

RAWVISION

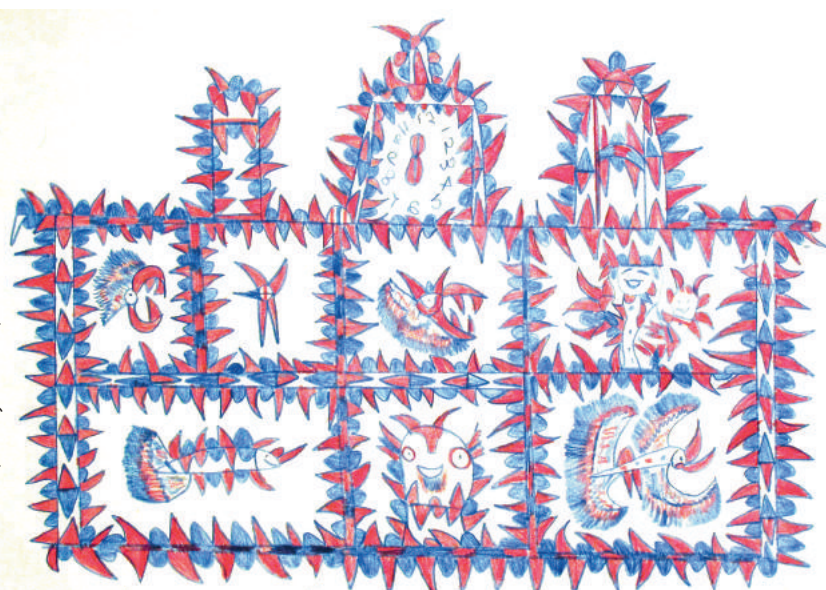
O U T S I D E R A R T B R U T

RV 94 SUMMER 2017 \$14.00 £8.00 €15.00



MICHEL NEDJAR • KOHLER • ARTIST PORTRAITS • VALERIE ROUSSEAU • ART CARS

Frank Jones, Hullahyah House, c. 1964–69



FRANK JONES: A BICHROMATIC WORLD

Carl Hammer Gallery
Chicago, Illinois
May 5 – June 30, 2017

Frank Jones (1900–1969) was born in rural Texas, near the border with Oklahoma, where his ancestors, who were slaves, had worked on cotton plantations. Jones, who never learned to read or write, was born with a caul (part of the fetal membrane covering his left eye). In the African-American society in which he grew up, it was referred to as a “veil,” and babies born with one were believed to be able to “see spirits” and communicate with the spirit world.

Jones claimed that he could see supernatural beings, which he referred to as “haints” (“haunts”), “devils” or “haint devils.” He survived by working as a farm labourer and doing odd jobs, but over a period of about two decades, he spent time in and out of jail and finally was sent to a large, state-run prison in Huntsville, Texas, to serve a life sentence for a murder he claimed he had not committed. There, in the 1960s, he began making drawings on found pieces of paper with the stubs of blue-and-red accountants’ pencils. He drew cross-sections of what he called his “devils’ houses”, in which his horned “haints” lived – or perhaps by pictorially containing them in such structures, Jones imagined that he could harness their mischievous, harmful energy.

This was the first solo presentation of Jones’s works in a commercial gallery in the United States in many years. It included numerous drawings from the collection of the painter and former art dealer Chapman Kelley that had

rarely or never been publicly exhibited before. (It was Kelley who, at his former gallery in Dallas, first brought Jones’s works to market.)

Of special interest were images featuring additional hues, including green and orange, that are not often seen in Jones’s coloured-pencil palette, and gridded compositions filled with his grinning, sprightly creatures, whose apparent jocularity belies the menace he saw in them. This exhibition served as a reminder that, with their sophisticated compositions and imaginative use of pattern and symbolism, Jones’s drawings constitute a body of work that merits in-depth, critical attention.

Edward M. Gómez

MR A MOVES IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Selected Artists from the Adamson Collection,
Pelz Gallery, Birkbeck College, London
May 15 – July 25 2017

Edward Adamson (1911–1996), himself an artist, was a pioneer of art therapy who encouraged patients to be creative and to express themselves through art. This new approach was born out of Adamson’s pioneering research into the relationship between mental illness and creativity. His findings were that the creative process itself was in fact therapeutic and that artistic expression could be used to help patients.

The collection, one of the world’s largest of its kind, consists of approximately 6,000 pieces, all produced by psychiatric inpatients at Netherne Hospital in Surrey between 1946 and 1981.

The exhibition showcases eight



Gwyneth Rowlands, *Man with Baby*, painted flint, 1970s



Mary Bishop, *Cri de Coeur*, 1959

artists from The Adamson Collection, curated by Dr Heather Tilley. It begins with **J.P. Sennett**, whose painting *Christmas Party* is a simplistic and naive piece. Adamson’s narrative points us to the isolated figures within the work, indicating how this could reflect how the artist felt.

Gwyneth Rowlands’ astonishing works are a highlight of the exhibition. She collected pebbles and flints, and, fascinated by their different shapes and hidden personalities, painted directly on to them, creating visually vibrant and completely unique pieces.

This exhibition reflects on the delicacies of these beautiful works which could have been tragically overlooked. None of the patients could ever have imagined how important their involvement was to be in this groundbreaking discovery of art as therapy. The exhibition highlights the value of displaying artists’ works and stories to the public, so their voices can be heard and recognised. This is a lasting legacy of these unheard and misunderstood artists.

Hannah Whitlock