

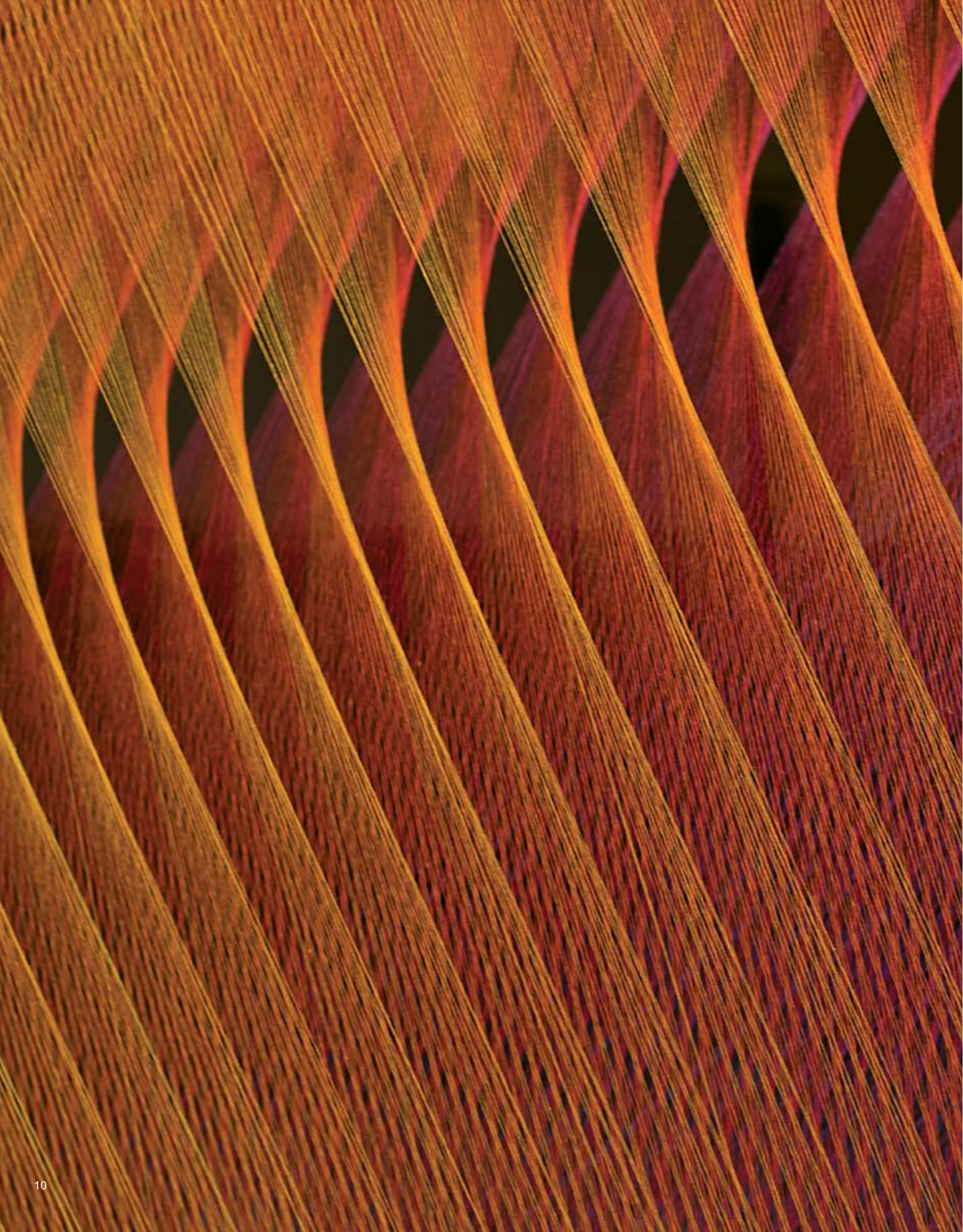


JOSHUA BIENKO  
CHRISTIE BLIZARD  
MATTHEW BOURBON  
SUSI BRISTER  
MARGARITA CABRERA  
MARY ELLEN CARROLL  
SHANNON CANNINGS  
BERNARDO CANTU  
ELIZABETH CHILES  
KRISTEN COCHRAN  
CATHERINE COLANGELO  
CLARKE CURTIS  
GABRIEL DAWE  
ESTEBAN DELGADO  
CASSANDRA EMSWILER  
JONATHAN FABER  
LAURIE FRICK  
MICHAEL ANTHONY GARCÍA  
ANTHONY GARZA  
LORI GIESLER  
RIGOBERTO A. GONZALEZ  
NATHAN GREEN  
TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK  
TIMOTHY HARDING  
NICHOLAS HAY  
HILLERBRAND+MAGSAMEN  
HANA HILLEROVA  
KATY HORAN  
TJ HUNT  
KATHRYN KELLEY  
DION LAURENT  
ANNETTE LAWRENCE  
JAMES MAGEE  
JESSICA MALLIOS  
RICHARD MARTINEZ  
MARCELYN MCNEIL  
BRANDON MILLER  
RAHUL MITRA  
OLIVIA MOORE  
KIA NEILL  
TOM ORR  
BRENT OZAETA  
RICARDO PANIAGUA  
JASON REED  
CARIN RODENBORN  
ABBY RONALDES  
SAM SANFORD  
ANTHONY SONNENBERG  
BARRY STONE  
SHANE TOLBERT  
BRAD TUCKER  
CATHIE TYLER  
H. DAVID WADDELL  
JADE WALKER

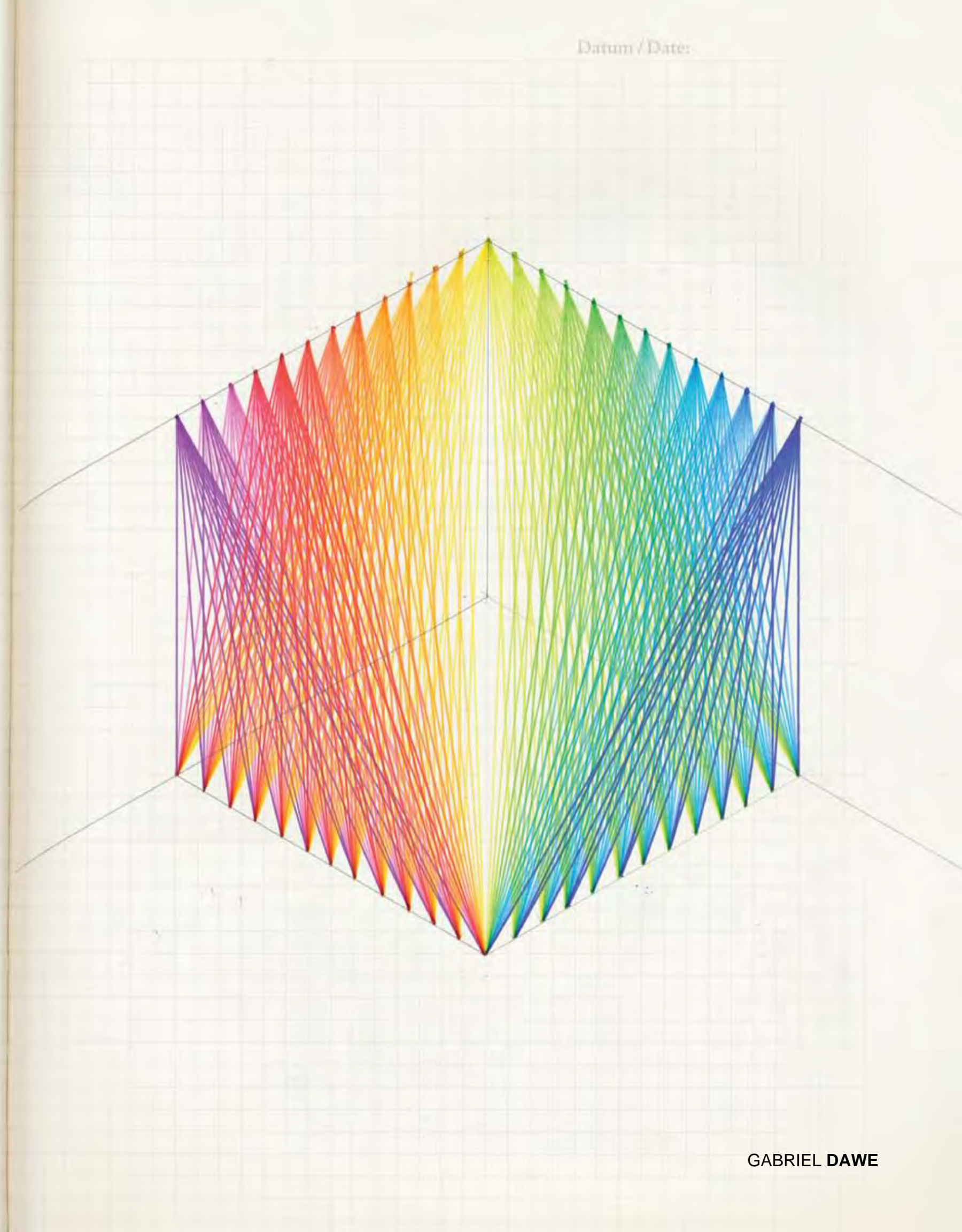




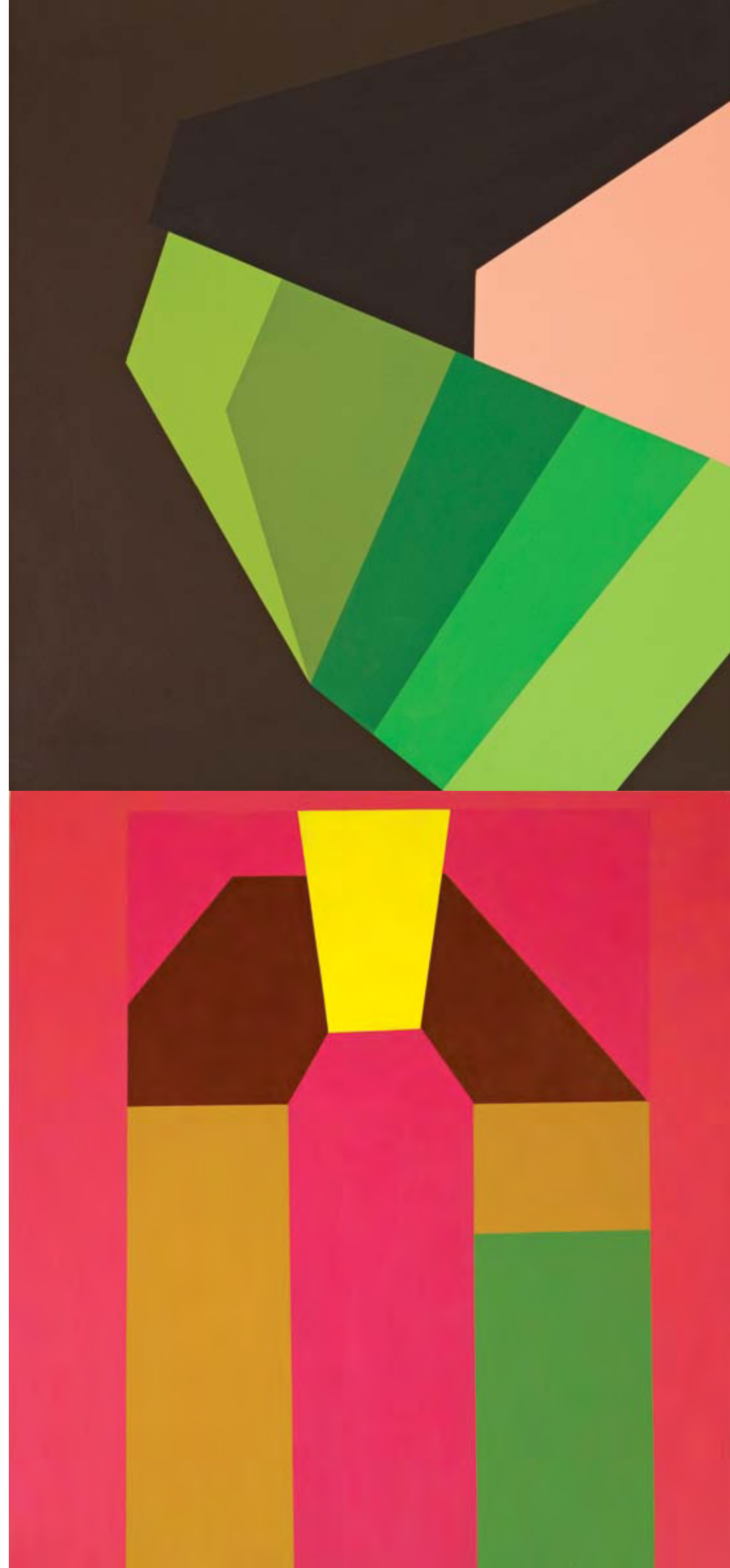




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GABRIEL DAWE







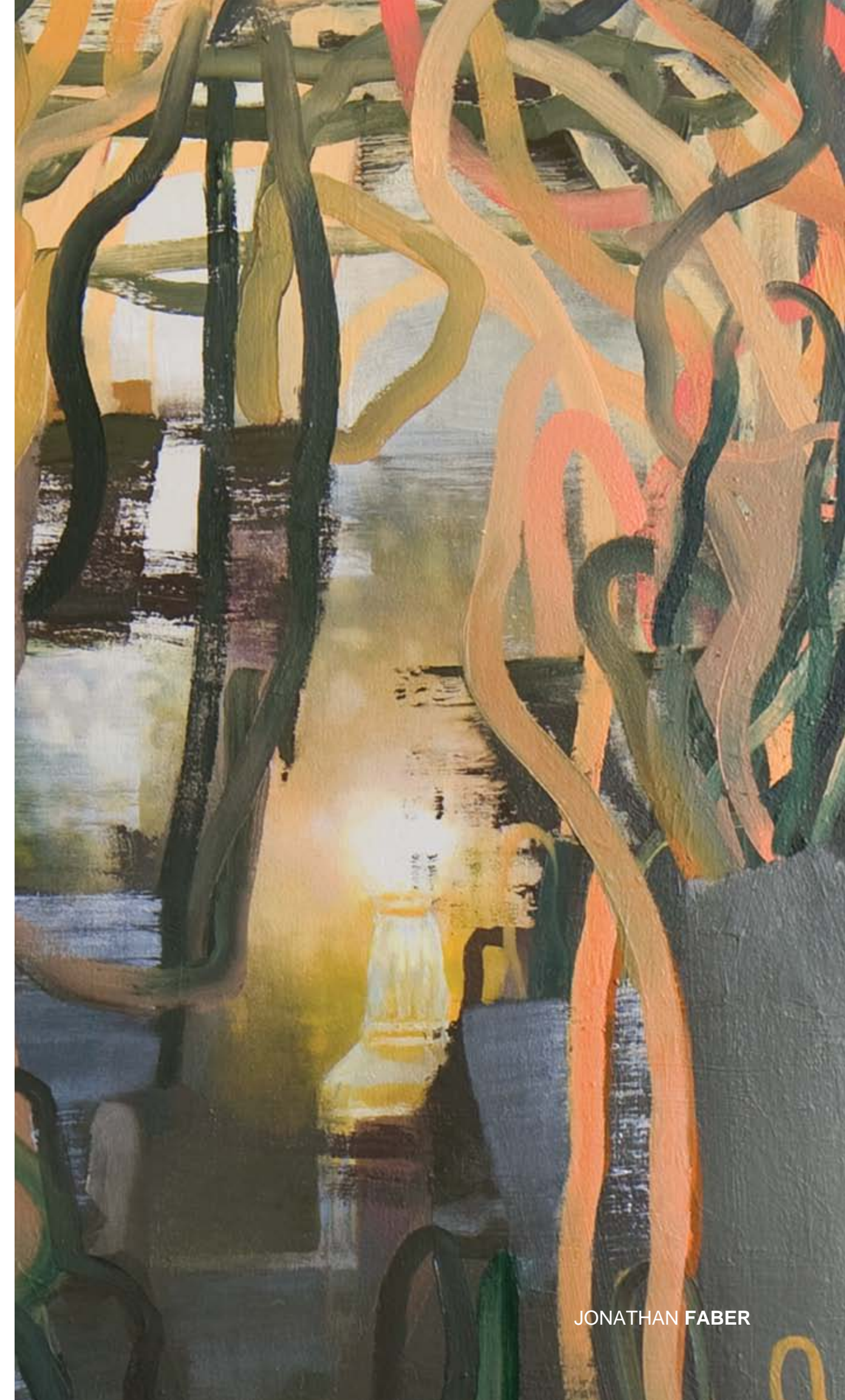
MATTHEW BOURBON



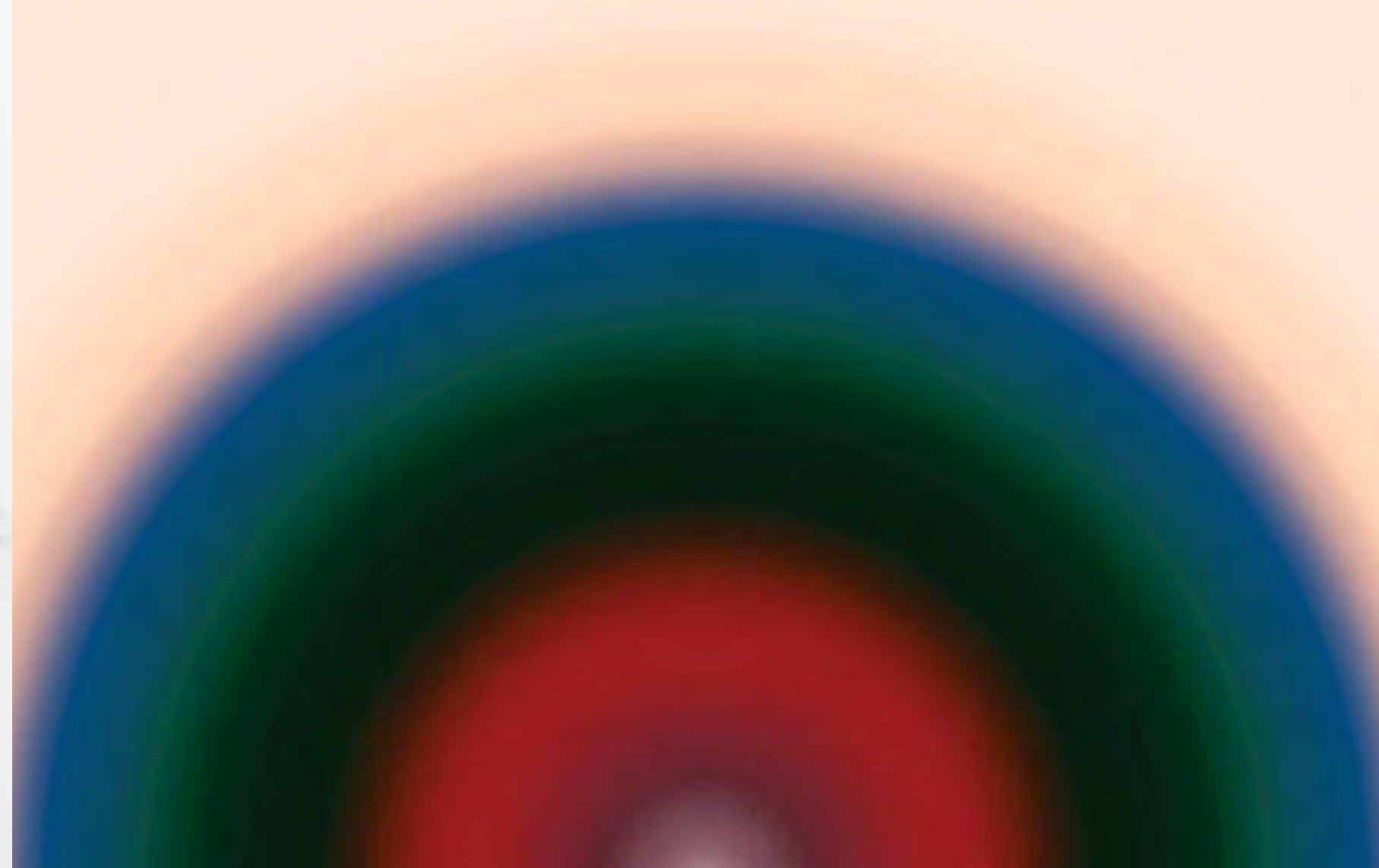


CATHIE TYLER











ANTHONY SONNENBERG



KRISTEN COCHRAN





RIGOBERTO A. GONZALEZ

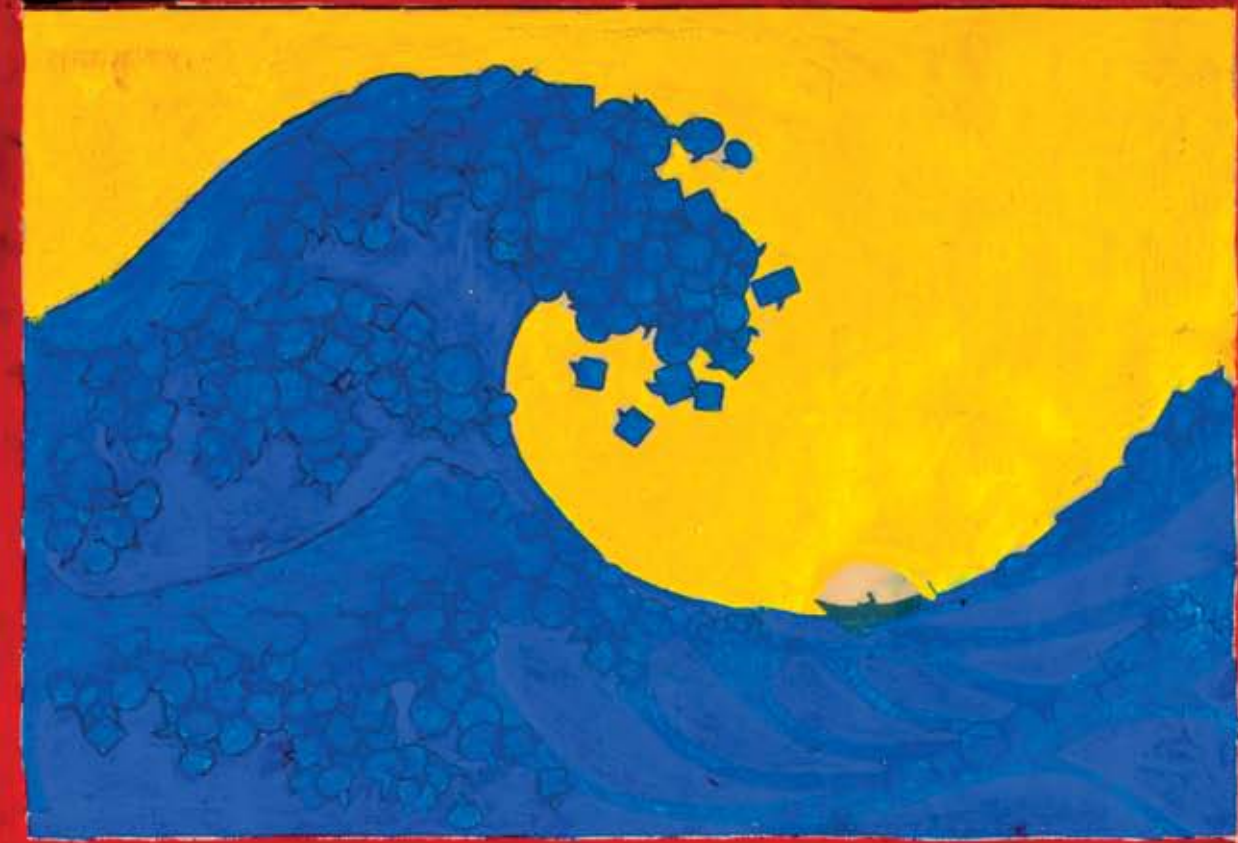






JESSICA MALLIOS

in R



Twitter



Anx



DRAWING BLOOD  
CALL BETTE DAVIS  
LOUISIANA LAW  
OPINION PAGES



BRANDON MILLER

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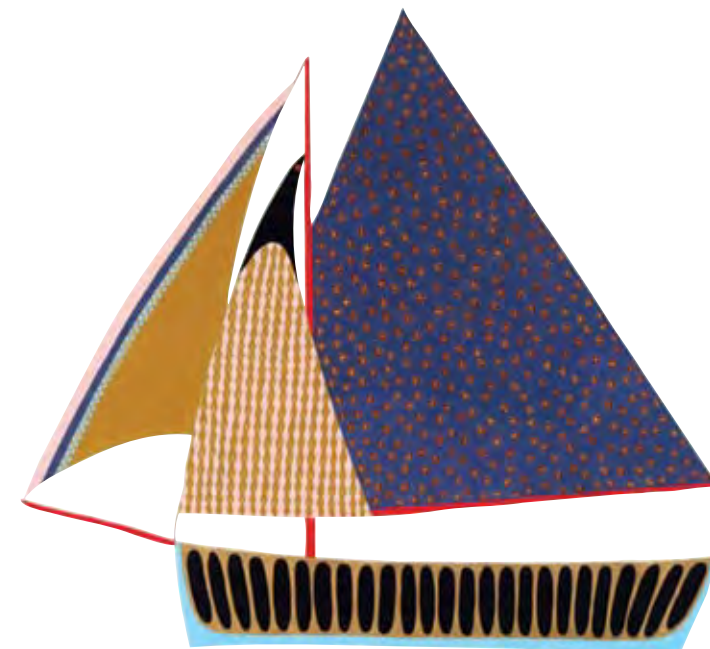
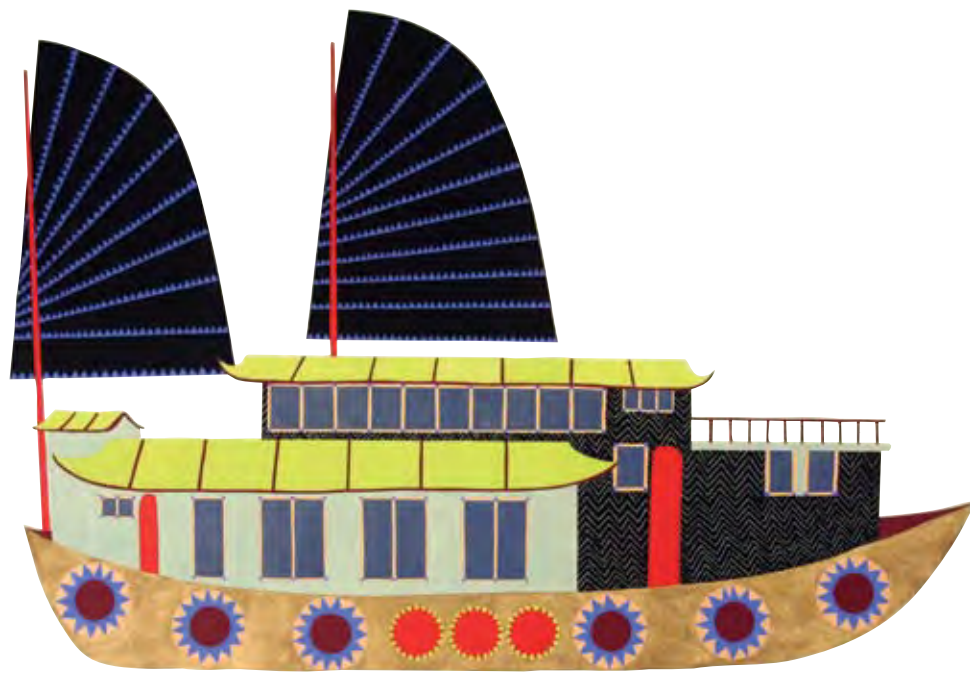
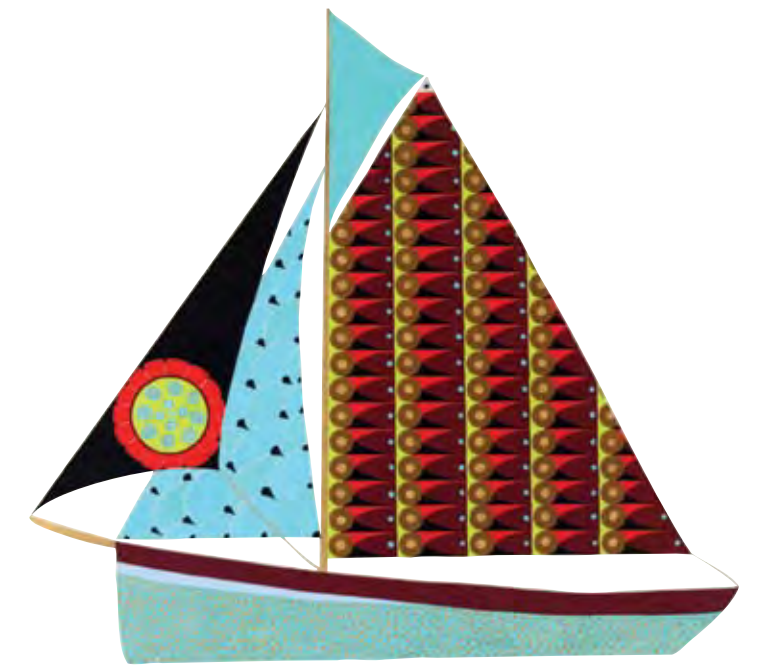
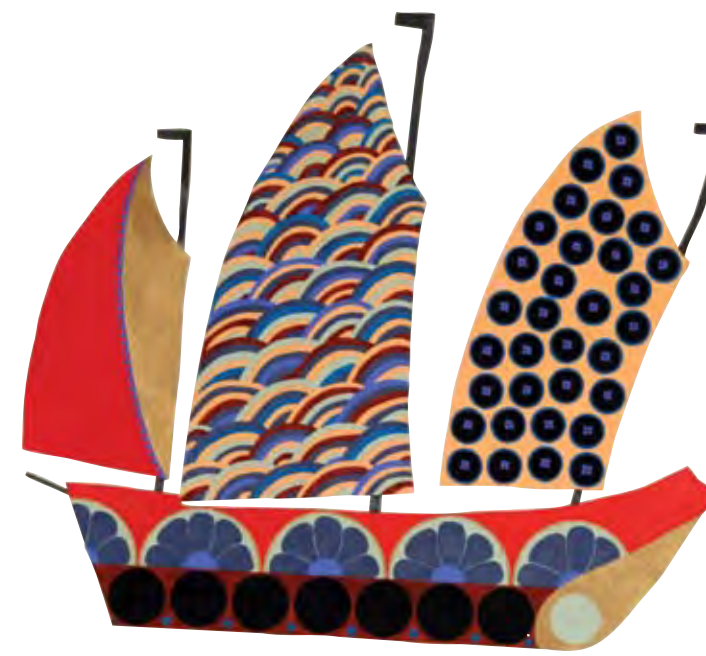




SHANNON CANNINGS

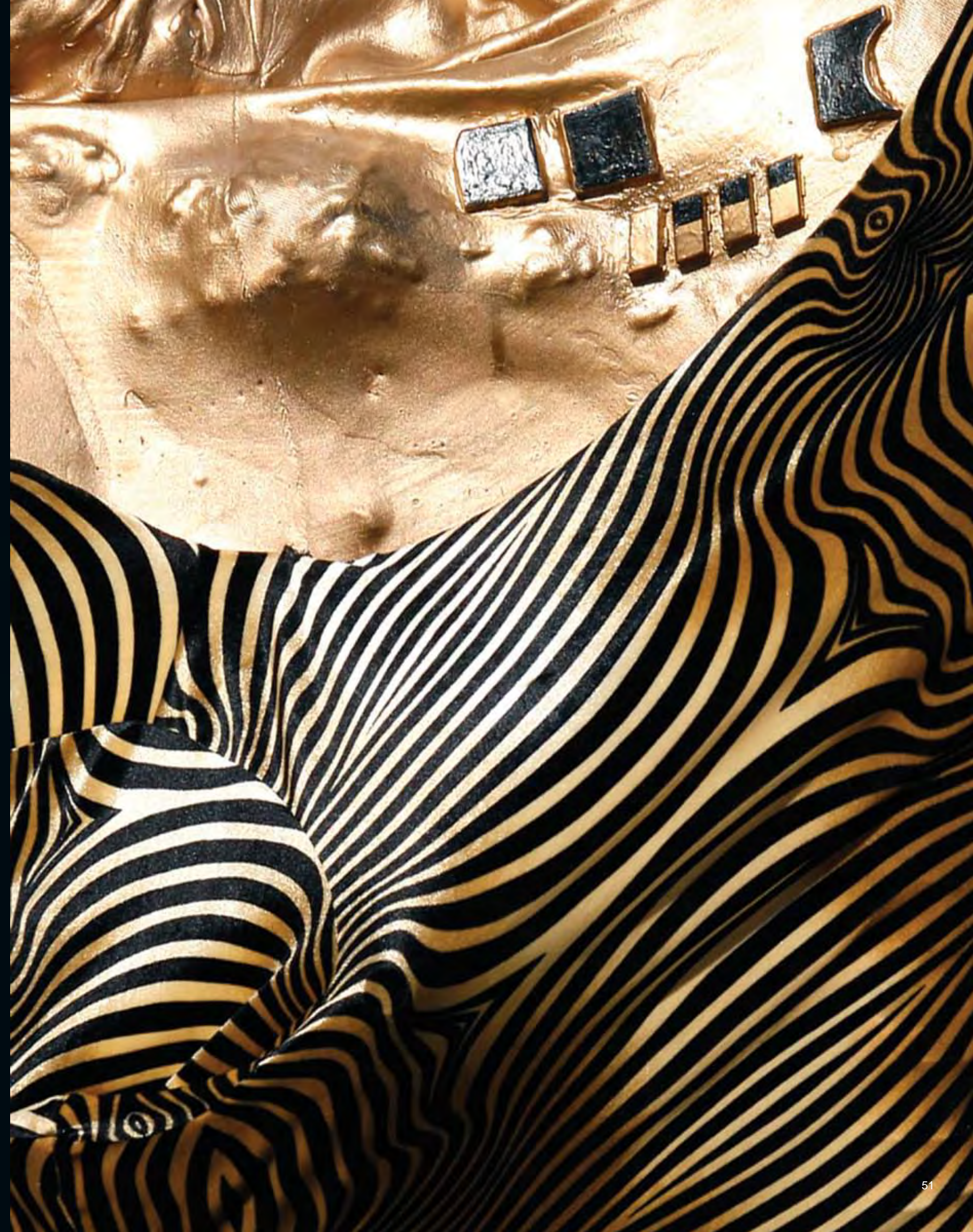


LORI GIESLER





BERNARDO CANTU









MICHAEL ANTHONY GARCÍA

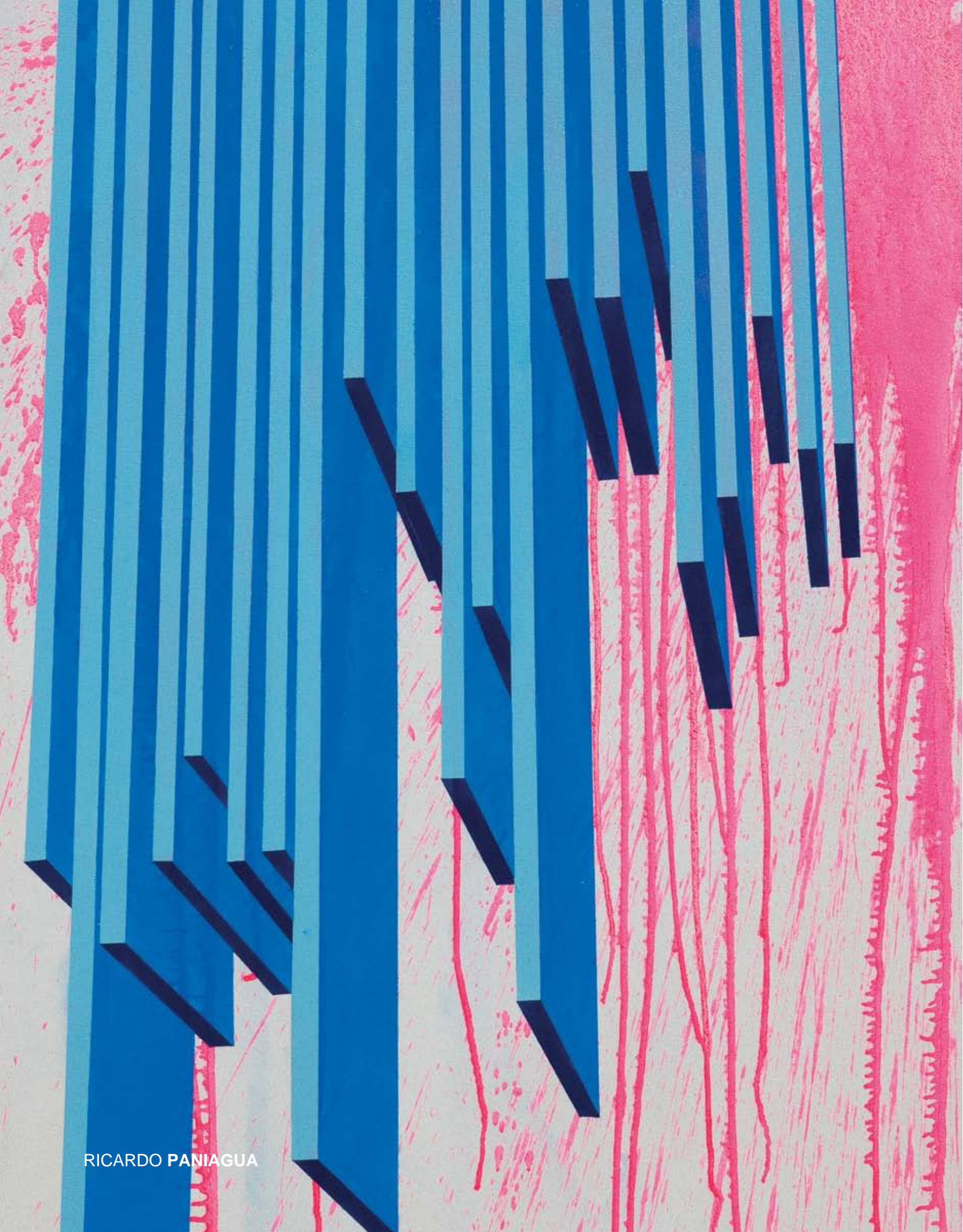




MacBook Pro







RICARDO PANIAGUA

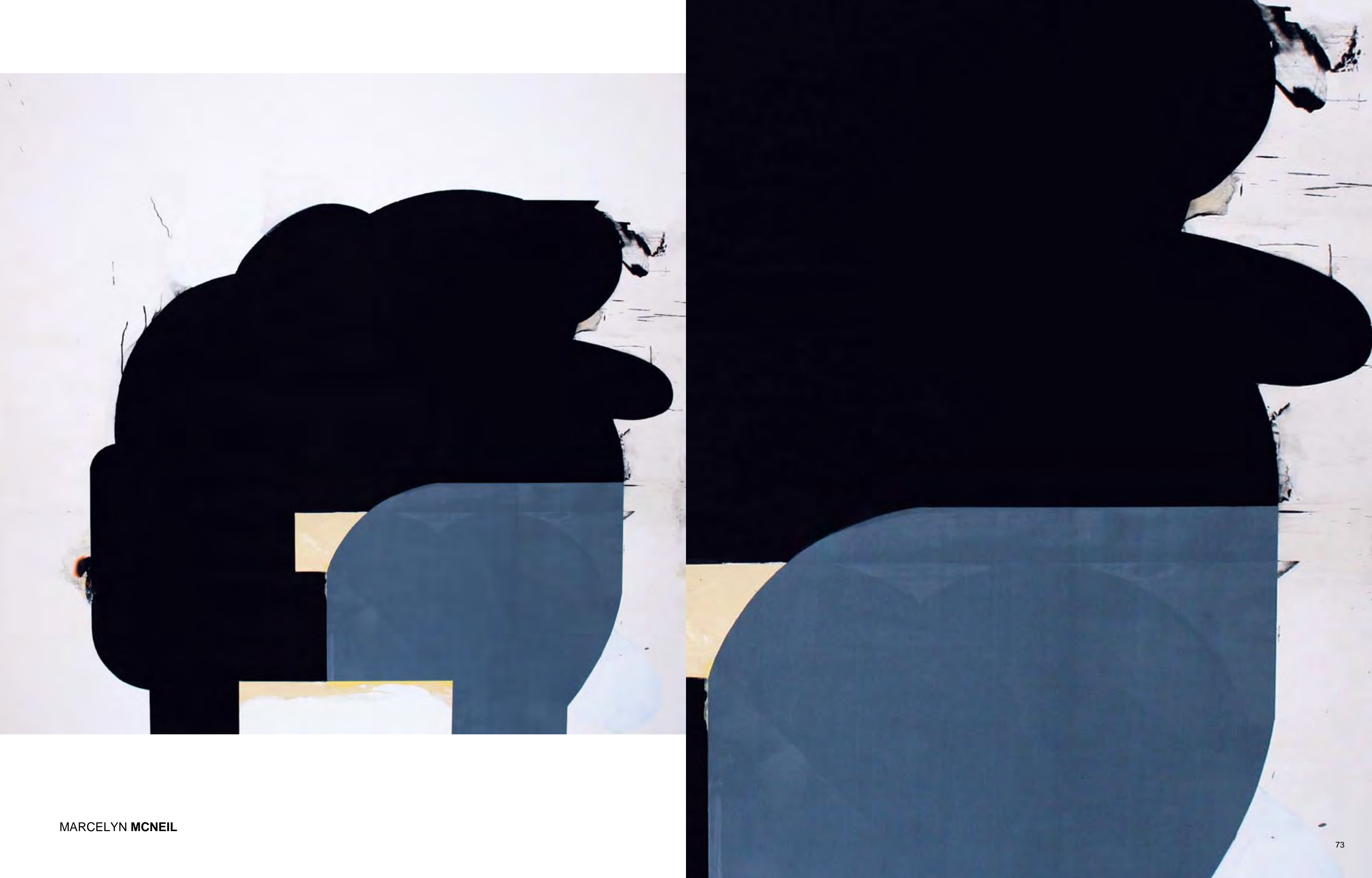














**I AIN'T GOT  
NOTHIN' TO SAY**

**I AIN'T GOT  
NOTHIN' TO SAY**



ABBY RONALDES

PROPOSAL FOR PERFORMANCE AND INSTALLATION:

Digging, extracting, carrying. The artist carves her grandiose message into the earth and seeks to enact it, replicating the mechanized gestures of land art by hand. The statement nods to the sentiment behind Bruce Nauman's iconic neon – potentially sincere or tongue-in-cheek – yet its literal physical manifestation reflects an absurdist search for truth within the metaphor as the artist sets herself up for failure.






EARTHMAN TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS: (1) HUMAN. (1) AIR-TERRARIUM BACKPACK WITH INDIGENOUS EARTH AND PLANTS AND A CIRCULATING ALGAE AIR PRODUCTION SYSTEM AND SOLAR-POWERED 12 VOLT ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. (1) 9 VOLT WIRELESS VIDEO CAMERA. (2) 12 VOLT 7 AMP SEALED BATTERIES. (1) 9 VOLT SEALED RECHARGEABLE BATTERY. (3) 12 VOLT SOLAR PANELS. (1) 12 VOLT 13 CFM FAN. (5) 12 VOLT 6 CFM FANS. (2) OXYGEN AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL DUCTS. (1) 12 VOLT INSULATED AIR COOLING SYSTEM. (2) BIOLOGICAL/CHEMICAL AIR FILTERS. (4) 12 VOLT LED GROW LIGHTS. (1) 12 VOLT LED HEAD LIGHT. (1) CONTROL PANEL WITH 8 LIGHTED ELECTRIC SWITCHES, 4 LED INDICATORS, VOLTAGE METERS, IN-LINE FUSES, WIRES. (1) SILVER HEAT-REFLECTIVE SUIT.



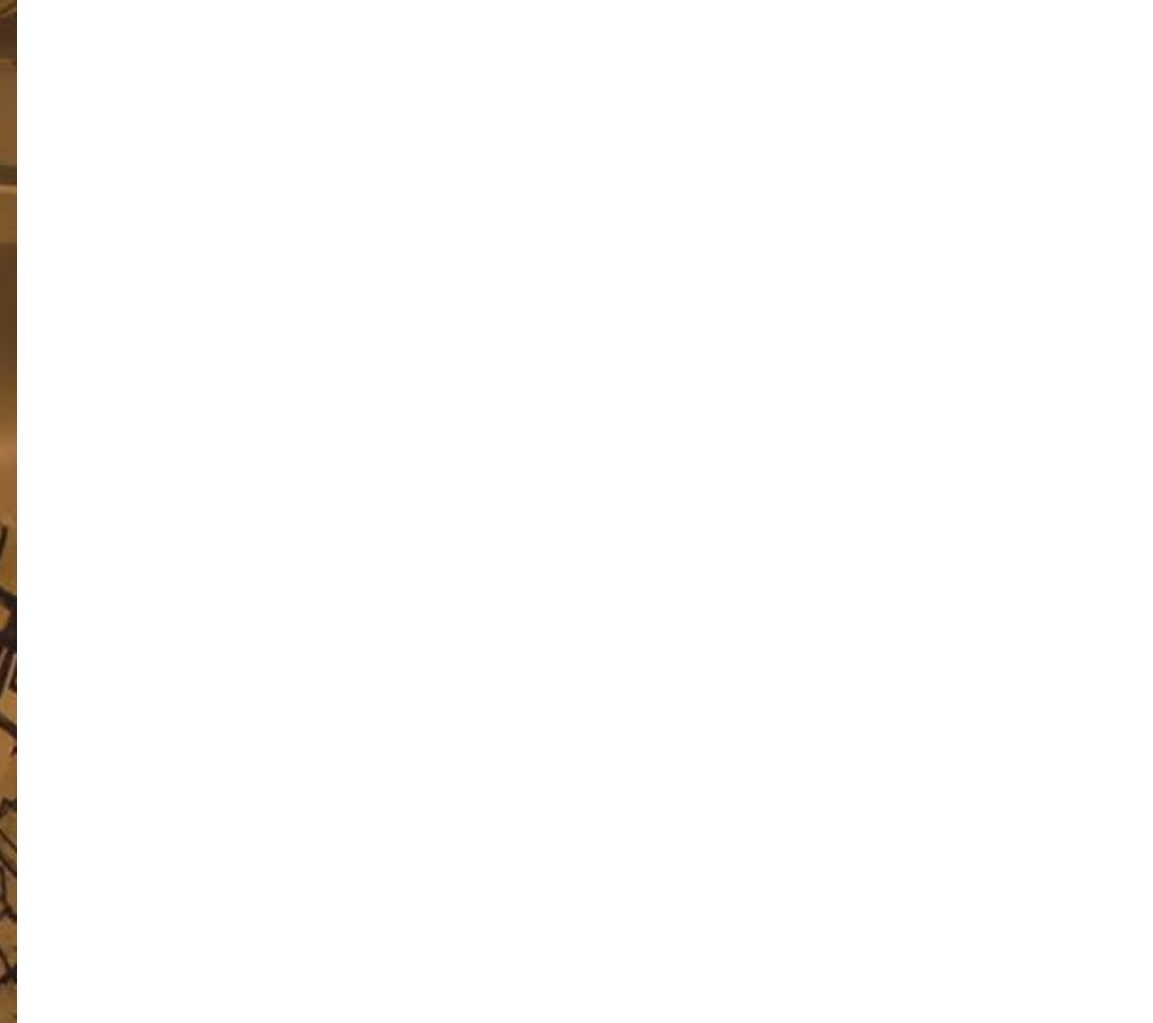
DION LAURENT



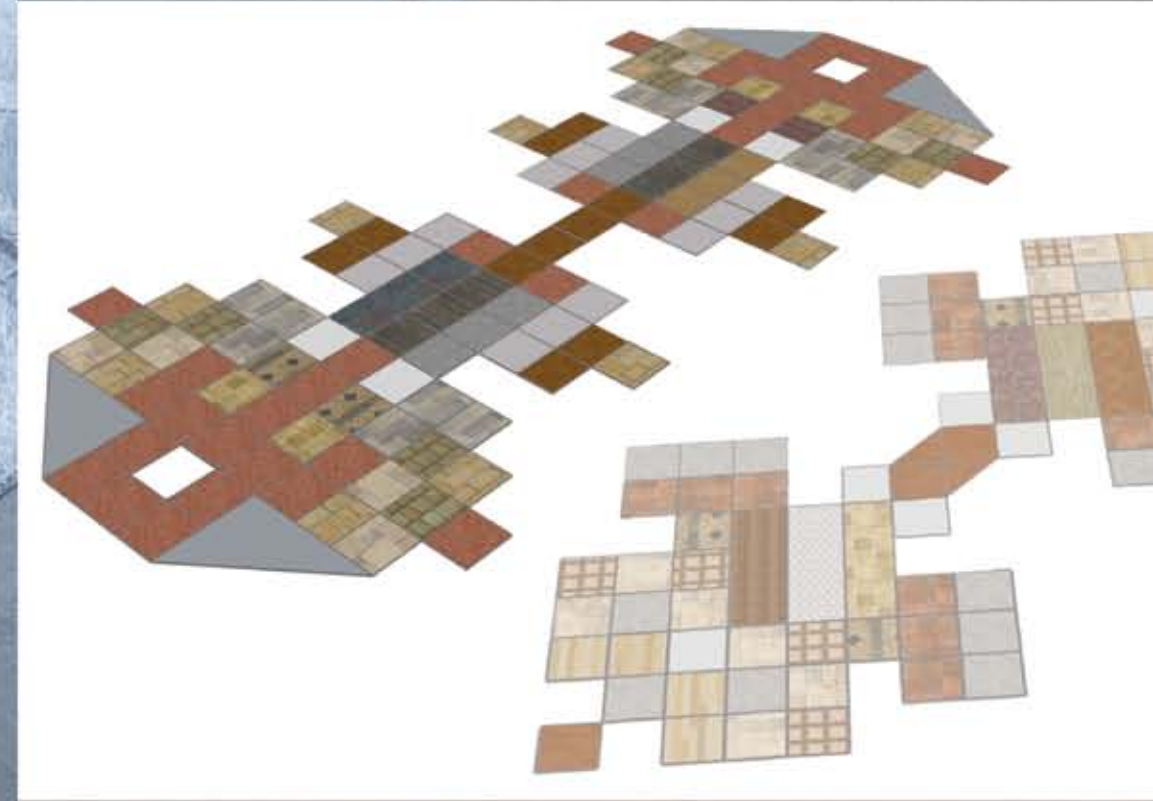
YO, YOUR FAUXPOD  
AIN'T BUSTED  
LITTLE BOBBY HUGHES  
I DON'T WEAR OLD  
SHOES ROBERT,  
I JUST SHOCKED  
THE NEW  
I AIN'T NO POP  
ARTIST ANDY  
YEAH WE'RE DONE  
WITH THAT  
AND NOBODY'S DUMB  
ENOUGH TO BE ABSTRACT  
I AIN'T INTERESTED IN  
RESURRECTING THE OLD  
BEUYS FAT FELT SUIT IS  
COVERED IN MOLD  
AND CONCEPTUAL ART...  
WHAT CAN I SAY?  
I STILL CAN'T PRONOUNCE  
TEHCHING HSIEH

JOSHUA BIENKO

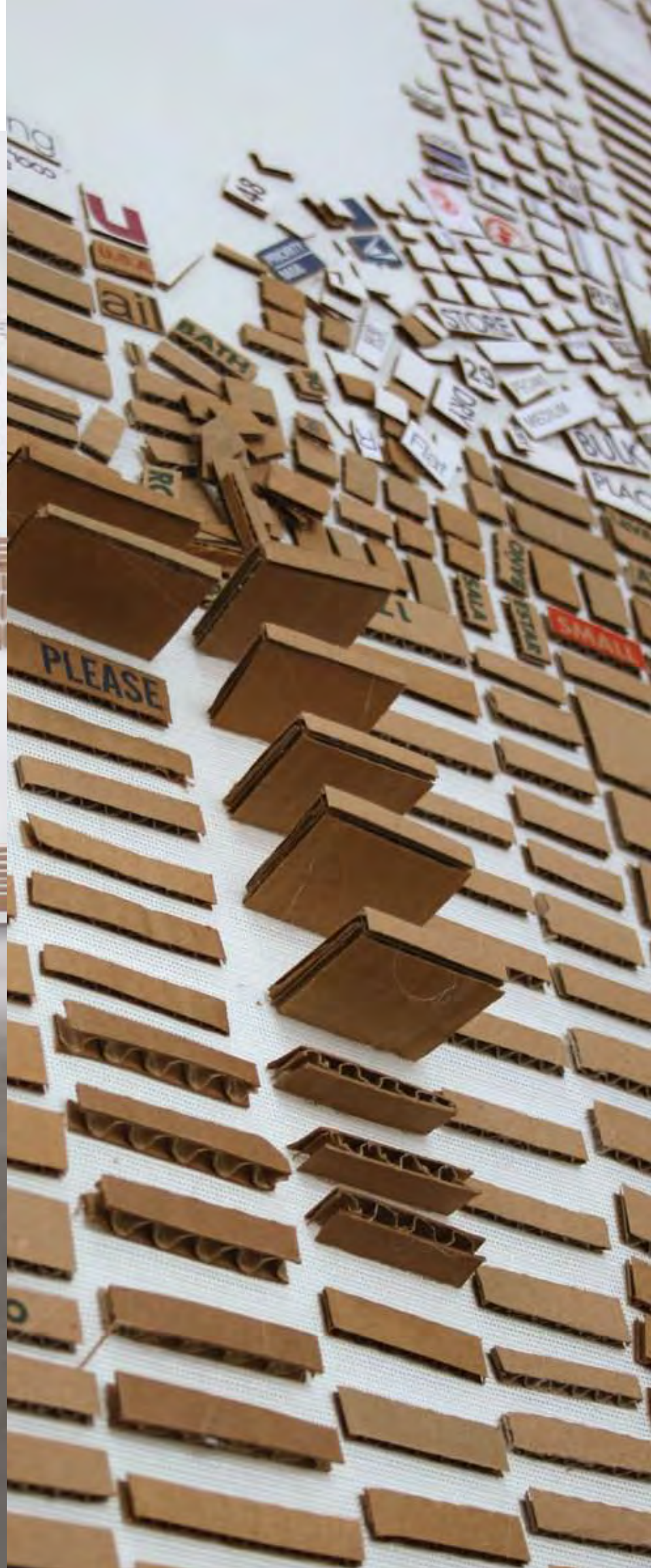


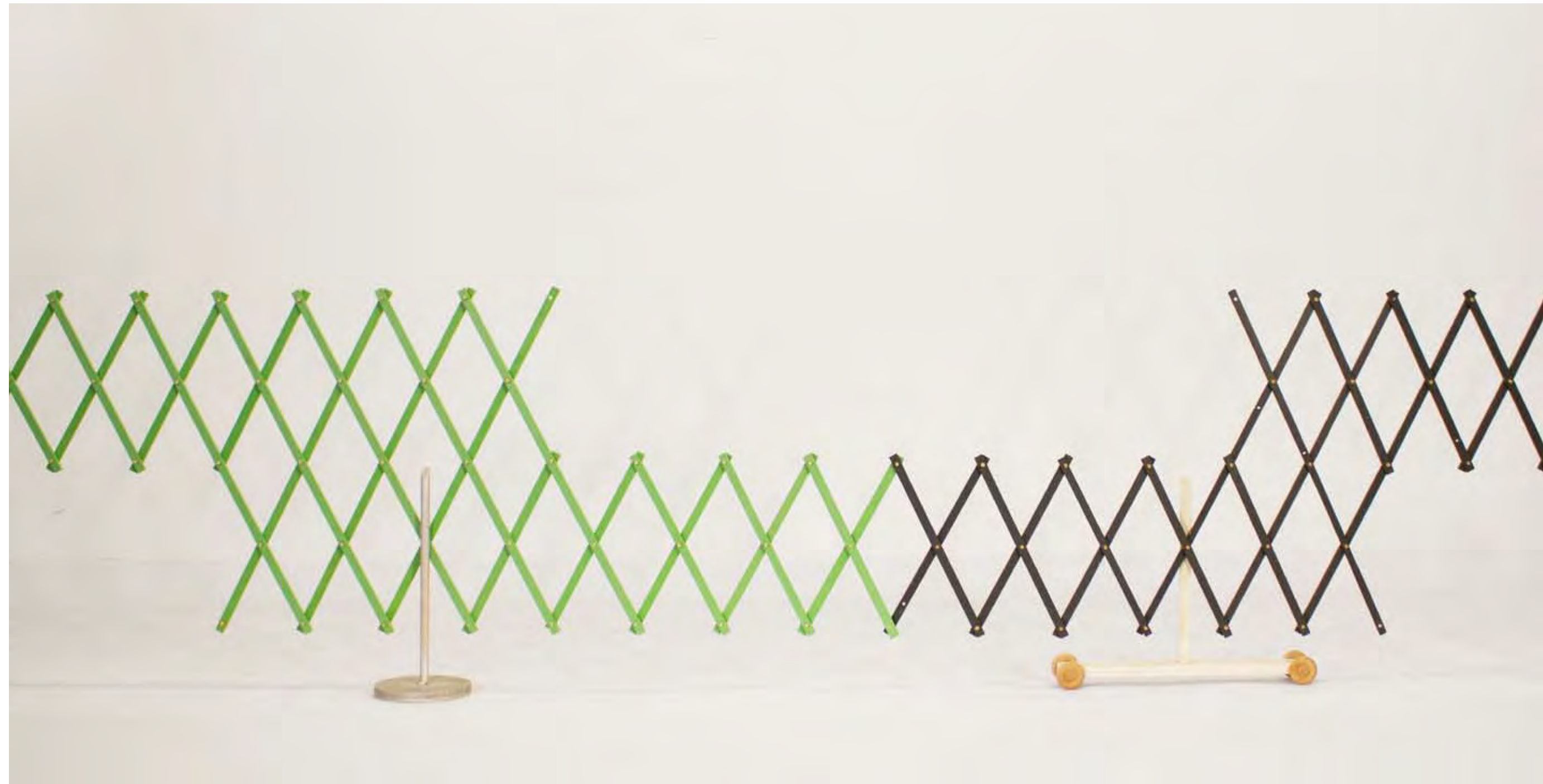


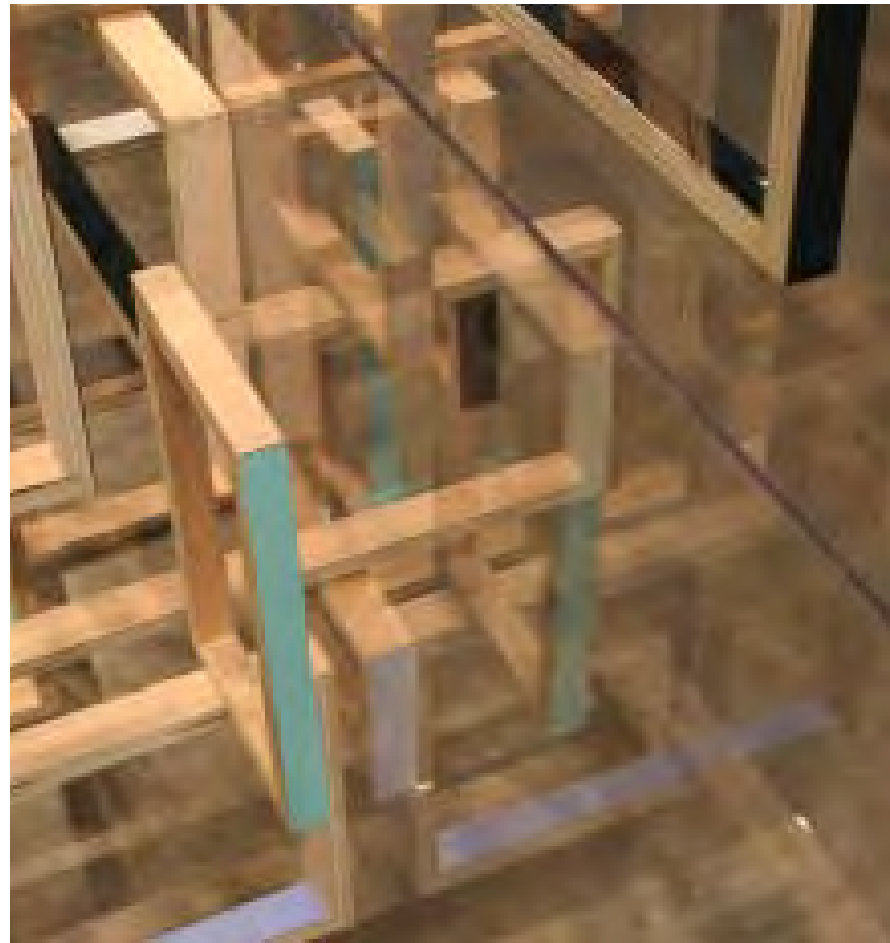
TIMOTHY HARDING















# CONTENTS

|                        |    |                                      |            |
|------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|------------|
| JOSHUA BIENKO          | 84 | <b>Introduction</b> _____            | <b>104</b> |
| MATTHEW BOURBON        | 16 | Shea Little, Director                |            |
| SUSI BRISTER           | 24 | <b>There Are No Lone Stars</b> _____ | <b>106</b> |
| SHANNON CANNINGS       | 44 | Virginia Rutledge, Curator           |            |
| BERNARDO CANTU         | 50 | <b>Special Invitation Artist</b>     |            |
| ELIZABETH CHILES       | 18 | CHRISTIE BLIZARD                     | 109        |
| KRISTEN COCHRAN        | 30 |                                      |            |
| CATHERINE COLANGELO    | 48 | <b>INVITED ARTISTS</b> _____         | <b>110</b> |
| CLARKE CURTIS          | 52 | MARGARITA CABRERA                    | 112        |
| GABRIEL DAWE           | 10 | MARY ELLEN CARROLL                   | 114        |
| ESTEBAN DELGADO        | 12 | TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK                | 116        |
| CASSANDRA EMSWILER     | 88 | ANNETTE LAWRENCE                     | 118        |
| JONATHAN FABER         | 22 | JAMES MAGEE                          | 120        |
| LAURIE FRICK           | 92 | <b>CHECKLIST</b> _____               | <b>122</b> |
| MICHAEL ANTHONY GARCÍA | 56 | <b>VENUES</b> _____                  | <b>138</b> |
| ANTHONY GARZA          | 42 | <b>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</b> — | <b>140</b> |
| LORI GIESLER           | 46 | <b>TEAM</b> _____                    | <b>144</b> |
| RIGOBERTO A. GONZALEZ  | 34 | <b>SPONSORS</b> _____                | <b>145</b> |
| NATHAN GREEN           | 68 | <b>THANKS</b> _____                  | <b>146</b> |
| TIMOTHY HARDING        | 86 | <b>continued...</b> _____            | <b>148</b> |
| NICHOLAS HAY           | 76 |                                      |            |
| HILLERBRAND+MAGSAMEN   | 8  |                                      |            |
| HANA HILLEROVA         | 14 |                                      |            |
| KATY HORAN             | 54 |                                      |            |
| TJ HUNT                | 80 |                                      |            |
| KATHRYN KELLEY         | 64 |                                      |            |
| DION LAURENT           | 82 |                                      |            |
| JESSICA MALLIOS        | 38 |                                      |            |
| RICHARD MARTINEZ       | 66 |                                      |            |
| MARCELYN MCNEIL        | 72 |                                      |            |
| BRANDON MILLER         | 40 |                                      |            |
| RAHUL MITRA            | 36 |                                      |            |
| OLIVIA MOORE           | 90 |                                      |            |
| KIA NEILL              | 60 |                                      |            |
| TOM ORR                | 96 |                                      |            |
| BRENT OZAETA           | 4  |                                      |            |
| RICARDO PANIAGUA       | 62 |                                      |            |
| JASON REED             | 32 |                                      |            |
| CARIN RODENBORN        | 6  |                                      |            |
| ABBY RONALDES          | 78 |                                      |            |
| SAM SANFORD            | 70 |                                      |            |
| ANTHONY SONNENBERG     | 28 |                                      |            |
| BARRY STONE            | 26 |                                      |            |
| SHANE TOLBERT          | 74 |                                      |            |
| BRAD TUCKER            | 94 |                                      |            |
| CATHIE TYLER           | 20 |                                      |            |
| H. DAVID WADDELL       | 58 |                                      |            |
| JADE WALKER            | 98 |                                      |            |

# Introduction

**THE EXPANSION AND EVOLUTION** of the Texas Biennial is a thrill to those of us who have been involved since the beginning. The 2011 Texas Biennial is by far the most energized edition of the exhibition to date, including simultaneous shows in three cities, designated artworks located around the state, a weekend of opening events in Austin, and the participation of over 60 Texas arts organizations that have joined in with their own independent exhibitions and other programming, all focused on contemporary art.

While it is incredible to witness this growth, it also is important to remember the Biennial's roots. The passion and driving purpose behind the Texas Biennial remains the effort to unite and support visual artists dispersed throughout the state by providing an exhibition opportunity for all to participate as a community, via an open call for submissions.

In 2005, when the Biennial originated, our founding organizers sought out a group of Texan art advocates whose expertise was called upon to jury the exhibition, resulting in a show comprised of 36 artists' work installed throughout Austin in five different venues, including artist-run and commercial galleries, as well as a city-run arts center. The beginning was humble, but the exhibition stirred the local contemporary art community, and our version of the Texas Biennial was born.

Since that first installment, subsequent Biennial exhibitions have received greater recognition as our founders developed the program to include more of the visual arts community in other parts of the state. The 2007 Texas Biennial also was juried by a panel, which selected 38 artists. That exhibition was again installed throughout Austin in multiple arts venues as well as truly alternative spaces, including oversized portable storage units.

In 2009, Los Angeles-based curator and art critic Michael Duncan was invited to independently curate the Texas Biennial. Duncan curated the group exhibition of work by 61 artists selected from the open call, and also put together four solo exhibitions — one artist each from the regions of North, South, East and West Texas. In addition, he included a Texas Biennial tribute artist — the late Kelly Fearing, who helped shape the history of Texas art through his involvement with the Fort Worth Art Circle and his many years of teaching. Duncan also helped establish a more collaborative exhibition model for the Biennial, as he worked with Risa Puleo at the City of Austin's Art in Public Places program to commission seven artists to create temporary outdoor projects in the city's parks.

And in 2011 we continue to forge ahead.

Guided by this year's independent curator, New York-based art historian and attorney Virginia Rutledge, for the first time in its history, the Biennial has partnered with non-profit arts organizations outside of Austin and is on view simultaneously in three major Texas cities: Austin, Houston and San Antonio. In Austin, the exhibition is also presented in unexpected places including temporarily empty commercial office space, a vacant house and the public area of the Austin airport. Rutledge has selected works by 49 artists both emerging and established, creating in a range of media representing the spectrum of contemporary visual art production. Pushing the Biennial's distributed exhibition model even further, Rutledge additionally has designated site-specific or permanently located artworks by five internationally recognized artists living and working in Texas. Each of these works demonstrates that contemporary art in Texas knows no bounds.

Rutledge has also built on the Biennial's spirit of community by challenging us to reach out to arts organizations across the state to support the project. We are delighted and honored by the enthusiastic response from the most established museums to the most alternative artist-run collectives. As a result of their participation, the 2011 Texas Biennial now not only celebrates Texas artists, but Texas arts organizations as well.

As the Texas Biennial continues to grow, the goal as always is to encourage community within the contemporary visual arts while promoting the artists who give Texas reason enough for a Biennial. The heightened collaboration, participation and notable support of the 2011 Texas Biennial confirm that indeed a bold and dynamic visual arts community exists throughout our state, sharing our same commitment to champion and sustain the amazing contemporary art that is made here.

— Shea Little, Director

# There Are No Lone Stars

**IT HAPPENS THAT THERE IS ENOUGH** contemporary art being produced in Texas to make a biennial. I'm not sure why that is; it is perhaps not even remarkable except that I don't think it is necessarily true of every state. Being big, having an extensive school and university system, having enough metropolitan areas and plenty of space to sustain almost any preference for working environment, having rich cultural diversity, the possibility of living relatively cheaply — all these may have something or nothing to do with it.

The "Texas" part of the Texas Biennial is less interesting to me than the fact that the exhibition was started by artists and has managed to make it to a fourth edition without an established institutional home or celebrity name attached to it.

"Cowboy art" makes some sense to me as a label. "Texas art" does not.

Although the ground rule I accepted as a curatorial limit was to include only recent work created by artists living and working in Texas, I've come to think that the point of the Texas Biennial isn't so much about the art made in the state. Instead, the real contribution of the project may be its potential to bring focus to the question of Texas as an audience for contemporary art.

Actually it's not surprising that artists founded the exhibition. Artists have done this before. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney did DIY rather differently, but the core motivation for providing a showcase may be much the same.

Artists understand that it's all about the audience. Sure, sometimes the artist is the only or primary audience. The artist is working out some thought for herself, or maybe just enjoying the physicality or labor of whatever is her process of making. Some art is never intended to leave the studio. Maybe that art becomes a totem, a source of personal or even clan power. Some art is abandoned before it is finished. Some art is destroyed by the artist, or recycled.

Most art is made to be seen, however.

Asking for an audience takes nerve. And it is a nervy thing to do. Why should anyone give you time and attention, just because you ask for it?

That is why we are entitled to assume that the work an artist chooses to put before an audience represents the artist's good faith attempt to communicate... something. I think that is partly why we can become so exasperated or even outraged when we don't get it, or suspect there's nothing to get.

So let's say the artist has nerve, and the work is at least personable, and maybe even better, interesting, or better still, thought-provoking. What is an artist without (enough of) an audience to do? (Is there ever enough audience? No. Not really.)

The open call art exhibition is one answer, however odd a social situation. Artists are invited to submit their work to be rejected. One has to have guts and a solid ego or some serious narcissism to accept such an invitation. But artists have been participating in this game since well before reality television.

There is a temptation perhaps to think of the open call submission format as being less mediated than the more typical curated show, which can sometimes feel as if the organizing institution chose the curator from 'column A', and the curator selected artists from 'column B'. By comparison, the open call exhibition may seem to promise unusual access for both the artist (to scarce curatorial attention) and the audience (wow, a truly "independent survey"!).

It has to be said this is mostly a fiction. The call is "open", but the response to some degree is predictably limited. Many artists and maybe particularly those who enjoy certain kinds of success would never submit their work to a juried show, just as top executives never "apply" for a job. And while it is a democratic process of evaluation, that means only that every artist has the possibility of receiving a vote from the juror or jurors. The election of the jury is fixed, and there never was an impartial judge.

I was interested to curate the 2011 Texas Biennial as much because of the open call process as because it had to do with Texas, a place I love without being able to say what "Texas" is. 'Making a show' out of a potential grab bag of art — no matter how fully realized and compelling each work may be — is a great challenge. Curators like an audience too.

But this Biennial has something special going for it, aside from the talent that lives and works in this state. Some confluence of circumstances and ideas and personalities has come together and caused a platform to be built from which it is possible to reach out. Obviously it is a small project in the scheme of things; the Biennial has grown so far because there is so much out there — but the interest in reaching out is significant.

This catalog gives most of its pages to images, and other than in sequencing those images to suggest a few themes and conversational threads, I've not attempted to 'talk about' the work selected for the group exhibition. It seems abundantly clear that contemporary art in Texas participates in many of the trends and concerns of the national and international art scenes, and just as clear that there are many highly original visions being pursued by artists living and working here. What they would be making if they lived and worked in Turkey probably would be different. But probably not as different as what they would be making if they lived in Texas 150 or even 100 or 50 years ago.

Stars used to be grouped in constellations that appear to form a picture in the night sky, and that is still a common usage. Yet we all know a constellation of stars may change its aspect when viewed from another location. "Texas art" might look different seen from Turkey, and vice versa.

In modern astronomy constellations are associated with sections of a gridded map of the celestial sphere rather than apparent patterns of stars. Nevertheless, both systems of classification obscure the reality that the stars that are grouped together typically are very far apart from each other, and are at varying distances from the Earth.

Our organizing principles enable some perceptions and hinder others. As a useful category "Texas art" has some limitations. In this particular age I suspect it would be as productive to talk about regional audiences as regional art. Yet focusing on contemporary art in Texas — contemporary art anywhere — is all to the good, in my view.

As a curator, I was allowed to reach out and invite several artists to participate in this Biennial. I chose to ask five who were gracious enough to permit certain 'located' works of theirs to be designated part of the exhibition. Though utterly unlike, each work insists on some consideration of its environment and therefore of its public — and in that sense each explicitly raises a question of audience. I also extended a special invitation to an artist who measures the success of her project literally by audience acceptance.

When is art the gift of a new or renewed thought, and when is it only an empty bid for attention? That is a question for all of us interested in the relevance of contemporary art.

There are a lot of lists in this catalog. As much as the documentation of the art included in the exhibition, this is the content, too. While the lists offer only a partial diagram of the network of support for contemporary visual art that exists in Texas, they are ample proof that there is an audience. They also affirm that collaboration is a viable model in this particular art galaxy.

— Virginia Rutledge, Curator

*Virginia Rutledge is an art historian and attorney.*



## Special Invitation Artist

### CHRISTIE BLIZARD

#### *The Give-Away Project, 2011*

Performed in Austin, TX, April 15-16, 2011

In this ongoing project, Blizzard creates small drawings and posts them in public places, accompanying them with hand-lettered signs indicating that the drawings are free and intended to be taken. Blizzard considers the work complete when her act of giving is accepted — when someone takes a drawing. The artist documents each site as a record of the work. Many of the drawings are made of multiple pieces of paper painted with watercolor and stitched together with thread. To date, Blizzard has distributed drawings from *The Give-Away Project* in Dallas, Lubbock, Reykjavik, and, as her contribution to the 2011 Biennial, in Austin.

**Christie Blizzard** was born in 1978 in Indianapolis, IN. She currently lives and works in Lubbock, TX, where she is an Assistant Professor of Painting in the School of Art at Texas Tech University. Her work has been featured in over 50 national and international exhibitions since 2003, including New American Paintings, The Southwest Biennial at the Albuquerque Museum of Art, the Texas Biennial 2009, and Berkeley Art Center's International Film Festival. She has received numerous awards including Best of Show from the annual national juried exhibition Positive/Negative 25, and honorable mentions for the 2009 Texas National. Blizzard has also been awarded several residencies, including at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY; Vermont Studio Center, Johnson City, VT; the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH; SIM Artist Residency through the Association of Icelandic Visual Artists, Reykjavik; and CentralTrak, the University of Texas at Dallas Artists Residency.

# INVITED ARTISTS

The 2011 Texas Biennial includes works by five internationally recognized invited artists: Margarita Cabrera, Mary Ellen Carroll, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Annette Lawrence and James Magee.

Each artist has recently created or is in the process of completing a major work that is either permanently located in Texas, or which responds to a particular site within the state (and sometimes both). *The Hill*, James Magee's monumental work situated in the West Texas desert, is difficult to imagine elsewhere. Mary Ellen Carroll's *prototype 180* is uniquely site-specific to the city of Houston. *From a Legend to a Choir*, by Trenton Doyle Hancock, and *Coin Toss*, by Annette Lawrence, are works commissioned for the contemporary arena that is Cowboys Stadium, in Arlington. In contrast, Margarita Cabrera's temporary and transportable installation *Mexico Abre la Boca* is modestly presented, but bold in its address of certain trade relations operating both locally and globally.

This aspect of the project expands the concept of a distributed model for exhibitions that the Biennial has embraced from its beginning. More importantly, however, it is a way to recognize some exceptional artists and works, and a gesture toward acknowledging the great range of contemporary visual art being produced in Texas. These designations may afford some opportunity to consider how the location or siting of a work may affect an audience's understanding of its meaning. Despite their dramatic differences in approach and subject, however, all these works share a belief in the communicative power of visual art.

In the following pages, each artist provides a description of the designated work and a brief biography.



## MARGARITA CABRERA

### *Mexico Abre la Boca, 2011*

Installed in Austin, TX, April 16, 2011

*Mexico Abre la Boca* uses the literal vehicle of a taco stand to close the gap between two very distant market actors: corporate and street vendors, which normally exist at opposite ends of the spectrum of globalized economies. The title of the work assumes the strong cultural presence of communities of Mexicans within the borders of the United States and announces a call for both cultural and economic empowerment. The stand offers information about FLOREZCA, a for-profit multinational corporation recently formed by Cabrera that produces, sells and exhibits original works of art that address issues impacting immigrant and migrant communities. In the same manner that a street vendor would sell delicious tacos, the *Mexico Abre la Boca* merchant or public representative promotes and sells artistic cultural productions from Mexican craft communities. Audiences may obtain information about FLOREZCA's international share investment options, as well as the artistic workshops organized by the corporation. They may also purchase traditional crafts created in Mexico, knowing that the profit from these purchases is returned to communities where the craft traditions are rooted.

**Margarita Cabrera** was born in 1973 in Monterrey, Mexico, lived in Mexico City for ten years and then immigrated to the U.S. with her family. She received an MFA from Hunter College in New York, NY. Cabrera currently lives and works in El Paso, TX. Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions, including at the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA; Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, Dallas, TX; and the El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY. Her most recent exhibitions include a solo survey show entitled *Pulso y Martillo* at UC Riverside Sweeney Art Gallery, Riverside, CA, during which she debuted two performance works. Her work also was included in *New Image Sculpture* at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; and the touring exhibition *Phantom Sightings: After the Chicano Movement*, organized by the Los Angeles Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Cabrera is represented by Walter Maciel Gallery in Los Angeles, CA.

Photography courtesy UC Riverside Sweeney Art Gallery, Riverside, CA; and Walter Maciel Gallery, Los Angeles, CA



## MARY ELLEN CARROLL

*prototype 180, 2010*  
Houston, TX

*prototype 180* is a conceptual work of art and urban alteration that entails a radical form of renovation through the physical rotation and reoccupation of a single family house in the aging, first-ring subdivision of Sharpstown in Houston, TX. In conception and planning for over 10 years, the project is temporally, physically and structurally organized around its catalytic rotational transformation, which took place on November 11, 2010. While the rotation and relocation of the house on its lot interrupt the relation of the house to its context and to existing street typologies, they also signal the altered life of the house as a space devoted to a program that will address the issue of aging neighborhoods and their potential futures. *prototype 180* strategically intersects conceptual art projects, social activism, urban legislation and economic processes. Its 180 degree reorientation registers aesthetically against a history of critical house alterations, and administratively in relation to Houston's unregulated land use policies and its absence of zoning.

**Mary Ellen Carroll** was born in 1961 in Danville, IL. She currently lives and works in New York, NY and Houston, TX. Carroll is the recipient of many grants and honors, including, most recently, a 2010 Graham Foundation Fellowship for *prototype 180* and innovation territory and the American Institute of Architects' Artist of the Year Award. She has also received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Pollack/Krasner Award, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship and a MacDowell Colony Fellowship. Carroll's work has been exhibited in numerous institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Renaissance Society, Chicago, IL; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich; and Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections. The monograph of her work published by SteidlMACK (London and Göttingen, Germany) received the AIGA's 2010 Book of the Year Award. Carroll teaches in the architecture school at Rice University, Houston, TX. She is represented by Galerie HubertWinter, Vienna.



## TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK

### *From a Legend to a Choir*, 2009

Vinyl print; approximately 40 by 98'  
Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, TX

Trenton Doyle Hancock's dense work stops viewers in their tracks. Its screaming colors and riotous energy are an eyeful and not for the fainthearted. But what happens when one spends a few moments with Hancock's crazy quilt of an image is hardly indelicate. *From a Legend to a Choir* builds upon the most democratic aspects of American Pop Art, from Stuart Davis to Andy Warhol to Jean-Michel Basquiat, empowering viewers by letting us bring our own stories to a wildly open-ended narrative.

Hancock's sprawling mural sets the stage. Its flower-filled setting evokes the biblical Garden of Eden and the psychedelic Summer of Love. Its figures' striped outfits recall jailhouse garb. Hancock's cast of characters is a rogues' gallery: some are headless lumps and others look more like animals than human beings, with a walrus, a four-eyed rooster and other mutants.

These creatures are part of an ongoing saga that Hancock has been telling for the past decade. He calls them "mounds" — plant-animal hybrids that behave like all of us, sometimes admirably and sometimes badly. Hancock's homegrown mythology includes a creation story, an epic battle between good and evil, an attempt at reconciliation between color-loving carnivores and scrawny, subterranean vegans, and much more. It has its roots in his personal history. Those roots nourish an inventive imagination out of which springs a world so rich with possibility that viewers cannot help but be drawn into it.

**Trenton Doyle Hancock** was born in 1974 in Oklahoma City, OK. He currently lives and works in Houston, TX. He received a B.F.A. from Texas A&M University in Commerce, TX, and an M.F.A. in painting at Temple University's Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, PA. Hancock has received numerous grants and awards including a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, the Penny McCall Foundation Award, the Joyce Foundation Award, the Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award and the Artadia Foundation Award. He has been included in numerous prestigious group exhibitions which have included the Lyon Biennale (2003), the Istanbul Biennial (2003) and the Whitney Biennial (2000 and 2002), and has been given solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; the Cleveland Museum of Art; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; and the Dallas Museum of Art. In addition to his mural at Dallas Cowboys Stadium, his most recent projects include a ballet produced by Austin Ballet and a site-specific sculpture at the Seattle Art Museum. Hancock is represented by Dunn and Brown Contemporary in Dallas, TX; and James Cohan Gallery in New York, NY.

Photography by Richie Humphreys, courtesy Dallas Cowboys



## ANNETTE LAWRENCE

### *Coin Toss*, 2009

Stranded cable; 14' diameter by approximately 45' span  
Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, TX

Just about every sculpture that has ever been made has had to struggle against gravity — to fight against its downward tug, to rise up off the ground, and to stand tall, with the authority of a monument. Mobiles are different because they hang from the ceiling. But their effect also depends upon their capacity to defy gravity — so that they seem to float in midair.

Annette Lawrence's graceful sculpture stands apart from this history for one simple reason: gravity does not matter to it. As an original work of art, it has as much to do with the nearly immaterial installations of California's Light and Space movement as it does with the geometric sculptures of such New York Minimalists as Donald Judd and Fred Sandback. Lawrence's tautly stretched steel cables inhabit an architectural interior, giving elegant form to the passage of time and the movement of bodies through space.

The hourglass-shaped sculpture comes alive when one walks under it. That is when the gentle curves of its profile shift, causing the open volume it wraps around to appear to contract and expand. Dazzling reflections dance off its shiny silver cables. The faster one walks, the faster they spiral through space. This movement is suggested by the work's title: *Coin Toss* calls to mind the start of a football game, when a coin spins through space in a manner very similar to that described by Lawrence's streamlined sculpture, which commands a lot more space than it actually occupies.

**Annette Lawrence** was born in 1965 in Rockville Center, NY. She currently lives and works in Denton, TX. Her work has been exhibited in numerous institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston, TX; the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX; the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; the University of California Riverside, Riverside, CA; The Bag Factory, Johannesburg, South Africa; and the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, Australia. Lawrence is a Professor of Studio Art in the College of Art and Design at The University of North Texas in Denton, TX. She is represented by Dunn and Brown Contemporary, Dallas, TX; and Betty Cuninghame Gallery, New York, NY.

Photography by Todd Eberle, courtesy Dallas Cowboys



## JAMES MAGEE

### *The Hill*

Cornudas, TX

A complex and monumental work of art, *The Hill*, is situated on 2000 acres of desert land in Cornudas, 70 miles east of El Paso. The work consists of four identical buildings connected by causeways, designed and built by the artist. Each building is 40 feet long, 20 feet wide and 17 feet in height. Three have installations made by Magee. The buildings are expertly crafted of irregularly-cut shale rock of which nearly 250 eight-ton truckloads were brought to the site. Each of the buildings is entered through a majestic iron portal — 8 feet wide and the full height of the building — portals that turn easily on their hinges, testament to the remarkable engineering acumen Magee has brought to the project as a whole. Decades in the making, a product of one man's infinite patience and unimaginable labor, *The Hill* sits in a gently rolling landscape with mesmerizing views of snow-capped mountains and limitless West Texas skies.

The buildings of *The Hill* — sited in a cruciform plan with their doors facing each other — sit on a promontory rising above the rocky desert. From door to door, the buildings are 187 feet apart, and the entire complex takes up 52,000 square feet. They rise above retaining walls fashioned of the same stone as the

buildings, and are connected by means of stone paths of a generous width. The sight of *The Hill*, so elegantly fabricated, classically-proportioned and mysteriously-sited amidst rocky desert and sky, inspires awe, even a sense of the sacred, well before the viewer enters a building.

To visit the complex, the vast double doors of each building must be opened, a task that is by no means trivial. Moreover, each of the three completed buildings house enormous metal installations that themselves open into a materially and visually complex *gesamtkunstwerk*. On occasion, while visitors take the considerable time required to study the works, Magee will recite their "titles" — in effect, lengthy poetic texts, at once allusive and immediate.

The installations themselves are large, metal-framed and glazed, hinged together in metal boxes like the wings of an Iron Age altar. Fashioned of a great variety of materials, such as cinnamon, paprika, flower petals, oil, wood, metal, rust, paint, textiles and more — the boxes resonate with the harsh beauty of their site. As these large panels are opened and moved to reveal yet other

large boxes, they evoke a sense of endless complexity, belying their creation by one man. Shifting and moving with the scale and power of the natural, they are also utterly artificial, completely abstract creations, analogs of the uneasy coexistence of the natural and the human in these remote plains. Less artworks in the usual sense than immense environments, *The Hill* is like a chapel filled with inexplicable altars belonging to some unknown religion.

*The Hill* is a profoundly original work of art; nothing like it exists anywhere else. Of the land, but not land art, sculptural but not sculpture, its closest analogs are the relief-adorned temples of southern India or Mesoamerica, and it is as isolated, improbable, and mysterious as they. Solemn, weighty, even ponderous, *The Hill* transmutes materiality into spirit and, despite its many tons of geared aesthetic machinery, seems more ethereal and dreamlike than metal and stone. A site of national and even international stature, *The Hill* is the life's work — and crowning achievement — of James Magee

**James Magee** has been engaged in a massive, largely secret, almost solitary endeavor in the vast plains of West Texas for more than a quarter of a century. A Michigan-born, Ivy League-educated lawyer, Magee's unusual trajectory through New York taxi driver and off-shore roughneck led him to make his home in El Paso, Texas, a border city made up of equal parts Mexico and the U.S., where, fittingly, he produces a vast body of work both under his own name and under the names of Annabel Livermore and Horace Mayfield, liminal identities in a liminal place. A painter, sculptor, poet, film and video maker, widely featured in museum and gallery exhibitions across the U.S. from the Yale University Art Gallery to the Nasher Sculpture Center, Magee reveals himself to be an architect, engineer and builder as well as an accomplished artist. Magee is represented by Addison Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA.

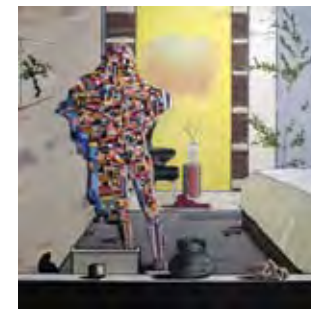
Photography © Tom Jenkins, courtesy Lisa Jenkins

# CHECKLIST



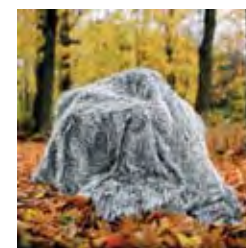
**JOSHUA BIENKO** Born 1978, Dunkirk, NY Lives in College Station, TX BFA, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, 2000 MFA, Lamar Dodd School of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 2008 Teaches at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

*ARTRAPS, TehChing Hsieh, 2009* Video with sound; aspect ratio 16:9; 4:32 mins. Presentation variable *ARTRAPS, Lewitt, Sol, 2010* Video with sound; aspect ratio 16:9; 2:21 mins. Presentation variable



**MATTHEW BOURBON** Born 1970, Newport Beach, CA Lives in Denton, TX BA, University of California, Davis, CA, 1993 MFA, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, 1999 Teaches at the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas, Denton, TX Represented by Rudolph Blume Fine Arts, Houston, TX

*Happy House, 2010* Acrylic on canvas; 72 x 72 x 2"



**SUSI BRISTER** Born 1979, San Marcos, TX Lives in Austin, TX BA, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 2001 MFA, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, 2008

*J and Horses in Snow in Snow, 2010* Pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper; 44 x 44" Edition of 5 *R & T and Frosted Mongolian in Fallen Leaves, 2009* Pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper; 44 x 44" Edition of 5



**SHANNON CANNINGS** Born 1972, Bridgeport, CT Lives in Lubbock, TX BFA, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1995 MFA, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, 1998 Represented by Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, TX; Charles Adams Gallery, Lubbock, TX; and Divergence Fine Art, Baltimore, MD

*Razer, 2010* Oil on panel; 24 x 24 x 1"



**BERNARDO CANTU** Born 1977, Weslaco, TX Lives in Denton, TX BFA, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 2001 MFA, The College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 2010 Teaches at University of North Texas' College of Visual Arts & Design, Denton, TX and Mountain View Community College, Dallas, TX

**Barrio Blaster (aka Neo-Geo Tex-Mex Shamanist Lite), 2010** Mixed media; 44 x 48 x 10"



**ELIZABETH CHILES** Born 1975, Austin, TX Lives in Austin, TX BA, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1997 MFA, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA, 2005 Represented by John Cleary Gallery, Houston, TX

**Backstage, 2010** Thirteen pigment prints on archival photographic paper; each print 16 x 16" Installation variable



**KRISTEN COCHRAN** Born 1975, Spokane WA Lives in Dallas, TX and Seattle, WA BFA, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 1998 MFA, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, 2010

**Domesticated Stump, 2010** Digital print on photographic paper; 53 x 42" Edition of 5 Part of the installation **at rest amongst branches, 2011** Mixed media; dimensions variable Installation variable



**CATHERINE COLANGELO** Born 1969, San Antonio, TX Lives in Houston, TX BFA, Cooper Union, New York, NY, 1992 *2009 Texas Biennial*

**Fleet for Abby Boat 3 - Heather, 2010** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 x 20"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 2 - Millie, 2010** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 x 20"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 1 - Anne, 2010** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 ½ x 20"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 8 - Cath, 2011** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 24 x 35"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 4 - Lorrie, 2011** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 x 20"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 7 - Lotte, 2011** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 20 x 30 ½"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 5 - Karen, 2011** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 x 20"  
**Fleet for Abby Boat 9 - Lara, 2011** Gouache and pencil on Okawara paper; 18 ½ x 20" (left to right, top to bottom)



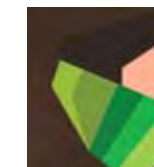
**CLARKE CURTIS** Born 1983, Eugene, OR Lives in Austin, TX BFA, The Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH, 2007 MFA, Clemson University, Clemson, SC, 2009

Four collages from the series **Haute Helping Hands, 2010** Paper collage; each figure approx. 10 x 4" on 19 5/8 x 19 5/8" mat ground



**GABRIEL DAWE** Born 1973, Mexico City, Mexico Lives in Dallas, TX BFA, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla, Puebla, Mexico, 1998 MFA, University of Texas at Dallas, Dallas, TX, 2011 Represented by Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX

**Plexus No. 5, 2011** Gütermann thread, wood, nails; dimensions variable



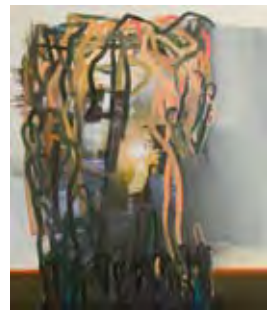
**ESTEBAN DELGADO** Born 1982, Kingsville, TX Lives in San Antonio, TX BFA, Texas A&M University at Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 2006 MFA, The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX, 2010 Teaches at St. Philips College, San Antonio, TX Represented by Art360 Gallery, San Antonio, TX

**Balancing Stack, 2010** Acrylic on panel; 24 x 22 x 1" **Golden Arch, 2010** Acrylic on panel; 24 x 22 x 1" **Set to Catch, 2010** Acrylic on panel; 24 x 22 x 1" **Trivial, 2010** Acrylic on panel; 24 x 22 x 1"



**CASSANDRA EMSWILER** Born 1983, Dallas, TX Lives in Dallas, TX BA, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX, 2008 MFA, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX, 2011

**Hemispheres / Spacia bridge / Austin - Houston, 2011** Mixed media including flooring material and natural objects; dimensions variable Installation variable Installed simultaneously at 816 Congress, Austin, TX and BOX 13 ArtSpace, Houston, TX



**JONATHAN FABER** Born 1970, New Orleans, LA Lives in Austin, TX BFA Alfred University, Alfred, NY 1994 MFA, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 2003 Represented by David Shelton Gallery, San Antonio, TX

**Transparent, 2009** Oil on canvas; 40 ½ x 34 ½ x 1 ½" Private collection, San Antonio



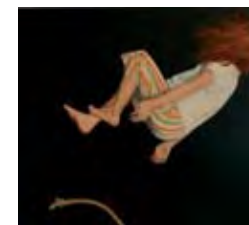
**ANTHONY W. GARZA** Born 1981, Corpus Christi, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, 2005

**Aard Cardinal Mountain Carrier, 2010** Watercolor on Arches paper; 40 x 60"



**LAURIE FRICK** Born 1955, Los Angeles, CA Lives in Austin, TX and Brooklyn, NY MBA, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 1982 MFA, New York Studio School, 2007 Represented by Edward Cella Gallery in Los Angeles, CA; Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY

**A long walk through cardboard, 2011** Recycled cardboard boxes, cut, glued and wired to PVC mesh; dimensions variable



**LORI GEISLER** Born 1961, Dallas, TX Lives in Highland Village, TX BFA, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 2005 MFA, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 2010

**IFTP7, 2009** Oil on panel; 36 x 32 x 1 ¼" **IFTP8, 2009** Oil on panel; 36 x 32 x 1 ¼"  
**IFTP9, 2010** Oil on panel; 32 x 36 x 1 ¼"



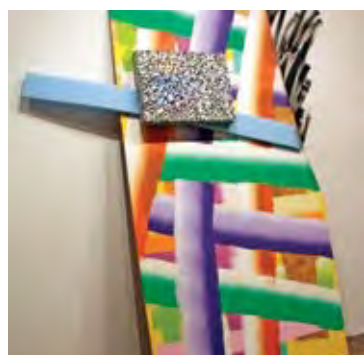
**MICHAEL ANTHONY GARCÍA** Born 1974, El Paso, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, Austin College, Sherman, TX, 1996 Teaches for Austin Independent School District

**Remote, 2010** Mixed media including light fixture; 96 x 36 x 24" **Bilocate, 2010** Mixed media including light fixture and architectural elements; 72 x 48 x 96"



**RIGOBERTO A. GONZALEZ** Born 1973, Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico Lives in San Juan, TX BFA, University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg, TX, 1999 MFA, New York Academy of Art, New York, NY, 2004 Represented by Art House Gallery, McAllen, TX

**The Zetas Cartel Beheading Their Rivals (Se Los Cargo La Chingada), 2010** Oil on linen; 84 x 84 x 5"



**NATHAN GREEN** Born 1980, Houston, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, University of Texas at Austin, TX, 2004 Represented by Art Palace Gallery, Houston, TX

*untitled*, 2011 Acrylic, spray paint, duct tape, hot glue, cement, pipe cleaners, pom poms, cardboard, sticks, spray insulation foam, mirrors, string, wood, tree stumps, shelving unit, carpet, panel, canvas, pedestal; units of variable dimensions Installation variable



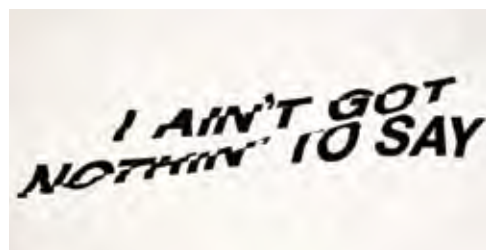
**HANA HILLEROVA** Born 1975, Prague, Czech Republic Lives in Houston, TX MGR, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, 2000 MFA, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 2004 Represented by Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston, TX

*Untitled (Conscious Space)*, 2009 Steel, mirrors, paint; 70 x 80 x 90" *Untitled (Conscious Space, Second Series)*, 2011 Steel, mirrors, paint; 80 x 140 x 90"



**TIMOTHY HARDING** Born 1983, Houston, TX Lives in Fort Worth, TX BFA, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX, 2008 MFA, TCU School of Art, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, 2010

*Don't Forget to Dot the I in Power*, 2010 Paper, graphite, charcoal, fluorescent lights, extension cords; dimensions variable



**NICHOLAS HAY** Born 1984, San Antonio, TX Lives in San Antonio, TX BFA, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, 2010

*I Ain't Got Nothin' To Say*, 2010 Black gesso on wood; 36 x 144 x 5/8"



**KATY HORAN** Born 1980, Houston, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 2003

*Seer*, 2009 Gouache on paper; 19 1/2 x 15 1/2" Collection of Mel and Julia Rapp *Singer*, 2009 Gouache on paper; 19 1/2 x 15 1/2" Private collection



**HILLERBRAND+MAGSAMEN** Stephan Hillerbrand Born Raleigh, NC Lives in Houston, TX BFA, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, 1990 MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, 1994 Mary Magsamen Born Ft. Collins, CO Lives in Houston, TX BFA, University of Denver, Denver, CO, 1991 MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, 1994

*Accumulation*, 2010 High definition video with sound; 4:00 mins. Single channel projection; aspect ratio 16:9; dimensions variable



**TJ HUNT** Born 1985, Abilene, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

*The True Artist Carries the Weight of the World*, 2011 Performance and earth; dimensions variable Installation variable Performed publicly April 9, 2011, 1319 Rosewood Avenue, Austin, TX



**KATHRYN KELLEY** Born 1962, Seattle, WA Lives in Houston, TX BS, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 1985 MFA, University of Houston, Houston, TX, 2006 Teaches at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX *2009 Texas Biennial*

*without your forgiveness I am still bound to what happened between us. only you can set me free, 2011* Remnant tubes, steel rebar, baling wire; dimensions variable



**DION LAURENT** Born 1965, Rockford, IL Lives in Rosanky, TX

*EarthMan 2, 2010* Sculptural performance work and documentation Presentation variable Performed publicly April 16, 2011, Congress Avenue, Austin, TX



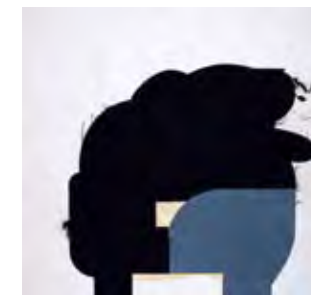
**JESSICA MALLIOS** Born 1976, Austin, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, 2000 MFA, The Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY, 2005 Teaches at The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX; Texas State University, San Marcos, TX; and St. Edward's University, Austin, TX

*1:1, 2011* High definition video with sound; 4:13 mins., looped Single channel projection; aspect ratio 16:9; dimensions variable



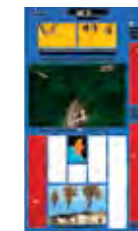
**RICHARD MARTINEZ** Born 1965, Hemet, CA Lives in San Antonio, TX MFA, University of California, Davis, CA, 2001 BFA, Southern Oregon University, Ashland, OR, 1998 Teaches at the University of Texas, San Antonio, TX Represented by DARKE Gallery, Houston, TX; REM Gallery, San Antonio, TX; JAY JAY Gallery, Sacramento, CA; and Fresh Paint Art, Culver City, CA *2005 Texas Biennial*

*Ultra 19, 2009* Oil, enamel and alkyd on stretched, shaped canvas; 37 ½ x 62 ½ x 2"  
*Bellatrix, 2010* Oil, enamel and alkyd on stretched, shaped canvas; 42 x 80 x 2"



**MARCELYN MCNEIL** Born 1965, Wichita, KS Lives in Houston, TX BFA, Pacific NW College of Art, Portland, OR, 1993 MFA, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1998 Represented by DARKE Gallery, Houston, TX

*Untitled (speed), 2010* Oil on panel; 74 x 71 x 1"



**BRANDON MILLER** Born 1975, Lansing, MI Lives in Austin, TX BA, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1997

*i-WIRE No. 7, 2010* Oil on newsprint; 22 x 12" *i-WIRE No. 10, 2010* Oil on newsprint; 22 x 12"



**RAHUL MITRA** Born 1967, Hyderabad, India Lives in Houston, TX Ph.D, University of Maine, Orono, ME, 1995

**DNA, 2010** Ink and collage of linocut prints on paper; 30 x 22" **Synthesis, 2010** Ink and marker on paper; 42 x 30"



**OLIVIA MOORE** Born 1978, Cincinnati, OH Lives in Austin, TX BFA, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, 2002 MFA, University of Texas, Austin, TX, 2011

**Double, 2009** Mdf and koa veneer with maple inlay; 39 x 52 x 8" **Frame, 2009** Box spring deconstructed and reupholstered with original material; 17 x 52 x 74"



**KIA NEILL** Born 1978, Evanston, IL Lives in Houston, TX BFA, The Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus, OH, 1999 MFA, The University of California, San Diego, San Diego, CA, 2005 Teaches at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Glassell School of Art, Houston, TX

An arrangement of works from the series **Coral Bed Remnants, 2010, Coral Trees, 2010 and Oysters, 2010** Pit-fired ceramic, sheet metal, polyurethane, epoxy, flocking fiber, rhinestones, gold leaf, metallic powder, glitter; each object approximately 2 x 6" Installation variable



**TOM ORR** Born 1950, Dallas, TX Lives in Dallas, TX BFA Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 1973 Represented by Marty Walker Gallery, Dallas, TX *2007 Texas Biennial*

**Bunny Harvey, 2009** Wood, lexan, plastic, wire; 60 x 120 x 50" **Onagadori, 2010** Wood, laminate, plexiglass; 59 x 68 x 40"



**BRENT OZAETA** Born 1985, Dallas, TX Lives in Dallas, TX BA, The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX, 2007 Represented by The Public Trust Gallery, Dallas, TX

**Brick Paste, 2011** Screenprints and wheatpaste, acrylic on cardboard; dimensions variable Installation variable Installed simultaneously at 816 Congress, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport and Big Medium, Austin, TX



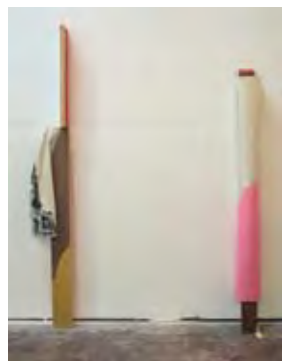
**RICARDO PANIAGUA** Born 1981, Dallas, TX Lives in Dallas, TX

*Fresh Gong Go Bong Bong, 2010* Enamel and lacquer on canvas; 72 x 43" *Technological Marvel, 2010* Enamel and lacquer on canvas; 72 x 43"



**JASON REED** Born 1980, Edmond, OK Lives in New Braunfels, TX BA, University of Texas, Austin, TX, 2003 MFA, Illinois State University, Normal, IL, 2007 Teaches at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX

*Border, 2010* High definition video with no sound; 6:15 mins., looped Single channel projection; aspect ratio 16:9; dimensions variable



**CARIN RODENBORN** Born 1972, Harlan, IA Lives in Austin, TX BFA, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, 1995 MFA, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2007 Teaches at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX and The Art Institute of Austin, Austin, TX

*In Between Our Closeness, 2010* Canvas, wood, acrylic, flocking fiber; 51 x 70 x 9" Installation variable



**ABBY RONALDES** Born 1983, San Antonio, TX Lives in Austin, TX BFA, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 2011

*Future Perfect, 2010-11* Private performance and video with sound on monitor; dimensions variable Presentation variable



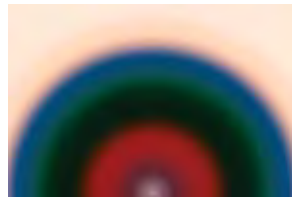
**SAM SANFORD** Born 1977, San Antonio, TX Lives in Austin, TX BA, Reed College, Portland, OR, 1999

*Kitty Pilgrim, 2009* Video with no sound for 12 monitors and 12 DVD players; 1:37 mins., looped Presentation variable



**ANTHONY SONNENBERG** Born 1986, Graham, TX Lives in Austin, TX and Seattle, WA BFA, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 2009 MFA, University of Washington at Seattle, Seattle, WA, 2012

*Beauty is Not Benign, 2010* Bear skin rug, brass sheeting, brass piping; 42 x 72 x 60" Private collection, Austin *St. Sebastian, 2010* Lion skin, brass sheeting, brass piping; 54 x 90 x 36"



**BARRY STONE** Born 1971, Lubbock, TX Lives in Austin, TX BA, University of Texas, Austin, TX, 1993 MFA, University of Texas, Austin, TX, 2001 Teaches at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX Represented by Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York, NY 2009 *Texas Biennial*

**Black Cloud, Austin, TX 6.22.2009, 2009** Archival inkjet print; 24 x 36"; Edition of 10  
**Alan Greenspan as a Rainbow in Washington D.C. on October 23, 2009, 12.20.2009, 2009** Archival inkjet print; 24 x 36"; Edition of 10  
**Crop, Indian Canoe, Circa 1886 by Albert Bierstadt, Jack S. Blanton Museum, Austin, TX 1.2.2010, 2010** Archival inkjet print; 24 x 36"; Edition of 10



**SHANE TOLBERT** Born 1985, Corsicana, TX Lives in Houston, TX BFA, University of Houston, Houston, TX, 2008 MFA, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA, 2010

**Mirror, 2010** Sodium chloride solution on commercially dyed fiber; 79 x 79 x 1 3/4"



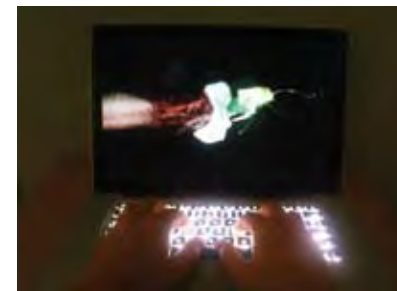
**BRAD TUCKER** Born 1965, West Covina, CA Lives in Austin, TX BFA, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 1991 MFA, Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY Teaches at Texas State University, San Marcos, TX Represented by Inman Gallery, Houston, TX 2007 *Texas Biennial*

**Stretch Fabric, 2010** Acrylic on wood, precision bearings; 30 x 40 x 7" compressed, 29 x 85 x 7" stretched  
**Padded Mirror with Small Reflection and Wands, 2011** Acrylic and enamel on wood, acrylic on foam rubber, wood; 136 x 183 x 14"



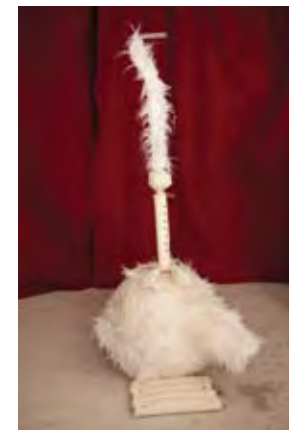
**CATHIE TYLER** Born LaJunta, CO Lives in Mason, TX BS, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 1967 MFA, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 1977

**Caged Sky, 2009** Oil on board; 12 x 12 x 2"



**H. DAVID WADDELL** Born 1980, Houston, TX Lives in Houston, TX BFA, University of Texas, Austin, TX 2003 MFA, American University, Washington D.C., 2007 Teaches at Houston School for the Performing and Visual Arts

**Night Crawlers, 2010** Stop-motion animation video with sound; 2:40 mins., looped Presentation variable Presented online at [www.texasbiennial.org](http://www.texasbiennial.org) for the duration of the exhibition



**JADE WALKER** Born 1977, Tampa, FL Lives in Austin, TX BFA, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 2000 MFA, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 2005 2009 *Texas Biennial*

**Quadri-Poise, 2011** Fabric, found objects, Nitto tape; dimensions variable Installation variable

# VENUES

The 2011 Texas Biennial is hosted by non-profit arts organizations in three cities: Austin, Houston and San Antonio. In Austin, the Biennial is also presented in an unusual range of alternative spaces, including unoccupied commercial offices, a vacant house and the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

## AUSTIN

**816 Congress** is an office building located just south of the Texas State Capitol at Congress Avenue and 9th Street. Rising 20 stories above one of the most dynamic central business districts in the nation, 816 Congress is within walking distance of a multitude of popular destination amenities including upscale dining establishments, world-class historic and four-star hotels, museums, art galleries, theatres, and the lively Sixth Street, Warehouse and Second Street entertainment districts. [www.816congress.info](http://www.816congress.info)

**1319 Rosewood Avenue** is a vacant house in the heart of central East Austin, a diverse and growing community.

**Austin-Bergstrom International Airport** is the gateway to the city of Austin and Central Texas. The Barbara Jordan Terminal is programmed year-round with a variety of displays and exhibitions celebrating the region's heritage and creativity. The Biennial exhibition is located in an area accessible to the general public. [www.abia.org](http://www.abia.org)

**Big Medium** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting visual arts and artists in Texas by offering affordable studio spaces, operating a gallery and organizing programs such as the annual East Austin Studio Tour and the Texas Biennial. [www.bigmedium.org](http://www.bigmedium.org)

**Pump Project Art Complex** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to enrich and reinforce Austin's creative community through providing working studios, programming and exhibition facilities for emerging and established artists. [www.pumpproject.org](http://www.pumpproject.org)

**The Visual Arts Center (VAC) in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin** draws students, faculty, guest artists and creative voices from around the world to the university's dynamic arts community, and serves as a hub for artistic expression, education and innovation. [www.utexas.edu/finearts/vac](http://www.utexas.edu/finearts/vac)

**Women & Their Work** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that serves as a catalyst for new ideas in contemporary art by creating opportunities for artists and audiences to experience contemporary art through ambitious exhibitions, commissions of new work, performances and education programs that inform audiences of all ages. [www.womenandtheirwork.org](http://www.womenandtheirwork.org)

## HOUSTON

**BOX 13 ArtSpace** is an artist-run non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, an innovative environment for the creation and advancement of experimental contemporary art in Houston. [www.box13artspace.com](http://www.box13artspace.com)

## SAN ANTONIO

**Blue Star Contemporary Art Center** is the first and longest-running venue for contemporary art in San Antonio, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that now in its twenty-fifth year enables over 300,000 visitors each year to experience contemporary art through exhibitions, the MOSAIC after-school education program and community events. [www.bluestarart.org](http://www.bluestarart.org)

# PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The 2011 Texas Biennial is proud to recognize the arts organizations and artist collectives supporting the project with their own independently curated exhibitions and other programming.

## **ABILENE**

The Grace Museum

## **ALBANY**

The Old Jail Art Center

## **AUSTIN**

Arthouse at the Jones Center

Austin Museum of Art

Blanton Museum of Art

City of Austin People's Gallery, Austin City Hall

Co-Lab

Dougherty Arts Center

Mexic-Arte Museum

## **CORPUS CHRISTI**

Art Museum of South Texas

K Space Contemporary

The University Galleries at Texas A&M University

Corpus Christi

## **DALLAS**

CentralTrak, The University of Texas at Dallas

Artists Residency

Dallas Museum of Art

Free Museum of Dallas

McKinney Avenue Contemporary

Nasher Sculpture Center

Richland College Galleries

Ryder Jon Piotrs Nomadic Gallery

## **DENTON**

East | West Galleries, Department of Visual Arts, Texas

Woman's University / Denton

## **EL PASO**

El Paso Museum of Art

Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts

## **FORT WORTH**

Fort Worth Contemporary Arts — The Art Galleries at TCU

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

## **GALVESTON**

Galveston Arts Center

## HOUSTON

Art Car Museum  
Aurora Picture Show  
Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston  
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston  
CORE Program at the Glassell School of Art,  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
FotoFest  
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft  
Houston Center for Photography  
Lawndale Art Center  
Museum of Printing History  
Project Row Houses  
Station Museum of Contemporary Art  
The Menil Collection

## LONGVIEW

Longview Museum of Fine Arts

## LUBBOCK

Farm to Market Arts @ LHUCA  
Landmark Arts, Texas Tech School of Art, Texas Tech  
University (with Land Arts of the American West  
at Texas Tech University)  
Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts

## LUFKIN

Museum of East Texas

## MARFA

Ballroom Marfa

## MCALLEN

International Museum of Art & Science (with South  
Texas College Visual Arts Gallery, McAllen and  
University of Texas — Pan American, Clark Gallery,  
Edinburg)

## MIDLAND

Museum of the Southwest

## SAN ANGELO

San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts

## SAN ANTONIO

Artpace  
cactus bra Space  
Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center  
McNay Art Museum  
Neidorff Art Gallery at Trinity University  
Sala Diaz  
San Antonio Museum of Art  
Southwest School of Art  
Unit B (Gallery)  
UTSA Art Gallery and Satellite Space, Department of Art  
and Art History, The University of Texas at San Antonio

## SAN MARCOS

Gallery I & II, School of Art & Design at  
Texas State University

## TYLER

Tyler Museum of Art

## WACO

Martin Museum of Art at Baylor University  
The Art Center of Waco

## WICHITA FALLS

The Juanita Harvey Art Gallery at  
Midwestern State University



## RYDER JON PIOTRS NOMADIC GALLERY

### *Unpacking Access, 2011*

Performed in Austin, TX, April 15, 2011

Formed in 2007, the roving project **RJP Nomadic Gallery** has both exhibited at numerous venues and served as a venue for curated exhibitions. *Unpacking Access* is a performance investigating the possibility of decentralizing more traditional art distribution systems. Nomadic Gallery founders and artists Ryder Richards (Dallas, TX), Jonathan Whitfill (Lubbock, TX) and Piotr Chizinski (Ithaca, NY) use a rented 40' Ryder moving truck to transport a 'gallery kit' which enables them to transform the vehicle into a functioning art venue. The work seeks to import open source media concepts and values to the notion of 'the art exhibition', modeling alternative forms of community access, engagement and collaborative ingenuity.

During opening performances, the artists park the truck, unpack and install the gallery kit. (On April 15, 2011, the artists exhibited works related to information systems.) Closing performances return the arts venue to its original function, as the artists pack up the truck and drive away. Performances are filmed and streamed online as a further gesture toward transparency and accessibility — a gesture that is intended to acknowledge its limits, as the notion of the Internet itself as truly public and accessible space is only that, a notion.

# TEAM

## CURATOR

Virginia Rutledge

## STAFF

**Director** Shea Little **Coordinator** Hannah Roberts **Program Associate** Jon Windham **Special Projects Coordinator** Jessica Nicewarner  
**Media Contact** Rachel Koper **Volunteer Coordinator** Lindsey Ford

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## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Texas Biennial gratefully acknowledges its 2011 Advisory Committee, a distinguished group of artists, curators, critics and arts educators and administrators from around the state, including several former Biennial jurors:

Joe Arredondo *Director of Landmark Arts, Texas Tech School of Art, Texas Tech University, Lubbock* Kate Bonansinga *Director, Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, The University of Texas at El Paso* Andrea Karnes *Curator, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth* Valerie Cassel Oliver *Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston* Frances Colpitt *Deedie Potter Rose Chair of Art History, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth* Kimberly Davenport *Director, Rice University Art Gallery, Houston* Fairfax Dorn *Executive Director, Ballroom Marfa* Matthew Drutt *Curator* Steven Evans *Executive Director and Curator, Linda Pace Foundation, San Antonio* Bill FitzGibbons *Artist; Executive Director, Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, San Antonio* Sue Graze *Executive Director, Arthouse at the Jones Center, Austin* Joseph Havel *Artist; Director, The Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* Benito Huerta *Artist; Director and Curator, The Gallery at UTA (University of Texas at Arlington)* Toby Kamps *Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Menil Collection, Houston* Constance Lowe *Artist; Professor, Department of Art & Art History, University of Texas at San Antonio* Laurence Miller *Co-Founder, Fluent-Collaborative, Austin* Dennis Nance *Director, Exhibitions & Programming, Lawndale Art Center, Houston* John Pomara *Artist; Professor, School of the Arts and Humanities, University of Texas at Dallas* Claudia Schmuckli *Director and Chief Curator, Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston* David S. Rubin *The Brown Foundation Curator of Contemporary Art, San Antonio Museum of Art* Wendy Watriss *Artistic Director & Co-Founder, FotoFest, Houston* Clint Willour *Curator, Galveston Arts Center* Charles Wylie *The Lupe Murchison Curator of Contemporary Art, Dallas Museum of Art*

## CATALOG CONCEPT

Specific Type

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Michelle Kapp-Cabaniss Design, Shea Little, Jon Windham

The Texas Biennial is a project of Big Medium, an Austin based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting contemporary visual art in Texas. [www.bigmedium.org](http://www.bigmedium.org)

# SPONSORS

## FUNDERS

City of Austin, Texas Commission on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts

## DONORS

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Anonymous, Sheila and Colin Buechler, Ann Daughety, Will Dibrell and Beverly Bajema, Browne and Diane Goodwin, Inman Gallery, Emily Little, Marissa and Chad Nickle, Steve Redman, The Screamer Company

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Domy Books, Trailer Space Records, Whole Foods Market, Wildworld Graphics, Central Market



The Texas Biennial began with strong local community support, and that community is growing in significant ways.

All of the artists, venues, participating organizations and sponsors involved in the project for 2011 are identified in the preceding pages. We appreciate every one of them.

Here we are pleased to acknowledge collaborations with several institutional partners: Art Lies, which commissioned and produced three special online Biennial-themed features also published in PDF format and considered part of this catalog; Glasstire.com, which hosted an online calendar of exhibitions and events presented by participating organizations statewide, and also created a unique Texas Biennial information page; The Blanton Museum of Art, which hosted and co-presented with the Biennial and Art Lies on April 16, 2011 a public panel that explored the state of contemporary art in Texas; and Arthouse at the Jones Center, which co-hosted a meeting on April 15, 2011 of contemporary arts curators, critics and journalists from across the state.

We also express gratitude to the government agencies, foundations and other nonprofits that helped fund our programming: Booth Heritage Foundation, the major sponsor of this catalog; Texas Commission on the Arts and the Linda Pace Foundation, which made significant grants

in support of the curators meeting; Art Alliance Austin, which supported our group celebration in Austin on April 16, 2011; Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which helped support the public panel; and Fluent~Collaborative, for an unrestricted gift. We also thank the Austin Museum of Art for sharing its Community Room as an information headquarters.

Finally, we would like to offer particular thanks to some of the individuals who helped make this fourth edition of the Biennial happen.

Several people made important contributions early in the development of our plans. Suzanne Deal Booth gave us generous advice as well as financial support, as did Mike Chesser and Jeanne and Michael Klein. Their endorsement of this project was inspiring.

We also owe special thanks to Laura Wiegand, Director of Programs and Technology at Texas Commission on the Arts, for her tireless championing not only of this project but the entire Texas visual arts community.

To these and all Biennial friends listed below — thank you. We hope you are looking forward to 2013, too!

— The Texas Biennial Team

# THANKS

## VENUES

**816 Congress** Peggy D. Dills, Matthew P. Chittum, Sr., Amy J. Newsom **1319 Rosewood Avenue** Nicole Blair **Austin-Bergstrom International Airport** Matthew Coldwell **Big Medium** Jon Lawrence, Shea Little, Joseph Phillips, Hannah Roberts, Jana Swec, Jon Windham **Blue Star Contemporary Art Center** Bill FitzGibbons, Zinnia Dunis Salcedo, Emily Barker **BOX 13 ArtSpace** Elaine Bradford, Emily Link, Kathryn Kelley, Dennis Nance **Pump Project Art Complex** Debra Broz **The Visual Arts Center (VAC) in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin** Jade Walker, Xochi Solis **Women & Their Work** Chris Cowden, Rachel Koper

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

**Art Car Museum** James Harithas, Ann Harithas, Noah Edmundson, Jim Hatchett, Mary Forbes **Art Museum of South Texas** Joseph Schenk, Deborah Fullerton, Michelle Locke **Arthouse at the Jones Center** Sue Graze, Elizabeth Dunbar, Rachel Adams, Christa Gary, Leslie Moody Castro **Artpace** Matthew Drutt, Kimberly Aubuchon, Mary Heathcott **Aurora Picture Show** Andrea Grover, Delicia Harvey, Mary Magsamen **Austin Museum of Art** Dana Friis-Hansen, Jack Nokes, Andrea Mellard **Ballroom Marfa** Fairfax Dorn, Virginia Lebermann, Mike Bianco **Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston** Claudia Schmuckli, Jeffrey Bowen **Blanton Museum of Art** Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, Aimee Chang, Risa Puleo, Ursula Davila-Villa, Kathleen Brady Stimpert **cactus bra Space** Jayne Lawrence, Leigh Anne Lester **CentralTrak, The University of Texas at Dallas Artists Residency** Kate Sheerin, Leigh Arnold **City of Austin People's Gallery, Austin City Hall** Jean Graham **Co-Lab** Sean Gaulager **Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston** Bill Arning, Valerie Cassel Oliver **CORE Program at the Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston** Joseph Havel, Justin Cavin **Dallas Museum of Art** Charlie Wylie, Erin Murphy **Dougherty Arts Center** Mary Ann Vaca-Lambert **East | West Galleries, Department of Visual Arts, Texas Woman's University / Denton** Vance Wingate **El Paso Museum of Art** Michael Tomor, Christian Gerstheimer **Farm to Market Arts @ LHUCA** Jeffrey Wheeler **Fort Worth Contemporary Arts — The Art Galleries at TCU** Christina Rees **FotoFest** Wendy Watriss, Jennifer Ward, Vinod Hopson **Free Museum of Dallas** Michael Corris **Gallery I & II, School of Art & Design at Texas State University** Mary Mikel Stump **Galveston Arts Center** Alexandra Irvine, Clint Willour **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center** Patty Ortiz, Belinda Menchaca **Houston Center for Contemporary Craft** Julie Farr, Gwynne Rukensbrod, Mary Headrick, Anna Walke **Houston Center for Photography** Bevin Bering Dubrowski, Jason Dibley, Sandy Vitrano **International Museum of Art & Science** Joseph Bravo, Susan Zwerlin | South Texas College Visual Arts Gallery Tom Matthews, Phyllis Evans, Pedro Perez, Amanda Alejos | University of Texas — Pan American Susan Fitzsimmons, Maria Macias, Chad Farris

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## FOR HELP IN ORGANIZING THE PARTICIPATION OF OUR INVITED ARTISTS

Walter Maciel, Walter Maciel Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, University of California Riverside Culver Center of the Arts & Director, UCR Sweeney Art Gallery; Patty Ortiz, Executive Director/Curator, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center; Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Jones; Doreen Nichols; Michael Auping; Judith Gaskin Ross; Kate Bonansinga; Richard Brettell; Lisa Jenkins

## FOR ABOVE-AND-BEYOND ADVICE, ENTHUSIASM AND HANDS-ON HELP

Joe Arredondo, Sue Graze, Virginia Lebermann, Laurence Miller, Dennis Nance, John Pomara, Kate Sheerin, Wendy Watriss

Adam Carnes, Aimee Chang, Megan Crigger, Lindsey Ford, Alison de Lima Greene, Benito Huerta, Hana Hillerova and Dana Harper, Dan Kaplan, Michelle Kapp-Cabaniss, Jon Lawrence, Emily Little, Kurt Mueller, Elizabeth Murray, Jessica Nicewarner, Jessica Nieri, Judy Paul, Meredith Powell, John Rosato, Danny Roth, Richard Shiff, Xochi Solis, Terri Thomas and Randy Potts, Anne Elizabeth Wynn

Peter Briggs and the West Texas Sky Survey, Matt Cowan, Lana Dietrich, Jim Edwards, Nancy Fullerton, Amy J. Goldrich, Arturo Palacios, Pogolo Productions, Dave Rauchwerk

## The curator would like personally to thank

Michael Duncan, Diane Neumaier, Jane and Bob Rutledge, Lawrence Waung, The Staff at Spa Trintignant

# ART LIES

We have art in order not to die of the truth.

—Nietzsche

**The 2011 Texas Biennial catalog continues with a series of special contributions commissioned in partnership with *Art Lies*, A Contemporary Art Journal.**

Visit Artlies.org for three original features related to the 2011 Texas Biennial that will be posted at intervals throughout the run of the exhibition. Each text will be available as a downloadable PDF file, which we encourage you to read, share, print and then store in the pocket behind this page for future reference.

**Biennials and Texanicity in Contemporary Art:  
A Survey of Surveys**

**Benjamin Lima**, Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History, The University of Texas at Arlington

*A look at the history of biennials, statewide exhibitions and surveys of Texas art.*

**Sited and Situated:  
A Brief Account of Art Places in Texas**

**Richard Brettell**, The Margaret McDermott Distinguished Chair, Art and Aesthetics, The University of Texas at Dallas

*A personal encounter with site-specific practices located in Texas.*

**Like a Whole Other Country?  
The State of Contemporary Art In Texas**

**An edited transcript of a public panel co-presented by the Texas Biennial, the Blanton Museum of Art and Art Lies**, featuring Texas-based artists Margarita Cabrera and Trenton Doyle Hancock; Alison de Lima Greene, Curator of Contemporary Art and Special Programs, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; *Los Angeles Times* art critic David Pagel; 2011 Texas Biennial Curator Virginia Rutledge; and Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art History, The University of Texas at Austin.

This program was made possible in part with a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

# continued...

In the spirit of expanding the Texas Biennial beyond venues in Austin to include organizations and activities across the state, we offer a complementary set of discursive coordinates. We have edited a special edition: a set of Biennial texts disseminated via Art Lies' website reflecting on the range of artistic production occurring under the banner "Texas" — as a community, a geography, a history, a culture, a curatorial (or other) conceit or simply an address, however temporary. We hope to enrich the critical dialogue surrounding this most current roundup by contextualizing the Biennial project in terms of trends both unique to Texas and pertinent to contemporary art at large, to map out a sense of where "Texas art" has been and where it might go.

— Kurt Mueller, Interim Editor, *Art Lies*, and Virginia Rutledge, Curator, 2011 Texas Biennial

Founded and rooted in Texas, Art Lies provides an international forum for the critical examination of artistic practice, theory and discourse on and about the contemporary arts. Art Lies achieves its mission through the publication of a printed journal, a weekly-updated website, our Guest Editorial Program, membership events and public programming, including the Art Lies Annual Distinguished Critic Lecture Series.

Art Lies is funded in part by The Anchorage Foundation of Texas, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Brown Foundation, the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, The Houston Endowment, The Keating Family Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts and our members.

## Biennials and Texanicity in Contemporary Art: A Survey of Surveys<sup>1</sup>

By Benjamin Lima

Within the field of contemporary art, a gap has opened between the etymology of the term “biennial” and its common usage.<sup>2</sup> That an exhibition takes place every two years is not the main significance of the term “biennial.”<sup>3</sup> Rather, the term commonly refers to large-scale exhibitions of contemporary art that connect a particular city with the global art world through the display of work by an international roster of artists. In that sense, the Texas Biennial is unusual in defining its scope by work made within the borders of a state.<sup>4</sup> Flanking Texas to the east and west, the Prospect New Orleans and SITE Santa Fe biennials are more conventional examples of the exhibition form as it has come to be known; like most others, they share the names of their cities (not states or countries) and emphasize an international roster of contributors.<sup>5</sup> It would be tempting to see the present exhibition’s Texanicity as reflecting both a swaggering independence and a conscious distancing from the trends and fashions of the international art world.<sup>6</sup>

As perhaps befits a place that experienced nine years of sovereign independence in the nineteenth century and today counts a population greater than that of Australia or the Netherlands, Texas has produced and received a number of serious published surveys of its art history.<sup>7</sup> Many of these fit the historical art of Texas into the broader currents of American and world art history. They make clear that movements such as regionalism and modernism, which interpret social transformations such as the Industrial Revolution or the information economy, apply both locally and globally.<sup>8</sup>

A good way to orient oneself to the field is to consult publications that encompass the entire art history of the state. A 1983 Austin exhibition, *Images of Texas*, surveyed the history of Texas artists’ treatment of their environment and came to conclusions already familiar from pop-culture stereotypes. In the words of curator Becky Duval Reese, “Cows and cowboys, oil wells and rockets, landscapes with wide-open spaces, and a look that has come to be called Texas chic” evolved over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with “a strongly felt sense of romanticism” and later also appearing in a parodic mode.<sup>9</sup> In an accompanying catalogue essay, the historian William H. Goetzmann traced a series of key moments in the state’s art history: its vast scale and varied environments daunting efforts to “capture” it artistically in the 1840s; the arrival of European-trained patrons and artists with the German Adelsverein by 1850; the state legislature’s sponsorship of official history painting in 1873; the rise of the cowboy as icon, above all with Frederic Remington in the 1880s; a preference first for impressionism, then regionalism (against avant-garde modernism) through the early twentieth century; expressionism and muralism as responses to the Depression; the rise of modernism (often affiliated with university art departments) after World War II; and Dave Hickey’s Austin gallery, A Clean Well-Lighted Place, as a symbol of countercultural cosmopolitanism in the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

The most comprehensive published survey, *Texas: 150 Works from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* covering all of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, followed two exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: *Texas Myths and*

1. Although “Texan” is standard and “Texanicity” is not, the latter more clearly refers to an abstract quality, not an individual, and acknowledges Roland Barthes, who found “Italianicity” in a Panzani pasta advertisement; Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32–51.

2. Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Østvebo, eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010) is an essential resource for grappling with the phenomenon.

3. The quinquennial *Documenta* exhibition in Kassel, Germany, is a frequent point of reference in the literature; also triennials such as the Asia Pacific.

4. The California Biennial does the same; the quinquennial *Greater New York* exhibitions at P.S. 1 cover the metropolitan area; and the Whitney Biennials have historically been limited to U.S. artists (less so recently).

5. In this, they share the characteristics of all other descendants of the Venice Biennale, established in 1895, as does Houston’s *FotoFest*, the biennial photography survey.

6. The 2009 exhibition’s curator, Michael Duncan, made comments to this effect; see below.

7. My research here is based on a study of published catalogues (that is, excluding exhibitions without them) and not meant to be an exhaustive list, but I apologize for any errors or omissions. I was unfortunately unable to examine unpublished sources for the many exhibitions that were not accompanied by catalogues. I also consulted published literature that was not occasioned by an exhibition, as well as selected periodical sources. I thank Robert Hower and the UT Arlington Art & Art History Department for research support.

Catalogues include *Texas Painting and Sculpture: The 20th Century* (Dallas: Pollock Galleries, 1971); William H. Goetzmann and Becky Duval Reese, *Texas Images & Visions* (Austin: Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas at Austin, 1983); *Texas Realism* (Dallas: Meadows Museum, 1991); Cecilia Steinfeldt et al., *Art for History’s Sake: The Texas Collection of the Witte Museum* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association for the Witte Museum of the San Antonio Museum Association, 1993); Edmund P. Pillsbury and Richard R. Brettell, *Texas Vision: The Barrett Collection: the Art of Texas and Switzerland* (Dallas: Meadows Museum, 2004); and Robert Summers, *Texas Treasures: Early Texas Art from Austin Museums* (San Marcos: Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art, 2009).

8. A special mention should be given to studies of the iconography of the Texas cowboy. These including Caleb Pirtle and Jack Bryant, *XIT: Being a New and Original Exploration, in Art and Words, into the Life and Times of the American Cowboy* (Birmingham: Oxmoor House, 1975), and Donald E. Worcester, *The Texas Cowboy* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 1986).

9. Becky Duval Reese, “Preface,” in *Texas Images & Visions* (as in note above), 10.

10. William H. Goetzmann, “Images of Texas,” in *Texas Images & Visions* (as in note above), 15–44.

*Realities* (1995) and *Texas Modern and Postmodern* (1996).<sup>11</sup> In an ambitious, scholarly catalogue essay, Alison de Lima Greene used four topics as analytical concepts to draw together a vast range of historical and contemporary material: the landscape, the spiritual and visionary, modernism, and postmodernism. Most interestingly, Greene considered many examples of work that would test conventional boundaries of school and genre. For instance, she discussed Vernon Fisher's postmodern compositions or Rackstraw Downes' Galveston views as examples of "Texas landscapes"; the universalist spiritualism sponsored by the Menils and the impact of Mexican religiosity on a range of artists; Donald Judd turning the isolation of West Texas to advantage; and the way that general ideas of postmodernist pastiche and hybridity have played out in a specifically Texan context.

Certain cohesive groups, based in individual cities, have received fuller scholarly treatments in the form of book-length studies based on in-depth historical research. If we contrast the "Lone Star Regionalism" preceding World War II, rooted in a sense of local distinctiveness and the challenges of the Depression, with the Fort Worth Circle's "Intimate Modernism" following the war, a self-consciously internationalist group working in a context of peace and affluence, we may see how artists' groups that spring from similar social environments nonetheless turn out to have fundamental differences on questions of artistic theory and practice.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the Dallas Nine and their circle were concerned with "the regional artist's relation to his or her environment—not only the land but the people as well"—the Fort Worth Circle was "the state's first colony of artists to embrace and manifest a clearly nonregional aesthetic" and "Texas' first genuinely cosmopolitan movement."<sup>13</sup> Both, however, were small, cohesive groups of artists including individuals who provided ambitious leadership, and were supported at key points by local institutions; that is, they conformed to the standard model of modern art movements more generally.

Also at the level of the individual city, leading museums have sponsored long-running series of contemporary art exhibitions that mix local, national and international art, allowing artists on the local scene to evaluate and respond to different work flown in from around the globe. This mixing is a goal also shared by standard biennial exhibitions. Examples here would be the *Perspectives* series at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, the *Focus* exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and the *Concentrations* and *Encounters* series at the Dallas Museum of Art.<sup>14</sup> A similar stimulus has been provided by fellowship and residency programs that promote contact between insiders and outsiders, such as the Artpace International Artist-in-Residence Program in San Antonio, the Core Program at the Glassell School of Art in Houston, Centraltrak: The UT Dallas Artists Residency and the Chinati Foundation's Artist-in-Residence Program in Marfa.<sup>15</sup> All of these exhibitions and residencies have provided for a cross-pollination of the Texan and non-Texan that seems crucially important for a growing, thriving art scene.

Exhibitions, such as the current Texas Biennial series, that take up Texanocity as a theme have had many forms and sizes. One frequently occurring type is the small- or medium-scale group show that may take place at a museum, a

11. Alison de Lima Greene et al., *Texas: 150 Works from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2000).
12. Rick Stewart, *Lone Star Regionalism: The Dallas Nine and Their Circle, 1928–1945* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985); Scott Grant Barker and Jane Myers, *Intimate Modernism: Fort Worth Circle Artists in the 1940s* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 2008).
13. As in note above, Stewart, p. 12, and Barker and Myers, p. 11, 36.
14. See Richard R. Brettell, *NOW/THEN/AGAIN: Contemporary Art in Dallas 1949–1989* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1989) and Lynn M. Herbert et al., *Perspectives@25: A Quarter Century of New Art in Houston* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2004).
15. See *Core: Artists and Critics in Residence* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2008) and *Dreaming Red: Creating ArtPace* (San Antonio: ArtPace, 2003).

commercial gallery or an alternative space, whose title announces the included artists' Texas identity as a basis for the show. The accompanying catalogues often center on each artist's individual work more than synthetic discussions of the whole.<sup>16</sup> Several larger-scale exhibitions have also presented selections of Texas-based work distinguished primarily by a general criterion of quality or interest as the main rationale, rather than verbally developing a thematic argument at great length.<sup>17</sup> Another approach is to select a group of works primarily through an aspect of identity that the included Texas-based artists share in common; a prime example would be those shows that have focused on the work of women artists in Texas.<sup>18</sup> Curator Lynn Adele's study of self-taught artists in Texas is also framed in this manner.<sup>19</sup>

Probably only in recent decades have the art scenes in each of the largest Texas cities developed to a point where a survey exhibition or publication can be both of a substantial size *and* highly selective of its list of artists, as is typical for biennials. Curators have developed thematic concepts that unify groups of selected artists, responding in various ways to the conventional wisdom that a national or international public may be presumed to hold about Texas. In a 1986 survey of contemporary Texas art published by Chronicle Books in San Francisco, Annette DiMeo Carozzi (now deputy director of the Blanton Museum of Art) first acknowledged the existence of familiar stereotypes old ("a vast frontier...a sparse population of good ol' boys") and new ("the mad for-profit oil magnate...the urban cowboy") before moving beyond them to more relevant and productive concepts. She noted that Roberta Smith in 1976 had written appreciatively in *Art in America* of the state's "weirdness and fantasy...a fresh, direct appeal, an uncensored humor and personal immediacy missing in the mainstream art centers," but worried that the state's "eccentricity, colorful hyperbole, and outrageous characters" were disappearing under the pressures of urbanization. Selecting a diverse list of 50 contemporary artists, Carozzi identified three themes of broader relevance: "Art that conveys a spiritual search," especially of a visionary or autobiographical nature; "Art that evaluates the myths of American life," especially to satirize, parody and mock over-inflated myths and icons; and "Art that responds to other art," especially European and Latin American surrealism.<sup>20</sup>

Examining the second half of the twentieth century for a book published in Australia, critic Patricia Covo Johnson highlighted the Chicano movement, the border with Mexico and rapid urbanization as main influences on the current scene, before nominating three themes as crucial to the state's artistic identity: "a sense of spirit," i.e., "intuition, metaphysics, and magic"; "the concept of assemblage" in both material and symbolic terms; and irony, generated by the gap between myth and reality, or between life and larger-than-life. (In his foreword, Walter Hopps also noted the connection to Mexico and the importance of visionary artists.)<sup>21</sup> In a more recent exhibition catalogue, curator Suzanne Weaver and critic Lane Relyea placed Texas work of the 1980s and '90s in the context of the art-school/art-market nexus and the Internet.<sup>22</sup> Reflecting on the process of "growing up in public," Relyea discussed the direct connections between MFA programs, galleries interested in promoting young artists, and the art fairs, *Kunsthalls* and adventurous museums that commission work by such

16. Characteristic examples for which I was able to consult published catalogues include *Twelve Artists Working in North Texas* (Dallas: Museum of Fine Arts, 1979); *Paperworks: An Exhibition of Texas Artists* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum Association, 1979); *Third Coast Review: A Look at Art in Texas* (Aspen: Aspen Art Museum, 1987); Surpik Angelini, Bert Long, and Thomas McEvilley, *Another Reality: An Exhibition* (Houston: Hooks-Epstein Galleries, 1989); Jim Edwards, *The Perfect World in Contemporary Texas Art* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art, 1991); *Capirotada: Eight El Paso Artists* (El Paso: El Paso Museum of Art, 1991); Patrick McCracken, *Reunion: The Young Texas Artist Series* (Amarillo: Amarillo Art Center, 1993); Benito Huerta, *Establishment & Revelation* (Dallas: Dallas Visual Art Center, 1997); Dana Friis-Hansen and Lynn M. Herbert, *Artistic Centers in Texas: Houston/Galveston* (Austin: Texas Fine Arts Association, 1999); Charles Wylie and Suzanne Weaver, *Artistic Centers in Texas: Dallas/Fort Worth* (Austin: Texas Fine Arts Association, 2000). Robert Summers provides a historical survey of prize competitions in *Arthouse Texas Prize 2005* (Austin: Arthouse at the Jones Center, 2005).

Related exhibitions for which I was unable to examine publications but that bear mentioning include *Nexus Texas* (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2007), *I-35 Biennial* (Dunn and Brown Gallery, Dallas), *New Art in Austin* (Austin Museum of Art), *Amarillo Biennial 600* (Amarillo Museum of Art), *Houston Area Exhibition* (Blaffer Gallery, Houston), and Artadia-related exhibitions (DiverseWorks, Houston).

17. These include *Fire: An Exhibition of 100 Texas Artists* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 1979); *SAMA Open: A Juried Regional Contemporary Art Exhibition* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum Association, 1986); and Louise Dompierre et al., *Texas/between Two Worlds* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 1993).
18. Patricia D. Hendricks, *20th Century Women in Texas Art* (Austin: Laguna Gloria Art Museum, 1974); Marcia Tucker, *Woman-in-Sight: New Art in Texas* (Austin: Women & Their Work, 1979); *150 Works by Texas Women Artists* (Dallas: Dallas Women's Caucus for Art, 1986); Sylvia Moore, *No Bluebonnets, No Yellow Roses: Essays on Texas Women in the Arts* (New York: Midmarch Arts, 1988); Regine Basha et al., *The Activist Impulse: 30 Women and Their Work* (Austin: Women & Their Work, 2008); Kippra D. Hopper and Laurie J. Churchill, *Art of West Texas Women: A Celebration* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2010); and Jo Williams, *Pioneers in Modernism: TWU Women Artists, 1920s–1970s* (Denton: Greater Denton Arts Council, 2010).
19. Lynne Adele, *Spirited Journeys: Self-Taught Texas Artists of the Twentieth Century* (Austin: Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, 1997).
20. Annette Carozzi, "Introduction," in Carozzi, Gay Block, and Laurel Jones, *50 Texas Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in Texas* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1986).
21. Patricia Covo Johnson, *Contemporary Art in Texas* (Roseville East, NSW: Craftsman House, 1995).
22. Suzanne Weaver and Lane Relyea, *Come Forward: Emerging Art in Texas* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2003).

artists, leading to increased levels of opportunity, risk and pressure in the early years of a career. These developments affect artists both here and internationally.<sup>23</sup> Weaver addressed the convergences and divergences between “real,” embodied experience and “virtual,” cybernetic experience as a central theme of both local and wider significance.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, the two most recent series of efforts to establish a recurring statewide survey (preceding the present series) both focused on broader themes in contemporary art, as opposed to a Texan essence. In brief introductory remarks for a 1988 Texas Triennial at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, the curators noted the strength of both abstract and figurative painting, and the pluralism and variety of the state’s art scenes.<sup>25</sup> David Ross (then director of the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art) had begun with a preconceived idea of a “Texas mythology...everything larger than life, everyone richer, meaner, smarter, more passionate...just plain bigger in every way,” but concluded that the best artists were instead focused on trans-regional issues such as terrorism and AIDS.<sup>26</sup> Five years later, for a biennial exhibition in Dallas, curator and gallery director Al Harris F. argued for the central place of irony, “a blurring and interweaving of fact and fiction,” and that “the mass media and advertising shape not only our social relations but our identities”; in other words, central themes of postmodernism per se.<sup>27</sup> If these exhibitions signaled the integration of Texas art into the wider contemporary art world, their unintended one-off status indicated that they did not securely establish themselves within the local one, their appearance and disappearance constituting what Bill Davenport called a “classic boom-and-bust cycle.”<sup>28</sup>

By contrast, the most recent institutional configuration has so far been able to sustain its momentum through a record four consecutive editions. The 2005 exhibition was “a bootstrap effort by five small artist-centered spaces in Austin, with the help of colleagues from across the state,” a “do it yourself biennial” on a “shoestring budget,” in what could be seen as self-reliance in an honorable frontier tradition, with Austin artists most strongly represented.<sup>29</sup> The 2007 jury was more heavily slanted toward museum curators; nonetheless, there was some continuity in the roster of artists, with Candace Briseño, Heyd Fontenot, Peat Duggins and William Betts represented for the second time.<sup>30</sup> Notably, the 2009 exhibition was placed in the hands of a single curator from outside the state, Los Angeles-based Michael Duncan, bringing it closer to the established biennial model in which a single “exhibition-maker” is given a significant degree of authorship over each new edition.<sup>31</sup> At this point the range of exhibition venues remained in Austin, while the central place given to the work of Kelly Fearing invited viewers to interpret contemporary work from a historical perspective. In an interview with Andrew Long, Duncan offered a reason to think that his exhibition might be more surprising and rewarding than any given stop on the international “biennial circuit”:

Museum curators often float the same cornucopia of well-known names. That’s a quota they feel they have to fill. The premise of the Texas Biennial is to surprise people, and there are so many great Texas artists who have not been discovered.<sup>32</sup>

23. Lane Relyea, “Growing Up Absurd,” in *Come Forward* (as in note above), pp. 8–13, “growing up in public,” p. 11.

24. Suzanne Weaver, “Are You Experienced?” in *Come Forward* (as in note above), pp. 14–20.

25. Marge Goldwater, David A. Ross, and Marilyn Zeitlin, *The First Texas Triennial Exhibition* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 1988).

26. Ibid., 11.

27. Chris Cowden, Al Harris F., Benito Huerta, and Marti Mayo, *1993 Texas Biennial Exhibition Presents: Eighty Texas Artists* (Dallas: Dallas Artists Research & Exhibition, 1993).

28. J. R. Compton, “The Texas Biennial” (2005), *Glasstire: Texas Visual Art Online*, <http://glasstire.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

29. Rebecca S. Cohen, “Texas Biennial 2005,” *Art Lies* 46 (2005), <http://www.artlies.org>, accessed February 14, 2011; Robert Faires, “Do It Yourself Biennial,” *Austin Chronicle* (March 4, 2005), <http://austinchronicle.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

30. Elaine Wolff, “Reading Between the Pixels,” *San Antonio Current* (March 14, 2007), <http://www.sacurrent.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

31. Harald Szeemann was the pioneering figure in this regard in contemporary art; more recently, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Okwui Enwezor and Robert Storr have occupied similar positions (along with many others). For the 2009 exhibition, several single-artist outdoor installations were co-curated by Duncan and Risa Puleo.

32. Andrew Long, “State of Wonderment,” *Austin Chronicle* (March 6, 2009); <http://austinchronicle.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

He also suggested themes that might be seen as tying the exhibition together, including “Artists positioning themselves against the world,” or put slightly differently, “Texas art is about cultivating interior vision—artists feeling at odds with the place but doing their own thing regardless.”<sup>33</sup> We could read this as a reference to the quirky counterculture that is distinctive of Austin (and for which that city is known well beyond Texas) or, just as much, of the fortitude required of such artists who settle away from Austin in any of the state’s less self-consciously artsy neighborhoods. In another context, Duncan returned to similar themes:

Loners who know what’s up, these Biennial artists function on the periphery of the powers that be, satisfying aesthetics they’ve developed largely on their own. No copycats allowed....Texas seems largely a self-contained world and that’s what’s good about it.<sup>34</sup>

Reviewing the exhibition for *Art in America*, critic and art historian Frances Colpitt saw Fearing’s work as exemplary of this theme and “emblematic of the isolation and independence of the Texas artists [the curator] admires.” She viewed the show as consonant with Duncan’s larger vision, one “[p]artial to narrative painting and, especially, Magic Realism,” and to “championing sincere, underrecognized artists.”<sup>35</sup> Another critic, Robert Faires in the *Austin Chronicle*, saw the 2009 biennial as covering “technology, identity, the environment, a culture driven by information at a faster and faster pace” and suggesting a trajectory that runs “from the stresses of our technologically fractured society to the enduring power of nature and the saving grace of pure, simple color.”<sup>36</sup> The value placed on individual independence, outsider or renegade status and, implicitly, liberation from the stresses of modern, mass, metropolitan society, suggests that the outsider artists surveyed by Lynn Adele may be not simply models of “outsider art,” as such, but could also have a privileged status within the broader field of Texas art as a whole.

Although the format of the Texas Biennial has evolved over time, one continuing emphasis seems to be a predominant focus on early- to mid-career artists who are unambiguously identified with Texas as a base or site for their work.<sup>37</sup> While this focus is highly valuable to the development of artistic culture here, it also tends to de-emphasize certain classes of artists who nonetheless have a major influence on relations between local and wider artistic worlds. In the present moment, while artists whose careers are primarily concentrated in Texas fully deserve to be the focal point of a Texas biennial, it may also be the case that Texas art is significantly shaped by artists who count as “Texan” to greater or lesser degrees.<sup>38</sup>

As a thought experiment, I could list three of these categories. The first group are non-Texan residents who have contributed to the state through their presence here—among a wide range of examples, we could include Peter Saul, Michael Smith, Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler, Richard Patterson, Erick Swenson and, last but not least, Donald Judd. The second group are natives of the state who maintain an active presence through working or exhibiting here, while at the same time building their careers more widely: Nic Nicosia and Dario

33. Ibid.

34. Jeanne Claire van Ryzin, “Ten days till the Texas Biennial,” *Austin Arts: Seeing Things* (February 24, 2009), <http://austin360.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

35. Frances Colpitt, “Texas Biennial,” *Art in America* (June 16, 2009), <http://artinamericamagazine.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

36. Robert Faires, “Texas Biennial 2009—DIY: Double Wide,” *Austin Chronicle* (April 10, 2009), <http://austinchronicle.com>, accessed February 14, 2011.

37. One possibility is that this results from self-selection among the artists who participate in the open submission format.

38. In the 2011 Biennial, curator Virginia Rutledge has included work by artists such as Trenton Doyle Hancock and Mary Ellen Carroll, which may be considered ambiguously or quasi-Texan in ways that I discuss below.

Robleto would be examples. The third group are natives of the state who have made more or less definitive moves to pursue lives and careers elsewhere, but whose art could nonetheless serve as significant monuments to some aspect of Texas artistic culture, in some cases even illuminating a point by their very abandonment of native soil. These would include Robert Rauschenberg (born 1925, Port Arthur; died 2008, Captiva Island, Florida), Max Neuhaus (born 1939, Beaumont; died 2009, Maratea, Italy), Robert Wilson (born 1941, Waco), Kay Rosen (born 1949, Corpus Christi), Richard Hawkins (born 1961, Mexia), Nathan Carter (born 1970, Dallas) and Ryan Trecartin (born 1981, Webster). Of course, these names represent only the smallest sample of the diverse tendencies within the state, but they do suggest how permeable the boundary is between Texas and beyond. They might also indicate that the impact of Texas artists on American art, and American artists on Texas art, is underappreciated. Every survey exhibition, by its nature, makes explicit or implicit arguments about inclusion and exclusion. As we consider the history of efforts to define what is Texan in visual art, it is provocative to imagine examples of the semi-Texan, formerly Texan or newly Texan, demonstrating that independence and interdependence can coexist in the same state.

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## Sited and Situated: A Brief Account of Art Places in Texas



*In recent iterations of the Texas Biennial, the exhibition's organizers have sought to broaden the exhibiting venues beyond white-wall galleries, and the artwork presented beyond objects easily contained in such "neutral" spaces. In 2007, the Biennial solicited and selected proposals for eight original and temporary installations, half of them housed in PODS® and the rest sited directly on the neighboring grounds at "Site 1808," a field alongside East Cesar Chavez Street in Austin. In 2009, Biennial curator Michael Duncan commissioned, in concert with the City of Austin's Art in Public Places and Risa Puleo, Assistant Curator at the Blanton Museum of Art, seven temporary outdoor projects near or around the banks of Lady Bird Lake. Making the Biennial more public, these "site-specific" artworks also significantly extended the biennial's representation of artistic production occurring within the state.*

*Continuing this trend with an expansive twist, 2011 Biennial Curator Virginia Rutledge invited five recently completed or in-process Texas-sited projects to be part of this year's exhibition. These works are Margarita Cabrera's Mexico Abre la Boca (2011) in Austin, Houston and other forthcoming locations; Mary Ellen Carroll's prototype 180 (2010–present) in Sharpstown, Houston; Trenton Doyle Hancock's From a Legend to a Choir (2009) at Cowboys Stadium, Arlington; Annette Lawrence's Coin Toss (2009), also at Cowboys Stadium; and James Magee's extraordinary work known as The Hill (ongoing), in Cornudas. Each project engages natural, architectural or social landscapes particular to Texas.*

*These inclusions further Rutledge's "distributed" Biennial model in which she has augmented the juried open-submission process by designating nonprofit spaces, shows and artworks across Texas as part of the exhibition. Making the most of a limited budget, she has annexed major works by internationally recognized artists (who otherwise did not respond to the open call). Again, the Texas Biennial acknowledges another facet of art connected to the state, reflecting not only on artistic possibilities but also the landscape specifically engaged.*

*We invited University of Texas Professor Richard Brettell, no stranger to the state's artistic treasures, to address this dimension of the Biennial. In the following contribution, Dr. Brettell foregrounds Rutledge's selection with a personal account of art places in Texas. Looking back nearly forty years, his recollection establishes a prehistory to recent site-responsive practices while making clear that embracing such projects (both as viewers and scholars) is necessary to any understanding of Texas art.—KM*

My wife and I first drove into Texas by crossing the great State Line Avenue in Texarkana in August of 1976. We had all of our earthly possessions in an old red VW Beetle with no air conditioning, and it was as hot as hell. We were moving from a seventeenth-century thatched cottage in Old Marsden outside Oxford, England, to an unseen 1960s apartment in downtown Austin found for us by Ken Prescott, chair of the Department of Art at the University of Texas, and we were incredibly excited. I was going to be an assistant professor of Modern art at UT's art school. It was odd to me, however, and potentially challenging that art history was not its own department but, instead, was part of the art department in the university's College of Fine Arts. I already knew the department was on the opposite side of campus from all the things that mattered to me—the library, the rare book library, the university art collections and the humanities departments.

The first person I met on campus was painter and printmaker Ken Hale, also then an assistant professor, working in the air-conditioned splendor of his new lithography studio. The next day I met some art historians, but the most memorable person I met in that first week was the photographer Garry Winogrand, who was teaching then at the university and who, after I earnestly asked about the places to see great art in Texas, told me, "Rick, you don't come to Texas for great art. You come for great life." I knew then that it would be a wild ride.

I took Garry's pithy advice seriously by driving throughout the state in the four years my wife and I lived in Austin—visiting small towns, ranching communities, cities and landscapes, meeting the families of my students, reading the *WPA Guide to Texas*, following the travels of Frederick Law Olmsted in his antebellum trip through the state, etc. And although, unlike Garry, I was actually impressed with Texas' art museums and private collections (the Kimbell was brand new, and the Menil had not yet been built), I was, true to his comments, more impressed by its diverse and vibrant culture and its independent streak. As a Coloradan, I was totally blown away by the state's diversity—culturally and geographically—and I well remember the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio.

Little did I know that in the same year we arrived in Texas, Donald Judd bought the first of two ranches outside of distant Marfa and began to conceive of his extraordinarily ambitious series of installations now maintained by the Chinati Foundation. Indeed, the only "site-specific" works of art that I heard about in those years were in major cities. The Rothko Chapel and the Beer Can House in Houston (a juxtaposition of types of "art" possible only in Texas) topped the list for me.

## Sited and Situated: A Brief Account of Art Places in Texas

2

Fast-forward a year: I remember sitting at dinner in the home of the great medievalist art historian at UT, Eleanor Greenhill (who grew up in the Panhandle, received her doctorate at the University of Munich and taught first at the University of Chicago). On the wall of her dining room, behind Eleanor as she sat at the head of the table, was an extraordinary "halo," which was actually a huge framed sheet of paper on which appeared what can only be called a gilded blotch. (The sheer idea of this was extraordinary to me because a blotch is only possible as the result of a sudden gesture with liquid, while gilding is only possible with pure, dry surfaces.) I was fascinated by it, and she told me about its maker, the artist Michael Tracy. Michael was then about to leave Houston for the tiny early-nineteenth-century border town of San Ygnacio, where he moved definitively in 1978. But before he did we began a lively correspondence that resulted in my coming to know the first truly sublime and original site-specific work of art I had ever encountered.

Michael was so fascinated by the renewed responses to his work in the late 1970s in Austin (where he had taken classes as an undergraduate) that he had rented (or squatted in) a small, abandoned two-story building on East Sixth Street and had spent a considerable amount of time filling the entire building with art installations (without saying anything about it to anyone). He gave a set of keys to Eleanor Greenhill and me and left town. I will never forget going down to the building for the first time with no sense of what I would see and opening the door to discover a room-by-room installation of his extraordinary "faux-religious" art with piles and vases of flowers lit by votive and large-scale candles. (Thank God the Austin fire marshal never knew about it.) I can't remember how long the installation was there—perhaps a month, perhaps two weeks—but it was gone one day as quickly as it appeared, and I never saw a photograph of it or read a mention of it in print. It was an installation created specifically for its site, but unlike most works of art that are site-specific, it was always intended to be temporary—more like a stage set for a short-run performance of private viewing than a permanent work of art.

It was the expression of a deeply felt and emotional meditation by an artist from the Midwest on the cultural situation of Texas. Michael had come to the state and taken classes in medieval art and architecture from Professor Greenhill. In 1977–78 he began to respond more powerfully than any non-Hispanic artist I know to the deepest cultural conditions of Texas—its border status. It was this status that led him eventually to the border itself and, while there, gradually to Mexico City, Guanajuato and beyond. For the Michael Tracy of this extraordinary installation, Texas was part of an immense series of interlinked—borderless—landscapes with

cultural roots in pre-Hispanic times and whose modern status as a U.S. state was less important to its identity than its participation in this larger—and far deeper—cultural terrain.

The Sixth Street installation coincided with the beginning of Tracy's gradual restoration and installation of the earliest adobe buildings in San Ygnacio. It was also at this time that Tracy started collaborating with James Magee, which, in turn, played an important part in that artist's decision to buy land of his own in Cornudas in far West Texas for his ever-evolving work of art called *The Hill* (about which I have written extensively elsewhere).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the 1980s were what one might call the "Golden Age" of artist-designed places in Texas. Not only was Tracy working on his San Ygnacio complex and his series of performances on the border, and not only was Jim Magee beginning construction of the four buildings at *The Hill*, and not only was Donald Judd pulling his Marfa installations together, but also James Surls and, later, Bert Long were creating their own environments in the woods of Splendora, north of Houston, where Surls moved in 1977. San Ygnacio, *The Hill*, Marfa and Splendora were essentially "artist sites" in which the landscape and indigenous architecture were adapted by artists as both places to live and work, as well as sites for performance, entertainment and art viewing.

Michael Tracy formalized this practice with a few friends by creating the River Pierce Foundation, which exists to this day and which, according to its website, sponsors historical preservation, tours, performances and publications devoted to the border.<sup>2</sup> The performances by Tracy and Magee in and along the Rio Grande in the 1980s were extraordinary, rooted perhaps in Tracy's own Galveston performance of 1979, *Sacrifice I: The Sugar*. Tracy and Magee's collaborative work combined an almost operatic mythological structure with modernity—forklifts, cars, cranes, docking machinery, boats, etc., all used by variously costumed people instructed to perform certain functions. Tracy had his performances documented in film—in the case of *Sacrifice I: The Sugar* by his friend William Glad. Surls too sought to document his years in Splendora with an exhibition, book and a series of films produced in collaboration with curator and museum director Terrie Sultan.<sup>3</sup>

This idea of a non-urban artist utopia, which has such an important history in American art, also finds expression in Harry Geffert's home, studio and land in Crowley, south of Fort Worth, and in the strip shopping centers appropriated by the Good/Bad Art Collective in Denton or any of a number of artist places in and around Austin. Together with the works of urban "street and park art"—such as Willard "The Texas Kid" Watson's famed and now lamented front yard in north Dallas or Bert Long's commissioned

works in the parks of the Fifth Ward in Houston—these “art places,” though unprotected by statute or ownership, are so numerous in Texas that they constitute an important substructure of the state’s diverse art world. They have never been discussed or documented as a group, and information about them is scattered and difficult to access. This is particularly tragic since many of them—Surls’ Splendor or The Texas Kid’s yard as cases in point—have been abandoned and no longer survive except in various recordings, photographs, films and memories.

(I worry the same fate awaits Tracy’s complex at San Ygnacio.)

A short discussion of non-institutionalized art places in Texas could never be complete without at least a mention of *Cadillac Ranch* (1974, moved 1997) near Amarillo. A project of the famed (and well-documented) Ant Farm collective, or “art agency,” which was based partly out of Houston, the *Ranch* was instigated and financed by the eccentric millionaire Stanley Marsh 3. It is, in many ways, the most famous (or infamous), most often reproduced and most visited (in its relatively accessible second home along Interstate 40 west of Amarillo) artist place in Texas other than Judd’s Marfa installations. Indeed, unlike Judd’s Chinati, *Cadillac Ranch* has entered the realm of popular culture, approaching Clement Greenberg’s notion of kitsch with its cheerful critique of capitalist excess equally appreciated by truckers, bikers and the “art world.” In this way, it is as much a contrast with Judd’s aesthetic as the Beer Can House is with the Rothko Chapel. But as an artist place it pales in significance when compared with Stanley Marsh 3’s recent landscape installation, *Floating Mesa* (date unknown), also in the desert landscape directly west of Amarillo. Here, Marsh created a vast planar “fence” of white-painted plywood sheets that rings a vast mesa below its flat top. In the right light (a white sky) the fence creates the illusion of the mesa’s top slab floating above a stripe of sky. With no labels or road signs (or website), it is a work of art that simply appears as one drives along a two-lane paved road outside of Amarillo. It is poetic and subtle without pretense. Viewers, or those fortunate to happen upon it, are forced to conclude that it is a work of art without anyone telling them so.

My late friend Garry Winogrand preferred the rodeos, high-school football games, chili competitions, used-car lots, barbeque joints and motorcycle clubs of Texas—in short, Texas L-I-F-E—to the art places just described. Surely this is too bad. Had someone with a compelling and talented visual sensibility chosen to document these site-specific works in their heyday, we would know a good deal more about them than we do, and all of them would survive in a comprehensible form for future generations. Now, although some are protected and recorded, most are not and will disappear without a trace, like Michael Tracy’s short-lived Sixth

Street installation in Austin. Of the major Texas cities, Houston is the only one with a sufficient degree of critical and historical discourse, as developed by its institutions, to provide fertile ground for the documentation and preservation of such places within and around that city. The rest of us are too busy producing culture to also worry about documenting, recording and preserving what has already been produced and especially what has been left to be forgotten. Our collecting institutions, with their global aspirations, are not sufficiently interested in local artistic culture either to collect and display it intelligently or to provide archival and documentation support, such that the best and most ambitious of it can nurture future generations of artists in Texas.

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1. See Richard R. Brettell and Jed Morse, *James Magee: The Hill* (New York: Prestel USA, 2010).
2. See [www.riverpierce.org](http://www.riverpierce.org).
3. See Terrie Sultan, Ed., *James Surls: The Splendor Years, 1977–1997* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) and [www.jamessurls.coe.uh.edu/access.htm](http://www.jamessurls.coe.uh.edu/access.htm).

## Like A Whole Other Country? The State of Contemporary Art in Texas

**ART LIES**  
A Contemporary Art Journal

**TX★11**  
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*On April 16, Art Lies, in conjunction with the 2011 Texas Biennial and the Blanton Museum of Art, hosted a panel discussion on the state of contemporary art in Texas at the Blanton Auditorium in Austin. The panel was comprised of artist Margarita Cabrera; Alison de Lima Greene, Curator of Contemporary Art and Special Programs, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; artist Trenton Doyle Hancock; David Pagel, art critic for the Los Angeles Times and Art Lies Editorial Advisory Board Member; Virginia Rutledge, 2011 Texas Biennial Curator; and Dr. Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art, The University of Texas at Austin. What follows is an edited transcript of the program.—KM*

**Kurt Mueller:** The title of today's panel, "Like a Whole Other Country? The State of Contemporary Art in Texas," comes from one of Texas' state slogans, "It's like a whole other country," which is courtesy of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism. The line is a marketing device capitalizing on the fact that Texas was an independent republic from 1836 to 1846, but it also conveys a sense of distinction or uniqueness, if not separation and "weirdness," bound to the idea of "Texas."

Whether this characterization is accurate or not is secondary to our purpose today, which is to consider Texas as a single entity, as a place or a community, or as an organizing principle, especially for an art exhibition. The objective of today's panel is threefold:

1. To question the usefulness of the label "Texas" or "Texan" as an identity or packaging for the art produced here. Is there a distinct character to Texas art? Does the state—defined geographically, culturally or economically—condition the work produced within its borders? Are there other, more useful labels that we should apply?

2. To locate this "other country," i.e., Texas, in the current "art world" or "art worlds." What place does Texas occupy in larger or global art ecologies and cultures? How does this compare to past roles? Can we imagine future roles? Are there instructive models outside the state worth considering?

And most importantly, and as our first point of discussion:

3. To critically assess the state of contemporary art in Texas. What are its strengths, and what are its weaknesses? Following Virginia's lead, we'd like to consider this expansively, not only in terms of art and artists but also institutions and audiences. This past month has seen a curious time for Texas art, with changes announced or pending at the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Austin Museum of Art, Arthouse and Art Lies [and now the Blanton], the effects of which have yet to be fully felt. But it is also an exciting time as evidenced by the breadth of work on display here in Austin and throughout the state over the coming weeks,

as well as by the community gathered in Austin this weekend and today in this auditorium. This is an excellent time to critically engage with these ideas about what Texas art is and can be.

I'll now turn this over to Virginia, who is going to moderate in her own style, which is very collaborative. So be warned that she might call on you [in the audience] to open up the discussion.

**Virginia Rutledge:** I'd like to start with a statement, then invite everyone else to talk. We all know it's a fiction that there is an art world. There are many art worlds even within the city of Austin, much less the state of Texas. It seems to me that branding is most useful as a communications channel. That is what interests me about the Texas Biennial, understanding it as a way to create conversation.

As for the state of contemporary art in Texas, it seems to me it's much like the state of contemporary art around the globe. That's to say that it's different, everywhere, even as we see many more commonalities than ever before.

Here, there seem to be particular strengths such as the number of working artists, really terrific schools and excellent curation happening. It's quite extraordinary.

And the weaknesses are the same that you would find anywhere. I think you would just call them realities. Is there ever enough money to do all the projects you want to do? Are there ever enough institutions to host all the fabulous shows you want to do? Is there ever enough health insurance, studio space, etc.? What is particularly unique about Texas as a situation?

**Alison de Lima Greene:** Ten years ago, I published a book on Texas art and my opening line was that Texas is an imaginary place. "What is Texas? And how do we relate to the national scene?" has exercised the imagination of a lot of people here for a number of years. For example, in the 1940s, Jerry Bywaters stated, "In the past few years the painters of Texas have taken their place calmly in the national art arena without calling attention to their work by symbolically flashing a pair of six-guns or by singing 'Git Along Little Dogie' to guitar accompaniment."

James Johnson Sweeney, when he was director of the Museum of Fine Arts in the early 1960s, sent out a press release stating that now that the world has reached a greater level of international communication, regionalism no longer matters. People are still saying that nearly fifty years later. And of course in the 1970s, you had artists who exploited the idea of regional identity; the Texas Funk movement got going until finally Dave Hickey said it was like a tiger that had been turned loose and he wished it would go back in its cage.

Like a Whole Other Country?  
The State of Contemporary Art in Texas

2

Of course, the idea of regionalism has had its moments of popularity not just in the U.S. but also elsewhere around the world. Last night Richard Shiff and I were talking about how there are moments when the idea of branding a certain nation, city or state with a kind of art avant-garde had enormous currency. For example, think of Italy and the Transavanguardia in the 1980s. I think we're moving away from that at this moment. However, ideas of regionalism and internationalism go in and out of fashion. So I'm thinking that, on the one hand, it's very good to be a historian, but I would also say it's probably healthy to have a certain amnesia because from that amnesia you can also start things afresh.

**Richard Shiff:** One thing that is always a factor when you try to define a regional character is that you've got people moving in and out of the region. Although there are a lot of artists in Texas who have lived in Texas all their lives and for whom it's truly their home, there are also a lot of very productive people in this state who have mixed identities because of their own backgrounds.

I've now lived here considerably longer than I've lived anywhere else in my life, and I can't totally identify with Texas, nor can I identify with any other region. I did live in North Carolina for ten years before moving here; and I still feel that when I drive from Austin to Houston there is a particular spot just beyond Bastrop where the pine trees reemerge and I'm back in the southern U.S. and not in this region, which has a different feel to it. If I go to El Paso and Marfa, that seems equally different in another way. It's a very diversified state and we all know that it's very large, so that it might even be easier to find a regional identity in a locality—around Houston, or along the border area or perhaps in the plains. This state is the Great Plains, it's the Midwest, it's the South, it's the Gulf, it's the border and it's the Southwest. It's all of those things.

**Margarita Cabrera:** When I think about the Texas art scene today, I have to question it from my own perspective. As a person coming from Mexico I'm really aware of my sense of time and space. I think one of the things that we share as Mexicans and Texans is a strong sense of time and space.

Texas is the third art market in the U.S. [after New York and Los Angeles], and because of our rank I think it's important to consider what sets us apart as a market from the other two. Going back to my personal experience, I think it is this connection to the land, a connection to a specific region of space that sets us apart. Being aware of the assets that we have as a state in relation to who is around us—that being, of course, Mexico and all the groups from different countries that live and work in the state—recognizing this will further set us apart.

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Promoting our multicultural voices in institutions and exhibitions is, in my opinion, the best approach to continue competing with the other art markets and advance our rank. We have the opportunity to lead by example in today's globalized art world as a particular market that fully acknowledges and embraces its international population with artistic sensitivity.

**David Pagel:** I'm not from here and I don't know Texas that well. I'm from Los Angeles, which I know a little bit better. When I started looking at art and writing about art in LA in the late 1980s and early '90s, it was just after the moment when artists had discovered that they no longer had to go to New York if they wanted their career to happen. Basically, up until Mike Kelley, the idea was that when you graduated from school in LA, you would go to New York if you wanted to be a serious artist. Mike Kelley was among the first that didn't do that and did really well; and then the generation that followed was kind of like, "Well, we can stay here."

The attitude was, "We're in a city that's about to happen." But then you also had people looking back and saying, "Yeah, we've been the city that's about to happen for a long, long time." Actually, I don't think that's a bad place to be mentally as an artist, redefining the relationship between the region and the center. Los Angeles was always the region that didn't want to be a region. New York was the center and we didn't want to be the periphery to that. We've never wanted to talk about regional boosterism because we wanted to be a player in the big league world of art. But the world did change somewhere between 1990 and now; there does seem to be a multitude of centers and not that us/them attitude.

When comparing Los Angeles, a city, to Texas, a state, I think that it's always a mistake to look for characteristics in the work that are authentically "Los Angeles" or "Southern California" or "Texas." Is it light and space that defines the work or is it rust and brownness, respectively? The branding, or calling it "Texas art" or "California art," is just naming where it was made, and that is a useful way of starting to talk about it—you have to start somewhere. It doesn't have to do with the materials; maybe attitude figures in—to place or geography—but naming the place is just facing the facts. Whether it's made by an immigrant or a local doesn't matter so much as where the stuff starts from.

**Trenton Doyle Hancock:** I can only comment on Texas from a personal place, from my own standpoint as an artist having started out here early in my career and learning what the art world is—this fictitious place that you mention—who the operators are in this world and how I fit into it.

Texas was a great place for me to start that education. Adding up all of the different cities and all the things that they have to offer, you get a sense that there's great support and respect here for art, which is passed down from generation to generation. So, you can get spoiled. If you move to other places you see that's not necessarily the case elsewhere. It is not instilled in other places; it's not passed down. When I moved back—I moved away for a little while—I think the thing that kept me here was this sense of space, the idea of distance.

You can be part of something, connected to all of these different art scenes. But at the same time, if you so choose, you can go off and be alone for a very long time, and no one knows where the hell you are, and I like that too. There are also great resources here; there's everything you need to sustain yourself and your studio, which is very important.

But from the outside looking in, I think Texas is, as a unit, the sum total of all the cities and everything they have to offer. It's pretty powerful. I try to preach that message to people on the outside and they don't understand it. They're like, "Oh, Texas: cowboys and cactus!" And there is just so much more. You just have to come down and see what's going on.

**ALG:** I think we're very bad at selling ourselves. You go to a lot of other places as a curator or as an artist, and most of the people think you're weak-minded to work in Texas, or you must be paid a lot; otherwise you wouldn't stay here. [Laughter]

I do think there is a slightly apologetic stance often taken. The Texas pride has a sort of negative backside. You don't always have to say, "It's a Texas thing." You could just say, "This is my project." It could be, "This is how I live. This is why I work here."

Economics does play a big part. In some ways it is cheaper to work in Texas than it is in New York, although certainly there are more high-end opportunities in the New York art world. But access to them is very limited.

**VR:** Something I'd like to get out and talk about as soon as possible is the role of the market. We've been referring to "branding" and "marketing"; let's just talk about selling and buying art for a minute. One significant thing about this year's edition of the Texas Biennial project is that we have collaborated with nonprofits. This was a relatively easy way to involve many people, because there was a quick distinction to make: "You're a 501(c)(3) or you're a poor artist collective? Great! Come play with us." But of course, the commercial gallery system at all levels—whether we're talking about selling work in the \$200 range from someone's apartment or the much higher-end markets—is a vital part of this whole infrastructure. Not the cause or the reason, but a vital part. If people

accept the idea that Texas is the third U.S. art market, we've got two cities and then a state as number three—

**DP:** That's the first time I had heard that.

**VR:** Well, do we agree with that?

**DP:** You mean in terms of art centers?

**VR:** Yes—how much does it matter that there is more or less of a commercial scene here? Miami, for instance, is the hottest place to be at least one month of the year.

**ALG:** I would respond to that in terms of just having colleagues. It is terrific that there are a number of art galleries around this state. A lot of people make the mistake of thinking the art world is separate little pockets. No, we all work together. For the purposes of the Biennial, working through the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations is very good. But I also work very happily with a number of art dealers here. As the daughter of an artist, I know how good it was when a painting sold and the possibilities dealers can create for an artist.

We don't have an art fair yet in Houston, though there are now two coming up later this year. The Dallas Art Fair last week was a solid success, I hear, but it doesn't have the traction that Art Basel Miami Beach has, and I don't think that is something we should necessarily strive for because I don't think the world needs another mega art fair.

**RS:** Miami succeeds because people like to go to Miami; Europeans especially like to go to Miami. [Laughter] To some extent events in Marfa succeed, on a much smaller scale, for the same reason—because it's an international destination. That's a quirk of geography and climate and all kinds of things. Whether people want to go to Dallas for the same reasons is not likely. [Laughter]

There is also the phenomenon of artists who live in Texas and don't necessarily have their market in Texas. In many cases, they like living here because it's economically viable, because you can get a warehouse to work in, a lot of space. And the shipping costs are relatively minor if your gallery is elsewhere.

So there are all kinds of scenarios. A lot of artists who establish a market in a more traditional major center for art sales move out of that place once they establish themselves because they don't like living there. They may well come to Texas or leave to more remote places as well.

**DP:** There are lots of similarities here with Los Angeles. I always think of LA as the art production center of the country and New York as the art consumption center of the country. Texas probably comes somewhere between. You probably have institutions with longer histories than we do, and I think the collector base may even be stronger than it is in LA.

My old friend Patty Faure used to say, "The great old cities in America had fantastic collectors because the industries were so ugly that they wanted to have a little bit of culture." So if you work in steel in Pittsburgh, you want to have some art, or if you're slaughtering cattle in Chicago, you want to have some art on the side. Hollywood or Los Angeles is a one-industry town and those people think they're artists, so they don't buy art, or at least not until very recently. [Laughter]

We don't have a strong collector base in LA, but it's a great place to be an artist, because the rent is relatively cheap and you can disappear like Trenton said—well, not totally disappear. You can come back out of your rabbit hole when you want. But there is anonymity in that space, space that is both physical and mental. Now there are more models for artists living in one place and showing in another place and selling in another place. There's way more flexibility now than there was when you had to go to Manhattan to see the show and buy the stuff.

**ALG:** One of my favorite collector stories is from Caroline Wiess Law, who was one of our greatest benefactors in Houston. She had a great Picasso from 1927, and it's now at the MFAH. I asked her how she got it and she said, "A dealer flew in from New York, rented a Cadillac convertible and drove up to our house with the Picasso in the back seat. And you know, he drove back with nothing in the Cadillac."

Today there are people who still do variations on that, of coming in, staging fabulous projects and allowing access. It happens in gallery spaces. It happens in museum spaces. Great things get staged here, as well as from out of here. Trenton just finished how many projects outside of the United States?

**TDH:** Um, well, two. [Laughter]

**ALG:** Big ones. So there is that sense of portability. One of the things that has happened that we haven't quite brought up—we've talked a bit about art fairs, but not much about biennials—is the idea of the biennial as not so much where you ship art but where you stage art. So many projects happen, whether it's in Gwangju or in Lyon or Dakar, where the artist goes in and finds local material to stage a project. This can be very stressful on the artist, but it is an interesting way to move art around the globe without actually moving objects around the globe.

**VR:** My own take on the biennial, or *biennale*, model is that the audience for those spectacles is the truly global audience. It's an audience that is affluent enough to travel, or interested enough to travel if not affluent. In a way, the audience for those exhibitions is the same. I'm particularly interested in this project partly because it is for a Texas audience. I'm interested in that twist in making a biennial be more about the "local"—using this word very advisedly—making it more about a local reception and a local audience than about needing to be on the calendar of global art fairs.

**MC:** It's interesting to think about the role of institutions or forms of the market in relation to the global conversations that happen in contemporary art. One of the really wonderful things about the Texas Biennial is that it brought in a very good cross-section of what's going on in Texas; it really attempts to represent the different voices from Texas' cities.

Regarding the idea of the Biennial as "stage," institutions and exhibitions do create these spaces for audiences and communities to come together. I think it's important to be very aware of who the audiences are and who they can be, specifically some of the audiences that haven't been addressed, especially if the Texas Biennial is trying to effect a globally significant response through contemporary art.

Being right next to Mexico and considering that forty percent of Texas is of Hispanic and Latin descent, I stress again the importance of including all demographics in these art dialogues that are to become important historical cultural documentation. This change would really make big statements and make the Texas Biennial very different from other biennials.

**VR:** Margarita, are you talking about inclusivity in the sense of representation of artists who are working on particular issues, or are you talking about representation of all Texas artists more generally? The show that I curated—luckily from this great pool of open-call submissions—includes, to my surprise, little politically edged work. But little was submitted.

**MC:** If we consider art as being a kind of mirror to society, I think one could ask who comprises this society and who is making this art; what demographics are represented? If you look at this audience here today and some of the audiences that I've seen around the Texas Panhandle, I think there could be more of a balance. We need to be more forward-thinking about who and what Texas art should represent.

One question could be how does the art world harvest artists to participate in these dialogues from the ground level? How is our school system actually working to promote artistic dialogue with young people? And I mean all students enrolled in

our schools, including undocumented students. I did a little bit of research: At UT Austin, for instance, there is a very significant demographic of undocumented students, an important group of people in this community that have no voice. These are the people that are most closely related to some of the important and urgent global issues. Facilitating the expression of their voices could place us within a more authentic conversation, precisely the type of dialogue necessary in today's globalized contemporary art world.

**VR:** So you're suggesting the Texas Biennial as a project with a social cause and a political cause to some degree? Which is not necessarily the Venice Biennale model.

**MC:** Why not? All art is political. If art is not controversial it is not relevant. I'm suggesting that there needs to be inclusivity of all the voices in Texas. I think it needs to try to be a complete statement and of a global stature.

**DP:** So being especially attentive to locale, you actually make it more global.

**MC:** Exactly.

**DP:** And that is a nice way of getting away from the international art fair spectacle, the same big biennial. It's a different kind of biennial, and that's a smart thing to do.

**VR:** More than a smart branding move...

**DP:** But from what I've seen of the Biennial here, it isn't about branding but, rather, getting away from that sort of packaging and wrapping things up, and putting power in more grassroots hands and letting things bubble up from below. That's one thing I've always loved about LA, with the sense of space that we have talked about. I've always found that in LA there's more possibility because we don't have entrenched histories or institutions.

Art is always the stuff that sprouts between the cracks in the sidewalk. You do need institutions, but I think it's like seeds and fertilizer and it comes from below. In paying attention to what you have, you become a much bigger deal, rather than trying to be what someone else thinks it should be.

**ALG:** When you said that the Venice model isn't political, I disagree. The whole idea of national pavilions, for example, was all about competition. And the first Documenta started as a Cold War project, setting up an exhibition very close to the East German border: "We've got Jackson Pollock and you don't." [Laughter]

Putting anything in the public realm is a political gesture, whether or not we say, "This is the political agenda that this particular show has." It's an act of communication. It's an act of announcing a position, whether it's a single social agenda or exploring different directions.

One of the things that I was thinking about in regard to the idea of the Biennial is to go back to the model of the Texas Fine Arts Association shows some years ago. They had annual or biannual shows. But the idea was to mix it up with national artists, so you think about what happens to a local biennial when it becomes a national show, such as the Whitney Biennial attempts to do with the New York artists in that show. I would ask the question, would it be better for the Texas Biennial to expand beyond the state's borders or not?

**DP:** I think it's better as just Texan. It's a mark of distinction. It sets a limit and does its thing, rather than pretending to be a two-thirds-of-the-way-across-the-country version of the Whitney. When I started looking at art, you would eagerly anticipate the list of who's in the Whitney every two years. It mattered in a way that mattered. And after a while, it just didn't anymore.

It's not because that biennial changed, or went bad. The world changed, and that kind of a show no longer served a purpose. It used to be about SoHo, and that was its strength. It was a summing up of what was hot those two years and what was up-and-coming that fit into that model. The world's just a different place now and it wouldn't be a good move to copy that model. It's more interesting to do something more grassroots, more DIY here.

**RS:** Virginia, you have a Texas connection, but how would you identify yourself in terms of your regional orientation?

**VR:** Oh, I'm a very special case, but there are a lot in this room. I'm a military brat, so I have no home in that sense.

**RS:** I was just remembering—my memory may be incorrect—but with the old Texas Fine Arts shows, what was done very deliberately was to get the juror to be someone who did not have a Texas connection of any kind—a presumption of some objectivity. Whether that works or not is another matter, but you probably do get different shows if you have somebody who's very much inside the scene doing it versus somebody who is half-and-half or somebody who is truly outside. You could have it curated by someone from another country or even a radically different culture and the results might be interesting.

I did want to say that I was trying to figure out whether I could define a Texas identity; is there something different? So I passed

the problem on to my laboratory people—my graduate students. [Laughter] The majority of them that are not from Texas have been in the state for less than a year, so their viewpoint is fresh. The most definitive response I got was that the art here is a lot funnier. There's humor in it. That actually made sense to me, that there is that element in this region. And then I wondered, so why would that be?

My naïve answer is that most forms of humor tend to be verbal and Texas has a very strong writing tradition. Whether or not visual artists are conscious of the connections, it might be absorbed anyway, a kind of verbal sensibility that might be stronger in Texas visual art than in some other region of the country.

**VR:** That's interesting, given you're sitting next to Trenton.

**TDH:** It's funny you bring that up, because I was just saying to someone the other day that I oftentimes laugh out loud when looking at art at museums or galleries. I look around and I'm like, why aren't other people responding the same way I am to this work? I could be standing in front of a Jackson Pollock—it's absurd what these guys were doing and what they got away with. [Laughter] I liken the artist's plight to the comedian's plight. There's a similar relationship to torture and being alone. There's something about Texas that lends itself to that because of some of its histories and its space. I think of where I am in the middle of all of it and I just laugh; I understand how humor might be the consensus.

Some of the art that I was raised looking at, that I felt was the most important to me, had a foot in the grotesque and also in something that's more sublime, something beautiful. But it's all mixed together with humor, not taking itself too terribly seriously. I think that's what keeps me excited about art. Maybe that's why I stuck around here, because I sense that in the community, in the soil—not taking yourself too seriously and being able to kind of thumb your nose at life a little.

**DP:** I want to build a bit on what Richard said about the literary side of humor and Texas, and what Trenton said about the absurdity of life and the mad insanity of being an artist at all and recognizing that with a sense of humility and non-entitlement. And I think that goes a long way with art in Los Angeles. As a city we're not known as being particularly literate, but I think we are known as making funny art.

It goes hand in hand with this sense of not really being taken seriously as an artist in LA. You would be taken seriously as an actor or as a screenwriter, and there is this sense of kind of madly turning your back on that and doing something else and laughing

at it. A lot of the great work since World War II in Los Angeles is funny. Ruscha and Wegman and—

**ALG:** Yeah, it's a deflective protective mechanism too.

**DP:** I don't know if it's protective. Maybe a little bit, but I don't think it's a defensive move. To me, it really comes from not being entitled to some grand history.

**VR:** I'm wondering since Aimee and Kurt have been thinking about this for a while, if either of you has a question or a comment in response to any of this?

**KM (in audience):** We seem to be fairly content and celebratory about the Biennial and art in Texas in general; but what would make Texas better? If growth is an ideal—and I'm not sure what the direction of that growth should be—what should we add? What is missing? Not that the scene here is necessarily lacking something, but if you could add something, what's on your wish list to make Texas an even more interesting place to make art, or write about art, or see and study art?

**VR:** Let's just note again, we've lost *Art Lies*. I'd say growth for its own sake is not what we're looking for, but we can always use more opportunities and possibilities for depth and seriousness for those who want this. Where, I'm wondering, is there weakness in systemic terms? Is it just back to money again, or is there not enough interest? Is that a rude question? Who and how big is the audience for contemporary art in Texas?

**ALG:** Well, could I suggest that when we're thinking about contemporary art audiences, why don't we just say "art audience"? Why don't we also think about what publications can mix it up a little bit more? We don't see as many interdisciplinary collaborations as we should. Fine arts institutions collaborate with each other frequently, but we could all do a lot more. Often we're so focused on fundraising for our needs, we're not thinking laterally as much as we might.

**MC:** I think it's really interesting to consider what the politics of Texas are and how the world thinks of Texas in that we are very much at the center of important global issues.

We have everything we need right here as far as prime material with respect to subject matter. We just need to be more open. We need to be more inclusive of people that are getting lost between the cracks, to have them be a part of these cultural discourses, and to have their experiences in the world be a part of

art history, cultural documentation and contemporary artistic dialogues. That can really set us apart and create growth in a sense that I don't believe we have had yet in this state.

**Aimee Chang (in audience):** Yesterday, at a panel for professionals organized by the Biennial, a question came up, "Who is responsible for teaching a new audience? Who is responsible for growing this audience?" And I'm curious about that, because I do wish the audience for art here was larger.

**MC:** Size is one thing, but the variety of demographics represented is equally important. I have some really interesting statistics provided by Deana Williams, Director of Graduate and International Admissions and International Student Scholar Services here at UT, that I would like to share. In the U.S., 607,000 undocumented students are enrolled in classes from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Only 65,000 of them graduate from high school, and only 5 to 10 percent of those go on to enter the college system. This questions our educational systems and how they are intertwined with structures of economic wealth in the U.S. Systems with little sensitive accessibility to these masses of people—undocumented immigrants who pay tuition costs—that are not openly a part of our mainstream culture. It asks whether or not we are fostering their ability to develop and grow their voices, so they can actually navigate the systems and end up becoming a true thread in the fabric of American culture that they are not only a part of but also helped to create with their very own hands. A good education, and more so an equal education, should be a human right.

It's a matter of maybe reconsidering the way that the class structure is composed and how we are promoting inclusivity from the bottom, from the beginning of education and how that's going to filter through. For cultural documentation to be important it certainly needs to be reflective of everybody, not just the constituency that we see present in the audience here. It's just the beginning though. It's like a blind spot that we have in the art world in the U.S. and particularly in Texas. It's a blind spot to something that can be an actual asset: this whole community, this whole culture of people that can say so much and can teach so much and offer so much for dialogues to progress. There is an opportunity for us to see it, to acknowledge it and to change the ways in which we include these voices.

**Female (in audience):** Would it be possible for the Texas Biennial to go into the public school system in order to encourage the removal of that blind spot? Is there some way that the Texas Biennial could involve the public school system?

**MC:** I think there are probably many different strategies. The Texas Biennial happens every two years. Maybe it can't happen by the next biennial, but maybe over the next three biennials there can be a strategy to try to foster some of this art expression education in the school system so that after a period of time the efforts trickle through and quieter voices are heard. It is a process that needs to take place. Another idea—and again, I don't know if it can happen between now and the next Biennial—would be to shape the curatorial themes presented to introduce urgent global themes to the general public and allow for controversial political dialogues.

**VR:** This goes back to your really interesting question, Aimee: Who has the responsibility for audience education, if we want to call it that? It should be noted that this Biennial began as a truly grassroots initiative, started by artists here in Austin who formed a nonprofit to help support the exhibition as part of a larger but still modest program. City and state funding has been crucial but also limited, not surprisingly—and no one counts on those budget lines for the future. The expansion of the project this year has been driven by very few people, though happily it has been supported by some generous individuals and foundations, and has found many enthusiastic partners in participating organizations and other friends around the state. What the Biennial may be in 2013 is a completely open question, in my view.

David also made a point yesterday about access and interest that is important not to lose here: In the end, maybe what we most should want is an audience informed enough to give their attention to something other than contemporary art, if they prefer.

I'm intrigued by Alison's observation about the lack of lateral collaborations among institutions devoted to particular disciplines. That's an interesting thing to be thinking about at a moment in time when most of us get most of our information from video and the Internet—both very hybrid media formats. I love the idea of a fruitful discussion about not necessarily enlarging audiences but broadening access for different audiences by using different channels that are already established.

**ALG:** Is this the right point when we should allow this audience to join the conversation?

**VR:** Yes, please.

**Male (in audience):** I have a question for David. In the sense that LA has very broad cultural diversity, do you see any differences in their participation or influence in the art community there?

**DP:** It's growing slowly. The first generation involved a lot of identity politics work. If you were "other" you had to make work about being "other," and that opened a lot of things up. The next stage is where you could be "other" and just make work. This was particularly clear to me when New Yorkers would write about art in New York; they would just write about the art. But if they were writing about work anywhere else, it was always about that place. As an Angeleno, I was like, why does our art have to be about the beach and the sun? Why can't our art just be about art? But I think you get into the discussion a step at a time; it's similar with broadening audiences. I actually think the broadening has slowed down over the last decade, and I think everyone's wondering why and trying to stop it from slowing.

**TDH:** Amongst all the talk about the show and Texas, I noticed there's a lack of speaking about Texas as a place where communities gather in a spiritual way. Not that I'm a Bible thumper or anything but Texas probably has the most churches anywhere in the country, and the most strip clubs [Laughter], and the most sports arenas and some of the biggest and best museums. All these places are where people gather in a spiritual way, if you will. And these meeting grounds are a release; they're a place for people to go and shed something and to gain something.

I'm also interested in where the line is between education and corruption. I think I'm sometimes a little bit more excited about the idea of corrupting, and art is a beautiful vehicle for that. Through corruption comes some of the more interesting art, for me anyway. Consider a place like Austin—"Keep Austin Weird." I'm not looking for anything that's incredibly weird, but something that's strange, idiosyncratic and very personal and also critical at the same time. I think Texas is a place where those kinds of things happen; just by the nature of being surrounded by so many different kinds of communities with different needs. Moral and ethical issues are like weather patterns here, in that they're always colliding. I think that somehow makes up the scene, and that is what becomes exciting about this place.

Through that you can find or locate this idea of the spirit. Even if you're not interested in that word, I think it keeps rising through the floor as part of the identity of this place. The Rothko Chapel, for example, is this intersection between a church and a museum. Or Marfa, which has the same kind of cachet. Or Austin, with its rolling hills and rivers and lakes. That's why people come here, because it's so varied and you can access something that's not describable in text. It's just something else. Maybe if we were to try to pin down ways to create—what Alison was saying about different kinds of arts coalescing—some kind of interdisciplinary intersection and make new hybrid forms. This place, Texas, is fertile for that kind of a thing.

**ALG:** I was listening to Pacifica Radio the other day. There was an editorial along those lines, and someone said, "Let's abandon do-it-yourself for let's do-it-together."

**Annette Carlozzi (in audience):** It's interesting to me that we are here, asking this question about how the outdated geopolitical concept of "the state" or statehood is reflected in the culture of this place, Texas. I've been surprised to hear the conversations that each different panelist has provoked—indeed, when I first saw the list of panelists I thought, wow, good individual speakers, but it's going to be such an odd group! But perhaps now I see the wisdom in the selection, because you've all refracted in different ways from this same concept, which is that no state, no nation-state, is yet entirely over with. You'd think the idea wouldn't mean anything when we are connected globally by the Internet. But what I've heard each person say from their own perspective is that they really value the ways in which we, as a "community," identify with living in this very big, very disparate place. We prize our separateness and particularity, but we also value the ways in which we in Texas actually identify together, even if the rubric seems otherwise bankrupt.

Culture more than anything else responds to these notions. It expresses, "Who am I at this time in this place?" The sum of everything that's been said today has given me a bit of new faith. As a nonnative who has made a home here, I've spent a lot of time studying Texas, then being identified with and by it, and, in the past fifteen years, trying to turn away from that identification, to no longer be seen as a curator concerned primarily with Texas. And today in this conversation, somehow I see the richness of the construct again and I see the relevancy of it again. Thanks for that.

**VR:** That was a beautiful summation. That was also very generous. Thank you.

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