

Gallery Guide

Altered

Many contemporary artists use previously created images in the development of their work, whether as resource material, visual guidance or by actually attaching an image into their art work. Today, with so many technological advances, it is easier than ever to transfer images onto the surface of a work of art. Artists can use images from online sources, art history, newspapers or other sources with ease and at times, don't realize that images can be intellectual property that is copyrighted and protected from use by another creator. There can be a fine line between copyright infringement and fair use, especially with the growth of the internet. In a world filled with so many visual images, there is a plethora of sources for new creativity.

In the exhibition **Altered**, artists Rose Camastro-Pritchett, Javier Chavira, Kate Ingold and Katsy Johnson make use of images but then alter them in some way to make them their own and add impact. They incorporate images that have been made by others or images they have made themselves with photography, but change and transform them by adding other media, manipulating them or by changing their entire context. Artists by nature are creative, and see potential in whatever they observe or internalize, and these artists have used this inherent artistic nature to approach their own creative practice.

Rose Camastro-Pritchett, in her **Comfort Women** series, has researched her topic strenuously, and in doing so, has included in her works photocopies of authentic maps from 1937 China. The maps provide us with information as to where "comfort stations" (brothels) existed for Japanese soldiers to avail themselves of over 200,000 women sex slaves beginning with the Nanking Massacre and throughout WWII. The comfort women were from China, Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Korea and Indochina, as well as Dutch women from the Netherlands and Australia. The maps are incorporated into quilted works that sensitively overlay images of the women's robes with red thread emanating from their hearts. The works evoke the women's fragility as victims and yet provide information that is accessible through printed words and the mapping of space. Without the use of the altered images, the works might appear generic; Camastro-Pritchett successfully conveys important specific statistics balanced by emotionally provocative imagery to make works that can be seen for their specific issue or to more universally address abuse against women.

Javier Chavira is a painter who utilizes photography as a basis for his work, painting highly realistic portraiture but altering the images through use of symbolism, metaphor and various media. His portraits are not straightforward painted renderings of his subject, but instead appear with various painted or

physically added symbolic objects or abstract symbols. The portraits instead become metaphorical, asking the viewer to interpret their emotional essence. Chavira at times adds a circular colored disk on top of the painted surface to further alter the image. His paintings draw us into his subjects as we attempt a deeper understanding of these individuals through his combinations of imagery. He alters our perception, too, as we are asked to interpret meanings.

Kate Ingold uses her own photography for her images, but then alters her images with text and pattern to create new meanings. Her series **Dark Water** blends evocative and blurred images of water, with droplets appearing mysteriously on a surface (presumably the glass of the lens) distorting whatever lies beyond the lens. On top of these evocative photos, Ingold stitches spirals or circles in colored threads, attracting our vision to the surface of the image; she also integrates poetry into the pieces. The understanding of the works relies upon our ability to integrate all aspects simultaneously, photographic image, text and applied textile. The works also comprise a series, so that our perception of the work moves through time as we move from one work to another. The work itself has a poetic quality; it cannot be interpreted in only one way. The work relies on our own active participation as viewers to experience it. It has a rich layering of imagery and meaning.

Katsy Johnson is a photographer who takes photos in her travels, unrolling an ongoing experience that we as viewers can share guided by her eye. The photos in themselves are sensitive and beautiful, yet the addition of paint and wax to their surfaces add a layer of mystery and delicacy. The images are softened and convey a sense of peace. She says of her work, "In general, I find that photos alone simply document an unfolding scenario. However, once I layer the images with wax and paint, it adds depth and complexity to the wistful stories that they capture." The textures add a complexity that makes evident her hand in making the work, and the layering amplifies the richness and depth of the image.

These four artists' creativity is defined by seeing endless possibilities in an image, a source or an object. Artists often view the world with a different eye, an enhanced sense of the importance of what they see. By using and then altering images that existed before the creation of a new work, these artists can be inspired by the potential inherent in all that they see, and then fusing their own interior thoughts with whatever they consider in the world beyond themselves. They change, alter, adjust, enhance and ultimately, create.