An exhibition catalog that addresses the influence, critique, and celebration of Pop Culture.

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Juror Statement

In the world of the Internet, the HASHTAG connects seemingly disparate entities and individuals, all of whom have a desire to be seen and heard. Similarly, the exhibition #Hashtag brings together a diverse group of artists, each of which is investigating what pop culture is in 2013. The majority of the artists included in #Hashtag have turned their magnifying glasses toward the meme-worthy phenomena that crowd the internet.

Upon its inception, Pop Art simultaneously critiqued celebrity and mass-market manufacturing. Today, artists dealing with pop culture are exploring the behaviors and interests of relatively “normal” individuals. Through social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube, non-celebrities can attempt to gain a level of fame through connecting with, commenting on, or becoming celebrities in their own right. This creation and fascination of a global community provides a rich environment for artist exploration.

The video artist Cindy Burton takes to Youtube to ask the collective conscious “Am I Pretty?” Burton is stepping into the cyber shoes of young teenage girls, embracing, and questioning the authenticity of the practice of presenting insecurities to a nameless and faceless online community. Similarly, Malena Barnhart explores cultural expectations of the female gender through the lense of the Youtube phenomenon of women posting hair and makeup tutorials, many of which are meant to emulate celebrity style.

Other works in the exhibition investigate Instagram and the uprising of the selfie. Jason Schwaub’s staged “selfies” explore the artifice of presenting personal/private experiences to a wide universe of connected acquaintances. Brian Cavanaugh followed the tag “#happy” on Instagram in an attempt to find further commonality among unrelated individuals, by way of cataloging and presenting the specific hues found in the #happy photos.

Overall, the work included in #Hashtag is simultaneously embracing the meme and the selfie as contemporary pop culture and questioning the overall authenticity of the internet celebrity. The content of the work may seem somewhat esoteric at first, and some of it is. However, the subjects being tackled by this selected group of artists are universal, and absolutely right now.

#contemporaryart #lipstick #lanadelray #pizzahut #selfie #happy #theinternetz #mememyselvandi #hotdogs #internetfamous #share #leaveacomment #FIRST
In this work, the music video *Young and Beautiful* by Lana Del Rey, is combined with 72 YouTube makeup tutorials featuring women and girls demonstrating how to look like Lana Del Rey.

I believe that the marginalized status of women is maintained and enforced through the process of acculturation. Consuming mass media, including television, consumer products, and the Internet, is how we learn the rules and expectations of our society.

http://www.malenabarnhart.com
Using a digital makeover site, I created selfies or self-portraits using the makeup style and hairstyle of celebrities. The portraits are glitched by inputting erroneous information about my face resulting in a monstrous combination of my image and an ideal celebrity face. These works rely both on the use of the Internet, glitches and on knowledge of pop culture.

http://www.rachellebeaudoin.com
Favoriting, tweeting, and retweeting are common among people of the twenty-first century. It seems like everything we do is on our screens. We post our pictures to Instagram instead of printing them, update our status on Facebook instead of writing a journal, and send instant messages to our friends instead of making time to see them in person. As much as I love the ease of online social networking, I find it interesting to critique the cloud by applying it to paper. I chose to group my favorite tweets into taxonomies: comedy, cats, lifestyle, etc. — a way of categorizing what had already been categorized as my favorites. Each taxonomy is one issue in a zine series called Hashtag. Hashtag zines are meant to be entertaining, but to also raise awareness of the lack of intimacy within the Internet.

http://cargocollective.com/gabrielleblades
American popular culture transcends cultural and economic boundaries. From hearing 50 cent in a remote bar in Chilean Patagonia to watching 12-year-old Korean school girls choose Paris Hilton as their American names in English class, I have witnessed Hollywood’s influence around the world. Entertainment is one of America’s largest exports, and while I have mixed feelings about the individual players, I am fascinated by the phenomenon. In the words of cultural critic Neal Gabler, celebrity “distracts us, sensitizes us to the human condition, and creates a fund of common experience around which we can form a national community.”

Through material vacancies in photographic images and stacked gossip magazines, I repurpose print media through appropriation, extraction, and manipulation to examine stardom and its functions in contemporary society. By recontextualizing the printed matter of entertainment culture, I create vacancies for additional interpretations by suggesting new comparisons and highlighting the intersection of pop culture and Culture with a capital C.

http://peterbugg.com
In her videos and online presence Burton seeks to identify patterns in the performances of self acted out by young girls and women online. Her videos seek to scratch away at the glittery veneer of Internet life to reveal the insecurities and the dangers of sharing yourself online. Living openly online directly fuels Burton’s practice, providing context and content for use in videos that make the nostalgic disturbing and present the unsettling nature of vanity.

http://youtube.com/user/l1ndybunr0w
Hashtags connect seemingly disparate ideas, people, and visual information into networks linked by common language. #happy is sources public Instagram photos to discover how individuals worldwide view happiness. Each image is analyzed to find the average color—the most commonly used hues within the image—and displayed in an ever-changing grid.

http://www.briancavanaugh.com
Letters to a Young Actress reproduces a erratic and strange “fan letter” sent to the troubled starlet Amanda Bynes in the wake of her 2013 arrest in New York City. Offering encouragement, counsel, and the beginnings of what seems to be a complex disquisition on the nature of fame, the letter reads like something a deranged, anonymous Internet comment. The text of the letter runs from page to page beneath a series of child-like drawings depicting items - a Starbucks cups, a bra, a Xanax pill - that may or may not have had some significance in the affair. Gualco and Henkel’s work exaggerates the surreal and confusing relationship between audience and individual in the tabloid realm.

http://www.matthewgualco.com
Planned installation utilizing glitter covering an entire gallery. Explores the glits, glam, and kitsch of our popular culture and how these items 'infect' viewers and visitors.

http://thejonhenry.com
This website functions as a celebrity gossip page while also acting as an archive for celebrity gossip pages. Depending on the context it is an artwork about Britney Spears, celebrity culture and the representation of women - or it is just another website to view a celebrity without make-up.

I hope that this project will encourage viewers to become aware of the interactive qualities that these types of images in the media have. When a magazine like US Weekly puts two images of the same celebrity side-by-side and asks the viewer to chose which image is more attractive, it puts the viewer through a process of identification and rejection. When a celebrity is not wearing make-up we (women) can identify with the celebrity and may think that they look like us without their stylists and airbrushing. But we then (often) decide that the celebrity looks bad without “makeup” (“makeup” is in quotation marks here because often “without makeup” is coded language for someone who is sloppy or ugly - even if the celebrity in question actually is wearing makeup). When we compare images of celebrities with or without make-up and then decide that the made-up celebrity (who we don’t identify with personally) is more attractive - we reject ourselves.

britneyspearswithoutmakeup.com is a site that highlights the paradox of celebrity idols and considers the complexities of blaming “the media” for unrealistic representations of women.

http://cindyhinant.com
The wallpaper suggests a gendered division driven by consumerist desire. The photos, mostly posted by women, boast of the fulfillment of a marital and fantasy rather than the lifetime promise of the two individuals. The friend comments highlight not only the nature of responses, but also how such behavior laden with consumerism and vanity is constantly rewarded with approval and praise.

The wallpaper also plays into the art history of interior design. Wallpaper enabled people to convey their taste and identity, particularly for women and their domestic lives. Wedding announcements used to be formally shared via printed invitations or newspaper announcements. Today, technology, has drastically changed—and in ways, trivialized—how people share these events. Social media technology allows users to informally share life events and news with everyone from close family to mere acquaintances.

This raises a good question about the invisible line between the private and public sphere. While a Facebook account may be for personal uses, the public’s access to it is uncontrollable. An Internet profile is not exempt from Internet advertising services turning a memorable moment into its own mini-advertisement. This intimate occasion is communicated much differently to the masses with the use of media. What exactly is privacy and how can people, in the face of advancing technology, maintain ownership and quality over personal moments?

http://www.katrinamajkut.com
As an image maker it’s difficult to not be influenced by the existence of the internet meme. Both permanent and ephemeral, the meme is subject to the ebb and flow of cultural currents and zeitgeists as self-realized reflection. A simulacrum folded into itself, the meme is both present and past, fleeting and immortal, democratic and repressive. In these works I used the internet as media, as raw material and finished product. Raw source memes have been corrupted through an online image program (original source code here: https://github.com/snorpey/jpg-glitch), existing as disposable documentations of disposable images.

http://www.michaelrmarks.com
#Jason Schwab

The work I have been exploring recently is dealing with social media and it’s prevalence as a medium for individualization and social flag planting. I am investigating the selfie as a social commodity, which its users present to place themselves within the ranks of a society. I use photography, video, and installation to convey my message because of the elements in these mediums that are so familiar to our everyday. With the abundance of photography and video in our daily lives, either on the internet or television screen, these mediums have become a regular means of communication and that is something I am trying to harness. With my installation work I intend to create environments that are very familiar to enhance the message that often hits close to home. The reason I believe this work fits well into the #Hashtag theme of this show is because the hashtag is often the right hand man of the selfie. They are either one word or brief statements that describe in more detail what the selfie is supposed to be saying. The hashtag is a contributor to the constructed image being created by the social media user.

http://www.jasonschwabart.com
My work satirizes the strong influence of pop culture on malleable young minds as well as the shift in ideals between generations. In referencing traditional “women’s work”, I aim to bring to light the evolution of the familial and professional roles of women over time in relation to the narrowing barrier between fine art and craft practices. By removing these craft elements from the historical domestic atmosphere, the embroidery thread on stretched fabrics, particularly canvas, acts as another mark-making instrument and consequently relatable to the act of painting. Similarly, as women expand their presence into the male-dominated public and become increasingly independent, they too are breaking the barriers of idealized gender roles.

http://www.sarahspread.com
“We Get Real Drunk And Eat Hot Dogs” is a part of a series of text paintings assembled from phrases derived from advertisements, overheard bits of conversation, hand-written signs, mundane objects, or any other mode of communication seen or heard in the public realm. By presenting them in a similar format and stripping them of context, the words can be examined more carefully, but the meaning is often so changed from the lack of context that the phrases become something else entirely. With the sources hidden, the phrases can become what they really are: funny, manipulative, strange, and, commonly, inarticulate. The series is an attempt to hold all stimuli as equal, and in so doing, experience the world without omission.

http://www.tomezsko.blogspot.com
As a child in Japan, I grew up watching reruns of 1970’s Japanese giant monster movies, Godzilla, while my mother worked late night shifts. I watched Godzilla being attacked by humans and monsters wherever he went, and as I immigrated to the US, I related heavily to Godzilla’s struggles and begun painting my personal narrative with me being Godzilla. At times I find myself being an observer of the American culture, at others, I find myself feeling helpless to the problems of the world, while on some occasion, I celebrate my shameless desire to consume materialistic products. Visually I have been influenced by television and internet advertising, while my works also reference aesthetics of Japanese woodblock prints, which were meant to be used as a highly consumable, “low-brow” mass produced advertisement during the late 16th century of feudal Japan. These visual aesthetics that I consumed are not only reflective of my cultural influences but also my addiction to mass social media and popular culture.

http://www.javeyoshimoto.com
#Malena Barnhart

Malena Barnhart earned her MFA degree in photography from Arizona State University in 2013. She also holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland. She has earned such awards as the John Dorsey Prize for Outstanding Curatorial Practice in 2009, Best of Show Honorable Mention from the Society For Photographic Education's Juried Exhibition in 2012, the Juror’s Merit Award from the Desert Photography Traveling Exhibit in 2012, and a Completion Fellowship Grant from Arizona State University in 2013. She has recently shown work in TOGTFO at the Harry Wood Gallery at Arizona State University, Double Vision II: Multi-Channel Video Festival at the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis, IN, the West Virginia Mountaineer Short Film Festival at the West Virginia University Creative Arts Center in Morgantown, WV and Fon Seks: Handheld Digital Technology and the Transformation of Intimacy at the University of Illinois Springfield Visual Arts Gallery in Springfield, IL. Her current research examines Internet culture through a feminist lens.

#Rachelle Beaudoin

Rachelle Beaudoin is an artist who uses video, wearables, and performance to explore feminine iconography and identity within popular culture. She attended the College of the Holy Cross and holds a Master’s degree in Digital+Media from Rhode Island School of Design. She has exhibited at Intimacy: Across Digital and Visceral Performance Goldsmiths London UK, the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi Finland, Low Lives 3 and Itinerant Festival of International Performance Art, Queens NY. She was a Spring 2013 Artist-in-Residence at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass CO. She will be a Fulbright artist-in-residence at quartier21 in Vienna, Austria in 2014.

#Gabrielle Blades

Gabrielle Blades is working towards a BFA in Graphic design at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Design allows Gabby to engage in a meaningful process in which she can explore language and typography. Design challenges her to find new ways to deliver ideas to specific audiences.

#Peter Bugg

Peter Bugg was born and raised in Madison, WI, earned a BA in economics from the University of Chicago, and an MFA in photography from Arizona State University. In 2009, he participated in the Arizona Biennial and interned at a paparazzi photo agency in Los Angeles, CA, where he gained an inside perspective on stardom and the Hollywood machine. In 2010, his work was featured in the exhibition Open for Business at the ASU Art Museum. In the spring of 2011, he was awarded an emerging artist grant by the Phoenix Art Museum’s Contemporary Forum. In 2012, received an In Flux vacant storefront grant through the City of Tempe and he participated in the group exhibition O Espaço Entre, at Largo das Artes in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He currently teaches at Arizona State University where he also serves as the student gallery director.

#Cindy Burton

Cindy Burton is a 28-year-old teen princess who befriended the Internet (in 1997) at the tender age of 12. She spent her teen years pretending to be adult men in cyber sex chatrooms, drawing, and watching anime alone in her room. Now she is an MFA candidate at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where she makes videos exploring online persona and Internet pop culture.

Still operating mainly from her bedroom (under at least two personas), Cindy examines what it means to create and act out a feminine presence in online spaces, the relationships involved, and the challenges faced by young women online creating a branded identity.
Brian Cavanaugh

Brian Cavanaugh is an artist whose digital practice explores data, technology, and digital culture. Through collecting information from public sources and by generating data from self-tracking, Brian explores the notions of transparency and privacy in a data-centric world. His works, created with digital tools such as programming languages, extrapolate and summarize data in visual multimedia works, which include video, graphics, interactivity, and traditional media. Brian received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art and Digital Media from Albright College and Master of Fine Arts in New Forms from Pratt Institute. Brian lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Matthew Gualco

Matthew Gualco earned a BFA in Painting and Printmaking from Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA in New Genre from San Francisco Art Institute.

Jon Henry

Jon Henry grew up in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains on his family’s cattle farm. His county still does not have stoplights, cellphone towers, or chain retailers. He completed BAs in Studio Art & International Politic from the University of Richmond, MA in Arts Politics at NYU|Tisch, and is currently enrolled in an MFA Studio Art program at James Madison University. Henry's practice is rooted in sculpture and explores his heritage in the rural south as a queer. Currently, he is producing and curating the Old Furnace Artist Residency.

Cindy Hinant

Cindy Hinant was born in Indianapolis, IN in 1984 and lives in New York, NY. She received a BFA from the Herron School of Art and Design and holds a MFA from the School of Visual Arts. In 2008 she received the Edward Albee Visual Artist-in-Residence Fellowship and was awarded the Robert D. Beckman Jr. Emerging Artist Fellowship in 2009. She has had solo shows at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Joe Sheftel Gallery and 3A Gallery and has participated in group shows at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Athens Institute of Contemporary Art the Community Museum Laboratory and the Museo de Arte El Salvador.

Katrina Majkut

Katrina Majkut (My’kit) specializes in the history and social impact of Western wedding customs—exploring the origins, analyzing the influence of social norms, pop culture, religion, media and consumerism, and asking difficult questions: Who or what created Bridezillas? How come men don’t wear engagement rings? Why doesn’t the groom change his name? In creating her artwork, she is inspired by art history and particularly provoked by male representations of females. She is a heavily research-based artist and works in a range of mediums based on which form best fit her artistic, feminist and activist ideas.

Majkut holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Babson College, Wellesley, Mass., and a Post-baccalaureate certificate and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She lectures, continues to write on the topic, and exhibits related artwork extensively in the Boston area and nationally.
Michael Marks was born in Birmingham, AL and has lived throughout the Southeast. He received a BA from Georgia College and State University and MFA from Clemson University. His work uses a wide range of media, investigating historical modes of perception, memory, and image disruption through antagonizations of meaning and form.

Marks’s work has been featured nationally and internationally in over fifty exhibitions; in solo exhibitions at Middle Georgia State College in Cochran, GA, and Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA; in group exhibitions at Lapham Gallery and APW Gallery, NY; Murray State University, KY; and Art and Shelter Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. He has received several awards, including a 2012 research grant from Vasari Paints, NY, and will have a teaching project published later this year through the Paris College of Art. He currently teaches at the South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville, SC and Anderson University in Anderson, SC.

Jason Schwab is a current candidate of the MFA program at Columbus College of Art and Design. He has recently finished his first year in the MFA program. He received his BFA from Kutztown University of Kutztown Pennsylvania in 2010 with a concentration in photography. Jason’s work has a large emphasis on the critique of society. He believes art has a great ability to recontextualize what we see as the common everyday and view it in a way that makes it exceptional and questions its context in our lives. Much of his work focuses on this idea, which drives his work to question what we interact with on a daily basis. Through the use of photography and drawing Jason creates scenes that are situated in reality but have an oddness to them that questions the depicted reality.

Sarah Spread was born and raised in the heart of Chicago. She received her BFA from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 2013. Since her return to the city, she has been drawing inspiration from the vivid tattoo scene and pop culture in general. Her work consists mostly of oil paint and mixed media with a growing emphasis on embroidery as a drawing tool.

Mat Tomezsko is a Philadelphia based artist primarily producing paintings influenced by the social environment of the city and the urban experience. His paintings often reflect social issues and conditions, and are made up of materials and imagery drawn from everyday visual language. Tomezsko is a Tyler School of Art graduate, and has participated in exhibitions at various commercial galleries and underground art spaces such as the Crane Arts, Projects Gallery, and the Danger! Danger! Gallery. He has also made a number of temporary public art installations with the Mural Arts Program.

Jave Yoshimoto is an artist and educator of multi-cultural background. He was born in Japan to Chinese parents and immigrated to California at a young age. Yoshimoto has since traveled and lived in various parts of the states which influenced his artistic practice. He believes in creating art works that are socially conscious and true to his authentic self. Yoshimoto has received his Bachelors from University of California Santa Barbara in Studio Art, his Post-baccalaureate Certificate in Painting and Drawing and Masters of Art in Art Therapy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and his Masters of Fine Arts in Painting at Syracuse University. As an artist, he served as an artist-in-residence at Art Farm Nebraska, The Art Students’ League of New York, Vermont Studio Center and Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the arts. Yoshimoto has been published in New American Paintings and featured online on multiple websites, received a letter of recognition from the Friends of the United Nations, and exhibited across numerous states. Yoshimoto has also shown in solo exhibitions in New York City and Seattle, Washington. Yoshimoto currently works as Director and Assistant Professor of Studio Art program at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, Oklahoma.

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