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## Henry Art Gallery explores 'Pictures in a Remix Culture'

Seattle's Henry Art Gallery probes the tricky realm of image appropriation in three new exhibits.

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"We live in a truly raucous visual culture," writes curator Sara Krajewski in her catalog essay on the Henry Art Gallery's show, "Image Transfer: Pictures in a Remix Culture."

The exhibit — featuring works by a dozen artists — bears her out. In it, found images, traced images, random images and meticulously manipulated images all vie for attention in the Henry's North Galleries.

Photography, video, installations and even old-fashioned pencil drawings and oil paintings figure in the mix. The work that appeals to you may depend on whether your appetite is for chance-determined pieces or something involving firmer artistic control.



[enlarge](#) CARTER MULL / MARC FOXX GALLERY  
Carter Mull's Type-C print with pasted print "Passenger," 2010.

The large-scale "Passenger," "Expenditure" and "The Tar Pit" all take as their starting points the full-page ads and alarmist headlines of an open newspaper. As Krajewski succinctly puts it, "Mull creates a blur of consumables: products and catastrophes merge together." Mull then messes with them in a still more unnerving way, especially in "Passenger," where flaming debris appears to be bursting through the newspaper pages. News of the Gulf oil spill, stock-market drops and Toyota recalls sits side by side with movie ads, discount coupons and liquidation-sale notices. Mull takes the visual noise around us and makes it into something beautiful — albeit a beauty that, on closer examination, may prompt a stop-the-world-I-want-to-get-off reaction.

Sean Dack, taking his cue from digital-signal breakup, is more spare in his approach. In "Wing (Economy Class)" and "Glitch Girl #4," he deliberately corrupts the digital files he's working with "by skewing, moving, and accentuating pixels, and heightening or changing coloration," Krajewski explains. The results are stark yet poignant looks at the noise that sometimes overwhelms ordinary moments: a glance out an airplane window, a glimpse of a pretty woman.

Jordan Kantor and Karl Haendel, while they take photographs (and photo negatives) as their inspiration, revert in their final products to traditional fine-arts media: oil on canvas in Kantor's "Eclipse (color inversion)" and pencil on paper in almost all of Haendel's work. Haendel's large black-and-white drawings, painstakingly traced from photographs projected onto his studio wall, wind up being photorealistic — and also, in the case of "Pencil Stubs #7," heavy on concept (a pencil-on-paper rendering of half-a-dozen pencils).

With some artists, the emphasis is entirely conceptual. Lisa Oppenheim's "The Sun Is Always Setting Somewhere Else ..." is a cycle of 15 slide projections in which Oppenheim holds photographs of Iraqi sunsets posted online by U.S. soldiers in front of sunset snapshots taken near her New York home. Horizons align, but the realities linked remain worlds apart.

Matt Keegan, similarly, takes imagery from glossy magazines and gives it a curious video twist, as his mother (a teacher of English as a second language) pronounces the identity of the image projected, accompanied by its Spanish counterpart in subtitles. Her labeling of the images is sometimes obvious, sometimes eccentric. Either way, it gets you thinking about the choice of words we put to images.

Not every conceptual move in the show is as provocative. Siebren Versteeg's "Untitled Film IV," which uses computer programming to project photos from [Flickr.com](http://Flickr.com) at random, is more vacuous than intriguing. Amanda Ross-Ho's mirrored security domes, installed in every gallery, are closer to gimmick than revelation. Still, Krajewski's curatorial eye and commentary are mostly astute. Two other exhibits at the Henry offer curious footnotes to "Image Transfer."

SuttonBeresCuller's "Panoplos" (up through Feb. 13, 2011) draws on the Henry's permanent collection to display 154 works salon-style in the dimly lit East Gallery. There's no way the naked eye can latch onto much detail here. But if you go into the Stroum Gallery, you'll find an HD screen and a joystick that lets you steer a camera up and down "Panoplos," allowing you to scrutinize the 154 works more closely. The digital, perversely, supplants the real.

Just off the main entrance to the Henry, an installation by Harry Shearer (yes, the actor who appears in Christopher Guest's films) toys with our take on televised politicians, news anchors and commentators. Shearer, while working on "Saturday Night Live" in the 1980s, became fixated on the "dead air" time on the satellite news feed, when the talking heads of the media wait for the broadcast to begin.

In "The Silent Echo Chamber" (up through Jan. 16, 2011), Shearer puts this "dead air" on display. The results are strangely mesmerizing, as the likes of James Carville, Bill O'Reilly, Hillary Rodham Clinton and a dozen others stare at the camera, waiting for the show to start. Some go for dignity. Others try for Mona Lisa smiles, while some engage in a sort of lizard-eyed showdown with the camera.

Anderson Cooper is an especially restless puppy, looking as if he's about to wriggle out of his own skin while waiting for a go-ahead. He stretches, he scratches his head, he mops his brow. He may not be saying anything — but his presence is peculiarly human and electric.