

Cade Tompkins Projects
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risd views fall 2008

perrone's risd reveries



[Serena Perrone MFA '06 PR](#) says it felt right that her first solo show, *In the Realm of Reverie*, would be held at RISD's Sol Koffler Graduate Student Gallery over the summer -- just two years after she graduated. After all, she began work on the series shown in the exhibition when she was still a grad student, and furthermore, she says, "RISD gave me fantastic technical training in all printmaking processes, which freed me to really explore my imagery and content unhindered by gaps in my technical knowledge."

In the Realm of Reverie -- a series still in progress -- integrates Perrone's interests in natural history, physical abnormalities and sideshow freaks into wild-eyed portraits of personal loss and deep introspection. In these large-scale, gold-inked woodcuts with silver point drawings she renders children with desolate faces swallowed up by swamps and overgrown woodlands -- images evocative of Lewis Carroll or Maurice Sendak, with a recognizable feeling of childhood fears offset by glimmers of hope.

Perrone chose RISD's Printmaking program after graduating from Souther Illinois University in Carbondale with a background in painting and art history. She credits the rigors of graduate study at RISD with helping her to develop a disciplined studio practice, and feels the variety of critical perspectives challenged her to strengthen her creative and technical processes. She also found the artistic output of fellow students to be especially inspiring, noting that it was important "to see how everyone was able to use common techniques in such varied ways."

Throughout her academic career, Perrone focused on making a life in and through art. "I kept a list of upcoming calls for entry that seemed appropriate for my work," she says, adding that she met her representative, Cade Tompkins (cadetompkins.com), when she simultaneously exhibited her prints in two Providence shows -- one being her MFA thesis exhibition. Thanks to Tompkins, Perrone's prints are being seen -- by major museum curators, private and corporate dealers and collectors, and in juried exhibitions, at venues in Providence, New York and throughout the US, as well as overseas in Italy and Scotland. Her work is also included in public collections at RISD Museum of Art, Smith College (MA) Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

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Currently based in Philadelphia, Perrone teaches at Temple University's Tyler School of Art and says, "I have no doubt that my RISD background helped me attain that position. Since graduation, I've been able to see how far-reaching RISD's reputation really is." Despite her successes, Perrone admits that it's tough to make it as a young artist. She juggles her time between teaching, working at a graphic design firm and creating large-scale woodcuts such as those on view through September 14 at Sol Koffler, all of which require enormous time and effort. Still, she remains committed to further creative exploration, while also hoping to "find the balance" she recognizes as crucial to maintaining a studio practice and continuing to grow as an artist.

by Robert Albanese



A Day in November: Impending Loss 2005-06 is among the large-scale prints from Serena Perrone's series *In the Realm of Reverie*