Questions Without Answers, a major exhibition co-organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery, Tufts’ Institute for Global Leadership and VII Photo Agency, presents a wide range of photographs that portray defining moments of the post-Cold War period and their aftermaths. From The Fall of the Berlin Wall and September 11, 2001, to Iraq and Afghanistan, The Balkans and Congo, Chechnya and Gaza, among other conflict zones, this timely, landmark exhibition features 125 photographs by 16 photographers affiliated with the renowned VII Photo Agency, newly printed for the Tufts University Art Gallery @ the Aidekman Arts Center 40 Talbot Avenue Medford, MA 02155

Questions Without Answers
Amy Schlegel, Ph.D., Director of Galleries and Collections and Exhibition Co-Organizer

Questions Without Answers, a major exhibition co-organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery, Tufts’ Institute for Global Leadership and VII Photo Agency, presents a wide range of photographs that portray defining moments of the post-Cold War period and their aftermaths. From The Fall of the Berlin Wall and September 11, 2001, to Iraq and Afghanistan, The Balkans and Congo, Chechnya and Gaza, among other conflict zones, this timely, landmark exhibition features 125 photographs by 16 photographers affiliated with the renowned VII Photo Agency, newly printed for the

Saya Woolfalk: The Institute for the Analysis of Empathy
Amy Schlegel, Ph.D., Director of Galleries and Collections and Exhibition Curator

What is your vision of utopia? What are your waking dreams about? How is the personal political for you? These questions are at the heart of New York artist Saya Woolfalk’s candy-colored total installation in the Koppelman Gallery. In The Institute for the Analysis of Empathy, a fictional research outpost temporarily sited at Tufts, Woolfalk visualizes an elaborate narrative about an

Saya Woolfalk
The Institute for the Analysis of Empathy
Ethnography of No Place (with Rachel Lears)
January 21 to April 4, 2010

Continued on Page 8

Saya Woolfalk, The Institute for the Analysis of Empathy, 2009, video still, courtesy of the artist
A Tribute to Alexandra Boulat
Julia Csikesz, Masters Students, Art History, Tufts University

Alexandra Boulat (1962-2007) was an award-winning French photojournalist and member of the VII photo agency known for her distinctive documentation of volatile war zones across the globe, from Iraq and Afghanistan, to Bosnia and Rwanda. Her work is best summarized in her own words: “You can show a war without showing a gun, and that’s interesting—in only one photograph.” Boulat depicted war-torn areas by focusing on the victims of political upheaval and the impact on their everyday lives. Her visual sensibility and artistic training are evident in her beautifully poignant and thought-provoking images.

Born in Paris in 1962 to Pierre and Annie Boulat, Alexandra Boulat was exposed to the world of photography from an early age. Her father was a long-time photographer for Life Magazine while her mother was founder of the Cosmos photography agency in Paris. After studying graphic art and art history at the Académie des Beaux Arts in Paris, Boulat worked professionally for ten years as a painter before turning to photography.

Throughout the 1990s Boulat focused primarily on the devastation of Yugoslavia, which established her reputation as a photojournalist. Her work featured prominently in notable publications including National Geographic, Time, Newsweek, and Paris Match. In 2001 she co-founded VII Photo Agency in New York with six fellow photojournalists with the commitment to explore political, social and environmental conflict throughout the world.

Boulat produced wide-ranging photo-essays throughout the Balkans and the Middle East, as well projects such as backstage coverage of haute couture fashion shows of designers Yves Saint Laurent and Jean Paul Gaultier. Much of her work in the 2000s studied the presence of modern women in the Muslim world. Her photographs express the diverse impact of war and political and social issues on civilian populations throughout these regions. She published two volumes of her work: Eclats de Guerre, a compilation of her photo essays on Yugoslavia, and Paris, A Portrait of City, in 2002.

Boulat passed away in 2007 at age 45 due to complications from a brain aneurism while in the West Bank attempting to pass through a checkpoint into Israel. She died in France. The Tufts Institute for Global Leadership and her VII photo agency compatriots will honor Boulat with a tribute program and reception in March 2010.

On January 28, the IGL awarded its First Annual $2500 Alexandra Boulat Award for Photojournalism to Tufts student Sam James.

“Between 1990 and 2008, Lagos, Nigeria grew from a modest seaport of 250,000 people to Africa’s largest and fastest growing megalopolis, with a population estimated between 12 and 20 million. Of this population, several hundred thousand are unemployed young men, known in local parlance as Area Boys. With the Alexandra Boulat Award I intend to further a project I have been working on since 2003: an evolving meditation — with words and images — on freedom, survival and redemption set in Lagos, Nigeria amongst the Area Boys.”

Thanks to our Renewed Supporters for 2009-2010
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Shirley Aidekman-Kaye (pictured left)
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Diane Burko
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Laura Roberts and Ed Belove

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Complete the form below, enclose your donation, and return to: Contemporary Art Circle Administrator, Tufts University Art Gallery @ Aidekman Arts Center, 40 Talbot Avenue, Medford, MA 02155

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Circle Calendar of Events

Saturday, March 6, 11 am, New York City
Guided tour of PULSE Contemporary Art Fair (and admission to the fair)
330 West Street (at West Side Hwy & W. Houston); New York, NY
Tour led by Amy I. Schlegel, Director of Galleries & Collections, Tufts University

Acclaimed as one of the most internationally-diverse contemporary art fairs, PULSE New York will once again feature a dynamic mix of national and international exhibitors, including established and emerging galleries, as well as solo projects in the IMPULSE section of the Fair. A list of exhibitors for PULSE New York 2010 will be available in January 2010. In addition, PULSE will once again feature its signature programs of large-scale installations and sculptures; the PULSE Play- video lounge; and PULSE Performance. See www.pulse-art.com for more information about the fair.

RSVP by March 1 to contemporaryartcircle@tufts.edu or call: 617-627-4387

Tuesday, April 27, 6-8pm, New York City
A Reception and Tour of the Private Art Collection at the home of Orna Shulman

Orna Shulman (’80) is the founder of OLS Ventures, a private equity investment firm specializing in hi-tech, biotech and real estate. Studying European history at Tufts she became “fascinated by the broad sweeps of changes that occurred in society during the late 19th century and early 20th century.” Her interest in this time period led her to collect works by artists involved in the major movements of the modernist era. Ms. Shulman has generously donated items from her collection to several major art institutions and Tufts. Her gift “Red Palms,” a colorful work on paper by Howard Hodgkin, currently hangs in Gifford House and is featured in Tufts University Art Gallery note card series.

About her current collection she writes, “The art I surround myself with now reflects a transition to contemporary works on paper which is much more immediate in appeal and very easy to live with. Collecting contemporary artists’ work gives you the added opportunity of meeting with them while at work in their studios. It brings a different dimension to the world of art collecting.”

RSVP by April 19 to contemporaryartcircle@tufts.edu or call: 617-627-4387

Brian Kneip receives Brother Thomas Fellowship

Brother Thomas Beazanson (a monk-turned-potter represented by Boston’s Pucker Gallery) succumbed to stomach cancer in 2007. Among his many contributions to the arts is his charitable legacy to help other artists as he was helped. The Brother Thomas Fellowship Program, established at The Boston Foundation in 2007, awarded $15,000 a piece to its first group of fellows in October 2009. 60 artists were nominated but only eight were selected by a 7-member multi-disciplinary review panel including Nicholas Baum (formerly the Chief Curator at the ICA and currently Director and Chief Curator of the Public Art Fund and Judith Tannenbaum, Curator of Contemporary Art at the RISD Museum). Among the winners was artist Brian Kneip, whose exhibition Exempla at the Tufts University Art Gallery closed on November 19, 2009. Upon receipt of the fellowship, Kneip said: “Being recognized alongside those outside my corner of the art world, from a jury composed of artists across the spectrum, is truly validating...I am inspired by the other fellow’s work, and am curious to see where these new connections lead. The connection to Brother Thomas is particularly meaningful, as I studied ceramics and try to create new-media works with the same sensuality and poetry present in the best of pots.”

Alex’s Place: “One of the finest examples of public art produced in the region in the past decade”

Amy Schlegel and Kristen Heintz-Perkins

On April 27, 2009, Tufts officially unveiled the new Tisch Library rooftop, Alex’s Place. After three years of planning and construction, the $1.3 million spatial transformation was achieved thanks to the generosity of Thomas and Andrea Mendell, parents of Alex Mendell, a Tufts student who died in 2003. The new space now provides the Tufts community with a unique and beautiful place for a range of activities, from quiet contemplation and studying, to class meetings, to performances and larger-scale gatherings.

Renowned public artist/sculptor Jackie Ferrara and landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg designed the rooftop as “an evolving progression of interconnected meditative spaces or ‘rooms,’ each with a different character.” The “place” includes three outdoor “rooms,” a large plaza with a mosaic floor that functions as a conceptual sundial, a prominent L-shaped steel trellis, raised planting beds featuring white River Birch trees and hosts, and two spectacular views of the Boston skyline on either end.

The only conscious memorial feature of Alex’s Place appears discretely along the northern side of the L-shaped trellis, in the mosaic floor, where the name of the deceased, designed in red brick, appears in Morse Code. Ferrara employed this obscure language used by pilots and other navigators in an unintentional homage that reflects a passion shared by Alex and his father Tom Mendell, who together piloted their private plane.

More than just a new space for Tufts and its surrounding communities, however, Alex’s Place represents an important addition to the canon of public art in Massachusetts.

The concept of public art in Massachusetts is longstanding; indeed, our state has many dynamic works on display and in the process of development. However, unlike many states, Massachusetts does not have a percent-for-art program in place to encourage the development and placement of new works of public art. In a percent-for-art program, cities or states typically set aside a certain percent (up to 1%) of their capital improvement project funds for the commission or purchase, installation and maintenance of artworks. Percent-for-art programs can take many forms, including public installations, municipal art funds, small, traveling collections, or temporary exhibitions.

“Our design contains multiple concepts that reflect [our] creative synergy... The use [of each] space is entirely discretionary. The visitor can decide how to respond to the space; The design is not deterministic, thereby compelling the visitor to respond in a specific manner. We, as designers, are the facilitators. Having released the design, our interest is to see how creatively the visitor encounters and uses the space.”

Jackie Ferrara, artist

All photos in this story are by Melody Ko.
Tufts University Photographer

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A Gift of Art to the University: A Drawing by Robert Hernandez

Ken Aidekman, Gallery Advisory Board Co-Chair and Circle Member

The Kenneth A. Aidekman Family Foundation has made a generous gift of Robert Hernandez’s (MFA 2009; pictured right) Untitled drawing to the Tufts University Permanent Art Collection. Ken shared his thoughts about the piece and Hernandez’s work.

I find all of Rob Hernandez’s works appealing. The key interest for me is his ability to capture the essence of a three dimensional object in simplified line. Rob’s lines are elegant, economic and full of character. The fact that his current work involves layer upon layer of line drawings does not take away from the craftsmanship of each individually sketched layer.

While there are a lot of graffiti and cartoon influences in the figures and objects that Rob creates, there is also tenacity in his drawing efficiency, something he shares with great artists. The panels have a feeling of lightness. They are not over-worked.

Why this particular piece?
It has everything.

It has sex, violence, a jet plane, a helicopter, weapons, Kim Jong-il, rabbits, pigs, a wolf in clothing, women, gang members, a DJ, robots and more. It’s an everything-all-the-time assault on the visual senses.

Hernandez’s stated goal is to process the overwhelming quantity of images presented to us by news, entertainment and marketing media. It’s all too much. The result can be pretty messy, but one gets the sense of a young man trying his best to keep his head above the rising tide of “garbage-in.” Hernandez has found a way to deal with all of this information successfully and then “represent” it in a cohesive, organized way through his own unique vision. He is the kind of artist you want to check back with in the future to view his progress.

I also believe that this is youthful work that will appeal to undergraduate students. It encompasses subjects and styles with which they are familiar.

Questions Without Answers continued

celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The IGL at Tufts prepares new generations of critical thinkers for effective and ethical leadership. It emphasizes the combination of rigorous academic preparation and experiential learning in order to prepare students to act as global citizens in addressing the world’s most pressing problems. Questions Without Answers focuses on many of the crises and issues the IGL has sought to address throughout its history of contending with conundrum issues. Sherman Teichman, founding director of the IGL, comments: “This exhibition reflects the complexity and ambiguity of many of the compelling world events and issues we have been confronting at our Institute for over 25 years.”

EXPOSURE, the IGL’s photojournalism, documentary studies, and human rights program, is dedicated to mentoring and developing young, knowledgeable photojournalists and documentary filmmakers. EXPOSURE is allied with the preeminent photographers of the VII Photo Agency, The Aftermath Project, and other distinguished journalists. Since 2005, VII photographers have mentored Tufts students in workshops in Argentina, Bali, Cambodia, Kashmir, and Kosovo. A Tufts Exposure leader, Samuel James, contributed to the selection of images and editing of annotations for this exhibition. The IGL’s ongoing partnership with the renowned photography collective has greatly enhanced this collaborative Tufts’ educational initiative.

The images were selected by the directors of the three co-organizing entities. The aggregate was then curated by Amy Schlegel, director of the Tufts University Art Gallery. The exhibition and the annotated guide were designed by Doug Bell, gallery Preparator, and Jeanne Koles, of Jeanne Koles Consulting. We would like to thank the staff of VII, especially CEO Stephen Mayes, and agency co-founder Gary Knight for their spirited collaboration and engagement throughout planning process, and Canon for its partial in-kind production support. We would also like to thank the staff of the IGL, particularly Director Sherman Teichman and Associate Director Heather Barry, for their commitment to excellence through collaboration. We also gracefully acknowledge Rick and Patti Wayne and the Kenneth A. Aidekman Family Foundation in supporting the annotated exhibition guide and related educational programming. Last but by no means least, we thank all of the participating VII principle and network photographers for their cooperation with the image selection and production process.
Questions Without Answers continued

everyday life. As Mayes comments, VII’s work “has never been about simplistic representation but rather about supporting debate and contributing to change. The discussions inherent [in the planning process] and expressed in the final [selections] are an essential part of our work.”

Questions Without Answers is organized as a metaphorical prism of both cataclysmic events and persistent conundrums that have retracted over space and time, a prism that mirrors Tufts’ Institute for Global Leadership (IGL) mission, which

CAC Frieze Art Fair Event, October 9, 2009

Twenty-three Tufts alumni gathered in Regent’s Park, London, for a guided tour of the [ ] annual Frieze Art Fair, led by Tufts Art Gallery Director Amy Schlegel (see picture on right). Thanks to Gretchen Dobson of the Tufts Alumni Relations Office and Vikki Garth (81J) and Lora DeFelice (94J) for organizing a great event!

We visited a global roster of galleries, from Asia, the Middle East, Europe and The United States. We experienced an installation by the Hong Kong representative to the 2009 Venice Biennale, Cao Fei, at Vitamin Creative Space’s booth, an alternative space located in Guangzhou, China. At the booth of The Third Line Gallery, Dubai, we looked at the work of Iranian artist Farhad Moshiri, who was featured in “Empire in Its Discontents” at the Gallery in the fall of 2008. We saw a project by emerging artist Jack Strange at the emerging London gallery Limoncello’s booth and we visited the booth of the Foksal Foundation, Warsaw, and learned about the work of Monika Sosnowska, who was the Polish representative to the Venice Biennale in 2005. We also heard about the work of overlooked proto-feminist European artists Alina Szapocznikow (1926-1973) and Belgian Evelyne Axell (1935-1972), whose work and reputations are being revived through long overdue exhibitions at Broadway 1602, an alternative gallery in New York City directed by Swiss art historian and independent curator Anke Kempske (see image on left). These two artists are among a dozen or so others featured in a landmark exhibition “Subversive Seduction: Women and Pop Art, 1958 to 1968,” now on view in Philadelphia, and coming to Tufts January 2011.

Museums in the News

Katie Loesel, Museum Studies Certificate Student

Tufts’ students working toward their Museum Studies Certificate begin the program with the foundation course Museums Today: Mission and Function, which examines the various functions of a museum, from producing exhibitions to developing a mission statement, writing a grant proposal, and cataloging the collection. As part of that course, each student must find a museum story in the news, review it, and analyze it based on the criteria they are learning in the course. Below is first-year student Katie Loesel’s review of an August 3, 2009 New York Times article by Michael Kimmelman entitled “At Louvre, Many Stop to Snap but Few Stay to Focus.”

With the evolution of new technologies and societal trends, there is a disturbing fact that more and more people have a greater interest in the gadget in their hand than in the actual experience they are presently having. Moreover, people seem to graze a museum to have the honor of having “completed” it, rather than ever actually looking at the exhibits and objects. The New York Times addresses this technological, cultural phenomenon with the example of visitors at the Louvre. At big name museums and attractions like the Louvre, visitors are often overwhelmed with sights and a constricted time frame. Because of this, many people end up breezing through the large museum at a fast, exhausting pace, only slowing down to take photographs of a few big name pieces highlighted in their guidebooks. This is a very sad thing to witness; people who are missing the entire point of the museum.

In the author’s observations while sitting in the gallery for several hours, no one looked at a single object for more than a minute. A couple of people slowly went through the gallery and really enjoyed themselves, but most were on a whirlwind tour, naively hoping to do the Louvre in a day and actually get something out of it. This culture-on-the-go experience has replaced the genuine experience of visiting a museum. Rather than the purpose of the visit for enlightenment, thought, creativity and wonder, it has become another item to check off the list.

The article asserts that if one goes to a museum in an attempt to gain knowledge in a particular area of interest, one cannot expect to have a transforming experience without taking the time to be engaged. What is the point of the visit if one is just there to say she saw the Mona Lisa or another famous painting, but didn’t even take the time to look at long enough to remember? People are becoming too accustomed to having all the information they could ever want at their fingertips, which removes the curiosity, ability and excitement of finding something new and meaningful in a piece. The guidebook feeds all the necessary information to locate the main attractions, the labels tell you what to think, before you take a picture and walk away. Labels, guidebooks, iPhones and other technologies should be secondary to the initial and engaging first look at the object. It is important to

Continued on Page 13
Museums in the News continued

look and think and take the time to understand for yourself what you are actually looking at, not what someone thinks you should focus on. A transforming experience can only take place when the viewer really takes the time to challenge their perceptions and engage in new thought.

Another issue raised by this article is the fact that people are constantly taking photographs of the art, and not looking at it through their own eyes. If the idea is to recreate the image for artistic quality, there are plenty of books and postcards that have professionally documented images which are of a much higher quality than anything the tourist or everyday visitor can take. The average visitor is not taking photographs to eventually hang on their wall as reproductions, rather they serve as proof that they have visited the Louvre. The purpose and point of coming to see the real thing is diminished when you spend most of your time behind a camera lens, not even looking at the actual object. Technology can do amazing things, but when individuals allow it to take away from their real life experience, this experience becomes hollow and devoid of substance. Sometimes we must remember that the most important memories of the moment may not require a camera. These moments require all your senses and a little time to really experience and remember what it smells and feels like to be in front of that sculpture. Not only do mass amounts of photography in museums take away from the genuine engaging experience for the viewer, it is also distracting to those who may be taking a closer look and really trying to understand the piece.

From a conservationist perspective, visitors taking photographs can be quite damaging to objects in a collection. This can be especially problematic at high traffic museums and special exhibitions. Even if there is a rule prohibiting photography or use of flashes, there is still a small percentage of flashes that will accidentally go off in front of a piece. The average visitor who is just in it to get a photograph in front of their favorite famous painting, probably does not understand the damage they are causing.

Because of these tendencies for visitors to disregard much of the museum, and only pause briefly at the popular pieces, it becomes the charge of the museum to teach the public to focus and carefully consider art in new and challenging ways. Museums and exhibit designers must make galleries inviting and interesting places to linger, contemplate, and learn. There are many different ways a museum can capture the visitor’s attention, including interactive exhibits and technologies, spatial designs that are intended to feel inviting, comfortable, and slow the walking pace. Benches and reading areas are an example of ways museums attempt to encourage contemplation. Objects and exhibits must be presented to the viewer so they will become engaged enough to stay beyond the few seconds it takes to snap a picture and read the title on a wall label. When people are encouraged to learn, linger, and make discoveries on their own, the museum has succeeded in teaching the public to really look and appreciate the moment they are in, as well as the history learned through the objects and experiences.

Alex’s Place continued

“My boyfriend bought me a really cool telescope for my birthday and we sat on the roof hugging each other for an hour in the chilly cold to watch the stars and planets around us.”

Cherry Lin, Student, A11

Because of Massachusetts’ lack of public funding for art, UrbanArts Institute plays a particularly crucial role in this time of financial instability. They look now to public support to continue their important work, responsible for such landmarks as Christopher Janney’s and Jane Goldman’s works at Logan Airport, the Boston Women’s Memorial, the Mayor Kevin Hagan White Memorial Park, and now, Alex’s Place at Tufts University.

The job of the artist who works in and with a public or communal site is to create sculptural space using a specific aesthetic vocabulary and an appropriate scale, or range of scales, for imagined audience(s). During the 1970s and 1980s, Jackie Ferrara established a reputation as a monumental sculptor and public artist who consistently employed a minimal (not Minimalist) aesthetic vocabulary of architectural metaphors and mathematical variations. Her aesthetic motivation emanates from a love of geometry and logic. One of her signature design motifs since the early 1990s, working exclusively via public art commissions and in “making places,” as she calls her practice, is asymmetrical variations within symmetrical arrangements or structures (e.g., I-shaped trellis with overhead slats on diagonals directed toward the nexus of the two arms; or, the black and red brick mosaic floor of the sundial penetrated by a visually dominant black and white diagonal).

Ferrara’s sculptural practice is full of what she calls ampitheaters – public gathering places – though they are not all semi-circular in ancient Classical architectural terms. Ferrara and Friedberg’s conception of the “rooms” of Alex’s Place – especially the two ampitheaters, one large and one small – spaces where people voluntarily decide to associate freely, to come together with a communal purpose, are rooted in the democratic principles underlying classical architectural forms. Theirs are spaces in which different groups can convene, simultaneously and independently, not in contention or for the purpose of debate (as in a Roman forum), but in mutual coexistence, for purposes antithetical to debate, such as entertainment and performance.

Some might say that Alex’s Place is animated primarily by the users and secondarily by the subtle and sympathetic landscape design that buffer the sequential “rooms” and the sleek, steel vertical lighting poles that punctuate and unify the overall space.

For more information, and how to help UrbanArts continue their important work, please visit:
http://www.massart.edu/About_MassArt/Urban_Arts_Institute/About_UrbanArts.html
Alex’s Place continued

Perhaps the most famous public art fund was the Works Progress Administration, which helped establish the legitimacy of government-sponsored public art. During the 20th century, “as government patronage grew, public art came to assume a broader role in public life. Governments began to see art as a means of building community, and artists turned their thinking toward actually creating the public realm rather than simply placing artworks in it. The concept of ‘art in public places’...gave way to ‘public art’, with art reinforcing a sense of place and occasion.” Over the past 40 years, the field of public art has undergone a fundamental shift in its aesthetic focus from object to experience, from sculpture to space, from site to audience/visitors’ bodily experience of the site, from the viewer as object to the viewer as subject. The Public has become “sculpture,” a kind of kinetic sculpture amidst a static structure. Even more to the point, the entirety becomes kinetic sculpture – once the public is added. The static structure is generous – it implies it uses, it suggests experiences, it points to and enables participation. The kinetic sculpture is completed with the addition of the public. The “place-making” approach is less object-oriented than it is an environment integrating users’/constituents needs with another purpose or mission, such as the unconventional memorial that is Alex’s Place. In Massachusetts, public art is most often a privately funded endeavor. The UrbanArts Institute, an affiliate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, is the leading promoter and facilitator of public art and community building and design in the state and handled the early stages of the process that lead to the realization of Alex’s Place. Founded in 1980, UrbanArts not only assists in the design and selection of public art, but also serves as a resource for artists, urban planners, community members, and other constituencies interested in the quality of the built environment. It offers educational programs and maintains a national artists’ registry of over 2,000 names.

For Alex’s Place, UrbanArts facilitated the initial research and development process, disseminated the RFP (Request for Qualifications), and presented a shortlist of candidates, leading to the eventual choice of Jackie Ferrara, who in turn selected landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, with whom she has collaborated twice before. Ricardo Barreto, director of The UrbanArts Institute, recently lauded “Alex’s Place...[as a] marvelous addition to Tufts University’s campus. Further, this project is without a doubt one of the finest examples of public art produced in the region in the past decade. With no percent-for-art policy in Massachusetts, it has been a particular privilege for UrbanArts to play a role in a project of this scope, vision and quality.”

Continued on Page 11

Whenever I get the chance I wake up early and go to the Tisch Library roof to meditate, journal and watch the sunrise. It’s so soothing feeling like you’re the only one awake on the campus in a special, secret spot watching the sun peek behind the Boston skyline.”
Nicole du Maine, Student, A11

Questions Without Answers continued

On occasion, many displayed for the first time. Also included is one Oscar-nominated short docudrama. The exhibition anticipates a book forthcoming from Phaidon Press, Questions Without Answers: The World in Pictures from the Photographers of VII.

VII Photo Agency derives its name from the number of founding photojournalists who, in September 2001, formed this collectively owned agency. Designed to be a distribution hub for some of the world’s finest photojournalism, VII’s up-to-the-minute digital photography circulates traditional media and publishing venues. VII Photo Agency’s independence from media outlets ensures that the individual photographers’ visions and passions remain paramount. Its collective approach does not purport to be neutral, yet it is not didactic or didactic. Rather, the various aesthetics of the VII collective are united by the shared embodiment of both humanist and concerned photography. Based on a philosophy of social change, the early-20th century practice of humanist photography was instigated by two primary factors – the abysmal working and living conditions of immigrants in the U.S. and the arrival of the Leica miniature camera in 1925, which sparked the development of a reportage style of quick and unobtrusive photography that persists today. Stephen Mayes, director of VII, notes that humanist photography’s “extraordinary combination of descriptive power and emotional immediacy to both inform and move the viewer” then matured into a more explicitly humanitarian approach known as concerned photography.

The photojournalist who pioneered and coined the term “concerned photography” (and later founded the International Center for Photography in New York), Cornell Capa, defined it in the mid-1960s as an approach “committed to contributing to or understanding humanity’s well-being.” The documentary photographer’s humanist function as purportedly objective witness yielded to a more subjective, “committed” attitude – one of questioning, rather than answering. Transcending the war photographer’s role as witness to historical events, the work of VII extends the legacy of concerned photography to the quieter moments of everyday life during war, after crisis or natural disaster, and in the face of slower moving disasters such as environmental devastation, pandemic, and exacerbated poverty. Consequently, Questions Without Answers balances powerful, poignant images of conflict with images of...
Saya Woolfalk Continued

Welcome from the Institute’s Director:

In 2008, I encountered and excavated a burial site in the woods of upstate New York. The bones I found appeared human but upon analysis I came to realize they had an unfamiliar genetic composition. I subsequently constructed a greenhouse where I established a temporary Institute to study this particular biology. From preliminary research, I have determined the bones belong to a group called the Empathics. They appear to have a supernatural and biological connection to a future utopian world. The Empathics manifest a unique form of chimerism – the result of two embryos that fuse during the early stages of cell division – consisting of plant and animal genetic material.

This temporary off-site division of the Institute aims to raise public awareness about the unique biology and practices of the Empathics. Through investigation of their genetic material and methods of mutation, we are learning about the processes by which the Empathics experience a complete de/materialization of the Self and a merging with the surrounding landscape; this research promises to provide a guide to a new logic for harmonic existence.

extinct species of plant-animal hybrids from the future-of-the-future known as The Empathics, whose genetically-active remains were recently discovered in upstate New York. We find the Institute’s Director, the heroine of our story, infected through contact with the empathic gene. Mutations are abounding, physiologies are changing rapidly, and fireflies are the agents of consciousness-raising, empathic behavior.

As you enter Woolfalk’s imaginary world, ask yourself: How can you become more empathetic, to overcome or transcend differences that divide people and societies? How can individuals bring about social change through collective, peaceful means? You are invited to submit to Saya Woolfalk’s spell as you experience the exhibition.

Join us Friday, April 2 for the culminating performance of Saya Woolfalk’s exhibition.

Contemporary Art Circle Event at the Joshua Liner Gallery

Ken Aidekman, Gallery Advisory Board Co-Chair and Circle Member

On November 9th the Contemporary Art Circle was treated to a special evening at the Joshua Liner Gallery featuring Japanese artists living in New York. The event was an outgrowth of the Tufts University Art Gallery’s major fall exhibition Sacred Monsters: Everyday Animism in Contemporary Japanese Art and Art. (For more details about Sacred Monsters refer to the Gallery website and “Around the Circle” Volume 2, No. 1; August 2009.)

While Sacred Monsters examined the artistic expression of animism and metaphysics within the context of Japanese culture, Joshua Liner’s artists spoke to aspects of their work dealing with the conflict between Western and Japanese culture. Most of them spent some of their formative years in the U.S. and attended American art schools. All are extremely talented, but each artist incorporates a unique mode of expression.

Tomokazu Matsuyama, represented in Sacred Monsters, uses as his subject matter the Kirin, a mythical blend of deer, dragon and unicorn. The image is Japanese, but the execution relies on a patchwork of Western painting styles and textile patterns. The result is exciting and fun with a creative energy reminiscent of Kandinsky abstractions.

Hiro Kurata grew up in Tokyo and Chicago. His grotesquely distorted characters derive from primitive graffiti and cartoons. The paintings incorporate baseball imagery (bats, balls and uniforms) alongside traditional Samurai accoutrements (swords, Kimonos and sandals). American and Japanese icons do ritualistic battle, but also recognize intersecting points between the two disparate cultures.

Finally, Tat Ito and Kenji Hirata discussed how they use personal iconography to express cultural differences.

The Contemporary Art Circle is grateful to Joshua Liner for accommodating our event and introducing us to such interesting new artists.