

CHRISTIE BLIZARD works in a variety of media focusing on the convergence of painting and drawing and socially engaged practices. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include the 2009 and 2011 Texas Biennials; *New American Paintings 96 West Edition* and *108 West Edition*; and solo exhibitions at Lawndale Art Center, Houston, and Women & Their Work, Austin. She has been a visiting artist at numerous universities across the United States. Recent residencies and fellowships include the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH; CentralTrak–The Artist Residency of the University of Texas at Dallas; and the SIM Artist Residency in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Born 1978 in Indianapolis, IN
Lives in San Antonio, TX
BFA Herron School of Art and Design, Indianapolis, IN, 2001
MFA Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 2005
Teaches at the University of Texas, San Antonio, TX

MICHAEL DUNCAN: Where are “The Walks” going?

CHRISTIE BLIZARD: Overall, they are not going anywhere in particular. I am just trying to have a different perspective on my surroundings while interacting with people in a more overt way. I am also gradually trying to increase the distance. My first one was about 16 miles, and the longest one so far was about 19 miles. I'd like to do one around 25 miles or more if I can make it.

I view the walks in a very general way as showing a work of art to people when they are not expecting it. They are also about the burden one carries around, or even a kind of penance. I am not religious, but my dad’s side of the family is Catholic. I think I inherited something of that, and it is showing up here.

I began the project by going around my driving route to work and back plus a few detours, but then I got a bit more ambitious and started exploring other parts of Lubbock, where I used to live until moving recently to San Antonio. Over the summer I did some walks in New York and in Indiana, where I grew up. I plan to go on.

MD: Do your paintings change on the road?

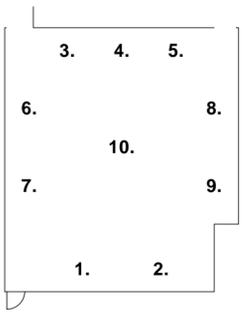
CB: Most haven’t really changed so far on the road, other than a few dirt marks and bumps. Perhaps the exposure to the West Texas sun has faded them a bit as well. But I have built a camera attachment for the paintings, so I can paint as I walk and document it every 30 seconds or so.

MD: Is this land art?

CB: I can see the project as land art in a certain way. It is dependent on the landscape for its meaning. The paintings are paintings, but other facets of the project, such as some of the photo collages and flip books I have made, explore not only the act of being seen in a place, but the landscape as a kind of unfolding panorama that changes me during various phases of the performance. By the end, I am definitely in a different state of mind, exhausted but pleasantly so. The walks make me feel embedded into the space, one that I often feel somewhat detached from, and whether people honk or don’t even notice what I am doing, something about the absurdity of it keeps me going.

MICHAEL DUNCAN is an independent curator and critic living in Los Angeles. His numerous exhibitions and publications include most recently *Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent* (2013) and *Jess: O’Tricky Cad and Other Jessoterica* (2012). Duncan is also a corresponding editor for *Art in America*. He was the curator of the 2009 Texas Biennial.

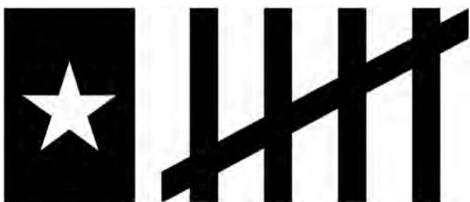
1. *Walk Project (visiting where I grew up in Columbus, IN), 7/4/13* (2013), video documentation of performance; 3:06” looped, mixed media installation including acrylic paintings on canvas, spray paint cans, clothing, wood, presentation variable
2. *Walk Project (my last four weeks living in Lubbock, TX), 5/20/13, 6/1/13, 6/15/13, 6/22/13* (2013), photo documentation of performance, mixed media installation including acrylic paintings on canvas, nylon rope, presentation variable



TEXAS BIENNIAL INVITATIONAL

CHRISTIE BLIZARD, MARCELYN MCNEIL, TOM ORR AND BRAD TUCKER

Curated by Michael Duncan and Virginia Rutledge



TEXAS BIENNIAL
5TH ANNIVERSARY
August 23 - September 28, 2013

MARCELYN MCNEIL paints primarily in oils, using an abstract visual vocabulary. Recent exhibitions include the 2011 and 2013 Texas Biennials, and a solo show at the Galveston Art Center in 2013. McNeil has also exhibited her work frequently in Houston, Dallas and Chicago, and was selected for the Kansas Biennial in 2008. Her work has been published in multiple editions of *New American Paintings*. In 2011-2012, McNeil received the Milton and Sally Avery Award while in residence at the MacDowell Colony, NH. She is represented by Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, TX and Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX.

Born 1965 in Wichita, KS
Lives in Houston, TX
BFA Pacific NW College of Art, Portland, OR, 1993
MFA University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1998
Teaches at the University of Houston, TX

VIRGINIA RUTLEDGE: Where do your images come from? Do you see them in advance of their realization as paintings, or are they formed more through process?

MARCELYN MCNEIL: The paintings are about identifying simple forms that embody assertiveness, a kind of awkwardness, and vulnerability at once. The masses and forms delineated are often lithe or bulbous, and subtly reference structure, architecture and human anatomy. I work with my canvas flat on the ground much of the time. This is because I pour paint directly onto the surface. I only use oils, with the occasional exception of spray paint, because of the type of staining and soiling I can get. Sometimes I pour shapes seven or eight times before I’m satisfied.

VR: Many of your paintings are close to the same shape and dimension, which feels like something you’ve worked out with a particular aim in mind. How did you arrive at this format?

MM: I’m trying to make a bodily connection or establish a familiarity with the viewer. This speaks to the scale of the work, roughly five or six feet, about our size as individuals.

VR: When do you title the paintings? Have you ever changed a title or completely repainted a work?

MM: Because I develop my work while painting, the titles most often come at the very end. For me, assigning a title is one of the most difficult parts of the whole process. And yes, if a painting is still in my studio I consider it fair game. I am fairly notorious for reworking work.

VR: Do you see yourself as forwarding “abstract painting”?

MM: A popular strategy in painting today is to introduce some type of intervention into the equation. I’m talking about the use of technology, foreign materials, objects, or by reconsidering how paint physically occupies space. For now, I am choosing to operate within a “traditional” format using oils.

The pressure to make a relevant painting within traditional parameters is incredible, and honestly I don’t know that I succeed. I will say I present work that is both distilled and animated in a way that I don’t commonly see. My paintings read as bold and simple at a distance and are very vulnerable and nuanced up close. I want to suspend form between being sculptural, flat, and spatial. This is provocative to me, keeping me engaged.

VR: Have you ever been asked to paint something to match a sofa?

MM: Fortunately, no.

VIRGINIA RUTLEDGE is an art advisor and attorney who lives in New York and Texas. Previously a museum curator, corporate litigator, and nonprofit administrator and general counsel, her practice focuses on contemporary art, intellectual property, and cultural organizations. Rutledge curated the 2011 Texas Biennial and is Curator-at-Large of the 2013 Texas Biennial.

3. *Nothing More Nothing Less* (2013), oil on canvas, 62 x 58”
4. *Orange Like A Pro* (2013), oil and spray paint on canvas, 63 x 58”
5. *Red Herring* (2012), oil on canvas, 60 x 58”

TOM ORR makes works that often combine sculptural and imagistic elements. Throughout his career he has exhibited extensively in the United States and Japan, and has created site-specific works for several venues in both countries. His public art projects include large-scale wall installations in the international terminal at the Dallas Ft. Worth Airport; a station design for Dallas Area Rapid Transit; and a major sculptural installation for Love Field Airport in Dallas (2013). His work is represented in numerous private and public collections including the Foundation of Culture, Osaka, Japan; The El Paso Museum of Art; and the Utsukushi-Ga-Hara Open-Air Museum, Nagano, Japan. He was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2011. Orr exhibited in the 2007 and 2011 Texas Biennials. He is represented by Barry Whistler Gallery, Dallas, TX.

Born 1950 in Dallas, TX
Lives in Dallas, TX
BFA Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 1973

JOHN POMARA: About a decade ago I noticed there was a distinctive change in your work. The works began to appear more casually installed, with objects and ephemera seemingly randomly placed or stacked against a wall. It seemed as if four or five works were intermingling as one, existing freely, formed with little orchestration. What happened?

TOM ORR: I began to be more interested in the collection of materials, objects and experiments in my studio than I was in the more finished, deliberate, completed pieces. I was missing the natural instinctive approach I began with as an artist. In those early years, I focused on shadow, light reflection and line, making temporary installations. So, I decided to stop building structures for a while and create loose arrangements by leaning, layering and balancing materials, in order to express a sense of immediacy and necessity.

It took me awhile to exhibit these pieces. They are challenging to accept but very honest and liberating.

JP: Yes, as a viewer I felt you engaged your audience in a visual interaction in the structuring of form and its unpredictable outcome. I recall being invited over to see these odd groupings of materials that seemed like rambunctious youth gangs hanging around the studio. How could you tell a work was finished?

TO: The work tells me when it is finished. Sometimes that happens right away and sometimes it takes time. I do have a studio large enough to leave work up to look at and listen to.

JP: Shortly after you started showing this new work you also began including abstract digital photos in the mix.

TO: The digital prints are often altered images of my sculpture. I am drawn by the collaboration with the computer because in my case, I don’t have total control. My job is to know when to stop the abstraction and save the image. So the computer and I are breaking down the image of something I have physically made, into an abstract print.

JP: A year or two ago you showed me a picture of one of your earliest works that you had rediscovered. It consisted of several panels of glass leaning against one another. Visually it seemed more related to your current work, almost like it was premature, perhaps even promiscuous for its time in your studio.

TO: Those early seventies works are extremely important to everything I have done since. They came from a totally clear vision of what was and still is important and meaningful in my thinking. They were based on basic principles of light, shadow, line, reflection and materials, which I have never stopped thinking about. Since those early days my work has taken different tracks at different times, and has gotten more complex, but the same concerns have always been there.

JP: I see that. Next time, I’ll ask about your titles, which I love.

JOHN POMARA is an artist whose work has been shown extensively in solo and group exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Houston, Miami, Los Angeles and London. He is based in Dallas, where he is a professor at the University of Texas, Dallas. Pomara was a juror for the 2007 Texas Biennial.

6. *Portrait* (2013), mixed media, 37 x 44 x 23”
7. *Fingerprint 5* (2007), silkscreen on wood, 81 x 81 x 3.5”
8. *ZZZZZZ* (2012), mixed media, 120 x 60 x 19”
9. *Ghost Story* (2011), mixed media, 67 x 96 x 51”

BRAD TUCKER works across media. His work has been widely exhibited at venues including P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and SculptureCenter, New York, NY; Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Art, Houston; Old Jail Art Center, Albany, TX; Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND; Arthouse, Austin; and Sala Diaz, San Antonio; in addition to numerous shows at commercial galleries in Texas, New York, and London. Tucker has also given multi-media performances in conjunction with exhibitions at Dallas Museum of Art; the 2007 and 2011 Texas Biennials; Bard College, New Annandale, NY; Texas Christian University, Fort Worth; Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, San Antonio; and Arthouse, Austin. He is represented by Inman Gallery, Houston, TX.

Born 1965 in West Covina, CA
Lives in Austin, TX
BFA University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 1991
MFA Bard College, Annandale, NY, 2009
Teaches at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX

KATE GREEN: Your installations, and the objects you arrange in them, come off as playful. Do you give yourself rules in the studio?

BRAD TUCKER: I remember showing at a gallery once and hearing my work described as “conceptual sculpture.” At the time, I had not yet settled on a category for my work and I felt pretty flattered by the term. However, time has passed, and when I think about it, my work is not very conceptual at all. I use loose ideas—like creating a coterie of bass players or making homemade TV trays—merely as a way to begin generating objects. I play with the language of the ideas and create new forms and eventually break the ideas because they are often flawed. If an idea still stands after I’ve abused it with clunky handiwork, then perhaps it will still be worthwhile.

KG: Sometimes you perform “with” your installations and sometimes the objects in your installations invite people to do something with them. What about this performative element?

BT: I use performance as a way of merging different aspects of my personality, and, in turn, my work. As much as I can, I want to put my whole self into my art. I go back and forth, though. I enjoy the private immersion I feel when I work alone in my studio and then the idea of performing in front of others is repellant. But sometimes, while I am working, some old musical idea returns to my imagination and I want to bring the music to life in front of other people and be, I don’t know, an awkward entertainer.

When I include objects that invite interaction from viewers it is separate from my desire to perform. The invitation is not explicit so people seldom do physically engage my work. Even if they don’t, I want them to be aware of the suggestion and the potential use of the objects. And I want the objects to act in a way that suggests they are conscious of people.

KG: Your work often involves records and instruments that are hand-made or cast. Which band’s album cover would you like to design?

BT: I would rather design the amps and speakers for a group like Three-Day Stubble, or any other appropriate nerdy rock group that wouldn’t be embarrassed by equipment that is more frumpy than cool.

KG: If you could do a two-person show with any other person—living or dead—who would you choose?

BT: I’ll go with Mondrian. His work is an inspiration to me. For some reason I feel it wouldn’t completely overpower mine. Can you make it happen? If not, put me with Malevich.

KG: If you were not ridiculously busy as an artist, educator, and parent... dream side job?

BT: I love what I do, and I am happy to keep on doing it. If I needed to add something to my list, I’d start a rock ‘n’ roll camp for kids with disabilities. I think that might just be a good match for my own particular batch of peculiarities.

KATE GREEN is a doctoral student at the University of Texas, Austin. She has worked as a curator and educator for Artpace, San Antonio, TX, and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, NY, and has written for numerous publications. Green was a juror for the 2007 Texas Biennial.

10. *Body and Voice* (2013), acrylic and enamel on wood, various fabrics, latex rubber, installation of 9 individual units, presentation variable

ABOUT LAWNDALE ART CENTER

Lawndale Art Center develops local contemporary artists and the audience for their art. Lawndale is dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art with an emphasis on work by Houston artists. Lawndale presents exhibitions, lectures and events, and offers an annual residency program to further the creative exchange of ideas among Houston’s diverse artistic, cultural and student communities.

Programs at Lawndale Art Center are supported in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, The Texas Commission on the Arts, Houston Endowment, The Brown Foundation, Inc., The John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation and The John P. McGovern Foundation.

ABOUT THE TEXAS BIENNIAL

The Texas Biennial is an independent survey of contemporary art in Texas, founded to create an exhibition opportunity for all artists living and working in the state. In the fall of 2013, the Biennial celebrates its 5th anniversary with a range of exhibitions and other programming at venues in Austin, Dallas, Houston, Marfa and San Antonio. www.texasbiennial.org



The Texas Biennial is a program of Big Medium, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting contemporary art throughout Texas, funded in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division. The Biennial is also supported by the Texas Commission on the Arts and generous contributions from Suzanne Deal Booth and David G. Booth and other private donors, as well as grants from the Susan Vaughan Foundation, the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation and the City of Houston through the City’s Initiative Grant Program of the Houston Arts Alliance.