2009

BLOOD & THUNDER CLASSICS, VOL. 2

Brian Taylor
Virginia Commonwealth University

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BLOOD & THUNDER CLASSICS, VOL. 2

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

BRIAN TAYLOR
Bachelor of Fine Arts, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1999

Director: Elizabeth King
School of the Arts Research Professor, Department of Sculpture + Extended Media

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
May 2009
ABSTRACT

BLOOD & THUNDER CLASSICS, VOL.2

By BRIAN TAYLOR, MFA in Sculpture

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Major Director: Elizabeth King
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A MAGAZINE –

A game of Chutes and Ladders – a network of pools connected by streams, rivulets, creeks and rivers. Concerns: aluminum, sculpture, film, an endless image or an image-object, cork, shoulders as the center of movement, archery, wicker, nystagmus, darkness or the penumbral near-darkness, constant movement, beer, tone, musical forms, bells, gongs, The Titanic, purple, black and white, indeterminacy, Ghostface, yodeling, John Smith, John Adams, David Hammons, Beyoncé, Honda CR-V’s, Har-khebi, Ahnighito, Hermann Doomer, Prince, Yvonne Rainer, perception, double rainbows, composers from Transylvania, Los Angeles, and chandeliers.

“Everything is everything.” and “A woman is the first teacher.”

I used Microsoft Word 2008 and Adobe Photoshop CS3 and lots of paper and tape to prepare this document.
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TONE, WICKER, AND CONSTANT MOVEMENT

“I was watching a video on YouTube in which Ornette Coleman presents a tune called *Spring* in Germany; he tells the audience, ‘Follow the idea of the song, not the song itself.’ He also said, ‘Follow the idea, not the sound.’ I was impressed with that. Follow how my ideas are put together, as opposed to whether the rainbow appears or the rain comes. I use this logic a lot. It moves in the realm of poetry as opposed to the actuality that people are used to or expect.”

In the mid-1970’s, shortly after relocating to Harlem from Los Angeles, David Hammons went from making his *Body Prints* to making sculptures using hair. Making molded pyramid-shapes on the floor and arcs or lines with wire and stringing hair – specifically African-American hair – on the wire to create strange dot-matrix-ish volumes or fuzzy beaded line drawings in space. He was taking “that tangible crown of African American ‘difference’” and taking it even further into the realm of sculpture than it already was (and is). Hammons had moved from using his body as a performative template for drawings to using a part of the body directly. One that comes from a visible set of styles, fashions, and signifiers that are cut, straightened, extended, woven, curled, braided, pressed, and otherwise teased into some new and amazing form that has an existence already as “…not simply hairdos; these are elaborate constructions…nothing less than sculpture.”

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1 David Hammons on Artforum.com, 500 Words, November 24 2008.
2 A series that involved smearing margarine or grease over his body, hair, and clothes, pressing up on a support of some kind, and dusting it with chalk or pigment, these were politically and racially charged indexes of a process as well as a really visceral way to approach drawing and printmaking.
3 Kellie Jones, “In the Thick of It: David Hammons and Hair Culture in the 1970’s”, p. 17.
4 Ibid., p. 18.
At the same time he was with working directly with and from the body, David Hammons was making collage and assemblage work from brown paper bags, bones, glitter, shovels, grease, eggshells, vinyl record shards, bricks, rattraps, gold chains, and bottles. This collection and transformation of stuff found in thrift stores, on the street or in the trash, or bought straight from a store became a central facet of Hammons’ work, and he weaves it in a much different way than Duchamp did. A little rougher around the edges – well, at first. In the last several years, Hammons has veered increasingly toward the dematerialized, as in his proposal last year for a public project in Paris:

Have you heard of the White Night in Paris? It is co-sponsored by Foundation Cartier and the City of Paris. I think it’s been going on for some time. Each year, they invite thirteen artists to do installations around the city, and everyone stays up from 7 PM to 7 AM. I was invited to participate this year. For my piece, I predicted that a double rainbow would appear over the city at night on the fourth of October. Actually, I saw a double rainbow about just two days before I met with representatives from the Foundation Cartier and the City of Paris about the project. Both agreed, but then approximately three days beforehand, the City of Paris removed my name from the exhibition. I think they canceled it because they couldn’t explain it to anyone. But how do you stop or remove the rainbow from happening?5

Whether a descriptor for tiny ultra-subjective chromatic dictatorships, a sonic/vibrational presence, or a certain feeling or emotional quality in a given work or room or voice or phrase, or the continuous partial contraction of the body’s muscles6 – Tone makes its existence felt as gigantic and ungraspable as though it was the central lens through which to view the universe. That is, if the universe were to be composed solely in terms of sound, embedded states of being, color, or movement.

Nystagmus is a disorder involving the muscles around the eyes. They never stay still. Sometimes this is a genetic muscular condition, but other times it happens when you drink a lot. Nystagmatic eye functioning, specifically of Horizontal Gaze Type Nystagmus, is used as one in a series of field sobriety tests. It’s an accelerated fragmentation of the vision. Normal seeing, or ‘object and scene recognition’ – as opposed to reading, for example – is fairly fragmented in the first place. Physiologically, we kind of piece the world together. Using a combination made mostly of memory, what we directly perceive through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell accounts for strikingly little when it comes to our processing at the time. But we’re used to this kind of piecing-together, this, that, over there, back then, up to, down and under, over the top, to the left.

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5 David Hammons on Artforum.com, 500 Words, November 24 2008.
6 Even when sleeping, the muscles are never completely at rest. Unconscious nerve-impulses keep the muscles in a nearly-constant state of readiness. Hypertonia (overactivity) or hypotonia (under-activity) are muscle-tone disorders. Some forms of hypertonia, are associated with dementia.
I have different eye muscles than everyone else. Everything’s fuzzy. And I think I might need it to be that way. My eyes are always in constant motion. Shaking. There’s an adjustable ratio that describes the relationship of what I’m able to see to what I can guess is probably there, so there’s a certain level of perceptual improvisation that is necessary for me on a daily level. Whether you want to call it guessing or intuition is up to you, but either way it messes with my social life. I sometimes don’t recognize people when I’m looking right at them from across the street or on the other side of the bar, and this isn’t just the beer. The unstoppable shaking is a form of nystagmus, a muscular (dis-)function I’ve had ever since I was born. So I’m exaggerating a little when I say everything’s fuzzy, but while this insistent back and forth definitely forms the physical way that I see, it also intensely affects the meter of my speech, the cant of my body while I walk, and a ton of little gestures that I make out of habit, like a quick touch on the nipple-top bolt on a fire hydrant. Restlessness as a physiological and performative watchword.

*Bourbon Bottle Honda Tunnel*
A kind of a field recording, titled with a short poem. This is one track on an E.P. of field recordings that involve me acting on or along with a ‘field’ – in this case a tunnel. I made a pan-pipe for my car out using five different sizes of empty bourbon bottles, and tipped the shifty mechanism out the window while I drove through a tunnel. I controlled the sound with the speed of the car, modulating the triple resonators of the bottles, the tunnel, and the container/resonator of the Honda CR-V. Recorded with a stereo microphone from inside the black glossy 1998 machine-form.
More specifically, Congenital Motor Nystagmus is one of over 40 types of the eye condition. It’s characterized by a rhythmic shaking of the eyes, a dual movement alternating between a slower, smooth sweep in one direction, and a quicker corrective flit, or saccadic movement in the opposite direction. A quick-slow combination, over and over and over and over and over endlessly, shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake shake.

Up until I was about 13 or so, I would get out excess energy while I was trying to go to sleep by rocking myself back and forth on my right or left side (right or left shoulders, alternately). An small arc back forth back forth back forth back forth back forth to wear me out so I could sleep. I can easily relate this to the constant arcing of my eyes, it seems kind of natural. It was around this time that I stopped playing basketball with other people. For a brief period when I was in elementary school and junior high, I played basketball. Since I was small and fast, I was the ‘Defense-and-Random-3-Pointer’ dude. I stole the ball a lot and performed regular miracles in the form of unexpected 3-point shots (which I’d like to attribute to telekinetic abilities handed down from my mom’s side) and was a general nuisance to the otherwise sweaty elegance of the games.

An alley-oop! (or alyoop! or aleupe!) is a pretty hard move to do - well. In basketball, alley-oops require some seriously exact passing and great timing, a quick hand signal or head nod, or better yet, just eye contact. Unspoken teamwork. A tacit understanding that a spectacular move is exactly what needs to happen riiliiliight NOW! ... A feel for the fluidity and rightness of the moment when you could just could weave between two other barriers into the portal, lift off a bit, touch it and shoot. I’m interested in the alley-oop where it’s 2 or 3 people involved together, not really the one with a single person (e.g. bouncing it off the backboard). An aesthetic difference, maybe...it’s just a lot less interesting.

Doesn’t the analogy between language and games throw light here? We can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every

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7 Aleupe! - as I first thought it was spelled - seemed a little too French at first, but then apparently the word ‘alley-oop’ comes from the French “allez-hop” – a cry of an acrobat about to leap.* So from here on I’m going with the acrobats.
throw. And is there not also the case where we play and – make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them – as we go along.\(^8\)

Wicker. And wickered Stuff. The straw, reed, branches, thin wood slats, rattan, plastic, or whatever that gets wrangled into a baskets, a pith hat, a vase to put a glass vase in, a plate to go underneath plates, big wingback for that reading-chair-for-the-jungle feel...the interlaced and woven form, it’s like a bramble, like a thicket. It is pent up energy held into a form. This rough and immense history, how long ago was it? 30,000 years? 50,000? Like archery? These traditions, weaving and archery, are some of the beginnings of the MEANINGS of the word technology. The draw and release, the over and under, the over and under and through and back again. Back and forth.

Wicker, now, is surplus production – it’s just all over the place. The white noise of suburban American periphery – thrift shops, garage sales, basements and holiday gift-conveyance toss-offs. The economy of those technologies, relegated to dust and summer camp. Of course, in some cases, baskets and other wickered things get collected for rarity and/or beauty. But this happens with anything. It’s no more or less important – everything can have a niche market – but in general, going to a thrift store, you’d think people had been tearing down houses made of baskets, emptying quarries full of rattan chaise lounges.

Yvonne Rainer’s 16mm film *Rhode Island Red* (1968) is basically two or three shots in an enormous chicken coop for 10 minutes. There’s no sound, and it’s black and white. A Found Dance. Seemingly endless clucking and bobbing – a sea of grainy fowl twitching themselves in something that is and isn’t unison. This is a single image, in a way. I think about it as being a combination of the two – an image-object in the form of a moving record. A continuous image,

shifting only slightly, like walking around a sculpture. Though there’s a ton of time-based visual information, yet you could watch it for a minute or 9 minutes and it’s more or less identical. This has more to do with subject and shot composition and editing than it does with perception.

Aluminum can be like a silver-gelatin print, having a very small gap between the aristocratic and modern black-and-whiteness of the ‘actual’ tone of the material, and the ¼-second-long sensation of seeing something ‘colorless’.¹

John Smith’s *The Black Tower* (1985-87) is a 24 minute color narrative film. With an extremely easy going pace, it seems to circle around in a day-to-day life so immediately familiar and charming that when an unsettling shift comes, it seems so natural it’s as if it happened to me. The narrator sees a black shape that he hadn’t noticed before, and soon it seems the tower-form is following him around London, and into outlying areas. The bizarre sightings all over town soon invest a strange kind of laid-back paranoia into the story, investing the tower and the film with a quality sort of like a lucid dream. ”The fact that man is placed inside and not outside the landscape is a given that emerges first from daily life then from architecture.”¹¹

As the story collapses on itself and opens up again, amazingly, even when he brings me out of the narrative for a moment and mentions working on the script for the film I’m currently watching, seconds later I’m back inside the story. An exploration of what happens when image and sound are separated, but like in *The Black Tower*, when there’s sounds of the dishes and the fire and the blinds being drawn back, then hearing the same sounds with matching image…it’s the

¹ I first thought of this when seeing a picture of Charles Ray’s *Untitled (Tractor)* (2005), but couldn’t find him talking about the piece chromatically. Then later I realized this piece ended up being in a show in Scandinavia called, appropriately, *Black and White.*

creation of a reality. The sound and image sometimes linked, sometimes disjointed or matched up with something else. It flows forwards and backwards with, rife with the insertion of details that are super-specific in their placement but seem like a stream of consciousness trail. The Black Tower is scattered with premonitory and foreboding fragments that heighten the paranoid ease of the 24-minute film. Sounds of birds, boiling water, passing cars/trucks, a buzz of an alarm, fire, and distant voices on the street are shown both with the attendant images and without – replaced with colors, pale pale yellow, faded cream, pinkish-red, off-black, nearly-white, a light grey-blue.

Then a scene of frantic running after the Tower – footsteps, footfalls, running, left right left right left right as the image shifts between two views of the tower to closer and further away to a nearly completely black screen like Malevich, ticking back and forth, and later, shown with written words on a page, left right in a rhythm left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right left right.
In 2006 I saw John Adams’ *Naïve and Sentimental Music* performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Adams started off grouped with the Minimalist composers in the 70’s, and though you can definitely still hear that in his work now, it’s gotten much more sweeping and, well, romantic. For one thing, there are harps now. The theatricality that’s part of this very American symphonic piece is super important. Composed between 1997-98 for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, this might be one of the more grand and works Adams has made, sonically (I’m not thinking of his opera Nixon In China, for instance). One of the things I’m most interested with him is his deftness with circular and reflective interconnected sounds, which Adams has referred to as “small fragments of rhythmic cells”.  

These “rhythmic cells” wash over each other and often there’s a thrumming woven into these overlapping, slightly shifting cell structures. It’s like a far more ornate and bombastic version of the impression I get from György Ligeti’s *Clocks and Clouds*, a 15-minute piece for 12 female voices and small orchestra from 1972-73. For one thing, everything seems at once to build up to something and still bounce back and overlap on each other, instruments imitating other instruments, or in the case of *Clocks*, voices drifting nearly imperceptibly into instruments or other voices. In *Naïve and Sentimental* for instance there’s a part where a minute-long up down up down up down over back to from tumultuous series of loud synchronous calls and blares from the bombastic brass section that seems to alternate through a set of scales that at once hovers in the same minor key and yet moves forwards and backwards at once. Then later, a smaller part which I think builds from a base of violins, moving from a triangle dinner bell to a hand bell to tapping a piece of metal on a crystal wine glass.  

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11 John Adams quoted in Ingram Marshall’s liner notes to *Naïve and Sentimental Music*  
12 About 16:53 into the first movement  
13 About 11:40 into the second movement.
Emerson, in his essay *Circles*, veers from American Transcendentalism into mysticism and abandon and back again. Maybe it just IS that, and not ‘veering’ from anything, but certain sentences are more swift and heady than most.

The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory, and to do something without knowing how or why; in short, to draw a new circle. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.\(^{14}\)

Prince, voting ink on fingers in Iraq, violent, violence, royalty, luxury, history, death, sex, fashion, theatricality, drama, indeterminacy, indirectness.

In *On Being Blue*, William Gass dips in and out of a historic-philosophical reflection and a deep stream of consciousness poetic reverie about a color with a thousand specificities, symbolic meanings, and cultural touch-points. He writes about the sexuality of blue, its relationship to heaven and the sky. Another color, closeby in the rainbow and way past indigo, is violet. When it goes by its more street name, violet is purple and is wider and less distinct. Purple is hazy. Moody, perhaps violent, and sometimes sinister. A symbol of death in many parts of the world, and inspiring “associations with the non-physical...send[ing] a signal that someone or something is going to be transformed.”\(^{15}\) Purple transverses tense, telling the future or expecting it, or being all serious and looking at you in the half-light as you weave your way through wrongly-remembered facts and times from history classes - or as a constant presence in daily life, as death was in ancient Egypt.

Purple also is indeterminate. And when I say indeterminate, I don’t mean vague or indistinct. Closer to mysterious or ambiguous. *Focused indeterminacy*. Having one foot in two different worlds with authority and elision simultaneously. Contradictory but definitely powerful. Disturbing in a way red or yellow or black are not (because of its sneakiness and sexiness and elusiveness). Or even, as anything to do with bright color in general, “…made out to be the property of some ‘foreign’ body...[or] relegated to the realm of the superficial, the supplementary, the inessential or the cosmetic.”\(^{16}\) Purple is a romantic color, and serious. And I don’t wanna get too uptight here, it’s showy and flagrant – I can flip past Kanye West for a second and go to Ghostface Killah, you see what I mean. Instead of a neon self-congratulatory party and stopping there, add in Ghost’s sense of humor and self-deprecation with a heavy dose of hyperactive verbal acrobatics, and it’s a badge of certainty and finesse.

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\(^{14}\) Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Circles”

\(^{15}\) Patti Bellantoni, “If It’s Purple, Someone’s Gonna Die” p. 191

\(^{16}\) David Batchelor, “Chromophobia”, 2000
The sarcophagus of Har-khebi at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

I realized a little bit ago that I had become almost obsessively attentive to a few very different forms that I had lumped together in my mind. The Sarcophagus of Har-khebi, a Honda CR-V from 1998, a large meteorite named Ahnighito, and a cabinet from the mid-1600’s made by Hermann Doomer. These four super-weighty objects are all slightly similar in that they’re large, heavy, dark-colored, and all exemplify very different technologies in the way they came about.

The sarcophagus of Har-khebi, a massive dark brown basalt form that stands upright in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. From around 600 B.C., Har-khebi was an Egyptian astronomer. Among the hieroglyphs inscribed into the smooth and pockmarked surface, is this line from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, “You should reveal the world to me, since I am effective in what you do, I am in control of your magic…”

Also in New York, in the American Museum of Natural History, there’s an object that’s been touched and rubbed by maybe millions of people. Ahnighito - “The Tent” - fell 10,000 years ago in Greenland. The 34-ton meteorite in the center of the museum’s Hall of Meteorites is a massive chunk of solid iron that was initially just a part of a larger meteorite called the Cape York that was

17 Fragment taken from the translation on the didactic sheet at the Metropolitan Museum next to the sarcophagus.
found in 1894. Once swiftly blowing through space, now it’s resting on 6 pylons reaching down through the museum into the bedrock of Manhattan.

Hermann Doomer was a 17th century German craftsman living and working in Amsterdam. A massive dark cabinet he made sits, plopped on a pedestal with no dramatic lighting at all in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. This glossy dark capsule was made between 1640-1650 of ebony and oak, kingwood, rosewood and maybe partridge wood, covered in some places with mother of pearl and ivory inlays in the shapes of butterflies and flowers. Most references to it all say things like “supreme craftsmanship”. Made outside of commission or patronage, it is a product of Doomer’s free time; the work around work.

Honda CR-V’s are EVERYWHERE – basically a compact SUV, but built on a car frame. It’s one of Honda’s most popular cars, production starting in 1996 by robots and people on assembly lines in England and Japan. Kind of a hybrid, it looks really chipper for a truck, but a little chubby for a car. There are a couple different answers as to what "CR-V" stands for. Honda sources in different countries give different meanings – Honda sales literature in the U.K. makes references to "Compact Recreational Vehicle", where the official Honda Japan CR-V Fact Book and Honda Worldwide both say "Comfortable Runabout Vehicle". Can that really be true? The seeming omnipresence of this automotive chamber sets it totally apart from the other three, yet it being my car, I have an almost paranoid attachment to it, which I think other people can easily understand. I’ve had nightmares that I sold it, and felt really relieved to wake up.

Each of these massive forms was produced using very different technologies and forces, yet each very specific and laborious. Forces of gravity, pressure, heat and the mysterious pull of outer space; a craftsman working in the Netherlands in the 17th century with specialized and well-worn hand tools; an automated, robotic, late-20th century industrial process punctuated by human hands, perforating the automated mass-production line with tiny smudges of grease or dead skin to finish installing a cloth seat or a windshield; a large upright form cut and carved and chiseled and punched and scribed from rock thousands of years ago by unknown numbers of workers, or more likely, slaves. And now stands in a museum in the States. But as different as each of these are, all have a direct connection to the body, or a body. They are containers, compressing time, duration, technology, and purpose in upon themselves, and pressing that back out again as a physicality reflecting my own presence.
I’ve just cast my shoulder into a bell-shape. The edges like a torn, ancient bell, it’s made out of aluminum, and hovers at my shoulder-height just a bit to the left of a tripod, which acts as its pedestal. It is a conceptual and physical centerpiece that expands into the rest of my work, as a touchstone and reminder of that chunk of muscle and bone, a locator of identity, awareness and physicality. Drawing back recurve bows, or my hand on a friend’s shoulder, or the rotational fulcrum of a stack of drawings of circles, preparations and thoughts about a gong I hadn’t made at that point.

A gang of images: A video of a chandelier in the back of a Honda CR-V at night; a search in a cloudy sky for a non-existent eclipse; a large fragment of an even larger sarcophagus; text blocks laid out on a page, interspersed with tiny scribbles like floaters in my field of vision; the front half of a dog; a tumbling, jerky, 40-second scene shot in Super-8 focusing on an obsessive hand gesture occurring amidst activities of a few people under a purple sheet; a giant mass of wicker shot through with cork-tipped arrows; circular red-orange-yellow drawings as obsessions with a gong that has yet to be cast or formed.

I see these as a Gang and not just as a bunch of projects. They find common attitude where they lack common form. Each single project is the culmination of a series of interconnected movements, and embedded along with this network of actions is a little string. This string is a departure that pries apart that initial plan to embrace and adjust mistakes as well as simply

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18 ‘Blood & Thunder Classics, Vol. 2’ is named after a tape my grandfather, Frank Sidney, made in 1974 of his big and small bands in Detroit, with the title ‘Blood & Thunder Classics’ typewritten on the sleeve-edge. Frank was a bandleader, clarinetist and saxophonist, sometime actor in commercials, and briefly owned a skywriting company.
providing access to the process. Hopefully making something that seems simple (but isn’t) into an opportunity for phenomenological, energetic, and historical emotions to coalesce into a sculptured idea. It’s important to me to find a little knob that cues you in to a larger conceptual framework that nestles itself easily between formal relationships and reinterpretive philosophy.

Oh, Spirit! (still image)
Shoulders, archery, gong and bell ringing, drawing, shifting your weight, direction, movement, rocking back and forth, nystagmus, running.

I am concentrating on something around the corner...just beyond what I can hear or reasonably think about. The tension this creates within my work acts as an ecstatic catalyst.

Coming to grips with something – with a space. Dance-ish movement. Wash the floor. David Lee Roth, Yvonne Rainer, Charlemagne Palestine’s Island Song.

To think of a room as a psycho-socially detached head is one way to do this.

Threnody, Fugue, Chamber Music, Yodeling, Tone Poems.

The shoulder is the center. Illuminated and aluminum, the Shoulder Bell marks the ever-present start, the lighthearted tap and charged locus of energy and momentum.

Touching The Floor as a strong peripheral dream. The thing (image) that has inertia, and transfers that in a darker way to all the pieces/situations, in a horror-film kind of way.

Threes are important. Three under the sheet - Three sections to Big Form - Three bones meet in the shoulder. Third time’s a charm, third chimes a charm, third times a chime.

The drawings are repetitive thought and activity. Practice and feedback.

The gong is the object of the drawings’ desire.

Touching The Floor’s desire is manifested and at the same time rooted in the Big Form – for which a kind of crazy shiatsu pounding is necessary (amplification). First with palms, then sides of hands, then pounded with wicker to emboss.

The shoulder is the repetitive movement-structure of the accretion of the mass of the Big Form as well as the possibility of the gong and it’s double-identity as an aluminum Bell. A repeated curved form, kind of like a mango peel, but in different orientations.

The bell is the reminder, the chiming, Same beauty, clarion TINNNEE! that charges the circular concentration on the drawing, calling back to its body-echo.

The drawings are charged by the shoulder, and recall the irregular but continuous floor touch, and the application/accretion of the Big Form.

19 From the “head voice” to the “chest voice”, yodeling is a vocal style found all over the world, which is characterized by a high-low high-low quick alternating sound. An AMAZING example in a kind of unexpected place is Leon Thomas’ singing on the Pharoah Sanders song “Hum-Allah-Hum-Allah-Hum-Allah” from 1969.
The Shoulder-Bell is the draping, illicit and explicit body-formation of the moving mass of Touching the Floor.

Touching the floor as a reassurance, a restart, a grounding and steadying. Guide.

In a very serious way it’s about restlessness. Not indecision. But I want the space to feel active, I want people to keep moving around. Spread out, and contracted.

Contradiction: silent videos, bells and gongs not meant to be played, a fragment of something that’s supposed to be closed (sarcophagus).

Moving against a stream that I’ve put in motion myself.

Casting; Duration; Constant movement; Trajectory;

A sculpture that points to an idea or a state of action.

The Gong. Almost automatically I thought of it as a relic, or actually a remade relic. gong – circle drawing contests, Kenneth Noland, the difference between a cymbal and a piece of metal, a mandala. And maybe the picture of making the gong at the river, the Field E.P. photo of the waterfall/running stream sound effect machines playing along with the river and a chandelier still (or production still).

Making the steel gong on a giant rock on the James River in Richmond, Virginia
SOURCES


David Hammons, 500 Words, on *Artforum.com*, November 24, 2008.


Beyoncé Knowles, photograph by Vince Bucci, 2008.


Brian Taylor was conceived in 1976, born in 1977, and spent a lot of time in his Midwestern American youth wearing glasses, drawing, and riding a bike – sometimes all at once. He spent some time in Chicago doing many things with many superb people, including collaborative radio work as part of a group called Blind Spot, showing his work in a big handful of small American venues, and receiving a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1999. Since fall of 2007, he has pursued graduate study at Virginia Commonwealth University in the Department of Sculpture + Extended Media, in Richmond, Virginia. The spring in Richmond is amazingly beautiful, don’t let anyone tell you different. In 2008, Curious, a publication of ancillary and reflective material from the studios and brains of Sculpture Grads, was published by the Department, and his project Superinterior was a starting point for the preceding thesis paper. In 2009, after receiving an MFA, the online literary journal Blackbird will host a collaborative project he initiated entitled Alley-oop! / Aleupe!.