

# Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, Features Works by Colin Quashie and Fahamu Pecou

The Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, is presenting two new exhibits including: *Colin Quashie: The Plantation (Plan-ta-shun)* and *Native Sun: Fahamu Pecou, 2009 to Now*, both on view through Jan. 11, 2013.

The Sumter County Gallery of Art is proud to present an important body of mixed media work by Colin Quashie. The works presented in *The Plantation (Plan-ta-shun)* explore the possibilities offered by seamlessly blending popular cultural imagery, media based communication and satire to investigate serious cultural, social, and political ideas and issues with sometimes raucous, scathing and tongue-in-cheek humor. Quashie addresses cultural issues using sarcasm intended to spark popular debate and discussion among his audience while challenging status-quo social and cultural assumptions. His works also often play upon various popular stereotypes and ridiculous irrational cultural assumptions in order to trigger an awareness of our personal limitations in understanding each other's daily life experiences.

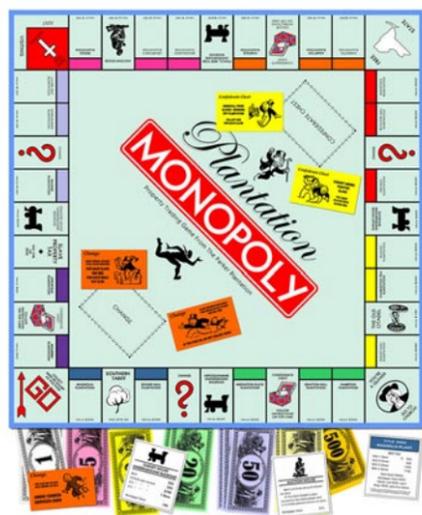


Work by Colin Quashie

Quashie states: "The Plantation is not about slavery. No one, black or white, wants to talk about slavery. Instead, the show deals with different aspects of plantation life, the pros and the cons. Ultimately, it is about the past and the present. He further observes: "Charleston is so much about the past. The South basically glorifies the past. As far as they're concerned, the past isn't the past. It's still the present. So that's what we market, that's what we sell, but we do it in a lot of different ways, and plantations are a mirror of that. Plantations are in the present, but they reflect the past, and depending on your sensibilities and the way you look at the plantation system tells a lot about what your sensibilities are."

Susan Cohen, writing in the March 28, 2012 edition of *Charleston City Paper* for the opening of *The Plantation (Plan-ta-shun)* at Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, notes: "Quashie's vision is nothing like the modern money shots of hanging moss and white weddings you'll see on decadent blogs or in a luxury magazine - his is harsher and truer to their dark history. For each new piece produced for the show, Quashie took a part of that past and connected it to something the audience will know from the present. There is a playable 'Plantation' Monopoly game (and Quashie hopes patrons play it). The familiar blue and green rectangles that signify the game's most expensive properties - Boardwalk and Park Place - have been replaced with Magnolia Plantation and Boone Hall. Mr. Moneybags is still a central character, rewarding players with \$100 if their slave mistress gives birth to mulatto twins. Instead of going directly to jail, you must pray for abolition in a Quaker church, and the railroad system is of the underground variety."

"It's the exact same game, except that everything has just been reconfigured," says Quashie, but certain adjustments have been made to reflect familiar Charleston landmarks and historical concepts. "I even rewrote all of the rules and everything like that. And of course, instead of hotels, once you get four slaves, you can buy yourself a mule to work on your plantation." Other pieces in the



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exhibition include Harriett Tubman's Twitter page and a wall sized prototype of the glossy *Plantation Digest* magazine complete with an editor's note, a page with a pull back crease offering a sample of Mandingo cologne and advertisements for Fledex and a multipage section for J. Crow Apparel which incorporates stark archival images of scarred backs (Look Solid With Stripes) and a lynching, (Black Tie Event?).

Cohen further elaborates: "But there is a softer side of the exhibition, both in meaning and in presentation, Large pieces in gentle colors, paintings that will temper the volume of Quashie's louder works."

"I realized I was kind of getting out there a little bit as far as the cynicism was concerned, and so I wanted to pull it back in, because the bottom line is I also wanted to talk about who were the real people who lived on these plantations," Quashie says. He found photographs of former slaves on the Library of Congress' website, and he wanted to make them larger in life. In one painting, a man poses in a slightly crumpled blue suit, a white beard decorating his tired face, his wife and home in shades of black-and-white behind him. The faint background is meant to represent the past. The colorful subject is the present.

Quashie was born in London, England (1963) and raised in the West Indies. At age six, his parents immigrated to the States and settled in Daytona Beach, FL. He briefly attended the University of Florida on a full academic scholarship and then joined the Navy as a submarine Sonarman. He has also worked as a comedy sketch writer on *Mad TV* and 6 other comedy series. He was an associate producer on an independent feature film and in 2001 received an Emmy award for documentary writing. He lives in Charleston, where he paints while developing work for television and freelancing as a graphic artist.

The Sumter County Gallery of Art is also excited to present an exhibition of work by Fahamu Pecou, an American painter, performer and video artist based in Atlanta, GA. His works utilizes self-portraiture to challenge and dissect society's representation of black masculinity in popular culture today - an early and ongoing ruse includes a series paintings featuring the covers of art magazines bearing his likeness - and how these images come to define black men across generational, geographical and economic boundaries.

Pecou states: "My work can be viewed as meditations on contemporary popular culture. I began my career experimenting with practices employed in contemporary branding strategies, particularly as they pertained to hip-hop music. These experiments ultimately led me to question not only the stereotypes that drive consumerism, fame, celebrity-worship etc., but how an unspoken racial and cultural divide often influenced these factors. I appear in my work not in an autobiographical sense, but as an allegory. My character becomes

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