

# PaperExplorations

An exhibit at Wallace L. Anderson Gallery  
Curated by Leigh Craven

October 5 – 30, 2009  
Opening Reception: Thursday, October 8th 4:30 – 6 pm



Constantine Gedal

Bridgewater State College Art Center 40 School  
Street Bridgewater MA 02325



40 School Street • Bridgewater • MA • 02325  
Gallery Hours • Monday - Friday 8-4 • closed holidays

501 531 1359 handicapped accesible

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|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Caitlin Applegate | Deborah Karpman    | Aaron L. Peterman     |
| Matthew Ballou    | Jolynn Krystosek   | Susan Reedy           |
| Constantine Gedal | Steven Labadessa   | John Ros              |
| Brad Guarino      | Joseph A. Lupo     | Joyce Utting Schutter |
| Dawn Hunter       | Joseph Moniz       | Christopher Troutman  |
| Jan Johnson       | Matthew Northridge | Leigh Li-Yun Wen      |

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Paper is a widely used material for many artists; and for some, the material plays an integral role in their work. *Paper Explorations* is a group exhibition of eighteen artists that highlights the multitude of ways paper is utilized.

In 2002 the Museum of Modern Art presented a survey drawing exhibition called *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions*. This exhibition not only expanded the definition of drawing but became important in presenting contemporary drawing as a validated artistic medium. The elevated status brought about rising prices and increased viewer interest. In turn, we have seen a resurgence of works on paper.

For this exhibition I have selected artworks that span a wide spectrum in scale, color and content. I searched for a diversity of imagery with well-honed technique and artistic aesthetic awareness. *Paper Explorations* displays a diverse and eclectic selection of artworks that are made of and on paper.

### Historical

Some of the represented artists were selected for their reverence to artistic traditions. I chose to include the works of **Joseph A. Lupo** for his fresh take on the historic tradition of trompe l’oeil. His refined graphite drawings of purchase receipts are simultaneously simple in subject matter and complex in execution. Lupo’s drawings are depicted as low-relief still life and contain many small personal details. These attributes are consistent with historic trompe l’oeil, giving the viewer an intriguing contemporary perspective of the tradition.

Portraiture also has a long tradition that has evolved throughout time. **Steven Labadessa** gives us two strikingly different portraits that illustrate the strength of contemporary portraiture. With each piece Labadessa has captured a moment in time. He utilizes posture, color, and mark making in a manner descriptive of the individual character of each subject.

For centuries we have seen the immortalization of the female nude. This exhibition offers two beautiful contemporary examples of this subject by artists **Constantine Gedal** and **Joseph Moniz**. Moniz presents a life-size, elegantly composed female bent forward leaving a *Paper Trail*. The elegance of the nude is made even more dramatic by the physical space it inhabits and the abstract nature of the simplified environment. Constantine Gedal presents an illusive moment where alter egos or doppelgangers meet. He utilizes the complexities of photographic and print media to create images that are gritty and simultaneously ethereal.

### Collage

I chose the work of five different collage artists for this exhibition including Jan Johnson, Deborah Karpman, Matthew Northridge, Susan Reedy, and John Ros. These artists represent a diverse approach to collage. **Jan Johnson** has carefully cut hundreds of little pieces of paper from various sources and layered them to create a low relief collage. **Susan Reedy** also uses found materials for her works, but she tears edges and partially paints them to alter her sources. And **John Ros’s** *Industrialization no. 16* uses bold angular shapes to contrast with the organic forms that appear like crystallization on his piece. Even though these artists carefully select, cut/tear, and place their materials, their works seem to pay homage to the American Expressionist movement. Johnson’s piece bursts with energy and spontaneity; and Ros’s and Reedy’s pieces reflects the influences of Robert Motherwell.

Two of the collage artists selected use architectural structures for their subject matter. **Deborah Karpman’s** collaged structures pull and pucker the paper they are attached to. This created rippling puts greater attention on the space surrounding the ambiguous teetering structure. **Matthew Northridge** is represented by a suite of four pieces, *Aerial Studies*, constructed of cut paper from recycled materials. The minimally composed works of buildings are highly refined in color, lighting, and perspective. Even more interesting is the absence of extraneous details in the barren expanses of paper that surround the structures. The viewer can imbue these spaces with both physical and psychological meaning as they bounce from the various pieces in the suite.

### Narrative

The monumental works of **Christopher Troutman** are sure to capture the attention of any viewer. The artist creates large-scale, intricately composed spaces that capture moments of everyday life. Troutman’s multi-figure scenes entice the viewer to observe the interactions of the figures with each other and with their environment.

**Brad Guarino** and **Dawn Hunter** carefully construct narrative works that preserve a feeling of ambiguity. Each artist creates environments based on collaged mainstream ideals and stereotypes. The aesthetic handling of these two artists differs greatly, but each allows the viewer to interpret the created environments and figurative relationships in a multitude of ways.

### Sculptural

Some of the most fascinating works for me were those that were sculptural in nature. There is a selection of artists represented in this exhibition that explore the physicality of paper and utilize it as a three-dimensional object. *Stop Time* by **Joyce Utting Schutter** is one such example. She has sculpted a large-scale leaf by lacing paper pulp over a skeletal armature. Utilizing the thin, translucent qualities of the organic materials, the leaf appears weightless above the viewer, as if it has been lifted by a gust of wind. **Jolynn Krystosek** also explores botanical themes with her paper creations. She cuts flora into layers of large, crisp white sheets of paper. These sheets are then layered upon one another to create a complex hanging landscape sculpted by positive shapes and negative spaces.

Another paper construction you will see is **Aaron L. Peterman’s** *Furrie II*. Both playful and elegant, the piece reminds me of peering through a kaleidoscope. Dizzying patterns repeat themselves as your eye spirals within the undulating circular composition. Only upon closer inspection might a viewer notice the homosexual imagery that forms the design.

The ceramic and paper sculpture, *My Mother, Myself with Pickalittle* by **Caitlin Applegate** explores the intricacies of human relationships. The artist captures private moments that are revealed to the viewer through body language and manipulated proportions. The mass of her sculptures and the space they occupy further develop a narrative about insecurities and isolation.

The final two selections come to us from the area of printmaking, a tradition that burgeoned with the spread of papermaking in Europe. I chose to include one artist book in this exhibition, a collection of etchings by **Leigh Li-Yun Wen**. Each image of this beautifully executed book has rhythmic lines undulating and swelling across the printed surface. These marks appear to move, and express this artist’s affinity for nature that derives from her cultural heritage. **Matthew Ballou** also utilizes print media to capture nature in his piece *Sphinx*. This diminutive representation of a seashell is executed in mezzotint and pastel. The rich black mezzotint encapsulates a shell that basks in a strong, warm, light source. The quiet elegance of the work creates an intimate portrayal.



Joseph Moniz



Matthew Northridge



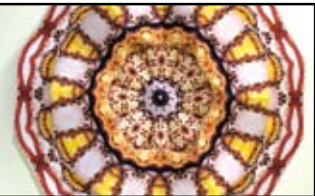
Matthew Ballou



Jan Johnson



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