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**MP3 II:
Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis
July 17 – September 13, 2009**

Chicago — The Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago is proud to present *MP3II*, an exhibition and subsequent publication of work by three contemporary photographers (**Curtis Mann, Stacia Yeapanis, and John Opera**) from the museum's rotating collection, the Midwest Photographers Project.

MP3II is the second in a series of exhibitions and publications from the Midwest Photographers Project. The first volume of *MP3* (and exhibition), originally published in 2006 by Aperture, featured the work of artists Kelli Connell, Justin Newhall, and Brian Ulrich.

The original imagery in **Curtis Mann's** *Modifications* series is copied from a variety of sources: online auctions, photo-sharing websites and estate sales, in a sense creating a fictional archive through the artist's selection and collection of other people's photographs. Mann's appropriated archive is acquired in digital form. He first makes very minor adjustments with Photoshop and then orders several conventional chemical color prints from an online printing service used by hobbyists. He then paints varnish as a resist over areas of the print he decides to preserve, using standard household bleach to remove the rest. The varnish remains on the final print. He then hand-works the isolated objects and people, taking the camera based image into the manual realm of painting and drawing. He adds details such as lines that suggest a stage or platform or forms that seem to replicate comic strip thought balloons. Mann is interested in how the slightest adjustment in either the production or final use of the photograph can produce an entirely new set of implications.

MoCP

Museum of
Contemporary Photography

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
600 South Michigan Avenue Chicago IL 60605
312-663-5554 Fax 312-344-8067
mocp@colum.edu www.mocp.org

RELATED EVENTS:

Exhibiting artists talk
Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapanis

July 23, 5:30 pm @ MoCP

Closing reception

September 10, 5 – 7pm @ MoCP

Artists Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapanis will be present to sign copies of their newly-released trio of books, *MP3*, Volume II.



John Opera makes photographs in the spirit of transcendentalism: the idea of emphasizing the importance of the individual soul and promoting a form of self-knowledge that can be acquired by experiencing divinity directly through nature. His lush landscapes and entrancing abstractions are made to co-exist, but also to affect one another in a push and pull of form and content, surface and depth, specificity and elusiveness. His landscapes can deliver powerful depictions of nature. Yet for all their picturesque quality, they are not always spectacular. Opera's landscapes are not intended to communicate the grandeur of nature in the tradition of the European Romantic painters. Rather, like the American Transcendentalists, Opera goes to nature for inspiration, exploring the power of the mundane to elicit a feeling of interiority and an awareness of the subjectivity of experience. He then sets up a dialectic between representational and abstract work as a vehicle for expressing these broader concerns, as a way to probe the powerful links between emotion, intellect, and perception.



Stacia Yeapanis uses pop culture as a platform for navigating a world of ubiquitous media. In an effort to destabilize cultural assumptions about using media as a vehicle to find meaning, she makes art that uses a language familiar to a generation captivated by pop culture and cunningly exploits her own search mechanisms – television and computer games – to create works involving photography, video, performance, computer simulation, and the Internet. This publication addresses two projects in her large body of work: *My Life as a Sim*, 2005–2007 and *Everybody Hurts*, 2004-2008. In the first series, Yeapanis explores identity through simulated life in the computer game *The Sims 2*. Within the game, the artist explores the daily life of her avatar much as she would document her own life with a camera. Using an in-game camera function, she moves throughout the three-dimensional space to take snapshots that emphasize the character's mundane life. The second series of her work presents a collection of embroidered television screen captures of well-known characters in emotionally charged fictional moments. She then elaborately embroiders a reproduction, freezing the fleeting moment of television anguish. In both *Everybody Hurts* and *My Life as a Sim*, Yeapanis pushes the boundaries that divide art from craft and public from private.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Curtis Mann holds an MFA in Photography from Columbia College Chicago and a BS from the University of Dayton. A 2008 solo show of Mann's work was exhibited at Kusseneers Gallery in Antwerp, Belgium, along with exhibitions at the Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; the Silverstein Gallery, New York; Lisa Boyle Gallery, Los Angeles; and Jen Bekman Gallery, New York. Also in

2008, his work was exhibited at the New York Photo Festival in an exhibition curated by Lesley Martin of Aperture. Mann is currently represented by Kusseneers Gallery in Antwerp, Belgium.

John Opera received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in Photography from the State University of New York at New Paltz. His work has been shown at Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago; the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York; and Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago. Opera received the Weinstein Fellowship from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005 and a Special Opportunity Stipend from the New York State Foundation for the Arts.

Stacia Yeapanis was born in Newport News, Virginia. She holds an MFA in studio art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2006) and a BA in German from Oberlin College, Ohio (1999). In addition to her solo show *Addict* at Gallery X, Chicago, Yeapanis' work has also been exhibited in *Spun From the Web*, Gallery 2, Chicago; *More Real Than Real*, LG Space, Chicago; and the 4th Annual Pingyao International Photo Exhibition, Pingyao, China.

ABOUT THE MIDWEST PHOTOGRAPHERS PROJECT

Founded in 1982 by the MoCP, the Midwest Photographers Project is a rotating archive of contemporary photography established to promote both prominent and emerging photographers from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The MP3 series aims to give greater recognition to photographers on the verge of national and international prominence.

ABOUT MOCP

The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), a resident organization of Columbia College Chicago, is the only museum in the Midwest with an exclusive commitment to the medium of photography. By presenting projects and exhibitions that embrace a wide range of contemporary aesthetics and technologies, the Museum strives to communicate the value and significance of photographic images as expressions of human thought, imagination, and creativity.

MoCP SPONSORS

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of the MoCP are sponsored in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services; After School Matters; the Lannan Foundation; the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Lange Burk Fund; the Palmer Foundation; U.S. Bank; The Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; American Airlines, the official airline of the MoCP; and our members.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Natasha Egan, the museum's Associate Director and Curator has organized dozens of international and national exhibitions and has contributed essays to numerous publications and magazines. In addition, she teaches in the photography department at Columbia College Chicago and juries local and national exhibitions.

Karen Irvine is the curator of the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago. She has organized numerous exhibitions, and is a part-time instructor of photography at Columbia College Chicago. She received her MFA in photography from FAMU, Prague

and her MA in art history from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Rod Slemmons is the Director of the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago. From 1982 to 1996 he was the Curator of Prints and Photographs at the Seattle Art Museum, and from 1996 to 2002 he taught Photography, the History of Photography, and Graduate Museum Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He was the National Chair of the Society for Photographic Education from 1990 to 1994. He has organized numerous exhibitions, and his essays and reviews have appeared in dozens of publications including *Afterimage*, *Black Flash*, *image*, and *Reflex*.

PRESS CONTACTS

Audrey Michelle Mast
Web/PR/Marketing Administrator
Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605
P: 773.459.5777
F: 312.344.8067
audrey.m.mast@gmail.com

Jeffrey Arnett
Manager of Development and Marketing
Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605
P: 312.344.7779
F: 312.344-8067
jarnett@colum.edu

IMAGES

Curtis Mann, *thought collective (somewhere, Israel)*, 2007, courtesy of the artist
John Opera, *Stump in Black Pond*, 2006, courtesy of the artist
Stacia Yeapanis, *Buffy Summers #2*, 2007, courtesy of the artist