

Visualizing MacDowell

MEDAL DAY 2009

A LOOK AT THE VISUAL ARTS AS MEDAL DAY TURNS 50

PRESENTATION SPEAKER

LYNNE TILLMAN

WITH SPECIAL PLEASURE, I'm very happy and privileged to introduce and honor Kiki Smith, who has been, in addition to everything else she is, and fortunately for me, a close friend since 1978. I've also had the good fortune to watch her develop into one of the leading artists of her generation — one of the most significant artists in contemporary art. And I want to thank MacDowell for asking me to speak about Kiki Smith and her contribution to art, and also for allowing me to be a Fellow here seven times, when I did a lot of writing, and no writing, and visited Colony Hall a lot, and made phone calls, and bothered people in the office.

Kiki Smith makes sculpture, drawing, photographs, installations, multiples, one-of-a-kind objects, in two dimensions, three . . . I can't think of a medium or form she hasn't tried. Smith's art investigates, plunders, reverses, and revises myths, spirituality, art history, women in history, poetry, feminism, religion — her own Catholicism mixes with Buddhism, paganism, deism, and pantheism, I think. She explores sexuality, social mores, violence, fear, horror, finding ways to conjure images of the anguish, pleasures, and vicissitudes of life in an anatomy not only of bodies but also of daily existence, of how we live our lives. There may be many silicon bronze crows lying on a floor but there is, as in every object she makes, much more

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than meets the eye. What hovers below consciousness is being beckoned; the things that act on us without our knowing are being awakened.

An artist is recognized for producing a significant body of work when — because of and through it — a space has opened up, in aesthetics, in thought generally, in imagining, in feeling, in people's finding a greater capacity for understanding, and a greater allowance or encouragement

Over a century of evolving aesthetics and movements, The MacDowell Colony has nurtured the innovations and talents of more than 1,700 visual artists. These talented printmakers, photographers, painters, sculptors, and installation artists have all come to the Colony for singular and collective reasons: the unusual New Hampshire light; the particular privacy of its spacious studios; or the community of peers from other disciplines, which serve to directly enrich their own work. Since Achsah Barlow Brewster painted her first canvas in 1908, **Benny Andrews, Milton Avery, Robert Cottingham, Heide Fasnacht, Qin Feng, Glenn Ligon, Faith Ringgold, and Stephen Shore**, among many others, have followed, each defining and contributing to this artistic laboratory for the sake of the culture outside it.

This Medal Day, MacDowell awarded its Medal in visual arts to another pioneer who has redefined the culture: Kiki Smith. Said **Lynne Tillman** — writer, critic, MacDowell Fellow, and this year's Medal Day presentation speaker: "Kiki Smith's influence on contemporary art and culture is immeasurable. In under 30 years, Smith has invented an identifiable language all her own. She has touched materials and forms and transformed them, their grammar. Her art, its ideas, her commitment to art's necessity and the process of making it, is formidable and astonishing and revelatory. Her impact was immediate and is enduring. Her art has shaken things up — especially received ideas — and keeps doing so."

It is perhaps unsurprising but no less appropriate that the Colony shares this aim with its 50th Medalist: a commitment to not only art's necessity, but also to art that shakes things up and endures.

We invite you to read through our Medal Day section, which features Tillman's and Smith's remarks, as well as a stirring speech given by MacDowell President Carter Wiseman. We also include special coverage of the visual artists who were in residence during Medal Day, and profile a few whose work first saw the light of day at the Colony before appearing in current venues around the world. Enjoy!



ELLEN PAGE WILSON/COURTESY FACEWILDENSTEIN, NEW YORK



Top: Visual artist Kiki Smith addresses the Medal Day crowd. Above: Picnickers at Medal Day. Left: Smith accepting the Medal from MacDowell Chairman, Robert MacNeil.



KERRY BRAN MCFATE/COURTESY FACEWILDENSTEIN, NEW YORK



ELLEN LABENSKO/COURTESY FACEWILDENSTEIN, NEW YORK

Artwork by Kiki Smith. Left to right: *Constellation*, glass and bronze on Nepal paper, installation dimensions variable, 1996; *Born*, bronze, 3' 3" x 8' 5" x 2", 2002; *Sleeping Girl*, bronze, overall installation approximately 44" x 55" x 2 1/4", 2004.

MEDALIST

KIKI SMITH

THANK YOU. I want to thank the MacDowell community very much for giving me this award, and I want to thank Lynne Tillman, also, for her beautiful words and her beautiful friendship. One of the titles of one of her books was *Living With Contradictions*, which has been my motto for trying to assemble my life. I thought getting a medal — it puts you in the lineage of other creative people, and that's something. Many artists are living in their own heads, in their own houses, and their own hearts, so it's very nice to be reminded that we are in a lineage. We are in a community, all of us, in the lineage of creativity and the world, and that's something that we all can access freely at any time in our lives.

I just came from New Mexico, from working in a shop making prints, and I thought, well, as you're sleeping in this bed where all these other people for 50 years have been sleeping in this bed, or some version of this bed, making prints . . . And I'm thinking, Oh, it's like here. Like America was predicated on these utopian communities. Then I thought, it's like, sleeping here, where you have this utopian community that's based on temporariness, where people are transient, coming and going. So it's like all these people sleeping in the beds of prior creative people, and maybe some of that's rubbing off

We are in a community, all of us, in the lineage of creativity and the world.

on them, or they're accessing that. Then I think, New York is like that, too, or maybe it's like the same thing. That you have a form that stays the same, but then there's transience and movement within that form. That, maybe, is what makes it stable — is that it gets to be removed, like creativity, which generationally gets to be renewed and revealed.

The only thing I would say is that I hope that future recipients of this award are not only of European descent, because our creativity in America is much broader than that. But I'm very privileged and honored to be here, and very excited to be in New Hampshire.

Thank you very much.]

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for questions, doubt, ambivalence, and joy. The artist's sense and sensibility, ideas, skill, psychology, beliefs, gender, religion . . . all of her life has led her toward what she wants to make and put into the world. Her artwork realizes itself when it appears before viewers whose vision and experience create its various meanings. The greatness of art has, historically, relied upon the range of interpretations viewers find in a work, each era redefining it on its own terms. And though art may hang on walls or sit on floors or be pasted on billboards, it functions in us. It works in us.

Kiki Smith's influence on contemporary art and culture is immeasurable. In under 30 years, Smith has invented an identifiable language all her own. She has touched materials and forms and transformed them, their grammar. Her art, its ideas, her commitment to art's necessity and the process of making it, is formidable and astonishing and revelatory. Her impact was immediate and is enduring. Her art has shaken things up — especially received ideas — and keeps doing so.

Smith's work is frank and tender, brutal and compassionate. It seeks to communicate without having any particular message. Her application of a material is unique, almost

mysterious, as if Smith is discovering its special properties as she works like an alchemist with paper, glass, bronze, papier-mâché. In her hands — and she is a very hands-on artist, her hands are always at work — glass becomes sperm, a teardrop, a drop of blood. A sculpture of a human body turns light as a sparrow in papier-mâché, or heavy as a black hole in bronze. She innovates in textiles and others of the so-called homely arts, and remakes their missions. By incorporating them into her practice, she challenges the division between domestic and public spaces, between high and low art. Her work is tactile and tangible and solid, and also nearly invisible and fragile and ephemeral.

In 1980, I think it was, Kiki showed me some paintings from a series she called *Severed Limbs*. She'd painted an arm, a leg, each separate on a board — separate limbs in hard, bright colors. Weird, severe, and charming, *Severed Limbs* gave me a hint of what was to come. In 1982, at The Kitchen, an alternative music space in New York, she produced work for a small show entitled *Life Wants to Live*. That sentence, "Life wants to live," also augured things to come. It contained her philosophy about human endurance, about all of nature facing multitudes of obstacles. The body, she says, makes incessant demands. It has cycles



Presentation speaker **Lynne Tiltman** (left) and Medalist Kiki Smith in Savidge Library.

independent of a person's will and attitudes. And what we do is try to survive.

Smith's first solo gallery exhibition in New York was in 1988 at The Fawbush Gallery. I attended the opening. The gallery was crowded; everyone was very excited — something new was happening. In a way, Smith had gone back to basics, peeling away and revealing the body, focusing on its interior spaces. Things were inside out. Two pieces especially come to mind. Called *Untitled*, though it relies

on naming, made in 1987, one installation was comprised of 12 large bottles — glass, water-cooler-sized containers — labeled Blood, Tears, Semen, Saliva, Oil, Milk, Sweat, Pus, Mucus, Urine, Diarrhea, and Vomit. The 12 sat on a table — 12 bottles, 12 months. It's the body we don't see, or the one we hide and can't control. There was *Ribs*, also from 1987, a pair of human ribs made of white terra-cotta sewn together with thread and hung from nails, as delicate as the huge jars were heavy and brooding. A piece of the body's structure was a strikingly vulnerable entity.

Smith produces in so many media and in so many materials that the fact she has said of herself that she doesn't have any particular talent boggles the imagination almost as much as her art. But in a way, Kiki Smith couldn't help

in the original *Oklahoma* and *Charley's Aunt*. I knew Jane Smith for many years. She died on August 5, 2006. Jane was an elegant, unusual, intelligent, and beautiful woman. Kiki once had a loft in an isolated building on the East River, very far downtown, when the South Street seaport area was abandoned and still salty. One night, Kiki had a party, and when her mother, Jane, decided to leave, I asked if I could have a lift. I was scared to walk around and find a cab or subway. We went outside. It was very dark, and to me it felt ominous. Jane looked toward the East River and declared, "Doesn't Kiki have the most romantic front yard in New York?" Jane Smith was exceptional in all ways.

Kiki grew up in New Jersey in a Victorian house, but filled with talk about contemporary art, and with visitors that

But before Kiki decided to be an artist, almost as if to ward off the inevitable, she learned plumbing, EMT, carpentry, and electrical work. And parts of that knowledge are also in her art. And her house is often under construction.

With her Fawbush show, Smith mapped her territory — the body — and for some years afterward, she revamped, reimagined, and newly represented, in particular, the female body. She took on the female subject as it had been portrayed in all previous art history. Her female figures were abject; they crawled on the floor, one with dark glass beads trailing from her rectum, one with yellow glass beads played on the floor from her urethra, glass urine pooling everywhere. They were melancholy, blessed, ethereal. They were neither heroes nor victims. They were survivors of all kinds of wars, internal and external.

Two sculptures from 1992 demonstrate Smith's canny and uncanny approaches. One called *Virgin Mary* is a flayed body made from beeswax and cheesecloth and wood. It stands about five-and-a-half-feet high. Mary's arms hang slightly away from her body, her palms open to receive, head bald, eyes cast down modestly. It's an unnerving piece. The other

Her art, its ideas, her commitment to art's necessity and the process of making it, is formidable and astonishing and revelatory.

but become an artist, though she didn't decide to be one until her mid-20s. Her father was the acclaimed sculptor and architect Tony Smith, and her mother, Jane Smith, was an opera singer and actor who appeared on Broadway

included Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. Her sister, Seron Smith, knew from [the age of] 12 that she wanted to be an artist, and her resonant and subtle photographs of interior spaces and architectural forms are exhibited around the world.

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Make Art

As part of the 50th anniversary

of Medal Day, the Colony wanted to offer a memorable art-making experience to guests. Envisioned by sculptors and Colony Fellows **John Bisbee** and **Wade Kavanaugh**, the Make Art program began three days before the event with the assembly of a steel armature donated by Belletete's, a hardware store in Peterborough. With a generous grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation — as well as help from the Sharon Arts Center, several volunteers, many donors of yarn, and, finally, the great enthusiasm of the Medal Day crowd — the site-specific sculpture grew each day, knot by knot, string by string, until a vibrant network became a stand-alone sculpture.

On Medal Day, young and old spent minutes and sometimes hours contributing to the sculpture by taking a skein and weaving it around the armature, connecting their string with another's, or dramatically tossing yarn over the framework to see where it would go on its own. Lit from beneath at night, the Medal Day sculpture was a colorful symbol of how individual expression can unite all of us in creative, thought-provoking experiences.



Above: Volunteers participating in Make Art. Right: **John Bisbee** (left) and **Wade Kavanaugh**, co-creators of Make Art. Below: Make Art at night.



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Bearing Witness

In 1999, noted AIDS activist and art historian Robert Atkins wrote: "Art has always played a role in coming to terms with collective tragedy, and the role of the artist has frequently been to bear witness. Surely an art of memory like **Eric Rhein's** can help harmonize our views by suggesting that honoring the past is one way to live more fully in the present." What Atkins is referring to is *The Leaf Project*, begun by Rhein out of his MacDowell Fellowship in 1996 and recently included as part of the Art in Embassies Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. *The Leaf Project* is currently on view at the ambassadorial residence in Cameroon, Africa.



COURTESY PHOTO

When Rhein came to the Colony in 1996, he was adjusting to his return to health from the then-new HIV medications. Walking the fields and woods at MacDowell, he gathered autumn leaves, each invoking memories of a friend or acquaintance who had died from the epidemic. The actual leaves inspired facsimiles "drawn" in wire and named for the deceased individuals.

"*Leaves* was conceived through a mystical experience in the hills of New Hampshire," recounts Rhein. "While wandering MacDowell, I was moved to tears at being welcomed into that

vibrant community when, not even a year before, my health would not have permitted the experience. My senses were acutely open, and one by one, I picked up leaves until a host of kinsmen was gathered in my arms, 86 in all. The 'portraits' were pinned to the wall like the limbs of an extended family tree."

Rhein has sustained the project for more than a decade now, and his collection has grown to more than 180 portraits, which serve as a moving reminder that, in order to honor memory, one must first never forget.

Visual artist Louise Nevelson, the 1969 Edward MacDowell Medalist.



COURTESY PHOTO

POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

In early October, The White House released a list of 45 artworks selected by Michelle Obama for display at the first residence, including two works by MacDowell visual artists and three by past MacDowell Medalists. Borrowed from the National Gallery of Art and chosen for the Obamas' personal living quarters were: **Edward Corbett's** *Washington, D.C. November 1963 III*; **Glenn Ligon's** *Black Like Me No. 2*; Richard Diebenkorn's *Berkeley, No. 52*; Jasper Johns's *Numerals, 0 through 9*; and Louise Nevelson's model for her sculpture *Sky Covenant*.

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sculpture, *Getting the Bird Out*, is a bronze head that lies on the floor, a piece of string coming from its open mouth, at the end of which is a bronze bird. It's a little wicked. Both works are handled very differently, formally and conceptually. Mary is more than naked; she is stripped of flesh. The bronze head is spitting out a secret, or vomiting a burden, or realizing a kind of renewal. I think of the head as a haiku.

Kiki Smith is thoroughly engaged in art history, the history of iconography, and the language of materials, and also in words and narratives. She has used poems by Emily Dickinson and collaborated with contemporary poets, such as MeiMei Bersenbrugge. She plays with fairy tales. In 2001, Smith made an installation for the International Center for Photography in New York City based on the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. She sculpted a wolf in bronze; its head raised up; a small, red, cloth glove gripped in its mouth. There was a sculpture in papier-mâché of Little Red Riding Hood in a red cape, her face bearded. Humans and animals, part animal/part human creatures, emerged more and more. Smith departed from or shifted direction from the female body to the stories humans tell

and have told themselves for thousands of years to explain the unexplainable.

Smith is incredibly prolific. Everything she touches turns to art, so I can only describe a few works of hers and hope to give you an idea of her complex and manifold project.

Recently, Kiki Smith has been addressing death, not so much as a physical body but as the absence and loss of a body — the spirit and what remains after death — in drawings of imagined spaces and empty chairs, and portraits of seated and standing women with windows framing them. In addition to telling people she has no particular talent, Smith also tells everyone she can't draw, but her drawings are unique, modest, and honest. Honesty in art is hard to explain. Maybe I should say that the eye, mind, and hand of Kiki Smith are moving together, not holding back. The drawings seem to be direct transcriptions from the imagination of memories, of cherished objects that have been lost.

Kiki Smith keeps changing and questing and finding things out, and her work describes unseen and weird states of being. She's a daring artist. If you asked her, she'd say she's not brave. But she is. Being brave means, really, to work against fear. Her pieces don't arise from the desire to please or fit into a program; they result from a compulsion to delve into what

she cannot completely know. Her courage has been an overcoming that feeds her art as she reaches for the huge subjects and questions — the greatest we have. She boldly takes on taboos and sacred cows, but she also, just as boldly, doesn't concern herself with what's fashionable or unfashionable.

She goes where she has to go to create images with which she orders and reorders her experience, and then ours.

In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud said, "We can only laugh when a joke has come to our help." To paraphrase him, we only respond to art when it speaks to our wishes and hopes and fears and doubts and thoughts. A work of art reaches us — it helps us — because we need it.

So, we needed Kiki Smith. We need her work, brilliance, insights, wit, extraordinary talents, and her courage — which has encouraged so many of us. She goes to the heart of things with a good heart. Her peers, and younger and older artists, cite her work with awe. They rely on its generosity. And, returning to what makes significance and greatness in art, generosity is a big part of it. Work is generous when it generates. And hers does. Kiki Smith is and has been and will continue to be the most generative of artists, her work growing richer and richer in time, and with time, offering us more and more.]



PRESIDENT

CARTER WISEMAN

AS YOU ALL KNOW, The MacDowell Colony opens its studios to the public only one day each year. The reason for this is to allow the artists to create with a minimum of interruptions. This is the day we all get to come through the gates together. And we are thrilled to have you all here.

In other places and other times, this institution — along with what it produces: artists like Kiki Smith, and people like

you who support the Colony — would not have survived for long. Writing in 1994 in *The Rape of Europa*, Lynn H. Nichols reported that, "... on March 20, 1939, 1,004 paintings and sculptures and 3,825 drawings,

Totalitarians hate the uncontrolled nature of creativity. But they are no less aware of its enduring value, to both enrich and to inspire. The enrichment they are willing to exploit; it is the inspiration they fear.

watercolors, and graphics were burned as a practice exercise in the courtyard of the Berlin Fire Department's headquarters."

In a more recent book, the historian Richard J. Evans describes scenes from the Nazi invasion of Russia: "The houses in which famous Russian cultural figures had lived were deliberately targeted: manuscripts at Tolstoy's Yasnaya Polyana were burned in the stoves, while the composer Tchaikovsky's house was trashed and army motorcycles driven over the musical manuscripts that littered the floor." Yet at the same time, such Nazi leaders as Hermann Goering were furnishing their hunting lodges with Cranachs and Dürers, while making deals on the side with what they themselves called "degenerate" art looted

from museums and private collections all over Europe.

Why this apparently contradictory behavior? I think it is evidence of the frightening power of art as both a threat and a resource. Totalitarians hate the uncontrolled nature

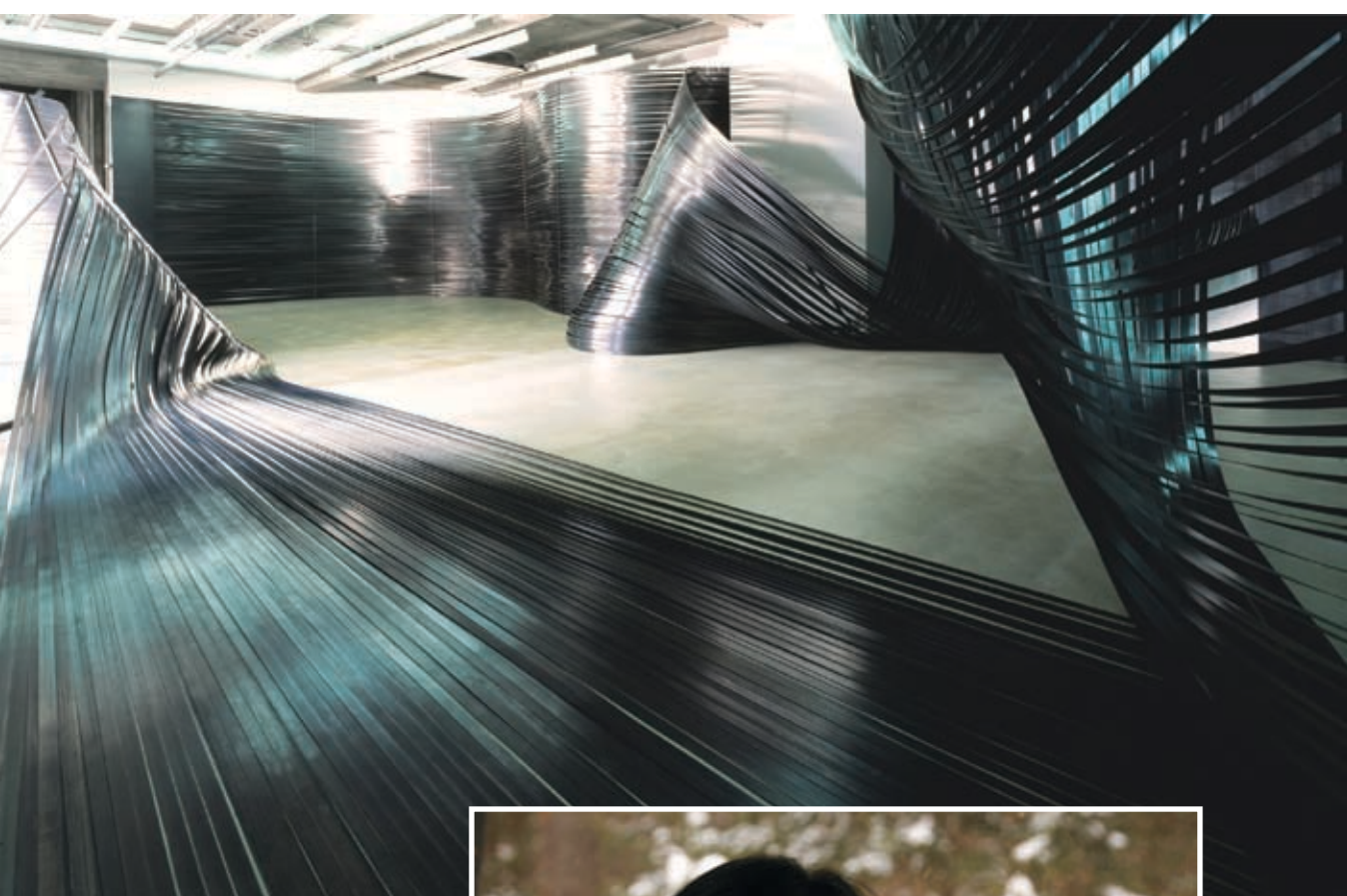
of creativity. But they are no less aware of its enduring value, to both enrich and to inspire. The enrichment they are willing to exploit; it is the inspiration they fear.

Happily for us, Edward and Marian MacDowell created the Colony 102 years ago to encourage inspiration. But they knew that the process needed protection. That is why MacDowell doesn't offer regular tours to see artists at work. It is why the artists who are opening their studios to you today are doing so voluntarily — not because they were told to.

In 1649, Oliver Cromwell destroyed the Irish monasteries and their manuscripts, and 284 years later Hitler closed the Bauhaus. Those arch-vandals have long vanished,

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Under the Rainbow



end of the Rainbow, steel band, dimensions variable, 2009, by Jinnie Seo.



This past spring, artist Jinnie Seo opened her impressive *end of the Rainbow* installation at the Mongin Art Center in Seoul, South Korea. But it was in the winter of 2008, in Alexander Studio, that this large-scale stunner began. "Being completely secluded in the midst of a monochromatically serene landscape at MacDowell, my creative mind also became devoid of cluttered thoughts," writes Seo. "In the end — and through this lucid problem solving — I was left with the essence of my desire to explore space: spatial relationship and spatial movement."

Seo's treatment of space is striking indeed and offers a paradox of liberation and constriction that both focuses one's mind and frees it. The installation creates labyrinth-like passages where the diagonal lines of steel fence and curvaceous steel bands intersect, offering unusual entry into the temporal and spatial realms. These passageways then become points of encounter between what Seo calls "the artist's and the viewer's cognition." "The viewer roams through, contemplating endlessly changing multiperspective views of intersecting spatial lines. Contrary to its title, which implies the traditional definition of a colorful presentation of a rainbow, the installation is purposely achromatic, emphasizing the elasticity of steel. Consequently, the perception of the material also becomes redefined. Moire-like effects and rhombus shapes offer an additional gravity-defying experience."

The rainbow as symbol is also intentional, reinforcing Seo's exploration of perspective. As it turns out, an actual rainbow will seem farther away the more one tries to reach its end. And two people standing in two different spots never see the same rainbow because the phenomenon depends on the relationship between the viewer's position and the sun. These playful oppositions provoke a point: "We cannot ever reach the end of a rainbow to discover 'a golden pot,'" says Seo, "and similarly, it is doubtful that there is such an answer waiting at the *end of the Rainbow*. But it is always the human progression towards the unattainable that is laudable."



Above: *Named For Derrick Bell*, oil on theatre muslin, 100" x 147", 2003, by Kate Javens. Left: The artist in her studio.

Animal Energies

It may seem odd to keep expired birds in your freezer, but Kate Javens has resorted to this as a way of getting it right. The "it" in this case is her *Named For* series, which takes obscure but pivotal figures in American history and endows their spirits or essences, if you will, into paintings of animals. Take Andrew Furseth, a labor leader of the 1930s, immortalized on a canvas as a crow. Or Benjamin Drew, an abolitionist who interviewed former slaves who had come through the Underground Railroad — he is painted as a horse swimming in (against?) the ocean.

Though Javens lives in New York, her husband's family owns a farm outside Bath, Maine. It is this locale, and others, that have provided barn swallows and other inspirations, first for her camera (she often photographs an animal hundreds of times to study its features), then for her needle and thread (to position the subject for her brush), and finally for her canvas, where the animals are re-animated and often reborn in haunting fashion.

As it happens, the only living person Javens has painted for the *Named For* series is legal scholar Derrick Bell, whom she met at MacDowell. Next for Javens is setting up her own studio in Harlem, where a small bit of MacDowell might inspire new installments in a series that combines art and history with the aim of making art history.

GRANTS FOR 10 VISUAL ARTISTS

The Pollock-Krasner Foundation announced the recipients of its 2008–2009 grants for visual artists in September. Awarded based on artistic merit and financial need to painters, sculptors, printmakers, and artists who work on paper, the grants aim to help artists create new work, purchase needed materials, and pay for expenses such as studio rent and health insurance. This year's list of recipients included 10 MacDowell visual artists: Blane De St. Croix, Pang-Chieh Hsu, Wade Kavanaugh, Anthony Krauss, Julia Kunin, John Newman, Paul Santoleri, Carrie Scanga, Peter Schroth, and Jane South.



Wall; hand-cut paper, ink, and acrylic with wood structure; 15' x 14' x 3'; 2009; by Pollock-Krasner recipient Jane South.

but the danger has not passed. Only eight years ago, the Taliban blew up the 1,500-year-old Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan because they offended the group's interpretation of Islam. And in recent months, the leaders of Iran have threatened writers who oppose them with the usual "appropriate measures."

You are, by your presence at MacDowell, helping to protect art from such threats, even if that art may be confusing or offensive. If you are not sure of your role here, remember that virtually

The artists who work at MacDowell may well produce the works by which future generations measure us as a nation.

every important artist in history confused or offended someone in power — whether a dictator, a congressman, or an ayatollah. But when we measure the stature of a nation's culture, we inevitably turn to the works of those formerly confusing and offensive artists.

When I was working on a book about the architect I. M. Pei, a former MacDowell Medalist, he was overseeing the construction of his Bank of China building in Hong Kong. In the middle of it all, the students of Beijing rebelled, and many were shot down by tanks. I asked Pei, as a native of China, how he felt about working for a government that had turned murderous. With deep sadness in his voice, he replied, "Regimes come and go; culture endures."

MacDowell endures to help artists perpetuate the culture to which Pei referred. In these woods, they are free from outside influence and pressure. Because of this protection, the artists who work at MacDowell may well produce the works by which future generations measure us as a nation.

Think of it this way: You are not being kept out of MacDowell for 364 days a year; rather, for one day, you are participating in the mystery that yields our culture's most powerful legacy — not our cars, our computers, or our cell phones, but our paintings, plays, symphonies, buildings, and all the works of art yet to come that too many people will want to destroy.

Thank you for supporting MacDowell. Whether you are inside or outside the gates, you stand in the way of the tanks.]



Ju-Yeon Kim opens her studio to Executive Director Cheryl Young (at left), Medalist Kiki Smith, and guests.

MEDAL DAY VISUAL ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE



NICK LAMIA

ABOUT THE WORK: Recently, **Nick Lamia** has been working on a series of maps, which he regards as visual records of the discoveries of man. "While most of the earth's surface has been mapped," he says, "there still remain vast expanses of unknown around us — in science, in nature, and in thought." Of particular interest to Lamia are the uncharted spaces where technology and nature overlap and where the relationship between nature and society is in flux. He sees these unknown territories as pivotal to a sustainable future. "As we confront a worldwide environmental crisis of our own making," writes Lamia, "the importance of exploring and sharing our findings cannot be overstated."

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Lamia's work has appeared in numerous solo and group shows. Most recently, he was included in *The Brand New Deal* at Caren Golden Fine Art in New York and *Midnite Snacks* at Ghostprint Gallery in Richmond, Virginia. A graduate of the University of California-Berkeley and Boston University, he received a Guggenheim fellowship in 2003 and is currently a fellow at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in New York. He is also a director at Von Lintel Gallery in New York. Lamia is a first-time MacDowell Fellow.



Untitled, oil on canvas, 42" x 36", 2009, by **Nick Lamia**.

JU-YEON KIM

ABOUT THE WORK: **Ju-Yeon Kim** is currently working on a series of enclosed room installations with a recurring theme of *bardo*, a Tibetan word for an in-between state. There are three intermediate bardo states that a person undergoes right before and after death. "It is the second state — where reality reveals itself; when one's body, including sensations, perceptions, and emotions, disintegrate — that interests me," she writes. "In this process of the spirit separating from the body, one experiences differing psychological states and moments of extreme clarity."

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Kim has shown in both solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally in such places as New York; Washington, D.C.; Shanghai, China; and Seoul, South Korea. She has been the recipient of several prestigious residencies, including the Triangle Artists' Residency Program and the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Fellowship. Kim has also held several positions as a visiting artist and professor. She is currently working on installations for the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., and Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a first-time MacDowell Fellow.



Untitled, acrylic and paper cutouts on canvas, 54" x 54", 2007, by **Ju-Yeon Kim**.



Untitled 2, digital C-print, 40" x 50", 2009, by **Gillian Pears**.

GILLIAN PEARS

ABOUT THE WORK: **Gillian Pears**'s work focuses on the breach of boundaries between the familiar and imagined, revealing conditional human emotions. "I am focusing on a body of work that intends to evoke the elusive nature of place and metaphor," she says. "During my residency at MacDowell, Alexander Studio provided the needed space to further develop the use of light, color, and materials in my photographic work. Through intensive exploration of these elements within that space, I discovered new ways to intertwine physical space with metaphor."

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Pears holds an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and an M.S.Ed from the University of Pennsylvania. She has been the recipient of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Graduate Fellowship and the Merit Scholarship at Cranbrook Academy of Art. She is a first-time MacDowell Fellow.



BILL JACOBSON

ABOUT THE WORK: In 2007 and 2008, **Bill Jacobson** traveled to several desert locations in the American West. His interest was neither landscapes nor deserts, but rather to look for places in nature where he could create, photographically, something approximating two equal rectangles. "The relationship between the symmetry of geometry and the asymmetry of nature had always intrigued me," he says. "During my recent stay at MacDowell, I spent most days placing a 30 x 40-inch piece of foam core at different points in the woods, using the camera to record the resulting patterns of light and shadows."

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Jacobson began taking photographs as a teenager. Since graduating from Brown University and the San Francisco Art Institute, he has had numerous solo shows throughout North America and Europe. His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and many others. There are three monographs of his work: *A Series of Human Decisions* (Decode Books, 2009), *Bill Jacobson Photographs* (Hatje Cantz, 2005), and *1989-1997* (Twin Palms Publishers, 1998). In 2010, Jacobson will be included in an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. He is represented by the Julie Saul Gallery in New York, and is a five-time MacDowell Fellow.



Some Planes #436, archival pigment print, 47" x 36", 2007, by **Bill Jacobson**.



STEPHANIE SNIDER

ABOUT THE WORK: **Stephanie Snider**'s work often takes the form of drawings, paintings, collage, and sculpture, and deals with personal memory and history, as well as social and cultural space through the lens of fictional architecture and design. In her recent works, she has created fictional landscapes that draw from fairy tales, historical decorative arts, literature, and theatre. These fictional places evoke a physical landscape as well as a psychological state. "Much of the imagery that I use is present in both my two-dimensional and three-dimensional work, and each process inspires the other. The 'back and forth translation/conversation' explores notions of depth, layering, composition, and space," writes Snider.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Snider lives and works in New York. She received her MFA from the Yale School of Art, and her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). In 2000–2001, she was the recipient of the Berlin Prize/Philip Morris Emerging Artist Prize in cooperation with the American Academy in Berlin. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship for 2009–2010. Her work has been exhibited widely at such venues as the Bronx Museum and the Hudson River Museum in New York, and Galerie Thomas Schulte in Berlin, Germany. She has taught at RISD, Princeton University, Maryland Institute College of Art, Ohio University, and Yale. She is a first-time MacDowell Fellow.



Untitled (Berlin doorway); watercolor, gouache, pencil, and collage on paper; 6" x 6"; 2009, by **Stephanie Snider**.