



ARCHETYPES POWER & PUPPETS

ARCHETYPES POWER & PUPPETS

Punch and Judy, Pinocchio, and Kermit. Whether a hand puppet or marionette, everyone knows the story of these memorable alter egos who raged in comical violence, wanted to become a “real boy,” or plaintively sang “. . . it’s not easy being green.” Generally considered children’s entertainment, puppets derive much of their efficacy through the unique juxtaposition of play, manipulation, and archetypal characters.

Found in mythology, art, and literature, an archetype is a uniquely effective form of communication that often expresses common values. Examples range from characters like the hero, the trickster, the mother, and the innocent youth, to archetypal themes such as good versus evil. Such recurring tropes have tremendous power for modeling behavior, storing collective morals and memories, and defining universal typologies. And while admittedly reductive, archetypes are particularly impelling when they define, elucidate, and acknowledge what are often uncomfortable social truths.

Archetypes, Power, and Puppets features artists based in New York, Los Angeles, London, and Cape Town. Each utilizes some aspect of the puppet genre to unpack shared histories. For example, in the Sussel Gallery, Kara Walker and Wayne White explore stereotypes associated with the antebellum South, while Tom Thayer and Anne Chu carefully neutralize themes and characters in their painting and sculpture. In the same gallery, My Barbarian’s video critiques high culture, and Jonathan Baldock’s installation at the far end of the gallery comments on how history repeats itself in a humorous riff on Alfred Jarry’s infamous play, *Ubu Roi* (1896).

The Burton D. Morgan Gallery features a selection of traditional puppets from the CWAM’s William C. Mithoefer Collection of African Art, and The Mariska P. Marker Puppet Collection, sponsored by the Departments of Sociology/Anthropology and Theater and Dance. Also in that gallery is a 2011 TED Talk featuring the Handspring Puppet Company’s co-founders—Adrian Kohler, Artistic Director, and Basil Jones, Executive Producer—who show us just how difficult it is to make a puppet live.

Together, the work in both galleries demonstrate—in different ways—what curator Ingrid Shaffner so aptly said in *The Puppet Show* catalogue (2008), “. . . puppets come to us readymade to abstract the dramas, mysteries, anxieties, and personas we might all project onto a shared stage.”

Kitty McManus Zurko
CWAM Director/Curator

JONATHAN BALDOCK
ANNE CHU
MY BARBARIAN
TOM THAYER
KARA WALKER
WAYNE WHITE
&

HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY
THE MARISKA P. MARKER PUPPET COLLECTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any contemporary art exhibition dealing with puppets owes a debt of gratitude to Ingrid Shaffner and Carin Kuoni’s landmark 2008 exhibition, *The Puppet Show*, first shown at The Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

We also thank the artists, galleries, and collections who so graciously made possible the loans that comprise this exhibition. They are: Wayne White and Joshua Liner Gallery, New York; Anne Chu and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York; Kara Walker and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; Jonathan Baldock and VITRINE London; My Barbarian and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects; Tom Thayer, New Jersey; and H. Scott Westover and The Progressive Corporation, Cleveland.

As is typical in museums, many participate in the realization of projects, and we thank the Departments of Anthropology/Sociology and Theater and Dance, for graciously allowing us to show their Mariska P. Marker Puppet Collection. We also thank Doug McGlumphy, CWAM Preparator/Collections Manager, who designed the beautiful installation with the assistance of the CWAM Gallery Attendants—Tilly Alexander ’16, Dani Gagnon ’16, Sue Kim ’16, Robin Klaus ’16, Katie Stephens ’15, and Petr Wiese ’16. Once again, we thank Robin Klaus for her superb editorial assistance, and also Sue Kim for her research on Korean puppets. And, from Smithville, Ohio, we thank Eric L. Mast for so generously crafting a longer hanger for Anne Chu’s *Eques*.

Last but not least, we owe the greatest debt to the artists and performers who push boundaries and provoke curiosity in order to open the metaphorical window that lets in the much needed oxygen of new thoughts and ideas.

Cover: Kara Walker, Still from *Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi’s Blue Tale*, 2011’ DVD video, color, sound; 17 minutes; Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York



THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER ART MUSEUM
EBERT ART CENTER / 1220 BEALL AVENUE / WOOSTER, OHIO 44691-2363

JONATHAN BALDOCK (British, b. 1980)

Syncing disparate binaries such as sculpture/costume, art/craft, and ancient/contemporary is at the heart of British artist Jonathan Baldock's work. From sourdough busts to soft-sculpture Stonehenges, Baldock uses craft processes and materials to blur the boundaries between absurdity and reality.

Rife in Baldock's work are subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—allusions to literature, film, pagan rituals, archaeological materials, carnivals, theater, and puppets. In his installation *PA UBU*, he references Alfred Jarry's scandalous play *Ubu Roi*, (1896). The PA (*père* or father) of Baldock's title is the protagonist in Jarry's satire on power, greed, and the complacent French bourgeoisie.

Much translated, revived, and revised, *Ubu Roi* is a searing social critique about unbridled self-gratification portrayed through puppets. In short, Jarry drew from marionettes and puppet theater to portray Père Ubu as an archetypal megalomaniac glutton who leads a revolution then kills the royal family of Poland, taxes the population before killing them, fights off invading Russians, is attacked by a bear, and reunites with his scheming wife before fleeing to France.

In Baldock's version, *PA UBU* becomes an outsized, giant emoji face with arms akimbo on the supporting structure—or prop bin—and eyes and tongue separated from the overwhelmingly large face that does not have ears with which to hear. Given the size of the face, *PA UBU* would stand over 70 feet tall. Such an outsized puppet could be seen as a twenty-first century analogy to the nineteenth-century French bourgeoisie because economic and power imbalances have—once again—moved to the forefront of social ills.

About the Artist

Jonathan Baldock was born in 1980 in Pembury, and graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2005. Select solo exhibitions include: *Notes from the Orifice*, VITRINE London (2014); *Hot Spots*, The Apartment, Vancouver (2014); *The Soft Machine*, Chapter, Cardiff (2014); *A Strange Mix between a Butcher's Shop and a Nightclub*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2013); *The Blue Epoch*, Colloredo-Mansfeldsk Palác, AMoYA, Prague (2012); *Musica*, Annarumma Gallery, Naples (2011); *Pierrot*, Peregrine Program, Chicago (2011). Select group exhibitions include: *Only the Lonely*, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, Paris (2015); *SUNSCREEN*, commissioned by EM15 for the 56th Venice Biennale, Venice (2015); *Dance First, Think Later*, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston (2015); *Two Figures in a Landscape* (choreographed by Rubato Dance Group), Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2013); *The Gathering*, Mytoro Gallery, Hamburg (2013); *ARE YOU ALRIGHT? New Art From Britain*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), Toronto (2013); *NEWSPEAK: British Art Now*, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (2009); and Saatchi Gallery London (2008).

Baldock's recent awards include a 2015 fellowship by Kunstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral in Bad Ems, Germany, the Abbey Fellowship from the British School, Rome, and a Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residency in Shanghai. The artist lives and works in London.



Jonathan Baldock

PA UBU, 2015

Hessian, raw cotton, acrylic paint, dolls eyes, human hair, wood, ceramic, various textiles, silk thread, wheat sheaves

10 7 1/2 h x 89 w x 34 3/4 d (inches), frame

Courtesy of the artist and VITRINE London

ANNE CHU (American, b. 1959)

In a 2004 interview with art critic Linda Yablonsky, Anne Chu stated, “I generally pick archetypes that have been used so much they’ve been emptied of meaning, so I can invest my own.” At the time of the interview, Chu was investigating the idea of puppets as sculpture. Ten years later, the “archetypes” in *Eques* suggest further abstraction as the artist explores a kind of recombinant iconography that references the metaphorical realm of puppets.

In this piece, the minimally detailed suede and copper horse head is tempted, pursued, and chasing carrot-printed hide shapes. Interspersed are an inverted *putto* (or cherub) head with Tang dynasty-like glaze marks, a black pelt, and a large fish weight.

Although mobiles can invoke whimsy as they eschew the pedestal and ground to take to the air, Chu’s focus on neutralizing the familiar also means that this work carefully avoids a direct narrative. Instead, she leaves that to us.

About the Artist

Anne Chu received her BFA from the Philadelphia College of Art, and her MFA from Columbia University. Select solo exhibitions include: *Rubric for the Eye*, Tracy Williams Ltd., New York (2014); *Animula, vagula, blandula*, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld (2012–13); *A Resting Place for William Tell*, Art Parcours, Basel (2010); and the Miami Museum of Contemporary Art, Florida (2005). Select group exhibitions include those at: the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn (2011); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2008 and 2010); Gladstone Gallery, New York, and the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (both in 2007); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2006); Victoria Miro Gallery, London, and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley (both in 2003); and the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (1998). Select awards and grants include: the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2010); the Penny McCall Award, New York (2001); a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, New York (1999); and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Competition Award, New York (1999).

Anne Chu lives and works in New York City, where she is represented by Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York. Other gallery representation includes Monica De Cardenas Gallery, Milan, and Galerie Walter Keller, Zurich.



Anne Chu

Eques, 2014

Leather, metal, porcelain

110 h x 127 w x 70 d (inches)

Courtesy of the artist and Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York

MY BARBARIAN

An artist collective/theater troupe, My Barbarian was founded in Los Angeles in 2000. Comprised of Malik Gaines, Jade Gordon, and Alexandro Segade, this notorious group has produced works for the Whitney Museum of American Art, LACMA, and the Hammer Museum, among others.

My Barbarian describes themselves as artists who “make site-responsive performances and video installations that use theatrical play to draw allegorical narratives out of historical dilemmas, mythical conflicts, and current political crises.” More to the point, Gaines has said about the group, “we are black-box theatricalists who snuck into the white cube . . . we revel in the baroque trappings of genre.” And revel they do. Puns, jokes, and theoretical over-complication combine to divert sustained attention from the social inequalities and global politics at the heart of the work.

Object Opera was part of the troupe’s multi-faceted *Broke People’s Baroque Peoples’ Theater*, first performed in 2012. It features visible puppeteers moving objects around a stage. Two Baroque operas, two Maoist model dramas, and a Brechtian Lehrstück (or experimental play) make up the piece, with each tackling social issues such as class warfare, wastefulness, and injustice.

Trying to keep track of the literary, historical, and political references in *Object Opera* is almost impossible. Conclusions are drawn, only to slide away moments later. Quotes from “The Promise of Politics,” by Hannah Arendt, “Art for Art’s Sake,” by Emory Douglas, and “Aesthetics of the Oppressed,” by Augusto Boal come and go, and memorable phrases such as “Class hatred,” “What is politics?” and “People are the real artists” filter through the wrought dialogue. Although stereotypes abound in both the objects/puppets and the historical references, they are ultimately upended because My Barbarian’s goals are to “turn the worm” from inside the citadels of high culture.

About the Artists

Malik Gaines (b. 1973, Visalia, California) received a BA in History (1996) and a PhD (2011), both from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). He also received an MFA in Writing from Cal Arts’ School of Critical Studies, Los Angeles (1999). Gaines is an Assistant Professor at New York University, New York. **Jade Gordon** (b. 1975, Santa Rosa, California) received a BA (2008) and MA (2011) in Theater, both from the University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles. She teaches at the Stella Adler School in Los Angeles. **Alexandro Segade** (b. 1973, San Diego, California) received a BA in English from UCLA (1996), and studied in the School of Film and Television at USC (1997–98). He received an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studio Art from UCLA (2009). Segade is a co-chair of Film and Video at the Milton Avery School of the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson.

Select solo exhibitions and performances by My Barbarian include those at: the Goethe-Institut, New York(2014); Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Culver City (2013); Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles (2010); and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2008). Select group exhibitions include: the *2014 Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2014); SFMOMA, San Francisco (2012); The Kitchen, New York (2011); and Grand Arts, Kansas City (2009). Select performances include those at: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles (2015); and SFMOMA, San Francisco, the Hirshhorn Museum of Art, Washington, DC, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (all in 2012).



My Barbarian
Still from **Object Opera**, 2012
Digital HD video
16:24, Total Running Time
Edition of 3
Courtesy of the artists and Susanne Vielmetter
Los Angeles Projects

TOM THAYER (American, b. 1970)

A polymath and collaboratively oriented artist, Tom Thayer bridges a wide spectrum of mediums and disciplines. His work combines elements of painting, sculpture, animation, technology, music, video, theater, and performance art. Thayer's naive painting and collage style and use of elementary-level art materials situates his work squarely in the realm of the twenty-first century DIY aesthetic to intentionally speak to what he calls, "the creative power of collective action."

Like Anne Chu's work in this gallery, Thayer uses imagery that is extremely familiar yet is also somehow devoid of overt specificity. In *Chorus of Voices*, cardboard, string, and tempera paint sublimate pretension, and reference the collective archetypal theme of the homogeneous, non-individualized Greek chorus. An invisible puppet master orchestrates the heads which are one-dimensional stand-ins for anyone who has ever felt or been manipulated by unseen forces.

About the Artist

Tom Thayer was born in Chicago in 1970. His work has been widely exhibited in national and international venues including: the *2012 Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1, New York and Long Island City; White Columns, New York; The Kitchen, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Sculpture Center, Long Island City; and The Living Theater and Issue Project Room, Brooklyn.

Tom Thayer lives in Ridgefield, New Jersey, and teaches Painting/Drawing and Diverse Media at The City College of New York.



Tom Thayer

Chorus of Voices, 2011–13

Paint, crayon, ink and graphite on cardboard, wire, string, felt,
wood, tape, paper, and monk's cloth

65 1/4 h x 47 3/4 w x 9 1/4 d (inches)

Courtesy of the artist

KARA WALKER (American, b. 1969)

Kara Walker is best known for her hard-hitting, mural-sized silhouettes depicting the brutality, absurdity, and deep racism of America's antebellum South. Discussing her re-adaptation of the oh-so-proper Victorian silhouette, the artist states, "The silhouette says a lot with very little information, but that's also what the stereotype does."

Walker's shadow-puppet video, *Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi's Blue Tale*, 2011, uses motion and sound to bring hateful racial fantasies and realities to life by exploring the relatively unstudied history of sexual relations between white, elite, Southern women and black males. The narrative arc of the work revolves around a Southern belle, Miss Pipi, having sex with a male slave. In the end, Miss Pipi is disgraced, and the slave is mutilated, beaten, and consumed by flames. Filmed in the artist's studio, Walker is visible as she manipulates the puppets, and her laughter can be heard throughout.

During the sometimes excruciatingly uncomfortable seventeen minutes of this piece, the viewer becomes a complicit voyeur of unexpected eroticism, brutality, and graphic sex. As the artist stated when *Fall Frum Grace* was shown at the Camden Arts Centre, London, in 2013, "I want the viewer to feel a giddy discomfort—that same sort that happens when I'm making the work."

Sex in puppetry has historical precedents, and is jarring because of the cognitive dissonance created between the medium and the subject. Yet, these are just manipulated pieces of paper. The characters are not real or even dimensional. Even so, we do not want to watch these stereotypes of hyper-sexualized black males, cosseted and repressed white women, and the intolerance of biracial sex in the antebellum South. Why? Perhaps because *Fall Frum Grace* is a potent reminder not only of a shared history, but also of our country's still-simmering racial issues, which is something we most definitely should not look away from—Kara Walker certainly doesn't.

About the Artist

Born in Stockton, California, in 1969, **Kara Walker** was raised in Atlanta. She studied at the Atlanta College of Art (BFA, 1991) and the Rhode Island School of Design (MFA, 1994). She is the recipient of many awards, notably the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Achievement Award in 1997, and the United States Artists Eileen Harris Norton Fellowship in 2008. In 2012, Walker became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her work can be found in museums and public collections throughout the United States and Europe, including: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Tate Gallery, London; the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo (MAXXI), Rome; and Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt.

A major survey exhibition, *Kara Walker: My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love*, was organized by The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis where it premiered in February 2007 before traveling to ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Hammer Museum, University of California Los Angeles; and The Museum of Modern Art, Fort Worth. Recent solo exhibitions include those at The Art Institute of Chicago; Camden Arts Centre, London; and the Metropolitan Arts Center (MAC), Belfast.

Kara Walker currently lives and works in New York City, where she is the Tepper Chair in Visual Arts at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick. She is represented by Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.



Kara Walker

Still from *Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi's Blue Tale*, 2011

DVD video, color, sound

17 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

WAYNE WHITE (American, b. 1957)

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Wayne White's trajectory as an artist includes being an animator, illustrator, cartoonist, music video art director, and set designer and puppeteer on *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. Citing influences such as *Raw Magazine*, Art Spiegelman, Red Grooms, Andy Kaufman, and Pee-Wee Herman, White began doing punk aesthetic "guerilla puppet shows" in downtown Manhattan performance spaces during the mid-1980s. Suffice it to say, puppets have been a recurring theme in his work.

Having grown up in the South visiting Civil War "tourist traps," White has said that he always wanted to do an installation about the Civil War. In 2014, York College Art Galleries and Marketview Arts brought him to York, Pennsylvania as an artist-in-residence, where he produced *FOE*—an installation comprised of oversized cardboard puppets and props based on the 1863 Confederate raid on York led by General Jubal Anderson Early.

The artist states that he had no agenda for the work other than indulging his love of history while making a Civil War Cubist funhouse. The title, *FOE*, comes from the Fraternal Order of Eagles where the piece was initially installed. (*FOE* can also be construed as wordplay for the military's IFF system, or "identification, friend or foe.") Both *FOE (Sarge)* and *FOE (Guitar)* were in the *FOE* installation, which also featured a giant, walk-through General Early, spoils of the confederate raid (shoes, beer, pies, and pigs), shack motifs, hillbilly hats, rebel uniforms, corncob pipes, serious moustaches, and, of course, banjo music.

Throughout his career, White has often been put into the role of what he calls the "requisite representative of the South," and that while he may not be so proud of certain aspects of that heritage, he is not an apologist either. Rather, he is a sharp realist who asks "Can't art also make you laugh?" Indeed. The artist adeptly uses laughter to open up a space in which to reflect on long-held beliefs. After all, who doesn't love a giant puppet?

About the Artist

Born and raised in Chattanooga, **Wayne White** received a BFA from Middle Tennessee State University, and worked as an illustrator for New York publications such as the *East Village Eye*, *New York Times*, *Raw Magazine*, and *The Village Voice*. In 1986, he became a designer on the hit television show *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, for which he won three Emmys. White also worked in television and designed sets and characters for shows such as *Shining Time Station*, *Beakman's World*, *Riders In The Sky*, and *Bill & Willis*. While working in the music video industry, he won Billboard and MTV Music Video Awards as an art director for music videos such as The Smashing Pumpkins' *Tonight, Tonight* and Peter Gabriel's *Big Time*. His work is represented in the collections of: the Detroit Institute of the Arts, Detroit; The Progressive Art Collection, Cleveland; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Frederick R. Weissman Art Foundation, Los Angeles; and Laguna Art Museum, Laguna. In addition to his documentary *Beauty is Embarrassing* (2012), White's life and career was the subject of a monograph by Todd Oldham (2009).

Wayne White lives in Los Angeles, and is represented by Joshua Liner Gallery, New York City, and Western Projects, Los Angeles.



On wall:

Wayne White

EW, 2015

Acrylic on offset lithograph

17 h x 15 w (inches)

000, 2015

Acrylic on offset lithograph

13 h x 16 w (inches)

Untitled, 2015

Watercolor on paper

22h x 30 w (inches)

Courtesy of The Progressive Corporation,
Cleveland, Ohio

On floor:

Wayne White

FOE (Sarge), 2014

FOE (Guitar), 2014

Cardboard, paint, string, wood

55 h x 21 1/2 w x 29 d (inches) (Sarge)

70 1/2 h x 33 w x 29 d (inches) (Guitar)

Courtesy of the artist and Joshua Liner Gallery,
New York

THE MARISKA P. MARKER PUPPET COLLECTION



Sponsored by the Departments of Sociology/Anthropology
and Theater and Dance

HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY



TED Talk by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones, 2011
DVD video, color, sound; 18 minutes
Courtesy of TED Talks and Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones