



Young Voices Sing to Creation

Featuring works by

Antonius Bui, Heather Dorsett and Emma Kissel

Guest Curator: Trudi Y. Ludwig

HENRY LUCE III
CENTER
for the
Arts and
Religion
DADIAN GALLERY

May 25 – August 19, 2016

Reception & Artist's Talk:

Thursday, July 14, 2016, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Curator's Statement

Showcasing work created by emerging young artists, *Young Voices Sing to Creation* is the second in what I trust will become a long-standing series here at the Dadian Gallery. While many contemporary artists consider themselves spiritual beings, they may be reluctant to admit that their work is faith-based or to accept the label 'religious.' This is not surprising. Acknowledging the sacred as a creative impulse has been marginalized by the mainstream art world for several decades, and this is especially true in many academic institutions.

Still only in their twenties and recent college graduates, the work of each of these three artists reveals their sincere exploration into making sense of the world they inhabit and will inherit. Whether in photographs, cut paper, or fabric banners, each artist honors and respects the sacredness of creation with an astute sensitivity, even as they acknowledge the difficult truths of its fragility.

Offering a welcome place to show their work and proclaim their true sources, the Dadian Gallery is a unique venue that can inspire young artists and forge opportunities for them at the beginning of their careers. *Young Voices Sing to Creation* recognizes and rewards these young adults, whose work has a basis in faith: faith in nature, faith that their creative endeavors may celebrate spirituality; and faith in the resilience of the environment.

---Trudi Ludwig Johnson, Guest Curator

Works in the Exhibition

Emma Kisiel

Emma Kisiel (b. 1989) raised in Colorado Springs, CO, is a photography artist living in Portland, OR. After completing coursework at the Maryland Institute College of Art, she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in photography from the University of Colorado Denver. Her photographs are an exploration of the ways in which humans experience and interact with animals. Kisiel uses photography to document and ponder her emotional and physical closeness to animals, both living and dead, the significance and future of taxidermy in museums of natural history, and the 21st-century culture of places where visitors can experience captive and preserved animals. Often, her images question the authenticity of the moments we share with animals, as well as our comfort with our own mortality. While at times repulsive and confrontational, Kisiel's photographs draw attention to the preciousness of animals and the importance of a relationship with them, in a sincere and genuine form.

Cher Ami was a famously loyal homing pigeon who, during World War I, suffered from a shot to the breast and a destroyed leg, yet diligently delivered a message that saved hundreds of lives. The meaning of his name is "Dear Friend." Animals play many roles to us as humans, but to me, their most significant role is as kindred spirits, dear friends. In *Cher Ami*, I explore the meaning of examining animals' fragile bodies up close, as I have done since childhood, and spend quiet moments appreciating the small but significant lives of the beings with which we share the planet.

At Rest is a photographic series depicting roadkill on American highways that addresses our human fear of confronting death and viewing the dead. My images draw attention to the fact that, while man has a vast impact on animal and natural life in American society, people are generally separate from wildlife and the souls of animals have little value. To cause the viewer to feel struck by this notion, I photograph memorials I have built surrounding roadkill at the

location at which its life was taken. *At Rest* expresses the sacredness to the bodies of animals hit by vehicles while crossing the road.

In the Dadian Gallery

1. *Cher Ami – Toxostoma Rufum 1*, photograph, 2012
2. *Cher Ami - Rectrices*, photograph, 2012
3. *Cher Ami – Sturnus Vulgaris*, photograph, 2012
5. *At Rest - Rabbit*, photograph, 2011
6. *At Rest - Fox*, photograph, 2011
8. *At Rest – Deer 2*, photograph, 2011
9. *At Rest - Pheasant*, photograph, 2011
10. *At Rest - Coyote*, photography, 2011

In the President's office

Cher Ami – Toxostoma Rufum 2, photograph, 2012

Heather Dorsett

Heather Dorsett (b. 1992) is a multi-media artist and native North Carolinian. She finished her undergraduate career at Maryland Institute College of Art in 2015, with a major in General Fine Arts. As a lifelong member of the church, her work aims to push past surface-level religion and into what relational spirituality looks like visually. Heather is currently finishing her work with the refugee resettlement agency, World Relief, preparing for mission work in Uganda, and getting ready to teach art classes near home.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” - Genesis 1:1-3

As someone who chooses to subscribe to Christian teachings I base my work on Biblical scripture and our human relationships to the spiritual world. The way language and literary visuals bounce off the pages of scripture informs the outcome of what I make. Throughout the Bible, God is referred to as light and even manifests Himself as a burning bush. The cyanotype process relies on light in order to

create an image. By exposing what was once blank and in the dark to light, imagery begins to appear and the act of artistic creation mimics the act of Holy creation. Cyanotype photographs offer a wide range of blues and whites relating to what is holy, pure light, such as the heavenly sky and the act of baptism in blue waters.

In the Dadian Gallery

12. *Come*, cyanotype on cloth, 2015

13. *In the Beginning*, cyanotype on cloth, 2015

14. *Sacred Song*, cyanotype on cloth with embroidery, 2015

In the President's office

Sermon on the Mount, cyanotype on paper, 2014

Tomb, cyanotype on paper, 2014

Antonius Bui

Antonius (b. 1992, Bronx, NY) is a Vietnamese American artist currently residing in Houston, TX. His interest in Scherenschnitte, the art of cut paper, began during his undergraduate studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and became the focus of his commencement thesis exhibition in May, 2016.

The repetitive action of cutting by hand is a meditative ritual that Antonius uses to explore notions of spirituality and the necessity of human suffering. One form that constantly resurfaces in his work is the deer. In addition to playing a significant role in many cultures and religions around the world, the deer stands for Antonius's personal pilgrimage in this life.

In the Dadian Gallery

4. *Confirmed*, hand-cut paper, 2015

7. *Sacrifice 1*, hand-cut paper and black acrylic paint, 2013

10. *In communion*, hand-cut paper, 2015

In the President's office

Jali 2, hand-cut paper, 2015



The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion is a program of Wesley Theological Seminary. The Center sponsors a variety of cultural events which explore the intersection of art and religion. All contributions are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted.

To be added to the gallery mailing list please send an e-mail with your name and email address to agray@wesleyseminary.edu. In addition to receiving gallery announcements you will also receive the Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion's quarterly newsletter.

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