

For Immediate Release

Walter Maciel, walter@waltermacielgallery.com, 310-839-1840

Paper Cuts

13 March – 15 May 2021

Walter Maciel Gallery presents *Paper Cuts* featuring works on paper by the following artists: Barry Anderson, Carolyn Castaño, Walt Cessna, Colin Doherty, Doug Hall, Cynthia Ona Innis, John Jurayj, Andy Kolar, Hung Liu, Brendan Lott, Greg Mociłnikar, Dean Monogenis, Maria E. Piñeres, Pepa Prieto, Robb Putnam, Lezley Saar, Lisa Solomon and Dana Weiser.

Many of the artists in the exhibition reference landscape as both location and inspiration for the imagery in their work. In Carolyn Castaño's triptych, *El Cañon 1-3* different renderings of the sun are depicted with the use of geometric shapes inspired by traditional textiles from ancient cultures that remain persistent despite the depredations of colonialism. Castaño's suns rise and set over landscapes inspired by the maps, botanical illustrations and topographical illustrations of Prussian botanical explorer Alexander Von Humboldt, as well as by the paintings of Frederic Edwin Church and Albert Berg. John Jurayj also creates imagery of the sun but in a more literal format. Taken from random tourists shots downloaded from the web, Jurayj prints appropriated photographic images of sunsets over the skyline of Beirut and the surrounding coastline disrupting the surface with distinct burnt holes and areas of colored plexiglass. He intentionally blurs the formal boundaries between photography, drawing and painting manifesting an exiled state of the disposed as a metaphor for the ongoing turmoil and destruction in Lebanon, his father's native county. Landscape and architecture are explored in a more documentary format in Doug Hall's photographs. His images arrest human subjects engaged in leisurely and mundane activities within urban and architectural settings, juxtaposing them with pictures that capture the spectacle of the architecture itself. An image of an artificial ocean found at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas reveals tourists engaged in social activities with human behavior caught in awkward poses questioning whether it is a true capture or rearranged in photoshop. In Dean Monogenis's new body of work, tension and anticipation are created with a balancing of natural and made objects ranging from logs, rocks and branches to cinder blocks, columns and beach accessories. Often stacked and strapped together the objects playfully exist as dependents of one another in order to avoid collapse. Barry Anderson works primarily in digital video and photographs juxtaposing digitally made interior and exterior landscapes with the documentation of personal experiences in nature. In his photograph entitled *Badlands*, an image of Anderson's son is shown from behind with his head covered by a knit mask while pointing a gun at the open landscape. His work questions or relationship to nature which continues to be more fragile with global warming and human destruction.

Abstraction and pattern making are another genre included in the show. Brendan Lott presents an overview of multi-panel photographic works that explore his ongoing interest in the sublime.

Using simple images of architecture taken with his iPhone, Lott creates a grid of visual information with a specific selection of rows and columns to form geometric abstractions. Each image can be hung one of four ways creating an enormous number of patterning options for the overall pictorial field. Cynthia Ona Innis works with fragmentation of imagery in a different way often with the use of collaged fabrics. Evidence of natural phenomena like earthquakes and volcanoes are rearranged into abstractions with drippy washes of pigment separated and literally shifted within the layers of materials. Greg Mociłnikar often uses a layering technique within his geometric forms including the sole application of paint in some of the works and overlapping collaged fragments of paper in others as a way of communicating a visual exercise. Some of the paintings include text with written statements of emotions that pointedly open up and explain the expression and communication in the narrative. Pepa Prieto creates a fertile ground for

experimentation trying to recuperate meaning while at the same time imbuing the formal gestures with personal significance. She builds intuitive links through her painting using narratives that weave her personal experiences together with those of others occupying the same space. The compositions question the relationship between abstraction and figuration with the oblong forms alluding to figures or trees in a landscape. Similarly, Kolar explores the referential, implicative and relevant potentials of select combinations and collective compositions within the totality of the painting. His intimate works on paper display colorful abstract forms floating from tethering lines that fall from the top of the pictorial fields. In a more free-floating sequence, Lisa Solomon's drawing on Duralar depicts playful doilies in monochromatic pink color. The positioning of the forms follows the molecular structures of viruses and toxins disguised as beautifully drawn prototypes with the use of acrylic pigments juxtaposed with areas of stitched thread.

Working from personal experience and identity, many of the artists use figuration as the subject of their work. In her large format acrylic paintings on paper, Maria E. Piñeres depicts female wrestlers in the moment of their match with bodies entangled and twisted together with overt tension, intentional contrast and complimentary styles using camouflage patterns inspired by military uniforms from various nations and terrains. Her female wrestlers are stripped of their own identity and pitted against one another in a corporeal drama that parallels the relentless conflict in ourselves as well as nature. Walt Cessna's photographs from his series *Joy of Hicksville* were shot in the late 80s and early 90s using his friends including Piñeres as subjects posed in his mother clothing and accessories throughout New York City. His mother, Joy lived in suburban Hicksville in Long Island and her identity is re-imagined in the adventures of his models with creative and stylistic posturing dressed in exaggerated costumes of vintage periods. Lezley Saar's figurative collages are arranged from cut magazines, cards and other found images that are cleverly placed in relationship to a historic portrait used as the base imagery. Colorful patterns of intricate subject matter are laced over each image creating a narrative with issue of race, gender and colorism at play. Known for her paintings based on historical Chinese photographs, Hung Liu's subjects have often included prostitutes as seen in her the portraits used for her series of prints included in the show. The prostitutes are juxtaposed with renderings of dandelions drawing a correlation with its traits of being a weed that is vulnerable and transient based on the moods of nature like the struggles and hardship of a prostitute. Liu has invented a kind of weeping realism that embodies ideas like the erosion of memory and the passage of time, while also bringing faded photographic images vividly to life as vibrant prints. Colin Doherty makes work from his life experience and his digital prints display enhanced and enlarged polaroids of leisurely activities from his personal relationships. The prints evoke characteristics of drawings while revisiting Doherty's past girlfriends and lovers as an exploration of himself. Personal identity is an ongoing subject for Dana Weiser as noted in her three self-portraits that question her experience as an Asian American and a Korean adoptee. Entitled *Enacting My Koreanness, Self-portrait performance* each image shows Weiser with her face painted replicating different versions of traditional Korean folk masks assembled from kitschy items sold as tourist souvenir shops in Koreatown. Weiser questions the ways in which her identity can create a perceived culture by altering temporality and a traditional Korean narrative. Working from his imagination, Robb Putnam draws imagery that relates to his childhood memories with playful characters in animated forests as an homage to the safety his imaginary friends provided during bouts of bullying. Exploring the dualities of fear and comfort, connection and alienation and the real and the imagined, Putnam transforms his thoughts into whimsical environments of playful interactions.

The gallery is open from Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 6pm. For further inquiries please visit the gallery website at www.waltermacielgallery.com.