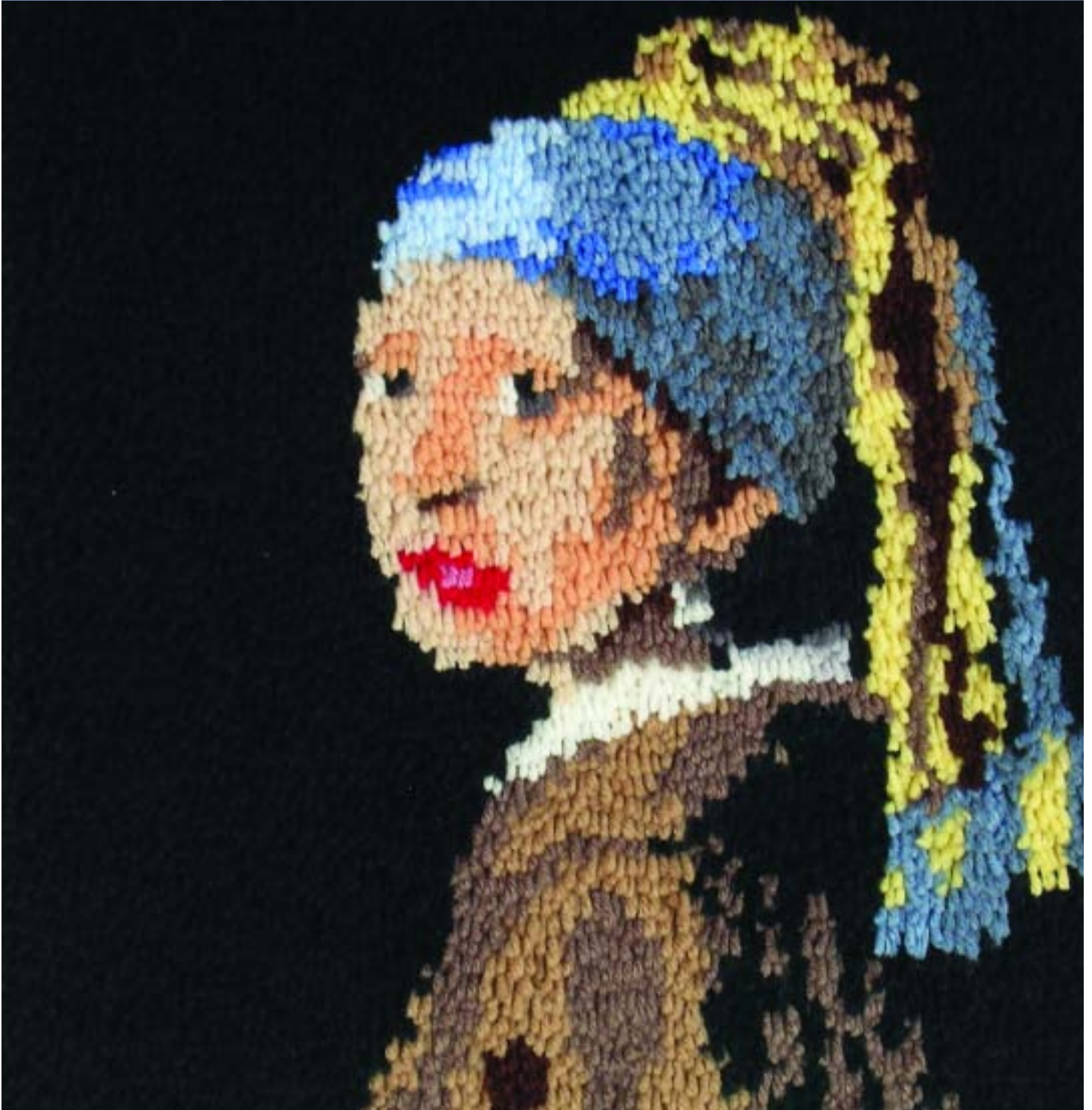


Kurt Treeby: *Fuzzy Memories*

February 1 - April 20, 2008

Opening reception with artist's talk: First Friday, March 7, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.



kurttreeby

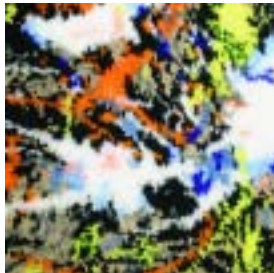


Kurt Treeby's recent work is simultaneously a lush homage to art history and a calculated salutation to kitschy commercialized craft. The fiber work featured in this exhibition focuses on iconic imagery and the relationship between high and low art forms. *Fuzzy Memories* explores visual experience and the concept of widespread artistic appeal.

Defined by individual interests and life experiences, everyone responds to art at their own rhythm. For some, the relevancy and artistic integrity of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes evoke intense personal meanings and religious connotations, while Jackson Pollock's expressionistic action-paintings provide an ephemeral, defining reflection on the triumphant spirit of modern art. Still others are inspired by the capricious arrangements and rich colors of the work of Henry Matisse or the politically charged Picasso masterpiece *Guernica*.

As the number of museum visitors grows, viewers are attracted to the Old Masters including Jan Vermeer, Gustave Courbet, and Pablo Picasso. Within these artworks are attributes that "define" a masterpiece—technical ability, composition, and recognizable subject matter are paramount. Contemporary artists are reexamining themes with an art historical context, altering traditional implied meanings. Treeby places himself on the edge of this cliff—between high and low art. What make an artwork a masterpiece—high art? What relegates another work of art to kitsch—low art?

Raising more questions than answers, Treeby's work examines this difference, freeing his work to communicate with a broad range of visitors. The cultural popularity of the latch-hook kits of the 1970s provided audiences with an avenue to create and experience craft art while building inter-generational family activities. By bringing this machined, predetermined aesthetic to contemporary art, Treeby carefully recreates historically important artworks and redefines our relationship to them.



(detail) *Conversion*, 2006-07,
acrylic yarn rug, 93 x 156 inches

Artist Statement

In our post-modern era, the line between so-called "high art" and "low art" is constantly crossed. By working in the traditional craft medium of latch-hook rug making, I aim to further blur this distinction. The images I work with are iconic and recognizable to many viewers.

By re-interpreting these masterworks as rugs, a playful dialogue is opened between me and the original creators. The lasting appeal of these images, as well as our collective familiarity with them, fuels our response to seeing them reproduced in such a way.

Broken, 2007, acrylic and wool yarn rug, 63 x 105 inches

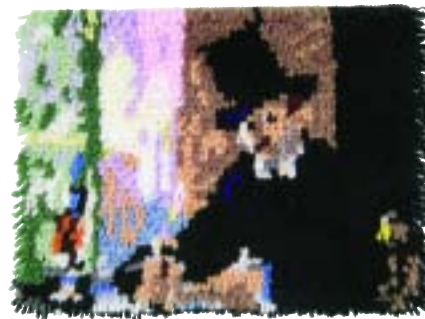
To increase the dialogue between viewers and the artwork, he has meticulously recreated these pieces as close to the original size as possible. Understandably Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel masterworks have been downsized to more manageable dimensions.

Stretched canvas and textured brush strokes are replaced with standardized grids and uniformity materials. Editing is kept to a minimum, limited to the structured grid-pattern available with latch-hooking. The serendipitous color blending of drips and brush strokes is simplified and redefined. As these works are morphed from flat paintings to machined sculptural representations of the originals, do they present the same message? Unlike their established counterparts, Treeby's works welcome the physical interaction of the visitor. The ability to engage in a tactile experience with the works, as opposed to the traditional limitation of only visual appreciation makes them accessible to a wider array of audiences. Simultaneously, elements of uniqueness and originality come into play.

Inspired by his vigorous studies of art history, theory, and fine arts, Treeby's artistic search for relevancy in the distinction between high and low art has culminated in a series of bold reinterpretations of historically renowned artworks. Beyond their own existence, these works of art transcend their physicality. *Fuzzy Memories* is an Ultra-manufactured trip through art history, with a kitschy machined aesthetic.

Michael J. Beam
Curator of Exhibitions
and Collections
Castellani Art Museum





Clockwise, from top left: *Sistine Suite: The Creation of Eve*, 2003, acrylic yarn rug, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; *Sistine Suite: The Creation of Man*, 2003, acrylic yarn rug, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 50 inches; *Sistine Suite: The Creation of the Sun and the Moon*, 2004, acrylic yarn rug, 23 x 52 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; *Sistine Suite: The Fall and the Expulsion*, 2003, acrylic yarn rug, 23 x 52 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; *Reclining Nude (After Matisse)*, 2006-07, acrylic yarn rug, 26 x 36 inches; *Gardener Series: Manet's "Chez Tortoni,"* 2007, acrylic yarn rug, 11 x 14 inches; *Gardener Series: Vermeer's "The Concert,"* 2007, acrylic yarn rug, 29 x 26 inches; *Sistine Suite: Noah's Sacrifice*, 2003, acrylic yarn rug, 24 x 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Left: (detail) *War to War Carpeting*, 2006-2008, acrylic yarn rug, 132 x 288 inches

www.kurttreeby.com

A native of Buffalo, Kurt Treeby studied art at the College of Art and Design at Alfred University. Focusing his artistic efforts on painting and drawing, he received minors in art history and art education. Influenced by the work of artists such as Sol LeWitt, Sophie Calle, and Mark Tansey, Treeby's work changed considerably through the development of a conceptual based approach to art making. Returning to school in 1998, he attended Syracuse University for his Master of Fine Arts degree. No longer confined to a single medium, his work began to explore the concept of artistic

production and public reception of art.

In addition to his successful artistic career, Treeby is also a dedicated teacher. He currently teaches a variety of studio art and art appreciation courses at the State University of New York at Brockport and at Niagara County Community College. In Buffalo, he has taught courses for both the Arts in Education Institute of Western New York and the Buffalo Arts Studio. Treeby maintains an active studio at Buffalo Arts Studio and has exhibited his work both regionally and nationally.

EDUCATION

- 2001** Master of Fine Arts, Painting, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
1996 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting and Art Education, Alfred University, NY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2006-current** Adjunct Instructor of Drawing, Erie Community College, Buffalo, NY
Adjunct Instructor of Design, Niagara County Community College, Sanborn, NY
Music is Art-Live at the Center, produced by the Music is Art Foundation, in conjunction with the University at Buffalo, NY
2005 Visiting Artist Lecture, School of Art, Central Wyoming College, Riverton, WY
2004-current Adjunct Instructor of Studio Art, State University of New York, Brockport, NY
2001-03 Teaching Artist, Arts in Education Institute of Western New York, West Seneca, NY
1998-2001 Teaching Assistant, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006** Floor to Ceiling, Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, NY
Mystical Diagnostics, Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted Center for the Visually Impaired, Buffalo, NY
20 Painter's Problems, Visual Art Studio, Richmond, VA
2001 Recent Work, Spark Gallery, Syracuse, NY
Thesis Exhibition, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
2000 Recent Paintings, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

1999 Gestural Voids, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

1996 Thesis Exhibition, Alfred University, Alfred, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007** Future Artemi, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY
8 Hour Drawing, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA
2006 Craftforms 2006, Wayne Art Center, Wayne, PA
It's Not You; It's Me, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY
2005 Specimen Exploration, Central Wyoming College, Riverton, WY
2004 Annual Holiday Exhibit, Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, NY
Annual Juried Exhibition, Atlanta Artists Center, Atlanta, GA
Inaugural Exhibition, Hus Var Fine Art, Buffalo, NY
2003 Twelfth National Juried Show, Art Center of Northern New Jersey, New Milford, NJ
Trimania, Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, NY
2002 Brand 32, Brand Library and Art Center, Glendale, CA
National Juried Competition, Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts and Sciences, Loveladies, NJ
Opening Exhibition, Definition Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Reunion Show, Spark Gallery, Syracuse, NY
2001 Art, Syracuse Stage, Syracuse, NY
Graduate Open Studios, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY



The museum's Tops Gallery – long dedicated to the exhibition of work by local and regional artists – presents the **TopSpin** series. This juried series of solo exhibitions draws from the richly diverse work of WNY artists, as well as that of artists beyond the region. **TopSpin** features a broad range of visual expressions, varied in media as well as message. **TopSpin** is made possible through the generous support of Tops Markets, LLC. Catalog design: JCharlier Communication Design

2000 Summer Show, Spark Gallery, Syracuse, NY

Fourteenth Annual McNeese National Works on Paper Exhibition, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, LA and Baton Rouge, LA

The Alien Show, Gallery 120, Syracuse, NY

1999 Border to Border 7, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Matrilineage Symposium Exhibition, Westcott Community Center, Syracuse, NY

1998 Members 2 Exhibit, Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Graduate Student Exhibition, Good Earth Café, Syracuse, NY

1997 Regional 97, Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo, NY

SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2007** Discretionary Salary Increase Award, State University of New York, College at Brockport, NY
2005 Strategic Opportunity Stipend, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY
2001 Larson Biennial Purchase Award, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Amanda Besl, Buffalo, NY
Larson Drawing Collection, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN
Kara Daving, Buffalo, NY
Sharon Gold, New York, NY
Ani Hoover, Buffalo, NY
Carolyn Manco, Indianapolis, IN
Lawson Smith, Syracuse, NY
Ludwig Stein, Syracuse, NY
Cara Tomlinson, Portland, OR



The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency that fosters innovation, leadership and a lifetime of learning, supports The Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University.



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