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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications  
Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer  
Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**Humanities Fine Arts Gallery to feature work by artists Byers and Richardson**

*Summary: Byers' paintings explore the environment as an abstract form, while Richardson's works of sculpture question the ideas of flatness and space*

(December 12, 2011)-The University of Minnesota, Morris will feature the work of artists Betsy Ruth Byers and John J. Richardson in the Humanities Fine Arts (HFA) Gallery from Thursday, January 19, until Thursday, March 8, 2012. The work of Byers, *Peripheral Accumulations*, will be displayed on the main floor of the gallery, while paintings by Richardson, *Case Study*, will be exhibited on the mezzanine level. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, January 19, from 7 until 9 p.m.

**Betsy Ruth Byers**

Byers received a master of fine arts in painting from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2008. Additionally she received a master of arts from St. Catherine University along with a bachelor of arts in studio art from St. Olaf College. She is currently an assistant professor of studio art at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter.

Byers' paintings reflect a discovery or an imagined relationship that embody one's intimate experience with the environment as an abstract form. Her work is often produced from a singular and elemental experience of the body within space. Personal encounters with wilderness inform each painting's progression. Byers will give an Artist Lecture on Thursday, January 19, from 6 until 7 p.m. in HFA 6. The lecture will precede the opening reception.

**John J. Richardson**

Richardson received a master of fine arts in sculpture from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a bachelor of arts in studio art with honors from the University of Puget Sound. He is currently the associate chair of the Department of Art and Art History at Wayne State University.

Richardson's sculptural work questions the ideas of flatness and space. He deals with topics, such as culture, and the surface that it resides in and remains. He explores the boundaries of whether a viewer sees his work as fictive art or an actual object. He confronts the tension in art between the real and virtual, the condensed and expansive, the figural and geometric, the compressed and the volumetric and, of course, flatness versus space.

HFA Gallery hours are 9 a.m. until 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., Friday 1 until 4 p.m., Saturday.

For more information about the exhibit or the artists, please contact Michael Eble, associate professor of studio art and HFA Gallery curator, at 320-589-6285 or email [meble@morris.umn.edu](mailto:meble@morris.umn.edu).

Photo above: painting by Byers

Below: sculpture by Richardson

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