

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

8-12-2011

'en pathos'

John Remo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Remo, John, "'en pathos'" (2011). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

In Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

'en pathos'

By

John Paul Remo

Date: August 12th, 2011

Thesis Title: 'en pathos'

Thesis Author: John Paul Remo

Chief Advisor Keith Howard

Associate Advisor Elizabeth Kronfield

Associate Advisor Luvon Sheppard

Department Chairperson Don Arday

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Images.....	ii
Artist Statement.....	1
Thesis Statement.....	2
Goals and Objectives of this Thesis.....	3
Artist's Autobiography.....	4
Evolution of this Thesis.....	5
Artist's Inspiration.....	6
The Body of Work.....	12
Conclusion.....	37
The Future.....	39

LIST OF IMAGES

- Img. 1. *Laocoon and his Sons* (Laocoön) c. 25 BCE **
- Img. 2. Polykleitos, *Spear Bearer* (Doryphoros), Roman marble copy after the original bronze figure, ca. 450-440 BCE **
- Img. 3. Lysippos, *Apoxyomenos* (The Scrapper) 1st century CE Roman copy after an original bronze of c. 330 BCE **
- Img. 4. John Paul Remo, Excerpts from sketchbook 2008
- Img. 5. John Paul Remo, Excerpts from sketchbook 2008
- Img. 6. John Paul Remo, Excerpts from sketchbook 2008
- Img. 7. Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-1504 **
- Img. 8. John Paul Remo, *Visual Perception*, 2008 Monoprint with etching, oil stick, charcoal, ink, acetone transfer and chine colle Plate: (3) 3"x3" Paper: 22"x30"
- Img. 9. John Paul Remo, *Lure*, 2009 Monoprint with etching, woodblock, oil stick, graphite, color pencil, ink, acetone transfer and chine colle Plate: (etching) 3"x3" (woodblock) 5"x6" Paper: 14"x15"
- Img. 10 John Paul Remo, *Ali*, 2010, Plasticine Size: 13"x18"x27"
- Img. 11. John Paul Remo, *Stuart*, 2007 Charcoal, Pastel Size: 11"x15"
- Img. 12. John Paul Remo, *The Knee*, 2009 Charcoal, Pastel Size: 11"x15"
- Img. 13. Wendy Artin, *Tamara Reveuse*, 2009, watercolor on Rives BFK paper, 23 x 20 cm *
- Img. 14. Henry Yan, Figure Drawing, Charcoal *
- Img. 15. John Paul Remo, *Radials*, 2010 Watercolor, Size: 30"x40"
- Img. 16. John Paul Remo, *Counterpoise*, 2010 Watercolor Size: 30"x40"
- Img. 17. John Paul Remo, *Rise*, 2010 Watercolor Size: 12"x18"
- Img. 18. John Paul Remo, *Turn*, 2010 Watercolor Size: 12"x18"
- Img. 19. John Paul Remo, *Essence of Man*, 2008 Etching Plate: 6"x3" Paper: 15"x11"
- Img. 20. George Donald, *Kabuki*, 2005 *
- Img. 21. Robert Rivers, *Alabama Song*, Etching 24" x 36" *
- Img. 22. Lamination of ImagOn film onto a PETG (Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol) Plastic

Printmaking Plate, which is an inexpensive alternative to traditional copper plates.
Photograph by Aspasia Tsoutsoura Staikou

- Img. 23. Exposure of an image with the correct dot structure to be transferred to the prepared plate. Photograph by Aspasia Tsoutsoura Staikou
- Img. 24. Developing of exposed ImagOn plate into a developer composed of soda ash and tap water. Photograph by Aspasia Tsoutsoura Staikou
- Img. 25. John Paul Remo, *Balance*, 2010 Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"
- Img. 26. John Paul Remo, *Persuasion*, 2010 Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"
- Img. 27. John Paul Remo, *Pick Up*, 2010 Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"
- Img. 28. Photograph of Gerhard Demetz revealing the different stages in his process. *
- Img. 29. John Paul Remo, *Hubris* in original plasticine form, 3/4 front view.
- Img. 30. John Paul Remo, *Hubris* in original plasticine form, 3/4 back view.
- Img. 31. Sculptures during the ceramic shell process. The wax figures being coated with multiple layers of ceramic shell slurry after the sprues and vents are welded.
- Img. 32. After removing the sprues and vents, the cast iron sculptures are cleaned with a grinding disc and sand blasted. The sand blasting process exposes the iron and is heated to accept the patina. Photograph by Scott Riddle
- Img. 33. Vinegar is used to create the rustic patina. Photograph by Scott Riddle
- Img. 34. Once the iron figures achieved their patina, the two sculptures that make up 'The Argument' were chosen to receive a wax finish creating a deep, rich hue.
- Img. 35. Richard MacDonald, *Caruso III* *
- Img. 36. John Paul Remo, *The Argument*, 2011
Cast Iron, Size (male): 9"x10.5"x26" Size (female): 10"x11"x28"
- Img. 37. Joshua Bronaugh, *Prayer for St Valentine*: 48" x 60" *
- Img. 38. John Paul Remo, *Feet Up*, 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x40"
- Img. 39. John Paul Remo, *Aggression*, 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x40"
- Img. 40. John Paul Remo, *Aggression* (Detail), 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x40"
- Img. 41. John Paul Remo, *The Pose* (Detail), 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x40"
- Img. 42. John Paul Remo, *The Pose*, 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x40"
- Img. 43. John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Locate and remove the

deceased section of the colon using a linear stapler

Img. 44. John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Suturing an anvil to remaining colon

Img. 45. John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Check the connection between the reattached colon and rectum

Img. 46. John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Orientation view showing the placement of the trocars and the incision site

Img. 47. MFA Exhibition Overview, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011

Img. 48. Paintings, drawings and prints, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011

Img. 49. Paintings, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011

Img. 50. Drawings and prints, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011

Img. 51. Sculptures with drawings and prints, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011

Img. 52. John Paul Remo, *The Argument*, 2011 Cast Iron Size (male): 9"x10.5"x26" Size (female): 10"x11"x28"

Img. 53. John Paul Remo, *Hubris*, 2011 Cast Iron Size: 7"x10.5"x26"

Img. 54. John Paul Remo, Femoropopliteal Bypass Overview, Digital

Img. 55. John Paul Remo, Femoropopliteal Bypass Orientation Overview, Digital

Img. 56. John Paul Remo, *Overseer*, 2011 Acrylics Size: 40"x27"

Img. 57. Heating the cast iron female figure from *The Argument* Photograph by Scott Riddle

Img. 58. Photograph by Josh Marrah

* Image reproduced with permission from the Artist.

** Image reproduced from the Wallace Memorial Library (*Artstor* Database, <http://www.artstor.org>.)

ARTIST STATEMENT

“There is a kind of complexity that disguises itself as simplicity.
There is a rhythm that seduces the mind and titillates the senses.
There are those that are quick and confident.
There are those that are meticulous and exact.
There is a satisfaction that is difficult yet effortless.
Indulge in every stroke.
Savor every mark.
Explore and let not a single morsel escape.”

John Paul Remo

The beauty and mystery I search for in my work is well described in the lilting words of Lord Byron’s poem entitled “She Walks in Beauty”, where he says in part;

“One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair’d the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o’er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.”

Lord Byron (1788 - 1884)

The passion and the process of drawing for me, ‘making my mark’, became a stimulus that spread to multiple practices in the visual arts.....printmaking, painting, sculpture, and even digital media.

THESIS STATEMENT

‘en pathos ‘

A Greek term that translates to

‘ in passion ‘ .

The human figure is a timeless and classic subject that has always bestirred feelings of passion in the hearts of both artist and viewer.

It can easily take a lifetime’s artistic endeavors to master just a tiny aspect of the figure’s potential. More important than the literal realm of the figure, there also lies a subjective realm, a place where my work is created and lives.....a place ‘between’.

In trying to capture the essence of the human figure, each artistic medium offers its own unique visual interpretation, be it with paint, ink, charcoal, clay, metal or wood.

My philosophy as a visual artist is to welcome risk and chance, and to nourish interest into passion.....for the true artist’s work is most certainly created.....‘en pathos’.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THIS THESIS

Within this written and illustrated thesis you will be able to take a glimpse into the evolution of my work.....through my eyes.....the eyes of a dedicated and fluent artist.

You will be introduced to the inspirations, techniques, and procedures of my 'body of work', as well as to the mistakes that were made and learned from along the way.

Whether one is a fine artist, architect, graphic designer, or photographer, the core of the visual arts field is always 'drawing'.....making your 'mark'.

You will be introduced to contemporary artists of today that convey similar aesthetics, have the enthusiasm to experiment and most of all have a genuine passion for their art.

I believe the most important goal of this thesis is to showcase the array of work I have been able to create during my years of study.....to bring you right into my world of the visual arts and hopefully, touch your heart with a glimpse of the passion that drives me to make art.

ARTIST'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

For the past several years, which include two years in the Masters Program at the Rochester Institute of Technology, I have devoted myself to creating visual imagery through observational practice. To further develop these skills, I have constantly researched my subjects and how best to represent them.

Further to the basic two-dimensional properties such as quality, value, proportion and perspective, I have concentrated an intensive focus on the human figure, thus it seemed only natural that I should enhance my knowledge of human anatomy. I was fortunate to take advantage of the medical illustration program at R.I.T., which also polished my abilities in the digital medium.

Having studied both traditional and current digital media, I am able to offer an array of knowledge and experience in several other fields as well. Drawing, painting, sculpture and printmaking have been my main areas of expertise but I am also well versed in three-dimensional media, from using simple elements such as paper and tape right through to lost wax casting methods. I am also familiar with digital programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Design, Dreamweaver and Corel Painter to name a few.

At the University of Central Florida I worked with traditional etching, woodblock and linoleum printmaking as well as screen printing. In addition to my Masters Degree I will also be receiving a Graduate Certificate in Non-Toxic Intaglio Printmaking which has prepared me to research and introduce new non-toxic methods for safer studio environments and procedures.

Throughout my arts training in the fields of printmaking, painting, sculpture and even digital media, I have become convinced that drawing is the core of the visual arts and is an essential skill necessary for success.

EVOLUTION OF THIS THESIS

It is sometimes easy for an artist to get lost in the glamor and allure of becoming “the next big thing.” In this time after ‘post modernism’ a free-for-all attitude has colored the fine arts. Many artists of my generation have focused primarily on the conceptual.

The art of today has reached astonishing sales prices such as Damien Hirst’s ‘Lullaby Spring’, a medicine cabinet with 6,136 pills, selling for 19.2 million dollars in June of 2007.

I have come across too many young artists that do not realize the importance of foundational practice to every field of the visual arts. Concept is a crucial factor in the visual arts, but I do not agree that we must cast aside the traditional practices that shaped what fine art is today.

Whether you are an architect, graphic designer, photographer, sculptor, printmaker or painter, the core of visual arts is drawing. Whether you draw with pencil or with your mind’s eye, you constantly test and challenge your compositional abilities, developing them through hands-on experience and practice.

ARTIST'S INSPIRATION

I can still vividly recall the moment I first really understood how to make a 'mark'. The lights were focused on the model as my instructor George Donald demonstrated how a line that captures the soft quality of skin could also convey muscle and bone simply by varying the stroke of his pencil.

Another important piece of advice was given to me by professor Robert Rivers, dealing with artistic influences when he said, "Don't look at your favorite artists alone, more importantly look at the artists who inspired them." Taking that advice to heart I found myself thinking back to Greek and Roman sculptures and their creators.

Michelangelo himself was present during the unearthing of a compelling Greek treasure named '**The Laocoön**' in the year 1506. The massive scale and sensuous Hellenistic aesthetic, particularly the depiction of the male figures, influenced his future work and has most certainly played a role in my love of the figure and the medium of sculpture.



Above:
Laocoön and his Sons
(Laocoön)**

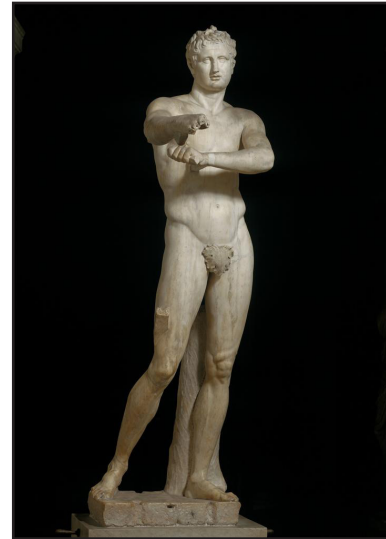
'Doryphoros' (Spear Bearer) It is thought Greek sculptor Polykleitos designed this work. A characteristic of this piece is the classic contrapposto in the pelvis, where one leg seems to be in movement while he stands on the other.¹ The lost bronze original (450-400 BC) presented the correct human proportions using a 1:7 ratio of the head to the full figure.



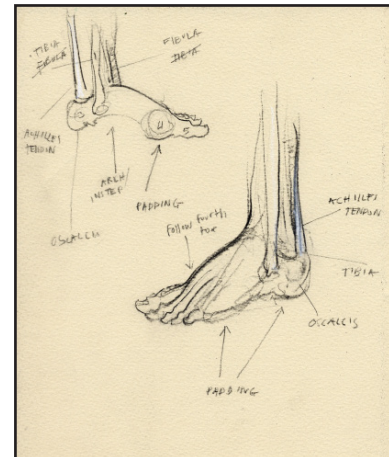
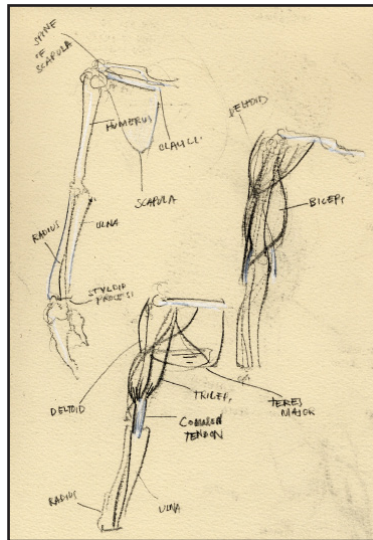
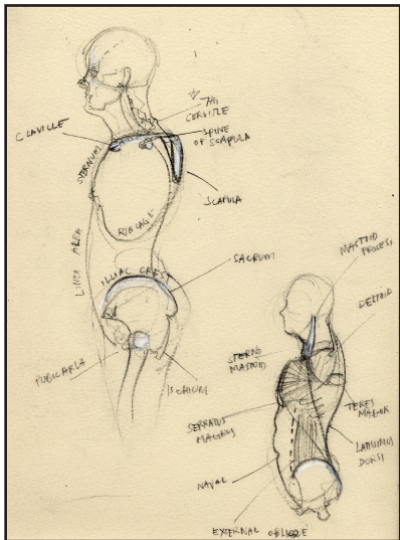
Left:
Polykleitos, *Spear Bearer* (Doryphoros), Roman marble copy after the original bronze figure, ca. 450-440 BCE **

¹ Wikipedia, "Doryphoros," last modified May 9, 2011, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doryphoros>

'Apoxyomenos' (The Scraper) Here we see an athlete caught in the act of scraping oils from his arm with a stridgel. This sculpture, slightly larger than life-size, is characteristic of the canon of proportion pioneered by Lysippos using a 1:8 ratio of the head to the full figure (Wikipedia). The smaller head and longer, thinner limbs were a part of a deliberate decision to exaggerate the figure. After rigorous study and practice drawing human anatomy I have created my own unique visual language which also uses deliberate exaggeration to heighten the viewing experience. There is a significant difference between exaggeration and abstraction. Exaggeration is based on structure keeping the function the same whereas abstraction does not depend on structure but rather on essence alone.



Lysippos, *Apoxyomenos* (The Scraper) 1st century CE Roman copy after an original bronze of c. 330 BCE **



John Paul Remo, Excerpts from sketchbook 2008

My work allows the viewer to become a part of it, to be intertwined with its meaning and importance. Being an artist means becoming one with your media, the same as learning a new language and speaking fluently in it. I work from a live model refining my drawn image with repeated layering of line. During this challenging struggle there are occasions when the stars seem to be aligned and everything works perfectly. I dissect the image to the bare bones and try to decide which marks or colors will work better than others and why sections of a composition should be left raw and others meticulously rendered. The human figure is a timeless subject.

Past artists that I admire include Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Degas, Rodin, Schiele and Klimt. The works of these great masters have set a standard to achieve and surpass. Leonardo took on multiple projects contributing to science, technology, art and the architecture of his time, constantly learning, even dissecting cadavers to further his understanding of the human body and how to draw it in his work. At the age of 25 Michelangelo had already completed a respectable portfolio of work that included the *Pieta* and the immense statue of *David*. Looking up to these artists pushes me to strive for the highest possible level of quality in my work.



Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-1504 **

At the Neue Galerie in Manhattan there are rooms of masterful paintings and sculptures done by Austrian artists such as Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele. A sketch by Klimt, done in blue pencil of a reclining figure, is one of his best in my opinion. Each of these artists has his or her own unique image making process. Rembrandt and Caravaggio use chiaroscuro in their work contributing to depth and drama, yet the style is distinct to both artists. Rodin and Degas both expressively describe their sculptures, and again each style is unique.

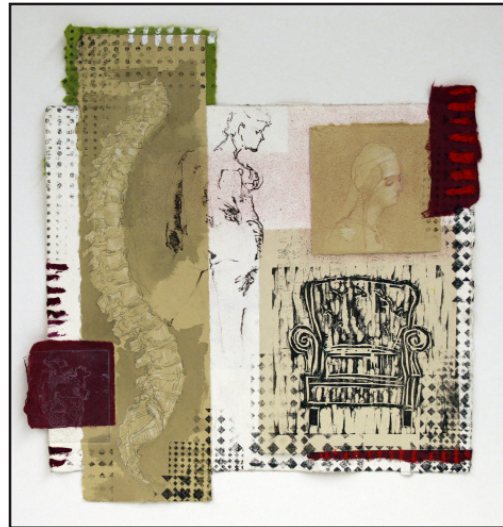
Contemporary Artists of today that intrigues me include Wendy Artin, Joshua Bronaugh, Henry Yan, Richard MacDonald, and Gerhard Demetz. Artin, Yan and MacDonald take a traditional approach in their respective mediums. Artin uses watercolors with finesse, capturing the values of her subjects. Yan creates figures with charcoal and great gestures. Macdonald works with Cirque du Soleil to capture the dynamic poses for his sculptures. Bronaugh, a painter, uses motor oil and milk in addition to common paints to develop his images. Demetz builds his sculptures with multiple layers of wood in a way that affects both formal elements and context. It is empowering to see new artists of today exploring unique ideas and styles with such great gusto.

Each of these artist share a similar quality with my work and will be explored as each medium is introduced.

Dealing with such a common subject as the figure creates the challenge of keeping the work fresh and unique. Since the cave drawings of earliest man, the figure has been a most worthy subject. Like many artists of my generation, I continue to search for better and more natural ways in utilizing the materials of each media to aid in depicting the imagery of the figure. More experimental approaches continually challenge the cognitive thought process in image making, leading to fresh outcomes.



John Paul Remo, *Visual Perception*, 2008
Monoprint with etching, oil stick, charcoal, ink, acetone transfer and chine colle Plate: (3) 3"x3" Paper: 22"x30"



John Paul Remo, *Lure*, 2009
Monoprint with etching, woodblock, oil stick, graphite, color pencil, ink, acetone transfer and chine colle
Plate: (etching) 3"x3" (woodblock) 5"x6"
Paper: 14"x15"

It is not simply the style or look of an artist that stimulates my creativity. Although abstract artists are stripped of the traditional means of representation, there are still moments in abstract work where the response to the material is much more meaningful than any other kind of visual depiction.

During the Masters program, my time was spent rigorously studying the figure, becoming more familiar with artistic anatomy and learning how to visually describe the subject from observation. As well, time was spent honing techniques learned during my undergraduate experience at the University of Central Florida. New materials were introduced during the program as sculptures emerged. Each medium was further explored and began to contribute to the other, feeding the thought process.



John Paul Remo, *Ali*, 2010,
Plasticine Size: 13"x18"x27"

I believe that every artist has the ability to become excellent; that a path set to success is built on practice. There are few traits that separate the good from the great and the great from the excellent. Talent has become a crutch and an excuse as to why we are not better. But as studies² have shown, when talent competes against enthusiasm, dedication, passion and perseverance, the victor is always the person who is engrossed in rigorous practice.

Development is a *cognitive*³ process. One has to be aware of the variations that may arise out of certain conditions. Drawing in silence or with music, use of differing methods of lighting, using the non-dominant hand and pushing the boundaries of the media and surface are just a few variables.

I have been fortunate to have had a vast array of mentors that introduced me to their own particular methods and techniques. With rigorous practice the variety of techniques learned evolved to a system that works best for me. I have worked with innovative artists like Keith Howard who pioneers health effective ways of creating art and traditional artists like water-colorist Luvon Sheppard who offers solutions such as how bread crumbs can remove pencil marks or how adding honey to the water can change the consistency of a watercolor.

I strive constantly to overcome the challenges I set for myself. Each victory over these limitations continues to develop my technical skills and allows me to set new levels to further test my abilities.



John Paul Remo, *Stuart*, 2007
Charcoal, Pastel Size: 11"x15"

² Geoff Colvin, *Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else* (New York: Penguin Group: 2008)

³ Self-communication pertaining to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as contrasted with emotional and volitional processes.

THE BODY OF WORK

A Search for Timelessness

As I continue to evolve as an artist, the satisfaction and fulfillment I gain from the *mark making* process becomes ever more apparent. There are unique traits that each medium lends to the artwork being created.

Drawing

George Donald said, "Drawing is like having an intelligent conversation with yourself." The mastery of drawing has become my deepest commitment. It is a daunting challenge to capture a fleeting moment on paper, a moment that is filtered from eye to hand. Drawing is the foundation of artistic endeavor. A seductive moment occurs when rich pigments placed correctly on paper capture the eye and invigorate the soul.

My image entitled *The Knee*, is about visual observation and the collaboration between the artist and his/her materials. It is the result of finding the image, then losing it and finding it again. This constant correction procedure builds up a richness that emerges from the surface of the paper.

A quick sketch of the model is done with a hard charcoal pencil. Pastel is then applied to find certain colors that dominate an area. With constant rubbing, erasing and painstaking attention to what is apparent before my eyes, layers begin to build up and colors begin to interact. This reconstructive process is repeated until an image of emotion and observation aptly reflects the captured moment



John Paul Remo, *The Knee*, 2009
Charcoal, Pastel Size: 11"x15"

Some areas become very rich in color adding to the value and depth of the work, while other areas are erased back to the surface of the paper which can create a sense of light. This quick and energetic process allows the drawing to remain fresh as if it were completed just moments before it is viewed.

Contemporary artist, Wendy Artin uses watercolor with great finesse as she captures the values of what she witnesses. Similar to my search for honest mark making, she allows her medium to direct what needs to be depicted. To further explore an honest moment, she also works at the same specific time of the day to accurately convey the light that is true to what she sees.



Above: Wendy Artin, *Tamara Reveuse*, 2009, watercolor on Rives BFK paper, 23 x 20 cm *

Right: Henry Yan, Figure Drawing, Charcoal *



Building and rendering a form from observation, Henry Yan pushes charcoal throughout the composition. Working in rapid or meticulous methods, he is able, in both, to capture a likeness given 10 minutes or 2 hours. While each methods accurately renders his forms, I feel that his limitations of time allowed a more honest method of mark making with less time to react or over-think the image, the process allows a human condition.

These contemporary artists of my generation reaffirm confidence in my search for honest *mark making* as they themselves follow a similar aesthetic.

Working more and more often with the human figure I continued to challenge myself to take different approaches in capturing the moment. Drawings such as *Counterpoise* and *Radials* were the first of many experiments dealing with a moving figure. What could be more challenging than trying to capture a moment in time and space that lasts for less than a second? How does one truly capture a fleeting moment?

As my quest for honest mark making continued, a particular drawing technique known for its innocence came to the fore. Drawing with the non-dominant hand led the transition from left-brain drawing to right-brain drawing. This exercise brought forth more techniques that offered more challenges as well, and combined with blind contour work, offered the most honest of mark making.

Trusting my eye and hand and working with them in sync produced confident strokes. The marks and lines created a sense of mystery surrounding the figure. The repetition of arms and limbs moved in and out of the viewer's eye as faint limbs gradually appeared creating a sense of direction.



John Paul Remo, *Radials*, 2010 Watercolor, Size: 30"x40"



John Paul Remo, *Counterpoise*, 2010 Watercolor
Size: 30"x40"



John Paul Remo, *Rise*, 2010 Watercolor Size:
12"x18"



John Paul Remo, *Turn*, 2010 Watercolor Size:
12"x18"

Having the model repeat a particular motion allowed me to continue layering the blind contour work. Adjusting the tempo also created new challenges. My response during fast paced movements was to blindly draw with both hands to keep up with the pace. Watercolor seemed the most appropriate medium to add value and tone to these high velocity drawings since it presented fast yet delicate results. These limitations brought out the best of my creativity and mark making, beginning a new body of work.

It is refreshing to see artists of today value the traditional practices of the past. Both Artin and Yan show extraordinary technique, accomplishing masterful compositions. Their approaches capture both simplicity and great complexities. Working with motion and limiting the time to draw, I feel that I have also reached a similar level.

Printmaking

The process of printmaking allows me to experience work in multiples.....reusing the same images in a number of various ideas. This feeds the desire to experiment. Traditional etching was the first technique I approached and I can still recall the first copper plate I pulled from the press. I had worked on a single plate diligently from preparing it, to the scraping off of the hard ground to reveal the crisp metallic copper to be etched. The whole process was captivating, including painstaking efforts to clean the plate, rolling on an even coat of hard ground like layering a skin made of honey, then smoking the plate and wiping off the soot. An appreciation began for process.



John Paul Remo, *Essence of Man*, 2008
Etching Plate: 6"x3" Paper: 15"x11"

Studying under the likes of Robert Rivers and George Donald, I was introduced to their aesthetic preferences as printmakers, while Keith Howard taught me an appreciation for the unexpected and from this a love for the "artifacts of the process"⁴ emerged.



George Donald, *Kabuki*, 2005 *



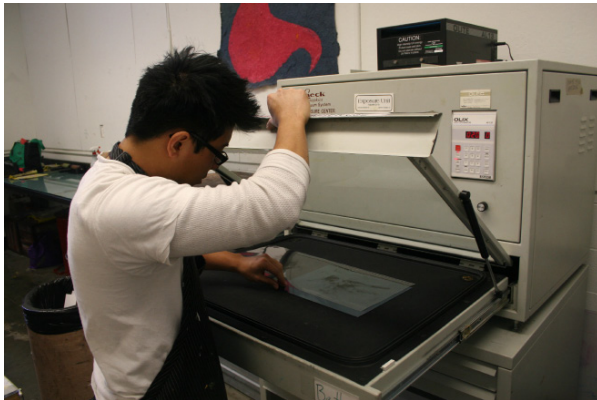
Robert Rivers, *Alabama Song*, Etching 24" x 36" *

⁴ Keith Howard

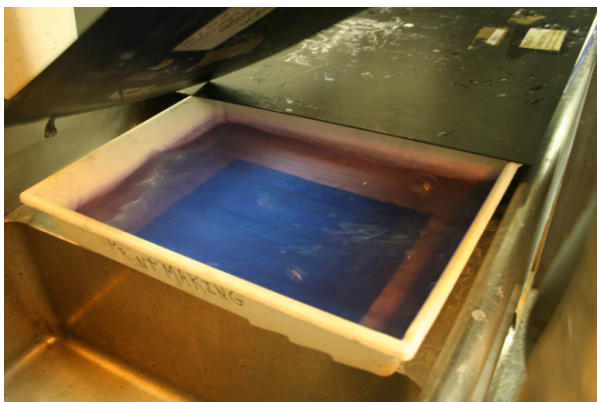
Anticipation for the accidental and uncontrolled natural images grew. Marks that were never intended to be part of the composition were invited. Traditional and contemporary printmaking allows a constant flow of experimentation in creating and composing an image. As professor Keith Howard introduced me to the latest non-toxic and contemporary methods of printmaking, increasingly more opportunities arose in many directions regarding image creation. With his newest methods, even digital technology can be applied to enhance images that are later printed on an etching press.



Lamination of ImagOn film onto a PETG (Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol) Plastic Printmaking Plate, which is an inexpensive alternative to traditional copper plates.



Exposure of an image with the correct dot structure to be transferred to the prepared plate.



Developing of exposed ImagOn plate into a developer composed of soda ash and tap water.

These latest techniques allowed a much smoother transition from drawing to print. Attention was created using the digital halftone technique with ImagOn⁵ film. This Intaglio-Type print mimics the etching process in inking and printing but allows a more versatile approach by exposing not only plates but also transparencies. An open cell plastic plate PETG (polyethylene terephthalate glycol plastic printmaking plate) is used as the base to laminate the ImagOn film which is a light sensitive photopolymer film mainly used in circuit boards but utilized here to expand the printmaking field. Once the film has adhered to the plate and dried, it is ready to be exposed to the transparency that is set to a particular dot structure. This dot structure creates a series of points that is translated to the plate using ultraviolet light. The ability to use transparencies allows the opportunity to utilize digital software such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Once the image is transferred to the plate it is developed using a solution created with ordinary tap water and soda ash. After the allotted time in the developer, the film is stabilized using vinegar and is ready to print.



John Paul Remo, *Balance*, 2010
Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"

5 Keith Howard, "Printworks Magazine"ImagOn, compiled on 7/96

<http://artmondo.net/printworks/articles/imagon.htm>

The images entitled *Persuasion* and *Pick Up* were achieved in a similar fashion, beginning with my drawings done from observation of the subject. 'Persuasion' was posed with Samantha gracefully moving her torso. 'Pick Up' depicted the model Julie bending down and lifting her hands high in completion of the movement. Keeping the legs stationary allowed a static point to balance the motion happening in the composition.



John Paul Remo, *Persuasion*, 2010
Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"



John Paul Remo, *Pick Up*, 2010
Intaglio Type Plate: 22"x30" Paper: 30"x40"

With the absence of certain areas of the figure evident while conveying a repetitious direction of motion, an abstract image is obtained that may or may not depict a figure at isolated moments. Much like the joy of natural marks made in the process, each line or smudge contributes to something much greater than a figure but rather an exploration into the realm of abstraction. An achievement that occurs naturally within the printmaking process.

Sculpture

Gehard Demetz constructs the groundwork of his sculptures using multiple layers of wood with gaps in certain areas. Once the pieces are fixed together, he carves his figures, leaving areas rough while certain characteristics are highly polished and rendered. Chosen areas of the depicted “figure” are omitted adding an element of mystery to the work. This mystery is very similar to the aim of my drawings and prints. It is refreshing to see other artists’ interpretations and even more exciting when they are applied to a different medium.



Photograph of Gehard Demetz revealing the different stages in his process. *

Contemporary ideas such as Demetz’s contemporary approach in creating his figures surpasses the imagery of depicting figures and highlights content with subtle absences of the form. Simple approaches like that of Demetz strengthen me to continually explore more unexpected areas of content that can rise from the most understated and overlooked areas. His process also opens possibilities to continue exploring materials that are more versatile and avoid more complex facilities that create extra work.

To my surprise, sculpture proved to be a natural and comfortable medium for me. My two dimensional drafting abilities fluidly translated to three dimensional work in plasticine. It was pleasing to experience a positive equivalent to gesture drawing and mark making. What started out to be studies took a dramatic shift when the plasticine was transformed into iron. The lost wax cast iron process is the intense progression of creating a proper mold to contain the iron when it is poured.

All of the sculptures presented in this thesis were first created with plasticine while directly observing the model. Using a wire armature, clay was built up to a reasonable mass that generally resembled the figure. The 1:7 ratio was used at the beginning and mimicked the general mass of a universal figure (although the ratio may have been elongated to exaggerate a particular pose). While the model is posing, the figure becomes more refined.

Like the drawings, each figure is refined to a point where the sculpture has the unique characteristics of each individual model's anatomy. Areas are left with marks of the artist's fingers pushing through the clay to hint at the process. The sculptures were all done in quick gesture-like manners. Each of the poses was chosen by the model in order to hold it for as long as possible.



John Paul Remo, *Hubris* in original plasticine form, 3/4 front view.

Hubris was made using a female model (Lindy) in a balanced pose, standing with legs crossed while one hand holds the other arm behind her back. Her head is held high in a proud posture.



John Paul Remo, *Hubris* in original plasticine form, 3/4 back view.

Once the pieces were completed in clay, they were critiqued. Positioning the male sculpture (Eric) in proximity with a female sculpture (Michelle) created a tension and dialogue between the two pieces that could not be ignored, thus the idea for 'The Argument' was conceived.

With the guidance of instructor Elizabeth Kronfield, a lost wax process was used to obtain the cast iron sculptures. The male figure required a three-part plaster mold to acquire a wax mold of the original figure. The two female figures used a brushable rubber compound with a hard shell to attain the wax mold. After the wax figures were released from their molds, bases were made, unique to each figure. Thickness, shape and texture were considered when developing the bases. Once the wax figures were completed on their bases, each sculpture (and their duplicates) was sprued and vented. A cup was welded beneath the bases for each before being dipped in ceramic shell slurry.



Sculptures during the ceramic shell process. The wax figures being coated with multiple layers of ceramic shell slurry after the sprues and vents are welded.

After an adequate number of layers of slurry had been built up, the sculptures were placed in a boiler to remove the wax, hence the term 'lost wax process'. Any cracks in the ceramic shell molds were sealed with mortar and the molds were then placed in a kiln before the iron was poured. Keeping the ceramic shell molds at a high temperature insures the molds will be at a similar high temperature when the iron is poured into the mold.



After removing the sprues and vents, the cast iron sculptures are cleaned with a grinding disc and sand blasted. The sand blasting process exposes the iron and is heated to accept the patina.

Once the iron has filled the molds, the ceramic shells and sand molds are broken to release the cast iron sculptures within. Sprues and vents are cut off and ground away. Using a more refined grinding disc, any unwanted blemishes are then blended into the sculpture. Then the sculpture is sandblasted revealing the open iron material ready to accept patinas. Spraying on vinegar as the iron is heated with a torch rusts each cast iron figure. The male and female figures for 'The Argument' were immediately rubbed with floor wax to achieve a rich deep brown color and to seal the iron from further oxidation. 'Hubris' was left to continue oxidizing after using vinegar to create a patina.

Upon completion of the cast iron figures, pedestals were carefully chosen for each figure, as the height at which they were viewed contributed to their visual composition. 'The Argument' employed two separate pedestals in close proximity and offset to avoid



Vinegar is used to create the rustic patina.

symmetry. The male figure was placed on the high pedestal to represent the feeling of logic and while the female figure was placed on the lower pedestal, although the female figure remains the focal point as she is significantly larger than the male.

'Hubris' was chosen to have the tallest and thinnest pedestal to accentuate her pride and vulnerability. The Argument' also plays with the balance of hierarchy in both the size of the actual figures and the different heights at which the two figures are presented. Eric is posed with a stern face looking to the right with arms crossed while Michelle is posed with hands placed on the hips in a contrapposto stance looking to the left.



Once the iron figures achieved their patina, the two sculptures that make up 'The Argument' were chosen to receive a wax finish creating a deep, rich hue.

Artist Richard MacDonald works exclusively with Cirque de Sole to capture dynamic poses for his sculptures. The importance of each sculpture relies crucially on the pose that is portrayed. Combining both the subtle and dynamic approaches of artists like MacDonald and Demtz allowed me to visualize the strong but subtle content that can be created with stationary 3-dimensional figures, like that of 'The Argument'.



Richard MacDonald, *Caruso III* *



John Paul Remo, *The Argument*, 2011
Cast Iron, Size (male): 9"x10.5"x26" Size (female): 10"x11"x28"

Painting

The ability to experiment with and enjoy the painting medium has been a revelation to me. More than just an expressive account of color and viscosity, the materials are chosen with great care. Professor Theo Lotz always emphasized the importance of the brush, the variety that is available and how unique each one is. Whether the difference was in the shape or in the type of bristle, each had a unique purpose. George Donald introduced me to the liner brush, a style that allowed me to continue my draftsmanship.



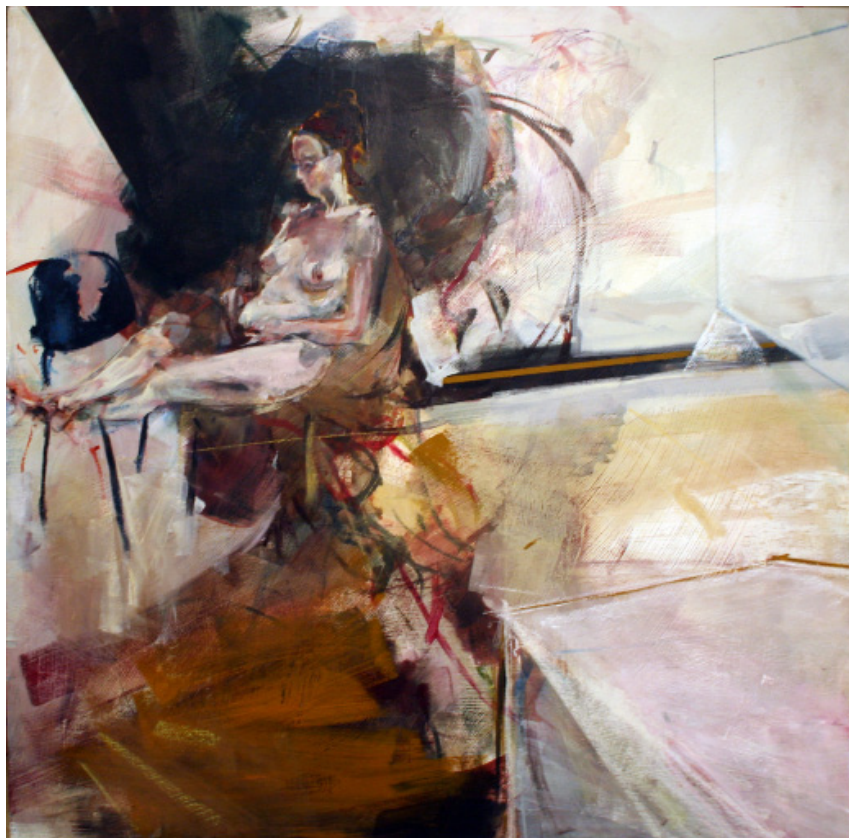
Joshua Bronaugh, *Prayer for St Valentine*, 48" x 60" *

Joshua Bronaugh, a rising painter, exudes experimentation as he uses motor oil and milk in addition to common painting mediums to develop his paintings. These unorthodox materials enrich the painterly approach in his compositions. A continuation of this sense of exploration and experimentation can be done not only with content but materials. An artist's materials become more than just objects but in fact partners that contributes to the image being made. The artist's reaction to the materials chosen is more of a collaboration. An image dealing with the same subject from the same artist changes drastically with

the different materials that are chosen to execute the composition.

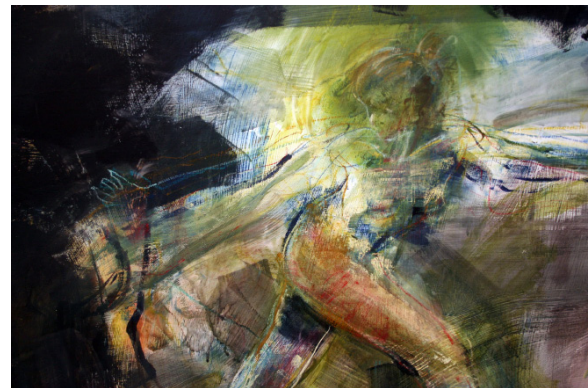
Although I myself have stayed largely within the acrylic boundaries, I have introduced pastel drawings within my paintings. I have also explored more painterly approaches as the materials contribute to the quality of the work both figuratively as an image and literally as texture develops on the painting surface.

The paintings I presented in the MFA exhibition were done on wood panels, each having multiple paintings layered beneath the image. This process of painting allowed me to welcome change even if it meant sacrificing a full painting to re-explore a certain part of the image where I saw promise. The combination of acrylic paint and pastels opened a wider spectrum of mark making for me, from graphic to organic arts. 'Feet Up' was the first work to be completed with at least three paintings beneath it.



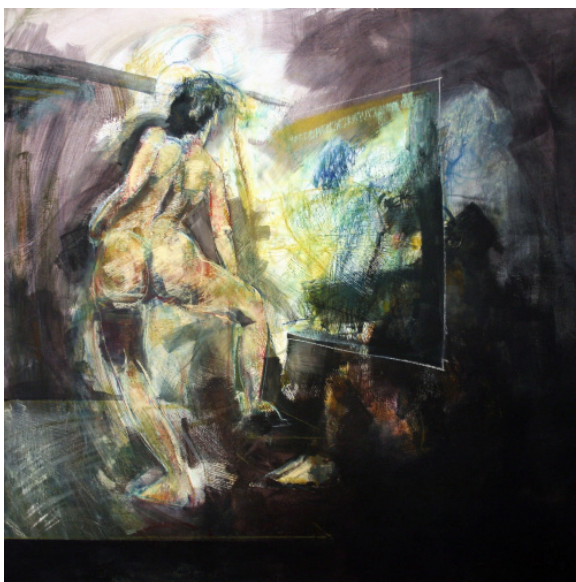
John Paul Remo, *Feet Up*, 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x40"

The painting named 'Aggression' closely followed the style of the motion drawings, using pastels to redraw the figure numerous times following the movement of the model. Another painting, 'The Pose', consisted of multiple layers of pastel drawings catching the figure in different poses. It followed a progression where one figure becomes the focal point with another being a gesture and the rest melting into the painting. Although all of the paintings convey a sort of visual ambiguity, these two are the most prominent as a result of their diptych presentation. They were created together with elements counterbalancing each other. A rich deep violet was used to simplify both compositions and to introduce more graphic elements. Simple shapes and straight lines balance the organic forms throughout the composition.



Top Left: John Paul Remo, *Aggression*, 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x40"

Above: John Paul Remo, *Aggression* (Detail), 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x40"



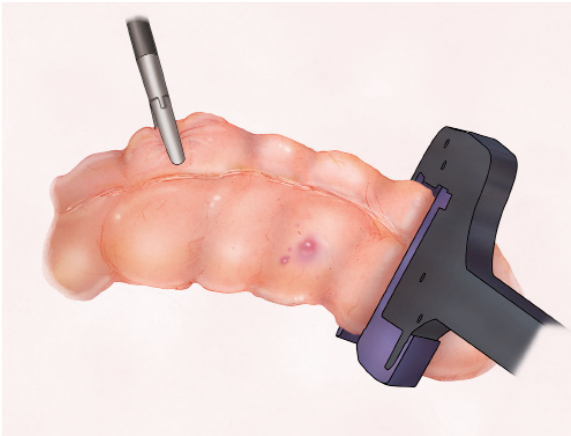
Below: John Paul Remo, *The Pose* (Detail), 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x40"

Bottom Left: John Paul Remo, *The Pose*, 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x40"

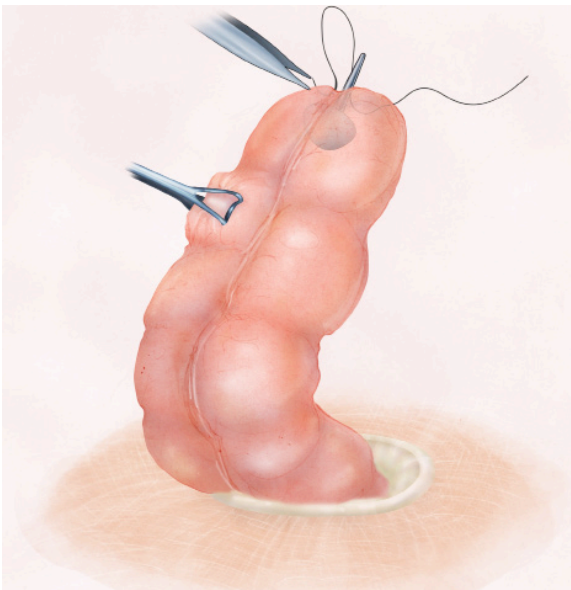


Digital

As technology becomes more integrated into the visual arts, it is only natural for an artist to explore new terrain. Medical illustration has always been a field of interest to me. With my affinity to study the figure it seemed only natural to continue into a more in depth study of human anatomy. Fine art is a broad field not limited to any kind of restriction. Right and wrong exists only in the eyes of the beholder. As I worked with medical illustrations, questions of how to accurately depict a texture, how to differentiate between certain tissues, how line art has a certain formula for line widths, etc. arose. These questions allowed me to familiarize myself with digital programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Dreamweaver and other pertinent programs.



Top Left:
John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Locate and remove the diseased section of the colon using a linear stapler



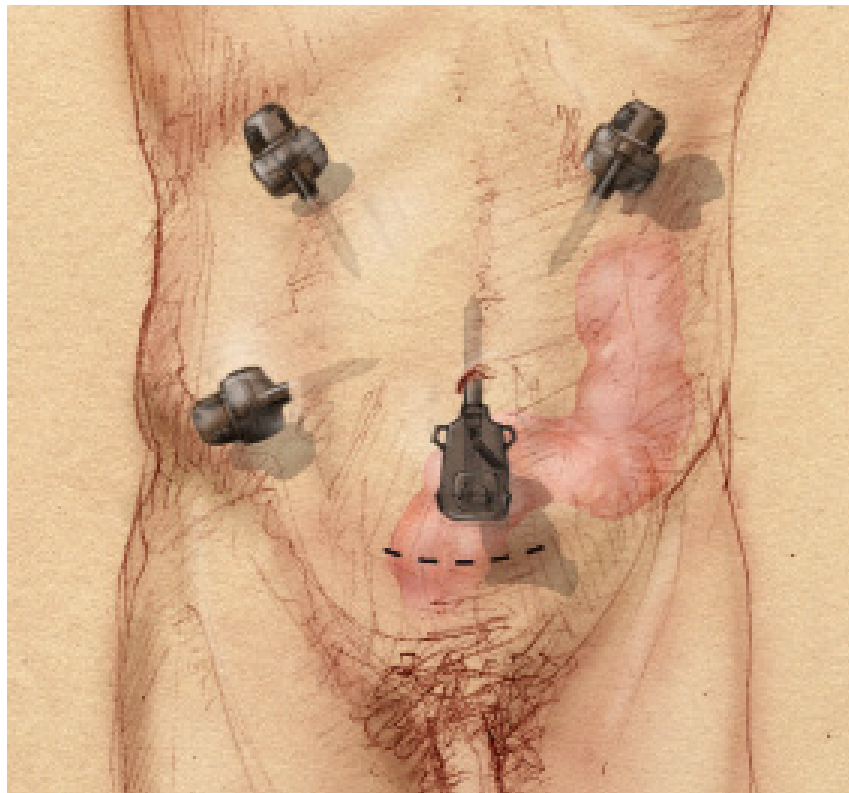
Bottom Left:
John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Suturing an anvil to remaining colon

Bottom Right:
John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Check the connection between the reattached colon and rectum



Much like painting and similar to how an artist like myself and Bronaugh reacts to his materials, these new digital programs are much like adding “milk” or “motor oil” to the tool box of the artist. There are natural limitations that occur when each medium is introduced but it ultimately becomes a collaborative experience as an artist familiarizes himself with the tools.

Using these digital programs is much like drawing with a pencil or painting with a brush but with a stronger sense of the age we live in today. Instead of having to mix paints or switch brushes, each move is done instantly with a click of a button. Although there is a loss of tangible connection with the works produced, there are benefits to the immediacy and ability to instantly reach an audience.



John Paul Remo, Laparoscopic Sigmoid Colectomy: Orientation view showing the placement of the trocars and the incision site

My Medical Illustration website presented three different surgeries in both digital illustrations and animations. Each surgery was created with the unique opportunity to watch the actual process live in the operating room as if the viewer were right next to the surgeon and his assistants. All of the illustrations began with quick sketches done during the live observation and were completed through supplemental research and rendered with digital programs like Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

Thesis Exhibition

The MFA exhibition consisted of a variety of media that were created throughout my time spent in the Masters program. It included 5 paintings, 3 drawings, 4 Intaglio-Type prints, 3 cast iron sculptures and 2 computers allowing the viewer to interact with a website I had created containing my digital illustrations and animations in the Medical Illustration field.



MFA Exhibition Overview, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011



Paintings, drawings and
prints, Bevier Gallery,
March 28-April 13, 2011



Paintings, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011



Drawings and prints, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011



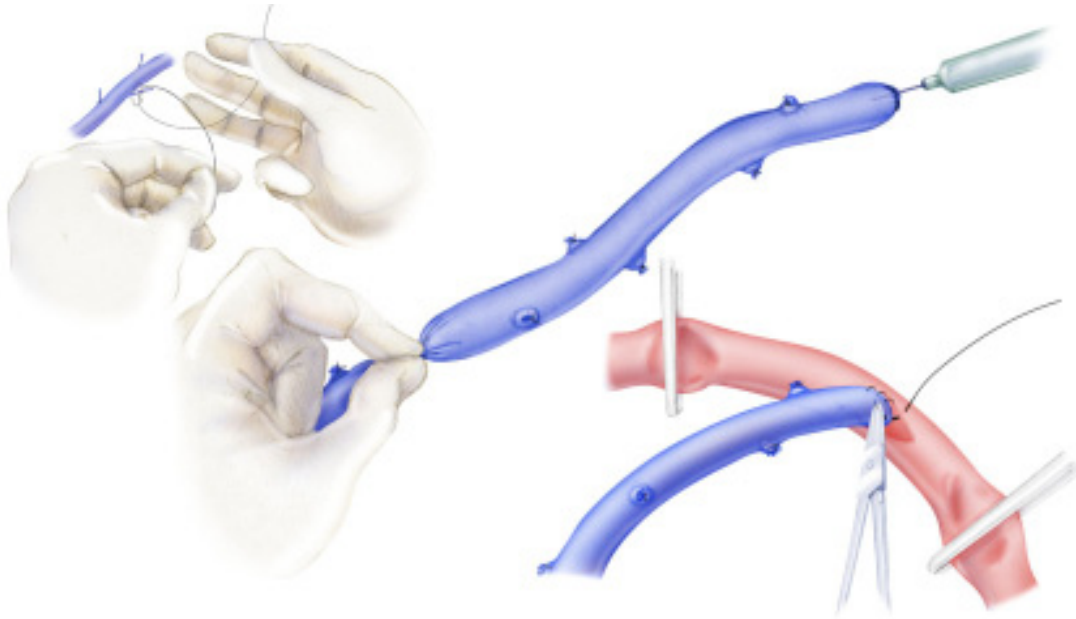
Sculptures with drawings and prints, Bevier Gallery, March 28-April 13, 2011



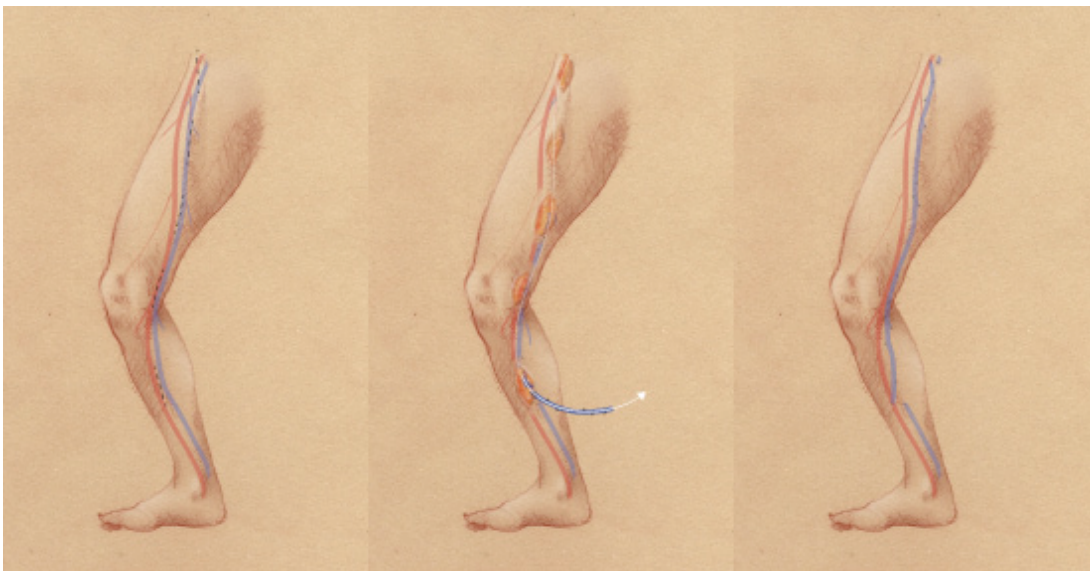
Above:
John Paul Remo, *The Argument*, 2011
Cast Iron Size (male): 9"x10.5"x26" Size
(female): 10"x11"x28"



Left:
John Paul Remo, *Hubris*, 2011
Cast Iron Size: 7"x10.5"x26"



John Paul Remo, Femoropopliteal Bypass Overview, Digital



John Paul Remo, Femoropopliteal Bypass Orientation Overview, Digital

CONCLUSION

Successes and Failings

All of my artwork has been created within a fluid and organic process that embraced any happy accidents that may have occurred along the way. The drawings are very natural since the goal was to have honest marks. The method of observing in capturing the procedures was kept unrefined and instinctive. In every case, honest mark making was successful, although some drawings communicated what was being observed more elegantly than others.

Those pieces that were not as successful were not wasted, as each one was scanned and reworked digitally to produce a successful intaglio-type print. In certain cases, sections of drawings were used to enhance other drawings while some images used repetition and elements of multiplicity. The drawings and prints ultimately balanced each other as the drawings remained delicate and sensitive while the prints were much more aggressive. Carbon black ink took the place of red pencil, revealing the indentation on the plate.

The paintings were approached with constant layering. Layers on top of layers of paint eventually enriched each piece and developed not only the image and composition but also the texture. All of the paintings were an identical size of 40" x 40", except for one. In order to fill an odd space, one painting, *Overseer*, was cropped to maintain a continuous flow when viewing the work.



John Paul Remo, *Overseer*, 2011
Acrylics Size: 40"x27"



Heating the cast iron female figure from *The Argument*

While the sculptures were in the wax state, there were many incidents with the figures falling or bending from their bases overnight. At one point the female figure from 'The Argument' had to be reconstructed, completely removing the left leg and left arm to reposition them in a more stable and successful composition manner. There is less satisfaction with the left arm as the shoulder seems anatomically incorrect, but this anomaly is embraced as just part of the process, revealing its prior malleable state. Failings are often seen as happy accidents. In a time when technology reigns supreme, it is unusual to see imperfections, but certainly everything does not need to be calculated and perfect to be beautiful and unique.

THE FUTURE

Limitations and challenges have always allowed the best of my artistic creativity to reveal itself. At the present time I am adjusting to a more meager workspace. Drawing is a field that requires very little space. Woodblock prints and acetone transfers do not require an etching press and I have adequate equipment to continue painting and sculpting.

My resourcefulness has grown over the years, as it should, to produce fresh solutions to new problems and new procedures that arise. Alternative methods such as using Earl Grey tea as a medium for painting or using white pigment with egg yolk to work subtractively above watercolors will be pursued. Although I focus primarily on the figure, I can foresee work that incorporates landscapes and other natural elements from botanical images to animal subjects. Ultimately this will enrich my body of work, creating new and more diverse collections.

Upon receiving my Graduate Certificate in Non-Toxic Intaglio Printmaking, I will be able to build versatile printmaking work spaces. My training and experience will lead towards safer procedures in the studio.

In the words of my Artist Statement I plan to.....

“Indulge in every stroke,
Savor every mark,
Explore and let not a single morsel escape”

And to do it all ‘en pathos’.



Photograph by Josh Marrah

Respectfully,

John Paul Remo

Date: August 12th, 2011