

“PRIME TIME”

Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition

Visual Arts Gallery

March 3 – 18, 2006

Opening reception: Tuesday, March 7, 6-8 PM

The School of Visual Arts (SVA) presents “Prime Time,” the third of three thesis exhibitions featuring students from the MFA Fine Arts Department. Curated by Amy Smith-Stewart, the exhibition takes its title and theme (or lack of one) from the number of participants, the prime number eleven. A prime number is divisible by only one and itself, by its totality or its single components. A thesis exhibition bears a close resemblance to prime numbers in that its participants are primarily related as classmates, and the lack of any other predetermined organizing principle creates an exhibition that can be seen as simply a collection of individuals, thematically divisible to only a totality of MFA candidates or to each artist alone, allowing the viewer to consider each artist’s work separately or the broader aims of the institution they attend.

Negar Ahkami’s paintings imbue her Persian art influences with her American values of individualism, play, attention to the body, and the freedom to criticize and subvert. Ahkami’s work melds Islamic, Western, Iranian, and American art history and pop culture to undermine misconceptions of an isolated Islamic world. Embracing her Iranian-American identity with a flamboyant pride, her art challenges Islamic systems that deny the individual, and American systems that marginalize Iranian culture.

Jill Alexander is a photo realist painter of decaying coastal urban landscapes. Her paintings are full of mood created by sources of light and color and contrasted by scenes of night and day. She uses these moody landscapes as a vehicle for narrowing in on and retelling the events that took place during her childhood.

Brent Birnbaum likes color. The rainbow has been sucked through a crack pipe and exhaled into an installation. Admission is free to the hip-hop rave; guns and glow sticks optional.

“We’ve come for your children. And we’ll bathe them in the blood of a thousand revolutions.” Well maybe 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. The drawings and videos of **Matthew Bradley** explore the fantasy and pathos of an adolescent obsession with rock music culture and the idealistic belief in its power to transform and redeem.

Shannon Brunette searches for answers to the unanswerable, she loses herself in the vastness of time, of memory, of change, of impermanence. Forcing us to make connections with our internal selves, to deepen our own senses or recall our own experiences living in our individual vessels. Utilizing the time-based medium of film, allows Brunette the freedom to create her own place, to invent her own realities.

Rita Sobral Campos researches the transformations of the concept of space and the need to redefine it today. Her work explores the possibilities of simultaneity of spaces by blending the concrete with the abstract and reality with fiction. For this she uses a broad range of media as a way to rehearse hypotheses of representation and discourse on these concepts.

Sean Christopher is an oil painter and sculptor. Christopher's work deals with subtle narratives and overt dichotomies. This is a classically trained artist with a contemporary aesthetic, who is commonly associated with the "Pop Surrealists." Sean Christopher's work is ultimately about reflecting society as the viewer and an active participant

Dan Drossman is interested in the creation and development of experiences. He produces works of art that suggest feeling and emotion, but leaves much open to the viewer. Drossman's paintings reveal themselves over time, giving birth to new meanings and interpretations with each viewing.

Knife violence, maiming, blood and gore. These aren't the only things on **Gavin Kenyon's** mind, but he was once a boy. Oh for the days when any stick laying on the ground was as good a sword as it was a gun. Come play.

Josh Shaddock looks at examples of everyday visual culture and attempts to find and create disruptions in their logic and meanings; to reveal underlying structures in things so familiar they often go unnoticed. Removal, addition, conflation, contextualization, and other processes are used to do this, tempered by efforts to retain as much of the original forms as possible. He intends his practice to cultivate wonder in the viewer for the small, quiet, and ordinary, with the hopes this will strengthen their awareness, playfulness, and compassion.

The main concept behind **Ricardo Valentim's** work has been the idea of "other" such as it is understood in anthropological terms. He develops strategies that have as a goal the permanent redefinition of cultural construction, as seen through different perspectives. The purpose is that this remains as an open language where an inverted relation to reality is as natural as a reverted one. The use of anthropological questions as a medium among traditional mediums is justified in a time when doubt is responsible for different kinds of representation.

The Visual Arts Gallery, located at 601 West 26th Street between 11th and 12th Avenues, 15th floor, is open Monday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm, closed on Sundays and public holidays. Admission is free. The gallery is accessible by wheelchair. For further information call 212.592.2145.