

# CYNTHIA · REEVES

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## DAWN BLACK: INCITEMENTS OF FOLLY



CYNTHIA-REEVES @ 1315 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA  
APRIL 4 - MAY 3

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## Press Release

CYNTHIA-REEVES Opens Incitements of Folly,  
Dawn Black's Latest Conversation on the Dynamics of Power

(New England, New York, San Francisco) -- CYNTHIA-REEVES opens Incitements of Folly, a new exhibition of socially poignant paintings by Baton Rouge artist, Dawn Black. The exhibition takes a candid look at the personifications of “folly” within the broader context of Black’s primary themes: dynamics and imbalances of power; the constructs of identity and self awareness; and, depictions of the socially absurd. This exhibition marks the artist’s third solo exhibition with the gallery, and features four newly completed paintings paired with a selection of earlier, seminal works, including examples of her powerful Conceal Project series. The artist’s reception is on Saturday, April 4 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at 1315 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA.

Unlike Black’s iconic portraits, Folly’s Burden departs from her deft use of negative space; here, she covers the entire surface in an array of celestial jewel tones and, in the center of this nighttime tableau, she places a stark and singular figure. Folly, perched tenuously in the cradle of a crescent moon, carries the symbol of justice on her slight shoulders. Her cultural identity, while masked, is suggested by the headscarf – Lady Justice re-imagined as a messenger from a tumultuous cloudscape that has no solid ground, no footing. The image is inspired by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s opera, The Magic Flute, specifically, the Queen of the Night – a Queen who is magically cast out into the eternal night.

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The watercolor, *Truth's Weight*, reflects on three very separate and disparate personalities. Black's central figure, a peasant in traditional South American garb, is walking away from the viewer. Faceless and nameless, the peasant struggles to carry the manifestations of a dissolute culture far removed from his own reality. The two women perched on the scales illustrate cultural perceptions of accepted female beauty. On the left, idealized youth, with fetishized accessories, parted lips and eyes that engage her viewer head on. The figure on the right is gender ambiguous, wearing an inflatable female "dancer fat suit" costume, yet with a masculine unshaven face. Above this mute drama floats a feather, an ancient Egyptian symbol of the afterlife. It was understood that before one's soul may reach true paradise, *The Field of Reeds*, one's heart was weighed against Ma'at, the feather of truth. Only souls weighing less than the feather were permitted entry to the sacred Field of Reeds, the Ancient World's symbol of judgment.

In *Muse and Mistress*, one of the more ambitiously sized paintings on view, Black continues her exploration of opposing influences. Here, the central figure is a young, gaped tooth woman with wide, dark eyes. Cloaked in a puritanical white cape are two smaller, clandestine figures clinging to her neck. Angel and devil, the figures are by no means stereotypical. On the left, typically the position held by the personification of good, the angel is a haggard and visibly distraught skeleton outlined in yellow. The figure on the right, typically the devil, is masked entirely in a black bodysuit, with its implied sexual connotations. Black draws inspiration from the traditional floats of *Mardi Gras* in Mobile, Alabama, where the clandestine dark figure, Death, is ultimately defeated by Folly, adorned in shimmer and flashy colors, as they chase one another around a "broken column of life".

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The inspiration for the Wonder Wheel comes from a Life Magazine image of water toys designed in the 1980's. The inflatable, human-scale hamster wheel requires quick eye-hand coordination. The blindfolded figure, a female hostage, is a commentary on the absurdity of it all — a “human” hamster wheel, improbably floating in midair, defying gravity. Black pairs this with the ironic image of a young child defiantly holding a sign with Gloria Steinem's feminist mantra, “We Shall Overcome”.

Dawn Black's award winning thesis, Conceal Project, was recently on view at The Columbus Museum in Georgia, (2012), followed by subsequent traveling exhibitions with the Museum of Paper and Watermark in Fabriano, Italy (2013); Fundacion Pedro Cano, Blanca, Spain (2012); Weatherspoon Museum, Greenboro, North Carolina (2013); and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA (2013). Black received an MFA in Painting and Sculpture in 2001 from the University of Iowa, and has been awarded several prestigious residencies around the country; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, McColl Center for the Arts, Lawndale Arts Center, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Her work has been profiled in Art Papers, Art in America, New American Paintings, The Washington, and The Advocate.

For further information on Dawn Black, please visit the online gallery at [cynthia-reeves.com](http://cynthia-reeves.com) or contact us at 212 714 0044. Please note that the gallery at 1315 Mass MoCA Way is open on Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. and by appointment.

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Folly's Burden, 2015, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 12" x 13 1/2"



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Folly's Burden, 2015, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 12" x 13 1/2", detail

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Muse and Mistress, 2015, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 46" x 35"

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Truth's Weight, 2015, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 46" x 35"



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Wonder Wheel, 2015, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 50" x 35"

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Conceal Project Grid 242, 2013, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, each panel 7 1/2" x 5 1/2"

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Dominion, 2014, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 35 3/4" x 33"

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Our Blood, 2011, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 28 1/2" x 22"



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Shack Bullies, 2012, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 18" x 24"



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Sirens Song, 2011, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 50" x 74"

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Teenage Blues, 2012, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 15" x 22"

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The Three Ages of Woman, 2010, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper

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Tribunal, 2009, watercolor, ink, and gouache on paper, 22" x 28"

# CYNTHIA - REEVES

## DAWN BLACK

### EDUCATION

- 2001 Masters of Fine Arts / Painting & Sculpture, University of Iowa School of Art & Art History, Iowa City, IA
- 2000 Printmaking Studio Summer Program, Scoula di Graphica, Venice, Italy
- 1997 Bachelor of Fine Arts / Painting, Louisiana State University School of Art, Baton Rouge, LA

### SELECT SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 Dominion, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2013 Commentary on History, Castle Gallery, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY
- 2012 Conceal Project, Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA  
The Magic Foxhole, Curator's Office, Washington, DC  
Work on Paper Biennial, Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, NC  
Summer Salon, Get This! Gallery, Atlanta, GA  
Folly's Garden, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA  
Solo Mujeres, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2011 Dawn Black, CYNTHIA-REEVES New England, Hanover, NH  
Sleepless Eyes, Fulcrum Gallery, Columbus State University, Columbus, OH
- 2009 Conceal Project, Curator's Office, Washington, DC
- 2007 Paintings by Dawn Black & Lori Larusso, Chesapeake Art Gallery, Bel Air, MD  
Veils and Lamentations, City Arts Gallery, CCSF, SF, CA
- 2005 Interlaced, Kunstoffice, Berlin, Germany  
Black and Gold, Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, LA  
H-Hour, Oculus Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2001 Trust the Pyro Techies, Eve Drewelowe Gallery, Iowa City, IA  
Iron Folds, Bryon Burford Gallery, Iowa City, IA
- 2000 Whatever You Love You Are, Byron Burford Gallery, Iowa City, IA

### SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Louisiana Contemporary, The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA  
Art Miami, CYNTHIA-REEVES, Miami, FL  
Volta NY, CYNTHIA-REEVES, New York, NY  
PULSE New York, CYNTHIA-REEVES, New York, NY  
Art13 London, CYNTHIA-REEVES, London, UK



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- Marche d'Acqua, MCF Biennial, Paper and Watermark Museum, Fabriano, Italy  
(traveling exhibition)  
Solo Mujeres, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Work on Paper Biennial, Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, NC  
Marche d'Acqua, Paper and Watermark Museum, Fabriano, Italy  
Solo Mujeres, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2011 Decadence, LSU School of Art Glassel Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA  
AIR Exhibition, McColl Center for the Arts, Charlotte, NC
- 2010 Round Four, Lawndale Center for the Arts, Houston, TX  
New Members, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA  
Creature Comforts, Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2009 Beyond Appearances, Lehman Gallery, CUNY, Bronx, NY  
Summer Dock, Curator's Office, Washington, DC  
MASKED, Studio 33, Baltimore, MD
- 2008 Self Evident: Contemporary American Self-Portraiture, MSU, Morehead, KY
- 2007 Faculty Show, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA  
Combined Talents, Florida State University Museum of Art, Tallahassee, FL  
TVAA National, Irving Arts Center, Irving, TX, Juror: Andrea Karnes, Curator, Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art  
Transgressions, Reynolds Gallery, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA
- 2006 Bay Area Annual, Sanchez Art Center, Pacifica, CA, Juror: Karen Kienzle, Curator of Exhibits and Collections, de Saisset Museum, SCU  
Faculty Show, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA  
3rd Annual National Juried Exhibition, Novato Art Center, Novato, CA, Juror: Frances McCormack, Professor, San Francisco Art Institute  
Pretty Girls & Robots, Upstate Artists Guild, Albany, NY
- 2005 Faculty Show, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA  
Fresh Greens, Shaw Center for the Arts, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2004 No Dead Artists, Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, LA  
Blue, Louisiana State University Art Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA  
Storytellers, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA  
White Light Night, Red Shoes Center, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2003 Endless Summer, LSU Art Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2002 MFA Thesis Show, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA  
Midwest Ticket, Gallery 119, Chicago, IL
- 2001 Vertebrates are Strong, Linn Street Gallery, Iowa City, IA  
Summer Painting, Mandala, Oxford, IA  
The Big Show, Checkered Space, Iowa City, IA
- 2000 Appendage, Eve Drewelowe Gallery, Iowa City, IA  
Science Fair, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA

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## COLLECTIONS

2012 Paper and Watermark Museum, Fabriano, Italy  
Columbus Art Museum, Columbus, GA

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

2013 Grand Prize, Louisiana Contemporary, The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA  
2012 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant Nominee  
Honorable Mention, Marche d'Acqua, Paper and Watermark Museum, Fabriano, Italy  
Louisiana Division of the Arts, Career Advancement Grant  
2011 Louisiana Division of the Arts, Creative Capital Workshop Grant  
2007 Exhibition Honorarium, Transgressions, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA  
2006 3rd Place Award, Northern Art League of California, Novato, CA  
00-01 Madison Scholarship, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA  
Teaching Fellowship, University of Iowa, IA

## ARTIST RESIDENCIES

2012 Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE  
2011 Visiting Artist/Scholar Program, Columbus State University, Columbus, GA  
McColl Center for Visual Arts, Charlotte, NC  
2009 Lawndale Art Center, Houston, TX  
Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Nebraska City, NE (alternate)

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