

Bowdoin College Museum of Art Presents Solo Exhibition of New Media Artist Luke DuBois

Opening March 2016, the exhibition will feature films, works on paper, installations, video and sound works exploring the politics of American identity

Brunswick, Maine, November 19, 2015—The Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will present a solo exhibition by R. Luke DuBois—a New York-based “new media” artist, who through his simultaneous work as a composer, computer programmer, filmmaker, and installation artist, defies traditional categorization. Over the last 15 years, DuBois has produced a prodigious body of work ranging from musical composition and collaborative performance, to large-scale public installations, film, and generative computer works. Originally organized by the Ringling Museum of Art, *R. Luke DuBois – Now* will showcase dozens of works, including films, works on paper, installations, video, and sound objects, ranging from the late 1990s to the present.

“We are proud to bring *R. Luke DuBois – Now* to Bowdoin College,” remarked Bowdoin College Museum of Art Co-Director Anne Collins Goodyear. “Luke’s hybrid practice—which incorporates music, digital video, web-based data visualizations, and prints—reflects the extraordinary fluidity of contemporary art-making. With an astute grasp of the unwieldy relationship between data, information, and knowledge, DuBois challenges us to consider the mechanisms through which we acquaint ourselves with the world around us—words, pictures, data visualizations—and the delivery mechanisms through which they frequently reach us: social media, email, television, Internet. In an institution dedicated to scrutinizing the creation of knowledge and the nature of our engagement with the local and global communities we occupy, DuBois’s exhibition will be a welcome opportunity to explore the informational structures through which we view and interpret the world, from aesthetics to personal relationships to evaluating political arguments.”

By presenting a range of works from DuBois’ multifaceted career in context with one another, the exhibition will demonstrate how DuBois operates at the intersections of the visual, performative, and the time-based arts in a manner that mirrors audiences’ collective 21st-century experience in a world of globalized information. On view at the BCMA March 31–September 4, 2016, DuBois’ inventive use of political and demographic data in his diverse works has special resonance in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election.

“For much of my work, data is the critical source material—in a way, I paint with data,” said R. Luke DuBois. “I was born in America and have lived here since the late 1990s, but I spent most of my childhood and adolescence abroad, and since I’ve returned, I’ve been trying to figure out what this country is all about and have been especially fascinated by the political underpinnings of American portraiture. For me, data-driven portraiture represents a way to address the questions of who we are, how we talk about ourselves and those around us, and how we are preserving distinct cultures in the face of rising homogenization.”

Throughout the multifaceted nature of his practice, three dominant themes of DuBois’ work are the mining and metamorphosing of data into art, the investigation of temporality, and the construction of contemporary portraiture, or how we represent and conceptualize ourselves and others. These themes will be explored through the presentation of notable works such as *Hindsight is Always 20/20* (2008, commissioned by the Democratic National Convention), *A More Perfect Union* (2010–2011), and *(Pop) Icon: Britney* (2010), among others. Drawing from the annual State of the Union addresses given by

presidents to Congress, *Hindsight is Always 20/20* consists of a single Snellen-style eye chart for each president to have given a State of the Union address. Instead of the typical characters present in an eye chart, the piece employs words drawn from their speeches, presented in order of most frequent (top line) to least frequent (bottom line) word. The result is a startlingly clear snapshot of the lexicon of each presidency, containing a mix of historically topical keywords and rhetoric unique to each president and the time period during which they served in office.

In his work *A More Perfect Union*, DuBois looks at American self-identity through the medium of online dating services. Culling data from over 20 online dating sites, the work is organized according to the same heuristics as the U.S. Census, sorting dating profiles by Congressional District and subjecting the imagery and text to statistical analysis. Revealing a “dating lexicon” of each state, DuBois constructed maps using the words provided by 16.7 million people describing themselves and those they desire—resulting in a romantic atlas of the nation, with keywords from dating profiles in lieu of the city and town names. In the same series, DuBois also designed maps of the entire U.S. that are colored in a “red-state/blue-state” pattern, showing how different adjectives, such as “funny” and “lonely,” are distributed across the country.

In (*Pop*) *Icon: Britney* (2010), a video work that runs on a 60-minute loop, DuBois takes all of the extant Britney Spears videos and singles and subjects them to a computational process that locks her eyes in place, allowing the video frame to pan around Britney, keeping her in a fixed position akin to an Orthodox icon. Her image is stabilized and blurred, creating a constantly shifting halo or aura around her face, reflecting back our gaze. Her voice is stripped from her songs (creating an “a capella” mix) and filtered through the reverberation of the San Vitale Basilica in Ravenna, Italy, once of the most important sites of Byzantine iconography in Western Europe.

Additional Venues:

The Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida. January 31, 2014 – May 4, 2014.

Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California. November 7, 2015 – February 28, 2016.

R. Luke DuBois (born 1975, United States)

R. Luke DuBois is a composer, artist, and performer who explores the temporal, verbal, and visual structures of cultural ephemera. He holds a doctorate in music composition from Columbia University, and has lectured and taught worldwide on interactive sound and video performance. He also contributes to “The Score” section of *The New York Times* Opinionator blog, which features the writings of composers on their work and the issues involved in creating music in the 21st century.

He has collaborated on interactive performance, installation, and music production work with many artists and organizations including Toni Dove, Todd Reynolds, Jamie Jewett, Bora Yoon, Michael Joaquin Grey, Matthew Ritchie, Elliott Sharp, Michael Gordon, Maya Lin, Bang on a Can, Engine 27, Harvestworks, and LEMUR, and was the director of the Princeton Laptop Orchestra for its 2007 season.

Recent exhibitions of DuBois’ work include *R. Luke DuBois – Now* at the Ringling Museum of Art (2014), the 2011 debut of *A More Perfect Union* at bitforms gallery, New York, and the 2011 exhibition *Multiplicity* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, featuring *Hindsight is Always 20/20* (2008). *Hindsight* also toured the U.S. and was on view at the Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence, KS; the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, KS; and the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA; among others. A major live performance project, *The Marginy Parade*, was commissioned in 2011 for the “Prospect.2” art biennale in New Orleans. Additional past exhibitions of his work have included the Insitut Valencià d’Art Modern, Spain; the 2008 Democratic National Convention, Denver; Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis; The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK; San Jose Museum of Art; National Constitution Center,

Philadelphia; Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art; and Scottsdale Public Art Program; among others.

An active visual and musical collaborator, DuBois is the co-author of Jitter, a software suite for the real-time manipulation of matrix data developed by San Francisco-based software company Cycling'74. He appears on nearly 25 albums both individually and as part of the avant-garde electronic group The Freight Elevator Quartet. DuBois has lived for the last 20 years in New York City. He is the director of the Brooklyn Experimental Media Center at the Polytechnic Institute of NYU, and is on the board of directors of the ISSUE Project Room. His records are available on Caipirinha/Sire, Liquid Sky, C74, and Cantaloupe Music. R. Luke DuBois is represented by bitforms gallery, New York.

About the Bowdoin College Museum of Art

The collections of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art are among the most comprehensive of any college museum in the United States. Collecting commenced over 200 years ago with a major gift from the College's founder James Bowdoin III and his family that included Gilbert Stuart's magnificent portraits of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

The Museum is housed in the landmark Walker Art Building, designed in 1894 by Charles Follen McKim. Located on the historic quadrangle of Bowdoin College, the building is graced by murals by John La Farge, Kenyon Cox, Elihu Vedder, and Abbott Thayer. A \$20.8-million renovation and expansion in 2007 provided a stunning setting for objects as diverse as monumental Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud, Iraq; European old master paintings; and works by American modernists. The Museum is the centerpiece of Bowdoin's vibrant arts and culture community and offers a wealth of academic and educational programs. The Museum is also a prominent summer venue for major exhibitions such as *Edward Hopper's Maine* (2011), *William Wegman: Hello Nature* (2012), *Maurice Prendergast: By the Sea* (2013), *Richard Tuttle: A Print Retrospective* (2014); and *Night Vision: Nocturnes in American Art, 1860-1960* (2015).

Fully accessible, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art is open to the public free of charge from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Saturday; 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

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