CAMERON FULLER

(Born in 1975 in Chehalis, Washington. Lives and works in St. Louis)

Cameron Fuller studied printmaking at San Francisco State University and received a Bachelor of Arts in 2005. In 2007, he received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Washington University in St. Louis. His installations have been shown at alternative art spaces throughout St. Louis, including Fort Gondo; White Flag Projects; Maps Contemporary Art Space; and Gallery 210; and at La Esquina in Kansas City. In addition to his own work, Fuller has collaborated since 2008 on installations with Sarah Paulsen at Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis; Open Lot, St. Louis; The Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, Missouri; and Saint Charles Community College, St. Charles.

Cover image: From the Collection of the Institute for the Perpetuation of Imaginal Processes, 2010
Mixed media, 8 x 4 x 4 feet
Courtesy of the artist

Great Rivers Biennial 2010 is generously supported by the Gateway Foundation.
Great support for the Contemporary’s exhibitions program is generously provided by the Whitaker Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; William E. Weiss Foundations; Nancy Reynolds and Dwyer Brown; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Regional Arts Commission; Arts and Education Council; and members of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. Special thanks to Chase Park Plaza Hotel, Glazer’s Midwest, and Midwest Valet.
Laura Fried: Cameron, for your new exhibition, you transform several of the galleries into a new kind of museum. Riffing on the idea of taxidermy appears in this exhibition as well. What part do these specimens play in this project?

**Cameron Fuller:** Taxidermy plays two roles in the exhibit. First, because I use the tropes of fables and fairy tales in much of my work, the animals bring with them a culturally constructed character that comes from the stories many of us grew up hearing. When we are given a cast of characters, there is an urge to fit the pieces together and discover how a community could come together to celebrate art, craft, and dance. These pieces began as reminiscences, but as the project has gone on, I have invited a few fellow artists and friends to participate in their creation. In a way, I hope that we can create objects that declare the collective necessity of art in our everyday existence.

**Laura Fried:** Could you give me a virtual tour of the project?

**Cameron Fuller:** The whole project falls under the umbrella of an ongoing project called The Institute for the Perpetuation of Imaginal Processes. The Institute was formed out of my desire to create more opportunities to collaborate with artists close to me, and to provide a productive platform for new ideas. The first piece that the visitor will encounter is As it is, a life-size diorama, somewhat in the tradition of the natural history museum. Instead of recreating a familiar slice of the natural world, this work compresses a piece of some place foreign. Initially, the diorama was a way to present faraway lands and exotic creatures to an audience. But in a time where frontiers are essentially non-existent, this piece resurrests a place that exists only in fables, fairy tales, or in the imagination. The diorama, as a structure, also provides a glimpse of a static cinema. As much of my work involves coaxing the audience into the role of storyteller, the environment framed by the diorama also creates a three-dimensional fiction that engages onlookers, like walking into a paused movie, where you have to decide where the story is going before the action resumes.

**Laura Fried:** The macabre art that promises drama (through museum, you construct a space of a solitary tinkerer. It gives the audience a way to see how the notion of poking around in the circus, building forts, secret clubhouses—with the voyeuristic notion of poking around in the space of a solitary tinkerer. It gives the audience a way to see how the environment Evokes the imagery, Fuller evokes the world being presented; it's the tension between strangeness and familiarity that makes fairy tales so compelling. Although we know that the story is about, say, a fox and a rabbit, we know that it's really about us, about how people interact with one another.

**Laura Fried:** Your work in the theater arts becomes clear in this exhibition, particularly in your attention to set design. What is your relationship to theater, as it appears in your practice?

**Cameron Fuller:** I started building sets for the theater right out of high school. It served as the foundation for the theater right out of high school. It also creates a three-dimensional environment framed by the diorama. somewhat in the tradition of the natural history museum. Instead of recreating a familiar slice of the natural world, this work compresses a piece of some place foreign. Initially, the diorama was a way to present faraway lands and exotic creatures to an audience. But in a time where frontiers are essentially non-existent, this piece resurrests a place that exists only in fables, fairy tales, or in the imagination. The diorama, as a structure, also provides a glimpse of a static cinema. As much of my work involves coaxing the audience into the role of storyteller, the environment framed by the diorama also creates a three-dimensional fiction that engages onlookers, like walking into a paused movie, where you have to decide where the story is going before the action resumes.

**Laura Fried:** I have been drawn to this salom of small photographs because I use the tropes of fables and fairy tales in much of my work, the animals bring with them a culturally constructed character that comes from the stories many of us grew up hearing. When we are given a cast of characters, there is an urge to fit the pieces together and discover how a community could come together to celebrate art, craft, and dance. These pieces began as reminiscences, but as the project has gone on, I have invited a few fellow artists and friends to participate in their creation. In a way, I hope that we can create objects that declare the collective necessity of art in our everyday existence.

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**Laura Fried:** The exhibition ends with Where My Heart Will Lead Me. I see this as the origin of the universe, with regard to the Institute. It combines the idea of childhood fantasy—running away with the circus, building forts, secret clubhouses—with the voyeuristic notion of poking around in the space of a solitary tinkerer. It gives the audience a way to see how the tension between strangeness and familiarity that makes fairy tales so compelling. Although we know that the story is about, say, a fox and a rabbit, we know that it's really about us, about how people interact with one another.

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April 30 - August 8, 2010

MARTIN BRIEF
(Born in 1966 in Chicago. Lives and works in St. Louis)

Martin Brief’s work has appeared in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including exhibitions in New York, Paris, Zurich, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. In addition, his work is in several public collections, including the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson and the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts in Honolulu. Martin is currently an Assistant Professor at Saint Louis University.

Cover image:
Non Fiction (detail), 2010
Ink on paper, 72 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist

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Martin Brief's work explores the way that language, thought, and information relate to contemporary culture and the creation of self. His work is characterized by precision and alteration, as he takes robust source of information and translates them into images with only traces of their former selves. His process of obscuring and creating self. His work is contemporary culture and the infinite catalog of the word "God" becomes a stream of textual data that is amorphous, and for sale.

Martin Brief: Cataloguing is about control and, for me, the illusion of control. Similar to the idea that we are held to explain the unexplainable, these types of catalogues bring a sense of order to what can never be ordered. In the end, the form of the drawing relies on the order the titles appear on Amazon, the length of the titles, and how much of the title falls to the left or right of the word God. These uncontrollable factors determine the formal aspects of the drawing. Within the tight controls of the process, chaos prevails.

FRIED: What have previous projects looked like?

Brief: Drawing and language have been at the center of my practice for the past four or five years. In the Dictionary and the Newpaper series, I eliminated the text, instead relying on the visual patterns created by the text. In the former, I am creating one drawing for each page of the dictionary by tracing the outline of the columns of text on each page. In the latter, I filled in all of the o’s in the text on the front page of randomly selected issues of the New York Times, revealing a similar sequence of dots in each drawing. In the Artforum Series, I began to use text as the raw material for the drawings, allowing it to function as both language and abstract form. For this project, I collected all of the names from each issue of Artforum magazine for an entire year. I made one drawing for each issue, rewriting the names line by line to create a 10.5" square matching the size of the magazine.

FRIED: Could you describe your relationship to cataloguing, taxonomy, classification, and how this endeavor is manifest in

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Sarah Frost received a Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture and painting from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Washington University in St. Louis. Recent exhibitions have been presented at Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis; Regional Arts Commission, St. Louis; Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, Missouri; Mad Art Gallery, St. Louis; The Jacoby Arts Center, Alton, Illinois; and Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, Mt. Vernon, Illinois. She has recently exhibited in New York, and has been awarded grants from Arts in Transit, St. Louis and the Missouri Arts Council.
I generally had a formal idea for the Great Rivers Biennial, which was important and that subject and formal idea came together as I worked with the paper guns; it became clear that the negative space around the guns was important and that suspending them was a solution. I tried to activate the space of the gallery through their dynamic configuration and to make the viewer want to walk among them, to walk a sort of gauntlet. While the form of the installation in the gallery was important, communicating that these guns are re-creations of found forms was critical. The stills give a sense of the authors of these forms, and reveal a range of abilities in this online community.

Laura Fried interviews Frost about her simultaneous interest in the history of weaponry and technology, or commodity. I am also interested phenomenology—the idea that our knowledge of the world is gained through our bodies, both our physical and visual experience. I like the idea that one may first perceive my work and be drawn toward it without knowing what the forms are. For the past several years, I've worked with either found objects themselves or found form as material for your work. What is the relationship between the object and the built environment in your project?

LaurA Fried: Sarah, in your newest installation, you've combined a cascading paper cloud with photographic stills. On first encounter, we recognize the material as a catalog of the discarded, the plastic, and the handmade. What is the relationship between the object and the built environment in your work?

FrOSt: Many of my recent works rely on scale to create a sense that the viewer is within a larger framework. I often employ hundreds or thousands of similar units in an installation; together these units create a space that dwarfs or contains the viewer. The particular materials used are evocative of this framework, such as communications systems, technology, or commodity. I am also interested phenomena—the idea that our knowledge of the world is gained through our bodies, both our physical and visual experience. I like the idea that one may first perceive my work and be drawn toward it without knowing what the forms are.

FrOSt: For the past several years, I've worked with either found objects themselves or found form that I re-create in a different medium or context. For example, I have worked with found form by casting it in metal, plaster, or paper; through casting, the form of the original object remains but is transformed by the new material. I have also re-created found forms by fabricating them in a different scale, quantity, material, or in a different context. In short, I like to access the history inherent in found objects, and both ways of working facilitate this object-centric approach. Sometimes I just like making things.

FrIEd: Found objects and forms reflect upon a culture and the people who used them. The artist in this case plays the role of an anthropologist. This project appealed to me because it was thought provoking on its own terms; if only I could re-present the paper guns, the paper guns could collectively raise so many questions. I don't have an answer to these questions, but in my mind, this work touches on fragility, the need to be part of a community, sexuality and masculine identity, as well as the more obvious issues of guns and violence.

FrIEd: The hostile role of weaponry is belied in your project. From the You Tube stills picturing cute and clever kids hosting their own instructional videos, to the suspended delicacy of your installation, the latent violence is muted. How do you see these tensions playing out in your project?

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