

(as the balloons used to create the paper machete forms shrink, there is a distinct crick cracking of the paper and glue to be heard) His vocabulary of color, form and sound creates a lexicon of agency that becomes a communication base for the people's movement. Honor, dignity, respect and humility saturate this sculpted form just as the sun's rays penetrate a summer's day. The gift of abstraction explodes the mendacity of "realistic" expression, lending lever after lever for the conceptual hand to grasp and continue the work of defining truth; understanding the importance of the audiences' work as equal to the work of the artist.

The direction of Art is like a compass. Its authenticity comes from our ability to recognize and own it as a tool, a radar, our secret code that links and unites us in the historic struggle for life. Franky Laude adds another block to the foundation of our cultural offensive to grow and bend this world toward justice.

The Ice Box Project Space, Crane Arts Building is located at:  
1400 N American Street.

The exhibit *From Taboo to Icon : Africanist Turnabout* is ongoing until  
February 10

The curators are Sophie Sanders and Shervone Neckles

# Franky Laude

## ***Going Back Home***

**From Taboo to Icon : Africanist Turnabout**  
**on going at the**  
**Ice Box Project Space, Crane Arts**  
**Philadelphia**

Review by Paul Meaye



Franky Laude starts on the ground with the sun. An artist with a firm grip on the tools of human relationship, his art articulates reality on every plane. The installation *Going Back Home* rocks the ship of state, upsetting the balance of myth and illusion that keeps that state afloat.

Just as Vincent van Gogh disturbed the 19th century vision of a separate bourgeois truth and exposed the beauty and order of the common peoples reality; Franky Laude upsets the sentimental contrivance of ruling class hegemony by exposing the vessels of the peoples revolt in the same glorious sun soaked yellows that served van Gogh's pallet. Adroitly setting the context firmly on the earth the artist manufactures an



intimately accessible metaphor for the volcanic accomplishments of human progress with paper machete, balloons and pigment.

Laude's and revolutionary origins spring from the same well,

the nation state island of Haiti. Birthplace of the victorious spirit of oppressed peoples truth, Haiti informs every march toward progress our species makes.

A water container, food basket, musical instrument, hunting disguise and cradle, the utility of the fruit husk represented here bears witness to the industrial efficiency and fertility of the people. Franky Laude's paper gourds inhale the breath of youthful revolt and creativity, produced by collective generations, carrying their precious cargo forward into the twenty-first century struggle for justice and truth.

Fruit of the calabash tree, rooted in the soil of mother earth, these gourds are collected together as a reservoir of reservoirs. Soaked in the yellow sun drenched invincibility of our soul, this sculpture becomes a ready tool for actualization and collective utility. The orbital forms, detailed with creases and folds of surface texture, are gathered together as we gather ourselves, sensing an energy that is pooling, coalescing, uniting and building to a crescendo of hurricane force change agency.

This activity is invisible to the opportunistic seekers of leisure class status. They see only a mass of odd shaped spheres without significance. In this way these weapons of mass construction infiltrate the sanitized 'green zone' of status quo futility (the museum space), laying the groundwork for the manufacturing of munitions necessary to sustain a peoples army. Laude uses a disciplined methodical approach by exploiting his childhood experiences in the Haitian countryside to cultivate a crop of artifacts lethal to the status quo and readied for use by an alert audience.