

The Guide

Louisville's Guide to Arts, Shopping & Dining

performance art – art in which works in any of a variety of media are executed premeditated before a live audience. Although this might appear to be theater, theatrical performances present illusions of events, while performance art presents actual events as art.

LIVE – A Series of Performance Works by Louisville Artists, took place this past winter at the Louisville Visual Art Association's Water Tower gallery on River Road, with "One Nation Under God: Operation Whitewash" by Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway; and "Pulidora—Polishing Machine" by Cynthia Norton, followed by "the Hierophant" by Michelle Amos. More LIVE series are in the works.



Photos: Paula Ahrens

ONE NATION UNDER GOD: OPERATION WHITEWASH Aron Conaway and Hallie Jones

Exploring the possibilities that arise when merging art and socio/geo-politics, *One Nation Under God: Operation Whitewash* was created and performed by artists Aron Conaway and Hallie Jones to accompany their installation titled *Operation Shock and Awe*. Ten 80 lb. bags of military radar-scattering desert/snow camouflage were hung to envelope the inside of the LVAA's Watertower. Ten white countries covered in white rocks and a black and white version of the American flag were installed on the gallery's floor. A deployment of toy army soldiers painted solid white conquered and guarded each country. Zip lock bags containing two army men and a handy wipe were handed out with the intention of inviting the audience to play war and then wash their hands of the situation.

During the live performance, video featuring images of diverse cultures from around the world was projected onto a large global map. Corporate logos were slowly spliced in and progressively came to dominate the video. Conaway and Jones attached white puppet strings to each other's limbs. They used white paint to "whitewash" their bodies and then the map of the globe. They then saluted a projection of the modified American flag while a trumpet player performed taps from the back of the room. The audience stood in silence as the artists fell... dead. Finally, two additional performers (one African and one of Indian decent)

entered the scene to cut the puppet strings and wake the whitewashed

couple, proclaiming "Wake up, its time to fight!" As images of revolution and social upheaval flooded the whitewashed map, the performers awoke and began scrubbing the white paint off of their bodies and the map. The artists then turned and confronted the audience with an inviting gaze.

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