

# art **NOW**dc

michael dax iacovone

chandi kelley

katherine tzu-lan mann

jonathan monaghan

kendall nordin

heather harvey and  
natalie cheung, curators

february 8 – march 30, 2012

kohl gallery • gibson center for the arts

washington college • chestertown, maryland

The complex, unconventional approaches of this remarkably diverse group of artists open a whole range of inventive ways to think and make art. In her witty, wistful photos Chandi Kelley captures disorientating moments when reality slams hard into artificiality: A stuffed wolf howling at a fluorescent moon; a two-dimensional immobilized waterfall pouring from a shop front window. These found moments where simulated natural worlds are juxtaposed onto urban reality suggest a communal longing for the sublime and an alienation from the natural world. They are sweetly flawed attempts to re-integrate what has been marginalized in our over-mediated, photoshopped existence. The photographs are funny to be sure, but they are also dirges for unmitigated contact with the wild.

Jonathan Monaghan's haunting animations follow a similar thread. He works with high-end digital technology used by Hollywood, advertising and video games, to create otherworldly, ambiguous storylines that seduce only to unsettle. Their bizarre, disjointed narratives draw as much on the past and mythology, as on science fiction and contemporary culture. It is unclear what his stories mean, where they lead or what the moral is. They draw on the human need for beauty and epic heroism. But there is a nightmarish edge in which we remain trapped in an endless loop of seductive but ultimately vacuous simulation where meanings don't quite materialize.

Katherine Mann's work is unapologetically beautiful. Inspired and informed by the full range of human experience from the pleasures of opera to the horrors of cancer, Mann slips effortlessly between painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture in her hybrid pieces. She delights in commingling materials, processes, and cultural references, hurling them together into one beautifully chaotic visual symphony.

If Mann's work is a rowdy mash-up of artistic options, Kendall Nordin's hushed work speaks to the importance of slow,

meditative contemplation. Like other artists in the show, Kendall feels no compulsion to stay within disciplinary boundaries. Her work and ideas have an ethical undercurrent. She brings a careful attentiveness to overlooked things, and an informed worldview that incorporates philosophy, poetry and the sciences as much as aesthetics and artistic process. Her quiet work asks that you slow down and consider the beauty and meaning to be found in the understated, the ephemeral, and the absent.

In Michael Iacovone's work, the primary medium is his own body, and the spaces he moves it through. Iacovone is interested in undermining notions of artistic genius by self-imposing systems that determine his final work. He collaborates with other artists, with non-artists, and with the geographies he travels in. Both works in this show deal with borders – invented demarcations between here and there, home and away, familiar and strange. Borders are loaded cultural and historical markers. They are often the site of danger, war, aggression and defensive posturing. Yet they also are zones of discovery, adventure and cross-pollination. By physically traversing these lines alone or in collaboration with others, he essentially makes conceptual drawings through the three-dimensional world in which he re-experiences or reimagines these historical barriers, whether the edges of an urban grid or the historically problematic Mason-Dixon line.

If one purpose for this exhibition and Kohl Gallery's artNOW series is a didactic one, and I will admit that it is, I can think of no finer group of artists to demonstrate the exciting range of wonderfully idiosyncratic, hybrid, and interdisciplinary possibilities in art-making today.

— Heather Harvey  
Assistant Professor of Art, Washington College

The artNOW series presented by Washington College which began last year with work by artists from Baltimore and will next year feature that of artists from Philadelphia, this year presents work from Washington, DC. Each city vibrates with its own distinctive attitude and style. For me, the selections for this exhibition were inspired by one question: What defines DC art? In a city of free admission museums with such historically important collections, how do up and coming artists make their footprint here?

In my search for artists to include in artNOW:DC I focused on artists who have established themselves not just inside the DC arts community but have also started to expand their reach nationally and internationally through exhibitions, residencies and publication. Washington, being a politically driven city, divides between a preference of conservative tastes realized in corporately owned collections and city commissioned public works, and a thriving contemporary art scene influenced by the major museum exhibitions, the changing political climate, and

the cultural exchange with the vibrant art scenes in New York and Philadelphia.

Each of the five artists in artNOW:DC has contributed greatly to the DC arts community, whether in exhibiting nationally, promoting DC artists, or bringing together artists from different cities. Michael Dax Iacovone has connected with artists all over the world and aside from his artworks he has continued collaborations with artist Billy Friebele through Free Space Collective. Chandi Kelley is helping to promote and make accessible works of DC area artists as the co-founder of Project Dispatch with affordable subscriptions to original artworks. Katherine Mann, Jonathan Monaghan, and Kendall Nordin have bridged the gap nationally and internationally by participating in numerous residencies and exhibitions. I believe that their ideas and artwork will continually grow and remain influential to emerging artists in DC for years to come.

— Natalie Cheung  
Jean Efron Art Consultants, LLC

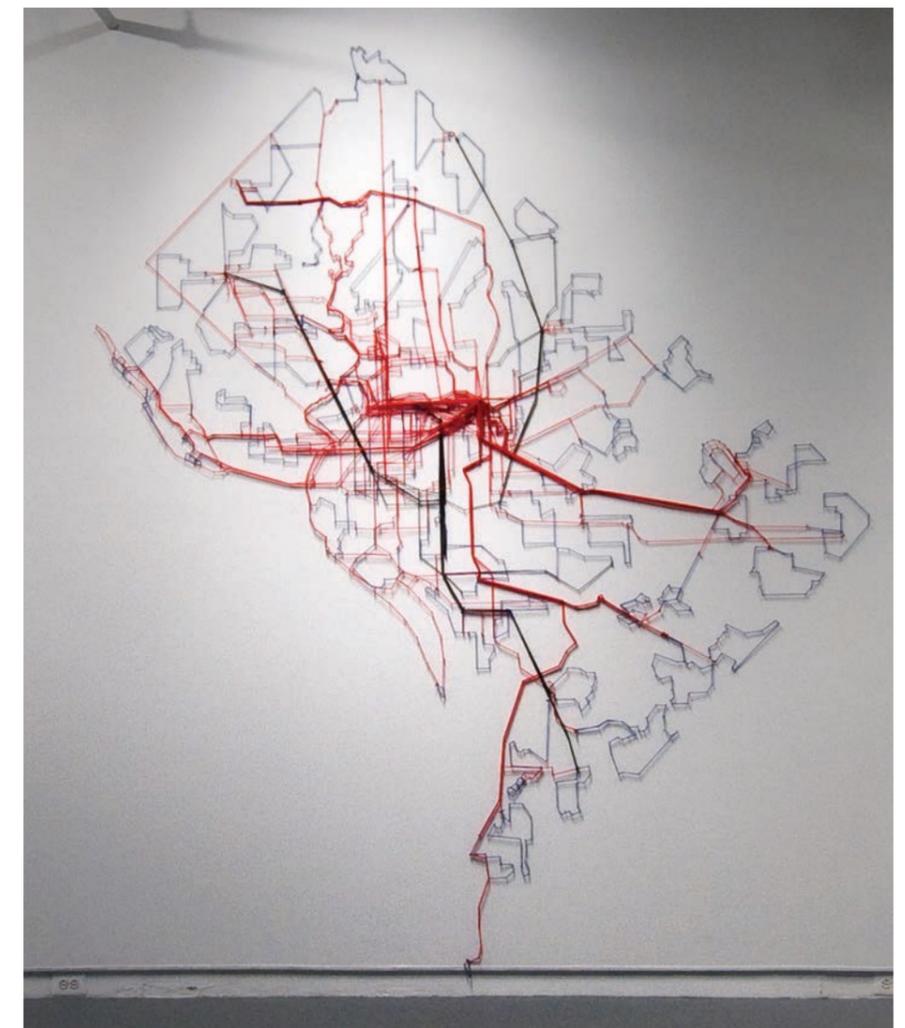


## michael dax iacovone

I am interested in creating systems to move through and experience spaces, and then putting myself through the systems. For the *DC Walking Project*, I wanted to experience every square mile of the city, as well as the journeys to and from each square mile. I used the historic survey mile markers and gridded the city into 68 square miles and then spent four months recording my journeys to and around those spaces. The result is a wall drawing that I created as a record of the 68 actions. The drawing itself is an artifact of the performative nature of these walks.

For the *Mason Dixon Project* I wanted to use the political history of the line and the significance of crossing it as a guide for a driving project. I tracked the mason line using a GPS and wanted to cross every public road that crossed the line. It took five days of driving to cross all 270 roads that cross the Mason Dixon Line. I also recorded each crossing with a video camera and edited each crossing into one video. The large map installation and the video are records of each crossing and the journey itself. —MDI

*Michael Iacovone* spends his time investigating public space, walking through cities, and driving across bridges while making maps, photos and videos of his experiences. He is interested in formulas and creating systems to generate art. He is co-founder of the Free Space Collective. He has a BS in Photography and Art Education from the State University of New York, an MFA in Photography from Virginia Commonwealth University, and an MFA in Studio Art from Maryland Institute College of Art. His work has been exhibited internationally in Sarajevo, Belgrade, Budapest, and London. Domestically he has exhibited in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Orlando, Baltimore, Washington DC, among other places.



*DC Walking Project*  
2009  
Mixed media, yarn and nails

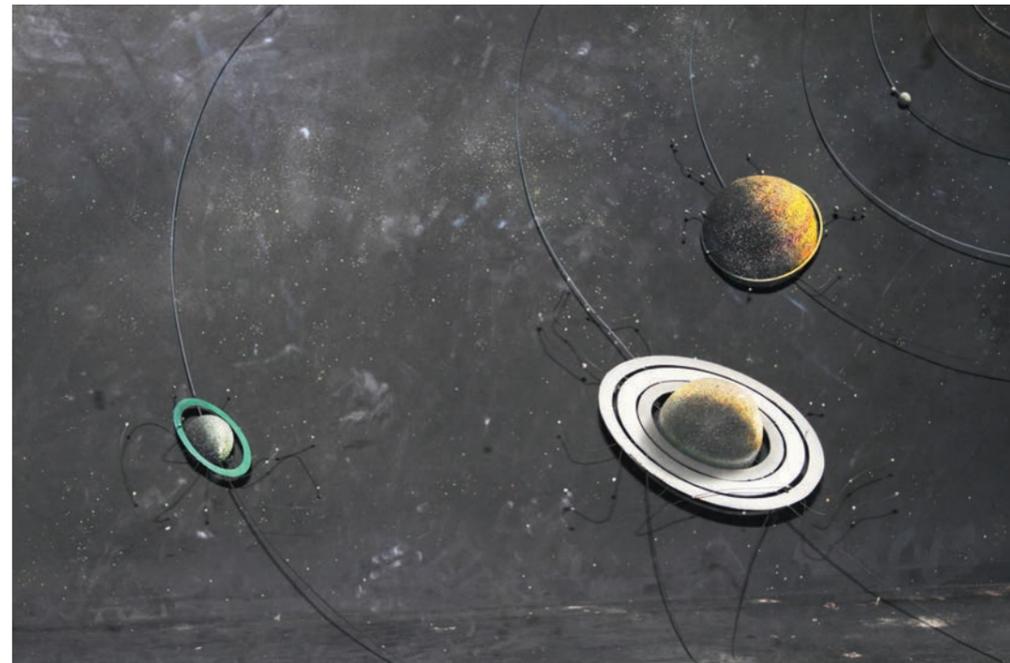


## chandi kelley

Inherently, the photograph is a source of information. It is a representation of the world at a specific moment in time. We take for granted that this information is truth, that it is a confirmation of reality. Photography allows the coexistence of nature and artificiality to reflect both our understanding and estrangement in the world. The unknown is brought into focus and what we think we know is put into question. This duality skews our representation of nature, allowing the photograph to be even more deceptive while the understanding of the medium is broadened.

This body of work highlights the tension between fiction and documentation through constructed environments and the objects that inhabit them. In these environments, the natural world becomes a mere representation of itself – no longer the thing it was, but signifying its past. Facades of nature give the illusion of a natural space, but only emphasize the longing that we feel for a wilderness untouched by mankind. Displays in museums construct experiences that most will never have, such as being in space or in another time. These images contain things that exert a great deal of power—a waterfall, a volcano, a wild animal – but they appear completely still as if suspended or hovering between these two realities, serving as a haunting reminder of something that has been. —CK

**Chandi Kelley** graduated with a BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art and Design in 2004. She was the recipient of a Young Artist Grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities in 2009, which led to her first solo exhibition. From 2010 to 2012 she was a member of the DC Arts Center artist collective, Sparkplug. Her work is in the permanent collection of the U.S. Embassy in Malta and in private collections throughout the U.S. She is a Co-Founder and Administrator of the artwork subscription service Project Dispatch, and Co-Founder of Outer Space. She has served on the Publishers Exhibition Committee for Fotoweeek DC, as Artist Nominator for the 2012 Transformer Auction at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and currently serves on the Visual Arts Committee at the DC Arts Center. She lives and works in Washington, DC.



*Ellipse*  
2012  
Archival Inkjet Print  
24 x 36 inches



## katherine tzu-lan mann

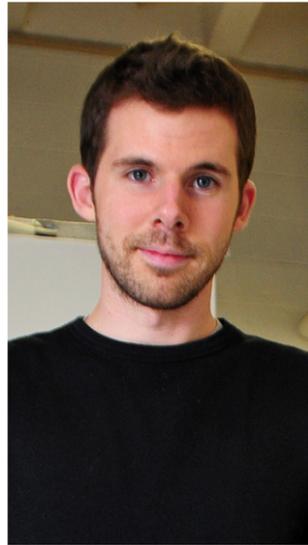
My paintings show how patterned, highly-wrought, decorative elements coalesce from the chaos and contingency of an organic environment—and how they dissolve into that environment again. I begin each piece with a stain of color, the product of chance evaporation of ink and water from the paper as it lies on the floor of the studio. From this shape, I nourish the landscape of each painting, coaxing from this organic foundation the development of diverse, decorative forms: braids of hair, details from Beijing opera costume, lattice-work, sequined patterns. Although founded in adornment, these elements are repeated until they too appear organic, even cancerous. . . and they at once highlight and suffocate the underlying ink stained foundation. Each piece is tense with the threat of disunity and incoherence as nature and artifice spring from and merge into one another, and as different elements multiply and expand like poisonous growths.

At artNOW:DC, I will be exhibiting three pieces, including one site specific installation. *Slurry 2*, in sumi ink and acrylic on yupo paper, moves beyond the recta-linear boundaries of traditional painting and instead hangs from walls and crawls onto the floor of the gallery. The piece is created by repeating calligraphic lines that suggest hundreds of loops of ribbon. But because of the sheer size and the oily black background on which they are painted, these decorative motifs coalesce into something biomorphic and alien. —KTM

**Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann** received her BA from Brown University and MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She is the recipient of a Fulbright grant to Taiwan, the AIR Gallery Fellowship program in Brooklyn, NY, and the So-Hamiltonian Fellowship in Washington, DC. She has attended residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Blue Sky Dayton, Vermont Studio Center, Salzburg Kunstlerhauss, Triangle Workshop, and Anderson Ranch Art Center. Some of the venues where Mann has shown her work include the Walters Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Rawls Museum, the US consulate in Dubai, UAE, and the US embassy in Yaounde, Cameroon. Mann is currently an instructor at the Maryland Institute College of Art.



*Slurry 2*  
2012  
Acrylic and sumi ink on  
yupo paper  
Dimensions variable.  
(approx 10 ft x 15 ft).



# jonathan monaghan

Referring to the heir-apparent to the French throne, *Dauphin 007* is a short computer animation which draws on elements and narratives surrounding French monarchy. Rendered in a Pixar-like aesthetic, the Dauphin is portrayed in this playful narrative as a would-be king lion continually harassed by a black eagle. With a child-like naiveté *Dauphin 007* conflates disparate references, such as Gothic architecture and medical devices, to create a distorted mix of reality, imagination and cultural critique. —JM

**Jonathan Monaghan** (b. New York, 1986) makes short films that combine high end computer animation with surreal and fantastical scenes drawn from religious themes, popular culture and Western history. Work by Jonathan Monaghan has been shown in the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., the Today Art Museum in Beijing, and the BFI Southbank in London. He has been awarded residencies from MakerBot Industries, Yaddo, and Seven Below Arts Initiative.



*Dauphin 007*  
2011  
3D Animated HD film  
3m 14s,



# kendall nordin

Title: Χειμώνας, καταρράκτη & *your foot*

Description: They do not step into the same rivers. It is other and still other waters that are flowing. (Heraclitus)

Thousands of acetate “flags”, marked with dried glue are suspended by invisible string. If they are sparse enough, some of the flags move with air currents, sending light refractions over the surfaces of the room. On the walls, the flags’ shadows produce small waterlike marks which also move in and out of focus. This particular installation of these materials is more dense, with no hope of the lights changing throughout the day—almost as if it were frozen in time—but at the same time is split into two like an event and an echo of that event. The only real information to be gleaned is in the shadows (also essentially an echo of an event) and even then it is unclear, always changing. “*Katarrakhts*” invokes Tibetan prayer flags, cast aside scraps, biological slides, film cels, epistemology, and questions the fine lines between the visible/invisible and the viewers’ relationship to the work. —KN

**Kendall Nordin** is a DC-based artist who has often spent time working in farflung places such as China, or most recently, southeastern Alaska. Her visual work has been exhibited in group and solo shows in the US, Australia, and Estonia and is included in the viewing program of *The Drawing Center, NYC*. Recent venues for performances and pieces include *Black Mountain College, Chashama windows project, Transformer Gallery, and Project Dispatch*. She received a grant from the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities in 2008. As well as practicing visual art she has performed in music ventures since 2000. Contributions to that world include *PANIC*, a 22-piece all girl rock improv orchestra. She completed her MFA at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia where she co-founded “*The 24-hour Drawing Project*.” Before she left the written word behind, her poetry appeared in *Wordwrights, Rain City Review, and Flat Bike*, garnering an American Academy of Poets collegiate prize and a Lannan Foundation fellowship. Kendall is a rabble-rouser and an instigator from teaching pre-school age children to lobbying for low power FM radio or provoking discussions about working space for artists. Occasionally she works under the name *Le Chien Sauvage*.



*Time is not a circle nor a square*  
Harlem, 2012  
performative durational  
drawing  
26 hours

## catalogue of the exhibition

### Michael Dax Iacovone

*DC Walking Project*, 2009  
Mixed media, yarn and nails

*Mason Dixon Project*, 2012  
Mixed Media, digital prints, yarn, video

### Chandi Kelley

*Howl*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

*Ellipse*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

*A Light in the Forest*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

*Photosynthesis*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

*Waves Crashing Against a Locked Door*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

*Remembrance of an Untouched Wilderness*, 2012  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 inches

### Katherine Mann

*Slurry 2*, 2012  
Acrylic and sumi ink on yupo paper  
Dimensions variable (approx 10 x 15 feet)

*Net*, 2010  
Acrylic and sumi ink on cut paper  
84 x 102 inches

*Calcite*, 2010  
Acrylic and sumi ink on paper  
70 x 100 inches

### Jonathan Monaghan

*Dauphin 007*, 2011  
3D Animated HD film, 3m 14s

*Dauphin 007 Wireframe I*, 2012  
Digital print on canvas  
24 x 24 inches

*Dauphin 007 Wireframe II*, 2012  
digital print on canvas  
24 x 24 inches

### Kendall Nordin

Χειμώνας, καταράκτη  
2012  
Acetate, drafting film, glue, invisible thread  
Dimensions variable

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