

# NEW FACES To City Hall

February 28—May 23, 2008

*Celebrating the artistic achievements  
of Philadelphia area artists since 1984.*

**MICHEL-DAMINI CELEBRE  
ALDEN W. COLE  
ELISHA CONRAD  
AMANDA D'AMICO  
SALLY ECKHOFF  
LORRAINE GLESSNER  
MATTHEW GREENWAY  
LAUREEN GRIFFIN  
BRENDA HOWELL  
ALEXANDER P. IRVINE  
LAUREN MARSELLA  
GEROLD MAROONEY  
BRENNAN K. MURPHY  
NOELLE NARDONE  
DANIEL PETRAITIS  
MATTHEW PRUDEN  
MATTHEW DAMIAN RITCHIE  
CAROLINE SANTA  
BROOKE SCHMIDT  
KIRSTEN A. TEEL  
H. JOHN THOMPSON  
AUSTIN TREMELLEN  
KRISTEN VON HOHEN  
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CURATORS: WARREN ANGLE  
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**NEW FACES**

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WITH  
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For over 20 years, Art In City Hall has been a strong collaboration between city government and the art community. We are proud to have given exhibition opportunities to over 1500 Philadelphia area artists in addition to numerous schools, nonprofits and city agencies.

**MISSION:**

*Art In City Hall presents exhibitions that showcase contemporary artwork by professional and emerging Philadelphia visual artists. Encompassing a variety of mediums, techniques, and subjects, this municipal program is committed to presenting a diversity of ideas and artistic explorations. The program strives to link visual artists with the larger community by providing the public with a greater knowledge and appreciation of their artistic achievements.*

Art In City Hall is part of the City of Philadelphia's Department of Public Property.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the program, make checks payable to *The Fund for Philadelphia/Art In City Hall*

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## ART AT THE HEART OF THE CITY

*~Providing the public with a greater knowledge and appreciation of artistic achievement ~*

### INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Advisory Council of Art In City Hall, I would like to congratulate the 24 artists in the *New Faces* exhibition. Thank you all for being part of our 2008 Winter/Spring exhibition featuring. Your talent reflects the creative integrity of Philadelphia's vibrant art community.

Art In City Hall is made possible by the generous support of many individuals and by the strong collaboration between City government and our local arts community. Thanks to the continued support of the City of Philadelphia, Art In City Hall provides a valuable cultural experience to City Hall visitors and workers alike.

As Chair of the Advisory Council, I would like to thank our volunteer members for all their efforts; in particular, Exhibitions Committee members, Warren Angle and Michelle Marcuse for selecting the works in *New Faces*.

I would also like to thank the dedicated work of the Department of Public Property for its organization and involvement. Special thanks to Commissioner Joan Schlotterbeck and Program Director, Tu Huynh. Through the joint efforts of many individuals, the Art In City Hall program continues to present exhibitions for the cultural enrichment of all.

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## NEW FACES

Welcome to Art In City Hall's 54<sup>th</sup> group exhibition for local emerging and professional artists, *New Faces*. Normally, each of our exhibitions is based on a specific theme; which are then juried by members of the art community. Whether it is metal sculpture or artwork inspired by the city...cartoons, children's book illustrations, toys and games, text or fabric art, the program continually strives to be a strong reflection of what is currently happening in Philadelphia's art scene. For our current exhibition, in an effort to bring new artists to City Hall, our "call for artists" did not specify a theme, but instead invited artists who have yet to show their work in these historic halls. *New Faces* also marks the first time Art In City Hall is accepting submissions from graduate students or recent grads from the many art colleges and universities in the area, several of whom were accepted into the show.

*New Faces* highlights the works of 24 Philadelphia area artists selected by Art In City Hall Exhibitions Committee members, Michelle Marcuse and Warren Angle. Michelle is also a member of the Da Vinci Art Alliance, and Warren is the Director of Exhibitions at the Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial.

## ARTIST STATEMENTS (In Alphabetical Order)

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### MICHEL-DAMINI CELEBRE

(Display Case 1 - 2nd Floor)

Brushwork is a moving meditation...  
If my mind is clear, the painting emerges into being.  
Brushwork is all about preparation...  
I work at being a "hollow vessel."  
It takes time to get out of my own way and let the energy move.  
Brushwork is Experiencing the moment ink, brush and paper meet.

### ALDEN W. COLE

(Display Cases 9 & 10 - 4th Floor)

I enjoy making beautiful objects. Creating them from found things has been a lifelong passion. I consider myself an inveterate recycler—another green artist. Lighting is also a passion. I've been recycling old lamps into new since I was a kid on a farm in Maine where discarded lamps and other objects were plentiful. My luminaries a.k.a. light sculptures of the past 10 years are just one more manifestation of my creativity—unique sources of light from found objects. These four luminaries submitted to the Art In City Hall New Faces exhibition are all re-assemblages of parts previously used, plus the magic of color changing light burns only 2 watts of energy—programmable LEDs in a light bulb. Another Green plus.

### ELISHA CONRAD

(Display Case 9 - 4th Floor)

Through an investigative process of combining photography, digital printing, delicate cutouts, and collage, I create images that frequently reference interior spaces including the home. I strive to capture a sense of my personal history through narratives and a buildup of layered imagery that focuses on the domestic and nostalgic. My visual inclusion of ornate, decorative, and craft elements simultaneously questions and reinforces a general appreciation for things I see as being beautiful. This excessive decoration also serves as a veil for underlying notions of emptiness, isolation, and unmet expectations that make up the thematic content of the work.

### AMANDA D'AMICO

(Display Case 11 - 4th Floor)

My work is born out of observation and an interest in how our personal actions affect the greater good. By documenting what I observe, I am attempting to open up a dialogue between the past, the present, and our impending future. By examining the conflation of my personal history with that of the country at large, my work attempts to define some of the many ways we can identify ourselves as Americans. I encourage the viewer to look at his or her behavior and to consider the ramifications of their actions.

Food has become a commonality I use to examine such issues as consumption, tradition, and the dissonant relationship we have with where our "things" come from. While what we eat differs greatly, the sources of our food are becoming increasingly consolidated. Decisions regarding what we eat and how much we eat affects not only our individual bodies, but our shared food systems. I aim to raise awareness of the role food plays from its cultivation on the land to its meaning on our tables and its digestion in our bodies.

### SALLY ECKHOFF

(Display Case 8 - 2nd Floor)

I was a young artist in the East Village in Manhattan in the late '70s. My paintings were escapist fantasies about a beautiful life outside the scary place between Avenues A and B where I lived. When I moved to the country, my work became urgently more populist-minded (paintings about repression and industry) and I got to take my first real stab at depicting the dark side. I had been a typesetter at newspapers and ad shops in New York, and a contributing writer for *The Village Voice*. New York City is full of symbols and signs, texts and subtexts. This new work represents my courtship with the natural world.

I'm an MFA painting student at UArts, and I am also in the Bennington Writing Seminars, a low-residence MFA program in Vermont. I'm an essayist as well as a painter, and I have been at work on two book projects: one on working animals—the unsung heroes of this culture—and the other on painters in the East Village from 1977–1987, among which I include myself. The writing work is the template for my efforts as a painter. I explore the distillation of original image, and the messages in art.

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

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### LORRAINE GLESSNER

(Display case #10, 4th floor)

*Experience is never limited and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every airborne particle in its tissue.*

-Henry James

All living things leave a physical mark; a stain or imprint through the natural cycle of creation and birth, life and growth, death and the regeneration of life through decomposition. The cyclic nature of the earth and our bodies serve to jog the mind, to remind us of the desire to seek progress within cycle, and to measure that progress against the repetitive constant. Marks on the surfaces of the earth, the body and within urban environments serve as a visual narrative that speaks to this cycle, while also referencing personal, political and cultural histories. Sidewalks, building facades, interior and public spaces of the city read as a palimpsest on which these histories and narratives are written. Layers of holes, cracks, smudges, graffiti and signage that form the urban landscape intermingle and merge to create an iconography significant to the present, yet allude to both the past and future.

Just as this process takes place, the notion of imprinting, staining and marking is realized in my work by applying layers of encaustic medium to fabric and found paper that has been subjected to branding, rusting, burying, decomposition, or exposure to the elements. Rubbings, drawings, images and material taken from billboards, buildings, streets and sidewalks of the city are merged together with the stained materials along with my own intuitive responses to them in paint. Adding to this narrative are collaged images and patterns from high-end fashion and interior design magazines, which interact with and contextualize the markings as well as speak to our wants, needs, temptations and desires as a culture. In a continuous process of accumulation, concealment and removal, the layers of material create new narratives, which look through and into time, thus reminding us of perpetuation, death and regeneration.

My intent is to follow and record these marks as evidence of the spectacle and complexity of human activity and the poetic violence that is life.

### MATTHEW GREENWAY

(Display case #5, 2nd floor)

Recently, I have been exploring specific tragic events of the last century. I have found these subjects to possess the necessary elements for great painting. Within each subject lies a rich and powerful story involving humanity's struggle against a modernism that has lost its moral compass.

There are three objectives of this work: First, involving the aesthetic, my endeavor is not only to depict the beautiful but the sublime. Kant describes the feeling of the sublime as arousing "enjoyment with horror". Because of the subject matter of the work, achieving beauty becomes a complicated challenge.

Second, I believe that history paintings hold an educational value in our society and should simply introduce or remind people of an event. Some of the subjects I am exploring are well known, while others have been forgotten. The Hindenburg disaster still has something of an iconic presence in our culture, while the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire has largely left public memory.

Third, there is a moral lesson to be imparted with each piece. All of the depicted events took place because of the failure of human beings to do the proper thing in a changing world. This failure, manifested in the form of greed, ignorance, or vanity, brought about terrible consequences.

### LAUREEN GRIFFIN

(Display case #13, 4th floor)

Laureen Griffin works primarily in digital media, photography, and printmaking to reflect on, reenvision and rewrite the history of a gender-centric society. Approaching art-making as subjective, not objective, Griffin, questions the meaning of female and/or feminine in society throughout history and within various cultural contexts. Currently, she is exploring how society represents and displaces gender queerness and femaleness vs. how we experience our own image of self. Her goals are to provide visibility for women and gender variant people with the hopes of creating a belief system open to new possibilities of identity. She doesn't want to change people, but hopes to make and exhibit art that authenticates self. Her newest work "Gender Portraiture Project" brings together photographic portraits with personal narrative. She asks each participant to think about how they identify within the male-female spectrum.

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

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### BRENDA HOWELL

(Display Case 10 - 4th Floor)

*Human made beauty is a way of seeing God, but no more so than human made ugliness, because there is that side of God too. The Scriptures say God has created both Shalom and Ra ... wholeness and calamity*

-- Unknown

In my work the intent is to suggest the 'presence of an absence', to intrigue the viewer and set up a dialectical tension that is deliciously painful. Thru texture, color, layering and materials (wax, rust, wood, anything discarded yet lovely) a tension is achieved – beauty vs. ugliness, aggressive vs. peaceful, forgotten vs. precious. There is vastly minute place that exists between these poles and it is there that I live and love, often oscillating from one noisy extreme to the other. But I seek to explore and abide in that space, for it is in there that one hears the still small voice.

### ALEXANDER P. IRVINE

(Display Case 5 - 2nd Floor)

*Echoes from the Swamp*

Just behind you, there is a vast landscape,  
Into which every moment feeds.  
Though the scenery may differ from one vantage to the next,  
There is a swamp behind all of us.  
It is a soggy region of foul odors oozing from a waist-deep stew.  
Though its spread may seem bounded from afar, be warned;  
It will swallow all you know.

There is, however, reason enough to enter.  
Some claim there grows a lotus deep in the swamp,  
So beautiful, if witnessed, will vindicate all things.  
There exist deposits of clay throughout the swamp,  
That acts like a compass if modeled, pointing toward the lotus.  
Finding and sculpting the clay is done with a spark we each possess.  
Only it can mine the clay and only its hand can render meaning.

My hands have modeled the objects presented here.  
Though they may be but reflections of things I have seen,  
Their value is not lost.  
For as they enter your landscape,  
They will proclaim that the lotus exists.  
And for those of you who choose to seek it,  
Godspeed.

### LAUREN MARSELLA

(Display Case 13 - 4th Floor)

Meanwhile Michael Jackson stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of Pop?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Michael Jackson replied.

"What shall I do, then, with Jacko who is called Wacko?" the governor asked.

They all answered, "CRUCIFY him!"

"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked the governor.

But they shouted all the louder, "CRUCIFY him!"

When the governor saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

### GEROLD MAROONEY

(Display Case 6 - 2nd Floor)

In a world of constant transformation I bring to light the loss of our innate sensibilities to coexist as a cohesive community. The stark dystopia filled with sharp architectural elements, undergoing transformations, or crumbling rubble and debris, create an unforgiving state of constant flux. My work has slowly developed an interest in an exploration of distinct spatial and psychological relationships of people amidst a fractured landscape. Hovering between the twisted logic of dreams and our perceived reality, I strive to strike a universal chord of memory revealing a specific time and place either imagined or real. Using a variety of images taken from my own photographs or culled from various forms of media I reorganize and reinterpret, thereby turning a banal series of images into self-defining monumental moments.

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

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### **BRENNA K. MURPHY**

(Display Case 12 - 4th Floor)

I gather the tips of my hair in my hand, arrange them so they nearly form a straight edge, and begin to stroke the strands with my index finger. I pull them up to my nose and inhale. The tips softly tickle my fingers, nose and lips, and then my cheeks, eyelids, and ears as I drag them along the rest of my face. In performing this simultaneously conscious and unconscious ritual over and over again, I provide myself with comfort, quiet, warmth, the memory of my mother's body, and a sense of safety. In short, I make myself at Home.

With this 'hair ritual' as a catalyst for artistic investigation, I examine the subconscious process of trying to re-create a lost sense of Home through the body. Before I learned the societal attributes that came to define Home, such as family, 'hometown,' and house, my body provided me with a sense of place; it was my original Home. Therefore, when the cultural signifiers of Home are lost in my life, I naturally revert back to my body to provide me with a sense of Home in their absence. My work is a continual exploration of this process, its merits and its failures.

### **NOELLE NARDONE**

(Display Case 11 - 4th Floor)

Animals are the focus of my art; domesticated animals dominate my work, simply because of my every day exposure to them. Growing-up I was taught to have a love and respect for animals—my family always had at least one dog and two cats in the house. My process involves taking a series of photos of the animal that I am going to paint or draw—if I do not already have a personal relationship with the animal; this allows me to develop one. My goal is to catch the "normal" every day activities of the dog or cat, which I am photographing. While reviewing the photos I naturally gravitate toward the photo, which has clearly captured the personality of my subject.

My paintings are acrylic on maple / birch plywood, and are a combination of animal portraiture and words. The portrait of the animal in conjunction with the text are inspired by punk music, skateboarding, and graffiti—which were once considered rogue activities. Though some of the animals are not paired with pop-culture, but quotes from great authors such as, Tennessee Williams, William Shakespeare, and Friedrich Nietzsche, which capture the expression of the animal. Like a sticker or a wheat paste the text and the portrait look as though they have been slapped onto the plywood.

### **DANIEL PETRAITIS**

(Display Case 4 - 2nd Floor)

Daniel Petraitis received his BFA in glass from Massachusetts College of Art. He returned to his native city of Philadelphia in 2004, where he currently lives and works. He runs a custom metal fabrication shop where he incorporates his steel work into architectural designs. His work can be seen at galleries throughout Philadelphia including Wexler Gallery and Philadelphia Glass Works Gallery. Daniel has taught and demonstrated glass working at Ox-bow in Saugatuck MI, East Falls Glass Works in Philadelphia, Wheaton Arts in Millville, NJ, and Goggle Works in Reading, PA among others.

His present work deals with deception, uncertainty, balance and the oddity surrounding human experience. Using familiar objects from daily life, his sculptures invoke feelings of uneasiness and stillness while still maintaining a precarious beauty.

### **MATTHEW PRUDEN**

(Display Case 5 - 2nd Floor)

My work is often concerned with issues of translation, imaginary worlds, exploration, and loss, seen through the lens of obscure historical phenomena. These current images are inspired by my research into 19<sup>th</sup> century spirit photography, parapsychology, and Spiritualism- the belief that the human personality continues on after death and can communicate with the living through the agency of a "medium".

An American expression, and one of the formative sources of the New Age movement, Spiritualism was born out of the dimly lit parlors of the 1850's. It was a conflicted response to a cultural environment eerily similar to our own: a newly powerful mass media, rife with news of war; dizzying accelerations in technology and industry; an uprooted, mobile population; the seemingly inexorable advance of scientific achievement

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

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(Matthew Pruden Cont'd)

(especially explanatory theories of evolution and geology); and a perceived decline in fundamental religious values.

This body of work focuses on the sometimes humorous paradox of a homespun, unorthodox mysticism that addressed itself to an establishment concerned with experiments, proofs, and documentation; a trance-eyed, spirit-channeling movement that nevertheless courted men of science, and found inspiration in the metaphysical possibilities of the newest communication technology.

*Metaphysical Forgeries series, digital photographs.*

These photographs self-referentially portray the artist as the "medium", participating in ghostly apparitions. The images are lovingly inspired by not only the obvious chicanery of early Spiritualist photo-documents, but also their deep resonance. All photographs, after all, are records of "ghosts" now passed, and Spiritualism only literalized the inherently surreal, mysterious nature of these objects. In a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner they also address the friction between faith and rational proof, and, by involving the artist himself, the questionable concept of the artist as a "shaman" or revealer of transcendent truths.

### **MATTHEW DAMIAN RITCHIE**

(Display Case 3 –2nd Floor)

Matthew is an MFA candidate from Tyler School for the Arts. He received his BFA in painting and printmaking, and sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2006. He has also attended Savannah College of Art and Design and J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond, VA. He has exhibited his work at the Woodmere Art Museum, Chestnut Hill Gallery, Washington state, and numerous venues in Richmond, VA.

### **CAROLINE SANTA**

(Display Case 7 –2nd Floor)

A coded world of color and pattern is the setting for my psychologically based animal kingdom. Vulnerable, awkward, uncomfortable, beautiful, ugly, forceful, naive, or aware, these animals are an emotional response to the politics of relationships, psychological states, inhabited spaces, and the world at large. I feel a great deal of empathy for these figures. The disproportion of their bodies and the sometimes foreboding or uncomfortable situations creates a sense of frailty that is the human condition. Even when engaged in positions of power or control, still the figures remain passive and tenuous. The surreal spaces that the animals inhabit are emotional landscapes, where the figures and spaces dictate responses from each other.

Using color for its formal qualities alone does not interest me. Hence, I developed a code by defining colors and patterns as specific emotional or psychological traits (See Trait Diagrams #1-50). This code gives me a concrete trajectory to generate both the content and formal aspects of the work in tandem. I derive the figures from my own social and emotional experiences, as well as from photographs of political, sporting, and cultural events from world History-specifically the 1980's to the present, as this equates my own cognitive experience with the world.

### **BROOKE SCHMIDT**

(Display Case 12 –4th Floor)

For over ten years Schmidt's art has incorporated a wide variety of tactile materials such as resin, wood, paper, fabric and wax to interpret such themes as loneliness, awkwardness, tension and refuge. Subtle or bold changes in her materials and experimental methods trigger new interpretations. She is always intrigued by her discoveries as she seeks out her visual language, and often uses repetition as a way of portraying different facets in a single piece: all the unseen tries of self-discovery, of explanation and of the struggle to live. Schmidt's work invites the viewer to seek their own story: to recognize references to places, objects or feelings similar or disparate to their own and to discover their own insights and connections.

### **KIRSTEN A. TEEL**

(Display Case 1 –2nd Floor)

The relationship between humans and animals is intriguing, the way we judge them, exert our power over them, and attempt to control their welfare. Why is it that our society values certain species, such as pets or exotic wildlife? At the same time, why do we condemn others like the rat, and detach ourselves from chickens or cows, considering them expendable? The qualities in these animals that most people ignore or detest are the very things that make them unusual and unique. I find "disposable" animals the most interesting and feel a need to let the viewer see them through my eyes.

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

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(Kirsten Teel Cont'd)

I specifically use animals to which I can relate: former pets, caged hens at the Italian Market, or urban wildlife I notice day to day. They are modeled based on sketches from life and photographs. In this way, the piece becomes more personal. Using curious and dramatic poses the animals become enigmatic and disquieting for the viewer, as well as set a foreboding mood or sense of unease. At the same time I try to hint at a haunting presence that represents human impact on each animal with the objective of emotionally involving the viewer in the piece.

My work refers to traditional ceramic knick-knacks or figurines, purely ornamental porcelain objects that reflect a society's consensus on beauty. One of the most important goals in this work is to challenge what the public considers beautiful. And incorporate the figures into evocative scenes that are far from decorative.

With every new concept comes a new technical challenge to further test the limits of my medium and push my abilities. The aim is to understand how far clay can be pushed. Through these concepts and challenges the making process continues to be interesting and exciting.

### **H. JOHN THOMPSON**

(Display Case 2 –2nd Floor)

*Doorway* is made to investigate notions of craftsmanship that exist within art as well as the trades. I balance my life between that of a carpenter and an artist and make every attempt to translate knowledge and skill from one endeavor to another. By learning carpentry techniques from my family as well as the value of work/labor, I hope to communicate my respect for history and tradition through my work.

*Doorway* is meant to demonstrate unnoticed structural elements of a typical Bucks County or Philadelphia home. The floor is inspired from the well crafted floors found in many North and South Philadelphia homes. Frequently, these floors are in disrepair or covered by lesser quality materials. *Doorway* was created in the spirit of calling attention to familiar elements that are often overlooked and undervalued. I've created anonymous space in my work that calls attention to the craft of an artist and a carpenter while creating a dialogue regarding interior spaces.

### **AUSTIN TREMELLEN**

(Display Case 10 –4th Floor)

I find myself questioning the process of adaptation. Dulling our senses while strengthening our defenses to the world—is this our greatest technique of survival as humans or our single greatest obstacle preventing us from experiencing ultimate feeling?

My art exists in a universe of where I interrogate the constant fluctuation and evolution of form in a biological, physical, or physiological manner. I fuse clay, metal, glaze, and oxides to make manifest the mysteries of adaptability that I obsessively seek to unravel within my pieces. Stressing the clay by fast-paced hand building or under/over firing to create fragile forms allow me to test the form's ability to behaviorally and structurally transform and to bring into being results proving that while specific attributes are gained others are also lost. Glazes applied are often untested and are provoked to perform "unusually". The lack of oxygen inherent in a reductive firing process creates a cacophony of earthy color and a textural palette ideal for my work.

### **KRISTEN VON HOHEN**

(Display Case 6 –2nd Floor)

I have become interested in idea of the overgrowth of nature in a manmade world. How thru time nature will retake what we have built. I carefully construct by hand, stoneware rectangular blocks which I then arrange to suggest the remnants of a city.

I use casting slip as a coating on flammable materials that burn out in the kiln, leaving behind their shells. Firing the slip past its ideal temperature, allows the porcelain to melt slightly and act on its own thus giving it a sense of movement and growth. I love the balance between the controlled blocks and the chaoticness of the slip.

### **TED WARCHAL**

(Display Case 3 –2nd Floor)

My work in sculpture utilizes many mediums (metal, wood, hydrocal, paper, paint and found objects). I use a variety of techniques, both conventional and experimental, in joining and in finishing each piece.

I try to create objects which have something to say about our world, in an attempt to communicate my experience to others.

I believe that one of the primary reasons for creating art is making contact with the viewer. Another is the desire to express a unique vision.

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October 29—January 25, 2008

