

**MFA Thesis Exhibitions**

8" x 8"

24 Pages

Four-color process inks on paper.

MFA Graduates, Cohort 1  
Azusa Pacific University  
2009

## The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Visual Art at Azusa Pacific University

Azusa Pacific University's Department of Art prepares art students for a lifetime of artistic expression, and cultivates individual creativity through the study of history, technique, presentation, and social engagement, as reflectors of the creative and transformative nature of God, the ultimate Creator.

Faculty believe that art is a socially responsible calling that empowers students to act as transformers in the world. In human history, artists have been the vessels and vehicles for spiritual, social, political, and psychological definition and change. Therefore, art is presented as both a professional occupation and an essential part of a liberal arts education. APU students train to continue in that artistic tradition. The Department of Art, comprised of 10 full-time faculty members, offers the Master of Fine Arts: Visual Art degree and a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art, which offers six concentrations, and a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design.

The Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art (MFA) at Azusa Pacific University provides an educational context within which artists of unusual artistic promise and strong motivation explore the horizons of their talents in the midst of an intense critical dialogue of both faith and art. This dialogue is generated by students, distinguished visitors, and a faculty comprised of experienced artists and designers mature in their faith and art.

A congratulation to the very first cohort of MFA graduates from Azusa Pacific University. Ranging in interests, geography, and experience, together they progressed through a course of study testing them physically and philosophically. Here you will find a sample of the great work these artist-scholars explored during their residency in our three-year program.

The art galleries at APU continue a tradition of first-rate exhibits. Showcasing undergraduate to blue chip artists, the APU Art Department strives to keep quality aesthetic experiences of prime importance. Facilitating over 50 exhibitions a year, the galleries are the hub of creative inquiry at the university. The MFA program continues this tradition at the highest level as each MFA candidate completes a written thesis and exhibition during their course of study. We hope you enjoy engaging the text and images provided by our students and we look forward to seeing you at the APU Art Galleries.

william catling | director | mfa program

g. james daichendt | exhibitions director

clovis blackwell | master of fine arts

Today's pop culture idols are poor representations of the hero figures that have always fascinated human cultures. Unlike the challenges faced by earlier heroes, our celebrities lead glamorous lifestyles of comfort and ease. To be more like the faces we see on television, we hide from anything that interferes with our lives of comfort.

Comic book stories are often more complex than simple morality tales or escapist wish fulfillment. The super-heroes within them embody the same archetypes as mythological heroes, whose adventures once served as metaphors for their audiences. Through the trials of these heroes, people from previous cultures learned how to understand the world and face their internal struggles.

Conflicting emotions and desires war within us. Today's flawed role models fail to show us how to confront the darker side of our selves, and instead teach us to cover our dark impulses with a facade. At a time when the power of our myths has been diluted, perhaps that power can be restored through comic book heroes.



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charity capili | master of fine arts

Using text and natural found objects, my work explores the relationship of storytelling and identity. I create three-dimensional forms that investigate the interconnected relationships between people, nature and their environment. We each have a life story that has shaped who we are today and it is through reflection that we are able to gain an understanding of our identity and our environment. My work is a tangible expression of our human desire to create and visually express ideas or concepts that transcend the boundaries of language. Sharing stories, both verbal and nonverbal, allows us to realize our connection to others. At times, it is in silence that the most powerful story is told.

- 1 One Sentence - Series | Sewing Bobbins, Text | 1" x .5" (each bobbin) | 2009
- 2 Reflection | Wood, Text | 20" x 13" | 2007
- 3 Possessions | Wire, Text | 14" x 8.5" | 2007
- 4 Learning | Wood, Text | 1.5" x 2.5" | 2009

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susan m. gibbons | master of fine arts

Integration, fusion, adoption, the blending of materials to craft works of transformation, contemplation, and beauty are what motivates me to create.

This embracing of materials, the claiming of the discarded metal, the pieces of collected detritus form the inspiration for my work. These pieces have been thrown away, and devalued. They are weathered, worn, aged and show the passage of time in their appearance and testify to a life once lived.

Messages of the past are spoken in the language of subtle colors, aged and torn edges, broken, fragile, and fragmented remnants. Time and place are carried within these tenacious relics. The stitching of and around these objects creates a journey, the constant, the presence of God, showing the hidden and revealed with both the metal and thread. They combine to fashion a dialogue between what is known and what is seen versus what is unknown and unseen.

My art engages both the metal and the stitching along with paint to translate them into transcendent objects. Sacred spaces are created when they speak. These discarded pieces invite a personal dialogue that allows the transformation of the insignificant to the valued and beautiful.

- 1 Dark Night of the Soul | Encaustic Collage | 22" x 5" | 2008
- 2 Earthen Mysteries | Encaustic Collage | 15.5" x 11.5" | 2009
- 3 Revealed | Encaustic Collage | 11" x 7.75" | 2009
- 4 Exposed | Encaustic Collage | 7" x 22.5" | 2009

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alyse miller ochniak | master of fine arts

My work relates to the domestic, interpersonal relationships, and nature. The concepts that I engage involve the life cycle, memory, grief, preservation and transformation. I rely on my reading, research of scripture, poetry, symbolism, words, and personal experience to guide and inform my creative process. My home and garden are my primary studio and gallery where I find the natural materials that I use in my art making. In my home and garden I create large and small-scale sculptural objects and installations.

Two things that inspire my creative work are: foremost the fear and pain of loss and solitude and secondly, nature with all of her beauty, power and mystery. In the latter, I discover clues, comfort, hope and motivation to find healing and sometimes, understanding and new awareness.

1 Containing my thoughts | Tie wire, rice and wax paper, bee's wax, ink | 24" | 2008

2 Pastimes | Cheesecloth, tumbleweed | Life size | 2008

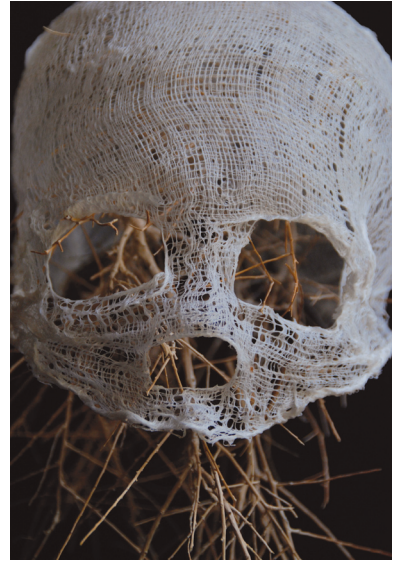
3 It settles in | Crystal Decanter, decaying rose petals | 12" | 2008

4 Something this way comes | California Black Oak Branches, Home-Studio | 12' x 6' x 4' | 2008

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kim m. reiff | master of fine arts

The fabric of life is stitched with threads from interpersonal family relationships. Memories woven from past experiences entangle the present. Conceptually, my materials and process speak to a journey of re-thinking, reconstruction, and re-enchantment.

Using acrylic paint, cotton fiber, and wire mesh, metaphorical and physical elements are melded into semi-sculpted forms. While carefully binding the frayed canvas together with gauze and metal, I consider how organic filament protects, whereas, rigid alloy corrodes. Reflecting on the tapestry of family, I selectively reweave sorrow, healing, and joy and find new meaning embedded in the layers.

It is in my studio that I explore the essence of being and create new paradigms for the future. The viewer is invited to experience the visual and tactile nature of my work and begin their own journey of unexpected discoveries.

1 Untitled 1 | Acrylic, natural cotton fiber, wire mesh | 24" x 48" | 2009

2 Untitled 2 | Acrylic, natural cotton fiber | 24" x 48" | 2009

3 Untitled 4 | Acrylic, natural cotton fiber, wire mesh | 24" x 48" | 2009

4 Untitled 5 | Acrylic, natural cotton fiber | 24" x 48" | 2009

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lucien saxton | master of fine arts

Openness, time and infinite connections. Some think we have a separate world of our own thoughts and ideas. I am not so sure we do. We are constantly breathing through our skin. Particles are traveling through our bodies without even slowing down.

The scene for this project is Job mourning the loss of his children, home, possessions, and even his health. His three friends sit and wait for him to speak, but he does not speak for seven days.

This body of work is about connectivity. It is meant to be touched. It belongs in spaces people visit: a lawn, library, hallway, or even in the residence of an unrecognized art collector. I appreciate honesty and find it through the questions of a child, conversations with a retired business professional and in contextual discussions with an art historian.

The concept of waiting in silence for seven days and nights for someone else to speak is a foreign one in our culture, but it may still be read as a form of respect. There in the connections, are small infinities, and silence makes room for infinity.

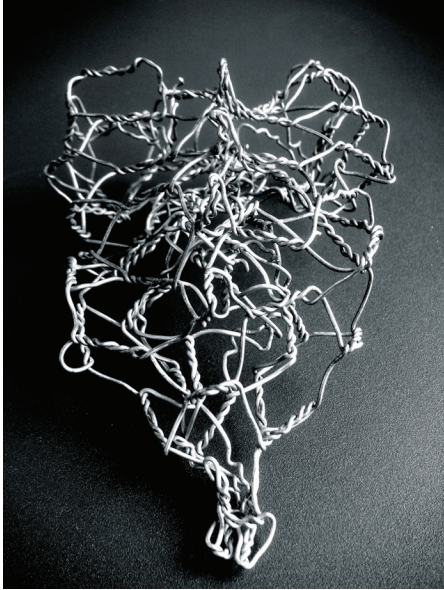
1 Sacrum | Galvanized steel wire | Life Sized (7" x 5") | 2008

2 Carbon Dating | Galvanized steel wire | Life Sized (head to ribs 23", depth of chest 10", Shoulder to shoulder 19") | 2008

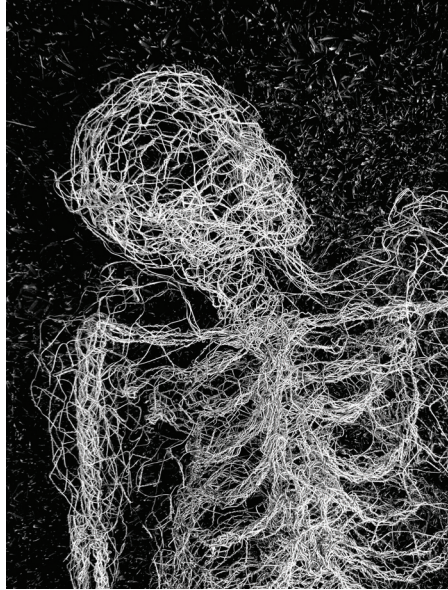
3 Upper body | Galvanized steel wire | Life Sized (Tip of finger to hip 48", depth 10" ) | 2008



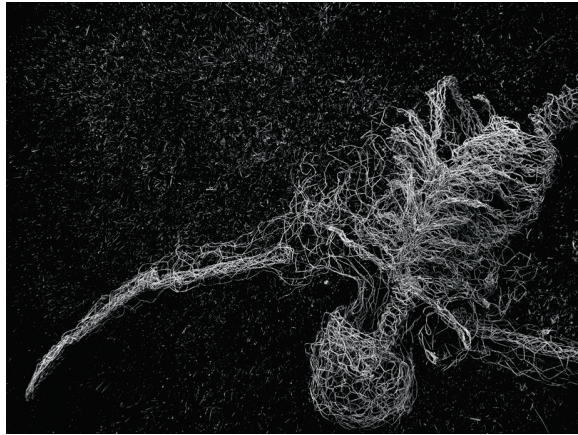
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jeff siemers | master of fine arts

My work invites the viewer into the landscape of life experience and explores the act of existing within and moving throughout our own landscape. The process of digital illustration and mark making allows me to probe my own limits of imagination and sense of adventure. I can discover both the significance and relative insignificance of the individual's journey—the paths we cross, the marks we make, the purpose in it. The layers in my work often refer to the past, present and future as well as the shared human experience of physical, spiritual and emotional being. The story of the human journey is multifaceted; there may be a depth of complexity behind a simple mark, a simple phrase uttered, a gesture, a glance.

1 Ridgeline | Ink on Digital Print | 24" x 16" | 2008

2 Terrain | Ink on Digital Print | 24" x 16" | 2008

3 Aspire | Ink on Digital Print | (3) 12" x 18" | 2008

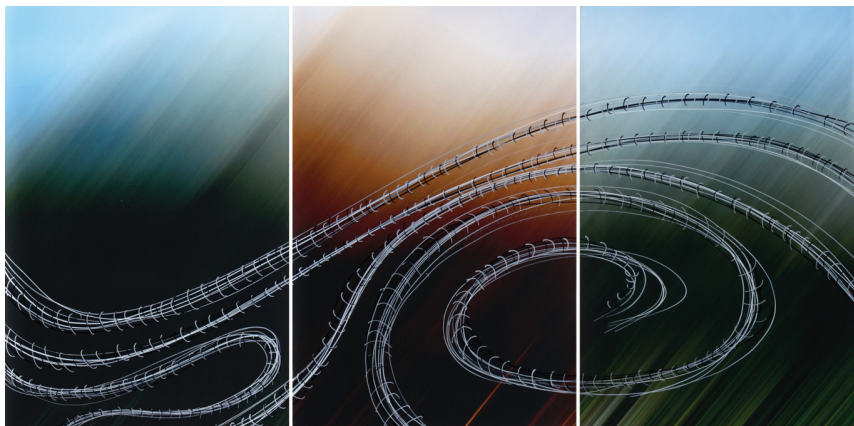
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mark terry | master of fine arts

Alchemy is about my quest for increasingly intimate and immediate relationships between the vessels I shape and the phenomenon of fire. I am captivated by the inextricably symbiotic relationship between artisan and fire, and the uncontrolled organic beauty of forms glazed by wood ash and fire.

This body of work considers the similarity between the corporeal body and the record etched into it by the act of living, with surfaces on figural forms created entirely by organic firing cycles. I believe it speaks with apt metaphor of the communal dance between bodily experience and the marks – both visible and invisible – that remain behind as journal of our bodies' journeys. Along with the grace and beauty inherent in the human form, the idea of the body as a sacred vessel for the spirit, and as the vessel in which the seed of life is nurtured and born resonates with the powerful labor and childbirth imagery attendant in the cycles of primitive firing techniques I employ in my work.

With each firing I rediscover the intimate relationship between the artist and fire, and the corresponding magic in the uncontrolled and organic beauty of figural forms glazed by wood ash and fire.

1 Nysiadeae: Daughter of Artemis: Sacred Vessel Series | Pit-fired stoneware | 8" x 16" x 36" | 2008

2 Neriadne: Sacred Vessel Series | Wood-fired stoneware/porcelain composite, Noble Hill Anagama | 8" x 16" x 36" | 2008

3 Alseidae: Sacred Vessel Series | Wood-fired stoneware/porcelain composite, Noble Hill Anagama | 8" x 16" x 36" | 2009



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kathleen yorba | master of fine arts

This current work is a dialogue about ancestral, geographical and physical inheritance. I am the subject of this relationship and dialogue. Created on backlit film I address the residing memories contained within my form. Memories of origin and identity preoccupy while using fugitive materials that continue the lost and found edges of remembrance. They allow me to integrate and examine the line that defines and separates me from those who came before.

Because of my DNA interest, Crows are an important symbol in the work. Many myths surround their existence. One that speaks into my process is their ability to communicate with and carry the souls of the dead. Ancestral memories continue within my blood and are signified symbolically through the Crows.

Maps also denote the ancestral connection. It signifies the land that bears the memories and marks of their passage and life. They loved, worked, and fought for this land. The land that sustained their lives is now hallowed. It carries, covers, and cradles their bodies as holy vessels.

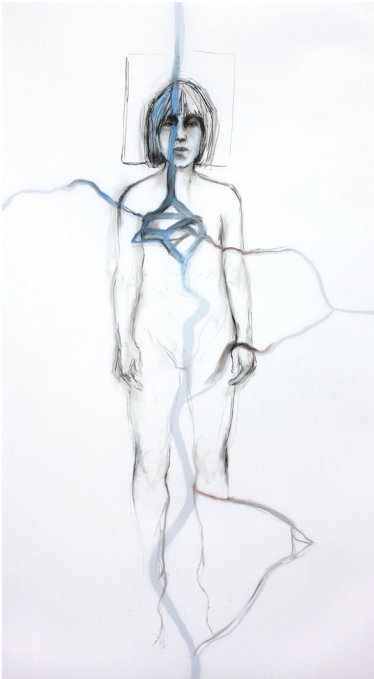
My work engages the human form as a vessel that emanates a compelling history and language. Creating childhood memories of myself I am continually discovering and developing an understanding about the mystery held within the body and my relationship to it. It is my inheritance and contribution and is offered in this work.

1 Being Pulled Forward | Mixed media on backlit film | 36" x 60"

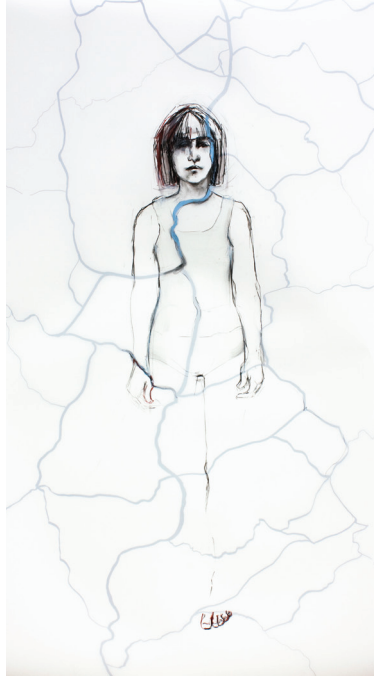
2 Cocoon | Mixed media on backlit film | 36" x 60"

3 Connected | Mixed media on backlit film | 36" x 60"

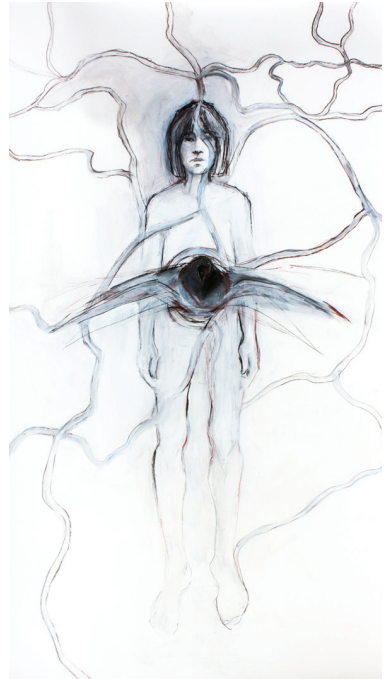
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