

Floodplain: Chad Rutter CHASTUSHKI: Amy Toscani

APRIL 18 THROUGH JUNE 29, 2014



Chad Rutter, *Pond*, 2014
Ver-Mac traffic sign, text from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau



Amy Toscani, *Cuccu*, 2013
Found sculpture and painted plaster
photo courtesy of Sarah Whiting

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The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) presents two new exhibitions at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). In "Floodplain," artist and bookmaker Chad Rutter explores American material and cultural geography through a range of media, including photography and sculpture; while sculptor Amy Toscani, known for her distinct Midwestern aesthetic and humor, showcases new works in "CHASTUSHKI." Both exhibitions are on view through June 29.

"Floodplain," Rutter's first solo museum show, carries forward the artist's interest in cultural geography as well as reflects on his understanding of transcendentalist philosophy, which he links to American values of individualism,

car culture, and exploration. In *Pond*, the centerpiece of the installation, Rutter excerpts from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* on a custom-programmed highway message board. By converting this classic meditation on the beauty of wilderness and creative isolation into 3-line bits of text, the installation conflates the private, slow-paced act of reading with the fast-lane drive through the natural landscape.

In the adjacent MAEP gallery, "CHASTUSHKI" presents new works that Toscani creates from thrift-store treasures and found sculptures. Her pieces, which have been described as "suburban sublime," use art historical concepts such as ready-made and recycling and morph them into objects that become endearingly awkward and self-effacing. For example, *Cuccu* began as a found sad-eyed dog figurine, the top portion of which seamlessly transitions into Toscani's sculpted, over-sized lower body. The exaggerated scale gives an appearance both humorous and pathetic. The human scale of her new sculptures also marks an important shift in Toscani's work.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Chad Rutter received his MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) in 2006 and is a 2011 recipient of the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant. He is also the publisher of Mystery Spot Books.

Amy Toscani received her MFA in 1988 from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, and is a 2013/2014 recipient of the McKnight Artist Fellowship. She has had numerous solo and group shows, including Rosalux Gallery in Minneapolis.

An opening reception for "Floodplain" and "CHASTUSHKI" is Thursday, April 17, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the museum's MAEP galleries.

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PRESS CONTACTS

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Anne-Marie Wagener, (612) 870-3280; awagener@artsmia.org

Tammy Pleshek, (612) 870-3171; tpleshek@artsmia.org

Emmalynn Bauer, (612) 870-6364; ebauer@artsmia.org

ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Home to over 80,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—the MIA links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration. The 2013 fiscal year marked the highest attendance—679,357 visitors—in the nearly 100-year history of the MIA.

General admission to the MIA is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum hours: Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Monday closed. For more information, call (612) 870-3000 or visit artsmia.org.