

Connecting
people
with
art
Contemporary African-American Art

Evelyn Redcross and Mercer Redcross III

Second Edition

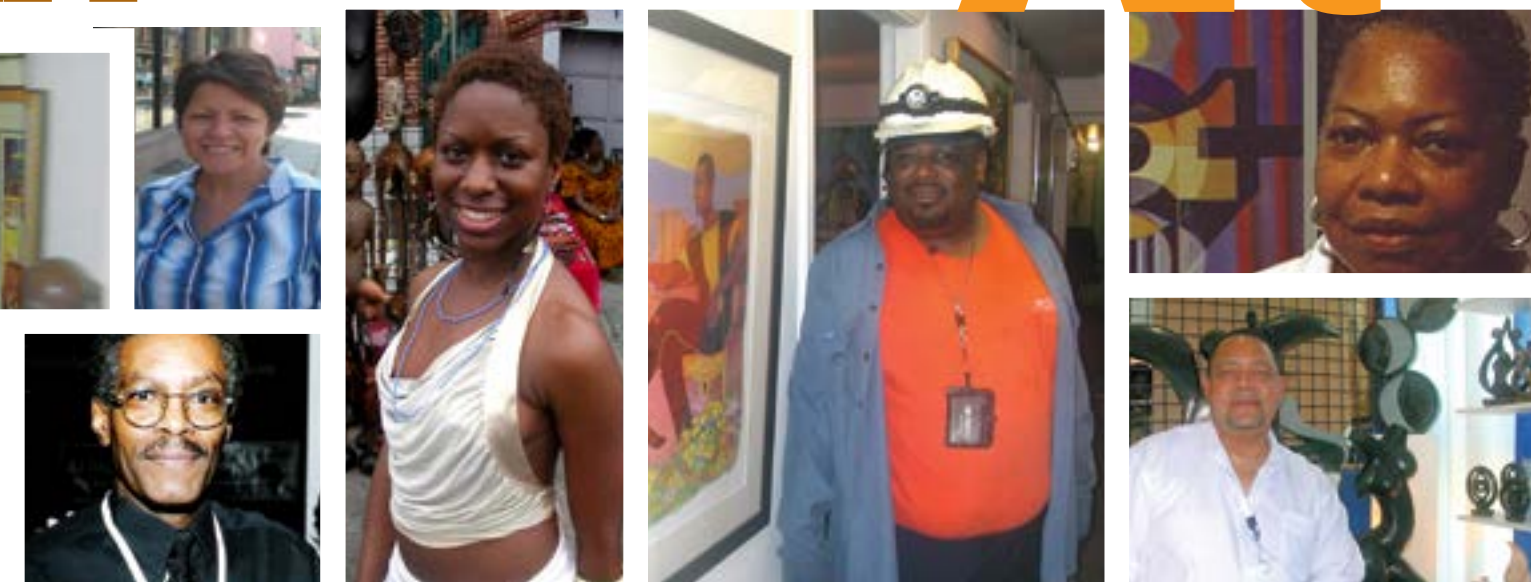


We Love Africa





n -American Art





Connecting People with Art

Contemporary African-American Art

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First Edition Published 2006

Second Edition with Additional Pages Published 2020

Special Limited Edition

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Published by October Gallery, 6353 Greene Street Philadelphia, PA 19144

215-352-3114

www.octobergallery.com

ISBN: 978-0-9790655-2-1

Native Philadelphian Mercer Redcross, III
co-founded the October Gallery with Evelyn Redcross. The gallery's first location was in the Powelton
Village section of Philadelphia.

The Redcrosses have always been collectors. Their initial interests included Lionel model trains, antique
clocks and traditional art. Later, they became passionate advocates of African-American art. In 1985
this new fervor stirred a special kind of excitement for them. It led to the creation of a new art gallery in
Philadelphia that they called, "October Gallery."

They understood that art is an ideal medium to communicate culture, history and broad human experi-
ences. Together they strive to make art and art education accessible to all people.

"Connecting People with Art," has been their mantra for years. This book reveals their stories and numer-
ous art adventures, as well as it chronicles the experiences of many others whom they met along the way.

Mercer Redcross III graduated from Cheyney University with a BS in Economics. Then, he earned a
Masters of Business Administration from Eastern University. Evelyn Redcross graduated from Temple
University with a BS in Psychology. Then she earned a Masters in Journalism from Temple University.

.

For our children,
Wade, Lamar
and Stephanie



Gazelle by Adrienne Mills



Cross My Heart by Adrienne Mills



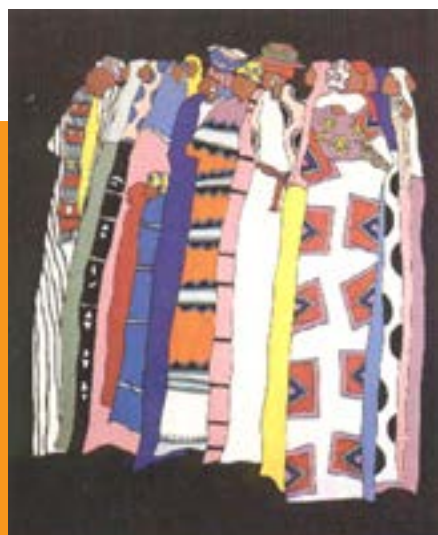
Gilded Paisley by Adrienne Mills



Camille by Adrienne Mills



African Odalisque by Margaret Burroughs



Praised by Frank Frazier

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One and a Half by Sam Byrd



Circle Unbroken by E. B. Lewis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book involved a great deal of work. Mercer and I could not have completed it without many very long days, some sleepless nights and a community of friends and family who know how to get a job done expeditiously.

Blessed and privileged, we, for as long as we can remember, have been fortunate to know these wonderful and caring people. They contribute unselfishly to our endeavors. We can say without equivocation that they are all “fam-i-ly.”

Our children, Wade, Lamar and Stephanie, share their time and ideas, and expend their energy in support of us. The special thing about love is that you can’t stop it. It overflows and manifests itself in everything. The progeny of entrepreneurs, they took in stride our thermometer-like ups and downs since 1973, which we have had to manage. We thank them for their patience, kindness and understanding.

Again, our special thanks to our team of seven editors, who diligently met to move this script from printed words on a page to a clear message. Our team of seven includes: Stephanie Daniel, Gaille Hunter, Robin Nedab, Shirley Rhone, Deborah H. Stephens, Olivia H. Stoner and Mimi Ross Wilson. They gave of their time freely. They were on call for meetings and readily reorganized their schedules. Most of all, they wanted to see the venture through as much as Mercer and I did. Dana Crum graciously agreed to copyedit and proofread the final draft.

Artist Cal Massey opened our eyes to how large the



Spiritual Awakening by Edwin Lester

African-American art market could become. Massey was an early mentor. To the many other artists who crossed our threshold, we thank you for your confidence and tolerance. And, we apologize for not acknowledging you by name. We decided not to try to list all of you for fear of leaving some of you out.

It took us a while to learn that our artists are, first and foremost, our customers. This is a departure from the traditional notion that artists are simply suppliers of product. We have Artist Ellen Powell Tiberino to thank for helping us shift our thinking in this direction.

Our attorney, Ragin Henry, taught us the value of negotiations versus the use of the Louisville Slugger.

American Picture Framing, Bruce Teleky and Sam Miller, thank you!

So many people have been a part of the October Gallery story. The list is long. These project leaders have earned a special tip of the hat: Angelina Bell, Sandra Blakely, Doris G. Brown, Lenette DeLoatch, Terri Fletcher, Charlene Landon, Stephanie Pierce, Jackie Powell, Mercer "Al" Redcross, Jr., Sanford Redcross, Adon Reish, Cassandra Lockerman-Robinson, Monica Rocha, Charles Strawberry, Jeremy Sustare, Tina Tiller, Chester Walker and Horace Wright. These exceptional people saw us through the maze of each workweek with great diplomacy. Often, they got the job done ahead of schedule.

My sister, Doris G. Brown, traveled with us on road shows all over the country. She always seemed comfortable lingering around the "expensive art" area. Customers who found themselves conversing with her also found themselves considering higher priced art. Without much ado, Doris, more than anyone, often escorted those customers to the checkout table to buy. Someone had to do it. Thanks, Sis!

Mike Tandler has been a "brother" since the 1970s. He has helped in so many capacities. I dare not try to

list them here, but we are grateful.

The Philadelphia International Art Expo (PIAE) committee meets from January to December every year. The members help plan and facilitate the events and activities that make the Expo work. As a group, they function like networked computers, and like well-oiled machines, they get it right the first time. They are: Lynn Carter, Stephanie Daniel, Jerome Davis, Deborah H. Stephens and Olivia H. Stoner. We are obliged to them.

Our son, Lamar, took many of the photographs for the book and taught Mercer how to "see" a great shot before the camera snaps. Lamar, Wade and Stephanie use their analytical minds to keep the underpinnings of our art gallery and expo contemporary in its programs and strong in its policies and structure.

Mercer and I have been a team for 38 years. We thank each other for all that we have learned, one from the other. We thank God for our time together. And, we thank God for His grace.

Our first and longtime Webmaster, Teil Wise, brought us a long way in the design and layout of this book.

Our friends and associates, who relate their stories in this book, have taught us that a concept is beautiful if many share in it.

It was not until we stopped to look back over the past twenty-some years that Mercer and I considered writing this book. We realized we may have made a difference for ourselves and others, somehow. It was so hard to see if we were making progress even though we found ourselves walking the pathway everyday and many nights. Although we hadn't counted our steps and had no idea the number of miles we had traveled, we have come to understand that our fulfillment comes from the people who support October Gallery, always looking on the bright side of everything and leaving all things to God.

"It is not enough for us to talk about the philosophies, the personal needs of the Black artists, or to beg you to support them because they are something special. If you would read the popular art publications, you will notice that most of the emphasis is placed on those areas. They are important and needed, but we are talking about other things, which are just as important. We are talking about your helping to promote, preserve, and have an input into the art works done by Black artists. By your buying, you will enable the artist to eat, pay rent, buy supplies and continue to work out artistic problems that stem from his or her unique life experiences—very often Black ones."

Benny Andrews, artist

Articulation 1 by Gerald Branch
(on opposite page)





Mamma's Hands by E. B. Lewis

REFLECTIONS

on the BlackStream Renaissance

This book is a written account of what October Gallery (OG) means to us. We attempted to unfold the saga of the gallery's evolution over time. In addition, we asked patrons and artists alike: "What is the value of African-American art to you?" Their personal responses, interesting and insightful, are included throughout our story.

Our national and international patrons and artists have witnessed firsthand the creation and development of the African-American art industry, which prior to the 1970s was almost nonexistent. This group of patrons and artists are part of what we call the BlackStream Renaissance.

The term "blackstream" was used by Black artists in the 1900s who were denied admission to the art mainstream. More recently, fine art appraiser Edward S. Spriggs of Atlanta, Georgia brought the term "blackstream" to our attention. Feeling there was a need to identify this important time of formative awareness of, belief in and commitment to African-American art, we coined the phrase BlackStream Renaissance.

We further define this growth period as being marked by a collective community conscientiousness that recognizes the creative, cultural and financial viability of African-American visual expression.

The interplay between artists, community members and available resources has created a fabric-like cohesion characterized by:

- Artists willing to create
- A community that can inspire its artists
- A community that accepts its own cultural creations as having value
- Sufficient community resources to sustain the exchange of value

The patrons and artists of the BlackStream Renaissance purchased and sold art, displayed it at home and at work and shared it with friends, family, co-workers and the general public. In short, they have made African-American art an indispensable part of their everyday lives. The African-American community is effectively supporting and building an art industry, perpetuated primarily by its own members.

Artists, galleries, museums and others in the art business realize that because of proper education, focused marketing and love of culture, African-Americans have shifted their habits and allocated to the visual arts a portion of the more than 750 billion dollars they spend each year. This group has invested precious time and valuable resources in African-American art and has thereby continued to give it value.

To be clear, the BlackStream Renaissance welcomes the mainstream but does not have to rely on it for content, aesthetic validation or financial continuance.

Educator and curator David C. Driskell said, *"The boom in Black art has come about not in the market of galleries of the auctions at Sotheby's and Christie's, but from ordinary Black people."*

Most African-American artists market and exhibit in the African-American community. Successful Black art festivals and expos, where artists sell and exhibit, recognize the importance of marketing to this special community. It is in this community where the strength and the value of African-American art begins. It is this community that has provided the foundation for the Blackstream Renaissance. It is this community that has given us the content, the material, the stories for *Connecting People with Art*. This book recognizes the pioneers of the Blackstream Renaissance.

TIME LINE

Over the past 35 years or so, the African-American art industry has grown like never before. This time line is an attempt to give an overview of some of the people, places and events of the BlackStream Renaissance (defined on page 19). As you will see, October Gallery was just one of many organizations and people who played a role in the growth of the BlackStream Renaissance.

We were unable to include everyone in the time line, and we offer our apologies to those whom we may have overlooked. The following dates are generally accurate, but some may be approximate.

35 *Years of*



Cooper Originals opened its doors in Los Angeles, CA.

Dryus Cooper has been referred to by many as the “godfather” of the contemporary art movement we call the BlackStream Renaissance.

DuSable Museum’s Arts and Crafts Festival was launched.

This Chicago festival, which started 32 years ago, is an outdoor event that features local artists.



Good Times debuted on TV.

Ernie Barnes’ art was displayed on the set. His famous painting “Sugar Shack” was featured on the show’s opening credits.

Wood Shop Art Gallery opened in Chicago, Illinois.

Wood Shop Art Gallery began as a cabinet shop run by Dan D’Antignac. He produced frames for artists. D’Antignac sought out local Black artists and produced a catalog of the noted works of Annie Lee and Ernie Barnes. Wood Shop was one of the first publishers and distributors of Black art.

Schomburg Center in New York City.

The Research Library of the New York Public Library designed what was to become known as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Artist Joseph Holston opened his gallery in Maryland.

His unique style has made him a very successful artist for over thirty years.

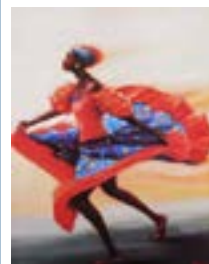


Indiana Black Expo began in Indianapolis.

Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore was created.

With locations in Detroit, Atlanta, and Houston, the centers contain one of the world’s largest selections of books related to the Black experience.

Arthello Beck, Jr. opened the first African-American art gallery in Dallas, TX.



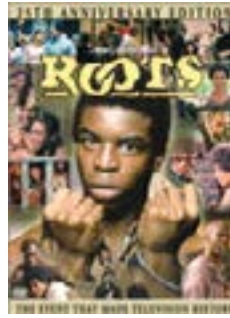
1970

1972

1973

1974

African-American Art



Roots TV series

The success of *Roots* had a lasting impact on the American audience. The show's executives had not expected that Black-oriented programming with Black heroes and white villains could attract such huge audiences.

Sutton Black Heritage Art Gallery opened in Houston, TX.

The owner, Robbie Lee, remembers how difficult it was to see art by African-Americans at the time. She created her gallery to showcase and to give a voice to African-American artists.

Artcetera

Eugene Foney's gallery opened in Houston, TX.

Art: African-American

African-American art book by Samella S. Lewis

Two Centuries of Black American Art 1976

African-American art exhibition catalog by David C. Driskell

Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum was founded in Philadelphia, PA in celebration of the nation's Bicentennial.

The museum was the first institution funded and built by a major municipality to preserve, interpret and exhibit the heritage of African-Americans.

***I Want You* by Marvin Gaye**

The cover for this album featured *Sugar Shack*, a painting by Ernie Barnes.

The first issue of the *Black Arts Quarterly* was published by Samella S. Lewis.

The name changed to the *International Review of African-American Art* in 1984.

The journal is now published by Hampton University.

Kenkeleba Gallery opened in New York City.

Frank Frazier exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum.

After showing at Hunter College in New York (1971), this exhibition served to launch Frazier's long artistic career.

1975

1976

1977

1978

35 Years of

Northern California welcomed Brenda Joysmith Studio.

Joysmith studio spent 20 years in Oakland, CA. In October 1999, it moved to Memphis, TN and opened as Joysmith Gallery & Studio.



Bumpin'
by Brenda Joysmith

Studio Museum in Harlem opened in New York City.

This museum initially opened in 1968 in a rented loft at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street. In 1979, the New York Bank for Savings donated to the museum a 60,000-square-foot facility. The museum relocated to this space, at 144 West 125th Street, in 1982.

Sun Gallery opened in Washington, DC.

Sun Gallery began as an art gallery and a goldsmith's studio. Later, it was bought by Ronald Chism, who used it to showcase unique artwork, cards, carvings, artifacts, books and a large variety of prints and posters.

Malcolm Brown Gallery opened in Shaker Heights, OH.

Tanner's *The Thankful Poor* was purchased by the Cosby family.

After remaining in a school closet for 75 years, *The Thankful Poor* by Henry O. Tanner was rediscovered and auctioned at Sotheby's in 1981. Bill and Camille Cosby bought it for \$250,000; at the time that was the most ever spent for a painting by an African-American artist.



Wanda Wallace Associates was established in Los Angeles.

A corporate art consultant, Wallace was a national distributor and publisher of fine art.

California African-American Museum opened in Los Angeles.

The Museum began in 1981 in temporary quarters at the California Museum of Science and Industry. The current facility in Exposition Park was built for \$5 million and was financed by state and private funds.



Super Mall Art Show at the Fox Hills Mall

Barbara Wesson started her first mall exhibition at the Fox Hills Mall in Los Angeles, CA. Later, the show moved to the Baldwin Hills Mall.

George N'Namdi's first gallery opened in Detroit.

It was named "Jazzonia" after a poem by Langston Hughes. Three years later N'Namdi moved and changed the name to G.R. N'Namdi Gallery. The gallery has continued to grow and has expanded into three locations: one in downtown Detroit, one in Chicago's West Loop Art District and one on West 26th Street in New York City's Chelsea Art District.

1979

1980

1981

1982

African-American Art

***The Cosby Show*
premiered on TV.**

The Cosby Show portrayed a positive upper-class Black family living in Brooklyn. Black art was prominently displayed in nearly every room in the house.



***Madonna* by Brenda Joysmith was published.**

This limited edition print became a collector's item. It was displayed on *The Cosby Show*.

Kathleen Wilson released new prints.

In 1984, she published her first four limited-edition lithographs. These images included *The AACV Village Poster*, *Four Women Waiting*, *Three Musicians* and *The Keeper*.

Things Graphics opened.

The company remains America's largest Black distributor of African-American prints.



Charles L. Blockson donated his collection of African-American and Caribbean rare publications to Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

October Gallery opened in Philadelphia, PA.



***Hidden Heritage* was published by David C. Driskell.**

A catalog of an exhibition included works by Sargent Johnson, Hale Woodruff, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, Robert S. Duncanson and others.

La Belle Galerie opened in New Orleans.

Savacou Gallery opened in New York.

This gallery has been at the forefront of the movement to popularize African-American art.

Melanin Graphics opened in Baltimore, MD.

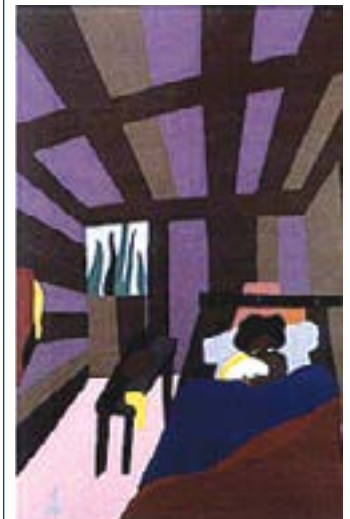
B Graphics founded in California.

June Kelly Art Gallery opened in New York City.

Before opening the gallery, June Kelly had been a private dealer for many years. In addition, she had managed the career of artist Romare Bearden for 13 years, until his death in 1988.

***The Birth of Toussaint L'Ouverture* was released.**

This was the first print in a series of serigraphs of Toussaint L'Ouverture by Jacob Lawrence.



Samuel's Gallery opened in Oakland, CA.

Samuel's Gallery was an early innovator of Black art distribution.

1983

1984

1985

1986

35 Years of

<p>Vargas Fine Art was founded in Maryland. Elba Vargas-Colbert formed her company to distribute fine art by African-Americans.</p>	<p>The National Black Arts Festival's first summer festival was held in Atlanta, GA. NBAF firmly established itself as one of the most important festivals in the world for the presentation of the art and culture of the African Diaspora.</p> <p>Pyramid Gallery opened in Little Rock, Arkansas. Sixteen years later, Pyramid Gallery evolved into Pyramid Art, Books & Custom Framing and Hearne Fine Art.</p>	<p>Golden Enterprise was founded in Brighton, CO. Golden Enterprise focuses on publishing quality art images by African-Americans and other ethnic groups.</p> <p>The Barnett Aden Collection was sold to the Florida Endowment Fund. The Barnett Aden Collection was the creation of two extraordinary African-American art professionals, Alonzo J. Aden and James V. Herring. They opened the original gallery in their private residence and named it after Aden's mother, Naomi Barnett Aden, a retired schoolteacher.</p> <p>E&S Gallery was established. Based in Louisville, KY, E&S is a full-service art and custom-framing gallery.</p> <p>Heritage Art Gallery opened in Philadelphia, PA.</p>	<p>Thelma Harris Gallery opened in Oakland, CA. Specializing in works by contemporary African-American artists, the gallery is a venue for emerging, mid-career and established painters, sculptors and mixed-media artists.</p>
1987	1988	1989	1990

African-American Art

Color Circle Art Publishing opened in Boston, MA.

The company was founded by artist Paul Goodnight.

Ethnic Expressions was founded in Atlanta, GA.

The home art show company consists of hundreds of consultants in numerous cities.

William Tolliver opened an art gallery in Atlanta, GA.

William Tolliver died at the age of 49—but not before leaving an indelible mark on the contemporary African-American art world.

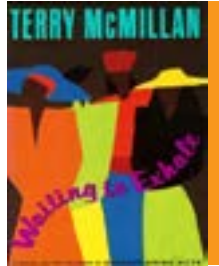
T. Ellis Art began in League City, TX.

Todd Fine Art was founded by Louise Todd in Atlanta, GA.

The gallery exhibits, publishes and distributes work by African-American artists. Todd Fine Art runs the silent auction at the National Black Arts Festival each year.

Terry McMillian's *Waiting to Exhale* was released.

Waiting to Exhale became a blockbuster tour de force, landing on The New York Times best-seller list its first week out. Synthia Saint James' artwork was on the cover of the book.



The cover of *Waiting to Exhale*

Zawadi Gallery opened in Washington, DC.

Irene T. Whalen, who moved onto a stretch of U Street in 1992, specializes in African and African-inspired decorative art and accessories.



Irene T. Whalen
of Zawadi Gallery

Black Heritage Art Expo began in Baltimore, MD.

In 2006, the expo celebrated its 11th anniversary. The purpose of this 3-day event is to allow individuals of all nationalities the opportunity to learn and celebrate African-American culture.



Stella Jones Gallery launched in New Orleans, LA.

The gallery fulfills its educational goals through lectures, panel discussions, intimate gallery talks and exhibitions.

The first piece of African-American artwork ever to be installed in the White House was installed by President Clinton's administration.

As a leading scholar of African-American art, David C. Driskell was called upon by President Bill Clinton to select a work by an African-American artist for permanent display in the White House. Driskell's choice, Henry O. Tanner's *Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City*, was unveiled in the Garden Room.

1991

1992

1995

1996

35 Years of

Kwanzaa Stamp was developed by the US Postal Service.

The United States Postal Service commissioned artist Synthia Saint James to create



the first Kwanzaa stamp.

National Black Fine Art Show opened in New York City.

Unique in the world of traditional art fairs, this show is dedicated to the exclusive presentation of original art by artists of African and African-American descent.

Grandpasart.com was launched.

Grandpasart.com is one of the major African-American art Web sites.

Bank of America purchased the Hewitt Collection of African-American Art.

Bank of America purchased the collection from John and Vivian Hewitt of New York as a gift for the Afro-American Cultural Center in Charlotte, NC. It represents more than 50 years of collecting and is regarded as one of the most important and comprehensive collections of African-American art during the 20th century.

Halima Taha published a book on African-American art, *Collecting African-American Art: Works on Paper and Canvas*.

Cleveland Fine Arts Expo began.

Presented by Sankofa Fine Art Plus, the expo is a juried art show featuring ethnic fine art by local, regional and national artists.

The Paul R. Jones Collection was donated to the University of Delaware.

One of the oldest and most complete holdings of African-American art in the world.

Artistic Impressions formed to distribute African-American art via the Internet.

1997

1998

2000

2001

African-American Art

Artist Justin Bua created an image for a limited-edition PF Flyers shoe.

Released in May 2004, Bua's collaboration brought art onto the streets and sold out within hours.



Artist Varnette Honeywood, Wood Shop Gallery owners Dan and Marvita D'Antignac and artists Annie Lee and Synthia Saint James at the Wood Shop's 30th Anniversary Celebration in 2004.

African-American woman acquired Paloma Editions.

Kim Butler purchased the brand Paloma Editions from The Art Publishing Group and formed a new independent company called Paloma Editions, Inc.

Delaware Art Exhibit began in Wilmington, DE.

RAL Productions presented "Fine Art at the Riverfront," the largest exhibition of artists of color to ever exhibit in the state of Delaware.

The Grant Hill Collection of African-American Art was showcased.

Featuring a selection of more than 45 works, the Orlando Museum of Art was the opening venue for a nationwide tour of Grant Hill's personal art collection, *Something All Our Own: The Grant Hill Collection of African-American Art*.

Twenty years of the Philadelphia International Art Expo.

The Philadelphia International Art Expo celebrated a milestone. The expo has become the nation's largest, stand-alone, African-American art expo, featuring up to 200 exhibitors and over 40,000 attendees.

2002

2003

2004

2005

35 Years

This time line is by no means complete. Specifically, we attempt to highlight the milestones in the development of the African-American art industry. All of the masters who started their careers prior to the BlackStream Renaissance laid the groundwork for this era. We would like to mention artists and master printers Robert Blackburn of Printmaking Workshop, Lou Stovall of Workshop, Inc., and Allan Edmonds of Brandywine Workshop. We mention these printmakers because nationally very few artisans were skilled in hand-pulled printing. This also includes Hand Graphics in New Mexico.

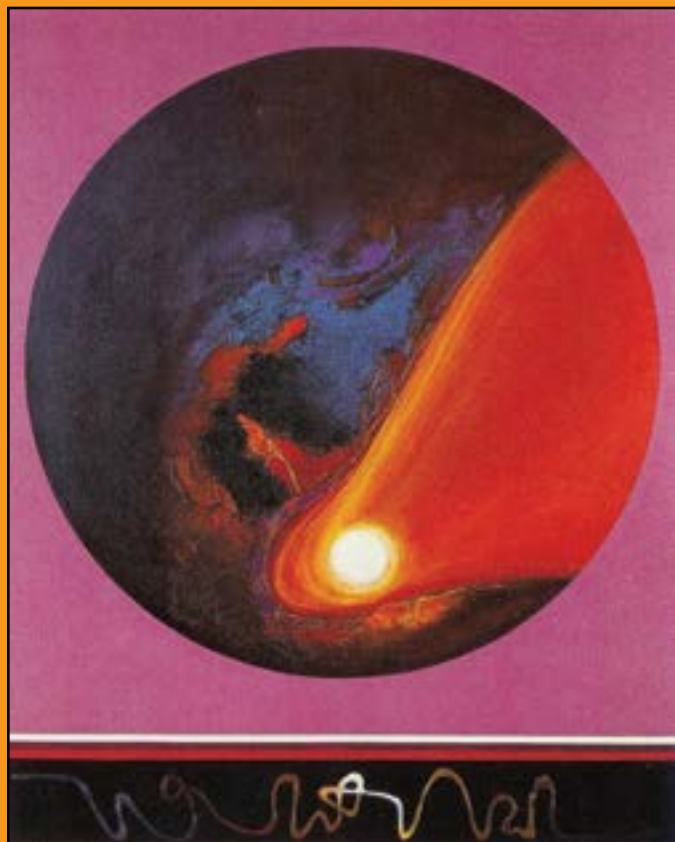
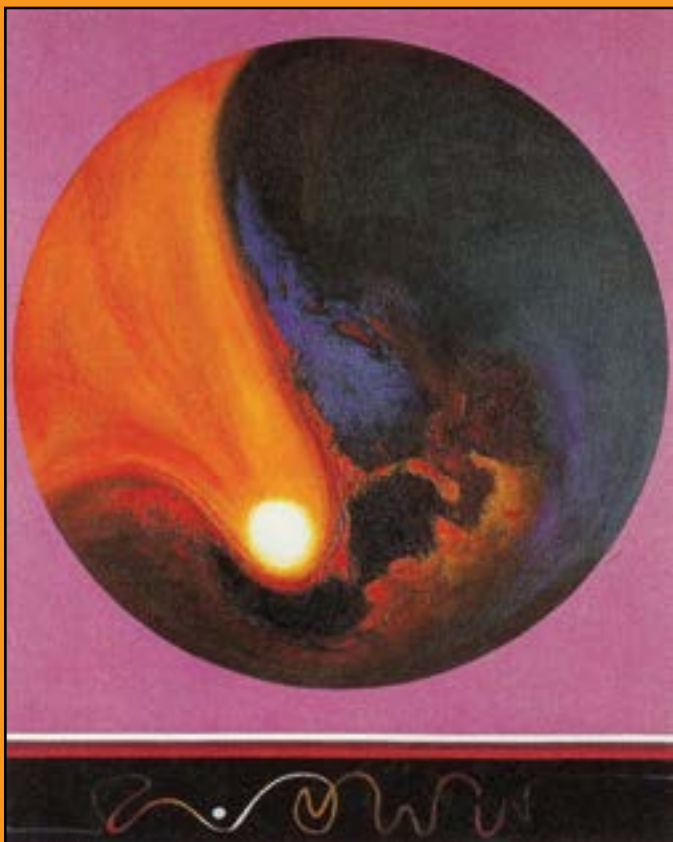
Other galleries, retail outlets and distributors that made contributions are: Chosen Image Gallery, Collectible Art and Frames, Hakim's Bookstore, Recherché and Sande Webster Gallery, all in Pennsylvania; Deck the Walls (national chain); Bruce Teleky, Inc., American Vision Gallery, Essence Art and H&M Gallery, all in New York; Brockman Gallery, Gallery Plus, Gallery Tanner, Gamboa Gallery and Museum in Black all in California; Hue-Man Bookstore in Colorado; Atlanta Underground, Greenbriar Mall and Hammonds

House Galleries, all in Georgia; Shorewood Fine Art Reproductions in Connecticut; Southside Community Arts in Illinois; Umoja Fine Arts in Michigan; and Viewpoint (founded by Dan and Irene Houston) in Texas.

Organizations and museums that had an impact include the National Conference of Artists, the Walter O. Evans Foundation for Art and Literature, the Hampton University Museum and the Museum of African-American History in Detroit, Michigan.

Many publications published articles about the value of African-American art. They include *Decor* magazine, *Art Business News*, *Essence* magazine, *Black Enterprise* magazine, *Ebony* magazine and *Upscale* magazine. A special mention goes to *American Visions* magazine in Washington, DC. The publication recognized early on the need to let African-American artists and galleries advertise at reasonable rates.

African-American Art



Genesis by Cal Massey

GENESIS:

In the Beginning

The October Gallery Story

“LOOK FOR A VISION,
NOT AN IDEA.”

– Romare Bearden

In the Beginning

Looking back, Mercer and I perhaps have always been pack rats, or to say it professionally, informed amateur accumulators. Before focusing on the visual arts we traveled widely, collecting relics such as old clocks, leaded glass windows and doors, model trains and blown glass.

By the early 1970s we were intrigued by the interactive process of bidding and purchasing at art auctions. We began collecting mainstream art, unaware that an extraordinary treasure of Black art lay waiting to be explored and, more importantly, appreciated.



Mercer and Evelyn Redcross at October Gallery's first home, 3805 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA.



We developed an interest in the visual arts and collected pieces for our home. Our modest art collection, which included Salvador Dali', Joan Miro' and others, grew until we ran out of space. It was not a premier collection. Most of the items were framed posters, limited edition serigraphs and lithographs. Later, a few originals were added. Our budget was inadequate for collecting original art but the visual art seed was already sown and was being nurtured in our hearts.

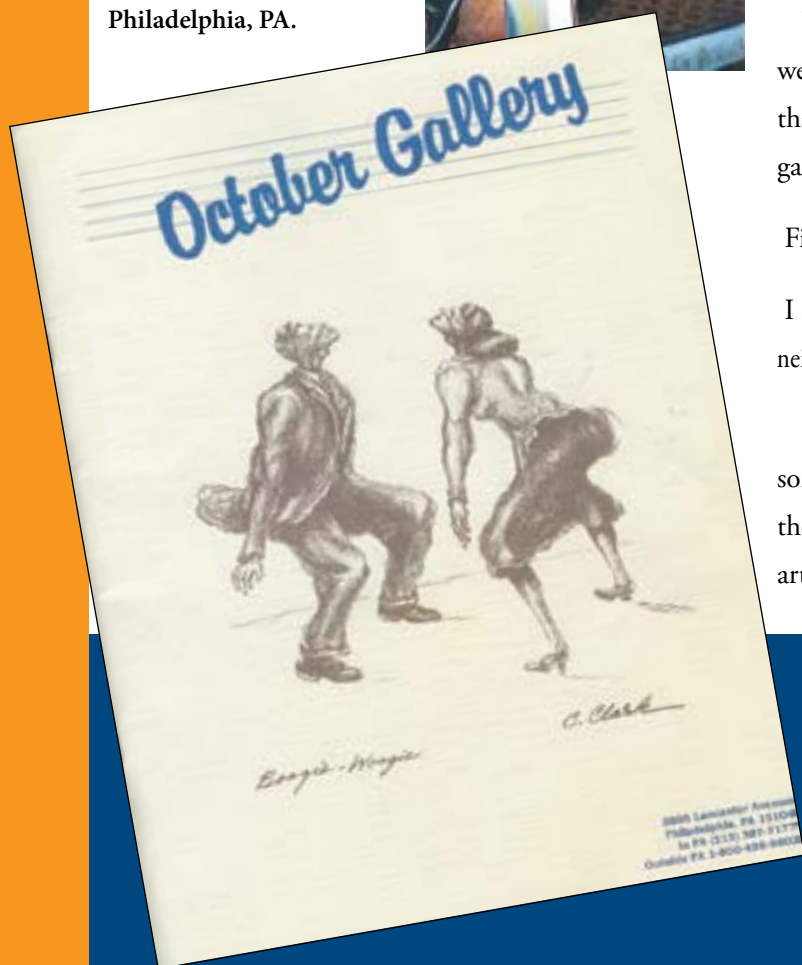
As we collected, it occurred to us that something was missing. Where was the Black art—the art of our own culture? We set out to explore and to become better informed about African-American art. However, a number of issues impeded this objective. African-American art was difficult to find in traditional galleries. We couldn't see a body of work in one place. Obtaining Black art meant visiting each artist, one home at a time. Our inexperience did not help us sort through the matter easily.

By the 1980s we had met several Black artists and were able to add their creations to our collection. Less than a handful of commercial African-American art galleries had opened in the country by that time.

Finding Black art was still a challenge.

I remember someone saying to me that “*Art* is not in the neighborhood; *Art* is only the guy that lived down the street.”

In order for us to acquire Black art we would sometimes drive to New York City, visit an artist's studio, then travel to northern New Jersey to visit several other artists' studios. After repeating this ritual at the rate



The October Gallery Catalog

was first published in the late 1980s. It was one of our biggest educational tools. Information about prints, posters, originals and artists' biographies was included. This helped to educate our customers. Today the catalog is a collector's item.



The October Gallery credit card and our first business card.

of three or four visits in one day, we would make our selection and return to one of the studios and complete a purchase.

This new task took time, energy and resources. We realized that for this kind of effort, this kind of difficulty, we might better serve ourselves and others with similar interests by putting an art collection under one roof. It seemed to us that other people might gravitate to our artistic findings.

The excitement of stumbling upon a product so hidden yet so rich in culture and expression was the catalyst that started kitchen-table discussions and ultimately gave birth to October Gallery.

Mercer and I opened October Gallery in 1985. Originally, we added mainstream art to the inventory, unsure whether an exclusive Black art concept could stand alone. A short time later, my friend Cheryl

Patchin visited us at the gallery. She had operated a gallery a few years before and gave us the one piece of advice that set the course for the gallery from that day forward. She said, "Why should I come to October Gallery for a Dali', an Erte' or an Icart? I can get that art in almost any other gallery. African-American art is unique. You should promote that. Then, there is a reason to come."

What Cheryl said rang true for Mercer and me. We knew instinctively that it was the right move to make. And the following day there were sale signs on all the art that was not African-American. We would make the transition and provide a one-stop-shop for the exhibiting, marketing, viewing and purchasing of African-American art.



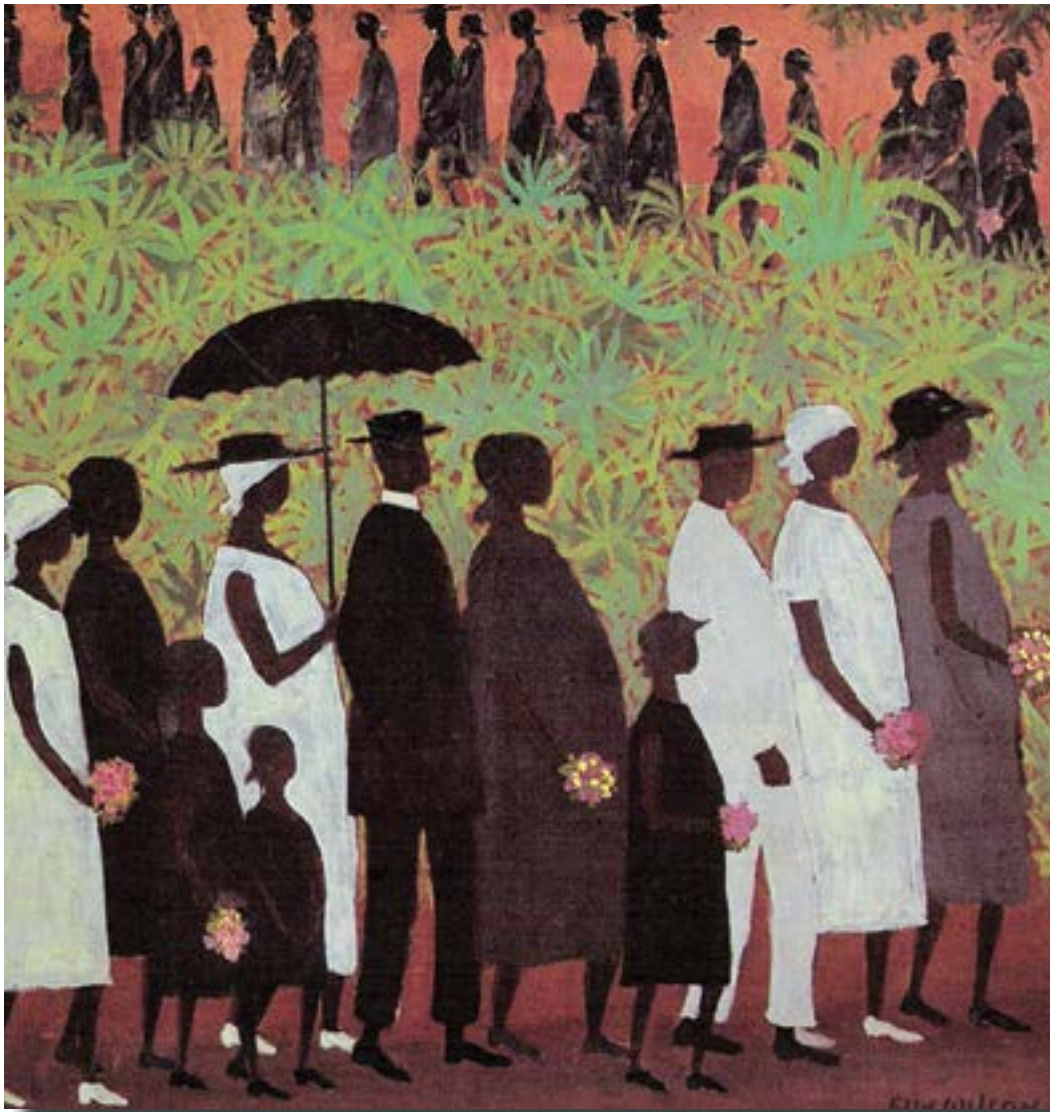
"Art is no extravagance" was an article written by one of our staff members. Education has always been the cornerstone of October Gallery.



Sugar Shack by Ernie Barnes.

Some forces were already at work while we were finding our way and building the business. Norman Lear's creation of the *Good Times* TV show gave national prominence to the work of African-American artist Ernie Barnes. One of the show's main characters, J.J. Evans, played by Jimmy Walker, was cast as a gifted artist who painted in the living room of his TV home. But, in fact, California painter Ernie Barnes was the real artist. His famous painting, *Sugar Shack*, was featured on

the opening credits for the four years the show aired. Additional original pieces were commissioned and displayed on the show. This television story of the Evans family with their everyday trials and triumphs in the inner city seemingly impressed an audience of African-Americans who seldom saw themselves or their issues positively mirrored by national media. The situation comedy tactfully and comically handled subjects such as race, poverty and family.



Funeral Procession by Ellis Wilson, as seen on *The Cosby Show*.

The sitcom *The Cosby Show*, which featured a middle-class Black family, dominated prime-time television from 1984 to 1992. This popular comedy promoted positive values. Black art was prominently displayed in nearly every room in the home. This had a great impact. It established that Black art had value, and stimulated in viewers a desire to acquire it. Black art sales grew exponentially as a result. *The Cosby Show* greatly enhanced our efforts to promote Black art in our gallery.

From the beginning, our vision was that art should be for everyone. We wanted everyone to feel a connection

to art: factory worker, doctor, salesman, teacher, bus driver, lawyer, dishwasher, stock boy and cashier. Since there were so few African-American art galleries, we understood that education would be the key to the gallery's long-term success. To educate and ultimately attract patrons, we could not allow barriers to disconnect them from the art. We especially could not allow exclusionary practices to limit the number of people who were taught and included as patrons of the gallery.

The art
education
process
involved
not only the
physical aspect
of taking
art home
but also the
philosophical
discussions
about how and
why
Black art fits
into our lives.



Artist Claude Clark, Sr. lectures at October Gallery in 1987.

All events at the gallery, from day one, were always free to attend. Our staff was trained to educate the client first and sell second. The educational component started as soon as the client entered the gallery. Our staff was taught to help patrons feel comfortable. Price was never to be an issue. If someone liked a piece of art, October Gallery would find a way to enable him or her to purchase it.

October Gallery initiated an internal financing system where a client could purchase art using post-dated checks and/or credit card payments with no additional finance fees. We produced booklets and pamphlets for the sole purpose of educating our clients about simple concepts such as the difference between an original painting and a limited-edition print or the difference between a serigraph and a lithograph. As we entered our 21st year of connecting people with art, we often saw patrons who by then had acquired a significant collection of African-American art. Some were early participants in our informal art education. We like to think that we were a vital influence in awakening the collection of African-American art. We salute those with sizable and valuable collections for becoming strong examples for others to follow.

The art education process involved not only the physical aspect of purchasing art for the home but also the philosophical discussions about how and why Black art fits into our lives.

We have always believed that the life enhancement that a piece of art generates for a collector is the most important reason to acquire artwork. This means that a collector's motivation should not be based solely on whether a work of art will appreciate financially. Rather, it should also be based upon a kinship, a connection with the essence and life force of the work. Corrine Jennings of the Kenkeleba Gallery in New York City says it well: "The thing about art is that you only hold it in trust. There's a living spirit in a great work of art. If you see it only in terms of its monetary value, the circle of communication is incomplete." Mercer and I agree.

An astute art collector will recognize the value of an artist's work long before the investment-oriented art collector takes note. At October Gallery, we say it is well to develop a sensitive eye for intrinsic aesthetics when obtaining artwork. First, find the valid aesthetic reasons to purchase; then consider investment appreciation. Should a piece of art appreciate, that is an added benefit. African-Americans are purchasing Black art because some have more disposable funds as well as a strong motivation to collect art and support Black artists. In addition, many African-Americans want to make a cultural statement concerning their identity that the designer dress, home theater or Range Rover can not make. We believe that members of other ethnic groups purchase Black art because it offers a means to diversify an already established collection.

In our early days, around 1986, a year or two after we opened, a Black couple came into the gallery. They were extremely well dressed; she wore a beautiful fur coat. One could not miss the beautiful black Mercedes sports car they had parked in front of the gallery.



Inside the gallery at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.



October Gallery's Charlene Landon (left), artist Robert Jefferson (center) and Evelyn Redcross at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.



Artist Joseph Holston (left), Evelyn Redcross, Bob Russell and Mary White at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.

The gentleman said, “I don’t know anything about art, but folks are telling me that my wife and I should check you guys out.” They looked around, and based solely on October Gallery’s having been recommended to them, and the fact that African-American art was the exciting “new thing,” they purchased three Romare Bearden lithographs for \$2100 (\$700 each).

A number of years later the gentleman came back to the gallery and asked if we could resell two of the Bearden’s he and his wife had purchased. About ninety days later we sold them both. When we informed the gentleman of this development, he gave us the following instructions: He needed a certified check and it had to be made payable to a particular Historical Black College and University (HBCU). Mercer said something about it being a shame that he had to sell such nice pieces of art, then added: “But one does what one needs to do.” The gentleman said, “No, it’s not like that.” He explained that his son was going to attend an HBCU that September, and that this check would help pay his fees. He was delighted that his family had enjoyed and treasured the art as part of their living environment over a number of years.

These pieces of Black art had enhanced this family’s life and now would help pay for their son’s college education. The gentleman indicated he could not have realized such a recompense from the sale of, say, his Mercedes. The fact that African-American art, a facet of African-American culture, could help send his son to an HBCU was exhilarating. By the way, the check was for \$3500. What a smart investment!

We told this story over and over again in our seminars to demonstrate art’s value and its ability to enhance one’s life and benefit one’s financial situation. People would say to us that trying to teach people about art is a tall order. It could take forever, they would say, and one could go broke in the process.



Artist Reba Dickerson Hill (left) and TV personality Trudy Haynes at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.



Ishana and Glenda, our first real sales team.



Weddings and other social functions are held at October Gallery. Here Stanley and Pearl Anderson exchange vows.



Lancaster Avenue head picture framer W. Sanford Redcross (right) with Mercer Redcross.



Terri Fletcher “working” at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.



Dr. Selma Burke (left) visits 3805 Lancaster Avenue and talks to Artist Reba Dickerson Hill.



Patrons Shirley and Junious Rhone Sr., visit October Gallery.



Head picture framer Jeremy Sustare at the Philadelphia International Art Expo.



Former State Representative Gordon Linton (center) at October Gallery.



From left to right: Former Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia Constance Clayton, Lamar Redcross, Evelyn Redcross, TV Personality Ukee Washington and Tessie Varthas, lead academic coach in the School District of Philadelphia's Office of the Performing Arts.

Mercer has often told the following story in response to this admonition. There was an old man who would walk along the beach as the tide brought the starfish onto the beach. The old man knew that if a starfish did not get back into the water in short order, it would die. So the old man went along the beach and started throwing the starfish back into the water, one at a time. Now, keep in mind that there were thousands of starfish on the beach, and this old man grabbed one at a time, throwing each back into the water. As this was happening, a young man came along and looked at the old man and said, "Are you crazy? There are thousands of fish on the beach. You can't throw enough fish back into the water to possibly make a difference." At that moment the old man picked up another starfish and threw it into the ocean. He looked at the young man and said, "Made a difference to that one!" The old man's approach is like our approach to educating people about art. We do it one client at a time, one couple at a time, one class at a time.



Photographer Raymond W. Holman Jr. (right) with Junious Rhone Sr., at 3805 Lancaster Avenue.



Gallery manager Angelina Bell at the Philadelphia International Art Expo.

October Gallery believes that art is for everyone. We like to compare ourselves to the Marriott Hotel chain. The Marriott is neither the Ritz Carlton nor Motel 6. It is a mid-range hotel. The company's Web site states that the hotel offers packages of "fun filled days and wild nights that will fit any family's budget without breaking the bank." At the Marriott one can get an expensive or an inexpensive room depending on availability. October Gallery's marketing philosophy is similar to that of the Marriott. We offer an art experience that will fit anyone's budget, that does not have to break the bank. October Gallery's average sale is between \$400 and \$800. The Gallery's prices range from \$25 to \$25,000.

October Gallery opened for business in July of 1985, at 3805 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It operated from this location for nine years. The gallery has since moved to 68 North 2nd Street in Philadelphia. During the 1990s October Gallery operated six locations: two in Philadelphia; one in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; one in Echelon, New Jersey; one in Burlington, New Jersey; and one in Washington, DC.

People often ask, "Where did the name 'October Gallery' come from?" We tell them there is a relationship between the tenth month of the year and October Gallery. Think about it! The month of October and October Gallery both exhibit the magnificence of beauty and color, one through nature's multicolored autumnal arrays, the other through artists' eyes.

October comes in the fall, when the colors of nature change. Leaves on the trees change from variations of green to combinations of orange, red, purple, yellow and brown. These variegated arrays are similar to the many colors on an artist's palette; hence, the name October Gallery.



Artist Jonathan Pinkett at October Gallery Express (The Gallery at Market East Mall, Philadelphia, PA).



Activist Dick Gregory and artist Jeffrey Glenn Reese.

AUTUMN DANCING IN THE HILLS

Jeffrey Glenn Reese

*Old autumn, you're so senile
forgetting all about summer
doing whatever winter tells you to*

*Jazz bellows from the passing breeze,
it's so kool so hip*

*The purple the pink
the blue passion clouds,
on a highway to Cairo lasting
forever and three days*

*Mammoth my friend with
your dancing rusty tree freckles*

*The sun has kissed your cap away
only leaving brown sugar to caress your base*

*Pushing you vertically to lick the
cotton candy at your summit*

*Me the sun has mounted itself
atop my mountainy friend
as if it were a trophy*

*Dancing with every step I take
never losing pace or virtue*

*I can feel a Zulu beat vibrating from inside me,
rhythmatically steady the leaves all around me*

*Hand painted by my Father
speckled with tears*

*On them delightful faces
enticing the right side of my brain*

*Swaying cottontails guide me,
redder robins are laughing,
pussy willows are calling me,
crabgrass clutching my toes,
a cascade gently applauds me*

*While washing clean rocks clean
and sorrow bitter sorrow
To the pass*



Artist and poet Jeffrey Glenn Reese.

Jeffrey Glenn Reese showed up at October Gallery around 1995. He is a young energetic artist from New York with lots of viewpoints. Besides being a good visual artist, he is a great poet. From time to time we asked Jeffrey to perform his poem about autumn, at gallery functions.

We are extremely grateful and happy that Jeffrey agreed to let us use his words as our signature poem for October Gallery. Thank you, Jeffrey Glenn Reese, and may God always bless you!



Chet Taylor filming video at October Gallery,
The Gallery at Market East-Mall, Philadelphia, PA.



October Gallery Cart, Cherry Hill Mall, Cherry Hill, NJ.



October Gallery, The Gallery at Market East-Mall,
Philadelphia, PA.



October Gallery, Burlington, NJ.



Artist Bernard Hoyes (center) with gallery
manager Lenette DeLoatch (left) and picture
framer Laura (right) at October Gallery,
217 Church Street, Philadelphia, PA.



Soul Food author LaJoyce Brookshire (center) at her book
signing, stands with the Redcrosses at October Gallery, 68 N.
2nd Street, Philadelphia, PA.

THE ART OF GIVING

October Gallery has always supported the communities it serves. Over a span of twenty years, we have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in art, services and other gifts. This is no small feat considering we are a small gallery. There are community groups and organizations that, like clockwork each year, request from us a donation of art, which they then use for a raffle or a door prize so as to promote a cause. Other beneficiaries include politicians, civic leaders, heads of corporations, and other individuals to whom we give original art (valued in the thousands of dollars) in an effort to promote the art and the artists. October Gallery has also donated cash to a number of groups. We believe our type of gifts enable the public to make a “conscience connection” to Black art. We understand that if we want people to consider making art a part of their daily lives, we have to get the art “in their faces.” October Gallery gives in both good and lean years.

We call the good years “autumn gold” (the month of October being in autumn). These are the years that profits are high and expenses are low.

The lean years we like to call “the dark side of autumn.” These are the years when just paying the phone bill is a hurdle.

A company should not exist just for profit. Yet profit is essential if it is to do good things in the community. No margin! No mission!



From left to right: Cassandra Lockerman Robinson, Carter Borden, Oliver Franklin and Tina Tiller at an October Gallery art auction.



Tina Tiller (standing) at an October Gallery art auction: “Going! Going! Gone!”



My man extraordinaire, Horace Wright at an October Gallery art auction.

“If it doesn’t kill you, it will make you stronger.”



Keepin' the Faith by Andrew Turner.

Speaking of the phone bill, many years ago the telephone company called to notify us that they would disconnect our service if we did not pay the phone bill first thing Monday morning. We had postponed the paying of this bill for some time, and now we realized we were out of options as far as the telephone company was concerned. Mercer called a client in Washington, DC who had expressed interest in the Andrew Turner serigraph “*Keepin' the Faith*” some months earlier.

We had tried to contact this lady on several occasions with little success, but we finally made contact on Friday, the Friday before the Monday when the phone was to be disconnected. Mercer convinced her to purchase the Turner serigraph at a discounted price of \$400 (\$9 more than the amount of the phone bill). At that time the retail value of the serigraph framed was somewhere

around \$900. There were only two conditions for getting the art at this greatly discounted price. She had to pay cash and she had to buy that weekend.

Mercer quickly framed the art using a black metal frame, put it in the car and drove 144 miles to Washington, DC to deliver it on Saturday. When he arrived, the lady indicated that the frame color was wrong. She said she had specifically requested that the metal frame be gold, not black. As Mercer looked around her home, he saw that all of her art was framed in gold. Though he pled with her to take the art as it was, she

persisted. Mercer realized that in his rush to make the sale, he had perhaps forgotten her request regarding the frame. To make matters worse, the client told him that she was going out of town Sunday morning, and that if he wanted to close the deal, the art had to be back in Washington, correctly framed, by Saturday evening. So Mercer put the art back in the car, returned to Philadelphia, reframed the art in gold and took it back to Washington.

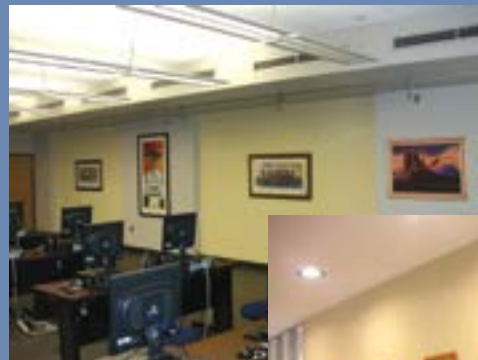
Needless to say, he closed the deal and the phone bill was paid on Monday. As the old folks used to say, “If it doesn’t kill you, it will make you stronger.” Even in challenging times like those we just described, we continued our practice of giving. As the Sinatra song goes, “Even when my chips were low, I found some for giving.”

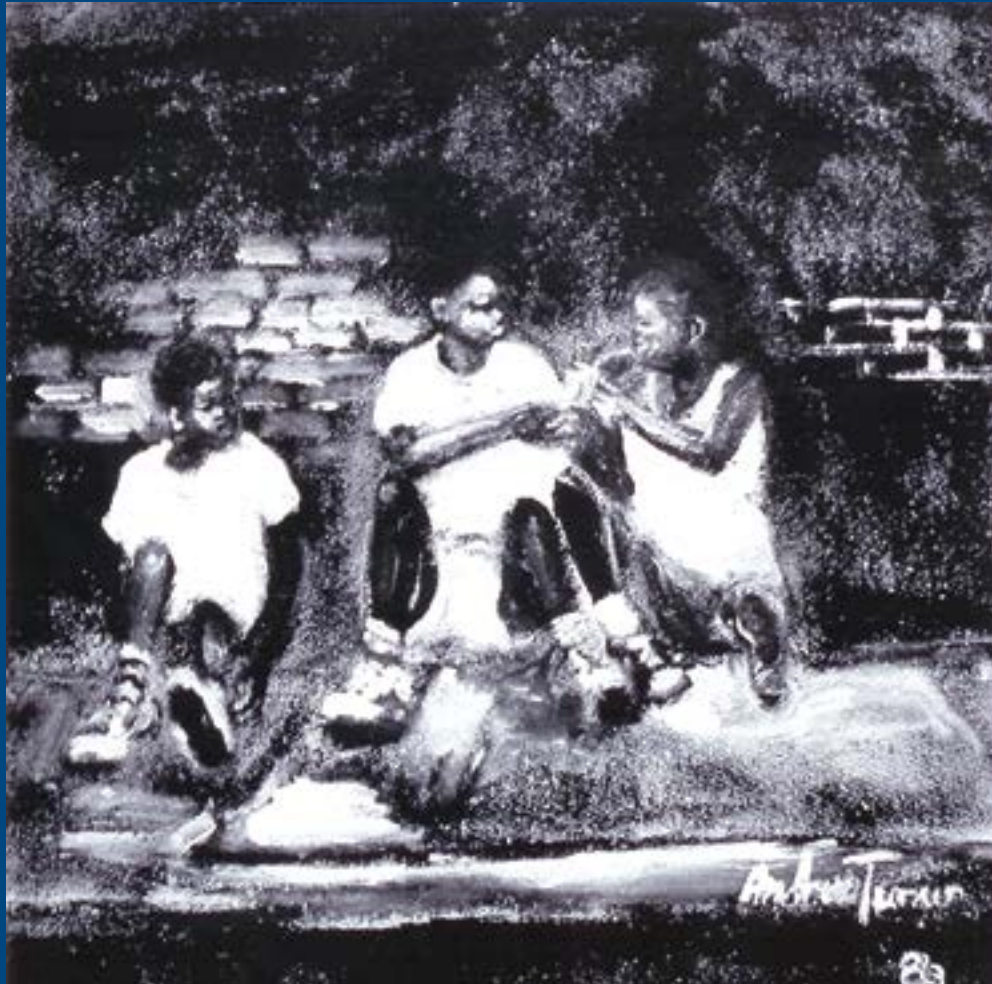


Cheyney University of Pennsylvania is America's oldest historically Black institution of higher education. Founded in 1837, Cheyney will celebrate 170 years as an institution of higher learning in 2007. By February, 2007 October Gallery will have completed its donation of 170 artworks to Cheyney University Of Pennsylvania to help mark this historical occasion.

Mercer received a Bachelor of Science degree from Cheyney in 1971. He says besides receiving a great education he remembers the care, compassion and interest that the faculty shared with the students at Cheyney. What he says he is really giving back is the love and cultural experience that Cheyney gave to him and thousands of other African-American students for 170 years.

Cheyney University





Learn to Share by Andrew Turner

The Philadelphia Inquirer
DAILY MAGAZINE
 PEOPLE • HOME • MOVIES • THE ARTS • TV • STYLE

In the business of giving



Mercer Redcross owns October art galleries in Center City and West Philadelphia with his wife, Evelyn. They donate to a wide range of causes. He says customers demand that businesses they patronize be "socially responsible."

St. John's Hospice

1221 Race Street
 Phila., PA 19107-1694
 (215) 563-7763

TO HELP THOSE IN NEED
 ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHO CARE

October 22, 1990

Ms. Angelina Bell
 General Manager
 October Gallery
 3805 Lancaster Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Ms. Bell,

We cannot thank you enough for inviting St. John's Hospice to participate in the 5th Annual African American Art Expo at the Adam's Mark Hotel on September 29 and 30, 1990.

Our hearts were filled with gratitude when we saw all the canned goods that was collected. It will help us immensely during the coming holidays and will enable us to give something special to the 400 to 500 men who come for their meal that, in many cases, might be the only meal they have that day.

Your generous gift of \$500.00 will help us to pay the day to day expenses in running the Hospice.

Again, we want to let you know how very grateful we are, because it is only by the support of people like yourself that we are able to continue feeding, clothing, sheltering and helping in other ways the poor and homeless who come to us.

Sincerely,

Bruce Malachy
 Bruce Malachy, S.S.S.



United Negro College Fund, Inc.

42 S. 15th Street, Room 1610 - The Robinson Building, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102 568-4240

October 11, 1990

Mercer and Evelyn Redcross
 October Gallery
 3805 Lancaster Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Mercer and Evelyn:

We are deeply grateful for your generous check to UNCF. You must know that your support over the years has meant a great deal to us.

I feel very close to your own mission and I am very appreciative that our mutual goals and ideals come together on behalf of the College Fund.

The Telethon this year is Saturday, December 29, 1990 at the Adam's Mark Hotel. I hope you are planning to be there for a check presentation on your contribution to us.

Sincerely,

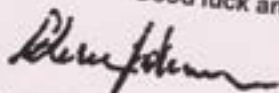
Carrolle Perry
 Carrolle Perry
 Area Director

Dear October Gallery:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank October Gallery for donating space to me to participate in the last five (5) Philadelphia Art Expos. These Expos have enabled me to promote and sell my art. This has been a great opportunity and I hope that we will continue our relationship in the future.

Also, I would like to thank you for framing my artwork from time to time at no charge.

Good luck and best wishes,



Steven Johnson



College Access Program
The Philadelphia Scholars

October 17, 2001

Mercer and Evelyn Redcross
October Gallery

Dear Mercer and Evelyn:

I am responding to Evelyn's request that I send you a formal letter identifying both your direct contributions to The Scholars endowment and those you have generated indirectly.

Attached are three donor reports relevant to your request; the first is a record of your direct gifts, the second is a record of the Rohm & Haas Company's gifts; and the third covers funds raised at the 1997 Art Expo. As you can see, you have contributed \$15,946.00 directly to the endowment. At your direction, Rohm & Haas gave \$1,500 in honor of Black History Month in February of 1999. In addition, we raised \$1,711.00 in donations for our "pin sale" at the 1997 Art Expo. The funds raised at the art auction that you organized at the 2000 Art Expo are included in your direct donations. As you know, you wrote us checks totaling \$6,000; one covering our share of the auction's proceeds and one for \$1,000 pledged to you on our behalf from the Seagram Company. Your total efforts both direct and indirect therefore add up to \$19,157.00.

Please let me know if these reports are not consistent with your records. If we are missing any gifts you made or that you generated, we want to correct our records.

Thank you for these donations. Your efforts dating back to early 1992 have helped our students.

With our best wishes and outstanding support.

THE
ARTS
LEAGUE

University City Arts League • 4226 Spruce St • Philadelphia, PA 19104-4040 • 215.382.7811 • Fax 215.382.3329

October 12, 2001

Mr. Mercer Redcross
October Gallery

Dear Mr. Redcross:

Many thanks to you for the art works that you have donated from your gallery to our annual auctions. You have been extremely generous for the last four years. The value of the work that you donated was \$21,000. Our 20th auction will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2002. We will be contacting you for a donation yet again, and we hope that you can contribute.

We remain grateful for the support that you have given us.

Sincerely,

United Negro College Fund, Inc.

"A mind is a terrible thing to waste." ®

October 17, 2001

October Gallery
Ms. Evelyn Redcross

Dear Ms. Redcross:

On behalf of the United Negro College Fund, accept our thanks for your continuing support of our mission to provide access to college for deserving young men and women.

I am pleased to acknowledge your fund raising support of our 1998 gala and silent auction. The paintings and prints provided by October Gallery made a difference in the success of our auction. The paintings and prints sold that evening resulted in your contribution of \$4,700 to UNCF. Because of your generous support, UNCF member colleges and universities will be able to continue to operate efficiently and keep tuition about half that of private institutions nationwide.

Thank you for support and for believing as we do that "a mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Sincerely,

Open Arms Against Abuse Service

Whose mission is to Empower & Educate women and children who are victims of Family Violence

April 15, 2005

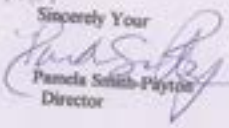
October Art Gallery
68 N. 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Redcross

Open Arms Against Abuse Service INC would like to thank you for your donation of artwork, your generous gift allow our fundraiser for battered women and children a success.

Again, We thank you, and we look forward to working with you in the near future.

Sincerely Your


Pamela Schlich-Playton
Director



June 14, 2004

Evelyn & Mercer Redcross
The October Gallery
68 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Evelyn and Mercer:

Thank you, again, for selecting Center in the Park (CIP) as a community partner for the October Gallery's 18th Annual International Art Expo, held in November, 2003.

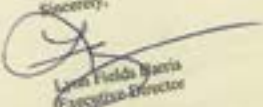
It was wonderful to have our older artists' works exhibited so prominently as a part of the Expo and to have the opportunity to gain exposure to such a tremendous audience of art lovers. Also, we sincerely appreciated your participation in our Night Out With the Arts Reception, as well as your sponsorship of Jazz at the Center, and the opportunity to present an intergenerational program on the opening day of the Expo.

Thank you for the final installment, which was recently received, of \$200, on the \$700 sponsorship from the October Gallery's Art Auction, which helped to defray the costs of Jazz at the Center, held in October, 2003, for the benefit of CIP's Dwight Dowley Endowment for the Arts.

Because of your generosity and promotion of our mission, we are able to continue to celebrate creativity, community connections and the endless possibilities of positive aging!

Thank you again for your support of Center in the Park and the more than 5,000 older adults we serve. We look forward to the October Gallery's 19th Annual International Art Expo.

Sincerely,


Lynn Fields Harris
Executive Director

3615 Germantown Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19144-2187
Tel: (215) 646-7722 • Fax: (215) 948-0979
e-mail: info@centerinthepark.org
www.centerinthepark.org



SPRUCE ADOLESCENT COUNSELING & EDUCATION CENTER, INC.

A Non-Profit Corporation
5046 Spruce Street • Philadelphia, PA 19139
Phone: (215) 471-2780 • Fax: (215) 471-5201

November 22, 2005

Mr. Mercer Redcross
October Galleries
68 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Redcross:

This letter comes to thank you for your generosity in donating several pieces of African-American art to the Spruce Adolescent Counseling & Education Center Annual Awards Banquet, which totaled \$1,965.00. Several people are still talking about the quality of the art.

I greatly appreciate your support of our youth program.

Sincerely,

Leonard W. Johnson, D.O.
LWJ/aw

Society For Helping, Inc.

Comprehensive Human Services for the Deaf & Hearing • Economically Empowering Persons
1323 W. Gwynedd Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Pres. Dr. Reptile M. Warren, President/CEO

August 28, 2005

Mr. Mercer Redcross
October Galleries
68 N. 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

RE: ART AUCTION DONATION

Dear Mr. Redcross:

We greet you with Jesus joy and trust that God is blessing you right now! Society for Helping, Inc. extends a heartfelt thank you for October Galleries' generous donation of \$500.00, all funds raised for our Scholarship Fund from the art auction given on Society's behalf. Society for Helping, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible. Our EIN is 23-2044643.

Again, thank you for your generosity.
We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Art Expo in November.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. Reptile M. Warren
Rev. Dr. Reptile M. Warren
Founder/Pastor

Jacqueline Taylor-Adams
Scholarship Auction Coordinator



REAL MEN COOK® FOR CHARITY – PHILADELPHIA
Father's Day Charity Event
June 18, 2006
Web Site: www.realmencook.com

March 13, 2006

Mr. Mercer A. Redcross, III
Vice President-Marketing
October Gallery
68 N. 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mercer,

On behalf of everyone in Philadelphia and nationwide associated with the Real Men Cook® event and its charitable arm, Real Men Charities, Inc., we extend our heartfelt thanks to you and everyone associated with the Philadelphia International Art Expo for your generous contribution of \$775.00. The fact that you were willing to extend us the courtesy of raising money for our cause through several art auctions held at the 2005 Expo speaks volumes about your sense of community. Additionally, you were very supportive of our food-themed art initiative, "The Art of Food." At the end of the day, this cooperative effort paid dividends for all concerned and further helped Real Men Charities spread its message and mission of health and wellness throughout the Delaware Valley in a fun and unique way.

We look forward to building on this support and collaboration in 2006 and beyond. Again, many thanks for allowing Real Men Cook® and Real Men Charities to be part of Expo 2005.

Sincerely,

Bruce B. Rush
Bruce B. Rush
Philadelphia Event Manager
Real Men Cook® for Charity





The Bright Lights Initiative

A program in the New Beginnings Nonprofit Incubator
Project of Resources for Human Development

P. O. Box 5506
Philadelphia, PA 19143
215-748-5454
www.thebrightlights.org
ann@thebrightlights.org

December 18, 2005

October Gallery
Mercer Redcross
68 N. 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Redcross:

The Bright Lights Initiative greatly appreciates your generous contributions and assistance in the production and publication of *The Bright Lights' Guide to the African Universe* as the Fall 2005 issue of PAINT. The publication continues to enrich and inform the many readers of *October Gallery's* magazine, *PAINT*, and is especially important for the Bright Lights.

October Gallery's contribution from the actual printing of the 30,000 copies of PAINT with 3800 copies specifically formatted for the Bright Lights, to consistent support from you and your staff in the complex areas of graphic layout, design and formatting, not to mention proof-reading, editing, and actual delivery of the 3800 copies to the Bright Lights Initiative.

A conservative estimate of your contribution of the printing and related cost to this publication is at least \$11,500. We thank you very much.

Always moving forward,

Ann Evans Guise, Director

For income tax purposes, this letter will also serve as your receipt and confirmation that, in consideration for your contribution, the Bright Lights Initiative did not provide you with any goods and services, in whole or in part, that would affect the tax-deductible amount of the gift. Rather, it is tax-deductible to the fullest amount allowable by law.

PLEASE KEEP THIS RECEIPT FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSE

The Bright Lights Initiative is a subsidiary nonprofit of Resources for Human Development, Inc. (RHD). RHD is a registered charitable organization. A copy of RHD's official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



We are proud to be Bright Lights. To inspire us everyday, we repeat The Bright Light Motto: "I will be bold. I will be strong. I will be courageous. I will work for positive change. I will learn something new every day."

ON THE ROAD

When we first opened October Gallery we realized that we could not develop the October Gallery brand with just the stand-alone art gallery. We decided to put on mini art shows outside the gallery walls. These local mini art shows were held in the lobbies of public buildings (where permission was granted), and at sorority and fraternity social functions. As we gained experience at creatively setting up small shows, we applied our savoir faire to bigger art shows, in other cities.

Produced and sponsored solely by October Gallery, these events were called Black art shows. The cities where these traveling shows were presented include:

Atlanta, GA	Baltimore, MD
Chicago, IL	Columbia, MD
New York, NY	Wilmington, DE
Los Angeles, CA	Montreal, Canada
Oakland, CA	Detroit, MI
Jacksonville, FL	Durham, NC
Sarasota, FL	Boston, MA
Washington, DC	

To prepare for these events, our framing department sometimes had to operate 24 hours a day. The volume of framed artwork needed for these shows was enormous. A special staff of about seven to ten people became the traveling team for weekend shows throughout the year. At the end of a show, we would celebrate by finding a soul food restaurant (if possible) and relaxing a bit before heading home.

The Black art show was part of the vertical integration strategy for October Gallery's branding. The shows were a good move for us. They elevated sales, but, more importantly, they broadened our customer base and helped sustain those relationships. It was also an excellent way to strengthen our brand regionally as well as nationally. Probably, the two best shows outside Philadelphia were the Washington, DC and Martha's



The Washington Hilton where some of our most successful Washington, DC art shows took place.

Vineyard shows. At the time, Washington seemed to us like a place where upwardly mobile young African-Americans wanted to be ethnically and culturally aware. They already owned

many of the accoutrements that money could buy, but they still wanted more. Along came October Gallery with a strong marketing campaign to reach these folk, and magic happened. Sales were great and the response was so positive we revisited the area often. On average, we hosted such shows in Washington at least three or four times a year from 1989 to 1995. This location generated an incredible market for our gallery.

As we recall those days, we think of our daughter, Stephanie. She was 14 or 16 years old when the Washington shows began. She had the most important job of all at these shows: as we got close to the end of the day, she had to sit on top of the briefcase that held the receipts (charge slips and checks). If she wanted to go to the bathroom, she had to let someone know first. Our staff and volunteers would say to her: "Don't you want to take a break? Aren't you tired?" And she would reply, "I'll move if you want to see my father have a heart attack."



Artist Chez Guest (left) and poet Trapeta Mayson at our Martha's Vineyard art show.



Siren's Song by Romare Bearden



Sorority by Brenda Joysmith

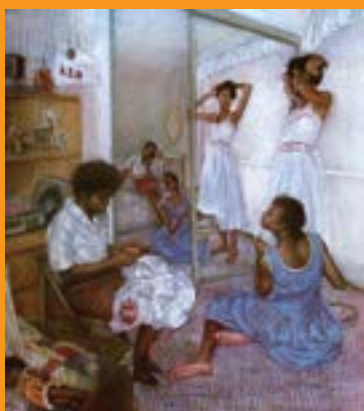


Abide by Charles White



Ethnic Dolls by Doris McGillan

Popular Artwork the Gallery



Delta Girls by Brenda Joysmith



Lantern by Romare Bearden



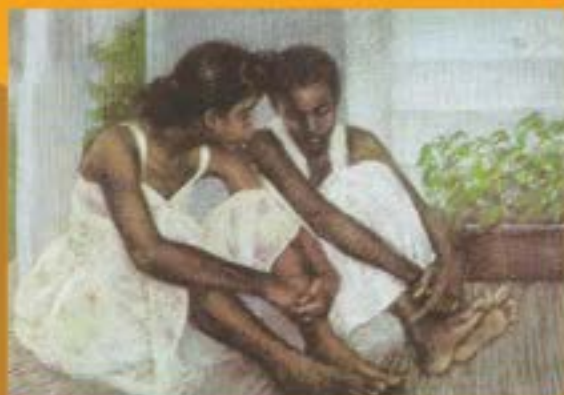
Oriental Landscape by Reba Dickerson Hill



Heart of the Day by Ellen Powell Tiberino



Last Supper by Cornell Barnes



Sisters and Secrets by Brenda Joysmith



He Ain't Heavy
by Gilbert Young



Moorish Chief by Charlemont

Sold on the Road



Lady in Red by Charles Bibbs



Madonna by Brenda Joysmith



Pas De Deux by William Tolliver



Up and Away by Robert Jefferson

We hosted shows in Martha's Vineyard for twelve consecutive years. Oak Bluffs, a town on Martha's Vineyard, was founded in the early 19th century as a Methodist summer camp. A century later, the town became an exclusive summer haven for well-off Blacks. Now all of the small towns on the island are popular vacation spots for Blacks, who go for reunions, tennis championships, shopping, private parties and beach parties.

Martha's Vineyard was rewarding for us. Our staff and people who helped us over the years always looked forward to the annual trip at October Gallery's expense. Unlike many vacation spots in the country, Martha's Vineyard was frequented by numerous Black families, who spent June through September there each year. Most brought disposable income with them and used it to satisfy their passion for acquiring African-American art.

By hosting shows on Martha's Vineyard, where summer vacationers came from far and near (from all over the U.S.), we gained more national exposure for October Gallery without having to leave the East Coast. A wide variety of high-quality art was displayed over a 4-day weekend, with excellent attendance. The setting for our exhibition—the Harborside Inn in Edgartown—was relaxed, friendly and warm.

We used a wide-screen TV and a VCR to expand the educational component of the show. We remember countless people who came to these shows just to learn from the videos. Videos described how prints were made (*Works of Art on Paper*), why one should buy Black art (*Welcome to the World of October Gallery*) and so forth. Lloyd Trotter, a vice president of General Electric, and his wife Terri, visited the shows many times. Once, they sat through an entire video on Jacob Lawrence's life and the Harlem Renaissance. They seemed quite pleased with the information and presentation. The other notables who attended



October Gallery manager Sandra Blakley loved Martha's Vineyard.



Map of Martha's Vineyard.



Taking a break in Martha's Vineyard. From left to right: Wade Redcross, Prate Bailey, Alan Burgess, Lamar Redcross, Doris Brown and Horace Wright.

October Gallery Art Show Ads of the Past

**BLACK ART
SHOW &
SALE**

**Sunday
March 25**
10 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Princeton Hyatt Regency
Rt. 1 at Alexander Rd.,
Princeton, N.J.

**FREE POSTER
WITH THIS AD**
**ADMISSION
FREE**
ALL MAJOR
CREDIT CARDS
ACCEPTED

**OCTOBER
GALLERY**
Philadelphia, PA
1-800-458-8602

SUN. OCT. 2ND
NOON TO 8PM
McDonald's Cafeteria
2812 Beatties Ford Rd.,
Charlotte

Free Admission
Free Print With This Ad

BLACK ART
SEMINAR & SALE
By October Gallery
215-629-3939

**BLACK
ART
SHOW &
SALE**

Saturday, April 21
10am to 6pm

Washington Hilton
Connecticut Ave. and
Columbia Rd. N.W.
Washington, D.C.

**FREE poster
with this ad
(one per customer)**

**Show benefits the
United Negro
College Fund**

**OCTOBER
GALLERY**
Philadelphia, PA.
1-800-458-8602

all major credit cards accepted
admission FREE

CHICAGO DEFENDER - Monday, May 15, 1989

Daley hit on move to end

by Chinta Strausberg

Mayor Richard M. Daley's move to abolish the Office of Municipal Investigations (OMI) and replace it with an Inspector General unit complete with subpoena powers that could be used to probe aldermen is being called "racist" by Ald. Robert Shaw (9).

The alderman called the creation of the new investigative office to look into alleged corruption "judicious, outrageous and anti-Black and an attempt to bring Blacks back to the plantation where his daddy had Blacks on for years," said Shaw.

"Daley is attempting to do something to silence his critics. When people elected him to be mayor, they didn't pick him as king," he added.

Shaw said he fears press leaks would prevail against Black elected officials in an effort to silence them and "tarnish their reputations."

Finance Chairman Ald. Edward M. Burke (14) said he could support the new office with certain safeguards he says would be needed to prevent political witchhunts; however, Burke did note that a similar office in New York has met with failure.

But the move is a good piece made the City Hall press announce Alexander former supervisor County State's Unit, to Council of change.

Vernon and Dale would invest contractors are regulated Ald. Sherie she welcomed adding that "most in around."

Daley said the ethics of the physical Hall.

He said the of the past as being a "pig janitors and clean "every Ironically, Daley lauded team and anticipate.

BLACK ART SHOW & SALE

SAT., MAY 20 - 10 AM - 8 PM
SUN., MAY 21 - 10 AM - 6 PM
THE HILTON AT HYDE PARK
4800 SOUTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE

- Show benefits United Negro College
- Major Credit Cards Accepted
- Bring this Ad for free unframed poster-one per customer

MEET MERRI DEE Sat., May 20 - 6:00-8:00 PM

October Gallery
Free Admission 1-800-458-8602



included Dr. James Comer, a Yale professor, and his wife Shirley (now deceased); Charles Ogletree of Harvard University; Cornel West of Harvard (now at Princeton University); Andy and Wendy Vincent; Earl Graves of *Black Enterprise Magazine* and Dr. Louis H. Sullivan, Secretary of Health and Human Services under President George H. Bush.

None of these traveling art shows would have been possible without our loyal and diligent friend and driver, Horace Wright, who has worked with us at October Gallery since its inception. Over the years, he has transported what has to be thousands of pieces of art valued in the millions of dollars, and has never lost a single piece of art. Horace saw to it that each piece was wrapped well and stored with care, something he is still proud of to this day.

While on the road, many instances made caring for the art a big responsibility. Without conscientious help, it would have been easy to leave art behind by mistake. Driving long hours over bumpy terrain or along unknown routes could have damaged the artwork had there not been someone there who cared.

There was one instance that Horace still talks about. The crew was on its way to Chicago for our show at the Hyde Park Hilton. They were driving along an interstate highway in a Ryder truck. A police car pulled them over and ordered everyone out. Horace realized the policemen were dead serious. They had their guns drawn and instructed our men to get down

on the ground. Horace started explaining right away. “There must be some mistake,” he said, and told the police that the truck was loaded with art en route to a Chicago art show. At this moment another Ryder truck sped past rather recklessly. The police, recognizing their mistake, got back in their cars and drove away. Needless to say, our guys were shaken to the core. This is one of many road hazards our crew endured.

By 1996, the Black art shows were finished. With many more art galleries in the marketplace and customers already primed for purchasing, October Gallery was forced to change its focus. Rather than continuing to travel all over the U.S., we had to give greater attention to the one show we had in Philadelphia, which was a diamond in the rough. Our new frontier would be the growth of the Philadelphia International Art Expo and the merging of art with technology. That year our Web site was created: octobergallery.com.

Today, our site averages between 300,000 to 500,000 hits per month. It has enabled October Gallery to reach external markets with nearly the same effectiveness as the traveling art shows once did. The site has become a promotional and advertising vehicle for the Expo, the gallery, artists, sponsors and partners. The Philadelphia International Art Expo is now our flagship event.



Our Driver Horace Wright.



October Gallery Artist
Coordinator: Adon Reish.



Artist and October Gallery
Sales Coordinator Charles Strawberry.



Gay Head Martha's Vineyard by Sam Benson



african-







I paint that which I love in this life, images from the Black community. I paint in the spirit of those whose lives have touched me. I express in my portraits an understanding of the dignity of my varied subjects.

Tom McKinney

Visual Artist
Philadelphia, PA



Sunday After Church by Tom McKinney.



October Gallery's first art exhibition featured artist Tom McKinney.



Pretty Eyes by Tom McKinney



I've always wanted to be a master artist. So, I found out that you cannot be a master unless you learn from one. I discovered that God was the greatest master, so I learned from Him.

Cal Massey

Visual Artist

Moorestown, NJ



The Creator inspires me. He puts whatever I need in me. I admit that I love Black women and like to use them in my art.

When I see young people look with respect and appreciation for the art of today, I think of Sankofa and how we must go back to the past to understand the present.

Frank Frazier

Visual Artist

Dallas, TX



It is still a good time to be an African-American visual artist. I say that because the opportunities are endless. You can go as far as your imagination will take you. The opportunities for licensing and publishing have never been more lucrative than they are today. The business opportunities in the art industry or art market are as realistic as your will and ability to capitalize on it. Building a legacy is a concept that is achievable because of these numerous opportunities. Building timeless, personal legacies within a family and a business is a concept with which I have put forth all of my energy. The process is not an easy one, but I enjoy waking up every morning knowing that there will be new challenges to overcome and more goals to achieve.

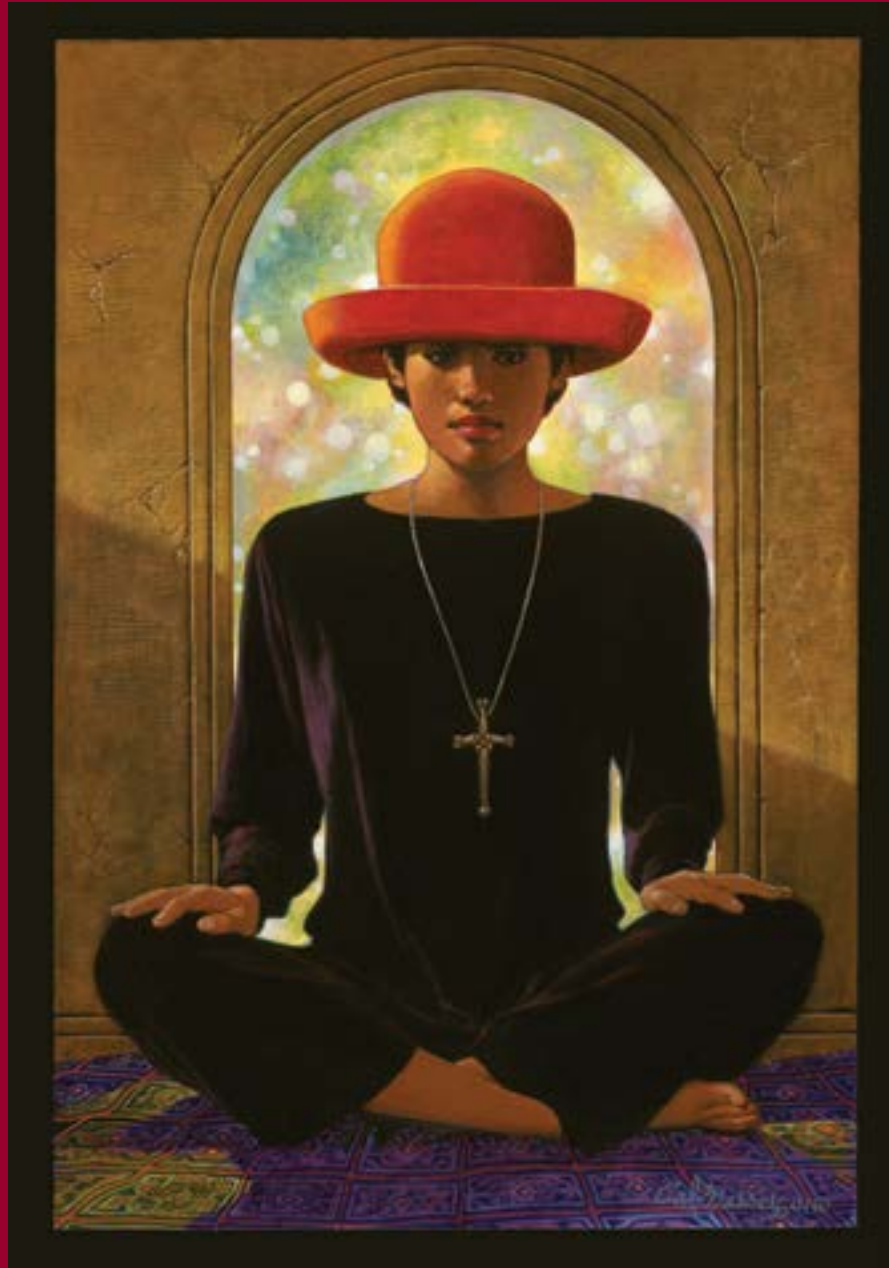
Although I've been in this business for 30 years, I still get chills when I see a young couple or an individual buying African-American art for the first time. The joy I feel when collectors boast to me about how many pieces of art they have in their homes is energizing. It gives me that feeling I need to continue my pursuits with aggressive determination.

In closing, I would like to give thanks to the October Gallery family, whom I have had a strong relationship with for many years. There are few people in this business who have the love and care for artists that Evelyn and Mercer Redcross do. They made a commitment to this business many years ago, and today they are continuing their business legacy toward a bigger and better tomorrow.

Charles Bibbs

Visual Artist

Moreno Valley, CA



Lady in Red Hat by Cal Massey



"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36

My love for aesthetic creations had its inception first in music. To paraphrase the words of Longfellow, it filled the night and chased away the cares that infested the day.

Later, my mind became a fertile ground for the wonderful words of Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. The intricate musical artistry created by Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Illinois Jacquet and Duke Ellington inspired my love for true musical genius and talent. The magical brush and the gifted chisel of such artists as Annie Lee, Andrew Turner, Henry O. Tanner, Augusta Savage and Isaac Scott Hathaway provided beautiful constructs of African-American life. These are but a few of the aesthetic masters who have exposed us to the true "soul" of Black folk and who, through their artistic contributions, have enhanced my life and strengthened my soul.

Samuel Ferguson, Ph.D.
Retired University President
San Francisco, CA



The brilliance of African-American art lies in the diversity of its full expression of culture. For generations the stories of the African-American experience have been captured through the hands of Black artists. Whether using vibrant strokes of color or the simplicity of charcoal, African-American art speaks to humanity in all its splendor and majesty.

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
United States Congressman
Mrs. Renee Chenault-Fattah, Esquire
News Anchor NBC-10
Philadelphia, PA



Untitled by Gerald Branch



Loving art the way we do, especially African-American art, has caused us to see it as a necessity in our lives. We need to have it around us.

Also, we think it reflects the complexity of African-American culture, the heartbeat of our culture.

Not only can we see and feel the rhythmic beauty, pain and evolution, but also, we can see ourselves.

The Honorable Vincent Hughes

Pennsylvania State Senator

Sheryl Lee Ralph

Actress/Activist

Philadelphia, PA and Los Angeles, CA



I remember, as a young girl, marveling over the beauty of African-American art displayed at two universities, Fisk and Tennessee State, in Nashville, my hometown. At that point in time, very few of us had Black art in our homes because the commercial establishments did not sell it and there were no Black art galleries in the city. And so we decorated our walls with whatever we could find that matched our décor, subconsciously knowing that no matter how expensive the piece, something was missing.

Then suddenly things changed. Retailers discovered that beautiful works by African and African-American artisans were an untapped market with an inexhaustible demand. Galleries, exhibits and art shows for us and by us have thrived and flourished. Ever since that time I have filled my home with original works and prints that are positive images of us. I happily have made many November treks to Philadelphia to feast on the wealth of beauty and talent that comprise the annual October Gallery International Art Expo. (The 2003 signature print graces my fireplace!) But most of all, I am proud to say that my son will grow up with an appreciation for our artistry as the norm in his life, rather than the exception. In this regard, I can say with absolute certainty that times have changed for the better.

Marilyn Gross

Consultant

Landover, MD



Shotgun Third Ward by John T. Biggers

Who developed the image on the dime?

The portrait of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the dime was created by Dr. Selma Burke, remarkable sculptor, dedicated teacher and winner of the 1943 competition sponsored by the Fine Arts Commission for the District of Columbia. In 1944, President Roosevelt posed for the artist and her completed bronze plaque was unveiled by President Harry S. Truman in 1945. It can be seen at the Recorder of Deeds building in Washington, D.C. Since the coin bears the initials of the engraver, John Sinnock, Selma Burke has never received proper credit for the portrait used on the dime.

Robert Perkins said of Selma: "Selma Burke's artwork is everywhere—from grocery store cash registers to candy vending machines to your very own wallet."

Power and Glory by Charles Bibbs
(on opposite page)





African-American art is important because it speaks of our unique expressions. It comes from our heart, soul and unique experiences.

Phyllis Yvonne Stickney

Actress
Los Angeles, CA



I purchase African-American art because it expresses the truest beauty and complexity of our people. It defines our past, present and future through form, scenery, music and familial themes. The colors are bold and striking or subdued pastel, expressing our emotional depth. This is what I want for my sanctuary.

Sheila Davis

Writer, *Paint Magazine*
Louisville, KY



Locks by Elliot Zunidza



We don't fully realize how we are affected by the images we see and surround ourselves with. For decades, African-Americans endured images of others' realities in our homes, churches and institutions, as well as on grocery shelves, greeting cards and magazine displays, etc. Now, there are a great many worthy images and artworks depicting our lives, speaking to our souls, revealing our truths and tickling our fancies. These images are all created by African-American artists and artists of other ethnic backgrounds who were compelled to portray the experiences of our remarkable people.

Kathy L. Jackson

Owner, Perfect Touch Graphics & Framing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA



Most of our art buyers want to enhance their visual surroundings. They want to feel good when they walk into their homes. Still, others purchase art because certain pieces will stimulate their inner being.

Over a period of time, customers begin to realize that art can be more than something beautiful to look at. It can also be a wise investment, whether for the buyer or their children, to pass on as a family heirloom. But, no matter how costly or expensive a piece of art is, or what its ultimate worth in dollars and cents is, if you do not feel good about it, then what is the value?

Barry Lester

Paul Williams

Attitude Exact Gallery
Washington, DC



Folks Get Brown by Bisa Butler



I have been an art collector for over 20 years, and I have learned how personal art really is. My collection includes art from around the world that speaks to me for different reasons. I buy what makes me smile. The range of art by African-American artists is so incredible and varied that I love finding emerging artists as well as new pieces from the "masters." Encouraged by my mother, I developed a passion for the arts at an early age.

I was exposed to museums, galleries, theatre and classical concerts. Growing up, I was surrounded by my uncle's art (a visual artist in New York) who gave me my first piece of original art. Two of my brothers are artists in their own right.

October Gallery has found a way to bring artists from around the world under one roof, where art lovers can come out and see the best that African-American artists have to offer.

The Honorable Lisette Shirdan-Harris

Judge, Court of Common Pleas
Philadelphia, PA



Art has a living spirit and I try to connect to it.

Marine Maurin de Carnac

Art Collector
Paris, France



Jazz Lounge by John Holyfield



Angela P. Dodson

Editor

Michael Days

Editor, *The Philadelphia Daily News*
Trenton, NJ

Black art has been a part of our lives for so long, it just seems a natural part of who we are as individuals, as a couple and as a family. When we met 25 years ago, each of us had a few pieces, nice but not expensive. So continuing to collect just came naturally after we married.

From the beginning, spare cash went into art. We remember the first time we spent three figures for art and when we crossed the four-figure line. Once, we came home from separate business trips to find that each had stretched the budget on a piece of art. (Fortunately, we each loved the other's choice.) Our collection includes originals, limited-edition prints, masks and sculpture of the African Diaspora, as well as Black American memorabilia and a few contemporary, limited-edition collectibles.

For us, major milestones and holidays are more often than not celebrated with a gift of art to each other, and sometimes to and from friends or family. Vacations usually include at least one stop to buy art. We like to entertain, and our parties sometimes revolve around displaying a friend's art and buying a little for ourselves. At one of our parties, a guest was overheard asking how we could afford so much art, and another friend explained: "Have you ever noticed that Angela and Michael don't put money into fancy cars and some things that a lot of people do?" Art is something we value. Visitors now ask to tour the art in our house, and we have caught guests giving others the tour, authoritatively, with no need of assistance from us.

Our four children have grown up loving art, and our eldest son has mastered finding decent art on eBay and in thrift stores for his first home. We have even used our love of art to raise thousands of dollars for our church as October Gallery brings its auction to us each year.

Where the passion comes from is less clear, as we are not artists, other than as wordsmiths. We were lucky early on to meet Cheryl Sutton, an art specialist, who guided us in our choices and educated our palates. In later years, we met the Redcrosses and have learned more from them and acquired pieces we can be proud of for many years. Michael also meticulously researches every purchase, and we have built-up a library on Black art. We collect pieces that we care deeply about, and usually pieces we agree on, but we also plan purchases for investment. We want to have art not only for our enjoyment now, but also to build a legacy for our family.



Mornings by Romare Bearden



We collect art because of its visual appeal and historical significance, and for investment purposes. Our financial advisor can't compete with the rate of appreciation from our art collection.

Cathy and Walter Shannon

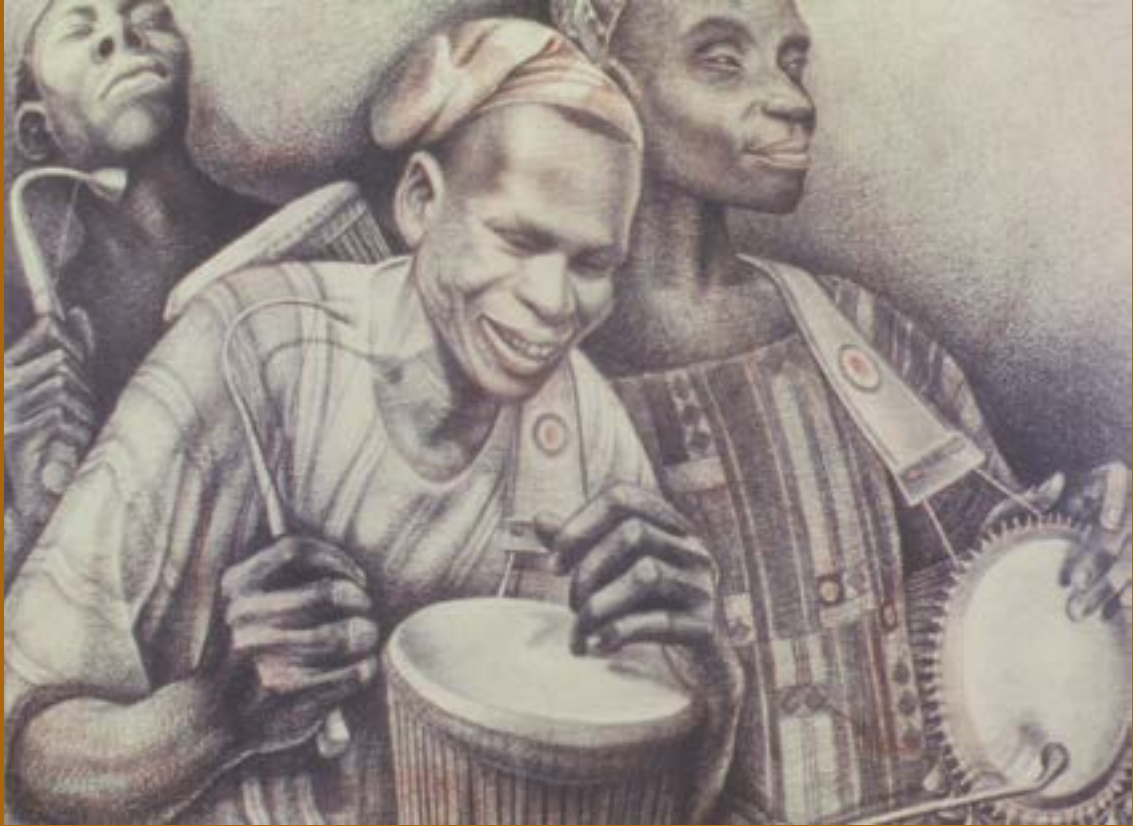
Owners, E&S Gallery
Louisville, KY



Heritage has not been a transitory occurrence for us. We have but to look at our African inheritance and what African-Americans have endured through slavery since setting foot on North American soil. The parts of our history, both painful and joyous, are not to be forgotten. Museums are our repositories of life, stories, images and memories. It is incumbent upon all of us to take care in how our story is told and how we wish to be remembered. We must be concerned about what is ours to present. There is no greater testament to the legacy of our ancestors than the ability to continue caring for important moments in time. We all have a responsibility to go on with collecting and preserving those significant periods, connecting the dots to what seems relevant today and presenting a vision for our future. Complacency should have no place in the preservation of our heritage!

Ramona Riscoe Benson

President & CEO, African-American Museum in Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA



Drummers of Ede by John T. Biggers

Who was the first African-American woman awarded a Ph.D. in art history and fine art?

Dr. Samella S. Lewis earned a doctorate from Ohio State University in 1951, becoming the first African-American woman awarded a Ph.D. in art history and fine art.



Living with Art



The first time I walked into a Black art gallery, I was mesmerized. Simultaneously, I felt a pride that I had never imagined before, as I viewed images that reflected me in beautiful and wonderful ways. Here were women and men in poses showing confidence, dignity and boldness. I knew immediately that I had to have one of these images in my home. I wanted to recreate that feeling on a regular basis. Also, I realized how wonderful it would be to have these pictures to inspire my daughter. So, I made a purchase. It was *Barefoot Dreams* by Brenda Joysmith. It still hangs in my living room.

That first purchase was only the beginning. It had satisfied a desire, but only momentarily. I wanted to recreate continually the experience and to see more art. I was hooked. At that point, there were few, if any, venues for experiencing African-American art. As a result, I returned to the gallery; a few months later, I bought another print. Then, a show or an artist would come to town, and I'd find yet another print to buy. The venues grew over the years, and now there are more shows, more galleries and more opportunities to buy wonderful art.

Suddenly, I realized that I had built a collection. I have surprised myself in doing it, and today my home has different types of art in each room. I think I am selective: I only have items with women and only with certain color combinations. But each day I can walk through my house, enjoy my personal art gallery and feel the joy and pride of my heritage in works of Black art.

Marilyn E. Dyson, Ph.D. (with daughter Angela Brown, M.D.)
Career Consultant
Philadelphia, PA



We collect African-American art because of the rich cultural heritage that it expresses. Our culture offers greatness by way of artistic expression.

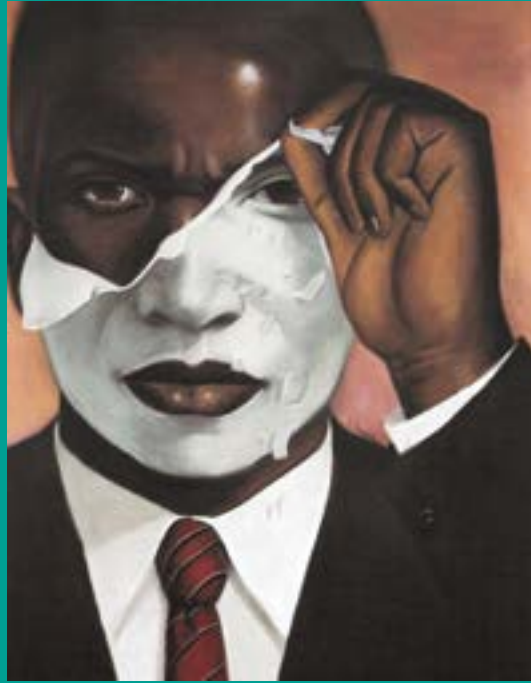
Rhonda and Kevin Reddick
Art Collectors
Kansas City, KS



My interest in African-American art spans almost three decades and was piqued when I joined the Board of Directors of the African-American Museum in Philadelphia. As a result of my affiliation with the museum and the Brandywine Workshop, I had the opportunity to meet personally with a number of artists and subsequently collect their works, including Romare Bearden, Sam Gilliam, Barbara Chase-Riboud and Huey Lee Smith, among others.

As a vital part of our cultural heritage, African-American art connects us to our past, provides us with a rich record of the present and is a portal to the future.

Doris Harper
Art Patron
Philadelphia, PA



Face Reality–Male by Laurie Cooper



Ballroom by Annie Lee



I would like to be a skilled and consummate draftsman. I try to use a collection of sensuous colors, often revealing mysterious hidden forms. I would love to convey the ability to see between the figures, melding and infusing them into an environment of endless nuances where abstraction and representational images are comfortable in the same space and where passion and humanity resonate. Once I learn to do this well, I will be obligated to pass this on, just as this information has been passed on to me. Thank God for our masters!

I also try to offer the rich evidence of love in the composition of ordinary Black people whom I've witnessed in my travels around the world. Men, women and children who are familiar, intimate and engaging have stories written all over them, waiting to be told. My goal is to expose these stories to delight the eye and to satisfy the spirit—in short, to make them live.

Paul Goodnight

Visual Artist
Boston, MA



I am a vessel called "artist." My inner being is exposed in the art that I create. My artistic vessel brings the truth to light. I attempt to depict humanness in all that I paint. I am a representative of our ancestors, bringing attention to their beauty and divine spirit.

I wish for others to explore my artwork and to experience growth through my paintings. As they question me about my creations and intentions, we both embark upon a journey. I learn from their questions, and this adds to my future artistic interpretations and expressions. I am influenced creatively by the circumstances of my culture. When I create, I hope my art, in turn, will influence the next generation.

Deborah Shedrick

Visual Artist
Baltimore, MD



Road to Rhythm by Paul Goodnight



I am an African-American who collects contemporary African Diasporal visual art images as fine art. I, and others in Chicago, maintain that it is important for the people of African descent in the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa to be in the forefront of acquiring and validating the creative images produced by the artists in their communities. And, by those collecting and promoting activities, be the first in naming those high-quality productions as fine art. This position does not preclude anyone from liking or acquiring anything that they choose. Art appreciation is for everyone, but art as a culturally defining concept belongs to a people, in a place, at a specific point in time. The more involved a people are in promoting their artists in creating images—in all of their manifold subject matters, concepts, and techniques—the clearer the direction will be as to where those people are going and a clearer description will arise of who they were. Visual images are important—important on the grand scale of culture and history and simultaneously important on the very personal level of contemplation, inner peace and sanity.

I love our visual images, just as most of us love and collect one or more types of our Diasporal music. And subsequently, I collect visual images with that same intensity. Within the realm of consideration for inclusion in my collection are images created by Diasporal artists of things seen, experienced, expressed or imagined and of concepts explored.

Over the past 30 years I have collected over 400 paintings, drawings, sculptures, collages, assemblages, etc., and have displayed them in a five-room space. Each of these pieces of art has spoken a message of its importance to me personally and has also revealed its importance to our culture here and now.

Cultural importance addresses that which should be honored, contemplated, promoted and enjoyed, but also those concepts and behaviors that should be thrown away and avoided. When asked, I counsel those debating the purchase of an artwork that they should, above all other considerations, acquire work that they like; get the work that they can live with as a companion, instructor, inspiration or confidant; and have the work that speaks to them now and has the ability to say, much later on, "But do you see the other messages that I contain?"

There are many standards (academic, economic, technical, etc.) that have been established in Western society for evaluating art and its quality. I do not reject them, nor do I slavishly subscribe to all of those standards when making a purchase. As an example, I accept that very good African Diasporal artists can be either formally trained or self-taught and can be unknown or un-shown. I believe the

more important "artist" question in evaluating an artwork for purchase is: "Did the artist, through the utilization of the materials and techniques available, impart quality and/or cultural innovation in the presentation of the visual message?" In regards to the act of collecting, that question puts an obligation on more of the Diasporal community to passionately seek out the creative images in the same manner as we seek out new and quality music. Our passion and critical ear for our own music has made its forms globally recognized and appreciated. We can do the same for our visual images with our collective critical eye.

When I listen to the current master collectors of African-American art speak on collecting, I hear a common message. They say to collect the artists producing quality work right around you. And if you do, they project, you will end up with an important collection. I, and many others in Chicago, have taken heed of that advice. We are giving special attention to the Chicago artists. We attend their shows, we invite them to our homes, we work together on common projects, we introduce them to other collectors and galleries, we write about them and we collect their original works. As a result, the atmosphere in the African-American art community in Chicago is now electric. Many more people have developed critical eyes and a passion for collecting contemporary art. We believe that will also occur in other African Diasporal communities across the globe when those communities are the first to claim the visual images created by their artists.

Patric McCoy

Environmental Scientist
Chicago, IL



The arts inspire and compel. They mirror the perfections and frailties of the human spirit. From the artistic works of Biggers, Catlett and Bearden to the performances of Whalum, Jamison, Coltrane and others, Black arts have served through the years to chronicle our heritage and define our culture.

At Artcetera we invite you to celebrate the arts; for it is in doing so that we come closer to discovering the best in ourselves.

Eugene L. Foney

Owner of Artcetera

Gwendolyn Ngozi Haydell

Staff Assistant

Houston, TX

Art has always been an integral part of Black life. Like music, dance and religious observances, art could not be separated from everyday life in traditional African cultures.

It was in our signs and symbols, our rituals and rites, our utensils and dress. It was life itself. Contemporary Black art serves no less a life-affirming function, even as it has been removed from its traditional utilitarian root. Art by African-American artists (and their brothers and sisters from the Black Diaspora) reflects a unique aesthetic that is influenced by, and in turn reflects, our political reality, our beliefs, our hopes, our aspirations. It invokes our memories and experiences. It helps us to connect with our inner spiritual self.

Whether you are reading the prose of Toni Morrison or reciting the poetry of Langston Hughes, whether you are listening to the compositions of Duke Ellington or the vocal artistry of Ella Fitzgerald, an encounter with a well-executed work of art has the power to elevate the spirit like few experiences can.

Lynn Porter

Byrma Brahm

Avisca Fine Art

Fine Art Dealers and Print Distributors

Marietta, GA



Garbage Man by John T. Biggers



I began collecting Black art because it is a connection to my world. When I view my art collection. I feel as if I am traveling through Africa. Each piece in my home is significant to me. I purchase art, not for investment purposes, rather for the visual comfort within my home.

When I walk into my home and look around, I get a warm feeling for something good that I have done. I can pass my art collection on to my heirs, and it can remain in my family forever. I bought my first piece of art, an Andrew Turner, at an October Gallery art show. Now, not only do I continue to attend their shows and add to my collection, but I have introduced many of my friends to art collecting. Good art calms and soothes me like good music.

Sylvia Pinkney

Art Collector
Washington, DC



Mention Art Expo to me and three names immediately come to mind: Billy Dee Williams, Andrew Turner and Chuks Okoye, three gifted artists whose works have been exhibited in Art expo venues throughout the U.S. and grace the walls of our home. It is my unbiased opinion that the future of African-American art and expos are interdependent.

Ron Granger

Art Patron
Glenn Mills, PA



Dedicated to Son House by Bisa Butler



Collecting African-American art is extremely important to me. African-American art is an adjunct to African-American history—indeed American history and world history. Too few African-Americans appreciate the importance of the concept of endowment of and preservation of our history. The collecting and the passing on of our art supports this concept in a mighty way.

October Gallery, particularly here in the Philadelphia area, has played an extraordinary role in exposing our community to this art; art that, for years, only a few African-Americans were familiar with. Each year tens of thousands attend October Gallery’s hugely successful Art Expo. WDAS FM Radio and WHAT AM Radio are among the growing number of African-American– oriented businesses that prominently display Black art pieces. October Gallery has played a major role in this phenomenon.

Kernie Anderson
Radio Executive
Philadelphia, PA



My interest in art was sparked by a mentor, the late John Allen Jr., founder of Freedom Theater in Philadelphia. He ignited my interest in the arts and cultural arena. John had an infectious energy and passion about art and everything artistic. He taught me that artistic and cultural organizations are an important part of any economic development strategy and enhance the overall quality of life in a community.

A picture of John Allen hangs in my office and is one of my favorite collectibles. Aesthetically, the piece brings a certain vibrancy and life to my legislative district office.

Dwight Evans
Pennsylvania State Representative
Philadelphia, PA



Locked in Prayer by Darian Robbins

THE AFRICAN LEGACY



Claude Clark, Sr.,
at October Gallery.

My (Evelyn's) art appreciation study at the Barnes Foundation was advocated by the late artist Claude Clark (1915-2001), a transplanted Philadelphian (born in Georgia) who later made his home in Oakland, California. It was during the late 1980s that I began classes at the Barnes Foundation, which is located on Philadelphia's Main Line in Merion. Clark himself had once been a student there.

After completing his education in the School District of Philadelphia, Clark studied at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art (now the University of the Arts) from 1935 to 1939, at Barnes Foundation from 1939 to 1944, at Sacramento State University from 1955 to 1958, and at the University of California at Berkeley from 1958 to 1962.

As I questioned him about learning to “see” art, he instructed me to register at the Barnes Foundation so that I might realize this objective. He talked about his own experiences there and gave me a bit of history about the Foundation’s importance to early African-American artists who studied there between 1920 and 1951. The carefully chosen fine art collection at the Barnes Foundation was the vehicle from which I was to learn. With each visit to Philadelphia, Clark would remind me to begin my studies. He was thrilled when I finally reported that I had kept my promise and had become a matriculant at the Foundation.

According to *The Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 1, Winter 1982, and according to Clark’s recollections, he and three other Black artists became alumni of the Foundation and subsequently taught art on the university level.

Dr. Albert C. Barnes, after whom the Foundation was named, amassed a vast collection of fine art paintings, drawings, African and Western sculpture and antique furniture. He designed the building to house his art.

He, along with educator John Dewey, established a progressive art education method that included the use of his famed art collection as examples for comparable analyses.

Barnes, with his supposedly controversial nature, frequently found himself viewed negatively in the media regarding his policy on determining admission to his art education program. It is reported that he allowed only those he and his staff considered “real seekers” of art education rather than status seekers, pretentious participants and the like.

Some Philadelphia educators were concerned about his zealous crusade to reform art education in Philadelphia schools and universities. His achievements, his progressive programs that embraced everyday people and his world-class art collection often became of secondary consideration compared to the contentions that his ideology brewed in academia and among the “well-to-do” on Philadelphia’s Main Line.

C
Claude Clark
788 Santa Ray Ave
Oakland CA 94610

Dear Evelyn:

It was good to hear your voice on the phone and learn more of what you are doing. I've enclosed the invoice for the prints that my son sent to you.

I am a little concerned about the amount of light coming into the window in town where the paintings are displayed. Is the window shaded by an awning or tall buildings most of the day? Direct sunlight will cause any paintings to fade. In my first show in Philly in 1944 one of my paintings in a window, received direct sunlight most of the day and was severely damaged after one month by the sun.

At the Barnes Foundation more

ago after a snow storm, Dr. Barnes closed the shades so that reflections from the snow would not harm the Barnes Collection of paintings. If your paintings are in a deep shaded window you shouldn't be concerned at all.

Please give our regards to Mercer and the rest of your family and staff.

Cordially,
Claude Clark



Claude Clark, Sr., (seated), art historian Steven Jones and Evelyn Redcross at October Gallery.

Clark said it was Dr. Barnes who invited him and fellow Black artists Aaron Douglas, Gwendolyn Bennett and Paul Moses to the Foundation to participate in some of the first classes in art analysis. Aside from these artists, Barnes also taught several Argyrol Factory workers (the factory that produced a drug patented by Barnes) and students from Lincoln University, all of whom helped to shape and propagate the teachings.

Barnes was supportive of Clark inside and outside the Foundation. Clark said that the principal of his former Philadelphia high school was very doubtful that the well-known Dr. Barnes would personally attend a celebrated exhibition of his artwork. Clark felt that in the City of Brotherly Love racial sentiments were still both subtly and openly expressed. Barnes did attend, the office of the doubting principal was crammed with Dr. Barnes, the trustees of the Foundation and several other prominent Foundation staffers. "We all marched into the auditorium," wrote Clark, "as the orchestra played *Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder*." John Dewey, who could not attend, mailed a letter to Roxborough High School congratulating Clark. Today, that letter is a prized collectible.

A second story that Clark recalled took place in 1949 while he was teaching at Talladega College, in Alabama. Because Blacks were not allowed at the University of

Alabama's new museum opening, Barnes convinced the keynote speakers to cancel their participation. Barnes' successful boycott of the museum was done in support of Claude Clark and in support of human rights.

So I found myself studying at the Barnes Foundation. The art and the information were so exciting that I continued for four years. We scrutinized each painting and object and considered the art periods and the traditions by which the art was influenced. Interestingly, without condescension, the Barnes classes gave credit to the influence of African art where they believed it applied.

In fact, a diverse collection of African sculpture was located on the second floor of the Barnes Foundation while I attended. The instructors referred to the collection, but the reference book *Primitive Negro Sculpture*, which discussed and illustrated the art forms, was listed as "out of print" in the Foundation's bookstore. Years later, Richard J. Wattenmaker, a former Foundation student, became one of my Foundation teachers. He gave me the book as a gift. I will always be grateful.

The book, published in 1926 and written by Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, openly acknowledges that critics trained in Greek standards may have had difficulty recognizing the importance of African sculpture. They go on to say, "Today it is impossible to deny its importance as an influence on contemporary art and the number is considerable of critics who place it among the world's great sculptural traditions." Guillaume and Munro were students of Dr. Barnes.

Guillaume and Munro say that most African art collections in museums around the world were collected primarily for their ethnological value rather than for their artistic merit.

The book analyzes the traditions, forms and intricacies of sculpture, including simple lines, angular planes and bulky versus slender renderings. The authors clarify

how the parts of a sculpture fit together.

Following is an interesting excerpt from the book:

"Nothing can justify art as good except its power of giving pleasure to someone, of satisfying and fulfilling the natural aesthetic impulses of a human being. If a person cannot get this pleasure from a Negro statue, after giving a fair amount of open-minded reception to its qualities, there is no reason for him to pretend to like it; he is simply not so constituted; for him it is not good art, whatever it may be for others. But, as has been said before, one's native powers of enjoyment are often underdeveloped or narrowed by habit or prejudice; some effort may be required to make oneself genuinely open-minded and receptive, to perceive distinctly the sights and sounds that are coming to him. Analysis that is devoted simply to pointing out the forms that exist in a work of art can never diminish enjoyment of them. It may seem to do so temporarily, while one is engaged in the drudgery of learning to see, feel and respond to new stimuli, as in learning to play the piano, or to read a new language..."
(Primitive Negro Sculpture, pages 44-45)

For me, one of the most powerful lessons learned at the Barnes Foundation is that getting pleasure from any artwork is not dependent upon knowing who created it, what it represents, what its name is or even what stories about it exist. The art stands for itself, without addenda, without colorful adjectives and persuasive add-ons, without the use of earphones or ceremony.

Clark was not only an artist but also a student of the culture of Africa and the African Diaspora. He was a great teacher and friend to me. To his knowledge, he was one of the first teachers of African-American Studies on the college level. He explained to me that there were no such departments in those years.

When he was first asked to teach African-American Studies, he said there was nowhere to turn for a reference. Consequently, after careful research, he created his own reference materials. His class, initially offered as an "inconsequential" elective for upperclassmen, was soon very much in demand.

My friend and teacher, Claude Clark, departed this life in 2001, one year before my own dear father passed away. It was because of this educator, who reminded me of my father, a man with large hands like Dad's, that I was connected to art. Claude pushed me to achieve and taught me for my own growth. I enjoyed the casual conversations we shared (that turned out to be instructional).

I shared the lessons I learned at the Barnes Foundation with my family, patrons and friends. The lessons have enabled us to realize that spending time viewing and musing about art, whether in one's home or at a gallery or in museums or at any other place, is a gift to one's self that leads to broader understanding and wider possibilities.



Rockin' Chair by Claude Clark, Sr.



I started collecting art by artists of African descent over fifteen years ago. My first piece was *Mother and Child* by Lionel Lofton. Since then I have collected works by various artists, including, but not limited to, Annie Lee, Glen Smith, Lee White, and Bernard Hoyes. The highlight of my collection is two originals by Andrew Turner (shown upper right). I am extremely proud of my collection. I believe that there is much to be learned from pictures. More importantly, as I matured in my collecting, I found that my taste continued to develop. Because of my diverse background and love of people, I gravitate toward pieces that convey cultural pastimes, traditions and trends.

Rina Fitzgerald
Art Collector
Charlotte, NC



Arts and culture are essential to the African-American community because they interpret and reflect the hopes, dreams, aspirations and accomplishments of a great people.

Shirley M. Dennis
Art Patron
Philadelphia, PA



Pool Hall by Annie Lee



My family and friends have dubbed me the “Collecting Queen,” a title that I admit is well deserved. I have been amassing collections of whatnots since I was a young girl, from everything resembling a butterfly to stamps from around the world. As an adult, my collections became a bit more meaningful (at least that’s what I thought). A lover of tea, I started collecting ceramic teapots. Surely, the tea would be tastier served in these delightfully decorated vessels. Although they did add to the ambience of teatime, they also contributed significantly to my unintentional collection of dust. And then I discovered the world of Black dolls. How could one go wrong with a collection of beautiful porcelain dolls with their penetrating eyes and woeful expressions? To my surprise, they seemed to multiply while I was sleeping and soon occupied every curio cabinet, free floor space and shelf in the house. When my children were certain that the dolls’ eyes were following them, my dolls became yet another collection that got packed away.

The one collection that remains prominent in my home today is my collection of African-American artwork. Quickly, I discovered that each of these pieces that I selected was a reflection of my personal experiences. For me, my collection serves as a visual testament that speaks to the core of who I

am. These pieces of artwork are my daily affirmation of both my struggles and successes. When I look at the painting *Day’s Wages* by artist Harry Roseland, I am reminded of the sacrifices that my parents made to ensure a better life for me and my siblings, and my willingness to do the same for my own children. Hanging in my kitchen is the painting *Strawberries* by artist Brenda Joysmith. Each time I look at it, I see myself as a little girl helping my mother get fresh fruit ready to be placed in mason jars so it could be enjoyed by our family during the cold days of winter. I laugh out loud when I look at the painting *The Brothers* by artist Malvin Gray Johnson because it takes me back to summer vacations on a farm in Virginia where my parents were born and raised. There were two brothers that we played with when we visited each summer. They always wore coveralls and some type of cap on their heads. Whenever we took photographs of them, they always smiled broadly and gave each other a tight, arm-over-shoulder hug. On days when I convince myself that the daily grind is for naught, I have but to look at Ruth Russell Williams’ painting *The Graduation*, and suddenly, I find myself seated at the commencement exercises of one of my children, dressed in my finest outfit, waiting for my turn to say, “That’s my baby.”

Each and every painting in my collection serves as an inspiration when I find myself in a rut, motivation when I am sure I cannot go one step further, and that which keeps me grounded when I forget the tribulations of those who paved the path upon which I walk so freely today.

Yes, I am still the “Collecting Queen,” but to that title I now add “with a purpose.” I am proud of my collection of African-American artwork and proclaim my admiration and gratitude for the extremely talented artists who’ve given me something meaningful to collect.

Sharon Cannon

Administrator, Cheyney University
Cheyney, PA



Palm Tree of Deborah by Adriene Cruz



Basic Black II by Cal Massey



We get a warm feeling when we walk through our home and enjoy our art collection. Through art, we collect the history of our people, our story, our struggle, our triumphs and our beauty. They are captured on canvas, on paper, in wood, in stone, through photography and through a mixture of media available to the artist. Our first significant piece was a print by Romare Bearden. Today we own more than 250 pieces by artists known and unknown. To us, each one tells a story about the artist, about a time in history or a memory of a visit to a far-away land. Art is so much more than an object of monetary value.

Vic Carter

News Anchor, CBS WJZ-TV

Jan Carter

Educator

Baltimore, MD



Jazz in the City by Sidney Carter



Quilting Time by Romare Bearden



Diversity of expression is the key ingredient noticed when viewing the body of my work. Many viewers have expressed the belief that more than one artist created my art. I believe that my gift of multi-expression, using a variety of mediums, allows me to be a versatile artist. I strive to paint the human figure well, and my goal is to unmask my skills.

Roederick Vines (with his wife Sharon)

Visual Artist
Stone Mountain, GA



My ideal world is one in which every moment is treasured. A hand on a hip, the bend of a smile, the organic perfection of a sunflower hiding in a little girl's braid are proof that beauty lies in everything. No moment is too small to be celebrated. Lean in, look closely: the emotion and the magic of my pieces are in the details.

Karen Powell

Visual Artist
Boston, MA



Mama's Callin' by Karen Powell

To me, the “Black art” label doesn’t matter, in my work. I work out of my experience, and if somebody wants to call that Black art, that’s all right.

Jacob Lawrence

3 Kings by Karen Powell
(on opposite page)





These originals are inspired by the common thread we share in our community. I have traveled extensively and have observed our rich and diverse communities. From Atlanta to Baltimore, Chicago to California, we are connected. As African-Americans we are storytellers, business owners, lovers, husbands, wives, rappers, administrators, etc. What a diverse group!

Bonding. We bond on the city streets or on the porch, telling stories over and over, with the same crew, and we gladly invite anyone to join in for a good story or the dozens.

Despair. Our community receives the brunt of a failed economy. No jobs, no way out. Whom do we blame? Is there any one to blame? In such an advantaged society, why are so many in our community still disadvantaged?

Create. Create your own reality as you view each original. How does the story play out in your mind? How does it start? How does it end? Do you see yourself or a family member or a close friend? What you see is totally up to you.

Stacey Brown

Visual Artist
Atlanta, GA



As far back as I can remember, I have had a passion for drawing. When I was in the first grade, the Mayor of Panama City, Florida proclaimed the month of December Children's Art Month, and I received recognition for a piece of art that I had done.

My artwork, sometimes described as nostalgic, expresses my belief that the African-American culture has a rich heritage. I want people to think about how life used to be...how it should be... how it is.

I believe that my creativity is a gift from God. I pray before starting each painting, and He guides my hands.

Sidney Carter

Visual Artist
Powder Springs, GA



Love Under the Umbrella by Stacey Brown



The Redcross family has truly been devoted to their clients in the interest of art. October Gallery has made it their priority to educate everyone who has attended the Philadelphia International Art Expo. Because of their devotion, we all have grown and have learned to understand the purpose and uniqueness of the art world and what it stands for. It would have been easy for the Redcross family to just look at the commercial end of the business, getting the people in the building, or securing a great sponsor; but their creation of October Gallery has truly lived up to its purpose of "Connecting People with Art." It doesn't matter whether it was a video conference with the late great master painter Dr. John T. Biggers, or highlighting nationally known artists such as Sidney Carter with his original work "Blood, Sweat and Tears"; Otis Williams, the African art dealer, with his medicine man sculpture

from Ghana; or the late Andrew Turner of Philadelphia with his painting of Miles Davis. It is this quality of work that keeps me coming back year after year.

Although I purchased my first "real" piece of art in 1972, each subsequent piece of art that I buy, whether it is sculpture, pottery or a painting, carries the same value as that first one.

Art essentially comes down to a subjective approach that asks no more than, what does this sculpture, pottery or painting mean to me? The final analysis is what Mercer and Evelyn are trying to teach all of us: art can reflect the whole richness of human possibility.

J.D. Gray

Education Representative, UAW Region 5
St. Louis, MO



Cotillion Ball by Louis Delsarte



Sleeping Boy by John T. Biggers



When we were children in a segregated school in Kentucky, our teachers made sure we had an appreciation for African-American art, literature and history. We had to memorize everything under the sun that was written by Black authors, and we did that throughout our time in school. So we have always had, and will maintain, an interest in African-American culture. As a family, we love to collect Black art because it links us to our history.

From left to right starting with the back: **Freddie Black, Thaddeus Black, Herbert Black, Sharon Black and Ms. Black**
Art Patrons
Madison, WI



My collection of original art started with a piece by Columbus Knox, whom I first met at the Rittenhouse Square Fine Arts Annual. I involved the community in supporting art through workshops while I worked at the library coordinating educational forums.

Art is for everyone and is found everywhere, from the spectacular designs in the wings of a butterfly or a flower in full bloom, to practical designs such as a shoestring or a colorful toothbrush.

The onus on art providers is to insure that artists are nurtured and that art is appreciated. Art advocates can be the catalyst for cultivating “the evergreen effect,” insuring that art is preserved.

Frances Aulston

Founder and CEO, West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and Paul Robeson House
Philadelphia, PA



She's All We Got by Lucien Crump



I started researching African and African-American art and artifacts during the early 1980s. I bought every illustrative book I could find to learn more about the cultural backgrounds of the artists and the significance of the pieces. My husband and I traveled frequently and over the years discovered where the more interesting and unusual pieces could be found in the States, and then throughout the world. Earlier, when we were struggling young professionals, we skipped buying furniture and went straight for the art. The piece that captures the essence of my spirit, however, was found at October Gallery—a William Tolliver masterpiece. I love to find my own spirit active in peaceful conversation in a room—my art does that for me.

Deborah Stephenson-Holmes

Vice President, Fannie Mae
Mitchellville, MD



I grew up with an appreciation for the French Impressionists and spent most of my young adult years studying them. It wasn't until I approached my 30s that I began to identify our African-American artists, and I was astounded: astounded that I had spent many years bypassing some of the most brilliant artwork on the planet. I am delighted to say that I have approached African-American art with reverence and am exceedingly proud of my African-American art collection.

Thirteen years ago I was introduced to one of the most renowned artists of our time, Ellen Powell Tiberino, for whom I have the highest regard. I was fortunate enough to sit for her while she created a likeness of me. Unfortunately, she passed before my portrait was completed. In the artwork of hers that I possess, I am reminded of the many stories she shared with me and I am reminded of her enormous zest for life.

As my quest for art continues, my search has led me to African, Caribbean as well as African-American works of art. In selecting my pieces, I rely on my instinct as well as the opinion of experts in the art world. I am inspired by up-and-coming artists and by veteran artists. When I purchase art, I approach it as an investment, something that I pass on to my children and my grandchildren.

Faatimah Gamble

President, The Wellness of You
Philadelphia, PA



Bathers by Ellen Powell Tiberino



Early Blues by George Hunt



Working with October Gallery was a fulfilled dream. I always wanted to work in some place related to the arts, and I finally did. I also needed to work in a place where I could learn something new.

I grew up in Latin America, where we have a heavy African influence in our culture, art, music and dances, but I had never experienced African-American art before, at least not so intensively. I always thought of art as a way to express feelings and thoughts that we cannot express in words, but October Gallery has captured the feelings and thoughts expressed in art of the African-American community.

Since I have always liked cultures and languages, for me being at October Gallery was a reciprocal experience: I learned something, and I hope I left something there, too.

Elisa Bermudes

October Gallery Artist Coordinator
Philadelphia, PA



During my senior year of undergraduate study at Howard University, I decided that when I got a job, I would collect Black art. I do not recall the specific event that triggered this decision. It could have been any of many thought-provoking campus events and the event may not have even been related to the arts. Regardless, I was awe-struck when I realized the multitude of talents that Black people have, when I realized I could confine my collection to Black artists without beginning to exhaust the menu of art forms, time periods, etc., to which we have contributed. My collection has grown to include well-known and lesser-known artists. I don't consider myself a collector in the sense of having amassed a renowned collection. I have a challenging career, and I am a spouse and a rather new mom, so having such a collection isn't a part of my immediate strategy. Still, I have discovered a way to maintain my interest in Black art while balancing other demands: I try to commemorate special events in my life with the acquisition of a new piece. In this way, when I look at the piece, I receive double the enjoyment: there is the beauty of the piece itself and the memory with which I associate it.

When I got that first job, I kept the promise I made to myself. I discovered October Gallery, which was then located on Lancaster Avenue, near the campus of Drexel University. I knew nothing about art, but the gallery staff walked me around and gave me lessons in Art 101. They were so gracious and made exploring this area of new interest so pleasant that easily I became a regular at special gallery events and any other occasions, and I dragged my friends along to see the artwork I would soon discover.

Pam Williams

Art Collector
Baltimore, MD



Capital Gorge Photographed by Richard Johnson



Two of a Kind by Charles Bibbs and Larry "Poncho" Brown



Artist Profile



Some people need art to get their minds off the problems they have. Art serves a lot of purposes, and it's a good thing—a good, God-given thing. It is here for a reason. Sometimes I say to myself, why am I doing this? Why am I in it? I believe art is here to put a little happiness in someone's life. I think I'm probably a vessel to bring out this happiness, and I appreciate being used like that.

Annie Lee

Visual Artist
Las Vegas, NV



Art is important to me because it is a means of expressing joy and creativity. It is a way to create something I feel. It is a way to express feelings to those who see it. There is pure delight in color and form; it is just plain fun to work with.

Iris Massey

Visual Artist
Moorestown, NJ



Drip Dry by Annie Lee

BUILDING AN INDUSTRY



Edward Robertson, president of Things Graphics.

In our early years we at October Gallery (OG) sold art in both the retail and wholesale markets. We marketed and distributed to individuals, galleries and dealers. While our retail business was galloping along, wholesale and distribution were just maintaining a trot. There were many possible reasons for this. As we look back, we believe that we dedicated more time and assets to retail and that it was more difficult to climb two mountains at one time. However, the main reason might well have been the presence of Things Graphics & Fine Art (Things) in Washington, DC, a distributor of fine African-American prints.

Owner and president Edward Robertson was the first to dedicate his business solely to the publishing, marketing and distribution of African-American Art (AAA). And no matter how hard OG tried to gain market share, we could not surpass the company

that would eventually become the number one AAA distributor in the nation. Robertson opened Things in 1984 with a vision that AAA could be distributed throughout the country utilizing a distribution structure similar to that of traditional art in the U.S. As a major publisher for artists through the 1980s and 90s, Robertson was responsible for jumpstarting and supporting the careers of many artists who are well known today. Robertson marketed to galleries large and small across the U.S. He expanded into new markets and new galleries as he traveled and promoted artists. We salute Robertson and his contribution to the development of today's AAA industry.

To reiterate, many artists are nationally known as a result of Things and Mr. Robertson. Here are quotations from two of the numerous artists who benefited:

"As a visual artist who has been painting for 30 years, when I first discovered an African-American-owned art business, I was very excited. I will always support Things Graphics & Fine Art because they were there at the beginning when we [Black artists] needed support."
—Artist Frank Frazier

"In 1984, Things Graphics & Fine Art, in Washington, DC set out to establish a market for African-American art by serving not only as a distribution point, but also as a resource to dealers and artists. Ed [Robertson, president] was one of the first people I met that was interested in publishing pieces of Black art. I was impressed with his tenacity and with his basic urgency to distribute Black artwork at a level where most people could afford to purchase it."
—Artist Paul Goodnight

In the 1980s most galleries were owned by entrepreneurs (not artists) and obtained product from distributors like Things. By 1995, African-American art galleries had started to change over. Artist-owned galleries began to replace entrepreneur galleries. More and more artists entered the marketplace, and

interestingly, they began to open art galleries for themselves. They also began to self-publish. This market change created new and (sometimes) difficult competition for entrepreneur galleries and distributors. From the artist's point of view, it seemed they could better manage their finances and the market (to some degree) by controlling their own product. Those entrepreneur galleries that did not close and wanted to survive needed to reposition themselves. It seemed difficult to maintain the AAA gallery business unless the gallery was multifaceted—dealing in market sectors, including art sales (individual and corporate), service, framing, gift items and education.

Another commerce shift was about to affect the industry. As artists searched for additional income sources, they learned that the art patron wanted to meet them and purchase their product directly. These face-to-face encounters reinforced their reasons for leaving the sanctuary of their studios, maintaining the overhead of gallery operations and/or traveling throughout the country to art events.

In the last 25 years, the growth and development of our very young AAA industry has made frequent shifts. It has established itself as a necessary part of the culture at large.

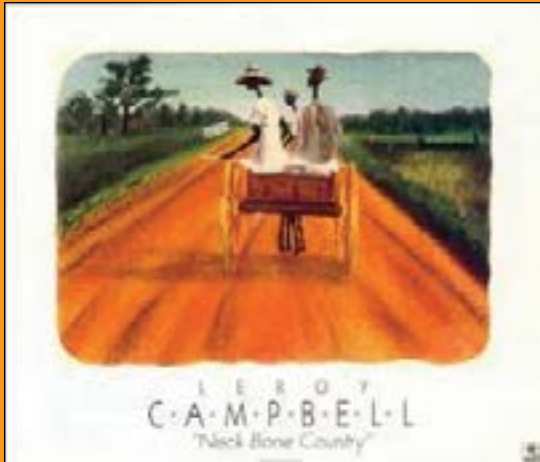
More importantly, the industry has established itself as an essential part of African-American culture. Are there new twists and turns on the horizon for the industry? Only time will tell.

As artists evolve and as the marketplace requires more sophisticated operational business models from them, these creative persons may opt for more creative time in the studio and less time working the business model. This may cause the economic pendulum to swing again, and companies such as Things and the entrepreneurial galleries, retrofitted with new business models, may grow and thrive again.

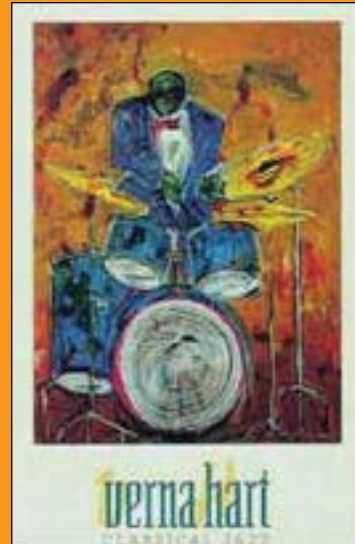
Things Graphics & Fine Art

America's largest distributor of fine African-American prints

Here are some of the images published and distributed by Things Graphics...



Neckbone Country by Leroy Campbell.



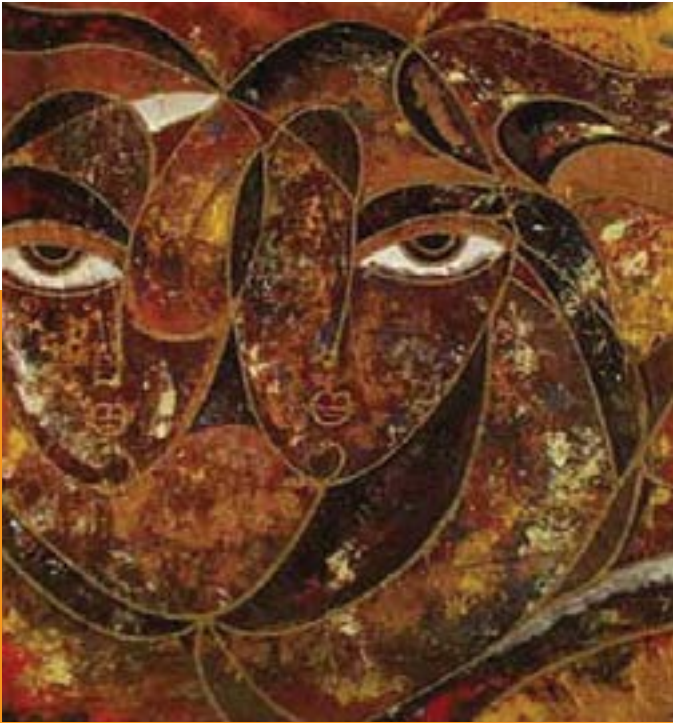
Classical Jazz by Verna Hart.



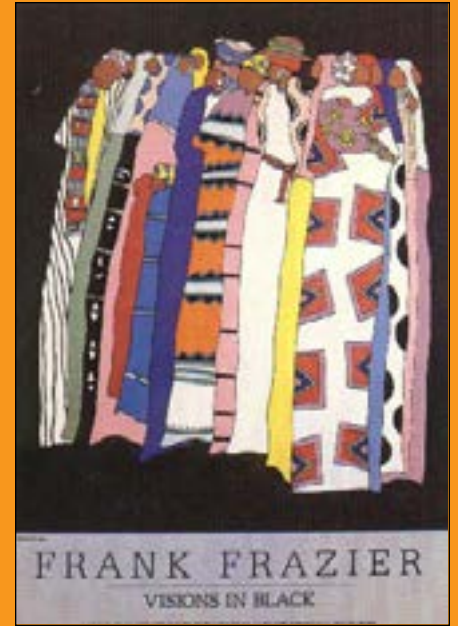
Sophisticated Lady by James Denmark.



Herdsman by Charles Bibbs.



Mirror to the Soul by Anthony Armstrong.



Praised by Frank Frazier.



Side Steppin by Larry "Poncho" Brown.



Angelic Sonata by Anthony Armstrong.



Angelic Serenade by Anthony Armstrong.



Art, especially the art of a people that has seen so much and been through so much, is more than the sum of what it presents. It is history, love, culture and food for the heart. My first piece of “real art” was purchased through October Gallery, and my life and views have been different ever since, because I’ve always had this piece of beauty from which to measure everything.

Lorina Blake

Vice President of Government Relations
Independence Blue Cross
Philadelphia, PA



My wife Lorina said folks wanted a quote from a longtime customer and supporter. As a playwright and journalist, it’s an honor to be part of another set of artists still breaking ground and changing minds.

Joseph P. Blake

Journalist
Philadelphia, PA



“Herein lay buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.”

—W.E.B. DuBois

Little did DuBois know that this issue would rage on into the twenty-first century. Science has proven that all humankind originated in Africa. However, the lack of universal acceptance of this fact has resulted in the further separation of ethnic and racial groups. Since every human being on this planet has some amount of DNA that reflects African ancestry, one has to question the rejection of a single human family. As African-Americans we are unable to conceal this part of our being. African-American art reveals the spirit of the whole human experience, as it tells the story of the journey and experiences of a people. For me, the entire story of human existence—the triumphs, emotions, joys and pains—is told in African-American art. Through the appreciation of African-American art, one can hope for world peace, global harmony and live the best life possible!

Glenn Ellis

Health Educator
Philadelphia, PA



The Future of the Past by Eli Kince



Basic Black I by Cal Massey



Many years ago, the owners of October Gallery introduced us to African-American art. They were the forerunners of African-American art in the city of Philadelphia. Prints, lithographs, oils and other media of art were well represented in their gallery. They sponsored many functions and were always available with knowledge and recommendations about the art and the creativity of the artists. Many well-known artists' works and programs are still a reflection of the gallery's efforts.

Dr. Sidney Bridges

Dentist

Joyce Bridges

Educator

Philadelphia, PA



For me, African-American art is a visual language that I use to better understand the world I live in. It also enables me to discover new ideas and new thoughts and ultimately assists me in defining my community, my culture and my humanity.

Chris Squire

Radio Executive

Chicago, IL



Pink Politics by Marcus Antonius Jansen



Debbie Behan Garrett with her doll collection

I am an avid collector of all types of Black dolls—from vintage to modern—in all sizes, mediums and categories. The Black dolls that I collect are all positive reflections of Black beauty. However, a few Black dolls collected early on serve as reminders of the negative perception of Black people held by other cultures. These dolls have overexaggerated facial features and overexaggerated skin tones. They range from the prettiest dolls to the dolls considered to be derogatory or to promote negative depictions of Black people. Despite the negativity, I love them all. They represent me. They are part of my culture, my history, and will be a part of my legacy.

Although I was a child who was born in the mid-1950s, it was not until the early 1960s that I became consciously aware of who I am, my surroundings and social standing. I lived in an all-Black world. My neighborhood was Black. My principals and teachers were Black. The pastor and congregation of my church were Black. The neighborhood

storeowners and the professionals were Black. Everything was all right in my world except for one significant thing: all my dolls were white! I remember the character Sarah Jane from the movie *Imitation of Life*, who looked white. She wanted the white doll owned by the white character, Susie, and rejected the Black doll Susie gave her to play with, and dropped it to the floor. I can vividly recall Sarah Jane dropping the Black doll and exclaiming, “But I don’t want the Black one!” At that instant, my approximately six-year-old self wondered, what’s wrong with the Black doll? Nevertheless, there I was, a Black girl with dolls that resided in my make-believe world and did not look like me. There was definitely something wrong with that picture.

It was not until I became an adult that I questioned my mother about the lack of Black dolls in my childhood. She confessed that very few Black dolls were available to us in the South; the ones that were available, in her opinion, were not a true depiction of Black people. She felt they were



derogatory, and she did not want to leave that negative imprint upon me.

Subconsciously, after the birth of my daughter in 1977, I began collecting Black dolls via the dolls that I purchased for her. By that time, there had been a minor progression in the manufacture of Black “playthings.” However, the selection of Black dolls was still quite limited. Because of my childhood experiences, I was determined to reverse the trend of Black girls owning only white dolls: All of my daughter’s dolls were Black. Of course, some of them were simply white dolls colored brown—but they were brown, which was of the utmost importance to me.

The last doll that I purchased for my daughter was a porcelain collector’s doll ordered from a catalog in 1991. After the doll arrived, I decided (for several reasons) to keep the doll for myself. That one doll obviously began to fill the childhood void of not owning Black dolls and prompted my desire to begin a Black-doll collection and to conduct Black-doll research. I purchased current and past doll-reference books in order to learn the identification of Black dolls made during my childhood and earlier. Unfortunately, the Black-doll collector was not a member of the writers’ audiences. Therefore, most of the doll-reference books available in the early 1990s and prior were quite deficient in Black-doll information. It was not until I purchased *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide 1891-1991* (Collector Books, 1993) by Myla Perkins, followed by her second book, *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, Book 2* (1995) that the entire world of vintage Black dolls opened up for me. I am deeply indebted to Ms. Perkins for the extensive Black-doll information her two books provided. As the author of the first, full-color Black-doll reference book, *The Definitive Guide to Collecting Black Dolls* (Hobby House Press, 2003) I can attest to the fact that passion is a key factor in order for the research, documentation and sharing of the same to continue. A successful mission began to find as many of the dolls as possible that were not part of my make-believe childhood world. Further, because my Black-doll knowledge escalated, I have been able to fill the aforementioned void, but the mission has not ended. Whenever possible, via public speaking engagements or casual meetings, I stress



to parents of little Black children that it is very important to provide their children with positive reflections of Black people through playthings, literature and art. This will serve to promote a strong sense of self-worth, self-pride, self-esteem, but most importantly, self-love, in their young minds.

“All things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). It was in God’s divine plan for me to experience a childhood devoid of Black dolls. Had I owned Black dolls as a child, it is highly probable that my adult life would be devoid of this passion, and the Black-doll community would be devoid of my book. I would love to open up the world of Black-doll collecting to others so they, too, can be blessed with positive reflections of Black beauty that can renew their spirits.

Debbie Behan Garrett

Author
Dallas, TX

"It is very inspiring to release a figure from a piece of stone or wood. Very often I look at a piece...for a year or longer. Sometimes I will have completed the piece mentally before attacking the material."

Dr. Selma Burke, artist

Harriet's Hope by Sam Byrd
(on opposite page)





The gallery has become a very important part of my life and my family's life. I love meeting new people and giving them the service that they want and expect.

Displaying a beautiful piece of art in one's home gives the house a wonderful spirit, creates a sense of magnificence and provides for family and friends a great deal of enjoyment.

May Allen

Owner, Collectible Art and Frames
Philadelphia, PA



We are an arts-and-cultural organization dedicated to the education, preservation and distribution of fine ethnic art.

Cofounders **Louise J. Gissendaner** and **Rose M. Harper**
and Executive Director **Donna Johnson**
Sankofa Fine Art Plus
Cleveland, OH



Musical Night by Essud Fungcap



For me, looking at African-American art is like gazing into a mirror that reflects my heritage, my soul and my innermost thoughts and feelings. In particular, art that “speaks to me” captures the essence of African-American womanhood—strength, purpose, leadership, beauty and spirituality. As you can see, my favorite piece is “Legacy” by Sam Byrd, a Philadelphia artist. I sincerely appreciate October Gallery for their passion, perfection and unwavering commitment to preserving our culture and heritage through the expression of African-American art.

Terri Dean

President, Verizon Connected Solutions
Philadelphia, PA



Whenever I attend the Annual October Gallery International Art Expo, there is a sense of eagerness as soon as I board the bus and head to Philadelphia. The anticipation is all about the kaleidoscope of African-Americans gathered together in one place with their creativity and talent. How talented we are! I cherish those moments of excitement and energy. There is always something new and different. I feel the expressions of our yesterday, today and tomorrow. Meeting the different artists and making new friends every year are memories that I will keep forever. One of my favorites is a well-known artist, George Nock. I love his work. His art speaks to me in a natural way. His masterpieces touch the “keep-it-real” side of me with a stretch of imagination.

Rosetta Gray

Entrepreneur
Marlow Heights, MD



Rest Stop on the Highway by quiltmaker Phyllis Stephens



For as long as I can remember, art and the arts in general—music, dance and drama—have been an inspiring and steady light in my life. As a child, I used to sit and look at two paintings of cottages in what appeared to be a Swiss village with snow-capped mountains in the background. I was fascinated by the color and design of the images and wondered what life might be like inside the picture. During my college years in the late 60s and 70s, “Black art” blossomed alongside the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, and I had my share of poetry and posters reflecting the politics of the time. In my twenties, I bought my first prints by a Black artist and never looked back. Acel and I have very divergent tastes in art: I like the representational while he leans to the abstract, which has made for quite an eclectic collection over the years. But our “art” has become a deeply valued part of our lives—a reflection of our experiences, a validation of who we are and, I hope, an inspiration to our daughter, who can see herself in the pieces adorning our walls. That our collection has grown in value through the years is an added benefit of surrounding ourselves with pieces that touch our hearts and lift our spirits. I really recognized the power of art some sixteen years ago, when we moved to a new home, and left the walls bare for weeks as we were settling in. One evening I came home and discovered that Acel had hired a friend and gallery owner to hang our artwork. Suddenly, the cool, flat unfamiliarity of the new house was gone and the place felt just like home: the rooms felt warm, comfortable and authentically our own. Such is the power of art.

Acel Moore and Linda Wright Moore

Journalists
Philadelphia, PA



I have been attending the Philadelphia Art Expo for the last few years, and have enjoyed each and every one of them. The fact that you can meet and talk to the artists is one of the things I enjoy about the Expo. I always find something new and different there.

Letricia Womack

Web Technical Consultant
Temple Hills, MD



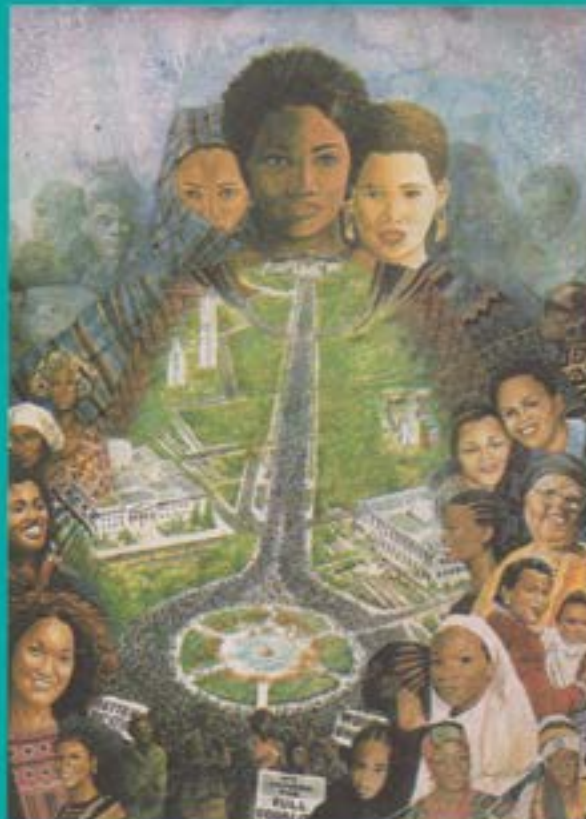
I knew Romare Bearden well and collected his lithographs and originals before they became popular. Today, I am still in awe that 18 years after Bearden’s death, my collection is still highly prized. I purchased the items simply for the love of Bearden’s work.

Earl Brown

Attorney
Philadelphia, PA



Luther by William Tolliver



Million Woman March by Sam Byrd



We Love Africa





an-American *art*





My father, my son and I represent three generations of visual artists.

My own contemporary paintings are a reflection of personal values. Family, community and spirituality are favorite themes manifested in my art as I integrate elements of Afrocentric rhythm, movement and unity. A variety of mediums and styles reveals my interest in Egyptology, dance and mysticism.

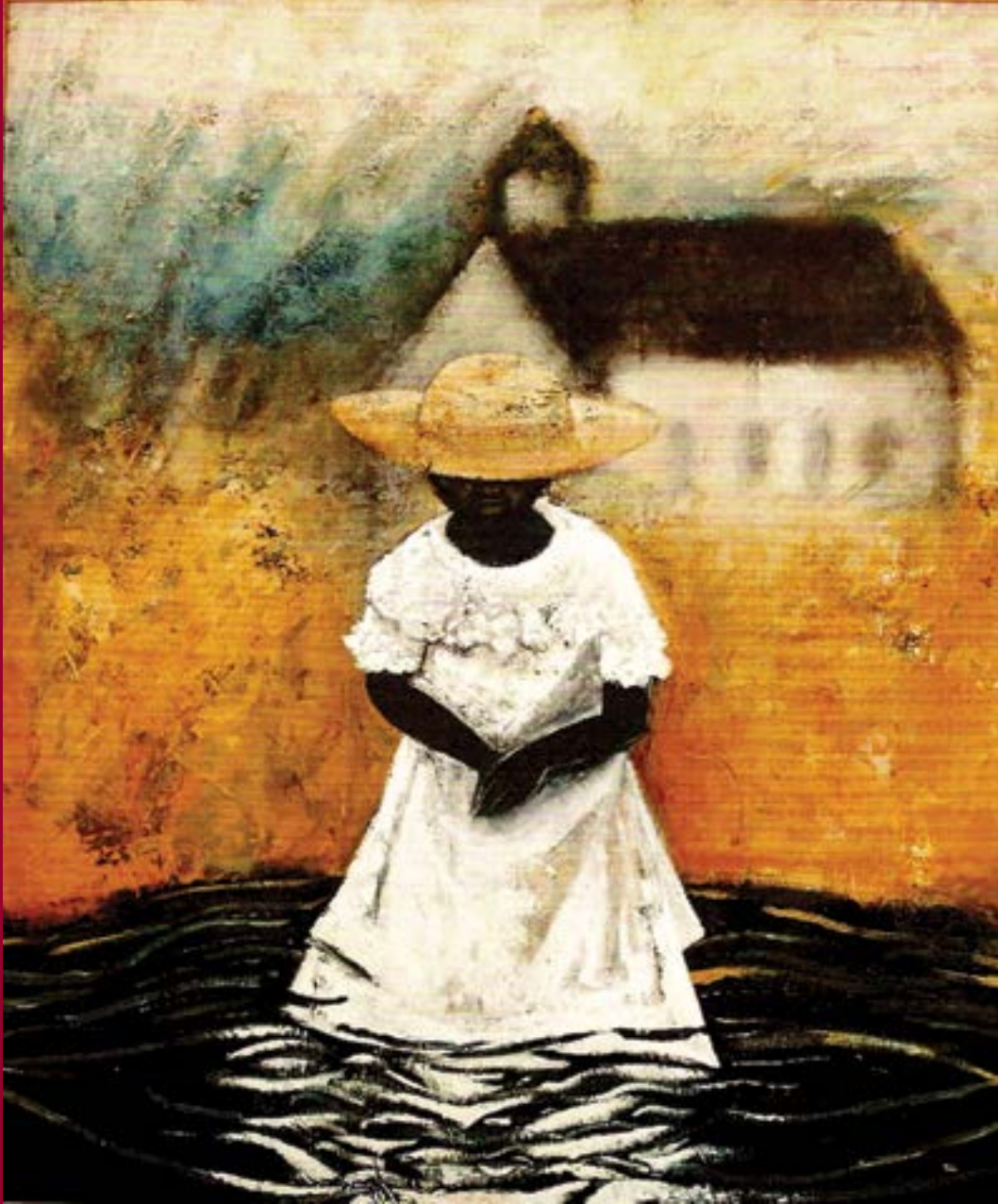
A full-time artist since I was 17 years old, I continue to support young artists because I understand their need for mentors and programs that help them hone their creative expression. My goal is to provide an outlet for young artists to express themselves, and to enlighten them on the importance of art in culture.

Larry "Poncho" Brown

Visual Artist
Baltimore, MD



Larry O. Brown, Sr. (father), Mandela E. Brown (son) and Larry "Poncho" Brown (seated).



Wade in the Water by Terry and Jerry Lynn



For me, African-American art is a source of inspiration and meditation.

Divinity's artistic handiwork is a remarkable phenomenon. You have all of these creative hearts sharing glimpses of their inner visions, yet each story can only be told in part, because canvases are finite and artists do have to sleep sometimes. African-American art renews my creative soul.

Collages are especially captivating (am I biased?) —other-people's-trash-turned-into-art. I'm always awe-struck and tickled by their oxymoronic correctness.

Maria Dowd

Inspirational Author
Los Angeles, CA



I think that art is a by-product of culture and experiences that can be taken, shaped, created and formed on a piece of canvas or as a sculpture. I look for whatever appeals to me or catches my eye. First, it's the colors; then, it's the theme that attracts me.

Alesia MacFadden Williams

Collector
Pritchett, AL



I had been collecting African-American art for many years when I was asked to host one of October Gallery's earlier art shows, where I received my first Annie Lee art as a gift. I am an avid art collector and own many unique works of art. I purchased my first Charles Bibbs piece at October Gallery's Art Expo. It hangs at the entrance to my office, and people never fail to comment on it.

Barbara Daniel-Cox

President, The African Heritage Center
Philadelphia, PA



Leaning Nude by Cal Massey



As a longtime business owner in Philadelphia, I have admired and respected not only the entrepreneurial spirit of Evelyn and Mercer, but also the quality of work that they present to the people in the city. They have managed to bring people together through the phenomenal artwork that they showcase in their gallery and at their Annual Art Expo. As a consumer, I can honestly say that I trust October Gallery and know that when I make a purchase from them, I walk away with first-class quality. My love for artwork has grown over the years because of the art education that I received from the gallery.

Willie Johnson

Chairman, PRWT Services
Philadelphia, PA



I buy African-American art because it represents the experiences of my people, both triumphs and tragedies. I always purchase African-American images. I became a collector when I met Mercer Redcross through a mutual friend. When I come home and see images of my people on my walls, it makes my spirit soar!

Madeline B. Swann, Ph.D.

Chemist
Mitchellville, MD



Frederick Douglass Lives Again by Charles White

PANORAMIC PROGRAMS



Entertainer Jill Scott.

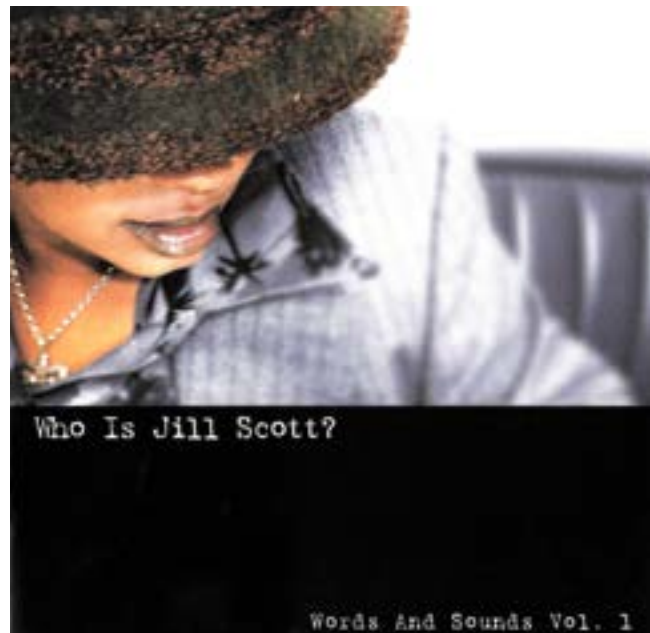
When our son, Lamar, began Panoramic Programs at the gallery in 1995 we didn't know how the poetry readings might develop. Twice a month his spoken-word sessions would draw young adults who gathered to perform and express their creative writing and to learn from each other. These talented writers seemed determined to share their hopes and life experiences using rhyme, rhythm and metaphor.

In the early days of Panoramic Programs, Mercer would hang around the gallery, late, to assist in any way he could. He was first of all surprised that the young people were orderly and didn't "tear the place up." Secondly, he was surprised at the wealth of talent there. One of the outstanding female poets who impressed Mercer and really dazzled the crowd was Jill Scott. About the gallery she once said (to *NME*, the popular British weekly music magazine), "It's an African-American—owned gallery in Philadelphia where I'd perform every second and third Friday of the month. I just grew so much in that space. People would pile in there to hear poetry; sometimes you could get on to do your stuff, sometimes you couldn't... I enjoyed being there; I enjoyed listening to other people's work."

In 2000 Jill Scott asked us if we would permit her to film a music video at October Gallery. It was for her song, "*The Way*." Of course, we said yes. We were delighted that Jill considered October Gallery an appropriate venue for her new video. Wow! What a treat for us.

In an interview with Thelma Golden, chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem (New York City), Jill spoke of her video and her relationship with the gallery. She said, "A lot of people will have money and cars, but they won't have any art in their homes, and it's an investment."

Jill has remained very kind to October Gallery as her career has grown. From time to time she returns to Panoramic Programs to read her poetry. And she has attended our Philadelphia International Art Expo on several occasions.



"The Way" by Jill Scott

*Woke up this morning with a smile on my face
Jumped out of bed, took a shower, dressed, cleaned up my place
Made me some breakfast, toast, 2 scrambled eggs, grits
Grabbed my keys, grabbed my purse, grabbed my jacket
Off to work, beaming all the way down 3rd*

*Is it the way you love me baby?
Is it the way you love me baby?
(Yeah)*

*Four thirty, can't wait to get home
Nah, girl I got somethang else to do
(Damn Jill, don't be frontin' on your girls for real)
Go 'head, really get your groove on
Cause tonight my man's coming through
(Oh word)*

*We gonna have to connect some other time
As much as I like to shake my thang on the dance floor
I got another nasty, freaky just right way in mind
Tonight I'm gonna beat the high score*

*Is it the way you love me baby?
(Yeah)
Is it the way you love me baby?
(Baby)
Is it the way you love me baby?
(Is it, is it the way)
Is it the way you love me baby?*



We have been collecting African-American art since the 1960s as a way of expressing pride in our heritage. Although the members of the family have different tastes in art—from traditional portraits and photographs, to modern art, to monochromatic prints—they each enjoy collecting art that enriches their daily lives.

“I collect African-American art because it reinforces positive self-expression of African-Americans as artists, as people and as a culture. I started collecting while in college and still enjoy the process of discovering new artists who have a unique point of view,” said Kimberly.

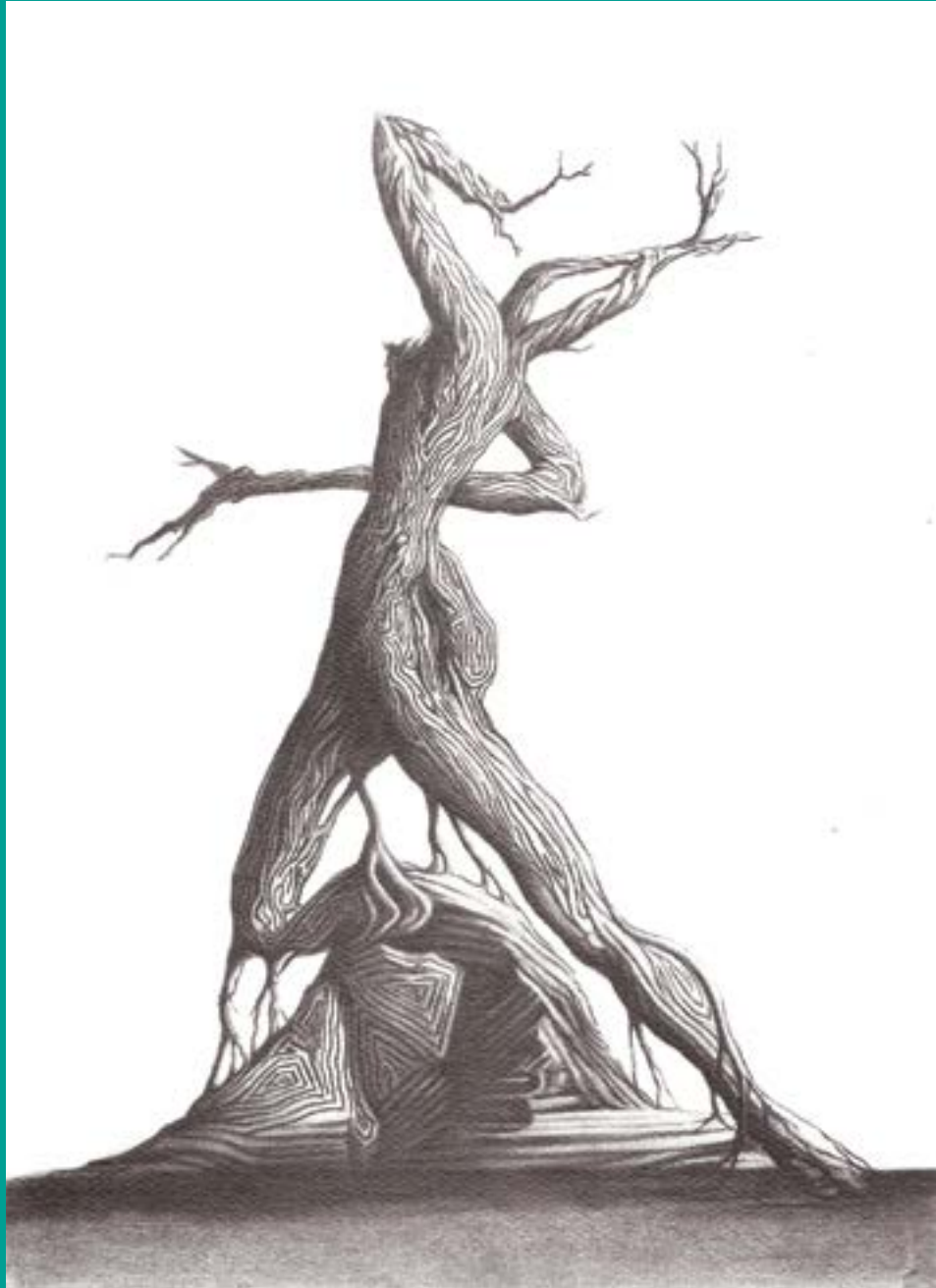
Chainey Family
(From left to right: Brenden,
Kimberly, Romana and Ron)

Art Patrons
Philadelphia, PA



I started collecting African art about fifteen years ago—small pieces at a time. My family had art in our home, but it didn’t reflect us as African-Americans. When I had an opportunity to collect pieces by Sam Gilliam, Lee White and others, it started me on a roll. I collected first because I liked the piece, but now I collect by artist as well as by my connection to the piece and for investment. I frame mostly with the museum look (white mats around the picture), so that the attention is on the art.

Gregory Jones
Art Collector
Centreville, VA



The Tree by Benjamin Britt

GOOD TIMES FOR AFRICAN- AMERICAN ART



Evelyn and Mercer Redcross with
Ernie Barnes (left) in Los Angeles, CA.



The family in *Good Times*.



Artist Ernie Barnes at the Philadelphia International Art Expo.

Through his prolific creative work Ernie Barnes helped to spawn a movement, one marked by appreciation for and acquisition of Black art. Seeing ourselves accurately depicted and desiring to obtain art that manifested our distinct existence was the foundation for the development and success of many Black-owned galleries such as October Gallery.

In the 1970s, the television and recording media provided a platform for broader visibility for African-American actors with a focus on the Black TV sitcom. *The Flip Wilson Show* was followed by *Sanford and Son*, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* and *Good Times*, the innovative Black family comedy that debuted in 1974 and centered on the Evans family (including Florida, her husband James and her three children), who lived on the South Side of Chicago.

Artist Ernie Barnes was invited to place some



Sugar Shack by Ernie Barnes.

of his art on the set of *Good Times*. The painting *Sugar Shack*, shown in the opening credits of the sitcom, became widely recognized, as did many of his other renderings. In 1976, Marvin Gaye used the image on the cover of his *I Want You* album, which further bolstered the painting's prominence.

Paradoxically, in *Sugar Shack* Barnes is able to show both joy and sadness. Predominant in the painting are figures of boundless energy, jubilation and activity. Yet, in contrast, he includes a static figure of despair. Perhaps Barnes' intention is to provoke serious thought about the challenges and difficulties of the Black American experience.

A subliminal appreciation of African-American art was occurring. This was a treat that satisfied the hunger in African-Americans for positive portrayals of Black life.



The Graduate by Ernie Barnes.

In Barnes' painting *The Graduate*, an African-American male struts in cap and gown, exuding confidence for achieving a dream.



Jake by Ernie Barnes.

Barnes gave birth to a signature expression of African-American art. This form of expression influenced the way others portrayed Black American life. His work helped to give voice to the twentieth-century African-American experience. Through Barnes' unveiling of powerful images and hidden beauty, a neglected slice of American life was brought to light. He does not just paint imagery. He has a point of view. The African-American male shown in a pool hall in the painting *Jake* would be considered frivolous by some. Barnes' had a higher perspective: that pool sharks are mathematicians and physicists. Pool is a skill requiring a keen knowledge of math, angles,

force and response. Barnes wanted to show that Black life experiences are not shallow and myopic. The unique strength of Barnes' figurative art is still a source of inspiration for many aspiring and accomplished artists. While Barnes' own African-American life experiences inspired him to show Black life, he knew something much more fundamental.

His works are powerful messages to remind us all that struggle is an universal condition. He reminds us of our humanity. Potent in his art is the communication of pride, hope and the triumph of the spirit.



Basketball Player by Ernie Barnes.



Black artists should have the support of the African-American community. Their works tell a story of our history, past and present. I purchase art from artists whom I can relate to, and who can relate to my struggles and my past.

Larry M. Talley, Sr.

Collector
Baltimore, MD



Afro-American art is both vital and critical. It enables the viewer to decipher, interpret and ascertain the message of the artist via the naked eye.

Perry McCotter, Jr.

Radio Personality
Philadelphia, PA



I began collecting Black art as a freshman at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse. That place, so far from my home, so devoid of my culture, was where I met my first Black artist, Gerald Coleman (currently of Milwaukee, Wisconsin).

He became the catalyst that sparked my interest in Black art. I saw beauty and strength in the male and female warrior images that he gave me. I became intrigued. A new and aspiring artist, he had provided me with the connection to my roots that I was missing.

I started out just looking for a visual connection to things familiar, going to all types of art shows and galleries. I developed an interest in all types of African-American art, dolls, clothing and jewelry.

My association with October Gallery and the Expo has provided me with the opportunity to continue the quest, to get "up close and personal" with a number of artists and to acquire the artwork I could not live without.

Today, I consider myself a collector. My collection has grown so large that I have had to decorate the walls of my children's and family members' homes just to have enough wall space. I enjoy sharing my love of African-American art with everyone.

Deborah Stephens

Administrator, School District of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA



Forever Young by Karen Powell



We have developed a great love for art over the past 30 years, and have carefully selected for our home artwork that reflects our history and heritage. So much of the culture of African people can be learned from their rich past. We hope that as people visit our home they will see reflected in our paintings and sculptures our love of our people and their contributions to the world. Art enables us to touch our past and connect it to our present and future like no other medium does. So much can be communicated through art. We hope that many will learn to love art as we do and receive the joy that can be achieved only through these special pieces.

Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.

Former Mayor, City of Philadelphia

Mrs. Velma Goode

Educator

Philadelphia, PA



I am not an art connoisseur. I have not studied the lines and the theories of the great masters. I do not possess an extensive collection that is the envy of all my friends. I have just one simple premise for what I hang on my walls. I have to love it!

I tend to prefer pieces with bold, vivid colors depicting a subject that really moves me. I'm quite discriminating about this because, to me, art is personal. Over the years, October Gallery has been invaluable in shepherding me through my selection of works for my home, and to their credit, they've never been overbearing about it. My art education is an ongoing process, one that I'm having fun with. But it sure makes a difference when you have great tutors.

Arthur Fennell

Comcast News Anchor

Voorhees, NJ



Mr. Soprano by Elliott Hubbard



As a jazz musician I have found that art brings the most wonderful people of all backgrounds together while celebrating the uniqueness of each individual.

Steven Smith
Trumpet Player
Norwalk, CA



I love collecting, visiting and viewing African-American art for many reasons. First and foremost, I enjoy our art for its vivid depiction of the struggles and joys of our race over the years. Our artists seem to capture the joy and pain, the hard work and the leisurely moments in time, the strong sense of family and the sheer joy of celebrating the good times. The quality of the artists, especially our own homegrown masters, is astounding. The way the artists liken African styles to American and Caribbean styles is amazing.

Bruce Bailey
Creative Floral
Philadelphia, PA



Bass Rhapsody by Alonzo Adams



Fishing Hat by Iris Massey



The African-American art that October Gallery offers gives the community a chance to enhance its knowledge of Black art and artists. It has also helped us to enhance the beauty of our home. We have several paintings and other art pieces. October Gallery has also given back to the community through its participation in fund-raisers at community organizations and churches. At Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Roman Catholic Church in Trenton, the gallery's auction is a major event for the church and the community.

Dr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Toca

Art Collectors
Belle Mead, NJ



I believe that man in his quest for happiness must embrace the arts to make himself complete. My association with the Redcrosses and October Gallery has given me the opportunity to realize and appreciate the importance of art.

I am a corporate executive for Verizon. My company has sponsored many non-profit affairs, awards programs and fund-raisers. The Redcrosses were always there donating a piece of art, assisting in the success of the event. I feel this exposure helped all the people in the community, including myself, begin their awareness, love and support of the arts.

My knowing the Redcrosses has given me the opportunity to realize the importance of art, which I now have a passion for. I have purchased many paintings by Cal Massey and Henry Ossawa Tanner, to name a couple. I met Cal Massey and observed him painting at the October Gallery. As I watched him, I recognized his great talent and his ability to convey it on canvas. I hung one of his paintings on my office wall. It has moved with me to three offices. This painting is a subject of conversation for all of my colleagues and associates when they enter my office, no matter their race or background. This piece has been admired for fifteen years by a host of business people and has brought a new appreciation of art into their worlds.

Since I began collecting, I have developed an eye for art. Not only do I buy for my home and office, but I also purchase art as gifts for others. I feel that Evelyn and Mercer assisted me in being complete.

Jim Reed

Director of External Affairs, Verizon
Philadelphia, PA



Soulful Flight by LaShun Beal



Ashanti Royal Stool, African Heritage Collection



I have always had a passionate sense of connection to my African ancestry. I struggled over the years, trying to find a way to bring my passion of Afrocentricity and art together. I wanted to do something completely different from the paintings and drawings that my family was accustomed to. I saw an African woman, beautifully dressed in African garb, and after meditating on her appearance, I made a doll in the likeness of that woman. She was the inspiration for me to become a doll artist.

I study images of Africans in the library and in documentaries. I meditate for recollection of all I have absorbed. I feel that I am motivated spiritually, as if part of me is there in Africa when I design and create my dolls. I try to keep my creations simple yet powerful.

Cathy Milby

CC Kabaka Creations
Philadelphia, PA



My love for crafts began when I was a child under my mother's guidance, and continued with my pursuit of crocheting, sewing and ceramics. My ceramics classes lead to porcelain doll making under the leadership of doll artist Goldie Wilson.

I used these crafts to fill a void after the death of my husband in 1990. I saw the art of doll making as an opportunity to become more creative, especially in the world of Black dolls. For many years Black dolls were virtually nonexistent, or they were portrayed stereotypically. At the age of eight, I received my first Black doll baby, which I adored. It was made of rubber, with a jointed body, molded painted curly hair, painted eyes and a nursing mouth for her bottle. She also had a birth certificate with her footprint on it. Her name was "Amosandra," from the *Amos 'n Andy* radio-and-television series. As time moved forward, and as I perfected my artistic skills, I became more involved in the doll-making world. With the encouragement of friends, relatives and other doll makers, I decided to venture into a small business enterprise.

In May of 1994, I participated in my first Black doll show, which was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Later I was invited to the U. S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC during Black History Month to showcase my Black dolls. I have been featured in various Black Doll shows throughout the States, including the October Gallery Art Expo in Philadelphia. I have continuously striven to improve my skills and to further participate in Black Doll shows to depict Blacks in a positive manner and to educate young people about their culture. My future goal is to sculpt my own Black dolls.

Daisy Carr

Doll Maker
Mitchellville, MD



Without Ceasing by Roederick Vines



African-American art highlights the creativity, talents, gifts and traditions of our people in various art forms. It is a wonderful experience to see our artwork in homes, festivals and expos. This availability of African-American art represents people working together. We hope that such cooperation continues because it reflects celebration and cohesiveness in our community.

Kenneth Smith

Corporate Manager

Nichel Smith

Educator

Kierre Smith

Daughter

Bowie, MD



I love large pieces of art, and this piece by Sam Byrd is one of my favorites. There was a brief period in my life, prior to attending law school, when I had aspirations of becoming an artist. At that time, I was energized by the internal explosion of a newfound creativity that I shared with my family and friends. Now, through my involvement with October Gallery, I find joy in being afforded an opportunity to meet some of the great artists of our time.

I feel a connection to each piece of African-American art that I have collected, with each piece evoking the satisfaction of ownership. I delight in the atmosphere that is created by them. My passion for art continues to grow with each new piece that I add to my collection. African-American art as an investment is a legacy that I will be proud to leave my children. It is an asset that will appreciate in sentimentality and value as it is passed on from generation to generation. The legacy of art is not affected by time; it is eternal.

Olivia H. Stoner

Attorney

Philadelphia, PA



Closed for Business by Marcus Antonius Jansen



African-American art, for me, is very important for living a healthy, happy life. My taste runs from the very realistic to the very abstract. I have always purchased art to which I feel a connection. I cannot say that commerce or the value of the art has ever played a part in any purchasing decision that I've made. However, a few pieces that I own have since become very marketable.

Jeanne King

Art Patron
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil



The only thing better than art is more art.

John A. Dawkins, III

McDonalds Licensee
Bala Cynwyd, PA



As someone who has been associated with the music industry, I see the correlation between art and music. Both are deep expressions of our rich cultural heritage. Our historical journey is depicted through the eyes of yesterday's and today's talented African-American artists. Our pride, trials and triumphs as a people are proudly displayed on canvas and through photographs. My favorite piece of African-American art by Andrew Turner hangs in the lobby of WDAS radio. Long live African-American art through the generations!

Doug Henderson

Radio Personality, WJJZ
Philadelphia, PA



The Canopy by Paul Goodnight



Undeniably Smooth

Billie Dee Williams has achieved star status in film, theater and television. Although his life has been dominated by the performing arts, the first of his artistic abilities to emerge was drawing, at the early age of four. Billy Dee grew up in Harlem. He studied classical principles of painting at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Design in New York, where he was awarded a scholarship.

For him, painting is a lifelong pursuit. He says that he generally applies acrylic to canvas with paint brush and airbrush. Often elements of collage and other three-dimensional canvas creations emerge, incorporating



The Cello Player
by Billy Dee Williams.

ceramics, Lucite and neon light.

Cool, misty, luminous and futuristic describe the dreamy ambience of his work. Some say he is a visual storyteller whose rhythmic composition, unique perspective and bold color carry the selective, often inspiring message. Billy Dee says he tries to bridge the visible world of the here and now with the invisible terrain of feelings and imagination.

One generation knows him as the heroic Lando Calrissian of the *Star Wars* series. Billy Dee has acted in over 100 other films, including *Lady Sings the Blues*, *Mahogany*, *Batman* and *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings*.

On Broadway he has given outstanding performances in such shows as *A Taste of Honey* and *Fences*. He was honored with an Emmy nomination for his television performance in *Brian's Song*. Other memorable TV performances include roles on *Dynasty*, *The Jeffersons*,



Remembering by Billy Dee Williams.

Gideon's Crossing, *The Hughleys* and *Scrubs*.

The versatile Billy Dee has also coauthored three novels.

In 1988, while he was performing in *Fences*, his inspiration for painting was reignited. This visit to his hometown reconnected him with the Big Apple's art scene and prompted a series of paintings. He returned to his present home in California with a new enthusiasm, completing 120 works in two years.

His personable writings and paintings make it easy to understand why Avon developed Undeniable, Billie Dee's fragrance for women.

"THE JAZZ MUSICIAN IS VERY MUCH PART OF MY LIFE. I GREW UP ON THEM, I CAN SEE THEM, I CAN EVEN SMELL THEM! I BECOME THE JAZZ MUSICIAN WHEN I PAINT HIM"

—Billy Dee Williams



Pool Player by Billy Dee Williams.



Piano Player by Billy Dee Williams.



Untitled by Billy Dee Williams



Strolling Strange by Billy Dee Williams



Patron Profile



It is our belief that everyone should be able to own and enjoy the beauty and wonders of fine art. October Gallery has opened its doors to this belief. Through them, we, the sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Rho Theta Omega Chapter, have been able to enjoy all artistic genres and share our possessions and knowledge with our families, friends and communities. October Gallery's generosity in donating artwork for our fund-raising initiatives has enabled us to continue to be a "service to all mankind."

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Rho Theta Omega Chapter
Philadelphia, PA



From the beginning, October Gallery, by educating and empowering the Black art audience and its artists, has provided an invaluable service, heightening the visual literacy of a people consciously seeking to counterbalance generations of widespread miseducation. Like other workers in the Black arts arena, October Gallery emerged out of the realization that without an audience the artist would be invisible and that without artists our community would have no positive sense of the fullness of its character and beauty, and in some cases no historical continuity. I salute all, from grass roots organizations to "Blackstream" museums, who serve to answer those critical needs and issues, while at the same time confirming the role of artists as advocates who validate and creatively document our spiritual and human presence.

Edward S. Spriggs

Fine Art Appraisals
Atlanta, GA



Wood Covered with Copper, Cameroon, West Africa



Black and Blue by E. B. Lewis



I was there with October Gallery from the very beginning—at the very first auction some 20 years ago. My perspective is unlike most because I have been one of the auctioneers for each of those years. I have watched, and have been a first-hand witness to, the growth of the African-American art industry. I feel that I have insight not afforded to many. As I see it, a remarkable metamorphosis has taken place.

The African-American culture has value. I am referring to economic value. There is no question that *The Cosby Show* and *Good Times* brought the artwork into millions of homes and living rooms on a weekly basis. Ernie Barnes' *Sugar Shack* and Ellis Wilson's *The Funeral Procession* were prominently displayed for us to admire on TV. Through my discussions with artists and gallery owners, it became clear that auctions and galleries saw an increased interest, especially in the work of artists seen on TV. Name recognition was on the incline as Annie Lee, Paul Goodnight, Cal Massey, Romare Bearden became household names. This did not happen immediately, however, but over time.

As an auctioneer, I began to appreciate the value people placed on their art acquisitions. Apparently, as some

household incomes increased, patrons changed from buying posters and mass-produced art to purchasing limited-edition prints and originals. So, there you have it! It goes without saying that the growth of any industry is built on the backs of the greats that led the way. The Harlem Renaissance was that foundation. Today's artists are a part of a new renaissance on the shoulders of the Harlem Renaissance, and it is happening before our eyes.

Mike Tendler

President, Self-Employed Insurance Group
Elizabeth, PA

As a member of the Expo working team, I find the auctions to be my favorite event. There's an air of excitement as bidders enter. The auctioneers entertain the crowded room with bidding wars, fun and laughter. Furthermore, designated auctions benefit local charities.

The Philadelphia Art Expo is much like a family reunion. Young and old gather to meet the artists and renew old acquaintances. Artists eagerly make the annual November trip to proudly display their latest works; and, attendees flood the halls for three days.

There's something to be said when everyone leaves the event a winner.

Melodee Kessler

Vice President, Self-Employed Insurance Group
Elizabeth, PA



Waterboy by Oronde Kairi Johnson



I love the faces of people of color because they have so much strength and character, and they are so varied in affect and form. Compare and consider Ossie Davis, Cicely Tyson, Lena Horne and Brock Peters. Therein are variations of stories within a facial palette.

I see fine art as competition, confidence and growth. My first experience with competition was the challenge, as a kindergartner, to draw people and objects figuratively to appear more "real." As I worked harder, my skills and confidence grew, allowing me to stop "balling up" so many sheets of drawing paper and to "persevere" and see a piece through. Growth comes through looking back over the completed pieces with satisfaction.

I was put here by God and guided by my parents who saw my talent early in my life. They reinforced my hunger and drive to create by enrolling me in summer and weekend art programs.

I research my studies and attempt to bring passion to my art.

John Baker

Baker Creations
Detroit, MI



As an artist, poet and folklorist, I invite my audience to adopt a positive attitude about life. I encourage us to appreciate ourselves and the contributions we make to humanity. I believe that good self-esteem, along with realizing one's self-worth, is important for success.

Brian Joseph

Artist, Poet
Houston, TX



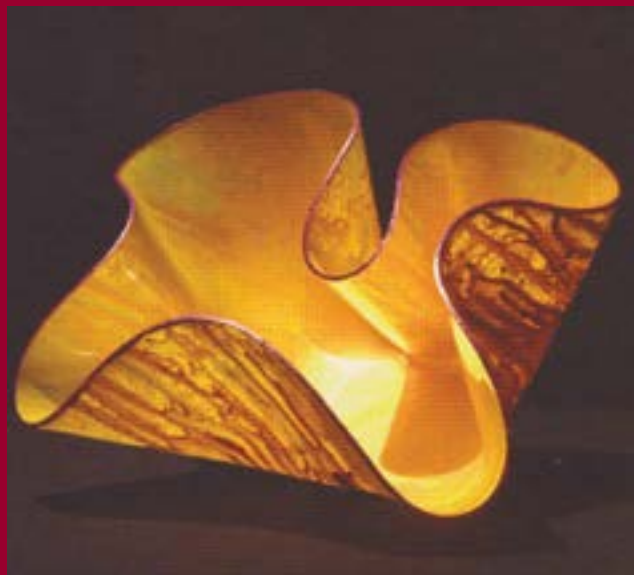
Diversity and beauty should be admired by everyone.

Larry Allen

Visual Artist
Leeds, AL



The Human Race by Brian Joseph



Yellow Bowl by artisans James and Yolanda Redd



I collect art that speaks to me and my culture. It brightens up my home when folks come to visit. When they see someone that looks like their own family members in a painting, it lifts them up. It is such a unique feeling. I have been able to purchase African-American art for family members, who have gained an appreciation for their culture.

Renee Amore

President, Amore Group
Philadelphia, PA



Art in general is a wonderfully personal description of a person's opinion of life, culture and economics. For African-Americans it is even more important to make sure that someone, who understands who we are, depicts our lives accurately.

Cicely Prescod

Student
Los Angeles, CA



Untitled by Omenihu Amachi



A few months after I started photographing the roots of trees, I asked a friend if I could take some photos of his locks. He agreed. I went to his house, located at the top of a mountain, with a panoramic view of where the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea meet. It was breathtaking! I took photos of his locks, and when I looked at them together with the photographs of tree roots, I said, "Wow!" I could not believe my eyes. The similarity was astonishing. It was as if it had been prearranged. I knew that was impossible. This was not a coincidence. I sensed a greater consciousness guiding me. It was a presence I had felt before, but not connected with my photography. I embraced its guidance and started to explore this new perspective, the human subject.

My journey led me into remote areas of Trinidad and Tobago, where people's daily lives are consistently connected to nature. My path was laid out for me: all I had to do was keep an open spirit and be prepared. Selecting my subjects was more of a visceral process, based on sensing a person's energy rather than the length of their locks.

Sensing a person's spirit is an intuitive process achieved by being spiritually conscious. I approached photographing the tree roots and my human subjects with the same openness of spirit. It provided me with the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogues with men and women who have been wearing their hair in locks. For some, it seemed natural, free, at one with nature and symbolic of a cosmic force, unfettered by society's constraints. For others, locks represented a connection to an ancient order dedicated to a pure and holy life. Locks were not seen as a novelty or style.

If we view creation as a continuous process in nature, with the Creator existing in all things, we can see its intricate role in shaping the spiritual and cultural development of humanity. This holistic approach, of worshiping God's manifestation in Nature, is still practiced today by many indigenous cultures around the world.

Curtis McHardy

Photographer
Trinidad





Black art is my weakness. I love collecting all forms of art. It is the quintessential representation of our people. Having Black art in my environment gives me a sense of connectedness.

Anita M. Pearson

Speech Clinician
Raleigh, NC



When you are in the business of molding youngsters into productive citizens, it becomes necessary to infuse their surroundings with positive role models and educational experiences.

Art is often a common denominator that allows the students not only to see positive images but also to make a connection with the subject through their own self expressions, interpretations and experiences.

As a child growing up, my exposure to African-American art was limited to a few pages in history books and *National Geographic* magazine. Today's youth have a number of opportunities to celebrate their heritage and enjoy art that personally speaks to them. It is because of this availability that I seize every opportunity to display artwork throughout our school that is either produced by our students or an artist that has a positive message to share.

The art shown above was created by Alcorn Elementary School students under the tutelage of art teacher Jeanette Pinkney (at left).

Pamela DeShields Young

Principal, Alcorn Elementary School
Philadelphia, PA



Dilemma by E. B. Lewis



If we are attracted to it, we will purchase it. It's just that simple.

Andy and Wendy Vincent

Art Collectors
Boston, MA



African-American art is important to me because it is ME! It shows me where I come from and where I am going. The colors bring out details.

Malinda Gossott

Art Patron
Los Angeles, CA



When I was a child, my favorite artist was Pablo Picasso. At the time, I did not realize that the passion I had for this Spanish artist's work was because he had been influenced by African art. When I was in 7th grade, I discovered I had a great passion for art. I even won the citywide award for my art. After I won, I was sent to special art classes every Saturday, but while there, I discovered that I preferred looking at other people's art to creating art. These kids were great art students from all over the city. Their work touched me because they were so creative. I wanted the world to see the depth, texture, energy and beauty that one can glean from looking at original works.

When a teacher asked me what was I going to do when I grew up, I said with great certainty and confidence that I was going to be an art dealer. This particular adult was shocked. She said I could not do that. I did not ask why she felt that way, but at twelve I knew I was going to be an art dealer. It would be my job to let the whole world know about the works of art in all mediums that were being created by innovative people. Nineteen years later, I started Barbara Wallace & Associates. I became a corporate art consultant to advise and to help corporations collect all mediums of art. I have worked with artists of all ethnic groups, but it has always been important to me that when I develop a collection it should be inclusive of women and people of color.

Barbara Wallace

Corporate Art Consultant
Philadelphia, PA



Epa helmet mask, Nigeria

President William Jefferson Clinton



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

June 17, 2005

Evelyn Redcross
Director
October Gallery
68 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Evelyn:

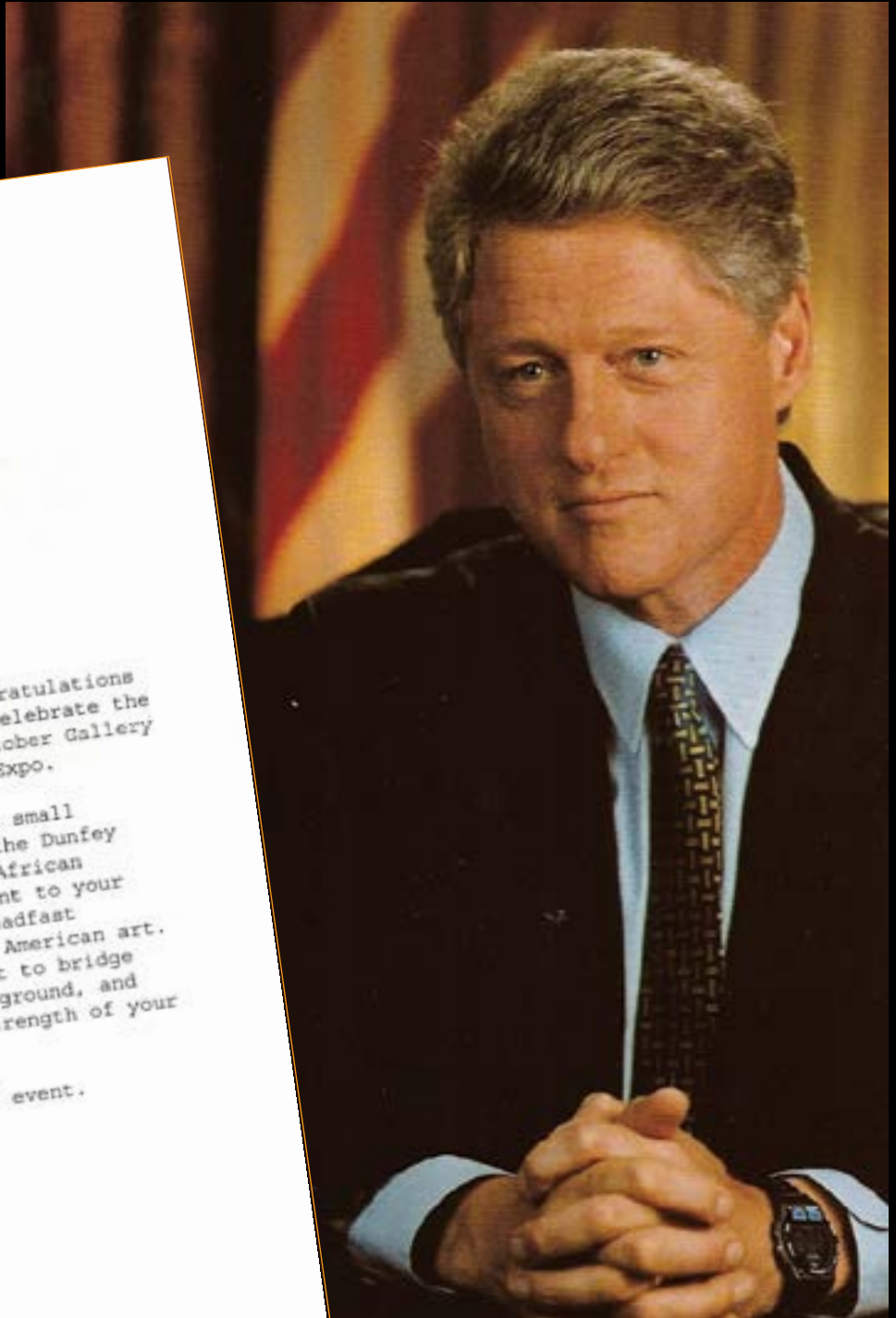
I am delighted to extend my congratulations to you as you and your husband celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the October Gallery Philadelphia International Art Expo.

The growth of your event from a small gathering twenty years ago at the Dunfee Hotel to the nation's largest African American Art Expo is a testament to your innovative vision and your steadfast devotion to promoting African American art. You recognize the power of art to bridge differences in language, background, and culture and to bolster the strength of your community.

Best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton



Senator Arlen Specter



The Honorable John F. Street



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
ROOM 215 CITY HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19107-3295
(215) 686-2181
FAX (215) 686-2180

JOHN F. STREET, ESQUIRE
MAYOR

November 11, 2005

Mrs. Evelyn Redcross
Director
October Gallery
68 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mrs. Redcross:

I am delighted to congratulate you on the occasion of the 20th Annual October Gallery Philadelphia International Art Expo!

This inspiring exhibition, the nation's largest African American Art Expo, is to be cheered for bringing together two hundred accomplished exhibitors and attracting over forty thousand attendees annually to the City of Philadelphia. A visit to the show is an exciting way to encounter the work of African American masters and emerging contemporary artists. It is very fitting that this exposition takes place here, in Philadelphia, a city rich in art history.

I wish to acknowledge and recognize your fine work as Director of October Gallery. Your two decades of dedicated time and effort in creating this magnificent fall exhibition is admired and appreciated.

Art lovers who share a common interest in African American Art are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to see and collect a part of American history. I know that all the attendees will enjoy this year's exhibition.

With kind regards, I am

A stylized, handwritten signature of John F. Street, consisting of a large, sweeping 'J' and 'S'.

John F. Street, Esq.
Mayor

Black Enterprise Magazine



Earl G. Graves Jr.
President and COO

July 20, 2005

Mrs. Evelyn Redcross
Director
October Gallery
68 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Evelyn:

On behalf of **Black Enterprise Magazine**, I am delighted to congratulate you and your husband on the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Gallery Philadelphia International Art Expo.

Your passion, hard work, and resiliency have made the Philadelphia International Art Expo into the nation's largest African American art exhibit.

We are inspired by your entrepreneurial spirit. Congratulations once again, on the anniversary of your 20th Annual October Gallery Art Expo in Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Butch'. The signature is written in a cursive, stylized font.

/enclosures
tl/EGG, Jr.

Earl G. Graves Publishing Co., Inc.
130 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10011-4399
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The Nation's Largest African- American Art Expo

Three days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, were the total number of days per week that October Gallery could bear in time and payroll to operate its brand new art gallery in 1985. That summer of nervous uncertainty and zealous expectancy gave promise to dreamers, idealists and those willing to step out on faith.

We could count on our hands the number of gallery visitors at first. But by autumn we had begun to make headway. Customers came more frequently and often returned to the gallery noticeably enthused. The newfound art expressions, clad in cultural heritage, were a hit. We were grateful!

Mercer's cousin, Donald Redcross, CPA (who in the 1980s owned the nation's second largest African-American accounting firm—Levy, Redcross) was our business mentor. "Rent a hotel function room and do something big," he said. "Have a large party chock- full of people. Give Philadelphia some pizzazz and thank the folk for their support." That's exactly what we did. It was a "thank you party." No admission was charged.

The Philadelphia International Art Expo (PIAE)



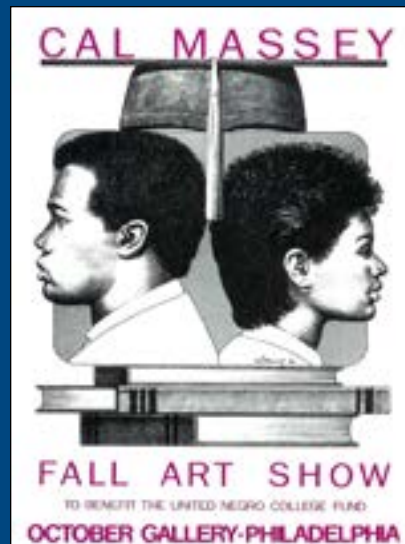
Ad as it appeared in the *Philadelphia Tribune*
Tuesday, April 8, 1986.

The Philadelphia International Art Expo (PIAE) evolved from this experimental affair. At the time we called it “The Black Art Show and Sale.” In our excitement we zealously scheduled these events every spring and autumn. Later, as momentum grew, we made the mature decision to present the Expo just once a year—in autumn (mid-November), consistent with our name, October Gallery (OG).

Nine hundred people crammed into the first event at the now defunct Dunfee Hotel on City Line Avenue in Philadelphia. Several more of the early Expos were held there as well. Later, we tried the University Sheraton Hotel (one year), the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel (one year), Adams Mark Hotel (five years), Pennsylvania Convention Center (three years) and the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel (two years). In 1998, PIAE moved to its present venue, The Liacouras Center, Temple University’s sports arena.



Spring Expo poster, 1980s.



Fall Expo poster, 1980s.

As destiny would have it, the Liacouras Center was extraordinarily suitable. For example, the Expo floor plan maximizes the Center's available floor space and encourages customer traffic to move circularly. In this format the artists are easily located and repeat visits to booths are better facilitated. Aside from traversing the space and purchasing when they want to, customers can also rest in the stands and watch others explore.

Our artists were nervous when we first chose the Liacouras Center. They believed North Philadelphia might be the wrong location, especially since news reports often suggest that this Philadelphia neighborhood has few positive attributes. We listened to comments such as "I heard October Gallery is having the Expo in a gym." And some artists asked, "Will we be safe in that neighborhood? We have heard bad stories." Of course, moving the event to the Liacouras Center turned out to be one of the best decisions for Expo that we have ever made.

As mentioned in "Reflections" (page 19), the BlackStream Renaissance shows that African-Americans are supporting and developing Black art mainly by themselves. The Liacouras Center on Temple's campus is in the heart of an African-American community. Why not host an African-

American-centered event in an African-American community—an area where we dominate in population and as consumers? Why not?



Ad used to promote the Expo in 1989. At this time we started using "Afro-American" and "African-American" in the title.

The Expo has grown from occupying a mere 1000 square feet of exhibit space to occupying over 45,000 square feet. Attendance has grown to over 40,000 patrons. Today, PIAE is the nation's largest African-American art expo. The event presents some of the most prominent African-American artists and showcases paintings, sculptures, jewelry, wood carvings, dolls, glass, metal, wearable art and much more. Poetry, music, dance, seminars, storytelling, African drumming and workshops enhance the main event.

There was no road map for what we wanted to do. No franchise, no precedent. So we learned like children learn. We learned to walk by falling down, getting up and falling down over and over again, until we could walk.

Many people believe that if they have a job or a

The Expo has grown from occupying a mere 1000 square feet of exhibit space in the early years to occupying over 45,000 square feet in 2005; from an attendance of 900 patrons to one of over 40,000 patrons.



Site of the first Expo, in Dunfry Hotel; 1,000 square feet of exhibit space.



Site of current Expo, Liacouras Center; 45,000 square feet of exhibit space.

profession there is no time or opportunity for a business of their own. Just think about that! Avon, Mary Kay, Tupperware and home art shows prove that businesses large or small have a chance to survive and perhaps even flourish as long as there is a vision.

Remember the cat's admonition to Alice in the classic children's story, *Alice In Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll,

Alice said to the cat: "Which road do I take?"

The cat replied: "Where do you want to go?"

Alice said: "I don't know!"

And the cat replied: "Then it doesn't matter which road you take!"

We learned an important lesson about our vision of connecting as many people as possible with art. We learned that our work had to support other people and our culture. Here is how we shaped the plan that enabled our business to become a meaningful entity: We created a vision, established an operational model to execute the vision and included real people (our customers) in the vision and model.

Culture lives! Art is just one of its forms. Our dream of bringing culture, art and people together became a reality because OG and the community share the same dream.

The Expo works because it remains focused on its vision. We understand that if OG is to have a successful Expo every year, we must always be mindful of our value proposition. Our value proposition is bringing to the Expo the largest number possible of the most informed attendees possible. We say that PIAE is attendance-centered. This is what gives value to our event. This simply means that almost everything we do, or don't do, is dictated by the question: Does this strategy improve or hinder attendance? With this ultimate objective in mind, we move forward to execute it.



Our business mentor,
Donald Redcross, Sr.



NBC 10's Sheila Allen-Stephens (left), Evelyn Redcross (center) and Wade Redcross directing the band at one of our first Expos.



Donald Redcross, Jr., Mercer Redcross, WDAS' Tamlin Henry and Junious Rhone, Sr. at an early Expo.

EXPO'S EARLY YEARS



Entertainment at one of our first Expos, 1986.



Dr. Ruth Hayre (left) and Evelyn Redcross at Expo 1987.



Art auction at Expo 1993.



Philadelphia news anchor Joyce Evans at an Expo in the 1990s.



From left to right: Glenda, Terri and Ishana, the Expo sales team.



Artist Allan Crite and his wife Jackie Crite at Expo 1997.



City Councilperson Marion Tasco (fourth from left) greets Girls Scouts at Expo 1994.



Artist Steven Johnson draws portraits at Expo 1997.

None of this, of course, happened over night. The road was long and sometimes arduous. Several years ago we realized we needed a road map for PIAE. A business survey was developed that generated our **Market Position Analysis**, which is a model for how we work.

Market Position Analysis

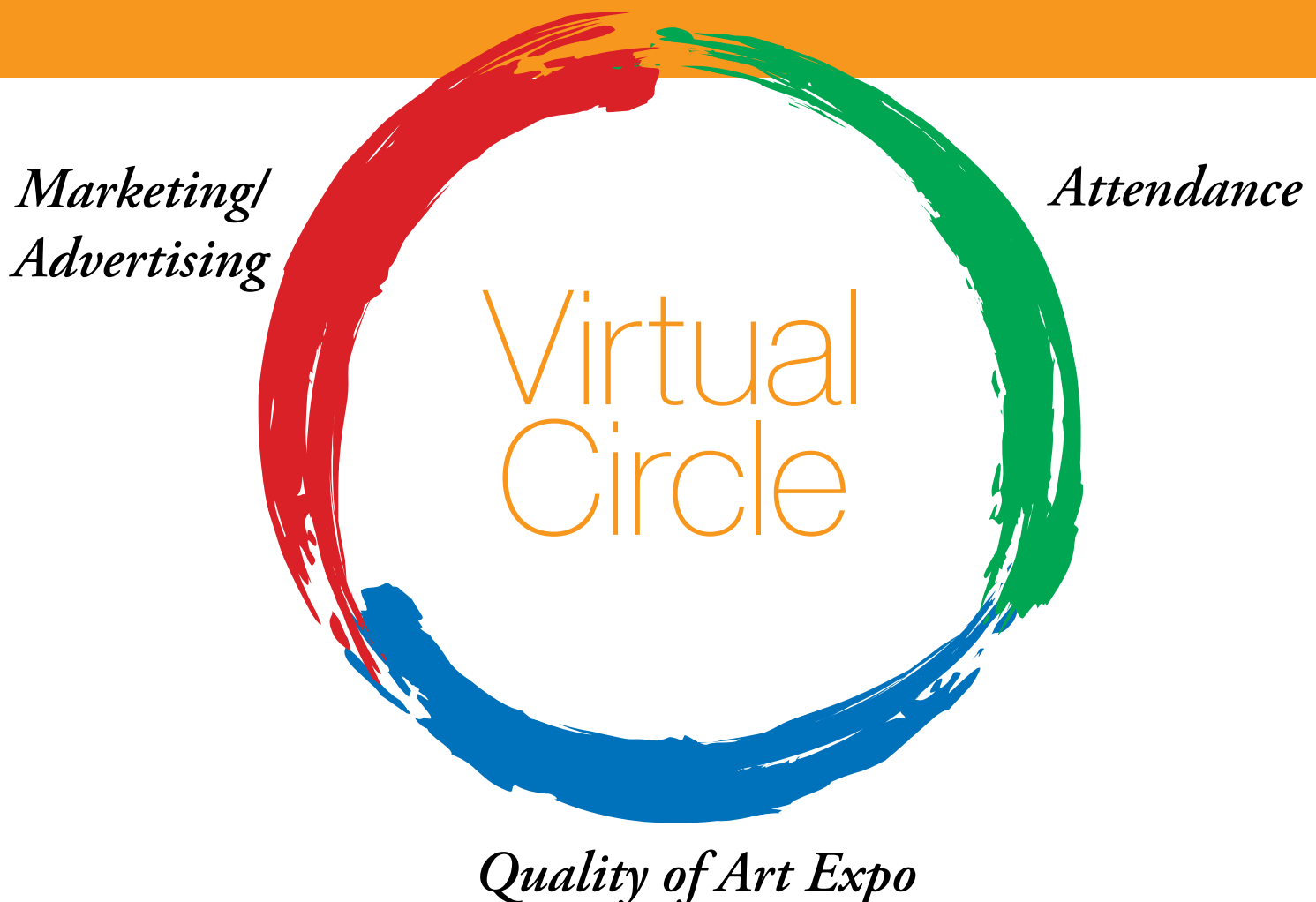
The success of the Expo comes from the Gallery's ability to develop a virtual circle that addresses the core values that motivate our customers to participate in the Expo. These core values are:

Marketing/Advertising

Attendance

Quality of Art Expo

The power of the Expo lies in its ability to uniquely combine these critical core values for long-term value and revenue for our internal customers, the artists. (The attendees are primary customers for the artists and external customers for the Gallery.) High attendance drives a higher level of and broader selection of artists to Expo, which in turn helps to create better marketing and advertising for future shows.





October Gallery's Marketing System



It is the Gallery's intention to promote the Expo to the right audience through the right media so as to draw the largest crowd possible. Just because one develops or builds an event does not mean the public will come. Some of the world's most interesting events go unnoticed simply because people aren't aware of them.

Early and continual advertising helps maintain the Expo's attendance level. However, the cost to advertise is dear. The OG team begins its marketing concentration as early as mid-January and continues through mid-November.

There are two marketing strategies OG implements to promote the Expo and its sponsors and exhibiting artists. The two strategies are: a media campaign and hand-to-hand combat. Both automatically lead to a word-of-mouth campaign.

Placing a major emphasis on advertising in newspapers and national magazines and on the Internet has proved very effective. This wide-sweeping approach emerged from our work in the 1980s and 90s. As a means of encouraging the growing interest in African-American art, OG took the message and the art to over 32 U.S. cities yearly. Our present use of national media plus the Internet provides effective communication tools to cement earlier relationships and to undergird the depth and scope of our vision.

Through advertisements we aim to pique our customers' interest. The content and visuals of our Web site facilitate the messages so that customers miles away can feel as close to the Expo as our fellow Philadelphians.

OG is pleased to announce that we receive up to 600,000 hits per month on our Web sites (octobergallery.com and paintmagazine.net). The hits increase dramatically as we near Expo, totaling up to 1,000,000. The Web site is constantly updated with information on current contests, art giveaways, news, education and opportunities. More traffic means increased interest in the Expo.

Paint Magazine, our national quarterly resource magazine for popular African-American art, has become a strong vehicle for promoting cultural events and issues as well as other topics of interests. By 2002, two years after the magazine premiered, *Paint* had found its target audience. Subscriptions increased significantly. We decided to entrust *Paint* with delivering the details of the Expo that year. We adjusted the advertising budget accordingly so as to increase *Paint's* area of distribution. Our logic was: Shouldn't we put some trust in an advertising medium under our own management? Why not invest in our own advertising medium? Why not put a stake in a future of our own design?

Call us crazy! Perhaps our reasoning was indeed irrational. We took 40% of the advertising budget designated for established newspaper ads and re-allocated those funds for *Paint Magazine* and its distribution. Fortunately, two things happened. First, *Paint* surpassed our marketing expectations. Second, *Paint* proved to be a viable advertising medium and demonstrated its effectiveness as a tool of communication.

The fliers promote the Expo and our sponsors and exhibiting artists. And by offering a free mini print the

fliers help us attract more attendees. This offer adds value to the fliers. When they are handed out five to seven months prior to the event, offering a free print upon redemption, it makes it more likely that potential clients will hold on to them. These fliers also reveal that admission is free, and highlight artists, national organizations, sponsors and community groups that are associated with Expo, helping them gain greater exposure and helping us portray the depth and scope of the event. Attendees can get a number of other free items, simply by registering online prior to the Expo.



We begin advertising the Expo in newspapers, program booklets and national magazines as early as August. Following is a partial list of publications in which we have advertised:

Black Enterprise magazine

Black Issues Book Review

Black Network Magazine

Essence

Images Magazine

The Los Angeles Times

Mt. Airy Times Express

National Bar Association Conference booklet

National Black Nurses Association Newsletter

The New York Times

Paint Magazine

Pathfinders Travel Magazine

The Philadelphia Daily News

Philadelphia Inquirer

The Philadelphia Metro

Philadelphia New Observer

The Philadelphia Sunday Sun

Philadelphia Tribune

Ritz Filmbill

Scoop USA

Sojourner Magazine

Upscale magazine

Vibe magazine

The Village Voice

The Washington Post

The Weekly Press



Samples of
ads placed
in various
print media.

October Gallery's

20th Annual Philadelphia International Art Expo

In the News



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There's Page 4.

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Do This!

By Rob Watson

Body-painting
will again be part of the art expo at the Liacouras Center.

**TODAY THROUGH SUNDAY
Paint it black**

Billed as the nation's largest African American art show, the 20th International Art Expo from October Gallery is at Temple University's Liacouras Center this weekend. The expo is a showcase for creations by artists from the States, Canada, the Caribbean, and Africa. Ohio sculptor Woodrow Nash and Georgia ceramist-painter Kinsey Cantrell will be two high-profile talents present. In case you're wondering, yes, the popular live body painting Paint Nude Expo will again have many delights. Hours: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. today and Saturday, till 7 p.m. Sunday. Information: 215-629-3039.

Ray Ayers

**TODAY AND SATURDAY
Everybody loves his sunshine**

There's no need to go searching any longer. Jazz-funk vibraphonist Ray Ayers, one of the most sampled artists in hip-hop, is making a stop on another mystic voyage at Zanzibar Blue. A major player in the fusion of black music in the '70s, Ayers can do it all — from empowering tracks such as "Red, Black and Green" to the silky soul of "You Send Me." Do yourself a favor and feel the vibes at four shows, tonight and Saturday night at 8 and 10. Tickets: \$40. Information: 215-732-4500.



SERVING PHILADELPHIA AND THE DELAWARE VALLEY

PHILADELPHIA

New Observer

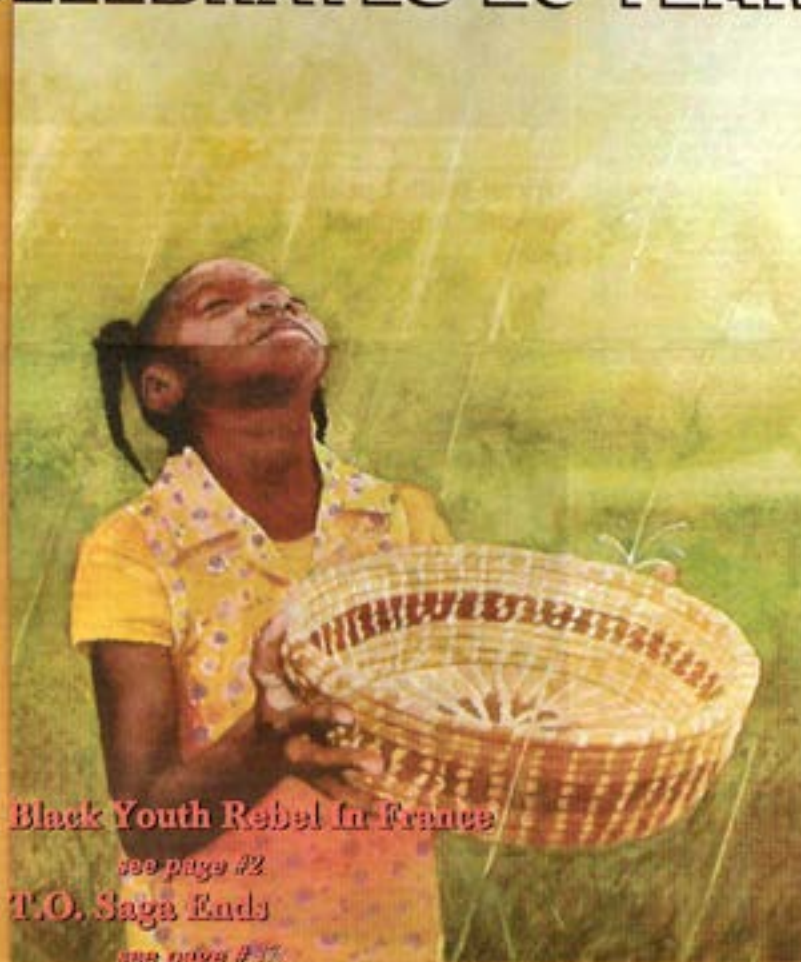
"INNOVATORS OF THE POSITIVE NEWS FORMAT"

Volume 30 Number 45

© Philadelphia New Observer, Inc.

November 9, 2005 50¢

OCTOBER GALLERY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS



• **Black Youth Rebel in France**

see page #2

• **T.O. Saga Ends**

see page #17

"Waiting For Spring" by E.V. Lewis

CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING, NOV. 10TH, AT THE 1ST DISTRICT PLAZA, SEE PAGE 12



editor's pick

>>ART

20th Annual Philadelphia International Art Expo

Fri., Nov. 11-Sun., Nov. 13, 10am-10pm. Free. Liacouras Center, 1776 N. Broad St. 215.629.3939 ext. 17. www.liacourascenter.com

Whether you need something nice for your living room wall or want to add a diverse commodity to your retirement portfolio, the Philadelphia International Art Expo is a beautiful thing. "It was our goal to enlighten people to the fact that art can be more than just some-



Body art: *Glided Paisley* by photographer Adrienne Mills is part of the Expo collection.

thing nice to hang on your wall—we've shown people that art can also be an investment," says Lamar Redcross, operations manager of October Art Gallery. "Over the years we've grown with many of our buyers, who have now become art patrons." This year more than 100 artists of color will display their paintings and sculptures—art that attacks the sensibility that spans from pre-slavery Africa to what's happening today in hip-hop, education, politics and sports, including visions of the future and daring looks inside personal lives. Not content to showcase visual art alone, this year's expo will also feature spoken word, a tribute by the Headline Theater Company to musical legend Donnie Hathaway and a presentation by black-cinema pioneer Melvin Van Peebles. (*Raymond Tyler*)

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

The major ground campaign includes the distribution of over 400,000 fliers throughout the Northeast Corridor. This is the heart of our marketing strategy. This special distribution starts as early as March. We call the passing out of fliers “hand-to-hand combat” because we believe this is where the advertising battle is won. Patrons respond to this approach because it shows we care enough to come to them. We like it, too, because we start to feel the excitement of the Expo. Our fliers seem to ignite the “buzz.”

Aside from fliers, we use other techniques to promote the Expo, including gift bags filled with free promotions and advertisements. Bags are distributed by our established partners and on street corners. There is no substitute for face-to-face visits with individuals and organizations. It is simple. We just ask customers to come. This format has proved powerfully effective.



Flier distribution.



October Gallery's flier--hand-to-hand combat.



October Gallery's billboard campaign.



October Gallery's mobile campaign.



Fliers used in our hand-to-hand combat campaign.

About three weeks prior to Expo we utilize the power of television for the final advertising push. Prior to that, we advertise in magazines and newspapers and on billboards and radio. On-site radio broadcasts on WDAS continuously remind customers to come to the Expo right up until the last day. And let's not forget the 250,000-plus reminder e-mails sent before the event.

A reminder is any form of advertising done in the last 30 days before the Expo. For example, often October Gallery gives free art and art-related products to the shakers and makers in the Philadelphia area and beyond.

These “grateful art” gifts are given to excite and remind leaders who can influence public opinion about the Expo. Connecting people with art is what we do. The advertising vehicles discussed above ensure that the Expo has high visibility, mass outreach and strong market saturation. This is the investment the OG organization makes in promoting the Expo and its artists and sponsors.

The success of any art event also depends on other factors such as a strong economy, reasonable weather, new product and high attendance.

Attendance

Many business professionals advise, “Don’t go into business to make money; instead, go into business to develop and maintain a customer.” This advice has become one of our mottos. Consequently, OG sustains and increases attendance (external customers) to build the enthusiasm required for greater artist participation (internal customers). “Ingredients” such as customer service, entertainment, celebrities, new artists, partnerships and imagination are stirred into the attendance broth to send the message that we care and that the PIAE experience delivers more than what one might anticipate.

For example, OG strives for quality customer service that permeates the Expo. We encourage artists and other exhibitors to develop methods and strategies to educate, engage and sell. Many artists are uncomfortable with their “selling” role. Yet participation in the Expo means exhibitors must sell or have someone sell for them. Some artists dislike selling so much that they rank it up there with unpleasant conditions such as a toothache or a poison ivy infection. Exhibitors may increase positive selling if they:

- 1. Acknowledge potential customers right away.**
- 2. Avoid body language that indicates: “Here’s another looker, not a buyer.”**
- 3. Help customers overcome their uncertainties.**
- 4. Empower customers by educating them.**
- 5. Maintain a customer list for future marketing.**
- 6. Create an atmosphere in which customers can interact.**

The second section of this circle is our greatest asset.



Quality of Art Expo

The overall quality of the Expo experience is shaped by the selection of artists, programming, sponsors and partnerships. Providing the exciting, the unusual and the exceptional is always the goal. Products and services that are in some way uplifting for the community may find a voice in the Expo. The Expo is a conduit for learning, expanding, sharing and experimenting.

The products of jewelers, clothing designers, potters, painters and other artisans are subject to an evaluation committee that aims for a diverse blend of African-American or culturally complementary artwork. This helps to reduce unnecessary competition and better ensures exhibitor profitability. Care is taken to avoid duplication of product whenever possible.

Other quality issues include our efforts to maintain great customer relations with our internal and external customers by using three simple rules: (1) The customer is always right; (2) There is no advantage in winning an argument and losing a customer; and (3) Nothing is worth losing compassion or consideration for our customers.



October Gallery strives to create a spirit of cooperation and an atmosphere of order and reassurance; therefore, we insist that our exhibitors are treated with deference, consideration and compassion. Quality oil dropped on the strategic parts of a wheel make it run smoother and last longer. So it is with all the internal and external customers. Our aim is to treat everyone well so that the Expo runs smoothly. It seems to us that an atmosphere of teamwork prevails and spreads to all in attendance, from the setup personnel to the hot dog vendor to the venue managers to the attendees. This unity of the environment seems to expand exponentially and pervades the Expo.

Expo Framing Partners



Expo framing partner American Picture Framing Company.



Expo framing partners Christopher & Co., and Seven Arts Framing.

Exhibitors and Celebrities

Hundreds of artists and art dealers have exhibited at the Expo. We can not possibly list all the artists that have been a part of the event. Below are some that should be mentioned. Over the years the artists below either exhibited or participated as special on-site guest artists or through live video conference.

*Ernie Barnes, Samuel Byrd,
Charles Bibbs, John T. Biggers,
Claude Clark Sr., LeRoy Clarke,
Jimi Claybrooks, Leroy Campbell,
Allan Rohan Crite, James Dupree,
Paul Goodnight, John Holyfield,
George Hunt, Lois Mailou Jones,
Annie Lee, Samella S. Lewis,
Cal Massey, Ellen Powell Tiberino,
William Tolliver and Andrew Turner*



From left to right: Evelyn Redcross, unidentified artist, artist Reba Dickerson Hill, Edie Huggins, artist Ellen Powell Tiberino and artist Francina Hill.



Artist Lois Mailou Jones (right), 1991.



October Gallery's Juanita Barnes (left) and artist Bernard Hoyes (right).



Artists Benjamin Britt (left) and Reba Dickerson Hill.



Artist Samuel Brown (left) and Mercer Redcross.



Artist Sylvia Walker (center) with patrons.



Artist Gilbert Young.



From left to right: Evelyn Redcross and entertainer Jean Carne, early 1990s.

More Expo Exhibitors

Accents Afrocentric, African Connection, African Heritage Collection, Amen Arts, Annie Lee & Friends, Another Phase, Anthony Armstrong, Art by Andrea, Artistic Treasures, Artifacts Art and Bookstore, Artrium Studio, Avisca Graphics, Aziz Fashions, B Graphics & Fine Arts Inc., Bakari Editions, Bamboozle, Bryan Collier Art, Carmel Fine Art Productions, CJET Inc., Clay By Kim, Color Circle Art Publishing, Creative Ceramics, Cultural Expressions, DBA Dress for Success Ethnic Dezigns, E&S Gallery Inc., Ethnic Expressions, Fame Art Gallery, Fashion Fields, Fatima Williams, Femi Trimnell Studios, Fine Art By Antonio FABA, Garments of Praise, George Nock Studios, Gifts from the Heart, The Gold Connection, Gripps Photography, Hinton Originals, Howell Enterprises, Huuza Collections, J. Woolard's Ethnic Accessories, Jayne's Crafts & Things, Jazzabon Creations, Jean-Claude Saint, Johari Inc., John Holyfield Studio, The Art of Karen Y. Buster, Kenneth Gatewood Enterprises, Kenworld Enterprises, Khanovax International, Kwaku Genfi, Larry O. Brown Sr., Larry "Poncho" Brown, Lest We Forget Black Museum, Louise's Daughter, Melanin Graphics, The Art of Merrill, Oneeki, Pamela Hilliard, Perfect Touch, Prettyman Productions Inc., Redfern Pottery and Fine Art, Ribbons & Things, Ricky Steele, Roberts Images and Carol Ann, Roederick Vines, Sidney Creations, T. Ellis Fine Art, T/A Divine Creations, Timbuktu, The Fantasy Art of Toni L. Taylor, Twin Hicks Inc., Universal Creations, Who Deserves It More Than You, The Word Gallery, Zebra/Wak Gallery and more...



Sponge Bob entertains at the Expo.



Artist Ricky Steele.



Artist Leonard Freeman.



Exhibitor Megbar Ayalew (left) and associate.



From left to right: artist Edwin Lester, Kandi Pitts and artist Michael Angelo Wallace.



Artist Erich March (right) with Michele Speaks.



Artists Aaron and Alan Hicks.



Artist Randall Walters and Sherie Walters.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Proclamation

The 12th annual Philadelphia Art Expo, hosted by the October Gallery of Philadelphia, will showcase the best in the art world created by African American artists from across the United States, the Caribbean, and Canada. Taking place in the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel Exhibition Center from Friday through Sunday, December 12, 13, and 14, the Philadelphia Art Expo reaches out to patrons from all communities and cultures, bringing them face-to-face with African American art and artists.

Nearly 100 visual artists are included in this year's Art Expo, including such well-known painters as Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Jonathan Green, Bernard Hoyes, John Biggers, and William Tolliver. Contemporary painters also include James Dupree, Andrew Turner, Sylvia Walker, and LaShun Beal, with others such as Joysmith Oakland, California, Annie Lee of Chicago, Gilbert Young of Atlanta, and Charles Bibbs of Los Angeles at the Expo in person.

Originated and produced by the October Gallery, the Philadelphia Art Expo also benefits a number of charitable organizations and groups. For the sixth consecutive year, the Philadelphia Scholar's Fund is the selected recipient of these proceeds. The Scholar's Fund provides the last dollar monies to high school seniors, bridging the gap between awarded financial aid and unanticipated college costs. Over the past five years, October Gallery has donated more than \$10,000 to the Scholar's Fund. In addition the Gallery pays for transportation to the Expo for hundreds of public school students.

THEREFORE . . .

I, Edward G. Rendell, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, do hereby proclaim Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 12, 13, and 14, 1997, as

OCTOBER GALLERY PHILADELPHIA ART EXPO DAYS

in Philadelphia and do urge all Philadelphians to experience this vital, exciting, and important art exposition and learn and enjoy the multitude of art experiences that will be on view there.



Edward G. Rendell
Mayor

Given under my hand and the
Seal of the City of Philadelphia,
this twelfth day of December, one
thousand, nine hundred and
ninety-seven.

CITY COUNCIL CITY OF PHILADELPHIA CITATION

RECOGNIZING THE 15TH ANNUAL PHILADELPHIA ART EXPO

The Council of the City of Philadelphia is pleased and proud to recognize the 15th Annual Philadelphia Art Expo, and to support its hosts and supporters.

Whereas, The Philadelphia Art Expo, now in its fifteenth year, draws African and African American Artists from all over the United States and the Caribbean, Canada, Africa and Europe, and

Whereas, This year, over two hundred exhibitors will display their work for over forty thousand individuals and families, all of whom are hereby encouraged to attend the October Gallery's Philadelphia Art Expo and learn more about art, tradition, history and heritage, and

Whereas, The Expo, hosted by the October Gallery, reaches out to all communities and goes across every boundary to reveal the common humanity we share.

Therefore, With this Citation, the Council of the City of Philadelphia does hereby recognize the Philadelphia Art Expo. We support its goals and missions and extend to the October Gallery and all those who patronize this terrific event the respect and admiration of this legislative body.



Blondell Reynolds Brown
Blondell Reynolds Brown
Councilwoman-at-Large

Anna C. Verna
ANNA C. VERNA, President
11/10/00

Time-Sequence Docking

We have instituted a load-in and load-out system that enables our exhibitors to avoid the hassle of a congested loading dock. Our system puts into place a specific schedule that ensures a comfortable operation. We surveyed our artists/exhibitors several years ago and the loading-dock nightmare was the number-one problem with our Expo (and other art shows at that time). Prior to the solution the frustration and problems associated with this procedure created stress before the show began. This countered our attempt to keep the exhibitors' attention focused on effecting a beneficial and positive experience.

It is difficult for one to feel one way on the inside and act completely different on the outside. "As within, so without." Even if exhibitors managed to mask their discomfort, somehow their feelings might result in limited customer service, impaired ability to educate the customer or contagious angst. Could this cause the erosion of the win/win environment necessary for a successful Expo? We prefer a "wealth mentality," a sense that there is more than enough for everyone, that there is an inexhaustible supply of goodwill, trust, caring and compassion. This thinking results in the sharing of influence, and the acknowledgment of revenue and profits. It opens up possibilities, opportunities, prospects and creativity. Instead of simply making transactions, exhibitors make some transformations.



From left to right: Charles Warfield, Evelyn Redcross, En Vogue singer Terry Ellis, Mercer Redcross and Dyana Williams.



Artist Edward Boseman and his wife.



Artists Bisa Butler and Phyllis Stephens.

MORE EXPO...

AND MORE EXPO...



Artist Bryan Collier.



Playwright Ntozake Shange and Mercer Redcross, 1999.



From left to right: The Marriott's Curtis Dean, then Mayor of Philadelphia Edward Rendell, Pennsylvania State Senator Vincent Hughes, and U.S. Congressman Chaka Fattah at the Marriott Hotel, 1998.



Entertainer Angela Stribling, 2000.

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS OVER...



Artist George Nock at Expo 2005.



Damon Evans, Angela Stribling and Joseph C. Phillips at an Expo.



Dr. Paul Brown Bodhise's health pavilion at an Expo.



Artist Michael Angelo Wallace (left).



Body painting by Adrienne Mills.



Artist Steven Johnson.



Artist Woodrow Nash.



Sponge Bob entertains the kids.



Senior Center artists.



Artist Frank Frazier.



Black Issues Book Review.



Standing room only at the Art Auction.



A child making her mark on the mural wall.



Gary Shepherd and his wife (center) with friends.



Bob Lott and Dyana Williams.



Cookin' in the VIP Suite.



Patron enjoying the art.



Magician entertains the young adults.



Universal Creations' booth.



Third Generation Jewelers.



WDAS radio staff.



1340 AM radio station at Expo 2005.



Artist Bob Carter at an Expo.

YOU GOT
THE PICTURE.

The Expo's competitive advantage is bringing these pieces together in a self-reinforcing loop. We strive to communicate our vision with each segment of the circle. The Expo organization has committed members—staff, artists, sponsors and consumers. The Expo team shares common goals and values that result in good participation, satisfied end-users and the generation of revenue. Beyond its three-day duration, the Expo also generates leads, educates the public and develops follow-up business. Our mission is to connect as many people as possible with art.



Artist Kevin A. Williams (center) with staff, 2005.



Artist Phillip Snead (left) and Corine Melons.



Pennsylvania State Senator Vincent Hughes (left) and Jerry Mondesire, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP.



Making the Most of Expo: A Message to Artists and Exhibitors

Exhibiting all original artwork or art with extremely high price tags is not what brings in the biggest crowd. The Expo is not a show for the elite. The Expo succeeds by the means of a wide representation of art styles, mediums and concepts, and prices ranging from moderate to high.

The OG organization attempts to attract attendees by educating them about the value of art. PIAE has unique and creative educational strategies that continue to target a new generation of art buyers. Perhaps new “art candidates” come to the Expo “art conscious” and without the traditional “art fear” because of previous teaching sessions (i.e., at the gallery, on the Web site and in *Paint Magazine* or other sources). Perhaps they are searching for venues, such as the Expo, to test their knowledge.

Here is an experience that Mercer recently had with a customer:

He was in the grocery store one day before an Expo. Someone tapped his shoulder emphatically. As he turned around a lady began to barrage him with questions to which she obviously knew the answers. Quite like a teacher, she drilled him on the when, where and who of the Expo. And in conclusion she said, “Good! My sister and brother are coming up from Washington, DC, and we are planning to spend the entire weekend at the show. Keep up the good work!”

We wanted to relay this story because we believe that many people feel as if the Expo belongs to them. The

lady who stopped Mercer was saying in so many words: “Look! You work for me and I am just checking to see if you are doing the job.” Mercer said to her, “I agree. We represent you. We work for you. And all that Evelyn and I desire is that you will ask us to do it for years to come.”

Our employees know that the Expo is not about them. It is about the people who come. Before each Expo Mercer always cautions the staff, “Don’t complain that your feet hurt or that you are tired.” Luckily, the level of cooperation is high. We feel very strongly about our philosophies, and the people who work with us respect our philosophies.

Working at the Expo is more than a notion. We say that because no matter how diligently we train our staff, we have found that those new to the event can be easily overwhelmed by the constant demands for problem solving and public service. The energy in the Liacouras Center seems to spiral up, and can leave one in a state of constant excitement if one is not careful to balance it with calming energy. Once in a while, our new staffers become inundated, but they learn, as we all do, how to flow with the tide.



From left to right: Evelyn Redcross and entertainer Isaac Hayes.



Artist Kelvin Henderson.



October Gallery's Judith White (center) with Isaac Hayes to her left.



Football great Troy Vincent.



From left to right: Kandi Pitts and exhibitor John King.



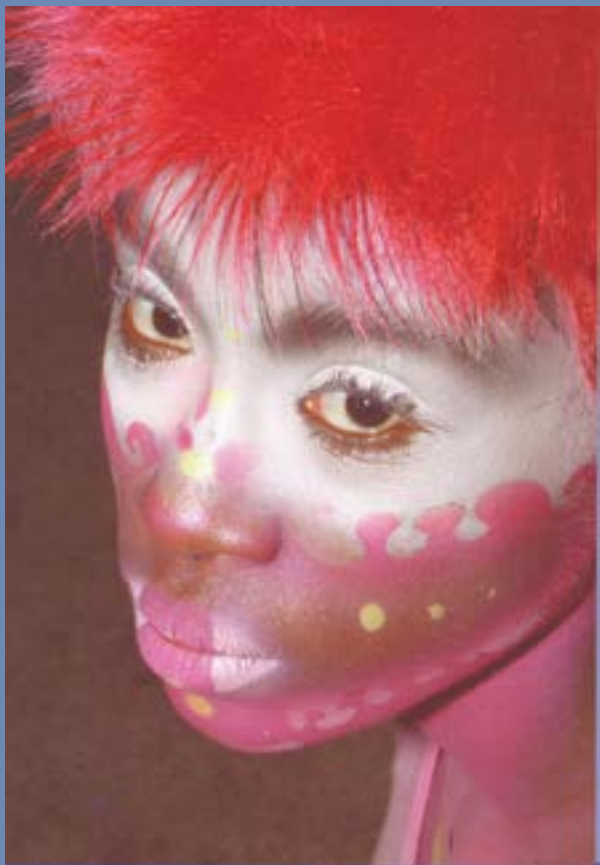
Exhibitor Dominique Carrie.



October Gallery's Ari Redcross (left), Isaac Hayes (center)

Body Paint:





Expo 2005



225





227



Which state has the oldest African-American Museum?

Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia has the oldest African-American museum in the United States and one of the oldest museums in Virginia. The Hampton University Museum houses a collection featuring more than 9,000 objects, including traditional African, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Island and Asian art; fine art; and objects relating to the history of Hampton University.

Face Reality Female by Laurie Cooper
(on opposite page)





My being a part of the two separate yet intertwined worlds of art and science has made more than a few "eyebrows raise" due to the belief that these worlds have nothing whatsoever to do with one another; this is a misconception. Both disciplines involve research, intuition, knowledge and inspiration, divine and otherwise.

Latresa Copes

Visual Artist/Engineer
Philadelphia, PA



I feel a responsibility to breathe life into untold stories, usually women, the culture bearers of any society. Oftentimes my subjects will be African-Americans, whose way of life seems to have remained in touch with their heritage. Our history is reflected in our faces.

George Nock

Visual Artist
Alpharetta, GA



Time by Louis Delsarte

Who was the first Black painter to be represented in the White House art collection?

In 1996 the White House had a permanent art collection of 450 pieces. In this collection there were no artworks by African-American artists. That year the White House acquired Henry Ossawa Tanner's 1886 landscape *Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City*. It was bought from Tanner's grandniece, Rae Alexander Minter, for \$100,000.

Tanner was the most distinguished African-American artist of the nineteenth century. He was also the first artist of his race to acquire international recognition. Tanner was born on June 21, 1859, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Benjamin Tucker Tanner and Sarah Miller Tanner.

Woman, Mother, Wife by Gerald Branch
(on opposite page)





Galleries, Dealers and Museums



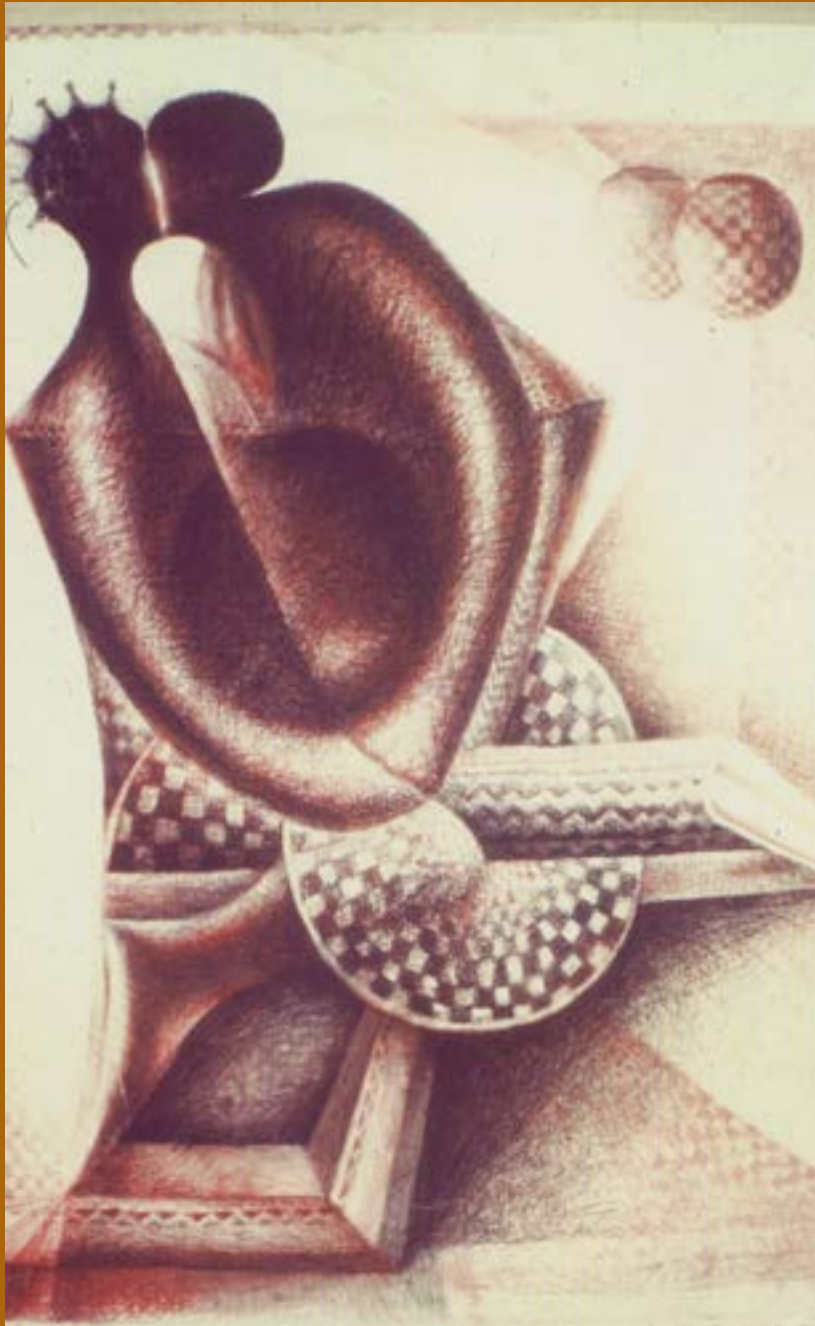
African-American art is very important to all cultures because it defines an expression of the African-American mind and intellect. We use art to better understand all cultures, their traditions and their way of life.

From left to right, starting from the back:

Vernise Bolden, Jacquelyn Stewart, Victoria Stinson, Donnie J. Banks, Deborah D.G. Carter, Ed.D.

Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History & Culture
Baltimore, MD





See Saw, aka The Kiss, by John T. Biggers



Black art is as much a part of my lifestyle as is African-American history. I've had an appreciation for art since a very young age. Visiting museums and exploring paintings or drawings and looking at those pictures is still an enjoyable experience.

Back then, if I saw a piece of Black art, I was intrigued. Later, Black art galleries started to open, and visiting them was socially entertaining and educational. The first piece of artwork I owned was from Romare Bearden's collection.

Black art dominates the decor of my office and my home. Each piece has a history that I can personally relate to.

Lana Felton Ghee

CEO, Lana Felton Ghee Associates
Philadelphia, PA



Our introduction to October Gallery filled us with great pride and joy. Finding an abundance of images and textures that represented our history, culture and creativity initiated us into developing an art collection, which adds to our daily pleasure.

Aquilla S. Massey

Retired Educator

Reese A. Massey

Retired Education Administrator
Philadelphia, PA



Quiet by A. Gatsi



Orange Bowl by artisans James and Yolanda Redd

**The Entertainer's Photographer****Oggi Ogburn (center)**Photographer
Washington, DC



Sade



Teena Marie

Photography by Oggi Ogburn



Artist Profile



When you ask me about my work in the multimedia industry, I will tell you that I love to make the camera dance. There are three important steps to this process. First, embrace the subject through trust; second, use natural lighting; and third, employ color saturation. Breaking down the walls of vulnerability helps strengthen the bond between photographer and subject. This approach allows me to capture the subject in his or her most creative or natural state, seizing the innocence of the moment. The proof is in the image that sets the quality, mood and tone, and, finally, compels the viewer to embrace the creative vision.

Adria Diane Hughes

Photographer

Willingboro, NJ



Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee



Chaka Khan



Halle Berry



Patti LaBelle

Photography by Adria Diane Hughes

"Black art, like everything else in the Black community, must respond positively to the reality of revolution. It must become and remain a part of the revolutionary machinery that moves us to change quickly and creatively. We have always said, and continue to say that the battle we are waging now is the battle for the minds of Black people... It becomes very important then that art play the role it should play in Black survival... Black artists and those who wish to be artists must accept the fact that what is needed is an aesthetic, a Black aesthetic that is a criterion for judging the validity and/or beauty of a work of art."

Dr. Samella S. Lewis

In the Presence of Silence by quiltmaker Phyllis Stephens
(on opposite page)





Patron Profile



I love Black art that depicts strong women. I look for human qualities such as joy, power and strength.

Deidra Tate

Art Collector
New York, NY



The beauty and intensity of African and African-American art is in Aretha Franklin's "Amazing Grace."

It's Ms. Duhart's Rolls
It's the smile in Langston and Rashid's hearts
It's original
It's powerful
You can't have just one
It captures the essence of who we are.

African-American art is deeply rooted in the Mother continent, and its rich essence inspires the entire world.

October Gallery helped all of us learn to appreciate art and then develop a healthy appetite for this vibrant expression of life.

We celebrate the achievement of twenty years of love from Evelyn and Mercer Redcross and thank them for making each month October and each room at home our gallery!

E. Steven Collins

Lisa Collins

Art Patrons
Laverock, PA



October Gallery has provided more than 20 years of excellence in business and in the community. May it have continued success for many years to come.

George E. Eldrige

The Philadelphia Coca-Cola Company
Philadelphia, PA



Jazzman by Oronde Kairi Johnson



The very first time I saw *Prophetess* by George Nock, it was November 2003, and I was walking through the many artists' booths on the floor level of the annual October Gallery Expo in Philadelphia. My own booth, where I exhibited crafts, was located on the upper level of the venue. Thanks to my husband, I was taking a respite to visit my many fellow exhibitors. That year, as is the case every year, the floor was crowded not only with vendors and the buying public, but also with artists of every kind who use various media. The floor was visually arresting in the best way—eye candy for those of us who can appreciate all the shapes and colors, the lines and the textures, the essence of what art is.

What I experience is an almost sexual, visceral feeling that envelops me. Touching and seeing are one aspect of the experience, and many pieces command your attention over others. So many people attend the Expo, and often your view of something beautiful can be obstructed. But, if you are patient and take your time, the people move out of the way and you can “see” something beautiful.

It's like winning a prize: it's just for you, just for a moment. Conversely, sometimes you get a surprise: the thing you tried hard to see isn't so beautiful after all – not everything there appeals to your exact taste. When you see something extra special, the feeling hits you in the gut like some physical thing, and then it touches your heart. Art is like that for me. I think the mental part comes last.

I could have walked by the painting with all the animated people and colorful canvases that surrounded me. The original, *Prophetess*, was on a metal display stand right in front of me. The piece stunned me and stopped me in my tracks; the image's eyes held me there. I took in the entire portrait. First, I noticed the eyes (haunting and knowing), and then the shock of hair (wiry and gray white with a few Black strands: bushy, thin and natural). The image is clothed in white and holds a wrinkled hand at her breast, as if holding her garment tighter around her lean body. Her face is the only color on the portrait: a shade of a caramel.

The artist noticed me looking at the piece. I told him how much I loved her in that very moment. I asked how much the original was, and was immediately saddened that I could never afford it. As always, beauty comes at a cost. I felt such a sense of relief when I saw prints of it hanging on the walls of the booth. I had to buy one even though I was spending the profits from my own vending.

Prophetess hangs on the wall of our dining room. No one else seems to get her. They look at it and say, “It's nice,” or sometimes they say, “The portrait is okay.” They just see an old lady staring straight at them from her perch in the painting. But, of course, I see more. I see an uncompromising beauty, wisdom and strength. I see hard times, and some good times. I see weariness, but I also see a light in those eyes. She's seen some stuff, this woman. And she has more stuff to see. I want to know her, for real...but sometimes I think I already do.

Robin Dickerson-Rhone

Benefits Administrator
Upper Darby, PA



Creation of Man by Edwin Lester



It's important for us to stay connected to our heritage for ourselves and for our children.

Diana Molen
Craft Artist
Baltimore, MD



Adam & Eve by Louis Delsarte



For me, African-American art is about my history, my culture and the history and culture of my people. When I come into my home, I like to be reminded of my people's journey: our joys, our struggles and our great accomplishments. The art that I own reminds me of these things. It is something that I, as an African-American, do not see in mainstream culture everyday. I love to collect Black art because when I enter my home, I feel at home with who I am.

I asked Lamar Redcross to locate the painting *The Advocate* by Ernie Barnes so I could add it to my collection. It is an image of an African-American lawyer with his sleeves rolled up, law books in the background and the Civil Rights document in one hand. As a young attorney, it inspires me to be engaged as I am with my community. It also reminds me that I am here today because of the struggles of others.

Justin Gray

Attorney

Washington, DC



I have always made a special point of having favorite pieces of African and African-American art at home, as well as at the office. It reminds me that our Black perspective, no matter how different from the mainstream Eurocentric perspective, also has value and deserves respect. It also inspires me to make my own professional or civic contribution, from a uniquely African-American perspective, every single day.

For example, I have a huge and unusual piece of Kenyan art, painted on fabric. It must be six and a half feet wide and about four feet deep.

It depicts four African percussionists, and it's simply called *The Communicators*. I saw it, in fact, for the first time at October Gallery, 16 years ago, right after I quit my job at First Pennsylvania Bank and opened our PR firm. Seeing it at that time, I thought this piece of art was divine inspiration, a spiritual message that my partners and I would be successful in our new communications business.

I bought the piece and kept it on a wall in the office for about 10 years. It's now very prominently displayed at home.

A. Bruce Crawley

Chairman, African-American Chamber of Commerce
Philadelphia, PA



Ceramic pottery by Gwen Redfern



AFRICAN-





american Artists





African-American art has always been an integral part of my life. As a child, my parents owned and operated an African-American bookstore and an African Export/Import store. Art was all around me in different mediums. When I was nine years old, we moved to Ghana, West Africa, and that experience left an indelible imprint on my mind as to where African-American artists inherited their rich legacy—some without even knowing it. The richness of African art has been and always will be part of my environment. It is a form of self-expression for me, and it highlights who I am and what I have experienced. Living life as an African-American is a colorful, enlightening and intriguing journey that makes life worth living!

Rana Walker

Founder, Diamond Cutter LLC
Philadelphia, PA



African-American art and artists have captured societal shifts in our country. In doing so, they have risen above the strife and the nebulous title of “other,” and have secured a stronghold in the art world. Diverse cultural legacies compete for validity, respect, recognition and position in our society every day. Our American culture has been—and continues to be—riddled with great gains and losses because of this competition. Although our struggles and triumphs may seem to surpass understanding, African-American art remains organic, fluid, provocative and unique in all its forms.

It is widely known that the Harlem Renaissance established the foundation that enables African-American artists and galleries owned by African-Americans to thrive as they do today. Their significance traverses economics, politics and community simultaneously, as it did in the past. Art, artists, galleries, and museums exhibit, record and distribute information and ideas, therefore capturing the zeitgeist of our time, in my opinion. They are a platform from which we are able to “see” one’s vision or to “hear” one’s non-verbal voice create awareness, balance or discord: our “soapbox.” For me, art is a place where talent and intellect merge.

Robin Nedab

Writer
Philadelphia, PA



Sista by George Nock



Growing up in the inner city of Boston, Massachusetts, a city steeped in history and culture, I was fortunate enough to be exposed to all aspects of the visual arts. Mom had close friends who were artists: their original paintings hung on our living room walls. She, along with my aunts, took me to the museums—The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Art in Boston. When I was a young girl, art was my favorite subject in school. In second grade, I realized I was much better at drawing and painting than my classmates. I decided then and there that I would be an artist when I grew up.

Many years later in high-school art history classes, my interests were piqued when I saw and learned the origins of African-American art, Greek art, African art, Chinese art and art from the Egyptian periods. I loved learning about these ancient periods. The art was primitive, yet beautiful.

My connection to African-American art begins and ends with my own heritage – Native American, African-American and Portuguese American. I will always be drawn to images of people who resemble me. I will always want to see Black artists and the work that they produce. I love it...even if the art is not

obviously “ethnic” in subject matter. One of my favorite pieces is an acrylic landscape painting, full of fall foliage colors like burnt umber, yellow ochre, orange and green, depicting trees, bushes and the land around them. It is a painting totally devoid of any human images, and it is simply and plainly, beautiful. Is it African-American art? Most certainly it is. The artist is Samuel Benson from Chester, Pennsylvania. Mr. Benson is an African-American.

Working with October Gallery over the years has been an enormous pleasure as well as an enormous learning experience. I am constantly exposed to new and up-and-coming artists who continue to create some of the most beautiful and provocative artwork I will ever see in my lifetime.

Stephanie A. Daniel

Educator

Philadelphia, PA



Untitled by Paris

THE RED PINTO



Blue Set by Andrew Turner.

Over the years, many artists have played a major role in the October Gallery story. One such artist was Andrew Turner.

I guess it was around 1988 when this lanky 6-foot-5-inch individual walked into the original gallery location (3805 Lancaster Avenue) with a handful of his art. I remember the hatchback red Pinto that he had parked just outside the door. Evelyn and I were there and he proceeded to show us his work. We had heard of Andrew Turner from exhibitions he had done at the Sande Webster Gallery and the Rittenhouse Square Fine Arts Annual also known as the “Clothesline Show.”

Andrew Turner’s art was rendered in a loose form, in an impressionist style. Evelyn and I looked at each other simultaneously and wondered how we could present this art style to our customers. At the time our gallery patrons seemed to prefer art that was more familiar to them: representative, or figurative, artwork. We call it realistic artwork because of its easily recognized forms, its near portraiture of everyday Black folks. In fact, I said to Turner that our customers were not used to his style and might not understand what was being said. I suggested that he add more stokes, more definition. Turner looked at me and said, “I try to paint like Miles Davis plays. You don’t have to play all the notes, just the sweet ones.”

Here’s an analogy to the situation: We had been selling popular music like that of The Temptations and now we had to decide if we could sell more abstract music like that of Miles Davis.



Artist Andrew Turner.

The day Turner showed up marked the beginning of a relationship that spanned some 12 years. He made it clear that what he wanted from October Gallery was to put his name and his art in the spotlight. He said he had seen firsthand our aggressive promotion of artists. And he wanted in.

October Gallery loved the fact that Turner was a prolific painter. Turner loved to paint and we loved to sell good art. In the beginning, our relationship was just that simple. Later, we became caring friends.

As our organization traveled nationally to some 32 shows per year and grew, it began to require large inventory. One critical difference in the work provided by Andrew Turner was that his art was always rendered as original paintings, unique one-of-a-kind pictures. Once we took the time to teach patrons to “see” his work, they couldn’t get enough.

We remember Turner bringing art through the door when the acrylic paint was still wet. Now, you must realize that acrylic paint dries almost instantly. So if the paint was still wet, when and where did he paint them? And I would say, “Turner, they’re still wet.” And he would look up somewhat tongue in cheek and say, “They’re fresh.”

Ours was overall a great business partnership. We did not always see eye-to-eye, however. While

Turner’s approach to life and art was laid-back, symbolized by his pipe smoking and long lunches, ours was to act quickly, perhaps too quickly. For Turner, gallery showings and public painting demonstrations were an honor. They brought him much-deserved accolades and a break from his daily painting routine. At such events, he might don his avant-garde clothes, complete with a silk scarf tied about his neck, and sometimes he would flaunt a secondhand hat cocked to fit his style. “I’d like to be treated according to the station to which I am accustomed,” he’d say, when he fancied a special hotel, special restaurant or special budget. On the other hand, Evelyn and I preferred to move from show to show with the emphasis on quality art and not on “pomp and circumstance.” Time was of the essence because we were responsible for art, artists, staff and a successful event. We were in a hurry to make our mark in business and in the art industry.



Slidin' Trombone by Andrew Turner.



Everybody Say Amen by Andrew Turner.



Backhand by Andrew Turner.

Turner would often caution us to relax, slow down and “smell the roses.” We in turn counseled Turner to “wake up and smell the coffee.” We had other disagreements too, about the how to and when to of business, but each of us always realized that together we made an unbeatable team.

Turner painted many different subject matters on all types of materials and surfaces. His themes included, for example, a group of young boys sharing one ice cream cone; girls walking to church in their Sunday best; a high-stepping marching band on the streets of Chester, Pennsylvania; a boy lying on his stomach shooting marbles; and an abstract musical theme.

I remember visiting Turner at his home in Chester. I noticed the vacant house next door. When asked how long the house had been vacant, Turner replied, “For years.” At that moment Turner walked next door, pulled a ceiling tile from the drop ceiling of the vacant house and indicated he would paint a jazz scene on that tile later that afternoon.

Painting on old tables and chairs, old mattresses, window shades, found wood, or paneling was not out of the question for Turner. All sorts of discarded wooden objects became workable surfaces for him. Any defect, flaw or damaged part of the surface was used to his advantage. A split in a piece of wood might become the seam on a ladies dress. A hole might become the button on a jacket.

In Philadelphia alone many collectors of African-American art have a piece of Andrew Turner art. His work can be seen in public spaces as well. We actually gave some of our patrons Andrew Turner originals as gifts. Some we sold with deep discounts. This was done to promote his art and to advance the educational process for patrons by offering an easy firsthand experience. The patrons who were recipients now know the value of what they received. Since Turner

didn't have prints at that time, October Gallery used this promotional strategy to quickly bring up the learning curve for his art in a short period of time.

The educational component was essential. We learned that it had to be an intrinsic part of any art presentation. It was the same nearly everywhere we traveled. When we visited the homes of those interested in art, these vignettes, as Turner called them, captured the spirit of the occasion.

I particularly enjoyed taking Turner with me for radio interviews and seminar presentations. He had the gift to speak about what was on his mind at the drop of a hat. He was very intelligent and extremely articulate. Andrew could spell almost every word in the dictionary. When Turner painted on site at our gallery for weeks at a time, we would often holler for him to spell a word. He would spell it and invariably weave in a word we were less familiar with. This was part of our ongoing education from Turner.



Cello Lessons
by Andrew Turner.



Thurgood by Andrew Turner.



Buffalo Soldiers
by Andrew Turner.



Sam's Trombone by Andrew Turner.

Turner said that he lived one day at a time. He was a true artist in every sense of the word. He was creative. He was not concerned with other people's opinions and marched to his own drum. I have always said that Turner lived a life of which most of us might never approve. But if he were here today, he would probably say, "I lived life to the fullest. I enjoyed every day doing what I loved to do: paint." The lyrics to the Frank Sinatra song say it best, "The record shows I took the blows, and did it my way."

Biography of Andrew Turner (1944-2001)

Andrew Turner was born in 1944 in Chester, Pennsylvania. He was a graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art. His work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad. He taught art in grades K-12 in the Chester, Pennsylvania Public Schools and in correctional centers. His appointments include Artist-in-Residence and Curator, Deshong Museum, Chester,



Stephanie by Andrew Turner.

PA; Lecturer, Widener University; and Lecturer, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. He also toured and lectured in The People's Republic of China. Collectors who hold Turner's paintings include Woody Allen, Dr. Maya Angelou, ARCO Chemical Company, Bell Telephone Company, Dr. Constance Clayton, Will Smith, Danny Glover, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cosby, Edie Huggins, Eric Lindros, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Madonni, Moses Malone, Penn State University, the artist formerly known as Prince, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Sorgenti, Swarthmore College, Mrs. Marilyn Wheaton, and Widener University's Deshong Museum, just to name a few. His Philadelphia commissions include: WDAS FM (1996); *Marco Solo*, (written by J. Schwinn and G. Harlow, illustrated by Andrew Turner) Reverse Angle Productions, Inc. (1995); and Robin Hood Dell, Fairmount Park (1985).



Sisters by Andrew Turner.



Bass Jazz by Andrew Turner.



Set Em Up by Andrew Turner.



Boy with Hat by Andrew Turner (original on china).



Inner City Blues by Andrew Turner.



Hornin' In by Andrew Turner.



Braids by Andrew Turner.



Clown by Andrew Turner.



Girl Jumping Rope by Andrew Turner.



Preparation by Andrew Turner.



Three Wheelers by Andrew Turner.



Trombone by Andrew Turner.



Jazz Abstract II by Andrew Turner.



Untitled by Andrew Turner.



Flute Player by Andrew Turner.

*“My experiences,
my background,
my neighborhood,
is legitimate fodder
for expression.”*

—Andrew Turner



Andrew Turner outside the October Gallery Express (mall store).



Andrew Turner blowing smoke from his pipe in front of a life-size fireplace that he painted on the wall at October Gallery Express (mall store).



Study in Black and White by Andrew Turner.





Sunday Best by Andrew Turner.

Lady in Hat by Andrew Turner
(on opposite page).



Turner was truly an artist-in-residence. He painted in our gallery frequently, often daily. For him, staring at an empty canvas for maybe an hour was routine—just staring.

Later, he would drop his brush into a paint jar and begin. He would say to me, “Mercer, I like to start with the big brush to get the big idea down first. To get the spirit of the occasion, the introduction. Then I work the details.”

Turner loved these unusual knitted shoes. He bought them in Martha's Vineyard. He wore them at the end of each day while he relaxed.



Kisha and Company by Andrew Turner.



Keyboard by Andrew Turner.



The Club by Andrew Turner.



Shopping Ladies by Andrew Turner.



Untitled by Andrew Turner.

Turner painted everyday, almost all day long. He would always have his favorite music—jazz—playing on the radio. He loved to listen to Miles, Coltrane and Gillespie. He loved jazz so much.

I (Mercer) would say to him teasingly, “Why don’t you get a guitar (he always said he played) and present your own music?”

Andrew would look at me, tongue in cheek, and say,

I’ve just put the guitar back into the closet having convinced myself I am not Wes Montgomery, Richie Havens or Feliciano. Those guys could take a guitar and paint a picture with it. So I’ll just take my paints and see if I can sing you a song.

”



Abstraction 10 by Andrew Turner.



Going to Church by Andrew Turner.

Reflections from Others Who Knew Turner



would say. For more than twenty years, as our business relationship became a strong friendship, we shared the good and the bad, the joy and the sorrow. At his best, his artistic aesthetic was without peer.

Sande Webster

Sande Webster Gallery
Philadelphia, PA



her Victorian porch, located in the Powelton Village area of Philadelphia. While working on the top side of this porch, I spotted a tall, angular-looking fellow walking by holding an elongated painting, which caught my eye. I yelled down to him, asking him who had painted the picture. Naturally, he responded, "I did." We introduced ourselves to one another, and he asked me if I would be interested in buying his artwork. Upon negotiation, I purchased my first Andrew Turner painting. He asked if I wanted to buy more of his artwork, and needless to say, within one week's time, I had bought five of Andrew Turner's paintings.

Don Stafford

Patron
Philadelphia, PA



It was early spring, and my friends and I were talking and not paying much attention to the teacher. We had just won the school championship for basketball. This was the 1960s. The teacher, tall and of slender build, continued teaching and demonstrating, and we continued to talk and to not pay much attention. Gym class was next and we could not wait to lace up our \$6.00 Converse sneakers.

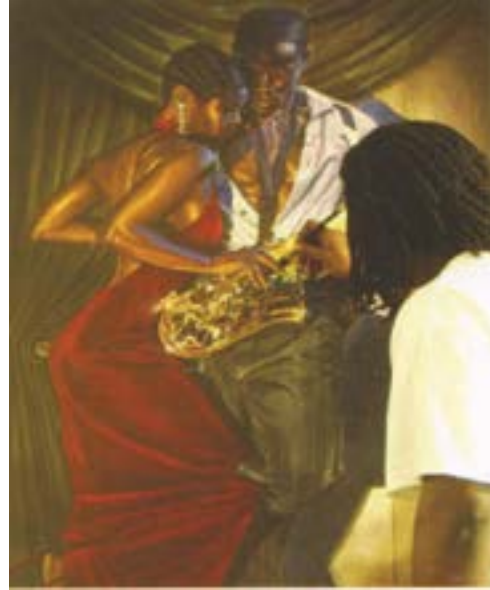
Thirty plus years later, once again in early spring, I was in my favorite place, Zanzibar Blue, listening to my favorite music, jazz. The group Pieces of a Dream was "taking five," and I was taking a drink, when the art on the walls caught my eye. I thought it was cool that there was art that represented me on the walls. There was one painting that stopped me cold and made me sit up. The subject of the piece was a man and a woman seated at a piano. Her left hand was placed between his in an intimate way. This painting was so expressive and passionate. It would be two years later that I would see this painting again at October Gallery. To my shock and amazement the painting was by Mr. Turner, my seventh-grade art teacher.

In the last several years I have collected over 150 pieces of art. My greatest sense of pride comes from my Andrew Turner collection. In all his works I see someone I know or places that are familiar to me from growing up in the city of Chester. All aspects of my life seem to be depicted. There is a character representation of Rev. Dr. J. Pius Barber in one painting. I waded in the water at his church at the age of five. There is a street scene of brothers on a corner. The buildings in the painting are identical to a place at 4th & Central Avenue. There is a barbershop setting where a little boy is getting his first haircut. My history is all there in each and every work. This history gives me a snapshot of my past. In Mr. Turner's work, I am reminded of where I've been and who has impacted my life.

Next lifetime I'll pay more attention.

Jerome Davis

Collector
Chester, PA



WAK painting *Sax Appeal*.

I am an artist on a mission, but this is no solo trip: I want to take you on the journey, too. My destination is a place where more African-Americans will appreciate, own and even create fine art that honors their rich heritage and hope-filled destiny. So far, tens of thousands of people have willingly followed me to that vista—including talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, and actor/comedian Bernie Mac. From celebrity homes to small businesses, corporate offices and women's spas, my original and lithographic artwork hangs from coast to coast.

I could do the wine-and-cheese events, but is that my calling? I believe that my calling is more to the masses, to introduce them to art in a quality, creative, positive way. If they evolve into people who love art, and then start to collect art, I want it to be because something pure in my work caught their attention. If that happens — if they've fallen for the pure message in my work — then my mission has been accomplished.



Sax Appeal near completion.

Kevin A. Williams

WAK

Visual Artist

Decatur, Georgia



Viola! Finished painting: *Sax Appeal* by WAK



My dolls celebrate life through art. I combine color, texture and design to share positive energy and celebrate the human spirit. It is a blessing to realize and embrace my purpose.

Tonia Kim Mitchell

Doll Maker
Fayetteville, GA



My creations are the result of unconscious feelings, intuition, emotional experiences, self-awareness and a sense of cultural integrity. As far back as I can remember, I have been blessed with a God-given talent to create. My art allows the viewer to exercise their subconscious mind, pushing the limits of the imagination with bold colors, strong lines and geometric shapes using three dimensional concepts. I work in many mediums, bringing together a collage of techniques and integrating them into styles such as abstraction, Cubism, figurative work and my new style, Pyramidism. My inspiration comes from a spiritual foundation that creates a healing and therapeutic effect on the viewer. I feel that waking up everyday, living out my spiritual purpose and doing something I love is the ultimate dream job.

David Lawrence

Visual Artist
Philadelphia, PA



Lady with Braids by Caleb Samhire



Untitled by David Lawrence



I have a couple of Tanners, art that makes a statement. I also love sculpture because the lines are peaceful. Monet and other Impressionist painters are favorites of mine because their work is not aggressive, but soothing.

Art reflects our character and our feelings. It is the beauty of still water. There is a reason that it has existed for a long time. It is soothing to the soul and spirit. It is important that we view art in this way.

Robert W. Bogle

President and CEO, Tribune Newspapers
Philadelphia, PA



Our appreciation for art is based on seeing and feeling the expressions of artists who attempt to show the human experience. We really appreciate these artists who have been in the forefront of the struggle for Black liberation in the world.

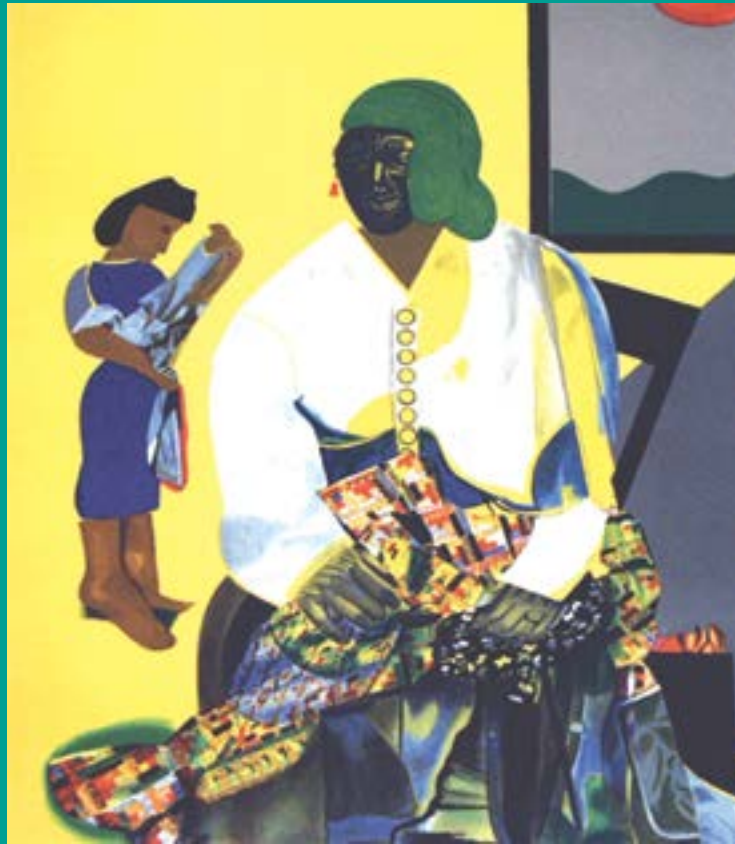
We have a variety of prints by Malangatana that show the struggle of African people. He is considered the premier artist in Mozambique, where we recently visited, and in all of southern Africa, including South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Linda Braxton

Businesswoman

John Braxton

Retired Judge
Philadelphia, PA



Mecklenburg Autumn by Romare Bearden



In the Garden by Romare Bearden



There was a time when so many of the impressions around me were either abstract or depicted the majority culture. By collecting images of and by African-Americans, I am able to magnify and applaud my culture. I buy what speaks to me, and I have found that without my making a conscious decision most of my collection includes depictions of African-American women (mothers and dancers). I look with pride upon images of our beauty and strength. When I walk through my home and gaze upon the African-American prints, paintings, statues and figurines, my spirit is lifted and my soul dances. From where I stand, that is about as good as it gets.

Jacquelyn Moore, Ph.D.

Assistive Technology Consultant, Speech Language Pathology
Washington, DC



I have always liked art. Even as a child I did. When I came to the U.S. from Salvador, Brazil, I realized how rich Brazilians are in art and African culture. Salvador da Bahia, which some call the chocolate city of Brazil, has the second most dense population of Black people on earth after Lagos, Nigeria. The former Brazilian capitol was also the main entry point for African slaves into the country, thus establishing it as the epicenter for Afro-Brazilian culture. It's one of the most colorful and artistic places that you may ever see because everything in Salvador breathes Africa, be it food, clothing, festivals, religion or especially art. Now, having experienced the African-American art scene in America, my perspective on art has evolved; I have a greater appreciation for all art which has its roots in Africa. Afro-Brazilians should be especially proud of Brazilian art.

Monica Rocha

Assistant Gallery Manager
Salvador, Brazil



Miles Davis by Jeffrey Glenn Reese



We consider ourselves to be art experiencers. It is not just a finished piece we see when we view a piece of art, sculpture, artifact and such, but the sum total. Our minds try to conjure up visions of the experience that the artist gave birth to.

Anthony Harrison

Entrepreneur

Kelly Harrison

Atlanta, GA



There are any number of social, educational and business reasons why art matters. Evidence shows that students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds who are involved in the arts earn better grades and test scores, are less likely to become bored in school, are more involved in community service and have higher self-concepts than students who are not involved.

Consider Philadelphia's own Elbright Brown, a Philadelphia public school art teacher and a successful, award-winning children's book illustrator. He got his start in the Philadelphia public schools' art department. Mr. Brown is a contemporary example of why exposure to art is valuable for all children, especially African-American children.

I am also a living testimony of why the arts matter. It was in a dance studio for many years where my confidence soared and my sense of my greater self took shape. The arts have helped define who I have become.

Therefore, all efforts that foster a greater understanding, appreciation and awareness of the value of art programs count. These efforts need to be further expanded, and access to the arts needs to broaden. We can never provide too many art awareness and art education opportunities. An unprecedented initiative like the annual Philadelphia International Art Expo fills a void, yet keeps art alive.

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance."

—Aristotle

The Honorable Blondell Reynolds Brown

Councilwoman At-Large

Philadelphia, PA



Visions by Louis Delsarte

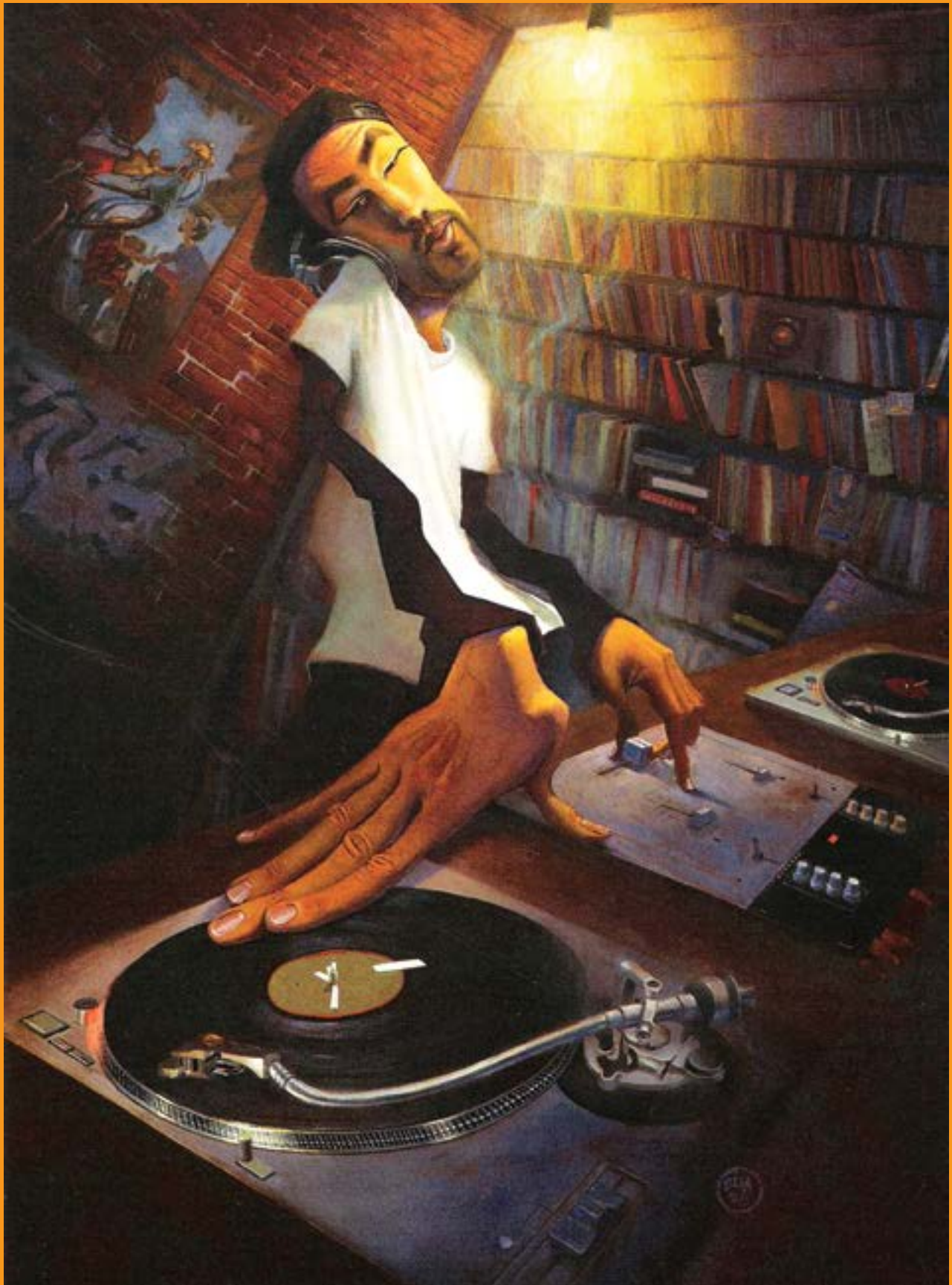


The Evolution of Osiris by John T. Biggers

"My main objective is to illustrate Black life as a positive form locked in holy matrimony with mankind and the world. I attempt to treat each work as a personal and intimate involvement with the subject, which develops its own distinctive character as I translate it into my own interpretation. I frequently restrict my use of color and often leave the backgrounds white and uncluttered to attempt to show that emotions and feelings of mankind are timeless and universal."

Gilbert Young

DJ by Justin Bua
(on opposite page)





Artist Profile



I credit October Gallery for my initial success in the world of art. Angelina Bell, who worked there, ordered my first one hundred pieces for the Expo, which resulted in a jump start for my career as an artist. I am a featured artist on prime-time television, in craft journals and in art galleries. I have been a recipient of numerous awards and have been inducted into a doll hall of fame.

I have fashioned doll collections, each series having personal meaning to me, as they represent my spirit (my missionary work), my talent (the artistry in me), and my heritage (the Afrocentric dolls). I recreated the people of Africa and the Caribbean in my *Bamboo and Marketplace Collection*. *The Quilter Doll* pays homage to Harriet Tubman, and all of my signature pieces have meaningful and significant reasons for being.

Doris E. McGillan

Heritage Dolls
West Chester, PA



By acknowledging dignity and humanity in my subjects, I feel much like a documenter of our times. As an American genre painter, it is important to me to provide serenity when offering a soft, subtle background or excitement in presenting a prominent image, but always striving to serve as a catalyst for thought and reflection, and believing that others may virtually join me in an experience that will be, to them, very significant.

E. B. Lewis

Visual Artist
New Jersey



Ethnic doll by Doris McGillan



Gelede Mask, Yoruba, Nigeria



As far back as I can remember, art has been my passion. My mother says she saw that creative energy in me at about four years old. I began to make and cut patterns out of paper bags for dolls, animals and simple clothing. Thankfully, she nurtured it, always believing in whatever project I would throw myself into.

In my formative years, art became my voice when my words were silent. By pouring my heart into my work, it helped center me and express all the emotion that was inside.

I would describe my work as an unconstrained spirit...full of light and life. It is serene, harmonious, proud and powerful. I use many mediums: the more natural, the better. Each piece has its own meaning, energy and spirit.

And now for the past twenty years, I have truly pursued my passion, waking everyday with a new awareness of art. This journey is ever evolving for me and I have truly surrendered to its wonders. Believing that art is a divine gift from God, I consider myself an accountable steward of His gift.

Lorrie Payne-Stewart

Doll Maker
Philadelphia, PA



As an artist, I think of myself as a visual interpreter of not only my dreams, ideas and life experiences, but also the thoughts and projects of others. I hope, through spiritual motivation, to constantly evolve, seeking to improve my skills by examining and acknowledging the art of my peers, and realizing the need to continue being creative.

Robert L. Jefferson

Visual Artist
Yeadon, PA



Risen by Robert Jefferson



I feel very fortunate to have found my “purpose” in life at such an early age. My art is truly an extension of myself, my voice. My goal is to reaffirm every positive aspect of being African-American by focusing on our families, our spirituality and our heritage and traditions. I believe that every race can relate because, in essence, I am shining a light on the beauty of being human.

Maybe my images will evoke fond memories of your life experiences, and hopefully they will influence the young minds and hearts of future generations.

John Holyfield

Visual Artist
Fairfax Station, VA



Through the years my interest has been in mythology, especially the mythology of women and how women are related to the universe, the earth, the earth-goddess, the universe-goddess. These things have always been in my mind. I had thought of Hampton University in this way, as this great goddess who gave me an education, gave me creativity.

The late John T. Biggers

Visual Artist and Professor
Houston, TX



Seven Little Sisters by John T. Biggers

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Over the years October Gallery has sponsored art shows and expos in cities across the nation. The Gallery has participated in many benefit art auctions, events and functions since it opened in 1985. Here are some photographed highlights of the past 20 years:

Auctions and fundraisers are good ways to help others and brand OG.

Dr. J. and I do the auction thing.



Bill Russell is still the MAN!

From left to right: Auctioneer Mercer Redcross, Julius "Dr. J." Erving, a Converse representative and Bill Russell at the Dr. J. Foundation auction.



I remember OG did the Dr. J. benefit auction...I was a little nervous. Oprah, Samuel L. Jackson, Bill Russell and all these big names were in the audience. I was the auctioneer. When I put the first item up for bid, Mary Mason shouted out, "Mercer, take it easy. I bid a thousand dollars." Just hearing her voice relaxed me and we went on to have a very successful night. Mary, thanks for all you have done for OG.

—Mercer Redcross

*It was great to see
Will Smith again...*



Entertainer Will Smith (left) at 3805 Lancaster Avenue in 1989, with Evelyn and Mercer Redcross.



Will Smith (left) and Mercer Redcross at the Dr. J. Foundation auction in 2003.

*...and he is still the
same old
West Philly guy!*

*Beverly Johnson...
beautiful inside and out.*



Supermodel Beverly Johnson and Mercer Redcross.

*October Gallery was so honored to host
Prime Minister James Mitchell.*



From left to right: Mercer Redcross, a local artist and former Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines James Mitchell at October Gallery.



Mike Tandler (left) making a presentation on behalf of October Gallery to Bobby Womack.

*"Harry Hippie"
"That's the Way
I Feel About Cha"
"Lookin' for a Love"
Bobby, you are the BEST!
Thanks for the MUSIC!*

*Mike Tandler could not stop
smiling the day he met Bobby.*

*Thanks to Michael Days
and the Daily News Staff.*



Front page of the Weekend section:
The Philadelphia Daily News.



Poet Sonia Sanchez with Mercer Redcross.

*Dr. Burke, my she-ro; and
Jacob Lawrence, my hero.*



From left to right: Artist Selma Burke, Ph.D.; Evelyn Redcross; and artist Jacob Lawrence.

Eartha Kitt is charming and gorgeous.



Evelyn and Mercer Redcross with entertainer Eartha Kitt (right) at a special performance hosted by our friend Audrey R. Johnson Thornton of the American Women's Heritage Society, Inc.



Lamar Redcross with Lois Mailou Jones (right) at Martha's Vineyard show.

Our son and Lois Mailou Jones, a great talent.

First Fridays at OG



Danny waited for us to find a camera so that we could take his picture.

Thanks, Danny, for loving the arts.

Actor Danny Glover (left) visits October Gallery.

Cathy Hughes is one super business woman.



Radio One's Cathy Hughes (right) at the Dr. J. Foundation auction with Evelyn and Mercer Redcross.



KYW television personality Trudy Haynes.

My friend Trudy, always willing to help.

Before Zanzibar opened, Robert asked us to decorate the restaurant with African-American art. We were delighted!



Jewel Mann and Mercer Redcross presenting an original Andrew Turner painting to the Bynum Brothers (right) of Zanzibar Blue jazz club and restaurant.



Artist Kevin Gordon (left), entertainer Musiq (middle), and Mercer Redcross.

I know I'm getting older, but I enjoy new music. Musiq is such a great talent.



Judge Julian King with Mercer Redcross.

Julian was a great storyteller. We were always glad to see him when he stopped by the gallery.



Lucien Crump opened his art gallery in Philly several years before we opened OG. He helped lead the way for us.



Lamar Redcross (right) with Bryant Gumbel at Art Expo New York.

Lamar and Bryant posed for this photo after they both admired artist Joe Holston's etchings.



Author and speaker Tony Brown.

Tony Brown's work as an author and speaker was very inspirational to me. Thanks, Tony!

My father "Al", as we called him, managed the Gallery Mall store for us.



October Gallery sales representative Wyatt Grove (left) and Mercer "Al" Redcross, Jr. (right).



Entertainer Gloria Lynne.

I have always admired and loved Gloria Lynne's music.



Actor Tyler Perry is presented with the official 20th Annual Art Expo print by the staff of the Liacouras Center.

Cody Anderson was very instrumental in helping us to understand the value of radio advertising: first at WDAS radio, then at WHAT and now at WURD.



Audrey R. Johnson-Thornton has supported October Gallery almost from the first day we opened. We love her! Thanks, Audrey.

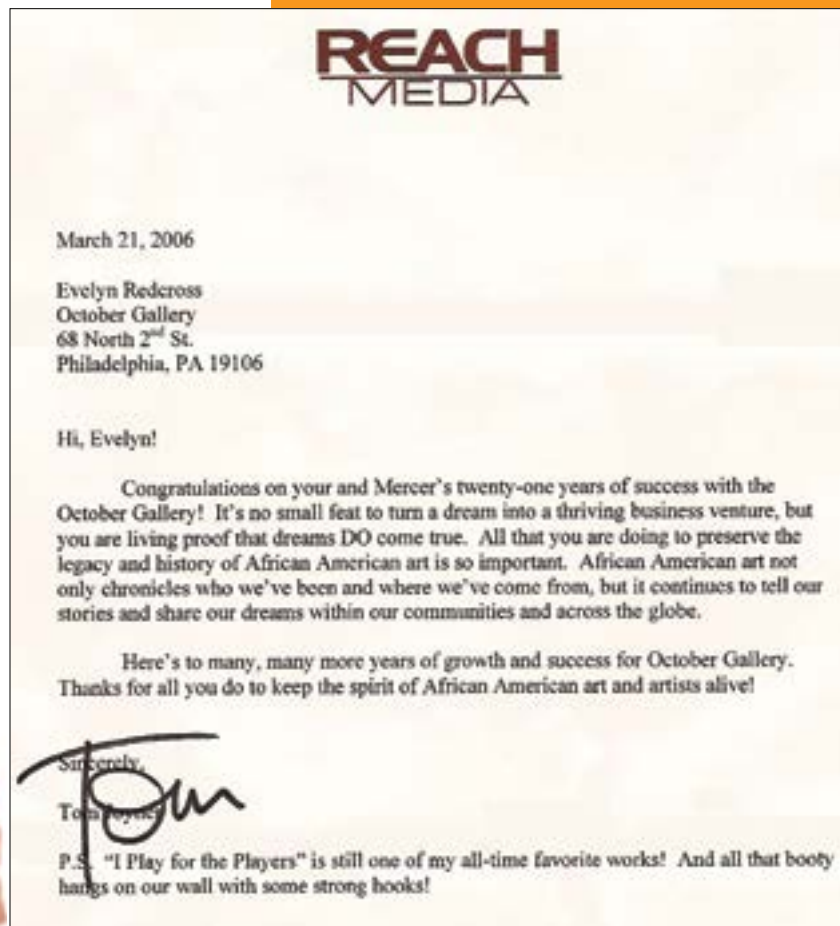
Oh,
Oh,
Oh

It's Tom Joyner



I met Tom Joyner in Philadelphia at one of his early Sky Shows. Andrew Turner had painted a special work of art for Tom of a woman sitting at the piano with an unusually large derriere. This original painting was called *I Play for the Players*. In the letter below, Tom makes reference to that painting in the postscript.

Thanks, Tom, for loving the art.





African-American art documents Black history by recording the true philosophical reflections of the people. When one examines paintings of the past from the masters such as Hale Woodruff's *Lynching* and Jacob Lawrence's *Migration Series*, a lucid intellectual and pictorial history is recorded.

Examine Henry O. Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson*. The grandfather is teaching the grandson as well as passing on the tradition of our culture.

Lawrence Hilton

Owner, Bellevue Gallery of Art
Trenton, NJ



I clearly remember sitting at the table with the Redcrosses discussing the need for a source of Black art, their vision for a gallery, and the beauty captured by the name October Gallery. Since that moment twenty years ago, I have been associated with October Gallery and as a result have gained a deeper appreciation for Black art.

I have experienced the power of art on individuals, families and our community. I have fallen in love with Benjamin Britt's *The Tree* and *The Wall* because they capture often overlooked complexities and open our minds to many perspectives. *The Heart of the Day*, which Ellen Powell Tiberino created while battling an illness, enabled me to connect with her and inspired me to persevere in spite of my own illness. It has been wonderful to get to know these Philadelphia artists and their work. To this day, they hold a special place in my heart.

Over the years, Black art has become an increasingly significant influence in my life, and in the life of my family. As we share in the Art Expo, I am in awe of what a difference the exposition of African-American art makes for our community, year after year.

Doris Brown

Entrepreneur
Ambler, PA



Fang Mask, Gabon



Family by John T. Biggers



As a young person whose parents are avid art collectors, I see Black art as a way for me to learn about the past. It is a way for me to understand how Black people perceive the world around them, now. Black art, like the native drums of Africa, communicates for us as a people.

Alva Pearson

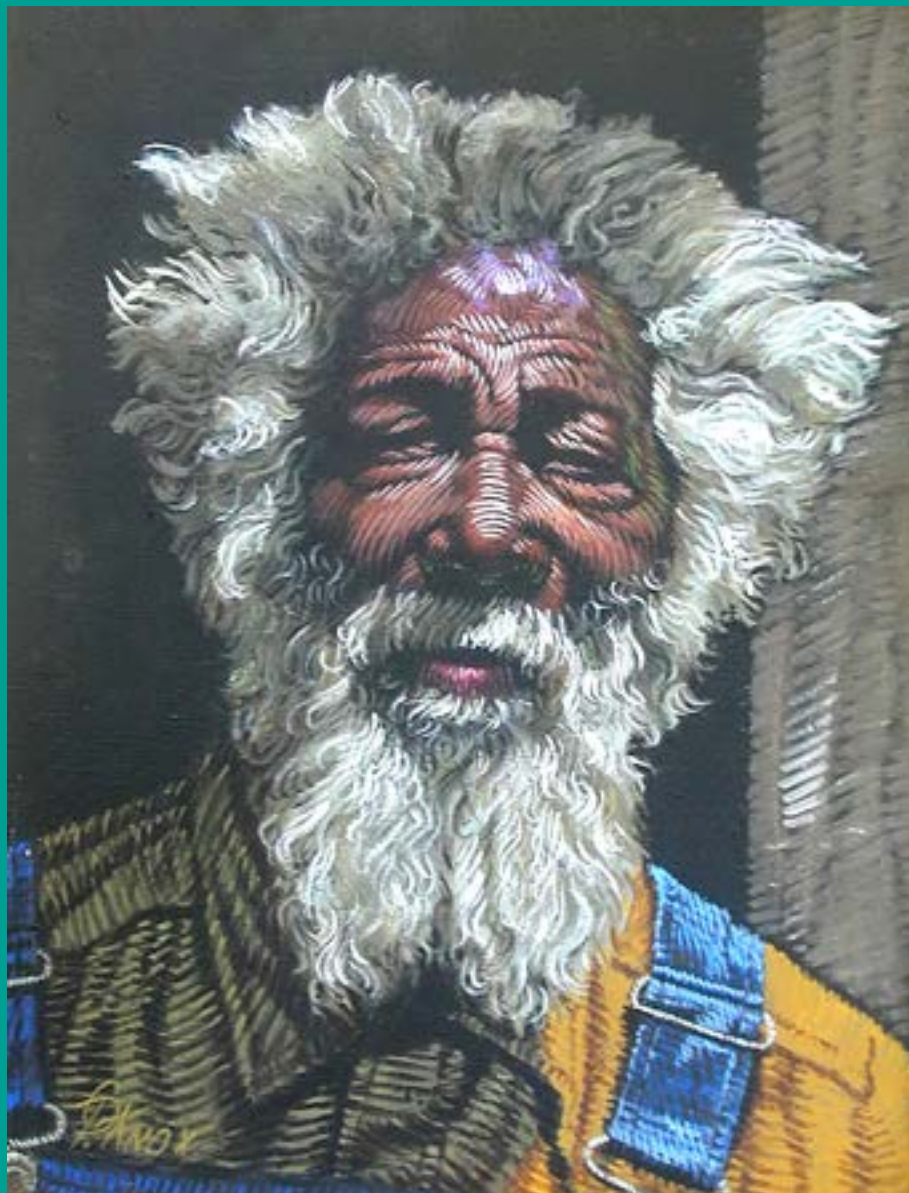
Student
Raleigh, NC



African and African-American art are true expressions of beauty, love, raw emotion and sometimes anger and frustration. In our home, our collection focuses mainly on the beauty of being Black, although we have one piece in particular that reminds us of the segregated past that our forbearers endured. I think it is important that we never forget that aspect of our existence in America. During our travels we have picked up pieces that, when I view them, instantly remind me of far-away and exotic places. This brings a warm sense of appreciation for being blessed to have experienced how others in Africa and the Diaspora live now and lived in the past. I think African and African-American art transcend language, race and culture. To me, that is the reason this art is treasured all over the world.

Gary Shepherd

Third Floor Media Productions
Philadelphia, PA



Old Man by Columbus Knox



Patron Profile



The entire body of African-American visual and performing arts documents and connects the African Diaspora and its contribution to world culture. The Dane Mask is a case in point. The lines are abstract and pure; nothing is stronger or more beautiful. African-American art represents who we are. It reveals our history and explains our culture. The colors can explain feelings and emotions that capture the essence of the artists.

Dalili Pierson
Nzinga Kimbrough
Fred Tillman
and friends
Los Angeles, CA



Our collaboration with the October Gallery has been most rewarding. The Delta Film Festival in 2002 received significant support from October Gallery and was scheduled to be part of the collateral programming available in Philadelphia at the time of the annual Art Expo. In 2003, we produced the video, *Timeless Treasures: The Works of Four African-American Artists*, which featured the artistic achievements of Henry Ossawa Tanner, Selma Burke, Andrew Turner and Sam Byrd. The premier screening was held during the annual Art Expo. This DVD is now available for screening in schools and community settings as a public service.

Marlene G. Patterson, C. Gloria Akers, Marion Johnson,
and Sharlene Robeson
Philadelphia Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta



Waterfall in Early Morning Fog by Richard Johnson



Untitled by Irmagean



The National Great Blacks In Wax Museum is among the nation's most dynamic cultural and educational institutions. Because it is a wax museum committed solely to the study and preservation of African-American history, it is also among the most unique. Primarily, the presentation of life-size, lifelike wax figures highlighting historical and contemporary personalities of African ancestry defines its uniqueness.

The National Great Blacks In Wax Museum
Baltimore, MD



One of the things that I always say is that art is the custodian of our culture. When we look back on the pieces that we sell to customers, there is some kind of history behind them. Often the pieces depict something that is going on in the community or culture, so it serves the role of documenting our history.

Edith Buffalow
Ramee Art Gallery
Washington, DC

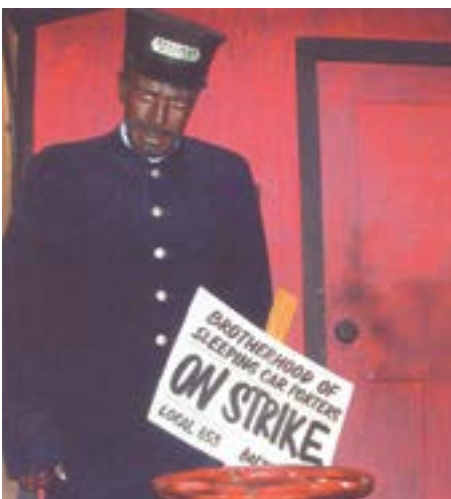


Exhibit at the wax museum.



First Encounter by Benjamin Britt



Night Howler by Oronde Kairi Johnson



Collecting African-American art is not just a way of decorating our home, but also a way of expressing how gifted we are as a people. The pieces that adorn our home display the broad talents of several gifted artists. From the powerful *Forgotten Journey I & II* by Larry "Poncho" Brown to the laid-back *Partying In Paris* by Maurice Evans, each piece we collect shows just how diverse we are and celebrates our uniqueness as a people. As young African-Americans, we also feel that we are responsible for teaching the generations to come the importance of collecting African-American art. Not only do we get visual pleasure from our collection, but we also consider them worthy investments.

Mark Small and his wife Nyree

Managing Partner of Denver Operations
Art By Golden
Denver, CO



Every wall and every corner of my house is a delightful discovery and a treat for the eye, filled with an eclectic mix of paintings, photography, sculptures, furniture, dolls, quilts (and the list goes on) in various styles by different artists,

I will spend the rest of my life promoting African-American art, culture, music, dance. It's who I am and what I believe in. I love the creativity that comes from our communities, specifically the communities of color.

Dyana Williams

Artist Development Coach
Huntington Valley, PA



Homeless by Austino Okafor

Living with Art



Robin and Junious Rhone, Jr.

African-Americans are now purchasing Black Art because they desire to make a cultural statement concerning their identity that the silk dress, expensive vacation or BMW can't make.



Billie's Trio by Chez Guest



Years ago I read advice from an older woman who wisely encouraged young people to “choose substance over style.” My relationship with Black art is an expression of that choice. For me, Black art captures the substance of our culture and its complexities. Not only does it reflect the style of the time, but it also tells stories, captures snapshots of our souls, and provides opportunities for reflection. Through it, artists challenge the status quo by demanding inclusion and representation on their terms. They affirm our value as a diverse people. They invite us into non-verbal conversations about the meanings of Blackness, the richness of our experiences, the significance of our relationships and the possibilities that can be imagined. Black art provides an avenue through which we can choose substance over style.

Thankfully, I grew up with October Gallery. I remember the early days, when we propped pictures up with styrofoam cups in the Adam’s Mark Hotel. Those were the days when I fell in love with the diversity of the Black women captured in Cal Massey’s *Basic Black* series. I remember the joy I felt when I convinced my mom that I needed to own *Basic Black 4* because it somehow reminded me of me.

Wandering through the Gallery also connected me to my history. Sam Byrd’s *Legacy* and *Heritage* captured images of our ancestors with a richness that helped them come alive in my heart and my historical imagination.

And as I grew up, Brenda Joysmith’s images of childhood brought me back to my younger years while Annie Lee reflected signs of the time. I am thankful to October Gallery, to my Uncle Mercer and Aunt Evelyn for understanding what a positive difference it makes for a people to see themselves in art created by people who look like them. I am so proud that they had the courage and wisdom to make that opportunity available to others. Thank you for planting such rich seeds of community while reminding us of the beauty of the harvest.

Shauna Brown

Educator
Laurel, MD



Study for View from the Upper Room by John T. Biggers



Art is so decorative. We love beautiful things in and around our home and collect a variety of art forms.
"Truly a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Carolyn and Percy Lynch

Retired
Hollister, NC



I am a preserver of African spiritual and ritual objects. My purpose in exhibiting them is to enhance awareness of African fine art, to demonstrate to young men and women the importance and profundity of their heritage and to strengthen cultural self-esteem and respect for our mother culture.

Herman Bigham and Associates is a collective of primarily African art presenters, preservers and scholars. Our exhibitions are of rare and authentic African sculpture. Our goal is to target as our audience, students, children and families, and to instill in them the pride of their artistic heritage, and awareness of centuries-old, deeply held beliefs in family unity.

We as Africans should make it our responsibility to tell our own story and not wait and depend on others.

Herman Bigham

African Art Preserver and Presenter
Philadelphia, PA



Art has always been very meaningful in my life. I cannot imagine being in a space for any length of time without art adorning the space and inhabiting that space with me. Art civilizes without judgment, and soothes and/or disturbs without malice.

Ahmeenah Young

Executive VP, Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, PA



Moments by Sam Byrd



Masquerade by Frank Morrison



Founded in 1976 as the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum in celebration of the nation's Bicentennial, the Museum was the first institution funded and built by a major municipality to preserve, interpret and exhibit the heritage of African-Americans. Throughout its evolution, the Museum has objectively interpreted and presented the achievements and aspirations of African-Americans from pre-colonial times to the current day.



African-American artwork that we call Black artwork is more than just the beautiful images on the walls of our six-figure homes. At its core lies more than six generations of humiliating suffering and pain with a relentless struggle to find joy. It looks great, in spite of what it has gone through to be here... as do we. Black artwork is hard yet soft, dark yet light, ugly yet very beautiful, simple yet very complex... as are we. The more we embrace it, the more we embrace the ever-developing story of who we are. For the collector, there's not another commodity of modern times with more value than African-American artwork. To date, there is not another group of people on this planet who have endured what African-Americans have over the past six-plus generations... and there never will be! The remnants of that very unique but tragic experience are being visually expressed through present day Black artwork.

Reginald Toran

CEO, BlackArtwork.com
Baltimore, MD



Mask by Charles Bibbs



When a culture or civilization is unearthed, what remains is their art, depicting what was occurring in their lives. For example, Picasso's *Guernica* depicts the horrors of war and his feelings about the experiences. He used African art for his cubist style. Art tells a history.

Experimentation of mediums and styles, like pointillism, minimalism, cubism and expressionism, pushed the envelope during the lives of the artists in their time of prominence. We don't have to like what the artists portrayed, but it gives us views and reflections of their lives during that period of time.

As a young child I went to museums alone. Then as a college student, living in New York City, I hung out with the likes of Keith Haring, Andy Warhol and other innovative artists.

I own eclectic artwork; it gives me hope and makes me feel alive.

Mariska Bogle

Director of Strategic Planning and Business Development
Philadelphia Tribune Newspapers
Philadelphia, PA

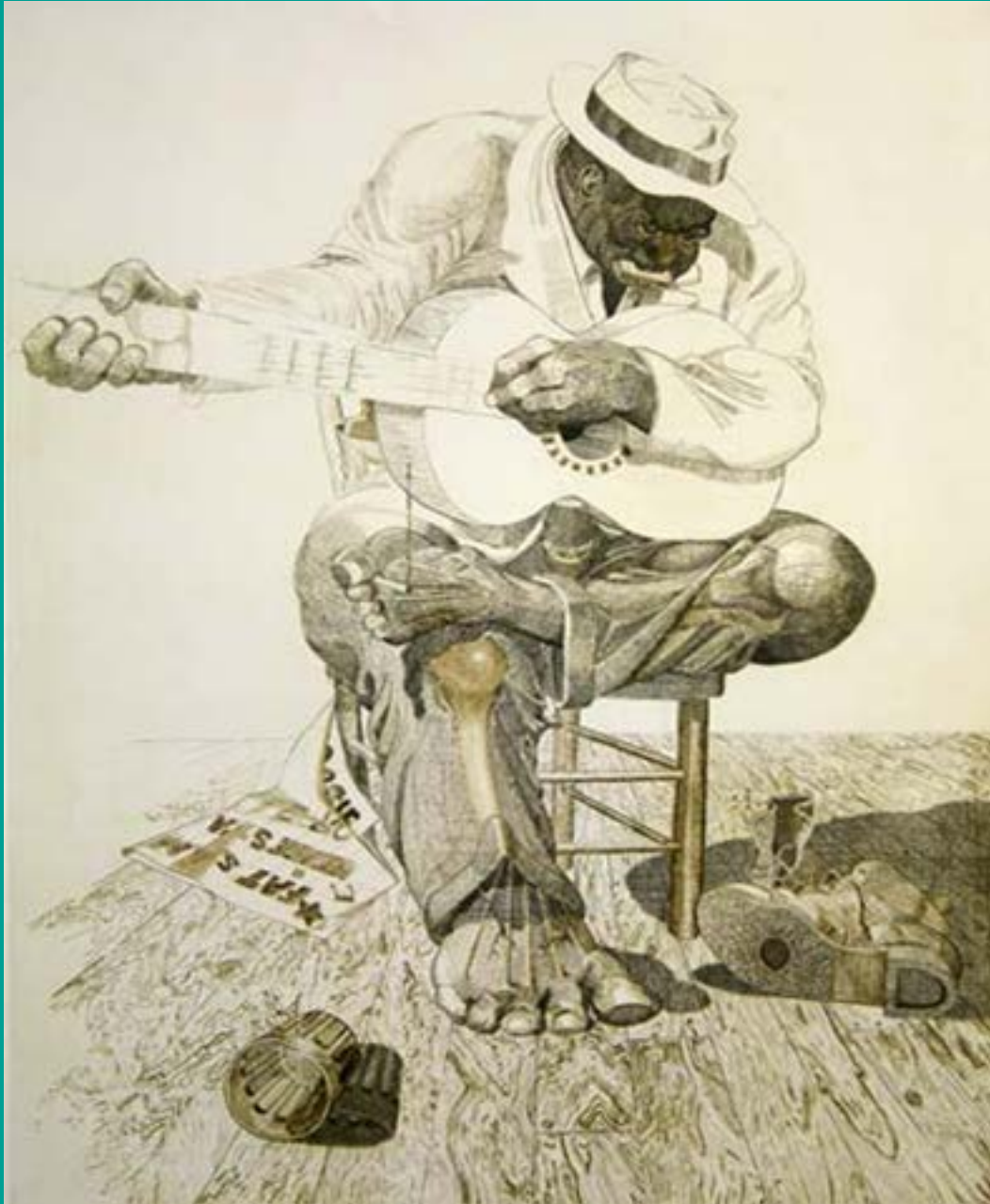


Art is as important to a people's existence as language and custom. It is crucial to our experiencing a sense of validation and wholeness. This is especially important when living in a society that constantly bombards us with negativity and assaults on our personhood. These routine attacks lead to "spirit murdering." Art is part of the armor that can protect us from these attacks. In order to assure its effectiveness and longevity, we must have institutions that are dedicated to its support. We need to support and protect our historically Black colleges, universities and art institutions.

Art has enabled me to heal and press on as well as to rise above the challenges that I am continuously subjected to as an African-American. Art is like love. It is beautiful in and of itself but even more profound when it is shared.

Barbara Simmons

Attorney
Philadelphia, PA



Fat Sam by Ron Adams



We took a giant step forward in 1999 to create a contemporary fine art gallery representing artists of color from across the globe. Having come from backgrounds in corporate America, we knew that using acquired sales and management skills coupled with an enormous passion for art would be successful when combined with the ability to represent exceptional emerging and mid-career artists. The formula is a good one and is a continuing work in progress. We continue to believe that there should be no limits, no labels and no boundaries placed on African-American artists and artists of African descent. Why? Because we believe that their talent is unsurpassed in every aspect of visual art. As gallery owners, we also believe that the new challenge is to identify, support and solicit the collection of the “new masters among us.” The rich visual art culture passed down as the Harlem Renaissance, Work Projects Administration (WPA) and beyond continues to imbue artists of today.

Pamela Brown and Beverly Dawson

Owners, ArtJaz Gallery
Philadelphia, PA



I sought to find art that reflects positive images of African-Americans. I proudly committed to a movement that contributes to the visual and cultural enrichment of our communities. In this effort, I began collecting these images, learned custom framing, opened my gallery in 1983 and promoted the premise that the African-American artist is an important entity in our culture.

For the past quarter century, we have experienced an era that provided more accessibility to anyone who desired to purchase Black art, exceeding even that of the famed Harlem Renaissance period of the early 1900s. In fact, I have chosen to dub this era the “New Renaissance” period in African-American art. In truth, this movement has been broader in scope, as it has enabled those of every economic, social and educational level to be able to afford and purchase works, as they are more available and reasonably priced.

Samuel Fredericks

Samuel's Gallery
Oakland, CA

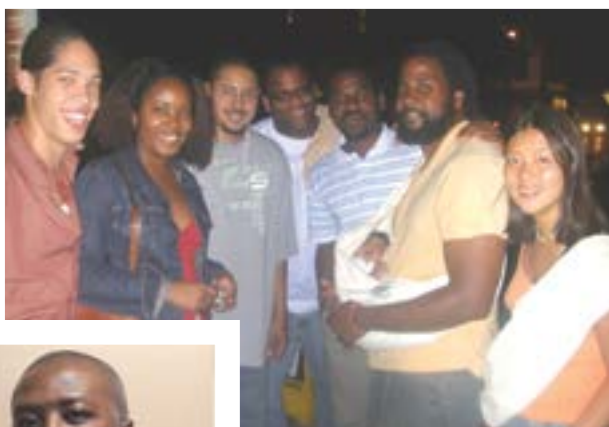


Hiroshima No. 7 by Jacob Lawrence



We Love African





-American ART





When I started seriously collecting art seven years ago, I wanted something that would speak to me. It's easy to be invisible in this society: no traces of the past, no heritage and no connection to Africa depicted in my daily walk. Art marks a moment in time, as it is a snapshot of life illustrating perceptions of how things were, the way things are, and how they can be. It defines my existence, and it creates that missing connection: The artist and the work, history and my experiences, culture and my "self" image are one. For me, art speaks to passion and perceptions, and it evokes a response. Each piece has sound and movement. Every work has its own voice. It's the blues, the jazz, the hip-hop and the bebop of Black life. Through art, the ancestors are calling... I just want them to know that they have been heard.

Jerome Davis

Collector
West Chester, PA



Untitled by Bernard Collins



Deep in Thought by LaShun Beal



I purchase African-American art because several years ago I developed a profound interest in my ancestral heritage. I realized that the circle of communication of African-American art had not been fully realized in my family. I wanted to leave a legacy of African-American art to my children to increase their awareness and appreciation and continue the connection.

Collecting African-American art has opened my mind to the enormous talent of people of color. As a youth growing up in rural West Tennessee, with firsthand knowledge of the plight of Blacks in the South, I knew that there must be a million stories to be told. As I have collected sculpture from Africa and paintings from African-American artists, I am continually amazed that art on any surface can tell a story more clearly than words can express.

I sincerely appreciate the Redcross family for all that they have done to promote African-American art and for enabling me to meet and become friends with artists such as Sidney Carter. I thank them for this opportunity and for allowing me to be a part of their family.

John D. Sangster

Education Representative, UAW Region 1D
Saginaw, MI



My home art collection visually reflects African-American culture, encourages my family, welcomes my guests and soothes my soul.

Joe Pailin

New York Life
Philadelphia, PA



Art is beautiful in all forms. It connects an individual to the artist's creative abilities.

Loretta Harris

Patron
Lamott, PA



Queen by Frank Morrison



Morning Light by Keith Mallett



I have loved and created art since childhood. I express my personal experiences and innermost thoughts and feelings through art. Art is my life's blood. My art reflects my moods and is my vehicle for communicating with the world. Art immortalizes me. To me, empty walls in a room are synonymous with empty dreams and non-fulfillment.

Sam Byrd

Visual Artist
Philadelphia, PA



Art can be very personal, emotional and healing. In considering the art of healing, honesty can be both painful and therapeutic. My doll sculptures reflect intense personal moments and memories. I believe that to be truly alive, creatively, I retreat to my "inner world," where I find freedom and productivity. The loss of my brother James Baldwin, world-renowned playwright and author, has caused this evolution. The infusion of the human experience and my artistic mastery result in characters that are thought-provoking and spiritual. If my work can bring peace and harmony and uplift the spirit in each individual who views it, then I have succeeded.

Paula Whaley

Doll Maker
Baltimore, MD



The Protector by Sam Byrd



I started making dolls about fifteen years ago. Doll making was a fun, creative way to express my thoughts and soon became an inexpensive way to give personal gifts to loved ones. When I was a child, dolls did not look like me. Therefore, the first things I wished to do were to make dolls that I felt had some cultural significance and mirrored my people. Over the years, my work has changed significantly. My early dolls, although creative, were simple crafts. Today, I feel my creations have developed into art.

Sharon Tucker

Doll Maker
Philadelphia, PA



I think and create from the rhythms, color and spiritual lifestyle of Black folk. Whatever I do in the ceramic sculptures that I create is really an attempt by me to communicate with these folk. I create with the dynamics of the Benin spiritual awakening. It is the powerful Black force of our people, which comes through me, that I hope to give back, so as to perpetuate our ever-present force. I believe that art can breathe life, and life is what I am all about.

I am looking for that expression that cuts across a cultural grain. "African Nouveau" is the term I use to describe my present body of work. It is specifically African and European in influence. The images are African, in general. The concept is 15th century Benin with the graceful, slender proportions and long, undulating lines of 18th century Art Nouveau.

When I speak of "folk," I am included, and I attempt to communicate with others, through my art.

Woodrow Nash

Sculptor
Akron, OH



Black Diva by Paula Whaley



Art by African-Americans is as important as art by others. It expresses our view. It is very important for African-Americans to become collectors of African-American art in order to encourage our artists to continue to create.

Dr. Margaret Burroughs

Founder of the DuSable Museum of African-American History
Chicago, IL



The capacity to journey beyond limited circumstances may be serviced by cultural reference. African-American art is important because it allows us to witness ourselves from a place of abundance and blessings, honoring what we have as opposed to what is missing. Community is made whole when we embody critical, creative and reflective awareness of ourselves. Art allows us to access hidden truths by tapping into ancestral memory, cultural roots and imagination, creating symbols of personal power and expressing our magic. African-American art is inspirational evidence of our incredible strength beyond survival.

Adriene Cruz

Textile Artist
Portland, OR



Vibrations by Margaret Burroughs



Each of my paintings is the result of what I was feeling and thinking at that given moment. The initial thought enters my mind for a particular work, then it becomes reality on canvas and that painting is not complete until I can feel my soul in it. The thought of wanting to express peacefulness and thankfulness resulted in my painting *Giving Thanks*. My thoughts were connected to my spiritual attributes in the creation of this painting, and since it is so popular, I did a similar one titled *Still Giving Thanks*. In these paintings, I used the seven images that symbolize the number of completion and again added the ambience of the universe and the earth.

C.J. Fletcher

Artist
Louisville, KY

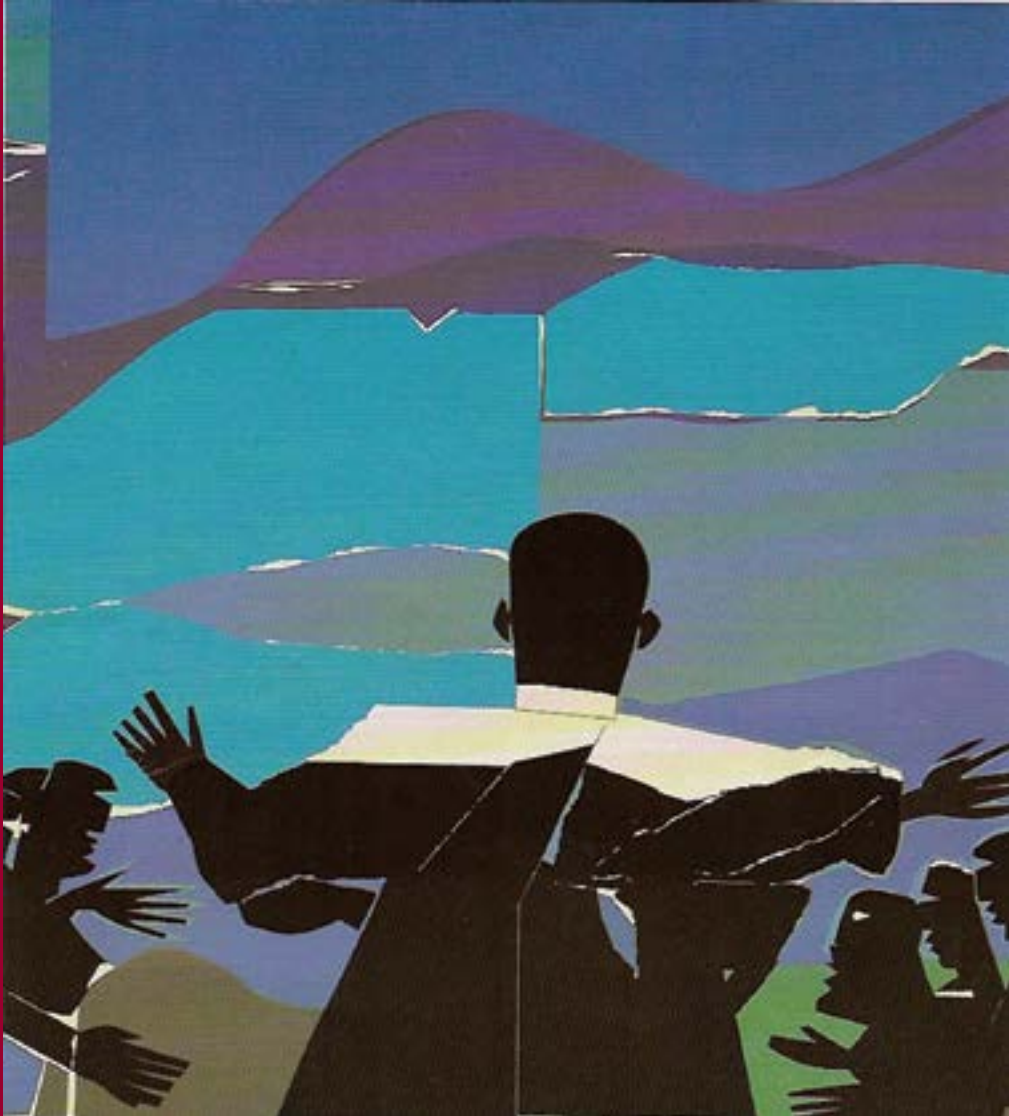


I am inspired by a spiritual purpose. I feel that one of the primary functions of art is to improve mankind by stimulating minds to broaden their scope. I seek to express truth in both emotion and spirit. I have something to say and I say it with art.

Early in my life, I traveled and lived in many areas throughout the United States. During these times I learned to make both a mental and physical documentation of these experiences, which I felt would be useful for future reference. I always knew that I would need those connections and memories to draw upon in my future expressive work.

Eugene Thomas

Artist
Louisville, KY



MLK by Romare Bearden

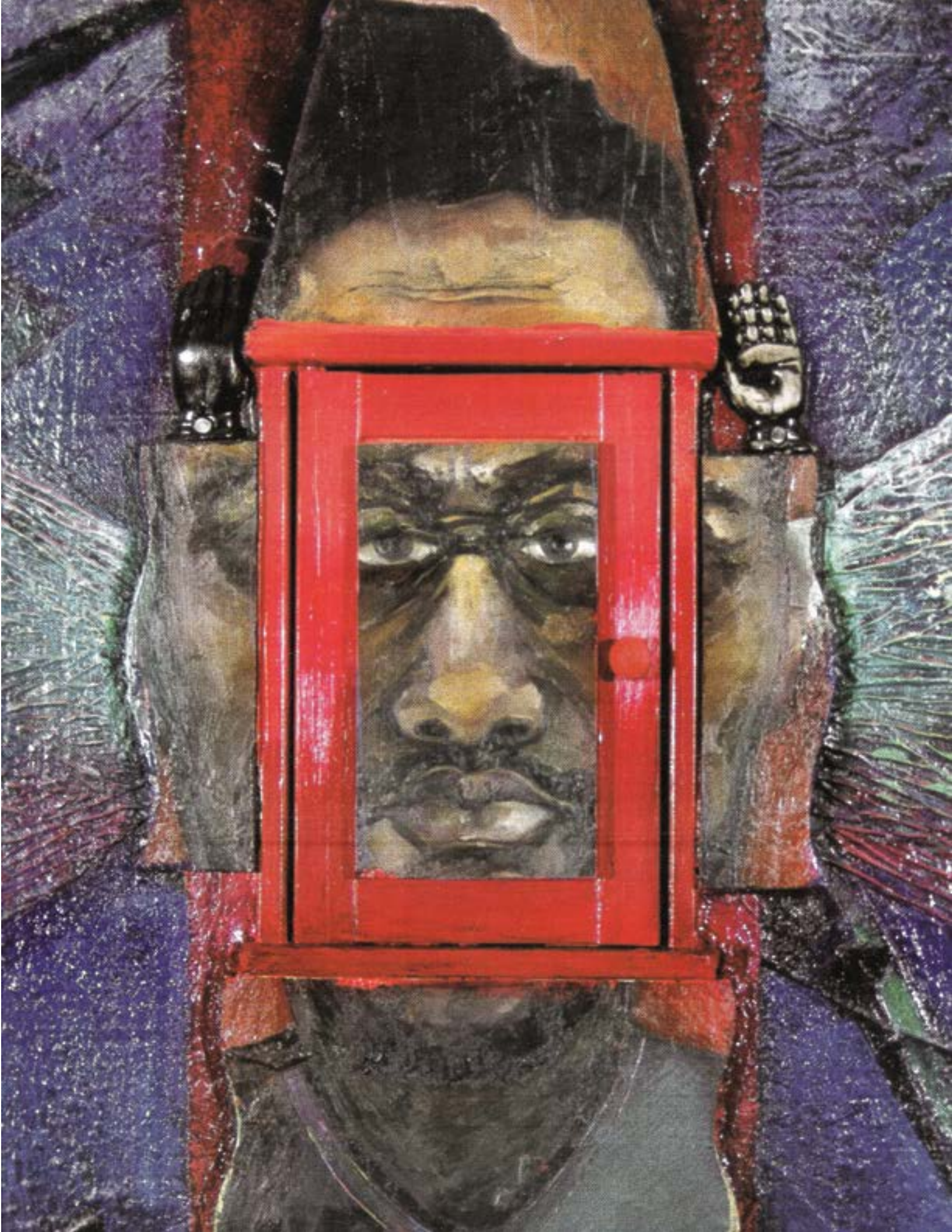
Is there a proper way to clean framed art?

If the artwork is framed with glass, spray the glass cleaner onto a cloth or paper towel and then clean the glass. Spraying the cleaner directly onto the glass may cause the liquid to run under the edges between the frame and glass. This could damage the mats or even the artwork.

Never wipe or dust acrylic or Plexiglas with a paper towel. Paper products tend to scratch these surfaces. A cloth rag or towel is recommended instead. First, spray the liquid cleaner onto the rag or towel.

Also, the back paper dust cover may develop tears. If it is a minor tear, use a wide piece of tape to close it. More severe damage to the back paper dust cover should be brought to the attention of a picture framer.

Too Funky In Here by James Dupree
(on opposite page)





When I was growing up, the only pictures that hung on the walls were religious and Eurocentric themes. Once I purchased my own home, I decided that African-American art would adorn my walls. I reviewed magazine articles on artists and galleries before making my initial purchase. Now, my purchases are based purely on a connection with the art; nothing is purchased for profit.

Ercelle Privott
Program Analyst
Landover, MD



Art is like music, its presence affects one and moves one in some way. My collection of African-American art contains pieces that resonate with the rhythm of my spirit.

Joe "Butter" Tamburro
Program Director, WDAS Radio
Philadelphia, PA



Fetish African Wood Carving



I think the main thing about art for me is expressing my inner self rather than anything outside myself. I am a multimedia artist who uses three-dimensional cutouts. Not many artists are doing this. Regarding the business of art, the market has changed: Therefore, the customer needs to be educated about various forms of printmaking such as giclees and etchings.

T. H. Gomillion

Visual Artist
Washington, DC



I am but a vessel of God and my ancestors. The joy of creating art allows me to express my appreciation of this fact. We are creatures of many forms of art. It has a history of struggle and success that our children need to know.

Linda Gray and Grayson Williams

Artists
Baltimore, MD



Fabric Art by Linda Gray and Grayson Williams



Culture is part of our heritage. Every person should know something about their heritage and culture because a man that doesn't understand his past may have a shaky future. Our culture, heritage and past give us a solid foundation to build upon. It helps us to know who we are, where we've come from and where we are going. And with that, we cannot miss the target.

African-American art tells the story of our past and our future. It helps us to understand the many talents and gifts passed down to us by our ancestors. When we embrace these talents and fine qualities we are passing a bit of us on to the next generation. We will all die a physical death, but we will never die through our culture, history and heritage. We live on for generations to come.

For we are the unsung heroes of future African-Americans and have experienced a deep rebirth of those things that once made us ashamed and now make us proud. Knowledge is a strange thing. It breaks bondage and helps us to improve ourselves. That's the rebirth that I am talking about. I collect and have learned to love African-American art. Surrounding myself with it is like remembering the experience of my ancestors with a joy that expresses an awakening and a new beginning.

Louise Williams Bishop

State Representative, 192 Legislative District
Philadelphia, PA

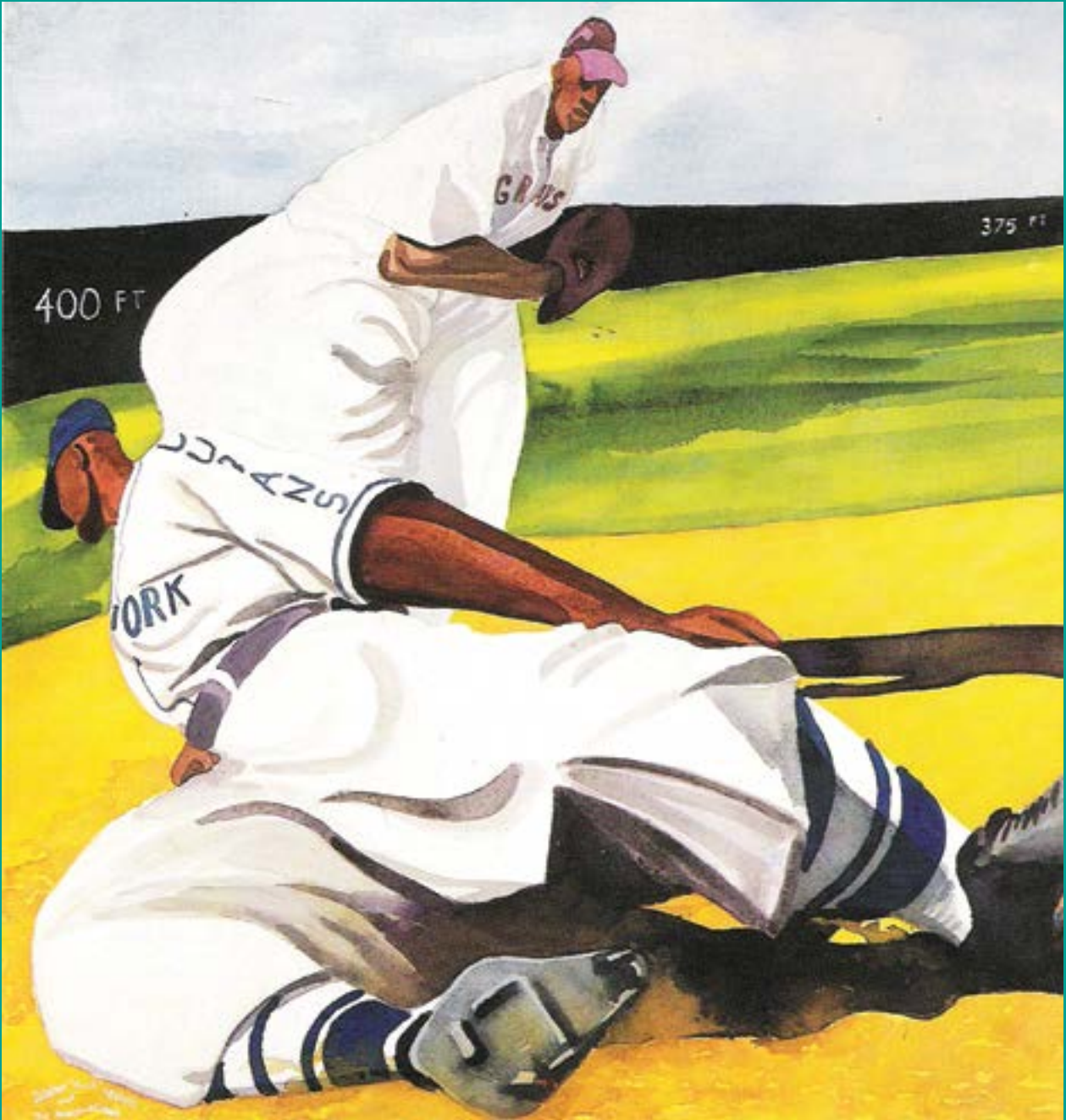


Mary and I collect African-American art to recognize and honor the artists who have worked so hard to be seen, accepted and appreciated. Our initial interest in collecting was fueled by our appreciation of strong Black images that reinforced or reflected the determination of our friends and families to celebrate their pride in their Blackness... awakened by the civil rights struggles of the 60s and 70s.

Our home and office and those of our friends are decorated with many different artists, styles and periods. The images in the art represent the history, emotions, strength and styles of Black people, Black culture and Black experiences in the world. We appreciate what each scene depicts: the colors, the themes and the messages. The art speaks of Us! It speaks to Us!

Charles Warfield with his wife Mary

President and COO, ICBC Broadcast Holdings, Inc.
Newtown Square, PA



Cuban Slide by Dane Tilghman

A MOTHER'S LEGACY



Joe and Ellen Powell Tiberino.

If you never met artist Ellen Powell Tiberino, then surely you missed one of the most striking, personable and creative ladies that we have ever known. Ellen (that's what we called her) had eclectic and eccentric taste. Her style was manifested in everything she touched: her art, home, clothing and conversation, for example.

Although Ellen was very ill when we met her in the late 80s, she would walk from her home to October Gallery (two blocks away) on some Saturdays to sign her graphic art and talk to customers. She never complained about her illness, but would share her experiences and her courage in dealing with the pain she endured as if it were news of someone else. Ellen had the ability to teach without preaching and to discuss her point of view frankly without burdening her listeners. We always looked forward to her visits and her artistic chapeau (hat) and fashionable garments.

Some say that Ellen's pencil, pastel and oil paintings were haunting and mysterious. That is to say, there was so much honesty and power in each rendering that viewers might have needed to set aside time to examine themselves on an emotional level—Ellen's immediate truth could hit hard. Perhaps her illness, reflected in her philosophy, encouraged her to cut to the chase.

As we revisited Ellen's legacy, we spoke with her family about her personal journey as an artist, wife and mother. Her husband Joe and son Raphael helped us to relay the following account:

When the Tiberinos were newlyweds, they moved to the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia. Their home was always an organic, artistic entity. The space that Ellen and Joe Tiberino shared has been a "living, breathing piece of artwork" for the past 35 years. Also, it has been a museum for numerous years. Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell issued a proclamation that placed their home on the Registry of Museums.

Ellen was a serious artist. Joe says that no one artist, in particular, influenced his wife. However, she gravitated to Italian painters, especially those who were more obscure (e.g., Andrea del Sarto, Vittore Carpaccio and Ambrogio Lorenzetti).

Although Ellen's art was diverse, many people saw her art through myopic eyes. Skilled at capturing the essence and struggles of Black people, Joe reflected, "Having the 'Black artist' label is labeling and limiting, but Ellen's paintings illustrate a good 'recording' of Black history that transcends the label."

It took time for our customers' growing artistic appreciation to connect with the sensibilities Ellen conveyed in her work. Also, Ellen's art was costly, relative to African-American art prices at the time. As a result, our customers bought her work slowly at first. When she made prints available, and subsequently allowed OG to publish graphics for her, our buyers responded favorably to these affordable products. The prints increased her exposure, helped to accelerate the learning curve of her art and hastened the demand for her originals.

In 1992, at age 54, Ellen transitioned from this life. An excerpt from Ellen's obituary, which appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, is included below:

"I paint life and life is not always beautiful," she [Ellen] said in a 1988 interview. In recent years, she did many pastel and pencil works from her hospital bed. "She never stopped working," said Evelyn Redcross, a friend and one of the principals of the October Gallery in the city. "Her hospital rooms were full of pictures. She really fought the fight. She had a strong character and she prevailed as long as she could. Few people could match her courage. Her work was very dramatic. She very often was able to show you the other side of midnight. She was able to show you the sides of life that you may not want to deal with."



Perfect Day by Ellen Powell Tiberino.

Bill Cosby; Ralph Smith, MD; Parrish Hall; Gladys Rodgers; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (through Director Anne d'Harnoncourt) have collected her work. The museum's permanent collection includes 13 pieces of Ellen's artwork.

"Ellen was fascinated with art and being an artist. She never thought that she would or could get married because all she wanted to do was to be an artist," said Joe. Ellen graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (the nation's oldest art school and the same academy where Henry Ossawa Tanner studied, in the late 19th century). In 1959, she became the first Black woman to win the prestigious Cresson Traveling Scholarship, which allowed her to travel and study in Europe.

After graduation in 1961, Ellen decided to move to New York City to work and become an integral part of the city's art scene. It was at her going-away party that she first met Joe, who at the time was living in Philadelphia, attending the Philadelphia College of Art, from which he would later graduate. Shortly after Ellen moved to New York, Joe traveled there to see her, not allowing distance to impede his mission.

Finally at her door, Joe Tiberino confidently knocked upon it, and Laslo—Ellen's current beau and a six-foot wall of muscle—greeted him. Although Ellen was at work when Joe called on her, Laslo invited him into their home. Joe and Laslo "hung out" at the apartment that afternoon, and when Ellen returned home, Laslo proclaimed, "Your good friend, Joe, is here!" Raphael remembers his father telling him that the look on Ellen's face was one of shock and horror: She feared this was



Moon Face by Ellen Powell Tiberino.

a "fatal attraction" scenario. However, after Ellen, Laslo and Joe mingled a bit, Laslo invited Joe to go out with them. Being a few years younger than Ellen, Joe appeared harmless to her: "She had no clue. I was this young art student who wanted to tag along. She was beautiful," he said.

Little did Ellen know of the heartfelt plans he had for their future together.

Who could blame him? Her beauty was art itself. Her image and her artwork is everywhere in their (home) museum to remind you; it comes through the family she loved. As a result, Joe and Ellen's collaboration can be seen and felt in their home-museum, inside and outside. "Having the work shown where it was done is very important," Joe said.

With a pulpit at the center of the outdoor space, the museum is a compilation of four houses and nine yards. Your senses are stimulated at every angle. Truly an artistic retreat, or as her son Raphael described it: "A total artistic meeting hall."

Often, Ellen taught art classes to children at the school her son Raphael attended. On Saturdays at her home, she taught classes for aspiring artists, many of whom are well-known artists now.

Considering all the art the family has produced and continues to produce, Raphael said, "When creating, there is complete involvement. The favorite one is the piece you are working on. You can lose connection with it when you're not working on it." Further, Raphael believes that the legacy his mother left for him is "how" she did things: "It's part of who I am," he said.

The Tiberino family is truly an artistic community:



Sister Jennieva by Ellen Powell Tiberino.



Leonardo and Raphael, two of Tiberino's three sons.

Her husband Joe, her sons Raphael, Leonardo and Gabriel and her daughter Ellen are gifted and established artists. Joe pointed out a photograph hanging on the wall in which Raphael is painting joyously and intensely at age two. Raphael said, "All kids are artistic. It needs to be nurtured." Joe poignantly interjected, "It's the socialization process of our society that pushes art aside for the children."

Even when traveling to Europe, Mexico or other locales, the family is still more of an artistic community than a typical family on vacation. Both Joe and Raphael remembered how their family would view their surroundings with an artistic eye wherever they went. Then and now their experiences and the people they meet is inherent in their collective and individual works of art. The Tiberinos are artists at all times.

Following the lead set by his mother, Raphael has been entrenched in the Mural Arts Program since he graduated from college. Art classes are held at the home-museum, where he teaches in familiar surroundings. Workshops for children are held two days each week. The focus on children and their artistic development and awareness has included projects where a group of kids make "Peace Poles," a continuation of the love,

peace and beauty for which Ellen stood.

In addition to focusing on children and exposing them to art, Joe and Raphael elaborated on how the neighborhood open-house gallery walks called "Second Fridays" have flourished at their museum. They say it has become a touring, communal thing, and has received a lot of recognition because the museum continues to include elements such as live models, live music and poetry readings.

"After Ellen became seriously ill, she became extremely spiritual. Her conversations would go all over," Joe stated. He recalled John Newns, a Catholic priest who, after reading an article about Ellen in the newspaper, sought her out and befriended her. Father Newns was so inspired by Ellen and her spiritual beauty and strength that he visited her and provided Mass for her on a regular basis: a true testament to how inspirational Ellen was even during her illness. Perhaps the strength of her existence can still be felt in her home, as if an angel lived, loved and created there.



The Operation by Ellen Powell Tiberino.



Cousen Rose Gallery has exhibited African-American art for twenty-six years. Although not exclusively featuring Black artists, the gallery exhibits an ethnically diverse collection, including Cuban, Native American, Chinese and Mexican art. We were the first gallery of its kind to open in the town of Oak Bluffs, on the island of Martha's Vineyard.

Our Saturday night "Meet the Artist" receptions have been a tradition in Oak Bluffs for over twenty-five years. The mellow jazz music of a pianist sitting in the picture window playing a tune has been a beacon for those strolling along the avenue on a summer's evening.

Here at our little gallery at the top of the avenue, we will continue to strive to present a diverse collection of fine art that appeals to the thriving global economy of Martha's Vineyard.

Zita Cousens (with Artist Paul Goodnight)

Gallery Owner/Curator
Martha's Vineyard, MA



We will never forget our first visit to the Philadelphia International Art Expo. We had no idea what to expect and were totally unprepared for the sheer exuberance, energy and exhilaration we felt for contemporary African-American art. It wasn't just the vibrancy of the exhibits, the sophistication of the artwork, the imaginativeness of the presentation or even the enthusiasm of the artists; it was the atmosphere, the sense of celebration, and we found the whole experience thrilling. That was back in 2001 and we haven't missed a show since. In fact, we now exhibit at the show ourselves and look forward all year to our weekend in the company of the wonderful community of artists, craftsmen and art lovers who make this occasion so very special.

Janine and Mike Zaikowski

Profiles Fine Art Printmaking Studio
Philadelphia, PA



X Factor by Paul Goodnight



Our collection of paintings by African-American artists is colorful, vibrant and joyful. Our favorite pieces are the Shona stone carvings from Zimbabwe. We are inspired by the unique character of each piece, and the knowledge that the artists believe they are “freeing the spirit from the stone” with the completion of each form. The reflection of African traditions and cultures blend in an eclectic way with our home’s contemporary architecture and Asian and Mission influences.

Arthur and Janet Milanese

Video Visions
Philadelphia, PA



Black art is important to me because it shows the expression of Black artists. It has a strong power that’s dynamic in its usage of colors.

Richard Cryer

Poet
Los Angeles, CA



Made to Order by Deborah Shedrick



In my day, art collection was a luxury and still is for many people. We thought that persons, especially children, who were artistically inclined were lazy, would never amount to anything and would be unable to care for themselves when they grew up.

The only art displayed on the walls in the homes of many of my generation were cheap, mass-produced prints of the *The Last Supper*, or of Jesus at the well, of Mary at Jesus' open tomb and of Jesus with his halo shining brightly. These prints were bought at Kresge and Woolworth's five-and-dime stores for less than a dollar.

The nearest things to the visual arts during my generation were such handcrafts as patchwork quilts, crocheted runners and doillies, hats and bedspreads. Since my children Mercer and Evelyn Redcross opened October Gallery, I am convinced that art is a luxury more people must try to afford. I don't remember the artists of the pictures I want to describe now, but I still carry in my mind the message and beauty they portray. One is a picture of a farm couple holding hands. They show in their faces and their stance strength, love, perseverance, hope and faith.

Another picture is of three ladies all dressed up with distinct hats and in Sunday-go-to-meeting dresses. They have come before God's presence. Their faces show that God is able and has them in His Care. Yes, one picture is worth a thousand words.

Alverta Redcross

Hollister, NC

Morgan and Anthony Harrison

Canton, GA



We find art breathtaking and interesting. We respond emotionally to many artists and artistic forms. Our collection includes collages, realistic portraits, and for us, the race of the artist is not a consideration.

We have art throughout our entire home and it is eclectic. A large part of our collection is by Black artists but that is not the focus of our determination when we purchase. Our art appeals to us on an emotional level.

There are pieces that have been exhibited nationwide in our private collection.

Regina's personal statement:

When I enter my foyer, I have views, through paintings, that I always wish to see. I have a sketch by Barbara Chase-Riboud that she made for her mother and gifted to me. Ellen Powell Tiberino is another of our favorites. We were invited to her studio before she passed, and we acquired several of her paintings.

Ragan's personal statement:

October Gallery not only represented Tiberino but also a number of other Black artists. October Gallery became a wonderful resource for us and continues to play a role in our collecting life today.

Ragan Henry

Attorney

Regina Henry

Businesswoman

Philadelphia, PA



Piano Man by Justin Bua



Research shows that humans have an innate desire to experience altered states of consciousness. Observing, appreciating and producing art allows us to step outside of the mundane, pedantic experience of everyday life. The healthiest fulfillment of this innate desire for me is through the peaceful transcendence of painting. My subject matter ranges from things close to my heart like children and dance to dreamscapes that symbolize significant events and emotions in my life.

Gaille Hunter

Adjunct Professor
Philadelphia, PA



Our heritage: It's who we are! Thousands of generations we represent them. We artists take nothing and make something of it.

Calvin Walton

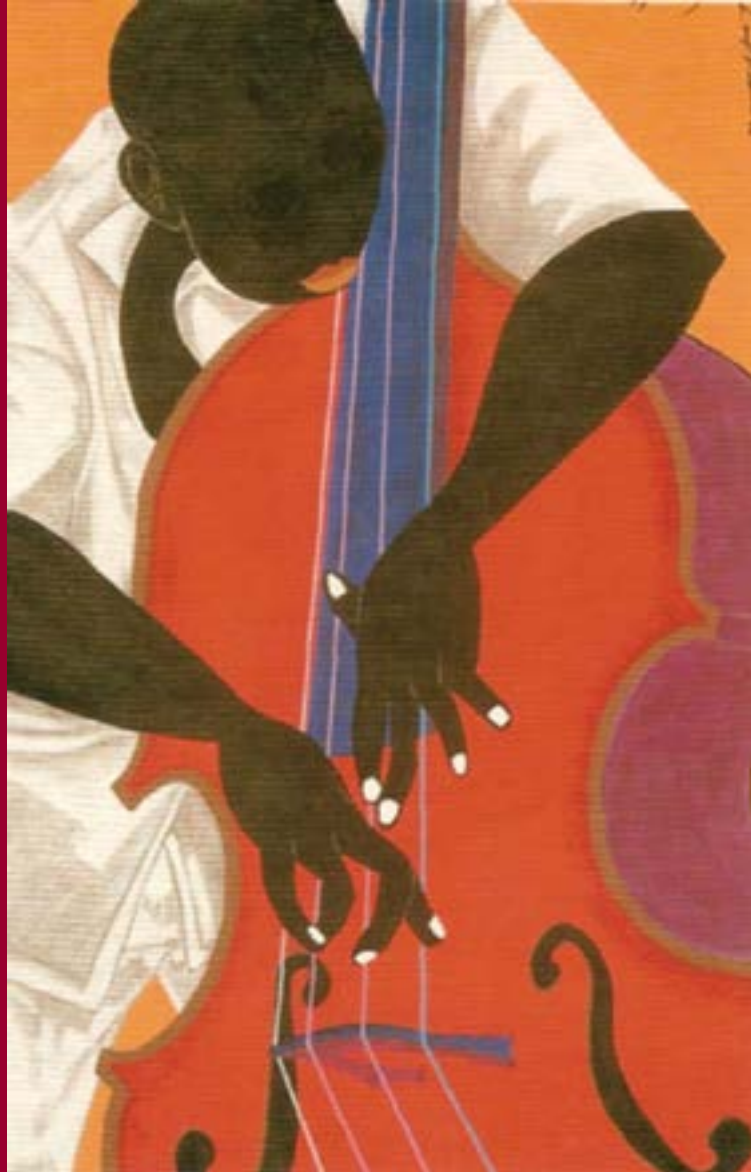
Visual Artist
Baltimore, MD



As years go by, I see my art as a celebration of Black lifestyles. I try to capture the richness of the culture—the dance and music. I call it old spirit art; it represents a past, reflective of the African-American experience.

Leroy Campbell

Visual Artist
Brooklyn, NY



Down Low by Leroy Campbell



I believe in the statement, "What food is to the body, art is to the soul." After humans satisfy the need for sustenance and shelter, self-actualization must be expressed, depicting one's culture, environment and beliefs.

As African-Americans, we may have an even greater need to "self actualize," or express who we are as a people and as individuals. The formation of this country profited from an enslaved African people, whose cultural identity was forcefully abated, and infused with negative stereotypes. It is important that we redefine who we are as a people in the diverse brotherhood of the African Diaspora. The visual arts are an avenue for us to accurately depict our diversity as a people. Afrocentric art allows us to heal our wounded subconscious and reinforce our proud past, our strong present and our hopeful future. Simply stated, Afrocentric art makes people of African ancestry feel good about themselves. I hope my art achieves this goal.

Gregory L. Reid

Proud Images
Wilmington, DE



We love African-American art because it depicts and records the lifestyle and culture of our people, and we salute all artists who dedicate their lives to preserving our heritage.

Milton and Glenda Boone

Black Heritage Visual Arts
Baltimore MD



Bronze Lion, Cameroon, West Africa



Piano Man by Keith Mallett



When I was asked the question, why I like Black art, all kinds of thoughts ran through my mind. I thought about my first trip to Abidjan, West Africa when I was 24 years old. It was an experience I'll never forget. We went to a small village outside town, and the villagers were carving statues, bracelets and faces from all types of wood, stone and ivory. I remember how amazed and excited I was as I watched. Keep in mind, I knew very little about Black art. As a child, our walls were adorned with Eurocentric art and family photos. This was something brand new to me. I remember thinking, *Wow, I wish I were so gifted and talented. I could make a lot of money.* Yet some of the villagers were so poor; they were working in their bare feet.

Those villagers were creating masterpieces and probably never thought of themselves as artists. The pieces were stunning and the prices inexpensive. I couldn't believe it. I wanted to buy everything. I purchased some gorgeous pieces, including an ivory necklace and a beautiful hand-carved ivory bracelet, for \$40.00.

I had a great experience in West Africa. I learned so much about the culture of our talented people and the background

and uniqueness of certain pieces of art. I wanted to share my knowledge with everyone. Africa was truly an education on African art and our Black culture. It gave me the thirst to learn more. Did you know that certain carvings are made by only particular tribes and only specific craftsmen within the tribe? The shape of the stone or piece of wood plays an important part in determining how the piece is carved. Also, there are many tribes throughout Africa, and each tribe has a particular mask with a painted design pattern that is used for certain celebratory dances or rituals. It is not just a piece of art; it is an education. Everything has a meaning. I learned more about the meaning of the masks on my trips to South Africa. I purchased three of them.

Black art has become part of my life. It represents my people and my culture. My travels and experiences have allowed me to gain a greater knowledge, appreciation and education of our art. I love walking into my house and seeing the work of my people adorning the walls.

Lynne Carter

Boxing Judge
Philadelphia, PA



Silk by George Nock

"It is important that an artist study life than study the technique of painting exclusively. Technique will come with desire to make oneself understood. It is more important for the artist to develop a philosophy and clarity of thought."

Jacob Lawrence

Your Blues Ain't Lke Mine
by Bisa Butler
(on opposite page)





In one sense, African-American art is a wonderful form of creativity that allows the artist to be expressive while at the same time allowing the viewer to appreciate the beauty of African-American people and places, whether the settings are urban or rural. Some African-American artists capture our lives in vibrant colors and in great detail while others capture life in simple sketches. Some African-American artists prefer to represent their view of life in Black and white or in muted shades and tones. Some of our artists have had extensive formal training at the side of other acknowledged masters and in great schools of art while others are self-taught and use a talent that comes from within to express the world as they see it.

Nor are these artists, these talented men and women, limited to capturing African-American lives, as many of them present representations of other themes, including still lifes, religious topics, landscapes, seascapes and imaginative and fictional images as well as illustrations of children's books. African-American artists have shown mastery in all forms of visual art from crafts, doll making and quilts to pottery and stained glass; from sculpture and figurines to abstracts.

No matter what the medium, African-American artists certainly offer all art enthusiasts wonderful and sometimes challenging views of the world. The breadth of the talent, the variety of subject matter and the assorted methods of expression are limitless, and we the consumers are the grateful beneficiaries.

Lillian Ransom

Art Patron
Philadelphia, PA



I was never into African-American art until Mercer Redcross gave me a painting by Andrew Turner at Unity Day one year. And, by going to Expo every year and meeting the artists, especially Cal Massey and Tom McKinney, I developed an appreciation and accumulated a wonderful array of pieces. The most magnificent piece I ever saw was the creation by Andrew Turner that hangs in the lobby of WDAS. It is more than a painting. It is more than a sculpture. It is true art. Mercer and Evelyn have to be credited with turning so many people on to African-American art.

Tamlin Henry

Radio Personality
Clinton, NC



Solid Rock by Jimi Claybrooks



I can't imagine my home without African and African-American art. Our home is full of it. Our most recent trip to countries in Africa added dimension to our thinking.

We have traveled to Ghana, Egypt, West Africa and Bahia, Brazil several times in the last five years, and we know that we Black people have every reason in the world to be proud of ourselves.

We have a knowing that we did not have five years before, and we can see the beauty in what we know. We saw antiquities and know without a doubt that they were built by Black people. We think that these Black people were close to God and were enabled by Him.

Bob Lott

Executive Producer and President
Team Works International Productions

Jackie McNichols

Account Executive
Team Works International Productions
Philadelphia, PA



Aside from its obvious pleasing aesthetic qualities, we love Black art because it exudes racial pride, an appreciation of African culture and the artists' commitment to manifest work that reflects the experiences of Black people.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.

Beta Delta Zeta Chapter
Graduate Chapter
Philadelphia, PA



Big Easy's Set by Terry and Jerry Lynn



My father, artist Fred Wilson, always participated in October Gallery Expo with me until his passing in February 2005. He recognized my artistic proclivity when I was three years old. I feel that the Lord God Almighty gave me a gift, blessing me with the ability to create. I am compelled to share this God-given talent using art as my voice.

I am a visual artist, illustrator and teacher. Interwoven in my art and my character is a strong sense of spirituality and family, which I transform into my subjects. I employ a unique style, working with mixed media. I try to skillfully translate my mission onto canvas, sometimes digging deep into my soul to create images so real that they literally leap off the canvas. I want to captivate the attention of my audience, and to do this, my work must be powerful, coming alive in their minds and hearts. I feel so blessed everyday to have been given such a talent, which I enjoy sharing with the world.

Terry Wilson

Visual Artist
Indianapolis, IN



Antiquity by Louis Delsarte



When I was five or so, one of my aunts collected lipstick, eye shadow and liner from guests at a family gathering and painted the face, legs and arms of an attendee that had lots of leg and arm exposed. Everyone got their cameras out to snap photos as she posed for the crowd. I was hooked. Over the years, most photographs that made a lasting impression involved body art of some sort. During painting classes in college, I often thought it would be more interesting to paint on people instead of on paper or canvas. Finally, I've gotten around to trying it.

The photograph above was taken by Adrienne Mills after she completed the body painting of model Greta Martz. Makeup is being applied by Sharon Richmond.

Adrienne Mills

Body Painter / Photographer
Washington, DC



It's no wonder that I love to work with clay. As a youngster, I loved to play in the dirt, the red clay dirt that surrounded our home and the neighboring farms of rural Georgia. My brothers and sisters would always try to make a better mud pie than me, but my mud pies, dried pieces of interesting structures, were always judged the best.

My life seems to have always involved some sort of creativity. My mother is an artist and poet, as well as a source of inspiration for me. My work involves many factors. I take my love of family, music, nature and spirituality and apply them to my art. When taking a flat, lifeless piece of raw clay into my hands, I am not restricted by the substance. I like to incorporate and experiment with various mediums, taking bits of copper, exotic wood and pieces of metal and intertwining them within the clay. When creating, there are no boundaries.

The most enjoyable part of being an artist is taking something with virtually no substance and composing a creation that stimulates emotions as well as conversation.

Elliott Hubbard

Visual Artist
Fairburn, GA



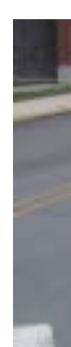
Orchestration I by Sidney Carter



Rhapsody by Keith Mallett



We Love Africa

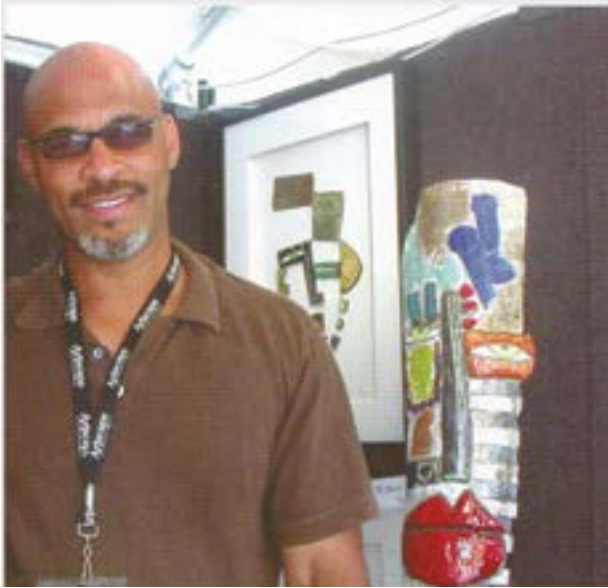




n -American

art





My artwork is a way of telling my story. It is a reflection of all of my memories, which include fishing with my grandmother and watching her cook and bake with her apron on.

The most important thing for me is to use my art as an opportunity to share my experiences. My originals are biographical.

Kimmy Cantrell

Sculptor
College Park, GA



The artwork I create evolves from a collection of mindful images depicting family, friends, music and dance. Taking realism and changing the images into an abstraction creates a conscious manipulation that forms a bond between realism and abstraction. Knowing that realism is what we know and abstraction is what we deal with, we have to try harder to understand these concepts just as in everyday life. My goal is to help people not only see the images, but more importantly feel the visual side of music, dance and life.

Jason Jones

Visual Artist
Chicago, IL



Untitled by Kimmy Cantrell

When asked, "What does African-American art mean to you?" I reflected upon "art as a creative expression of one's imagination that emerges as visual oral and aural reality." Historically, African-American art emanated from our Mother Continent, portraying a dichotomy of oppression and pain juxtaposed with a desire for power and freedom. It is a haunting echo of a rhythmic and sensual drum beat and as aesthetically unique as the subtleties of nature itself in color and contour.

"Black art" embraces all facets of soul and spirit across all cultural and generational boundaries as it depicts and explores how our people have been perceived by self and others. It is manifested through a multitude of forms, embracing fine art, music, architecture, dance, textiles, photography, graphics, poetry, creative oral expression, functional and decorative design and the literary. Today, as in yesteryear, we continue to express our inner challenges, outer jubilations and visions for our future, as we leave a legacy of a controversial mosaic for the world to digest, critique and enjoy.

When I was asked, "What do you like about African-American art?" a myriad of images cavorted before me as they cascaded from my memory like beads from a broken Maasai neckpiece. When confronted with the need to give decisive answers and make selective choices about something or someone, I always sing softly to myself a revered hymn, "Open My Eyes That I May See." I spontaneously engage in this exercise in order to comprehend any submerged intent beyond my initial impression, or to derive a personal connection beyond the obvious. In answer to October Gallery's question, several artists' conceptualizations emerge as my favorites: *White Chocolate* by Lady Bird Strickland, which parallels my historical biography of an ancestral Southern plantation and slave ownership, with mixed heritage. Another is *Ascension* by Larry "Poncho" Brown, which exalts my exuberant faith. Among the many others, however, it is Paul Goodnight who "sang my song" as he captured my essence in his rendition of *The Landlord*.

Initially, as I often gazed upon this ecstatic, hip-swinging, feet stomping, rambunctious dance, I could "hear" the



tempestuous rhapsody and "feel" the rhythmic vibrations as I pondered why I was enchanted with it. Why had Goodnight imbued it with that provocative title? Does their synergy suggest that the landlord and his tenant are having an affair? They are certainly extolling their mutual joy!

Hmmmm!!

Later, on one quiet, pensive evening, I instinctively knew the source of my pictorial adoration. It was that presently, as the shades of night begin to descend upon my twilight years, this rendering by Paul Goodnight reminds me that I too am having a glorious affair with my landlord...the Man upstairs...

our Heavenly Father, who holds my infinite mortgage. As His tenant, I find that Goodnight's "visual song" resonates my joyful expression of gratitude to Him for his magnanimous gift of longevity.

Gratitude and enchantment are universal and expressed so artistically and eloquently in the many melodic, lyrical, and creative languages within our Mother Continent. A sampling is reflected in Yoruba when the Nigerians say, "Mo was layo fun ayee mi" (I am joyful for my life). The Dinkas of the Sudan are rhythmical in their refrain, "Yic ya piox yice rec" (In me life is good.) And in Liberia, "nyelleh eh deh coo poh yah be kwa deh yenneh poh ageh coo y mammah say e mahn minni mma!" (We share our workmanship (art) with the world to thank You for Your blessings). In America, "Hallelujah!" says it all.

I am proud to acclaim African-American art as a legacy of birth from the womb of our African Homeland, and am intrigued by the belief, proposed in some arenas of idealism, that our first Black artist is Our Creator of Life.

Erlene Bass Nelson, Ed.D.

Educator
Philadelphia, PA



Oba, Benin



Tea and Biscuits by Gilbert Young



I love the color and the movement in Black art. I am very eclectic in my taste, and when I started to collect art pieces, I often saw items that would complement Black art (furniture, frames and floral arrangements). I was buying so much that some of my friends started saying to me, "Why don't you open a business and sell it?" That is exactly what I did.

I try to educate all of my customers. I encourage them to buy a piece not because it matches a particular sofa or décor, but because the piece is good enough to move from room to room. I want my customers to know that Black art is an investment and, like money in the bank, will only increase in value.

Regina King

King Production
Washington, DC



One of the many joys of family history is sharing who you are, how you feel and what you think through visuals like African-American works of art. For generations to come we can share our ideas, dreams and inspiration through beautiful works of art. Most assuredly, the value of art can increase over time, and we desire that as an inheritance to our children's children. More importantly for us, the work has to speak of who we are and what we believed at the time we bought it, because we share it with everyone who walks into our home. When they see, feel and discover the art, they see an extension of us now, or at some period of time in our lives.

Keith and Hope Golden

Golden Enterprises
Denver, CO



Kitchen Conversation by Brenda Joysmith



I've always had an eye for the arts and a strong love for the female form. From my earliest desires to create art, it was the female form that was my muse. As I grew as an artist, I was always seeking ideas to challenge the viewer along with myself. The world sees the nude and starts down a path of preconceived thoughts and stereotypes that have lingered since the dawn of man. My goal is to persuade the viewer to wander outside the norm and to see the soft curve of form, the play of light and shadow, the dance of color and shape. In the last few years, my artistic notions have run into the shining bright world of digital technology. It has opened doors I would have never dreamed of entering, by taking a simple image and transforming the subject into something otherworldly. Today, each new body painting starts the creation of a vast array of creatures that only hint at their mundane beginnings.

Anthony Rice

Photographer
Washington, DC



Life is art. My focus is on the character of us and our surroundings—not so much the pretty picture we oftentimes prefer to see. I want something that represents our times and this generation, away from the more traditional, calculated versions.

Marcus Antonius Jansen

Visual Artist
Fort Myers, FL



Lamp in Room by Marcus Antonius Jansen



My daughter Brooke and I were both trained in classical ballet. One of my favorite paintings is *It's My Turn* by Larry Johnson. He painted a beautiful, young Black girl, sitting on a divan, holding a nutcracker. It symbolizes that it is time for a Black dancer to be chosen for the lead role of Clara in the Christmas favorite *Nutcracker Ballet*.

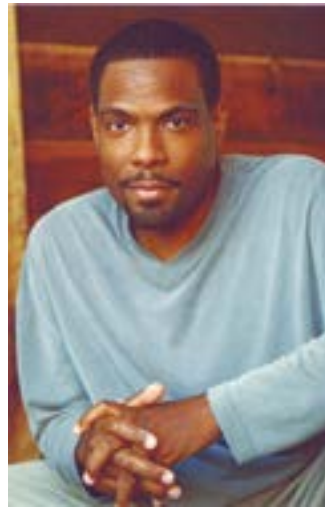
Brooke danced in the *Nutcracker* with the Pennsylvania Ballet Company. When she was about ten years old, she discovered this painting one summer on Martha's Vineyard. We secretly purchased it, October Gallery framed it beautifully and the painting was placed under the Christmas tree as a special gift to her.

When Brooke married and moved into her own home, she wished to take "her painting." But, I could not bear to part with it. A piece of art can become a part of you. As it was a "limited edition" that was out of print, we could not purchase another.

Finally, last year, Zita Cousens, of Cousen Rose Art Gallery on Martha's Vineyard, was able to convince the artist, Larry Johnson, to release one of his private reserves to us. Again, Brooke was gifted with a surprise Christmas present. We both now have the same beautiful painting, which each of us loves, in our separate homes.

Mimi Ross Wilson
Dr. Brooke K. McKie

Former and present ballet teachers and ballerinas
Philadelphia, PA



I have never given much thought to why I enjoy art. To me it is a question akin to "Why do I love good food?" The answer seems obvious. A good meal feeds the soul; it makes the heart glad. A meal lovingly prepared can transport the diner to other worlds and other times. Food can teach culture and values, and build relationships. Following a particularly good meal, we are liable to say the chef has "put his foot in it." "Mamma, you put your foot in those beans!" It is an acknowledgement that the chef has put heart and soul into the dish. We enjoy it because with each bite we receive a bit of the preparer's soul. The same is true of fine art.

When I look at art, I am filled with the same sense of "dining on the soul of the chef." There is a story in each piece of an artist's work; there is a mood capable of transporting the viewer to other worlds and other times. Fine art educates; it is an expression of values and culture. Exploring it with my family strengthens our relationships. But most of all, art—whether viewed on the walls of my home or on the walls of a museum or gallery—fills my heart with gladness. Like a good meal it feeds my soul.

Joseph C. Phillips
Actor/Author
Los Angeles, CA



Sound Stream by Essud Fungcap



When I think of African-American art, I think of a broad definition describing the visual arts of today's Black American community. This definition would include art produced by people of African descent, influenced by a number of cultural traditions. Its colors are vibrant and alive, as are the folk it represents.

Mercer A. Redcross Jr.

Retired
New Hope, PA



The cultural input of African-American art serves many purposes. It can help to heal the individual, the family, the community and the culture at large. There is no doubt that a connection to the spirit of the people of African ancestry offers a potent connection to creative expression.

The art of holistic health suggests that we change any health habits that may hamper our survival. For instance, we can adopt better eating practices.

It is now time for our society and race to operate as a collective to change the habits and hindrances that keep us from our divine blessings. Through the creative arts and the art of holistic healing, at least we can begin.

Dr. Paul Brown Bodhise

Chiropractor/Naturopath
Bodhise Holistic Institute
Philadelphia, PA



Those Eyes by Dane Tilghman



Drena and I started collecting African-American art in 1990, while residing in New Jersey. Our treasures have grown to over 100 pieces by numerous artists, and include masks, statues as well as original portraits.

Carl Brooks

President & CEO of the Executive Leadership Council

Drena Brooks

Washington, DC



I love African-American art! I think it is an essential part of our culture, and I think it is critical that we invest in artists' works across the African Diaspora. Art can bring such joy and beauty into our homes and lives and can enrich our overall environment.

In terms of my personal collection, each piece has touched me in an individual way. They each tell something about my personal life, culture, loves and experiences. I have pieces from Brazil, Africa and the U.S., with a special focus on Philadelphia artists.

October Gallery is beyond an art gallery to me. October Gallery and the Redcrosses are like family. There has never been a time that I have asked for help that they have not gone beyond the call of duty. Art is joy! Art is love!

Frances Ellen Fattah

Attorney

Philadelphia, PA



The Yellow Umbrella by Charles Bibbs



Black art should be appreciated not only for its beauty but as a powerful influence connected to our history and our future. Black art depicts our past, often through the drive and determination of the characters and scenes portrayed, the same drive and determination that continues to be critical for our future. Black art should be used to educate our youth, to pass on to them the history of struggle, survival, joy and beauty of a people whom they are connected to and on whom they should draw for strength as they lead us into the future. Black art also serves as therapy in times of depression and joy. It's a source for those who seek to reaffirm their blessings and to witness the energy and creativity that exists in our community. Black art is essential for our well-being as individuals and as a community.

Ernest L. Wright

Art Patron
Philadelphia, PA



African-American art is indispensable as an expression of the highest spiritual, artistic and emotional gifts of genius. How would we know who we are without our art? What constitutes the colors, rhythms and styles of our people if not the creations of our artists? They are the keepers of the faith of our fathers and mothers and they give life to the things that we dream, think and hope. Without artists to paint the pictures, to sculpt the images, to immortalize the feelings of our people, we would be nothing—we would be like someone who came to the earth and left no record. We have always believed it is essential for African-American families to encourage young people to purchase African-American art as a way of remembering the best qualities of our people.

This is the way we strengthen ourselves and teach values, humor, joy and rituals of sadness and happiness, so let us rejoice that we are a people of artists. My wife and companion, Ana, and I have always felt that our homes and places of business should be decorated with African and African-American art.

Molefi Kete Asante

Professor, African American Studies at Temple University
Elkins Park, PA



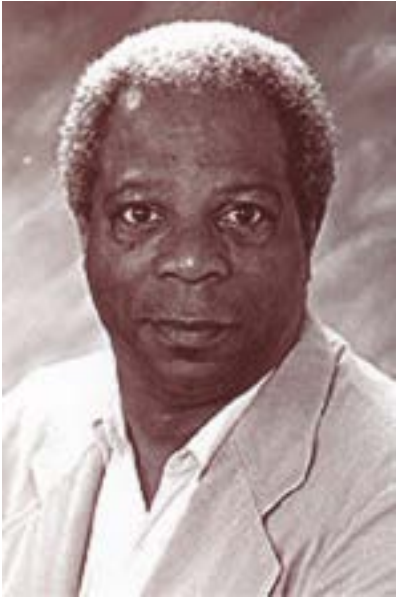
Just Men, Just Drums, Just Free by Roederick Vines



Against the Wind #2 by Eugene Thomas



Artist Profile



When I am asked what kind of work I do, my answer is that I am a storyteller, in picture form, who tries to reflect and interpret the lives and experiences of the people that gave me life. When I am asked who I am, I say I am an African who was born in America. Both answers connect me specifically with my past and present. Therefore, I bring to my art a quality that is rooted in the culture of Africa and is expanded by the experience of being in America. I use the vehicles of "fine art" and "illustration" as viable expressions of form, but I strive always to do this from an African perspective, an African worldview, and I strive above all to tell the African story. This is my content. The struggle to create artwork and to live creatively under any conditions and survive (like my ancestors), embodies my particular heritage in America.

Tom Feelings

Visual Artist
Brooklyn, NY



I want my work to make the viewer think about social issues or see a side of society that rarely gets documented in art.

Jason Phillips

Visual Artist
Detroit, MI



King Cotton by Jason Phillips



The camera is just a tool.

It's really the people, the spirit and the subject that preserve the moments in time so that it can be treasured forever.

Ron Allen

Photographer
Philadelphia, PA



Leon Huff, Kenny Gamble and Berry Gordy Jr.



Cedric the Entertainer



Lionel Richie, Jerry Blavat and Renee Amore



Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street, Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones

Photography by Ron Allen



We Are What We Love

We are Baby Boomers

Crossed into a New Millennium

We search for ourselves in what we know

We find ourselves in those we love

We communicate

Or not

We are the Moon walkers

Baby stepped in Black and White

We laugh with the crazy warriors

We cry with the timid beggars

We communicate

Or not

We are Stars and pictures

We are sounds and sights

We lean into the future generations

We dally in the culture of our ancestors

We communicate

A lot!

In appreciation of October Gallery, its dedication to the community and its stalwart stewardship of the cultural underpinnings of the arts. Thank you.

Nancy W. Morgan, Ed.D.

Educator

Philadelphia, PA



I enjoy the Gospel-Aires (Sargent Memorial Presbyterian Church) annual trip to the October Gallery Art Expo. There, I can find African American, Afro-Caribbean, and African art, sculpture, music, clothing, etc. I enjoy meeting and talking to the artists. This makes the art incredibly special!

Delores Bolding

Consultant

Washington, DC



I have connected with art crafted by African Americans and all People of Color for decades. As a visual artist and designer, I gather inspiration from exceptional talents such as Beauford Delaney and Ellen Powell Tiberino while I produce my creative projects. As an educator and collector, I still embark on any purchase with the thought, "Does it stir my soul?" If I answer, "Yes!" within five minutes, I know that I will have no regrets. My experiences at the Expo have often resulted in a uniquely significant addition to my collection. I continue to have immense pride in my heritage and our history when I look at the walls of my home. My own home museum of prints, photographs, and paintings eloquently displays my culture and my people.

Nadene Moore

Teacher, Art and Technology

Philadelphia, PA



The Sun People by Larry “Poncho” Brown



Real Men Pray by C. J. Fletcher



Cheyney University has a historical collection of Black art. We have archival materials that are valuable in terms of assembling a mosaic of Blacks in education. Our fine arts department did an exhibit for the mayor's office in Philadelphia during Black History month. This exhibit also included the beautiful works of our students and faculty.

Cheyney's fine arts studies program is one of our fastest growing departments. Our students are choosing dual majors such as business and art or math and art. Students are being exposed to art and consequently are discovering their talents and expressing themselves artistically.

Under the direction of faculty member Marietta Fryer, we created a marvelous piece of work called *The Liberty Bull*. This piece was entered in the 2004 Harrisburg Cow Festival in Pennsylvania and is now on display in Biddle Hall at Cheyney. The story of African-American history is painted on a cow. Exposing our students to art is unmasking many talents. We are developing a new generation of artists.

Wallace Arnold

President, Cheyney University
Cheyney, PA



Collecting African-American art keeps me connected to the past, grounded in the present and excited about the future. The pieces I'm attracted to connect me to the past because they remind me of the God-given gifts and talents of African-American people. They ground me in the present because each piece I purchase speaks to me through the artist's use of color, theme or medium. Most importantly, they allow me to share the legacy with my teenage daughter as she learns to love and appreciate African-American art as well.

Michele Sims

Educator
Fort Washington, MD



Jazz On Ogontz by Oronde Kairi Johnson and Michael Angelo Wallace



I look forward to our annual trip to the October Gallery Art Expo. I love the shopping, especially meeting the artist. You can find everything there. Black art, sculpture, holiday cards, calendars, clothing, music and much more. It's a time to meet sisters and brothers who share the same passion for art. Black art represents our culture and it expresses our heritage. It is also a time to learn more about products that are produced just for our skin and hair.

Each year more friends have joined us and have experienced the pleasure and excitement of the October Gallery Art Expo.

Cynthia Williams

Insurance Broker
Bowie, MD



We had Black art when I was a little girl. So we're celebrating 50 years of Black art.

We were all so excited when the Lucien Crump Art Gallery opened in our neighborhood. We could browse, get educated, shop and have pieces framed with a friend.

My children grew up with Black art.

And now we're all growing up with October Gallery and the Philadelphia International Art Expo, one of the most exciting weekends in Philadelphia.

Pictured above from left to right are mother and daughter.

Rev. Dr. E. Louise McCrary Sanders

Minister

Vicki Edwards Redmond

Assistant Director of Admissions, Cheyney University
Philadelphia, PA



In the Spirit by Bernard Hoyes



Artist Profile



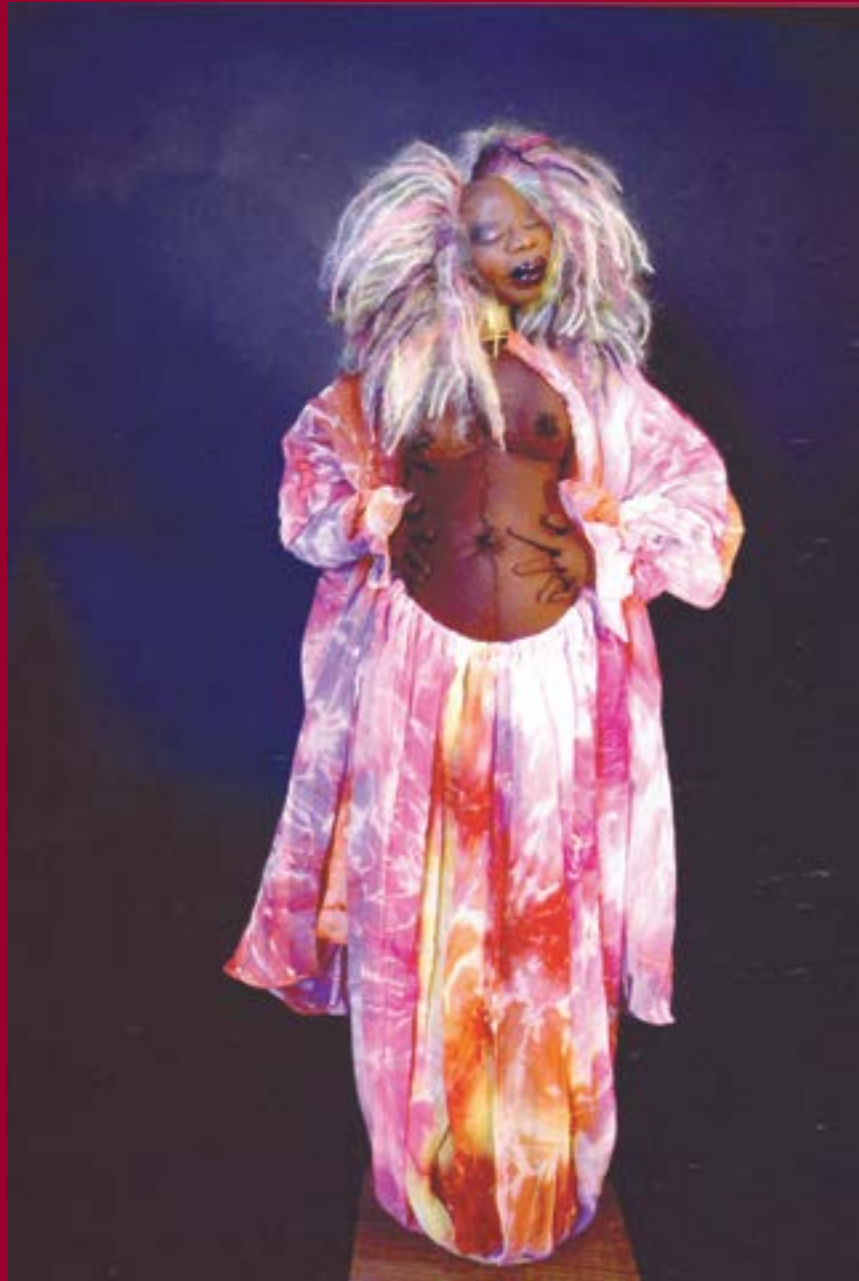
When I was a student at Harrity Elementary School in Philadelphia, one of the most popular class activities was Friday show and tell. Little did I know that my favorite presentation would one day become my profession. I anxiously prepared for show and tell for weeks in advance. My presentation was always a hand-sewn “couture” line of clothing for my Barbie doll, one that I had designed myself. My mother would not allow me to use the large, power sewing machine at that early age, so all my work was done by hand with a needle and thread. My mother was an excellent seamstress and she taught me how to sew. She worked in a clothing-manufacturing factory, so I always had lots of scraps from odds and ends that were left over from whatever lot they had been working on that day. At that stage of the game, I didn’t know the difference between dress fabrics and casual fabrics. Even more so, it really didn’t matter. I can still recall my favorite Barbie gown, which I fashioned after a beautiful “fishtail” dress that I had seen in an old 50s movie. The only difference between the original and mine was that mine was made from a fine, green-and-white gingham fabric. Well, at least it was an original.

I would stand there in front of the class and change Barbie’s clothes, one outfit after another, until the teacher inevitably said, “Okay. Thank you, Patricia. We’re just about out of time.” And I would be genuinely upset because I wasn’t quite finished and had been building up to the grand finale. For an extremely shy little girl, those were the only times that my shyness didn’t encumber my ability to perform in front of an audience. Even then, I was extremely confident about my ability to design and create.

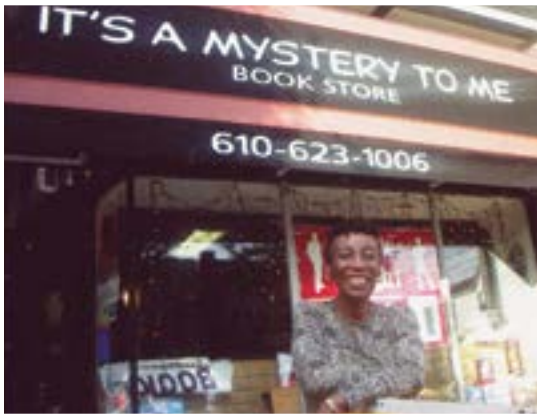
I have since learned from those early experiences that, usually, you are good at what you like and you like what you are good at. So it only made sense that I pursue those options. Although there were many stumbling blocks and obstacles along the way, they only made me that much more determined to be successful at my life’s true calling.

Patricia Coleman-Cobb

Dollmaker
Duluth, GA



Natural Woman by Patricia Coleman-Cobb



We Love African





n American Art



B

RAZILIAN CONNECTION



In 1996, our youngest son, Lamar, traveled to Bahia, Brazil and decided to live there for a few years. As parents we were scared to death that something might happen to our middle child. Evelyn and I tried to talk him out of going, but of course it is very difficult for parents to change young people's minds. Three years later, Lamar returned to Philadelphia, darkened by the sun, lighter in body weight, fluent in Portuguese and knowledgeable about Salvador, Bahia.



A Brief History of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

The city of Salvador is 450 years old. Many consider it the most African city in the Western Hemisphere. It is believed that over 80% of the city's population has African blood. Salvador celebrates African culture in its food (Bahian specialties like acarajé), its religion (Candomble), its dance (the martial art dance of Capoeira) and of course its Carnival (said to be the largest street carnival in the world).

The 6-day street party attracts an estimated 2 million people. More than 160 groups parade at different locations, and everyone is welcome to join in. But Carnival is just the beginning; it is followed by the Lavagens and the Yemanjá Festival. The people of Salvador are always inventing an excuse to have a party.

Brazilian Con



Brazilian artist Menelaw Sete in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.



Capoeira demonstration at the Philadelphia International Art Expo.



Carnival in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

After visiting this colorful, traditional city, Evelyn and I began to understand why so many African-American artists and others travel to Brazil to digest its history, art, color and rhythms. Some recent works by African-American artist Paul Goodnight illustrate the Brazilian influence, or, as we call it, “The Brazilian Connection.”

Salvador, Bahia is
considered the most
African city in the
Western Hemisphere!



Carnival by Paul Goodnight

Brazilian

October Gallery has developed two Brazil-related Web sites, digabrazil.com and paintbrazil.com. They share travel information and news about and photographs of Brazil. The sites also feature art by Brazilian artists. Here is a sampling of their work.



Museum art



Museum art

Brazilian



Museum art

Connection



Flores by Menelaw Sete

Brazilian



A Familia by Menelaw Sete

Connection



Alegria by Luis Espinosa

Brazilian



Prometido by Luis Espinosa

Connection



Capoeira I by Marco Aurelio

Brazilian

Martial Arts

Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian art form filled with tradition and history. It combines music, athletic movements and martial arts. Capoeira was originally practiced by African slaves who were shipped to Brazil by the Portuguese. The traditional martial arts movements were set to music and disguised to look like a dance. Capoeira is one of the fastest growing martial arts in the world today, but more than that, it is a social event.



Capoeira II by Marco Aurelio



Untitled by Menelaw Sete

Brazilian



Afro Brazil by Menelaw Sete

Connection

Glossary of Terms

A) Original Art

An artist takes a vision or original concept and renders this concept onto canvas, paper, wood, cloth, metal, cardboard or some other surface. This is a unique, one-of-a-kind work of art. The conception, expression or rendering is distinctly and directly a product of the artist's own creative efforts and energy.

B) Print or Graphic

Any work of art produced in an automatic, multiple, commercial or hand-printing process.

C) Hand-Pulled Graphics

1. Silk-screen or Serigraph - Incorporating the idea of "block out" stencils, the artist makes his prints by pressing inks through the stencil, through the stretched silk and onto the paper. There are many methods for creating silk-screen stencils: with cut paper, with solid glue painted onto the silk, with existing objects, etc.

2. Lithograph - The artist uses a grease-based crayon or grease-based ink to draw his image on the smooth surface of a limestone block or another ultra-smooth surface. He then coats the stone's surface with a mild acid solution, resulting in the image being set in. Lithography operates on the fact that grease and water repel each other. The stone surface is sponged by the artist with water, which is rejected by the set design. Then he rolls the surface with a grease-based ink which is attracted by the design. Paper placed on the stone and "run" through a press results in the printing of the artist's image only.

3. Etching - The entire surface of a steel plate is printed by the artist with a substance called "touche." A sharp tool is used to scrape the touche away from the steel surface in the form of his design without actually abrading the steel surface. The designed plate is submersed in an acid bath that "bites" the design into the steel. The plate is inked and paper is placed on the plate and "run" through a heavy press.

4. Wood Block or Woodcut - The image that the artist plans to print is drawn onto the surface of a smooth block of wood. Then, with carving tools, he cuts the wood away which he does not want to print. Only the design to be printed is left at the level of the original surface. The block is inked and stamped onto the paper, or it is placed into a press with the paper.

D) Machine-Produced Prints

1. Offset Lithography - This can be a complex printing process. An offset lithography is a print produced commercially through photographic reproduction. By this method, "fine arts" reproductions are produced. The printer uses four or more color separations in order to produce the best facsimile of the artist's original. "Limited edition prints" or signed-and-numbered offset lithographs have become widely accepted in the collector's market.

2. Poster - A poster may be an original or an offset reproduction, but it always incorporates words, letters or announcements in its design. Sometimes, in order to improve the design, the lettering is covered or cut away in the framing process. Posters are the earliest form of advertising known. Because the prospect has little time to devote to a poster, usually only a glance, the information communicated is brief. For this reason posters are usually used as a reminder medium, supplementing a major exposure of an idea in another medium.

E) Color

The one thing that all methods of hand-printing have in common is that generally only one color can be printed at a time. So if you see ten colors in a print, you should know that ten plates, stones or stencils were used to make it. Today, one of the most dynamic investment markets is the entire field of original prints. The public in general has come to appreciate the great technical difficulty involved in printing an original graphic.

F) Signed and Numbered (S/N)

These prints are authenticated with the artist's signature, the total number of impressions in the edition and the order in which the impression was signed—e.g., “5/20” indicates that the print is the fifth signed print of an edition of 20 impressions. **Open Edition Prints** – Prints that are not numbered and have no indication that they are limited are considered open-edition prints.

G) Artist's Proof (AP or EA)

A print outside the regular (numbered) edition is an artist's proof. In as much as every artist has a different use for his proofs, an exact definition is impossible. Some proofs are experimental. They precede the regular edition and are unique in that they show the evolution of the final design. Sometimes, when printed along with the regular edition, they are retained by the artist for commercial or personal reasons; sometimes they are printed from the same plates without change after the regular edition. Usually, 10% of the edition is printed as APs.

H) Hors de commerce (HC)

Hors de Commerce (not for trade) traditionally were the graphics pulled with the regular edition but marked by the artist for business-use only (HC). These graphics were used for entering shows, exhibits, samples, etc. Today, however, since people have begun to acquire and collect them, these graphics now generally find their way to the marketplace through regular channels and are sold.

I) Printer's Proof (PP)

A printer's proof is one outside the regular signed-and-numbered edition that was printed at the same time or after the regular edition, from the same plates or screens without changes. Printer's proofs are usually a very small number of prints given to the printer for the printer's own purposes.

J) Remarques

A current practice of some artists is the addition of a small personalized drawing with the artist's initials, usually near his penciled signature in the margin of the graphic. This is called a *remarque*.

What Is a Giclee Print?

The Giclee (pronounced “jee-clay”) method of printmaking, sometimes referred to as the “Iris” (after the original machine that produced the print), is the most recent technological advancement designed to preview what a print will look like before mass production begins.

Giclee reproductions were originally developed in 1989 as a digital method of fine art printing. The French word, Giclee, means “to spray on” or “to spray ink.” Images are scanned and digitally stored in a computer and sent directly to a super-high-resolution, inkjet printer.

Like other printmaking methods (lithographs, serigraphs, offset prints), the Giclee method starts with a highly sophisticated photograph of the original painting. Then the photograph is scanned, digitized and entered into a data retrieval system. The electronic image is sent to the printer after the artist and technician feel they have the best representation of the image.

Tiny ink jets, smaller than strands of human hair, spray ink onto canvas or paper, one line at a time, until the image is created. This process can take up to 30 minutes.

The Giclee method produces a print that is completely true to the artist's original intent, yet in and of itself has the look and feel of an original painting on paper. After the image is “fixed” with a UV protective coating, like that used on watercolor paintings, the print becomes as archival as any other work of art on paper.

From the standpoint of the art-collecting public, the Giclee fine art print offers the collector the same physical properties of an original painting, yet it is a work of fine art at a fraction of the price.



Patrons often ask, “Should one purchase art solely as an investment?”

In a survey conducted on octobergallery.com, we asked patrons why they purchase art. Below are the results:

For its aesthetic value: 47.66%

For investment purposes: 18.75%

Because it makes a good gift: 4.69%

To support the arts: 14.06%

For decoration: 14.84%

Evelyn and I say that we are not financial consultants. We are art dealers. According to some reports, art is the third best investment behind gold and real estate.



General Toussaint, from the *Toussaint L'Overture Series*
by Jacob Lawrence
Published in 1987 for \$1500
NOW: \$15,000



Herdsticks & Sandals, hand-painted by Charles Bibbs
Released in 1988 for \$100
NOW: \$3,750



Changing Times, serigraph by Paul Goodnight
Published in 2005 for \$750
NOW: \$1,850

Galleries and collectors who follow the performance of African-American art point out that even during economic slowdowns prices of artwork have held up well in the marketplace. We have even reported record prices at our annual Philadelphia International Art Expo art auction. The stock market is organized so that people can track the performance of their investments. The art industry is loosely organized and unregulated. The value placed on art can be very subjective. Through the centuries, art has proven to be an attractive investment. With new appreciation and increased visibility, African-American art has become a valuable commodity.

The contemporary African-American art market has a two-tier transaction structure. The primary art market supplies itself through replaceable new artwork. Simply put, artists and publishers supply art galleries and dealers with new and recent artwork. The second tier (secondary market) has a network of dealers, artists, collectors, auction houses, art galleries and others that have originals and sold-out editions. This is a recycling process where originals and sold-out editions are offered for resale by owners, estates and institutions.

On a personal level, our African-American art has outperformed many conservative investments over the years. We recognize that investing in African-American art is an alternative investment.

In considering African-American art as an investment, think long-term. Cashing in on your investment might be 10 to 15 years down the road.

Art does not generate income. Except for the occasional lease or rent of art to a museum or traveling exhibition, there are few revenue streams available. Non-believers will tell you that art is not a traditional financial asset given that it does not provide earnings over a period of time. In addition there are insurance costs, storage (hanging) considerations and high transactions fees associated with re-selling the asset. But if we are careful in our choices, do our homework and look at



Pas de Deux, serigraph by William Tolliver

Published in 1994 for \$750

NOW: \$13,000

the long run, art may outperform or equal many other investments. When we say be careful in our choices, we realize that though original art by the masters and well-established artists may perform at a higher yield, such works are relatively scarce and not everyone can own or afford one. But keep in mind that as prices of older pieces soar beyond the reach of most buyers, the long and affluent coattails of this art boom will provide many opportunities for contemporary paintings, serigraphs, lithographs, photographs and sculptures.

There are other benefits of owning African-American art. Purchasing art can be fun and enjoyable and can serve as a social function.

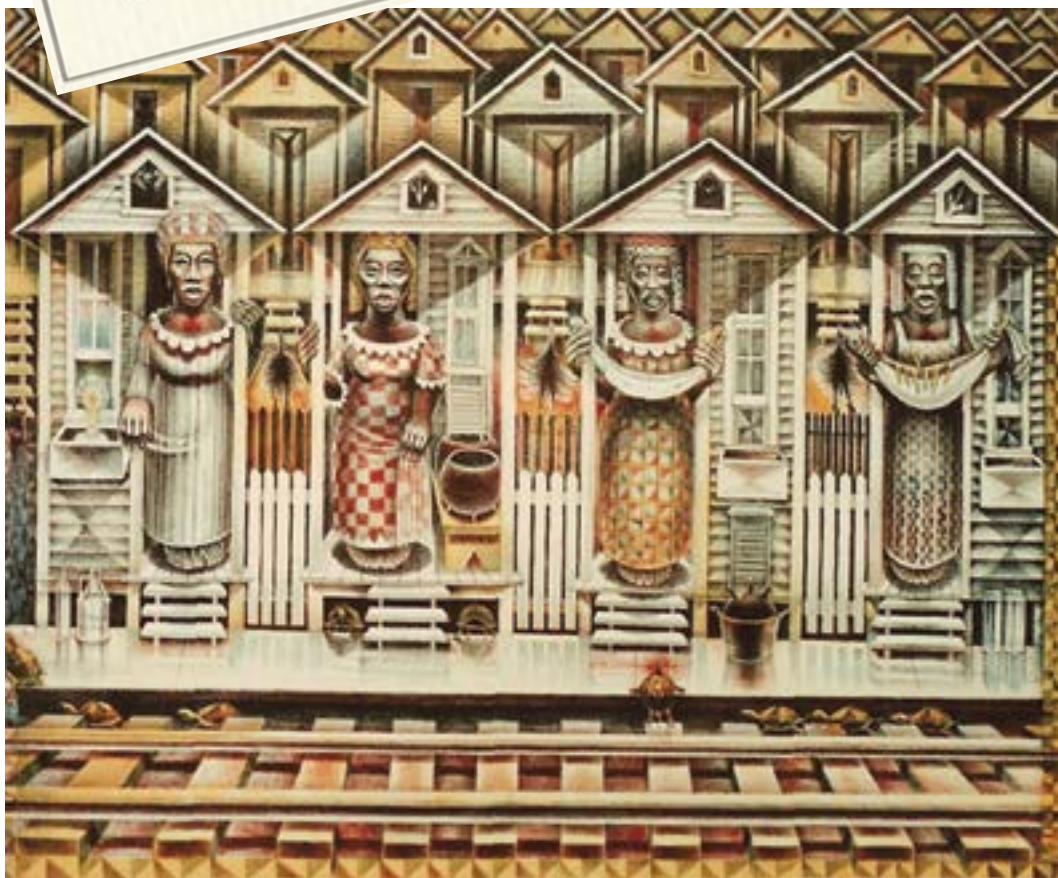
If investment is one of your reasons for collecting art, remember to look for quality. Quality can be found in the work of established artists yet we caution investors to be aware of and open to emerging artists.

Great things always begin with quality.



The Wall, offset lithograph by Benjamin Britt
Published in 1988 for \$100
NOW: \$1800

FOUR SEASONS
24 3/4 x 34 inches (plus margins)
a February 1990 limited edition (numbers 1 to 120)
four colors, hand-pulled, stone lithograph,
created by **John Biggers**
published by Hand Graphics, Ltd.
is available for sale at the special preview price of
\$600 (price effective until April 1, 1990)
Make checks payable to:
Hand Graphics, Ltd.
418 MONTEZUMA ST. • SANTA FE • NM 87501 • (505) 988-1241



Biggers— *Four Seasons*; lithograph
published in 1990 for **\$600**
NOW: \$12,000

*African-American Art
has been marketed
extremely well.
A record of accelerated
financial growth is
documented here for
your edification.*

Bearden— *Odysseus*; serigraph
published in 1979 for **\$450**
NOW: \$4500

Bearden— *Lantern*; serigraph
published in 1979 for **\$600**
NOW: \$7500

Bearden— *Out Chorus*; photo-etching
published in 1979 for **\$900**
NOW: \$12,000

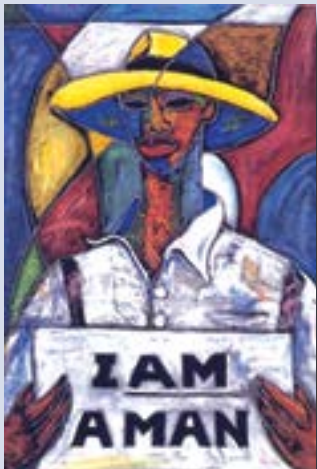


Bibbs— *More Lilies*; offset lithograph
published in 1998 for **\$200**
NOW: \$800

Bibbs— *The Gift*; offset lithograph
published in 1991 for **\$135**
NOW: \$3300

Bibbs— *Lady in Red*; offset lithograph
published in 1995 for **\$125**
NOW: \$1500

Hunt— *I Am A Man*; serigraph
published in 1994 at **\$450**
NOW: \$4,500



Lawrence— *Confrontation at the Bridge*;
serigraph published in 1974 for **\$700**
NOW: \$12,000

Tiberino— *Perfect Day*; serigraph
published in 1989 for **\$600**
NOW: \$6000

Tolliver— *Going to Church*; lithograph
published in 1987 for **\$750**
NOW: \$8000

Turner— *Keeping the Faith*; serigraph
published in 1990 for **\$300**
NOW: \$2500

Turner— *Jazz*; original
painted in 1988 with a value of **\$250**
NOW: \$9000

Turner— *Flute*; original
painted in 1990 with a value of **\$1000**
NOW: \$9500



White— *Abide*; etching
published in 1984 for **\$400**
NOW: \$4000



Sharecropper, linocut by Elizabeth Catlett
Sold at Swann Auction Galleries in February 2006

Estimated value in auction catalog: \$2,000–\$3,000
Sold at auction for \$8500.00



Jubilee, serigraph by John T. Biggers
Published 2000 for \$1500
Now: \$7500



Barefoot Dreams, offset lithograph by Brenda Joysmith
Published in 1984 for \$75
Now: \$1,150



El Señor, serigraph by Terry and Jerry Lynn
Published in 2000 for \$950
Now: \$2850



I Am the Black Woman, tricolor linoleum cuts by Elizabeth Catlett
Sold at Swann Auction Galleries in February 2006
Estimated value in auction catalog: \$1,500–\$2,500
Sold at auction for \$9000

Everyone seems to have some amount of artistic talent. When we talk about artists, we are usually referring to those with enhanced or special ability. We all have creative ability, whether it be latent or active. We believe that developing one's art gift is sufficiently important if the entire community is to participate in its own development.

In the case of young people, school curriculums seem to focus on reading, writing, arithmetic and science, to the growing exclusion of art. For this reason, the community must find avenues to ensure that our youth are exposed to as many art genres as possible.

It is essential that the display of art be an integral part of our children's home environments. Why shouldn't we make certain that the arts are included in everyday activities as an indispensable part of all our lives? If we ignore that part, if we are not looking in that direction, we may overdevelop some capacities and become deficient in important others. Might not an imbalance result? And, is it not balance that we are striving for?

Kids Love Art Too



Art makes me feel relaxed and good. I enjoy art class because I can do whatever I want as long as it is drawing (when we are instructed to draw). The world would be nothing without art. Art is everything. Art is found in everything, from the way they made my home, to the way they made that poster, to the way my pillow was made.

Levi
11 years old



Art makes me think of the art teacher at school and art class. Also, I think of painting pictures myself. I enjoy painting pictures. It's fun! When I look at pictures, some are interesting and some are not.

Parker
7 years old



Art can change the way I feel. It can make you feel happy or sad. I enjoy the colors I see in some paintings. When I read, I see pictures in my mind.

Ari
13 years old

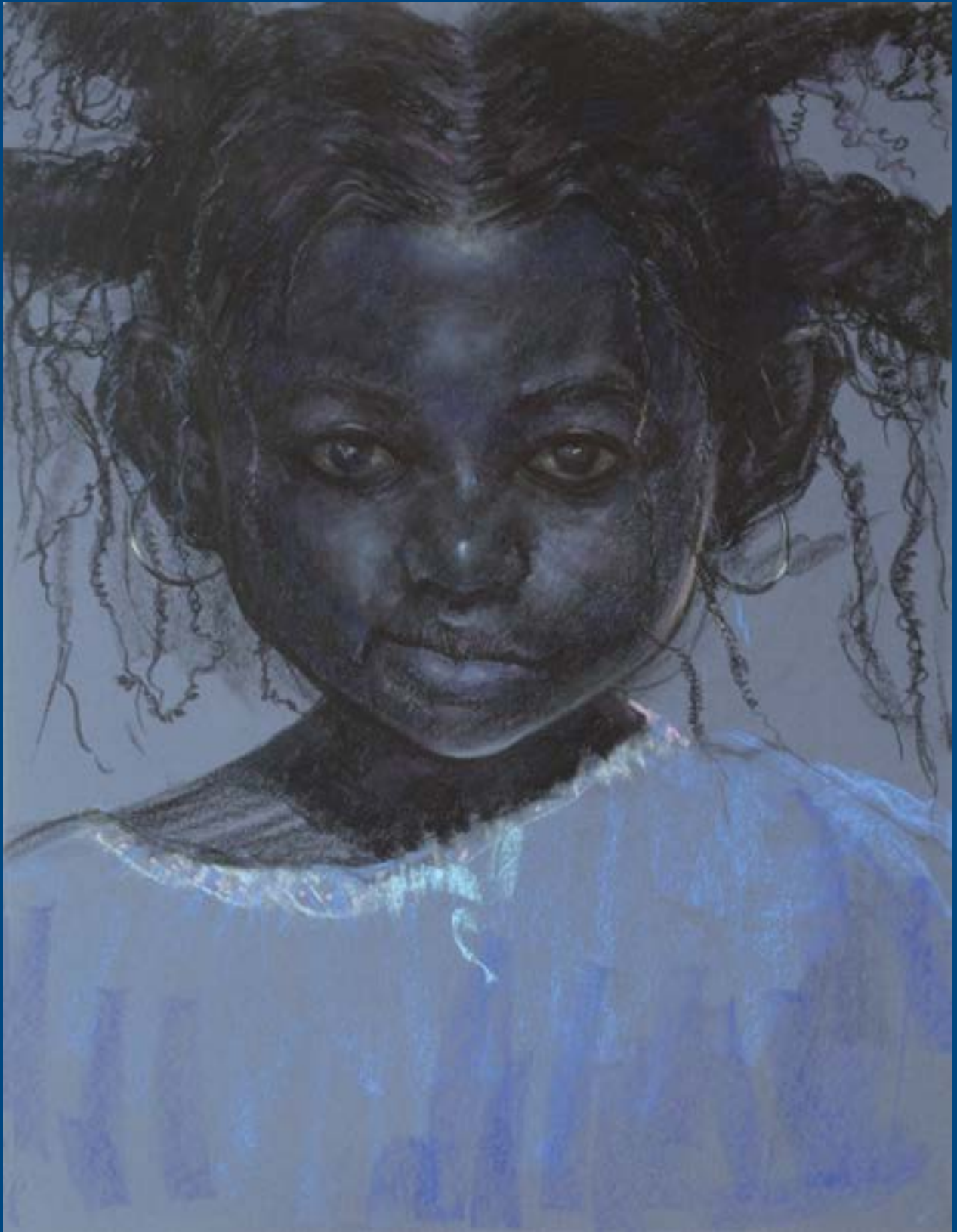
The New Generation of Art Collectors?



More art
for your
soul...



Sisters of the Sun by Keith Mallett



Mona Lisa Smiles by Tyrone Geter



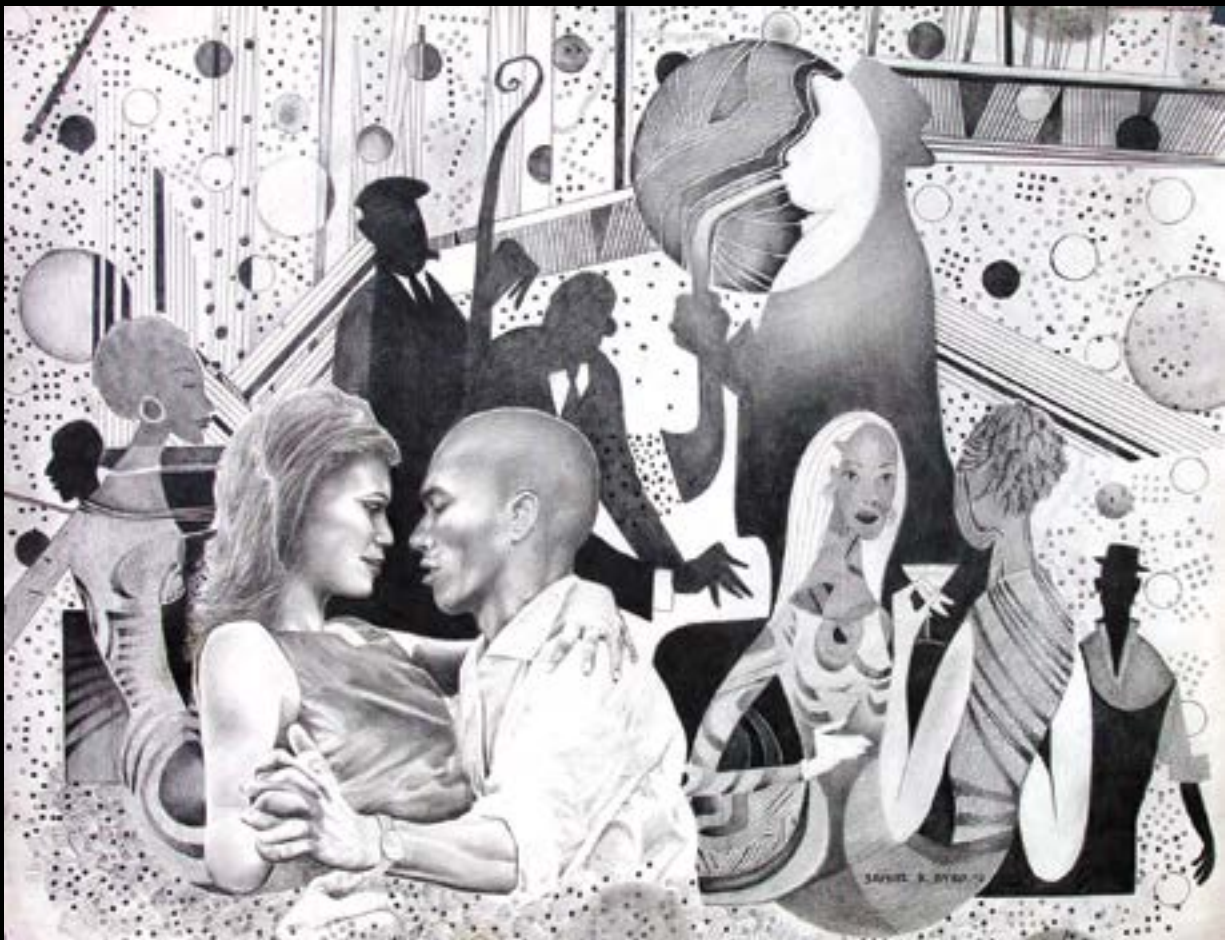
Essence of Woman by Cal Massey



Heritage by Sam Byrd



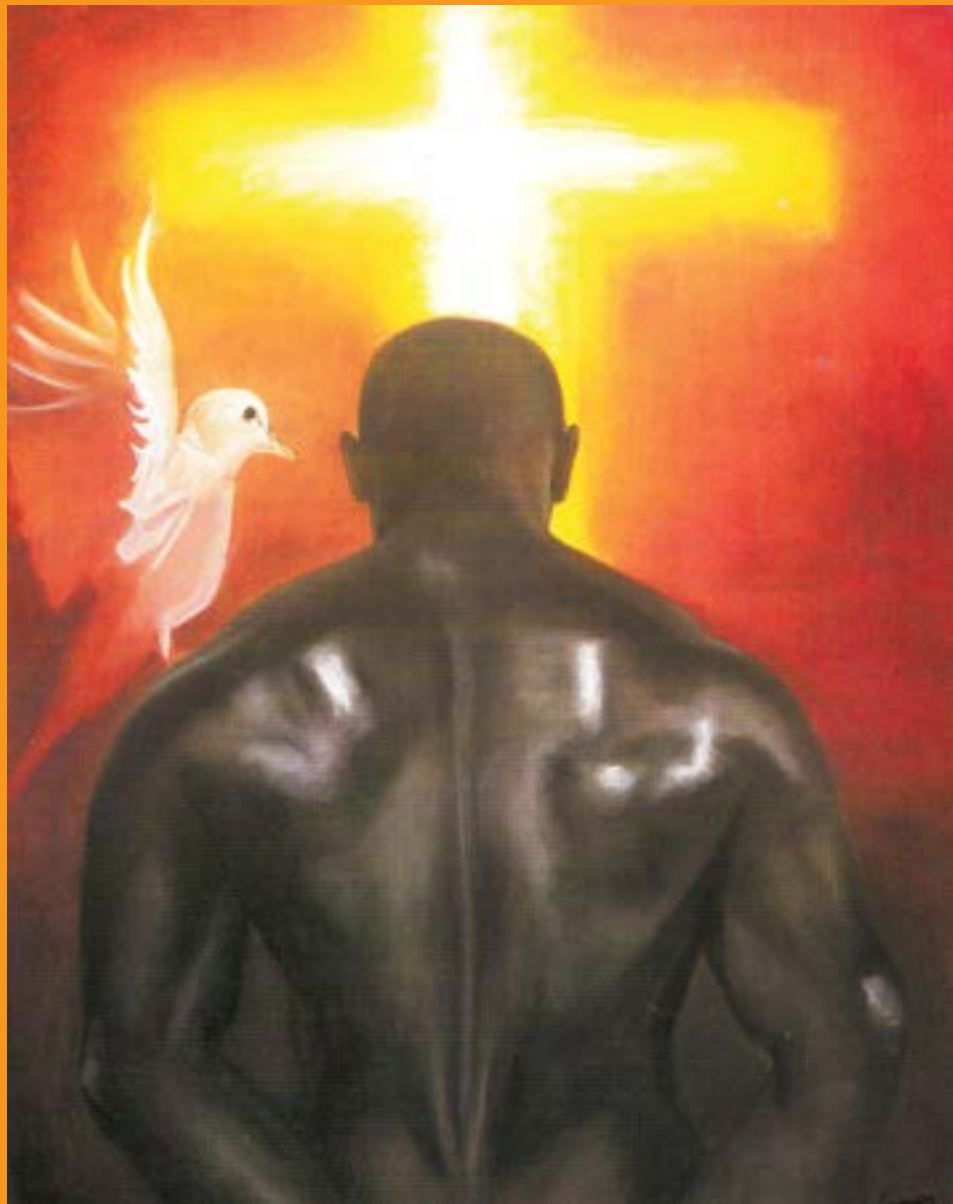
Hello Friend by Andrew Turner



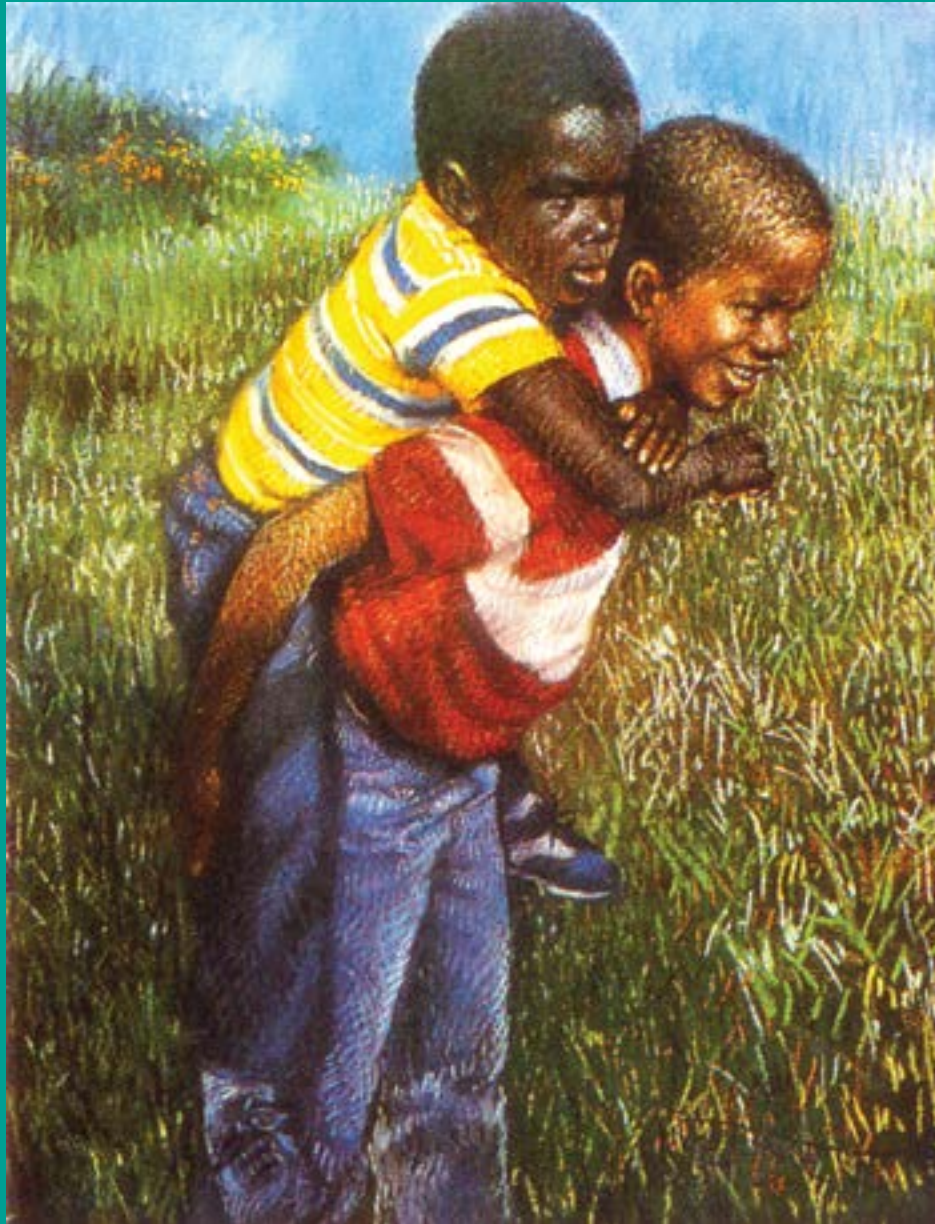
The Dance by Sam Byrd



Reflections by Sam Byrd



Inner Peace by Laurie Cooper



He's My Brother by Brenda Joysmith



Center City Jazz by Terry and Jerry Lynn



Divine by LaShun Beal



Identity Lost by Kurtis Watkins



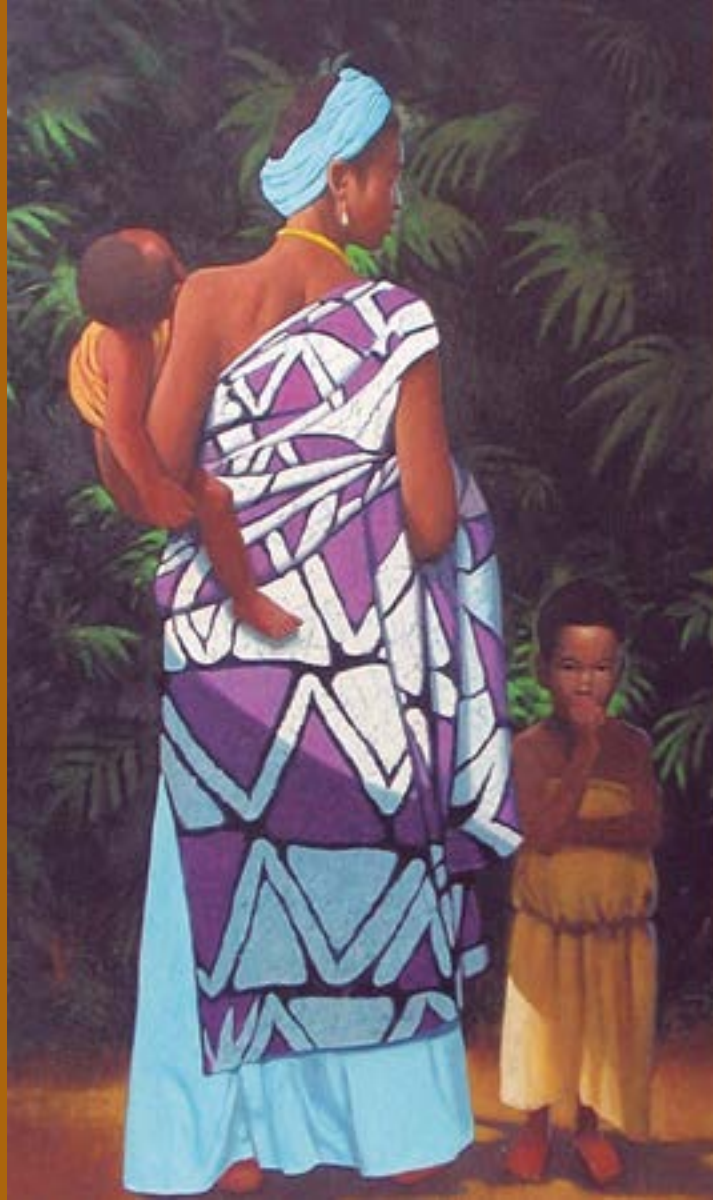
Triumph, Dance of the Victor by Kurtis Watkins



Honest Crowd by Reginald K. Gee



Musician Leaving Town by Reginald K. Gee



Ghana High Fashion Madonna by Cal Massey



God's Country by Tyrone Geter



Boat House Row photographed by John Lane



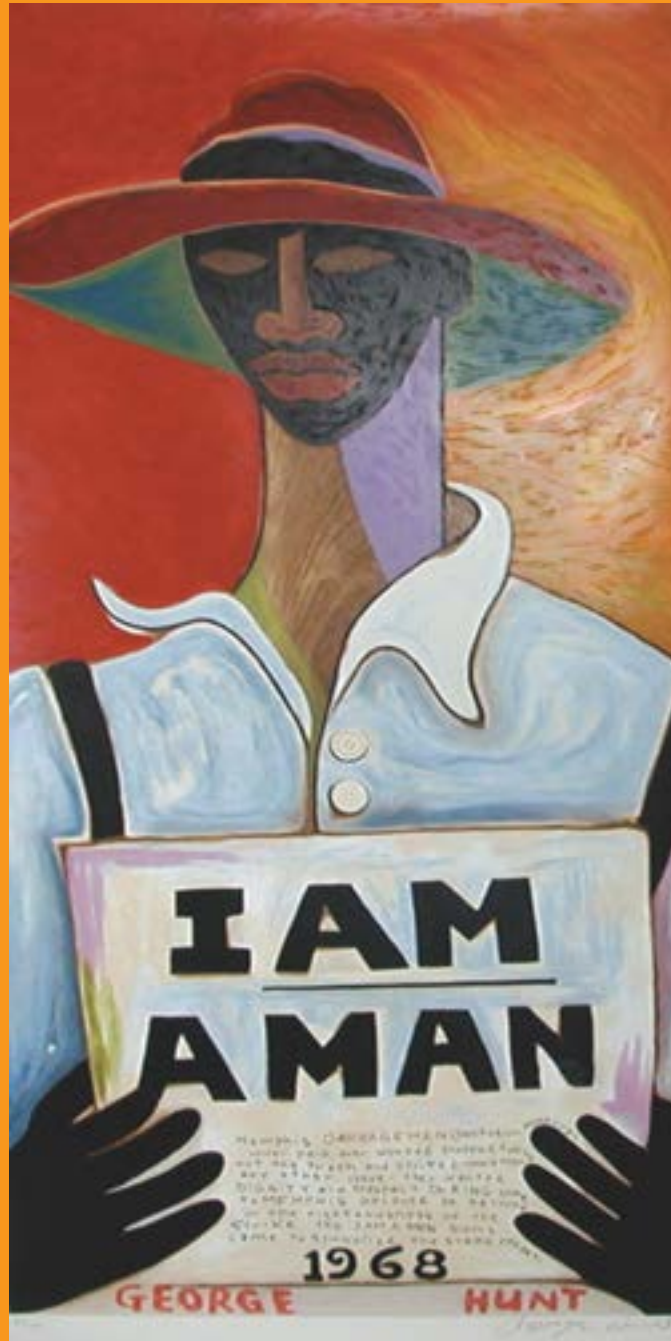
Moving in Rhythm by Edward Boseman



Untitled by George Hunt



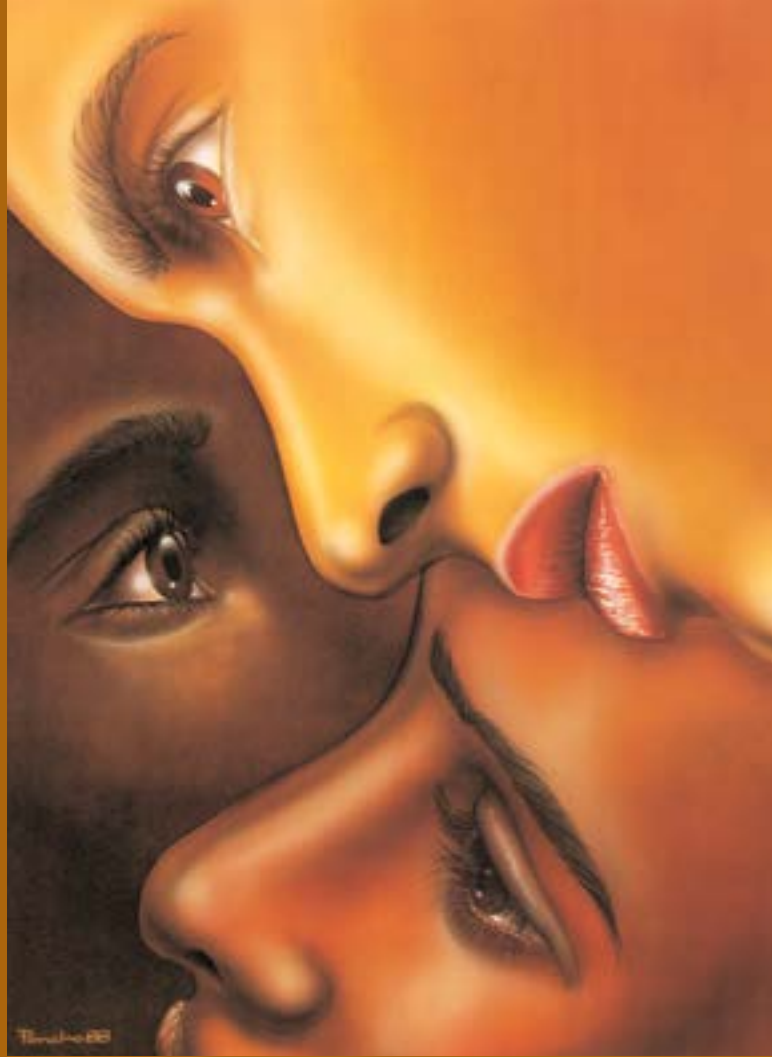
Untitled by David Lawrence



I Am a Man II by George Hunt



Art Museum photographed by John Lane



Black Is Black by Larry "Poncho" Brown



Expo 2006 Poster by Annie Lee



Jazz Abstract by Harold Smith



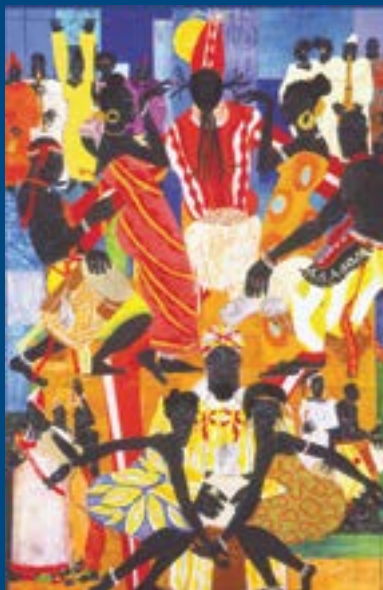
Vine Street by Harold Smith



Acceptance by Nathaniel Barnes



Embrace the Hold by Willie Torbert



Cultural Center by Willie Torbert



Dance Trio by Michael Angelo Wallace



Solidao by Menelaw Sete



Native Woman by Ernani Silva



Double Tyme by Karen Y. Buster



Sonia Sanchez photographed by Ron Allen



Nettie's Solo by Patricia Coleman-Cobb



Untitled by Kimberly Camp



Diva by George Nock



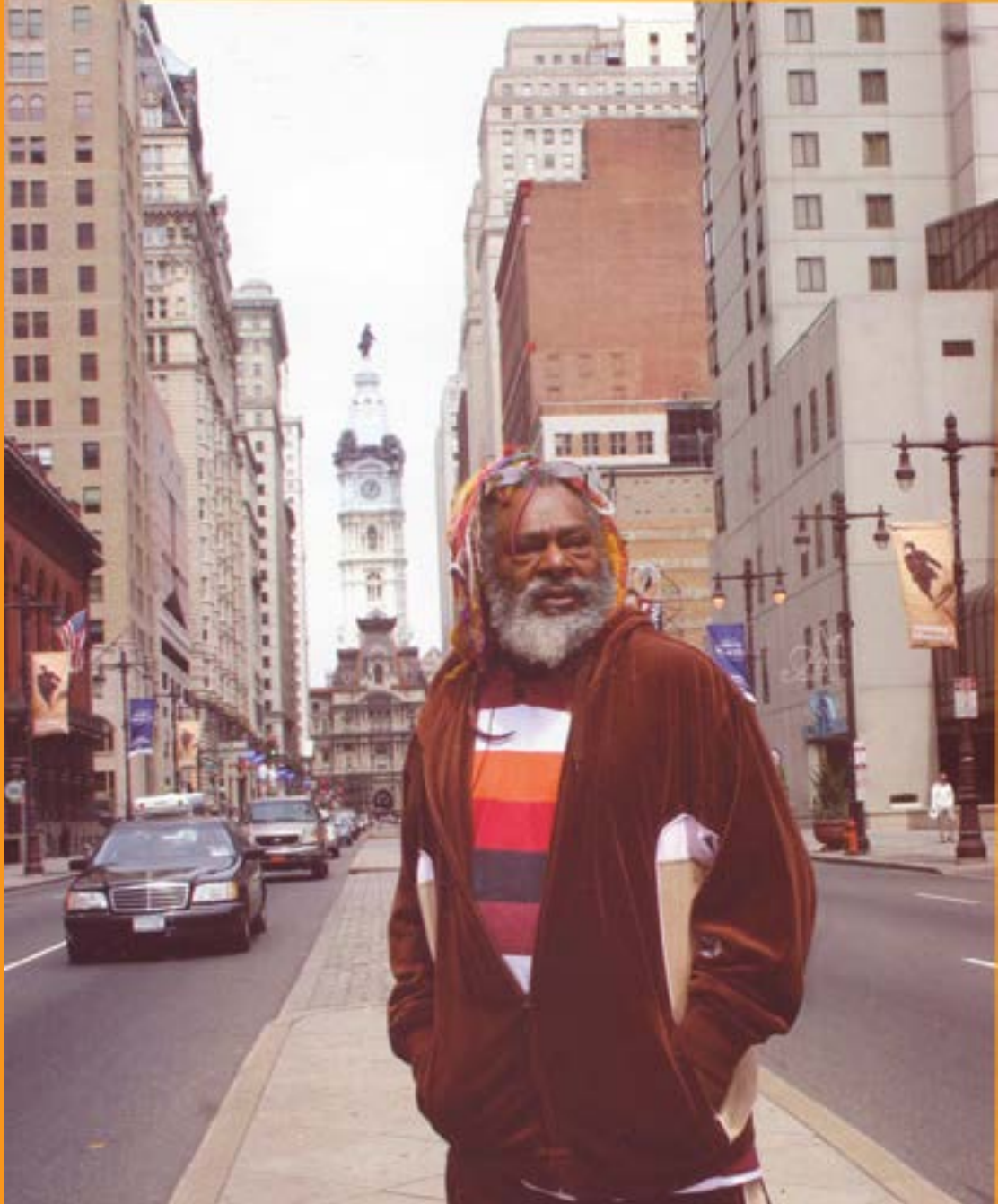
Divine Assistance by Jimi Claybrooks



Queenie by Ellen Powell Tiberino



Drawing from the Middle Passage by Tom Feelings

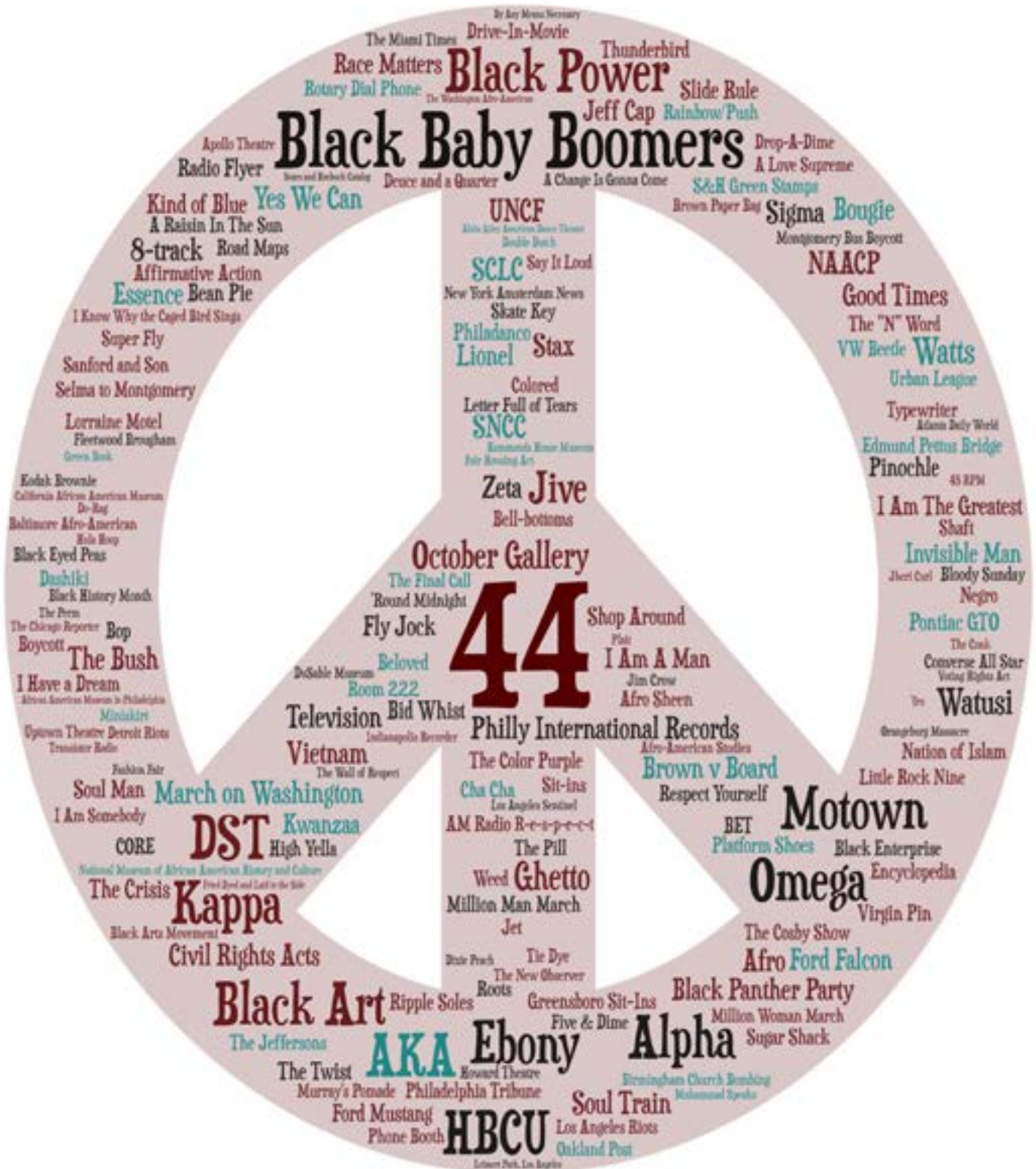


George Clinton photographed by Ron Allen



Salon by Patricia Coleman-Cobb

Black Baby Boomers



This poster (on page 492) was created by the staff at October Gallery to recognize the Black Baby Boomer Generation. The Black baby boomers were born in the USA between 1946 and 1964. This generation became of age during the effects of “Jim Crow South”, by and large sported an Afro hair do, wore a dashiki, read the Autobiography of Malcolm X, attended Black universities, marched for civil rights, then joined the work force and had available to them more disposable funds to claim their culture by collecting Black art and supporting Black artists. This became the era (1985 - 2005) as described by artist Larry “Poncho” Brown as the “Golden Age of African-American Art”.

Page 19, Reflections on the BlackStream Renaissance, dicusses further this milestone in African-American Art.



Signed Sealed Delivered by Edwin Lester

What's New 2006 - 2020

First Edition of this book published 2006. Second Edition published 2020

New Museum in Washington, DC

Time Line 2006 - 2020

The Bull Market 2020

Record Prices for African-American Art

President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama Portraits

New Art and Artists

In Memoriam

Black Lives Matter



The National Museum of African-American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is a Smithsonian Institution museum located in Washington, D.C. Established in December 2003 and opened in this facility in September 2016 with President Barack Obama leading the ceremony.

TIME LINE

Since the publishing of the first edition of this book in 2006 a lot has happened in the Contemporary African-American Art Industry. This updated time line is an attempt to give an overview of some of the people, places and events that helped shape the industry. We were unable to include everyone and everything in the time line, and we offer our apologies to those whom we may have overlooked. The following dates are generally accurate, but some may be approximate.

The initial time line 1970 - 2005 starts on page 20 of this book.

Creative Quarantine in 2006

In 2006, several artists came together for the first Creative Quarantine. These artists were Maurice Bradford, Karen Buster, Lauren Lyde, James Murphy and Larry "Poncho" Brown.



Swann Auction Galleries

Founded by Nigel Freeman in 2006, the African-American Art department handles a range of material spanning the late nineteenth century to the Harlem Renaissance, as well as modern and contemporary art.

2006

Artist Kara Walker named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People Next Generation Leaders Person of the Year

Kara Walker is among the most complex and prolific African-American artists of her generation.



The Kinsey Collection

With education as a goal, The Kinsey African-American Art and History Collection has been on national tour since 2007, and has been seen by over 10 million visitors. The collection has exhibited in 25 cities, at notable institutions such as the California African-American Museum, The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Cincinnati) and The DuSable Museum of African-American History (Chicago).



2007

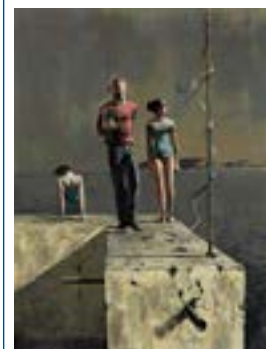
Barack Obama

Elected First African-American President.

The Juggler # 1

by Hughie Lee-Smith

Sold for \$90,000 at auction.



Paul R. Jones Collection

In 2008, Paul R. Jones donated a portion of his collection of African-American Art to the University of Alabama. With over 1,700 pieces, the Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at The University of Alabama is one of the largest collections of African-American Art in the world.



2008

15 Years of

The Art of the Steal (Film)
Barnes Foundation and
Lincoln University

Dr. Barnes had designated Lincoln as the institution that would eventually nominate four out of five of the Foundation's trustees.



Harlem Fine Arts Show

In 2009 The Harlem Fine Arts Show (HFAS) opened its first art show.

Past/Present Collage, 2009 - 2010 by Leroy Campbell

"The Newspaper Series", evolved out of a preceding body of work that focused on Gullah culture and history.



2009

Black Art in America
blackartinamerica.com
Launched Online

Najee Dorsey, CEO | Founder

A Spirit Chasing Rainbows,
The Art of Louis Delsarte

The Hammonds House Museum Exhibition.



Charles Bibbs Featured Artist

2nd Annual Leimert Park Village African Art & Music Festival in CA.



2010

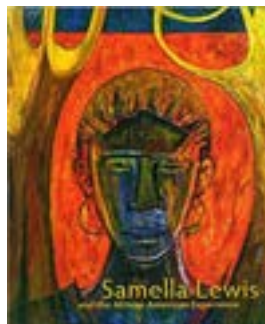
Romare Bearden's Centennial Celebration

Romare Bearden was honored in his hometown of Charlotte, NC during what would have been his 100th birthday.



Samella Lewis and the African-American Experience Hardcover Book

Dr. Samella Lewis has touched the lives of artists, scholars, educators, students and countless others through her dedication and perseverance of African-American Art.

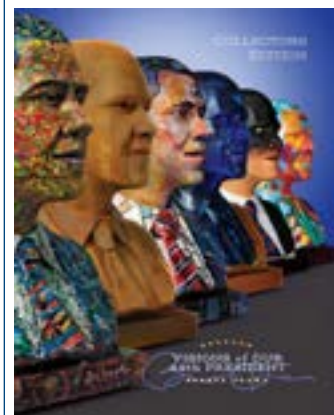


2011

President Barack Obama
 Re-elected to a Second Term.

Visions Of Our 44th President

Visions of Our 44th President is a collective sculptural show created to recognize and celebrate the historical significance of the first African-American President of the United States of America, Barack Obama.



Hampton University Museum - New Power Generation 2012 Art Exhibition

"New Power Generation 2012", was organized by the Hampton University Museum. It is a national competition for contemporary art by people of African descent.



2012

African-American Art

Untitled (Backyard Scene)
by Allan R. Crite
Sold for \$6,250 at auction.



Harlem Postcards Spring 2013

Harlem Postcards is an ongoing project that invites contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds to reflect on Harlem as a site of cultural activity, political vitality, visual stimuli, artistic contemplation and creative production.

Culture Type culturetype.com Launched Online

Victoria L. Valentine, founder and editor

Untitled (Artist Granddaughter)
by Frederick Campbell
Frederick Campbell's collection was donated to Georgia University in 2014



Carrie Mae Weems Brings Change to the Guggenheim

This year, Weems gets the distinctive honor of becoming the first African-American woman to have a retrospective at the Guggenheim.



Paris, Mars - Juin
by Mavis Pusey
Sold for \$1,375 at auction.



The Hampton University Museum Presents Elizabeth Catlett

A Celebration of 100 Years and Elizabeth Catlett and The Hampton Art Tradition.



My Authentic Self Book by Leroy Campbell

Celebrated visual artist and Gullah cultural ambassador Leroy Campbell embraces his African roots and the journey to self discovery with the debut of his first coffee table book.



Swizz Beatz, Museum Trustee, Art Patron and Collector

The election of Kasseem Dean (Swizz Beatz) to the Brooklyn Museum Board of Trustees.



National Museum of African-American History and Culture

Opened on the National Mall in Washington, D.C

Rush Arts Philly Danny Simmons Opened in Philadelphia, PA

Through works by dozens of artists-both Philadelphia and New York based-the inaugural exhibition showcased the intersection of visual art and social action.



Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA Celebrates 20 Years

The inception of Stella Jones Gallery in July, 1996, was the realization of a dream. Long time friend and art historian, Dr. Samella Lewis was an inspiration and serves as consultant and curator. The gallery provides a venue for artists of the African diaspora to exhibit superior works of art and social action.

Stella Jones
GALLERY

2013

2014

2015

2016

15 Years of

Untitled by Jean-Michel Basquiat

This painting by a Black artist, sold for a record \$110,487,500. The record-shattering sale is highest auction price in history for a work by an American artist.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Named National Historic Landmark

The Schomburg Center being named as a National Historic Landmark comes nearly 92 years to the day after it opened as a collection to the public in 1925.

The Black Art In America™ Fine Art Show Houston, TX

This fine arts exhibition included works by 20th – 21st century Masters as well as a select group of today's contemporary artists.

31st annual Colorado Black Arts Festival

3-day festival shares African culture with the community.

ZuCot Gallery, Atlanta, GA opened a new exhibition entitled, AfreauX

Featuring works by Lavett Ballard, Jamaal Barber, Shanequa Gay, Sean Haynes, Lobyn Hamilton, Horace Imhotep, and Shawn Theodore.

Sean "Diddy" Combs pays \$21 million for painting

Diddy purchased *Past Times* by African-American artist Kerry James Marshall. The purchase was said to be the highest ever for artwork by a living artist.



Black Panther Movie

We looked so proud, the energy felt proud. It was exhilarating.



E & S Gallery Celebrates 30 Years

Established in Louisville, KY in 1989 by Walter Shannon.

TEDxAshburnSalon TV Art, Media & Cultural Identity Larry "Poncho" Brown appears on TEDxAshburnSalon



Ernie Barnes: A Retrospective

The California African-American Museum's retrospective dedicated to late artist and former NFL player Ernie Barnes.



Art of Black Miami

Art of Black Miami Offers Unique Cultural Experience for Residents and Visitors during Art Basel and Miami Art Week.



African-American Art from the Johnson Publishing Company - Auction

The Builders (The Family) by Jacob Lawrence
Screenprint sold for \$8,125.



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This virus forces art galleries, museums, cultural centers and much more to temporarily close their doors. The effects of this pandemic on the art community will be long lasting.

Black Lives Matter

In 2020 we may be witnessing the Largest Movement in US History.



October Gallery Celebrates 35 Years

Established in Philadelphia, PA in 1985 by Evelyn Redcross and Mercer Redcross.



2017

2018

2019

2020

African-American Art



On page 438 of this book we described the African-American Bull Market as it was in 2006. Let's take a look at today's Black Art Market.

In a survey conducted on octobergallery.com, we asked patrons why they purchase art. Below are the results:

For its aesthetic value: 2006 - 47.66% 2020 - 53.56%

For investment purposes: 2006 - 18.75% 2020 - 19.11%

Because it makes a good gift: 2006 - 4.69% 2020 - 3.89%

To support the arts: 2006 - 14.06% 2020 - 10.02%

For decoration: 2006 - 14.84% 2020 - 13.42%

We are not financial consultants, we are art dealers but it appears from the data that patrons increasingly consider the aesthetic value of a piece of art over the investment potential.

While art is the third best investment behind gold and real estate, it's the life enhancement that a piece of art generates for a collector that is the most valid reason for selecting any artwork. Collector motivation should not solely be whether a work of art will appreciate financially, but should be based on a link, a kinship, a connection with the essence and life force of the work.



General Toussaint, from the Toussaint L'Overture Series

Limited edition screenprint by Jacob Lawrence

Published in 1987 for \$1500

Sold at auction 2009: \$15,600

Sold at auction 2018: \$20,800

Sold at auction 2019: \$25,000



Yellow Umbrella, lithograph by Charles Bibbs

Published in 2002 for \$150

Value 2020: \$2,350



Love is Love - The Family

Acrylic on Canvas by Varnette Patricia Honeywood

Painted in 1985

Sold at auction 2019: \$1,750

October Gallery's Fall '88 Art Show Poster



**Frederick Douglass Lives Again
Charles White**

In early 1988 the gallery received a call from someone in New York who had a Charles White original they wished to sell. We had a client that had some interest in White's artwork so we made arrangements to meet the seller on one of the exits off the New Jersey Turnpike. We struck a deal and returned to the Gallery with the art in the trunk of the car. The acquisition price was seven hundred dollars.

For many years we would travel to Los Angeles, CA for art shows and to meet artists from the west coast. In 1988 we visited the Heritage Gallery in Pacific Palisades, CA owned and operated by Benjamin Horowitz and Charlotte Sherman. Benjamin and Charlotte were very excited about

the Charles White we had in our inventory and granted us permission to use the White artwork "Frederick Douglass Lives Again" for our 1988 Philly Art Expo Poster (above).

October 7, 2008 this White original was placed up for auction in New York, NY. Here was part of the auction catalogue description: "Pen and ink over pencil on illustration board, 1949 - 20 x 30 inches. Signed and dated in ink, lower left."

This piece sold for two hundred & four thousand dollars. Our client was extremely happy.



Set of 4 woodcuts on Japan paper by Aaron Douglas
 Illustrations for the Eugene O'Neill play *Emperor Jones* in 1926
 Estimated original value: \$100
Sold at auction 2008: \$22,800



Sharecropper, linocut by Elizabeth Catlett
Sold at auction 2006: \$8,500
Sold at auction 2014: \$10,000



Slave Ship by Romare Bearden
 Limited edition screenprint 1977
 Sold in 1988 at October Gallery \$450
Sold at auction 2013: \$3,500



Barefoot Dreams, offset lithograph
 by Brenda Joysmith
 Published in 1984 for \$75
Value 2020: \$2,000

Record Prices



In 2017 at Sotheby's contemporary art auction a large canvas painting *Untitled* by Jean-Michel Basquiat, a Black artist, sold for a record \$110,487,500.



In 2018 Sean “Diddy” Combs paid \$21 million for this painting *Past Times* by African-American artist Kerry James Marshall. The purchase was said to be the highest ever for artwork by a living artist.



In 2015 this painting entitled *Steve* by Barkley Hendricks 1976 sold at auction for \$365,000 - Swann Auction Galleries, New York.



In 2015 *Constitution IV* (mixed media on canvas, 2013) by Mark Bradford sold for \$5,848,796 at Phillips London Contemporary Art, United Kingdom

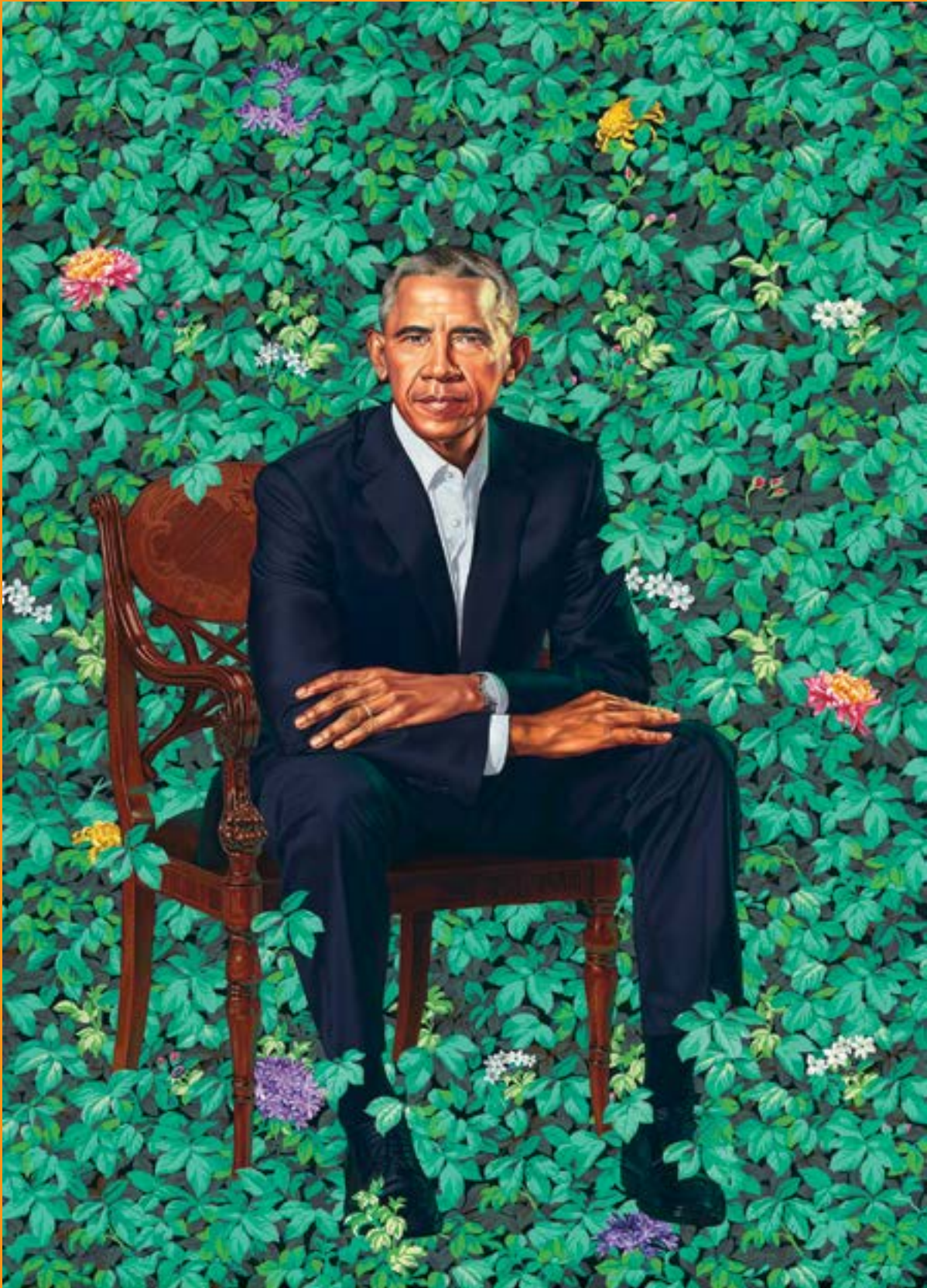


In 2015 this lithograph *Head Wrapped, Mind Free* by Paul Goodnight 1986 sold at auction for \$5,500 - Swann Auction Galleries, New York.



In 2016 *Engagement* by Columbus Knox Acrylic on Canvas 1989 sold for \$55,000 at Swann Auction Galleries, New York.

Presidential Portrait



Barack Obama by Kehinde Wiley



Michelle Obama by Amy Sherald

New Art and Artists



Funky by Kennard Copeland



Mother and Child by Michele Foster Lucas



Tar Beach #2 by Faith Ringgold



Listen by Michele Foster Lucas



Legends of Hip Hop by Gabriel Tiberino



Visions of Tutankhamen by David Lawrence



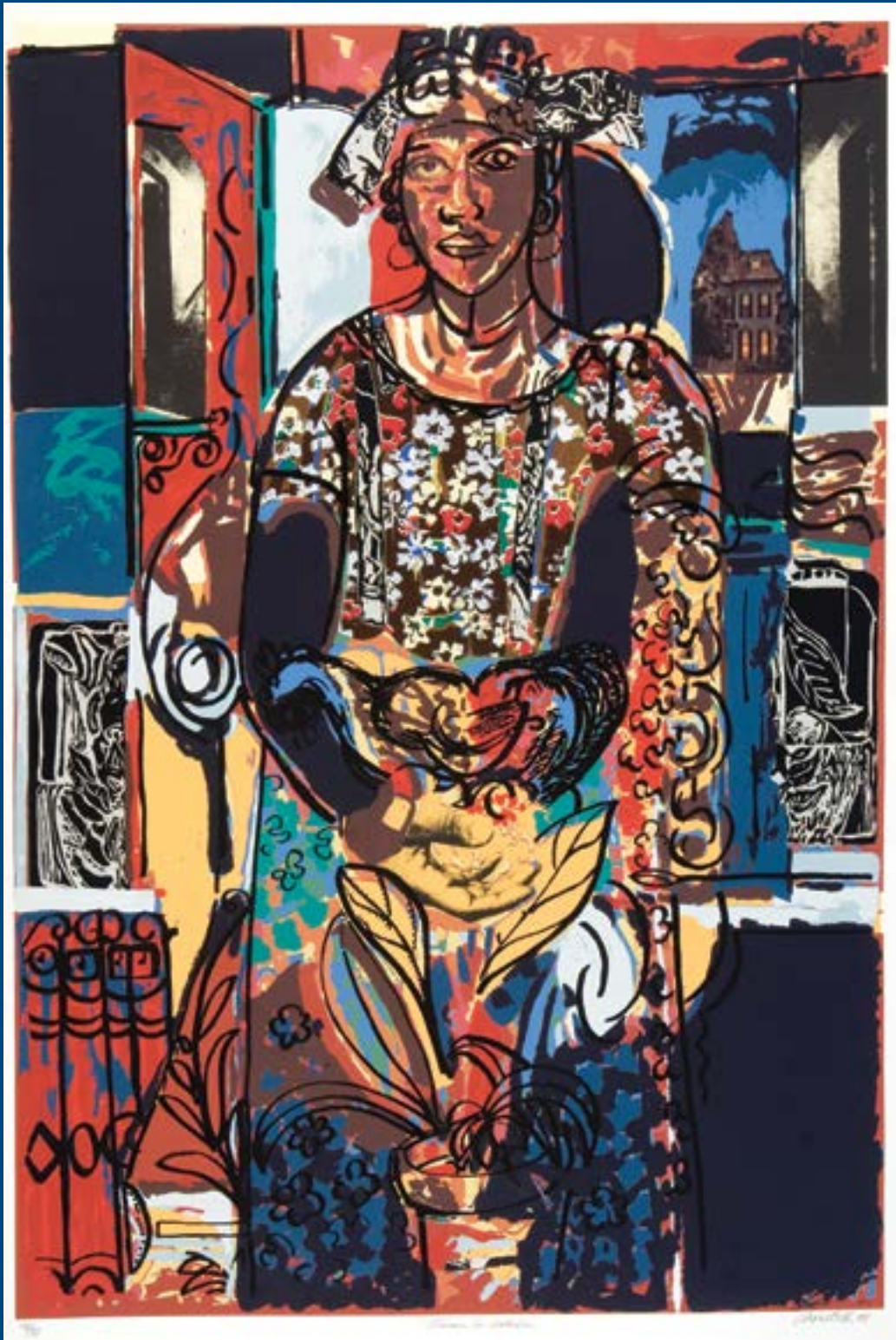
Smiling Faces by Tom McKinney



Birds by Charles Searles



Blue Face by Chet Highsmith



Woman In Interior by David Driskell



Young Boy by Leila Ullmann



Green Eyes and Blue Lips by Frank Stephens



30th and Market Streets by Levi Bastian Redcross



The Gathering by Leon McDuffie



Instrumentos by Luide Araujo



Orange Wrap by Laurie Cooper



Green Mood by Tyrone Frisby



Untitled (Two Dancers) by Charles Searles



Untitled by Luide Araujo



What's Going On by Andrew Nichols

October Gallery

Celebrating 30 Years



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH ART 1985- 2015 OCTOBERGALLERY.COM

"After Church" by Romare Bearden 1941 Art © Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

After Church by Romare Bearden



Farrab by Andrew Nichols



Still Life by Leroy Yancey



Legacy by Samuel Byrd



Untitled by David Lawrence



Ndebele by Kennard Copeland



Obra A Origem by Menelaw Sete



Miss Rose by Michele Foster Lucas



Bummi and Child by Laurie Cooper



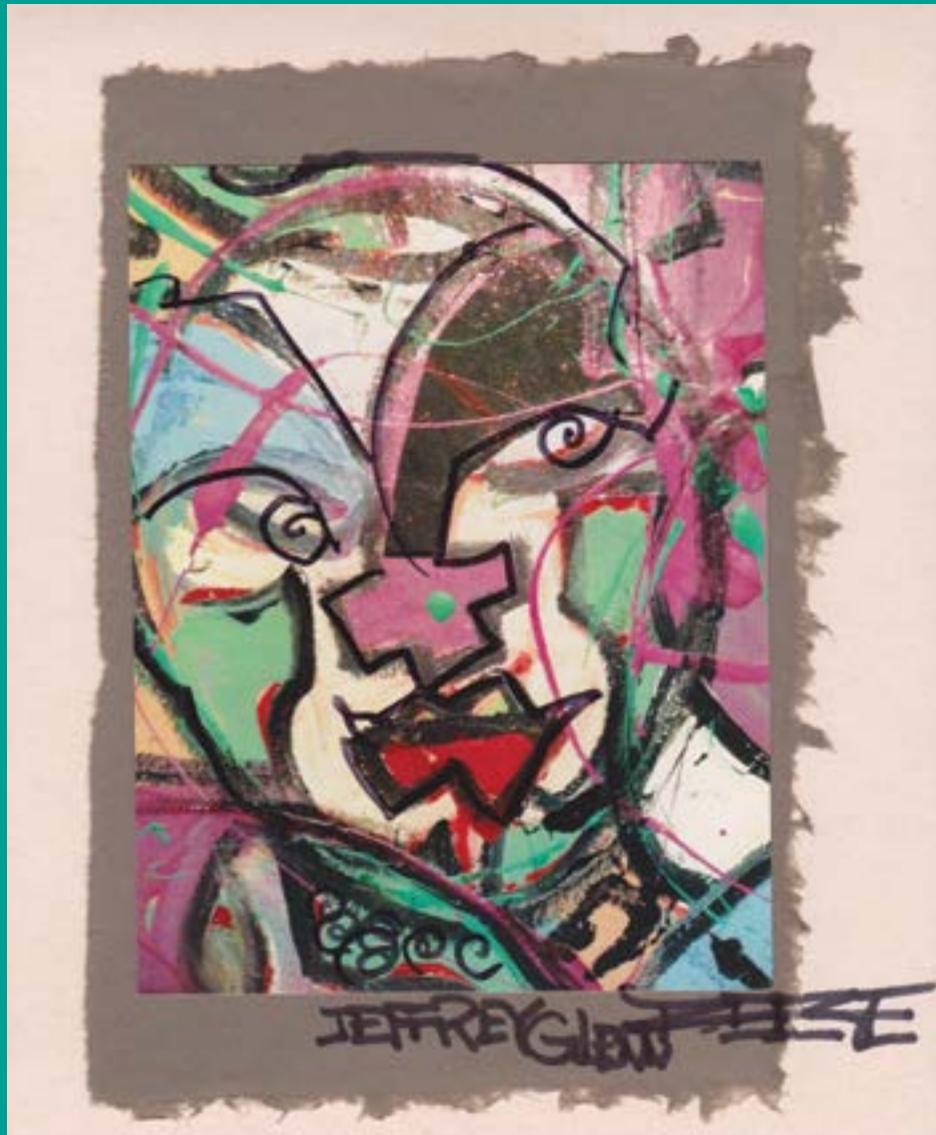
His Peace by Chet Highsmith



Carnival One by Laurie Cooper



Bass Player by Don Stephens



See Me See You by Jeffrey Glenn Reese



We Are One with the Universe by David Lawrence



Illuminados by Menelaw Sete



Glassworks 101 by Leon McDuffie



Boipelo by Kennard Copeland



Freedom by Michele Foster Lucas



The Notorious Dreamer by Thomas Elias Lockhart



Warrior Ritual by Laurie Cooper



Julio by Shai Yossef



Untitled by Frederick Campbell



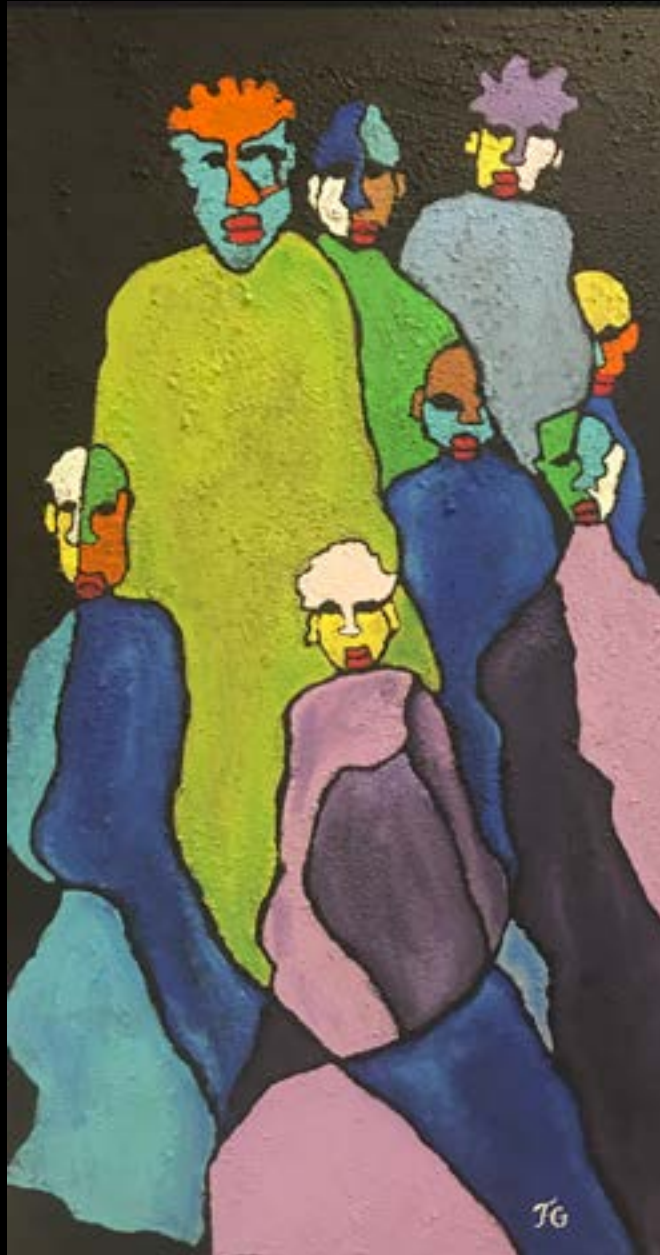
Shekinah by David Lawrence



Boys by Shai Yossef



Our Reality by Laurie Cooper



Untitled by T.H. Gomillion



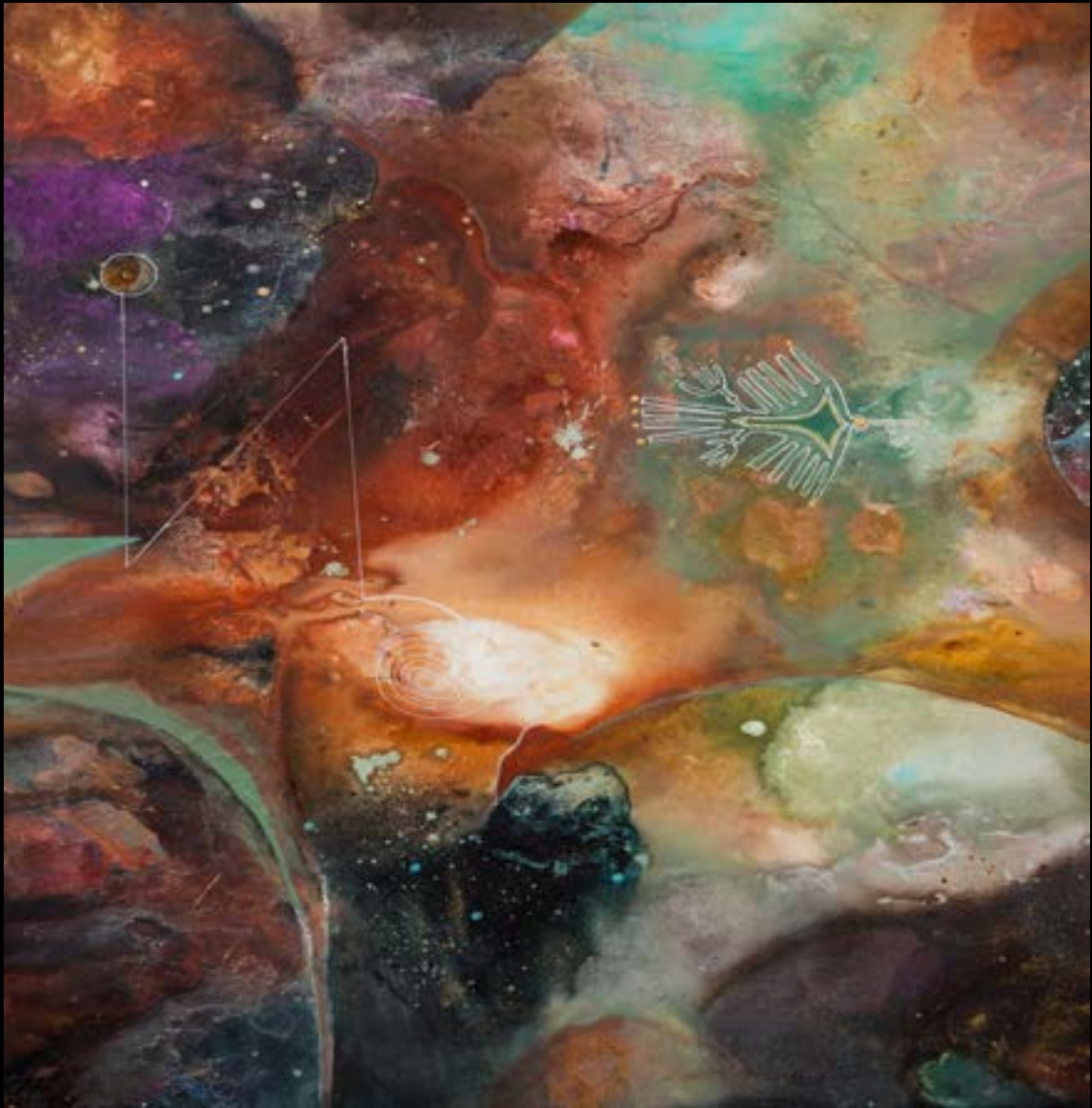
Free Labor by Andrew Nichols



Colorful Me by Andrew Nichols



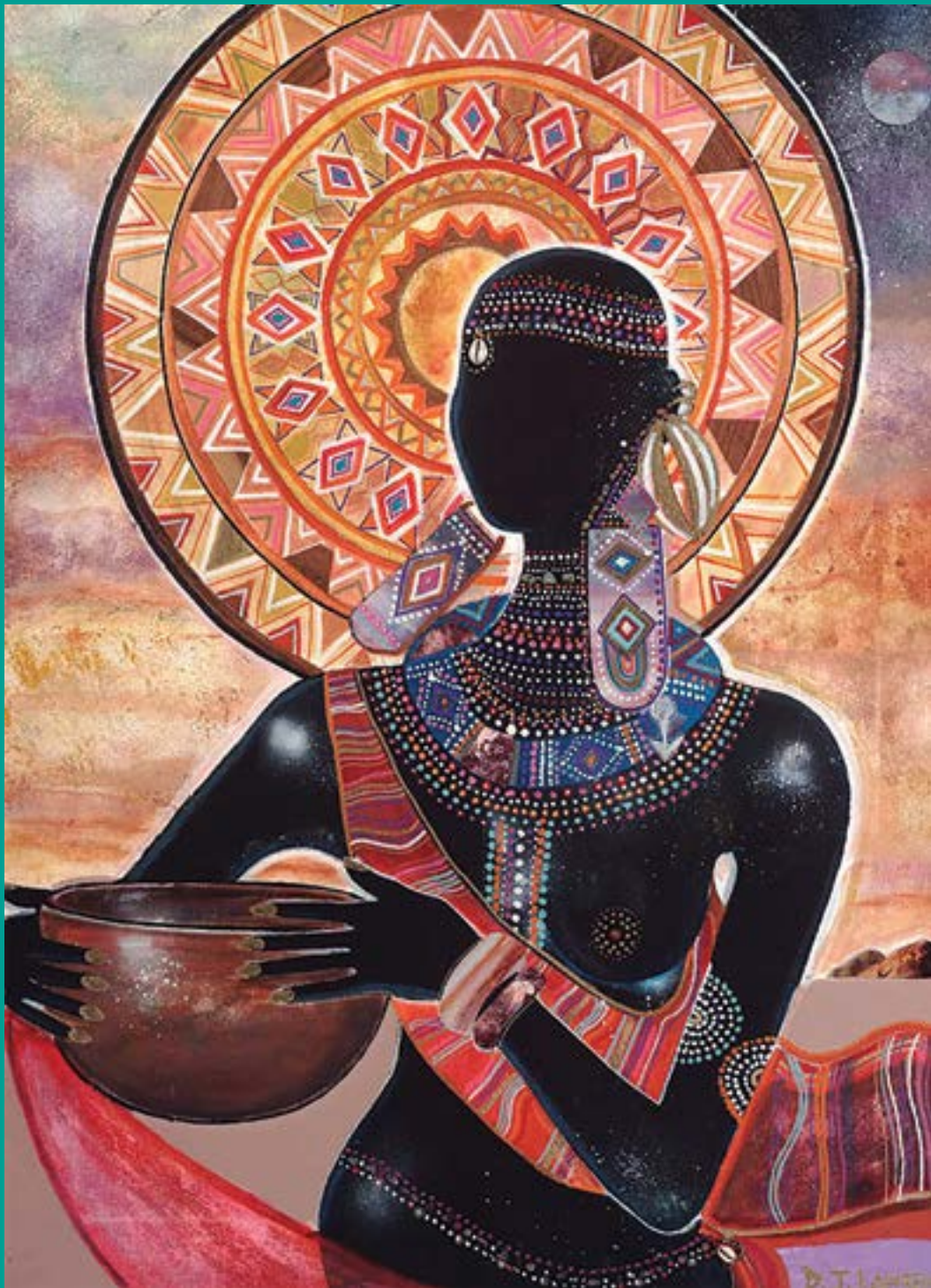
Piano Man by Jeffrey Glenn Reese



Untitled by David Lawrence



Walking the Line by Edwin Lester



Maasai Woman by David Lawrence



The Thirst by Edwin Lester

In Memoriam 2006-2020

Terry Adkins (1953–2014), Artist

Tina Allen (1949–2008), Sculptor

Emma Amos (1938-2020), Painter

Benny Andrews (1930–2006), Painter

Ernie Barnes (1938–2009), Neo-Mannerist Artist

Camille Billops (1933-2019), Filmmaker and Sculptor

Betty Blayton (1937–2016), Painter, Print Maker

Bertram Carlisle Brewer (1936-2013), Art Dealer

Frederick J. Brown (1945–2012), Painter

Calvin Burnett (1921–2007), Book Illustrator

Robert Butler (1943–2014), Painter

Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012), Sculptor and Print Maker

Don Hogan Charles (1938–2017), Photographer

Robert Colescott (1925–2009), Painter

Eldzier Cortor (1916–2015), Artist and Print Maker

Allan Crite (1910–2007), Painter

Roy DeCarva (1919–2009), Photographer

Louis Delsarte (1944-2020), Painter

Thornton Dial (1928–2016), Artist

David Driskell (1931–2020), Artist and Scholar

The Visual Artists We Lost

Eugene Foney (1950-2020), Art Consultant, Art Dealer

Barkley Hendricks (1945–2017), Painter

Calvin B. Jones (1934–2010), Painter, Muralist

Richard Gordon Kendall (1933–2008), Outsider Artist

Edward L. Loper, Sr. (1916–2011), Painter

Gwendolyn Ann Magee (1943–2011), Artist, Quilter

Calvin Massey (1926-2019), Artist, Sculptor

Gordon Parks (1912–2006), Photographer, Director

Mavis Pusey (1928–2019), Abstract Painter

Charles L. Sallée Jr. (1923–2006), Painter

John T. Scott (1940–2007), Artist

Merton Simpson (1928–2013), Painter

Gilda Snowden (1954–2014), Artist, Educator

Margaret Taylor-Burroughs (1915–2010), Artist

Bruce Teleky (1949-2020), Art Consultant, Art Dealer

William Walker (1927–2011), Chicago Muralist

Ron Witherspoon (1940-2020), Fabric Artist

John Woodrow Wilson (1922–2015), Sculptor

Richard Yarde (1939–2011), Water Colorist

Purvis Young (1943–2010), Artist

PRO
BLACK

ISN'T
ANTI
WHITE

THERE
COMES A
TIME WHEN
SILENCE
- IS -
BETR
AYAL

"one
has a
moral

responsibility
to Disobey
unjust laws"

EQUALITY
HURTS NO
ONE!!!!!!

I CAN'T
BREATHE
SAY
THEIR
NAMES
MARTIN
LUTHER
KING JR
JUSTICE

=RISE ABOVE=

INJUSTICE
ANYWHERE

IS A
THREAT
TO JUSTICE
EVERY-
WHERE

True
Peace is
not merely the
absence of Tension
it's the
presence

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

SPREAD LOVE

"We
need
leaders
not in
love with money
But in Love with
justice not in
Love with publicity
but in Love with
Humanity" - MLK



Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter has gone from a simple social media post to a global movement as a slogan chanted around the world.

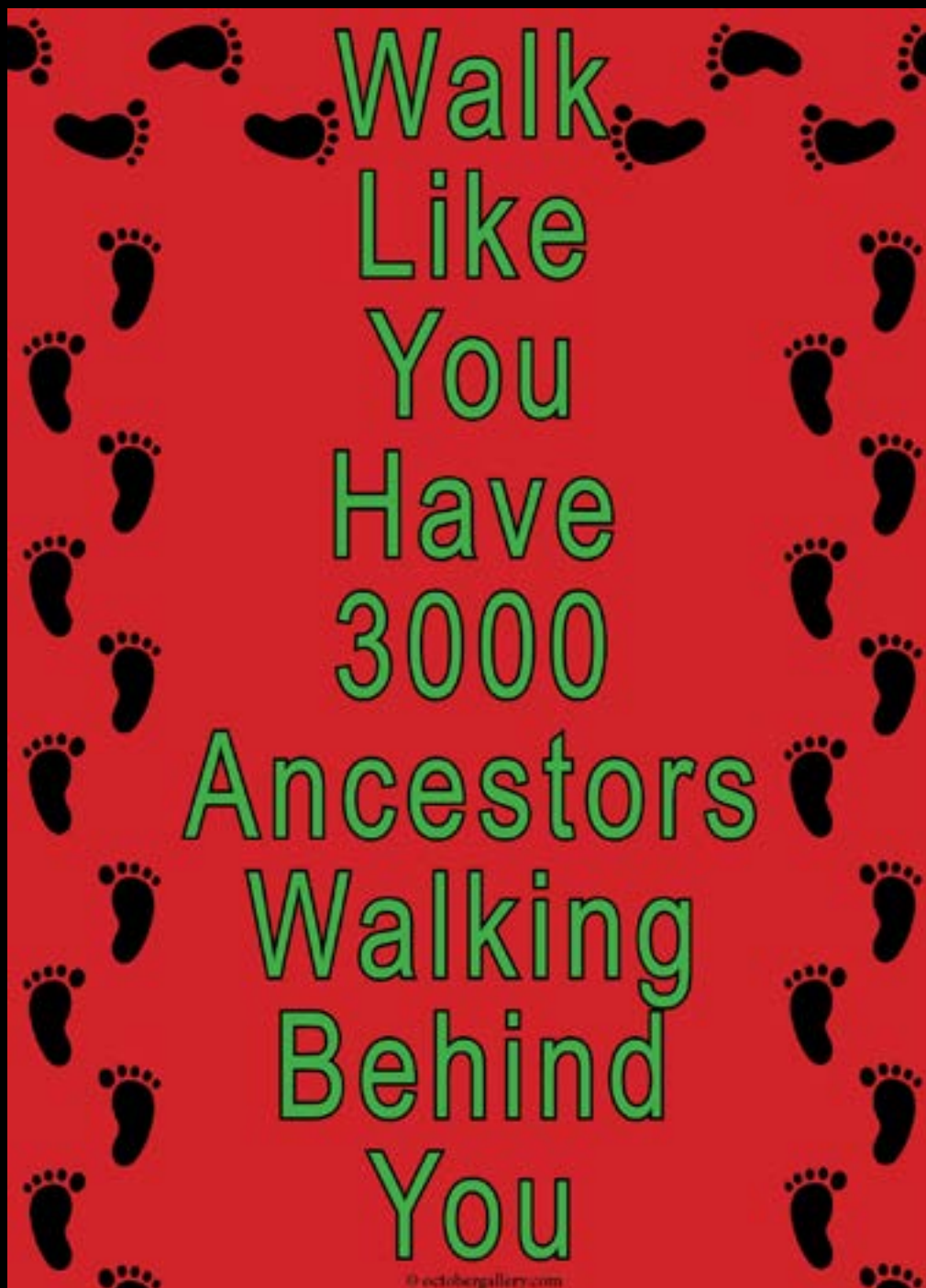
In response to the 2013 acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman, three Black organizers - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created a movement with a post #BlackLivesMatter on social media. Today it is a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters.

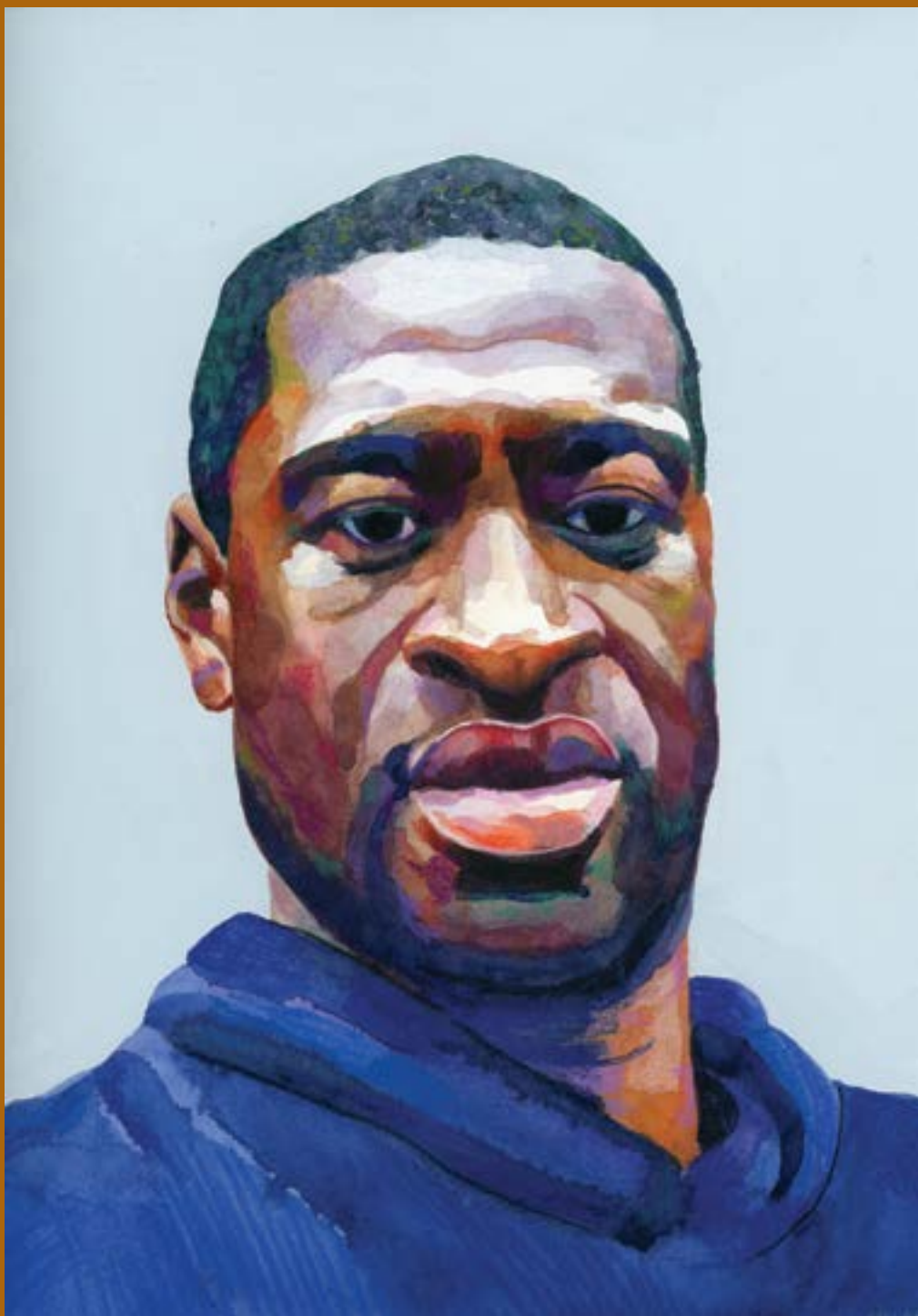
Here are some artistic expressions and quotes in support of the movement.

Aspiration by Eliza Torres
(on opposite page)



Time Magazine Cover 2013 by Molly Crabapple





We Matter by Chloe Bren



Artful LIKE BEARDEN
fight LIKE ALI
run LIKE CHISHOLM
image LIKE MAYA
Confront LIKE MALCOLM
assert LIKE ROSA
non-violent LIKE MARTIN

Awesome LIKE TUBMAN
majestic LIKE MICHELLE
excell LIKE OPRAH
revolutionize LIKE GIL SCOTT
invent LIKE MCCOY
Command LIKE OBAMA
amaze LIKE MARLEY
noble LIKE THURGOOD

©octobergallery.com



Our Time Has Come by Ted Ellis

**YOU NEVER
KNOW HOW
STRONG YOU
ARE, UNTIL
BEING STRONG
IS YOUR ONLY
CHOICE**

Bob Marley

www.octobergallery.com



To Be Conscious by Thomas Williams

Not everything that is
faced
can be changed;
but
nothing
can
be
changed
until it is faced.

-James Baldwin

octobergallery.com



John Lewis - Good Trouble by Andrew Nichols

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check, to draw the architects of our republic from the seignior's vault of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. They were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all citizens, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be false for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This everlasting summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an ingathering of justice and equality. Nowhere else does a man live with such content. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever reject our struggle on the high ground of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a violent and all-out campaign for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unexpressed horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unrealistic that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where you quest for freedom, left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the victims of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unrelenting suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the states and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that one day our little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'Tis of Thee, sweet land of liberty, of Thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hills of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the hugging Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

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Little Rock Nine by Charly Palmer

I AM

BECAUSE

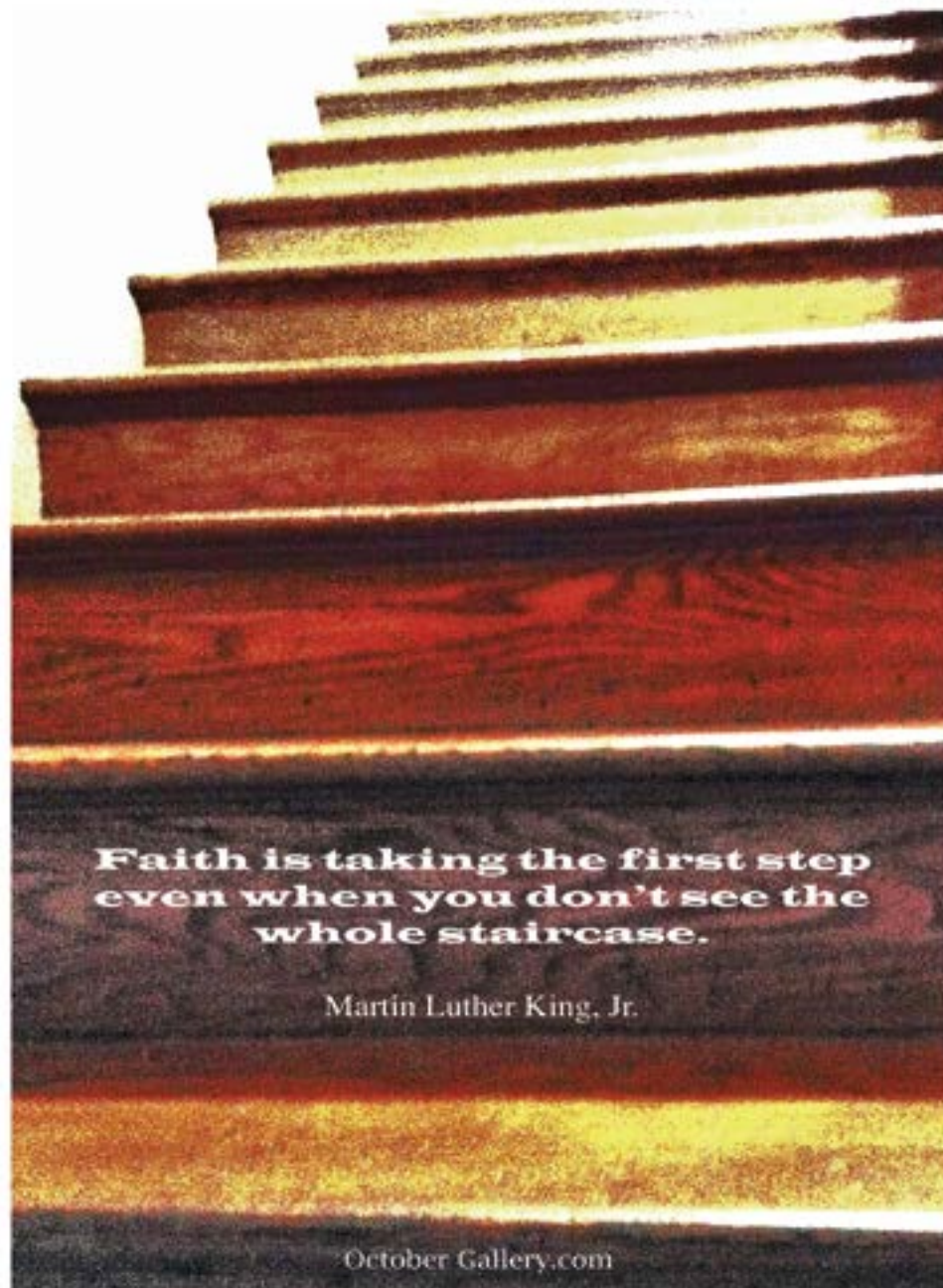
WE ARE

African Proverb

October Gallery Celebrates 30 Years 1985 - 2015



Who I Am by Laurie Cooper





Black Lives Matter by Anon

Life is only about the
I-tried-to-do. I don't
mind the failure but
I can't imagine that
I'd forgive myself if I
didn't try.

-Nikki Giovanni

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Believe in Yourself by Andrew Nichols

**If you don't like
something, change it.
If you can't change it,
change your attitude.**

– Maya Angelou

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We Love **African-** *American* **art**



Photo Credits

There are numerous photos in these pages that are the work of photographer *Bill Z. Foster*. Thanks Bill for all of your help and caring.

Lamar Redcross: As always, thanks for your photographic eye.

Universal Creations and Otis Williams.

A special thanks to *Adrienne Mills* for the body painting photographs.

Mark Ludak : Thanks for the photograph of Mercer and Evelyn Redcross on page 308 and the inside book cover.

John Edward Jordon: Thanks for the group photograph at the top of page 220.

Daniel S. Williams: Thanks for the photograph of

Paul Goodnight and Zita Cousens on page 366.

Ron Allen: Thanks for your photographic work

Daniela-Federici: P Diddy page 499

Robert Mendelsohn, thanks for the photos.

Herman Bigham, Thanks for your photographic work.

Special Thanks

There are so many individuals who have played a role in the October Gallery story. We can not mention all of them, but we would like to send special thanks to the following:

John Allan, Cody Anderson, Ernie Blumenthal, Chip Finney, George Guy, Eleanor Jean Hendley, Edie Huggins, Robert and Carolyn Irvin, Jack Kitchens and OARC, Kevin Parker, Charles and Jackie Prather, Sara Lomax-Reese, Gwen Remsen, Bruce Rush, Jonas Tart, Otis Williams, Georgie Woods, and Bill Wright

One of our October Gallery patrons succinctly commented, “I think the African-American artists along with the African-American writers interpret and chronicle the great strength and value inherent in our group. Both the artists and the writers counter attempts by those others who are bent on impeding the well-being of our group. They, artists and writers, also counter attempts to assign to African-Americans the base characteristics that those others themselves both glorify and typify. Such is the legacy of African-American artists and writers.”

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