

ARTicles is a student-driven publication of the Chaffey College Center for the Arts. It is published twice each semester by a consortium of students with a passion for the arts, entertainment and culture. The content reflects a diverse sample of the cultural life at the college. ARTicles is generously supported by the Chaffey College Marketing Department.

Separation Anxiety

Sheila Taylor



Haley Hasler

Lady Serving Dinner, 2008

Oil painting

Courtesy of Kathryn and Steve Price, Fort Collins, CO

Historically artwork that deals with parenting takes inspiration from the iconic Christian images of “Madonna and Child”. These images portray idyllic and serene moments that, while lovely to look at, have little to do with day-to-day family life. Real parents must struggle constantly to strike the perfect balance of protection and freedom for their particular child, while meeting the needs of an increasingly complicated modern world. For every good intention, there is always a failing and each decision leaves an enduring mark. The Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art’s exhibition *Separation Anxiety* delves into the differences between the romantic notion of motherhood and the messy, sometimes painful, reality of parenthood.

Being a mother is anxiety. Inside your body, you can keep track; you can commit each movement to your memory, jot down the record in a journal. Your DNA carries the record of the time you served as a vessel of protection and life for the enigma that you call your child, who you made but will never own.

The moment the child leaves your body, that relationship is tainted. The protection you are able to offer outside the womb comes hand in hand with pain. Needles poke, instruments measure, sounds assault, all for the good of this squirming, squalling, smut covered mass of life, that happens to be the most beautiful thing you have ever seen. Motherhood becomes constant observation, and repeated separations. For every goal they reach is another step away from the safety of your body.

Kate Kretz’s work *Your Fragility* embodies this beautiful and fearful love. The infant’s shirt, white and pristine, a delicate wisp of cloth that is easily ruined, stands in for the newly born infant, still perfect, still untouched by outside influence and self-knowledge. Your hopes and dreams as a mother are still a possibility. Using threads of her own hair, shed during pregnancy, Kretz embroidered the message, “Your fragility in this sharp world is paralyzing.” The weight of the stitches tethers the ghostly garment to the human plane. The antique look of the garment and the use of human hair call to mind locks of curls lovingly placed in a parchment pocket for safe-keeping.

While Kretz considers childhood innocence and the fear of its loss, Claudia Alvarez compares society’s romantic view of childhood against actuality. Her children are round and soft, ready to climb into your lap for story time, except upon closer examination they are not as cherubic as they seem. In *At the Playground*, a large-scale ceramic installation, the children are caught mid playground taunt, a scene familiar to most viewers. That many, if not most, adults can recall being a piece of this playground tableau calls into question our assumptions about the inherent goodness of all children. Another work in the exhibition by Alvarez, *Brothers Playing*, is a watercolor painted in beautiful, soft washes of color. As the viewer, you are immediately drawn into the watery, fearful eyes of a young boy. His terror is palpable, his tearful eyes are haunting. Alvarez seems to have captured every mother’s worst fears in those eyes. With another child as the perpetrator, the viewer is uneasy, unsure of exactly what is happening and just how real the gun may or may not be.

This unease is a familiar companion. As a parent, you are always waiting for a sound—your child’s footsteps, a cry in the dark, a thump and wail as body meets object, a phone call late at night. Waiting in the quiet of the night to hear their next breath, the one that means everything is okay. M.A.M.A., a collective of women artists, uses the sound of a child crying to great effect in the installation piece *California Civil Code 43.3*, (which states that a mother may breastfeed anywhere as long as it is not violating another law). The piercing cries of a hungry child are what first alert the viewer to the artwork. One instinctively looks for the mother that should be attached to the sound, but finds an unaccompanied hinged box. You approach the box with fear and hesitation, worried about what you may find. Upon opening the box, the viewer sees an image of a nursing child from the mother’s visual perspective. There is a gasp of relief, but, ironically, this answered call is a disturbing image to some. When first shown on a public bench in Pasadena, during an art exhibition, the police confiscated it for obscenity.

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Separation Anxiety

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Think of that message—a crying child instantly alerts us that a mother is needed, (how many of us think of the father?) and we immediately wonder where the mother is. However, the act of a mother nurturing that same child as biology intended is upsetting, lurid and unseemly.

The artwork selected for *Separation Anxiety*, by curators Denise Johnson and Rebecca Trawick, show loving, frightening, ironic, morbid, and apathetic viewpoints of parenting and childhood not often discussed in the public sphere. I have mentioned only a few that, as a mother, I had a powerful reaction to. For me, motherhood is living with a vague and terrible fear undulating under the surface of every thought and action. The rewards of parenting are not always apparent. Though this confusion and self-doubt is common, it has historically been absent from the dialogue between artist and viewer. It was cathartic to view parenting from a more realistic standpoint. What is also fantastic and distinctive about *Separation Anxiety* is that it considers relationships beyond that of biological mother and child. The process of raising a child is explored from many different viewpoints, families outside of the conservative model are included, and not all of the artists are parents. By doing away with the isolating ideal of perfection, and delving into what it really means to love a child we can embrace and give support to all types of families that take on the thankless task of parenting.

Separation Anxiety opens on October 11 and runs through November 13, 2010. An artists' roundtable will be held on October 13 from 5:00-6:30pm in CAA-218 with a reception immediately following at the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art. Please visit the website for additional events and activities, www.chaffey.edu/wignall.



Mark Stockton
Jan Benet, 2009
Graphite on BFK Rives
Courtesy of the Artist

Dance Student Showcase

Michelle Mora

On Tuesday, August 24th, students, staff, faculty and administrators gathered to dedicate the new Center for the Arts complex. Several speakers announced the significance of the state of the art technology, equipment and architecture that distinguishes these facilities on the Chaffey College campus. The evening's festivities included a tour through each of the six buildings in the complex. Among the variety of classrooms, studios, computer labs, darkrooms, and study areas in this new complex is the new and infinitely improved dance studio, located on the second floor of the Center for the Arts Building A.

Dance students unanimously agree that they feel a sense of connection to this studio that was lacking in their previous location. "It's more homey," one student proclaims, and it's easy to see why. The specially designed flooring and lighting, and the multitude of surrounding mirrors are a fulfilled dream for any dance student attending Chaffey College. The mere vastness of this room allows dancers to feel less constraint, which makes a profound difference when studying movement and form.

Before the completed construction of this new Center, dance classes were held in the old gymnasium and temporary modular buildings. Although dance students and faculty were grateful to have a facility at their disposal, they are thrilled to now have their own dedicated space within the new complex, allowing them to feel more artistically valued. "Dance isn't usually thought of as something that's cerebral," claims Dance Professor Michele Jenkins. "It involves not only a huge physical demand, but also critical thinking... dance is its own entity, and it's an art form; it's a performing art." This advanced studio and higher respect for the art of dance means a great deal to students coming from high school as well as to students intending to transfer to a university. "Ever since they gave us this space, we feel uplifted," confides one particular student, "It's like a weight lifted off our shoulders." These new facilities coupled with newly found campus and community recognition provides new artistic opportunities for students, faculty, and the public.

Michelle Jenkins has decided to take advantage of these new opportunities by participating in the *Center for the Arts Presents* lecture and performance series, which showcases and celebrates the diverse programs of the School of Visual, Performing and Communication Arts. Michele will do so by hosting the first annual Dance Student Showcase. This show is constructed to be an "informance," which Michele has cleverly defined as a small informal performance. The performers will be wearing simple costumes to showcase the body and space, but nothing elaborate or distracting. "This is a simple show, so we want to follow through with simple costuming" informs Michele. The north wall of the dance studio has been specially designed to elevate, opening to the outside air, and allowing the audience to be placed just outside the north side of the building.

The main purpose of this showcase is to offer students a chance to create their own choreography. "It's also a great jumping off point" says Michele, who claims that if she sees something promising, it could possibly be included in the Spring Dance Concert. The Spring Concert is mostly faculty choreographed, primarily Michele's own work. The Dance Student Showcase, however, allows the students the opportunity to independently choreograph, direct, rehearse and perform. Although Michele, as the Artistic Director, does oversee each piece to assure they are well executed, these are solely student works. "They're having a blast," admits Michele with a smile, "They always love doing my shows but this is their opportunity to be creative... This isn't just an assignment for them. It's a real audience to show their work to."

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A Double Take: *Even Better Than the Real Thing*

Jules Ebe

It is that moment in which you make a double take. Your head snaps back and you are compelled by this unsettling need to look a second time. Your senses are jarred again and the question is beckoned: did you really just see what you thought you saw? Even more surprising is the fact that what you are staring at is a chair – at least you think it is a chair.

In her collaboration with the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art, guest curator Jennifer Frias of the University of California at Riverside's Sweeney Art Gallery has accomplished a complex collection of diverse pieces with fastidious care. *Even Better Than the Real Thing: The Art of the Uncanny* takes the everyday object and plays with the perception of the viewer through “defamiliarization”.

When asked about the content of the exhibition and what she desired to communicate, Frias states, “I think the message is not one that would change the world, but in looking at art, I think that the process of making the work should not be taken for granted. It should not be overlooked. Sometimes when I see an art exhibit, one of the first things I notice is how the artist’s work becomes something else when it’s put into context to support the thesis of the show. The process of creating the work almost becomes diminished. The work suddenly become re-contextualized into something else other than what the artist had intended it to be.

I respect all the artists in the show and have been an admirer of their works. It was a natural choice to put them all together in the exhibition. I also wanted to curate a show where the context focused on the artists’ process.”

The craft of each piece is brought to the forefront of the viewers experience as the individual peers closer, sometimes with no other purpose initially than to figure out what exactly the item is actually made of. Salt and pepper shakers filled with an unidentified fluid, metal, and plastic shavings, a fire extinguisher of stoneware and walnut, nails and screws crafted of urethane rubber, a trash bin comprised of acrylic on stretched canvas,

and a cardboard box made of plywood.

Simple objects from our daily lives become an exploration of the work of Victor Shklovsky’s 1917 essay “Art as Device” where he coined the notion of “defamiliarization”, the artistic

technique of forcing the audience to see common things in an unfamiliar or strange way, in order to enhance perception of the familiar. Each artwork, though definitive in its make-up and craft, contains the uncanny quality of remaining common yet unorthodox. The viewer sees that which is taken for granted in a new way.

Each piece solicits a visceral response. You simply want to touch it, test the limits. Will it stand up to the strain and pressure of the original inspiration? When asked about her personal response to works and artists comprised within the exhibition, Frias explains, “I am drawn to all the pieces in so many different ways. It’s difficult to single one out. For instance, I love the technicality that went into Kaz Oshiro’s suitcases, trash bin and guitar amps. Who would have thought those were all made out of stretched canvas, acrylic paint and bondo? And on the other side of the coin, I’m really partial to Stephanie Syjuco’s low-tech approach in re-creating counterfeits of electronic goods solely on downloaded images, cardboard and glue. Also, Laura Splan’s work is mesmerizing and disturbing at the same time. She uses facial mask peel applied onto her own body and then unpeeled to make a delicate negligee with intricate embroidery, and wall paper samples with the patterns hand drawn using her own blood. It’s disconcerting, but so intriguing at the same time.”

Even Better Than the Real Thing is an exhibition that is playful, challenging, and disturbing. Whether it is Kristen Morgin’s comic books made out of unfired clay or Rebecca Morales’ intricate gouache, ink, and pastel on calf vellum, there will be something to pull your eye in and not let go until you have taken in every lush detail. Everyday minutia has never been so sumptuous to the senses. For further information on this and other exhibitions, visit www.chaffey.edu/wignall.

Listen to the iconomaniacs interview with curator Jennifer Frias online at www.iconomaniacs.com.



Derek Parker
It's What's on the Inside That Counts?, 2010
wood and latex paint
Courtesy of the Artist
photo: Jules Ebe



Kaz Oshiro
Trash Bin #4, 2004
acrylic on stretched canvas
Courtesy of the Artist
photo: Jules Ebe

Dance Student Showcase

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Some groups started rehearsing as early as May or June, usually once or twice a week. "Dance has to be rehearsed way in advance for muscle memorization and conditioning," Michele tells me. "You might have it in your brain but you don't have it in your body... It has to be instinctive." I was fortunate enough to meet one group of performers and attend one of their rehearsals.

As I walked into the dance studio I was greeted enthusiastically by Charnels Ruff, Jenel McNamara, Tiana Powell, and, choreographer, Thuan Nguyen. Although Thuan has directed some choreography in the past, he considers this show to be his debut. "It's a little bit nerve-wracking," he admits. Thuan's piece is characterized as heavily modern with some contemporary ballet. He describes it as very conversational and directed to the audience. "This is our opportunity to tell the audience what we want to say," he states proudly.

As I watch them rehearse in their spacious new studio, I can term their movements as both narrative and expressive. As Thuan directs, he describes the emotions that inspire each step; his words are then translated into the beautiful and communicative movement of the dance. "It's still a work in progress" Thuan discloses, "Things are redeveloping as we rehearse." And as I observe, I notice the minor changes he chooses to make and witness the piece coming together right before my eyes. More than their talent, their collaboration, or their amount of focus, I notice their energy. Above all else, they're having fun. Charnelle and Thuan also express to me their hope that students viewing this performance may possibly be inspired to participate in future dance classes and performances. "This is not just a showcase for us, but an invitation for them as well," adds Thuan.

The First Annual Dance Student Showcase will be held on Friday, October 22 at 5:00pm in the new dance studio in CAA-206. Approximately thirty-five dancers will showcase a variety of different dance styles including modern, hip-hop, jazz, and ballroom. As with every event in the *Center for the Arts Presents* series, this show is free and open to the public. The performance will be followed by a small reception with light refreshments. Learn more at www.chaffey.edu/vpca-blog.

Thank You Vera Dunwoody

Many of us have gone through the trials and tribulations of building or remodeling a home. It takes a strong constitution and a special determination to endure the upheaval of your life, the delays and the hidden surprises of the construction process. And, it takes a keen eye to envision the grand final product while simultaneously spotting the smallest error in an architectural drawing or engineering schematic. Those of us in the School of Visual, Performing and Communication Arts were lucky enough to have just such a person in our corner to over see the construction of our new Center for the Arts complex.

Over the years this special person has played an important role in our lives as our coordinator, our dean, and finally our project manager for interior spaces in the Center for the Arts, but most importantly as our friend. Much of what she has accomplished for our school you will never see, and that's because she did it right. But what you see today as you walk through these minimalist, Bauhaus-inspired structures is the evidence of her contemporary eye and personal flair, and possibly at times the channeling of Frida Kahlo. She has given us a unique home at Chaffey College that embodies the spirit of the visual and performing arts. Both her involvement in this school and in the creation of this space has clearly been a labor of love.

Although she hails from another land, the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, we know deep down she is one of us. We thank you Vera Dunwoody.

John Machado
Associate Professor, Art History
Coordinator, Broadcasting & Cinema,
Dance, Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts



At the Center for the Arts complex dedication on August 24, 2010, Vera Dunwoody is presented with her likeness created by Irene Diaz.

ARTicles

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ARTicles seeks creative students with writing, photography or graphic design skills to participate in the production of an exciting publication on the visual and performing arts at Chaffey College. This is an excellent opportunity for students with aspirations in the arts, with emphasis on writing, criticism, publishing, photography, graphic design, art history and museum studies.

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