



Evan Reed

until every shape has found its city



SOURCES AND SYNECTICS

I keep myself receptive to stimulation from diverse sources—literary, visual, and experiential—making these the catalysts for sculptural ideas. My current work references architectonic structures though I remain open to and incorporate other avenues for imagery. The binding themes throughout my sculptures include working with representational forms; turning the everyday into new visual metaphors; and exploring the potential of materials, construction techniques, and design to expand the interpretation of my art.

My fascination with using architectonic forms to communicate ideas emerged from travels I made to Dubai, London, and the Mayan ruins in Yucatan. A seminal piece was my first large-scale architectural structure, *Arlington to Aachen House*, a stripped-down, one-quarter size Sears Kit House presented in Aachen, Germany. My current work includes additional ideas discovered in books such as Kimberly Elam's *Geometry of Design*, Michael Pollan's *A Place of My Own*, Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. The exhibition's title is a borrowed line from Calvino's book. As an artist, I play a role similar to Marco Polo's in the novel; I create artwork that invites the audience to take psychological journeys, search memories, and pursue desires.

At a sculpture's inception these artistic stimuli are ambiguous. They begin to coalesce as the work develops. I read Elam's book to learn more about divine proportions which led me to construct three-dimensional spiraling and cyclonic forms. These shapes had logical connections to passages or shelters and I searched for ways to

integrate them. The spiraling ramp tower reminded me of the Malwiya Tower on the site of the Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq. I incorporated this mental image with my direct experience of visiting Dubai near the apex of its construction boom. While I was there, the skyline in every direction was crisscrossed with construction cranes. This contrast between an old and new Middle East became the impetus for the sculpture *Burj al-Shawq*.



Wandering the mazes of narrow, city streets during my first trip to Europe led me to create *Strasse Spirale*. The sculpture has a cyclonic shape with inclined passageways curving back to a central spire. As the viewer's sightline drops to the height of the ramp's edge and follows the curve back into the center, the illusion of deeper space becomes more pronounced.

Not all of the work is tied to biographical events. As this group of sculptures progressed, my interest in fantastical architecture began to dominate. A set of materials and formal parameters initiated the sculpture *Plan and Frame to Confuse*. I used a network of recycled drafting tables to create the base for nine, interlocking house frames. Soon after I started this piece, I read about the Winchester Mystery House in California and discovered its parallels to my sculpture. The unfinished mansion, designed by an heiress to the Winchester Rifle Company, was continuously remodeled to confuse vengeful spirits.

October Hive revisits the exposed house frame of my earlier sculptures. However, this time eight units are joined side-by-side to form a six foot wide ring. The open framing suggests an abandoned colony and took its inspiration from Hakka round houses in China and Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon architecture. Bentham's design allows overseers stationed in a central tower to observe occupants housed in a surrounding, circular network of cells.

The installation, *A Corner for Gaston and Gonzalo*, is a new

direction for my work which until now has been almost exclusively focused on freestanding objects. In the piece, I reference architectural sites in Reston's Lake Anne and Town Center neighborhoods. The overall form is derived from an abandoned nineteenth-century structure that served as a church, a town hall, and a bourbon distillery. Incorporated into one end of the work is a corner cutting into the structure's interior. Similar corners can be found in the concrete sculptures around Lake Anne designed by sculptor Gonzalo Fonesca whose name is referenced in the title. The title's other namesake, Gaston, is a nod to Gaston Bachelard's chapter on corners in his *Poetics of Space*.

Utilizing architectural forms permits interchange between my own experiences and those which are universal. Working with familiar subject matter, I offer clues for comprehending the work. Throughout these sculptures I experiment with changing the viewer's sense of scale and location. As one transits a sculpture's perimeter, it exists in space with you. However, one also encounters a sense of self-diminution while mentally navigating the form's surface and interior space. Although there is no single, definitive message to be had, memories of existing things present avenues to understanding. A form delineated by a frame suggests potential or arrested growth. A scale between a model and life-size invites fantasy. Empty architectural structures lead one to wonder what inhabiting such spaces might be like.

Evan Reed

CONVERGENCE

Early last summer Evan Reed sat down with Reston's founder, Bob Simon, to discuss Bob's intentions for the community he had created in 1964. Evan was collecting ideas for a sculpture that would be part of his upcoming solo exhibition at GRACE. Although accomplished in building freestanding works, this particular project would be his first site-specific installation. He wanted it to reflect Reston's historic architecture but it had to be more than a literal interpretation of building styles and decorative details. With that in mind, he asked Bob what his main hope had been for the new town and if he thought he had achieved it. Bob replied that he wanted to create gathering places, like the piazzas in Italian hill towns, where residents could mingle and develop a sense of neighborhood. And yes, he thought it had been achieved at Lake Anne and Reston Town Center.

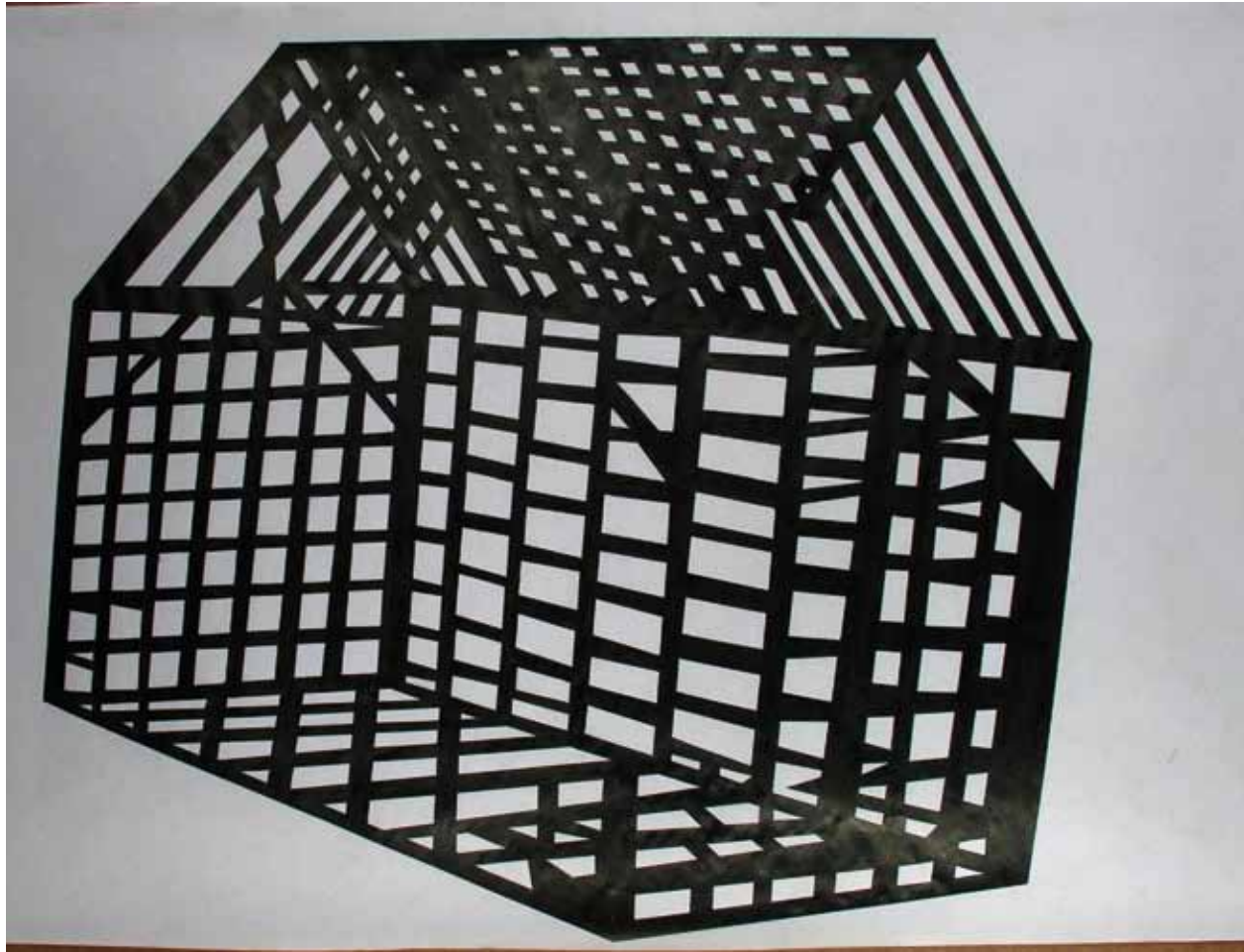
As the two men talked on Bob's balcony, overlooking the plaza below, an unusual convergence occurred; the exchange between Evan, a young, experimental sculptor and Bob, an older, visionary developer, brought to mind the fictional dialogue between Marco Polo, the youthful explorer, and Kublai Khan, the aged emperor, in Italo Calvino's novel, *Invisible Cities*. Serendipitously, the title for Evan's exhibition, *until every shape has found its city*, derives from the same book. Calvino's Marco Polo is a teller of tales who invents fantastical stories about faraway cities. In a similar way, Evan assumes the role of storyteller by condensing multiple narratives into his artwork. Instead of using oral language, he communicates visually

through exceptional craftsmanship, massive scale, and refined forms.

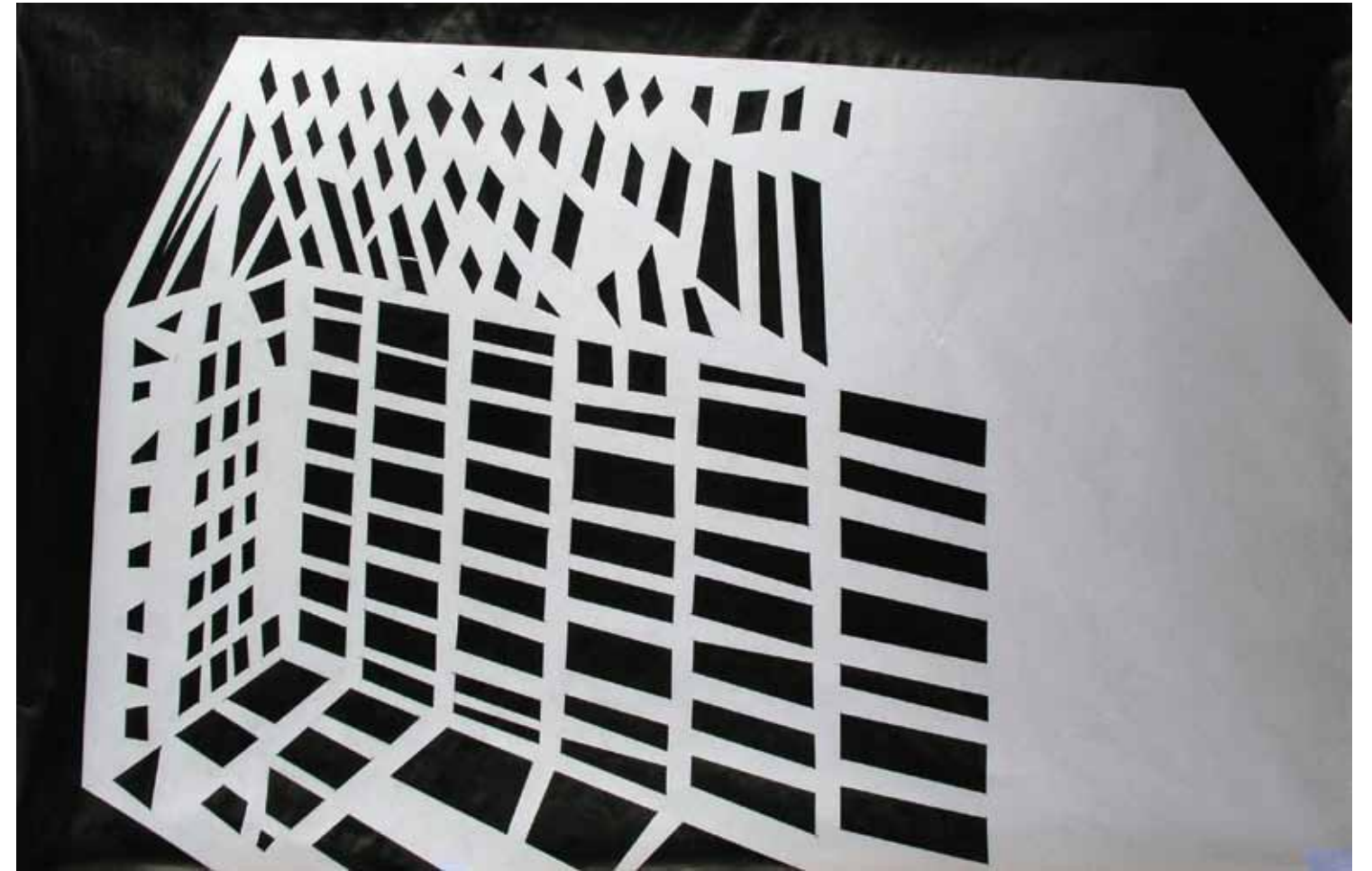
This significant exhibition, which opens doorways through familiar structures to the realm of the imagination, was made possible through the generous support of the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Fidelity Investments, and Reston Community Center. This assistance enables GRACE to feature a gifted artist whose work—like Bob Simon's—creates community through dialogue and reveals the transformative power of art and architecture to create new ways of seeing the world.

Joanne Bauer, Curator





6 *Black Frame*, sumi ink on drafting vellum, 23" x 30", 2008



White Frame, sumi ink on drafting vellum, 23" x 30", 2008 7

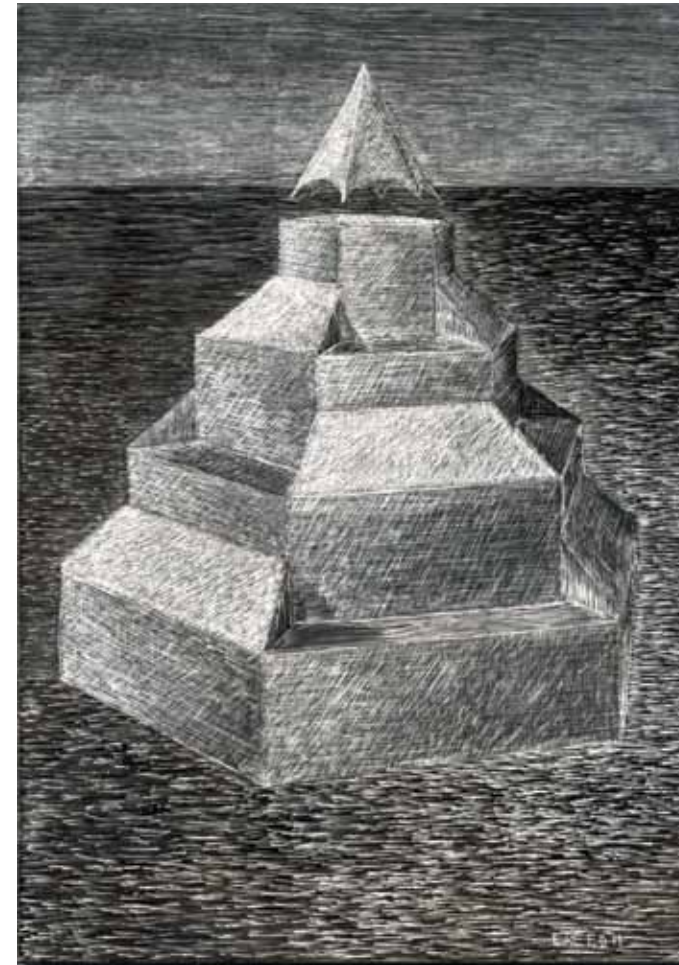


Arlington to Aachen House, wood, 84" x 144" x 72", 2007





Plan and Frame to Confuse, wood, 96" x 96" x 36", 2010



Shape for Terunobu: Polygon Stack, ink on panel, 7" x 5", 2011



Shape for Terunobu: Square Stack, ink on panel, 7" x 5", 2011



Burj al-Shawq, wood, 156" x 84" x 160", 2009



Burj al-Shawq (detail) 15



16 *A Corner for Gaston and Gonzalo*, wood, plasterboard, and optics, 108" x 72" x 48", 2011



A Corner for Gaston and Gonzalo (detail)



UNTIL EVERY SHAPE HAS FOUND ITS CITY

"The atlas has these qualities: it reveals the forms of cities that do not yet have a form or a name. ...The catalogue of forms is endless: *until every shape has found its city*, new cities will continue to be born."

Italo Calvino

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino—from whose pages the exhibition title is drawn—is a classic of modern literature and one of the most celebrated novels today. This collection of short stories references cities that Marco Polo encountered on his travels around the Tartar Empire. Narrated to the aging Tartar's emperor Kublai Khan by Polo himself, these stories are interspersed with conversations between the young explorer and the great emperor, touching on the issues of social order and power, human nature and morality. Most importantly, *Invisible Cities* is a book that explores imagination and the imaginable through the description of places that are nonexistent but possible, not real but fictional, and not visible but invisible.

Similar to Calvino's book that elicits the imaginative possibilities of cities, Reed's exhibition brings forth the poetic aspect of architectural spaces. Its title, *until every shape has found its city*, refers to a particular passage in the book—a dialogue between the Great Khan and Marco Polo on the meaning of atlas as a fictional mapping of places that may or may not exist in reality until their outlined shapes are matched with the shapes of existing cities. Featuring seven constructions and twelve related drawings, the exhibition explores a thin line

between real and imaginary, actual and fanciful architectural sites. The sculptural constructions, made of wood and acrylic resin, are predominantly monumental in scale. While *October Hive* is suspended from the ceiling, hovering in the space like a giant birdcage or hive, other pieces are positioned on elaborately constructed platforms. For example, *Strasse Spiral* (Spiral Street), elevated on a network of slim wooden legs, is based on slightly inclined ramps reminiscent of the narrow alleyways and streets of



London and Aachen—cities where the artist traveled. *Plan and Frame to Confuse* uses recycled drafting tables as the ground for a structure of interlocking house frames. On the other hand, *Burj al-Shawq* (Tower of Desire) is a tall spiral that evokes both the utopian architecture of Russian Constructivists (especially the 1920s Tatlin's Monument) and the architecture of the Middle East from the Great Mosque of Samarra's Malwiya Tower to the new construction sites in Dubai, which the artist experienced firsthand.

Reed's ink drawings—mostly on drafting vellum and restricted to black, white, vermillion, and shades of gray—expand his exploration of architectural spaces. At first the studies corresponded to particular constructions but more recently they have taken their own independent paths, coming before, during, and after the building process. Like constructions, they refer to both existing and fictional sites while attempting to give visible shapes to invisible memories and illusions of places. Whether alluding to buildings from Europe to the Middle and Far East, Reed's work by and large, is about making symbolic forms that trigger the imaginative aspect of experience and in the artist's own words, "entice viewers to make psychological journeys."

This is most evident in a large site-specific piece conceived for the exhibition, *A Corner for Gaston and Gonzalo*. Built in the shape of a house that riffs on the historic architecture of Reston (the Bowman Distillery from 1890 and Gonzalo Fonseca's geometric sculp-

tures from the 1960s sited around the Lake Anne neighborhood), the work uses a camera obscura to connect the interior of the gallery with the exterior of the street and invites viewers to inhabit the space. Inside, in the corner, there is a small piece of etched glass where the camera obscura projects a scene from the exterior street; creating an in-between space of moving light and stillness, sense perception, and introspection. It is this dialectic of outside and the inside and the notion of corner as a hidden, quiet place for contemplation that brings to mind Gaston Bachelard's writing from *The Poetics of Space*: "Every corner in a house, every angle in a room, every inch of secluded space in which we like to hide, or withdraw into ourselves, is a symbol of solitude for the imagination." It is also in this sense that the title, *A Corner for Gaston and Gonzalo*, is chosen; paying homage to both a French philosopher and a Uruguayan artist whose simple, enigmatic forms also trigger ambiguity, wonder, and the imaginable.

Indeed, with twisted perspective, distorted scale, accentuated corners, pronounced curves and spirals, and cast shadows, Reed's work speaks to visionary architecture—the architecture of the mind rather than habitat.

Vesela Sretenović

Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
The Phillips Collection

EVAN REED

Solo Exhibitions

- 2011 *until every shape has found its city* (catalog)
Greater Reston Arts Center, Reston, VA
Evan Reed: Traveling past PROUN
Project 4, Washington, DC
- 2006 *Evan Reed: Resident Studio Artist Solo Exhibition*
Arlington Arts Center, Arlington, Virginia
Evan Reed: New and Recent Sculptures
Flashpoint, Washington, DC
Evan Reed: Recent Sculptures
Hungerford Gallery, College of Southern Maryland
La Plata, Maryland

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2010 *Department of Art and Art History, Studio Faculty Exhibition*
Spagnuolo Gallery, Georgetown University
Washington, DC
- 2009 *Resident Artist Two Person Exhibition: Jill Romanoke and
Evan Reed*, Arlington Arts Center, Arlington, Virginia
- 2008 *Resident Artist Two Person Exhibition: Scott Hutchinson
and Evan Reed*, Arlington Arts Center, Arlington, Virginia
- 2007 *Imaging the Distance: Arlington to Aachen* (catalogue)

Ludwig Forum fur Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
Curators: Harold Kunde, Claire Huschle, and Carol Lukitsch

Playing for Keeps: Toys and Their Side Effects
Atlantic Gallery, New York, New York

Washington Project for the Arts/Corcoran, Art Auction
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Curator: Mary Early

2006 *Department of Art and Art History Studio Faculty Exhibition*
Spagnuolo Gallery, Georgetown University
Washington, DC

2005 *State of the Art: A Mid -Atlantic Regional Overview*
(catalogue), The Arlington Arts Center, Arlington, Virginia

2004 *Washington Project for the Arts/Corcoran, Art Auction*
(catalogue), The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Curator: Chan T. Chao

2003 *Sculpture at Washington Square*, Washington, DC
Curator: Marie Ringwald

*In Process: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the
BFA Program at The Corcoran College of Art and Design*
(catalogue), The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Jurors: Sam Gilliam and Jonathan Binstock

2000 *Faculty Drawing Exhibition*, Helen E. Copeland Gallery

1998–1999

Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana

The Bowl Show, The Bowl Alternative Exhibition Space
Bozeman, Montana

Public Art Loan Program, Albany International Airport
Albany, New York, Curator: Director, Sharon Bates

1998

*Whatever Floats Your Boat: Annual Outdoor Sculpture
Exhibition* (catalogue), Art Omi Residency, Omi, New York
Curators: Sylvia De Swann and Jonathan Kirk

1998 New York State Biennial (catalogue)
New York State Museum, Albany, New York
Curator: Linda Wientraub

Mohawk Hudson Region Invitational, Leslie Urbach Gallery
Albany, New York, Curator: Rebecca Harrimann

1997

Faculty Drawing Exhibition, Usdan Gallery
Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont

1996

Art Sites 1996, Tudor Place Estate and The Corcoran
Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Curators: Carla Hanzel and Jack Cowart

Professional Experience

2003–present Visiting Assistant Professor/Gallery Director
Georgetown University, Washington, DC

2000–2001

Visiting Assistant Professor in Sculpture, Sabbatical
Replacement, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana

1996–1999

Technical Assistant for the Visual Arts Department
Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont

Education

1994 –1996

Master of Fine Arts, Sculpture
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

1989 –1992

Bachelor of Fine Art, The Corcoran School of Art
Washington, DC

Residencies

2004 –2010

Artist in Residence, Arlington Arts Center, Arlington, VA

2000

Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont

Awards and Grants

2011

Strauss Fellowship, Arts Council of Fairfax County
Fairfax, Virginia

2008

Georgetown University Faculty Summer Research Grant

2000

The Berkshire Taconic Foundation Fellowship For Residency
at the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This catalog was published in conjunction with the exhibition, *until every shape has found its city*, curated by Greater Reston Arts Center, Reston, Virginia. September 29 – November 12, 2011

The artist and Greater Reston Arts Center would like to thank Robert E. Simon and the GRACE staff for their assistance.

The artist would like to thank Suzanne Fox, Quint Marshall, Greg Angelone, Virginia Reed, John Morrell, and the Arts Council of Fairfax County–Strauss Fellowship for their assistance.

Photography Credits:

Alex Jamison Photography p.p. 8-9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18

Evan Reed outside covers, p.p. 4, 6, 7, 13, 19, & 20

Project 4 inside covers

Joanne Bauer p.p. 2, 5

Text Credits:

p. 20 *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino (p.p. 138-139)

p. 21 *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (p.136)

Catalog Design: Leanna Gefrich

Printing: The Business Press

© 2011 Greater Reston Arts Center, All Rights Reserved, ISBN 978-1-4507-9052-9

The mission of Greater Reston Arts Center is to enrich community life by promoting involvement and excellence in contemporary visual arts. www.restonarts.org

GRACE programs are sponsored in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.



This exhibition is funded in part by the Arts Council of Fairfax County, supported by Fairfax County.



This exhibition is sponsored by Fidelity Investments.



Program support is provided by Reston Community Center.





GreaterReston**ArtsCenter**