

tacit.

a group exhibit featuring recent and regional
Craft/Material Studies alumni (2005–2010)

Megan Biddle
Jackie Brown
Andrea Donnelly
Younseal Eum
Cari Freno
Jason Hackett
Katie Hudnall
Aaron McIntosh

Sarah Rebekah Byrd Mizer
Debbie Quick
Meg Roberts
Caitie Sellers
Sayaka Suzuki
Adam Whitney
Erin Williams

introduction by Sonya Clark

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Since my arrival at Virginia Commonwealth University one thing has been clear to me. There is an abundance of talented Craft/Material Studies students and alumni. So when the opportunity for an exhibit at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond came knocking at our door, I immediately thought we should use the moment to celebrate the stellar (and often humble) alumni from the Department.

But how would we represent the breadth and depth of talent in this august group? Luckily, I had a posse of thoughtful faculty, including Susie Ganch, Susan Iverson, Bill Hammersley, Jack Wax, Allan Rosenbaum, Shay Church, and Soyeon Kim, to aid in the task. Together, we were charged with selecting from among the large pool of alumni in some meaningful way. We limited our choices to alumni who have graduated in the past five years. That narrowed our pool to over two hundred and fifty graduates. We wanted both BFA and MFA alumni artists representing all five of the Department's media areas (Glass, Fiber, Metal, Wood, and Clay). We decided to restrict our selection to regional alumni. We chose to exhibit new work not previously seen in Richmond. And, finally, even with all these parameters, the decisions still were not easy. However, culling from an embarrassment of these kinds of riches is not so bad.

In Richard Sennett's book *The Craftsman*, he speaks of Hannah Arendt his teacher and author of *The Human Condition*. Sennett describes good teachers as those who impart satisfying explanations. Great teachers like Arendt, he says, unsettle, bequeath disquiet, and invite argument. So it is with creative types. In my opinion, it is our responsibility. When I witness these skills in recent alumni I am heartened. There are fresh voices in the field. At the end of this catalog you will see a list of all the alumni who graduated between 2005 and 2010. It's a large and talented chorus of fresh voices.

The fifteen alumni selected for tacit (Megan Biddle, Jackie Brown, Andrea Donnelly, Younseal Eum, Cari Freno, Jason Hackett, Katie Hudnall, Aaron McIntosh, Sarah Rebekah Byrd Mizer, Debbie Quick, Meg Roberts, Caitie Sellers, Sayaka Suzuki, Adam Whitney, and Erin Williams) are working as full-time studio artists and at educational institutions. As difficult as it is to sum up the work of fifteen distinct artists in a few choice words, there is shared territory, a solid ground, on which many of our alumni stand. These alumni have a deeply rooted knowledge of the history and meaning in materials. And, yes, they possess a tacit understanding of their mediums and concepts. They employ these tools strategically to engage the viewer at an inherently emotional level. These artists play with our expectations. They negotiate the language of materiality and form, visual sustenance, politics, ecology, identity, and wit. They are a generation that explores the grey areas, the liminal space between boundaries. They dwell in the complexity of blending this and that rather than selecting this or that. In the realm of this complexity,

these artists have found their authentic obsessions. Whether those obsessions are rooted in the fragility of human experience or sensory imagery, the idioms these artists provide elevate the field.

Plato said, "Craftsmen are all poets...they are not called poets, they have other names." Many of those names appear throughout this exhibition catalog. Enjoy the poetry here and the poems yet to come.

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