

Ricardo Miranda Zúñiga

We live in a world administered by data. Data accumulation presents a rich metanarrative of our culture and the worlds we construct. Manipulation or suppression of data can lead to major crimes, whereas the visualization of data makes complex realities more available and institutions more transparent.

Breaking News is a two-part exhibition about the re-interpretation of the ceaseless data we call “current events.” The first part is a news literacy workshop initially conducted in Buffalo at the Gloria J. Parks Community Center. Children between the ages of six and nine years old discussed what they consider news, how it disseminates, and recent newsworthy events. They learned to visually deconstruct a newspaper and then reinterpret articles and headlines into drawings and collages. Beyond the pedagogical purpose of the workshop, it served as a means to gather content that informed the second part of the project: the gallery installation.

Based on the premise that we live in a media-saturated world, Miranda is interested in how young children digest major world events—Obama’s election, Michael Jackson’s death, Swine Flu—inescapable “realities” that momentarily consume media outlets and seep into our lives. The content generated by the children in the workshop is integrated into the news media visualization presented as part of the gallery installation. The visualization itself consists of a textual feed of current headlines accompanied by computer-rendered illustrations of personalities who have established an understanding of news media in the United States. The illustrations and text help generate new interpretations of what we consider “news.”

Other elements featured as part of *Breaking News* are a selection of drawings and collages from the workshop, video content used in the workshop to contextualize specific articles, and documentation of the workshop itself.



Charmaine Wheatley

Charmaine Wheatley is a performance artist who has turned increasingly to drawing and painting of a narrative nature. She is currently working with two New York State not-for-profits: Literacy Volunteers of Buffalo & Erie County and Booklyn Artists Alliance in Brooklyn; the former serving as the setting for the creation of a series of forty drawings being published by the latter as a full-color graphic novel with letterpressed cover. “30% of Buffalo” features intimate portraits of adult learners and tutors whose stories provide insight into how the ability to read can impact lives.

One in three residents of the City of Buffalo is functionally illiterate. On a national level, between 41% and 44% of adults with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty. 60% of prison inmates are illiterate. 76% of adults on public assistance are illiterate or unable to read more than the simplest of texts.¹ Given these startling statistics, illiteracy is undoubtedly a matter that affects not only individuals, but our entire society. Graphic novels are affordable, portable, and thereby an accessible format for establishing collective awareness and heightened visibility of artwork. Captured through Wheatley’s sequential drawings of “life observed” at Literacy Volunteers are the socially devastating realities of illiteracy and its potential to affect levels of freedom, self-esteem, poverty, and crime.



Since the content of this sequential artwork focuses on experiences shared by Buffalo friends made through Literacy Volunteers, Buffalo Arts Studio will exhibit the original watercolor/collaged drawings and invite those friends to partake in a celebratory reading/book launch in the gallery, in addition to programming a panel discussion of the issues addressed in the graphic novel. Presented in the exhibition alongside the drawings are oil paintings of bears from the Bronx Zoo. Inspired by Galway Kinnell’s poem, “The Bear,” these works speak to our primal struggles to survive or, as the artist describes, “an attempt to express through images the stuff that can’t be articulated with words...that feeling that makes us go *RAWR*.”

1. Literacy Volunteers of Buffalo & Erie County, Inc. “Literacy Facts and Resources.” 2009 <<http://www.literacybuffalo.org/facts/index.html>>.



Western New York Book Arts Collaborative

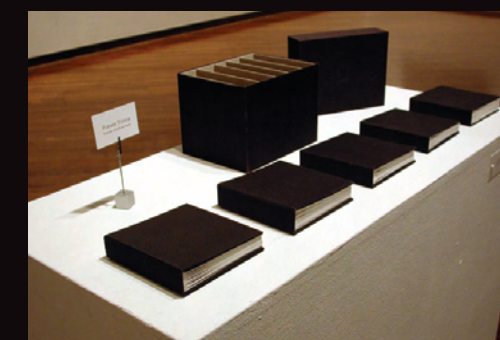
The Western New York Book Arts Center is Buffalo’s newest non-profit cultural site. The downtown space at 468 Washington Street at Mohawk is shared between the Western New York Book Arts Collaborative (WNYBAC) and Just Buffalo Literary Center. WNYBAC exists to promote, encourage, and develop printing and book-related arts through education and access for individual artists and underserved communities. Through active programs such as lectures, workshops, and exhibitions, all facets of the printed word and image—printmaking, papermaking, illustration, design, writing, and binding—can be explored and made accessible to the public as viewers and participants.

WNYBAC’s workshops and supply shop are open to the public, but members receive access to studio space and discounts on all goods and services. The members exhibition featured at Buffalo Arts Studio showcases a wide range of work in the book arts. The blurred line between craft and fine art has a long-standing tradition in Western New York and book arts continue to grow as a genre worldwide.

About the Artists

Ricardo Miranda Zúñiga approaches art as a social practice that seeks to establish dialogue in public spaces. Born of immigrant parents and raised between Nicaragua and San Francisco, a strong awareness of inequality and discrimination was established at an early age. Themes such as immigration, discrimination, gentrification, and the effects of globalization extend from highly subjective experiences and observations into works that tactfully engage others through populist metaphors while maintaining critical perspectives. Miranda has established a socially investigative creative practice that utilizes whatever media possible to present content in a manner that may generate interaction and discussion by others. He holds an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University and a BA in Practice of Art and English Literature from the University of California at Berkeley. Based in Brooklyn, NY, Miranda is an Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies at CUNY Hunter. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

A graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canadian-born performance artist **Charmaine Wheatley** has been based in New York City since 1997. A series of public gestures/interventions in Halifax, Nova Scotia (1997); Amsterdam (2000); and Winnipeg, Manitoba (2001) earned her the title “Performance Provocateuse.” From 2002 through 2005, Wheatley collaborated with sound artist Taketo Shimada, performing in New York City at Whitebox Gallery, SubTONIC, Emily Harvey Gallery, The Knitting Factory, and New York University. Wheatley’s paintings, drawings, sculptures, and book works have been exhibited widely. Her book work “Beau Fleuve: The Heart of North America,” based on a four-month residency in Buffalo, NY (2006), is available at various locations in the United States and Canada, including Talking Leaves in Buffalo. Since 2006, Wheatley has completed residencies through the Confederation Centre of the Arts & Parks Canada on Prince Edward Island (2007) and through Seven Below, Trey Anastasio and Burlington City Arts in Vermont. Boxes of her drawings are available at Pierogi Brooklyn in New York City.



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Western New York Book Arts Collaborative Members Exhibition

September 12 - October 31, 2009

Opening Reception
Saturday, September 12, 2009 7-10 p.m.
Artist talks 7-8 p.m.

Charmaine Wheatley "30% of Buffalo" book launch/reading and panel discussion on literacy (date to be announced—please visit www.buffaloartsstudio.org for details)

University at Buffalo Visual Studies Speaker Series presents Ricardo Miranda Zúñiga
Monday, October 19, 2009 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Center for the Arts (CFA) Screening Room #112, UB North Campus



Buffalo Arts Studio
2495 Main Street, Suite 500
Buffalo, NY 14214
(716) 833-4450
www.buffaloartsstudio.org
Gallery hours: Tuesday - Friday 11-5; Saturday 11-3

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