

ACKLANDARTMUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

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Exhibition website: ackland.org/exhibition/ronald-lockett/

Ackland Art Museum Announces Ronald Lockett Retrospective

First Comprehensive Exhibition Devoted to the Southern Vernacular Artist

Organized by the Ackland Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *Fever Within: The Art of Ronald Lockett* is a groundbreaking retrospective of a passionately inspired and little-understood figure in twentieth-century American art. Largely unrecognized during his lifetime, by the time of his death at age 32, Lockett (1965-1998) had produced an estimated 400 works of art created from a wide variety of found materials.

The first solo exhibition of Ronald Lockett's art, *Fever Within* emphasizes the powerful themes the artist explored over the course of his career through about 50 of his works of art. The exhibition, which will be presented in 2016-2017 in New York and Atlanta as well as in Chapel Hill, marks the first time that viewers will be able to gain insight into the full range of Lockett's innovative and evocative paintings and assemblages.



Raised in Bessemer, Alabama, near Birmingham, Lockett was heavily influenced by other self-taught African American artists in his closely knit community, including his cousin Thornton Dial (1928-2016), who mentored and encouraged him.

Through his art, Lockett explored events in twentieth-century history that he sought to better understand; among them are acts of large-scale violence and terrorism such as the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima, and the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. He also grappled with emotionally-charged subjects such as racial and political tumult, including the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the unfulfilled promises of the Civil Rights Movement; environmental degradation; and religious faith. In his final years, following his diagnosis with HIV/AIDS, his art explored mortality, salvation, and remembrance.

"The Ackland is proud to be organizing this pioneering, highly significant exhibition," said Chief Curator and Interim Director Peter Nisbet. "The Museum and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in which we are embedded, have become key institutions in the study of and engagement with the art of the American South."



Fever Within is curated by Bernard L. Herman, George B. Tindall Distinguished Professor of Southern Studies and Folklore at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in close collaboration with the Souls Grown Deep Foundation, an organization dedicated to documenting, researching, preserving, and exhibiting the work of vernacular African American artists of the American South.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 160-page book edited by Bernard L. Herman and published by The University of North Carolina Press. It includes 60 full-color plates of Lockett's paintings and assemblages, as well as written contributions by Paul Arnett, Bernard L. Herman, Sharon Patricia Holland, Katherine L. Jentleson, Thomas J. Lax, and Colin Rhodes.

Two other venues will host *Fever Within*: the American Folk Art Museum in New York (21 June – 18 September 2016) and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta (9 October 2016 – 8 January 2017). The exhibition's tour will culminate at the Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (27 January – 9 April 2017).

"Building on the Ackland's important acquisitions and exhibition projects such as *Thornton Dial: Thoughts on Paper* (2010, travelled to Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont, Burlington; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Alabama; and the Knoxville Museum of Art, Tennessee), we look forward to stimulating a rich and multifaceted conversation about Ronald Lockett's powerful and moving art," said Nisbet. "We could not be more grateful to our guest curator, noted scholar Bernard L. Herman, to our lenders, and to our colleagues at the distinguished institutions in New York and Atlanta who will ensure a broad and diverse audience for the show."



The Ackland's exhibition *Fever Within: The Art of Ronald Lockett* has been made possible in part by awards from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding has been provided by the Department of American Studies Chair's Discretionary Fund for Southern Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

About the Ackland

The Ackland Art Museum is located on the historic campus of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Ackland's holdings consist of more than 17,000 works of art, featuring significant collections of European masterworks, twentieth-century and contemporary art, African art, North Carolina pottery, and folk art. In addition, the Ackland has North Carolina's premier collections of Asian art and works on paper (drawings, prints, and photographs). As an academic unit of the University, the Ackland serves broad local, state, and national constituencies.

Admission and Hours

Admission to the Ackland Art Museum is always free, with donations accepted. The Ackland is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and Sundays 1:00 to 5:00 PM. The Museum is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Location

The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 S. Columbia Street, just south of Franklin Street, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Detailed directions are available at www.ackland.org or by calling 919.966.5736. Downtown Chapel Hill parking information and a map are available at www.parkonthehill.com.

Images of works by Ronald Lockett, American, 1965-1998:

Rebirth, 1987. Wire, nails, and paint on Masonite, 12 x 18-1/2 inches. Collection of Souls Grown Deep Foundation, L2015.2.3.

Fever Within, 1995. Found tin, colored pencil, and nails on wood, 66-1/2 x 30 inches. Collection of Souls Grown Deep Foundation, L2015.2.1.

Traps, c. 1989. Found metal, wire, wood, chain link fence, and paint, approx. 48 x 48 x 3 inches. Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gift of the Arnett Collection and Ackland Fund, 2010.51.3.