

For Immediate Release**BEN DURHAM*****Doubling and Doubt***

March 5 – April 4, 2015

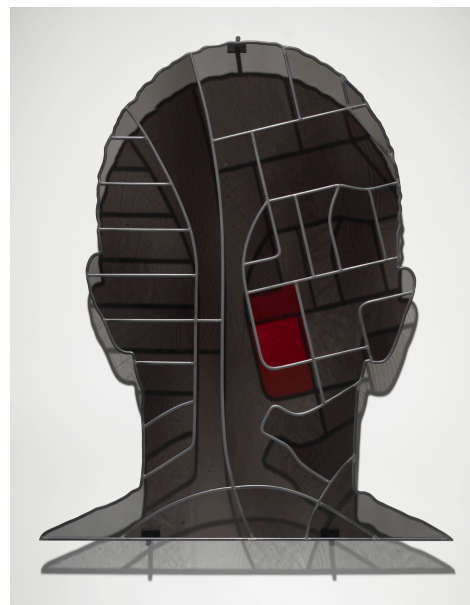
Opening Reception for the Artist

Thursday, March 5

7 – 9 pm

Gallery Talk

Thursday, March 26, 7 pm



*Hunter (Summerhill Drive)*, 2013  
Stained glass, 38 x 32 x 3 inches

Reynolds Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of works by Ben Durham entitled *Doubling and Doubt*. The exhibition opens with a reception for the artist on Thursday, March 5, and continues through April 4, 2015. This exhibition is Durham's second solo show at Reynolds Gallery. Durham will give a gallery talk on Thursday, March 26, at 7 pm.

Diptychs, doubles, and layered forms function both visually and conceptually in these bodies of work to reveal the territory between images, where forms are mirrored and oppositions merged. Here, repetition does not provide more information or a clearer perspective, but instead creates a sense of ambivalence and irresolution. Durham approaches mark making as a physical and performative act, a repetitive and irreversible process without erasure. Like speech, the artist's process "is a stammer, a fabric that frays as it knits itself together."<sup>1</sup>

In much of the work, imagery is not drawn but sculpted into the surface of handmade paper. In the *Street Glyph* and *Map Diptych* works, scar-like ridges create linear diagrams that collapse distinctions between systems of cartography and written language. Maps of neighborhoods, housing projects, and suburban cul-de-sacs from Durham's hometown are cropped to form a portrait silhouette like the delineation of a territory's outer boundary. These silhouettes are based on official mug shots of Durham's childhood friends and classmates who, as adults, were arrested on these same streets. This visual intersection of place, personal history, and crime transforms these portraits and maps into hieroglyphic abstractions impossible to identify, follow, or translate.

In the *Graffiti Form* and *Graffiti Monochrome* works, graffiti collected from the neighborhoods depicted in the *Street Glyph* and *Map Diptych* works is layered to create a further disruption of these ordered sites. Although seemingly in contrast, the graffiti is presented as analogous to the studied plans that comprise our neighborhoods and cities. The graffiti artist, urban planner, and architect each reveal the atavistic impulse to refigure our world and mark our place.

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (New York City: Hill and Wang, 1987), 309

Equal parts portrait and map, the *Stained Glass Silhouettes* act as personal topographies further linking our understanding of identity and place. In each stained glass work, a mug shot silhouette is intersected by a grid of lead lines depicting the streets where the arrest took place. A single, luminous pane of red glass marks the location of confrontation where the arrest was made or the crime committed.

Portraiture, mapmaking, and stained glass have all been used throughout history to represent and maintain systems of power and influence. Durham's works, however, depict portraits drained of representation and maps without landmarks or street-names, their functions of recognition, orientation, and order stripped away. By blurring the lines between these heavily controlled systems of understanding each other and the world around us, Durham visualizes an iconography of systemization characterized by mistrust and profound uncertainty. Binding institutional power and individual impulse, these armatures of identity and place reveal the fault lines running through both.

Durham lives and works in Richmond, Virginia. He is originally from Lexington, Kentucky, and received his BFA from Washington University in St. Louis. He has held solo exhibitions at Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York; Country Club at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago; and Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles. His work has been exhibited in many group exhibitions at the Smithsonian Museum's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Flag Art Foundation, New York; and 21c Museum locations in Bentonville, Cincinnati, and Louisville. Durham is included in numerous significant public collections including the Flag Art Foundation and the Whitney Museum of American Art, both New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

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