Material as Signifier from Outer Space (there lies the metaphor)

Jessica Marie Lund

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Professional artists work in a variety of ways; traditionally, a new artist would work for and be apprenticed by a more experienced artist—in this manner the new artist would learn his or her trade and be introduced to various means of establishing contacts and receiving commissions. This method is still in use today in its original mode, and has also metamorphosed into a new approach that encourages collaboration between peers. This mode expands the artwork beyond the individual artist, and is used by artists such as the Royal Art Lodge and the Starn Twins. This collection of works presents the fruition of a new artist relationship that incorporates both the aforementioned types. Kathryn Jill Johnson (Assistant Professor of the Art and Art History Department of University of Alabama in Huntsville) and Jessica Marie Lund (BA candidate, University of Alabama in Huntsville) have explored various themes including the idea of the shrine and the simple machine as it applies to human nature in a series of drawings entitled “Material as Signifier from Outer Space (there lies the metaphor).”

Why choose to collaborate, particularly between a student and teacher? Teaching and learning are collaborative processes—but one whose focus is on the student. A professor teaching creative processes must make a conscious effort to pull back a bit during a collaboration in order to allow the student’s voice to develop. The student, in turn, may feel compelled to defer to the ‘authority’ of the instructor. Together the collaborators construct the conditions for working: meet for an hour once a week, bring drawing supplies and visual references, and draw. Now and again they decide on which works are complete, or confer on what to do with an uncooperative drawing. In this situation both artists can engage without restraint and play creatively without strategy: a simple structure to elude the teacher/student dynamic and make something new on common ground.

Every Thursday for four months Kathryn Jill Johnson and Jessica Lund flew up to the second floor of Roberts Hall (University of Alabama in Huntsville). They made drawings on paper, worked with a variety of drawing materials including graphite, pen, Wite-Out, charcoal and crayon; they made simultaneous jazz hands.
Jessica Marie Lund (statement)

A paper lace doily rests on the wooden end table, protecting the orange glo-d varnished surface from glass perspiration water rings, the center, originally unblemished white, marked varying shades of gray. Thin paper tendrils stretch out across the wood grain, contrasting white and brown, preparing to drown, hoping for better. Paper lace spells out paper flowers intertwining paper bubbles with paper diamonds. Pick up the glass; take a swallow, set it back down, a new mark. These marks are a history, a residue of a past experience-life-wish. Put it all together glass passed down from grandmother to mother to daughter, held by their hands friend’s hands family’s hands, water touched by cloud fish animal person, doily presenting a canvas barrier receptacle.

now

A drawing sits on the paint blemished desk, no need to protect the ruined surface make a new mark on it, the paper unblemished white, Jill grips a pencil makes a mark. Graphite charcoal crayon metal tendrils stretch out across the paper mesh, contrast gray black gold white and brown, preparing to drown, hoping for better. Single line smudges spells out a dream bed intertwining dream nurse with dream plane. Jill: Slide the paper box; pass it on, set it back down, Jessica grasps a brush, a new mark. These marks are a history, a residue of a past experience-life-wish. Put it all together Jill/Jessica passed down from grandmother to mother are daughters, held by their hands friend’s hands family’s hands, persons touched by dream memory breath actuality, paper presenting a canvas barrier receptacle.

The exploration of symbolic imagery (toys, art history objects, old photographs, furniture, and house plans) and symbolic materials (predestined paper, metal leaf, crayon, and graphite) induce an introspective experience resulting in a memory-object. Collaboration serves this purpose by keeping the drawings fluid; they are not chained by a single person’s rigidity of thought or experience.
The trouble with a classicist he looks at a tree/ That's all he sees, he paints a tree/The trouble with a classicist he looks at the sky/ He doesn't ask why, he just paints a sky/ The trouble with an impressionist, he looks at a log/ And he doesn't know who he is, standing, staring, at this log--Lou Reed & John Cale

The trouble with collaboration is that you have to forget who you are and what you're doing. So we met. The studio was busy, public, full of distractions. Conversations ranged, hats changed. Intuition and improvisation became the engines of the project.

It seems we speak the same language. Or perhaps different dialects of the same language. We cash in on personal and idiosyncratic symbols, translate them into pidgin or Creole. We salute quirky associations, peculiar forays into the unconscious, find things funny, and float on some darkness—and there are marks, there is ambiguity, there is the flatbed picture plane.

(It's a bit scary too, stepping outside the authority of experience. Driving without the license of professorhood and blowing through the smoke and mirrors of academia...)

As beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!--Comte de Lautréamont

What we've made, to me, are little worlds. Visual conversations, missed connections, country-dances called backwards, birds and fragile little people and clouds of pigment as unpredictable as the weather. Even the unnamed ones have names, each vignette can snap to any other. So what if juxtaposition is out of style (like it could be: Juxta Poser = place next) it's impossible to escape. It's the match of the century: absence versus being there. Raw little faces, veils, trim, machines and machinations, nature and nurture and it all gets a bit sticky, a bit messy, a bit quaint or fanciful or just plain fancy.

Conversations framed by conversation. Talk, chat, gossip, tête-à-tête, heart-to-heart, exchange, dialogue; informal confab, chitchat, chinwag, gabfest; formal confabulation, colloquy.

Jill: How do you feel about sudden floods?
Jess: They wipe out all the trees and make a new volleyball court.
Jess: What rotations is the dial measuring?

Jill: Recent past moments (RPM).
Linen-like canvas texture that is treated with a high performance barrier to absorb oil, bonding agents, and water evenly. Ideal for acrylic, oil, and gouache.

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Jessica: How do you feel about the relationship between the birds beak and the diving board?

Jill: I feel like the diving board could be a shadow (except its white) but the beak is afraid of the dark.
Canson Ingres (suitable for 21 colors)

Gelatin sized, 60 lb. smooth paper with laid finish; very good erasability and blendability; for detailed rendering, pen and ink, colored pencil and charcoal.

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Jess: Do you think geometric forms relate better to objects from antiquity as opposed to contemporary objects?

Jill: Aren’t objects from antiquity also contemporary unless they are lost? I don’t think the relationship between things that are lost is geometric—lost things feel organic.
Jess: What kind of force do you think the blue line represents?
Jill: It thinks it’s a force for good but it might be mongooses in India.
Jess: How would you describe the walk of Supper Buddy?
Jill: Shuffle, ball, change with jazz hands.
Jill: Who's winning in this one?

Jess: The squash is gonna feel you up.
Jess: What kind of flag does the sailboat have?
Jill: It’s white, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.
Arches® Watercolor

100% cotton; cylinder mould made with natural internal and external gelatin sizing for color brilliance. Ideal for watercolor, gouache, pencil, and pen & ink.

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- dizziness
- trouble with balance
- slow reflexes
- lack of hand/eye coordination
Jill: What do you think this drawing is remembering?
Jess: Sorbet by-product and dinosaur half-smiles.
The earth moon game

1. Get a doorknob large enough to hold both hands and a child's hand. Tie a string around the large doorknob whose ends are tied to a small ball held by the child. It will look like the moon. The child holds the ball by the string and the parent holds the large knob. When the child pulls the string, the large knob moves as if it were the moon. The child can pull at any time to make the moon move and stop when he or she wants to. The moon will always be near the large knob and the child can move it closer or farther away. The moon will always be near the large knob and the child can move it closer or farther away. The moon will always be near the large knob and the child can move it closer or farther away.

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Jess: Is her head in a vise? – TranSparrow girl?
Jill: No, but she wants to know what a vice is.
ion Edition - Wheat

Text:

Versatility for printmaking, drawing and textured. Pour la gravure, le dessin et autres surfaces de ses caras. Un lado granico suavidad.

706-2414
22x30
55.8646x2
Jess: What prescription glasses does Cheese Burger Cake wear?
   Jill: Trifocals fixed with band-aids.
Jill: What kind of shoes does Abigail wear?

Jess: I don’t...60 foot high heels....

That’s what I want to say “60 foot high heels”.
Canson Dessin JA 130 Drawing/Dibujo

Consistent fine tooth paper for detailed drawings and layouts. Good erasability.

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Jess: What kind of underpants does the stork wear?
Jill: Big girl pants with Hello Kitty.
Jill: I can't stop thinking about Virginia Woolf –
What is she unable to stop thinking about?

Jess: The paper route gangsters.
Jill: Do you think this work will someday be authenticated by the thumb print on the clown’s nose?

Jess: I think they need a larger Frypan.
Canson Drawing for Illustration and Manga

Heavyweight paper especially formulated for use with ink, markers, felt-tip pens and pencils. Excellent resistance to erasing and scanning. Smooth texture is ideal for scanning.
Jess: That pink box – all I see is an Always pad – what do you see?

Jill: It makes me think of a kitschy ceramic figurine my grandmother either made or just had that I called Pinky.
Jess: What kind of gas mileage does that car get?

Jill: Well, it doesn’t run on french fry oil. I think it runs on the concept of perpetual motion (which is against some people's religion).
Jill: What’s the soundtrack to the drawing?
Jess: “The Knife” from Sweden because they wear crow masks.
Jill: Do you remember when pop tops on cans really came loose?

Jess: No I don’t, not at all, but I think I saw it on TV.
Jill: Do you think they believe in love at first sight?

Jessica Marie Lund is a BA Candidate in Fine Art at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Kathryn Jill Johnson is an Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Artwork Photographed by Jose Betancourt
I'm your love and not nearly enough. I get that done something to be if you can let me know and lead to let me know to work upon as much as statements to get you. What the other person is all that maybe we may put relationship behind the other.
Honors Senior Project Approval

Form 3 – Submit with completed thesis. All signatures must be obtained.

Name of candidate: Jessica Lund

Department: Art and Art History

Degree: Bachelor of Arts

Full title of project: Material as Signifier from Carter’s Space (there once the metaphor)

Approved by:

Project Advisor

Date

Department Chair

Date

Honors Program Director for Honors Council

Date