



From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit

A **Pepco Edison Place Gallery** Exhibition

Presented by **Black Artists of DC**

February 11 through March 4, 2014

Hubert Jackson

Charlie Wright, The Runaway Slave Who Saved The Union, 2013

Mixed media on canvas 48 x 40 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia



Introducing the Sponsors

From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit is co-sponsored by Potomac Electric Power Co. (Pepco), Black Artists of DC (BADC) and Art Impact USA.

The Pepco Edison Place Gallery is located in Penn Quarter, a cultural centerpiece of DC. With exhibits from a diverse array of area groups, the Gallery joins the dynamic yet historic downtown heart of Washington. The Gallery's mission is to work with nonprofit arts organizations to develop diverse, high-quality exhibits on behalf of the community. Pepco also works with local governments to support school enrichment programs, aid to the less fortunate and many other community needs. Pepco is a regulated electric utility. Pepco has been providing reliable electric service for more than one hundred years.

Black Artists of DC was founded in 1999 by Viola Leak (Textiles), "Planta" Jacqueline Reeder (Painting and Drawing), and "Aziza" Claudia Gibson-Hunter (Printmaking, Painting). The first meeting was held at the home of Viola Leak and was attended by about 10 artists. Six years later Black artists of DC was a group with a mailing list of over 125 artists, and an internet group site of over 90 working artists, curators, art enthusiasts and gallery owners from Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia. Artists have joined from other states, however the focus is on artists residing in the DC area. Today the list serve reaches out to over 450 artists. The work from these artists: masters, emerging, student, and novice, is growing stronger through the encouragement of each other. The work spans all media, subject matter, and style. BADC is open to Black artists from DC as well as Black artists who have lived, were educated or worked in DC. There was a strong emphasis on artists who attended Howard University. BADC's membership includes males and females of African descent from America, South America, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Art Impact USA is an artist organization dedicated to creating synergistic relationships between artists, non-profits and corporations in order to establish opportunities for artists to exhibit. Art Impact USA's mission is to be a positive force in the community using art to benefit everyone during the process of bringing art from the artist to the collector. Art Impact USA is here promoting and curating an independent exhibition, ***From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit***. Deconstructing the established norms, a new breed of Artist-Curators has emerged. Art Impact USA operates outside of convention or orthodoxy, a form of freedom an institutional Curator may not find. This freedom and creation of new circumstance is what appeals to these Artist-Curators who slide between creating their own work and curating the work of others.

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Welcome to the



pepco
EDISON PLACE
GALLERY

Pepco's Edison Place headquarters is the first major office building in Washington, D.C., to be designed by a minority-owned architectural firm; Devroux & Purnell.

The mission of Pepco's Edison Place Gallery is to work with nonprofit arts organizations to sponsor a series of diverse, high quality art exhibits on behalf of the community we serve.

Admission is free.

Curator's Statement

From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit, Pepco Edison Place Gallery, 2014

There is undeniable power in the human spirit – that which inspires us to rise from any fall. This exhibition helps us visualize the power of the human spirit. Spirit takes form, form takes action and action makes results. It is this result that would be the most fascinating aspect of this exhibition. How does each artist, as a spirit, rise from loss, heartache, trouble, negativity, anguish, torment, anything gut wrenching? How does one come out of it? How does it look on the other side – the triumphant side, where you have become stronger and wiser?

These questions are extremely pertinent to this time in modern history and in relation to our past. Artist Hubert Jackson's focus is on the Civil War. 2015 will be the 150th anniversary of its end. War could be interpreted not only as political or physical, but also mental and emotional. Each artist offers his or her unique vision using self reflection.

By studying each piece of art, the viewer may resonate their own spirit's journey. The show can be seen as being a kind of visual symphony of objects that exist on their own but also in concert with one another. What is at stake here is that each artist must confront their own mortality to create powerful work. Regardless of race, we are all mortal beings. From my own spiritual practice of Zen and astral travel through the cosmos to the ashes of the departed Civil War soldiers that have become a part of the terrain of battlefields now contained in Jackson's painting, the viewers of ***From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit*** are taken on a visual journey through the human spirit's struggle through life.

- Carolyn S. Goodridge
Artist-Curator
Art Impact USA



Akili Ron Anderson

(born 1946)

Akili Ron Anderson is a lifetime resident of Washington, DC, born to Russell Anderson and Frances Holmes. He has successfully practiced as a full time visual artist since 1970. Anderson creates art for the visual enhancement needs of cultural, religious and public institutions. He designs, fabricates and installs stained glass windows, sculptural forms, fine art paintings and theater sets. Anderson is also well versed in still photography, cinematography, computergraphics, special effects and multi-media presentations. Anderson graduated from Cardozo High School in 1964. He attended The Corcoran School of Art (1964-1965) and Howard University, School of Arts and Science, Division of Fine Arts (1965-1969) and (2005-2008). He received his BFA and MFA from Howard University in 2008.

Anderson held the position of Artist in Residence for the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities (1971-1973). He was the first chairperson of the Visual Arts Department at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (Washington, DC 1974-1976). Anderson is a co-founder of NationHouse Organization (Watoto School) and a board member of the African Freedom Fund Treasury and Black Artists of DC. Anderson is presently teaching full time in the Department of Art at Howard University.

“With all the facilities of my mind and spirit; and by my hand, together with my community, my goal is to celebrate African people and culture. Aesthetics, a division of philosophy, examines the rules and principles of what is beautiful. For my purposes, I use aesthetic principles to examine the outward appearance of my work in direct relationship to human emotion. Within that investigation, beauty is not an essential element. What is beautiful in art is subjectively based on the viewers’ socialization and perspective on life. Aesthetic success is achieved when a work is felt past its visual attributes. Does the work have a social usefulness, as well as a message? In my work, I am seeking to attract people of indigenous African decent to a cultural mirror, in order to utilize the art as a source of nourishment, grounding and inspiration.”

www.akilironanderson.com



Akili Ron Anderson *Enlightenment Eye on the Prize*, 2013
Acrylic on Canvas, 36 x 24 in.
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia



Anne Bouie

Anne Bouie was born in Birmingham, Alabama; she grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and was deeply affected by the beauty and culture she experienced during summers on her grandparents' farm in Florida. Her family lived in six states and she had attended seven schools by the fifth grade before settling in Riverside, California, where she grew up, and graduated from the University of California. She left southern California and moved to the Bay Area to enter the graduate School of Education at Stanford University, where she earned a Ph.D. in Administration & Policy Analysis, a Master's degree in Secondary Education, and a Master's degree in African-American History.

Though highly trained in education and history, Anne Bouie is an artist in the naïve tradition, and draws heavily upon pre-conversion indigenous cultures, which use art to heal, teach, and sustain meaning. The traditions of southern folk artists are also a source of inspiration. Her pivotal moment as an artist came while attending a meeting of the Black Artists of DC, who encouraged her to "stop sitting on her ideas for art, and get busy doing it." In 2006, her work was accepted in Found, a BADC exhibition and she had been working as an artist since then. As a mixed media, assemblage artist, Bouie has exhibited at the Honfluer Gallery, Galerie Myrtis, the Nevin Kelly Gallery, Millennium Salon, and the D.C. Arts Center. She has also participated in exhibits in California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and India.

"Transcendence is a primary theme in my work. From the ashes brings to mind spirits communing and souls rising. As an artist, I commune with many sources of spiritual nurture, especially the Earth, my elders, the ancestor, and the holy texts of many spiritual traditions. Art is a spiritual practice for me; I often feel that I am co-creating with Spirit, guided by an unseen hand. My work flows from a desire to reconcile the worldly and tangible with the transcendence of spirit. Gathering, sorting and combining an array of components to make something new out of the old is an essential part of my process. Foraging, gathering and composing are opportunities for meditation and inspiration to allow Spirit to "have its way" and say what it has to say through me."

www.annebouie.com



Anne Bouie *Shield of Flowing Water #1*, 2013
Mixed media: Honey Locust pods, 19 x 48"
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia





Daniel T. Brooking

(born 1942)

Daniel T. Brooking is a native Washingtonian who have been in the DC arts for over 50 years. He has exhibited nationally, internationally, and served as a curator, juror and grant panelist for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. His first art instructor was his father, Daniel H. Brooking who taught to "see" the world and the possibilities of beauty within it. He soon learned that not everyone could "see". At Anacostia Senior High School he had the privilege of receiving training from Phillip Ratner who introduced him to new artistic challenges. Over 40 years later he and Phillip Ratner were reunited at the Dennis and Phillip Ratner Museum where Daniel curated two exhibitions.

To him art is more than a technical skill. He often says "First of all, I do this for me". He gives presentations to aspiring high school and college art students about the business side of art, and about the life of an artist. "Artists should never limit themselves to a particular genre; learn as much as you can, do as much as you can and never stop".

"From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit reminds me of my youth; I was fascinated by the story of the Phoenix who rose from the ashes renewed to start again, I would be like the Phoenix. We often need to rise but not just from a tragedy, sometimes from sameness. We need to see that there is more to life than just this. When we lose life's spark then we doom ourselves. Adversity, yes; death, disease, famine, yes, but also joy and we must find our joy. Sometimes we have to search, fight and pray for our joy, but don't give up. It's yours, claim it. Let no one steal your joy. My Face and Skin masks were made from digital images of human skin. My work often follows Sankofa, never forget the past. The masks reflect a connection with the past that can strengthen us. They helps us communicate with the past so that we may more clearly see the future."

Brooking's work is represented by Jeannette Mariani, Galerie 13, in Paris, France.

www.artimpactusa.com/daniel-brooking.html



Daniel T. Brooking *New Skin 3*, 2011
Digital print, 20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia





Adjoa Burrowes

(born 1957)

Chicago-born, Adjoa Burrowes, is a mixed media artist, published author, and art educator. She has a BFA degree from Howard University and is currently a MA candidate at the Corcoran College of Art + Design. Her art has been exhibited widely throughout the U.S. and is represented in collections at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center, The Brooklyn Art Library and ArtColle Museum in Plemet France.

“My mixed media collages are narrative landscapes that explore collective and personal memory. Drawing upon my background as a printmaker as well as graphic designer and illustrator, I try to infuse my work with multiple layers of meaning. In my abstract paintings, I use color, texture and pattern to create rhythms that recall human energy, both mental and physical. Sometimes the energy depicted is light and uplifting. Other times this energy is fractured and confusing and causes pain. In a series called “Bye-Ku” collage narratives were created that recalled loss and mourning in personal relationships. My painting “Better Days Ahead” for this exhibit alludes to an encouraging future through my use of bright swirling colors that emerge from darkness.”

www.adjoaburrowesfineart.com



Adjoa Burrowes *Better Days Ahead, 2013*

Mixed media 22 x 30 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Silver Spring, Maryland

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<http://tinyurl.com/aburrowes>



Elsa Gebreyesus

(born 1969)

Elsa Gebreyesus lived in Ethiopia, Kenya, and United States before going on to receive her BA from Brock University in Ontario, Canada. After Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia, she lived there for five years, working as a Project Officer with an indigenous women's organization. After leaving Eritrea, she came to the U. S. where she's been pursuing her career and her lifelong passion for art. In addition to her work and art, she also volunteers with organizations involved with human rights issues especially in Africa. She admires and has been greatly influenced by modernist painters from both Africa and the West. Gebreyesus currently lives with her husband and two children in Fairfax, VA.

“Each of my paintings starts with a loose sketch, landscape or object and is built up with layer upon layer of paint. I do not start with an end in mind when I begin a painting, instead the challenge is to find the end. This process to me is a type of meditation - an intimate conversation between the materials and myself. I enjoy working with acrylic paint because of its versatility. Drawing media in the paintings are caran d'ache and graphite. Some pieces incorporate text from my native language, Tigrinya. I also use sand and other texture media all part of the process of building visual stories that reflect experiences and internal states.

Tigrinya is one of the official languages spoken in Eritrea, a small East African country. It has a phonetic writing system consisting of symbols that represent syllables. Using these symbols in my paintings reflects my connection to my cultural heritage and enables me to express my views about the current situation in Eritrea.

Time and time again we have witnessed the determination of the human spirit to strive for justice, peace and freedom. It is our birthright. Our task, I believe, is to honor that spirit and bear witness in our lives and for those who come after us. My aim is to bear witness to that ancestral spirit while at the same time incorporate my personal experiences and history through the abstract compositions.”

www.elsabet.com



Elsa Gebreyesus *Toward the Horizon*, 2011

Acrylic on canvas 48 x 36 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Fairfax, Virginia

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<http://tinyurl.com/egebreyesus>



Claudia Aziza Gibson-Hunter

(born 1954)

Claudia “Aziza” Gibson-Hunter attended Tyler College of Art, and graduated from Temple University. Claudia attended graduate school at Howard University and moved to Harlem New York. After completing her MFA in printmaking, she studied in Bob Blackburn’s Printmaking Studio and later received a fellowship from the Bronx Museum of Art. She joined “Where We At”, a noted Black women’s artists group in Harlem. In 1987 she returned to Washington, DC and in 1999 she was invited to take an adjunct position at Howard University to teach printmaking.

While at Howard University, she completed a residency with the Canadian School for Non Toxic Printmaking. In 2002 Aziza decided to pursue her art full time. In 2003 her focus became painting. By 2005 she was combining printmaking, assemblage and collage with painting, moving into mixed media works. A co-founder of Black Artists of DC, she represented BADC during Art Basel Miami 06, in the Design District. In the same year Ms. Gibson-Hunter was awarded the Artist Fellowship Program Grant, from the DC Commission of the Arts and Humanities. Her work is included in the Washington DC Art Bank, the John A. Wilson Building permanent art collection, the Liberian Embassy and other notable collections.

“My work is a testimony. I rely on improvisational relationships between concept, image, object, information and rhythm to state my case. Testimony is a heartfelt public truth telling, and my truth telling is often encrypted. My process is Orsirian; I utilize both deconstruction and construction in the creation of work. The need to push beyond the shape of the original sub straight is something I find very compelling ...a fight against being contained by either internal or external forces. With this series I welcome the return of the figure.”

www.gibsonhunterstudio.com



Claudia Aziza Gibson-Hunter *Trials of the Heart*, 2013

Mixed Media, 41 ½ x 38 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia

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<http://tinyurl.com/zhunter>



Carolyn S. Goodridge

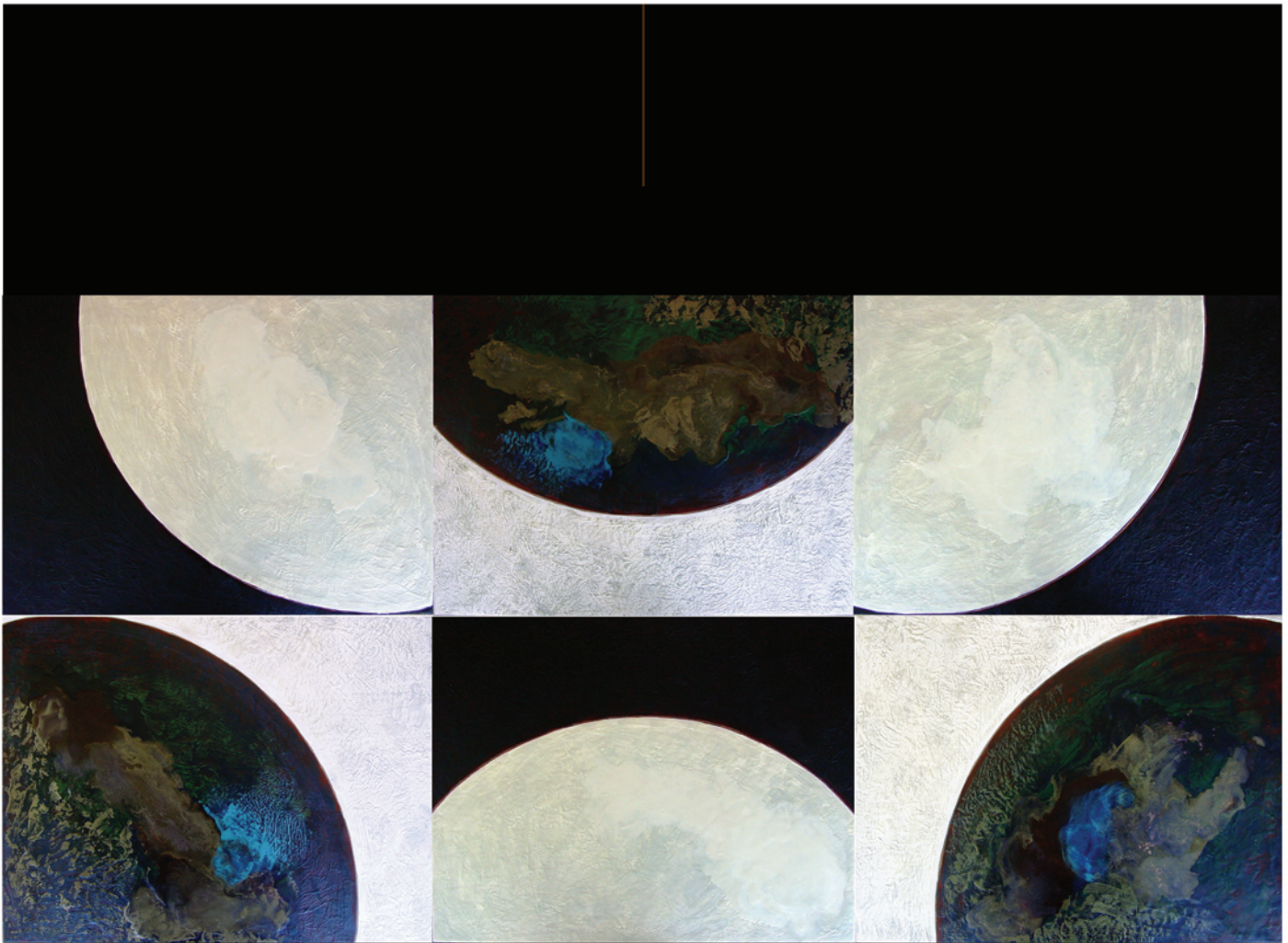
(born 1960)

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, West Indies, Goodridge immigrated to the U.S. in 1963. Carolyn was introduced to a heavily spiritual way of life through Beryl Odell, her paternal grandmother in Brooklyn, New York. Goodridge developed an interest in the fine arts at the age of 10, first writing short stories, plays and poems and then expressing herself through songs for the piano and guitar and later focusing on drawing and painting. Later, she became widely read in the Eastern philosophies of India. At age 19, she left home to live in a Korean Zen Buddhist temple, the Chogye International Zen Center in Chelsea Manhattan, and studied Zen meditation with the late Zen Master Seung Sahn, founder of the Kwan Um School of Zen.

Goodridge received a Bachelor of Fine Art in Painting from the University of Florida in 1993, and a Master in Fine Art from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 1997. An avid student of art history, Goodridge was inspired by the mystical works of artists Mark Tobey, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, Hans Hofmann, Vassily Kandinsky, the exploratory work on dreams and the collective unconscious by Paul Kleé, and the genius of musician John Cage. Goodridge brings a rich integration of spiritual philosophy, with modern science and ancient psychology to the artwork.

“The radiance of nature is audible. So, I listen with my heart and paint what I hear. I am inspired to paint visual songs. The paintings are emotional attunements to nature’s elements: sun’s fire, the wind, water and Mother Earth. Each work whispers a glimpse of an intelligent and relentlessly churning life. I accomplish this work with a patient process of orchestrating colors, mixing finely ground raw pigments with melted beeswax in the ancient process of encaustic. The ideas that inform the conscious side of my work are a marriage of Eastern philosophy and Western science: Zen, Taoism, Yoga and Vedic texts, Sufism, Theoretical Physics, and Quantum Mechanics.”

www.abstractpaintings.com



Carolyn S. Goodridge
An Interval of Zen, Cosmos and Dewdrops, 2013
Encaustic (Pigmented Beeswax) on panel 4 x 8 ft.
Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia





Hubert Jackson

(born 1943)

Hubert Jackson, born in Culpeper, Virginia knew he wanted to be an artist since the age of six. Beginning with a correspondence course during high school, Jackson went on to formally study painting, ceramics, printmaking, sculpture and photography. In 1999 Jackson retired from 34 years of teaching art in the Washington, D.C. public school system.

“Color, shape, and texture are the driving features of my paintings. I begin with disparate objects and materials and, by incorporating planes of shape and color, allow them to work in much the same way elements are transformed in nature - through endless variations of light and perspective.

My recent work deals with the period of the American Civil War and in particular the spirits of those who have come and gone but remain anonymous and unaccounted for with the passage of time. Although they came from the earth and returned to the earth, their spirits remain with us as they have become one with nature, embodied within the various life forms that have since emerged from the soil.

I use vegetation and artifacts particular to the location of each subject in my mixed media artwork, which I obtain on site or purchase from collectors and relic hunters and incorporate into the design. The three dimensional aspects in my creations evoke an immediacy and spontaneity which I find compelling in achieving the connection with the subject that I am seeking. My paintings recognize, demarginalize, and honor the dignity and worth of all people and transcend the circumstances of their place in time.”

www.hubertjackson.com



Hubert Jackson *The Spirits of Brandy Station*, 2013

Mixed media on canvas 42 x 30 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia

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<http://tinyurl.com/hjacksonart>



Wayson Jones

(born 1957)

Wayson R. Jones was born to a military family. As a child, he lived in Georgia, South Carolina, and Germany, before settling in the Washington DC area. His artistic experience began with playing the violin, moving to piano then to the saxophone. During his high-school years, he was reached state-level competition as a tenor sax soloist. At the University of Maryland he graduated with a general degree in music.

The major milestone in his art life was meeting and befriending poet Essex Hemphill, his freshman-year roommate. With Hemphill, Wayson would go on to perform in a marriage of music, poetry, and performance that took the duo to venues such as the Kennedy Center, Blues Alley, and New York's LaMama Theater. He also appeared with Hemphill in filmmaker Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston*, as well as the late videographer Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* and *Black Is, Black Ain't*, all of which aired nationally on public television.

Wayson began to create visual art in 2007, in work that is informed and enriched by his earlier performative experiences. He has exhibited in Washington DC at Hillyer Art Space, District of Columbia Arts Center (DCAC), and Gallery O on H; in Virginia at The Sundry (Vienna), the Candy Factory (Manassas), and Gallery West (Alexandria); in Maryland at Arts Harmony Hall, 39th Street Gallery, and The David Driskell Center; in Fresno, CA at Gallery 25; and in Long Island City, NY at Jeffrey Leder Gallery.

“My paintings and sculpture revolve around the idea of implicit association between image, memory, and emotion. Much of the work is influenced by the sense of gesture, space, and spontaneity in abstract expressionism. Working flat, using quick-drying acrylic paints, acrylic gels, and dry pigments, and combining planning and chance are central to my process. The appearance of a recognizable human profile in these pieces is a new element in my work. The work represents both the struggle for, and attainment of, spiritual rebirth.”

www.waysonjones.com



Wayson Jones *Dreaming Youth, 2013*
Acrylic, powdered graphite, acrylic medium, and gesso on paper, 22 x 30 in.
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia



Michael Platt

(born 1948)

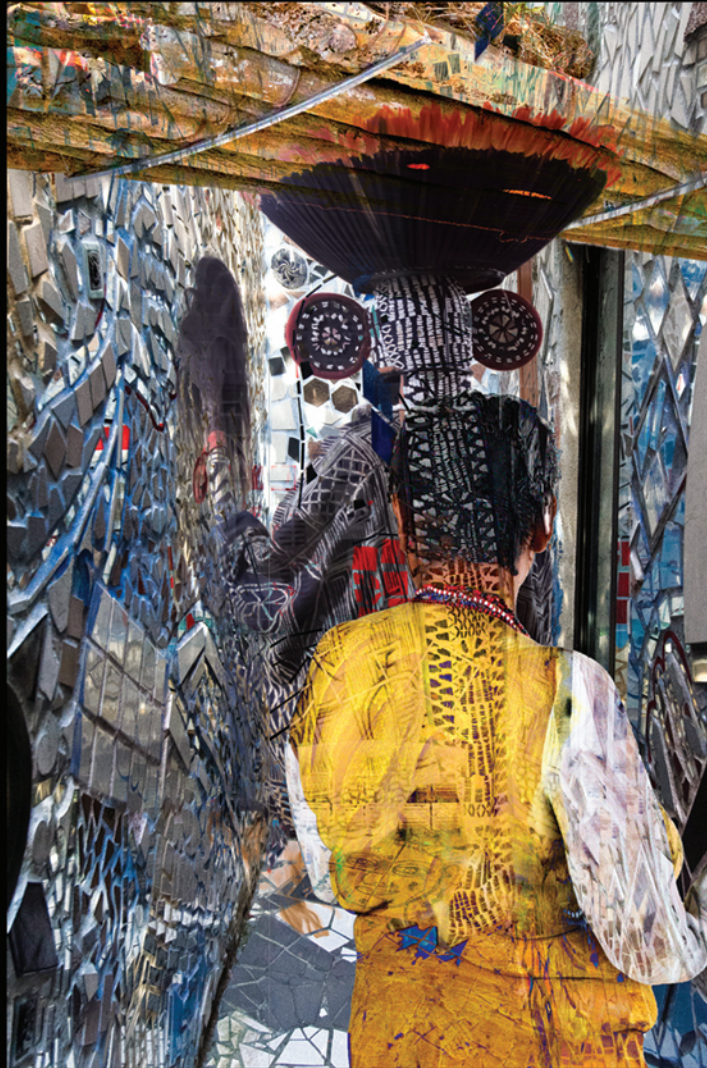
Michael B. Platt is a 2007 recipient of the Franz and Virginia Bader Fund Grant. Long known as a printmaker, his artwork in the last decade has explored digital imagery and book art that combines image and poetry—fragments, allowing us glimpses of our selves. He continues to create artwork that centers on figurative explorations of life's survivors, the marginalized, referencing history and circumstance in the rites, rituals and expressions of our human condition.

Platt has exhibited internationally and nationally. Some of his most recent work, collaborative mages done with DC based painter Katherine Mann, is currently on exhibit in Common Ground, in Paris, France. His latest one-person exhibitions were in Australia, 2012: Michael B. Platt: Telling Stories, Framing Time, and 2010: Spirits and Spaces: The Prints of Michael B. Platt, The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, Charlotte, NC. Important group shows include the 2011-12, Multiplicity, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.; and in 2011: Corridor: 6 DC Artists + 6 Baltimore Artists, Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC and Embodied: Black Identities in American Art from the Yale University Art Gallery, The Yale University Art Museum, New Haven, CT; in 2010, The Washington Project for the Arts 35th Anniversary exhibition, The Katzen Center at the American University, Washington, DC.

Platt's artwork is represented in numerous private collections as well as in the permanent holdings of the Corcoran Museum; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art; the Library of Congress' Prints and Photographs Collection and Rare Books and Special Collections; the Schomburg Research Center in Black Culture of the New York Public Library; the Yale University Art Gallery; the John Hay Library of Brown University; the David C. Driskell Center Collection of the University of Maryland; and the Hampton University Art Museum.

Michael Platt is represented by Tim Davis of international Visions The Gallery, Washington, DC.

www.mplattstudio.com



Michael Platt *Time Walker*, 2013

Pigment print on canvas, 40 x 60 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia

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<http://tinyurl.com/mplatt>



Russell Simmons

(born 1943)

Russell Simmons was born in Washington, D.C, and for most of his adult life was involved in community development and business. However, he painted without publicity and continued to paint and study and attend galleries and museums for more than 20 years.

Simmons did not study art except for a course in ceramics at college. He painted in his basement, for the sake of art, entered a few shows at Neighbor's Inc., in the 1970's where he won an honorable mention. During the 1980's and 1990's there was little activity. It wasn't until October 2002 that Simmons had his first show at the Wohlfarth Galleries. In April 2003 he had another successful show at the Skyclub at the Zanzibar in 2003. In March 2004 Simmons had a significant show with 27 works at the Millennium Arts Center. That proved to be a commercial success. Simmons continued to have other successful shows at the Wohlfarth Galleries, Pyramid Atlantic Gallery and the Brentwood Gallery.

"I am self-taught and therefore, have few inhibitions or limitations. I experiment continually with my work with lots of energy and movement with very subtle colors. I usually paint what I feel and let that lead me to a finished product. Sometimes that happens quickly while at other times it may take months. These journeys have been the most challenging and joyous ones of my life. Each journey with each canvas is different even when producing a series of similar work. Each work had its own unique characteristic and learning experience.

I am heavily influenced by the Washington Color School and other abstract artists. To this day, I continue to evolve and experiment with new styles in mediums. Much of my work has a tribal and Afrocentric theme. This show in particular "From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit" reflects deeply on my sense of history, pain, imprisonment and freedom."

www.russell-simmon.artistwebsites.com



Russell Simmons *High Priest*, 2013
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas 30 x 38 in.
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia





Alec Simpson

(born 1944)

Alec Simpson's studio experience began as a young teenager attending Saturday classes at the Corcoran School of Art. During high school, it stopped. It was not until very much later as an adult that he was re-introduced to art making through creating monotypes at the Art Thomas Studio in Charleston, South Carolina and at Pyramid Atlantic with Helen Frederick when it was located in Riverdale, Maryland. Since then, Simpson has had the opportunity to work with and/or talk to and learn from a number of master artists as he explored various media including Mindy Weisel, Joyce Wellman, Brandon Graving, Lou Stovall, Michael Platt, Susan Goldman, Sam Gilliam and Romare Bearden. Although Simpson holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Comparative Arts (focused on the history and aesthetics of the arts), he likes to think of himself as working to create artworks closer to the traditions of self-taught visionary artists rather than those of the academy.

"Overall, for me, my work presents the opportunity for exploration, adventure, discovery, and self expression. And in my view, this exhibition, "From the Ashes: Rebirth of the Human Spirit," bears a universal theme that speaks to that. We all face a time in our life when we are called to "rise from the ashes" of the challenges that confront us. The works in this, which I call "The Phoenix Series," literally represents just that. As artists, we often start works that don't get finished or let "finished" works sit in lateral files or other storage for years until we feel that they are ready for public exposure. I revisited some stored works and either worked to finish them off or simply allowed them sing as they were -- literally calling them forth to rise from the ashes.

It is my hope that the works in this series act as symbols of empowerment and courage as we each address with triumph and victory whatever challenges come our way."

www.alectsimpson.com



Alec Simpson *Phoenix Series: Flow 1*, 2013
Watercolor, 22.5 x 30 in.
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, District of Columbia



Acknowledgments

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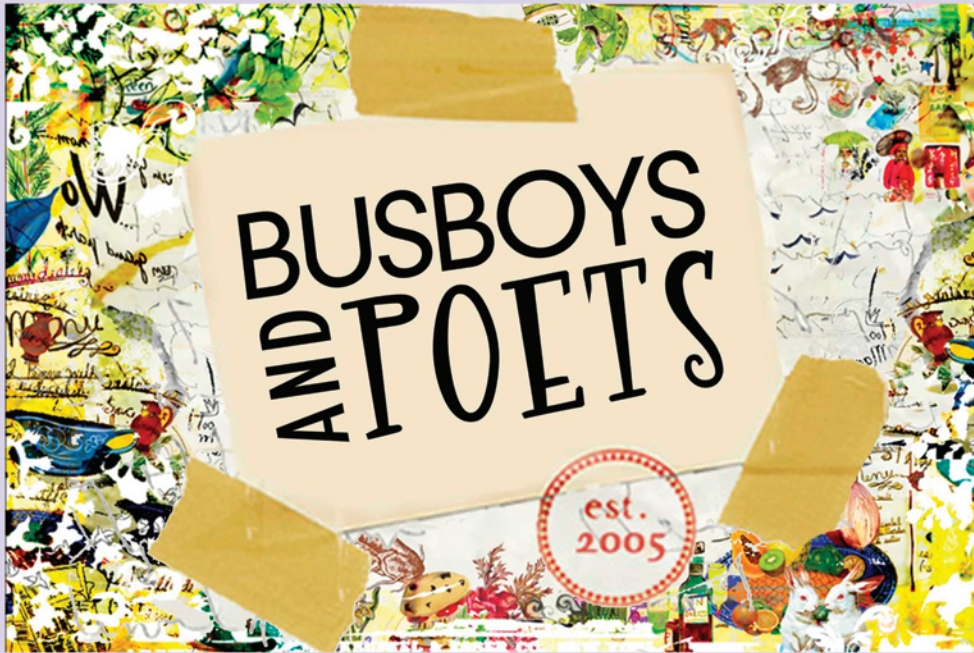
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Honoring Our Past

Elizabeth Catlett



Elizabeth Catlett Mora (April 15, 1915 - April 2, 2012) was an African-American sculptor and printmaker. Catlett is best known for the black, expressionistic sculptures and prints she produced during the 1960s and 1970s, which are seen as politically charged.

Honoring Our Past

Biography

Catlett was born in Washington, D.C., the youngest of three children. She attended the Lucretia Mott Elementary School, Dunbar High School, and then Howard University where she studied design, printmaking and drawing. In an interview in December 1981 in *Artist and Influence* magazine, she stated that she changed her major to painting because of the influence of James A. Porter, and because there was no sculpture division at Howard at the time. She received her BS cum laude from Howard in 1935. She then worked as a high school teacher in North Carolina but left after two years, frustrated by the low teaching salaries for black people.

While living and working in Harlem, New York, she was briefly married to Charles White. In 1947, she married Mexican artist Francisco Mora, and made Mexico her permanent home, later becoming a Mexican citizen. They have three sons, including film director Juan Mora. Her granddaughter, Naima Mora, was the Cycle 4 winner of the *America's Next Top Model* television show. Catlett's sculpture, *Naima*, is of Naima as a child. After retiring in 1975, Catlett continued to be active in the Cuernavaca, Mexico art community.

Education

In 1940 Catlett became the first student to receive an M.F.A. in sculpture at the University of Iowa School of Art and Art History. While there, she was influenced by American landscape painter Grant Wood, who urged students to work with the subjects they knew best. For Catlett, this meant black people, and especially black women, and it was at this point that her work began to focus on African Americans. Her piece *Mother and Child*, done in limestone in 1939 for her thesis,[2] won first prize in sculpture at the American Negro Exposition in Chicago in 1940.

She studied ceramics at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1941, lithography at the Art Students League of New York in 1942-1943, and with sculptor Ossip Zadkine in New York in 1944.

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