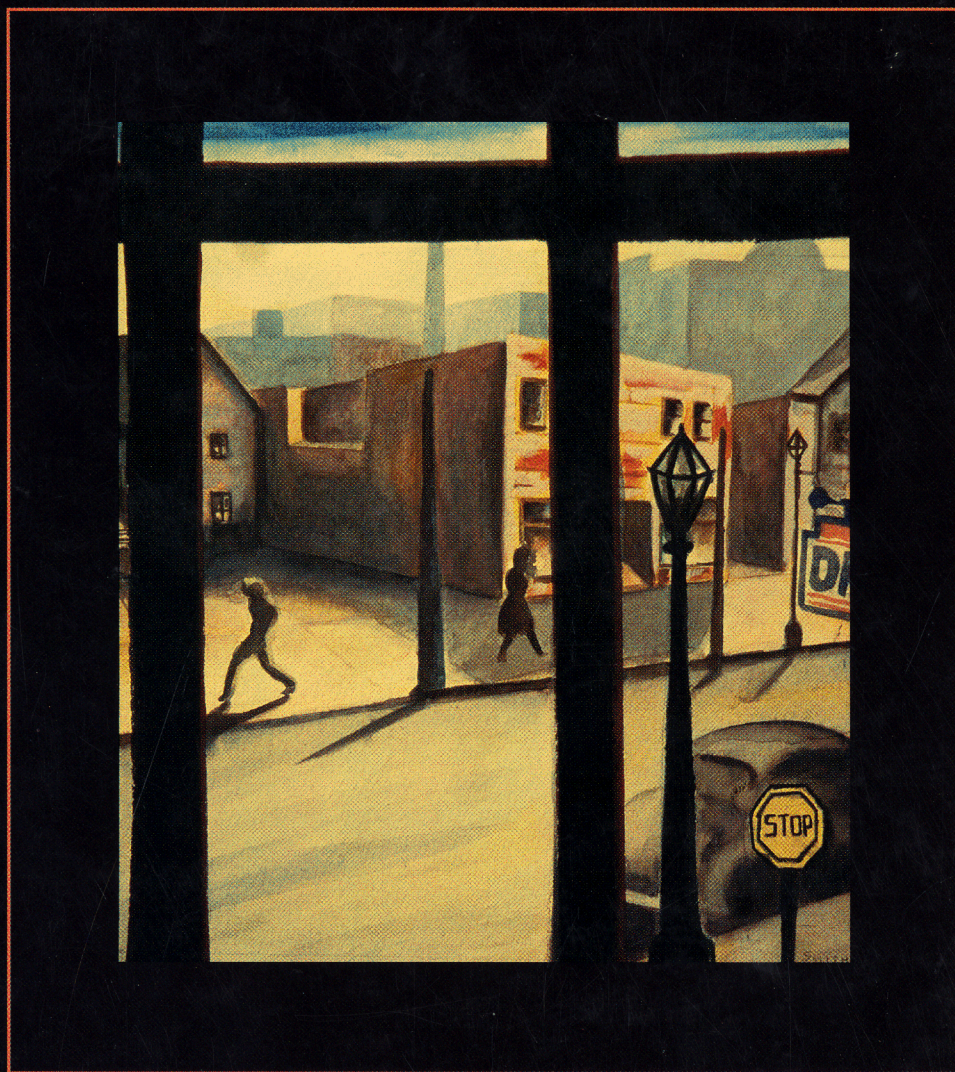


YET STILL WE RISE

AFRICAN AMERICAN ART IN CLEVELAND 1920-1970



YET STILL WE RISE **AFRICAN AMERICAN ART** **IN CLEVELAND 1920-1970**

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Cleveland, Ohio

March 15, 1996 – April 20, 1996

THE BUTLER INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN ART

Youngstown, Ohio

December 22, 1996 – January 26, 1997

RIFFE GALLERY

Columbus, Ohio

April 24, 1997 – July 12, 1997

CONTRIBUTORS

Copyright 1996 Cleveland Artists Foundation
23811 Chagrin Blvd., LL41, Cleveland, Ohio 44122
Ann Caywood Brown, Director
Library of Congress Card Catalog Number: 96-083592

ISBN: 09639562-4-8

Project coordinated by Zita Rahn

Edited by Ursula Korneitchouk

Cover designed by Helen C. Biehle

Layout by Helen C. Biehle, Ann Caywood Brown, Ursula Korneitchouk

Typesetting and Printing by

The Collier Printing Company, Wooster, Ohio

Staff support: Madeline L. Cargill, Mary Koster, Barbara Messner, Sandy Richert

PHOTO CREDITS

Photographs of works reproduced in this catalog are the work of Brian Pierce with the exception of the following:

Alfred L. Bright: 21, 22, 89, 102

R. Kumasi Hampton: 72

George Jones (© SOHI ART): 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 103

Brady Melton Jr.: 97

Susan Telecki: 94

Zita Rahn: 105

Western Reserve Historical Society: 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76

All other photographs have been provided by the artists or the owners and are so noted.

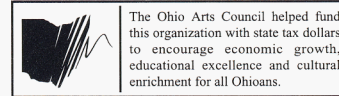


COVER: WILLIAM E. SMITH.
38th and Central (1942). Watercolor,
10 1/2 x 13 1/4". Courtesy of the artist,
SOHI ART, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The title of the publication and exhibition have been paraphrased from ...*And Yet I Still Rise* (1970) William E. Smith (Fig.34)

This catalog and exhibition have been made possible by the generous support of the following foundations, organizations, businesses, corporations and individuals:

Supported by **THE OHIO ARTS COUNCIL**



CSU Cleveland State University



THE GEORGE GUND FOUNDATION

THE BUTLER INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN ART

RIFFE GALLERY

CHARTER ONE BANK

SUNOCO MIDAMERICA MARKETING & REFINING

THE KULAS FOUNDATION

MARTHA HOLDEN JENNINGS FOUNDATION

American Greetings, Mo & Son, Inc., Parker Hannifan Corp.

Bank One, The Bonfoey Company, E. F. Boyd & Son, Inc., Eller Media Co., Goodtown Printers, Inc., *The Plain Dealer*, Ryce Sunoco #2, Charles Simpson.

Douglas Phillips Memorial Fund: Mr. and Mrs. Mark J. Bir, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Grasso, George Streeter, M.D., John Szilagyi.

Laurel Blossom, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred L. Bright, Cleveland Automobile Dealers' Association, Mr. and Mrs. Robert P. Madison.

Dr. and Mrs. Albert C. Antoine, Foster and Judith Armstrong, Robert B. Benyo, Delta Products, Ralph Drake, Dr. and Mrs. W. L. Huffman, Northeast Ohio Beverage Distributors, Algesa and Joseph O'Sickey, Caroline G. Oberndorf, Donna and Joe Pacchioni, Barbara V. Wamelin, Jane and James M. Wood, Zagara's Food Centers.

Reta Biehle Alder, Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Bell, Helen C. and Frederick Biehle, Mary F. and Charles Bill, Ann C. and Hugh J. Brown, Laura K. Burchard, Joanne Calkins, Kathleen M. Carrick, Mark Cole, Ruth Dancyger, Kathleen Komnenovich and Charles Donahue, Lelabelle Freeman Robinson and James E. Robinson, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gaertner and Family, Nina F. and James Gibans, The B.F. Goodrich Co., Diana Tittle and Tom Hinson, Charles H. Joseph, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lissauer, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Mackenbach, Barbara and Steve Messner, John Paul Miller, Mr. and Mrs. John Prim, John Puskas, Ben Shouse, Albert and Raquel Wasserman, Marianne Woods.

CONTENTS

Foreword by Leslie King-Hammond	4
Curatorial and Advisory Committees	7
African American Photographers of Cleveland, 1930-1965 by Samuel W. Black	9
On Fertile Ground The African American Experience of Artists Associated With Cleveland's Karamu House by Alfred L. Bright	23
Creativity in a Time of Social Change by Pamela McKee	41
Artist Biographies	54
Bibliography	86
Authors	88
Acknowledgements	90
Lenders	92
Index of Works of Art by Artist	93

Rising like the mythic phoenix from the dusty ashes of the Middle Passage, the African American artist finally emerges from the peripheral edge of oblivion. American art history has been all but deaf, dumb, and blind to what Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* (1992) describes as 'American Africanism', which she identifies as "the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings and misreading that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people." Art historical literature suffers from gross voids in the contextualization and documentation of black artists as well as their relationship to, and contributions within, the larger construct of an American identity, culture and, in particular, aesthetic sensibility.

The legacy of American Africanism is more openly recognized in music, dance, theatre, and the literary voice. Defining a visual aesthetic has been a more difficult process for the artist, historian, and critic, complicated by geographic and regional biases. The exhibition *YET STILL WE RISE: African American Art in Cleveland, 1920-1970* challenges these biases and establishes the presence of Cleveland's creative African American community as an important factor in the development of regional American artistic traditions of the twentieth century. This unique blossoming of art occurs in a period of traumatic change and demographic shifts in the lives of African American people.

The subject matter, prolific production, and technical excellence of the works under discussion shatter the populist assumptions that if there were any artistic centers of black visual creativity, they were insignificant rather than crucial to the development of a midwestern American character or aesthetic ideal. Cleveland is in fact another important center in the growing legion of black communities who helped to create a continued regional legacy by expressively documenting and representing the American Africanist experience.

During the mid-1800s, approximately two hundred miles south of Cleveland, the city of Cincinnati, Ohio had become the "gateway to the West." Through the pioneering images and activities of James Prestly Ball, the first recognized black photographer, and the highly revered landscapist Robert S. Duncanson, these two artists formed a partnership which inspired not only the black community,

but the entire city and region of Cincinnati. In the northeast New England corridor, Boston's African American community was distinguished by the award-winning works of landscape artist Edward M. Bannister and sculptress Edmonia Lewis. The cultural energy of Philadelphia is affirmed by the diligent research found in W. E. B. Dubois' *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899) and the more recent efforts of Steven L. Jones on African American material culture in the *International Review of African American Art* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 1995). These texts identify the active presence of over seven hundred black artists and artisans in the nineteenth century. Some of the more notable individuals from that period include silhouette maker Moses Williams, painters Sarah Mapps Douglas, Robert Douglas Sr., David Bustill Bowser, Henry Ossawa Tanner, and sculptress Meta Warrick Fuller.

Again, contrary to popular beliefs held by a racially blind-sided society, these artists' extraordinary endeavors gave clear evidence of an intensely productive artistic energy that was well known throughout all of these black communities in America. These centers were distinguished by self-educated individuals who had a strong sense of self-esteem, self-determination, and a collective commitment to uplift the race through anti-slavery and abolitionist activities. Art proved to be a viable mechanism to address the issues of black survival in a society resistant to the presence and participation of black people within the democratic ideals of the American Constitution and Bill of Rights.

In 1943, art historian and artist James A. Porter published his seminal study *Modern Negro Art* which made some of the earliest profound observations about the potential development of – and future challenges for – the African American artist. The impact of the Depression of the 1930s gave rise to the Federal Art Project under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal administration. This was a boon for the artist of African American descent by providing conditions for full employment as an artist and the uninhibited opportunity to experiment with new materials, technologies, equipment, and stylistic genres. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, and Cleveland became centers of intense production.

Porter believed that Karamu House, founded in Cleveland in 1915 by Russell and Rowena Jelliffe, exempli-



1. ELMER W. BROWN. *Dorie Miller Manning the Gun at Pearl Harbor* (1942).
Oil, 34½ x 46". Cleveland Artists Foundation; Gift of the Elmer W. Brown Estate.

FOREWORD, *continued*

fied “a highly successful experiment in the cultural education of the Negro into which racial differences have not intruded.” He was greatly encouraged by the efforts and achievements of Karamu House, whose directors “reached out for great outstanding ‘talent’ from ‘very ordinary run-of-the-mill people’” who were each given the opportunity for excellent technical training. Stellar examples of genius emerged in William E. Smith, Rozell Ingram, Charles Sallée, and Hughie Lee-Smith.

The city of Cleveland provided other supports coupled with the efforts of Karamu House: a strong arts curriculum at East Technical High School, biracial exhibitions at the annual May Show of The Cleveland Museum of Art, the WPA program (1933-1943), and the projects and activities of the Cleveland Print Makers (1930-1936). Each of these interconnected efforts helped to establish Cleveland as a vital center in the revisioning of America’s aesthetic legacy. Continuing in this vein, the Cleveland Artists Foundation, founded in 1984, is to be recognized for its vision, spirit of humanity, and belief in the importance of the artist and the community.

As the American art scene continues to be inundated with the issues and questions of political correctness, identity, representation, multicultural diversity, sexual determination, and gender balance, affirming the African American experience warrants, as Steven L. Jones has suggested, a “new attitude of curiosity.” At the threshold of the new millennium, it is time for all Americans to fully acknowledge the impact of this experience and the achievements it engendered, if we are to embrace the future in a spirit of equity and national harmony.

LESLIE KING-HAMMOND
Dean Of Graduates
Maryland Institute, College of Art

When the Cleveland Artists Foundation decided two years ago to begin a project focusing on the African American art of this region, we knew it would be an groundbreaking project, but little did we know how exciting and exhilarating it would be to discover these artists and their work.

Some of the artists whose work is featured in the exhibition and publication are very well known, others are not. In some cases very little of an artist’s life and work has been revealed by research, thus one of the important goals of this project is to uncover information about these and other artists and their work. To learn about these artists, their lives and the obstacles they have overcome has been an honor and an inspiration.

After this exhibit has been shown in the three venues scheduled, Cleveland’s African American art will take its place in the historical and cultural history of this area. Much of this art reflects Cleveland’s history and some subject matter is personal; all of it records events, persons, and emotions that are part of our collective experience. In this year of Cleveland’s Bicentennial, it is important to recognize the contributions of all our citizens and to leave a record of those accomplishments for the future.

The Cleveland Artists Foundation recognizes the support and help of the Board of Trustees, the efforts of the Curatorial and Advisory Committees, the project director, Zita Rahn, and the financial and volunteer backing of so many individuals, organizations and foundations.

The Cleveland Artists Foundation brings you this exhibition and book within the context of our mission: to preserve, research and present the artistic legacy of this region. It is our hope that it will help uncover new information about the artists featured in the exhibit and bring to the public’s attention those about whom we have no knowledge.

NINA FREEDLANDER GIBANS
President, Board of Trustees
Cleveland Artists Foundation

CURATORIAL COMMITTEE

Samuel W. Black, Associate Curator, African American History, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

Alfred L. Bright, Professor of Art, Youngstown State University, Ohio.

Ann Caywood Brown, Director, Cleveland Artists Foundation.

William Busta, Director, William Busta Gallery; Vice-president, Cleveland Artists Foundation.

Cleo Bell Ferguson, Coordinator of Art Programs, Karamu House, Cleveland.

John Hunter, Associate Professor & Chair, Art Department, Cleveland State University.

Richard Karberg, Professor of Art, Cuyahoga Community College Eastern Campus, Cleveland; Trustee, Cleveland Artists Foundation.

Ursula Korneitchouk, Editor, Cleveland Artists Foundation.

Zita Rahn, Project Coordinator, Cleveland Artists Foundation.

Robert Thurmer, Director of Art Gallery, Cleveland State University.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John and Joanna McLendon,
Chairpersons

Alicia Barnes

Helen C. Biehle

Carolyn L. Brock

Ann Caywood Brown

Elmer Buford

William Busta

Madeline L. Cargill

Robert Cheshier

Frances Daniels

Rachel Davis

Elisabeth Travis Dreyfuss

Eryllyne Davis Durant

John H. Durant

Joe Erdelac

Cavana Faithwalker

Ellen Galmitz

Nina F. Gibans

James L. Harris, Jr.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones

Richard Karberg

Lolita M. McDavid

Marva McMillan

Emmy Lou Miller

Zita Rahn

Maria Respreto

Sandy Richert

Rev. Albert T. Rowan

Shirley Sacks

Brenda Sheppard

Juliann Weber

Carmel B. Whiting

Rachel Wiggins



2. HUGHIE LEE-SMITH. Untitled (c.1937-38). Watercolor, 8 1/2 x 8". June Kelly Gallery, NYC, NY.



3. ALLEN E. COLE. *Silas Johnson*
(1920s). Handtinted Photograph.
Western Reserve Historical Society;
The Allen E. Cole Collection.



4. LEWIS & ANDREW CHESNUTT, CHESNUTT BROS. STUDIO. *Edwin Chesnutt* (1902). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society.

African American photographers have been active since the advent of the daguerreotype in the early 1840s. Jules Lion, a freeman of color, introduced the daguerreotype to New Orleans in 1841.¹ Between the early 1850s and the late 1880s, the studios of daguerrean James Presley Ball, located in Cincinnati, in Montana and later in Washington State, produced some portraits of the highest quality any photographer of the time could aspire to attain.

In Cleveland, which had a very small African American population between 1840 and 1880 and where occupational lines were sharply drawn, no references to African American photographers can be documented until the late 1880s.

Hattie Baker advertised as photograph enlarger, seamstress and fitter in various January 1887 issues of the *Cleveland Gazette*.² Cornelius M. Battey – the founder and from 1916 to 1927 the head of the Tuskegee Institute’s Photography Department – entered the Ondeon studio of Cleveland in 1888.³ After moving to New York, he supervised the Bradley studio and later worked at the studios of Underwood and Underwood.⁴

The most successful African American photographers in late 19th century and early 20th century Cleveland were the **Chesnutt Brothers, Andrew and Lewis**. Beginning as social photographers, they opened their first studio in 1891 at 50 Euclid Avenue, right in the business district of downtown Cleveland,⁵ but rather removed from their primary clientele. Gradually overshadowed by the fame of their nov-

elist brother Charles, they began to do commercial work as well⁶ and relocated their studio several times during their forty years in business, in step with the social demographics of Cleveland’s African American population. In the 1920s, they moved it into the hub of the African American community. In a 1902 *Plain Dealer Magazine* article by George Myers, the Chesnutt Brothers were the only “colored” photographers listed.⁷ They were recognized for over 15 years as the only professional African American photographers in town.

The Chesnutt Brothers’ portraiture was exquisite. One portrait, taken around 1902, shows Edwin Chesnutt (Fig. 4), the artists’ nephew, in a romanticized pose. Another one, dated in the late 1920s, of Edwin (with camera) and his father (Fig. 73), shows an elderly Charles Chesnutt a few years before his death. Sought after in their lifetime, the Chesnutt Brothers have remained a too-well-kept secret in the annals of African American photography.

In the years between 1930 and 1965, African Americans asserted themselves nationwide as an increasingly active element in American society. Their vitality was captured by African American photographers, as witnessed by James Van Der Zee’s monumental photographic documentation of Harlem, New York. Yet the accomplishments of Cleveland’s African American photographers during these years of growth have, until recently, remained a relatively hidden treasure.

In Cleveland, a number of African American “urban photographers” chronicled the mid-twentieth century. Their photographs are in some cases the only surviving visual record of African American community life, history and culture from that period.

By 1930, as the Chesnutt Brothers were approaching retirement, the African American population of Cleveland – a bare 2,989 in 1890 – had risen to 72,469.⁸ Despite the Depression, the African American metropolis, constantly swelled by new arrivals from the southern states, offered many opportunities for skilled African American photographers, even if they had to barter their services.

From 1922 on, various studios opened, most of them along Cedar Avenue, the pipeline of African American life. In the 1930s, Cleveland’s African American press began using the work of local photographers more regularly. The

Call & Post in particular established many photographers as competent professional artists.

The next decade ended the economic depression and brought World War II. Between 1941 and 1946, the number of the city's African American photographers increased dramatically. Portraits of departing servicemen and their families were popular and often poignant, as there was no guarantee that the soldiers would return home from the war. Among these images are some of the most artistic and powerful portraits produced by local African Americans.

During the same decade, the opportunities for photographic training and hobbyism also increased. Notable members of the "Film Wasters Club" that had been organized in 1939 by the YMCA on Cedar Avenue for "Clevelanders who would like to indulge their photographic hobby ..."⁹ were **Frederick Coleman** (later a federal district attorney and judge), **Leroy Leonard**, **R.F. Donato**, **Leland Harding**, **Fred Johnson**, **Karl Johnson**, **Eddie Coleman**, **Reace Jamieson** and **Raymond Harding**.¹⁰ For more thorough training in photography, the Karamu Guild offered to African Americans one of the first programs in the country and helped develop the careers of several respected photo-artists of the time. The Guild, "composed of Karamu members interested in all phases of photography,"¹¹ was primarily a photo-artist training studio, but also encouraged journalism and historic documentation. During the 1950s, as photo technology developed and the public became more keenly interested in the medium, the Guild at times counted over 20 members.¹²

The decade of the 1950s saw freelance photographers diversify in style and clientele. While reliance on journalism as the sole means of livelihood and photographic expression began to diminish, artistic photography gained popularity. For the first time, more than one African American belonged to the Cleveland Photographic Society. The number of African American entries in photographic exhibitions increased as well. Members of the Karamu Camera Guild participated annually in *The Cleveland Museum of Art's* May Show and the Photographic Society Interclub Competition, and also hosted an annual exhibition of their own.¹³ The photographers **Harold Golden**, **James Brown**, **Calvin Ingram**, **James Joyce**, **John Goodwin**, **Matthew Dunlop**, **Mildred Elston**, and **Katherine Samuel Butler**



5. MATTHEW DUNLOP. *Loving* (1963). Photograph. Courtesy of the Artist.

all were members of the Camera Guild.

Throughout the 1960s, the members of the Karamu Camera Guild continued to enter competitions while a new crop of African American freelancers began to vary the scope and production of photography. In 1963, Camera Guild member **Matt Dunlop** took first prize in the International Black and White Print Competition in Rochester, New York.¹⁴ His winning print, *Loving*, (Fig. 5) was a moving black and white image of a mother and infant daughter in embrace.

The socio-economic barriers of the previous decades also

started to yield in the 1960s, as the Caucasian news media more readily accepted the photojournalistic work of African Americans. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* employed several freelance photographers, in particular **James Gayle** who later became the first African American on its staff. But the predominant media employer for African American photo-journalists remained the African American press.

From 1930 to 1965, African American photographers established themselves as respected artists and skilled technicians, finding fresh opportunities for artistic expression both inside and outside their community. During this period, the growth of the Cedar-Central area as a residential, business and social district reached its zenith. Between 1922 and 1960, a number of studios opened on Cedar Avenue and adjoining streets and helped define African American photo-aesthetics. The body of work produced by **Bob Williams - Pierpoint Studios, Benmar Studios and Artistic Studios**, and by studio photographers such as **Allen E. Cole, Herbert Mitchell, William Washington, Garnell McGhee, George Bryant, William Crawford,** and **James Doss** defused any criticism of the African American photographer as being unestablished and unprofessional.

The studios were equipped for commercial production, primarily portraiture. Of course, some were technically more advanced than others. While the studios of Cole, Mitchell, McGhee, Crawford and Doss could explore a variety of artistic approaches, that of Washington was little more than a darkroom in his home, with limited means for producing sophisticated images.

The freelancers of the time – for instance **Clement Perry, James Gayle, Jim Brown, Josephus Hicks,** and **Charles Pinkney** – were expressionist and adventurous. Though they would do portraits and occasionally freelance for commercial studios or the news media, their true studio was the field. The result was a heightened genre of artistic and journalistic photography, refining the professionalism of African American photographic production.

The early studio photographers had built a sound reputation which inspired their successors, leading into the civil rights era of the 1950s and '60s. With each new decade, a new generation raised the level of professionalism and expanded the scope of expression. It is interesting to note



6. JAMES "JIMMY" GAYLE. *Garrett Morgan* (1950s). Photograph. Courtesy of Gina Gayle.

that many of these dedicated African American photographers held other occupations as their primary source of income, or before making photography their main profession. Allen Cole worked as a waiter, Garnell McGhee was a plasterer, William Washington a clerk, George Bryant a shipping clerk.

The business and residential district around Cedar Avenue that had begun to take shape in the 1930s soon stretched north to south from Cedar Avenue to Woodland Avenue and west to east from East 22nd Street to East 105th Street. Commonly recognized as the Cedar-Central community, it remained the core of Cleveland's African American social life and culture into the mid-1960s.

The Cedar-Central community had been without a resident photographer until **Allen E. Cole** opened the first photo studio in 1922. From 1915 to 1922, Cole had been a waiter at the Cleveland Athletic Club as well as an apprentice photographer at the Frank Moore Studios of Cleveland.¹⁵ His decision to dedicate himself full-time to professional photography prompted the last of his many

career changes.

Born in 1884 in Kearneysville, West Virginia, as eleventh of the thirteen children of Allen Cole, Sr. and his wife Sarah, the junior Allen Cole graduated in 1905 from Storer College in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, waited tables in Atlantic City for a short while, then migrated to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he found employment as a railroad dining car cook. When an accident ended his railroad job, he entered the real estate business – a venture that proved unprofitable¹⁶ – and applied unsuccessfully for admission to the Miami and Ohio State University Law Schools. He subsequently studied law through correspondence courses.¹⁷

In 1915, Cole moved to Cleveland and, through fraternal connections, secured employment at the Cleveland Athletic Club. He had always been an art enthusiast who painted oils and produced graphite drawings. During his years at the Club, he also became interested in photography. Though none of his oils and drawings has survived, a wealth of his photographs has.

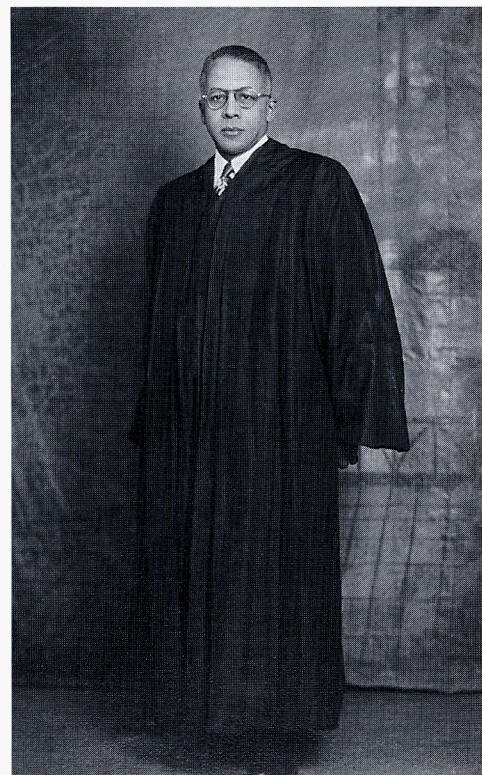
Cole took advantage of the lack of a resident photographer in the Cedar-Central community where he established himself in 1919 and, in 1922, opened the first studio in his home on East 103rd Street. In 1924 he moved to 9904 Cedar Avenue and equipped his studio for greater commercial production.¹⁸ From the late 1920s to the early 1930s, much of his work was contracted by Caucasian-owned studios.¹⁹ Cole describes his role in this relationship:

*“... They would send me out to make them [photographs]. I would make the negatives, print the picture, put their names on it. They would sell and deliver, and we worked on a percentage basis.”*²⁰

Most sources characterize Cole as a documentary photographer comparable to Van Der Zee, celebrating the life and culture of Cleveland's African American population. As a photo-journalist, he freelanced with the *Call & Post* from 1929 well into the 1950s. But Cole's most exemplary subjects during 40 years of practice were church groups, socio-political organizations, businesses, weddings, funerals, clubs, entertainers, athletes, politicians and public officials. Clearly, his greatest impact was in portraiture.

Cole's portraits were much in demand – and he knew how to create a market. If his colleagues habitually advertised their services in newspapers and magazines, he went a step further and advertised portraits as Christmas gifts. Seizing upon the possibilities inherent in Cedar-Central's tradition as a “walking community” where people would spend entire Sunday afternoons in the streets ambling from one social attraction to the other, he attracted walk-in clients by displaying portraits on a billboard in front of his studio, inscribed with his slogan “Somebody, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph.”

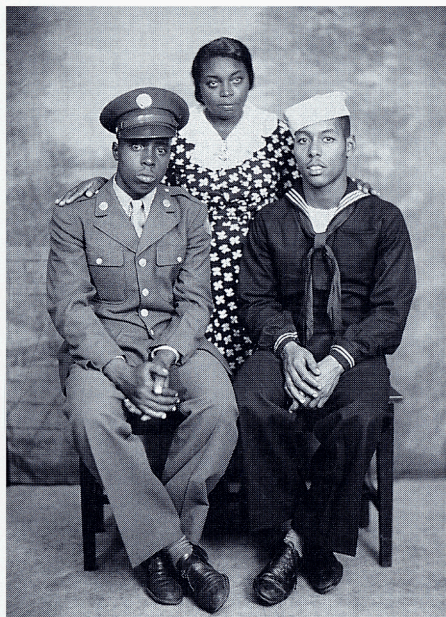
Cole created memorable portraits. One of them, very dynamic, captures the dignity and austere prominence of Judge Perry Brooks Jackson (Fig. 7), Ohio's first African American Municipal Court Judge, appointed in 1942,²¹ around the time the portrait was taken. It shows the jurist posing tall in a traditional black robe, subtly framed by a



7. ALLEN E. COLE. *Judge Perry Jackson* (1942). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society; The Allen E. Cole Collection.



8. ALLEN E. COLE. *Sorilla and L. Pearl Brooks* (c.1944). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society; The Allen E. Cole Collection.



9. ALLEN E. COLE. *Aisilee McPherson and Sons* (1940s). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society; The Allen E. Cole Collection.



10. ALLEN E. COLE. *Mrs. Woods* (1935). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society; The Allen E. Cole Collection.

wisely chosen, unobtrusive background scene.

The portrait of Sorilla and L. Pearl Brooks (Fig. 8, c.1944) illustrates how much Cole's portrait style had evolved since the time of his early work in the 1920s. The stylish sisters, similarly dressed, strike a pose of high-spirited elegance, echoing the jazz age.

Another classic Cole portrait is that of Mrs. Woods (Fig. 10), taken around 1935. The subject poses in evening gown among modest surroundings. The focus is on Mrs. Wood's face, enhanced by the bareness of her back and the exquisite elegance of the gown draped on her body.

However, Cole's sensitive artistry is best revealed in what may be his oldest portrait still in existence: the hand-tinted portrait of Mr. Silas Johnson (Fig. 3) seated in a wicker chair, which dates from around 1921. It is not known how extensively Cole used this technique, but he certainly used it with consummate skill.

Cole's photographic achievements were recognized in 1948 when he took first prize in a regional competition held at the Allen Theatre.²² His winning entry was a portrait of his great-niece, 8-year-old Phyllis Lyles.

Allen E. Cole had savored the prestige of being the Cedar-Central community's first career photographer. Eventually, he had established himself beyond the boundaries of Cedar-Central and become a distinguished member of the Cleveland Society of Professional Photographers, the Photographers Association of America, and the International Photographers Association.²³ But in the late 1940s a new crop of photographers began to emerge, and by the mid-1960s, Cole had sharply reduced his activities. He died in his home on February 6, 1970.

In 1928, Mitchell Studios Incorporated, located at 9101 Cedar Avenue, became the second photography business to establish itself in the community. **Herbert Mitchell**, its proprietor, was a trained industrial photographer and, like Cole, a migrant to the city of Cleveland. He was born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1905. In 1918 he moved with his parents to Cleveland, an industrial city which Lee and Belle Mitchell saw as offering greater opportunities than Jim Crow Alabama. Herbert Mitchell began as chauffeur to the president of Standard Oil in the 1920s. During this period, he was sent to the Rochester Institute of Technology for photographic training; thereafter he worked at Standard Oil

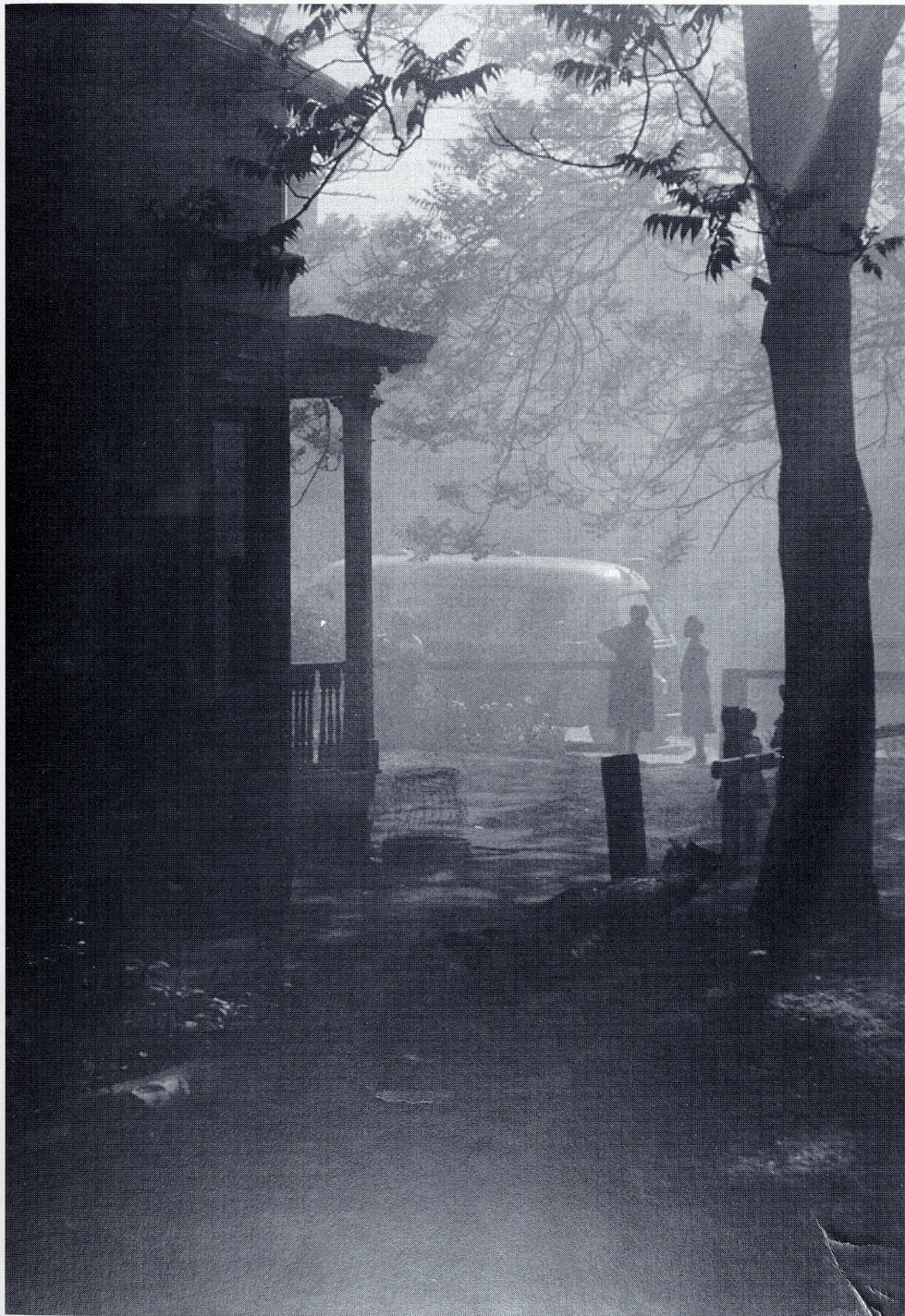
with Alonzo Wright. Over the years, his assignments would take him into the hearts of the steel and refining complexes in Cleveland's Flats.²⁴ Mitchell, like Cole, freelanced with the *Call & Post* newspaper. By 1939 he had equipped his studio for commercial production. He specialized in single and group portraits, covered community events, and did photo restoration as well as retouching. An advertisement in the Cleveland Business Directory lists Mitchell's photo services as "architectural/landscape; machinery/accident; insurance/legal; candid/speed flash; portraits/photo finishing; groups/weddings & banquets; babies, children, pets."²⁵ Ever enterprising, he also imposed photographic images on cigarette lighters and door plates.

Mitchell, a Mason and member of various business organizations, participated frequently in the social and civic activities of the Cedar-Central community. He also served, as professional mentor to attorneys Fred Coleman and Clarence McLeod whose first law office occupied the front room of Mitchell's studio on Cedar. Coleman, who belonged to the Film Wasters Club, was at the same time a photography apprentice to Mitchell.

Herbert Mitchell remained on Cedar Avenue until his property was purchased by the Cleveland Clinic in the late 1970s. He sold the bulk of his photography to various parties and in 1981 moved with his wife to Silver Springs Shores, Florida, where he died in 1991.

William F. Washington was primarily a *Call & Post* photographer and photo-engraver. He followed Allen E. Cole as the weekly's second local photographer. Before securing his position at the newspaper in 1938, he had worked as a clerk.²⁶ He operated a studio out of his home at 2349 East 88th Street.²⁷

Washington's photo-journalistic style was the collage. Often covering banquets, parties and conventions, he composed the images of the numerous individuals and groups he portrayed into a collage format. A good example of this style is his depiction of a Mt. Haven Baptist Church program commemorating the births of Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. It appeared in the 15 February 1940 issue of the *Call & Post*²⁸ and shows three separate photographs super-imposed into one finished print. The resulting three-level image eloquently documents an event attended by one hundred people.



11. HAROLD LOUIS GOLDEN.
Morning Gossip (1950s). Photograph.
Courtesy of Ruby Golden.

One of the most gifted Cedar-Central photographers was **Garnell McGhee** whose studio opened in 1954 at 10513 Cedar Avenue. McGhee was a 1941 graduate of Central High School and had received photographic training with the Karamu Guild. He was renowned for his good photo-portraiture technique and skilled lighting.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, recent high school graduates would flock to McGhee's studio to have their senior portraits taken – formerly one of Cole's trade specialties. Garnell McGhee also did portraits for various organizations and church groups. He is recognized in particular as one of Cleveland's first African American professionals to make extensive use of color photography.

George Bryant operated a small darkroom in his house before opening a photographic studio at 5217 Woodland Avenue²⁹ in 1947. He produced portraits and habitually photographed special events and the night club scene in Cleveland's African American community.

George Bryant was born in 1896 in Pelham, Cuthbert County, Georgia., and received photographic training at Atlanta's Morris Brown College. His photographic skills were already developed when he moved to Cleveland in 1923. But times were hard and, forced to rely on steady employment in other fields, he remained essentially a part-time photographer. He worked for Scheumann Jones, a

pharmaceutical company, for 19 years. He also served for 38 years as Sunday School Superintendent of the Greater Avery AME Church.³⁰

Like most photographers, Bryant was always carrying a camera, and he did so for so many years that it earned him the nickname "the picture man."³¹ On March 13, 1931, he won an award in a Cleveland Photographic Society competition for a portrait of his infant daughter Gwendolyn sitting atop a cabinet with a joyful smile (Fig. 12).

George Bryant died in 1965 from a heart attack suffered on a CTS bus while returning home from his studio.

William Crawford joined Washington in the photo-engraving department of the *Call & Post* in 1949 and is remembered as "an accomplished craftsman who seemed to wear his camera the way most men wear a watch."³² Crawford was born in Williamsburg, West Virginia, in 1907. He served as a combat photographer in Europe during World War II and, his military service behind him, worked at the *Columbus Advocate* and the *Ohio State News*, then moved to Cleveland.³³ From 1951 to 1966, in addition to his job at the *Call & Post*, Crawford also operated a studio in his home at 8221 Cedar Avenue. He photographed community events, group meetings and church programs, and excelled in producing candid portraits. Among his surviving work for the *Call & Post* is a 1948

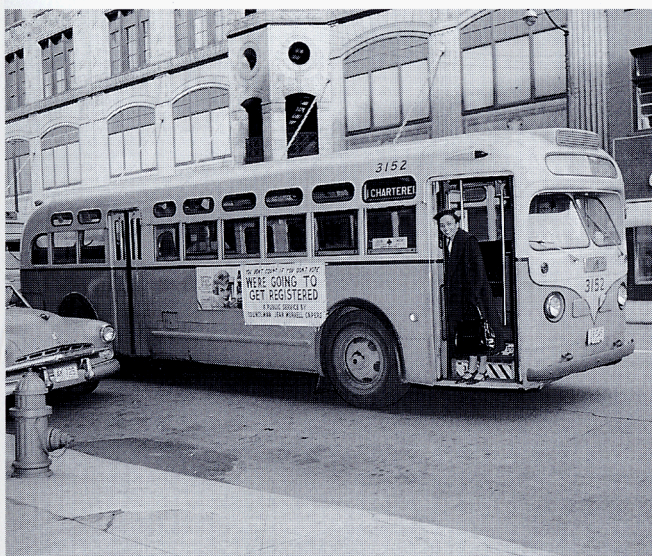


12. GEORGE BRYANT. *Gwendolyn* (1931). Handtinted Photograph. Courtesy of George Bryant, Jr.

article entitled “The People Speak Out”, written by “Doc” Young and illustrated with Crawford’s pictures, including photographs of the interviewees.³⁴

In the 1960s, Crawford joined forces with journalist Rey Gillespie as chief photographer of Gillespie’s Urban League-sponsored *Focus* magazine, an annual publication offering a pictorial retrospective of the year’s events in the African American community. Crawford died on May 23, 1966, in Cleveland.

One of Garnell McGhee’s classmates at Central High School was **Jim Doss**, a Cleveland native born in 1920 whose artistic interest manifested itself at an early age. While in the military from 1942 to 1945, he continued to sharpen his portrait skill by making graphite drawings of fellow soldiers, who then would send them home to their families. After the war, he took courses at the Cleveland Institute of Art and, in the late 1950s, joined the Karamu Camera Guild to satisfy his growing interest in photography. The Guild trained him and encouraged him to participate in national and international competitions. In 1968 Doss enrolled in the American Training Institute for Professional Photographers in Winona, Indiana at the recommendation of photographer George Berosky.



13. WILLIAM CRAWFORD. *Jean Capers, Campaign for City Council* (1959). Detail of Photograph. Afro-American Cultural & Historical Society Museum.

Also in 1968, he won acclaim for a multiple-exposure image exhibited in Dayton, Ohio, that piqued the interest of the area’s professional photographers. In 1969, he opened his first studio on Kinsman Road.

Although he is adept at illustration and commercial photography, Jim Doss considers himself strictly a portrait photographer. Unlike many of his predecessors, he was never attracted to photojournalism and has never freelanced for the news media. His photographic influences have been Allen Cole and William Washington. Doss reflects that Cole was a master “photo-artist who produced superb images.”³⁵

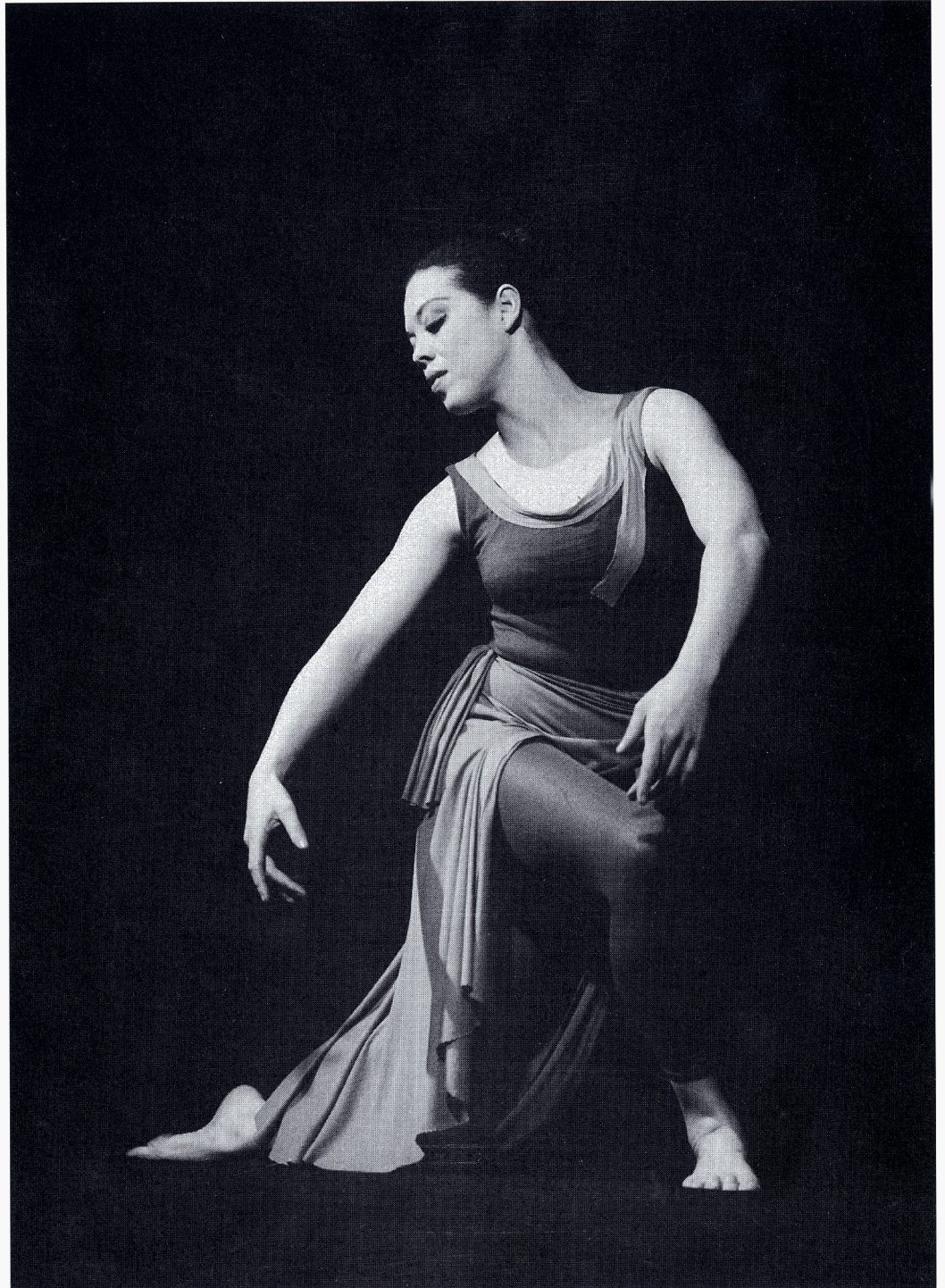
Jim Doss’ present studio is near East 140th Street and Kinsman Road.

If Allen Cole is sometimes called the James Van Der Zee of Cleveland, then **James “Jimmy” Gayle** is most assuredly Cleveland’s Gordon Parks. Gayle was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1920; his parents were teachers at the Tuskegee Institute. In 1923 the Gayles moved to Cleveland. In time, Jimmy graduated from East High School where he played the saxophone and developed a lifelong love of jazz music. In the U.S. Navy during World War II, he played in the band; after the war he travelled with the Ernie Freeman Band, comprised of former Navy Band personnel.

In the early 1950s, Gayle became interested in photography. He secured employment at Hastings-Willinger and Associates, a commercial photography firm. In 1956 he joined Allen Cole as the second African American member of the Photographic Society of Cleveland. The Society’s membership list of that year recognized his freelance work with the *Pittsburgh Courier*, with Cleveland’s *Call & Post*, and with *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. Gayle recalled his experience at the two African American weeklies:

“... at the *Courier* you were forced to do ‘about almost anything’ ... at the *Call & Post*, O.W. Walker expected you not only to take pictures, you also had to develop and paste up.”³⁶

Gayle’s freelance work took him to many parts of the country and all over Greater Cleveland. He was one of the first African American photographers to gain wide acceptance outside the African American community. In the late 1960s, he left Hastings-Willinger and, in partnership with



14. JAMES "JIM" BROWN.
Karamu Dancer (1950s).
Photograph. Western Reserve
Historical Society.

Louis Childress, opened studios at 1150 Prospect Avenue.³⁷ But he always considered himself a freelancer who enjoyed the field. Before long, he dissolved the partnership and decided to sell pictures as a freelance and to concentrate on field work. His favorite subjects were Malcolm X, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Garrett Morgan (Fig. 6).³⁸

After the death of William Crawford in 1966, Gayle took over as director of photography for *Focus* magazine. In 1967 he was hired by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and remained for 22 years on the daily's staff as a photographer.³⁹ In addition, he worked for WEWS TV throughout the 1970s, developing publicity photos for the Mike Douglas and Dorothy Fuldheim shows, among others.

Though chiefly a photojournalist, Gayle also produced wedding photos, copy photography and advertising art, and took pictures at community events. He never lost his love for jazz, and throughout the 1950s and '60s continued to haunt the jazz club scene in search of interesting photo opportunities.

Gayle had already received many awards in the course of his 38-year-long career when, in 1990, he was recognized by the National Association of Black Journalists. In 1991 the Black Media Workers bestowed upon him an award honoring his contribution to their profession.

James Gayle was in many ways a barrier-breaker and path-maker who transformed the African American photographers' career outlook by clarifying their professionalism and expanding their role in the growing mainstream media, so they would no longer be limited to the African American news industry alone. After a long and respected career, James Gayle died in Cleveland in 1991.

James T. (Jim) Brown, a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art, was a prize-winning photographer, an advertising artist for Sales Promotion Products Incorporated⁴⁰ and a treasurer of the Karamu Camera Guild. He began his photographic tenure at Karamu House in the early 1950s and helped the Camera Guild set high standards of professionalism. Matt Dunlop hails him as having been one of the leading photo-artists of the Guild. During Karamu Theatre's heyday of the 1950s, Brown – who also was a recognized freelancer and often sold pictures

to various news media – served as general photographer for the theater and its many groups.⁴¹

James Brown won a number of ribbons and awards for his creative work, including an honorable mention in the International Club Printing Competition of the Photographic Society of America.⁴² He died in Cleveland in 1971.

Josephus F. Hicks was born in Newberry, South Carolina on May 4, 1908. His interest in photography began during his prep school days where he used an old box camera to take pictures of family and friends. In 1932, he graduated from South Carolina State University where he had been a student of Johnson C. Chesnutt Whitaker, the famous West Point cadet. In 1936, he moved to Cleveland and resumed his photography hobby. By 1940, he had earned a master's degree from Case Western Reserve University.

In 1941, he began to use 16mm motion picture film because of "the movement of the subjects."⁴³ His first significant film recorded a service at St. John AME Church; films of services at Antioch Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church and St. James AME Church followed. He also filmed the initial service of Cory Methodist Church in its East 105th edifice. For the next 39 years he recorded community events, school programs, church services and weddings. But his greatest contribution has been the motion picture documentation of the installation of Jean Capers as the first African American Councilwoman in 1949, and of Civil Rights demonstrations in Cleveland, including the NAACP picketing of Cleveland Trust Company in 1961.

Hicks' still photography documented Cleveland Public School desegregation demonstrations and the ribbon-cutting of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. A social worker by profession, Hicks also used his photography hobby in his efforts to communicate with young people. He considers his greatest work the photographic documentation of the Cleveland Pride program (Fig. 87), a social work group project of the Cleveland Public Schools. He has authored several books and, although he has abandoned the film format, continues to take still pictures of community events.

Josephus Hicks maintains a small lab in his home where his photograph work of over 50 years is preserved.

Charles Pinkney, a Cleveland native, studied art at the Cooper School of Art and at Kent State University after graduating from Glenville High School. He learned photography in the military, and in the late 1950s further developed his skills at the Karamu Camera Guild.⁴⁴

As an artist primarily interested in portraiture, Pinkney explored and enjoyed the flexibility of the camera used as a brush. He still considers himself “a painter using a camera” and cites James Van Der Zee, Gordon Parks and Henri Cartier Bresson, the photographer of the “decisive moment,” as his major influences.⁴⁵ After winning a Leika M-3 in 1954, he completed his first photo-journalism story and later worked for the *Pittsburgh Press*.

In the early 1970s, Pinkney decided to venture into journalism not as a freelance, but as a publisher. He launched *The Record*, a community-based newspaper with feature stories and insightful exposés on Cleveland’s African Americans. Before long, he was acclaimed as a documentary photographer.

At present, Charles Pinkney maintains a studio in Cleveland as well as one in San Diego, California.

IN CONCLUSION, African American photographers active in Cleveland between 1887 and 1970 contributed progressively to the achievements of the local – and in some cases national – photographic community. The period between 1930 and 1965 constituted the highpoint of this collective development. In the span of those 35 years, the city’s African American photographers developed their own artistic identity. There is a distinct evolution from the nostalgic portraiture of Allen E. Cole to the empowering journalistic independence of James Gayle and Charles Pinkney;



15. CHARLES PINKNEY. *Mr. Obie Shiner* (c.1965). Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

but the basic aesthetics remain firmly rooted. Clearly, the Cedar-Central neighborhood, its people and its culture, nurtured these dedicated lensmen. Building upon the foundation laid by Allen E. Cole, each new generation found fresh and expressive ways to expand the scope of their art, leaving an eloquent body of work which mirrors the community’s civic growth, its growing religious life, its club scene, jazz exuberance and sports enthusiasm, its post-war family boom, its civil rights activism, and the continued migration of African-Americans from the rural south to urban industrial Cleveland. Together, these consummate photographers have left us an impressive and eloquent legacy in pictures of the lives, history and culture of generations of African Americans in Cleveland.

SAMUEL W. BLACK

Associate Curator for African American History
The Western Reserve Historical Society



16. JOSEPHUS FRANKLIN HICKS. *Boy Scout Troop* (c.1959). Photograph. Courtesy of the Artist.

NOTES:

1. Willis-Thomas, Debra. *Black Photographers, 1880-1942*.
2. *Cleveland Gazette*, issues of January 1, 8, 15 and 29, 1887
3. *Crisis*, May 1917, p. 32
4. *ibid.*, May 1927, p. 91.
5. *Cleveland City Directory*, 1891. Listed under photographers, this is the earliest date for the Chesnutt Brothers.
6. Keller, Francis Richardson. *An American Crusade: The Life of Charles Waddell Chesnutt*. Brigham Young University Press, 1978, p. 230.
7. G. A. Myers, "Cleveland's Colored Population", *Cleveland Plain Dealer Magazine*, May 18, 1902
8. Davis, Russell H. *Black Americans in Cleveland*. The Associated Publishers, 1972, pp. 83, 221
9. *Call & Post*, May 18, 1939, p. 410.
10. *ibid.*
11. "Photography in the Air," *Karamuse*, volume 5, number 3, June-July 1957, p. 3
12. *Karamuse*, volume 1, number 2, September 1951, pg. 2
13. The reference to The Cleveland Museum of Art May Show is *Karamuse*, volume 6, number 3, July 1961, page 4; the reference for the citation of the Cleveland Photographic Society Interclub Competition is *Karamuse*, volume 5, number 9, April-May 1959, page 8; the citation for the Camera Guild annual show is from *Karamuse*

publications, volume 1, number 2, September 1951; volume 1, number 5, April 1952; volume 5, number 6, April-May 1958; volume 5, number 8, February-March 1959; volume 2, number 5, December 1953; and April-May 1965.

14. *ibid.*, February-March 1964, p. 2
15. Beavers, D. L. "Somebody, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph", *Legacy Magazine*, February-March 1995, p. 41. Also *Renaissance Magazine*, Fall 1991, p. 13
16. *ibid.*
17. Correspondence in the Allen E. Cole papers, African American Archives of the Western Reserve Historical Society
18. *ibid.*
19. Beavers, *Legacy Magazine*, p. 43
20. Allen E. Cole papers
21. Davis, p. 314
22. Interview of Agnus Lyles and Phyllis (Lyles), February 21, 1995
23. Allen E. Cole Photograph Collection, African American Archives, Western Reserve Historical Society; Cleveland Society of Professional Photographers 1959-1960 roster.
24. Interview of Dorothy Stewart of Cleveland, April 14, 1995
25. *Cleveland Directory*, 1939, p. 9
26. *ibid.*, 1938
27. *ibid.*, 1935
28. *Call & Post*, February 15, 1940, p. 9
29. *ibid.*, May 15, 1965
30. *ibid.*
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.*, June 4, 1966
33. *The Plain Dealer*, May 28, 1966, p. 28
34. *ibid.*, January 17, 1848, p. 5B
35. Interview of Jim Doss, June 8, 1995
36. *Call & Post*, June 28, 1990, p. 2B
37. *Cleveland Press*, August 16, 1967, p. A-12
38. *The Plain Dealer*, obituary, July 3, 1991, p. 6B
39. *ibid.*
40. *Cleveland Press*, obituary, February 1, 1971
41. *ibid.*
42. *Call & Post*, February 6, 1971, p. 1A
43. Interview of Josephus Hicks
44. Interview of Charles Pinkney
45. *ibid.*



17. FRED CARLO. *The Flats*
(1930). Linocut, 9 x 6". Cleveland
State University; The Russell &
Rowena Jelliffe Collection.

ON FERTILE GROUND

The African American Experience of Artists Associated With Cleveland's Karamu House

By Alfred L. Bright

Cleveland, Ohio, with its wealth of cultural resources and institutions, has long been one of the important centers of regional art in the Midwest. It is also one of the most fertile centers of African American art in the United States.

The emergence of African American art in Cleveland dates back to the first two decades of the century, as a massive influx of Blacks from the rural South arrived in search of a better future, only to discover the misery of overcrowded urban ghettos. The Central Avenue district where many of them lived in the 1930s and '40s was, in the words of Hughie Lee-Smith, "a disreputable section of town, inhabited mainly by unfortunate underprivileged Blacks." It is remarkable that many of the black artists responsible for the flourishing of African American art in Cleveland between 1930 and 1943 – as well as a number of renowned black actors, musicians, playwrights and dancers – rose from that slum. That this blighted district should popularly be known as the "Roaring Third" precinct surely says something about the irrepressible spirit of the black community. The same vitality pulses in the works by Cleveland's black artists of the time, the unsparing realism of their subject matter notwithstanding. What was it that made the 1930s and early '40s a period of outstanding achievement for Cleveland's black artists?

Cleveland – the chief city of a 500,000-acre region known as the Western Reserve, which the Connecticut Land Company deeded to twenty-two New England families in 1792 – had long since become a major industrial center. The Western Reserve had produced two U.S. presidents after the Civil War. The Chases, the Huntingtons, Rockefellers, Mellons and Hannas who controlled America's banking industry, all came from the Western Reserve. During the period from 1930 to 1943, Cleveland's famous "Millionaires' Row" on Euclid Avenue was fast becoming a memory, but the city continued to thrive and to play an important role in the affairs of the nation. Nor was its black population a monolith of poverty. It was diverse and participated actively in local politics. Indeed, since the turn of the century, Cleveland has been a mecca for black intellectuals, artists and politicians.¹

Despite uneasy race relations, all Clevelanders could enjoy The Cleveland Museum of Art, all could send their youngsters to the museum's Saturday art classes. Black and

white artists alike could enter their works into the museum's prestigious May Show and win prizes. Art training was available to Blacks at The John Huntington Polytechnic Institute. Black students also were admitted to the Cleveland School of Art where they could study under distinguished teachers – even if it required stipends, scrounging for bus money, and settling for evening classes when the full-time curriculum was beyond reach.

Then came the New Deal. From 1935 to 1943, Cleveland artists both black and white took part in several federal programs expressly created by the Works Progress Administration to alleviate Depression-era suffering. These WPA programs were designed to assist the jobless – even artists! – by employing them on useful projects. Artists were paid to create public art. For African Americans, however, participation in WPA art projects meant more than a paycheck. It meant moving into the mainstream of American art, on equal footing with their white colleagues, in a climate of cooperation and trust.

For Cleveland Blacks – Charles Sallée, Jr., Hughie Lee-Smith, Elmer W. Brown, Zell Ingram, and Curtis Tann – to be selected for WPA projects was an exciting challenge. William M. Milliken, director of The Cleveland Museum of Art and a fervent spokesman for the WPA, was appointed to oversee WPA art projects of the entire Ninth Region, including Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana;² Clarence Carter supervised those in the state of Ohio. Both men set stringent high standards. Milliken handpicked the crews for WPA art projects in Cleveland. He basically expected them to have earned recognition by winning prizes and honorable mentions in the May Show.

However, perhaps the most crucial element in the mix of ingredients that made Cleveland such a fertile ground for African American art in those days was the enlightened, ever-supportive role played by Karamu House*, an interracial neighborhood arts center keenly responsive to the needs of the African American community in the Roaring Third district where it originally was located.

The history and importance of Karamu are well documented. It was founded in 1915 by Russell and Rowena Jelliffe under the initial name of Playhouse Settlement. Helping to acclimate black immigrants from the South was foremost on its agenda. Rowena Jelliffe, a trained actress,



18. CALVIN INGRAM. *W.C. Handy, Rowena & Russell Jelliffe* (1950s). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society; Russell & Rowena Jelliffe Collection.

effectively used drama and dance to draw underprivileged Blacks from the neighborhood into Karamu activities that encompassed all other arts as well.³ There was acting, dancing and music; there were poetry, painting and pottery classes. Young Blacks were exposed to the likes of Langston Hughes, Shirley Graham, William Sommer, Katherine Dunham, Charles Chesnutt, Dorothy Maynor, Zora Neal Hurston, Hazel Mountain Walker, and Eleanor Roosevelt. This broad-based support from an intellectual and artistic elite, both black and white, gave them a high level of sophistication rare among African Americans of the day. Many of Cleveland's finest artists taught at Karamu, notably Clarence Carter, Paul Travis, Rolf Stoll, Henry Keller, Richard Beatty, Marian Bonsteel, Victor Schreckengost, Carl Gaertner and Edris Eckhardt. Youngsters not interested in acting or dancing could be pressed into service to do stage and set design. Many nationally renowned actors and dancers received their initial training at Karamu; its fame as the world's only stage with a racially integrated cast had reached Europe well before World War II. In 1922 the neighborhood center's drama club renamed itself *The Gilpin Players* in honor of famous black Broadway actor Charles Gilpin who, on tour in Cleveland and coaxed into watching a rehearsal by Karamu's thespians, admonished them to "act out the drama in your daily lives and the world will come to see you" and,

as an incentive, gave them a \$50 bill. His word was to prove prophetic, for the Gilpin Players soon won international acclaim.⁴ And his \$50 bill inspired the establishment of a fund. Over the years, this fund was put to many wise uses. When Festus Fitzhugh, choreographer of primitive and modern dance, insisted that the masks he wished to use in African dances be truly authentic, the fund paid for authentic masks,⁵ which later were donated to The Cleveland Museum of Art where they formed the basis for the museum's African collection.⁶ Charles Sallée, Jr., Hughie Lee-Smith, William E. Smith, Elmer W. Brown, Zell Ingram and Curtis Tann all received Gilpin scholarships to pursue studies in the visual arts. These were the same artists who, joined by Fred Carlo, Thomas Usher and William Hulsinger, founded Karamu Artists, Inc. in the late '30s, with Hughie Lee-Smith as president.⁷ They met informally to critique each other's work; they also began to submit their work to the museum's May Shows and to national exhibitions of Negro Art. As a group, Karamu Artists, Inc. burst onto the national scene in 1942 with a major exhibition on New York's Fifth Avenue, hosted by Dorothy Maynor and Eleanor Roosevelt and subsequently shown at Temple University in Philadelphia.⁸

African American art in Cleveland has always been pulled in many different directions; but certain characteristics clearly distinguish the group of artists associated with the Karamu of the '30s and '40s:

- association with the great regional artists of the day;
- the cosmopolitan Karamu spirit of that era;
- striving for excellence by students and teachers;
- high technical skills and formal academic training, imparted by superbly trained instructors;
- consistent reference to, and use of, local subject matter, often with social realist overtones.

The influence of the Cleveland School is felt in the Karamu group's rather subdued palette which harked back to a conservative European tradition and stood in contrast to the explosive colors preferred by most African American artists of the New Negro movement. On the other hand, the group was resolutely opposed to the European-influenced modernism of, say, native Clevelander Marsden Hartley or some of his east coast colleagues. Karamu artists subscribed to muralist Thomas Hart Benton's insistence on

boldly realistic American themes; they found their themes in their local surroundings and often infused them with social comment – at times with an emotional intensity reminiscent of German Expressionism. The influence of Mexican muralists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, both social realists admired by the Karamu group, informs their vigorous portrayal of the human figure.

Charles Sallée, Jr. was the first Gilpin scholarship recipient. He used it to enroll at the Cleveland School of Art. It was a historic event: Sallée became the first African American to be admitted to the school in 1934, and its first black to graduate in 1938.⁹ Sallée knew as a child that art was his calling. The community recognized his talent when he was in his teens. At art school, he coolly observed the lamentable class and race distinctions in American society, but he never doubted that skill and talent would prevail. He discovered that the school catered mainly to white women intent upon a career in graphic and textile design or interior decorating; some of them arrived for class in chauffeur-driven limousines. More skilled than they, Sallée would help them with their drawings and floor plans, which they then turned into lucrative contracts to which he had no access.¹⁰ Undaunted, he graduated at the top of his class, winning a fifth-year Gund scholarship for his portrait of *Bertha*, the portrait of a Karamu dancer who left before he was finished, wherefore he substituted the body from studies for one of his mural paintings.¹¹ Portraiture was his main interest. In his untitled painting of a woman in a chair (Fig. 24), the head is disproportionately large to give the portrait emphasis. The perspective, too, is distorted; but the resulting composition is all the more harmonious for it. The haunting “oriental” sparseness is characteristic of Sallée’s assured design instincts. He was a superior draftsman rather than a painter. His drawings have been likened to those of John Singer Sargeant and the post-impressionists; some of his paintings, on the other hand, verge on colored-in drawings.

As a commercial and interior designer, Charles Sallée, Jr. has been an inspiring role model for African American artists. He created the beautiful ballroom at the downtown Renaissance Cleveland Hotel (Fig. 36) and the clubhouse for the Cleveland Indians’ Stadium, two of his best-known interior designs. As WPA project participant, he produced etchings documenting *The Life of the Common Man*. They



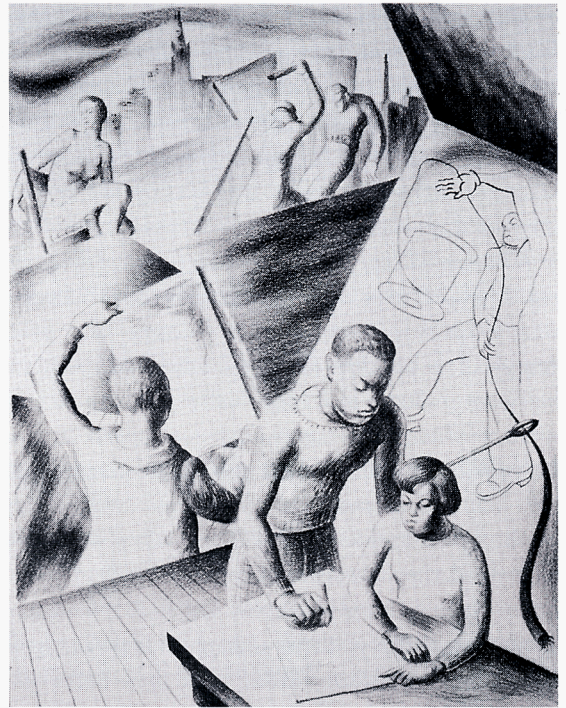
19. Charles L. Sallée, Jr. at Karamu House (1930s). Western Reserve Historical Society.

show Cleveland’s labor force at work. *Polesetters*, a major work, belongs into this cycle. Sallée’s most important mural was produced for the Portland Outhwaite Homes in the heart of the Central Avenue district, America’s first federal housing project. The mural depicts in neoclassical style the hopes and aspirations of black families migrating to Cleveland.¹² It is now deteriorated; but original sketches and preparatory drawings survive in private collections. Clarence Carter, whose committee had to approve preparatory drawings before a project got underway, insisted that murals be painted on canvas and then applied to the walls. In this manner, they could be taken down and reinstalled if the organizations for whom they were created moved to other buildings. This process also had the virtue of keeping the artists involved in easel painting, a Cleveland art school tradition.¹³

Hughie Lee-Smith, today one of America’s most admired black artists, was a child of ten attending Saturday classes at the museum when he met Clarence Carter who became his lifelong friend. Lee-Smith was the second recipient of a Gilpin scholarship to attend the Cleveland School of Art. Although the school awarded him a 5th-year scholarship for advanced study, he chose to participate in WPA projects instead, producing lithographs and etchings to earn money. Yet he was not impoverished. Unlike many of his



20. HUGHIE LEE-SMITH. *Untitled* (1938). Graphite on Paper, 6 x 9". June Kelly Gallery.



21. HUGHIE LEE-SMITH. *Artist's Life # 1* (1939). Lithograph, 11 1/8 x 8 7/8". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



22. HUGHIE LEE-SMITH. *Artist's Life # 3* (1939). Lithograph, 7 1/8 x 10 1/2". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



23. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. *Study for Bathtime* (1941). Conte on Paper, 10 ½ x 7 ¾". R. Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART.



24. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. *Untitled* (1940s). Graphite & Conte on Paper, 20 x 12 ½". Courtesy of Elmer Buford.



25. CURTIS TANN. *Portrait of New Soldier* (1940s). Graphite on Paper, 12 x 9 ⅝". On loan through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



26. ZELL (ROZELLE) INGRAM. *Self Portrait* (c.1941). Oil, 20 x 14". Courtesy of the artist, SOHI ART.

Karamu colleagues, he lived with his mother in a middle-class neighborhood on Hudson Avenue, east of E. 105th Street. He has pointed out that he “never set foot in the Roaring Third”. However, one of the stipulations of his Gilpin grant was that he go to Karamu “once or twice a week to teach unfortunate children”, and their plight was to affect him deeply.¹⁴

In his works of the '30s and '40s, Lee-Smith steered clear of social realism, opting instead for an oblique symbolism that helps the viewer grasp the psychological or metaphysical depth of his paintings and prints, which at times exude an eerie feeling of alienation. He depicted with the detached eye of a keen observer Cleveland and its waterfront, the decay of urban centers and the isolation of inner city people, frequently juxtaposing symbols of wealth and poverty, gaiety and sadness, celebration and sorrow, development and deterioration – including the dismantling of Millionaires’ Row. Among recurring devices are dead trees; figures frozen in movement and usually turning their backs to the viewer; kites and balloons; ribbons and strings. The ribbons seem ambiguous, at once sharing the festive, uplifting quality of the kites or balloons and implying barriers, a “cordoning off”. Another recurring image is the figure of a runner, perhaps a personal reference: Lee-Smith was a track runner on the same Cleveland team as star athlete Jesse Owens who in 1936 set several new records at the Olympic games in Berlin. *Artist’s Life No. 3* (Fig. 22) is full of typical Lee-Smith details. Like all of his later works, it contains three non-interactive figures; the small runner is there, as well as rubble, industrial build-up, and some loose string.

William “Skinny” E. Smith takes us into the heart of the Roaring Third precinct. His works sometimes capture the pride of the working man; but most often they open doors to dark apartments filled with the loneliness of latchkey children and the anguish of elders trying to cope with the Great Depression. He knew his subject matter intimately: Rowena and Russell Jelliffe had discovered the 16-year-old living in the basement of Central Avenue’s Grand Central Theatre where he survived on twenty-five cents a day, earned by sweeping the cinema. Rowena promptly involved him in the youth activities at Karamu. His many costume, stage set and poster designs for the



27. WILLIAM E. SMITH.
Study for 38th and Central (1942).
Graphite on Paper, 6¾ x 4¾".
Courtesy of the artist, SOHI ART.



28. WILLIAM E. SMITH.
Study for 38th and Central (1942).
Graphite on Paper, 6¾ x 4¾".
Courtesy of the artist, SOHI ART.

Gilpin Players earned him a scholarship to attend the John Huntington Polytechnic Institute from 1935 to 1940.¹⁵ In 1932 he won a costume and set design contest for Shirley Graham’s operatic play *Tom Tom*, staged at the Cleveland Municipal Stadium. He showed strong talent in drawing, printmaking and design. When painting, he used the muted palette of the Cleveland School. His social realism is subtle; it usually makes its points by implication. In *38th and Central* (Cover), he achieves a surreal dream atmosphere. *38th and Central* has three planes, three “realities”. The viewer feels almost personally engulfed, up front, in the deep – and deeply symbolic – shadows of a lonely interior, looking out through the window as if through prison bars. Beyond the window, the neighborhood bustles with activity. The cityscape in the background above proclaims the power and wealth of industrial Cleveland. The composition conforms to the to the concept of the Golden Mean – a concept reaching back to classical antiquity and carefully adhered to in many works of the academically trained Karamu group.

Zell (Rozelle) Ingram expressed talent in sculpture as a child. Rowena Jelliffe later recalled that “Zell always held a ball of clay in his palm – he was forever fashioning a foot, a hand or a figure”. Having taken Karamu classes under Marian Bonsteel, Richard Beatty and Langston Hughes, he became skilled in painting and printmaking as well. He also



29. ZELL (ROZELLE) INGRAM. *Untitled* (1938). Linocut, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 10". R. Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART.

became an accomplished puppet maker and converted an old Model T Ford into a traveling puppet theater which he took to the South and East Coast, armed with letters from Rowena Jelliffe to gain him safe passage.¹⁶ His wizardry in puppet-making was appreciated at Karamu, where marionettes were used to channel young children's emotions while teaching them theatrical concepts and discipline.

Zell Ingram's linoleum cuts were outstanding. For subject matter, he focused on the seedy side of inner city life, documenting Cleveland's ghettos during Prohibition and Depression – gambling dens, speakeasies, smoke-filled backrooms. In the late '20s, he was tirelessly assisting younger artists. In the early '30s he took Curtis Tann and Fred Carlo under his wing to teach them all he knew about light and shadow; together, they took frequent excursions to the flats to draw and paint; sometimes they journeyed to the countryside in hopes of selling their "barn pictures" to farmers. In 1937 one of Ingram's sculptures was juried into the May Show; in 1940 he showed linocuts and sculpture in the American Negro Exhibition in Chicago. He left Cleveland for New York City in the early '40s to resume studies at the Arts Students League.

Curtis Tann came to Cleveland with his family in 1922. He grew up in the Roaring Third district. His



30. FRED CARLO. *Tool Shed* (1934). Linocut, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", R. Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART.

father frowned on his artistic bent, already evident when he was a child. His only source of inspiration, encouragement and support was Karamu where he was taught ceramics by Fannie Carlo, printmaking by Marian Bonsteel and Richard Beatty, painting and drawing by Paul Travis, Langston Hughes and Zell Ingram. In 1936 he competed with William E. Smith for the fifty dollars awarded to the best costume designs for Shirley Graham's *Tom Tom*. He showed great talent as set and costume designer and did much backstage work, but his main interest focused on metalwork, copper enameling and ceramics.

Times were rough for young Tann. He could not attend the Cleveland School of Art for lack of funds and transportation, and he never became a good painter for lack of academic training. But he was a fine draftsman. As an adult, he attended the John Huntington Polytechnic Institute on a Gilpin scholarship. His fortunes began to improve in 1934 when he was selected for a WPA-related National Youth Administration project. He developed a slide project for the Cleveland Board of Education and for a while taught arts and crafts at the Hiram House Settlement. However, the settlement had a segregated policy, and when Tann tried to organize interracial theatre and art groups, his

31. ELMER W. BROWN.
Gandy Dancer's Gal (1943). Oil,
24 x 32". Cleveland Artist's
Foundation; Gift of the Elmer
W. Brown Estate.



program was disbanded and his students were sent to Karamu.

In 1942 Tann had a solo exhibition at the Peoples Art Center in St. Louis, Missouri. That same year, he participated in the Karamu Artists, Inc. group exhibition in New York where he drew mention for his watercolors. He entered the army in 1943 and produced watercolors showing the daily routines of the GIs at Fort Riley, Kansas and the Cavalry Replacement Center. He also created murals for mess halls and for U.S.O. posts. After World War II, he and his wife Ethel Mage-Henderson, a former Gilpin Player and Karamu social worker, moved to California where he continued his training at the Chouinard Art Institute. In 1967 he was appointed director of the famous Simon Rodia Watts Tower Art Center in Los Angeles. In the '70s he became one of Southern California's leading enamelists.¹⁷

Fred Carlo was born in the Roaring Third precinct. His talents were nurtured practically from the cradle. His mother was a gifted artist who taught ceramics at Karamu. Carlo became a fine jewelry maker, enamelist and ceramist, but is best known for his sensitive linocut portraits of Depression-era Cleveland youngsters. He was a superb graphic artist,

able to fill a composition with big, clean, two-dimensional shapes, using minimal means to maximal effect. His work *The Flats* (Fig. 17) dates from the early '30s and reflects his frequent outings to the flats with Curtis Tann and their mentor Zell Ingram. It also reflects the thrust of Cleveland-based WPA art projects. Documenting the local scene and finding local beauty was what they were all about. *Tool Shed* (Fig. 30) does exactly that – even the ash can is there. This wonderful linoleum cut probably shows the backyard at Karamu.

In 1932, Fred Carlo became the first black artist to exhibit in the International Print Show. He was also among the first Blacks to exhibit in the May Show, where he repeatedly won awards and honorable mentions. He showed prints and ceramics with Karamu Artists, Inc. in New York, Philadelphia and Atlanta. Little is known about him after World War II; but in the '30s and early '40s he played an active role in the development of Karamu.

Elmer William Brown was perhaps the most versatile among the group of Karamu-associated artists. He came to Cleveland in 1929 after having served time in a Missouri prison chain gang for illegally riding freight trains. He lived

at Karamu, was actively involved in its art studio and theatre, ran errands for the staff, and occasionally cooked for the cast. He took art classes under Marian Bonsteel, Richard Beatty, Paul Travis and Langston Hughes. Hughes became a close personal friend; Brown eventually illustrated a number of Hughes' publications.¹⁸ Brown designed stage sets and costumes, performed frequently with the Gilpin Players, was a portrait painter and a master printmaker. When, under the aegis of the WPA, Cleveland became the site of the first federally funded ceramics project, William Milliken chose Edris Eckhardt as head of the team. Eckhardt was known for her innovative glazes and glassmaking techniques. Elmer Brown became the ceramic colorist for Eckhardt's team of four.¹⁹ Within the framework of a WPA-supervised educational youth program, he also taught.

The linocut *Ol' Peckerwood* (Fig. 33) is a searing account of Elmer Brown's Missouri prison experience. "Old Peckerwood", the overseer of the prison, was, according to Brown, the vilest man he ever met. The meanness of that man haunted him until his death. The linocut helped him process these intense feelings. The composition is formally organized and observes the rule of the Golden Mean, enforcing the prominence of the main figure. The black and white areas are masterfully orchestrated; the exaggerated hands and a great variety of line thicknesses and line shapes make the image electrifying. Brown was probably the most powerful printmaker of the Karamu group. His linocuts *Fortune Teller*, *Wrestlers*, *Numbers Drawing* and *15th Defense* all are masterpieces. *Fifteenth Defense* refers to boxer Joe Louis' triumph after the 15th round; the joy of the African American community over this victory is palpable. Much of the power of Brown's prints stems from his ability to invest the human form with a sense of mass and weight. This, of course, is the hallmark of mural painting. Not surprisingly, Brown was first and foremost a muralist.

Under WPA contract, Elmer Brown created a mural for the Valleyview Housing Project, relief sculpture for the Columbus Housing Project and, with Paul Riba, murals for Cleveland Hopkins Airport's Administration Building. In 1942 he was chosen to create a very large mural, *Free Speech*, for the City Club of Cleveland. The painting, which was dedicated by Rockwell Kent in 1942, had to be moved to different quarters on two occasions; unfortunate-

ly a doorway had to be cut into the work to make it fit in its current location.²⁰

Brown, a social realist, acknowledged his admiration for the Mexican muralists and endeavored to emulate their robust treatment of the human figure, as can be seen in the paintings *Gandy Dancer's Gal* (Fig. 31) and *Dorie Miller Manning the Gun at Pearl Harbor* (Fig. 1). The muted colors show the Cleveland School's influence. In *Gandy Dancer's Gal*, an almost baroque use of diagonals and counter-diagonals fills the composition with boundless energy.

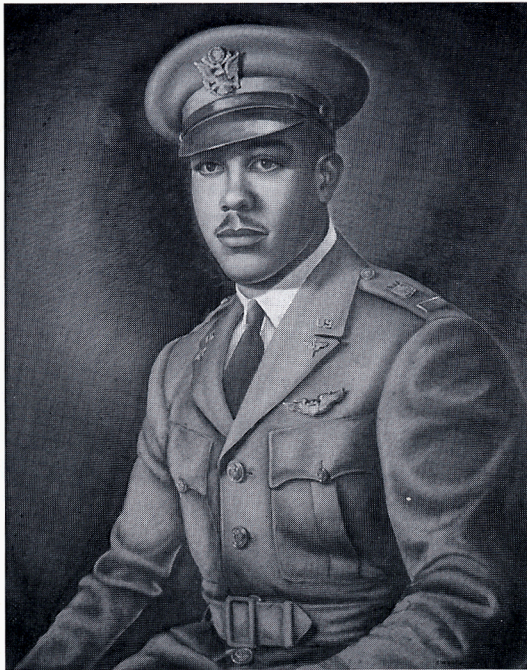
Brown was also a sensitive portraitist. His portrait of Karamu alumnus *Lieut. Sidney Brooks* (Fig. 32), the first Tuskegee Airman to die in WW II, was commissioned by the Cleveland chapter of B'nai B'rith and, in 1943, presented by Dorothy Maynor to Karamu, where it still hangs.²¹ He consistently exhibited and won prizes in the May Show from 1935 to 1940. Toward the end of his career, he was a designer for American Greetings.

Elmer W. Brown, once a troubled youth, became one of Cleveland's finest and most respected black artists. His astounding versatility sprang from his rich Karamu experiences – experiences which turned his life around.

This brief survey of the achievements of Cleveland's black artists associated with the Karamu of the 1930s and early '40s shows quite clearly that Cleveland was, in those days, a peculiarly fertile ground for the flourishing of African American art. It was a cosmopolitan city where, despite the hardships of the Great Depression, a spirit of cooperation and dignity fostered inspiration and produced many sophisticated African American artists. Their accomplishments can only be attributed to the high caliber of the training they received, in a rich cultural environment and in an atmosphere of open-mindedness. Race was, of course, always an issue; but true talent could prevail. Gifted black artists were encouraged to grow. They had a community who honored their merits. They also had the support of outstanding citizens who, regardless of race, acknowledged creativity and excellence.

Cleveland was special. This exhibition is a testament of that.

ALFRED L. BRIGHT
Professor of Art
Youngstown University



32. ELMER W. BROWN. *Lieut. Sidney Brooks* (1943). Oil, 31 ½ x 25 ½". On loan through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



33. ELMER W. BROWN. *Ol' Peckerwood* (c.1934). Linocut, 7 ¼ x 9 ¾". On loan through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.

NOTES:

*The names and name changes of institutions can be confusing. Therefore please note:

PLAYHOUSE SETTLEMENT:

The name Karamu is used throughout the text. When the Playhouse Settlement opened its first 120-seat theater in 1927, it was named "Karamu Theatre" at the suggestion of Dr. Hazel Mountain Walker, first black principal in the Cleveland school system. The name carried over; soon the entire settlement was popularly known as Karamu, a Swahili word for "place of joyful meeting". In 1941, the Playhouse Settlement officially adopted the name Karamu House .

CLEVELAND SCHOOL OF ART:

The name Cleveland School of Art is used throughout the text for what was to become The Cleveland Institute of Art.

It should not be confused with the Cleveland School, a term that refers to a distinguished group of Cleveland artists active throughout the first part of the century. They were art school-trained and actively supportive of Karamu.

WPA:

The New Deal-instituted Works Progress Administrations became the Work Projects Administration when it was made part of the Federal Works Administration in 1939. This agency also supervised the National Youth Administration, known as NYA, and its educational programs.

1. Lee-Smith, Hughie; letter to Alfred Bright, 17 October 1988
2. Milliken, William M.; Public Works of Art, Cleveland, April 1934
3. Selby, John; *Beyond Civil Rights*; World Publishing Co., 1966, p.127
4. Jelliffe, Rowena; taped interview, August 1988, Cleveland, Ohio
5. Jelliffe, Rowena; interview (see above)
6. Fitzhugh, Festus; telephone interview, 1992
7. Lee-Smith, Hughie; letter to Alfred Bright (see above)
8. Selby, John; (see above), p. 89
9. Sallée, Charles Jr.; interview, Shaker Heights, Ohio, 1988
10. Sallée, Charles Jr.; interview (see above)
11. Sallée, Charles Jr.; interview (see above)
12. Sallée, Charles Jr.; interview (see above)
13. Carter, Clarence; telephone interview
14. Carter, Clarence; telephone interview
15. Jelliffe, Rowena; interview (see above)
16. Selby, John; (see above), p. 130, as well as Rowena Jelliffe interview (see above)
17. Tann, Curtis; telephone interview, September 1988
18. Smith, Raynor; interview, August 1988, Cleveland, Ohio
19. Marling, Karal Ann; *Federal Art in Cleveland, 1933-1943*, Cleveland Public Library, 1974
20. Gottlieb, Mark and Tittle, Diana; *America's Soap Box: Seventy-Five Years of Free Speaking at Cleveland's City Club Forum*; Citizen's Press, Cleveland, 1987
21. Sallée, Charles Jr.; interview (see above)



34. WILLIAM E. SMITH. *...And Yet I Still Rise* (1970). Oil on Board, 30 x 24". Courtesy of the artist, SOHI ART.



35. CURTIS TANN. *Cityscape* (1962). Enamel on Copper, 16 ³/₈ x 12 ¹/₄". Courtesy of E.M. Tann, SOHI ART.



36. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. Ballroom in Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Tower City Center. Photograph courtesy of Renaissance Cleveland Hotel.



37. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. *Bedtime* (1940s). Oil, 34 x 26".
Courtesy of June Sallée Antoine.



38. HENRY WILLIAMSON.
Reverend Jackson (1949). Oil on Board,
21 x 12". Courtesy of the artist.



39. DOUGLAS PHILLIPS. *Fencers* (1958). Stained Glass Exhibition Panel, 52 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc.

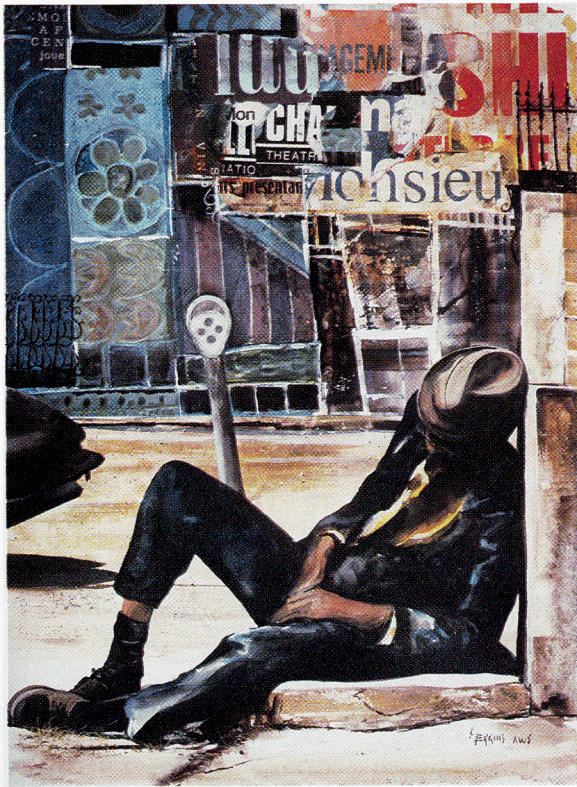


40. DOUGLAS PHILLIPS. *Charles Gilpin* (1950s). Oil, 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.

41. MALCOLM M. BROWN. *Bay*
Fishermen (c.1968). Watercolor, 18 x 23 ½",
Courtesy of the artist.



42. MALCOLM M. BROWN. *Untitled* (c.1968). Watercolor, 16 ½ x 28 ½",
Courtesy of Sheila N. & Frederic E. Markowitz.



43. CLARENCE PERKINS. *Vieux Carre*
(1968). Gouache & Collage, 24 x 18"
Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. George Z. Griswold.



44. CLARENCE PERKINS.
Untitled (c.1970). Watercolor &
Collage, 18 x 20". American
Greetings Collection.



45. VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE. *Three Girls* (1963). Acrylic, 35 ½ x 26 ½".
Courtesy of the artist.



46. VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE. *Untitled* (1964).
Acrylic & Collage, 35 ½ x 26 ½". Courtesy of the artist.



47. EDITH BROWN. *Untitled* (1962-65). Acrylic, 21 ½ x 21 ½".
Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Robert
P. Madison.



48. EDITH BROWN. *Summer
Idyll* (1965-68). Acrylic, 29 ½ x 23 ½".
Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Robert
P. Madison.



49. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris). *Untitled* (1950s). Acrylic, 24 x 36". Private Collection.



50. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris). *Woodland Cemetery* (1950s). Watercolor, 18 x 24". Courtesy of Robert & Linda Kendell.

CREATIVITY IN A TIME OF SOCIAL CHANGE

African American Art in Cleveland, 1940-1970

By Pamela McKee

In the years between 1940 and 1970, the city of Cleveland experienced tremendous social, political and economic changes which were to have a profound impact on the lives of its residents. The war years brought a continuing influx of African Americans from the rural South to fill the additional manufacturing jobs, but the city's housing and infrastructure were increasingly inadequate. The East side of the city, once a racially-mixed area of working and middle class families, became progressively ghettoized as retail businesses, industry, and those who could afford it, left the inner city for the newly-constructed suburbs. While the new racial character of the city's eastern wards insured increased political representation for African Americans, lax housing codes and absentee landlords accelerated the area's decline. A series of short-sighted planning remedies were proposed: most were never implemented, and nearly all focused on the business district, with little or no attempt to significantly redress the housing shortages and lack of businesses in the poorest neighborhoods.

The relatively enlightened quality of race relations which had distinguished Cleveland in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was gradually eroded, as segregation and other discriminatory practices, both official and unofficial, became the norm. The city's economic downturn in the post-war era, exacerbated by suburbanization and significant losses in the industrial sector, was especially hard on African Americans, who were often the first to lose jobs in periods of downsizing or shop closings. Even the historic election of Carl Stokes in 1967 could do little to stem the frustrations which, just two years after the 1966 Hough riots, were to erupt in violence again in Glenville in 1968.

What is remarkable about this era in Cleveland history is the strong tradition of community support and racial pride which persisted in the African American community in spite of these obstacles. These years also witnessed a growth in the number of African American artists, reflecting the accessibility of arts instruction in the city's many fine institutions. Karamu House continued to be a nationally recognized center for creative endeavors, and the city's public schools, particularly East Technical High School, produced a number of talented artists in all fields.

Of the many important legacies of the WPA and early Karamu era, perhaps the most significant was an emphasis on technical proficiency in all artistic endeavors. While Karamu, as well as The Cleveland Museum of Art's Saturday classes, offered African Americans artistic encouragement and study, the WPA had afforded many the opportunity for full-time work as artists. As a result, those talented artists who had been fortunate enough to be included in the various government-sponsored programs were able to concentrate their efforts on perfecting technique and addressing formal issues in their artistic development. It is not surprising, then, that the next generation of African American artists in Cleveland, those working from 1940 through the 1960s and '70s, exhibit a mastery of technique and a stylistic maturity which places them on a level with their better-known peers in New York and Washington.

If training was readily available, exhibition opportunities were somewhat less pervasive. Fortunately, The Cleveland Museum of Art had, from the time of its opening, maintained a mission of supporting local artists through its heralded annual May Show. In this juried exhibition, local artists were able to hang their works in a prestigious institution, and the shows were well-attended and fairly well patronized. At a time when black intellectuals were beginning to question the ultimate utility of all-African American shows, which many believed fostered the public's perception of these works as distinct from 'mainstream' American art, Cleveland's African American artists could access this important venue.

The museum's philosophy dictated that it encourage the industrial applications of the creative arts, in keeping with its location in one of America's foremost manufacturing centers. To this end, its permanent collections and May Shows included works in all techniques, helping to foster the public's interest in such diverse media as glass, enamel, metalworking, textile arts, and jewelry and furniture design. Furthermore, this multi-media focus encouraged artists to experiment in various techniques.

Since the turn of the century, Cleveland had also been an important center for lithography and engraving. While the mechanization of graphic reproduction had somewhat diminished the commercial importance of these techniques

by the mid 1920s, their earlier prominence had helped to create a taste for graphic arts among the general population. The founding of the Print Club of Cleveland in 1920 attests to the popularity of these media, which would be locally exploited in the Depression era under the auspices of the WPA printshops. The post-war growth of the service industries also sparked a new commercial demand for graphic artists, with American Greetings and several advertising firms expanding their operations in the 50s and 60s. Not surprisingly, many of the African American artists of the period found employment in this field, and continued to explore the expressive potential of prints.

Printmaking has long been championed by African American artists because it can reach a larger audience, and is more readily affordable, than either painting or

sculpture. Many of the most important figures in African American art of the twentieth century have worked in the various print forms, contributing to the general rise in interest in this medium. James Lesesne Wells, Sargent Johnson, Hughie Lee-Smith, and Elizabeth Catlett have all created extremely important and innovative works which often feature compelling images of the black experience.



51. W. HAL WORKMAN. *The Magi* (1956). Woodblock, 11 x 8". Courtesy of the artist.



52. W. HAL WORKMAN. *In the Sun* (1955). Woodblock, 31 1/2 x 12 1/2". Courtesy of the artist.

The woodcuts of Cleveland artist **W. Hal Workman** fit well within this tradition. An experienced commercial artist, Workman has also devoted a considerable portion of his career to teaching high school students. His own educational experiences at East Technical High School were unfulfilling, and throughout his teaching career Workman has sought to provide the encouragement and support which he felt his own instructor had neglected.

Something of the artist's personal warmth is present in his early 1960s woodblock print *In the Sun* (Fig. 52). The figure occupies most of the narrow space, which Workman divides into thirds through his arrangements of light and dark. The jagged linear treatment energizes the composition, imbuing the seated figure with a vitality which is further developed in his facial expression. In its opposition of vertical and curvilinear forms, the piece resembles some of Elizabeth Catlett's later linocuts, particularly her famous *Sharecropper* (1968). Workman's exploitation of the wood block medium, both employing and defying the surface grain, bespeaks his mastery of technique. *The Magi* (Fig. 51), another work from this period, combines the same line treatment found in *In the Sun* with a greater attention to detail and patterning. The exoticism of the Magis' costumes starkly contrasts with their pious actions, conveying the sense of wonder suggested in the biblical texts.

Perhaps the best-known African American artist of this period to explore religious imagery is the celebrated stained-glass artist **Douglas Phillips**. However, Phillips began working in glass only later in his career. Originally trained in portraiture and illustration at the Cleveland Institute of Art and Syracuse University, Phillips also had an early interest in graphic media. In *Artist's Portrait* (Fig. 53), a lithograph from the 1930s, the carefully described frame, mask, drapery and torso are used as emblems of the sitter's identity as artist, and reveal Phillips' sophisticated approach to figural arrangement. In its juxtaposition of elements, the work is somewhat reminiscent of Hughie Lee-Smith's *Artist's Life #1* (Fig. 21). However, while Lee-Smith's work is jarring because of its disturbing imagery, Phillips' piece relies on sharp contrasts of light and shadow to create a vaguely unsettling mood.

The interest in illumination which characterizes *Artist's Portrait* was to become the central focus of Phillips' artistic

development. Beginning in the early 50s, he opened his own stained glass studio, and in addition to several commissions for area churches, he created innovative lighting designs for commercial and residential settings. Fascinated by the spatial dimension suggested by the penetration of light through colored glass, he studied the psychological and religious effects of illumination and color. His inventive light boxes, already three-dimensional, almost take on a fourth in their tinted glow.

But it is Phillips' windows which serve as the greatest testament to his artistic abilities. Sometimes creating works for new buildings, sometimes for older structures containing earlier stained glass, Phillips was particularly adept at fusing traditional religious symbols with a more contemporary approach to line and color. The nave windows for Lakewood Presbyterian Church exemplify this, as the large central figures are swept upward in a tempest of surging



53. DOUGLAS PHILLIPS. *Artist's Portrait* (1940s). Lithograph, 10 x 8". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



54. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris) Untitled (1961) Acrylic, 16 x 21". Courtesy of Mark Edward Vance.

lines to the jeweled blue area in the tracery. The repetition of colors serves not only to unify the composition, but also to relate it to its pendant in the opposite nave. Phillips explained that the recurrent "kite-shaped forms symbolize the Trinity and the rhythmic bands symbolize the Grace of God which encompasses all of mankind in the same sense that they encompass and relate various parts of the window."¹ In a medium so steeped in tradition, it is this ability to translate religiosity into a language both contemporary and deeply personal which establishes Douglas Phillips as a singularly gifted individual.

A less accessible spirituality pervades the enigmatic works of **Beni E. Kosh**. Born Charles E. Harris in 1917, the artist changed his name in the 60s as a statement of pride in his racial heritage. Little is known of Kosh, except that he was honorably discharged from the military in 1944, and briefly studied under Paul Travis at Karamu eight years later. If Kosh received only limited formal training, his works nevertheless reveal a strong awareness of contemporary artistic traditions and a willingness—almost a compulsion—for stylistic experimentation. Throughout his oeuvre, however, he recurrently depicts both his home city and his religious beliefs.

In the untitled work with two nuns (Fig. 54, 1961), Kosh presents an unsettling image of his East side neighborhood. With muted, cool hues he depicts three children in a vacant



55. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris) Untitled (1957) Acrylic, 13 x 19 1/2". Courtesy of Sherrie Bingham Chicatelli.

lot. The clapboard siding of the structures to the left pulls the viewer into the center of the scene, where the straight, horizontal thrust of the planks is countered by the disorderly jumble of rooflines and the frenzied branches of the trees. While there is a suggestion of movement, the children do not engage with each other, but instead direct their attention to the two nuns to the right of the canvas. Indeed, Kosh depicts motion toward the women, clearly suggesting the pull which drew him toward his faith.

This calm spirituality, emphasized through the cool hues employed throughout, is achieved again in *Woodland Cemetery* (Fig. 50). Both paintings are evocative of the works of Horace Pippin, a self-trained Pennsylvania artist who achieved fame in the 1940s following the inclusion of four of his pieces in the heralded *Masters of Popular Painting* show held at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1938.² Pippin, like Kosh in these works, often muted his colors in his many depictions of scenes from his native Chester County, and his own deep faith in the redemption of God manifested itself compellingly in his *Holy Mountain* series of the 1940s.

Kosh escalates this tranquillity into the visionary in his startling image of the crucified Christ rising over a city street. Unlike the children drawn toward the two nuns in the earlier piece, here the figures are unaware of the presence of God. If the disparate elements suggest the surreality



56. MALCOLM M. BROWN. *Pier 2* (1970). Watercolor & Collage, 22 ½ x 37". Courtesy of the artist

of a dream, Kosh nevertheless locates the scene in Cleveland through the inclusion of a Transit System bus stop sign. By limiting his palette primarily to bold reds and yellows, the artist succeeds in creating a unified whole out of the intentionally dislocated parts of the work.

This dream-like quality is precisely to the point in the untitled painting with the Terminal Tower (Fig. 50), a self portrait of the artist asleep in his home on Townsend Street. In a deliberately destabilized composition, Kosh juxtaposes the imposing Cleveland landmark, surrounded by teeming skyscrapers and smoke-belching factories, with a verdant image of pastoral life outside of the gray metropolis. Significantly, there is a winged heart (Kosh's?) shown fleeing the chaotic forms of the city for the comfort afforded by the straight, stable forms of the numerous country churches.

Not all of Kosh's cityscapes are characterized by this disquieting mood. In the untitled work of the East 105th St. Rapid Stop (Fig. 55, 1957), the artist captures, almost photographically, a brief moment in time. The figures, all turned away from the viewer, await the arrival of the train on the opposite track. Slightly right off center, Kosh depicts a figure moving toward the turnstile exit, making it clear that another train has just departed. The painstaking detail of the railroad ties and floorboards creates a convincing spa-

tial recession, which is abruptly halted by the green and black blur of the background.

Kosh's interest in recording the particularities of his city is shared by watercolorist **Malcolm M. Brown**. A relative latecomer to the Cleveland area, Brown quickly assumed an important role in the city's artistic community, teaching art in both the Shaker Heights public schools and in the evening sections of the Cleveland Institute of Art for many years. He has consistently gained in stature as an extremely accomplished watercolorist of national prominence and has exhibited in a number of one-man and group shows in such prestigious institutions as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Cleveland Museum of Art, and in an American Watercolor Society exhibition which travelled to American Embassies in Europe. He has won numerous awards, including the Mainstreams International Award of Excellence (1970), the National Exhibition of Black Artists' Henry O. Tanner Award (1971), for four consecutive years the Virginia Beach National Juried Exhibition's first prize (1971-74), more recently the Rocky Mountain National Juried Show's Watermedia Award (1980), several Ohio Watercolor Society awards (1983-85), and a Cleveland Art Prize (1994). His paintings are now in private collections and in the collections of many large corporations in

57. CLARENCE PERKINS.
Bentleyville Lane (c.1967).
Watercolor, 17 x 22".
Courtesy of the artist.



Cleveland and throughout the country.

Although Malcolm Brown has spent much of his life elsewhere, his works continue in the long tradition of outstanding watercolors which had, by the 1930s, enabled Cleveland to supplant Boston as the most important national center for work in this medium.³ From the mid 1920s, watercolors claimed preeminence in the annual May Shows at The Cleveland Museum of Art, and indeed Brown's work was juried into this venue. Primarily landscapes, his paintings are generally characterized by a beautiful blurring of line and form to create an exceptional atmospheric quality. In an untitled work set in the Flats (Fig. 42, 1968), and *Pier No. 2* (Fig. 56, 1970), Brown manipulates the thickness of his paints to minimize the visible detail in the water, thus counterplaying tangible form and reflection. By placing the major architectural elements slightly off center, he introduces a dynamic visual tension into the otherwise still image. In *Bay Fishermen* (Fig. 41, 1960s), Brown again explores the atmospheric magic of water imagery, though here his palette is considerably

brightened. By reserving the heaviest application of color for the tree and the figures, Brown focuses the viewer's attention first on the tangible reality of the subject matter in the upper portion, and then, through a repetition of colors in thinner washes, leads the eye downward to the reflections cast by the figures and tree.

In his *Untitled* (1968) and *Sunflowers* (1969), Brown is after slightly different effects. In these he reveals his mastery of detail, carefully delineating the fence rails and flower petals. Once again, the forms are positioned slightly off center, pushing most of the visual weight toward the bottom of the paintings where the details are concentrated. Both *Sunflowers* (Fig. 70) and *Untitled*, like most of Brown's works, exude a certain sense of isolation. Even when the artist chooses to include figures in his landscapes, there remains a moody loneliness, intensified by the misty environments which he so masterfully conjures up.

This sense of isolation is more explicitly developed in the works of **Clarence Perkins**, a long-time friend and colleague of Malcolm Brown. Born in Louisiana, Perkins came

to Cleveland in the 1940s to escape the segregated schools of his native Louisiana. At East Technical High School, his talent was soon recognized, and he became an honor student of Nicholas Livaich. In his senior year he garnered top honors in the National School Art Competition. However, despite several scholarship offers elsewhere, Perkins ranked only as an alternate at the Cleveland Institute of Art, and after a job offer mysteriously fell through at American Greetings, he left Cleveland for employment in Chicago.⁴

It took Perkins several years to overcome his early disappointments and return to painting. In the mid 1960s, he studied under Fred Leach at the Cooper School of Art, where he attempted his first work in watercolor. This change in medium was immediately successful: the painting was exhibited in the Midyear Painting Show at the Butler Institute of Art and, to boot, Perkins was asked to assume Leach's teaching position when his former instructor was forced to change his schedule. Soon thereafter, Perkins and Brown were invited to a two-man show at the Canton Art Institute.⁵

Like Brown, Perkins works in the grand Cleveland tradition of watercolor landscapes. Stylistically, however, the two are distinct. While Brown generally employs thin washes of color to create a hazy atmosphere, Perkins chooses a more tightly controlled style to exhibit a wealth of finely detailed brushwork. This is especially evident in his *Bentleyville Lane* (Fig. 57, 1967), where he carefully delineates each leaf and blade of grass in the foreground. He manages to impart a convincing sense of space and receding background by skillfully manipulating tone and hue. In *Louisiana Bayou* (Fig. 93), Perkins reproduces in painstaking detail the tangle of bollards and patches of seagrass in front of the main structure. With its restricted palette and minimal juxtaposition of complementary colors, and despite the inclusion of human figures on the pier, the work elicits a more subdued emotional response than does *Bentleyville Lane*.

In perhaps his most visually arresting piece, Perkins is again inspired by his Louisiana childhood. A watercolor collage, *Vieux Carre* (Fig. 43, 1969) is full of exquisite detail, so typical of Perkins' style. Unlike his other works, however, the artist here severely curtails his depth by rendering the back of the picture plane in bits of printed paper. Besides suggesting the handbill-covered walls of America's urban

neighborhoods, the device serves to flatten the image, compressing the solitary figure into the very foreground where his sharply foreshortened left leg seems to project directly into the viewer's space. And while the inclusion of the carefully rendered grillwork and the large "monsieur" locate the image in Louisiana, the dejected figure and peeling wall poignantly evoke the increasing isolation of African Americans within a decaying urban landscape.

In *...And Yet I Still Rise* (Fig. 34, 1970), **William E. Smith** responds very differently to the unequal treatment of African Americans in American society. Where Perkins' lone figure remains isolated despite its intrusion into the viewer's space, Smith in this later work depicts a figure who confronts the viewer, not only by his physical placement in the extreme foreground, but also through his compelling gaze directly at the viewer. Extreme foreshortening combines with a dramatic use of light and dark to produce an image of startling intensity and barely suppressed motion. Any suggestion of the downtrodden is here replaced by an image of defiant resilience and ultimate triumph.

The appearance of more overtly race-conscious themes and imagery in the works by Cleveland's black artists of the late 60s and early 70s is of course directly linked to the Black Power movement which was then sweeping America's urban centers, but perhaps also to the works and teachings of Nelson Stevens.⁶ One of Cleveland's preeminent African American artists, Stevens was a co-founder of AfriCOBRA, a black artists' collective based in principles of commitment to the African American community and to cooperative exploration of a black aesthetic. Through the use of "bright colors, the human figure, lost and found line, lettering, and images which identify the social", AfriCOBRA members sought to create works which could visually communicate a positive sense of group identity to the African American community, as jazz had done so successfully for nearly fifty years.⁷

Akron resident **Edith Brown** successfully applies many of the principles championed by AfriCOBRA in her *Collage for Black History* (Fig. 58) of the 1960s, where she incorporates photographs, text and painting to create a testament to the African American experience and culture. Through a careful manipulation of images and blocks of painted color, Brown arranges the forms into the shape of the African

continent. The inclusion of photographs of bronze sculptures from the kingdom of Benin underscores Africa's creative legacy, while the black experience in the New World is recorded through textual references to Toussaint L'Ouverture, the hero of Haitian independence, and to American Revolutionary War hero Crispus Attucks. More recent political struggles are memorialized in photographs of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Finally, the common cause of justice and equal rights which unites these historical figures is made poignantly clear by the selection of lines from the Declaration of Independence inscribed on the piece's right side.

Brown's work is, both in media and message, evocative of the collages of Romare Bearden. Like Bearden, she is a skillful colorist whose technique reveals a commitment to excellence and a keen awareness of art history. A graduate of Ohio University, Brown pursued additional studies in fine art and art history at Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C. (where she later taught), Kent State University, and at the Akron Art Institute under Leroy Flint. Much of her work is non-objective. As her other untitled works attest, Brown exploits color and shape to convey an often deeply personal emotional state.

In an artist's statement, Brown describes her efforts "to achieve a harmony where there is a dynamic balance of the plastic forces and what I consider the poetry of the painting." By dispersing multiple shades of the same hue in large blocks around her canvases, she creates a dynamic motion which engages the viewer's attention, leading it horizontally and vertically around the works. These linear arrangements give outward expression to the "time and space, sign and significance, the real and the imaginary" which the artist views as "parallel and simultaneous forces moving toward an ultimate truth."⁸

Edith Brown is not the only Western Reserve-based African American artist of this period to explore the formal possibilities of an Abstract Expressionist style. **Virgie Patton-Ezelle**, in her untitled collage from the 1960s (Fig. 46), similarly exploits shape and color to achieve a work of extraordinary balance. While Brown's palette is characterized by highly saturated reds, yellows and blues, Patton limits her range of colors through a careful mixing of complements. By concentrating the lightest values in the center of



58. EDITH BROWN. *Collage for Black History* (1968-70). Acrylic & Collage, 34 1/2 x 28 1/2". Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Robert P. Madison.

the canvas, she pulls the viewer directly into the work, binding the gaze between the massive, dark shapes on either side. The artist's presence is everywhere suggested by the frenetic brushstrokes left in the thick impasto.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Patton-Ezelle developed an early interest in art, attending the children's classes at The Cleveland Museum of Art while still in grammar school. She went on to study in nearly every venue in the city: the Cooper School, John Huntington Polytechnical Institute, Karamu, and the Cleveland Institute of Art. Of these experiences, she cites Karamu as especially important, for she found the warm support and encouragement it so freely dispensed decidedly lacking elsewhere. Like Malcolm Brown and Clarence Perkins, she was briefly employed at American Greetings during the 1960s, but felt the company was unsupportive.

In spite of these setbacks, Patton-Ezelle's considerable



59. VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE.
Autumn Medley (c.1967). Acrylic,
27³/₄ x 35¹/₂". Courtesy of the artist.

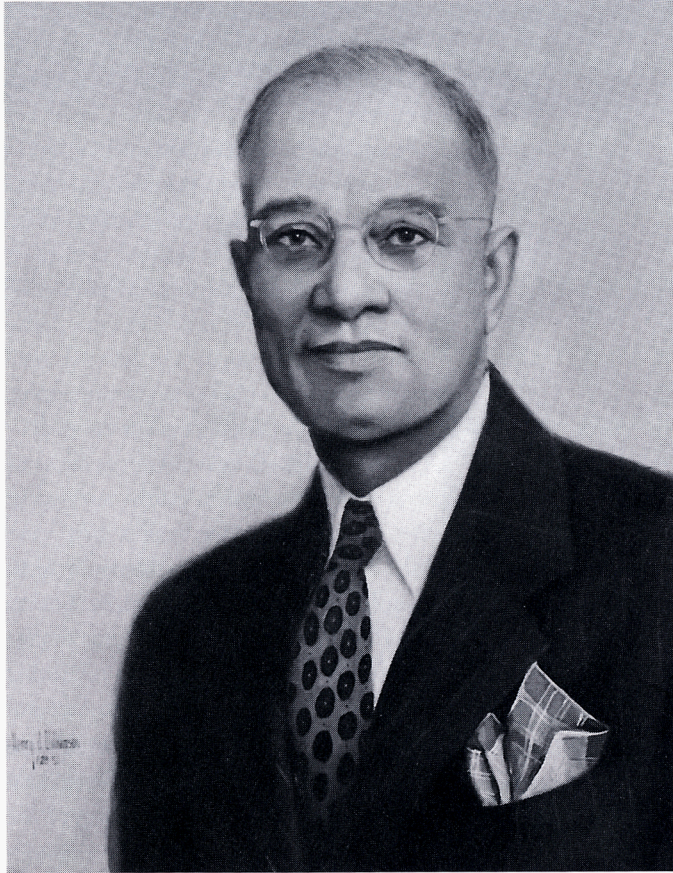
talents have developed throughout her career. Indeed, her self-assured works produced in more recent years – and therefore not included in the present discussion – show remarkable artistic growth, leading to an honorary degree bestowed by the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1994. Then and now, her works consistently reveal an extremely able technique coupled with a strong awareness of artistic traditions. Her representational works show the same expressive brushwork and generally muted palette contained in the non-objective collage. In *Autumn Medley* (Fig. 59, c.1967), Patton-Ezelle presents a landscape viewed sharply from above, so that the sky is but a tiny blue strip at the top. She counters the strong horizontal arrangement of the bands of trees and rooflines by describing the foliage in vertical brushstrokes.

Conversely, in *Three Girls* (Fig. 45, 1963) a bold verticality is established by the parallel standing figures. Working in a long tradition of mythically inspired subject matter (the Three Graces, the Judgment of Paris, etc.), Patton-Ezelle reveals herself here as both a master colorist and a sensitive portraitist of the female form. By restricting her colors to light tints of red, yellow and blue, the artist builds

up the figures in thick layers of mottled color, which are repeated in larger patches in the background. The negation of depth thus achieved is heightened by the cropping of the image at the figures' feet, diminishing the distance between viewer and subject.

The very hues which comprise Patton-Ezelle's works are used to entirely different effect by **Curtis Tann** in his *Cityscape* (Fig. 35) of the 1960s. Tann's mastery of the enameling technique is here evidenced in his subtle modulation of the large blocks of color with which he constructs the building. Concentrating his darkest shades at the bottom of the work, he gradually lightens the middle and upper sections, replicating the sun's effects in densely built cities. The emphatic verticality of the skyscrapers is strongly countered by the sharp diagonal shadows created by the unseen light source at top left. Tann's reduction of the imagery to crisp, rectilinear forms, evocative of modernist architecture, is achieved by masking areas with stencils when applying the powdered glass used for enameling.

In contrast, Tann employs a wet application technique to blur the edges of juxtaposed colors in his untitled portrait of the 1960s (Fig. 103). Reproducing Henri Matisse's



60. HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Portrait of Peyton Lemon* (1951).
Oil, 21½ x 18". Courtesy of the artist.



61. HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Untitled* (1949). Oil, 24 x 18".
Courtesy of the artist.

celebrated *The Green Stripe (Mme. Matisse)* of 1905, Tann shares his predecessor's interest in the play of seemingly arbitrary colors in the unification of the composition. However, the uneven, glossy surface of the heavy enamel layer in Tann's reproduction does not duplicate the painted flatness of the earlier piece.

Henry Williamson was working throughout this period as well. His later works in portraiture reveal a keen eye for detail and interest in conveying the personality of his sitters. In *Portrait of Peyton Lemon* (Fig. 60, 1951), Williamson presents a bust-length view of the sitter at a slightly oblique angle. A smile illuminates the figure's features, creating the impression of a warm rapport between artist and sitter. The pocket square serves as a visual counterbalance to the brightness of the background and lightens the visual weight of the sitter's dark, off-centered jacket.

In his *Reverend Jackson* (Fig. 38, 1949) Williamson once again uses starkly contrasted elements. The suggestion of a smile is here absent, as the sitter stares straight ahead, holding the viewer rapt in his gaze. Again, Williamson reveals his talent for modeling, presenting every facial feature in sharp detail. Only the skin tones are rendered in warm hues, the remainder of the work consisting mostly of varying values of blue. The eye is thus drawn immediately to the face, and from there to the tiny church positioned in the dark and vaguely unsettling landscape. By directing the viewer's gaze first to the individual, and then to the emblem of his calling, Williamson captures both the private and public personae of his subject.

This device is frequently employed by **Ernest William Trotter** in his many portraits of jazz musicians and other cultural figures. In *Edgar Allen Poe* (n.d.), Trotter perches

the author's famous raven on the figure's shoulder, beak open as if assuming the role of muse. The drawing, rendered entirely in black magic marker, is typical of Trotter's bold, jarring work. Instead of rendering the facial projections in lighter tones, the artist renders three-dimensionality through his use of jagged lines to suggest contours and recessions. Though known mostly for his portraits, Trotter occasionally depicts landscapes and buildings, as in an untitled work of about 1970 (Fig. 62) which features the same bold contrasts and jarring use of heavy, black line against a white ground.

If there is a unifying current throughout all the works of these many talented artists, it is the remarkable commitment to technical expertise. When viewed as a whole, this otherwise disparate body of works reveals both an awareness of, and proficiency in, the mainstream currents in art of the mid-twentieth century. If society was increasingly coming to identify these individuals in terms of their race, they themselves were declaring their identities as artists first, and as perpetrators of the "Cleveland Style" second. The engagement with race issues which characterizes much of the art of African Americans elsewhere would, with few exceptions, have to wait for the next generation of black artists in Cleveland. In a city characterized by segregated neighborhoods and diminished economic opportunities for minorities, Cleveland's African American art of the 1940s, '50s and '60s reflects the more inclusive policies of its many art institutions.

PAMELA McKEE
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Michigan



62. ERNEST WILLIAM TROTTER. Untitled (1970). Magic marker on paper, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12". Courtesy of the artist.

NOTES:

1. Douglas Phillips, Explanatory notes for the Healing Window. Lakewood, OH: Lakewood Presbyterian Church.
2. Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African American Artists from 1792 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993): 362.
3. David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds., in association with Case Western Reserve University. *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), s.v. "Art", by James Shelley, p. 51.
4. Helen Cullinan, "Watercolorist is Tested but Stays on Creative Track," *The Plain Dealer*, 7 March 1986, p.
5. *ibid.*
6. For a detailed discussion of Nelson Stevens, see Curlee Raven Holton, "The Contribution of Cleveland's African American Artists to the New Negro Movement," in *Cleveland as a Center for Regional American Art*, Symposium presented by the Cleveland Artists Foundation at the Cleveland Museum of Art, November 13 and 14, 1993.
7. Samella Lewis, *African American Art and Artists*, updated and rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 266.
8. Edith Brown, "Artist's Statement" (Akron Art Museum Archives, n.d.), unpaginated.



63. St. James AME Church, Art Exhibit. Andrew Young, guest speaker, Feb.11, 1968. L-R: Curtis Ross, John Page, Hugh D. Bullock, Dewayne Phoenix, Grant Latimore, Nelson Stevens, Warner Thomas, W. Hal Workman (Exhibit Coordinator). Photograph courtesy of W. Hal Workman.



65. W. Hal Workman. Karamu House, April 1949. Photograph courtesy of W. Hal Workman.

64. Douglas Phillips (1950s). Photograph courtesy of Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc.

BIOGRAPHIES

EDITH BROWN (b. 1907)

Edith Brown, a painter and teacher, was born in Jackson, Mississippi and came to Akron, Ohio at the age of nine. A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University with a BA in music, she began her art studies in the mid-1950s. She studied for about 12 years with Leroy Flint, former director of the Akron Art Museum and for one year also took painting and art history courses at Oberlin College. Although she taught from 1966 to 1968 in the summer humanities program at Bennett College in North Carolina and exhibited there, her primary exposure has been in Ohio. She has had one-person shows at the Akron Art Museum (1970, 1979), Ohio Wesleyan University (1986) and galleries in Akron and Columbus. Mrs. Brown also gained acceptance in such major juried exhibitions as the Butler Museum of American Art's Midyear Show and, in 1962, in the May Show of The Cleveland Museum of Art. She took honors in several of the six Akron Spring Shows in which she participated. She also participated in group exhibitions at galleries including the Malcolm Brown Gallery (no relation) and Tea House Gallery where she won an award, and at NOVA, Alpha Pi Alpha-Akron Urban League exhibit.

Mrs. Brown speaks of her art as an effort to "achieve a harmony and balance between the plastic elements of the painting and that hard-to-define element we call expressive feeling. This only comes by reason of relationships and associations which give...meaning to the forms in a personal way. I try to think of the real and the imagined, sign and significance, as parallel forces moving together to produce a new truth, or a regeneration of perception."

Edith Brown's work is in the permanent collections of the Akron Art Museum, the Akron Public Library, Bennett College, North Carolina, National City Bank, and other firms in Akron and Cleveland. — SNM

Sources: Zita Rahn interview, February 1995 and August 1995; Ann C. Brown conversation with daughter, January 1996; Art for Community Expression, Inc., exhibition catalog; undated exhibit clippings, courtesy of the artist.



66. Edith Brown. Photograph courtesy of Linda Brown.



67. Elmer W. Brown at work at American Greetings (c.1975). Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth M. Smith.



68. ELMER W. BROWN. *Horseshoe Lake* (1920s). Oil, 6 x 9". Courtesy of Judith and Roland Stenta.

ELMER W. BROWN (1909-1977)

Elmer Brown was a painter, printmaker, muralist, illustrator, set designer, cartoonist, enamelist, ceramist, and educator. He came to Cleveland at the age of twenty, after a childhood of considerable hardship. Brown studied at the Cleveland School (now Institute) of Art where Paul Travis was among his teachers, and at the John Huntington Polytechnical Institute. Early in his career, he taught at Karamu House, one of the country's most active community arts centers, and also designed costumes and sets for its outstanding theater department. At Karamu he befriended the poet Langston Hughes and eventually illustrated some of Hughes' books. In 1934 Brown participated in the International Print Shows in New York and Philadelphia. He also exhibited at the 1939 and 1943 May Shows of The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the early 1940s, Brown executed a series of murals for Valleyview Homes Community Center. Best known among his murals is the extant *Freedom of Speech* at the City Club of Cleveland. Two commissioned paintings, *Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders Going Up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War* and *Dorie Miller in the Act of Manning the Gun at Pearl Harbor*, were reproduced in editions of 300 for lounges of railroad stations, hotels and camps used by Black U.S. Army personnel. Brown taught at the Cooper School of Art and worked as a designer for American Greetings for 18 years until his death. His work is in the collections of The Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Artists Foundation (former Northeast Ohio Museum of Art collection), and Karamu House. — SNM

Source: *Cleveland's African Image circa 1920-1960*, Cleveland Artists Foundation, 1990.

JAMES T. BROWN (1927-1971)

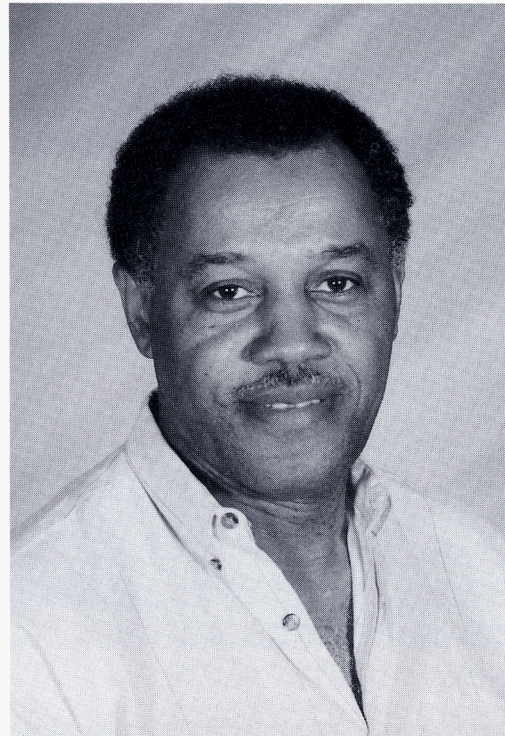
James T. Brown was a prizewinning photographer who graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art and became one of the charter members of the Karamu Camera Guild. He taught photography at Karamu and initiated a camera clinic which offered criticism for amateurs experimenting with photography. He did freelance work, documented Karamu Theater productions and worked for Sales Promotion Products, Inc. as an advertising artist.

Noted for his artistic compositions, Brown won ribbons and awards for his creative work, including an honorable mention, just before his death, in the International Club Print Competition of the Photographic Society of America. His long association with, and devotion to, Karamu House were honored by Russell and Rowena Jelliffe, his colleagues and friends at the time of his death in February 1971. — ACB

Sources: *The Call & Post*, February 1, 1966; *Cleveland Press*, February 1, 1966.

MALCOLM M. BROWN, A.W.S. (b. 1931)

Malcolm Brown, a painter and art educator, was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. Encouraged by high school teachers, he hoped for a career in commercial art; but opportunities in this field were so limited that he chose teaching instead and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in art education from Virginia State College in 1955. After teaching in Virginia and a stint in the military service, he came to Cleveland in 1964 and joined American Greetings. In 1969 he received a master's degree in art education from Case Western Reserve University and obtained a teaching position in the Shaker Heights schools that he has held ever since. In 1979, Brown was named Ohio Art Teacher of the Year. He also taught evening classes at the Cleveland Institute of Art from 1970 to 1982, has been an active lecturer, painting demonstrator, and exhibition juror since 1973, and, together with his wife Ernestine, has owned and operated the Malcolm Brown Gallery since 1980.



69. Malcolm M. Brown (1995). Photograph courtesy of the artist.



70. MALCOLM M. BROWN. *Sunflowers* (c.1970). Watercolor on rice paper, 37 x 26". Courtesy of the artist.

Though he has also worked with collage and acrylics, watercolor has long been Brown's favorite medium. He relishes its "unpredictability" and "the endless learning that comes through mistakes, accidents and recoveries." He is a member of the prestigious American Watercolor Society and the National Watercolor Society, as well as a charter member of the Ohio Watercolor Society. He also holds membership in the National Conference of Artists.

Malcolm Brown has had solo exhibitions at the Butler Institute of American Art (1986) and the National Afro-American Museum; other venues have been in Kansas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, as well as elsewhere in Ohio. In addition to The Cleveland Museum of Art's May Show and other state and national juried exhibitions, Brown's work was selected for inclusion in an American Watercolor Society exhibition which travelled to American embassies in Europe. His awards include: Mainstreams International Award of Excellence (1970), the National Exhibition of Black Artists' Henry O. Tanner Award (1971), the Virginia Beach National Exhibition's first prize (1971-1974), the Rocky Mountain National Juried Show's Watermedia Award (1980), and Ohio Watercolor Society awards (1983-85). In 1994, he won a Cleveland Arts Prize and an Alpha Kappa Alpha award, both for distinguished service to the arts. His corporate and private collectors include Ameritech, Arco Chemical, BP America, Coca Cola, General Electric, General Tire, and McDonalds, as well as banks, hospitals, universities, art museums, and The Cleveland Foundation. — SNM

Sources: Author's interview with artist, November 1995; artist's statement; *Art News*, Vol 88, March 1989, p. 83.

GEORGE BRYANT (1896-1965)

George Bryant was born in Pelham, Cuthbert County, Georgia and received his photographic training at Morris Brown College in Atlanta. Unable to find full-time work as a photographer upon moving to Cleveland in 1923, he was forced to rely on steady employment in other fields. He worked for nineteen years for Scheumann Jones, a pharmaceutical company. For 38 years, he also served as Sunday School Superintendent of the Greater Avery AME Church. He thus remained essentially a part-time photographer.

Bryant and his camera were so inseparable that he was popularly known as “the picture man.” A portrait of his infant daughter Gwendolyn, joyfully smiling from atop a cabinet, earned him an award in a Cleveland Photographic Society competition in March 1931.

George Bryant died in 1965 from a heart attack suffered on a CTS bus while returning home from his studio. — ACB

Source: *The Call & Post*, May 15, 1965.

FRED CARLO (1914-1964)

Scholarly research on Fred Carlo has turned up almost nothing about his birthplace or his schooling. It would seem that he was not born in Cleveland and did not attend Cleveland schools. What is known is that he was introduced to Karamu House by his mother, Fannie, who taught ceramics, and that he was a gifted artist who met with considerable success as a printmaker. The catalog for the Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Collection of Prints and Drawings reports that “in 1931, at the age of 17, Fred Carlo was the first black artist ever to be selected for inclusion in a national show ‘Cleveland Print Makers’, held at the Old Wade Mansion. He was one of the original members of Karamu Artists, Inc.” The Cleveland Museum of Art bulletins for 1932, 1933, 1935, 1938, 1939 and 1941 record that during those years he exhibited in the print section of the annual juried May Show.



71. Karamu Camera Guild: (L) Matthew Dunlop, (R) James Doss. Photograph courtesy of Western Reserve Historical Society.



72. FRED CARLO. *Snowy Rooftops* (1930s), Linocut, 6 x 11 1/2". Photograph courtesy of R. Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART.



73. LEWIS AND ANDREW CHESNUTT, Chesnutt Bros. Studio. Charles Chesnutt and Son, *Edwin* (1930s). Photograph. Western Reserve Historical Society.

Carlo exhibited extensively. In 1939 his work was shown at Dillard University, in 1940 at the American Negro Exposition and at the Tanner Art Galleries (*Art of the American Negro*), both in Chicago; in 1941 at Howard University (*Exhibition of Negro Artists of Chicago*), at Chicago's Southside Community Art Center, and at McMillen, Inc. Galleries in New York (*Contemporary Negro Art*). In 1942, he exhibited along with fellow Karamu artists Charles Sallée, Zell Ingram and Hughie Lee-Smith at the Associated American Artists Gallery in New York. The January, 1942 *Art Digest* reviewed the show in *Art from Cleveland's Karamu House*. His work was also included in the exhibition *Contemporary Black Artists* (1970) at the DuSable Museum of African American Art.

The Cleveland State University catalog for *The Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Collection of Prints and Drawings* – a collection of works by Karamu-associated artists – reprints a statement by Carlo: “I looked from the rear window of my room one cold morning when the frost was so heavy that it looked much like snow. It made a bleak picture but the design interested me. The contrasts were intense. I have tried to capture them.” This interest in intense contrasts of dark and light is also evident in Carlo's strong lino-cuts of heads. A fine draftsman with great control of his medium, Carlo used simple areas of dark shadow which crisply define the three-dimensional forms.

The Cleveland Artists Foundation continues to seek information about Carlo's life and work between 1942 and 1964, and about his pre-Karamu years. — HCB

Sources: *CMA Bulletins*, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1939, 1941. *Art Digest*, January, 1942. *Artists Biographies Master Index*, 1984. Porter, James, *Modern Negro Art*, Howard University Press, 1992. *The Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Collection: Prints and Drawings from the Karamu Workshop, 1929-1941*, Cleveland State University, 1994.

LEWIS(1860-1933) and **ANDREW** (1860s-1930s)
CHESNUTT

Very little information is available about the Chesnutt brothers and the Chesnutt Bros. Studio. Lewis was born in Oberlin, Ohio in 1860 and Andrew in Cleveland in the 1860s (the exact dates of his birth and death are not known). Lewis was educated at Howard School, Fayetteville, North Carolina. The Chesnutt Bros. Studio was opened in 1891 at 50 Euclid Avenue, specializing in social photography. The brothers were gradually overshadowed by the fame of their author brother, Charles, and began to do commercial work.

In a 1902 article in the *Plain Dealer Magazine*, the Chesnutt brothers were described as the only “colored” photographers in Cleveland. Their studio was relocated several times during their 40 years of business, reflecting the changing demographics of their clientele. During the 1920s, they moved into the hub of the African American community. By 1930, when the Chesnutt brothers were approaching retirement, the African American community of Cleveland had swelled, creating many more opportunities for skilled African American photographers.

Lewis Chesnutt died in Cleveland on January 18, 1933, and Andrew sometime during the 1930s. Famous and popular during their lifetime, the Chesnutt brothers have remained relatively unknown and unheralded after their death. — ACB

Sources: Samuel W. Black, *Yet Still We Rise*, p. 9; Keller, Frances Richardson, *An American Crusade*.

ALLEN E. COLE (1884-1970)

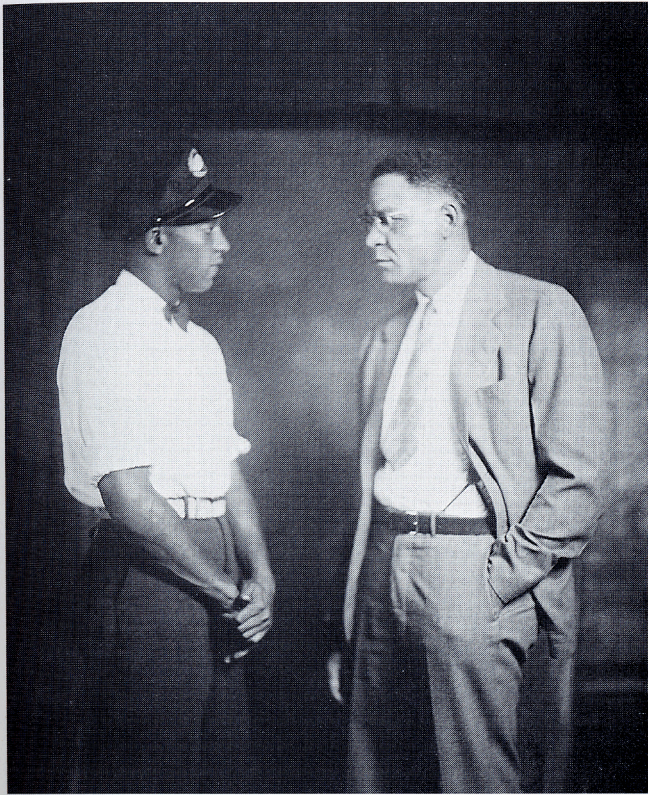
Allen E. Cole, photographer, was an artist almost by happenstance; yet his body of work illuminates nearly half a century of the flow of life in Cleveland’s black community. Cole, the eleventh of thirteen children, was born in Kearneysville, West Virginia. As soon as he could swing a ten-pound hammer, he began assisting his blacksmith father and continued to do so until he went off to Storer College in nearby Harpers Ferry. After graduation in 1905,



74. Allen E. Cole display booth, business convention (c.1945). Photograph courtesy of Western Reserve Historical Society; Allen E. Cole Collection.



75. ALLEN E. COLE. Councilman L.O. Payne Extending Xmas Greetings (1932). Photograph courtesy of Western Reserve Historical Society; Allen E. Cole Collection.



76. ALLEN E. COLE. *Jesse Owens and Alonzo Wright* (n.d.).
Photograph courtesy of Western Reserve Historical Society; Allen E. Cole Collection.

Cole went to Atlantic City, New Jersey where he found work as a waiter. He then moved to Cincinnati and, within two years, was promoted from railroad porter to chief dining car cook. When injuries from a wreck left him unable to stand the vibrations of train travel, he tried the real estate business without much success. In quest of better opportunities, Cole moved to Cleveland, reluctantly leaving behind his new wife, Frances, to care for her ailing parents. Although he once again advanced rapidly from waiter to headwaiter at the Cleveland Athletic Club, his letters home echo his frustration and determination to do better.

Because headwaiting left him plenty of spare time, Cole was able to take advantage of a chance to acquire a new set of skills when a club patron, Joseph Opet, manager of the Frank Moore Studios, offered to have his staff teach Cole photography in exchange for clean-up and odd jobs. By the time Frank Moore's business was sold six years later, Cole was proficient and committed. In 1922, he opened a small studio in his home on East 103rd Street and became Cleveland's first professional African American photographer. Hoping to capitalize on the popularity of photos as Christmas gifts, Cole requested a three-month leave from the Cleveland Athletic Club and, when told he couldn't be spared, quit his job, making photography his principal means of support. Sometime in the mid-1920s, Cole moved to Cedar Avenue, which was becoming the social and business hub of the black community. His lawn sign read "Somebody, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph." His home-based business thrived. He became the first Cleveland photographer to offer tinted prints, assisted by his wife who executed most of the tinting.

In the early years Cole concentrated on portraits, but the onset of the Depression in 1932 cut deeply into that custom. Since individuals and groups who could still afford to hire a photographer were patronizing white studios, Cole bought additional equipment on contract, paid for materials as he went, and looked to those studios for work. Eight of them sub-contracted jobs to him. Cole shot and finished the photos for them in return for a percentage of their fees. The arrangement continued long after the Depression

ended, and in the '40s and '50s he often had more work than he could handle. Ill health in the last twenty-five years of his life forced Cole to cut back, but, determined to leave his wife a sizeable estate, he maintained as heavy a schedule as he could. The money he left supported Frances for the nine years she survived him.

Cole's lasting legacy surfaced later. Some prints and twenty-seven thousand negatives were purchased from his estate by the Western Reserve Historical Society, which restored them, printed some, and mounted the first exhibit of Cole's work in 1980. — SNM

Source: *Someone, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph*, The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1980

WILLIAM W. CRAWFORD (1907-1966)

Born on December 17, 1907 in Williamsburg, West Virginia, William Crawford received his early education in the public schools of Charleston, South Carolina, where he was reared by an aunt, Mrs. Mary Green. After graduating from Garnett High School in Charleston, he entered the U.S. Army and served in Europe as a combat photographer attached to the 354th Engineers and Headquarters Service Company.

Following his discharge from the army, Crawford worked in Columbus, Ohio as staff photographer for the old *Columbus Advocate*, and later for the *Ohio State News*. He joined the *Call & Post* in 1949 as staff photographer and later became the head of the African American weekly's Photo Engraving Department. He eventually left the *Call & Post* to open his own very successful business, but continued to do special assignments for the newspaper.

Crawford was widely admired for his technical skill, and at the time of his death was the operator of Crawford's Photo Studios on Cedar Avenue. — ACB

Sources: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 23, 1966, p.28; *The Call & Post*, May 28, 1966, p.1.



77. WILLIAM W. CRAWFORD. *Tuxedo Club Dance* (1959). Photograph. Afro-American Cultural & Historical Society Museum.



78. WILLIAM W. CRAWFORD. *Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Wiggins* (1963). Photograph. Afro-American Cultural & Historical Society Museum.



79. Matthew Dunlop. Photograph courtesy of the artist.



80. JAMES "JIMMY" GAYLE. *Duke Ellington* (1950s). Photograph. Courtesy of Gina Gayle.

MATTHEW DUNLOP (b. 1923)

A world traveler who has lugged his camera to South America, Europe and Africa, Matthew Dunlop has always made Cleveland his home. He was born in Cleveland in 1923 to Matthew and Henrietta Drake Dunlop, attended the city's public schools and graduated from Central High School in 1943. He did his tour of duty in the Navy, partly in the Pacific theatre. Upon his return in 1946 he enrolled in night classes at Fenn College, an engineering school absorbed into Cleveland State University in 1964, and took a job with what is now the Regional Transit Authority where he eventually rose to Supervisor of Major Repairs. At the same time, however, he took night classes in photography at Karamu House with Jim Brown and Cal Ingram, joined the Karamu Camera Guild, and became an avid freelance photographer.

In 1963, Dunlop entered a photograph of an African American mother and child in the Photographic Society of America's International Exhibition in Rochester, New York. The image, *Loving*, won first prize. Since then, Dunlop has won many prizes in local and regional competitions and has lost count of the number of group exhibitions in which he has participated. He has continued to hone his art, taking a photojournalism class at Cleveland State University in 1965. When Cuyahoga Community College opened its eastern campus, he took courses in color processing. Since his retirement, he has been attending day classes at the community college, branching out into life and portrait drawing and, more recently, oil and pastel painting.

Dunlop has always generously shared his expertise with others. He began teaching at Karamu House in 1958 and continues today as a volunteer; over the years he has taught many other groups on a free-lance or volunteer basis. He served as photographer for Cleveland chapters of NAACP and CORE, and for the Central Area Garden Clubs. Well known for his slide talks, he was the author of a monthly photo-essay on travel in *The Record*, a Cleveland publication serving the African American community.

In 1992, Karamu House honored Dunlop with a solo exhibition of his photographs, *The Oneness of Children*. He shows no signs of slowing down. — HCB

Sources: Telephone interviews by the author, January 22-26, 1996. *The Record*, Cleveland, November, 1986; *1967 Youth Activities Yearbook*, Fairmount Temple and *Fairmount Temple Footnotes*, Cleveland, 1965.

JAMES “JIMMY” GAYLE (1920-1971)

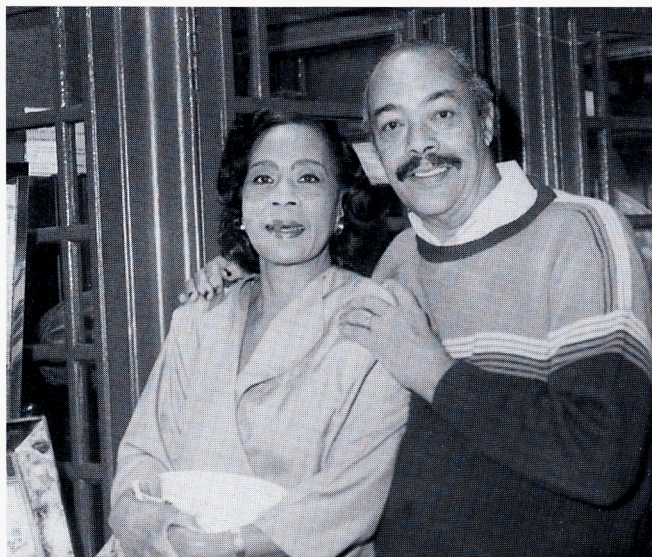
James Gayle was born on the campus of Tuskegee Institute, Alabama where his father was a physical education teacher. In those early days of his life, his father often took him to visit with Dr. George Washington Carver, the renowned scientist and researcher at Tuskegee Institute. Gayle moved to Cleveland when he was three years old. He attended the Cleveland Public Schools and graduated from East High School, where he played the saxophone. During World War II he was a musician in the Navy and was stationed on the island of Curacao.

After the war, Gayle played and traveled with the Ernie Freeman dance band. When the dance business waned, he first took a job in a foundry and then went to work in a photography shop where his interest in taking pictures was awakened.

In the early 1960s Gayle opened a studio with a partner and sold photographs on a free-lance basis to many newspapers, including the *Plain Dealer* and the *Call & Post*. He also obtained local photography assignments for *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. When the *Plain Dealer* hired him in 1968, he became that newspaper's first African American photographer. He stayed with the *Plain Dealer* until his retirement in 1990.

Gayle was known to pursue his assigned tasks tirelessly, striving to capture both content and spirit of each assignment as tellingly as possible. He is fondly remembered for the infectious enthusiasm he brought to his work. — ACB

Sources: *Plain Dealer*, July 4, 1991, p.6B; Obituary, July 6, 1991, House of Wills Funeral Home.



81. James “Jimmy” Gayle and wife, Juanita (December, 1987). Photograph courtesy of Mrs. James Gayle.



82. JAMES “JIMMY” GAYLE. *Billie Holliday* (1950s). Photograph. Courtesy of Gina Gayle.



83. Harold Louis Golden (1947). Photograph courtesy of Kevin Golden.

HAROLD LOUIS GOLDEN (1928-1979)

Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Golden attended Cleveland Public Schools and graduated in 1947 from East Technical High School, where he was a member of the National Honor Society. He attended Howard University on a partial scholarship for two years, returning home when his father died.

He began work at Central National Bank as a night janitor in 1950. A year later, he was promoted to handyman in the maintenance division, a month later to electrician's helper. In 1953 Golden became a carpenter and in 1960 was promoted to the general accounting department. He became supervisor of general books in 1967.

Golden was a past president of the Karamu House Photographic Society. His photographs received honorable mentions at The Cleveland Museum of Art's May Shows and were sold for magazine covers. Golden also taught a photography course at Fairfax Community School. He died in 1979. — ACB

Sources: Author's telephone conversation with Kevin Golden, February 1996; *The Plain Dealer*, March 30, 1979, p. 6C.

CHARLES ELMER HARRIS, a.k.a. BENI E. KOSH (1917-1993)

Charles E. Harris' entire life's work narrowly escaped being thrown onto a city dump. After his death in 1993, an as-yet-unidentified "picker" saw some paintings in a trash pile on the tree-lawn in front of the late Harris' home on Dunlop Avenue; eventually some 900 paintings by the unknown artist were saved.

The works in this bonanza appeared to be signed by two artists – Charles E. Harris and Beni E. Kosh. But Sherrie Bingham Chicatelli and Mark Vance, who purchased the collection from a westside art dealer for their gallery, discovered through inquiries in the artist's neighborhood that Beni E. Kosh was Charles Harris' "black name." All the works had been painted by one man.

Bingham and Vance sought the help of Rachel Davis in the task of documenting this newly discovered artist. It was

clear to all of them that Harris/Kosh had been a very gifted man, whose knowledge of artistic styles was evident in his painting. By April 1995, an exhaustive search of the records enabled the Rachel Davis Gallery to present the first retrospective exhibition of the artist's work, to much public acclaim.

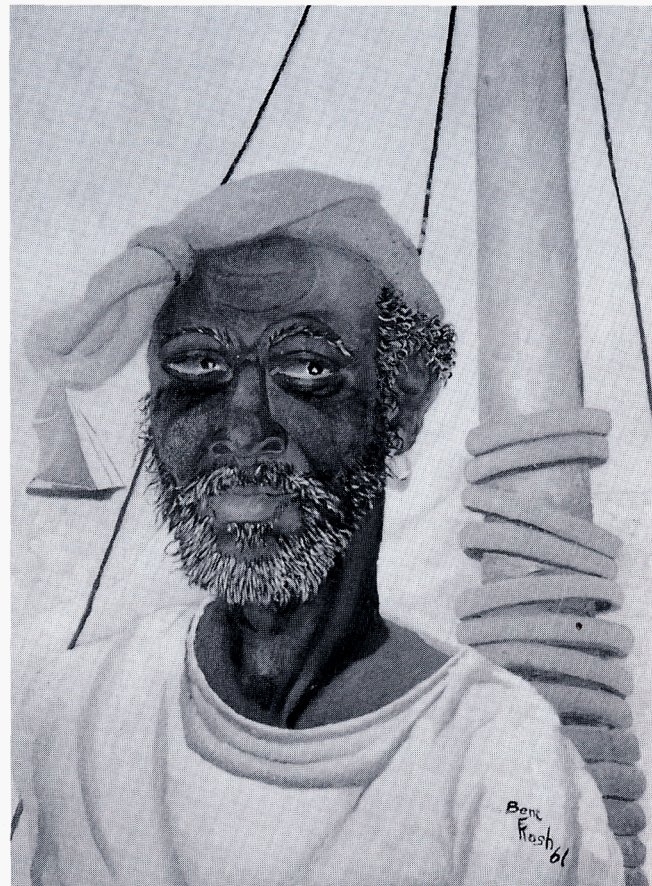
The *Plain Dealer* honored Harris/Kosh with an April 14th feature story, complete with color photographs of two of the artist's visionary paintings – *Crying Christ* and *Terminal Tower*. Steven Litt, the *Plain Dealer's* art critic, wrote:

“...Harris at his best was a powerful artist with a keen eye and a knack for painting both abstractions and representational imagery...His identity as an African American comes through strongly not only in his choice of neighborhood scenes but in the inspiration he drew from African art and from contemporary African American artists including [Jacob] Lawrence.”

Harris' work covers a tremendous range of subject matter. There are surrealist works, doctrinaire works addressing the oppression of people of color; there are portraits, cubist landscapes of neighborhood churches, clubs and factories. Next to a representational painting of figures at a Rapid Transit stop one might see one of Harris' dreamlike works – an imaginary scene from a black schoolroom, with fantastic shapes reminiscent of Juan Miro. Finally, in his late paintings, he turned to religious themes.

As to the wide range of styles in which Harris/Kosh worked, Steven Litt has pointed out: “Harris was an artistic chameleon. He oscillated between works that look thoroughly schooled and works in a naive or visionary style . . . Sometimes he switched styles several times in the same year.”

The records show that Charles Elmer Harris was born in Cleveland on May 26, 1917 to Elmer Harris and Alice Reid Harris. Charles' mother later divorced his father and married James Ross. Harris attended Central High School after



84. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris). *Son of Ethiopia* (1961). A self portrait. Acrylic, 20 x 16". Photograph courtesy of Rachel Davis Gallery.



85. BENI E. KOSH (Charles E. Harris). *Inner City Protestant Parish* (1958). Acrylic, 16 ½ x 29". Photograph courtesy of Mark Edward Vance.

which he enlisted in the Merchant Marine. His tour of duty took him to the French-speaking ports of North Africa, where he not only came into contact with the Islamic religion but became vividly aware of his African heritage. He is reported to have learned French and to have converted to Islam.

In 1944 Harris was honorably discharged and returned to Townsend Avenue to live with his mother, who worked at Park Synagogue. He contributed his pension to their expenses and as the possessor of a new leisure, began to paint.

That Harris studied painting and drawing with Paul Travis in 1952 at Karamu House has been documented. Travis, who also taught at the Cleveland School (now Cleveland Institute) of Art, had traveled extensively in Africa, and shared Karamu's commitment to the advancement of African American artists. (Whether Harris studied at the two-year Cooper School of Art at some time between 1953 and 1960 has not been established.)

It is believed that it was during the time of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, when African Americans were beginning to take pride in their roots, that Harris began to use the name Beni E. Kosh, a Hebrew transliteration meaning "son of Kush" – Kush being Ethiopia. At some time before his death, he stopped using the name, but his paintings from the '60s and '70s bear the Kosh signature. His friends say that it was also during the 1960s that he wore his hair in two braids, in the Moslem belief that in the event of his death he could more easily be pulled into paradise.

At some time in the 1960s, Harris/Kosh and his mother moved to Dunlop Avenue. Also during the 1960s, Harris/Kosh joined, as its oldest member, a group of seven African American artists who sometimes called themselves the "Sho-Nuff Art Group" and sometimes, "FLAG" (Free-Lance Artists Group). They met regularly for about five years, to critique one another's work and exhibit at the YMCA, the Phyllis Wheatley Association, various churches and the University of Akron. The other members were Ronald Leigh, Raymond Banks, Sarah Prince, George

Williams, Richard Boggess and sculptor Ted Waalker (sic). W. Hal Workman also sometimes exhibited with the group. Leigh remembers that Harris/Kosh was a very private man who wrote poetry, was reluctant to exhibit his paintings publicly and was never willing to sell them. Leigh also recalls that Harris used a crutch and carried his paints in a backpack because his leg had been shattered in an accident in the 1950s. One of his paintings, in fact, shows a crutch as part of his signature.

Harris/Kosh seems not to have painted after 1977. There is some evidence that his eyesight was affected by glaucoma, and he gradually developed a number of other medical problems. One of his physicians remembers him as a man of remarkable intelligence and charm: "As he sat in my waiting room, he would read St. Exupery in the original French, and he was a favorite with all the nurses!"

His deep interest in world religions had led him to read widely about Islam, Christianity and Judaism, according to Rabbi Armond Cohen, his mother's Park Synagogue employer. Indeed, Harris/Kosh's gentle manner may have been a function of his religious ideals. After his mother died in 1981, he was gradually forced by illness to remain in his home. He painted a dragon on his door, and neighbors thought of him as a recluse. By the end, the world had shrunk very small for this former traveler to lands afar. But, through the legacy of his paintings, he travels still, to worlds both known and unknown, and shares with us his powerful vision of the black experience. — HCB

Sources: Steven Litt, "Artistic Chameleon," *Plain Dealer*, April 14, 1995. Personal interviews by the author with Rachel Davis, April and October, 1995; with Rabbi Armond Cohen, November, 1995; with Mark Vance and Ronald Leigh, January 1996.

JOSEPHUS HICKS (b. 1908)

Born on May 4, 1908 in Newberry, South Carolina, Josephus Hicks attended schools in South Carolina and graduated in 1932 from South Carolina University. He moved to Cleveland in 1936 and resumed the photography hobby of his prep school days. By 1940, he had earned a master's degree in social work from Western Reserve University.

During his professional career at Cuyahoga Community College, the Cuyahoga County Welfare Department and the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, he continued to document the public and private life of Cleveland. He describes his time working with young people through the Juvenile Court as “a happy piece of work” and says he and the youngsters “helped each other.”

Hicks has documented on film (still and motion picture) Cleveland’s Civil Rights movement, political life, church services and events, weddings, family celebrations and school programs, especially the Cleveland Pride program. This program, initiated by Hicks in cooperation with the Cleveland Public Schools, was designed to help youngsters acquire good study habits, self-discipline, promptness. Many of the students thus encouraged have gone on to make valuable contributions to their communities.

In 1994, Hicks and his son, Kenneth Ward Hicks, co-authored *Johnson Chesnut Whittaker: Our Teacher, Ex-West Point Military Academy Cadet, Lawyer, Exoduster and Teacher*. The book details the life of Johnson Chesnut Whittaker, who was dismissed from West Point on falsified charges. President Clinton recently awarded Mr. Whittaker’s descendants his commission posthumously — ACB

Sources: Samuel W. Black telephone interview, Spring 1995; Ann C. Brown interview, February 1996.

CALVIN INGRAM (n.d.)

Calvin Ingram was active in the Karamu Camera Guild in the 1940s and 1950s. Research was unable to yield his birth or death dates.

The Cleveland Artists Foundation continues to search for information about Calvin Ingram’s life and work.

ZELL (ROZELLE) INGRAM (1910-1971)

Zell (originally “Rozelle”) Ingram was born in Carrothersville, Ohio and came with his mother to Cleveland in 1922. A gifted child, he soon enrolled in art classes at Karamu House. When he was only 16, he co-organized the first marionette group at Karamu. The pup-



86. Josephus Franklin Hicks to the right of Mayor Carl Stokes and members of the Glenview Area Community Council (July, 1968) (detail). Photograph courtesy of the artist.



87. JOSEPHUS FRANKLIN HICKS. Pride Program, Boulevard Elementary School (1960s). Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



88. Karamu Camera Guild (n.d.). L-R 1st: Harry Golden, 2nd: Langston Hughes, 7th: Calvin Ingram, 8th: James Brown. Western Reserve Historical Society.

pet theatre was so successful at Karamu that its fame spread, and other audiences in the city, the state and beyond clamored for performance bookings.

Ingram went to East Technical High School. It appears that after graduating, he spent three years traveling and performing with the Karamu puppetry group. In 1931, he left Cleveland for New York to study at the Art Students League. But these were Depression years, therefore he returned to Cleveland in 1933 to assist Karamu with its WPA project in the performing arts, designing and building sets and acting in Karamu Theatre productions.

Eventually, Ingram became a member of Karamu Artists, Incorporated. In 1940, he returned to New York to study, once again, at the Art Students League. The list of his teachers seems to include most of the highly acclaimed New York artists who preceded the rise of abstract expressionism. He studied with William Zorach, author of *Zorach Explains Sculpture*, and Kaimon Nikolaides, author of *The Natural Way to Draw*, with Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Bernard Tigning and Cameron Booth, with Robert Wood Johnson, Vaclav Dytlacil, Kenneth Hayes Miller and Will Barnett.

Ingram taught at the Harlem YMCA, which functioned as a WPA arts center. He exhibited in *Art of the American Negro* at Tanner Galleries in Chicago (1940) and in *Negro Art from Cleveland's Karamu House* at the Association of American Artists' Gallery in New York (1942), reviewed in *Art Digest* (January, 1942). His painting, *America's Most Tragic Figure* drew press comment in the *New York Post* (January 13, 1942).

As an established painter and sculptor, his work was shown in *Afro-American Artists: New York and Boston* at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1970. In 1971, his *Seated Nude* of 1965 was included in *Black Artists: Two Generations* at the Newark Museum. (*Seated Nude* is a decorative painting without social commentary, faintly echoing Will Barnett's poster-like approach in its linear simplicity, the shallow picture plane, the flattening of the figure, and the importance of pattern.)

At Ingram's memorial service on May 20, 1971, at the Washington Square United Methodist Church in New

York, Kate Millett read a poem by the late poet Langston Hughes who had been a close friend of Ingram and owned the bulk of Ingram's works. Dr. John Bell of New York University, where Ingram had recently earned an associate degree, also spoke. Romare Bearden presented the eulogy, in which he talked of Ingram as a good friend and fellow fine artist who deserved far more acclaim than he had received in his lifetime. — HCB

Sources: *Afro-American Art*, New Jersey State Museum, 1971; *Artists Biographies Master Index*, 1984; *The Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Collection: Prints and Drawings from the Karamu Workshop, 1929-1941*, Cleveland State University, 1994. Telephone interviews: Robert Thurmer, Cleveland State University, January, 1996; William Campbell, archivist at the Art Students League and friend of Ingram.

HUGHIE LEE-SMITH (born Hughie Lee Smith, 1915)

Hughie Lee-Smith is today the most highly acclaimed African American artist to have begun his career in Cleveland. He was born in Eustis, Florida, to Luther and Alice Williams Smith and, when his parents separated, moved to Cleveland with his mother. He vividly remembers his Saturday classes for gifted children amid the masterworks of Western painting at The Cleveland Museum of Art and, in junior high school, his fascination with Rubens' *Head of a Negro*, found in an art book.

Lee-Smith attended East Technical High School where Howard Hunsicker, Paul Scherer and Howard Reid were his teachers, Joseph O'Sickey a schoolmate. In his senior year, 1934, he won a National Scholastics Art Competition scholarship for one year of study at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts (now the Center for Creative Arts). In 1935, he won Karamu's second Gilpin Players Scholarship, enabling him to continue his studies at the Cleveland School (now Cleveland Institute) of Art. Among his teachers were Henry O. Keller, Rolf Stoll, and Carl Gaertner whose "absolute control of values" Lee Smith admired; Joseph O'Sickey and Anthony Eterovich were fellow students.

While at art school, Lee-Smith taught classes for "underprivileged children" at Karamu House as part of his Gilpin

Scholarship obligation. He graduated in 1938, continued furthering his art at Karamu, took evening courses at John Huntington Polytechnical Institute, and joined Charles Sallée, Elmer Brown, George Hulsinger, William E. Smith and Zell Ingram in an art education project sponsored by the National Youth Administration. In The Cleveland Museum of Art's annual juried May Show, he won third prize for freehand drawing and honorable mention for linoprint in 1938, second and third prizes in lithography in 1939 and 1940.

Lee-Smith spent academic year 1939-40 in Orangeburg, South Carolina, to help develop art courses for Claffin College, a small African American school. While there, he married Mabel Everidge. The couple then moved to Detroit, where a daughter, Christina, was born. Lee-Smith worked as a molder on war assignments at the Ford Motor Company, experimenting on sand cores for the Wright engine. In his spare time, he painted. One of his paintings won the Purchase Prize at the 1943 Atlanta University exhibition of works of African American artists. That year, James Porter praised Lee-Smith's prints in his important book *American Negro Art*.

In 1944-45, Smith-Lee served for one year and seven months in the U.S. Navy and painted "morale" paintings at the Great Lakes Naval Base. After the war, the GI Bill enabled him to earn a degree at Wayne State University. He also took courses, once again, at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts. He graduated in 1953 and, from 1955 to 1965, taught for several art groups, gave private art lessons – to Ann Ford, wife of Henry Ford II, and John Stroh of Stroh Beer fame, among others – and painted the crumbling "inner city" of Detroit.

Winning the National Academy of Design's coveted Emily Lowe Award in 1957 gave Lee-Smith the confidence to move to New York. Difficult years followed. His wife died in 1961; professionally he struggled against the tide of Abstract Expressionism while adhering to his distinctive style, hauntingly enigmatic, sometimes described as Romantic Realism. Yet he received the National Academy of Design's Purchase Prize of 1963.



89. HUGHIE LEE-SMITH. *Kite Flyers* (1930s). Etching, 5 ¼ x 6 ¼". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Lee-Smith taught at the Princeton Art Association in New Jersey and briefly in private schools (Princeton Country Day School and Vermont Academy); from 1969 to 1971 he also was artist-in-residence at Howard University; in 1973 he taught at Trenton State College. During the Civil Rights unrest when black students revolted against the teaching of Western art, he had occasion to act as spokesman for the students.

Having steadily continued to paint, to win prizes in group shows around the country, and to exhibit at Janet Nessler's Petite Gallery, Lee Smith was at last appointed, in 1972, to teach at the Art Students League – a post he held until 1987. His life was approaching a high point. In 1978 he married Patricia Ferry, a former student, and moved into Manhattan.

Bearden and Henderson point out that in 1987 Lee-Smith was the first African American artist to be elected to full membership in the National Academy of Design since Henry Ossawa Tanner in 1927, and the first to become a board member. By 1988, Lee-Smith had to take a leave of absence from the Art Students League in order to fulfill his many commissions, among them murals for the New Jersey Commerce Building in Trenton and the Prudential Life Insurance Building in Washington, D.C.

Lee-Smith has had more than forty solo exhibitions since 1945, and participated in over a hundred juried exhibitions. The list of group shows in galleries, museums and universities in which his work has appeared fills seven pages, single-spaced. His awards, prizes and honors are many. In 1984, the City of Cleveland declared a Hughie Lee-Smith Day. That year, the Malcolm Brown Gallery gave him a solo exhibition, and a second one in 1988 in cooperation with Lee-Smith's dealer, the June Kelly Gallery in New York. A Hughie Lee-Smith Retrospective exhibition, accompanied by a catalog with an essay by Lowery S. Sims, Associate Curator of 20th Century Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was shown in 1985 at the New Jersey State Museum and traveled subsequently to the Cultural Center in Chicago, the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York and the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio.

Hughie Lee-Smith now lives and works in Cranbury, New Jersey. Discussing his 1989 show at the June Kelly Gallery in *Art in America*, Gerrit Henry called him “an elder statesman of the American imagination.” — HCB

Sources: Bearden, Romare and Henderson, Harry, *A History of African-American Art: from 1792 to the Present*, 1993; Henry, Gerrit, *Art in America*, 1989; June Kelly Gallery, New York; Malcom Brown Gallery, Cleveland; *CMA Bulletins*, 1937-1939, 1940, 1941; *The Russell & Rowena Jelliffe Collection of Prints and Drawings*, Cleveland State University, 1994. Telephone interviews: Robert Thurmer, CSU Galleries, January 30, 1996; Algesa and Joseph O’Sickey, Kent, Ohio, Anthony Eterovich, Cleveland, Patricia Glasscock and Jean Peyrat of the Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, February 3, 1996.

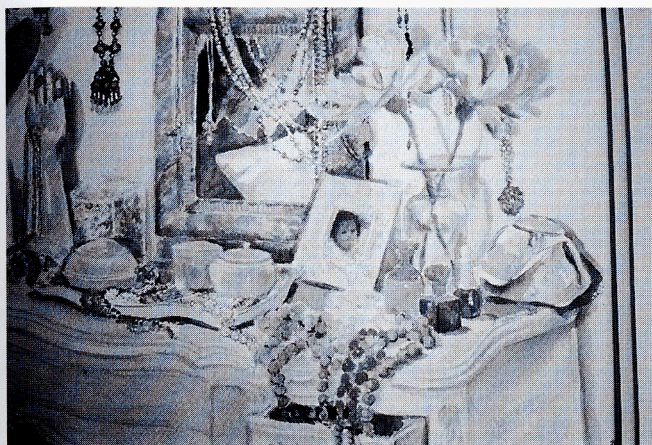
VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE (b. 1930)

Virgie Patton-Ezelle, a painter, sculptor, printmaker, illustrator and teacher, was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Patton-Ezelle began her formal art study in junior high school when she received the first of many scholarships to attend art classes at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Paul Travis was her first teacher, and she is still proud that he pronounced her “a perfect draftsman.” In addition, she took classes at the Cooper School of Art and the John Huntington Polytechnical Institute. At John Hay High School, she was mentored by a caring art teacher, Mrs. Shudova, who encouraged her to enter competitions, many of which, like the Easter Seal design contest, she won. In 1948, Shudova urged the graduating senior to take her portfolio to American Greetings; but, as Patton-Ezelle recalls, despite her past successes, she was “too chicken.” She took a secretarial job while continuing to take art classes, but it was not until the 1960s that she first felt herself connected to the art world – mainly thanks to the “warm and congenial atmosphere of shared support” at Karamu where she began expressing herself as a painter and studied sculpture with the late Duncan Ferguson.

From 1970 to 1978, Patton-Ezelle had a series of disparate art-related jobs – in magazine, greeting card and fashion illustration as well as in china, fabric and stained glass design and production – each of which she left after a



90. Virgie Patton-Ezelle. Photograph courtesy of the artist.



91. VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE. *Yesterday's Melodrama*, detail (c.1968). Watercolor, 15 x 16". Courtesy of the artist.



92. VIRGIE PATTON-EZELLE. *Untitled* (1963). Acrylic, 27 ¼ x 37 ½". Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. George Womersley.

year or two, searching for ways to reassert her dignity after racially based humiliations. Nevertheless, Patton-Ezelle in her younger years felt that to speak from a race-referential point of view as an artist was unnecessarily self-limiting. She now admits that she then was in "a denial that allowed me to dismiss the notion of having to respond to the political and social themes of the day." Patton-Ezelle sees her artwork from that phase as unfocused, for she moved from style to style and subject to subject with her head as occupied with the minutia of raising six children as it was with aesthetic concerns. Her art continued to mature, however. By 1978, when Patton-Ezelle accepted a challenging job as a consumer protection specialist for the City of Cleveland, her art career also began to gel. That same year, fellow painter Clarence Perkins urged her to enter the First Ohio Watercolor Society Show. Encouraged that her work was accepted, she soon entered other juried exhibitions close to home, winning several awards for her watercolors and acrylics.

When she consigned work to the respected Circle Art Gallery at the suggestion of Cleveland Institute of Art painting teacher John Tyrell, she felt she had achieved the status of a "professional artist." Today Patton-Ezelle's work is found in galleries in Cleveland, Dallas, Memphis, New Orleans, New York and Nigeria, Africa. In the 1980s, Patton-Ezelle began to teach: printmaking at Karamu, fashion drawing at both a dressmaking and a modelling school. In 1987 she became an instructor at the Rainey Institute, a satellite of Cleveland's Music School Settlement – a job she still holds. In 1992 and 1993, she also took a multidisciplinary arts program into the Cleveland Schools as an artist-in-residence for the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art. Between 1988 and 1994 she participated in a dozen invitational exhibitions, including two at the Contemporary Arts Center. In 1994, Patton-Ezelle was awarded an honorary painting degree by the Cleveland Institute of Art.

As a mature artist, Patton-Ezelle's primary identification is with her gender; one of her aims is to "restore Black woman to her well-earned space in art." Her recent work, which she calls "Zen" painting, eliminates detail to portray

the essence of the female figure as a symbol of “fertility, triumph, survival, dignity and ecstasy.” — SMN

Sources: Artist’s statement and vita. Zita Rahn interview, February 1995. Zita Rahn and Ann C. Brown interview, summer 1995.

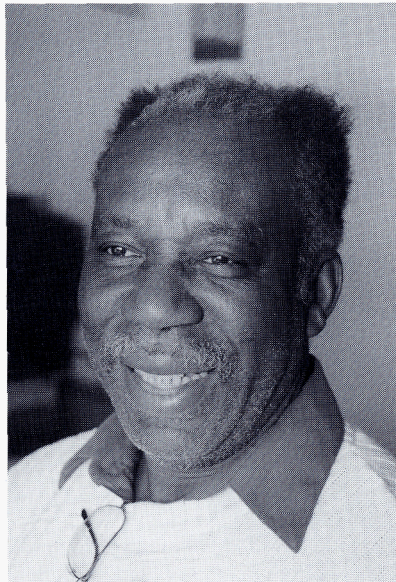
CLARENCE PERKINS, A.W.S. (b. 1935)

Clarence Perkins, painter, teacher, commercial artist and furnishings designer, is largely self-taught. Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, his childhood was spent in New Orleans where he lived with his grandparents. His grandmother provided the early encouragement that nurtured his love of drawing. The opportunity to live with his father and attend a non-segregated school brought him to Cleveland in his teens. He attended East Technical High School where Nicholas Livaich, his art teacher, fostered his development. As a senior in 1954, Perkins won seven gold keys – top honors – in the National Scholastics art competition. He not only excelled at art, but was an honor student as well.

Offered scholarships by the Universities of Michigan, Kansas and Illinois, Perkins turned them down in favor of his first choice, the Cleveland Institute of Art. CIA, however, waitlisted him for admission, while the American Greeting Card Corporation recruited him, then reneged on the job offer. The double-barreled slight left Perkins so bitter that he moved to Chicago without taking advantage of any of the scholarships awarded. He now believes his decision was a matter of “misplaced pride” as well as economics. In Chicago he worked as a lab technician in a plating firm. Two years later, he came back to Cleveland to wed, settling into jobs that had nothing to do with art – shipping clerk, construction worker, insurance salesman. Perkins had nearly stopped painting when he ran into his high school art teacher who had become a personnel consultant for American Greetings. Offered a job there once again, Perkins turned down the prominent firm with satisfaction: he was earning more than their job paid. But his passion for painting was rekindled. In 1964, when his wife obtained a degree in nursing, he took the pay cut and went to work for the greeting card company. There, he formed close friend-



93. CLARENCE PERKINS. *Louisiana Bayou* (c.1970), Watercolor, 19 x 32". Courtesy of the artist.



94. CLARENCE PERKINS (1996).
Photograph courtesy of Susan Telecki,
The Connection.

ships with an interracial group of artists who critiqued each other's work. At that point, Perkins switched from egg tempera to casein to watercolor, took a class with Fred Leach at the Cooper School of Art to loosen up his style, and had his very first watercolor accepted into the Midyear Painting Show at The Butler Institute of American Art. A member of the American and Ohio Watercolor Societies, he has exhibited in juried and invitational shows all over the United States, regularly winning prizes.

Perkins also began to teach, taking over Leach's watercolor class when the teacher changed his schedule. Perkins' employment at American Greetings did not reflect the success he met elsewhere. After ten years, dissatisfied, he left the firm. For two years, he sold his paintings on the art show circuit. When he found the travel too demanding on his family life, he went to work for the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and kept on painting. He eventually returned to commercial art and designed home furnishings for Joan Luntz.

Clarence Perkins is currently working for the National Caucus on Black Aged and the Urban League of Greater Cleveland. His paintings are in the collections of Society Bank, Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co., the late former Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., MacDonald & Co. Investment Brokers, and the City of Wichita, Kansas. — SNM

Source: Helen Cullinan, "Watercolorist is Tested But Stays on Creative Track," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 7, 1986. Zita Rahn and Ann C. Brown interview with artist, April 1995; interview by author, October 1995.

DOUGLAS PHILLIPS, FRSA, SGAS, IES (1922-1995)

Douglas Phillips was an artist, athlete and singer who enjoyed international renown as a stained glass designer. He founded the Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc., on Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio in 1952, where he designed and fabricated stained glass windows for Protestant, Catholic and Jewish sanctuaries and secular spaces across America. A large number of his commissions may be seen in Ohio, particularly in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, where one



95. Douglas Phillips with Leon Gordon Miller (1960s). Photograph
courtesy of Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc.

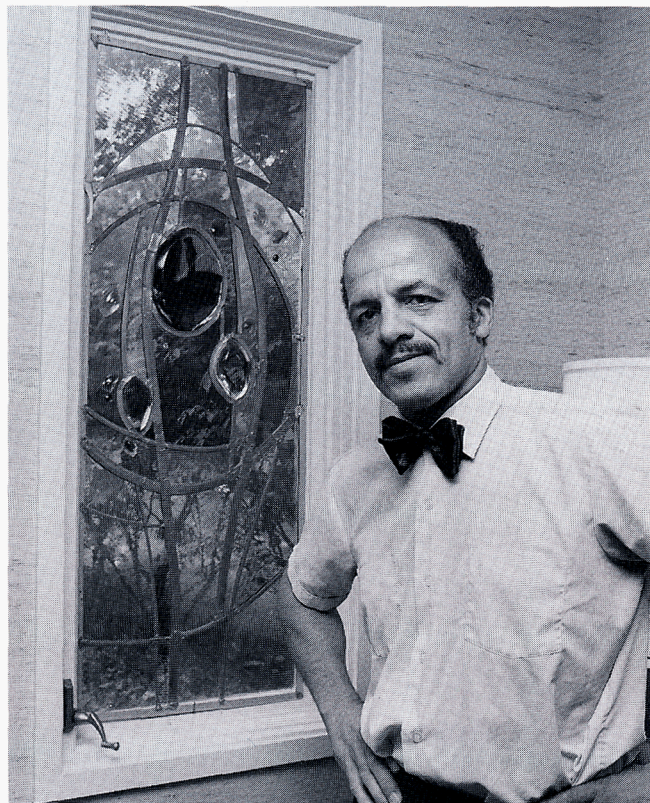
may observe his skill in the use of both the medieval, leaded-glass technique and the contemporary, faceted glass method. His original compositions were often abstract forms into which he had integrated figures. Some of his most dramatic work is based on swirling linear arabesques and large areas of one color, such as red in the Lutheran Home chapel in Westlake, or blue in St. Joseph Riverside Hospital, Warren, Ohio.

Born in Farrell, PA, and growing up in Buffalo, NY, Phillips frequently visited his father in Cleveland before moving there when he was 17. He served in the Army Quartermaster Corps during World War II in the Pacific. He attended the Cleveland School (now Institute) of Art on the GI Bill, then earned his BFA degree at Syracuse University. Returning to Cleveland, he worked as a designer for Winterich Associates, a firm specializing in church interiors and stained glass. By 1952, he was ready to establish his own stained glass studio.

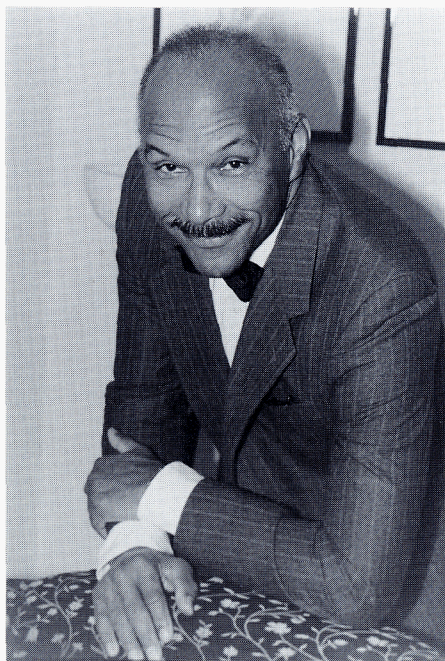
For five years during the 1950s, Phillips participated in The Cleveland Museum of Art's May Show, winning First Prize in Glass in 1952. He exhibited as well at the Intown Club, the Women's City Club and the Playhouse Gallery. To a question about where the next exhibit of his work would be held, he is said to have answered that there is every Sunday morning a show of his work in churches across America and as far away as Great Dunmow, England. Great Dunmow is the site of the thousand-year-old Little Easton Parish Church for which Phillips created a set of windows in the mid-1980s. They were commissioned by veterans of the 368th Bomb Group of the U.S. Army Air Corps, which had been stationed in the village during World War II.

Cleveland and its suburbs are rich in examples of Phillips' work. Beyond Ohio, his work appears in U.S. cities such as Little Rock, Mobile, Dearborn and Seattle.

Phillips was a fellow of Great Britain's Royal Society of Art. He won the Edwin Guth Memorial Award of Merit in Lighting, and was honored for outstanding craftsmanship in stained glass for three consecutive years by the Cleveland Builders Exchange. He was a member of the Advisory



96. Douglas Phillips (1973). Photograph courtesy of Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc.



97. Charles J. Pinkney. Photograph courtesy of the artist.



98. CHARLES J. PINKNEY. *Dick Gregory* (c.1970). Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Board of the Cleveland Institute of Art, served for 16 years as consultant to General Electric for the GE Nela Park Christmas lighting display and was for four years a consultant for the Greater Cleveland Growth Association's Holiday Lighting Program.

Phillips lectured and wrote articles on glass and lighting for professional journals. He was the co-author of a paper on the lighting of stained glass for *Illuminating Engineering*, and he contributed the section on "Lighting Stained Glass" to the *SGAA Reference and Technical Manual*.

Phillips was athletic and musical as well as artistic. In his youth he sang in choirs, during his army service he sang with choral groups, and later he was a vocalist with several local bands. He was a State Champion Fencer who coached young fencers at Cleveland State University; he also held a black belt in Karate and taught martial arts classes.

In 1954 Phillips married Jane Travis, who is the mother of his son, William and daughter, Elisabeth. Divorced in 1961, Phillips later married Mona Spangler, a former English teacher who now holds a Ph.D. in the history of technology and science. She also completed an apprenticeship with the Stained Glass Association of America. Having assisted Phillips for more than thirty years in the execution of his work, she has no plans to close the studio which will continue production under her leadership. — HCB

Sources: Obituary, *Plain Dealer*, September, 1995. Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc., brochures; Cleveland Museum of Art May Show Bulletins 1951-1954, 1957. Telephone interviews by the author with Mona Phillips, November 1995 and January 1996.

Ohio places of worship where Douglas Phillips' stained glass may be found:

Cleveland (Cuyahoga County):

- Church of the Incarnation
- Lutheran Home, Westlake
- Mt. Sinai Baptist
- Ridgewood United Methodist, Parma
- Open Door Baptist
- United Presbyterian, Lakewood
- Second Calvary Baptist
- United Presbyterian, Rocky River
- St. Gregory

St. Stephen, Euclid
St. Helena
St. Thomas Episcopal, Berea
Williams Temple Church of God
SS. Peter and Paul, Garfield Heights
West Side Hungarian Reformed

Ohio (outside Cuyahoga County)

Advent Lutheran Church, Uniontown
Adgunath Bnai Israel, Lorain
Fairlawn Lutheran Church, Akron
First United Methodist, Chardon
United Methodist, Painesville
St. Joseph, Newton Falls
St. Joseph Riverside Hospital, Warren
Temple Israel, Akron
Gray Street Baptist, Columbus
Citizens Hospital Chapel, Barberton

CHARLES JACKSON PINKNEY (b. 1933)

Charles Pinkney, a native Clevelander, started drawing before learning to read or write. He attended Cleveland Public Schools, and art classes at Karamu House and The Cleveland Museum of Art. He graduated from Glenville High School and pursued studies at the Cooper School of Art. After serving in the U. S. Army during the Korean conflict, he attended Kent State University, majoring in art.

Pinkney's interest in photography was encouraged when he joined the Karamu Camera Guild in 1949. In 1954, after winning a Leica M-3, he created his first photo-journalism story. He went on to become a photographer with *The Pittsburgh Press*. He returned to Cleveland in 1983 and published *The Record*, a newspaper featuring photographic essays of "sheroes and heroes" from the African American community.

Mr. Pinkney, whose interest in photography was an outgrowth of his original interest in painting, has always considered himself as an artist painting with a camera. He continues to do freelance photography and is currently studying painting in California with Sebastian Capella, cre-



99. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. Untitled (1943). Conte and pastel, 26 x 19". Courtesy of Elmer Buford.



100. CHARLES L. SALLÉE, JR. Self Portrait (1930-33). Oil, 16 x 12". Courtesy of June Sallée Antoine.

ating artistic images using not only his camera, but an etching press and paint. — ACB

Sources: Charles J. Pinkney, autobiographical notes, 1996; telephone interview with the artist, January 1996.

CHARLES LOUIS SALLÉE (b. 1914)

Charles Louis Sallée, the eldest of fourteen children, was born in Oberlin, Ohio where his father, an ornamental plasterer, had come from Pittsburgh to work on the building of a men's dormitory at Oberlin College. By the time Charles had finished kindergarten, his father had become a builder and moved the family to Sandusky, where he established his own construction firm.

Sallée learned the construction business from his father, but he had known from the age of four that he wanted to be an artist. He attended Sandusky High School, where he received art instruction and learned to admire Renaissance painters and the drawings of Ingres. His natural ability quickly made him into the school's resident artist. He did portrait drawings of all the faculty. "When we had a play I would design the programs, letter the posters, and design and paint the scenery," he said in a 1995 interview. As a parting gift to the school, he painted a large mural of Commodore Perry's 1812 Battle of Lake Erie which had been fought not far from Sandusky.

In 1932, in the depth of the Depression, he fulfilled his dream of going to art school by winning, as Alfred Bright points out (p.23) the first Gilpin scholarship to the Cleveland School (now Cleveland Institute) of Art. He majored in portraiture under Rolf Stoll and minored in design under Kenneth Bates and Viktor Schreckengost, who founded the school's industrial design department. He also studied painting and drawing with Carl Gaertner and Paul Travis, many of whose paintings were based on his trip to Africa.

In 1936 not only was Sallée the first African American to graduate from the Cleveland School of Art, but he also won a scholarship for a fifth year of study. From 1936 to 1938, he earned a bachelor's degree in education from Adelbert

College of Western Reserve University. He began teaching art, first at Kennard and then at Outhwaite Junior High. The third year he taught at Central High School; but the disciplinary aspect of teaching drove him out of the public schools at year's end.

Sallée was invited to teach at Karamu House, the interracial cultural center founded by Russell and Rowena Jelliffe, who became lifelong friends. "I loved teaching at Karamu," says Sallée. He also joined the WPA Printmaking Project at Karamu along with Hughie Lee-Smith, Zell Ingram, Fred Carlo and others. He also painted WPA murals, most of which have disappeared. Helen Cullinan mentions in her essay on Sallée in the August 2, 1992 issue of the *Plain Dealer* that "his 1940 mural for the Outhwaite Homes housing development office is documented in the 1974 Cleveland Public Library publication *Federal Art in Cleveland, 1933-1943* by Karal Ann Marling". Entitled *A New Day*, the mural showed slum families moving out of their old quarters into clean, new housing units.

Sallée's paintings and prints were shown in group exhibitions at Howard University in 1937; the annual May Show at The Cleveland Museum of Art in 1937-39; American Negro Exposition of 1940; South Side Community Art Center of Chicago, 1941; Atlanta University, 1942; and in *Negro Art from Cleveland's Karamu House* at Associated Artists Gallery in New York, 1942.

When the U.S. entered World War II, the Army Corps of Engineers sent Sallée to England, where, as a Technical Sergeant, he served as a cartographer, eventually working on maps for the Allied invasion of Europe. When the liberation came, he was in France. At the end of the war in Europe, his company was sent to the Philippines, where he finished the last months of his tour of duty.

During his first year at home after the war, Sallée painted as never before. However, he began to get interior design commissions which paid well, leaving him little time for painting the portraits he loved to do. A charter member of the American Institute of Interior Designers, his first large commission was the conversion of a former restaurant on 105th Street into the Tijuana night club, which brought in

national celebrities such as Nat “King” Cole. Sallée hired engineers to effect dramatic structural changes, including a revolving stage. The success of this spatial transformation led to a long series of interior design commissions for churches, residences and the owners’ private offices as well as the clubrooms at the Cleveland Stadium. His largest public commission was the Grand Ballroom at Stouffer’s Inn on the Square (now Renaissance Cleveland Hotel), for which he also designed the Brasserie Restaurant.

Sallée’s prints and paintings have appeared in many publications including Locke’s *The Negro in Art*, Porter’s *Modern Negro Art*, 1940, Patterson’s *The Negro in Music and Art*, 1969, and Walker’s *A Resource Guide to the Visual Arts of Afro-Americans*, 1971.

Sallée’s WPA prints of the 1930s and his paintings from the 1940s and early 50s are enjoying a renaissance. In February, 1990, his compelling *Portrait of Olivia* was shown in *Cleveland’s African Images*, an exhibition at the Northeast Ohio Museum, the Cleveland Artists Foundation’s former gallery. The Plain Dealer published a photograph of the artist with his painting and, in 1992, printed the aforementioned Helen Cullinan interview with Sallée, complete with pictures of prints he had produced for the WPA project as part of an exhibition organized by Cuyahoga Community College.

Sallée’s second marriage, to Constance Waples, lasted from 1960 to 1990 and produced a son, Warren and two daughters, Coco and Renee. All three children have careers in the arts. Their father, although officially retired, is still active as an artist and designer. — HCB

Sources: Helen Cullinan, *Plain Dealer*, February, 1990 and August 2, 1992; *Artist Biographies Master Index*, Detroit, 1986; Cleveland Museum of Art Bulletins, 1935-1938. Telephone interviews by the author with Sallée, November, 1995 and January, 1996.

WILLIAM E. SMITH (b. 1913)

William E. Smith, a graphic artist and painter, was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Influenced by a cousin who taught him to draw stick figures, and encouraged by his mother, Smith had decided to become an artist when he



101. William E. Smith. Photograph from “The Printmaker: From Umbrella Stave to Brush & Easel” by Marjorie Witt Johnson and William E. Smith.



102. WILLIAM E. SMITH. *Politics* (n.d.), Linocut, 8 ½ x 7". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.



103. CURTIS TANN. *Untitled (After Matisse)* (1967). Enamel on copper, 7 ½ x 7 ½". R.Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART.

came to Cleveland at age 14. Responsibility for two younger siblings after his mother's death brought him North to join his father who opposed his artistic aspirations. Leaving home in 1932, he was drawn into the nurturing milieu of Karamu House, where he began his training, won a \$50 prize for 35 costume designs, obtained a 5-year Gilpin scholarship and embarked on studies at the John Huntington Polytechnical Institute. From 1935 to 1949 he exhibited in nine May Shows at The Cleveland Museum of Art, winning awards in 1938, '39 and '41. In 1941 his block print *Nobody Knows* was the popularly chosen winner of the Cleveland Artists' Contest. Between 1938 and '40, Smith participated in 19 exhibitions under the aegis of Karamu Artists, Inc., a mutual support group that carried their own shows to other venues. Smith continued his art education with Saturday classes at the Cleveland School of Art (now Cleveland Institute of Art) where he studied with Paul Travis, and at Karamu House where he worked with Richard Beatty. Following his army service, he took courses in illustration and advertising and in 1946 opened his own graphic arts studio. In the late 1940s he also was art director of an advertising agency. In 1949, after his brother's death, Smith moved to Los Angeles to be near his sister. He worked nights as a sign painter at Lockheed Corporation, leaving his days free to pursue teaching and his own art. In 1951, part of Eleven Associated Artists, Inc., he co-founded the first Black art gallery in downtown Los Angeles. He continued his studies at Chouinard Institute from 1956 to 1960 and continued to exhibit nationally throughout the next several decades. In 1976 Karamu organized a retrospective of his work, *From Umbrella Staves to Brush and Easel*.

Smith's work is in the collections of The Cleveland Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, Howard University, the Oakland Museum, Golden State Insurance Co., Karamu House, and Cleveland State University, as well as in many private collections. Color slides of his work are available from the Ethnic American Arts Slide Library at the University of South Alabama. — SNM

CURTIS TANN (c. 1915-1990)

Born in Circleville, Ohio, Curtis Tann began taking classes at Karamu shortly after arriving in Cleveland at the age of four. As an adult, he studied at the Cleveland School (now Cleveland Institute) of Art and at the John Huntington Polytechnical Institute. One of the founding members of Karamu Artists, Inc., he exhibited in the 1942 show of art from Karamu House at the Associated American Artists Gallery in New York. After serving with the U.S. Army in Italy during World War II, Tann moved to Los Angeles, finished his training at the Chouinard Art Institute and began a lifelong teaching career while continuing to study and learn, and to experiment in a variety of media.

Primarily a designer and craftsman, Tann worked in 1971 as director of the Simon Rodia Tower near the Watts Art Center. His work has been shown in west coast exhibitions and in Tuscon, Atlanta and New York. Before retiring in 1985, he worked for nine years with the Los Angeles Board of Education, teaching art to senior and handicapped citizens. He died in 1990.

Source: *The Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Collection: Prints and Drawings from the Karamu Workshop, 1929-1941*; Cleveland State University.

ERNEST WILLIAM TROTTER (b. 1932)

Born in 1932 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Ernest Trotter, the son of Sam Trotter and Mary Lou Moore Trotter, came to Cleveland as a child. He remained here all of his life except for a brief sojourn (1943-45) in California, during which time his mother worked for film star Bette Davis. He was graduated in 1952 from Thomas A. Edison (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) Occupational High School, where he learned mechanical drawing and sang in the glee club.

After graduation, he took a job as a shipping clerk in Euclid in a building which also housed a commercial art studio. The cartoonist Jim Berry, creator of "Berry's World," became aware of Trotter's art ability and offered to pay his tuition to the Cooper School of Art. For more than a year in 1964-65, Trotter studied portrait drawing and



104. ERNEST W. TROTTER. *Vincent Price* (1969). Magic marker on paper, 17³/₄ x 12". Courtesy of the artist.



105. Henry Williamson (1995).

anatomy with Lois Vance in the evening classes, but when his benefactor left Cleveland, his formal study came to an end.

In September, 1967, The Cleveland Museum of Art was one of the museums hosting a traveling show of the paintings of Henry O. Tanner (1859-1937). Tanner was an African American artist who had lived most of his life in France where he had earned the French government's highest honors. Trotter attended the exhibition. "That show was a landmark in my life," he says with great feeling.

However, Trotter's first love is jazz. He does not play an instrument, but is a baritone singer and has a good "ear." Although as a visual artist he is still largely self-taught, Trotter has built an artistic reputation on his hundreds of portrait drawings of key jazz players such as Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk and local musicians. Great jazz musicians, however, are not Trotter's only subject matter. He also likes to draw other cultural heroes – Dr. Martin Luther King, Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein.

Trotter's work has been exhibited in many group shows. Now retired, Trotter continues to be a prolific draftsman who estimates that he has produced over 1500 drawings. He has begun to paint as well. — HCB

Sources: Personal interview with Ernest Trotter by Zita Rahn, June, 1995. Michael Drexler, "The art of jazz," *Plain Dealer*, July 3, 1995. Telephone interviews with Trotter by the author, January, 1996.

HENRY WILLIAMSON (b. 1919)

Henry Williamson was born in Ashby, Alabama and moved to Birmingham at a very young age. Williamson attended the Birmingham public schools and graduated from Industrial High School. During his service in the U. S. Army from 1941 to 1945, he was attached to special services and painted scenery for stage productions. He graduated from the Cleveland School of Art in 1950 after winning a fifth-year scholarship. Upon art school graduation, Williamson worked briefly for Phillips Stained Glass Studio, then for Morgan Lithography Studio where he did silkscreens.

Williamson has maintained a lifelong interest in calligraphy which was first awakened in grammar school when he was exposed to the Palmer Method of Handwriting. While serving in the army, he took correspondence courses in Ornamental Writing and Flourishing, for which he received certificates of merit. He continues to produce beautiful calligraphy for friends. He currently uses his knowledge of calligraphy and graphic design to create interesting and original customized motorcycle decorations. — ACB

Sources: *Plain Dealer*, August 3, 1995. Telephone interview with the artist, January 1996.

W. HAL WORKMAN (b. 1925)

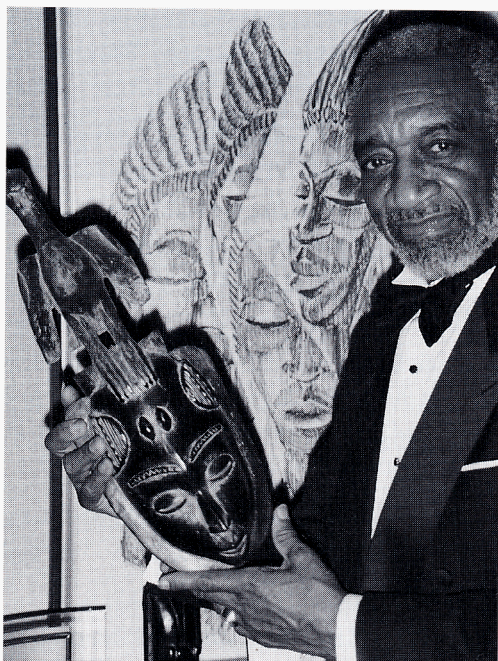
W. Hal Workman, a fine and graphic artist, is also an art educator, mentor and administrator whose commitment to art has touched many lives. "My passion for art is all-consuming," he says. "It is more than a career – it is a pursuit. My passion for art has only been eclipsed twice, and that was by the birth of each of my sons." He was born in Cleveland where he has lived most of his life.

W. Hal Workman dates the start of his career to the fifth grade when he worked on school murals in various media. He then took Saturday classes at The Cleveland Museum of Art and, in junior high school, participated in a special program for talented students. But on entering East Technical High School, he received the rude shock of being summarily dropped from its outstanding art program and told that "negro students" were not encouraged to study art – "foundry" was recommended instead. Workman's mother interceded and got him reinstated. In his junior year at "East Tech" he attended classes at John Huntington Polytechnical Institute, but during the following year he took several jobs which left no time for outside art classes. One such job was in calligraphic design, styling the names on bowling league shirts. Workman's attention to design and lettering has lasted and to this day is often an important element of his work. In his senior year he was awarded both a gold key in the Scholastic Art Competition and a partial scholarship to the Cleveland Institute of Art. The war intervened, and one month after his '43 graduation,

Workman was drafted into the U.S. Army, then still strictly segregated. Overseas he drew cartoons for the battalion newspaper and illustrated all his letters home – works later lost in a fire. With the aid of the G.I. Bill of Rights, Workman entered Kent State University in 1948, where he got a first introduction to art by African Americans as well as a strong foundation in graphic design. He graduated in 1952 with a bachelor's degree in education and an officer's commission from the campus ROTC program. His art training was essential for one major assignment in his 16 years in the Reserve: he was a captain in charge of leaflet production in a psychological warfare unit.

After college, Workman moved to Washington, D.C. to work for an art gallery, but decided to return to Cleveland a year later. For the next two years, he worked as lithographer and artist at two direct-mail advertising agencies. His 35-year-long association with the Cleveland schools began in 1955. He taught art at Patrick Henry Junior High for twelve years and ultimately ran that school's art department. He then transferred to Glenville High School to head the art department there, and also taught commercial art in a pilot program sponsored by the State of Ohio. At that time he also enrolled in graduate studies at Kent State University for his master's degree in Fine Arts – studies which, he feels, brought focus to his work, stimulated his creativity, and exposed him to a wider range of media. Ten years later, MFA in hand, he became Assistant Supervisor of Art for the Cleveland School District. When the desegregation progress of the Cleveland School District began, he headed the department in charge of graphic communications for internal and external audiences.

Workman has taught at all levels, from elementary to adult education. He has made films, written and produced for television, co-authored curriculum guides, lectured, and coordinated community arts programs. He has been a juror of art competitions all over the State of Ohio and is the recipient of a Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Special Award in Art. Of all his achievements in art education, this master teacher is proudest of his role as mentor, helping his African American students gain insight into their heritage



106. W. Hal Workman (November, 1993).
Photograph courtesy of the artist.

and influencing the many who went on to pursue successful art careers.

Always generous with his time in the support of others, W. Hal Workman has never been able to amass, all at once, enough of his own work to mount a one-man show, but he has participated in numerous group exhibitions. His art ranges over a variety of media. His subject matter relates with loving concern to the Black experience. — SNM

Sources: Artist's statement and vita; telephone interview by author, October 1995; Zita Rahn interviews, February and March 1995. Patrick Jones, "Hal Workman: Art and the Black Experience", *The Star*, March 13, 1973; *Art and the Black Experience*, W. Hal Workman.



107. W. HAL WORKMAN. Drawing on envelope (1945). Ink.
Photograph courtesy of the artist.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- . *African-American Art 20th Century Masterworks*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essay by Beryl Wright. New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1994.
- . *African-American Art 20th Century Masterworks II*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essay by Richard J. Powell. New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1995.
- . *Alone in a Crowd: Prints of the 1930s-1940s From the Collection of Reba & Dave Williams*. 2nd Ed. (Exhibition Catalogue) Essays by Leslie King-Hammond, Lowery Stokes Sims, Reba and Dave Williams. American Federation of Arts, 1993.
- . *American Painting 1900-1970*. Time-Life Library of Art. New York: Time-Life Books, 1970.
- Bearden, Romare and Henderson, Harry. *A History of African-American Artists from 1972 to the Present*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.
- Beavers, D.L. "Somebody, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph". *American Heritage Magazine* (Special Supplement: "Legacy: A Celebration of African American History and Culture"). February-March 1995.
- Bright, Alfred L. "Karamu Artists 1939-1945". *Cleveland As a Center of Regional American Art*. Cleveland Artists Foundation, 1994.
- Cederholm, Theresa Dickason. *Afro-American Artists: A Bio-Bibliographical Dictionary*. Boston Public Library, 1973.
- Cullinan, Helen. "Watercolorist is Tested but Stays on Creative Track". *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 7, 1986.
- . *Dream Singers, Story Tellers: An African-American Presence*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essays by Micheal Brenson, Sadao Serikawa, James Smalls, Alison Weld. Japan: Fukui Fine Arts Museum & United States: New Jersey State Museum, 1992.
- Gottlieb, Mark and Tittle, Diana. *America's Soap Box: Seventy-Five Years of Free Speaking at Cleveland's City Club Forum*. Cleveland: Citizen's Press, 1987.
- . *Harlem Renaissance Art of Black American*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essays by David C. Driskell, David Levering Lewis, Deborah Willis Ryan. The Studio Museum, Harlem. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1987.
- . *The Harmon & Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essays by Gylbert Coker, Corrine Jennings. San Antonio Museum of Art, 1994.
- Holton, Curlee Raven. "The Contribution of Cleveland's African American Artists to the New Negro Movement". *Cleveland As A Center of Regional American Art*. Cleveland Artists Foundation, 1994.
- Keller, Francis Richardson. *An American Crusade: The Life of Charles Waddell Chesnutt*. Provo: The Brigham Young University Press, 1978.
- Lewis, Samella. *African American Art & Artists*. (updated and rev. ed.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.
- Lewis, Samella. *Art: African American*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978.
- Lewis, Samella S. and Waddy, Ruth G.(ed.) *Black Artists on Art*. Los Angeles: Contemporary Crafts Publishers, 1969.
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Late Modern: The Visual Arts Since 1945*. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Marling, Karal Ann. *Federal Art in Cleveland 1933-1943*. (Exhibition catalogue) Cleveland Public Library, 1974.
- Miliken, William M. "Public Works of Art". *Cleveland*, April, 1934.
- Myers, G.A. "Cleveland's Colored Population". *Cleveland Plain Dealer Magazine*, May 18, 1902.
- Perry, Regina. *Free Within Ourselves: African American Artists in the Collection of the National Museum of American Art*. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art with Pomegrante Artbooks, 1992.

-
- Porter, James. *Modern Negro Art*. Introduction by David C. Driskell. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992.
- Reynolds, Gary A. *Against the Odds: African-American Artists and the Harmon Foundation*. Newark Museum, 1989.
- . *The Russell & Rowena Jelliffe Collection: Prints & Drawings from the Karamu Workshop, 1929-1994*. (Exhibition catalogue) Essay by John Hunter. Cleveland State University, 1994.
- Sackerlotsky, Rotraud. *Cleveland's African Images 1920-1960*. (Exhibition catalogue) Cleveland Artists Foundation, 1990.
- Selby, John. *Beyond Civil Rights*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1966.
- Smith, William E. and Johnson, Marjorie Witt. *The Printmaker "From Umbrella Stave to Brush & Easel"*. (Exhibition catalogue) William E. Smith, 1979.
- . *Somebody, Somewhere, Wants Your Photograph. A Selection From the Work of Allen E. Cole (1893-1970)*. Foreword by Olivia Martin. Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1980.
- Turner, Robyn Montana. *Faith Ringgold/Robyn Montana Turner*. Boston: Little, Brown Publishers, 1993.
- Van Tassel, David D. and Grabowski, John J. (eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. In association with Case Western Reserve University. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Willis, Debra (ed). *Black Photographers 1840-1942*. New York: New Press, 1992.
- Willis-Thomas, Debra. *Black Photographers 1940-1988: A Bio-Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1989.
- Witchey, Holly Rarick with John Vacha. *Fine Arts in Cleveland: An Illustrated History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

HELEN CHAFFEE BIEHLE

Helen Chaffee Biehle divides her time between painting, writing and teaching. She is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art and Case Western Reserve University, and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. She is Chair Emerita of the art department of Laurel School, was adjunct professor in the School-College Articulation Program (SCAP) of Kenyon College, and is a former member of the education staff of The Cleveland Museum of Art where she now serves on the Women's Committee.

Biehle is co-author of an art history study guide, produced with a grant from the Jennings Foundation. She has written a video script and essays on individual artists of the Cleveland School. Her essay on the history of the American library is to be published this summer. She serves on the board of the Cleveland Artists Foundation and of the Darius Milhaud Society, and on the Education Committee of her church. She has lectured on American art and architecture at Mather Gallery of Case Western Reserve University, Cuyahoga Community College and the Chataqua Institution.

SAMUEL W. BLACK

Samuel W. Black is Associate Curator for African American History at the Western Reserve Historical Society and directs the African American Archives program, serving as the chief archivist for one of Ohio's largest archival collections of the African American experience. He earned a bachelor's degree in African American Studies at the University of Cincinnati and a Master of Arts in African Studies at SUNY, Albany. He has lectured widely in various New York State correctional institutions, in schools, colleges, universities, community centers, and for special interest groups.

Black is a member of the African American Museums Association, Society of American Archivists, Society of Ohio Archivists, Ohio Academy of History, and the Cleveland Bicentennial Commission Advisory Board. He is a past member of the Black Male Coalition of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. and past president of the Afrikan Studies Association of the University of Cincinnati. He serves on

various committees, including the curatorial committee of the Cleveland Artists Foundation's project on *African American Artists in Cleveland*, and the Cleveland Public Schools' *Underground Railroad Project*.

In early 1996, Black has curated Karamu House's exhibition of Carl B. Stokes memorabilia, *Images of South Carolina Plantations During Union Army Occupation* at University Hospitals, and *Portraits of Progress: African Americans Through the Lens of Allen E. Cole* at the Western Reserve Historical Society. He is currently conducting research on *African American Photographers of Cleveland from 1887 to 1965* and on *Carter G. Woodson: The Vision of African American History*.

ALFRED LEE BRIGHT

Alfred L. Bright, Distinguished Professor of Art at Youngstown State University, is a native of Youngstown, Ohio. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education from Youngstown University and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at Kent State University. Bright, a nationally recognized painter and recipient of numerous awards, has had solo exhibitions in Ohio, California, Florida and Virginia. He has participated in many juried exhibitions, including The Cleveland Museum of Art's May Show and the National Midyear Exhibition at the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown. In 1980, Bright's interest in music and performance art led to an Ohio Arts Council commission of a series of paintings executed to live music of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. His works are in private, corporate, museum and university collections; he has created murals for IBM and First Federal Savings in Youngstown.

Bright is the author of *An Interdisciplinary Introduction to Black Studies*. He is known for his special expertise on the WPA-sponsored Karamu Print Workshop.

LESLIE KING-HAMMOND

Dr. Leslie King-Hammond was born and raised in New York City. She studied at SUNY, Buffalo, at the New School of Social Research, New York and at the City University of New York, Queens College, where she earned her Master of Fine Arts degree, chaired the Performing Art

Workshops of Queens and served as vice-president for the student government at the college's School of Social Studies. She pursued her doctoral studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and in 1976 was appointed Dean of Graduate Studies at the Maryland Institute – a position she still holds. In 1985, she won the Trustee Award for Excellence in Teaching; in 1984 and 1987 she received Mellon Grants for Faculty Research.

In 1985, King-Hammond became project director of the Maryland Institute-initiated Ford Foundation Fellowships for Minorities in the Visual Arts (now the Philip Morris Fellowship for Artists of Color, in which the Yale School of Art, the School of Art of the Art Institute of Chicago, Cranbrook Academy, and the California Institute of the Arts also participate.)

King-Hammond maintains a high profile in the civic and professional arts community. She serves on numerous boards, juries and commissions, including the boards of the College Art Association (President-elect, 1996), the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre Foundation of Maryland, and the Edna Manley School for the Visual Arts, Kingston, Jamaica. Her exhibitions and publications include *Celebrations: Myth and Ritual in African American Art* (Studio Museum in Harlem, 1982), *Art As a Verb* (Maryland Institute, Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Met Life Gallery, 1988), *Black Printmakers and the WPA* (Lehman Gallery of Art, New York, 1989), *Masters, Mentors and Makers* (Maryland Institute, Decker Gallery, 1992), and *Gumbo Ya Ya: An Anthology of Contemporary African American Women Artists* (MidArts Press, 1995). King-Hammond is currently working on a major book project, *Masks and Mirrors: African-American Art, 1750-Now* (Abbeville Press, forthcoming).

SHEILA N. MARKOWITZ

Sheila N. Markowitz is a writer and communications consultant involved with the visual arts and arts organiza-

tions since the early 1970s. A potter for 15 years, she won more than a dozen awards in local and regional shows and helped students explore the craft and their own creativity. No longer working in clay, she continues her artistic endeavors through photography, occasionally exhibiting in juried shows. In 1983, she developed *Art by the Falls* for the Valley Art Center in Chagrin Falls, chairing the popular arts and crafts show for three years.

Markowitz has handled publications and other projects for a wide variety of non-profit and governmental organizations. She is currently honing her skills as a writer of children's books.

Under the auspices of the Cleveland Artists Foundation, Markowitz in 1992 designed and analyzed a community-wide opinion survey of Northeast Ohio artists that documented the felt need for a regional art archive in the Western Reserve. Efforts to establish such an archive are at present gathering momentum.

PAMELA P. McKEE

Pamela P. McKee is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Art History at the University of Michigan. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Arts in History from Cleveland State University, concentrating on African and African American Art and History. She taught at CSU as Visiting Professor in the Spring and Fall quarters of 1993. From 1994 to 1995, McKee was public relations and development officer at Providence Center in Annapolis, Maryland.

McKee presented a paper on *The Landai Mask of the Poro Society* at the PASALA symposium, held in conjunction with the triennial ACASA meeting, in Iowa City, 1992. In 1991 she published *Art and Artifacts of West Africa*, a catalogue for an exhibition held at Gallery 754 in Akron, OH. She is currently preparing entries for a catalogue to accompany a 1996 Detroit Institute of Arts exhibition of works from private collections of African art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition and publication would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of numerous individuals and institutions. The Ohio Arts Council provided financial support and a very important vote of confidence, especially when the project was still in the research stage. Many thanks are due to Susan dePasquale. The George Gund Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, and The Kulas Foundation provided much needed and very appreciated basic support; The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation partially funded the educational component of the project. Thanks also to the many corporations, businesses and individuals who expressed their faith in the project with financial support.

Kudos go to the Cleveland Artists Foundation's Board of Trustees for their participation and support for the project. Special thanks to Nina F. Gibans for her constant encouragement and participation, to William Busta for his expertise in grant proposal writing, to Ellen Galmitz and Juliann Weber for their guidance of the benefit party and Helen C. Biehle for her layout and design capabilities. A fabulous job was done by Zita Rahn in coordinating this project: from interviewing artists, locating works of art, contacting donors and community members, speaking on behalf of the project, and conducting Advisory Committee meetings – we are grateful for her flexibility, initiative and innovative solutions to many of the problems we overcame in bringing this project to fruition. Staff support for this project was wonderful: thanks to Madeline L. Cargill for coordinating public and media relations and contributing to community-based fundraising efforts; to Sandy Richert for generously providing public relations support, advice and much needed contacts; to Mary Koster and Barbara Messner for secretarial assistance and proofreading. The research and writing for the biographies of the artists by Helen C. Biehle and Sheila N. Markowitz contributed greatly to the publication. Of course, without the expert contribution of the editor, Ursula Korneitchouk, all of this would not have been properly showcased; for her wonderful job of editing this publication we are very appreciative.

To all those who have helped make this project a reality we extend our heartfelt gratitude:

At Cleveland State University: Dr. Claire Van Ummersen, President, Cleveland State University; Dr. A. Harry Andrist, Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate Studies

and Research; and Dr. Glending Olson, Interim Dean, College of Arts And Sciences for their support for this project on behalf of the University. Many thanks also to Dr. John Hunter, Chair, Art Department and Robert Thurmer, Director, Art Gallery for hosting this exhibition and for their participation on the curatorial committee as well as their help and support for the entire project. Thanks also to the members of the University/Community Committee: Dr. Laurel Lampela, Chair; Dr. Aileen Ajootian; Dr. David Gariff; Masumi Hayashi; and the entire faculty and staff of the Art Department. Special thanks to the Art Gallery Staff: Jennifer Yates, Project Assistant; Timothy Knapp, Assistant to the Director; Gallery Assistants Ellen Bible, Dina Deskins, Laura Harasyn, Lora Zborowski; Volunteer Interns Barbara Henry, Gala Loarca; and Docents Beth Maynor, Catalina Kiss and Marlene Wurm.

At The Butler Institute of American Art: Dr. Louis Zona, Director, whose early interest, support and commitment were essential to the project.

At Riffe Gallery: Mary Grey for her enthusiasm, interest and support.

At The Western Reserve Historical Society: to Samuel W. Black, Associate Curator for African American History, for curating the photography portion of the exhibit and publication and for his participation on the Curatorial Committee. The assistance of Kermit Pike, Director of the Library, and Ann K. Sindelar, Reference Supervisor, in obtaining loans and photographs is appreciated.

At Karamu House: to Margaret Ford-Taylor for the generous participation of Karamu House in the Elmer W. Brown/William E. Smith exhibit in October, 1995 and for their loans of work and photographs to this exhibit and publication. Thank you to Cleo Bell Ferguson for serving on the Curatorial Committee and for her generous help. Our thanks also to Skully Black and Justin Dennis for their help with the exhibit at Karamu House.

To R. Kumasi Hampton, SOHI ART in Cincinnati, Ohio, for generously sharing information, works of art, and photographs of many of the artists included in the exhibit. He has been an invaluable help in obtaining works for the exhibit that have not previously been shown in Cleveland. We are very appreciative of his interest and support for this project.

To The June Kelly Gallery, New York, for providing information about Hughie Lee-Smith and for arranging the loan of Mr. Lee-Smith's work to the exhibit and publication.

At Cuyahoga Community College: we are grateful for the assistance of Joanne Liebow in Public Relations, Richard Karberg, Professor of Art and member of the Curatorial Committee, and Joan Damankos, Gallery Director, Metro Campus.

At The Cleveland Museum of Art: the encouragement and support of Dr. William Robinson, Assistant Curator of Modern Art, and Mark Cole, Curatorial Assistant, is appreciated. Thank you to Dr. Jane Glaubinger, Curator of Prints and Drawings and Sabine Kretschmar, Curatorial Assistant, for information and advice on Cleveland printmakers.

To the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Society Museum and Icabod Flewellen for the loan of photographic negatives to the exhibit and publication.

At Cleveland Public Library: thanks to Ruth Hadlow, Head of Children's Literature Department, and Alice Loranth, Head of Fine Arts and Special Collections Department, for artist information, photographs and loans to the exhibit.

To Alfred L. Bright, Professor of Art, Youngstown State University, appreciation and thanks for his early encouragement, support and participation on the Curatorial Committee.

To Richard Moore and Laura Sherman of The Bonfoey Company, thanks for assistance and advice in framing the photographs for the exhibition.

To Brian Pierce for generously contributing his services photographing most of the works pictured in the book: thank you so much.

We would also like to acknowledge the research of Laura Hilbert.

Many others have given us generous encouragement and they are: Elmer Buford; Kathleen Cerveny at The Cleveland Foundation; Joseph Erdelac; Deena Epstein at The George Gund Foundation; James L. Harris, Jr. and James P. Fallon, III from Sunoco Company; Northeast Ohio; Leslie King-Hammond, Dean of Graduate Studies, Maryland Institute; John Koch, Vice-president, Charter One Bank; Bracy E. Lewis, Vice-president, Bank One; Dr. Kathy Curnow Nasara; Rotraud Sackerlotzky; and Herbert Strawbridge, Director, The Kulas Foundation.

We would also like to thank the artists who are honored in the exhibit and book, their families and friends; their willingness to share information about themselves, their lives and careers has been very helpful. In many cases these persons are also lenders to the exhibit and this is deeply appreciated.

To Roger Collier and The Collier Printing Company, our deep appreciation for their advice and help. Their patience and expertise were essential in producing this book.

The Cleveland Artists Foundation is very grateful for all the encouragement and help we have received from the community and we wish to thank everyone for being so supportive.

ANN CAYWOOD BROWN
Director
Cleveland Artists Foundation

LENDERS TO THE CLEVELAND STATE EXHIBITION

Afro-American Cultural and
Historical Society Museum
American Greetings
June Sallée Antoine
Malcolm M. Brown
George Bryant, Jr.
Sherrie Bingham Chicatelli
Cleveland Artists Foundation
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland State University
Matthew Dunlop
Gina Gayle
Ruby Golden
Mr. and Mrs. George Z. Griswold
Josephus Franklin Hicks
Karamu House, Inc.
June Kelly Gallery
Robert and Linda Kendall
Mr. and Mrs. Robert P. Madison
Sheila N. and Frederic E. Markowitz
Virgie Patton-Ezelle
Clarence Perkins
Phillips Stained Glass Studio, Inc.
Charles Pinkney
William E. Smith
SOHI ART
E. M. Tann
Judith and Roland Stenta
Ernest William Trotter
Mark Edward Vance
The Western Reserve Historical Society
Henry Williamson
Mr. and Mrs. George Womersley
W. Hal Workman

1995-1996 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nina F. Gibans, *President*
William Busta, *Vice-president*
Juliann Weber, *Vice-president*
Bracy E. Lewis, *Treasurer*
Ruth Dancyger, *Secretary*
Helen C. Biehle
Dorothy Claffin
Elisabeth Dreyfuss
Ellen Galmitz
Lila M. Held
William Martin Jean
Charles Joseph, Jr.
William Joseph
Richard Karberg
John Koch
Joseph Kovalcheck
Caroline Oberndorf
Christine Pierce
Gloria Plevin
Leon Plevin
Muriel Rivchun
Gretchen Grauer Vanderhoof
Barbara Wamelink
Rosalynne Wilson

INDEX OF WORKS OF ART BY ARTIST

	<i>Pages</i>
Edith Brown	39, 48
Elmer W. Brown	5, 30, 32, 55
James Brown	18
Malcolm M. Brown	36, 45, 57
George Bryant	16
Fred Carlo	22, 29, 58
Andrew & Lewis Chesnutt	9, 59
Allen E. Cole	8, 12, 13, 60, 61
William W. Crawford	17, 62
Matthew Dunlop	10
James Gayle	11, 63, 64
Harold L. Golden	15
Charles E. Harris (Beni Kosh)	40, 44, 66
Josephus Franklin Hicks	21, 68
Calvin Ingram	24
Zell (Rozelle) Ingram	27, 29
Hughie Lee-Smith	7, 26, 71
Virgie Patton-Ezelle	38, 49, 73
Clarence Perkins	37, 46, 74
Douglas Phillips	35, 43
Charles Pinkney	20, 77
Charles L. Sallée, Jr.	27, 34, 78
William E. Smith	Cover, 28, 33, 80
Curtis Tann	27, 33, 81
Ernest W. Trotter	52, 82
Henry Williamson	34, 50
W. Hal Workman	42, 85



CLEVELAND ARTISTS FOUNDATION

CSU *Cleveland State
University*