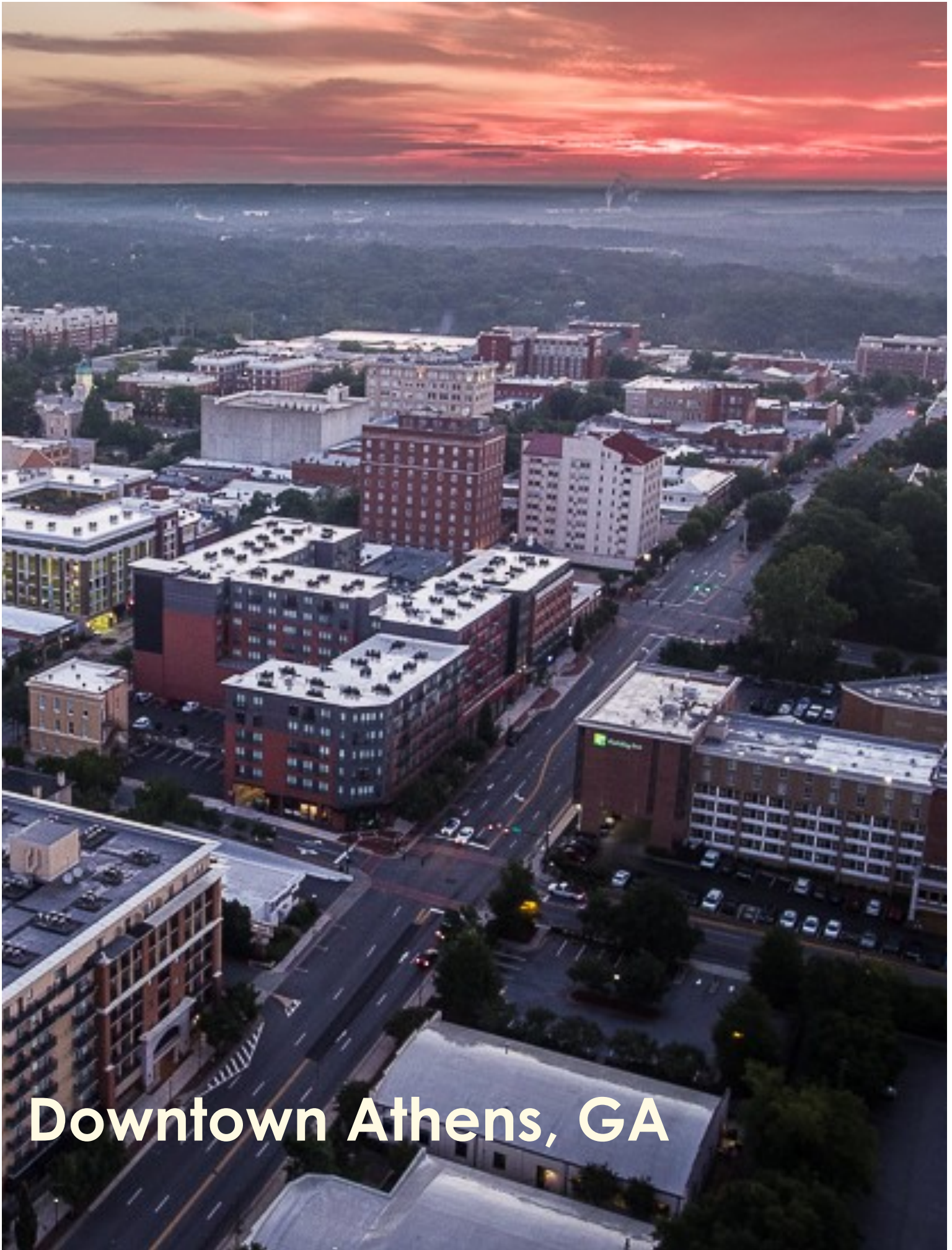




African American

ARTISTS IN THE

CLASSIC
City



Downtown Athens, GA

Michael Davenport



Hello again. This is my story.

As a child, I wanted to be a superhero like Spiderman. I wanted to fly through the air. At 13 years of age I had some rope with copper inside and I was attempting to throw that rope over a tree limb. With each throw I came closer until I finally went over...and onto a live 70,000+ volt electrical line. From then on my life was changed forever.

I underwent over 60 surgeries. Both arms were amputated and I lost my toes. Before my accident I couldn't draw a stick figure with both hands. 3 years afterwards I could draw with my mouth. The more I practiced, the better I got. I went the way of alcohol until a motorcycle wreck knocked out my teeth. I then realised that God had a bigger plan for me than to feel sorry for myself. I decided to do what I do best with what God gave me.

I have met former Coach Vince Dooley, current Coach Mark Richt, as well as Herschel Walker. They all have at least one piece of artwork done by me. I have had my name in the Athens Banner Herald on a few occasions and even had a short piece on Backroad Treasures by Darrel D. You would think my name would be known outside of Athens or Atlanta, but it really isn't. I live day by day in a motel room at the Microtel Inn of Athens, Ga. My wife, Crystal, is my rock. She makes sure I drink when it's hot, feeds me, makes me take breaks, and watches over me while I sleep. I have medication that I need to take for my high blood pressure but often can't afford it. I need medication to help me sleep and keep the nightmares away but I can't afford to take a break from my art to see a doctor. We manage to get by, but our goal is to get our own small home or trailer. We have no furniture, no amenities, and very little in the way of clothing but it would be a start.

So, I draw with my mouth...using Sharpies on canvas...and create one of a kind artwork. No 2 pieces are exactly the same even in a series. I am mainly known for my UGA mascot and Hairy Dawg work but I can just as easily draw people, other animals, beach scenes, houses, or other college mascots (though I am an UGA fan). This is my life. This is what God chose for me. I make of it what I will and do with it what I can. I have faith that things will get better. Thank you.



Harold Rittenberry



With towering, rusted sculptures of a knight, a robot and various animals inhabiting every possible foot of the yard, the home and studio of renowned self-taught artist Harold Rittenberry Jr. is one of the most unusual sites in town. The artist has become accustomed to curious visitors stopping by his residence, nestled at the corner of Colima Avenue and Rose Street. Several of his sculptures will make their way off of the lawn and into the Quiet Gallery of the Athens-Clarke County Library this weekend for the special exhibition “Metal Visions: The Work of Harold Rittenberry.”

Born on Christmas Day in 1938—coincidentally, at the same location where the library now stands—Rittenberry has spent nearly his entire life in Athens, with the exception of three years serving in the Army in Germany. Though he was always interested in drawing and painting, it wasn’t until the mid-’80s, while taking care of his mother, who had Alzheimer’s, that he bought his first welder and began creating metalwork sculptures. He later expanded to working with stainless steel when fellow sculptor Bob Clements approached him to participate in the Atlanta Folk Art Park, a major public-art project established in anticipation of the 1996 Olympic Games. The project kickstarted a very strong friendship, and the two artists continue to collaborate. “I think it’s one of the best jobs you can find. Maybe one of the best things you can do,” says Rittenberry. “I call it a job, but it’s really not a job. It’s a pleasure.”

He has commissioned pieces are in Atlanta—the College Park Library, East Point Library and Atlanta City Court Gate— around Athens. Memorial Park’s Bear Hollow Zoo is home to “Serengeti Dreams,” an 8-foot-tall tower of giraffes, elephants and sprinting antelopes, while the Sandy Creek Nature Center has a memorial bench that offers a peaceful place for reflection. a maypole for the community garden at the West Broad School, which he attended as a child, as well as an aquatic-themed bench and mural for Rock-springs Park and Community Center.; the Georgia Museum of Art, and professional galleries, such as the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation



Broderick Flanigan



Broderick Flanigan is a visual artist in painting and drawing and is Assistant Director of Chess and Community - founded by Lemeul LaRoche . Flanigan now runs his own art studio, doing a lot of youth art programing and youth development. He serves on the Lyndon House Arts Foundation, the Athens Farmers Market and the Envision Athens Initiative.

He says “I'm kind of heavily involved in the community... I love creating art and inspiring others through art, and supporting minority-owned businesses. This is a lot of my work. My family grew up right there on Water Street, right across from the river. It sits like literally right across the street from the river. It's now MLK, Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, I think it is, or drive. Yeah, that's kind of where I grew up for the first maybe 6 or 7 years of my life. Then, we kind of started moving around a lot after that including public housing.”

After high school, he and his fiance' lived in Virginia while enrolled in college. Flanigan later attended Georgia Southern University in Statesboro for about five and half years studying Exercise Science. His volunteerism at the local Boys and Girls Club planted the seed to give back in some way. When he returned to Athens, it started in his church, Ebenezer Baptist Church West, participating in community events, fundraisers and getting to know people. His attention to high unemployment and poverty in the African American community became the focus of some of his work.



Yvonne Studevan



Yvonne Studevan

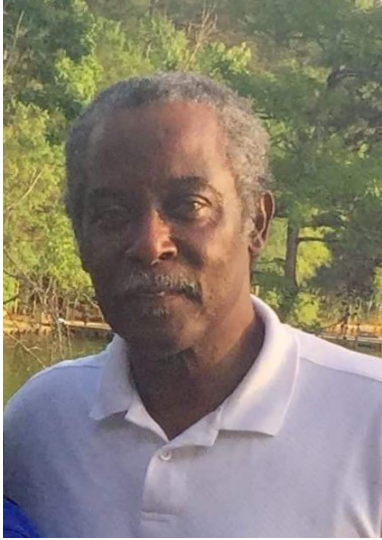
V. Yvonne Studevan hails from Yeadon, Pennsylvania. A graduate of Cheyney State University with a Bachelor's of Art in Education and Georgia State University receiving her Master's of Education. As a retired educator, Yvonne spends her time traveling, painting, and serving on various community boards. In addition she spends time researching family history and the legacy of her ancestor, the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen, founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Yvonne resides in Athens, Georgia with her husband, Dr. Russell Studevan.

Art is a legacy and has always been a part of her life. It is spiritual and comes from the soul of the artist. As a young child Yvonne began to develop her artistic talents by attending Saturday art classes at Fleishers Art School in Philadelphia, by participating in local art contests, and by receiving instruction at school, from family members, and local area artists. As an adult she continued to pursue and fulfill her need to create art by attending classes and workshops in Hawaii and Japan, as well as, the University of Georgia Continuing Education Program, The Lyndon House Art Center, Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation and apprenticing under Abner Cope, portrait artist. By becoming actively involved in the art community Yvonne's skills and knowledge of art have continued to develop.

People and nature inspire this artist. Her artwork depicts scenes from nature and people going about their daily living. When she looks at people and nature, she thinks, "Behold the beauty of the Lord". You can see aspects of her life expressed through her art; from the decorating of her home, yard, and classroom to dressing, cooking, and making jewelry. Consequently, her artistic creations are inspired by people, surroundings, travels, and events of her life.



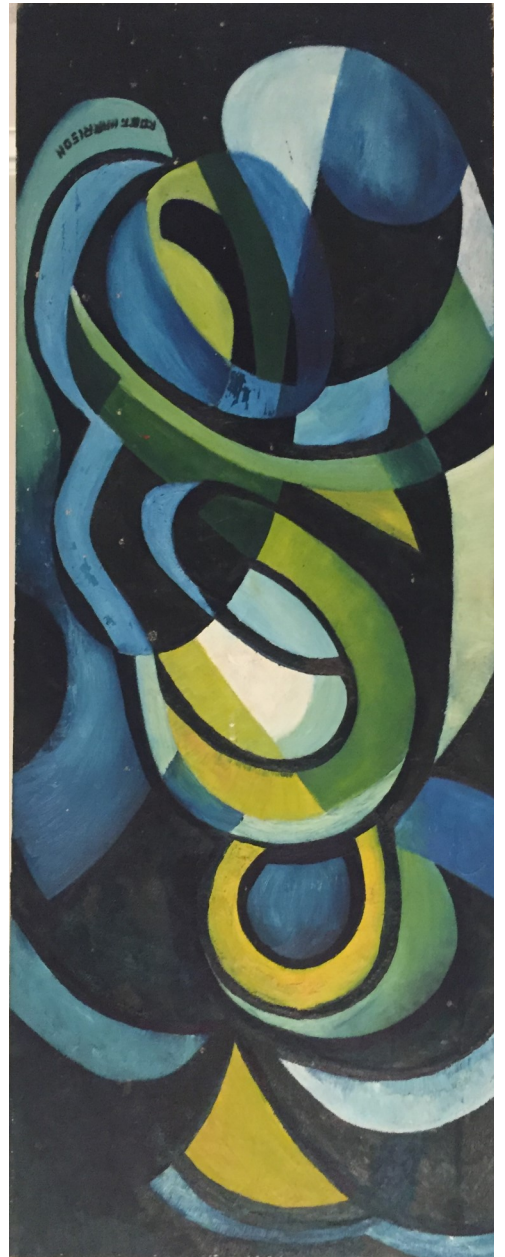
Robert E. Harrison



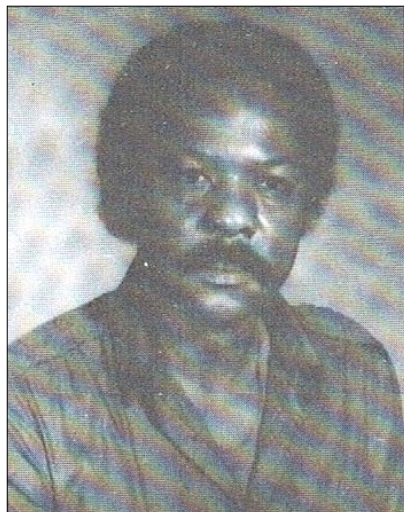
Dr. Robert E. Harrison is an artist who draws and paints in oils, pastels, chalk and charcoal. Subjects include portraiture, landscapes, still life and abstracts; with a focus on how light shapes the form of objects and people. He draws inspiration from everyday events, the African American experience and human history..

Dr. Harrison was born in Athens, a 1963 graduate of Athens High & Industrial School; 1967 Bachelor's degree in Art Education from Mississippi Valley State University; Masters and Doctorate in Education - University of GA. He taught Art for 6 years at Burney-Harris Middle School and summer school at Clarke Central High School.

After retiring from UGA in 1998, he established the Institute for Community and Organizational Development, Inc., a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) entity. He is Executive Director and currently operates the VISTAS Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and www.theyellowjacket.com. Past projects include Friends For Life Mentoring and the Netspan Community Technology Network.



Marion Armell Stroud



Marion Armell Stroud is an accomplished artist who draws and paints primarily in oils. His subjects include portraits of family, friends and students and notable people in the church, politics and community. For more than 40 years, Stroud taught art at Burney-Harris High and Clarke Central High Schools. Before retirement in 1997.

Mr. Stroud was born in Athens, a graduate of Athens High & Industrial School; and Clark College in Atlanta with a degree in Art Education. .

He is a long-time businessman in Athens operating entertainment, beverage and auto sales enterprises. Marion Armell Stroud is also an accomplished musician serving as organist for several churches throughout his adult life.



Starr Campbell



Starr Campbell was born in Athens Georgia and received her bachelors of fine arts from the Atlanta College of Art and masters in education at Piedmont College. She enjoys drawing, painting and creating collages to depict the life around her...generally in 3-D form. She uses mix-media to convey the mood, scenery, historical aspect and character of the subject, in order to express what she wants to say. She is a retired art teacher with over thirty years in the Athens Clarke County School system. She still teaches art to various groups within the community. She has illustrated books for various authors. She enjoys playing the percussion drums on the worship team at her church. Maybe you've driven around town and noticed the "U-verse Georgia Bulldawg? " Well, she and her former art club students helped design and paint the bulldog.



Jeffrey Barnett



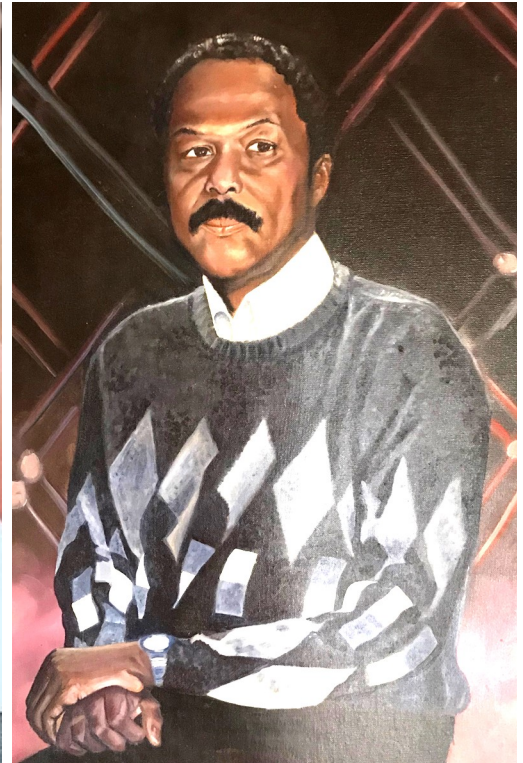
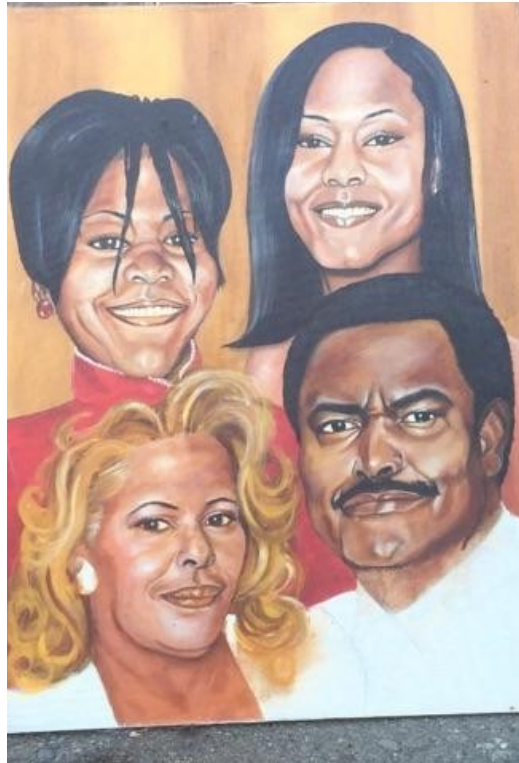
Jeffrey Barnett lived in Athens for over forty years. He attended Gaines Elementary School, Hilsman Middle School, and Cedar Shoals high school. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education from South Carolina State University in 1995, Mr. Barnett returned to Athens where he taught art at Clarke Central High School for eighteen years. During his tenure at Clarke Central High School, Mr. Barnett received a Golden Apple Award (1998), Teacher of the Year Award (2003) and Foundation of Excellence Award (2008). Last year, Mr. Barnett was recognized for outstanding contribution to the legacy of African American art and culture at the 2017 African American Heritage and Urban Agriculture Festival. His students participated in numerous exhibits throughout Athens. Mr. Barnett loves to work primarily in charcoal and graphite. However, he occasionally creates abstract works of art in acrylic. On March 5, 2017, Mr. Barnett opened James J. Barnett Photography Studio. Currently, he lives in Lawrenceville Georgia and serves as an Education Research & Evaluation Specialist for Georgia Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program



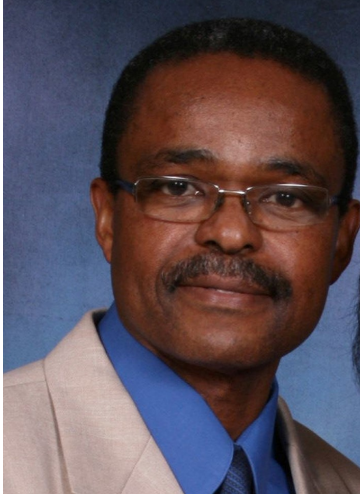
Tonnie Stroud Goolsby



Tonnie Deborah Stroud Goolsby is a graduate of Clarke Central High School, Athens, GA . She completed her studies for a Bachelors Degree at the University of Georgia. Tonnie is a daughter of Marion Armell Stroud, longtime art instructor at Clarke Central. Mrs. Goolsby resides with her family in Vallejo, California.

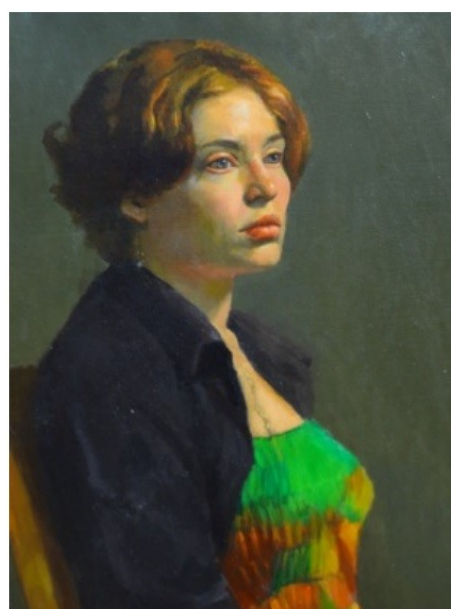
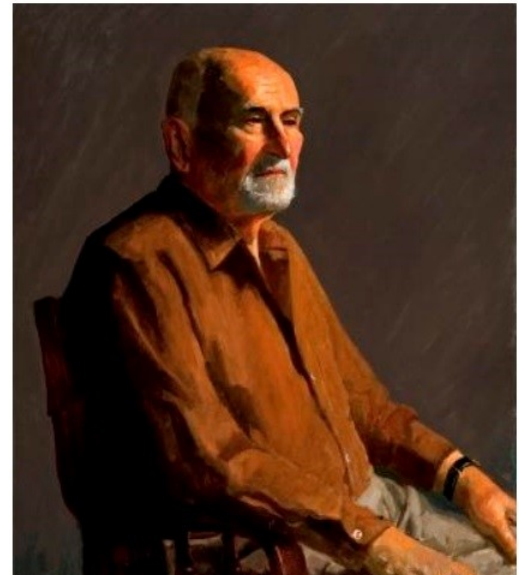


Abner Cope



Abner A. Cope received his Bachelor of Arts degree in painting from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA. in 1974. In 1980 he received his Masters of Fine Arts in drawing from Eastern Michigan University, Ann Arbor Michigan. Abner was an Associate Professor of Art at Central State University, Wilberforce, OH where, for 30 years, he taught beginning through advanced drawing and painting courses, with an emphasis on the figure. He also taught drawing and painting classes at various Ohio colleges including the University of Dayton, Clarke State University, Wilberforce University, Sinclair Community College, The Dayton Art Institute and Riverbend Art Center. Abner Cope has won numerous awards in Georgia, Chicago, Toledo and Dayton and his works are included in various private and corporate collections throughout the Mid- west.

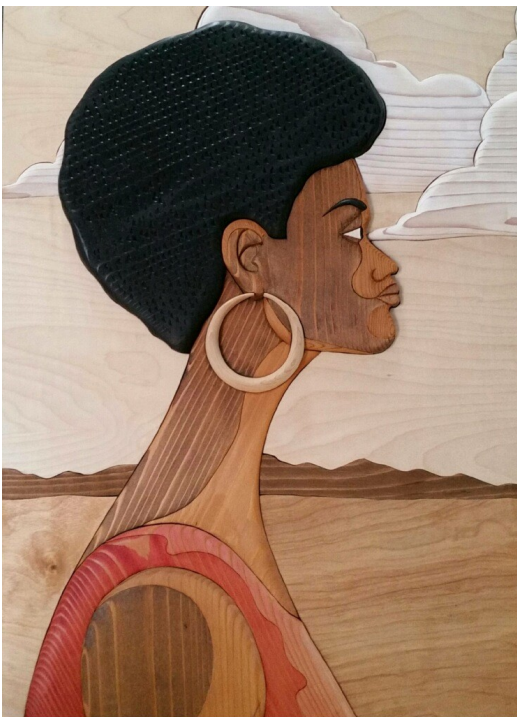
Artist's Statement: "I am constantly engaged with artists in Georgia, where I live and paint, and in New York, where I paint and continue to study portrait painting...teaching is an integral part of being an artist. That is, artists have urges to create, to learn, and to share what they have learned. "The essence of three - dimensional illusion in two-dimensional art rests within the design of the elements of light and shadow within the composition. The impact of the illusion depends on the contrast between these two essential elements. My work is driven by the formal essence of light."



Jeffrey Waller



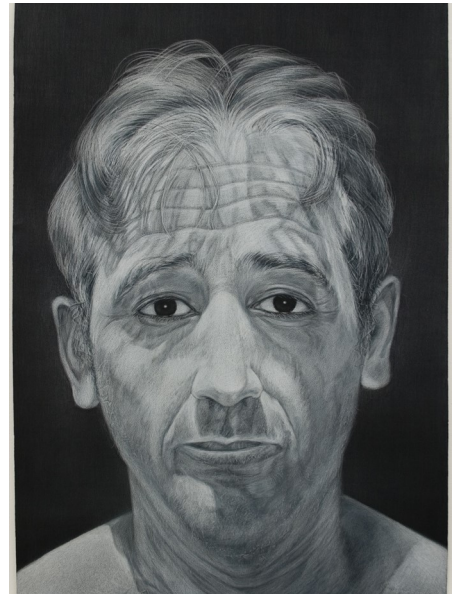
JEFFREY WALLER is a native of Putnam County, Georgia and graduated from Putnam County High School in 1980. He is a self-taught master of *Intarsia*, a woodworking technique that uses varied shapes, sizes, and species of wood fitted together to create a mosaic-like picture with an illusion of depth. Intarsia is created through the selection of different types of wood, using their natural grain pattern and color (but can involve the use of stains and dyes) to create variations in the pattern. After selecting the specific woods to be used within the pattern, each piece is then individually cut, shaped, and finished. Sometimes areas of the pattern are raised to create more depth. Once the individual pieces are complete, they are fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle and glued to a wooden backer-board, cut to the outline of the pattern, often with the intention of creating a three-dimensional effect as seen in the [studiolo](#) of the [Palazzo Ducale, Urbino](#). Waller recalls his earliest influence came at age seven observing his father doing sketches. Years later, he discovered *Intarsia* while leafing through a magazine featuring pictures created by this technique. Through inspired research and effort, he later found that his own methods of creating pictures were the same techniques originating in Italy! Artists Charles White and John Bigger are two of his greatest professional influences. Since 1994, Waller has exhibited throughout the country, has several works in private collections and attends an average of 10 festivals each year.



Diane Edison



Professor Edison received her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1986 and her BFA from The School of Visual Arts, NYC NY 1976. Edison's visual investigations have centered on portraiture, with an emphasis on the autobiographical. Edison creates her work using color pencil on black paper. Her images are thematically narrative in presentation and psychological in nature. Edison received her first teaching post in 1990, has been a member of the faculty at the Lamar Dodd School of Art since 1992 and was promoted to full Professor in 1999. She served as Associate Director of the School from 1997–1999. In 2002 Professor Edison was elected to a four-year term on the 25-member board of the College Art Association. In 2005 she was elected to the executive, Finance and Budget Committee of the CAA serving as Vice President for Committees, chairing the Nominating Committee. In 2008 her college textbook, *Dynamic Color Painting for the Beginner* was published by Harry Abrams in New York City and simultaneously with Laurence King Ltd in the United Kingdom. The Spanish language edition was printed in 2009 and the Chinese language 2015. Professor Edison has been represented by The George Adams Gallery in NYC NY since 1995. Her New York exhibitions have also included the Forum Gallery, the DC Moore Gallery and the Tatischev Gallery.



Stephanie Jackson



Stefanie Jackson is an Associate Professor of Art at UGA's Lamar Dodd School of Art, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate drawing and painting. Originally from Detroit, Jackson studied art in New York City and Paris. She received a BFA from Parsons School of Design in 1979 and an MFA from Cornell University in 1988. In 1994 she received her first major grant, from the Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner foundation. Jackson has lived and worked in Athens, Georgia since the 1990s, maintaining a studio practice at her home. Jackson is the recipient of several prestigious awards, most recently awarded the 2017 *Anonymous Was A Woman* prize of \$25,000! *Anonymous Was A Woman* recognizes extraordinary accomplishment in midcareer status; Georgia Council for the Arts and a Special Projects Grant from the National Endowment of the Arts; the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Award in 2002 in recognition of twenty years of sustained art making. Recent exhibitions include the solo exhibition *La Sombra y el Espiritu IV: Figurative Visions and Collective Histories* at the Stone Center's Robert and Sallie Brown Museum at the University of North Carolina in 2016 and the group exhibition *Shifting African American Women Artists and the Power of their Gaze* at the David C. Driskell Center Gallery at the University of Maryland in 2017. Jackson's paintings are in the collection of the Georgia Museum of Art, Birmingham Museum of Art, Larry and Brenda Thompson Collection of African America Art, the Kerry and C. Betty Davis Collection, and the Clarke Atlanta University Art Galleries. The Detroit Institute of Arts recently acquired a painting by Jackson that is on view in the galleries devoted to African-American art.



La Sombra y el Espiritu IV: Figurative Visions and Collective Histories – The Work of Stefanie Jackson art exhibit opens with

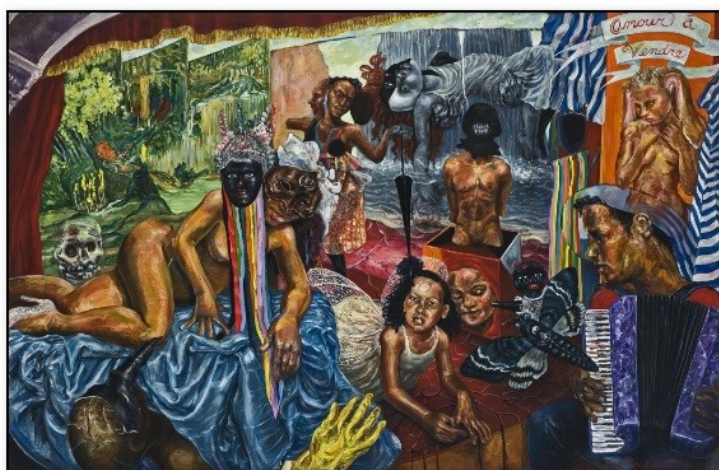


Image: Stefanie Jackson, *Love for Sale*, from the "Only Skin Deep" series



Stefanie Jackson, *What's Going On*, from the "WGO Series," 2010.

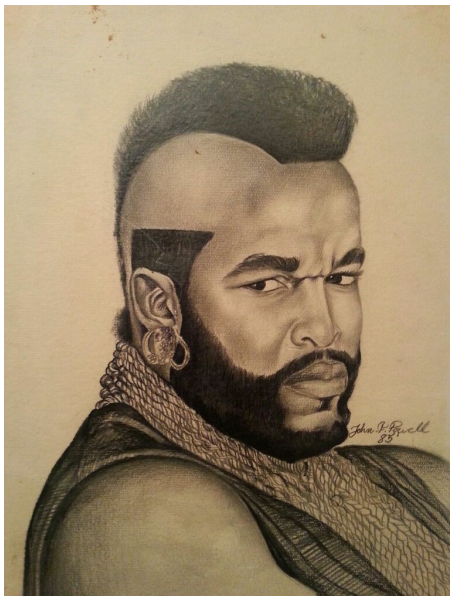
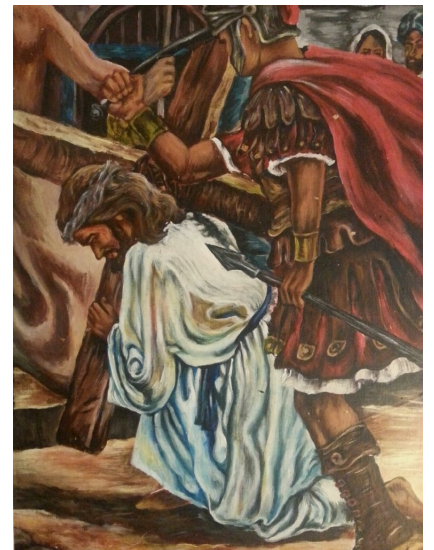
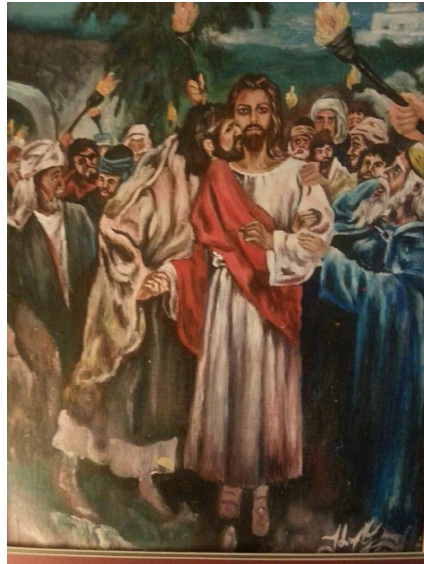


Image: Stefanie Jackson, *Love's In Need of Love Today*, from the "Orpheus Soul Brothers" series

John Powell

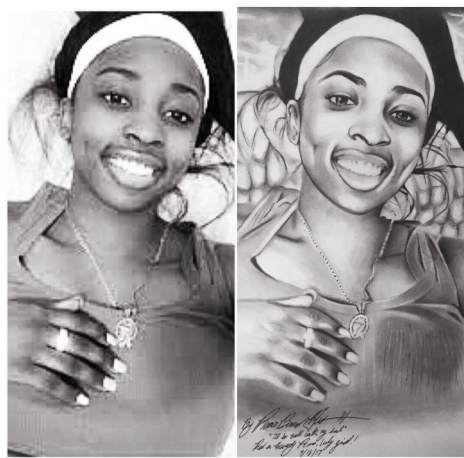
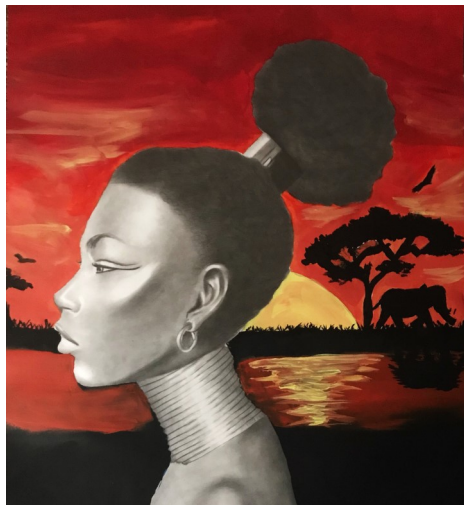


John F. Powell was born in Athens Georgia and attended Clarke Central High School where he was inspired and encouraged to pursue his dreams in art and life, by art teacher Marion Armell Stroud and History teacher Joyce Harrison. John credit these two individuals as “that voice “that said you can be successful in whatever you strive for in life. While at Clarke Central High school, he won many art awards, student and art contest. He credits Marion Armell Stroud as the person that helped him get a scholarship to the Savannah College of Art and design in Savannah Georgia. Powell received his Bachelors of Fine Arts Degree from Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah Georgia. He enjoys drawing and painting primarily portraits in ebony pencil and painting in acrylics. However, he does other art media such as; creating poster advertisements for various individuals or companies; retirement’s events, birthday parties, weddings and social gatherings. He currently resides in Stone Mountain Georgia and is employed with the State Of Georgia.



Ronnie Bernard Hull, III

Ronnie Bernard Hull III is a young renowned artist born and raised in Athens, Ga. He attended Chase Street Elementary and later attended Clarke Middle School where he first began his journey in art. In 2009, after the death of his father (Ronnie Bernard Hull Jr.), Ronnie vowed that he would never draw again, and throughout his high school career he took to other forms of the Arts focusing on singing and acting. In 2015 The Principal (David Cole) of Classic City High School challenged Ronnie to complete a portrait of Martin Luther King as a punishment for unruly behavior. Unbeknownst to Ronnie, his portrait was submitted for, and, won the 2015 Athens Clarke - County School District's "I Have A Dream Art Contest" which was the first award the high school had ever received! From there he began drawing for locals in the Athens Community. In 2016 Ronnie founded his Arts company, "Ronnie B Art & Designz," from which he has developed a very loyal following on social media platforms from Facebook to Instagram. His works have been received and admired by many celebrities and dignitaries alike, including being featured by HGTV and being recognized by Kelly Price, T.I., Momma Dee, Cardi B, Jussett Smollett, Brandy, and more!! As one of the Youngest Entrepreneurs in Athens, Ronnie continues to pursue Art and its many forms. He is constantly looking for new avenues to showcase and advance his Art. He enjoys singing, creating influential artwork, and traveling!



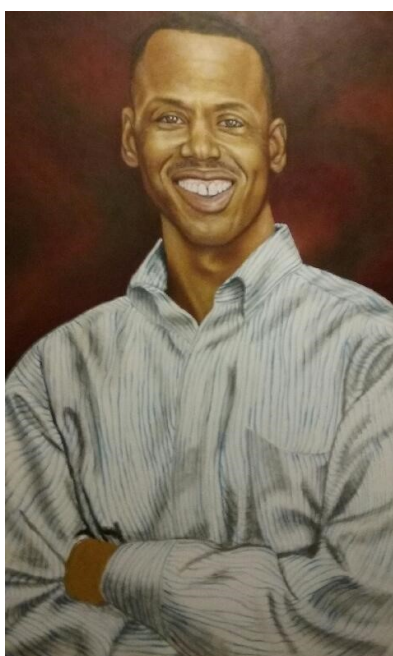
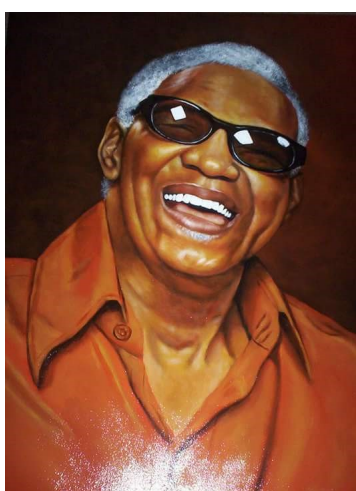
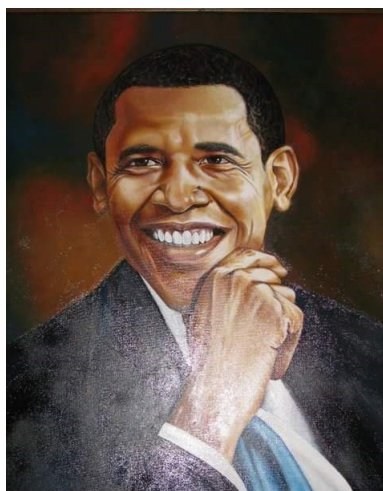
Billy Wilhite



My interest in art started in my early years drawing cars and things, but as I got older in middle school years watching my cousin (James Bradford) draw and paint in school I became fascinated. When I went to high school watching The Master Mr. Armell Stroud painting pictures that just made me stop in my tracks, and some of other great I watched coming up were Artists like Anthony Thrasher, Donald Maxey and others. I started out just doing pastel and pencil drawings. Then Mr. Stroud told me it was time to move into painting and I did just that.

Becoming a Painter gave me some opportunities to do other things and meet all different types of people. And I give a blessing to those people I really care about. Being an artist helps me in my other business as videographer and photo editor. It also helps your creative side come out to give people the best product you can.

I will always be grateful to Mr. Armell Stroud for those early years and even now for teaching me and giving me an opportunity to grow as an artist.





Caroline Ford Coleman

Caroline Ford Coleman is a native of Athens, GA, who has resided in Washington, DC since 1989. Ms. Coleman attended public schools in Athens and studied art under Mr. Robert Harrison (Burney Harris Middle School) and Mr. Armell Stroud (Clarke Central High School).

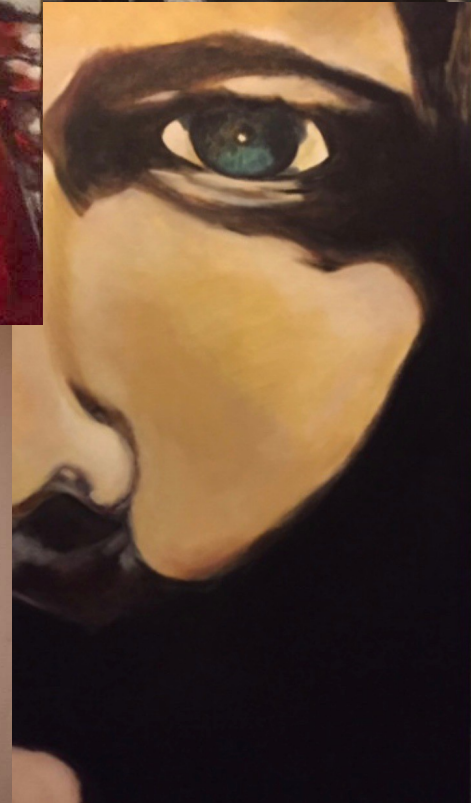
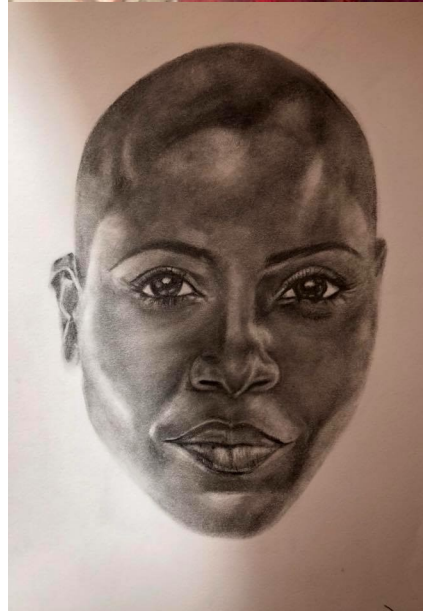
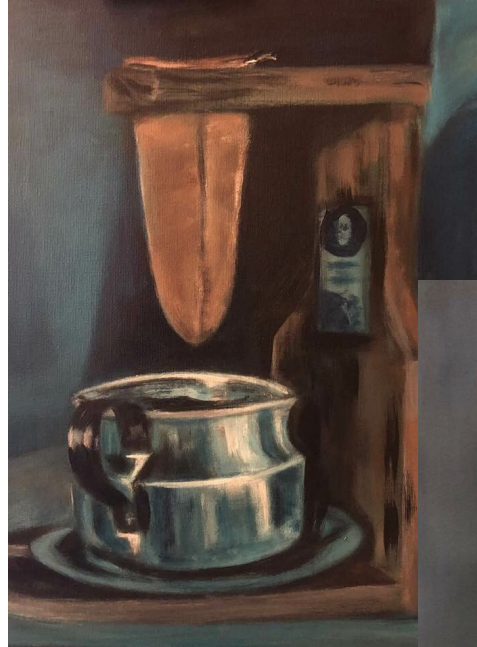
Her interest in art began in elementary school. In college she studied under the late renowned artist, Manon Cleary. Ms. Coleman's media of choice are oil, acrylic, and graphite. Her style is mainly realism representing varying subjects as well as some abstracts. Her exploration and interest in different techniques and media continue to grow through the development of her own work as well as that of the children she teaches. Ms. Coleman graduated from the University of Maryland University College with a degree in graphic communication.

After almost 20 years, she left her job as a program manager of a medical association to fulfill her dream of working with and inspiring children with different learning styles. She is currently a Student Support Resource and middle and high school art teacher at Washington Latin Public Charter School in Washington, DC.

She is the owner of The Coleman Factory, LLC – Art on the GO! established in 2016 (www.thecolemanfactory.com). As a practicing artist and art educator in Washington, DC, she provides art on all levels to all ages. Ms. Coleman paints, draws, and provide services that include paint parties for adults and children, as well as murals and instruction.

She has exhibited as well as published locally. She has been commissioned by patrons in DC and throughout the country.

She wholeheartedly believes the inclusion of black art of all genres is very important to society, as it broadens the scope and lends to an opportunity to educate and unite all people. Black art provides a platform for African American Artist and others to express their lives, feelings, values, beliefs and education through creativity. When black art is added to the "pallet" the entire world is made more beautiful by its inclusion.



Wadsworth Jarrell, Sr.



Revolutionary social artist **Wadsworth A. Jarrell, Sr.** was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1929, the youngest of six children. Jarrell credits his father, a furniture maker, and the rest of his family for supporting his childhood interest in art. After high school, Jarrell enlisted in the army, served in Korea, and then moved to Chicago. In 1954, Jarrell enrolled in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago majoring in advertising art and graphic design. Not long afterward, Jarrell lost interest in commercial art and took more drawing and painting classes.

Graduating from the Art Institute in 1958, Jarrell spent several years working as a commercial artist. By the early 1960s, Jarrell was exhibiting his work widely throughout the Midwest. Meanwhile, the explosive social atmosphere of the era left him wanting to create art that was pertinent to the social movements of the day, the Civil Rights Movement and black liberation struggle. Jarrell joined the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC), a group that created Chicago's Wall of Respect mural, a seminal piece in the 1960s urban mural movement. It was there that he met his future wife, Elaine Annette (Jae) Johnson, a clothing designer. With the eventual breakup of the Artists' Workshop of OBAC, Jarrell and fellow artists Jeff Donaldson and Barbara Jones-Hogu, among others, formed a collective called COBRA-Coalition of Black Revolutionary Artists, which later became **AFRI-COBRA, the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists**. AFRI-COBRA took as its central tenets black pride, social responsibility and the development of a new diasporic African identity.

In 1971, Jarrell was recruited by fellow AFRI-COBRA founder, Jeff Donaldson to teach at Howard University where he pursued his Master of Fine Arts degree. **He continued there until 1977, taking a position at the University of Georgia as Assistant Professor. In 1988, with the interest in his work increasing, Jarrell retired from teaching altogether.** Jarrell's work has been shown at numerous places including: the Smithsonian International Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and at festivals and exhibitions in Nigeria, Germany, Sweden, France, Haiti and Martinique.

The History, Philosophy and Aesthetics of AFRICOBRA



(Originally published in Afri-Cobra HI (Amherst: University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1973). Revised by the author, Chicago 2008. Barbara Jones-Hogu)

In 1968, a group of artists came together at the request of Jeff Donaldson in the studio of Wadsworth Jarrell to discuss the premise that Black visual art has innate and intrinsic creative components which are characteristic of our ethnic group. The artists who were present at the meeting consisted of painters, printmakers, textile designers, dress designers, photographers and sculptors who felt that their visual expression was definitely affected by the fact that they were Black and that their Blackness contributed a specific quality to their visual expression. Many of the artists at the first meeting were members of a visual art group which was then defunct, the Visual Workshop of OBAC (Organization of Black American Culture)—who created the Wall of Respect in Chicago in 1967. This mural became a visual symbol of Black nationalism and liberation...

Once the artists concluded that we had specific visual qualities intrinsic to our ethnic group, a future meeting was set for each person to bring in their work for analysis by the group. At that meeting the following visual elements were selected: bright colors, the human figure, lost and found line, lettering and images which identified the social, economic and political conditions of our ethnic group. When we had found our common denominators, our next step was to ponder whether a group of Black artists could transcend the “I” or “me” for the “us” and “we” in order to create a basic philosophy which would be the foundation of a visual Black art movement. We wanted to create a greater role as Black artists who were not for self but for our kind. Could we sacrifice the wants of self and ego in order to create the needed positive visual images of our people? Yes, we can!

A nucleus of artists felt that a collective effort was possible under a common philosophy and a common system of aesthetic principles. The basic nucleus was composed of Jeff Donaldson, painter-teacher; Wadsworth Jarrell, painter-photographer, Jae Jarrell, clothing designer, Barbara J. Jones (Hogu) painter-printmaker-teacher, and Gerald Williams, painter-student. We had all noted that our work had a message: it was not fantasy or art for art's sake, it was specific and functional by expressing statements about our existence as Black People. Therefore, we began our philosophy with functionalism. Functional from the standpoint that it must communicate to its viewer a statement of truth, of action, of education, of conditions and a state of being to our people. We wanted to speak to them and for them, by having our common thoughts, feelings, trials and tribulations express our total existence as a people. We were aware of the negative experiences in our present and past, but we wanted to accentuate the positive mode of thought and action. Therefore, our visual statements were to be Black, positive and direct with identification, purpose and direction. The directness of our statement was to be conveyed in several ways:

- A. The visual statement must be humanistic with the figure frontal and direct to stress strength, straight forwardness, profoundness, and proudness.
- B. The subject matter must be completely understood by the viewer, therefore lettering would be used to extend and clarify the visual statement. The lettering was to be incorporated into the composition as a part of the visual statement and not as a headline.
- C. The visual statement must identify our problems and offer a solution, a pattern of behavior or attitude.
- D. The visual statement must educate, it must speak of our past, present, or future.

Black, positive, direct statements created in bright, vivid, singing cool-ade colors of orange, strawberry, cherry, lemon, lime and grape. Pure vivid colors of the sun and nature. Colors that shine on Black people, colors which stand out against the greenery of rural areas. Cool-ade colors, Black positive statements stressing a direction in the image with lettering, lost and found line and shape were the beginning elements which created COBRA, the Coalition of Black Revolutionary Artists.

As COBRA began activating their philosophy we felt that everyone should work on a particular theme, the Black Family. The group met every two weeks to analyze and criticize the progress of each member as they completed their composition. These critiques became extremely important since it gave the artist a chance to work independently and jointly while having a group of his peers point out his strengths and weaknesses. As each artist developed his expression in a COBRA philosophy and aesthetics we moved on to the second theme, "I am Better Than Those Mother Fuckers," and we are. When the second theme was finished we dropped the idea of a definite theme and decided to start identifying problems, and solutions to problems, which we as Black people experience. Therefore, in the third work and thereafter each artist worked on a theme which he felt was pertinent to our existence as a people.

At this point Napoleon Henderson, the weaver, joined the group and we moved from five to six which later changed to seven as Nelson Stevens, painter-printmaker came into the group. Yet we continued to grow with Carolyn Lawrence, painter; Omar Lama, a draftsman in pen and ink; and Sherman Beck, a painter and illustrator. During the same period of time we moved from COBRA to African COBRA to AFRICOBRA, an African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists. We moved from a national perspective to an international perspective. All Black people regardless of their land base have the same problems, the control of land and economics by Europeans or Euro-Americans.

The change from COBRA to AFRICOBRA also crystallized our philosophy and aesthetics, such as (a) The Philosophical Concept `Images, Identification , Programmatic Modes of Expression and Expressive Awesomeness, and (b) The Aesthetic Principle – Free Symmetry, Mimesis At Mid-point Visibility, Luminosity and Color (cool-ade color, bright colors with sensibility and harmony)

As we expanded our philosophy we developed as a group who created messages that dealt with the past, to give definition to our existence, in the present, to identify the images and activities of our present situation, and the future that would show a direction toward purpose and solution. Our endeavors and thoughts culminated in 1970 in TEN IN SEARCH OF A NATION, an exhibit which was held at the Studio Museum in Harlem. The work we exhibited was on view to educate and was not for sale. We did not want to promote individual gain of the images but we did want to stress a unified effort of giving our messages to the people. We had plans to create poster prints of the work so that everyone could have some AFRICOBRA messages. Our endeavor was well received. It was the first time that most of the viewers had seen a group of artists jointly working together toward a concerted philosophy with images which stated to Black people "Unite," "Unite or Perish," "We Will Build Here or Nobody Will," because "I Am Somebody," "I Am Better."

Each artist dealt with their images in different perspectives. **Nelson Stevens** dealt with the spiritual aspect of nation building in Jihad, Uhuru, and Ujamma; he wants "to get as close as possible to the jihad... to images of those brothers and sisters who have never existed before," while **Jeff Donaldson** dealt with the modern Amos and Andy who are not for Toming but are seriously dealing with our problems with an advanced weapon. His Oshun, Oba and Yansa, the Wives of Shango (God of thunder and lightning who balances all debts), are three sisters who are ready for combat with bullet, belts and guns; while the "Shango Shortys" are dealing with their past in the tensions of today in a high- strung society of crystal clear glass.

Carolyn Lawrence wants to "Take the past and the present and make the new image." She records her concepts in Pops, a tribute to an old man, while in Manhood she pointed a direction of responsibility for all men. Jae Jarrell, the dress designer, laid out strong messages on her garments with strong patterns, textures and colors of Black Family, Unity, and Manhood. **Wadsworth Jarrell** stated, "If you can get to Be-Bop, you can get to me. That is where the truth is." The rhythms of his Be-Bop can be seen in the repetitious letters and colors of Cool-ade Lester. Jarrell's Homage to a Giant pays tribute to many pertinent leaders, such as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson, Fred Hampton, Huey P. Newton. His images state that we must be about Tightening Up the Game, and This Time Baby we are not going to be turned around from our

objective of total liberation. Each artist brought his peculiar talent to the commune and exhibit. **Sherman Beck**, a magic maker, extended himself through the magic of his medium. Although he had no titles on his work he dealt with another realm of the spiritual essence of man which could be seen and felt in his paintings. **Napoleon Henderson, the weaver**, looks toward himself and Africa as his future. The title of his work does not speak of the significant symbolism, bright harmonizing colors and textures in his words “Doodles” “Cool-ade Icicles” and “Bakota.”

Yesterday, today and possibly tomorrow **Gerald Williams** will respond to the potential for Black Nationhood and the need to develop that potential when he created I Am Somebody, Nationhood, and Wake Up to the King Alfred plan of concentration camps; while Omar Lama works toward positive images—images that will inspire Black people to a higher level of consciousness in Black Jesus, and United or Perish. Last but not least is Barbara J. Jones, who states Black People a total people, a total force, Unite, Unite, as we learn of our Heritage as an African in a racist country in the Land Where My Father Died which need to Stop Genocide while Black men must Rise and Take Control.

We moved from **Ten in Search of A Nation** homeward with important feedback from our viewers which gave encouragement, inspiration and direction for the future... The future works of AFRICOBRA became stronger, more powerful and more accessible as we started creating silk screen poster prints which was another phase of our basic philosophy. The poster prints made our images available to a larger audience at a reasonable price. For the prints, which were a total group effort, we selected one work from each artist, especially those that had been exhibited in the Ten in Search Of A Nation exhibit. Carolyn Lawrence's Manhood, the first print, enthralled everyone in the group as we finished the last color and saw the crystallization of many trials, errors and color separations. The completion of the first print produced a quick production of the next three which were Unite, Wake Up, and Uhuru. The prints which followed were African Solar, and Victory in the Valley of Esu. In the process of working on the prints, we lost **Sherman Beck and Omar Lama**, but we gained **Howard Mallory, ceramicist-jeweler-textile designer**, who did a great deal of work on producing all the prints.

In between production of the prints, we did find time to create broader visual statements about the changing conditions of our time and our people. Our new statements related the strength and determination of Angela Davis and Martin Luther King, the truth and wisdom of Malcolm X, the continual fall of Black education and the need of education to be based on the history and accomplishments of Black People. Our children have put up a tough struggle to Keep Their Spirits Free. Our images still stressed Nation Time, but emphasized: Don't Forget the Struggle, we all need spiritual unity as featured in Spirit Sister, Holy People, and From These Roots we gain strength. If we Get Some Land Black People, we need land to survive, for land provides the essentials which cultivate and nourish life, and We Must Go Home with Something. These images were the foundation for our AFRICOBRA II show at the Studio Museum in Harlem in the fall of 1971.

Nothing is continuously stable, and things must change, perhaps from young to old, east to west or vice versa or marching seconds of infinite time never to return. In our development we began to change; we first changed in position, time and space. The first to extend our commune was Jeff Donaldson who moved to Washington, D.C. to become the head of the Howard University Art Department early in the spring semester of 1971. Next to leave, Wadsworth and Jae Jarrell with one child at hand and one on the way, they moved eastward to Connecticut, Massachusetts, and later to Washington, D.C. The extension of our space relationship broke down our immediate communications and communal development, but it also built personal progress without the intervention of momentary feedback of criticism in our trials and tribulations which created a more responsive or irresponsive action. As we attempted communications across country we continued to work and develop but at a slower pace. Before long another AFRICOBRA member, Nelson Stevens, had made his way eastward to Amherst, Massachusetts, and what was six became five again. We began with five members in Chicago. The work of AFRICOBRA will continue to grow because we have a foundation by which we have built a strong value system of our work and a philosophy which guides us toward a common aim of artistic endeavor. The works which are exhibited in AFRICOBRA expressed the expansion of our creative effort in new media, new techniques, new styles and a new member, Frank Smith, painter.

Where will we go from here? As time moves so shall we, to a broader and more expanded commitment to our people visually, mentally, and physically. Our new visual statement shall explore the total gamut of our existence: The Individual and the Family; Education, Can State Our Social Needs and Social Services, The Economic Needs, Concerning the Present, Past and Future Political Needs and Developments, Religious Needs... AFRICOBRA will not only state our problems and solutions but also state our emotions, our joys, our love, our attitude, our character, our total emotional and intellectual responses and feelings. Art can be a liberating force—a positive approach concerning the plight and the direction of our people. Visual imagery should bring us together and uplift us as a people into a common—a common unit, moving toward a common destination and a common destiny. WE IN AFRICOBRA SHALL HELP BRING THIS ABOUT

