

Davidson College in Davidson, NC, Offers Works by Harold Mendez, Joelle Dietrick & Owen Mundy

The Van Every/Smith Galleries at Davidson College in Davidson, NC, are pleased to begin the new academic year with two new exhibitions, *Harold Mendez: The days of yesterday are all numbered in sum*, on view in the Smith Gallery, and *Joelle Dietrick & Owen Mundy: The Speed of Thinking*, on view in the Van Every Gallery. Both exhibitions will be on view from Aug. 26 through Oct. 6, 2019 with a public reception on Sept. 4 from 7-8:30pm, with a gallery talk by Harold Mendez at 7pm. On Sept. 17, from 11:05am-12:05pm, Joelle Dietrick and Owen Mundy will discuss the exhibition with Kate Mondloch, Professor and Department Head, History of Art and Architecture, University of Oregon.

Harold Mendez uses simple materials – archival photographs, industrial items such as found metal and chain link fencing, and natural materials like tree limbs, flower petals, and pigments made from insects – to communicate complex concepts around history, memory, the body, violence, and ultimately, mending. Mendez alters, reprints, edits, distresses, layers, peels away, builds back up, and then re-excavates these objects and works on paper.

Mendez's works often depict or suggest human or animal bodies, and in some cases they are derived directly from animal matter. In *Untitled (Death Mask)*, viewers peer into a singed cardboard box to find a face staring back. *Body* incorporates an actual tortoise shell, and the central component of *American Pictures* is a carcass-like form; both of these works incorporate pigments made from crushed cochineal or other insects native to South or Central America. *American Pictures* takes on an altar-like presence with the scattering of white carnations around the base. Caretaking of an art object becomes a ritual for the gallery staff who must tend to the work every few days, removing old petals and scattering fresh ones, per the artist's wishes.

Mendez's interest in history and memory is reinforced through his materials and practice as he creates works that rely on historical photos or objects while imagining an alternative through their manipulation, juxtaposition, or re-presentation. To create *For let X stand*, if it can for the one's unfound (*After Proceso Pentágono*), Mendez utilized a photo found in the archives of *Grupo Proceso Pentágono*, an anti-authoritarian art collective based in Mexico. The life-size image depicts an unidentified man, his back to the viewer, being punched in the face by several attackers. Not only is the identity of the victim obscured, but those brutalizing him are hidden as well. Only the hands of the aggressors remain within the frame of the lens. Further, the context of the aggression is unknown. Mendez has reversed, reprinted, cut, collaged, distressed, and re-photographed the original image, his process further obscuring identity and truth. Works such as this depicting distress, violence, and turmoil, along with Mendez's exhibition title choice, are reminders that this very moment is the direct result of the past, while the future remains dependent on our current choices.

Harold Mendez (b. 1977) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, and his native Chicago, IL. Mendez received an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2007, a BA from Columbia College Chicago in 2000, and attended the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, School of Art and Design, in Ghana, West Africa, in 1999. He has had solo exhibitions at such venues as PATRON, Chicago; Van Every/Smith Galleries, Davidson College, Davidson, NC; Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, TX (forthcoming); and Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago. His work has also been included in many group exhibitions, including "Cross Currents/Intercambio Cultural," Smart Museum



Work by Harold Mendez

of Art, Chicago; "Being: New Photography," 2018, Museum of Modern Art, New York; "Whitney Biennial," 2017, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and among others.

Mendez has been honored with numerous awards, grants, and residencies, including those from 3Arts Residency Fellowship in partnership with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency in Captiva, FL; Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA; Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME; CORE Program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant, New York, NY; and Illinois Arts Council Artist Fellowship.

Mendez's works can be found in the permanent public collections of the JP-Morgan Chase Art Collection, New York; Museum of Fine Arts Houston; Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the Chicago Transit Authority.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of the Herb Jackson and Laura Grosch Gallery Endowment; Davidson College Friends of the Arts; and Malu Alvarez '02.

Davidson College's Van Every Gallery will present the exhibition *Joelle Dietrick & Owen Mundy: The Speed of Thinking*. On Sept. 17, from 11:05am-12:05pm, the artists will discuss the exhibition with Kate Mondloch, Professor and Department Head, History of Art and Architecture, University of Oregon, who is best known for her books *Screens and The Capsule Aesthetic*; Sarah Higgins, Editor + Artistic Director of *Art Papers*, Atlanta, GA, and moderator Mark Sample, Associate Professor and Chair of Digital Studies, Davidson College.

Each year, the Van Every/Smith Galleries present an exhibition that highlights the work of one or more studio art faculty. This year, the Galleries present digital works including games, prints, and animations by collaborative art team Joelle Dietrick and Owen Mundy. Focusing on their collaborative work from the last five years, the centerpiece of the exhibition is *The Speed of Thinking*, their mobile game that playfully connects global trade to global warming.

The exhibition is organized into three rooms about global trade: the first focuses on its products; the second, its infrastructure; and the third, a digital wilderness for escape or refuge. Developed during the team's Fulbrights to Austria, Germany, Chile and China, all of the works consider how digital technology and its automated systems cultivate consumer desire and elicit unintended consequences.

Two of the artworks in the exhibition are interactive works that are free to download. These include *Tally*, their browser extension that gamifies data tracking, available at (<https://tallygame.com>).

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THERE'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN PRICELESS AND WORTHLESS.



Artist Diane Falkenhagen's Texas studio — destroyed by flooding during Hurricane Ike, 2008

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net/) and *The Speed of Thinking*, their mobile game about global trade, available at (<https://sneakaway.studio/the-speed-of-thinking>).

Joelle Dietrick's artworks have been shown internationally including at the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville; Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago, IL; MCA San Diego, CA; Long March Space Beijing, China; ARC Gallery Chicago, IL; and Soho20 New York, NY. A MacDowell Colony fellow and Fulbright scholar, her artwork has been supported by the University of California, Florida State University, the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Owen Mundy's work is best known for his online interventions that have been reviewed by over 300 international news media outlets including the *New York Times*, *National Public Radio*, and *Wired UK*. Recent exhibitions of his work include solo and group exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, London, Berlin, and Rotterdam. His work has been included in many books about internet art, including



Work by Joelle Dietrick & Owen Mundy

Art and the Internet (2014) and *Thinking Through Digital Media: Transnational Environments and Locative Places* (2015) and has been supported by the University of California, Florida State University, the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) and the Fulbright Commission.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of the Herb Jackson and Laura Grosch Gallery Endowment and support received by Dietrick & Mundy from the North Carolina Arts Council, the Fulbright US Scholar Program, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The MacDowell Colony.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (www.davidsoncollegeartgalleries.org).

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