



Suspension in Red, 1985
oil, tar on canvas, wood, cloth, rope, metal
78 x 68 inches
Collection of H. Gordon Brooks II



Construction: Palette with Stool
1997
oil on cloth, wood, wire
32 x 16 x 18 inches
Collection of the Artist



The Benefits Of The Moon (On Baudelaire) detail, 1998 - 2002
oil on canvas, music stand, slate, oil on panel, stone, oil can, wood, glass, pigment, ivory
90 x 112 x 16 inches
Collection of the Artist

John Hathorn's work is best described as painting all about painting. That is, painting that is not about a didactic approach to have the viewer learn something empirical, political, or factual, but painting that lets you peek into a world of the artist who is hooked by love, curiosity, passion, and obsession with this viscous, lyrical, sometimes cumbersome, illusive and beautiful thing called paint. Paint in Hathorn's hands works as a poetic medium. In his poetry, we visually meander through each work, retracing his journey to seize what cannot be captured and that which is sublime. Essences of spirit, emotion, and desire flame his extrasensory world.

John Hathorn occasionally selects a humble object and imbeds it or juxtaposes it to his work. He selects a typewriter, a rock, a string, or a vile of salt for its personal appeal as well as its universal allure. The objects work as a counterpoint to the frozen moment of artistic gestural expression that paint allows. He speaks of things that are not tangible and then uses corporal things only to render them elusive. This is John Hathorn's language. Objects work as temporal metaphors and concrete reality, simultaneously.

As John Hathorn's work developed, he has introduced discernable script. It functions as a form of abstracted mark-making as well as a physical language. It bridges a world of mere paint and expressive voice. The result is poetry that lingers in a loop of reality, fantasy, art, and spirituality. To experience Hathorn's work is to hold onto a cloud. The vapor is something you know and have seen for most days of your life, but yet you cannot grasp or hold onto its certainty; and with that familiarity and uncertainty, you long to experience it again and again.

Hathorn grew up in Mississippi and was the youngest child of three in a family where education was paramount. He chose an unlikely path as an artist. But his path afforded him a life long journey to learn and explore as evident in the 30 years of work that is on display here at the AcA. Hathorn, a resident of Lafayette, has been a professor of art at UL (formerly USL) for 31 years. He is married to visual artist Mary Ellen Leger.

Enjoy.

Mary Beyt



John Hathorn

A Retrospective

Acadiana Center for the Arts

February 9 - April 13, 2013

Curated by Mary Beyt and Brian Guidry

Gray Study: Rain, 2000
oil on canvas
12.5 x 8 inches
Collection of the Artist



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John Hathorn
Relic, 1983
oil, graphite on canvas, cloth, rope, pulley
78 x 50 inches
Collection Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum
University of Louisiana at Lafayette