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MCAD exhibit explores the act of transformation

“From<To”

May 20 through June 19

Reception: Friday, May 20, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

MCAD Gallery at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design will present “From<To,” a group exhibition of 15 Midwestern and Canadian artists. The exhibit, pronounced “*from* is less than *to*,” explores the notions of moving from one place to another, both physically and as a metaphor for artistic growth. Comprised entirely of artists who at one time or another have been called “emerging,” “From<To” challenges the definitions of emergence, positing that the artistic process is one of constant growth and discovery. In other words, where you’re from isn’t as important as where you’re going, and besides, it’s the getting there that tends to captivate and inspire.

Guest-curated by Doug Lewis, Assistant Curator at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, “From<To” charts the ways in which these installation artists, painters, sculptors and interactive artists are all “getting there”—whether as travelers to destinations or artists to fame—and the problems encountered along the way. The work of Fargo sculptor Mike Marth, for example, calls attention to the various hang-ups in communication suffered by artists. His “Still Life” series features several telephones encased in concrete, perpetually hung-up. To further illustrate the artist’s communicative frustration—at being unheard, at being unable to answer questions, and so on—the artist calls the phones from time to time, to the alarm and delight of gallery visitors.

Technology also plays a key role in “From<To”—it is, after all, the newest and fastest way to get *from* one place *to* another, whether by phone call, e-mail or aircraft. MCAD Associate Professor Piotr Szyhalski, a world-renowned interactive artist, uses technology itself as an art-making tool in his sound installations. And Barbara Gilhooly, who teaches in MCAD’s summer youth programs, puts a different spin on an old technology,

manufacturing model airplanes out of such household items as duct tape and a Folgers coffee can.

Originally exhibited last year in Winnipeg, “From<To” consists of artists from Winnipeg, Fargo, N.D. and the Twin Cities, a move that naturally calls attention to the artistic communities that foster the artists. But like the turning points on a career arc, the artists’ origins are only half of the story. By exploring the literal and figurative sense of “distance”—both as points between places (specifically these Midwestern cities) and personal trajectories of style and method—“From<To” mines the value of the artistic journey.

Artists in the exhibition include Jackie Sawatzky, Jennifer Stillwell, Judith Levy, Mike Marth, Kevin Friedrich, Xurxo Garcia Penalta, Barbara Gilhooly, Celeste Nelms, Chris Larson, Gerald Smith, Colin Gatling, Paul Zacharias, Mark Franchino, Scott Hadaller and Piotr Szyhalski.

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The Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) has been creating art on the cutting edge for well over a century. Recognized nationally and internationally for its innovative approaches, it offers concentrations in advertising, animation, comic art, drawing, filmmaking, fine arts, graphic design, furniture design, illustration, interactive design, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture. MCAD is home to more than 700 students pursuing BFA, MFA, Post-Baccalaureate and BS: Visualization degrees. MCAD is located at 2501 Stevens Ave. in south Minneapolis, adjacent to The Children’s Theatre Company and The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

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