



JOZEF BAJUS • *Lendfield* • November 7 to December 19, 2014

JOZEF BAJUS is Associate Professor of Design and Coordinator of Fiber/Design Program at Buffalo State College. In 1985 he received his MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (Slovakia). He is an award-winning fiber and mixed media artist, and recently received the 2008 Esprit de Corps Award in category artist, Burchfield - Penney Art Center in Buffalo and President's Award for Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creativity 2008, BSC, Buffalo. Bajus' work has been exhibited worldwide, including Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Japan, Korea, USA and Canada. His recent one-person show *The Combing Wave - Recent Works* - was on display in 2008 at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery - Collectors Gallery in Buffalo. *Curved Circle*, a one-person show, was in 2006 at Buffalo Art Studio in Buffalo, NY and in the Museum & Art Gallery of Koloman Sokol in Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia (Summer 2006). Bajus taught fiber workshops at the American Craft Museum, NYC in 2001, Penland School of Art and Craft in 2005, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in 2007 and 2010, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in 2000 and 2008, Split Rock in 2009, a one person exhibit "Long Distance Calls", City Gallery of Bratislava, Slovakia (2013), and at M.A. Bazovsky Gallery, Trencin, Slovakia (2014). Bajus' artworks are in numerous collections including the Moravian Art & Craft Museum in Brno, Czech Republic, Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, Slovakia, Racine Art Museum in Wisconsin, Gregg Museum of Art & Design in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Burchfield Penney Art Center, Buffalo, New York. Jozef Bajus' artworks are included also in private collections in Europe, USA and Canada.
www.jozefbajus.com

I would like to thank Hi-Temp Fabrication (John McKendry and his wonderful staff) for donated materials and Spinneybeck for donated leather material; Jeff Higginbotham for collaboration on the project *Submerged*; all who contributed with time and talent to help installing of my artworks (Deb Abgott, Bruce Fox, John Gallineau, Lenka Hajduchova, Joe & Leanne, Patrick Robideau, Elizabeth Samuels, Rebecca Wing); Hallwalls staff and for the opportunity to exhibit at such a prestigious institution; and curator John Massier for encouragement and believing in me as an artist. — Jozef Bajus

Hallwalls' visual arts program is supported by generous grants from Erie County Arts & Cultural Funding, the City of Buffalo, and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Major grant and underwriting support for Hallwalls' 2012-2013 programming season has been provided by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



HALLWALLS
 341 DELAWARE AVENUE
 BUFFALO, NY 14202
www.hallwalls.org



JOZEF BAJUS LENDFIELD



The sculptural work of Buffalo artist Jozef Bajus operates within successive layers of deceptive simplicity. They are ultimately concisely planned and realized, but they involve sophisticated material and conceptual concerns that belie the directness of their surface appearances. But as we have seen throughout the history of modernist and post-modernist sculpture, the simple-seeming can sometimes be the most impactful and most memorable of works.

As an artist whose background resides in textiles, the functional aspects of elemental crafting are always entirely visible in Bajus' art. Works are cut, folded and enfolded, wrapped, twisted, and tied. It sounds like a short menu of approaches, but Bajus has persistently demonstrated that those direct methods contain seemingly endless possibilities, contingent on scale, quantity, and material. It has enabled him to maintain an adventurous and exploratory path throughout his career and this perpetual variety is an apt illustration of Bajus' insatiable pursuit of new forms and unexpected meanings.

In the past, fabric and paper have been the dominant materials in Bajus' work (and they remain lynchpins of his practice) but recent years have seen an increase in his use of both found and industrial materials. A similar shift has occurred in the scale of his work, which has often been modest or compact, a gesture that tends to reiterate their hand-wrought and hand-held nature. But this scale has slowly amplified itself over time and his new works demonstrate that expansion of volume. Like those elemental crafting methods, scale is a direct and obvious aspect that, once engaged, can affect the proposed forms profoundly.

While some of the works in *Lendfield* use purchased industrial materials, the vast majority of materials here are found, appropriated and repurposed. Fingers of felt, lengths of rope, slender

metal curled into usable forms, bubble wrap, and many, many thousands of swatches of the artist's junk mail. Repurposing as a preferred philosophy was a key element for Bajus with these new works and there is no more staggering example of repurposing and concision than a pile of leftover cuts of black leather retrieved from a local factory. Restacked onto the gallery wall, they are immediately transformed into a thick, gnarly work of abstract expressionism.

Despite the predominance of industrial materials, the works often reference natural and organic forms. A yellow line of rope snaking through a vertical configuration of metal rods evokes cloud formations with lines of rain. Spirals of various materials piercing three of the gallery walls are a tornado of detritus. Suspended swatches of felt waft and sway as though they were a fragile, wintry forest.

These allusions reflect the conceptual concerns of the artist and tie adroitly into the exhibition's title—much of the materials in evidence here were “lent” and then transformed into a field of imagery by Bajus—but also reference an overarching concern about waste, refuse, re-use, the planet, and the problematic space of creating ever more art without merely adding to the general world of landfill.

Holding court in a central position in the gallery, Bajus has inserted a self-referential abstraction, derived from his own fingerprint. A simple arrangement, the work reiterates, in the bluntest manner, the artist's hand. Like all his other works, it's presented in exaggerated scale—less a gesture of self-promotion than perhaps an emphatic recognition that the artist himself, like his work, is ultimately another aggregate of patterns. As are we all.

John Massier
Visual Arts Curator



List of Works Illustrated:

Toxic Cloud (detail),
metal rods, rope

Imprint (det.), aluminum pipe, eye hooks

Imprint

Toxic Cloud

Twister, pvc pipes, junk mail, bubble wrap,
mixed media

Black Composition, leather

All works 2014.

All photos by Bruce Fox.

