CURRENTS
Recent Art from East Tennessee and Beyond

This ongoing installation examines recent developments in international contemporary art. It features a selection from the KMA’s growing collection of recent works by emerging and established artists currently working in East Tennessee and beyond. **Currents** serves as a chronological extension and geographic expansion of the KMA’s historical art display in the adjacent gallery, *Higher Ground: A Century of the Visual Arts in East Tennessee*. It is also designed to enable museum audiences to track the changing character of the region’s art community within an international context.

The broad variety of works in the exhibition mirrors contemporary art’s seemingly countless threads of development. It reflects the desire of many artists to break from tradition and make objects inspired by their individual experience in the present day. Some use digital media or apply unorthodox combinations of techniques and materials. Others borrow images from the past or elements from earlier art traditions and reintroduce them in unexpected ways designed to spark new interpretive possibilities and cultural associations. In this way, **Currents** represents a vital educational resource through which local audiences can gain direct access to an increasingly global creative dialogue and follow its evolution.

**PREMIER PRESENTING SPONSOR**

**June and Rob Heller**

**PRESENTING SPONSOR**

[Emerson Process Management logo]
Anne Wilson (Detroit 1949; lives and works in Chicago)

Local Industry Cloth, 2010

Donated mill fiber
24 inches wide x 75 feet 9 inches long
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 gift of the artist

Anne Wilson is a Chicago-based artist whose multimedia work addresses issues of labor and gender, and community engagement. Her studio practice was the subject of the KMA’s 2010 exhibition Anne Wilson: Wind/Rewind/Weave, which called attention to the global crisis of production and skill based textile labor. The exhibition included a participatory area entitled Local Industry, which allowed exhibition visitors to wind onto hand-crank bobbins colored thread donated by mills facing closure throughout the southeastern United States. The wound bobbins were then used by experienced weavers to compose a single bolt of striped cloth on one loom inside the gallery space. The resulting monumental textile, Local Industry Cloth, was created over the course of three-months with the expert assistance of 79 experienced weavers and more than 2,100 volunteers and exhibition visitors. When completed, the cloth was donated to the KMA by the artist alongside an “Archive of Production” identifying all contributors to Local Industry. The “Archive of Production” list is on view nearby.
Leonardo Silaghi (Satu Mare, Romania 1987; lives and works in Cluj, Romania)

*Untitled #1313203*, 2013

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2013 purchase

Leonardo Silaghi’s abstractions powerfully express the chaotic transition of his Romanian homeland from a decaying Communist nation to a contemporary urban society still taking shape. Often using black and white photographs of abandoned Cold War machinery as starting points, the artist launches into large, forcefully executed paintings populated by conveyor belts, vehicles, ductwork, and other industrial debris. Carefully painted shadows and highlights imply that these relics exist in pictorial space, while sweeping brushwork and rugged surface textures shift attention to his dynamic process.
William T. Wiley (Bedford, Indiana 1937; lives and works in Northern California)

**Double Basis for C. B. and Anvil for C. B.**, 1993
Acrylic, charcoal and pastel on canvas; acrylic and metal on synthetic foam
Knoxville Museum of Art, 1998 purchase with funds provided by KMA Collectors Circle

Since the 1960s, Wiley has been a leading figure in the San Francisco Bay art scene. His dense, colorful paintings, prints, and sculptures bring humor and wit to topics such as war, creativity, pollution, information overload, and global warming. These two related works express Wiley’s deep admiration for modern sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), whose figure appears in the bottom left. Many of the shapes in the painting stem from Brancusi’s famous sculptures such as *Bird in Space* (1932-40) and *Endless Column* (1937), which in their minimal forms represent a dramatic contrast to Wiley’s over-the-top compositional density. Anvils appear frequently in his work for their striking shape and important role in the history of technology. Based on an early type of anvil made of stone, this coated synthetic foam anvil with its projecting metal fragment makes reference to the Arthurian legend of the Sword in the Stone.
Charlotta Westergren (Stockholm, Sweden 1969; lives and works in Brooklyn)

Siting, 2003
Sequins, pins, rubber stoppers, foam core
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2003 purchase with funds provided by the Tennessee General Assembly, Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Arts & Culture Alliance

Charlotta Westergren is known for her interest in painting with non-traditional materials. Here, she uses thousands of large sequins to construct a shimmering, panoramic view of an icy landscape inspired by her interest in fairy tales and her Nordic heritage. This monumental installation was created by Westergren specifically for the KMA in conjunction with her 2004 solo exhibition.
**Jim Dine** (Cincinnati 1935; lives and works in New York)

*Green Picture in My Meadow*, 1971

Acrylic paint and straw on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of June and Rob Heller, 2014

Jim Dine is internationally known for his mixed-media works in which he enlarges a single image from his familiar environment—boots, tools, clothing—and, in this case, a stylized human heart.

*Green Picture in My Meadow* captures the artist’s response to a rural landscape setting after several years of living in London, England. In 1971, the year he produced this painting, he had just settled in Putney, Vermont, whose natural beauty would help fuel his studio practice over the course of nearly two decades. In the making of this painting, he pitched an army tent in a field and mixed straw with his paint in order to echo the area’s distinctive natural terrain.
Knoxville-based artist Jered Sprecher is among a generation of contemporary painters exploring anew the creative territory between figuration and abstraction, and between the handmade and the digital. He describes himself as a “hunter and gatherer” who draws inspiration from an eclectic array of image sources including graffiti, architecture, cut gemstones, family photographs, and ancient frescoes. Computers, copiers, and printers enable him to acquire and prepare selected images beforehand, in some cases cropping and filtering them to the point at which they become ghostly remnants of the original. Intermingled with a broad range of abstract passages, this imagery is transferred onto canvas by hand through a meticulous, intuitive, and labor-intensive process. Inch by inch and layer by layer, he applies pigment in translucent veils, stenciled grids, feathered stripes, irregular dabs, and serpentine drips. The resulting compositions possess a transitional character—at close range, rich surface details are optically dominant while from a distance opalescent hues command greater attention, conveying a degree of luminosity reminiscent of digital monitors.
Ridley Howard (Atlanta 1973; lives and works in Brooklyn)

**Starry Carpet**, 2005
Oil on canvas
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2009 gift of Craig Jacobson

Ridley Howard specializes in technically refined paintings in which he explores the allure and superficiality of contemporary life. Within stage-like settings, elegant figures interact with mannered gestures that suggest unfolding dramas of a cinematic variety rather than moments from real life.
Daniel Canogar (Madrid, Spain 1964; lives and works in Madrid and New York)

**ECHO**, 2016
Flexible LED tiles, power supply unit, media player, LED screen hardware
Edition of 3 + 1 artist proof
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2017 purchase with funds provided by KMA Collectors Circle

*Canogar* is a multidisciplinary artist who produces vibrant electronic sculptures often made of discarded consumer parts. As the artist explains, “such detritus becomes a mirror of ourselves—circuits, cables, and hard drives mimic our tissues, nervous systems, brains, etc.—but above all, these technologies die, just as we do. In its obsolescence, technology becomes utterly human.” His interest in screens, in particular, stems from their growing public presence in locations ranging from monumental billboards to tiny wrist devices that monitor our every move. The artist leaves visible their dangling cables and electronic components in order to underscore symbolic connections between machine components and those of the human body.

Made of flexible LED tiles that appear to peel off the wall, **ECHO** features an abstract generative animation that occasionally is disrupted by moiré patterns. The artist designed the work so that its patterns shift according to real-time seismic data across the globe fed to the work through links to online sites. The result is an ever-changing abstract composition that captures the echoing murmurs of the planet’s shifting tectonic plates. References to abstract painting and Meso-American textiles also inform the work’s design.
Marin Majic (Frankfurt am Main, Germany 1979; lives and works in Berlin)

Foyer, 2010
Oil on canvas
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 gift of Stephen Hanson

Croatian painter Marin Majic uses objects representative of localized history, and paints them into scenarios intended to provoke new narrative possibilities. His figurative subjects are rendered using a meticulous painting technique that recalls the smooth finish and intricate detail associated with photography. In Foyer, Majic seamlessly blends imagery pulled from various sectors of Croatian daily life to construct an enigmatic scene laced with references to consumer culture, nightlife, and the Cold War era.
Tomory Dodge (Denver 1974; lives and works in Los Angeles)

**Mirage**, 2006
Oil on canvas


Tomory Dodge creates large paintings in which broad sweeps of bright pigment define primal landscapes and call attention to the physical reality of the artist’s process. For this painting, Dodge was interested in the way that prismatic colors could be used to represent in a convincing manner what he describes as the “overheated delirium” of a mirage.
Since 2014, Nathan Hylden has explored the subject of his own Digital Age studio as an intriguing and elusive subject for expansive untitled works that blend photography, printmaking, painting, and sculpture. He often works in series, and begins by taking photographs of seemingly random reflections, and ghostly shadows cast by studio equipment—ladders, tripods, etc.—rather than depicting studio contents themselves. Also appearing are masking-taped right angles indicating the spot where an artwork once hung or will hang. After adjusting his photographic imagery on a computer, the artist silk-screens it onto aluminum panels at human scale using dark pigments. Shifting angles present the notion of each panel in the series as a frame in a film sequence. However, bold, gestural passages of brushed and sprayed white acrylic paint create rich surface textures and call attention to the reality of each panel as a material object. In this manner, Hylden presents the artist’s inner sanctum as an enigmatic space in which infinite possibilities and contradictions unfold moment by moment.
Zsolt Bodoni (Aleșd, Romania 1975; lives and works in Budapest)  
*Replaced*, 2009  
Acrylic on canvas  
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 gift of David Hoberman

Ethnic Hungarian artist Bodoni creates atmospheric, painterly canvases that evoke the violent struggles of Hungary’s past. The artist witnessed the fall of the communism in his country and the subsequent struggle to reclaim its history. His paintings depict shadowy streets, plazas, and warehouses littered with telltale remains of former regimes and signs marking the dawn of new ones. Depicting the dark interior of a massive foundry, Replaced explores the practice of casting or melting down public sculptures by successive political regimes in order to re-write history. Bodoni’s larger related canvas *Hall with Horses* is on view in the KMA’s 3rd floor lobby.
Julie (Warren Martin) Conn (Knoxville 1943; lives and works in Lexington, Kentucky)

**Warlord**, 1993
Tennessee coral marble on black marble base
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2004 gift of Glady and Ross Faires in honor of Frank Vallone

Now living in Kentucky, Conn is a long-time resident of Knoxville known for her flowing forms sculpted from various types of marble. While most appear abstract at first, her descriptive titles often enable viewers to discern hints of narrative imagery as in *Warlord*, whose projecting forms include a distinctive shield and helmeted head. Conn is deeply inspired by the work of British sculptor Henry Moore as well as classical art and culture.
Karen LaMonte (New York 1967; lives and works in Prague, Czech Republic)

Chado, 2011
Kiln-cast glass, artist’s proof (edition of 3)
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 purchase with funds provided by Mary Hale Corkran in memory of her husband Blair

Although LaMonte’s first works were blown glass figures, she soon developed an interest in the theme of absence, and began producing ghostly cast glass sculptures in which only women’s clothing is represented. She investigates the role of clothing as an expression of identity, and as a mediator between the human body and society. Chado stems from LaMonte’s residency in Kyoto, and reflects her new understanding of the importance of the kimono in Japanese culture. As she explains, “How the kimono is worn parallels the relationship between Japanese individuals and their society. We conceal our bodies, but also to obscure and protect our individual personalities.”
Crystal Wagner (Baltimore, Maryland 1982; lives and works in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania)

Aphotic IX, 2016
Hand-cut screen printed paper in custom made wooden box, UV-protective Plexiglas
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2017 gift of Lane Hays in memory of Charles A. Hays, who was part of the team responsible for the construction of the Knoxville Museum of Art

A graduate of the University of Tennessee’s printmaking program, Wagner specializes in sprawling organic forms that combine elements of printing, drawing, and sculptural installation. Recently she has focused on producing series of unique sculptural prints contained within elongated boxes that make reference to the natural world—especially undersea life. Aphotic IX refers to the portion of a lake or ocean where there is little or no sunlight and in which bioluminescence is the only light present.
Piccinini uses art as an arena for exploring contemporary ideas about nature. She is especially interested in modern society’s obsession with the automobile, the ways in which technology is changing society, and blurring the boundary between natural and artificial. Her works include a wide range of media, such as sculpture, video, drawing, installation, and digital prints. In addition to creating wall-mounted works like Woods using auto body materials, she is known for her hyper-real animal sculptures that suggest a genetic experiment gone awry.
David Bates (Dallas 1952; lives and works in Dallas)
**Black Tip Shark**, 1989
Oil on canvas
Knoxville Museum of Art, 1990 gift of Laila and Thurston Twigg-Smith, the Persis Corporation, and the Knoxville Journal

Texas-based artist David Bates has achieved an international reputation for his paintings examining the intimate relationship between humanity and nature along America’s Gulf Coast. His expressive compositions present grass-roots subjects in a heroic, larger-than-life format rendered in bold brushwork and thick paint.
Zsolt Bodoni (Aleșd, Romania 1975; lives and works in Budapest)

**Hall with Horses**, 2009

Acrylic and oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 purchase with funds provided by Cathy and Mark Hill, Livia and Marc Straus, David Butler, Susan and Kent Farris, Rosemary Gilliam, Kitsy and Lou Hartley, Penny Lynch and Kimbro Maguire, Carole and Robert Martin, Hei Park, Jenny Banner, Lane Hays, Margo Clark, Melinda Meador and Milton McNally, Laura and Shelton Davis, and the KMA Guild

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Jered Sprecher (Lincoln, Nebraska 1976; lives and works in Knoxville)

**A Type of Magic**, 2008

Oil paint, spray paint, and graphite on linen

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2009 purchase with support provided by Ann and Steve Bailey, Connie and Ralph Gonzalez, Barbara Apking, Hei and Stanley Park, Stuart Worden, Jayne and Myron Ely, Cathy and Mark Hill, Allison and Reid Lederer, Kay Clayton, Penny Lynch and Kimbro Maguire, Dan McGehee, Lane Hays, Carole and Bob Martin, Pam and Jeff Peters, Ted Smith, Dorothy and Caesar Stair, Marie and Bob Alcorn, Jennifer Banner, Barbara and Bernie Bernstein, David Butler, Lynda Evans, Susan and Kent Farris, Arlene Goldstine, Donna Kerr, Sheena McCall, Melinda Meador and Milton McNally, Mary Helen and Fran Olmstead, Betsy and John Quinn, Mary M. Rinearson, Ebbie Sandberg, Andrea Cartwright and Alan Solomon, Sarah Stowers, Rosalind Tillman, Loida Velazquez

Sprecher, a Knoxville-based artist and member of the University of Tennessee’s art faculty, uses an assortment of methods to construct complex, layered paintings. Each is made up of image fragments culled from sources ranging from art history books to random imagery from the immediate environment. Their original meaning and associations are often subdued, altered or lost in favor of their new role as formal devices. These elements are combined in compositions that appear to shift between abstraction and representation, and between two-dimensional form and three-dimensional space.

The richly textured surfaces of Sprecher’s paintings are the result of his method of applying multiple layers of paint with brushes, squeegees as well as spray cans. The artist also applies tape and stencils to the surface of his canvases to create precise edges that contrast sharply with loosely brushed or sprayed pigment. The resulting angular planes of color draw the eye into a fragmented, ambiguous pictorial space that appears shallow in certain areas while infinitely deep in others.