



Jennifer Liston Munson

Entering into the visual space of Jennifer Liston Munson's art, one begins the wistful work of grasping at a former moment. Described by Liston Munson as 'something on the edge of nothing,' many of her recent creations evoke landscapes or architectural landmarks—but beyond referring specifically to any particular place, Liston Munson is more interested in depicting experiential time.

Her own travels and experiences inform her subject matter to a certain degree, but her tendency toward abstraction also encourages viewers to project their own memories. Just as Liston Munson seeks the 'familiar' as she explores unfamiliar terrain, finding recognizable features in spaces formerly foreign to her, the viewer of her art becomes the art's subject, and has the power to name what he or she sees. Regarding the nature of her creative process, Liston Munson says, "at some point I leave behind my own experience, and the image becomes something new."

To achieve 'something new,' Liston Munson transforms each work through a variety of high and low tech processes. Much of her work, then, features hybrids of media: for example, *Mexico City 1* is an example of her early explorations combining photography and paint (c-prints, oil on plaster) in which the two media exist parallel to one another—completing one another, yet still markedly divided. More recently (for example, in *Mexico City 12*), Liston Munson has striven to use the media in more layered, integrative techniques. She often begins by photographing with a Polaroid camera, so that the image has a soft quality from the beginning, and then scans the print, so that the texture becomes further abstracted. Then she discovers what painting over the image will add or detract, sometimes deciding that the painting should live on its own, sometimes that the photo should live on its own. The nature of each particular image determines its form.

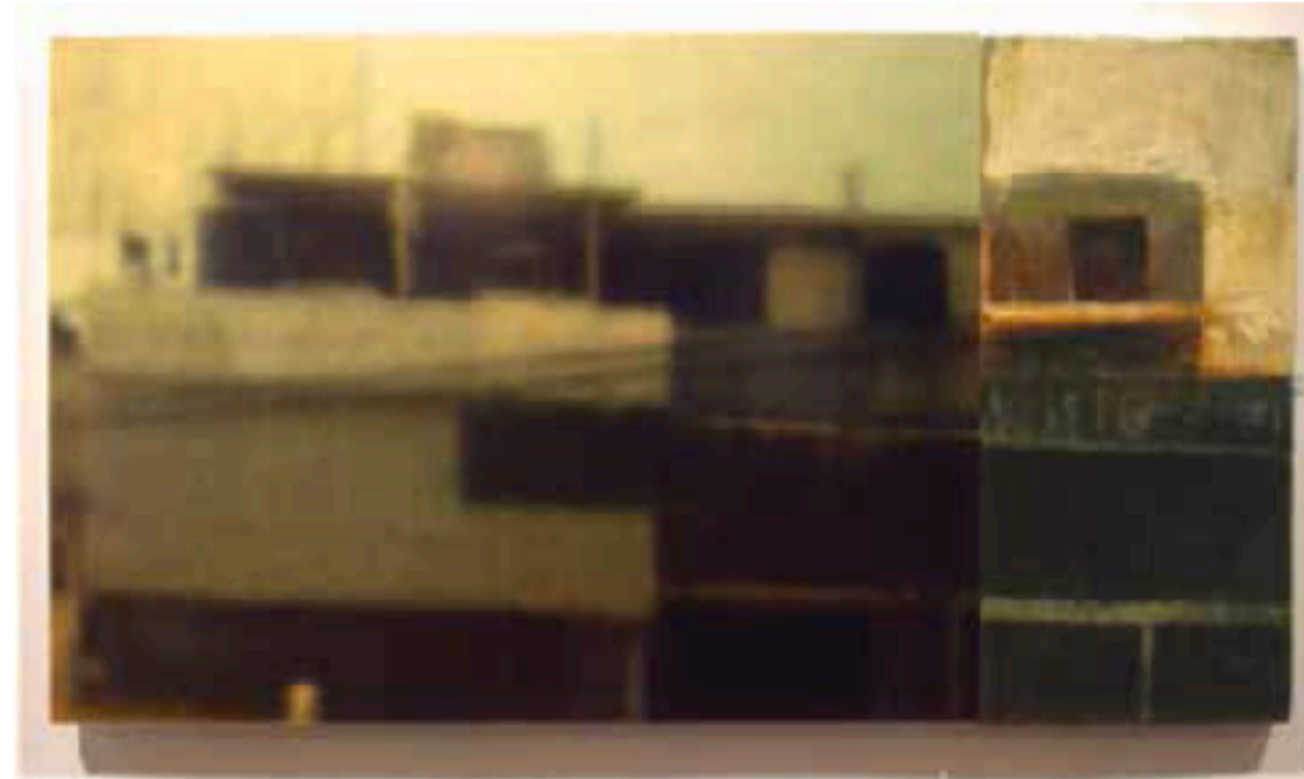
In addition to these decisions, Liston Munson's choices in surface quality play a powerful role in communicating tone. Applying material to wood with resin and sanding the surface with steel wool in many layers, Liston Munson achieves the texture of a surfboard, glossy and natural. She takes pride in this craft as much as in photography and painting; recently she has embraced 'doing more and more [herself]' with a special interest in printmaking, 'embracing the limitations' of the technology she uses. Solving the difficulties involved in printing at a large scale, for example, she has broken images into diptychs and triptychs, a process which lends new energy to her work.

Now working as Senior Exhibition Graphic Designer at the Museum of Fine Arts in addition to creating art independently, Liston Munson feels that she owes much to her collaborative work environment for inspiration both technically and conceptually. She applies many of the materials and methods which she uses at the MFA to her own art, and finds inspiration in the large scale, physical encyclopedia of art with which she works. For example, she is not merely influenced by Ellsworth Kelly; she worked tangibly with his art in a show, and closely experienced its presence. Of the great deal of art which has moved her, Abstract Expressionism most powerfully shaped her sensibility at an early stage. She names Kandinsky as helping her understand

abstraction—"how to start with something and reduce it to formal elements," how to "produce energy in a picture that includes the viewer," and how to couple color and marks to indicate movement.

Having studied as an undergraduate at Massachusetts College of Art and Design and Loughborough College of Art and Design in Leicestershire, England, as well as the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Tufts University for her Master of Fine Arts degree, Liston Munson is also heavily influenced by formative experiences in her education. As an undergraduate acclimated to an urban setting, going abroad and living in a rural landscape had a strong impact on her sensibility: she remembers gazing a long way beyond the horizon of rolling hills. Later in graduate school, Liston Munson was most influenced by advice to take a course she would never normally try. The class—video sculpture—encouraged her to use more technology in her work, a far reaching influence across her career.

Liston Munson continues to travel, to work with colleagues and students, and to push her development as an artist: fusing new and old, technological and natural, past and present experience. Innovative in her approach to these oppositional relationships, she finds and communicates a poignant harmony.



Jennifer Liston Munson
Mexico City I
2012
C Print on plexi, oil on
plaster, wood



Jennifer Liston Munson
Mexico City II
2014
Archival pigment photographs
and oil on wood panels,
UV resistant resin