



Final 2013 MFA thesis exhibition draws large audience at May reception

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([/taxonomy/term/50166](#))
Jun 4, 2013

“Sway (<http://arts.uchicago.edu/content/mfa-2013-sway>),” the last of the [Department of Visual Arts 2013 MFA thesis exhibitions](#) (<http://arts.uchicago.edu/content/archive>) featured the works of [Marco G. Ferrari](http://vimeo.com/marcog-ferrari) (<http://vimeo.com/marcog-ferrari>), [Paul Somers](http://www.somersstudio.com/) (<http://www.somersstudio.com/>), and [Stephanie Anne Harris Trevor](http://stephanieahntrevor.com/home.html) (<http://stephanieahntrevor.com/home.html>). The three artists celebrated the collective results of their tenure as MFA students with more than 200 guests at a May 24 reception.

"We're all dead tired," said Somers, standing beside his "GTX Super Sport 4000," the sculpture he had just ridden into the Logan Center Gallery, which moves about 10 mph.

Somers, who describes himself as "horribly Midwestern," spent all quarter welding and collecting materials to decorate it. "It's supposed to be inadequate," Somers added. "It's about consumer culture in America. And failure."

Adorned with advertisements for "macho consumer products," the sculpture itself represents one, which is what its exaggerated name is meant to satire. "I wanted it to be kind of dysfunctional."

The finished product wasn't really designed to be "finished," but rather fully modifiable. Some tweaks might be necessary in the near future, as Somers plans to drive it all the way to the [Bridgeport Art Center](http://bridgeportart.com/) (<http://bridgeportart.com/>), where 14 of this year's 15 graduating MFAs will participate in a group show opening Friday, June 21.

After that, he plans to leave it locked up around the city to expose it to the elements and let the urban environment modify it further.

Somers and his two colleagues, grouped together in light of their similar artistic interests in working in large formats, were inspired to name their exhibition "Sway" since they were all fascinated with "the idea of something moving away," Ferrari said.

Ferrari, a video artist who grew up in Hyde Park, screened three pieces, "Parabola," "Skyway," and "Traction." "Skyway," filmed in the Calumet region, explored the ideas of emptiness and loneliness.

"I traveled the Skyway Bridge a lot and passed by these abandoned and disregarded places that myself and many usually ignored," said Ferrari, who made approximately 20 visits to the area over the course of six months. "The more time I spent there, the more those feelings came through."

"Parabola" was an attempt to break his usual filming habits as well as to show the materiality of HD video footage by using extreme zooms. "It's revealing and seems perfect, but it actually hides a lot," he said.

The title of the piece represents the arc of going up and then back down a mountain —this one aided by a funicular in Switzerland, where it was shot. "It can be surprisingly easy to get on top of a mountain. It was too easy and feels strange," he added, describing the dissonance he tried to convey through the film.

Harris Trevor's installation, "That Which Passes Through," was whittled down from 75 yards of linen, which she progressively draped, painted and cut into separate pieces to play off each other and the environments in which it was placed. It migrated around the Logan Center, hanging in the lobby and other public spaces.

The separate pieces still amount to an installation that is *one thing*, for Harris Trevor. "People change, and the space changes. People bring their memories and experiences to the art," which, she added, will inevitably change what affects them when they see it and, hopefully, walk through it, not just around it.

"It's funny how people are timid to talk through it," she laughed. What the uninitiated may not know is that they become part of the art when they interact with it. Someone might spy them through the tattered pieces of one piece of linen, and their momentary form spliced by fabric becomes part of the installation; others might take on a temporary shade of blue walking by, the color cast on them by another dyed cut with light shining through it.

Then there are the little moments that could get lost, like the single strand of linen extending down from the ceiling like a rope, just barely touching the floor off to the side.

"I hope people will have those moments, too," said Harris Trevor.