

FORT GANSEVOORT

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Arena for contemporary African,
African-American & Caribbean art

AFRICANA

December 20, 2018

Keith Duncan: The Big Easy

Fort Gansevoort, New York, Opening: Thursday, January 10th, 6-8pm
On View: Thursday, January 10th – Saturday, February 23rd, 2019



Wedding Reception, 2015

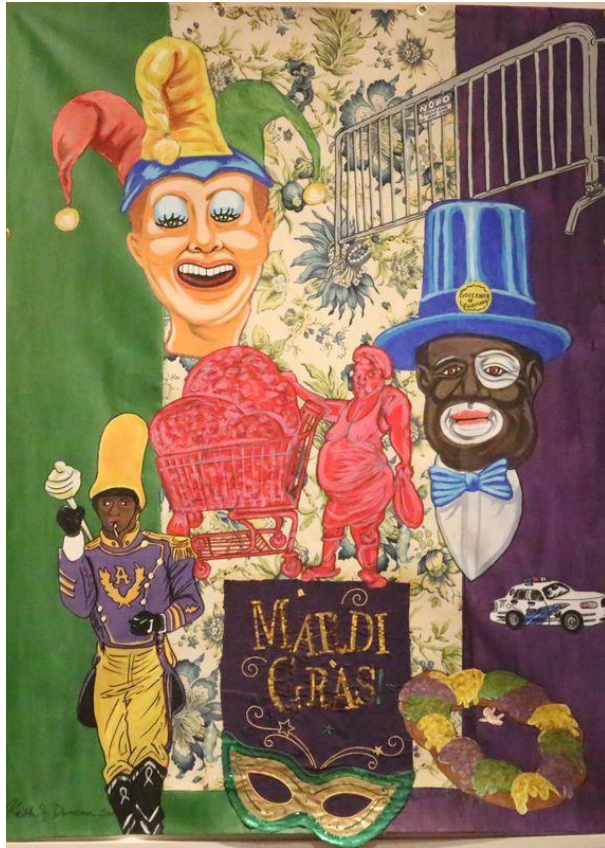
About:

The origins in my art is narrative and my images with familiar signifiers embodies everything that is unique, diverse, and “creolized” in the manner of storytelling. Undoubtedly, I am a storyteller signifying the human condition in the old South, most importantly, in a post-Katrina era. I paint about my environment around me.

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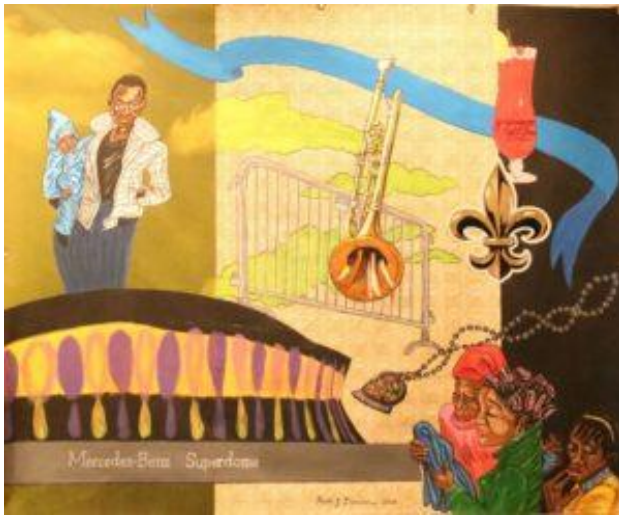
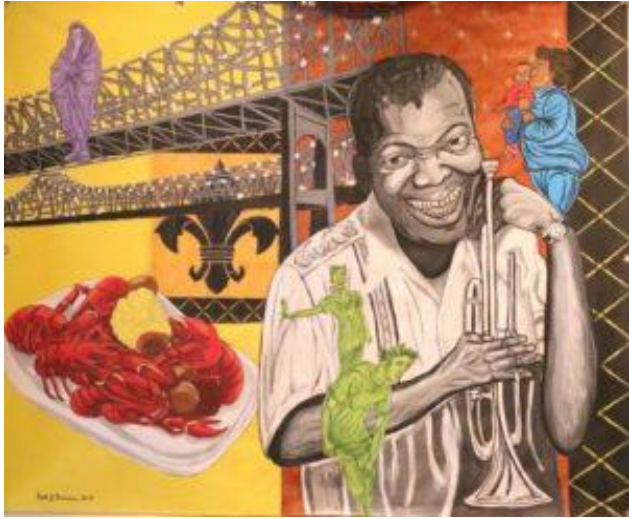
My works are discoveries and a creative process from the 'autobiography becoming the iconography' and in search of seeing the image as a new invention or archetype. Within my vernacular I want to produce a distinct language that has literature, poetic or narrative in content. For the most part, in my style of work I am a surrealist at heart.



Satire and Storytelling Series, 2015

Eventually, in 2010 my art changed drastically. The concept was to embrace my southern heritage and my roots. I was observing and studying art of African American quilts of the South, Faith Ringgold's quilt paintings and the later works of Robert Gwathmey, in which all aesthetically influenced my current art. By the use of fabrics or textile patterns and flags in my background each choice has to relate to a specific theme or topic of a particular subject matter. Interestingly, this has created a tapestry of images and narratives that most recently in my art – I have discovered why I use textile patterns and flags in my paintings. In the Mande and A'kan regions of the Kongo (in West Africa) men uses or dominates the textile/fabric cloth materials (i.e., quilts, cloths and pattern traditions) but, here in the U.S. there was a "gender leap",* in which African American women dominates the usage of textile fabrics, in particularly (quilts) in the South. Therefore, I use pattern, in my background as a means to connect with my roots and heritage. Indeed, the connection is far beyond the South. Ultimately, I am doing something "Ancestral".

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Times Picayune Series, 2013-16

Accordingly, another major inspiration of my works come from my Father; his real stories in folkloric manner has been a vital source of my new artworks. As a result, there is both a message in my art that can be “disturbing” to the viewer but yet allows invitation through my illustrative/ animated approach in my drawings and paintings. Furthermore, this is my focus, local sub-cultures and folk-cultures in my environment which has developed into an investigation of the southern region. My paintings of Southern culture through the use of traditional motifs and post-modern language in realm of Afro-American narratives – “signifying”, along with social street art has created an aesthetic that is both current and yet aware of its historical past.

-Keith Duncan