

# Florida Focus

## TAMPA BAY

CURATED BY MARK ORMOND

GULF COAST MUSEUM OF ART  
JANUARY 14 – FEBRUARY 20, 2005

RICHARD BECKMAN

NEIL BENDER

RYAN BERG

ELISABETH CONDON

LESLIE FRY

DAVID NORR

BETH REYNOLDS

CARLOS MANUEL SOTO

BURK UZZLE

ROBYN VOSHARDT / SVEN HUMPHREY

THEO WUJCIK



On the cover:  
RICHARD BECKMAN  
*Strange Addictions*, 2001

Top, left to right:  
ROBYN VOSHARDT/  
SVEN HUMPHREY  
*Cluster 6.7.04* from  
*Selected Drawings 2003–2004*

DAVID NORR  
*Untitled Green Case*

THEO WUJCIK  
*Cocked & Ready*

Bottom, left to right:  
ELISABETH CONDON  
*Welcome Net*

NEIL BENDER  
*Manifest Destiny* (detail)



**THE TWELVE ARTISTS IN THIS SURVEY** include individuals long established in the art world and those who have recently received attention. The work of each represents a significant contribution to an expansion of the current dialogue in contemporary art. There are fewer rather than more artists in this show so that those chosen could be represented by more than one work. And while this exhibition includes only a sample of what is being made in the region, it presents a microcosm of the types of significant work that is being made throughout the world. Some of the words that describe the work are: intelligent, curious, intense, visceral, colorful, profound, innovative, soulful, bold, refined, essential, sensual, ordered, playful, humorous and personal.

Formal issues are important to each of these artists. They respect the potential of their materials and have explored the greater possibilities inherent within them. Media and methods whether conventional or innovative have allowed them to add to what we know and redefine sculpture, painting, drawing, photography or video. In some way, each of the works deals with aspects of performance (even if it is about the performance of making the work). Each is referential to and reverential of certain traditions.

Mark making is a significant concern for these artists. In photography it may be the crop line of an image or the illumination of light. In a drawing it may be the trace of a pencil or the evidence of the pressure graphite makes on the paper. For a painter it could be the juxtaposition of one brush stroke with another or the quality of an aqueous medium layered over one that is more dense and saturated. In sculpture it could be the additive use of materials of found objects or the reductive mark of carving into plaster.

RICHARD BECKMAN's sculpture manifests a process he adopted using a welder. The resulting forms are organic and highly charged with an expressive energy that is more spontaneous than his previous more systematically and mathematically derived forms. His drawings involve meditation and the channeling of energy to sustain each of the marks he placed on the paper.

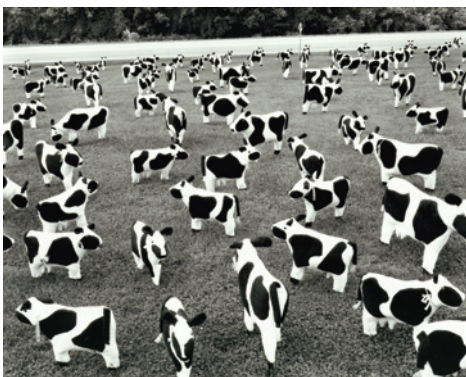
NEIL BENDER's work is intensely visceral and nostalgic for both the past and immediate present. It is about a surface or skin that can uncover much if the viewer participates in the revelation. Bender draws us into his process and materials where he then provides references to real, anticipated or imagined experiences. Bold colors and shapes encourage investigation as they defy identification or categorization.

RYAN BERG's work takes the viewer along on a journey about becoming. Each work investigates and tries on, if you will, a persona that can be adopted or shed as we choose. The collage of components of each object confounds and seduces as it engages and satisfies. Berg's presentation of the work presents an essential integration of ideas that can be accepted or deconstructed.

ELISABETH CONDON is fantastically curious. Her work combines elements and issues of her past or present that might be shared with the viewer. The structure of the landscape is inventive and respectful combining formal issues of eastern and western painting and drawing. Condon's serious sense of whimsy wraps our heads around ideas about travel, time, memory and how we establish a sense of place.

LESLIE FRY's sculpture connects to nature outside and beyond the gallery in addition to having an almost heroic and mythical presence in the exhibition space. The painted plaster heads pay homage to ancient and classical traditions and forms suggesting we search our memory for legends while at the same time we ponder our connection to history and place in the present.

DAVID NORR focuses on issues of display. The minimal appearance of his work disguises a reference to questions about how objects function in our lives and how we observe and respond to the formal issues of scale, color and form. That presentation is as important or more important than form and function in our culture is an idea he presents for us to ponder.



Top:  
BETH REYNOLDS  
*Children Outside Oscar's—Havana*

Bottom:  
BURK UZZLE, *Wow Cows*



At left, top to bottom:  
CARLOS MANUEL SOTO  
*Summertime Dream from the Tampa Bay Series*

LESLIE FRY  
*Quercus Emancipation*  
Photograph by Burk Uzzle

RYAN BERG  
*Bjork's Tear*



BETH REYNOLDS investigates social issues and societal conditions in her documentary work. Her combination of image and words is presented in a sequence and relationship that allows us a focus of attention unlike what is found in mainstream media. In her work a connection is created between viewer and viewed that stimulates our empathy, understanding and concerned response.

CARLOS MANUEL SOTO's paintings reflect his keen observation of a new culture and his connection and nostalgia for his past. The inclusion of text on canvases that are about the vocabulary and language of paint introduces a specific narrative that is informed and humorous. His objectivity is balanced with a passion and fervor for both discovery of the new and respect for tradition.

BURK UZZLE displays an uncanny wit in his observation of people, places and things. His mastery of black and white and color photography is evident. His choice of subject matter attracts our attention with both the formality and humor of its presentation. We accept his fictions that he refines and constructs as an informed view of aspects of life in places we have never experienced.

ROBYN VOSHARDT AND SVEN HUMPHREY are concerned with isolated moments of experience and their resonance. Their collaborative work manifests a process that is both thoughtful and spontaneous. The visual aspect of the video work often focuses on one element that tests the viewer's patience and the relationship of personal to shared space. The risks they take in their work are calculated to push them and us to contemplate chance, construct and beauty.

THEO WUJCIK's works represent an investigation of blind contour painting. His other inspirations derived from current events or his collection of magazine advertisements and photographs connect his imagery with modern culture and its concerns with identity and appearance. Visually he offers the relationship of disparate elements such as war and fashion or violence and beauty for contemplation.

I would like to thank all of the artists for opening their studios to me and for all their assistance with details of the exhibition. My appreciation is extended to Ken Rollins for the opportunity to organize this exhibition and Laurel DeLoach and the staff of the museum for their help and attention to many details of loans, installation, presentation and promotion.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Richard Beckman.

MARK ORMOND  
Curator, *Florida Focus: Tampa Bay*

**RICHARD BECKMAN**

*Strange Addictions*, 2001  
steel, 18 x 12 x 22 in.

*Scatter*, 2001  
steel and flocking  
30 x 22 x 22 in.

*So Much Love (lost)*, 2004  
steel, 68 x 43 x 81 in.

*Breathing*, 2003  
graphite and ink on paper  
45 x 30 in.  
Collection of Bob and  
Li-Hung Catron

**NEIL BENDER**

*Manifest Destiny*, 2004  
ink, acrylic on fabric over canvas  
40 x 60 in.

*The Chinese Finger Torture Device*, 2004  
ink, collage, acrylic, latex,  
and paper on wood  
50 x 62 in.

*The Diagrammatic Diary of Dysfunction*, 2004  
mixed media on Rives BFK paper  
42 in. x 9 ft. (variable length)

**RYAN BERG**

*Loss is Natural*, 2004  
ceramic and plaster  
6 x 4 x 5.5 in.

*Bjork's Tear*, 2004  
ceramic, 4 x 3 x 5 in.

*Rainbow Pile & a Tiger's Feet*, 2004  
ceramic and plaster  
10 x 4.5 x 8 in.

*I Wanna Love You Like a Plaid Dog*, 2004  
ceramic, plaster, paper  
6 x 4 x 6 in.

*Little Willy*, 2004  
ceramic, plaster, paper  
6 x 6 x 6 in.

*Skin Tight Skin*  
(*Suzi, Chariot and Me*), 2004  
ceramic, plaster, paper  
12 x 6 x 8 in.

*New Born Carrier*, 2004  
fabric, watercolor, paper  
14 x 17 in.

*Strawberry Plaid (Shuggie and Me)*, 2004  
fabric, watercolor, ink, paper  
15 x 20 in.

*The Eyes and Elton's Arm*, 2004  
paper, plaster, watercolor, ink  
15 x 20 in.

*Mama Weer a Rockin Moonbeam*  
(*Have a Look!*), 2004  
paper, watercolor, ink  
20 x 24 in.

**ELISABETH CONDON**

*Welcome Net*, 2004  
acrylic on paper  
22 x 30 in.

*Dual Residence*, 2004  
acrylic on paper  
22 x 30 in.

*August*, 2004  
oil on linen  
38.5 x 52 in.

*The Fu' Chun Mountains of Florida*, 2004  
oil on linen  
24 x 88 in.  
All works courtesy The Beaker Gallery

**LESLIE FRY**

*Quercus Emancipation*, 2003  
painted plaster with hemp  
size varies  
On loan from the artist  
Courtesy Clayton Gallery

**DAVID NORR**

*Untitled Green Case*, 2002  
lacquer, MDF, glass, stainless steel  
52 x 26 x 16 in.

*One Down and Self*, 2001  
lacquer, MDF, glass, brass  
44 x 42 x 15.5 in.

*The Taming*, 2003  
lacquer, MDF, wood, stainless steel  
106 x 30 x 49 in.

**BETH REYNOLDS**

*Misunderstood Minds:  
Living with Learning Differences*, 2004  
still photographs with audio  
created in Macromedia Flash  
3 minutes

*Cuban Jews – The Diaspora*, 2004  
still photographs with audio  
created in Macromedia Flash  
3 minutes

**CARLOS MANUEL SOTO**

*Summertime Dream*  
from the *Tampa Bay Series*, 2003  
oil on canvas  
60.25 x 39.25 in.

*Welcome Hillsborough*  
from the *Tampa Bay Series*, 2003  
oil on canvas  
40 x 60.25 in.  
All works courtesy Brad Cooper Gallery

**ROBYN VOSHARDT/SVEN HUMPHREY**

*Bad Blood*, 2004 (3 min. 40 sec.)  
video/sound installation  
variable dimensions, as shown 72 x 96 in.

*Twenty-Six Selected Drawings*, 2003–2004  
graphite, egg tempera, acrylic, ink, gouache,  
or watercolor on paper and vellum  
various dimensions

**BURK UZZLE**

*Wow Cows*, 2003  
gelatin silver print  
30 x 37.5 in.

*Self Portrait*, 2004  
gelatin silver print  
30 x 37.5 in.

*Clothesline with Deer Heads*, 2002  
gelatin silver print  
27.5 x 37.5 in.

*Really Clean Oak Trees*, 2002  
gelatin silver print  
27.5 x 36 in.

**THEO WUJCIK**

*Cocked & Ready*, 2004  
acrylic on canvas  
90 x 75 in.

*Building Blocks*, 2004  
acrylic on canvas  
90 x 75 in.

*Identity Theft*, 2004  
acrylic on canvas  
60 x 36 in.  
All works courtesy Millenia Gallery

# Florida Focus

## TAMPA BAY

The *Florida Focus* exhibition series was conceived to explore new and significant contemporary art occurring in various regions of the state, as seen through the eyes of knowledgeable guest curators. The first such exhibition in 2002, entitled *Florida Focus: Fresh Squeezed*, was curated by independent Tampa curator, Jade Dellinger. The second installment, *Florida Focus: Miami Hot!* was curated by Denise Gerson, Associate Director for Programs at the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami. This exhibition, *Florida Focus: Tampa Bay*, has been curated by Mark Ormond, former Deputy Director and Senior Curator at the John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, now working as an independent curator. The Gulf Coast Museum of Art is supremely committed to contemporary art in Florida. The *Florida Focus* exhibition series reinforces that commitment and provides an annual opportunity to examine some of the most important work occurring in our state.

Mark Ormond is one of Florida's preeminent independent curators. Over the years, he has consistently made it his business to remain abreast of issues and trends in contemporary art on an international level, as well as regionally. I would like to extend our most sincere appreciation to Mark for the stimulating exhibition he has assembled for our Museum.

Also, as always, it is important to recognize the role of the Museum's Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors, community volunteers who establish policy and work in a variety of ways in helping maintain a viable contemporary art museum for the west coast of Florida.

Also, to the Museum staff, I extend my most sincere appreciation to each and every one of you. Each exhibition is a team effort and would not occur if each department did not pull its weight. Exhibitions/Collections, Marketing, Education, Administration, Finance, and Security/Facilities Departments all are an integral part of organizing, marketing, mounting and implementing each exhibition and associated educational programs.

Special recognition is extended to Laurel DeLoach, the Museum's Registrar/Exhibitions Coordinator, for her exemplary work in coordinating the details of this exhibition, the gallery guide, the loan of works, and their masterful installation.

**KEN ROLLINS**  
Executive Director  
January 2005

EXHIBITION SPONSOR: AM SOUTH WEALTH MANAGEMENT



Programs of the Gulf Coast Museum of Art are sponsored in part by the members, the Fine Arts Society, Pinellas County Commission through Pinellas County Arts Council Cultural Development Grant Program, the City of St. Petersburg Arts Advisory Board, and the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs through the Florida Arts Council.



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