

WORDS ON CANVAS

HARN MUSEUM OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



WRITING COMPETITION

2017
WINNERS

Art is a highly personal experience. It is also a collective one. The meaning of a painting, sculpture or photograph remains incomplete until it has been viewed, discussed or written about. By sharing what we see when we look, we learn more about art and about ourselves. Words on Canvas exists to facilitate this shared understanding. For the writer, it is a chance to look beyond the surface of a piece. For you, the reader, it is a chance to share another's perspective for a moment. We hope you enjoy this year's winning Words on Canvas entries. Feel free to take this booklet with you into the Harn's galleries and see what stories emerge and inspire you during your visit.

Thank you to the *Words on Canvas* judges for devoting their time, expertise and interest to the challenging task of selecting winners from among the many fine submissions.

Words on Canvas Judges:

Ashley Jones, Assistant Professor, UF School of Art + Art History

Ange Mlinko, Professor, UF English Department

Elizabeth Ross, Associate Professor and Head of Art History,
UF School of Art + Art History

And our appreciation goes to all those who participated in *Words on Canvas*, looking closely, writing carefully and gamely submitting their writing. Congratulations to each of you for your fine efforts.



Words on Canvas is made possible by the generous support of the UF Honors College

Grant Glavin — English at Santa Fe College
First Place

If Death Could Speak

Do not neglect the living, or the dead.
New dawn and tomb await those yet to die.
My hand shall grasp both crown and mouth unfed.

Among the sleepless troupe their path has led,
His widow, weeping through her veil, for I
Do not neglect the living, or the dead.

Green wreath will wither soon above cold head;
Brown stone shall fall while all men flee from my
White hand which grasps both crown and mouth unfed.

I watch them place their tribute in my bed,
Admitting guilt and grief until they cry:
"Do not neglect the living or the dead!"

I keep unseen; their eyes are fixed ahead,
Upon the lamb. They miss the ruined sky.
Close hand shall grasp their crowns and mouths unfed.

Their time is spent among their friends; I tread
Behind the fence and wait to say goodbye.
Do not neglect the living, or the dead;
My hand shall grasp both crown and mouth unfed.

Inspired by

Stuart Robert Purser

Funeral. 1945

Gift of Eloise R. Chandler in memory of William H. Chandler

Object number: 1993.20.3

Table Of Contents

Alandya Arnold-Brutton

untitled [*Kitchen Table*] 4

Kenneth Hays

Incandescence 6

Isabella Newan

untitled [*Sheep Wranglers*] 8

Theodore Burrows

Sheep Wranglers 10

Millie Rogers

untitled [*Apocalypse de St. Jean*] 12

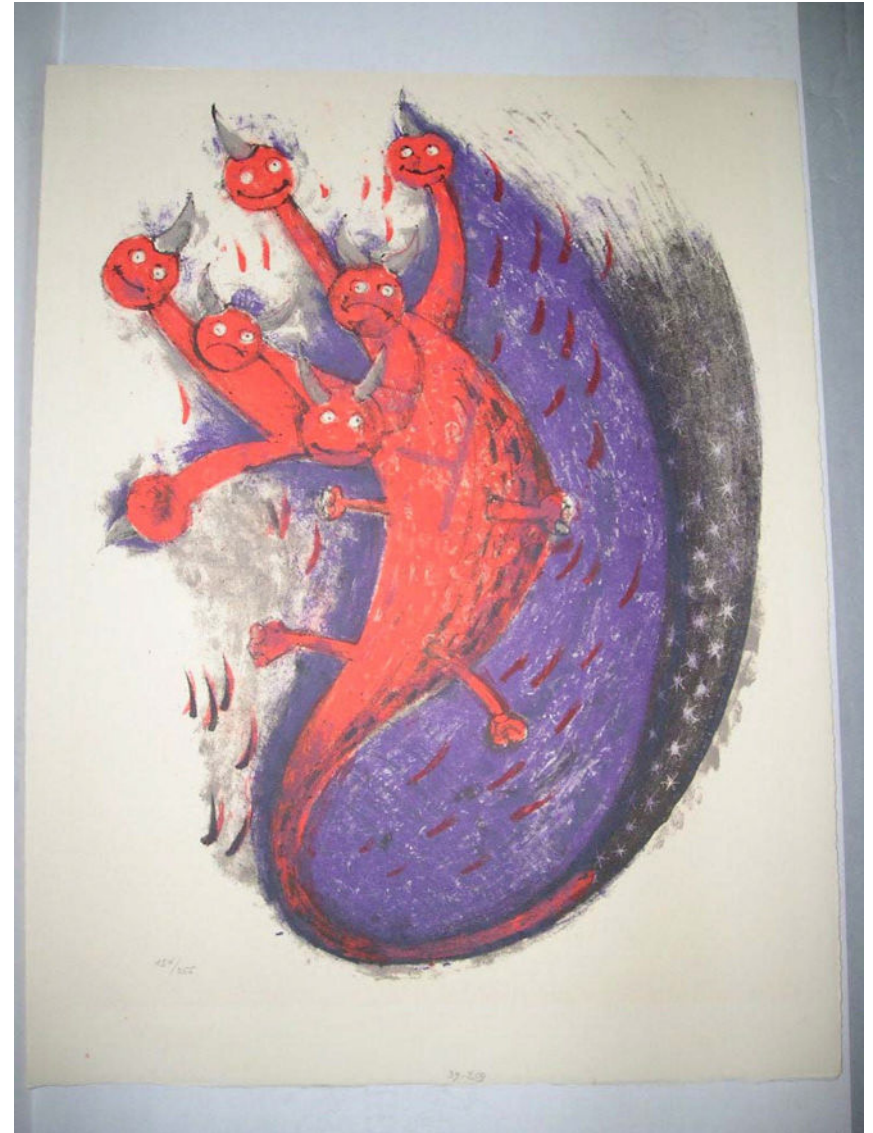
Grant Glavin

If Death Could Speak 14

Alandya Arnold-Brutton — Business Administration, Santa Fe College
Honorable Mention

untitled

You may as well learn baby girl
Paint for your lips
Highlight your brown skin
Cause it will take more baby girl
Than waking up to play the part you're in
Coiled hair and sun kissed cheeks are a magic
Perfect for life's undertow
But if you're going to ride the wave
You're going to have to give them a show
In this neighborhood, this home, this room
I'm a queen just as I am
But from here preparing for the stage
Takes more when the audience sees you as sand
So tonight, we practice the scene
As if we're going on live
And I'm talking the time to show you baby girl
Then when your tomorrow comes, there will be no surprise
Of an understudy casting a shadow
Of which you can't emerge
Tonight, I'm going to show you baby girl
How to minimize the hurt
First, be sure to sit up straight
And take a good look before you start
Remember your natural beauty and worth
Before you perform the art
Pull your hair away from your face
For your skin, should always appear tight
Learn which angles of your face look best
As if pictured under stage light
Take your time, don't rush- it won't be perfect at first
And be sure to use the enlarged side of the mirror
Cause you need to see yourself as bigger than life
And carry this confidence inward
You won't be magnified on the stage baby girl



Millie Rogers — History & Biology at UF
Second Place

untitled

Worlds erected in my mind
And I build and break the walls.
I lay words like bricks,
And my periods make doors,
On either side of which
I plant flowery metaphors.
A tick, a comma, digs a river in the ground
And a slash, a dash, builds a highway and
connects two thoughts.
These cities inside my head
are built entirely from scratch-
the odds and ends of other shores
In an order never seen before
Which never will be seen again.
With a stroke of my pen I add a string to the universe,
inimitable and unprecedented.
But then I tried to build
my world upon this page,
and what lived once inside my head
died suddenly of old age.
Another string left in my wake-
too tangled to unwind.
Another world, in inky ruins,
won't ever leave my mind.
But one day I will find a way
to give my worlds a home in ours,
and maybe then to help you see
our world as I wish it could be-
for within the words we use to build
I know there is redemptive power.

Inspired by

Rufino Tamayo. **Untitled** (from *Apocalypse de St. Jean*). 1959
Museum Collection, University Gallery purchase, President's Special
Purchase Fund.
Object number: PR-70-31

Not for your role or amongst the cast
But you'll have to model perfection my child
To make an impression that will last
Look at the items I've placed before you
It really doesn't take much
Yet you must arrive showing effort
The Director's heart is the first you must touch
The name of the production is Life in the 50's
Our time- the present at hand
And black pride is more than the dress I wear
It's the respect that I command
When you show up for casting calls -
No one wants to see you
Take the break to shake the white man's hand
"Mr. Director" you say
And ride the wave of charm through
Like a pit bull lock him down—don't let him loose
Then after he's given you the smallest part
Like caramel you melt with thanks and gratitude
Now he's forced to see what he's got
But he doesn't know - you've got him
Exactly where you want him
Work that charm until you're on center stage
Then steal the show from them
I may not make Hollywood baby girl
The performance of life has had it toll
But anything you want is simply a stage
And center should be your goal
Don't compromise your value
You're a diamond in the rough
This lesson is simply to polish you
For life's industry is tough
Soon your season will arrive
Your tide has surely got to come in
Be sure your Vanity Fair is handy
Then let the show begin
Don't be greatly disappointed
If every performance doesn't meet satisfaction
It's "Life" the show only has one ending
There's time to win them over... ACTION!

Inspired by Carrie Mae Weems, *Kitchen Table Series*. See page 7.

Kenneth Hays — History at Santa Fe College
Honorable Mention

Incandescence

The scars never penetrate to the surface.
A mirror will only reflect my form, never
the malice that pulsates under a brooding
nostril.

Daughter, thirst in spotlight, dutiful in her
mimicked play. Today, will engage her smile-
like aristocratic folly. Truffles ripen while she
dances in the pride of adolescence.

Photos that heckle in joyous candor will scratch one
tear across my upper lip. Batted eyelids stretch days
work. I am the persistence of youth.



Inspired by

Carrie Mae Weems

Untitled, from the *Kitchen Table Series*

1990/2010

Museum purchase, funds provided by the Melvin and Lorna Rubin
Fund

Object number: 2011.7.1

Theodore Burrows — English at UF
Third Place

Sheep Wranglers

Underneath a thin oak shade
You looked at me with perfect vacancy.
Whatever thought hid behind your eyes
Was as much a mystery as the hour of day,
Whose light was too soft and too still
To rule it a morning wax
Or an evening wane.

While sheep muttered to one another nearby,
We lay, indistinguishable.
The wool on our backs
Enclosed a warmth the same as theirs,
And all our quiet set a heavy peace.

But time awoke from its suspension,
Along with all the zephyr's chill,
And as you helped me to my feet
The sun sank slightly behind the hill.

Inspired by

Justine Kurland

Sheep Wranglers.

2001

Museum purchase, funds provided by the Caroline Julier and James

G. Richardson Art Acquisition Fund

Object number: 2002.21



untitled

entrenched in emeralds;
i misplaced my mind,
have you seen him?
the gravel has begun to grind,
beneath the feet I can not feel.
“i’ll fail to see the sun at this rate”,
as she labored her eyes up towards the level moon,
“i’ll fail to feel his heat.”
she tucked away her whole arm up and underneath the flimsy
cream cotton that
hugged her slight folds of tan flesh, her elbow peered out from the
hem-line,
she wore an all uneasy expression of complete and utter displace-
ment;
two round orbs flitted, darted and meandered every which way,
front&back, back&forth, up&down, tracing shapes and circles,
reddish chestnut & warm mahogany,
those big round circles were filled with them,
her eyes cut through the uprooted dirt and bent blades of grass
with ease,
her feet kicked up the dust and ground in hunks,
it pandered some basic instinct inside of her to dismantle,
leftover wool floated in lumps like right before a cloud spills,
“I just want to read my own words, not nobody else’s,” she sput-
tered
out between cracked pinstripe shells, “Not no one else”.

aside from that she didn’t speak, not a morsel of conversation,
nor a whistle through that childhood gap in her teeth, she kept her
arm in
her shirt though, probably out of habit.
the thick gruel of coffee grounds & iron pumped slowly through the
map of
tubes that ran through my body,
so i kept looking at her,
she had this sort of sensation of hunger, you know the type of ap-
petite that
won’t ever be filled, she knew it & i knew it, that there wasn’t not
one
thing,
that could ever be enough.

Inspired by

Justine Kurland. *Sheep Wranglers*.

2001

Museum purchase, funds provided by the Caroline Julier and
James G. Richardson Art Acquisition Fund

Object number: 2002.21

See page 11.