

James Williams

Portfolio Highlights



I am James Williams,
a designer

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Self portrait in Alfredo Jaar's *Dark Side of the Moon* at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago de Chile

I design things, photograph things, occasionally print or paint things. The photographs, prints, and paintings are typically of inanimate objects or places. Rarely people, but more often of late a dog, cats, and chickens. Mostly things like parking structures, doors, manhole covers, and other things discovered walking old and new places.

I am currently the Director of Design and Technology at the Birmingham Museum of Art.

As a child I could be found drawing or playing with Legos. Not surprisingly, being a bright kid, I was tracked into advanced math and science classes in middle school, coinciding with my last art class for some time. Fortunately, in my last semester of high school I took a photography class to fill an unexpected gap in my schedule. I proved to have a natural aptitude for composition and a long standing hobby was born.

Fast forward less than a year and I was a disgruntled engineering major. Though I loved math and science, well, at least the science part, I found that honors physics and calculus III were not the way I wanted to spend my professional life. A deep inspection of the course handbook returned a number of classes offered in photography, or at least tangentially related to photography. And those tangentially related to photography were in the visual communications curriculum.

Finding the 40th anniversary edition of *Communication Arts* in the university bookstore sealed my fate. It reminded me of the interests I had as a child, defining them actually. By the next semester I was a graphic design major. Since then I've enjoyed a career ranging from small agency work through the non-profit arts sector.

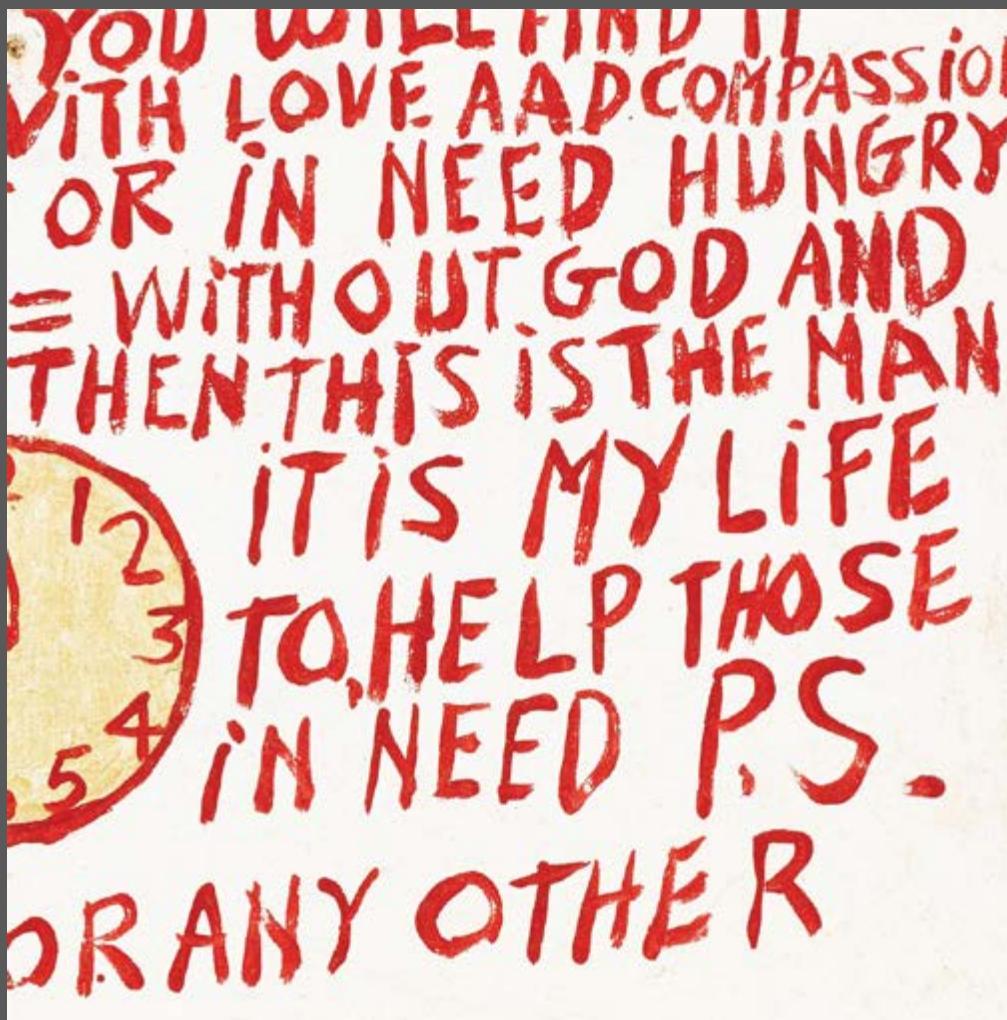
JAMES “Son Ford” THOMAS

b. 1926, Eden, Yazoo County, Mississippi
d. 1993, Leland, Mississippi



130

James Thomas, who lived and worked mostly in Leland, Mississippi came by the nickname ‘Son Ford’ because he modeled cars and trucks from river clay, which he called ‘gumbo clay.’ Raised by his grandparents, he spent hours by himself making things, singing, and picking the guitar (which he learned from his uncle). People were interested in his clay figures, and someone offered to buy a box of clay horses for three dollars—more than his grandparents earned in a week. Thomas took note and kept sculpting, adding enough to his earnings from picking cotton to buy his first guitar in 1942.



THE ORIGINAL MAKERS

FOLK ART FROM THE CARGO COLLECTION



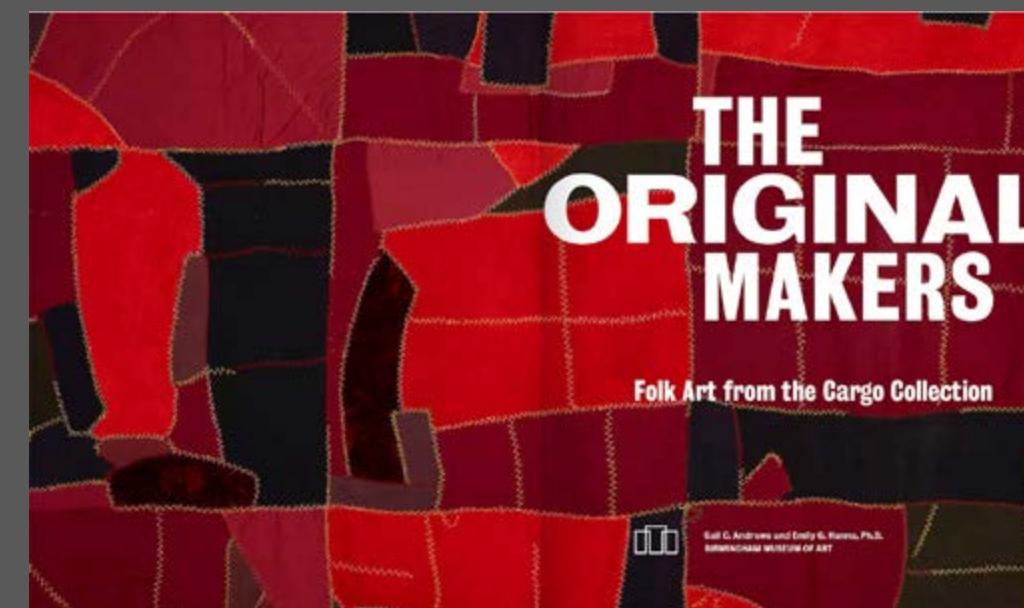
Fig. 1 (see also Movie Number One, part 1, 10



Fig.



Fig. 10 (See [4]) (continued) makes, 30 days had elapsed), colour TV



This image shows a vibrant patchwork quilt with a variety of traditional folk art motifs. The quilt includes a central American flag motif, a sunburst or starburst pattern, and several floral and leafy designs. Other motifs include a stylized tree, a cross-in-square pattern, and a compass rose. The colors used are primarily red, white, blue, yellow, green, and black.

STITCHING
A LEGACY

Ned C. Andrews
Director Emeritus

Fig. F (see Fig. 10) (continued from
Figure 10c (continued), 1990)

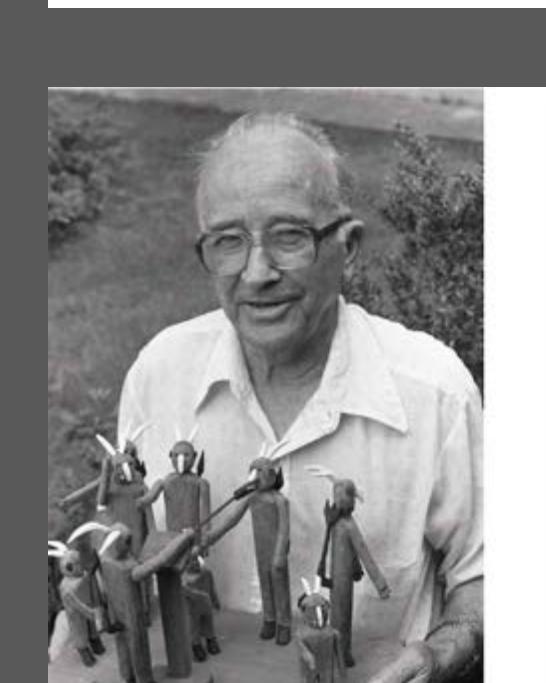
In the late nineteenth century, a period of relative peace increased the availability of land and labor, and led to more capital inflows, and more organized urban manufacturing centers in the number and variety of ceramic designs. The resulting growth of the household ceramic and the rural life of the society's members, the craft guilds' associations, and the activities of the ceramic workers, were the main factors that contributed to the growth of height and body effects, as well as the contribution of Asian ceramic motifs. The rich tradition of the state of Pomerania was the source of these changes of



b. 1906, Edna, Tazoe County, Wisconsin
d. 1993, Leland, Mississippi

JAMES
“Son Ford”
THOMAS

b. 1926, Edna, Tazoe County, Wisconsin
d. 1992, Leland, Mississippi



b. 1911, Fayette County, Alabama
d. 1986, Fayette County, Alabama

**RED
WEBSTER**

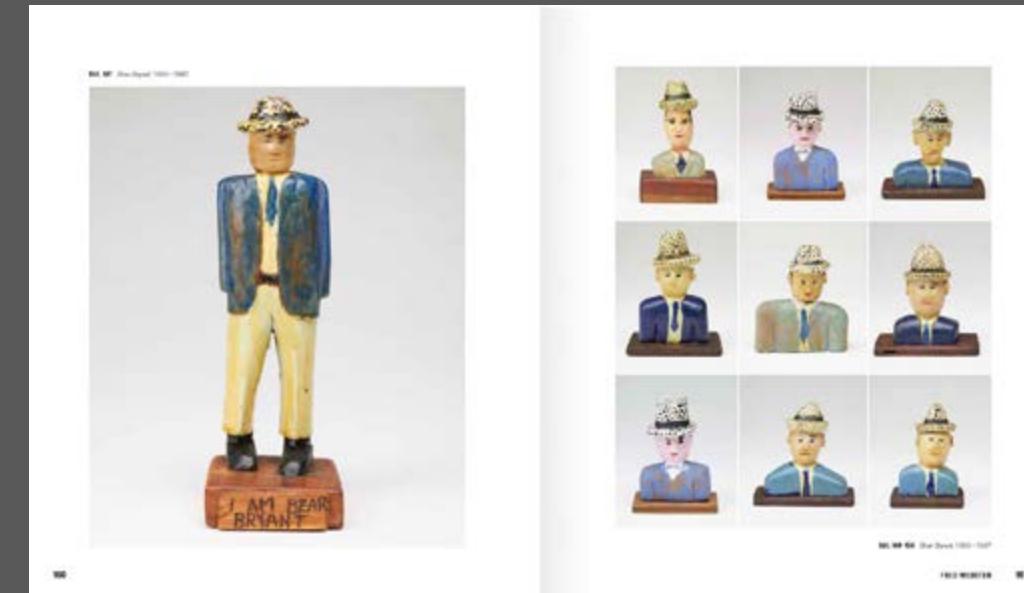
to 1991, Fayette County, Alabama
to 1998, Fayette County, Alabama

Franklin Wilson did not begin writing until his retirement, once he had moved to rural Alabama. Wilson graduated from Fluvanna High School in 1945 and received a master's degree from the University of Alabama. He taught school in Perry, Alabama, where he taught history for twenty years before becoming the principal of Perry High in 1988.

After long discussions in 1973, Macmillan concluded an inter-governmental treaty that effectively banned all processing that has shown the risk present to the environment.

He agreed. "It was too difficult to do. You do the painting, but you mustn't break it. I wanted something that would make up my family of the long-ago man and his wife. Well, I got up to make myself this here at the John Paul School in Shreveport, North Carolina. The took it overing

measuring six inches at the front first implemented as a logo. The logo came with a variety of apparel and items and soon became a tradition in a wide variety of subjects, most notably the products shown at the Alabama National Convention, which was held annually from 1947 to 1954. The logo was also used on the state's license plates, postage stamps, and other items.



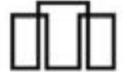
The Original Makers

Birmingham Museum of Art
Exhibition Catalog



GLENN_KAINO+TOMMIE_SMITH

-THIRD
SPACE_ | CHAPT
ER_01 | APRIL 18 2017 6PM
FREE ARTSBMA.ORG



Third Space is presented by PNC. Additional support provided by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, City of Birmingham, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Protective Life Foundation, Vulcan Materials Company Foundation, Robert W. Meyer Foundation, Luke 628 Foundation, Susan Mott Metal Charitable Trust, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Alabama Tourism Department, Alabama Humanities Foundation, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Lyda Hill Price Fund, and friends of Third Space.

WILMER_WILSON_IV
ARTIST_TALK_FREE
_NOV_16_2017_6PM
BIRMINGHAM_MUSEUM_OF_ART

-THIRD
SPACE_ | CHAPT
ER_03

PRESNTED_BY
PNC

**-ANTI-
CHARISMATIC
BODIES**

Charisma is a coveted force throughout history for its power to generate particular types of sensation in an audience. It makes those who are affected by it feel and do things in relatively predictable patterns. But for all its hard-to-define qualities, charisma is not a completely magical phenomenon. This presentation will examine moments of performance that grate against prevailing ideals of charisma, and imagine ways those moments can be expanded upon.

ARTSBMA.ORG



-THIRD
SPACE_ | CHAPT
ER_06

PRESNTED_BY
PNC

LONNIE

HOLLEY
MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
OCT 25 2018 8PM

FREE

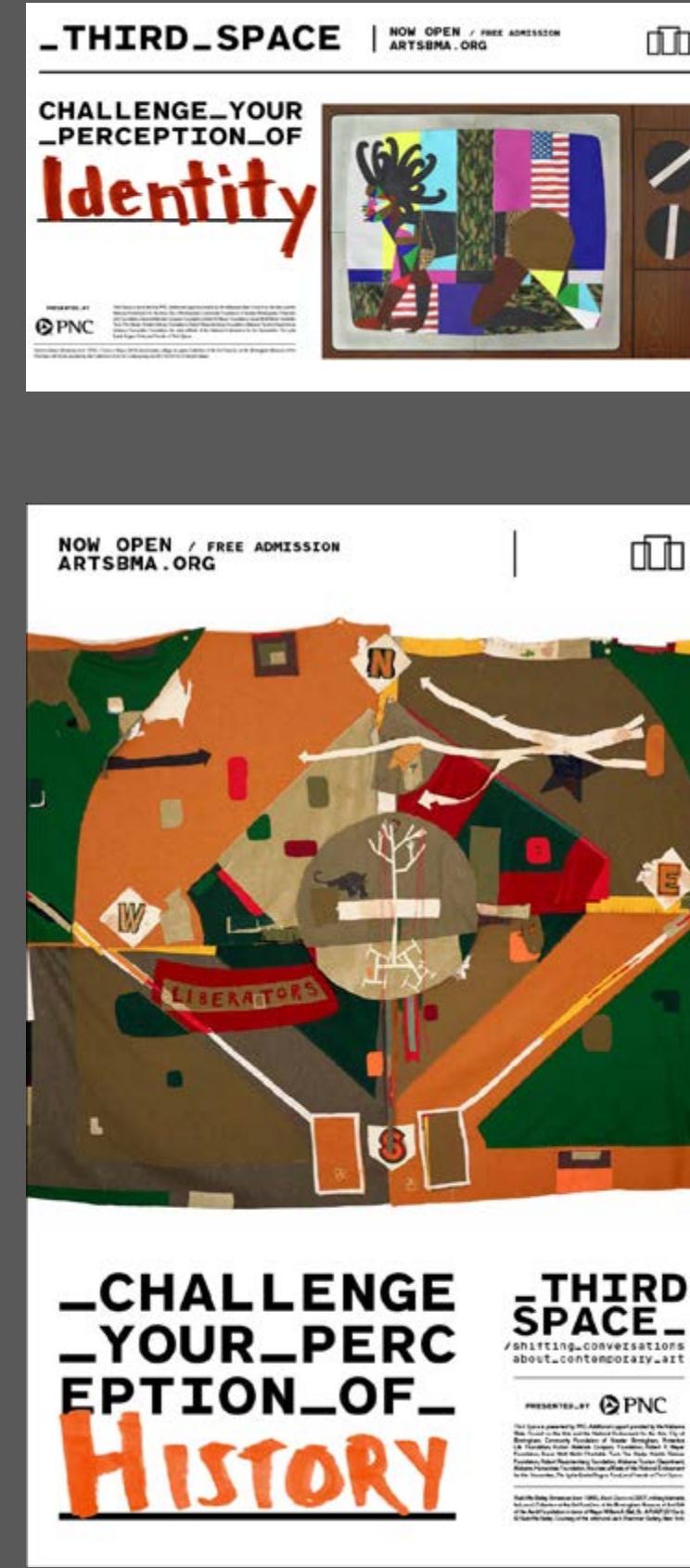
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

Third Space is presented by PNC. Additional support provided by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, City of Birmingham, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Protective Life Foundation, Vulcan Materials Company Foundation, Robert W. Meyer Foundation, Luke 628 Foundation, Susan Mott Metal Charitable Trust, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Alabama Tourism Department, Alabama Humanities Foundation, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Lyda Hill Price Fund, and friends of Third Space.



Third Space | Chapters

Birmingham Museum of Art
Posters



Third Space

Birmingham Museum of Art Marketing Campaign

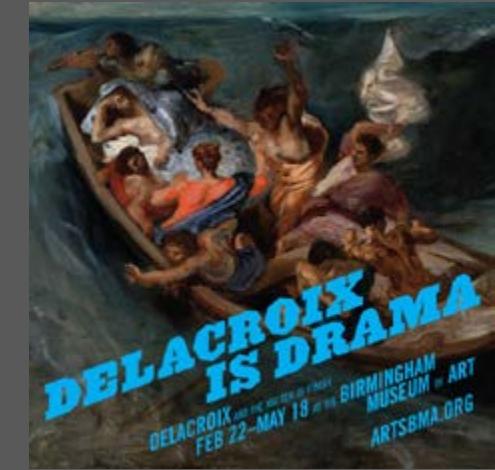
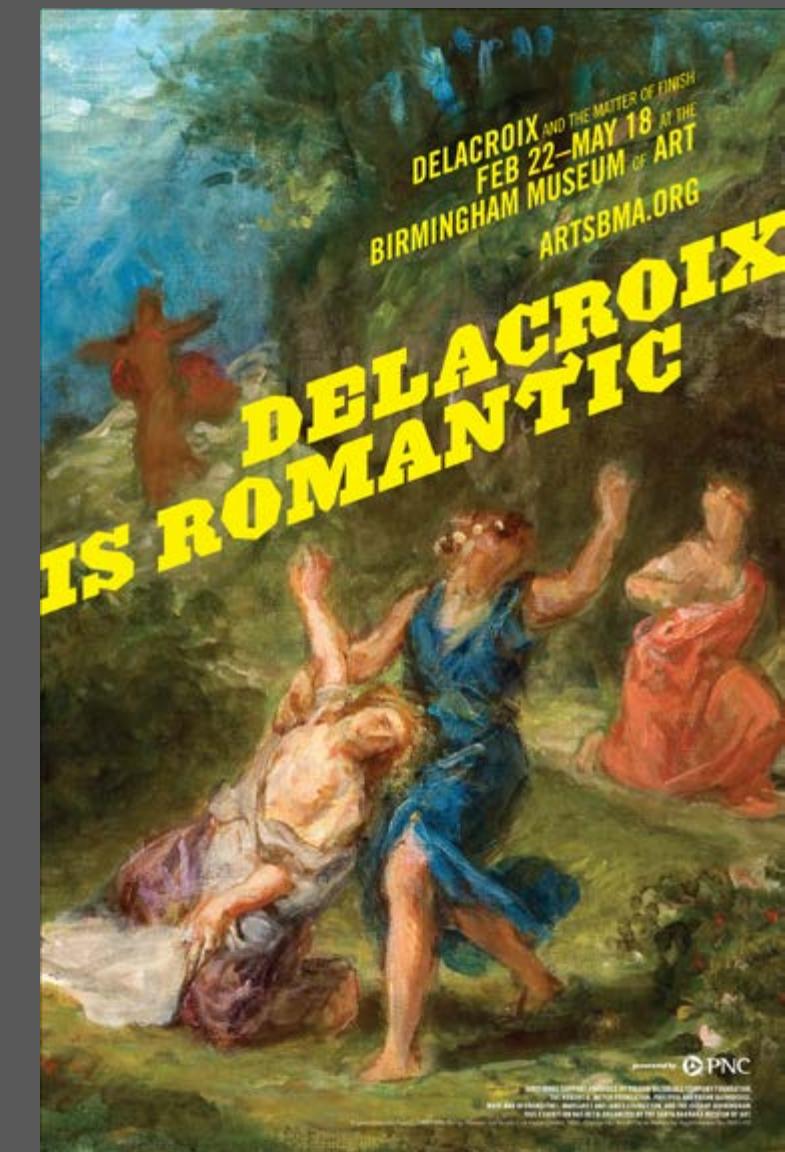
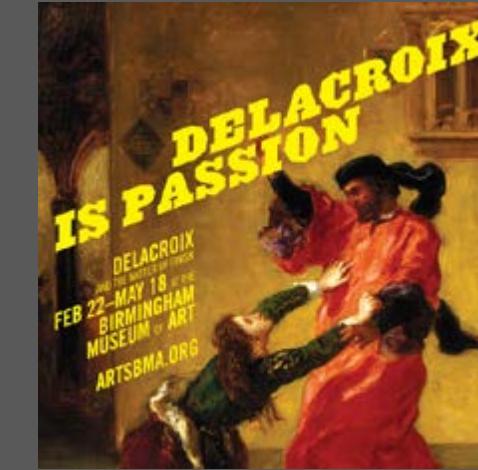
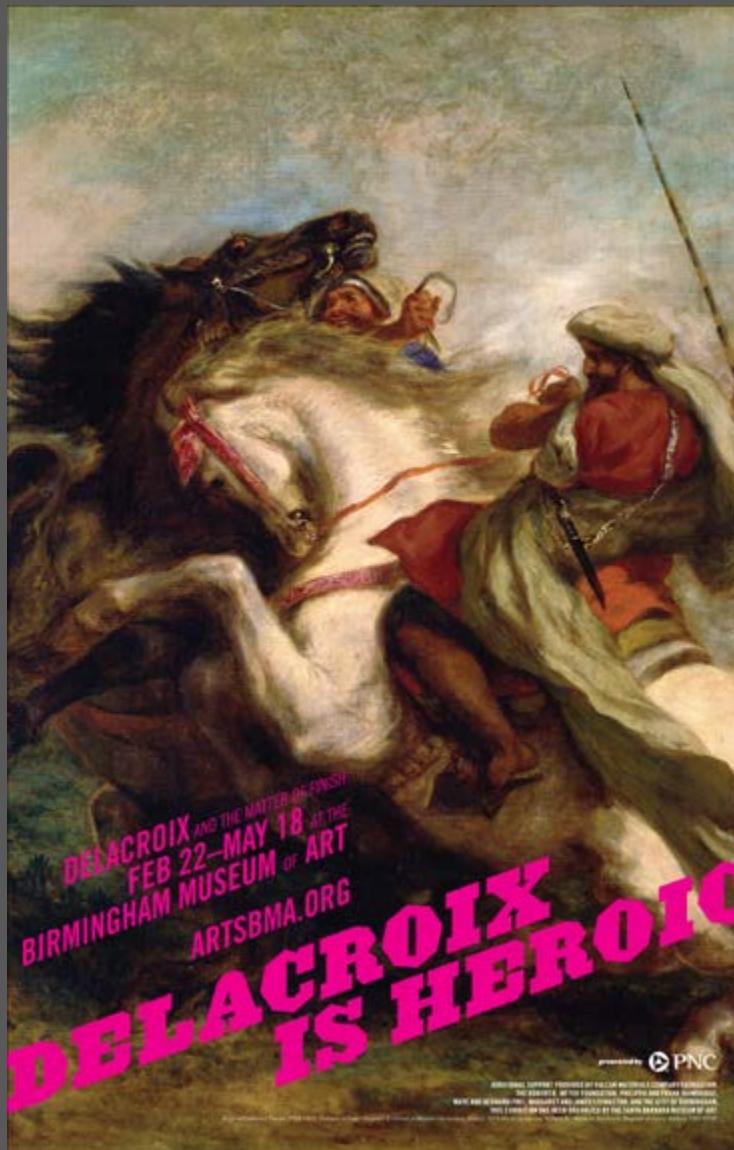


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MRS. CHARLES W. HEDLAND, MARGARET AND JAMES LYNNAGHTON, MR. AND MRS. LEE STYSLINGER, JR.,
PATRICK CATHEN, LISA AND MIKE DEYIVO, TERRY K. SIMMONS, AND THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.
Eugène Delacroix, French, 1798–1863, Collision of Arab Horsemen (Collision de chevaux arabo-maures), 1843–44, oil on canvas, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Bequest of Henry Walters, 1931 (37.16)

presented by  PNC

Delacroix and the Matter of Finish

Birmingham Museum of Art
Marketing Campaign



Art + Exhibit

Celestia Morgan **REDLINE**

October 5 · 2019 – February 16 · 2020 · Pizitz Galleries

Celestia Morgan: REDLINE presents a series of photographs and small sculptures by artist Celestia Morgan that explore redlining in Birmingham, Alabama. Beginning in the 1930s, the Federal Housing Administration systematically denied mortgages to prospective homeowners in order to prevent residents from building wealth on the basis of race, religion, and immigration status. This practice of housing discrimination was called redlining after the red lines drawn by banks and government officials on housing maps and disproportionately affected Black, Latinx, and Jewish residents. These red lines designated African American or Latinx-based neighborhoods and singled them out as "undesirable" for investment. Birmingham-based artist Morgan was raised and currently lives in neighborhoods that were once redlined, inspiring her three-part series that examines the practice through photographs of houses, silhouettes of height-

Postal Map of the City of Birmingham, Alabama (Reproduction), May 1933; A. J. Hawkins, American, Born Birmingham, Alabama 1886; Died Birmingham, Alabama 1979; Courtesy of the National Archives, Cartographic Branch

Interstate 20/59 #1, from the series "REDLINE," 2017, archival pigment print, Celestia Morgan, American, born 1981; Museum purchase with funds provided by the Sterling Family Charitable Foundation in memory of David and Natalie Springer, T2019.61



Medium

Birmingham Museum of Art
Magazine



Art + Exhibitions

**Celestia Morgan
REDLINE**

October 5 - 2019 - February 16 - 2020 - Polk Galleries

Celestia Morgan's REDLINE presents a series of photographs and oral histories by artist Celestia Morgan that explore enduring in Birmingham, Alabama beginning in the 1920s. The Federal Housing Administration sponsored the first home loans to prospective homeowners in Birmingham, making it possible for many Black families to buy homes in predominantly white neighborhoods. This practice of "redlining" was continuing after the mid-twentieth century by banks and government offices in housing, wage and discriminatory-affected Black, Latino, and Jewish families. Those not less marginalized from American or Latino neighbor-hoods and targeted them as "undesirable" for investment. Birmingham-based artist Morgan has revised and currently has a neighborhood's history re-told, helping her viewers see that the practice through photographs of housing, alternative neighborhoods, and images of the invisible that define the city.

Art + Exhibitions

**Black Out
Silhouettes Then and Now**

September 28 - 2019 - January 12 - 2020 - Jemison Galleries

Below the title, before the Polk City and soon before the photograph there was the silhouette, a profile portrait made from cut paper. Silhouettes were a highly popular and accessible form of portraiture in the nineteenth century, offering almost instant images of wealthy Americans—writers, Mrs. Stowe, white presidents, and others. Black Out Silhouettes That exhibition, which focused on the silhouettes on display, was developed to draw visitors to and encourage them to consider the history of portraiture.

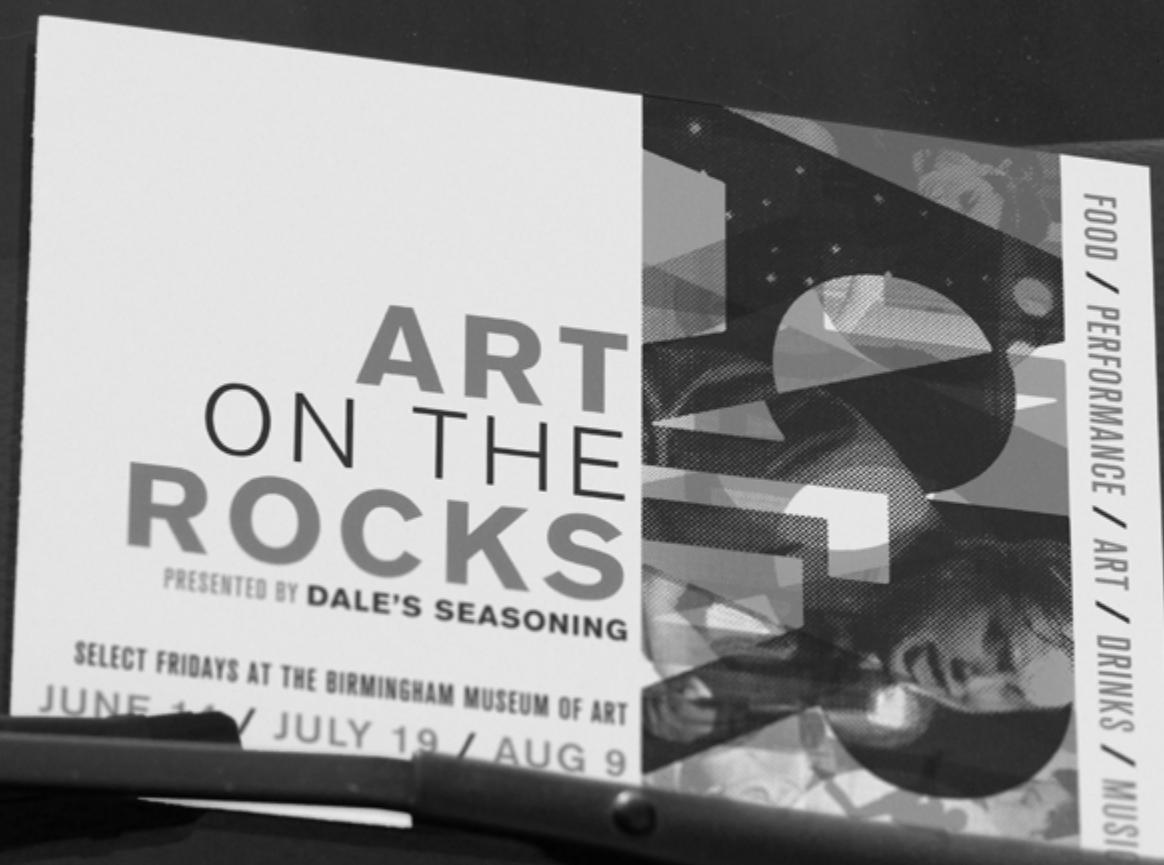
Black Out presents historic silhouettes from the collection of the Birmingham Southern Railroad Safety and other institutions alongside works by contemporary artists who are adapting silhouettes in bold and unforgettable ways. Many of the works in the exhibition were made by Auguste Everett, a French artist whose designs capture notable figures including John Henry, Africa, Death,

Art + Exhibitions

1880 Crow Peace Delegation

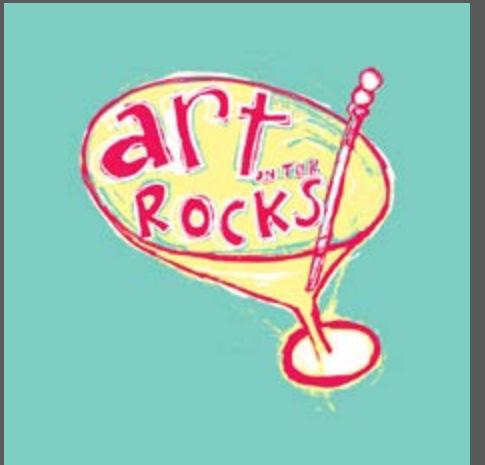
This work by Nancy Ross (c. 1980) depicts 1880 Crow Peace Delegation, a group of ten portraits, photographs that have been annotated with handwritten text. The portraits were taken by Charles M. Dyer, a white photographer working in Washington, D.C. in the late 1880s. The delegation of Dakotas and Arapahoe leaders had traveled to Washington to discuss a treaty regarding the boundaries of the Crow Indian Reservation, and while there had their portraits made. Dyer's studio.

The title area of the Crow, mentioned that the portraits, in addition to a photograph of Native American people, had made their way into the public domain with no identifying information about the subjects and were reproduced for use in commercial publications. She discovered a photograph of a member of the delegation—Chief Medicine Crow—and used an advertisement for National Gas. This reproduction was used for the advertisement with Native American names and bodies copied to fit according to National Gas company.

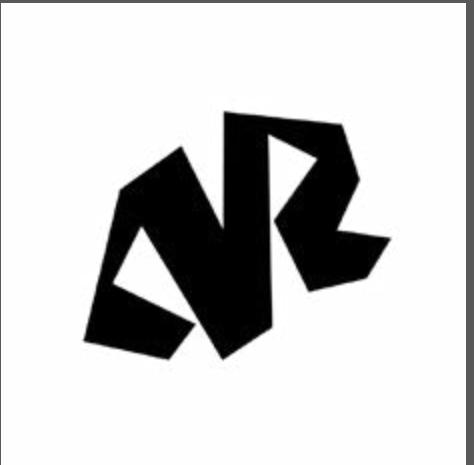


Art on the Rocks

Birmingham Museum of Art
Rebrand / Integrated Branding



Original



Option A

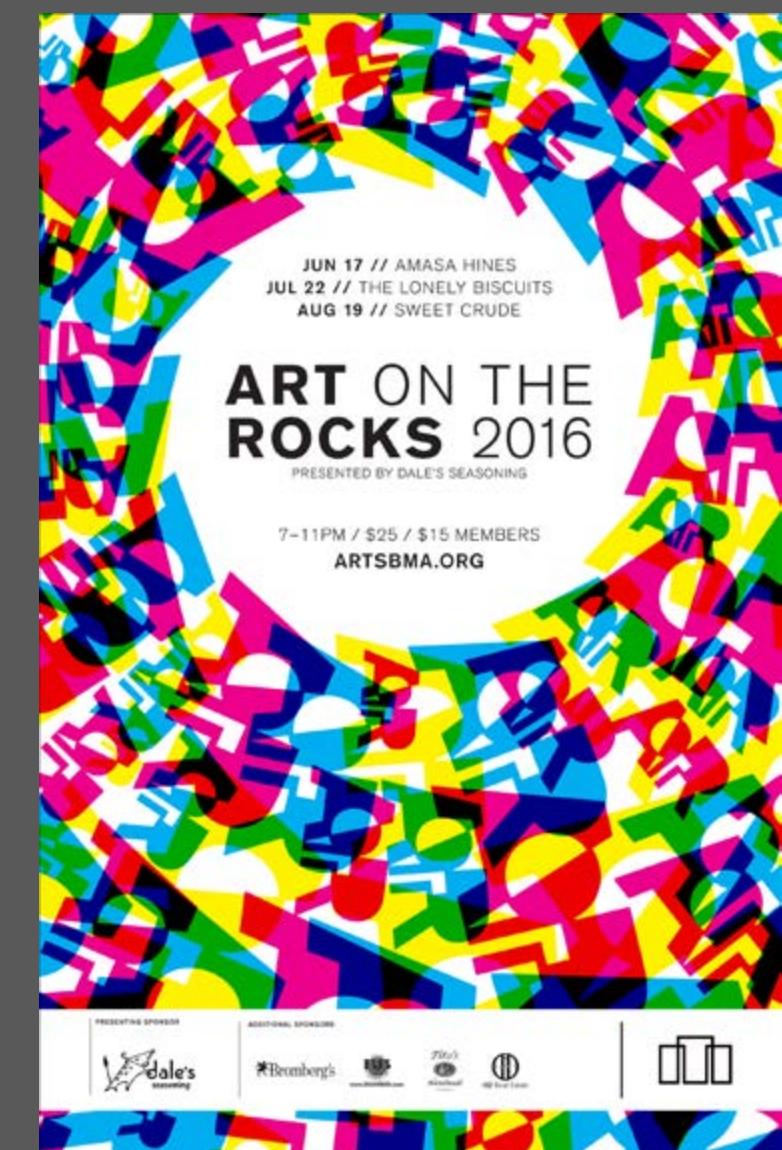
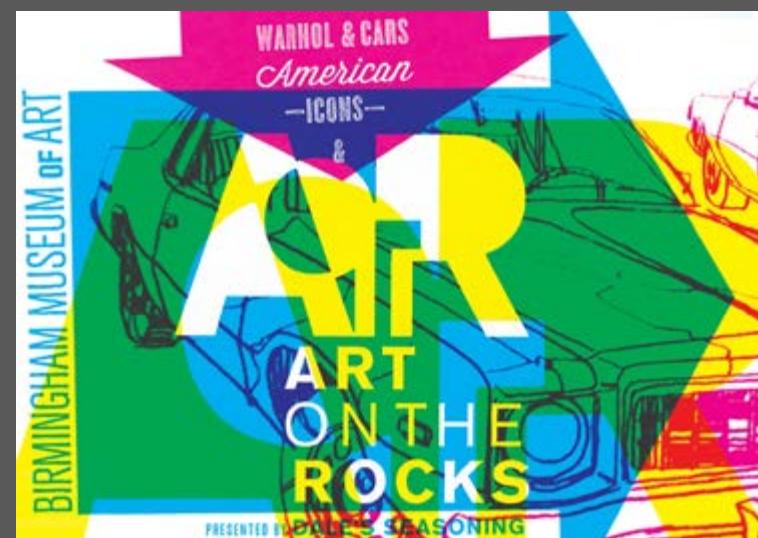
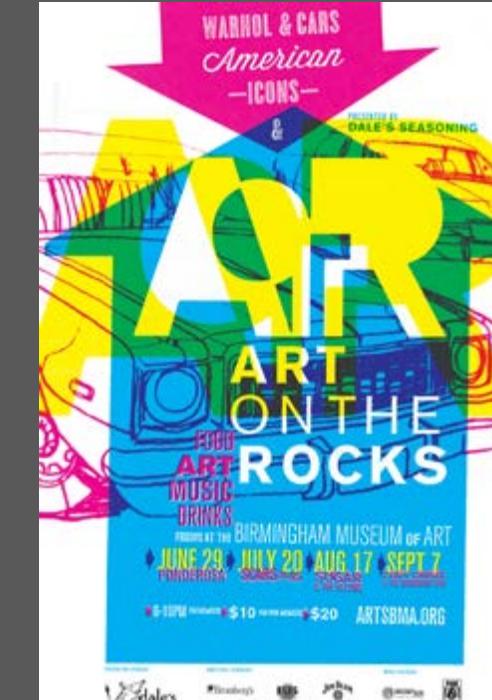
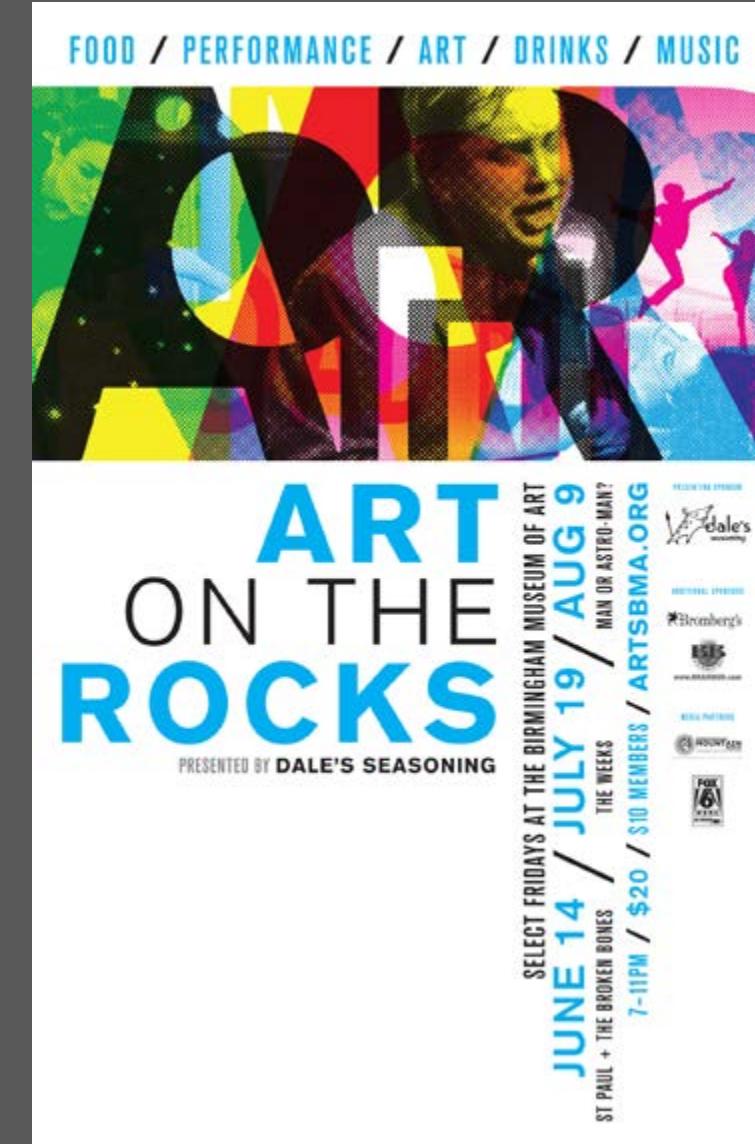
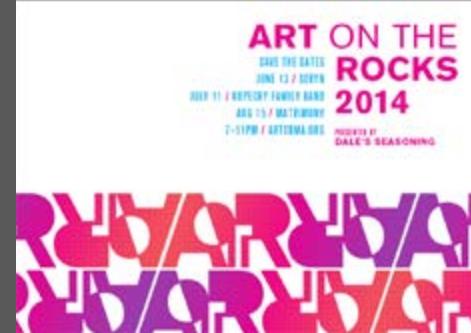


Option B



Option C

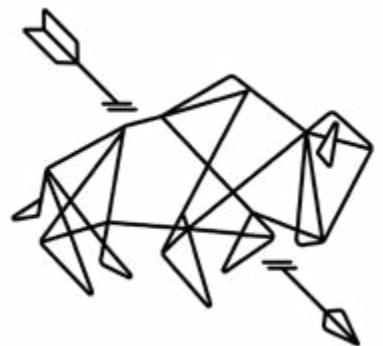
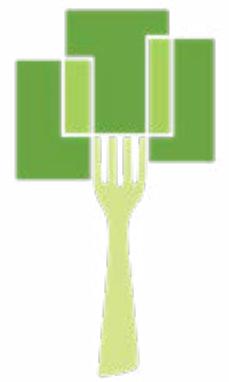




Art on the Rocks

Birmingham Museum of Art
Annual Variations







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Red Diamond Fresh Iced Coffee

Hot Tea

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Cone Not Chardonnay
Cone Not Pinot Noir

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TUESDAY-FRIDAY: LUNCH 11AM-2PM / SNACKS AND BEVERAGES 2-6PM — www.oscarsatthemuseum.com —
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COMING SOON to the BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM of ART

the art of eating local



OSCAR'S AT THE MUSEUM

Oscar's

Birmingham Museum of Art

HE SHOT THE SWEAT, THE GRIME, THE FRENZY



HE IS IAN DICKSON, ONE OF MORE THAN 100
PHOTOGRAPHERS **Who Shot Rock & Roll: A Photographic History, 1955-Present**
JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

Who Shot Rock & Roll

Birmingham Museum of Art
Marketing Campaign

HE SHOT THE SWEAT, THE GRIME, THE FRENZY

He is **IAN DICKSON**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10

HE REVEALED THE INNER WORLD OF A RELUCTANT ICON

He is **HARRY PEINSTEIN**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10



Who Shot Rock & Roll
A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT
JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011
60 BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART WWW.ROCKBMA.COM

HE IMMORTALIZED A THUG'S POET'S INK

He is **DANNY CLINCH**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10

LAST CALL Who Shot Rock & Roll
A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT
SHOW'S OVER SEPT. 18

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MAMA SAID DON'T MISS WHO SHOT ROCK & ROLL
A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT

THROUGH SEPT. 18
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HE SHOT A HOUND DOG ON THE HUNT

He is **ALFRED WERTHEIMER**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10

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YOU JUST HAD TO BE THERE THEY WERE

He is **IAN DICKINSON, DANNY CLINCH, WILLIAM "POPSIE" RANDOLPH & ALFRED WERTHEIMER**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT SUMMER 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
60 BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART WWW.ARTSBMA.ORG



HE CAUGHT A BEATLE POST-BREAKUP

He is **ALLAN TINENBAUM**, ONE OF MORE THAN 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS Who Shot Rock & Roll: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY, 1955-PRESENT JUNE 24-SEPTEMBER 18, 2011 AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART TICKETS: \$10

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WITH
Anne Feschler-Tarrach, PhD

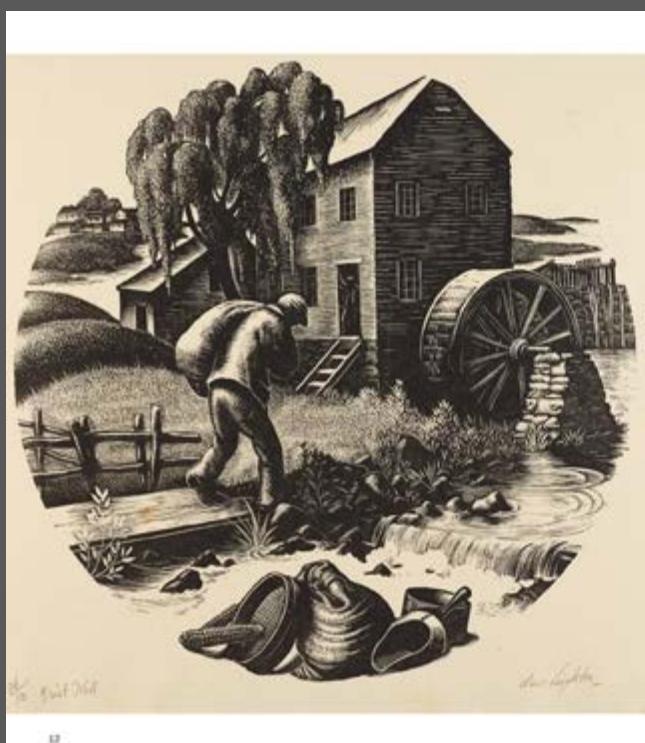
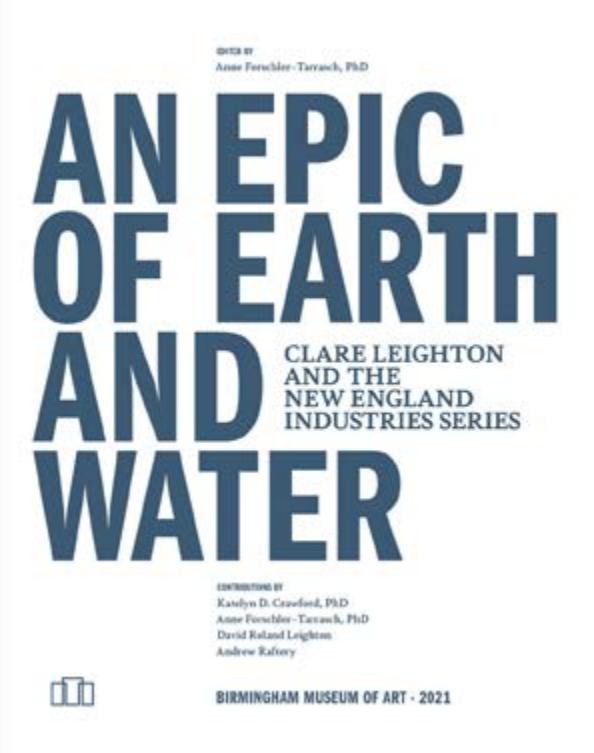
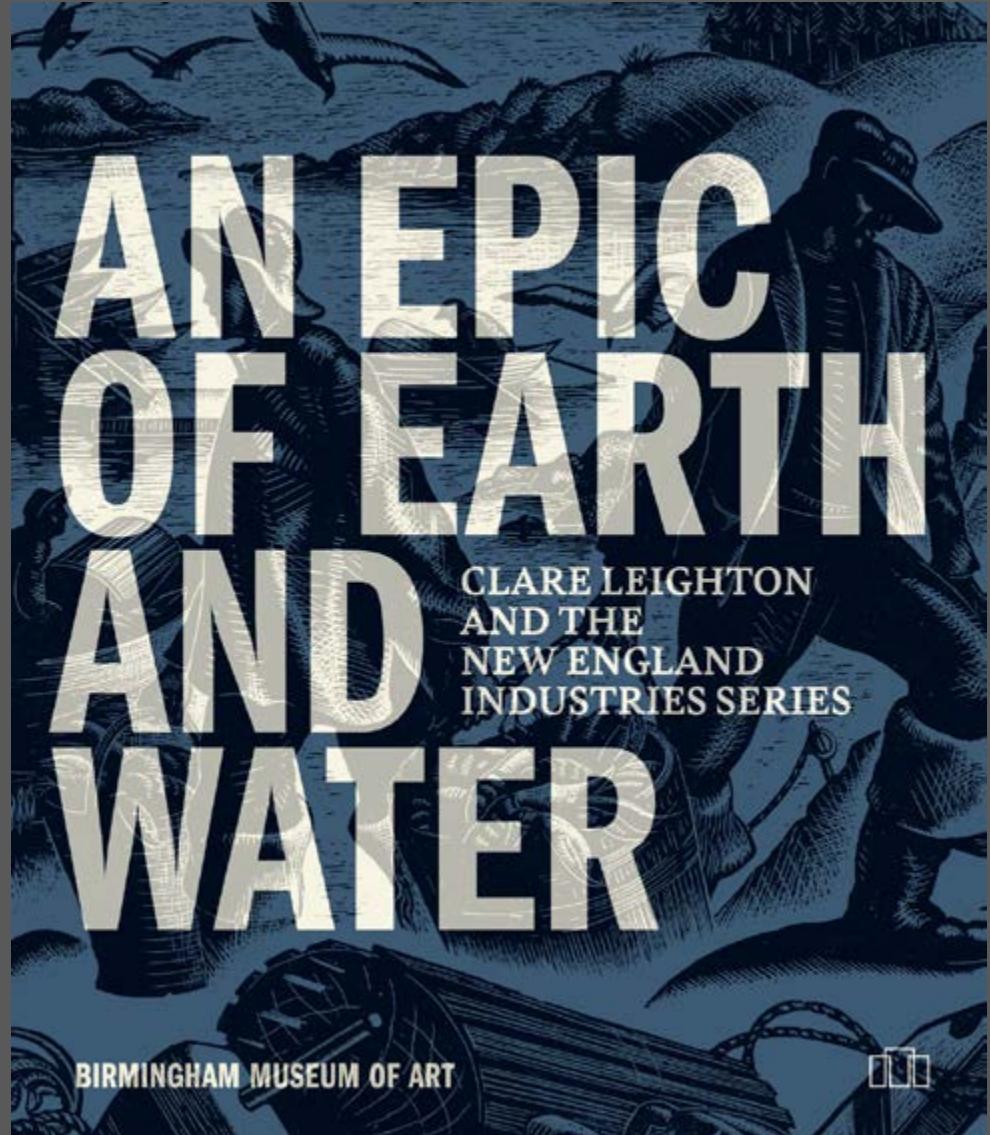
AN EPIC OF EARTH AND WATER

CLARE LEIGHTON
AND THE
NEW ENGLAND
INDUSTRIES SERIES

commissioned by
Katelyn D. Crawford, PhD
Anne Feschler-Tarrach, PhD
David Roland Leighton
Andrew Rafey

BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART · 2021





CLARE LEIGHTON, BETWEEN AMERICA AND BRITAIN

Katelyn D. Crawford, PhD

THE WILLIAM CARTY VALETT CURATOR OF AMERICAN ART
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

Clare Leighton's New England Industries series for Wedgwood is a transatlantic creation—a product of Britain and the United States—as was the career of the artist herself. In this series of wood engravings, Leighton depicts New England's historic industry in minute detail, making her subjects relatable—like the workers in the mills and factories of the textile manufacturers who produced New England's historic commodities—through thousands of fine lines cut from wood with hot irons. These wood engravings were created between 1930 and 1931, inspired by Leighton's travels across New England. Once she printed her images, they were reprinted in New York to Wedgwood's specifications and ultimately transferred via cyanotype plates at the company's factory in England in 1932. The Wedgwood plates printed with her images of New England then returned to America where they were sold to the American market. This may consider Leighton's British and American identities in the context of the New England Industries commission and how she constructed her transatlantic identity as her wood engravings and writing.

Born in London in 1895, Leighton received early encouragement for her art and writing from her family; she studied at the Brighton College of Art before attending the Slade School to study

painting and eventually learning wood engraving at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. Naturally talented and prolific in her work, Leighton quickly became a part of the British revival of interest in wood engraving in the 1920s. She became friendly with other artists, including wood engravers and book illustrators Eric Gill, who purchased her early work and advised her on securing her first exhibition.

In 1924 Leighton arrived in left-wing journalist Noel Butlin's studio for the Independent Labour Party newspaper, *The New Leader*. Around this time, her first model (which began to come) chose, showing even her earliest wood engravings, including *The Milkhouse* (fig. 3). While her style of detailed landscapes and figure abstraction was yet to codify, here the foreground workers, emphasizing their strength through the loads they carry. Her interest in working people and her desire to reach a wide audience with her work grew alongside her relationship with Butlin. Their partnership was professional as well as romantic: *The New Leader* published nine of Leighton's wood engravings! Her images illustrated articles on land distribution and agricultural reform as well as efforts being made to prevent rural England.

Butlin also convinced Leighton to travel to North America, where they both completed speaking tours. While Butlin did not make the United States, Leighton was fascinated by its industry and landscape. She traveled to New York, New England, and Canada, producing work that foreshadowed the New England Industries series created some twenty years later (as, for example, *Roue* [fig. 2]). Leighton also developed connections with her fellow American printmakers on these visits, often presenting new prints of her own designs to them. By the mid-1930s, Leighton had a central position in the Arts and Crafts scene of British wood engraving and its related derivative in the United States. Her knowledge of both British and American printmakers is documented in her instructional volume, *Wood Engraving and Block-printing* (1932).¹ The book brought together block prints by British, including Eric Gill, Agnes Miller Parker, and Gwendolyn Renshaw, with work by Americans, including Wood Gag and Roger Sanderson, and wood engravings from around the world. In 1930, Leighton immigrated to the United States.²

When Leighton arrived in the United States in 1930, the medium of printmaking was flourishing in the country. Local and regional print clubs promoted the creation and display of prints, and work in this affordable medium grew during the 1930s as the country felt the effects of the Great Depression. The possibility of printing woodcuts by hand (as Leighton did) made the medium accessible to a broad group of artists, including those with few financial resources or little formal training. Her interest in the medium of wood engraving and her labor as an artist came together in her writing. In discussing the appeal of woodcuts and wood engraving, she writes:

To start with, there is the innumerable but unavoidable consciousness of economic conditions and demands. A widening of the circle of good taste through the spread of education has brought about a desire for original works of art. But this bigger public is art steadily. Fortunately, the borrowed block, unlike the copper plate, will yield an almost infinite number of perfect prints. A large edition of a wood engraving at a low price is therefore the ideal thing to satisfy the modern public in the modern home.³

Leighton's attraction to book illustration created another domestic path for distributing her work. She was deliberate in this effort, avoiding publishing with private presses. Her personal perspective on her life as an artist and her interest in working in an affordable, accessible medium are inextricable from her personal politics and her enabling representations of human labor. While some of her contemporaries critics and some twenty-first century viewers might see nostalgia for a simpler past in Leighton's work, her populist agenda must also be acknowledged.



Upon settling in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to accept a position at Duke University as an art lecturer, Leighton began work on *Southern Horizons* (1942). In that volume, which Leighton wrote and illustrated with her wood engravings, she deliberately studied the industries and regions of the American South to ground herself in her new country and "to push my roots into their new earth of this American continent," as she put it.⁴ Instead of subsuming her Britishness in her newfound American home, Leighton sought commonalities between Britons and Americans. Southern Horizons also brought together her training in Britain with contemporary American art. In 1920, a friend noted that:

A fellow artist says he trembled at the impetuosity of abstraction. Miss Leighton does not seem to suggest that. But she is reluctant to abandon what feels meaningful and inspiring, the sort of a systole, the contour of a heart, the curve of a wagon, the violence of the human form engaged in tasks of labor.⁵

By creating wood prints on the American South in a representational style, Leighton aligned herself with both American modernism and the work of American regionalist artists.⁶ As her introduction to *Southern Horizons*, she asserts, "I found myself friendly towards and accepted by the people who worked the American west." How she uses "American west" to describe her subjects, but the term was also more broadly used to describe the representational American modernists who sought to paint images of the country in the region.⁷ Both Leighton and the visual artists of the American Scene movement, like Robert Gwathmey, captured the harsh realities

ing Reception

FRANK FLEMING
Between Fantasy &
FRI DAY . FEB

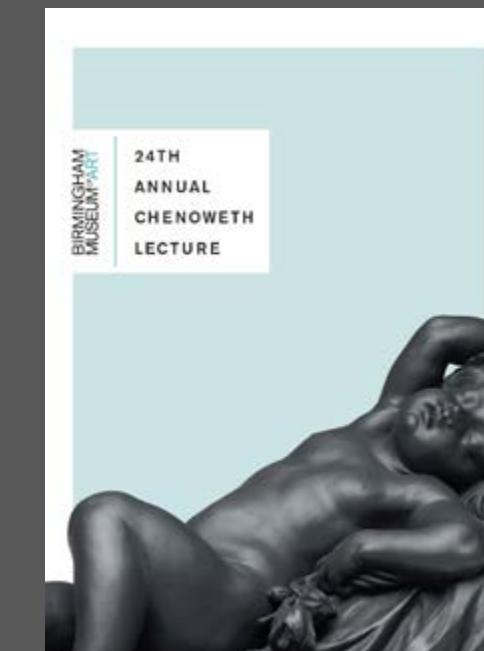
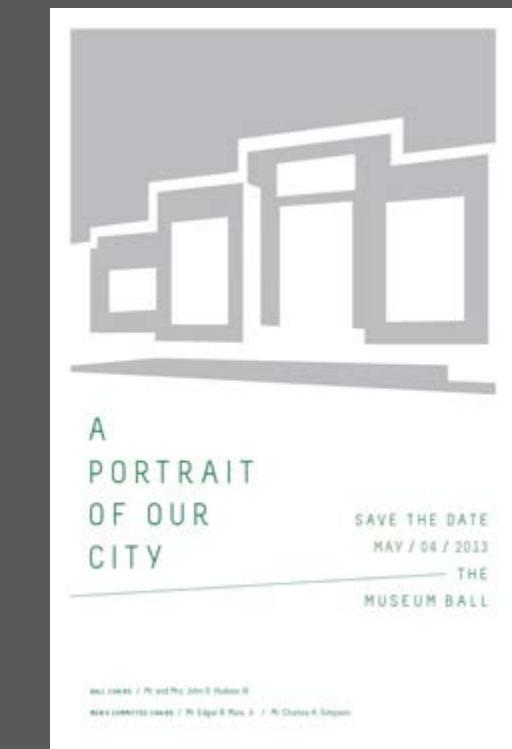
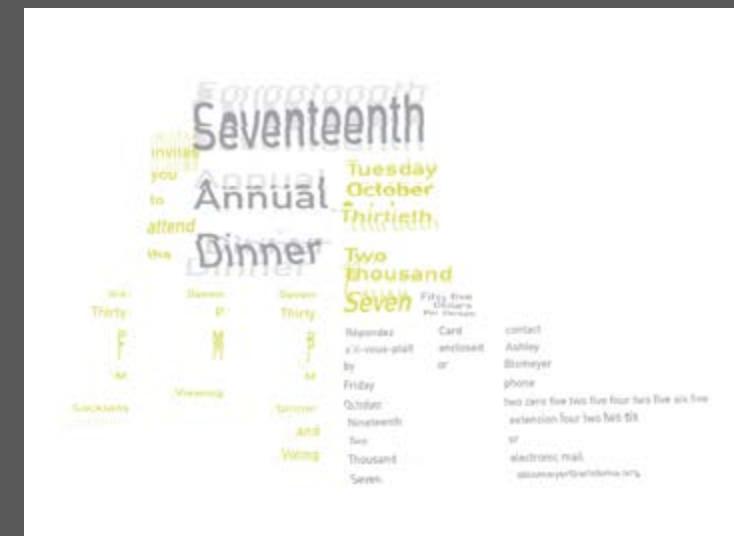
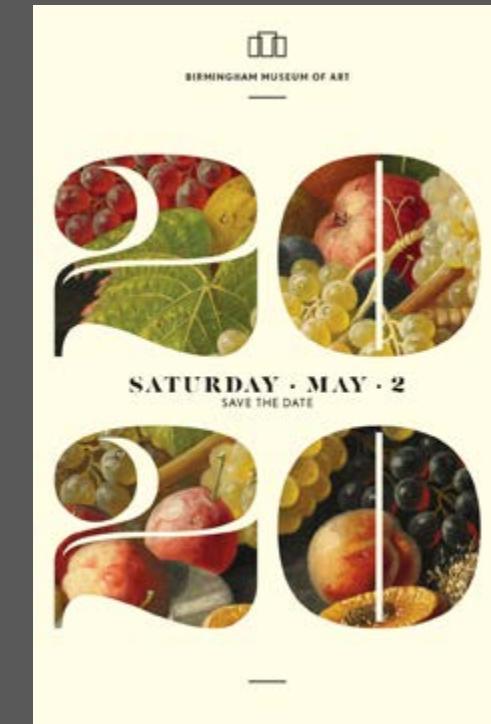
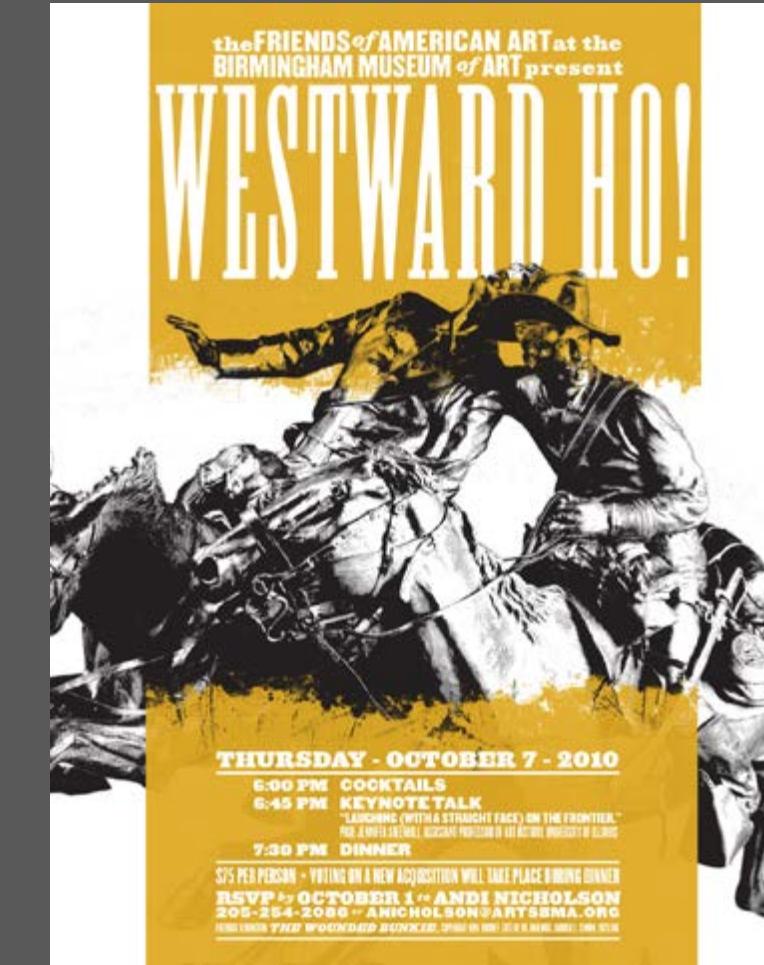
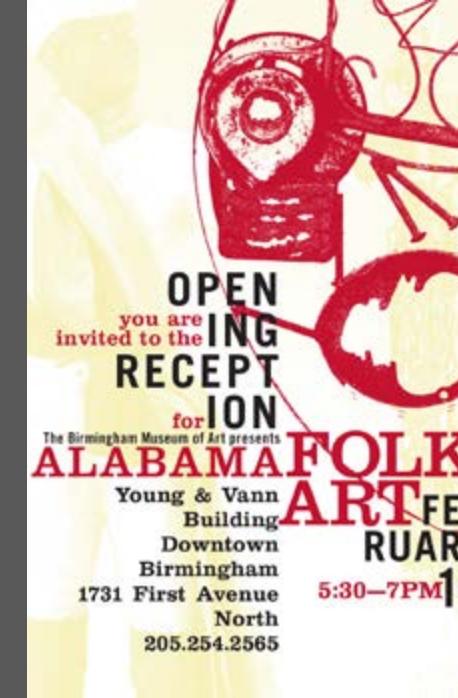
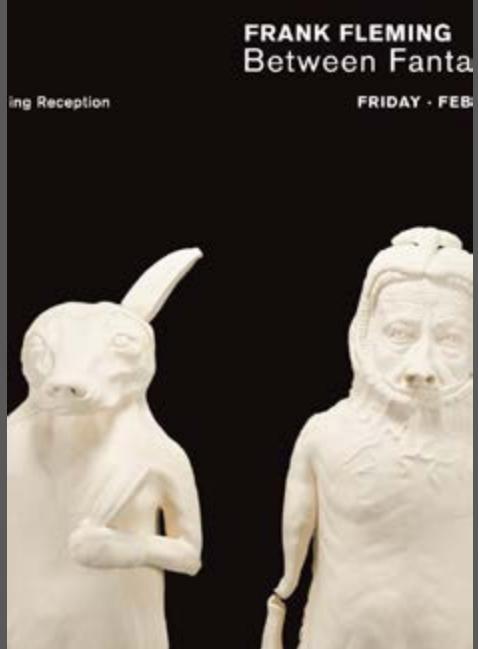


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AUGUST 7 // 7PM
HARAKIRI
[1962]

AUGUST 8 // 6:30PM
47 RONIN
[2013]

AUGUST 9 // 10:30AM
FROM UP ON
POPPY HILL
[1960]

AUGUST 9 // 1:45PM
TALES OF THE
TAIRA CLAN
[1960]

AUGUST 10 // 1PM
SEVEN SAMURAI
[1954]

Posters

Various

