



MARSHALL M. FREDERICKS
SCULPTURE MUSEUM
SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
7400 Bay Road, University Center, MI 48710

Motor City Icon: The Spirit of Detroit

Motor City Icon: The Spirit of Detroit

October 5, 2018 - January 19, 2019

This catalog and the exhibition are dedicated to the memory of artist David Philpot.

Foreword

It's hard to imagine that Marshall Fredericks knew in 1955 when he collaborated with architects Harley, Ellington and Day, who were designing a building to house city and county offices at the corner of Woodward and Jefferson Avenue, that the "kneeling giant" he designed for the frontispiece of the building would become the most beloved and iconic public sculpture in Southeast Michigan. But shortly after the dedication ceremony on September 23, 1958, citizens began to refer to *The Spirit of Detroit* as the "jolly green giant," embracing it as an enduring symbol of hope for the city of Detroit.

That kind of legacy is worth celebrating, and so more than two years ago I started discussing with museum board members and staff meaningful ways we might celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of this renowned and well-loved sculpture. As with any commemorative fête, we decided a year-long celebration was in order.

The Spirit of Detroit 60th Anniversary Celebration was held on May 12, 2018 in Minoru Yamasaki's first skyscraper, the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company building at One Woodward Avenue, across the street from *The Spirit of Detroit*. Guests from Midland, Bay City, Saginaw, Detroit, Bloomfield Hills, Grosse Pointe, and beyond joined Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and SVSU President Donald Bachand for a celebratory evening of music, dining, and commemorative speeches. Many of Marshall Fredericks's family traveled from New York, Vermont, South Carolina, and California to be part of the celebration.

It seemed appropriate that the museum itself should play a major role in the sixtieth anniversary celebration. We began to conceptualize a multifaceted exhibition to round out the year, titled *Motor City Icon: The Spirit of Detroit*. Our objective in producing this exhibition was to illustrate the breadth of interest this particularly meaningful public sculpture has generated over six decades.

We commissioned Chicago videographer Bill Holland to create an animated film about *The Spirit of*

Detroit, making a powerful visual connection between the sculpture on Woodward Avenue and the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum at Saginaw Valley State University, where the artist's legacy is preserved. Visit marshallfredericks.org/ learn and click on videos in the dropdown menu to see Holland's innovative animation.

Museum Archivist Melissa Ford created a historic documentary exhibition assembled from letters, sketches, drawings, clippings, and photos in the museum's Marshall M. Fredericks Archive. The items tell a story about the 1955 sculpture commission, Fredericks's creative process, the foundry casting of the *Spirit*, and the 1958 dedication.

Collection Manager Geoffe Haney conducted a wide search for ephemera (posters, prints, letterhead, business cards) and objects (caps, shoes, shirts, mugs, coasters, cards, Detroit manhole cover, recycling bin) that bear the *Spirit's* image. Detroit's major league sports teams saw *The Spirit of Detroit* as a winning spirit, which explains the jerseys on the sculpture when national championships were won, including a Detroit Tigers jersey that is in the exhibition.

When I consider what the spirit of Detroit means to me, my mind goes to the many artists I have developed friendships with over the forty years I've lived in the city of Detroit. The creative genius and enduring spirit of these artists has been a catalyst for so much that is positive in this historic and gritty city.

To make the *Motor City Icon: The Spirit of Detroit* exhibition relevant to Detroit in 2018, I invited Kresge Visual Arts Fellows to submit a current work of art to the exhibition that speaks to what the spirit of Detroit means to them. The eighteen artists whose works are included in this exhibition chose varying ways to relate what that "spirit" means to them, and each piece is unique and personal. I am grateful to the artists for considering the invitation to participate and for accepting the challenge. You can meet the artists through the photographs of them and their work on the following pages.

It is my wish that visitors will find the exhibition enlightening, informative, and memorable.



Michelle Perron

I was walking back from Aretha Franklin's public viewing at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, right down the street from my office at the College for Creative Studies (CCS), thinking about the "spirit of Detroit." Resilient, creative, loyal and tough, Aretha embodied the spirit of our city in song and attitude, just as Marshall Fredericks's sculpture, *The Spirit of Detroit* does – it's our

touchstone, our witness, our mascot, the creative embodiment of spirit and humanity.

4

While this exhibition is meant to mark the sixtieth anniversary of Fredericks's legendary sculpture, the exhibition is really about spirit – the life force of something or someone, or in this case, a city – the spirit of Detroit. Marshall Fredericks captured it in his sculpture. Aretha Franklin seized it in her voice and music. And the artists in this exhibition have portrayed it in their revealing and celebratory works.

The artists included in this exhibition have two things in common: they are all agents of the soul of our city and they all have been singled out for their excellent work and commitment to their communities by the Kresge Arts in Detroit program, each having been awarded a Kresge Artist Fellowship in the visual arts.

Founded in 2008, Kresge Arts in Detroit, funded by the Troy-based Kresge Foundation and administered by the College for Creative Studies, was established as one of the foundation's enduring efforts to strengthen the economic, social, and

cultural fabric of Detroit. Kresge Arts in Detroit was designed not only to elevate the profile and bolster the careers of artists living and working in metropolitan Detroit but also to enrich the quality of life for Detroiters, because Kresge knew that communities are enlivened by the arts and artists are the key to that enlivening.

Kresge Arts in Detroit believes that when artists work in partnership with the community, people are more creatively empowered, and their communities are more vibrant, resourceful, and robust. But this hasn't always been the case. For a long time, our community was bereft of most public, and much private, funding and support. The State of Michigan and its cultural council used to provide modest grants directly to artists, but after the economic downturn of 1991, that financial support disappeared. Local cultural organizations, but only the largest and most prominent, have typically received generous funding from those bodies, while individual artists and grassroots organizations – the very life blood of this arts community for decades – usually didn't qualify for government, corporate, or foundation funding.

As a result, the Detroit art community has historically possessed a DIY sensibility; the art scene has thrived on its own energy, with its own internal support, and by its own sheer will. Detroit artists have taken it upon themselves to create their own exhibition venues and opportunities; they've supported each other and damned the torpedoes; oftentimes working in obscurity. Detroit has had this vital arts scene for a long time – hyper-creative, functional, and tough – whether its residents, government or the rest of the country knew it or not. When the Kresge Foundation came to CCS in 2008 and asked CCS to develop a program to give metro Detroit artists \$25,000 fellowships, *no strings attached*, because they knew artists would be essential to re-imagining Detroit, we were surprised and amazed, and totally up for the challenge. What has happened in Detroit since then – the downward spiral of bankruptcy then the meteoric rise of

renewal – has happened because Detroit’s spirit is unyielding. Always has been; always will be.

In ten short years, the Kresge Arts in Detroit program has distributed over \$5 million to over two hundred artists – an astonishing investment by the Kresge Foundation that has helped fuel Detroit’s creative economy and cultural core. We have seen how equipping artists with vital resources empowers culturally minded thinking, and helps position our metropolitan area as a major center for the arts. The fellowships have provided the art community with a sense of validation and in doing so have helped fuel a new awareness of the power and usefulness of the arts. It is that sense of purpose that makes Kresge Arts in Detroit a purveyor of the spirit of the city, so it’s apt that Marilyn Wheaton and her colleagues at the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum chose a selection of Kresge Fellows to honor *The Spirit of Detroit*. It’s the artists who make our city great. That’s the spirit of Detroit right there.

Michelle Perron

Michelle Perron is Founding Director of Kresge Arts in Detroit and Director of the Office of Exhibitions & Public Programs at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

Lynne Avadenka



Avadenka has been active in the Detroit arts community since receiving her M.F.A. from Wayne State University in 1981. In 2013 she was named director of Signal-Return, a Detroit nonprofit letterpress print shop and community arts center.

Avadenka received a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2009 and has received individual artist grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Residencies and teaching opportunities have taken her to Germany, Israel, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Virginia.

This fall she will be working collaboratively on a climate change project in Venice and will be a visiting artist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Her work is exhibited and collected internationally, including in the British Library, London; the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Jewish Museum, New York; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; New York Public Library; Museum Meermanno, The Hague, Netherlands; and the Thomas J. Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

6 Photograph by Sarah Nesbitt

Lynne Avadenka is an artist/printmaker. She established Land Marks Press in 1979 and purchased her Vandercook Sp-15 printing press shortly after that and uses it to create limited edition books and prints as well as experimental works on paper.

Ribbons, 2017

Drawing

10" x 24" with frame



Photograph by R. H. Hensleigh

Corrie Baldauf

Corrie Baldauf's art practice is based out of a shared studio space in the Corktown neighborhood of Detroit. She has participated in a series of artist residencies and art festivals using interaction with people as a way of bringing her art alive, both in Detroit and internationally. She has worked closely with the Kresge Foundation, Midtown Detroit Inc., and the Urban Culture Project (Kansas City, Missouri). Using the platforms provided by these institutions, Baldauf has offered new views of familiar places through her art and conversation.

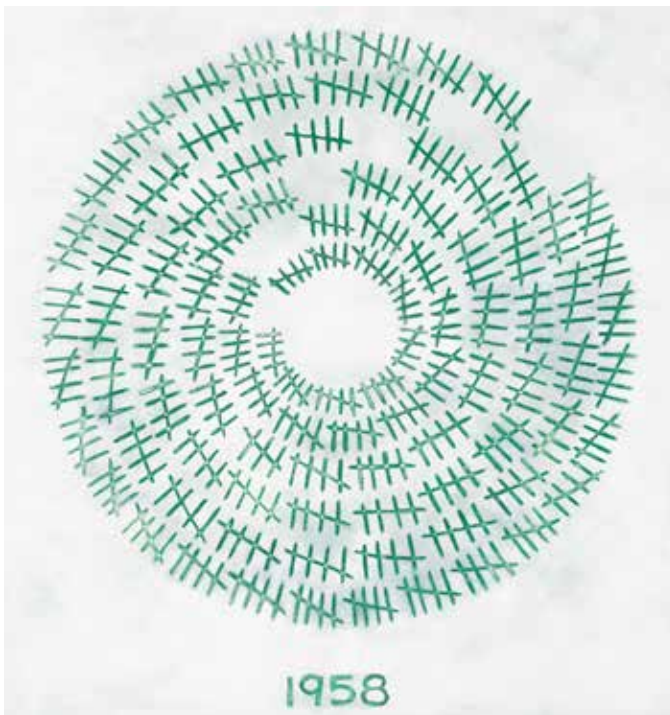
She was an international resident artist at Griffin Gallery in west London, where she designed *Gold Zero* and *Day in the Life at Head Office* – two interactive projects displayed at the head office of Colart United and at Innovation and Development Laboratory, both in London, in partnership with



Photograph by Charlie Bennet

Griffin Gallery, Liquitex, and the website White Noise in White City, London (2016). She subsequently brought the *Day in the Life* project to Colart United's distribution warehouse and offices in 2017 (also in London).

Baldauf has shown her *Optimism Filter Project* in Detroit at Art X in 2013 and in Lille, France at Lille 3000 in 2014. Her interactive work has been exhibited at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Songjiang Museum in Shanghai, China, and the Palazzo Barolo in Turin, Italy. Her art has appeared in *art - Das Kunstmagazin*, *FUKT Magazine for Contemporary Drawing*, *Hyperallergic*, *LUFTHANSA EXCLUSIVE*, and *HOHE Luft*.



Photograph by Tim Thayer

I Hear the Spirit of Detroit Better than I Can See It, 2018
Ink and paint on wood panel
30" x 30" x 2"

Jeanne Bieri

Jeanne Bieri grew up on a farm in Hastings, Michigan, taught in a two-room schoolhouse in Hopkins, Michigan, got married, and moved to Detroit in 1972. In the 1980s, she discovered art making, began to translate the visual world into her terms, and earned an M.F.A. from Wayne State University. Bieri uses sewing as a way of moving ideas and images, a type of visual problem solving that keeps the artistic process flexible.

“Four years ago, I stood before a Muslim clerical garment at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. I had been using WWII army blankets and army suture cotton for over twenty years. My practice is hand stitched and meditative. I love to mend the worn blankets. My art-practice begins with the simple act of hand stitching, a simple act to fix the fabric frayed by use. Assembled piece by piece, the work grows. Hand work adds to the contemplation of the art-making process and the careful organization of the parts.”

8



Photograph by Tim Thayer

The Cape, 2015

Fiber with army blanket, felt, silk and
army suture cotton
84" x 60" variable



Photograph by Right Brothers

Bieri believes that “art is about relationships and a sort of curiousness that taps into the nature of the materials used, it is about collecting and asking why, a wondering about the past, the current and future, an excavation of memory and forgetting, permanence and loss, the expression of vaporous ideas realized through the act of making an image permanent in paint or mending it to make it whole.”

She was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2017 and had a solo exhibition at Detroit’s Scarab Club May 23–July 7, 2018.

Susan Goethel Campbell

Susan Goethel Campbell creates multidisciplinary work that considers the engineered environment as a natural process. Her work is realized in installations, video, prints, photographs, drawings, and projects that engage communities to look at local and global environments.

Campbell's work has been exhibited internationally in Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Slovenia and nationally throughout the U.S., including the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Queens Art Museum, New York; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan; the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Drawing Center, and the International Print Center, New York.

Her work is in the collection of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, New York Public Library, Yale University Art Gallery, Minneapolis



Photograph by Tim Thayer

Institute of Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Toledo Museum of Art, and the University of Michigan Special Collections Library, Ann Arbor. Campbell has been the recipient of several fellowships and awards, including a Kresge Artist Fellowship, residencies at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Alberta, Canada; the Flemish Center for Graphic Arts; the Jentel Foundation, Banner, Wyoming; and the Print Research Institute of North Texas, Denton; as well as the Beisinghoff Printmaking Residency, Diemelstadt-Rhoden, Germany.

Campbell has taught and been a visiting artist in numerous institutions. She was the interim head of the Print Media Department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, from 2016 to 2018 and taught studio art at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit for fifteen years.



Photograph by Tim Thayer

Aerial: Landscape #6, 2017
Woodblock print with perforations
31" x 46"

Annica Cuppetelli and Cristobal Mendoza



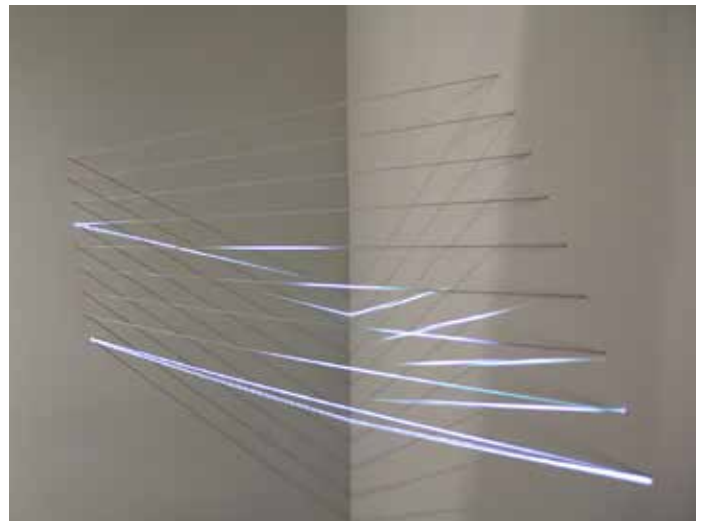
Photograph courtesy of the artists

Cuppetelli and Mendoza's work has been reviewed in *Sculpture* magazine, *Art in Print*, *Art Nexus*, and featured or mentioned in *@FastCo.Design*, *CNET News*, *The Creators Project* – VICE, and *The New York Times*. They were selected as Kresge Foundation Visual Arts Fellows in 2015. Cuppetelli received an M.F.A. in fiber from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Mendoza received an M.F.A. in digital + media from the Rhode Island School of Design.

Annica Cuppetelli and Cristobal Mendoza

began collaborating as Cuppetelli and Mendoza in 2010. They create installations and objects that combine physical elements with digital technologies, composing sensual, immersive, and dynamic experiences.

While they are based in Detroit, their work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, with solo shows at the Denver Art Museum; Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan; Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, California; Logistics Fine Arts, Miami; Red Bull House of Art, Detroit; and Grizzly Grizzly, Philadelphia. Their work also has been exhibited in such festivals as the International Symposium on Electronic Art, Durban, South Africa; Electronic Language International Festival, Sao Paulo; Video Tour, DUMBO, Brooklyn, New York; Festival Nemo, Paris; Scopitone, Nantes, France; Lichttrouten, Ludenscheid, Germany; and Dubai Design Week, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, among others.



Photograph courtesy of the artists

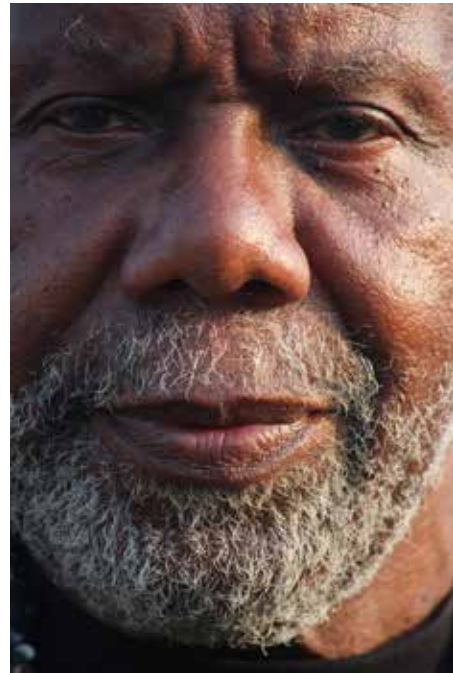
L-Harmonics, 2014 to present

Mixed media installation: Elastic cord, video projector, computer, custom software
Variable dimensions

Olayami Dabls

Olayami Dabls has produced over five thousand works of art and has exhibited his paintings in the Detroit area since 1974. Dabls received his high school diploma from the Detroit Public School system in 1973, an Associate degree from Highland Park Community College in 1976 and studied mechanical engineering at Wayne State University. Dabls worked for General Motors Chevrolet Division as a draftsman from 1973 to 1983.

In addition to this work as an artist, Dabls has lectured extensively on African art and produced and hosted a radio program on WNEC-4 from 1978 to 1981. He served as curator/artist-in-residence at



Photograph courtesy of Queen Cooper VMMGLLC. ©2017



Photograph by Olayami Dabls

The Spirit of the Snake, 2018
Acrylic and leather
79" x 83"

the Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History from 1975 to 1984. He is a founding member and curator of the African-American Sports Hall of Fame Museum, which is currently housed in the Wayne County Building in downtown Detroit. Dabls was a drafting instructor at Wayne County Community College from 1982 to 1995 and artist-in-residence at the Detroit Psychiatric Institute from 1985 to 1989.

In 1983 Dabls opened Dabls Perettes Gallery in Detroit, which became known around the world. In 1996, he founded the African Bead Museum (MBAD) on Grand River Avenue in Detroit. Olayami Dabls has received numerous awards and has been featured in numerous Detroit newspaper articles.

Ed Fraga



Photograph by Tim Thayer

Ed Fraga's first solo exhibition was in 1983 at the Feigenson Gallery in Detroit. This seminal show consisted of constructed reliquaries made from found door frames, which encased drawings of imaginary figures based on homeless people from the streets of Detroit. Fraga often blurs the line between painting and construction as image and object merge into one. As a figurative painter, he explores the human condition/psyche, using an allegorical narrative format, with themes of loss and the cycles of birth and death informing much of his work. As he tackles subjects that are often dark and challenging, he also embraces humor, impulse, and the role discovery and accident play in art. He looks to art history, especially the medieval period, for ways of contextualizing the present with the past.

In 2011, Fraga was invited to participate in the exhibition *Art X Detroit* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. His multimedia installation *Agnus Dei* raised questions of religious ritual, the sacred, alchemy, and traditions of animal sacrifice.

His distinguished awards and fellowships include the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Fellowship (2011), Kresge Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship (2009), Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency Program (1995), and Arts Midwest National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1992). Fraga's paintings and drawings are in the permanent collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Flint Institute of Arts, the Cranbrook Art Museum, and the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. He has works in many national and international private collections.



Photograph by Tim Thayer

*You hear that boy laughing? - You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!*, 2018
Books (City of Detroit - Vol 1 - 11), wood, digital print
38" x 42" x 14"

M. Saffell Gardner

M. Saffell Gardner is a native Detroiter with an M.F.A. in painting from Wayne State University and a lifetime of experiences in the world of art. A master painter, mixed-media artist, muralist, sculptor, printmaker, performance artist, videographer, art historian, curator, lecturer and educator, he teaches at private and community colleges and has participated in arts mentoring programs across the country.

In 2000, Gardner was selected as the Chivas Regal Artist-in-Residence at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit. In 2012, he co-curated *Vision in a Cornfield* for the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. The following year Gardner was invited to participate



Photograph by Karlest Ford

in the Venice Biennale. In 2014 he competed in ArtPrize in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was invited to have a survey (retrospective) exhibit at 9338 Campau gallery, Detroit. Gardner was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2015.

His commissions range from a painted receptacle for Detroit's *Pretty City* project to a collage series for Detroit Public Schools and Cobo Center in Detroit. The commissioned painting *Door of No Return* resides in the Wright Museum's permanent collection. Gardner's work is in the permanent collections of Henry Ford Hospital, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Detroit Medical Center, Total Health Care, Renaissance High School, Southeastern High School, the Detroit School of the Arts, and the Federal Reserve of Chicago.

Gardner's work has been exhibited throughout the United States and in Jamaica, Brazil, and Ghana.



Sankofa, 2017
Steel
24 3/4" x 15 3/4" x 9 1/4"

Photograph by Karlest Ford

Bruce Giffin



and if anything, it has motivated me to beat my head a little harder. I will always want to be better tomorrow than I am today ... I have made a living for the past thirty years as a freelance photographer and when I'm done with that, I go into the city and attempt to feed my heart for no pay by shooting pictures. This is a pretty good definition for happiness. I am the luckiest man alive," says Giffin.

In 2011, Giffin was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship; in 2013 the Scarab Club's Gold Medal Award; and in 2016 the Scarab Club's Gilda Snowden Silver Medal Award. His photographs were part of the 2018 Biennial All Media Exhibition at the Detroit Artists Market.

— Photograph by Trina Orloff

14

Bruce Giffin's thirty years as a freelance photographer were mostly with nonprofit organizations. He spent twenty years as a photographic mentor with Focus Hope's "Focus on the Mission" community arts program; five years as the *Detroit Metro Times'* only staff photographer; and five years as an adjunct professor (Photo II) at Macomb Community College.

"Being painfully self-taught, after thirty years of beating my head against the wall, I realized that I'm not yet good enough. I am humbled beyond words



Photograph by Bruce Giffin

Midnight Cadillac, 2016

Photograph
33" x 44" x 2"

Oren Goldenberg

Oren Goldenberg is a producer and video artist living and working in Detroit's Cass Corridor. He uses video to explore the dismantlement of the public sector, subvert the assumed, and create catharsis. His work, which began in video and now ranges from interactive installations to celebratory processions, captures society's effect on the spaces around us as well as on the body.

Goldenberg has been creating new rituals to address spatial transformation and barriers. His projects have included *People of the Infinite Fires*, a performative installation now in the permanent collection of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African America History; *A Requiem for Douglass*, which premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2015 as part of *The Future is Changing*, his ongoing series concerning spatial change and coping rituals; *Time I Change*, an experimental video representation of a black body moving through twentieth-century Detroit; *Our School*, a feature documentary on Detroit's public schools; *Brewster Douglass, You're My Brother*, about America's first public housing project; a feature film *The Bicyclist*; and the satirical web series *Detroit (Blank) City*.

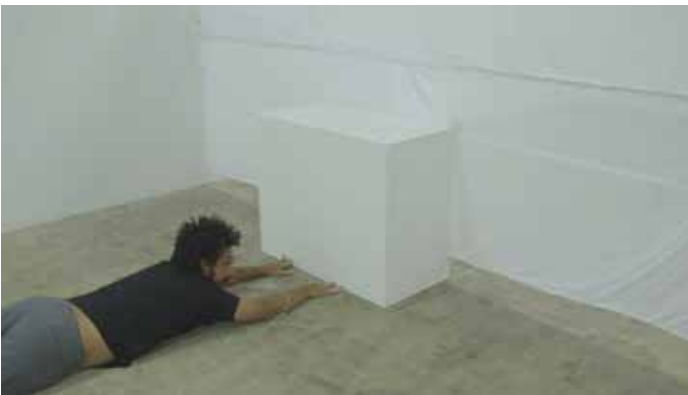
He received a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2013; was a 2009 University of Michigan Roman J.



Photograph courtesy of the artist

Witt Visiting Artist; received the Ann Arbor Film Festival's 2006 award for Best Michigan Filmmaker and Real Detroit's 2011 award for Best Detroit Filmmaker. Goldenberg is the owner of Cass Corridor Films, which produced Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* film series. He is co-owner of the underground dance music label, Sector 7G.

15



Photographs by Oren Goldenberg



Billy Mark Traverses My Art For All of Humanity, 2016
Video

Carole Harris



Photograph courtesy of the artist

Carole Harris is a fiber artist, working primarily in the medium of art quilts. Her work has extended, redefined, and subverted the boundaries of traditional quilting. Harris's recent works are inspired by the impact of time on natural and constructed environments. They celebrate and embrace the beauty in the frayed, the decaying, and the repaired. She lets fabric and color lead her on an improvisational rhythmic journey, using commercially printed as well as hand-dyed and hand-painted fabrics and paper. These materials are cut up, overlaid, burned, and hand stitched, resulting in densely layered compositions.

Harris's work has been exhibited worldwide, including in *The Sum of Many Parts: 25 Quiltmakers in 21st Century America*, an exhibition for which she was a guest lecturer while it was touring in China. In 2017, Harris's work was included in *Footworks* at the St. Etienne Biennale in France. This year she was one of two veteran artists honored with an exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Recent solo exhibitions were held at the G.R. N'Namdi Gallery, Detroit, and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Recent group exhibits include

McArthur Binion Curates in Detroit, Hill Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan; *Artists Who Stitch*, Detroit Artists Market; *Have We Met? Dialogues on Memory and Desire*, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan; and *Where Were They Then*, Oakland University Art Gallery, Rochester, Michigan. Among her many awards are a 2015 Kresge Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship. She earned a B.F.A. in 1966 from Wayne State University, Detroit.



Photograph by Eric Law

Up Until Now, 2018
Fiber
52" x 45"

Scott Hocking

Scott Hocking was born in Redford Township, Michigan, in 1975 and has lived and worked in Detroit since 1996. He creates site-specific installations, sculptures, and photography projects, often using found materials and neglected locations. Inspired by subjects ranging from ancient mythologies to current events, his artworks focus on transformation, ephemerality, chance, and the cycles of nature. He is a Pisces, born on the day of creative isolation, in the week of the loner, and the year of the cat. A psychic once told him he would have an average life and die at age eighty-eight.

Hocking is a sixth-generation Detroiters, descended from Baltic Polish immigrants and a long line of Cornish copper miners who settled in



Photograph by Scott Hocking



Photograph by R. H. Hensleigh

Earth I, 2018
Cast bronze
13" diameter

Michigan's Upper Peninsula. His artwork has been exhibited internationally, including at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Kunsthalle Vienna; the French Lille 3000 Triennial exhibition "Renaissance"; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago; the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh; the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, Michigan; and the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities, Ann Arbor.

He has received numerous awards, including a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship, Knight Foundation Arts Challenge Grant, and Efroymson Contemporary Arts Fellowship, as well as residential grants in France, Iceland, Australia, Canada, Brazil, and several U.S. cities.

Sydney G. James



Photograph by Lamar Landers

Detroit-bred illustrative fine artist **Sydney G. James** began her career as an ad agency art director in corporate America after earning her B.F.A. with an illustration concentration from the College for Creative Studies, Detroit, in 2001.

18 James left Detroit in 2004 and relocated to Los Angeles, where she expanded her career as a visual artist in the film and television industry, earned a master's degree in secondary art education, and evolved from a commercial into a fine artist. She returned to Detroit in 2011 and has become one of the leading creative change agents in the city while participating in community art projects.

James manages her brand G.R.in.D (Girls Raised In Detroit) and includes her message in her work, particularly her murals, "because this is how I am feeling right now and it's reflected in and my recent work titled *Appropriated Not Appreciated The State of Black Women In America*."

James has completed murals in Detroit (including the *Murals in the Market* project at Eastern Market), Atlanta, Los Angeles, Honolulu, and Ghana. She has exhibited in galleries and museums around the

country. She was awarded a Red Bull House of Art Residency as well as a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship. She takes on every project with the intention of evoking emotion in her viewers and hopefully causing positive change.



Photograph by Sydney G. James

I Am Dātwa, 2018
Multimedia on raw canvas
70" x 35"

Chido Johnson



Photograph by Corine Vermeulen

hahahoho, 2012
Plastic cast and video
30" x 25" x 25"

Chido Johnson is a Detroit artist, a 2009 Kresge Visual Arts Fellow, and a MacDowell Colony Fellow. Johnson was born and raised in Zimbabwe and Zambia, moving to the United States as an adult. He earned both his B.F.A. degrees (in sculpture and painting, with a minor in drawing), at the University of Georgia, Athens. Johnson received his M.F.A. in sculpture from the University of Notre Dame in 2000.

Johnson has worked, exhibited, and taught both



Photograph by Hans Thomalla

nationally and internationally. Some of his affiliations include the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art; Sullivan Galleries at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Printed Matter, Inc., New York; Umea University, Umea, Sweden; University of Georgia Cortona Study Abroad Program, Cortona, Italy; Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe; and the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare.

His work has been reviewed in *Art Papers* magazine, *Sculpture* magazine, and included in other notable publications and catalogues. He is the cofounder of the Zimbabwe Cultural Centre of Detroit and Wire-car Auto Workers Association of Detroit. Both projects were recipients of John S. and James L. Knight Foundation grants. Currently Johnson is a full-time associate professor and the section chair of sculpture at the College for Creative Studies, Detroit.

Nicole Macdonald



Photograph by Roy Feldman

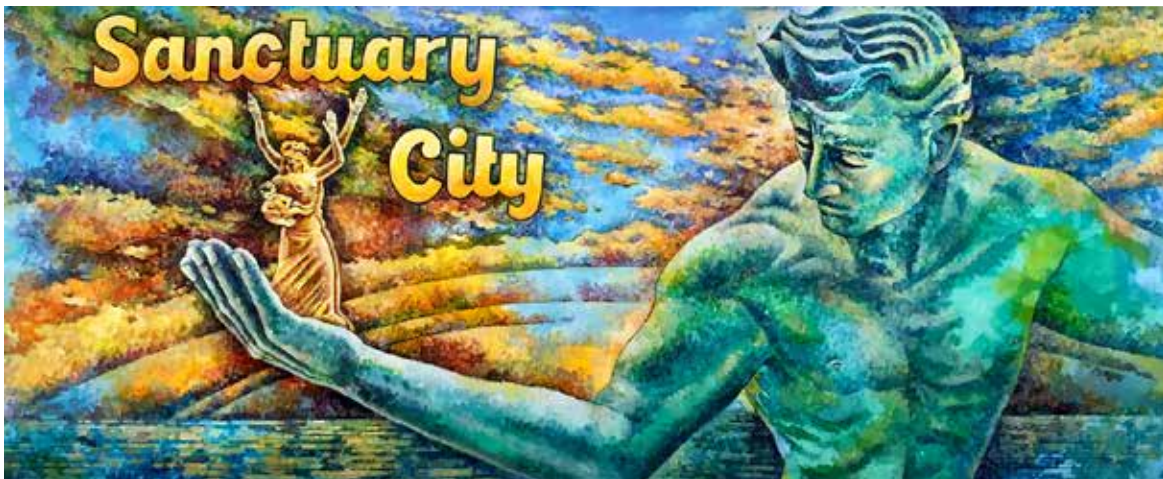
Nicole Macdonald is an artist who paints and collages her Detroit environment in miniatures and maximums, portraits and landscapes, with brush and camera. Her documentaries on the Detroit environment and city history have won Best Michigan Filmmaker award at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Best Documentary at Humboldt Film Festival, and the John Michaels Filmmaker Award for Social Activism and Community Empowerment at the Big Muddy Film Festival, and have been

screened at Media City International and Full Frame film festivals.

Macdonald's paintings and collages have been exhibited in local and national shows, including the Casco Gallery in Utrecht, The Netherlands, and the Detroit Institute of Arts. She serves on the boards of various nonprofits and galleries in the city of Detroit, including City Sculpture (founder), Southwest Artist Latino Network (founder), Detroit Artists Market, and Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit.

Macdonald's roughly ten-foot-high portraits of historical Detroiters have been erected throughout the city starting in 2014 as part of the Detroit Portrait Series. Her work was published in *Canvas Detroit*, 2015, and *Essay'd*, vol. 1, 2016 by Wayne State University Press. In 2017, she was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship. The new Living Musical Legends portrait series featuring ten music genres will be installed in late 2018 on the oldest Albert Kahn-designed bank building in the country, at the corner of Milwaukee and Woodward Avenue in Detroit.

Sanctuary City (Mock of Billboard), 2018
Archival print, Moab rag paper mounted to Dibond
14" x 25" x 2"



Photograph by Nicole Macdonald

David Philpot



Photograph by Jeff Cancelosi

David Philpot, 1940–2018, was born and raised in Chicago. He was a staff maker, wood carver, mosaicist, and assemblage artist. The primary medium for his staffs is *Ailanthus altissima*, also known as the Tree of Heaven, Chinese sumac, or “alley tree.” He adorned trees, PVC pipes, bedposts, and other media with new and up-cycled faux jewels, crystals, timepieces, shells, and found objects.

Philpot is recognized as a seminal folk and outsider artist of the late twentieth century. In Chicago, his life-sized, bejeweled *Cow* was declared “Cream of the Crop” and acquired at auction by media mogul Oprah Winfrey in 1999. The first inclusion of his work in a museum show was as part of the seminal exhibit *Ancestral Legacies*, at the Dallas Museum of Art in 1989, which toured the United States. His staffs are in several permanent collections, including the Du Sable Museum, the Harold Washington Library, AT&T Headquarters, the Illinois State Museum, and the Anacostia Community Museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

Philpot led workshops, served as an artist-in-residence in the U.S., Europe, and Africa, and

loaned works to the U.S. State Department’s Art in Embassies Program, which exhibited in several countries. In 2012, five years after the passing of his wife of forty-five years, Jean, he moved to Detroit, where he married writer Marsha Music. In 2015, three of his staffs were acquired for permanent installation in the U.S. Embassy in Swaziland, South Africa, and he was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2017. He passed away in June 2018 at age seventy-seven.



Detail of staff

Watchful, 2016
Wood, watches, paint, acrylic
48" x 2 1/4" x 2 1/4"

Photographs by Tim Inman

Senghor Reid

Senghor Reid explores the interactions between the human body and the environment, creating visual representations of dreams, memories, and traces of human contact with nature. He creates figurative paintings and films that explore the connections between culture, art, the social sciences, and the conservation of our natural environment.

Reid earned a B.F.A. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, a Masters in Art Education degree from Wayne State University, Detroit, and



Photograph by Ralph Jones

attended the internationally recognized Marathon Program at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. He is currently an artist-in-residence at the Cranbrook Schools, Bloomfield Hills, and is a National Board Certified Visual Arts Educator.

He has received many awards, including the Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship and the prestigious ArtServe Michigan Governor's Award for Emerging Artists in Michigan in 2001. Reid's work has been exhibited in the U.S. and abroad in galleries and museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, New York; St. Catharines Museum in St. Catharines, Ontario; and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. His work is in many private, public, and corporate art collections.



Photograph by Senghor Reid

Le Cercle Rouge III, 2018
Oil on board
42" x 30"

Robert Sestok



Photograph by Robert Sestok

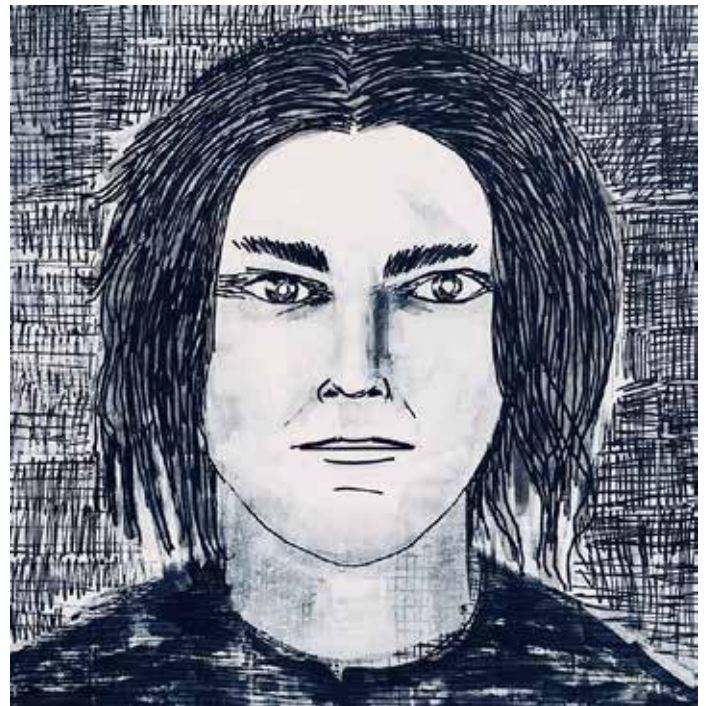
Robert Sestok is a painter and sculptor living and working in Detroit, where he was born in 1947. His work has been exhibited at the Cranbrook Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Marlborough Gallery, New York City, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and Wayne State University, Detroit, where his work is in the permanent collection. Sestok has been the recipient of grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sestok uses positive cuts for his figures and negative cuts to express architecture. He likes welding metal because “it takes me physically and spatially into the metaphor, making different objects connect. There’s a specific kind of permanency that

comes with the way welded steel withstands the elements, giving extended life to the work.”

A mentor to young artists, in 2014 Sestok established an outdoor gallery, City Sculpture Park, which is located in Midtown on Willis Street in Detroit’s Cass Corridor. It is free and open to the public. He has a passion for community involvement and enrichment, working closely with the surrounding neighborhoods.

He was awarded a Kresge Visual Arts Fellowship in 2017. Sestok currently has a large sculpture installed at the Michigan Legacy Art Park at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, Michigan. Currently he is welding a fourteen-foot tall sculpture that will be installed in front of Shed 5 as part of *Murals in the Market* in Detroit’s Eastern Market. Both installations will be on display for the next two years.



Photograph by Robert Sestok

Third Man, 2018
Oil on canvas
72" x 72"

Acknowledgments

Many generous supporters made the *Motor City Icon: The Spirit of Detroit* exhibition possible. I am particularly grateful to the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs who provided generous grant support. The Samuel L. Westerman Foundation provided grant support for five artist honorariums. Ed and Sylvia Hagenlocker's family contributed an artist honorarium in honor of their parents's sixtieth wedding anniversary.

We are appreciative of the many *Spirit of Detroit* enthusiasts who donated or loaned more than fifty objects and pieces of ephemera to the exhibition, and of Detroit artist Vito Valdez for painting a mural for inclusion in the exhibition.

I am indebted to Michelle Perron for advising me on the Kresge Arts in Detroit program and reviewing with me the visual artists who have been recipients of Kresge fellowships. Cindy Newman Edwards always brings her editing expertise to the museum's exhibition catalogues, for which I am grateful. I wish to thank Andrea Ondish for her commitment and skill in designing this catalogue and working with me to get every aspect of it right.

Marilyn L. Wheaton,
Museum Director

