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Ellen Banks: Musical Manifestations: Compositions in Wax, Paper, and Yarn

Banks, Ellen
Boston University

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Boston University
MUSICAL MANIFESTATIONS: COMPOSITIONS IN WAX, PAPER, AND YARN

ELLEN BANKS

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Visual Arts

Sherman Gallery at Boston University
MUSICAL MANIFESTATIONS:
ELLEN BANKS
COMPOSITIONS IN WAX, PAPER, AND YARN

September 13–October 30, 2011

Exhibition and Catalog by
Kenneth Hartvigsen

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Visual Arts
Sherman Gallery at Boston University
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The School of Visual Arts (SVA) at the College of Fine Arts (CFA) is pleased to present an exhibition of work by the esteemed artist Ellen Banks. Although Banks has enjoyed an enviable international career and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, she has a noteworthy Boston connection: she taught at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts from 1974 to 1996. In the past three decades, Banks has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Europe and the United States, yet a significant show of her work in Boston was last held at the New England School of Art in 1997. It is therefore an honor and a tremendous opportunity to present Ellen Banks—Musical Manifestations: Compositions in Wax, Paper, and Yarn, curated by Kenneth Hartvigsen, Jan and Warren Adelson Fellow in American Art in the Department of History of Art & Architecture at Boston University. As the show’s title illuminates, the exhibition explores Banks’s ongoing interest in visual interpretation of the musical score through a selection of the artist’s recent work in diverse media.

This exhibition would not be possible without the support and contribution of many individuals. I would like to first thank Ellen Banks for her wholehearted participation, and Kenneth Hartvigsen for his thoughtful curation and critical insight. The exhibition is a direct result of their fruitful collaboration and dialog.

I would like to acknowledge the Jan and Warren Adelson Fund for supporting, in part, the exhibition and catalog. I also express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Patricia Hills, Professor of American Art, Department of History of Art & Architecture at Boston University, for her always-diligent oversight.

At the College of Fine Arts, I would like to sincerely thank Dean Benjamin E. Juárez and School of Visual Arts Director Lynne D. Allen for their ongoing enthusiasm and encouragement of exhibitions programming.

In addition to those already mentioned, Kenneth Hartvigsen would like to thank the School of Visual Arts for enabling the fruition of the exhibition. He reiterates acknowledgement of the Jan and Warren Adelson Fund for their generous support of his fellowship in the department of History of Art & Architecture. Kenneth would like to personally acknowledge the guidance and support of Professor Patricia Hills, without whom this exhibition would not have been possible. He would also like to thank his wife Emily for her patience and editorial eye. Without question, the biggest thanks are extended to Ellen Banks for her kindness and willingness to share her time and her work.

At Boston University’s Creative Services, I thank Hy Zhitnik for the catalog design, Temple Goodhue for her careful editing, and Jan Hauben for her always-diligent management of the publication’s production. Additional thanks to Lou Rouse for his photography for this catalog. Ellen Banks is represented by Andre Zarre Gallery in New York City and Galerie Spandau in Berlin.

Lynne Cooney
Exhibitions Director, School of Visual Arts

ELLEN BANKS—
MUSICAL MANIFESTATIONS:
COMPOSITIONS IN WAX,
PAPER, AND YARN
KENNETH HARTVIGSEN

IN 1981, ELLEN BANKS COMPLETED WHAT SHE HAS CALLED HER FIRST SUCCESSFUL MUSIC PAINTING.1 It was a personal breakthrough, and gradually she began working exclusively from musical scores, transforming the formal elements of sheet music into textured artworks using wax, paper, and yarn. She reads music and grew up playing the piano, which accounts for the fact that her chosen sources are all printed piano scores. Yet the actual songs and sounds are not really Banks’s central concern. Rather, it is the notations, the physical signs for sound, that provide the basis for her colorful abstractions as she uses the notes from a single measure of piano music as the inspiration for each painting in wax or on paper, and each piece rendered in wool yarn.

This essay will present several interlocking keys to Banks’s work that will aid the viewer in unlocking her musical manifestations. First, though her paintings are abstractions, they must also be encountered as material embodiments of musical signs and symbols. Banks approaches musical notation as a symbolic language, an arbitrary system for encoding thoughts and sounds using visual patterns. Secondly, though she is not interested in visually describing sounds or communicating her emotional reaction to music, Banks never abandons the physicality of the basic materials—the musical score and her artistic media. Keeping this in mind illuminates significant elements of her process, including her love of improvisation and riffing in paint, wax, and fabric. Lastly, Banks does not use these symbolic systems to convey conventional messages, but rather to suggest patterns of human culture and thought. She seems to see all communication, perhaps all human action and interaction, in terms of making and recognizing patterns. As such, the repeating shapes in Banks’s work, the riffs and patterns she carves into wax or works into woolen fabric, constitute visual meditations on how humans order and understand the world. She is a sophisticated thinker who, in spite of her love of spoken languages, thinks best with her hands, working in paint and yarn.

As is evident when approaching any of the pieces in this exhibition, her work sets itself apart from other music-centered visual art through its warmth and texture, its intense focus on materiality. However, Banks was not the first artist to investigate the musical score as a permeable membrane facilitating exchange between aural and visual worlds. Rather, she is part of an ever-expanding group of artists who challenge the score from multiple angles. Musical notation, like all written languages, is a visual system, inviting experimentation from both musicians and visual artists.
In the 1950s and 1960s, some avant-garde composers such as John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Morton Feldman, Cornelius Cardew, and numerous artist/musicians associated in varying degrees with the Fluxus collective, began experimenting with what is now called graphic notation by including nontraditional and nonsymbolic musical symbols in their scores ranging from simple text instructions and annotations to elaborate drawings. The performances which resulted from these scores often blurred the boundaries between music, performance, and installation art, while the scores themselves could often be appreciated as unique visual objects. Cornelius Cardew’s 193-page graphic masterpiece _Treatise_ (1967), for example, while primarily intended for musical performance, can also be considered “a work of graphic art” and “a graphic work whose subject matter is music.” Though it bears no physical resemblance to her paintings (for all of its visual play, _Treatise_ takes the literal form of an extended score), Banks and Cardew pursue similar questions as they investigate the meaning and form of musical symbols and focus on musical notation as a subject.

Other composers have produced scores that more directly evoke the abstract painting tradition of which Banks is part. Anthony Braxton, active as a solo saxophonist and composer since the 1960s, has long given his compositions graphic rather than written titles. These can be simple geometric shapes resembling schematic diagrams, or even colorfully illuminated maps. More recently, Braxton has, with his Tri-Centric Orchestra, performed what he calls “Falling River Music,” for which the score itself is a painterly abstraction accompanied by a mysterious symbolic legend. According to the orchestra’s publications: “Braxton refuses to assign any specific meanings to the notations of his Falling River scores, since part of their purpose is to allow each performer to find her own way through them.” In this case, visual art does not come from the score, but rather invades it, seeking for a free exploration of image and sound correlation.

Banks comes to the contested musical score from the opposite direction, not asking how graphic arts can expand written musical language to convey musical sounds, but rather asserting that the linguistic system of the score offers dynamic optical expressions of balance and tension, and that focused looking at conventional sheet music and not graphic notation can lead to meaningful visual experiences. Though her process and style are unique, Banks is not alone in this quest. A recent exhibition at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, _Contemporary Outlook: Seeing Songs_ (July 1, 2009–February 21, 2010), included multiple interpretations of sheet music including Idris Khan’s _Wagner… Parsifal_ (2007), for which the artist created a single-sheet print by superimposing each page of the indicated score one on top of another. The resulting work has a murky appearance as the hundreds of layers of staff and bar lines create a dense thickets, which masses of black note heads sweep in ghostly arcs. Where Khan works in the macro, Banks focuses on the micro, looking for small moments of balance, movement, and whimsy in a song’s individual measures.

Addressing her process, Banks wittily calls herself a representational artist of abstract forms. This playful pronouncement is typical of her approach to art. In conversation, she often laughs when explaining her work, not because she doesn’t take art seriously but rather because she finds it so tremendously entertaining. She graciously accepts thoughtful reflections on her paintings and happily engages with others in serious discussions about art’s meanings and functions. However, she is far more moved by the immediate emotional or aesthetic reaction to the end result of her work, by the viewer who is simply in tune with a painting’s beauty or joyful character. Yet, she is correct that her art represents as much as it abstracts, though it represents forms not from the natural world but taken from the communicative signs that underpin human culture and civilization. Banks begins not with an object but with a sign, with the signifier not the signified. She explores this abstract representational system of musical notation, seeing its patterns and gridded staff as a skeleton to be clothed in fleshly colors and fibers.

Alongside music, physicality is the second key to experiencing Banks’s work. Each of her pieces must first be experienced as a physical object, not merely a visual representation. Starting from the abstract, Banks creates paintings of tremendous physical presence, of visual and tactile depth. This physicality suggests again that these are not abstractions but manifestations, palpable incarnations of abstract systems. The viewer does not merely look at but rather peers into a wax painting such as _Scherzo in E_ (2011) (fig. 1), as though seeing columns of light simultaneously penetrating and reflecting against banks of fog, or observing a body of water, tracking the visual rhythm of light rippling against waves, the bright salience of leaves and sticks floating on the surface and the cool, removed and obscured fish darting underneath. There is also something very human in the wax’s matte texture, which Tom Breidenbach described as a “flesh-like translucence.” This lends these paintings a tattoo-like appearance. The principal forms are literally incised into the waxy skin, aching with a razor rather than a mechanized needle, and seem to float in or be suspended against a screen of imperfections, wrinkles, and scars.

The experience of peering into Banks’s work results from her literal layering of materials. A board is treated with pigment and wax. A thin linen scrim may be laid across the ground. More wax is applied in varying thicknesses, in clusters, smooth sheets, and the bubbling swaths. The wax layers spread, dry, and crack, leaving what may seem a topographical map or an aerial view of some ancient, now craggy and dried seabed. With a blade she returns to this surface to incise simple, almost monolithic shapes—the square, rectangle, and circle—then fills in these perfect razor-thin wounds with black, creating a deliberately sharp contrast with the milky ferment beneath. The forms, in their basic shape and spacing relate exactly to the notes from a measure of music, usually restricted to just the single treble clef. Colors also come from the written music and are assigned according to the seven major keys: A major is red, B orange, C yellow, D green, E blue, F violet, and G neutral. In some recent works such as _Capriccio in A_ (2011), the forms have swollen or even exploded to fill the whole piece, resulting in a bold and startling all-over compositional style. In these examples Banks has come the farthest from a strict translation or transcription of the existing grid of the musical staff. She explains that even though the score remains central for its structure and inspiration, she decided that it does not have to be treated as a “precious thing.”
MUSICAL MANIFESTATIONS

Despite my insistence on reading her paintings as material manifestations, Banks’s personal process of reconding musical notes into visual art must also be acknowledged as a process of abstraction. Though she represents both the shapes and hollow spaces embedded in the music, she does so through a process of simplification rather than a strict transcription. In earlier musical works such as Maple Leaf Rag (1987), the oldest work in this exhibition, the finished product is more readily recognized as sheet music due to the vestigial staff and measure lines which have transformed into a severe black and gray grid and the more colorful articulation or individual notes rather than the color palettes later assigned to key signatures. However, in the more recent works that feature in this exhibition, Banks has simplified the relationship between music and image. For example, as previously mentioned, she typically restricts her interest to the treble clef and avoids any inclusion of incidentals—there is no indication of sharp or flat keys or notes. Nor does she indicate meter or rhythm by differentiating quarter notes, half notes, etc. She is not trying to re-create the sheet music; she does not intend that someone be able to play her paintings. Rather, the formal language of musical notation inspires her. In this sense, she is abstracting from her music the same way that some artists abstract from nature; she freely adapts her subject into color and shape.

That she re-creats music into a new physical form, abstracting from the already abstract to paradoxically create something potent and immediate is evidenced not only in the works themselves, but also in how she names them. Works on paper, typically modest in size, are presented in groups, with eight to twelve measures of one song framed as a single piece, and typically are named according to the source song’s name. The larger, more imposing wax paintings, however, are given titles that do not reflect their source. Often, by the time the paintings are finished she has discarded the songs that provided inspiration, choosing instead to stand on their own. It is as though they have become their own selves, transformed into new bodies, and deserve new names descriptive of their autonomous aesthetic presence. However, the names still come from musical words and phrases as Banks essentially chooses to forget what has come before and instead allows each new painting to speak its own presence.

At the same time, the viewer should not ignore that through a witty interplay of abstraction and manifestation, Banks has found a way to perform music visually. This process of simplifying and abstracting, of picking and choosing which notes to manifest, is somewhat analogous to musical improvisation. Jazz musicians go through similar processes when soloing, as they riff on a particular melodic fragment from the written tune, repeat and rephrase notes played by other musicians, or spontaneously create new melodies that fit alongside the original song. When improvising, mistakes—perhaps a better word is surprises—are not strictly avoided or covered up, but are folded into the evolving performance flow. These surprises are often emphasized and repeated, and may bring completely new or previously unnoticed elements of the song to the surface, revealing pathetic, biting, or even silly incarnations of the same tune. Inherent in this experimentation is the seeming paradox of finding freedom through structure, as most, though not all improvisations take place within a set of rules, a chord progression or given mode. Banks emphasizes that she relies on a structured process, on the formal skeleton of the grid and her chosen correlation between colors and notes, in order to induce freedom, that working within a system opens avenues for experimentation. Banks’s improvisations include unexpected color layering or modulation, the unplanned but essential buildup of complex surface texture, circles that sometimes appear without any relationship to the source music, and the occasional inclusion of incised words from song titles or lyrics. When asked about these, Banks smiles, or laughs, and says that these things just happen, that what wasn’t initially intended turned out to make sense for a particular piece. Her response is candid and perhaps a little surprising, especially considering the question’s obtuseness. Would a jazz fan ask Miles Davis, another improviser who could say much with just a few carefully constructed phrases, why he had overblown this or that note, why he had chosen to repeat that fragment or had left half a bar silent? With Davis as with Banks, the why is not as important as the what. Both artists display an economic aesthetic and the creative taste to know when enough has been said.

The importance of improvisation within a fixed system, of finding freedom when relying on structure, is evident in Banks’s work across all media, though the processes of working different materials expresses this freedom to different extents. Works on paper, such as When I Do the Hoochie Koochie in the Sky (2010) (fig. 2), though individually small, are no less dramatic than large paintings in proclaiming her process, her interest in systems, and her joy in improvising and exploring the physical possibilities and qualities of materials. She makes her own paper from cotton and plant fibers. These coarse and crisply uneven sheets have the same topographical qualities, the same exposed and dried character of an arid, age-beaten landscape, indicated by the layered wax and fabric of her larger paintings. Onto these she applies the sharp and straight note forms with tape before adding paint. The watery colors run through the paper’s rivulet channels, sometimes pooling in thick, irregular shapes. The result is a physical meditation on the interaction of materials. The color intensity varies with thickness of or covered up, but are folded into the evolving performance flow. These surprises are often emphasized and repeated, and may bring completely new or previously unnoticed elements of the song to the surface, revealing pathetic, biting, or even silly incarnations of the same tune. Inherent in this experimentation is the seeming paradox of finding freedom through structure, as most, though not all improvisations take place within a set of rules, a chord progression or given mode.

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explained that there is a personal component to her works in wool, as she says there are times when working on a large painting becomes overwhelming, and it is therapeutic to work on a smaller scale with her hands, crocheting the wool. She says that in the deep winter, for example, she finds herself more interested in working with yarn than painting.

Feminist reclamation of craft is not the only social or political framework through which some have viewed Banks’s work. Though she insists that her paintings are appreciated on their own terms, in the past some critics and gallery owners questioned her art because of her identity as a black woman artist. In interviews, Banks has explained that these individuals did not think a black woman would, or should, paint in an abstract grid like Mondrian or use Bach and Beethoven as source material.7 Banks refuses to even consider their arguments, insisting that she has many progenitors and is the inheritor of many different artistic styles. She mines a vast musical and artistic past and does not alter her approach according to the source material’s supposed racial implications, but rather allows for the organic experimentation of the moment. Despite the fact that she rejects racial motivation in her own process, she admits being unable to work from spirituals earlier in her career, for emotional reasons.8 She has since completed numerous series of spirituals, including the pieces presented in this exhibition: Go Tell it on the Mountain (2010), Mary Had a Baby (2010), and I’ll Fly Away (2010).

Banks’s works in all media form an extended visual and material meditation on the interrelation of communication systems, as her own process of translating sheet music interacts with Western music’s linguistic notation. She acknowledges that both art objects and sheet music communicate through symbols, materials, and patterns. When I asked her about the words incised into one of her paintings, she said simply, “Words are very important.” It was not, it seemed, that she was saying the meanings of words are important, although that is certainly true, but rather that words in themselves, the existence of signs that communicate despite their arbitrary and imperfect correlations, is of considered significance to understanding her work. This may be why she was drawn to musical notation as an arbitrary language related and connected to other languages, to other ways of ordering and encoding thoughts and messages. Drawn to these symbolic systems, she paints and weaves designs whose repeating symbolic patterns emphasize the way humans think. Through her work, Banks shows us that we can communicate, not only through words, but also through shapes, sounds, and colors. To think with these objects and sensory experiences, to meditate through music and materials when working or feeling wool, when exploring pigment and wax, is to ask and answer with our eyes, ears, and hands, to contemplate the fundamental shapes and systems of communication.

1 Unless otherwise indicated, the author has drawn all thoughts and words attributed to Ellen Banks from personal conversations and interviews.
2 Pictures of Music, a program sponsored by the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, is an excellent source on the history and function of graphic notation. Its website, displaying score excerpts with accompanying analysis, interviews, and historical timeline, is highly recommended: www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/picturesofmusic/
3 Brian Dennis, “Cardew’s Treatise (Mainly the Visual Aspects),” Tempo, New Series, No. 177 (Jun., 1991), 15.
8 Ibid, 294.
PLATE 1
Cantus Firmus in E, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
24" x 24"

PLATE 2
Capriccio in A, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
24" x 24"
PLATE 3
Inverted Mordent in B, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
36” x 18”

PLATE 4
Melody in A, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
36” x 18”
PLATE 5
Scherzo in C, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

PLATE 6
Scherzo in D, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”
PLATE 7
Scherzo in G, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

PLATE 8
Trio in A, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
18” x 36”
PLATE 9
Chaconne in F, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
36" x 18"

PLATE 10
Mary Had a Baby, 2011
Mixed media on paper
31" x 21½"
PLATE 11
I'll Fly Away, 2011
Mixed media on paper
27” x 301⁄2”

PLATE 12
Troubled Waters, 2007
Mixed media on paper
32” x 23”
PLATE 13
Go Tell It on the Mountain, 2010
Mixed media on paper
23” x 30”

PLATE 14
Bagatelle in E, 2010
Wool yarn
20” x 14”
PLATE 15
Bagatelle in G, 2011
Wool yarn
20” x 14½”

PLATE 16
Bagatelle in C, 2011
Wool yarn
17” x 14”
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Maple Leaf Rag, 1987
Screen print
15” x 48”

Troubled Waters, 2007
Mixed media on paper
32” x 23”

Bagatelle in E, 2010
Wool yarn
20” x 14”

Go Tell it on the Mountain, 2010
Mixed media on paper
23” x 30”

Mary Had a Baby, 2011
Mixed media on paper
31” x 21½”

When I Do the Hoochie Koochie in the Sky, 2010
Mixed media on paper
39½” x 28”

Bagatelle in B, 2011
Wool yarn
14” x 14”

Bagatelle in B, 2011
Wool yarn
16½” x 15”

Bagatelle in C, 2011
Wool yarn
17” x 14”

Bagatelle in G, 2011
Wool yarn
20” x 14½”

Cantus Firmus in E, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
24” x 24”

Capriccio in A, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
24” x 24”

Chaconne in F, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
30” x 18”

Inverted Mordent in B, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

Scherzo in C, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

Scherzo in D, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

Scherzo in E, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

Scherzo in G, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
48” x 36”

Trio in A, 2011
Wax and pigment on board
18” x 36”

Bagatelle in B, (undated)
Wool yarn
16” x 13½”

Bagatelle in C, (undated)
Wool yarn
16½” x 13½”

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

ELLEN BANKS

Training
1983–1984 César Domela—Paris, France

Teaching Affiliation
1974–1996 Painting Instructor—School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Selected Solo Exhibitions
2011 Illusive Abstraction, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2010 The Force of Color, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2009 Galerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2007 Galerie Open, Berlin, Germany
2005 Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2003 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1997 Uranian Center, Berlin, Germany
1996 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1995 Makihe Museum, Berlin, Germany
1992 Amerika Haus, Berlin, Germany
1988 Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1988 Galerie of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
1986 University of Camposinas, Campinas, Brazil
1984 Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
1983 Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
1981 Wettering Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
1976 Howard University, Washington, DC
1973 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Selected Group Exhibitions
2011 The Force of Color, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2009 Galerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2009 Galerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2007 Core of Substance, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2006 Gallerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2005 Aspects of the Real, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2002 Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2001 Gallerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2000 Denise Bibro Gallery, New York, NY
1997 Donahue/Sosinski Gallery, New York, NY
1996 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1995 Makihe Museum, Berlin, Germany
1992 Amerika Haus, Berlin, Germany
1988 Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1988 Galerie of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
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Maple Leaf Rag, 1987
Screen print
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Troubled Waters, 2007
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20” x 14”

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Mixed media on paper
27” x 30½”

Mary Had a Baby, 2011
Mixed media on paper
31” x 21½”

When I Do the Hoochie Koochie in the Sky, 2010
Mixed media on paper
39½” x 28”

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Selected Solo Exhibitions
2011 Galleria Sprumillo, Suwalki, Poland
2010 Galeria Labirynt, Krakow, Poland
2009 ARTtu Gallery, Warsaw, Poland
2007 Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2005 Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2003 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1997 Erfurt Gallery, Erfurt, Germany
1996 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1995 Makihe Museum, Berlin, Germany
1992 Amerika Haus, Berlin, Germany
1988 Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1988 Galerie of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
1986 University of Camposinas, Campinas, Brazil
1984 Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
1983 Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
1981 Wettering Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
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2009 Galerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2007 Core of Substance, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2006 Gallerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2005 Aspects of the Real, Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2002 Andre Zarre Gallery, New York, NY
2001 Gallerie Spandov, Berlin, Germany
2000 Denise Bibro Gallery, New York, NY
1997 A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY
1996 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1995 Makihe Museum, Berlin, Germany
1992 Amerika Haus, Berlin, Germany
1988 Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1988 Galerie of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
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2000 Denise Bibro Gallery, New York, NY
1997 A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY
1996 Gallerie Spandow, Berlin, Germany
1995 Makihe Museum, Berlin, Germany
1992 Amerika Haus, Berlin, Germany
1988 Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1988 Galerie of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
1986 University of Camposinas, Campinas, Brazil
1984 Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
1983 Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
1981 Wettering Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
1976 Howard University, Washington, DC
1973 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Selected Honors and Awards

1991 Massachusetts Artist Fellowship
1988 Book Grant, Nexus Press, Atlanta, GA
1987 National Endowment for the Arts, Painting Grant
1983–1984 Bunting Fellow, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
1982 George Gund Foundation Grant
1979 Ford Foundation Grant
1972 Blanche E. Coleman Award

Selected Collections

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
Boston Public Library, Boston, MA
Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
Citicorp, New York, NY
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Federal Reserve Bank, Boston, MA
First National Bank, Boston, MA
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Museum for the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Boston, MA
Makise Museum, Berlin, Germany
New York Public Library, New York, NY
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Schomburg Center, New York, NY
University of Campinas, Campinas, Brazil
Yale University Art Collection, New Haven, CT

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