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Scott Hocking

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2014 - 09:00 TO THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014 - 17:00

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Pop-up exhibition in the Faulconer Gallery through March 13

It feels quite appropriate for the new Grinnell Artist in Residence Program (GARP)* to invite Detroit-native Scott Hocking as one of the first residents, on the basis of his attention and dedication to place and formation. By exploring abandoned buildings and assembling sculptural installations within and away from their materials' source, he creates environments to photograph over time, or present in a gallery. A bold and patient artist, Hocking has braved numerous, harsh rounds of Midwest winters and summers for documentation in toxic and collapsing ruins of the now-bankrupt city. His photography and installation projects exemplify his delight in lonely, foggy nights, and now-unfamiliar industrial vessels. The prints hung for this pop-up exhibition record three projects: all took no less than a brief eight months to construct, and up to six years of documenting.

In Ziggurat and FB21, waves of scrappers, EPA cleanups, and police guards shaped both what Hocking could use for the project, and also how long the pyramid would last before his access dissolved. Hocking also captivates us with his use of symbols, enriched by their context and lifespans. Some are tinged with sarcasm, as hinted in the subtitle for The Egg and MCTS (AKA Andy Goldsworthy Did Not Invent The Fucking Cairn); others bristle with criticism—as when he substitutes a dozen defunct televisions for the Twelve Olympians in Garden of the Gods. In assembling his work out of objects and rubble that have endured decades of decay, their durability is tested further as Hocking carefully alters their relationships, however temporarily.

Faulconer Gallery, Writers@Grinnell, and the Art, Music, and Theatre & Dance Departments are excited to collaborate with Hocking and the materials and social fabric in and around Grinnell. While Hocking's residency in central Iowa lasts a fleeting two weeks compared to the seasons seen in his photographs, numerous students will have the opportunity to not just observe his practice, but also work alongside the artist. The apex of his visit will take place on March 12th in Main Hall: there he will present an installation that combines found objects and natural elements with curated texts, images, and sounds, created with students in the Music, Art, and Writing Interdisciplinary Course. On March 4th, he will also discuss his work and career as a place-based artist, including the process of creating his new book, *Bad Graffiti*. Inspired by his journeys through abandoned properties, Hocking looks at the graffiti sketched and scrawled upon the vacant lot fences, boarded up factories, and derelict dwellings.

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Scott Hocking Launches Artists@Grinnell

Monday, Mar. 10, 2014 4:03 pm



Mercury Retrograde, 2012-2013, Site-specific installation, Susanne Hilberry Gallery. Detail from photo by Scott Hocking.

As the first artist-in-residence brought in by the new Artists@Grinnell program this spring, you might wonder if Scott Hocking has worried about his responsibility to lead by example, or at least that he would make the ten-day stay worthwhile — maybe, that is, until you see his work.

The Detroit-native has in fact already faced many unpredictable and harsh scenarios as an international artist, mostly voluntarily. A photographer and sculptor, much of Hocking's work is based in abandoned, deteriorating buildings in shrinking urban sprawls, where he takes materials from their respective sites and builds installations. After and during documentation — sometimes for years following — he leaves the sculptures to surprise the scrappers, "ruin porn" explorers, and EPA cleanup crews, and keep his artwork outside of the gallery to balance out the many exhibitions he's had for his photographs and other installations.

"What is the different between a ruin and a monument?" Hocking asked at his Writers@Grinnell book talk in Faulconer Gallery, where his pop-up exhibition of eleven prints are currently hung. He finds that distinction a universally important one for people, which his efforts clearly illuminate.

Much of Hocking's time here so far, however, has been spent as a mentor to the Art, Music, and English Interdisciplinary seminar with professors Lee Emma Running, John Rommereim, and Dean Bakopoulos.

The forty-plus students from each background have been working all week on collaborative installations strewn about the Grinnell College campus. The installations, some of which rely on performances or lighting, will be viewable during a walking tour Monday, March 10, 2014. The tour begins at 7:30 p.m. at Main Quad, 1221 6th Ave, and moves north through the fine arts, science, and other buildings, ending at 10 p.m.

Hocking's approach to spaces and materials is nothing short of stimulating to the class and their work.

Indeed: ask any student who's encountered Hocking, and you'll know how worthwhile his residency has been.