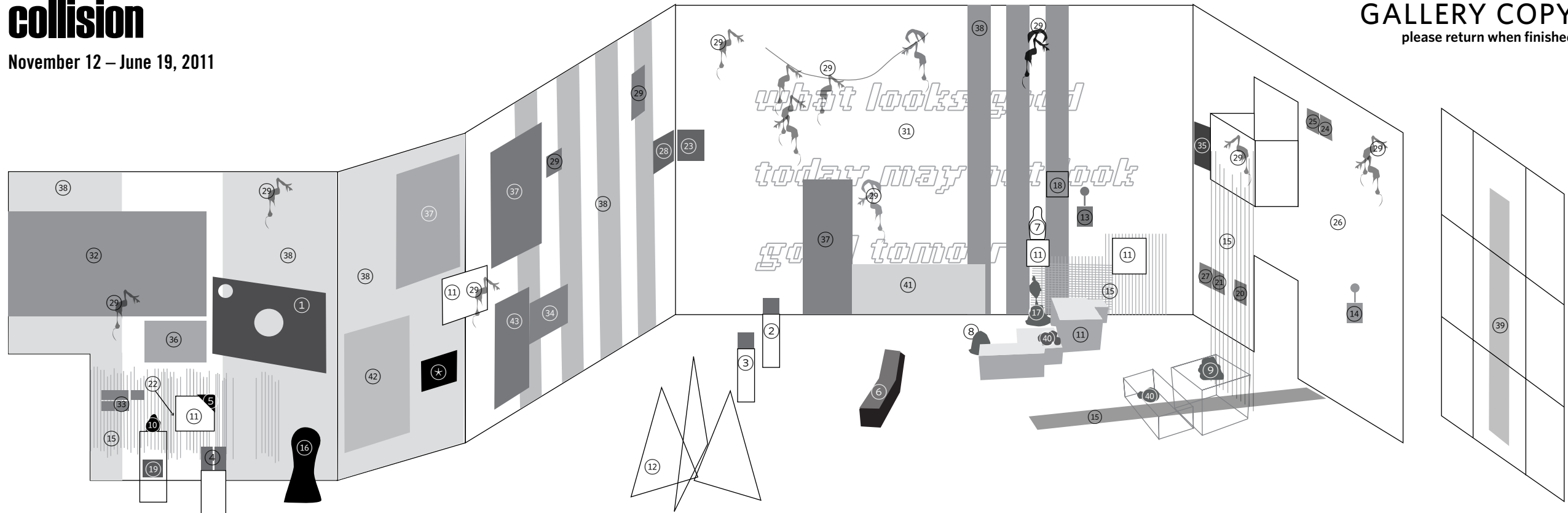


collision

November 12 – June 19, 2011

GALLERY COPY

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Caroline Achaintre

- ① Visor, 2007
Hand-tufted wool
- Nicole Cherubini
- ② Box, Baby Blue, 2010
Clay, glaze, MDF, enamel
- ③ Box, Auricula, 2010
Clay, glaze, MDF, enamel
- ④ Box(s), Medallion, 2010
Clay, glaze, MDF, enamel

- ⑤ Corner, 2008
Clay, glaze, crystal ice.
- Carl D'Alvia
- ⑥ Slab, 2007
Bronze
- ⑦ Easter Bunny, 2004
Resin

- ⑧ It, 2004
Bronze

- ⑨ Braid, 2008
Resin
- ⑩ Magic Frog, 2008
Resin
- ⑪ Installation elements: white pedestals and Plexiglas vitrines
Lucky DeBellevue
- ⑫ Untitled, 2005
Chenille and tinsel stems
- ⑬ Untitled, 2005
Chenille and tinsel stems
- ⑭ Untitled, 2010
Chenille stems, acrylic paint on paper
Franklin Evans
- ⑮ balconyscreen2010, 2010
Acrylic on tape and wall

Jeffrey Gibson

- ⑯ All Hail the Collective Failure, 2009
Mannequin, urethane foam, oil, spray paint, fake gold chain
- ⑰ Numb Witness, 2009
Mannequin, urethane foam, air-dry clay, African mask, oil, spray paint
- ⑱ Untitled, 2010
Digitally printed vellum posters
- ⑲ Sum of Parts, 2010
- ⑳ Runaway, 2010
- ㉑ Edge, 2010
- ㉒ Slippage, 2010
- ㉓ Blender, 2010
- ㉔ Backward Vision, 2010
- ㉕ More Often Than Not, 2010
- ㉖ Envelope, 2010
- ㉗ BetaPlay, 2010

- ㉘ Looped, 2010
Acrylic, oil, and spray paint on linen
Susan Jennings
- ㉙ Flow(ers), 2010
Mixed media collages and sculpture: crystals, fabric, feathers, adhesive, holographic Mylar, bells, tape, wire, glass, sequins, plastic
- ㉚ Color video: 29 min
Sound (by Slink Moss): 6 min., 29 sec.
Michel Majerus
- ㉛ What Looks Good Today Might Not Look Good Tomorrow, 1999
Enamel (wall painting)
Marilyn Minter
- ㉜ Green, Pink, Caviar, 2009
Color video, 7:45 min.

(*) Time-lapse video of installation.

Joyce Pensato and Christopher Wool

- ㉝ Untitled #1–# 5, 2010
Enamel paint on black and white inkjet prints
Erica Royer
- ㉞ Untitled, 2005
Oil, acrylic, and house paint on canvas
- ㉟ No Title, 2005
Oil, acrylic, and house paint on canvas
- ㊱ No Title, 2007
Tempera and ink on paper
Jackie Saccoccio
- ㊲ One To One, 2010
Oil and mica on linen
Jackie Saccoccio and Nader Tehrani
- ㊳ Tight Imprisonment, 2010
Vinyl, India ink, thread

Laura Stein

- ㊴ Collision + + x +, 2010
Vinyl decal
- ㊵ room with a view, 2007/10
Rocks and adhesive Mylar
Doug Wada
- ㊶ Better Than Honor, 2008
Oil on linen
Kevin Zucker (featuring first-year RISD painting MFA candidates Hilary Doyle, Anthony Giannini, Rachel Klinghoffer, Francisco Moreno, Kimo Nelson, Arthur Peña, Michelle Rawlings, Astrid Toha, Page Whitmore, and Bruce Wilhelm)
- ㊷ Collision I, 2010
Screen print, watercolor, and pencil on canvas with additions
- ㊸ Collision II, 2010
Screen print, watercolor, and pencil on canvas with additions

Introduction

Collision is an experiment in exhibition-making. It began when painter Jackie Saccoccio invited a group of artists (seventeen, including herself) to contribute works of their own choosing to a show in which their paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings, prints, videos, and various hybrid forms would literally collide: butting up against each other, overlapping, and even altering one another in an improvisatory fashion. Depending on their placement in the gallery as determined by the individual artists, the works could become entirely subsumed in the larger communal cacophony.

Most often group exhibitions in museums are conceived and organized by a curator, who selects the works of art and decides how they will be displayed in the gallery space. In the case of Collision, the RISD Museum took a leap of faith, giving up a significant amount of its normal control, as the exhibition became a collaborative effort between Saccoccio, the participating artists, and the RISD Museum's staff.

The RISD Museum has a tradition of inviting artists to “guest curate” exhibitions going back to Andy Warhol's legendary Raid the Icebox I, in which the artist made a wonderfully quirky selection and installation of objects from the Museum's storage vaults in 1969. More recent examples of artists creating exhibitions here by juxtaposing their own work with objects from storage include Jim Isermann's Logic Rules (2000), Betty Woodman's Il Giardino dipinto (2005), and Carl Ostendarp's Pulled Up (2009), while projects by David Wayne McGee and Alexis Rockman featured their own paintings placed within the context of the Museum's permanent collection galleries. Collision, however, represents the first time an artist has invited other artists to participate in creating a group exhibition at the Museum.

The contributing artists represent a range of generations as well as varied aesthetic interests and disciplines. Some know each other well while others met for the first time during the making of Blue Balls, a precursor to Collision that Saccoccio organized in New York in 2008. Collision also reveals the rich cross-fertilization that occurs between the school and the museum at RISD. Six of the artists in the show are RISD alumni, including Saccoccio, who has also taught here part time, and RISD students assisted Saccoccio and the Museum crew during the installation. Nicole Cherubini made her pieces for the show during a visiting artist gig in the Ceramics Department this fall, and Kevin Zucker, a professor in the Painting Department, invited a group of graduate students to add their own marks to two of his works in the exhibition. The public was able to observe the progress of the installation and, in some cases, the very realization of the works directly on gallery walls or floor.

We are exceedingly grateful to Saccoccio for the expansiveness and ambition of her vision—and for her considerable organizational ability. Whether functioning as artist, curator, or something else that doesn't have a name, in Collision Saccoccio provides us the opportunity to experience an overload of works by an exciting group of artists who have come together to create something that is more than the sum of its individual parts.

—Judith Tannenbaum, Richard Brown Baker Curator of Contemporary Art

MUSEUM OF ART

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

The Visible Is Merely a Portion of the Creative Act

Taking its cue from indie music and film, Collision invited seventeen visual artists to self-curate and self-install their work in the RISD Museum. Within this DIY framework, the exhibition functions like an improvisatory piece of music. Rather than one curatorial force creating neat relationships between works, artists make their own associations in situ as they pair, add to, or cover the walls, floor, and works of others. In addition to being self-directed and collaborative, the exhibition extends the studio process into public view over its three-week installation period. A looped stop-frame video of the installation process accompanies the exhibition, reminding the viewer that the visible is merely a portion of the creative act.

Collision is a reinvention of Blue Balls, the 2008 inaugural exhibition at Art Production Fund's LAB in New York, which featured the same group of artists (minus two). For both exhibitions, each artist received an identical set of informal guidelines that began with a description of the gallery space and an invitation to consider the space as the exhibition's first participant. Each artist was given a few days to come to the gallery and install. Those scheduled early in the installation period had the advantage of more space to choose from, but they also had to be willing to have their works covered or destroyed by succeeding artists. Artists were given the choice to make their work directly in the gallery or to choose a preexisting piece with the space in mind. For Collision, artists who couldn't travel to the RISD Museum to install their work in person guided their works' placement virtually, through Skype and in response to digital photos.

Space predictably had an effect on the works selected and made and on the shows' overall impressions. For Blue Balls, a seductive layout (the show was viewable only through a glass façade) inspired themes of desire and denial. Installed over a five-week period, the “finished” exhibition lasted only a few days. For Collision, the Lower Farago Gallery and its surrounds suggested themes to build upon. Situated at the Benefit Street entrance, the gallery functions as a transitional area from exterior to interior, with a short flight of slate stairs inside echoing another set of stairs that leads to a grassy area outside, separated by a steel-and-glass façade. The space is rife with multiple vantage points, means of entry and egress, and reflective surfaces.

The viewer's introduction to Collision occurs before entering the museum. Laura Stein's Collision + + x + —a totemic sign emblazoning the exhibition title and artists' names in shimmering layers of type across the museum's exterior — reflects the raucous conceptual and physical nature of the works to come. Inside, the installation plays out as impromptu performance, relying on the integrity and strength of each individual artist while at the same time foregrounding relativism. Michel Majerus's wall painting What Looks Good Today May Not Look Good Tomorrow, 1999, provides something of an anchor, but the sheer number and variety of images and textures swarm the viewer as a collective unit even as shards of decipherable notations parse out individual works.

Collision is a visual feast, and excess is in fact the focus of several artists' works. Marilyn Minter willfully brings the over-sexualized nature of commercial advertising to the level of the grotesque in the video Green Pink Caviar, 2009. Doug Wada's Better Than Honor, 2008, is a hyper-realized temporal investigation of autumn conveyed through reflections on plastic trash bags. Christopher Wool's stark photographs of detritus shot in Marfa, Texas, combine forces with Joyce Pensato's signature drips, the residue of her muscular paintings. Erica Royer's dense abstractions echo the overabundance while Kevin Zucker invites RISD MFA painting candidates to pile on their own excess to his painting structures.

Collision's artists frequently undermine the historical conventions of their craft in order to catapult it forward. Caroline Achaintre's tufted wool Visor, 2007, is hooked rug-making as extreme sport. In her mesmerizing glazed-clay sculptures, Nicole Cherubini boldly challenges the categorization of ceramic vessels as solely utilitarian. In his mazelike installation, Carl D'Alvia elevates the pedestal to art object and architecture as his work metastasizes off of walls, multiplies, and finally morphs under a coating of finely crafted bronze “hair” of Slab, 2007.

Several artists manipulate peculiarities presented by the architecture to form their contributions to Collision. Franklin Evans's balconyscreen, 2010, a dazzling chromatic screen of mixed media, tape, and paint, flows from the balcony in an elongated Piranesi-esque downpour. His work creates a scrim through which to view Jeffrey Gibson's wall of lively, graphic, taped, sprayed, and painted canvasses. In Tight Imprisonment, 2010, a collaboration between Nader Tehrani and myself, parameters for improvisational inking and hand-cut vinyl strips are based on the exposed ceiling structure. Susan Jennings's dystopic light projection, Flow(ers), 2010, presents a kinetic surge amid anything that might be called static. Lucky DeBellevue's Untitled, 2005, a collection of ephemeral chenille and tinsel stems, refracts light and casts shadows back into the mass of works across the wall.

Taken as a whole, the works in Collision recall Robert Rauschenberg's famous observation that “there is no reason not to consider the world as one gigantic painting.” In its excess and experimentation, Collision suggests that contemporary artists are revisiting and reinventing the idea of the “gigantic painting” as a way of processing the 21st-century world. The artists I invited to participate all reach beyond the boundaries associated with their materials and imagery, a common quality that I hoped would break down physical limitations, encourage pairings and layering, and evoke a sense of open-endedness. The results were far beyond anything I could have anticipated.

—Jackie Saccoccio, guest curator

Full Exhibition Notes will be available after December 1, 2010