

Simmons College Trustman Art Gallery Presents: "Sacre Rouge," A Two-Person Exhibition by Susan Montgomery and Richard Whitten



BOSTON (January 15, 2014) — Simmons College presents *Sacre Rouge*, an exhibit of mixed media by [Susan Montgomery](#) and paintings by [Richard Whitten](#) from February 3 — March 6 at the Trustman Art Gallery, located on the fourth floor, Main College Building, 300 The Fenway in Boston. A reception from 5–7 p.m. will be held on Thursday, February 6. The exhibit and reception are free and open to the public (closed February 18). Entwining the sacred with the profane, the art of Susan Montgomery and Richard Whitten astounds with their virtuosity in service to the imagination. Red—the color of passion, power, and blood has been an art historical touchstone. These artists employ all of these red visions and more as they manipulate our expectations of space, time, and convention. Susan Montgomery works in 2D and 3D. Her works of paper

seem to ethereally float—they consist of impressions, ghosted figures, and objects hardly tangible, like the stuff of dreams. Yet, like dreams, their imagery and meaning stirs us uncomfortably. Pope Joan, the popess of the early Middle Ages, may be apocryphal, but as Montgomery reminds us, history is an amalgam; not all is remembered and winners write the story. A female pope is provocative. Montgomery's images alternately evoke the white of papal garments or are drenched in the blood of a martyr. Her wraithlike paper and wire sculptures require effort to see the form, their gaps in continuity emphasizing her conceit. Richard Whitten's paintings embrace the Italian Renaissance and its love of ordered space. Impossible shifts in scale question foreground and background conventions. His doorways and windows beckon us into a world as witty and confusing as that of Alice's in *Through the Looking Glass*. They are delightful, mysterious, and a bit uncomfortable. Whitten's works on shaped panels are solid and architectural, conjuring a juggler's cap or a trefoil. Their surfaces are illusionary; banded borders and intricate carvings are all *trompe l'oeil*. The works play with space. Colored balls, recalling juggling or the game of pool, cavort across the surface. These oversized balls are disorienting. They play havoc with any rational narrative we might have begun to build. *WHERE ARE WE?* His sensuous colors and orderly architectural spaces war with the wild abandon of his game imagery. Susan Montgomery and Richard Whitten both controvert and make use of images we associate with the sacred. Their secularization and alteration of iconography asks questions about order, chaos, and societal choices, beauty, and memory. Our Lunchtime Lecture series continues on February 12 at 12:30 p.m. in the Gallery with Simmons College Professor of Spanish Delores Peláez. The title of her talk is "Red: A Colorful Connection to Power and Phantasy." The lecture is free and open to the public. Trustman Gallery hours are 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The gallery is free, open to the public, and wheelchair accessible. For more information, contact Marcia Lomedico at 617-521-2268, or visit the Trustman Art Gallery website at www.simmons.edu/trustman. Above: Susan Montgomery: Pope Joanna, 2012. Paper, thread, ink, and wire, 6'4" x 4'.