DETROIT, MI, December 16, 2014 -- The Elaine L. Jacob Gallery at Wayne State University announces the opening of BLOOD / SPORT, January 16 through March 27, 2015.

A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of a stream and the scorpion asks the frog to carry him across on its back. The frog asks, "How do I know you won't sting me?" The scorpion says, "Because if I do, I will die too."

The frog is satisfied, and they set out, but in midstream, the scorpion stings the frog. The frog feels the onset of paralysis and starts to sink, knowing they both will drown, but has just enough time to gasp "Why?" Replies the scorpion: "It's my nature."

-The Aesopica (Aesop's Fables)

Natural, contradictory impulses - to help and be helped, to dominate and be directed - create tensions not only in the animal kingdom but in the human realm as well. Whether through culture or games, the body becomes a medium for experience and display, mastery and catastrophe. The resultant spectacle alternates between the transcendent and the traumatic.

Blood / Sport features works by three contemporary artists who interpret human reaction and adaptation in complex and often predatory environments: Jordan Eagles, Jordan Wayne Long, and Paul Pfeiffer.
Jordan Wayne Long’s installation work includes custom made devices used in his performance. His design of the apparatus complements the gallery architecture. Documentation of Jordan using these site-specific, physical constraints is on view throughout the duration of the exhibition.

The length of his performance in the gallery is determined by his endurance and by audience interaction. Viewers often implicate themselves, feel vulnerable, and embrace Long’s achievement or failure throughout his performance.

In Jordan Eagles’ Blood Illumination environments, analog, overhead projectors shine and enlarge patterns formed by translucent, preserved panels of blood. The effect transforms the gallery space, casting light and dark shapes while bathing the interior and viewers red; wrapping the organic pattern around the architecture and abstracting the viewers’ bodies which now appear to have new layers of birth-marked skin. Overall, the materials and luminosity in Eagle's work relate to themes of corporeality, mortality, spirituality, and science.

Paul Pfeiffer digitally removes key elements from video documentation of professional sporting events. Whether the athlete is removed or another element is edited out to isolate the athlete, the mass-culture sporting event shifts to a much more intimate scale. The edited event functions as a meditation on faith, desire, and a contemporary culture obsessed with celebrity. Viewers are implicitly invited to examine their own fears and obsessions.

The James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History is a division of Wayne State’s College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, educating the next generation of visual artists, designers and art historians. Wayne State University, located in the heart of Detroit’s midtown cultural center, is a premier urban research university offering more than 350 academic programs through 13 schools and colleges to more than 28,000 students.