Behold the strange solar system, the white-hot center of commerce and industry, blue and red planets orbiting and adhering, tiny spots illuminated only by reflected glow. Each planet with its own revolving circumstance, orbit, moon(s), light, and dark. In the distance, dwarfs and satellites and black holes. Space the endless black beyond.

What fuels this source of heat? This obliterating force that diminishes all that surrounds it? Its throb is a reminder of unceasing power, god of watchfulness, overlord of darkness, smiter of lesser beings.

We made God when we needed an explanation. We trusted science when we had questions outside the Father’s purview. But what in us has demanded The Watchtower? And when will we, finally, be relegated to the outlying areas of the big picture?

Antonya Nelson
Art OF OUR TIME

SELECTIONS FROM THE ULRICH MUSEUM OF ART
WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

Patricia McDonnell and Emily Stamey

With contributions by:
Toby Kamps, Laura Moriarty,
Antonya Nelson, Timothy R. Rodgers,
and Robert Silberman

Photo-essay by Larry Schwarm

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About the Contributors

Toby Kamps is senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. He has organized exhibitions on the work of Vanessa Beecroft, Ellsworth Kelly, and Claes Oldenburg as well as such themed exhibitions as Small World: Dioramas in Contemporary Art (2000), Lateral Thinking: The Art of the 1990s (2002), and The Old, Weird America (2008).

Patricia McDonnell is director of the Ulrich Museum of Art. Her scholarly focus is upon European and American modernism, and she is a leading specialist on the painter Marsden Hartley. Her publications include Marsden Hartley: American Modern (1997), On the Edge of Your Seat: Popular Theater and Film in Early Twentieth-Century American Art (2002), and Painting Berlin Stories (2003).

Laura Moriarty is the author of three novels and the recipient of several literary awards. Before becoming a full-time writer, she was a social worker. Moriarty lives in Lawrence, Kansas, where she teaches creative writing at the University of Kansas.

Antonya Nelson has written three novels and published six short-story collections. She contributes often to the New Yorker and the New York Times Book Review. Nelson holds the Cullen Chair in Creative Writing at the University of Houston. Her award-winning novel, Living to Tell (2000), takes place in her hometown of Wichita, and her forthcoming novel, Bound, is set there as well.

Timothy R. Rodgers is director of the Scottsdale (Arizona) Museum of Contemporary Art. Formerly chief curator at the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, he is involved in a range of writing and curatorial projects. His scholarly concentration is on American early modernism.

Robert Silberman is an associate professor of art history at the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus. His chief scholarly interests have been photography, film, and contemporary art. Silberman collaborated with former New York Times photography critic Vicki Goldberg on the companion volume for the 1999 PBS series American Photography: A Century of Images.

Larry Schwarm is a professor of art at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, and a nationally regarded photographer whose work has been shown at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. His 2003 book, On Fire: Larry Schwarm, won the Honickman Book Award and Prize.


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