

*Alabama, Y'all* is a collection of photographs and sculptures made by an Alabama collector, Patrick Owens. His Alabama fascination began during childhood road trips with his parents to the family home place in Tuskegee. Though never an Alabama resident, he was bred of Alabama stock. His people, his roots, his family stories and myths are all Alabama born. Now, and particularly over the past decade, Owens makes intentional, frequent trips to Alabama to glean the landscape for images and detritus to bring home to his South Carolina studio. Each image, each discarded bit has its own origin story and its own history of usefulness. Owens has reimagined these stories making them his own.

The provenance of Owens' photographs is mysteriously vague. The barbecue arrow, does it point to mouthwatering dinner for tonight, or is it a eulogy for a long-gone mom and pop? The parlor chair, though threadbare and hemorrhaging cotton stuffing, has the presence of a dais in the wilderness or the happenstance destination of a discard. Even many of the storefronts he photographs could be just closed for the day or closed years ago. Owens honors and preserves the history of these destinations as he incorporates them reverently within his myths.

Owens' wall mounted assemblages are closer kin to quilts than relief sculptures or paintings. He has pieced together bits of detritus from his Alabama scavenging with the whimsy of an outsider artist but also with deliberate and learned precision. In speaking of these works, Owens says, "These collections stem from a desire to preserve the memory of authentic lived experiences, and their stories lend evidence to our existence in this world." *Alabama, Y'all* proudly takes us on a fun trip of visual joy through an undetermined era in a very specific location but not just to make fun or have fun. *Alabama, Y'all* reminds us that memories and storied myths once abandoned lose us in the current cultural quagmire of dissention, greed, and grief.

Patrick Owens received his AA degree in Photography from Greenville Technical College where he works as the Studio Manager/Gallery Assistant for the Department of Visual Arts. He earned his BFA degree Magna Cum Laude from Clemson University in Sculpture. His photography has been included in exhibitions across the US including Rayko Photo Center in San Francisco, CA; the Midwest Center for Photography in Wichita, KS; Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC; and Mobile Museum of Art in Mobile, AL. He has photographs in the *Looking at Appalachia* project of the Archive of Documentary Arts at Duke University, Durham, NC. He continues to make regular trips to Alabama, the home of generations of his family, to photograph and collect.