Jehra Patrick: Artist Voice/Artist Choice

Artist Voice/Artist Choice is a program where Minnesota artists use ArtsConnectEd.org to connect their own work with the collections and resources at the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Jehra Patrick is an emerging visual artist who lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. She received her BFA from the College of Visual Arts in Drawing and Painting in 2006 and has since gone on to hold various positions in museum arts administration, and currently works as Program Assistant to mnartists.org, a joint project between the Walker Art Center and the McKnight Foundation.

Her visual art acknowledges the time spent in both undergrad and in a museum setting, often citing pedagogy, art history and contemporary art and artists as well as referencing 'art world' institutions such as the museum, the award, the scene, and the art student. Her interest in success of the artist and the painting are genuine, though in practice her use of painting is self-referent, noncommittal and preliminary. Her past work parodies visual strategies she has encountered, including compositions from social-networking and browser phenomenology.

More information can be found at www.mnartists.org/jehra_patrick

girl five (re:presenting series)

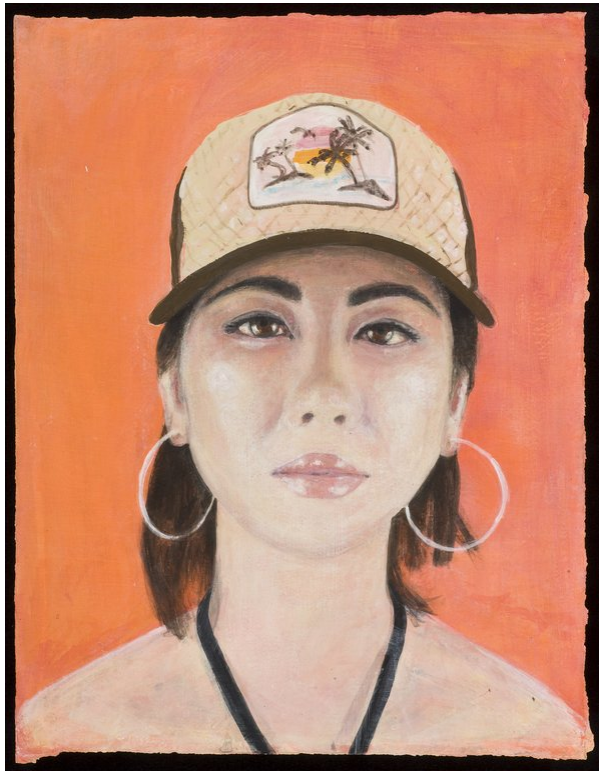
girl five
Jehra Patrick
Oil on canvas
2006

The work that I have selected for Artist's Choice/Artist's Voice are works from The Walker Art Center which can be contextualized with my own work, as either as artists I site within my work or artists who bare similarities to how I work.

I would like to discuss my work in the context of two other Minnesota artists, Melba Price and Evan Baden, both of which have produced serial work within the last few years that, like my work, use contemporary portraiture as a means to critique personal interaction with technology.?To situate my work among these artists, I will first provide some background on my work and it's conceptual foundation. The 'myspace' series was created from 2005-2006, during the peak of the social networking site. Out of this widespread trend, photos uploaded by the site's users triggered a phenomenon that re-introduced the notion of the self-portrait to the point of convention, especially among young women. Taken by cell phones and digital cameras, these photos abstracted the subject – foreshortened angles, huge facial features and bust-lines overwhelm the camera – and become exaggerated performances of their identity. I interpret these images into large-scale oil paintings, quoting the vocabulary of the digital image into my formal painting strategies. Like the

original images, which perform to an anonymous audience, these paintings require the viewer's presence to complete them. Their removal from their original context as self-portraits into portrait of anonymous 'sitters' nods to the canon of Western portraiture as well as contributes to ongoing dialogues that painting has had with Photography and with image authorship.

girl three, Untitled #28



(Left)girl three
Jehra Patrick
Oil on canvas
36" x 48"
2006

(Right) Untitled #28
Melba Price

Gouache on paper
17" x 13"
2008

Similarly, artist Melba Price creates paintings from found photographs of youth collected from the internet. Her photographic sources are not only anonymous, but they are also pulled from random sites, rather than culled from a certain source. Working this way, both Price and myself interrupt the Western tradition of portraiture – portraiture as being a time-honored means of recording and often is made with admiration for, or memorialization of the subject and a distinct relationship is created between he artists and the sitter. Both Price and myself intervene on this relationship by pilfering images of our sitters from online and working with an intentional distance between our subjects. This sense removal is paralleled in the detached context of where we found our subjects. While Price uses an intimate scale and the hand-touched, painterly gouache, to rebuild the tactile relationship with her subjects, I use oil to mimic the hard-edges, cold climate of high-contrast images and compositional strategies of the digital lens to not only create further detachment to my subjects, but also to parody the convention of their self-portraits. Additionally, in creating her compositions, Price eliminates any trace of the original background of her subjects, whereas I use the backgrounds to enforce the source imagery; the inclusion of closets, bathroom mirrors, and personal affects all on display are distinct to the sitter and the phenomenon.

Whereas my subjects seem to be superficial, self-glamorizations, they are in fact real girls, who posted these. Price's subjects feel just the opposite, they feel like they are full of that person, though they have been taken from stock photos sites, such as gettyimages.com. Both series heightens the sitters vulnerability, but for different reasons.

Lila with Nintendo DS, girl four

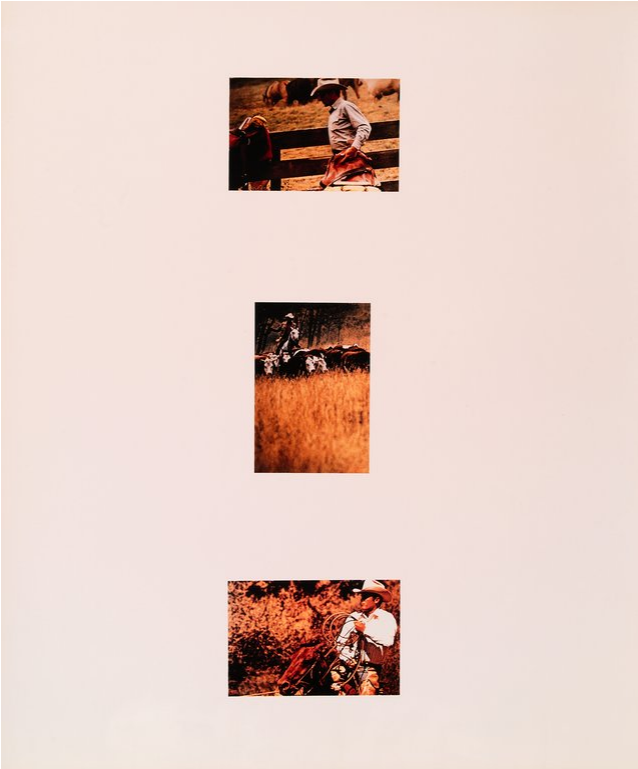
(Left)
Lila with Nintendo DS
Evan Baden
C-Print
2007

(Right)
girl four

Jehra Patrick
Oil in canvas
2006

My series also explicitly calls out a young people actively participating with this technology, both the camera itself, and the social networking sites that host the images. Photographer Evan Baden also created a body of work portrays teens interacting with technology. More specifically, how technology can connect and separate young people. Baden's portraits capture an image that is exclusive to our generation. Solitary figures are depicted from the waist up, bathed in a soft light and surrounded by shadows in a manner that recalls Vermeer's paintings. In Baden's photographs, however, the glow radiates from the screens of electronic devices, such as iPods, cell phones, and computers, rather than streaming in from a nearby window. The artist captures his subjects during private moments and their faces are uniformly expressionless and absorbed with the devices they hold. The artist recognizes that kids growing up now are constantly plugged in to information networks and is interested in these social implications. Though Baden's portraits have a tranquil beauty about them, he is more interested in the implications of these new social conditions. "These devices grace us with the ability to instantly connect to other," he states, "and at the same time they isolate us from those with whom we are connected. They allow for great freedom, yet so often we are chained to them."

Cowboys and Girlfriends, Landscape Painting



(Left) Cowboys and Girlfriends
Richard Prince
Photographs
20" x 24"
1992

(Right) Landscape Painting
Oil on canvas

48" x 36"
2008

I have selected two works within the Walker's collection by the artist Richard Prince. Prince's work has served not only as an influence but I have gone on to explicitly site his work within my own.?In Cowboys and Girlfriends, Prince explores pervasive images from American culture. The works on view here relate to two larger series of photographs he made in the 1980s. The archetypal cowboy images, though cropped, are reproduced facsimiles of originals from Marlboro advertisements. The Girlfriends pictures in this series are appropriated from ads placed by women in biker magazines. Prince would not only create enlarged rephotographs, he would also group his re-photographed images by classifications. This taxonomy, or relating of like images, he used to create a new compositional format based on the photo-lab technique of 'gangning' in which 9 or 12 35mm slides could be grouped into a single internegative, which can be greatly enlarged for printing. Formally, each gang is a grid of individual photographs and this pre-determined format proved catalytic for Prince, in that he could house any subject matter in this grid. Additionally, he found the term 'gang' appealing because of it's resonance in describing rebellious sub-cultures, like bikers.??I parallel Prince's 'gangs' in present day pre-determined compositional format of google search results. A series of oil paintings were created from search results on using terms from several conventional painting tropes 'landscape', 'portrait' and 'still life.' This project acknowledges the randomized visual taxonomy created using research tools like google and the spectrum of plurals in contemporary painting as well as contemporary conceptual approaches to art making including appropriation and collection.

(no title), Richard Prince + Louis Vuitton Handbag

(Left) (no title)
Richard Prince
Lithograph
15" x 11"
1991

(Right) Richard Prince + Louis Vuitton Handbag
Oil on hardboard

12" x 12"
2007

Prince continues to work with appropriation throughout his career, including an ongoing series of joke paintings, which he produced in both as paintings and screen prints and with varying images and uses of text. Both images and text were often sampled from New Yorke and Playboy magazines and many jokes were ‘one-liners’ which have been retold so many times that, like his images the origin is completely unknown and unauthorized. The cartoons themselves consisted of cultural evidence and Prince would often interject punch-line’s and mix illustrations to create his own jumbled narratives in his whitepaintings the early 1990’s. ??In 2007, Prince collaborated with the fashion designer Marc Jacobs on his Spring 2008 collection for the prestigious French label Louis Vuitton, titled ‘Louis Vuitton After Dark.’ The collection itself was inspired, in part, by Prince's Nurse Paintings and featured many of Prince’s cartoon paintings printed on handbags.??At surface value, the union of Prince and Vuitton is an odd convergence of fashion and art, and challenges the notion of where art belongs. Prince's work consists of images appropriated from the 'low-brow' culture of adult novels and crude jokes, whereas Louis Vuitton is the authority in high society luxury. There is also contradiction created which questions authorship and creates tension in the purse itself: Prince holds a reputation for appropriating images of others and Vuitton being one of the most highly counterfeited brands in the industry. In painting the image of the purse, I am not only returning the image of Prince's work back to painting, but am also adding a further step of removal and appropriation. In painting this piece I am appropriating the appropriated and the appropriator; knocking off both collaborators and also creating an unauthorized collaboration.