

COLLAGE:COLLAGE

Participating Artists:

Agathe de Bailliencourt, Michael Krumenacker, Sandra Eula Lee, Shana Moulton, Margit Raczkowski, Dylan Spaysky, Jennifer Sullivan, Carlo Vialu, Melinda Yale

Curated by Jackie Klempay

Collage:Collage is a group show comprised of artists who use various collage techniques in combining clashing materials, amplified colors, vivid symbols, off-kilter shapes, and absurdist humor. My interest in curating this exhibition was prompted by the idea of collage on two levels—not only do the selected works contain elements of collage, the show in and of itself is a pastiche of different artists' sculptures, videos, drawings, photographs. At first glance, bright colors, childish forms, and slaphappy construction make this collection of art appear to be purely about fun, pleasure, and excess. However, this show also aims to explore the ways individual artists use collage as a tool, as well as how their collages speak to other artist's response to the medium at this point in history.

Artists often create collages in turbulent times as a way to make sense of, and lighten the severity of, the surrounding chaos. Deeper meanings lurk just beneath the surface of these assemblages—chopped body parts may be reminiscent of wartime, stacks of magazines speak to consumer culture, and 80's nostalgia insinuates anxiety about the aging process. On the surface, these works tell the story of self-indulgence, hedonism, and bacchanalia, but darker themes of despair, alienation, and loss lurk in various combinations of scavenged materials. The collages in the show reflect the spontaneity of imaginative play amid a much deeper search for understanding. All in all, conglomerations of mismatched objects straddle the realms of pleasure and despair, caprice and control.

Agathe de Bailliencourt's drawings, paintings, collage and interventions are created spontaneously. Her process involves creating marks, such as handwriting, drawn patterns or large burst of primary colors, and her outdoor interventions look as if a giant child scribbled on a building. de Bailliencourt's experimental collage combines entire buildings, brick walls, sidewalks, and her paintings combine abstract shapes and colors which look as if they are collaged with text.

Michael Krumenacker makes sculptures often resembling furniture, but the ad-hoc, punch-drunk, homemade look undermines its functionality. The construction of various scavenged bric-a-brac and cheap, commercially available materials reminds the viewer of the instability that sometimes exists in a home setting.

Sandra Eula Lee's sculptures interpret life by accumulating mundane material such as receipts, paper bags, and old photos. Lee states that she seeks the "voice of the absurd and the uncanny. [She's] concerned with the individual's struggle on a day-to-day basis, the politics and the humor of everyday life."

Shana Moulton's videos mash new age philosophy and kitschy video effects with an 80's color palette. The characters in her videos highlight the anxiety inherent in our desire to escape the limitations of time. In "Whispering Pines #5", the main character's skewed reality quickly spirals into a fantasy where a dead plant turns into a sparkling, bejeweled ladder leading to a flashy party. Moulton then uses a myriad of special effects in which she vomits herself back home.

Margit Raczkowski creates humorous sculptural paintings, mixing her media as much as her imagery. On the same small surface, she glues cut up history books, draws sketchy animals, elevates Dr. Phil as a recurring image, and inserts small plastic trees. All the while, the viewer is left to wonder if her strong claim in loving her life is sarcastic, genuine, or a little bit of both.

Dylan Spaysky's bright collages provide the audience with an overload of strange and dirty imagery. The eye jumps from wall to floor, from a digital Tweety Bird magic eye to a decoupage chair with family photos to a hand knitted tapestry reading "Dog Aids" to carbon copies of ten Dolly Partons to a painted-over KFC cup.

Jennifer Sullivan explores youth culture and current day feminism through neon paintings and jittery collage in both 2-D and 3-D forms. Sullivan will also conduct a performance in December to be part of her series called "It's a Process." She invites guests to visit her evolving handmade set—in the past, a lucky audience member won a sculpture during a mock public access show.

Carlo Vialu views his work as "reverse collage". Selected elements of a photograph such as leaves, buildings or people are excised, leaving a white space in the photo. Vialu then cuts the extracted piece into smaller pieces before painstakingly placing them back into the original photo. The result is a dramatically changed landscape that becomes a storm of tiny jagged shapes and colors that surround a figure. Vialu's work emphasizes the give and take of life—sometimes something is missing, but is made up for elsewhere.

Melinda Yale creates drawings and paintings that reference comics and animation in a nonrepresentational way. In her words, her use of humor "comments on how people respond to the anxieties and tensions of a complex world."