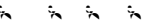


C  **A** **m** is an opportunity for the museum to weigh in on what artists in the state are currently thinking. These artists, chosen on their own merit rather than a prescribed curatorial treatise, bring to the discussion a variety of timely perspectives on issues including race, politics, gender and environmental awareness.

C **Ma** (b. 1978, Milwaukee, WI)

One of Colin Matthes' recent works is entitled *FF*, a play on words that acknowledges the militarism within our society. Matthes' experience of encountering a military recruitment

Sonja Thomsen (b. 1978, Chicago, IL)

As a photographer and installation artist, Sonja Thomsen creates dynamic large-scale work that invites audience participation. In her recent projects, the viewer either sees themselves in the work or can alter the work by removing a picture from a stack of images. Thomsen photographed used motor oil to create *Peel Me*. The assembled grid of prints becomes an oversized mirror reflecting our image. Seeing ourselves in the work implicates us in the politics of energy consumption implied by the subject matter. Looking closely, one can find small self-portraits of the artist with her camera in each print. In *Layers* the viewer is invited to invent their own stories and to participate by peeling away a picture from various stacks. As these diminish, the images fade altering the piece for the next viewer. Thomsen teaches at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. She lives in Milwaukee.

Xiaohong Zhang (b. 1969, Hubei, China)

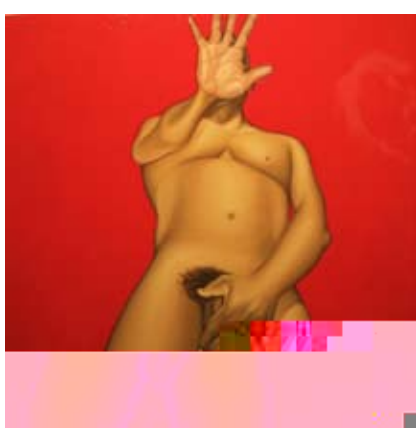
Xiaohong Zhang specializes in large-scale northern Chinese style paper cutting. As an artistic tradition, paper cutting dates back to the sixth century making it one of the oldest art forms in China. Zhang started using scissors to cut different symbols and flowers when she was a child and then graduated to working with blades. Zhang, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1997, draws from her experience as a first-generation immigrant, artist, professor and mother. She has created personal narratives while also addressing broader themes such as the impact of war as seen in *Aftermath* and *Survivors*. In the latter, the woman represents the survivors of Japanese atrocities, many of whom were forced to speak the invaders' language to survive. Other works reflect on historical and cultural issues from a Chinese perspective. Xiaohong Zhang is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She lives in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

George Williams, Jr. (b. 1958, El Paso, TX)

George Williams' subject is the Black male. He paints bodies in a variety of stances to challenge existing perceptions of Blacks while introducing new paradigms and possibilities of interpretation. While his large-scale canvases are imposing, the people within them do not confront the viewer directly. Whether a sole figure or a group of figures, Williams' men in this exhibition either have their heads down or obscured by an out-stretched hand. By skewing perspective in paintings like *M... M...*, Williams not only challenges the idea of the traditional full-length portrait but introduces a wholly new approach to painting the human body. His goal is not to commemorate or immortalize specific individuals, but to create paintings that are culturally and spiritually charged. Rather than admiring his various groups of figures, the viewer is forced into the role of witness and, or oppressor. Our position becomes that of "commander" forcing individuals either to kneel with their arms behind their heads or stand spread eagle against a wall. By drawing the viewer into his compositions, Williams hopes we will each recognize the need for greater humanity in the world. George Williams, Jr. is an associate professor at Beloit College. He lives in Beloit.



Survivors, 2007
Mixed-media digital printing and paper-cutting
28 x 89"
Collection of the artist



M... M..., 2009
Oil on canvas
7 x 7"
Collection of the artist