

# JOHN SARRA

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## EDUCATION:

- 1995-97 M.F.A., Washington University in St. Louis, major in Painting  
1990-94 B.A., College of Charleston, major in Studio Art

## RECENT AWARDS:

- 2013 Regional Arts Commission Artist Support Grant  
2011 EarthDance Farms Mission Award for Sustainable Practice in the Arts

## SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

- 2015 *Sticks and Stones*, Pearl Gallery, MO  
2011 *Leaf Litter*, Special Display at The Missouri Botanical Garden's Monsanto Research Center, MO  
2010 *each mountain as a valley*, Fontbonne University Gallery, MO  
2009 *John Sarra: Tone Poems*, Schmidt Art Center, IL  
2008 *Reflex*, Space B Gallery, NY  
2008 *Sad Smiles and Tears of Joy*, PSTL, MO  
2007 *John Sarra: wash drawings*, Ethical Society of St. Louis, MO  
2005 *Living Together*, Covenant Theological Seminary, MO  
2005 *Still Lifes and Landscapes*, Space B Fine Arts, NY  
2003 *John Sarra: Paintings*, Fontbonne University Gallery, MO  
2000 *Particular Space (New Faces)*, Elliot Smith Contemporary Art, MO  
1999 *(space) between us*, Forest Park Gallery, MO  
1998 *John Sarra/You Shou-Jong*, Mong Jyau Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan  
1997 *Recent Work*, The Gallery, University City Public Library, MO  
1995 *John Sarra*, City Gallery, Charleston, SC  
1993 *Scenes from Mazyck Wraggborough*, Gallery Chuma, Charleston, SC

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2016 *Island of Misfit Toys*, The Gallery at Missouri Baptist University, MO  
2015 *Everywhere and Elsewhere*, Meramec Contemporary Art Gallery, MO  
2014 *Beyond Violet with the Emperor Scorpion*, Des Lee Gallery, MO  
2012 *Three*, John Sarra, Marg Corey, and Sylvester Jacobs, The Chapel, MO  
2012 *LV SK8 Six*, Get Up Gallery, Las Vegas, NV  
2012 *Artist:Teacher*, Kingsbury Gallery, St. Louis, MO  
2011 *Space B's Greatest Hits: The Chelsea Years*, Space B Gallery, NY  
2011 *Milligan House Exhibition*, Old Orchard Church, MO  
2011 *A is for...*, Center of Contemporary Art, Gina Alvarez, Curator, MO  
2010 *Regarding Place*, St. Louis Artists Guild, Jana Harper, Curator, MO  
2010 *wALL, Un progetto d'arte*, SRISA Gallery of Contemporary Art, Firenze, IT  
2009 *Crescendo*, Group Performance of music and painting, St. Louis, MO  
2008 *Out of the Box*, curated by Paige Wideman, Main Street Gallery, Cincinnati, OH  
2007 *New and Improved*, Space B Gallery, NY

- 2007 *Transference*, Koken Art Factory, St. Louis, MO
- 2006 *Le Pouce et L'Orteil*, The Francis Schaeffer Institute, Covenant Theological Seminary, MO
- 2006 *St. Louis Symphony Showcase*, Cabanne House, Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, Curator, MO
- 2005 *Contemporary Realism*, Centre for the Living Arts, AL
- 2004 *Space B Holiday Variety Show*, Space B Gallery, NY
- 2004 *Space B Group Exhibition*, Space B Fine Arts, NY
- 2004 *Thou My Vision*, Nancy Hughes, Curator, Grace and Peace Fellowship, MO
- 2003 *Regarding Objects*, Olivia Lahs Gonzales, Curator, Sheldon Concert Hall and Art Galleries, MO and Innsbrook Conference Center, MO
- 2001 *The Forest and the Trees*, Elliot Smith Contemporary Art, MO
- 2000 *Landscape*, Desmond E. Lee Gallery, MO
- 2000 *Fresh Work*, John Sarra, Jason Rucker, and Joseph Burwell, Halsey Gallery, SC
- 1999 *paintings (plus)*, John Sarra, Christine Amick Sarra, and Cayce Lanham, Innsbrook Conference Center, MO
- 1999 *The Artist of Faith in the New Millennium*, The Francis Schaeffer Institute, Covenant Theological Seminary, MO
- 1995 *Annual Piccolo Spoleto Juried Exhibit*, Guest Curator Diane Gingold, Charleston, SC
- 1994 *Young Contemporaries*, Guest Curator Eleanor Heartney, Halsey Gallery, SC

#### **SPECIAL PROJECTS:**

- 2010-present ***Decomposition:*** What began as the casual observation of interesting aesthetics has evolved into a collection of nearly 200 images documenting the incidental, accidental, and collaborative compositions that are created as waste products accumulate in my kitchen compost bin. These photos help me to overcome my own compositional self-consciousness by providing “found” arrangements of colors, shapes, and textures. The images carry the memory of otherwise fleeting meals and seasons while developing an analogy between gardening and other forms of creative practice.
- 2010-present ***Leaf Litter:*** During the fall of 2010 I began to create my own herbarium collection composed of artificial plants. I maintain a collection of artificial leaves and flowers that I find on the ground. I received training through the Monsanto Research Center in order to mount the specimens according to the standards of the Missouri Botanical Garden. But I broke from tradition when I filled the seed packet (a small envelope) on each specimen sheet with a set of complimentary objects that were found on the ground under similar circumstances. The portfolio was subsequently displayed in the Garden’s Monsanto Research Center. The collection continues to expand and evolve.
- 2003-2013 ***Live Oak:*** In December of 2003 my spouse, artist Christine Amick Sarra, and I began a collaborative work documenting and investigating the clear-cutting, re-growth, and evolving use of nearly two hundred acres of forest and adjoining wetlands outside of Charleston, SC. For ten years we added to a collection of photographs, drawings, paintings, and writings investigating parallels between changes in the land, our families, and our own lives.

#### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

- 2014-present **Chair of Visual Arts**, Westminster Christian Academy, St. Louis, MO
- 2006-2014 **Senior Lecturer**, Painting Department, Washington University in St. Louis, MO
- 2001-2006 **Lecturer**, Painting Department, Washington University in St. Louis, MO
- 1997-2001 **Lecturer (Adjunct)**, Painting Department, Washington University in St. Louis, MO
- 1997-2000 **Adjunct Faculty**, Painting and Drawing, Fontbonne University, St. Louis, MO

- 1996-2001 **Woodworker**, John Lesch Design, St. Louis, MO  
 1994-1996 **Instructor**, Drawing, Painting, and Printmaking, Summer Art Program, Colleton County School District, SC  
 1994-1995 **Graphics Technician**, Printmaking Department, College of Charleston, SC  
 1993-1994 **Instructor**, Drawing, Gibbes Museum School, Charleston, SC

#### LECTURES/PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

- 2015 **Called to Creativity**. Chapel presentation, Westminster Christian Academy, MO  
 2012 **Artist/Teacher**. Panel Discussion in conjunction with the exhibition, Kingsbury Gallery, MO  
 2010 **A Structured Use: Emptiness and Opportunity in Creative Practice**. Series of two public lectures, St. Louis Art Museum, MO  
 2009 **Looking Down at the Sky**. Gallery talk in conjunction with the exhibition *John Sarra: Tone Poems*, Schmidt Art Center, IL  
 2008 **Moved by this Stillness**, Classroom Lecture for “Ancient Worlds to Contemporary Practice”, Washington University in St. Louis, MO  
 2007 **Spirit and Flesh: The Language of Painting in Oil and Ink**. Series of two public lectures, St. Louis Art Museum  
 2007 **Gardens and Gazing Stones: Gongshi as Templates for Creative Action**. Public lecture accompanying the exhibition *John Sarra: wash drawings*. St. Louis Ethical Society, MO  
 2006 **Creation, Production, and the Necessity of Change**. Public lecture with Washington University graduate and undergraduate Painting Majors, in conjunction with the exhibition curated by John Sarra and Robin Clark, St. Louis Art Museum  
 2006 **Focus on Philip Guston**. Series of two public lectures accompanying the exhibition curated by John Sarra and Robin Clark, St. Louis Art Museum  
 2005 **Living in the Garden: Color and the Infinite**, Classroom Lecture for “Ancient Worlds to Contemporary Practice”, Washington University in St. Louis, MO  
 2003 **Color in Contemporary American Painting**. Keynote Speaker for the International Color Conference, Fu Jen University, Taipei, Taiwan  
 2003 **Color Culture in Taiwan**. Panel Discussion as a part of the International Color Conference, Fu Jen University, Taipei, Taiwan  
 2003 **The Calligraphy of Fu Shen**. Panel Discussion, Saint Louis Art Museum, MO  
 2003 **Living in the Garden: Asian Aesthetic**. Classroom Lecture for “Ancient Worlds to Contemporary Practice”, Washington University in St. Louis, MO  
 2000 **Fresh Work**. Panel Discussion in conjunction with the exhibition, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC

#### BIOGRAPHY:

John Sarra was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1972, and grew up along the southern and Eastern coasts of the United States as part of a Coast Guard family. He received his BA in Studio Art from the College of Charleston in 1994. In 1997 John earned his MFA in Painting from Washington University in St. Louis, where he then went on to teach graduate and undergraduate students until 2015. John's studio practice is informed by a love of the natural world, the experiences of an itinerant childhood, a six-year apprenticeship as a custom woodworker, and seventeen years (and counting) of intensive home repair, renovation, and restoration. John is currently the Chair of Visual Arts at Westminster Christian Academy in St. Louis, MO. He lives in the City of St. Louis with his wife Christine and daughter Florence.