



Garden Party

ART

ROBBY MOORE



ABSTRACT

In *Garden Party*, artist Robby Moore uses print, ink, pen, fabric and discarded items to create artwork about memory and his identity as a Black Appalachian.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Robby Moore

robertmooreart@gmail.com

KEYWORDS:

memory; quilting;
Appalachian; Black; artist;
mixed media

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Moore, Robby. "Garden Party." *SPECTRA* 8, no. 2 (2021): pp. 1–3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/spectra.v8i2.175>



I am a 40-year-old, Black, Appalachian, mixed-media artist living and working in my small hometown. This means I appreciate nostalgia and progression. Most of my work is about memory in the sense that many of the themes are conceived from subconscious thought. Most of the subject matter in my work is distilled forms, keeping only the essential parts; this is how memory works. When I direct theatre productions, I compose the action of the play as if it were the composition of a painting. I think of my visual artwork as a short story, using the elements of art and principles of design to fashion strong images that create a lasting memory for the viewer. Art creates these memories, and that is my goal.

I'm deeply proud of my hometown, a place that has historically not favored my race or profession; and I most often lack the comfort in the physical presence of peers who share my traits. My identifiers affect my themes and the process of my work. They complement and resist each other: causing duality, discordance and leaving me in a nebulous middle ground where I can understand various sides and yet not fit neatly in any of them. So much of my time is spent educating my audience or defending my work that self-reflection is always incorporated into the work itself in some form.

I have an inherent need to be resourceful and not wasteful. I use Appalachian traditions (quilting, storytelling) and values (like saving and repurposing) as inspiration to comment on our modern existence. I find their intersection of practicality and adornment interesting. I am also inspired by incongruous juxtapositions, like the idea of using trash to make fine art. There is something subversive and gratifying in taking something that no one wants and exalting it to something collected and exhibited. I am obsessed with ephemera; I appreciate the beauty of something that was once useful and now is not. The act of saving it is useless, until some undetermined and unforeseen moment when it becomes invaluable.

Most of my media is found materials — paper, paint, ink, pencil, thread, and fabric. I primarily use common, often discarded, items to create my work. I use what I have to communicate the strange, triumphant, beautiful, and tragic things that I observe and experience in my daily life. I try to express, through my figures, the sadness and confidence that comes from the depth gained from thoughtfulness. My process often begins with practical choices like composition and design, and then it quickly yields to subconscious thought. After a series of impulsive, capricious and reckless choices, I revert back to an orderly state where I arrange and edit in an effort to tell a short visual story.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Robby was born and currently works in Beckley, West Virginia. He holds a B.A. from Concord University in Studio Arts with a concentration in painting concentration and a minor in Theatre. Moore began exhibiting artwork professionally in 1999. In 2004, he co-founded Treehouse Arts Ensemble, an arts organization dedicated to producing original fine and performing art in West Virginia, and he currently serves on the Board of Directors. He has curated art exhibitions across West Virginia and Ohio, many in unconventional spaces. Moore is also a professional theatrical director and has worked professionally as a scenic designer/artist, costumer, actor, technician and marionette puppeteer. From 2011 to 2016, he was a resident studio artist at TAMARACK: The Best of West Virginia, an arts facility in Beckley, WV, where he became a juried artist in 2008. Moore is also the Executive Director of the Beckley Art Center.

AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Robby Moore
Independent artist

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:
Moore, Robby. "Garden Party."
SPECTRA 8, no. 2 (2021):
pp. 1–3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/spectra.v8i2.175>

Submitted: 09 July 2021
Accepted: 09 July 2021
Published: 26 July 2021

COPYRIGHT:
© 2021 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

SPECTRA is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by VT Publishing.