

Georgia retrospective

Collection reflects state's colorful, creative history

By CATHERINE FOX
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No one would mistake the Georgia Council for the Arts for the Medici, but the fact is, between 1969 and 1990, the agency was a major patron of Georgia artists.

Gov. Carl Sanders got the ball rolling when he started the Art Bus, which carried works by Georgia artists to libraries and community centers around the state.

EXHIBIT REVIEW

"Selected Works: State of Georgia Art Collection"

Through June 5, 10
a.m.-5 p.m.

Tuesdays-Saturdays,
The Museum of
Contemporary Art of
Georgia, 1447
Peachtree St.
404-881-1109.

The verdict: Though not a survey, this show supplies a good bit of Georgia art history.

Between the art purchased for that program and its later acquisitions program, the council's collection numbered 600 by the time it stopped acquiring.

The bus rides again at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, where a selection of 46 paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and sculptures from the state's collection is on view.

The exhibition, curated by MOCA GA director Annette Cone-

Skelton, reprises a history of Georgia art, not by any means complete, but illuminating nonetheless. It includes, for example, work by an earlier generation of artists, many of them influential college professors who played an important role in the history of Georgia art. Joe Perrin, a fine colorist who marches his hues into intricate compositions of diagonal parallel lines, built the Georgia State University art department. His rival, the late Lamar Dodd, represented by a rather insipid abstraction and a dreamy and more engaging watercolor of

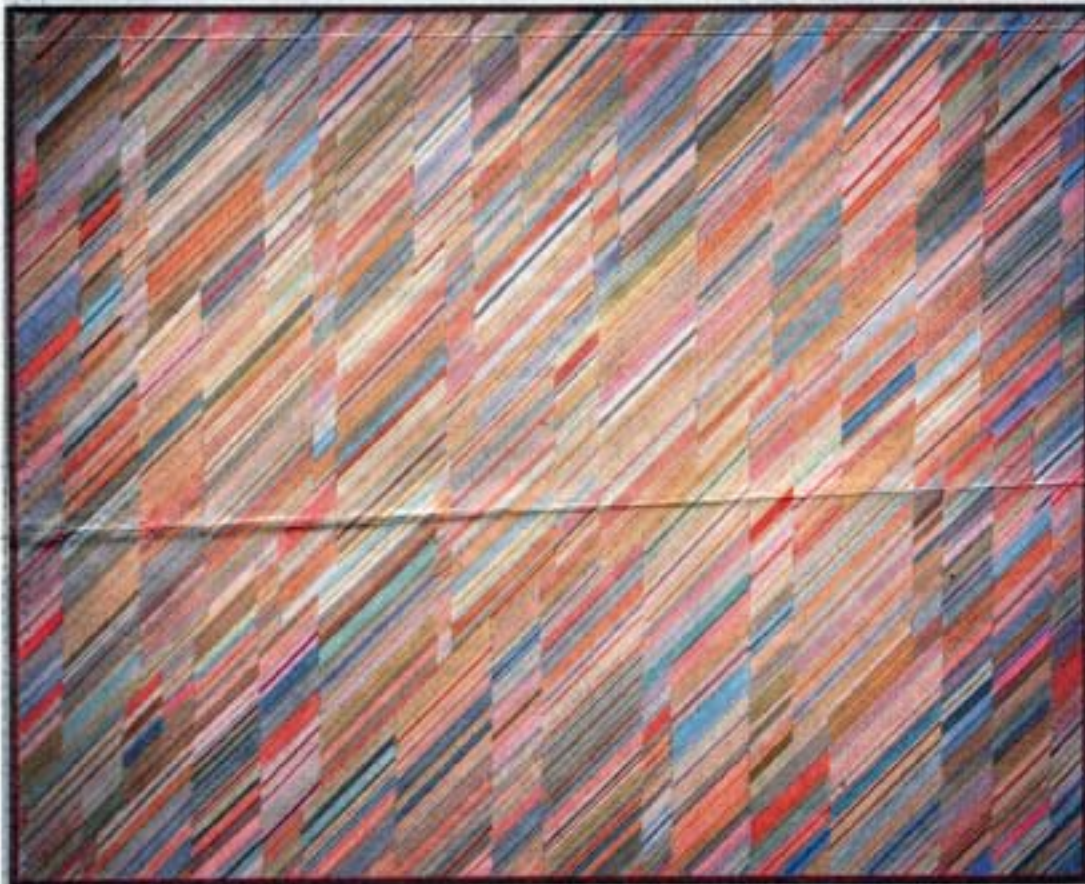
Venice, created an empire at the University of Georgia. The late Ed Ross, who begot a generation of minimalists at the Atlanta College of Art, is not particularly well-served by the two pieces here.

For longtime Atlantans, some of the art will spark a trip down memory lane. Ben Smith's bold monumental woodcut, visible through the front window, brought me back to the '70s, when one of his striking prints, a meticulous pencil portrait by Bruce Hatley and a Moulthrop bowl (both are also in the exhibition) were de rigueur in sophisticated households.

Cone-Skelton gives some coherence to a basically scattershot checklist by grouping works according to medium. The room of drawings is particularly strong, and it complements the High's show down the street. The angels on the heads of pins have nothing on "Ghost Image-Athens," a rare example of the late James Sitton's impossibly detailed "map" drawings. The drawing has a soulmate in Maurice Clifford's adjacent piece.

Fine art photography occupies a special place in Atlanta's history. The romance of the landscape presides over work by John McWilliams, Gary Super, Michael Reagan, Frank Hunter and Karekin Goekjian. Chip Simone's small black and white photo "Droplets on Screen" turns a mundane view of rain on a torn porch screen into an aesthetic moment.

The public doesn't have much opportunity to see this collection, which is housed in the Georgia Public Broadcasting headquarters. It was former Georgia Council executive director Betsy Baker who suggested the exhibition to MOCA GA. She picked the right place: The museum's mission to support Georgia artists continues the legacy the council began.



"Chroma" by Joe Perrin, an intricate colorist responsible for building the Georgia State University art department. Above right: Jennine Hough's 1977 watercolor, "Handmade by Chocolate Rag Muffins." A total of 46 works of art are included in the show.