

Quadrennial: Greater Decatur at Dalton Gallery strikes a balance

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Jonathan Bouknight, *Forever Young*, 2010, video still, total run time 7:30 minutes. Image courtesy the artist and Dalton Gallery.

I recently visited Agnes Scott College's [Dalton Gallery](#) for the first time to see the current show, *Quadrennial: Greater Decatur (QGDD 2010)*. *QGD* features an aesthetically varied selection of eight artists from the Greater Decatur area working in various media including video, painting, photography, and sculpture. Despite the geographic proximity of the curated artists, no clear thematic parallels or patterns connect them into a collective viewing.



Photo courtesy Dalton Gallery.

While lack of cohesion is often a prelude to a confusing group show, *QGD* benefits from the clear distinctions between the artists. Each artist's work is displayed in its own, mostly enclosed space within the gallery, which by its very design encourages isolated viewing in each of its rooms.



Matt Haffner, *Between 2 Worlds*, 2010, installation view, cut paper, paint, and video, room-sized installation, 15 x 32 x 10 feet. Photo credit T.W. Meyer; courtesy Dalton Gallery.

In particular **Matt Haffner**'s video installation, *Between 2 Worlds* feels more at

home within this controlled space than at *Convergent Frequencies*, when it was presented on the side of a shipping crate during an outdoor performance. Here, as the air conditioning hummed ambiently, I could settle into a closer viewing and clearly hear the subtleties and movements of the sound design. Male gazes will likely enjoy the video segment featuring a mysterious lady in a checkered dress who appears ephemerally between clips. Visuals include shots of industrial power lines and closeups of skin so extreme you can make out individual follicles. The camera's gaze zooms in until details disappear and, symbolically, desire is frustrated by impermanence.

Mark Brotherton's mixed-media paintings first introduce themselves as maps or puzzles replete with written clues and messages, but no clear solutions arise. One is left with words as visual tropes, vaguely recognizable icons, and melting lumps of color.



Jonathan Bouknight, various works, installation view. Still photography: Cher Series No. 1-11, 2010, digital archival prints, 11 x 17 inches each. Video: *Forever Young*, 2010, run time 7:30 minutes. Photo by T.W. Meyer; courtesy Dalton Gallery.

Jonathan Bouknight's *Forever Young* questions gender construction using photography, video, and painting within the context of a room-sized installation. A dark, brazen sense of humor and impropriety runs through this work, enabling a

less defensive, almost comical viewing of queer subject matter.

Taken as appetizer-sized samples of each artist's work, *Quadrennial: Greater Decatur* is well worth the visit.

*The exhibition Quadrennial: Greater Decatur continues at **Dalton Gallery** of Agnes Scott College through November 21.*