

# Encountering Place



U.S. Embassy Wellington  
ART in Embassies Program

# WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to the ART in Embassies 2011 Wellington exhibition, *Encountering Place*.

Because the exhibition is mounted in the public rooms of the Ambassador's Residence, we have the pleasure of seeing the works numerous times each day. And still the exhibition provokes the same broad smile it did a month ago, when the pieces were first uncrated and hung.

The individual works are dynamic, engaging, and indeed seductive, in that each one pulls you in for a closer, more intimate look. Taken together they interact in interesting ways, stir emotion, and provoke thought about the disparate meaning, relevance, and power of place.

We are also delighted to introduce you to two new and exciting friends of ours, the curators of the exhibition: Nathan Huff of greater Los Angeles and James Brown of Auckland.

Why curators?

Rather than choosing the works ourselves, we thought it would be much more interesting to select an emerging American artist and an emerging New Zealand artist, put them together, and have them create the exhibition as part of getting to know each other.



We believe the experiment worked brilliantly.

The interaction of Nathan and James – including their first trips ever to each other's home countries – created a vibrant and surprising selection. It also wonderfully reinforced the objectives of the half-century old ART in Embassies program, which is to use art to bring people together and start a conversation.

And now, we'll turn things over to the curators.

**Ambassador David Huebner  
and Duane E. McWaine MD**

## ENCOUNTERING PLACE

How does one define a place? Is it in the location on a map, a geographical landmark that you can stand on? Is it the cultural identification with the space by those who inhabit it? What about digital locations, conceptual spaces?

This exploration of the concept of place was the focus for a collaborative curatorial exchange for the United States Ambassador's residence in Wellington.

Ambassador David Huebner's unique vision for the ART in Embassies program was to bring together two emerging artists from different countries and have them create an exhibition. We found ourselves suddenly introduced to an individual half a world away and with an exciting task ahead of us.

Through the generous provision of ART in Embassies, and the New Zealand American Association, we exchanged two week long – full immersion – visits: Nathan to NZ and James to LA (a first for both of us).

As we began our artist “blind-date”, we managed a few awkward Skype calls, wrote e-mails, and shared personal opinions on a range of topics. Attempting to leave our options wide open, we looked at over seventy galleries, and visited ten museums.

We encountered artists both familiar and unknown to each of us. Studio visits were a rich part of this project, as well as being invited into the creative workspaces of twenty-five individuals



James Brown and Nathan Huff

in Los Angeles, Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

The bombardment of art spawned a spirited dialogue. We discussed personal taste, design components, philosophies of making art, and how to unite the works that we were to select within the heavily aestheticized residence in which these pieces were to hang. What drew us to select the fourteen artworks for this exhibition was the distinct intervention that all the artists made as they engaged with their subject: a place.

While places depicted in art are often noticed first for the location represented, artists whose investigation evoked an emotional tie to a location increasingly intrigued us. We appreciated artists who engaged with critical commentary about the construct of an image of a place, and others who used illusion, displacement, and intentional intervention in the space to draw attention to the “placeness” of the work.

Throughout this process the open-ended concept of place matured into something quite specific evoking the artist’s intention to draw attention to the place within work rather than simply depicting it.

The richness of our encounters with these artists and their work inspired us

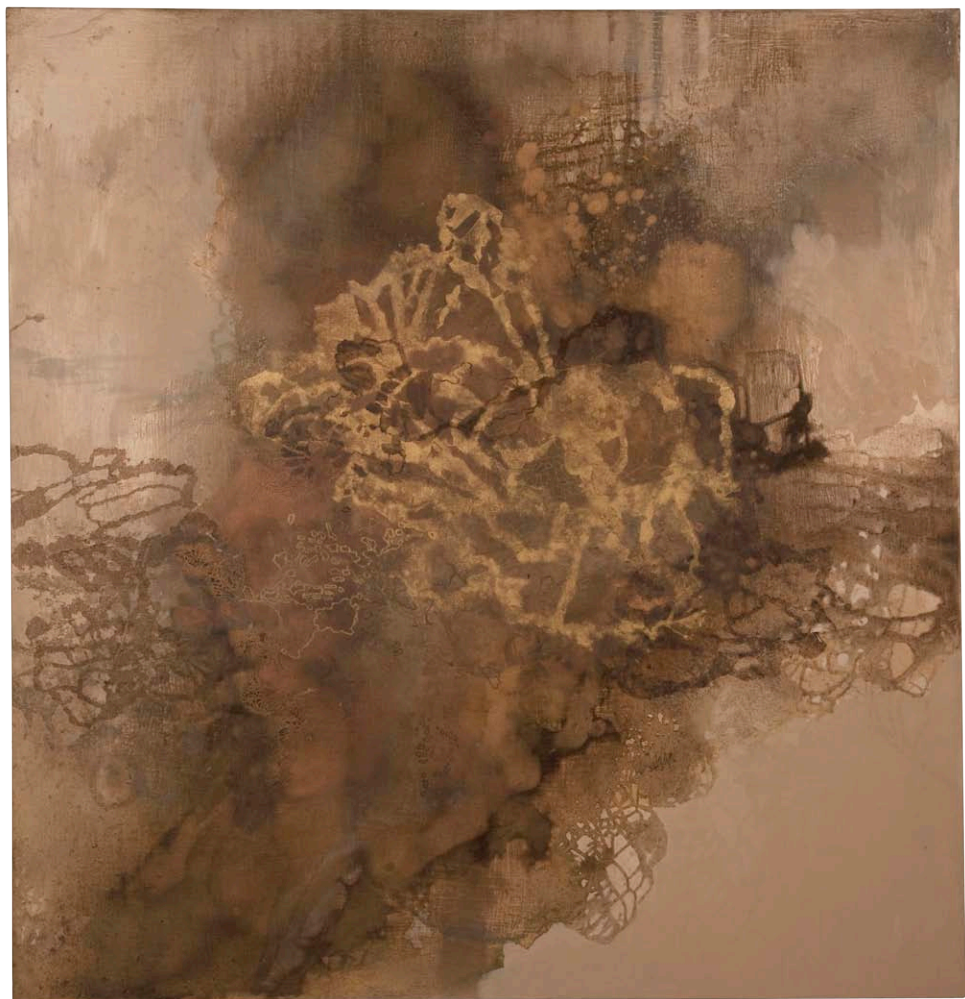
in our own practice. As artists ourselves, we decided to create new works for this exhibition, based on our evolving perceptions of the project.

For Nathan, the fact that this exhibition is housed in a residence rather than a gallery, caused the show site itself to become an important location. “On my visit to the space, I found myself interested in the history of the home, particularly its role as a site for diplomacy. I thought of people that have lived and met here, I thought about the conversations that were had, and the decisions made.

Our hope is that this exhibition will not only represent a variety of artists from both continents, but also spark conversations about our relationships to the places, both physical and metaphorically, in which we reside.

Special thanks to Sarah Tanguy at ART in Embassies for her guidance and tireless assistance in helping us, and to Ambassador David Huebner for his vision to foster diplomacy in action, and his openness to living with an unpredictable outcome. Our professional practices and personal lives have been enriched by engaging with the life and culture of another.

**James Stephen Brown and Nathan Huff**  
Co-Curators



**Nancy Voegeli Curran (born 1955)**

*Lacemaker's Sky*, 2010

Oil on panel

46 x 48 in. (116.8 x 121.9 cm)

Nancy Voegeli-Curran spends months on her intricately composed paintings, which become a physical stage for her painting narrative. Similar to Jae Hoon Lee in his photomontage, Voegeli-Curran relies on the process of accumulation to form her abstract paintings.

Place, in its potent physicality, is developed within the surface of the work. Begun with pours of paint and gravity, the piece is harnessed in as she traces and retraces the forms, spills, and colors of the subtly controlled painting, *Lacemaker's Sky*.

Through interweaving, multi-layered structures, she creates micro and macrocosms that resemble a phenomenological event such as a cosmological dust storm with inter-stellar bits or a spatial galaxy. Shimmering, mineral-like colors add subtle nuance to her work.

Themes of chaos and order, flux and movement as affected by gravity, and the passage of time are all present in her work. She observes that a single shift of a chance event within our natural world, such as an earthquake or the birth of a star, can cause extreme change or chaos in a seemingly stable environment.

This occurrence then generates reverberations or repercussions from which a new structure or order emerges.

### **Biography:**

Following a first career as a speech-language pathologist, Voegeli-Curran returned to school to pursue a degree in studio art. In 1994, she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing and painting and a Master of Fine Arts degree at California State University, Long Beach in 2011.

She has also studied art in Florence, Italy, and at Anderson Ranch Art Center in Snowmass, Colorado. Her work has been shown both nationally and internationally, and is included in public and private collections. Her current residence is in Los Alamitos, CA.

Her studio practice has been influenced by living in the northwest for several years and by subsequent travels to Alaska where dynamic natural forces combined with an overall sense of vastness are evident.

[www.nancyvcurran.com](http://www.nancyvcurran.com)



**Claudia Morales McCain (born 1976)**

*Journey*, 2010

Oil on canvas

41 ½ x 54 in. (105.4 x 137.2 cm)

One feels the transient experience of displacement in Claudia's Morales McCain's work *Journey*. This gestural painting depicts a raft-like vessel cobbled together with twine and other found objects. Like the immigrant stories and travels that inspire her work, Morales McCain's painting knits a complex history and collaged journey that make up many people's experience traversing the lands they inhabit.

She draws inspiration from her bicultural experience and uses appropriated photographs combined with personal memory to build makeshift structures of identity. These intuitively built shelters, rafts, boats, trees, and bodies become stand-ins for the artist's life journey. Her paintings aim to suspend time and capture an emotional terrain through the absence of character and the use of color and light. The viewer's body is invited to become the absent character.

### **Biography:**

Claudia Morales McCain was born in El Salvador. She and her family immigrated to the United States during the civil war in her country. She currently lives and works in Long Beach, California. She earned an Associate of Arts degree from Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, California and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Cal State, Fullerton. She is currently a Master of Fine Arts candidate from Cal State, Long Beach. In addition, she has studied at the Anderson Ranch Art Center, Snowmass, Colorado, and at the Centro Nacional de Arte, San Salvador, El Salvador. The recipient of several awards, fellowships and grants, she has exhibited her work throughout California.

[www.claudiamoralesmccain.com](http://www.claudiamoralesmccain.com)



**Anne Marie Jean (born 1973)**

*Nature no. 6: Veiled*, 2003

Oil on canvas

Diptych: 47 x 118 in. (119.4 x 299.7cm)

Anne Marie Jean's painting *Nature no. 6: Veiled* simultaneously offers landscape illusion and sensual surface. Viewers are caught up in the illusion of distance in the painting and are immediately reminded of the dance that occurs on the canvas surface with paint and color. While it offers a receding vision of a landscape, it also grounds the viewer in the activity of viewing and perceiving. This work draws attention to what is veiled, but referred to explicitly in the title: a space which may have once existed and now does so only in the mind of the artist.

*"I am a painter who trained in Australia and France in the mid-1990's and have lived since 2000 in New Zealand, first in the South Island and now in Wellington in the North. In 2009 I opened Blackmore Jean Gallery and Studio in Shelly Bay on the Miramar Peninsula with fellow painter Jane Blackmore. Here, with a glorious view of the sea, I continue to develop my work while learning to run a gallery and teaching and mentoring in art.*

*"My painting is as much a celebration and exploration of the history of painting and the medium of paint itself as it is an evocation of my love of and experience of nature. I'm attracted to unruly landscapes. Landscapes that contain patterns that are disrupted by discordant notes. Landscapes that are not neat, which invite close inspection. Landscapes with which I can become intimate. Through the physicality of paint and the languages of gesture and colour I record the details of my physical presence in nature. I work on large scale paintings in the studio as a continuation of the physical bodily awareness I have when tramping and sketching in nature."* Anne Marie Jean

**Biography:**

Jean holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in visual arts from Canberra Institute of the Arts at Australian National University, and has studied at l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. The recipient of several residencies, she has exhibited her work in Australia, France, Scotland, and New Zealand.

[www.annemariejean.com](http://www.annemariejean.com)





**Nathan Huff (born 1981)**

*Negotiating Place*, 2011

Gouache on paper

42 x 78 in. (106.7 x 198.1cm)

*Negotiating Place* is a gouache on paper that utilizes the structure of the dining room in which it sits in to comment on place.

Site specific to the red walls and chandelier, it opens the roof to reveal the passage of boats sailing across the ceiling of the room. Like the relations that might exist around this table, the boats offer fantastical representations of those present or long absent.

*"I wanted to create a work that would both represent my rich experience of travel to New Zealand and engage with the history of the residence.*

*"My recent drawing and painting installations create freewheeling narratives: personal stories of suspending gravity, traversing emotional vertigo, and sorting reservoirs of memories.*

*"I am fascinated by visual conversations that can occur between images and objects that tangentially relate yet lack a linear retelling.*

*"Exploring the gaps between visual perception and modes of representation, and possible interpretation of these objects, provides a rich and fertile arena for my art making.*

*"In my studio practice I leave space for interpretive play and experimentation. I collect meaningful images, imagined experiences, or emotional conundrums.*

*"My initial responses take the forms of gouache drawings; sculpture made from altered found furniture, creative writing, an enacted dialogue, an Internet search and*

*collage, or colliding personal mythology with actual objects.*

*"It is in these chance combinations that objects take on potential beyond what I might have immediately recognized. New visual observations, personal insights, and metaphorical links are discovered in the process of this exploration."* Nathan Huff

### **Biography:**

Nathan Huff earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Drawing and Painting from California State University, Long Beach; a degree in art education from Azusa Pacific University, California. He has also studied art in Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

Actively exhibited in Los Angeles and abroad, his work has been collected throughout the West by universities, public collections, and private individuals.

He enjoys working in his art studio above the beautiful cliffs of San Pedro and is privileged to work with art students at Biola University and at California State University, Long Beach as an adjunct lecturer.

[www.nathanhuff.com](http://www.nathanhuff.com)



**James Stephen Brown (born 1981)**

*Back*, 2011

Acrylic on plyboard

23 2/3 x 27 1/2 in. (60 x 70 cm)

James describes his process thus: “The image was a figure standing in a field of puddles forming a fragmented reflection.” It was a response to the fact that Nathan and James were so similar in nature, and in general how nice it was to find so much in common with someone from the other side of the world.

He also loved the idea of Ingrid Boberg’s displaced animals in a landscape, and wanted to draw from the idea of directing attention to place through displacement of figure. A narrative formed around the central image of a space traveler who has just crashed back on his home planet after an adventure on a neighboring planet. The character is looking *back* at the planet where he has come *back* from with his *back* facing the viewer – hence the title *Back*.

*“I’ve drawn my whole life, in fact most of my earliest memories are of drawing. I developed a talent at a very young age and discovered a love for painting in high school.*

*“I have worked full time as a video director / editor for the past seven years. While filming a documentary in Africa about the role of art in youth development I rediscovered my love of painting and began furiously painting and drawing once again. I entered a number of competitions with a series of works with a science fiction illustrative style.”* James Brown

The fantastical landscapes, dramas and illusionistic diversions created by Auckland artist James Brown lead the viewer down many weird and wonderful paths. Brown’s juxtapositions of the real, the imagined, the sublime and

the visceral bring together things usually only seen in the heightened world of the graphic novel. But these are paintings, bright, luscious, oils and enamels, unexplainable, driven by the imagination, formed by intuition, individualized by skill.

The paintings in this first show are rich and explosively fanciful explorations of the worlds beyond us, behind us and beside us. From the burning red skies of apocalyptic beginnings, to the space suited frontiers of the future, the past and the imagined collapsing, rearranging and reforming before our eyes on our computers and on our movie screens.

The worlds of wonder we become a part of are in the end celebrations of image making. They are theatres of the ritual madness and ecstasy worthy of the Dionysus Greek god of wine and the ultimate patron of drama whom we pay homage to in these paintings.

### **Biography:**

Born in Auckland, New Zealand, James Brown received a scholarship in Art History at secondary school then went on to study at the Elam School of Fine Arts where he was awarded the Denise Gerald Scholarship. While working as a video director and editor, James has won a Wallace Art Award twice and achieved runner-up at the Empire Arts Youth Art competition.

He is represented by the OrexArt gallery in Auckland.

<http://tinyurl.com/43vmbly>



**Devon Tsuno (born 1980)**

*White Out*, 2007

Acrylic and spray paint on panel

36 x 48 in. (91.4 x 121.9 cm)

An investigation of multiple moments and liminal imagery is also observed in Devon Tsuno's multilayered painting *White Out*.

Based in Los Angeles, Tsuno draws on the scenes from his everyday life in the city to create his densely layered images. Using fences, signposts, and foliage in his exploration of unobserved backyards, his images straddle the ever-evolving landscape of the city and the rootedness of generational Angelinos. His observations create a meditative space within the flurry of spaces, both natural and synthetic that makes up the city.

*“Los Angeles is always described as a city of sprawl. But it is also a massively layered city that is growing amidst an unsound ecology – people battling for space via hostile takeovers resulting in violent concussive movements.*

*“The city of Los Angeles is littered with vegetation from every corner of the world, insurgent horticulture nurtured by a toxic, yet forgiving climate. LA's plant life mirrors the diverse population which coexists within it.*

*“These paintings are made from images taken while on fly fishing and biking sojourns on the streets of Los Angeles and along the San Gabriel River, the Los Angeles River, and the Mid-Wilshire area in Los Angeles. My abstractions recall a city organism composed of beautifully ordered concrete, space and light, integrated and often interdicted by violent layers of vegetation.*

*“Some document their travels, however I document quotidian journeys in search of rediscovery of the familiar. I have photographed the history of a 25-mile radius in Los Angeles from 1995 to 2011. These photographic references are a repetitive scrutiny; of what is observed, questioned, and experienced and have become a direct parallel in my process of paint application.*

*“I use spray paint and acrylic paint, to re-imagine Los Angeles through confrontations in pictorial and abstract space, color theory and hard edge abstraction. These modes of observation, process, recollection, and criticism, dictate how I choose to paint. It is living in the world of Los Angeles and painting that interests me.”* Devon Tsuno

### **Biography:**

Devon Tsuno holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Drawing from California State University, Long Beach and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Drawing from Claremont Graduate University, California.

The recipient of several awards, Tsuno also teaches, has been a gallery director, is a curator, and has participated in numerous workshops and residencies. His work has been exhibited in California and Tokyo, Japan, and can be found in public and private collections in the United States and Japan.

[www.devontsuno.com](http://www.devontsuno.com)



**Melissa Kauk (born 1981)**

*Left as bruises on the bodies of fallen leaves  
are scratched their letters of love, 2008*

Mixed media

15 x 6 in. (38.1 x 15.2 cm)

Melissa Kauk investigates her memories of home and heritage through her densely layered mixed media collages. Like an excavated drywall, or musty box of letters, her work reminds viewers of the rich layered histories of the places we call home

*“My artwork investigates ‘home’ defined not only as a physical space, but also as a space that is manifested in the mind and connected to memory.*

*“Even as people physically move from place to place, there are always those gritty, worn spaces: scratches and drips that can transform themselves into familiar landscapes and settings, or oil stains and dusty surfaces that remind us of our doorknobs that have collected a ripe patina from having been turned so many times before.*

*“These traces and marks often have the ability to bring forth memories that transport a person back ‘home.’*

*“Inspired by my current and past surroundings, my artwork navigates environments through multiple levels of drawing, re-ordering, and building. Images are accumulated as reflections of dwellings that once were, cocooning themselves into a new and mythological home.*

*“Small visual passages or niches within the artwork suggest narrative, but often fail to provide substantial storyline, welcoming viewers to use their minds to weave together a ‘home’ of their own.”* Melissa Kauk



**Melissa Kauk (born 1981)**

*Switch Plate Iron Gate*, 2010

Mixed media

5 x 3 in. (12.7 x 7.6 cm)

**Biography:**

Born in Modesto, California, Melissa Kauk earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Drawing and Painting at California State University, Long Beach in 2007, during which time she was awarded the Richard and Johanna Baker Scholarship and the Marilyn Werby Graduate Exhibition Scholarship. She currently

resides in Long Beach, California where she continues to make and exhibit art.

She has taught a wide range of art courses at colleges throughout Southern California and has exhibited her work throughout California and in Berlin, Germany. In her spare time, she enjoys tutoring students of all ages in art, science, English, and math.

[www.melissakauk.com](http://www.melissakauk.com)





**Ingrid Boberg (born 1951)**

*Horses on an Oval Corral, 2005*

Color photograph

31 1/2 x 43 5/16 in. (80 x 110 cm)

At times displacement becomes the primary theme of the artwork. Ingrid Boberg's photograph *Horses on an Oval Corral* draws attention to the artificial displacement of subject and background. A ring of toy horses sits on a coffee table, while a painting of a pastoral landscape hangs on the wall behind them.

Through her witty arrangement of everyday objects, Boberg creates a narrative of subtle bewilderment as viewers try to unite the two spaces. The place and our emotional reactions to it are defined by what has been displaced.

Boberg uses an archival inkjet process to print her works, creating soft colors and a matte surface. Her vibrant compositions of constructed realities and seemingly familiar environments are disquieting, whether she is orchestrating an artificial scene with found figurines or camouflaging the staged interiors with what she calls the "*cute factor*."

Boberg enables viewers to be both audience and narrator, navigating through a compilation of mini-scenarios. Her photographs take viewers outside of reality and into the fantastical by quietly seducing them with her selection and arrangement of the objects.

The desirable interiors comment on perfectly ordered interiors seen in design magazines, but ironically, they are settings of conformity and lack

individuality. Warm, yet stifled; familiar, yet distant; pleasant, yet disconcerting, it is the beauty of the compositions that comes through in her photographs of interiors.

### **Biography:**

Ingrid Boberg holds a Bachelor of Education (A & C), Melbourne State College; a Post Graduate Diploma of Fine Art, Phillip Institute of Technology; and a Bachelor of Education (A & C), Melbourne State College; and is a Senior Lecturer of Photography at Auckland University of Technology.

She has twice been accepted as a finalist for the Salon de la Recherche Photographique in Royan, France. In 2005, she was a finalist in the New Zealand Vodafone Digital Art Awards and a finalist at the Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award.

Her work has been exhibited in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, and can be found in several public and private collections.

[www.whitespace.co.nz](http://www.whitespace.co.nz)



**Christina Shurts (born 1977)**

*Tree House*, 2010

Oil on canvas

9 x 12 in. (22.9 x 30.5 cm)

Artwork has the unique capacity to transport us through time recalling long lost experiences. Some of the works in this show lead the viewer through the artist's emotional connection or ephemeral memories of places. Christina Shurt's quirky painting *Tree House* recalls a place of blooming childhood imagination. The thick paint and jauntily applied brushstrokes embellish the freedom of those places that we might go to dream.

*"Through my paintings I explore the human condition. My current series hones in on the condition of nostalgia, both for the recollected past and an idealized future. In these paintings images of peculiar spaces are homes to uncanny getaways. Within vast spaces, flying ships, tree houses, and shacks with chandeliers are transformed into forgotten vacationlands. I want to offer a respite for the viewer, yet embody the honesty of life's*

*transience. Nostalgia emerged in a previous body of work and still left questions. What is pertinent to contemporary nostalgia, and if it is a getaway or even just a daydream from the everyday, does a dark side to this longing always creep through? Ultimately, the paintings aim to be a depot for these concerns while tackling the challenge of gooey paint balanced atop a canvas."* Christina Shurts

**Biography:**

Christina Shurts earned her Master of Fine Arts degree at California State University, Long Beach and Bachelor of Art degree at University of California, Irvine, and has since shown her work in New York, Los Angeles and London. Within the last year her work has been included in two New American Paintings annuals. Shurts lives and works in Long Beach, California, with her loving family and three silly dogs.

[www.christinashurts.com](http://www.christinashurts.com)



**Mica Still (born 1974)**

*They wait for me to wake, 2008*

Acrylic on board

24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)

Moving even further away from a representation of physical grounding, Mica Still creates dreamlike images with visages of animals, pulsating color, and graphic lines. Her painting *They wait for me to wake* is a wonderful melding of the mythologies, histories, and memories that might swirl in the soup of the unconscious. Laws of gravity and scale changes are as diverse as this place is unique to the mind of the artist.

Still is a people enthusiast with shy tendencies who lets her artwork tell it like it is. She dreams in color, and these dreams spill out onto her art works, populating them with animals and symbols from both her homeland and her adopted home.

Her work is bright, graphic and complex, with humans and animals combining to explore her desires, fears and fantasies.

Still's artwork will sneak up and frighten you in your dreams while making you laugh out loud in the light of day.

### **Biography:**

Originally from a small West Coast town in the United States, she upgraded to the capital of New Zealand, where she mentors other promising artists to supplement her own art career.

Still completed a Study Abroad Program, Pont-Aven School of Art. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon and a Certificate of Multimedia, National School of Technology and Design, Wellington, New Zealand. Her work has been shown in Australia and New Zealand and can be found in collections in Portland, Oregon and New Zealand.

[www.micastill.com](http://www.micastill.com)



**Jonathan Anderson (born 1977)**

*Construction (no. 6), 2009*

Oil on oak panel

48 x 72 in. (121.9 x 182.9 cm)

Embodying a painting of home in a different fashion, Jonathan Anderson's *Construction* series reveals a place by what appears to be its withdrawal.

His images of framed-in homes are delineated by their absence through his selective rendering of a background. By allowing the natural wood of the support panel to represent the foundation and studs of constructed homes, he seductively renders the landscape surrounding the construction site with paint. This change in the physical surface of his works, coupled with his beautifully painted illusion, challenges viewers to question the location as well as the representation of the location.

*"I think about painting in construction terms. Paintings are buildings; they are structures designed to provide containment for ways of seeing and thinking, ways of positioning and orienting oneself in relation to the world. And I undertake art-making in these terms: as a structure-maker, transforming oily mud and fibers into visual spaces for the housing of stories, the posing of questions, and the visual organizing of concepts. It's not only that these paintings are often images of buildings; they are themselves 'buildings.'*

*"Yet, there is an impasse that occurs in these (and ultimately, all) representations. The curious thing about a painted image is that it offers visual space upon a flat surface—it simultaneously opens out onto things-in-the-world other than itself, while at the same time persistently remaining its own distinct thing-in-the-world (a flat painted surface hanging on this wall)..."*

*"I have been working through this idea in an ongoing series entitled *Constructions*..."*

*"This series includes paintings of homes under construction, in which I'm thinking about the painting itself as a domestic construction site, conflating the construction of an image with that of a home."*

*"What appears to be the wooden structural framing of a house under construction is, in fact, the bare wooden panel that the painting is constructed on: the image is 'negatively' painted such that the wooden panel (the object) is conflated with the wooden studs and beams of the half-built home (the image)."*

*"I'm interested in asserting both sides of this dynamic as clearly as possible in an attempt to understand the profound mystery of what George Steiner calls the "covenant between word and object, the presumption that being is, to a workable degree, 'sayable.'"*

Jonathan Anderson

### **Biography:**

Jonathan Anderson is an Assistant Professor of Art at Biola University. He has a Master of Fine Arts Degree from California State University, Long Beach, where he received the Distinguished Achievement Award in Drawing & Painting. He currently lives and works in Long Beach, California.

[www.jonathanandersonpaintings.com](http://www.jonathanandersonpaintings.com)



**Karley Feaver (born 1978)**

*Sophia: Managing Director, 2010*

Acrylic on canvas

39 x 39 inches; (99 x 99cm)

Karley Feaver's slickly painted work titled *Sophia: Managing Director* is a piece that is inspired from interviews in which she poses the question: "What does escapism mean to you?" In this abstracted portrait of the individual interviewed, clumpy green clouds hover on the surface and one senses the boundless distance of metaphorical escapism; another place that might only exist in the mind.

**Biography:**

Born in New Plymouth, New Zealand, Feaver is a self-taught artist living in Auckland. She works across a range of disciplines including painting, sculpture and taxidermy. Her work focuses on moments, happenings or experiences that move her in her everyday life. She is interested in blending visual languages and exploring how color, abstract forms, and representational

images can cross-reference each other and audience perception.

In 2010, Feaver had her first solo exhibition, *Interviews with Escapists*, where through a series of interviews, she explored people's personal experiences and opinions on escapism. She then translated the interviews into bold abstract art works. Each artwork tells a story intended to evoke emotions through imagery and through the use of color. Her use of color is not meant to confuse the viewer but to embellish the sometimes dark topic of escapism and the way it can be interpreted.

Feaver has exhibited her work throughout Australia, and is a member of Artists Alliance, New Zealand. Her works are held in private collections in the United Kingdom, Australia, Russia and New Zealand.

[www.karleyfeaver.com](http://www.karleyfeaver.com)



**Jae Hoon Lee (born 1973)**

*A Mountain, 2009*

Digitally collaged photograph

78 3/4 x 27 9/16 in. (200 x 70 cm)

Jae Hoon Lee's photograph *A Mountain* is an evocative image to start with. His creation of the portrait of a place involves taking hundreds of photographs of a landscape and digitally weaving them together to reveal a unique splaying of location. Upon close observation the unreal focus of the image and pulsating perspective shifts create a surreal or hyper-real location. The perspective of the canyons bulge while the flattened horizontal road that travels across the bottom of the image literally scores and underlines the location.

*"I lead a nomadic existence, working in and between different cultural territories. This creative process allows me to record and assemble an image bank of my experiences as a cultural wanderer. Over the past decade, I have been collecting source material in New Zealand and other countries I have visited, including India, Japan, Nepal, and Korea. My daily collecting habit has expanded to include natural elements, urban scenes,*

*daily objects, and banal accidents (random situations and happenings on the street). This bank of images is used to create the digitally collaged photographs and videos that are time-based, presenting multiple instants that are collapsed via digital manipulation to create alternative new readings of my personal experience in different space and time."* Jae Hoon Lee

**Biography:**

Born in Seoul, Korea, Jae Hoon Lee is a citizen of New Zealand. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the San Francisco Art Institute, California; and a Masters of Fine Arts degree from the University of Auckland, where he has started a Doctorate of Fine Art. He has shown his work in Australia, China, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States.

[www.jaehoonlee.net](http://www.jaehoonlee.net)



## FINAL THOUGHTS

As you can see, Nathan and James have assembled a superb exhibition. Dr. McWaine and I are deeply grateful to them for agreeing to such a novel and demanding enterprise, and for bringing such passion, enthusiasm, and dynamism to the project.

In closing, I would like to note that in addition to their fourteen selections, three other works hang in the exhibition space. From Dr. McWaine's and my personal collection, those three pieces speak to aspects of our own exploration of place.

My paternal grandparents were working-class immigrants from Germany who settled in a small coal mining town in Pennsylvania. Dr. McWaine's family is descended from slaves brought to Mississippi from West Africa. I migrated from America's Eastern seaboard to California and have lived and worked for extended periods in metropolitan New York, Tokyo, Shanghai, and now Wellington.

I wrestle vigorously and happily with a sense of place. I enjoy questioning orthodox, politics-laden, self-serving mythologies of place. Who I am is an amalgam of influences from many places. I don't fit anywhere perfectly. As I have been told more than once, I don't know my place.

Whether geographically, personally, or spiritually, the path one takes and where one ends up are more important than where one starts. To me, discussion of place should transcend "where" and ask "why."



**Tony Gleaton (born 1948)**

*Grandmother and child, 1986*

Gelatin silver print on paper

14 1/2 x 14 1/2 in. (36.8 x 36.8 cm)

When defined in human terms, place is inherently complex.

Tony Gleaton's photograph of an elderly woman and young girl illustrates part of his journey through the "incomprehensibly confusing mix of peoples" that defines the Americas.

The work is from his *Africa's Legacy in Mexico* series, which documents the villages on Mexico's Pacific Coast populated by descendants of Black African slaves brought to New Spain in the 1500s and 1600s. It is a powerful statement of what Gleaton calls an "alternative iconography" of society and place that is "inclusive not exclusive."

Even literal representations of place can evoke more than expected. The decorative map of Egypt in our library was drawn by renowned French cartographer Le Sieur Robert De Vaugondy in 1753, and came to our attention two-and-a-half centuries later in a bin on the floor of an old bookshop on a side street in Lisbon, Portugal.

It evidences on its face and in its provenance an inherent fluidity and multiplicity of place.



**Le Sieur Robert De Vaugondy (Born 1688)**

*Map of Egypt, 1753*

Hand colored copper engraving

21 x 27 in. (53.3 x 68.6 cm)

Finally, perhaps the work that connects me most powerfully and directly to

place is an empty frame. It is crafted in plaster in an ornate style popular, I believe, at the time my grandparents arrived in the United States.



I pillaged it from the basement of the building in which my family worked for two generations (on the first floor), my grandfather raised his family (on the second floor), and my parents raised my brother and me (on the third floor).

When I look at it, I see where I started ... and why I left, what matters most, who I am, and how I fit into a context larger than myself.

Everyone else sees an empty frame.

But that's the beauty, mystery, and subjectivity of place – and of art.

DH



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Putting together an art exhibition is a tremendous amount of work. There are many people to thank:

*Nathan Huff and James Brown.* In more ways than one this is Nathan's and James' project - they took responsibility for developing the concept and theme, for visiting a large number of galleries in New Zealand and Los Angeles, for selecting the works and for producing a work each to include in the exhibition.

*The team in Washington D.C.* The ART in Embassies program is run by the State Department and sees American art make its way all around the world. We are grateful for the willingness of the team to embrace this new concept and for their help in bringing it to life.

*The Tracey and Marjorie Simpson Trust* (associated with the New Zealand American Association). The Trust generously supported the project by covering the costs of James' travel to the United States. We hope they are pleased with what he brought home!

*The artists.* Jonathan Anderson, Ingrid Boberg, James Brown, Nancy Vogeli Curran, Karley Feaver, Nathan Huff, Anne Marie Jean, Melissa Kauk, Jae Hoon Lee, Claudia Morales McCain, Christina Shurts, Mica Still, and Devon Tsuno. Each work is itself a triumph and together they sing.

*Our guests.* Thank you for visiting. We hope you enjoy it.

# NOTES



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