

## Faculty Forum

At the faculty forum I attended there were presentations given by four faculty members. The first was by Morgan Price, who does printmaking and lithography. Some themes in his work are social discomfort, worry, repetition, and story telling. He shared with us that it is difficult for him to feel vulnerable by sharing these embarrassing moments through his art, but it also relieves some of the burden. He says the repetition seen in some of his work represents reliving mistakes and punishing himself for them continually. I can relate to this feeling because I have similar experiences with obsessive thoughts about my past mistakes. By expressing this experience through his art he is able to talk about his mistakes, learn from them, and share stories with other people. He has learned that everyone has similar feelings of worry, and he considers these feelings to be a part of humanity. He is interested in the vulnerable qualities of humanity that connect all people, which is an idea I am also interested in. I think it is important to celebrate our differences but keep a perspective that we are all connected by similarities on a natural, basic level.

The second faculty speaker was Vanessa Schulman, an art historian. She was describing her most recent research on the art of Herge, creator of the Tintin comics. She went into great detail about the Tintin comics and how the main character always found himself in odd situations in which he was going to be buried alive, frozen solid, or turned into a sculpture. She elaborated on this running theme by finding other forms of art, such as film, that had this common theme. She explained “the mummy complex”, a desire to be remembered and immortalized. Some artists accomplish this through their art, and in one film she talked about, a serial killer achieves immortality through his victims. He kills them by turning them into wax figures, and he knows that people will always remember him for this brutal and unusual case. This presentation opened my eyes to how detailed and thorough artistic research can be, and that interests of art history can lie in such a small niche.

The third artist presenter was Melissa Oresky, and her main focus is in painting, but she does some collage as well. Some themes she explores are landscape combined with the body, abstraction, color, and “shifting between two gravitational pulls”. She explained that she wanted to talk more generally about her work instead of giving away every detail or meaning. In her latest work she has been moving away from imagined landscapes and towards real experiences she has had in nature. She enjoys working on collages over long periods of time. By keeping them in her studio, she can slowly add and subtract from them and combine pieces. She says she forms less attachment to the collage pieces and is able to turn off her mind while she works on them. She takes photos throughout the phases of development of the collages, and when they are complete, they are very dense and layered. In her abstracted work, she is interested in how they always tend to refer to something. She did a series of paintings that were about one color. For this work, she says it is about the overall experience, the initial reaction, and what it represents. Her yellow paintings represented sunlight or cosmic space. I thought her explanation of her work was vague, but I know that was her intention. From the images she showed, I was able to appreciate the illusion of depth and space she

created and the elements of fantasy in her landscapes. I was interested in her idea of taking an entire experience out in nature, like a hike, and translating it into an abstracted landscape. It would be a fun challenge to capture an experience that happened over a period of time, moving through a natural environment, rather than remaining still to capture a frozen image of an unchanging landscape (other than the sunlight).

Finally, Colleen Brennan presented some of her photography. She is inspired by many artists, including Barbara Kruger, Alex MacLean, Bargitta Lapedes, Lisa Hoke, and Chris Jordan. She is interested in consumerism, nature, waste, and abstraction of landscape from areal views. On a flight back home from her grandfather's funeral, a thin layer of snow highlighted the details of the land as she looked down from the plane. She talked about the contrast between the natural hills and valleys of the earth and the forced, man-made, agricultural grid on top. She explained that in general people feel a sense of power and control over the planet, but in reality the planet is sturdy and resilient. She darkened the low values in her photos to create more contrast and show the subtleties of the land. I share her interest in consumerism, nature, and waste, and I attempt to make comments on these issues in my own work. I think it is important to bring awareness to these issues through art.