

**Black Tide**

an installation by Candice Ivy

October 5 - November 23, 2007

Opening reception: Friday, October 6, 2007 5:30 - 8:00 PM

**Laconia Gallery**

433 Harrison Avenue

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“Black Tide”, a three channel video and sound installation and two mural sized drawings by Candice Ivy, brings the rural South to the South End. For the last few years, Ivy has been filming her immediate family and their friends in and around the small towns they inhabit in the Carolinas. The comfort that her family feels about her using a camera around them is tangible, allowing a strange “hidden camera” feeling of discovery to saturate all of her recent immersive installations.

In the Laconia gallery space, the two large wall projections of furrowed fields that speed by on either side of the viewer ( like looking out of a car window) create a dynamic central space where the narrative’s main drama unfolds. These images also carry us to somewhere else, effectively defining a distance to the far away place that the artist takes us to. In the main frame—a floor to ceiling image with sound—pans across a backyard of meager means which comes jarringly to life with the aggressive lunge and loud bark of a Pit Bull. The looped image is filmed at point blank range, and as the shock slowly abates we are left with the somber reality of a fenced in dog. The maligned breed, known mostly for fighting, is surrounded by narrative clues. A bare-chested twenty-something male working oblivious to the camera is seated in his yard. The house is nice, but seems modest, the birds are singing, the yard fairly neat. The details complicate the obvious stereotypes at work, undermining some of the quick assumptions we make about people of a certain income level or from a certain place, just like the things we assume about dogs of a certain breed, and reinforcing others.

In the Laconia lobby, adjacent to the gallery, two giant wall drawings in charcoal on vellum fill the gallery wall space with the choking intensity of that invasive Southern vine: Kudzu. This visual / botanical quicksand fills the gallery with a gestural energy that creates the same beautiful but impending mortality that gives the exhibit such arresting power.

The delicate use of black and white in “Black Tide” reminds us that some things have not changed in the deep south (and lots of other rural areas) for a long time. The vintage feel of the super 8 footage, shot near Ivy’s family’s home in South Carolina, effortlessly generates nostalgia and sympathy in equal measure. The uneasy feelings conjured up get to the heart of America’s dirty secret: We would rather avoid and/or forget everyone that looks poor—they are the reality that spoils the proud, well rehearsed “American Dream”. But the way Ivy paints this picture is empathetic and authentic. The artist puts us there and makes us see the beauty and the rough edges of what a whole bunch of people across the country call home. Candice Ivy can take us to places like this precisely because she is not judgmental—she can see, and wants us to see, beyond the stereotypes. She recognizes and relays the complexities and contradictions of these settings with loops of footage that make the “feel” of that place and her connection to it primary—a very different approach than a documentary with its “objective distance” and detachment creates. This specificity allows all of the associations to unfold and wrap around viewers like the powerful, rhythmic songs of cicadas on a warm summer evening.