



Gianna Commito
Windows and Doors

Cover:
Catch, 2008
watercolor and casein
on panel
32 x 24"

Right:
Lap, 2009
watercolor and casein
on panel
20 x 16"



Right:
Wing, 2009
watercolor and casein
on panel
32 x 30"

Far Right:
Block, 2009
watercolor and casein
on panel
36 x 30"



Gianna Commito
Windows and Doors

Feb 5–Mar 13, 2010

William Busta Gallery
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Gianna Commito

Several years ago Gianna showed up in The Drawing Center to show me her work. She laid out her stuff on the table the Center used to have for this purpose. It was an enormous table in a wonderfully well-lit big room—a deserved homage to the artists who were about to pass through the hell of criticism. The table, that day, seemed covered by blindingly colorful shapes and lines, and my initial reaction was to wonder when artists would realize that formalism was dead. I looked again and, in that moment, I became a casualty of aesthetic subversion.

Commito showed me works that at first looked harmless, but seen peripherally, they were seductive. For distrusting people like myself, her paintings almost seemed easy to dismiss, floating in a world of visual Muzak. However, the work was not soothing; it was irritating. Against my prejudices, it was screaming for my attention.

I realized that the work did not have a real compositional order nor, for that matter, any order. Neither did it, in spite of its appearance, have the ambition of pleasing. Beauty was studiously nipped whenever it threatened to emerge. I started to smile and to look more intently. The work might have been a joke, but it wasn't—there was humor, but it was intertwined with the wisdom of a good chess player. I was being carefully led into a maze of wrong paths of recognition, and then kicked back to the beginning. Commito was seducing me with the promise of pleasantness, but then, with a careful administration of arbitrariness, she honed the part of promise and stopped. Conditions that seemed to lead to balance and harmony eventually ended in self-destruction, and Commito seemed to anticipate the viewer at each step.

Looking smooth, she offers very bumpy rides. Commito has faked a sense of security in order to make us work willingly and hard. She provides us with a balancing act between order and disorder, between space and flatness, between comfort and discomfort, without tipping her hand. We may even start believing that all this is about decoding her pieces. Soon we'll realize that it's not, that it is about decoding our reactions to her pieces. We end up learning something about ourselves, while her pieces remain as renewable ciphers, compelling us to return to them over and over.

—Luis Camnitzer

Camnitzer is an artist. He was formerly Curator of the Viewing Program at The Drawing Center in New York.



My work has always been reflective of my environment, representing the architecture I move through and my relationship with public versus private space. I am interested in recording real places in their many varied forms—my attic studio, the modernist building I teach in, a hotel room in a foreign country—and converting them into more ambiguous, abstracted, spaces. The initial structural elements that I reference may evolve into more complex geometric systems or become obscured through the process of painting, but still provide a sense of space: of interior versus exterior, residential versus industrial, pictorial versus illusionistic space.

—Gianna Commito

Above:
Ville, 2009
watercolor and acrylic
gouache on paper
18 x 12"

Gianna Commito

Born 1976, North Carolina, USA
Resides and works in Kent, OH

giannacommito.blogspot.com

Education

- 2003 MFA, University of Iowa, School of Art and Art History, Iowa City, IA
- 2002 MA, University of Iowa, School of Art and Art History, Iowa City, IA
- 1998 BFA, Alfred University, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred, NY

Selected Exhibitions

- 2010 *The 185th Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art.* National Academy, New York, NY
- Untitled (Painting). Shaheen Modern and Contemporary, Cleveland, OH
- Windows and Doors.* William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
- 2009 *The Living and the Dead.* Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York, NY
- The Great Impression.* Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA
- 2008 *Union Square.* Taxter and Spengemann, New York, NY
- Exquisite.* Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA
- Art on Paper Biennial.* Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC
- Recent Work.* Moreau Art Galleries, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN
- Perfect Strangers.* Daily Operation, Brooklyn, NY. Curated by Jon Lutz
- 2007 *Fall Selections: Non-Declarative Drawing.* The Drawing Center, New York, NY. Curated by Luis Camnitzer
- Side by Side.* Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH. Curated by Ana Vejsovic
- Eight Hour Drawing Project.* Bowman and Penelec Galleries, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA
- Thirty Women.* Mary Condon Hodgson Art Gallery, Frederick Community College, Frederick, MD
- 2006 *Artist of the Week, from Flatfiles* (May 19–27). Pierogi 2000, Brooklyn, NY
- Space-Domestic.* Emerson Gallery. McLean Center for the Arts, McLean, VA. Curated by Jiha Moon-Wilson

- 2004 *Young Painters Competition.* Heistand Galleries, Miami University of Ohio, Oxford, OH. Curated by Lauri Firstenburg
- 2002 *Iowa Artists.* Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA

Awards and Residencies

- 2009 Artist in Residence, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
- 2006 Finalist, Wendy L. Moore Fellowship. Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
- 2005 Artist in Residence, St. Michael's College. Colchester, VT
- Second Place, William and Dorothy Yeck Award, Young Painters Competition. Miami University of Ohio, OH
- Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant
- Yaddo residency. Saratoga Springs, NY
- The MacDowell Colony. Peterborough, NH
- Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE

Collaborations and Curatorial Projects

- 2008 *Call and Response.* School of Art Gallery, Kent State University, Kent, OH
- The Last Book.* Compiled by Luis Camnitzer. Housed in the National Library of Argentina
- 2006 *Three-way.* School of Art Gallery, Kent State University, Kent, OH
- 2005 *Listings.* Collaboration with author Rick Moody. *Indiana Review* (Volume 27, #1) Summer

Professional Experience

- 2005–Present Assistant Professor. Kent State University, School of Art, Kent, OH
- 2004–05 Visiting Assistant Professor. Alfred University, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred, NY