



JANUARY 21ST – MARCH 4TH, 2012

CURATOR:
JUDITH MCWILLIE
ASSISTANT CURATOR:
LAUREN WILLIAMSON

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

STANLEY BERMUDEZ (ATHENS, GA) | DRÉK DAVIS (BERNICE, LA) | HOPE HILTON (WINTERVILLE, GA) | TED KUHN (ATHENS, GA) | MICHAEL LACHOWSKI (ATHENS, GA) | JUDY RUSHIN (TALLAHASSEE, FL) | SAM SEAWRIGHT (NEW YORK, NY) & JOHN SEAWRIGHT (ATHENS, GA) | STEVEN THOMPSON (BROOKLYN, NY) | JAMES PERRY WALKER & THE FAMILY OF WASHINGTON HARRIS OF THE SAINT PAUL SPIRITUAL HOLY TEMPLE (MEMPHIS, TN)

RADICAL CONTEMPORANEITY

There are three times: a present of things past,
a present of things present, and a present of things future.
Augustine. The Confessions, AD 398

When **Stanley Bermudez Moros's** painting *Heritage?* was removed from the Biennial Faculty Exhibition at Gainesville State College in January 2011, the artist explained that as he grew up in his native Venezuela he learned in school about the American civil war, slavery, and the Ku Klux Klan with “the rebel flag” as the abiding visual anchor. Moving to Texas to attend college, he regarded the blue St. Andrew’s cross, with its thirteen stars superimposed on a red background, with a disconcerting sense of familiarity, like an unexpected celebrity sighting. “My English was limited but that image stuck in my head.” Happening upon a Klan rally in Houston, “it made me realize it was real; it was something that did exist, not just from things I had studied.”¹ Bermudez Moros resolved the cognitive dissonance of stumbling upon the flag at a Klan rally while also seeing it in front of public buildings and football games by painting *Heritage?*. The painting “focused solely on the image that has been perceived as aggressively hostile in other areas of the country,” wrote Martha T. Nesbitt, president of Gainesville State, “that being the graphic depiction of a lynching.”² True enough, Bermudez Moros has two torch-bearing Klansman presiding over a ghostly lynching behind the familiar “X,” and Nesbitt knows all too well that it is this image of the American South that, even today, has the most

currency in the world. Now, in the 21st century, she—or the Southern heritage group that pressured her to take the painting down—will have none of it, no more of what Faulkner three generations ago called “stubborn backlooking ghosts.”³

Meanwhile, in Petrosani, Romania, Gabriela Dumbrava, professor of philology at the University of Petrosani, writes of the South:

It is not accidental that this self-revising act of the text, performed by challenging the very cultural patterns and codes that generated it, coincides with moments of cultural crisis, when reality outgrows language to such an extent that it brings about the need for new forms.

On the level of culture, this process is most visible in the frenetic revisiting of canons, in the reassessments of cultural patterns, and in the questioning of artistic forms. On its deeper level, the perpetual self-revision of culture as text is driven by the shift from archetype to stereotype under the pressure of an ever more complex reality that seems to constantly outgrow our means of appropriating it and proclaims a crisis of language.⁴

Dumbrava goes on to list more stereotypes of the American South culled from its literary canon, among them the idea of a land apart, a nation within a nation where identity is based on binary oppositions—north/south, black/white, inside/outside, us/them—at once constitutive and self-defeating, and by narratives so numbingly familiar that



Judy Rushin, From the Carapace Series

Southerners themselves find it hard to distinguish between reality and the caricatures ascribed to them.

SOUTHERN MODERNITY

There is, however, another story of how modern art as understood—or perhaps presciently misunderstood—by idealistic Southern Baby Boomers of the 1960s came to be embraced as a kind of salvific ray that privileged primary experience over derivativeness, opened channels to the world writ large, and fed a gathering momentum to transform the old archetypes and stereotypes.

This exhibit explores the vitality of that impulse in the works of nine artists who share no dominant aesthetic or visual ideology, although all but one of them have lived, at various times, in Athens, GA, a community emblematic of the radical contemporaneity of visual art in the post 1960s South.

Radical contemporaneity is a term first used by Jean Baudrillard to ascribe equal weight to the shards of local histories shattered by global capitalism. Without assigning moral value to what he observed, he sketched the conditions that made it possible for a generation of commercial, academic, and civic entrepreneurs to ignore history even as they traded on its glosses. But in the same sense that modernism might be perceived on the local level as liberating rather than totalizing, the anthropologist Johannes Fabian appropriated the term radical contemporaneity to question the controlling nature of systems of meaning in which language more appropriately used to describe space is imposed on the orders of time (“way back when”, “ahead of its time”, “up to date,” “advanced” or “backward”).⁵ He called for an experience of *the rest of the world* as coeval, not distanced in ways that immunize us to the affective experiences of others. Fabian’s irrevocable insight into the distancing effects of language prompted the British geographer Doreen Massey to deem radical contemporaneity a condition to be actively pursued in a new discourse on the nature of space and place as mutually constituted and inter-relational.⁶ “Space” (including cyberspace), she argues, is the “sum of our connections,” not just the domain of anonymity, boundlessness, and disorientation; “place” is where we are based, self-identified in community, but not necessarily bounded.⁷ These insights and ideas have many implications for artists of the American South.

PARA-MODERNITY

Initially, I drew from these sources in order to make sense of my own experience. For thirty-seven years I taught painting at the University of Georgia’s Lamar Dodd School of Art while living among and writing about artists whose status in the art world was ambiguous because of their biographies. They practiced outside of established professional networks, were uncredentialed, and steeped in “place.” The best of them—Thornton Dial, Lonnie Holley and J. B. Murray, for example—made works of such authority and power that they revealed the South’s visuality to be as



Michael Lachowski, Sux Sez blog series: Red spot



Michael Lachowski, Sux Sez blog series: Hotel hallway

generative as its music and literature. Some were African Americans working with repurposed objects—such as Lonnie Holley and Hawkins Bolden—or asemic writing—such as J. B. Murray, James Hampton and Minnie Evans. Didn’t early European modernists—Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst, for example—employ these same idioms as they mined the traditions of Africa from afar? Didn’t Southerners like Robert Rauschenberg (Texas/Florida), Jasper Johns (South Carolina), and Cy Twombly (Virginia) distance themselves from their origins, as all serious artists of their generation were expected to do, only to transform modern art into something that could be simultaneously global and local? These are definitive synchronic encounters, not just lapses into irony and syncretism. Sensing something profound in this para-modernity, many artists of the American South ignored antimonies between art and religion, aesthetic and documentarian practice, folk and fine art and embraced the vernacular, cueing each other interaffectively.⁸

SUBLIMINAL SPIRITUALITY

Interaffectivity is the lynchpin of this exhibition wherein nine artists, a religious visionary, and three deceased and revered heroes—a group spanning four generations—converge in an installation intended to activate their work in unexpected ways.

The initial impetus for *Southern* was the decision of Washington James Harris, grandson of Washington “Doc” Harris (1905 – 1995), founder of the Saint Paul Spiritual Holy Temple in Memphis, to allow the photographer James Perry Walker to exhibit the first ever authorized images of the Temple’s interiors and grounds. His 35mm photographs date from the late 1980s and show



James Perry Walker, Craftwork, by Washington Harris and Family.

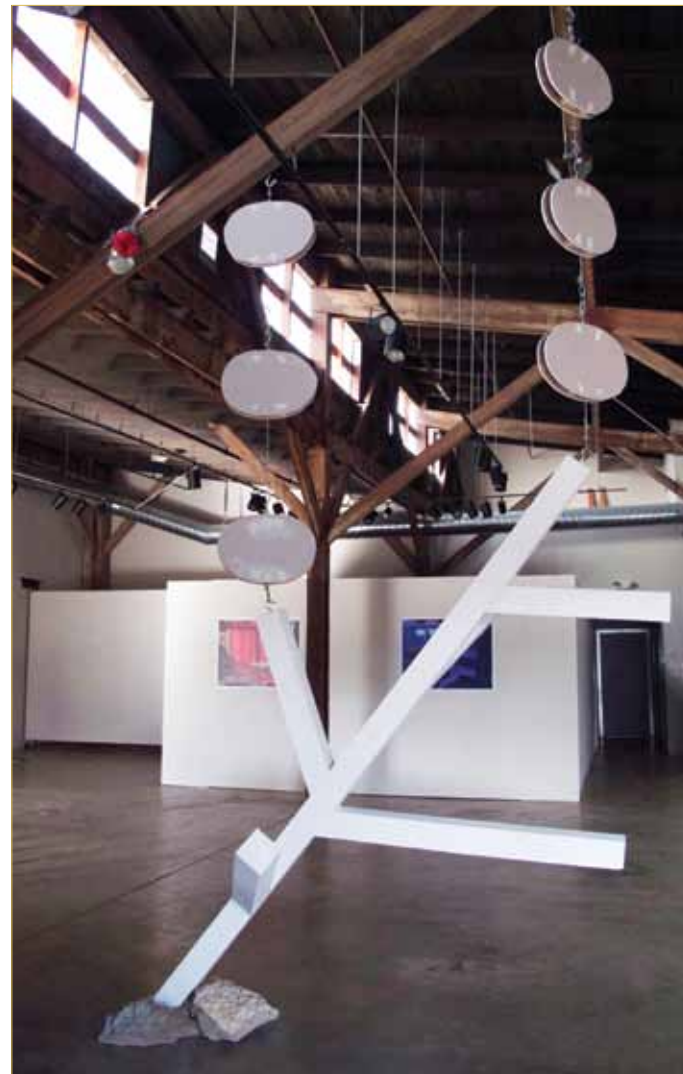
the Temple in its prime. Referencing the rituals and protocols of the actual Temple, these photographs are installed in a special room within the exhibition, a circumscribed place interacting with the more fluid and undetermined space of the gallery. Doc Harris established the Temple according to Biblical and Masonic protocols and, for over fifty years, directed its members in constructing over 1500 sacred works that he called *The Degrees of God* and *Craftwork*. Honoring its status as both a church and a Masonic Temple, these works, installed within the interiors and exteriors of the grounds, remained off limits to all but members of the extended Harris family and their church. Although family members have a multi-generational commitment to the Temple’s care, the volume of works to be maintained and the lack of assistance as children and siblings leave to attend college threaten its survival.

From a cul-de-sac bordering the property, a wire and lattice fence several blocks long and large polychrome constructions in wood and metal obstruct public view of the grounds; an iron gate once allowed egress to clients of Doc Harris’s licensed healing ministry. Today, sixteen years after his death, pharmacies in the nearby Boxtown neighborhood still carry the medicinal herbs and tonics he prescribed. For generations of clients in the Mississippi/Arkansas Delta and beyond, the Saint Paul Spiritual Holy Temple was a respite from an invasive world oblivious to the ways of faith and reckoning.

In the early 1980s, independent of each other, James Perry Walker and I began visiting the Harris family and interviewing Washington Harris until his death in 1995. As natives of Memphis, we had heard about the Temple from teenaged pranksters who

discovered it on the edge of town and named it “Voodoo Village,” establishing an urban legend that persists today in websites such as HauntedAmericaTours.com and in YouTube posts of drunken drive-bys. Washington Harris strictly rejected voodoo and modeled his organization after the African Native American spiritual churches founded in New Orleans in the 1920s that also had live-in compounds, traditional healing, counseling, and social services. In the tradition of these churches, he made “shields,” *nkisi*-like bundles of specially selected objects customized for individuals and worn secretly on the body for protection. (A *nkisi* is a Kongo charm made of specially configured objects said to affect healing and well-being. They were of particular interest to early European modernists.) Harris was a professed Christian and 33rd Degree Freemason; his services resembled those of mainstream Protestant churches with traditional hymn singing and call-and-response communal prayer, but these services took place in an atmosphere suffused with triumphant abundance rendered with impeccable rectitude and conviction. “This place is created for future generations, and the fallen of the world.”

The Temple’s vulnerability—many works have been lost or stolen; buildings are collapsing—and its fragile status



Steven Thompson, *Worship the Wind*



Steven Thompson, *Detail: Death is a Star Badge.*

in the city of Memphis due to the Voodoo Village urban legend, are memorialized in the tabernacle-like installation of James Perry Walker’s photographs, exhibited here for the first time. A room without a ceiling, accessible but discrete, separates them from the rest of the installation. Viewers enter through a facsimile of the door used by Doc Harris’ clients as they approached his “office” (healing room) to wait for his counsel and attention. While Walker credits Doc Harris for the powerful and enigmatic imagery of his work, these exquisitely composed photographs, are intended to be viewed as art, whereas the actual *Craftwork* and *Degrees of God* are not, something Washington Harris emphasized on many occasions.

A NEW SOUTHERN ARCHETYPE

I propose the St. Paul Spiritual Holy Temple as a new southern archetype, one that broadcasts the subliminal spirituality recognized by many artists of the American South as the origin of their work if not its goal.

The struggles inherent in balancing this recognition with the frantic demands of life in the 21st century are nowhere more apparent than in Steven Thompson’s work. In a recent exhibition at English Kills, Brooklyn, Thompson created an aesthetically expansive installation of objects that mingle luxurious substances such as amber, meerschaum (an opaque white mineral mined in Turkey and used to make carved smoking pipes), polished crystals, stuffed birds, white felt “ghosts,” and skeletons with artificial versions of themselves in an almost textbook application of Baudrillard’s idea that the actual and the virtual are becoming indistinguishable.¹⁰ Yet Thompson’s work is about moral tension, not postmodern theory. His “artifictions,” as he calls them, may appear inscrutable, but his practice is an instinctive probe of a culture struggling to cope with the implications of its premise. His fearlessness in taking on one of the central issues of our time—the destabilization of values as markets supersede the core dynamics of identity—positions him at the vanguard of this crisis. *Worship the Wind*, his site-specific installation is composed of a set of beams and trusses, resembling a tree with three attached “badges” that read “Death is a star,” “Trust the dust,” and “Worship.”

Sam Seawright is one of three artists in the exhibition, including James Perry Walker and Hope Hilton, who memorialize friends and ancestors, both blood kin and adopted. Seawright’s *The Poet’s House*, a suite of photographs of his older brother John’s apartment on Meigs St. in Athens, was shot while packing John’s belongings for storage after his unexpected death from an aneurysm at 45. Entering John’s rooms a week after his death in 2001, Sam found himself surrounded by an ad hoc collection of found objects, trophies, and mementoes scattered across every available surface. He photographed details of the array in available light, without changing anything. John Seawright was a poet and freelance essayist who published in *The Oxford American* and other Southern journals.¹¹ His Ghostfry column in Athens’s local progressive weekly, *Flagpole Magazine*, exposed politically suppressed or ignored histories recovered from old newspapers and microfiche records in libraries and private collections across the state. Though most of Ghostfry’s stories originated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, John was particularly sensitive to the microcosm/macrocosm effects of linking them suggestively, rather than explicitly, with contemporary politics and world events. His prolific oeuvre is a primer for a new understanding of the American South. Like William Eggleston’s “democratic forest,” the essays transmute the romance of a doomed oligarchy clinging to the residual entitlements of colonialism into a drama of profound interaffectivity. Examples of Ghostfry columns, three of John’s poems, and photographs of the two brothers are on display along with Sam Seawright’s photographs.

“It’s taken me ten years since John’s death to emotionally process this work,” Sam says. “John and I often talked about a shared project riffing off of each other’s aesthetics and the subtle differences of our take on Southern culture. This is probably the closest we ever came to realizing that.”¹² It is Sam’s instinctive reach for wholeness in the wake of loss—his incremental positioning and re-positioning of the lens in order to achieve closure—that identifies these photographs as sacred medicine not unlike Washington Harris’ *Shields*.



Sam Seawright, *The Poet’s House 6 (Brother New)*



Sam Seawright, *The Poet’s House 3 (Confederate Widow)*

LABOR RITUALIZED

The theme of labor and labor ritualized appears throughout the exhibition—in Washington Harris’s monuments to domestic service, as photographed by James Perry Walker, in Hope Hilton’s *The Recognitions*, and in Judy Rushin’s *From the Carapace Series* and *Bent Line*. Rushin believes that “being an artist is an industrious job and [she has] the hands to show it.”¹³ She ritualizes the work ethic in her repetitive mantra-like sanding and polishing of panels that she attaches to grids of unfinished 1 x 2’s. The results resemble mass-produced modular construction laid bare by natural disasters or demolition. Rushin breaks down the panels and reconfigures them into provisional environments, small marginal spaces like lean-tos and other temporary constructions that reference “transient relationships between people and spatial environments.”¹⁴ Her decision to fabricate the panels herself, while economically efficient, also serves a ritualistic purpose that privileges do-it-yourself craft and human-scale technology. Humble materials belie the time-consuming casting of plastic skins to make illusionary pegboard and other hard lacquered extensions that can be resized to fit available space with sleek simplicity. What began as theory—an investigation into Gaston Bachelard’s ideas about shelter in *The Poetics of Space*—synapses with an empathic sense of problem solving that honors shelter wherever we find it.



MIMETIC JOURNEYS

In *The Recognitions: Mrs. Harriet Powers' Bible Quilt* (2012), Hope Hilton pays tribute to Harriet Powers (1837–1910), a formerly enslaved African Native American who lived in Winterville, GA (pictured at left circa 1898), as does Hilton now. In 1885 and 1898, Powers created two famous storytelling quilts now in the collections of the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian and the Museum of Fine Arts,

Boston. The Powers quilts are aesthetically reminiscent of Henri Matisse's portfolio, *Jazz*, although they predate it by 60 years. They merge biblical motifs with recorded celestial events of the 19th century such as eclipses and meteor showers. Referencing the Smithsonian quilt, Hilton overlays scraps of vellum to "recreate her [Powers's] labor" 102 years after her death. Reenactment is the master dynamic of *The Recognitions*, a series Hilton describes as "an experiment in social architecture." It began in 2007 after her grandmother gave her a photocopy of a letter describing an enslaved and hearing-impaired African named Henry who walked sixty miles, from Huntsville, Alabama to Shelbyville, Tennessee, to announce the birth of her great-great-grandmother.¹⁵ Hilton walked the same route in 2007, visiting sites associated with her family—the place where her grandmother was born, family cemeteries—photographing and journaling in her blog as she travelled.¹⁶ These mimetic journeys, including the ephemeral re-enactment of the Powers quilt, are traces of atonement (at-one-ment) that expose Hilton's struggles with space and place, the ambiguities of representation, and the purposes of art itself.

Drék Davis lives in the central Louisiana town of Bernice, a short distance from Grambling State University where he is an associate professor of Art. This places him within the axis of the Yoruban South where, in 1809, ten thousand refugees from the revolution in Haiti (then Saint Domingue) resettled in New Orleans and up the Mississippi River, bringing the Yoruba Orishas, a pantheon of archetypes reminiscent of the Greek gods, into the creolized, mostly Kongo-based milieu of the Mississippi Valley. Davis's prolific career and activism includes writing for *ColorLines: a Journal of*

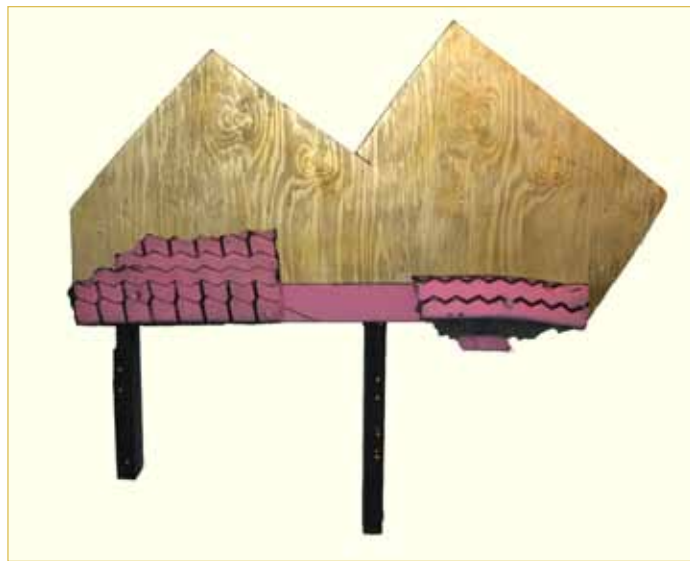


Hope Hilton, *Detail: The Recognitions: Mrs. Harriet Powers, Bible Quilt* (reproduction). (Note: Artwork is white; image altered).

African American Popular Culture and *The Athens Banner Herald*, while working as a mediator for juvenile offenders, and curating *Race: (Enter Personal Politics)* for ATHICA in 2005. Here Davis installs two large floor canvases from *Idle Warship*, a series in which Veve, graphic signs that summon Loa/Orisha in Haitian Vodoun, are superimposed on Confederate flags. A serialized inkjet print, *A Crown for Oshun—Femininity* (2011), emblemizes a defunct 2004 assemblage made from a scrap of gold-painted plywood, metal brackets, and tire treads relief-rolled in pink. Oshun is the Orisha of maternal femininity; she represents the fecundity of the ocean and brings diplomacy, intimacy, and wisdom. Davis finds her ghost in a trash heap and restores her to honor without ignoring the circumstances that put her there. She hovers above *Shango Fans* (2009), a set of inscribed silhouettes that reference the Orisha of male virility while resembling the hand fans used to memorialize Jesus and Martin Luther King, Jr. in African American churches.

Davis' edgy, literate art blurs the edges of the sacred and the secular, as do the Orisha themselves. In a world where religion is political and politics is treated as religion, cultural icons can be as sacrosanct as religious ones, as Stanley Bermudez Moros discovered when he was censored from the Gainesville State College faculty exhibition. "Since I've

undertaken this journey of cultural and social nitpicker," writes Davis, "I've been allowed to see and learn. Such a diversion has been delivered in a collision of the past, present and future".¹⁷



Drék Davis, *A Crown for Oshun: Femininity*



Drék Davis, *installation view*

MORAL TENSION

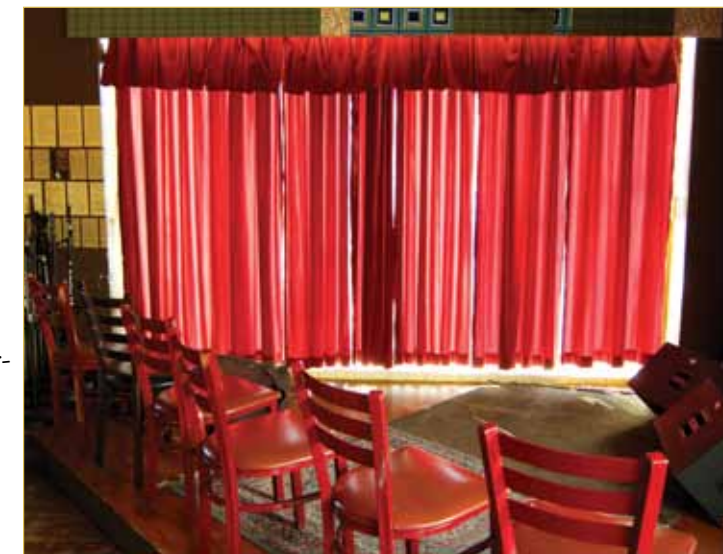
In a nod to the art market, Stanley Bermudez Moros divides his web site into pages advertising his "folk art" and "fine art." *Heritage?*, however, is in a class by itself. "I wasn't expecting that kind of feedback," he explains, "I've been an artist for 25 years. I've always known that artwork can be powerful, but I never dreamed it would be this powerful to the point that I would be censored." Exhibited here for the first time since its censorship, the painting has become a touchstone in the popular press and in distinguished academic journals, such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, as part of the ongoing debate over academic freedom and first amendment rights. But the Southern stereotypes it exposes, including its criticism on the *Southern Heritage Alerts* blog as "despicable," have long been successfully branded and commoditized.¹⁸ The more neglected image of the African or African American woman pictured at the top

has been consistently ignored. The orange background that frames her, a "window" that places her in the scene more concretely than the other humans depicted, and her temporally ambiguous hairstyle and clothing, suggest that she languishes within the spatialized experience of time that so troubles the anthropologist, Johannes Fabian. The problem with postmodernism's "failing attacks on history"¹⁹ says Fabian, is that they numb us to both the successes and the moral debasements of the past.

Ted Kuhn, our youngest artist, is a recent recipient of Georgia's Hope Scholarship, a state-run merit-based program that assists students with their educational costs if they maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0. On the evening of February 3rd, he performs *Keep Hope Alive*, demonstrating, both literally and metaphorically, the reflexivity of funding the scholarship with the Georgia State Lottery. Knowing that the statistical probability of winning is nil, he purchases 500 tickets with personal funds available because of the scholarship and scratches them off as patrons of the gallery sample grits from local restaurants competing for best in show. The detritus of scratched off tickets and the chalkboard used to tally results remain on display in the gallery after the event. Kuhn's performance is a carnivalesque miasma of inter-subjectivity that tests the relationship of chance and merit. The moral tension so evident in Davis's, Thompson's, and Hilton's works surfaces again in an act where the stakes are high, especially for the artist. Will he be perceived as using his scholarship to frivolous ends, or is he, in effect, donating \$500 to state education?

FORMALISM AS EQUANIMITY

Michael Lachowski's digital photographs are brilliantly formalist with a hypnotic verve and equanimity that transform the rural towns he visits in the annual Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (BRAG), and the older in-town neighborhoods of Athens and Atlanta, into a luminous odyssey of recognition. He posts up to twelve new high-resolution images a day on his web diary, *Sux Sez*, without captions or the unmediated chatter of blogs. The cumulative effect of scrolling through over 5,000 images in reverse temporal order is an immersive experience that builds over time, inviting associations with earlier images vividly remembered, if difficult to go back and retrieve; one goes forward instead, into the next day. Fifteen images from *Sux Sez* are on display, chosen for their resonance with the exhibition's predominant themes. Three more prints from the *Summer Sets* series, exhibited for the first time, pair images from BRAG according to



Michael Lachowski, *Sux Sez* blog series: Red curtain



James Perry Walker, *Craftwork* by Washington Harris and the Family of the St. Paul Spiritual Holy Temple.

their affinities of color, texture, geometry, and scale rather than their descriptive content. A trompe l'oeil fold divides each of them vertically like an open book. But these books are unsaid, intended to be read in a language of form and light—light that Lachowski goes out of his way to find, light that is always surprising, light that transmutes change, light that totalizes without suppressing the character of what it manifests.

The fluent abstraction of Lachowski's photographs and of other works in the exhibition, including Hilton's revisiting of Harriet Powers's quilts and Washington Harris's *Craftwork* and *Degrees of God*, is not a closed self-referential system or a polemical platform intended to suppress the uninitiated. It is a first principal that attends to the "crisis of language" identified earlier in this essay by Dumbrava, Fabian, and Massey. The artists in *Southern*, however, were born into "a reality that seems to constantly outgrow our means of appropriating it."⁷ They know that it is their job to heal and reconstitute the world, not to become its whore or victim.

BILONGO

I learned this many years ago when I first encountered the Yale art historian, Robert Farris Thompson's revolutionary work, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two*

Worlds, the catalogue for a 1982 exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Thompson and his co-curator, Joseph Cornet, paired funerary monuments from Kongo—the region of West Central Africa that is the ancestral home of many African Americans—with their counterparts in the American South. This crossover, though highly significant, was less affecting to me than Thompson's ability to expose a seamless continuum of practice, aesthetics, and ethics in visual art. I thank him here for being attuned to this power and responsibility and for his generous support and friendship. He gave me the inspiration and the tools to transpose African models of material vision into my discussions of contemporary art over the past thirty years.

As an investigative model for the recurring use of repurposed objects among artists in the South, I once proposed the Kongo *nkisi*, a pouch or carved human figure containing special objects and substances that, once constellated, make sacred medicine. Today, given the challenges of the times, I propose the more dynamic term, *bilongo*, meaning power amplified through interaffectivity. Washington Harris made machines intended to message grace, prescience, and regeneration. May he and all of the artists in *Southern* be honored for doing the same.

—Judith McWillie, *Curator*,
with editorial assistance by Lizzie Zucker Saltz



James Perry Walker, *Degrees of God* by Washington Harris and the Family of the St. Paul Spiritual Holy Temple.

ENDNOTES

- Jennifer Clark, "Stanley Bermudez: Artist Under Fire," *The Compass*, February 11, 2011.
- Tricia L. Nadolny, "Gainesville State Decision Sparks Silent Protest," *Gainesville Times*, February 4, 2011.
- William Faulkner, *Absalom! Absalom!* (New York: Random House, 1990), 7.
- Gabriela Dumbrava, "From Archetype to Stereotype: a Postmodern Re-reading of the American South," *European Journal of American Studies* 2 (2007): 2–9. <http://ejas.revues.org/1693>.
- Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE editions, 2006), 185.
- Ibid., 66.
- See Jonathan Hay, "Double Modernity—Para-Modernity," in *Antimonies of Art and Culture*, ed. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
- Washington Harris, personal communication with James Perry Walker, 1989.
- See "Steven Thompson at English Kills," YouTube video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE-XAdf6iRM>, 6:40, posted by jameskalmroughcut, February 5, 2011.
- See *The Oxford American Book of Great Music Writing*, ed. Marc Smirnoff (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).
- See "The Poet's House, John Seawright's Vision," Kickstarter, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1569547152/the-poets-house-john-seawrights-vision>, accessed January 17, 2012.
- See Website of Artist Judy Rushin, www.swallowawindchime.com/info/about, accessed January 17, 2012.
- Entering the Carapace: An Exhibition that Shelters," Kickstarter, <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/786652908/entering-the-carapace-an-exhibition-that-shelters>, accessed January 17, 2012.
- See <http://hopehilton.com>.
- See "The Recognitions," <http://www.therecognitions.org/>, accessed January 17, 2012.
- Drék Davis, "Davis: Vision in Two Parts," *Athens Banner Herald*, July 13, 2006.
- See "Southern Heritage Alerts: Heritage Violation at Gainesville State College," Southern Heritage Alerts Blog, <http://shnvalerts.blogspot.com/2011/01/heritage-violation-at-gainesville-state.html>, accessed January 17, 2012.
- Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 59.



Michael Lachowski, Summer Sets blog series (2010–2011): Segway scooters, Deer trophies (top); Keyboard stand, Tent flashlight (middle); Field house, Storage building (bottom).

Southern

BIOGRAPHIES



STANLEY BERMUDEZ MOROS
A Venezuelan artist, he currently resides in Athens, GA; born in Louisiana in 1965 he was raised in Western Venezuela in the 1960s and 1980s. He received his B.F.A. from Sam Houston State University in 1990 and a Master's degree from Radford University in 2000, with an emphasis in metalwork and jewelry. He has taught in numerous universities throughout Texas

and Georgia including the Lamar Dodd School of Art where he an Art Appreciation professor. Bermudez has been exhibiting professionally since 1990; many of his works focus on the Latin Community in the South. The painting, *Heritage?*, was influenced by the racism associated with the KKK and the rebel flag.



Detail: Bermudez' *Heritage?*



DRÉK DAVIS
A native of Monroe, Georgia, Rodrecas "Drék" Davis earned his MFA in 2006 from the University of Georgia's Lamar Dodd School of Art's Drawing and Painting program. Primarily a mixed-media artist, Drék is also a saxophonist, audiophile, Hip-Hop head, and "lover of all things caffeinated." His work has been published in the Politics Issue of *Callaloo: A Journal of*

African Diaspora Arts and Letters and *ColorLines*. A former columnist for *The Athens Banner-Herald*, Davis married his visual arts and journalistic experience to provide both an academic and formal review of the arts. Presently Davis is an associate professor of Art at Grambling State University, in Grambling, LA.

HOPE HILTON

Hilton was born in 1977 in Atlanta, GA. She is a cum laude graduate of the Atlanta College of Art (2003) and a magna cum laude graduate of The City University of New York, Hunter College (2008). She is also the co-founder of the artist collective Dos Pestaños (Atlanta/NYC). Hilton "curates, collaborates, designs, publishes, writes, and walks." In May 2005, "You are My Salvation," a public space for collaboration and events, opened in her MFA studio. In 2005 she was awarded the Good Earthling Award, a grant from the artist Harrell Fletcher and CalArts. She was a participant in "Open Engagement: Art After Aesthetic Distance" at the University of Regina, Canada in October 2007. Recently completed projects include a silent walk commemorating the Black Heritage Trail in Boston at Brandeis University, and in San Francisco. Dos Pestaños had a retrospective at Alfred University in 2008. Hilton was awarded a Forward Arts Foundation (Atlanta) grant in 2010 and was a finalist for the Hudgen's Prize.



Hilton at work (2012). (Photo by Rinne Allen.)



TED KUHN

Kuhn is an artist working in performance video and sound installation. He draws on “the rich possibilities inherent in personal interaction to propel forthright and striking performances.” He lives and works in Athens, GA.



MICHAEL LACHOWSKI

Lachowski received a BFA in Photography from the University of Georgia’s Lamar Dodd School in 1979, and has remained in Athens working in graphic arts and creative fields ever since. He is a founding member of the

acclaimed band Pylon and the ad agency Candy. He publishes the quarterly photo, art, and music magazine *Young, Foxy & Free*. He has worked in photography, drawing, installation, film and video, and exhibits his work online and in galleries. His photo blog of daily images, *Sux Sez*, was sourced for *Southern*.



JUDY RUSHIN

Her work explores relationships between people and spatial environments through painting, sculpture, and installation. Her work has appeared throughout the US and in Korea. She has exhibited at Aqua Art Miami, FL; Art and Literature Laboratory in Cambridge, MA; Prospect 1-Satellite at Trumpet in New Orleans,

LA; Mass MoCA, MA; and Soho20 New York, NY. She is the recipient of numerous grants and her work has been featured twice in *New American Paintings*.



SAM SEAWRIGHT

Sam Seawright, a painter currently working and living in New York, was born in Toccoa, GA in 1959. He received his BFA from the University of Georgia in 1982 and his MFA in painting from the University of Texas, Austin in 1985. In 1990 he moved to New York and worked at Robert Miller, Alan Frumkin, and



John Seawright portrait (photo by Terry Allen).

Matthew Marks Galleries. He has exhibited his paintings in New York, Los Angeles and Georgia and traveled extensively in France, England, Spain, Brazil, Rome, Florence and Tuscany. He and his wife Tara have been married for 17 years. His current studio is in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

JOHN SEAWRIGHT

John Ryan Seawright (1956–2001) was a poet and essayist. He frequently contributed to *Flagpole Magazine*, Athens’ local progressive weekly. He appeared in ‘Inside Out,’ the 1987 documentary about the Athens’ independent music scene, and wrote for *The Oxford American*. In 2009 the Athens, GA Orange Twin Conservation Community dedicated The John Seawright Forest, 100 acres of woodland in his memory. Please join us for *The Universe of John Seawright* memorial event on Friday, February 17th.



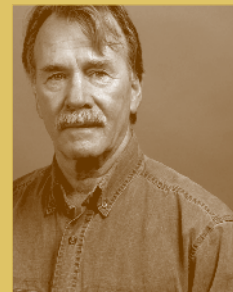
Detail: Sam & John at Orange Twin (photo by Tara Seawright.)



STEVEN THOMPSON

Born in Greenville, SC in 1967, he now resides in Brooklyn, NY. He received undergraduate degrees in Literature, Classical Languages, and Art from the College of Charleston in 1990 and 1991. He has an MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of Georgia and in

Sculpture and Mixed Media from the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught academic and studio courses at the University of Georgia, The New School, and Parsons in New York. He currently shows at English Kills Gallery, Brooklyn, NY. Exhibits include the Armory International Exhibition in New York, Miami/Basel and Rove Gallery, London. He has an honorary degree in Classical Languages from the College of Charleston.



JAMES PERRY WALKER

A native of Red Banks, MS, Walker currently lives in Memphis, TN, Tallahassee, FL, and rural Upstate New York. His photographs have been widely published, including in the monograph, *The Reverend* (2006), a photo-biography of Reverend Louis Cole, a revered African American

preacher in Western Tennessee and North Mississippi. The monograph depicts the life and death of Cole as he spread the Gospel and inspired his congregants. For six years, from 1976 until his death in 1981, Walker photographed him, the black Baptist congregations he served, and the roads he traveled. The book fuses Walker’s own impressions with the reverend’s stories and sermons. The intimate photographs reveal the spiritual depth of one individual and the extraordinary impact he had on others. Walker received his PhD in photography from the Steinhardt School of Education, NYU in 1997 and was elected in the same year to The Legion of Honor of the National Rifle Association. He is founder of the Delta Axis Contemporary Art Center in Memphis, TN and is a licensed commercial pilot.



THE FAMILY OF WASHINGTON HARRIS OF THE SAINT PAUL SPIRITUAL HOLY TEMPLE, MEMPHIS, TN

Washington Doc Harris (1905–1995), an African Native American, was born in Pleasant Grove, Mississippi in 1905. He later moved to Memphis, TN where he raised a family and founded the Saint Paul Spiritual Holy Temple

in 1960. (The portrait below is circa 1965). He was also a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Freemason. Under his direction, members of the extended Harris family and church created over 1500 sacred works that Doc Harris called the *Degrees of God* and *Craftwork*. Patterned after the Spiritual Churches founded in New Orleans in the 1920s, the Temple community created a sacred space unique in North America.

CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES



JUDITH MCWILLIE

McWillie is professor emerita of drawing and painting at the University of Georgia’s Lamar Dodd School of Art. Her paintings and photographs have been exhibited throughout the United States and Europe.

She is the author of numerous essays in arts publications including *Metropolis* and *Artforum* and anthologies such as *Testimony: Vernacular Art from the African American South*, *The Art of William Edmondson*, and *Keep Your Head the Sky: Interpreting African American Homeground*. She is co-author with Grey Gundaker of *No Space Hidden: the Spirit of African American Yard Work*, winner of the James Mooney Award of the Southern Anthropological Society. She has resided in Athens, GA since 1974.



LAUREN WILLIAMSON

Our Assistant Curator received her BFA in Painting from the Lamar Dodd School of Art of the University of Georgia in May 2010. She began interning at ATHICA last summer. She is creating studio work independently and working as a freelance photographer, graphic designer and has worked professionally as a photography assistant.

She most recently had work in ATHICA’s 2011’s *OCCUPY: This is What Democracy Looks Like* and contributed works to the

ATHICA Mystery Triennial in Fall 2011.

This is her debut turn as a curator; in addition to typical assistant curatorial administrative responsibilities, she personally installed the majority of the artworks in the exhibition, aided visiting artists and oversaw the labors of numerous volunteers and interns. ATHICA lauds her professionalism, dedication and outstanding commitment to realizing the curator’s vision of *Southern*.



Installation shot of Stanley Bermudez Moros's *Heritage?* (wall) and Drék Davis's *A Flag for the War of Southern Regression* (floor)



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

STANLEY BERMUDEZ MOROS

Heritage? (2010)

Acrylic on canvas, 60" x 90"

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION OF CENSORSHIP:

- Various newspaper clippings
- *Interview with Heritage? artist Stanley Bermudez*
Digital video, 6:27 min.
- Web links

DRÉK DAVIS

Black, White & Red Ogun Flag (2010)

Acrylic paint and lacquer on canvas, floorpiece
59" x 34"

A Crown for Oshun: Femininity (2004-11)

Digital Print, 11" x 17"

- This work serialized three times per the curator's request.

A Flag for the War of Southern Regression (2009)

Acrylic paint and lacquer on canvas, floorpiece,
72" x 108"

Flag Paintin'

Digital video, 2 min.

Shango Fan Series (2009)

Shango Fan (Fist)

Shango Fan (Penis)

Shango Fan (Rooster)

All fans mixed media assemblage; paint overlay on pine paneling, 45" x 24.5"

HOPE HILTON

The Recognitions: Mrs. Harriet Powers, Bible Quilt (reproduction) (2012)

Site-specific wall installation, vellum, nails with heads painted white, 87" x 74"

TED KUHN

Keep Hope Alive (2012)

Performance piece and performance remains;
lottery tickets, tallying board

MICHAEL LACHOWSKI

Sux Sez blog series on vinyl (2011–2012):

Blue barricade

- November 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/13070760975>

Red curtain

- October 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/11908143250>
- Both (2011), ink jet on vinyl with grommets, 43" x 33"

Sux Sez blog series on paper (2010–2012):

Branch intersection

- November 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/12969581594>

Car trunk

- July 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/7194442147>

Chalked bricks

- December 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/14296378506>

Crossed briars

- November 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/12969576238>

Hotel hallway

- August 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/8806264331>

Liquor wall

- December 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/14296356650>

Palmetto fan

- 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/8496424027>

MICHAEL LACHOWSKI CONTINUED:

Rain water

- July 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/7477274485>

Red blaze

- November 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/12969539775>

Red spot (2010)

- October 2010, <http://suxsez.com/post/1370696060>

Spice bowl

- January 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/3023626131>

Tree tops

- September 2011, <http://suxsez.com/post/10182086499>

Twelve ink jet on paper prints, 19" x 14.5" each

Summer Sets series (2010–2012):

**Field house, Storage building
Keyboard stand, Tent flashlight
Segway scooters, Deer trophies**

Set of three; ink jet on paper, 60.5" x 23.5" each

- All images shot in 2010, *Summer Sets* series conceived of and executed in 2011, printed in 2012.

JUDY RUSHIN

Bent Line (2011)

Cast plastic, wood, zip ties, 36" x 80" x 24"

From the Carapace series (2011–2012)

Cast plastic, wood, furniture lacquer, nuts and bolts, 13' x 76" x 8.5"

From the Rest series (2011–12)

Cast plastic, wood, oil paint, 49" x 60.5" x 10"

SAM SEAWRIGHT

The Poet's House series (2001–2011):

The Poet's House 1 (Candlestick)

The Poet's House 2 (Jimi)

The Poet's House 3 (Confederate Widow)

The Poet's House 4 (Moth)

The Poet's House 5 (Ganesh)

The Poet's House 6 (Brother New)

All Giclee print on Epson Hot Press Bright mounted on Dibond support, (2001-2011), 18"x 24"

- All images taken in the workspace of John Seawright's house in 2001 on 35mm film. Digitally processed & printed in 2011.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR SEAWRIGHT:

TERRY ALLEN

John Seawright (2001)

portrait photograph, 11" x 14"

TARA SEAWRIGHT

John & Sam at Orange Twin (2000)

photograph, 10.75" x 14"

John Seawright writings:

Poems: Folly, I Broke My Saw, May First

Flagpole Magazine 'Ghost fry' articles:

The Wanderer—June 6, 1993

Native Americans—April 7, 1993

African King—May 26, 1993

Resistance to WWI—June 29, 1994

STEVEN THOMPSON

Worship the Wind (2012)

Site-specific installation: sheetrock, joint compound, wood, cement, steel, 15' x 7' x 3'

- Note: This work was conceived & executed 3 days, January 13-15, 2012.

JAMES PERRY WALKER & THE FAMILY OF WASHINGTON HARRIS OF THE SAINT PAUL SPIRITUAL HOLY TEMPLE IN MEMPHIS, TN

Craftwork: Nos. 1–9 (1987)

30" X 20"

Degrees of God: Nos. 1–2, 5–11 (1987)

30" x 20"

Degrees of God: Nos. 3 & 4 (1987)

30" x 40"

All works u.v. direct prints on gatorboard

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

Voo Doo Village

Digital video, 8:10 min. Produced by James Perry Walker

SITE-SPECIFIC ROOM CREATION AND DOORWAY REPLICA:

CONSTRUCTION & DOOR HANGING:

NACKASHI DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

RECREATION OF CROSS, EXTERIOR PAINT, OBJECTS & BLINDS:

RACHEL DEBUQUE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ASSISTANT CURATOR LAUREN WILLIAMSON, ATHICA INTERNS & ADDITIONAL ITEMS BY JUDITH MCWILLIE.



Judy Rushin, Bent Line (2011)

AFFILIATED EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD | 7:00 P.M.—9:00 P.M.

GRIT-OFF! WITH PERFORMANCE:

KEEP HOPE ALIVE

Enjoy a grits competition judged by local foodies and a Ted Kuhn performance addressing the relationship between the Hope Scholarship and the Georgia Lottery. Southern food by area restaurants.

- Event coordinated by Jordan Rothacker.

\$6.00 suggested donation includes tasting and voting

FRI., FEBRUARY 17TH | 6:30 P.M.—8:00 P.M.

THE UNIVERSE OF JOHN SEAWRIGHT:

A MULTI-MEDIA & LITERARY EVENT

This event is in honor of the late Athens poet and author John Seawright. Readers will include Coleman Barks, Laura Carter, Dana Downs, Allan Flurry, Pete McCommons and many others. Southern food by area restaurants will be provided.

- Event coordinated by Judy Long with the assistance of Jordan Rothacker.

\$12 Suggested donation includes victuals

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH | 2:00—4:00 P.M.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION DAY

STITCHING STARS: A PAPER QUILT EVENT

- 2:00 Storytelling with Hope Hilton
- 2:30 Gallery Tour
- 2:45 Paper Quilt Making!

Exhibiting artist Hope Hilton will read the children's book "Stitching Stars" based on the life of Harriet Powers—Athens' most famous quilt maker. After a tour of the exhibit, children will create a paper quilt square with their very own story.

- Event by Sage Rogers, Education Coordinator.

\$3.00-\$6.00 suggested donation includes materials (but no child turned away for lack of funds!)

SUNDAY, MARCH 4TH | 3:00—6:00 P.M.

CLOSING: LECTURE & PANEL WITH ARTISTS

Come hear curators, artists & other experts discuss the exhibition. Includes a lecture by Curator Judith McWillie on the Saint Paul Spiritual Holy Temple of Memphis, TN.

Free!



Left: James Perry Walker Craftwork image of doorway to Saint Paul Spiritual Holy Temple in Memphis, TN. Middle: Recreation of temple doorway. Right: Outer corner of temple room recreation with Red curtain & Blue barricade from Michael Lachowski's Sux Sez blog series.

THANK YOU TO:

STEVEN THOMPSON'S RED HAT MESSAGE:

This sculpture would have been impossible without the efforts, support and friendship of **Doug Booher, Anthony Wislar (in plaid), John Gburek, and Sam Gribbon, Melissa & Keyes Williamson & Brian Hitselberger.**

I also wish to thank **Lizzie Zucker Saltz** for this opportunity & **Judith McWillie** for her constant encouragement, support, & vision.

OUR DEDICATED & TALENTED INTERNS:

ANDIE JANET ASHE, KATIE FAULKNER (PICURED HERE), CAROLINE WARNER

BUSINESS INTERNS:

HALEY CLARKSON, MIMI PROTHERO

LINUX ASSISTANCE:

PIOTR MISZTAL & JOEL IZLAR (FREEIT)

OUR MACINTOSH ANGEL:

JAY MULLIS

PRINTER DONATION & ASSISTANCE:

CHARLES JAMES

INSTALLATION TEAM:

INTERNS & LAUREN WILLIAMSON
THE GEITNER FAMILY: KYLE, ANNIE & TYLER
JORDAN ROTHACKER (IN IMAGE TO RIGHT)
DAVID & ALLI STUBBS

SANITY, ZEN & AMUSEMENT ASSISTANCE:

CHARLES JAMES

SCISSOR LIFT BARTER:

MELISSA ROBERTS / CANOPY

ARTIST ACCOMMODATIONS:

MARIO & DAVE OF ASHFORD MANOR

ARCHIVAL ASSISTANCE:

PETE MCCOMMONS, FLAGPOLE MAGAZINE

POETRY DOCUMENTATION:

JUDY LONG

THE A-CC COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE:

CRYSTAL VICK & DARLA WRIGHT

SPOUSAL SUPPORT HONEY:

DAVID Z. SALTZ

PLANET FRIENDLY LOCAL SUSTENANCE DELIVERY SYSTEM:

BECCA ROBERTS—À LA CARTE

AMANDA CROUSE—LITTLE CUCKOO



Artistic Director:
Lizzie Zucker Saltz

ATHICA's Support System:
Education Coordinator: Sage Rogers
Mailing List Manager: Monica Pereira
Volunteer Coordinator: Rosie Taylor

Documentarians:
Wayne Bellamy Events Photographer
Diana Lee: Videographer & Editor

ATHICA Board: Officers
Katherine McQueen—President
Elliot Gootman—Treasurer
Jordan Rothacker—Secretary

ATHICA Board Members:
John English
Michael Lachowski
Judith McWillie
Beth Sale



ATHICA is supported by:
 THE FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS
 THE PUFFIN FOUNDATION
 A-CC MAYOR'S COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
 ANONYMOUS ATHENS FAMILY FOUNDATION
 TRIENNIAL ACQUISITIONS
 & VIEWERS LIKE YOU



CATALOG PRODUCTION CREDITS

INSTALLATION PHOTOS BY KATHERINE HODGES: PG 2, 7, 14 & 18 | PHOTOS BY LIZZIE Z. SALTZ: PG 12 (CRUSHIN) & ABOVE OF INTERNS | PHOTOS BY JUDITH MCWILLIE ON PAGE 4 & ALL ON THIS PAGE EXCEPT PHOTOS BY LAUREN WILLIAMSON OF J. ROTHACKER ON 2 LADDERS & 3 ARTISTS TALKING.

CATALOG DESIGN & LAYOUT BY LIZZIE ZUCKER SALTZ
 WITH IMAGE MODIFICATIONS AND PLACEMENT BY JUDITH MCWILLIE

PROOFREADING BY ALICIA BETH CORTS & BETH TURNER

SOUTHERN LOGO DESIGN, IDENTITY & FRONT OF ANNOUNCEMENT
 CARD BY DARCY REENIS FOR WWW.NEUMACHINA.COM

HATS OFF TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS & IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

flagpole



**HISTORIC
COBBHAM
FOUNDATION**



GALLERY HOURS:

WEDNESDAY: 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM | THURSDAY: 1:00 - 9:00 PM | FRIDAY–SUNDAY: 1:00 - 6:00 PM

ATHICA: ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
160 TRACY STREET, UNIT 4 | ATHENS, GA 30601 USA
706.208.1613 | WWW.ATHICA.ORG

ATHICA IS A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

