



Cell Phone Tour Transcript



MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

In Their Own Words

Cell phone tour to accompany the exhibition 6th Rochester Biennial

At the Memorial Art Gallery from July 13-September 21, 2014

Dial in to the tour at 585-627-4132

Stop 1

Welcome

Marie Via, Director of Exhibitions, Memorial Art Gallery

I'm Marie Via, Director of Exhibitions here at Memorial Art Gallery. Welcome to the 6th *Rochester Biennial* and to this special tour of the exhibition recorded by the artists themselves. This year's *Biennial* is sponsored by M&T Bank, with additional support from COMIDA, Constellation Brands, Inc. and the Rubens Family Foundation.

The 6th *Rochester Biennial* champions the art of our region and the artists of our own time. They were chosen by a curatorial team from the Gallery, and the exhibition offers us a chance to explore their work in depth. This year's exhibitors are Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez, Richard Hirsch, Jeff Kell, Kumi Korf, Lynette Stephenson, and Kim Waale. We hope you will enjoy this opportunity to hear the artists speak about their work "in their own words."

Stop 2

Tour Instructions

Patti Giordano, Marketing Manager, Memorial Art Gallery

Throughout the exhibition you will see several signs that indicate a cell phone audio stop. Call the telephone number listed and enter the stop number to hear the artists talk about the highlighted work. When the stop concludes, you may simply enter the next stop number, or hang up and call the tour number back when you're ready. To interrupt a stop, press # and then the next stop number.

You also have the opportunity to share your thoughts with us about this tour, or your overall experience at the Gallery today. We encourage you to enter *0 (star 0) at any time during your tour to leave us feedback.

This cell phone tour is free, but please be aware that your normal plan minutes will apply. Thank you for visiting the Memorial Art Gallery.

Stop 3

Kumi Korf

Delirium

This is my most recent piece. The title *Delirium* is from a poem by Bisham Bherwani. Four intaglio prints were created for this project. Each print was folded to make a book, and the poet has this to say:

“Nature has been a perennial, inexhaustible mother lode for poets from Virgil to Robert Frost. I was under the spell of Japanese Haiku masters and of American imagist and symbolist poets such as Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams when I composed ‘Delirium.’ The poem traces recurring cycles in nature, such as those of life, from birth to death, and of seasons, from spring to winter. ‘Delirium,’ a sequence of twelve segments propelled by such passages of life and time, found a natural counterpoint in Kumi’s sensibility, in her visual aesthetic that embodies both precision and mystery.”

Stop 4

Kumi Korf

Document Storage #5

This piece is closely related to *Turning Leaves Again*. The title, *Document Storage*, came from a series of sculptural artists' books. These were imagined storage houses, which stored books mainly in a scroll form. This one is an accordion form and tiny, but it is still a document needing to be stored.

Stop 5

Kumi Korf

Green Bird, Play Chase, Blue Shadow, White Bird

There is a traditional Japanese children's song called "Kagome, Kagome." Its verse includes passages that suggest a contradiction of time and space – something that has captured my attention for a long time. I have frequently returned to this theme, and wanted to find a way to express my fascination. I knew I wanted to use stencils; I started with a loosely woven basket shape, with sizable holes where a trapped bird could escape (in the song children walk around forming a circle while singing, wondering when the bird might come out). I use copper plates for printing, and the stencils block out portions of the design on the plate. Different shapes and colors were applied as repeated layers, which then allowed the bird shapes to appear.

Stop 6

Kumi Korf

Garden

I love gardens! The kind of garden one can walk around in, with a pond. I also love the kind of garden where one sits quietly, and cannot help but become a philosopher. However small, gardens represent the universe to me – or different facets of the universe. The Sumi ink and brush drawings of *Garden* are my expression of that universe, as influenced by Japanese traditional calligraphy - something which comes naturally to me. The artist's book is a collection of 20 original drawings, photo copied to be bound as an accordion book.

Stop 7

Kumi Korf

My Father's Garden

I grew up in Yokohama. My parent's home had a small garden, which was well tended by my father. One day my parents were discussing whether to purchase a certain rock – not so large, but heavy enough that they needed a gardener to move it in for their approval. They both were agreeing that a touch of the rock's blue hue fascinated them. I remember their collaborative effort with affection. A bamboo fence provided a backdrop for the trees and rocks. The bamboo was arranged vertically, tied to each other, as seen in *My Father's Garden*.

Stop 8

Kumi Korf

HM

Somewhere I remember reading that an artist cannot get away from the net of her/his own era. I am proud to be an artist from the 20th century. My influences stem from as far back as the cave paintings at Altamira, all the way up to our present time. But I confess that I love my era; each piece of mine has many naturally imbedded influences.

Stop 9

Kumi Korf

Red Pond, Coming Home, Starr's Garden, Two White Ponds

When creating my pieces, I reference my heart and my observations of nature – both from my childhood and from present life. For these pieces in particular, my memory went back to when I was perhaps 7 or 8 years old. One winter while watching a frozen stream, I became fascinated by

the shapes created by the ice and water. I made a vow to myself, to remember that beautiful moment. The piece titled, *Starr's Garden* comes from an imagined underwater scene, as it would be expressed by music. Another piece, *Coming Home* reflects a boomerang like shape – a shape one finds not only in 20th-century art, but in many other cultures as well.

Stop 10

Kumi Korf

Sea to Land, Land to Sea

It was so shocking to hear that there is an island the size of Texas made up of plastic garbage, floating in the Pacific. I chose to express my commentary by making a paper monument, using a page from one of my earlier artists' books titled *Hunter-Gatherer, Family Business Mario*. (Mario's underwater photographs, and his writing are featured in *Hunter-Gatherer*, and in this piece). I used plastic straws because so much of the polluting material is plastic. Also, I wanted to add some humor by using dried seaweed, hijiki – whose black and curly pieces rise upwards from the straws, like black smoke coming out of a smoke stack.

Stop 11

Kumi Korf

Turning Leaves Again

My love for three dimensional structures, plus my sense of playfulness and invention, in addition to the influence of Joseph Cornell, all joined together in creating this piece. The title *Turning Leaves* related to my husband's work as a mycologist – turning over leaves to find fungi on many continents. The box is covered by my intaglio print.

Stop 12

Kumi Korf

Hole in my Heart

Four small books, each containing a poem, are nestled inside the square blocks. Four square and four triangle blocks are connected by hinges, which also allow them to turn in both directions. The poets are all historical Japanese female writers from the 9th to 13th centuries. They had one thing in common: a sad event to overcome. By opening their hearts to their art, their poems have survived to the present day. I spotted one of them, Ono no Komachi (9th century poet), at the Metropolitan Museum of Art this year.

Stop 13

Richard Hirsch

Crucibles

This distinguished vessel-type, which harkens back to antiquity, remains one of the most indelible and universal emblems of human culture and civilization. Within its walls occurs the alchemy between earth, air, fire, water and man. The crucible is a potent symbol for actual and metaphorical transformation. For me, investigating its expressive and formal possibilities has proven to be extremely fertile. My approach is to portray it as a container of matter, meaning and mystery.

Stop 14

Richard Hirsch

Primal Cup Series

My *Primal Cup Series* is a confluence between my research and study of the art of Chinese Scholar Rocks and the universal format of the cup-vessel.

Stop 15

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Stitching

This piece is made with sterling silver, copper which has been electroplated, felt, rutilated quartz, pearls and rusted steel with gold plated stainless steel pins. It is symbolic of a pincushion used by a seamstress to hold pins or needles neatly while working. The top of the piece is absent the traditional cushion. The pins are placed in the side of the bracelet in a more decorative way rather than the more traditional pincushion ball.

Stop 16

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Stitching Patterns III

Stainless steel wire was treated with a chemical that oxidizes it to make it turn dark. It appears in the piece almost like thread. A nylon based fabric is interwoven into the stainless steel and heated to melt into the steel. It creates a textural quality to the piece. It is covered with a fine glass powder representative of the idea of dust to dust. The gold and silver disks are stitched throughout the piece representing buttons.

Stop 17

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Bracelet (Should We Sew)

This piece is made with silver, aluminum, glass and stainless steel thread. It is a metaphor and symbolic of sewing. The use of thread and the spool is a direct relation to work as a seamstress. I used stainless steel thread to tie together the relationship between strength and fragility. It looks fragile, but is very strong.

Stop 18

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Seamstress's Prize I and Mother's Brooch

These two pieces are the first work in this series. They were made to symbolize an award that we may receive – a gold medal of sorts. I made the pieces using materials that are not traditionally used in jewelry to highlight the use of the alternative materials, such as recycled nylon and fiber optics, plastic and rubber along with lava rock, gold, diamonds and gold plated, stainless steel. I wanted the idea of the seamstress to stand out to the viewer and they embody the idea of the mother who sacrifices for her family through hard work, but at the same time mothers sew together our lives creating the fabric – the very foundation of our lives.

Stop 19

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Urn: Dust to Dust II

This piece is an urn made of copper, silver, and white powdered glass, gold, rubber, felt, pearl and diamonds. It is a vessel that can be used. The glass powder is symbolic in that we are all dust in the end and this is a holder of that precious dust of a loved one. The circle of felt surrounding the perimeter reminds us of the circle of life, and the pins are the time markers of our life – those moments we remember that create the pattern of our existence – we are all born, we live and we die.

Stop 20

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Mothers Brooch II

This piece is made with steel, gold, diamonds, rubber and felt. It encompasses the idea of contrasts – the materials are a contrast with the hard industrial material of steel juxtaposed with

the gold. The fusing of the gold creates an illusion of embroidery along with the soft and delicate felt stitched all around the edge. The softness of the border creates a sense of balance and softens the hard edge of the steel. This contrast and balance is an on-going theme in the body of work – representing life – its preciousness and fragility and its strength and endurance.

Stop 21

Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez

Stitching II

Made with fine silver, copper, felt and stainless steel pins, this piece is symbolic of a pincushion used by a seamstress to hold pins or needles neatly while working. The top of the piece is copper enameled filled with felt, resembling a ball of yarn. It continues the theme of a seamstress's work.

Stop 22

Lynette Stephenson

Incidents and Observations

Hello my name is Lynette Stephenson the artist of this series of paintings that I have titled *Incidents and Observations*. These paintings are about how we navigate ordinary and mundane experiences and construct meaning out of the absurdity of reality. I invite you the viewer to look at the ambiguous juxtaposition of recognizable imagery and color fields and allow yourself to break your traditional ways of considering a painting and approach the idea of a narrative in an atypical manner.

Stop 23

Lynette Stephenson

Flood

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Flood*. It is pretty straightforward and is what it is. It is an example of my love of playing with spatial relationships and fields of color.

Stop 24**Lynette Stephenson***Shadow*

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Shadow*. I wanted to visually explore different perspectives of space and break up the canvas in unexpected ways. Looking down on the orange socks, the ostrich a bird that does not fly and the legs of a figure diving in water, all grounded in different ways.

Stop 25**Lynette Stephenson***Incidents II – Sumo*

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Incidents II – Sumo*. I wanted to pair two very dissimilar images to construct a situation where the viewer expected a different conclusion. I compel the viewer to decipher the situation rather than limit interpretation to one solution. Why these images together? I intend to create a tension, something that does not appear to fit but on the other hand is somehow appealing.

Stop 26**Lynette Stephenson***Tug*

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Tug*. I have been playing around with creating a corner piece that moves the composition from the single rectangle to a more expansive space that allows for a slightly different way to confront a two-dimensional work of art. Notice the tug from the dog is stronger than the grip on the side of the unconcerned figures. The layers of imagery – the chairs, shuttlecock, top hats and the floating watermelon are intended to suggest a possible narrative.

Stop 27**Lynette Stephenson***White Face*

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *White Face*. The odd looking figure is a grounding element in the field of color. The energy and movement of the background paint serves as a contrast to the clearly defined floating chair.

Stop 28

Lynette Stephenson

The Kindness of Strangers

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *The Kindness of Strangers*. The figure is from my favorite painting, *Happy as Kings* from a previous group of paintings called the *Red Cross Series*. This painting was my jumping off point for this series and inspired another painting in this series, *Green Gloves*.

Stop 29

Lynette Stephenson

Incidents

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Incidents*. Formally the colors unite the two canvases however I leave it to you the viewer to interpret the relationship between the legs, the airplane, hose and egg.

Stop 30

Lynette Stephenson

Green Gloves

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Green Gloves*. The figure is not quite the same but references the figure in *The Kindness of Strangers*. This painting gave me the opportunity to play with gestural mark making, color field painting and still include a figurative element.

Stop 31

Lynette Stephenson

Observations

My name is Lynette Stephenson and this painting is titled *Observations*. First, consider the work simply for its formal qualities that combine the two fields of color with the pattern that the eyeballs create. The eyeballs also serve to introduce a figurative reference. I intentionally try to make the paintings somewhat uncomfortable to intensify the experience of looking for the viewer. When was the last time you stared at someone in the eyes without feeling exposed?

Stop 32**Jeff Kell*****Memorial***

I'm very grateful for my father. He was someone I could count on, someone I could both love and respect. Good times we spent together often play through my mind like a silent movie. Yet, unexpectedly, memories of his sudden death can still haunt me and I momentarily long for times when we sat together at breakfast or played softball at family reunions.

Stop 33**Jeff Kell*****Sanctuary***

I've always found the word "sanctuary" to be comforting, bringing things like safety, warmth and protection from enemies to mind. This work tries to evoke that sense of protection, warmth and light found in any sanctuary whether it's within one's own heart, a church or if one is very lucky within one's home, family or circle of friends. It's a place one finds acceptance and forgiveness – a place where love triumphs.

Stop 34**Jeff Kell*****Clown***

Some people just love them but others find them creepy. Put me with the latter group. Nothing against Ronald McDonald or Bozo, but I find clowns very questionable, even shady characters.

How can you trust someone hiding behind makeup and a costume pretending to be happy? And have you ever seen pictures of clowns from early 1900's Europe or the U.S.? They're the stuff of nightmares. I always keep my eye on a clown if one is close by.

Several years ago driving on 390 a noisy little car swung in right behind me. I said to my wife, "that stupid clown is right on my bumper." My wife assumed I was using "clown" as slang for jerk until the guy, in a clown suit with a wig and makeup, pulled around us staring creepily as he zipped past.

Stop 35**Jeff Kell*****Dog with a Bone***

Do you ever wonder what your pet is thinking? Often what we see in their behavior makes us wonder about their inner lives. What do they know? How much do they understand? What do they dream?

As pet foods and accessories have moved upscale over the past decade I sometime wonder if we're not just projecting our own longings onto our pets.

Still, who's to say our dog Murray's hopes and dreams are not exactly as portrayed.

Stop 36**Kim Waale*****Simulacrutopia (again)***

Simulacrutopia (again) is one of my largest installations. It involves the construction of a location and at the same time it's a dislocation. This installation is a sort of bizarre artificial semi-convincing version of nature made by utilizing various ways of representing the natural world: a 10' x 25' collage of maps, a "waterfall" made of cast rubber copies of rivers and creeks, reeds and webs made of handspun ordinary kitchen plastic wrap, boulders carved from Styrofoam, etc. It's meant to be a stand-in for an experience with nature, not unlike looking at a photo of a waterfall on one's iPhone in the parking lot of a state park instead of actually walking 500 yards to see/experience the real thing. Hopefully it raises questions about our increasing tendency to replicate nature rather than preserve nature, and the toll this takes on our planet and our humanity.