

ART NOTES

BY CATHERINE D. ANSPON

Outsider Insider: It often seems the outsider artist has the greatest insight. That's certainly the case at **Kirk Hopper Fine Art**, where Hopper and gallery director **Giovanni Valderas** organize "Margins Beyond: Self-Taught" (through February 11). Dallas Art Fair co-founder **Chris Byrne** and Houston-based independent scholar **Jay Wehnert** guest curate.

At Kirk Hopper, treasures are culled from living and historical outsiders including **Forrest Bess**, the late bait fisherman of Bay City whose diminutive abstractions were the subject of a traveling exhibition organized by The Menil Collection in 2013; **Ike Morgan**, a one-time patient at the Austin State Hospital who's obsessed with U.S. presidents (what would he think of our 45th?); **Rev. Johnnie Swearingen**, who captured the African-American experience in rural Texas with great imagination and vigor; and New Zealand-based **Susan Te Kahurangi King**, an artist of power and persuasion who often employs deft cartoon-based imagery to decipher the universe.

Seed Pods to Underground Railroad: Speaking of the cosmos, in the galactically titled "Quarks and Quasars," Dallas-based environmental artist **Rachel Muldez** serves up a solo at **Oak Cliff Cultural Center** (through February 24). Muldez is the ultimate nature lady; the Richland College adjunct professor, trained as a ceramicist, is known for her nuanced sculptural installations informed by the quiet, direct beauty of the plant and animal kingdom. Seeds, sprouts, cocoons, and nests gathered from daily nature walks comprise the materials of her practice ... Another exhibition demanding close contemplation employs photography to examine a under-known chapter from the Civil War — the Underground Railroad, the secret network of safe houses and abolitionists who shepherded slaves to freedom and refuge in the Northern U.S. or Canada. Concurrent with the release of a profound book filled with her photographs on this subject — *Through Darkness to Light: Seeking Freedom on the Underground Railroad* (Princeton Architectural

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND THE MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH



Press, \$40) — **Jeanine Michna-Bales** comes to **Photographs Do Not Bend Gallery**, signing volumes and exhibiting images (opening/book signing Saturday, February 18; exhibition through April 15). The photographer, based in Dallas, garnered the 2016 Documentarian of the American South Collection Award from Duke University for this decade-long project, which traversed 1,400 miles and was mostly photographed on foot, in the depth on the night.

Geo + Abstract: Two exhibitions showcase coast-to-coast septuagenarian American masters who are emblematic of the power of abstraction and assemblage. At the **Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth**, Venice Biennale-exhibited **Stanley Whitney** — also a headliner during Art Basel Miami Beach — exhibits paintings spanning the monumental and the intimate scales, recalling the refrains of jazz notes via rhythmic bars of repeated color sequences (through April 2) ... At newly



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND BIVINS GALLERY

unveiled **Bivins Gallery**, sited in a prime spot amidst the Hotel Crescent Court complex, gallerists **Karen** and **Michael Bivins** open with a stable heavy on California talents. This month, the spotlight shines on **Robert Hudson**, a museum-collected (MOMA and Whitney to Hirshhorn and de Young) San Francisco sculptor. Hudson creates lyrical post-modern assemblages and some very powerful paintings on paper invoking Jungian symbols (February 18 – March 25).

Above, from left:

Stanley Whitney's *One Day*, 2016, at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Robert Hudson's *Red Spiral*, 2010, at Bivins Gallery

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