

Joseph Mills has formed a picture of the universe that is different than most of us carry. At age 21, he experienced a psychotic break, a schizophrenic episode that put him in an asylum for six months, half of which was spent in a complete and seamless delusion.

According to Mills, "I slipped into this state as something of a card-carrying existentialist and came out like a newborn—fragile, totally vulnerable, but with an unshakable knowledge of there being great meaning to this life, of there being an undeniable harmony to 'things,' of there being absolute truth, one that is mirrored by art that is pure."

The pieces in this exhibition are photo-collages from his series *The Loves of the Poets* and are created from found ephemera, mounted on pages of existing books, and heavily coated with furniture varnish.

In these surreal original images, Mills distills and transmits his perceptions of the world viewed from the shadows, bringing together the past, present, and future. The result is a series of strangely beautiful collages, bizarre yet eerily familiar—as though we are remembering something we never knew.

Joseph Mills lives in Annandale, VA.

The role that artists play as cultural barometers always seems to be heightened in times of change and uncertainty. Although they employ different approaches, from timely reportage to futuristic illusions, all of the artists in this exhibition explore the terrain where hopes and dreams collide. By making visible the complex emotions we all sometimes experience, the artists in this exhibition ask us to deeply consider the promise and peril that exists both in the fantasies we create and the realities we deny.

All of the work in this exhibition was borrowed from the collection of JGS, Inc., a non-profit photography organization based in New York City. JGS and Syracuse University have entered into an agreement to collaborate on traveling exhibitions, research, publishing, and other projects utilizing work from the JGS collection that includes over 8,000 photographs spanning the history of the medium. This exhibition is an example of that collaboration and at the conclusion of the exhibition the SUart Galleries will create traveling solo exhibitions by each of the four artists.

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY

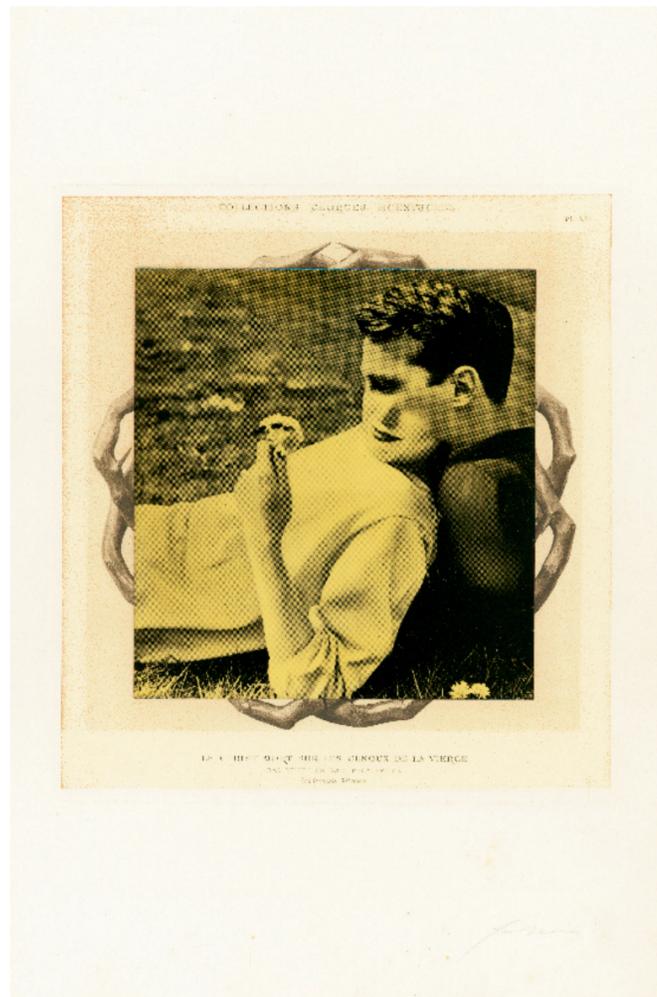
Syracuse University
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The Warehouse Gallery is an international contemporary art venue of the SUart Galleries at Syracuse University. The gallery's mission is to present exhibitions and programs by artists whose work engages the community in a dialogue regarding the role the arts can play in illuminating critical issues of our life and times.

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Joseph Mills—*Untitled*, from the series *The Loves of the Poets*, 2005
Varnished silver gelatin print on found book page, 17 x 12 inches

CHUAN CHAO • JOSEPH MILLS

DREAMS OF PROMISE AND PERIL

PROJECTS FROM THE JGS COLLECTION
AUGUST 19 - OCTOBER 25, 2008

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY

GUIDE # 4

MELANIE PULLEN • AES+F



AES+F—Episode 1, #9, from the series *Action Half Life*, 2005
Digital chromogenic print, 20 x 24 inches

Action Half Life is the name of a real computer game that the Russian-born artists in the collective AES+F have used as a starting point in their examination of heroism in contemporary culture.

For the project they recruited young teenagers from modeling agencies to act out the roles of conquering heroes and heroines in a conceptual battlefield. Set against the rugged backdrop of the Sinai Desert, there is no sign of an enemy, nor any of the usual mess or horror of war.

These children look like children, but they do not appear as children. Equipped with a steely array of futuristic-looking armaments, they are airbrush-clean and dressed in crisp white clothing. AES+F has created frozen-in-the-moment tableaux that radiate an unsettling but awe-inspiring combination of sheer beauty and mounting unease.

In a time when war, tragedy, and pathos are continually processed through computer games, social networking Internet sites, and action movies, AES+F twists these fantasies into delusions by using the same tools and techniques that have created today's world of glimmer reality.

AES+F is a collective of Russian-born artists that include conceptual architects Tatiana Arzamasova and Lev Evzovitch, graphic designer Evgeny Svyatsky, and fashion photographer Vladimir Fridkes.



Melanie Pullen—Untitled, (*Hanging series*), from *High Fashion Crime Scenes*, 2003–2005
Chromogenic print, 18 x 12 inches

Melanie Pullen's series *High Fashion Crime Scenes* takes aim at the public's fascination with forensic investigations, crime scenes, and bodies of evidence. Using the Los Angeles Police Department and County Corner's office database as primary study for her reenacted crime scenes, she confuses the solemn feel of such scenes by the inclusion of haute couture.

Pullen's photographs depict productions against nature, so to speak, as the complete process is a mimicry of heinous crimes captured with the assistance of models, haute couture on loan from top fashion houses, and complete staffs consisting of set designers, makeup artists, and other associated stage hands.

Her images use the artifice of fashion and the currency of the body as commodity to ask questions regarding authenticity, the human obsession with the tragedy of others, and the blurred line between reality and spectacle in contemporary culture. In doing so she grips our attention with images that play on the same morbid fascination she wishes us to examine.

Raised in a family of photojournalists, Pullen was inspired by Luc Sante's 1992 book *Evidence*, which contained crime scene images collected from the New York Police Department from 1912–1914. She lives in Los Angeles, CA.



Chan Chao—*Win Soe*, May 1997
Chromogenic print, 24 x 20 inches

Nearly a decade has passed since Chan Chao published his series of powerfully direct portraits of freedom fighters in Burma, *Something Went Wrong*. Sadly, the military junta's repression has worsened and the possibility of democratic reform seems ever more distant.

An ancient culture, Burma means "first inhabitants of the world." As one of the largest countries in Southeast Asia, it had a rich abundance of natural resources and was known as the breadbasket of the East. In its pre-colonial past, adult literacy was astonishingly high and the country had a thriving literary culture. Yet Burma has been hurtling backward, becoming one of the most impoverished nations in the world.

Burma is once again back in the news as the country, called Myanmar by its military dictators, struggles to recover from a devastating cyclone. As grave uncertainty surrounds the fate of the individuals that Chao photographed ten years ago, there still is only lingering hope for an answer to the question, *What Went Wrong?*

Chan Chao was born in Burma and moved to the United States when he was twelve years old. He currently resides in Washington, D.C.