I see this issue’s theme as Arts of Interventions because I am interested in the work of artists who find themselves at the center of intersecting identities. It’s something I actively seek in the exhibits of contemporary art and visual arts together, I don’t. But Baldwin is the one genius whose work grew so much with the world that it could no longer be contained by it and now seems larger, wholly unreal, even as it again and again rings true as if it were prophecy. In a volume of his uncollected writings, there is an essay called “The Artist’s Struggle for Integrity. In it, he says “the poets (by which I mean all artists) are finally the only people who know the truth about us….Art is here to prove, and to help one bear, the fact that all safety is an illusion. In this sense, all artists are divorced from and even necessarily opposed to any system whatever.” I’ve thought about that last part quite a lot. Baldwin — Black, gay, poor — would know something about being opposed to systems. Usually, it is those of us who benefit from the systems that see them that last. I now use the word “intersections” from Black feminism. The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a black legal scholar, in 1989. Her article Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics published in University of Chicago Legal Forum critiqued the way in which the courts — as well as feminist and civil rights thinkers — fail to recognize the simultaneity of discriminations that Black women experience. According to Crenshaw, Black women experience both racism and sexism, and these oppressions are not borne separately but are compounded. A year after Crenshaw’s article, Patricia Hill Collins published a book called Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. Here, Collins writes about the concept of a “matrix of dominations” to explain that Black feminists, rather than thinking of oppressions as additive, see their intersecting experience as being within “one overarching structure of domination.” If you’ll accept that premise, wholly inadequate summary of the origins of the term intersectionality — and I don’t blame you if you don’t — I’ll admit to some skepticism about Baldwin’s claim. Plenty of very successful artists do very little in the way of divorcing themselves from systems; in fact, they benefit from them richly. But what of those who don’t? What of the artists who criticize this “matrix of dominations,” or exist outside it? In this issue, Liz Dayton Scottfield’s essay Living in an Imagined Future: Queering the Southern Artistic Narrative, A Call to Arms looks at identity from a distinctly Southern queer perspective. “The Southern queer narrative,” they write, “is often one of migration.” But Scottfield has stayed in the South despite the fact that vibrant queer artistic communities exist elsewhere. By confronting tokenization, the dangers of competition and mentorship, and the ways in which even “exclusive” arts spaces can box queer artists in, Scottfield asks fellow artists, “What do we have to lose?” Joeh Hurst of Nashville heads back home to Arkansas where she interviews her mother, Sandy Hurst, and her high school art teacher, Nancy Dun- kley — both of whom contribute to relationship build, and to coalition build at the intersection of art and social change. In Butler’s article, he says of art, “it’s dynamic, flexibility, and tolerance of uncertainty are precisely why it lends itself so well to the goal of developing better communities.” Let this work stand in the light of that possibility.
Regional Update: Memphis

The accelerated growth in the Memphis art world is coming in waves and in a number of forms including some intriguing white pieces and several enamel paintings on steel. Open through January 2017.

The truth is – if you are an artist in Memphis with nothing to do right now – you are simply missing out. The accelerated growth in the Memphis art world is coming in waves and in a number of forms. Regional Update: Richmond, VA

All along the James, the arts sparked change in Richmond, VA. Now fall, starting September 2-20, Coalition Books and Gallery featured STEAM, a group photography exhibition that addresses political social issues in a raw awareness for the 2016 election. Developing artists included: Lindsey Boyd (glitch mining sexual harassment and reproduction rights), Sheila Pierre (first to be incarceration), Didi Connell (the world of guards and those imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba), Tom Kiefer (a world of guards and those imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba), and Brian Ulrich (American consumerism), among other artists.

Julia Martin Gallery, a duo exhibition space in Wedgewood-Houston – now open to the public. Channel to Channel, a community/gallery space and an outdoor art garden, adding to the already current South Main Arts District. ArtMemphis is haring up the project. It “uses the tools of real estate development to create affordable, appropriate places where artists can live and work.” The Memphis venues will build community and add to the stability and sustainabilty of our local art world.

Hart Gallery recently opened a branch in Memphis at 465 Marshall Ave. New: Sun Studios. This venture is beginning in Chattanooga as a place to discourage work by local farmers and non-traditional artists. The New Edge District location is also offering studio space for rent to artists in a variety of sizes, each with its own aesthetic. All spaces come with AC and use of a common area. The larger institutions appear to have a healthy list of competition happening, resulting in ramped up programming in the form of quality shows and these events for both artists and the general populace. A case in point is the National Ornamental Metal Museum where Master Memphis hailer Tom Haley has lined the buildings and the grounds with steel, concrete and bronze including some intriguing white pieces and several enamelled paintings on steel. Open through January 1.

The Memphis Museum is also offering a series of classes during the month of October including a Day of Traditions in which attendees can choose among introductions to welding, blacksmithing, cement and enamelling for tune. All are open classes as to how to make forged tools and backyard operations and a class called Backyard Foundry making sure that you can practice your metal skills in your own backyard.

The smaller galleries around Nashville are doing it big: OZ Arts-Nashville is offering its next show in a new space, at 507 Hagan St., adjacent to contemporary galleries COOP and CCH. All spaces are in a row in this district which has been an artist haven for years. OZ Arts is also taking applications for the 2017 ArtsAccelerator Grant beginning in September with workshop dates through November. The first public workshop is on October 16-18, 6-8:00pm at the nearby Huddle meeting at Crosstown Arts. Applications are due in early January with awards announced in February. This year ArtsMemphis is offering the $10,000 grant to visual artists in the greater Memphis community to resituate their art and overall work in the current moment. This is the first time the grant will be subject to expert panels from outside the city.

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Why did you decide to start Valet?

Valet started with the intention of bringing together artists living in Richmond, VA by providing space where they could engage and exhibit. Our vision for Valet was inspired by the unique nature of the space itself: tucked inconspicuously next to the entrance of a parking garage in downtown Richmond. We wanted to provide a space for practicing professional artists who have very few outlets to exhibit their work. We desired a platform for exchange, where artists working in contemporary modes could come experience the work of peers.

Why is Valet different from other galleries?
The location and oddity of the space has driven the way we operate. On one hand, since we are a public space on a street-corner downtown, we appear, cosmically, like a gallery and more formal than the standard Richmond house show. But, on the other hand, we maintain an air of improvisation and informality in relation to other galleries in the region. We do not attempt to turn a profit or take any percentage from exhibition sales. We design programming such that it is challenging, compelling, and not populist in nature. None of us have the money or power to label ourselves experts or tastemakers, but we do have educated and informed peers and artists who make Valet a destination. For now, our goal is to operate an open-access, artist-run, free space, a venue to display and explore creative ventures.

It was appropriate that Stephanie Kong and I met at coffee shop just minutes away from Wonderroot, the nonprofit arts organization where she works as the Programs Director. She didn’t study arts administration; she realized her bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Georgia State University. Her education allowed her to travel to Seoul to connect with her Korean heritage and teach English to at-risk teens. Stephanie continues her work of caring for our state of being through her position at Wonderroot. As Programs Director, Stephanie’s work must align with the organization’s mission “to unite artists and community to inspire positive social change.”

I wanted to speak to her because I’m interested in a program she created for Facing Space: A National Conference that will take place in Atlanta on November 15-17. This event is not an art conference, but Stephanie is sending some of Atlanta’s artists talented to the event. Stephanie received a call from Facing Race organizers who felt Wonderroot’s mission statement aligned with their mission. Facing Race offers resources to communities on racial equity andWonderroot offers Atlanta’s artists community access to resources surrounding anti-racism. The two organizations decided to team up for an initiative.

When Stephanie told the Facing Race organizers about Lines of Work, a project she coordinated for Wonderroot four years ago, they became interested in revising the program for this year’s Facing Race conference by making it relevant and specific to the conference’s mission of promoting racial justice. The program this year is called Percolate. Well, isn’t that what coffee does after all? Percolate, like the one hundred conversation series that will take place at Just Add Honey, Hopdogget, and Tiramisu Coffee and Bar, locally owned coffee and tea shops around Atlanta. The series of conversations will be between artists and activists as a pre-conference event for the Facing Race Conference.

“Percolate unites artists and activists to percolate new ideas for addressing racial justice through the lens of art,” Stephanie said.

The conversations between artists and activist are designed to raise consciousness around the issue of racial equity and promote racial equality. One hundred artists and one hundred activists will pair up at coffee and tea shops around Atlanta. Some of the artists have been Galen Baker, Community Supported Agriculture artists, teaching artists for Wonderroot, or artists Stephanie had conversations with about social justice issues during the event activities selected by the Facing Race Conference. Stephanie said.

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Michi Meko: Navigating Contemporary Art

Atlanta-based artist Michi Meko remembers the fear he experienced when he learned that being black meant following certain rules to make other people comfortable. “When you are a black teenage boy there is a moment where your elder will tell you how to survive your daily life. This is how you interact with caps, where to go, how to act. There are instructions for your survival.”

Meko makes art as he processes the onerous feelings associated with being recognized and treated differently. To explain his life’s challenge, Meko refers to W.E.B. DuBois’ concept of double-consciousness—feelings associated with being recognized and treated for your survival.”

Meko worked as a metalworker and handyman for the majority of his life. In his free time he created sculptures and wall hangings out of scrapwood materials and rejections. It wasn’t until he met Arnett at age 50 that Dial realized that what he was making tells a significant story about life as a poor black man in the south. Deemed Outsider Art, his works became highly collectible in the late 80s. Using that labeling to define Dial’s art frustrates Meko, “Outsider art, what is it outside of? The mainstream? That’s how groups and aesthetics become segregated.”

While the South has many talented artists making meaningful works, artists require respect and a receptive audience to have an impact, Meko defines his art within the lineage of Southern artists using discarded materials. He regards them as “makers who endow the discarded with powerful spiritual connotations.”

Underlying Meko’s art is a focus on the black community’s heroic survival and resilience despite discrimination, destruction, and uncertainty. In Unsophisticated Splashing Meko creates an abstract scene that explores the struggle black people have experienced by and through water. For Meko, water symbolizes danger, injustice and endurance. The real buoys attached to the work, are hopeful elements that suggest guidance. The only representational element in the composition is the hand of a black man reaching out. The rest of the work consists of gestural layers of paint applied in an urban contemporary style using graffiti drips and tags. The red and white pattern across the top of the artwork implies an American flag and long intersecting lines drawn across the work seem to trace naval navigation routes used for transporting slaves.

Lamplighted Knapsack Ready for Quick and Efficient Travel The work points to the historical instability of black lives in America continue to affect individual lives and contemporary society. While Meko jokes that “black art is hot right now,” he is not going to rely on that for his success. He plans to continue developing his craft and concepts so that he is remembered not as a footnote, but as a powerful, intelligent voice of truth.

Interview: Connections

This interview features two women artists from Arkansas; my mother (Hatt Springs) and my high school art teacher Nancy Dunaway (North Little Rock). My interest in interviewing them is highly personal, as they contributed to my growth as an artist. I was also curious, more objectively about school art teacher Nancy Dunaway (North Little Rock). My interest in interviewing them is highly personal, as they contributed to my growth as an artist. I was also curious, more objectively about Nancy Dunaway: There were paintings in my house such great places that are distinctly your own, Oh! I love seeing artists’ homes. You both have harmonious environment and her gardens were a beautiful, and took lessons at the Arkansas Art Center in Little harmonious environment and her gardens were a beautiful, and took lessons at the Arkansas Art Center in Little Sandy Hays: I became an Art Teacher because it was the practical thing to do for an artist mom with three small children. I love art and believe it to be an essential oils. Nancy: Thank you. My home is filled with art I’ve collected over the years and colors and things I like. I am a gatherer by nature and my house reflects that. Artists tend to feel free to follow their own paths rather than trends, and visitors respond positively to the authenticity and art of the space. My home is another kind of art for me. My mother was a gardener and while I spend lots of time in the studio, I love gardening in the spring. It’s an extension of the studio. Sandy: I have always seen objects and faces in wood grain, even painting a door because of the scary face I saw. One of my favorite classroom experiences was when a new group of elementary students came into my classroom and we’re settling down for the lesson. As I walked around the room giving out the art supplies a smiling little face beamed up at me and said, “I love faces in wood!” I said excitedly, “I did too!” That artistic connection was priceless!

Do you have a favorite book or ones that you come back to?

Nancy: Clarissa Pinkola Estes’ Women Who Run with the Wolves. I keep books in the studio for inspiration and just because I love words, stories and especially poetry. There, you will always find The Essential Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks, and at least one book of Mary Oliver’s poetry, either Thirst, Dog Songs, or American Flamingos. Sandy: Books I have read and re-read. To Kill a Mockingbird, Gifts From the Sea, Celeste Prophesy, Simple Abundance. Under the Tuscan Sun, Tea with Mussakas, The Ginger-Tree, Fizzled and Me...
Living in an Imagined Future: Queering the Southern Artistic Narrative, A Call to Arms

The Southern queer narrative is often one of migration. Get out when you can. Go to California, New York, Portland. (I did actually go to Portland. It was short-lived.) Artistic queering of this narrative. To be a Southern queer artist, to be by the South, is to be living in an Imagined Future. An Apparition.

All my life I’ve been trying to leave the South, and I just keep getting pulled back in. I grew up in a rural town in Tennessee, and despite dreaming of my escape to a Northern cosmopolitan space, I ended up spending my coed years in Nashville. My assumptions about myself and the place proved wrong. The urban South was more diverse than the suburban school that raised me and coupled with the shifting culture of the New South, investing in creative industries and bike shares, fell in love with Nashville. I changed my relationship to the South and that aspect of my identity. Nevertheless, I still left Nashville after six years, relocating to the Midwest for my MFA. (Bloomington, Indiana home for four years, and it did offer a vibrant queer scene that Nashville is still notably lacking, but somehow, despite all the distance, I would feel this at this point, I have recently landed back in the South, settling down in Atlanta.

The current dominant art world model reserves niche concept work. You know — the kind that a dude can get away with because “Genius!” but when done by a woman, artist of color, or queer gets called bullshit? More rules: we can’t get by on talent. We can get away with because “Genius!” but when done by a woman, artist of color, or queer gets called bullshit? More rules: we can’t get by on talent. We have to work hard to prove we can come into the room. But slow down! Being in the room doesn’t mean you’re in. Do you carbon copy your way in? Or do you participate in the process? In that process, we become more understanding of our identity. Don’t expect us to be your mere audience. We’re more than that, and we’re more than your market. How do you deal with the violence of being tokenized? The violence of our unique experiences being erased? Do the dominant culture assimilate us by merging our difference invisibly? Does it tokenize and fetishize us? How can the South be reimagined? What does the South look like for us?

Kulip Linzy, “An Apparition.” The Queen River family (engaging all lengths). Art Adams and Linzy Nolom, 2008, video camera. A number of Linzy’s queer black voice plays an important role in his artistic narrative, and we always have been. The outsider, shushed off, invisible. Other. Maybe there is queerness to embrace in our very Southerness, and in that embrace, we discover potential for a radical, beautiful, gritty, heart-filled, confrontational art. Are you listening? Many of my experiences as a queer artist parallel those of the Southern artists. Southern artists are singled out for major opportunities like the Whitney Biennial, and how, consequently, the Atlanta Biennial creates its own space for the Southern artists often excluded from dialogue outside the region. Even then, we can question the exact definition of “lives in” for some of the current included artists. I’m sure. Take, for instance, Kulip Linzy who according to the Biennial’s information lives in Tampa, yet many other sources accessible online (e.g., Wikipedia, various gallery and museum sites featuring his biography) claim Linzy lives and works in Brooklyn. This is not a mission to squash the legitimacy of Linzy as a queer Southern voice. That is part of his identity entrenched far deeper than where he’s currently setting up shop, and the inclusion of Linzy’s queer black voice plays an important role in the overall curations of the Biennials. However, Linzy’s public image is one of a queer black performance artist living and working in Brooklyn with Southern roots a Southern immigrant. Did Linzy have to leave so we could have him? Did Linzy have to leave so we could have her? After all, New York Times critic Holland Cotter declared “a star is born” in 2005 in a piece that’s as much about New York City as it is about Linzy...and he didn’t mention the South even once.

Do we always have to leave to find success (what-ever that might look like)? What about those of us who return? And those of us who return? What is pulling us back, and how do we build a world for us here? Echoing the mission of the Atlanta Biennial itself, let’s ask ourselves, how do we build our own communities in our own spaces, find strength in what connects us and makes us unique, and stop fighting with each other for those coveted tokens? Let’s be mindful of how and to whom we are giving power, and then let’s take it back.

For all, what do we have to lose? For now, I’ll be in Atlanta, a new city, a new home, searching. I’ll be looking for you other Southern queers who have the girl and the tender hearts to stay and stand and figure it out day by day. I’ll keep asking myself how I can live artistly, openly, and compassionately, while allowing myself the space to speak, to fight, and to grow. After all, if I’ve got nothing left to lose, then I can start asking, what am I trying to find? For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to bestow him on his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. This in fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master’s house as their only source of support.”
Art is Long and Time is Short: At the Intersection of Art and Community

Robert Reichert, MAA executive director Jan Beeland, and City Commissioner Lin said that a collaborative arts space that Woodham described as "the Ampersand Guild," a furniture, and an East Macon liaison I'd serendipitously met provided me with a collection of vinyl records. "It was just conceptual stages, but I did start getting some equipment, furniture, and an East Macon liaison I'd serendipitously met provided me with a collection of vinyl records." The first and only Listening Session was held at the artists' going away gathering at the Amperpetual Guild, a collaborative arts space that Woodham described as "one of the few places Samanthas and I found that was integrated, and was a gathering place for disenfranchised artists of all different media." Why not, then, involve Macon artists who were already familiar with the turf, especially considering that the national call, according to Lin, yielded only about 30 responses? "That call for entries made me believe that there was a deficit," Hill said. "That there were many people and community-based work there. Then Ed and I arrived and saw that there were plenty of people doing just that!" Surely a Macon artist or collective, or one based elsewhere in Georgia would have allowed for the sincere community art that all parties were supposedly seeking. Perhaps a local artist or collective could have accomplished something more concrete, more viable, in a timelier manner. Art is long, so the saying goes, but time is short. Every ambiguity, every misunderstanding leads to death; clear language and simple words are the only solvation.

Albert Camus, The Rebel

Time and language are essential considerations when the artists intersect with community development when creativity collides with issues of race, class, profit, and political optics. Patience is necessary for artists, municipal entities, and private developers alike, no matter how forcefully the creative impulse burns, and even if patience is inconsistent with revenue generation. Cultivate it up to optimum or even maximal, but I don’t believe good or bad intentions on either side led to the residency program’s break down. Rather, time and language were uncommon denominators variables never clearly defined that ultimately kept the equation from being balanced. "They have the social practice jargon, and it looks good on paper, but in actuality that’s not what happened. They didn’t understand our work," lamented Hill. "Maybe it’s time to get rid of the jargon." She called to mind how jargon can sometimes twist like a snake eating its tail, serving no other purpose but its own eloquent utterance – or worse, serving ulterior purposes. Intended or not, language itself is a lens that screens and separates. It makes matters and city-building is disappointing. Disappointment is itself so well to the goal of developing better communities.

All told, patience and clarity – and collaboration itself - have limits. A deadline and opposing sides standing ground across a line drawn boldly in the sand expose what’s at stake at the intersection of art and urban development. We can’t fudge over that "inclusivity," as Edminster called it; "I don’t think the goal should be to make it safe to be creative; it should be to feel those who are creative even in the most challenging environments.”

More than a challenge, every collision between art and city-building is disappointing. Disappointment is the feeling left when hopes andexpectations are unfulfilled; a collection of unfulfilled; art-making is itself disappointing, crumpled sketches and ruined sculptural fragments littering any studio are records of unfulfilled ideas that had to be compromised in order to realize a completed work. Compromise and disappointment, then, are unavoidable steps in uniting the creative process with community development. A tawdry moment in the last analyses, the MAA residency breakdown shows that it’s necessary – and disappointing – to accept the distance between an idea and what the fabrication process can actually achieve.
I made my first visit to Dana Oldfather’s exhibition of new paintings and prints, Sugar, when I stopped by Red Arrow during the September edition of East Nashville’s Second Saturday East Side Art Stumble. Like most things that capture my attention these days, Oldfather’s work sparked my interest, but — more importantly — it stuck with me, interrupting my thoughts for days to come before I revisited the work with an eye toward writing this review. These chromatic confusions on canvas and panel and paper may resemble fleeting sugary confections, but these tastes linger and this work sticks to your ribs.

As with any show of abstract art, the titles of these works stand out the way a cipher’s code stands out to a spy. White Elephant Diptych seems like an apt title for the biggest painting in the gallery. At roughly 6 feet by 10 feet this frosty fjord of icy whites, chilly blues and glowing lime green combines gentle gestures with jutting geometric lines in a flowing field of cool colors that’s painted across two frames stretched with raw canvas — the unpainted portions are left as is, and they create a kind of vignette effect around this elephant. This is one of the most striking pieces in a striking display, and it’s definitely the best work on canvas in the show. The highlights of this exhibition are the paintings on panel. I love oils and acrylics on canvas, but Oldfather’s pools, stripes and swirls are as full of texture as they are bursting with color, and the sculptural feel of her surfaces sets even more solidly against the hard, flat faces of her panels.

The irreverent titling of Muffin Top 1 and Muffin Top 2 belies their landscape evoking compositions and pungent palettes of orange, blue, yellow and green. The painted sections on each panel pop against their plain white backgrounds, and the mirror image, complimentary compositions of these two pieces makes them read like bookends hanging next to one another on a small wall below the gallery’s staircase. Most of Oldfather’s compositions are purely abstract, organic, sometimes almost impulsive-seeming affairs, but they’re never anything I’d label expressionistic. The muffin top panels read like abstracted countrysides captured at first light or last light — they’re soft and solar, and it makes the bones in my arms feel warm and radiating just to think about them.

When I first read Oldfather’s White Elephant Diptych title I immediately thought of the classic Ernest Hemingway short story “Hills Like White Elephants.” Just in case I’m on to something I’ll also mention that my literature detector was also set flashing by Run Rabbit Run. Another painting on panel, Run Rabbit Run also reads like an abstracted landscape, and I could imagine viewers who might argue that the show’s best paintings are these variations on verdant spaces — and they might be right. When I sat down to write this piece I knew that I preferred the paintings on panel to those on canvas. I also knew that I’d make that point in this review, as I have. I didn’t know that the abstract landscapes were going to push for a space at the forefront of my understanding of the show. This is an illustration of how good art continues to surprise you and re-engage you. It’s also a demonstration of the dynamic, evolving flow of ideas that can play out across an instant of critical analysis. This is one of those instances.

Run Rabbit Run is another colorful collection of lines and curves, spaces and shapes. Again, Oldfather only paints part of her panel here, this time dark greens, dusty rusts, ochres and yellows. Up close Oldfather’s textures, designs, rays and squiggles stand out, but it wasn’t until I was looking at my picture of the painting on my phone’s big screen that I realized that the painted field in this one resembles the head of a rabbit. It’s subtle enough that if you didn’t read the label you might not notice. I read the label and had to look at it a handful of times before I saw those ears and that nose. I can’t tell if Oldfather painted the hare’s head on purpose or if the shape evolved organically, and I couldn’t care less. The overall effect could be corny, but this doesn’t need that way. The rabbit’s revelation lends an air of mystery to the work that no gimmick ever could. Of course there’s no mystery to rabbits appearing and disappearing. That’s magic. And this show might be too.
In 1906, an open letter printed on the front page of the liberal Parisian newspaper L’Assommoir begins with the words “J’accuse.” Emile Zola thus began his denunciation of the President of France and of the government for anti-Semitism in the conviction of Alfred Dreyfus, who was accused of having provided secret military information to the German government. Although he was eventually exonerated and even awarded the Legion of Honor, Dreyfus suffered greatly during his ordeal, undergirding not only public humiliation but also physical hardship, spending time in the penal colony on Devil’s Island off the coast of French Guiana. For decades Pauline Doupé withdrew from the French intellectual community; one was either pour ou contre. “J’accuse” has since become the generic cry of outrage against injustice anywhere in the world.

And this phrase might well serve as a subtext of Duane Paxson’s current exhibition at Virginia Tech’s Perspective Gallery. Choosing as his point of departure the late 17th-century witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, Paxson diversifies the mass hysteria that led to the accusation of 200 persons — both male and female — for witchcraft and the execution of 20, who are now known as “tramp stamps” — seen by many as anodyne body art or absurdities.

These agreeably undulant lines underscore the “witches’” feminine allure, calling into question the attackers’ motivations; jealousy of another’s beauty? latent fear of sex? Or rather does their seductiveness render moot the question of their innocence? Sexual deviance has long been an undercurrent of sorcery as well as morally by the allegations they wage. “Accusation is very difficult to escape,” the artist contends. “No matter how you try to extricate yourself, it is almost impossible to prove your innocence.”

Echoing the sculptures are thirteen wildly imaginative drawings from the artist’s Witch Hunt series. A fantastical creature with a bulbous “head” and a protracted “tormentor” — for witchcraft and the execution of 20, who are now known as “tramp stamps” — seen by many as anodyne body art or absurdities. These images were inspired, Paxson says, by paintings of the fanciful depictions of Caravaggio, especially in The Crucifixion of Saint Peter (1606), as well as by the zigzag lines of the canes welded by the artist’s friend Stephanie that her hair is falling out. (Hair seems to be particularly difficult for the animation to render.) The profusion of lines somewhat like shooting stars, Dreyfus suffered greatly during his ordeal, undergirding not only public humiliation but also physical hardship, spending time in the penal colony on Devil’s Island off the coast of French Guiana. Dreyfus was condemned to life in prison.

For narrative logic or casual connection stop it from finding them. There is something meta and hilarious about watching this digital puppet whose wooden movements make it difficult for him to look for his broken sunglasses. Rebecca, whose head looks as if it’s been through a blender, her hair in tattered patches, complains to her friend Stephanie that her hair is falling out. (Hair seems to be particularly difficult for the animation to render.) Stephanie suggests it might be falling out because she is washing it too much or because, “you pull your hair out when you’re not having enough sex.”

Throughout the film the characters are humiliated in a show of funny, sexual longing. In a locker room a slim knoxes at a commode and shoves his oversized red toothpaste. Acupuncture tit. Burst bubbles. I could go on trying to find the right dictionary to help describe this unexplainable Frank, but I won’t.

Ponytail

Ponytail is Barry Doupé’s first full-length computer generated animation and was recently shown in Nashville in tandem with an exhibition of framed video-stills and video-works at Mild Climate.

Made in 2008, the animation Ponytail uses is by now probably antiquated. If you ever played Galaga on Nintendo 64 back in 1998 then you know the type glitzy, pixel, plastic, geometrically built simulations with rubber bands moving with robotic stiffness, their faces stubbornly refusing to show emotions, giving everyone a startled psychotic look. The loose narrative follows a group of fortunetellers through disjointed scenes of existential angst as they ponder their relationships, their desires, the nature of their digital reality.

The characters speak an uninflected German in clinical voices. Talking to each other in circular logic, cheap puns, and perverse rhymes. Running water; what are you coming from? Doupé uses the animated world, with all its obstructions to suspend our expectations of narrative logic and causal connection. The physics of the cgi reinforce this and have an ironic self-awareness. A cigarette falls from Stephen’s mouth as he ruts off to sleep only to land by the hot end oddly erect on her collarbone. She expresses her desire to touch and be touched. Then he’s dead, split down the middle.

Ponytail exploits to hilarious ends what this cgi animation does badly. When the pig-tailed boynamed Paul (with the sunglasses dangles without pants, her penis shaking in the wind, (his ass shined-stained or at least nudity) and knocks his glasses to the ground, he immediately claps to pat the grass and dirt trying to find them. There is something meta and hilarious about watching this digital puppet whose wooden movements make it difficult for him to look for his broken sunglasses.


That “place” can have the feel of ‘romantic loneliness,’ as Abbott describes it. People are rarely seen in these thirty-six images. When the human figure is present, it is often detached, eye contact or recognition of the camera is almost never present. A young man looks despondently out of the frame of one photograph as he sits alone at the counter of a fast-food restaurant. A grocery store clerk loads paper bags into the back seat of an automobile, his eyes are cut off by the car’s roof, leaving his face teasingly out of view.

The exhibition is introduced with words by Megan Abbott, in which she details Eggleston’s ability to make our own world mysterious through his use of color and composition. Abbott suggests more than Eggleston’s innovative use of color, it is his work’s ability to be felt and experienced that makes it exceptional, “he drops us in the middle, or near a shuddering climax, or in the chilly moments after.”

While enthusiastically agreeing with Abbott’s introductory remarks, this exhibition is more than just one pre- or post-climatic moment after the next. Depictions of dramatic tension or melancholy are mitigated by natural scenes where honey-colored sunlight bathes an autumn tree with an almost palpable warmth. Museumgoers will also encounter the imprinted remnants of traumatic climes through Eggleston’s landscape photographs, where rural architecture sits long forgotten, skeletal in the aftermath of fire or decay. As many have noted of Eggleston’s photography, it is not human interaction that conveys much of his work’s sentiment, but it is the material objects with which humans interact and experienced that makes it exceptional, “he drops us in the middle, or near a shuddering climax, or in the chilly moments after.”

Not only is this exhibition unique in its scope of Eggleston’s style and subject matter, it is also inter- preted through the voice of his first cousin and protégé, Maude Schuyler Clay. Clay, an accomplished artist and author of several acclaimed books of photography including the recently published Mississippi History, offers particular insight to the locations and people throughout the exhibit. Clay’s commentary presents a more personal understanding of Eggleston’s photographs.

Long-time lovers of Eggleston and those new to his work will find The Beautiful Mysterious a rewarding balance of the artist’s singular and identifying photograp-...
A collaborative performance curated by Terri Phillips 
featuring the Blueshift Ensemble 
Thursday, December 15, 7:30 pm at Crosstown Arts

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