Southern Accent
Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art

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Featuring the work of sixty artists and including 300 illustrations, the catalog *Southern Accent* accompanies a major contemporary art exhibition that questions and explores the complex and contested space of the American South. This unprecedented exhibition investigates the many realities, fantasies, and myths of the South that have long captured the public’s imagination, while presenting a wide range of perspectives that create a composite portrait of southern identity through contemporary art. It looks at the South as an open-ended question and concept in itself by encompassing a broad spectrum of media and approaches, demonstrating that southernness is more of a shared sensibility than any one definable culture or style. While the exhibition includes artwork from the 1950s to the present, it primarily focuses on the past thirty-five years. With numerous contributions by artists, scholars, musicians, and poets, a music-listening library, and a timeline of scholarship on southern art, this catalog redefines the way we look at the South in

**Praise**

“[T]he work in this wonderful catalog comes from many perspectives, often grappling with the subtexts of race, religion, class, and loss. Curators and exhibition organizers Lash and Schoonmaker have assembled a marvelous group of artists, writers, curators, pundits, and musicians to address the question of Southern identity and the Southern experience, creating a grand pastiche of visual art, writing, and music. Covering touchstones such as Andy Warhol’s appropriations of civil rights documentation and the classic lightning rod of polemic imagery, the Confederate battle flag, there is plenty of grist for controversy and a deep emotional well to plumb. A powerful collection and compelling guide to an outstanding exhibition. Well done.” — Dan McClure, *Library Journal*

“*Southern Accent* is an important contribution to existing scholarship. Not only a bellwether for new approaches to thinking about the region within the context of contemporary art, it also provides a framework for considering it through the experiences of its most accomplished voices. *Southern Accent* therefore stands as a testament to this particular place at a very specific moment in time.” — Jennifer Jankauskas, *Panorama*

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Author/Editor Bios
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Miranda Lash is Curator of Contemporary Art at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. She previously served as Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the New Orleans Museum of Art and is editor of Mel Chin: Rematch, Dario Robleto: The Prelives of the Blues, Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, and Skylar Fein: Youth Manifesto.

Trevor Schoonmaker is Chief Curator and Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher Curator of Contemporary Art at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where he has curated traveling exhibitions such as Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey and The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl. He is the Artistic Director of the Prospect New Orleans Triennial, 2017–2018, and is the editor of several books, including Fela: From West Africa to West Broadway.

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The Speed Art Museum presents Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art, the Speed’s largest and most ambitious contemporary art exhibition to date, which opens at the Speed on April 30, 2017. Artists featured in Southern Accent include: Terry Adkins, Walter Inglis Anderson, Benny Andrews, Radcliffe Bailey, Romare Bearden, Sanford Biggers, Willie Birch, Rachel Boillot, Douglas Bourgeois, Roger Brown, Beverly Buchanan, Diego Camposeco, Mel Chin, William Christenberry, Sonya Clark, Robert Colescott, William Cordova, Jerstin Crosby and Bill Thelen, Thornton Dial, Sam Durant, William Eggleston, Minnie Jones Evans, Ralph Fasanella, Skylar Fein, Howard Finster, Michael Galinsky The Nasher Museum presented Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art, which questioned and explored the complex and contested space of the American South. One needs to look no further than literature, cuisine and music to see evidence of the South’s profound influence on American culture, and consequently much of the world. This unprecedented exhibition addresses and complicates the many realities, fantasies and myths that have long captured the public’s imagination about the American South. “Southern Accent is an extensive exploration of southern identity through contemporary art,” said Trevor Schoonmaker, Chief Curator and Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher Curator of Contemporary Art, and co-curator of the exhibition.