



*Places,
Everyone*



Above: Caroline Santa, *Circumstance 2 Incident 7*, gouache and colored pencil on paper
24 x 18 inches

Front Cover: Sarah Gamble, *Mt. Mansfield*, oil on panel, 24 x 24 inches

Back Cover: Joe Ballweg, *Strange*, oil on linen, 54 x 40 inches

Places, Everyone

Erin Raedeke • Sarah Noble • Vera Iliatova
Jay Noble • Sarah Gamble • Joe Ballweg
Caroline Santa

July 16 - August 11, 2010
Opening Reception: Friday, July 16, 5 - 7 P.M.

Gross McCleaf Gallery

127 S Sixteenth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
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The exploration of the relationship between order and chaos is something that generations of painters have mined for inspiration. This tension is always present in landscape painting as one tries to compose a picture from nature, something that is inherently entropic. Taking something that is fleeting and temporary and attempting to make it concrete and eternal through the art-making process is an endeavor that has continued to fascinate artists as motifs, materials, and movements have come and gone. Chaos, while natural, is not comfortable and is difficult to understand. The way that we try to understand it is to look for similarities, patterns, or rules – to impose order.



This idea is central to the practice of these seven artists. While their work is varied, and the route that they choose to follow for this exploration differs from artist to artist, this desire for visual order resonates from one to the other. Each artist takes his or her respective elements – whether those elements are objects, figures, or just abstract shapes – and manipulates the placement of those elements to find a balancing point where order is both taking form and being dismantled. It is a dramatic tension, and it is not a stretch to picture the parts of a painting as characters in play – each reacting to the others and the environment and influencing the events to come.

Erin Raedeke actually describes the objects in her still life paintings as characters playing out a narrative. Her pieces attempt to solidify ephemeral qualities of thoughts and memories. It is interesting that she chooses mostly children's toys, drawings and candy as the objects for her paintings; while they are the things that are in the immediate vicinity in her role as mother, they also symbolize a period of time that is fleeting, and most of us struggle to hold on to fading memories of our youth. These pieces serve as the ordering of those (seemingly now) carefree days.

Sarah Noble uses the personification of the moon as her character. He is the isolated hero in her dramas, as she almost treats him like a guinea pig to see how he will react to new and strange environments. As Noble changes the color of the light, the reflective quality of the moon-head's surface changes color: he is in control of his expression but of very little else. He serves as the embodiment of something both quite familiar but ultimately strange and distant.

Vera Iliatova makes the most overtly narrative paintings in this group. However, the narrative presents itself as if we have entered it mid-conversation. The figures, all women, act as if they are simultaneously clones with a collective intellect and individually willed souls. The environments – strange, new, and constantly in flux – present challenges to the women. Some try and adapt to the peculiar surroundings, while others choose



to largely ignore the oddities and go about their activities as they normally would. There is a third set of women who seem unable to decide which route to follow, perhaps paralyzed by the ominous sense of foreboding in these worlds.

Jay Noble is equally drawn to the idea of a painting telling a story and the exploration of shape, color, and gesture. His paintings balance those narrative qualities with abstraction, as forms shift from being recognizable objects to planes of color and bold gestural marks. Order and chaos are reversed from their intuitive associations here: the representational images push towards the chaotic as an elephant charges into a room

with a translucent or perhaps nonexistent wall, while the relationships of shape against shape and mark against mark achieve an exquisite resonance.

Sarah Gamble creates a world that is equally sophisticated and fanciful, as she looks through childhood eyes to understand her surroundings. Her paintings marry an innocent idea of contemporary technology with other things that may seem just as real to children: monsters, UFOs and strange faraway lands. In her world the energies that make cell phones, computers, and radios possible are the same that bring us aliens, floating ships, and various aerial phenomena. It is this consistency of substance – a cohesive life force – that allows her to make such a bizarre yet convincing reality.

Joe Ballweg starts a painting when one of his hundreds of small sketches instills the desire for him to follow that idea farther. It is a largely intuitive process – from the moment he chooses which drawing to extrapolate from to the finishing sense of resonance – yet there are conscious decisions that guide the direction of the painting. The elements in the paintings attempt to order themselves against the permeating chaos of the overall environment. Imperfection is both a source and a goal, as he maintains contradictions and illogical relationships, while achieving a harmonic resolution nonetheless.

Caroline Santa also goes through a process of extrapolation in her work as she starts by taking images from news sources and stripping them of their detail in order to get some sense of truth from what she is seeing. The images she chooses from newspapers, although depicting the events shaping the world, are often devoid of context, and their meaning is based on point of view. Santa removes the nameable objects and identifiable information from the images until just a core set of shapes remains. The forms become nameless while their relationships remain specific. She carefully layers marks and colors to hint at the hidden meaning behind the elements.

Mark Brosseau, Curator

Left: Erin Raedeke, *Birds*, oil on muslin mounted on panel, 12 x 12 inches
 Above: Jay Noble, *Elephant in the Room - Arms*, oil on canvas, 15 x 10 3/4 inches

Erin Raedeke

Born - 1977, Louisville, KY / Currently in Washington, DC

BA/BFA - Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

MFA - American University, Washington, DC



Above: *Still Life with Birdhouse*, oil on muslin mounted over panel, 24 x 24 inches

Top Right: *Still Life with Chocolate Bunny*, oil on muslin mounted on panel, 12 x 16 inches

Bottom Right: *Still Life with Elsa's Drawing*, oil on muslin mounted on panel, 12 x 16 inches



Sarah Noble

Born - 1978, Marion, VA / Currently in York, PA

BA - Anderson University, Anderson, IN

MFA - Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC



Above: *Venus and the Crescent Moon*, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

Top Right: *Winter Moon*, oil on canvas, 9 x 12 inches

Bottom Right: *The Moon in Jewels*, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches





Vera Iliatova

Born - 1975, Saint Petersburg, Russia / Currently in Brooklyn, NY

BA/MA - Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

MFA - Yale University, New Haven, CT



Left: *City of Women*, oil on linen, 50 x 40 1/4 inches

Above: *Loves of a Blonde*, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches

Both pieces courtesy of Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY.

Jay Noble

Born - 1976, Indianapolis, IN / Currently in Lancaster, PA

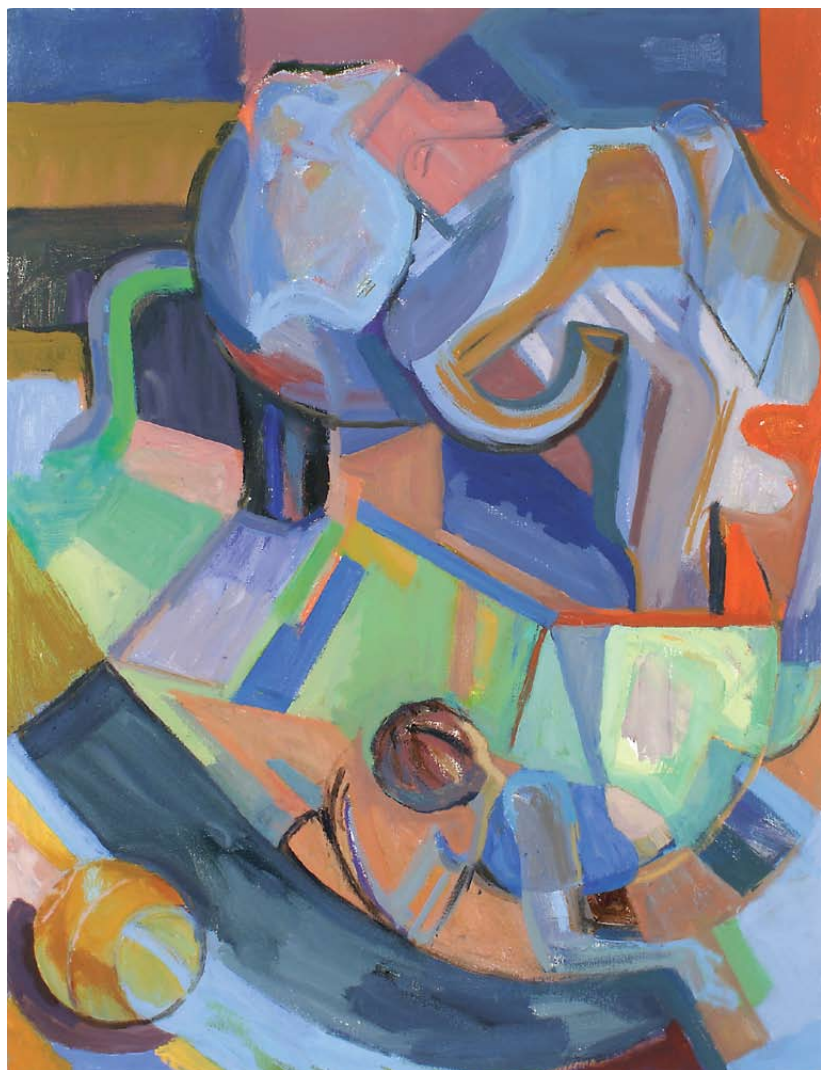
BA - Anderson University, Anderson, IN

MFA - American University, Washington, DC



Above: *Elephant in the Room - Curtain*, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

Right: *Elephant in the Room - Ball*, oil on canvas, 30 x 23 inches



Sarah Gamble

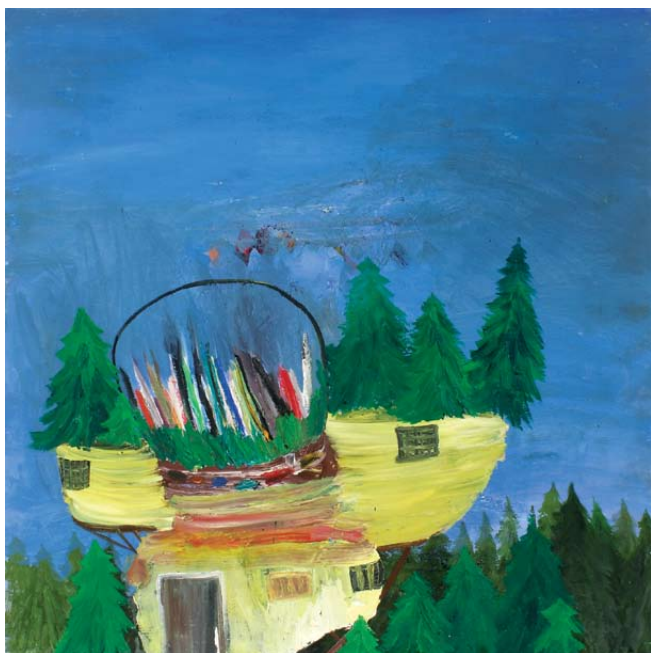
Born - 1975, Charlotte, NC / Currently in Philadelphia, PA
BFA - Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington, DC
MFA - University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA



Above: *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches

Top Right: *Untitled*, oil on panel, 24 x 24 inches

Bottom Right: *Grow Your Own*, oil on panel, 24 x 24 inches





Joe Ballweg

Born - 1973, Smithtown, NY / Currently in Queens, NY

BFA - University of Washington, Seattle, WA

MFA - Boston University, Boston, MA



Left: *Horse Feathers*, oil on linen, 54 x 40 inches

Above: *Radiate*, oil on linen, 64 x 48 inches

Caroline Santa

Born - 1982, Morristown, NJ / Currently in Philadelphia, PA

BFA - University of Delaware, Newark, DE

MFA - University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA



Above: *Opportunity 4*, graphite and gouache on paper, 18 x 23 1/2 inches

Top Right: *Action 2 Situation 3*, graphite and colored pencil on mulberry paper
19 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches

Bottom Right: *Time 7 Event 1*, graphite and colored pencil on mulberry paper
19 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches



