

Artists Exhibit Work at City Gallery of Contemporary Art

Raleigh, NC
September 9-October 29

With the generous support of Northern Telecom, the City Gallery of Contemporary Art in Raleigh has awarded \$10,000 fellowships to each of three exciting Southeastern visual artists: Martin Johnson, Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier, and David Szafranski. An exhibition of the artists' works, titled *New Works Fellowships: Northern Telecom*, will be at City Gallery, September 9-October 29, before traveling to three other sites around the country.

Martin Johnson is a resident of Virginia Beach, VA. A native of New Jersey, he received a B.A. in Architecture from VPI in Blacksburg, VA, and an MFA from UNC-Chapel Hill. Johnson's work has been widely exhibited at galleries and museums such as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, SECCA, the Chrysler Museum, and the Phyllis Kind Gallery in New York. He has been the subject of articles in both *Art in America* and *Art Forum*.

Martin Johnson collects; his studio bulges with objects that others have discarded or that have been picked up from junk shops, discount stores, or wherever they have caught his eye. In a unique way, he assembles these objects into sculptures that fill, both literally and psychologically, any space that they occupy. Quoting from Donald Kuspit's remarks about the artist in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, "It is standard Dadaist-surrealist operating procedure to regard ordinary objects as extraordinary art (and vice versa), but for Johnson that is not the end of the ironic process. ... Again and again, on a grand scale but also more intimately, he attempts to embrace the human whole, as exemplified by everyday America. Indeed, strange as it may seem to say so, Johnson is a kind of folk artist, if more conspicuously and self-consciously avant-gard."

A native of North Carolina, Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier now lives in Atlanta, GA. After attending Spelman College, she received her B.F.A. in Photography from The Atlanta College of Art. A veteran of many solo and group exhibitions, Marshall-Linnemeier also co-curated an exhibition for the Duke University Center for Documentary Studies called *Mississippi Self-Portrait*. The exhibition stemmed from her work as Project Director and Fieldworker for this photo-documentary project that is a collaborative effort among the Duke University Center for Documentary Studies, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, and the Mass Communications Department of Jackson State University. Marshall-Linnemeier also received a 1993 Southern Arts Federation/National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in Photography.

Marshall-Linnemeier's work includes what she refers to as illuminated photographs. These are photographs in which the original image is both obscured and enhanced by overpainting with acrylic paint. Writing for the catalogue, Clarence White characterizes her works as follows: "Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier belongs to a growing contingent of artists who have been producing experimental and risky photo-based works of art since the late 1970s. ... [Her] distinctive accomplishment is her radical restructuring and recomposition of straight photographs and her subversive transformation of their content through painterly techniques and the persuasive power of her accompanying texts."

The third artist, David Szafranski, lives in Dallas, TX. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and an M.F.A. from the University of North Texas in Denton. Szafranski, too, has exhibited widely, most recently at The Drawing Center in New York and the Contemporary Art Museum in Ghent, Belgium. Since receiving the Northern Telecom

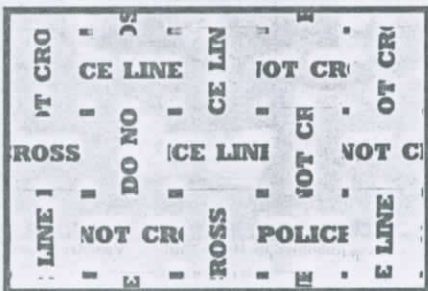
award, he has also won the Best in Show award from a prestigious juried exhibition held annually in Houston, sponsored by the Assistance League of Houston.

Szafranski works in two parallel modes. In the first, he uses light fixtures and electrical apparatus to create sculptural pieces that both attract and repel the viewer. Too bright to be looked at directly for very long, these works evoke for the artist the phrase *seeing the light* as it describes "a state of receiving higher knowledge or a blinding insight into the fundamental spiritual nature of the Universe or God. Yet this knowledge usually comes with painful emotional and psychological strings attached." In the second, he utilizes flat materials that can be woven such as lawn chair webbing, video tape, bang caps, and police barrier tape (*Police Line Do Not Cross*) to create objects that, from a distance, resemble elegant minimalist canvases but whose identities change upon closer inspection. In Tom Moody's catalogue essay, he writes, "Szafranski's interest in visual artifacts led him to the current work, fusing the 'low' of material culture with the 'high' of modernist abstraction. The combination itself isn't new - fifty years before the minimalists, Pablo Picasso took the radical step of incorporating a fragment of the everyday world in his cubist composition *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912. Szafranski has 'hyperrealized' Picasso's idea, (to use a term of social theorist Jean Baudrillard's), meaning he has abstracted it further and exaggerated it in scale and intensity. In a Szafranski piece the cubist composition (art) is distilled down to a grid while the chair caning (life) has grown to engulf, almost to become the entire piece."

City Gallery is deeply grateful to Northern Telecom for its willingness to support the work of contemporary artists. Northern Telecom is a leading global supplier of fully digital telecommunications switching systems and a strong supporter of the arts. Supporting new and innovative works by regional and national artists, the City Gallery of Contemporary Art presents and interprets contemporary art and design through a schedule of diverse exhibitions that explore aesthetic, cultural and ideological issues.

City Gallery is located at 220 South Blount Street, directly across from Moore Square Park in the historic Moore Square Art District. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-5 pm. There is no admission charge.

In addition to the New Works/Telecom exhibit, there are numerous special events (music, lectures, workshops) planned in conjunction with the exhibit. For a complete schedule, call City Gallery at 919-839-2077.



David Szafranski
Northern Telecom
New Works Fellowship Recipient