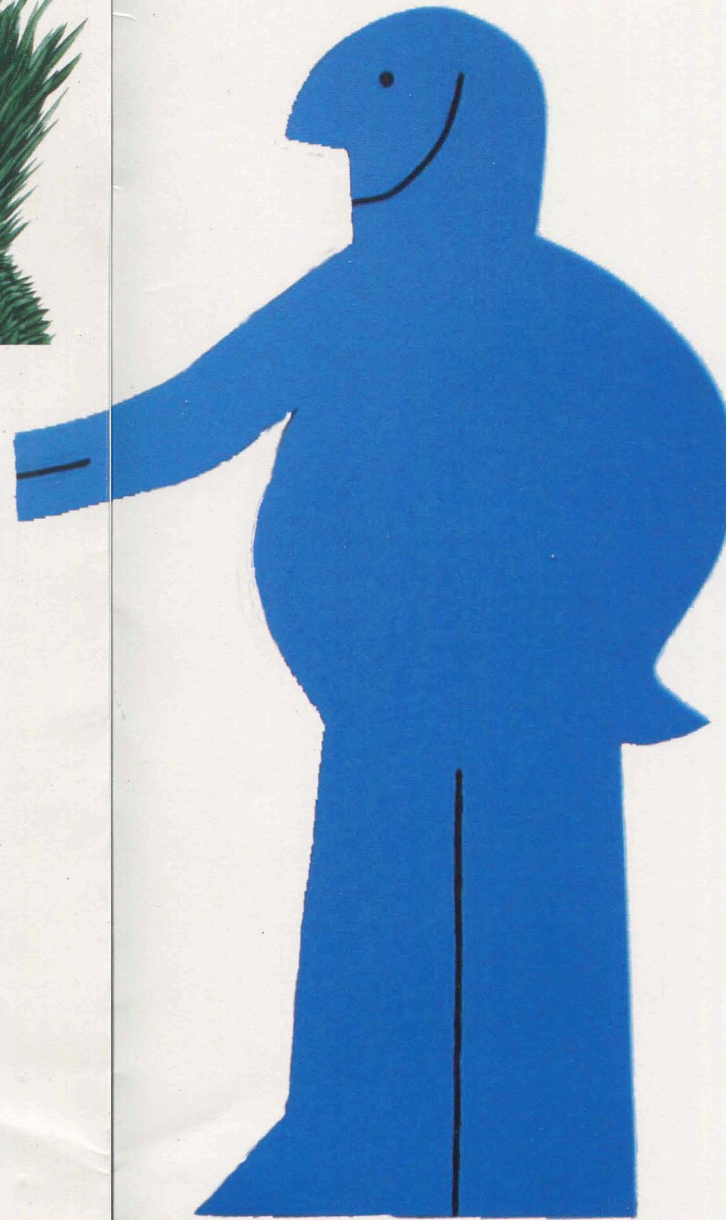
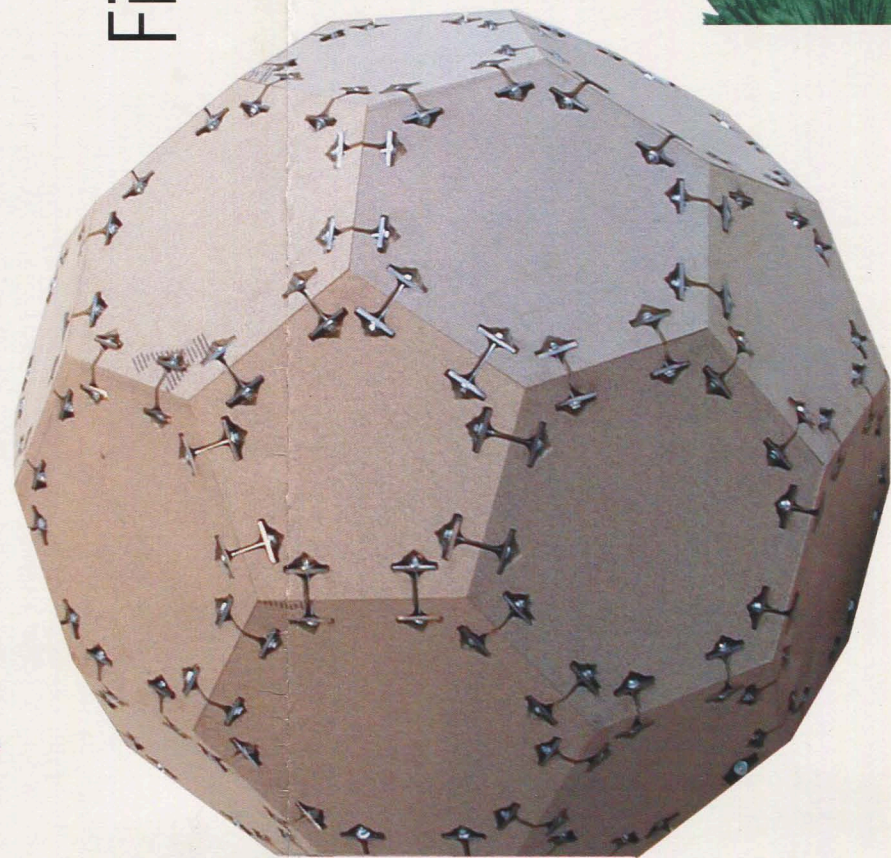


JOEY FAUERSO  
RILEY ROBINSON

Fields & Monuments



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

SEPTEMBER 9 – OCTOBER 14, 2010

TAMU CENTER FOR THE FINE &  
PERFORMING ARTS GALLERY

5201 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD, LAREDO, TX 78041

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JOEY FAUERSO, *CLING TO ME* (DETAIL), 98 17"X12" WATERCOLORS ON PAPER AND DIGITAL VIDEO, 2008, RILEY ROBINSON, *EKK-YA!*, PARTICLE BOARD, STEEL HARDWARE, 2003, JOEY FAUERSO, *SOCIAL NATURE 1*, WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 14"X16", 2009, RILEY ROBINSON, *MR. GREEN JEANS*, BRONZE, 2007. **BACK PAGE INFO:** RILEY ROBINSON, *MONUMENT TO A MONUMENT*, PLYWOOD, STEEL HOT RAIL SET, 2009, JOEY FAUERSO, *FIELD STUDY* (3), WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 45"X66", 2008.



ANJALI GUPTA

Antediluvian Dreams

Imagine a hypothetical conversation between William Blake and Alexander Rodchenko: a face-off between the high priest of English Romanticism and the frontman for Russian Constructivism. Where would such a dialogue, stretched inevitably over space and time, position man in terms of the natural and fabricated worlds? It would be a thorny position, to be sure: utopian postures are always problematic, as is the innate human impulse to attach emotive qualities to man-made objects that claim to represent ideals.

With intimations of the above, the exhibition *Fields and Monuments* is a seven-year survey of the art of Joey Fauerso and Riley Robinson that likewise evokes a dialogue. All of the work addresses the never-ending aphorisms of man—the metaphysical and the material—albeit from distinct vantage points. Rather than force connections, however, the selected works relate via tableaux—quiet conversations between two- and three-dimensional objects that address the corporeal by either its substantive weight or conspicuous absence. Questions also arise about identity, be it shared or individual, and how identity manifests in space, both within the works and in the locus of their display.

**FAUERSO: CREATION AND MYTH**

How can form be talked about in terms of its absence? In Joey Fauerso's art, figure and ground meld and occasionally merge completely. Landscape is presented as a simplified body—a surreal, synthesized, anthropomorphized terrain in which metaphorical boundaries are merely physiognomic smudges. Themes of vulnerability and ecstasy recur. However, the positioning and rendering of Fauerso's subjects produce a reversal—or, rather, an evolution—of traditional notions of the sublime as espoused by Romanticism and its proponents.

In one watercolor (*Opening*, 2006), the night sky appears to be framed by a gaping human mouth. Or is the figure literally swallowing the ground, attempting to digest the majesty of the cosmos in a single gulp? This distinction remains purposely unclear. It embodies man's micro/macro struggle with the cosmos, with the sublime, with the infinite. In this way, Fauerso speaks not to a "creation myth" but of creation and myth—a seemingly minor linguistic inflection that reflects her upbringing in a transcendental meditation community (yet another utopian concern to add to the mix).

**ROBINSON: METONYMIC REALITIES**

Tatlin's Tower, or The Monument to the Third International, is a grand monumental building envisioned by the Russian artist and architect Vladimir Tatlin but never built. It was planned to be erected in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 as the headquarters and monument of the Comintern (the third international). The Monument is generally considered to be the defining expression of architectural constructivism, rather than a buildable project. Even if the gigantic amount of required steel had been available in revolutionary Russia, in the context of housing shortages and political turmoil, there are serious doubts about its structural practicality.

Riley Robinson engages in a critique of the mechanistic realities of utopian endeavors, and his objects can be considered as stand-ins for the social body. All of Robinson's works selected for *Fields and Monuments* have a compelling physical presence, with a twist. *Monument to a Monument* (2009) is the most straightforward manifestation of his ambitions. The title makes direct reference to Tatlin's Monument to the Third International. Although the original project was never realized, it remains a powerful tribute to an ambitious—albeit flawed and unrealistic—aesthetic and sociopolitical ideal. On Robinson's comparatively diminutive plywood and chicken-wire Monument (Tatlin's steel and glass, double-helix structure was to stand over 400 meters tall), toy trains replace the massive conveyors that were to shuttle comrades to and from speeches and party meetings in the belly of the structure. Imagining their speeding around in pointless circles, one cannot help but feel a pang of sadness at the futility of their efforts, and for Tatlin's unrealized Constructivist masterpiece. In essence, *Monument to a Monument* is a eulogy for a monument that never was.

Art and artifice; materiality and craft; the finite and the infinite; the isolated and the iconic; metaphor and metonymy... the conversations between objects in *Fields and Monuments* could potentially reach cacophonous levels if they were not tempered, as they are, by a common goal: furthering an understanding of what may be gleaned from failure, in this instance, that of utopian ambitions. So where do these conversations leave man in terms of the natural and fabricated worlds? Floating on an inner tube with his lover in the night sky above Sant'Elia's Futurist Power Station (or some other piece of unrealized architecture), while she recites Wordsworth in a robot voice, giggling all the way to the horizon.