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than personal choices made in familiar situations but also reactions to those dealing with circumstances outside one's comfort zone. The artwork asks questions such as "Would I donate a kidney or take a loved one off life support?" The portraits cause reflection on an individual's reactions to many controversial matters. The group

invites viewers to contemplate the choices of others as well as those made personally, day-to-day.

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Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, Presents New Exhibits

The Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, is presenting two new exhibits including: *Question Bridge: Black Males*, an innovative collaborative video exhibition by artists Hank Willis Thomas, Chris Johnson, Bayeté Ross Smith and Kamal Sinclair and *Stacy Lynn Waddell: BLACK, BURST AND BOOM!*, both on view through Oct. 25, 2013.



Question Bridge: Black Males (QB: BM) is a project that explores critical and challenging issues within the African American male community by means of a transmedia conversation among Black men from a range of geographic, economic, generational, educational, and social strata. The *Question Bridge* concept originated in 1996, when the artist Chris Johnson was looking for a way to initiate a meaningful conversation around class and generational divisions within San Diego's African American community. Over the past several years Johnson, along with artists Hank Willis Thomas, Bayeté Ross Smith, and Kamal Sinclair, traveled the country collecting a video catalogue of 1,500 questions and answers from more than 150 Black men in twelve cities throughout the US.

These questions and separately filmed answers were then interwoven to create a stream-of-consciousness exchange around issues such as family, love, interracial relationships, community, violence, and the past and the future of Black men in American society. None of the questions or answers was staged. These diverse, everyday men – from recognizable politicians and actors to incarcerated individuals, ask and answer questions that are humorous, painful and poignant, thus providing a portal to an inner realm of Black male consciousness.

This project utilizes video as a medium to bridge the various economic, political, social, geographic, and generational divides between Black men in American society today. Also on view alongside *Question Bridge* will be a selection of photographs by Bayeté Ross Smith from his series "Our Kind Of People" and "Mirrors" which examine how clothing, ethnicity and gender affect our ideas about identity, personality and character.

Hank Willis Thomas is an artist and photographer whose primary interests are race, advertising and popular culture. He received his BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and his MFA in photography, along with an MA in visual criticism, from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Thomas has exhibited nationally and internationally and is represented by Jack Shainman Gal-

lery in New York City.

Bayeté Ross Smith is an artist, photographer, and arts educator who currently resides in New York City. He received his BS in photography from Florida A & M University and his MFA in photography from California College of the Arts. Smith has exhibited nationally and internationally and is represented by Beta Pictoris Gallery in Birmingham, AL.

Chris Johnson was born in Brooklyn, NY, and studied photography with Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham and Wynn Bullock. He has exhibited both nationally and internationally and is currently a full Professor of Photography at California College of the Arts.

Kamal Sinclair is a professional artist, teaching artist, and producer of live and transmedia art. Kamal obtained her BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and graduated with honors from Georgia State University's Robinson College of Business MBA program. She was a six-year cast member of STOMP

In conjunction with the exhibition, there will be a Blueprint Roundtable discussion - inspired by a question of a younger participant to the older participants in *QB:BM*: "Why didn't you all leave us a blueprint?" The intergenerational discussion will be among a panel, ages 16 to 91 of local African American men, including Anthony Dennis, Sheriff of Sumter County, State Representative David Weeks and 91 year old Lt. Col Leroy Bowman, a Tuskegee airman, as well as the audience, who will also have the opportunity to participate in the conversation. The moderator will be Rick Jones, director of the Millican Foundation and *QB:BM* artist, Bayeté Ross Smith will also be present.

Karen Watson, director of the Sumter County Gallery of Art states that, "*Question Bridge: Black Males* and *Stacy Lynn Waddell: BLACK, BURST AND BOOM!* are two of the most important exhibitions the gallery has ever presented. *Question Bridge: Black Males* has been presented at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, NYC, The Oakland Museum of Art California, Chastain Art Center, Atlanta, The Missouri History Center and the Sundance Film Festival. Watson further notes that *Question Bridge* provides a real opportunity for a community dialogue from which all our citizens can learn from, and that is exciting."

The Sumter County Gallery of Art is also proud to present a mixed media installation by Stacy Lynn Waddell. Waddell was born in Washington, DC, and creates works that integrate real and imagined events, Waddell's innovative technique involves drawing, collage and the processes of burning and singeing paper and fabric as a way to explore the inner conflict experienced in negotiating African American cultural history and heritage, with personal identity, and considers the ways individual consciousness is formed through generations.

Waddell earned her MFA from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2007. Her work has been recognized and exhibited nationally.

About the installation at SCGA Waddell writes, "With the installation *BLACK, BURST AND BOOM!* an unlikely combination of a tropical backdrop akin to one from the 1983 cult classic *Scarface*, Dr. Mae Jemison's 1992 Endeavour mission, and the 2009 Mason Dixon Meteor give

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Work by Stacy Lynn Waddell

form to the spaces and passages of time that exist between what we know and what we believe, what we desire and what we are capable of in spite of insurmountable forces. Ultimately, this is a project about the allure, power and beauty of failure."

Frank McCauley, chief curator for the Sumter County Gallery of Art states that, "I've always had a fascination with works on paper, their intimate and delicate nature, so Stacy's work is particularly interesting to me as she incorporates the rather aggressive technique of burning and branding to create her main imagery. She also incorporates beautiful accents of paint as well as silver and gold leaf to create arresting images exploring cultural and personal identity. Her work reveals itself in layers, what may appear to be a serene island landscape, upon closer inspection it becomes apparent that it is actually an organic mass of typography and other icons."

McCauley notes that Waddell alludes to her thought process behind the title of the Sumter show, *BLACK, BURST AND BOOM!*, in a recent interview with Dwana Clark for the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. She states, "A few years ago I made a list of words that started with the letter "B" and created a narrative with the form. "B" looks impregnated and elegant. I love the way words that start with "B," "Bl" or "Br" sounds to the air and how the breath and the body create the sound "B." "B" is a stand in pop culture and history."

Waddell has participated in exhibitions at The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston Salem, NC, the John

Hope Franklin Center and the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University in Durham, NC, the Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC, The North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA, Project Row Houses in Houston, TX, and The Studio Museum in Harlem in NY. During Fall 2010, her first solo museum exhibition *The Evidence of Things Unseen* was on view at the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, traveling to the Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC, in January 2011. Recently, Waddell's installation was included in the exhibition *0 to 60: The Experience of Time Through Contemporary Art* at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC. Her work is included in several public and private collections that include The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC, the Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC, the Ackland Museum of Art at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, The North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC, The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY. Waddell was named one of The New Superstars of Southern Art in *Oxford American Magazine's* 2012 100 Under 100 List and is a 2010 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant.

These exhibitions, *Question Bridge: Black Males* and *Stacy Lynn Waddell: BLACK, BURST AND BOOM!* are partially funded by the Sumter County Cultural Commission, which receives support from the John and Susan Bennett Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of SC, the South Carolina Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Gallery at 803/775-0543 or visit (www.sumtergallery.org).

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