

Permeated Surfaces affirms the potential for tactility amidst the intractable landscape of slick monitors and digital displays. The work in this exhibit uncovers the interstices that exist between surface and substrate. Paint, paper, ink, and plastic are transfigured into forms that highlight the potential for depth in a world flattened by pixels and screens. Sandra Perlow, Cydney M. Lewis, and Allison Svoboda—three Chicago based artists—restore hand labor by performing tangible acts of staining, folding, knotting, twisting, layering, and tearing. These diverse artists share an interest in exploring the boundaries that exists between the natural and the artificial. Each respond to their immediate environment by sampling and remixing forms, matter, textures, gestures, and color in improvisatory layers and marks, re-imagining the urban landscape.

The painted collages of Sandra Perlow are rich fields of color and organic abstraction mixed with layers of found and printed paper. Animated shapes, forms, and textures exist in a state of flux, emerging and disappearing. Found and printed matter expands the strata of the pictorial surface; flatness is penetrated. Perlow's paintings and works on paper are an "energetic [re] shuffling" of urban imagery: from commuter trains, to skyscrapers, to bustling crowds flowing through the city streets. Her compositions are records of movements and matter.

The plastic tendrils of Cydney M. Lewis's sculptures and installations attest to the resiliency of nature, like the weed that pushes its way through the concrete gap or the spreading network of ivy on a built structure. Lewis tries "to create a world I want to live in by transforming materials from my present reality." Discarded plastic bags and synthetic ephemera are given a new purpose through creative intervention. Debris is refashioned into dendrites through intimate choreographies of the hand. The relief sculptures and installations perform in space, branching and spreading into root-like rhythms of renewal.

The natural spread and flow of ink becomes a point of departure for the organic sculptural drawings of Allison Svoboda. Svoboda intuitively works with materials like mulberry paper and ink. Accidents often provide paths for the generation of the work. "Every gesture and every flaw is readily visible." Her process of layering and assembling reflect the complex fractals and radiating spirals found in natural phenomena. Spontaneity and structure are balanced through physical acts of dissolution and constitution.

These artists create objects that reassert the importance of touch and gesture. Human engagement has become increasingly remote and mediated through automated movements of touching screens, pressing keypads, and swiping across graphic tablets. To permeate the surface is to truly connect and remain rooted.

Stephany E. Rimland,
Associate Professor of Art History, Harper College, IL.

Sandra Perlow Statement

This new body of work furthers my investigation into a visual call-and-response. Each painting is an amalgamation of formal gestures, which perform visual dialogues. Biomorphous forms float and merge, drift and collide like improvised verse. In each painting, there is a new path of discovery; the process is renewed through assembling and disassembling.

My paintings are accumulations of forms and textured surfaces. Paint, oil stick, and marker weave over and under layers of patterned paper. At times, the textures have the tough grit of a Philip Guston painting; at other times, paint and paper elude one another through a push and pull of occlusion and illusion.

The fluid movement of textures and forms are inspired by the view from my Chicago studio: the flow of pedestrians, the colorful patterns of window displays, and the syncopated geometry of skyscrapers. In my work, singular forms move through complex networks and organic shapes find balance with architectonic structures. These visual exchanges reflect the ongoing conversation between nature and industry, self and community.

Many of the titles of my paintings are drawn from literary sources. As in phrases like *Hardly Possible* or *Kind Advice*, they are utterances, which are mirrored in the visual grammar of my work. Like the titles, which are suggestive, I listen to the process until it is time for the viewer's response.



Sandra Perlow, *Hardly Possible*, collage and acrylic on canvas, 24" x 30" 2014



Sandra Perlow, *Kind Advice*, woodcut, collage, and acrylic on canvas, 24" x 30" 2014

Gallery Hours

Monday thru Thursday: 10 am – 9 pm
Friday and Saturday: 10 am – 4 pm
Sunday: 1 – 4 pm

Cydney Lewis Statement

In this series titled *Earth's Gems*, I approach the process of combining natural forms and unconventional materials through a dual sensibility of whimsy and urgency. By transforming industrial materials that are ignored or discarded, I construct a new language of landscape that reinvents nature in order to remind us of its value.

By reusing, reshaping and reinterpreting waste, I hope that this body of work can be understood archeologically as though a future civilization has embalmed and reinterpreted samples from our contemporary urban environment.

I am also exploring the relationship between art, craft, and nature by conceptualizing a new vision of our utopian future. The idea of plastic flora draping in space or the juxtaposition of dry-cleaning bags, refashioned into snowdrifts inhabited by butterflies, re-imagines a beauty modified by the very materials that are currently contributing to the earth's demise.

Each piece is individually handcrafted over a period of time. The slow repetitive labor of twisting and knotting hearkens back to our distant ancestors who reshaped the natural materials of their environment for their survival. I hope to redefine the future by physically translating extinction into evolution.



Cydney M. Lewis, *Yellow Jackets*, plastic bags, wire, and thread, dimensions variable, 10" w x 24h x 4" d 2014



Cydney M. Lewis, *Hot House Flowers* (detail), plastic bags, wire, and thread, 2014.



Allison Svoboda, *Mandala* (detail), sumi-e ink on mulberry paper collage, 2012



Allison Svoboda, *Kite Mandala*, sumi-e ink on mulberry paper collage, 6 x 8' 2014

Allison Svoboda Statement

Organic patterns and forms found in nature have an instinctive draw. The theory of fractal geometry; infinite layers of self-similar shapes repeated in every living thing, hold an endless fascination for me. Plants, feathers, skeletons; this enormous energy in nature influences my work.

The same way a plant grows following the path of least resistance, the quick gestures and simplicity of working with ink allows the law of least resistance to prevail as the ink finds its path across the paper. Ink gives a more spontaneous experience as I allow the ink to move where it flows naturally.

With this process, I work intuitively through thousands brushstrokes creating hundreds of small paintings. I then collate the work, tearing out images that work together. When I find compositions that intrigue me, I then delve into the longer process of collage, taking the time to digest the image.

The patterns or lines of the work often have multiple inferences. The flow of a tree reaching to the sun has the same movement as a river reaching toward the ocean. Water droplets bind together and become fluid just as arctic ice builds up and melts apart. The dichotomy in our natural world of destruction and growth, light and dark, fear and wonder is very important to my work.



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