Excerpts
from Four Portfolios

Mary Dondero

Desert. Sumi ink on Mylar, 24” x 36”
The West side of Prudence. Sumi ink on Mylar, 24” x 36”
Night Swimming

Perception is one of my central concerns, and my photography is meant to represent the temporal and or imagined experience. Night Swimming is a set of three photographic images where there is no representation of distance or space—only the human figure moving through atmosphere. The gestures of the model are meant to imply wavering emotional states of being, a theme echoed by the movement of the silk media that the images are printed on.

When presented as installation pieces, the silk waves and flutters in reaction to any physical movement in the gallery. As a result of the transparent qualities of the silk, the images themselves seem to appear at one moment only to disappear at the next, as if they are apparitions, causing our perceptions to be thrown into doubt and often necessitating them to change.
Sumi Paintings

Riptide. Sumi ink on Mylar. 16" x 16"
Storm swell. Sumi ink on Mylar. 16" x 16"
Undertow. Sumi ink on Mylar. 16" x 16"

Sumi Ink Painting

My goal in this work is to create images that evoke a surprise. The surprise is that the viewer may recognize the familiar in the imagery while not being able to easily describe this recognition with words.

These paintings are created with visual language derived from a sensual point of view rather than direct observation, which would result in mimicry. The paintings are a result of memory, my memory of what was perceived or felt at some point in the past.
Secret Desire

This project relies on the premise of codes, and secrets. The inner function of our very own bodies may contain secrets regarding our well-being. This may only to be decoded by the practitioner, a person with the proper language skills required for translating the information that a diagnostic test contains, without the translation a secret remains. As an example, an EKG test reveals the function of a heart.

I collected both three-dimensional objects and examples of actual diagnostic tests, then transformed these into two-dimensional imagery, much like a photomontage. With the same “scratch-off” material that is applied to common lottery tickets I covered my constructed images. When presented, the viewer or participant must scratch the surface off to reveal my secret desires.

—Mary Dondero is Assistant Professor of Art.