“The You Inside of Me”: Carnegie Mellon School of Art’s MFA Thesis Exhibition Opens March 23

PITTSBURGH—Seven Carnegie Mellon University Master of Fine Arts (MFA) candidates will present their final thesis exhibition, titled “The You Inside of Me,” March 23 through April 22 at CMU’s Miller Gallery in the Purnell Center for the Arts on the Pittsburgh campus.

An opening reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., on Friday, March 23. The artists will talk about their work from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. March 29 and April 12. All events are free and open to the public.

Spanning video, performance, sculpture, and mixed-media installation, the unconventional artists enjoy posing awkward questions with their work. While each artist has a very different practice, they all possess an exploratory approach, an irreverent but intensely serious attitude, and a critical rigor that they have developed in their three years at CMU.

“Unpredictability is one of the joys of art. Just when you think you have seen everything; just when you think you have got it all figured out; along comes ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon,’ ‘Mutt’s Fountain,’ ‘Campbell’s Soup Cans,’ and ‘The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living.’ Well, here it comes again,” said John Carson, head of Carnegie Mellon’s School of Art.

The Artists, In Their Own Words:

- **Jonathan Armistead** is interested in re-making everyday objects in order to highlight an often-dormant sexuality that exists within the everyday. Often using his own body as object and objectified, he seeks to reveal the performative nature of identity. By uncovering La Vie en Rose, he prompts his viewers to re-examine their current reality, eradicate shame, and celebrate life's simple pleasures through honesty and humor.

- **Agnes Bolt**’s work explores psycho-social behavior, cultural paradoxes and the absurdities and limitations of communication by implicating herself in the process of making small gestures or

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large interdisciplinary projects using video, performance, sculpture and installation. Her non-linear approach conflates sincerity and cynicism, desire and freedom, reality and performance.

- **Sung Rok Choi**’s absurd animated landscapes blur multiple political events through fictional and satirical storytelling. Using flash animation, drawing and installation, his work investigates memory, history, politics and technology by mashing-up historical, anthropological and political assertions.

- **Jesse England** presents a variety of projects that address how people make and consume media today. From custom-built gadgets to books and cameras, his work explores the issues surrounding contemporary image consumption and generation. What does “media ownership” mean in an era where there is no physical media to own?

- **Riley Harmon** examines multiple layers of reality and representation through appropriating and detouring popular media such as films, video games and television. His reverse-engineered social and personal narratives result in hyper-real videos, objects and performance. www.rileyharmon.com

- **Oscar Peters** creates work as part of his ongoing research into the illusion of America: part joke and part autobiography. His sculptures move from physical violence to psychological danger: exploring society’s drive for speed, fear, adrenaline, repetition, crashes and breakdowns. Dangerous yet funny, his works reveal a sense of elegance on one hand and the inevitability of getting your ass handed to you on the other.

- **Nina Sarnelle**’s collaborative performances explore fantasies, miracles and lies: the physicality of metaphysics, the malleability of belief, solutions-based solutions, lateral connectivity and truth by consensus. She believes in acid reflux and things beyond her control. www.ninasarnelle.com

Carnegie Mellon’s School of Art, ranked first in the nation for its multi-media MFA Program, produces artists of exceptional ability and initiative who are able to connect meaningfully with the communities around them. The Miller Gallery is CMU’s award-winning, critically acclaimed contemporary art gallery located in the Purnell Center for the Arts on the Pittsburgh campus. The gallery, free and open to the public, is open from 12 to 6 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday. More information on “The You
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Inside of Me” can be found at www.cmu.edu/millergallery/exhibitions/mfa2012

About Carnegie Mellon University: Carnegie Mellon (www.cmu.edu) is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the arts. More than 11,000 students in the university’s seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. A global university, Carnegie Mellon’s main campus in the United States is in Pittsburgh, Pa. It has campuses in California’s Silicon Valley and Qatar, and programs in Asia, Australia, Europe and Mexico. The university is in the midst of “Inspire Innovation: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University,” which aims to build its endowment, support faculty, students and innovative research, and enhance the physical campus with equipment and facility improvements.

The School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University (www.cmu.edu/art) considers, in practical and visionary terms, the role of art and the artist in society. Ranked #1 in the nation for its multimedia Master of Fine Arts Program, the school produces artists of exceptional ability and initiative who are able to connect meaningfully with the communities around them. All School of Art degree programs (Master of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Interdisciplinary Arts) and its Pre-College Program, incorporate a broad-based approach to art-making, encouraging a coherent, informed understanding of personal, public, conceptual and technical issues relevant to many forms of artistic expression.

The Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University (www.cmu.edu/millergallery) supports experimentation that expands the notions of art and culture, providing a forum for engaged conversations about creativity and innovation. The Miller Gallery is the contemporary art gallery of Carnegie Mellon, located on campus in the Purnell Center for the Arts in Pittsburgh, Pa. Admission is free and open to the public from 12 to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.