

# Full Circle

## The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

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It is the mission of The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum to be a national leader in the exhibition of significant and challenging contemporary art with an emphasis on emerging and mid-career artists, a world-class innovator of museum education programs, and a vital cultural resource for our community.

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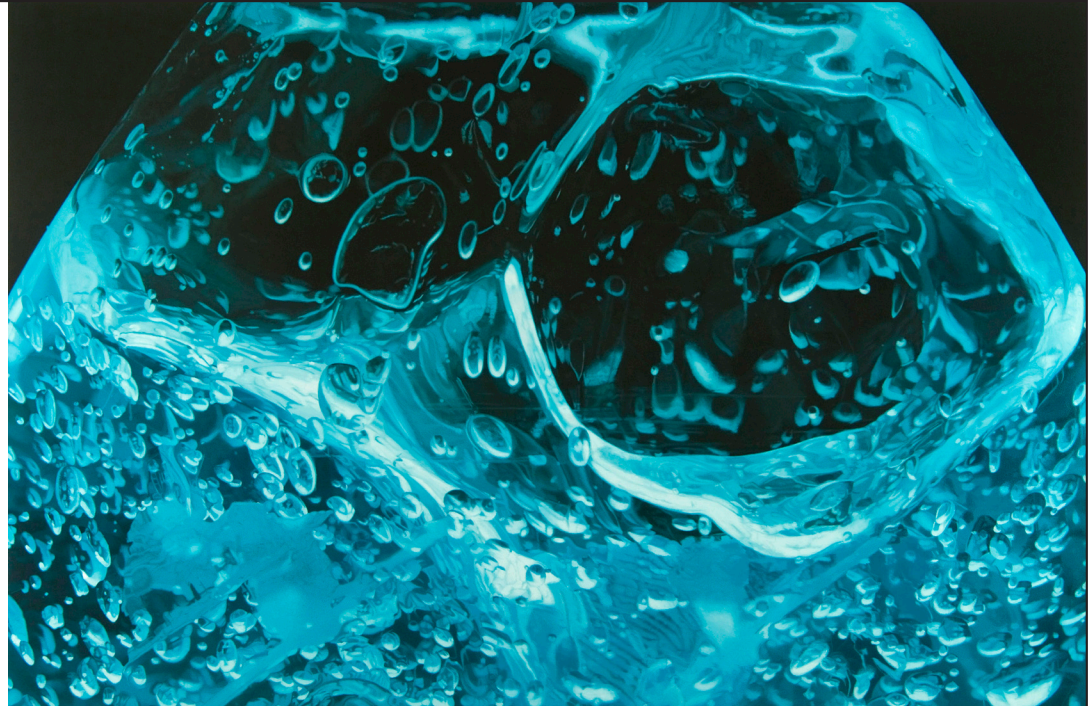


NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS



artasiapacific

Benjamin Weiner, *The Great New Wave*, 2007  
Collection of Tonya and Thomas Nicholson  
Courtesy of the artist and Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica



### Full Circle: Ten Years of Radius

*Kelly Bigelow Becerra, Jaclyn Conley, Paul Favello, Robert Federico, Beth Gilfilen, Jim Hett, Bryan Jones, Nathan Lewis, Christopher Mir, Mari Ogiyara, Alyse Rosner, Joseph Smolinski, Thuan Vu, and Benjamin Weiner*

Curated by Regine Basha

November 28, 2008, to June 7, 2009  
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

## Full Circle: Ten Years of Radius

Every once in a while a curator is offered the chance to be introduced to a new group of artists through a jury process. It can be both a thrilling and a daunting process, in that the work is generally put before one in a random way. Daunting because artists from all ages, all backgrounds, and varying approaches to their respective media are grouped together, as is the case with *Radius*, by their geographic location. Thrilling because sometimes within that mix one begins to recognize formal patterns, find kindred spirits, and discover echoes throughout completely different bodies of work.

Because *Radius* is widely known as a regionally specific program of ten years standing, one might expect to perhaps discover a school of thought, or shared aesthetic practices that reflect life throughout the region. Though it may be tempting to historicize the exhibition in this way, it would be something of a generalization that would detract from the particulars and eccentricities of the artists' work. With this in mind, I chose instead to utilize an editorial process, much like editing a book or a magazine, in order to select from the work submitted by the eighty-plus artists. I tried to consider how the images might leap off the page or recede from it, in order to provide a fluid, yet dynamic, reading experience.

Perhaps the binding theme, if there has to be one, for the group of fourteen artists selected for *Full Circle*, is an awareness of the "power of the image." Many of the artists represented here understand the impact of an image on the psyche, and the ways in which it can transform the visual experience into a physical one. If we are living in the Information Age, then these artists are making the case for sensory information as the most penetrating. Through the painting, drawing, collage, sculpting or filming process, each of these artists is invested in creating a transformative image that draws the viewer into the picture plane to reveal the very act of looking. Within this space of looking, one might recognize a variety of source materials available in the work—from historical references to space travel to strong personal narratives of death or transgression; from wondrous visionary and symbolist motifs to elements that draw from the sublime in nature. —R.B.

Download a full color version of this brochure by visiting:  
[www.aldrichart.org/about/radius.php](http://www.aldrichart.org/about/radius.php)

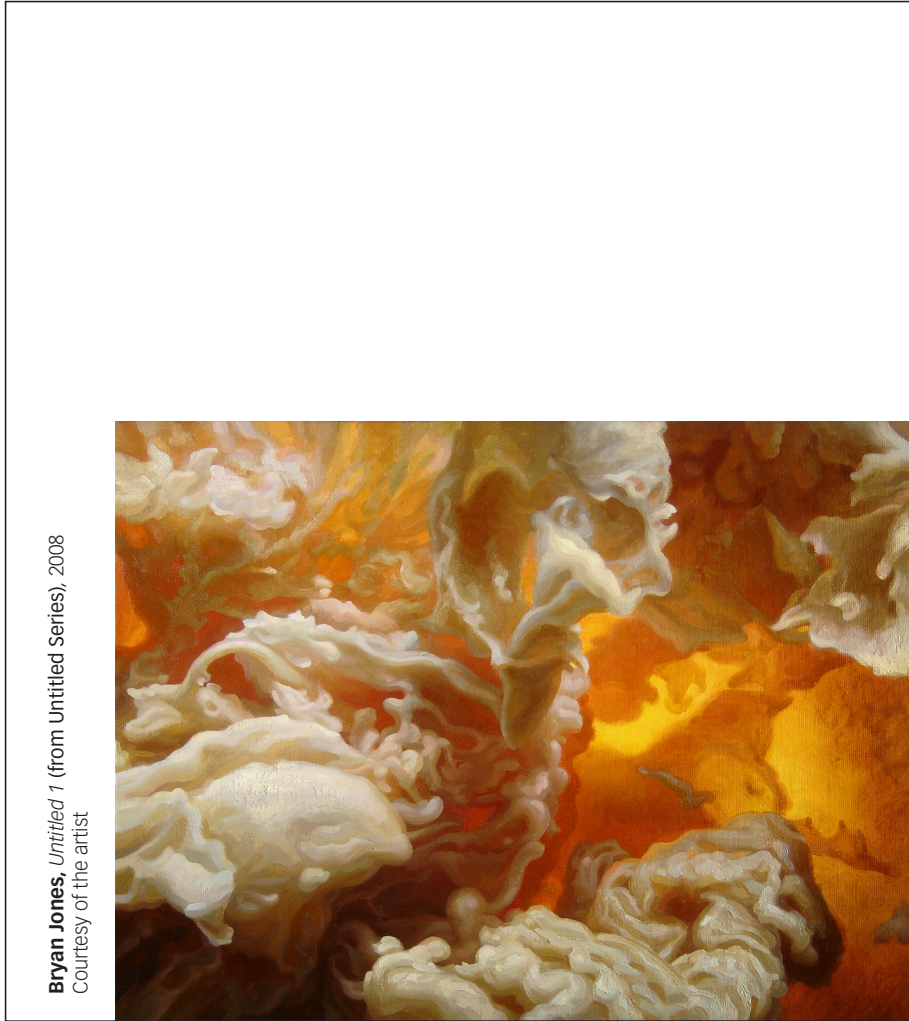
Christopher Mir's paintings are often large-scale and visually packed with information culled from many literary and cinematic sources. His photo-realist images collide with the obscure gestural marks that create an other-worldly quality, as if the artist were "an explorer of deep psychic space," in his words. His sources of inspiration derive from science fiction, mythology, and surrealism, though he prefers ambiguity over revealing any direct references in his work. These shredded "cut and paste" components act more like viral elements or clues that require close investigation within expansive fields of abstraction.

Christopher Mir, *Day One*, 2006  
Collection of Malcolm and Gini Nicholls  
Courtesy of the artist and Rare Gallery, New York

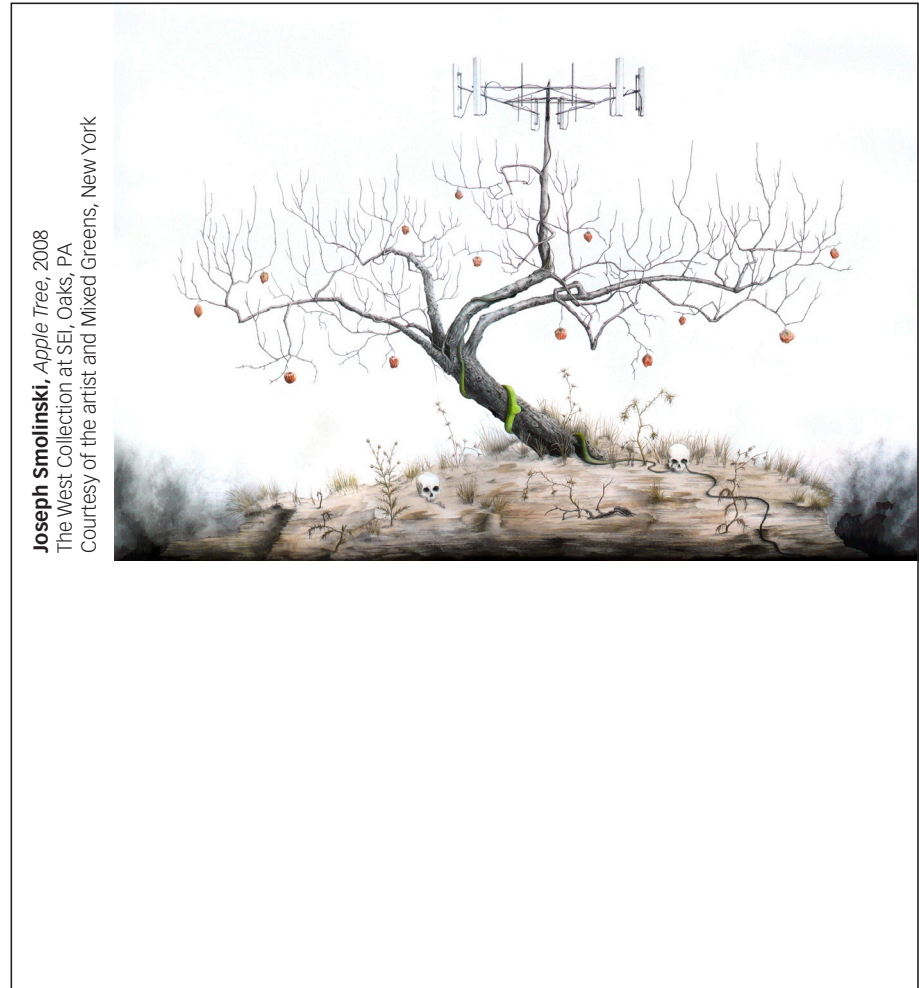




Bryan Jones began as a still life painter and has recently begun working on a series of paintings intended to both attract and repel the viewer. As baroque painterly abstractions, the images cross the line between ethereal landscapes and tactile internal organs. He achieves these images by building meticulous models that he then painstakingly reproduces. The models, made from wax and Vaseline, echo the natural formations and geological phenomena beneath the planet's surface, such as underwater volcanoes and stalactites. Of particular interest to the artist is the way the earth simultaneously "creates and destroys," and how this action could be emulated in his paintings.



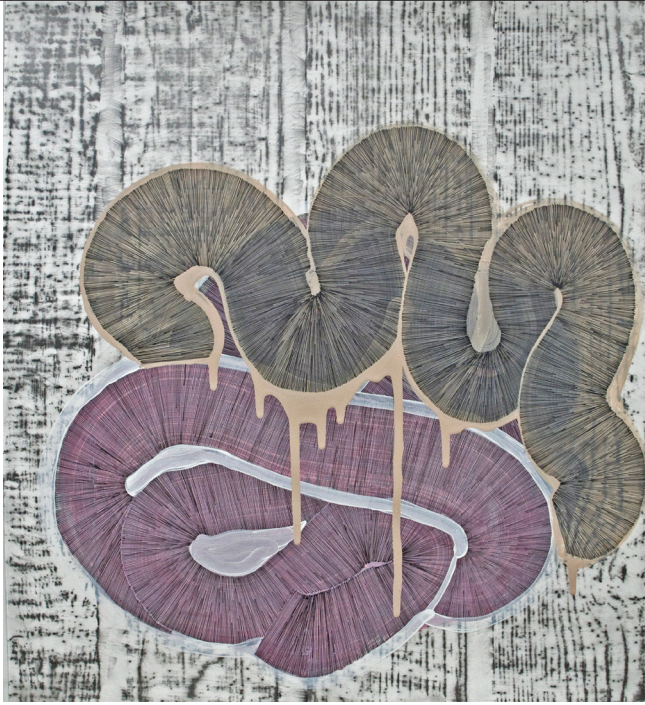
Bryan Jones, *Untitled 1* (from *Untitled Series*), 2008  
 Courtesy of the artist



Joseph Smolinski, *Apple Tree*, 2008  
 The West Collection at SEI, Oaks, PA  
 Courtesy of the artist and Mixed Greens, New York

Joseph Smolinski's drawings in graphite and watercolor function as portentous omens. In his work one finds nature hybridized and malformed by human industry—a kind of creolization of the planet's resources. The artist depicts technology as a "parasite," allowing him to consider the future of its insidious path. His iconic images often repeat, as with the antennae, the "natural" cell phone towers—trees that bear technological gadgets instead of fruit—floods, architecture in decay. The fine and light quality of his illustrative line betrays the weighted subject matter and might even appear to be suspiciously comical.

**Alyse Rosner**, *With Wood Grain XXV* (from *With Wood Grain Series*), 2008  
 Courtesy of the artist



Alyse Rosner's work in abstract painting and drawing has long had an aesthetic affinity with such practices as Indian miniature painting and illuminated manuscript. The use of pointillist marks and minute line in her work borders on the ritualistic, and through their continual repetition in hundreds of works, a unique lexicon of marks forms. As with the earlier work, the larger, looser paintings that form the new series are generative, in that each informs the making of the next. Marks taken from nature (tree rubbings on Japanese Yupo paper, liquefied brushstrokes) take on organic properties that teeter between the measured and the spontaneous gesture. The works reflect ongoing investigations with texture, color, light, and density, and the possibility of new material processes.

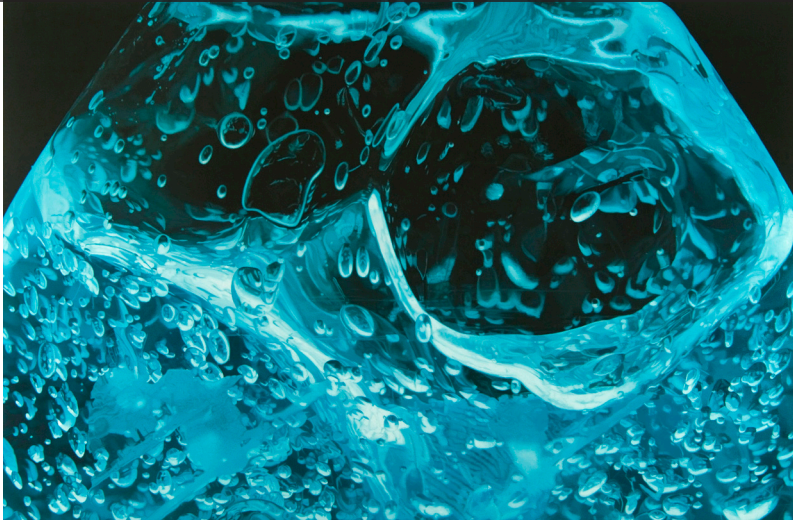
Jaclyn Conley's paintings are akin to theatrical or cinematic moments in which a dramatic encounter or incident has just happened, or is about to happen, to her chosen subjects. Her depicted figures are often engrossed in a moment of concentration—be it sleep, death, ecstasy, or something that could be read as all of the above. The skillfully painted scenarios in which these figures find themselves are elaborate, yet purposefully ambiguous. The artist brings the viewer towards an empathetic reading of an intensely personal, albeit anonymous scene, that reflects, in her words, "someone else's memories."

**Jaclyn Conley**, *Parched of Reason*, 2008  
 Courtesy of the artist





Benjamin Weiner, *The Great New Wave*, 2007  
Collection of Tonya and Thomas Nicholson  
Courtesy of the artist and Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica



Benjamin Weiner's large-scale paintings create a beguiling illusion of space and fluid movement. Pictorially, they seem to depict an underwater landscape or a scene from deep space, or even a strange amoeba-like form caught in mid-stream. The artist creates these effects through an extreme process of photo-realistic painting that sometimes takes several months to complete. The subject of his paintings (and in recent months videos, as well) is hair gel. With a Pop sensibility, the artist monumentalizes this banal chemical product and revels in its high artifice. Looking at the unnatural as if it were natural becomes the artist's metaphor for our own symbiotic relationship to science.

Kelly Bigelow Becerra's works in print media employ disturbing images disguised by their quaint aesthetic format. Using the model of the traditional sampler, an American folk vernacular popular in the Midwest where the artist grew up, the artist creates unusual tableaux that draw the viewer into her personal memories of family trauma. These tableaux are extremely flat and graphic—nearly cartoonish even—yet they retain an uncanny realism that charges them with a chilling edge. They are constructed through a material process the artist developed herself, in which several images of actual body parts, objects, fabrics, and other domestic materials are scanned directly. The one-to-one scans are then cut and collaged into pictorial vignettes, forming cathartic reconstructions of scenes from her childhood.

Kelly Bigelow Becerra, *Grandma whackin' me with a yellow hoe*, 2008  
Courtesy of the artist

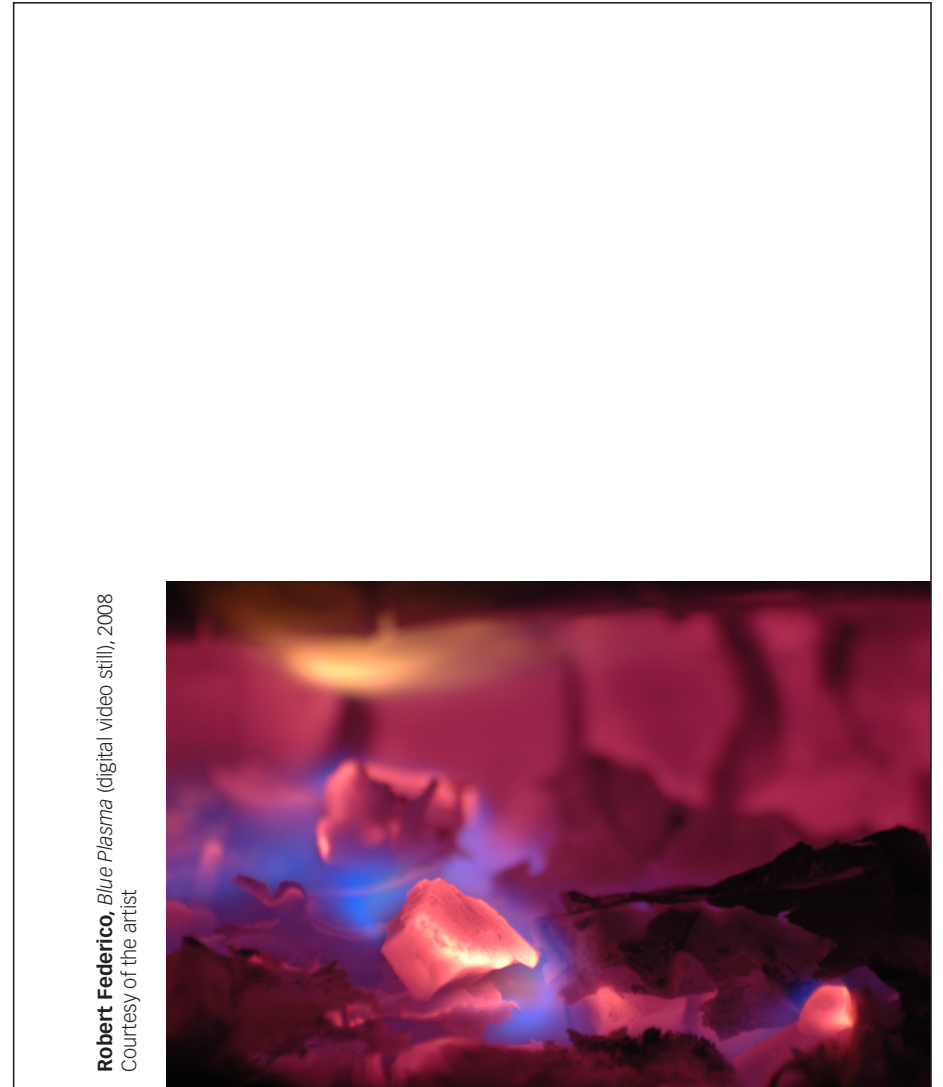




Beth Gilfilen, *The Big Hunch*, 2008  
Courtesy of the artist

Beth Gilfilen's paintings are like evolved studies in abstraction that have undergone several stages before arriving at their final state. The artist begins with an intuitive process of expressionistic drawing, then analyzes the marks, isolates them by cutting them out of paper, and proceeds to re-compose the cut elements onto a new picture plane. Often the "cut-outs" become works in themselves. In this recent series, the artist allows this process to develop and then unravel her intentions towards completing a composition, resulting in lyrical and sketchy abstractions that the viewer is visually invited to complete.

Robert Federico's works reflect a devotional practice aimed at capturing the sublime and communing with nature. With photography as his primary medium, the artist engages in lengthy sessions of close observation of the elements. The camera serves as a magnifier of tiny events and occurrences, the details of which might escape the human eye. His photographs and videos tend towards a specific framing or cropping of these events, so that moments like the movement of water over a rock, or the flickering of a flame, begin to suggest an alchemic process.



Robert Federico, *Blue Plasma* (digital video still), 2008  
Courtesy of the artist



Nathan Lewis's paintings suggest a self-conscious form of the genre of "history painting." They are often large in scale and populated with figures engaged in dramatic struggles gripped with human spirit, such as the search for freedom or survival. The figures are sometimes self-portraits or the artist's friends and family. Painted with bold, hyper-real colors and a densely packed composition, the images enact dreams, nightmares, or aspirations that contain within them a metaphorical commentary on current American culture and society.

Nathan Lewis, *Till We Find the Blessed Isles Where Our Friends Are Dwelling*, 2008  
 Courtesy of the artist



Thuan Vu, *Journey (Home)*, 2005  
 Courtesy of the artist



Thuan Vu's paintings and drawings evolved out of the artist's own history, his memories of Vietnam and his experience of having traveled between Eastern and Western cultures. The works take on titles such as *Journey* or *Voyage* to suggest a continually transient existence. Similarly, the paintings tend to unfold within a series, in which a particular image is examined repeatedly to uncover its myriad angles and abstract variations. Painted with oil, acrylic, and latex on canvas, they achieve a refined texture that is at once atmospheric, airy, and humanly tactile.

## Mari Ogihara

**Mari Ogihara**, *Garosello the Galloper*, 2008  
Courtesy of the artist

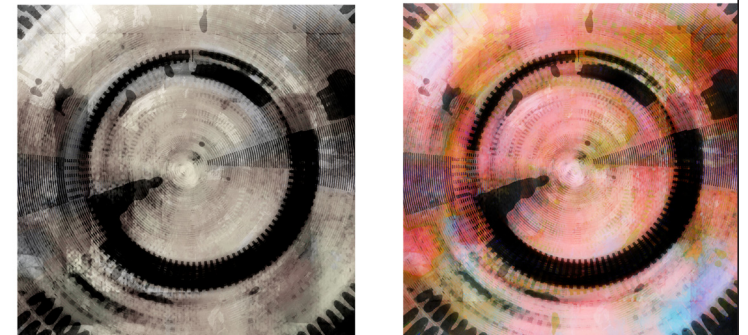


Mari Ogihara's work rests uniquely between the forms of sculpture and painting. Working primarily in porcelain ceramic, her sensual snake-like forms are embellished with extremely minute and elaborate painted details. They rest on pedestals and are jettisoned outward and inward, with a gestural exuberance that emulates organic movement. The forms are responses to fabric, architecture, and in some cases animal skins, exuding a visceral and vaguely alien quality.

## Paul Favello

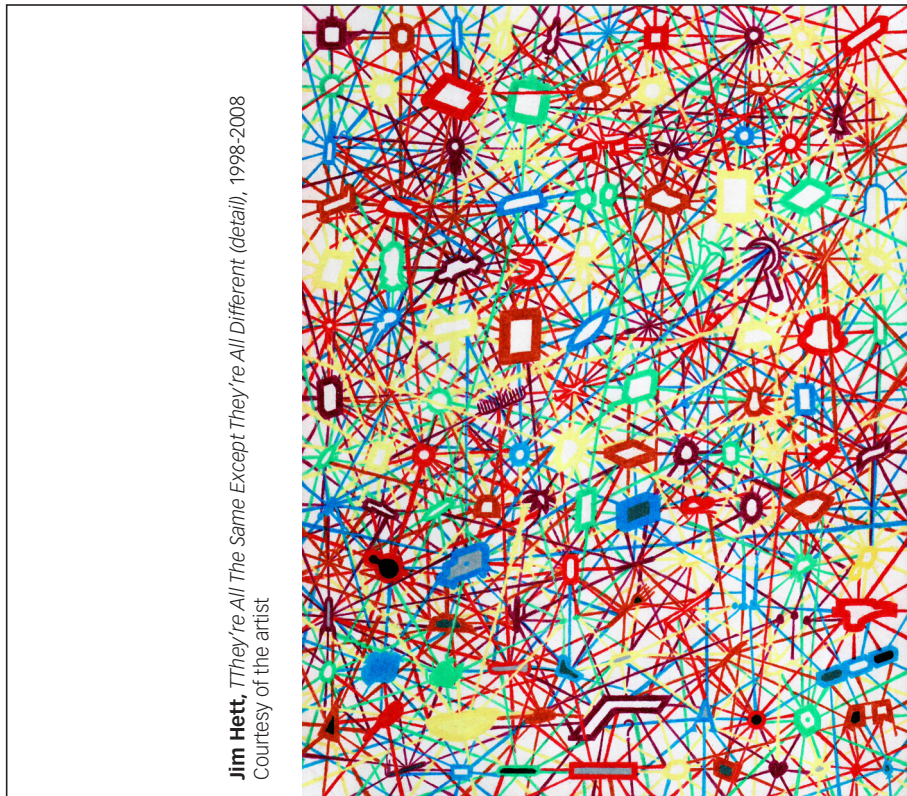
Paul Favello's work explores the images of our war culture—specifically the visual by-products of military information and strategies. This information is manifested as repeated, iconic symbols, such as the bomb target or the mushroom cloud, and invokes Warhol's work with repetition and disaster. Whether the work takes the form of painting, photography, or mixed printing processes that incorporate hand-colored prints mounted on aluminum, it is highly graphic and visually compelling. As images they set out to draw the viewer into their inherent beauty as forms, while confronting them with their horrific information.

**Paul Favello**, *Radial Mapping—Aerial 1, Radial Mapping—Aerial 2*, 2007  
Courtesy of the artist





## Jim Hett



Jim Hett's work is a continuum of drawings on various surfaces—collages, watercolors, paper sculptures, and in some cases wall drawings—that he makes on a daily basis in a casual, obsessive, yet considered manner. Like a diaristic writing process, the works take note of his environment; i.e. objects that are close-by and in daily use, words that describe those objects, images that describe words, abstractions made from the images, and so on ... in a cumulative process of building a hermeneutic pictorial language. Almost always produced on accessible 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper, the works are like exercises that enable the artist to consider every possible interpretation or manifestation of a “thing” in his world.

### Works in the Exhibition

All dimensions h x w x d in inches unless otherwise noted

#### **Kelly Bigelow Becerra**

*Grandma whackin' me with a yellow hoe*, 2008  
Collaged archival prints  
51 x 60  
Courtesy of the artist

#### **Jaclyn Conley**

*Parched of Reason*, 2008  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 60  
Courtesy of the artist

#### **Paul Favello**

*Radial Mapping—Aerial 1, Radial Mapping—Aerial 2*, 2007  
Digital C-prints mounted on Plexiglas  
Diptych: 40 x 40 each  
Courtesy of the artist

#### **Robert Federico**

*Blue Plasma*, 2008  
Video, color, sound; 3 minute loop  
Courtesy of the artist

#### **Beth Gilfilen**

*The Big Hunch*, 2008  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 60  
Courtesy of the artist

#### **Jim Hett**

*They're All The Same Except They're All Different*, 1998 – 2008  
Mixed media  
8 1/2 x 11 each (series of 88 works)  
Courtesy of the artist

**Bryan Jones**

Untitled 1, 2008  
Oil on linen over wood  
18 x 24

Untitled 2, 2008  
Oil on linen over wood  
24 x 30

Untitled 3, 2008  
Oil on linen over wood  
32 x 28

All of the above works are from Untitled Series, 2008  
Courtesy of the artist

**Nathan Lewis**

Till We Find the Blessed Isles Where Our Friends Are Dwelling, 2008  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 120  
Courtesy of the artist

**Christopher Mir**

Day One, 2006  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 72  
Collection of Malcolm and Gini Nicholls  
Courtesy of the artist and Rare Gallery, New York

**Mari Ogihara**

Garosello the Galloper, 2008  
Hand-built porcelain, glazes, acrylic stand  
24 x 15 x 5  
Courtesy of the artist

**Alyse Rosner**

With Wood Grain II, 2008  
With Wood Grain III, 2008  
With Wood Grain V, 2008  
With Wood Grain VI, 2008  
With Wood Grain XXVI, 2008  
With Wood Grain XXV, 2008  
Graphite, fluid acrylic, ink, on Yupo  
22 x 20 each

All of the above works are from With Wood Grain Series, 2008  
Courtesy of the artist

**Joseph Smolinski**

Apple Tree, 2008  
Ink, watercolor, graphite on paper  
32 x 44  
The West Collection at SEI, Oaks, PA  
Courtesy of the artist and Mixed Greens, New York

**Thuan Vu**

Journey (Home), 2005  
Oil, acrylic, latex on canvas  
36 x 48  
Courtesy of the artist

**Benjamin Weiner**

The Great New Wave, 2007  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 110  
Collection of Tonya and Thomas Nicholson  
Courtesy of the artist and Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica