



# GESTURES

An Exhibition of Small Site-Specific Works  
Guest-Curated by Katherine Talcott  
July 25, 2009–January 10, 2010

Drawing on different generations and perspectives to explore the significance of identity and place, I invited Pittsburgh residents and professionals to create site-specific installations that span a range of media, including gardening, video, sound, painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media, and drawing. Although diverse in nature, they reveal several common threads: exploring process, the merging of art practices, and a recording of personal experiences.

Within these installations, visitors are invited to travel through the Mattress Factory Annex, to imagine the daily rituals, social interactions, and personal narratives or fantasy lives that are informed by the artist's experience. Pushing the boundaries of experience into the realm of commonality, the installations range in aesthetic and societal implication, but are also playful, visually intriguing, scathing, and instructive.

Each installation provides the viewer a connection to contemporary popular culture, a historical reference and a social memory and juxtapositions the reality with the ideal.

Katherine Talcott  
*Guest Curator*

## **STEPHANIE ARMBRUSTER**

*Word Salad* (2009)

latex paint, spray paint (non-enamel), ink, wheat paste, cut paper, ephemera

*My most recent series of works began as a reflection on the interactions of pedestrians in urban settings. Buildings are pressed on all sides by swarming arrows, errant speech balloons, and heaps of disjointed type. These whimsical images reflect the intersections and interactions of people in congested urban environments. When invited to create a site-specific work, the turns and intersections of the gallery's stairwell and landing immediately inspired me to create a piece that, like a busy city, forces visitors into unexpected encounters and unintended diversions along their way.*

Stephanie Armbruster's work is an exploration of urban spaces, populations, and visual textures. Often a reflection on the postindustrial landscape, her works suggest whimsical environments that are familiar, unique, and a little absurd. Informed by a fascination with printed matter, street art, and design, Stephanie works primarily in 2D media and maintains a studio in Braddock, PA. Stephanie received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University and was recently awarded a Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts Project Stream grant.

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## **JEREMY BOYLE**

*Untitled (Annex Stairs)* (2009)

multi-channel sound installation

*Often drawing on a background and interest in engineering and music, my work is approached through a broad range of media. Inquiry is fundamental and observation, relation and comparison are methods – placing elements together, seeking similarity and conversation in unexpected places. The process is active and balances system and pattern with responsive improvisation and indeterminacy, leaving intent in flux. Questions are posed and rarely resolve in answer – the motivation simply to uncover the next site of inquiry and energize the process.*

Born in Pittsburgh in 1975, artist/musician Jeremy Boyle received his BFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago and MFA from The Ohio State University. He was a founding member of the Chicago group Joan of Arc and has performed music (both solo and collaborative) throughout the United States, Canada and Japan. He has exhibited artwork, most of which is sound and technology based, in major cities across the U.S. including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Sacramento, Seattle, Miami, San Francisco, Columbus, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh. He was awarded the PA Council on the Arts Fellowship in 2003, received the Heinz Creative Heights Award and completed a residency at the Mattress Factory in 2004, and received a Sprout Fund Seed Award in 2005-6. Recent projects include solo exhibitions at Deadtech Gallery in Chicago at the Hudson Franklin Gallery in New York City. He was an Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst from 2006-2009 and currently resides in Pittsburgh, PA. More information can be found at [www.jeremyboyle.com](http://www.jeremyboyle.com).

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## **NAYDA COLLAZO-LLORENS**

*Unfolding the Triangle* (2009)

wall installation, mixed media

*This site-specific project explores location as an imaginary, physical, geographic, and psychological territory. The Bermuda Triangle, an area that encompasses the artist's native Puerto Rico, becomes distended, its coordinates stretched and its area unfolded into her current site. A series of connections, multiple narratives, and factual data are interwoven into a visual structure that explores navigation and displacement.*

Nayda Collazo-Llorens, born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is a recent transplant to Pittsburgh, after having spent the last ten years in New York City. She received an MFA from New York University in 2002 and a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art, Boston in 1990. Recent projects include the solo exhibition titled *ESC* at LMAKprojects, New York, NY, 2009; *ESCaperucita & Little Flying Hood*, a multi-disciplinary project produced for the *10th Havana Biennial*, Havana, Cuba, 2009, and *Voiceover*, an urban intervention at MediaNoche, New York, NY, 2008.

Notable group exhibitions include: *You Are Here*, SPACE, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008; *IX International Cuenca Biennial* in Ecuador, 2007; *12th International Media Art Biennale*, Wroclaw, Poland, 2007; *Artists' Books: Transgression/Excess*, Space Other, Boston, MA, 2007; *None of the Above: Contemporary Works by Puerto Rican Artists*, Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT, 2004, and *Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico*, San Juan, PR, 2005; and *Here & There: Six Artists from San Juan*, at El Museo del Barrio, NY, 2001 and Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, TX, 2002. Her work has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Art Net*, *Art US*, *Art Nexus*, *Art News* and *NY Arts*, among others.

## **JONNY FARRINGTON WITH ALLISON WHITNEY MEREDITH**

*Curiosity and Joy* (2009)

krylon and muslin

*Peep through the glass and wave,  
The brevity of a moment, captured.*

*Still figures in their gesture,  
Look at me, and away from me,  
Do they wear their own emotions, or mine?*

Jonny Farrington is fascinated with the art and science of creativity. Educated as a mathematician, he became senior research fellow at University College London in computer science and cognitive psychology. He led a multi-discipline “wearables” team fusing textiles, fashion and electronics at Philips with its user centered design ethos, resulting in the Philips / Levi’s ICD+ clothing range. He moved to Pittsburgh in 2001 to join BodyMedia as an inventor, scientist and designer of wearable medical sensors and products.

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## **VICTORIA HRUSKA & LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER**

*1921 Braddock Summoning 1982* (2009)

mixed media

The Mayor of Braddock, John Fetterman selected two Braddock resident artists, Victoria Hruska (b.1921) and LaToya Ruby Frazier (b.1982). For their first site-specific collaboration *1921 Braddock Summoning 1982*, Hruska and Frazier transform time, recycled possessions and memories of generational moments and changes; concerning environmental and familial issues in their hometown Braddock.

*“Recycling, a very popular word today is a simple process of giving materials a second chance. Everyone has creative ability. There is a whole world of possibilities with found items and artistic clutter.” – Victoria Hruska & LaToya Ruby Frazier*

As the seventh of eight children Victoria Hruska, a respected Braddock resident at the age of eighty- eight, recalls how she constantly found activities to keep herself entertained, through collecting greeting cards and cutting pictures out of magazines and coloring books. She found ways to change and sometimes repair traditional found items. This installation continues her unique vernacular in collaboration with artist LaToya Ruby Frazier.

*“Ruby Frazier, LaToya’s grandmother, whose collection of memories is displayed shares the art space here today. Ruby, an attractive lady with a pleasant personality, at age 84, lived close by. Oftentimes with her grandson, J.C she walked by my home. We exchanged pleasant greetings. I missed seeing her for several months and learned from LaToya that she died in January. I am grateful to LaToya for inviting me to learn more about my friend, Ruby, the Lady with a memorable Past.” Victoria Hruska, 2009*

Artist LaToya Ruby Frazier creates a memorial for her recently deceased grandmother Ruby Frazier (1925 - 2009). The artist explores the shift implicit in her grandmother’s death- a living, shared home environment, (transported into the gallery space in Frazier’s first public installation work,) becomes an archive of her grandmother’s life and their shared experience. The stories told to Frazier during her childhood now reside in her grandmother’s possessions – Ruby’s bed, her extensive porcelain doll collection and the living-room table and in the artist’s retelling through her exploration of intimate family histories. Frazier places her own video work, (which reframes notions of home-video,) in conversation with found historical photographs of Braddock, during the height of its growth as a steel city, evoking a fragmented memory of living and dying in the city of her grandmother’s long life and the artist’s own upbringing.

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## **GARY HUCK**

*Jesus of Nazareth Crown O’ Thorns Ring Toss Game* (2009)

euphorbia milli thorns from Jerusalem, male mannequin head form with bust, Jesus wig and beard costume, sacred heart of Jesus candles, red warning tape by the Empire Co., cotton t shirt, iron-on transfer, barbed wire gloves, basket

*I want this piece to work as a three dimensional political cartoon. The irreverence of the piece reflects the irreverence I perceive in our society’s discussion of our government’s use of torture. There is a troubling disconnect in the almost*

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*casual nature of our conversation of what is and is not torture, who should or should not be tortured, at the same time that real, living, breathing, human beings are being tortured.*

*There is an equally troubling disconnect in our indifference to our own direct complicity in these acts of torture when our government acts in our name. The Romans were less interested in the question of the divine nature of Christ, and more concerned with his direct threat to the social order and thereby his direct threat to their Empire. The Romans used torture as a brutal deterrent to insurrection.*

*As citizens of the empire we participate with our silence, we participate with our indifference. We participate.*

Gary Huck is an internationally syndicated political cartoonist. He has co-authored six collections of political cartoons with cartoonist Mike Konopacki. His cartoons are archived at the //Tamiment Library// at NYU. He is the cartoon curator and graphic designer for arts group ArtUp. He lives in Pittsburgh with the artist Tavia La Follette.

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## **ANDREW ELLIS JOHNSON**

*CHOREOGRAPHY* (2009)  
marble and cultured marble

*Choreography presents a choreography of crisis, a series of planned situations tossed away as if they were so many unavoidable mistakes. The array of 'cultured' marble banana peels appear strewn 3/4 not hewn 3/4 on the floor. The imminent future implied by the 'slapstick' humor of the pratfall is shown to be the calculated placement of the pitfall.*

*Choreography converts the 'slip' into a 'stumble'. The intractable becomes concrete. A 'slip' is accidental, its damage lamentable and victim sympathetic. When it 'happens' to someone else, it is comical. Crisis, like physical humor, is based on speed and surprise, necessitating haste and condemning circumspection. Crisis dies with analysis. To 'stumble' emphasizes an external obstacle or indicates impaired agency. Stumbling is an event or encounter to be dealt with. It compels a backward look, identifies missteps, and assigns blame. Choreography doesn't find the now millions of downwardly mobile people, and the economic sleight of hand that has assisted their fall, funny at all. It is a field of injustice.*

Andrew Ellis Johnson (BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; MFA, Carnegie Mellon) is Associate Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University. His work addresses exigencies of daily realities and undresses the refined aesthetics of art.

Diverse in media, his practice is united by conceptual and tactical approaches that present subjects rather than objects, balancing realpolitik with poetics, craft and contemplation. Exhibition topics have ranged from the apocalypse to animal nature and disasters of war to the culture of class. Venues for his work have included museums, galleries, electronic arts and video festivals, public collaborations, conferences, books and journals in North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He is co-founder of the socially engaged collective, PED that has performed in Buffalo, Belfast, Chongqing, Rio de Janeiro, St. John's and Tonawanda.

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## **AMANDA LONG**

*Triad* (2009)  
three channel video sculpture

*In a dark space video is light and light draws the human eye in like insects. It is a bit of science fiction and fantasy to accept an animated surface as a part of a permanent structure, as if we could slice through the skin of the physical world to expose an alternate world underneath. With this intention, I remove video from the screen and project it like a living, breathing mural on a wall, into a glass orb as a god, or into a hole in the floor leading to another universe. There is a sense of magic I wish for in the real world. Fundamental physical motions such as breathing, blinking, flowers opening and closing, the sun rising and setting, my heart beating – these cyclical processes inspire my animations. The body and the landscape get mixed up in my mind. The French painter Claude Lorrain spent mornings in a foggy field looking to see how the landscape changed as the sun moved, watching the sun filter through the atmosphere. I am looking to create a similar feeling with video installation, to place viewers in sight of a window to an idealized moment, a dreamscape where love and nature conquers all.*

Amanda Long is an artist, animator, mirror-maker, lover of the earth and sun and the animals, a dreamer of fairy tale visions. Her video installations investigate light, color, questions of faith and why we exist. She fantasizes about giving technology a soul and making peace between humans and nature. Amanda received her BS in Cell and Molecular Biology at Tulane University in 2000 and her BFA in Sculpture and Extended Media from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2005. She currently is a MFA student at Carnegie Mellon University.

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### **LINDSAY O'LEARY**

*Pedaling Backwards, Moving Forward: How to lose 100 pounds in 365 days* (2009)  
stationary bicycle, generators, motors, lights, wood, plastic, sand, paint

*This scale model of my childhood home represents my old self and old habits. For 31 years, I had been twice the size of an average person. From birth (12lbs 4oz) to adulthood (250-275lbs), I had resigned to the fact I would always be the size of two people. Last July, a medical mystery was solved. With the help of a bicycle and medicine, I lost 100 pounds during the past year.*

Lindsay O'Leary lives, works and plays in the Mexican War Streets. She has become one of those Pittsburghers who she swore she wouldn't become by never crossing a river and is, mostly, at peace with this fact. Lindsay moved to Pittsburgh in 2002 to blow glass at the Pittsburgh Glass Center. She'll still cross the Allegheny River once in a while to get to the glass studio.

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### **DREW PAVELCHAK**

*Staple Approach* (2009)  
mixed media

*A stapler and sheets of paper flutter and vibrate as they approach the moment of their intended unification. Never quite making it though, the time before that moment is instead emphasized: slowing it down, reversing it, and drawing it out into an infinitely long state of anticipation.*

Drew Pavelchak is an artist primarily interested in using stop-motion animation and kinetic sculpture to personify found objects. He received a BFA in 2003 from Carnegie Mellon University, with a concentration in Electronic and Time-Based work. He has exhibited in Pittsburgh's SPACE and Future Tenant galleries, the Best of Pittsburgh show in the 2007 Three Rivers Arts Festival and the 2008 Pittsburgh Biennial. His animations have also been a part of two traveling shows that toured across the country: *Slow-Dance Recytal* in 2004 and *CARTUNE XPRESZ* in 2006. In 2007 he received a Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

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### **RENEE PIECHOCKI**

*Guestroom for Lareese's Dream* (2009)  
video, photography, drawing

*A space reconfigured to explore the intimate act of divulging dreams.*

Renee Piechocki is an artist and public art consultant. For the past eight years, her artistic practice has been focused on the collaboration *Two Girls Working* with artist Tiffany Ludwig. Their multimedia project *Trappings* investigates the meaning and expression of power. Renee was born in Queens, New York and grew up in Long Island. She received her BA in Studio Art and Honors Program from Hunter College of the City University of New York. She moved to Pittsburgh in 2003. She is the director of the Office of Public Art, a partnership between the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council and the City of Pittsburgh.

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### **JOHN RIEGERT**

*Sublet* (2009)  
mixed media

*With Sublet, John is taking the space and creating a "micro" gallery that will be an incubator for new ideas, participation and connecting art to real life. It is a new start. An experiment in potential and interaction. It can be considered multimedia with a mix of performance, videos, documentation, installation, covering all media. Changes will be documented and published online at <http://www.mauvecube.com> and <http://www.johnriegert.com>.*

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John Riegert could best be called a conceptual artist. He works primarily with the idea and finds the medium that best plays with the concept to present it with simplicity. The media may range from photography, photo illustration, performance, installation to writing. John lives in Pittsburgh and received his BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University in Multimedia.

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### **THE URBAN GARDENER: JOAN KIMMEL + LYNN WEBER**

*Lawn* (2009)

grasses (Phyllostachys, Pleioblastus, Panicum, Calamagrostis, Ophiopogon, Hakonechloa), cement blocks, soil, shredded bark, ammunition cases

*Using a method they call 'guerilla gardening', the Urban Gardener regularly develops green spaces in otherwise unwelcoming cement landscapes. In response to large monoculture lawns, unsustainable without the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, the Urban Gardener presents a multi-species urban lawn for The Mattress Factory with grasses that will change in color and form as the seasons change.*

A lifelong resident of Pittsburgh, and several decades resident of the Northside, Joan Kimmel has more degrees than running a retail garden center would ever require, and has had more careers than she cares to admit. With Lynne Weber, she opened The Urban Gardener twelve years ago to focus on the concerns and opportunities posed by city garden spaces.

Born in New York, Lynne Weber landed on the Northside 30 years ago, in a house that is still a work in progress. Lynne has dabbled in several careers, from teaching high school to studying particle physics and smashing atoms. But through it all she has been a gardener and community organizer/volunteer – which is how she met Joan, and how the Urban Gardener came into being.

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### **PATRICIA VILLALOBOS ECHEVERRÍA**

*Parasite (40°27'25"N 80°00'48"W)* (2009)

EPS foam, Wexler apartment and building façade

*Parasite (40°27'25"N 80°00'48"W) is a site-specific installation that alludes to contaminants and occupied territories. The architectural site becomes a "host" to elements that protrude from the walls as a metaphor to symbiotic and parasitic relationships. The work references camouflage, intrusion and disease, where both the host and its appendage transform into a new hybrid site/being.*

Patricia Villalobos Echeverría was born in the US and grew up in Managua, Nicaragua. She received an MFA from West Virginia University (1990) and a BFA from Louisiana State University (1988). Recent individual exhibitions include *Aguasmalas (Blackwaters)* at MediaNoche (New York, NY), 2008; *Aflujo•Afflux* at Artist Image Resource (Pittsburgh, PA) and Laura Mesaros Gallery, (Morgantown, WV), 2006; and *Alamar (Asea)* at PROYECTO'ACE (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 2006. Notable group exhibitions include: *Imprint 2008: Kulisiewicz International Graphic Arts Triennial* (Warsaw, Poland); *Third International Biennale for the Artist's Book 2008* (Alexandria, Egypt), 2008; *IX International Cuenca Biennial* (Cuenca, Ecuador), 2007; *Falun Triennial at Dalarnas Museum* (Falun, Sweden), 2007; and the *International Print Triennial* (Krakow, Poland & Oldenburg, Germany), 2006. Notable grants include the Oregon Arts Council Fellowship, PA Council for the Arts Fellowship, Creative Heights Residency Fellowship from the Heinz Endowment and residencies at Artist Image Resource, The Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University and the MacDowell Arts Colony. She lives in Pittsburgh, PA and is a Professor of Art at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

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### **DROR YARON**

*Southern Exposure, picture window* (2009)

archival ink jet Gigapan print

*This image opens a window in the south wall of the gallery. Like a real window - it shows what exists on the other side of the wall - in this case, neighbors of the Mattress Factory.*

Dror Yaron is the Community Outreach Coordinator for the CREATE Lab at the Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute. He studied at the International Center of Photography in New York. His own artwork, as well as community art projects created in collaboration with students and teachers, has been exhibited in galleries, museums and alternative venues in the US and Europe.