

# CIVILIAN

## ART PROJECTS

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Civilian Art Projects is pleased to present two solo exhibitions: **Love Letters** by Cara Ober and **Debriscapes** by Nikki Painter. The exhibitions will open to the public on Friday, September 11, 2009 and will be on view through October 17, 2009. There will be an opening reception for the artists on Friday, September 11, 2009 from 7pm to 9pm.

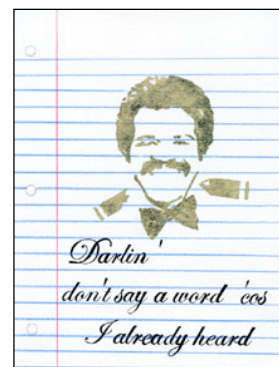


**Love Letters** is Baltimore-based artist Cara Ober's first solo exhibition with Civilian Art Projects. A painter, teacher, and writer, Ober layers drawing, painting, and printmaking into mixed media works that examine and reinterpret sentimental imagery. Ober's narrative works utilize specific phrases and fonts to suggest multiple voices, perspectives, and time periods. Rather than illustrating the text, the images create discord and contrast, layering metaphorical and nonsensical outcomes over personal notation. For *Love Letters*, Ober exhibits drawings and paintings, showing new work from three interrelated series. Intricate and funny, *Love Letters* explores the relationship of the artist to image, word, and personal meaning found in the exploration of secret fantasy and expressive interlude.

A visual artist with a love of the written word, Ober says, "the best metaphor for the method behind my fragmented, nostalgic, neurotic, and humorous paintings and works on paper is writing. It is impossible to experience my work without referencing reading and the literary narrative, not to mention home décor, suburban fashion, greeting cards, old dictionaries, pop songs, and other culturally mediated subjects. Wet scrawls of confessional writing, garnered from a variety of sources, contradict structured texts, often a dictionary definition or a generic statement, to imply numerous and disparate voices. Words have the power to illuminate as well as to deceive. I pair the visual with the verbal in order to maximize a painting's power to contradict itself, mimicking the human brain's natural thought process."

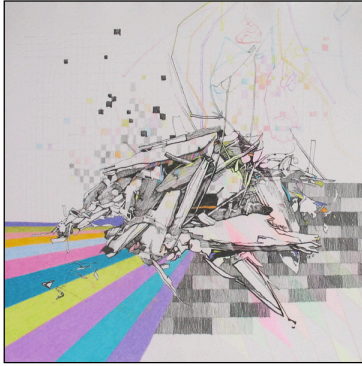
Combining text and emotive scribbles, these new works are "paradoxically straightforward and intricate. Referencing an assignment or diary, hand-drawn notebook paper sheets create an ordered structure which contrast childlike scrawls of crayon, colored pencil, and magic marker." Part romance, part inside joke, her paintings and drawings are nurturing tales of love and longing. Thick with hidden connection, fragments, and foggy memory, the imagery cumulates in a sort of impossible puzzle meant not to be solved but to be considered, enjoyed and left to its own devices.

Ober is commercially represented by The Randall Scott Gallery in Brooklyn, NY, Gallery Imperato in Baltimore, MD, and Civilian Art Projects in Washington, DC. She has participated in numerous international art fairs in the past year, including Art Miami, Aqua Winwood Miami, and Bridge Fair in London. Cara is a 2006 MD Individual Artist Grant recipient for painting and took second prize in the 2007 Bethesda Painting Awards. She received a Warhol Grant for Emerging Curators in 2006, and a Best in Show Award at the Torpedo Factory's Juried painting exhibit in 2006 from juror Jack Rasmussen. Ober earned an MFA in painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2005 and a BA in fine arts in 1996 from the American University. Cara writes art reviews for various publications like ArtNews, The Examiner Newspaper, Art US Magazine, Art Papers, Gutter Magazine, and publishes her own award-winning art blog, BmoreArt. She received her MFA in painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD and her BA in Fine Art from American University.



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**Debris** by Richmond, VA-based Nikki Painter is the recent American University MFA graduate's first solo exhibition in Washington, DC. Painter exhibits new drawings and a site-specific installation that explore—in bright neon colors, pencil lines, and various materials—the relationship and continuum between the built and natural worlds. According to Painter, “*debris* as a subject bridges my ideas about these worlds. I have been interested in demolition sites because they appeal to my ideas about the natural world's tendency toward chaos. This tendency manifests itself in the crumbling and splintering of man-made facades...demolition sites are also indicators of civilization's cyclical nature - we destroy our structures in order to make way for new ones.”

Painters' drawings and installations, cheery with color and layered with markings, belie a concern and examination of destruction and connection. Brightening up sticky subject matter, Painter carefully installs layers of detritus in robust three-dimensional collage that combust from the ceiling to the floor. In Painters' world, these structures are impossibly and chaotically constructed offering visual considerations versus practical use. “Ambiguous places, exploded imagery, and broken motifs within my work correlate with what I perceive both in my internal and external environments as a constant state of flux.” Exploring this continuum of ideas and relationships, the built world is on one end separated by a great range of space and chaos from that of the “natural” world. But these worlds are interdependent and inextricably connected.

Painter graduated in 2009 with an MFA in Studio Art from American University. She received her BFA in painting and printmaking from the Virginia Commonwealth University. She is the 2009 recipient of a Mellon Research grant, the Wolpoff Purchase Award, and Best in Show from the Rawls Museum in Courtland, VA. Her work has been exhibited at Civilian Art Projects, the Randall Scott Gallery, Paperwork Gallery, Transformer through the X-Initiative, at the Katzen Center Museum and Virginia Commonwealth University.



For more information or high-resolution images, please contact the gallery.

CIVILIAN ART PROJECTS, an art gallery based in Washington, D.C. supports the voice and vision of the artist through exhibitions, events, and collaborations in D.C. and abroad. The gallery is located in the Penn Quarter neighborhood in downtown Washington near many major museums, galleries, and national treasures. For more information, please visit [www.civilianartprojects.com](http://www.civilianartprojects.com).