PAPER®

ART

The Black Artists You Should Know at Basel

by Julie Walker | 23h

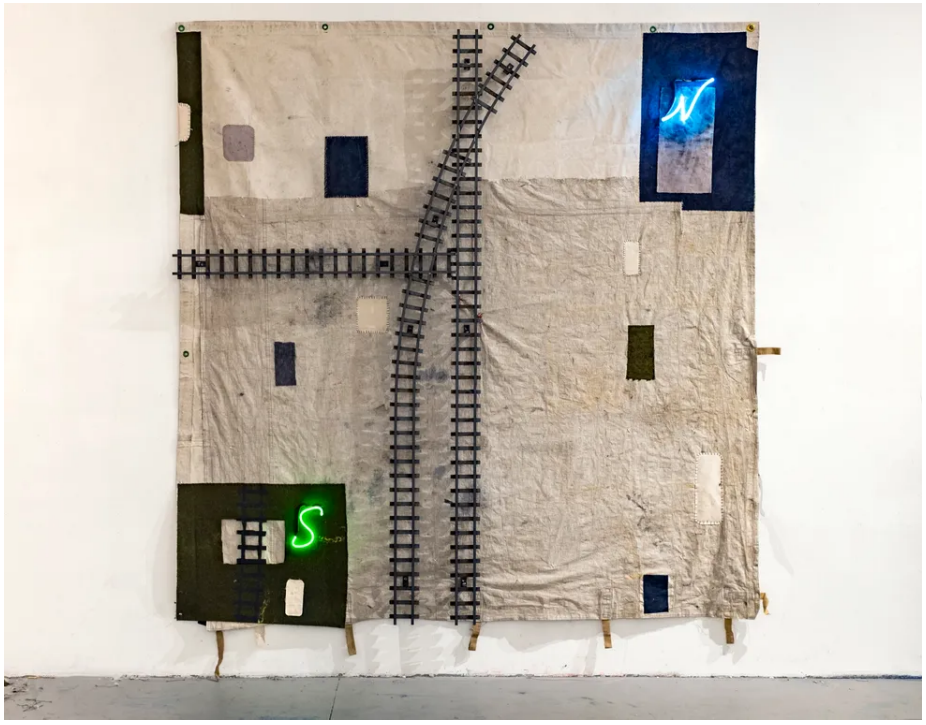
The art world's annual December pilgrimage to Miami for Art Basel is currently underway. The glamorous mega fair and the more than two dozen satellite fairs that exist in its orbit draw tens of thousands of attendees each year. Some go to schmooze, some go to buy, and everyone arrives ready to party.

So who's invited? Most of Art Basel Miami Beach takes place in a convention center a few blocks from the ocean. Million dollar paintings are sold by blue chip galleries, and over the years the event has expanded to include emerging artists from mid-tier galleries. Other shifts have occurred, too. While Black artists have always had a presence at Basel Miami, over the past several years there has been a significant uptick in representation and recognition.

This cultural shift is essential. It shines a light on the work Black and brown artists create — artwork that often speaks to the Black experience and chronicles the lives we live. Events like Basel help Black artists claim a piece of the billion dollar art market, which historically has excluded pretty much everybody save rich white men.

Below, some Black artists to know at Miami Basel and surrounding fairs this month.

Radcliffe Bailey



"Pushman, Pullman, Portage" (2019) Shipping tarps, railroad tracks and neon. Jack Shainman Gallery

Art Basel Miami Beach. © Radcliffe Bailey. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Radcliffe Bailey lives and works in Atlanta. His father was a railroad engineer, and railroad tracks play a large role in the artist's work. The neon N and S in "Pushman, Pullman, Portage" represents the north and south stars in the sky that helped guide black slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

ARTDESK

FANTASTIC BEASTS

Photographs of Modern and Contemporary Artists with their Animal Muses

Animals are a welcome presence for most any artist, particularly the ones who spend their workdays alone in a studio. These remarkable photographs depict fourteen muse like relationships between artist and animal, collected here for the first time. From contemporary icons Ed Ruscha and his dog; Marina Abramovic and a falcon; and Ai Weiwei with a cat to artists like Dr. Seuss with his Irish setter; Count Basie and his bulldog; and Frida Kahlo with a fawn, these creatures comfort the greatest makers in modern times. View the image gallery to the right for more. —Louisa McCune

Radcliffe Bailey with his dog (2017). Photograph by Joeff Davis

The New York Times ART & DESIGN

Worth the Ride: 5 Surprising Exhibition Spaces in Upstate New York

By Nancy Princenthal

Aug. 30, 2018

If the long holiday weekend tempts you to head out of the city, you won't have to venture far to find terrific art. Whether taking you deep into the woods, or simply away from the familiar ways and means of painting and sculpting, a range of shows waits for you in upstate New York this Labor Day weekend.

KINDERHOOK, N.Y.

The School

Radcliffe Bailey's installation “Windward Coast — West Coast Slave Trade” in his show “Travelogue,” at the School gallery in Kinderhook. Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

At the School, Jack Shainman’s museum-scale gallery inside a former public school in Kinderhook, N.Y., this year’s featured artist is Radcliffe Bailey. Introducing Mr. Bailey’s show there, “Travelogue,” is his arresting installation “Windward Coast — West Coast Slave Trade,” a thunderous sea of old wooden piano keys amid which a single glittering black human head stares upward, at some distance from a small, ghostly black schooner. Buried deeper in the wooden waves is an upright tribal figurine: perhaps the lost dream of a drowning man. Among other sculptures by Mr. Bailey (there are collages on view as well), another standout is a haunting assemblage of rock and iron that forms a Christ-like head, haloed in barbed wire and collared in spiked iron, and taunted by a single jingle bell that dangles soundlessly above.

BOMB

Another Kind of Living Life (or Those Who Do Not Dance Will Have To Be Shot): Radcliffe Bailey: *Travelogue* by Jessica Lanay

Art of enslavement and escape.

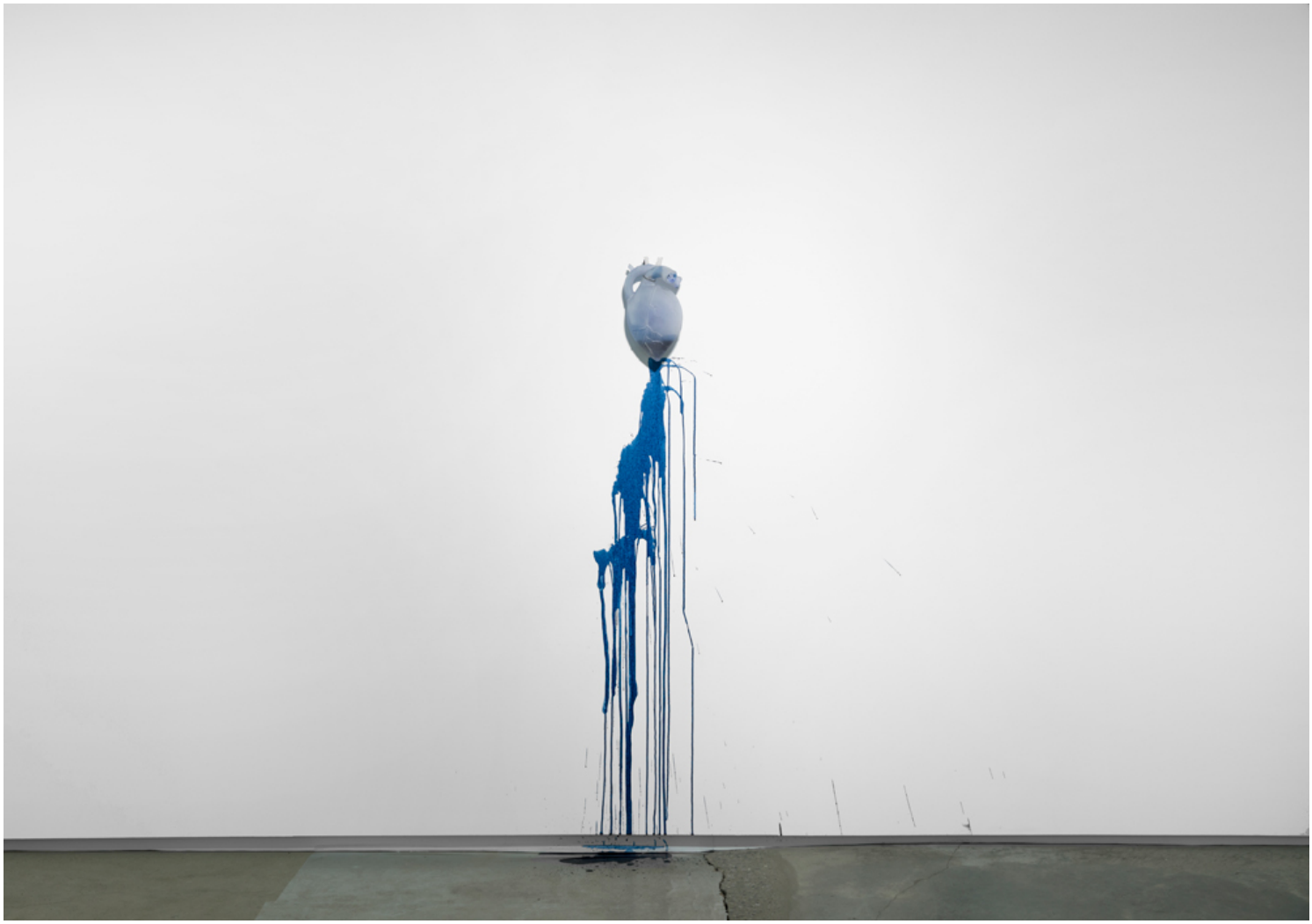
Radcliffe Bailey, *Vessel*, 2017. Steel, conch shell, stereo. Approximate dimensions: 13 x 8 feet.

I approached Radcliffe Bailey's *Vessel* (2017) from the parking lot of Jack Shainman Gallery's interdisciplinary art facility, The School, located in Kinderhook, New York. In an open field, the sculpture stood, an acute peak. The closer I moved to it, the more I could hear the conical steel structure moaning. Heat emanated from *Vessel*, and I entered what seemed to be a dislodged piece of machinery. Inside I could feel the vibration of the soundscape of banging cello, raucous wind, twittering cicadas, and swelling ocean conducting through my feet, up the ladder of my bones, and through my head. I looked up ten feet to a circular opening of Robin egg blue sky where a pristine conch shell hung. I realized that if the thin door closed, I could be trapped forever in sweltering heat, at the whim of a beautiful yet frightening aural cacophony, only able to see the conch shell and the sky.

Vessel is the symbolic doorway into Bailey's exhibition, *Travelogue*. I stood inside of it sweating for fifteen minutes, and as a result the rest of the exhibition expanded in meaning. *Travelogue* opens a conduit between the historical reality of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and present-day forced im/migrations through the examination of essential ideas of escape, movement, survival, and memory. The works in Bailey's exhibition propose the involuntary immigration or enslavement of black peoples as a model for other modern dispersals.

As an artist, Bailey has the methodology of an apothecary: from a storehouse in his mind of beakers and bottles filled with the detritus of global movement and wreckages, he adds what he needs bit by bit, making him adept and fiercely dedicated to any medium he chooses. *Windward Coast—West Coast Slave Trade* (2009–11) is an unabashed nod (as it should be) toward the earthquake of humanity forcibly carried from Africa into the budding Western world. In a sea of deboned piano keys that undulate like waves are scattered a decapitated head, a ship, and a tiny nkisi statue, all illuminated in black glitter. *Windward Coast* contains the body dispersed, the method of dispersal, and the memory dispersed. It asserts that there is a main artery shared between memory, survival, and the sounds of a people.

Radcliffe Bailey, *Windward Coast—West Coast Slave Trade*, 2009–2018. Piano keys, plaster bust, and glitter. Dimensions variable.



Radcliffe Bailey, *Blue Black*, 2016. Glass, ink. 10 1/4 x 5 1/4 x 4 1/2 inches (glass heart); 54 x 62 inches x 4 1/2 inches (overall dimensions).

Bailey's repertoire in *Travelogue* is intense and wide-ranging, including *Blue Black* (2016), a glass heart dripping luminous blue ink down a white wall; three-dimensional assemblages in picture boxes like *67/68* (2016) and *Upwards* (2018); and *Maroon* (2013), an all-black canvas sculpture made from Georgia clay with embedded axe, oars, rope, and ladder—symbols of capture and escape. Many works, such as *Lantern* (2018), *Stir* (2016), and *Monument for a Promise* (2013), are positioned to make the viewer examine these symbols from a different angle. *Lantern* is a seven-foot steel lantern with a blue LED neon light inside forming the letter "N" for North. *Stir* is a surreally sized glass container or beaker that contains a glass oar. *Monument for a Promise* is a concrete mold of a donkey carrying a trunk full of cotton on its back, elevated into the air on a pedestal. These enlarged art objects are tantamount in size to the average human body, changing the relationship between viewer and escape, salvation, and being found as these ideas encroach upon the audience's perception of place and movement.

Radcliffe Bailey, *Lantern*, 2018. Mixed media. 84 x 40 x 40 inches.

The exhibition takes advantage of the enormous space of The School to allow Bailey's works to reverberate with each other in recurring themes, materials, and symbols. The arrangement of the art does not push or teach, but facilitates the force of Bailey's work. In a conversation I had with Bailey over the phone he told me that, "Music is the first DNA," which conjures for me the idea of intricate repetitions and subtle oscillations spreading toward a symphonic chaos. With African diasporic art, curation often tends toward didacticism as an apology for the subject matter, but not here. There is a specific attention to highlighting form and method that puts the versatile hand of the artist first.

My only real critique is the absence of any kind of accompanying catalogue for such a significant exhibition. Otherwise, *Travelogue* soaked me with the sensation of having completed a kind of cosmic travel. Bailey's generosity of work in the expansive space of The School is a bracing visual and conceptual experience.

Radcliffe Bailey: Travelogue *is on view at The School in Kinderhook, NY, until October 6.*

The Post and Courier

New school year offers families opportunities to visit new art exhibits

BY SCOTT D. ELINGBURG SPECIAL TO THE POST AND COURIER

AUG 15, 2018

Artist Radcliffe Bailey's exhibition "Pensive" is on view at the Gibbes Museum of Art until Sept. 16.

PROVIDED/JOHN MCKINNON

Preparing for a new school year can be a shock to the system. We must re-adjust our bodies and minds to new routines.

There's no easy advice for how to jump into the start of school. The only thing I've found that works is to remember to breathe, get enough sleep and carve out some activities for you and your family that get you out of the house.

I'm already making time to take my daughter to the Gibbes Museum of Art and the Yorktown, two places she's never been. And the October ArtWalk is on our family calendar. I've discovered that activities are easier to stick to if you commit ahead of time.

At the Gibbes, two shows soon will end, including a process-based printmaking exhibit by mixed-media artist Radcliffe Bailey called "Pensive" (through Sept. 16) and, one of my favorites, a show featuring the urban landscape called "Vanishing Charleston" (through Oct. 21). And Charleston-based artist Alex Waggoner is on hand as the Gibbes' artist-in-residence, through Sept. 1. View her meticulously made architectural paintings during open studio hours on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The Gibbes, 135 Meeting St., is a destination that shows visionary work and exhibits the best of Southern artists. If you haven't yet, make a date to visit (again) soon.

The Halsey Institute, 161 Calhoun St., is a contemporary art destination in Charleston that's gearing up for a new season with their first exhibit, "**The Image Hunter: On the Trail of John James Audubon**."

Italian artist Hitnes, a muralist, printmaker and painter, examines Audubon's legacy in and around Charleston and beyond. Audubon sought to track and capture images of all the birds in the United States. The naturalist spent decades in this pursuit as well as plenty of time on the Charleston coast, an area rich with bird life.

Hitnes, retracing Audubon's journey, took a 20-city road trip during which he, too, documented the avian sights he encountered. Hitnes' journey, which breathes new life into Audubon's work, resulted in paintings that are sharp, vivid pieces of naturalism. Filmmaker Giacomo Agnetti created a documentary of Hitnes' trip. "The Image Hunter" is an impressive exhibit presented by one of Charleston's most important galleries.

For something completely different, Revealed Gallery, 119 Church St., is hosting a fun art show where light and sound collide in inventive ways. Artist Devin McKinney, an optometrist by day, brings an alternative approach to abstract art in an exhibit called “Breaking Through: Connecting Light and Sound.”

McKinney illuminates his art with LED lights and allows for color changes. In the opening reception, the gallery will be transformed into an emotive, dark(ish) room lit almost solely by the light of his artwork. If that weren’t enticing enough, the event will be accompanied by music he will create with a synthesizer.

whitewall

Radcliffe Bailey Uses Memory as Medicine in "Travelogue"

KINDERHOOK
ART, JUNE 6, 2018

By Katy Donoghue

Jack Shainman's **The School** opened its fourth summer show at the end of May. On view through October 6 is a survey show of **Radcliffe Bailey**, entitled "Travelogue," as well as a series of solo presentations by artists like **Nina Chanel Abney**, **Math Bass**, and **Leslie Wayne**.

Bailey's show focuses on work made between 2006 and today. As he describes it, his practice has always had one foot in the past and one in the present. His work explores shared history, faith, and ancestry through the layer of objects, photographs, music, and other materials.

Whitewall spoke with Bailey about the surreal, the spiritual, and memory as medicine.

WHITEWALL: Can you tell us about the earliest work we'll see in "Travelogue"?

RADCLIFFE BAILEY: The earliest work is a small cabinet piece from 2006. I refer to these as cabinet pieces because they're based around medicine cabinets. The idea is that you use these cabinet works to access memory. Memory became the medicine for the piece.

I made this work shortly after testing my DNA on my mother's side, which was the side I didn't know much about at the time. I traced my mother's lineage to Guinea and Sierra Leone, specifically to the Mende people. This 2006 piece was very personal, and I wanted to include marks and letters about my genetic code.

There's a related piece in the show that is a minimal approach to the Mende mask, something I remember seeing as a kid at the High Museum of Art. Part of the practice for me in making this work was to wax the mask and create somewhat of a shine that relates to the patina that you see on African art; but also—I remember my grandmother used to collect antique furniture and would create a patina on some of the pieces. So there's a reference to her, as well.

WW: Can you talk about how your practice has continued from that piece?

RB: My practice has remained consistent throughout the years. As I've always had one foot in the past, I always have one foot in the present. The present in the sense that I explore entities that are very surreal; such as the surreal concepts that we're dealing with today politically, but also spiritually for me. I'm trying to understand that faith is not necessarily tangible. My practice today is really in that space.

WW: Along those lines, could you tell us about the most recent work in the show and how that is representative of your studio practice today?

RB: The most recent work is a piece called *Upwards*. That piece is inspired by the Kongo cosmogram—a crossroads between North, South, East, and West. The work inquires into travel, so there's a railroad track that runs across the top, middle, as well as the other intersections of the tarp. There are counter clockwise traces, as in the Kongo cosmogram, and also references to my family members migrating from the South to the North as a part of the Underground Railroad. The piece also deals with ascension and travel upwards in a surreal way. The tarp is a shipping tarp and resembles a constellation with its surface stitches.

WW: The concept of travel also relates to the sonic work that's on the lawn. Could you talk about that?

RB: That piece is called *Vessel* and was created for and commissioned by **Prospect New Orleans** this past Fall. It could be shown anywhere, but for its initial installation, it was located between the Mississippi River and a railroad track. I worked with a young musician, Okorie Johnson, to create a soundtrack, which sonically represents past, present, and future. It had the sounds of a railroad track, sounds of the ocean, sounds of a burning fire in the background; you can hear sounds of dogs. It was recorded during a full moon. I worked with architect friends of mine, **Mack Scogin** and **Merrill Elam**, to engineer the piece, which is made with steel.

WW: How do you want your work to interact with the unique architecture and history of the school?

RB: Speaking of working with architecture, I've always pictured my work in a space that *dealt with space*. I've always wanted to make work in reaction to an architectural space just as I react to spaces that are public, outdoor, and not traditional. For The School to have a history as just that was perfect for me.

UPSTATE DIARY

TRAVELOGUE

A Spiritual Journey

The School, gallerist Jack Shainman's exhibition space in Kinderhook, NY, creates an unforgettable voyage through time and space in the new show titled "Travelogue".

By Miss Rosen

The School

25 Broad St, Kinderhook, NY 12106

On view Saturdays through October 6, '18.

11am - 6pm until Labor day. Post Labor day Saturdays 11am-5pm. Or by appointment.

Photos Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery

Untitled (Mende), 2011 by Radcliffe Bailey

To Be Titled, 2018 by Radcliffe Bailey

We walk along the pathless path through time and space, on an infinite journey of continuous departures and arrivals. It is only when we stop to pause that we begin to see how we came to be here and now although our presence in the present may still be shrouded in layers of mystery, of histories untold, and of forces unknown.

The voyage into existence, one which we all make as we cross the terrestrial plane, extends far beyond the physical world as it takes shape in the intangible realm of perception, emotion, and idea. Those who are called to manifest this wisdom are known to us as artists or shamans depending on where and when they work. Their creations reveal layers of knowledge that meet us where we are, ready to guide us to a new level of understanding of ourselves and the world.

In *Travelogue*, a survey exhibition at The School in Kinderhook on view Saturdays through the fall, African-American artist Radcliffe Bailey takes on a trip we won't soon forget. The voyage begins as we ascend the steps inside The School and are greeted by *Windward Coast – West Coast Slave Trade* (2009–2018), a sweeping installation of thousands of piano keys, assembled to suggest the rough, choppy waters of the Atlantic Ocean during the Middle Passage. Here, inside this silent storm, a slave ship navigates its way through, while a disembodied black head that glitters in the light bobs far away on its own, reminding us of all who have been lost to history.

Windward Coast - West Coast Slave Trade, 2009-2018 by Radcliffe Bailey

> *"My goal is to bring important shows to this area, with artists of our time who comment on socio-political topics. At a moment when our culture is so polarized, I want to present exhibitions that generate conversation about the issues facing our country." — Jack Shainman*

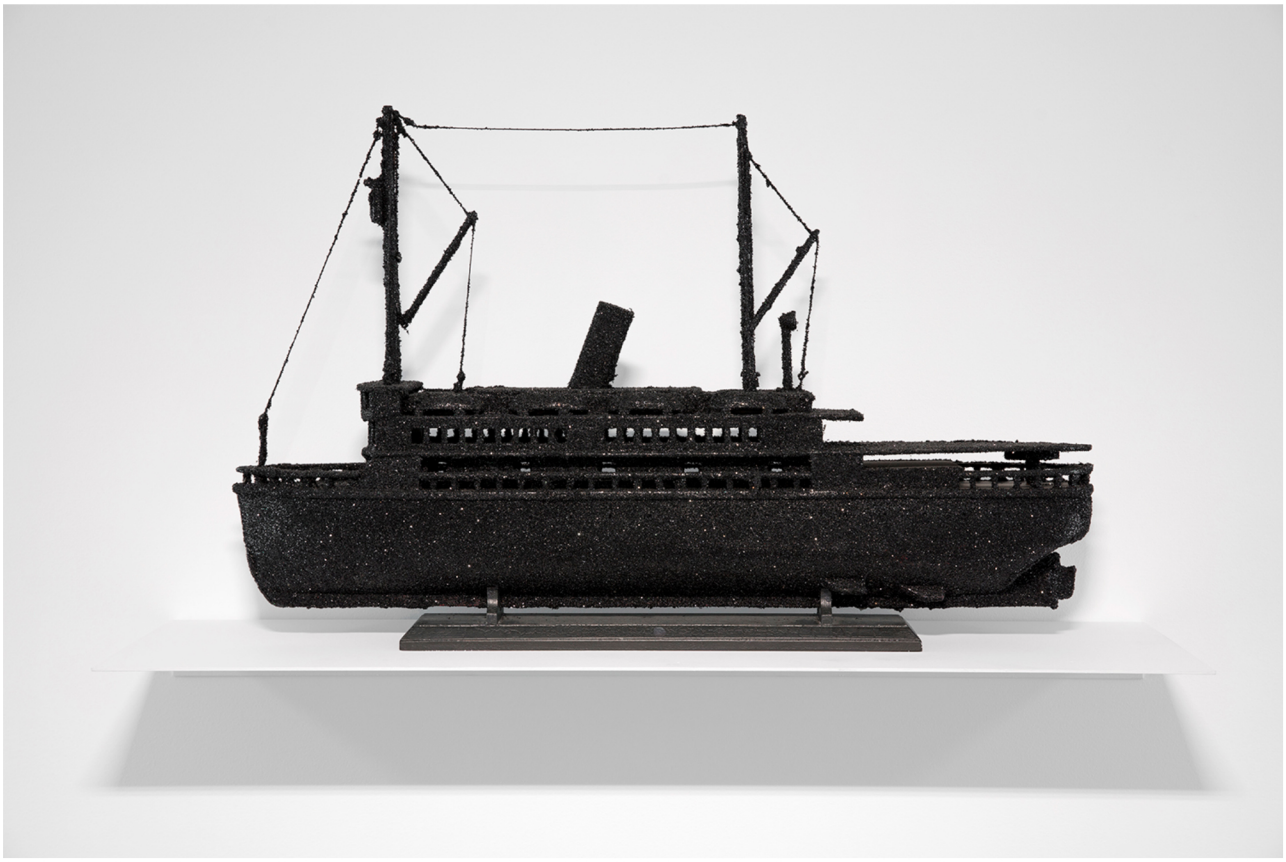
"There is only the fight to recover what has been lost / And found and lost again and again," T.S. Eliot wrote in *Four Quartets* (1943). This fight need not be a struggle so much as a campaign, an undertaking of majestic scope that brings together that which has been torn apart, honoring the history of a people who have survived against the odds.

Bailey's *Travelogue* is an investigation into the movement of his people on two continents over centuries, exploring his familial relationships in an array of work that includes wood cabinets featuring photographs of distant relations set amid symbolic still lifes as well as *Untitled* (2006), a mixed media painting of Bailey's DNA sequence.

"I have always been curious about my family history," Bailey explains. "I felt a connection to different parts of West Africa. I researched my DNA on my mother's side and traced it to parts to Sierra Leone and Guinea, to the Mende, where women controlled and ran society. That reminds me of my mother."

The path from past and present is illuminated by the nearby presence of a Mende mask from Sierra Leone that Bailey created in 2011 based on one in the collection of the High Museum in Atlanta. The mask reminds us of the power inherent in the ritualized object, where art and spiritually fuse into a holistic expression of existence, making it an integrated part of communal life. Here, the mask's journey echoes that of the people, refashioning itself to adapt to the "New World."

Bailey observes, "Even though the mask has been taken out of context and put into a museum still has its same power because it has guided itself in front of us. To encounter it the same way I encountered photographs from family members, it's like the strength, power, and purpose of those objects have a presence today in a different way. To me, it was like trying to trace those presences."



Sierra Leone, 2008 by Radcliffe Bailey

In this way, *Travelogue* reveals the many trails that simultaneously co-exist, be it the Underground Railroad to freedom or Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line back to Africa, the solar system of Sun Ra's "Other Worlds" or the Dikenga cosmogram that gave the people of the Kongo knowledge of self and their place in the universe. In Bailey's work, there are infinite access points – be it subject or medium, style or design – to access the messages he delivers in soaring, majestic works or intimate collages that are lyrical poems rendering in silence.

As we go along Bailey's *Travelogue*, a sweeping symphony can be heard in the mind's ear. "Music was my first form of DNA: of understanding sound and rhythm, relating to those different things and looking at the piano keys as a form of DNA, be it sound. It's almost as if I want to create soundtracks for history," the artist reveals.

After completing *Travelogue*, a new adventure awaits as The School is concurrently showing a series of solo exhibitions by Nina Chanel Abney, Shimon Attie, Math Bass, Valérie Blass, Vibha Galhotra, Brad Kahlhamer, Margaret Kilgallen, Lyne Lapointe, Gordon Parks, and Leslie Wayne.

Each of the artists on view offers a different thread into the complex interweaving of trails of life, giving us a panoply of vantage points that expand our perspective about life. Here, we are invited to engage with a diverse array of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and video that take us from Harlem to the Moon.

As we leave the exhibition, we may encounter *Travellers*, a luminous red 1995 photograph by Gordon Parks. It is a potent and poetic reminder that we must continue the journey on our own, comforted in the knowledge that we can draw strength, courage, and solace from the masterful works of art now on view at The School.

"As above, so below, as within, so without, as the universe, so the soul," Greek philosopher Hermes Trismegistus understood, speaking of the fundamental connection that exists of all who inhabit the earth.

#21, 2018 Nina Chanel Abney

#5, 2018 by Nina Chanel Abney

Left to Right: *Fort Gotham Girls + Boys Club,* 2014. *To Be Titled (Chandelier)*, 2018. *Super Catcher VI*, 2016. *Super Catcher V*, 2016. All by Brad Kahlhamer

Left to Right: *Stuffed Curiosity Cabinet*, 2017, *Bee*, 2018. *Horse*, 2017. *La Fantome / The Ghost*, 2017. All by Lyne Lapointe.

Left to right: *Untitled (Sarow),* c. 1997. *Untitled (Ever),* c. 1997. *Untitled (Measure-Up)*, c. 1997 All by Margaret Kilgallen

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Jack Shainman's School is open for the summer with migration themed show

LINDA YABLONSKY

12th June 2018 19:05 GMT

Kinderhook is a village on the east side of the Hudson River in upstate New York, about two hours' drive north of Manhattan. It was the birthplace and final rest of Martin van Buren, the eighth American president. His house is now a museum, but on 20 May, when people from all over the Hudson Valley streamed into the town, history was not the main draw. It was the third annual season opener of The School, formerly the Martin van Buren Public School, now a 30,000 sq ft satellite of Chelsea's Jack Shainman Gallery.

From the start, opening day has been comparable to a county fair, except with contemporary art on show instead of animals—not counting the two Afghan hounds and the whippet accompanying the sartorially resplendent Kehinde Wiley, one of the 1,000 guests helping themselves to food and drink under an enormous tent on the back lawn and enjoying a concert by a rockin' Toshi Reagon and her all-female band, with the producer/DJ (and art collector) Swizz Beatz filling out the bill.

Inside the building, in what used to be classrooms and offices, were solo presentations by a multi-generational group of artists, such as Margaret Kilgallen, Nina Chanel Abney and Brad Kalhammer, as well as a show of classic photographs by the great Gordon Parks.

Radcliffe Bailey, Windward Coast-West Coast Slave Trade (2009-18) © Radcliffe Bailey

But the main event began just inside the schoolhouse door, where the plaster head of a black man was drowning in a sea of broken piano keys scattered across the entryway. I was puzzling out the dates in the installation's title—Windward Coast—West Coast Slave Trade, 2009-2018—when a friend whispered: "Who is that extraordinarily good-looking man?"

He was the very dapper Radcliffe Bailey, peeking at the crowed from under the brim of a preacher's hat, the artist responsible for that haunting installation, which merely hinted at the diverse body of works on display on two levels of the main exhibition space (previously a gym and cafeteria) under the title Travelogue.

The show's subject is migration of all sorts, and a tour through resonant objects and images in Bailey's personal and political life. Along with the collaged paintings, more found-object sculptures, and delicate gouaches with collaged images, is a very large, unstretched canvas crossed with narrow railroad tracks and bearing a squiggle of blue neon that, coupled with Bailey's arte povera-ish aesthetic, made me think of Mario Merz.

As it turned out, the references are as historical as they were personal. The neon stands in for the North Star, the guiding light for many Southern African-Americans migrating northward in the last century, or brought from Africa before that, and for the refugees crossing many borders today.

It is all very pointed and poignant. "It's just what I've been thinking about lately," Bailey says.

• *Travelogue by Radcliffe Bailey, with solo presentations by Nina Chanel Abney, Shimon Attie, Math Bass, Valérie Blass, Vibha Galhotra, Brad Kahlhamer, Margaret Kilgallen, Lyne Lapointe, Gordon Parks, and Leslie Wayne, until 6 October 2018 at The School: Jack Shainman Gallery*

OBSERVER

The Best Summer Day Trips for Art Outside of New York City

By Margaret Carrigan • 06/13/18 7:00am

Jack Shainman Gallery: The School

Kinderhook, New York, 129 Miles North of New York City

Radcliffe Bailey's *Vessel* installed at Crescent Park for Prospect 4. Jack Shainman Gallery

Perhaps the last thing from anyone's mind in the summertime is going back to school, but make an exception for Jack Shainman's extensive 30,000-foot Upstate space, located in a former schoolhouse. Shainman, who has two Chelsea galleries and is a known champion of some of the biggest African-American artists working today, opened The School four years ago as a way to offer more visibility for his artists in the art world "off season."

This summer, the main exhibition space boasts the first ever mid-career survey of work by mixed-media artist Radcliffe Bailey, including a major outdoor sound installation, that debuted May 20. On the second floor, which still retains its original classroom structure, each room features a mini solo show for other artists in the gallery's stable such as Nina Chanel Abney, Lyne Lapointe, Gordon Parks, Valérie Blass, Vibha Galtora, Margaret Kilgallen, Leslie Wayne and Math Bass.

artnet news

Art World

Shows! Shows! Shows! 34 New York Must-See Gallery Exhibitions to See This May

Anchored by Frieze Week, May is one of the busiest months for gallery shows in New York.

Sarah Cascone & **Caroline Goldstein**, May 1, 2018

31. "Travelogue" at Jack Shainman's The School

Radcliffe Bailey, *Windward Coast – West Coast Slave Trade* (2009–11), detail. Photo courtesy of the artist.

For the season opening at Jack Shainman's The School, a series of solo exhibitions by artists from the gallery's stable will be presented in conjunction with Radcliffe Bailey's "Travelogue." Bailey creates assemblages from found objects that allude to broad themes of collective memory, history, and migration. He considers music to be the common thread in his work, directing the ultimate composition.

May 20–October 6; opening reception, 2 p.m.–6 p.m.; 25 Broad Street, Kinderhook

BLOUIN
ARTINFO

Radcliffe Bailey's "Travelogue" at The School

BY BLOUIN ARTINFO | JULY 24, 2018

The shows on view through October 6 at The School in Kinderhook, New York, mark the fourth anniversary of this offshoot of the Jack Shainman Gallery.

The centerpiece is Radcliffe Bailey's "Travelogue." "Working primarily between the mediums of sculpture and painting, Radcliffe Bailey incorporates found objects and photographs into textured compositions that address history, ancestry, migration, and collective memory," the gallery writes. "The cultural significance and rhythmic properties of music are also important influences which can be seen throughout his oeuvre."

A concurrent series of solo exhibitions by Nina Chanel Abney, Shimon Attie, Math Bass, Valerie Blass, VIBHA GALHOTRA, Brad Kahlhamer, Margaret Kilgallen, Lyne Lapointe, Gordon Parks, and Leslie Wayne are also on view.

hv1

Art & Music

Radcliffe Bailey's "Travelogue" at the School in Kinderhook

by Ann Hutton / May 24, 2018 / 0 comments

Installation view of Radcliffe Bailey's "Travelogue" exhibition at the School (Image courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery)

I've skimmed through the white-walled halls of the School, Jack Shainman's gleaming 30,000-foot exhibition space in what used to be Kinderhook's high school, gawking as I go at a number of works by Radcliffe Bailey. His survey exhibition, "Travelogue," provokes wonder. Incorporating found objects, photos, paint and metal, he sculpts pieces – arrangements, really – that explore multiple African-American themes, such as ancestry, migration, the Middle Passage and other elements of collective memory. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia, but has shown in Shainman's New York galleries numerous times. They are longtime friends, it seems.

When Bailey and Shainman suddenly appear in one hall, I grab the opportunity to ask a few questions to satisfy my curiosity. You're not supposed to do that, are you? Ask an artist or poet right out what the heck their work means? Like the sculpture in the entryway: hundreds, maybe thousands of piano keys strewn about like ocean waves, with a sparkly black ship floating at one end and the sinking body of a black man at the other. So many disassembled pianos. So many lives lost at sea and elsewhere. Throughout the exhibit, I see repeated elements: railroad tracks and boats. I run to catch up. I dive in.

So, what do you have to say for yourself?

(Bailey laughs with sweet shyness and answers quietly.) It's about dealing with travel by land and by sea, but then spiritually traveling as well. Some of it's layered between my father being an engineer and the Underground Railroad, to boats and travel, movement crossing the Atlantic – as well as the relationship between sea and space, and how we somewhat sit at the crossroads between the two.

How do you mean, "We sit at the crossroads"?

I always felt like I lived in my dreams, and the other world, which was real surreal, was the actual world we live in, so-called tangible reality.

(Oh, that crossroads?) When did you start doing artwork?

After art school. (He chuckles.)

Shainman: Nah, when you were in kindergarten! You've been an artist forever.

Bailey: I think so, yeah. It's something my mother picked up on and pushed me towards.

Bailey wanders into a large hall where multimedia paintings and a few sculptures dwarf the viewer. I sense that the message emanating from them as a group covers a lot of historical ground and personal experience. Is that subtle violence or acceptance? Is that anger? Beauty? Is that a lighthouse lamp?

Shainman continues: With artists like Radcliffe making such incredible work, I'm really so proud of this exhibition – there are 41 pieces of his here, even a large sculpture out back. This show will be up for six months.

Is that standard?

Shainman: There's nothing really standard. We did three shows one year, but it was too much.

And you've shown in New York, too?

Yes.

Shainman: Oh yes! We've worked together many times. When did we get together?

1997.

Shainman: Are you kidding? Is that true? I'm so proud. I just love the juxtaposition of the works.

I'm struck by the size of some of these. The space is phenomenal. So, is there anything you really want readers to know about the show, your artists or the facility that hasn't been emphasized yet?

Shainman: What I want to do is bring these shows to this area... I'm trying to do important shows with artists of our time with important themes. This show has so much relevance, especially now.

With Bailey's "Travelogue," the School celebrates its fourth anniversary, remaining open until October 6. Concurrently, a series of solo exhibitions fills what were once the upstairs classrooms, hallways and bathrooms of the Martin Van Buren High School: works by Nina Chanel Abney, Shimon Attie, Math Bass, Valérie Blass, Vibha Galhotra, Brad Kahlhamer, Margaret Kilgallen, Lyne Lapointe, Gordon Parks and Leslie Wayne.

Covering even more ground (and water), these artists "converge on themes of history and migration, funneled through the lens of contemporary life. Emphasis is not on the destination, but on the digressive path of the journey and the various points of discovery and loss along the way."

The School is open on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. The School/Jack Shainman Gallery, 25 Broad Street, Kinderhook; (518) 758-1628, www.jackshainman.com/school-2.

Galerie

Four Art-Filled Day Trips to New York's Hudson Valley

Buzzing with creative energy and a lively art scene, this idyllic region makes the perfect escape from the city. Here's what not to miss this summer

Dia:Beacon is one of the Hudson Valley's must-visit art destinations.
Photo: Dia:Beacon

May 1, 2018 | By Colleen Curry

The verdant forests and picturesque mountains of New York's Hudson Valley don't just offer a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of Manhattan; they're also home to a trove of sculpture parks, galleries, and art museums on par with the city's blue-chip offerings. The best part? These venues are just a short train, bus, or even boat ride away from the Big Apple, so you'll be back by evening—that is, if the region's captivating allure doesn't convince you to stay the night.

The School, *Kinderhook*

The School occupies a 1929 federal-revival building.

Photo: Jack Shainman Gallery

Radcliffe Bailey, *Other Worlds Worlds*, 2011.

Photo: Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery

This year, New York mega-dealer Jack Shainman marks the fourth anniversary of his grade school turned gallery in this quiet town, presenting a survey by mixed-media artist Radcliffe Bailey, on view from May 20 through October 6. Bailey's compelling work, which has been the star of numerous solo exhibitions in Shainman's New York City gallery, speaks to both the cultural and the personal implications of the African-American experience. The 30,000-square-foot space will also exhibit contemporaneous solo shows featuring Nina Chanel Abney, Shimon Attie, Math Bass, Valérie Blass, Vibha Galhotra, Brad Kahlhamer, Margaret Kilgallen, Lynne Lapointe, Gordon Parks, and Leslie Wayne. *25 Broad Street, Kinderhook, NY 12106*

The Post and Courier
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Video: 'Storm at Sea' by artist Radcliffe Bailey now on exhibit at Charleston's Gibbes Museum of Art

Staff report Apr 27, 2018 Updated Apr 27, 2018 (0)

The centerpiece of Radcliffe Bailey's exhibit at the Gibbes Museum is "Storm at Sea," which staff preparator and art handler Chris Pelletier photographed on Wednesday, April 26, 2018. The sculpture features an undulating sea composed of piano keys and references the Middle Passage, the transatlantic route of slave ships from West Africa to the Caribbean or the Americas. Bailey's installation, called "Pensive," will be on view April 27-Sept. 16. Wade Spees/Staff

Wade Spees

Radcliffe Bailey's relationship with the Gibbes Museum of Art deepens this weekend with the opening of "Pensive," an installation that will be on view through Sept. 16.

Bailey, an Atlanta-based artist who examines issues of race and culture, won the Gibbes Museum's 1858 Prize for Contemporary Southern Art in 2010, and the work that secured him the honor, "Tobacco Blues," is now part of the museum's permanent collection.

The centerpiece of Bailey's installation at the Gibbes is "Storm at Sea," which he installed Wednesday. A reference to the Middle Passage, the transatlantic route of slave ships from West Africa to the Caribbean or the Americas, the artwork is made with hundreds of piano keys.

The Post and Courier was there as Bailey assembled the work in the gallery. Watch the time-lapse video here:

Jenkins, Mark. "Radcliffe Bailey exhibition evokes the harsh history of slavery." *The Washington Post*, 28 June 2017. Online.

The Washington Post

Museums • Review

Radcliffe Bailey exhibition evokes the harsh history of slavery

By Mark Jenkins June 28

Radcliffe Bailey has visited the Great Dismal Swamp, the marshland on the Virginia/North Carolina border that provides the title of his show at the Greater Reston Arts Center. The Atlanta artist roamed the area with his cousin and two friends, traveling in what he called "a big old black 1950 Cadillac."

Yet Bailey's collages and installations were not directly inspired by the vast marsh. Indeed, they may owe more to that Cadillac.

That's because Bailey is fascinated by the talismanic power of vintage objects. His Reston exhibition features several glass-doored cabinets full of such things, some of them handed down by relatives. The case that includes many family heirlooms, including his grandmother's tintypes, "feels more like an altar," Bailey said during a break from installing the show this spring.

Bailey builds his assemblages intuitively and leaves them open to interpretation. "I don't want to get too locked down into making a statement," he said. "If it doesn't make sense, I'm cool with that."

Statement-making or not, the context is clear: the African and African American experiences. The show's centerpiece is a roiling sea of several thousand wooden piano keys, some with the plastic keytops still attached. The overlapping sticks suggest the action of waves or the debris left in the wake of a flood.

It could be the flood of history. A bust of a man's head, covered in a glittery mix of black paint and white sand, pokes above wooden swells to memorialize the many subjugated Africans who didn't survive the Middle Passage. The piece's title is "Windward Coast — West Coast Slave Trade," and the head was inspired by documentation in European museums of abuses in the Belgian-ruled Congo.

The artist has done versions of the installation in a half-dozen locations, from his home town to Senegal and Colombia. "Every time I do it, I do it a different way," he said. This edition is just half the size of largest one.

Bailey acquired the piano keys — he has more than 400 sets of 88 each — from an Atlanta music shop that was disposing of them. “I didn’t know what I was going to do with them,” he admitted. Like so many of his ingredients, the keys have been around awhile. Some are dated, and the oldest says “1910.”

The keys signify Bailey’s love of music, which is evident in several of the show’s pieces. And because they’re fragments of a musical past that can be put together in a new way, they suggest hip-hop’s original scratch-and-chop aesthetic.

One early idea for the keys was as representations of DNA code. It’s hardly surprising that a man who resequences found objects to conjure history and culture would ponder genetics. One of the show’s pieces, a metal model for a larger sculpture, combines a sailing ship and an oar and is titled “Creole.” Several of the cabinets juxtapose African and European art and society.

“I’m made up of so many different kinds of people,” the artist said.

Although born in New Jersey, Bailey has spent most of his life in Atlanta, where he draws inspiration from the histories of the civil rights movement and the Civil War. He lives on land that was the site of skirmishes during that conflict, land that occasionally yields artifacts from it.

Even dirt and sand can imply people and places. The glimmering black grit employed in several of Bailey’s pieces was inspired by beaches in Jamaica, another crucial location in the history of the slave trade. A collage painting titled “Clotilde,” after the last ship known to have brought slaves from Africa to the United States, features a coating of sand-flecked ebony paint atop one of Georgia clay.

Two sculptural pieces have fewer layers — at least physically. “Blue Black” is a glass heart that leaks blue pigment onto a white wall, evoking water as well as indigo, the dye plant cultivated by slaves on Southern plantations. “Travel by Night” is an outsize lantern that recalls travel via the Underground Railroad.

One route on that path to freedom was through the Great Dismal Swamp, whose thickets also provided sanctuary to thousands of escaped slaves who lived there from around 1700 to the end of the Civil War. Their story is not told directly here, but then Bailey is not exactly a storyteller.

The artist combines things that have meaning for him. But he also likes to hear what the finished pieces mean to the people who view them. “I learn more from my work when the work is up,” he said, “than when I’m making it.”

IF YOU GO

Radcliffe Bailey: The Great Dismal Swamp

12001 Market St., Reston. 703-471-9242. restonarts.org.

Dates: Through Aug. 18.

ArtReview

September 2016

Radcliffe Bailey *Quest*

Jack Shainman Gallery, New York 28 April – 23 June

Upon entering *Quest*, an exhibition of mixed-media works and sculptures by black, Atlanta-based artist Radcliffe Bailey, and learning from the press release that it's meant to 'plumb the depths of American history in an attempt for a fuller understanding of, and a healing from, this shared past', one has the impulse, especially in the current political climate, to be generous in one's criticism. The show opens with *Rocking* (2014), a massive canvas coated in splashes of black paint, purple and blue glitter, and what is best described as moon dust. It serves as a sort of map. Arrows point to names of places such as Georgia, Haiti, Jamaica, Ghana, Spain and the Congo. In the glittery murk, one can make out human footprints and perfectly round orbs that represent the waxing and waning moon. In the centre, a white rock mounted on brackets resembles a human skull unearthed from an archaeological dig. Given the glitter, the map could be described (with tongue in cheek) as a very gay rendering of the transatlantic slave trade; or perhaps a diagram of the disparate roots of the artist's own family tree.

Subsequent works draw comparisons to pop culture in general. *67/68* (2016), a gorgeous diorama in a wooden cabinet, holds an antique table upon which lies a white fur, a decanter of whiskey, a bottle of Murray & Lanman Florida Water cologne and two cigars on a white enamel ashtray. Next to the table is a bagful of dried palm fronds. On the inside walls are tacked photographs of a Spanish-moss-covered road, the pews in a chapel and an African wood carving. A gallery attendant told me that many of the artefacts and references in the show are personal ones. The diorama could thus memorialise one of Bailey's forbears, but it could just as easily be a set piece from the 1948 film *Key Largo*, in which Humphrey Bogart plays a tough-talking Second World War veteran standing up to a bunch of mobsters marooned in the Keys during a hurricane. The point being that the work doesn't unearth any deeper understanding of the place (Florida) and the time (the late 1960s): it merely recreates a Hollywood fiction, albeit with a black man instead of a white one.

Works like *Zion Crossing* and *Mika Flame* (both 2016) mine the history of minstrelsy. Known for wearing a top hat and tailcoats, and playing the fool in front of white audiences, the minstrel has all but disappeared from contemporary culture because of its racist origins. In *Zion Crossing*, a wall-mounted assemblage, he is wrapped in a canvas that features the markings of railway tracks; in *Mika Flame*, his clothing hangs in another cabinet diorama. But what does either work say besides that the minstrel existed, and is a part of a history of which, as a society, we are or should be ashamed?

If the show uncovers anything new about American history, it is the intersection of black male identity with that of kitsch. *Before Cisero* (2016), a mixed-media installation, includes a framed photograph of a black man in early-twentieth-century garb. Before him, on the ground, is a wooden chest, out of which spills broken green glass, which is beautiful, and matches the flamboyant mood of the glitter in *Rocking*, and the squares of gold leaf covering the glass on the cabinet in *67/68*. Artists such as Rashid Johnson and Rashaad Newsome have utilised kitsch to explore the identity of the black male queer in a culture dominated by hyper-hetero rap stars like Jay Z and Kanye West, who themselves love kitsch, albeit in the form of diamonds, Kardashians and murdered-out Maseratis. What are the roots of kitsch in black male identity? This question is raised, but unexplored, in Bailey's otherwise staid exhibition of glittering cabinets of little curiosity. *Brienne Walsh*

Before Cisero, 2016, mixed-media installation, dimensions variable. © the artist. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

THE HOME FRONT

July 8, 2011

Southern Past, Modern Present

The Atlanta home of an artist interweaves his work and personal history

BY CANDACE JACKSON

Atlanta

A DESCENDANT OF former slaves and Civil War soldiers who fought for the North, Radcliffe Bailey is known for art that incorporates objects and themes from his own life and his family's history. At his Atlanta home, his work and his past are similarly interwoven.

He lives on a heavily wooded, seven-acre lot in the Cascade Heights neighborhood, a middle- and upper-middle class area that's home to some of the city's prominent African-Americans. Confederate and Union soldiers once marched during the Civil War through a trench on the property. Occasionally, Mr. Bailey said, he'll catch Civil War buffs in Confederate hats roaming the grounds. Also on the property is a small, yellow 19th-century home that was used for card-game playing by a previous owner, who lived in a large antebellum home across the street until she died at over 100 years old. The land is also two blocks from Mr. Bailey's childhood home, where his parents still live.

But the house breaks from the typical look of a history-seeped, Southern residence. Made of glass, concrete and corrugated fiberglass, two boxy structures—a three-bedroom, 2,200-square-foot home and a 2,000-square-foot studio—are connected by a second-story rectangle suspended above an open space, revealing the woods behind it. Inside, low-profile couches are surrounded by white walls and floor-to-ceiling glass windows along the back.

Most of Mr. Bailey's works were created in his studio, a windowless concrete room with a vaulted ceiling, connected to the house by a library that doubles as a guest room. (He didn't want a lot of natural light, as he wasn't used to working in it and wanted to be able to control the lighting almost completely.) A Juliet balcony looks down on the space, which on a recent visit was filled with giant mixed-media paintings in various stages of completion, piles of black glitter and a large, mirrored

lantern with a photo emulsion of a Civil War soldier on it.

Mr. Bailey, 42, often rises at 3 a.m. and works until around 8 a.m., then visits the studio throughout the day "whenever it hits me," he said. Carol Thompson, a curator at the High Museum of Art, said having his work space in his home has made for a noticeable shift in his work. "His space has allowed him to have this very improvisational way of working," she said. "I think it makes him more free." Last week, the largest exhibition of Mr. Bailey's artwork to date opened at the High Museum: a solo show called "Memory as Medicine," which spans his career and explores themes of memory and identity.

Mr. Bailey was born in New Jersey; some of his ancestors got there via the Underground Railroad. When he was 4, his family moved to Atlanta, counter to the migratory trend of the time of African-Americans typically moving north. He studied at the Atlanta College of Art, and his artwork is now in the permanent collections of museums like the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Art Institute of Chicago. Prices for his work range from $4,000 for smaller works on paper to as high as $100,000 for a large installation.

Mr. Bailey and his wife, Victoria Rowell, have four children between them from previous relationships, ranging from ages 8 through 22. Ms. Rowell, who grew up in foster homes in rural Maine, said although the ultra-contemporary home is somewhat different from the "antique-y" style she's used to, the bucolic setting reminds her of the farmhouses of her youth. "I felt like I ran 100 miles and ended up back at my front door," said Ms. Rowell, a 52-year-old writer, children's-rights activist and actress known for her roles in "The Young and the Restless" and "Diagnosis: Murder." "I've returned to nature. I'm back in the woods."

Mr. Bailey purchased the property nearly 15 years ago. He then hired a local architecture firm, Mack Scogin Merrill Elam, which had previously designed a satellite of the High Museum. Instead of detailed instructions on what he wanted for his home, Mr. Bailey said he showed the architects slides of his artwork, letting them take the lead on style and layout. "A collector sometimes comes [to me] and says 'I don't like that color.' And that is annoying to me," said Mr. Bailey. "I wanted to treat them like artists."

Mr. Bailey spent roughly $500,000 building his home and the studio, which were completed in 2003. The structures were made with mostly inexpensive materials like corrugated fiberglass and fiber cement siding. Building the studio without windows also helped cut back on costs. A 4,900-square-foot, five-bedroom home down the block that was built in 2006 on about an acre is on the market for $340,000.

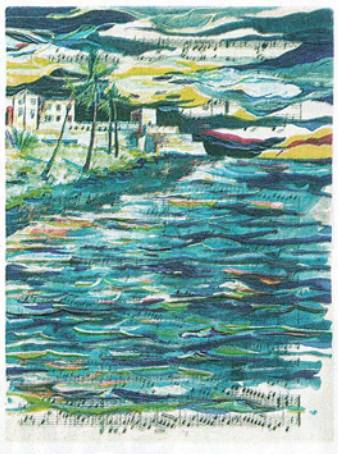
On a recent swelteringly hot summer morning, Mr. Bailey, wearing a straw hat with a green feather and white cuffed pants, said he sees his home as something of an extension of his studio, but "more livable." To stay inspired, he fills it with objects and art that inform his own work.

Hanging above the living room's fireplace was a wood sculpture made of four piano tops that Mr. Bailey's father helped make before he had a stroke several years ago. In the middle is a photograph of school children in Alabama, an homage to his mother, a former schoolteacher. "I really believe in making something so personal, it becomes universal," he said.

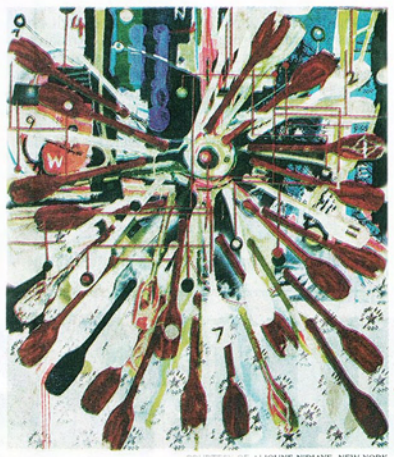
The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2011 AR 19

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA



COURTESY OF ALIOUNE N'DIAYE, NEW YORK

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ATLANTA

In the Picture: Atlanta, Africa And the Past

By HILARIE M. SHEETS

IN 1972, when Radcliffe Bailey was 4 years old, his parents were looking for a change of scene from New Jersey, where most of his extended family had settled. They were considering California, Ontario and Florida, where they were headed on a road trip, when they stopped by chance at a restaurant in Atlanta and met the Rev. Lucius M. Tobin. Mr. Tobin, a onetime teacher of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at Morehouse College, gave the family members a tour that captivated them with its rich account of the city's history. Soon after, the minister's wife was returning with Mrs. Bailey to New Jersey to help her pack up the family home.

"That was our introduction to Atlanta," said Mr. Bailey, who has lived there ever since. Now 42, he has built a successful career as an artist largely out of his fascination with the city's history as the crossroads of the South, and with the past more generally — as is evident in "Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine," his largest museum show to date, which opened last week at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta. His mixed-media paintings and installations incorporate objects steeped in history — including tintypes of distant family members, African figurines, disassembled piano keys and Georgia red clay — and suggest stories of the black Atlantic diaspora and migrations more universal and spiritual.

"Atlanta has this interesting past that makes you want to dig deeper and understand what was once there, even though it may be covered," he said in a recent interview at the Jack Shainman Gallery in Chelsea, where he shows in New York. "Sherman burnt down the city. They say when you want to get rid of something, you burn it, but you don't really get rid of it. I can look out my back door and see a lot," including antebellum gravestones and remnants of a Civil War road that cut through his property in a rural part of the city.

He has also been inspired throughout his career by Atlanta's culture of churchgoers. "For a lot of African-Americans here church has been a focal point," he said. "People sing these hymns with a certain tone to them, and that's just something that comes so far from the past. I'm always trying to make sense of those things."

In his monumental installation "Windward Coast," a star attraction of the show, Mr. Bailey has created a rolling ocean of wooden keys harvested from some 400 pianos. A lone head, painted glittery black,

ERIK S. LESSER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; INSET, K. TAUCHES/ SOLOMON PROJECTS, ATLANTA

ERIK S. LESSER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

COURTESY OF JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

COURTESY OF JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

bobs in this expanse, suggesting isolation and the trauma of the slave trade as well as recent natural disasters. Yet in this piece, as in all his work, Mr. Bailey fuses pain with transcendence. "I think about all the music that was probably played on those keys," he said. "An ocean is something that divides people. Music is something that connects people. Duke Ellington or Thelonious Monk — it's a different sound that takes you somewhere else. It's also about being at peace."

Michael Rooks, the High Museum's curator of modern and contemporary art, describes Mr. Bailey as "probably the most prominent living artist here in Atlanta." For the artist, seeing this show mounted at the High is particularly meaningful. It was the first museum he frequented as a child,

Work that reaches back to migrations, enfolding journeys both actual and spiritual.

visiting with his mother, a schoolteacher, who enrolled him in art classes there and took him to meet the painter Jacob Lawrence when he visited the museum. "We stood in line and got his signature in my book, and my mother told him 'My son's going to be an artist,'" Mr. Bailey recalled. He credits his early interest in visual storytelling to artists with a narrative bent like Mr. Lawrence and to his grandfather, a deacon at a church in Virginia, who built birdcages as a hobby in his mint-green workshop. Mr. Bailey loved to spend time in the workshop listening to him and has used that shade of green often in his work.

As a teenager Mr. Bailey, who grew up in Hank Aaron's neighborhood in Atlanta, pursued his early love of baseball and played semi-pro for a year. He ultimately decided he was too small for his position as catcher and followed his mother's vision for him by enrolling at the Atlanta College of Art. (Baseball bats remain a recurring motif in his work.) He majored in sculpture and early on was interested in large outdoor pieces, working as an assistant to the sculptor Mel Edwards on an installation. "I always come to painting as a sculptor," Mr. Bailey said. "Everything is based on materials."

Above, left, Radcliffe Bailey at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Above center, the artist with his installation "Windward Coast" and (inset) a detail from it. Top, from left to right, "Notes From Elmina III," "Notes From Elmina I," "Winged" and "Notes From Elmina II." Bottom left, an untitled work and, below it, "Tricky." Bottom right, "Uprooted."

He has found many of those materials through a love of antiquing that he developed under his mother's influence; for years he has collected weathered objects wherever he goes. But it was his grandmother's gift of some 400 tintypes from family albums shortly before he graduated from art school in 1991 that led to a turning point in his work. He found that placing a photograph at the center of a wall piece provided an anchor for constellations of interconnected imagery fanning out around it, as well as a way in for viewers, particularly African-Americans who "don't necessarily go to museums," he said, and "don't see themselves in those objects."

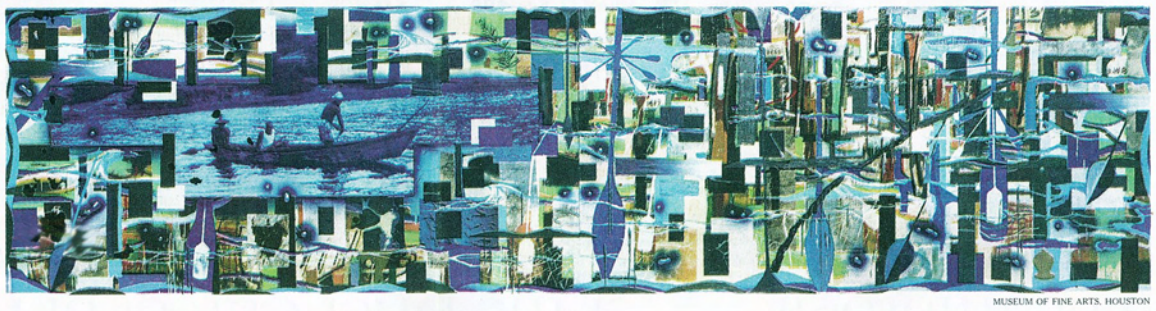
Carol Thompson, curator of African art at the High, who organized the show with Mr. Rooks, proposed this exhibition after seeing Mr. Bailey's 40-foot-long public commission at the Atlanta airport titled "Saints." It's a collage of oversize black-and-white photographs of dead relatives, bright blocks of color, words, numbers and the African dikenga, a circular chart that shows the cycle of life from birth to the ancestral realm. Ms. Thompson said she was struck by how he gave this ancient pictographic symbol a present-day currency. Mr. Rooks, meanwhile, sees in Mr. Bailey's work the influence of artists including Anselm Kiefer (in terms of scale and focus on identity and myth) and Peter Halley (in the way he uses a geometric architectural system to connect different zones of his paintings). "Radcliffe has this terrific visual acuity where he travels around the world and picks up ideas from artists of many different backgrounds and generations, throws them into his hopper and comes out with something completely original," Mr. Rooks said.

Mr. Bailey works on multiple pieces at once, leaving objects out everywhere around his house and studio until he figures out how he wants to proceed. "It's very much like hip-hop, patching and putting things together quiltlike, using old things to make new things," said Mr. Bailey, who designed his studio without windows so that his attention would stay focused inward.

Ms. Thompson noted Mr. Bailey's involvement with a wide circle of musicians, and the frequent references to music in his work. "The way he moves in his studio, he's involved in a dance in how an artwork comes to life," she said. "That may be a hidden aspect to his studio practice — that it's very performative."

Earlier in his career Mr. Bailey tended to throw everything into his paintings, "like a kid with all these questions," he said. "As I look at my recent work, it's really pared down. Now I want haikus."

Another reward of having a hometown exhibition (this one will travel next year to the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College and the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio) is that his parents and the community that has nurtured him since elementary school can be a part of it. "I've always been interested in my work in relationship to my friendships and my family," he said. "I've always wanted to make work that would speak to them — not over them, not around them, but straightforward to them."



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

DAILYSERVING
AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

New Orleans

April 8, 2015 Written by Jordan Amirkhani

Radcliffe Bailey at Contemporary Art Center New Orleans

Radcliffe Bailey's current exhibition at Contemporary Art Center New Orleans rewards multiple visits.

Comprising seven large-scale works by the Atlanta-based artist, the exhibition gathers an intensely personal constellation of imagery that has continued to distinguish Bailey as a contemporary artist of significant aesthetic and critical power. Bailey's emphasis on the rich symbolic context of the liminal, or the in-between, provides support for his expansive definition of American culture and its unique admixture of European, African, Central American, and Caribbean visual and cultural traditions. In his radically open formal vocabulary, signifiers playfully subvert the gaps that separate Anglo-European visual codes from earlier representational traditions of West and Central Africa, and point to Bailey's unique response to forms of détournement associated with conceptual art of the 1950s and '60s. The crocodile in On Your Way Up (2013) registers as both crucifix and curio, a metaphor for the Nile or ancient Nigerian water god, a political response to animal rights or a post-Duchampian absurdity retooled for a Southern audience. Darkness is almost always accompanied by hints of optimism and hopeful belief, yet what resonates throughout the exhibition is Bailey's mastery of ambiguity within his pictures, his skill in representing the fluctuating space where water meets land, heaven meets earth, gesture meets text, figuration meets formalism, and art becomes music.

Radcliffe Bailey. On Your Way Up, 2013; tarp, crocodile, and steel; 120 x 106 x 10 in. Courtesy of the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans.

Bailey grounds his practice in a playfully subversive and anachronistic field of visual and art histories and traditions, and finds freedom in the deconstruction of a vocabulary of signs and images culled from early African art and the turbulent history of the Black Atlantic experience. This is most robustly felt in works where textual fragments, graffiti, and African ideograms feature prominently within the pictorial field and intersect with objects that embody the physical and psychological rupture of the Middle Passage and the colonization of Africa. The gargantuan mixed-media work Black Night Falling (2014) is the most complex of these in its presentation of the representational, gestural, and performative features of markmaking associated with so-called "primitive" art; African cosmograms such as the dikenga (a spiritual map of cross and circle used by tribes from the kingdom of Kongo to mark the space between the mystical and earthly realms and channel communication between mystical forces and religious practitioners) and Haitian vévé drawings of gods and the heavens interrupt the indexical marks left by Bailey's shoes and bare feet, turning the canvas into an empty stage of leftover symbols and movements co-choreographed by artist and history. Meanwhile, cutouts of circles puncture the rough textures undulating across the deep black of the picture space, desperately hinting at the sun that cannot shine over the seas where so many lives were cruelly lost. It is Bailey's unique, dialectical expression of black experience as something collectively felt, infinitely diverse, and personally political that invests his creations with a powerfully unresolved symbolic space where the historical consciousness of trauma and the potentiality of healing are allowed to confront and embrace one another.[1]

Radcliffe Bailey. Black Night Falling, 2014; mixed media; 168 x 240 x 14 in. Courtesy of CACNO.

However, it is the artist's deep investment in music and sound that remains the most powerful aspect of his practice, connecting him not just to a "black tradition…but a black mode of creativity" where ceaseless improvisation and experimentation accumulate and intensify.[2] In statements about his work, Bailey continually pays debt to the technical innovations and artistic ethics of American jazz masters Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and Thelonious Monk, and his interest in capturing the historical and political impact of music on American culture.[3] In many ways, his works operate like a jazz riff where profound simplicity and repetition take on the spontaneous fireworks of individual style—what Amiri Baraka calls "the changing same."[4] Motifs reappear in new forms and contexts, their moods and identities changed and deterritorialized through changes in scale and compositional organization. This musical materiality is presented diametrically in the two installations created for the New Orleans show: Windward Coast, a three-dimensional work of disassembled oak and walnut-wood piano keys emanating from the corner of the gallery, interrupted by a haunting plaster head covered in black glitter rising out the undulating sea of driftwood; and If Bells Could Talk, a sculptural bouquet that includes brass instruments exploding from an antique birdcage sitting atop an oversize 19th-century wooden music stand and a recording of a solo horn riff reverberating across the gallery—its sound complicated by a pink conch shell suspended on the opposing wall.[5] While Windward Coast re-presents the lost or unheard songs and sounds of slaves transported across the Atlantic, and the overwhelming physical and psychological violence associated with "lost-ness" in African American culture, If Bells Could Talk acknowledges the incredible contribution slave artisans made to the history of decorative arts, the repressed voices of an enslaved people, the liberating force of jazz, and the specificity of New Orleans to those narratives.[6] Music, for Bailey, is like history—a human attempt to acknowledge, honor, and move forward through time.

Radcliffe Bailey. Winward Coast. 2015. Piano keys, plaster bust, and glitter. Dimensions variable—approx. 27 square feet. Image: Courtesy of CACNO.

[1] See Christine Mullen Kreamer, Mary Nooter Roberts, and Elizabeth Harney, *Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art* (Washington, DC: The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, 2007), 166.

[2] See Carole Thompson's "Preface" in the exhibition catalog for the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA, entitled *Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2012), 16. Thompson quotes John Vlach's essay on the Charleston-based blacksmith Philip Simmons, and compares Bailey's unique individualism to the black artisan–artist.

[3] "I love music and music is a very important part of the work that I do. Imagine all the pianos and all the different songs that each piano has played. I am relating to that. I am also interested in connecting the different time periods—a piano from a church to pianos from a high school to people's personal pianos. I am thinking about how music has been connected to spirituality." — Radcliffe Bailey in a 2010 interview with art historian Edward S. Spriggs, quoted in "Radcliffe Bailey's Cerebral Universe," in *Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine*, pg. 106.

[4] Baraka is quoted in William J. Harris's "How You Sound?: Amiri Baraka Writes Free Jazz," in *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, eds. Robert O'Mealley and Brent Edwards (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 312.

[5] The first iteration of *Winward Coast* appeared in *Looking for Light, Traveling By Night* at Solomon Projects in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2009, and then appeared again in 2010 at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. The new 2015 installation at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans is placed in a corner window facing the street as if it were spilling out of the gallery and into the world—a decision similar to the candy-floor work of the late conceptual sculptor Félix González-Torres.

[6] Dr. Andrea Andersson, Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, mentioned that the instruments used in this installation were requested by Bailey while the install was in process—another instance of the artist's dependence on spontaneity in his aesthetic practice (telephone interview conducted on April 2, 2015). Thanks to Dr. Andersson for her insightful commentary on the exhibition and Bailey's work at the CACNO.

There and back: Art Center explores Africa

Michael Morain, mmorain@dmreg.com *11:50 p.m. CST February 13, 2015*

Dozens of battered wooden boxes lie in neat rows on the floor in the Des Moines Art Center's main gallery, and each one contains a different curious object: a glass hand, a bundle of braided hair, a two-headed antique doll that is black on one end and white on the other.

The items in the assemblage by the Chicago-based artist Nick Cave are the only things in the new show that fit into tidy boxes — and even then, only literally. The rest of the symbolically and spiritually charged artwork in "Field, Road, Cloud: Art and Africa" defies orderly sorting into any overall styles or themes.

But, man, some of it is fascinating.

The bulk of the traditional artifacts — figurines, textiles and wildly creative masks — were made in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Benin, Cameroon, Nigeria and other countries on the West African coast. They started landing in the museum's permanent collection in the 1960s, but many hadn't been displayed publicly until this show opened on Friday.

Contemporary African-themed artwork from Africa and the Americas fills the rest of the space, raising questions about old versus new and "us" versus "them." Curators sometimes talk about the way different artworks in a gallery create a "conversation" with one another, which is easier to imagine here, where 23 ceremonial masks stare out from shelves on a sky-blue wall.

The scope of the silent chatter is deep and wide. Blurbs of text and a world map painted on the wall near the entrance draw connections between the rise of the slave trade in the 1500s to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the end of South African apartheid in 1994. The timeline marches on: the Ebola outbreak, the Ferguson riots, the terrorist attacks of Nigeria's Boko Haram.

"What do we really know about Africa? How do current political events in Africa impact our lives?" the curator Gilbert Vicario asks in one of the catalog's essays. "How do we deal with the legacy of forced migration in this country?"

Vicario made it clear during a walk-through this week that neither he nor the exhibition offers any real answers. A Western curator in a Western museum inevitably misses some of the cultural clues, especially from the traditional artifacts that were designed for ceremonies and everyday use. They lose some of their power in a whitewashed gallery.

But the Art Center "took this challenge as the show's intellectual and aesthetic starting point," museum director Jeff Fleming wrote in the catalog. "The exhibition explores how traditional aesthetic and ritual expressions lay alongside contemporary investigations of the political, economic and social realities of the continent."

One of those investigations, in fact, lent the show its title. The Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar was so shaken by news reports of the Rwandan genocide that he traveled there to see it firsthand. He shot thousands of photos of the carnage — of empty villages and mass graves — but decided after the trip that they were too nightmarish to use. Viewers would simply block them out.

Instead he framed three ostensibly peaceful images — of a field, road and cloud — from the site of one of the massacres. He paired each with a hand-drawn map that retraces the sequence of the events, ending with a haunting detail: "Bodies. 500?"

"It's sort of a peripheral look at what people had experienced," Vicario said.

He could say the same of the show's other artwork, too, which circles around complex issues of history and culture without ever settling on an easy, takeaway message.

The Ghanaian artist El Anatsui's shimmering tapestry made from discarded bottlecaps (a recent acquisition from his solo show last season) raises issues about globalization. The Beninese and Dutch artist Meschac Gaba's street-vendor stands filled with fake diamonds, real cacao beans and stacks of international currency (tiny artworks themselves) pokes at economics and the allure of wealth.

It's tempting to divide the show into two categories, one old and exotic, the other new and brainy. But if the exhibition distills even one central idea, it may be that the artworks and the people who made aren't so different after all. The masks that were made to protect their wearers from poverty or bad luck were designed for the same reasons modern Westerners pick up lucky pennies and blow out birthday candles.

One of the pieces in the show is a carved wooden door that looks like it could be 500 years old, except that one of its figures rides a motorcycle. It's the Yoruban character Eshu, a messenger between people and the gods. The Nigerian artist Arowogun of Osi carved the door for a palace around 1920.

As Vicario put it, "The traditions are alive and well."

'Field, Road, Cloud: Art and Africa'

WHEN: Saturday through April 19. Regular hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; and noon-4 p.m. Sunday.

WHERE: Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave.

ADMISSION: Free.

GALLERY TALKS: Senior curator **Gilbert Vicario** will lead a free talk at noon Sunday. **Christopher Roy**, who teaches art history at the University of Iowa, will lead another free talk at 6:30 p.m. March 5. Another short gallery talk will follow a yoga session in the gallery at 8:30 a.m. March 7; free, but reservations are required.

LECTURES: University of Iowa Assistant Professor **Kelly Baker** will discuss "The Landscape of Environmental Poverty in Africa" at 6:30 p.m. March 19. The artist **Nick Cave** will talk about his multimedia work in the show at 6:30 p.m. April 2. Both events are free, but reservations are required.

INFO: www.desmoinesartcenter.org

THE HUFFINGTON POST
TOP NEWS AND OPINION

Must-see Painting Shows: January 2014

By Steven Zevitas
Posted: 01/07/2014 1:32 pm

I looked at a lot of art while hunkering down to escape the subarctic temperatures blasting through Boston and much of the country last week. My monthly review of more than 400 gallery shows yielded close to one hundred must-see painting shows, three dozen of which involve *New American Paintings'* alumni.

Among the NAP artists on view are Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shianman Gallery in New York City (the mid-career, Atlanta-based artist's work was the focus of a stellar museum exhibition that traveled to various institutions in 2011 and 2012); John Sparagana at Corbett vs. Dempsey in Chicago; Astrid Bowlby at Gallery Joe in Philadelphia; and in Los Angeles, 2010 NAP Artist of the Year, Annie Lapin, and Matthew Penkala, at Honor Fraser and Western Project, respectively. I am extraordinarily fortunate to be hosting a show by longtime University of Iowa Professor, John Dilg, whose work I was first introduced to many years ago while working on Issue #11 of NAP.

Radcliffe Bailey. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery, New York City.

There are two noteworthy gallery shows of artists who made their reputations in the earlier part of the 20th century: works by Regionalist Thomas Hart Benton are on display at Alan Avery Art Company in Atlanta, and Mr. Push/Pull, Hans Hofmann, whose students included a number of prominent "second generation" Abstract Expressionists, is on view at Ameringer|McEnery|Yohe in New York City. Emerging painters look particularly strong this month, including: Alexandra Grant at Lora Reynolds Gallery in Austin; Zoe Nelson at Western Exhibitions in Chicago; Laeh Glenn at Altman Siegel in San Francisco; and in New York City, Anke Weyer at Canada, Davina Semo at Marlborough Chelsea, Angelina Gualdoni at Aysa Geisberg Gallery and Kour Pour at Untitled.

If abstraction is not your thing, there are plenty of painters exhibiting who work with imagery, some in a more traditional mode. In Chicago, eighty-something Jane Freilicher will have a one-woman show at Chicago's Valerie Carberry Gallery. Maine-based painter Gideon Bok has a soon-to-close solo show of paintings depicting the interior of his studio at Barry Whistler Gallery in Dallas. In New York, be sure to catch Yvonne Jacquette at DC Moore, Steven Assael at Forum Gallery, and Robert Bechtle at Gladstone Gallery.

Please visit the New American Paintings/BLOG for a more comprehensive list of must-see painting shows in January.

New American Paintings magazine is a juried exhibition-in-print, and the largest series of artist competitions in the United States. Working with experienced curators, New American Paintings reviews the work of thousands of emerging artists each year. Forty artists are selected to appear in each bi-monthly edition, many of whom go on to receive substantial critical and commercial success. Additional content focuses on the medium of painting, those who influence its direction, and the role contemporary painting plays within the art world. Visit New American Paintings for more information or to subscribe.

Zevitas, Steven. “Must-see Painting Shows: January 2014.” *The Huffington Post*, 7 January 2014. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steven-zevitas/must-see-painting-shows-j_b_4554706.html>.

BLOUIN ARTINFO

17 Must-See Gallery Shows During Frieze Week New York

BY RACHEL CORBETT, SCOTT INDRISEK | APRIL 29, 2016

Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman, through June 11 (513 West 20th Street)

The Atlanta-based artist needed to go no further than his own backyard — the site of a Civil War battleground — to source the rocks and plants that populate his eerie new show. Wall-based assemblages, cabinets of curiosities, and sculptural installations entangle the historical horrors of "primitivism," colonialism, and American slavery into a single beautiful nightmare.

Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman, through June 11 (513 West 20th Street)
Installation view

15 Blockbuster Gallery Shows You Need to See in New York This May

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY ALEXIS CORRAL
APR 29TH, 2016 7:10 PM

The rise of the museum-quality gallery show hits a fever pitch this May in New York, as a flurry of blockbuster exhibitions fill galleries across the city. From the unexpected Urs Fischer showing in the Lower East Side to Cindy Sherman's comeback in Chelsea, rejoice in the wealth and breadth of dynamic and in-depth new shows of major modern and contemporary artists.

Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman Gallery

APR. 28–JUN. 11, 513 WEST 20TH STREET

Installation view of Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman Gallery, 2016. Photo © Radcliffe Bailey, courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

"Quest" is Bailey's fifth solo exhibition at Jack Shainman gallery and it may be his best yet. These new paintings, sculptures, and installations explore America's history, ancestry, and collective consciousness—particularly around the artist's research on escaped African slaves in the U.S. Spanning a towering assemblage of trumpets and trombones, collages layered with images of African sculptures, and a synthetic heart dispelling blue blood, Bailey leaves his viewers to question of how this history is understood in the present.

International Sculpture Center
Publisher of Sculpture Magazine

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This selection of shows has been curated by *Sculpture* magazine editorial staff and includes just a few of the great shows around the world.

Nathan Cummings Foundation

Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York: Bring in the Reality

Through September 11, 2015

From Classical Athens to contemporary America, parrhesia (the right to speak candidly, freely, and boldly) has been more ideal than reality, as attested by the fates of dissenters from Socrates to Edward Snowden. An antidote to the sly persuasion of rhetoric, with its glosses, distortions, and manipulations, parrhesia speaks truth to power—even when no one wants to hear it. The works in this show rise to that challenge, conjuring not only the burden of history, but also of our present moment. The title comes from Cornel West's Black Prophetic Fire (2014) in which he investigates the resonance of blues, jazz, hip-hop, and the writings of Malcolm X within this distinctly democratic tradition: "It was always 'bring in the funk, bring in the truth, bring in the reality.'" In the face of enduring inequality, homelessness, classism and racism, and police brutality, participating artists—including John Ahearn, Radcliffe Bailey, Mel Chin, Jennifer Dalton, Scherezade Garcia-Vazquez, Guerra de la Paz, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Dread Scott, and Nari Ward—stand up to speak for the common good, often reflecting on the personal risk involved in the construction of counter-narratives. Realized in a variety of media, both conventional and not, these works highlight a commitment to social change through the ongoing relationship between art and politics. "Bring in the Reality," sponsored by No Longer Empty, is open to the public by appointment; to visit, contact exhibit@nathancummings.org.

Web site nolongerempty.org

Guerra de la Paz, *Monday though Friday*, from "Bring in the Reality."

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DAVE BARRY LOOKS BACK // THE TROUBLE WITH THE BIRDS AND THE BEES // MEDICAL MARIJUANA'S ETA

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sculpture

June 2012
Vol. 31 No. 5

A publication of the
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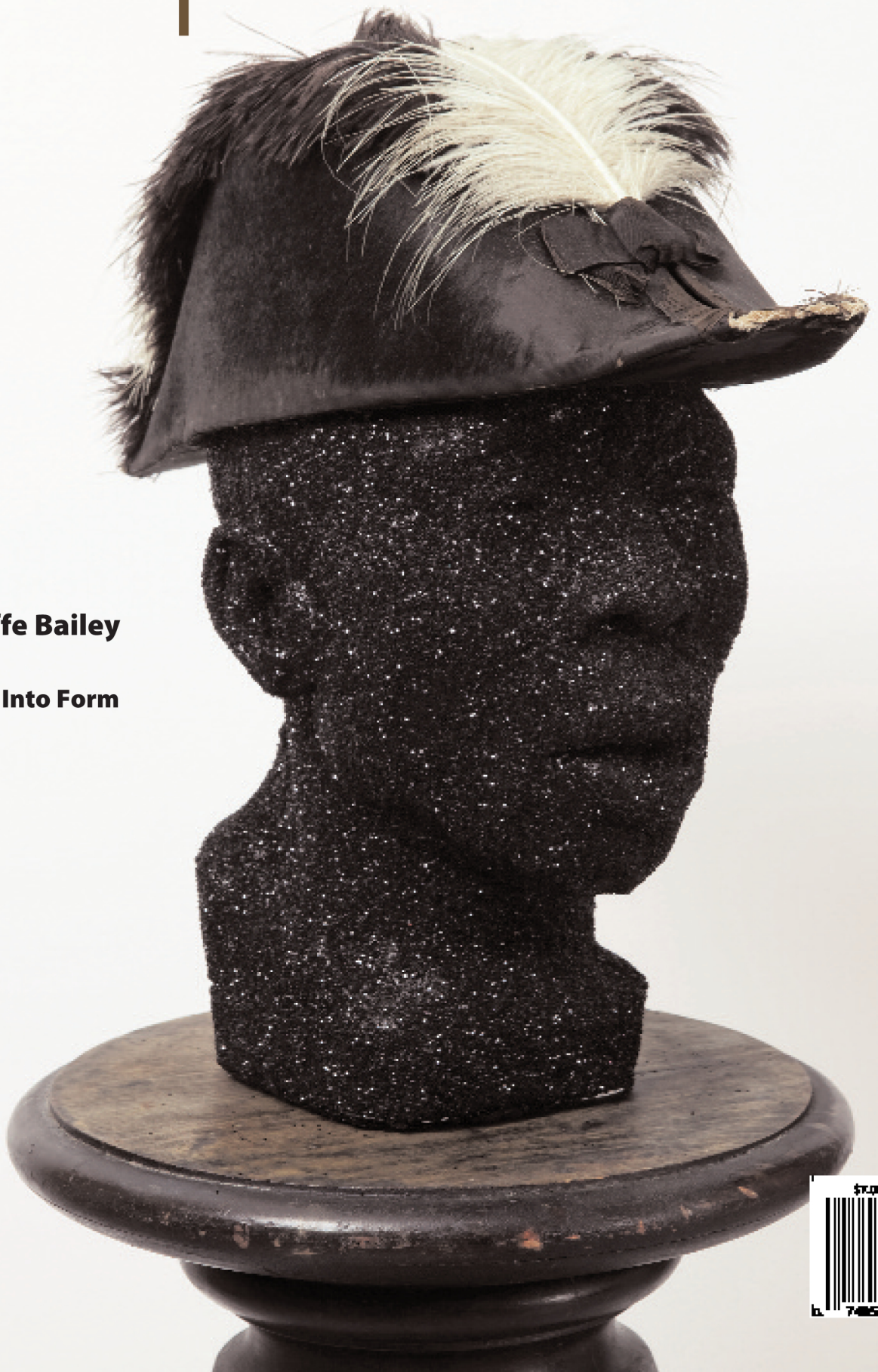


Radcliffe Bailey

Process Into Form

sculpture June 2012 Vol. 31 No. 5 A publication of the International Sculpture Center

Connecting Rhythms

A Conversation with Radcliffe Bailey

BY REBECCA DIMLING COCHRAN

A sculptor of emotional intensity and formal experimentation, Radcliffe Bailey has been a leading artistic voice in the exploration of African American racial identity for more than 20 years. His largest exhibition to date, "Memory as Medicine," which is on view at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio from June 6 through September 12, brings together 25 new and early works, ranging from intimate drawings to large-scale, mixed-media installations that reach into the depths of memory, struggle, and sacrifice. Drawing on family histories and experiences, as well as iconographic and aesthetic practices rooted in classical African sculpture, Bailey's work charts a deeply personal journey of understanding that moves outward from his own cultural heritage and identity to explore how communities (and individuals) create cultures for themselves.

Above: *Storm at Sea*, 2007. Piano keys, African sculpture, model boat, paper, acrylic, glitter, and gold leaf, 212 x 213 in. Opposite: *Cerebral Caverns*, 2011. Wood, glass, and 30 plaster heads, 97 x 100 x 60 in.

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NY

Rebecca Dimling Cochran: *When "Memory as Medicine" opened at Atlanta's High Museum of Art last year, curator Carol Thompson made some fascinating juxtapositions connecting your work to objects from the museum's African art collection. When did you first encounter African art, and how did it find a way into your work?*

Radcliffe Bailey: As a kid, I saw African art in museums, but it wasn't a profound thing that hit me. I was much more interested in trying to understand the practices or, if anything, in finding relationships with African American culture. So, the first thing I looked at was self-taught art, because I felt that it naturally had these connections. Just as people passed on stories or oral histories, they passed on the different practices that occur in the South. I remember going to visit my grandparents and seeing a tire painted white and metal objects placed as decorations around the yard. I'd notice that people would sweep their yards in a particular way. I was fascinated with those things—for instance, looking at why my grandfather had this certain hinge on his shed, which reminded me of a Dogon shed. I was interested in all of these connections, trying to make sense of my own practices and those of the people around me.

Installation view from *In the Returnal*, Solomon Projects, Atlanta, with (left) *Stride*, 2007, mixed media, velvet, glitter, steel, and wood vitrine, 87 x 19 x 19 in.

RDC: *When did you first travel to Africa?*

RB: It was in 2006. The idea began in 2003 in conversation with the National Black Arts Festival, whose organizers asked if I would like to do a project with them. I remember watching a documentary on the BBC about black British youth trying to understand their ancestry, and I thought to myself, "Wow, I've always wanted to know, and I had this question about my make-up in the work itself. If I knew those particular things, how would my work be different? Would I still have that desire and that quest? Where would my work go?" I was really looking for that next place for my work. When I did go, I went to Senegal and Dakar, specifically to Goree Island, which is like a slave castle right off the coast of Dakar.

RDC: *If I remember correctly, you discovered that your maternal ancestors were from Sierra Leone and Guinea. But you didn't visit those places?*

RB: No. For many reasons, it was difficult; but I did find where they may have departed from, and I went there. It was more like an understanding from the last point of touch.

RDC: *Did you resolve some of the questions that you had? How did the experience of visiting Africa affect your work?*

RB: I say that I don't read a lot, but I research, and I felt like I knew a lot of the history before I arrived. What I got out of the experience was the beauty of the countryside and an understanding of current political struggles. The youth there were very influenced by the youth here. They were hip-hoppers, and that felt like a connection. I was thinking about those connections back and forth, the rhythms that cross the seas. And that comes back to the practices.

RDC: *Since your return, you've been using materials similar to those that you used before, but in different ways. For example, before your trip, you mixed red clay soil into your painted surfaces, but now you're using it to coat walls. It is as you said—these things have always been there, but perhaps the practices are changing.*

RB: When I was in Senegal, I went to Pink Lake (Lake Retba). It's a natural wonder, like the Dead Sea; people mine the salt, but there is a drought and the lake is disappearing. I noticed how the world is changing everywhere, and how practices have changed. There's talk sometimes about how people who

***Pullman*, 2010. Heart, glitter, glass, and wood, 17 x 8.5 x 8.5 in.**

Sweet Georgia Brown, 2012. Mixed media, 60 x 60 in.

live out in the countryside do not practice like they once did, and how those things are disappearing. But, at the same time, those practices just transform into something that is not as tangible as it once was.

RDC: *It sounds similar to what happened when African slaves were brought to the Caribbean and the United States; their beliefs can still be recognized in Santería and in Creole and Gullah culture. Many of your self-portraits include a top hat, the symbol of Eshu, the Divine Trickster of West African cultures and of Santería, who is both kind and cruel. I see this duality woven through much of your work. Do you strive for this quality?*

RB: I don't do it on purpose, but I see it in my work. I think when I'm making work, but there is a lot of improvisation, a lot of play. It changes day by day by day.

RDC: *You've said that the trickster figure is important to you because it reflects the many sides of an artist.*

RB: In history, you hear a lot about artists and their "behaviors," their ways of life beyond the paintbrush. Living behind your paintbrush or your hands or your tools is a whole different thing—a logical thing that happens from the brain to the heart to the hand to the surface, and it goes back and forth, moving around. I'm interested in how people heal people. That's the source of the show's title, "Memory as Medicine." I'm playing with that, but I don't want to shamanize myself, I don't see that. I see it more personally, with my personal world, how it keeps me sane. The trickster comes up in references through so many different cultures. I'm interested in those links. I try not to be very specific about one particular practice or one group of people, because I believe that I'm made up of a lot of different people and a lot of different practices. I try to find the one common rhythm that runs through them and to put them together—that's been my method.

RDC: *This also goes back to the objects that you use. I find it interesting that you return again and again to particular objects, such as railroad tracks, lanterns, piano keys, top hats, sailboats, trumpets, and baseball bats. Certain things seem to resonate with you. What is it about these objects?*

RB: I think that I am trying to find symbols for myself and trying to create deities for myself. When I'm dealing with painting, I'm focusing on the color, the photograph. The photographs become the deities. Sometimes they recur, but the paint changes. When I'm dealing with sculpture, objects come up—the baseball, the trumpet, and the piano keys—those are my tools. Then there are moments when they collide and have their own concert. Sometimes I think that I have a band, my band, and sometimes I have an orchestra with a lot of different people playing. Sometimes I'm playing with just two people, and sometimes I'm playing solo. When it's solo, it's very minimal. I think about it like that constantly.

RDC: *It seems to me that you associate many of these objects with personal experiences—like the fact that your grandfather made birdhouses and used*

Windward Coast, 2009. Piano keys, plaster bust, and glitter, detail of installation.

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NY

Above: ***Other Worlds Worlds***, 2011. Mixed media, 75 x 120 x 115 in.
Below: ***Tricky***, 2008. Mixed media, 58.5 x 53.25 x 8.25 in.

a particular shade of green or that your father worked on the railroad or that you played baseball. They become personal symbols.

RB: When I was in art school, I was trying very hard to make work that reflected my everyday life and made it relevant. I had a studio at school but wanted to make work at home. I was living with my parents, and I would go down into the basement and look around. There was all my history. As I was looking at these things, I started to make work. That was the most difficult phase, but in some ways, the most comfortable. Most kids would say, "I don't want to work in my parents' basement," but, for me, it was like problem-solving.

RDC: *Jazz has also had an important influence on your work, and you've often spoken about your admiration for Sun Ra, Miles Davis, and Thelonious Monk. While there are obvious references in your use of musical instruments and titles, I see the connection best in your process, in how you borrow from the music's improvisational structure. Can you talk about how you weave different visual images and historical references into a single work?*

RB: I collect objects; I live around them; I play with them. The other day, I was playing catch with my son, and I thought, "I need to get into the studio." When I got there, I played with my upright bass, trying to figure out the sound. Then a day later, I'm sitting at the kitchen table doing a little gouache painting. Eventually I'm in the studio painting on canvas. There's no particular direction, no particular thought—I just need to start moving. A lot of it is just the physical action of moving around, which was an important dimension of being a sculpture major. When you're bending steel, it is very physical. I have to have that kind of action. I have to wake up in the middle of the night; I have to not be in a normal state.

RDC: *You included the sounds of John Coltrane coming out of a seashell in the current version of* Windward Coast*, and in your 2005 Rhodes College exhibition, you incorporated a song by Charlie Parker. Does your occasional use of sound also stem from your love of jazz?*

RB: I think so. One of the first times that I used sound was in a group of birdhouses that I created. In a show at the Atlanta College of Art, I used sounds from the ocean, trains, and insects. It comes up every once in a while, but it's not a strong focus.

RDC: *In the "Memory as Medicine" catalogue, I was fascinated by Ed Spriggs's description of your work as "narrative tableaux." Usually, I associate that idea*

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NY

with something that treats a single time and place, but your works often bring together three different narratives: Africa, the African American experience, and your personal history. How do you weave these stories together?

RB: They feel so much like one and the same. You can talk about one moment, but you have to talk about all the moments it takes to get there. I tell your story, and it has many layers, it's fragmented. Then I pick fragments from here and here and here and mix them up and there's the gumbo.

RDC: *As with jazz, it's layering. Everyone's playing their own tune, and if they're good, they weave together into a beautiful piece of music. That's how I see your work—not as linear narrative, but "narrative tableaux" is not that far off. Of course, you need to have a subject in the work, and many times, you use photography to introduce that element. I think of the women and children in* Roots That Never Die *(1998) or the adult male in* Travel by Night *(2007). Interestingly, the subjects in the photographs never interact with what you create around them; instead, they stare impassively at the viewer. Would it be fair to say that these figures are stand-ins for people who experienced the historical events evoked in the work? Or could they represent you?*

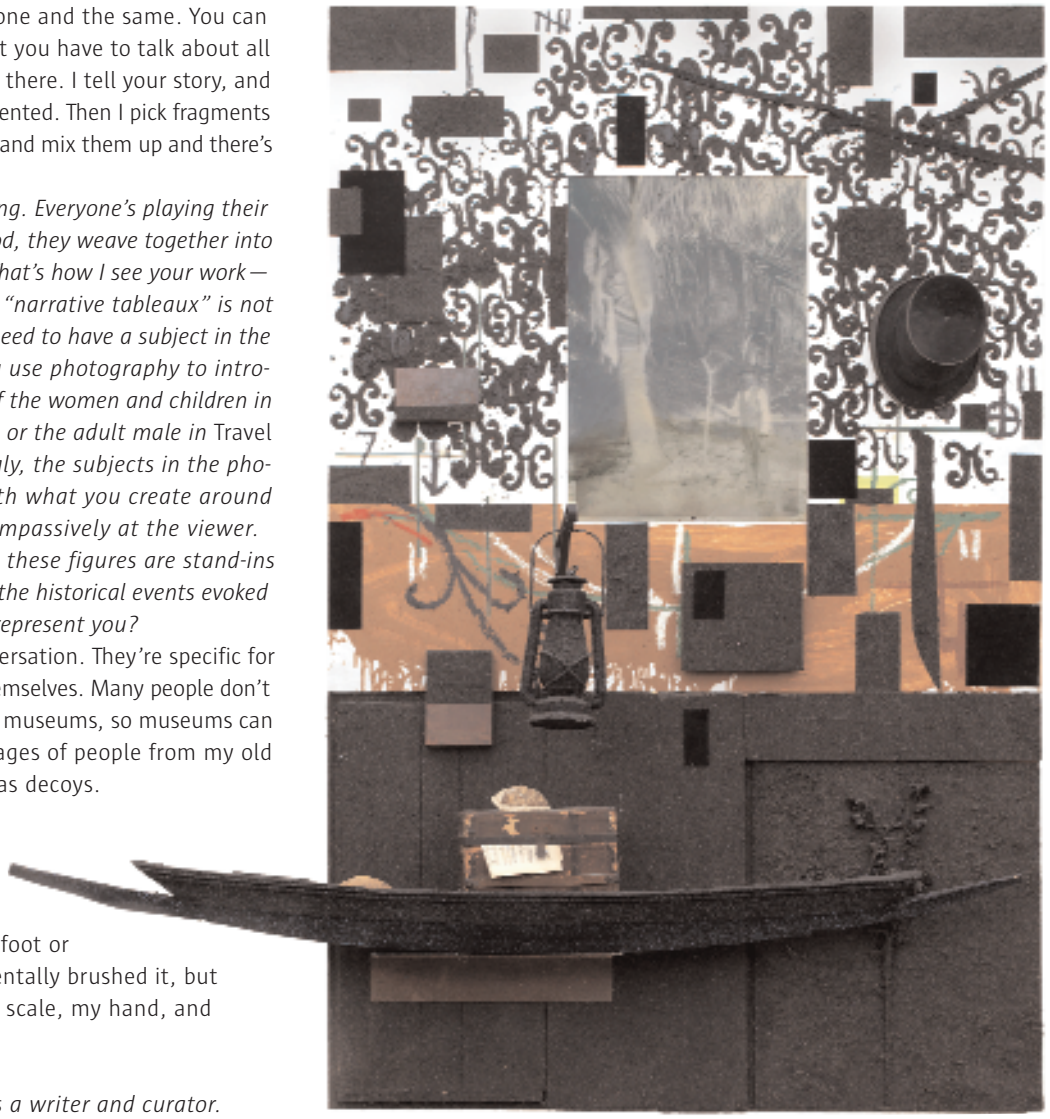
RB: No, they make the conversation. They're specific for people in terms of seeing themselves. Many people don't see images of themselves in museums, so museums can be intimidating. I place images of people from my old family albums in the work as decoys.

RDC: *So, the people serve as entry points?*

RB: Sometimes the human presence in a work may be a trace of my foot or hand—not because I accidentally brushed it, but on purpose. Let me put my scale, my hand, and my footprint in the work.

Rebecca Dimling Cochran is a writer and curator.

Above: ***Chapter 7***, 2007. Paper, acrylic, glitter, model ship, and gold leaf, 18 x 36 x 5 in. Below: ***Untitled***, 2010. Mixed media, 95 x 70 in.



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NY

Artforum 50, no. 10 (Summer 2012): 321, illustrated.

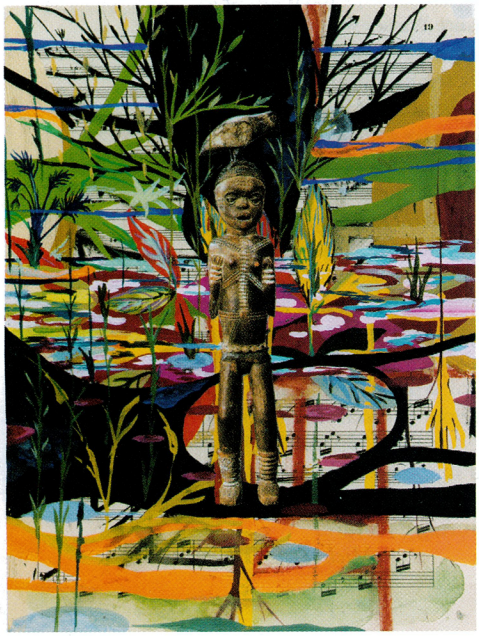
WELLESLEY, MA

Radcliffe Bailey

DAVIS MUSEUM AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Radcliffe Bailey's multilayered narrative art explores issues of culture, memory, and history related to his heritage and experience as an African American. Titled "Memory as Medicine," this near-two-decade survey (organized by Carol Thompson and Michael Rooks of the originating High Museum of Art in Atlanta) featured thirty-one works riffing on key chapters from the grand narrative of black history, with frequent allusions to tribal West Africa, aptly demonstrating the artist's inspired ability to present his modern world as a continuum with his genetic past.

This spring, the Davis Museum featured works that incorporated such elements as tintypes of anonymous relatives, African statuary, model sailing ships, tobacco, and Georgia red clay to form stunning tableaux uniting fiction and history, trickery and documentary factitiousness. *Windward Coast,* 2009/2012, perhaps the show's most ambitious installation, is a veritable sea of some 3,500 disembodied piano keys (still attached to their wooden leads), upon which a plaster head—that of a man—covered in black glitter has been set "afloat." Notions of existential isolation are reinforced by the title of this monumental work, which refers to the portion of West Africa between Gambia and Liberia that once served as a major hub for the exportation of slaves to the Americas along the Middle Passage. Mounted on the wall near this heap of ebony, ivory, and wood was a conch shell, which, in a nod to Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*, 1961, as well as to Glenn Ligon's *To Disembark,* 1994, emitted the reverberations of piano keys falling to the floor recorded during the installation of a 2010 iteration. In this sculptural postscript to J. M. W. Turner's *Slave Ship*, 1840, Bailey shifts the emphasis from a condemnation of the slave trade to an allegory of an African American's sense of cultural isolation, loss, and self-determination.



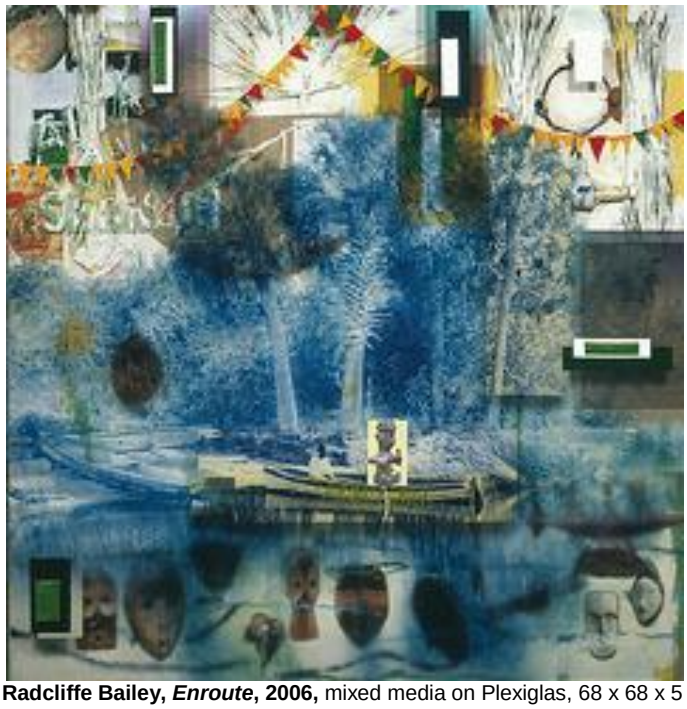
Radcliffe Bailey, *Notes from Elmina III*, 2011, gouache, collage, and ink on paper, 12 x 9". From the series "Notes from Elmina," 2011–.

Carrying this maritime conceit into two dimensions, the eight collages in this show mixed lively strokes of paint with cut-and-pasted images of tribal relics. For example, *Western Current*, 2010, a large watercolor work on paper, features a simple green boat loaded with a dense montage of African masks and wooden totems. An expressionist's choppy sea in blue, green, and black fills the lower half of the composition, while above looms a foreboding sky, suggesting a dark future for the depicted shipment of cultural treasures, presumably en route to Western markets. Bailey's quotation of masks and other tribal exotica references the historical typecasting of African art (not to mention Africans) by Eurocentric cultures such as ours.

Elsewhere in the show, Bailey appeared to make explicit reference to the absurdist visions of Hannah Höch and other Dadaists. Höch's series "*Aus einem ethnographischer Museum*" (From an Ethnographic Museum), ca. 1924–34, was brought immediately to mind by Bailey's "Notes from Elmina," 2011–, a still-growing group of works combining images of African sculptures, sheet music, and abstract designs drawn in gouache and ink. Likewise grappling with issues of race and breaking down boundaries between self and other, Bailey reorders formal and symbolic relations to rekindle rather than exhaust the power of his subjects—both the discursive topics in play and the individuals to whom Bailey's history also belongs.

—*Francine Koslow Miller*

ARTFORUM
MAY 2011



Radcliffe Bailey, *Enroute*, 2006, mixed media on Plexiglas, 68 x 68 x 5 1/2".

“Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine”

DAVIS MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER, WELLESLEY COLLEGE
WELLESLEY
Through May 6
Curated by Carol Thompson and Michael Rooks

For the most comprehensive Radcliffe Bailey survey to date, the High Museum will fete its local son with a dense exhibition organized into three sections: “Water,” “Blues,” and “Blood.” The show will comprise more than thirty works made between the early 1990s and the present, along with a selection of African sculptures underscoring the artist’s investigation of his own ancestral history. (Several years ago, Bailey traced his DNA to its Mende origins.) Central to the installation will be Bailey’s medicine-cabinet sculptures, which encase cultural talismans spanning the breadth of the artist’s sources of inspiration. A catalogue with newly commissioned essays accompanies the show.

— Suzanne Hudson

RADCLIFFE BAILEY: MEMORY AS MEDICINE

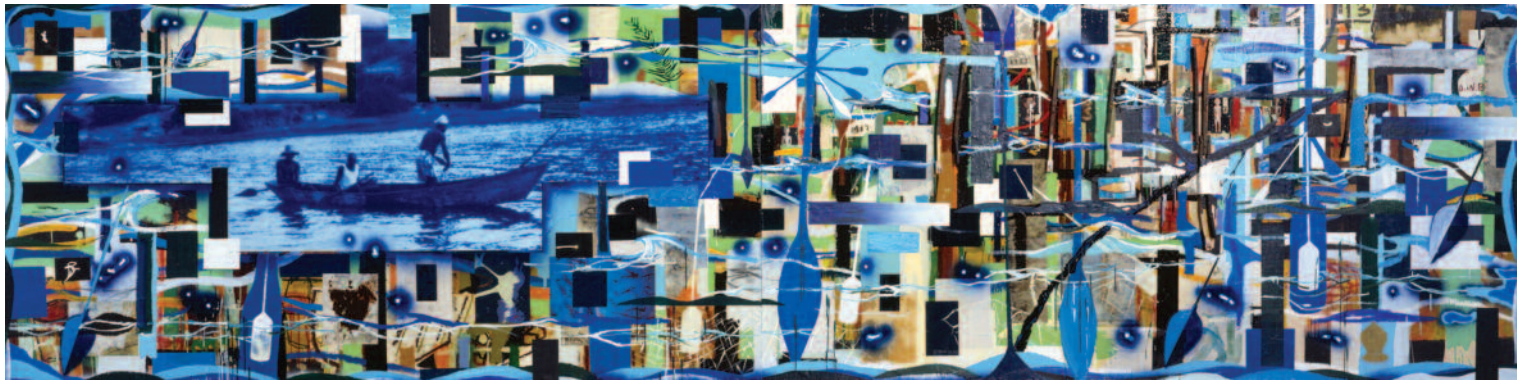
The Davis Museum at Wellesley College • Wellesley, MA • *www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu* • Through May 6, 2012

For over two decades, the Atlanta-based African-American artist Radcliffe Bailey has been creating works that draw upon African aesthetic practices, incorporating them into the idioms of international contemporary art while exploring the history and culture of the African Diaspora. The exhibition on view across two floors of the Davis Museum presents the largest overview of Bailey's art to date. It shows an artist finding new ways to engage his chosen themes, growing while staying rooted in his own language.

Bailey's "medicine cabinet" sculptures, with their diverse elements arranged within shallow boxes, seek to provide the healing power of collective memory through association. While employing a private, sometimes obscure, language, they remain determinedly social objects, seeming to contain the murmurs of past generations reaching into history. His wall assemblages frequently incorporate old photographic images of black men and women to lead one into the profuse imagery, found objects, and exuberantly painted surfaces that surround them. It makes for a bravura style, not unlike the jazz that Bailey admires. His choices carry risks: The photographic elements skirt sentimentality while the abundant layers can feel overdone. These and similar tendencies can lead to works that blow hot and cold without being resolved. *Mound Magician II*, for instance, a 1997 mixed-media tribute to Satchel Paige, explodes references and images across a field in the shape of a ballpark, a combination both too hermetic and too literal. The more significant *Uprooted* (2002) features a blue-tinted photographic reproduction of three black men in a low fishing boat across its left side. A lush web of wet blues and greens spreads out and dominates the rest of the large surface (about five-feet high by twenty-feet long), balanced by the stately rhythm of the painted oars that Bailey intersperses across its panels. It is a quietly monumental work that summons up patterns of life across generations and continents.

Bailey's art has its humor, as in *Tricky* (2006), a sculpture of a glittering black ship with a top hat hanging off the top of the mast. The hat stands for the Yoruba trickster deity Eshu, but even without that knowledge it's hard to miss the artist's sly smile shining through the jaunty gesture. The 2009–2011 floor installation *Windward Coast*, however, is likely to receive the most attention. In the midst of a rectangular grouping of about 35,000 piano keys, piled to mimic the rise and fall of the ocean, sits a single black plaster head covered in glitter, like a man adrift. A recording of the same piano keys being dropped on the floor—clanging, dissonant—plays from a wall-mounted conch shell. These few elements combine into a grim synecdoche of the slave trade. One may be regretfully skeptical regarding the exhibition title's claim for the recuperative possibilities of an art of memory, but Radcliffe Bailey clearly knows there's more than one way to make the medicine go down.

—Joe LeDuc



Top: Radcliffe Bailey, *Notes from Elmina III*, 2011, gouache, collage and ink on paper, 12 x 9". High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Gift of Bert and Cathy Clark. Above: Radcliffe Bailey, *Uprooted*, 2002, mixed media on wood panel, 60¼ x 238¼ x 3⅝". The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Gift of Gerald B. Smith with additional funds given in honor of Harvey Padewer.

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RADIO BOSTON

In The Art Of Radcliffe Bailey, Memory Takes Form

By Anthony Brooks
February 15, 2012

At the Davis Musuem of Art at Wellesley College, there's an extraordinary sculptural installation that fills up one huge exhibit room. Spread out across the floor are piles of wooden piano keys, and a small ocean of wooden sticks that appear to undulate like waves on a wind-swept pond. In the very middle, a shiny black head of a man pokes through — the rest of his body apparently invisible — as if he's about to be swallowed up and lost forever beneath the waves of wood.

The piece is called Windward Coast, and it evokes the harrowing trauma and isolation of the slave trade. To Artist Radcliffe Bailey, though, it's about even more than that.

"It was about those who were lost at sea," he says. "It was about even going fishing with my father and going out on the ocean and feeling so small. It's also about the one thing that I felt was the early form of DNA, which was music."

Windward Coast is the centerpiece of Radcliffe Bailey's show, "Memory as Medicine." It opens Wednesday at the Davis and will be on display through May 6.

It's hard to sum up Bailey's art — but jazz comes to mind. He improvises with memory, history, and stories. He does floor and wall sculptures, paintings, and works with all kinds of found objects — from photographs and hats to vintage baseball bats and those piano keys (which he harvested from some 400 pianos that were being scrapped at a piano shop near his home in Atlanta).

Some of Bailey's mixed-media pieces are built inside of deep frames, like cabinets. A family photograph in the middle, and then with paint and sculpture, he tells the stories of his past; of the south; or of a piece of African history. Bailey says these pieces help explain the name of his show: "Memory as Medicine."

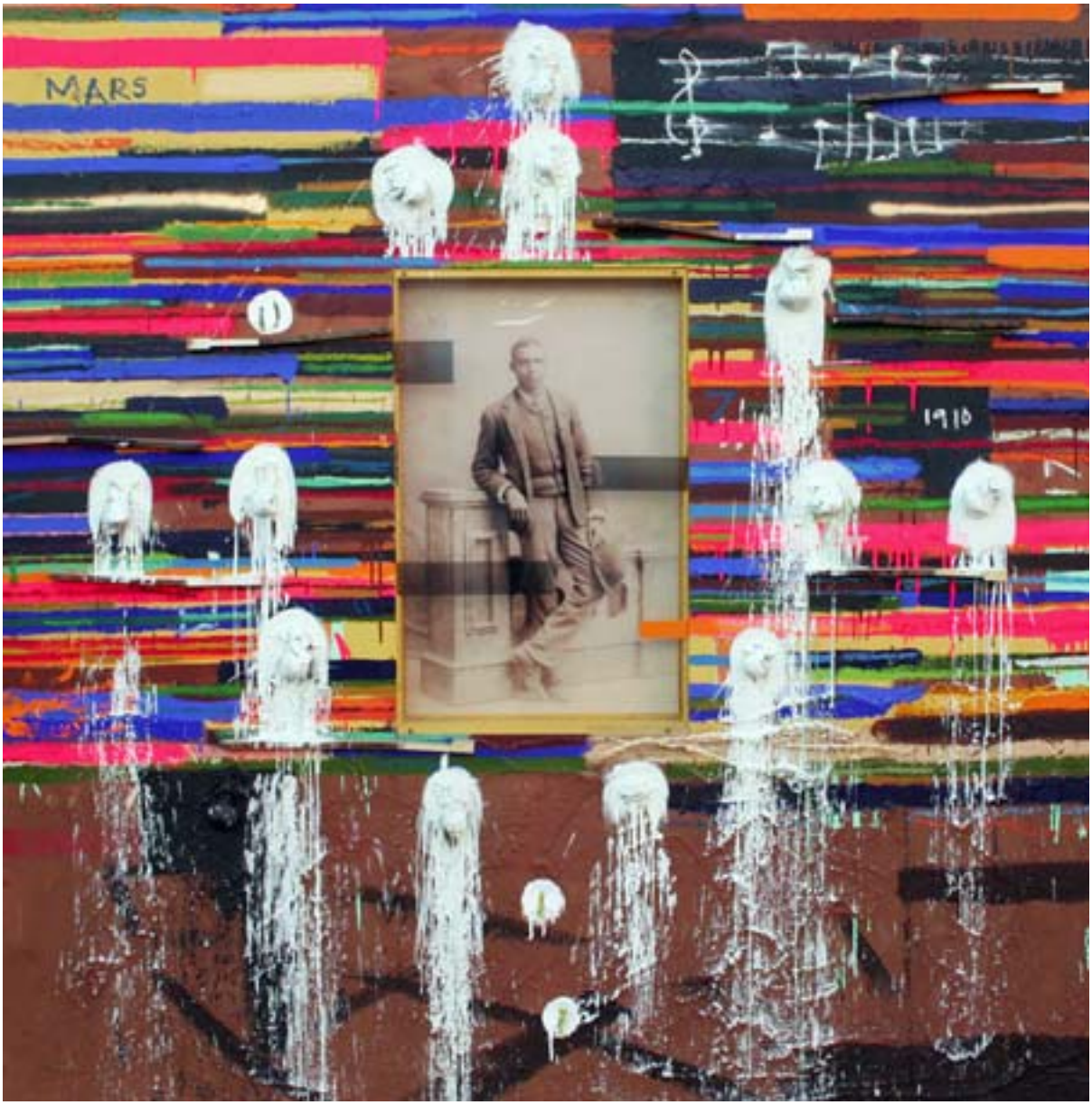
Bailey dreamed of becoming a baseball player, and in fact played some semi-pro ball. In art school, he studied sculpture, but describes himself now as a "sculptor who paints." And there's a powerful example of that — a piece based on a picture of a mosque in Mali that uses paint, steel and real red clay from Georgia. And of course, it tells a story.

Brooks, Anthony. "In the Art of Radcliffe Bailey, Memory Takes Form." *NPR Boston*, 15 February 2012.

[PHILADELPHIA] citypaper
PHILADELPHIA'S INDEPENDENT WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Bridgette Mayer Gallery undergoes a major transformation.

by Robin Rice
Posted: Thu, Nov. 10, 2011, 3:00 AM



After being closed for most of the year, **Bridgette Mayer Gallery** is ready to unveil a major renovation that transforms the space's look, size and functionality.

Mayer says she was surprised to learn that her Washington Square building was considered historic, built as a residence in 1799. A typical 18th-century row house, it is deep but relatively narrow. To create an unfussy, unbroken, considerably larger space, Mayer knocked out the walls between rooms and united her original gallery with an apartment in the back of the building. The walls are not entirely flat: A couple of shallow niches will frame individual works or installations.

The design is characterized by simple, open areas and right angles, flat planes and limited expanses of rustic texture. In the entranceway, a small television screen will display art-related videos (not all proprietary). The floor is made of white oak planks from an 1864 French barn. The color is cooler than you'd expect: stone gray and bisque veined with black grain, complemented by an unusual narrow steel channel running laterally along the base of the walls. The velvety black margin frames the walls and floor, bracketing the flow of space. The work of Philadelphia Museum of Art lighting designer Andrew Slavinskas is perfectly unobtrusive, as it should be.

Mayer retained two barrel-vaulted spaces, one above the other, from the original building but removed their heavy steel doors. The one on the gallery floor has been fitted with special lighting, an up-to-date audio system and a suspended, concealed screen that is available for video and performance. The lower-level vault functions as a conduit from one section to another and is outfitted as a wine cellar. Its exposed brick walls make a nice foil to the unmarred white elsewhere. A really beautiful up-to-date painting storage area shares the downstairs with Mayer's office, a conference room and a private viewing area for clients. She anticipates hosting parties downstairs, just as the previous inhabitants did.

Meanwhile, Eileen Neff will be showing a photographic installation and Shelley Spector will have small sculpture in the office area. These two have recently joined Mayer's stable, along with several other local and international artists. Nevertheless, Bridgette Mayer Gallery retains its distinctive quality: intensely visual, sensitive, never heavy-handed. "For me," says Mayer of choosing new artists, "it's what I'm seeing and caring about and adding another layer of sophistication."

The new space's debut exhibit, "Karmic Abstraction," features 23 artists, including Radcliffe Bailey (whose *Four and One Corner — South* is pictured), Iva Gueorguieva, Eemyun Kang, Tim McFarlane, Tom Nozkowski, Odili Donald Odita and Rebecca Rutstein. Mayer says the title was suggested by paintings that layer moments in time, but it could also refer to the reincarnated persona of the gallery itself.

When reminded that upon opening her gallery a decade ago she had exclaimed enthusiastically, "I was born to do this!" Mayer says she felt an unexpected wave of emotion last week after seeing the completed renovations. "I had tears running down my face. ... This project is one big present to all of the artists here who are hungry for great shows just like I am, and to the community who need to know that the arts are alive and thriving in Philadelphia. I am overjoyed and so excited to open our doors and share this with everyone."

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

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[Memoir]

LEARNING FROM STING

From Feeding on Dreams, *a memoir by Ariel Dorfman about his years of exile after the 1973 coup in Chile, out this month from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. In 1980, after seven years in Europe, Dorfman came to the United States, where he began to write in English, the language he learned as a child in New York City. He is the author of* Death and the Maiden, *among other works.*

Back on May 6, 1965, I celebrated my twenty-third birthday by joining thousands of other Chileans outside the American Embassy in Santiago to protest Lyndon Johnson's invasion of the Dominican Republic. While others hurled stones and rotten eggs and vegetables at that building opposite the Parque Forestal, I launched—ever the pacifist—only verbal abuse, but if foul words could have killed!

Eighteen years later, a forty-one-year-old Ariel was again celebrating his birthday, this time by proffering to the holders of American dominion something other than insults: I spent that day in 1983 walking the halls of Congress, handing out books that I trundled behind me in my son Joaquín's red wagon. Five hundred and thirty-five books, to be exact, one for each representative in the House, one for each senator.

The idea for that delirious political-literary project had come to me one insomniac night as I corrected the proofs for the English text of *Widows*. I can't deny that I was thrilled to be fulfilling my adolescent ambition to publish a novel in the language of my childhood, and doubly thrilled because I knew that having a book in the lingua franca of our times could pry open the door to multiple translations and success in the literary world. My glee was tempered, however, by the recognition of how far I remained from my original objective of using this very novel to sneak back into Chile, to reach my readers there. Then it hit me: Why not use the novel, newly minted in New York, to reach out to the legislators of this country? Maybe I could get some rich friends of the Institute for Policy Studies to buy the books at cost for my adventure. In my mind, I was already rehearsing the conversation: "Good morning, sir, madam, Senator, Congresswoman, Congressman," and then explain that I couldn't go back to my land, but my plight was insignificant compared to what was happening to the Disappeared and to the relatives of the Disappeared in Chile, as portrayed in this novel I'm now dedicating to you, sir, madam, impossible to do something like this in my own country, because our Congress has been abolished and nobody has the right to vote there, just as I don't have the right to return. Perhaps, sir, madam, you could pressure the Chilean government into allowing me to go back to my country, perhaps you could protest the horrors of disappearance. And let me tell you about how the Reagan government bolsters the Pinochet regime.

And that was it, the spiel I repeated so many times during those eight days in May, rehearsing for what would be a flurry of interviews in the years ahead, my English hooked to the cause of Chile and Latin America and every oppressed nation in the world, my English articulated me into many meetings with minor Reagan functionaries and bankers, pundits and luminaries, and it was then that I started to cultivate an array of well-known stars, hitched them to the lone star of Chile.

I got a kick out of this, that's the truth. It was a dream to meet Costa-Gavras in Washington when he premiered *Missing* and Richard Dreyfuss in Los Angeles and Arthur Miller in New York and Bill Styron in Connecticut. I lobbied Martin Sheen and Dan Rather, Jackson Browne and Jane Fonda and Harry Belafonte. And then, in late 1987, Chilean actors were warned to leave the country or be executed, so I wrote an op-ed for the *New York Times*. A few hours after it was published, the telephone rang: it was Margot Kidder. Kidder had contacted Christopher Reeve, her costar in the Superman films. "He's read your *Times* piece," she said, though I couldn't get it out of my head that it was Lois Lane speaking to me, "and he's fearless. I think he'll do it."

Later that day, the telephone rang again, and this time I recognized that deep baritone I had heard in movie theaters, the voice of the Man of Steel and of the evil dissembler of *Death Trap* and of the benevolent lawyer in *The Bostonians*, the voice asking how he could assist the Chilean actors. At the end of our half-hour conversation, Reeve had a question: "How dangerous is Chile for someone like me?"

"Nothing would be worse for the dictatorship than for you to get hurt, but renegades from the secret police might decide to kill you in order to blame the opposition."

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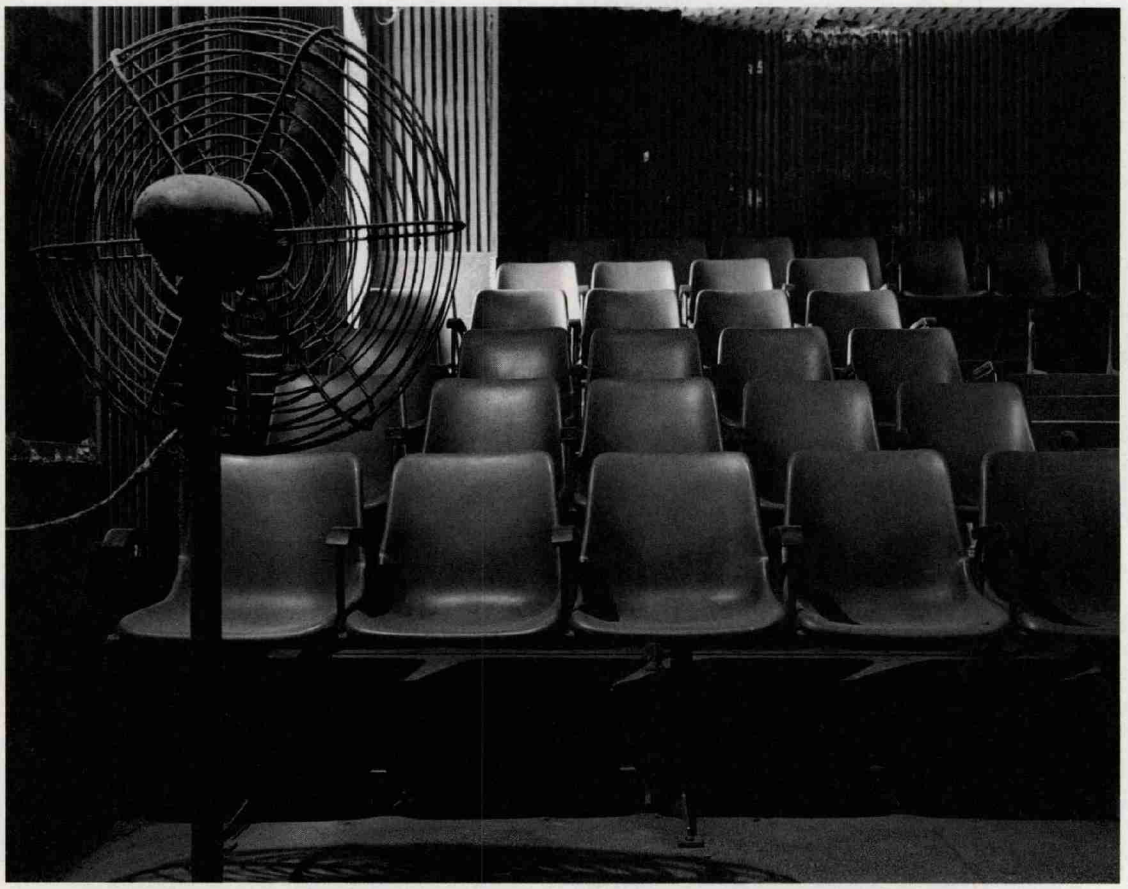

COURTESY THE ARTIST

"Untitled 11, Cinema Play House," *a photograph by Nandita Raman, on view this month at the Snite Museum of Art, Notre Dame, Indiana.*

"And if I go, would this help my Chilean colleagues?"

"If you go, you'll probably save their lives."

After a pause, maybe four seconds long: "Then I'll go."

It was an act of great bravery, though not his last service to Chile.

When the campaign for the No vote against Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite was gearing up, I enlisted Reeve to appear in one of the publicity spots that the dictatorship had been forced to offer us every night at an ungodly hour, but that all of Chile had tuned in to, and there was Chris again, telling the TV viewers not to be afraid, that they were not alone.

Nor was he alone.

My mission for the plebiscite was to bring in as many celebrities as I could find. I tried to suffocate the unsettling thought that I had spent so many decades denouncing the way fandom emasculates citizenship and postpones responsibility, the way Hollywood manipulates our emotions and tamps down our rebellion, I had spent a good part of my life calling for ordinary humans to emerge from the shadows and into the light, and yet when opportunity came, I relished being in touch with the luminaries, caught in the web of their enchantment. Yes, it was for a good cause, and yes, I was giving them a chance to use their fame for something meaningful, but the elation I felt was, well, unseemly. When I contacted those stars personally, voice to voice, face to face, I could sense my ego swelling, puffing up in a puerile delight that crept out of some deep-seated insecurity intensified by years of rejection and exile.

I was to be taught a lesson in humility one crazy midnight in October of 1988, a week after the people of Chile had resoundingly defeated Pinochet in the plebiscite. "He has an eye that can see everything," an old woman confided in a whisper when I went canvassing for votes just before the referendum. "He'll follow me into the booth, take away my roof, but I'll vote against the man anyway. This is my one chance."

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And what better way to celebrate that she and so many millions like her had chosen the path of democracy, what better place to rejoice than in a stadium, listening to the blur and roar and wave of seventy thousand screaming, heaving rock fans at an Amnesty International concert?

True, it wasn't possible in Chile yet, we'd need another two years before we could hold that concert in Santiago. But Sting and the other singers on that Human Rights Now! tour had added that show at the Estadio Mundialista in Mendoza, Argentina, as a way of calling attention to the struggle in Chile, where of course Pinochet would not have allowed even one of the trouble-making musicians to disembark. Mendoza, just on the other side of the Andes, was the city from which the ragtag army of San Martín set forth in 1817 to liberate Chile, so why not create a new Ejército Libertador, thousands of Chileans crossing the mountains to Argentina to celebrate human rights?

Sting asked that before I introduce him to the multitude, I read one of my poems—and I willingly agreed, feeling that I somehow deserved that honor. It seemed like a unique chance to cast my forbidden verses into the ears of all those young Chileans.

The show's producer, Bill Graham, was dubious. "Those kids will have been out in the sun for hours," he said, "and then in the cold of night waiting for Sting," they would probably not be in the mood for poetry. But Graham asked for the poem anyway, and nodded after reading it, and he said yes, if I was willing to risk it, poetry's always good.

I entered the stage under a flood of lights, enough to make me sweat in the chilly Mendoza night, but I sweated even more when I realized that the spectators were expecting Sting, not this Dorfman fellow. The dazed puzzle of silence was speckled with some hoots, and I hesitated. Wouldn't it be better to ditch the whole poem thing and just announce, like an incarnation of Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*, here's . . . *Stiiiing!* I looked at the real Sting, standing just out of sight of the crowd next to Peter Gabriel, and they gave me a reassuring smile, they'd tamed this sort of monster many a time, and I ludicrously remembered the scene in *The Way We Were* when Robert Redford says to Barbra Streisand, "Go get 'em, Katie," and some voice inside me, not Redford's for sure, was saying "Go get 'em, Ariel."

I took a deep breath and went and got them, or tried to get them, because they seemed to be the ones out to get me. As I launched into the first verses something stirred in the loins of the stadium, and it soon became an uproar. I could hear—or at least hoped I was hearing—shouts of encouragement from the sons and daughters of friends out there, and I kept plodding on, the boos and protests now so loud that I couldn't hear my own words, my litany against death and disappearance trying to soar above the clamor from without and the self-questioning from within, what right do I have to come between these fans and their idol? Why did I ever want to be a surrogate to a rock star and bathe in his aura, how could I have become so addicted to the fawning of the world and the whirring of the cameras, what insane delusion gripped me, why, why? Even so, I continued. Pinochet couldn't silence me, and this crowd won't silence me either, and then I'm on the homestretch, almost done, I've finished, I can finally gesture to one side and yell with my last lungful of air, *Y ahora, Sting!* And he came out with his band and hugged me and I staggered out from below the diabolical lights and Bill Graham gave me a friendly punch in the arm. "That was great, man, that was really gutsy."

I was hoarse and chagrined, but there were more pleasurable matters to attend to. Hey, I'd never been to a Sting concert, so I circled around, with my all-access backstage pass hanging from my neck, to join friends and family in the section right in front of the stage, where Verónica de Negri comforted me with a hug. She was the mother of Rodrigo Rojas, burned by the Chilean military, and had been on this tour for the past month and a half, demanding justice for her martyred son, and she'd soon be up there onstage with the women of the *Desaparecidos*, dancing with Sting and Peter Gabriel instead of dancing with the dead and the missing and the invisible ones.

Finally that was all that mattered, this celebration of our victory in the plebiscite, the fleeting solace of the songs. I was able to leave my public disgrace behind and lose myself in "Roxanne," *You don't have to put on the red light . . . don't have to sell your body to the night,* and then there is the finale with everybody up there singing together, Sting and Peter and Tracy Chapman and Youssou N'Dour and the spirit of Bob Marley alive in Mendoza telling all fifty thousand of us that heaven is not under the earth, urging the world to remember that the story hasn't been told, *Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights.*

It took me a while to probe the meaning of that public pillorying, to realize that a slap in the face can become a good slap if you can only come to love it, embrace its pain as a learning experience. Do I feel proud? Do I continue to crave attention? Of course I do. But as soon as I perceive a hint of cockiness creep into my soul, I quickly cut myself down to size with the message from the Mendoza debacle: This is not about you. It's all right to flit in and out of that world of celebrities as long as you don't believe in the flashing bulbs or the hype or the praise, as long as I never forget the lesson about narcissism and truth that I learned in Mendoza on a night of humiliation that I now recall as a blessing.

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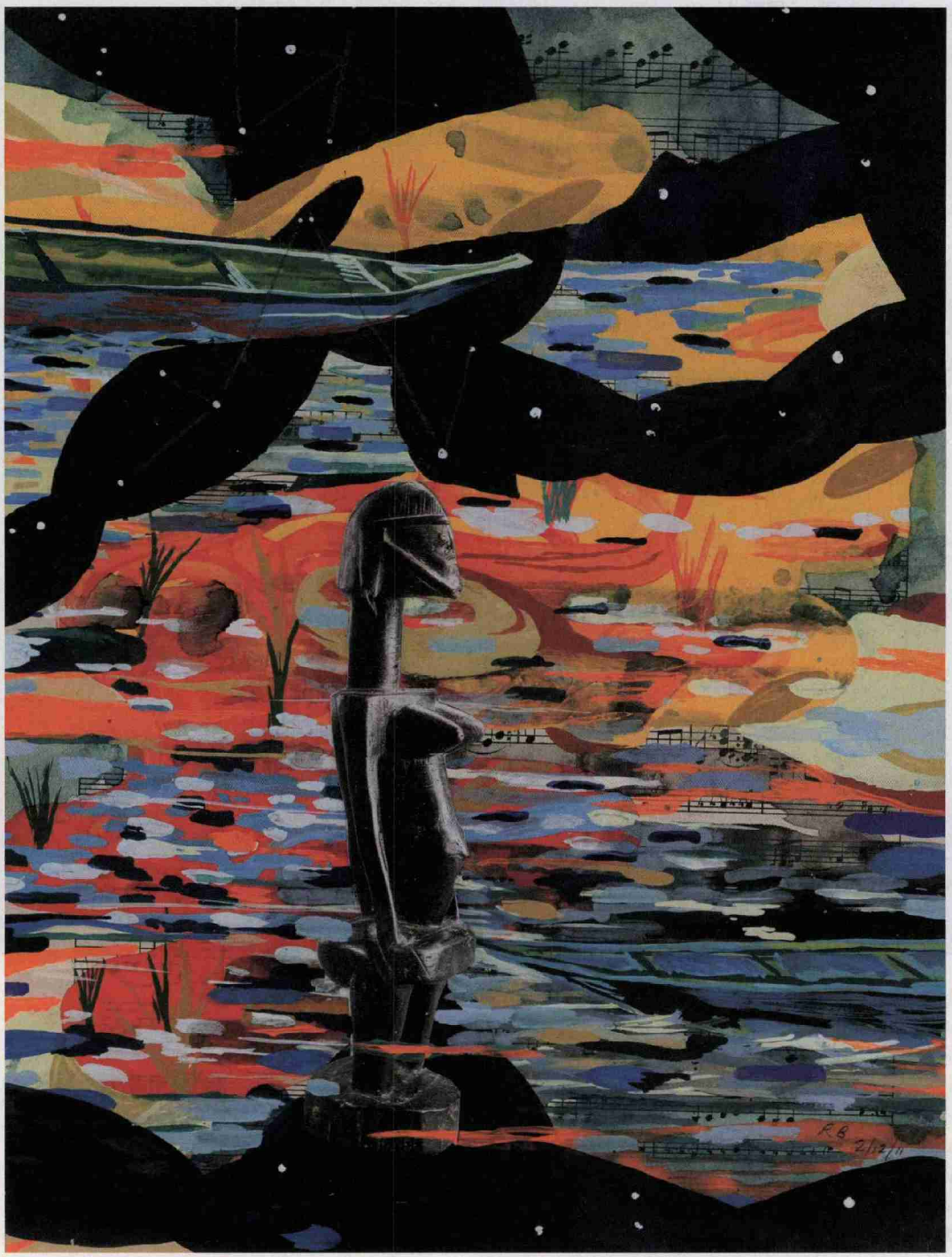


Notes from Elmina IV, *a collage by Radcliffe Bailey, whose work is on exhibit at the High Museum of Art, in Atlanta.*

Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York City

THE NEW YORKER

Goings On About Town May 23, 201

Art

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

RADCLIFFE BAILEY

Bailey’s lyrical assemblages don’t always succeed, but when they do they are knockouts. In the romantic and transporting “Echo,” a sepia photograph of a mosque in Timbuktu is juxtaposed with a pipe from which brown mud appears to spill into a seashell. “World Cup,” on the other hand, amounts to nothing more than a punch line: the sound of vuvuzelas buzzing from a metal cast of a wicker basket, located next to a beehive. Bailey organizes his work like the stanzas of poems; sometimes the multiple parts give a fluid sense of enjambment, and sometimes they simply jam up. Through May 21. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 212-645-1701.)

ARTFORUM
MAY 2011 INTERNATIONAL
SUMMER PREVIEW
50 SHOWS WORLDWIDE

Radcliffe Bailey, *Enroute*, 2006, mixed media on Plexiglas, 68 x 68 x 5½".

ATLANTA

"RADCLIFFE BAILEY: MEMORY AS MEDICINE"

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART · June 26–September 11 · Curated by Carol Thompson and Michael Rooks · For the most comprehensive Radcliffe Bailey survey to date, the High Museum will fete its local son with a dense exhibition organized into three sections: "Water," "Blues," and "Blood." The show will comprise more than thirty works made between the early 1990s and the present, along with a selection of African sculptures underscoring the artist's investigation of his own ancestral history. (Several years ago, Bailey traced his DNA to its Mende origins.) Central to the installation will be Bailey's medicine-cabinet sculptures, which encase cultural talismans spanning the breadth of the artist's sources of inspiration. A catalogue with newly commissioned essays accompanies the show. *Travels to the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, MA, Feb. 8–May 6, 2012; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, June 6–Sept. 2, 2012.*

—Suzanne Hudson

Time Out New York

ART

Radcliffe Bailey, "Outer Spaceways" Critics' pick

April 28, 2011
Jack Shainman Gallery, Tomorrow - Sat 10am; May 03 - May 05 10am. Ending: Sat May 21 10am 513 W 20th St (between Tenth and Eleventh Aves)
(212) 645-1701 jackshainman.com
Subway: C, E to 23rd St

Sun Ra—the jazz great and poet-philosopher who once postulated that "space is the place"—serves as inspiration for Bailey's latest show. Records, parts of musical instruments and a cabinet filled with multiple plaster heads are just some of the elements he uses to evoke a kind of metaphorical cosmology.

Soul Man

ATL artist Radcliffe Bailey wins the hometown recognition he deserves—and the lady—capping off a run of terrific luck

| By Felicia Feaster | Photography by Christy Bush |

Artists' lives are filled with anxieties and uncertainties. The lack of a steady paycheck, the vagaries of the marketplace, creative juices that can ebb and flow. Atlanta artist Radcliffe Bailey, however, is another story. Some people lead charmed lives, but Bailey's feels enchanted. He has pulled off one of the most difficult feats for any artist—steadily supporting himself through his art. In the process, the 41-year-old has created an enviable life distinguished by placement in prestigious collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. He's also enjoyed the support of a local gallery owner, Nancy Solomon, who gives him a wide creative berth. For his third solo show at Solomon Projects this fall, for example, Bailey filled the gallery with 54 sets of piano keys undulating like waves in his installation piece, *Windward Coast*.

Bailey is an undeniably successful artist. But in 2011 a profound—and long overdue—testament to his importance on the Atlanta and national art scene will come when the High Museum unveils the most comprehensive presentation of his work to date. Buoyed by a $75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, *Art of an Ancient Soul* will cover 6,000 square feet of museum space, travel to three national venues, and mark a capstone in Bailey's career. "I'm more excited by this than any other show I've been a part of," Bailey recently told a crowd of his former Atlanta College of Art teachers and past students, critics and collectors gathered to hear him discuss his Solomon Projects show, *Looking for Light, Traveling at Night*. "The High campus is important to me for many reasons. I went to school next door. That was the museum where I spent a lot of time. Saw a lot of African art. I projected and imagined my work on the walls." Though Bailey has embraced installation, sculpture and works on paper during the course of his career, he is perhaps best known for his mixed-media paintings incorporating bright shards of color, found objects and vintage photographs. "When I was in school, I would try to figure out a way not to go to the art supply store," he laughs of the rum labels, graveyard ribbons, Georgia soil, palm fronds and tobacco leaves that made their way into his work. That signature clash of objects, color and found photographs suggests a musical cacophony stifled by decades of oppression. Deeply moving on an almost subconscious level, his art commemorates the anonymous African-Americans of the past and allows them to live on eternally as symbols of the countless, faceless people lost to the winds of history. "I think of my work as being able to create many stories," says Bailey. His timeworn photos become portals to viewers' own families and personal histories. "People can walk away with their own relationships," he admits.

DRIFT WOOD *From top:* Atlanta artist Radcliffe Bailey in his home studio; an installation composed of piano keys, *Windward Coast*, suggests a body floating in a turbulent sea; *Untitled (Blue Trees)* incorporates coconut palms, felt, acrylic, wood, and Bailey's recurring theme of travel.

"People really connect to the work," says the High's curator of African art Carol Thompson, of Bailey's loyal cadre of collectors. "It's almost like the house is built around the work." Because of that, she says assembling the pieces for *Art of an Ancient Soul* may be challenging. "It's going to be hard to pry away loans," Thompson laughs.

Add to Bailey's thriving professional life an increasingly glamorous personal one. When he's not flying to openings at his New York gallery Jack Shainman, Bailey lives in the kind of house that makes movie location scouts salivate. Tucked into a South Atlanta neighborhood of plain brick ranches, Bailey's award-winning contemporary home by Atlanta starchitects Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam is filled with vintage photography, Bailey's massive, drama-infused paintings and boasts a studio that would make most artists weak-kneed with yearning. Surrounded by autumnal forest, Baileyville's enormous windows offer views of passing deer, fox, coyotes and owls. But Bailey's mojo really went through the roof this summer when he married *The Young and the Restless* actress and *New York Times* bestselling author Victoria Rowell, 50, in a star-studded wedding (Samuel L. Jackson gave the bride away) glowingly recorded in *The New York Times* and *Town & Country*.

Since their June wedding, the couple has lived the peripatetic life of rock stars, jetting back and forth between their separate homes in Los Angeles and Atlanta and their increasingly paparazzi-dogged appearances at the Emmys, film festivals and museum openings. Despite the glamour, both remain exceptionally grounded. When she's in Atlanta, Rowell does the vintage store, auction house and even Goodwill circuit in search of additions to her collection of Forties hats. And Bailey's dream is to plant another Scogin-Elam modern next door for his parents, Brenda and Radcliffe, Sr., who are intimately enmeshed in his life. (It was his mother who first told Rowell at a book signing that she *must* meet her son). Bailey still considers his mother an important sounding board and a litmus test for making his art accessible to many viewers. "I always wanted to create work that didn't speak over my mom's head" he says. Bailey and Rowell have two children each and creativity that burns like wildfire. While Bailey holes up in his studio, preparing for his High show, Rowell puts the finishing touches on her new book, *Secrets of a Soap Opera Diva*. And she is delving once more into her own past while working on an HBO series based on her memoir of being a foster child, *The Women Who Raised Me*. Both Bailey and Rowell are creatively obsessed by what history has to teach. "The past is prologue" says Rowell. And the remaining chapters of their life together are still being written.

"The High campus is important to me for many reasons. I went to school next door. That was the museum where I spent a lot of time. Saw a lot of African art. I projected and imagined my work on the walls."

Art in America
March 2006

Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman

While Radcliffe Bailey's use of deep frames and Plexiglas glazing in these new paintings suggests the tradition of the reliquary, the frames also help maintain the works' physical integrity and support their structure. He calls them "cabinets," and the show is titled "From the Cabinet: Reflections of Winding Roads." In most examples, a photograph with a patina of history is central to the composition, while the enclosing black frames emphasize the narrative he intends—a continuing consideration of the history of African slavery and the African diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean islands. Only one work is titled; all are dated 2005.

A 56-by-56-by-5-inch painting centers on a group portrait of the Smith YMCA Orchestra Glee Club of Wichita, Kans. The members are outfitted in the sort of uniforms, gaiters and hats associated with late-19th-century military regalia. They carry drums and horns. The faded-blue image is surrounded by paper stained with tobacco. Indigo dye and tobacco are associated with rice, cotton and cane, all connected with the history of the slave trade. Geometric motifs in black, red and green provide colors symbolic of Kwanzaa and Africa. Another work of the same dimensions derives from an old photograph of a black man, a mule and a rustic cart filled with bottles. The piece is ornamented with an emanation of colorful, shardlike rays applied directly to the Plexi, and to the painting's surface as well. A shelf near the top of the cabinet supports a bottle featuring the profile of a turbaned woman and labeled "Rhum Vieux"; the image evokes sugar cane and the Caribbean.

A cabinet 68 inches on a side centers on a black man in a pirogue pulled up to a shoreline as though he has returned from fishing. Bailey appends a single carved figure at the center of the boat. A dozen or so images of African masks appear below the waterline, like objects waiting to be restored to the people who made them. In a vigorous structural departure, a particularly remarkable cabinet incorporates as its frame a simulacrum of a baby grand piano that measures 53 inches vertically and 13 inches deep. Fixed to the wall, with no lid, the frame exposes the piano's inner parts, and a few of them are numbered with map pins. The keys are covered with black wax and sprout toy-store trees of the sort used in model-train landscape displays. Small representations of planets, including Saturn, are fixed to the ends of sturdy wires. Looking toward more recent history, according to gallery materials, the cabinet pays homage to several figures much admired by Bailey: Thelonious Monk, Sun Ra and Duke Ellington. *—Edward Leffingwell*

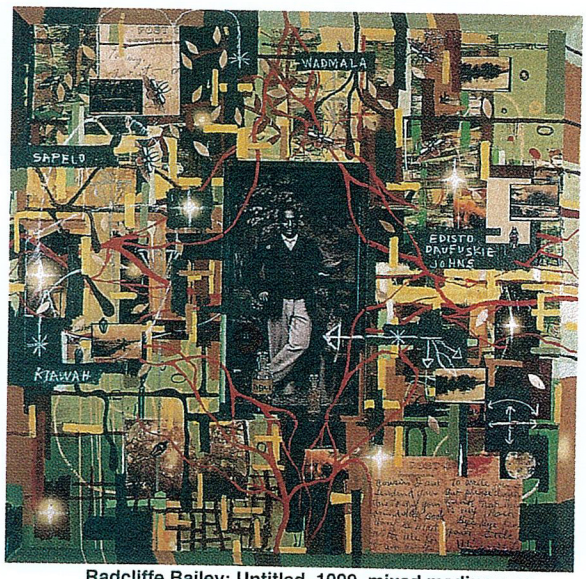
Radcliffe Bailey: Untitled, 2005, mixed mediums on wood, 56 by 56 by 5 inches; at Jack Shainman.

Art in America
April 2000

Radcliffe Bailey at Jack Shainman

In this new body of work, Atlanta-based artist Radcliffe Bailey plays dynamic movement around a still center. As a whole, these monumental canvases are full of activity—snatches of grid underlie sinuous lines and tangled marks that suggest diagrams, road maps, networks of synapses or meandering plant tendrils. The center of each painting, by contrast, brings this controlled chaos to a halt. Embedded in each work is a rectangular glass box containing a black-and-white photograph. The photographs are of two sorts. Some are tintypes that belonged to Bailey's grandmother depicting relatives whom he cannot otherwise identify. These offer formal portraits of an African-American middle class from the late 19th century, with sitters arranged against painted backdrops and architectural props in the manner of the day. The others, taken by Bailey himself, are sepia-toned depictions of figurative sculptures from the High Museum's collection of African art.

The wild, syncopated patterns of the surrounding painting become giant frames which counterpoint the stillness of the images. The boxes suggest reliquaries or displays of ethnographic artifacts, a quality which is sometimes enhanced by the presence of other objects, such as exotic insects pinned to pillows, glass bottles filled with roots or seeds, or even, in one case, a chicken claw.



Radcliffe Bailey: Untitled, 1999, mixed mediums on wood, 80 by 80 by 5 inches; at Jack Shainman.

The disjunction between center and frame suggests the break between memory and the flux of immediate experience. The photographic images are deliberately out of context—as African ritual sculpture always is in a museum setting. And indeed the sculptures are shot to reduce their legibility. The portrait photographs are far more readable, but even these seem enigmatic—evidence of a social atom which has been poorly incorporated into our national narrative.

The figures in the portraits wear silk dresses, decorous bonnets and well-pressed suits and uniforms, and seem very much assimilated into the society in which they live. Yet the mysterious bottles and the pulsing lines and nature-derived emblems snaking over the surrounding frames are full of a shamanistic magic which links them to their African ancestors.

Despite the carryover of motifs and symbols from painting to painting, each work embodies a particular theme. In one, the photo features a black soldier in a Union army uniform posed formally before a painted backdrop. The frame that surrounds him is ornamented with painted banners containing numbers: 54th, 38th, 7th, etc., presumably referring to the regiments to which he might have belonged. Overall, the colors of this painting are darker than those of the others, creating an elegiac quality.

Bailey's work has been compared to that of such artists as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Raymond Saunders, but he is clearly his own man. These works blend past and present with an electric energy that brings history back to life.

—Eleanor Heartney