

wednesday, 2 march, bentonville,arkansas

not gonna even talk about the metro snafu from last night. did finally get to the airport in time, but just barely.



downtown mural

staying at a small airbnb house close to the old downtown. bottle of nice red wine waiting for me, and some butterscotch candy. empty lot on one side of the house, new boxy condos on the other, and a torn up street in front. construction everywhere. everywhere. as you move farther away from old downtown, you see more blocks of boxy, modern buildings. closer to town, you see old houses like the one i'm in (poured concrete ranch house) right next to brand new mcmanions. gives the place a super weird vibe — seems that they're trying to maintain the kitschy old sam walton town square while modernizing everything around it. offset by interesting art everywhere you look.

walked around until time to pick up my bike at 10am. did you know arkansas is the 'mountain bike capital of the world'? and this bike shop had tons of mountain bikes. i got my basic model and biked over to trails south of Crystal Bridges museum. the surrounding forest is an outdoor museum, with tons of sculptures.



Maman by Louise Bourgeois. Her mom as a friendly, protective spider.



Narcissus Garden by Yayoi Kusama. little mirror balls.



Three People on Four Benches by George Segal. Have always loved his work. Even though figures sit together, they face away from each other. Kinda look like paper mâché, but they're bronze.



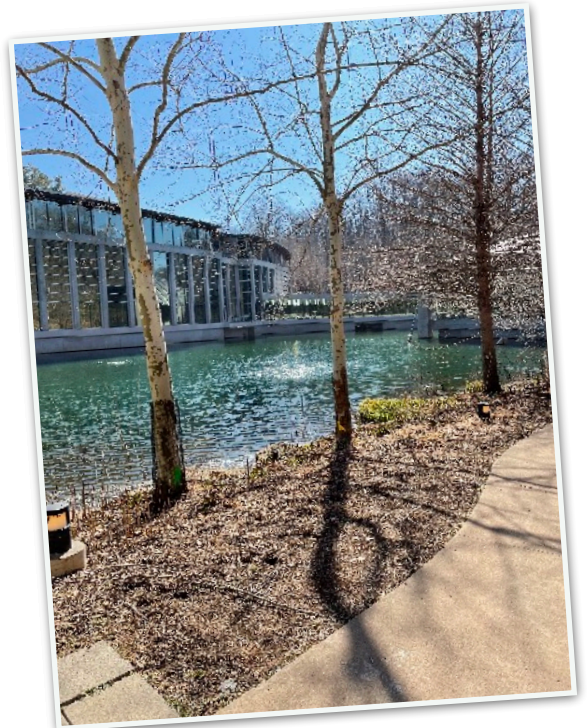
Crystal Bridges has quite a few pieces by Chihuly, both inside and out. *Turquoise Reeds* and *Ozark Fiori* stand out, especially among the winterized grounds.

also, beautiful sculptural design for the building itself. CB opened 10 years ago, designed by Moshe Safdie to fit in the Ozark forest, paid for by one of the Walmart kids. it's quite a place. somewhat surprised that the collection and curators pay such close attention to women, people of color, and indigenous artists. neat that piece descriptions point out the art's import while also discussing problems with the artist or the limits of a particular vision.



(stock photo)

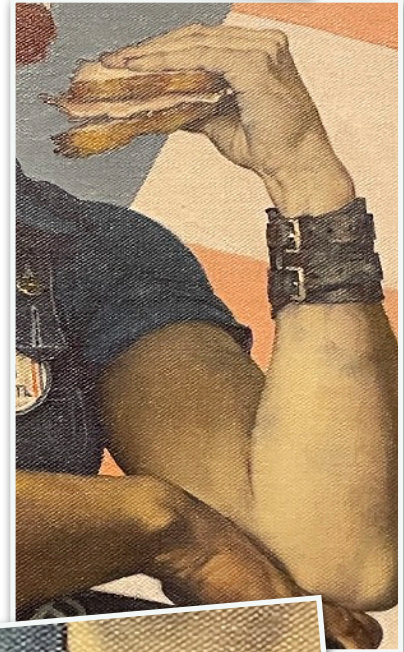
WARNING: the next 13 pages are basically me holding forth on art. just my own interpretation, with which you may or mayn't (why is this not a widely used variation? in this case, i stand by my decision, as satch would say) agree.



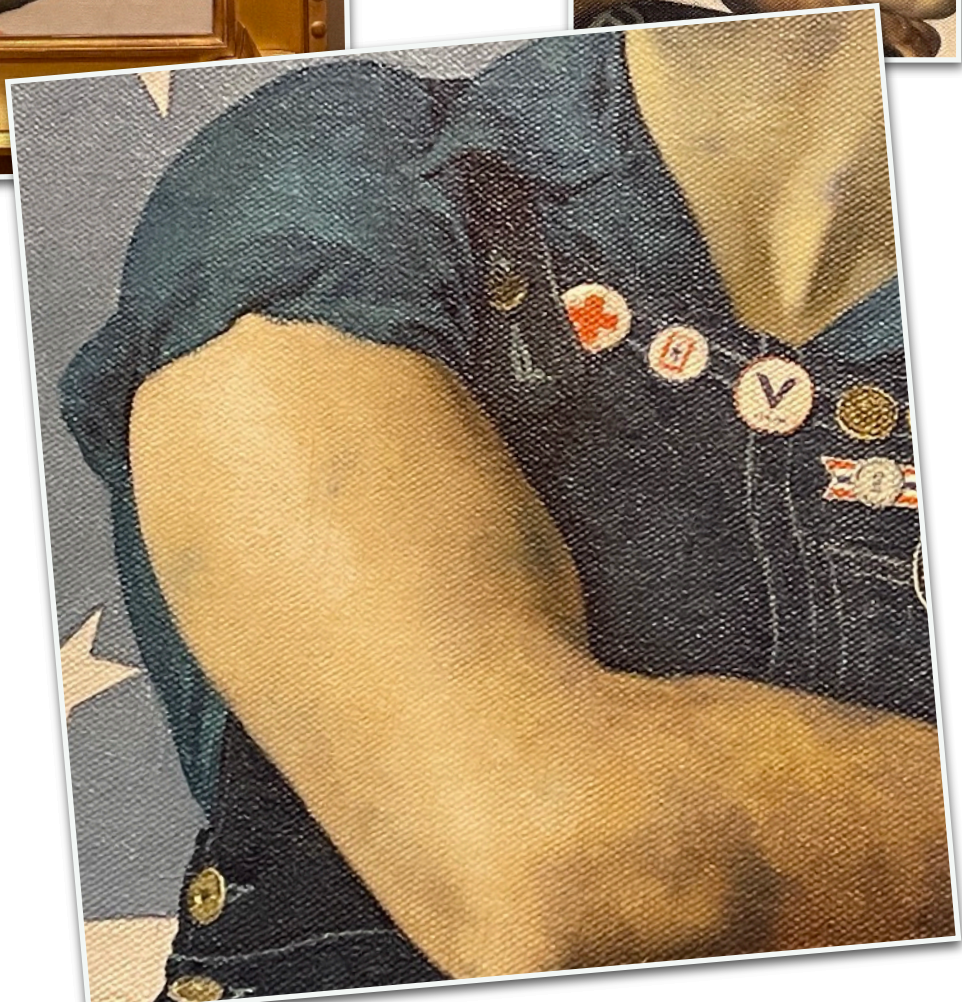
(my photo)



Norman Rockwell's one of those mass market painters i never really paid attention to. but *Rosie the Riveter* caught me by surprise. i find her facial



expression of quiet competence remarkable. love the rivets echoed in the frame, her doubled leather bracelet and the girth of her strong bicep. she exudes strength. also, look! a halo rises above her head. cool, right?





Howard Finster was the first southern folk/visionary

artist i remember learning about, back in the 80s (REM album cover). actually tried to go to his Paradise Garden in Athens, GA when he was still alive in 1989: didn't happen. i got to the garden, but then felt too shy to venture in. didn't want to disturb, and i was alone. sad, huh? now i wouldn't think twice. one life, do it if you can/feel like it.

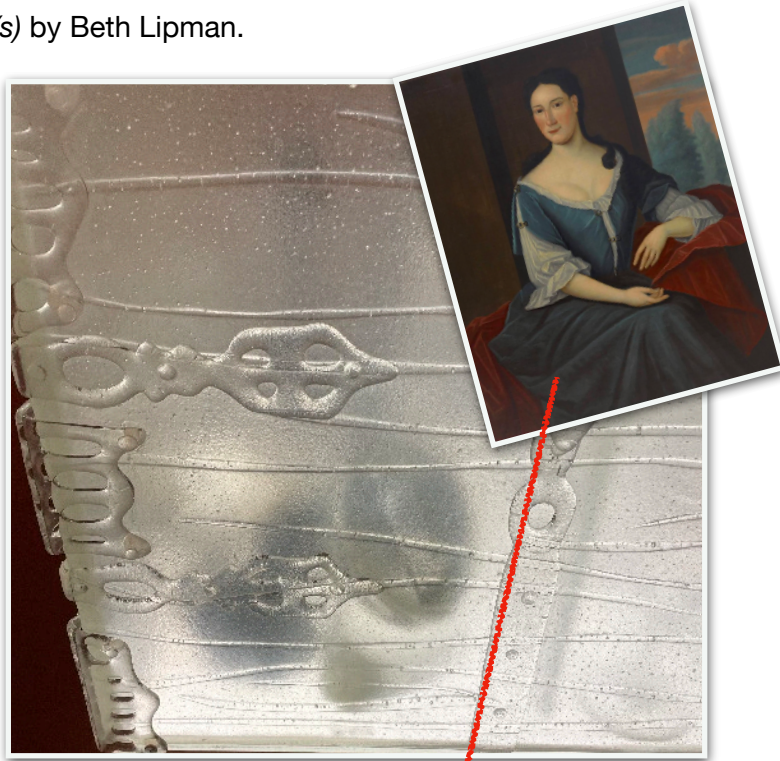
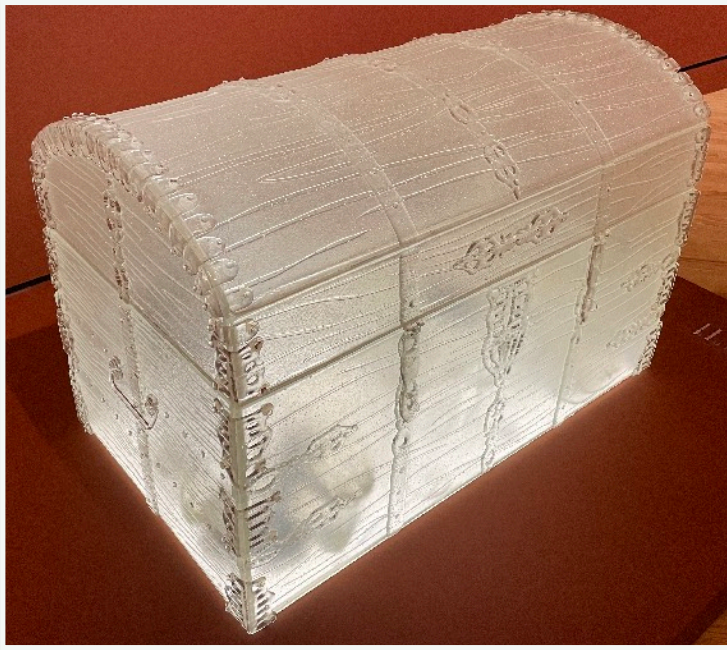
many more people recognize his work now, but still, seeing this up-close-and-personal hits home all the elements he incorporated into each painting. brings his work to a different level for me, cause i feel his energy and passion for saving (in a religious sense) people. how truly important he felt it was and that this was his best way to do so.

while looking at this and writing "George Washington has eyelashes on the bottom lid, not the top. why is that lower left corner in color?", a weird guy joined me and said "you look like you know what you're doing around the art." he continued by asking, "what's to keep someone from just coming over and slashing this open if they

don't like it?" at first, couldn't tell if he was serious, but he was. WTF? i answered that alarms would go off if he got too close and security guards are nearby. he walked away after that. weird, right?



Belonging(s) by Beth Lipman.



huge glass molds! what a project. description says:

“reflecting on migration, identity, and history, Lipman created this sculpture in response to the portrait of Abigail Levy Franks. The trunk contains glass objects representing Abigail’s life and colonial society. Textiles evoke home, while other elements — including chains — summon the family’s merchant activity. [Their] connection to the trade of enslaved people is not evident in their portraits, and Lipman considered how the paintings afford only a partial view of the past. [The ghostly] objects in the trunk commemorate Abigail’s life but suggests the full history is unavailable to us here.”

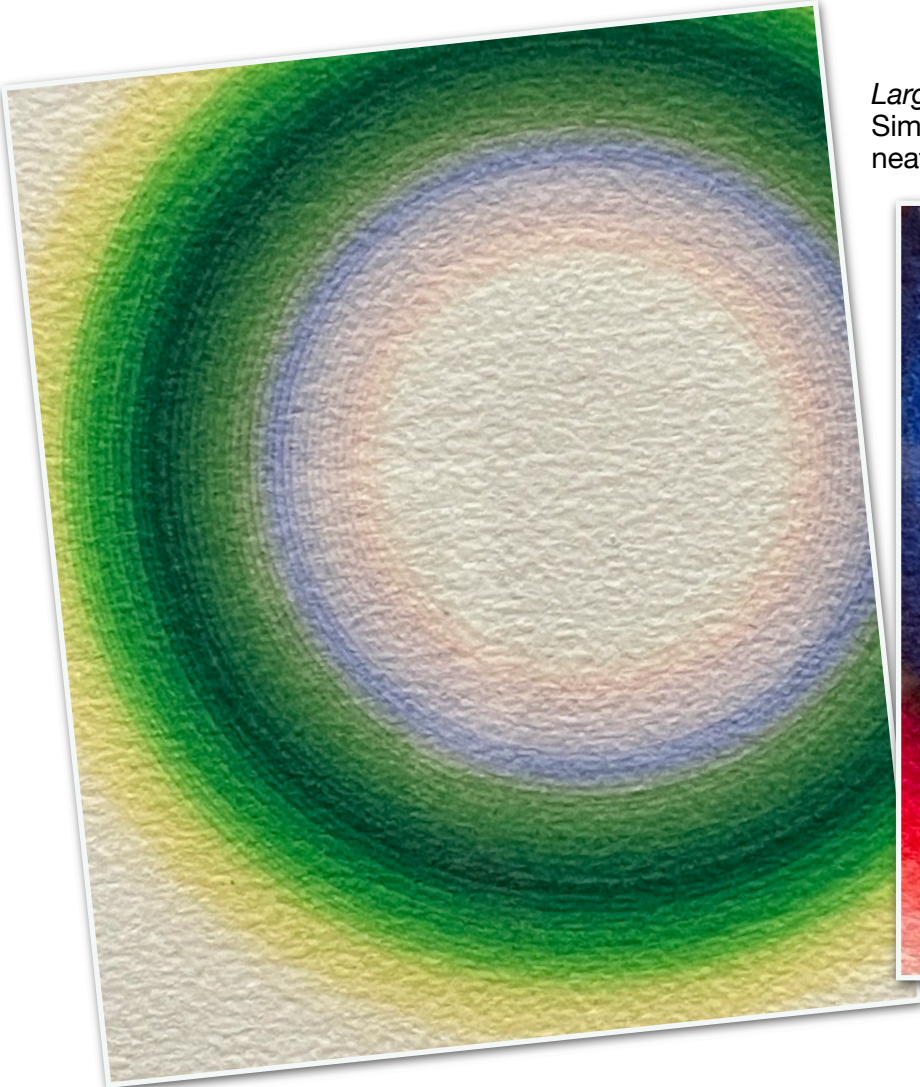
Amen! that’s the way to handle the truth. just say it.



Indians of Virginia by James Wooldridge. look at the buns and old-man-face on that baby!!!



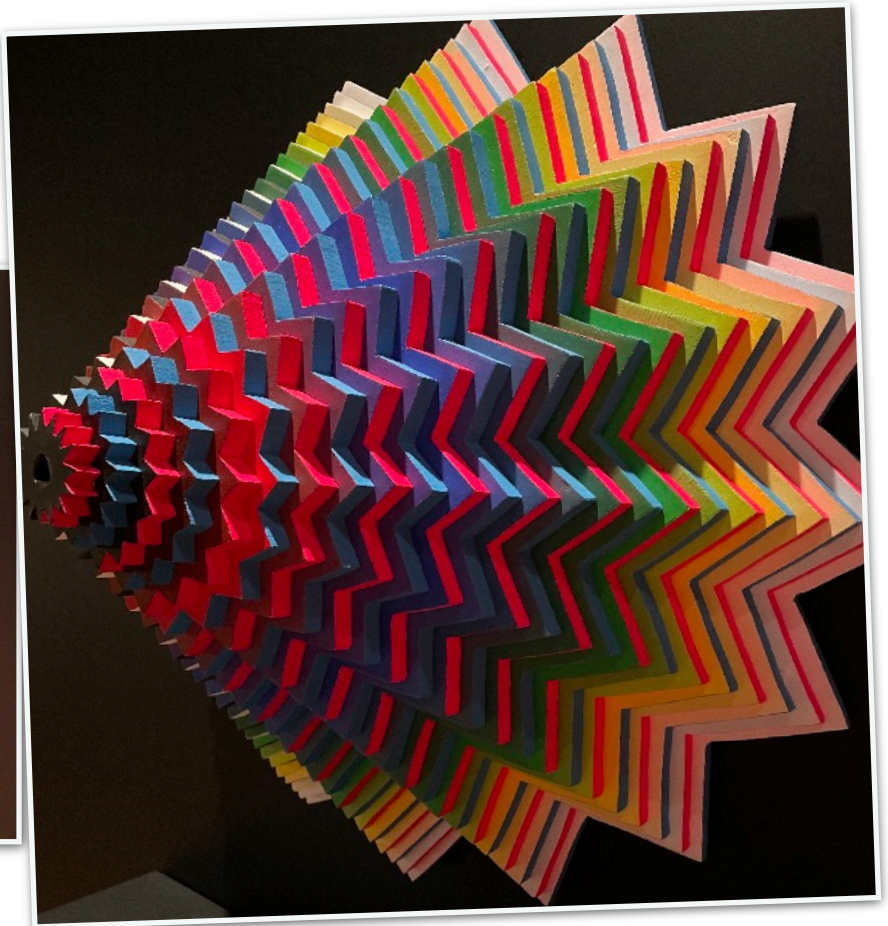
Winter Scene in Brooklyn by Francis Guy. big ol sky, white people on the left side of the painting, black people on the right, with a little interaction between the groups. close in proximity, but separate socially.



Larger Chorus IV, Larger Chorus VII by Jeffrey Simmons. watercolor. the closer you get, the neater it is.



Kaleidoscopic by Jen Stark, who i've followed since seeing her work at the renwick pre-covid. neat how the light plays off each tier of color differently with a white side reflecting.



Bachman-Wilson House by Frank Lloyd Wright, on the museum grounds. originally sited in NJ, CB dismantled it, moved it here, and reassembled. Were the screw holes covered at the original site? no pix allowed inside, so i can't really show you the really beautiful design or the apparently novel method of beveling glass so you can have a supportless glass corner seam. all mahogany. the whole thing. imagine the cost of that today?

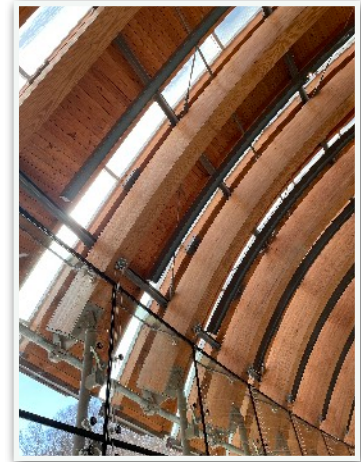


perfect, huge beams



lunch time! got a yogurt, chocolate chip scone (warmed), and herb tea. my view to

the front (glass all around), looking up, and looking across the restaurant. prominent structure (beams and glass joinery).



imagine being in charge of bending those

back to the museum collection. nice decision to place these two artistic objects — the tiffany lamp and native clay jar made hundreds of years apart — side by side so we can draw parallels between them.



The Bubble by Harriet Whitney Frishmuth



postcard of this and hung it in my bathroom. it's a really cool painting.



For this piece, *The Lantern Bearers*, Maxfield Parrish basically took pigment and mixed it directly into the varnish and then layered it, which is why the whole thing has a full orange-aura glow around it. bought a

Motive of Space and Form — A New Jersey Village (Montville) by Oscar Bluemner. jersey? yeah, makes absolute sense. on a primal, imaginative level. i like it.



two views of *Purple/Amber Sliced Descending Form* by Harvey K. Littleton which is cool as yo mama's icebox. neat.





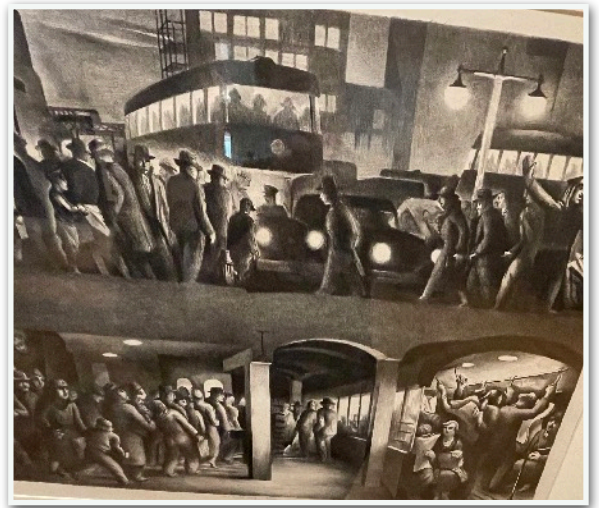
in *The Gallants* by O. Louis Guglielmi my eye goes directly to her orange shirt



The Garbage Man by John Biggers reminds me of a hyperstylized Thomas Hart Benton.



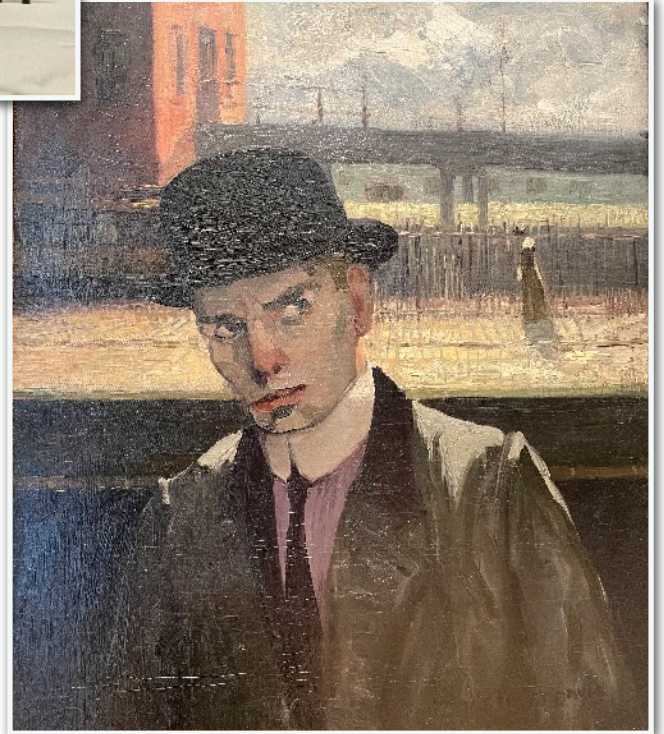
The People Work lithograph series by Benton Murdoc Spruance. really neat in person. rounded figures and objects, softened at their edges. love the light/dark perspective. i'd like to try lithographing some time.





Daylight at Russell's Corners by George Ault, set in woodstock, ny. ault lived in this non-urban setting of bucolic, cold, quiet, far from the horrors and stress of WWII. same as many people found this region preferable to NYC over the past COVID years.

another chihuly, against those gorgeous beams.



Self Portrait by Stuart Davis. look at those eyes. what did he do?

Depression Bread Line another by George Segal. life size. aside from the hats, coulda been people waiting for food during the pandemic.





cool bird highlight effects from two of the *Gems of Brazil* by Martin Johnson Heade.



Camouflage by Jeffrey Gibson. like the beads.

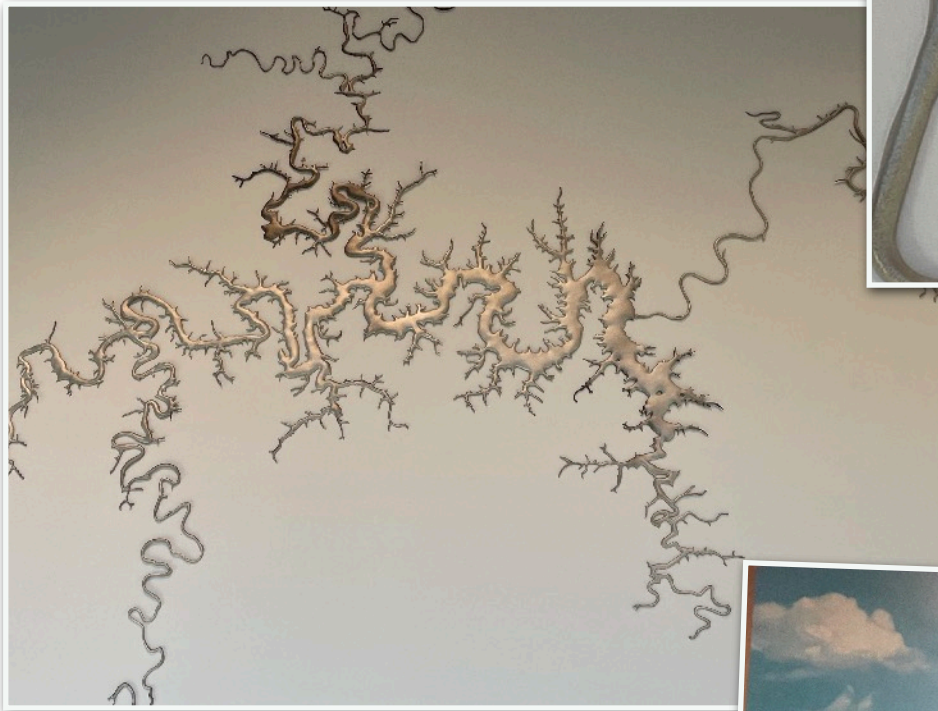


Been watching Titus Kaphar on instagram. his *the cost of removal* references andrew jackson's true legacy.

maya lin. knew immediately. she's so cool.



Silver Upper White River
by Maya Lin



precious jewels by the sea by amy sherald. her figures are so perfect in their flatness. and that basket clasp looks super real.



Our Town by Kerry James Marshall



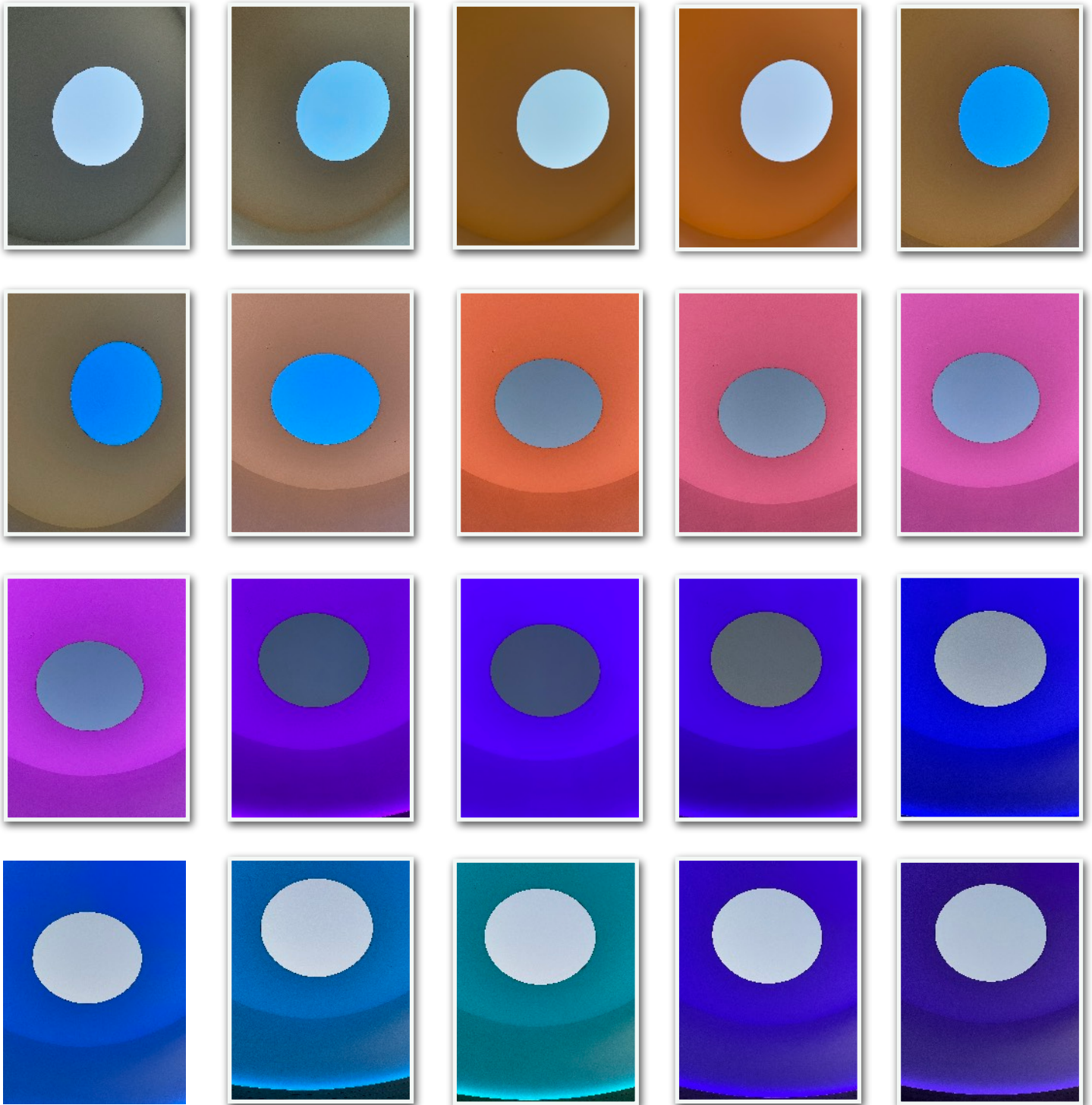
so much going on here. like how he's alluded to the slave quarters, cotton, a seemingly happily playing girl running from a dog. yellow ribbons everywhere.

back outside, a buckminster fuller piece.



ok, so now to the skyspace. got here about an hour before sunset. just lay down and zenned out. this skyspace is much shorter than the mass moca silo one, and is starting to show a little disrepair. benches around the inside made of arkansas stone, and warm. the skyspace may be just a hole in the ceiling, but it lets you really experience the world in a different way. watching the sun squint smaller and smaller like reminds me of its travel across my room at home. birds fly across the hole through sometimes, disrupting the illusion. at one point, a helicopter went by but i only heard it. not seen. did it exist? how can such a huge corp be so evil and also responsible for this place?

Skyspace by James Turrell. these images were taken over 35 minutes, from dusk to sunset. i love james turrell. my camera didn't get the colors right.



grew cold after sunset, so i biked back to the airbnb for a sweater. came back into town, and had a drink and a portobello quesadilla at table mesa restaurant. bartender from guatemala and i talked about life for a bit. he made a good margarita.

thursday, 3 march

saw ample evidence of mountain-biking-capital-like-trails on a five mile hike not far outside town. and yes, more art. beautiful weather, gorgeous scenery.



neat covered bridge with new-agey music piped up through the wood boards.

accommodations for mountain bikers include cutting through this log on an easy-level ride.



neat fungus cities on tree trunks



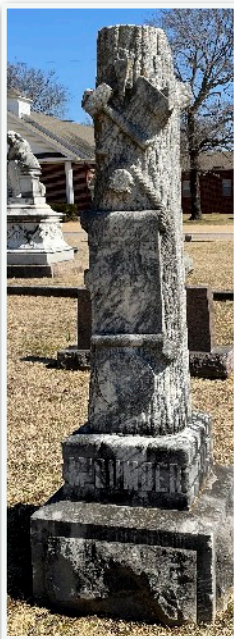
bouncy moss



how did they grow that way?

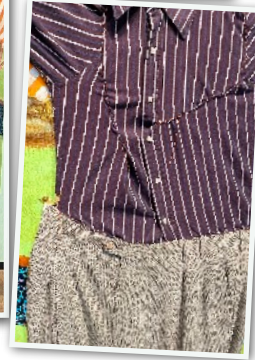
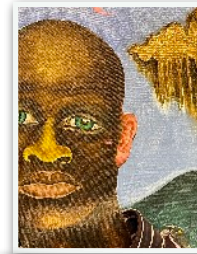
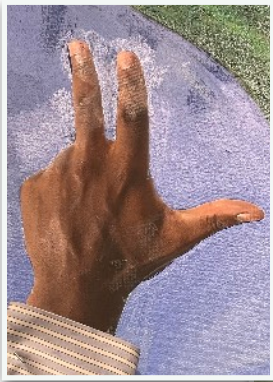


next to the bentonville cemetery, a regular run-of-the-mill boneyard. EXCEPT ... the 'woodworkers of the world' had special gravestones throughout. wonder what kind of woodworking they did. was this a union?



drove to a smoothie place and then a food /small restaurant marketplace. had some veggie and sweet bao buns. then back to the house to change into shorts. biked over to the Momentary, a satellite CB space. formerly a cheese factory (!), this huge warehouse-like space would be perfect for an installation. oh, the things i could fill some of these rooms with.

Assertlon of Will by Simphiwe Ndzube



i love the figures bursting forth from the painting, with tangible clothing and lifted canvas. wonder why he made all the eyes blue and green?



No Longer at War by Simphiwe Ndzube

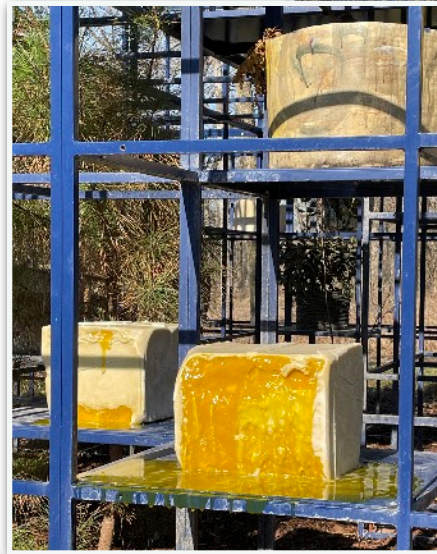


felt suits by Wendy Red Star

so after Momentary, i biked up to the north end of CB to check out the grounds on that side. the art continues.



Brick House by Chakaia Booker, who's stuff i continue to dislike. but striking composition...



The Bruising by Rashid Johnson. neat. and i love the beeswax melting in the sun. a continuously changing sculpture.



another chihuly. can't help but love his work.

biked back to the town square for an old-fashioned chocolate brownie milkshake. sun shining, 75ish degrees, not a cloud around. hung out in the central park area for an hour or so, until the sun departed and the cold crept back in.

after dropping off the rented bike, i passed through the square again, and this time saw a local art show in the corner gallery. stopped by the table mesa bar again for another margarita and some ceviche.

early up the next morning to catch a 6am flight. definitely a worthwhile trip. maybe will visit again some time.



came upon this scene on the walk back to the house. love how the woman's white hair echos the painting of the white horse