

SECCA in Winston-Salem, NC

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ers his sitters, and by association the Black American community, to reject limited two-dimensional depictions of themselves for ones in which they are interlocutors with their past and present struggles, while being in dialogue with the American Dream on their terms.

“My goal with my work in this exhibition is to make black folks feel comfortable when visiting art spaces by seeing themselves or people they know in the portraits that I paint,” said Shell. “By doing this, I’m hoping to encourage the next black creative to see themselves as an agent of change and fight by using their talent to create safe spaces for their communities.”

Shell is a mixed-media collage painter born in Monroe, LA, where he lives and works. His work is geared toward the black experience, giving agency to people from this community through powerful images deconstructing, sampling, and remixing identity, civil rights, and contemporary black culture.

Shell received a BFA from Memphis College of Art in Tennessee, 2000 and an MFA from University of Mississippi, 2008. As of 2020, Shell is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Louisiana Tech University. To date, Shell has accumulated an impressive list of achievements. He was an artist-in residence at Crosstown Arts, Hermitage Artist Retreat, BemisCenter for the Contemporary Arts, Mass MoCA, Joan Mitchell Center, Skowhegan School of Art, Tougaloo Art Colony, and Masur Museum of Art. Exhibitors of his work include The McKenna Museum of African American Art, New Orleans, LA, Gallery Aferro, Newark, NJ, New Orleans Museum of Art, University of Louisiana at Monroe, LA, Philander Smith College, Little Rock, AR, Cue Art Foundation, NYC, Stephen F. Austin University, Nacogdoches, TX, University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, Tennessee Art Commission Gallery, Nashville, TN, Miami University, Oxford, OH, and University of Alabama at Huntsville. Shell’s mural project collaborators include the National Civil Rights Museum’s NBA Pioneers exhibit, Indianola City Pool in



Vitus Shell, “Not New to This, Tru to This”, 2019. Indianola, MS, Union Parish Elementary School in Farmerville, LA; and the Memphis Urban Art Commission. Shell has received numerous grant awards including the Joan Mitchell MFA Award and Camille Hanks-Cosby Scholarship.

The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), an affiliate of the North Carolina Museum of Art and division of the NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, offers a front row seat to the art of our time through exhibitions, experiences, and education programs with a focus on regional working artists. Founded in 1956 and located on the scenic James G. Hanes estate in Winston-Salem, SECCA offers unique large-scale indoor and outdoor settings for exploring the intersections of contemporary art and culture.

SECCA is located on Marguerite Drive in Winston-Salem. Recent exhibiting artists include Will Wilson, Kara Walker, Lonnie Holley, Elizabeth Alexander, Esteban Cabeza de Baca, Freeman Vines, Jillian Mayer, and Antoine Williams. An ongoing Southern Idiom exhibition series highlights the work of Winston-Salem artists.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (<https://secca.org>).

Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC, Offers Restored Work by Thomas Hart Benton

Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC, is presenting *Prohibition Days: The Conservation of Thomas Hart Benton’s “Bootleggers”*, on view in the Museum’s Northeast Bedroom Gallery, through May 28, 2023.

Like any organism or machine, works of art need to be maintained, protected from adverse conditions, and occasionally treated or repaired. The canvases of Thomas Hart Benton pose unique conservation challenges, because the artist often combined incompatible media, including egg tempera (in which pigment is mixed with egg yolks and water) and acrylic paint. With funding provided by the Bank of America’s Art Conservation Project, *Bootleggers* was recently restored to the sharply faceted, glowing, gem-like glory of its original appearance when it was completed in 1927.

Benton’s painting remains an embodiment of the roaring twenties in all their restless energy, excess, and opposing forces. In this large-scale painting, we observe the life cycle of a bottle of hooch—the era of Prohibition distilled into a single scene. This was Benton’s first canvas to address contemporary social problems and dramatic changes in American life. New technologies, new class struggles, and new forms of entertainment would become his primary subjects.

He wrote that, “The new airplanes, the blimps, the dredges, because they were so interesting in themselves, tore me away from all my grooved habits, from my play with colored cubes and classic attenuations,



Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) “Bootleggers”, 1927. Egg tempera and oil on linen mounted on Masonite. Reynolda House Museum of American Art. Museum Purchase with funds provided by Barbara B. Millhouse. © 2022 T.H. and R.P. Benton Trusts / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

from my aesthetic drivings and morbid self-concerns.”

With *Bootleggers*, Benton began a series of indictments of the corrupting influence of power and capitalistic exploitation in 1920s America. The economy of Benton’s storytelling and the expressiveness of his bristling, rippled, and elongated figures have given the work its enduring appeal, long after the folly of Prohibition ended.

This exhibition is curated by Phil Archer, Betsy Main Babcock Deputy Director of Reynolda House.

For more info check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 336/725-5325 or visit (<https://reynolda.org>).

You can contact us by calling 843/693-1306 or by e-mail at info@carolinaarts.com but do it before the 24th of the month prior to our next issue.



SATURDAY, MARCH 4

9AM - 5PM

G L A S S F E S T



Thoryn Ziemba
Photography: Jon Carter

A premier sale of handcrafted glass art and functional wares. Free glassblowing demonstrations!

Featured Glass Artists:

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Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC, Features Works by Stephen Towns

Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC, will present *Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance*, on view in the Mary and Charlie Babcock Wing Gallery, from Feb. 18 through May 14, 2023.

Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance examines the American dream through the lives of Black Americans from the late eighteenth century to the present time. Using labor as a backdrop, Towns highlights the role African Americans have played in building the economy, and explores how their resilience, resistance, and perseverance have challenged the United States to truly embrace the tenets of its Declaration of Independence.

Towns has created paintings and story quilts that expand the historical narratives of enslaved and free people who toiled under the most extreme hardships, yet persevered through acts of rebellion, skillful guile, and self-willed determination. Within this arresting body of work, Towns also shows the beauty and love that Black people possess beyond the grips of white supremacy.

Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance is organized and toured by The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA, and was curated by Kilolo



Stephen Towns (born 1980), “I am the Glory”, 2020. Acrylic, oil, metal leaf on panel, 48 x 36 inches. Collection: Gregory and Alyssa Shannon, Houston, TX.

Luckett.

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Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, Features Works by Rosa “Malikia” Johnson

The Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, is presenting *Straw into Gold: A Photographic Journey*, featuring Rosa “Malikia” Johnson, on view through Mar. 11, 2023.

The exhibition highlights the cultural

legacy of African Ancestral Hair Sculpture through creative visionary Rosa “Malikia” Johnson. Known as “The Queen Mother of Braids,” Malikia’s unique, stylistic hair designs of intricate braiding and elaborate

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