

NEWS RELEASE

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 Wed – Sat 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.



JILL DOWNEN: Hard Hat Optional
Opening Reception:
Friday, April 10, from 6 to 9 pm
APRIL 10 – MAY 9, 2009

Project Room | CHRIS RUBIN DE LA BORBOLLA: there was a silent tinfoil rapping against the front door
 Media Room | BRETT WILLIAMS: Things You Will See

BRUNO DAVID GALLERY PRESENTS A NEW EXHIBITION BY JILL DOWNEN

SAINT LOUIS, MO, February 5, 2009 — “Jill Downen: Hard Hat Optional” at Bruno David Gallery will be on view in the Main Gallery from April 10th to May 9th, 2009. The exhibition is the most recent installation by the Saint Louis based artist. This is her third solo exhibition with the Bruno David Gallery. A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Andrea Ferber accompanies the exhibition.

Jill Downen's latest work, *Hard Hat Optional*, resembles a construction site, filled with anatomical forms reminiscent of sensual bodily elements, pockets of empty space, and areas of densely packed material. She stacks, leans, and places sculptural and architectural forms to be seen not as individual pieces, but rather as a complete installation. The exhibit emphasizes the temporal nature and transformation of place. Downen invites viewers to question whether the site is in a process of construction or deconstruction, with seductive fragments, sensitive folds of architectural skin, and stacks of flesh-like blocks. The work employs an indeterminate nature and offers viewers an opportunity to experience the space and directly interact with precariously balanced building materials and forms.

Peripheral vision became part of the inspiration, process, and concept of *Hard Hat Optional* when Downen began to notice construction sites. In this exhibit, she aims to bring qualities from these overlooked sites out of the periphery and into direct conversation with the viewer. She captures the temporal energies and unsettling tension that objects create in both their physical weight and spatial movement. The idea of architecture as flesh is opened, exposing the infrastructures and energies of the sensual building blocks. Still resembling bodily structures, the sculptural forms reveal varied surfaces; chiseled, cut, punctured, scarred and smoothed. Downen urges viewers to imagine these pieces as parts of a building that is in a state of becoming.

Hard Hat Optional reveals the relationship between the objects and the space in which they are situated. Although the space feels like a construction site, it is presented free of grit and grime. Palettes, sand bags and lumber are all part of the installation, carefully placed to create a distinct conversation with the viewer. A fifteen-foot wooden support structure cantilevers ominously overhead, building unsettling tension while holding up a pocket of empty space. The exhibit reveals the shared substructures of architecture and the human body, as well as the temporal nature of their creation.

Recently, Downen was awarded three residencies at the Mac Dowell Colony in Peterborough, NH; Ragdale Foundation, Lake Forest, IL and; Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT. In 2007, she was awarded the Cite International des Arts Residency, Paris, France. In 2003, she received a Great Rivers Biennial Grant, sponsored by Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and the Gateway Foundation, and in 2004, she exhibited "The Posture of Place" as part of the first Great Rivers Biennial. Her art has been reviewed in numerous publications, including Sculpture Magazine, Art Papers, The New York Times, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Downen holds an MFA in sculpture from Washington University in St. Louis as a Danforth Scholar and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in painting and printmaking.

MORE



In the **Project Room**, **Chris Rubin de la Borbolla** presents a series of recent paintings titled “there was a silent tinfoil rapping against the front door”. Chris works in an ever-changing environment where the lines of traditional and commercial forms of expression are blurred. He uses technology as a means to appropriate materials on all sensory fronts, reassembles them, and distributes them across numerous media. His work involves an equal employment of scientific and artistic reason. Chris's new paintings explore the superficially blurred conversations between relationship and conflict in both cultural and personal life. The work mirrors this dynamic conflict through an amalgamation of contemporary culture and events with a distinct edge influenced by graffiti, pop imagery, cutout magazine text, books street culture and personal musings. De la Borbolla's paintings can be seen as “images with a cerebral pulse” that push the medium of painting yet find a common ground in their conversation with the social, the

political and the real.

In the **Media Room**, multidisciplinary artist **Brett Williams** premieres a single-channel video titled “Things You Will See”. In this video Williams utilizes stop motion animation combined with a sonic landscape to look inward and find an undiscovered place. Concerned with the pleasures and absurdities of communication and the conventions of stage, film, and television, “Things You Will See” explores a new direction in the artists' career. His earlier work focused on television commercials, creating full stories in one-minute frames. He admires the look of the low-tech style shot with a hand-held camera. While his newer work continues to draw from the same ideas, Williams moves towards animated motion graphics that construct settings of fantasy and play through dark humor and visual abstraction.



For further information and visuals, please contact the gallery or visit our website at brunodavidgallery.com.

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ABOUT THE BRUNO DAVID GALLERY

Established in 2005, the Bruno David Gallery is a contemporary art gallery and one of the most important places to see art in Saint Louis. The Gallery represents some of the best artists that Saint Louis has to offer, along with artists of national and international reputation. The editors of the St. Louis Magazine awarded the Gallery: *Best Gallery in St. Louis* in 2008. The gallery is located in the heart of the Grand Center arts district, directly opposite the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

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