

**Wignall Museum**  
Chaffey College  
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www.chaffey.edu/wignall

**Hours of Operation:**  
Monday, Thursday and Friday: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Tuesday and Wednesday: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.  
Closed: Sundays and holidays

**ADMISSION:** Admission is free and open to the public.  
Donations are gladly accepted.

**PARKING:** Purchase permits in parking lot vending machines  
for \$2 or pick up a guest parking permit available at the Wignall.

# MAMMYGRAPHS

Mark Steven Greenfield

# TRICK BABY

Ernest Arthur Bryant III

August 25 – September 27, 2008



Activity &  
Exhibition Guide



The Wignall Museum and Gallery is dedicated to presenting innovative exhibitions and programs that reflect the scope and diversity of the art of our time. A vital component of the academic and cultural life of the Chaffey Community College District, the Wignall aspires to engage broad and diverse audiences, create a sense of community, and provide a place for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion of contemporary art and the questions that shape and inspire us as individuals, cultures, and communities.

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Mark Steven Greenfield

# TRICK BABY

Ernest Arthur Bryant III



Curated by Rebecca Trawick

for the Wignall Museum at Chaffey College

August 25 – September 27, 2008



## Activity & Exhibition Guide

Written, conceived and designed by  
Rebecca Trawick and Denise Johnson © 2008

Chaffey College Lithography Department  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

**Books available at the Wignall for browsing:**

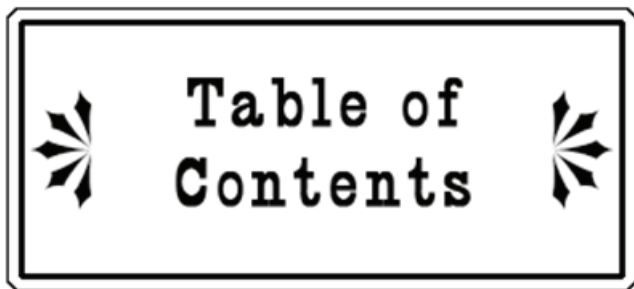
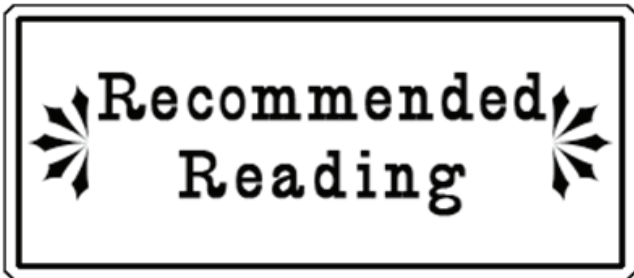
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Online Sources

Mark Steven Greenfield	<a href="http://www.markstevengreenfield.com">www.markstevengreenfield.com</a>
<b>Blackface Totally Explained</b>	<a href="http://blackfacetotallyexplained.com/">blackfacetotallyexplained.com/</a>
<b>Broad Territories</b>	<a href="http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/exhibitions/broadterritories/greenfield.html">www.cmp.ucr.edu/exhibitions/broadterritories/greenfield.html</a>
<b>The Legacy of Blackface</b>	<a href="http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1919122">www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1919122</a>
<b>Stephen Foster</b>	<a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/foster/index.html">www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/foster/index.html</a>
Ernest Arthur Bryant III	<a href="http://www.angelfire.com/art/bryant/">www.angelfire.com/art/bryant/</a>
<b>Artist Stitches Together Cultures</b>	<a href="http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2007/10/08/artiststitches-togethercultures/">minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2007/10/08/artiststitches-togethercultures/</a>
<b>Iceberg Slim</b>	<a href="http://www.popsubculture.com/pop/bio_project/iceberg_slim.html">www.popsubculture.com/pop/bio_project/iceberg_slim.html</a>

**Cover image:**

Mark Steven Greenfield, Portrait of Jason White, from *Incognegro* series, 2006, C-print, 20 x 50 inches



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Nadell, Martha Jane. **Enter the New Negroes: Images of Race in American Culture.** Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Ramano, Renee C. and Leigh Raiford. **The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory.** Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006.

Smiley, Tavis. **The Covenant with Black America.** Chicago: Third World Press, 2006.


Strausbaugh, John. **Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture.** New York: Penguin, 2006.

Stubblefield, Anna. **Ethics Along the Color Line.** Ithaca: Cornell University, 2005.


Van Deburg, William L. **Hoodlums: Black Villains and Social Bandits in American Life.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

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# About the Exhibition



*Mammygraphs* features photographs and sculptural works by LA-based artist Mark Steven Greenfield. Greenfield's work appropriates historic images from the

heyday of blackface minstrelsy. With this provocative selection of images and objects, Greenfield prompts the viewer to consider the effect this history has on our culture today. *Mammygraphs* surveys the work created over the last ten years of Greenfield's illustrious career as a visual artist and includes work from Greenfield's *Blackatcha*, *Post Minstrel*, *Incognegro* series, as well as new, never-before exhibited work from *Mammygraphs*.

In *Trick Baby*, Minneapolis-based artist Ernest Arthur Bryant III weaves race, politics, pop culture and art history into his mixed-media assemblages. Utilizing found clothing remnants, hand painted portraits, graffiti and sewn elements, Bryant's works challenge the cultural constructions and coding that we take for granted and that shape our social interactions. Borrowing the title from Iceberg Slim's book *Trick Baby*, this is the first California exhibition of Bryant's work.

Greenberg & Bryant will speak about their work on **Tuesday, September 2 from 6:00-7:00 p.m.** at the Wignall. Immediately following will be an artists' reception with light refreshments and entertainment featuring dj Trickmilla.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Aaron and Jason Christophe White of In Tha Cut Productions will perform *The Dance: The History of American Minstrelsy* on **Monday, September 15 from 7 to 9 pm** in the Chaffey College Theater. Before the presentation, a lecture about minstrelsy will be given in Wargin Hall 142 **from 12:30 to 2 pm**. Both events are FREE and open to the public. These presentations are generously co-sponsored by AMAN/AWOMAN, Human Resources, Language Arts and the School of Visual, Performing & Communication Arts.

Look up the terms listed below in the "Useful Terminology" section of this guide. For each term, identify at least one work in the exhibition that takes that term into consideration or provides a critique of it.

Next, write a brief explanation of the link you find between the work and the term.



# Terminology Link



## Title of Relevant Work & Explanation of Link

Farce

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Assemblage

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Blaxploitation

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Lampoon

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Grffiti

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Satire

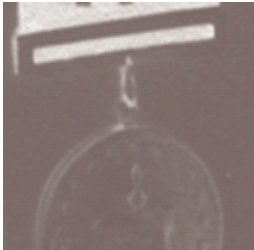
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Lenticular print

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Darky Icon

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As you view the exhibition it may be helpful to consider the following questions.

## Questions to Consider

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Both Greenfield and Bryant confront the idea of "authenticity" as it particularly relates to the African-American identity and community, but by utilizing different strategies and approaches. Describe the general methods used by these artists to provide a critique of race and racism. Consider what methods they share and how their approaches differ.

Connections are often made between contemporary hip-hop culture and Greenfield's critique of minstrelsy. Explain why the artist uses historic imagery to comment on contemporary perceptions of race. Also consider how Bryant might also be questioning African-American culture with his use of found materials. What possible critiques of race do Greenfield's and Bryant's works provide?

In the postmodern era identity is considered to be a construct - it is not believed to be necessarily "inborn," "natural" or "innate," but is instead believed to have been learned, assumed, presumed and embraced by the individual. Consider this idea in relation to Bryant's work. What identities are constructed through his assemblages? What do the materials, imagery, textures, colors and decorative details say about the imagined wearer/s of these found constructions?

The Congolese Nkisi figure in Bryant's interactive piece, *Self-Medication*, is ironic in that it represents what western viewers consider to be "authentic," "traditional" African art yet its aesthetic (the way it looks) has been strongly influenced by western tastes. Such objects often have no monetary value to the people who make them but are much sought by western consumers as souvenirs and artifacts. How does Bryant address this circumstance in the work? What further commentary does the interactive piece provide?

Much of the imagery that Greenfield's and Bryant's critiques are based on is decidedly racist, stereotypical, hurtful and problematic. Consider your personal dialogue when confronted with these works. What were your gut reactions? Do you think that the artists intended to prompt those emotional responses in their viewers? What benefit might the artists have hoped to gain from that experience?

Consider your own identity by describing who you are and the person you believe yourself to be. What methods do you employ to communicate your sense of self to others? How do you know these things to be true? How do you present an "authentic" likeness of yourself to the world at large? Does your "authentic" self change according to your situation or context? In other words, what aspects of your "real" self do you share with your friends, your family, your classmates, your instructors, your boss or to strangers?

While racism is generally considered abhorrent in postmodern society, consider whether there are any circumstances under which racism is accepted and goes without question. Are you aware of any stereotypes that may not be perceived as harmful, and that may even be embraced by the group to which they are applied? If so, explain why we might be comfortable with some forms of racist stereotypes and not others? What are your personal limits when it comes to race? What do you perceive are society's limitations on racism? Do you think that your own identity/ race and experience of racism (or lack thereof) influence your point of view?

Viewers often assume that there are personal reasons for an artist choosing to make work on a particular subject or concerning a specific theme. What personal factors may have influenced Greenfield and Bryant to have made the works in this exhibition? Are any (a few, or perhaps all) of the works an attempt at catharsis, or healing wounds? Identify specific details in the works that inform your decision.

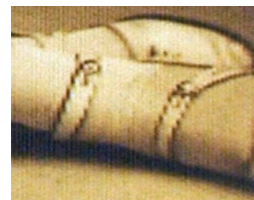
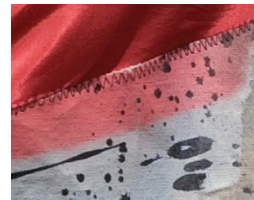
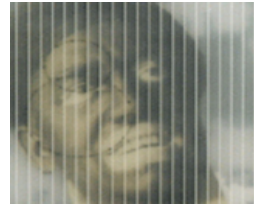
Both artists in the exhibition borrow liberally from a wide assortment of sources – pop culture, the streets, and art history to name a few. Consider why the artists would be interested in blending such disparate sources. Could they be critiquing more than race? If so, what other questions do their works ask?



Each of the snippets below provides a detail of one of the works in the exhibition. Locate the work that each snippet was taken from in the gallery and write its title on the line next to the appropriate image.



**Title of Work**



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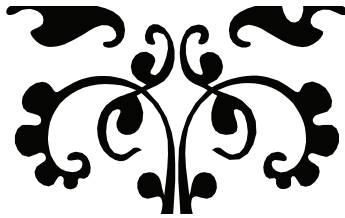
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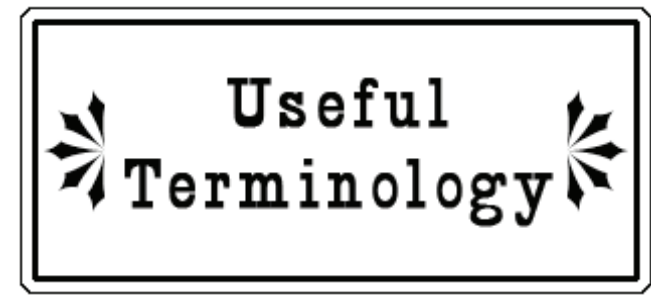
**Synchronous Sound:** Refers to film industry standard since the birth of sound pictures and *The Jazz Singer* (1929) to record sound at the time of filming.

**Trick Baby:** Novel by Iceberg Slim, 1967. *Trick Baby* features a bi-racial child, the offspring of a trick (prostitute) and a “john”, and how he tries to navigate life on the streets and negotiate this non-traditional family structure. In 1973 *Trick Baby* was adapted as a “blaxploitation” film directed by Larry Yust.

**Vaudeville:** Theatrical entertainment consisting of a number of short, individual performances, acts, or mixed numbers, as by comedians, singers, dancers, acrobats, and magicians. A popular, often satirical song.



The following terms may be useful in building an understanding of the images, materials and strategies employed by Mark Steven Greenfield and Ernest Arthur Bryant in their work.



**Abolition:** The legal prohibition and ending of slavery in the United States, the act of abolishing a system or practice.

**Abolitionist:** A person who advocated or supported the abolition of slavery in the United States.

**Al Jolson:** Called “the world’s greatest entertainer” at the time of his death in 1950, Jolson starred in *The Jazz Singer* (1929) in which he dons blackface.

**Antebellum:** Belonging to the period or existing before the war. The term particularly refers to the American Civil war.

**Assemblage:** A sculptural technique of organizing or composing a group of unrelated and often fragmentary or discarded objects; a work of art produced by this technique.

**Bamboozled:** To take in by elaborate means of deceit; to hoodwink.

**Bigot:** A person who is intolerant of differences such as race, creed or religion.

**Blackface:** Makeup for a conventionalized comic travesty of black people, especially in a minstrel show, often made of burnt cork.

**Blaxploitation:** A genre of American film from the 1970’s featuring black actors in lead roles and often having anti-establishment plots and featured funk and soul soundtracks. The genre is often accused of glorifying violence and stereotypes regarding race.

**Darky Icon:** A character with exaggerated features like googly-eyes, inky skin, voluminous red lips and bright white teeth that was used extensively in American cartoons, children’s literature, toys, advertisements and consumer goods until the 1980s.

**Derogatory:** Disparaging, belittling, uncomplimentary.

**Discrimination:** Treatment based on class or category rather than individual merit; prejudice.

**Eurocentric:** Considering Europe and Europeans as focal to world culture, history, economics, etc.

**Farce:** A dramatic production in which satire and slapstick are utilized.

**Folly:** Foolishness or absurdity.

**Graffiti:** Markings that are drawn, written, spray-painted, painted on a public area such as a building exterior, a sidewalk or a subway car.

**Hoodwink:** To deceive or trick; conceal one's true motives.

**Iceberg Slim:** Slim, also known as Robert Beck and born Robert Lee Maupin (1918-1992) was an African-American author of urban fiction. Born in abject poverty, Beck spent much of his life as a pimp who landed in and out of correctional institutions. In about 1961 Beck moved to Los Angeles, quit drugs, reconciled with his dying mother and retired from street life. After marrying and selling insecticide for four years, he was encouraged to write his autobiography, *Pimp: The Story of My Life* (1967). A controversial success, Beck wrote the book in three months. Selling more than eight million copies, Beck became one of the best-selling African-American authors, after Alex Haley. He went on to write seven more novels. His influences are evident today with popular actors and musicians such as Dave Chappelle, Ice-T, Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, Jay-Z and others who've paid homage in various ways to the author.

**Interlocutor:** A performer who is staged in the middle of a line of blackface performers in a minstrel troupe, which acts as the announcer and banter with the end men.

**"Jim Crow":** The systematic practice of segregation or discriminating against blacks. The term is also used as a disparaging term to identify a black person. Originally the name of a black minstrel character in a popular song-and-dance act, from a T.D. Rice song that appeared in 1928.

**Lampoon:** A virulent satire directed against an individual or institution; a work of art or literature that severely ridicules the character of an individual or institution.

**Lenticular print:** Works that combine two or more images with a lenticular lens to create a 3D effect or to present alternate images that appear to transform into each other; the effect produced an illusion of depth and movement as you view the image from changing angles.

**Mammy:** An offensive term used to describe a black woman who had the care of white children in the Southern United States.

**Minstrel Show:** A popular comic variety show of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries developed in the U.S. featuring comic dialogue, song, and dance to highly conventionalized patterns, performed by a troupe of actors. Traditionally the shows would include two "end men," and a chorus in blackface and an interlocutor.

**Multiculturalism:** Of, or relating to several different cultures.

**Oppression:** The assertion of power or authority in a cruel or unjust manner, excessive use or abuse of power.

**Pickaninny:** Derogatory term referring to black children or caricatures of them.

**Racism:** Hatred or intolerance of another race or other races; discriminatory behavior towards members of another race.

**Pop culture:** Generally accepted cultural patterns that are widespread within contemporary lifestyle.

**Postmodernism:** The name for many stylistic reactions to, and developments from, modernism. Postmodern style is often characterized by eclecticism, digression, collage, pastiche, and irony. Postmodern art is seen as a reversal of well-established modernist systems, such as the roles of artist vs. audience, seriousness vs. play, or high culture vs. kitsch.

**Prejudice:** An unfavorable opinion or feeling formed without knowledge, thought, or reason.

**Provocative:** To Provoke; stimulating discussion or exciting controversy.

**Sambo:** A derogatory term used to signify a black male. Prior to WWII the term was used without conscious racism. After the war it fell from polite conversation and became the racist term we know it as today.

**Satire:** The use of sarcasm or caustic wit used to attack folly.

**Serigraph:** A print made by the silkscreen process; a print made using a stencil process in which an images or design is superimposed on a very fine mesh screen and printing ink is squeegeed onto the printing surface through the area of the screen that is not covered by the stencil.

**Slapstick:** A broad farcical comedy characterized by physical comedy and crude practical jokes.

**Stereotypes:** An oversimplified conception, opinion, or image.

