

BIOGRAPHY

SIEMON ALLEN

Siemon Allen is a South African artist who currently lives and works in the United States. His collection projects involve the accumulation, cataloging, configuration, and display of multiple historical artifacts in which he explores issues of identity and branding. Allen often employs the format of the grid within built architectural elements to frame his collections. *Records*, his most recent collection project, is currently being expanded into an extensive web based archive documenting South African audio through both visual and sound artifacts.

While in South Africa, Allen was a founding member of the FLAT gallery, an artists' initiative that operated in Durban from 1993 to 1995. Early versions of the stamp collection and a woven work were included in the *Vita 93* exhibition in Johannesburg. For *Vita 98*, Allen showed the first of his cut-up collage works, constructed from his collection of Tintin comics. His woven videotape and film works have been included in exhibitions in New York, Cape Town, and Johannesburg, with the largest installation included at the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale in the exhibition *Graft*.

Allen's collection projects are open ended in nature and have each been exhibited as fragments and at various stages of accumulation. *Stamps* has been presented at the Renaissance Society in Chicago, Artists Space in New York City, and the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, DC. *Newspapers* was first shown at FUSEBOX gallery in Washington, DC and later included in *The American Effect* at the Whitney Museum in New York City, and in *A Fiction of Authenticity* at the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis. In 2009, expanded versions of *Stamps* and *Newspapers* were shown at the Durban Art Gallery, together with *Makeba!*, which was first shown at BANK Gallery in Durban, South Africa.

In 2010, the gordonschachatcollection in Johannesburg acquired *Records*, a series of twelve large-format prints and commissioned Allen to complete the final and most comprehensive version of *Stamps*.

Siemon Allen is currently teaching in the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media at the School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

BHP Billiton, South Africa
Durban Art Gallery, South Africa
gordonschachatcollection, South Africa
Guggenheim Museum, New York
Standard Bank Collection, South Africa

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Cover: *Labels*, 2009. Anderson Gallery, Richmond, VA. page 2: *Newspapers*, 2009. A South African viewer reads about the election of Barak Obama in the US, through the tracing paper. Durban Art Gallery, Durban, SA. page 6: *Opening of Union Parliament: King George V*. stamp issued November 4, 1910, SAPO.

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