

Carris Adams

Send-Go



Persistent Rem(a)inders

On Carris Adams's *Send-Go*



Untitled, 2016

oil, acrylic and glitter on canvas
60 x 72 in

How do you locate yourself in your hometown? How do you navigate an unfamiliar city? Where exactly do you feel at home, and where do you find yourself a stranger, and how? What tells you to follow one street but not the other? What clues make you to quicken your stride and what encourages you to leisurely stroll? Who do you expect to meet depending on the path and pace you choose?

A perpetual wanderer, Carris Adams is highly attuned to the circulation of bodies and signs in and between urban, suburban and rural spaces. In her large-scale paintings and drawings, the artist appropriates and re-signifies graphic designs taken from local businesses she has stumbled upon while roaming diverse neighborhoods. By transplanting them from their original settings—that is, the streets and corners in which they are embedded and naturalized as common elements of a man-made landscape—to an art gallery, she seeks to expose how these social markers are implicitly classed, raced, and gendered. By setting up encounters with a specific local, ingeniously ramped-up aesthetics, she invites her viewers to question their perceptions, their sense of place and identity (or identities), and their habitual manners of relating to the constructed environment. Her fragmentary, reassembled landscapes signal the far-flung zones of resilience of black and brown communities, manifested through their distinctive words, typefaces, and colors.

Her recent paintings, presented at the Courtyard Gallery, zero in on the ways in which a black female body is ossified into a sign and a signifier. What are the repercussions of this forceful transformation from a live, concrete being into a persuasive, textual object on display? When a black woman is reduced to a marker of a commercial venture as a consumable object, for example, as “Lady Mocha,” what does it tell us about how she is valued, both by her own community and others? Do our perceptions shift when she is compared, in turn, to a precious stone? Embellished with glitter and hardened by enamel, Adams’s paintings render visible captivating and enduring stereotypes constructed around black womanhood.

So when you meet her in the flesh on the 63rd and MLK intersection in Chicago or on the 12th and Springdale in Austin, whom will you see? And how will you address her?

Dorota Biczal is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art and Art History at The University of Texas at Austin. In 2015–16 she served as the Visual Art Center’s Curatorial Fellow. Dorota specializes in modern and contemporary Latin American art in the global context. Her dissertation examines artistic and architectural interventions as the means of construction of new publics in Lima during the tumultuous period of the urban demographic explosion, transition to democracy, and onset of the Internal Conflict in the late 1970s and 1980s.



Untitled, 2016
oil, acrylic and glitter on canvas
60 x 72 in



Untitled, 2016
oil, acrylic and enamel on canvas
60 x 120 in



Untitled, 2016
mixed media on canvas
48 x 120 in

Carris Adams

Send-Go

May 11 – September 9, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, May 11 • 5–7 p.m.

Dallas native Carris Adams received a B.F.A. in Studio Art from The University of Texas at Austin in 2013 and an M.F.A. from the University of Chicago in 2015. Her large-scale drawings and paintings deploy signs and signifiers appropriated from man-made landscapes to point to class, race, gender, systemic inequality and resilience, begotten in urban, suburban and rural spaces. Thus her works seek to inform and position viewers to recognize their reactions concerning others. Adams's works have been shown in exhibitions at the Studio Museum in Harlem in New York (2016), Logan Art Center Gallery in Chicago (2015), and South Dallas Cultural Center (2014), among other venues. She lives and works in Chicago.

The Courtyard Gallery is located inside the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center at The University of Texas at Austin and presents work by faculty and alumni of the Department of Art and Art History in the College of Fine Arts. The exhibitions are curated by Jade Walker, director of the department's Visual Arts Center.

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Gallery**

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The University of Texas at Austin
Art and Art History
College of Fine Arts