



Nick Conbere: Restructured Realities

3rd Floor Emerging Artist Series

December 1, 2007 – January 20, 2008

Atrium Gallery

Nicholas Conbere's work both embraces and challenges the historical traditions of landscape. Working from both drawings and photographs, Conbere invents dreamlike panoramas, which explore connections between culture and nature to create an experiential and personal interpretation rather than a geographic or literal depiction. Through a process of layering images borrowed from ephemera, architecture, diagrams, and natural features, Conbere creates a timeline of relationships and histories. The resulting work unfolds as though excavating and examining objects buried in layers of sediment or carefully searching for hidden images with a Highlights magazine puzzle. The meticulous detail in each piece builds and interrupts upon previous marks, obscuring images and blending the stratum.

Trained as an illustrator, Conbere is interested in representing images in a naturalistic manner through traditional printmaking processes, contemporary digital techniques and drawing. The repetitive overprinting and manipulation of scanned images and digital photographs merges disparate subject matter into dense tangles, building into sprawling architectures. For example the work *Take a Short Cut*, a rocky path travels upward towards large trees and distant hills intersected repeatedly by wooden obstacles including bridges, incomplete fences, and partial barn like structures. *Take a Time Out* and *Long Landscape with Words* portray a more linear journey with objects appearing along the path like landmarks on a long hike, floating in otherworldly emptiness. Although the journey throughout Conbere's natural landscapes are seemingly blocked by objects of human activity, the overall intent is not to pit nature and humankind against one another but to objectively document them as equal chapters in the experiential history of a fictitious place.

Contemporary landscape artists cannot avoid the art historical baggage associated with the genre. Likewise the viewer cannot block personal and collective history and experience when viewing a work of art or their own backyard. Conbere's landscapes are uninhabited, however the evidence of a human intervention and presence of memory are left behind like ghostly reminders scattered throughout the topography. SS

Scott Stulen is the Curator of the Third Floor Emerging Artist Series

About the Artist

Nicholas Conbere is originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He received a MFA in Printmaking from the University of Minnesota in 2007 and an MFA in Illustration from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1999. He is currently in the middle of a year long residency at the Roswell Artist Residency program. Recent exhibitions include the International Print Center in New York, and upcoming exhibitions at Augsburg College and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. He has received grants to fund artistic research in Peru, Bolivia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

3rd Floor Artist Series Credits

The Rochester Art Center continually strives to engage the community members of all ages in the creation, contemplation, and appreciation of the visual arts. As a non-collecting institution, the Art Center focuses its efforts on presenting temporary exhibitions throughout the year featuring established local, national, and international artists, as well as “emerging” artists from diverse backgrounds working in a variety of media.

In 2004, the Rochester Art Center initiated the 3rd Floor Emerging Artist Series—an exhibition program dedicated to promising young artists working in the state of Minnesota. Since its inception, the series has reflected shifting trends in contemporary artistic practice and production, and has helped to facilitate the creation of new bodies of work in a variety of media including photography, installation, sound, painting, drawing, sculpture, and film. Now entering our third year, the 3rd Floor Emerging Artist Series continues to support emerging artists and to provide a dedicated forum for the exhibition of exciting new work.

These exhibitions are made possible, in part by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota Legislature and, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Rochester Art Center is a recipient of a McKnight Foundation Award and a Bush Foundation Grant. Major sponsorship for the 3rd Floor Emerging Artist Series is provided by the Jerome Foundation. The Rochester Art Center is also a recipient of support from the city of Rochester.