

# SINGULARITY IN THE COMMUNAL TIDE



PIERRO GALLERY OF SOUTH ORANGE

# MAY 13 – JULY 15, 2007

Rupert Ravens, Guest Curator

Lynda Abraham - BROOKLYN

Mark Andreas - STAMFORD

Victor Alimpiev - MOSCOW

Les Ayre - NEWARK

Clarina Bezzola - ZURICH

A.Kimberlin Blackburn - KAPPA

Tom Broadbent - BROOKLYN

Adam Brown - OKLAHOMA CITY

James Andrew Brown - NEWARK

Willie Cole - MINE HILL

Brian Dettmer - ATLANTA

Patrick Doyle - ROCHESTER

Del Geist - NEW YORK

Matt Gosser - NEWARK

Grace Graupe Pillard - KEYPORT

Victoria Hanks - NEWARK

Dalit Gurevich - BROOKLYN

Nicholas Hlobo - CAPE TOWN

Lisa Kokin - SAN FRANCISCO

Nina Levy - BROOKLYN

D. Dominick Lombardi - WESTCHESTER

Ujima Kuumba Majied - NEWARK

Loren Munk - BROOKLYN

Tom Nussbaum - MONTCLAIR

German Pitre - NEWARK

Rolando Politi - NEW YORK

Gae Savannah - NEW YORK

Peter Schlangenbader - BERLIN

Joan Semmel - NEW YORK

Veron Urdarianu - AMSTERDAM

Fred Wilson - NEW YORK

# SINGULARITY IN THE COMMUNAL TIDE

**CULTURE & IDENTITY IN THE MOMENT,**  
investigates the process of discovering a diverse uniqueness within the swell of the similar.

Stephen Hawking<sup>i</sup> proved that when a star disappears from the universe into a point of infinite density, the laws of general relativity<sup>ii</sup> that govern space and time break down and a singularity is formed. By taking into account quantum mechanics, he was able to show that black holes<sup>iii</sup> can also radiate energy as particles are created in their vicinity.

*A black hole only appears to form but later opens up and releases information about what fell inside. So we can be sure of the past and predict the future.*<sup>iv</sup>

— Stephen Hawking

Although cultural information swirls the globe almost immediately, it is still artists, civilization's avant-couriers, who present visionary ideas from a procured position perceived on a metaphoric event horizon.<sup>v</sup> Nothing in their circumambient environment appears to escape the gravitational pull of their myopic interest. Similar to their theoretical counterpart, they also release a radiated energy; it is the pattern of aesthetic creations. Witness the language of sacred geometry in the steel spheres of **PATRICK DOYLE**. It is through mathematic principles that the universal is open to our gaze. The nature of the number 10, of *Pythagorean Totality*, becomes all important, because it represents the sum of  $1 + 2 + 3 + 4$ ,

and thus becomes the identity of Totality expressed through the language of mathematics as both decimality and sphericity.

Through their individual visible creations and actions, artists' awareness and perceptions become the inimitable identifiers of the conscious experience of local societies. However, their accomplished expressions simultaneously probe and enhance our collective sensibilities regardless of geographic origin, and this pattern permeates a wider global art culture via numerous overlapping international biennials and art fairs.

Artists have had the same aspiration throughout history, and that is, to explore the visual language implicitly, and, when it becomes trite, create a new one. Consider *Bions*, the inventions of **ADAM BROWN**, with their wholly new artificial computer life form that responds to the presence of human energy by communicating, or alerting one another that an entity has invaded their finite community. Similarly, **MARK ANDREAS**'s *Seed Spreader*, a stoic robotic steel sculpture creature, spreads seeds during its performance, which actually continue to grow throughout the remainder of the exhibition.

*Each product affects an individual air; individuality itself serves to reinforce ideology, in so far as the illusion is conjured up that the completely reified and mediated is a sanctuary from immediacy and life.*<sup>vi</sup>

— Theodor Adorno

In the artworks of **A. KIMBERLIN BLACKBURN** and **CLARINA BEZZOLA** their product becomes an idiosyncratic synthesis that not only offers views of their asylum but also an obsessive presentation of the localized experiences of their respective insulated environments of Hawaii and Switzerland where they came of age. Many artists travel from their birthplace for school and settle elsewhere, thus ever-expanding their community of existence. This is a continuing process, which has encinctured most artists since birth.

*The world is interconnected, the flow of information has only very limited borders, so has the flow of people and influences. What was before the colonisation, and the influence on the local culture, that is taking place now on a larger, faster and more efficient scale. It reaches not only a certain class, it reaches far into the society, every society.* <sup>vii</sup>

— Stephan Dahl

**VICTORIA HANKS**, and **PETER SCHLANGENBADER**, each exhibit pieces uniquely individual that are not derivative of a prevalent locale but are instead exceedingly personal, powerful, physical and even psychosexually in nature. Meanwhile, **DEL GEIST**'s environmental sculptures elicit unique natural history qualities inherent to specific geographic regions and thus can reveal the country of origin. The post-apocalyptic tattoos of **D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI** graphically register a future where logos or body markings represent personalities that become three-dimensional information.

Culture, as it morphs, continues to be the schizophrenically treated culprit; as in the devices of psychological control envisioned by **LYNDA ABRAHAM**; similarly as either the economic goods, experienced in the accessorized temples of female shopping by **GAE SAVANNAH**, or as probing images of self introspection and reflections of **JOAN SEMMEL**; in the toys for the imagination, as in the utopian miniature expandable Bauhaus buildings of **VERON URDARIANU**; as documented in the *ar+cheology* <sup>viii</sup> discoveries and assembly line (re)creations of **MATTHEW GOSSER**; ultimately as potential national treasures as in the exploration of Xhosa traditions in the sculpture of **NICHOLAS HLOBO**, the incisive documentary paintings of **LOREN MUNK**, the primitive African yet commercial American brandings of **WILLIE COLE** and **UJIMA KUUMBA MAJIED**, along with the placid iconic talismans of **TOM NUSSBAUM**.

*...the prime calamities of sculpture [and art] in the present: a terror that emerges from both the universal equivalence and exchangeability of all objects and materials and the simultaneous impossibility of imbuing any transgressive definition of sculpture [and art] with priorities or criteria...* <sup>ix</sup>

— Benjamin Buchloh

Alternate slices of identity within culture can be derived from artists' challenging terror, racism and superceding regionalism with compelling concepts which use gathered objects, photographs, or moving images. Demonstrating such aims are the discarded books, which have been recovered and repurposed, by **LISA KOKIN**; the violent bombing and schoolgirl juxtaposition in Russian **VICTOR ALIMPIEV**'s video projection; and the American street scene photographs adorned with the political graffiti and realities of war by **GRACE GRAUPE PILLARD**. It is **JAMES ANDREW BROWN** and **GERMAN PITRE** who memorialize the sardonic, and visceral with a fervent determination to scrutinize and expose the reality of racial truths and justice. Each artist is reworking the perception to shatter our "secure" existence, which heightens his or her provocation.

Culture is a shared sum of orientation, habits, customs and beliefs that identify one collection of people from another. One traditional way this knowledge is endowed from one generation to the next is through objects and music, both being strong cohesive and unifying elements in society. We are actually robbed of the audio soundtracks of the 1980's past "glory days" in **BRIAN DETTMER**'s *Skull #12*, discovering a prop of Shakespearean death instead. The personal, emotional, and sports objects, of **LES AYRE** have been smothered and incased in lead, approximating a precious metal and denying us direct access. This being reminiscent of some lost civilization

protecting it ceremonies, while in **FRED WILSON's** *Drop, Dripped*, we find references to a slave's "song and dance" through the embodiment of rituals, in this case bodily fluids. The multi-media of **DALIT GUREVICH** explores and broadcasts specific years of communal living from her Israeli youth via "home-style" movies combined with painted self-portraits.

*Although no two humans know exactly the same things, they often have a great deal of knowledge in common. To a large extent this common knowledge or collective memory allows people to communicate, to work together, and to live together. It forms the basis for communities... \**

— E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, James Trefil

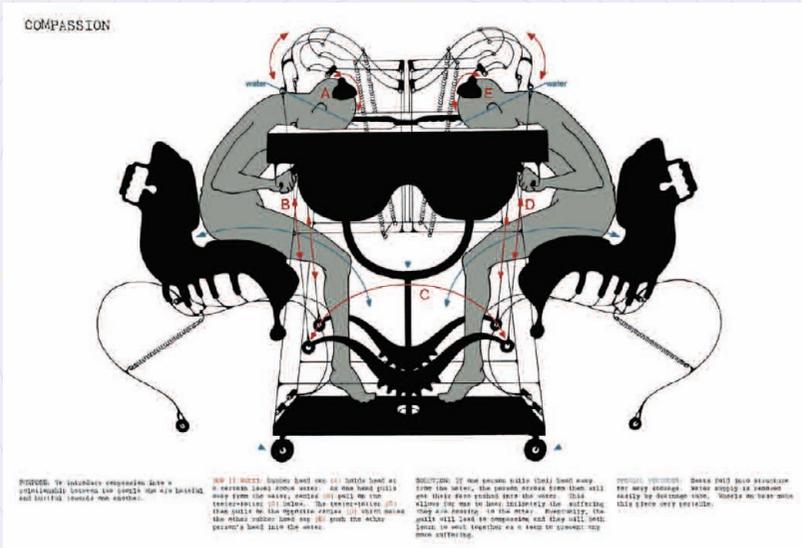
**NINA LEVY's** sculpture, *Husband and Son*, identifies and presents the subculture of parents. It is a melding together of the two males in her life. Where does one body end and the other begin? Only DNA will tell.

The gallery and adjacent space are infused with rich aesthetic cultural constructions embodying local, regional, and international sensibilities. Upon entering the building, we are greeted with the inflatable societal command, *Don't Cry* constructed by **TOM BROADBENT** and subsequently, when stepping into the gallery, are presented with the recycled "bouquet" creation of **ROLANDO POLITI**, both artists offer persuasive instruction on dealing with the everyday detritus surrounding us, be it pent up emotional feelings of self worth or materials cut and assembled from a pile of discarded household trash. All the artists in this exhibition speak with a voice, which is not banal or vacant but concise, authentic and cumulatively vitalizing. Our humanness is buoyed up by their insightful fabrications as we navigate the existential tide of culture and identity.

**RUPERT RAVENS** • Curator

## APPENDIX

- i Stephen Hawking is the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge in England
- ii Albert Einstein's first published his theory of relativity in 1905, which broke away from the Newtonian reliance on space and time as immutable frames of reference. He expanded this in 1916 to include Special Theory to include the effect of gravitation of the shape of space and the flow of time.
- iii A black hole is a region of space-time from which nothing can escape, even light. Black holes account for 25% of the total energy of the universe.
- iv Stephen Hawking, *Newsnight* interview  
British Broadcasting Corporation, July 2004
- v Theoretical boundary around a Black Hole
- vi Theodor Adorno  
*The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*  
London: Routledge, 1991
- vii Stephan Dahl  
*Communication and Culture Transformation*  
Liverpool, 2001
- viii *Ar+chaeology* is a combination of found object art, urban exploration and historic preservation. A term coined by Mr. Gosser.
- ix Benjamin Buchloh  
*Isa Genzken*  
Innsbruck, 2006
- x E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, James Trefil  
*The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*  
Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1988



**MARK ANDREAS**  
STAMFORD, CT

**Seed Spreader** 2005  
Steel  
120 x 48



**Surfboard 2** 2006  
Lead covered surfboard, with cover  
72 x 21 x 15



**LES AYRE**  
NEWARK, NJ

**CLARINA BEZZOLA**  
ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

**Toothvest** 2001  
Fabric, styrofoam, resin, polyester-filing, leather  
12 x 13 x 16



**Haven** 2006  
Glass beads, acrylic, wire on wood  
14 x 15 x 11



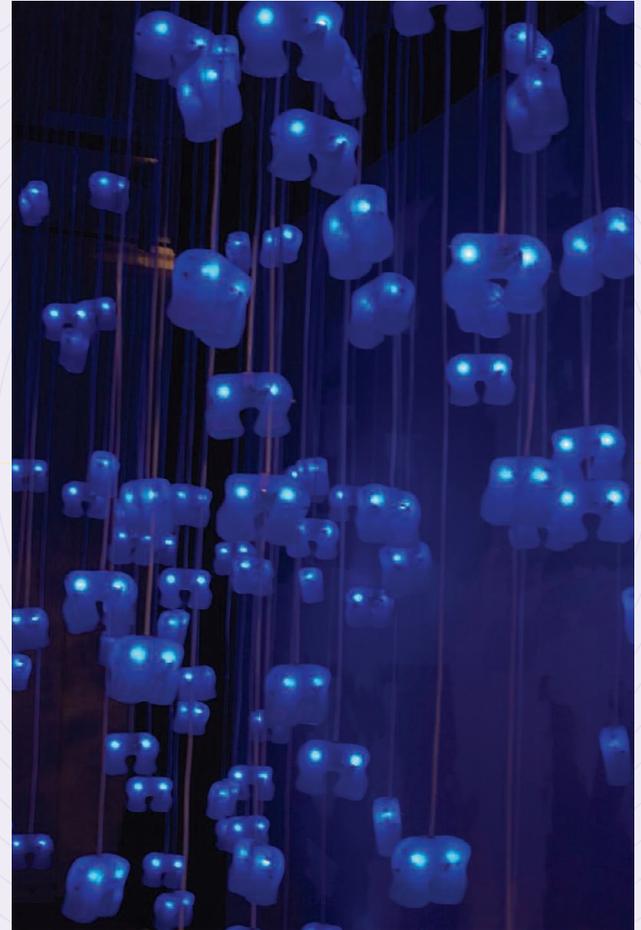
**A.KIMBERLIN BLACKBURN**  
KAPAA, HI

**TOM BROADBENT**  
BROOKLYN, NY

**Don't Cry** 2007  
Mixed Media with inflatables  
Variable



**Bions** 2006  
50 Computers and mixed media  
36 x 36 x 84



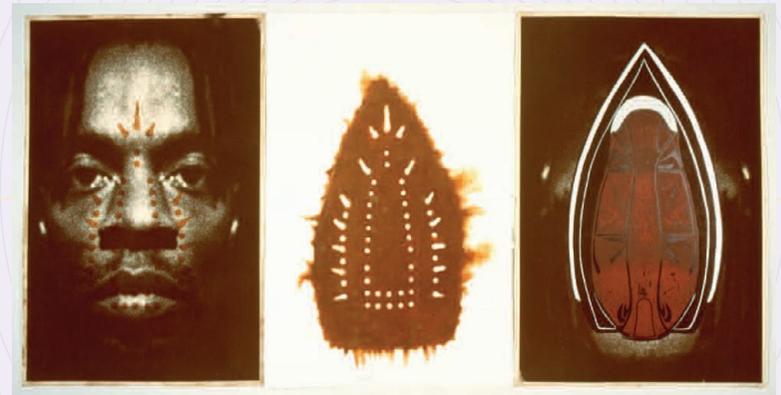
**ADAM BROWN**  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

**JAMES ANDREW BROWN**  
NEWARK, NJ

**Memorial Pole** 2006  
Gathered mixed media  
48 x 48 x 84



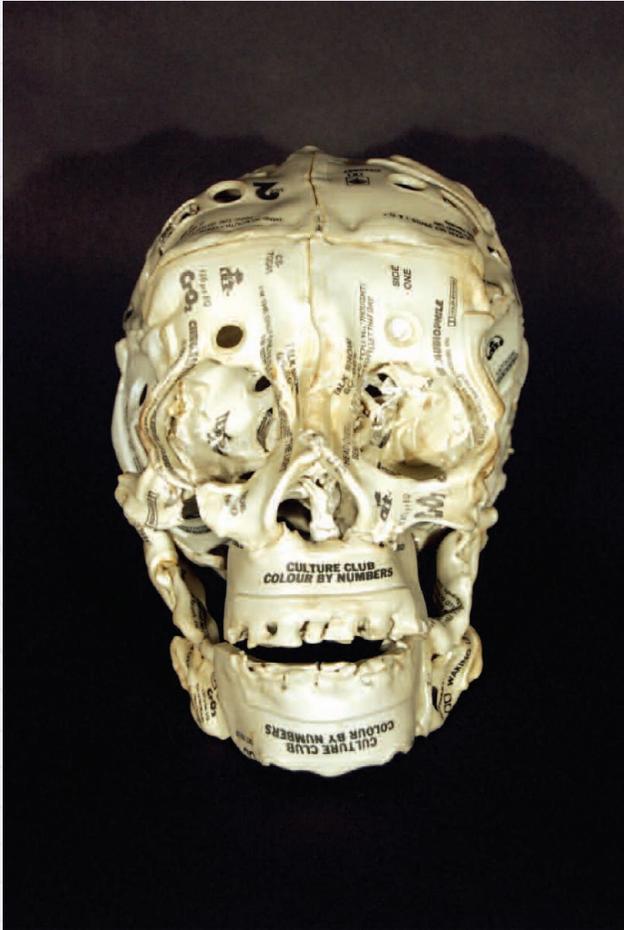
**Man, Spirit, Mask** 1999  
Multi-media print  
26 1/2 x 39 1/6



**WILLIE COLE**  
MINE HILL, NJ

**BRIAN DETTMER**  
ATLANTA, GA

**Skull #12 (80's Pop)** 2007  
Altered cassette tapes  
6 x 6 x 8



**Sphericity** 2006  
Steel  
120 x 120



**PATRICK DOYLE**  
ROCHESTER, NY

**Nila** 2002  
Black slate and steel  
12 1/2 x 23 x 12 3/4



**Pabst-Chair, Chaise Lounge & Tables** 2006  
Mixed media fabrications  
Variable



**GRACE GRAUPE PILLARD**  
KEYPORT, NJ

**Soho Refugees** 2005  
C-print  
20 x 30



**Age 17** 2004-2005  
Video projection, acrylic, mirror & mixed media  
27 x 21



**DALIT GUREVICH**  
BROOKLYN, NY

**VICTORIA HANKS**  
NEWARK, NJ

**Prince – Princess and the Pea** 2006  
Watercolor on paper  
7 x 10



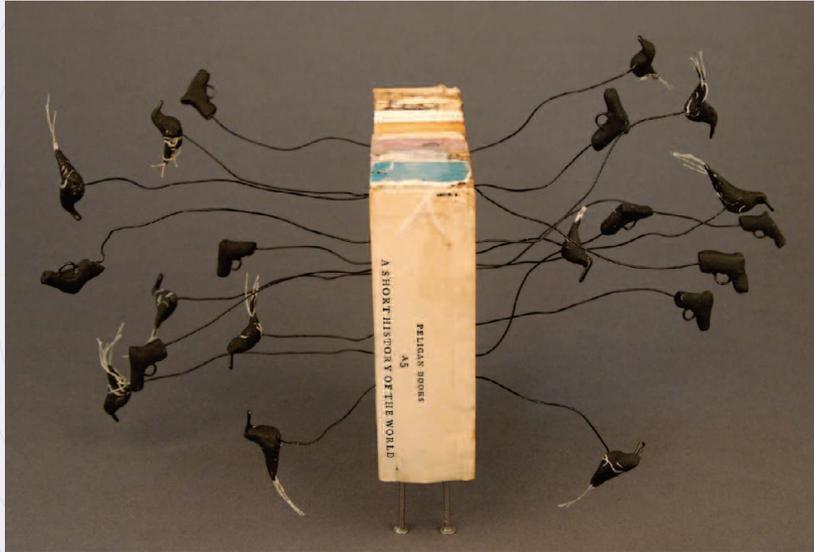
**Deka** 2007  
Initiation blanket, ribbon, plaster of Paris,  
wooden chair and table, 84 x 38 x 36



**NICHOLAS HLOBO**  
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

**LISA KOKIN**  
RICHMOND, CA

**A Short History of the World** 2006  
Mixed media, found book sculpture  
6 x 8 1/2 x 7 1/2



**Husband and Son** 2006  
Polyester resin, steel, oil paint  
76 1/2 x 23 x 21



**NINA LEVY**  
BROOKLYN, NY

**D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI**  
WESTCHESTER, NY

**Heads (Post Apocalyptic Tattoo Series)** 2006  
India ink on paper and mixed media  
wall sculptures, Variable



**Madame CJ Walker, Series 1** 2000  
Wood, cloth, beads, hair, hairclips, plexiglass  
55 x 31 x 5

**UJIMA KUUMBA MAJIED**  
NEWARK, NJ







**GAE SAVANNAH**  
NEW YORK, NY

**Lei-tsu** 2003

Hair accessories, Christmas ornaments,  
beads, feathers, wire, wood and fabric, 22 x 9



**Medium** 2004

Pencil, ink, paint on paper  
27 x 39

**PETER SCHLANGENBADER**  
BERLIN, GERMANY



**JOAN SEMMEL**  
NEW YORK, NY



**Cornered** 2006  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 54

**Waterhouse** 2006  
Wood, paint, and plexiglass  
16 1/2 x 23 1/2 x 24 1/2



**VERON URDARIANU**  
AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND



**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND THEIR GALLERIES**

- LYNDA ABRAHAM** Dam Stuhltrager Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.damstuhltrager.com](http://www.damstuhltrager.com)  
**VICTOR ALIMPIEV** Regina Gallery, Moscow, Russia, [www.regina.ru](http://www.regina.ru)  
**MARK ANDREAS** Dam Stuhltrager Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.damstuhltrager.com](http://www.damstuhltrager.com)  
**LES AYRE** Artist, Newark, NJ \*  
**CLARINA BEZZOLA** Artist, New York, NY, [www.clarinabezzola.com](http://www.clarinabezzola.com)  
**A.KIMBERLIN BLACKBURN** Artist, Kapaa, HI, [www.akimberlinblackburn.com](http://www.akimberlinblackburn.com) \*  
**TOM BROADBENT** Front Room Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.frontroom.org](http://www.frontroom.org)  
**ADAM BROWN** Artist, Oklahoma City, OK, [www.isisconceptuallaboratory.com](http://www.isisconceptuallaboratory.com) \*  
**JAMES ANDREW BROWN** Artist, Newark, NJ \*  
**WILLIE COLE** Brodsky Center, New Brunswick, NJ, [www.rcipp.rutgers.edu](http://www.rcipp.rutgers.edu)  
Alexander and Bonin, New York, NY, [www.alexanderandbonin.com](http://www.alexanderandbonin.com)  
**BRIAN DETTMER** Toomey Tourell Gallery, San Francisco, CA, [www.toomey-tourell.com](http://www.toomey-tourell.com)  
**PATRICK DOYLE** Artist, Rochester, NY \*  
**DEL GEIST** Artist, New York, NY, [www.tinyurl.com/32skvo](http://www.tinyurl.com/32skvo)  
**MATT GOSSER** Artist, Newark, NJ, [www.gosser.info](http://www.gosser.info) \*  
**GRACE GRAUPE PILLARD** Artist, Keyport, NJ, [ggp.Neolimages.net](http://ggp.Neolimages.net) \*  
**DALIT GUREVICH** Dam Stuhltrager Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.damstuhltrager.com](http://www.damstuhltrager.com)  
**VICTORIA HANKS** Artist, Newark, NJ, [www.paintgrrl.com](http://www.paintgrrl.com) \*  
**NICHOLAS HLOBO** Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, SA, [www.michaelstevenson.com](http://www.michaelstevenson.com)  
**LISA KOKIN** Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY, [www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com](http://www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com)  
**NINA LEVY** Metaphor Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.metaphorcontemporaryart.com](http://www.metaphorcontemporaryart.com)  
**D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI** Kasia Kay Art Projects, Chicago, IL, [www.kasiakayartprojects.com](http://www.kasiakayartprojects.com)  
**UJIMA KUUMBA MAJIED** Artist, Newark, NJ \*  
**LOREN MUNK** Dam Stuhltrager Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, [www.damstuhltrager.com](http://www.damstuhltrager.com)  
**TOM NUSSBAUM** Artist, Montclair, NJ, [www.tomnussbaum.com](http://www.tomnussbaum.com)  
**GERMAN PITRE** Artist, Newark, NJ, [www.germanpitre.com](http://www.germanpitre.com) \*  
**ROLANDO POLITI** Artist, New York, NY  
**GAE SAVANNAH** Artist, New York, NY, [www.gaesavannah.com](http://www.gaesavannah.com)  
**PETER SCHLANGENBADER** Lys Wakeman Galerie, Berlin, DE, [www.lys-wakeman-galerie.de](http://www.lys-wakeman-galerie.de)  
**JOAN SEMMEL** Artist, New York, NY, [www.joansemmel.com](http://www.joansemmel.com)  
**VERON URDARIANU** Mitchell, Inness & Nash, New York, NJ, [www.miandn.com](http://www.miandn.com)  
**FRED WILSON** Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY, [www.sculpture-center.org](http://www.sculpture-center.org)  
Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, [www.pacewildenstein.com](http://www.pacewildenstein.com)

\* for more information — [www.rupertravens.net](http://www.rupertravens.net)

# SINGULARITY IN THE COMMUNAL TIDE

## CULTURE & IDENTITY IN THE MOMENT

MAY 13 – JULY 15, 2007

Rupert Ravens, Guest Curator

Judy Wukitsch - GALLERY DIRECTOR

Peter Jacobs - EXHIBITION COORDINATOR

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SOUTH ORANGE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
RECREATION AND  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS.

What a culturally sumptuous yet at times strangely familiar world we have. Through globalization resulting in large part by advances in media and technology, we have flung open the borders for our exposure and experiences. At the same time, the overlaying of culture upon culture by the same means has impacted the provinciality of a region through infiltration by well-known commodities and concepts. How is individualistic identity maintained in a world exchanging fast-moving, fast-tracking, fast-absorbing information, ideas and knowledge? How is cultural uniqueness fostered and cherished in a time of shifting cores and the obscuring of familial framework through mobilization? *Singularity in the Communal Tide* is the artist's attempt to break through this globalized framework in search of their personal, identifying marks, often times.

The Pierro Gallery of South Orange is honored to present this significant international body of thirty contemporary artists whose work examines the individual self revealed in the ever-increasing world collective. I thank Curator Rupert Ravens for his voracious desire and expertise in bringing as many of the best artists representative of our premise to the Gallery. His scope, aspiration, and intelligence make him a formidable force in the art world. Thank you to Peter Jacobs, Singularity's Coordinator for the Gallery, for his creative vision and oversight in bringing the original brainstorm to fruition. Thank you to the PGOSO Committee, a most talented, devoted and benevolent group of volunteers responsive to the needs of sustaining the Gallery and its vision. And thank you to all the volunteers whose time and energy keep the the doors open and programming vital for the hundreds of residents and visitors, students and seniors, artists and non-artists, groups and individuals to visit, observe, and experience a broad range of significant works of art.

JUDY WUKITSCH • director

*It may be in the cultural particularities of people — in their oddities — that some of the most instructive revelations of what it is to be generically human are to be found.™*

— Clifford Geertz, Cultural Anthropologist

Culture was once relative to where you lived and your identity was formed largely by exposure from that environment. Many artists acknowledge their backgrounds, ancestries, and religions through the expression of their art. Along with these elements, artist now embrace an expanded global culture of contact, sources and information. This relentless media stream has altered artists methods of creation and the tools they utilize to express 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts. This movement in art has transformed the way we perceive the world and ourselves. Contemporary art is now both the barometer and initiator of trends.

I was thrilled when Rupert Ravens agreed to curate an exhibition based on my concept, *Culture and Identity*. He titled the show, "Singularity in The Communal Tide (Culture & Identity in the Moment)." The work in this show reinforces the artists' identity through a broad illumination of culture. This exhibition of thirty artists is a testament to the provocative curatorial vision of Rupert Ravens. I would also like to express my appreciation for the hard work of Judy Wukitsch, The Executive Board, and The Exhibition Committee of *The Pierro Gallery*.

PETER JACOBS • exhibition coordinator