

# JOSEPH LA PIANA

K I N E T I C   S T A T E

MARCH 27 THROUGH MAY 3, 2008



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Since an early age, La Piana showed tremendous interest in the arts and in the creative process itself. He looked toward the artists of the Abstract Expressionist movement and decided to focus on his sense of exploring and broadening his ability to capture moments in an uncommon manner. For this, La Piana ventured outside of the confines of his studio and found himself to be more comfortable in nature's backyard.

The body of work consists of abstract fluid forms that are very reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionists of the 1940's and 1950's. La Piana's point of view is more "painterly than photographic" as he states. This is evident in his large-scale abstract photographs that have strong, intuitive and organic biomorphic forms. These evoke a romantic, sensual and surrealistic feel that is accentuated by the movement of objects that offer a three-dimensional sensory experience.

At a first glance, one will notice that his work reflects a particular passion that has guided his heart and his photographic eye to nature. The source of water, which he states "is the basis of all life", acts as component which he uses the source of light and space to capture live abstractions. These abstractions are what the artist refers to as "photonastic" or response to light in kinetic energy. These light formations in movement seem to collide creating three-dimensional abstracts. The artist's interest with kinetic energy is directly related to his exploration of these light formations. The depth of texture, its' unhindered movement and its' abstract shapes make for a perfect subject matter' that he believes, 'can transform itself and change much like the spirit and mood of a live subject'."

La Piana employs his camera as a means of documenting instantaneous formations that occur at a moment's glance. All that is seen in La Piana's photography is unadulterated pure abstractions that occur naturally. If one did not recognize the artist's work, it would be difficult to offer exact identification of his subject matter. While La Piana utilizes the camera to capture the slightest nuances, his artistic vision possesses both individuality and intellect. They are an extreme expression of pulsating color, texture, depth and fantasy. When an image gains La Piana's attention, he focuses on its isometric and three-dimensional qualities, encompassing a full spectrum of mood and emotion. As a result, his work functions as contemplative spaces capable of connecting the viewer to a greater sense of intimacy.

Regardless of his subject matter, La Piana is interested in the most abstract point of view, which challenges him to search for the deeper meaning beyond what seems apparent on the surface. Very much like getting to know another human being, as the intimacy grows and the emotional layers unravel, the artist's connection to his subject matter intensifies and more information is revealed. The discovery of the unknown is artists' driving creative force.

As La Piana has continued his examination of abstract fluid forms through the eye of his camera's lens, he has built upon that point of view by interpreting his light formations and expressing or as he's calls it "metamorphosizing" them in his paintings, sculptures, and mobiles. The first layer in his process is what he refers to as "movement paintings". La Piana relies on the movement that once was captured through light and space but instead now utilizes the movement of ink, dye, and acrylics that are at times poured directly out of the bottle moving his surface vertically, horizontally and sometimes cyclically to create the vernacular abstract forms. Through movement La Piana once again refers to "kinetic energy" as a means of defining and constructing this process. La Piana is physically responsible for the complex structure of numerous labyrinths, one on top of the other, crossing over each other, creating whimsical, ethereal fluid structures. These forms show us the evolutionary relationship between his work in photography, sculpture, mobiles, and drawings. It is important for La Piana to bring his subjects to life via three-dimensional sculptural forms that have a sense of suspended relief. This theory for the artist is strongly influenced from the history of kinetic energy in art. Kinetics have been taken up at various times by the Russian Constructivists, the kinetic abstractionists of ZERO, like Jesus-Rafael Soto, Hartmut Bohme and of course Alexander Calder and Jean Tinguely among others. La Piana's works have been compared to the transparently overlaid color veils as those seen in Brice Marden and Mark Rothko's paintings. Their abstractness clear enough, their expressiveness less obviously so via Willem de Kooning and also representative of the color field paintings of Morris Louis.

The next layer in his process comes come breaking down or deconstructing the negative and positive space which were created in his movement paintings. This process allows the artist to create a three-dimensional perspective on an otherwise one-dimensional flat plane. Subsequently these three-dimensional forms, which represent the negative and positive space though whimsical suspended abstracts, are represented in his mobiles. Unlike Calder where his geometric forms are connected by a central core or axis, La Piana further adds to his unique definition of kinetic energy expressed through gravitational movement by physically disconnected forms that maintain a highly interactive and communicative dialogue.

Additionally in further understanding and executing his intellectual reference in kinetic energy the artist continues to explore and create through movement. This period of work is referred to as his "kinetic paintings" or "blow paintings" by which the artist employs the mathematical equation for kinetic energy itself represented by  $KE = \frac{1}{2} \text{mass} \cdot \text{velocity squared}$ . His interpretation however is as follows  $M = (\text{the medium being used})$   $v = (\text{speed at which the medium is moved})$

In order to document this study of kinetic movement the artist series "Hurricanes, Tornados and Typhoons" studies the source of weather storms and their physical life. The movement of these storms and their journey from a tropical storm to storms of mass destruction are synonymous with the unconscious, random and organic nature of his paintings.

It is important to La Piana that there is a clear correlation and progression between mediums. As he states, "the mobiles and sculptures were born initially from the movement paintings which were conceptualized from his original body of work in photography. La Piana likes to refer to the transition between mediums as a parallel to the life cycle. Initially we all begin our lives as these embryonic forms and through the passage of time we begin to evolve, grow, experience metamorphosis in hopes of laying the foundation of what is to come.





1. **Untitled Primary**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007  
*Private Collection, Korea*



2. **Spatial Relief Primary, Steel, Filament, and Powder coat, Dimensions Variable, 34'8" L x 12'W x 15'H, 2007**



3. Spatial Relief Primary Installation, 2008





4. **Twin Typhoon**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007  
Private Collection, Korea

5. **Isabel**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007  
Private Collection, Korea (Next Page)









6. **TYPHOON BABS**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007

7. **HURRICANE HAZE**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007





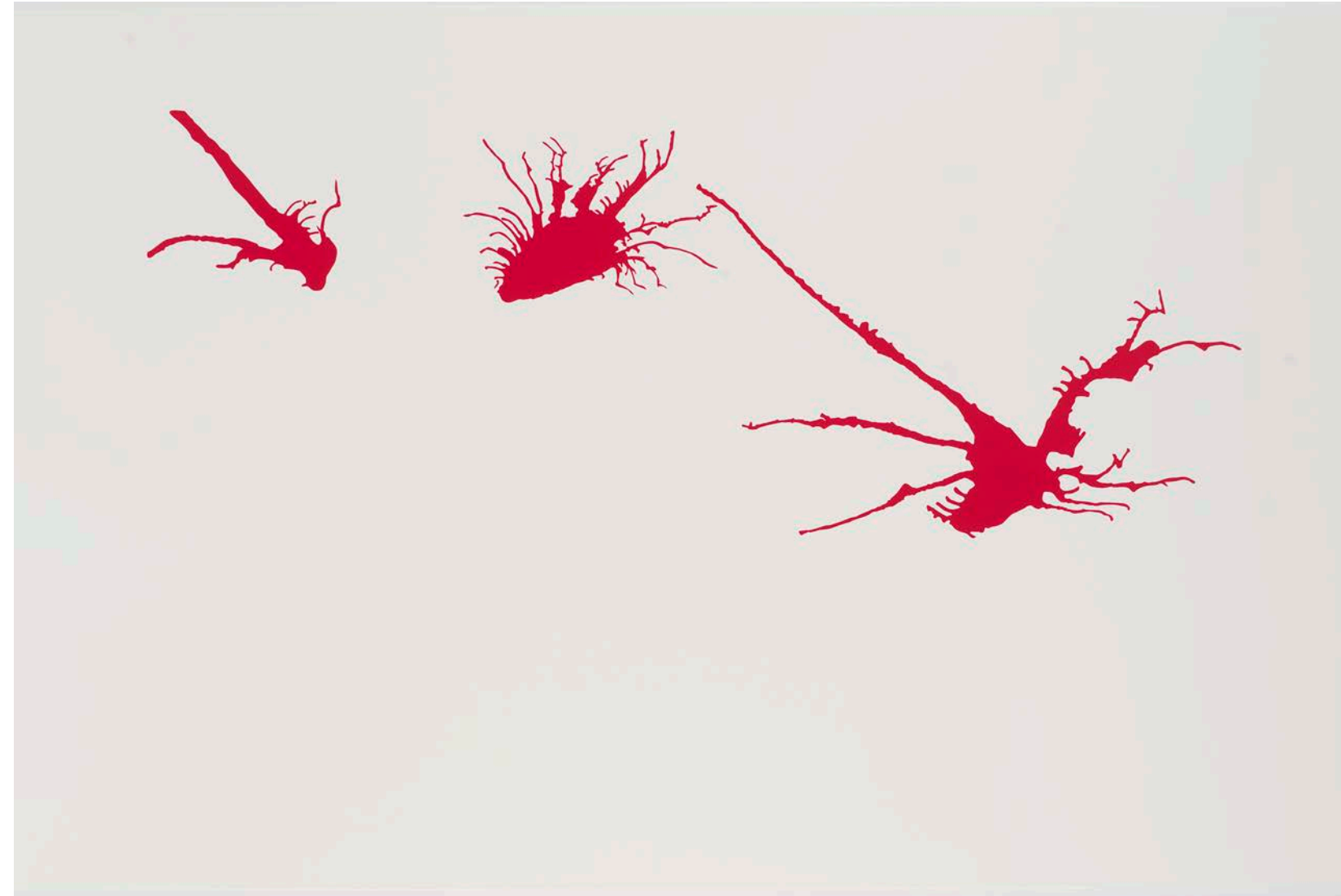
8. **Alone**, Enamel and Acrylic on Canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches 2007  
*Private Collection, Korea*





9. **Journey**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 96 by 144 inches, 243.84 by 365.76 cm, 2008



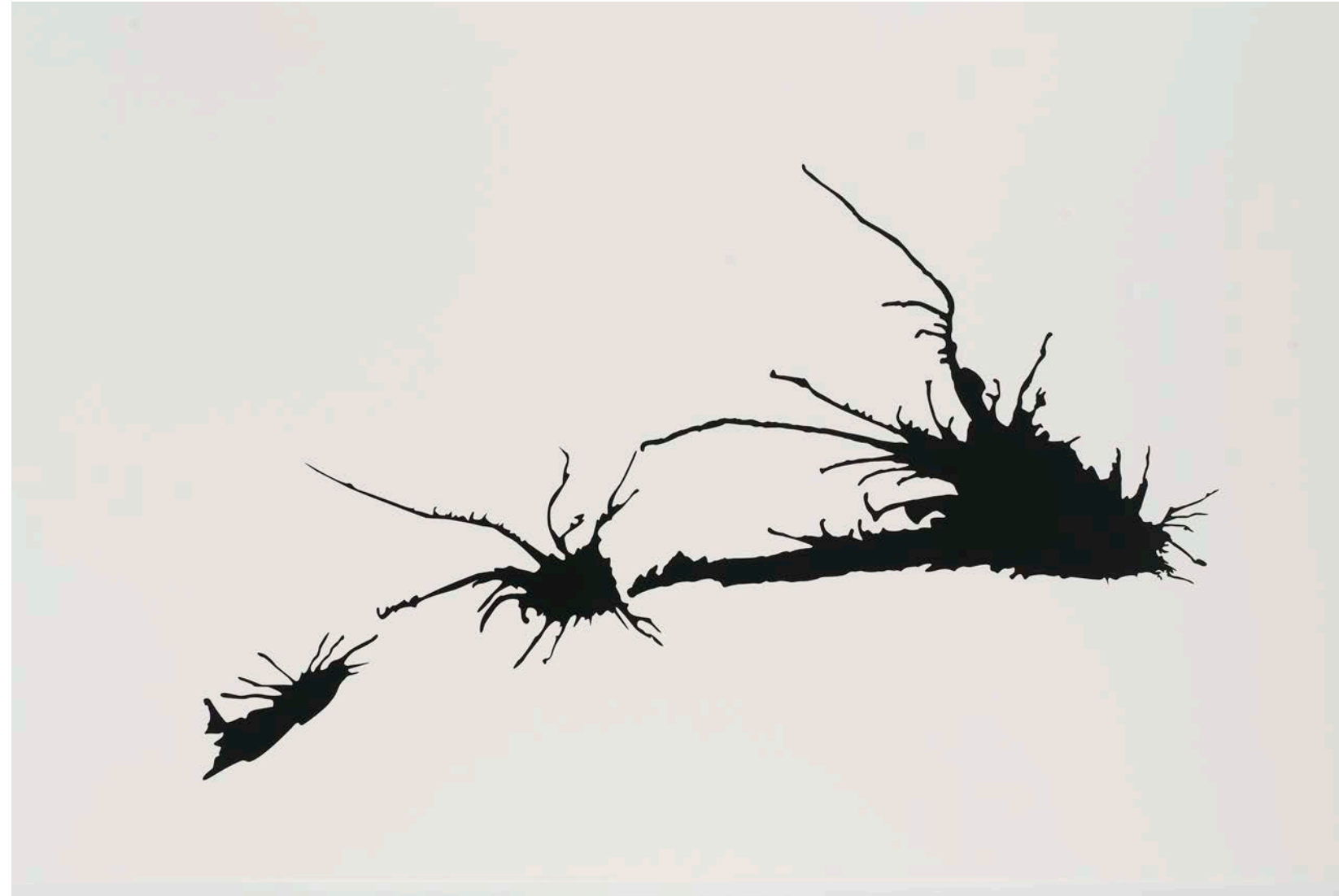


10, **Untitled**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007





11, **Joined**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007



12, **Untitled**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007



13, **Offspring**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007  
Private Collection, Los Angeles





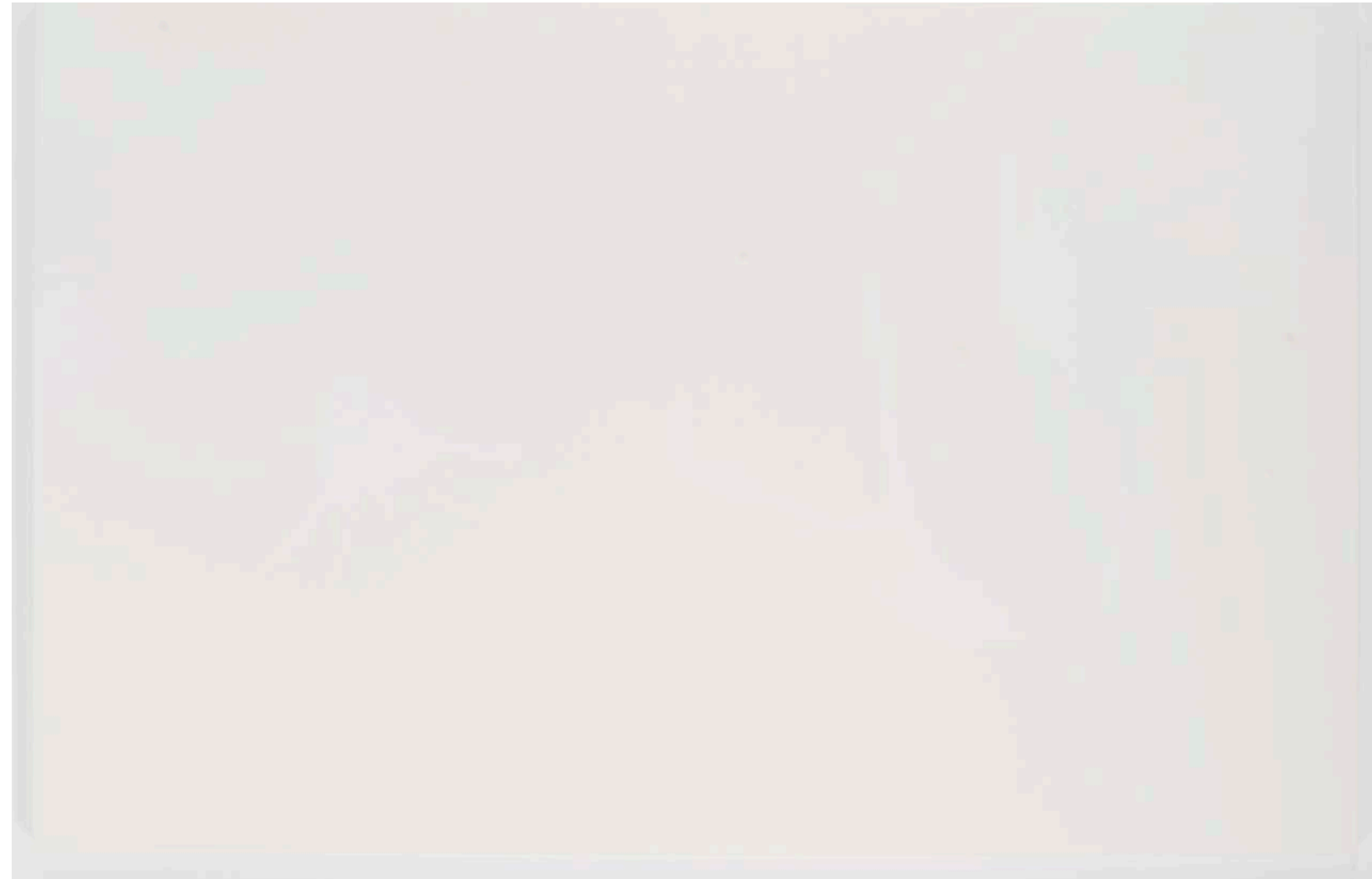
14, **Marge**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2008



15, **Untitled**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007



16, **Untitled**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007



17, **Untitled**, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 67 ½ by 103 ½ inches, 171.45 by 262.89 cm, 2007





18, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome I**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

20, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome III**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

22, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome V**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

24, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome VII**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

19, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome II**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

21, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome IV**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

23, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome VI**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D

25, Photonastic Spatial Constructions  
**Monochrome VIII**, 2008  
*birch wood and enamel*  
18 1/2" L x 13 1/2" H x 1 1/2" D



26. Movement Sculpture  
**Human**, Polyester Resin, Steel, and Fiberglass, 13 ½' L x 62" W x 86" H, 411.5 x 157.5 x 218.5 cm, 2008





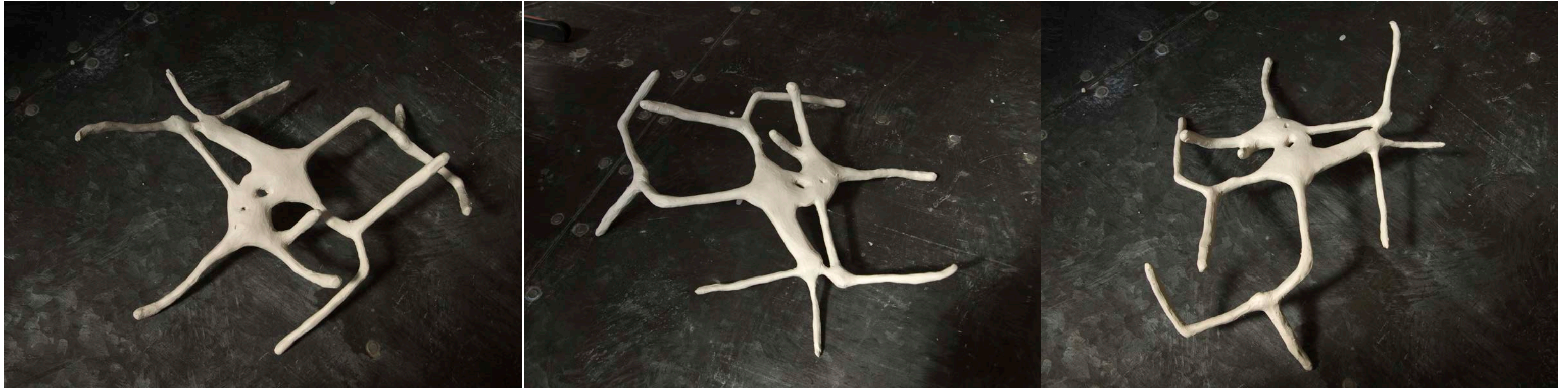
27. Movement Sculpture,  
**Zero Gravity**, Polyester Resin, Steel, and Fiberglass, 10'L x 48"W x 10' 7"H, 305 x 122 x 322.5 cm, 2008



28. Movement Sculpture Study

**Human**, Clay and Aluminum,  $13 \frac{1}{4}$ " L x 6" W x  $6 \frac{3}{4}$ " H, 336 x 156.5 x 174 mm, 2008





29. Movement Sculpture Study,  
**Zero Gravity**, Clay and Aluminum,  $8\frac{1}{4}''L \times 6''W \times 2\frac{1}{2}''H$ , 210 x 156 x 65 mm, 2008







Joseph La Piana was born and raised in Brooklyn New York. After receiving his Bachelor's of Arts from Florida State University, he lived and worked in Los Angeles. In 2000 he decided to return to the East Coast where he lives and works in New York City and East Hampton, New York. Works by Joseph LaPiana have been held in revered private collections of several members of the Board of the Whitney Museum of American Art including honored public collections, some of which include The Financial Service Association, First National Bank of Arizona, and the AOL-Time Warner Corporation. In addition, Mr. LaPiana's work has supported many philanthropic efforts in reaching their organizational and community goals. These organizations have included Art Heals, Free Arts for Abused Children, Art for America, The Christopher Reeves Foundation, Empire State Agenda, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, The New Group, Friends of the High Line, The Central Park Conservancy Project, and The World Water Conference Association.

In 2003, La Piana contributed to the environmental issue of water advocacy to increase awareness for water issues globally and sponsored an exhibition for his work in New York City at the ISSEY MIYAKE/FRANK GEHRY gallery space. The artist's work was also exhibited at the Robert Wilson Watermill Museum, curated by Lisa Dennison of the Guggenheim Museum. La Piana's work has been published in collaboration with Stella Thomas, one of the foremost writers on water issues globally for UNICEF and the United Nations. Works by the artist have been exhibited throughout the country in New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, and at the Houston International Photography Biennial.

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# BIOGRAPHY

Born 1966, Brooklyn, New York  
Lives and works in New York and East Hampton

## EDUCATION

1988 Florida State University, BA

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2008 Kinetic State, Robert Miller Gallery, New York City, NY  
2007 Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY  
2005 Leila Heller Gallery, New York City, NY  
2004 Chac Mool Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
Whitney Museum, Art on Madison, New York City, NY  
Houston International Photography Biennial, Houston, TX  
Poissant O'Neill Gallery, Houston, TX  
Daniel Azoulay Gallery, Miami, FL.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006 Leila Heller Gallery, New York City, NY  
Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts, New York City, NY  
2005 Christies, Central Park Conservancy Project, New York City, NY  
2004 High Line Auction, Phillips de Pury, New York City, NY  
Roundtable Exhibit National Arts Club, New York City, NY  
2003 Robert Wilson Watermill Museum, Watermill, NY  
Curated by Lisa Dennison of the Guggenheim Museum  
Long House Museum, East Hampton, NY  
Vered Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
2002 Free Arts for Abused Children Exhibit, Dia Center, New York City, NY  
2001 Art Heals Exhibit, Chelsea Piers, New York City, NY  
Art for America, New York City, NY  
Staley-Wise Gallery, New York City, NY



