



Butch Anthony: Art, Nature, and Intertwangleism

Butch Anthony: Art, Nature, and Intertwangleism explores the prolific career of artist Butch Anthony, a contemporary, self-taught artist with a keen eye for assembling objects and art in unique compositions. Telling the stories of the American way of life, this exhibition includes clever installations that showcase the artist's interest in fine art and design and showcase his habit of collecting objects found in nature, like bones, insects, shells, and other artifacts.

The artist's work reflects the influences of his upbringing in the deep rural South and illustrates an abiding interest in the processes of the natural environment. At the age of fourteen, Anthony built a one-room log cabin, which became a shop for his many creations. As his skills developed, he began to build and fashion furniture, sculpture, and other works of art. He wasn't educated at art school but on the land around Alabama, where he hunted animals, had his own taxidermy business, and famously dug up a *Mosasaurus vertebrae* in the creek. Anthony would often draw pictures of local people who lived around his hometown of Seale, Alabama, using whatever materials he had available.

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Voyage of the Beagle, 2019, Canvas, oil paint, taxidermy, old drawers, books, barnacles, shells, animal bones

In 1994, after his friend and neighbor John Henry Toney plowed up a turnip that looked like it had a human face on it, Anthony suggested that Toney draw a picture of it and take it to a local junk shop. It sold for \$50. Anthony decided to sell his work, too. As interest in his work increased, his designs became more elaborate, often incorporating objects that had been discarded as trash. This would be the beginning of what would become his signature style called “Intertwangelism”, a way that the artist categorizes and illustrates his way of assembling art, design, and objects from nature. (Inter = to mix, twangle = a distinctive way of speaking, thinking, behaving, assessing, and ism = a theory.)

The foundation of Anthony’s work is an exploration of materials, including found and recycled objects as his primary media. He utilizes several techniques in his work - including painting, mixed media collage, large-scale sculpture, and embroidery - pushing the boundaries of found materials into new inventions. Anthony relies on specific components including bones, veins, muscles, nerves, skin and clothing, shadow and light, movement and spirit.

Butch Anthony: Art, Nature, and Intertwangleism features recent works by artist Butch Anthony, including the nineteenth century Intertwangled portraits he’s most known for, assemblages and sculptures, a site-specific cabinet of curiosity, and paintings of appropriated images featuring Anthony’s signature skeleton and embroidery work and coupled with objects from the artist’s personal collections. Images found throughout this exhibition speak to the tradition of folk art, but place Anthony firmly in the canon of contemporary, fine art.

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Wall of Intertwangles, 2000-19, 1800's portraits, paint, mixed media



Wall of Intertwangles (detail), 2000-19, 1800's portraits, paint, mixed media

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Adam and Eve, 2018, Cow bones, wire, canvas, paint, found objects



Wall of Intertwangles (detail), 2000-19, 1800's portraits, paint, mixed media

Exploring themes of identity and illustrating stories that he's collected in journals for decades; Anthony's practice includes painting skeletons on top of antique portraits that he finds in antique stores or yard sales. He tells unique tales and folklore in his *Wall of Intertwangles* by illustrating the stories and sayings he overhears from locals and travelers alike. Most recently, his work has become increasingly more complex, utilizing large scale sculpture and installation like his site-specific piece *Cabinet of Curiosities*. His assemblages are imaginative and are strengthened in context of the rest of his oeuvre, including examples like *Voyage of the Beagle* and *Portrait of John James Audubon*. The individual elements of the artist's work become more elaborate with the addition of bones and insects, artifacts, and shadow boxes that give voice to the conceptual prowess of Anthony's ideas.

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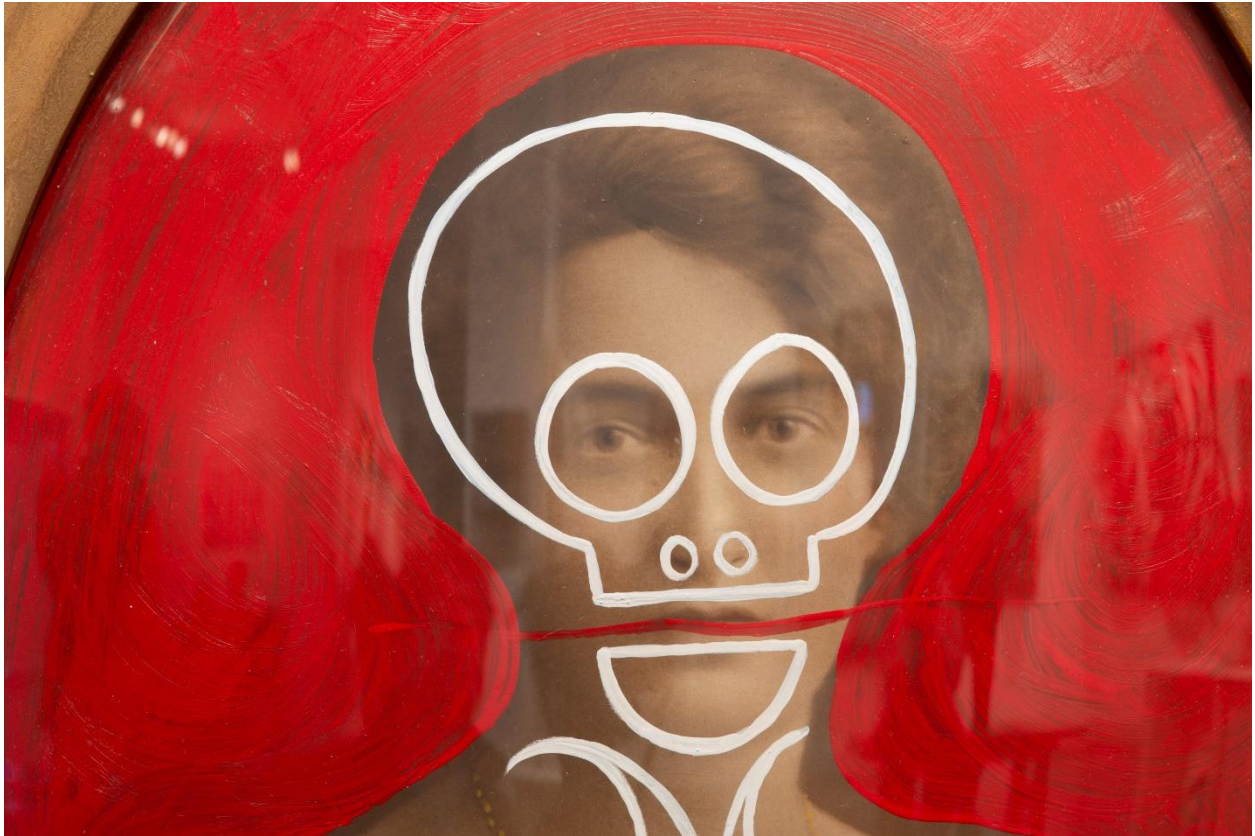


Cabinet of Curiosities, 2019, Bedsprings, pallets, taxidermy, beaver sticks, animal bones, shells, mirrors, old drawers



Installation view at Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, 2019

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Wall of Intertwangles (detail), 2000-19, 1800's portraits, paint, mixed media

Specifications

Number of works

17 large scale works, including one site-specific installation

Exhibition components

Digital files for text panels and labels

Organized by

Museum of Wonder, Seale, Alabama

Requirements

Moderate security, 200 linear feet

Fee

\$5,000, plus shipping and artist expenses for on-site installation

Shipping

Lending institution makes arrangements and pays costs associated with shipping

Education material

Artist will give a gallery talk

Booking Time

8 weeks

Availability

Through 2024

Contact

Jennifer Donaldson, Director
director@museumofwonder.com

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Cabinet of Curiosities (detail), 2019

Anthony is also the founder and creator of several roadside attractions, most notably the *Museum of Wonder*, a modern-day cabinet of curiosities filled with art, artifacts, and found or gifted objects including the world's largest gallstone and an actual footprint from Sasquatch. Featured on the television show *American Pickers*, Anthony's studio is located here, and the *Museum of Wonder* serves as inspiration for one of the signature pieces of this traveling exhibition. He also built *The World's First Drive Thru Museum* out of shipping containers. It sits off U.S. Hwy 431 in Seale, Alabama and exhibits a rotating display of Anthony's handcrafted designs and curiosities. The artist built the home he lives in, and he runs the *Possum Trot*, a barbeque restaurant-turned-junk auction house. His original designs and compositions are acclaimed both regionally and internationally.

Storytelling, sarcasm and wit, and contemporary commentary are central to Anthony's work. This exhibition brings together the artist's painting and portraiture work, assemblages and site-specific installations that are both creative and timely. The materials in his work provide physical and conceptual layers to Anthony's artwork and showcase the important influence of his upbringing and natural environment in creating a body of work deserving of its place in American art history.

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Butch Anthony in Seale, Alabama, image courtesy Wiregrass Museum of Art

Butch Anthony is a contemporary, self-taught artist, maker, and collector of objects and antiques. Born in Pensacola, Florida in 1963, the artist grew up on his family's 80-acre property in Seale Alabama, where he lives and works today in a home he built by hand. He is the creator of the internationally recognized attractions including the *Museum of Wonder*, *The World's First Drive Thru Museum*, and *The Possum Trot*, where his artwork can be admired and purchased by passersby.

In the early 1990's Anthony's started creating art using various media and techniques, crafting them into one-of-a-kind-masterpieces. Throughout a career spanning decade, the artist has created a specific genre of work he calls "Intertwangleism", an ism of his own creation. Anthony attended Auburn University In the mid 1980's, where he studied zoology, geology, and biology. While there, he enrolled in a comparative anatomy class that he would later attribute to the use of veins and bones in his art.

Anthony's original designs and compositions are acclaimed both regionally and internationally. His work has been featured in solo, group, and juried exhibitions across the United States and abroad in venues such as the Akron Museum of Art (Akron, Ohio), Wiregrass Museum of Art (Dothan, Alabama), Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art (Charleston, South Carolina), and the Black Rat Project (London, England). He has been featured on the television series *American Pickers* and his work in publications including *The New York Times*, *Garden and Gun*, and *Hyperallergic*. Anthony was included in *Alabama Creates: 200 Years of Art and Artists*, a book which showcases master artists from the state.

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Illustrated Checklist



Voyage of the Beagle, 2019

Canvas, oil paint, taxidermy, old drawers, books, barnacles, shells, animal bones
Approx. 130" (H) x 237" (W) x 80" (D)



Adam and Eve, 2018

Cow bones, wire, canvas, paint, found objects
Approx. 48" (H) x 77" (W) x 16" (D)

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Red-Headed Woodpecker, 2018

Cow bones, wire canvas, paint, bird feathers
Approx. 48" (H) x 74" (W) x 16" (D)



All work and No Play, 2017

1800's gentleman's cabinet, cut up books, seashells, fossils, mirrors, insects, animal bones
Approx. 120" (H) x 45" (W) x 21" (D)

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Portrait of John James Audubon, 2019

Canvas, oil paint, old furniture, taxidermy, bird feathers, insects, bird nests, old wooden drawers
Approx. 122" (H) x 138" (W) x 59" (D)



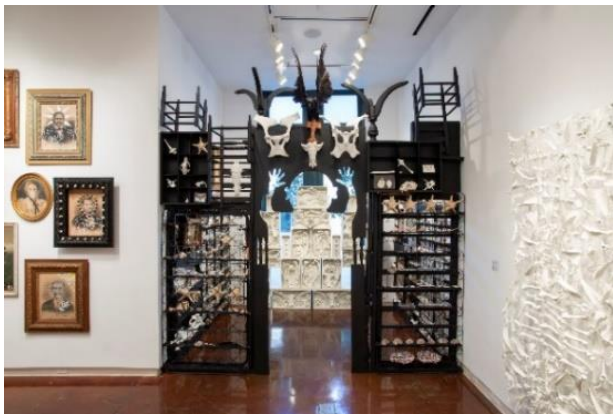
Ossification, The Bone Quilt, 2019

Animal bones, wire, paint
Approx. 84" (H) x 84" (W)

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Wall of Intertwangles, 2000-19
1800's portraits, paint, mixed media
Approx. 120" (H) x 420" (W)



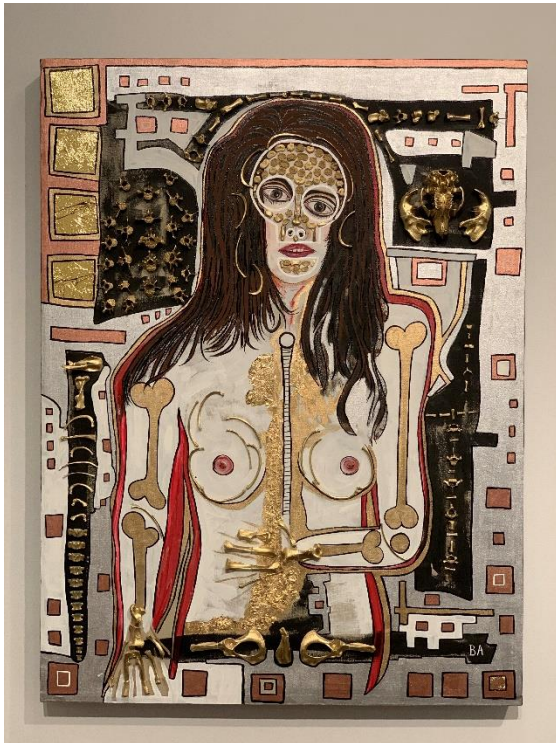
Cabinet of Curiosities, 2019
Bedsprings, pallets, taxidermy, beaver sticks, animal bones, shells, mirrors, old drawers
Approx. 8' (H) x 8' (W) x 8' (D)
**site-specific, possibility of increasing size of installation*

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Portrait of Johnny Parker, 2019

Old drawers, cow, bones, white paint, wire
Approx. 88" (H) x 120" (W) x 12" (D)



Beaver Girl, 2019

Beaver bones, Canvas, oil pain, thread, gold leaf
Approx. 48" (H) x 12" (W) x 4" (D)

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Abstract Intertwangleism, 2019

Plywood, tile adhesive, animal bones, wire, gold leaf
Approx. 48" (H) x 152" (W) x 5" (D)



An Inordinate Fondness for Sounds, 2019

Canvas, latex paint, old suitcase, piano keys, cow bones, records, metronome, fossil, magnifying glass
Approx. 90" (H) x 134" (W) x 18" (D)

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The Holy Grail, 2008

Cow rib bones, steel, wire, hay bale twine, strapping
Approx. 25" (H) x 24" (W)



Minotaur, 2019

Log cabin wood, jaw bones, bike handlebars, old chicken house tin, wire
Approx. 18" (H) x 21" (W) x 20" (D)

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Pygocentrus butchii, 2008

Shark jaws, butter churn lid, wire, old coffee pot, steel
Approx. 22" (H) x 20" (W) x 4" (D)



Frogs are Wet, Toads are Dry, 2019

Cow bones, old porch rails, wire
Approx. 32" (H) x 36" (W) x 22" (D)



You dropped a Bomb on me, Baby, 2016

Old 1800's portrait, glass, wire, glue, mirror pieces
30" (H) x 26" (W) x 14" (D)