

Curatorial Essay

Wrestling History: Points Along a Journey of Dis/covery Hidden in the Temple

There is much about our movement through time and space that defines life, but defies capture, control, and taming by words. Angelbert Metoyer is an artist who recognizes this condition. His work seeks to offer a vibrant counter to ineffability as he artistically envisions and portrays the inner-meaning of our existence— beyond what we can speak through language. He brings his personal wrestling with race and the cultural history of the United States to bear on shared concerns that frame human life.

Metoyer, who has family roots that connect him to Louisiana, Texas, and Holland, turns to images of life that surge up and out of his encounters with the self, others, and world. All of this plays out through a blending of materials. Wood, metal, mirrors, and ordinary items are layered and presented as an invitation to see beyond what our mind tells us. Paint doesn't simply cover a surface, and objects aren't just "things." In the gallery as temple, these works present and decode knowledge. They express often-hidden dimensions of what it means to be human. Bringing into contact images, signs, and symbols from an African past and contemporary markers of cultural meaning, the objects here point to a confluence of powers—locations where worlds merge.

Inspired by African mystery systems, physics, cultural theory, historiography, and philosophy, Metoyer creates each piece as part of a language that speaks to the contact between the sacred and the profane. Both found and made items are transformed into altars and totems as tools for manipulating time and space. Here, abstract pieces serve as ritual devices from which cosmic energy radiates. Mirror pieces contain faint images that confront and reflect the viewer. The double-ness inherent to mirrors exposes beings that populate both visible and invisible realms. *Wrestling History: Points Along a Journey of Dis/covery Hidden in the Temple* prompts confrontation and offers tools for rethinking the physical and "spiritual" nature of humanity. Together, the pieces on display evoke a *discovery* of the world as the artist encounters, interprets and communicates it; yet the work here also *covers* the world with layers of memory and history.

-Anthony B. Pinn, Curator