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## Shamings

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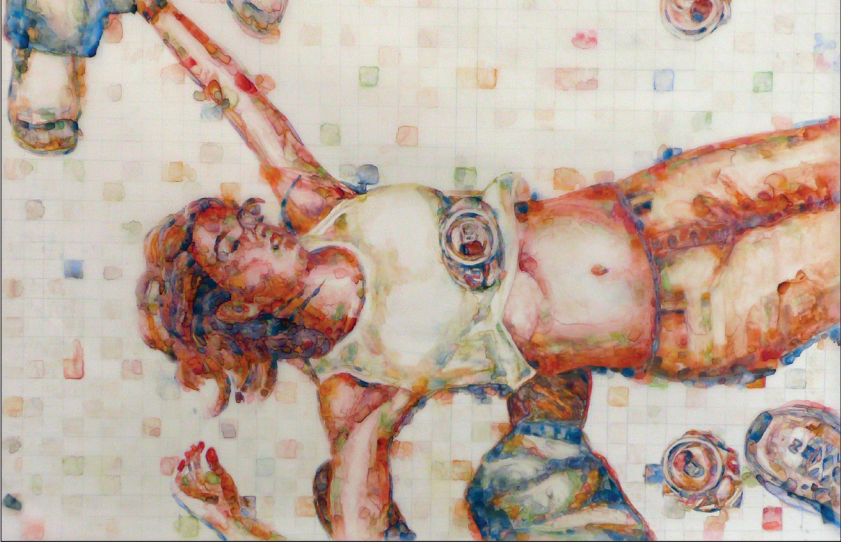
## SHAMINGS

*Michael Miller*

The approach I take in the arts is like a cultural anthropologist. I enjoy the process of observation linked to both drawing and studying cultural phenomenon. So my work is a combination of both disciplines, field study and drawing. My most recent series of works are based on web shamings. They explore different types of party hazing that is photographed, displayed, and available on the web through a variety of sites, my space, etc. The works look at the role the web plays as a public space and its influence on the private lives of its young users.

The large drawings are based upon images from the web that I have appropriated or in most cases restaged of 'shamings.' Shamings are anonymous web images of young people who have done an excessive night of partying, pass out, and then are photographed (usually with a cell phone) by their friends. These images are then posted on one or more web sites for college age students. There are several ways subjects can be shamed. The passed out subjects become reduced to objects and become part of bizarre obscene tableaux. Partygoers often rearrange the inebriated person's limp body into humiliating poses. Sometimes the drunken subjects are spontaneously arranged by the crowd into still life set ups with beer boxes, dorm furniture, and whatever material stuff is at hand piled on top of them. In other images the shamed person's anesthetized body is marked with felt pen cartoons and obscenities or covered with food, shaving cream, and other abject materials. The photo images are then loaded on the web the morning after for anyone to see and the subject is shamed. There are traces of surrealism in this amateur art. The unusual arrangements and juxtaposition of banal material objects open them for multiple associations. The anonymous weekend artists compete online for the most outrageous and humiliating image.

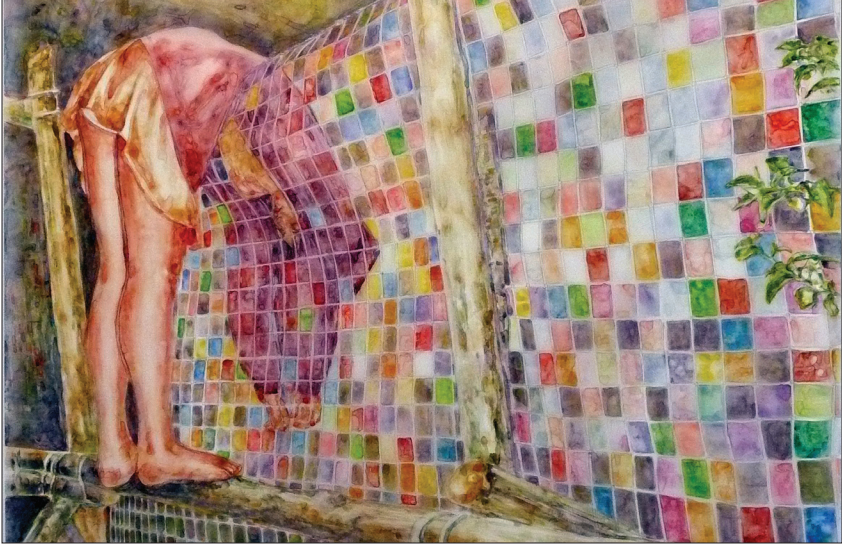
As a series, my drawings about the shamings create a commentary that is significant in a number of ways. I don't wish to bracket this work with too many of my own meanings because I feel personally that this work resonates with many meanings that are strangely revealing about our culture. The Dionysian behavior of partygoers is in many ways a response to the culture we live in where weekend warriors express their joy and deep rooted fears in a number of grotesque and ironic ways. Certainly the shamings expose the millennial anxiety and escapism that dominates contemporary life. ☺



*“Drunk U Thursday”  
Michael Miller*



*“Bragster” (Study)  
Michael Miller*



"Bender"  
*Michael Miller*



"Under the Table" (Study)  
*Michael Miller*





"Totem"  
Michael Miller



"Flame"  
*Michael Miller*



"Way 2 Many" (Study)  
*Michael Miller*