



## Losing oneself to process

Lisa Alembik

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a tight scientific method while others  
work in a flowing intuitive fashion.

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Motivated by the abundance of  
possibilities the world offers, ideas  
may develop through a flood of

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oneself to process can allow work  
to evolve into something of greater  
complexity. The prospect of crossing

and of itself a valuable act.

This catalog is a documentation of  
the first exhibition in a series on the

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platform to showcase influences and  
inspiration of faculty and staff at Agnes

□ □ shows the often hidden  
side of being an artist, writer and

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value of the making and the letting

space to present a selection of writing,

fifteen years. Each designs their gallery  
from the perspective of an educator,  
to be revealing of process and show  
by example. This unveiling is often eye

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for the contributing scholars. The

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cultivation of innovative ideas. Here,  
the working laboratory meets the formal

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discipline and organized passion often

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Perhaps the purest experience is that of teaching a Velazquez painting and speaking about the thickness of his application of paint to the canvas and the dissolution of all lines in his work and realizing that I no longer exist in bodily form, that I have become a mere mouthpiece for this

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The last piece of my process is telling stories. If there were still a need for bards, it would

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stories about works of art in class because they inadvertently function mnemonically, helping students recall, for example, the Nike of Samothrace whose beauty once made their professor pass out, fall down the marble stairs of the Louvre, and break her left leg.

On my very first sabbatical from Agnes Scott, I

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response was “comment?”□/

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of phrasing “il est mort”□ !

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he is a former scholar, etc.---the whole Monty

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books deposited 5 new offerings before him. I could not remain silent a minute longer: “I don’t think he will be needing those! He’s dead!” And

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reader, he fell over, and the library sprang into

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who was writing his 11th book and “Le Monde”

reported in his obituary that it was a beautiful

death for he had died in the saddle, as it were,

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lifetime. But I continue to try to coordinate head and heart and hand. I too love what I do. It fills

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between artist and viewer, are all at the center of  
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One series of large scale prints was begun in  
summer 2001 as an exploration into the myth of  
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of anonymous people who were lost in the  
underworld of burning steel.

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in terms of the un-named and faceless people  
who are caught in the violence of war or political  
situations beyond their control. Are they sisters,  
fathers, mothers or children? How much loss they  
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In my own life, the birth mothers of my □

present for me like ghosts of memories. In  
her introduction to Karin Evans' book, "Lost  
Daughters of China", Anchee Min takes on  
the role of stern Ai-yi or auntie, telling the  
"raw truth" of their histories. She tells the lost  
daughters that for their birth mothers, who for

they will be forever "a broken arm hidden inside  
the sleeve."

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I have searched for an image that conveyed  
essential woman, not determined by notions of

age or physical beauty or the gaze. Variations on

It is a stance of our daily life functions of giving  
birth, of elimination and of bathing. This simple

point for reclaiming images of ourselves.

These images are intended to transcend specific

self found in the private space of thought, body

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piece are close to life size and can be placed on

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On my first trip to China, I brought along a small  
book of one hundred poems by Han-shan from the

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to have lived anywhere between 627 and 750 A.D. I

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Han-shan's poem echoed as I visited famous spots

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looking out a train window across fields lit with  
many little fires from farmers' brush piles. It  
was the unnamed souls of Han-shan's poems,

resonated most deeply for me. China's history in

Ancient images of the Buddha and the goddess,

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provides the blessing of children, evoke a place  
of contemplation and peace. As well I find the  
ever-transforming garden to be a compelling and  
hopeful visual metaphor.

The work I have created often contains layered

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often visited perhaps over multiple centuries by

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*its inner qualifications and thus*  
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□ □ Duchamp’s “The Creative Act” by chance, which the artist, a founder of the Dada movement, would doubtless appreciate. Early in my graduate career, I was sitting in the library at the Museum of Modern Art researching Jasper Johns and considering ways of looking, experientially and called neo-Dada when first shown in the 1950s. attempt to create historical context for works that reintroduced recognizable images—flags a dramatic departure from prevailing Abstract Expressionist styles. My interest was not in Johns’ neo-Dada label, but in the profound compositional dynamics that infuse his art from

this period: his works not only mix abstraction gestures for that time, but they also, and for me from the viewer, who might embrace tasks hidden under layers of encaustic. Johns subtly and powerfully provokes an engagement

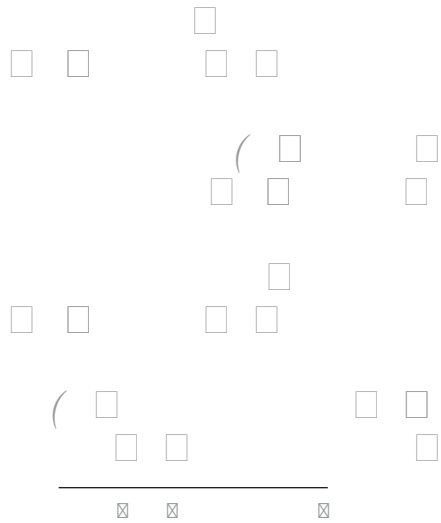
Johns shares with Duchamp the understanding of the connection—integral and collaborative—between artist and viewer. As a teacher, I constantly shift between positions of creator and critic. As a scholar, I use words and images to craft and shape ideas. I came to the study of art history through my own studio practice, and it feels natural to me that the members of our department work experiencing and modeling the kind of dialogue that Duchamp describes and Johns dictates. The structure of our department— exists at the core of a liberal arts education,

courses. Our curriculum exemplifies liberal learning through rich combinations of practice and theory, technical facility and research We develop a community of scholars engaged thinking, respectful and constructive dialogue, and significant exploration of increasingly self- and research methodologies. As I seek to historical and theoretical frameworks, often joining feminist theory with spatial politics and embracing issues of subjectivity and modes of perception. Many of my research topics have emerged directly from, and continue to be refined in, my teaching. As I have studied been challenged by and benefitted from the profound dialogue Duchamp proposes.



Katherine Smith





Video, film and TV culture; commercials and "big brother" voice of authority; who is responsible? , screen, which takes the form of a billboard, a sign, passively absorbing the message from "they", as if is separate from . As if a

I begin with language. I think about a title for informs my making, and my making informs relating: communicate, corroborate, act. Repeat.

I see is a way for me to check in and confirm

that reality itself is a collaboration. Engaged interaction is essential: you exit if I am just another screen/TV/billboard telling you what to think. If you don't matter in the context of our interaction, then of course you exit. You'd

blather and natter as if you didn't matter.) If I active and alive. I'm sure you prefer (whoever of paper, or on a billboard, a building or a

I can transform a space with a simple line.

A line divides, frames, points. I can change an entire room with an idea. A fat black stroke on a contrasting surface imposed in real space changes and defines your understanding of that

Graphs convince where words fail. Changing

A natural inclination toward change, like any

and want to spend my life sleeping. Or worse, watching TV.

I was asked to reflect upon my process as a scholar over the last fifteen years. Coincidentally, exactly fifteen years ago, I entered the College of William and Mary as an undergraduate, only recently finishing my Ph.D. in 2011. My experience then very much reflects the transition from student to scholar, a journey many of you may take upon leaving Agnes Scott. My

but also about the process of mastering my field.

2 have focused on the architecture of Rome and, specifically, the work of Carlo Rainaldi, one of the most significant baroque architects. Essential (years) in the Eternal City. With hundreds of baroque churches and palaces, Rome is a veritable classroom for the history of architecture, and I

tools of my trade: the best scholarly guidebooks of the city, photocopies of early modern maps of Rome, a camera, binoculars (to see architectural

perhaps the most important. Sketching is, in fact, an essential tool for the architectural historian. Drawing focuses the eyes and mind, forcing us to look closely and thoughtfully at the details of

of buildings and spaces. Some of my most

included a few drawings from my time in Rome.

and I still refer to my notes and drawings from architecture but time in the Roman archives.

and a curse for modern scholars! The process of digging through these records can be a tedious one, to say nothing of the challenge of deciphering and transcribing seventeenth-century writing. Documents are rarely carefully inventoried, and I've spent a great deal of time flipping through large volumes of material in the remote chance I would find something of interest. Ultimately, the rewards of patient study

to bring to life the personality of Carlo Rainaldi, his intellectual interests, and the struggles of

hundreds of years old.

The processes of looking, researching, thinking, and writing are interwoven for me as an art

to help me through the process, but I've found

The world is quiet before sunrise, and even my

pester me for treats or playtime. I roll out of bed

with books, notebooks, scraps of paper, and half empty glasses of water. Then I write. Like most people, I find a blank page absolutely daunting, and when I first start a project, I just put anything

eventually I have a draft to work with. Editing, my favorite part of the process, is where all the magic happens. There is an art to shaping and refining the raw material of writing, and at a certain point, it no longer feels like work—until I get stuck.

How do I get past writer's block? Strategy one: a walk. For short-term writer's block or fatigue,

ten or fifteen minutes around the neighborhood can keep me writing for another couple hours. Strategy two: looking. If the writer's block is

ideas, I often go back to the visual material. I'll

photographs, or if I'm lucky enough to be in Italy,

and-forth approach to looking and writing seems to be productive for me. Strategy three: reading. When I'm facing a serious challenge in writing or thinking, I have to step away from the problem and focus on something else. I tend to read fiction for creative inspiration. There are a few authors I keep close by, especially Oscar Wilde and Jeanette Winterson. Their often-cerebral writings touch upon aesthetics, truth, and artifice, and I'm

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 As a young art historian, I'm convinced that the  
 career of a professor is a monumental feat of  
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 facts, ideas, and sources we keep as guideposts,  
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 new ideas and discoveries in the field, to the  
 fluctuating rhythms of the academic calendar,  
  
 by life itself. In the uncertainty of this shifting  
  
 sense of stability and even confidence. With every  
 new challenge and every new project, I'm grateful  
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 them, it would be like encountering Rome for the  
 first time—without a map.

*Two things significantly*

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Jason Ciejka

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infuse this process.

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my subconscious to form itself into an idea. I  
will be troubled for days by this idea. It will cut

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Benazir Bhutto's assassination or the Virginia  
Highland murder, a killing in 2010 of someone

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of corporeality that urge me to create. Often  
it is some sort of intense passion—or a wrong  
enacted on a person—that gets my juices flowing.

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through my process I inflame to cauterize. I'll

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head. These inform what media I choose if they  
take a physical form, whether sculpture or paint,  
or of late, the ultimate choice of drawing. All of

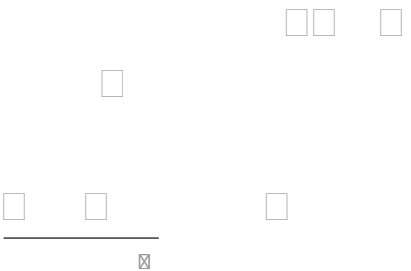
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form that might fill the hole in the space in my  
chest, the cavity in my heart, where I press my life.

For this exhibition I selected examples from  
series of works that present a continuous thread  
of ideas from the past ten or so years. These have  
progressed over time through a range of media.

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statements from those points in time.



# Lisa Alembik



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