



**MAX STREICHER
METAMORPHOSIS**



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Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Lewiston, New York

October 3, 2008 - January 25, 2009

PREFACE

Visual artists strive for communication. Sometimes the message is readily apparent, and sometimes, as in The Metamorphosis novella, they are layered within the work. Streicher creates astounding inflatable artworks on a grand scale. The efforts of the staff of the Castellani Art Museum mirror the artist's originality to provide a range of art experiences engaging individuals at all levels of appreciation. Franz Kafka said, "Association with human beings lures one into self-observation." Perhaps through self reflection and observations of society, we can experience the visions and insights that contemporary artists hold to heart. In the end, all art is a reflection of society, culture, and the human experience.

Beyond the intrinsic artistic value of Streicher's work, this exhibition offers the Niagara University community opportunities for integrative learning collaborations and university partnerships. Students studying Theatre, Biology, Philosophy, and Literature have the opportunity to develop critical skills to respond to an exhibition of this magnitude. Expanding the museum experience into a classroom based learning initiative, this collaboration offers students the opportunity to use the skills they are learning to respond to a unique exhibition and literary interpretation. Armand and Eleanor Castellani, our museum's founders, believed art was for everyone. Following this vision, *Metamorphosis* reaches beyond the walls of the museum and into the classrooms, providing an art experience to new audiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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METAMORPHOSIS

Expanding and transforming the way we experience the world through the visual arts, a number of contemporary artists have utilized the inflatable form to convey their observations on society. From Ant Farm's *50 x 50 Foot Pillow* used as a medical pavilion at the Rolling Stones 1969 concert at Altamont, California, and Paul McCarthy's recent floating renditions of dog droppings, titled *Complex Shit* (2008) over Bern, Switzerland, to Japanese art duo Yuji Tokuda and Junya Ishikawa's *Retired Weapons* (2007) life size inflatable tanks with pink flowers sprouting from the gun barrel, the spectrum of message is extremely varied.

Inflatable works such as Jessica Findley's project *Front* (2004) which consists of two voice-activated suits that inflate according to sound identification and Joo Youn Paek's *Self-Sustaining Chair* (2007) an apparatus that is worn like a dress and self inflates to form a useable chair have taken the physical attributes of the inflatable art form to a new interactive or self-modifying level. These artists, from the United States and Korea respectively, have merged industrial design and visual art to create functional devices, albeit comical, that interact and perform with the physical being. Most importantly, they are executed and presented outside of the traditional art-object environment and its limitations. They have been integrated into a public setting free of museum or gallery boundaries.

The inflatable medium also references the commercial oversized inflatables associated with grand openings, car dealerships, and thematic holiday yard ornamentation. These outdoor advertising structures embody a comfortable familiarity, existing as a focal point to draw the eye of passers-by—sharing a generic public message. When comparing these two esthetics, the commercial and museum/gallery based works, the relationship between high and low art becomes apparent. Innovative contemporary artists utilize this medium, providing relevance for collectors and art enthusiasts to take the medium seriously, as artists have taken the medium indoors—into galleries and museums. In fact, the act of viewing these works in a museum/gallery space speaks to the advancement and accepted genre of the inflatable. Beginning as outdoor props and advertising elements, the medium has come full circle. The achievements of contemporary artists who master this illusive medium should be celebrated.

Toronto artist Max Streicher has an instinctive ability to transform the inflatable form into objects of art that offer an interactive experience and engage the viewer, transcending commercialized preconceptions and expanding the visual art experience beyond the walls of exhibiting institutions. He succeeds in taking the inflatable past these philosophies, to an elevated esthetic and an ethereal experience.





Having worked with kinetic inflatables since 1989, Streicher has exhibited a significant number of projects across four continents. Working with elements of scale, public/private space, and architecture; his works exist on an elevated plane, well beyond his aforementioned contemporaries. Through the visual impact of volume and scale, his installations have challenged notions of art in public spaces. Noted works such as *Equestrian Monument #1* (2003) and *Lost Unicorn* (2003), are monumental in scale and broaden audience engagement through public display.



Equestrian Monument #1, an inflatable horse gallantly poised on its back hoofs, was attached to the face of a building in Venice, Italy. Rising two stories above the street level gallery, this positioning reinforced the sculpture's seductive relationship with the surrounding architecture—juxtaposing the smooth machined vinyl with the stone, wood, and wrought iron of the building.

Lost Unicorn was presented squeezing out of the top floor window of a Renaissance building in Erfurt, Germany. Rich with traditional architectural elements, the building's sculpted cherubic figures poised with trumpets appear to be announcing the unicorn's perilous situation.

The tension, which Streicher carefully sets up, between the building structure and the trapped unicorn, sets an uneasy scenario for the public below, anticipating the moment the unicorn breaks free of the building and lands on the causeway.

These two works challenged the historical architecture, as well as the building materials, with the slick smoothness of the vinyl horse/unicorn sculptures. The monumental scale and careful positioning of these works blasts the sculptures out of the art gallery context and into public space. By doing this, Streicher's sculptures take full advantage of an opportunity to engage the general public. His talent for challenging these preconceptions works to convey his creativity beyond the realm of art enthusiasts to a wider audience.

Union Station in Toronto, Canada, was the site of the 2007 installation *Quadrige II*. Four horses, each the size of an automobile, were suspended from the ceiling in the central terminal. A quadriga is the four-horse chariot used for races in the original Olympic Games and rituals in ancient Greece, and the vehicle used by gods and heroes in classical art. Again, Streicher has installed a work on the grandest scale in a public setting. The purity of the white nylon horses against the granite and limestone structure offers a superb elemental contrast. Cloud like, softly-contoured horse forms against the vaulting walls and arched ceiling visually resonate against each other. One can imagine the hustle and bustle of activity on ground level and the echoing noises, arrival/departure announcements, and conversations bouncing off the architecture—all the while, these horses hang poised in their gallant gallop in the terrestrial space above.

快樂都市中心
德安購物中心
9月27日隆重開幕



2000
Good
place
好地方
good
place

Lighters Bakery

美味點心 199

中央商場上市了!!

蚵仔麵線

球霸



Satirizing the notion of commercial advertising inflatables, Streicher's *Hamm & Clov (Taichung)* (2001) was presented atop a five-story commercial building in Taichung, Taiwan. This work consisted of two large-scale inflatable clown heads, complete with red noses and exaggerated features positioned above billboards, advertisements, and street signs in a place most of the public would not readily notice, while going about their business below. *Hamm & Clov (Taichung)* seems reserved only for the most astute and attentive of Taichung's urban population. It seems that a bit of tongue-in-cheek humor is not beyond Streicher's palette.

Perhaps the most ethereal of the artist's recent works, *Cloud* (2004) recreated elemental nature indoors—in the museum space. This work, a sculptural rendition of a cumulus cloud, took its position in the direct line of a public walkway. Within the Sculpture Atrium at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada, *Cloud* sat just feet from the floor and reached almost to the apex of the atrium. Contained, seemingly trapped, within this glass enclosed space existed a cloud that visitors must negotiate around, forcing public engagement. Here, the enormous scale was challenged by the grand modern architecture of the atrium. It is as if the cloud could see the sky (where it belongs) but cannot escape, held captive by the space.

The exhibition presented at the Castellani Art Museum brings important attributes from each of these projects together, culminating in an installation that reaches far beyond the museum walls. Streicher's *Metamorphosis* features an enormous inflatable dung beetle encircled by a number of photograms (images of the male form and oversized beetle) elaborating on the transformation of a man into a giant beetle. This work was inspired by Franz Kafka's 1915 novella [The Metamorphosis](#). On the surface, this story is about a traveling salesman named Gregor Samsa who awakes one day to find that he has been transformed into a "monstrous vermin." The story continues with his family trying to come to grips with this transformation and how it complicates their own lives. On a deeper level, the story is also about self reflection, depression, and isolation. Kafka is notorious for his visionary, enigmatic stories that present a grotesque vision of the world in which individuals, burdened with guilt, remorse, and anxiety, make a futile pursuit for salvation.

Streicher's *Dung Beetle* (2005) occupies a substantial portion of the Castellani Art Museum's main gallery, effectively changing the role of the exhibition space. He alters the space from a place to view works of art to an encapsulated environment containing a giant insect. Streicher transforms the role of the museum visitor to active participant. Metaphorically, the audience becomes Gregor's family members who are forced to deal with this unnerving transformation and subsequent series of grotesque events.

Michael J. Beam

Curator of Exhibitions and Collections



















ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Dung Beetle

The impetus for *Dung Beetle* was Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis. Not only for the image of the struggling beetle but also for the spirit of the story. It is the story of an ordinary life brutally interrupted by an inexplicable and horrifying event. Through Kafka's descriptions we vicariously experience the strangeness of Gregor Samsa's new body, with its multiple legs, armored belly, and tender bits.

It is in the description of simple physical actions and bodily functions in Kafka's novel that I find a resonance with the kind of bodily reactions that I seek in my sculptures. Breathing is the obvious function that my work focuses on. I use air to animate my works because it provides an effortless naturalism—it not only looks right, it feels right, recollecting our own sensation of breath. Breathing is first of all a matter of physical well-being, as we are dependent on the constant flow of air within ourselves, but breath is also intimately connected to our emotions, memory and spirit. The appearance of life-like movement within my works is often disrupted by actions that are distinctly unnatural. For example, a pair of figures alternately inflate and deflate one another in *Blow* (2004) or *Romulus and Remus* (2005) in a kind of life-giving/life-taking/life-saving dance. While the sense that they are breathing makes them seem human (or alive) that breath becomes macabre and preposterous when each figure takes its turn in being reduced to a crumpled layer of fabric on the floor.

My architectural interventions are about altering the viewer's physical relationship to a space. For example, *Cloud* (2004) created an architecture of its own where the viewer could literally put his or her head in a cloud and find within it a distinctly private and dreamy space. In *Alto Cumulus* (2006) the clouds were placed over a swimming pool so the viewers, particularly swimmers, could imagine themselves recast as Putti frolicking in a Baroque painting.

All of these themes and fantasies are embodied as well in *Dung Beetle*. In this case the creature's body overtakes the space, diminishing the viewer and, I imagine, leaving the viewer happy to be on the outside. But this bug is not so threatening, as he is placed here on his back, struggling or perhaps dead as in an entomological collection. Combined with the pseudoscientific quality of the photograms, this exhibition could be the remnants of some kind of science experiment or the display of a paleological find. The off-putting, perhaps creepy, quality of this beetle is enhanced by the material from which it has been constructed. It is made of vinyl that has been recycled from giant billboards, a material which was chosen for its tactile qualities. It is very durable and stiff and the printed surface has an insect-like sheen.

Generally, inflatables are an expression of naive optimism. In an art context they signal popular culture, anti-art and irony. As in most of my work, here too in *Dung Beetle*, I play with and against these expectations. I employ the playfulness of the medium—its oversized, over-inflated, puffed-up qualities—but always layered with a sense of vulnerability, the fear of destruction perhaps, and the fact of deflation. It is common that viewers express the wish to pop my inflatable works, to see them explode, and I see this as a natural response and perhaps the darker side of our "kinesthetic," bodily experience of the work—the reminder of their own last breath.



Photograms

My photograms are created by positioning my deflated and flattened figures, like those used in *Trio in a Box* (2006) directly on large-format photographic paper (about 8 x 4 feet) and exposing them to light. What emerges within the silver gelatin emulsion is the impression of a figure; the partial trace of features, recognizable human gestures and the appearance of motion stilled.

As my work with the inflatable medium has developed I have progressively refined the rendering of anatomy to achieve specific movements and the appearance of life within my figures. These works have been as much about deflation as inflation; as much about absence, shrinking and vulnerability as they are about the robust occupation of space. My choice of extremely light and papery materials enhances this sense of absence, of the nearly not there at all.

My photograms share a similar sense of a fleeting presence, a remnant or trace of a mysterious now departed being. The figures used in this series of photograms are made of a nylon spinnaker which is used in the construction of racing sails. The extreme lightness of this material gives it a translucency that allows light to penetrate to varying degrees. On photographic paper this creates subtle gradations of grey that gives the appearance of three dimensions. The shades of grey are the result of the unpredictable folding and overlapping of the material when the figure is flattened. They have therefore, the more mysterious and puzzling appearance of some unconventional imaging source, of an ultrasound perhaps or the x-ray of a mummified corpse.



In creating inflated forms several qualities remain difficult to control. A leg, for example, may not always bend 'correctly' at the knee. A facial feature may puff out where it should pull in. This slightly unpredictable and uncontrollable quality, I feel, gives the figures character and an even greater depth of animation. A similar dynamic occurs with the photograms. While the positioning of the deflated figures is intentional it can never be predicted just what the character of the captured being will reveal.

Max Streicher 2008

MAX STREICHER

Toronto, Ontario, Canada
www.maxstreicher.com

1958 Born, Olds, Alberta, Canada.

EDUCATION

- 1989 Master of Fine Art, York University, Toronto.
1987 Bachelor of Fine Art, York University, Toronto.
1980 Bachelor of Arts, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

RECENT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 *Breathe*, Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India.
2007 *Mammatus*, Galería Miguel Marcos, Barcelona, Spain.
Blow, Felix Ringel Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany.
Quadriga, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, Portugal.
2006 *Mammatus*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
Quadriga, Ludwig-Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany.
Four Horses, Galerie d'art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen de l'Université de Moncton, New Brunswick.
Respiración Madrid, Galerie Raquel Ponce, Madrid, Spain.
Mammatus, Museum London, London, Ontario.
2005 *Metamorphosis*, Artcore Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.
You and Me: Body talks, Herrmann & Wagner, Berlin, Germany.
Respiración, Galería Miguel Marcos, Barcelona, Spain.
Samuelis Baumgarte Galerie, Bielefeld, Germany.
Silenus, Glassbox, University of Erfurt Art Gallery, Erfurt Germany.
Four Horses, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
Silenus, Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
Endgame, Rodman Hall, Brock University Art Gallery.
Sextet, Centre d'exposition l'Imagier, Gatineau, Quebec.
2004 *Quartet*, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, New York.
Cloud, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Commissioned installation.
Silenus, Apothiki Gallery, Paros, Greece.
Horses, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
2003 *Sculture Gonfiabili*, Galleria Traghetto, Venice, Italy.
Floating Giants, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden.
Four Horses, Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario.
2002 *Silenus*, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta.
Lamentation, Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario.
Sleeping Giants, Definitely Superior, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
Hyperworld, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
Sleeping Giants, Neutral Ground, Regina, Saskatchewan.
Giant, Monte Clark Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia.
Sleeping Giants, Karlskoga Konsthall, Karlskoga, Sweden.
Sleeping Giants, Saw Gallery, Ottawa.

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 Galway International Festival, Galway, Ireland.
Captive Visions: Contemporary Canadian Art, Eli Klein Fine Art, New York.
2007 *Spirits*, Galerie Eric Mircher, Paris.
Troika, Slava's Snowshow, Moscow, Russia.
Universal Forum of Cultures, UNESCO and Kinetica Museum, Monterrey, Mexico.
Sleeping Giants, Manchester International Festival, Manchester, United Kingdom.
Das Motiv Säugling in der zeitgenössischen Kunst, Kunsthalle Darmstadt, Darmstadt, Germany.
Playing in Traffic, Red Bull Music Academy, Toronto.
Floating Artworks, Curated by Art Gallery of Ontario, Luminato Festival, Toronto.
Sculpture Now, Herrmann & Wagner, Berlin, Germany.
Blind Culture, Glenhyrst Art Gallery, Brantford, Ontario.
The Great Indoors: Manchester International Festival, Manchester, United Kingdom.



- 2006 *Naked Life*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei.
Lifeforms, Kinetica Museum, London, United Kingdom.
Plastiken Kunstkörperlich – Körperkünstlich,
 Kunsthalle, Osnabrück, Germany.
Summer of Love, Virserums Konsthall, Virserum, Sweden.
Alma Lov Biennial, Alma Lov Museum,
 Ostra Amtervik, Sweden.
Equinox, Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Ontario.
hic, Hart House Collective Exhibition, Hart House,
 University of Toronto.
Blown, Kenderdine Gallery, University of Saskatchewan,
 Saskatoon.
- 2005 *Figur/Skulptur*, ESSL Museum, Vienna, Austria.
Blown, Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan.
- 2004 *Gonflables! Inflatables Gonfiabili...*, Lille, France.
Floating Worlds; Beacon Cultural Foundation,
 Beacon, New York.
Ironic Turn; Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art, Toronto.
Chassez le naturel; 4th Liege Biennial, Museum for Modern
 and Contemporary Art, Liege, Belgium.
Ironic Turn, Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, New Brunswick.
Plastica d'Artista, Mostra Internazionale d'Arte
 Contemporanea, Pordenone, Italy.
- 2003 *The Ironic Turn*, Faux Mouvement, Metz, France.
Du lilliputien au gigantesque; Musée Régional de Rimouski,
 Rimouski, Quebec, Canada.
The Ironic Turn: Kanadische Kunst der Gegenwart,
 Kunsthalle Erfurt, Germany.
Il Palazzo delle Liberta, Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte
 Contemporanea, Siena, Italy.
The Mortal Coil: Ruminations on Human Physicality,
 Gallery Stratford, Stratford, Ontario, Canada.
- 2002 Site-specific installation, Durham Regional Art Gallery,
 Durham Ontario.
- 2001 *Good Place*, Taichung, Taiwan.
Mortal, Betty Rymer Gallery, Chicago Art Institute,
 Chicago, Illinois.
- 2000 *logocity*, Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Ontario.
Endgame, Alma Lov Museum, Ostra Amtervik, Sweden.

COMMISSIONS AND COLLECTIONS

- 2005 *Silenus*, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan.
Seated Figures, ESSL Collection of Contemporary Art,
 Vienna, Austria.
- 2002 *Windsock Babies*: Cambridge Sculpture Garden,
 Cambridge, Ontario: Site-specific installation.
- 2001 *Floating Giants*: Canadian Art Foundation:
 Toronto, Ontario, Commissioned installation.
- 2000 *Endgame*: Alma Lov Museum, Ostra Amtervik, Sweden.
- 1991 *Where there is Smoke*: installation,
 collection of Marat Inc., Toronto, Ontario.
- 1989 *We Will Name This Place*: permanent installation,
 collection of York University.



RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 2007 Tate Modern, *Take a Deep Breath*, Symposium presenter,
 London, United Kingdom.
 Visiting Artist; Ontario College of Art and Design,
 Ontario, Canada.
 Visiting Artist and workshop; Queen's University, Kingston,
 Ontario, Canada.
- 1998 Mercer Union: A Centre for Contemporary Visual Art:
 Board of Directors, 1992-1998.
- 1996 Visiting Artist: College of Educational Sciences, Department
 of Fine Arts, Erfurt, Germany.
- 1992 Visual Arts Ontario Panel: "Creative Initiatives: Organizing
 Alternative Exhibitions."

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2008 *Captive Visions: Contemporary Canadian Art*,
 Eli Klein Fine Art, New York.
- 2007 *Das Motiv Säugling in der zeitgenössischen Kunst*,
 Darmstadt, Germany.
Playing in Traffic, Archive Inc. Gallery & Art Library,
 Red Bull Music Academy, Toronto, Canada.
- 2006 *Naked Life*, Manray Hsu, Maren Richter,
 Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taiwan.
Lifeforms, Robert Pepperell, Kinetica Museum, London, UK;
Kunstkörperlich – Körperkünstlich, Hansdieter
 Erbsmehl, Kunsthalle Dominikanerkirchw, Osnabrück,
 Germany.
Mammatus, Jean Randolph, Mary Reid, Melanie Townsend,
 Winnipeg Art Gallery, Museum London.

- 2005 *figure/skulptur*, Robert Fleck, Andreas Hoffer, Lucia Binder, Essl Museum, Vienna, Austria.
Blown, Donna Wowzonek and Nick Lary, Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina.
- 2004 *Gonflables!*, Caroline David, Lille, France.
Chassez le naturel..., 4th Liege Biennial, Liege, Belgium.
Plastica d'artista, by Maria Campitelli, Palazzo Mantica, Pordenone, Italy.
- 2003 *Il Palazzo delle Liberta*, by Lorenzo Fusi, Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy.
Du lilliputien au gigantesque: l'imaginaire de la démesure, Véronique Bellemare Brière, Musée Régional de Rimouski, Rimouski, Quebec, Canada.
- 2001 *The Good Place*, by Manray Hsu, Hungjohn Lin and David Liss.
- 2000 *Sleeping Giants*, essay "Dream of Giants" by Marcus Miller, Saw Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario and Karlskoga Konsthall, Karlskoga, Sweden.
- SELECTED REVIEWS AND ARTICLES**
- 2008 Time Out Mumbai #57, Deepanjana Pal, "Deep Breathing," March 21-April 3.
- 2007 Cimaise, "Entre Résurrection et Torture," 55e année, No. 288, Paris, December 2007.
LE: Design Magazine, Ekaterinburg, Russia, May.
The Globe and Mail, R.M. Vaughan, "Black balls a bust; horses a masterpiece" Toronto, June 6.
The Toronto Star, Susan Walker, "Look up or you'll miss the show," June 6.
- 2006 Galleries West, "Max Streicher," Fall/Winter.
Azure, "Blow-Ups," Lyne Fraser, September.
El País, "Los hombres hinchables de Max Streicher," (photo) Madrid, January 15.
- 2005 Riverside Quarterly, Clarissa M. Lewis, "Max Streicher @ Artcore Gallery," Toronto, Fall 2005.
Kunst 21, *Schlafende Giganten*, Heft Nr. 8, Sept. 05.
New York Arts, Camila Belchio, "Max Streicher," Vol. 10 no 5/6, May/June.
Telegraph Journal, (photo), Fredericton, New Brunswick, April 29.
Folha de Sao Paulo, *Canadense e brasileira retratam homem em 'estado de excecao'*, March 2.
St. Catherines Standard, Matthew Van Donegen, "Giant clown heads inspire shock and awe," January 28.
- 2004 Canadian Art, Dionne McAfee, "Max Streicher," Fall.
The Globe and Mail, Gary Michael Dault, "The irony of (really) big expectations," July 3.
Art Nexus, Tatiana Flores, "The Armory Show;" (photo), No. 53; volume 3.
Art Nexus, Marisol Martell, "Palm Beach Contemporary" (photo), No. 52; volume 3.
Telegraph Journal, "Taking art to new heights," (photo), Fredericton, April 30.
National Post, "Portraits and pancakes in honour of Salvador Dali," (photo), April 29.
Toronto Star, Christopher Hume, "People palace and a Treasure chest" (photo), March 14.
- 2003 Rheinesche Post, Bertram Müller, "Schlafende Giganten," (photo), October 29.
- Handelsblatt, Christian Herchenröder, "Altes Blut in neuen Adern," (photo) Dusseldorf, October 31.
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Rose-Maria Gropp, "Zurück nach vorn zu den Wurzeln," November 1.
Kölnner Stadt Anzeiger, Martin Oehlen, "Die Welt der Kunst," (photo), October 29.
Kunst Film Biennale, Kathrin Luz, "Uns kennt die halbe Welt nur nicht Ehrenfeld..." (photo), Köln, October 31.
Espace: Natasha Hébert, "Il Palazzo della Libertá: Un projet elusive-subversif, sans attention aux bonnes manières," (photo) Winter 2003-2004.
Thuringen Landeszeitung, Peter-Alexander Fiedler, "Sie sägen am Ast, auf dem sei sitzen," July 5.
Aktuell Kunst, "The Ironic Turn," (photo), Nr. 4/2003.
Surfacing Journal: "Max Streicher—Silenus," (photo), Summer, Volume 24: issue 2.
Observer Sverige AB: John Peter Nilsson, "Jätter som svåvar i taket," (photo), Stockholm, June 7.
Lola: Jeffery Matt, "Silenus at 401 Richmond" (photo), Lola 15, vol. 7, no. 1, Toronto, Spring.
Toronto Star: Peter Goddard, "Streicher's benign giants" (photo), January 11.
- 2002 Edmonton Journal: Gilbert Bouchard, "Artist put patrons in the thick of giant inflatables" (photo), September 17.
The Globe and Mail: Sarah Milroy, "Divine Comedy," (photo), Toronto, September 7.
Espace: Gill McElroy, "Lamentation" (photo), Montreal, Autumn.
The Chronicle-Journal: Peter Fergus-Moore, "Sleeping Giants: Comatose, Disturbing" (photo), Thunder Bay, Ontario, March 12.
- 2001 The Star Phoenix: Sheila Robertson, "Challenging Boundaries" (photos), Regina, Sept. 29.
Leader Post: Jack Anderson, "Sleeping Giants Spectacular" (photo) Regina, Dec. 13.
World Sculpture News: Paula Gustafson, "Max Streicher at Monte Clark Gallery" (photo), Hong Kong, China, winter.
Espace: Paula Gustafson, "Max Streicher: Giants" (photo), Montreal, spring.
- 2000 Konstperspektiv: Fred Andersson, "Experimental konst i värmländsk hage," Sweden, Argang 28.
The Globe and Mail: Blake Gopnik, "Signs prove consumer culture is more than just a straight sell," Toronto, August 26.
Lola: Catherine Osborne, "logocity," Toronto, Autumn.
Lola: Sherri Irvin, "Sleeping Giants" Toronto, Autumn.



Max Streicher is a sculptor and installation artist from Alberta, Canada who now resides in Toronto. He graduated from York University in Toronto in 1989 with a Master of Fine Arts. Since then he has worked extensively with kinetic inflatable forms. He has shown in solo exhibitions in museums and public galleries across Canada and abroad, including the Mendel Museum in Saskatoon, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon and the Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton. Streicher has completed numerous site-related projects in such places as the Ludwig-Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany, The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

The artist's installations have been acquired by numerous private collections including the ESSL Museum in Vienna, Austria and the Hara Museum in Tokyo, Japan. He has participated in international symposia and group exhibitions in Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Taiwan, The Netherlands, Hungary, Finland, and the Czech Republic. Streicher was a founding member of the Nethermind collective of artists which organized four large exhibitions in alternative spaces in Toronto between 1991 and 1995. He served on the board of directors of Mercer Union Gallery from 1992 to 1998.

I extend my warmest gratitude to the Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Galerie Ernst Hilger, Vienna, Austria; Galerie Eric Mircher, Paris; Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, India, for their most generous support of this project and for the unwavering enthusiasm they have shown in the support of my work. I also wish to thank the staff of the Castellani Art Museum for all they have done in bringing *Metamorphosis* to the Western New York region.

Max Streicher, 2008

Exhibition Checklist

Dung Beetle, 2005, recycled billboard vinyl, electric fans, 362 x 252 x 240 in.

Photogram #1 (figure), 2005, unique Silver gelatin print, 94 x 50 in.

Photogram #2 (*Dung Beetle*), 2005, unique Silver gelatin print, 98 x 50 in.

Photogram #3 (figure) 2005, unique Silver gelatin print, 98 x 50 in.

Photogram #4 (figure) 2005, unique Silver gelatin print, 98 x 50 in.

Photogram #5 (*Dung Beetle*) 2005, unique Silver gelatin print, 98 x 50 in.

All works are courtesy of the artist.

Images

All images by the artist, except where indicated.

Cover: *Dung Beetle*: recycled billboard vinyl, electric fans, 362 x 252 x 240 in. 2005, *Metamorphosis* exhibition, Castellani Museum, Niagara University, New York, 2008.

Inside Cover: *Dung Beetle: Negative #1*, 1/5, digital print, 20 x 24 in, 2008.

Inside Cover: *Dung Beetle: Positive #1*, 1/5, digital print, 20 x 24 in, 2008.

Page 3: *Dung Beetle*, 2005, *Metamorphosis* exhibition, Artcore, Toronto, 2005.

Page 4: *Dung Beetle*, 2005, Art in the Park, Jefferson City, Missouri, 2006.

Page 6 and 7: *Dung Beetle*, 2005, *Metamorphosis* exhibition, Castellani Museum, Niagara University, New York, 2008, photograph by Biff Henrich.

Page 8: *Hamm & Clov*: (detail) painted Tyvek, electric fans, each head, 138 in. diameter, 1999, *The Good Place*, Taichung, Taiwan, 2001.

Page 9: *Hamm & Clov* (Taichung): 2001.

Page 10: *Lost Unicorn*: recycled billboard vinyl, electric fan, 177 x 354 x 78 in, *The Ironic Turn* exhibition, Kunsthalle Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany, photograph courtesy of Kunsthalle Erfurt.

Page 12 and 13: *Lost Unicorn*, (detail), 2003.

Page 14: *Silenus*: nylon spinnaker, electric fans, each inflatable figure, 315 in. tall, 2002, photograph by Luminous Productions, Toronto.

Page 15: *Floating Giants*: nylon spinnaker, electric fans, helium balloons, figures 276 in. tall, 2001.

Page 16: *Dung Beetle Photogram #1*, unique gelatin silver print, 96 x 48 in. 2005.

Page 17: *Seated figure Photogram #3*, unique gelatin silver print, 89 x 48 in. 2004.

Page 18: *Horse Photogram #2*, unique gelatin silver print, 50 x 48 in. 2007.

Page 19: *Quadriga II*, nylon spinnaker, electric fans, each horse: 354 x 345 x 69 in. 2007, photograph by Tyson Williams, Toronto, Canada.

Page 20: *Waking Army*: nylon spinnaker, electric blowers, each figure 197 in. tall, 2006.

Page 22: *Seated figure Photogram #4*, unique Silver gelatin print, 89 x 48 in, 2005.

Page 23: *Waking Army* (detail), 2006.

Page 24: *Cloud*: Tyvek and vinyl, electric fans, 384 x 384 x 287 in., Tannenbaum Sculpture Atrium, Art Gallery of Ontario, 2004, photograph courtesy of Art Gallery of Ontario.

Page 25: *Cloud*, (detail), 2004.

Page 27: Portrait by Joy von Tiedemann, 2005.

Niagara University

Integrated Learning Partnerships

The Max Streicher *Metamorphosis* exhibition provided a significant opportunity for the Castellani Art Museum to partner with Niagara University Academic Departments including English, Biology, Philosophy, and Theatre in the development of engaging integrated learning opportunities for students across multiple disciplines.

Integrated learning projects inspired by [The Metamorphosis](#) have come to fruition through the dedication and creativity of Niagara University faculty and museum staff on the *Metamorphosis* steering committee who developed a broad range of projects. Partners include Dr. Alexander Bertland, Assistant Professor of Philosophy; Dr. Jamie Carr, Assistant Professor of English; Susan Clements, CAM Publicity Coordinator; Gregory Fletcher, Director of Niagara University Theatre; Dr. Mark Gallo, Associate Professor of Biology; Marian Granfield, CAM Coordinator of Education; and the staff of the Castellani Art Museum.

Size, scope, and scale.

Dr. Mark Gallo, Associate Professor of Biology, Microbiology
Niagara University Microbiology students (Biology course 212) created drawings and models of insects and microbes in a scale to compare with that of Max Streicher's *Metamorphosis*. They included microscopic images of the microorganism and insights regarding the particular habits and habitats of microbes in the real world.

Through the looking glass.

Dr. Mark Gallo, Associate Professor of Biology, Microbiology
Dr. Gallo and students created a display consisting of objects that were viewed under the microscope to see their underlying features, structure, pattern, and characteristics. Insects and other biological objects were included as well so individuals could get a closer view of the complexity and beauty of the natural world. Some examples were produced by Niagara University students enrolled in Nature Studies (Biology course 302). This project was also integrated into the educational programming for family activities and the Castellani Art Museum's Saturday Art Express classes.

Readers Theater presentation of *Metamorphosis*

Adapted by Steven Berkoff from the novella by Franz Kafka, directed by Steve Vaughan

Gregory Fletcher, Director of Niagara University Theatre
Reader's theatre brought to life the famous 1915 novella [Metamorphosis](#). A story about a man who wakes one morning to find that he has transformed into a dung beetle. Students performed amidst the large-scale inflatable sculpture and photograms featured in the main gallery of the Castellani Art Museum.

Is it Art?

Dr. Alexander Bertland, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

The overall theme of the Philosophy of Art Class (Philosophy course 318, section A & B) asked the traditional philosophical question, "How is art defined?" The *Metamorphosis* installation by Max Streicher represented an important test case for answering this question. The installation defied traditional ideas of art through its use of materials, its scale, and its subject matter. Students composed a philosophical argument to justify whether or not the installation pushes the boundaries of the definition of art too far or not.

Students were engaged in the debate between formalism, which holds that art is a function of rational structure; and expression theory, which holds that art is an expression of emotion. Simultaneously, students generated their own ideas about how best to grasp the scope of the installation itself. The strongest arguments were presented at a public panel discussion Monday, November 3, at the Castellani Art Museum.

Identity through Literary Criticism.

Dr. Jamie Carr, Assistant Professor of English, English Department

For this project, students composed museum labels that theorize relationships between Franz Kafka's novella [The Metamorphosis](#) and Max Streicher's *Metamorphosis* exhibition, illustrating a range of work in contemporary literary studies. Analyses included: inquiries as to whether Streicher challenges our notions of originality and "high art" and with what effects; considerations of who authorizes the meaning of texts—author, reader, or the context of reception; exploration of the bug figure as a representation of the abject in modern society; and investigation into how the physicality of the art object "subjects" us as spectators.

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