

GAME II

THE WORKS OF
GAYLE WELLS MANDLE
& JULIA MANDLE



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GAME II

The Works of Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle

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Leila Heller Gallery, New York

Cover Image:
Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Burning Throne, 2012

Right:
Group Portrait Two, 2012



GAME II

THE WORKS OF
GAYLE WELLS MANDLE
& JULIA MANDLE

BALANCING ACT

MAKING MEANING FROM OUR TIME

An essay by Roger Mandle, PhD

In her op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (Sunday, October 14, 2012), Chrystia Freeland focuses on ruling classes throughout history that have ensured their own self-destruction. “Elites that have prospered from inclusive systems can be tempted to pull up the ladder they climbed to the top,” she concludes. “Eventually their societies become extractive and their economies languish.” Leaders who fear inclusiveness hold back their societies, closing off access to opportunities for education and advancement, and refusing to support those in need of a hand up. The recent Arab Spring and global Occupy movements, along with issues of economic disparity raised during the recent US election, demonstrate continuing frustration with leaders whose policies are not inclusive.¹

In their exhibition *Game II*, Julia Mandle and Gayle Wells Mandle use images – not of ladders but of chairs and a teeter-totter – to depict humanity’s eternal struggle against imbalanced societies that deny their citizens equal opportunity. Inspired by current events in the Middle East and the United States – where the Occupy movement and subsequent 2012 presidential election brought issues of economic inequity to the forefront – they express their ideas through a combination of media, styles and objects that infuse their art with topical meaning and depth. Their collaborative exhibition stems from a warm partnership dedicated to making art that speaks for the “other” 99 percent – for people who aspire to greater security, opportunity and justice in the world. Through their work, my wife Gayle and daughter Julia strongly believe they can effect change by challenging people of all backgrounds to think more openly and inclusively about the world around them.

It is important to understand their work as part of a larger effort by 21st century artists to create a new, more inclusive “public art” that builds on the legacy of their predecessors – from Goya and Manet to Picasso and Rauschenberg. By using their own techniques and technologies as tools to express concerns about social, political and environmental issues, my wife and daughter are attempting to extend viewers’ sights past the work seen in the gallery and outward towards the larger world.

Over the past decade, their work has become increasingly more message-driven. Timely references to global events now inform everything they make, from performances to paintings, embroidery to large and small-scale sculpture, drawings to photographs. While each artist has grown in her own way, their close relationship has enabled them to learn from and inspire each other.

As in their other exhibitions at Leila Heller Gallery, this mother and daughter partnership has both shown together and collaborated on the theme of their exhibitions. In 2011, Gayle and Julia showed together in an exhibition called *Game*, creating work that was both complementary in nature yet distinctly different in approach. *Hypermarket*, Gayle’s series of 38 paintings – exhibited as a large composite on a single wall – focused on the expat community living in the Persian Gulf region, whereas Julia’s work, *Lamiya’s Last Game*, centered on the tragedy of children killed or maimed playing with cluster bombs in Iraq and other war-ravaged countries.

In this new exhibition at Leila Heller Gallery, both artists have drawn strong inspiration from last year’s Arab Spring uprisings, creating work that expresses their respect and concern for the pro-democratic individuals who took to the streets. As a result, *Game II* portrays the uneven playing field in which oppressed people struggle for equal rights.

The central work in the exhibition, *Study for a Monument*, and the paintings, sculpture, photographs and embroideries that surround it could spill into the streets as a cry for justice for those who have given so much for freedom and civil rights. The burned chairs in the piece provide metaphorical references to the many individuals who sacrificed their lives to help others. The stacked chairs weighing down the giant teeter-totter and thrusting an empty throne into the air suggests our eternal struggle for fairness, parity and respect for all. One can imagine this monument cast in bronze, standing 50 feet high in the center of Tahrir Square, for example, or in other places where disenfranchised citizens have stood up against tyranny.

ROOTS OF MEANING

Gayle’s paintings reverberate with the urgency of Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes, with gestures suggesting Twombly and collage overlays reminiscent of Rauschenburg, and compositional references to Basquiat. But these techniques are all in service to her broader message: an expression of outrage against social injustice. In the catalogue essay for her exhibition *Beyond the War, Contemporary Iraqi Artists of the Diaspora*, which she curated for Leila Heller Gallery in 2010, Gayle wrote, “As a painter, I take my socio-political frustrations out on my canvases – abstract paintings with gritty textures. Over the years I have often sought out familiar forms of expression when I visit galleries and museums, and have assimilated techniques from artists who I admire.” Through this experience, she became aware of the expressive art of a number of Iraqi expatriates – Mahmoud Obaidy in particular. She responded especially strongly to his use of color, form and gesture, which feel very attuned to her own visual ideas. “When art resonates deep down inside the soul, there is no nationality, gender, age or experience that can separate us,” she notes. “In a sense, we speak the same language.” She had begun to experience the universality of human expression through – and most importantly, beyond – the subject matter of their work.

Growing up with a mother who was a painter, Gayle used to go to the town dump to sketch the detritus of the city – a memory that still moves her today. Living in Washington, DC years later, just as she was beginning to paint again, she was touched by seeing limousines passing homeless people sleeping on top of sidewalk grates in the winter – a stark reminder of poverty in the face of power. The haunting glimpses of this distinct disparity inspired a moving series of paintings reflecting the plight of the powerless.

Gayle’s work as interior designer over more than 30 years has nurtured her sense of color and form. Her love of fabrics, patterns and textures has led to her use of collage in combination with painting and writing. Her love of pithy texts, word play and typography has brought out both letterforms and quotations in her work, and she often incorporates snippets or whole pages of ledger books as symbolic accounts of anonymous individual histories. Not surprisingly, Gayle’s process also involves listening to news programs while making her work; current events inspire, anger or amuse her, and bring her work closer to the events of her time. Calling herself “a political junky,” she avidly follows national and local politics, trying to debunk candidates’ rhetoric and legislators’ moves.

In her essay in *Game*, her first shared exhibition with Julia at Leila Heller Gallery in 2010, Gayle wrote, “I believe that the world is becoming one mega civilization and that the biggest game will always be about human rights. Despite differences of gender, age, race, politics, religion and culture, we are all human beings with the same basic needs and the desire for freedom.... But the question remains: Can we ever create a fair balance between the haves and the have-nots? It remains to be seen whether history will ever record a new equilibrium for mankind.”

In the current exhibition, Gayle again creates works rich with texture from her own photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, fabrics from around the world and her written observations about her experiences in other cultures. In *Libro d’Oro*, for example, she refers to the book in which the Venetian aristocracy kept an exclusive list of names of those privileged to share the wealth of their community. The statement in gold on the painting *once upon a time* indicates the temporal nature of this Venetian exclusivity. The fragmented chairs, including the one sitting in front of the painting, are reminders of the transience of seats of power held by restrictive societies. The old hammer and lead covering the seat of the “real” chair suggest the eternal tools used to build these societies. In other paintings in this exhibition, chairs appear to identify with the innocent martyrs of the Arab Spring. The tension in Gayle’s paintings between recognizable objects, the architectural elements of her compositions and the more free gestures that move across them reinforce the sense of “breaking out” of the strictures of form and meaning, as well as the loosening of restraints in the societies she speaks about in her work.

THREADS OF CHANGE

Julia’s work is born from her education as an art historian, performance artist and lifelong maker of all sorts of things. Growing up in a creative household, she was influenced by her mother’s art, even as a child. She also absorbed the family fascination with world politics, and while living in Europe the past few years, has gained new perspective on issues of human rights. Starting out as a performance artist (jmandleperformance.org), Julia mounted highly original productions on the streets of New York and in improvised theaters like The Old Can Factory and the police horse stable in Brooklyn.

In *Fabrication of Blindness*, her 2007 installation at the Baryshnikov Art Center, she presented 385 embroidered black hoods representing each of the Guantanamo prisoners – a moving testimony to their enforced anonymity and confinement without due process. Around this time, her work was beginning to migrate from creating performances to making objects. As the accompanying catalogue essay explains, “the installation enabled Mandle to explore her own sense of blindness, remorse, guilt and powerlessness related to the occupation of Iraq.... Part performance, part sculpture, *Fabrication of Blindness* binds the viewer and detainee through the interaction of the quietly moving visitors and the undulating black hoods.” Just prior to these more intense projects, Julia had also attempted to translate her performance costumes into street wear.

Hopscotch for New Orleans (2008), a community-based performance project, involved students from the International School of Louisiana wearing Julia’s specially cast chalk shoes to mark their processional movement on the streets. The project created an ephemeral map of their neighborhood, which had been deeply wounded by Hurricane Katrina. This, like all of Julia’s pieces at the time, was built from her passion to have residents interact with her performances in non-traditional spaces; viewers encounter the “action” and find themselves participating in it. Through her work, audiences discover new levels of awareness about their surroundings and engage with each other more deeply through the performance, absorbing the experience and becoming infused more abstract ideas.

Come & Have a Chicky Meal, Cuz You’re Gonna Love This Deal, a 2006 performance at Montclair [NJ] State University’s Kasser Theater, questioned the declining participation in democracy in this country. “Is American consumer culture replacing civic responsibility?” Julie asked through this project. The basis of her imagery for this performance was an English advertisement found in the rubble of a Pakistani KFC franchise that was repeatedly being bombed in Karachi. In both of these projects, Julia introduced the symbolic use of embroidered images and quotations, utilizing a quiet, traditional women’s craft to boldly express her thoughts about global political issues. And she has since perfected this effective form of expression. In *Game II* her chair embroideries utilize un-cut threads hanging from the chairs to amplify expressive textures of direction and emotion. It’s a technique that beautifully complements her charcoal drawings of chairs that seem to be rising or falling, smoldering as they move.

INSPIRING NEW CONVERSATIONS

In her essay *Political Activism and Art: A Consideration of New Developments in Practice*, Daphne Plessner notes that artists who attempt to convey a political message “not only direct our attention to the discursive character of their projects, but their work also positions us within the heart of politics. That is, politics as it should be: active, participative, dialogic analysis of the operations of the state, corporations and the commercial and economic forces that impact on our lives....” She adds, however, that no matter how much artists strive to make a broad public impact, “they are, for the most part, only talking to other artists through arts institutions and in many cases rely on museums to promote their work....”²

The conflict that Plessner describes has been largely overcome by artists like Julia, who has taken her work into the streets, beyond the confines of galleries, museums, critics and collectors. In fact, artists have always attempted to deliver messages to whatever audiences they can reach directly – to decry inequities and atrocities against citizens. Far from diminishing the power of their art, such impassioned pleas on behalf of the oppressed have heightened the impact of these artists’ works throughout history.

Today, the work of artists like Gayle and Julia is challenging art historians and critics to rethink their views of contemporary art and art history. Art history is by nature a retrospective endeavor. When assessing contemporary art, most Western art historians look for links with past expressions or to see whether current artists are rejecting traditions to express new and possibly more relevant ideas in their art. Many believe that the history of art advances in a straight line, with artists’ movements reacting to and improving upon the art of previous generations.

Carter Brown, former director of the National Gallery in Washington, was fond of saying that “isms” became “wasms” as art historians pronounced the death of previous movements and heaped relative praise or criticism on the latest trends in art. Or as Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev states a bit more quixotically, “The riddle of art is that we do not know what it is until it is no longer that which it was.” She goes on to add: “Furthermore, art is defined as much by what it is, as by what it is not; by what it does, or can do, as by what it does not, or cannot do; it is defined even by what it fails to achieve.”³

Until recently, many artists have also felt obliged to move beyond previous art forms and styles to invent their own unique forms of expression. While many contemporary artists incorporate methods or ideas from previous generations, newer is somehow always considered better. Both critics and artists see originality as a virtue in its own right – as a reflection of the Western ethos of self-improvement and evolution.

In the late 20th century, artists and critics were still reacting to their predecessors’ break with the literal rendering of subject matter that began years earlier with Cubism, Futurism and so forth. The generations of artists producing work rooted in abstraction remained absorbed in a new focus on process. Art was self-referential and almost exclusively about process, form and technique. Movements such as Minimalism rejected Abstract Expressionism, preferring to adhere to formalist foundations. These artists “withdrew” from the socio-political maelstrom of the day to work in a rarefied world of more “pure” visual ideas that propagated each other. Post-modernism was meant to define a period for exploring the “end” of art. Certain art forms were considered passé and others were considered *retardataire*, a derogatory term reflecting on an artist’s lack of stylistic originality.

Many artists of that time seemed to reinforce the wall that the economic elite had built around themselves, blocking their view of the world outside their own secure bubble. By limiting their subjects to matters within the “frame” of their work, these artists also prevented their work from either reflecting or confronting the social conditions of people who could not afford to support their art. In societies “organized for their own benefit,” as Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson refer to them in their insightful book *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, artists popular with the elite may have inadvertently reinforced their own isolation by creating art that fails to take notice of changing conditions outside that realm. Is it possible that the elite would not respond favorably to imagery that forces them to recognize unpleasant realities about the world – especially ones that challenge their own status?

Art historians and critics must look back in order to shape their view of the present. In trying to analyze contemporary art, they can only adapt what they have learned from their own generation of visual practitioners. While artists have always presented their version of “the way,” critics and art historians have attempted to analyze this way in more broad terms relating art to society. Art criticism over the past fifty years has been brokered by the corporate structure of the arts – by art schools, art dealers and auction houses, art museums and collectors, and by art critics themselves. All these spheres of influence have been intertwined, creating an incestuous environment in which artists make their work.

Artists of previous generations were both influenced by and attempted to influence this self-perpetuating circle by making increasingly rarified art that tried to be more different, more inventive and more unique than their predecessors. Mostly these differences were about style. Style became substance. Substance became a decorative accessory to rich people’s lives – safe territory for cocktail conversation because it consciously avoided speaking about the more difficult and pressing issues of the day. Museums, galleries, parks and other public spaces became repositories for objects that spoke only to each other and to those elements of society that protect the preserves of vocabulary and value for their own sake. Art was about art.

By incorporating so many styles from across art history in their work, Gayle and Julia exemplify how today’s artists use art history as one vast encyclopedia of source material for making their own statements. Rather than seeing art history as a progressive series of better and better visual ideas, these artists tap into any- and everything in world culture – both present and past – as potentially relevant to the messages they are attempting to convey. In addition, they acknowledge being part of a long line of artists whose subject matter was political, or whose venues were the streets, and whose audiences were purposely not “main stream.”

Current events have exploded the previously narrow circle of influence on the arts of any one place as well. As new economies have grown across the world in China, Russia and now the Middle East, new wealth has created markets for artists who are being recognized for the first time for expressing their own cultural backgrounds and political situations. Critics, historians, museum curators, dealers and

collectors have rushed to discover these emerging artists from other parts of the globe. Meanwhile, artists like Julia and Gayle are incorporating new images, found objects and techniques drawn from other cultures. Both artists have lived abroad in recent years – Gayle in Qatar for four years and Julia in The Netherlands for the same amount of time. And widely connected as they are by modern media, they are able to keep up with the evolving scene in the Middle East and to satisfy their sizable appetite for timely information about these rapidly changing cultures.

The more critics gain global perspective, the more they recognize the wide range of sources influencing contemporary art. They recognize that in the 21st century many more artists are incorporating self-referential aspects of previous art movements as stylistic backdrops, expressing a new reality driven by the need to make personal statements about the current human condition. Moved by global events and everyday life, these artists make work about the issues of the day. Additionally, artists are making a renewed effort to communicate to a broad public about these important issues. Many – like Julia – are utilizing theatrical and performance-based work to speak about their concerns, combining objects with films, dance and dramatic interludes.

Given the growing urgency of this creative output, the renewed critical interest in socially connected art has been variously labeled “relational aesthetics” (Nicholas Bourriaud) and “social aesthetics” (Lars Bang). As Jeremy Deller notes, “I went from being an artist who makes things, to being an artist who makes things happen.” Nato Thompson observes that artists like Deller are “shaking up foundations of art discourse, and sharing techniques and intentions with fields far beyond the arts.” But socially engaged art is not an art movement, Thompson maintains: “Rather, these cultural practices indicate a new social order – ways of life that emphasize participation, challenge power, and span disciplines ranging from urban planning and community work to theater and the visual arts.”⁴

Gayle Wells Mandle and Julia Mandle are among many artists working today who have chosen to create their own forward perspective, not by rejecting previous artists’ contributions, but by appropriating the most useful aspects of them in their need to comment on contemporary life. The political value of their stylistic incorporation is to make their message more understandable and approachable, increasing its importance and universality. Their courage to address issues of equity and human rights through their art is admirable. And beyond its beauty, their work takes on added significance because of their acts of courage.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Freeland refers readers to the recent book by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, which defines those states as “controlled by ruling elites whose objective is to extract as much wealth as they can from the rest of society.” Freeland contrasted these extractive states with more “inclusive states [that] give everyone access to economic opportunity; often, greater inclusiveness creates more prosperity, which gives incentive for even greater inclusiveness.”

2. Daphne Plessner, “Political Activism and Art: A Consideration of the Implications of New Developments in Practice,” a paper for Art&Education, online blog, 2012.

3. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in the essay (entitled), “Press release,” dOCUMENTA (13), “The dance was very frenetic, lively, rattling, clanging, rolling, contorted, and lasted for a long time,” p. 3 .

4. “Living as Form” by Nato Thompson in *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011* (Creative Time Books, New York and The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 2012, p. 17–19)



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Study for a Monument (in artists' studio), 2012
Wood, steel, cloth and paint
7 x 20 x 10 ft / 17.8 x 50.8 x 3 m



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Study for a Monument (detail) 2012
Wood, steel, cloth and paint
7 x 20 x 10 ft / 17.8 x 50.8 x 3 m



Gayle Wells Mandle and Julia Mandle

Group Portrait One, 2012

Large: Archival inkjet print on Epson, hot press bright paper

84 x 44 in / 213.4 x 111.8 cm

Small: Set of 8 photographs printed on Ilford galerie,

gold fibre silk in an archival, custom, embossed black fabric box

21 x 14 in / 53.3 x 35.6 cm

Edition of 5, 2 APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle

Group Portrait Three, 2012

Archival inkjet print on Epson, hot press bright paper

84 x 44 in / 213.4 x 111.8 cm

Edition of 5, 2 APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Portrait of a Revolutionary Three, 2012
 Set of 8 photographs printed on Ilford galerie,
 gold fibre silk in an archival, custom, embossed black fabric box
 21 x 14 in / 53.3 x 35.6 cm
 Edition of 5, 2 APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Portrait of a Revolutionary Four, 2012
 Set of 8 photographs printed on Ilford galerie, gold fibre
 silk in an archival, custom, embossed black fabric box
 21 x 14 in / 53.3 x 35.6 cm
 Edition of 5, 2 APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Trophy One, 2012
Miniature bronze mounted on custom wooden pedestal
4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Throne Six, 2012
Miniature bronze mounted on custom wooden pedestal
4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Trophy Two, 2012
 Miniature bronzes and fabric mounted on custom wooden pedestal
 4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
 Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Trophy Three, 2012
 Miniature bronzes and fabric mounted on custom wooden pedestal
 4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
 Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Trophy Four, 2012
 Miniature bronzes and fabric mounted on custom wooden pedestal
 4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
 Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle
Trophy Five, 2012
 Miniature bronzes and fabric mounted on custom wooden pedestal
 4 in / 10.2 cm pedestal
 Edition of 7, 2APs



Gayle Wells Mandle

Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle

Burning Throne, 2012

Large: Archival inkjet print on Epson, hot press bright paper

84 x 44 in / 213.4 x 111.8 cm

Small: Set of 8 photographs printed on Ilford galerie, gold fibre silk in an archival, custom, embossed black fabric box

21 x 14 in / 53.3 x 35.6 cm

Edition of 5, 2 APs



Gayle Wells Mandle
Stacking the Odds, 2012
 Multimedia acrylic painting on canvas
 60 x 48 in / 152.4 x 121.9 cm



Gayle Wells Mandle
Verbal Fracking, 2012
 Multimedia acrylic painting on canvas
 48 x 48 in / 121.9 x 121.9 cm



Gayle Wells Mandle
Balancing Act, 2012
Multimedia acrylic painting on canvas
60 x 144 in / 152.4 x 365.8 cm (triptych)



Gayle Wells Mandle
Teeter, 2012
 Multimedia acrylic painting on canvas
 47 x 39 in / 119.4 x 99 cm



Gayle Wells Mandle
Libro D'Oro, 2012
 Multimedia acrylic painting on canvas
 60 x 48 in / 152.4 x 121.9 cm

Julia Mandle



Julia Mandle
Unraveling (detail), 2012
Embroidery on fabric
28 x 15 in / 71 x 38 cm (framed)



Julia Mandle
Rising and Falling, 2012
 Embroidery on canvas
 39 x 18 in / 99.1 x 45.7 cm (framed)



Julia Mandle
Rising Tide, 2012
 Embroidery on canvas
 23 x 37 in / 94 x 58.4 cm (framed)



Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) One, 2012
 Charcoal on Fine Art Paper
 42 x 29 in / 106.7 x 74.9 cm (framed)



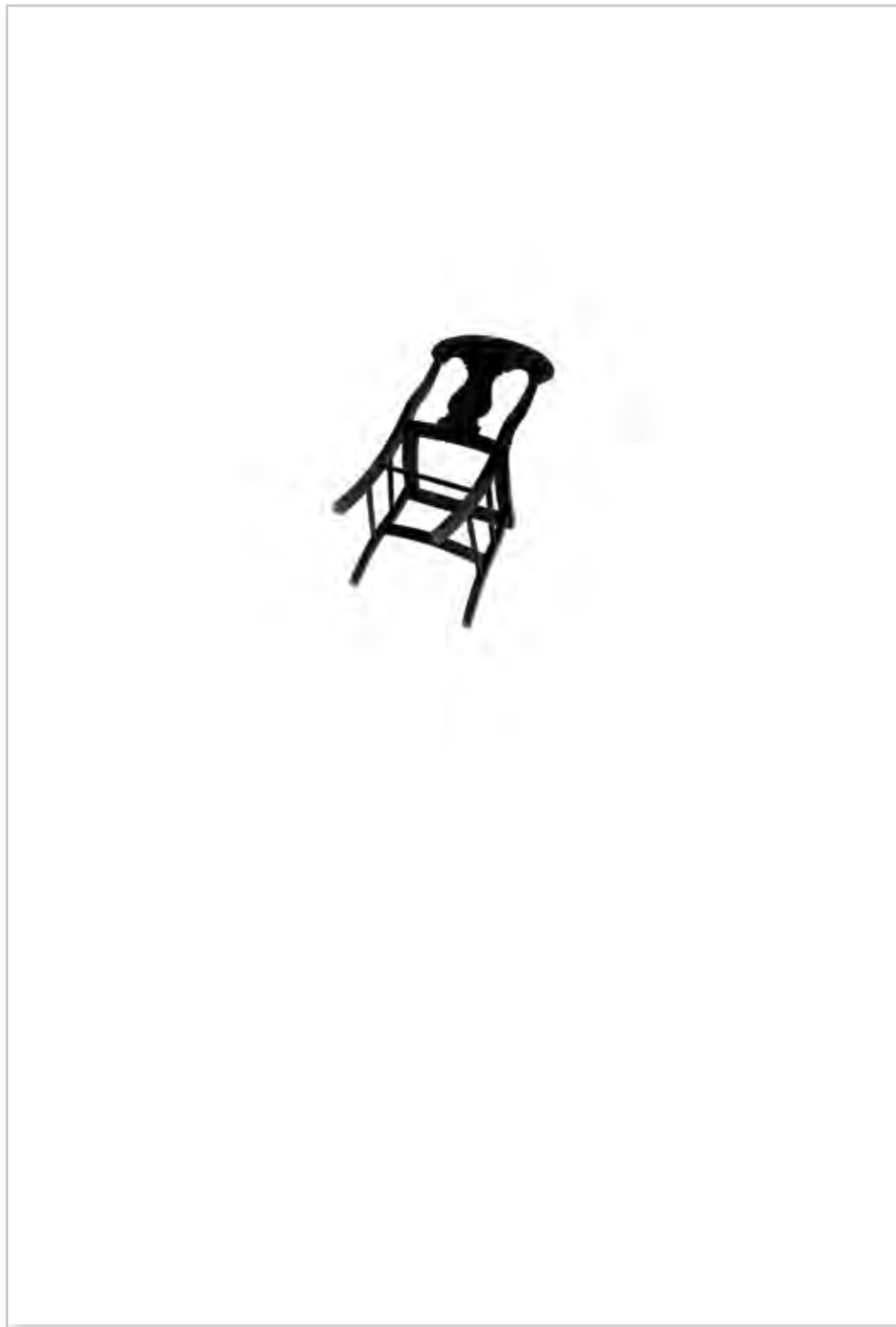
Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) Two, 2012
 Charcoal on Fine Art Paper
 42 x 29 in / 106.7 x 74.9 cm (framed)



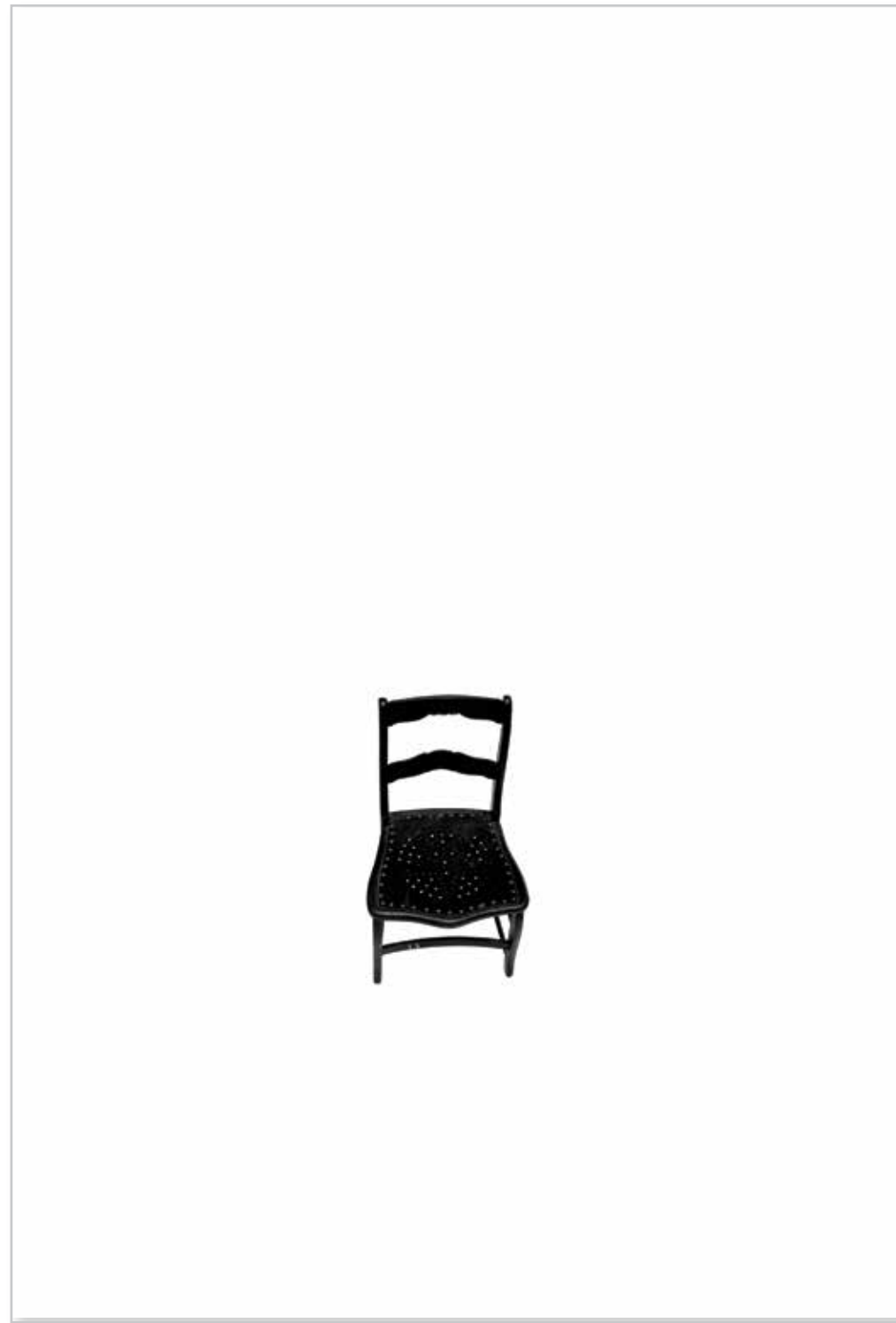
Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) Three, 2012
 Charcoal on Fine Art Paper
 42 x 29 in / 106.7 x 74.9 cm (framed)



Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) Four, 2012
 Charcoal on Fine Art Paper
 42 x 29 in / 106.7 x 74.9 cm (framed)



Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) Five, 2012
 Black and white photograph on Fine Art Paper
 21.5 x 14.5 in / 54.6 x 36.8 cm (framed)
 Edition of 5, 2 APs



Julia Mandle
In de War (Confusion) Six, 2012
 Black and white photograph on Fine Art Paper
 21.5 x 14.5 in / 54.6 x 36.8 cm (framed)
 Edition of 5, 2 APs

Q&A

WITH GAYLE WELLS MANDLE & JULIA MANDLE

What inspired you to create “Study for a Monument”?

Julia: Our world has been recently dominated by uprisings. The predominance of these acts of resistance, both on a large-scale and small scale, is very remarkable in our time.

Gayle: Our decision to call it “Study for a Monument” is in particular to call attention to and honor all the brave ninety-nine percent who are standing up currently to challenge the unfair imbalance toward the powerful and wealthy one percent of our population. We can envision this sculpture being later cast entirely in bronze and placed outdoor as a kind of memorial. But then again, the struggle still goes on, therefore, we feel it’s important to underscore that it’s a study, an unfinished memorial. The monument is not yet ‘set in stone’...

J: We have also been especially interested in the collective and the binding together of small acts of resistance that compose a large movement. Certainly Gayle and I spoke a lot about catalysts and people like Mohammed Bouazizi who immolated himself in Tunisia in 2010 and literally ignited the Jasmine Revolution. But there are so many moments and sacrifices. Here, my thinking is influenced by the writing of historian Howard Zinn who regards revolutionary times in history as the result of a collection of small acts of bravery.

G: We made large portraits of each part of our “Study for a Monument.” We want to highlight each of the smaller elements: their heroic grandness but also fragility and banality. These are our ‘portraits of revolutionaries.’

J: We also decided from “Monument” to create the miniature sculptures as sort of prosaic ‘trophies.’

Is this the first time you have collaborated on artwork?

G: Yes, this is the first time we have collaborated on the actual artwork. Our past three mother/daughter exhibitions have juxtaposed our individual work. However, this is the first exhibition that includes photography and sculpture we have made as collaborators.

During the development of this exhibition, we also made work individually- Julia created new embroidery and drawings and I created my mixed media paintings.

J: In my individual works, I allowed myself to reflect upon my own sense of confusion over our time. I constantly ask myself: Where are we heading in this chaos? Are we rising up or falling down? Is “Dissent is the mother of ascent,” as Ralph Nader proposes? Each day has a different prognosis.

In regard to our new depth of collaboration, I would add that this change evolved very naturally. We have always been very open with each other during our individual creative processes. We constantly offer each other critique and suggestions. It amazes me to think back to how organically we moved into creating work together. We easily slipped into each other’s mind during the co-envisioning process of the main sculpture.

G: We were able to work together in our minds and also in materials. We conceived, questioned, disagreed and agreed. But we also got our hands equally dirty: together we found, torched, ripped, tied, documented, collected, designed, disfigured, and assembled each part of the main and miniature sculptures plus the related portraits.

What was the context for your other joint exhibitions?

G: The first exhibition (1980’s) was in memory of my mother, Julia’s grandmother Alice Welsh Jenkins. The show was entitled “Alice, Gayle and Julia”. Although Alice painted beautiful landscapes, she selected rather political subjects. Alice often illustrated tragic local news, such as flooding and the mining disasters in her native Pennsylvania. Our second exhibition (1990’s) was Julia’s and my reflection on the homeless population in Washington, DC using detritus we found on the street. Our last exhibition (*GAME I*, 2010) was at Leila Heller Gallery uptown. Julia’s work focused on the ravages to children from the cluster bombs dropped during the Iraq War. My paintings highlighted the human rights issues, along with the culture I observed while living in the Middle East.

What inspired you to create Game II?

G: We constantly step back from our work and our world and question it. Sometimes everything seems like a game, including the art world. During the development of this project, Julia and I focused in on the theme of the political playground, especially considering the recent American election.

GAYLE WELLS MANDLE

EDUCATION

1995- 1997	MFA Degree, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
1989- 1992	Corcoran School of Art, Washington, DC
1959- 1963	BS Degree, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013	<i>Game II</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2012	<i>Hypermarket</i> , Providence Art Club, Providence, RI
2011	<i>Game</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2008	<i>Benefit on Benefit</i> , Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
2006	<i>Solo Show</i> , TwoTon Inc, Pawtucket, RI
2003	<i>The Stable</i> , Brooklyn, NY Pittman Gallery, Providence, RI Turks Head Gallery, Providence, RI

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012	<i>Young Collectors Exhibition</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY Dedee Shattuck Gallery, Westport, MA Gallery 4, Tiverton, RI
2011	Shattuck Gallery, Westport, MA
2010	<i>Beyond The War</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY (acted as curator)
2009	21st Century Leaders Foundation, Doha, Qatar RISD Museum, Providence, RI
2007	Slater Mill, Pawtucket, RI
2006	Plum Gallery, Williamstown, MA
2005	Providence Art Club, Providence, RI Trudy Labell Fine Art, Naples, FL
2004	Gallery V, Columbus, OH <i>Virginia Lynch: A Curatorial Retrospective</i> , Virginia Lynch, Tiverton, RI <i>Palimpsest</i> , Plum Gallery, Williamstown, MA <i>New Members Group Show</i> , Providence Art Club, Providence, RI
2002	Maienza Wilson Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA Providence Art Club, Providence, RI
2001	RISD Museum, Providence, RI Sara Doyle Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI

RESIDENCIES

Anderson Ranch
Vermont Studio Center

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Edwards & Angell, LLP, Boston, MA
Edward & Angell, LLP, Providence, RI
Nixon & Peabody, LLP, Providence, RI
Nordstrom Corporation, Seattle, WA
Farjam Collection, Dubai, UAE

JULIA MANDLE

EDUCATION

1996-2000	MFA, Gallatin School, New York University, New York
1988-1992	BFA, Williams College, Williamstown, MA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013	<i>Game II</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2011	<i>Game</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2009	<i>Fabrication Of Blindness</i> , Cabinet Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
2008	<i>Chalk Shoes To The High Line</i> , Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, NY
2007	<i>Come & Have A Chickly Meal, Cuz You're Gonna Love This Deal</i> , The Art Directors Club, New York, NY <i>Fabrication Of Blindness</i> , Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, NY
2004	<i>Variable City: Fox Square</i> , Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, New York, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012	<i>The Young Collectors Exhibition</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2011	Art Dubai, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2009	<i>In Stitches</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2008	<i>Slow Locket</i> , Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands <i>Arte Projects at Prospect.1</i> , Julia Street Gallery, New Orleans, LA
2005	<i>Odd Lots</i> , White Columns, New York, NY
1999	<i>Time Of Our Lives</i> , New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

PERFORMANCES

2009	<i>Paths To The Park</i> , Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA
2008	<i>Hopscotch (For New Orleans)</i> , Arte Projects for Prospect.1, New Orleans, LA <i>Chalk Shoes To The Highline</i> , Friends of the Highline, New York, NY
2007	<i>Come & Have A Chickly Meal, Cuz You're Gonna Love This Deal</i> , Art Directors Club, New York, NY
2006	<i>Come & Have A Chickly Meal, Cuz You're Gonna Love This Deal</i> , Kasser Theater, Montclair, NJ
2005	<i>Hustle</i> , Queens Museum of Art, White Columns, Cabinet Magazine, New York, NY
2003	<i>Variable City: Fox Square</i> , Fox Square, Brooklyn, NY <i>Feast</i> , Stable presented with Danspace Project's Out of Space Series, Brooklyn, NY
2001	<i>Return</i> , Gale Gates et al., Brooklyn, NY
2000	<i>Erika</i> , Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY
1999	<i>When</i> , New Museum of Contemporary Art (Broadway Window), New York, NY

AWARDS / RESIDENCIES

Franklin Fund for Performance Art
The Foundation for Contemporary Art
New York Slate Arts Council
New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Performance Art
The National Endowment for the Arts
Guapamacataro, Michoacan, Mexico (Residency)
Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY (Residency)
Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, NY (Residency)
Weir Farm Trust, Wilton, CT (Residency)

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Farjam Collection, Dubai, UAE

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.