

PACE/MACGILL GALLERY

William Christenberry: House and Car and

December 10, 2009 - February 6, 2010

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30; Saturday, 10:00-6:00

Pace/MacGill Gallery is pleased to present "William Christenberry: House and Car and," a selection of photographs, encaustic paintings, drawings, sculpture and found signs. The exhibition illuminates Christenberry's multimedia approach to capturing the spirit of his native South as reflected by the culture, natural landscape, and vernacular architecture of rural Alabama.

William Christenberry returns to his home in Hale County, Alabama annually. Like Walker Evans, his images of the region's architectural sites and material culture provide a window into the rural South by offering prolonged studies of a place over time. For example, Christenberry's sequence of 20 photographs, House and Car, near Akron, Alabama (1978-2005), chronicles the physical transformation of a single building over the course of 27 years. A related sculpture gives three-dimensional form to the photographed building, however, it is not intended to be seen as a replica. Rather, the sculpture is a hybrid of both the actual image and Christenberry's own memory of it. Christenberry elaborates: "[t]hey are not models. They are re-creations. Imaginative re-creations, like dreams." The powerful combination of memory and imagination is particularly evident in Christenberry's abstract drawings of gourd trees that reference the regional tradition of hanging hollow gourds to attract nesting birds and generate new life.

The iconography of the rural American South is intrinsic to Christenberry's oeuvre. His found signs are literal records of place, while his images of egg crate crosses on graves and gourd trees allude to deeper cultural legacies. Perhaps the most potent symbol is an elongated, conical shape suggesting Ku Klux Klan members' hoods. Christenberry translates this symbol into a more gestural, inverted "V" in a variety of his pieces, including the painted triptych, K House (1998).

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama) received a BA and MFA in painting from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and has held teaching positions at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C., Memphis State University, and the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. He 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).

Since his first solo show in 1961, Christenberry's work has been the subject of exhibitions worldwide and can be found in the permanent collections of 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 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); *William Christenberry* (2006); and *William Christenberry: Working from Memory* (2008).