

## Who We Are

The International Collage Center (ICC) is dedicated to the study and appreciation of Collage and its related forms, from Modernism to the digital age. Through our permanent lending and research collection and varied programming we promote community and scholarship within the field and consider the role of Collage within a larger cultural dialogue.

The ICC collection explores vital links between historical and contemporary practices, establishing a narrative of Collage as both an aesthetic and cultural model. We also maintain a comprehensive archive of reference materials. These resources are established through generous gifts from artists, estates, collectors and arts professionals.

In partnership with leading experts and other institutions, the ICC produces diverse public programs, exhibitions and publications. These initiatives highlight Collage's rich history and its evolution in a technologically driven future.

## ICC Collection Studio Focus



We invite you to explore interviews and articles on artists included in the ICC Collection.

### 2013

October: Karen Shaw  
September: Adam King  
July: Aaron Wexler  
June: Selena Kimball

## STUDIO FOCUS: SELENA KIMBALL



Selena Kimball in her studio.

Image copyright Leigh Davis

Selena Kimball is a visual artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Working primarily in collage, she uses printed documentary evidence, physically re-working visual histories into constructed surfaces and installations. This process of taking apart and reassembling is a search for the abstract, tactile, and oddness hidden in both the content and appearance of these printed histories.

*Interview by ICC Director Rachael Lawe*

**INTERNATIONAL COLLAGES CENTER** Firstly, as you work with a number of different disciplines, including film and collaborative novels and earned your BFA in sculpture, can you speak about how you view collage within your practice both conceptually and in relation to process?

**SELENA KIMBALL** Collage for me is a kind of construction, a built material surface. This approach comes from sculpture—the particular physicality of the material often informs how the images printed on the surface are used (the deep shiny black sheen of printing from the 1920s, the blurry bleeds of a mimeograph from the 1970s, the hard sharp contrasts of a digital print from an inkjet). Collaboration is also a kind of collage—the collaboration is made where the edges of our disciplines, our interests, touch and sometimes chafe. It is never entirely comfortable or familiar but that dissonance is what makes it satisfying.

## Support

The generous support of individuals like YOU will ensure the success of this unique cultural resource. [Email us to make your tax-deductible contribution today!](#)

The ICC gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations, for their generous support. [View list](#)

The International Collage Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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## Events, Projects & Collaborations

News on upcoming events, including info on Constructive Conversation, a new ongoing series of panel discussions organized by the ICC in partnership with leading cultural institutions and our collaboration with Bucknell University.

[View events, projects & collaborations here](#)

## Press

### Lewisboro Daily Voice

Collage Exhibit Comes To Katonah Museum Of Art This Month  
June 12, 2013

### Katonah Town Page

"Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center" Opens at the Katonah Museum of Art  
June 14, 2013

### Bedford-Katonah Patch

"Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center" Opens at Katonah Museum of Art on June 30  
June 11, 2013

### The Bucknellian

Samek Gallery mixes it up with "Remix" exhibition  
November 3, 2011  
(PDF 184KB)

### Art in America

Collage Center Coming to Milton, PA: If You Build It, Will They Come?  
September 27, 2011



Untitled, *Phenomena of Materialization* (1920), by Selena Kimball. Image © Jason Mandella

**ICC** The piece in the ICC collection is from a series of large-scale collages made from different editions of the book *Phenomena of Materialization* by Baron Von Notzig. Published in 1914, this popular science book purported to show the first photographic "evidence" of the dead being able to communicate through material form with the living (ectoplasm). In the ICC piece you have exclusively used the 1920 edition of this publication combined with a mirror. You've discussed how by focusing on the 1920s publication this directed your choice in the physical form this work took as you reference the Rorschach plates from Hermann Rorschach's publication *Psychodiagnostik*, first published in 1921. Can you speak about why this material intrigued you and how this piece explores the relationship between these two subjects?

**SK** How the particular piece in the ICC's collection *Untitled, Phenomena of Materialization* (1920) came to be in terms of shape and material has a little story attached to it. When I was beginning work on it, and starting to construct the surface, I ran across an article in *The New York Times* on a debate about Rorschach tests. It turns out the copyright on Rorschach's *Psychodiagnostik* had just expired and reproductions of the complete plates, along with their diagnostic key, had just been published on Wikipedia (to the chagrin of psychiatrists who still used the test). That the physical material I was working with was published at the same as the original Rorschach test (1920) made me interested in the similarities in their content (the viewer "projects" mental images into an abstract shape, etc.). The bilateral symmetry of this piece, and its likeness to an inkblot, evolved partly out of wanting to rhyme these two contemporaneous publications.

**ICC** To further discuss your interest in historic spiritualism, In your collaborative novels with the art historian Agnieszka Taborska, both works focus on fictitious women connected with the spiritual, *The Dreaming Life of Leonora de la Cruz*, whose protagonist Saint Leonora is a 18th century visionary saint discovered 200 years after her death by the French Surrealists who worship her as the patron saint of the subconscious, and Phoebe Hicks a Spiritualist medium. Can you talk about the collaborative process, creating these publications, the creation of these fictional characters and your interest

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in spiritualism generally?

**SK** Phoebe and Leonora are women whose power is derived precisely from what is often seen as too womanly (strong feeling, precise intuition, knowledge of the “use” of the irrational). Leonora has insane, prophetic visions, and Phoebe channels ghosts. While characters such as these might have been institutionalized as hysterics, each is born into a historical time and place that values these abilities. These collage novels are largely based in fact and bring to the surface something of the marvelous that has already really existed. (One of my favorite parts of *The Dreaming Life* is the glossary.) Did Phoebe really exist? Yes, I have a picture of her.

Agnieszka has a great feel for moments in history that open up into interesting narratives; she suggests the historical frame for the collage novels. I research for quite a while before I begin working. Part of that research is assembling a collection of books from the time and looking for an aspect of the history I can enter into. Our collage novel gets built in stages: we work alone for a while and every six months or so we sit down to exchange images and text. And then we each (loosely) respond to what the other has brought to the table.



Selena Kimball's studio.

Image © Leigh Davis

**ICC** Can you speak about the pieces you are currently working on in your studio? When the ICC last visited we were looking at works using the New York Times and also works that were incorporating color, where previously your palette was decidedly monochrome.

**SK** Color for me is always found (I don't add paint or anything to the surfaces). The material comes first and formal decisions (how and whether to use the black and white portions) come later.

I read the paper every morning but I never finish it. The problem is that my partner, a radio journalist, has to leave for work before I do, and, being a journalist, he always wins the tug-of-war about who gets to take the paper. So *The Times* comes back to me after having made the physical journey all the way to the offices of WNYC. The crossword has been finished, and some stains have appeared. The material is already used, and has served its primary purpose so I am free to have my way with it, so to speak. And then I bring it to the studio.

**ICC** In the studio visit we spoke about your interest in collage as a strategy for resistance, in particular the ways in which collage sets up sites of resistance by strategically re-purposing images sourced from the dominant discourse (adverts, fashion magazines, etc). Could you elaborate any further on how you see collage functioning in this way?

**SK** I still snicker in delight when I see those big slick posters in the subway advertising the latest Hollywood movie and the star (smiling broadly of course) has a front tooth blacked out in thick marker. The simple act of causing one

image to be read in the context of another is a small act of sabotage. All power is contextual, and collage in particular shakes up, disrupts, the context in which an image is to be read.

**ICC** And finally could you tell us about some upcoming projects you'll be working on in the coming months, including exhibitions?

**SK** I'm currently in a group show at Feature, Inc. and I'm working towards an upcoming solo show at Wolfstaedter gallery (Frankfurt) opening this October. This exhibition will be loosely based on the 20th century botanist Joseph Rock (whose explorations, funded by the National Geographic Society and Harvard, spawned the modern myth of Shangri-La). *The Unfinished Life of Phoebe Hicks*, the second collage novel in what I hope to be a trilogy, will be published this fall by *slowo/obraz terytoria*, Gdansk, Poland. An exhibition of the collages from the book will open simultaneously in Krakow.

*Selena Kimball's work has been shown at Feature Inc., Parlour, and Participant, Inc. in New York, The Portland Museum of Art, Yautepec Gallery in Mexico City, The Soap Factory in Minneapolis, The Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, and The Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Bucharest. She is represented by Wolfstaedter Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany. Selena Kimball earned her BFA in sculpture from The Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA in combined media from Hunter College. She has collaborated for over a decade with visual anthropologist Alyssa Grossman on films that have been shown at documentary film festivals internationally. Her published work can be seen in the collage novel The Dreaming Life of Leonora de la Cruz which was produced together with writer and art historian Agnieszka Taborska (Gdansk 2004, slowo/obraz terytoria; New York 2007, Midmarch Arts Press; Paris 2007, edition Interferences). Their most recent book The Unfinished Life of Phoebe Hicks is due to be published by slowo/obraz terytoria this October, 2013. She is Assistant Professor in the School of Art, Media + Technology at Parsons, the New School for Design.*