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AMOA-Arthouse



Jeff Williams, installation image of the exhibition Texas Prize 2012.*

Texas Prize 2012: Jamal Cyrus, Will Henry, and Jeff Williams

May 5–July 22, 2012

AMOA-Arthouse

The Jones Center
700 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
www.amoa-arthouse.org

AMOA-Arthouse is thrilled to name Jeff Williams as the 2012 recipient of the Texas Prize, an ongoing program highlighting talented, under-recognized professional artists working in the Lone Star State. An internationally respected jury selected Austin-based Williams from among three finalists—Williams, Jamal Cyrus, and Will Henry—vying for the revered prize in an exhibition of new work at the museum's Jones Center location. The winner was announced at a private event on the evening of May 18, 2012. The 30,000 USD prize is the nation's largest regional visual arts award specifically honoring emerging artists.

With his selection, Williams joins the esteemed ranks of the two previous Texas Prize winners:

Eileen Maxson (2005) and Katrina Moorhead (2007), each of whom has since developed a noteworthy presence on the international art stage.

“The members of the jury would like to congratulate all of the finalists,” the jurors explained in a joint statement, “each of whom produced an impressive and surprising body of new work for the Texas Prize exhibition. Although the decision was not unanimous, the majority of the jury felt that Jeff Williams was the most deserving of this year’s prize. Williams’ work deployed a fascinating range of materials and chemicals to activate subtle transformations in the space of the gallery. His installation was remarkable for the way in which it addressed the complex geographical and architectural history of the exhibition site and used an inventive sculptural approach to mark intersecting and distinct measures of time.”

In site-specific installations heavily reliant upon construction techniques, Williams reveals the history latent within a particular place and structure. Of interest to Williams is the narrative told by a building’s architecture, and his techniques often add to or subtract from the very fiber of a site in order to reveal the story at its core.

Williams’ mixed media, site-responsive Texas Prize installation is in close dialogue with the architecture of the Jones Center’s Second Floor Gallery, drawing attention to the elements that change and sculpt our built environment. Chemical solutions slowly degrade Central Texas fossils on weathered Plexiglas sheets resting upon the gallery floor, evidence of some unexplained laboratory experiment or manufacturing process. Videos suspended from the ceiling examine masonry blocks from the original exterior wall of the Jones Center, while liquid sacs evoke gravity and decay as they drip at an undetectably slow pace down the surface of the interior dividing wall. Williams’ work inspires a sensory experience of the gallery, engaging our senses of sight, touch, and smell to consider the effects of time and atmosphere on materials. The temporal installation promises to be dynamic, constantly evolving over the course of the exhibition itself before its inevitable end.

The Texas Prize celebrates Texas-based artists who have made significant, innovative contributions to the state’s contemporary art scene. Originally presented every two years, the Texas Prize is now a triennial award. Eligible artists must have resided in Texas for the past three years and not had a solo show at a major museum. Inclusion in the Texas Prize exhibition involves publication in a full-color catalogue and the chance to win the coveted Texas Prize itself.

The 2012 Texas Prize jurors included Bill Arning, Director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Gary Carrion-Murayari, Associate Curator, New Museum, New York; Philipp Kaiser, Director, Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Katrina Moorhead, 2007 Arthouse Texas Prize Recipient; and Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, Director and Chief Curator, Aspen Art Museum.

For the Texas Prize exhibition, fellow Texas Prize contender Jamal Cyrus designed his own stage and sculptures for improvisational, jazz-inspired sound performances, while Will Henry populated the Jones Center First Floor Gallery with surreal, stylized landscapes infused with humorous nods to Southwestern iconography and culture. The three finalists’ work will remain on view in the Texas Prize exhibition through July 22, 2012 at the museum’s Jones Center location at 700 Congress Avenue in downtown Austin.

*Image above:

Jeff Williams, installation image of the exhibition Texas Prize 2012, courtesy of the artist.

