

STUART A.

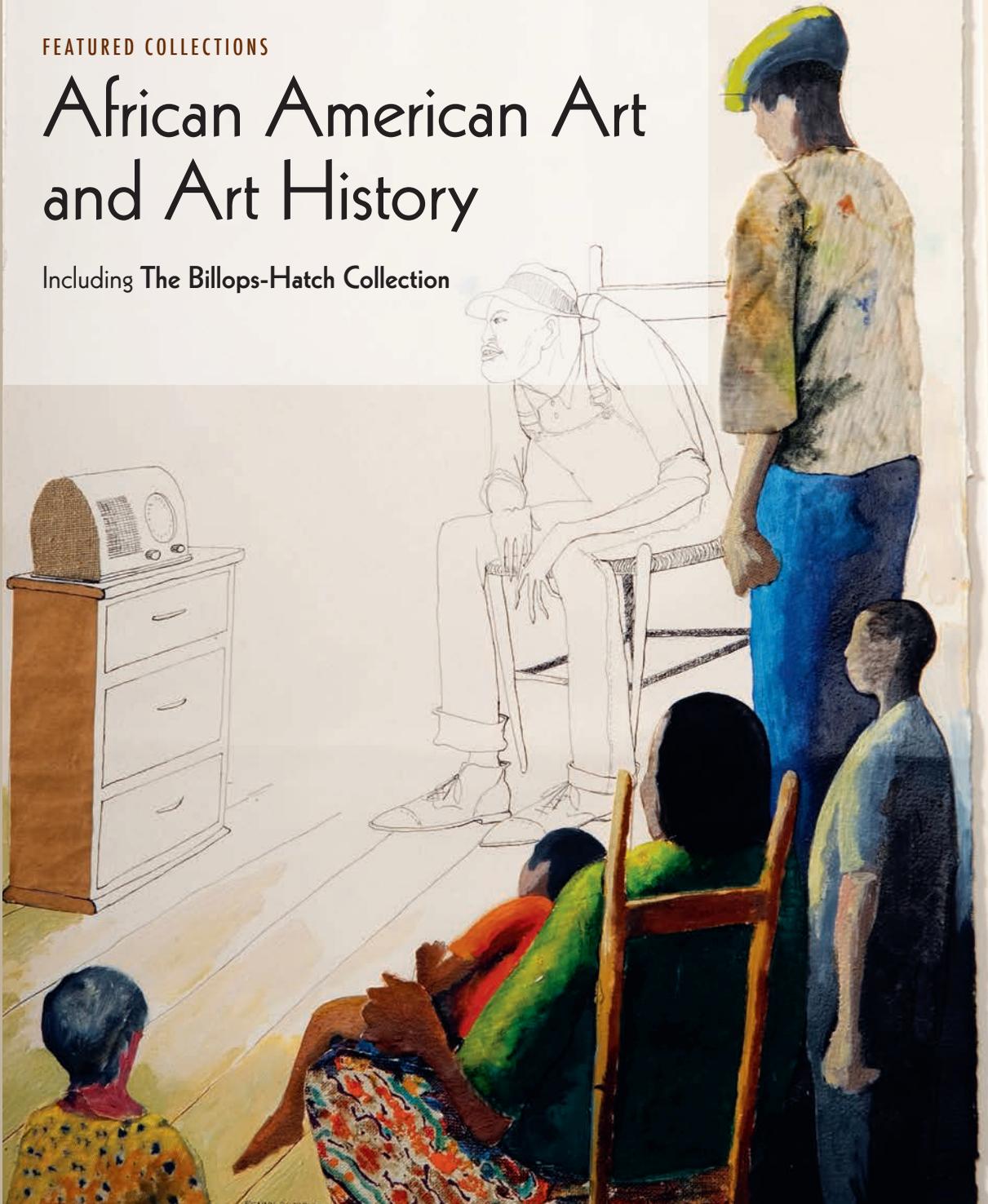
ROSE

MANUSCRIPT, ARCHIVES, & RARE BOOK LIBRARY

FEATURED COLLECTIONS

African American Art and Art History

Including The Billops-Hatch Collection





EMORY
LIBRARIES &
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library

Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

540 Asbury Circle

Atlanta, Georgia 30322

African American Art & Art History at Emory University

The Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University houses a diverse body of primary sources associated with the African American experience, from literature and history to politics and popular culture. These include an extensive collection of correspondence, literary manuscripts, photographs, and ephemeral material as well as rare books, periodicals, pamphlets, and other printed matter.

In the last decade, African American collections have expanded dramatically in the area of art and art history. The donation of the Hatch-Billops Collection in 2002 was an inaugural event in this growth, leading – directly or indirectly – to the acquisition of the papers of important African American artists, critics, art historians, collectors, and educators. Camille Billops and James V. Hatch, former professors and longtime figures in the world of African American art and theatre, have operated their collection in New York City since the late 1960s, which, under the name of the “Hatch-Billops Collection,” is regarded one of the most distinguished repositories of material relating to African American cultural arts.

Their collection in the Rose Library – designated the Billops-Hatch Archives to differentiate from the still-operational collection in New York City – has not only been a boon to the African American archives, but has also become the anchor in an expanding assembly of important art-related collections.

The artists' biographies for this brochure were compiled by Claire Ittner.

RANDALL K. BURKETT
RESEARCH CURATOR
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS
June 1, 2016

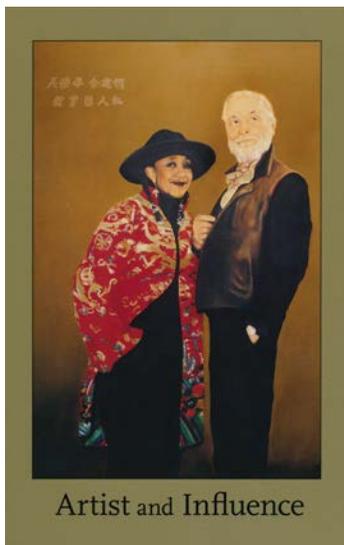
“The Rose Library houses a diverse body of primary sources associated with the African American experience.”

CAMILLE BILLOPS & JAMES V. HATCH

(1933 -) Artist, filmmaker, scholar, historian;

(1928 -) Historian, writer, educator

Camille Billops has had an extensive exhibition, teaching, and academic career. She has been a faculty member at Rutgers University, City University of New York, and for the United States Information Service in India. Beginning in 1968, Billops was the art editor of Indiana State University's Black American Literature Forum. James V. Hatch has held numerous academic positions, most notably as Professor of English and Theatre, City College and University of New York, and as Fulbright Lecturer, Cinema Institute, Cairo, Egypt. Hatch has published widely on the subject of African American theatre and wrote a biography of Owen Dodson. Billops and Hatch currently live in New York City.

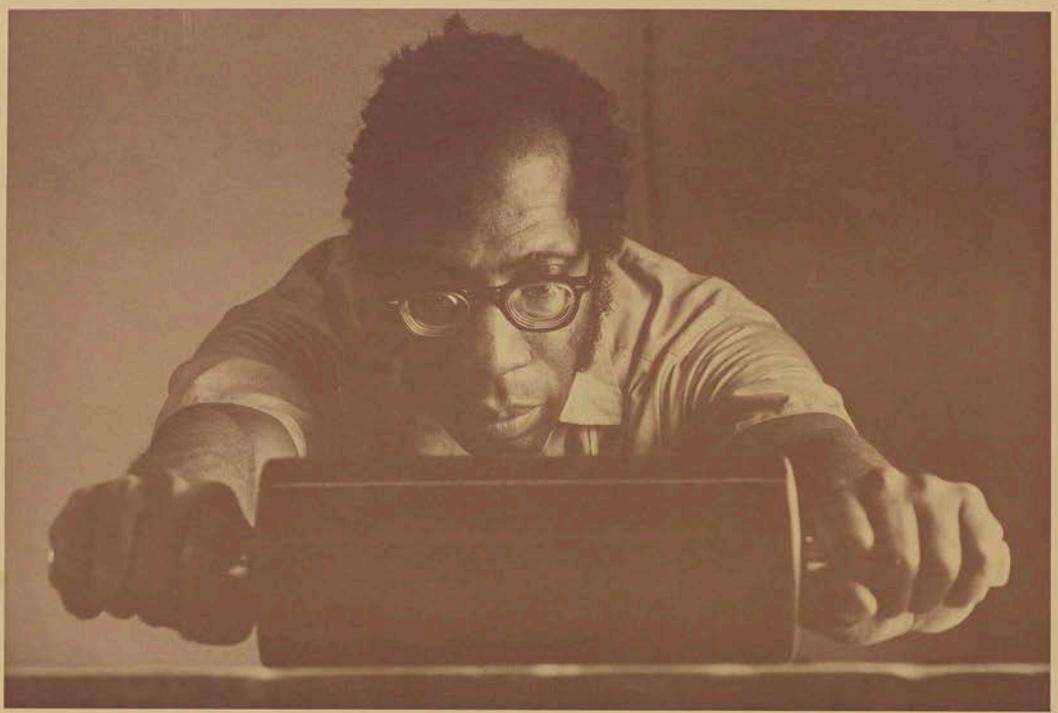


The Hatch-Billops Collection in New York, which continues to operate there, originated in 1968 while Billops and Hatch were teaching art and literature at the City College of New York. With the rise of the civil rights movement and a concomitant increase in racial consciousness, a demand rose for courses in black American art, drama and literature. Billops and Hatch found that very little had been published on the history of the African American cultural arts, and much that had been published

was out of print. They began collecting primary materials for their students. Artists and writers also began to send material to them for safe-keeping. With a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Billops and Hatch conducted oral histories with black artists in all disciplines.

Billops began to photograph the works of black artists, and Hatch began to collect plays, set designs, theater programs and theatre-related materials. Billops also began photographing the openings of exhibitions featuring African American artists, compiling a collection of slides that document these events. They also assembled a library of books, periodicals and clippings related to black cultural arts. In 1981 Billops and Hatch began publishing *Artist and Influence: The Journal of Black American Cultural History* featuring transcripts of interviews they regularly conducted in New York, as well as panel discussions and forums with minority artists.

A complete set of the journal is a part of the Emory collection. The Camille Billops and James Hatch Archives includes a large selection of play scripts written mostly by African American playwrights. Of particular interest are the oral history interviews conducted for inclusion in *Artist and Influence*. The collection also contains printed ephemera, including posters, postcards, calendars, and an extensive photograph series.



**BOB BLACKBURN
AND THE
PRINTMAKING
WORKSHOP**

A TRIBUTE TO A MASTER PRINTER

AUGUST 8, 1975 - OCTOBER 4, 1975

JAMAICA ARTS CENTER

161-04 JAMAICA AVENUE • JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11432

TELEPHONE: (212) 658-7400

GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY-FRIDAY 11-5, SATURDAY 10-5 *PHOTO CREDIT: DOUG HARRIS*

The Billops-Hatch Collection is unique in its 40+ year documentation of African American arts and culture, including the life and legacy of individuals like Bob Blackburn, regarded as one of the greatest American printmakers.

AMALIA AMAKI

(1949 -) Artist, professor

Describing her own work, Amalia Amaki has said, “I’m operating from this belief that a lot of what we do, automatic things that we take for granted, are markers for elements of our identities that are deeply rooted. I think about what we keep, for example. It’s a way of keeping with us the people they belonged to. I think, even though it’s often not conscious, that our past is like a quiet tug...It’s an unspoken impulse.”

Although at the time she was speaking about her artistic inspiration, Amaki’s belief describes a larger drive, one that also informs her work as a curator and educator – and, moreover, one that accurately describes the collection of her papers at the Rose Library.

Amalia Amaki, born Lynda Faye Peek, grew up in Atlanta, the fourth of six daughters. Her parents encouraged her creativity from a young age, and in fact had a great influence on the shape of their daughter’s future work. Her father, a musician, instilled in her a love of blues and jazz, and her mother’s skill with quilt and textile design resulted in Amaki’s fascination with traditionally female craft and materials. Amaki graduated

from Georgia State University and the University of New Mexico, and she earned her PhD in American art and culture from Emory University in 1994. She has since taught at Spelman College, the University of Delaware, and the University of Alabama.

In 1994, Amaki became the curator of the collection of Paul R. Jones, an Atlanta-based businessman, activist, and lover of African American art. In her curatorial endeavors, as in her educational and artistic pursuits, Amaki has made it her goal to integrate learning with the viewing of art. She established an artist lecture series at the University of Alabama which brought artists represented in the Jones

collection to speak on campus, and she created an African American Artist Biography project, which invited students to write biographies of artists in the collection, later compiled to establish an online database.

Amaki has continued to create while teaching and curating, and her work has drawn national attention. Her solo show *Amalia Amaki: Boxes, Buttons and the Blues* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, in 2005-2006, which featured her recognizable button- and bead- encrusted souvenirs, was lauded as a bold, witty investigation of the history and significance of American culture.

The Amalia Amaki papers include books, correspondence, teaching files, printed material, photographs, ephemera related to African American history, slides, artwork, and audiovisual material. The papers also include curatorial files and material relating to the Paul R. Jones Collection of African American Art.



12/31
P.H. Polk

Amalia Amaki

"I'm operating from this belief that a lot of what we do, automatic things that we take for granted, are markers for elements of our identities that are deeply rooted. I think about what we keep, for example. It's a way of keeping with us the people they belonged to. I think, even though it's often not conscious, that our past is like a quiet tug. . .It's an unspoken impulse."

AMALIA AMAKI

Amaki's photograph of P.H. Polk, Tuskegee photographer and subject of her academic research.

BENNY ANDREWS

(1930 – 2006) Artist, activist

One of the first major reviews of Benny Andrews' work, an article in 1962 described the pieces in his early solo show as "forceful...One does not forget them. [Andrews] is finding himself by taking his world apart, then tearing it up, and arranging it in a different order than it was before...He looks promising."

Over the course the next forty-some years, Andrews fulfilled the unknowing prophesy of the review; not only did he fulfill his early artistic promise many times over, but he proved, in his life and in his evolving work, to feel no hesitation in tearing up the world in order to better arrange it.

Benny Andrews was born in Madison, Georgia, the second of ten children. He won a scholarship to study at Fort Valley State College from 1948-1950. He then served in the United States Air Force as a staff sergeant from 1950-1954. Andrews earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1958, and moved immediately to New York, where he began teaching and showing his work. He gradually gained recognition, and between 1960 and 1970, he had eleven solo shows at

the Paul Kessler Gallery in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and three at the Forum Gallery in New York City. In 1965, Andrews received a John Hay Whitney Fellowship.

In addition to, or perhaps because of, his growing critical recognition and leadership within the African American art community, Andrews became increasingly involved as a political activist. In 1969, he founded the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC) in response to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition, Harlem on My Mind, which made notable omissions in recognizing the contributions of black artists to the Harlem community. The function of the group expanded in later years, entering into negotiations with large museums and cultural institutions, as a result of which significant

changes in exhibition practice were implemented.

Later in his life, Andrews assumed additional roles of leadership, serving as the director of visual arts for the National Endowment for the Arts and helping to found The National Arts Program. Andrews' wife of 20 years is artist Nene Humphrey. He died of cancer, age 75. The Benny Andrews collection consists of artist's papers from 1940-2006. The papers include correspondence and exhibit files; files relating the his organizational work with the National Arts Program and the National Endowment for the Arts; photographs, printed material, writings and illustrations, audio-visual material, and artwork.

"Every series I do, I feel like I'm not only doing it the best I can artistically, but I'm also recording slices of history that I too have had some first hand experience in."

BENNY ANDREWS



Andrews' cover illustration for "The Last Radio Baby," a memoir written by his brother Raymond Andrews.

JOHN BIGGERS

(1924 – 2001) Artist

John Biggers is perhaps best known today as a muralist – the painter of large, compositionally complex landscapes, peopled by strong female figures and often almost cosmic in scope and effect. The John Biggers papers illuminate the development of his creative process and artistic vocabulary. Perhaps more importantly, the collection allows insight into Biggers' career as an educator, as well as his research on the African continent and its art.

John Biggers was born in 1924 in Gastonia, North Carolina. After taking a course with Viktor Lowenfeld, an art psychologist who had fled Austria during World War II, Biggers decided to change his major to art. After the war, Biggers followed Lowenfeld to Pennsylvania State University, where he earned his bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees in art education. His doctoral thesis, "The Negro Woman in American Life and Education: A Mural Presentation" was received with such enthusiasm that he was invited to transform it into a public presentation, an honor described by Lowenfeld as "the greatest...which a university can bestow upon a doctoral candidate."

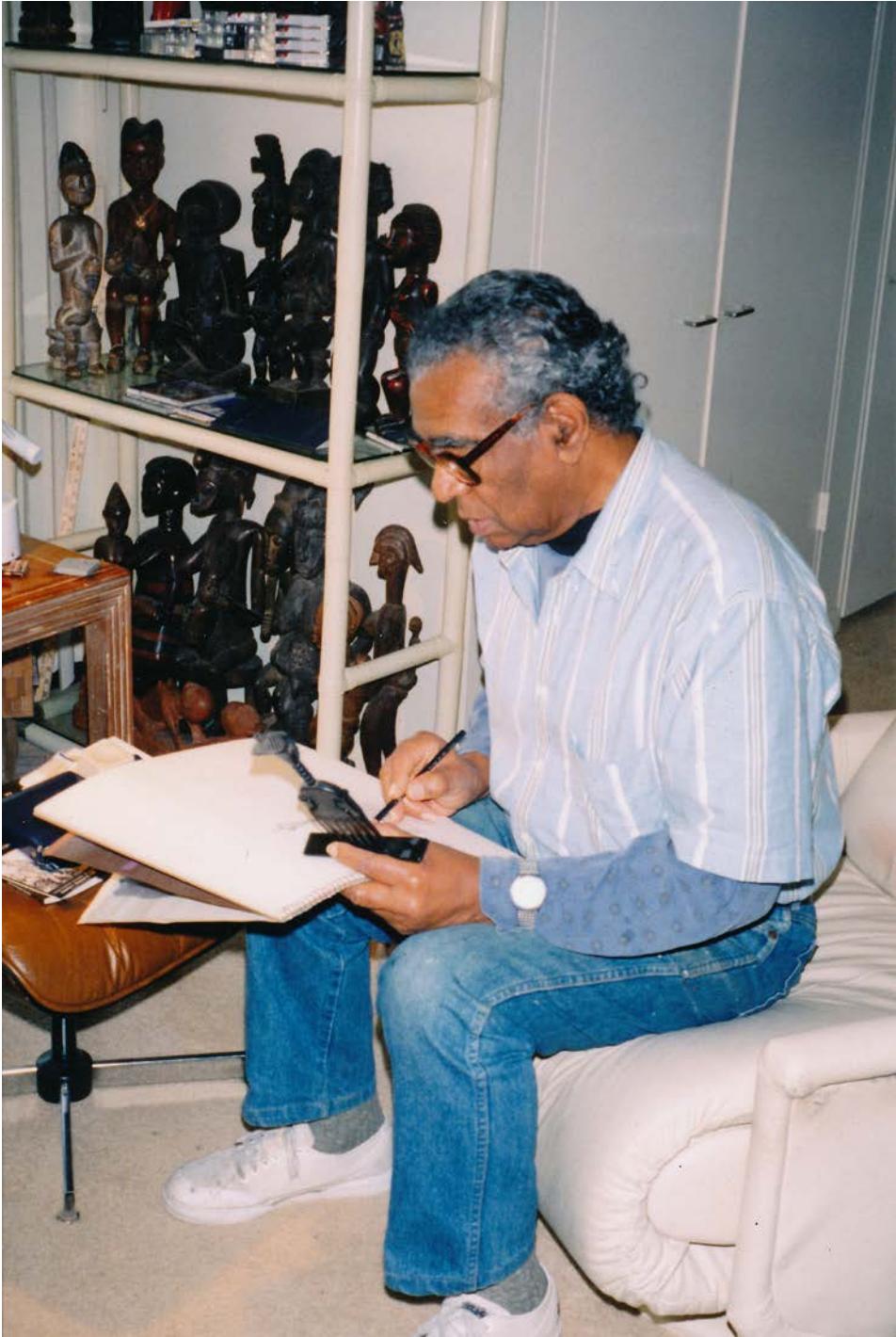
Biggers and his mentor remained close after Biggers moved to Houston, Texas, in 1949 to found the art department at the Texas State University for Negroes, later renamed Texas Southern University. The dimensions of his task there proved monumental; one source described Biggers as a "point man in a Cultural D-Day landing on a beach called Houston." Biggers built the department over the next thirty years, proving a devoted teacher and a conscientious administrator. In an essay on his time at Texas Southern, he describes his task not only as one of building faculty and designing curriculum, but one of altering perceptions, of helping young people to change "hatred

Biggers sketching an African comb, part of his extensive collection of African sculpture and craft.

into love...to understand new truths, cut through contrivancies, take off blinders, rip down veils, remove walls from within our minds."

In 1957, Biggers was awarded a UNESCO fellowship, which allowed him to spend six months traveling in Africa. Upon his return, he wrote *Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa*, documenting his observations on the life and art of Africa, including drawings completed on his journey. As one of the first accurate and visual views of Africa produced in America, it proved highly influential, informing the work of an entire generation of African American artists. John Biggers retired from teaching in 1983, and devoted himself to his art until his death.

The John Biggers papers include correspondence, subject files, printed material, audiovisual material, photographs, and books from his library, including all the books he illustrated.



Biggers wanted to alter perceptions, of helping young people to change "hatred into love. . .to understand new truths, cut through contrivancies, take off blinders, rip down veils, remove walls from within our minds."

GYLBERT COKER

(1944 -) Curator, writer, educator

As a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in the 1970s, Gylbert Coker was driven by the desire to understand “the cultural patterns and influences that make up Afro-American art... the interchange of culture from Africa to the United States, Africa to the Caribbean, the Caribbean to the United States.” Throughout her career as a writer and curator, Coker maintained this interest in the diversity of African American culture, both studying and celebrating its many forms. The Coker collection at the Rose Library documents the development of this passion, as well as its material implementation in Coker’s curating, writing, teaching, and scholarship.

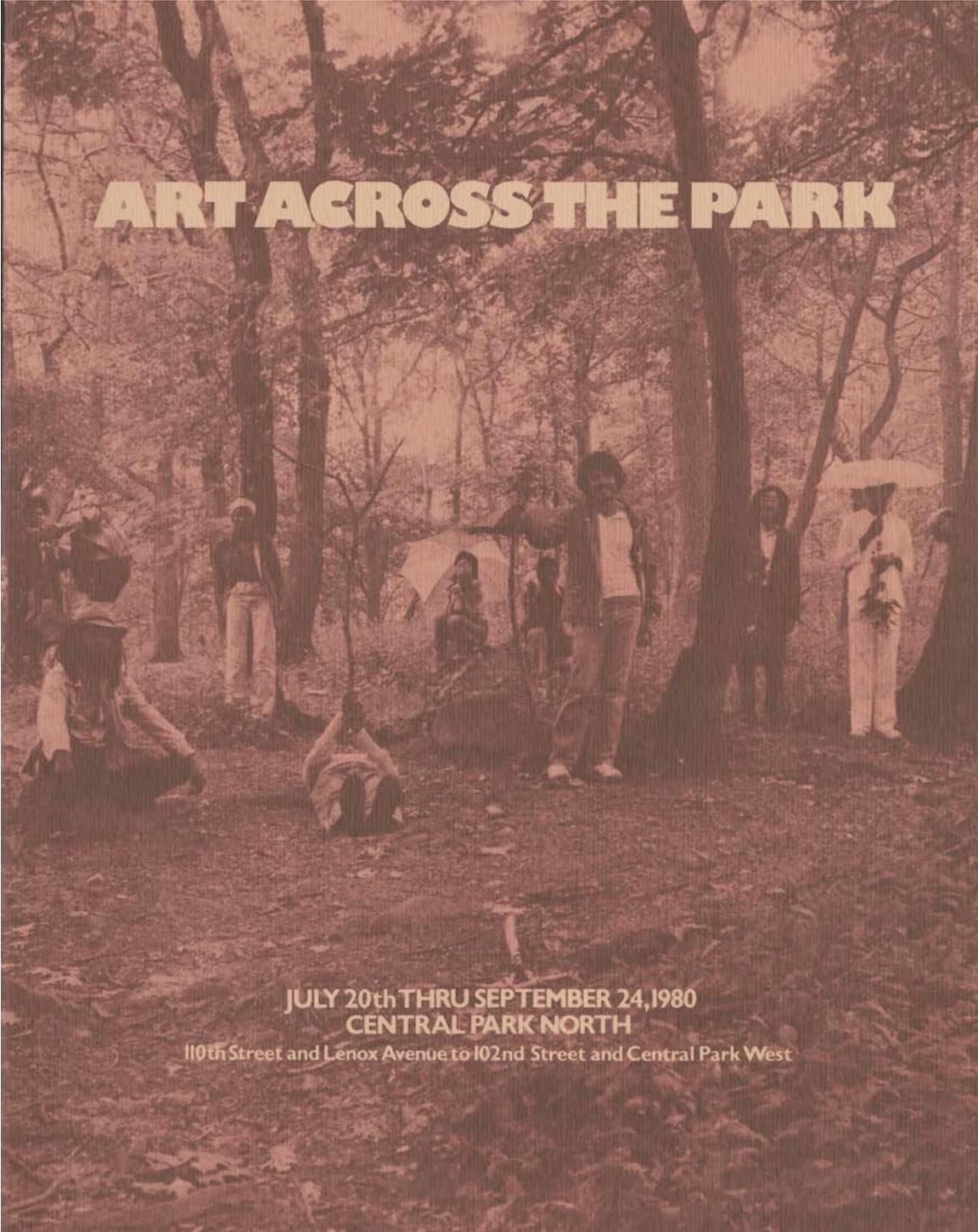
Born in 1944, Gylbert Coker attended Pratt Institute in New York City and continued to live and work in New York for much of her career. In 1980 and 1982, she created the Art Across the Park project along with artist David Hammons and curator Horace Brockington. Designed to present new site-specific work by emerging artists, Art Across the Park also reflected Coker’s continuous effort to make art physically and culturally accessible. The exhibition statement, which exists in various drafts in the Coker collection, outlines the selection of artists whose backgrounds reflected “the major ethnic character that is New York City – Black, His-

panic, Asian... Anglo Saxon,” as well as the effort to allow the public to witness all stages of the works’ creation, from installation to disassembly. This sensitivity towards her audience emerges in Coker’s writing and teaching, much of which is documented in the Rose Library’s collection.

Coker has worked in the curatorial departments of a number of museums and galleries in New York City, including The Studio Museum in Harlem and the SUNO gallery in New Orleans, and she has been featured as a guest curator at institutions like Franklin Furnace, a vanguard performance and book art space in New

York City, and the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Art. She has been a writer and an art editor for various publications, including Black American News, in addition to her role as a professor of Art History. As one of the most prolific and influential black woman curators and writers working between the late 1960s and the late 1980s, Coker offers a perspective unique among art historians of this period. Her papers include correspondence and planning materials relating to exhibitions and art projects, as well as writings and a body of printed materials, including exhibition catalogues and flyers.

As one of the most prolific and influential black woman curators and writers working between the late 1960s and the late 1980s, Coker offers a perspective unique among art historians of this period.



ART ACROSS THE PARK

JULY 20th THRU SEPTEMBER 24, 1980
CENTRAL PARK NORTH

110th Street and Lenox Avenue to 102nd Street and Central Park West

Exhibition brochure from Coker's 1980 curatorial project, Art Across the Park, which included installations from artists Ana Mendieta and Howardena Pindell.

CEDRIC DOVER

(1904 – 1962) **Writer, historian**

Cedric Dover was born in Calcutta on April 11, 1904, to parents of mixed European and Indian descent. Dover described himself as Eurasian, a term he preferred to “Anglo-Indian.” After attending St. Xavier’s and St. Joseph’s Colleges in Calcutta, Dover worked as an entomologist with the Zoological Survey of India. In the late 1920s Dover became increasingly interested in sociology and anthropology, specifically race and race relations in Europe, India and the United States. Notable works published by Dover on these subjects include *Half-Caste* (1937), *Know This of Race* (1939) and *Hell in the Sunshine* (1943).

In 1947, Dover served as a visiting lecturer in anthropology at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and then spent a year in New York City lecturing in race relations at the New School of Social Research. A long standing interest in African American art prompted the publication of *American Negro Art* in 1960. Dover died on December 9, 1962.

The Cedric Dover collection consists of Dover’s papers

from 1881-1962, and includes correspondence, writings by Dover and others, printed material, and photographs. The bulk of the correspondence concerns the publication of *American Negro Art* and covers the years 1959-1960. Writings include a manuscript draft of Dover’s first, but unpublished, book on butterflies, drafts of biographical sketches of artists under consideration for inclusion in *American Negro Art* and several drafts of articles on race and sociology.

The printed material consists primarily of journals, reprints of articles, and other works written by Dover throughout his career, in addition to material related to Fisk University and African American art in the mid-twentieth century. Printed material also includes twelve bound volumes of articles and clippings compiled by Dover. Many volumes contain scientific articles, though others cover topics ranging from literature to politics and philosophy. Several of these volumes have titles, which were supplied by Dover and describe the subject contents of the volumes.

Photographs include images of prominent African American intellectuals and artists, including Langston Hughes, Charles S. Johnson (president of Fisk University), Romare Bearden, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, Owen Dodson, Arna Bontemps, and others. Emory also received hundreds of rare volumes of African American history and culture, many inscribed by the authors with photographs and ephemera laid in.

AMERICAN NEGRO ART



Cedric Dover

The cover for Dover's book, *American Negro Art*, published in 1960.

CARROLL GREENE

(1931 - 2007) **Art historian, writer, lecturer**

As editor of *American Visions: Afro-American Art – 1987*, Carroll Greene wrote that his goal was not to provide a comprehensive guide to the history of African American art. Rather, he stated, “what is present here is a beginning: a visual experience that offers a glimpse of the diversity and creativity of today’s newer Afro-American artists.” As a curator and lecturer, Greene took the same stance; he sought to open the long delayed critical and scholarly discussion on African American art.

Carroll Theodore Greene, Jr. was born on June 17, 1931. Greene lectured, curated many exhibits, and published widely on the work of African American artists. The friend and contemporary of many of the artists he studied, Greene took a personal interest in the preservation of African American artistic heritage. In 1968, he was a fellow in Museum Studies at the Smithsonian Institute, where he played a role in adding to the museum’s collection of African American artifacts.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he privately collected

a number of such artifacts, as well as works of art, which were thus secured from deterioration or oblivion. Greene’s collection formed the basis for the Acacia Collection of African Americana, which he formed in 1989, serving as its curator and executive director.

In 1967, Greene co-curated “The Evolution of Afro-American Artists: 1800-1959” with Romare Bearden at the College of the City University of New York. He was influential in writing on and exhibiting Bearden’s work, serving as the guest curator of the 1971 exhibition “The Prevalence of Ritual” at the Museum of Modern Art. Greene organized a number of exhibitions as a free-lance curator and lecturer, curating and writing essays for exhibition catalogues in museums around the country.

The Carroll Greene collection includes correspondence, printed material and photographs mainly relating to Greene’s interest in African American art and artists.

**What is present here is the beginning:
a visual experience that offers a glimpse of
the diversity and creativity of today’s newer
Afro-American artists.**

AMERICAN VISIONS *Afro-American Art—1986*



Cover image from *American Visions: Afro-American Art—1986*, an art journal edited by Carroll Greene.

EDWIN A. HARLESTON

(1882 – 1931) Artist, activist

Once called “the foremost portrait painter our race has yet produced,” Edwin Augustus Harleston, was indeed one of the South’s greatest artists at the turn of the century, despite his underrepresentation on a national level. The Harleston family papers document his life and artistic career, as well as that of his wife, Elise Forrest Harleston, a teacher and one of the first African American women photographers in the United States. Edwin “Teddy” Harleston was born in 1882 in Charleston, South Carolina, to a prosperous middle-class family. He attended Avery Normal School, graduating as valedictorian in 1900 before going on to Atlanta University, where W.E.B. Du Bois became his professor and mentor. He received a scholarship to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where he received a highly traditional training from 1905 to 1913.

Harleston was one of the South’s great artists at the turn of the century, despite his underrepresentation on a national level.

When he was called back to Charleston to join his family’s business, Harleston became one of the South’s few classically-trained artists at the time. He also became active in the political landscape of the city, founding Charleston’s chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. and serving as its first president.

After a long courtship, much of which was carried out through a lively correspondence, Teddy and Elise married in 1920 and opened the Harleston Studio in Charleston in 1922. Harleston received several prominent commissions in the 1920s and 1930s, including portraits of philanthropist Pierre DuPont and the president of Atlanta University. He was invited by Aaron Douglas to participate in the painting of the murals at Fisk University, and he received the Harmon prize in 1931 for his painting *The Old Servant*.

Despite his many accomplishments, however, the majority of Harleston’s recognition came after his death in 1931. The Harleston collection includes much of his correspondence with Elise, as well as papers in relation to commissions, financial records, clippings, exhibition brochures, and several drawings and sketchbooks.



An original sketch by Edwin A. Harleston.

PAUL R. JONES

(1928 – 2010) **Art collector, businessman, activist**

A businessman by profession, Paul Jones nevertheless became a major figure in a number of communities, perhaps most notably that of African American art collectors. Jones began collecting art in the 1960s, after noticing a marked lack in the representation of African American artists in public galleries. From that time forward, Jones' collection grew steadily, driven by a passion that extended beyond any desire for personal profit or fame.

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His goal, as he described it, was to “incorporate African American art into American art,” one which eventually motivated him to donate the majority of his collection, as well as his personal papers, to universities, where it could be both displayed and actively incorporated into scholarship and education. Today, there are major Paul R. Jones collections at the University of Alabama and at the University of Delaware. Paul R. Jones was born in Bessemer, Alabama, and grew up in the Muscoda Mining Camp of an iron and steel corporation.

He attended the historically black Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama, and graduated from

Howard University. In the 1960s, Jones became active in the fight for civil rights; a member of the Birmingham Interracial Committee, he later worked for the United States Department of Justice on Civil Rights issues. Jones served as regional director of ACTION; director of the Model Cities Program in Charlotte, North Carolina, in the early 1970s; and a senior staff member of the Committee to Re-elect the President [Richard Nixon] in 1972.

The Paul R. Jones collection consists of the collector's personal papers, including printed material, correspondence, photographs, subject files, and audiovisual material, as well as hundreds of books from his personal library. Materials document Jones' involvement in the African American arts community, as well as his work with ACTION, the Model Cities Program, and the Committee to Re-elect the President [Richard Nixon]. He donated his art collection to numerous museums including the Paul R. Jones Art Collection at the University of Delaware and the Paul Jones Collection at the University of Alabama College of Arts and Science.

Depth & Diversity

ARTWORKS FROM THE PAUL R. JONES COLLECTION



2005 ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR

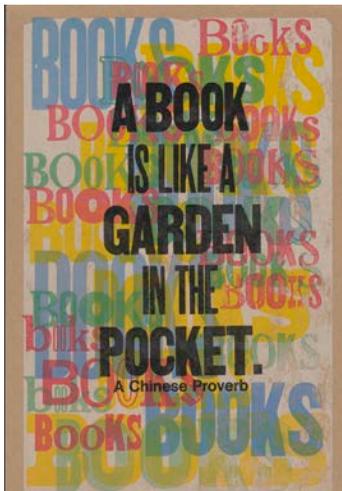


Poster for the inaugural exhibition of the Paul Jones Collection at the University of Delaware.

AMOS P. KENNEDY JR.

(1955 -) **Printmaker**

At the age of forty, Amos Kennedy left a comfortable life working as a computer programmer, bought a printing press, and began life as “a humble negro printer,” to use his own words. Since that time, he has become known for his colorful, provocative prints, posters, and artist’s books – as well as his equally colorful personality. His distinctive voice, both witty and insistent, manifests itself in the bold typography and strong graphics of his work, encouraging – or rather, demanding – a shift in perception.



Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. was born in Louisiana, and earned a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Wisconsin. In 1995, he founded Kennedy & Sons Fine Printers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since that time, he has become a teacher in addition to letterpress printer, sharing his expertise in workshops around the world, including Indiana University, Dartmouth College and Emory University.

He served as head of the Detroit Printing Plant before relocating to Alabama, where he operated his press in the

town of Gordo. He has since returned to Detroit, where Kennedy Fine Printers is currently based.

Kennedy’s hand-sewn, hand-printed books and posters can be found in the libraries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Northwestern University, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign – but Kennedy sells his original posters for under twenty dollars.

Underlying his work is a strong belief in the democracy of art – as he says, “My posters are for everybody.” He is representative of a recent renaissance of independent printmakers who have returned to the traditional letterpress, resurrecting pre-1960s presses and creating unique, deliberately hand-made images. Kennedy was the subject of an independent documentary film, *Proceed and Be Bold*, which was created in 2008 by Laura Zinger. The Kennedy & Sons Fine Printers collection includes books and printed materials.

Kennedy’s work often deals with issues of race, equality, and freedom.

BOOKS

BOOKS

BOOKS

Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.

SAMELLA LEWIS

(1924 -) **Artist, author, educator**

Samella Lewis was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and displayed, even as a child, an exceptional mind. She began her undergraduate studies at Dillard University, where she studied under Elizabeth Catlett, the African American sculptor who later became the subject of Lewis' own study. She transferred to Hampton Institute, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in art history in 1945. She earned a Master's from Ohio State University in 1948, followed by a Ph.D. from the same institution in 1951, becoming the first African American woman to receive a doctorate in art history.

This was not to be Samella Lewis' only first in an artistic or professional capacity; over the course of her career, she continually devised creative solutions to problems or absences she felt needed to be addressed. In 1969, Lewis began teaching art history at Scripps College, one of the Claremont Colleges in California, and she remained there until 1984, becoming the college's first tenured African American professor and a beloved mentor to her students.

Lewis spent much of her career addressing what she saw as a significant impediment to

the conversation surrounding African American art and artists: the lack of a place for such conversation to grow – for artists and critics to meet, converse, and engage in debate. She set out to correct this problem in all its dimensions; she established a physical space for the exhibition of black art, founding in the Museum of African American Art in Los Angeles and serving as its first curator until 1986.

The same year, she established the International Review of African-American Art, a journal which has

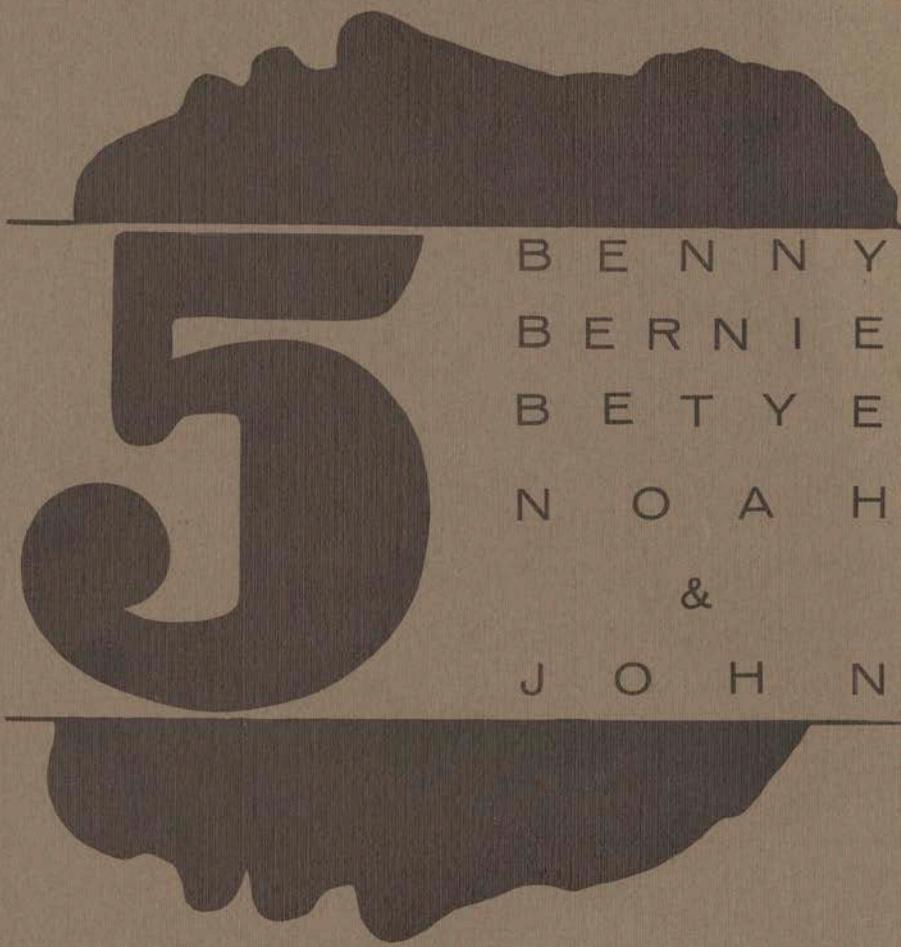
become one of the central sites for scholarly exchange surrounding African American visual art. She wrote an important survey of African American art, "Art: African American" and the first anthology of African American artists' writings, "Black Artists on Art" – and, when the time came to publish her books, she founded the first African American-owned art publishing house, Contemporary Crafts.

Lewis has continued to create her own work throughout her career as an art historian and educator, and her art has been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the country, including the Hammer Museum, in Los Angeles, the South Side Community Center, in Chicago, and Bill Hodges Gallery, in New York City.

The Samella Lewis papers include writings, correspondence, printed material, subject files, photographs, slides, and audiovisual material.

Program for an art exhibition curated by Samella Lewis.

lang art gallery SCRIPPS COLLEGE
Claremont, California



B E N N Y
B E R N I E
B E T Y E
N O A H
&
J O H N

Orlando Di

1 - 5 D A I L Y
16 Dec. 70 - 12 Feb. 71

JAMES A. PORTER

(1905 – 1970) Artist, art historian

James Amos Porter was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 22, 1905, to Lydia and John Porter. After graduating from Howard University with a bachelor's degree in art in 1927, he went to New York City to continue studying art. He graduated from New York University with a Master of Arts in Art History in 1937. While studying in New York he met Dorothy Burnett, a librarian at the Harlem branch of The New York Public Library. They were married in 1929 and had one child, Constance Porter. In 1943 he published *Modern Negro Art*, a seminal work documenting African American art from the 18th century to the mid-20th century. Porter became the head of the Howard University Department of Art and the Art Gallery in 1953. Dorothy Porter was the director of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. Porter died on February 28, 1970.

The subject files include his research files on all aspects of art produced in the African Diaspora, including Brazilian art, Cuban art, and others.

The collection consists of the papers of James A. Porter from 1914-1970. The papers include artist files, audiovisual material, correspondence, personal papers, photographs, printed material, subject files, and writings. The artist files document Porter's research into artists in the African Diaspora, focusing primarily on African American artists. They include correspondence,

photographs, and printed material. Porter's correspondence dates from 1928-1970 and relates to his research in addition to his role as head of the Howard University Department of Art and director of the Art Gallery. Notable correspondence includes several letters that document his intention to publish a follow up edition of *Modern Negro Art* intended to include post-World War II artists.

Porter's personal papers consist of early report cards from Armstrong Manual Training High School in Washington, D.C., and other items such as diplomas and certificates. The subject files include his research files on all aspects of art produced in the African Diaspora, including Brazilian art, Cuban art, and others. Printed material includes off prints and other articles written by Porter himself, as well as material published about him. Other general printed material includes posters, programs, and art exhibit catalogs. Finally, Porter's writings include several drafts of an article on Robert Scott Duncanson.



Exhibition of
**AFRICAN
NEGRO ART**

MAY 6-31, 1953

HOWARD UNIVERSITY
GALLERY OF ART

FOUNDERS LIBRARY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Exhibition catalogue from 1953, the year that Porter became head of the art department at Howard University and the curator of its gallery, beginning an era of the University's leadership in the exhibition of African American artists.

WALTER AUGUSTUS SIMON

(1916 – 1979) **Artist, professor of art**

In a lecture on the delineation between the American North and South, Walter A. Simon wrote, “I find myself an interested by-product of those two distinct cultures – having claimed successively as home: Brooklyn, Greenwich Village, Savannah, Georgia, and Petersburg, Virginia.” When he spoke those words in 1953, Simon was still a young man; over the course of his career, he would transcend not only the Mason-Dixon line, but an entire gamut of geographical, professional, and artistic boundaries. An artist, educator, and diplomat, Simon was able not only to integrate a remarkable range of experiences, but also to share the benefits of such multiplicity. As he states in an early letter to his wife: “It’s very possible to have different colors – I think it a good thing – it prevents you from becoming small [and gives you] an adaptability that enables you to see farther because you see in more than one direction.”

Born in 1916 in Brooklyn, New York, Walter Augustus Simon was hailed as a child prodigy, and had received commissions for portraits by the time he was 16. After graduating from Pratt Institute and the National Academy of Design, Simon served with the U.S. Army during World War II – painting at each of his postings, and eventually operating as a kind of unofficial documenter of the landscape

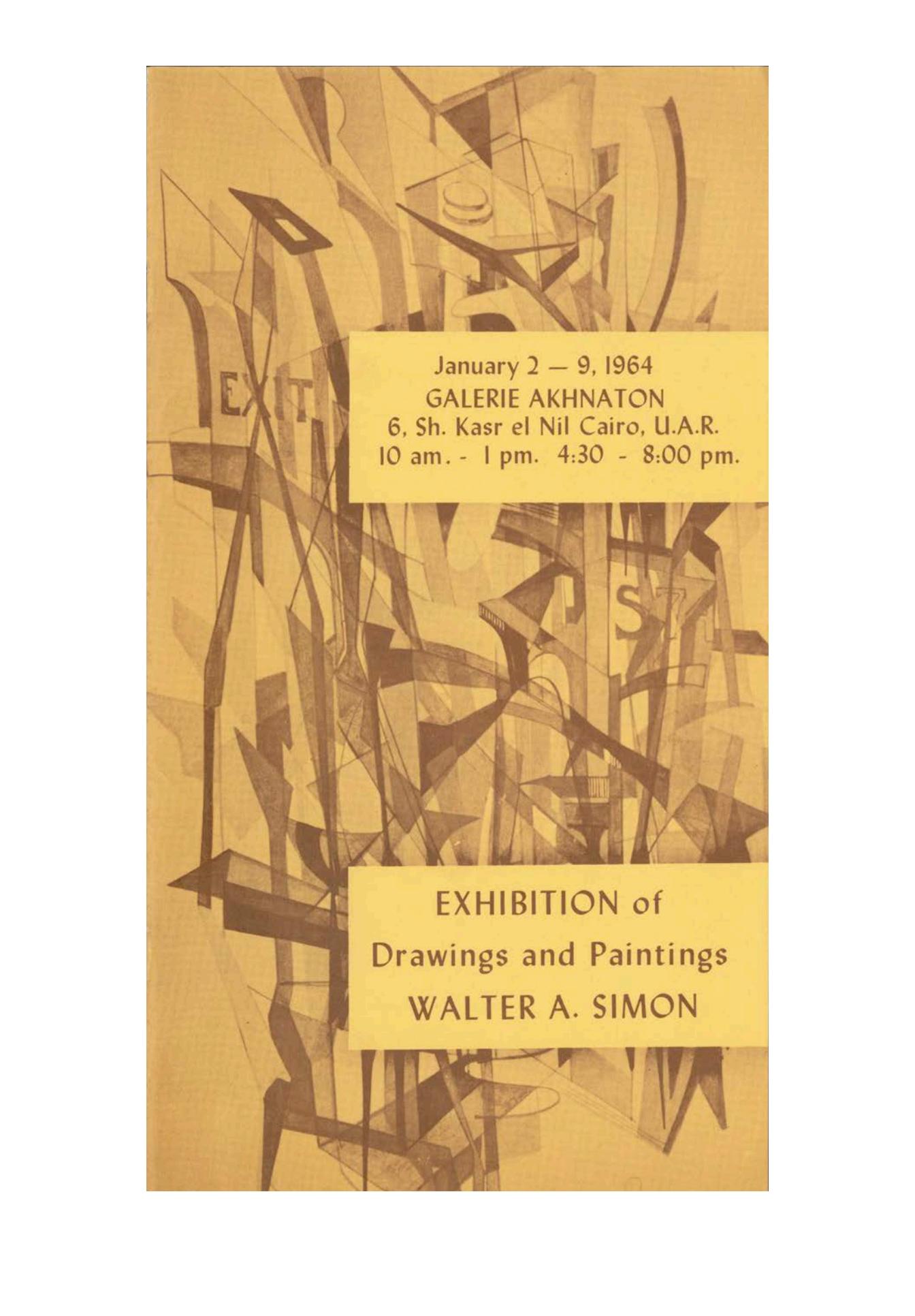
of war. Simon also wrote faithfully every day to his fiancée, Virginia Spottswood, whom he married in 1942, before he was shipped overseas. Upon his return, he earned his B.A., M.A., and PhD from New York University. In 1961, Simon won a position as a cultural attaché in the United States Information Services in Cairo, Egypt, beginning a diplomatic career that brought him to Kabul, Afghanistan, and

Colombo, Ceylon. Despite his many responsibilities, Simon found time to paint, and his art drew attention from foreign as well as American press.

After returning to the United States in 1969, Simon drew on his wide experience as a professor at a number of universities. As he did throughout his life, Simon expanded his role beyond that of a professor, serving as an advocate for minority students in university administration and taking on a number of other projects to expand the experience of his students. He advised student groups, arranged artist residencies on campus, and was instrumental in bringing important figures like Maya Angelou and Sonia Sanchez to speak to students. As one student wrote in an article after his death in 1979, “Walter Augustus Simon came to Bloomsburg University in 1971 to teach art history; he did much more than that. In short, he became a landmark.”

The Walter Augustus Simon papers contain correspondence, certificates and awards, writings, lecture material, photographs, and printed material.

Exhibition brochure from Simon’s one-man show at a gallery in Cairo, Egypt.

An abstract geometric drawing in shades of brown and tan on a light tan background. The drawing consists of numerous overlapping, angular shapes, lines, and planes, creating a complex, three-dimensional effect. Some shapes resemble architectural elements like beams and supports. The word "EXIT" is visible in a stylized, blocky font on the left side, and a large "S" is visible on the right side. The overall composition is dense and layered.

January 2 — 9, 1964
GALERIE AKHNATON
6, Sh. Kasr el Nil Cairo, U.A.R.
10 am. - 1 pm. 4:30 - 8:00 pm.

EXHIBITION of
Drawings and Paintings
WALTER A. SIMON

MILDRED THOMPSON

(1935 – 2003) **Artist**

Mildred Jean Thompson, African American painter, sculptor, printmaker, musician, and photographer, was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1936. Thompson began her formal training as an artist at Howard University in 1953, under the guidance of James A. Porter. After graduating, and with the encouragement of another mentor, Samella Lewis, she traveled to Germany where she studied at the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg. In 1961, Thompson briefly returned to the United States. However, after encountering racism while trying to exhibit her art, Thompson expatriated to Düren, Germany. She returned to the United States once again in 1974, assuming a position as artist-in-residence in Tampa, Florida. She worked for a few years in Washington, D.C., and Paris before finally settling in Atlanta, Georgia, with her partner, Donna Jackson.

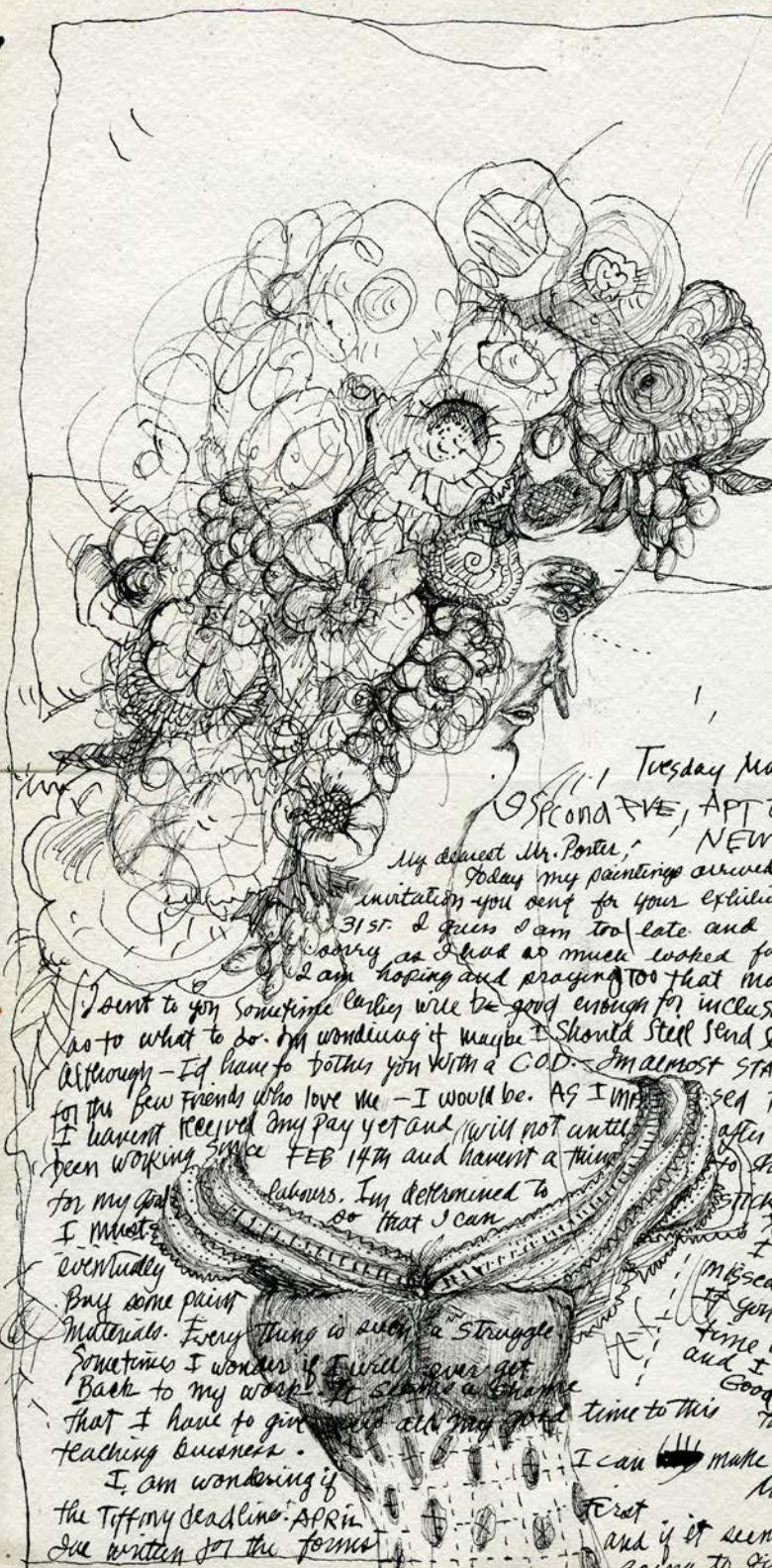
While Thompson is perhaps best known as an abstract painter, her oeuvre also includes wooden sculptures, drawings, lithographs, and photographs. She was also involved in a variety of other creative pursuits. Thompson was a musician/songwriter who wrote original music and performed in a blues band, Wedo Blues, with Donna Jackson. She also wrote poetry

and prose, and served as a contributing editor at *Art Papers*, an Atlanta-based art magazine, from 1987 through the early 2000s. Throughout her career, Thompson taught drawing and art courses at numerous institutions in the United States and Germany, including Dusseldorfer Schule Kollegium in Düren, Spelman College in Atlanta, and The Atlanta College of Art.

The collection consists of Thompson's papers from 1949-2009 and includes correspondence and personal papers; artwork; writings; subject and teaching files; printed material; photographs; audiovisual material; and digital media. The materials document Thompson's work as an artist, musician, photographer, writer, and teacher.

Correspondence is both professional and personal in nature, and includes numerous letters from Thompson's friend and fellow artist Gillian Lewis; personal papers include notebooks, a scrapbook, and other materials. Artwork includes numerous hand-made books composed of original photographs by Thompson, as well as three other original works of art. Writings consist of poetry and prose, including several children's books with illustrations by Thompson and articles written for *Art Papers*, as well as a few pages of sheet music. The bulk of the printed material consists of articles by Thompson and materials pertaining to her exhibitions.

Letter from Thompson to her mentor, James Porter, written during her thirteen-year expatriation in Germany.



Tuesday March 21, 1961

95 Second Ave, Apt 2, NY 3,
NEW YORK

My dearest Mr. Porter,
Today my paintings arrived and also the
invitation you sent for your exhibition opening March
31st. I guess I am too late and out. I am very
sorry as I had so much looked forward to participating.

I am hoping and praying that maybe some of the work
I sent to you sometime earlier will be good enough for inclusion. I'm in a bit of a
dilemma as to what to do. I'm wondering if maybe I should still send something. However -
Although - I'd have to bother you with a C.O.D. - I'm almost STARVING here - but for
for the few friends who love me - I would be. AS I MEAN
I haven't received my pay yet and will not until
been working since FEB 14th and haven't a thing
for my god. I must
eventually
Buy some paint
materials. Every thing is such a struggle
Sometimes I wonder if I will ever get
Back to my work. It seems a shame
that I have to give up all my god time to this
teaching business.

I am wondering if
the Tiffany deadline. APRIL
I've written for the form

SEA THE MARCH Payroll,
after APRIL FIRST. I've
to show
STICK it out.

I am very sorry that I've
missed out. It couldn't be helped.
If you think that there is yet
time enough please let me know
and I will try to send something down
Good luck, know that I am
thinking of you. The next time I'll be ready
I can make some more
Mildred
Forget
and if it seems at all possible I am certainly
going to give it a try.



DOX THRASH

(1892 - 1965) **Artist, printmaker**

Dox Thrash, African American artist and printmaker, was born in Griffin, Georgia. He left school after fourth grade and traveled around the United States in his teens, eventually settling in Chicago, Illinois, in 1911. He worked as an elevator operator and in 1914, enrolled in night courses at the Art Institute of Chicago. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Thrash joined the Army. He served in France with the 365th Infantry Regiment, 183rd Brigade, 92nd Division, also known as Buffalo Soldiers, the first American soldiers to fight in the war. He resumed his art training in 1918 after returning to America and graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1923.

Thrash again traveled the country from 1923-1925, eventually settling Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He took a job as a janitor and worked on his art in his spare time, gaining local recognition due in part to his membership in the Tra Club of Philadelphia. From 1936-1939, Thrash worked for the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration, supervising the Graphic Division for three years. During this time, Thrash invented the carborundum mezzotint printmaking technique, which he called “Opheliagraph printing” in

honor of his mother. Thrash is best known for his work in this medium, a lithographic printing process that uses a carbon-based abrasive on copper plates to create a print image in tones from pale gray to deep black.

In 1940, Thrash married Edna McAllister. Thrash died in 1965 at the age of 72.

The small Thrash collection consists of materials relating to the artist from 1920-1966, including correspondence, photographs, printed material and a small number of other

documents. Correspondence primarily contains letters sent to Thrash from the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project regarding his work for the organization. Other correspondence is from universities, art museums, and artist organizations regarding the exhibition or purchase of Thrash’s work. One such letter, from the Contemporary Art of the American Negro jury committee and signed by Hale Woodruff, discusses concerns about all-Negro exhibitions and the possibility that they inadvertently encourage segregation.

The collection also contains two photographs of Thrash and several newspaper clippings documenting his work as an artist. Printed material also includes a brochure from an exhibit of African American artists that included Thrash and a broadside of “Art Outlook” on which he sketched two pencil drawings.

Cover page from Thrash’s manuscript, which describes the carborundum print-making technique he invented and named “Opheliagraph Printing” for his mother.

THE ART OF

OPHELIAGRAPH PRINTS

BY

DOX THRASH

AFRICAN AMERICAN ART & ART HISTORY COLLECTION INDEX

Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Archives	MSS 927
James V. Hatch and Camille Billops Papers	MSS 1226
Amalia K. Amaki Papers	MSS 1219
John Biggers Papers	MSS 1179
Benny Andrews Papers	MSS 845
Barbara Chase-Riboud Papers	MSS 1292
Gylbert Coker Papers	MSS 1042
Cedric Dover Papers	MSS 1108
Carroll Greene Papers	MSS 1220
Edwin A. Harleston and Edwina Harleston Whitlock Family Papers	MSS 1161
Bill Howell Collection	MSS 1213
Delilah Jackson Papers	MSS 923
Paul R. Jones Papers	MSS 1187
Kennedy & Sons Collection	MSS 908
Whitney LeBlanc Papers	MSS 1141
Samella S. Lewis Papers	MSS 1132
James A. Porter Papers	MSS 1139
Walter Augustus Simon Papers	MSS 1057
Mildred Thompson Papers	MSS 1199
Dox Thrash Collection	MSS 1275
John Ralph Willis Papers	MSS 1208

Additional collections committed: Kevin Cole, Michael D. Harris

Finding aids for these collections are available through the Rose Library's website:
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Pellom McDaniels III, Ph.D.

Curator of African American Collections
404-727-6276
pellom.mcdaniels.iii@emory.edu

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