Linda Armstrong, *Missoe*, 1990, hand manipulated lithograph, 22 X 30 inches (courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia)

tleties. If the lithograph is inherently reproducible, the artist's ability to manipulate the image on the stone after each print lends it an aura of originality. In *Missoe*, 1990, **Linda Armstrong** exploits the subtlety and complexity of image composition allowed by lithography, layering drawings and photographs through a transfer technique involving photosensitive ink. Named for Cumberland Island off the Georgia Coast, *Missoe* presents a grid of nine rectangles in which topographical maps are layered over diagonal teal/blue stripes that convey reflected light on water. Translucent orange and pink snakes, salamanders, fish, birds' feet, and other evidence of native wildlife float above these maps. Evincing nature's hardships and man's presence, photographs depicting dead beached sea life, boats and wharfs, and a picture of a young girl with a bow in her hair, are also overlaid.

Founder Wayne Kline deliberately invited artists working in diverse media to explore the process of lithography. This crossing of disciplines opens new expressive possibilities for both artists and the medium. In *Mind Field*, 1988, by sculptor **Maria Artemis**, for example, large triangle-like wedges of blue, red and orange jut from the image's four edges into a field of deep mottled purple and wine. A double-helix projects from a blue and red-violet mass in the upper right corner, connecting to a multi-colored shape that, with one corner centered in the middle of the image, resembles a broken shard. Depth and flatness are simultaneously created by the colorful modeling of shapes, and their placement within the composition. In such a richly coloristic lithograph, Artemis had to draw each layer of color separately in black, envisioning the blended color fields in her mind.

In a taped interview played as part of the exhibition's educational outreach, Kline explains that lithography "goes beyond drawing because... it allows you to process the information or the ideas that you're working on." The Master Printer's work reveals his interest in seriality, "the progression of ideas and time and space." Kline's series *Nineties, Man!* presents variations on a pyramidal theme. The central image of a pyramid is cut open with a perspectival passageway leading to the other side. Pointy shapes rise in a leafy pattern as foliage at the base of the pyramid in the foreground. Overlapping circular beams of light illuminate oval portals near the pyramid's zenith. If the image speaks of ancient history and mystical experience, its serial production creates variations in color, texture and tone that open to multiple readings.

Wayne Kline and the Rolling Stone Press brings together experiments in lithography and a well-developed educational program to provide valuable historical insight into an institution that has both helped to shape contemporary art in Georgia and brought national attention to contemporary art in the region.
—Diana McClintock

BIRMINGHAM

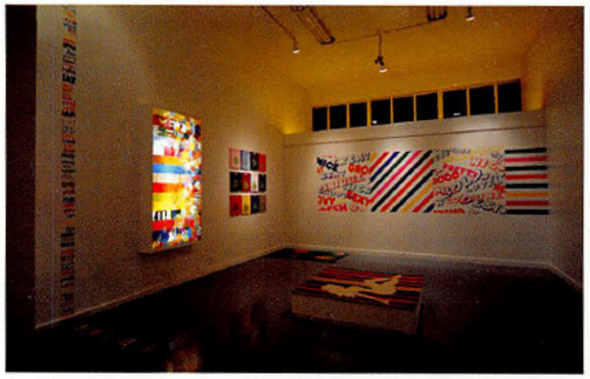
BAMA, a collaborative installation (Space One Eleven, November 12—December 30, 2004) by Birmingham artists **Jane Timberlake**, **Annie Kammerer Butrus**, and **Amy Pleasant**, grew out of a shared interest in painting. It is, however, anything but traditional painting. Instead, the relatively small gallery comprises three different experiments representing the direction each artist has recently pursued. Timberlake's droll take on the intersections of pop and modern design, Butrus' lush environment of organic forms, and Pleasant's austere drawings of figures performing mundane tasks converge to highlight various facets of a city's distinct geography and emerging art scene.

The gallery space has been divided into three areas. Slick commercial icons of Birmingham culture, such as a pyramidal display of *BAMA* huggies and Budweiser beer cans, fill the walls of Timberlake's *Media Room, 200X*. Nearby, digital collages, light boxes, buttons, and vinyl cut bubble letters reveal slogans—groovy, consume, pretty—and images gleaned from glossy magazines and gossip tabloids. The colors are those of a perky teenage girl's dream: kelly green, cotton candy pink, bright orange, and royal blue. The artist has even screenprinted t-shirts with a phrase hailing the South's renowned lecherous vine: "Kudzu, Spread It." The cleverest object rests in the room's center: a bench covered with a striped rug showcases the big-boobed mud-flap white girl in all her glory.

Through her rugs, wall décor, and furniture, Timberlake collapses high modernism, pop, and postmodern appropriation. She references the drips of Jackson Pollock, the stripes of Ellsworth Kelly, the pop creations of Warhol, and the interior design of Verner Panton. Her grids and utilitarian objects also bear striking resemblance to Donald Judd's transformation of minimalist designs into a lucrative furniture business. Her work nonetheless portends more than the commodification of art or the blurring of boundaries between the fine and decorative arts. Rather, by bringing the trashy southern culture and football mania of Birmingham into the realm of high design, the artist offers a glimpse of a changing city—a pointed departure from stereotypes of a backwoods South.

Butrus' *Shadow: Seasons, 200X*, a painting-based installation, forms the bridge between Timberlake and Pleasant's works. Obsessively covering wall, ceiling and floor, the artist has created a vibrant evocation of an orchard's transformation. Meandering ribbons of color indicate creeping vines while heavy amorphous globs rain down, denoting ripe and rotting fruits. One wall's glowing pinks and golds contrast its opposite's charcoals and umbers. Suggesting Monet's water lilies by way of Japanese landscapes, day turns to night, summer slips into fall. The effect of the consuming decoration however proves oddly frenetic; with its luminous points, her environment is reminiscent of Yayoi Kusama's *Fireflies*, 2002, a dark room filled with mirrors and strands of colored lights that induce psychedelic reverie.

Butrus' installation draws on earlier series focusing on the changing Alabama landscape: a place trapped between its illustrious heritage as "Alabama the Beautiful" and the inevitable vicissitudes of progress, the artist has said. It also emerges from conversations with farmers throughout the state. With no market for his crop, one man showed Butrus that orchards had become a sea of rotting apples. Her photograph of the fruits inspired her images. Building on the traditions of romantic landscape, her paintings mark time's passage and symbolize organic processes of decay and renewal. They also point to the specificity of forces radically transforming BAMA today.



Jane Timberlake, *BAMA*, 2004, mixed media, dimensions variable (courtesy of the artist)

If Timberlake's *Media Room evokes the city*, and Butrus' *Shadow: Seasons* takes us to the countryside, Pleasant's wall drawing, *Constellation*, 2004, ushers us into private interiors. We glimpse her spiraling trail of tiny lone figures and couples engaged in the rituals of daily life—looking in the mirror, sleeping, conversing—like pinpoints of twinkling stars. Her dark silhouettes snaking along stark white walls resemble Kara Walker's plantation vignettes. If violence permeates both artists' works, Pleasant focuses on the drama of subtle gestures, rather than lavish excess. In so doing, the diminutive scale and imprecise outlines of her forms both invoke precise actions and are provocatively rich. Positioning us as voyeurs, we get the sense of watching couples in passing cars, wondering if they are fighting, laughing, or just caught up in heated conversation.

Another work, *Spread*, 2004, fills the gallery's storefront window with a series of accordion books, unfolded and stacked in rows. Barring our view of the interior, they imply a larger narrative outside our scope of reference, foretelling what lies within. The artist's characters, an individual or small group appearing on each sheet, speak volumes by saying nothing. Intimate, repetitive, and sometimes spontaneous actions create the essence of our lives, or so they seem to imply.

While contemporary life has often been characterized as restless or placeless, Pleasant, Timberlake, and Butrus suggest that it remains fundamentally rooted to a place. Their installations effectively question the nature of place, evocatively unsettling—for natives and outsiders—just what BAMA may be.
—Jessica Dallow

CHAPEL HILL

Letters from Home: The Art of Michael D. Harris (The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 1, 2004—January 28, 2005) features digital prints, mixed-media assemblages and installations that represent a decade of **Michael D. Harris'** art. The letter, in its multiple invocations ranging from the homebound missive to African scripts and symbols, is the conceptual node of the exhibition as well as the subject of many of the works.

Presented in the sparkling new Robert and Sallie Brown Gallery at the Center, the golden tonalities of the works absolutely radiate. *Mothers and the Presence of Myth*, 1994, a lithograph based on Harris' residency among the Yoruba of Nigeria, is the earliest work in the room. It sets the mood for a coherent presentation of works based on storytelling's signs and symbols: Adinkra symbols are scattered on a splattered color field that contains a photographic reproduction, suggesting the connection of family history to an African past.

Michael D. Harris, *Penance for Oshun*, 2004, archival digital print, 30 X 20 inches on 34 X 24 inches Somerset Velvet paper, edition of 15 (courtesy of the artist and the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

References to the many manifestations of pan-African culture abound. Paintings with wooden ledges or shelves filled with mysterious bottles, beads, statues of saints, crucifixes, offerings of candles, wrapped charms, flowers, tobacco, rum and coins stand in for altars that present familiar offerings to the syncretic gods of Christian and African religions and voodoo referred to in *Bahia: A Velho Preta*, 1998, one of the most lushly lyrical works in the show.

Other works, such as *French Quarter Otis*, 2004, rely on rich palimpsests of computer-altered photographs and African imagery. African slaves debark *en masse* from a nineteenth-century ship seen in the doorway's windows behind a fashionably dressed man. Repeated Adinkra symbols, meaning "two crocodiles sharing the same stomach" to refer to the common ancestry of the modern New Orleans dandy and African slaves, are subtly inlaid across the entire image to form a visual and verbal mantra.

Framed by patterns from African Adire cloth, *Mrs. Peterson*, 2003, confronts the viewer with a once-popular "mammie" image attached to her shoulder. This underscores the work's dual reference. Refusing the monikers "mammie" or "auntie", she only answers to Mrs. Peterson, just as *Uncle Waymon*, 2003, in the pendant print, fights stereotype by refusing to be called "boy". Both are emblems of the Civil Rights movement's struggle for identity and dignity experienced within the lifetimes of many contemporary viewers.

With *No More Ugly Ways: A Prayer for Family Healing*, 1997, Harris develops a vocabulary of signs and symbols, using personal photographs and memorabilia, to meditate on the rift in his family of origin. Found objects convey narrative in *Letters from Home: Grandpa Henry*, 2004. A hat, a rusted saw, and antiquated tools of the carpenter's trade are laid out on a small carved table, around and under a framed image-collage. Harris has taken pains to calibrate the various notes of the tableau, so that visual harmony and a sense of authenticity are achieved. We can indeed believe *Grandpa Henry's* gathered mute implements and accoutrements.

In *Nana's Apothecary*, 2004, a quaint hanging shelf lined with herbs and concoctions in rows of glass bottles fills a corner of the room. A small chest of drawers, a suitably worn armchair bearing an elaborately feathered vintage hat, and a mortar and pestle resting on a doily-covered table complete the piece. While actually based on recollections of his grandmother, Harris embroiders her memory, suggesting her healing powers in the guise of a root woman.

Elaborating upon found objects is part of the creative process for Harris. The artist connects with his audience by conflating events, stories and pictures in an imagined history—sometimes difficult, sometimes sentimental—whose ambivalent relation to truth is precisely what yields truths.
—Michele Natale

KNOXVILLE

Atlanta artist **Sarah Hobbs** seemingly surrounds the viewer with scenes from her life. Focusing on ordinary experience—writ large—she creates installations that, akin to unpeopled stage sets, she then photographs. They appear to evolve out of her own living space, manipulated for the photographs. It is unclear whether her set/life occupies one room or many, but her reinvention of this space for each new piece becomes part of the intrigue of this work.

The natural-seeming color, the large scale, and the recognizable domestic imagery initially lend *Sarah Hobbs: SubUrban* (Knoxville Museum of Art, December 17, 2004—April 3, 2005) a comfortable familiarity. Hobbs' ten identically sized chromogenic prints make the box-like gallery feel spacious, as if it actually opened onto several life-size rooms. The neatness factor, however, rapidly comes in. We cannot experience the physical reality of these rooms: their actual size, textures, smells, and other qualities. Instead, the photograph renders all instantly tidy. In fact, Hobbs is creating virtual art: a transitory experience manufactured and recorded for future viewing. The mediation also keeps us at an emotional distance. While intellectually credible, some pieces almost seem to make light of real-life tensions. Hobbs' titling confirms this intentional ironic distance: a parenthetical word of explanation follows and inflects the ubiquitous *Untitled*.

In *Untitled (Insomnia)*, 2000, we feel like voyeurs. Mussed covers, mismatched sheets and assorted pillowcases make us uncomfortable. Scraps of paper float above the bed, bearing