

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

CFAM exhibition allows Rollins professors' big ideas to bloom
Faculty exhibition explores contemporary themes

By Richard Reep

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2014 ROLLINS FACULTY EXHIBITION

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cfam.rollins.edu | free

The Cornell Fine Arts Museum's beige arches terminate Holt Avenue with a little classical touch. Rollins' traditionalism, however, ends at the threshold of this institution. This year's exhibition of work by art department faculty departs from classical fine art into contemporary themes, and comes just in time for the languid lakeside summer to descend upon campus after a flurry of spring finals, allowing big ideas time to bloom.

Dawn Roe confronts viewers with a single video, titled "No One Was With Her When She Died (Dust)," a video loop inspired by one poignant line from *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White. Specks as large as baseballs silently swoop and jiggle in a big black sea, setting a contemplative atmosphere for the front half of the exhibit.

Roe's work is flanked by austere, subtle wall sculptures by Joshua Almond and Dana Hargrove. Almond's highly tactile landscapes teeter on the edge between natural and man-made; "Call the Darkness" is carved basswood, strangely luminous, pink as healthy skin, yet cracked like a dried-up lakebed in the hot desert sun and jutting with thorny protuberances. Opposite this, Hargrove re-envisioned the rock piles left by Scottish ancients, transforming them into colorful stacks of blocks. Her highly ordered sculptures are organic nested forms, yet brightly painted like product packaging. This leads to a fascinating effect, one of darkness and depth despite the gay colors. Together, the three artists' serene and somber tones build an aesthetic tension in the room.

This tension is broken, temporarily, by Rose Thome Casterline's humorous series of larger-than-life charcoal portraits, mostly students slumping, posing, or otherwise striking attitudes on a rigid row of uncomfortable plastic chairs. "Time Out" is a teenager submerged deep into his iPad, sprawled prone across his chair. Casterline's figures lyrically interact with the order of chairs in a syncopated narrative of a school afternoon, bodies frozen, caught in mid-writhe, sensuality repressed in their school clothing but leaking out through pouts and tapping feet.



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Rachel Simmons' two collaborative works counterbalance this opus with tragic and comic walls. On one side, she printed Lee Lines' photographs on an etching press, and they embellished these with charcoal and graphite. In "Economy of Scale," one of the nine images, two highway overpasses loom; the series continues the theme of spatial disharmony and scale-shift, a no-man's tragedy of wrecked places. On the gallery's other side, Simmons collaborated with history prof Julian Chambliss on "Future Bear – Past Imperfect" (see our story "[Future Bear wants to save the world](#)," April 16). The mixed-media piece ties in eerily to the room's grander theme of displacement and fear, yet it's rendered in comic-book color panels with wry Florida-bubba dialogue, ending this chapter of Future Bear's battle to save the planet from humans.

Emergence: 2014 Senior Studio Art Exhibition, the work of Rollins' graduating seniors, occupies two adjacent galleries through May 11, and is also worth a look. This new generation's work is exciting for its potential, and seeing it alongside the faculty's gives the viewer a sense of the great studio dialogues that are so key to teaching.