



# Young Country: Rural Themes in Art

Curated by Maiza Hixson, 2011-2012

Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts Wilmington, DE

Salisbury University, Salisbury, Maryland

Quonset Hut, Louisville, KY

Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

# Young Country: Rural Themes in Art

## Artists:

Janine Harkleroad

Mel Chin

Richard Campbell

Suki Anderson

Marshall Harris

Joe Girandola

C. Grant Cox

Jeffrey Stockbridge

Matthew Weddington

Eric Abaka

Sarah Lyon

Cynthia Norton

Andrea Stanislav

SunTek Chung

Justin Beckman

Curated by Maiza Hixson

An exhibition devoted to rural themes in contemporary art, *Young Country* specifically examines how artists are re-defining ideas of “country” in America. Addressing how geographic regions shape identity, *Young Country* features artists who employ rural images and ideas such as horseracing, honkytonks, and homesteading. The exhibition probes our assumptions of taste, class and sophistication, and presents an alternative to common, Hollywood, and cliched portrayals of rural culture.

# SunTek Chung



# Cynthia Norton



# Andrea Stanislav



# Link to purchase Young Country catalog on Amazon

- <https://www.amazon.com/Young-Country-Maiza-Hixson/dp/1257885049>



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# Young Country at Rosenwald- Wolf

By [Libby](#) July 25, 2011

The exhibit Young Country at [UArts'](#) Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery is as slippery as its title. Are we talking deep South? The Wild West? Our dreams as a baby nation only 225 years old? Either way, we are talking about something American in the bone, a kind of iconic ur-culture exaggerated by movies and stereotypes to they point that they have become our reality of the imagination.





*Richard Campbell, Horses are Pretty, 2008 6*

*minute short film based on illustrated story*



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looking toward the west and south and piney woods as well as country artists gazing at the culture in which they find themselves immersed.

My favorite videos were Janine Harkleroad's *The Duel* and Richard Campbell's *Horses are Pretty*.



*Janine Harkleroad, The Duel. stop motion video, Annie Oakley's feet and skirt are visible right.*

Harkleroad's *The Duel* is a shoot-out between two life-size cut-out props, one representing Annie Oakley and one The Cowboy. The competition has feminist Annie shoot off her mouth as well as her piece, amid a quirky stage set that includes quilted backdrops and a mix of drawings and fabrics. Fun to look at, fun to

listen to. Plus the story goes contemporary



Pony-pink wig and an enormous swatch of Pony-pink pubic hair at the base of her belly and at times not much else, in a send-up that plays with pre-teen girls' obsession with real studly steeds and grown boy sex fantasies of nurses in and out of uniform. Yet somehow the end product is not so much dirty as funny and pleasantly odd.



*Mel Chin, Rough Rider, 2001 barbed wire, steel*



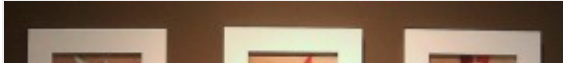
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*Marshall Harris, Saddle Sketch #1,  
detail, 2011 graphite on mylar*

Speaking of steeds, the show saddles up twice—with Mel Chin’s Rough Rider, a saddle beautifully crafted of barbed wire and steel (ouch; for cowpokes no doubt), and with Marshall Harris’ tour-de-force graphite on mylar drawing, Saddle Sketch, notable for turning the leather embossing into a romantic Wild West landscape. The contrast between the two is worth some thinking.



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*Suki Anderson Mr. Nibbles Likes to Wear Hats, 2011, 9 digital photographic metallic prints; these are maybe 8 inches each.*



*Joseph Girandola, Horse Sense (Father and Son), 2008 duct tape on canvas; 81.5 x 89.5 inches*

In Philadelphia artist Joe Girandola's duct-tape on canvas portrait of a horse watching a televised horse race, the monumental beast of a horse is a humanized and sad creature, tamed in the stable. And humanized animals sporting

ridiculous hat fashions in Suki Anderson's



just a little creepy with suggestions of lives of enslavement and bondage for our four-footed friends.



*C. Grant Cox, Tense Negotiations*

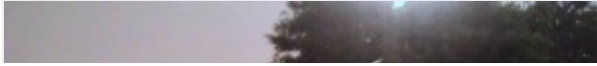
For another fashion statement and then some, C. Grant Cox's *Tense Negotiations* is a gizmo with stomping cowboy boots, disembodied but still dancing their way in (or out) of the Long Branch Saloon and their not drunk on sarsaparilla. It delights at the same time that it iconifies something already iconic—all those heroic and villainous characters who live and die in their boots in a century of Hollywood

oaters. This is a show with lots of boots



*Jeffrey Stockbridge, Country, 2011*

The only shot in a photo by Philadelphia photographer Jeffrey Stockbridge is from a syringe, suggesting a drug-infused slow death in contemporary rural life. The show does get beyond the conventions of cowboys, and spends a little time on the farm and in the woods, North and South. I loved the Matthew Weddington's conceptual road sign, too.



*Matthew Weddington, Landmark, 2003,  
Cibachrome print*

The show has barns, a still, rope, and other country conventions to poke. I'm not so sure the show achieves a new definition of what "country" means, but it's having an awfully good time playing with the old definitions, and moving the art conversation out of New York.

The show's 22 artists come from around the country, and [Delaware Center for Contemporary Art](#) Curator Maiza Hixson said she hopes to travel the show some more. For now, it opened in Louisville, and came here. The next venue is still in the planning stage. This is DCCA's first ever "satellite" show, a DCCA-curated show especially for off-site exhibition.

**Young Country**  
**Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery**  
**333 S. Broad Street**

to July 29



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