

LAWNDALE ART CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lawndale Art Center

Presents

Pleasing Punch – AJ Liberto and Jesse Robinson

Personal Panopticon – Cory Wagner

Once Removed – Ann Marie Nafziger

Flowback – Mequitta Ahuja

To Whom it May Concern – Emily Sloan

Houston, Texas – Lawndale Art Center presents five exhibitions **opening**

November 21, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, with artist talks beginning at **6 pm**. In the John M.

O'Quinn Gallery **AJ Liberto** and **Jesse Robinson** present an installation of found object sculpture in ***Pleasing Punch***. **Cory Wagner** transforms the Mezzanine

Gallery into a maze of mirrors for his installation titled ***Personal Panopticon***. For

her exhibition in the Grace R. Cavnar Gallery, **Ann Marie Nafziger** uses patterns

taken from nature stenciled directly onto the gallery walls in her installation ***Once***

Removed. In the Project Space, **Mequitta Ahuja** presents large format graphite

drawing of elaborate hair patterns in ***Flowback***. In collaboration with the Cynthia

Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts Studio Residency, **Emily's Sloan's *To Whom***

It May Concern will be on view in Room 317. The exhibitions continue **through**

January 10, 2009.

Opening Reception November 21, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Artist talks at 6 pm

On view through January 10, 2009

Programs at Lawndale are supported in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, The Houston Arts Alliance through the Houston Museum District Association and City Initiatives Program, The Texas Commission on the Arts, Houston Endowment, The Brown Foundation, Inc., Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Cavnar Foundation, The Cullen Foundation, The Wortham Foundation, Inc., The Susan Vaughan Foundation, John M. O'Quinn, Cecily Horton, Ann W. Harithas, Jonathan and Barbara Day, Diana Hudson and Lee Kaplan, Andrew and Gretchen McFarland, Anita and David Garten, MetroNational, H-E-B, Continental Airlines, Target, Art Colony Association, other contributors, memberships, benefit events and many volunteers.

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS:

John M. O'Quinn Gallery

AJ Liberto and Jesse Robinson

Pleasing Punch

They discovered that a smaller diameter cyclone gives greater centrifugal force. So they developed a way of getting 45% more suction than a Dual Cyclone vacuum and removing more dust, by dividing the air into 8 smaller cyclones. Cyclones appear, sealed within the vacuum. Something contained and yet terrifying, a collection of stuff thrust into this space.

Pleasing Punch is just such a space. Celebration and violence are hard to tell apart in both Liberto and Robinson's endeavors. Their work realizes the gravitational force of objects, that link that holds together and creates disastrous collisions, despair, and ultimately a drifting blissful calm.



AJ Liberto
Soul Crane, 2007
Styrofoam, epoxy, paint, wood
Dimensions variable
Image courtesy of the artist



Jesse Robinson
Cloister, 2008
Foam, fiberglass, epoxy resin, enamel paint, Rubbermaid tub, five compact discs and jewel cases (Thelonious Monk, Monk, Jonathan Monk, The Monks, The Monks of Doom)
119"x28"x19"



Cory Wagner
Personal Panopticon, 2008
Installation view
Image courtesy of the artist

Mezzanine Gallery

Cory Wagner

Personal Panopticon

Using the concept of the panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's 18th century prison design, the artist investigates how we are socially trained to look at ourselves with an ever gazing hyper-critical eye. Wagner transforms the gallery into a winding passageway populated with mirrors, sounds and activity producing a distorted sense of reflection.

Grace R. Cavnar Gallery

Ann Marie Nafziger

Once Removed

Once-Removed explores the relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing a diminished physical experience replaced with an abundance of representations, reflecting the predicament of being both disconnected yet intimately familiar with landscape. Executed directly on the gallery walls and exploiting a wide range of materials, media, and tools, the shifting environment evokes a constructed, artificial manifestation of the natural world.

"I'm interested in desire and perception in regard to the natural world, in the sense of failure or loss in the ability to directly interact with wild spaces or phenomena, and in finding alternatives or possibilities within this compromised position. I try to invent landscapes that embody the beauty or sublimity of the natural in combination with evidence of the human physical and psychological footprint in an effort to instigate a heightened awareness of the world at large." – *Ann Marie Nafziger*



Ann Marie Nafziger
One Thing After Another (detail)
2008
Acrylic, spray paint, graphite, paper, mylar, and thumbtacks on wall
Image courtesy of the artist

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Project Space

Mequitta Ahuja

Flowback

Mequitta Ahuja is of mixed ethnic origin, South Asian and African American. Her works are self-portraits. Mequitta's visual explorations include the interplay of figure and ground, the symbolic significance of blackness, and the social implications of Black hair. In response to the history of Black hair as a barometer of social and personal consciousness, she makes the image of hair both corporeal and conceptual, giving it psychic proportions. With medium and image, Mequitta proposes that identity, including racial and sexual identities, although narrowly defined by social norms, is both fluid and plural. Mequitta's works demonstrate female self-invention through the deployment of her own tools, including, her creative imagination.



Mequitta Ahuja

Loop,

Waxy chalk on paper, 2008

26" x 10'

Image courtesy of the artist

Room 317

To Whom it May Concern

Emily Sloan

University of Houston Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts Studio Residency

A recent focus of Emily Sloan's work is the idea of making a thing, phrase or place "special." For the Mitchell Center's Fall 2008 Lawndale Studio Residency, Sloan compiled a list of words and phrases that will be created in site-appropriate places throughout the city of Houston. Selected words and phrases will be stenciled in locations with materials collected from the area thus serving as environmental interventions and messages for those who stumble across them.



Emily Sloan

Thank You, 2008

parking lot, debris, adhesive

4'x16'

Image courtesy of the artist

ARTIST BIOS:

AJ Liberto - Originally from Houston TX, this wannabe wildcatter graduated from the University of Houston and went on to receive his MFA in sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University. Now far away from home, in the chilly arctic city of Boston, MA he tries to stay warm by making sculptures and cozying up with his girlfriend and two very small dogs. ajliberto.com

Jesse Robinson was born in New Rochelle, NY. He received a BA in Fine Art from University of California, Los Angeles in 2005. He received a MFA in Sculpture and Extended-Media from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2008. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

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Cory Wagner is an artist living and working in Houston, TX and New York, NY. He has exhibited his work both nationally and internationally including exhibitions at PS1 Contemporary Art Center/MOMA and Repetti Gallery in New York, NY; Galeria Metropolitana in Santiago, Chile; KU Art Center in Beijing, China; School 33 Art Center and Maryland Art Place in Baltimore, MD; the Target Gallery in Alexandria, VA; Flat International in Richmond, VA; Conner Contemporary in Washington DC; Moore College of Art and Design and Icebox Gallery in Philadelphia, PA; and Arlington Art Center in Arlington, VA. Wagner was the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation fellowship and is a current fellow with the CFEVA in Philadelphia, PA. Wagner is currently an Assistant Professor in Sculpture at the University of Houston and Co-Director of the MICA in NY Summer Intensive studio program.

Ann Marie Nafziger was born and raised in rural, northwest Ohio where she spent most of her childhood longing for a more urban existence. She lived and worked in the Pacific Northwest for a decade, exploring the then gritty, damp underbelly of Portland, Oregon and the iconic, natural beauty of the landscape surrounding it. She relocated to lovely Marfa, Texas in 2003 and since 2005 has divided her time between Marfa and Houston, along with her husband, Peter, and their trio of cowdogs, Nadine, Lance and Starr.

Mequitta Ahuja received an MFA from UIC in 2003, mentored by Kerry James Marshall. Her work has been exhibited in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles including solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and BravinLee Programs in New York. She has participated in group exhibitions including Global Feminisms at the Brooklyn Museum, Houston Collects African American Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Poets and Painters at the Ulrich Museum in Wichita KS and upcoming show, Anomalies at Rossi and Rossi Gallery in Piccadilly, London. Mequitta's works are in several collections. Public collections include the Ulrich Museum in Wichita KS, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, U.S. State Department's Mumbai, India offices and The Cleveland Children's Clinic. Private collections that include her work belong to artist Nick Cave, Houston City Council Member, Peter Brown and Gallery owner Meredith Long. Mequitta has recently completed a two-year artist residency at The Core Program in Houston Texas. In addition to her work as an artist, Mequitta is the designer of and Program Director for non-profit summer arts program, Blue Sky Project.

Emily Sloan was born in Diboll, Texas. She currently lives and works in Houston, Texas. Sloan is a MFA candidate in sculpture at the University of Houston and is a teaching fellow at the university. Sloan has the Burning House installation on Texas highway 59N, Polk County; has exhibited at the Target Gallery in Alexandria, Virginia; The Dallas Contemporary in Dallas, Texas; Deborah Colton Gallery; Lawndale Art Center; Project Row Houses; the Art Car Parade; and had the Sabine Street Bridge Lamp at the Buffalo Bayou Art Park in Houston, Texas. This fall she has two site-specific projects to be featured at the Texas State Fair including one at the Cotton Bowl and is working on a site-specific installation for Hermann Park scheduled for 2009.

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About Lawndale:	Lawndale Art Center is a nonprofit alternative exhibition space dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art in all media, with an emphasis on the work of Houston area artists.
For More Info:	www.lawndaleartcenter.org or askus@lawndalwartcenter.org
Gallery Hours:	Monday-Friday, 10-5; Saturday, 12-5; Closed Sunday Closed for the Holidays December 24 – January 1
Admission:	Free
Viewing Dates:	This exhibition will open on Friday, November 21, 2008 and will remain on view through Saturday, January 10, 2009.
Press Contact:	Dennis Nance, 713-528-5858, dnance@lawndaleartcenter.org

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