

# ABOUT THE ART

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Art Since  
1950

Gallery 12

ACKLAND

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## **ACKLAND ART MUSEUM**

The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
101 S. Columbia Street  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
Phone: 919-966-5736

## **MUSEUM HOURS**

Wed - Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sun 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
2nd Fridays 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.  
Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day, & New Year's Day.



George Segal  
American, 1924 – 2000  
**The Legend of Lot**, 1958  
plaster, wood, burlap, chicken wire, and  
oil on canvas  
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art  
Fund and Gift of The George and Helen  
Segal Foundation, Inc., 2009.1

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## About the Art

- George Segal designed this piece to blur the boundary between art and viewer, placing the life size principal figure in front of the painting.
- The piece is based on the biblical story of Lot, who fled his home in the land of Sodom before its destruction. The separation of Lot, expressively modeled in white plaster, from the boldly defined figurative painting underscores the theme of exile as he leaves his home and wife behind. The two-dimensional figure at the left of the canvas also represents Lot.
- At the time Segal made *The Legend of Lot*, his art was transitioning away from his earlier work. He stopped making paintings of figures in the Abstract Expressionist style in favor of plaster-cast figures set amid actual life-sized environments.

## About the Artist

1924: Born November 26 in New York

1947-49: Studied in New York at the Pratt Institute of Design and the University of New York

1949: Bought a chicken farm

1958: Made the *Legend of Lot*; sold his chickens and converted the farm to an art studio

1964: Focused exclusively on sculpture, rather than painting

1976: Began casting sculptures in bronze

2000: Died June 10

**Chat with this work of art using ARTBOT. Instructions available at the Visitor Services desk.**



Renee Stout  
American, born 1958  
**Ogun**, 1995  
wood, metal, and other materials  
Ackland Fund, 97.6.1

## About the Art

- The description of materials on the label for *Ogun*—wood, metal, and other materials— alludes succinctly to a large number of objects not often associated with works of art. They include car parts, pieces of musical instruments, fragments of dolls, cloth bags, nails, pulleys, tools, text, the motherboard of a computer, and tintype photographs.
- In this work, Renee Stout combines the twentieth-century art technique of assemblage with two African art traditions. Like a Kongo power object, or *nkisi*, *Ogun* is composed of materials appended to a central figure. Moreover, the title and the emphasis on metal materials tie it to Ogun, the Yoruba god of war and metal work.
- This sculpture responds to the constructive use of metal in tools and machines, and to its destructive use, as in the weapons of gang warfare. Stout has described it as a therapeutic means of handling pain, and as an homage to “our male ancestors so that they will give guidance to future generations of young black men.”
- The god Ogun symbolizes strength and protection, and his energy affects machines. Stout feels a family connection to this energy: her grandfathers worked in Pittsburgh steel mills, her father is a mechanic, and she uses power tools herself as a sculptor.

## About the Artist

1958: Born in Junction City, KS

1980: Graduated from the Carnegie Mellon University

1985: Moved to Washington DC; began making assemblages

1993: Had a solo exhibition at the National Museum of African Art

1995: Made the Ackland's *Ogun*



Barkley L. Hendricks  
American, 1945 – 2017  
**New London Niggah / Big Chuck (Charles  
Harvey)**, 1975  
oil and acrylic on linen canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2008.6

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### About the Art

- Barkley Hendricks sets a realistic figure against an unreal, abstract, blue field of color. The absence of any environment or accoutrement emphasizes the presence and power of Charles Harvey's body.
- Hendricks matches the subject's self-confident, proud pose with the title's forceful use of a vernacular version of a traditional racial slur sometimes used by African Americans as a gesture of reclamation.
- Harvey was an acquaintance of Hendricks' and posed for him on several occasions. Hendricks kept this painting for over thirty years, until the Ackland bought it in 2008.

### About the Artist

1945: Born April 16 in Philadelphia

1967: Graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

1972: Graduated from Yale University, receiving a bachelor's and master's degree; began teaching at Connecticut College

1975: Made the Ackland's painting

1984–2002: Turned to photography instead of painting

2010: Retired from Connecticut College

2017: Died April 18



Julie Heffernan  
American, born 1956  
**Self-Portrait as Dirty Princess**, 2004  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2005.2

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## About the Art

- Instead of a traditional ball gown, Julie Heffernan adorns her semi-nude body with a huge skirt composed of flowers, dead fish, and dead animals, combining elements of traditional portraiture with still life painting.
- Heffernan set this portrait in the Long Gallery at the Royal Palace in Brussels, Belgium, which she represents in shimmering splendor. Light from a glowing chandelier and ornate sconces is reflected in the mirrored doors and the polished floor.
- By presenting a royal figure standing grandly in this lavish hall and dressed in an abundance of flora and fauna, Heffernan critiques the excesses of power - both historical and contemporary - in which decisions by those in authority can foment disorder and destruction in faraway places.

## About the Artist

1956: Born in Peoria, IL

1985: Graduated from Yale University with a master's degree in painting

1992-93: Taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

1997: Began teaching at Montclair State University

2004: Made the Ackland's painting



Hung Liu  
American, born in China,  
born 1948  
**Peaches**, 2002  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2002.7

## About the Art

- The central figure in this painting is based on a historical photograph, one of a group of photographs of Chinese prostitutes that Hung Liu discovered in a Beijing archive in 1991.
- While in some places the oil paint is noticeably thick (as in the blossom at the woman's collar), there are also drip marks extending down the surface of the canvas, made with much thinner mixtures of paint. The drips, together with the woman's impassive expression, convey a mood of sadness.
- The peaches and bats (often symbols for happiness) swirling around the woman's head were inspired by an eighteenth-century ceramic plate that the artist studied at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. An image of a similar plate is printed to the right.



Dish with Peaches and Bats, 18th century; Porcelain with overglaze enamels. 20.7 cm. diameter. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

## About the Artist

1948: Born February 17 in Changchun, Jilin Province, China  
1968: Worked as a farm worker during the Cultural Revolution in China  
1981: Completed graduate study at the Central Academy of Fine Arts  
1984: Immigrated to the United States; attended graduate school at the University of California at San Diego  
1990: Began teaching at Mills College  
2002: Painted the Ackland's *Peaches*  
2014: Retired from Mills College



John Wesley  
American, born 1928  
**Boeing**, 1982  
acrylic on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2011.3

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## About the Art

- Boeing is rendered flatly in John Wesley's characteristic nursery room color palette of sweet baby blues and gentle pinks. The depiction of a fleshy, fishlike airplane, propelling itself upward with tail fins rather than wings is more like a friendly character from a children's book or cartoon than an actual airplane.
- The airplane seems to soar energetically toward the upper right, but when its nose reaches the corner, it seems to bend a little, as though it is constrained by the picture's frame.
- Wesley is known for infusing his painting with details from his personal life. Early in his career, he worked as a draftsman for an aircraft manufacturer and later - during the 1970s and early 1980s when *Boeing* was made - he and his wife traveled frequently between Europe and the United States.

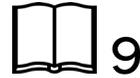
## About the Artist

1928: Born November 25 in Los Angeles

1953: Began working as an illustrator for an aircraft manufacturer

1960: Began working in New York City as an artist

1982: Painted the Ackland's *Boeing*



Stella Waitzkin  
American, 1920 – 2003  
**Untitled (Row of Nineteen Books)**  
cast polyester resin  
Gift of the Waitzkin  
Memorial Library and Kohler  
Foundation, Inc., 2012.5.2

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### About the Art

- Stella Waitzkin made hundreds of cast sculptures in her lifetime. These objects filled her rooms by the time of her death, so much so that her living space had evolved into a sort of site-specific installation. Many of these sculptures were molds of books that she recreated in different colors of resin.
- Waitzkin once told poet Allen Ginsberg her opinion that “words are lies,” so it is tempting to view her continuous creation of these empty, closed tomes as an effort to render their previous falsehoods impotent.

### About the Artist

1920: Born in New York City

1960s: Began to focus on books as subject matter for her art

1971: Divorced and moved to the Chelsea Hotel in New York

2003: Died in New York City



Tony Oursler

American, born 1957

**Eye in the Sky**, 1997

Mixed-media video installation:  
Sony projector, DVD, DVD player,  
eighteen-inch fiberglass sphere,  
acrylic paint, and tripod light stand  
Ackland Fund, 2000.11a-b

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## About the Art

- Without a body or face to convey expression, a single eye, belonging to artist's collaborator, the performance artist Mary N., compulsively watches the rapidly changing channels on a television screen that is reflected in its iris.
- By using a liquid crystal display projector, Oursler is able to show this video on a convex surface, rather than on a flat television monitor.
- One of the major themes in Oursler's work has been the psychological effects of mass media and the visual processing of information. Watching and being watched are important topics.
- Like some strange creature from a science fiction film or surrealist dream sequence, Oursler's disembodied eye is a metaphor for the human condition in a media-saturated age.
- The artist makes no attempt to hide the mechanics of this work.

## About the Artist

1957: Born in New York

1979: Earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California

1977-1989: Created installations involving handmade video tapes, sound, and language mixed with sculptural elements

1991: Began working with LCD video projectors

1992: Exhibited work in *Documenta 9* in Kassel, Germany

1997: Created *Eye in the Sky*

1999-2001: Exhibited work in *Introjection*, a mid-career survey at Williams College Museum of Art



Kenneth Price  
American, 1935 – 2012  
**The Squeeze**, 1995  
ceramic and acrylic  
Gift of Linda and Donald Schlenger,  
2005.9

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## About the Art

- In *The Squeeze*, the biomorphic form comes alive through the luminous opalescence of its colored surface. Kenneth Price's technique was to mold the clay by hand, fire it, and then paint the surfaces with acrylic. He layered colors and then sanded the work's skin.
- His sculpture reflects a deep appreciation for the earth's fundamental forms in flux, like volcanic eruptions and pounding ocean waves. He presents nature's processes in abstract and whimsical interpretations.
- Price was a noteworthy sculptor who spent much of his career exploring the possibilities of ceramic as a medium. At the time, it was a slightly unorthodox choice of material, and his successes went far in breaking down the perception that ceramicists are craftspeople rather than fine artists.

## About the Artist

1935: Born in Los Angeles

1959: Completed graduate study in ceramics at Alfred University in New York

1962: Went to Japan to learn about Japanese ceramics

1991: Became chair of the Ceramics Department at the University of Southern California

1995: Made the Ackland's *The Squeeze*

2012: Died February 24 in Taos, NM



Marc Swanson  
American, born 1969  
**Untitled (Looking Back Buck)**, 2004  
crystals, polyurethane foam, and adhesive  
Ackland Fund, 2012.11

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### About the Art

- Placed above eye level, *Looking Back Buck* recalls the way hunting trophies are hung on the wall. But most hunting trophies are not covered in glittering crystals, and the animal heads face forward, not back.
- A hunting trophy like this complicates the ideas of manliness often associated with such totems. There is also a hint of vulnerability in the exposed neck and head position.
- A son of a small-town New England hunter, Marc Swanson spent his twenties immersing himself in San Francisco's gay culture scene. His artistic practice investigates the dualities inherent in these disparate life experiences.

### About the Artist

1969: Born in Connecticut

1990s: Moved to San Francisco

2004: Made the Ackland's sculpture; graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree from Bard College in New York

2009: Commissioned to make an original, multiple-edition piece for the Norton Family Christmas Art Project



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Anselm Kiefer

German, born 1945

**March Sand**, 1981

oil and sand on photograph printed on canvas

Lent by Barbara B. Millhouse, L2019.14

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## About the Art

- This is a kind of landscape painting, though more conceptual than representational. It uses a mix of conventional and unconventional media applied over an almost completely obscured photograph.
- The title refers to the Brandenburg March, or Margravate, a sandy region of the northwestern lowlands of Germany, near Berlin. This area has witnessed great military events in German history.
- A popular patriotic song of the 1920s, “March Heath, March Sand” became a favorite of various Nazi organizations under Hitler’s dictatorship.
- Kiefer’s landscape evokes disaster and catastrophe, but also alludes to the redemptive power of art. A “frame” depicted as rough-hewn wood surrounds the scene, and the sand is formed into the shape of a painter’s palette.

## About the Artist

1954: Born in Donaueschingen, Germany

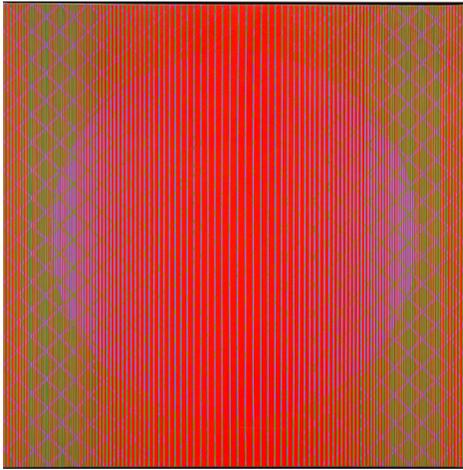
1970: Studied at the Düsseldorf Academy under Joseph Beuys

1980: Represented Germany at the Venice Biennale

1981: First exhibition in the United States; made *March Sand*

1987: Major retrospective exhibition in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York

1992: Relocated to France



Julian Stanczak  
American, born in Poland, 1928 – 2017  
**Glare**, 1969  
acrylic on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 72.20.1

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## About the Art

- Julian Stanczak employs criss-crossing lines of intense color to define a circle that floats in the center of the canvas. He derives much of the effect from the fine, hard-edged parallel lines of varying widths, a practice achieved through many different stages of applying and removing painting tape.
- This painting is a classic example of Op Art (short for optical), which was a popular movement during the 1960s. Artists, often employing a precise painting technique, experimented with geometry and color to activate the vision of the viewer. Because the visual acrobatics of Op Art were easy to recognize and respond to, it became very well-known very quickly.

## About the Artist

1928: Born November 5 in Borownica, Poland

1939: Lost the use of his right arm while in a Siberian labor camp

1942-1948: Lived in a Polish refugee camp in Uganda; learned to write and paint with his left hand

1950: Moved to the United States

1956: Earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at Yale University

1957: Became a US citizen; began teaching in Cincinnati at the Art Academy

1964: Became a professor of painting at the Cleveland Institute of Art

1969: Painted the Ackland's *Glare*

2017: Died March 25 in Seven Hills, OH



## 16

H. C. Westermann

American, 1922 – 1981

**Vent for a Chicken House**, 1967

wood, leather, and metal

National Endowment for the Arts and North Carolina

Art Society Purchase Funds, 74.14.1

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### About the Art

- A fuller description of this work's materials, recorded in the Museum's files, reads as follows: "wood, metal, and leather construction with a plastic bas-relief of a log cabin, and a pen on paper drawing of a dog, affixed to interior surfaces. Cabin can be seen from top hole at front, drawing can be seen from top hole at PL [its left] side."
- One of H.C. Westermann's largest sculptures, this work refers to domestic architecture with its tall vertical walls and a steep pitched gabled roof. However, the artist renders the structure with contradictory elements and whimsical symbols that require interaction between the exterior and the interior.
- He built *Vent for a Chicken House* for his friends Mike and Marion Nevelson, who upon moving into an old chicken barn realized that their open ventilation system allowed various animals to enter their new home.

### About the Artist

1922: Born December 11 in Los Angeles

1947-50: Studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1950: Served as a Marine in the Korean War

1955: Returned to Chicago

1967: Made the Ackland's *Vent for a Chicken House*

1969: Built a house and studio in Connecticut

1981: Died November 3 in Danbury, CT



## 17, 18

Nelson Morales  
Mexican, born 1982

**Queen on Board**, from the series *Musas Muxe*, 2015

**The Great Lady**, from the series *Musas Muxe*, 2017

archival pigment prints

Lent by Allen Blevins and Armando Aispuro,  
L2020.7.1 and .2

### About the Art

- These photographs depicts people who identify as *muxes*. Muxes are indigenous people from Oaxaca, Mexico, who mix male and feminine identities and are often described as a third gender. Nelson Morales has been photographing muxes as part of an extended, multi-year series that depicts them in a variety of settings, from the mythic to the everyday.
- In composing his images, Morales employs a combination of documentation, performance, and active participation. He states, “You know, the reality of life is subjective. Sometimes those levels of reality are augmented a little bit by this world of fantasy.”
- The lettering on the back of the vehicle in *Queen on Board* is “Carnicería Vega.” “Carnicería” translates to “butcher shop,” probably explaining the painted cattle heads that flank the phrase.

### About the Artist

1982: Born in Unión Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Mexico

2015: Made *Queen on Board*

2017: Selected for the artist-in-residence program at the McColl Center for Art + Innovation in Charlotte, North Carolina

2017: Made *The Great Lady*

2018: Published the photobook *Musas Muxe*, which was shortlisted for both the FOLA PHOTOBOOK AWARD 2018 and the Prix du Livre Les Rencontres d’Arles 2019

2019: Exhibited his *Musas Muxe* series in the exhibition *Transamerica/n: Gender, Identity, Appearance Today* at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas



Sean Scully  
American, born in Ireland,  
born 1945  
**Red Durango**, 1991  
oil on linen  
Gift of Mary and Jim Patton  
to honor Josie Patton,  
2001.29

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## About the Art

- Over the course of his career, Sean Scully has developed a vocabulary for the stripe that expresses a wide range of emotions and ideas. Within a seemingly narrow iconography, the artist has produced brilliantly nuanced effects by experimenting with the dimension, color, and composition of the stripe in its vertical, horizontal, and diagonal orientations.
- By constructing his paintings on a heroic scale in deep, multi-paneled arrangements, he injects a sculptural quality that heightens the work's texture and design.
- The title of this work refers to the Mexican city and state, an area rich in minerals and ferrous metals.

## About the Artist

1945: Born in Dublin, Ireland on June 30

1949: Family moved to London

1965–67: Studied painting at Croydon College of Art

1971–72: Studied at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

1972: Awarded a Knox Fellowship to study art at Harvard University for a one-year residency

1975: Moved to the United States and settled in New York City

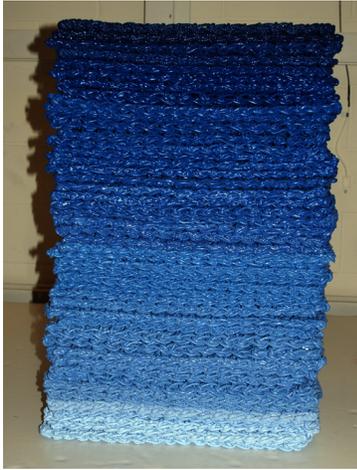
1977–1982: Taught at Princeton University

1983: Became a United States citizen; received a Guggenheim Fellowship and an artist fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts

1989 and 1993: Nominated for the Turner Prize by the Tate Gallery in Britain

1991: Painted *Red Durango*

2013: Became a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, England



Orly Genger  
American, born 1979  
**Untitled**, 2018  
recycled lobster rope and paint  
Anonymous Loan, L2019.1a-c

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### About the Art

- Genger knots and weaves recycled rope, in a laborious process that traditionally counts as “women’s work.” The resulting cube, in this case, alludes to the kind of obdurate Minimalist sculptural form associated with renowned male artists, such as Richard Serra and Donald Judd.
- The atmospheric blue, shaded from pale to dark as it rises up the sculpture, dematerializes the geometric form, inverting its stability.

### About the Artist

1979: Born in New York City, New York

2001: Graduated from Brown University

2002: Received a Postbaccalaureate degree from the Art Institute of Chicago

2013: Created the large-scale public sculpture called *Red, Yellow and Blue* covering some 4,500 square feet of Madison Square park

2018: Created the sculpture on view at the Ackland



Pinaree Sanpitak

Thai, born 1961

**Gold Breast**, 1995–96

acrylic, ink, pastel and paper on  
canvas

Ackland Fund, 2019.38

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### About the Art

- The artist's veneration of the breast form is underscored by the gold leaf used to delineate it and the central placement of the form against a dark background.
- The artist also associates the breast form, which she sees as a nurturing vessel, with the form of the stupa, the sacred mound-like structure built to house Buddhist relics.
- This allusion to Asian traditions is echoed also in the small scrap of paper with Asian-inspired patterns affixed at the upper right on the canvas.
- The surface of the painting is a many layered, with lines scraped away to reveal what lies beneath. Some of these lines at the upper left echo the breast/stupa form in a more ghostly outline.
- The painting exemplifies the artist's feminist themes and sensitivity to delicate materials, qualities that also characterize her later installations and actions.

### About the Artist

1961: Born in Bangkok, Thailand

1981–1986: Studies visual arts and communication design in Japan

1995–96: Creates the Ackland's *Gold Breast*

1998: First sculptural installation

2002: First solo exhibition in the United States