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Since Dwayne Butcher’s resignation as editor of Number, the Board of Directors has taken on the responsibility of keeping the “voice of the visual arts in the Mid-South” going. This has come with the usual challenges of limited time and resources as we have worked hard to carry on with both print and online publications. During the process of putting together this issue, the Board has also been working on finding ways to make the publication more timely and responsive to the regional arts community. Considering the theme for this issue, The Value of the Image and The Value of the Institution, it is timely that we have been evaluating the institution of Number, Inc., which has a 26-year history, while also considering the value of the visual arts more generally.

Number has been published and provided to the public free of charge since 1987. A variety of artists, historians, art lovers and business owners throughout the tri-state region have contributed to and supported it. Many people I talk to in the Memphis arts scene have been involved as a board member, editor or writer at some point in the history of the publication. Through their dedication, over 5,000 copies of each issue of Number are distributed to bookstores, galleries, colleges/universities, coffee shops and gathering places throughout Tennessee, Northern Mississippi and Eastern Arkansas. Black issues starting with Number 33 (Spring, 1998) are available online at www.numberinc.org, and provide a great archive of the visual arts in the region.

As any organization must do, we at Number are constantly evaluating our goals and creating plans for achieving our mission. We want Number to be a critical voice for the visual arts not only in Memphis but also throughout the Tri-State Region. Over the next two years we plan to publish at least two print editions per year and expand the online offerings. By expanding our online presence to be more responsive to the diverse array of visual arts opportunities, we hope to provide a place where people come to find out what is happening in the Southern art scene and discuss the merits of the work presented. We believe this to be an important addition to the print journal, which is one of the only publications to fill the void of arts writing left by the more commercial media outlets’ lacklal in the region.

In order to attract the variety of local art scenes throughout the region, we are hoping to add a new feature that provides short reviews or regional updates. If you would like to contribute or be the voice of your local art scene, please let us know. In addition, each publication will feature lengthier articles about current issues in the arts, in-depth reviews of shows, and interviews with artists. The problems that we face, we do as most arts organizations, are funding and people-power.

In order to keep this valuable voice of the visual arts alive, we are asking for your support. Currently, we are seeking an editor to work with the board to bring Number into a more active role in the Southern dialogue on the visual arts. This is an opportunity for someone who loves the arts and the region to demonstrate the value of the arts and its institutions to the community. Please see the ad to the left for more details on the position. Additionally, we are always looking for support in the form of sponsors. If you have enjoyed the editions of Number that pop up at your school, gallery, or coffee shop and would appreciate a more regular feed of arts news, your tax-deductable donation will certainly help. In addition to putting up for the printing costs, Number also pays its writers, designer and editor. As many of our writers are professionals in the arts field, we believe that this is an important part of supporting local art communities. It is the community’s contributions through advertisements, grants, sponsorships, and people-power that bring the arts news to you. For more information on how to contribute in any capacity contact us by email at jgonzales@numberinc.org.

Job description: Part-Time, Normally, four issues of Number are published and distributed annually. However, the Board has chosen to widen this number to two in order to provide the Executive Editor with enough time to assist the Board with the restructuring and long-term planning of the organization. This planning phase and reduced publication schedule expected to last for two years. Therefore, during 2011 and 2012, the Executive Editor’s primary responsibility include:

- Overseal ephases of the publication process ensuring timely production and distribution of two issues annually, coordinating efforts with other regional editors, artists, art director, and Board of Directors. Specific responsibilities include:
  - Manage and maintain publication budget
  - Identify writers and contributors, administer contracts and handle all correspondence
  - Solicit and organize advertisements
  - Write editorials
  - Manage Social Media – Twitter & Facebook
  - Work with board and staff to generate theme/features and identify pertinent topics that should be addressed
  - Produce and edit all materials before going to press
  - Create and maintain databases of contact information for contributors, subscribers, and advertisers
  - Attend all Board meetings
  - In collaboration with the Board of Directors, work toward developing the long-term vision and goals of Number Inc., including:
    - Establish a business plan and raise profile of the journal
    - Assist in defining Board member roles and establish a strategy for Board Growth
    - Enhance sales and advertisement strategies and broaden subscription base
    - Build online presence through website and social networking
    - Determine staffing needs and assist with writing job descriptions
    - Identify appropriate grants and philanthropic organizations; initiate and oversee grant writing and necessary follow up

To Apply: Letter of Introduction, CV, Writing Samples, Names, and Contact Information for 3 References. Email to: jgonzales@numberinc.org.
In 2005, Andrew Kaufman displayed a piece at the Tennessee Arts Commission called “The 10 Most Expensive Paintings Ever Sold.” It consisted of fiberglass forms covered with resin, sanded and stained into a mess of dark smudges. The panels contain no content per se. Only thin dimensions differentiated them, each one matching the height and width of one of the most expensive paintings sold at the time. Images—something to recognize and reproduce, decade and interpret—didn’t matter. Pictures did—the brute objects bought and sold at auction, defined by the abstract but so concrete Value and the Stieglitz Collection at Fisk University shows how little ideal climate control conditions.

The ongoing controversy around the fate of the Stieglitz Collection at Fisk University shows how little images have to do with the value contained in pictures and prized by institutions. The ART objects in the collection donated by Georgia O’Keeffe are smeared in a dense atmosphere of value, values that compete openly in the Tennessee court system, cancel each other out in complex ways, and receive images to a second order consideration. In 1940, O’Keeffe gave Fisk this set of works assembled by her late husband Alfred Stieglitz, with instructions that the collection be maintained in perpetuity, not sold off in whole or in parts. Over the intervening years Fisk saw its financial position weaken, and in 2005 its board voted to authorize sale of two of the most valuable paintings. This proposal met with resistance first from the O’Keeffe Foundation in New Mexico, which served as the heir to O’Keeffe’s interests, and then from the Tennessee Attorney General. After the courts rejected several rounds of proposals, the Crystal Bridges Museum, currently under construction in Arkansas by Wal-Mart heiress Alice Walton, stepped forward with a proposal to buy a half interest in the collection and share it with Fisk. In its most recent decision the court accepted this proposal, but put significant restrictions on how Fisk could use the funds.

At its base, the case deals with the reality that the Stieglitz Collection is an asset in the narrow accounting sense. This asset has a financial value—about $174M according to court filings. This value gives the collection overwhelming weight. Two years ago, Fisk’s audited financial statement for 2008 listed assets of $20M, of which the art collections made up $62M (presumably there has been a new valuation, and the financial statements probably reflect the value of other art Fisk owns—while those Aaron Douglas murals, pieces by Sari Gillam and Martin Puryear and many others). Based solely on these financial statements you could conclude Fisk is a college attached to an art collection (in the same way Yale is a university attached to an investment fund).

From an accounting perspective, Fisk has much less value when you take away most of the art. That absurd, reductionist approach flies in the face of the obvious value Fisk holds as an institution. One of the best historically black colleges in the country, a place where students and faculty work unusually close together, with unassailable performance statistics like the number of graduates who go on to advanced study in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Fisk intends that converting the asset of the Stieglitz Collection into some type of monetary form is an existential requirement for the institution. Preserving the educational value of the institution depends on the art and its economic value.

Fisk needs economic support from the collection, but as Karl Haas has written as does anyone in a dilemma with no clean resolution. It resists. Picture cannot weigh heavily in so many ways (they can make the sale, but the court will tell them how to spend the money. If you think of Fisk as an art collection and a college, the decision says that the art collection should get the share of the proceeds. Preservation of the collection is worth more than preservation of colleges. If this decision stands, Fisk will receive $20M for an endowment to care for the art. This decision will get appealed, but the decision again questions Fisk’s ability to act as stewards of its resources—they can make the sale, but the court will tell them how to spend the money. If you think of Fisk as an art collection and a college, the decision says that the art collection should get the lion’s share of the proceeds. Preservation of the collection is worth more than preservation of the colleges.

In court filings, the court stipulates that Fisk set aside $20M of 50% interest, with Fisk receiving $30M. Of that money, the court stipulates that Fisk would set aside $20M for an endowment to care for the art. This decision will get appealed, but the decision again questions Fisk’s ability to act as stewards of its resources—they can make the sale, but the court will tell them how to spend the money. If you think of Fisk as an art collection and a college, the decision says that the art collection should get the lion’s share of the proceeds. Preservation of the collection is worth more than preservation of the colleges.

In this discussion, images themselves matter hardly at all. Not that many people come to see the pictures, which were out of sight for a few years but are now back on display. It is a strong collection but modest, deep but narrow—mostly American work from 1900s and 20s, with a strong sampling of Harold, Diego, Stieglitz, Marin, and Demuth. There are others in there like an actual Blue Period Picasso painting and the O’Keeffe Flairon painting that gets so much attention, and some unusual things like two paintings by the Italian Futurist Cesare Severini and a very early Degas River in cubist mode. But all the other values at stake leaves too much room to assess the value of the pictures or images. At this point in proceedings the art works express themselves more strongly not as individuals, but as a population in the court case. In court, they have shown off their ability to hold and project value and transmit power. In an unmanageable direction, the collection’s function to contain and convey values of so many types gives it power, even destructive power. The art collection has made itself a problem, a dilemma with no clean resolution. It resists. The Stieglitz Collection has taken on qualities of a cyborg that develops autonomously. It requires an institution to make itself a problem, a dilemma with no clean resolution. It resists.
Art historians, even very good and inventive ones, are primarily interpreters. They use a complex repertory of intellectual codes that structure the record of visual impression and, by doing so, invest images with values tracing a practice that all cultures share regardless of time and place image-making. They write about the theoretical and philosophical implications of visual objects as a way to explain their impact on a specific cultural landscape. As a historian of contemporary art I write about the recent past and navigate a post-aesthetic structure of field inquiry that academic and critics—and many artists—have been exploiting since the 1970s. This requires keeping track of the proliferations of new media and new art categories that have been created due to the end of media specificity and the expansion of the international art market. This process requires writing from a mobile perspective as intellectual discourse changes from year to year. In general, historians invested in the field of contemporary art rely on the theory and critical analysis tools available in the wake of Conceptual art, a point at which art-making as a practice became increasingly theoretical and idea-driven, moving in multiple directions simultaneously with many new forms of media. In this respect, Conceptual art has forge the tools of contemporary critical analysis and contemporary art-making. It established a two-way street wherein there is no contemporary art history without art, but likewise, no contemporary art without an understanding of history and the theory. The job of the artist is to make the specific thing—the work of art—from their position. The job of the art historian is to understand that position and to provide overall perspective, to interpret and play out possible meanings of the work of art with language. The problem of how we look at a work of art was another concern at this crucial point of transition complicated by changes in the field of art in the late 20th century. Discussions of opticality, “perverse perspectives,” minimalism, post-minimalism, and conceptualism suggested a plethora of conventional models. The aesthetic aspect, on the one hand, held that a work should reveal nothing other than its constitutive materials and manner of construction. Best encapsulated by Frank Stella’s toutouche: “I don’t know what you see in this, but I see a powerful, self-encompassing design, yet its denial of visual contradiction allowed little room for invention. More problematic still was the issue of literalism. The premise that a work of art makes itself visible in its entirety marries the ambiguities of that experience and, what is more, the distinct ways in which many different art practices are seen by different audiences. Literalism is a good starting point—just what am I looking at?—but it is not an adequate model for describing how we actually experience art. Would works of contemporary art attract viewers decades later if the works were completely transparent to vision alone? For instance, are Sarah Sze’s elaborate constructions so easy to see, to know? The answer to these questions is ‘of course not.’ Sol Lewitt’s conceptualist looks as much as it reveals, as Lucy Lippard noted long ago. And as many current writers have noted, even Tinka Shontz’s work contains more contradictions than the eye can absorb. If the value of the image in contemporary art is only discernible through a field of differences, exposure to these differences is only possible at the institutional level. The boundaries of traditional media and so-called new media have been traversed in remarkably few ways. The practice of painting, like other traditional media such as drawing and sculpture, saw its boundaries stretched and took on new life in this rather recent period. While painting was declared dead in many circles during the 1970s, its demise was greatly exaggerated. As such, we find ourselves today asking what defines a painting? Can we still recognize one when we see it? While literally thousands of paintings are made each year in the portable, rectangular, paint-on-canvas format, countless new works have employed highly unconventional materials and techniques—Fred Tomaselli’s use of plants, pills, insect wings, and catalog clippings, for example—that overlap with sculpture, installation, and mass communication technology. One could even include the history of painting itself as a material and/or theoretical support as recent in the work of Kendell Wiley. While sculptors continue to carve, cast, and construct, there is a broadening of forms and techniques such as installation and time-based film and video that find their way into the vocabulary of sculpture. Sculptures whose characteristics include the skill refinement of mass-produced consumer products along with the embrace of schlock and kitsch have continued to amplify the legacy of the ready-made. Meanwhile, the pace of change in the world of digital editing and production has changed the landscape of photography, light, and art simultaneously. In fact, we are, arguably, witnessing a paradigm shift as the potential of digital technology to alter the nature of the image, to transform the visible into binary code, so that we no longer discuss the blurred boundaries of traditional media but the blurred boundaries of fact and fabrication. Add to this mix the emergence of a linked global society (both technologically and economically) and the growth of the international art fair. While this list of factors is by no means comprehensive, my goal is simply to suggest that “the image” in contemporary art is part of a complex forest of signs. As an instructor of contemporary art history, I am responsible for incorporating much of this complex network of images and contexts into the curriculum. It is a job that I greatly enjoy, and I have been lucky to experience two different formats geared toward producing BFA graduates and BA art majors at two very different institutions. My first position at Western Michigan University’s Frostic School of Art required an instructor of contemporary art history to create courses geared to the many students working toward completing a BFA. Courses at the Frostic School were divided according to specific media and required students to demonstrate competence in each. In this setting, my job was to familiarize students with the discourse surrounding contemporary art and to provide exposure to the range of imagery currently part of the globalized art world. Likewise, I was there to help students articulate the motivations and influences behind their own art-making. With a solid background in the history and theory of the recent past, undergraduate students could develop the language with which to situate their practice in relationship to the field at large. Several students hoped to complete an MFA, and these were necessary skills. This relationship was reciprocal. My training did not always prepare me to answer questions about material and construction, a major focus of BFA undergraduates immersed in studio requirements. Comfortable as we sometimes are in our world of projected digital peeps, a single question about how something is made and with what material can stop an art history class in its tracks. Learning more about materials and their manipulation was parallel to providing better support to a studio-centered curriculum. My pedagogical role is different at a small, liberal arts college in Sewanee, Tennessee, where I work today. At the University of the South, art history has its own majors who work within the methodology of the discipline and who attempt mastery of a historical period. While a number of studio art majors take art history courses, the majority of students I teach range across the spectrum of majors, from math to English, from philosophy to the natural sciences. Majoring in studio art at an institution like Sewanee means that your course work also spans multiple disciplines. This is a condition that parallels the various modes of inquiry found in contemporary art today. The student of art is no longer solely immersed in a single medium, but is required to demonstrate competence, or familiarity with, different disciplines within the arts and sciences. A set of concepts that range from postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism, just to name a few, are often recruited by critics and historians because they have shaped the creation and reception of art produced during the last few decades. The direct embrace of theory by influential art graduate schools in Europe and North America makes necessary the acquisition of theoretical knowledge for teaching analytical and interpretive skills. But these fields of discourse are useful for the artist as well, providing conceptual tools that allow us to ask new questions, find new meanings, approach or make objects with new eyes and minds. As writer and curator Bennett Simpson posted in a discussion of fine arts degree programs, “Employing conceptual, post-minimal, video and performance artists…tended to privilege intellectual and critical study over the more traditional training in manual skills such as drawing, figure painting, and sculpture. ‘Knowledge work’ became detached from its antecedents: ‘technical work.’” While I do not necessarily agree that a complete “detachment” occurred, I do agree that the institutionalization of the art education has led to a necessary facility with the “knowledge work” that goes along with the formal training in many medium of choice. If you understand art as simply personal expression, then, you don’t need an institution. But no one thinks of art that way anymore. Your tools are always going to be a language that is culturally determined. If you can’t speak that language, you can’t be a part of the discussion. The institution is where one encounters opinions and expressive forces contrary to one’s own. A former BFA student of mine from Michigan is now working on her MFA at UT Knoxville. As part of one her classes with me, we watched through Donald Judd’s terse prose and looked canvas at his minimal “boxes” as part of a seminar on 1960s sculpture. This recently emailed me a mash-up of footage from an exhibition of late works by Donald Judd and the soundtrack from the popular YouTube “double rainbow” video. It is a witty video that masks the contradictory rhetoric of Donald Judd and the gleaming, stark “specific objects” he produced late in his career. Yet, the video also intersects with the flow of random and hilarious information instantly available today. In essence, it is a model of institutional critique intersecting seamlessly with mass culture through the means of the most popular, electronic information streams. It was also a nice gesture from a former student. In this world of “knowledge networks” like WIKileaks and Twitter, information is becoming more hierarchical. As such, XDBK, Deloio and Guattari called this type of system de-territorial in order to characterize thought and research that is interconnected but who no beginning or end, without a predictable entry and exit, and that requires clear organization. This model of knowledge is increasingly common, and artists are taking advantage of the possibilities creating meaning from disparate units, reveling in the complexity. It calls for an increasing supply approach from the institution—and arts education. The historian of recent art need not adhere to a single methodology, but may arrive at a synthetic approach suited to the task at hand. That is, one follows clues implicit in the artwork or historical problem rather than allowing a theory to predict in advance the interpretive result. The image, however, defined, suggests how to proceed rather than the other way around.
urbanart makes strides in memphis

as a non-profit organization committed to fulfilling its mission of enriching the cultural diversity of our community through the development and public access to art in Memph, UrbanArt has seen a few twists and turns in its 19 year history. Concerned for the long-term sustainable funding of its programs, UrbanArt has continually worked to broaden its funding sources and expand its project portfolio to support the creation and access to public art in our community.

In 2002, UrbanArt began an initiative to focus on the development of a sustainable funding strategy. This strategic plan involved conducting a financial feasibility study and exploring avenues to increase revenue and stabilize funding streams. The study identified the need for a comprehensive approach to funding that included new partnerships, increased visibility, and a focus on project execution.

The strategic plan also included the development of a marketing and communications plan to increase public awareness of UrbanArt’s programs and services. The plan emphasized the importance of engaging the community in the development of public art projects and promoting the benefits of public art to a wider audience.

Over the years, UrbanArt has continued to refine its approach to funding and strategic planning. The organization has developed a more diverse funding base, expanded its project portfolio, and increased its visibility and engagement with the community. The strategic plan has helped to guide UrbanArt’s growth and development and has been instrumental in its success.

In conclusion, UrbanArt’s strategic plan has been a key driver in the organization’s growth and success. By focusing on sustainable funding, project execution, and community engagement, UrbanArt has been able to continue its mission of enriching the cultural diversity of our community. The strategic plan has provided a roadmap for future growth and development, and UrbanArt will continue to build on its successes in the years to come.
SE: Let’s start with the Shadow Fox exhibit, How did you meet Rita Ackermann? [laughs] Okay, so when you are out taking these pictures on fire, you just make things and you feel it. It’s all just perfect. All the mistakes and all the wrong decisions are just part of it. It’s always perfect. All the mistakes and all the wrong decisions are just part of it. I just don’t ever anticipate, so I don’t ever know.

S: That’s basically how I met her. I think the way you do instead of overanalyzing everything and planning each move they make, you never feel that again. But you know, it’s not even a question of how I feel, it’s more of a decision I made.

K: Yeah, exactly.

S: Did the identity of the characters in the Trash Humpers and their relationship to Dash Snow come down here or I would go up to New York. I would spend a lot of time in New York, you displayed a poem you wrote for him. I think it was about a rabbit. Do you remember any lines from it?

K: No, I can’t remember anything. I just can’t remember everything. Sometimes when I try to remember anything, I remember everything. So I just try not to think about it.

S: When you are in a group show like this, how do you decide your work—if all to—fit with the other artists?

K: Oh no, I don’t ever pay attention to that. Ever?

S: I mean I haven’t, that’s not to say one day I won’t. In the past, I just don’t even know. I won’t even know. I sometimes don’t even know what’s in my head and the length of his beard and he died a really painful death.

K: Right, it’s just better to not stress. So if you don’t think about framing or what pieces to display, what do you think when you have an upcoming exhibition? Is anything a priority? Just to get that shit there on time, on the day of the thing. You’ve had a few shows at Galerie du Jour. How does the response to your work differ in Paris as opposed to the US?

K: They always love it. Everyone else, I just love it. It’s all so beautiful. The one that’s here I don’t really hate it. They love it, I’m really grateful for all that shit. Has anyone ever gotten mad at you because they were offended?

S: Oh, of course. But really, those people just loved it. Let’s wrap this up with one last question. Do you have any advice for young artists out there?

K: Yeah, just love it. Like you can’t get enough of it. Fuck it up. Just fuck it. Just let it up, wash it down. And never try to be an artist. Make sure you shine your knees and keep going. Don’t ever back up too far. Always exercise. Don’t be too much of a douche. What else? Have fun. Don’t doubt yourself. Be bold. Stay healthy. And remember to always be a gansta.

[laughs] Okay, so when you are out taking these photos everyone in character, how long does that last? Do you stay in character all night or is it more of a posed photo shoot?

K: Yeah, it’s like the same with the movies. You are part of a community and become a character and you say, “Tonight we’re gonna go and fornicate with trash and set stuff on fire. We’re gonna torch this town.” And that’s kind of it. Then you just get into zone and you just don’t think about it. You just do it. You suck it up, you suck it down, and you just go with it.

S: What kind of camera did you use for the pictures?

K: I was using disposable cameras. We would usually fill up a glass with ice and a shot of bleach and we would each take a sip and go out with disposable cameras. So if you used a disposable camera, did you just go to some place like Walgreens to develop it?

K: Yeah, exactly.

S: Why the affinity for 8-fi equipment?

K: Well, it just makes it look more shitty. I like it for that. I thought it needed to be sufficiently shitty. In the Aftermath exhibit at Watkins, your print photos were small and framed nicely. How do you decide the best way to present your work?

K: Usually I just spend about 35 seconds. I mean, if there’s some tape next to me and I can just tape that shit up, that’s good. If there’s five one hundred dollar bills and a hungry framer, I’ll just say, “Yeah, go do your thing, bastard.” Everything you judge on its own. I mean, I could’ve just done anything. I could’ve set those photos on fire and they would’ve been just as good. I could’ve patted on that painting and it would’ve looked even nicer.

S: Let’s switch gears and talk about the show at Galerie du Jour with Ryan McGinley and Dash Snow. Why did you choose to show paintings and that’s what I was working on. Your photos were small and framed nicely. How do you decide the best way to present your work?

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Christopher Miner
“Every Other Girl in the World”
Jones Hall Gallery
The University of Memphis
November 1-26, 2010

Do we always want what we cannot have?
In the exhibition, “Every Other Girl in the World,” at Jones Hall Gallery at The University of Memphis, Christopher Miner asks this very question. Each of the five single-channel videos on display dealt with the question from different aspects of the artist’s life. Miner, originally from Jasper, MI, moved to Memphis with his new wife and newborn son. Each are subjects in the work that reflect their decisions to be a new father and husband. We have all had the same thoughts that Miner has unashamedly put on display, attempting to deal with current family conflicts while longing for anything other than what we may have now.

In “Lord of the Starfields” Miner attempts to justify the type of porn he has on his computer in a one-sided conversation with God. The radio signals to Almighty for a less severe judgment because the type of porn on the hard drive really isn’t so bad. As I stood in Jones Hall Gallery watching the video, I could not help but think that type of porn isn’t so bad and wondered if one day I would have to justify the contents of my own hard drive. In the piece that shares the title of the exhibition, “Every Other Girl in the World,” Miner narrates a fight he had with his wife while on their honeymoon in Acapulco. Acapulco is a city the artist finds himself in with a former girlfriend. Was he, subconsciously or not, picking a fight with his new bride to have an excuse to leave the hopes of running into the ex to see if his decision to get married was the correct one? Perhaps. But, it is definitely a chance I would not want to take on my honeymoon. I may not have been married very long.

The pieces are direct and selfish but Miner presents them in an intimate, vulnerable way and I found myself overbooking this wellness and not questioning the delivery or the contents of the message. In “Still Here is the Place to Be,” this is especially the case. The artist is shown sitting with his newborn son singing him a lullaby. Once the viewer gets over the affectionate embrace between father and son, we hear that Miner is actually singing Mystical’s “Shake Your Ass,” a song with very explicit lyrics. The new father now has to vicariously live through such songs. As Miner puts it, “I don’t have girls pop lock at my cock house.” With the song, the artist represents the artist’s non-domestic life and the baby represents the realization of the present. Whatever longings we may have for something else, regardless of the regret of the decisions we have made, right here is the place to be. Which is a good thing, because I happen to like where I am.


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invading both the First Center and Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and Museum of Art, Chihuly was everywhere in Nashville, 4,500 new members joined Cheekwood during the Chihuly exhibition, and their gate revenue is up almost 700% in comparison to the same time last year. Cheekwood has been a financial juggernaut for the museums, causing an extension of their creation. I just couldn’t get there. Chihuly makes big Christmas ornaments, the best, most wonderful dam Christmas ornaments around.

The Way We Move
Curated by Ron Lambert
October 9, 2010 – February 20, 2011
Cheekwood Video Installation Gallery

Bodies stand for many things. From the visceral eroticism of pornography to the terrifying and tragic theater of open-casket funerals, sometimes just the sight of a body has the capacity to make monstrosities of human emotion. The artists in the The Way We Move use the human body to drive their various points, and the installation’s sensuous acts as a kind of voice, in the very private, almost cloisteral rooms of Cheekwood’s Video Installation Gallery—a set of seven successive venues that were once utilized as horse stables, and which remain just small enough to accommodate a few people at a time.

The first video shown in the series is in many ways the strongest. Aurelia Mihai’s “Endless Motion” (1998) transforms human bodies into day-glo models of psychedelic banality—they perform various everyday activities while under the lens of cameras that seem to turn their bodies into fragile, magical things. An example of the earliest X-ray video technology, it is well-timed to coincide with the current conversation about the X-ray as an invasion of privacy. It certainly feels inappropriate to see bodies without their shells, just bones and an outline of flesh. It is as captivating as pornography, to bore, as one watches a face changing its hue with an electric razor, or a woman applying moisturizer under X-ray lens, the movement of the human body stripped of all external signifiers, is near exotic in its grace.

The third video in the installation is “Loose Control” (2008), by Monica Panzarino and Nadine Sobel’s “Loose Control” (2008). It is an examination of professional dancers at rest but never resting. Their bodies are instruments, a means of survival. The dancers move around an abandoned building in a stylized piece that is ambiguously nostalgic, like new photographs made from old film negatives. The final video in the installation is Pearl Bode’s “Video Locomotion” (1978/2010) which interprets the history of looking at the human body in video. It is a tribute to some of the original photo technology, that isn’t quite updated in this video as much as reinterpreted through the lens of likewise outdated technology. Bode uses hi-fi editors to alter footage that was technologically advanced in its time, resulting in a doubly retro aesthetic.

Voyeurism, in many ways, is making familiar that which is supposed to remain unseen. Other people’s bodies are mysterious but they are also familiar; they are like you but they are not you. Perhaps it is this familiarity that induces such empathy in a mass audience. The closer you get to seeing the insides of other people—their anonymous pacings, their trans-perfect flesh, and all of the ways they try to understand movement and share it with each other—the more you understand that the body is a vehicle for shared experience.
The twelve paintings by Lou Haney recently on display at the University of Mississippi Museum operate from a feminist angle. Disgust from a feminine and perhaps even cultural perspective, the viewers immediately confronted the most dynamic place for a young African-American sculptor. Meeting renowned philosopher Alain Locke and actor-illustrator Richard Bruce Nugent persuaded Barthé that Harlem was the most dynamic place for a young African-American sculptor. Landing in Harlem, Barthé moved to Chicago to enroll at The Art Institute with Schroeder after being included in the Art Institute's Negro in Art exhibition. Dr. Margaret Ann Vendryes, who contributed much of the text and photographs for the catalogue. A 150-page catalogue by Dr. Samella Lewis accompanies this exhibition. Dr. Margaret Ann Vendryes, who contributed much of the biographical information and critical commentary on the artist's life and career. Collection of Samella Lewis, Los Angeles, CA.

Rebecca Flaké is a University of Mississippi '93 graduate in Printing with a minor in Art History. The University of Mississippi Museum presides over the geographic pivot point of the way separating the male-dominated space of the male body is essential in sports and entertainment might draw substantial interest from sports and entertainment. Waiting for these same viewers, if they are lucky enough to look closely enough, are all the markers of a superficial existence. The works carry an air of self-conscious giggling, implicating the artist in the same world of fantasizing about food and entertainment might draw substantial interest from sports and entertainment. Waiting for these same viewers, if they are lucky enough to look closely enough, are all the markers of a superficial existence. The works carry an air of self-conscious giggling, implicating the artist in the same world of fantasizing about food and entertainment.
and discrimination in a fashion that Habib certainly never intended. In this sense, childhood toys stop being about childhood concerns as part of the construction of an idealized and authority voice, a ego made certain of its command of the world? Or are adults issues reducible to slogans, a regression into an irrevocable paradox? What is left after these questions is a fundamental incompatability in the imaginary sphere, a reduction of the urge towards identification into discordant impulses, a misconstrued of the gestalt, and a prefiguration of an alienating destination. In the act of disabusing the viewer complete access to these objects as fetishized tokens held up against the torments of the contemporary world, these images simultaneously force the viewer to return again to thinking of them merely as toys. What is left is that Herrin has created imagery stitched together with an emphasis on post-production elaboratory effect that remains elusive as a destination of firm meaning. Herrin is more known for producing sculpture and graphic design than photographs, but in speaking to the artist it became clear that these were, in his mind, not as far outside of his normal style of production than they might appear. Besides the fact that the artist wanted the figures to appear larger than life, using a sense of scale that helps the viewer to identify with the scene, instead the figures are treated as sculptural objects that are separate from the viewer embedded in a photographic presentation. Herrin seems to have been striving after retaining the sculptural experience in the photographs, with each one shot constructed to emphasize the manner in which it was focused on the eye contact between the viewer and the 3 in. dolls. Out of this manner of presentation the gaze becomes increasingly important in each piece, achieving the same effect as the piercing quality of the gazes found in Bernini, Hiran Powers, or even Edmonia Lewis. As strange as it might be to make such comparisons, by noting nevertheless that what is set into motion is a collision of the sculptural and the photographic media, setting out a problematic way of thinking about sculpture, of thinking about the figures as sculpture as opposed to being photographs precisely by means of the absence of the normal sense of scale and the normative usage necessarily suggested by the actual GJ Joe figures, a shift occurs between the two. As photographs of sculpture the use of space is still of paramount importance even if it’s limited through the specificity of the photographic medium, in a manner parallel to, while moving in exactly the opposite direction, of the work of Richard Serra; rather than be intimidated by scale and material, the viewer is confounded by intimacy and accessibility, by memories of childhood and the visceral presence of the objects which defined childhood. For Herrin, it’s important to realize that these photographs need to be understood as sculptural arrangements first, as tableaus of a sort, but also it’s important to realize that they could never be successful as arrangements of the actual figures because they would be too directly available to the imagination, to manipulation by the viewer; convincingly, as preparation for a type of reflection on childhood, Herrin’s work establishes a necessarily restricted access, a sense that the photographs are only documentation of the sculptural installations that are as equally fake as documentary as the objects are fake representations of patrition and military life, and as equally fake as our own memories of our childhoods. Go Play By Your Self is an invective, commanding the viewer to engage in a series of activities with self-constructed and self-referential rules that have little purpose and little reward. In some ways, the title for this exhibition couldn’t be more appropriate, through misunderstandings and uncertainties, through symbolizations that once we have meaning or never had in the first place, through a series of compulsively reverberating imaginary constructions that successively hostile the further we are from them in time the more we meldate them through failing references and reflections, our very sense of who we are and what we do falls away as meaningless. These photographs do not complete me, and, in fact, that “me” that is being referred to becomes even more complex, perhaps even more impossible, to define. If nothing else, we are left after this exhibition only with a sense of longing that cannot be rectified, that can only be turned over and over as a metaphor until it begins and where it ends is impossible to determine, with privileged symptoms that become compulsively reverberating imaginary constructions of the real, which makes Keith Herrin’s work very worthy of consideration as evidence of the remains of childhood returning to us in our adulthood.
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