

PRESS COVERAGE



MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis

July 17 — September 13, 2009

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EXPOSURES

an Aperture blog



Midwest Photographers Project Volume II Now on View at MoCP



Join the three *MP3 II* artists for a talk about their work on view at the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

For his series *Modifications*, [Curtis Mann](#) collects found photographs depicting conflicts in the Middle East and Northern Africa. He then bleaches and scratches the surface of the images, removing information to create new meanings from his source material. [John Opera](#) investigates the uncanny in nature. Moving between representation and geometric abstraction, his works reference historical notions of the sublime and landscape as well as modernist photography. [Stacia Yeapanis](#)'s interest in modes of entertainment and hobbies has led her to explore the simulated-reality computer game *The Sims 2*, and the craft of embroidery, as she stitches television screen captures of characters in states of distress.

***MP3 II*: Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapanis**
[Artist's Talk: Thursday, July 23, 5:30 pm](#)

Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S. Michigan Avenue

Chicago, Illinois
(312) 663-5554

Exhibition on view:
Friday, July 17–Sunday, September 13, 2009

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Tags: [Curtis Mann](#), [john opera](#), [MoCP](#), [MP3](#), [stacia yeapanis](#)

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ARTFORUM

"MP3, II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapnis"

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY AT COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

600 South Michigan Avenue

July 17–September 13

Chosen for their innovative handling of photo-based media, Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapnis—three emerging artists selected for volume 2 of the Midwestern Photographers Publication Project series—are featured in solo shows at the Museum of Contemporary Photography. The "MP3" exhibitions are an extension of the project, which promotes established and emerging artists and aims "to give greater recognition to photographers on the verge of national and international prominence." Remarkably divergent in their technical and conceptual strategies, the pictures featured here allow the museum to smartly evade the politics of regionalism and career categories that justify and drive these types of award shows while showcasing three germane bodies of work.

John Opera's images appear brazen on first glance, shifting presumptuously between hard-edge abstraction and romantic representation. Yet his juxtapositions of enraptured pictures of nature with geometric design place the artist securely in step with trends in contemporary photography. Simple symmetrical compositions such as *Purple Diamond*, 2007, face off with *Baraboo*, 2007, a landscape that depicts a small figure amid an imposing slope of craggy rocks. While Opera's work brings to mind that of Karl Haendel, Garth Weiser, and Anthony Pearson, it remains out of reach of the perceptually curious practices of James Welling and Barbara Kasten, whose decades of abstract and representational pictures avoid analytic language games and aesthetic riddles. Stacia Yeapanis's embroidered images of television screens with images of Fox Mulder or Tony Soprano also extol the pleasures of paradoxes, but in her works it is the tension between identity construction, media fluency, and the politics of craft that is at play.

The jarring pictures illustrating Curtis Mann's output are remarkable in their similarity to watercolor painting. Wiping away large areas of information from photographic images gathered from the Internet, Mann distorts our ability to read his work and to understand the images' original purpose. For example, *Man Pointing (Olive Harvest, Palestine)*, 2007, is a poetically charged piece that evokes not a seasonal routine but an emotionally pitched image of distress. The indeterminate white area that Mann introduces into found photographs offers undetectable threats and existential voids that make them more like watercolors of Samuel Beckett plays than products of photojournalism.

— Michelle Grabner



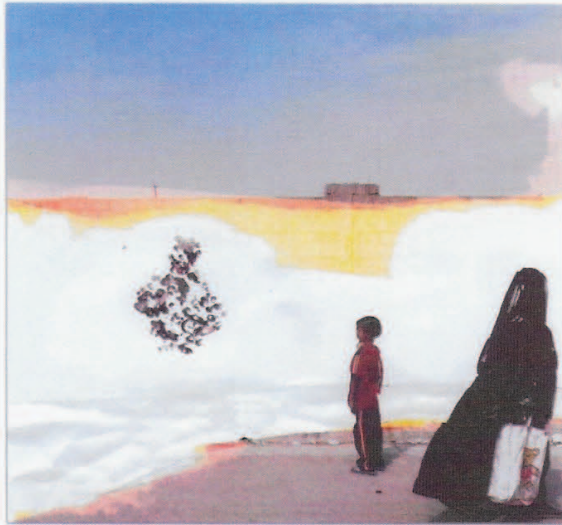
Curtis Mann, *Abstract #6, soldier (Baghdad)*, 2007, acrylic varnish on chromogenic development print, 18 x 19".

MP3 II
by Abraham Ritchie

MP3 II
Museum of Contemporary Photography
Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan
Ave., Chicago, IL 60605
July 17, 2009 - September 13, 2009



The three approaches to photography taken by the three photographers currently on view in the Museum of Contemporary Photography's (MoCP) exhibition "MP3II" demonstrate the breadth of current practice, sometimes even spilling over into realms one may not consider wholly photographic. On view is work made in the tradition of American Transcendentalism (John Opera); work that addresses the conflicts in the Middle East (Curtis Mann); work that mines pop culture hits like *Dawson's Creek* for the stuff of real life (Stacia Yeapanis). The result, *MP3II*, resembles our daily lives as we navigate our political, spiritual and personal worlds for meaning.



Curtis Mann. *Abstract #6, soldier (Baghdad)*. 2007. Courtesy of the artist and MoCP.

Entering the museum, you will be in the gallery devoted to Curtis Mann's *Modifications* series, and you will immediately notice that the images have indeed been modified. According to the exhibition notes, Mann gets his images from "online auctions, photo-sharing sites and estate sales. These are already once or twice removed from their original authorship, form, context . . . He specifically looks for records of violence in places like Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Kenya." Mann then manipulates these images slightly with Adobe Photoshop, orders conventional chemical color prints via an online service, uses varnish to preserve specific areas of the print, and bleach to remove other areas. The result is an image with preserved recognizable areas divided by bands of white-hot orange and red. These divisions represent borders, religious sects and violence.

Mann's *pièce de résistance*, *After the dust when you come over the hill (Beirut)*, 2009, is a grid of eighty-four images on the wall opposite the entrance, presented to best effect here without frames. Each image is a vignette of possible stories and meanings, but the overall presentation always rushes back due to the composition and especially the inclusion of ground running the length of the bottom of the piece (more info on [Curtis Mann's website](#).) One can pick out a body or a piece of a car contained in this fiery red/orange/white composition. Gradually, it seemed to me as though I was looking at a massive explosion frozen in time. The images are disturbing; they remind us of the violence faced every day in these areas of the world, which many of us only know through the media, if at all.



John Opera. *Rotating Ice Disk*. 2005. Courtesy of the artist and MoCP.

The work of John Opera is also on the first floor of the museum and takes a more straightforward and realistic approach to photography. Writing last year on Opera's work for ArtSlant: Chicago, Erik Wenzel described it in terms of "mystery and danger," Opera's depiction of nature is "where the wooded areas get thick, where civilization stops and the wild begins." The works included at the MoCP continue to explore this feeling of mystery that Erik described. A smart curatorial decision to forego labelling each work, and instead listing multiple works at the corners of the gallery, cuts down the visual clutter and further increases the aura generated by these pieces all together.

Opera's *Rotating Ice Disk* (2005) depicts an almost perfect circle of spinning ice, caught in a frozen creek. This attention to natural geometry is echoed in other pieces in the exhibition like *Interior Abstraction*, 2007, an image of overlapping squares that at once evokes the unlikely combination of a Josef Albers' *Homage to the Square* series and the feeling of entering a cave. Opera's images do not yield their secrets readily and I found them to be the most intriguing in the exhibition.



Stacia Yeapanis. *Spike*. 2007. Courtesy of the artist and MoCP.

Upstairs on the second level is the work of Stacia Yeapanis from her *Everybody Hurts* series. These works are embroidered screen shots from popular, prime-time, television shows. Among the ones I could identify were *The Sopranos*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The X-Files*, *Dawson's Creek* and *Battlestar Galactica*. Yeapanis chooses to depict moments in these shows where the character has an extreme emotional response; the result sometimes highlights the cringe-inducing acting, as James Van Der Beek demonstrates in Yeapanis' *Dawson Leary* (2005). While that caused me an initial eye-roll, on further thought I found this to be part of the point: something obviously cheesy can have significance and meaning to us no matter what. The hand embroidery of these TV moments speaks to the fanatical love of fans, their desire that these shows never end, that there's something to hold on to, possess, whether it's the entire series in a boxed set or a personal tribute like Yeapanis creates. In this way, Yeapanis reinvigorates the Pop Art tradition by showing that these pop cultural moments have specific personal values to the viewers, though we bring those ourselves.

--Abraham Ritchie

(top inset image: Curtis Mann. *thought, collective (somewhere, Israel)*. Courtesy of the artist)

Posted by Abraham Ritchie on 8/31

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Galleries

Television, nature and the news, mediated

Lori Waxman

Special to the Tribune

August 21, 2009

We live in a heavily mediated world. Twitter keeps a running commentary on everything, e-mail and Skype encompass communication, video games replace physical play and nature herself is known through TV series like the BBC's "Planet Earth" rather than direct observation. Most of this feels obligatory and completely normal by now, not a choice but simply the way we live today, watching while the world is delivered to our screens via pixels.

But what if these mediated levels of reality were themselves subject to mediation? What if, instead of receiving them passively, we could make or re-make them ourselves?

"MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis" at the Museum of Contemporary Photography presents three very different answers to these questions. Art has always been about making and remaking the world through individual human perspectives, and the three emerging local photographers in this exhibition bring that role up to date.

Mann takes as his subject matter and base material one of the most ubiquitous documents of our time: the digital photograph. Culled from online auctions, photo-sharing Web sites and estate sales, these images are nevertheless not the stuff of family photo albums, but rather global news: pictures from a refugee camp in Kenya, a checkpoint in Palestine, an unnamed location in Israel, another in Beirut. The sites, identified in the works' titles, conjure breaking stories of humanitarian crises, rocket launches, security walls and endless ethnic conflict.

Mann works via a subtractive process, removing information from found images until they metamorphose into alternate landscapes replete with new tragedies and strange allegories. He does



this in a three-step process, by first applying varnish to the parts of photographs he wishes to retain, then bleaching out the rest and finally adding a few faint pencil lines. What results are pictures of surreal color fields, strangely isolated people and utter violence -- burned-out skies, mutilated bodies, blasted buildings. Even the photo paper sustains injury, scraped to the point of rawness. The effect, when it works, is moving and paradoxical, as if photos of these places can't escape their combination of beauty and suffering, even when half their visual data is obliterated. When it occasionally doesn't, bad digital paintings result.

Yeapanis tackles far more plebeian stuff in her ongoing series "Everybody Hurts," in which popular television dramas provide the source material for meticulously embroidered screen shots of characters like Fox Mulder and Buffy Summers. Caught in dramatic close-ups, their familiar faces radiate seriousness, fear and concern. Meanwhile, the translation from pixel grid to cross-stitch sampler goes seamlessly, down to the stitched-on sayings. From David Fisher, the HBO undertaker: "Why is this happening to me?" From Buffy, the teenage vampire slayer: "They say if you think you're crazy, you're probably not, but I just don't know anymore." The whole provides a kind of home sweet home for today, testifying to a new kind of common ground, as well as to the comfort of vicarious living, even at the level of painful experiences.

Vicarious living occurs at another level entirely in the computer game "The Sims 2," which forms the basis for Yeapanis' multipart project "My Life as a Sim." But while the possibilities for digital life seem to promise an endless array of fantasies, the extraordinary finds little place in the segment "Life Isn't Bliss: Life Is Just This. It's Living." Yeapanis' character cleans the toilet, sits on the couch, eats a sandwich, runs on a treadmill and has the occasional breakdown. Alas, Yeapanis' life as a Sim proves just as boring and familiar as most. Monumentalizing it as art seems more collusion than critique, a succumbing to ordinary life as just that, ordinary.

Except it isn't -- or at least, it needn't be. Opera proves as much in his nature photographs of swarming birds, a small waterfall, a frozen stream, an expanse of boulders, a broken tree limb and various stumps. More or less unremarkable, none of these organic situations seems to warrant photographic documentation -- and yet each of them stands up to it, and how.

Some do so through sublime effect: The birds, countless white specks against a black sky, humble the viewer in their twinkling expanse. A few are wondrous: The stumps rise phoenix-like from snowy forest and hazy pond. Others are comic: An unattractively open-mouthed young man mars a sea of boulders, but also gives them a sense of scale. Still others are just plain strange: A golden fire burns from within a stereotypically picturesque waterfall.

Nowhere, however, is nature represented nonchalantly or plainly. Through sensitive and imaginative observation, Opera finds the extraordinary in the ordinary -- or rather, he locates the potential for it to emerge through photographic representation. The birds are printed as a negative, the stump solarized, the fire a rare geological phenomenon framed by a mundane Kodak moment.

Human perception -- active, curious, bodily -- is everywhere implicated, and the world is the better for it.

"MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis"

When: Through Sept. 13

Where: Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.

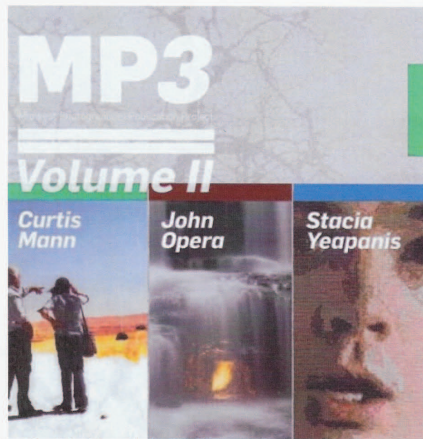
Price: Free; 312-663-5554 or moep.org

Conscientious

Jörg Colberg's weblog about fine-art photography (and more)

Review: MP3 Volume II

By Joerg Colberg on April 17, 2009 8:46 AM



Produced in collaboration with Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Photography comes the second installment of the Midwest Photographers Publication Project (MP3), [MP3 Volume II](#). [MP3 Volume II](#) showcases the work of three young photographers, [Curtis Mann](#), [John Opera](#) and [Stacia Yeapanis](#). Just like its first version, [MP3 Volume II](#) is a set of three separate books in a slipcase, so it seems best to discuss the individual books separately.

Curtis Mann might be the most innovative photographer of his generation, and his book alone makes [MP3 Volume II](#) a must-buy. Regular readers of this blog will be familiar with his work from [my conversation with him](#). Curtis modifies photographs by using bleach and other physical means, which results in pretty astonishing, radical and brilliant transformations. With his willingness to push photographic boundaries, I would squarely

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place his work in the realm of innovators like Thomas Ruff, and seeing his work in print makes it absolutely clear why.

I wonder what we will think of "Second Life" art in twenty years. Of course, the graphics will strike us the same way ' does today: As somewhat cute, maybe a bit quaint. But what will we think of efforts to use "Second Life" as art? Well... Anyway. Fortunately, Stacia Yeapani's book contains more than her "Second Life" work, namely photography (taken from TV) re-created as cross-stitched images. In a sense, this work is almost the exact opposite of Curtis Mann's: Instead of producing photographic art by means of physical destruction it's the production of photographic art by means of a literal physical creation from scratch. Truly wonderful.

Lastly, there is John Opera's work, which combines landscapes with abstractions. For me, in the context of [MP3 Volume II](#), this body of work lies somewhere in between the extremes of Curtis Mann's art and Stacia Yeapani's "Second Life" work: It doesn't excite me as much, either way. With the two other reference points it is maybe most conventional, and it doesn't question what photographic images do and what they are in the same way the two other artists' work does. It's almost getting a little bit lost.

With its focus on more experimental work, [MP3 Volume II](#) is bolder than its first version. This boldness comes at the price of presenting work that will provoke reactions like those seen above. But via its exposure of the inventiveness of three young artists, [MP3 Volume II](#) successfully expands the discourse of contemporary photography. Given its price, it's a total steal, and you really want Curtis Mann's work in book form, trust me.

PS: As a format, [MP3 Volume II](#) will hopefully at some stage find imitators. There is a lot of photography that deserves to be seen in (affordable) book form, especially from younger artists (but also from some older hands), and creating sets of smaller books seems like a perfect way to do it.

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Unique approaches to contemporary photography: Museum of Contemporary Photography

July 15, 1:44 PM · Jessica Kronika - Chicago Fine Arts Examiner

The current exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, MP3: Volume 2: Midwest Photographers Publication Project highlights a selection of cutting edge photographers. Whether working with standard photographic techniques and unusual subject matter, reinventing the process through use of chemical and physical editing, or translating photographic captures to the craft of embroidery, these three artists push the limits of the media into new realms. The exhibit is up from July 17th to September 13th, 2009. Museum hours are Monday through Friday 10:00am to 5:00pm. The Museum is located on the first floor of the Alexandroff Campus Building at 600 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

The subject matter of Curtis Mann's series Modifications, includes records of violence in currently war torn countries such as Kenya, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, and Lebanon. His resource material comes from photos found. His search includes estate sales, online auctions and photo-sharing websites. With these found photos, and a subtractive process, Mann creates original color prints whose surfaces bear the sense of loss. In Fragment 4, the limbs of a pair of youths lean over rocks, as the selected portion of this resource image lies as a rising wet drip across a plane touched with the white, orange and yellow of chemical and physical process. Mann received his MFA from Columbia College, Chicago, in 2008. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1979. A 2007 Santa Fe Award nominee, Curtis Mann participates in contemporary photographic excellence with this body of work.

For information about the Santa Fe Photography Prize: www.visitcenter.org/programs.cfm

The lyrical and abstract forms John Opera employs in his abstract landscapes include works of ambiguity, such as the work Untitled, 2009 on loan from the collection of Victor Shanchuk, Jr. This work suggests the silhouette of cityscape or ruins, while revealing itself as an ice flow and running water, lit by ambient and flash produced light. Opera received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005. He was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1975. Among the photographs featured at Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago in January and February of 2008, were two of Opera's Black Sun series. Working in digital photography and producing archival pigment prints, such as Black Sun II, 2006, which appears in the current exhibit, Opera pushes the limitations of photography.

For installation views of John Opera's work, displayed with fellow photographer Amir Zaki, at Shane Campbell Gallery:

www.shanecampbellgallery.com/main/index.php

Inspired by pop culture and the universal struggle of humanity in the realms of identity and emotion, Stacia Yeapanis starts with photography. Her mixed media process translates television screen captures from popular sitcoms, through her series of embroidered portraits Everybody Hurts. Video, performance and computer simulation are utilized in her My Life as a Sim, a video-computer simulation which explores identity through a triptych screen view. She was born in Newport News, Virginia, in 1977 and earned her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. Examples of Yeapanis work are in the collection of MoCP. Samples of the Everybody Hurts series and Comercial Free: The Museum of TV on DVD are available for members to view on the Rhizome Artbase online archive.

To view images or register for membership at the Rhizome Artbase:

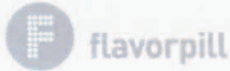
www.rhizome.org/art/by_artist-list.php

MP3: Volume II, the Midwest Photographers Publication Project Co-published with the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago features the work of Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapanis. Including essays by Rod Slemmons, director, MoCP; Natasha Egan, associate director and curator, MoCP; and Karen Irvine, curator, MoCP the book is available at the following websites.

www.aperture.org/books/books-new/mp3-vol2.html



Buffy Summers detail, Stacia Yeapanis



Art: Photography

MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, and Stacia Yeapanis

When

July 17 – Sep 13

Mondays–Wednesdays (10am–5pm)

Thursdays (10am–8pm)

Fridays–Saturdays (10am–5pm)

Sundays (noon–5pm)

Where

Museum of Contemporary Photography (600 S Michigan Ave, 312.663.5554)

Price

FREE

Details

http://www.mocp.org/exhibitions/2009/07/mp3_ii_curtis_m.php



MP3 II presents works by three Midwest-based photographers, their divergent approaches united by the transformative nature of their pieces. Curtis Mann bleaches out elements of existing photos, then adds his own drawn forms. His works go beyond mere appropriation to become sweeping recontextualizations, while also playing with the selective nature of viewing itself. Stacia Yeapanis' three-channel video *My Life as a Sim* gathers isolated moments from the universe of her video-game avatar, exploring identity through a lens of meta-mundanity. Her series *Everybody Hurts*, also on view, comprises embroidered reproductions of TV screen grabs, siphoning genuine emotion from prime-time genre fare like *The X-Files* and *Dawson's Creek*. Finally, John Opera juxtaposes landscape naturalism with recondite abstraction, taking cues from the intellectually vigorous spirituality of American Transcendentalism.

– Stephen Gossett



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AUG 31

Review: Brian Ulrich/Museum of Contemporary Photography

Photography, South Loop

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RECOMMENDED

Among the works of the six emerging photographers here, representing the Museum's Midwest Photographers Project, Brian Ulrich's color images of abandoned shopping emporia attract the eye immediately by virtue of the stark impenetrability of their subjects. Casualties of the economic recession, Ulrich's stores, which were intended by their owners to be friendly and accessible, now appear to be fortresses, wastelands, or—on the inside—inert dioramas. To the defenders of capitalism who are wont to praise its proclivities for "creative destruction," Ulrich's exquisitely composed deadpan yet emotionally charged studies respond with a reminder of the system's excess, waste and spoliation. Having advanced in this series, "Dark, Stores, Ghost Boxes and Dead Malls," to a higher level of aesthetic sensitivity, Ulrich unites cultural criticism and redemption of the ruins in "Dixie Square Mall," where the gutted shopping center at dusk takes on a post-apocalyptic guise. (Michael Weinstein)

Through September 13 at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.



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MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis @ MOCP

MP3 II: Curtis Mann, John Opera, Stacia Yeapanis
[Museum of Contemporary Photography](#)
600 S. MICHIGAN AVE : CHICAGO, IL 60605
July 17 - September 13, 2009

The MoCP 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.

In the Modifications series, 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, only some, or even none, of which may have the slightest connection to the facts of the world in front of the camera. In a sense he is replicating the judgmental action of our eyes as we initially scan a photograph, or an archive, for

familiar evidence, grasping what we prefer to see and allowing the unfamiliar and unknown to disappear.

When asked how he would like people to perceive this work, Mann states, "I want them to move through the pieces slowly, maybe on different levels. Minimalism from a distance, some odd color on closer inspection, different textures—'what's going on here, painting or photography?'" Then they see the more subtle handmade marks, wrinkles, relief of the varnish resist, then details of the original appropriated photograph, then start over with, 'What is going on here?'' in a larger sense."

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.

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. In an effort to relish this pained moment, Yeapanis digitally captures TV characters experiencing sadness, guilt, fear, or instances in which their worldviews are shattered. 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.

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, I.G. Space, Chicago; and the 4th Annual Pingyao International Photo Exhibition, Pingyao, China.

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.

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.

