MUTUAL AID
MUTUAL AID

October 1 - 26, 2018

Curated by Katharine Dufault, Jack McWhorter and Patricia Spergel

The William J. and Pearl F. Lemmon Visiting Artist Gallery, Fine Arts Building
6000 Frank Avenue NW
North Canton, OH 44720
MUTUAL AID

The William J. and Pearl F. Lemmon Gallery is pleased to present Mutual Aid, a group exhibition of paintings by members of The Painting Center, NY. Eighteen artists were invited to exhibit up to three works that make reference to the exhibition theme: “mutual aid.” In organization theory, “mutual aid” is a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services. For example, American Abstract Artists, Rubber City Prints and The Painting Center were all founded by artists to organize exhibitions of their individual works and to foster public appreciation and a forum for further discussion and investigation of matters of communal interest. In computing, we create hyperlinks to link web pages or hypertext documents. “Mutual aid” as a sharing, pattern-forming process is basic in animal life; think migration of birds and animals…”mutual aid” to hold small groups together.

In studio practice, reciprocally generative relationships between mediums of drawing, collage, photography, painting, and printmaking are widely acknowledged and celebrated. In this instance, mutual aid is not so much a theme as it is an acknowledgement that paintings create a relationship between two things or situations that suggest “multi-directional conversations.” Each exhibiting artist embodies concrete ideas about mutual connections in their individual studio practice that reflect various organizing principles. For example: How does one work connect two or more things in visual problem solving? How do visual continuities between one work relate to another over time? What relationships are explored between memory, photographs, prints, collages and sketches? What is the relationship between model and artist? Mutual Aid encompasses work across various painting mediums including oil, acrylic, flashe, encaustic, alkyd-modified oil and black tourmaline crystals. Painting subjects come from the built environment, connections to nature, the figure, observations from multiple angles to comprehend complex structures, memories, and formal processes.

The Painting Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to the exploration of painting in all its possibilities. It does not champion one school or tradition, but welcomes and encourages diverse viewpoints regardless of their market appeal. The Painting Center is a gathering place for painters and those who love painting. It is a democratic arena that fosters dialogue, experimentation, and community among artists.
Voluntary reciprocal exchange
When the disciple is ready, will the master appear? Who is whom, in what form?
Can they merge? If they do, what remains? if they don’t, what changes?

Ophir Agassi was born in Haifa, Israel and raised in Brooklyn, New York. After receiving a yeshivah education, he earned a B.A. at Yale University and an MFA at the New York Studio School. Agassi has exhibited at The Painting Center, Bowery Gallery and First Street Gallery in New York City; Parker’s Box, Sideshow, Storefront Ten Eyck and David & Schweitzer in Brooklyn; La Vigie-Art Contemporain in Nîmes, France and HMC in Budapest, Hungary. He has been an artist-in-residence in New York City at Chashama, Triangle Artists’ Workshop and Cross Path Culture; nationally at the Vermont Studio Center, UCross Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Hambidge Center, I-Park and I-M-A-R; and internationally at the Royal Drawing School’s Dumfries House Estate in East Ayrshire, United Kingdom. His work has been reviewed in The Hudson Review, American Artist and Concept magazine and he was featured as one of American Artist’s “12 Artists to Watch in 2012”. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Bethlehem, PA.
I have always painted people from direct observation in natural light and, although this process is essential to my work, I’m not interested in the conventional aspects of portraiture or realism. Instead, it is a stepping off point for exploring intimacy and poetic visual relationships found in both observable reality and the abstract relationships found within the painting. I like to keep something going in the studio when I don’t have a model and I decided to see what would happen if I just kept trying to create a head without a model. It was not easy to stay engaged in the way that I thrive on but still I felt compelled to keep at it to see what I would discover. In these paintings of “Imaginary Men” I tried very hard to will certain faces (that did not exist in reality) into being but they all went in unexpected directions. Because I was painting out of my head instead of looking directly at a real person, the people in the paintings developed their own stories which I felt compelled to follow. Working this way was challenging because I felt a bit ungrounded and was always wrestling with developing the character vs. developing the painting. Because there weren’t limitations of time with the model, fleeting light, etc. I could pick these up in between normal studio hours. I had a hard time leaving them alone. I really don’t know how exactly these will influence the rest of my work as they are still very fresh but I think they reinforced my interest and ambition to push through painting problems while trying to stay “fresh”.

The daughter of two painters, Alix Bailey grew up in New Haven, Connecticut and in Italy. She studied painting at Bennington College with Pat Adams and Sidney Tillim and received her MFA from Indiana University. She has shown her work in New York, Connecticut, and Italy. She lives and paints in New York City and Taghkanic NY with her two daughters.
While painting may physically be described as singular or static, painting as an activity is neither singular or static, but more like a link in a chain of multi-directional conversations. At its best, these conversations seem to reach in several directions at once, engaging with artistic peers, past and present, dialoging with the times we live in, and posing questions to other works in progress in the studio. Even once complete, a work is continually being re-positioned through comparison to other events.

Thomas Berding was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and received an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design. Berding’s paintings have been recognized with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and NEA/Mid America Arts Alliance. His work has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at the University of Maine Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, and in October 2016, Oakland University in metro Detroit mounted a survey of the last decade of his work which was accompanied by a major catalog. Over his career, Berding has exhibited at many venues including the David Klein Gallery, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Rochester Institute of Technology, Indiana University, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Savannah College of Art and Design, and Rhode Island School of Design Museum among many others. Thomas Berding currently lives and works in East Lansing where he is Professor of Studio Art at Michigan State University.
These three landscapes mark the beginning of my ambition to incorporate the figure within an outdoor setting. Having had a classical training I was comfortable working with the figure but had little background in painting landscape. Before I could comfortably work them together I wanted a degree of experience painting from nature. I lived close to Central Park where I could work in the open air and develop a vocabulary so that I could recall the experiences of trees, leaves, dirt paths whatever my paintings summoned. The first day I remember a truly beautiful fall day and feeling so privileged to be able to paint wherever I wanted, already feeling absorbed by nature and shedding the confines of my indoor NYC studio. I began by painting small quick landscape studies, took them back to the studio and developed them with some success. As a house cat let free to wander for the first time, I soaked up the park in all its natural magnificence and began what has become a long-standing practice of plein air work during warm weather which inspires and is often recognizably placed within my larger figurative paintings.

Sue Collier has lived and worked in New York City for the past thirty years and has taught painting, drawing and printmaking. She has received awards for outstanding teaching from SUNY Purchase, is a recipient of The Weir Farm Visiting Artist Program, and has lectured at Queens College and Dartmouth College. She has exhibited nationally, has had numerous one person shows, and her work has been reviewed by The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Art News, Art in America, and Art New England, among other publications.
Within a Walking Line painting there is wide open space to allow the collection of disciplined striped dashes to form a line. The vibrancy of each color is effected by its neighboring color. The whole cannot exist without cooperation, participation, and semblance from those individual colored dashes. Relationships are created and where there’s relationships there can be narratives. In the first painting things have become quieter and slower with the line achieving a curve. With movement slowed down my sense was something should be added. I found in the second painting by placing an acute angle that leaps up and over the curve and then brings itself down on the other side was one answer resulting in interconnectedness a benefit of mutual aid.

Born in Trenton, NJ, Cantwell earned a BFA at C.W. Post College on Long Island. Her latest work has become well-known through a number of recent solo and group exhibitions, primarily in the New York-New Jersey area as well as Provincetown, Massachusetts. In 2016, she was invited to become a member of The Painting Center in Chelsea and to be represented by Adam Peck Gallery on Cape Cod.
Pasta puttanesca is one of my favorite recipes. The name translates into English as “slut’s pasta.” You make it by throwing together tomatoes, olive oil, anchovies, olives, capers, garlic, and, frankly, whatever else you have left over in the refrigerator. The word “slut” doesn’t, in this case, have a sexual connotation. Rather, it suggests a lazy cook, someone who doesn’t plan and prepare ahead. This cook just throws together whatever is around…and the combined result is delicious, with all the ingredients feeding into the final product, providing “mutual aid” to each other in wonderful and surprising ways. When I paint, like the slutty cook, I aim to throw together the diverse and strange flavors that I love in art, whether they are high or low, decorative or representational, or anything else. I can only hope the results have some of the fresh, tangy bite of a great bowl of pasta puttanesca.

Anthony Cuneo has exhibited his paintings and photography regularly since receiving his M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was a Benjamin Franklin Scholar. He teaches at the Montclair Art Museum, and Montclair Kimberley Academy.
The landscape informs my work: memories of landscapes seen in my travels and the landscape directly visible beyond my studio door - a wild marsh with a tidal river. However, I have abandoned the traditional landscape composition in recent work, in favor of a freer structure formed with bold colors and abstracted shapes. ‘Autumn Walk’ was a small preliminary painting to experiment with the change of perspective. This led to the recent series of large scale landscape and nature based paintings. As the series has progressed, I have introduced layers of transparency which play off discrete areas of rich opaque color. I want the work to attract the viewer with beauty and simultaneously prompt curiosity.

Born in Cambridge England, Katharine studied fine art, photography and graphic design at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, before coming to New York. She graduated with honors from Columbia University, NY, with a degree in Painting and Literature. Katharine is an artist who lives and works in Westchester, NY.
The model-artist relationship has a complex and charged history, often ripe with misogyny and the inflated self-importance of the artist, their ego, and sexual desires. Rather than selecting models or hiring professionals, the individuals in Farrell’s paintings are part of a community of young creatives in NYC and abroad who often collaborate on multiple projects. Propelled by extreme political times and the overdue need for equal visibility of marginalized individuals and marginalized artists, young creatives often are choosing a structure of mutual aid over the traditional hierarchical artist-model or even gallery-artist. Farrell approaches her painting process as a conversation more than observation, an open-ended and slightly surreal glimpse into a familiar cast of characters captured amidst intimate scenes.

Born in Kingston, New York, Alannah Farrell spent her formative years living in the northwest Catskills of New York state, the high plateau of the upper Catskills. The enigmatic strangeness, poverty, and pervasive desolation of this rural locale influenced her aesthetic sensibility and relationship to color. As a teen, Farrell moved to the East Village, a completely opposite landscape. She was further influenced by NYC nightlife with its dualistic nature, a kind of hide-and-seek, where one can simultaneously lose themselves while finding solace amongst kindred spirits and a menagerie of misfits. Her paintings include representational depictions of real people rendered in her own ‘faux-realism’ style.
The partially random, partially controlled drip structure found in these paintings resurfaces periodically in my work. Small, quick watercolor studies done on site in the woods often focus on the jumble of undergrowth and movement that surrounds me and on the wild and mysterious negative space; controlled pouring of paint is a process I continue to turn to in order to recreate that sensation. Part of the challenge is to use this technique to find structure, flowing line and form and then use it as a jumping off point without it becoming repetitive or gimmicky. In her recent body of work, Feld questions how major life events influence one’s art and presumes that how and what one paints is driven by emotional factors interacting with visual concerns.

Robin Feld works out of her studio in Brooklyn, New York. Her work has been shown in spaces such as Drawing Rooms in Jersey City, the Fountain Art Fair, Paramount Gallery in Long Island City and the Monmouth Museum. She attended what is now LaGuardia High School, got a BFA at the City College of New York, and studied with various accomplished painters at the Art Students League.
These three pieces, represent a kind of sensorial map of my experience while on an Artist Residency in Paros, Greece. While navigating my way around the Cycladic island of Paros I noticed the city-scape seemed to parallel my process of composing a painting: Through layered marks, excavation, searching, at times feeling lost, as well as collaging together fragments to help make sense of the whole. Each painting recalls a different aspect or memory of being in Paros. The blue-pink shadows in doorways and the light on textured white washed walls, the iconic stonework underfoot, the meandering and jagged paths taken to get from one place to another, often the same paths that pirates once took when looting the island centuries ago. Each painting stands as an individual, yet is also inter-related to mutually aid one another in conjuring a painterly moment in time.

Molly Herman has had numerous one and two person shows. She has exhibited and participated in artists residencies, both nationally and internationally. She is represented by Amy Simon Fine Art, Westport, CT; Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn, New York; and Carrie Coleman Fine Art, Norfolk, VA; and made print editions with Dusk Editions and Skink Ink, NYC.
My paintings often focus in on a single object, as I aim to comprehend the complex structures that result from natural processes of growth and decay. In the Shawangunk Krystallos series, I took a single raw piece of quartz that was found in my local landscape, and looked at it carefully. I could not completely grasp the form from a single point of view, but observing the chunk of rock from multiple angles I began to understand its intricate three-dimensional structure.

Andrea Kantrowitz, EdD., is an artist, researcher, and educator who has lectured and given workshops internationally on art and cognition. She is the graduate program coordinator and assistant professor in Art Education at the State University of New York New Paltz. As director of the Thinking through Drawing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University, she organized a series of international drawing and cognition research symposia, in collaboration with colleagues from the U.K. She holds a B.A in Art and Cognition from Harvard University and a MFA in Painting from Yale. She was a teaching artist in the New York City for many years, involved in multiple local and national research projects. Her blog is Zyphoid.com and her own art work is represented by Kenise Barnes Fine Art. She recently completed an interdisciplinary doctorate at Teachers College which examined the cognitive interactions underlying contemporary artists’ drawing practices. Her blog is Zyphoid.com and her own art work is represented by Kenise Barnes Fine Art.
My work is my way of making sense of my life, what I love and what I believe in. Being in community fosters this growth and is necessary to my being an artist. Whether it is being a part of the New York art scene via The Painting Center, traveling to Brazil to be among like-minded seekers, and participating in artist residencies and galleries around the country, all of these are vital to my practice and provide the nourishing support so necessary to me as an artist. I feel very grateful and fortunate to have these systems in place.

Largely self-taught, Barbara Laube has studied in Italy, France, and Germany. She also had the good fortune to study in New York with Joop Sanders, a founding member, along with Willem deKooning and Milton Resnick, of the American Abstract Expressionist group. In competition, her talent was recognized with an honorable mention from Deborah Wye, Curator of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; and her artist-in-residence fellowships include The Vermont Studio Center, Soaring Gardens, and Woodstock Byrdcliffe. Laube’s paintings have been featured in shows in New York City, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Washington State.
I am a painter but I’ve been interested to work in other media in a way that relates to my paintings. In June, 2017, during a residency in L.A. at Otis College of Art and Design, I had the opportunity to utilize Otis’s “labs”—model making, digital, ceramics, printmaking, and so on. Interested in the built environment and nature’s presence in it, I found my subject in a mature tree growing in a median strip of a busy boulevard near LAX. The tree’s canopy spreads across both lanes of traffic and its understory has been pruned horizontally so that buses and trucks can pass underneath. I made ink drawings and paintings of the tree. I decided to deconstruct the shape-based composition of one of the paintings in various ways. I converted a line drawing to a vector graphic and had the sixteen pieces of my composition cut out of MDF. I reconstructed the pieces into a 3D wall mounted sculpture and made a painting of the sculpture. I made a series of polystyrene relief molds of ten of the shapes arranged in varying compositions. In the printmaking lab I made a series of blind debossed prints from my MDF pieces. In the ceramics lab, I rolled out paper clay like piecrust, cut out the sixteen shapes with a kitchen knife, and fired them in the kiln.

A child of the sixties, Marks fell into graphic design and established her own studio specializing in book design. In 2001, she left that behind to study painting at Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts (BFA 2005), and Brooklyn College CUNY (MFA 2008). Marks has been awarded artist residencies in Italy, France, and across the U.S, and has shown her work throughout the Northeast.
These works, part of a transitional series called “This World,” form a bridge between an earlier body of work, “Woods,” and a series of current oil paintings. They are representative of a typical experimental phase in my process of art making. “Woods” is a series of monochromatic tree and landscape drawings that are filled with light and shadow and have mysterious qualities. To make the drawings I used a brush with powdered graphite, liquified with rubbing alcohol. This allowed me to make expressive marks that had a gestural vitality and movement that I wanted to carry over into painting. Before I could tackle more complex large scale paintings, I explored different ways of incorporating color into the imagery. The pieces on display in “Mutual Aid” are from that group which I later titled “This World”. I played with spray paint, airbrush and water colors to see what kinds of atmospheric qualities I could create relative to the graphite marks. I also tried out different combinations of mediums and alternative ways of applying color. Working with a variety of mediums, on the same subject matter, allowed me to focus on individual elements in order to build a broader vocabulary that I can use in the oil paintings I am now creating.

Claire McConaughy is a painter who lives and works in New York. She earned her MFA in painting from Columbia University and her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University. She has exhibited in galleries including “Selections 45” at The Drawing Center, “Variations in Paint” at The Painting Center, “Persona” at the Therese A. Maloney Art Gallery, College of St. Elizabeth, “Reductive”, at Jeffrey Leder Gallery, “Portraits” at Storefront Gallery and others.

Tree Roses, 2018, Graphite and spray paint on paper, 35.5 x 42 inches

(Left) Rosa Roses, 2018, Graphite and spray paint on paper, 17 x 14 inches
In my studio practice I usually create works that become series, until there seems to be a natural progression for me to do something different. That “something different” may be related to form, subject matter, or conceptual content. Upon beginning a new series, I often think that I am working on something completely different than anything I have worked on previously. At some time later (weeks, months, years) the evolution of, and connections between my works emerge. While looking at jpeg images for possible inclusion in this exhibition, I accidentally placed the selected three pieces in the same portfolio file. Although they vary in media and were created at different times, you can easily see visual continuity and how one work relates to another. Reflecting on the artist’s fascination with the natural world and how we perceive it, Rachins’ works tease the eye with colors and shapes that shift and slip, causing viewers to question their own perceptions, while suggesting a world in flux. Her works flaunt art-historical tradition, playing with the boundaries between painting, drawing and collage, using materials unexpectedly, and infusing the work with her own sense of alchemy.

GERRI RACHINS is an American artist, living and working in Boston, Massachusetts. She received a Master of Fine Arts from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA, and also studied at The New York Studio School. Her artworks are part of private and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Danforth Art Museum, Fidelity Investments, and others throughout the United States.
My explorations in printmaking, specifically photopolymer and copper etching, inform and influence my work in paint. This works the other way around also, as frequently my painting informs the way I build up a print. I most always work on multiple pieces at once and sometimes stop in the middle of a painting to try an experiment in print before I move on. My interest is the intrusion of each media into the other. The change in a mark or texture is a type of expression that is closer to a subconscious feeling that I am aiming at in my work. The pieces presented in Mutual Aid, are examples of works where experiments in media helped formulate the way I wanted to communicate in the paintings. Conceptually I wanted the paintings to remain figurative in the most abstract way I could. The space between abstraction and reality allows for a kind of visual conversation that I find allows the paint to come alive. The print was also like a puzzle in that the abstraction of the figure through collaging helped emphasize a feeling I was after in the work, brought out by the newly formed colors brought out by the chine collé. I let the role of play and chance lead a work and the flow between multiple media help me get there.

Originally from Boston Massachusetts, Randi Reiss-McCormack is an artist focused primarily on painting, printmaking and media-media works. After completing her undergraduate degree in painting and printmaking at Cornell University, she spent a year in Paris working in various printmaking and painting studios until relocating to Baltimore to earn a graduate degree at The Maryland Institute, College of Art.
Memory, photographs, sketches help me decide which elements in a scene to emphasize, isolate or abstract as I begin my initial orientation around the blank canvas. Once the journey begins I give up half my conscious mind to the process before me.

Robert Solomon, artist and designer, was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA, where he lives and works. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Pennsylvania State University, and has completed graduate work in Architecture at University of California Los Angeles, as well as graduate work in Sculpture at Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia. He has exhibited widely across the United States, particularly along the east coast, and has had several one-person shows, most notable and recent of which were at bahdeebahdu in Philadelphia, PA, Lawrence Gallery of Rosemont College in Bryn Mawr, PA, and the Grand Opera House in Wilmington, DE. Solomon’s work has been included in several private collections and public institutions, and he has participated in several residencies such as the Directors Workshop Residency in Spoleto, Italy, the Vermont Studio Center, and the BAU Institute in Otranto, Italy. He has been an active member of several artist organizations in Philadelphia, including InLiquid, Da Vinci Art Alliance, Center for Emerging Visual Artists, and SAGE Projects, and was an original member of Nexus Gallery, as well as the founder and artistic director of Advocates for Public Art, LLC.
The three works I selected for this exhibit were completed shortly after a still life workshop I attended in winter 2017. Though I consider myself an abstract painter, I thought that a week of carefully observing, drawing and painting from a set-up of inanimate objects would be a welcome change of pace. The workshop helped to re-invigorate my studio practice and I found that I was gravitating towards painting more real than imagined spaces afterwards. I frequently choose to limit my palette when I am working out a problem. These three pieces were done at roughly the same time; I enjoy switching mediums and often my small drawings come after larger paintings.

Patricia Spergel lives and works in Westchester County and has been included in numerous group exhibitions nationally and had a solo show at the Tjadon Gallery at Cornell University in 2004. Her paintings are included in the collections of Citigroup, Sanford Bernstein and Bank of America and she has been published in New American Paintings and featured on the cover and in an eight page spread of The Southern Review, a literary magazine published by Louisiana State University. Spergel received her BFA from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY and her MFA from School of Visual Arts in NYC.

Freeze Frame, 2017, Acrylic on wood panel, 8 x 10 inches

(Left) Precarious, 2017, Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches