint. In his “Yards” series, Willis considers the fundamental support of painting. The square format suggests a measurable unit or systematized geographical space (like an “acre”) where simple actions and an economy of materials yield endless variations.

In Kim Manfredi's enamel paintings, wet paint dripped into wet paint mimics the action of a weather system passing over the surface of the earth. Each drop or spill of liquid results in structures and patterns that resemble deep space and microbiology.

Memoryscape:

Michael Farrell's drawings of landscape-like forms and textures hover between recognition and recollection. The work has the quality of a vague memory loosening itself from a fog and slowly consolidating into a resonant impression.

Plastiscape:

The individual units of color in Heidi Fowler's "Plastiscapes" merge at a distance into luminous landscapes. Up close, the landscape collapses into a tight grid of plastic bottle caps and junk mail opening a conversation about painting and ecology.

Skinscape:

Lisa Kellner zooms in on skin. With meticulous graphite drawings and embroidery, she documents a terrain both intensely intimate and fascinatingly alien where history and sentiment coexist.

Hyperscape:

The brilliant color, overlapping patterns of Pearson's vivid paintings allude to the daily "scape" of hyper-connectivity and floods of data. His complex and hypnotic paintings suggest that getting lost in the spell of visual entrancement is a way to be in place and in motion at the same time. The eye dives and spins off his "hyperscapes".

Airscape:

Elena Volkova's "Airscares" waver between image and nothingness. Attention shifts between the barely perceptible photographs of sky and air and the vast expanse of paper they are printed on. Without any horizon in sight and just the faintest whisper of an image, space has no boundaries.

Minescape:

Rachel Sitkin's gouache paintings of enormous resource mining pits are beautiful contradictions. The noisy, dirty, industrial operations appear serene and still. Sitkin takes an aerial view that brings to mind a slowly passing surveillance spy drone. Her paintings reflect an eye that is both obsessively attentive and coolly detached. She hints at the power of politics, economics, and technology to shape of the land.

About the Artists:

John M. Adams- thefullempty.com

Sabine Carlson- <http://www.sabinecarlson.com>

Michael Farrell- www.mjfarrell56.com

Heidi Fowler-<http://www.heidifowler.com>

Lisa Kellner- www.lisakellner.com

Karey Kessler- www.kareykessler.com

Kim Manfredi- <http://www.kimmanfredi.com>

Steven Pearson- srpearson.com

Rachel Sitkin- rachelsitkin.com

Theo Willis – theowillis.com

Elena Volkova- www.elenavolkova.com

To learn more visit <http://www.visartscenter.org>

About VisArts at Rockville:

VisArts at Rockville is a dynamic, nonprofit arts center dedicated to engaging the community in the arts and providing opportunities for artistic exploration, education and participation. Through educational programming, gallery exhibitions and a resident artist program, VisArts provides children, teens and adults with opportunities to express their creativity and enhance their awareness of the arts.

VisArts at Rockville is located three blocks from the Rockville Metro station at 155 Gibbs Street, Rockville, MD. The galleries are open on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. For information, please visit www.visartscenter.org or call 301-315-8200.

For information, images, or to arrange an interview or a preview of the exhibition, please contact:

Susan Main at (301) 943-4190, or smain@visartscenter.org

Dates:

- Exhibition on View: **June 1 – August 10**
- Opening Reception: **Friday, June 8, 7-9pm**
- Artist Talks: Thursday evenings, 7 – 9pm

June 14- Heidi Fowler, Kim Manfredi, Theo Willis

June 21- John M. Adams, Elena Volkova

June 28- Rachel Sitkin, Michael Farrell, Steven Pearson

July 26- Lisa Kellner, Sabine Carlson

Contact: Susan Main, *Curator*

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