

It Comes To an End; New Beginnings

Posted on [August 8, 2014](#)

It's Keesha again, my internship ended Friday, June 29, 2014 and I am a bit disappointed about it, but I leave you with this last blog post for [A Different Frame of Mind](#). I had a wonderful experience throughout the whole process and learning from professional artists within a gallery space stationed at USFCAM.

Now that the show is completed in the West Gallery space, the exhibition mirrors the artists' hard work and dedication for *A Different Frame of Mind* collectively. Reflecting from the beginning, I was unsure how the exhibition was going to turn out, but as the artists worked restlessly on their projects, I saw it come together beautifully.

When you enter the space, every piece is different by the use of materials, but reflect on the traditional aspect of a frame. The exhibition allowed Ariel Baron-Robbins, Mike Covello, Derek Curry and Jennifer Gradecki, David Gabbard, Janett Pulido, and Sam Robinson to break free from the traditional meaning of art by experimenting with the application of paint, color, and space. Their compositions are visually alluring within the space, making the viewers ask the same questions: "How did this happen? How did they do it?" Earlier in the weeks, many came to investigate the artists at work and responded well to the interaction. I urge you to take a second look at *A Different Frame of Mind* and question everything. Not everything is what it seems.

I hope that this exhibition gives the exposure that these artist need for future commissions and has helped to expand their techniques for their future endeavors because this may be the end of their experience at *A Different Frame of Mind*, but it is a new beginning for all of us to think in a different the frame of mind.

Thank you your support to USFCAM with this unique experience for me and for all at the museum. I hope there are more like these exhibitions in the future.

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Artists at Work in "A Different Frame of Mind"

Posted on [July 21, 2014](#)

Hello this is Keesha Jimenez reporting back on the progress of [A Different Frame of Mind](#). From June 16 to June 24, 2014, I have the privilege of working with Mike Covello, Ariel Baron-Robbins, Derek Curry and Jennifer Gradecki, David Gabbard, Janett Pulido, and Sam Robinson documenting their progress and asking questions

about their process. It is not every day that one is able to enter an artist's studio and interact with the artist as they create art. I enjoy capturing their progress through the camera lens because it mirrors the dedication that the artists contribute to their final products. Each day they work in USFCAM, I observe them as they contemplate the steps needed to complete the creative process. I ask questions when I feel it is appropriate and won't unintentionally interrupt the creative flow. I am learning so much from them during this experience.

This exhibition is so unique that it almost surreal, the makeshift studio space is open to the public; anyone can come and watch with me as the artist's create new works. As viewers enter the studio space, they stand in the middle of the gallery overwhelmed by the amount of work the artists are producing before their eyes. Some are almost afraid to enter until the artists welcome them into their space and talk them about their progress. Mike, Ariel, and Janett mentioned that they were normally used to the solitude of their own studios this show breaks that limitation for the public and the artists. [A Different Frame of Mind](#) does not only refer to the break of tradition from the frame, but includes the break between the viewer and an artist's studio, thought, and process.

Weeks before the artists began working on their artwork, USFCAM set up a camera high onto the wall in the West Gallery to capture a time-lapse video of the entire process from the frame selection to the completion of their works. In addition to the time lapse I captured stills of the artists at work. I followed them around as they began their day and ended shooting approximately five in the afternoon. The way the artists create their work is evidently different when you look at it, but they focus primarily on major decisions that would make or break their work.

Janett mixes colors to large proportions and spreads the color of choice gently to thin the paint carefully and mix the color further. Once the consistency begins to harden, she lets it sit for three to four days (depending on the size) to cure. After it cures, she pulls the paint from the edges, lifting it from the surface that it laid on. The paint looks and feels like rubber, so it is rather flexible to shape into any form Janett desired. She experiments with the placement of the paint onto the frames before making her final decision and gluing it into position with a liquid adhesive. On the wall sits a frame that comes forward with green and yellow enamel paint. The way I would perceive this piece is the window to our personal heavens. The frame sticks out at the top right edge, which suggests the position of the heavenly realm while the colors bring us to the earthly realm. It is the spontaneous impulse that helps Janett complete a work in which begins with the color process. All the artists have to come prepared with a "plan" for the given space as a starting point but there are always changes that can enhance their work.

A great example of this change is Mike's installation. From the beginning of the process, I watched his artwork transform beautifully. I asked him in the beginning if he knew what he wanted to do for this project and he responded, "Let's see how this comes out." Honestly, his spontaneity is a strong aspect to his work, Mike lets his hands do the talking, which is similar to the way I like to work. Working through the creative process he steps back to contemplate if the space had met the requirements well enough to have some consistency based on his



Janett Pulido at work in the USFCAM gallery studio



Mike Covello in the USFCAM gallery studio

choice of composition and color. The application of painter's tape gives clean-cut lines and a base of his composition with overlapping and placement of his paintings, which he composes on the walls, ground, and pedestal.

Ariel has a different connection to her artwork than the other artists I have touched on so far. Using the frames USFCAM supplied to her for the exhibition, she encased her body within the frames at three different locations in the Tampa Bay area. Although I was not able to be present at the locations, when Ariel returned I was able to view a few of the thousands of images she captured. In her studio space, she preferred solitude as she framed herself with her back towards us, but she was quite approachable when people entered her space as they questioned Ariel about her body of work. From the thousands that she shot, she narrowed her best shots to ten. She would print test prints and write little notes next to any issues with the image, and then make the necessary adjustments. From a distance I observed Ariel trying to further narrow her selection a seemingly difficult task at times. All the images she taped to the wall conveyed a different mood. From the four that she finally selected, she saw the change of emotion seeping from the print: excitement and happiness to exhausted and bruised. These emotions made the prints even stronger, which helped Ariel to select the two best prints for the exhibition. Ariel is excited about the show and the response that viewers will have when they see her forty-eight by sixty-four by inch prints. To compliment the two prints Ariel captured a video at the beach, which conveys the calmness of the waves and still reflection of the sun hitting the horizon.



Ariel Baron-Robbins in the USFCAM gallery studio

Finally, the complexity of Derek and Jennifer's work is beyond words. They built an app to record information of an artist's financialization and the investments patrons have to the art's value. They are stationed in Buffalo, New York; therefore, neither Vincent Kral nor I had the luxury to view their progress except through photos. However, the shots they provided us did not disappoint our expectations. The app includes a candlestick chart of the information they provided for their work. They also built a structure with the frames to house the tablet and the app.

This week was a productive week for the artists in their temporary studio spaces at USFCAM. It was a huge success in getting people into the studio space to relate with artists as they carried on with their work. I am proud to be part of this operation, documenting the whole process from June 16, 2014 to June 23, 2014 and giving the artists my perspective of their work. It was such a wonderful experience to be appreciated by artists who have been working so hard to make art a profession. I hope that USFCAM does another interactive exhibition so patrons of the arts can observe contemporary art on site, and then return the following week to view the completed works.

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Artists' Interpretations of "A Different Frame of Mind"

Posted on [June 16, 2014](#)

My name is Keesha Jimenez. I am an undergraduate student seeking a B.A. in Studio Art at the University of South Florida. For my summer internship at the USF Contemporary Art Museum (USFCAM), I am working with Vincent Kral, the Curator of the June 2014 exhibition called [A Different Frame of Mind](#). For this exhibition, seven artists were selected to use recycled frames to create new artworks that will explore ideas and issues of the frame in the context of contemporary art. I will document the process of this unique exhibition by interviewing the artists, taking pictures, and sharing my insights and observations.



As an artist myself, I am interested in the concept behind the title for the exhibition because at USF the art studio professors challenge tradition and force their students to think beyond the box. I also appreciate working alongside Mike Covello, Derek Curry and Jennifer Gradecki, David Gabbard, Ariel Baron-Robbins, Janett Pulido, and Sam Robinson to learn from their perspectives and work methods. They are all interesting artists with individual styles challenging tradition through installations, digital print and other mediums. I interviewed these artists individually and I am proud of being part of this exhibition.

For each artist, the phrase: "A Different Frame of Mind" has a personal connection to how each works today.

Mike Covello comments that the phrase is "referencing divergence and not fitting in." But he says it also references "pluralism, which asserts that those aforementioned notions are not necessarily negatives." Covello has been working on installations since he was an undergraduate at Cornell University. His interest with installations peaked in 2007 when he thought about how his context would surround the environment; however, he evolved in 2012 to work within the exhibition space. I cannot wait to see how he is going to continue this process within the West Gallery of USFCAM alongside the other artists. With limited space, the exhibition presents a challenge for all of them in terms of the size of their final work.

When I asked **Derek Curry** and **Jennifer Gradecki** about their perception of the phrase, they explained, "a different frame of mind' evokes the idealist posit that your mind frames the world you see." They believe, "if you can change the way a person frames the world in their mind, you can change the reality they experience." Curry

and Gradecki's focus on the finances of the art world in their previous works began with the stock market crash in 2008. As they investigated further with their projects, artists and curators have heavily criticized them because they broke tradition by revealing the finances from the patrons to the artists. This brings an interesting point of view of art: 'financialization.' It may be a new term as described by Curry and Gradecki; however, it is the fundamental process of investment for commissions and furthering our practice as artists. We see financialization in art history through the eyes of Vincent van Gogh, who sold but one painting to his brother. After his death, his artwork becomes accessible and very valuable. Henri Matisse or Edgar Degas, for example, show the success as artists after the French Revolution of 1787-1789. While Matisse focused on the bourgeoisie painting genre scenes familiar to them, Degas found beauty in ballet dancers. Their patrons were prominently the rich; however, they gained income to continue. Therefore, the finances of artists are important to focus on, and I applaud Curry and Gradecki to shedding light to this concept although some may disagree.

As I asked the others, **David Gabbard** agreed with Curry and Gradecki. He believed with "a different frame of mind," "you are stepping out of the norm and into something different." Without being an individual, we cannot continue the path to greatness. When Gabbard attended USF as an undergraduate, he wanted to challenge the meaning of a frame. He pointed out as he questioned the frame, "Take a drawing that you made when you were a child. Your parents are so proud of that drawing that they choose to frame it. In the child's point of view, they feel appreciated and praised for the drawing. The parent reinforces the praise by framing and hanging the drawing. If the child produces more drawings then it becomes a weird dynamic, where does the parent frame every drawing? How does one drawing become more important than the other? This is just one example of how the frame can symbolize importance." This raises an important question about the frame itself. Why is the frame important in a sense that we have to enclose ourselves to one perception? With this exhibition, the artists are able to represent a greater sense of self and understanding outside of tradition. This opens the doors to interpretation, too. As many artists before him, Gabbard recollects childhood memories through his artwork and places them in front of the viewer. To the artist, it is a moment of relief to reveal something private and cause viewers to relate to situations with minimal words. It is almost therapeutic, releasing tension from the past and sticking that emotion elsewhere, so we can move forward. Without that release, as artists, we would be driven insane.

I asked **Ariel Baron-Robbins** the same question about "a different frame of mind," and she responded that the phrase "brings me back to the body/mind problem, the difference between how you think and feel inside of your body and how you are perceived outside of your body by others." She focused on this idea through performances as a USF graduate student in 2009. Robert Morris and Ana Mendieta heavily inspired Baron-Robbins because of their relationship of the figure and environment. She says, "Mendieta inspires me in the way that she free-form plays with her environments, creating temporary sculpture or pieces, very impromptu looking, especially in the *Silueta* series, and then documents these actions with her camera. Morris inspires me with his entire body of work and its differences. He also scales things to be human-sized, which is something I try to do as well." Baron-Robbins interacts with nature as her source of inspiration, which in her previous work included architecture, whereas in her current work involves bodies of water.

When posed the same question, **Sam Robinson** thought to have "a different frame of mind," we have to understand that the "frame plays a role in the construct of formal art-viewing that seems to have historically become less and less important. To frame something is to draw a hard line around what is to be looked at, but does little to cage contemporary artists' tendencies toward materiality, dimension and sensory play." I have made this point earlier, and I agree with her. In her artwork, Robinson controls the viewer's response with scent. "The

fascination started with a TEDTalk titled *The Science of Scent*,” she explained, “in which biophysicist Luca Turin presented his theory that humans detect extraordinarily minute differences in molecular vibration, rather than molecular structure, when differentiating scents. In the talk, Turin revealed some perfumist/chemist manuscripts and some hints as to his contracts in the commercial world. In the same way that color is used thoughtfully to encourage appetite in the grocery store or morale in a sea of cubicles, scent is used to incite memories in relation with a product, and to reward the sniffer at the time of purchase. The fragrance industry fits into the corporate model of consumer conditioning on a molecular level,” she says. The concept drove her to experiment with particular scents: for example, rotten flesh and sweet-scented perfumes. Therefore, these scents allow the audience to respond accordingly and that pleases her as a result. To her, these experiments within her artwork involve the audience to practice a mind-over-matter exercise in self-reflection. This concept is a step forward into contemporary art, removing the frame from its traditional meaning and pushing it to an interactive art form.

In **Janett Pulido**’s perspective, “a different frame of mind” meant, “having a different perspective of a particular idea or concept prior to one’s initial thought to that particular idea or concept.” Artists from history have focused their artwork on representing a window that extends their eye. Given the circumstances of historical events, for example, Francisco de Goya’s *Third of May 1808*, represents the window of war and surrender in the Streets of Spain. As he witnessed this scene of horror, he depicts emotion through that window frame so the viewers can interpret fear through their eyes. As we move forward as contemporary artists, we move further away from that window and control the response to our works. As artists, we have to surpass our masters and assess all the possibilities to approach beyond the limits of those boundaries many artists established before us. Pulido uses her personal experiences to distinguish herself as a Mexican American raised in a Roman Catholic household. She says, “My Mesoamerican culture brought about types of rituals that seemed to contradict the Roman Catholic dogmas I have been taught in the past. It is for this reason that I always feel I am in constant limbo.” Although it was difficult for her, she learned to accept these contradictions and incorporate them into her works. She also establishes the Schrodinger’s Cat theory because it correlates with the impact of possibilities that can happen in limbo. Pulido explained in the Schrodinger’s Cat theory, “the scientist does not know if the cat is alive or dead until the box is open. This puts the cat in between both realms hence, being in limbo.” Therefore, she responds to the Schrodinger’s Cat theory through her sculptural paintings and allows the viewers to be in the position of the scientist.

You have heard from all the artists on their interpretation of what “A Different Frame Of Mind” meant to them and how they bring forth that perception into their work. I look forward to sharing further insights into their creative processes and the development of their works. The final exhibition will be installed and open to the public on June 27, 2014.

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