

PERSONA: PROCESS PORTRAITURE

marcia goldenstein • judith page • leah schrager • gail skudera

September 2 - 30, 2016
UT Downtown Gallery
Knoxville, TN

January 12 - February 24, 2017
The Clara M. Eagle Upper Gallery
Murray State University
Murray, KY

introduction

The desire to capture a person’s likeness, either objectively or in spirit, has been a motivation for numerous artists throughout the history of art. Artists of the Renaissance produced some great works of portraiture with the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci that is said to be the most famous painting in the world. With subsequent artistic movements, technological and conceptual innovations led to new ways to present portraiture. From the early fresco portraits of Piero della Francesca and the early oils of Raphael and Rembrandt to the colorful palette of Vincent van Gogh and the Impressionists, each new generation of artists have kept portraiture fresh and relevant to its time. From Pablo Picasso to Chuck Close and Cindy Sherman, portraiture has remained a viable pursuit of the modern artist.

The four artists in *Persona: Process Portraiture* continue this rich tradition of creating portraits in an innovative manner and speak to our generation.

On behalf of the UT Downtown Gallery and the greater Knoxville community we serve, I would like to thank the exhibition curator, T. Michael Martin, Director of the University Galleries at Murray State University in Kentucky, for his commitment to this project and for his essay, which is included in this catalogue. Mike Berry, Manager of the UT Downtown Gallery is acknowledged for his exhibition installation and design. Sarah McFalls and Eric Cagley of the Ewing Gallery are recognized for their contributions as well. Sarah, for her design of this catalogue; and Eric, for his coordination of exhibition transportation.

Finally, I thank the artists in this exhibition for their generous loan of their art.

Sam Yates
Director
Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture
UT Downtown Gallery

curator’s statement

Persona: Process Portraiture brings together four contemporary artists currently working with and expanding the definition of portraiture through a variety of processes. In this exhibition, the work of Marcia Goldenstein, Judith Page, Leah Schrager, and Gail Skudera originates from photographic portraits that are physically manipulated or altered by combining other mediums and multiple techniques. Through this modification of found photographic images or original portraits the artist reveals new meanings and constructs new questions. The figure in each new piece is redefined and a different identity is revealed or left ambiguous, allowing the viewer freedom to compose new definitions.

Marcia Goldenstein recently created a series of stitched portraits of women artists. She states, “Representing women artists in ‘stitches’ is my metaphor for a laugh at the criticism they often encountered.” Choosing the traditional craft of embroidery and thread as her mark-making material Goldenstein ironically uses techniques and materials that are historically associated with “women’s work” to discuss the importance of her subjects and alter the perceptions of their identity through portraiture.

Each piece in the *Portraits in Plasma* series by Judith Page begins with a specific identifiable portrait of an individual that, after manipulation, morphs into an ambiguous and more expressive image. The blend of photography and painting enables Page to reveal more about the character of the subject than the original photograph. These changes can take place in a passionate explosion of paint, yet more often Page’s process is deliberate and meditative. She describes the results as “an expressive vision rather than a depiction.” The photographic fragments left visible and surrounded by paint are the eyes, mouth, teeth, and bits of skin. These fragments create what Page refers to as a “reliquary” where one can glimpse, through the layers of paint, the now vague identity left behind in the altered portrait.

Leah Schrager is invested in using her image and likeness in her art to expand the language of self-portraiture. Her current works start from portraits taken of her by studio assistants or photos originated from selfies. Schrager uses selfies as a conceptual basis to speak about new issues pertaining to gaze and censorship in art. Her photographic manipulations explore the artistic value and merit of these seemingly casual digital portraits. Schrager’s portraits emphasize an importance for society to consider these images as a florid kind of psychological investigation based historically in self-portraiture.

The process of weaving and layering animates Gail Skudera’s painted and collaged works. She begins with a found or family photograph, and then through multiple processes, weaving, drawing, photo-transfer, and collage, she alters the original image. Skudera deconstructs the photographic image and authors a new story within each piece through the application of varied processes. Nostalgia intertwines with the contemporary and blends into a narrative as viewers find themselves seeking a meaning and simultaneously projecting their desires and personal interpretations into the work.

T. Michael Martin
Curator, *Persona: Process Portraiture*
Director
Clara M. Eagle Galleries
Murray State University, Murray, KY

UT Downtown Gallery

Dr. Joe DiPietro, President
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. Jimmy G. Cheek, Chancellor
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. Theresa Lee, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

David Wilson, Director
School of Art

Sam Yates, Director
Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture

Mike C. Berry
UT Downtown Gallery Manager

Eric Cagley
Ewing Gallery Exhibitions Specialist

Sarah McFalls
Ewing Gallery Collections Manager

marcia goldenstein

Women artists throughout history often had to make difficult decisions and sacrifices to disregard conventional, societal expectations in order to forge professional careers as painters, sculptors and photographers.

Representing them in "stitches" is my metaphor for a laugh at the criticism they often encountered, but also ironically uses a form that is historically considered "women's work". For this project I was able to combine the traditional craft of embroidery with my professional experience in painting and drawing. I find, not so surprisingly, that the activities demand the same formal, compositional and observational qualities. Building an image with thread is the same as with any mark-making material.

I chose "stitches" to depict and honor a few of these extraordinary icons through what is generally considered a domestic art form—something they eschewed in their own lives.



Helen Frankenthaler, 2011-16, thread, 3 x 3.5 in.



*Louise Bourgeois, 2011-16, thread, 3 x 3.5 in.
Mary Cassatt, 2011-16, thread, 3 x 3.5 in.*



*Georgia O'Keeffe, 2011-16, thread, 3 x 3.5 in.
Louise Nevelson, 2011-16, thread, 3 x 3.5 in.*

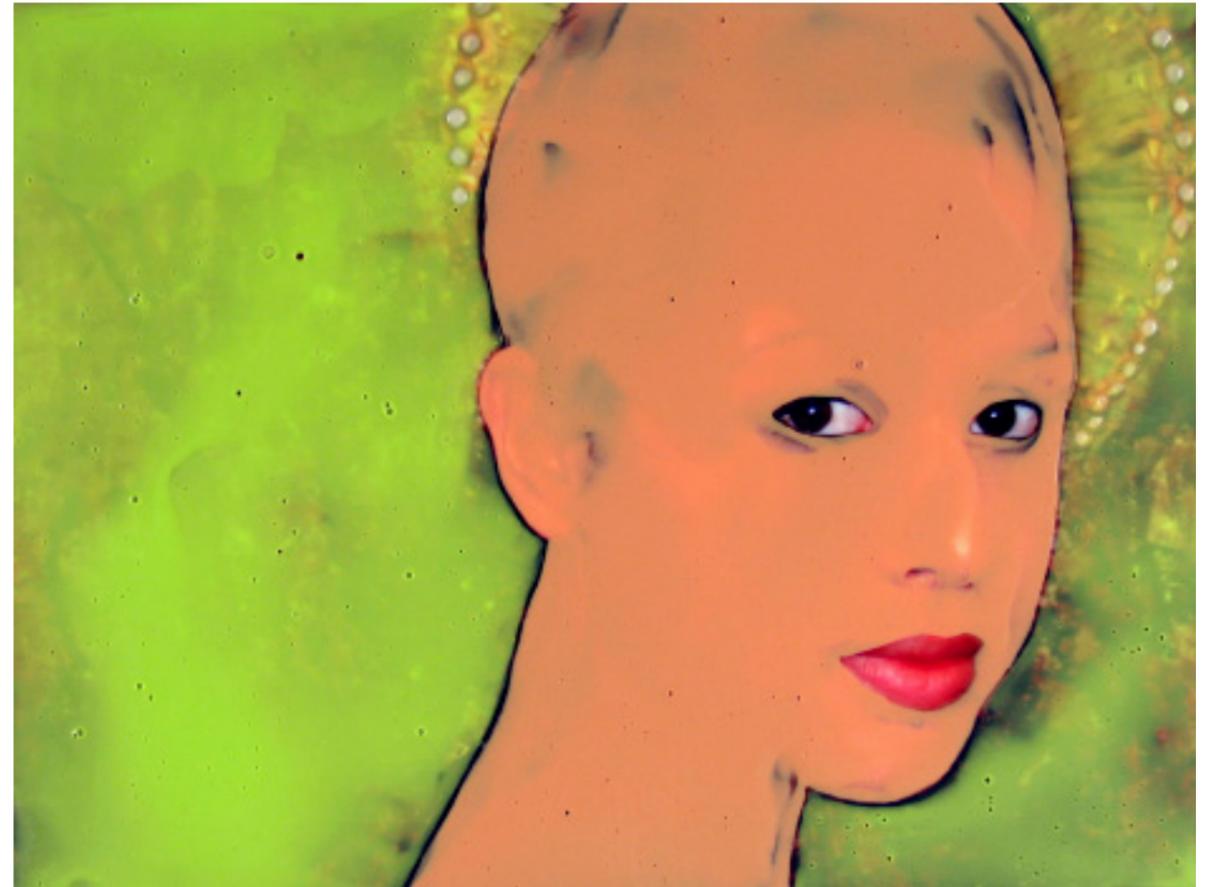
judith page

My portraits begin as photographs and, through the addition of a gel-like paint, become both reliquary and visionary. The reliquary aspect of the paintings comes from the fragments of the original photographs—eyes, mouth, teeth, or bits of skin—that one can glimpse through the layers of paint. They are like the bone fragments that one might view in a sculptural reliquary of a saint. The visionary aspect of the paintings involves the intuitive addition of paint over the photograph. Occasionally this action takes place in a passionate explosion; more often the process is deliberate and meditative. This blend of photography and painting allows me to reveal more about the character of the subject than the photograph itself—an expressive vision rather than a depiction.

Portraits in Plasma is an ongoing installation that consists of a selection of these portraits, often displayed in the format of a television viewing room, in venues such as The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut; and Barbara Gillman Gallery in Miami, Florida. The variations in meaning of the word plasma—from its origin as the Greek word, *plassein*, meaning “to mold,” to its contemporary use in reference to television (green translucent quartz), as a gaseous medium, to the fluid part of blood, and as a substance extruded from the body of a spiritualist during a *séance*—are all relevant to the content of these portraits. I want *Portraits in Plasma* to embrace the essence of each subject by stripping away the superfluous and allowing the subject to transcend the mortal, perpetually dissolving and evolving before the viewer’s eyes, a vision both profane and divine.



Robin, 2006, tar gel, acrylic, photograph on canvas, 11 x 14 in.



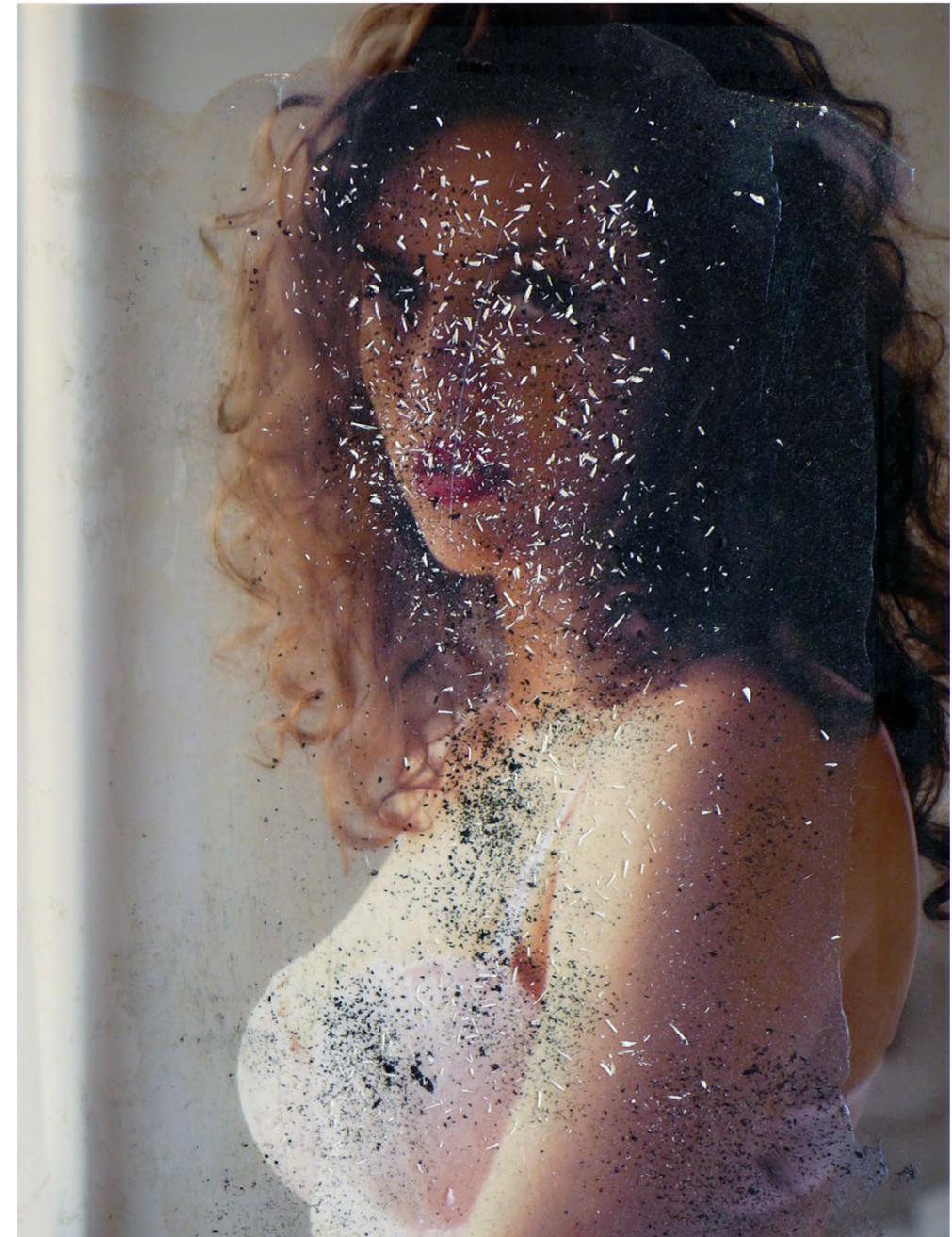
Maria, 2006, tar gel, acrylic, photograph on canvas, 9 x 12 in.

leah schrager

She is a proponent of considering the artistic value and merit of selfies, emphasizing the fact that selfies provide the model full legal and economic control over her images. While some (in and out of the art world) consider selfies vapid narcissism, as she says in her recent curatorial statement for *Body Anxiety*, it's important for us to start considering selfies an advanced and florid kind of self-portraiture. People are exploring themselves and they are owning their explorations, which should be supported as an alternative to what she calls "man hands" (men selling women's images as art).



Photobooth I, 2013, Photobooth digital C- print and mica, 8 x 10 in.



Code is not Poetry, 2014, acrylic and chalk on inkjet, 8 x 11 in.

gail skudera

There is something beautiful about the movement of tones between black and white in an old photograph that can evoke in the viewer an inexpressive sensation. My work often begins with an emotive response to a particular photograph from my collection. I have manipulated photographic images in my work for over 20 years as a point of departure for subject matter. And I have combined pattern weave structures with photo-transfers using off-loom weaving methods. I have worked with paint, washes and glazes, thread and collected objects, such as buttons and beads, and developed non-traditional printing processes. In my drawings and print works, plant forms become animated in an interactive field with objects in an invented landscape. I like the juxtaposing of time past (dated from the photographs and use of actual objects) with present, and juxtaposing of planes, colors, and surfaces. The juxtaposing informs the work with a surreal, natural but unnatural effect and it also builds in lots of visual movement.



Whiteout E De Kooning, 2015, woven mixed media, 4 x 4 in.



Marigold, 2016, woven paper, natural dyes on wool, mohair, alpaca, cotton warp, 17 x 11 in.

marcia goldenstein

lives and works in knoxville. tennessee

education

1973 MFA, University of Nebraska
1970 BFA, University of Nebraska

solo & two person exhibitions

2016 *Small Histories*, with Todd Johnson, Appalachian Center for Crafts, Smithville, TN; Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC
2015 Solo Exhibition, Webb School of Knoxville, TN
2013 Solo Exhibition, Bagwell Gallery, Pellissippi Community College, Knoxville, TN

selected group exhibitions

2016 *Artists Select*, Cumberland Gallery, Nashville, TN
Summer Faculty Exhibition, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN
Summer Exhibition, Art and Invention Gallery, Nashville, TN
2015 *Of A Feather*, UT Downtown Gallery, Knoxville, TN
From These Hills, Curator, Stephen Wicks, King Museum, Abingdon, VA
Maps, Curator, Jennifer Brickley, Arts and Culture Alliance, Knoxville, TN
2014 *Invitational*, Depot Gallery, Abingdon, VA
Medici Foundation Exhibition, Eisentrager/Howard Gallery, Lincoln, NE
Ossuary Exhibition, Herron Gallery, Iupui, Indianapolis, IN
Art In The Airport, Spring/Summer, Mcghee Tyson Airport, Alcoa, TN
The Seasoned Eye, AVA Gallery, Chattanooga, TN
Summer Faculty Exhibition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg, TN
Group Exhibition, Kiechel Fine Art, Lincoln, NE
Summer Exhibition, Art And Invention Gallery, Nashville, TN
2013 *Art In The Airport*, Fall/Winter, Mcghee Tyson Airport, Alcoa, TN
Members Exhibition, Arts And Culture Alliance, Knoxville, TN
20th Century America, Kiechel Fine Art, Lincoln, NE
Ossuary Project, Laurie Beth Clark, Curator, UT Downtown Gallery, Knoxville, TN
Herstory Exhibition, UT UC Gallery, Knoxville, TN
Group Invitational, Art And Invention Gallery, Nashville, TN
Abstract, Ewing Gallery, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
Artscapes, Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN

judith page

lives and works in new york city

education

University of Kentucky
Transylvania University

solo exhibitions & installations

2017 *Songs from the Roman Empire*, Murray State University, Installation, Murray, KY
2012 *The Politics of the Personal*, Hand Art Center, Stetson University, DeLand, FL
2010 *Night Walk*, Lesley Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2009 *Viewing Room*, Lesley Heller Gallery, New York, NY

selected group exhibitions

2013 *If 6 Was 9*, Projekt 722, Brooklyn, NY
Reset: Judith Page, Deborah Schneider, Ward Shelley, Bridge, Red Project Space, Miami, FL
2012 *I'm Not Like Everybody Else*, Teapot, Cologne, Germany
2011 *Almost Transparent Blue*, Y Gallery, New York, NY
Luise Ross Gallery, Small, New York, NY
2010 *Anonymous*, Kim Foster Gallery, New York, NY
Ocketopia, Lesley Heller Gallery, New York, NY
2009 *Judith Page, Philippa Blair, John O'Brien*, Jancar Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Your Documents Please, Galerie Kurt im Hirsch, Berlin, Germany

selected public collections

City of Orlando, FL
City of Tampa, FL
Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL
Deland Museum of Art, Deland, FL
Florida House of Representatives, Tallahassee, FL
Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY
Maitland Art Center, Maitland, FL
Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami, FL
Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC
Museum of Fine Arts, FL State University, Tallahassee, FL
Stetson University, Deland, FL
The Mennello Museum of American Art, Orlando, FL
University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA
University of Kentucky Art Museum, Lexington, KY
University of TN, Knoxville, TN
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

leah schrager

lives and works in new york city

education

2015 MFA, Fine Arts, Parsons, The New School, NY
2007 BA, Dance and B.S. Biology, summa cum laude, University of Washington, Seattle

solo exhibitions

2016 *Profit Positive Pu\$\$y*, Superchief Gallery, NYC, two person exhibition with Lindsay Jones
2016 *Assterpieces of the Online Century*, Digital Sweat Gallery, online
2015 *The Male Gayze*, Stream Gallery, NYC
2012 *Am I not Art/Ist*, Hotel Americano, NYC
2012 *Transition / Destruction*, El Cuco, El Salvador
2010 *Found Whiskey*, McLoughlin's Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan
2010 *Pretty | Whatever*, The Center on Contemporary Art, curated by Joseph Roberts, Seattle, WA

group exhibitions

2016 *Summer Fling*, Johannes Vogt Gallery, East Hamptons, NY
2016 *In The Raw: The Female Gaze on the Nude*, Untitled Space, NYC, curated by Coco Dolle and Indira Cesarine
2016 *Beaver*, Center For Performance Research, Brooklyn, NY, curated by Naomi Elena Ramirez and Kristen Korvette
2016 *The F-Word Immersive*, Superchief Gallery, NYC
2015 *Foursome*, Gallery Sensei, NYC, curated by Coco Dolle
2015 *Off Pink*, MFA Thesis Show, The Kitchen, NYC, curated by Tina Kukielski
2015 *Absent Shape*, The Chimney, Brooklyn, NYC, curated by Adriana Pauly
2015 *Second Selves*, Distillery Gallery, Boston, curated by Alexis Avedisian
2014 *Under the Seams Runs the Pain: A Musing on Artists Who Make Other People*, Bruce High Quality Foundation, NYC, curated by Chloe Rossetti
2014 *Synthetic Zero*, Bronx Art Space, NY, curated by Mitsu Hadeishi
2014 *FE:BODY*, 25 East Gallery, The New School, NYC
2014 *Actions & Intent: Documentations in Performance*, NARS Foundation, Brooklyn, NY, curated by Peter Gynd
2013 *Google Part II*, The Bedroom Gallery, Brooklyn, NYC, curated by Katya Grokhovsky
2012 *Google Part I*, Chashama Gallery, Queens, NY, curated by Katya Grokhovsky

gail skudera

lives and works in lewiston, maine

education

1981 MFA, School of Art, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
1975 BFA, School of Art, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

selected solo exhibitions

2016 *Woven Photo Collages—In Time, Out of Time*, Williams College Art Galleries, Lafayette College, Easton, PA
2012 *Gail Skudera: Over, Under and Back Around*, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY
2010 *Moreau Art Galleries*, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN
2009 *Close Up*, Wilson College, Chambersburg, PA
2008 *Three Collections*, Hartman Gallery, Lancaster Museum of Art, Lancaster, PA

selected group exhibitions

2016 *The Whale Imagined by Gallery Artists*, Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2015-16 *The Tiny Picture Show*, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY
2015-16 *Winter Works*, Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2015 *The Piano Roll Project: Shared Sensibilities*, Bates Mill Complex at Museum L-A, Lewiston, ME
2014 *Making a New Whole: The Art of the Collage*, Art Gallery, University of New England, Portland, ME Anne Zill, curator
2013 *Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center*, Ewing Gallery, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
2013 *Summer Salon 2013*, Aucocisco Galleries, Portland, ME
2013 *Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center*, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
2012 *I M A G E / C L O T: J. Fiber, Brad Kahlhamer, Johan Nobell, Nicky Nodjourni, Gail Skudera, Zolla/Lieberman*, Gallery, Chicago, IL
2012 *Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center*, Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO

selected public collections, commissions

ARA, 95th Fl, John Hancock Center, Chicago, IL
Baird & Warner Corporation, Chicago, IL
Canton-Potsdam Hospital, Potsdam, NY
Help-U-Sell Realty, Des Plaines, IL
Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL
International Collage Center, Milton, PA and New York, NY
M. A. Lipschultz, Chicago, IL
Medical College of Virginia Hospitals, Richmond, VA
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
Rubino Enterprises, Linthicum, MD
SUNY Potsdam, NY
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
Wilson College, Chambersburg, PA

