Ifōn’ seksl: Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy

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A primary task of the visual arts is to bring to light those societal issues that are buried just below the surface of our collective consciousness. In this role, art forces us to confront the most intimate aspects of our being and demands that we expose our deepest vulnerabilities to one another. The diverse range of works featured in Ifon’ sekš: Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy address how the meaning of sexual intimacy has been renegotiated in (fluorescent) light of advances in digital technology. I want to thank those artists who, through their ideas and artworks, have contributed to this necessary conversation.

My deepest gratitude to Dave Kube, Visiting Assistant Professor of Digital Media in the department of Art, Music, and Theatre at UIS, and to Michael Murphy, Assistant Professor in the Women and Gender Studies department at UIS. The theme of this exhibition was conceived by Professor Kube and Dr. Murphy, and the curatorial effort behind the project would not have been possible without their respective scholarly expertise.

Finally, thanks to all who have made the exhibition and this catalog a source of scholarly excellence. Allison Lacher, manager for the Visual Arts Gallery, put extensive efforts into the preparation, installation, and promotion of the exhibition. Dr. Murphy contributed an enlightening essay to the catalog. Kim Seiz spearheaded the terrific catalog design. Alex Williams collected and organized documents in preparation for the catalog. Additional funding for the exhibition was provided by the UIS Friends of the Gallery and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Jeff Robinson
Director, Visual Arts Gallery
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It does not require a salacious inclination to have noticed the raft of celebrities, politicians, and other public figures who have been brought low in recent years due to revelations of illicit sexual desires or behaviors expressed or realized via digital devices (think Eliot Spitzer, David Weiner, David Petraeus, etc.). Sex scandals, of course, are nothing new, nor is the moral outrage (real or feigned) that accompanies them. Sexuality, however much it feels private, has always been mediated by legal regulation, social conventions, language and visual representation. There is not and can never be such a thing as personal or private sex. Sexuality is always already social, cultural, economic, and historical. As the feminist philosopher and cultural critic Susan Bordo has argued, “When bodies get together in sex, a whole history, cultural as well as personal, comes along with them.”

Yet, the advent of handheld digital technologies seems to have heralded something entirely new. The meaning of dating, relationships, romance, and even sex itself is currently being renegotiated in light of the fluorescent glow of iPhones, Blackberries, and Androids. These technologies are transforming what it means to be sexually intimate in the 21st century, inaugurating new languages (“dicpic”), behaviors (“sexting”), desires, expressions, communities, identities, and legal and regulatory frameworks. The identification and interaction with others on the basis of a shared sexual identity, orientation, inclination, or “kink” has never been easier, nor have sexual performances or masquerades—scripted or spontaneous—ever been as ephemeral or transient.

The intersection of microcomputer and global telecommunications technologies threatens to collapse longtime distinctions between public/private, personal/political, strange/familiar, distant/immediate, fleeting/eternal, and connection/alienation. Familiar boundaries of self, relationship, community, and nation are easily bridged as desires and technologies combine to put an adult bookstore, singles bar, brothel, and gay bathhouse in your purse or pocket. We are witnessing a revolution in human intimacy and this one will be televised…via the XTube mobile app on your iPhone 4GS.

In light of this, how should we view the transformation of intimate relations enabled by handheld digital devices? The artists selected for this show exploit three main strategies to answer this question: the interpretation of sexualized digital imagery through older artistic conventions and strategies; the translation of such imagery into other media; and, helping us ‘see’ these new representational conventions by working to make them ‘strange.’ The artists and works included in Ífón’ seksl: Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy go a long way to help us become more cognizant of this burgeoning phenomenon and help us think through some of the issues it occasions.¹

¹ Portions of the above were borrowed from the call for the show that this essay accompanies, which was co-authored by co-juror Dave Kube.
A number of works selected for the show offer evidence that artists are attempting to grapple with the intimate effects of new tech by situating it in the context of older artistic conventions. Striking in this regard is the work of Michael Max McLeod and Cory Peeke. McLeod’s self-portrait #jock #bear #selfie #gaybear #beardporn #menwithdogs #dontwoofatme, uses very recent digital technology—a cell phone, the photography application Instagram—to compose an image of himself as he’d like to be seen: a hirsute, hyper-masculine male with all the prerogatives that entails. His very, very postmodern body and identity are belied by a much older, and conservative aesthetic style typically encountered in Old Master paintings and prints by artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn. A very narrow color palette of rich browns and blacks, a raking light source, and triangular composition lend a sense of stability and gravity, counterbalancing the transient life passage that the image narrates—one that many might find unduly obsessed with the importance of surfaces rather than substances.

The three works selected by Cory Peeke are from his much larger *Wallflower* series, which consists of mixed media collage, improbably uniting such diverse materials as amateur Internet pornography, vintage wallpaper, and wax. Such materials connect these works to a much older history of image making and art historical conventions for representing the naked human form. The strategic location of leaves or flowers to obscure the genitals in Western painting, sculpture, and printmaking is well known. Such a strategy was essential to legitimatizing and de-sexualizing such images by locating them within the artistic conventions of “the nude.” Paintings with pigment and wax (encaustic) were very popular in Medieval and Renaissance art. But the floral wallpaper, with its over-determined connection to feminized domesticity, also helps to undermine and soften the aggressive masculinity of the photographs’ subjects.

Notably, where historical nudes used flora to obscure the genitals, here it obscures the faces, and hence identities, of the photographic subjects. Students of the representation of men in film and photography have shown that the masculinity of male film stars and celebrities is often ‘salvaged’ through direct physical and visual confrontation with the camera, and by extension, the viewer. But the use of floral imagery in these works short circuits that strategy, reducing the subjects to passive objects available for easy sexual objectification—as is so common in representations of women’s bodies. Such self-objectification is rampant in the new digital landscape, whether intentional, as image makers attempt to salvage their anonymity by excising identifying details out of their images, or circumstantial, as the act of self-picturing using a cell phone camera necessitates that some part of one’s body will not be pictured. Peeke’s work helps us understand the complexities of sexualized self-representations now being casually exchanged on cell phones and websites, as well as the artistic instinct to understand these images through reference to older artistic and representational conventions.
Artist Statement: Have you ever met a woman who just had breast implants? I've met many. After all, I used to work in Los Angeles - at the Playboy Mansion, no less. Some women who've just had breast implants can't wait to show you the new boobs. It's sort of annoying.

Well that's me, right now. Except I had mine taken out. Six months ago, I had gynecomastia surgery.

I like to show off on Instagram. Now, an international network of hot fags can see my new chest too. Every “like” (371 and counting) is an addictive stroke to my ego. I jones a bit when I haven’t had a “like” in a few hours. Follow me at michaelmaxmcleod. #doitnow!

Before my surgery I felt like a man trapped in a woman’s body trapped inside of a man’s body again. For as long as I remember, I was intensely embarrassed by my body. No amount of theory or correctness could ever give me the masculine liberation of my personal surgical chopping block.

I stopped clipping and shaving and let all my body hair grow out. I grew a beard and haven’t worn deodorant in months. Can there be such a thing as a biological male who identifies as male and is just a little bit transgender? I have an affection for the female-to-male pin-up models in Original Plumbing magazine. They’re cute and hairy and buff, bursting at the seams of their “top surgery” scars with the ecstasy of testosterone.

Well, today I’m coming out as a POST-OP MALE-TO-MALE transexual.
Artist Statement: In my *Wallflower* series I juxtapose images of men acquired from amateur internet porn websites with images of flora and fruit cut from contemporary and vintage wallpaper samples. The floral and fruit imagery is nod both to art historical images of the acceptably naked man, Adam in the Garden of Eden as well as the decorative nature inherent in most artwork. The flora in the case of my Wallflower works do not generally conceal/obscure the genitalia of the male figures as is often the case in many historical works. This subversion questions both the theoretical and formal function of the imagery. Additionally the male figures are selectively coated in a layer of wax. This coating acts as both a visceral skin-like shell making the image of the men seem more three-dimensional or tangible while its color and consistency pooled on the paper’s surface reference ejaculate.

The integration of both transparent and opaque elements is a reference to the complicated relationship our society has to the naked male form. On the one hand a puritan tradition dictates strict concealment of male genitalia while at the very same time there is a proliferation of online profiles featuring nude self-portraits and sexting is on the rise among individuals of all ages with a mobile device. This mixed message is indicative of our society’s conflicted relationship with the male nude.

These pieces continue my investigation of the contradictory associations tied to representations of the male form.
Perhaps not surprisingly a large number of included artists are using various media to make the practices of digital image making ‘visible,’ usually by making the mundane ‘strange.’ Digital imaging has now penetrated the everyday spaces of our personal and professional lives. We are so inured to its habits and mechanisms, it can be difficult to ‘see’ them anymore. They are customary and taken for granted.

Sean Fader’s ‘Sup? series interrogates the process of self-representation for the purposes of gay male Internet and cell phone dating applications. Strategies of self-representation are highly strategized and conventional on these sites, so much that we hardly stop to think about these representations as images and their subjects are people. Fader penetrates beneath the surface of these stylized images to present a fuller, more human image of their subjects, in the process revealing the highly constructed nature of such seemingly candid “snapshots.”

Jonathan Armistead accomplishes a similar feat in his video So Long Solo-Sexual that highlights the mundane domestic context of sex web-cam videos. By foregrounding aspects of these videos which are usually ignored for the more central, more sexual ‘main event,’ Armistead helps us ‘see’ these videos in ways we normally wouldn’t: as seedy, clumsily amateurish, and (strangely) more personal, as the viewer is invited to restore the absent sexual activity to definitely non-sexy images. Oddly, the absence of nude bodies and genitals allows us to contemplate the minutiae of domesticity which is unintentionally captured in the camera’s field of view, yielding a different kind of intimacy than that produced from viewing the supposedly private “privates” of the (missing) masturbating exhibitionists.

Less obviously sexual but similarly insightful is Coalfather Industries’ video Drone which juxtaposes aerial footage of unmanned drone vehicles with images of animals and crosshairs, as would be seen through the targeting sights of a firearm. Their work helps us understand the dehumanizing and distancing effects of modern weapons of war that have allowed us to ignore their destructive and terroristic effects. On an entirely different scale, Liat Berdugo’s video Zoom | Genius (red) focuses on the new but taken-for-granted gestural repertoire that has emerged with touch screen digital devices. The work’s obsessive, even uncomfortable, focus on the repetitive “pinch to zoom” function pioneered by Apple computer for its iPhone products helps us see the absurdity and ubiquity of this commonplace gesture.

Finally, Malena Barnhart’s Siri: Your Wish is Its Command marries found with composed video to help us understand the limits and possibilities of the iPhone’s digital ‘servant’ Siri, which responds to voice commands. As users have found, Siri is capable of responding to the most unexpected, even inappropriate questions, and testing its limits has become something of a party game. But, as Barnhart’s work demonstrates, voice recognition software, however witty and responsive, does not a relationship make. Kept warm in your pocket, comfortable in your hand, an iPhone is revealed as a poor substitute for flesh-and-blood human companionship.
Artist Statement: About ‘SUP?
I spent 365 days trolling online dating and hookup websites looking for men interested in dates and sexual encounters. When I came across someone who interested me, I looked closely at their profile and I visualized what my photographic portrait of them would be.

“‘I’m working on a new project that focuses on the ways in which we edit who we are for the web. So I am blind photo dating strangers. Basically I want to come to your place and make a photograph of you immediately based on your online profile.

Then we go out for a drink/date/dinner etc so that I can get a sense of who you are in “real life” and then I re-photograph you appropriate to your personality. You game?”

My dates consisted of my arriving at their home, having never met them in person, pouring them a drink, and photographing them immediately. The shots were staged and often costumed from their own wardrobe. I directed them to perform my preconceived ideas of who they were. After our shoot, I would take them out on a date: often dinner, sometimes drinks, sometimes simply sex on the living room floor. The conversation on our date was always heightened: talking about who we are, our expectations of each other, and always how I misunderstood them. This allowed me to consider how I might alter my first portrait of them. After our date, we collaborated on creating an image that we both felt represented them.
**Artist Statement:** This work is a single channel video which consists of a growing and ongoing collection (300+) static images of empty office chairs captured from sex webcam sites such as cam4.com. The images play in sequence similar to a slideshow or animated gif. This video is intended to play on an infinite loop with no clear beginning or ending.

Intimate acts among gay men have long been tied to specific locations. Before there was a more connected online community, private sexual encounters were held mostly anonymously in public spaces, bathrooms etc. The arrival of the home webcam domesticated the location for sexual encounters and started to blur the lines between public and private sexual space. Now with the accessibility and convenience of mobile phones, our location options have expanded and it is no longer one space vs. another.

*So Long Solo-Sexual* shows a seemingly endless string of abandoned home office chairs, cropped clearly to showcase “the goods”. These images bring into question whether a masturbatory routine is yet to begin, or if there was an exodus from the home office just before engaging in a real life hook-up. Bodies appear to be present because of the ergonomic design of the chairs, yet still the body is absent.
**Artist Statement:** In *Drone*, a man and woman’s distorted voices are juxtaposed over a series of urban scenes, museum dioramas and US Military drone strike footage. *Drone* has been screened in exhibitions because of it’s militaristic and/or privacy undertones. But it operates on a number of different levels. Central to the theme of the video is the conversation between the two people. The conversation is an attempt at intimacy through mobile devices. This attempt, however, is thwarted by the malfunctioning nature of the technology that is supposed to facilitate it. In essence, neither party is hearing or understanding the other. It is a dead conversation. The resulting emotion is one of loss and isolation in a world where we are told our cellphones and our devices will bring us together. It is no wonder we give out our “cell” numbers with little to no sense of irony.
**Artist Statement:** Intimate relations are relations of proximity and closeness, both metaphorically but also quite literally. With intimacy -- with sex -- bodies get closer. Bodies have many gestures of getting closer, but digital technologies have mostly one: zooming. *Zoom* explores this gesture of getting closer in technology -- this gesture of enlarging what was once small, touching devices as if we wanted to become intimate with them -- or at least, with their contents. The second two works, *zoom | genius (red)* and *zoom | genius (blue)*, explore this gesture of getting closer via encounters with the keepers of consumer technology’s wisdom: the Apple Geniuses. These silent videos document clandestinely-filmed Genius Appointments in which I’ve asked the Geniuses to teach me how to zoom. The Geniuses make many other gestures in order to explain this one gesture in particular. They rub their thumbs together, they gesticulate vaguely, they point. Yet in the end we both touch the same surface, as if it were a skin, in an effort to make something larger through what is supposed to be the most basic and common sense gesture of modern technology.
**Artist Statement:** Intimate relations are relations of proximity. Siri is an iPhone application which is marketed as a personal assistant. The ad copy on Apple’s website reads, “Siri, your wish is its command.” This tool is marketed via commercials featuring busy celebrities, joyfully delegating daily tasks to the disembodied voices within their phones. According to Apple, Siri is simply a companionable, genderless aid; however, both the name and voice of the software happen to be female.

A variety of Internet videos reveal that some male consumers have responded to Siri as if the iPhone app is the submissive sexual slave they’ve always dreamed of owning. In this piece, found Youtube footage of men insulting and trying to sexually intimidate their phones exists alongside staged shots of a woman unsuccessfully attempting to forge a female friendship with hers.
By far the largest number of accepted works reflects some instinct to translate digital imagery into older, less ephemeral, often tactile forms. Such translations are the antithesis of the slick, fast, and immediate online and cell phone dating imagery that is the source of their work. The effect is to slow the pace of exposure and allow for greater contemplation of the form and content of the originals.

Craig Ryan’s *Fleshbook* marries bodies and technology in a rubber cast of a laptop computer but with the parts normally seen by the public sculpted with anatomical details of a well-muscled male torso. In a medium whose tactile experience epitomizes the word “icky,” *Fleshbook* publicizes encounters typically rendered private by the physical form of the laptop and social conventions proscribing snooping over someone’s shoulder. It also calls our attention to the physical nature of seemingly disembodied digital commerce—for now, at least, they still require lascivious intercourse between fingers, keyboards, and touch screens. The accumulated stickiness of such surfaces belies the depersonalized and distanciating conceits of electronic communications.

Jon Henry’s *Grindr Portrait Series: Richmond & NYC* and Lauren McGinn’s #booty and Tired o(f) Being One of the Boys render a by-now-familiar type of online image—the ‘dicpic’ or ‘girl gone wild’ shot—in a very traditional medium: paint. But where Henry constructs his image in the short time dictated by his cell phone screen saver, McGinn laboriously translates her online finds through distortion of form and color. Both result in a riot of color and simplicity of form that recalls the kinds of “primitive” or “folk” painting of untrained artists. In a similar, if more subtle, vein is Chad States’ series *Trade* of which the *Summer Edition* was selected for inclusion. Here digitally exchanged photographs are printed as physical photographs and framed through the devices of the souvenir or collectable. The concept of the souvenir (the French verb “to remember”) condenses the cultural function of memory served by photography, which makes a claim about reality: that which is pictured occurred. Although the truth claims of photography are dubious at best (think: darkroom and Photoshop manipulations) photographs have nevertheless performed important cultural work as an aide de memoire.

Collections of photographs once eased awkward drawing room conversations and allowed one’s self-narration through visual reference. A photo album is nothing if not a very selective autobiography, and the exchange of souvenir photographs such as cartes de visites and stereo-photographs was an important social ritual in the nineteenth century. Within the history of sexual minorities, the exchange of illicit images was important in the development of a personal sexual style and forging affective communal bonds, long before public politicking around gay rights became possible or fashionable. In *Trade: Summer Edition* States literalizes the online practice of swapping “selfies” reminding us of the afterlife of such photographs in the erotic economy of the Internet. States work draws a clear connection to this history, which works to legitimize and validate online erotic spaces and visual exchanges whose importance is often dismissed or overlooked altogether.

Erin Riley’s works *Ass Shot* and *Treasure* take this theme of material translation to an admirable, even obsessive, end. Her wool tapestries are produced on a floor loom using hand dyed wool fiber. This painstaking and time-consuming reconstruction of fleeting digital images recalls a preindustrial era of handicrafts and domestic artistry. Moreover, the specific kind of craft here—textiles—is one that has long been coded feminine. That she marries the highly gendered tradition of textile arts to images of female self-objectification raises questions about the agency of the subjects in the source images. Do these images reflect a kind of post-feminist agency and instrumental use of the body long enjoyed by men? Or does their conformity to the conventions of (hetero)sexist pornography remind us that very old expectations for female sexuality haven’t changed very much; they’ve just gone global (and viral and wild)? And, to this point, does the ‘pet-able’ tactility of a wool tapestry’s surface transform the pictures’ subject matter—scantily clad women’s bodies—into fetishized objects for the consuming male gaze? Or does the ‘scratchiness’ most people experience from wool repel any attempt at commodification, asserting the self-possessed subjectivity of these girls gone wild—here the artist herself?
**Artist Statement:** *Fleshbook* seeks to investigate the juxtaposition of sensory verses social stimulation and the loss of experience by individuals through mediated devices. Fleshbook is a molded and cast rubber object which emphasizes a sensual experience through its flaccid structure, fleshy textures, and lifeless play.

Although digital technologies overlap with intimate relations, a mediated device cannot represent an intimate human experience. This is not limited to just social media, but extends to online-dating, pornography, and even webcamming. With its floppy structure and perfect abs, Fleshbook attempts to replace an ordinary laptop with an idealized sexual toy.
Artist Statement: The cellphone has become a sex toy of negotiation. Grindr is the most widely used cell application for queer men to cruise for conversation, friends, and sex. The app allows users to select amongst hundreds of potential partners. In this plethora of choices, the profile photo becomes the central logo like a peacock’s plume.

Over the past year, I have transposed these profile photos onto canvases. These 8”x10” paintings archive and preserve the ephemeral billboards that change based upon the user’s urges. The photo’s fleetingness is simulated by my cellphone’s screensaver timer, which limits my ability to paint directly from it. I am intrigued how individuals decide to set up their photos. The arrangement can reveal a user’s underlining motivation. Some individuals expound upon their desire for asexual friendship yet provocatively pose is underwear; other users seek casual hook-ups but their leather gear implies a ‘kinkier’ encounter. The common composition in a bathroom mirror reflection evokes voyeurism yet uncomfortably removes space for the viewers to situate themselves. Other photos imply a secondary photographer and I wonder if they knew about their creation’s sexual future. Geographic differences are indistinguishable amongst these East Coast models. A seemingly simple application becomes a case study of modernity.

The overall collection includes 100 individual canvases that can be displayed in a variety of ways. I prefer adjoining them together so that it recreates the Grindr grid.
Artist Statement: My work explores the intersection of themes including sexuality, technology, and privacy in the phenomenon of “gone wild” photos: explicit amateur self-portraits by women who publish the images anonymously online. I collect these images from dedicated forums, glitch them, then paint them with acrylic and oil. By glitching, I aim to create a nauseatingly indulgent experience by introducing fluorescent color schemes and glitter accents. Glitching also moves the conversation about these images beyond sex by distorting, obscuring, and fragmenting the body.

Painting recontextualizes the dilemmas in sharing private data electronically. I hope to subvert the misconception of data as disposable by recreating images in a physical medium. Likewise, displaying these images shatters the illusion of intimacy the original images present by making them accessible to many people at once. Along with this, by using a medium associated with deep feeling, that requires manual labor and skill to manipulate successfully, and that results in a unique object (unlike unlimited digital prints), I make use of the romantic aura painting retains in order to undermine it through a deadpan and inscrutable tone.

In a culture of readily accessible information where internet users are encouraged to publish everything online, privacy is becoming an increasingly rare luxury. Gone wild photos present a reversal in the public-private hierarchy. The smartphones and women featured in my work create a juxtaposition between cutting edge technology and instinctive human urges, and hopefully cause the viewer to question if technology is more relevant as tool or toy.
Artist Statement: *Trade* is a collection of photographs culled from smart phone cruising applications that allow men seeking physical connections to find one another. The artist’s own “Pics” were used in exchange for the photographs that make up this collection. The photographs have been released from their bends of the virtual world and are now existing in the physical world for the first time. We encourage owners of *Trade* to continue the life of these photographs by placing them in your wallet, photo album or perhaps on your refrigerator.
Artist Statement: I am a tapestry weaver that spends hours on a floor loom with wool yarn that I hand dye, manipulate or deconstruct depicting young women in states of undress or exposure, personal objects and various landscapes relating to destruction and death. In an effort to uncover the mysteries underlying the things I could never understand, I spent time researching addiction, the effects of single parent households, socio-economic status’ etc. While existing as a sexual, sober middle child who grew up with two sisters, without a father figure in a chemically dependent household.

I am drawn to images that represent sexuality as the private and intimate event that it sometimes can be but also finding the images that are the remnants of courtship, early text message/IM/email flirtations turned into the litter of the internet or Facebook. I am using my own images that I have sent to lovers, images that are very similar to those I have sent and images depicting the moments that I can in many instances relate to as a sexual being, I am weaving the objects that I have formed attachments to.

I am interested in the honesty of sexuality, but also how imagery, relationships, pornography and sex is changing as a result of the mass depiction of these intimate moments. I am inspired by the penis’ that show up in my text message inboxes and the ways I am aroused by the thrill of sending nude photographs, and how some lovers never seem to have enough pictures. I am interested in how my coming of age on the internet has affected the quality (or mere occurrence) of irl relationships. The indescribably beauty of a woman who takes a self portrait for her own pleasure and the pleasure of the ones she cares about, and all the people who get to chance glimpse into that moment.
Michael Max McLeod
- #jock #bear #selfie #gaybear #beardporn #menwithdogs #dontwoofatme: (From the @MICHAELMAXMCLEOD Instagram feed), November 2012, digital pigment print, 10” x 10.”

Cory Peeke
- Flower Bed (Wallflower Series), 2009, mixed-media collage and wax on paper, 8” x 8.”
- Grower Shower (Wallflower Series), mixed-media collage and wax on paper, 8 1/2” x 8 1/4.”
- Seeded (Wallflower Series), 2009, mixed-media collage and wax on paper, 8” x 8.”

Sean Fader **Best in Show**
- Evan (‘Sup? Series), July 23, 2010- July 24, 2010, archival ink jet print, 30” x 50.”
- Adam (‘Sup? Series), February 28, 2010, archival ink jet print, 30” x 50.”
- Drew (‘Sup? Series), April 13, 2010, archival ink jet print, 30” x 50.”

Jonathan Armistead
- So Long Solo-Sexual, 2013, digital video, 16 minutes.

Coalfather Industries

Liat Berdugo
- Zoom | Genius (red), 2012, single-channel digital video, 1:30 minutes.

Malena Barnhart **Honorable Mention**

Craig Ryan
- Fleshbook, 2012, silicone rubber, 13” x 11” x 1.5.”

Jon Henry
- Richmond & NYC (Grindr Portrait Series), 2012-present, acrylic on canvas panel, dimensions vary.

Lauren McGinn
- #booty, 2012, acrylic and glitter on panel, 11” x 14.”
- Tired o(f) Being One of the Boys, 2012, oil on canvas, 41” x 48.”

Chad States **Honorable Mention**
- Summer Edition (Trade Series), 2012, mixed media, varies.

Erin M. Riley
- Ass Shot 4, 2012, hand woven wool tapestry, 42” x 25.”
- Treasure, 2012, hand woven wool tapestry, 42” x 28.”
Jonathan Armistead
Jonathan Armistead currently resides in Pittsburgh, PA. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2007 from University of Manitoba and then moving on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree at Carnegie Mellon University. He is the recipient of many grants and awards including the Kenneth Kinkelstein award for sculpture in 2005, the Cecil C. Richards Memorial award for achievement in Life Modeling Sculpture in 2006 and 2007, and a Lil Wallace Readers Digest Endowed Scholarship. His work was included in Quiet in the Land? at the Future Tenant Gallery; Face Value: (De)Constructing Identity in Portraiture at the University of Pittsburgh, and Utopia/Dystopia at the Urban Institute of Contemporary Art.

Malena Barnhart
Malena Barnhart earned her bachelors degree in Studio Art from the University of Maryland in 2009 and is currently working on her masters in photography at Arizona State University. She has earned many awards including the John Dorsey Prize for Outstanding Curatorial Practice in 2009, Special Talent Award in 2011, Best of Show Honorable Mention from the Society For Photographic Education's Juried Exhibition in 2012, and the Juror’s Merit Award from the Desert Photography Traveling Exhibit in 2012. Her work has been included in Art Anonymous at the Flash Point Gallery in Washington D.C., You Can Have Everything at The Blue Elephant Art Center in Frederick, Maryland and Troubling the Archive: Works by Feminist Artists at the Step Gallery at Arizona State University.

Liat Berdugo
Liat Berdugo received her BA in Mathematics and Philosophy (summa cum laude) from Brown University in 2008. She will earn an MFA with a concentration in Digital + Media Art from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2013. Her work has been exhibited internationally and been awarded in the Anomalous Press Chapbook Competition. In 2012 she was in residence at the Vermont Studio Center. In Spring 2013 she will publish a book entitled The Everyday Maths. Her work has also been published in the HZ Journal (2012). She lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.

Coalfather Industries
Coalfather Industries was founded by Craig Newsom and Kara Jansson. Craig Newsom earned his MFA in Sculpture from the University of Chicago. He currently teaches art at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois. He is currently on the board of the International Association of Mobile Digital Artists. Kara Jansson studied art at the Corcoran College of Art and Design before earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her work has been published in The Washington Post and The Huffington Post. She is also the founder and a current board member of the International Association of Mobile Digital Artists. Their work has been exhibited nationally in Chicago and Las Vegas as well as internationally in France, New Zealand, England and Italy.
Sean Fader
Sean Fader was raised in Ridgewood, NJ. He attended Northwestern University and The New School University then moved on to perform in Broadway and off-Broadway theatre. He received his MA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and his MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has received many awards including the Murthy Digital Arts Award, Critics Choice Award in the Professional category at the 11th Annual Chicago Art Open, the “3rd Ward’s Fall Solo Show” prize. Recently he received a Magenta Foundation Flash Forward Award for Emerging Photographers.

Jon Henry
Jon Henry received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Richmond in 2012. He is currently working on his Masters in Arts Politics at New York University. He has received many awards for his work as well as his activism. These awards include Best in Show for the VMFA Portfolio Review in 2012, the Bobby Chandler Annual Award, and the GayRVA.com’s Out Spoken award. His exhibitions include *Nude*, Lexington Art League, Lexington, KY, *There’s A Hole in the Ceiling* at the Wilton Companies Gallery in Richmond, Virginia, and *Open Barn* in Mt. Jackson, Virginia. His work was published in *Naming Ceremony* Gallery Art Magazine in 2012.

Laura McGinn
Laura McGinn earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Arts from Eastern Illinois University. She has received many grants and awards including 2011 Nominee for the Yale Norfolk program, the Greif Award in 2011, the Mabel L. Mountain Painting Prize in 2012, and the Graduate Assistantship from Eastern Illinois University in 2012. Her work was recently shown at the Snite Museum of Art in Notre Dame, Indiana. She currently resides in Charleston, Illinois.

Michael Max McLeod
Michael Max McLeod is originally from Chicago, Illinois but currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree focusing on photography from Arizona State University. Before attending college he worked for *RollingStone.com* and *Playboy.com*. One of his publications was included on Photo-eye’s list of 2011’s Best Photography books. His work has been exhibited at the Mesa Contemporary Art Museum and Famous Accountants in Brooklyn. He is the founder of Goodbye Ranch which publishes books and ‘zines. Most recently his work has been published in *Self Publish, Be Naughty*. 
Cory Peeke
Cory W. Peeke received his BFA from Kendall College of Art and Design and his MFA from the University of Idaho. His work has appeared in numerous solo and group exhibits throughout the United States and at the Kaunas Biennial in Kaunas, Lithuania. His work has been published in Mein schwules Auge 8, edited by Rinaldo Hopf and Axel Schock, published by Konkursbuch of Berlin as well as the Monongahela Review and Creative Quarterly. His works are included in the permanent collections of Eastern Oregon University, Lockhaven University, the Solara-Simpson Housing Group and the International Museum of Collage, Assemblage and Construction. He is a contributing writer to Kolaj magazine and serves as the Director of the Nightingale Gallery and Associate Professor of Art and Art History at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, Oregon. He is represented by Gallery I M A in Seattle, Washington.

Erin M. Riley
Erin Riley received her BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2007 and then moved on to earn her MFA from Tyler School of Art in 2009. Erin’s work has been seen nationally as well as internationally at the Galerie Pecka located in Prague and The End is Near Gallery in Brooklyn, Lux/Eros Gallery in Los Angeles, and in the Woven Stories: Exhibition of Contemporary Tapestries at Ann Street Gallery in Newburgh, NY. She has received many awards for her work including the Marilyn Pappas Award from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Best in Show from the Radius 250 group show juried by Marlene Rothacker, and most recently the Ruth and Harold Chenven Foundation Grant. She currently resides in Philadelphia.

Craig Ryan
Craig Ryan currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida. He earned his Bachelors degree in Fine Arts from Millikin University in 2011. Craig is currently working on his MFA from Florida State University. His work has been seen in many exhibitions including If Danny Could Love at the Working Meathod Contemporary in Florida, Try Me at the Smalls Gallery, also in Florida, and WHAT’S NEXT:2nd Annual Undergraduate Juried Show at Bradley University. Craig has also received many awards for his work including the “Dorothy Sellers Award” from Millikin University. He is currently a Teaching Assistant for “Digital Media 1” at Florida State University.

Chad States
Chad States earned his bachelors degree from Evergreen State College and then a MFA from the Tyler School of Art. His book Cruising was published in 2011 by Powerhouse Books. His work has also been published in Lonely Boy Magazine. His work has received many grants and honors including Webb Cam Award for Outstanding Photography and the Established Artist Fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts. His work has been exhibited in The Autonomous Connection at the 4 Culture Gallery in Seattle, Painfully Obvious at the Barbershop Gallery in Philadelphia, Cruising at the Powerhouse Arena in Brooklyn, and Into the Woods at ClampArt in New York City. His work is included in the permanent collection of the Julie Collins Smith Museum of Fine Arts at Auburn University.
Dave Kube is a visiting professor in the Art, Music, and Theatre Department at the University of Illinois Springfield. He teaches courses focused on digital media, photography, and art theory. He holds a masters degree in fine arts photography from Tyler School of Art in Philidelphia.

Michael J. Murphy is assistant professor of Women & Gender Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield. He teaches courses in critical men’s/masculinity studies, LGBTQ/sexuality studies, and visual and material culture studies. He holds a masters degree and doctorate in the history of American art and visual culture, with a graduate certificate in Women and Gender Studies, from Washington University in St. Louis.
The University of Illinois Springfield Visual Arts Gallery seeks to expand and enrich understanding of the visual arts for Illinois citizens, artists, and students through diverse quality exhibitions. The gallery benefits the Illinois art community by increasing public awareness of the visual arts and by exhibiting artists of regional and national importance.

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