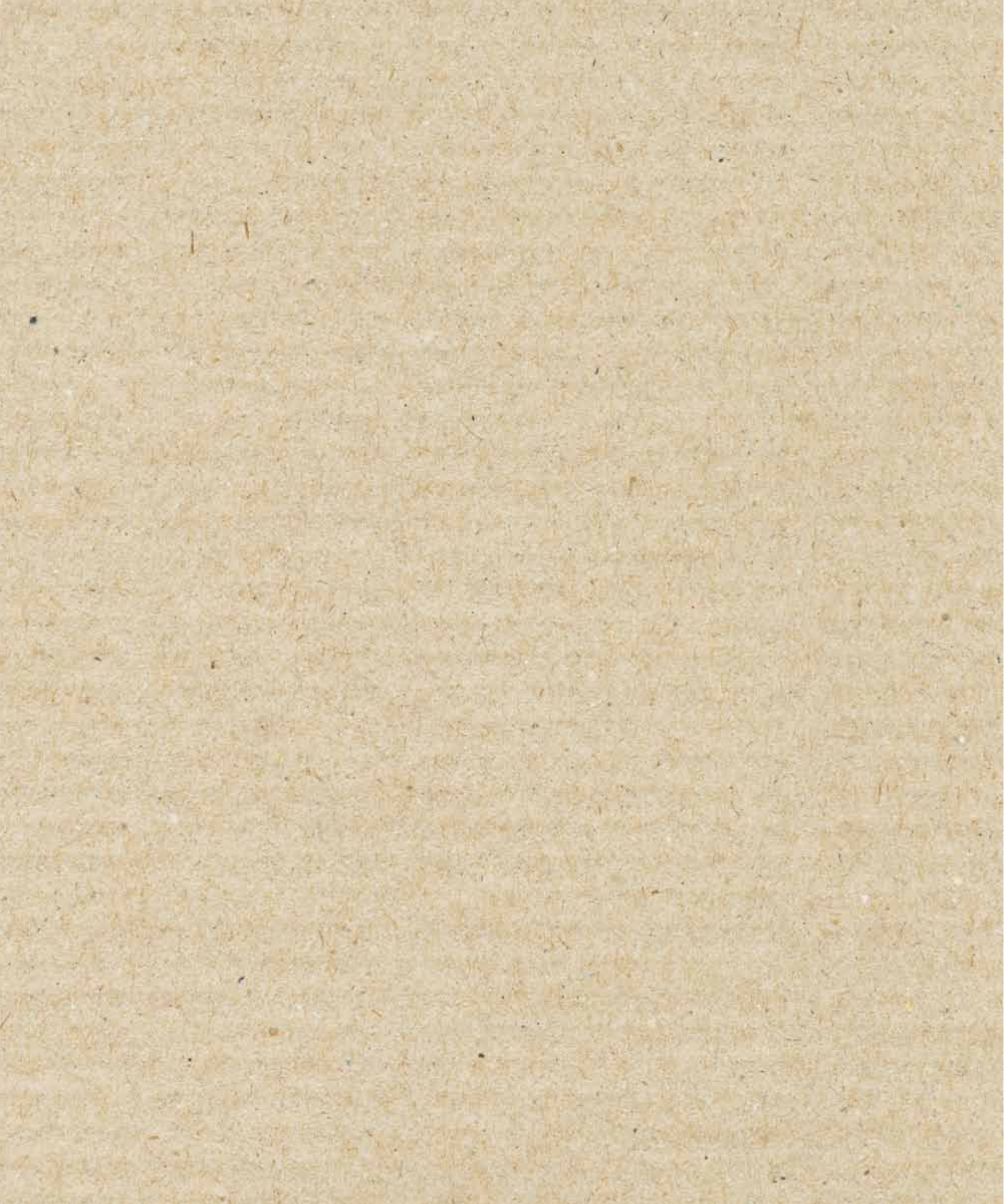




BORDERS AND FRONTIERS:

COLLAGE AND APPROPRIATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY IMAGE



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Jonathan Allen

Michael Anderson

Matthew Cusick

Chambliss Giobbi

David LaChapelle

George Rahme

Holli Schorno

Maritta Tapanainen

Mark Wagner

Curated by **Dick Goody**

Oakland University Art Gallery



BORDERS AND FRONTIERS:

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The world is filled to suffocating. Man has placed his token on every stone. Every word, every image, is leased and mortgaged. We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture ... (1980)

— Sherrie Levine (“Five Comments,” 1980-85; appropriated from phrases found in Roland Barthes’ *Death of the Author*).

It is paradoxical in the context of the lushness of this exhibition that the above statement, thirty years on, might appear celebratory rather than pejorative. Artists appropriate materials of their time and place, and rapidly the destiny of these “tissues of quotations” becomes the reflective and reflexive visual record of their given epoch. *Borders and Frontiers* presents a collection of artists that demonstrates both a specialized appetite for the digital and contemporary, yet, at the same time, a blend of quotations from an image bank of the past, and in doing so they build a bridge between historicism, the contextual present, and a conjectural tomorrow.

Using the notion of “borders and frontiers” as a metaphor for the democratization of imagery and the cutting-and-pasting of reconfigured pictorial forms, this exhibition explores the cultural significance of the mass-produced and the repurposed image. Contemporary artists have a seemingly infinite library of sources and stylizations to select from, appropriate and pastiche in their work. These rich sources of abundant

mass-printed forms, embedded with all their convoluted visual traces, constitute the watermarks, logos and loaded signifiers of the contemporary age. This is the raw material from which these artists convey the density and variety of global visual culture. Selection, archive, conceptualization and pictorialization are the overarching systems by which they reconstitute visual fragments into whole objects, creating newly aligned and delineated compositions. Confronting the agglutination of media, both culturally (from the global image bank or from their own photographs) and temporally (from historical image sources), these artists create new visual platforms as layered and sophisticated as in any traditional two-dimensional practice.

Collage — cutting and pasting, an art paradigm not truly established until the beginning of the twentieth century — whether used in painting, photography or sculpture, has been re-energized and re-invented with the coming-of-age of digital technologies. Just as painting could never be the

same after the invention of photography (another innovative paradigm of the modern age), all art forms have adapted to the digitalization of culture. Speaking of collage in this

context, one of the artists in the exhibition, Michael Anderson, alluded recently to this condition as “third wave abstraction:”

There is also an aspect of using both representation and abstraction at the same time in different compositions. Some compositions are more completely abstract, using such a level of non-linear narrative in the construction of the collage that the images themselves lead to no direct story, although the images are symbols themselves. And because of their advertistic [sic] qualities, the public recognizes them as something specific, but they’ve never seen these pieces put together in this particular manner previously. This makes a kind of third wave abstraction that I think is very obvious in our society today, one where the remote control of the television never leaves the hand of the watcher and never remains on a single channel for more than a few minutes, or where an Internet search of a few key words leads us to hundreds of possible links that make the user trend toward many ideas not originally imagined. The sheer number of advertisements that we are beset by in public makes sure that we never really ponder any single advert in its entirety; we only see small sections of everything, and this is what creates the third type of abstraction in the modern human condition.

— Michael Anderson (February 1, 2011)

This exhibition explores digital appropriation as a new paradigm that transforms the means of art production. That said, the materials that these artists use is both digital and analogue; hence, extraction and reconstruction of digital images is presented and explored in the context of art that uses both old and new technologies.

The artists in *Borders and Frontiers: Collage and Appropriation in the Contemporary Image* expand the practices of painting, photography and print media (and collage) into new hybridized forms which challenge their conventional archetypes. The connectedness of global culture, with all its permeable boundaries and interfaces, is the literal and metaphorical plane upon which they build their micro-macro worlds, each expressing in various codes the multiplicity and frontiers of existence.

Expansive rather than reductive, contemporary collage emerges at a time when everything and anything seems possible, where there are no longer standardized rules, no

avant-garde, and no master narratives. These artists (re) construct images from the vestiges of appropriation, for as we have come to realize, appropriation, which has been a colonial practice for generations, saw its postmodern pinnacle (after Andy Warhol’s extensive requisition of photography in all its mutated forms) in the 80s. Appropriation is a universal practice. Some artists acquire their impulsive ideas internally from their “authentic” identity rather than from assimilation. However, today this Baudelairean interpretation of “artistic inspiration” is all but an anachronism. With the digitalization of technology and the instant availability of visual material artists cannot help but be interactive with visual culture. Indeed, now, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of art production outside the context of appropriation. The flat screen represents one kind of appropriation (albeit virtual), which is universal, instant and transitional. Collage, on the other hand, entails a more active kind of engagement involving the physical act of selecting (or rescuing) the extant and repurposing it into a permanent concrete commodity.

Printed matter is the chief form and substance of collage. The process (selection and placement) is analogical, reflexive and rhetorical. Simultaneously, and paradoxically, it is both iconoclastic and constructive. The result, pictorialization, is acutely of its time, even more so because it is less dependent on the pedagogy and history of traditional hierarchic disciplines. Moreover, it echoes the multi-various, hyper-active and over-stimulated blare of visual culture — that is to say, formalistically and conceptually, every collaged fragment releases a cascade of juxtapositions.

Historically, collage has always been tied to modernism. Initially, collage, or *papier collé* as it was in 1911, was something glued to a canvas. It was intrinsically subversive, and while sampling and appropriation are no longer particularly subversive, its defiant bent and lineage to formalistic modernist concerns still persists. In the introduction to his book *The Frame in the Mirror*, Thomas Brockelman quickly establishes why collage is an extraordinarily direct process and perhaps begins to allude to its (ultimate) divorce from painting:

Depending upon viewpoint, modernist artists and critics have interpreted this reality [the reality of collage as formalistic rather than pictorial intervention] either as a “materiality” of the canvas and objects placed upon it or as an abstract “flatness” of the painterly plane, but in either case the point is that collage attempts to embody a kind of immediate presence beyond the necessity of representation. For the modernist, collage amounts to a kind of short circuit of the *distance* always implied by signification, indication ... representation.

In this exhibition, however, the artists, a hundred years on, want to achieve the opposite effect. They are not concerned with the materiality of something stuck onto a painted canvas, but, in fact, are very connected to the representational significance of their extracted pictorial fragments. They are more interested in an instant connection with a combination of the

representational and concrete than with the formalistic materiality of stuck-on signification.

The art of assemblage, whether it be cut-and-pasted or object-based, is at the forefront of recent developments in contemporary art. In 2007, for example, *Unmonumental*, a groundbreaking exhibition organized by the New Museum for its inaugural opening in the Bowery in New York City, introduced audiences to sculpture that bypassed traditional fabrication techniques in favor of temporary-looking juxtapositions derived from economical found materials. Comparing the sculpture in *Unmonumental* to the collage process of the artists in *Borders and Frontiers* is illuminating. Indeed, Laura Hoptman, one of the curators, referenced collage several times in her catalogue essay:

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, an era of customization in which selection from an almost infinite array of choices are collaged together to create personal soundtracks, social groups, menus, histories and canons, the most interesting artists are the mixers, mashers and sewers-together, the cobblers of irreproducible one-offs.

Of course, this was chiefly an exhibition of “sculpture,” but the parallel idea of riffing liberally from an array of 2D visual sources is the same as composing art from what is freely available rather than purchasing traditional art supplies. If rejection of convention is an intrinsic part of the ideology of contemporary artists, turning one’s back on traditional disciplines, materials and techniques is also a *de rigueur* contemporary practice.

In a manner of speaking, the unconventional sculptures in *Unmonumental* possessed a pictorial dimension in that their sources — furniture, clothes, architectural oddments and so on — were not disguised; they existed openly in a pictorial sense as the objects that they had once been, and still, in a sense, continued to be. Hoptman also stated that, “In a world of make-your-own-teleology, style is just another collage element, joining appropriated motifs, personal



Michael Anderson, *Lady Gaga's Looking Glass*, 2010, street poster collage, 44 x 56 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Claire Oliver Gallery, New York

fetishes and objects, found and made.” Similarly, the artists in *Borders and Frontiers* similarly blend their “found” images into newly “made” configurations.

Assemblage is the act of reconfiguring extant material. Rigged-up and mish-mashed juxtapositions of images and objects are one of the elemental trajectories of contemporary art in the second decade of the 21st century. It is clear now why it was no coincidence that collage and sculpture would be more reactive to the bursting economic bubble that catastrophically began pruning back fine art commerce in 2007 — that is to say that collage is potentially the most reactive of practices. Being more reflexive than reflective, the artists in this exhibition are implicitly *of* their culture — the ubiquitous global culture of universal images that are part of the everyday life of any contemporary city. Their collages are not stand-ins for something else, but are a manifestation of the very things that they are made from and as such are metonymic indexes of contemporary culture.

Hijacking the semiotics of images — photographs, engravings, manuals, maps, et al — is fundamental to the process of collage. The semiotic grammar of photography in all its forms (artefact, index, illustration, heirloom) is of particular significance to most of the protagonists in this exhibition. The photograph in this context is for consumption, both in terms of matériel and subject matter.

In framing and examining contemporary collage in 2011, what we see is a diverse array of practices. David LaChapelle, the defining American portrait and tableau photographer of his generation, creates an immediate and palpable shortcut to his photographs in his new collages, which he alters and reassembles on cardboard. Photographs tend to be multiples, but a photograph pasted into a collage is a unique object, linking it directly to the artist’s touch. Chambliss Giobbi similarly collages his photographs — the ones he takes of his sitters specifically to be torn and reassembled in his unique multiple viewpoint portraits.

Michael Anderson composes his work from street posters. The June 11, 2009, *Rolling Stone* cover unveiled Lady Gaga in a bubble costume; David LaChapelle’s iconic pink-infused

portrait of her appears hijacked (via street poster) in Michael Anderson’s *Lady Gaga’s Looking Glass*, 2010, collage. Anderson and LaChapelle know one another. The Gaga collage, while not a collaboration, certainly operates in the spirit of one, if not that of an homage. Like Anderson, George Rahme and Jonathan Allen riff a variety of lens-based images, but their sources are diverse: posters, reproductions, magazines and more.

Holli Schorno and Maritta Tapanainen assemble intricate collages from technical illustrations. These (often lens based) images are delicately extracted and repurposed into compulsively transformed biomorphic and architectural arrangements which contemporize their (historical) archived sources.

Matthew Cusick — and Holli Schorno — deconstruct maps and book pages in their work. Anderson and Rahme, like Tapanainen, Schorno and Cusick, are connoisseurs, each amassing their idiosyncratic archives.

Jonathan Allen’s approach to images is much more temporally sensitive, yet he still depends to a degree on historical sources. Another connoisseur is Mark Wagner, who dissects, deconstructs and composes his collages from dollar bills.

All the artists in this exhibition have discrete interests and substantial archives, making their work unique to them. Some share common goals, some are divergent, but all work to advance a means of expression that emancipates a direct approach to composing the pictorial via the repurposing of the extant. Their work is all-encompassing, culturally rich and challenges assumptions about the present, the popular, and the future of pictorial art. Absorbed by the interlocking assimilation of media and ideas, they are pluralistic visionaries and visual collaborators.

Dick Goody
 Curator
 February 2011

Jonathan Allen

(American), b. 1975, Neenah, Wisconsin

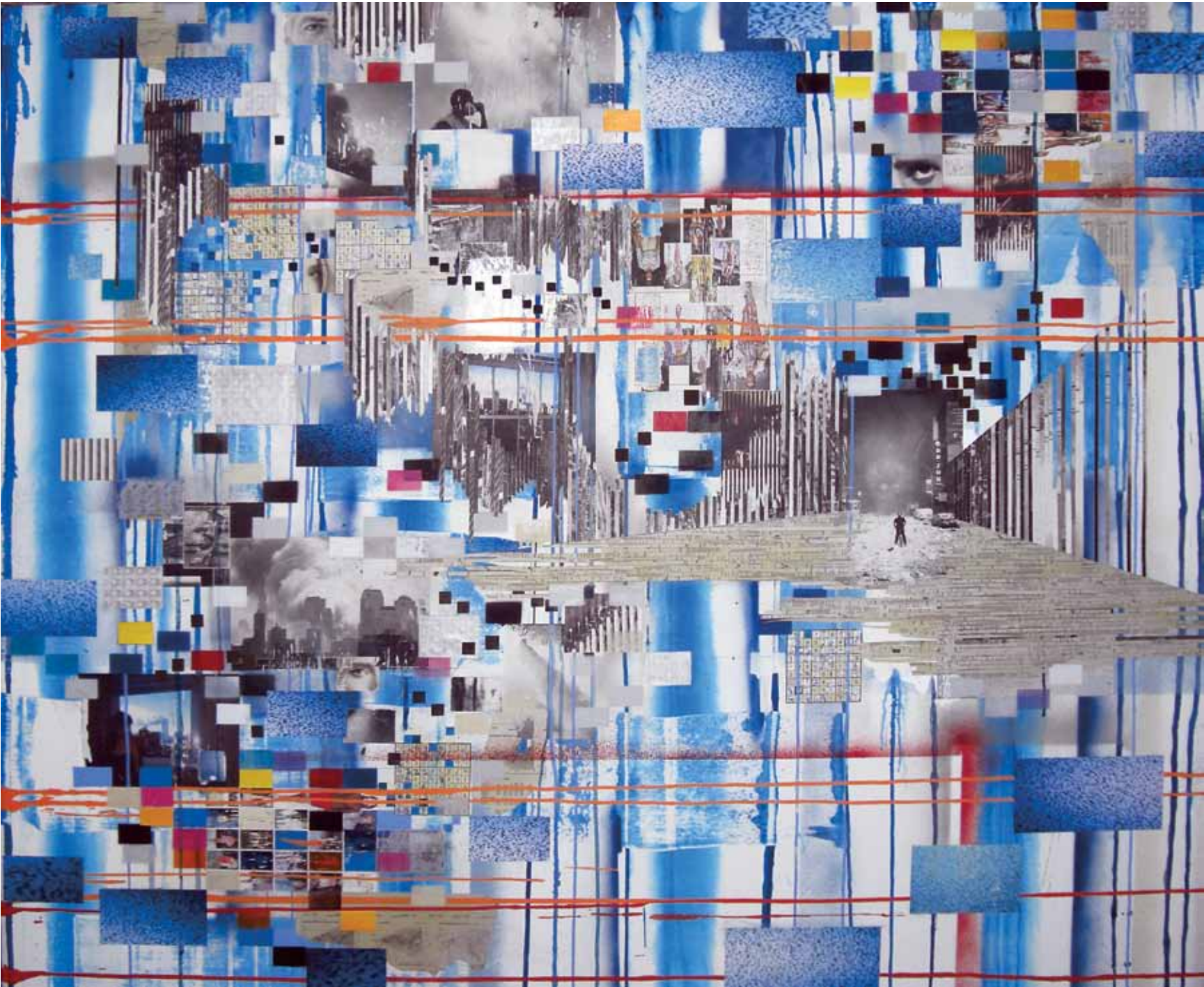
In 2010, Jonathan Allen was awarded a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council grant in the form of a studio in an office block high above Wall Street, a stone’s throw away from Ground Zero. Commenting on his collage *Deluge*, 2011, in the context of September 11, Allen states:

In this work fragments of imagery from the attacks and their aftermath are refracted through the buzz, TV static, advertising and pixilation endemic to our analog and digital visual deluge. The meaning of the attacks — and the perpetual war they have spawned — has been entirely mediated, woven into the tapestry of Americans’ media consumption, as common and ubiquitous as the business page.

— Jonathan Allen (Artist’s Statement, January 23, 2011)

Cut-and-pasted reproductions, used pictorially and abstractly, as well as wet and dry pigments, are united in Allen’s politicized collages. His work uses lens-based imagery woven into the dynamic compositional thrust of directly painted forms and pasted paper: an amalgam of hard-edged abstract and figurative elements. The former is a result of reconfiguring images as pasted fragments, often combining them with paint; the latter register as political and social critique. The title of the work *The Terrible Nearness of Distant Places*, 2011, for example, is borrowed from Okwui Enwezor, the Nigerian-born American curator and art critic who coined the phrase, “Globalization means the terrible nearness of distant places.” The title of another work, *Tu Byl Mur Getta*, 2011, translated from the Polish reads: “Here was the wall of the Ghetto.” This appropriated phrase is a message on bricks inlaid in the ground, marking the walls of the former Jewish ghetto. In Allen’s own words: “Historical photographs of the 1940 Warsaw Ghetto wall are juxtaposed against today’s looming Israeli security wall.”

Collages are a direct, didactic and dialectical medium. In Allen’s compositions the immediacy and truth of photographic images are interlaced into the fabric of classical dynamic arrangements of monumental form and content.



Deluge, 2011
paint, newsprint, paper on canvas
60 x 72 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Lu Magnus, New York



The Terrible Nearness of Distant Places, 2011
 paint, newsprint, paper, pencil, pastel, gold leaf on canvas
 70 x 156 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Lu Magnus, New York



Tu Byl Mur Getta, 2011
 paint, newsprint, charcoal, paper on canvas
 55 x 110 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Lu Magnus, New York

Michael Anderson

(American), b. 1968, Bronx, New York

Composition is the most important thing in abstraction. We can use representational imagery in different ways to create abstraction. The overall artwork is an abstraction. The individual pieces may not be abstract but the overall picture is an abstract construction.

— Michael Anderson (“Art in America Interviews Michael Anderson,” *Art in America*, November 7, 2010)

Michael Anderson calls his studio located on 136th Street in Manhattan, “The Harlem Collage Shop.” He makes collages from street posters, built up in layers on a massive, specially made worktable. Surrounding the table in his shop-front studio is a floor-to-ceiling archive containing thousands of street posters that he perpetually gathers from around the city.

Composition, as he asserts, is critical to his practice. In *Midnight Club*, 2008, for example, working from duplicate posters, the composition is created by hijacking and repeating images. In doing so he removes the context of the advertised image and transforms it into an abstraction, subverting the semiotic precision and authority of its original pictorial form. In *Flesh Graf*, 2004, (flesh graffiti) what Anderson dubs “third-wave-abstraction” (multiple juxtapositions from multiple sources) is in full effect. Information flows and flexes across the pictorial plane aided by the abundance of, and connections between, the replicated torn poster fragments. In this way, his collages are a unique repurposing of form and image.

In his recent *Art in America* interview, he commented that:

... the composition usually means more to me than who is in it. The way the parts look together is really important to me. The way I force things in terms of scale would be impossible to accomplish in paint. Things going from small to large in repetition, then layers of imagery on top of that. It's all very complex in terms of layering, and this level of precision is specific to collage in that way.

That said, Anderson’s collages are a dynamic, reconfigured reflexive register of contemporary everyday life in New York City. Besides collages, he has created murals from graffiti stickers — as in the lobby of the Ace Hotel, New York — and has designed large billboards — Target Brands, Inc., Times Square, New York.



Midnight Club, 2008
street poster collage
96 x 96 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Claire Oliver Gallery, New York



Flesh Graf, 2004
street poster collage
96 x 96 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Claire Oliver Gallery, New York



Terrorist Plot, 2007
street poster collage
96 x 96 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Claire Oliver Gallery, New York

Matthew Cusick

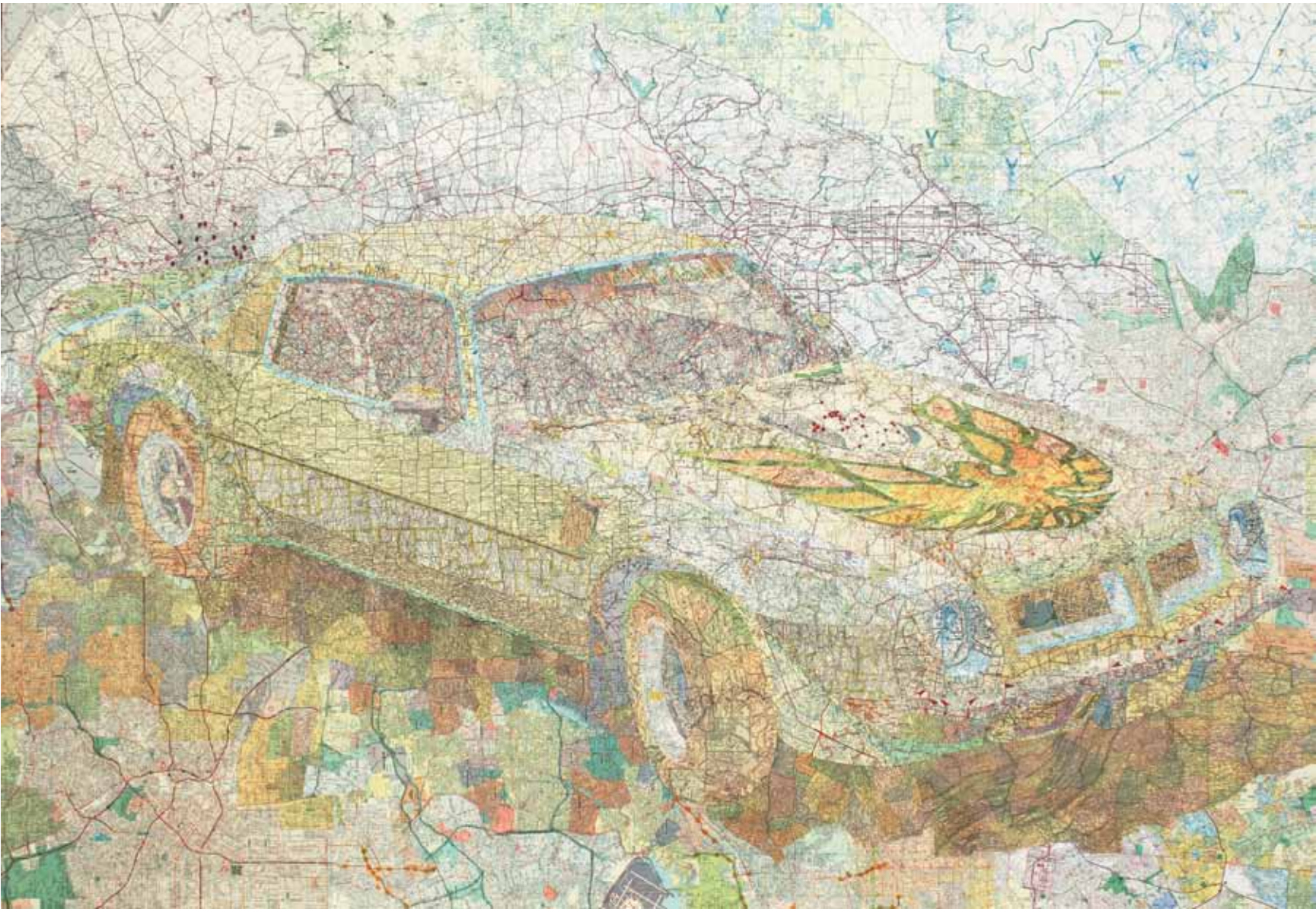
(American), b. 1970, New York, New York

Matthew Cusick lives and works in Dallas, Texas, and produces three discrete types of collage: “Map Works,” made from collaged roadmaps; “Happy Endings,” from lens-based collaged magazine pictures; and “Constellations,” from illustrated bibles, ink, charcoal and chalk. In addition to collage, he also makes videos with sound, which bridge his analogue and digital practices.

Cusick’s two works in this exhibition depict cars made from collaged maps. Constructed like delicate mosaic diagrams, they transform one form of historical data (a roadmap) into another relative semiotic image/object (a car). The relationship between theme and media in these works makes them compelling registers of the recent past, palpably familiar, yet somehow obsolete and out-of-reach.

Paper roadmaps, now largely redundant, have become evocative and nostalgic. So too are muscle cars from the 1970s. In *Transamerican*, 2004, a Pontiac Firebird, its hood emblazoned with a phoenix, is parked upon a patchwork of collaged roadmaps from the period of its production: 1970-1981 (Cusick was born in 1970). Themes of masculinity, freedom, commodity fetishism and nationalism are explored.

By reconfiguring a graphic format from a particular time, i.e., American roadmaps, Cusick transforms their semiotic inferences into a spectacular mosaic, narrative image. A mosaic approach to imaging is shared by several artists in this exhibition using similar sources: paper money, engineering diagrams, and technical and medical illustrations.



Transamerican, 2004
inlaid maps on wood panel
48 x 70 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Ghost Rider, 2002
inlaid maps on wood panel
47 x 70 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Pavel Zoubok Gallery,
New York

Chambliss Giobbi

(American), b. 1963, Mt. Kisco, New York

Chambliss Giobbi lives and works in Manhattan. He makes multiple photographs of his subjects and then tears their digital paper prints into fragments, which he then reconfigures into a portrait.

My studio is a disaster area where, surprisingly, I enter a meditative state. All day I wade through thousands of photographic fragments. It's as if the floor and tables are littered with suggestions for a destroyed psychological identity that waits for reconstitution. As I glue the pieces on the panel, I rediscover who this person really is to me: a heightened and refreshed intimacy that emerges from chaos.

— Chambliss Giobbi (January 25, 2011)

The distinctiveness of Giobbi work is embodied in the multiplicity of viewpoints exchanged within each of his portraits. *Portrait of Alice O'Malley 1*, 2010, for example, is a series of sequences of the figure in space. Each pasted fragment is an index of intimacy between the portraitist and sitter, and, to a great extent, even when surrounded by intense gloss darkness, they are a compelling memoir of the day the subject was shot.

Giobbi's monumental works are as much concerned with temporality as they are with biography. A myriad of photographs in his hands has the revealing temporal dimension of a succession of encounters. He simultaneously slows down and speeds up dynamic sequences of the figure in space. The area around the figure, with its layer of dense black coated with beeswax, creates a powerful emblematic effect.

He insists that he has to know his subjects for some time (months, years) before he can think about photographing them. When the long process is complete — apprehension, capture, extraction — the revealed persona, seen from all sides, has a unique familiarity. Nevertheless, the static image creates a fracture, a distance between the observer and the portrait, which is something not unlike the memory of watching a figure on a blacked-out stage, caught in a spotlight, captured on film.

I think that by using photographs as documents of something that really happened, I am capturing time; but by reconfiguring them in a manifold way, I am capturing the changing emotions and catharses that we use to measure time, like a diary.

— Chambliss Giobbi, (September, 2010)



Portrait of Alice O'Malley 1, 2010
collage and bees wax
56 x 92 inches
Courtesy of the artist
and The Butcher's
Daughter Contemporary
Art, Ferndale, MI



Tanz Fur Mich Salome
*(Dance For Me Salome:
 Self-Portrait)*, 2009
 collage and bees wax
 on aluminum panel
 68 x 92 inches
 Courtesy of the artist
 and The Butcher's
 Daughter Contemporary
 Art, Ferndale, MI



**Portrait of Alice
 O'Malley 2**, 2010
 collage and bees wax
 on Tycore
 56 x 92 inches
 Courtesy of the artist
 and The Butcher's
 Daughter Contemporary
 Art, Ferndale, MI

David LaChapelle

(American), b. 1963, Fairfield, Connecticut

David LaChapelle began his career working as assistant to Andy Warhol. With studios in Los Angeles and New York, he is one of the most visible and original photographers of his generation. Over the last twenty years, magazine driven, iconic photographic portraiture and complex memorable tableau set pieces have been his chief expressive preoccupations. Concurrently, he has shown his photographs in numerous gallery and museum exhibitions; *American Jesus* was a recent example.

The artwork that I want to make now ... I want to mean something to people that they can understand. The idea of communication is so important to me. It's crucial, so I need to have clarity.

— David LaChapelle (*CNN International*, aired December 29, 2010)

Filmed at his cottage retreat on Maui, he added, “I was pretty much working myself like crazy and wasn't taking care of myself, so (coming) here has really sort of saved my life in a way.”

LaChapelle's collages, which were made specifically for this exhibition, convey the clarity, directness and meaning he alludes to; the presence of the artist is conveyed directly in each cut, tear and crayon mark. These works are a sudden departure — his collages usually serve as preliminary works for setting up his photographs, but these were conceived as fully fledged works in their own right and contribute significantly to the discourse surrounding contemporary collage.

Using his own photographs and rudimentary materials — corrugated cardboard, oil sticks, ink, and torn paper from magazines — LaChapelle has found a short circuit to the primal visual immediacy and lucidity he so desires. They are a pointed substitute for the state-of-the-art studio spaces chockablock with assistants, actors, models and super hi-tech equipment. This new body of work also channels the archetypal idea of artist in arcadia, his hands and eyes focused on simple tools and materials.

Amid the solitude of combining cut up cardboard with his own backlist of co-opted photographs, the auteur re-contextualizes his oeuvre, defining the clarity so essential to his current practice. The communiqué is earnest, effective and poignant.

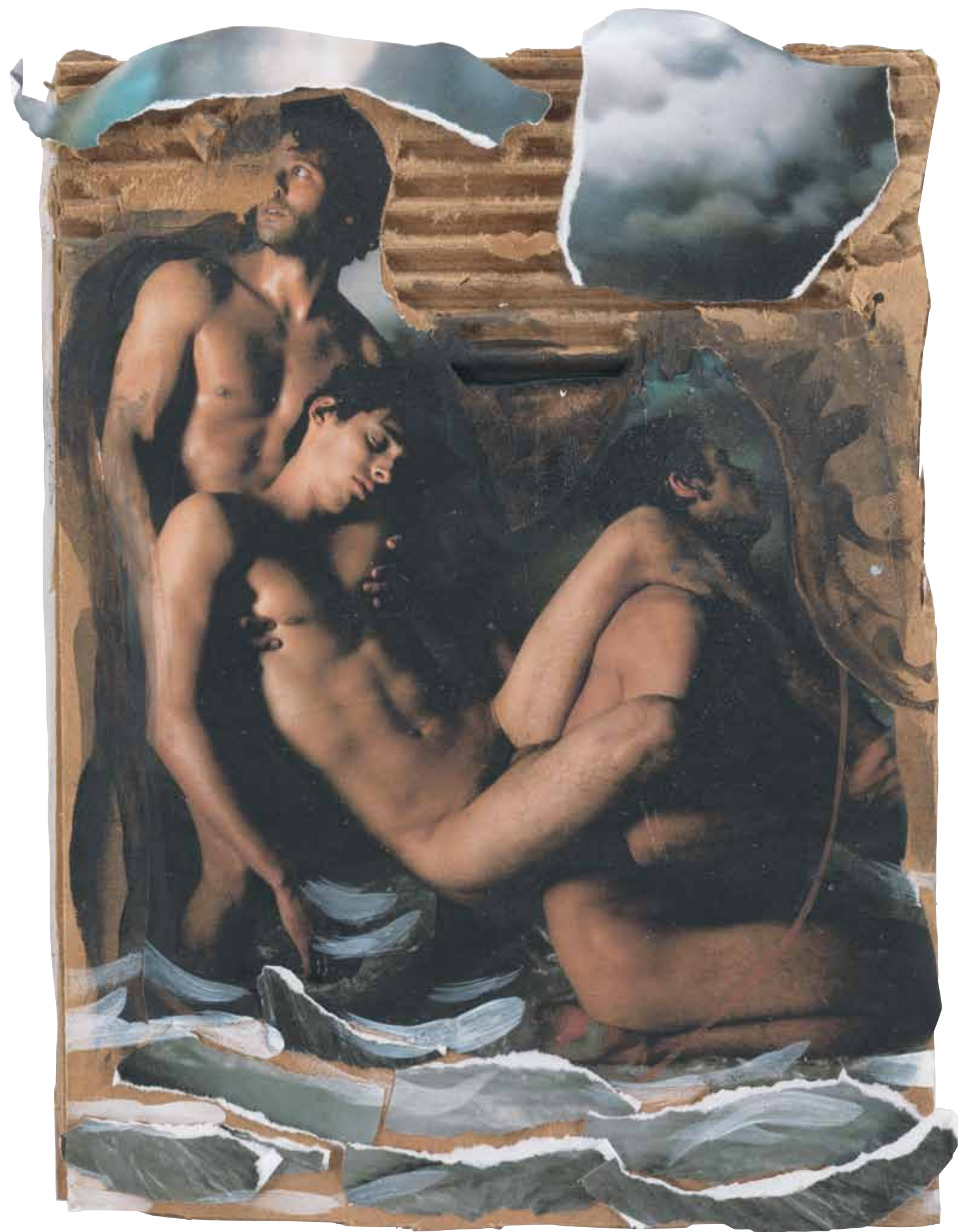


Studies and Sketches 2, 2008-11
ink, watercolor, graphite, paper on cardboard
10½ x 9 inches

© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 3, 2008-11
ink, watercolor, paper on cardboard
(overall) 11 x 23 inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



right
Studies and Sketches 4, 2008-11
ink, watercolor, oil stick, paper on cardboard
11 x 7 1/2 inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 5, 2008-11
ink, watercolor, paper on cardboard,
9 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 6, 2008-11
ink, paper on cardboard
7 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



left
Studies and Sketches 7, 2008-11
 ink, watercolor, paper on cardboard
 12 3/4 x 11 1/2 inches
 © David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
 Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 8, 2008-11
 ink, watercolor, paper on cardboard
 9 1/2 x 3 1/8 inches
 © David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
 Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 9, 2008-11
ink, watercolor, paper on cardboard
18³/₄ x 9³/₄ inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of
Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Studies and Sketches 10, 2008-11
ink, plastic, watercolor, graphite, oil stick, paper on cardboard, 22³/₈ x 17 inches
© David LaChapelle; Courtesy of Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



(Study for) *Raft of Illusion Rage Toward Truth*, 2010-11
 paper, ink, canvas, aluminum support
 90 x 122 x 1 1/4 inches
 © David LaChapelle; Courtesy of Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



The Four Bargain Hunters of the Shopocalypse, 2010-11
 found objects, color photograph, newspaper, cardboard
 (approximately) 72 x 100 x 8 inches (overall)
 © David LaChapelle; Courtesy of Fred Torres Collaborations, New York

George Rahme

(American), b. 1981, Lansing, Michigan

George Rahme lives and works in Hamtramck, Michigan, a multicultural enclave surrounded by the city of Detroit. His studio comprises a vast attic-space with a collection of large tables, each with a discrete work in progress.

(This) work had a lot to do with manifesting my landscape view outside my studio window. ... Landscape in large format is the only way I can finish a picture. In order for me to make a large-scaled picture, it must be landscape, or composition that includes depth mid ground, fore, and background. How the images work together is a challenge ... how to deal with what I have collected ...

— George Rahme (January 28, 2011)

Here, Rahme alludes to the fact that his landscapes are layered strata of material, accruing from the base of a picture up to its top. These compositions are expansive and require greater scale than his smaller works because of their complexity. He likens them to musical compositions of the scale of a symphony, which explore specific themes in a concentrated way. *The Pink of Condition*, 2009, for example, depicts a panoramic equestrian scene with multiple narratives. Horse-and-hounds from numerous sources gallop, canter and trot across the pink-tinted picture plane. Curiously, an Olde English manor, like something built in Connecticut in the 1920s before the crash, floats in the background with beams of honey-orange light emanating from its leaded windows. This syrupy image is a repurposed painting by the “painter of light,” Thomas Kincaid.

Of his other collages, he states: “The small works vary in imagery because I’m not required to cover a lot of surface.” Discrete works with their own logic, they tend to cover a wider range of themes and are completed sporadically, separate from the larger panoramic works he has in progress.

Of all the artists in the exhibition, Rahme works from the widest array of visual sources: magazines, record covers, posters, oil paintings and books, and sometimes organic materials such as leather and hair. The genre of landscape and diverse visual sources he employs gives his work its distinctive eclectic, heterogeneous appearance.



Pigskin Thrill, 2010
paper on painted plywood
44 1/4 x 44 1/2 inches

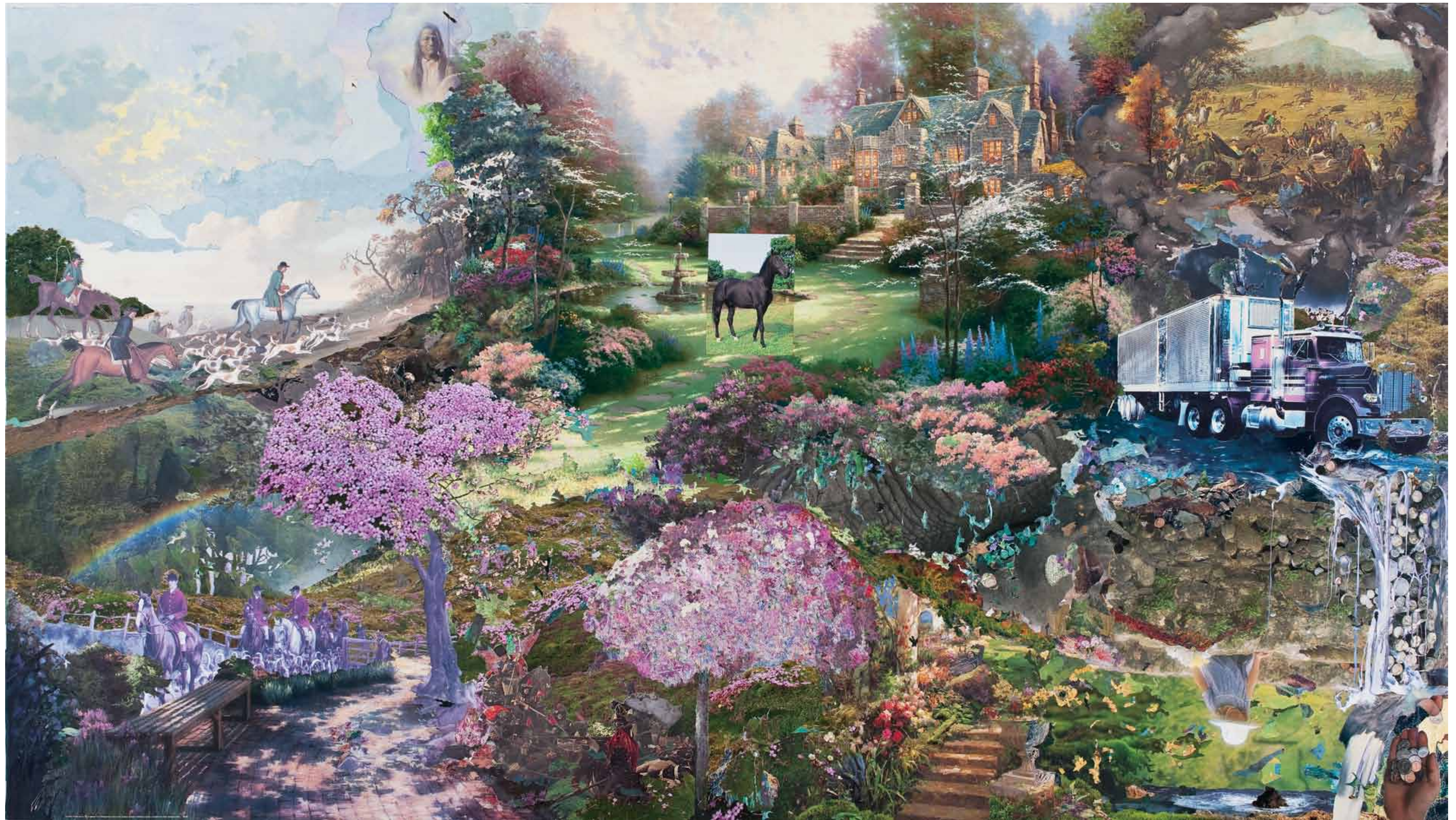
Courtesy of the artist and Fred Torres Collaborations, New York



Il Falait Bien Vivre, 2010
paper and mixed media on panel
48 x 84 inches
Courtesy of the artist
and Fred Torres
Collaborations, New York



Flamenco Sketches, 2011
paper and mixed media on panel
63 x 29³/₄ inches
Courtesy of the artist
and Fred Torres
Collaborations, New York



The Pink of Condition, 2009, paper and mixed media on panel, 48 x 84 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Fred Torres Collaborations, New York

Holli Schorno

(American), b. 1964, Oakland, California

Holli Schorno lives and works in Newark, New Jersey. The communication networks in her collages, some linked to the ground, others adrift, are metaphors for the virtual closeness and paradoxical disconnection of contemporary culture. Exploring the rhetoric of commoditized technical advancement and mass communication, her collages present not the realm and sameness of monopolized corporate networks, but rather each antennae/tentacle contraption, tethered or not, represents a single communicant reaching out. Her work speaks to individual identity rather than the anonymity of mass communication.

Her quasi-scientific arrays animate the vast literal distances of global communication yet indicate our immediate connectedness to anyone at another terminal next door or on the other side of the world.

In *Signal Hill*, 2008, an untethered cluster of objects — houses, sheds, epidermis diagrams, geological strata cross-sections, and building supply illustrations — float across a vast panorama of white paper, seemingly drifting, yet held together with struts and studs denoting an individual agenda or purposefulness. On the other hand, another nearby floating body resembling an asteroid projects a menacing pall over its smaller counterpart.

Her collages combine economy, refinement and a delicateness which suggests a finite level of limited resources, a sense of individuality (or destiny) and a general feeling of vulnerability in the face of adversity.

Her sources consist of medical illustrations, technical and construction manuals, diagrams and maps. Her collages are reflexive of the challenges that face humanity in a fragile interconnected world of trial, error and unregulated expansion, while at the same time speak of isolation and media overexposure.



Signal Hill, 2008
book cuttings on rag paper
60 x 80 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Transfusion, 2010
book cuttings on paper
25 x 35 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Thistles, Drumline and Kettles, 2008
book cuttings on rag paper
25 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York

Maritta Tapanainen

(Finnish), b. 1956, Lappee, Finland

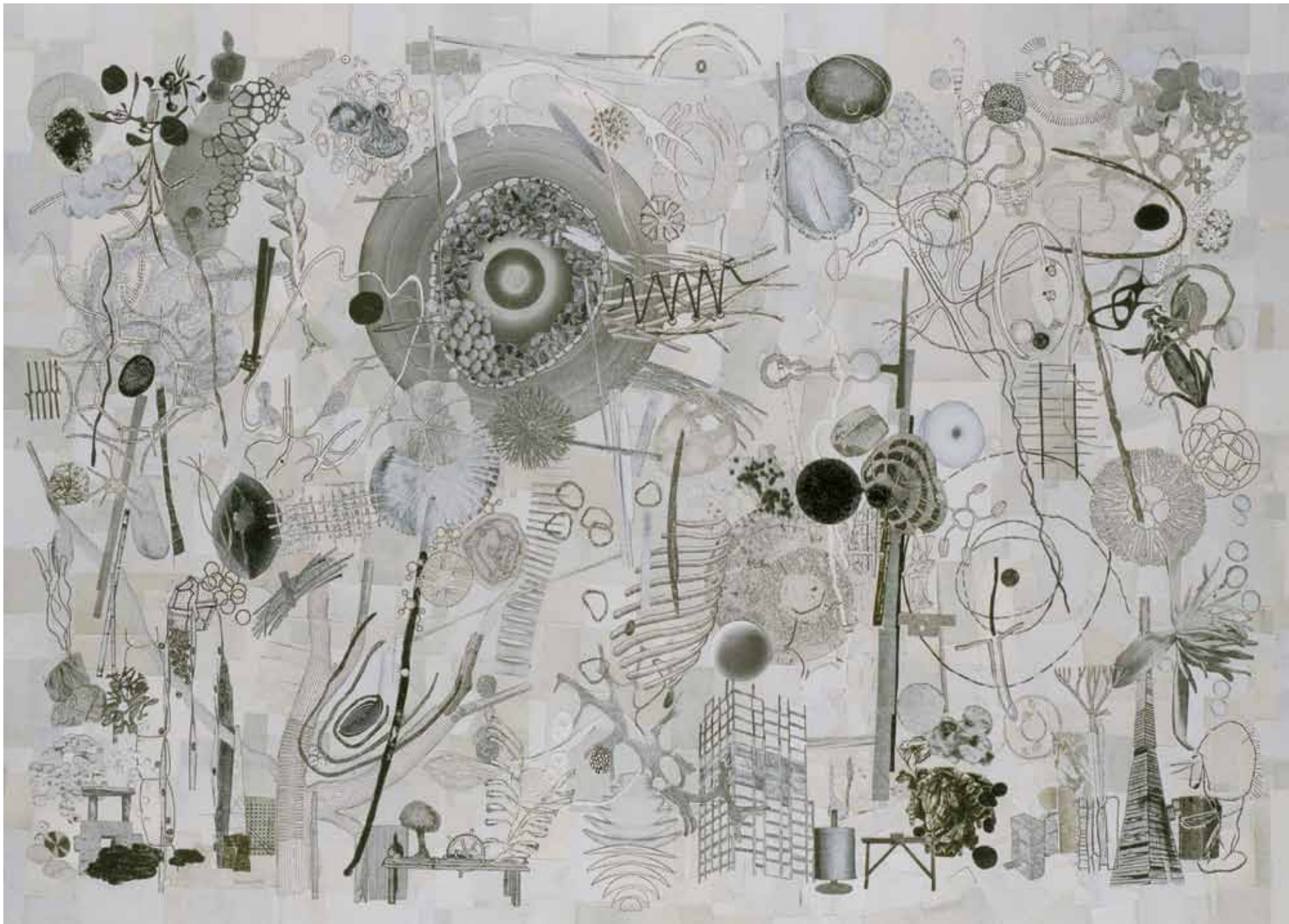
I was born in Finland of Karelian heritage, raised in Canada, and I have since lived in Europe, Central America, and in the harsh, expansive beauty of the Mojave Desert. I travel when possible — journeys to Southeast Asia, Cuba and, most recently, Japan. These changing environs have infused me with an awareness and respect for varieties of cultural experience and have contributed to my approach to collage.

— Maritta Tapanainen (Artist's Statement)

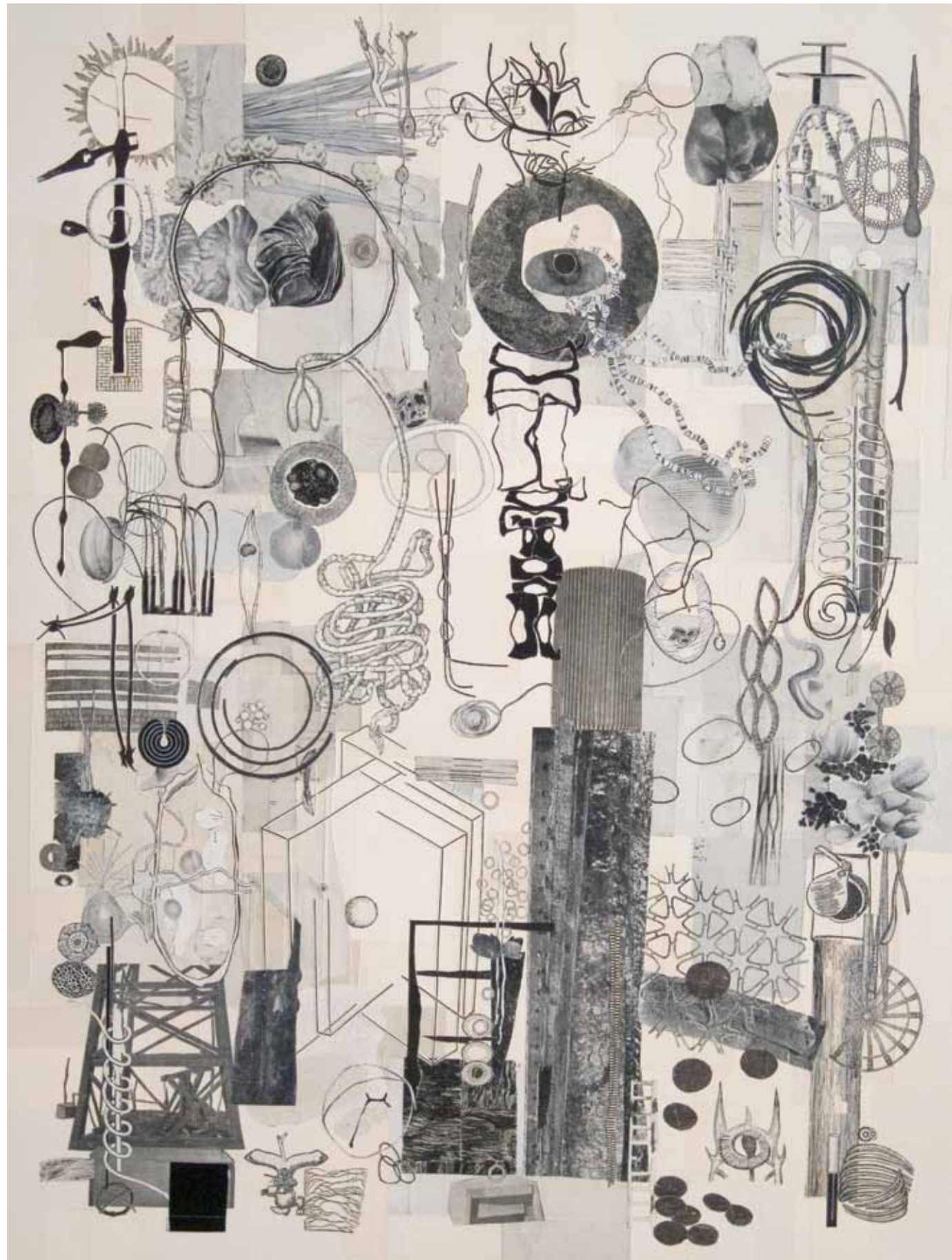
Maritta Tapanainen lives and works in Santa Monica, California. The visual metaphors and configurations in her work suggest protozoa, plankton and rhizomes constructed from fragments of technical scientific illustrations. The consistent look of her collages is derived from the type of photogravure/rotogravure images she cuts up in her work.

Close up, her images configure into singular entities: tubes, coils, valves, etc. These are the bricks and mortar forming the larger architecture of her compositions. In *Mesmer*, 2007, for example, Tapanainen creates a sense of attraction, and connectedness — a democratization of biological elements forming a complete network. The title alludes to Franz Anton Mesmer, the German scientist who believed there was an exchange of energy between the animate and inanimate, which he called animal magnetism; the term “mesmerism” is derived from his name.

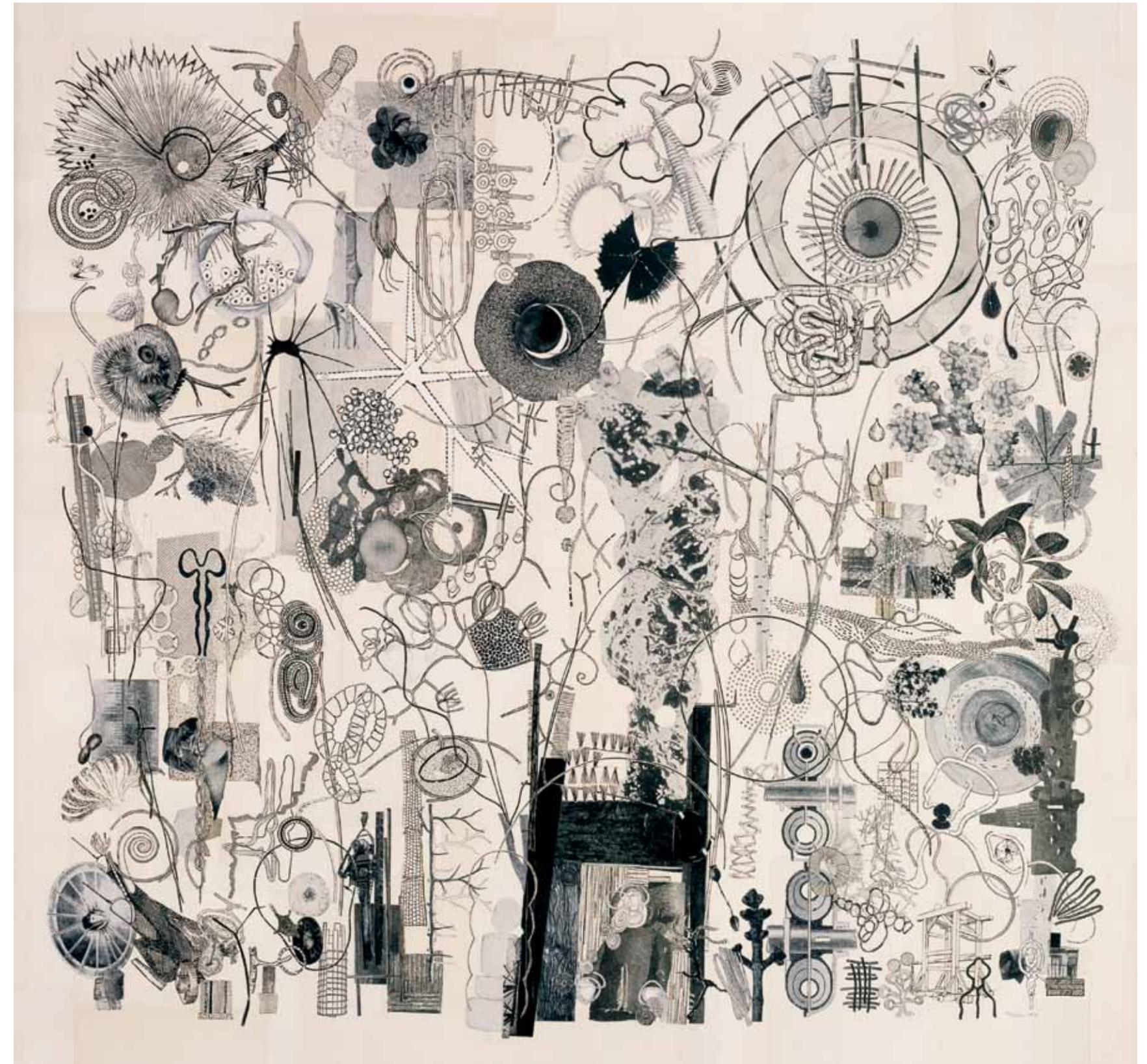
From afar, her images coalesce into overall compositions that employ modular circular forms with a biological bent reminiscent of cells and organs. The loose, cleverly arranged clusters of her forms operate in a flat diaphanous space akin to the delicate surface of a light box covered with a thin film of opaque skeletal forms — discrete vertical and spherical specimens laid out in parallel and adjacent arrangements. Tapanainen works on aged, worn paper which she says, “imbues the work with a sense of both history and detached timelessness.” Her works are situations: pragmatic and relative.



Mesmer, 2007
paper collage on board
17 x 23 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Labyrinth, 2006
 paper collage on board
 18 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Big Bang, 2006
 paper collage on board
 16 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York

Mark Wagner

(American), b. 1971, Edgar, Wisconsin

The one dollar bill is the most ubiquitous piece of paper in America. Collage asks the question: What might be done to make it something else? It is a ripe material: intaglio printed on sturdy linen stock, covered in decorative filigree, and steeped in symbolism and concept. Blade and glue transform it — reproducing the effects of tapestries, paints, engravings, mosaics, and computers — striving for something bizarre, beautiful or unbelievable ... the foreign in the familiar.

— Mark Wagner (Statement on *Collage with Currency*)

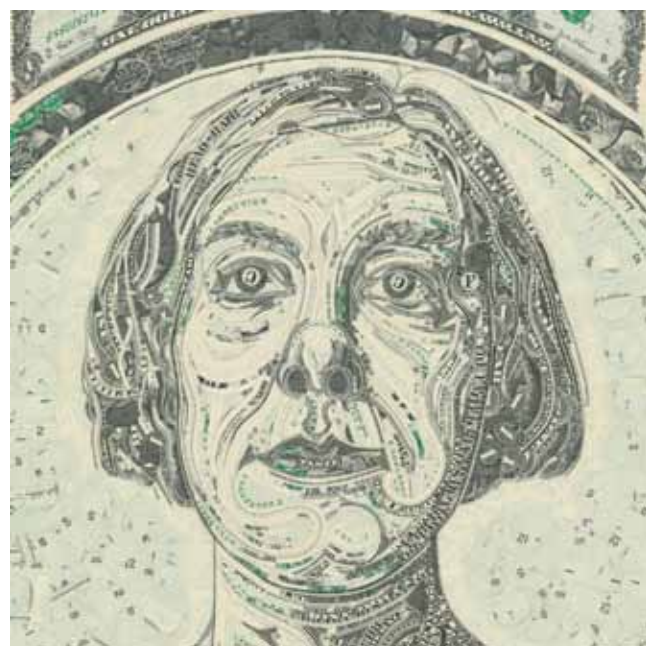
The American dollar bill is the medium of Mark Wagner's currency collages; it is also, in part, the message. While his work requires stacks of crisp new money, and while this condition (being made of dollars) is never absent from his work or the mind's eye of the viewer, ultimately the iconography in his collages — people, animals, plants, and architecture — operates in the realm of illusion and allegory. These two key elements in western art history work in tandem with the multiple signifiers embedded in a dollar bill: capitalism, nationalism, history, George Washington (as depicted by Gilbert Stuart, 1796), and the art of engraving.

In his studio in Brooklyn, New York, at any given time there will be several studio assistants cutting up dollar bills with scalpels for production. The resultant “paper-mosaic-tiles” are sorted into a taxonomy of textures, tones and shapes to be used in the construction a particular work.

Fortune's Daughter, 2004, is a life-size nude which Wagner states, “is a figure birthed from legal tender, an evocation of personal value from the material of commercial value, a product and testament to craft and attention, an allegory of prosperity.” It consumed 200 one-dollar bills cut into 12,390 pieces and took 446 hours to complete. Wagner, ever fastidious, documented its production in a 100-page handbook, which demonstrates his control and immersion in the production of his extraordinarily painstakingly constructed collages. Wagner is one of the greatest mosaic artists of his time.



Benjamin, 2006, currency collage on museum board panel, 24 x 19 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



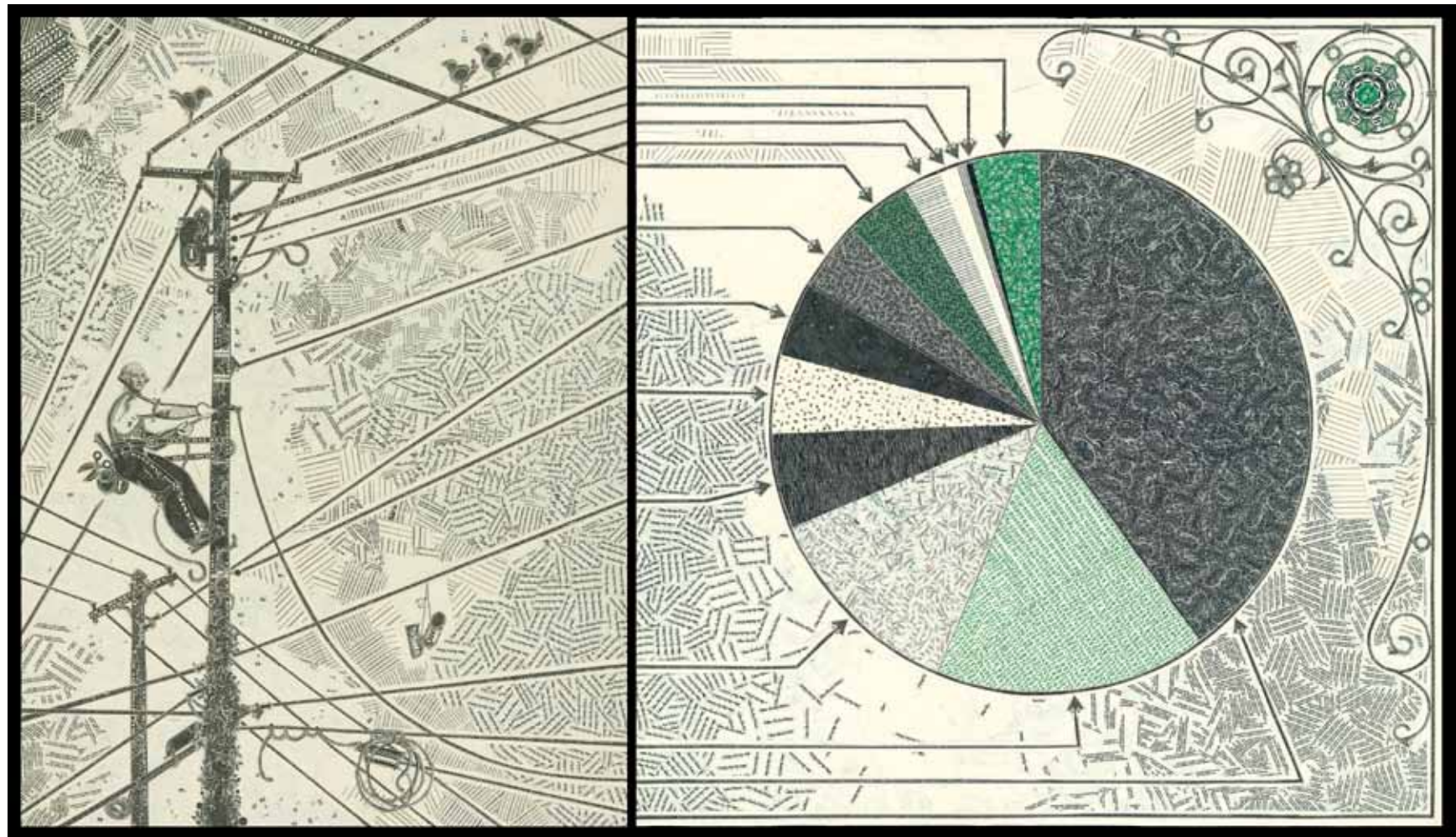
detail above; full image opposite page

Fortune's Daughter, 2005

currency collage on panel

80 x 32 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Powerlines Converge, Statistics Show, 2008-10
currency collage on panel
42 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



right
The Path Before You, 2010
currency collage on panel
24 x 18 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Full Fathom Five, 2008
currency collage
80 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York



Very Expensive Drafting Brush (Deranged), 2010
shredded currency and cherry wood, 13 x 3 1/2 x 1 inches
Courtesy of artist and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York

BORDERS AND FRONTIERS:

COLLAGE AND APPROPRIATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY IMAGE

Jonathan Allen

Michael Anderson

Matthew Cusick

Chambliss Giobbi

David LaChapelle

George Rahme

Holli Schorno

Maritta Tapanainen

Mark Wagner

Curated by Dick Goody

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cover, David LaChapelle, *Studies and Sketches 1*, 2008-11,
watercolor, oil stick, paper on cardboard, 9 1/4 x 10 1/4 inches
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