

PRESS RELEASE

MECHANICAL PERCEPTION

New Photographic Work by Mei-Mei Dillard, Eileen Maxson, Brian Piana, Soody Sharifi, and Anderson Wrangle

September 5 – October 19, 2008
Houston, Texas



For Information and Visuals:

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(Houston, TX) *Mechanical Perception: New Photographic Work by Mei-Mei Liem, Eileen Maxson, Brian Piana, Soody Sharifi, and Anderson Wrangle* is an exhibition of work by alumni from the University of Houston Photo/Digital Media program. *Mechanical Perception* opens September 5 and runs through October 19, 2008, at the FotoFest Headquarters at Vine Street Studios, 1113 Vine Street, Houston, Texas, 77002.

Mechanical Perception is curated by Toby Kamps, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Stephan Hillerbrand, Assistant Professor, University of Houston and Ariane Roesch, artist and UH Alumnus, from a list of graduates which were nominated by Houston area curators and current and past University Photo/Digital Media program faculty.

Resonating from FOTOFEST's 2008 theme *Transformations*, this exhibition began as an investigation on how the photographic medium and the academic photographic programs have transformed over the years. If anything has separated photography from other media, it is the presence of a mechanical device. Although the medium will continue to advance digitally, and be known as a technically dexterous discipline, at the core it will always be concerned with a way of seeing and critically analyzing the world around us through a lens — whether it is a camera shutter, video lens, or computer scanner.

Mechanical Perception includes five talented artists who continue to transform the definition of photography in their own work within. Mei-Mei Liem creates narratives through staged still lifes, which are inspired by fictional tales and composed in the style of 17th-century Dutch still life tradition. Eileen Maxson's videos and installations give a witty commentary on pop culture and how we situate ourselves in a media driven environment. Brian Piana deconstructs visual and structural elements of the web-based virtual space as well as the activities and experiences of its online users. Anderson Wrangle constructs photographs, which investigate the porousness of the Nature/Culture boundary, creating a play between the wild and the cultivated. Within her digital photographic assemblages, Soody Sharifi combines the traditional and contemporary Persian cultures, exploring the tension between public and private spaces.

This exhibition is presented due to the generosity of the Houston Arts Alliance, FotoFest and the School of Art at the University of Houston.

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For more information on FOTOFEST2008 or for visuals, please contact:

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