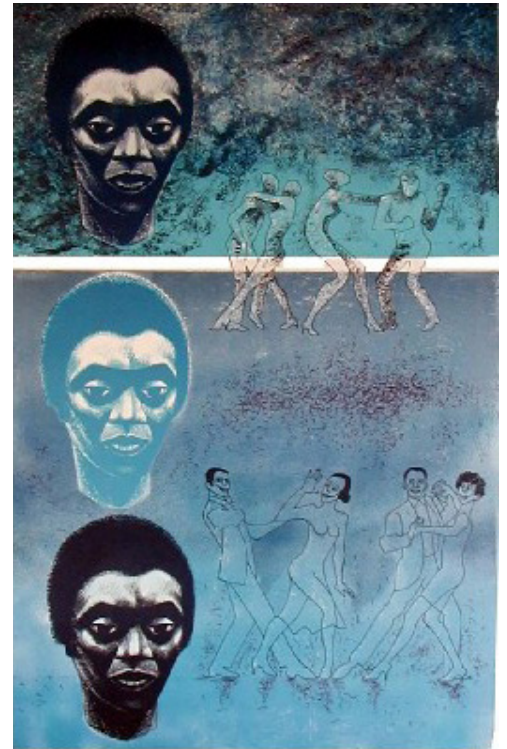


Infinite Mirror

Images of American Identity



Faith Ringgold, *Flag #4*, 2003, Felt pen and gouache on paper



Elizabeth Catlett-Mora, *Blues*, 1983, Lithograph

Infinite Mirror explores America's image of itself through 62 diverse works of paintings, prints, photographs and video by 38 insightful artists. Utilizing portraiture and figurative images and largely focusing on printmaking as a medium, the exhibition tells the story of an array of triumphs, tragedies, relationships, and traditions that inform our notions of nationhood.

Artists including the late **Elizabeth Catlett**, **Luis Jimenez**, **Jacob Lawrence** and **Faith Ringgold** reflect the complex dynamics between people and within the minds of individuals as they participate in, and contribute to, a composite, inestimable

culture. This examination demonstrates how vast America truly is, measured in dimensions and demographics beyond history, population, and geography and including race, ethnicity and origin, language and class. The artwork is personal, reflective, and often autobiographical. We, as Americans, need an infinite mirror to see our full reflection.

Infinite Mirror includes four main themes—**Self-Selection**, **Pride**, **Assimilation**, and **Protest**—that reflect affinities and points of departure for dialogue. Artists **Richard Ray Whitman** and **Edgar Heap of Birds** reveal how Americans are allowed to

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Luis Jimenez, *Self Portrait*, 1996, Lithograph



Jacob Lawrence, *Builders Three*, 1991, Lithograph

question the ideals of U.S. politics and social culture. Their work explores the treatment, past and present, of Native Americans.

Tomie Arai mixes the symbols of her Asian heritage and her American present. In *Peach Boy*, a young boy can participate by donning the trappings of a cowboy on the frontier, but the work hints at the tension between the actual experience of Chinese immigrants who worked for the railroad and the myth of the American West. Artworks such as **Delilah Montoya's** photograph of Elisabeth "Pink Panther" Monge suggests a celebration of indomitable spirit and perseverance.

Organizer and Educational Component

Infinite Mirror is produced by award-winning Artrain, Inc., of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and includes several works from the collection of the Brandywine Workshop in Philadelphia. An accompanying educational package includes integrated, multidisciplinary curriculum for specific disciplines as they relate to the exhibition, including: artistic interpretation of American identity; artistic technique and style; and cultural and social significance.

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Tara Sabharwal, *Life Journey*, 2006, Etching



Ben Gest, *Alice Waiting*, 2006, Archival ink jet

Self Selection

We choose how to present and project ourselves to the world. It is a democratic concept informed in this exhibition by artists having access to so many vehicles to capture a person's image. Their works are the intersection of available tools and technologies with traditions of high art, vernacular modes, and the range of indigenous and imported traditions. With the variety of means at their disposal, artists can capture or depict aspects of ourselves that we may not always perceive or recognize. **Ben Gest's** composite images of peoples' mundane moments capture our interdependence and the myriad ways we share space and time. *Alice Waiting* shows an older woman in a contemporary variation on a seated portrait. Like the symbolism of portraits from other eras, we are able

to construct a narrative from this woman's attributes and the familiar elements in the photograph. The characteristic that unifies the individual practices of these artists in this section is the exploration and portrayal of the self. Their work projects our values, desires, and even anxieties. Images can be straightforward and realistic depictions, or they can illuminate the hidden ways in which we communicate and connect. In considering America, in its elements and imagining a whole, it is useful to examine what artists chronicle and reveal in these intimate representations.

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Leamon Green, Jr., *Little Big Girl*, 2005, Acrylic and silkscreen on paper

Pride

Individuals often have an appreciation of one's origins, character, values, and personal accomplishments, and level of self-affirmation and self-respect. **Delilah Montoya's** photograph of Elisabeth "Pink Panther" Monge shows her guarding the front of the picture plane with her hands up and ready. It is unclear where she means to project aggression or if she is just posing. Embodying the nickname that is stitched to her waistband, she engages the viewer's gaze with a mix of confidence and stoicism. Artworks such as Montoya's suggest a celebration of indomitable spirit and perseverance. In the context of the exhibition, pride directly related to being proud and loving oneself. It is the most difficult category to describe, but the most readily apparent in an artist's depiction.



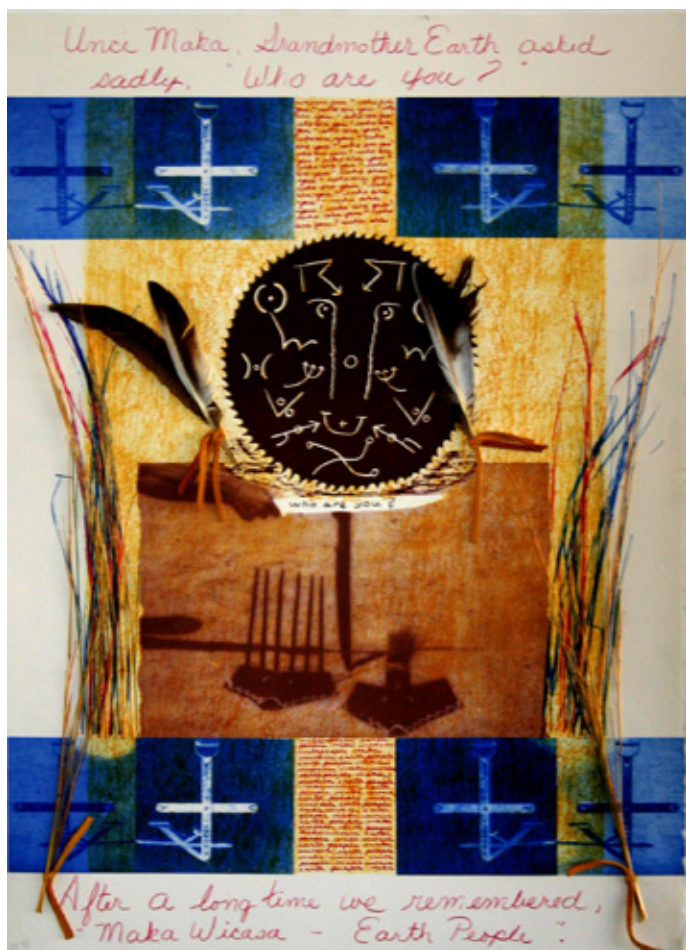
Scott Tsuchitani, *Boys Love Baseball*, 2004-2007, Digital Print



Delilah Montoya, *Elisabeth "Pink Panther" Monge*, 2003, Pieziography on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag 310

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Kaylynn Sullivan Two Trees, *Maka Wicasa*, 1992, Lithograph, leather, straw, and collage

Assimilation

Many artists in *Infinite Mirror* weigh in on the two-way transaction of assimilation and the degree to which new cultural contributions are accepted, mined, or rejected by the mainstream or normative culture. Conversely, many artists examine the degree to which they have retained their original cultures and the ways in which they have evolved and emerged in their changing environments. In her carefully layered portraits, **Tomie Arai** mixes the symbols of her Asian heritage and her American present. In *Peach Boy*, a young boy can participate by donning the trappings of a cowboy on the



Tomie Arai, *Peach Boy*, 2003, Etching

frontier. However, Arai's work hints at the tension between the actual experience of Chinese immigrants who worked for the railroad and the myth of the American West. Artists in the exhibition explore their experience of assimilation, illustrating their adoption of U.S. cultural values or maintenance of their native cultural values.

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Edgar Heap of Birds, *Telling Many Magpies, Telling Black Wolf Telling Hachivi*, 1989, Screenprint



Paul Keene, *Generations*, 1996, Lithograph



Richard Ray Whitman, *Do Indians go to Santa Fe When They Die?*, 1988, Lithograph

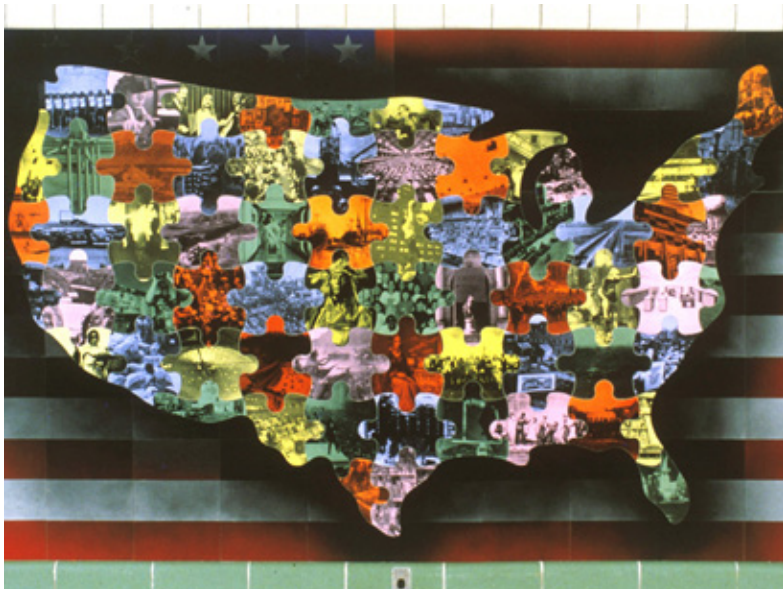
Protest

America has developed as a hybrid culture because of the power and allure of its ideals. In the land of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and the self-evident belief that all men are created equal, protest is in the firmament of our history. The diverse group assembled for *Infinite Mirror* illuminates some of the shadowy concerns in the United States. In **Richard Ray Whitman's** *Do Indians Go to Santa Fe When They Die?* and **Edgar Heap of Birds'** *Telling Many Magpies, Telling Black Wolf, Telling Hachivi*, the artists use their work to question the treatment of Native Americans in the past and present. Native

Americans are part of the myth of America, at the very least for having lent their names to places, products, and sports teams, although they received little back in the exchange. Artists such as Whitman and Heap of Birds are examples of how people are allowed, and even encouraged, to question the ideals of U.S. politics and social culture.

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Sungho Choi, *My America*, 1993, Mixed media on wood



Emma Amos, *Miss Otis*, 2002, Lithograph and fabric collage

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works: 62 multi-media works including paintings, works on paper, photographs and video

Requirements: Moderate security; approximately 300 running feet

Fee: Please inquire for extension fee starting in November 2013 (please inquire for discounted fee from August 2012 to December 2012)

Curated by: Blake Bradford, director of education at the Barnes Foundation; Robert Lee, executive director, Asian American Arts Center, NY; and Benito Huerta, associate professor & director of the Gallery at the University of Texas at Arlington

Organized by: Artrain, Inc.

Booking Time: 8 weeks

Shipping: Exhibitors pay outgoing shipping costs within the contiguous US

Tour: January 2011 - December 2013
2014 Extension

Publications: Exhibition catalogue, interdisciplinary family guide with educational activities and points to consider for all ages and K-12th grade curricula

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