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BFA William Carey College, Gulfport, Mississippi, 2005

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Of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

Of the

Requirements for the Degree

**MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

2011

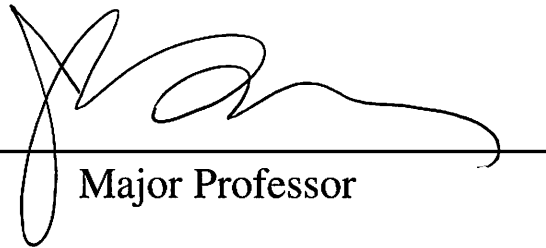
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Thesis Report

**Lamar Dodd School of Art  
University of Georgia**

Approved:



Major Professor

7-26-11

Date

Elizabeth Owen  
Another angle

My work is and always has been a response to both my environment and my southern heritage.

When I arrived at Lamar Dodd, I was committed to conceptually-strengthening my ideas. I returned to my old subject matter (children), doing colored-pencil portraits on wood. My previous job as a teacher connected me to young people. I was inspired by their lives.



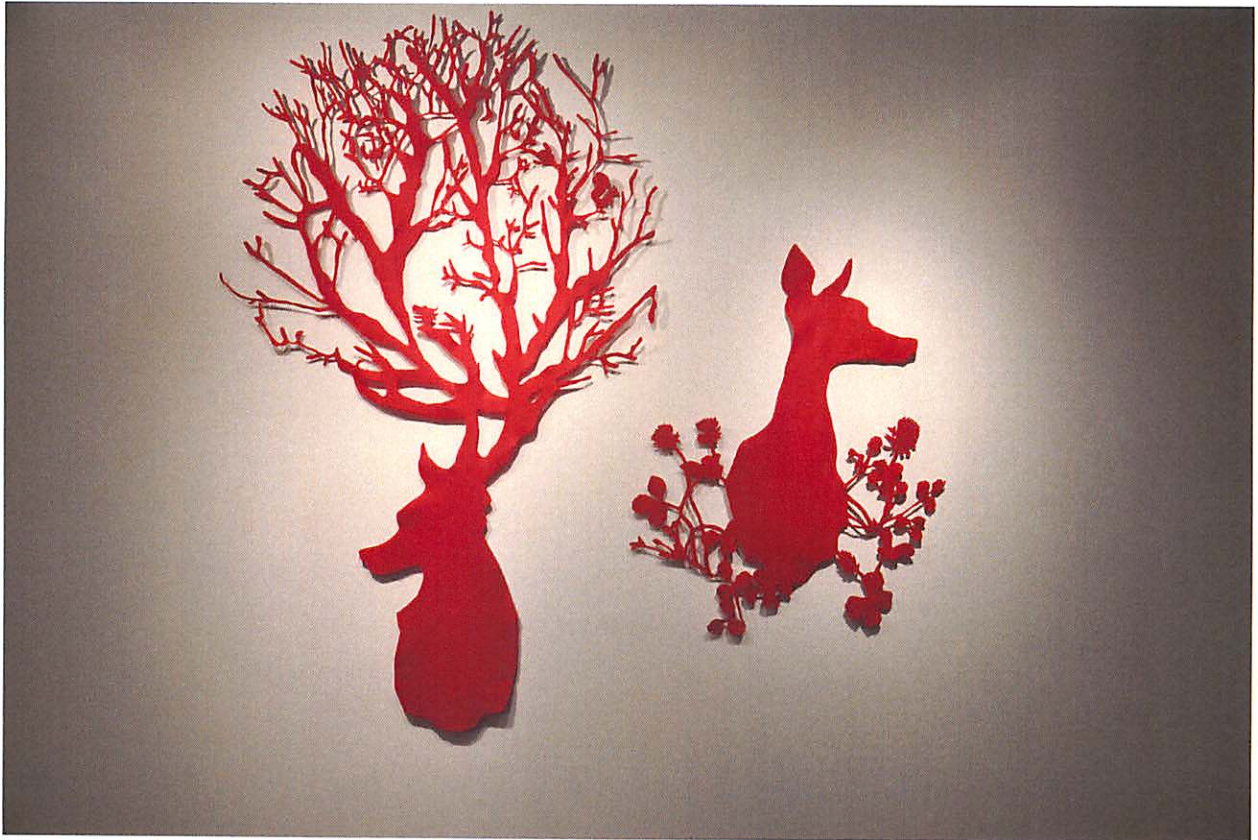
I then replaced the portraits with silhouettes. Minimizing the image to an outline removed the personality of my images and made them more like icons. I created silhouettes in paper and felt that were important to my past but are also universally recognized, like Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny, in an attempt to reach a bigger audience. The iconic images allowed viewers to infuse

them with their own ideas and memories. By losing some of the narrative qualities of my images, I elicited a broader sense of nostalgia in my viewers.



The characters I gleaned soon evolved. I began blending images from nature such as tree limbs and real silhouettes of birds found in magazines with the cartoons icons in an attempt to combine my fascination with childhood memories and a more adult sophistication.



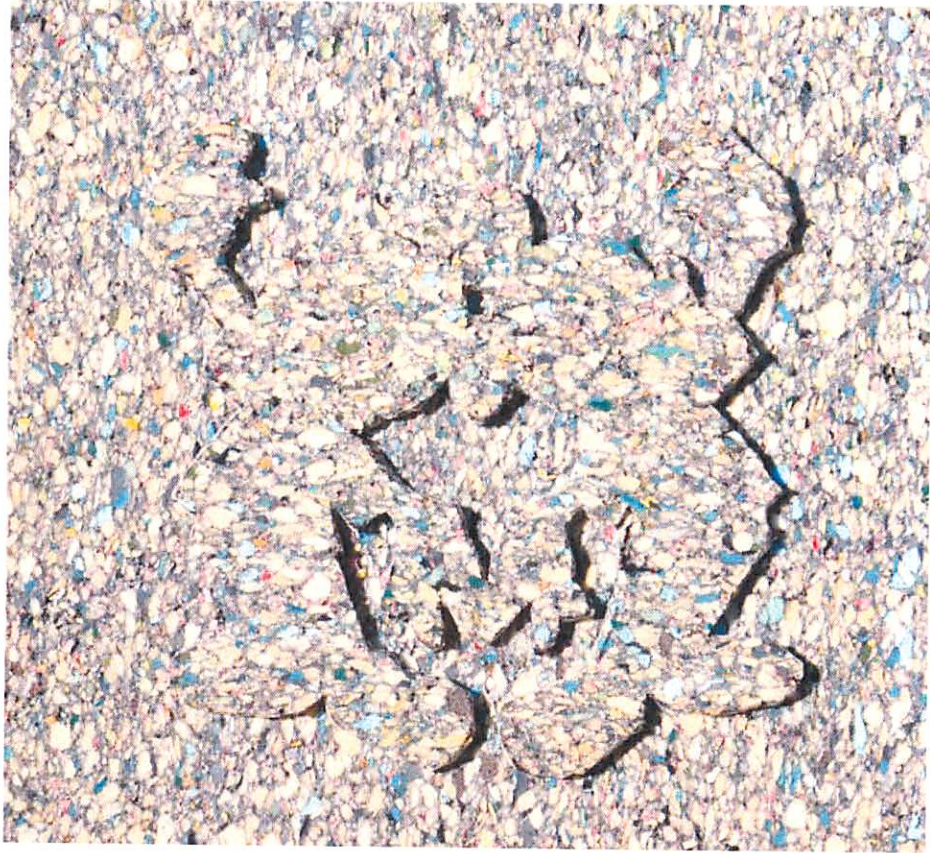


My materials were expanding as well; I started experimenting with foam carpet padding and Styrofoam wall insulation. I found beauty in the carpet padding's many different colors, and metaphor in the fact that these materials are meant to be unseen.

An underlining theme appears in all my work has to do with the unseen or the unexamined whether this means concepts or people. My former work dealt with the lives of the children I taught and spent every day with. I watched them grow and taught them lessons. When that child learned something new or felt some new feeling during the time spent with me, I witnessed it, not their parents. So I made the children giants; they hung on the wall each work towering six feet or more and protruding out invading the viewer's space demanding their attention.

When I started working with Styrofoam and carpet padding at first they were just a lightweight material that was easy to manipulate. The carpet padding had an attractive quality in its blending of color and texture and the Styrofoam with its pastel palette made an easy armature for the padding. In using it I realized how much conceptually these materials had to offer what they did for people and how we treated them. I wanted to bring them back into view out from behind wall surfaces and from beneath the carpet and let others see them for their beauty. Some how these materials are like the children unseen, underfoot but important adding to the comfort of our adult lives.



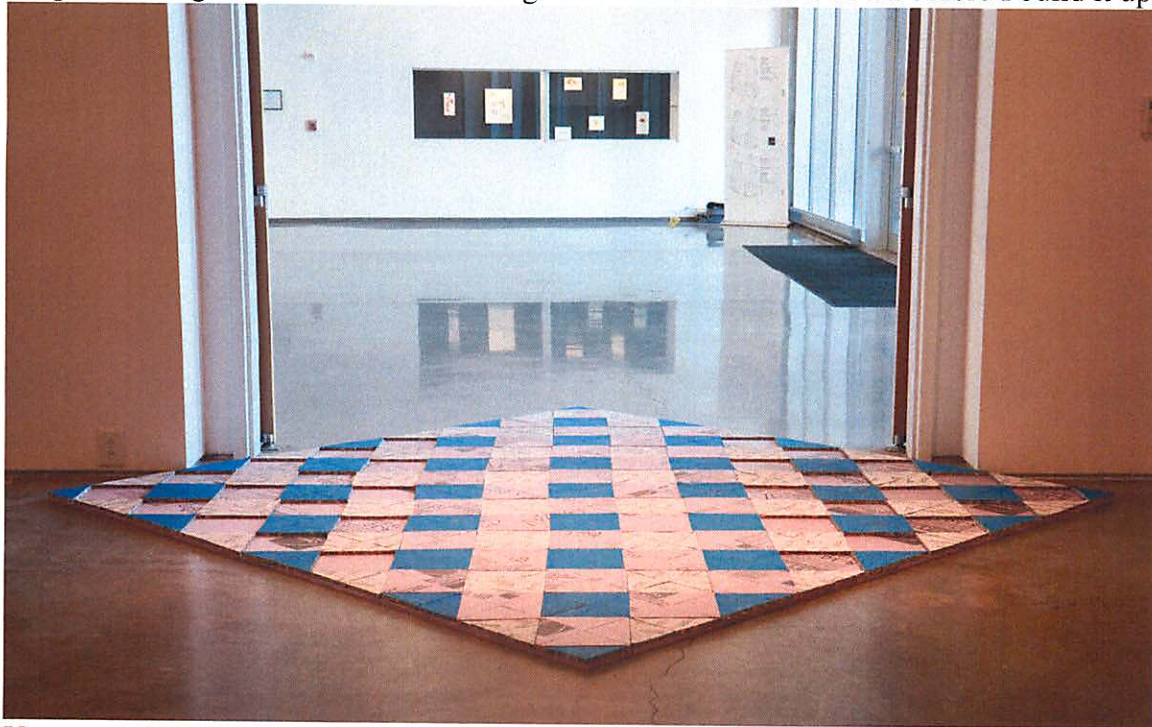


Last term I took a printmaking class concentrating on screen-printing. Instead of screen-printing on paper, I went to something I was more comfortable with which was felt. I had chosen metal bed frames as subject matter for screen prints I have always had a fascination with metal bed frames. The strong cold foundation that holds up the mattress that holds up the warm body .I wanted to take the images and expand, cut and re assembled them. It occurred to me to use the pieces like one would in the making of a quilt. The bed and the quilt seem to me to be inseparable but I wanted to disassemble the simple image and reorganize it like a puzzle creating both chaos and organization. The rhythmic process of cutting and assembling is ridiculously comforting and it seemed to be a great way to expand a material. This process coupled with the silk screened images soon led me to re examine those materials like carpet padding and Styrofoam. The Styrofoam already has silk-screened words logos and descriptive text on one side as well as the carpet padding. Letting the material be what it is and accepting the text in to my design opened a great many more choices in to the manipulation of the medium. It could now be flipped over the text chopped recombined subverted with my own silk screened images or just left blank to add or remove visual weight. Finally I had my format my material and my concept I could now begin to work.

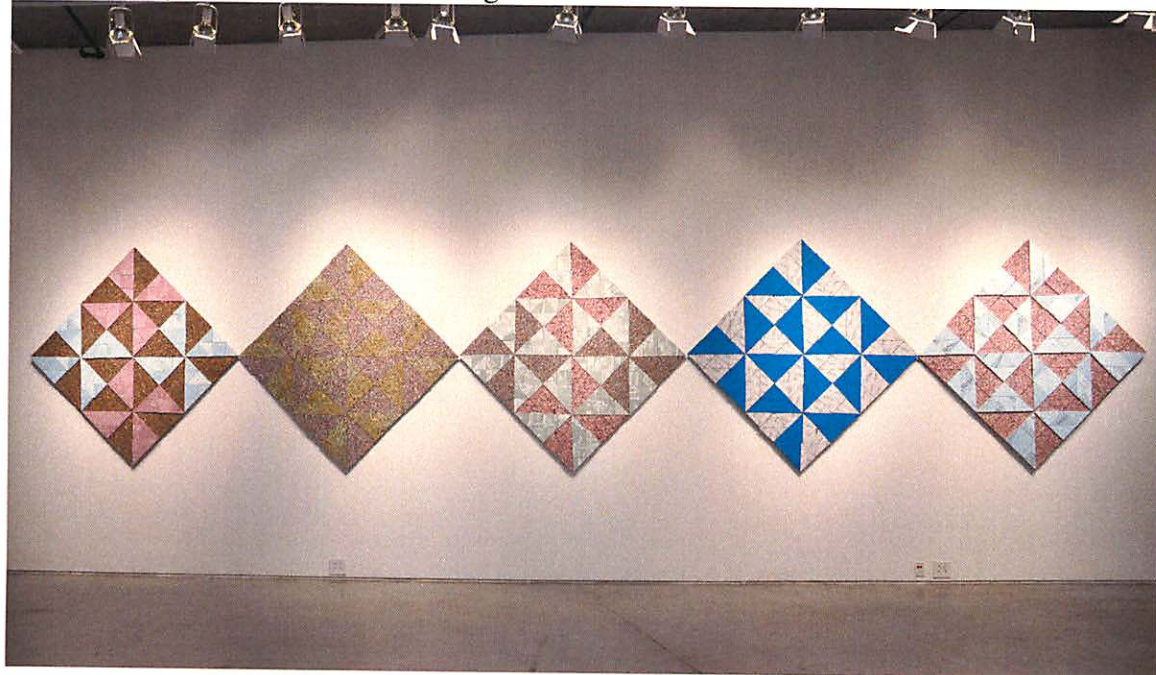
Upon entering my MFA exhibition the viewer is instantly introduced or reacquainted with the material physically by being made to walk on it. This asks a lot from the viewer to trust that they will not get in trouble by walking on the art and also reminds the viewer of the humble nature of the stuff. The piece is reminiscent of tile or an area rug. Wedged in the doorway the observer has no way of entering the room except to walk on all of my hard work. To walk on top of something is to show dominance to put it in its place. And I think its important to get this notion



out of the way as soon as possible. To me this material is beautiful and precious but to most it's a simple building material to take advantage of. I want to break it down before I build it up.

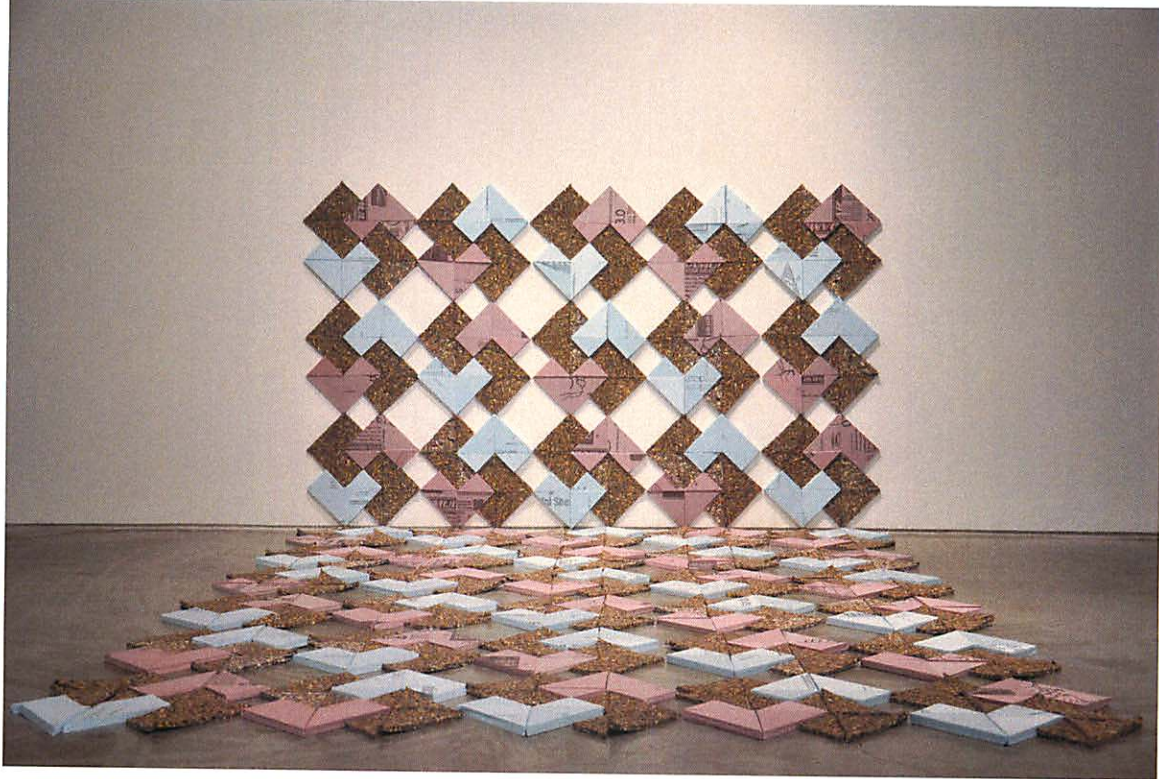


Upon entering, the left wall of the gallery you see five large diamonds illustrating the many quilt like color combinations of the material. Some of the styrofoam kept their original iconography and text and on some I have supplemented my own imagery. The images I have added although important are dissected so as not to get a full picture all at once keeping the eye moving the puzzle always unmade and interesting.





The center wall illustrates the pieces in pattern with no backing simply placed on the ground and allowed to climb up the wall further reinforcing the lowly status of the material and the flexibility of the material to show itself on any surface in potentially any man made structure.



To the right one is confronted with the only true sculpture in the show the unmade bed. Most true to quilt form the bed brings to mind. This work shows the nature of the carpet padding bending under its own weight draped veil like over a hard tomb sized pedestal that is supported by a full

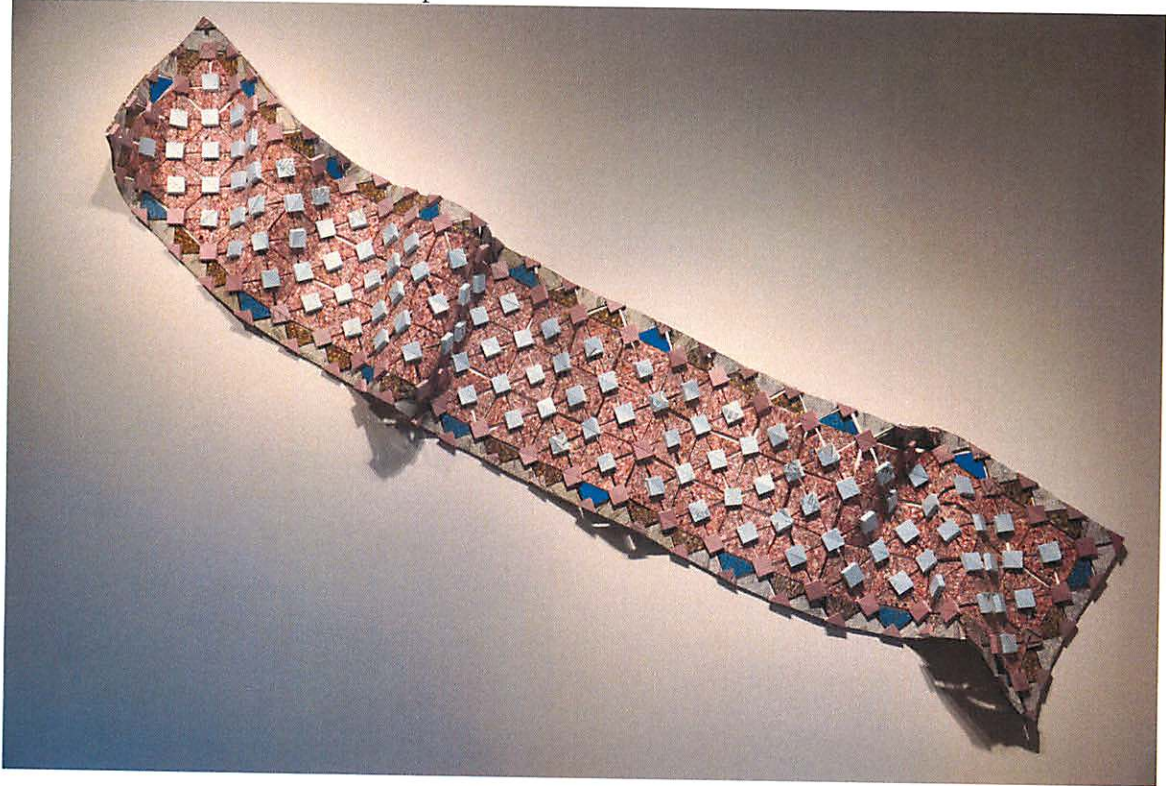


sheet of Styrofoam and pushed off of the ground by masonry blocks.



Finally to the right of the bed you are introduced to the most organic work the like a magic carpet the work inchworms its way up the wall curling up and off the as if to defy gravity. It spans the wall both from side to side and vertically this time humbling the viewer with its height and active poise. This piece was created last from the excess scraps that I had left over; similar

to how a quilt is made with scraps of fabric.



This show is a result of those processes, materials and ideas I have been investigating pushing the materials in many different directions taking advantage of the properties of my new medium.