

# OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### HOME

August 3 – September 28, 2013

Opening reception: August 3, 6 – 9 pm

wayne AMEDEE ron BECHET lynda BENGLIS rukiya BROWN keith DUNCAN brian GUIDRY james HENDERSON helen KOHNKE kathleen LOE aristides LOGOTHETIS rashaad NEWSOME tameka NORRIS duane PITRE jeffrey PITT regina SCULLY elizabeth SHANNON keith SONNIER michel VARISCO

The sense of place that one identifies as home is often a complex notion, one that is tied to authentic emotional attachments, belonging and perceived memories of a particular environment. This concept serves as the thematic framework for Octavia Art Gallery's inaugural group show, *Home*, opening White Linen Night at 454 Julia Street in New Orleans. The exhibition will feature local, national and international artists who have lived and studied in New Orleans and Louisiana at various times in their careers.

New Orleans has long served as an inspiration and muse for artists. It is a live culture, and a fertile ground for creativity and authenticity. With ties to New Orleans and an understanding of its heritage and recent history, the selected artists explore the complexities of the development of New Orleans into the fastest growing city in the country. Moreover, this shared history adds a common element to the exhibition and questions what that means for each artist – in their own identity and in their work.

For Ron Bechet, place is a defining element of the traditions and customs of humanity. Bechet's process directly reflects the abundance of south Louisiana's natural environment. His works reflect the dynamic and subtle dialogue between the sacred and secular in the multi-layered environment of New Orleans.

Much of the work of Keith Sonnier has explored his upbringing in Grand Mamou, Louisiana. Writer Max Blagg says of Sonnier's work, " 'Gonna take you to the muddy river and push you in...' Sonnier's heart is in his hands and his hands are in the river and the red Louisiana mud."

Lynda Benglis' vibrant, and at times tawdry, work embraces her New Orleans roots, often mocking austere aesthetics and feminist theories. Her love of elaborate ornamentation and flamboyant bodily decoration is directly influenced by Mardi Gras culture. As Benglis states, "all those things I wore - masks, costumes - later influenced my ideas as I began to think of painting as a skin."

Rashaad Newsome states that his work, "*Venus Vs. Mars* combines luxury goods with hip hop iconography to create an abstraction that plays with the design formulas of Heraldry while referencing a baroque grandeur that is "Naturally N'Awlins."

Although stylistically diverse, each work in *Home* has a strong connection to the culture of New Orleans and Louisiana. As a whole, *Home* pays respect to the individuals who have assisted in the rebirth of New Orleans and our community.

For more information, please contact Emily Siekkinen at 504-309-4249 or [emily@octaviaartgallery.com](mailto:emily@octaviaartgallery.com).