

JULIO FINE ARTS GALLERY

Loyola University Maryland
4501 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21210

Gallery Phone 410 617 2799
www.loyola.edu/gallery

Floating World: Beverly Ress
October 21 – November 23, 2010

Artists Talk / Reception:
Thursday, October 28, 5pm – 7pm

Gallery Hours

Monday through Friday, 11am – 5pm
Sunday, 1pm – 4pm
Gallery will be closed during all University holidays.

Location and Parking

The Julio Fine Arts Gallery is in the College Center directly north of Jenkins lot and Francis X. Knott Humanities Center. Paid parking is available in Jenkins lot on Bunn Drive; free parking is available on Cold Spring Lane after 6pm.

Cover. **Penrose Stick**. Detail. 2009. Colored pencil on paper, laser cut.
30 x 22 inches.

FLOATING WORLD



BEVERLY RESS

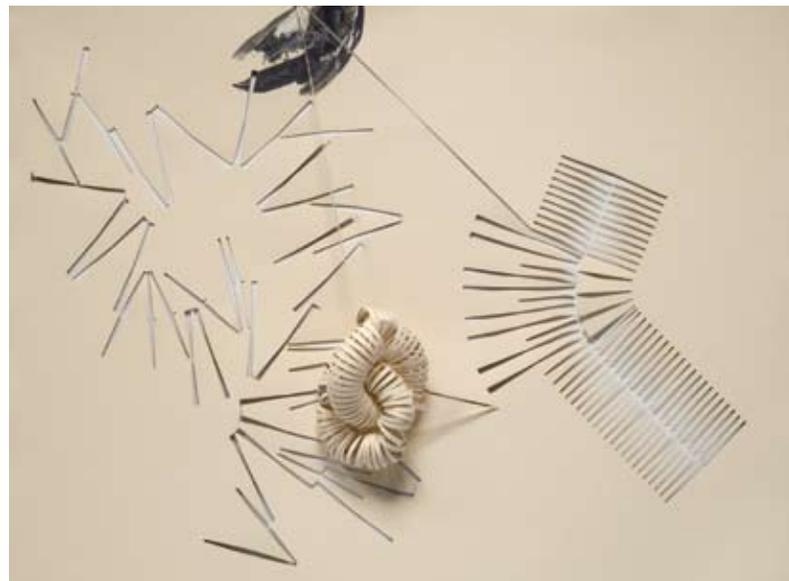
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Once & Later. Detail. 2010. Colored pencil on paper. 30 x 22 inches.



Making This World (for Lewis Hyde). Detail. 2008. Colored pencil on paper, mounted on gessoed canvas, cut, folded, and sewn. 40 x 45 x 7 inches.

FLOATING WORLD

“For, finally, what is in nature? Nothing in comparison with the infinite, and everything in comparison with nothingness, a middle term between all and nothing. (Man) is infinitely severed from comprehending the extremes; the end of things and their principle are for him invincibly hidden in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he arises and the infinity into which he is engulfed.

What else may he do except to perceive some appearance of the middle of things, eternally despairing to know their principles or ends? All things arise from nothingness and are carried to infinity. Who can follow these astonishing processes? The Author of these marvels can comprehend them. All others cannot.” ~ Blaise Pascal

From the outset, it may be hard to settle on a category for Beverly Ress’s sublime work. Does it even occur more correctly in two or three dimensions? In any such threshold classifications however rests a defining element of this particular artist’s body of work: the ongoing contemplations on the science, perception, and the poetics of interstice.

Observed in a sequence, one exploration following another, the works comprise something of a modern series of portraits of 17th century mathematician, theologian, physicist, Blaise Pascal’s theories on the “middle term” of existence.

Ress’s fragile renderings are of chance sidewalk findings – dead birds, curling winter grasses, dried lichens and downed tree branches. Each a subject whose brief term has concluded simply and without special notice or grief at its end, are offered to us as beautiful evidence of the deferential honesty of mortality. In these unsentimental remarks on a vast white plane, various interferences occur. Ress occasionally slices the image and weaves it with another, perhaps suggesting some kind of return to the greater aggregate of past and passing

things. In other instances she scores circles into the paper ground or even the drawing itself, periodically implanting a circle from one drawing into the corpus of another.

As in our physical world, death fades out all its ardent evidence of life gently, slowly, molecule by molecule, merging it with the history of life – teaching all who fear and rail against it acceptance through nature’s own acquiescent example.

Whispered onto the white void of sculpted paper the experience of these life-become-object dissipations, or slippages, nudges us to imagine Pascal’s middle ground of existence, the quiet, secret passage between the vivid and the vacuum.

The rendering of physical sphere imagery might be taken for the skin of the body of work, the surface information for the more reticent dimensional nature of Beverly Ress’s work. In the hypothetical realm of the manipulated white paper, geometry and quantum physics enter the theatre. Ress recreates such complex shapes as the Torus through the convoluted cutting and folding of the rigid paper, coaxing out the coordinates of geometrical formulas.

What is particularly delightful is the inverse character of Ress’s concepts. The birds and plant materials – those 3-dimensional things once experienced on the earth, inspire in art’s tradition the two-dimensional *memento mori*, but the mathematical constructions – ideas originally imagined purely on paper, essentially become the extra-dimensional agents that continue to create, impact and support existence outside of our awareness or sentimental memory. They do not qualify for *memento mori* because they do not decay or depart us for nothingness, but rather continue to fold and unfold, to open into an infinite mystery whose disappearance we would have no idea how to begin to perceive.

Deborah McLeod

*Curator, arts writer, and owner / director of
Chroma Projects Art Laboratory, Charlottesville, VA*