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*An Exhibition of Alabama African-American Artists*



on display

January 20 - March 26, 2015

in the Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery



201 Monroe Street • Suite 110 • Montgomery, AL 36104

*The Mission of the Alabama State Council on the Arts is to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality for all Alabamians by providing support for the state's diverse and rich artistic resources.*

Agency Goals

1. Support Excellence & Professionalism in all art forms.
2. Incorporate the arts as an essential element in the educational experience of all Alabamians.
3. Provide opportunities for all Alabamians to participate in and appreciate the arts.
4. Identify, preserve and present folk traditions.
5. Support multi-cultural artistic expression.
6. Support economic vitality in communities through the arts.
7. Increase public recognition and appreciation for the arts, arts organizations and individual artists.

*The Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery is open  
Monday-Friday from 8:00am-5:00pm.  
For more information, contact Gallery Director  
Elliot Knight at 334-242-4076 Ext. 250 or  
Elliot.Knight@arts.alabama.gov*



## **A<sup>4</sup> – An Exhibition of Alabama African-American Artists**

### ***Celebrating African-American History Month & the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights Marches***

The work of twelve (12) African-American artists are being showcased at the Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery in downtown Montgomery in celebration of African-American History Month and the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights Marches.

The exhibition, A4, brings accomplished artists from around the state together to highlight their achievements in art and in social commentary. The collection on display includes: large scale pinhole photographs, mixed media paintings and sculptures, charcoal drawings, clay sculptures and vessels and cast iron sculptures. This unique assemblage of work celebrates the achievements of African-American culture and the triumphs of all Alabamians since the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights Marches led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act 50 years ago.

# Larry Allen

BA, Fine Arts, Berea College



## Artist's Statement

*I was born and raised in Birmingham, Al. I received a BA degree in Art from Berea College in Berea, Kentucky in May 1978. I have an art studio in Leeds, Al where I reside.*

*I teach pottery classes and develop pottery creations. I also travel throughout the year exhibiting my work in numerous art festivals, mostly in the central and southeastern United States.*

*In 2007 one of my vases was given as a gift to Pulitzer Prize winner and author Harper Lee; presented on behalf of the Alabama State Council on the Arts.*

*In 2008 my work was showcased on the nationally televised HGTV show "THAT'S CLEVER". Also in the same year one of my vases was given as a gift to Liberia's first woman President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. I have been featured on the BrightHouse Cable television network; giving demonstrations of wheel-thrown pottery.*

*The pottery is "wheel thrown" and mostly involves a technique known as Sgraffito. This is a sophisticated method of incising designs onto leather-hard clay that has been completely covered with a colored slip (clay solution). Most of my designs are inspired by African and Native American work.*

*All vessels are made out of stoneware clay. The clay is a "special black" clay. After the vessels are formed they are covered with a slip solution that is mixed and after the slip has stiffened on the vessel it is covered with a wax coating. This allows the carving of designs into the clay. The vessels are bisque fired, then the interior is glazed and fired again to maturity. After that process I highlight it with a low fire red glaze and refire it. One design in particular which is the "Unity Design" is inspired by the tragedy of 9-11. I wanted to portray that concept of togetherness in the sense of "together-we-stand, divided-we-fall". As for the shape of my vessels, there is an influence from various cultures such as Greek, Asian, etc.*

*From the beginning when I was first introduced to clay in college I became fascinated with the process of making clay vessels and I'm still in awe today.*

*All the pottery work from start of finish is done solely by me.*

# Nathaniel Allen (Alabama State University)

BFA, Painting, Michigan State University

MFA, Painting, University of Mississippi



*Cow, Oil on canvas, 16" x 20"*

Mr. Nathaniel Allen III was born in the Mississippi Delta but grew up primarily in Lansing, Michigan. Mr. Allen has previously worked as a website production assistant, a commercial printer and has owned and operated his own retail store specializing in art supplies comic books, cult movie rentals and toys.

He has taught art courses at a variety of institutions including: The Flint Museum of Art - Flint, MI; Greater Lansing Artspace - Lansing, MI; Volunteer State University - Gallatin, TN; Watkins College of Art and Design - Nashville, TN; and, Tennessee State University - Nashville, TN; He served as Director of Visual Studies at Andrew College from 2004 through 2008 and began work as an Assistant Professor of Art at Alabama State University in 2009.

Mr. Allen has created commissioned portraits, mural paintings, book and magazine illustrations, logo designs, won a variety of awards in juried art exhibition and had sequential artwork published in the British horror anthology "Hallowscream."

In addition, Mr. Allen has written and performed original music with the band The LG's. He comes from a talented family which includes most notably his Aunt, Denise LaSalle and Uncle James "Son" Thomas, one of the last of the Mississippi Delta blues men.

Mr. Allen currently resides in Montgomery AL.



*Pixellation, Oil on canvas, 24" x 30"*

# Charmagne Andrews (Alabama State University)

BA, Sociology & Art, Xavier University  
MSW, Social Work, Tulane University  
MFA, Sculpture, Michigan State University



*Queen, Cast iron relief, 16" x 10" x 3"*

Charmagne Andrews is originally from Magnolia, MS. She chose visual art as a second career in the late 1980's. Her work has included cast metal, installation, handmade paper, prints, and mixed media. Most of her work is informed by expressive cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora.

Ms. Andrews was a longtime resident of New Orleans, Louisiana, where she worked at St. Mark's Community Center for twelve years. Ms. Andrews received her Master of Fine Arts in sculpture from Michigan State University. While at Michigan State, she did extensive study of art history and in-depth research on the Great Zimbabwe site; she studied Chi-Shona, a language spoken in Zimbabwe; and took courses in African music, comparative history of the Caribbean as well as music of the Caribbean.

## Artist's Statement

*My first exposure to African and African American art was awe-inspiring. These works resonated within me emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Through researching my interests in masquerades, metal working, textiles, religious beliefs, and mythology, I found inspiration for my art works. My approach to art combines research interests with art making. My works have been primarily inspired and influenced through my study of the dynamic, expressive cultures of Africa and her diaspora.*

*I was inspired to combine the suggestion of weaving as a part of my metal works. I was very interested in the masks used as a part of the masquerade outfits during ceremonies of some African cultural groups, especially in the western part of the continent. Once I learned to create wax forms for casting, I soon began to weave pieces of wax to combine with the faces I was transforming. These masks have several themes or meanings: they are a way of paying homage to the ceremonial traditions that incorporated masks; they pay homage to the ancient metal casters of Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin; they also allude to the poem, *We Wear the Mask*, by Paul Lawrence Dunbar which makes a strong statement about the psyche of our enslaved ancestors who were forced to cope with oppression and the double consciousness that African Americans still negotiate today.*

*Though metal casting is my favorite, I sometimes work in other media such as handmade paper and printmaking. Whatever the media, the works are meant to be aesthetically pleasing as well as informative. My works celebrate the various cultural elements and how they have been transmitted and continuously transformed. I feel that creating works like this is a part the responsibility of my chosen role as a keeper of culture.*

# Art Bacon (Talladega College, retired)

AB, Biology, Talladega College  
MS, Zoology, Howard University  
PhD, Zoology, Howard University



*Work Boots, Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 40"*

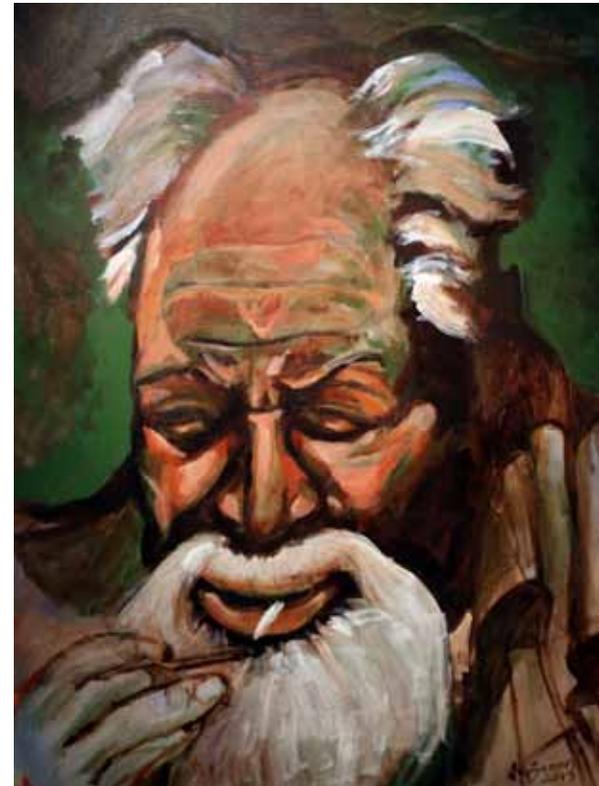
Art Bacon, a Native of West Palm Beach, Florida, is now retired from academe and living in Talladega, Ala--after 40 years as a member of the faculty, staff and administration at Talladega College. He is now enjoying his second career and passion—as a prize winning artist.

At Talladega College, Bacon majored in biology and enrolled in a few art courses taught by David C. Driskell. He also painted backdrops for the Little Theatre. On January 2, 1961, he was assaulted for sitting in the “wrong” waiting room at the Anniston Alabama Train station. At Howard University, while working on his masters, Bacon discovered a new species of protozoa and upon entering the doctoral program was also invited to join the Zoology Department faculty.

In 1969, Bacon joined the faculty at Talladega College as Chair of the Biology Department. During his 40 year tenure, his positions included; Chair of Biology, Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs. He also represented the faculty on the Board of Trustees for over 15 years.

## Artist's Statement

*People are my subjects of choice; especially older and neglected people whose experiences show in their faces. I also like to render those things more often identified with the rural south. In fact, one of my goals is to capture as much as I can before they disappear. In the early days, I worked almost exclusively with ink washes and pen and ink lines—very little color. I was a minimalist and believed that color interfered with my expression of feelings. I now use more color and a number of other media and techniques—often combining several. However, I still like lines and my palette is still limited.*



*Emmett Lighting Up, Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 40"*

# Tony Bingham (Miles College)

BA, Communications Arts, Antioch College

MA, Film / Community Media, Goddard College

MFA, Sculpture, School of Art and Design, Georgia State University



*Osnaburg Meditations – Ode to Estella Cast iron, headstone, 16" x 8" , 24" x 18"*

## Artist's Statement

*In the summer of 2014 I visited Marion, Alabama, some 50 years after its role as the catalyst for the 1965 Selma marches. Marion had always intrigued me, as the home of Coretta Scott King, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Jean Childs (Mrs. Andrew Young), The Lincoln school, Judson College and carefully preserved 19th century antebellum architectural structures.) My art making process involves engaging with the history of a place and its people, both past and present. I engage in conversations and go where that leads me, weaving back and forth between people and places, such as churches, cemeteries, barbershops and farmers markets, junk yards and academic institutions. The people, histories, and places of this community inspired this project.*

*The works in this installation are composed of two media - pinhole photography and sculpture. I value the process of Pinhole photography, and the images that result from it. Its hands-on methods for designing the camera and development of the negatives takes me back to the origins of the photography process. As well, the unique nature of my ice-chest cameras are a conversation starter that lead in unexpected directions.*

*The two sculptures from the Osnaburg Meditations series consist of stones combined with cast iron. The iron sculptures are textured forms which have been shaped in burlap and then cast. Osnaburg is the 18th century name for a burlap fabric known then as "negro cloth" which was given to slaves to make their clothing. The cast burlap sculptures adorn field stones, which are often used to mark early African-American graves. One iron sculpture is combined with an actual handcrafted tombstone, which I found in a second-hand shop in Alabama. When I find historic objects such as this for sale, I purchase them, if possible, and integrate them into my work, which I see as a kind of redemption for the object.*

*The Osnaburg Meditations mark the memory of African-American slaves, who lie in the many forgotten burial sites in southern rural communities, including some sites in Marion. As well, the project heralds the role of Marion's courageous citizens, sung and unsung, during the Civil Rights to the present.*



*Scan the QR code to view "Point of Departure" (30 min.) Artist Tony Bingham reveals his art making processes and inspirations including cast metal and glass, pinhole photography and a printmaking residency in South Africa. Or visit – [www.vimeo.com/64862256](http://www.vimeo.com/64862256) to view the film.*



*Rozelle Martin III and Thomas Wright  
Pinhole photograph  
Inkjet print, 32" x 43"*

# Leonard Dawson (Stillman College)

BA, Art Education, Eastern Illinois University  
MA, Art Education, University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana



*Spade*  
Mixed Media  
12" x 14" x 52"



*Jumping Through Hoops*  
Mixed Media  
30" x 44"

## Artist's Statement

*Subject matter is an important part of my work. People, thoughts and experiences are at the forefront. My work represents and expresses the experiences of everyday life that have an impact on our emotions or psyche. These images represent the symbolism in our lives. Social and psychological experiences of gender are rooted in the interpretation of these metaphors. Those experiences that affect our immediate state of mind are often shared by others and are memories of frequent thoughts.*

*The materials are equally important to the artistic message. For this reason, mixed media is often employed. It is through the use of material that meaningful thought is expressed. For example, in the piece entitled *Morning Sounds*, several materials are used: plaster, tin, pencil, and bronze. Plaster makes up a large portion of the composition expressing the roughness of any given day. However, the subordinate images are created with other materials which give them equal importance. The hand and the butterfly are created with colored pencils symbolizing the morning and nature. This gives way to the figure in the likeness of a saxophone. Created in bronze, the image, poised just in front of a textured tin back-drop to furnish a subtle but distinct contrast, represents the sounds of morning. It is an attempt to communicate a visceral dialogue.*

*The symbols we deal with most frequently are words. I am concerned with the symbols as they occur in art, but most concerned with the symbols which result from the description that words provide. A good example of this is the use of materials. Their importance to the work of art can be seen in *Jumping through Hoops*. The materials lend themselves effectively to the message. We are all very familiar with such experiences as jumping through hoops. It is my desire to create works that fire up the audience emotionally, intellectually, and visually. I want to arouse all the senses in some way.*

# Winfred Hawkins

BS, Graphic Design, Savannah College of Art + Design



*Noah's Lego Set*  
Mixed media- Digital print on vinyl  
52" x 52"

Winfred Hawkins is a native of Montgomery, Al. After graduating from Booker T. Washington Magnet High School, he attended Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and received a BS in graphic design. Currently, his work can be seen permanently hanging on the outside walls of the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery.

In recent years he has reinvented himself. Breaking free from traditional methods and ideas, his work is filled with mythology and symbolism. He has created a visual language that bridges memories from his childhood with the reality of today. "My work is an allegory of my life, a visual documentary of struggle and joy. It is a perseverance that, on occasion, shakes hands with insanity."



*Detail of Meditation*  
Mixed media- Digital print on vinyl  
36" x 72"

# Darius Hill (Alabama School of Fine Arts)

BFA, Printmaking, Atlanta College of Art  
MFA, Sculpture, University of Alabama



*Funkadelic Relic*, Mixed Media, 8' x 4'

Darius Hill is Chair of the Visual Arts Department at the Alabama School of Fine Arts. He is an exhibiting artist, participating in shows throughout the southeast including New Vision Gallery, Atlanta, GA; the University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL; and the Crossroads Initiative, New Orleans, LA. Hill's work is represented in many collections including museum, corporate, and private, throughout the U.S. He has earned several honors and awards including Operation New Birmingham Best in Show Award at the Magic City Art Connection and he was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. He was one of 13 Alabama printmakers selected to work with the University of Montevallo's Big Print project.

## Artist's Statement

*What is interesting, aesthetically, is that the deeper I dig into my Black experience, the more I rediscover the very things I thought I was leaving behind. One such thing and major influence in my much later work is my interest in architecture, gothic in particular. While creating the armature for sculpture like "What's Your Angle Jive Turkey", two 8-foot wide Afro-Combs, it was obvious to me that the armature resembled a rough version of framework for some gothic structure from the past. I'm not frustrated by this, as it reminds me of how things are connected and how the artist should always put themselves in the position to facilitate connections. At times like this, I am reminded of a quote by Kiki Smith, "I think art is just a way to think...it's like standing in the wind and letting it pull you in whatever direction it wants to go."*



*What's Your Angle*, Mixed Media, 17' x 4'

# John "Jahni" Moore

BS, Commercial Art , Alabama A&M University

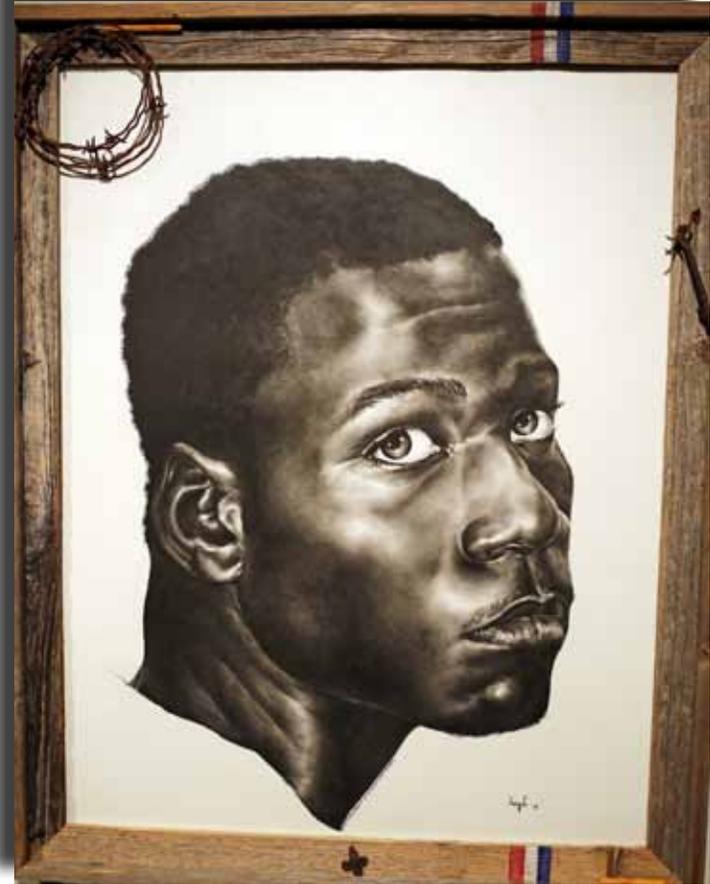
M.Ed, Art , Alabama A&M University



*Made In America*  
Acrylic on canvas  
36" x 72"

John Thomas Moore, "Jahni", is an African American artist and writer. Social commentary is a central theme in his art work, a visual journey of the human experience from history to modern day. Intricately haunting charcoal works on paper contrast with vivid paintings and assemblage in near living color.

Recognized internationally for his work in the United States and Columbia, South America, the artist completed several public works in the hometown of famous Latin artists Pedro Nel Gomez and Fernando Botero. He has won numerous awards for creative and humanitarian accomplishments. Johni has served as an educator on every level from kindergarten to university.



*State Public Education System Student #633411*  
Charcoal and mixed media  
25" x 31"

# Clifton Pearson (Alabama A&M, retired)

BS, Art Education, Alabama A&M University

MS, Art Education & Studio Ceramics, Illinois State University

Ed.D, Studio Ceramics, Glass, Art Education, Illinois State University



Detail of *Celebrated Figure #1*, Clay, 38" x 9" x 8"

Clifton Pearson's engaging works occupy an interesting zone between representative and imagined reality. His recent figural sculpture is formally conceived and highly stylized, yet through gesture and attitude Pearson convincingly summons the interior psychology of a real human presence. Details of physiognomy as well as hair, costume and jewelry stem from the artist's keen interest in African and other non-Western cultures, yet these elements are rarely literally transcribed. Instead, the works become cross-cultural fusions influenced by Pearson's active, free-floating imagination and strong sense of form and design.

Pearson's "Celebrated Figures" series features vertically attenuated, emotionally expressive personages ranging in height from approximately two-and-one-half to three feet. Like the Tanagara figurines of ancient Greece, their bodies are enveloped and revealed by layers of heavy drapery that cling as if wet to shoulders and folded arms. Pearson's love of refined texture, clearly inspired by classical African works from Ife and Benin, is allowed full expression here. Throughout the series, the artist sets deep pleats and fluid folds against shallowly incised rib, net and scale patterns, which in turn gain visual relief from adjacent areas left deliberately smooth. Textural contrast is further emphasized in the astonishing array of adornments--ranging from chunky and outsized earrings, fantastic headpieces, and elaborate hair styles to a brightly colored raffia boa--that enhance and underscore the character of each figure.

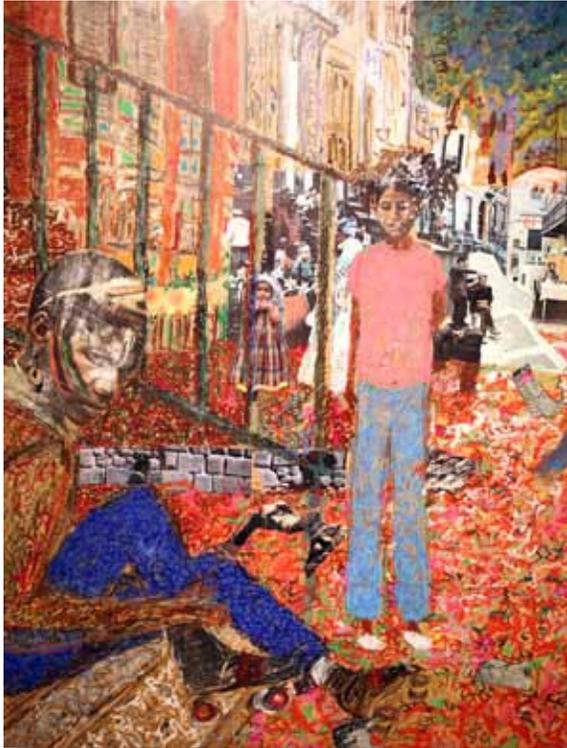
-Peter Baldai,  
Huntsville Museum of Art



*Celebrated Figure #2*, Clay, 33.5" x 8" x 8"

# E. Bruce Phillips (Tuskegee University)

BA, Marketing, Moorehouse College, Atlanta  
MFA, Painting, Savannah College of Art and Design



*In the Street. Mixed media on board, 36" x 48"*

Bruce's early works were an exploration of color, mixed media and found objects. His later works continued this trend but focused on several themes including performance art (dancers, music and jazz scenes, runners), street scenes, social commentary, found objects and architectural abstractions. His most current works showcase his fascination with architecture and spatial relationships and build on his use of color and texture to create abstract works of visual height, depth and dimension.

*For the last few years, I just created - not fully knowing how one of my pieces would turn out until it was actually completed. I freely experimented with my love of color, texture and mixed media. The result was pure abstract or figurative abstract images that blended painting, drawing, collage and found objects on board, paper, canvas, glass or any surface I could find.*

*I always saw the commonality in my works as my 'doodlings' or signature mark makings. These controlled or free flowing markings developed early in my career are used to create uniformity as well as add energy, a sense of sound, movement and vibrancy, to my works. But, a recent retrospective look at my body of work clearly reveals other distinctive trends and heavy influences: architecture and spatial relationships.*

*My favorite classes in my early traditional educational experience were always those that involved lines and color and included drafting in high school and architecture courses in college. My photography has been equally affected. Whether it is capturing the beautiful architecture of downtown Montreal or New Orleans, or the gritty crumbling buildings and bridges of industrial cities or the amazing topography thousands of miles above Barbados, the juxtaposition of art in nature remains a captivating attraction. These visual recollections and photographic images have become central to my designs. They are merged with found objects and carefully placed lines and chosen colors and textures to give the works height, depth, width, movement, fluidity, and emotion.*

*The design process is non-formulaic. Each piece starts and ends differently. One may start with a color, another with an image or a found object. The journey for each work is as unique as the end product. The journey is always exciting!*

# Cleve Webber (Alabama State University)

BFA, Fine Arts, Edna Manley School of Visual and Performing Arts, Jamaica  
MA, Pratt Institute, New York  
MFA, Pratt Institute, New York



*Tribute to Nat King Cole, Acrylic on Canvas , 36" x 48" inches*

## Artist's Statement

*My work is an artistic examination of the body in movement through dance, and other aspects of the performing arts from the Caribbean and the African American experience. The drawings, paintings, and prints and an occasional sculpture are derived from the human figure with an emphasis on movement. I use the figure because it is a very interesting and challenging subject to work with. I try to perceive the world around me in its multiple layers of colors and meanings, from the simple textures of ordinary objects to the complex relationships between individual forms. From the play of light on the figure, the translucence of skin, to the overlapping forms and shapes, the inner spirit that gives character to a creative composition, these are the essential components of my work. Ultimately, creating visual dynamism and illusions arrested against a fluid backdrop of space that is relevant to the twenty first century futurists' way of life.*

*My ideas are emphasized initially from the model, photographs and memory through drawings, ink and watercolor washes. This valued aspect of the visual arts, permeates major projects of my paintings and prints which is the foundation of my work. I have learned to see every surface distinctly, like the chiseled surface of a sculpture. During my creative observations I came to a conclusion that each section has its own value between black and white. Drawing with the pencil has forced me to make clear and defined strokes. The magnificent nineteenth century draughtsman and painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres once said, "Drawing is the probity of art, and to deny drawing is to deny art"*

*In 1988 I became fascinated with all aspects of printmaking. While attending graduate school I met Robert Blackburn at the Printmaking Workshop in New York. We talked at length about the power of the graphic arts. That led me to continue exploring all aspects of printmaking, practicing now for over twenty years has been a very rewarding experience. I work with all types of printmaking processes such as: Serigraph, Intaglio, Relief and Lithography. The influence of the technological age and the advent of the advancement of the camera and computers have changed my way of thinking as a printmaker, forging old technologies with new 21st century ideas. Dangerous traditional materials have forced me to revolutionize my practice of printmaking. For example, lithography no longer used the old stones and acids, but utilizes a polyester plate alternative with the use of limited chemicals.*

*As a painter, and printmaker the challenge continues in the transformation of ideas from one medium to the other. It's my goal to continue to interpret and adapt new ideas that can be used in the paint and print medium. Regardless of the medium the illusion of movement of the body permeates the core my work.*