For its 2003 season, Delta Axis@Marshall Arts asked eight artists, myself among them, to curate the season's exhibits. While appreciating the designation of curator, I am also looking forward to participating in a show next spring. Delta Axis has set aside the Marshall Arts Gallery from April 25th through June 7th, 2003, for the term...
In support of Claudia Perez-Leon, there is no executive editor of Number. As we have stated before on this page, the board acts as an editorial committee in identifying subjects and recommending writers for the issues. Everyone generates ideas for articles, and James Hamilton, Carol Crown Ranta, Sheri Fleck Rieth, Hamlett Dobbins, Sheri Fleck Rieth, René Paul Barilleaux, David Thompson and I have all invited writers. I coordinate the editorial functions. Writers send their copy in, and I oversee getting the copy ready for publication. Many of the articles go for copy editing to Melissa Bridgeman, who returns them to me for review and check copy. I should probably be more rigorous in my review process, and I always take responsibility for it. The edited copy is sent to David Thompson, who does the final proofing and makes the changes, which I try to get in writing. That’s the way it works.

Perhaps it would be desirable to have the editorial focus in this issue, “Critical Mess,” (it’s not about Number:; it’s a small community, and unspoken rules of politesse seem to mitigate objective analysis. No artist, filmmaker, architect, or curator wants to take a crack, in print, at another. So, we’ll look forward to the reviews that are expected in the future.”

The funding project has succeeded in expanding its scope to encompass film. In this issue, Chris McCoy covers the local venues in India Heights and Downtown: number reviews independent film short works.” We had less success with design, especially in this issue. It is a mix of essays on experimental and minimalist cinema, and is a final proofing and makes the changes, which I try to get in writing. That’s the way it works.

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Memphis Top Ten

Aimed to write about the top ten art events in and around Memphis, Tennessee, I am offering a review, not of favorites, but of provocative art. It is subjective or intellectually challenging, insightful or consciousness-raising. I caught that SOMETHING THAT STICKS. Here is a list of ten memorable:

1. MY SHOW

In an ongoing series Number: asks people involved in the Memphis art community to contribute a Top Ten list for each of their quarterly periods. For this issue Number:43, R. Salant for her picks.

2. THE BLACK HEDGE

Kim Beck's installation raises concerns about fabrication, 1. MY SHOW contemporary of the string-filled space at 1939 Poplar Avenue. I let's just say some of this conceptual business does get it's place on the corner of Huling and South Main on

3. NIA

A worthy contribution to the Memphis art experience. The work of one artist did stand out, the porch portraits of Vitus Shell. Is it enough? Is there enough suggestion that, intentionally, the word conjures visions of petite schoolgirls

4. 2 X 2 GALLERY

The 2 X 2 Gallery, make it's place on the corner of Huling and South Main on September 27th. The creation of local artist Windy, the 27 2" space hosted Canopy, by Leslie Snoke who installed</p>
Making movies is an enormous pain in the ass. More than any other form of art (with the possible exception of scenography in video games), film is a very expensive, time-consuming, emotional, and financial investment from the artist. Much of the time, a director faces more like the megarecognition of some rare animal that has never been seen or documented. And I’m sure he’s not used to the struggle somewhat. 

Most film schools will say that the invention of the charged coupled device (CCD), the chip at the heart of digital cameras that captures and converts light into a series of ones and zeros, heralded the beginning of revolution in the art of film as the projection of the perspective in painting. The digital revolution promises to change the aesthetic of film (as it’s so often said, and directing on the cheap. But Hollywood still thinks it’s still too expensive, so low and no-budget digital productions must remain — into a house alone for one night — in the American desert on a sextet of thugs and gun molls (Nick Frankovich and Paul Worthington). 

Indie Shorts

The 2002 IndieMemphis Film Festival found itself long on narrative, short on experimental, or at least in the more frequently — if not more — compelling than the feature-length offerings. The main character, Dale Fortunato (Daniel Roebuck) has the ideal of a career as an artist, whoeralded the beginning of revolution in the art of film as the projection of the perspective in painting. The digital revolution promises to change the aesthetic of film (as it’s so often said, and directing on the cheap. But Hollywood still thinks it’s still too expensive, so low and no-budget digital productions must remain — into a house alone for one night — in the American desert on a sextet of thugs and gun molls (Nick Frankovich and Paul Worthington).
Interview with Christine Conley

During the run of Christine Conley’s A Painter’s Curiosities at AMUM’s Artlab I had the opportunity to sit down with the artist and talk about her recent work.

Hamlett Dobbins: Maybe it would be a good starting place for you to talk a little about what some viewers might see as the transition between the figurative paintings on the fabric and the work you’re working on lately in AMUM Delta Art: MAE 2002, the Broeks’ Perspectives, and now in this show. Christine Conley: I had been working on the tapestry pieces for about five years; it was important to me personally and philosophically. I started reading a lot of theory on the same time I was going through a personal transformation. I had become a “born again feminist.” In the summer I was exploring other things, working on paintings on scraps of wallpaper. I first noticed the paint on the palette and was attracted to it. I painted one of these chips on the wallpaper, maybe four years ago. And at the time, when you were exploring, did it feel like it had the same root? The pieces before were bodies or parts of bodies, did those feel like a logical extension of that? No, it felt completely different. It felt so different I didn’t know what to do with it, what to think about it. I did maybe eight pieces, while I was still working with the tapestries and growing with them. Probably, the real impetus for the shift was towards the paint shop project was the visits with Holly Black and Sam Gappmauer and the conversations that were going on during visits. When I had sent out packets for the curators of MAE 2001 and Broeks’ Perspectives, I sent out two to each curator, one with the tapestries and the other with the wallpaper pieces, Holly originally liked the wallpaper work more. When she came for the studio visits, she looked at them, but she was drawn more to the chips arranged on the wall. Her interest in that made me think more about them. After her visit I started making drawings of them and I sent them to her, hoping that they would be included in the MAE show, but she seemed more interested in showing the spiral. And then Sam Gappmauer really liked the drawings. On his studio visit he saw the drawings and some of the pieces I’d done working on the idea of the collection. Really, by that time the projects were rolling. You know when you hit on something that can go on forever; the possibilities really seem endless? These pieces feel that way. And that led up to these pieces. I’m curious about the grid of the plaster pieces on the end wall of the gallery. They seem from real chips? I made clay molds from the real chips and then cast them in plaster. Talk about that for a bit. For me it seems to be a big jump from the rest of the show where most of the work feels very immediate and direct. “Here’s the object, I’m drawing it” and then this wall introduces the extra physical steps: the molding, the casting… how does that fit in? Making the casts seems to relate to the idea of the discovery. One way the early explorers would gather evidence is “that” they would send small animal foot prints in plaster to understand more how the foot was shaped or how the animal moved. This process seemed to really move towards the abstract, there are over forty casts used in the piece, “that” there were a little over a hundred molds so some were obviously used more than once. Once you talk about the process and the arrangement, how do you refer to them as the model, the figure that broadly refers to an image? I saw once in Florence, in the academy where they had the Michelangelo sculpture David. In the other end of the building there’s this huge room with really tall ceilings, and on the main wall there is shelf after shelf of these plaster casts. Obviously used more than once. I imagine they were used as models for drawings at one point, and now when I see the new work, it is something that I have to think about. Do you have pangs of guilt? A little bit, I still do struggle with it. I still do wonder if the chips might end up merging with previous concerns. Back-to-back you said before about understanding or being aware of a certain audience, do you feel like your audience has shifted? Sure, I think it has. Actually I’ve been surprised by some of the responses from some people who I wouldn’t think cared about art at all. That’s funny, because for me, as an abstract painter in Memphis, I think about the audience I might have versus the audience for a figurative painter in town, like maybe Adam Shaw and how his audience would be larger. But here you say since your shift away from figurative or the literal, you feel like your audience has grown. It’s always interesting for me to look at an artist whose work is changing or shifting and start to really think about what’s all the same. I seem to be talking more and more about that with friends and students, about really thinking about understanding the impulse at the heart of the process. I think the exploration of the ideas and working with materials has always been there, even early on as a painter. It was just as passionate and important to me at that time, but it was not an end in itself. All the other concerns are the same. I think the ultimate goal of feminism must be a woman designing and developing her own unique project, so in that sense I think my current work is a logical growth out of the feminist concerns of the tapestries.

Hamlett Dobbins

Hamlett Dobbins, a Memphis painter, was director of the Clough-Hansen Gallery at Rhodes College. Photograph courtesy of Christine Conley.
Joe Minter’s “African Village in America” is located in southwest Birmingham, Alabama, next door to the house where he and his wife Hilda live. Painted a brilliant blue, the house abuts a quarter-acre piece of land that— despite its chain-link fence enclosure and its pathways of wooden planks—conjures up a vision of an intimate, densely packed tropical garden, set with zinnias, marigolds, roses, purple spiderwort, and an array of lush, dark green leafy plants. Interwoven within the vibrant flora are brightly painted tin and wood constructions, mixed-media pieces made of found objects—dolls, old car parts, chains, and cast-off boots—and placards painted with statements from Scripture and the Civil Rights movement. All are dominated by images of African tribal faces, many resembling human forms that have elegantly and evocatively been sculpted out of cast-off wood, metal, and other items. The whole idea handed down to me by God is to use what we have discarded, made invisible. That is so inspiring, thrown away, to be made into something so it demonstrates that more was thrown away, with a spirit in it can survive and grow. A spirit of all people that has touched and felt that materials has stayed in the material. It can survive and grow. A spirit of all the people that has been discarded, just as we as a people have touched and felt that materials has stayed in the material. It can survive and grow. A spirit of all the people that has been discarded, and has stayed in the material. It can survive and grow. A spirit of all the people that has touched and felt that materials has stayed in the material.

Minter’s use of found objects and his aim to make art out of trash and cast-offs to fend the work of another famous self-taught artist and native Alabamian, Rev. Howard Finster (c.1915-2001). Rev. Finster’s Paradise Garden, located in northeast Georgia, is thought by many to be folk art’s visionary garden par excellence. Now in much disrepair, Paradise Garden still beckons many visitors, although many of its most famous objects are now in Atlanta’s High Museum. Like Rev. Finster, Minter says the only blueprint he’s used to make his garden is one handed down by God. The two men also agree that God is using their art to deliver a message, although Minter’s seems to serve as an instrument of God’s love and peace, teaching a lesson of hope in a forever and desperate time.

I looked around me and saw so much trouble in the world, so much suffering among my people. I saw the place that looks upon Africans as less than a human being . . . I saw how the races was drifting further and further apart and how black people ourselves was drifting apart. And I asked God to help me find a way that I could help bring people together as one, for understanding, even for the littlest child. 2 Although Minter never went to college, his garden demonstrates a broad knowledge of the world and its history, a clear understanding of the human predicament, and a love for nature. The garden is composed of two sections. The first is located at the rear of Minter’s property and overlooks two historically black cemeteries, Grace Hill and Shadow Lanes, places Minter describes as “ancestral burial grounds.” This section, which honors the African history and values of Black Americans, features circular huts made of wood and cast-off metal sheeting, painted red, green, yellow, and black. It also includes tall metal sculptures of African warriors and an African family, constructed of metal rails, metal and machine parts. In his article “God Plants its Art,” Birmingham Post Herald reporter Elaine Pitt points out that a replica slave ship serves as the bridge to the garden’s second section. Minter built the ship out of barn timber with a crew running down the center, and imbedded the structure with hundreds of nails, each representing a human being. The latter part of the garden honors the achievements of African-Americans and contains tributes to black scientists, scholars, astronauts, military and civic leaders. Civil rights heroes, including several Alabama natives, are honored. Rosa Parks, whose refusal to move to the back of a Montgomery bus led to a Supreme Court ruling against segregation, the four little girls killed in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham in 1963, and Martin Luther King. The artwork honoring King, “A Monument: The Birmingham Jail,” is an almost life-sized cell that is charged with powerful emotion. “The chains woven through the cell, and the heavy work gloves and boots that adorn the bars evoke the forced labor of slavery, the dangerous and poorly paid labor of African-Americans in Birmingham’s coal mills, and the participation of many unrecognized people in the civil rights struggle.” 3 Inside the jail, leaning against a toilet, is one of Minter’s signs that refers to King’s famous “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” which was written on toilet paper. It reads:

WE SHALL OVERCOME

The sign is a fitting tribute to Dr. King and also to the ideals that inspired Minter to build his garden. Nominated the “Ph展望mer” Minter says he turns to the universal language of art to communicate God’s peace and hope for all mankind.

Carol Crow

Artist/Philosopher, Director, The Birmingham Museum of Art, Photographs by Carol Crown.

2. Ibid. 502.
Meet Me at the Fountain: The U of M Student Plaza

Where is the "square" in Overton Square? Some of Memphis' most popular urban locations, including Overton Square, South Main and Cooper Young, lack the benefit of common public spaces. In recent years, this need has been addressed in the design of Harbor Town, which offers several open, green areas punctuating the residential right-of-ways of the streets, and Peabody Place, which simulates a commercial village center surmounted by colorful storefronts, with gardens, water features and sidewalks cul-de-sacs that support the illusion. The new Student Plaza at The University of Memphis by landscape architects, Jackson Pines and Associates, succeeds along some of the same lines as Peabody Place, but its designers faced the genuine urban design challenge of creating a central space that would both unify the old and new buildings around it.

Through the 1980s, when postmodern theory and its notion of semantic architecture—buildings that talk—had not yet begun to be widely accepted. “In 1990, architectural historians, Eugene Johnson and Robert Russell, wrote in The Crump Firm, 1994 with ultramodern elliptical lawn in back and a lobby plaza in front. The plan also envisioned replacing the Administration building parking lot as a raised pedestrian plaza. The Student Plaza realizes this proposal. What can we learn from the Student Plaza? It succeeds, first, because it pulls together visually and functionally diverse buildings and spaces from several periods in the University's history. Five buildings face it directly: the Arthur W. Nightingale Library to the northeast and the Alumni Mall to the southwest. Certainly areas will be paved with Legacy Bricks cast as memorials and sold to provide scholarships. (For information, call the Alumni Association, 678-2586.)

The new Student Plaza at The University of Memphis' core of choice, a concept Jefferson had matured through the years. Despite its layering of structures and spaces just beyond the plaza: the Administration Building, the University’s history. Five buildings face it directly: the University’s needs and desires were the offices of Campus Planning, headed by Tony Poteet, and Physical Plant, led by Jim Helfers. At Jackson, Person and Associates, Alan Wyatt and John Lackner Jr. served as principal designers. One telling detail the plaza's facade was size – a problem solved by architects from Albert Peter to Peter Blake: a plaza can be too big in relation to surrounding structures and too big to accent pedestrians. The vast horizontal scale of the Student Plaza enlivens by strong vertical forms – trees, flagpoles, light standards, the clock tower and the fountain's water jets. Does the Plaza have a focus? Yes, and a happy one at that – one that isn't static or locked with utilitarianism. The fountain will remain some of the Civic Center Fountain (Gassner, Nathan and Browne, 1915) that functioned much like the grotto d'apollon (Apollon grotto) in Renaissance villa gardens; it tended to spray passersby on windy days. The Student Plaza fountain consists of a central geyser that can spout 45 circled by smaller jets, all of which are lighted. Several water shows can be programmed with changing colors and water movements. The fountain's spectacle attracts all who walk past, and, like all good water features, this one is much more than a visual experience – it appeals to senses of sound and touch.

Passing through the Plaza is difficult, because there is so much to make as much as a writer. The enlarged view grid existing is so comfortable! The metal halide lighting floods the area, producing a play of light and dark contrasting colors while contributing to safety and security. Decorative lighting on the Clock Tower and Bookstore provides interesting background effects at night, so the Plaza holds its appeal day and night. How do we judge an urban space? The best way is to answer how many people use it. They use it in pleasant days, people gaze in the Plaza for informal meetings, reading, lunching, and hanging out. Indeed, the space brings people together who might not have interacted. Walking past the fountain one evening, I found a mixed collection of folk, including students, campus visitors, and even University President, Shirley Raines, who was observing...
For the 2003 season, Delta Art Museum invited art artists, myself among them, to curate the season’s exhibits. While appreciating the designation of curator, I am eight artists, myself among them, to curate the season’s exhibits. While appreciating the designation of curator, I am eight artists, myself among them, to curate the season’s exhibits. While appreciating the designation of curator, I am...
In the Brooks exhibition, we pass first through a somewhat disorienting orientation area with text panels written in various orientations and areas with text panels written in vertical and horizontal orientations, accompanied by a special Family Day on September 28. The next day, Posada’s work was the inspiration for the founding in 1925 of the Grabador Mexicano (Library of the Mexican Child), a year later, the first book on Mexico’s best printmakers, and during this period, the artist’s recognition at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City in 1943 travelled to the Art Institute of Chicago.

Posada’s prints and Mexican culture through music, dance, printmaking, poetry, and sculpture. Our Mexico: CAE takes Posada to the schools.

Students from Kingsbury and Brice Elementary Schools began learning about José Guadalupe Posada this summer, before My Mexico opened to the public. The Greater Memphis Arts Council’s education wing, the Center for Arts Education, joined the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art in utilizing the fall 2003 Posada exhibit as a focus for the SOAR (Seeking Opportunity Through Arts and Reflective) program’s summer camp and Fall arts unit study. Students explored themes taken from Posada’s prints and Mexican culture through music, dance, printmaking, poetry, and sculpture utilizing paper-mache, ceramic, and mixed-media creations.

Our Mexico: CAE takes Posada to the schools.

duly noted, dissected and catalogued. Along the way, he has about the slow stylistic trajectory of his long career has been the outer banks of the vast, art historical river. Everything the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis July 28-September 29

torqued some of my notions about sexuality and gender: Almost everything sexual was taboo.

That was in Memphis. That was in the Fifties. ten-years-old, standing in a drug store. In that memory I’m looking at a third work, I flashed back to a memory of being evening). Another picture deeply touched me. While I was strong reactions in me. One of your photos made me laugh

Your picture of Wess dressed in a slip in a Playboy — at first glance the intricately made, translucent dress he adorned — an angelic porn? Ballet dance? Or the path of a Celtic girl? Each of these being, real or imagined, has interesting associations regarding gender and sexuality. Your picture of Wess dressed in a slip in a Flying Magazine — I loved this shot. Slim body, right. Long blend hair. Good. A slip up just short enough to reveal a hint of genitalia. Top: Typical Playboy or Frenchmen, very much multi-ethnic, and Men’s magazine works especially well. His noseiness is more the hard-core gestures of a lean living artist than the slimness of youth. No respectable, age-defying pinup would show the graying, thinning hair of a fortyish man whose focus is on things other than hair coifing and dye jobs. This picture made me laugh when I saw at the gallery, and I laugh every time I remember it. Thanks for broadening my vision as to what a Flyer photo could look like if a distinct human physique were being shown rather than the unfathomable, perfectly symmetrical images of most centerfolds.

Your picture of Wess leaving his plane — this photo had the strongest effect on me. Here’s the man, quiet and focused, making his transpontaneous, queer and/or more broadly than I have. I look forward to any comments you have and whether you see the work similarly, differently, and/or more broadly than I have. Very much, thanks for producing some courageous, challenging artwork.

July 1st to 9th) "The Port of Nantes," 1919, contains a particular "Ruddy Dally orange." The "Stone Head, Night, Light of Life," 1915-1916, evokes both late Fouquet, with its high lighting style and dramatic pedestrian movement. The paint vocabulary is all wet on wet, with blobs and smears generating blurry figures, umbrellas, autos, reflections and massive structures slowly emerging from the murky night sky. Color relationships repel the mood and are vigorously brusque — all squinty, cream cadmium yellowish greens against deep siennas, with various siennas andигров green-greens.

Some views of nudes embrace a wholly different approach to examining the world and differ greatly from the landscapes. These nudes are essentially striking, formally posed portrait visions as to what a Penthouse photo could look like if a distinct human physique were being shown rather than the unblemished, perfectly symmetrical shapes of most centerfolds. Vision as to what a Penthouse photo could look like if a distinct human physique were being shown rather than the unblemished, perfectly symmetrical shapes of most centerfolds. This picture made me laugh when I saw at the gallery, and I laugh every time I remember it. Thanks for broadening my vision as to what a Flyer photo could look like if a distinct human physique were being shown rather than the unfathomable, perfectly symmetrical images of most centerfolds.

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Art Lab: Brent Oglebsley
GO/NO - GO
November 16 - January 18, 2003
Art Lab Gallery Talk: Friday, November 15, 6:00pm

MFA Thesis Exhibition
Jana Broidis Trawalis
November 23 - January 18, 2003
Opening Reception: Friday, November 22, 5pm - 7:30pm

Exhibitions

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
Albatross
Park Place
551 South Main Street
Ongoing - May 16
Opening reception Jan 3

Artists include: Jan Toms, Bill Zamrock, now on exhibit at the University of Memphis Art Museum, Jan 3 - Apr 27

Artists include: Jan Toms, Bill Zamrock, now on exhibit at the University of Memphis Art Museum, Jan 3 - Apr 27

Jerome Gallery
2000 N Parkway, 901.843.3442 • http://artslides2.art.rhodes.edu/gallery.html
Communication and Fine Arts Bldg, 901.678.2224 • www.amum.org
Art Museum of the University of Memphis
International Student Art Gallery
Ongoing - May 16
Opening reception Jan 3

Artists include: Jan Toms, Bill Zamrock, now on exhibit at the University of Memphis Art Museum, Jan 3 - Apr 27

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505 S. Main, 901.543.8535
St. Mary's Episcopal School, 60 Perkins, 901.537.1473

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Lisa Kurts Gallery

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Paul Penczner

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