

Expressive Interplay through PICTURES AND WORDS:

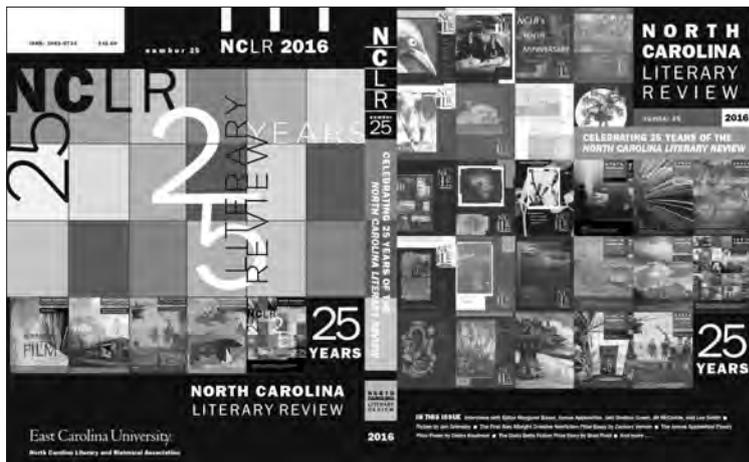
THE ART AND DESIGN OF THE NORTH CAROLINA LITERARY REVIEW



COURTESY OF NCLR



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BY RANDALL WILHELM

Winner of numerous awards, including the Best Journal Design in 1999 and again in 2010, the *North Carolina Literary Review* is one of the finest literary publications in contemporary America.

Skillfully blending the works of North Carolina writers with fine art by North Carolina artists, Art Director Dana Ezell and Art Editor Diane Rodman make reading *NCLR* similar to being guided through an art museum with a curator, in this case, Rodman. As Zackary Vernon has put it, *NCLR* is “an amalgamation of a scholarly journal, a literary magazine, and a showcase for the visual arts.”¹ Indeed, one of the many pleasures readers find in *NCLR* is the expressive interplay evoked by pairing works of fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and interviews with images from a variety of visual media such as painting, sculpture, photography, collage, printmaking and assemblage. By “interplay,” I mean whispers, murmurs, statements, asides, arguments, agreements between words and images that artists and visual thinkers have been making since antiquity. Since its first edition in 1992, *NCLR* editors and graphic designers have demonstrated a keen eye for the power of the visual and its interplay with the verbal. The inaugural cover featured a pencil drawing of a grackle’s

ABOVE TOP LEFT The first issue of *NCLR*, released in 1992, with cover art by Stanton Blakeslee

ABOVE BOTTOM *NCLR* 2016, which celebrated twenty-five years in print; cover design by Art Director Dana Ezell

ABOVE TOP RIGHT A page from Vernon’s 2016 issue interview with the *NCLR* editor, featuring here a photograph of Art Director Dana Ezell (who designed the interview) and her former student Karen Baltimore (who designed all of the poetry in this issue)

¹ Zackary Vernon, “North Carolina Connections: An Interview with *NCLR* Editor Margaret Bauer,” *North Carolina Literary Review* 25 (2016): 9; quotations from this interview subsequently cited parenthetically.