

HomeEc

Summer Carmack, Nick Deford, Joe Ford, Marty Haug, Rowan Haug, Paul Loughney, Jenna Richards & Cara Sullivan
Cullis Wade Depot Art Gallery
Mississippi State University
Starkville, Mississippi
June 2 – 28, 2014

“Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other. There is no place like home.”

-Ti-Fu Tuan in Space and Place

As a significant component of self-reflection, the artist is oftentimes compelled to explore the place that best defines his or herself – the home. Memories and the physical location define every person while the artist transforms these ideas infinitely to create his or her work.

Ultimately, the security of home lends itself to one’s truest identity whether realized or overlooked. It is of no insignificance that surnames originated as an indication of an individual’s residence or occupation, further identifying their history. Artisan skills were honed over a lifetime and passed on from the preceding generation, contributing to this identity, a societal background check still relevant in the contemporary South.

Eight artists were selected for *HomeEc* that represented the term in varying degrees of craft, symbolic representation and conceptual significance. Mississippi State’s Exhibit Coordinator and Lecturer, Adrienne Callander, curated the exhibition of mostly regional artists in a well-balanced display of diversity in mediums and approaches to the subject. Herself an artist, Callander’s

curatorial efforts became a further development in her own research and work surrounding the subject.

Photography by Cara Sullivan investigates and documents a house severely damaged by fire.

Though heavily charred and burnt out, remnants of the previous dwelling show the main structure of walls with exposed studs. What was a former home may still house memories.

Sullivan's photos suggest that while the structure physically makes a space, the residents form a place in the home. Within

the context of the larger

exhibition, the

manifestation of this idea

into imagery is a

significant element. In

Cat Nap, an alternative

reality is created with a

pinhole camera as the



warped space of a living room is the setting for a person taking the place of a family cat, sleeping on the top of a couch in another surreal look at the house as psychological place and space.

Nick Deford's work brings a heavy wit and humor to *HomeEc* with his incorporation of sarcasm, found objects, imagery, hand-embroidery. The artist investigates themes combining the origins of fibers craft traditions, places and the myths surrounding the societal paradigms physically located there. In his most relevant work for the exhibition, *Ascension (Spotless)*, Deford

combines an old pamphlet book entitled “Housekeeping Hints” with hand-embroidery in.

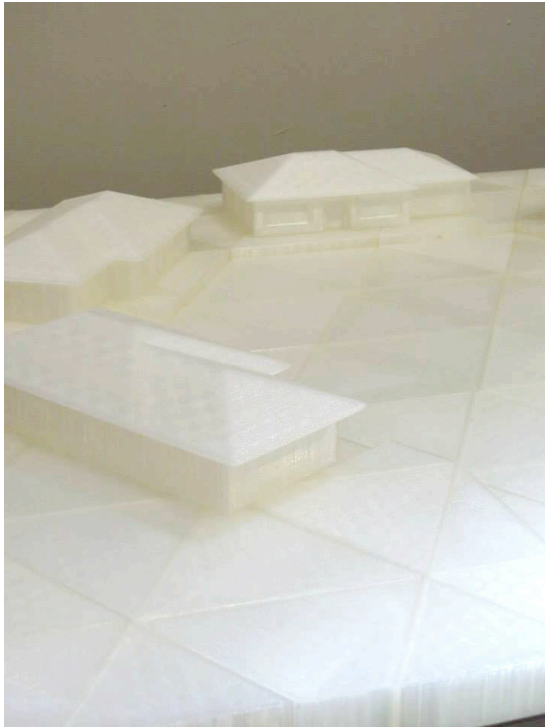
GODLINESS is sculpted with thread on a page that describes the best method for cleaning bed linens. The subversion of traditional roles in the domesticated home of the past, and even the present times, refers to his heavy research and acknowledgement of the contrast between the ideal and realistic development of the home.

In a process of exploring of space, place and relationships, Paul Loughney uses photography from magazines. Interior places are cut into organic shapes and collaged together with results



that are both wonderfully abstract compositions and strangely disorienting layers of space. In *Limitations of the Interior I* and *Untitled*, the viewer is forced into recognizing the

elements that construct a domestic space to realize a new space produced of multiplicity, dissection, reconstruction and the absence of the individual. *Commiseration Procession*, is minimized with two smaller areas acting upon one another within a larger interior space. Similar to Sullivan’s work, the concept of the individual that partakes in the space and home is brought into question with Loughney’s work.



Joe Ford's *Invisible Suburb* is a 3D-printed suburban cul-da-sac. The banality of uniform houses is reflected in the monochrome plastic used to construct the sculpture. Although different materials, the methods used in constructing such places of domesticity and in creating the sculpture are bereft of personal feelings towards the aesthetics or craft in the process. The lack of contrast against the gallery's white walls and under bright lights renders the sculpture difficult to see as a reference to both the

title and the suburbs themselves with their occupants among a sea of conforming design.

Ceramics is often relegated to a form of craft that is naturally existent in the kitchen. Summer Carmack allows this pre-conceived notion to act as central theme of her art, but layers further conceptions of form, function and femininity for a deeper inspection of complex ideas. The work is both traditional pottery and a quintessential take on ideas of domesticity. The teapot, cups and gravy boat stand tall and poised with elegance. The pieces are literally dressed up with hand thrown forms in porcelain, altered with frills and ruffles before being decorated with a simple celadon glaze. In sculpting these, Carmack takes away from the functionality of pottery, creating a layered approach directly related to home and femininity.

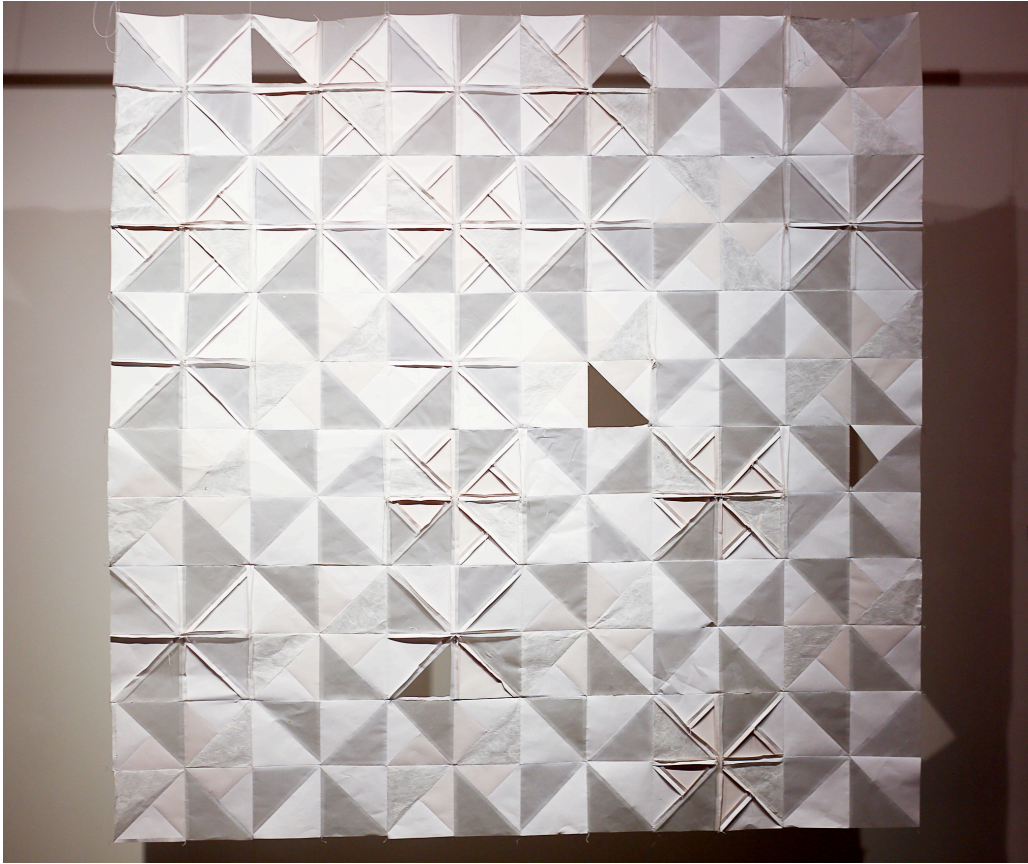
On the other hand, ceramic sculptures of Jenna Richards remove the work immediately from its



original context and then bring the work back in full circle to the idea of domesticity. Richards uses slip casting to produce the bone-white relics of home. Taking hand-knit clothing articles and making molds of them,

Richards transfers the objects of function to symbols of comfort. What was once pliable, warm and soft becomes cold, stiff and fragile. This fragility adds to the objects significance with great care for preservation, serving as a memorial to the objects that keep one feeling safe in a personal space.

As with both ceramists work, Marty Haug's hand-carved *Spoons* take from a craft medium and become symbolic of this tradition as an object. Although still functional, this sculpture is more representative of a certain quality and refinement of the domestic space. Rowan Haug's *Paper Quilt Top* continues with this line of thought, using paper to create a non-functional and abstracted form that adds to the dialogue of craft traditions, material and comfort of a traditional home. The paper quilt looks comforting hovering feet from the ground, moving in conjuncture to the viewer's action.



Callander's selection of artists created a well-rounded examination into the areas of craft, domesticity, home and community that she herself investigates. Use of hand embroidery, photography, ceramics, wood carving and 3D printing open up a dialogue with traditional and contemporary approaches towards domesticity with inherent links to a large component of how we become individuals. Look for more exhibitions in this vein from the Mississippi State University throughout the academic year with exhibitions like *Identity* in the Colvard Student Union Gallery, *Peggy Macnamara: Migration*, in the Visual Art Center and *Claudia DeMonte Works* in the Cullis Wade Depot Gallery.

Images from top to bottom: Cara Sullivan "Untitled", Paul Loughney "Limitations of the Interior", Joe Ford "Invisible Suburb", Summer Carmack "Teapot and Cup Set", Rowan Haug "Paper Quilt Top"

