

SHANNON SWENSON

CHASE WINKLER

ASHLEY PEDONE

growth

CHA TORI

Julie Ward

TJ Sadowski

Under

KARA CASSIDY HALL

RACHEL NOLTE

PRESTIGE

Jake Miller

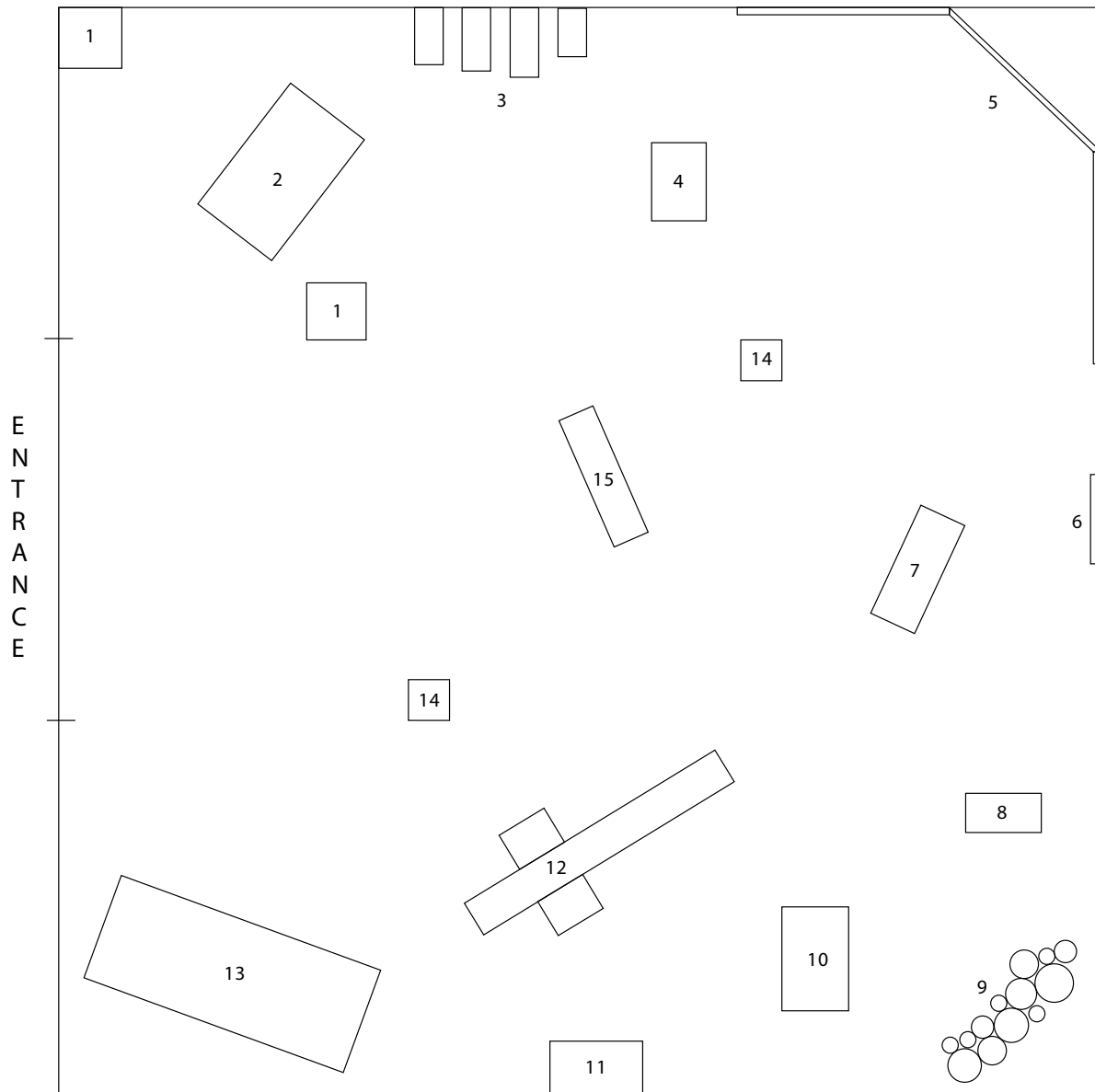
TYLER RHINEHART

Michael Thron

saalem art works
SUMMER 2014

GROWTH UNDER PRESSURE

Barn 3



1. Lonliness and Luxury

2. 1001 Bed Time Stories

3. Unstable Equalibrium

4. #9

5. Reductions II

6. The Bridge Is Breaking Inside Your Mouth

7. Untitled

8. #1 (Learning To Balance)

9. Discards (Learning To Balance)

10. #2 (Learning To Balance)

11. Snagged

12. Hang 10

13. Monstrum Versetur - Permian Era

14. Vertical Compression

15. Compression

EXHIBITION STATEMENT

GROWTH UNDER PRESSURE is an exhibition rooted in the landscape and geology of Salem. Salem's natural beauty speaks for itself, something that is evident to anyone who hikes up the hill and gazes out over the peaked and rolling green landscape. Fortunately, this beauty is more accessible than ever because Salem Art Works is constructing a road making the hill drivable to all vehicles, an action that had an unpredicted side effect.

The artists in this exhibition found this construction to be fortunate because it showed them the veins of beauty upon which SAW is built. They discovered inspirational shards of rock in the trenches gauged out by bulldozers. Between shale underfoot and the ever present trees before their eyes, the elements of wood and stone emerged as an opportunity for these artists to come together and find their places in this landscape.

Many of the artists here are about to, or have just recently, graduated college, while others have been variously employed for various amounts of time. In college and high school we are told that if we perform to high standards, pushing ourselves, we will be rewarded. Daily we are asked to take work home with us, work multiple jobs, or rewarded with extra pay for working overtime. In all of these situations we are pressured to do more and do it better. Against the stress and problems of these situations, this group of artists chooses to reclaim pressure as a tool that can be used for inspiration, motivation, and originality. By working with unfamiliar, fragile media, by the constrained amount of time, by functioning as a fluid group, and by physical scale, both large and small, these artists embraced pressure.

In contrast to the geological and day-to-day pressures that produced this show is the unintentional, yet strongly present theme of balance. In fact, perhaps one of the strongest conclusions that can be drawn from this show is that to channel pressure productively requires careful balancing. The vertical strength of a stacked pedestal and the instability of a teetering pile, the springy life of fresh hewn wood and the dead fragility of shale, the art object before you and the failures, mistakes, and accidents that make up its history, these are elements which this group has brought into balance to transform pressure into growth.

Geologically, shale is produced by consistent high pressure exerted on clay and quartz particles, resulting in a range of shales from black to red to green and striated with veins of other minerals or coated in iridescent casts. Just as this high pressure creates the stunning stone buried in this hill and composing this exhibition, these artists have shown how the pressure of everyday life can be balanced and channeled into creativity and originality to produce something beautiful.

~Cha Tori
Salem, NY 2014



Compression

TJ Sadowski

Slate, wood

70 in- 6 in - 45 in



Vertical Compression

TJ Sadowski

Shale, wood

18 in- 10 in - 87 in



Unstable Equilibrium

Jake Miller

29 in - 75 in - 2.5 in

Glass, wood, water, shale, ash



Unstable Equilibrium (Detail)

Jake Miller

29 in - 75 in - 2.5 in

Glass, wood, water, shale, ash



Snagged
Rachel Nolte
17 in - 26 in - 80 in
Shale, wood, barbed wire



Snagged (Detail)

Rachel Nolte

17 in - 26 in - 80 in

Shale, wood, barbed wire



Lonliness and Luxury
(Stone Pedestal)

Ashley Pedone
24 in - 24 in - 48 in
Shale, wood, moss



Lonliness and Luxury
(Wood Pedestal)

Ashley Pedone
12 in - 12 in - 53 in
Shale, wood



Monstrum Versetur – Permian Era

Kara Cassidy Hall

172 in- 128 in - 108 in

Shale, wood, bailing wire, washers, metal shavings, moss, pen



Monstrum Versetur – Permian Era (Detail)

Kara Cassidy Hall

172 in- 128 in - 108 in

Shale, wood, baling wire, washers, metal shavings, moss, pen



The Bridge Is Breaking Inside Your Mouth

Chase Winkler

21 in - 2 in - 27 in

Wood, shale, paint, paper



Rickshaw For My Clan

Julie Ward

60 in - 15 in - 30 in

Wood, slate



Reductions II
Shannon Swenson
292 in - 44 in
Fabric, ink, shale



Reductions II (Detail)

Shannon Swenson

292 in - 44 in

Fabric, ink, shale



1001 Bed Time Stories

Cha Tori

94 in - 50 in - 32 in

Shale



1001 Bed Time Stories (Detail)

Cha Tori

94 in - 50 in - 32 in

Shale



#1

(Learning To Balance Triptych)

Tyler Rhinehardt

36 in - 24 in - 60 in

Wood, shale, wheels



#2

(Learning To Balance Triptych)

Tyler Rhinehardt

48 in - 24 in - 48 in

Wood, shale, axe



Discards
(Learning To Balance Triptych)
Tyler Rhinehardt
84 in - 84 in - 108 in
Wood, axe



Hang 10

Mike Thron

120 in - 54 in - 12 in

Found shale, found wood, found metal object



#9

Mike Thron

25 in - 22 in - 35 in

Found shale, found wood, found metal object



#9 (Detail)

Mike Thron

25 in - 22 in - 35 in

Found shale, found wood, found metal object

ARTIST STATEMENTS

Kara Cassidy Hall

Working from previous themes in my work, this piece pushed my boundaries through sheer scale. I limited my resources to wood, shale, metal, and moss.

Jake Miller

This work is an arrangement of small samples of rudimentary elements comprising the tenuous balance, which makes up the world around us. The minute sample of each of these elements is contrasted by the shape of each sphere they are contained in, juxtaposing the sense of planetary scale with molecular structure.

Rachel Nolte

This installation explores the properties and aesthetics of three materials found at Salem Art Works. The positioning and form of the piece address the balance and weight of the materials against that of the barn's structure. It also speaks to concepts of interior/exterior and insider/outsider, which are as relevant and local to SAW as the materials themselves.

Ashley Pedone

These distant castles illustrate wealth, opulence, and the isolation it can cause.

Tyler Rhinehardt

Learning to Balance explores the relationship between shale and wood through the recycling of form and structure. Each material carries attributes of strength, but it is where they are fragile that pressures how they are balanced.

TJ Sadowski

These pieces demonstrate the power compression has to hold things in place. Slate and shale are created through this concentration of energy, which is mirrored by the compression in the architecture of this space.

Shannon Swenson

ink. print. break. repeat.

Mike Thron

#9 records an action that has happened and forecasts an action that will happen, presenting it to the viewer only in a moment of stillness.

Hang 10 creates its own vitality. Only in equilibrium does the work have a breath.

Cha Tori

Growing up in a rocky desert nearly everyone I knew in my small town had their own rock collection, gathered while hiking, off-roading, camping, or even just digging in their back yard. As a child, each of these rocks was magical and precious, each a piece of an infinite whole of never ending combinations of color and shape. By revealing the striated composition of this piece of shale (excavated from the hill opposite this exhibition), I want to rediscover the magic contained in these rocks.

Or was that magic only ever in my imagination...

Julie Ward

movement, implied action, action, cause, act, advance, expansion, extension
the rickshaw holds my immediate every day, underground sleight found from Cary Hill holds the secret.
elevated on a pulpit for security, togetherness, and longevity.

Chase Winkler

This piece is an exploration of composition inspired by the strength and fragility of shale. Painting on stone allowed for looseness and freedom in mark making. The misshaped nature of the shale triggered new ways of exploring a "canvas" or plane.

IMAGINING INTO

By Cha Tori

Stone occupies a unique and strange place within mythology, distinguished by how little attention it receives, particularly in contrast to the prominence of the other elements. Norse mythology includes Yggdrasil, a sacred tree connecting different realms, and fire and water so captivated our imagination that it is central to the Zoroastrian religion. Stone though is seldom featured in its raw, elemental solidity. Instead, it is usually used metaphorically for weight (Sisyphus) or in other forms, most notably the dust from which Adam and Golems are made – Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust.

Growing up in high desert where stone was the overriding feature of the landscape, I was significantly shaped by it from countless hours hiking rocky canyons to adding rocks, arrowheads, and chunks of dinosaur bone to an already large collection. As I have wandered through literature, I have been keeping an impassioned, if casual, record of where rocks prominently show up in mythology and folktales. In the context of this exhibition, I thought it might be interesting to offer some reflections on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a work which affirms the significance of stone.

The *Metamorphoses* is a collection of myths woven together to form a creation story, with the general theme of change. Many of Western culture's best-known myths appear here: the stories of Narcissus, Orpheus, Pygmalion, and Daphne and Apollo, to mention a few. This last story, that of Daphne and Apollo, inspired one of the most magnificent literature based art works of all time, the marble sculpture *Apollo and Daphne* by Bernini. In this work, Bernini depicts the moment when Apollo is about to catch Daphne (to rape her), and Daphne, having prayed to her father for protection, is being transformed into a Laurel tree (although the success of this is highly debatable). This work beauti-



Apollo and Daphne by Bernini

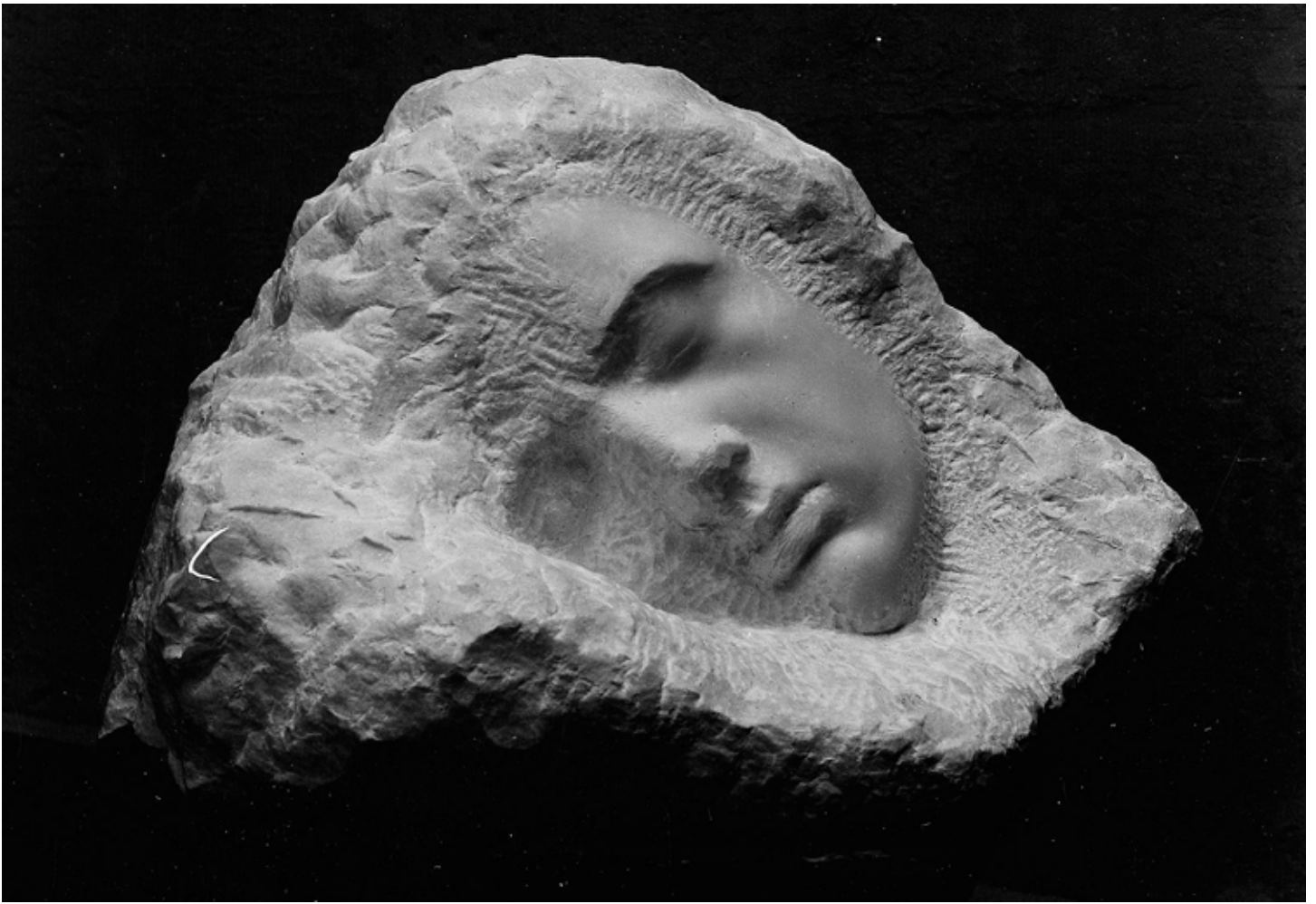
fully renders stone as both flesh and tree. The material approach of using rock to depict wood is very similar to this exhibition. However, this sculpture would be out of place because it transforms rock into something else, losing much of the natural quality of rock in favor of the depiction of this scene.

In contrast to Bernini's carefully sculpted, beautifully finished stone is the description of rock in Ovid's story of Deucalion and Pyrrha. In an act of vengeance against humanity's impiety, Zeus causes the earth to be flooded, killing everyone except Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha. Once the flood recedes, they travel to the oracle at Cephisus seeking advice on how to recreate humanity and are told: "Leave this sanctuary, cover your heads and ungirdle your garments, then cast the bones of your mighty mother behind your backs." Pyrrha is appalled at the sacrilege of this oracle, but Deucalion proposes that "their mother" should be interpreted as Mother Earth and her bones as rocks. Skeptical, but with little to lose, they decide to cast rocks over their shoulders. Lo and behold, from them arise people:

The stones started to lose their essential hardness, slowly to soften, and then to assume a new shape. They soon grew larger and gathered a nature more gentle than stone. An outline of human form could be seen, not perfectly clear, like a rough hewn statue partially carved from the marble and not yet properly finished. But still, the part of the stones which consisted of earth and contained some moisture was turned into flesh; the solid, inflexible matter was changed into bones; and the veins of the rock into veins of blood.



Deucalion and Pyrrha
by Giovanni Maria
Bottalla



Le Sommeil, vers 1920 by Brancusi

The image Ovid depicts of this moment of creation resonates much more strongly with the beautifully yet roughly hewn work of say, Brancusi than the pristinely finished sculpture by Bernini. Both these works and Ovid's rendering of this episode exemplify a certain type of artistic impulse, not the only one, yet certainly a significant and astounding one, which I will term "imagining into."

Faced with the dilemma of how to understand the seemingly sacrilegious oracle that they have just been given, Deucalion and Pyrrha consider a non-literal interpretation. They decide to imagine that, contrary to their lived experience, it might be possible for lifeless rocks to become flesh and blood humans. Ovid describes them as being skeptical, yet they still believe in it enough to try it. Deucalion and Pyrrha's choice to act on their interpretation of the oracle is an astounding moment, one in which they choose to believe that their reality could be different. In this moment they imagine into this world something mysterious that might enable rocks to be turned into humans.

Within the context of the *Metamorphoses*, this action takes the form of faith. Deucalion and Pyrrha are proving their piety by trusting the gods. However, their basic action, believing in the possibility of a different world, is a cornerstone of great change, ranging from Martin Luther King's "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed" to Albert Einstein's reimagining of our physical universe. Both of these are acts of *imagining into* -

imagining into this world the future we want to see. At its core *imagining into* is an act of creation, ranging in scale from seeing an elephant in a cloud to Dr. King's speech. This action though is seldom received lightly, something Ovid pre-empted in the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha: "Who would believe what ensued if it wasn't confirmed by tradition?" Ovid recognized this and so too did Dr. King, in order for imaginings to grow they must be collectively believed in and valued.



A Pair of Shoes by van Gogh

This creative *imagining into* is central to art. Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* is a remarkable testa-

ment to the *imagining into* that art inspires. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger was so struck by this painting that he imagines a detailed history of this pair of boots:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls.

Art, whether writing, painting, dance, music, or countless other media, encourage us to imagine into. Imagining into is a fundamentally optimistic act based in the belief that our reality is one that can be changed for the better. Not all art does this or even aspires to, but I believe that works that do are essential to enacting change. In the statement for this exhibition, I wrote about how the artists in this show have approached stress and pressure. As a group of artists, this is one small way in which they have imagined something into this world – with attention to balance stress can be changed into a productive force.

I began this essay by talking about stone. Stone and reality share many of the same descriptive words: concrete, solid, and harsh. We do not know why Ovid decided that Deucalion and Pyrrha should cast stones behind them. In choosing rock though, Ovid chose something fundamentally familiar to our world, and I would suggest that, perhaps, he did so to show how great an act it is to imagine something inexplicable into a world that we usually view as so solid. Each artist here has offered their own imagining of rock into this world and hopefully the rock in this exhibition may become a little less solid, even if only appearing to be wood.



We all would like to thank the wonderful staff at Salem Art Works for making this exhibition possible.

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On a personal note, I would like to thank all the artists in this exhibition. It has been an amazing and wonderful time working with you. I would also like to thank Anna Flinchbaugh for good conversations and many budding ideas that crop up in *Imagining Into*. Lastly thank you to my family for your constant support and passion for what I am doing.