

CATO - SAUNDERS - EWING - RHODES - MORRIS



THREEPOINTNINE
ART COLLECTIVE
S A N F R A N C I S C O

THE WORD “BLACK” NOW IS SYNONYMOUS WITH “VANISHING”.

According to the 2010 census, the African American population in San Francisco declined to 3.9%, in a city that has always considered its cultural diversity as one of its strengths.

Where once stood a people who were vibrant, productive, and an integral part of the city’s daily life, African Americans are on the verge of dissident status.

This collective created from San Francisco artists Nancy Cato, Rodney Ewing, Sirron Norris, William Rhodes, and Ron Moultrie Saunders have adopted this statistic and forged a banner of support and resistance. Their work represents their creative contribution to the African American existence, enriching the greater San Francisco artistic community with their narratives and perspectives born from being members of a diaspora community. The work may not stem the tide of the exodus, but to paraphrase the poet

DYLAN THOMAS “WE WILL NOT GO QUIETLY INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT”.



Forward

3.9 is no less a statistical reality than a transformative moment in American culture. Oft-reputed as a nascent destination for black folk fleeing the dregs of white, southern insanity and violence, San Francisco now bears witness to one of the more dramatic and debilitating forced migrations in contemporary life. And, yet, the consensus seems to be that this disturbing trend merits neither murmur nor mediation. The collective spirit of enterprise and economic development seem to direct this ill-fated interplay of transferable wealth, privilege and the fantastical to its illogical conclusion – that somehow San Francisco can be San Francisco without black people. It's rather anathema to suggest such a thing, but somehow hipsters to half-witted dilettantes have carried on as if Blacks in San Francisco have little or no vested role in the life of the city; that invisibility is somehow a mark of civil rights progress. How senseless is it to believe that there is a listenable popular music without the DNA of Louis Armstrong, or a sultry blues without Billie Holliday, or even a refined funk architecture without a Sly Stone, a transcendent homegrown talent, who, in today's San Francisco, would be nothing more than a Powell Street piano tinkler humming spirituals for loose change.

But the erosion of the black population in The City has been a long, steady decline that has altered the face of traditional black community enclaves. The Fillmore was once a cultural center of a vibrant neighborhood along the lines of New York's Harlem or Chicago's South Side, albeit smaller in number and stature.

By 1950 there were 15,000 blacks in the Western Addition, and nearly 50,000 total in San Francisco. After peaking at 100,000 in the early 1970s, the results of decades of corporate maneuvering, political camouflaging and urban re-development led to the demolition of hundreds of homes in the Western Addition, largely concentrated in black-occupied dwellings.

San Francisco Mayor George Christopher and the Redevelopment Agency's Justin Herman, of course, spearheaded this real estate boondoggle that would be the blue print for future gentrification and double dealing with essential black life in San Francisco. And when one considers the rather spectacular way blacks are leaving today, one wonders where the visual manifestations of the unwilling migrant are stationed. Who is collecting the stories, tracking their footprints out of The City? Who is remembering, memorializing? Have we really seen the faces of the departing families, the anguish and uncertainty in their countenance?

The **3.9 Art Collective** emerges as a compelling experiment at a time when some have willingly muted their protestations. Termed "Still Here", this exhibition of African American artists "have adopted this statistic (3.9) and forged a banner of support and resistance. Their work represents their creative contribution to the African American existence, enriching the greater San Francisco artistic community with their narratives and perspectives born from being members of a Diaspora community." Moreover, they may be answering the clarion call of the time, doing what the blues most characteristically does so well – delve deeply into the 'what is' of human existence. In other words, "Still Here" could be a powerful reemergence of a visual vernacular about our time in San Francisco; or it can be the bitter swansong of a people merely seeking a place to call home without condition. This, of course, will be entirely up to those open to experiencing the immense talents of each artist. However, in the end, one must ask the question– Does San Francisco care if black people are here?

By **Richard Kevin Cartwright**

RON MOULTRIE SAUNDERS

Bio

Ron Moultrie Saunders is a San Francisco-based photographic artist, landscape architect and teacher. Born in Jamaica, Queens, New York, he moved to San Francisco in 1982, after receiving his Master's in Landscape Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. Between 1983 and 2001 he took photography workshops with Ruth Bernhard, Cole Weston, Mark Citret and Frank Espada.

Ron M. Saunders' pushes the boundaries of traditional photography by working without a camera to create cameraless images, photograms. This 19th century process has an immediacy, rawness and truth that is not found in images created with a camera. He places elements such as water, plants, ropes and the human figure on the surface of light sensitive photographic paper and, exposes it to light to create a shadowy silhouette image. His current photographic projects, "The Secret Life of Plants" and "Someday We'll All Be Free" focus on the essence of life by exploring the hidden dimensions of the plants and man's connection to the natural environment.

Saunders work is in the San Francisco Arts Commission collection and he is currently working on a commission for the San Francisco Public Library, Bayview Branch. His work has been exhibited throughout the US including "The Secret Life of Plants" a solo show (CordenPotts Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 2010), "Exposed: Today's Photography/ Yesterday's Technology" (San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, 2010), "Measure of Time" (Oakland Museum of California at City Center, 2009), "SCAR TISSUE" (Common Wealth Gallery, Madison, WI, 2006), and "Self-Exposure: The Male Nude Self-Portrait" (Clamp Art, New York, NY, 2005).



9 Hands (Blue), 2010, Archival Inkjet Print, 17" x 22", from the series "someday we'll all be free"



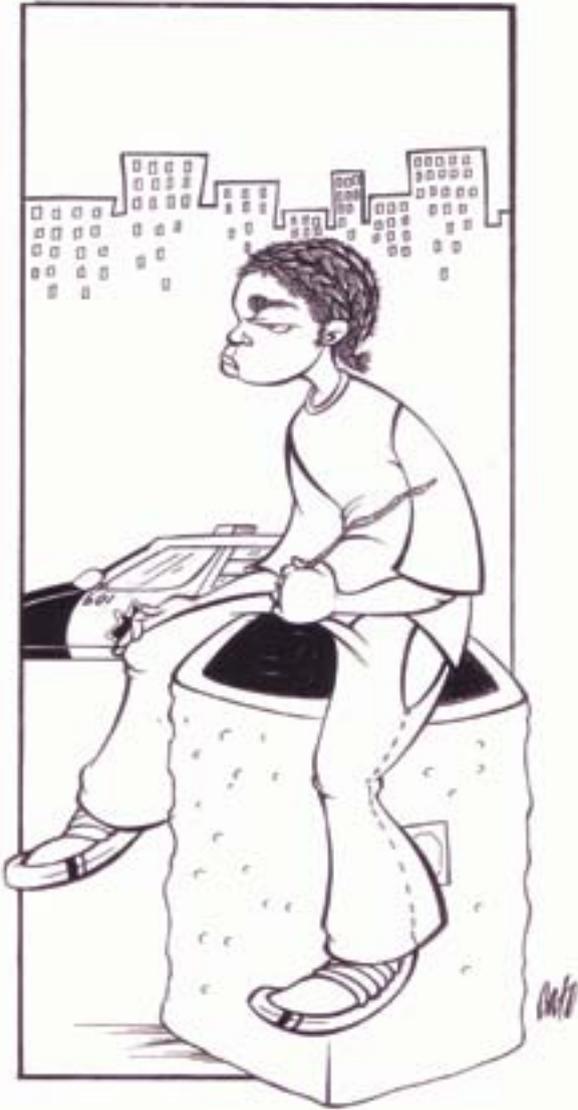
Emerging IV, 2011, Unique Photogram,
16" x 20" Sepia and Selenium Toned GSP,
from the series " someday we'll all be free"

NANCY CATO

Bio

Born and raised in New Haven, CT., Nancy Cato spent most of her childhood doodling and tracing comic strips. Early inspirations were her Uncle Donny's book of illustrations and the graffiti explosion of the 80's. Her pen and ink illustrations are an attempt to pay homage to her fascination with line weight and space. The characters within her illustrations are drawn from friends, family and the childhood she often returns to in her dreams.

Cato's work seeks to engage everyday people and participate in serious social conversations with humor, wit and compassion.



"Daddys girl" pen/ink 2010 8" x 10-1/2"



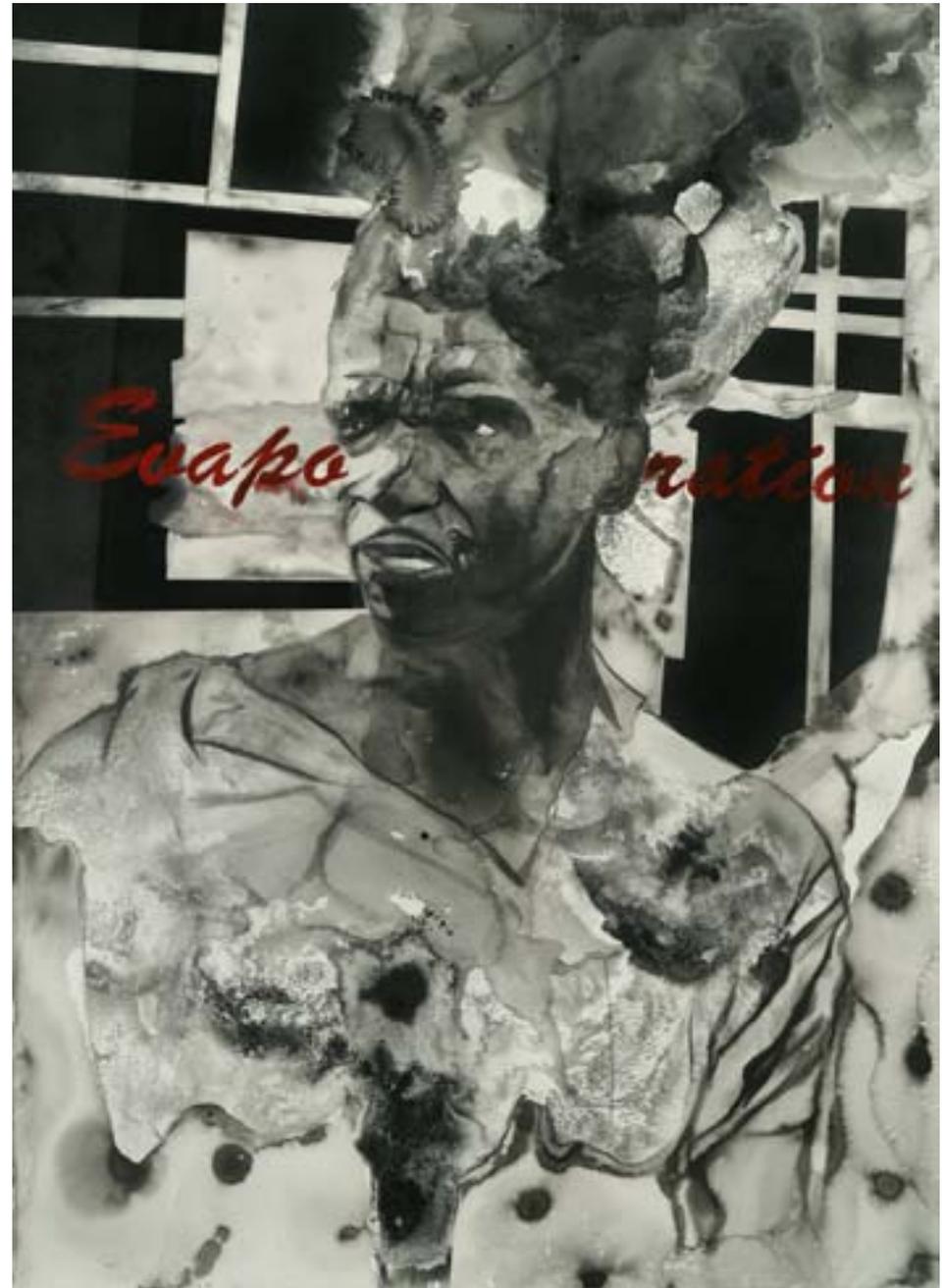
"Work it out" pen/ink 2010 8" x 10-1/2"

RODNEY EWING

Bio

Rodney Ewing is an artist working out of San Francisco California. His drawings, installations, and mixed media works focus on his need to intersect body and place, memory and fact to re-examine human histories, cultural conditions, and events. With his work he is pursuing a narrative that requires us to be present and intimate. Rodney Ewing's work has been included in numerous exhibitions including:

- "Surveillance" (Institute for Performing Arts, 2011)
- "Unwashed Saints" (Dog Patch Gallery 2011)
- "Tech Tools of the Trade: Contemporary Media Art" (de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara University, 2009)
- "Art Dubai", (Frey Norris Gallery)
- "Public Safety, (Frey Norris Gallery, San Francisco, CA 2008)
- "Code Switching", (Red House Gallery, Santa Monica, CA 07)
- "Who's Afraid of San Francisco (Frey Norris Gallery 06)
- Lisa Dent Gallery (San Francisco, CA 2005)
- Cartography (Johnsonese Gallery, Chicago, IL 2005)



"Dry Season #1", 2011, 60"x40",
Ink, Salt, and Water on paper.



“FOR SOULS”, 40X60 INCHES
2011, Ink and water on paper.

WILLIAM RHODES

Bio

Sculptural furniture design artist William Rhodes began his creative journey at the Baltimore School for the Arts. He then earned a BA in Furniture Building and Design from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and a MFA from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Mr. Rhodes' creative works are in the collections of various galleries and museums and featured in several major publications. Mr. Rhodes is the owner of St. Paul Art and Design Studio. He currently has a studio in San Francisco, CA.

Mr. Rhodes' travels to Africa, Asia, and Central and South America have strongly influenced his work. The people, art, and cultures of these societies have inspired Mr. Rhodes to consider non-Western approaches to furniture and art – to create utilitarian objects that are works of art. Therefore, the conventional definition of “craft” does not apply to Rhodes' work. Rhodes has taken a decidedly Eastern view in his choice of materials and method of building and design. More specifically, he believes the spirit and characteristics of a piece of drift wood lends itself to a particular piece of furniture. Materials such as paper, plaster, metal, clay and/or wood filler may be used to preserve the form of the piece. Additionally, recycled materials are an important component of Rhodes' work because re-using items in art gives that object a second life.



"Head of Ogon"; 33in X 12in X 12in; materials are re purposed plastic forks, spoons, knives and paint.



" The Dance of Innovation"; 68in X 32in X 5in; materials are re purposed wood, found mirror, glass and gold leaf.

SIRRON NORRIS

Bio

Sirron Norris, born in Cleveland, Ohio graduated from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, he then settled down in San Francisco in 1997. Since his arrival he has been busy. In 2002 he was the recipient of the prestigious Wattis Artist in Residence from the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. His most notable mural, "Victorion: El Defensor de la Mission" located in the historic "Balmy Alley" has been featured in several magazines, books and advertisements such as "Lonely Planet Travel Guide," "ComputerArts Magazine" and "Latino Future Magazine."

Sirron was the lead artist in an animated pilot for the FOX network "Bob's Burgers" ,worked with the Bay Area Video Coalition, featured on the PBS news Hour with Jim Lehrer, a recycling campaign for San Francisco Environment, and the front page of the Bay Guardian magazine..

In 2010 Norris's next big project was the opening of his art studio & gallery located in the Mission district. Norris aims to offer art for the family and hopes to serve as an inspiration to up and coming artists. Children and adults can watch Norris paint live in his studio and right next door they may purchase reasonably priced finished items in his gallery at 1406B Valencia St.



"Months" 18in X 24"
oil paint, spray paint & acrylic on canvas



“Untitled” 18in X 24”
oil paint, spray paint & acrylic on canvas

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