

LANEY CONTEMPORARY



CURTIS PATTERSON A Notable Journey

On View: April 1 - May 28, 2022

Reception: Friday, April 1, 6-9pm

Laney Contemporary is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Atlanta-based artist Curtis Patterson. *A Notable Journey* highlights a selection of bronze and steel sculptures from the 1980s to today. Patterson's unique command of materials and his dynamic compositions point toward an illustrious, decades-long career as a sculptor of engaging and often large-scale public works.

A native of Louisiana, Patterson's experience of growing up during the Civil Rights Movement informs the subject matter and the symbolism in his work. *Montgomery Bus Stop* creates an environment that suggests the courage of activist Rosa Parks. *Water for Mandela* symbolizes the South African leader's 27 years of incarceration. With inspirations in art history ranging from Hale Woodruff to Henry Moore, Patterson's large scale sculptures and multi-dimensional wall works emphasize a spectrum of African diasporic experiences within the context of modern and contemporary art.

His abstract approach is also inspired by a longtime interest in improvisational jazz in that it encourages an open and interpretive dialog between the artist, the art work, and the viewer.



Patterson's 2021 series entitled *Diasporic Reflections* depicts intimate, mask-inspired wall reliefs representing each month of the year. Motifs and forms carry over into the ongoing *Rocker Series*. These slot-fitted, interlocking, geometric shapes provide balance and kinetic movement. *Shango's Friends* highlights his continuous use of African symbols, such as the Yoruba double ax and double iron as visual elements that, in his words, "pay tribute to domestic labor implemented by people of African descent." From Patterson's late 1980's series *Unbroken*

Connections to his most recent work, his process acts as "a conduit to delineate ideas originating from the African continent." *A Notable Journey*, highlights Curtis Patterson's

longstanding commitment to “raise consciousness about a people who have given so much of themselves.”

With a special connection, this exhibition has been curated by Patterson’s former student, Independent Curator, Curator of The Mildred Thompson Estate, Melissa Messina. She emphasizes that “*A Notable Journey* brings over thirty years of Curtis Patterson’s artistic vision to the Savannah area and broader community. While his remarkable work in the public sphere should also be better recognized, this show provides a platform of visibility for his powerful pedestal and wall-based sculptures. With a command of material, scale, and abstraction, Patterson is one of the most important sculptors of our time. I am honored to have been his student and to have this opportunity to present his work today.”

Bios:

Curtis Patterson

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, sculptor Curtis Patterson’s parents instilled in him a strong sense of discipline, balance and spirituality. Being the grandson of a master carpenter fostered a deep affinity for working with his hands. With this solid foundation, Patterson earned his BA in Art Education from Grambling State University, an HBCU listed on the African American Heritage Trail. After time spent in secondary education, he earned his MFA from Georgia State University in Atlanta and was the first African American to receive an MFA in Sculpture from GSU. His practice has moved from painting, wood, and ceramics toward cast iron and large-scale, fabricated corten steel sculpture. Patterson was a faculty member at The Atlanta College of Art from 1976 to 2007. He entered the realm of large-scale, public work with *Cometh the Sun* commissioned by the City of Atlanta’s Bureau of Cultural Affairs. His work includes commissions and permanent public sculpture installations in several prominent cities in the United States including: Atlanta, Georgia, Columbus, Ohio, St. Paul, Minnesota, Shreveport, Louisiana and Dallas, Texas.

Melissa Messina

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Melissa Messina is an Independent Curator, Curatorial Advisor, and Curator of the Mildred Thompson Estate. For over 15 years, her exhibitions, site-responsive projects, and public programs have been presented in cultural institutions throughout the United States and abroad. She was recently the co-curator of *Mildred Thompson, The Atlanta Years, 1986 - 2003* at Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta, Georgia (2019), and *Mildred Thompson: Against the Grain*, at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana (2018). In 2017, Messina co-curated *Magnetic Fields, Expanding American Abstraction, 1960s to Today*, an intergenerational exhibition celebrating abstraction by 21 Black female artists that toured from Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. She was formerly the Interim Executive Director and Senior Curator of the SCAD Museum

of Art, Savannah, Georgia; the National Program Director for ArtTable, New York; and a founding staff member and then guest curator at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum. Her research on Black female abstract practitioners has been funded by Creative Time | Warhol Foundation, the Stuart A. Rose Library at Emory University, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Gallery hours and contact information:

Tuesday - Friday, 11-5 pm

Saturday, 11-2 pm

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Address: 1810 Mills B. Lane Blvd, Savannah, GA 31405

Images courtesy of the artist:

Curtis Patterson, *A Notable Journey*, 2019, *Rocker Series*, fabricated bronze, hot patina, 34 x 21 x 23 in.

Curtis Patterson, *Say it Loud*, 2011, *Rocker Series*, fabricated bronze, hot patina, 36 x 30 x 18 in.