

Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, Offers Works by Colin Quashie

Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, is presenting the exhibit, *The Plantation (Plan-ta-shun)*, featuring works by local artist, Colin Quashie, on view through May 6, 2012. A reception will be held on Apr. 6, from 6-8pm. There will be an artist talk starting at 7pm. On Apr. 7, a panel discussion is scheduled for 3 - 4:30pm. It will be moderated by art critic and art history professor at SC State University, Frank Martin. The panelists will be Dr. Millicent Brown, history professor at Claflin College, Mark Sloan, Director of the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, and lastly, Adam Parker, features reporter with the *Post and Courier* newspaper.

Quashie is an artist of this time. The controversy that surrounded the Battle Flag of the Confederacy which flew defiantly above South Carolina's State Capitol building engenders precisely the form of polemic exchange in which he feels most at ease. Quashie's wry, ironic, and irreverent art works are especially timely, forcing his audience to consider difficult cultural problems which they may often prefer to avoid. In this Post-modern era, Quashie's highly political art may be categorized as "conceptual" and "journalistic". Artistically, and aesthetically, much of his work is closely allied to the ideals of the Pop-Art Movement of the 1960s & 70s. However, the subject matter he presents is radically different from the topics explored in the earlier Pop-Art genre. What is singular about a "Quashie" point of view? What does this Charleston iconoclast have that demands our notice?

In this post-modern era, Quashie's highly charged political art may be called "conceptual". Artistically and aesthetically, much of his art is closely allied to the ideals of the pop-art movement of the 1960's and 70's, but the subject matter is radically different from that explored in the earlier genre. By exploring the reservoir of possibilities offered by the

resources of popular cultural imagery and using the mechanisms of representation, media based communication and satire, artist Quashie investigates serious cultural, social, and political ideas and issues, with sometimes raucous, sometime genial, tongue-in-cheek humor.

On occasion, Quashie addresses cultural issues using witty, scathing sarcasm intended to spark popular debate and discussion among his viewing audience. Operating in the tradition of the avant-garde, Quashie challenges status quo social and cultural assumptions. His works often play upon various popular stereotypes and ridicule irrational cultural assumptions in order to trigger an awareness of our personal limits in understanding each other's daily life experiences. Functioning through the use of positive "social" anger, fed by his frustration with the vision of the masses, a vision which he hopes to help re-shape and determine, Quashie uses his artwork to raise questions that involve scrutinizing the power bases of our social system, causing us to examine our collective political perceptions. Quashie's works challenge us to be more thoughtful, expressive, and aware.

Quashie's artworks face off against hard to handle issues of culture, politics, and race with a self-conscious awareness that often offends (or at least disturbs) blacks, whites and "others"; he discriminates with equality and equanimity. Quashie is equal to the hard questions that he raises, but often the issues are camouflaged in pop-culture imagery and a form of Warholesque flashiness which confounds as it derides the spectator. Operating in the tradition of the French avant-garde artists, Quashie challenges the status quo mentality. His works often play upon various popular stereotypes, and ridicule irrational cultural assumptions to trigger an awareness of our personal limits in understanding each other's daily life experiences.

Functioning through the use of positive "social" anger, fed by his frustration with the vision of the masses, a vision which he hopes to help re-shape and determine, Quashie uses his artwork to raise questions that involve scrutinizing the power bases of our social system, causing us to examine our collective political perceptions. The Quashie point of view makes its mark by challenging us to be more thoughtful, more expressive, and more aware.

Quashie was born in London, England (1963) and raised in the West Indies. At age six, his parents emigrated to the States and settled in Daytona Beach, FL. The artist briefly attended the University of Florida on a full academic scholarship, but felt ill at ease in academia and left, eventually joining the Navy as a submarine sonarman. It was there that his lifelong love for art re-emerged. After his discharge in 1987, he made the decision to pursue an art career. Showing steady growth, his art career ended abruptly in 1995 after an exhibition was censored. Frustrated with the art world, he abandoned art, moved West and landed a job as a comedy sketch writer on *Mad-TV*. His love for art re-emerged two years later and since then, in between writing gigs (he has written for five other comedy series and in 2001 received an Emmy award for documentary writing), he continues to produce his unique brand of art. He lives in Charleston, where he paints while continuing to write.

Artist Statement: "Sometimes,

stretched at ease in the shade of a roadside tree, we watch the motions of a labourer in a distant field, and after a time, begin to wonder languidly as to what the fellow may be at. We watch the movements of his body, the waving of his arms, we see him bend down, stand up, hesitate, begin again. It may add to the charm of an idle hour to be told the purpose of his exertions. If we know he is trying to lift a stone, to dig a ditch, to uproot a stump, we look with a more real interest at his efforts; we are disposed to condone the jar of his agitation upon the restfulness of the landscape; and even, if in a brotherly frame of mind, we may bring ourselves to forgive his failure. We understood his object, and, after all, the fellow has tried, and perhaps he had not the strength – and perhaps he had not the knowledge. we forgive, go on our way – and forget.

And so it is with the workman of art. Art is long and life is short, and success is very far off. And thus, doubtful of strength to travel so far, we talk a little about the aim – the aim of art, which, like life itself, is inspiring, difficult – obscured by mists. It is not in the clear logic of a triumphant conclusion; it is not in the unveiling of one of those heartless secrets which are called the Laws of Nature. It is not less great, but only more difficult."

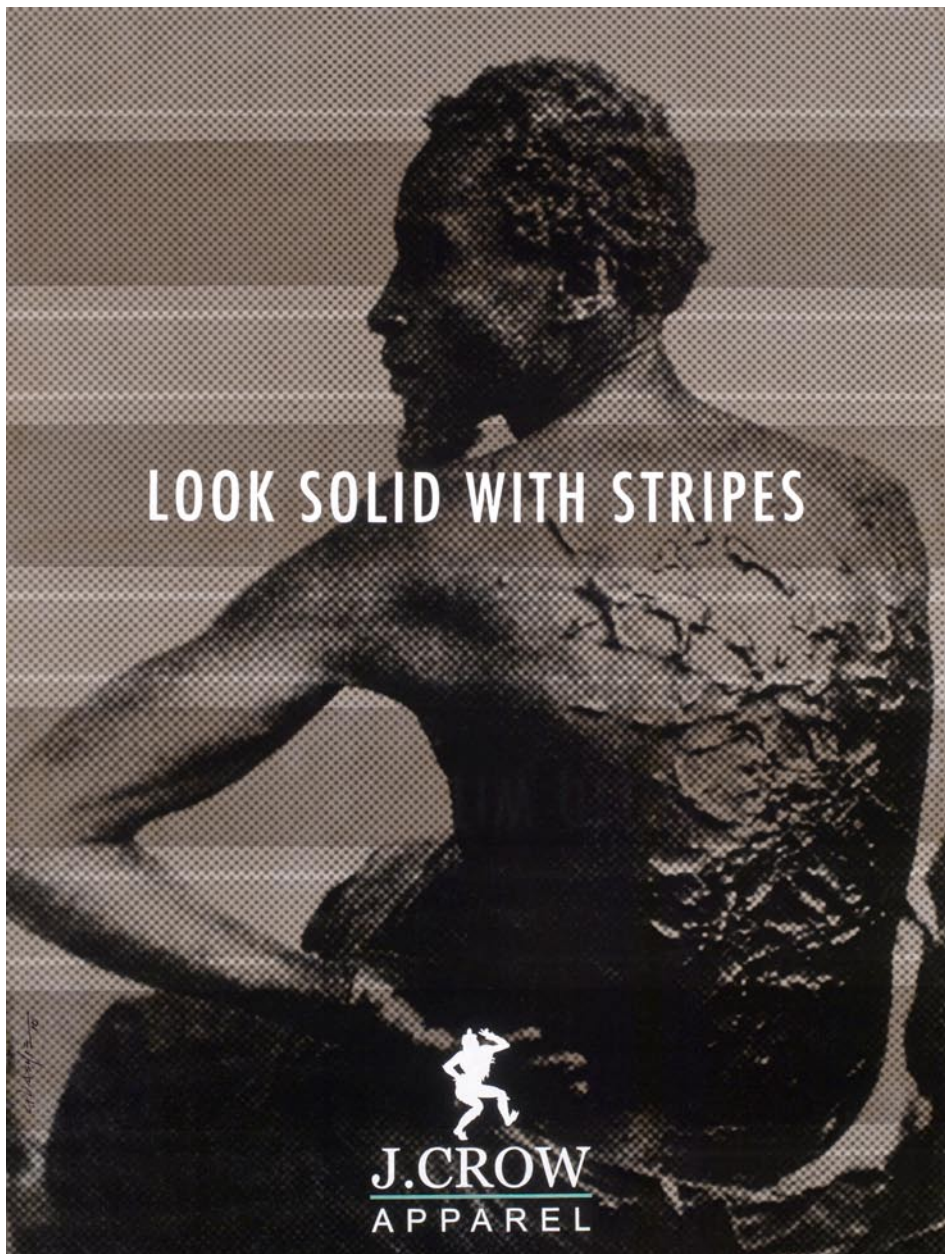
- Preface; 'The Nigger Of The Narcissus', Joseph Conrad, 1897

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Center at 843/722-0697 or visit (www.reduxstudios.org).



RAINBRO ROW
McCLEOD PLANTATION SLAVE CABINS - CHARLESTON, S. CAROLINA
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RainBro Row (poster), 18" x 24", Photoshop manipulated photo. Photo by Rick Rhoads.



J. CROW (Stripes)*, 40" x 32", Acrylic and Gel Transfer on Board. Photo by Rick Rhoads. * This is one panel of a larger 8 panel piece titled 'Plantation Digest'.



SlaveShip Brand Sardines, Actual can of Sardines with manipulated label. Photo by Rick Rhoads.