

LandEscape

A R T R E V I E W

July 2014

Special Issue

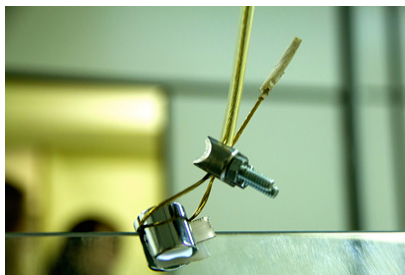
**NICK NABER
MOSHIK HAYMAN
IBN KENDALL
GUDMUNDUR R. LUDVIKSSON
THEODOROS ZAFEIROPOULOS
SARAH CHOO
MANDY WILLIAMS
PRISCILLA DUARTE GUERRA
JIM OLSON**

From TELEALTERIMAGEM, Priscila Duarte Guerra

Telematic Installation (Image by Daniele Akemi Magori)

Our net review presents a selection of artists whose works shows the invisible connection between inner landscapes and actual places. Apart from stylistic differences and individual approaches to the art process, all of them share the vision that art is a slice of the world to be shared. An artwork doesn't communicate anything: it simply creates a mental space. Language, gestures, or rather a masterly brush-stroke of a painter are nothing but ways to invite us to explore our inner landscapes". Thirty years have passed since this Borgesean deep and at the same time provocative statement has been written by the fine Italian writer Giorgio Manganelli.

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From TELEALTERIMAGEM

Priscila Duarte Guerra

(Brazil)

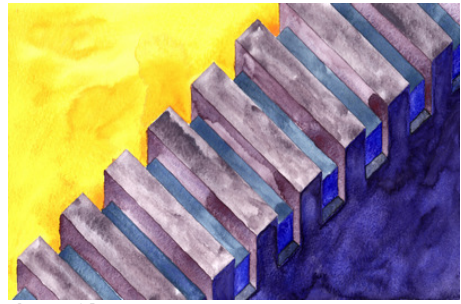
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The research with the shadows called SHADOW: means of investigation in Art, acquires a clear anthropological character connected to the memories of individuals who passed by a certain space, marking their territory in a given place and time, with forms that do not allow an identification of its wearer, are enigmatic.

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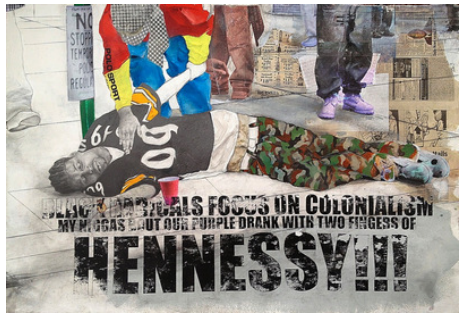
Nick Naber

(USA)



From the Lucid series

Severe, meandering, overwrought lines engulf the paper. Forms and spaces stretch, expand, and integrate to create structural abstractions. Walls crisscross, meander, and offer countless circuitous passages. The enclosures leave the viewer imprisoned, yet the multiple layers keep the viewer adrift in the space.



From the Dream House series

Ibn Kendall

(USA)

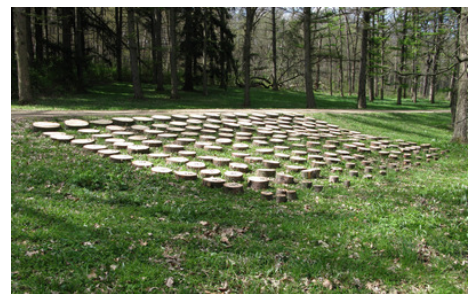
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I went back to the family farm in Jamaica last winter for a change of scenery. I was sorting through the family album and was struck by the photos of my great aunts, uncles and family friends. From the 1940's to the 60's, I was amazed to see they're stellar but delightful expressions in the face of this period in time.

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Theodoros Zafeiropoulos

(Greece)



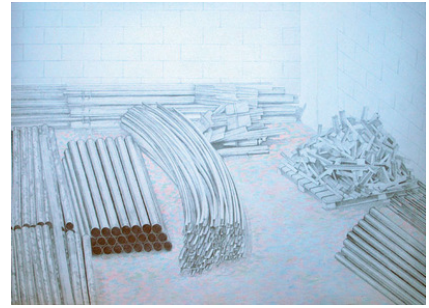
My works give answers to some of the major questions that in nowadays derive from many different fields of theoretical studies, sciences and disciplines. In that sense I feel that I am following this current problematic. I would better suggest that this dichotomy could be indicated on the bridges that link us with the past.

50

Moshik Hayman

(Israel)

'Dead bent' is a series of sculpted poles made to act as a Photoshop brush or a stamp tool, those Poles, made out of Foam, onto which I paint and then seal in plastic packing materials which hold it into its sculptured shape, folding the pictorial space into production standard units.



Die wachklige Gebärmutter



Imprint

Gudmundur R. Ludviksson

(Iceland)

72

Through multi-media installations, I endeavor to directly involve and engage participants—as opposed to “audiences” or passive viewers—in a creative and collaborative process of city building.

82

Alice Zilberberg

(Estonia/Israel)

I choose to narrate the story as well as participate in it, placing myself as the dark haired heroin. She is not saved by a prince, but alone and in despair, or even dead.

Playing the role of the girl character, I challenge conventional ideas about how a women should act, look and be like.



Imprint



Los Paramos

Thomas S. Ladd

(USA)

90

The camera has lead me to understand that the surface of things are endlessly beautiful; that slow and careful observations of the external world will lead one to deep introspection; that the tension between the photograph and the 'real' world will never cease to engage peoples' imagination; that photography is a form of thinking; that, nothing is ever what it seems to be; and that, one's intentions never materialize... something more exciting always takes over.

Nick Naber

(USA)

An artist's statement

Severe, meandering, overwrought lines engulf the paper. Forms and spaces stretch, expand, and integrate to create structural abstractions. Walls crisscross, meander, and offer countless circuitous passages. The enclosures leave the viewer imprisoned, yet the multiple layers keep the viewer adrift in the space.

The drawings give glimpses of a way out, but do not offer any real escape. The placement on the page is primary: the viewer is placed outside of the paper project, and I ask them to imagine what it would be like to be trapped inside. The result can be a feeling of claustrophobia and anxiousness. The viewer's anxiety is a remnant of my own uneasiness. To this end, dichotomies are crucial: dark-light, interior-exterior, and positive-negative.

Tension is created through these contrasts. In my work, specific neighborhood elements are joined to unrealized paper projects to form imaginary dystopic structures. Their scale and design communicates a sense of unease, intense competition, and the desire for power. I aim to reconcile my artistic process and the experience of my lived environment.

My work borrows from my surrounding architecture of the urban landscape: corporate skyscrapers, industrial buildings, brownstones, and shipping warehouses. I focus on the extremity of their structural elements through the use of severe lines and strict repetition. Fenestrations, sculptural elements, and the severity of industrial buildings find a place in the work. The artwork harkens back to multiple architectural histories: prisons, Brutalist architecture and the drawings of Piranesi. These sources and my imagination come together to create the work.

Nick Naber





Installation view of Construction, December 2012 at OPUS Projects New York, NY

An interview with

Nick Naber

Hello Nick, and a warm welcome to LandEscape. I would start this interview with my usual introductory question: what does in your opinion define a work of Art? By the way, what could be in your opinion the features that mark an artwork as a piece of Contemporary Art? Do you think that there's a dichotomy between tradition and contemporariness?

A work of art needs to illicit something in the viewer. By that I mean a response that is emotional, intellectual, or something more visceral and deep-seated. There also needs to be some sort of intention from the artist in the work's concept and execution.

Contemporary art is art that has an awareness of art from the past, but it is work that is being made now. It engages in a conversation with both.

In many ways tradition and contemporariness go hand in hand. In my own work I think the tradition comes out in craft. That is to say, I am interested in the craft of drawing. I think knowledge of art history and the tradition of the media you are working in is of vital importance to contemporariness. Extending a tradition is an important part of art making. I know this sentiment isn't shared by a lot of people in the current "anything goes" art world.

Would you like to tell us something about your background? You hold a MFA of Painting & Drawing, that you received just a couple of years ago from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn: how has this experience impacted on the way you currently produce your artworks? By the way, I sometimes wonder if a certain kind of formal training could even stifle a young artist's creativity... what's your opinion?

I started out thinking I would be an architect. After my first studio course as an undergrad I realized it wasn't for me. I am more interested in the history and theory of architecture, rather than the nuts and bolts of engineering. I switched my major to painting and drawing, graduated, and then headed to Pratt for my master's.





Nick Naber

Nick Naber

Pratt definitely impacted the way I work. I have always had a strong studio practice, but Pratt gives you a lot of time alone in the studio, both to make work and to really delve into your ideas. I think that was one of the biggest things I took from my time there; how to be independent in the studio, and to work through ideas. It's natural that some of them fail and some of them succeed.

Formal training was pivotal for me. It is important if you're going to say you're a painter that you know the basics, and continue to improve, and gain more knowledge by making, and seeing other paintings. I don't think that a traditional training stifles a young artist. We have been using the Bauhaus method of foundations courses in our universities for years now. There is a good reason; it prepares artists with at least a working knowledge of various media. Then it is up to them to pursue the medium that speaks to them. One of my favorite analogies for this is: would you go to a doctor who never went to medical school? Of course not. We want people to be experienced in their fields.

Before starting to elaborate about your production, would you like to tell to our readers something about your process and set up for making your artworks? In particular, what technical aspects do you mainly focus on your work? And how much preparation and time do you put in before and during the process of creating a piece?

The process leading up to making work varies. I always use my sketchbook. I draw the world around me, the surrounding architecture of any given place. I photograph things that I find compelling. Again, it tends to be architectural, but I find that people can also be amusing subjects for the lens.

Technically, I focus on details. I bring those details together in my work through the use of a straight edge. I always begin the work with drawing, whether it is a thumbnail sketch or the piece is intended to be a drawing. I am fascinated with architectural drawing, which is inherently technical. I like to play with the restraints of the straight edge, and within the rules I have set up for myself in the work.

Each of my works come out of the previous work, in many respects. So, it could be said that each work takes hours of preparation. While I am creating a work I veer far away from my initial sketches, as my work happens organically on the page, or on the canvas. Each move of the pencil informs the next line, or form. I like to respond to previous sketch or work, and to respond to the lines that are being made on the current work.



Structure 9, 2013 graphite on watercolor paper 22 x 30 inches

Now let's focus on your art production: I would start from your "Structure" series that our readers can admire in these pages : I would suggest to our readers to visit your website directly at <http://nicknaber.com/> in order to get a wider idea of your current artistic production. In the meantime, would you tell us something about the genesis of these pieces? What was your initial inspiration?

The Structure works are drawings that come out of my earlier series, Constructions and Developments. I felt this earlier series of drawings had gone as far as I could take them, but they still held an interest

for me in their conceptual framework. As I said before, I am drawn to the surrounding architecture of the places I live. New York City is an amazing place full of weird and amazing spaces. I have been focused recently on warehouses, and the skyscrapers of Downtown Manhattan. I live on Staten Island and I take the ferry everyday to work. I began noticing these buildings and drawing them; I didn't have a specific intention in mind at the time. I began to put the various places together, and create these kind of Frankenstein places: an amalgamation of various architectural forms and their details.



Construction Wall Drawing 1, 2012 graphite latex on wall 8 x 18 feet / (96 x 216 inches)

A feature of your works and especially of your stimulating "Construction Wall Drawings" that has mostly impacted on me is your capability of creating a deep intellectual interaction, communicating a wide variety of states of mind and I can recognize that it based on a deep involvement of the viewer and his personal perception of the space around him... I would like to ask you if experience is an absolutely indispensable part of a creative process... Do you think that a creative process could be disconnected from direct experience?

As an artist, I make artwork about my life and my experiences. They inform so much of what I do. It is a way to order my world, and to make sense of the information that I take in daily. My experiences of place and my emotions and feelings manifest themselves in my work. For me, there is no way to disconnect myself from the work that I make.

And since our review is called "LandEscape", I would like to stop for a moment to consider the "function" of the landscape suggested by your work: most of the time it doesn't seem to be just a passive background and one of the features that has mostly impacted on me is the way you have been capable of re-contextualizing the idea of environment itself... I'm sort of convinced that some information & ideas are hidden, or even "encrypted" in the environment we live in, so we need -in a way- to decipher them. Maybe that one of the roles of an artist could be to reveal unexpected sides of Nature, especially of our inner Nature... what's your opinion about this?

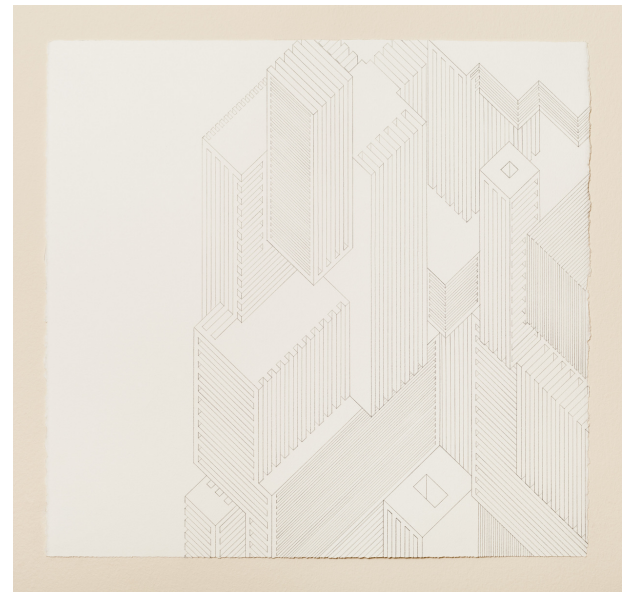
Totally. I am concerned with positive and negative space. The negative space is the "landscape" of the work.



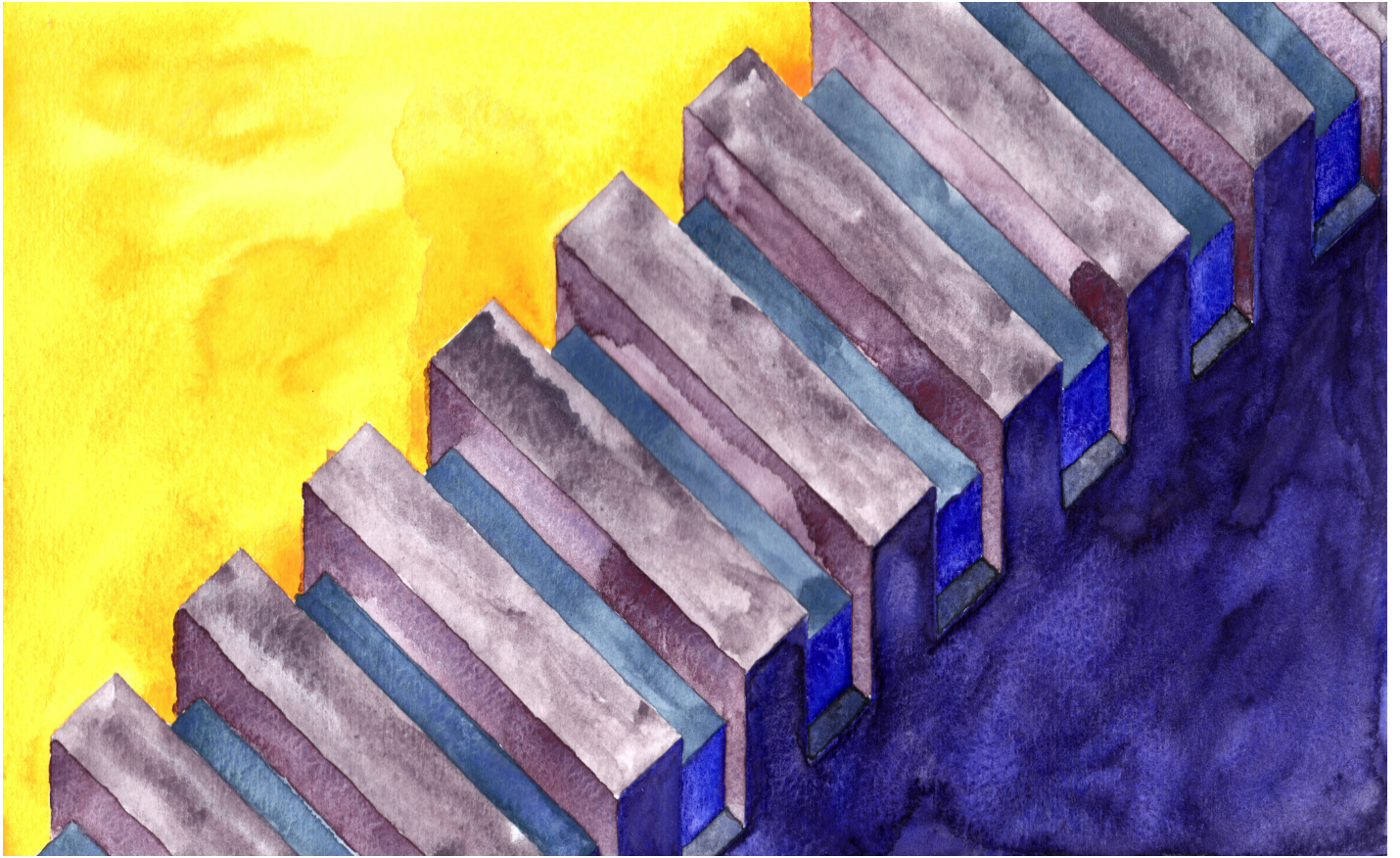
Facades 11, 2012 acrylic on canvas 28 x 48 inches

The way that they are drawn or painted has a direct effect on the way that the surrounding area is activated. In some cases there is no “landscape” visible, only the drawn or painted image, which then becomes overwrought and predominant in the work. I tend to focus on the place, and its details rather than information that’s happening peripherally when I create a work. I don’t want them to seem like dollhouses, or models sitting alone on a barren landscape. That is why I am conscious of the entire support when I make anything. Everything has to have a purpose in the work.

In many ways, this way of working does what your question is asking. It reveals certain information in the work, but it also conceals a lot of information. It’s interesting to create these places from my mind using sources from the world. It becomes a sort of encrypted language that can be deciphered by the viewer only over time.



Structure 7, 2013 graphite on watercolor paper 22 x 22 inches



PurBlue Structure, 2013 watercolor on watercolor paper 7 ½ x 11 ¾ inches

Now let's deal with the tones of your pieces: in particular, I have appreciated the intense, lively blue -a color that is very recurrent in your works: we can see a vivid nuance of it also in "PurBlue Structure"- and that suggests me such a tactile physicality... By the way, any comments on your choice of "palette" and how it has changed over time?

My palette has always been somewhat the same. I am drawn to blues and purples. There is an inherent richness to those colors, and such a wide range of possibilities using their compliments. I have returned to Albers's color theory in the past couple of years. I have been working predominantly in monochromes, and in complementary and tertiary color.

Over time, I think the palette has improved the more that I paint. I did a whole series titled *Façades* when I was in grad school based on toned black. Some paintings had over 20 different blacks within them, and I like that this only became clear to the viewer after close-looking.

More recently, my palette has opened up more and isn't quite as dark. The watercolors allow me more play when it comes to color. The way that I apply the watercolor changes the way the color looks after it dries. Not to get too technical but if I were to do wet on wet application the color would turn out much differently than if the paint is applied to a dry surface. Right now this experimentation with watercolor has been fruitful yet frustrating.



Installation view of Tension, February 2012 at Dekalb Gallery at the Pratt Institute Brooklyn, NY





Facades 13, 2012 acrylic on canvas 36 x 96 inches / 36 x 48 inches each

So far your works have been exhibited in several occasions and I think it's important to mention that you are going to have a solo at the OPUS Project Space, New York... feedback and especially awards are capable of supporting an artist: I was just wondering if an award -or better, the expectation of an award- could even influence the process of an artist...

An exhibition definitely motivates me to work a lot. It creates a goal that I work up towards. My production goes up when there is an exhibition on the horizon, because I want to have as many options as I can have for that exhibition. This added output contributes to new things that happen in the work, which gets used or discarded over time.

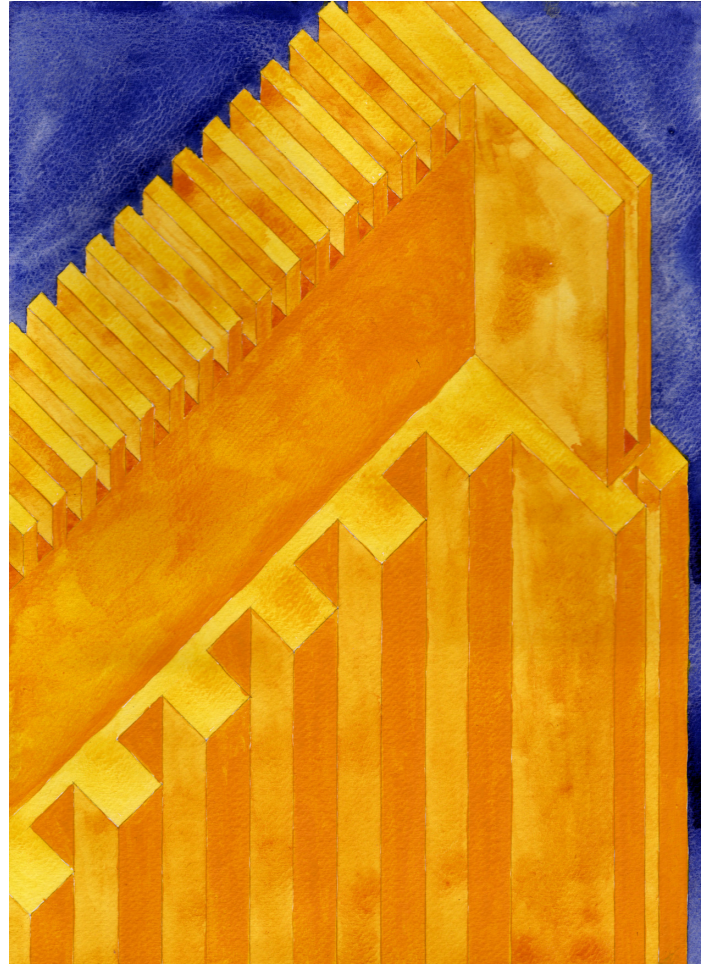
By the way, how important is the feedback of your audience? Do you ever think to whom will enjoy your Art when you conceive your pieces?

Feedback from the audience is important. I want

feedback about my work whether it is good or bad. Some criticism you take and some of it you forget about. Everyone has different opinions about every-thing. If I start to hear the same thing from more than one person that's when I begin to listen, because then the work is hitting on something for multiple people. As for making work for the audience, it does come into what I do but it isn't the driving force of my art making.

... and I sometimes wonder if it could ever exist a genuine relationship between business and Art...

Business and art have a long history; it's something that I deal with in my life because I work in a gallery. It is difficult for me to see art as a commodity, something to be bought and traded, auctioned, re-bought and sold again. That system is something I find troubling, but unfortunately that's the world we live in.



Complementary Structure 3, 2013

watercolor on watercolor paper 11 ¾ x 8 ½ inches

Thanks a lot for your time and your thoughts, Nick. Anything coming up for you professionally that you would like readers to be aware of?

Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to chat with you about my work!

I have a few projects in the works. As you mentioned, I will have a solo show at *OPUS* in 2015. I also have a few group exhibitions on the horizon. I just launched a studio visit/exhibition review website called The Coastal Post with another artist, Francesca Cozzone.

(thecoastalpost.tumblr.com) Where we will be doing monthly studio visits with people from the East and West Coast and periodic exhibition reviews. I am definitely keeping myself busy!



Construction Wall Drawing 3, 2012

graphite on wall

12 x 12 feet / (144 x 144 inches)