

'Improvised Munition'

a solo exhibition by Nick van Woert

and

'Pewter Wings, Golden Horns, Stone Veils'

a group exhibition

Opening: 3 March, 2012, from 4-6 at Keizersgracht 82
and from 6-8 pm at Frans Halsstraat 26, Amsterdam.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the second solo exhibition at the gallery by American artist Nick van Woert, as well as a group exhibition organized by the artist titled 'Pewter Wings, Golden Horns, Stone Veils'.

'Improvised Munition' takes its name from a United States Army Technical Manual, which outlines various ways of using seemingly innocuous and locally available materials to create weapons, explosives, fuses, ammunition and incendiaries. The materials and objects used in the manual are typically household products; products that for van Woert describe a new American landscape. Van Woert's interest lies in the latent horror and destructive possibilities resting just below the surface of these materials that have come to support and signify lifestyles of comfort, leisure, opulence and convenience.

Interested in destruction as a type of alchemy and how it has been used throughout history as a means to regain a sense of identity, van Woert's work makes reference to the iconoclasm during the 16th century Beeldenstorm in Europe, the breaking of stocking looms in England by the Luddites, burning billboards by Edward Abbey's fictional characters in "The Monkey Wrench Gang", and the industrial sabotage of the underground radical environmentalists, EarthFirst. Each of these groups developed a relationship to ordinary objects and materials that drastically changed their original meaning. By slightly altering the context of a material they were able to turn something typically associated with convenience into a catastrophe. A darkness is revealed behind the familiar suggesting that the comfort a material provides may only be camouflage for the violence underneath. The extreme polarities materials can traverse in terms of their meaning and our relationship to them is part of an ongoing discussion for van Woert.



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One of the works in 'Improvised Munition' is 'Erratic', a sprawling sculpture made from processed materials stacked in clear boxes. The boxes interlock like strata, which for the artist follow in the tradition of Landscape painting. Where Albert Bierstadt painted lavish Sunsets over Yosemite, Donner Lake and Lake Tahoe, places only hours away from where van Woert grew up, van Woert presents a landscape made from the materials he sees and touches everyday: urethane, plywood, sheetrock, steel, various chemicals, supplements, hair gel, charcoal, chlorine, Kool-Aid, Coca-Cola, and styrofoam among many others.

The subtext to many of the works is about reconnecting to the natural world. Figures like John Muir, Henry David Thoreau and Ted Kaczinsky all chose to live outside of the luxuries provided by modern life. Using the words of Thoreau to understand this impetus he says, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." This reductive process of stripping your life down and searching for a naked experience with raw material is what inspires van Woert.

The group show '**Pewter Wings, Golden Horns, Stone Veils**' curated by **Nick van Woert** includes **Sam Falls, Langdon Graves, Ryan Johnson, Ross Knight, Todd Knopke, Matt King** and **Austin Willis**. The title of the show is taken from a book by the late architect John Hejduk. Where the architect explored the social and psychological dimensions of space, this group of artists explore the social, political and psychological dimensions of materials.

Sam Falls' work deals with time and representation. He uses materials such as hand dyed or synthetic fabrics, depending on the place and what it warrants, to create site-specific installations. Falls' outdoor sculptures are often made of parts that will rust or fade while other parts stay unchanged, to illustrate time passing.

Drawing from the conventions of product display and commercial architecture, **Matt King's** work takes us on a circuitous route through the systems of global distribution. At once familiar and peculiar, his partially dismantled and vacated structures deny their utilitarian reference. By framing spaces whose emptiness makes room for contemplative consideration, King offers a meditative look at the remnants of an exhausted landscape.

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Todd Knopke's practice takes the American tradition of quilting with the European tradition of tapestry knitting and combines them with contemporary ideas of collage, sculpture and painting. To allow for more clarity in his exploration, Knopke focuses on the inherent richness of the material, with its diverse color and texture rather than basic physics. He uses mostly material gathered from friends and family to investigate how material is imbued with the personal.

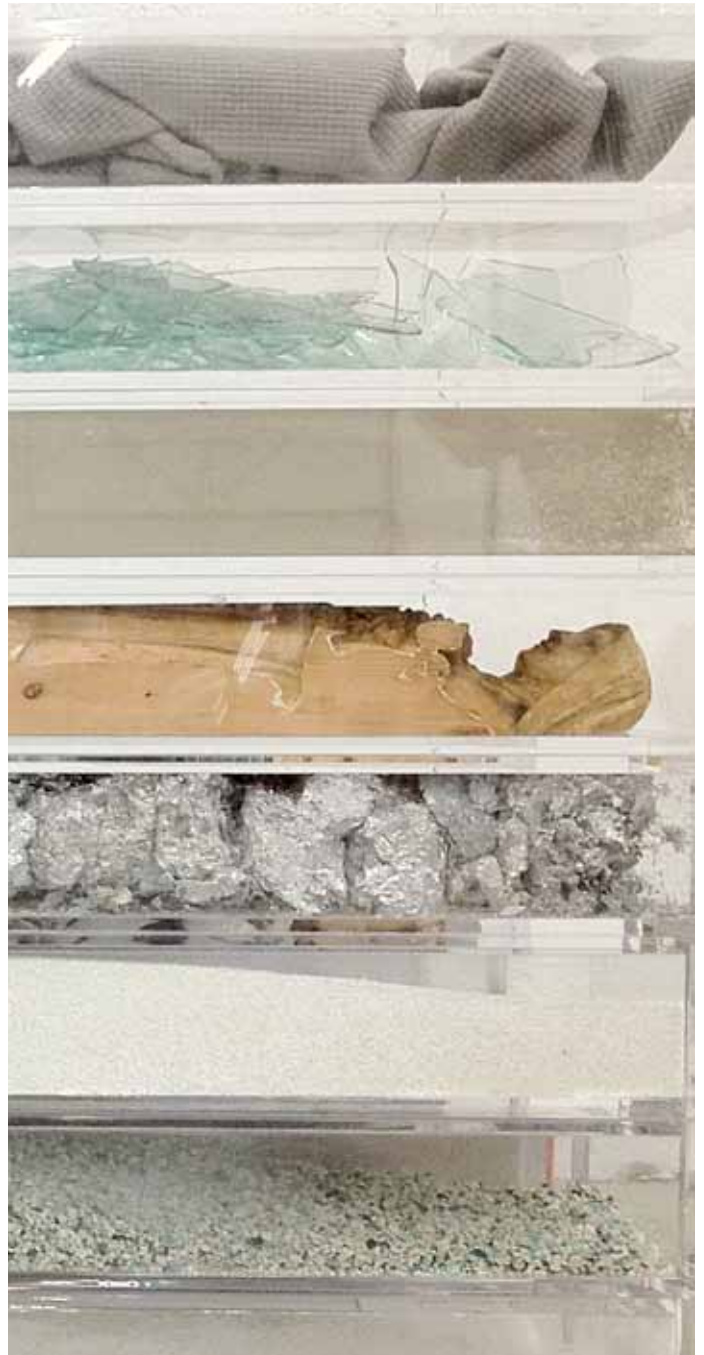
The intimate structures by **Ross Knight** hinge on visual relationships formed when re-contextualized materials are shaped to touch one another in specific and suggestive ways. Ross' describes his work as "awkwardly aesthetic and a reminiscent of something familiar; possessing a vague practical application they are neither formalist nor minimalist". At first glance the work seems to represent one thing while at the same time suggesting a different function.

Langdon Graves' drawings and sculptures tread a careful line between the beautiful and unsettling and often cross the line between the imagined and the physical. Inspired by basic human circumstances she explores the body and transformation, aging, degeneration, healing and the role of belief in these processes. For her most recent sculptures she borrows elements from the International Code of Signals and redirects their meaning through disassembly and unlikely arrangements. Signal flags send broken messages that materialize into gestures of self-defeat and half-hearted recovery.

Turning away from traditional sculpture and through his playful use of material **Ryan Johnson** creates a theatrical tension between 'stuff' and its implied function. This conflict of the used artifacts, materials and the suggested images plays a key role for Johnson. He finds inspiration in modernist architecture that focuses on the relationship between form and function.

Austin Willis' body of work is pervaded by a fascination with sound. In his video works, Willis plays with the possibilities of the medium to create an effect of dislocation through patterns, repetition and rhythmic structures. In this recent work he explores different media as he continues to investigate the disruption of normality.

Nick van Woert (1979) was born in Reno, Nevada and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. His work was shown by GRIMM in the group show 'High, Low and in Between' in 2009 and in his first major solo exhibition 'SHE-WOLF' in 2010. In 2011 Yvon Lambert hosted Van Woert's first Paris show 'Anatomy' as well as his first New York show 'Breaking and Entering'. In September 2011 FIAF Gallery presented Nick van Woert's 'Terra Amata' as part of the fifth edition of FIAF's annual contemporary arts festival Crossing the Line.



The exhibitions run at both GRIMM galleries from March 3 till March 31, 2012

GRIMM is open from Wednesday till Saturday, from 12:00 am to 6:00 pm.

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