

BITE

identity and humor

Jefferson Pinder, Juror

GreaterReston**ArtsCenter**

INTRODUCTION

“LAUGHTER AND TEARS ARE BOTH RESPONSES TO FRUSTRATION AND EXHAUSTION. I MYSELF PREFER TO LAUGH, SINCE THERE IS LESS CLEANING UP TO DO AFTERWARD.”--KURT VONNEGUT

Humor is one of the best tools to open dialogue about serious issues dealing with race and identity. There is so much tragic work defining societal problems that indeed, one of the freshest and most inventive ways to probe oppressive elements in our society is to laugh. It could be argued that comedians have always been at the forefront of educating the public about social injustice. Humor must be honest and truthful: otherwise few people can connect to its comic irony.

Growing up, I always remembered the funny kids in the classroom. Often their sharp-tongued wit would command laughter at the most opportune moments. Being cursed with an awkward sense of humor, I've always admired how these voices add levity to situations. As the title implies, BITE refers to subtle mockery or sarcastic qualities that have a piercing effect.

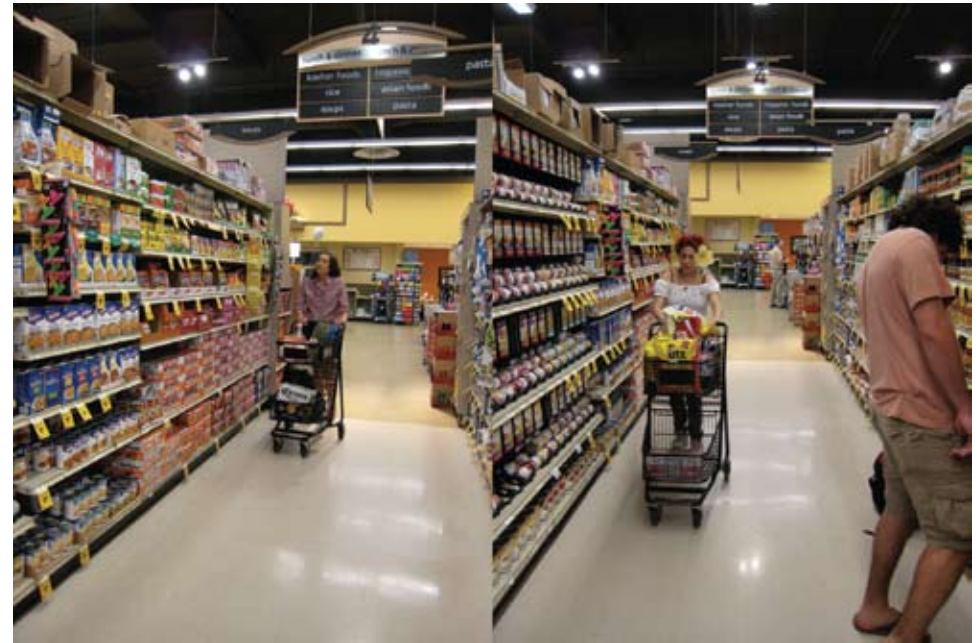
INTRODUCTION

From Steve Colbert to Dave Chapelle, our society relishes humor's ability to make us look inward while examining our surroundings. For this exhibition, artists were asked to use irony, sarcasm, and wit to shed light on issues of personal struggle in mainstream society. This show challenges cultural norms that dictate expectations of who we are supposed to be. Offering up intense observations of the surrounding world, this exhibition sought perspectives that touch on a variety of social ills.

The artists selected for BITE have pushed the boundaries of any standard definition of identity. This eclectic mix represents a powerful collection of art that displays a fierce voice of expression. From conceptual videos to unrepentant folk painting, I sought individuals who deal with honesty and angst in both beautiful yet clever ways.

Jefferson Pinder

KRISTINA BILONICK CAROLINA MAYORGA



LATIN / AMERICAN DIET (HISPANIC FOODS AISLE), DIGITAL PRINT, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 2011

LATIN / AMERICAN DIET is a collaborative project by artists Kristina Bilonick and Carolina Mayorga that plays with Latin American and American stereotypes as the two artists shop for food in a grocery store.

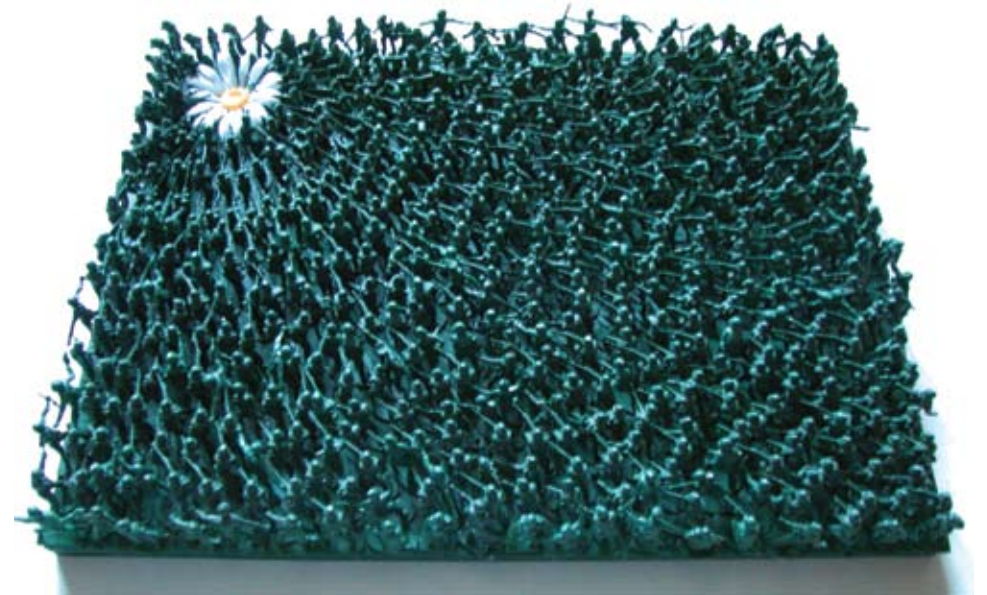
ED BISESE



GIANT BUNNY, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 54" X 54", 2010

If I were Carl Sagan I could say, "We make our world significant by the courage of our questions and by the depth of our answers." This describes the humor of being an artist.

WENDY COOK



UNWELCOME MAT, MIXED MEDIA, 18" X 24" X 2.5", 2004

UNWELCOME MAT employs dark humor to beckon the viewer back to the front stoop, the threshold of home, back to childhood, to the games and toys of our youth and asks how have we evolved as a species?

JUSTYNE FISCHER



VENUS TRUMPS BARBIE, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 48" X 60" X 3", 2009

This series sprightly examines perceptions of beauty within the Standards of Barbie, specifically Ethnic Barbies, which to most may seem an oxymoron.

LEE GAINER



THE DRUMMOND FAMILY, LIMITED EDITION ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT 1/5, 20" X 20", 2010

I manipulate found imagery to explore the socially enforced perceptions, traditions, and expectations in modern life.

GRINGOH



RICHMOND: IRRELEVANT SINCE 1865, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 36" X 48", 2010

GrinGoh uses humor to prompt the question: What if the State had to be honest in the assessment or advertisement of their own communities?

CHARLIE HAHN



UNTITLED, SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO, 00:06:32, 2008

With deadpan seriousness, seamless editing, and Korean subtitles, Charlie Hahn lip syncs famous audio clips from iconic Americans of film and politics.

LINDA HESH



PRINCESSES, ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 10.5" x 22", 2010

My artwork explores the relationship between the personal and political, identity and marginalization. I am very conscious of speaking to an audience, declaring private musings publicly to play with taboos or challenge social norms.

JACQUELINE LEVINE



GORGEOUS IMAGINATION, MIXED MEDIA, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 2011

In my work I make characters out of the experiences I have, the people I see, and the places I go, in an effort to understand and manage the fear of feeling inferior to the world around me.

SCOTT MALLORY JR.



SLIME, VIDEO, 00:03:15, 2009

Combining humor and seriousness, *SLIME* evokes a conflicted psycho-emotional state through which to experience and investigate paradox, identity, security, and innate social/cognitive dissonance that simultaneously houses pursuit and deflection of attention and/or neutral acceptance.

ASHLEY MCCLENON



TRAVELING, VIDEO, 00:07:55, 2010

TRAVELING, a silent, dark, animated film, uses the familiar face of Barbie to tell an unfamiliar story surrounding the nation's capital's drug scene during the 1990's.

ROB PARRISH



RECURSION, VIDEO, 00:01:40, 2011

RECURSION is a found footage video loop touching on issues of human interaction with technology, multiverse theory, the afterlife, free will, and addiction. It is an episode in my ongoing experimental web-based video project/series, *Next To Heaven*.

KARI K. SCOTT



YOU TOO CAN BE FAT LIKE ME, HAND AND MACHINE KNIT COTTON, HAND-DYED AND PAINTED, 38" X 60" X 4", 2007

"Clothes make the (wo)man:" you put on your persona each morning when you get dressed, and usually you want to look/be as thin as possible; I am not thin!

CHARLES SESSOMS



FEAR, VIDEO, 00:05:21, 2011

FEAR is a video portrait of a homeless woman who is spending her afternoon making lucid, humorous, philosophical statements about life while sitting on a busy sidewalk in downtown Washington, DC.

ALAN J. SIMENSKY



LIFE CAN BE SO CRUEL, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 36" X 60", 2010

My work explores the psyches of corporate employees by displaying the possible fantasy outlet which would help them make it through the banality and drudgery of their typical workplace day.

GWYNNETH VANLAVEN



KATZ BASIC ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING
(ADL) SCALE Category 1: Bathing
Independent? _____ YES | NO

BATHING INDEPENDENCE, INKJET PRINT, 19" X 13", 2011

To show the sincere humanity of disability in 3-D, I expose my own laughable moments as I break outside the flat symbol of "the little blue wheelchair box."

WILMER WILSON IV



STUDY FOR BANDAGE, DIGITAL VIDEO, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 2011

These pieces transform the everyday into the absurd.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE) is pleased to present this catalog featuring artists included in the June – July 2011 exhibition, BITE: identity and humor, juried by Jefferson Pinder.

JEFFERSON PINDER is a Washington-based video artist who seeks to find black identity through dynamic circumstances. His experimental videos and films feature minimal performances that reference music videos and physical theatre. Pinder's work provides personal and social commentary through popular music and surreal performances that underscore themes dealing with blackness. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally and is represented by G Fine Art in Washington, DC and Patricia Sweetow Gallery in San Francisco, CA. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

Greater Reston Arts Center was founded in 1974 as a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching community life by promoting involvement and excellence in contemporary visual arts. GRACE provides a year-round schedule of exhibitions, educational programs for all ages, Art in the Schools, a summer art camp, and special events including the nationally recognized Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival.

Visit www.restonarts.org to learn more.

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June 23 - July 29, 2011

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 25, 5 - 7pm

Juror's Talk: 5:30pm

GRACE programs are sponsored in part by
Virginia Commission for the Arts, National
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County, Reston Community Center, and Target.

GALLERY HOURS

11am to 5pm, Tuesday - Saturday

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