

# Dan Steinhilber

*Hold On, Loosely* April 30 – August 22, 2011

# Dan Steinhilber: *Hold On, Loosely*

*I'm drawn to three dimensional forms of art...it offers the viewer this bodily experience of moving around an object or moving through an object. It's physical and tangible and it has a gesture. It has to stand in opposition to gravity, just like you do.*  
-Dan Steinhilber

## WELCOME

It is my pleasure to invite you to CAM Raleigh's premiere groundbreaking exhibitions featuring Dan Steinhilber in the main galleries and Naoko Ito in the Independent Weekly Gallery. CAM Raleigh is the culmination of the dreams of many who imagined, planned, persevered, and achieved. This core group of dedicated dreamers believed deeply in "firsts"—both in new concepts and in innovative artists and designers you may not know today but will know tomorrow.

As you travel through this new building you will have numerous opportunities for exploration and engagement. The architecture invites a fantastic profusion: suddenly, everywhere you look, people are seeking out new experiences and opportunities to engage, interact, and contribute.

Artists talks, community workshops, dialogue with our staff and docents—all are exceptional occasions to wade through the city's cultural landscape as it is shaped by CAM Raleigh.

I encourage you to take advantage of our programs, to discover new ideas, to add to the conversations, to be inspired and to always explore everything and participate in art and design moving forward.

Elysia Borowy-Reeder  
Executive Director, CAM Raleigh

CAM Raleigh is proud to present a new installation of large scale site-specific works by Washington DC-based artist Dan Steinhilber.

In the exhibition *Hold On, Loosely*, Steinhilber examines the conceptual connections between our building's history as a produce warehouse and its future as a museum space for rotating exhibitions. He considers the parallels of controlled environments that receive, shelter, and then distribute objects to their next destination. Demonstrating this connection, themes of production, preservation, and consumption resonate throughout the works in the exhibition.

Steinhilber utilizes materials typically relegated as byproducts of industry: shipping pallets; stretch film; cardboard boxes; shopping carts and grocery bags all originally manufactured to contain and organize commodities. In this exhibition, Steinhilber strips away their function to examine their inherent properties as physical and aesthetic objects. Transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, he reveals how these materials are enticing in their own right.

For the large inflatable sculpture in the main gallery, the relationship between container and object becomes particularly relevant. A white, breathing mass, it hints at its interior through translucent skin and bits of scattered colored plastic debris. Nestled into the shape, a partially hidden refrigerator stands empty, its back removed so a viewer has the impression they are standing inside the refrigerator. The viewer pushes open the door against an escaping rush of air, to enter a world without angles. Soft curves are littered in bits of color fluttering in the stream of air that keeps the room aloft.

*I'm interested in the disconnect between culture and nature. Trying to figure that out, I'm spending all this time working the plastic, and I think I'm starting to find nature in the plastic... It has it's own nature. When you touch it and squeeze it, it has a seductive quality to your fingertips, the same way as when you touch a leaf or something waxy, or how a branch on a tree has some flexibility and can bend.*  
-Dan Steinhilber

Melted onto large sheets of greenhouse plastic, bits of colored grocery bags and lengths of stretch wrap highlight Steinhilber's fascination with the nature of plastics. Stretch wrapped pallets exude tension, bound by their glossy restraints. To work with unusual "art" materials, Steinhilber must employ unusual tools to obtain his desired result. A wide variety of unexpected devices were used to manipulate plastics, from a mulching lawnmower to hair straitening irons. Necessity being the mother of invention, Steinhilber created "griddle shoes" made of wood and electric pancake griddles that strap to his feet, enabling him to heat large sections of plastic at a time. This is how he and his assistants created the inflatable sculpture and the stretch wrap paintings that share the main gallery.

The title of the exhibition, *Hold On, Loosely*, is a duality. Referencing the theme of containment present throughout the works, it's also relevant to society. How do we hold on and remain in control, while simultaneously staying loose, unbound and free?

Kate Shafer  
Gallery and Exhibitions Manager, CAM Raleigh

# What's your first reaction?

*Upstairs, Dan's work is awesome, it's so cool, and totally different from me. Even though we're using same material, very common, everyday material, the approach is totally different, so I'm so excited to see his work too.*

-Naoko Ito, Artist

**#8\***  
*With artwork usually [you] think you can't interact with, but **that**, you can go inside of it and experience the whole thing, instead of just seeing a flat image on a frame.*

-Thomas, Docent, grade 7

**#5\*:**  
*I like how the different colors combine and contrast to create a warm feeling. I think the theme is to shine and stay happy and don't let people bring you down. You can always make something out of nothing.*

-Natalie, Docent, grade 6

**#4\*:**  
*The two sides of the piece remind me of a made up bed and a messy bed.*

-Peyton, Docent, grade 6

*Giant rolls of multi-colored saran wrap, like tons of plastic sheeting, thousands of coat hangers in boxes and I was just like, **what is all this stuff?***

-Jenn Werkhoven, Intern

**#8\*:**  
*My first impression is that it looks like dogs napping with each other. This is an interactive piece to get the mind thinking because it really could be anything. It makes me feel small compared to it. It is large and bleak on the outside and bursting with color on the inside.*

-Taylor, Docent, grade 6

*To watch his creative mind... and how he just has used everyday objects and turned them into just incredibly interesting pieces of artwork.*

-Rosemary Wyche, Director of Development/Communications



\*Image list and thumbnails on reverse.

Our Student Docent Program includes students from Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School and Leesville Road Middle School. The docents have attended a series of after-school training sessions where they have discussed the museum and its role in the community, met the exhibiting artists and witnessed the creation and installation of artwork. Learn more at [camraleigh.org](http://camraleigh.org).

## Things to consider:

Steinhilber chooses not to title his works as he does not impress his ideas of each piece upon the viewer. If you were to title his work, what would you call each?

The title of the show, *Hold On, Loosely*, marries two opposing ideas. Is there a work in the show that best reflects this concept?

If the outside of the inflated sculpture is "inside the refrigerator," what does the inside of the sculpture represent?

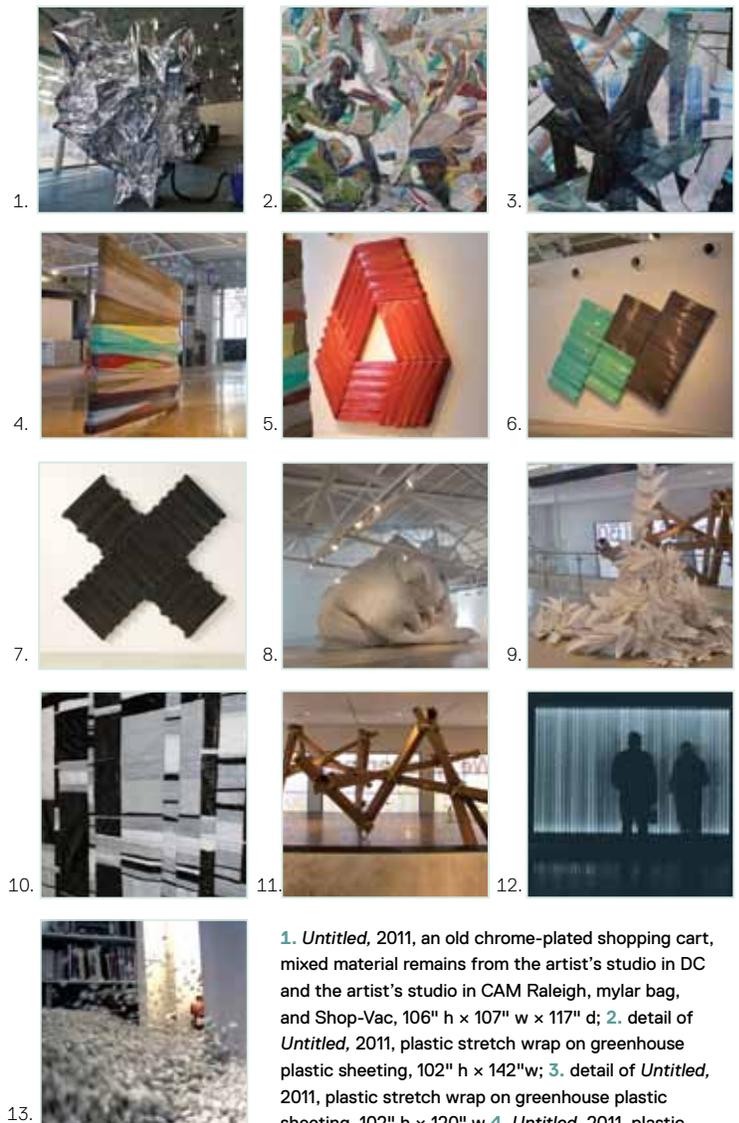
Dan Steinhilber (born 1972, Oshkosh, Wisconsin) is an established mid-career artist, living and working in Washington, DC. Born in Wisconsin, Steinhilber received his MFA from American University in Washington D.C. and his BFA from the Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee, WI. He has presented solo exhibitions at museums including: The Hirshhorn Museum of Art and Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC), The Contemporary Art Museum Houston (Houston, TX), The Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore, MD), The Mattress Factory Art Museum (Pittsburgh, PA), The Cheekwood Museum of Art, (Nashville, TN), The Brigham Young University Museum of Art (Provo, UT) and Socrates Sculpture Park (Queens, NY). His work has been included in a variety of group exhibitions in museums such as MassMOCA (North Adams, MA), ArtSpace (New Haven, CT), D.U.M.B.O Art Center (Brooklyn, NY), the Des Moines Art Center Des Moines, Iowa the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art (Omaha, NE), The Fields Sculpture Park, Omi International Arts Center (Ghent, NY), the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), the South Eastern Center of Contemporary Art (Winston-Salem, NC) as well as international venues such as The Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea in Siena Italy, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Steinhilber is a recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptures Grant and a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship.

**Artist Lecture: May 20, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**

Reception follows. Free with admission, limited seating available.

## BECOME A MEMBER

The best way to experience CAM Raleigh is by becoming a member. Stay involved, show your support, and get special access to the latest exhibitions. Become a member at [camraleigh.org/join](http://camraleigh.org/join) or inquire at the front desk.



1. *Untitled*, 2011, an old chrome-plated shopping cart, mixed material remains from the artist's studio in DC and the artist's studio in CAM Raleigh, mylar bag, and Shop-Vac, 106" h x 107" w x 117" d; 2. detail of *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap on greenhouse plastic sheeting, 102" h x 142" w; 3. detail of *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap on greenhouse plastic sheeting, 102" h x 120" w; 4. *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap, aged wood pallets, 96" h x 120" w; 5. *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap, wood, 125" h x 139" w; 6. *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap on aged wood pallets, 103" h x 174" w; 7. *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap on aged wood pallets, 130" h x 130" w; 8. *Untitled*, 2011, greenhouse plastic sheeting, mulched plastic bags, upright freezer, electric fans and mulching mower, 288" h x 325" w x 365" l; 9. *Untitled*, 2011, paper-clad dry cleaning hangers, dimensions variable; 10. detail of *Untitled*, 2011, plastic stretch wrap on greenhouse plastic sheeting, 102" h x 142" w; 11. *Untitled*, 2011, cardboard boxes, ratchet straps, hand truck, 172" h x 319" w x 416" l; 12. *Untitled*, 2006, DVD video; 13. Dan Steinhilber, *Untitled*, 2009, fluorescent light bulbs, fixture and ballast, 97" h x 144" w

*CAM Raleigh curates the most contemporary works of art and design where the public can directly encounter the work and ideas of those still emerging, growing, and living. CAM Raleigh aspires to engage a broad and diverse audience, generate a sense of community, and spark new thinking by creating experiences that explore what's now and nearing.*

**CAM Raleigh**  
409 W. Martin Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
(919) 513-0946  
[camraleigh.org](http://camraleigh.org)  
[facebook.com/camraleigh](https://www.facebook.com/camraleigh)  
Twitter: @camraleigh