

the Courier



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAM H. JOHNSON FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

WHJ Prize

2007 Prizewinner—Rodney McMillian

A distinguished jury selected Rodney McMillian as the recipient of the William H. Johnson Prize for 2007.

A native of Columbia, South Carolina, McMillian studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before earning his MFA at CalArts in 2002. He has had solo shows in numerous museums and galleries around the world. His works are in the permanent collections of The UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach; Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany; and The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Utilizing a wide range of media and techniques, McMillian's sculptures, videos,
continued on page 2

2008 Prizewinner—Jennie C. Jones

In December 2008, the William H. Johnson Foundation announced Jennie C. Jones as the winner of the WHJ prize for 2008.

The Brooklyn-based artist was born in Cincinnati in 1968. She received a BA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1991 and an MFA from Rutgers University in 1996. Jones has had solo exhibitions at Artists Space, New York, 2006 and at Arratia, Beer, Berlin, 2007. Her work was also included in a number of important group exhibitions including *Black Light / White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art*, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston in 2007; *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970*, Contemporary Art Museum, 2005 and *Freestyle*, Studio Museum in Harlem, 2001.

continued on page 3

2009-Save the Date
8th Annual
Southern California Gala
September 26, 2009

More...

Rodney McMillan -cont. from page 1



and paintings focus on the relationship between language, aesthetics and content. His work examines social history and culture and critiques the state of current affairs.

McMillian's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions worldwide, including the 2008 Whitney Biennial, 2008 California Biennial at Orange County Museum of Art, Ordinary Culture: Heikes/Helms/McMillian, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Painting in Tongues, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the traveling exhibition Uncertain States of America, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Art, Oslo; USA Today, Royal Academy of Art, London; Thing: New Sculpture from Los Angeles, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Frequency, Studio Museum in Harlem; White Noise, Redcat, Los Angeles. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

The selection jury consisted of Clara Kim, Gallery Director & Curator of REDCAT; Elsa Longhauser, Executive Director and Curator of the Santa Monica Museum of Art; and artists Dave McKenzie and Kori Newkirk.

2006 Summer Party in Santa Monica

Art collector and patron Eileen Harris Norton hosted a reception for the WHJ Foundation at her art-filled home in Santa Monica, California on a warm and beautiful day in August, 2006. Guests mingled with artists such as Lita Albuquerque, Edgar Arceneaux, John Bankston, Kelly Barrie, Phoebe Beasley, Maura Bendett, Mark Bradford, Oliver Brooks, Kim Dingle, Mari Eastman, Charles Gaines, Sherin Guirguis, Martin Kersels, Nzuji De Magalhaes, Rodney McMillian, Kori Newkirk, James Welling and Brenna Youngblood. Ms. Norton generously underwrote the entire event, enabling the Foundation to raise nearly \$10,000 in grant making funds.

Parties



Eileen Harris Norton
and Christine Kim



Steve Martin and Victoria Dailey

2007 Gala

The WHJFA held its 2007 gala on May 12th at the historic California Club. Approximately two hundred guests attended. 2006 WHJ Prize winner Edgar Arceneaux shared the spotlight with Sidney Poitier, recipient of the Foundation's newly established lifetime achievement award. In a moving speech, Mr. Poitier spoke about his struggles to become an artist and how he likened the impulse to create art to the impulse to pursue philanthropy. The crowd of artists, curators, collectors and supporters was mesmerized by his words of wisdom. WHJFA Board members Faye Davidson, Steve Turner and Victoria Dailey also spoke. Among those in attendance were Rodney McMillian, Mark Bradford and Kori Newkirk, all past WHJ honorees, Elsa Longhauser, Director of the Santa Monica Museum of Art, Charmaine Jefferson, Director of the California African American Museum, Katharine DeShaw, Director of USA Artists, Christine Kim, former curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem and Lauri Firstenberg, Director of LAX ART.

Parties

Guests had the opportunity to bid on art donated by Edgar Arceneaux, Mark Bradford, Sam Durant, Charles Gaines, Todd Gray, Artis Lane, Renée Lotenero and Richard Wyatt, all of who were in attendance, as well as works by Tony Gleaton, Dave McKenzie and Alison Saar, who could not attend.

JoAnn Busuttill, Steve Martin and Eileen Harris Norton deserve special mention for their generous support of this gala.



Mark Bradford, Rodney McMillian, Sidney Poitier,
Artis Lane, Charles Gaines, Kori Newkirk,
Edgar Arceneaux

2008 Cocktail Party in Pasadena

The WHJFA hosted a cocktail party for more than 100 guests on the terrace atop the Pasadena Museum of California Art one hot Sunday this September, toasting 2007 William H. Johnson Prize winner Rodney McMillian with cool glasses of wine or lemonade. Mr. McMillian gave an exuberant acceptance speech thanking the Foundation for its support. After enjoying drinks and exotic appetizers prepared by KAI's European Catering, guests ambled down to the museum's gallery to view a retrospective exhibit of works by Kori Newkirk, recipient of the 2004 William H. Johnson Prize. Mr. Newkirk attended the event, mingling with patrons and posing for photographs.



Victoria Dailey, Dee Kerrison, Steve Turner, Joy Simmons,
Bill Galloway, Janine Barrois, Bob Davidson

Jennie C. Jones -cont. from page 1



In 2008 she was a fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study Center as well as a Visiting Artist at The American Academy in Rome, Italy. Jones received a Creative Capital grant in 2008, the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Award in 2006 and a Pollock-Krasner Grant in 2000.

In her practice, Jones attempts to merge art history, music history and black history in order to present a more inclusive version of modernity. She identifies with the conceptual ideology of jazz, honoring its radical legacy of experimentation and its hybrid modernist form. She uses the materials of sound to create works of art in a range of media. In one series, she manipulated audiotape extracted from a Kenny G tape into what appears to be a modernist abstract drawing. The resulting works read as highly composed, yet improvised linear gestures much like the jazz music that the tape once played.

The 2008 William H. Johnson Prize jury consisted of Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator, Studio Museum in Harlem; Eungie Joo, Director and Curator of Education and Public Programs, New Museum, New York; and artists Glenn Ligon, Gary Simmons and Kara Walker.

Updates

Prize Winner Updates

Laylah Ali, 2002 prizewinner, had a solo exhibition, *Notes/ Drawings/ Untitled Afflictions*, at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts in 2008. In 2007, the Institute of International Visual Arts in London exhibited her solo show, *The Kiss and Other Warriors*, while her *Drawings from the Typology Series* show traveled to the University of Iowa Museum of Art and the University of Arizona Museum of Art.

2003 prizewinner, **Nadine Robinson**, contributed the installation *Tri-Christus* to the SITE Santa Fe Seventh International Biennial this year.

Kori Newkirk, 2004 Prize Winner, was honored with a solo exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2007. He also had a solo project at LAXART in October 2008.

In 2008, 2005 WHJ prizewinner, **Dave McKenzie**, participated in Prospect. 1 New Orleans, a biennial exhibition of international contemporary art. McKenzie contributed a conceptual art project he characterizes as an "art sculpture" formed by annual visits to New Orleans over 10 years. The Gallery at Redcat exhibited his installation *Screendoors on Submarines* in April 2008. The New York-based artist contributed pieces to the Museum as Hub:Neighborhoods project at the New Museum in Manhattan and had a solo show, *Momentum 8: Dave McKenzie*, at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art in 2007.

2006 WHJ winner **Edgar Arceneaux** was featured in the 2008 Whitney Biennial in New York. He also participated in the California Biennial at the Orange County Museum of Art in 2008.

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THE WILLIAM H. JOHNSON FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
6022 Wilshire Blvd, #200
Los Angeles, CA 90036
323 931-3744 323 931-3751 fax
www.whjohnsongrant.org

