

VISITING ARTISTS INFORMATION for 2006 -2007

Bridget Conn was born in Clearwater, Florida in 1978. Having expressed an interest in writing and art since childhood, she received a BFA in Studio Art from Tulane University in 2000. Continuing down the academic path, she received an MFA from the University of Georgia in 2003, focusing in photography, mixed media and installation. During those years she managed to squeeze in travel to England, Russia, Mexico, Italy, and Ghana. Having received a Master's degree, she promptly moved to Australia to travel and pick fruit. She returned in 2004 and participated in six shows across Georgia in this year, including "Gathering" at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta. She continues to show widely across the southeast and recently in South Korea. She currently lives in Swainsboro, teaches Art at East Georgia College, and works with an art advocacy group, the Stillmoreeroots Group, in bringing art to underserved communities through non-traditional venues.



Pantheon (Incantation Room)

Installation: 15ft. x 13ft. x 25ft.

Shelves of organic and found objects, jars, rows of rice on walls, flour, ink on scroll

Nick Nelson was born in Carrollton, Georgia in 1978, one of nine children. He began his artistic life in Americus, Georgia, a freshman at Georgia Southwestern State University. There he studied painting and drawing, focusing mainly on the human figure. Feeling that the human figure could not fully express his artistic vision, Nelson became dissatisfied with figurative painting and began to investigate representation itself as subject matter. This exploration led him to his current work, collage and assemblage created from found objects and nontraditional materials such as fruit. Nelson's current work focuses on aesthetic experiences attached to ordinary objects and the role that intuition plays in these aesthetic experiences. His work also explores themes centered on humanity's search for order and meaning within a seemingly chaotic and meaningless universe.



Landscape

Collage

#16

mixed

media

Nelson has returned to the human figure in recent sculptures, basing their compositions on his own proportions.

Nick Nelson graduated with a BFA from Georgia Southwestern State University in 2000. He went on to earn an MFA from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia where he currently teaches observational drawing and two-dimensional design. Nelson has shown his work regionally and nationally and is a member of the Stillmore Roots Group, an artist collective that exhibits site-specific installation in non-traditional spaces.

TAKEN FROM: STILLMOREROOTS (stillmorerootsinfo@yahoo.com)

Rina Yoon received a BFA in studio art from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, in 1988 and her MFA in Printmaking from Washington University in St Louis, MO, in 1996. Currently, Yoon is an Assistant Professor in the Fine Arts Division at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, where she teaches printmaking. A Korean-born printmaker, Yoon works primarily large-scale using collagraph technique, a non-traditional



intaglio process, combined with other traditional printmaking techniques. Her images address ideas of memory and identity, the conflict between past and present selves, and the desire to resolve this tension. Since 1996, Yoon has had five solo exhibitions in St Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee. She has also shown her work in many group shows nationally as well as in Korea.

TAKEN FROM: THE ELAINE ERICKSON GALLERY (info@ericksongallery.com)

Richard J. Olsen served in Vietnam, Army, 33d Transportation Company (Light Helicopter), Bien Hoa, helicopter pilot and flight leader, 1962-63.

"In the early years after the war I had to paint Vietnam in order to tell it. Nam became the only truth; the experience of the war became the authority to paint. After that all else paled; everything else became absurd, trite. After all, why paint unless you must? You must when you can put your whole self into it. My self-appointment as an artist was catalyzed or crystallized in Vietnam. Here was a world larger than one could imagine: a world far beyond my control. In such a world men are identified by what they do: by deeds and especially by courage. That medium—Teilhard de Chardin calls it the noösphere—became the air we breathed. D Zone ("D" for death) was the area of operations we flew into every day. We were enthusiastic about nation building, suppression of totalitarianism—I am speaking here of the early phase of U.S. involvement and the collective idealism of the Kennedy years.



Wall LXXVIII, 1992, oil on linen, 98.5 x 126 in. collection of the artist.

As a pilot flying a helicopter, I read Ho Chi Minh's writings, and I understand that we were involved in a world process, not a local insurrection. That year in Vietnam, if it didn't kill me, would form the rest of my life, especially my life as an artist.

The helicopter we used then, the CH-21, was obsolete and hard to fly. It had been designed for the arctic, not the tropics. Flying it was a performance; it took a certain skill, daring, and a sense of the urgency of the mission; it had to do with functioning under tension. It had to do with expecting a surprise at all times. You were always thinking about emergency procedures, getting hit in the flight controls, the blades, the transmission, the torque tubes, about fuel running low, being over enemy territory, about where to go in a forced landing, returning to a friendly place. Everything at once. Like art.

Toward the last day of my tour I began to know that I had to stay alive in order to paint. Then and only then I began to feel the need not to get wasted—I began to feel awe and wonder at the miraculous experience of staying alive. I saw that the same sense of urgency I felt in Vietnam was needed for painting. Being a painter, one continues to live at that level of urgency. My paintings, drawings, and prints after I returned from Vietnam oiled the gears of my deep engagement in art, heightened and liberated my convictions about the war, and what art could be and needs to be. I felt, and still do, that in order to paint one must be inside life, death, so hard that everything is understood, dealt with, nothing left out. The idea, the urge to paint is clear, but the painting must make it on its own terms, visually, not verbally. All LZs are hot; art is hot, or it doesn't exist.

I came back to the United States and found the art of the 1960s, which was asking the question: How do you create unusual art? How do you set up the audience to expect one thing, and then ambush them with a surprise? Alan Kaprow was making the first Happenings and I know that flying a helicopter in combat was way beyond, but similar to, the thing he was after: Vietnam was a Happening. The art that comes out of Vietnam is authentic; it has historical momentum; there is a history being made in the painting while it is being painted. It is a mark on the earth.

The art is THE. I want to make an art that is THE."

TAKEN FROM: NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERIANS ART MUSEUM (NVVAM.ORG)

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