



Summer 6-5-2013

Summer Art Exhibit: Ground

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Recommended Citation

Kavadi '15, Mallika, "Summer Art Exhibit: Ground" (2013). *News and Events*. 2151.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/2151>

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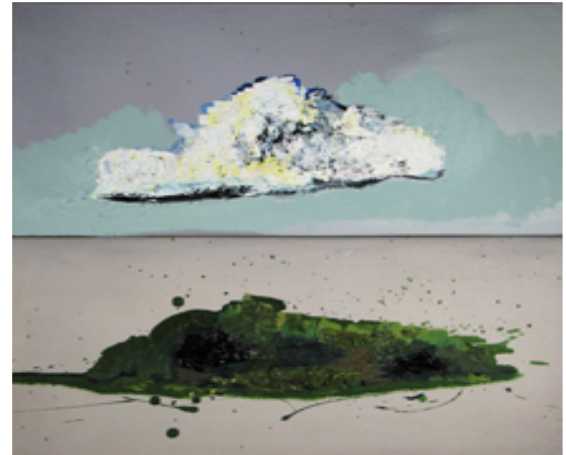
BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— From Saturday, June 15 to Tuesday, Aug. 10, the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries will display the exhibit titled “Ground,” featuring artists Robert Fifield, Claire Hedden and Doug Johnson. An opening reception will take place on Saturday, June 22, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and the artists will speak at the exhibits at 1:15 p.m. The galleries are located in the Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art Building (6 Ames Plaza West, Bloomington). Summer gallery hours are Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 12 - 3 p.m.

The exhibits are free and open to the public.

Fifield, who does paintings, earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from Millikin University in 2005, and a master’s of fine arts degree from Illinois State University in 2008. He has worked for the McLean County Arts Center in Bloomington since 2009 as project coordinator. Beginning in 2013, Fifield will be a lecturer at Whitworth University in Spokane, Wash.

Fifield commented on his work, “Throughout history, the map’s hillsign has hovered between a type of pictorial representation and the intellectualizing symbolism of concentric contours. It is in this space between landscape icon and landscape symbol that my work resides. By reducing stand-ins of the external world to their most basic elements, I am able to expand outward to the visually relational similarities that can exist between mountain and cloud, shrub and hill or sky and lake. In this reduction of information, I am able to make visual comparison of divergent landscape identities that enable me to point to a larger and more complex set of relationships. Through a mix of languages and signifiers, I am creating a specified depiction of no-place, of every-place, where the culminating image is one that ties together memory, fantasy, visual experience and an intellectual understanding of external space.”

Artwork by Robert Fifield



Artwork by Claire Hedden



Hedden is a curator at the McLean County Arts Center. She earned a master’s in fine arts degree in ceramics from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. She creates mixed media sculpture drawing from her experiences as a furniture maker, mother, ranch hand, yoga student and observer. Hedden has taught at Illinois State University and New York State College of Ceramics. She was granted a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in 2009 and was a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Mont.

“In this body of work, I interpret landscape as new subject matter. My interests in the interior— domestic life, physical gesture, locomotion, and their emotional connections— have shifted to inquire about the exterior—the elements of the vast spaces I inhabit and my emotional responses to these

larger forces,” said Hedden.

Johnson has served as executive director of the McLean County Arts Center since 2003. He earned bachelor and master's degrees from Illinois State University and a master of fine arts degree in painting from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. He has exhibited at the Chicago International Art Exposition, the Peter Miller Gallery and the Addington Gallery in Chicago.

Artwork by Doug Johnson

In describing his work Johnson said, "I am a painter. In an age of appropriation, collage and disjunction I have elected to create single images on single surfaces by hand. The traditional techniques of painting, exploring the properties of pigments and mediums, glazing and surface, are of primary importance. My works in this exhibition, all acrylic paint on canvas, were referenced from photographs taken near the Mackinaw River in the late summer and fall of 2012. I embrace these reference materials, although these serve as a tool, rather than a dictate for aesthetic conclusions. These new paintings explore spaces where human endeavor and nature collide and attempt détente. There exists within these agricultural outlines, county blacktops, and windmill sentinels, a feral borderland that speaks in an ancient voice."



For additional information, contact Carmen Lozar, director of the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries, at (309) 556-3391.

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