

## NEXTNEW2007

*NextNew* is the ICA's annual exhibition that showcases the work of emerging artists. This on-going series of exhibitions provides exposure for a fresh crop of artists, while affording the ICA audience the opportunity to see a wide range of new work. Each year, the show includes innovative work in all media – painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, installation and video.

This year the ICA invited distinguished faculty from MFA programs throughout the state of California to nominate recent graduates to exhibit in *NextNew2007*. The broad cultural and stylistic diversity of the state's artistic talent is reflected in the exhibition, which includes the work of 11 artists from Sacramento to Los Angeles.

While the show is not held together by a single thematic narrative, it tells the story of contemporary art in California, serving as a portrait of the art of our time. Although diverse in technique, materials, and concepts, these works reflect a cumulative energy and optimism that remains an inherent part of the artistic community.

*Faculty nominators include: John Baldessari, University of California, Los Angeles; Enrique Chagoya, Stanford University; Lewis deSoto, San Francisco State University; Amy Ellingson, San Francisco Art Institute; Johanna Poethig, California State University, Monterey Bay; Maria Porges, California College of the Arts; Lucy Puls, University of California, Davis; Katherine Sherwood, University of California, Berkeley; Catherine Wagner, Mills College; Stan Welsh, San Jose State University; and Michael Woodcock, Pitzer College.*

## **Binta Ayofemi**

*Untitled (after Weekend)* from *Scenes from New City*, 2007  
35mm film digitized for DVD projection

*Untitled (after L'Eclisse)*, from *Scenes from New City*, 2007  
Color video, DVD projection

### Courtesy of the Artist

In her most recent work, *Scenes from New City*, Binta Ayofemi refers to iconic moments in film history to create new cinematic statements about our present day society. Ayofemi's portrayal of a woman seen through a scrim of light and shadow on her car window in *Untitled (After Weekend)* is a reference to Jean-Luc Godard's infamous apocalyptic traffic jam from his 1967 film "Weekend." In this raucous, biting satire, Godard portrays a couple stranded in a sea of motionless cars in a scene that ultimately leads to rape, bloodshed and murder. For Ayofemi Godard's surreal combination of leisure and revolution evokes the static rebellion of our contemporary political condition.

The contradiction of leisure and revolt is also the theme for *Untitled (after L'Eclisse)*, Ayofemi's film inspired by a breakup scene in Michelangelo Antonioni's 1962 film *L'Eclisse (The Eclipse)*. Like Antonioni, Ayofemi examines the nuances of human relationships, moving away from conventional narratives in favor of a style of cinematic essay. Ayofemi has crystallized the story line, creating a succinct portrait of alienation. Within a visually spare and finite environment, Ayofemi's camera captures a much larger world, fill with politics and war. Every frame is like an exquisite photograph. However, there is nothing static about her films.



This spring, Binta Ayofemi completed her MFA in Art Practice at Stanford University's Department of Art and Art History. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Enrique Chagoya, Associate Professor at Stanford University.

Image: Enrique Chagoya, *Road Map*, 2003,  
Color lithograph with folds, 22 x 30 inches

---

## Ali Dadgar

(From left to right)

*Friday, May 26, 2006, 2006-07*

*Thursday, June 8, 2006, 2006-07*

*Sunday, June 25, 2006, 2006-07*

*Thursday, May 25, 2006, 2006-07*

*Sunday, May 28, 2005, 2006-07*

All works: Acrylic on newspaper

### Courtesy of the Artist

Based on a growing frustration about the stack of *New York Times* newspapers that had accumulated in his studio, Ali Dadgar began this series of work that expresses his sadness and frustration about the current war with Iraq. By selectively censoring and obscuring the text and photographs, Dadgar redefines the actual editorial content, creating his own statements about the war and our daily lives.



Ali Dadgar received his MFA from the University of California, Berkeley in 2007. He was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Katherine Sherwood, Professor of Art at UC Berkeley.

*Image: Katherine Sherwood, Martiniland, 2000*  
*Mixed media on canvas, 58" x 66"*

---

---

## Lauren Lavitt

*Ocean Box Series*, 2007

Mixed media installation

Courtesy of the Artist

*Ocean Box Series* incorporates several aspects of Lauren Lavitt's practice: video, photography, painting and sculpture. According to Lavitt, she uses whatever medium best articulates her ideas. Much of her method is about improvisation and recycling. She consistently re-utilizes fragments of previous works for new pieces. Regardless of the medium, the work is filled with fragmented narratives, abstractions and contradictions that reflect Lavitt's personal joy and anxiety about living in the auto-dependent metropolis of Los Angeles.



Lauren Lavitt received her MFA in 2005 from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by John Baldessari, Professor of Art at UCLA.

Image: John Baldessari, *Throwing four balls in the air to get a square (best of 36 tries)*, 1974

---

---

## Tom Mueske

(From left to right)

*White on White*, 2007

Marker and ink on paper

.

Collection of Marjory Graue and Martin Bloes

*Sprawl*, 2007

Marker and ink on paper

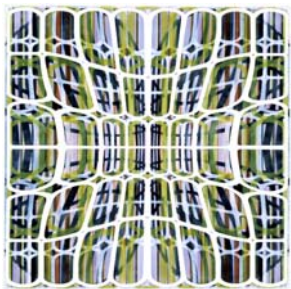
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Haines Gallery, San Francisco

*Throw Back*, 2006

Marker and ink on paper

Private Collection, New York

Tom Mueske is more interested in process than purpose. He describes his most recent drawings as “acts of commitment and meditation.” During the past year, Mueske has been exploring the notion of “pure un-alienated labor.” He begins each drawing using many colored markers, quickly creating a composition of jumbled lines. He then outlines the marker with black ink, transforming the spontaneous gesture into a drawing of intensely calculated detail.



Tom Mueske received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) in 2007. He was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Amy Ellingson, Associate Professor of Painting in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at SFAI.

*Image: Amy Ellingson, Identical/Variation (lavender, green, red) #2*

---

---

## Jennifer Brandon

(From left to right)

*Broken Frame I*, 2007

*Broken Frame II*, 2007

*Broken Frame III*, 2007

All works: Archival inkjet print mounted on aluminum

Courtesy of the Artist

Jennifer Brandon's camera captures familiar objects, removed from their original context, and in a state of disrepair. Brandon sets out to expose the fleeting nature of their physical form. In this series of photographs, old mattresses bare no resemblance to the comforting notion of "bed." Instead, these seemingly alien objects are defined by worn coils, tattered padding, loose threads and stained surfaces. According to Brandon, "As traces of vulnerability embedded within material objects are heightened for examination, those vulnerabilities become metaphors for an emotional and physical falling apart."



Jennifer Brandon received her MFA from Mills College in 2007. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Catherine Wagner, Professor of Studio Art, Mills College.

Image: Catherine Wagner, *American Classroom: Moss Landing Elementary School, 7th & 8th Grade Science Room, CA, 1984*, gelatin silver print

---

---

## Kim Schoenstadt

*Can Control: La Verne, 2007*

Spray paint on canvas

### Courtesy of the Artist

In early 2007, Kim Schoenstadt was invited to participate in a show at the University of La Verne in Southern California. In her work, Schoenstadt integrates participative elements and often collaborates with university communities where she has been asked to exhibit. Prior to her exhibition at La Verne, she sent the art students and faculty an email stating that she intended to create an artwork that would be derived from their input. She asked them each to send her instructions for a word, mark or shape. The response was abundant and enthusiastic. (The instructions she received are accessible in the Reading Resource Room at the front of the gallery.)

The *Can Control* project involves three activities that blend to create one work of art. The first activity was inviting the La Verne students and faculty to submit instructions for the painting. While she awaited the response, Schoenstadt applied very thin strips of tape to the canvas, creating a large spiral shaped drawing of architectural fiction. For the last activity, she followed the instructions that she received and using cans of spray paint, covered the entire canvas with the suggested imagery, words, and colors. Finally, she peeled off the tape to reveal her intricate drawing, which stands in stark contrast to the graffiti-like gestures of the spray paint.



Kim Schoenstadt received her BFA from Pitzer College in 1995. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Michael Woodcock, Professor of Art and Creative Studies, Pitzer College.

*Image: Michael Woodcock, "county line, growing up" 2004-2007, graphite and lithograph, 20 ¾ x 20 inches*

---

---

## Susan van der Mellen

*Crop Milk*, 2007

Ink, graphite, gouache on discarded paper, gold thread on muslin

### Courtesy of the Artist

Susan van der Mellen's most recent body of work is a series of diptychs that explore the notion of two: "in the textual meaning of two parts to a sentence and the meaning of two parts to an experience."

*Crop Milk* subtly references the story of St. Francis of Assisi and his devotion to nature and wildlife. However, rather than depicting images of bucolic landscapes, populated by all forms of animals, van der Mellen instead suggests an urban setting, peppered with an abundance of city pigeons. The implication seems to be that these dirty birds deserve the same amount of compassion that St Francis exhibited to those animals out in the countryside. According to van der Mellen, her pigeons are allegories for the innate desire to love and be loved.

The spare and gritty cityscapes, rendered on crumpled brown paper, are juxtaposed with cryptic symbols and imagery stitched in gold embroidery thread on unbleached muslin. The precious quality of this second part of each diptych alludes to the sacred or spiritual. According to van der Mellen "these tiny drawings seek to be beautiful and decorative as well as symbolic, a turnabout on those that are thought of as superfluous, dirty, and/or disgusting."



Susan van der Mellen received her BFA from California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) in 2001 and received her MFA this spring from JFK University. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Johanna Poethig, Faculty of the Institute of Visual and Public Art at CSUMB.

*Image: Johanna Poethig, Calle de la Eternidad Mural, 62'x42', 4th & Broadway, LA*



## Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor

(From left to right)

*No-Name* from *Doze, dose, dos-i-do*, 2006

Cement-saturated knit afghans and blankets, wire, string, pillows, pantyhose, wigs, and pigment

*No-Name/Benighted*, 2007

Blankets, afghans, glue, pigment, string, wire, pillows, and mattress covers

### Courtesy of the Artist

Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor describes her installations as "existing somewhere on a continuum between elegy and absurdity." These two figures, made from discarded bedclothes and old throws from thrift stores, are at once proud and humble. As Gregory Amenoff wrote about the work, "Their somewhat defiant stance forces us out of pity and into pathos. They become as familiar as our own anxieties – as though we were turned inside out to witness our patched together psyches, our internal scars and our battered histories. They mirror our own grotesque grace."



Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor received her MFA from the University of California at Davis in 2005. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Lucy Puls, Art Studio Chair and Professor of Sculpture at UC Davis.

*Image: Lucy Puls Ad Hoc Locum (Ficus), 2004  
fabric image, artificial ficus trees, wood clamp, faux rabbits, 94 x 72 x 28"*

## Amy Sampson

*Treasure*, 2007

Video, 3 minutes, 30 seconds

*Magic Carpet*, 2007

Video, 1 minute, 40 seconds

*Ghost*, 2007

Video, 7 minutes

### Courtesy of the Artist

Amy Sampson is obsessed with the moments in film that instill fear, loneliness, or impending trouble. From this obsession, she creates video vignettes that threaten for no logical reason.

Sampson grew up in Hollywood, born into a family that was involved in the movie industry from sound editing to costume design. However, she is “mad at Hollywood” for promoting ideas of perfection – perfection she cannot replicate, nor does she want to. Instead she thinks of herself as a producer of her own world where “everything verges on make-believe and anything real can be copied.”



Amy Sampson received her MFA from California College of the Arts (CCA) in 2007. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Maria Porges, Adjunct Professor, Glass and Graduate Program in Fine Arts at CCA.

*Image: Maria Porges, Acts of (Self) Deception, 2000 wax, wood, metal leaf, plexiglas case*

---

---

## Ema Harris-Sintamarian

*Untitled, 2007*

Ink on paper

Courtesy of the Artist and Jack Fischer Gallery,  
San Francisco

Ema Harris-Sintamarian was born in Romania, a communist country where, according to Sintamarian, artistic creativity was considered to be both subversive and punishable. In 1999, she came to the United States for the first time as part of a student exchange program. In 2002, she earned an MFA in Printmaking from the University of Delaware before continuing her studies at San Jose State University.

Since arriving in the US, Sintamarian's work has gravitated around ideas concerning fragmentation, construction, deconstruction, and analogous structures. Last year, a trivial moment led her to new ideas and a new series of work. In an effort to get off the phone with a telemarketer, she got trapped into buying numerous magazine subscriptions. As they began to arrive, she found their content to be vacuous; however she found the ads to be "omnipresent and omnipotent." Through this latest body of work, Sintamarian is reevaluating the idea of identity, consumption and the politics of being a socially active human.



Ema Harris-Sintamarian received her MFA in Painting from San Jose State University (SJSU) in 2006. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Stan Welsh, Professor of Spacial Arts at SJSU.

*Image: Stan Welsh, Stan Welsh, Sleeping Clown, 2003, terracotta and glaze, 36 x 19 x 19 inches*

## **Alison Watkins**

*Passed and Present*, 2007

Table, 1,476 buttons, cotton voile, embroidery floss

*Heirloom*, 2007

Vellum, embroidery floss, wooden boxes

### Courtesy of the Artist

*Passed and Present* serves as a poignant homage to Alison Watkins' grandmother, with whom she was very close. After her grandmother's death, Watkins became fixated on her accumulation of buttons – hundreds of them, in every shape, size, color and style. In an effort to figure out what was actually there, she began to sort them by size. She laid them out on a long piece of material and then traced around them. After removing the buttons, she then embroidered over the traced circles with thread that matched the color of the buttons. She is now sorting them by size with the same methodology and anticipates at least two more rounds of categorizing them.

*Heirloom* represents embroidered paper replicas of linens that Watkins' grandmother originally embroidered. The artist taught herself how to embroider in order to make this work. Originally trained as a photographer, (she received her BFA in Photography from San Jose State University) Watkins' photos documented other people's collections. While the articulation of *Passed and Present* and *Heirloom* is quite different from photography, what she aims to capture is the same. As Watkins states, "I am interested in what remains, as well as what is lost after an event or object is traced. Highlighting impermanence and temporality, these explorations serve as a record of time and an interpretation of what was once present."



Alison Watkins received her MFA from San Francisco State University (SFSU) in 2007. She was nominated to participate in *NextNew2007* by Lewis deSoto, Professor of Art at SF State.

Image: Lewis deSoto, *Alas Time*, 1992-1993, *Sound Installation*

**Ema Sintamarian**

*The seeds of our discomfort 1, 2007*

*The seeds of our discomfort 2, 2007*

Ink on paper

Courtesy of the Artist and  
Jack Fischer Gallery, San Francisco

\_\_\_\_\_

**Elisabeth Higgins O'Connor**

*Heap, 2007*

Tempera, gouache, charcoal on paper

Courtesy of the Artist

\_\_\_\_\_