

Art and Addiction: Putting a Human Face on Addiction and Recovery

FSU Museum of Fine Arts

Art & Addiction

Putting a Human Face on Addiction and Recovery

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Art Therapy Program at Florida State University and in conjunction with the Innovators Program, a national effort initiated by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. The exhibition corresponds to a book published by Johns Hopkins University Press in April of 2010 entitled *Addiction and the Visual Arts*.

The purpose of the Johns Hopkins nationwide collaborative endeavor is to change the way America views addiction by using the visual arts to put a human face on addiction and recovery. The Johns Hopkins program is based on the idea that creativity and artistic expression play a significant role both in recovery and in raising awareness of the personal toll caused by substance abuse and addiction. The term addiction, for this exhibition, is inclusive: drugs, alcohol, gambling, food, nicotine, and others.

As part of an education outreach and in collaboration with teachers from the Leon County Schools, a prior parallel exhibition for K-12 students was mounted at the Tallahassee Community College Fine Art Gallery from May 26 - July 21, 2011 (Laura Thompson, Coordinator).

Art & Addiction Committee

Amanda Alders, Doctoral Student, FSU Art Therapy Program

Sarah Gonzalez, FSU MoFA Education Program

Anniina Suominen Guyas, PhD, Asst. Professor,
FSU Art Education Program

Carla Morgan, FSU MoFA Education Program

Marcia L. Rosal, PhD, ATR–BC, Director,
FSU Art Therapy Program

Tonya Smith, FSU MoFA Education Program

Sunny Spillane, MFA, Doctoral Student,
Art Education Program

Laura Thompson, MFA, Coordinator, TCC Fine Art Gallery

Catherine Warden, FSU MoFA Education Program

Viki D. Thompson Wylder, PhD, Curator of Education,
FSU MoFA

Featured Artists

Joan Matey

Ned M. Stacey Sr.

Elizabeth Katz

Jeanne Greenleaf Lebow

Sunny Spillane

Kelly Garrett

Ryan Sarah Murphy

Charlie Lewis

Judith Gehrmann

Francesco DiMaria

Jansen Smith

Alejandra Leibovich

Deborah Whitehurst

Brian Gillis

Hannah Gavagan

Suzy Kitman

Chris Babson

Angela Teeter

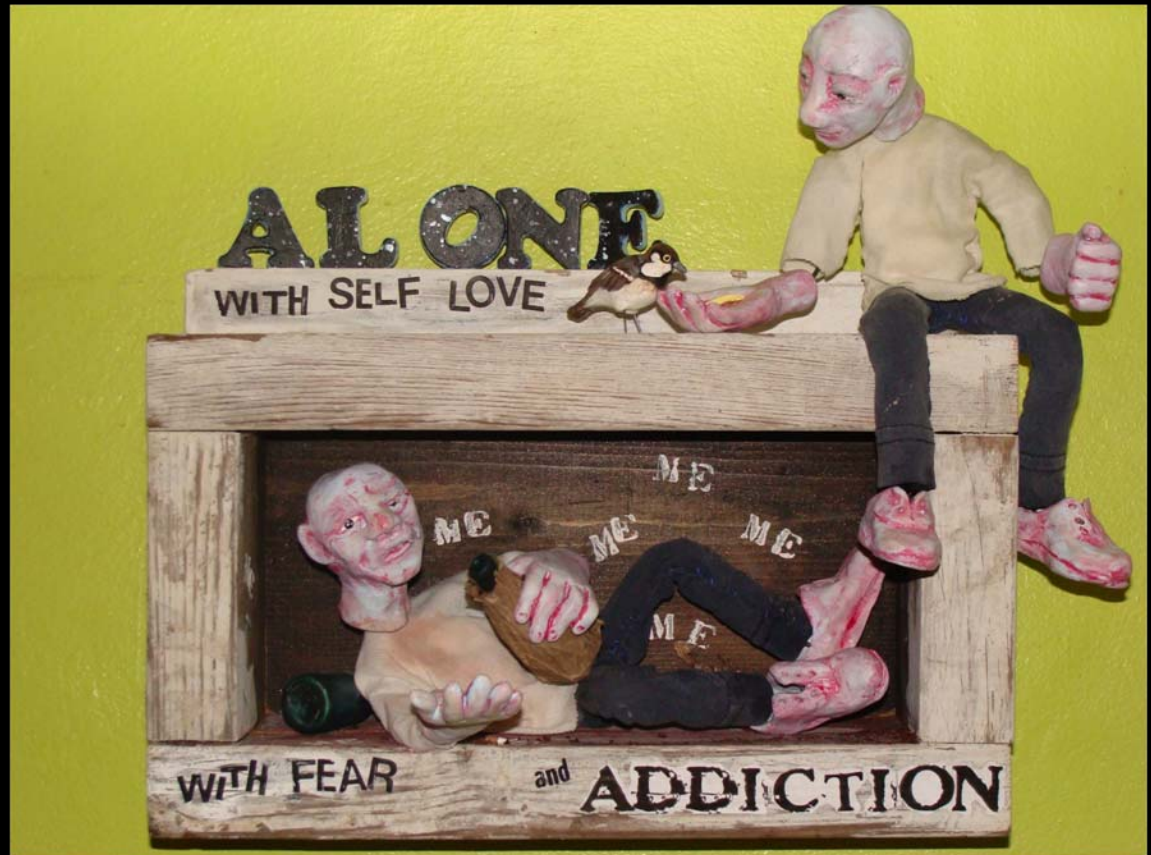
Kelly Lyles

Kristen T. Woodward

donnalee pond-Koenig

Joan Matey

Artist Statement: “My art has always been extremely therapeutic for me, even when I didn’t realize it. Drawing and creating miniature worlds, that I could get lost in, provided distraction when my parents were arguing. As an adult, I am still inclined to create small scenarios that spell out my frustrations. Despite the mechanical execution, strong personal feelings guide the process of making these detailed dioramas. I always search for what will present the most emotional impact, for myself or the viewer, and I’m frequently surprised by what comes forth. Whatever the trauma, art can be the best drug when seeking a means of dealing with mental anguish. ”



To Feel Or Not To Feel; Escape Through Addiction 2009

painted polymer clay, wood, cloth, 16"x14"x7.5"

Ned M. Stacey



Artist Statement: “This painting is rather subtle. It is a simple portrait of my father, which honestly is not done too well. The only photo I have of my father at this time of his life, prior to his death, is a small 1" x 1" ID photo. From that small b&w photo, this painting became more of a representation of anyone's father. But, as far as my father is concerned...my father had a drinking problem and he died too early in his life. My father was outlived by his father, by his wife, by two sons and a daughter, and by his grandchildren. He was outlived by his brother, sister, nieces and nephews. His life was shorter than those of his friends and colleagues. He tried to stop drinking. He died of a massive heart attack two weeks later. Some may say he hurt all of us, but alcoholism is a disease and at the time no one faced it. Maybe this painting is part of my recovery. Through this painting, I have been able to recall some good and bad memories. All I know is he tried. He was my Dad.”

My Father Was Whom He Left Behind 2010

acrylic on canvas, 12"x14"

Elizabeth Katz

Artist Statement: “Having been raised to constant exposure of the detrimental effects of addiction, this is a subject important and personal to me as it is both distressing and difficult. Admitting that the negative impacts of alcoholism have haunted me into adulthood seems, at times, a newfound regression into soft vulnerability. It surfaces at it’s best as a quiet understanding and acceptance of parental failings. More than anything, my father filled my mind with sour memories of his own indignity. Frustration and anger are natural accompaniments, though, as are my shame and disappointment, since little has changed.... As for indecision, it’s about that point of separation, the last surrender that occurs somewhere just before a substance ceases to be a matter of choice, the “tipping point” so to speak, back before loss, when ties to another way of life still offered a chance for all the pain to be avoided. Pausing in a moment of agony and yet unrealized potential, this image is about the eventual regrettable release into addiction.”



Indecision, 2007
lithograph, 16" x 14"

Jeanne Greenleaf Lebow



Artist Statement: "For me the most painful aspect of being the child, the sister, or the friend of an addict is the loneliness. I often feel isolated and invisible to that person. No real intimacy exists, since the addict's primary relationship is with the substance. In the painting, *Feeling No Pain*, gender is ambiguous. The figures do not touch. Thus depersonalized, they float in their own worlds. They seem peaceful, perhaps even happy in their detachment, but at what cost? The nudity of the figures is meant to underscore our collective vulnerability. My intent is to explore our humanness with compassion and humor in a time of complex and often paradoxical obsessions. We are so often out of touch with the impact of our choices."

Feeling No Pain, 2008

oil on linen, 36" x 48"

Sunny Spillane

Artist Statement: “*Recovery* is a visual metaphor for my ongoing emotional experience of rebuilding my relationship with my sister, a recovering opiate addict with two years clean. I used a simple color scheme of blue and red. Blue represents healing and peace; red represents pain and struggle. The color symbolism originated in a collaborative painting/poem my sister and I created for the 2010 *Art and Addiction* exhibition at Lemoyne Art Center in Tallahassee. The slashes and stitches in the canvas are meant to embody the process of healing the wounds of addiction through recovery, a process which can sometimes be painful and leave scars.”



Recovery, 2010

acrylic on linen with punctures
and embroidery floss, 24" x20"

Kelly Garrett

Artist Statement: “This photograph is a very raw snapshot within an act of addiction. It is called *Rays of Hope in Dissolving Dreams* because the addict is in the depth of darkness with dreams fading. Behind her, however, are rays of light. This light is her hope for recovery and climbing out of the darkness. I just lost a dear friend to addiction and although she lost her battle to this disease, she tried to recover and never let go of hope. This photograph is only a reenactment, no real drugs were used.”



Rays of Hope in Dissolving Dreams, 2010
photography, 11” x 14”



Before and After, 2010
photography, 11” x 14”

Artist Statement: “People never realize what addiction does till you see a before and after picture. You can almost hear yourself saying, “Wow is this what I’ve become?” It not only changes your body and physical appearance, but that once smiling and vivacious girl is frowning and lost in the world of her addiction.”

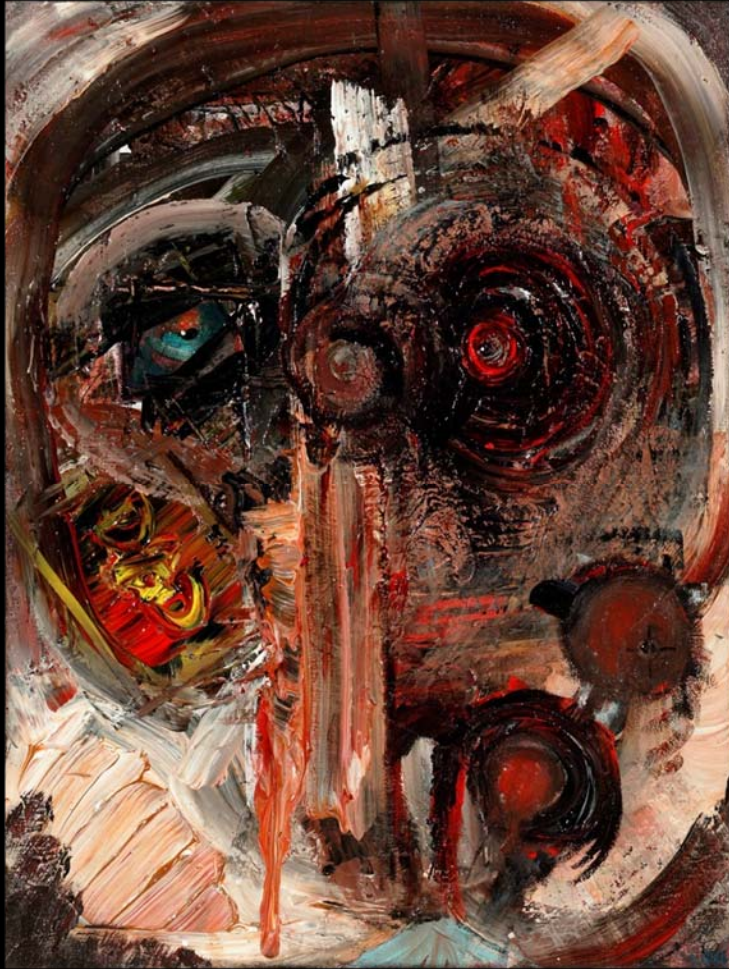
Ryan Sarah Murphy



Artist Statement: “In thinking about addiction, I consider the way alcohol affected my life and the way it impacts the family structure. As a family disease, alcoholism fully dictates and characterizes the behaviors in the home. It single-handedly defines everyone’s roles while demanding a certain code of silence, shame and confusion. While each family member is haphazardly connected by a series of unspoken rules, it is the breakdown and utter disconnection within the family that typifies the destructive force of addiction. This piece reflects my understanding of the silent emptiness and the dangerous risk that alcohol embodies. The piece *Mantel* consists of two empty liquor bottles connected by a knot of red twine, positioned on a painted wood base that is attached to the wall.”

Mantel, 2010
mixed media, 11” x 6.25” x 5”

Charlie Lewis



Artist Statement: “It was to take over thirty years of addiction for Lou to “discover” art, and to begin the road to salvation through it. No training. No prior interest in art beyond manic and nervous doodlings. No inkling at all that such a potent means of expression remained latent within him until he was encouraged to use art as a form of therapy at a rehabilitation center in America in 2003. Since that time Lou has transferred his addictive personality to creation rather than destruction, and his art has been a major part of finding self-worth within recovery. Categorizing Lou’s work is not easy. Labels such as lowbrow, emotive, pop surrealist and grotesque spring to mind, but Lou’s work resists such titles. Lou trusts to instinct and paints what he feels. Lou prefers the term raw to describe his oeuvre, predominantly working rapidly and in a stream of consciousness to capture his demons on canvas. Lou very rarely returns to his painting to re-touch and only entitles works after he’s finished them.”

Intensive Care, 2010
mixed media on canvas, 40” x 32”

Judith Gehrmann

Artist Statement: “This work is about the eleventh step, sought through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with the goddess, praying only for her will for me, and the power to carry that out. I have been in recovery from substance abuse for 30 years. I am also a clinical social worker who has worked in Arizona and California. I am currently in the MFA ceramics program at Florida Atlantic University with a full tuition and assistantship award.”



Rust Shrine #1, 2009, ceramic, 30"x17"

Francesco DiMaria



*As My Monkey Waits, 2010,
acrylic on canvas, 42" x 42"*

Artist Statement: "My experience with addiction took many faces. Along with my depression and being abused as a child, I struggled with myself to understand why I was, if that makes any sense. I tried to fit in with my family and my peers; I couldn't find a happy medium. My childhood was that of beatings, outcasting, and loneliness. My father and mother were from Sicily and brought me up as they were. That's all they knew. I was the kid who didn't fit; I was blessed and cursed. I couldn't understand what I did that was so wrong that anyone and everyone could find fault with me. My depression was a normal part of my being. The only thing I did right was draw. That's how I got any praise and yet, I was cursed artistically. Alcohol was my first escape with all that was wrong with me. Then came drugs, so that I could fit in. Food was another means to fill in the gaps. My life was a living hell. Nothing I did was right. I still search for my happy medium. As I search, my monkey is always waiting for me to fall. He seems to always be there when I need him least. I've come to realize that no matter what is good or bad, my monkey waits to pick me up and keep me down."

Jansen Smith

Artist Statement: “This artwork is inspired by the recent plan of the F.D.A. to place gruesome images of the long-term effects of smoking on the front of each package of cigarettes. My current work is titled *This Could Be You*. It conveys the same idea by utilizing an unconventional media, made up of various tobacco products and objects associated with smoking, to manifest a grotesque image. *What If I Told You That This Was You in Ten Years?* which was featured in a previous show shares the same function. With this artwork I hope to convey to smokers that their current actions may lead them to encounter consequences in the future that affect them and their family’s lives forever. I want smokers to stop and realize the harm they are inflecting upon themselves.”



This Could be You, 2010,
tobacco and burnt matches, 22" x 30"

Alejandra Leibovich

Artist Statement: “I find and give happiness with my art. I love that my art makes people smile. For this particular painting, *The Morning After*, I was working on three needs that everyone has: love, security, and self-esteem. In reality we all have them inside of us and sometimes we just don’t know we have them so we go looking to find them outside of us. In this painting, the Chihuahua dog named Taco is trying to get love outside himself, but he never seems to find it so he drinks himself to sleep. “



The Morning After, 2010,
acrylic on canvas, 11" x 14"

Deborah Whitehurst

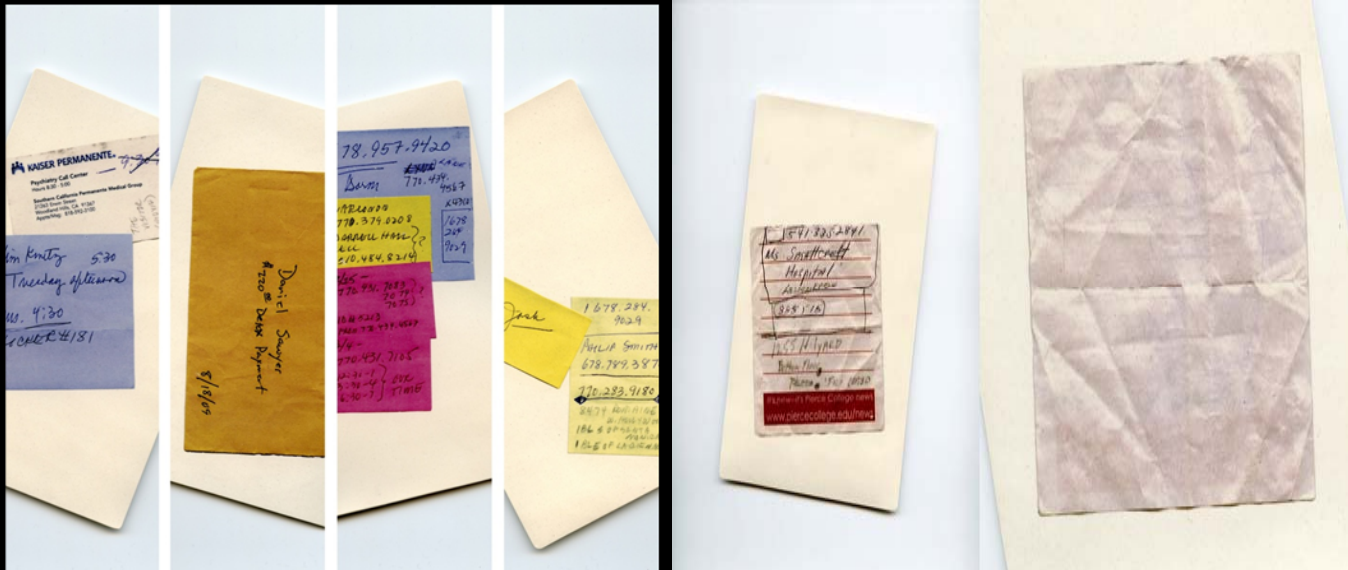


Methman, 2010,
digital paintbrush, 5" x 7"

Artist Statement: "*Methman* is an expression of the fact that addiction has ruined my family. The man depicted is my ex-husband. My son and I are in hiding. After he put a contract hit on my life, we had to flee our hometown. Although my ex is in jail for the next year, we don't feel safe. Ever. We are strangers in a strange place. We have moved six times this year. My son and I are attending college together. We never go anywhere alone. I turned to art to help express the anger and frustration I feel day to day and to leave behind something of me, if anything were to happen..."

Brian Gillis

Artist Statement: "My older brother is a heroin junkie. My younger brother is an alcoholic. Both lives have crumbled, quickly, catastrophically within the last five years. They look like completely different people every time I see them. They smell different, and talk different, and walk different, sit different, eat different, smoke different, sound different, and look at me differently. I probably do too. Rides to friend's houses, parks, and pawnshops led to emergency rooms, detox centers, rehabs, police stations, halfway houses, infectious disease units, and psych wards. Missed dinners became missed weddings, and 4:00 a.m. phone calls, car crashes, missing person reports, and meetings with FBI agents, social workers, private detectives, all the while bringing calls and letters from employers, lawyers, and collectors. I am confused, frustrated, angry, resentful, heart-broken, and in mourning. They are alone. There is always a bomb dropping. Where they are, what they're doing, and who's looking for them changes constantly. Now, what remains in my life of Josh and Danny are mainly memories, and a wake of notes that chronicle the mayhem that now defines them to me."



*Josh and Danny, 2010,
porcelain,
6" x 9" x .1875"*

Hannah Gavagan



Artist Statement: “Lured by the seduction, the moth’s ethereal wings, aflame, turn to darken ash, much like an addict’s life. My relationship with many of the young Sarasota addicts began years ago. They remember me as a school nurse. Seeds of addiction were already planted. Today, as a detox nurse, my hand reaches into the dark abyss, waiting to grasp the next hand. Many struggle, a few stand.”

Moth to a Flame, 2010, oil painting,
36” x 48”

Dedicated to: “The Legend”

Suzy Kitman

Artist Statement: “The iconographic Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls in my still lifes serve as archetypal male and female characters allowing me to consider challenging issues and events. As I consider my personal experience dealing with an alcoholic boyfriend, this painting speaks to the universal nature and trajectory of addiction.”



*Raggedy Ann Tried Telling Andy the Party Was Over, 2010,
oil on canvas, 16" x 16"*

Chris Babson

Artist Statement: “*Stick Figure Intervention* deals with the often difficult struggle of people coping with addiction. Not only does addiction affect the addict, but those around him or her as well. *Stick Figure Intervention* attempts to capture not only the addict’s emotion when confronted, but the emotions of those trying to reach the person with an addiction. Emotions range from frustration to anger to avoidance. This piece is a meditation on the difficult challenge of trying to reach someone who is facing his/her demons.”



*Stick Figure
Intervention, 2006,
acrylic on canvas,
25" x 35"*

Angela Teeter

Artist Statement: “My work directly explores addictions to consumption in American culture. As consumers, we psychologically attach a “personality” to each food we consume. By depicting individuals as palatable, I create a visual representation of the way human beings consume one another, and the way different types of people can be seen as socially consumable or inconsumable based on their gender or role in society....”

“A second sub-theme I explore in my work is the “how” and “why” people consume one another. In the twenty-first century “fast food” is commonly advertised as a quick and easy solution for hunger in American culture. Because of its accessibility and affordability, it is easy for gluttony to become a common everyday habit in our society. In the same sense, the 21st century media’s profound promotion of sex in cinema, advertising, and commercial industries endorses the notion upon America’s youth that like fast food, sex is common, accessible, affordable, and un-special. By depicting popular fast food icons as promiscuous or morally loose, I am able to turn the concept of “fast food” into a visual metaphor about cultures’ gluttony for instant gratification.”



*Fast Food, 2010,
mixed media and acrylic on canvas, 18" x 24"*



*Memoirs of a
Womanizer, 2010,
mixed media &
acrylic on canvas,
18" x 24"*

Kelly Lyles

Artist Statement: “I am a recovering alcoholic/addict with over 24 years clean and sober, thus aware that the issue affects huge segments of the population, either personally or in relationships (romantic, familial, or otherwise). Therefore this is both a universal and a personal statement, combining both humor/pathos in themes common to the disease. I’d like to both shock and amuse the viewers, familiarizing them and in this way desensitizing the issue, and ideally removing some of the stigma. At 19 I was “detained” at Disneyland and held for hours by their undercover policing agency (for public intoxication, passed out on a bench, they presumed drugs by my dilated eyes, but if memory serves, it was primarily alcohol, marijuana, and a lack of sleep for days). I now laugh but at the time it was a personal humiliation, and for years I was too embarrassed to go back to Disneyland (where every visiting friend to L.A. wanted to go!). This piece is a story told at one of my AA meetings by a young white yuppie attempting to “score” his heroin with a check. This underlined the addict’s unrealistic distorted realities and our desperation and obsession. “



*Will U Take a Check, 2009,
oil and glitter on canvas, 17" x 21"*

Kristen T. Woodward

Artist Statement: “Almost twenty years ago I began researching biblical women in hopes of better understanding the relationship between gender and the Judeo-Christian tradition. This investigation evolved into several bodies of work addressing such diverse issues as reproduction, transformation, temptation, and greed. These themes have remained the conceptual underpinning for my mixed media work.”

“My series *Reap What We Sow* includes abstracted renderings of disease loosely associated with human behavior. Many of the images in this series have biblical origins, and sustain contemporary extremist beliefs that blame victims of disease, famine, and addiction for their disobedience, which they believe to be the direct cause of their suffering. This correlation can be extended to explore larger moral controversies of animal research and testing, genetic engineering, and war.”



*Two Headed Monster, 2010,
encaustic on panel, 7.5" x 6"*

donalee pond-Koenig



Artist Statement: "This piece shows three figures in an embrace supporting one another. It is an uplifting piece of encouragement and the power of healing with the strength of others. The composition in the shape of an "A" represents Alcoholics Anonymous. In this piece it signifies the AA serenity prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference.""

*Untitled- Three Women, 1997,
pencil, 29.5" x 41.5"*

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ART & ADDICTION

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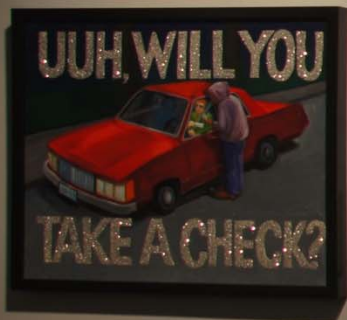
Two figures with red hair, wearing a pink shirt and a white dress, sitting on a blue surface. A white cylindrical object is positioned between them.



A blue square artwork with numerous small, dark, needle-like or pin-like objects arranged in a grid-like pattern.



A framed abstract drawing on a white background, featuring a blue square containing a stylized, swirling face or figure.



UHH, WILL YOU
TAKE A CHECK?



UHH, WILL YOU
TAKE A CHECK?



DAD, SON, UNCLE,
BROTHER, FRIEND,
HUSBAN, GRANDFATHER,
NEPHEW





ARTIST'S STATEMENT
This work is a response to the theme of the exhibition, 'The Body as a Site of Resistance'. It explores the idea of the body as a site of resistance, where the individual can challenge the dominant power structures and norms. The artwork is a dark, abstract, and somewhat biomorphic shape against a light, textured background. The shape resembles a stylized animal or a complex organic form.



ARTIST'S STATEMENT
This work is a response to the theme of the exhibition, 'The Body as a Site of Resistance'. It explores the idea of the body as a site of resistance, where the individual can challenge the dominant power structures and norms. The artwork is a colorful, abstract painting with a central figure that appears to be a stylized, elongated, and somewhat distorted human form. The figure is surrounded by various elements, including a large green circular shape and several smaller, dark, elongated shapes. The background is a mix of green and blue tones.



ARTIST'S STATEMENT
This work is a response to the theme of the exhibition, 'The Body as a Site of Resistance'. It explores the idea of the body as a site of resistance, where the individual can challenge the dominant power structures and norms. The artwork is a portrait of a woman with long, dark hair. The portrait is split vertically, with the left side showing her face in a neutral expression and the right side showing her face with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured color.

Two glass bottles, one with a red string tied around its neck, are displayed on a small wooden shelf. The bottles are clear and appear to contain a liquid. The red string is tied in a knot around the neck of the taller bottle.



A black and white photograph of a person sitting on the floor in a dark, enclosed space. The person is hunched over, with their head buried in their arms. The room appears to be a small, dimly lit room with a few chairs visible in the background. The photograph is framed by a thick black border.

Joan Mincy, *To Feel or Not To Feel: Escape Through Addiction*, 2009,
painted polymer clay, wood, cloth, 16"x14"x7.5".

My art has always been extremely therapeutic for me, even when I didn't realize it. Drawing and creating miniature worlds, that I could get lost in, provided distraction when my parents were arguing. As an adult, I am still inclined to create small scenarios that spell out my frustrations.

Despite the mechanical execution, strong personal feelings guide the process of making these detailed dioramas. I always search for what will present the most emotional impact, for myself or the viewer, and I'm frequently surprised by what comes forth. Whatever the trauma, art can be the best drug when seeking a means of dealing with mental anguish.





Small informational plaque.



Small informational plaque.



ART & ADDICTION

Putting a Human Face on Addiction and Recovery





THE MOUTH OF THE
MOUNTAIN (1971)



THE MOUNTAIN (1971)

est of Show

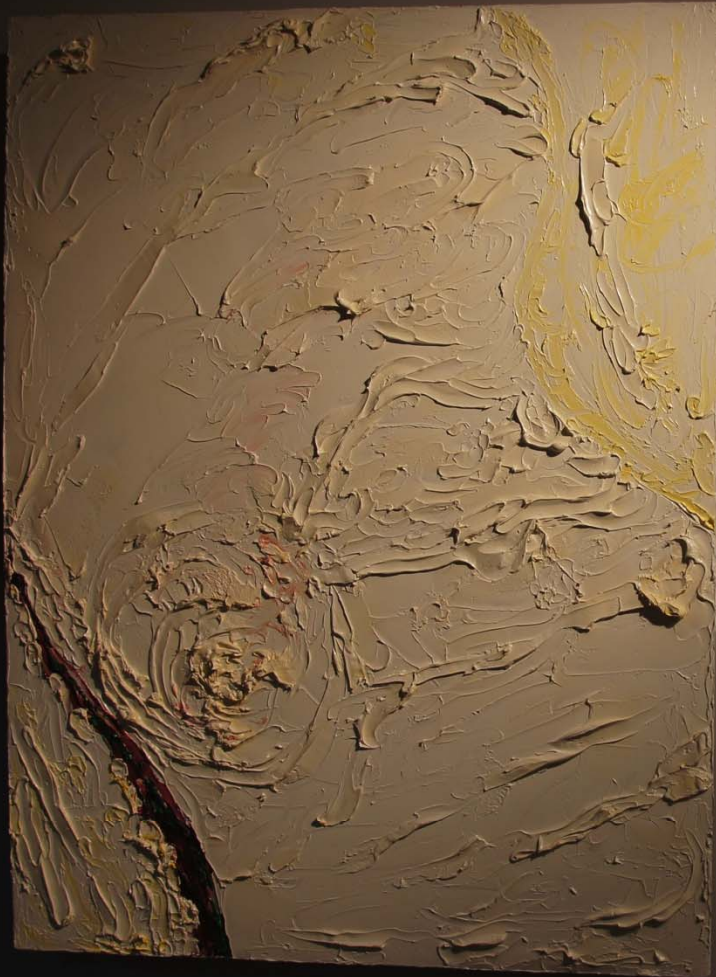


McDonald's
Wendy's
OLD FASHION
HAMBURGERS

BEST OF SHOW
Presented by the ACE class
at Goodwill Industries



McDonald's
Wendy's
OLD FASHION
HAMBURGERS



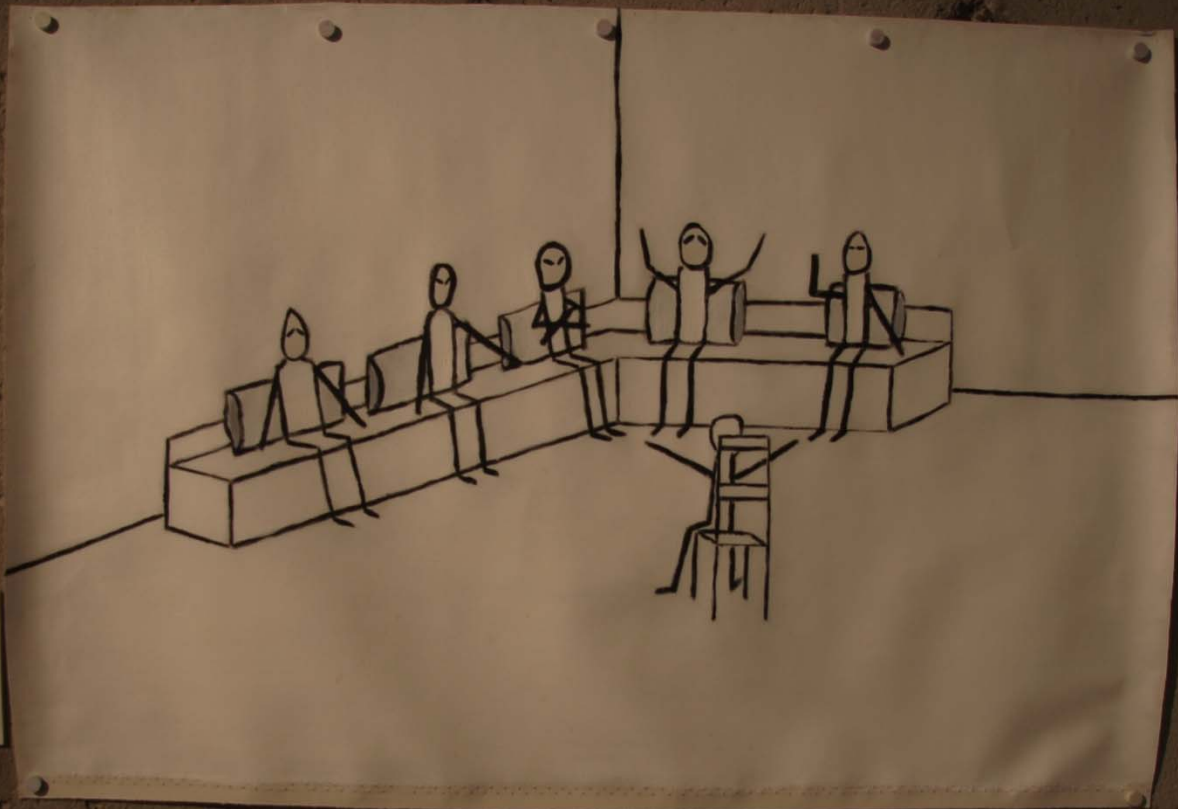
Abstract painting by [Artist Name]
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Abstract painting by [Artist Name]
[Additional text describing the artwork]

Best of Show





John M. White, 1964. *Untitled*.
Medium: Drawing on paper, 11 x 17".
This drawing is a simple line drawing of a group of six stylized figures sitting on a long, low, rectangular platform. The figures are arranged in a row, facing forward. The first figure on the left is sitting cross-legged. The second figure is sitting with legs extended. The third figure is sitting with legs extended. The fourth figure is sitting with legs extended. The fifth figure is sitting with legs extended. The sixth figure is sitting with legs extended. The figures are drawn with simple lines, having oval heads and rectangular bodies. The platform is drawn with simple lines, having a long, low, rectangular shape. The background is a plain, light-colored surface. The drawing is mounted on a larger, light-colored sheet of paper with four punch holes at the top.



Kristen T. Woodward, *Two Headed Monster*, 2010,
encaustic on panel, 7.5" x 6".

Almost twenty years ago I began researching biblical women in hopes of better understanding the relationship between gender and the Judeo-Christian tradition. This investigation evolved into several bodies of work addressing such diverse issues as reproduction, transformation, temptation, and greed. These themes have remained the conceptual underpinning for my mixed media work.

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Thank you to all of the artists who contributed to the exhibition, *Art and Addiction: Putting a Human Face on Addiction and Recovery.*

Powerpoint Created By: Jasmine VanWeelden, Kristen Wharton, Kimber Chewning
FSU MoFA Education

