Carnegie Mellon 2011 MFA Thesis Exhibition
Organized by the School of Art
March 18 - April 17, 2011

> Reception
March 18, Fri. 6-8pm

> Critique and discussion with
Tina Kukielski
Associate Curator, Carnegie Museum of Art
March 22, Tues. 6:30-9:30pm
Open to the public
Sean Glover
I am interested in an excavation of the tensions between aesthetic and political approaches to material forces in history. By studying the history of objects, one is able to uncover their awkward, unsuspecting, and provocative relations, their hold on our imaginations, their impact on our most intimate as well as our most public interactions. Objects seem to be imposers to what humans think of them. We design them. We use them. But, how do they act upon us? I wonder how military sound-ranging devices merged with traditional fresco painting can sound as an archeology of the present moment. I am curious about how the carvings by a robotic mill into discarded foam insulation can echo with both whimsy and the grotesque. How does the presence and the performance of these objects resonate in tandem with our understanding of the past.

Jesha Chen
"A Du Monde, a non-fiction semi-documentary exploring the nature of non-linear time, the impenetrable fluidity of reality, and the exponential possibilities of existence." — Michael Creed

"It’s not an easy thing to describe; it’s whimsical yet hard-hitting, cute but completely serious; amusing, inviting, like the grand canyon, terrifying but kind and caring." — Interview

"It’s not fundamentally about popcorn, either, but about the search for meaning and the consoling satisfaction of finding the patterns that define and describe both the physical universe and individual human lives." — Interview

Daniel Luchman
Human history reveals itself as a complex collection of methods for exploiting people and resources, yet this legacy is accompanied by a cultural archive of knowledge, mass knowledge, and this is the true fruit of civilization. The power structures that maintain civilization are the costs of this knowledge, and they also preserve cultural memory (obsessive self-catalogues as if unconsciously hyper-aware of its own transient existence). At this expense, we view knowledge as a powerful, almost sacred material. Through our work I actively merge rational and intuitive forms of thinking with a fluid practice that builds upon itself in continual layers. Many projects exist as open-ended situations, as structures with a void of undefined potential content. Gradually, overtime, I fill that void by continually leaping into it. This is a universal inquiry; the pursuit of the unknown. It is a fundamental drive, and I trust in this pursuit.

Courtney Dow
My work examines architectures of the familiar, often focusing on the minute and overlooked as a nod to monumental patterns or inevitabilities. In this installation, stacked elements of sound, text, image, and experience engage to explore three certainties of life: food, death, and family. These themes are conveyed within a constructed suburban family room setting. Pictures hang. A movie plays. Ideas surface about ideological traditions and rituals of consumption, legacy and inheritance, community and community, iconography, normalcy, and the subtle rewards of mundane day-to-day interactions.

James Robert Southard
I wish to better understand the role of violence and war that is ingrained in our natural instincts. The visions of battle and bloodshed are still honored in our society through entertainment and I look to re-examine my own childhood relationship with these traits. The stages and miniature sets used in science fiction films of the 20th century provide a rich source of inspiration for my body of work, exploring the violent role of the viewer and offering a chance to construct a larger context. Side by side, these two series display my interest in the construction of fictional worlds, escapism, and the relationship between artifice and reality through digitally constructed photography.

Message from the Head of the School of Art

I am writing on the threshold of the MFA thesis exhibition, where each year the graduate students extend themselves to produce something extraordinary. This tradition of creation and ambition creates an environment of unique culture. It is the mission of this institution to produce individuals who will serve as role models in their field. Uppers and Lowers, your dedication has taken a lifetime. We are proud of your achievements. You have become the artists, scholars, and leaders who have taken the knowledge and skills you learned at Carnegie Mellon and applied them to your careers. Your success is a testament to the value of a Carnegie Mellon education. We are excited to see what lies ahead for you.

John Carson
Regina and Martin Miller Professor and Head of the School of Art

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS
CARNegie MELLon 2011 Senior Art Exhibition
Organized by the School of Art
April 28 - May 14, 2011
April 29, 5-8pm: Reception

PITTsburgh Biennial 2011
Organized by the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Miller Gallery of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.<p>April 29, 6pm: Reception</p>

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