

# PACE/MACGILL GALLERY

## W I L L I A M   C H R I S T E N B E R R Y

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Ala.) attended the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, where he received BA and MFA degrees in painting (1958, 1959).

Following his move to New York City in 1961, Christenberry held a series of odd jobs until a conversation with Walker Evans at Time-Life inspired him to begin photographing his regional home. Evans and James Agee's 1941 book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, featuring images Evans had taken in Christenberry's own Hale County, had greatly influenced the younger artist. The dialogue with Evans also laid the foundation for a lifelong friendship between the two men. Whether using photography, painting, drawing or sculpture, Christenberry's interest in the themes and traditions of the rural American South translate into simple yet monumental iconography. On both formal and conceptual levels, Christenberry's work focuses on the prolonged study of a place. For example, in the process of documenting the evolution of a building and its surroundings over time, he provides a chronicle of that structure's evolving identity. His work not only captures the essence of a particular region's heritage, it is also a meditation upon the universal experience of stasis and change.

Since his first solo show in 1961, Christenberry's multimedia work has been the subject of one-person and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad. In 1996, two institutions organized retrospectives of his work; the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, Ga., presented "William Christenberry: The Early Years, 1954 - 1968," and the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson mounted "Reconstruction: William Christenberry's Art." In 2001 the Kreeger Museum in Washington, D.C., hosted "William Christenberry: Changing Landscapes - The Source Revisited," and "William Christenberry: Architecture/Archetype" appeared at the University of Cincinnati's DAAP Galleries. Christenberry's images of Alabama's Cahaba River and Bibb County Glades were included in the group show "In Response to Place: Photographs from the Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places" organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2001). Recently, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels presented "William Christenberry," an exhibition that traveled to the Photographische Sammlung in Cologne (2002) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C. exhibited "Passing Time: The Art of William Christenberry" (2006-2007).

Christenberry is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Lyndhurst Foundation Prize (1982); a Guggenheim Fellowship (1984); a Washington D.C. Mayor's Arts Award (1986); the Alabama Prize (1989); an Art Matters, Inc., grant (1994); and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa (1998). He has held teaching positions at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C., Memphis State University, and the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Christenberry's work belongs to numerous collections, including the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Mass.; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the George Eastman House, Rochester; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Menil Collection, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; the Milwaukee Museum of Art; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Monographs of his work include *William Christenberry: Southern Photographs* (1983); *Christenberry: Reconstruction: The Art of William Christenberry* (1996); *William Christenberry: The Early Years, 1954-1968* (1996); *William Christenberry: Art & Family* (2000); *William Christenberry* (2002); and *William Christenberry* (2006).

Christenberry lives and works in Washington, D.C.