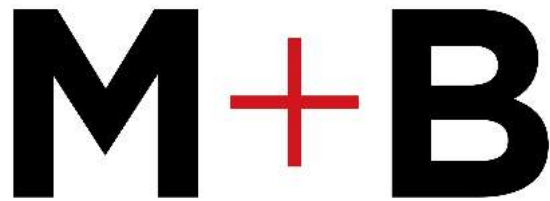


M+B

DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE

Press Pack



DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE
(formerly Bruce Davenport, Jr.)

BORN 1972, New Orleans, LA
Lives and works in New Orleans, LA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *The Culture Curated*, Fierman, New York, NY
Tatjana Pieters, Ghent, Belgium
- 2017 *Dapper Bruce Lafitte*, Art Los Angeles Contemporary, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Mrs. M. Abrams: Dapper Bruce Lafitte, Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Biloxi, MS
Dapper Bruce Lafitte: Kingpin of the Antpin, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
Kingpin of the Antpin: Artwork by Dapper Bruce Lafitte, Fierman Gallery, New York, NY
R.I.P. Bruce A. Davenport Jr. | Artwork by Dapper Bruce Lafitte, Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2016 *The Wild Wonderful World of Dapper Bruce Lafitte*, Third Man Records, Nashville, TN
The Dapper Comes to the Walkers, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
- 2015 *The Dapper Bruce Lafitte Does His Hero Mike Tyson*, Louis B. James, New York NY
The Dapper Bruce Lafitte Introduces: Draw Like a Butterfly, Sting Like a Bee, Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2014 Outsider Art Fairs, Paris, France
I See You Looking, Gallery of African American Art, Biloxi, MS
- 2013 *Bruce Jr. Does the Parades*, Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2012 *Good Stuff To Look At*, VACANT, Tokyo, Japan
- 2011 *Bruce Davenport, Jr.: All I Need Is 1 Pen*, Curated by Diego Cortez, John Hope Franklin Center, Duke University, Durham, NC
This Some Bad Shit, AS IF Gallery, New York, NY
I Give You Culture, AS IF Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *New Horizons: Self-Taught Art in the 21st Century*, Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC

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Pride Of Place: The Making Of Contemporary Art In New Orleans, New Orleans Museum Of Art, New Orleans, LA

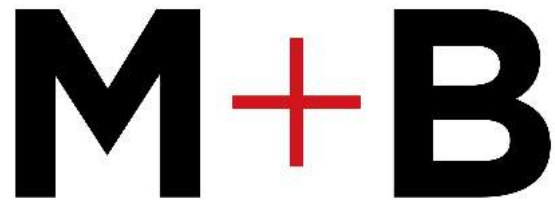
- 2016 *Dapper Bruce Lafitte and Friends*, New Orleans Main Library, New Orleans, LA
Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY
Duck Sauce, New Orleans Art Center, New Orleans, LA
- 2014 *Above Canal: Rights & Revival*, Prospect.3, New Orleans, LA
Outsider Art Fair, Paris, FR
- 2013 *Annual Art Show*, Poydras Home, New Orleans, LA
Whitney White Linen Night, Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA
- 2012 *Good Stuff III*, Curator, Homespace Gallery, New Orleans, LA
Prospect. 2 Biennial, Curated by Dan Cameron, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
- 2011 *The World According to New Orleans*, Curated by Dan Cameron, Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX
Prospect 1.5 Biennial, Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA
Double Crescent, C24 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2010 *Frenchmen, Desire, Good Children*, curated by Dan Cameron, Lambent Foundation, New York, NY
New Prints 2010, IPCNY, New York, NY / Visual Arts Center, University of Texas Austin
Annual Benefit and Auction, Dieu Donné, New York, NY
SOS: Magic, Revelry and Resistance in Post-Katrina New Orleans Art, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, New York, NY
- 2009 *Same Sweet Dream*, curated by Martina Batan, Dieu Donné, New York, NY

AWARDS

- 2010 Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts: Blackburn Printmaking Workshop Fellowship
- 2009 Joan Mitchell Foundation Award Recipient

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (VIDEO)

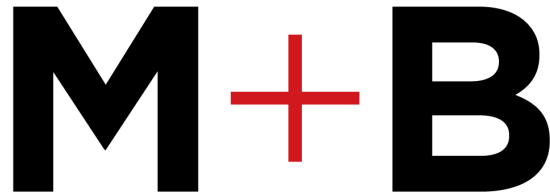
- 2016 *Interview with Dapper Bruce Lafitte*, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRfm_rmd05Q
- 2015 *Dapper Bruce Lafitte Explains his Art*, Arthur Rogers Gallery



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciAxaojIIYs>

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Bennetton Family
Diego Cortez
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA
Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA
Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
University of Texas, Austin, TX
University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA



DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE
(formerly Bruce Davenport, Jr.)

Dapper Bruce Lafitte (formerly Bruce Davenport, Jr.) was born in 1972 in New Orleans and grew up in the Lafitte Housing Projects in the 6th Ward. A self-trained artist, he began making and showing work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to commemorate the then-decimated street culture of parades and marching bands of the city. His vivid color marker drawings provide detailed reenactments of the vibrant pageantry of New Orleans culture, the artist's community, his personal heroes and historical events. The works have been exhibited nationally and internationally, notably in the Prospect Biennial, New Orleans and in solo shows at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum, Biloxi, MS; Atlanta Contemporary (curated by Daniel Fuller); Vacant Gallery, Tokyo; Fierman, New York, NY; and Louis B. James Gallery, New York, NY. Group exhibitions include those at the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX (curated by Dan Cameron); Lambent Foundation, New York, NY; the Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC; among others. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Hyperallergic* and *Victory Journal*, among others. In 2009, he was a recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation artist award. Lafitte currently lives and works in New Orleans.

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DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE

Selected Portfolio

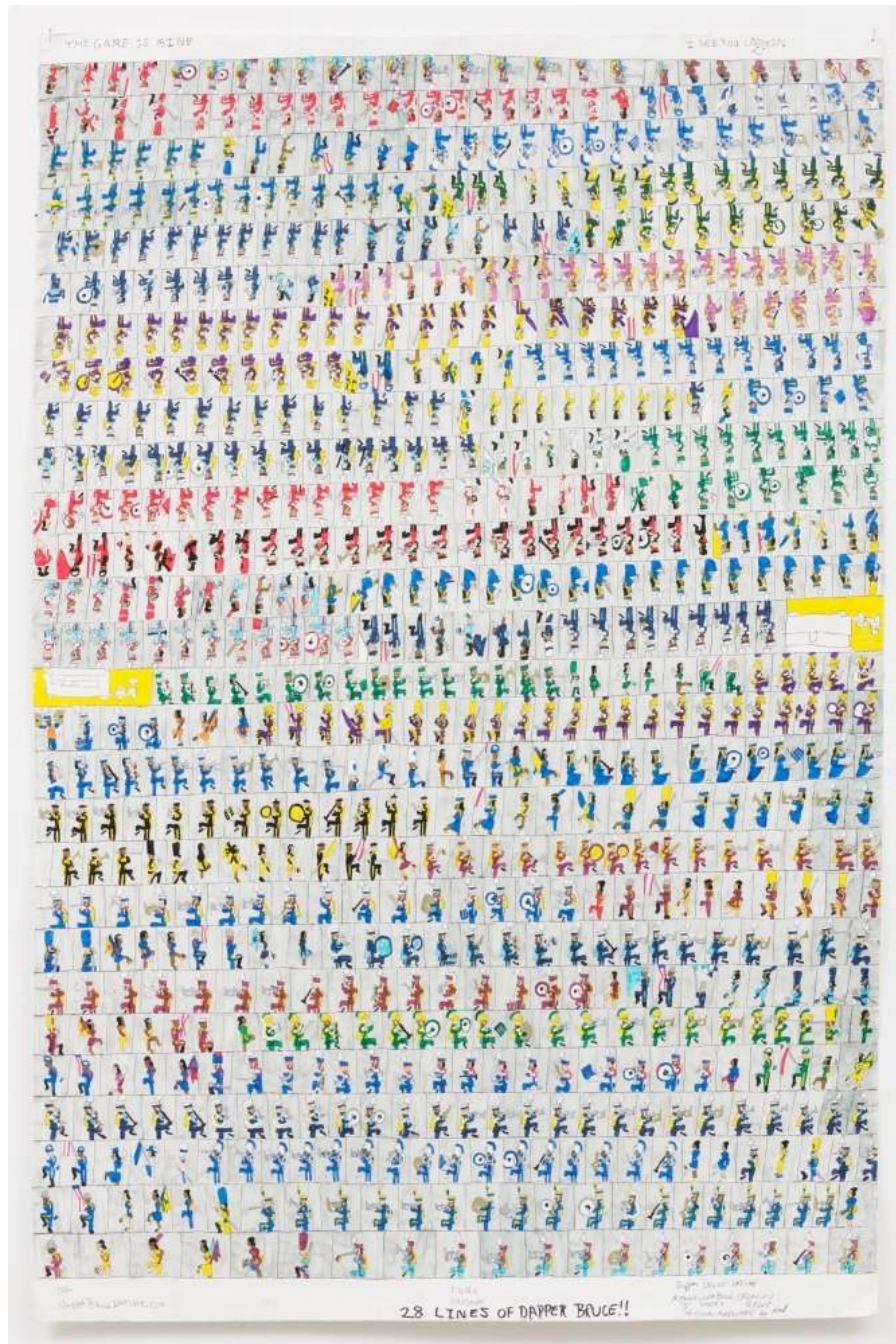
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Dapper Bruce Lafitte

Installation View of *R.I.P. Bruce A. Davenport, Jr* | Artwork by *Dapper Bruce Lafitte*, at Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans
August 5 – September 23, 2017

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents 28 Lines Of Dapper Bruce!!, 2017

signed and dated

archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0002.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents 28 Lines Of Dapper Bruce!!, 2017

signed and dated

archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0002.62)

(detail)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

Installation View of *R.I.P. Bruce A. Davenport, Jr* | Artwork by *Dapper Bruce Lafitte*, at Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans
August 5 – September 23, 2017

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents All I Need Its One Pen, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0001.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents All I Need Its One Pen, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0001.62)
(detail)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
Installation View of *Draw Like a Butterfly, Sting Like a Bee* at Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans
August 1 – September 19, 2015

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents Colored People Saying Goodbye, 2017

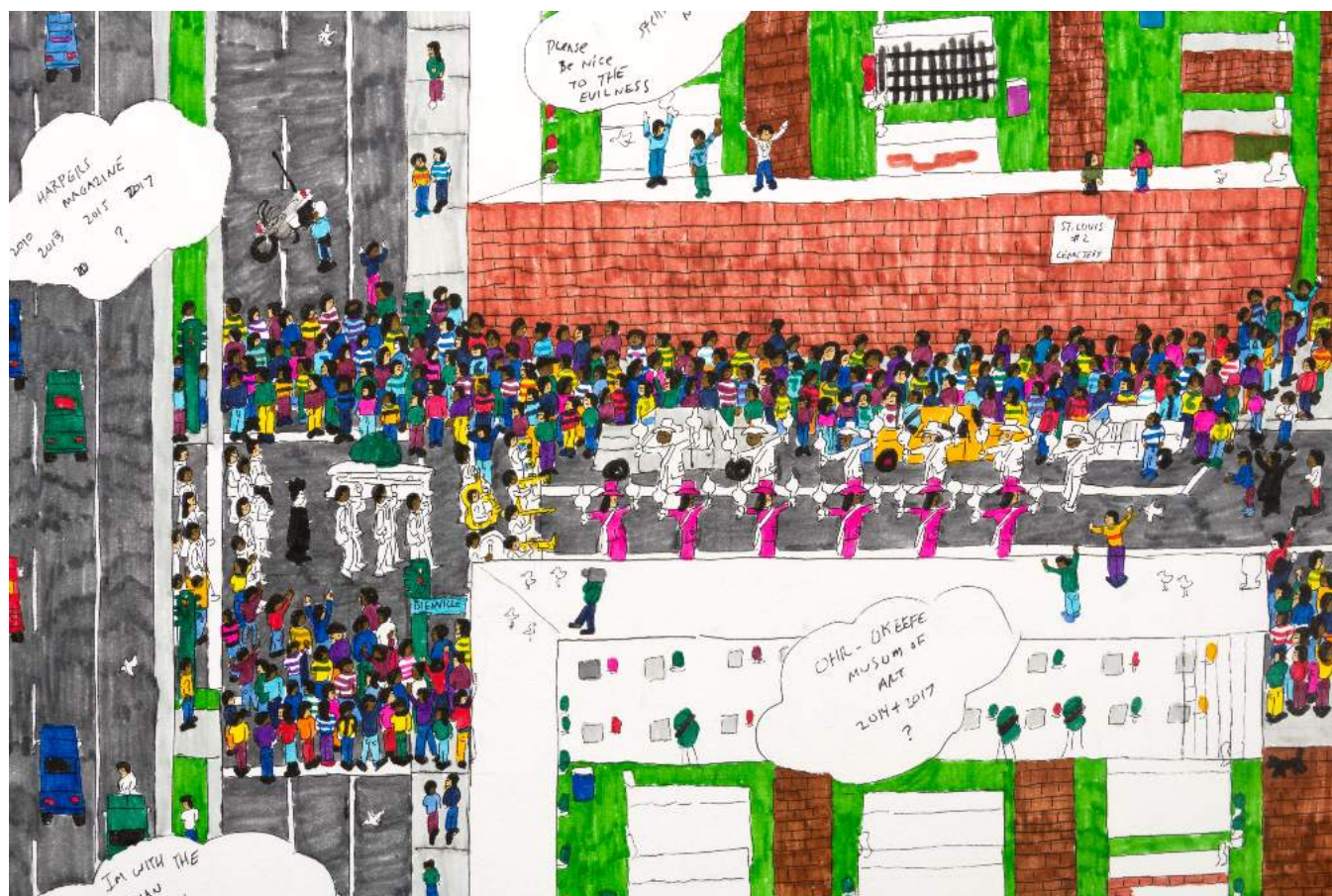
signed and dated

archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0005.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents Colored People Saying Goodbye, 2017

signed and dated

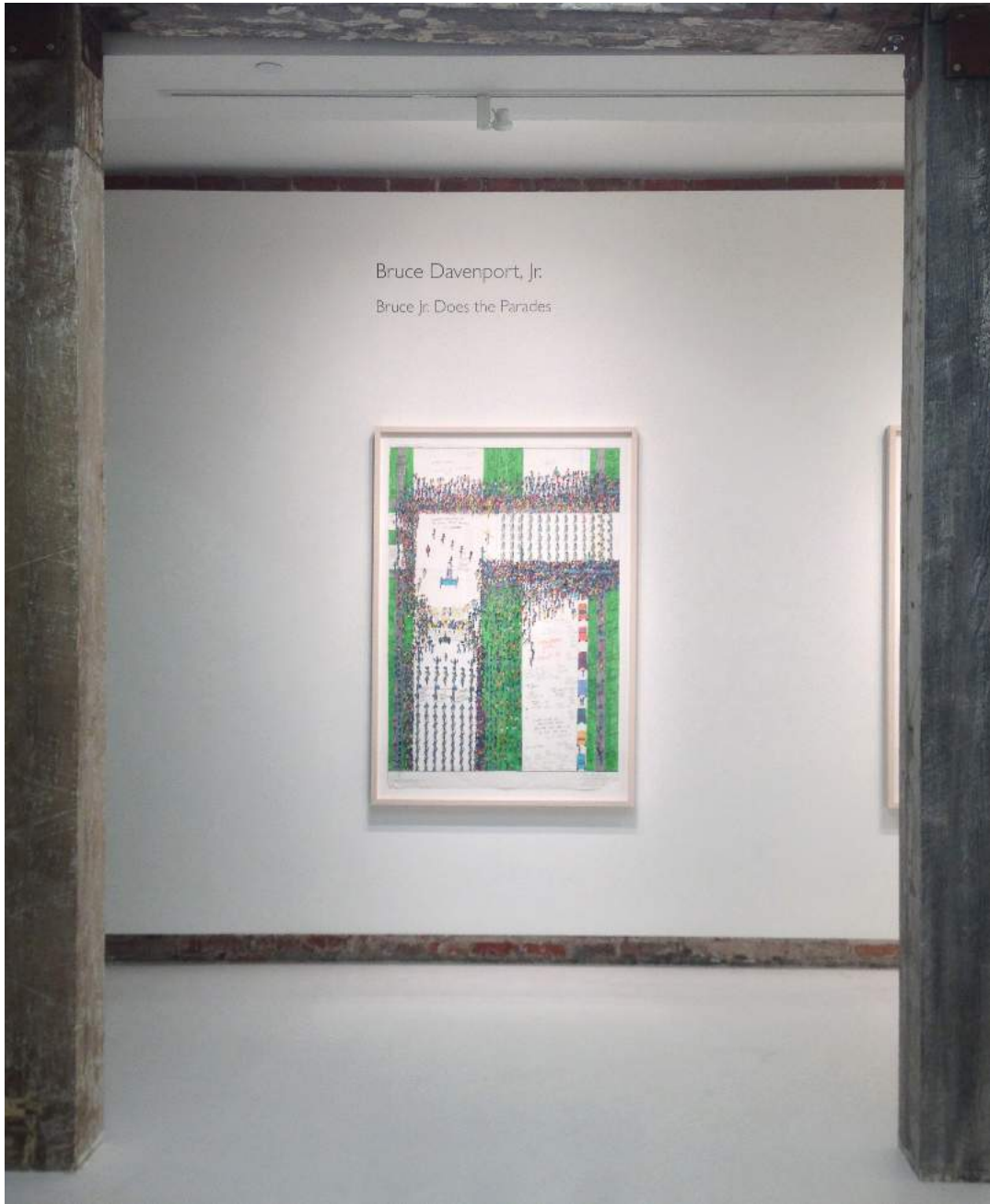
archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0005.62)

(detail)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

Installation View of *Bruce Jr. Does the Parades* at Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans
August 3 – September 14, 2013

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents Do You Have Ripple!!, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0006.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents Do You Have Ripple!!, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0006.62)
(detail)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

Installation View of *Bruce Jr. Does the Parades* at Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans
August 3 – September 14, 2013

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents Im A Wallhog II, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0003.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents Im A Wallhog II, 2017

signed and dated

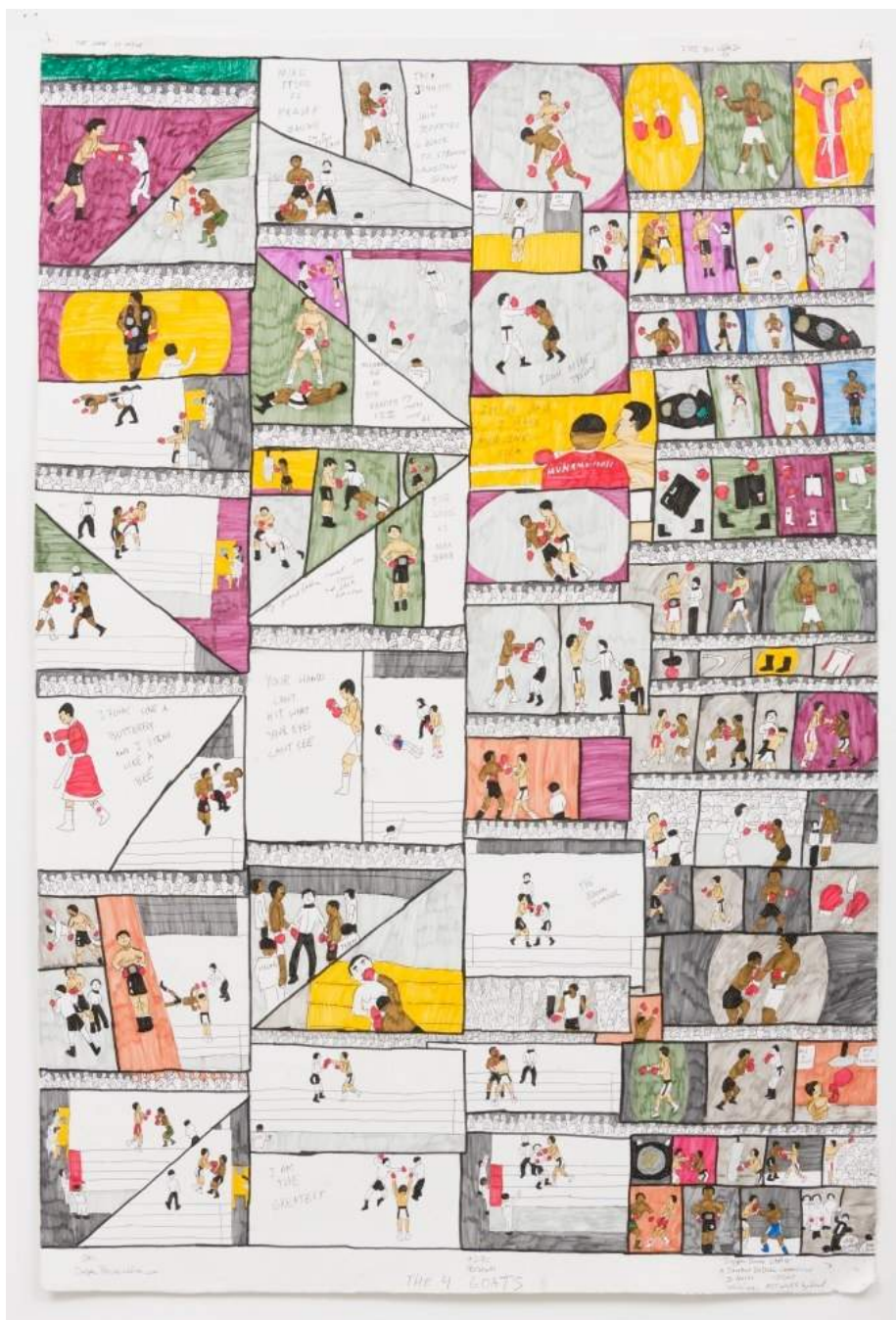
archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0003.62)

(detail)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
T.D.B.C. Presents The 4 Goats, 2017
signed and dated
archival ink on acid free paper
62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)
(DBL.17.0004.62)

M+B



Dapper Bruce Lafitte

T.D.B.C. Presents The 4 Goats, 2017

signed and dated

archival ink on acid free paper

62 x 42 inches (157.5 x 106.7 cm)

(DBL.17.0004.62)

(detail)

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DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE

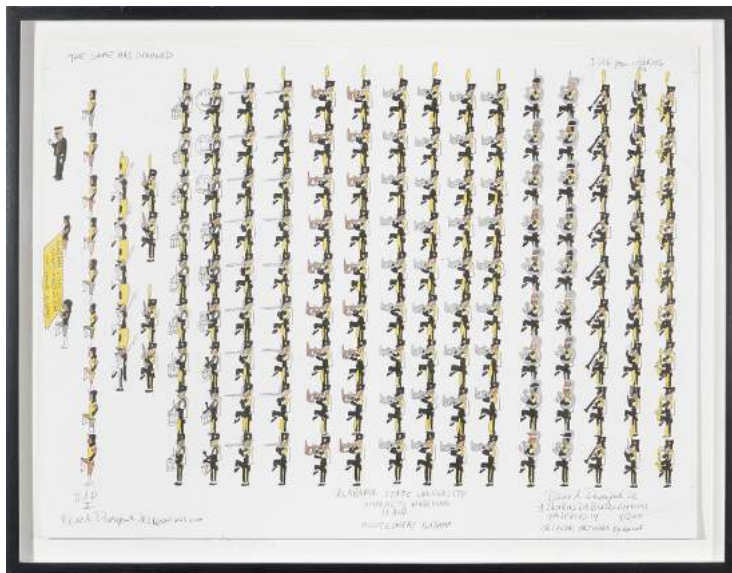
Press and Press Releases

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The New York Times

Dapper Bruce Lafitte

by Will Heinrich
July 17, 2018



When the artist who currently goes by Dapper Bruce Lafitte returned to his native New Orleans a year after being displaced by Hurricane Katrina, he started making drawings of his parade-mad city's high-school marching bands. Starting with schools that had been closed by the storm and working from memory, he initiated both his own artistic practice, which has subsequently blossomed in all sorts of directions, and an open-ended document of New Orleans folk history. The drawings, part of his new show, "The Culture," at David Fierman, evoke notes made by a careful court herald. The figures are thorough, but rudimentary, while the colors, applied

with marker, are vivid and precise. In two pieces from 2014, the Alabama State University band wears yellow and black and the Leopards of the Lake Area New Tech Early College High School wear red and blue. All of them play gleaming brass.

The key to the drawings' magic is the orderly arrangement marching bands take in real life. This lets the artist, formerly known as Bruce Davenport Jr., picture them, and lets us see them, in two ways at once: in a flat grid, with all the feelings of completion and control provided by a well-designed diagram, and at an angled, bird's-eye view that suggests a larger, more complex vista to explore.

For this show, he has also used work by fellow New Orleans artists to fill the gallery with some of that expanded context. Color photos by Moriah Blue give a sense of the Crescent City's sensory overload, and the intricate beadwork and comic-book imagery of Torrence Batiste's pink "Mardi Gras Indian" costume its unique aesthetic dedication. Brian Guidry's burlap clothing — made from discarded coffee sacks that he collected while working on the docks, and nodding to both the history of slavery and haute couture — is weirdly unforgettable. — WILL HEINRICH

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ART LOS ANGELES CONTEMPORARY 2018

Dapper Bruce Lafitte

January 25 - 28, 2018

Booth D4



M+B is pleased to announce its participation at Art Los Angeles Contemporary 2018 from January 25 – 28, 2018. Please visit us at Booth D4 where we will be presenting a solo booth of new drawings by New Orleans-based artist Dapper Bruce Lafitte. The fair marks the West Coast debut for Lafitte.

Dapper Bruce Lafitte grew up in the Lafitte Housing Projects in the 6th Ward in New Orleans. A self-trained artist, he was inspired to make work again in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as way to celebrate and commemorate his beloved city. His works often depict the parades, marching bands and the processions that are so much a part of the fabric of New Orleans. In recent years, Lafitte has also taken as his subject matter the history of the South, in particular the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement. Lafitte's intricate and vivid color marker

drawings provide detailed reenactments of the vibrant pageantry of the city's culture, the artist's community and his personal heroes.

Dapper Bruce Lafitte (formerly Bruce Davenport, Jr.) was born in 1972 in New Orleans. His works have been exhibited nationally and internationally, notably in the Prospect Biennial, New Orleans and in solo shows at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum, Biloxi, MS; Atlanta Contemporary (curated by Daniel Fuller); Vacant Gallery, Tokyo; Fierman, New York, NY; and Louis B. James Gallery, New York, NY. Group exhibitions include those at the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX (curated by Dan Cameron); Lambent Foundation, New York, NY; the Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC; among others. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Hyperallergic* and *Victory Journal*, among others. In 2009, he was a recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation artist award. Lafitte currently lives and works in New Orleans.

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New Orleans Canvas Magazine

New Orleans Visual Art Magazine

Dapper Bruce Lafitte and the Grittier Side of Art

by Erin McNutt

January 2nd, 2018

Over the last ten years, Bruce Washington (AKA Dapper Bruce Lafitte) has experienced the kind of success that most artists can only dream about. As a fellow artist, it would be easy to be jealous of his success were he not such a likable person. Bruce's personal story is simply engrossing. He comes from humble beginnings, and throughout all of his newfound fame and success, has never lost touch with his roots here in New Orleans.

Bruce grew up in the Lafitte Housing Development in the 6th Ward of New Orleans. This community has inspired his art so much that he has taken the name Dapper Bruce Lafitte to acknowledge its impact on his life. This inspiration is also apparent when you view Bruce's vibrantly detailed drawings chronicling his life in New Orleans. While Bruce is not shy about tackling the gritty subjects of poverty and racism, his art also documents the joyful parts of his life here in the city.

When we interviewed Bruce in early September at his New Orleans studio, he was hard at work on his newest collection.

EM: You once signed your art with the name Bruce Davenport, then started going by Dapper Bruce Lafitte. You also use the name Bruce Washington. How should your fans know you: Bruce Washington, Bruce Davenport, or Dapper Bruce Lafitte?

Dapper Bruce: Dapper Bruce Lafitte! Washington was my given name, then my dad came in when I was 13 or 14 and changed my name to Davenport. So Davenport

was going to be my sacrifice. He was going to be led to slaughter. Something was telling me, "Either you give up your talent or give up that name." So I gave up Davenport and picked up Dapper Bruce Lafitte. That's the name I put out there to let people know I had evolved. I'm into my 9th and 10th series of Dapper Bruce Lafitte. As Dapper Bruce Lafitte, I'm national now. I did the dirty work to promote Dapper Bruce Lafitte, but also the Davenport work is going to be more expensive and collectible because there's no more Davenport!



My Daddy Did Not Love Me

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As Dapper Bruce, my work is more focused on history. I'm drawing about the slave trade, WWII, the gangs. A grittier side of art. International affairs as well as in the 50 states. I'm going to tell the children: "You can be somebody! I made two people famous, Davenport and now Dapper Bruce Lafitte. You can do it too!"

As Davenport, I was learning the game. Green as a blade of grass. Learning the business side of it too. I learned who I needed to talk with and deal with to get the work in certain collectors hands. Then Davenport became drained, suffering. Now as Dapper Bruce Lafitte, it's all different and I'm happier.

EM: How long have you been working as a professional artist?

Dapper Bruce: I've been a professional artist since 2007 or 2008. In 2007, I started donating to the high schools. In 2008 I went to the Universities. In 2008 I met Dan Cameron (founder of Prospect New Orleans art extravaganzas) through CAC Gallery. Then my agent told me, "You need to tell you bossman that you have to take off work. You got to be an artist!"

EM: What job(s) were you doing before you took off to be an artist?

Dapper Bruce: I moved furniture for Kirschman's Furniture, Comeaux's Furniture, Universal Furniture. I moved trash for a trash company. I worked at Campo Food Services, in the freezer. I valet parked cars in the French Quarter. I also worked delivering condoms for an HIV prevention organization.

Those jobs gave me a range to go out to different territories. To show people, "Hey! This is my art! Maybe you can display it?" And it worked out for me like that. I took something from each job and put it in my life. When I went to work for the trash company and saw all of that trash all over the sidewalk, sometimes I would see artwork in the trash. I would be loading trash into dumpsters and people would be yelling to move on. When I delivered furniture, I remember going into rich people's homes, seeing artwork on the walls, and thinking, "I'm way better than those guys!" This made me say, "Bruce! Wake up from your nightmare and become an artist!"

EM: When did you first realize that your destiny was to be an artist

I remember growing up as a kid, going into museums and seeing artwork. The urge to be an artist was always there. But when folks like Dan Cameron and Stella Jones, Diego Cortez, As If Gallery, Freeman Gallery, Louis B. James Gallery became impressed, I finally realized that I was a serious artist.



NOLA Streets, Dapper Bruce Lafitte

M + B

EM: Tell us about your community and your family growing up and how these influenced your work.

Dapper Bruce: I remember the neighborhood I grew up in the 70's was good. In the 80's, crack cocaine came in. People started doing crack and even selling their bodies to get it. My grandmother would say that they'd allowed the devil to come into their village and separate them from their homes. I told my grandmother, "I'm not going to let that happen to me." Sometimes I would get on her nerves and she would say, "Why don't you go sit down and draw." I would sit there and draw for hours. Sometimes she would sit down and draw with me. After my grandmother died, my artwork became a way to keep a connection with her.

I remember going to stay with my Daddy for a couple of years when I was 15, the first time I really ever met him. There were some bad situations trying to adapt to each other. I remember for the first three months he was running in and out of the house, and I thought, "My grandfather doesn't do this." I tried playing football to get my Dad's attention, but that didn't work. He never came to my football games. I started getting girlfriends because I saw that he had lots of girlfriends. I wanted him to see that I was a man like him.

EM: What did he think about your artwork?

Dapper Bruce: He didn't like it. He thought it was a waste of time. He thought a man should get a real job. That's why I think as Davenport I was disconnected. People were expecting Davenport to do marching bands, and I kept telling them that I do more than marching bands. It was like people growing up in the projects, trying to get ahead but getting pulled back down into the crab barrel. There was an artist named Bruce Brice who would do murals in the projects that I remember seeing as a kid. Some people came and took them down. "Made the neighborhood look ugly." Say nothing about the lack of fathers and uncles, the lack of education, and more poverty. Without my art, I'd probably be in the penitentiary or the grave. I'd probably have twenty children. I would've given up.

EM: Where would you turn when things took a bad turn?

When it first got hard for me in the art game, it was like my grandparents were there for me, daring me to stop. Their spirits would pop up in my head and say, "C'mon, get up!" I feel like my grandmother's spirit is still looking out for me. I'll never go back into the crab barrel to ask for advice.



Get Out Colored People

M+B

EM: What's your work routine? What keeps you going?

I dedicate myself to my art work 325 days a year. The other days I'm on vacation. My work satisfies a passion and gives me something to leave to my two daughters. And then their children. Just like Picasso and Basquiat's families still get money, my children and grandchildren will get it.

EM: Tell us about the binders you have with you today.

Dapper Bruce: These are my write-ups, appreciation letters, etc. The binders are separated by year. I want to do six shows and three auctions each year. These help to keep me out of places where they don't want me. I only want to go places where they like me and need me.

EM: Beside drawing with your grandmother, was anyone else in your family an artist?

Dapper Bruce: My aunt taught me how to draw with a pencil, but mostly I'm it. Just me.

EM: Whose work inspires you the most as an artist?

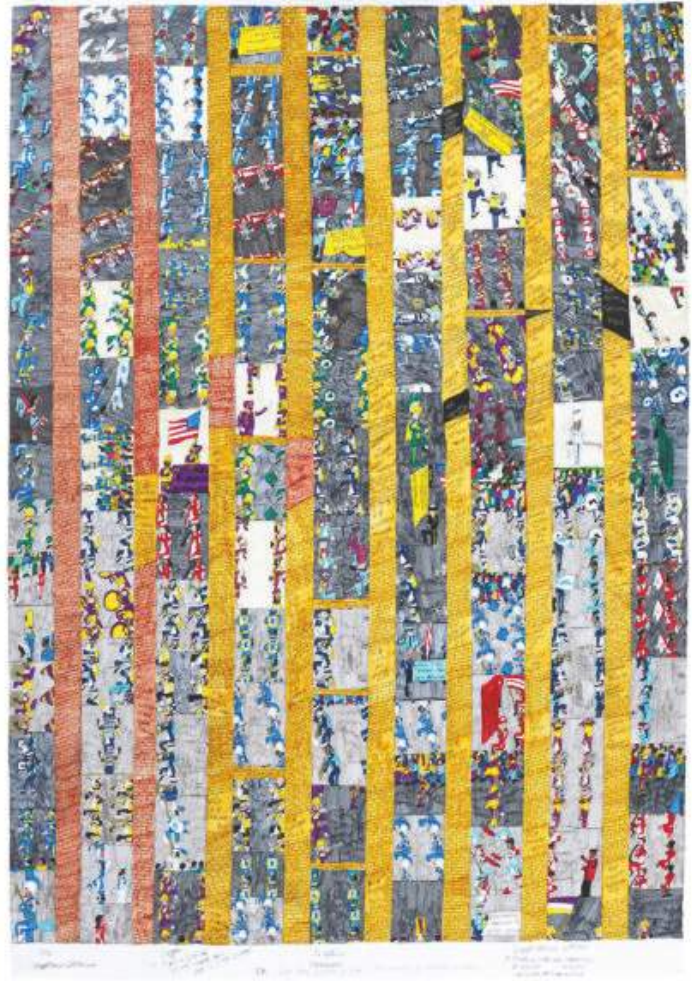
Dapper Bruce: I like Artie Burns, Clementine Hunter, Bob Ross (Bob Ross teaching me on TV!), Willie Birch, Bruce Brice, and Picasso. I also like Basquiat because his agent, Diego Cortez, was my first agent too.

EM: How did that come to be?

I met Diego Cortez through Dawn DeDeaux in New York. Diego and Dawn are best friends. Dawn wanted to introduce me to him so he could help my career. She mentioned that Diego knew Basquiat. She started peppering me up like I was going to a football game. Then we went down to MOMA and we were looking at art on the wall and she was saying, "You could be in this place! You need to get rid of that negative spirit in your head." And I told her, "I'm not going to call you Dawn. I'm going to call you Pimp Mother!"

And so she introduced me to Diego Cortez in the cafeteria at MOMA. I felt a connection. I drew something on paper, signed it and gave it to him. He looked at it and asked me who I was with and I said, "Nobody."

Dawn told him that I had no one to help me, that I had a bunch of wolves at my ankles. Diego said that he would help me and I just about fell out of my chair. He came out to the 9th Ward to Chartres Street and took about half of the work I had.



I'm in the Limelight Because I Draw Tight

M+B

After about two months, he called me and said he was coming back to New Orleans. He gave me some money and said he'd sold some of my work to Benetton. "I think you need to think about selling internationally because your work is powerful enough to go International. Just like Basquiat!"

He asked me to make more for him because he had more people who wanted to buy my work, 40" x 60" pieces, the same size as hanging in Arthur Roger's Gallery. He'd order a dozen at a time and sell all of them. So my prices went up from \$100 to \$10,000 on the big sheets. I was showing in Japan, France, New York, and Chicago. I started seeing the bigger picture.

EM: Were you terrified? Sometimes success is scary.

Dapper Bruce: Oh, yes! I was hearing how Basquiat became self-destructive and with my background and my people, I'm prone to destruction. And I was worried about my oldest daughter at the time.

But Diego taught me to manage the business aspect of it. The highs and lows. He taught me to invite gallery owners and curators to my studio. He also taught me about artists I didn't even know about.

EM: I see that you are a regular contributor to Art Forum. What did you think about being in Art Forum?

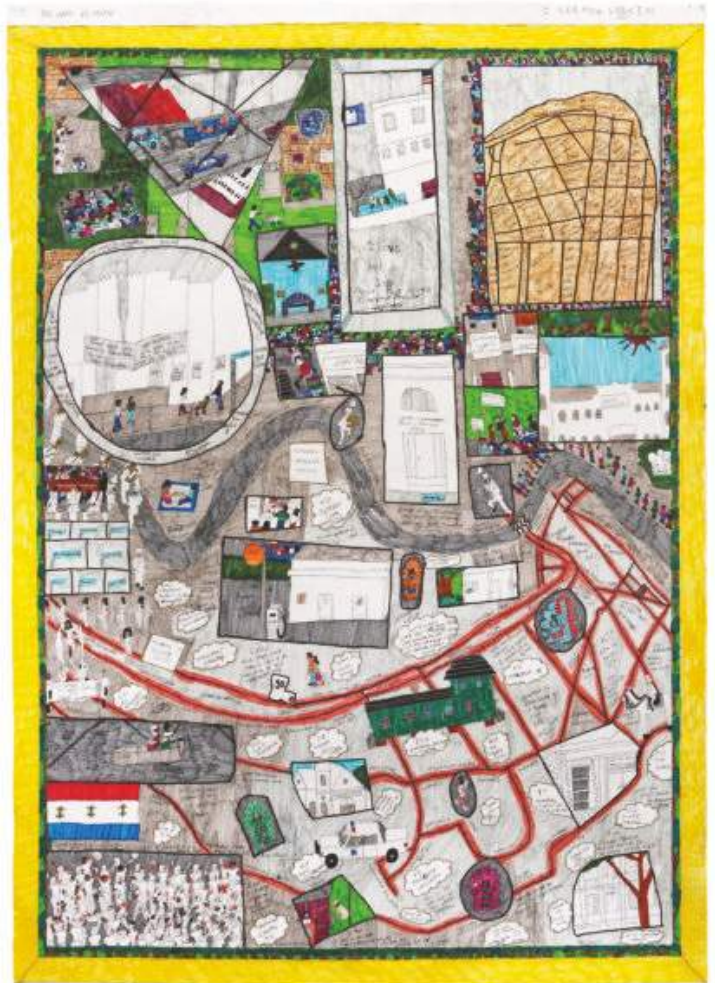
Dapper Bruce: It was a surprise the first time I was in it. Dan Cameron helped me get into Forum after I was in Prospect. I talked to the Forum author about

the article afterwards, and he said, "Bruce, you did good!" I only responded with "OK.", because I didn't realize the magnitude of what he was telling me. And he said, "Damn Bruce! Did you not hear what I just told you? Art Forum is going to follow you!"

I also remember the second time I got in Art Forum, I was in the Louis B. James Gallery in New York where I did Muhammed Ali. Forum wrote about that show too. Anything I send to Forum or Harper's, they'll put it in there.

EM: How do you handle negative criticism?

Dapper Bruce: Like a duck handles water! Where I came from there was negative all around you. You turn negatives into positives.



Let Me Talk To Your Art Students

M+B

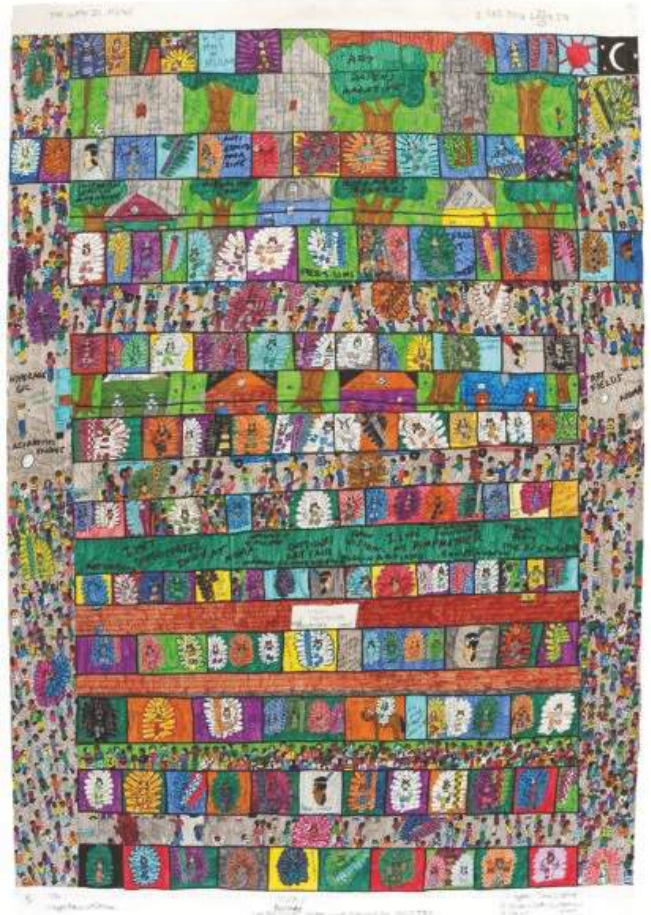
EM: If you had to pick one favorite of all of your work that you have done, what would it be?

Dapper Bruce: The work from Prospect 2 that was in NOMA because Diego Cortez and Dan Cameron had a hand in it. That was the only time I had both of them working for me at the same time. The art was special and Prospect 2 was special. That work is now in Italy. It was bought by Benetton. EM: What is the coolest art tip you have ever received?

Dapper Bruce: In 2010, Joan Mitchell Center handed me a \$10,000 check for some art. That was a good 'tip'! I felt like I was a real artist! I was able to get some studio space on Rampart because of them for a few weeks, which also led me to Arthur Roger. Diego Cortez also said to me, "Whatever you do, just keep drawing. The subjects will come to you."

EM: Have you ever had any medium other than drawing?

Dapper Bruce: No, just markers and pen. I remember when I was a kid in school, they gave me a paint kit to take home. And my grandmother pitched a fit. She said, "Don't come in here with that foolishness! Take that paint back and tell them you want a pen and a piece of paper to draw." She believed paint belonged outside and didn't want me to get it on her walls.



I'm Better Than Your Favorite Artist

M+B

READER

Bill Walker, Dapper Bruce Lafitte, and the virtues of angry art

Tal Rosenberg
November 22, 2017

On paper, Bill Walker and Dapper Bruce Lafitte, the subjects of separate, free, and ongoing art exhibits, don't have much in common. Walker, who died in 2011, was based in Chicago and known primarily for his murals, in particular the Wall of Respect, which Reader contributor Jeff Huebner called "one of the most significant, if unsung, artistic events of the turbulent 60s." Lafitte, 46, lives in New Orleans, where he makes elaborate drawings with markers and ink. But despite their having worked in different time periods and locations, I was nevertheless struck by how much Walker's pieces reminded me of Lafitte's, and vice versa.



Bill Walker, For Blacks Only 4, 1979

The most obvious similarity between Walker and Lafitte is that they're both black male outsider artists. What's far more interesting are the similarities between their aesthetics and creative decisions. Part of that is attributable to the medium: "Bill Walker: Urban Griot," which runs at the Hyde Park Art Center through April, and "Dapper Bruce Lafitte: Kingpin of the Antpin," which is on display at Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art through December 11, are focused almost exclusively on drawings. The artwork is equally vibrant and rich in detail; both Walker and Lafitte incorporate significant amounts of text in their pieces as well. Yet what stands out most of all are the ways in which Walker and Lafitte use anger as an artistic device, something that enriches and distinguishes their work.

Though larger and more wide-ranging in scale than "Kingpin of the Antpin," "Urban Griot" concentrates on a specific time period in Walker's life (1979-'85) and three series: "For Blacks Only," "Reaganomics," and "Red, White and Blue I Love You." Some of Walker's murals are represented at the start of the exhibit by photographs and explanatory text, but for the most part curator Juarez Hawkins favors drawings, paintings, and collages taken from the archives of the Chicago Public Art Group and private collections.

M+B

You can see glimpses of Walker's murals in these works. In *For Blacks Only 4* (1979), figures are rendered as all-black shadows: a man pointing his finger at a woman on a stoop, gentlemen in broad-brimmed hats walking into a shoeshine parlor, congregants filing into a church. It's a busy scene, with the storefronts and people all packed in together, just as Walker's murals tend to feature crowded, kinetic tableaux. It's also one of the few primarily celebratory pieces in the show.

For the most part, "Urban Griot" is informed by raw indignation. *Reaganomics 6* (1981) makes an explicit connection between the economic policies of the 40th president and white supremacy and racial violence: a giant Ku Klux Klan member personally lynches a black man, both of them facing a Nazi soldier who's squeezing a sickly man wearing a crown with a Jewish star on it. *Red, White and Blue 3* (1982) shows a pitch-black mother holding a pitch-black baby, both with narrowed eyes and downturned red mouths, standing in front of a sign that reads we no longer accept milk stamps; according to the program these figures represent the Madonna and child, perhaps symbolizing how America's Christian ideals are at odds with its actions.

Where Walker's anger is directed at the various aspects of 1980s capitalism, Lafitte's is focused on a specific event: Hurricane Katrina. For *T.D.B.C X Marks a Spot* (all the work in "Kingpin of the Antpin" was created in 2017), Lafitte draws cars and boats floating on a brown surface, likely the dirty water that flooded the streets of New Orleans in the aftermath of the hurricane. Lafitte seems to make specific associations between the hurricane and its effects on New Orleans culture: in black marker he writes on the water "RIP good Shit," "RIP justice," and "RIP sanity." Yet he also writes "make good art," an indication that expression might be a way to overcome the harshness of the storm. Like Walker, Lafitte calls out political leaders—*T.D.B.C. Presents Got Love From Ray Nagin* features trees, draped in the wires of felled power lines, with text written on the leaves ("no love from gov blanco" on one, "no love from g. bush" on another).

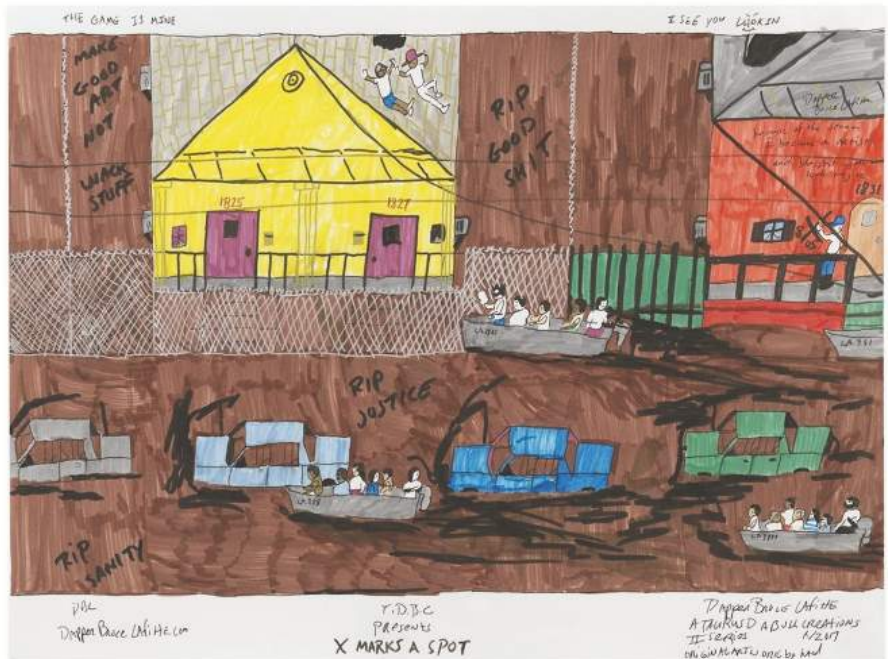
As heartbreaking as these works may seem, they don't register that way. In both Walker and Lafitte's pieces, tragedy doesn't have the effect of depressing the viewer. Yes, the pieces are often rendered in vibrant colors, but another thing that Walker and Lafitte's work has in common is that they're filled with people, a means of showing the humanity and liveliness at the core of urban communities, even those faced with injustice and loss. On the trunk of one of the trees in *T.D.B.C. Presents Got Love From Ray Nagin*, Lafitte writes, "I hope my art shows a good thing from Katrina." These exhibitions demonstrate that viewing anger only as an emotion is misguided; anger is a necessity, and a powerful resource for artistic expression.

HYPERALLERGIC

Drawing on Firsthand Experience to Depict the Horrors of Hurricane Katrina

by Jessica Holmes
April 21, 2017

Even after 12 years, the specter of Hurricane Katrina still hovers over the American psyche. Especially in New Orleans, ghosts of the storm's decimation now mingle vividly with the city's older ones, reminding citizens who remain that what was once entrenched before Katrina can never really return. The spectacular failure of government and infrastructure in the wake of the disaster also spurred cultural erosion, uprooting many of New Orleans' deeply held traditions and distinctive ways of life. For native New Orleanian Dapper Bruce Lafitte (who previously worked under the name Bruce Davenport, Jr.), chronicling the city as he once knew it lays at the heart of his practice. His new body of work in the show Kingpin of the Antpin documents the beginning of this seismic shift: the storm itself.

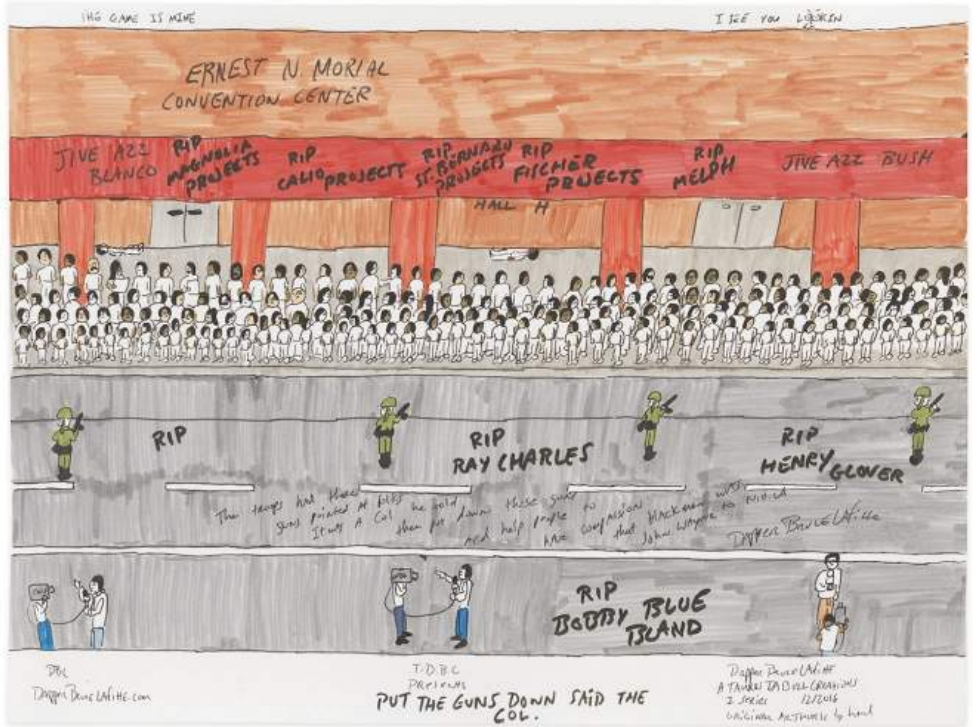


Dapper Bruce Lafitte, "X Marks a Spot" (2017)

Lafitte was born to a 12-year-old mother and raised largely by his grandparents in the Lafitte Projects (which were demolished after Katrina by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and from which his name derives) in New Orleans' 6th Ward. Though he displayed natural artistic talent as a child, he abandoned drawing as he grew older, only returning to it in the aftermath of the storm, driven by a visceral, almost mystical impulse. Shortly after Katrina, Lafitte began making pencil drawings of marching bands from the city's high schools, which he then colored, with fastidious precision, in marker. These scrupulous works on paper, which teem with hundreds of discrete characters rigorously lined up in marching formation along with their adoring crowds, are both a testament to the musical processions that are so much a part of the fabric of New Orleans and love letters to the schools themselves. Lafitte donated some of the drawings to the schools that survived and used others to memorialize those that were lost to the city's infamous post-storm educational restructuring. As recognition of his work grew, Lafitte also expanded his subject matter to encompass street scenes, Mardi Gras parades, boxing matches, and other scenarios where crowds gather.

M+B

Many of the works on view at Kingpin of the Antpin are also populated with scores of hand-drawn bodies, though this time Lafitte's scenarios are neither celebratory nor social. The pieces deliver a one-two punch to the viewer, who is initially drawn in by their jaunty colors but then startled by the harrowing narratives they portray. Lafitte recounts his personal experiences during Katrina: watching the early mass exodus of people from the city, the military crowd control complete with M-16s, and his own escape and eventual evacuation to Cobb County, Georgia. Works like "I-10 Westbound" (2017) make evident the shambolic nature of the rescue operations that took place: Lafitte depicts a swarm of people exiting military helicopters and being lined up on the ground by machine-gun-wielding soldiers. A handwritten note scrawled on one side of the drawing declares that a helicopter deposited Lafitte and a friend on "the I-10 by the Causeway exit."



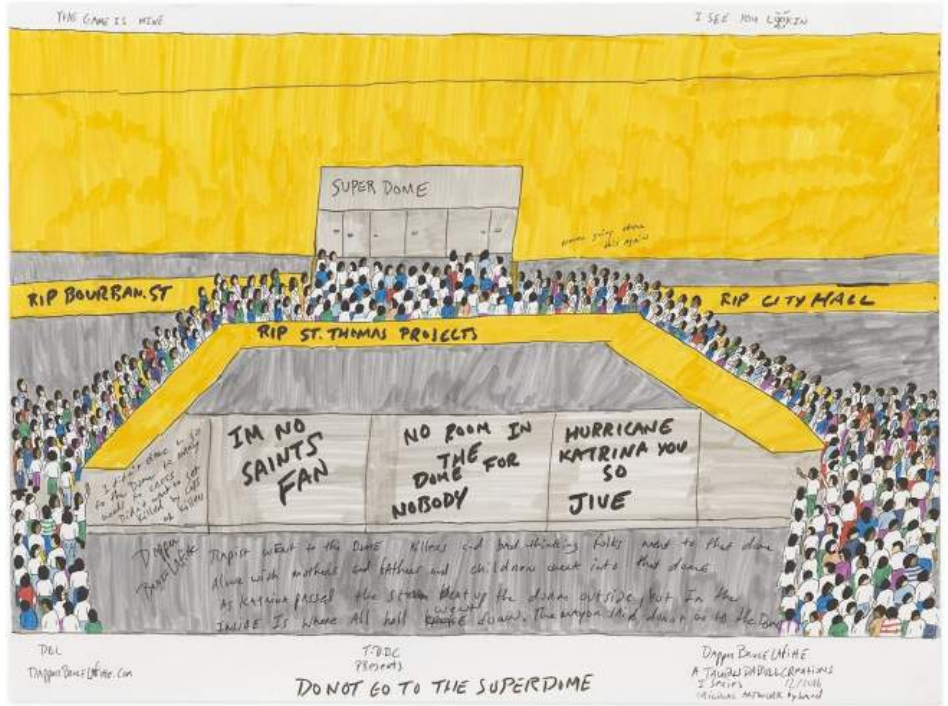
Dapper Bruce Lafitte, "Put the Guns Down Said the Col." (2017)

The message written directly onto the paper is no isolated incident: Text is part and parcel of Lafitte's work. He has always incorporated shout-outs to friends, family, and celebrities both living and dead, as well as political commentary, and he continues that practice in these drawings, which are additionally peppered with a fragmented, explanatory account of his Katrina story. A viewer needs a thoughtful amount of time with each work to truly appreciate the dizzying amount of information, both written and visual, that's being conveyed. In "No Love for the Poor" (2017), Lafitte's figures stream into the street from both the Magnolia and Lafitte housing projects — stout, brick-lined squares that anchor the left side of the page. The artist has marked the roofs of each "RIP Magnolia" and "RIP Lafitte," making the piece a tribute to these stalwarts of New Orleans housing that provided familiar community to thousands of low-income residents of the city for many decades but were demolished after the storm. When these, along with several other projects, were replaced with mixed-income housing, it was seen as an attempt to permanently drive poorer populations from New Orleans. The piece also contains shout-outs to several of Lafitte's personal acquaintances who have perished, and it seems not insignificant that every individual in the mass is dressed all in white — a color that frequently symbolizes death and mourning.

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Dapper Bruce Lafitte, “Do Not Go to the Superdome” (2017)

In another work, Lafitte’s crowds stream toward a school bus–yellow building: the New Orleans’ Saints Superdome, which was a last-resort refuge for many residents during Katrina. In the text on the piece, Lafitte recounts some of the horrors that allegedly occurred in the overcrowded stadium. “As Katrina passed,” he writes, “the storm beat up the dome outside, but inside is where all hell went down.” The work is titled, plainly, “Do Not Go to the Superdome” (2017).

Taken together, the works in this show operate on an archival level, recording a singular personal trajectory in a grander, historically significant moment. This is in keeping with Lafitte’s entire 10-year career. Born of the storm, it’s a practice dedicated to the preservation of an endangered culture. In a 2011 interview with Mark Anthony Neal on the YouTube series *Left of Black*, Lafitte lamented the frequency with which he is referred to as a “folk artist.” The reasons this might be so — because he is self-trained, because of the meticulous nature of his work, because it is geographically centered outside of a central art capital — are distinctions that have always been arbitrary and are increasingly antiquated in our ever-more-interconnected world. At the same time, the force of globalization is one of the greatest homogenizers of a community’s unique qualities. “This is a culture,” Lafitte says of New Orleans. “When I retire from this art, I have to go back to my culture.”

M+B

OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM OF ART

The Beau Rivage Resort & Casino Gallery of African American Art

March 28 – June 3, 2017



Dapper Bruce LaFitte's latest exhibit, Mrs. M. Abrams, is a departure for the artist in both style and content. His compositions are more abstract and vibrant in color, differing from the folk art usually prevalent in his work. This exhibit presents a bird's eye view of the physical and psychological effects of Hurricane Katrina on the city of New Orleans. Though hesitant to revisit his personal experiences with Katrina, LaFitte found that the creation of these

pieces helped to release and make sense of the complicated emotions that come with surviving such a disaster. He says "I feel differently about Katrina now, I don't feel the anger anymore." Making this collection even more personal, the title of Mrs. M. Abrams is an homage to the artist's grandmother; LaFitte characterizes her love and support as crucial elements on his journey to discover his own artistic identity.

Atlanta

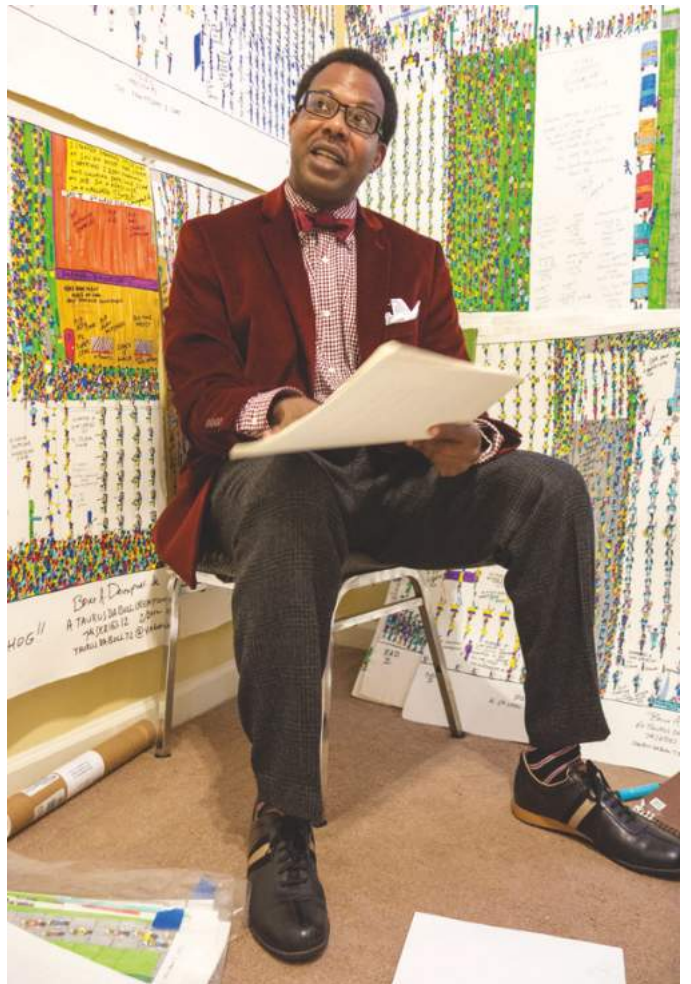
Dapper Bruce Lafitte's folk art honors a New Orleans tradition

by Tess Malone
May 6, 2016

"I can make art anywhere," says self-taught artist Dapper Bruce Lafitte. "It's in me." Just a decade ago Lafitte was sketching in a FEMA trailer in New Orleans; today his distinctive drawings (Lafitte likens the colorful style to Egyptian hieroglyphics) are displayed in New York galleries and, this month, the Atlanta Contemporary.

Born Bruce Davenport Jr., Lafitte grew up doodling in the Lafitte Projects in the Sixth Ward. By high school he had dropped art for football and only began drawing again seriously a few months before Hurricane Katrina. Since then he's produced thousands of works, introduced himself to prominent collectors and curators (including Diego Cortez, Jean-Michel Basquiat's former agent, who now represents Lafitte), and changed his name. "Dapper is style and class. Lafitte is where I grew up, so I take that with me," he says.

Many of Lafitte's incredibly detailed works depict New Orleans's celebrated high school marching bands, which all but disappeared in the years after the storm. His Atlanta Contemporary show (May 19 through August 7) features 30 18-by-24-inch drawings, which fit together to present one massive band, with smaller pieces below and above. "They're fun, [but] they also have political undertones," says Atlanta Contemporary curator Daniel Fuller. "He's making work emblematic to the South and to the city of New Orleans."



This article originally appeared in our May 2016 issue.

march on

Artist Bruce M. Davenport Jr., born Bruce M. Washington, aka "Dapper Bruce," lives and works in the back of a tidy shotgun house on a street of blocks from the Mississippi River in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans.

Davenport, 42, grew up in the Lafitte housing development in the city's 6th Ward, not far but a world away from the French Quarter. The Lafitte Projects "ain't there no more," to use a particularly New Orleansian turn of phrase, having been razed and turned into sterile tracts of mixed-income housing in the years after Hurricane Katrina. But the part of the Lower Ninth where he currently lives looks like it's doing just fine.

The first thing you see when you come into Davenport's living room are the two enormous aquarium tanks bubbling away practically in the middle of it. A big, sweet-looking turtle bobs contentedly in one of them. The next thing you notice is that whatever space in the room isn't filled by the aquariums is crowded with memorabilia related to Davenport's life and career as an artist. Stacks of magazines, newspapers, and drawings occupy whatever surfaces might have otherwise been used for seating, and a good part of the floor as well. Dozens of framed press clippings from magazines all over the world cover the walls, along with thank-you notes from principals and band directors for the drawings Davenport has donated to their schools. A giant framed poster of Biggie Smalls, propped up next to a bookcase arranged with Davenport's high school football trophies, watches benignly over all. The effect is equal parts atelier, archive, and bachelor pad, and the clustered clutter of words, faces, and colors feels a little like being in one of Davenport's drawings.

Davenport's dense, intricate art—which these days depicts boxing matches and football games in addition to the local high-school marching bands that first brought him prominence—has captured the attention of the international art market. In addition to exhibiting at three installments of Prospect, the Big Easy's contemporary art triennial, the artist has shown in places as far-flung as Marfa Ballroom in Texas, Vacant Gallery in Tokyo, and John Hope Franklin Center Gallery at Duke University, in Durham, North Carolina. Since being picked up by New York City's Louis B. James Gallery last year, Davenport and his work have been featured to great acclaim at the Outsider Art Fair (in Paris in October 2014 and New York in February 2015).

VJ: So I hear you played football in school. Were you an artist back then? **BD:** I played football at Bell Junior High, and then I went to Joseph S. Clark High School and played there. I was pretty good coming up as a football player. I played tight end, and then I was an outside linebacker. When I went to college they moved me to strong safety, then back to linebacker.

We had art classes in school but it wasn't taken too seriously when I was coming up. I loved art but I didn't have an audience to show it to. I didn't have people who understood art to show me the way. My grandparents, who raised me, told me that since I liked art, I should sit down and do it. It would keep me out of trouble. I could always look at something and draw it—I just had to look at it long enough and get it in my mind.

When I got older, it stopped, because the school cut down the art programs. So I wanted to play football instead. I was good at art, but now I had to show that I was good at football as well. So I let art get away from me. It's like you're married to art, but you go and cheat on it with something else.

VJ: When did you start making art again? **BD:** Well, after college I came back to New Orleans and went to work for

12 years. I started drawing again about a month before Katrina hit. I wanted to see if I still really was a talented artist. My plan was to go to galleries and show them my work and see what would happen.

But *BAM!* When Katrina came, it knocked all that out. I got sent to Atlanta, and then to Minnesota, and in Minnesota my social worker said, "You need to be an artist, because you're good." I said, "That's what my grandmother told me!" So I said I would go back to New Orleans and make a mark on New Orleans like Katrina did. My whole thing was to defeat Katrina. Whatever memories we had before Katrina, I'm going to draw them and make people feel happy, and it's going to be alright.

VJ: How did you decide to start drawing marching bands? **BD:** I thought if I did the bands first, maybe that would excite people. If I did Katrina, people would be like, "Nuh-uh, that's too rough, we already seen enough of that." But then with the bands—I could donate art to all the high schools in New Orleans. I wanted them to see it and say, "You're a fan of us, and we like you."

VJ: It was after Hurricane Katrina when your career really took off? **BD:** Yeah, but it took a while. After I went to college and then started working, I would deliver furniture to people's houses and see art on their walls and I would tell them, "I can do better than that." And they'd say, "Just take this tip and get on out of this house." So I thought, 'Alright, I need to show these people something.'

So when I came back to New Orleans after the storm I sat down and started thinking about art again. I kept thinking about those people who put me out of their house when I told them their artwork wasn't good. I kept thinking of that social worker who told me I should be an artist. I kept thinking of my grandparents and about the people who loved my art, and I thought, 'I got to please them.'

Then, when guys from the art world seen it, it took off. By my third year [making art], I'm showing in New York. By my fourth year, I hooked up with [curator] Diego Cortez and we're going to Tokyo and going to France and doing biennials. He had all these connections.

We did a show at Duke University, and I did an interview with this black history professor, and when we finished he just looked at me and said, "Man, you just hipped me to something new. I knew all about Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, and you can be the next one. Whatever you do, you need to inspire the next generation." And then that stuck to me. *BAM!* I didn't know I could inspire another generation, inspire people who didn't have hope. And so the art got a little more intense, the work got a little bit better, and then the stuff on it, like the texts, started switching up.

VJ: Let's talk about the text. What are all the phrases that keep appearing in different drawings? **BD:** The texts started with just my signature and where I came from. Then I put different things, like "R.I.P." for my grandparents or maybe a family member, or a teacher who inspired me, or for bands for schools that were closed by Katrina. It's a way to remember them. I'll put their name on it and it's like a shout-out to them. And "I see you looking"—what happened is that maybe a lot of times I can't go to Spain, or to Germany with the artwork, but the artwork is there—and I want people to be like, "OK, this artist is looking at me, because I'm looking at his art." I put that on there so they'll go looking for me too. And when they start looking for me, they start looking at everything, all the detail.

And then with "The game has changed"—it means that the artwork has changed. Everything about it changes—the size of the paper, even what I put on the back of the artwork. Different galleries change. Everything in life changes. So I put "The game has changed" on everything to express that. Next year, I'm going to start putting "The game is mine" on the artworks now.

VJ: You talk a lot about art in terms of it being a game. **BD:** When I got into this art game, I wanted to shake it up. And *BAM!* When I shake it up, I can control it. It's all mine.

My whole thing is about competing. Art is like a football game. The shows are like a football game. Getting a show in a museum is like the Super Bowl to me. When you get up on that wall, you gotta have people running up to that wall and you gotta put a smile on their faces. And at the end of the show, just like at the end of the game, people are going to be shaking your hand, saying, "Good job!" You want to walk through your neighborhood and you want people to be proud of you. They're like, "Good game!" You want to be the baddest thing they've ever seen.

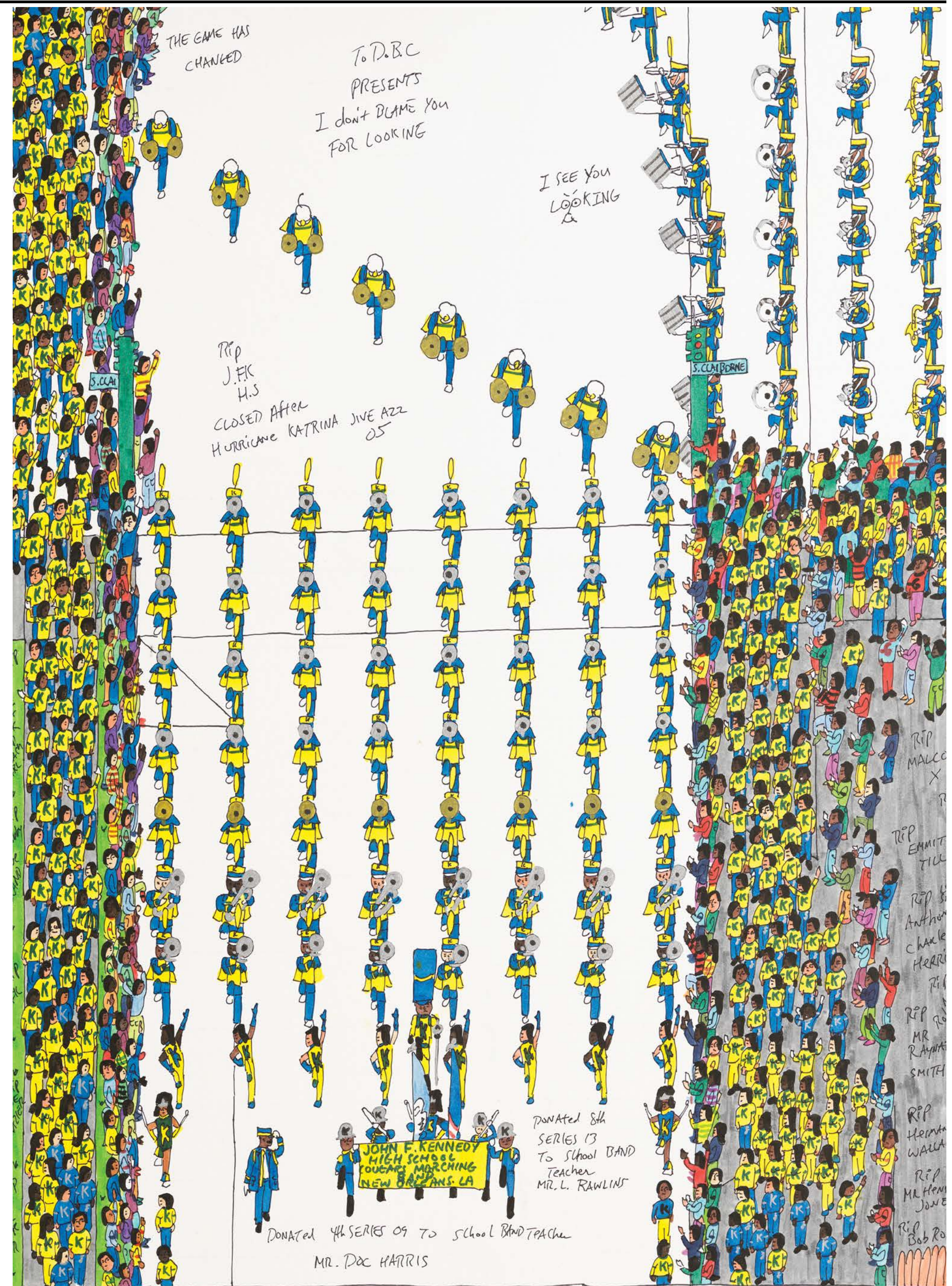
So that's how I play it in the art game. They put me next to Picasso, I'm gonna kick his ass. They put me next to any artist, I'm gonna kick his ass too. If they put me in the folk art game, I want to dominate it. If they put me in the contemporary art game, I'm going to dominate that too. So it doesn't matter to me where they put me.

VJ: Do you consider yourself a New Orleans artist? **BD:** I want to be a New Orleans artist who's separated from all the bad things about New Orleans: the crime, the bad politicians, the evilness that's going on. And I want my art to be separate from anything that makes people forget about education. People are all about the Saints being the "home team." I say forget about the home team—it's all about the home people you gotta cheer on. So I don't care what you want to call my art. Call it "Bruce Art," because no one does what I do.

VJ: People who only know your marching band drawings are sometimes surprised to know that you've moved on to drawing other things now, like boxing. **BD:** When I was coming up it was all about Tyson, and when my uncle was coming up it was Muhammad Ali, and when my grandad was coming up it was Joe Louis. So my grandad would talk about Joe Louis to my uncles, and they would talk about Ali to me, and I want to talk about Mike Tyson to the world. I'm happy to be part of a generation who had a superstar, just like Ali and Joe Louis were superstars for my grandad and my uncles.

VJ: Can you talk about how sports and marching bands are related, especially in New Orleans? **BD:** When we were coming up it was all related—education and athletics and the bands. So kids were well grounded. But this generation is losing something. Like now, when you go into a school and see a football team, there're only 15 kids who want to play. And only maybe six of them have enough skill to play and to move on to another level. Some of these kids even have the wrong teachers and coaches in the schools holding them back. So when they come out of school, they're hurt and mad and upset and their parents may not be home, so then they're double mad and upset. And then you have an angry kid with no way to get out.

We can gain from telling stories. I gained something from being an artist, from being a human being. I just gained, over time. That's why I said the game has changed, and that's why I say now that the game is mine. ■

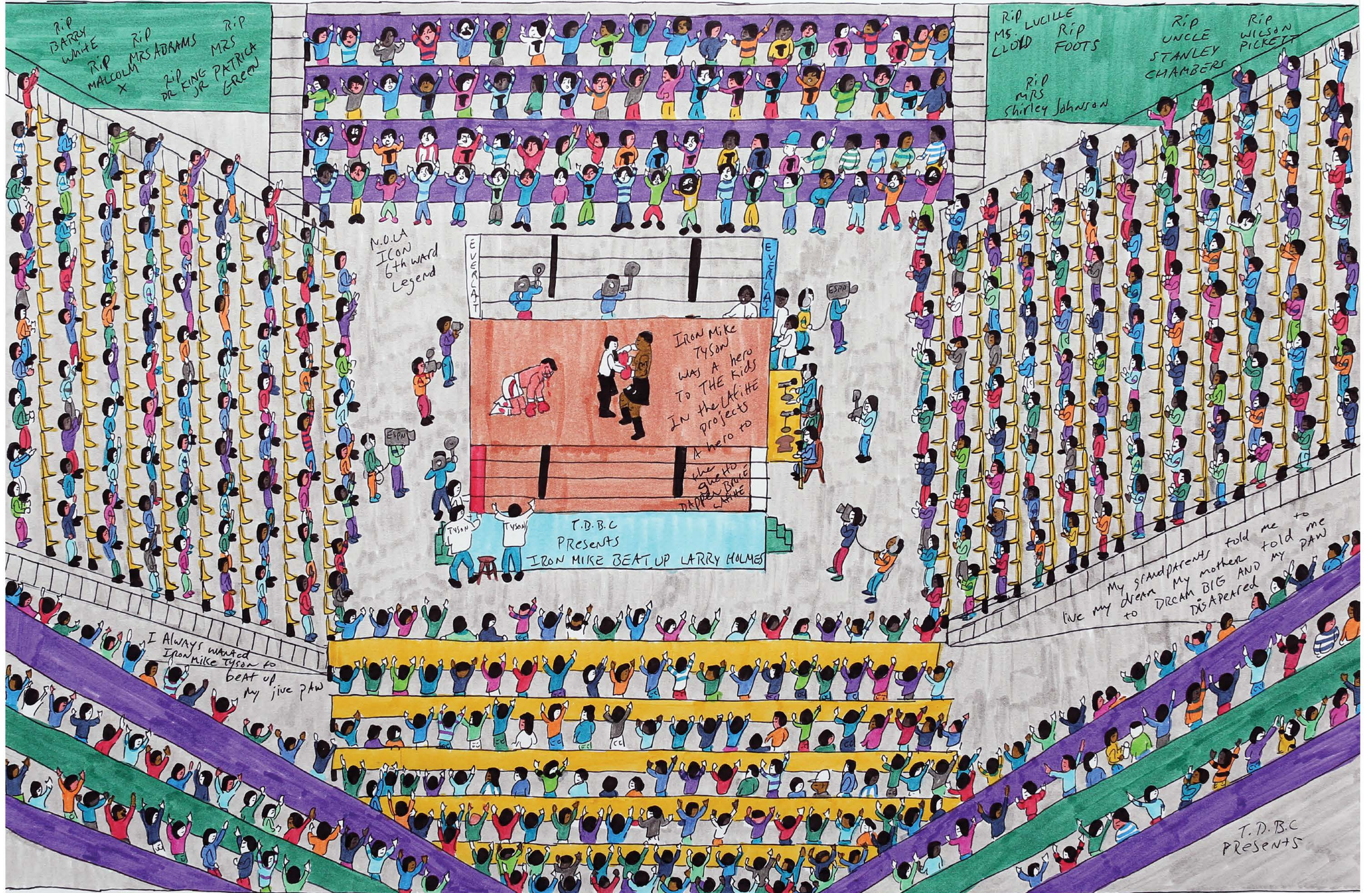


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ORIGINAL ARTWORK by hand

THE GAME HAS CHANGED

I SEE YOU LOOKIN



D.B.L
DAPPER BRUCE LAFIHE

Bruce A. Davenport, JR
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9th Series 14 12/2014
ORIGINAL ARTWORK by hand

RIP BARRY WHITE
RIP MRS ABRAMS
RIP MRS PATRICK GREEN
RIP MALCOLM X
RIP KING JR
RIP DR KING JR

RIP MS. LUCILLE CLOUD
RIP FOOTS
RIP MRS Shirley Johnson
RIP UNCLE STANLEY CHAMBERS
RIP WILSON PICKETT

M.O.L.A
Icon
6th Ward
Legend

EVERLAST

EVERLAST

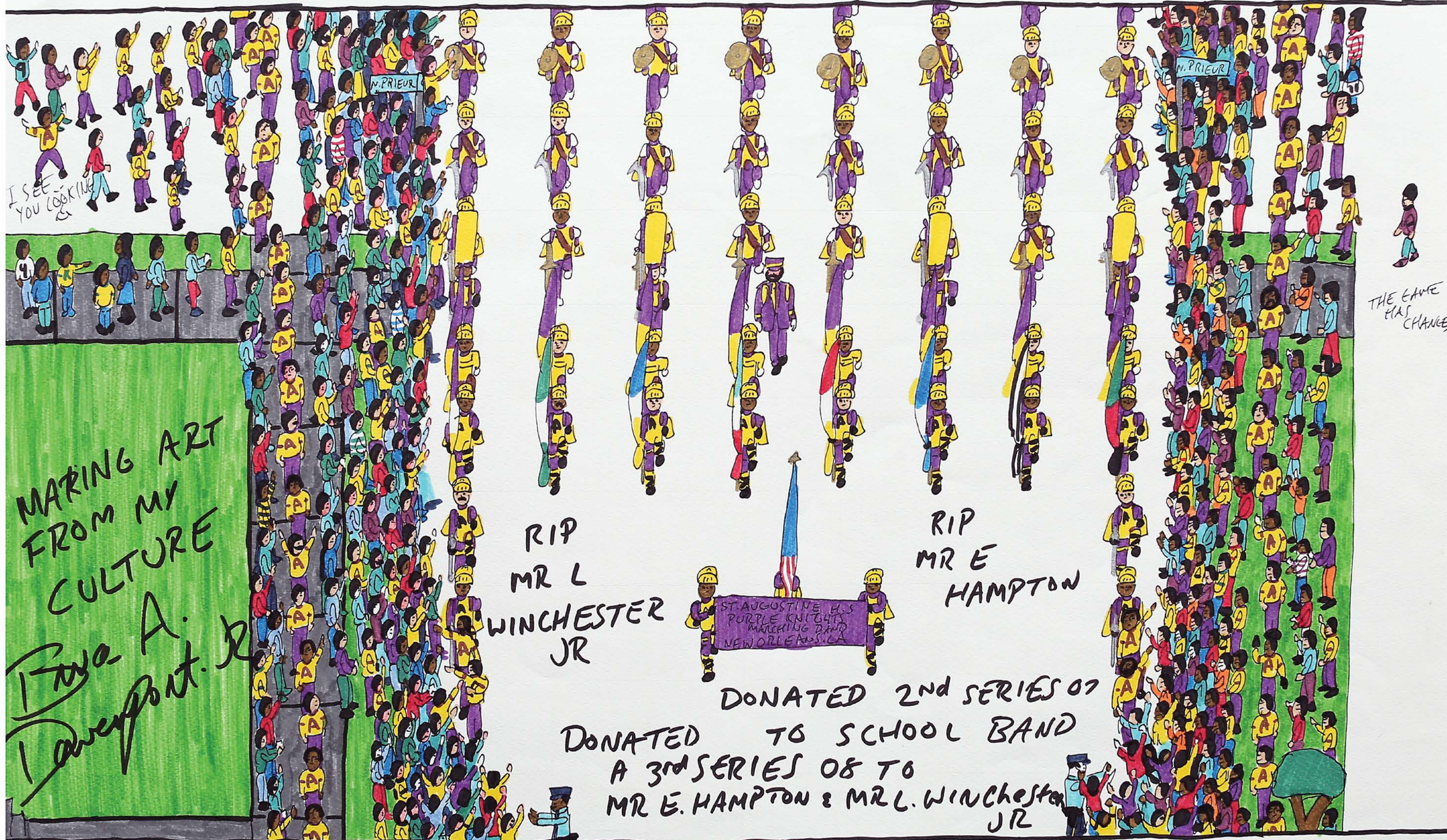
IRON MIKE TYSON
WAS A HERO
TO THE KIDS
IN THE LAFIHE
PROJECTS
A HERO TO
THE
GREAT
DAPPER
BRUCE
LAFIHE

T.D.B.C
PRESENTS
IRON MIKE BEAT UP LARRY HOLMES

My grandparents told me to
live my dream to DREAM BIG AND
to DREAM BIG AND DISAPPEAR
My mother told me to
live my dream to DREAM BIG AND
DISAPPEAR

I Always wanted
Iron Mike Tyson to
beat up
my jive paw

T.D.B.C
PRESENTS



MAKING ART FROM MY CULTURE
Bruce A. Davenport, Jr.

RIP MR L WINCHESTER JR

RIP MR E HAMPTON

DONATED 2ND SERIES OF A 3RD SERIES OF TO MR E. HAMPTON & MR L. WINCHESTER JR

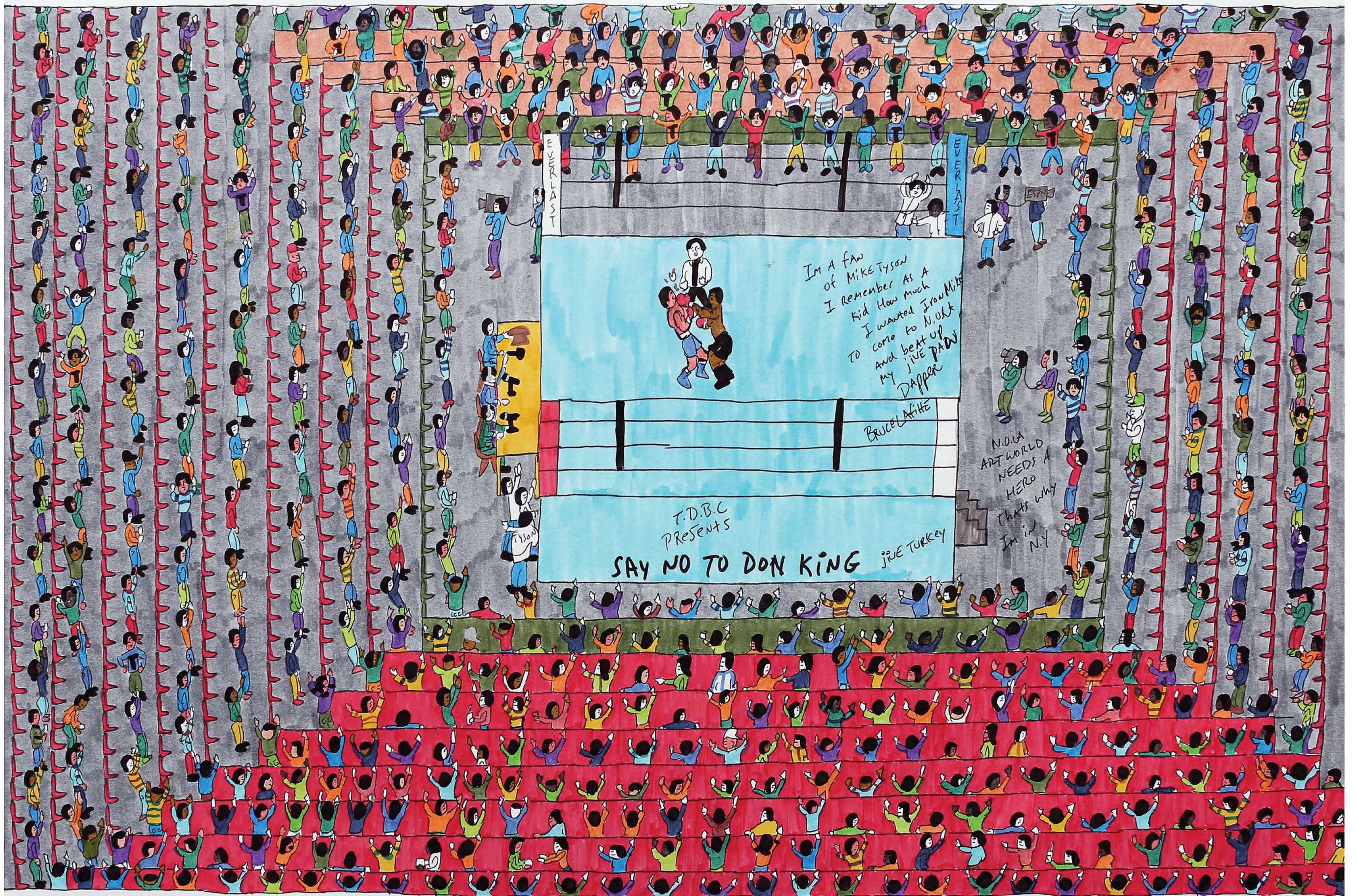
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T.D.B.C PRESENTS PURPLE ON N. PRIEUR ST

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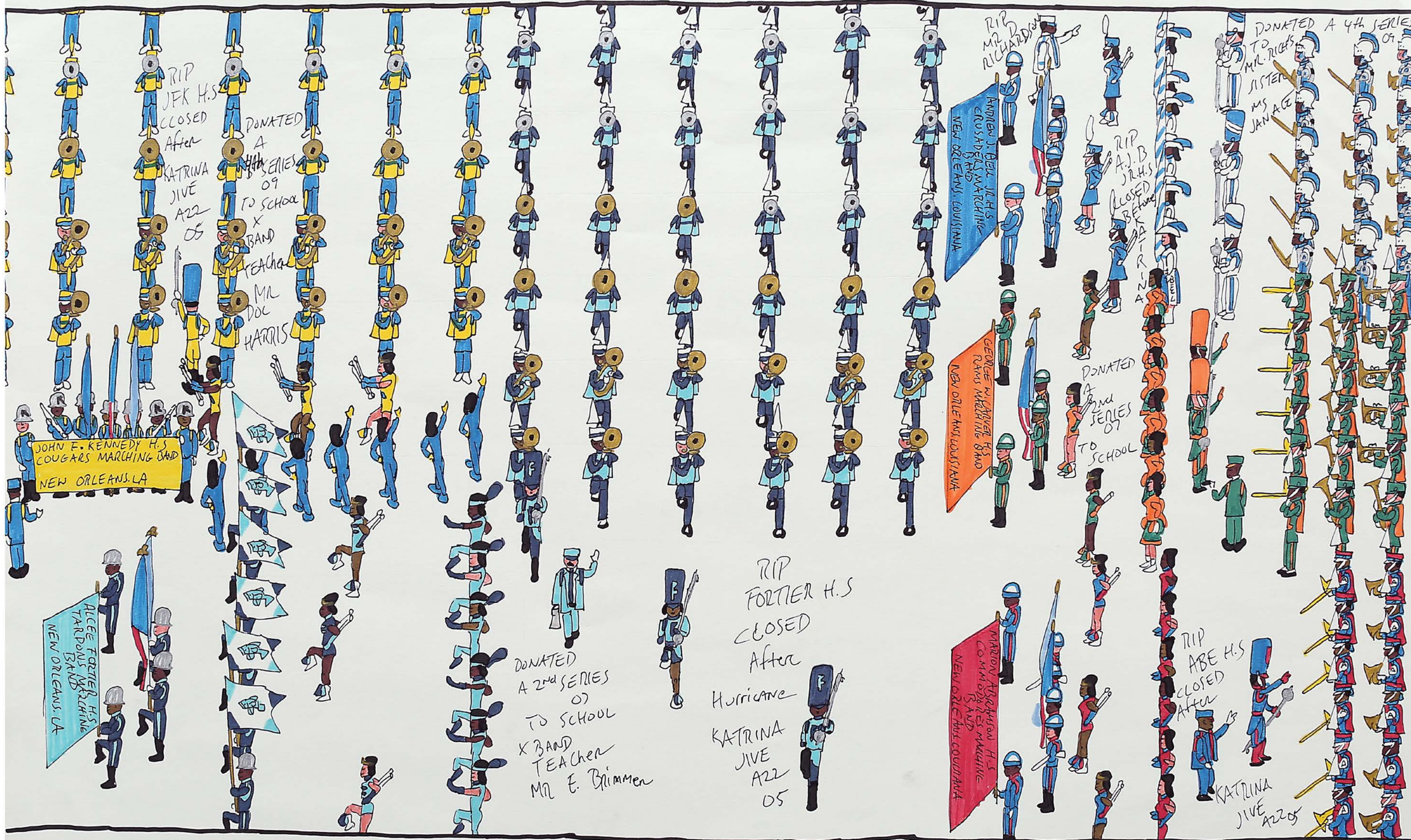


B.A.D II
DAPPER BRUCE LAFIHE

Bruce A. Davenport, Jr
A TAURUS DABULL CREATIONS
9th Series 14 12/2014
ORIGINAL ARTWORK by hand

THE GAME HAS CHANGED

I SEE YOU COOKING



B.A.D II

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ARTHUR ROGER | GALLERY

BRUCE DAVENPORT, JR. – THE DAPPER BRUCE LAFITTE INTRODUCES: DRAW LIKE A BUTTERFLY, STING LIKE A BEE

JULY 22, 2015



This is Bruce Davenport, Jr.'s second exhibition with the gallery. The four large-scale works are tributes to renowned heavyweight boxer champion Muhammad Ali. Each vivid color marker drawing, rendered in the artist's celebrated style, is a variation of a common composition – an aerial view of a boxing match. Featured in the ring are the referee, Ali, and his opponent – Floyd Patterson, George Foreman, “Smokin’ Joe” Frazier among others. Surrounding the ring are meticulously rendered rows with throngs of spectators. Bordering this narrative are snapshots of Ali in action, along with memorable quotes such as, “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” and “Your hands can’t hit what your eyes can’t see.”

Customary in Davenport, Jr.'s works are the scrawlings of his personal thoughts and observations – scattered throughout in pockets of quiet spaces. Common themes include Ali's influence on the artist as a child, who Davenport, Jr. describes as, “a hero to the black kids in the Lafitte Projects.” He also laments his relationship with his father noting, “I always needed a better father figure than what I had and Muhammad Ali was that father figure to me.” The drawings in this exhibition continue the artist's examination of family, community, celebrity and legacy.

Bruce Davenport, Jr. was born in 1972 at Charity Hospital and grew up in the Lafitte Housing Projects in the 6th Ward. With the encouragement of his grandparents who raised him, he began to draw at the age of five as a means to entertain himself and document the world around him. The artist has been described as, “not so much a self-taught artist as he is a self-taught anthropologist.”

Bruce Davenport Jr.'s work has received national attention. He has exhibited at the Dieu Donne Gallery and the As If Gallery in New York and also at the Lambent Foundation in New York. His work was exhibited at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans as part of Prospect 1.5 and at the New Orleans Museum of Art as part of Prospect 2. Bruce Davenport lives and works in the Lower 9th Ward.

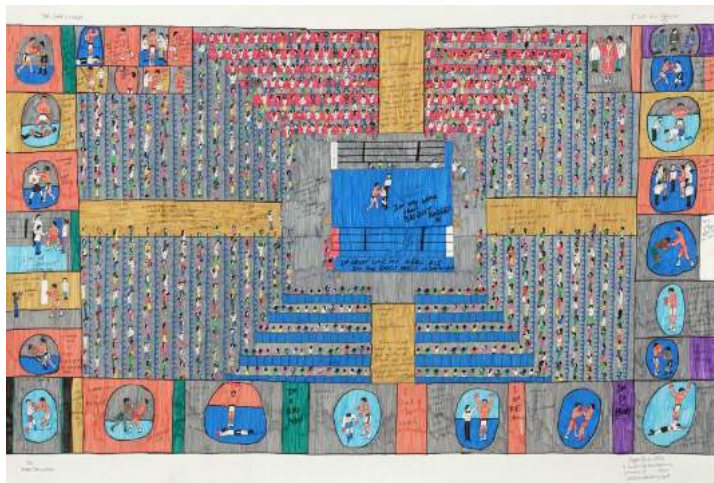
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BLOUINARTINFO

5 Must See Gallery Shows: Bruce Davenport, Jr., Amalia Ulman, and More

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | FEBRUARY 06, 2015

Bruce Davenport, Jr., at Louis B. James through February 21 (143b Orchard Street)



I first saw Davenport's colorful, densely packed marching band drawings at a New Orleans-and-Istanbul-focused exhibition Dan Cameron curated at C24 back in 2011. Louis B. James just showed some of those pieces at the Outsider Art Fair, but the bulk of Davenport's solo presentation at their L.E.S. gallery focuses on Mike Tyson. The pieces are generally variations on a

common composition — a boxing ring with “Iron Mike” in the center; rows of stadium fans; handwritten, journalistic asides by the artist (“Iron Mike Tyson took no wooden nickels into the ring,” or the artist's signature, enigmatic “I See You Looking”). The intense, choreographed symmetry of Davenport's figures brings to mind something between the paintings of Ian Davis and a North Korean rally.

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BLOUINARTINFO

Art for Art's Sake: Insider Picks at the Outsider Fair

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | JANUARY 29, 2015



Anyone fed up with the art world's same old, same old will find a bracing antidote at this year's edition of the [Outsider Art Fair](#), which comes to Center 548 in New York from January 29 through February 1. Boasting 50 galleries from eight countries — the biggest edition yet — the fair isn't just for the deep-pocketed; I spotted plenty of covetable work for less than \$1,000, alongside big-ticket items from the likes of Henry Darger and Bill Traylor. And while so-called "outsider" hallmarks abound — plenty of astoundingly obsessive, meticulous markmaking is to be

found — it's refreshingly impossible to pigeonhole the work on view. However one chooses to define the genre, the commonalities here tend toward the idiosyncratic and eccentrically personal: Art made for its own sake, often without an audience in mind, let alone a market. That sort of passion, in an increasingly careerist climate, is reason enough to spend an afternoon here.

Louis B. James has a two-person booth, combining marching-band drawings by New Orleans' Bruce Davenport, Jr. (who has a [solo](#) at the gallery's L.E.S. location through February 27) with paintings by Matthew Kirk, including a superb triptych on leaning sheetrock slabs. Shrine, of Brooklyn, has a focus on assemblage by Southern artists, many of whom originally showcased the work in their own front yards. That includes Reverend George Kornegay of Alabama (whose sculptures incorporate things like wooden crutches and Nintendo guns), and Hawkins Bolden, who made elaborate scarecrows out of soup cans, rubber, and other found materials. And Webb Gallery, of Waxahachie, Texas, has one of the fair's most delightfully jam-packed salon hangings (not to mention a functioning Tiki bar). The work on view includes ink paintings by Daniel Higgs, of the band Lungfish; an incredibly detailed, large-scale drawing of what might be a cave's interior, by Hector Alonzo Benavides; and several unexpected gems (including a feline-focused mixed-media piece) by the writer William S. Burroughs, who showed with this Lone Star gallery before his death in 1997.

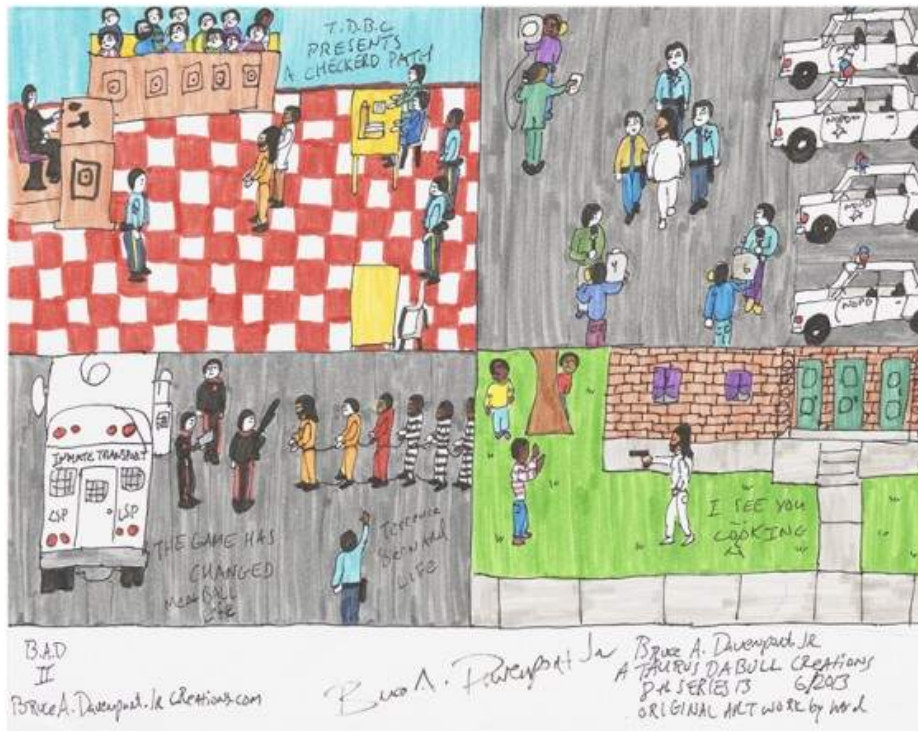
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The New York Times

On the Margins, but Moving Toward the Center

Outsider Art Fair Evolves, but Holds Fast to Its Roots

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER | JAN. 29, 2015



Mary Whitfield, based in Birmingham, Ala., has paintings at Galerie Bonheur that depict violent scenes of lynchings and one of women, “Fleeing Darfur” (2006). **Bruce Davenport Jr. is a New Orleans artist who draws marching bands in formation; his work is at Louis B. James.**

The art of T. A. Hay, a farmer from Kentucky who painted paper and

gourds with brown shoe polish, is on view at Tanner-Hill. And from farther west is the work of Daniel Martin Diaz of Arizona, whose alchemic, cartoonlike drawings reveal his Mexican-American and Roman Catholic upbringing, at American Primitive Gallery.

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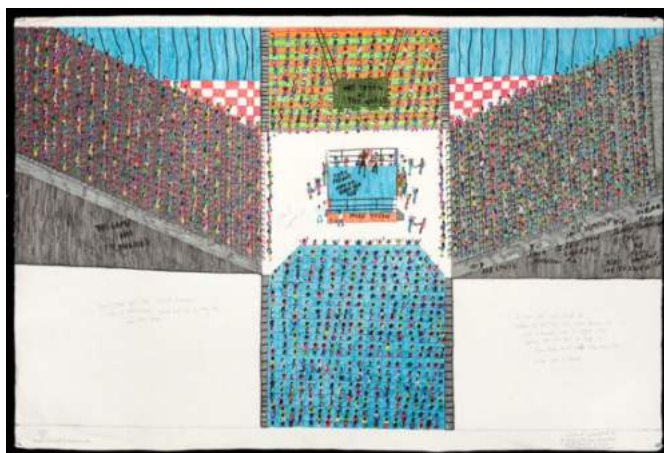
artcritical

the online magazine of art and ideas

Saturday, February 7th, 2015

Bruce Davenport Jr. at the Outsider Art Fair and Louis B. James Gallery

by David Cohen



Bruce Davenport Jr., T.D.B.C. Presents Knock Em Down Mike Tyson, 2013,. Archival ink on acid-free paper, 40 x 609 inches. Courtesy of Louis B. James Gallery.

It is one of the abiding ironies of art and taste that the current, growing, popular fascination with “outsider art” coincides with a historic deskilling in academic artistic training, a near cult status of “authenticity” in aesthetic standards and a prevalence of OCD detail among many artists. This might all contribute, you’d think, to a blurring of the distinction between fine art and outsider art, between the art world and the untrained, the

knowing and the savant. The gravedigger scene in Hamlet comes to mind. The mad prince was sent to England because “there the men are as mad as he.” And yet, exaltation of “outsider” status abounds, despite the pervasive outsiderish quality of the inside art world.

None of this detracts one iota from the sheer visual splendors and moving testimonies to the creative urge that awaited visitors last weekend at the redoubtable Outsider Art Fair. On three floors of the old Dia building were abundant examples of the “old masters” of art brut (Henry Darger, Albert Loudon, James Castle, Bill Traylor, the Philadelphia Wire Man) rubbing shoulders with anonymous side show placards, self-taught originals like Morris Hirshfield, many extraordinary works by artists at every point along the autism spectrum, even an art world luminary like the eminently sane Peter Saul who simply “looks” a bit nuts. The criteria are kept loose as befits riposte to regulation.

As if to prove the slippery boundary between outsider and hipster, Louis B. James has the same artist, Bruce Davenport Jr., in their booth and at their Lower East Side premises. His exhilaratingly vertiginous and obsessively fandom-annotated fight scenes document his love of Mike Tyson. They are knock out.

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A New Match for Mike Tyson: An Artist Moves the Iconic Boxer From the Ring to the Page

By Michael Valinsky
Feb 9, 2015 1:34 pm



New York gallery [Louis B. James](#) has put together a surprising show titled “[The Dapper Bruce Lafitte Does His Hero Mike Tyson](#),” where Davenport illustrates fight scenes from various Mike Tyson boxing matches. The artist assumes the alter ego Bruce Lafitte for this series, taking the name of the housing projects where he grew up as the last name of his persona.

Typically known for his effusive and vibrant colors, Davenport veers away from expectation and opts for darker tones, while often leaving other parts of his surface blank. When color does intervene, it is to highlight the excitement that went into Mike Tyson’s matches. The works are rooted in the inherent thrill and violence that characterize the sport, reflected in the written notations around and within the illustrations. In *T.D.B.C.*

Presents Mike Knockin All The Jerry Curl Juice Out Of His Pizz (2013), for example, he writes in one corner “Watching Mike beat up people was cool LOL.” Drawing from his experience growing up as a child in the Lafitte Projects in New Orleans, Davenport inserts his own impressions of the matches as seen from the perspective of someone perhaps not yet aware of the brutality of the spectacle.

As meticulously drafted as a diary, each of Davenport’s ink paintings rely heavily on richness of detail, both in text and imagery. Each character has a very intentional place on the page, while the audience is perfectly orchestrated in precise rows that frame the central narrative, the boxing ring. The more you look, the more sharply articulated details appear; viewed up-close, some of the tiny characters even have facial expressions. Such an emphasis on detail lends the works a humane tone, recognizing the central violence while emphasizing the crowds of people that are united and cheering for the heroic Tyson.

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ARTHUR ROGER | GALLERY

BRUCE DAVENPORT, JR.: BRUCE JR. DOES THE PARADES

JULY 24, 2013



The Arthur Roger Gallery is pleased to present *Bruce Jr. Does the Parades*, an exhibition of work on paper by Bruce Davenport, Jr. The exhibition will be on view at Arthur Roger@434, located at 434 Julia Street, from August 3 – September 14, 2013. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist in attendance, Saturday, August 3 from 6-9 pm in conjunction with “White Linen Night.”

Bruce Davenport, Jr. was born in 1972 at Charity Hospital and grew up in the Lafitte Housing Projects in the 6th Ward. With the encouragement of his grandparents who raised him, he began to draw at the age of five as a means to entertain himself and document the world around him. Throughout his schooling, particularly at Joseph S. Clark, he was exposed to and intrigued by the junior high and high school marching band culture – a culture that is integral to New Orleans.

Following Hurricane Katrina and the devastation to New Orleans and its schools, Davenport, Jr. felt compelled to honor the past glory of this unique band culture and celebrate those who are able to continue it. In his words, “The marching bands are a

passion to me. I love the history and culture... My work serves as an illustrative reminder of an activity that not only encourages creative thought processing but also engages youth with the community and with each other. Using photographic documentation of these bands in action, I recreate their vibrant pageantry... hopefully leaving behind a sacred reminder of a vibrant part of my hometown’s identity.”

Bruce Davenport, Jr.’s vivid color marker drawings provide detailed reenactments – the bands in precise number and formation and the multitude of spectators surrounding them. The small- and large-scale works on paper are flecked with the artist’s thoughts and tributes, interspersed between the crowds and streets. The rendered still moments evoke the energy and ceremony of the entire procession. The artist has been described as, “not so much a self-taught artist as he is a self-taught anthropologist.”

Bruce Davenport Jr.’s work has received national attention. He has exhibited at the Dieu Donne Gallery and the As If Gallery in New York and also at the Lambent Foundation in New York. His work was exhibited at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans as part of Prospect 1.5 and at the New Orleans Museum of Art as part of Prospect 2. Bruce Davenport lives and works in the Lower 9th Ward.

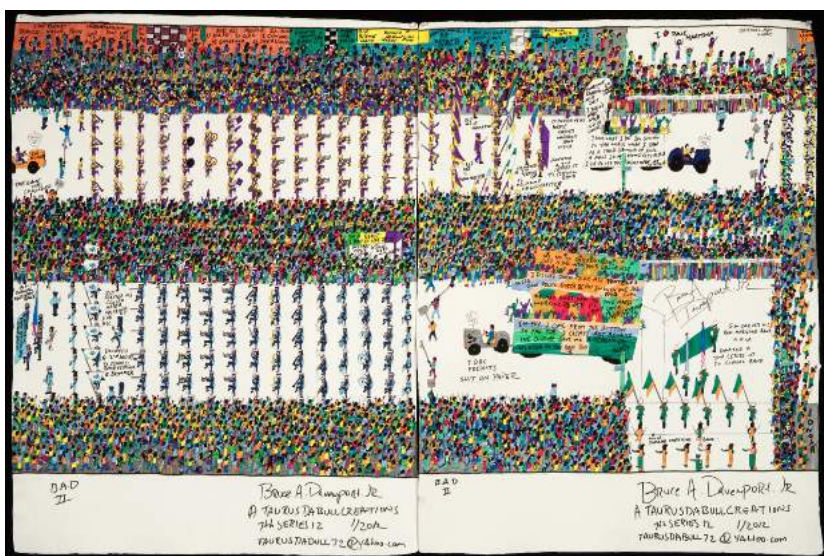
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JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN CENTER

for Interdisciplinary and International Studies

February 7, 2012



On view at the Franklin Center Gallery will be the exhibition All I Need Is 1 Pen, a show comprised of works on paper by Bruce Davenport Jr. as well as a short video from the upcoming Richard Barber film The Whole Gritty City, which documents both the marching band culture of New Orleans and Davenport Jr.'s artistic work in response to that culture. Davenport Jr.'s work is on the cusp between folk art and contemporary art and seems to undermine the terminology of both worlds. Bruce Davenport Jr., son of a preacher and community activist, was born in

New Orleans in 1972, grew up at the 6th Ward Lafitte Projects, and currently lives in the now infamous Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans. Throughout his schooling he was involved with the junior high and high school marching band cultures which are a major force in Mardi Gras and the overall musical culture of New Orleans. Following Hurricane Katrina, and the devastation to the city and its schools, about half of which remain closed today, Davenport Jr. decided to document the past glory of this unique culture in his drawings. Davenport Jr.'s work has been featured in many exhibitions in the U.S., including at the C.A.C., New Orleans, Dieu Donne Gallery, NYC, Lambent Foundation, NYC, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, New Orleans, Prospect 1.5 and Prospect.2 (Dan Cameron, Curator), New Orleans, AS IF Gallery, NYC and Ballroom Marfa, TX. His work has been collected by major collectors throughout the world. He has donated his works to many of the schools and libraries in New Orleans. Bruce Davenport Jr. is represented by AS IF Gallery in New York (www.asifgallery.com). Diego Cortez is an independent curator based in New York. More information can be found at www.lostobject.org.

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By [Doug MacCash, NOLA.com](#)
on January 04, 2012 at 1:40 PM, updated January 04, 2012 at 2:25 PM



Critic Doug MacCash rates Prospect.2 art exhibits. The ratings are Wonderful, Worthwhile and Whatever. Bruce Davenport's exhibit of marching band drawings at the New Orleans Museum of Art is: **WONDERFUL**. The New Orleans Museum of Art, 1 Collins C. Diboll Circle, City Park, 504.658.4100. Bruce Davenport's Brass Bands Blare Inner Thoughts

Bruce Davenport Jr. is the Bruegel of New Orleans marching band fans. Like the Flemish renaissance master, he uses a hovering high-angle perspective to produce charming miniaturist landscapes crowded with colorful

celebrants. Davenport's tiny, pen-and-ink parade-goers line the streets during Carnival to behold the Crescent City's beloved high school bands. The simple, strong geometry of Davenport's drawings echoes the steady rhythms of marching music.

When Davenport first exhibited his drawings in 2008, his stiffly stylized marching bands struck a poignant post-Katrina note. They recorded the artist's regret at having seen long-standing high schools such as Alcee Fortier and John F. Kennedy disappear. His new drawings on display at NOMA continue that thread, though other themes compete for attention. Personal memories, political outrage, art world criticism and rap-era boastfulness can all be found in the passages of text scattered in the parade scenes. "I love being Bruce Jr.," one note reads, "Who else you know can draw like me? I'm a beast from the Lafitte, 6th Ward, NOLA."

Davenport's drawings have always included written comments, but those annotations of the visual images seem to be growing in importance, adding layers of intimacy and edginess to his already compelling art. What began as a nostalgic view of the New Orleans marching band tradition is becoming an artistic diary.

The exhibit is part of Prospect.2 New Orleans, a collection of works by 27 avant-garde artists from the Crescent City and around the world, displayed in various locations. Regular hours are Wednesdays through Sundays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Jan. 29. Admission is \$10 for a one-day pass, \$20 for a week's pass and \$30 for a season pass. Passes are available at the New Orleans Museum of Art in City Park, the Contemporary Arts Center at 900 Camp St., and the Prospect New Orleans headquarters at 1036 Esplanade Ave., or at prospectneworleans.org. Take a video tour of all 27 Prospect.2 New Orleans avant-garde art exhibitions below.

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It's Nice That

Prospect.2: Bruce Davenport Jr.

Words by [Bryony Quinn](#), Thursday 15 December 2011



The New Orleans Biennial, *Prospect.2*, appropriately holds a mirror to the city's character and history with the variety of art on show – pulling in big international names (Sophie Calle), big local artists (William Eggleston) and lesser-known New Orleans creatives. Falling into the latter –

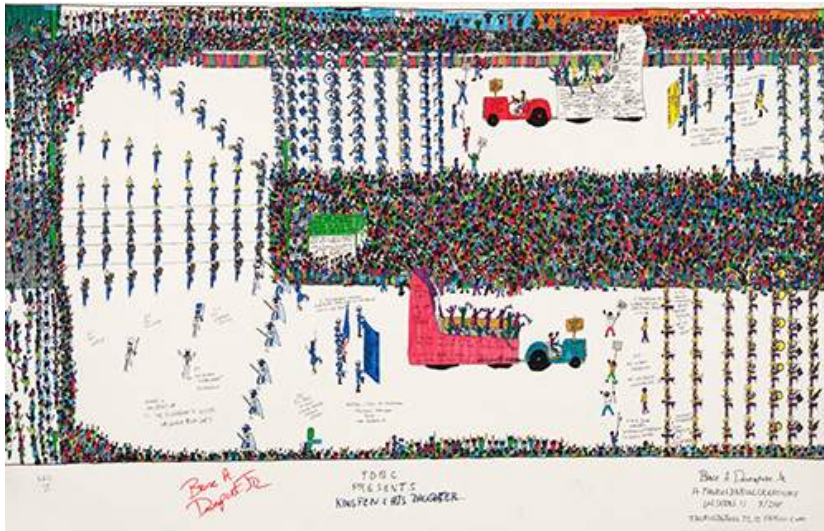
but with no less critical esteem – is Bruce Davenport Jr. His perspective-less, intense iterations of marching bands are a vast miniaturisation about the idea of “assembly” (historically, politically and musically). A kind of folk art through its social intentions and depiction, it is still also seen as fine art as he exhibits time and again to an excellent reception.

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e-flux

Prospect.2 New Orleans

December 13, 2011



Highlights of the biennial also include work from artists who currently live and work in New Orleans. Among these artists are Dan Tague, who is presenting a new installation entitled *The U.S. Dept. of Civil Disobedience*; Dawn DeDeaux, who has created a large-scale multimedia installation work entitled *Goddess Fortuna And Her Dunces In An Effort To*

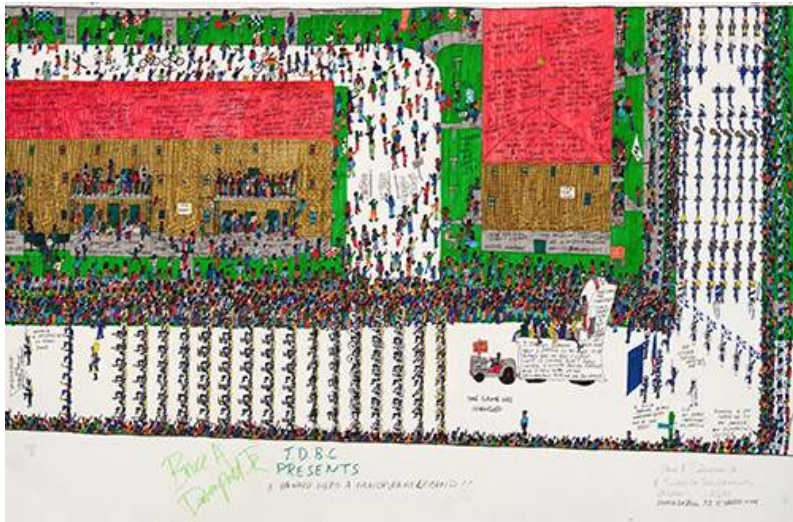
Make Sense Of It All; and Bruce Davenport Jr., who is presenting some of his most ambitious drawings to date, including a series of large-scale works which express the unique richness of marching bands as a dominant force in the local arts culture.

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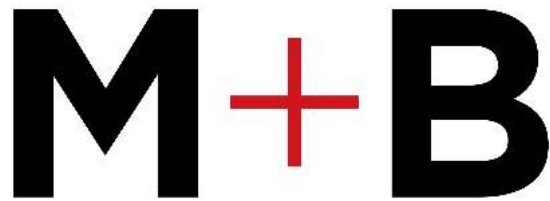
Prospect.2 New Orleans
BEATING HEART BIENNIAL
by Emily Nathan

Oct. 22, 2011-Jan. 29, 2012



One of those residents is **Bruce Davenport Jr.**, a New Orleans local who is rarely seen without sunglasses and whose painted aerial views of marching bands were featured recently in a Dan Cameron-curated show at Manhattan's new **C24 Gallery** on West 24th Street. Hung in the lobby of the **New Orleans Museum of Art** like meticulous cartographical studies, each painting is annotated

with small blocks of text -- like speech-bubbles -- containing witty quips from Davenport's interior monologue, as well as his signature, whose placement and form recalls an athlete's autograph on a fan's poster.



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO NEW ORLEANS

DAN CAMERON (CURATOR), JULES CAHN, BRUCE DAVENPORT, JR., DAWN DEDEAUX, COURTNEY EGAN, SKYLAR FEIN, ROY G. FERDINAND, SRDJAN LONCAR, DEBORAH LUSTER, SISTER GERTRUDE MORGAN, GINA PHILLIPS, NOEL ROCKMORE, MICHAEL P. SMITH, DAN TAGUE

18 MARCH 2011 - 14 AUGUST 2011

This spring, Ballroom Marfa will collaborate with curator Dan Cameron on *The World According to New Orleans*, a curatorial examination of the art and visual culture of New Orleans, with a particular focus on areas of overlap between self-taught and avant-garde tendencies. New Orleans' location at the geographic fringe of the continental United States, in close proximity to Cuba, Haiti, and Mexico, has generated a unique blend of distinctions between artistic genres and vernacular traditions, and each of the artists in the exhibition has produced work that in some way challenges many of these time-worn distinctions. The exhibition includes work by several artists who were self-taught, as well as documentary photographs and film that examine neighborhood and community expressions. New Orleans has not typically been located at the forefront of any major postwar American art movements, so the analysis of its characteristic visual art forms is missing from most accounts of national art of the past half century. Paradoxically, this cultural distance between center and periphery in American art seems to underscore much of the truly interesting art to come out of New Orleans, while ensuring that many valuable developments go unnoticed by the national mainstream. In this sense, the New Orleans art world shares some important characteristics with its much larger music scene, which is revered internationally for its unique and influential sounds, but since the early 1960s remains largely untapped by the music industry as a whole.

Renewed interest in the artistic and cultural significance of New Orleans since the post-Katrina floods of 2005 suggests a prior neglect that the international art community seems prepared to address. For this reason, *The World According to New Orleans* proposes that a historical backdrop to New Orleans art — particularly one that suggests an alternative artistic canon — is appropriate for an exhibition that attempts to explore the essence of the city's current art scene. However, instead of trying to establish a pedigree that approximates the emergence and development of modern art in larger metropolitan areas like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, with its requisite local variations of welded steel sculpture and lyrical abstraction, the historic past proposed in this exhibition is one that is just as idiosyncratic as the present it influences. For this reason, rather than span a sequence of historical chapters, it is simply designated as The Past.

The oldest artist in the exhibition, Sister Gertrude Morgan (1900-1980), lived the first 38 years of her life in Alabama and Georgia, but became a preacher and missionary after hearing a voice from God telling her to move

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to New Orleans and open an orphanage. In 1956, other voices told her to begin painting and that she was the Bride of Christ, and from then on, artwork and singing on were integral to her ministry. Jules Cahn (1916-1995) was a New Orleans businessman with a passionate interest in jazz, who left behind an outstanding photographic legacy that documents marching club parades, Mardi Gras Indian processions, Krewe of Zulu festivities, Preservation Hall, and jazz musicians' funerals. One of his rarest pieces of footage records the first Super Sunday meeting of Uptown and Downtown Mardi Gras Indians in 1970. The photographer Michael P. Smith (1937-2008), who followed in Cahn's footsteps as the house photographer for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, was an even more dedicated scholar of African-American vernacular culture, producing an extraordinarily cohesive body of photographs that document the full range of cultural expression, from spiritual churches to funk, soul and zydeco music. The fourth artist occupying an historical past is Noel Rockmore, a New York-born child of successful illustrators, who discovered New Orleans in the 1950s and spent most of the remaining years of his life developing an eclectic pictorial vocabulary that encompassed Surrealist-tinged views of the French Quarter and detailed portraits of jazz musicians from Preservation Hall.

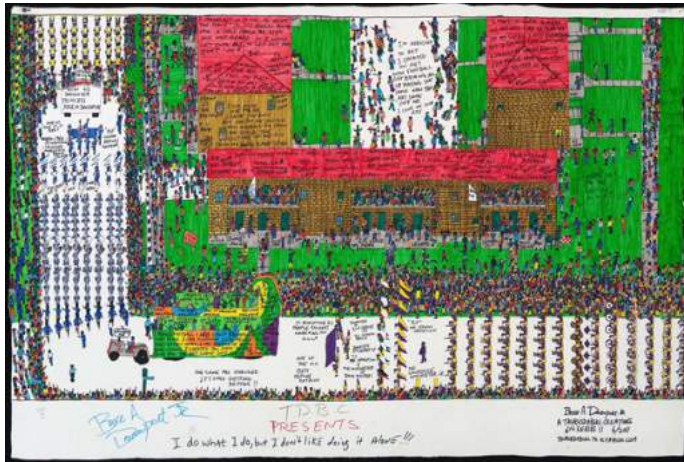
Of the six participating artists from the present day, most are well-known to each other and others in the tight-knit New Orleans art community, if not yet to the general public. Bruce Davenport Jr. grew up within the New Orleans public housing system, made drawings as a child, and played football in college until an injury, followed by Katrina, precipitated his return to making art. Courtney Egan, one of the first New Orleans artists to work primarily in video, continues to create in many different media, but with a particular emphasis on projections that incorporate found-object sculpture. Skylar Fein, born and raised in New York, was planning to be a doctor before the experience of Katrina made him instead opt for being an artist, and in a relatively short time he has become one of the city's most prominent artistic voices, with works ranging from the monumental Remember the Upstairs Lounge to more recent projects focused on music, youth and political revolution. Srdjan Loncar is a sculptor who was born and raised in Croatia and Louisiana before returning for good during the mid-1990s wars in former Yugoslavia. Deborah Luster has photographed both prisoners and crime scenes in New Orleans using atmospheric treatments, and often works with traditional printing techniques. Gina Phillips makes conventional paintings, but is best known for her densely packed assemblage-paintings that substitute skeins of colored threads for pigment. Dan Tague, who has worked in photography, sculpture and installation with tart renderings of political themes, is currently developing a multi-media room-scaled environmental installation based on his memory of ninth grade social studies class.

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ARGOT & OCHRE

by LAINYA MAGANA on FEBRUARY 4, 2011

*"I want to leave a mark on my city NEW ORLEANS like KATRINA'S JIVE ASS did."
— Bruce A. Davenport Jr. B.A.D. II*



I love everything about this work by Bruce Davenport Jr. and would give anything to see it in person. It's colorful and vibrant;; well composed and energetic;; thematically intense and culturally important. In essence, this work touches on issues of assembly, evokes musical themes, and depicts the artist's respect for the culture of his New Orleans community. I was so enthralled with the writing and analysis of Davenport's work as conveyed in the gallery's press release that I'm posting it in its entirety. I encourage you to read it in full, and view more pictures by this visionary artist after the jump.

Issues of assembly come to mind when viewing the work of Bruce Davenport Jr., specifically the freedom to assemble, a constitutional right once denied to people of color in historic New Orleans. Bruce Davenport Jr.'s work documents the public's right to gather for any motive, and poses questions, like "What is public?" and "What is public property?"

Bruce's dad, Bruce Davenport Sr, a relatively young urban preacher, has done much to assemble his community, especially around issues of health: HIV infection, its prevention and education, and providing care for the afflicted. Reverend Davenport's Katrina tales are harrowing. Leading the poor out of a flooded St. Bernard parish, he watched friends and parishioners disappear into potholes in the watery muck, sometimes just feet away. He then had to tie the corpses to telephone poles for relief workers to find, and attach handwritten notes for the police. Bruce Davenport Jr., lives and works in the now--infamous Lower Ninth Ward, devoting his time to meticulous graphic reenactments of the local musical culture of junior high and high school marching bands, those that were decimated by the levees breach and those that survive. Bruce's precise miniaturization, his flawless iteration of figures and the astonishing exactitude of the resulting patterns seem, at first glance, pertinent to folk art. But his work thinks and works larger in many ways.

While pictorially unrelated to graffiti or hip--hop culture, Davenport Jr.'s work, also deeply rooted in music, possesses the same contemporary vibe. Seeing his work is like listening to young New Orleans brass bands, the small street ensembles which play traditional, acoustic music with the amplified bombast of today's hip--hopster's. In Davenport Jr.'s work one sees and hears echos of the obsessions of the New Orleanian preacher--artist, Sister Gertrude Morgan, but his method rather evokes the storytelling of the

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late New Orleanian artist Roy Ferdinand, whose take on the violence of New Orleans' housing projects broke through the confining stereotype, or ghetto, of folk art, and defined Ferdinand as a world--class contemporary artist. Bruce Jr.'s visual dynamics recall both Futurist and Russian Suprematist ideas of movement, crowds as movements. Like Busby Berkeley, Eisenstein, or socialist stadium spectacles, Davenport Jr. renders a public in motion, a processional choreography defined by the streets, and thus an art of the streets, though not street art per se. The art world still struggles to define such phenomena. Born of a confluence of military marching forms and ancient religious processions, the parade form itself is rooted in the structure and image of the river, its forward flow, its bends and banks, just as it is reflected in the arterial systems on which both cities and human bodies rely. In depicting these resonant forms, Davenport Jr.'s drawings illustrate human columns and patterns in the flows of power, transport, communication, revelry and rivalry. His drawings flow with an essence fundamental to culture and to life itself.

Bruce Davenport Jr. is an artist whose work is capable of breaking down the partition which separates folk art from fine art once and for all. These are big issues: how we define and reduce our culture through effete catch phrases and ineffective oppositions like fine versus folk, outsider versus insider, trained versus self--taught or vernacular. All these characterizations ring hollow today. They are fraught with the prejudices and contradictions of class and racial manipulation, no less so when they are deployed in the study of the liberal humanities. Davenport Jr. escapes these confines in several ways. Through his connection to the street, public art and community rebuilding, he has focused on his local sub--cultures and folk--cultures, with the mind of a contemporary urbanist. He is not so much a self--taught artist as he is a self--taught anthropologist. Like Jean--Michel Basquiat, who fused the radical outsider art of graffiti with studio painting, or Andy Warhol, who fused photography with painting, Davenport Jr. has redefined folk art within the context of fine art. His mission is distinct from that of his father's, but his art is part of the same post--Beuysian mechanism to educate and rebuild his community and city.

AS IF Gallery is a collaboration between Nicole Rauscher, fabric designer, Seth Tillett, scenographer and artist, and Diego Cortez, curator. The gallery is dedicated to their friend Sylvère Lotringer, Editor of Semiotext(e) and the Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series.