

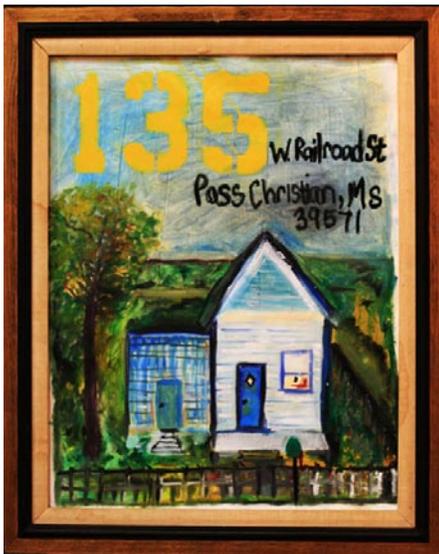
2007/08 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships

Mohawk Paper Honorable Mention



TAMEKA NORRIS
Fine Art
Sophomore
Otis College of Art and Design

“Going home for the holidays” took on a whole new meaning when I visited my family in New Orleans, Louisiana and Gulfport, Mississippi last month, December 2006. This was my first time seeing the coast... post-Katrina. I utilized my new digital camera to capture the many changes I discovered along my journey through the destruction and stagnant reconstruction of a place I called home.



Within moments of my arrival, I became aware of the violent collage that mother nature had created. The lives and possessions of thousands of people strewn across the landscape inspired my own collage, entitled “If home is where the heart is ...?”. It was my attempt to translate the visuals that overwhelmed me while I investigated the remains.

While shooting on a daily basis, I came across an endless amount of roofless homes with extreme water damage and mildew stricken walls. I was taken aback by a few articles of children’s clothing that were somehow still hanging neatly in the closet of a bedroom that no longer had walls. Numerous structures spray-painted with the words “Still No FEMA” expressed the personal and political struggles that followed this natural disaster.



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Fine Art

Despite the disastrous upheaval of their lives, many dedicated residents and businesses remain in the community creating order out of the chaos with the wherewithal to rebuild by any means necessary. The unaltered photograph, "Tolerance ... We Accept Coons," was taken at Mr. Greens' make-shift vegetable market set up outside his devastated home in Gulfport. A local elder sits on the stoop next to a sign that advertises a southern Mississippi delicacy... raccoons. The juxtaposition of the text, although slightly humorous, is tinged with the painful reminder that racism does remain in contemporary society.



Artists such as Clementine Hunter and Grandma Moses combined with my Southern Creole roots influenced the painting "My Grandmammy and Grandpappy house (dun floated away)". I began this piece just moments after finding out that the city of Pass Christian had been completely wiped off the map. I relied on memories of my grandparents' tiny, fragile house as I sought healing and understanding of such an unimaginable and catastrophic event.

I created the installation "I Am: Hanging Out My Dirty Laundry, No.1" as a public display of my uninhibited fascination with gender, sex, and sexuality. In the piece, a series of self portraits are hung with clothes pins across a laundry line alongside a doll sculpture with both female and male genitalia. The doll is one of many soft sculptures in my hermaphroditic series that have been used in other site-specific installations. In my artistic practice I am at once intrigued by sociopolitical commentary as well as personal identity.

I organized and exhibited my first show in December 2005. Since then I have shown my work at Kerchoff Hall, Lucy Florence Art Gallery in Leimert Park, and Black Cat Art Gallery in Culver City.

In August I will be transferring to Otis College of Art and Design. This art school will provide the perfect environment to further develop my knowledge and enhance my skills. Working within New Genres in the ACT program (Artist, Community, and Teaching) will set up the foundation to create a cohesive body of work and propel me towards graduate school, teaching, a career in the arts.

