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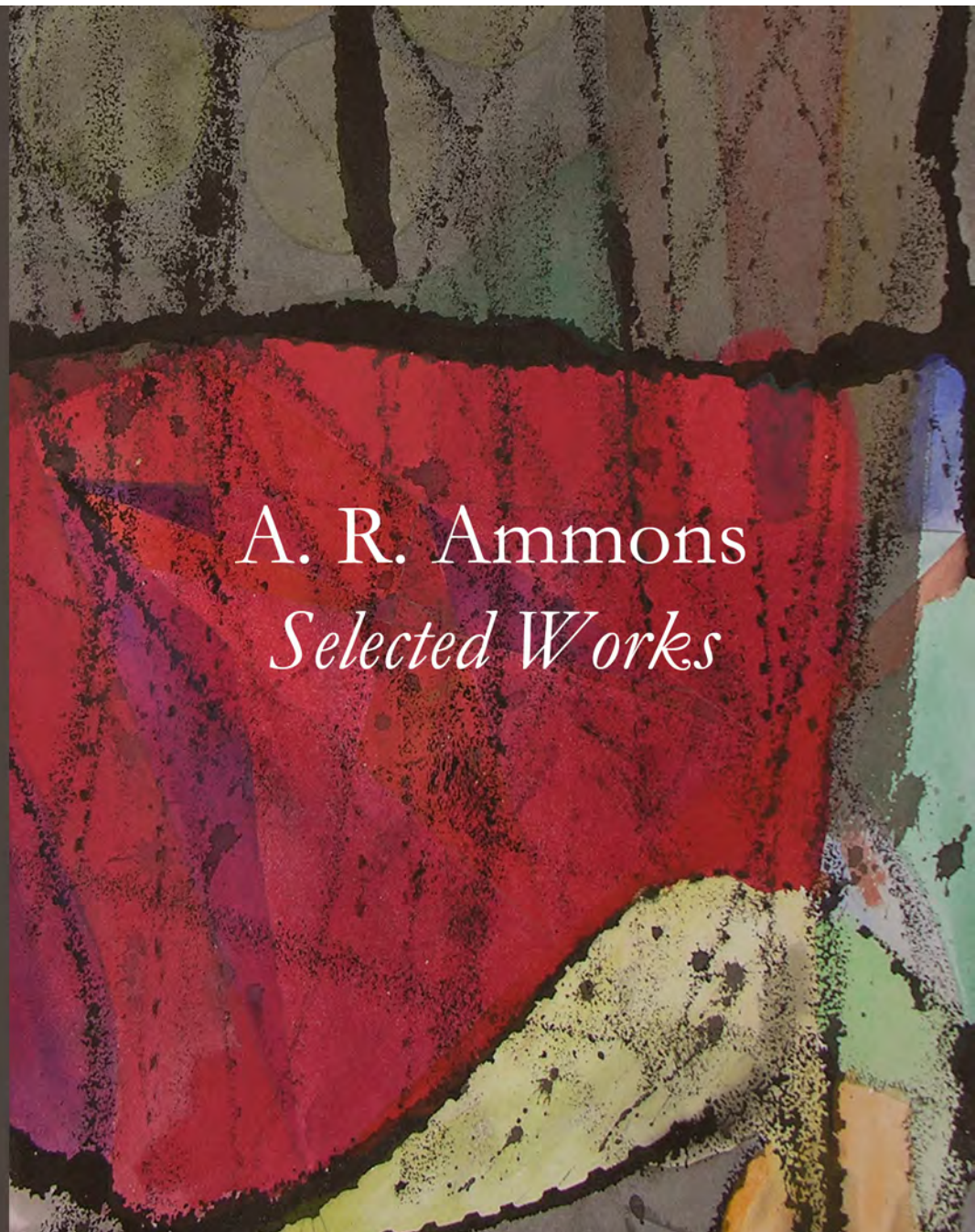
*Guided by the belief that an appreciation and understanding of the visual arts is an essential element of a liberal arts education, and consonant with the educational purpose of Wake Forest University; the actions of the Office of University Art Collections center on a two fold commitment to preservation and education.*



WAKE FOREST  
UNIVERSITY

# A. R. Ammons

## *Selected Works*



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A.R. Ammons

## Preface

Archie Randolph Ammons is widely recognized as an award-winning poet. Less known is that Ammons was also a prolific visual artist who built a substantive portfolio of paintings beginning in the winter of 1976. Some years later Ammons would author "Changing Things", a personal statement in which he expresses his decision to begin painting with watercolors. In 1981, Palaemon Press published just over one hundred copies of this statement which is reproduced here to provide a new audience the chance to experience Ammons' visual and verbal expressions simultaneously.

## *Changing Things* by A. R. Ammons

There is a poetics of tears, of smiles, of ecstasy (sensual joy and the harsh inspirations of the religious heights); there is a poetics of quietude and deep study, a poetics of fear - and a poetics of anger. During Christmas vacation in 1976, I got the notion, which I had had passingly but often before, to try watercolors. I'm sure I was attracted to the possibility of bringing together in one visual consideration the arbitrariness of pure coincidence with the necessity of the essential, the moving from the free, as the work of art begins, through the decisions of pattern and possibility, and into and through the demands of the necessary, the unavoidable, the inevitable. This "change" is in another form the oldest of journeys, that from exile to community. Having had dozens of tries at real pictures, I began to feel what events on the paper "meant"-that is, I began to learn the

joining of what happened on the paper to its emotional counterpart, the feelings generated and expressed by the events. I discovered that I was stirred by the thin, loud, and bright, the utterly blatant effect like a smack in the face, the anger felt, expressed, reacted to. And then I thought that not a very nice thing to be into. But I *was* angry, sizzlingly angry for whatever reasons, and I found myself, when I could endure the emotions at all, released by letting the anger go and become the splatters and the sheer control of the paint. And then I thought that since we must after all at times be angry, how fortunate we are that art allows us to transform blistering feelings into the brilliance, the sweep and curve, the dash and astonishment (along with the cool definition, judgment, and knowledge) of still completed things.

*Selected Works*





Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24



Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24



Untitled, 1979, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18





Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18

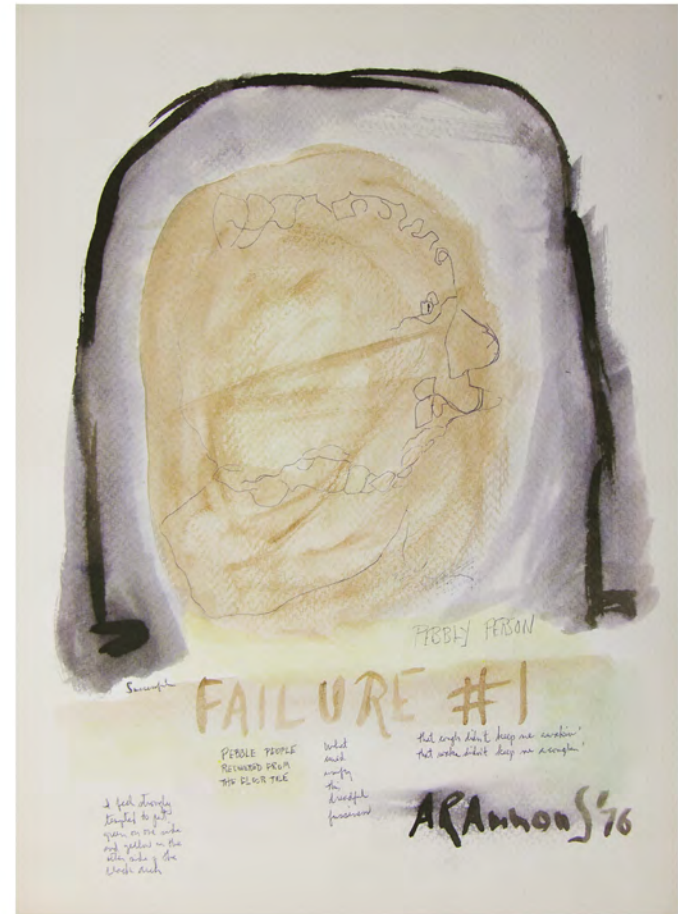


Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18

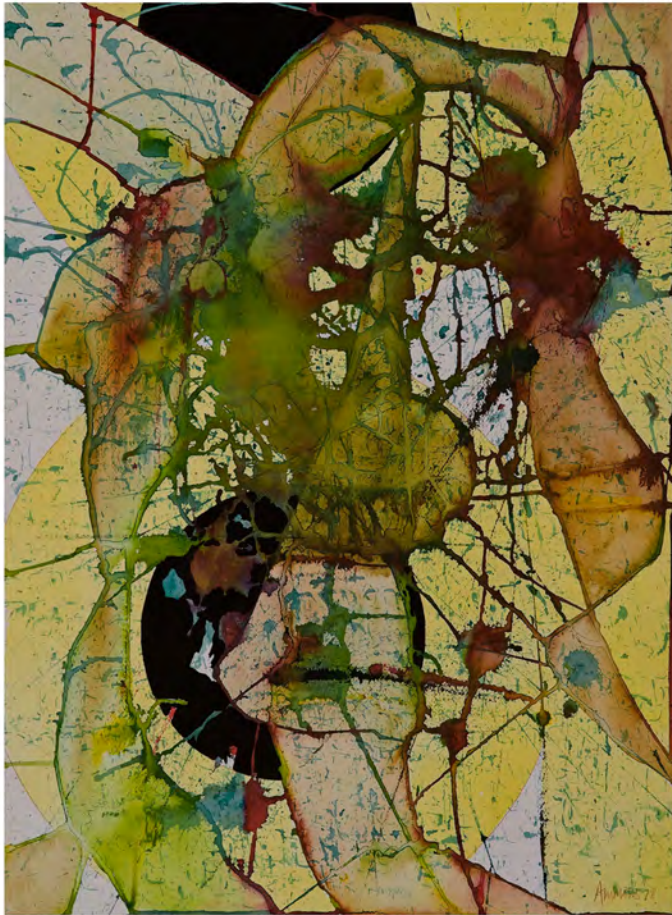




Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Pebbly Person, 1976, Watercolor on Paper, 15 x 11



Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1979, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24





Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24



Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24





Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



*Sundown Grove*, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24





Untitled, 1977, Watercolor on Paper, 24 x 18



Untitled, 1978, Watercolor on Paper, 18 x 24



Archie Randolph Ammons (1926-2001) was born outside Whiteville, North Carolina. It was during his World War II service aboard a U. S. Navy destroyer escort in the South Pacific that he began writing poetry. After the war, Ammons attended Wake Forest College, UC Berkeley and would work as an elementary school principal, a real estate salesman, an editor, and an executive in his father's biological glass company before he began teaching at Cornell University in 1964. His first book of poems, *Ommateum: With Doxology*, was published in 1955. He went on to publish nearly thirty collections, including *Collected Poems 1951-1971* (1972) winner of the National Book Award; *Sphere* (1974) which received the Bollingen Prize; *A Coast of Trees* (1981) which received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry and *Garbage* (1993) which won the National Book Award and the Library of Congress's Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry.

A.R. Ammons, on the lake porch at Reynolda House Museum of American Art, where he gave readings and workshops.  
Photograph by Susan Mullally.



## Acknowledgments

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