

## LER ta Contemporary

### Did you own it if space, there is no obstacle?

time at Mass MOCA  
than a Sol LeWitt wall  
because that would  
the house and property.

### What's the craziest place in Atlanta you've been to and would you recommend it to visitors?

Highway Farmers Market,  
10,000-square-foot mega-  
store, thousand mom-and-pop  
shops, Cuban, Caribbean, West  
African, Vietnamese, Eastern



Asian markets into a  
business. It's the United

### What do you read?

of rereading on rotation  
*Don Quixote*, *Donna Rex*, and *Long*,  
I got to the South, I took  
a trip, and despite having  
the oddest sense of déjà  
vu here Hannah used to  
talk about the others he had pissed off

### Who is your favorite contemporary through

He works with his pen-and-ink  
in New York City's beloved high

school bands. The outfits, the pageantry, the  
pomp, the structure, and the instruments—  
for those school bands lucky enough to remain  
intact, and those that were lost after Hurricane  
Katrina—are integral to New Orleans's soul.

### What's the last exhibition you saw that truly moved you?

Not an exhibition, per se, but I just visited  
Pasaquan for the first time and was floored. It's  
a seven-acre compound once owned by the  
flamboyant and eccentric folk artist Eddie Owens  
Martin (a.k.a. St. EOM). He ran away from home  
at age 14 to New York, where he spent three and  
a half decades making a living as an artist  
and hustler, running an illicit gambling parlor  
and dealing pot. When he returned to Georgia  
to live in the buildings his mother bought with  
proceeds earned from fortune-telling, he turned  
the compound's six structures into his greatest  
work of art. It's a mock pre-Columbian  
psychedelic wonderland, influenced by African  
sculpture and American Indian totem poles.  
Mind-blowing.

### Which contemporary artist would you like to see in the White House? (Not "hanging in the White House" but "leading the country.")

Trevor Paglen would certainly deliver some  
revealing State of the Unions. I have always  
admired Lisi Raskin's politics. But Theaster  
Gates seems like an obvious vote.

### We heard you used to be a practicing artist...

I have a BFA in painting. I made murky  
paintings of nudes and dreamt of combining  
Eric Fischl's offbeat suburbs with the  
disjunctive arrangements of David Salle.  
I was once upon a time named one of the  
top three artists in the mid-Atlantic region  
by the good folks at Kool Cigarettes. They  
used to send swag in the mail, like fortune  
cookies that said "Come up to Kool" and  
refrigerator poetry magnets with carefully  
chosen fragments like "smooth," "flavor,"  
"sunsets," "pleasure," and so on.

### What would you like to see changed about the contemporary art world?

Getting away from everything being about  
just white male artists.

### What is your spirit animal, and why?

Black panther, for every reason.

### If you could have drinks with two art world personalities, living or dead, whom might you choose, and what might you discuss?

I'm going with Hemingway and Kerry James  
Marshall. We'll talk about boxing, the ocean,  
Cuba, Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago jazz, the  
South, Spain, and the storytelling of comics.



#### FACT FILE

## EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN

WHEN THE MILWAUKEE-BASED  
artist died in 1983, he left behind a  
treasure trove of paintings—depicting  
fantastical castles, or landscapes like  
*Wand of the Genii*, 1956, above—bone  
sculptures, and adoring nude portraits  
of his wife. Here are a few facts about  
this odd and singular artist, courtesy  
of **Andrew Edlin Gallery** director  
Phillip March Jones.

**1** Von Bruenchenhein began  
to write poems while in his  
early 20s. In 1936 two of them,  
"The Tide of Life" and "A  
Prayer," were published in an  
anthology titled *American Voices*. He  
was, unfortunately, never able to find  
a publisher for the hundreds of other  
poems he wrote during his lifetime.

**2** Many of the paintbrushes  
the artist used were made  
from his wife's hair, which  
he stuffed into straws and  
pen stalks.

**3** Von Bruenchenhein's  
chicken-bone sculptures also  
incorporated turkey bones,  
which he soaked in am-  
monia, dried in the oven,  
and then assembled into thrones,  
towers, and other forms using tweezers  
and airplane glue.

**4** The artist desperately  
sought recognition for his  
work, going so far as to  
send poems and paintings  
to Presidents Kennedy  
and Johnson.

**5** He attributed his artistic  
production to "unknown  
forces at work, which I  
myself cannot rightly  
explain, forces that have  
gone on since the beginning."