



## Paper Chasers

*ArtWorks show digs deep into form and philosophy*

**MATT MORRIS** // AUG 25, 2008

One of my favorite aspects of Elaine Lynch's worldview is a graceful tempering of plunging conceptual terrain with a focus on the direct handiwork of the artist. This has been true of her own artwork for as long as I've known her, and within *Paper Chasers*, her latest curatorial endeavor as

gallery coordinator at ArtWorks Gallery, she has assembled 14 artists who all exemplify cohesion in form and content.

With paper being the partial premise of the exhibition, there's a substantial constant that calls attention to the unique solutions each artist extricates from the broader continuum of connotations that paper, unto itself, conjures up. As an accompanying text, I recommend reading *Paper Machine* by Jacques Derrida, in which he says, "Paper is the support not only for marks but for a complex 'operation' — spatial and temporal; visible, tangible and often sonorous; active but also passive (something other than an 'operation,' then, the becoming-opus or the archive of the operative work)."

Such theoretical functions manifest in roles culled from the materials of the exhibition: paper as banal tool (toilet paper as in Kristin Beal-DeGrandmont's series of sculptures or paper towel as in Molly Donnermeyer's "Golden Roll"), ornament (Stacza Lipinski's impressive vellum greenery that overtakes the front window like a display at an

Anthropologie store) or reminders of environmental and anti-capitalist concerns (as in Will Hutchinson's two works that require interested consumers to perform tasks like planting and traveling to obtain the art).

Most of all, many of the exhibition's artists use paper and drawing to experiment with ontological considerations. Taking advantage of the aesthetics of diagrams, hypotheses and cataloging, these finished art objects ("fully realized, independent works," as Lynch concludes in her curator's statement) retain senses of possibility and preliminary, in contrast to what is assertively "real" or "concrete."

Ryan Mulligan's "The Museum of Stress Hair Loss" is a self-conscious curatorial project within the larger exhibition that overtakes a full wall in the front gallery. By rambling, uncertain means, bits of text, props and graphic lettering are arranged as a humorous *Wunderkammer* against wall paintings of a balding head and some skin affliction. Illusory artifacts with accompanying text confuse *what is* with *what is told*.

Mentions of body issues (like the hand-painted book title "I Don't Understand Portion Control"), costumed role playing (self-portraits within shadow boxes heavily decorated like action figure or Barbie packaging) and head trauma (one of several small picketing signs reads "A Brain Injury Kills Family") all skirt the central motif of hair loss with black comedy and prove the psychological legitimacy of apparent free association.

Jane Carver's send-up to Hildegard recognizes the stuff of paper as participant in history, being and biography. In her statement, she points out that Hildegard (the first biographed composer in history, a visionary mystic credited with the origin of opera) is real to us in the present by way of her identity inscribed into pages through text, musical compositions and painting.

In this spirit, Carver's "Illuminati von Hildegard" is a CD of music, whose compositional notations are inscribed into the accompanying set of illuminated marker doodles on paper. She poetically insists on the synthesis in the subject and different forms of objects: "I have my own versions of her versions of the world. The song is the drawing. The drawing is the song. They illuminate each other."

Chris Vorhees' two graphite drawings are variably, rigidly patterned ("Drawing of a Log Jam") and flourished ("Drawing of an Explosion or a Dustcloud"). The pair implies

sequence, together forming a parable of causality that's economically pleasing in form and tactfully suggestive in its illustrations of construction and deconstruction.

I have known Steve Kemple and his art for several years; his addition to the exhibition is profound and shows beautiful evolution in his art. His expansive drawing "Neon Graphite Hypershape 2" references a larger body of work that uses fluorescent ink and meditates on psychedelia, Asian scroll drawings and the cosmos.

But here, constellations of squares and boxes in graphite string spaciouly through the newsprint space. Ghosts of quantum tunnels are depicted delicately and unassumingly, requiring reverence from the viewer's attention.

Every artist in *Paper Chasers* is deserving of consideration and sensitivity to the larger philosophical dialogue that can happen beyond the leveled premise of the materials involved in the exhibition. They're well selected and beautifully curated into thoughtful arrangements.

This is one of the greatest triumphs I've seen from ArtWorks Gallery. It should not be missed.

---

**PAPER CHASERS is on view at ArtWorks Gallery downtown through Sept. 5.**

**<https://www.citybeat.com/arts-culture/visual-arts/article/13019151/review-paper-chasers>**