

# SIX MEN WORKING



Camacho



Jacobs



Knapp



Ridgeway



Seldin



Swanson

S A N C T U A R Y

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# S A N C T U A R Y

Ben Shahn Center for the Visual Arts

Court Gallery

January 28 - March 2, 2007



WILLIAM  
PATERSON  
UNIVERSITY

300 POMPTON ROAD • WAYNE, NEW JERSEY 07670

university *galleries*

## Six Men Working: Sanctuary

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Each of the six artists uses different mediums in very distinctive ways to communicate his ideas. For example, Jay Seldin's photographic series “Calm Waters” evokes a peaceful and calming energy. According to the artist, the “slow undulating movement of the waves found in the Baltic Sea provides a sense of sanctuary”. These straightforward images capturing the real world are, at the same time, somewhat surreal in the vastness they record and therefore connected to the unconscious, the life of dreams, the unknown and unpredictable.

In contrast to Seldin's work is another photographic series/installation by Peter Jacobs entitled “Still Moving”. These are video stills of the artist's daughter Zoe, cheerfully free-form dancing. Jacobs has long used collage, assembling his visual images, capturing the helter-skelter of our cultural heterogeneity. Here we have a single subject, figure on ground, presented in a linear-collaged fashion through site installation. The basic image units might document nostalgia for childhood innocence while acting simultaneously as building blocks of a narrative to carry us forward. Zoe shows us the gesture of great joy to be had in life.

Three painters, Jose Camacho, Drew Knapp, and Ron Ridgeway, exercise a provocative dialogue between the painting process and the image, each in his own way. All three artists recognize the importance of place as each explores the multiple connotations of materials.

Jose Camacho was born in Puerto Rico and here uses the iconic image of his home island much in the way Jasper Johns used the American flag.

The surfaces of his paintings might be saturated or reflective but the concept, (and what is “home” if not a sanctuary?) urges us to examine our patterns and methods of ascribing meaning.

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The sanctuary of nature in the form of woods, wetlands, and wildlife is the starting point for the abstract landscapes of Ron Ridgeway executed in mixed media. In the “Orono Series”, named for the place of his residency in northern Minnesota, Ridgeway uses acrylic paint with collage and graphite. “Our prehistoric ancestors expressed the world they experienced through paintings on

the walls in their caves. I look outside my studio window and cannot see the beasts – but feel the danger. My work is about those feelings.”

Charlee Swanson confronts and confuses our conditioned reflexes, our automatic response to the known materials of glass and steel. “My work is primarily about the materials,” he says. “I use only broken glass and steel – recycle and reuse discarded materials from glass shops and metal fabricators. The original purposes of the glass and metal are no longer recognized by the viewer as objects of support, protection, and construction.” Our associations with the materials paired with our response to the symbols Swanson creates, cause an upheaval of meaning.

Collectively, Six Men Working has posed important questions for their audience and created an allusive atmosphere full of narrative possibilities. How does the burden of information gained through daily life insist on new interpretations of what we see in art? Can the conflict between the rational and the irrational find a point of equilibrium in the arts? Can we codify transcriptions of creative energy to address our current situation? Stay tuned...

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Recent works explore my concern for cultural problems and the closed colonized status that the island must endure. I decided to shorten the distance between my studio and my homeland. *Puerto Rico, Puerto Pobre Las Dos Islas del Encanto* attempts to examine layers of reality and perception that investigate the relationship between the different stores of Puerto Rican society, and the harsh conditions of its colonial status.

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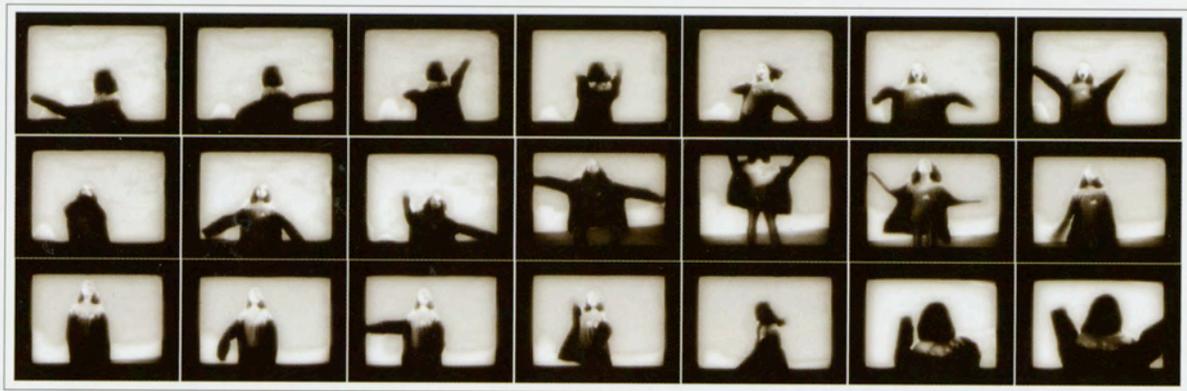
*PUERTO RICO, PUERTO POBRE LAS DOS ISLAS DEL ENCANTO 2006-07*  
Mixed Media Installation  
81" x 120" x 103"  
(Detail below)

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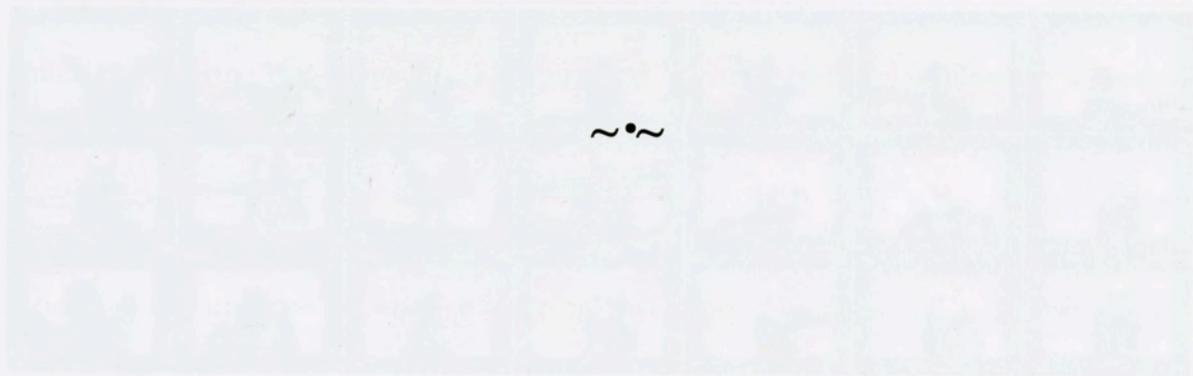




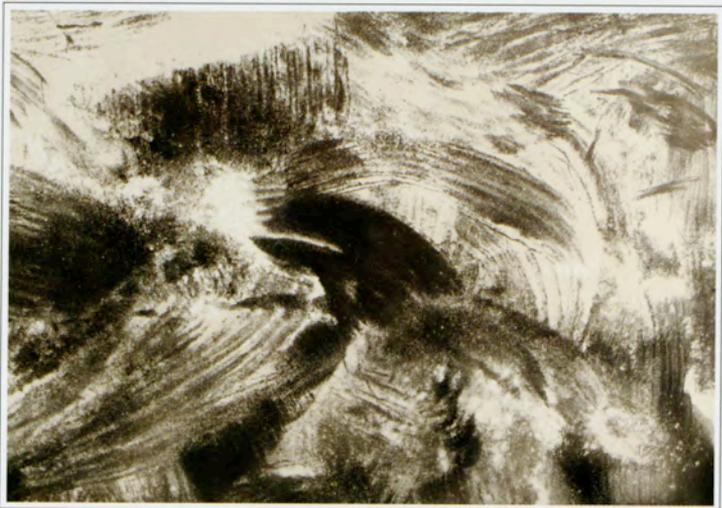
Twenty One Stills from *Still Moving* 2006  
34"x122" (11"x17" each)  
Gicleé Prints on Japanese Rice Paper

# Drew Knapp

Where within a vast and cruel universe may sanctuary be found?



[www.drewknapp.com](http://www.drewknapp.com)



*Wave (details)* 2006  
52" x 144"  
Sand Resist / Acrylic and Vinyl on Paper

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The residency in Orono, MN, provides the time and space in an extreme climate. My primary focus in an environment of woods, wetlands, and wildlife is to reflect on nature and develop a new body of abstract landscapes in different media, *The Orono Series*, 2005- 2007.



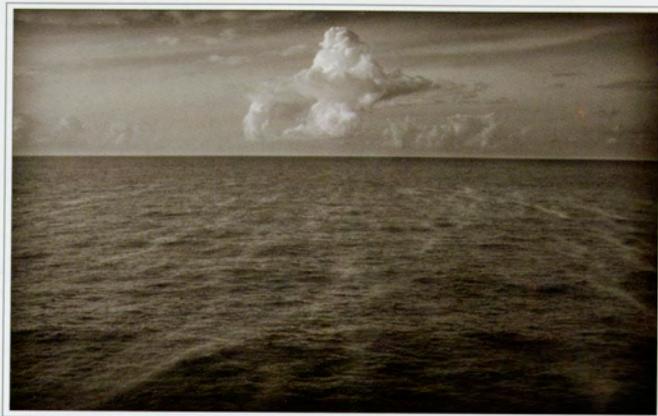


*Orono No.7-18 (Disconnected in Utopia) 2006*  
Acrylic, Charcoal, Graphite on MDF Panels  
12 panels (24" x 24" x 2" each)  
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*Calm Waters Cloud* 2006  
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*War Baby* 2006-2007  
Steel, Glass, Barbed Wire, Glass Cloth  
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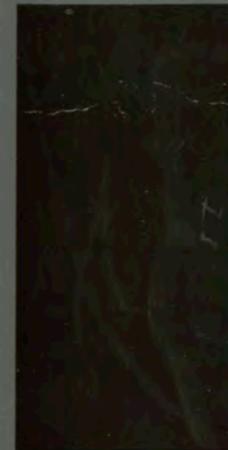
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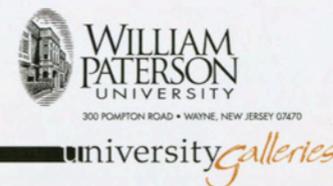


# SANCTUARY

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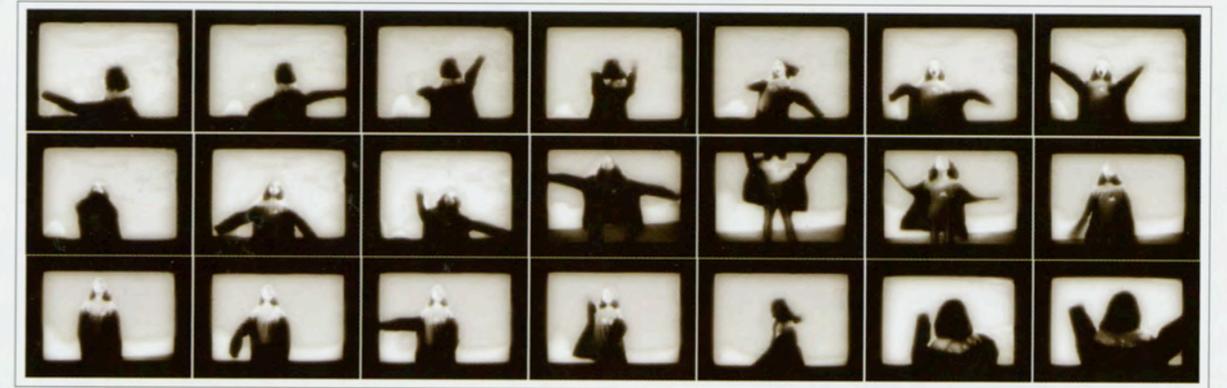


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[www.charleeswanson.com](http://www.charleeswanson.com)



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