

Claude Clark

Catalogues

(1947 – 2005)

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Recent Paintings, Roko Gallery, New York, NY, 1947

by
CLAUDE CLARK

RECENT PAINTINGS



POET

CATALOGUE

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Chained | 19. Noonday Chat |
| 2. Community Church | 20. Pendle Hill |
| 3. Conversation | 21. The Poet, I |
| 4. Downbeat | 22. The Poet, II |
| 5. Draftsman | 23. Papa Do's House |
| 6. Falling Leaves | 24. Pot o' Gold |
| 7. Farmer | 25. Primitive Dance |
| 8. Good Samaritan | 26. Princess |
| 9. Greasepaint | 27. Slave Lynching |
| 10. Hat and Landscape | 28. Soldering, I |
| 11. Haunted Station | 29. Soldering, II |
| 12. Heavy Load | 30. Station House |
| 13. Kindling | 31. Stompin' Ground |
| 14. Lady in the Cane | 32. Sunflowers |
| 15. Mansion | 33. Triumph |
| 16. Mask | 34. Tug |
| 17. Native Head | 35. Young Man |
| 18. Neighbors | 36. Zinnias, Asters and Marigolds |

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MARCH 2. THRU MARCH 31, 1947

Opening March 2, Between 3:00 P. M. and 6:00 P. M.

Claude Clark, Ruthermore Galleries, San Francisco, CA,

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"RAIN" by Claude Clark



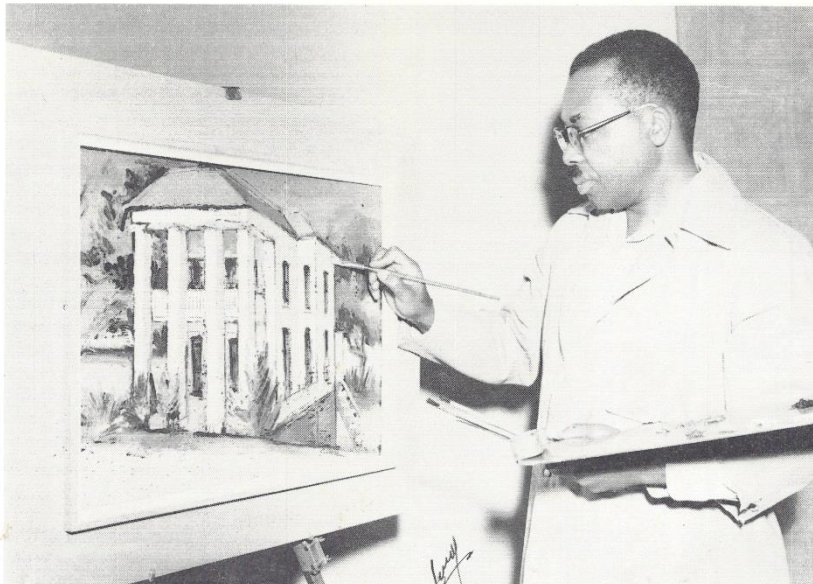
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Claude Clark



"SPONGE FISHERMAN" by Claude Clark

ARTISTS REPRESENTED IN OUR COLLECTION

PAINTERS

John Axton	Lyonel Feininger	Omer Lassonde	Millard Sheets
Bacosi	Robert Frame	Dan Lutz	
James W. Boyers	Grigory Gluckmann	Buckley Mac-Gurrin	Mexican Painters:
Claude Clark	Richard Hornaday	John Marin	Castro Pacheco
Russell Cowles	Ralph Hulett	Joshua Meador	Eugenio Servin
Lee Domez	Jerry Jolley	Moor	Juan Soriano
Edgar Ewing	Laurence Landa	Reuben Rubin	

MURAL ARTISTS:



Lee Domez	Jerry Jolley
Edgar Ewing	Buckley Mac-Gurrin
Richard Haines	Sueo Serisawa

Millard Sheets

MODERN FRENCH ARTISTS:

BONNARD	EDZARD	MATISSE	PISSARRO
CEZANNE	FORAIN	MILLET	REDON
CHAGALL	GAUGUIN	MONET	RENOIR
DEGAS	LAURENCIN	MORISOT	ROUAULT
DUFY	LAUTREC	PICASSO	UTRILLO
			VLAMINCK

All Artists Listed Above — Shown by Appointment


 Drawings by Rufino Tamayo
 Etchings by Pablo Picasso
 

1959?

Amistad II, Frisk University, Nashville, TN

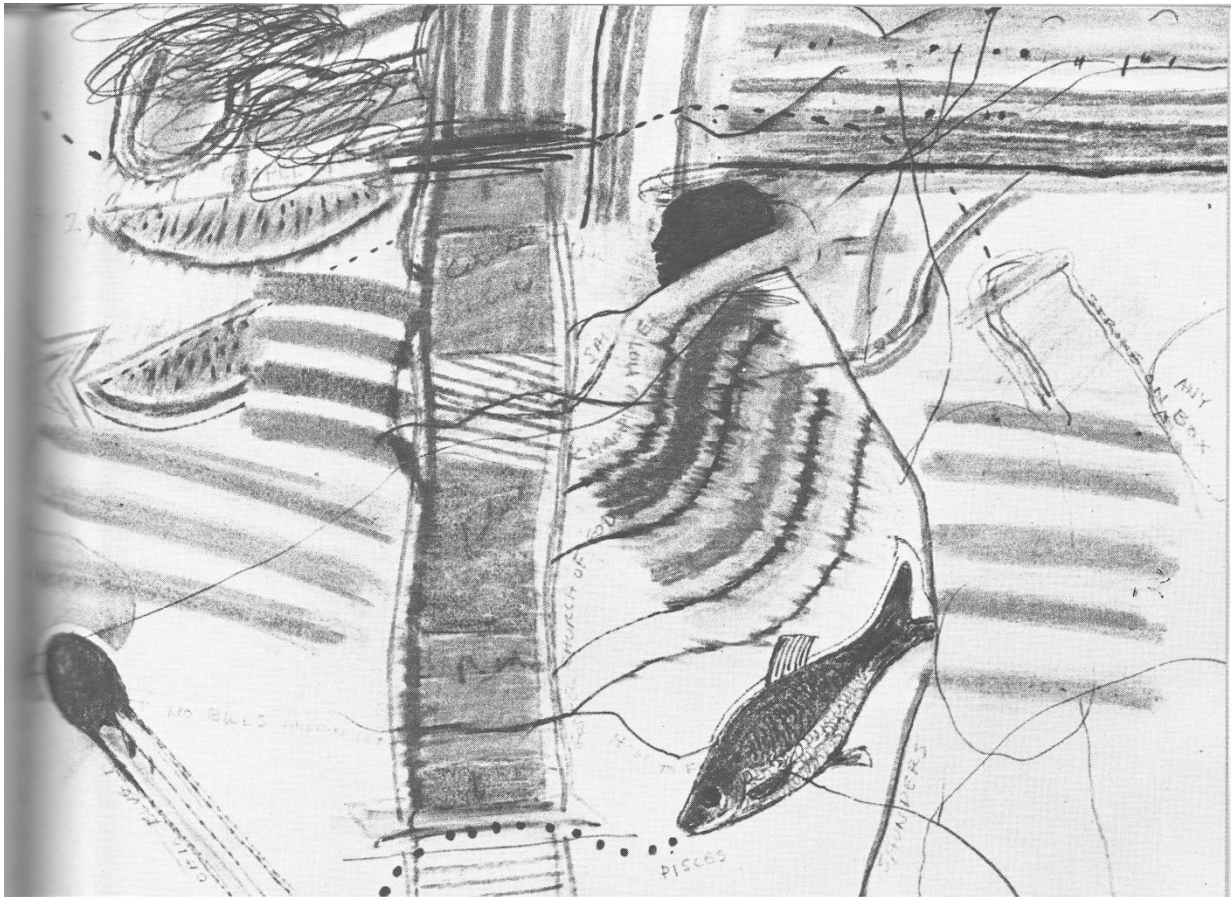


AMISTAD II: Afro-American Art / David Driskell

Claude Clark
788 Santa Ray Ave.
Oakland, Ca. 94610

AMISTAD II: Afro-American Art
DAVID C. DRISKELL

The Department of Art
Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee
in cooperation with the American Missionary Association and the
United Church Board for
Homeland Ministries, New York, New York



Raymond Saunders, Mixed media and collage, Afro-American Collection, Fisk University.



"The Arena," Claude Clark, Oil on canvas 20"x24", Afro-American Collection, Fisk University.

CATALOGUE

Benny Andrews

Born: 1930, Madison, Georgia
Studied—Fort Valley State College
University of Chicago—School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1. *Like I Am* Etching—14"x9¼"
Collection Tougaloo College

William Artis

Born: 1919, Washington, North Carolina
Studied—Art Students League, Alfred University,
Syracuse University and Pennsylvania State
University

2. *Head of a Boy Terra Cotta* 10" h.
Collection Fisk University
3. *Young Man Terra Cotta* 11" h.
Collection Fisk University

Edward M. Bannister (1828-1901)

Born: St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada
Studied—Lowell Institute and organizer of Providence Art Club

- *4. *Untitled* (Cattle, River and Sailboat) Oil on Canvas—14"x20"
Collection Museum of African Art
- *5. *Untitled* (Man on Horseback, Woman and Cattle)
Oil on Canvas 61"x22"
Collection Museum of African Art
- *6. *Landscape 1879* Oil on Canvas 5½"x10½"
Collection the Barnett Aden Gallery

Richmond Barthe

Born: 1901, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi
Studied—Art Students League and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

7. *Shoe Shine Boy* Polychromed Plaster 7" h.
Collection Fisk University
8. *Head of a Man Terra Cotta* 12" h.
Collection Fisk University

Romare Bearden

Born: 1914 Charlotte, North Carolina
Studied—Art Students League and New York University

9. *Last Supper* Watercolor 16¼"x22"
Collection Fisk University
10. *Sun and Candle* Collage 10½"x12¾"
Collection Tougaloo College

Betty Blayton

Born: 1937, Williamsburg, Virginia
Studied—Syracuse University, the Art Students League and the Brooklyn Museum School

11. *Emergent Forces* Etching 11⅞"x15⅞"
Collection Tougaloo College

Michael Borders

Born: 1946, Hartford Connecticut
Studied—Fisk University, Howard University and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture

- *12. *Now Go Have a Coke and a Hot Dog* Oil on Canvas 12½"x70"
Collection Fisk University

Elizabeth Catlett

Born: 1915, Washington, D. C.
Studied—Howard University and the University of Iowa

13. *The Black Woman Speaks* Spanish Cedar 16" h.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. David C. Driskell

Claude Clark

Born: 1915, Rockingham, Georgia
Studied—The Barnes Foundation, Sacramento State College and University of California at Berkeley

14. *The Arena* Oil on Canvas 20¼"x23⅞"
Collection Fisk University
15. *Black Man's Burden* Oil on Canvas, 23½"x19½"
Collection Fisk University

Claude Lockhart Clark

Born: 1945, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Studied—California College of Arts and Crafts and University of California at Berkeley

16. *Mantis* Felt, Ink and Brush Drawing 35"x22½"
Collection the Artist
17. *Untitled* Myrtle Wood 33" h.
Collection the Artist

Ernest Crichlow

Born: 1914, New York, New York
Studied—New York University and the Art Students League

18. *Day Dream* Etching 11¾"x9"
Collection Tougaloo College

Eldizer Cortor

Born: 1915, Chicago, Illinois
Studied—School of the Art Institute of Chicago

19. *Torso* Etching 20"x14¾"
Collection Tougaloo College

Allan R. Crite

Born: 1910, Plainfield, New Jersey
Studied—Boston Museum School of Fine Arts, Massachusetts School of Art and Boston University

20. *Adoration of the Magi* Ink 13"x20½"
Collection Fisk University

Willis (Bing) Davis

Born: 1937, Spartanburg, South Carolina
Studied—DePauw University, Dayton Art Institute and Miami (Ohio) University

21. *Fertility Altarpiece* High Fired Clay, Wire, Rope, Nails and Found Objects 46" h.
Collection the Artist

Phillip Dotson

Born: 1948, Carthage, Mississippi
Studied—Jackson State College and the University of Mississippi

22. *Anthropomorphic Psychosis* Oil on canvas 30"x45"
Collection the Artist

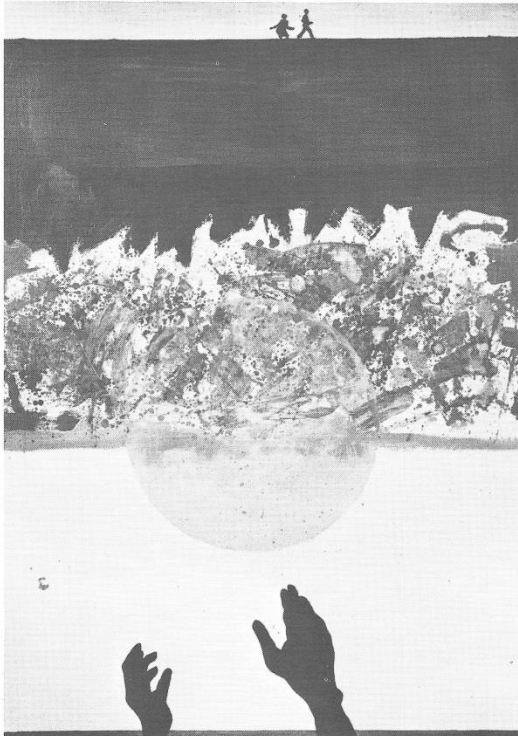
Aaron Douglas

Born: 1899, Topeka, Kansas
Studied—University of Nebraska and Columbia University Teachers College

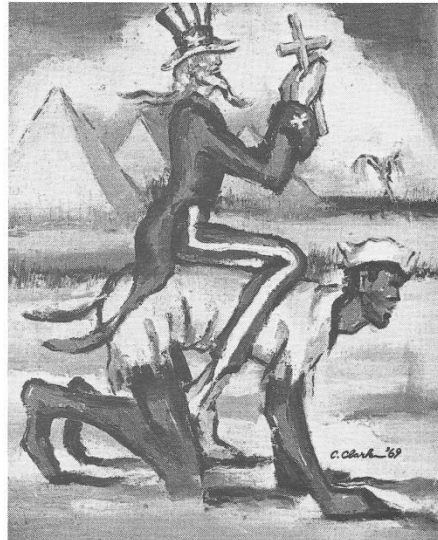
- *23. *Portrait of Alta* Oil on Canvas 27¼"x24¾"
Collection the Barnett Aden Gallery
24. *Emperor Jones Series* Linocut 8"x5⅝"
(Bravo, Defiance, Flight, Surrender)
Collection Fisk University



10. SUN AND CANDLE Romare Bearden



26. SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT David C. Driskell



15. BLACK MAN'S BURDEN Claude Clark

Merritt
College

College Report

June 1977



Art/Nancy Enkoji

Imagination, a vital ingredient in Merritt's Oral History Project

Edith Jenkins

"The biographer may be as imaginative as he pleases — the more imaginative the better — in the way he brings together his materials, but he must not imagine the materials," said the biographer of Henry James, Leon Edel in the *New York Times* book review section, May 8, 1977. Curiously, this statement, written to describe the requirements of a discipline far removed from that in which the Merritt College Oral History Project is involved, articulates the particular and innovative approach of our project. This approach differentiates the Merritt

College Project from the many scholarly as well as innovative uses of oral history in schools and colleges in the last few years.

Operating under a planning grant of \$50,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Merritt College Oral History Project will complete, on August 31 of this year, the period of fourteen months for which it was funded. During the grant period, the college has offered fourteen classes which have included oral history components. Because instructors have employed oral history in several sec-

tions of required courses, there have been a total of nineteen classes incorporating oral history. Seven disciplines have been involved, and six courses have been offered at off-campus sites, four for groups of senior citizens.

The goals of the project which have in turn dictated its form, are based on a philosophical stance, a stance that we believe indigenous to California Community Colleges. Our stance assumes the importance of the common man and woman and his or her contribution to history. We believe that the foot-

(Continued on Page 6)

Claude Clark, artist extraordinaire

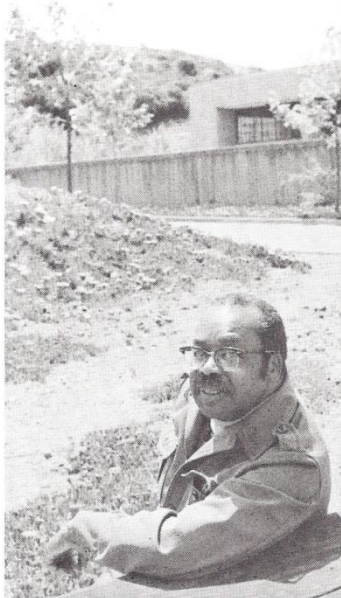
Edwin Johnson

Be it luck or fate or whatever else, Merritt College is the better for having among its faculty Claude Clark, artist extraordinaire, teacher, humanitarian and oral historian.

Few of us, to coin it archaically, have the gumption to literally lift ourselves up by our bootstraps, as has Claude Clark. Stemming from his early life on a tenant farm in Georgia, the second eldest of 10 children born to John and Estelle Clark, to an equally less than prosperous tenure in Philadelphia, one sees in Clarke's paintings the simplicity, color and down-to-earthness which is part and parcel of the Black urban and rural experience of which he is very much a part.

Clark attributes an artist's success to not so much sheer talent, but rather 99 percent perspiration, hard work and an eternal vigilance. "The pitfalls are innumerable," attested Clark, which is why he never encouraged his own son, Claude Lockhart Clark, an artist in his own right, to make a career of art.

At an early age, Clark saw the need to have heroes to look up to and found them in the form of Harlem Renaissance writers and artists Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson and others who protested the social ills of their time. "The Black artist should be concerned with his image," said Clark. "Blacks need positive role images and statements on Black life, and I have chosen that path in my work."



Claude Clark

As a part of his continuing education and experience, Clark entered the internationally known Barnes Foundation in Pennsylvania, in 1939, where he became more influenced by the African sculpture reflected in his later works. During this period, he also worked on the WPA Federal Art Project. It was not until 1945 that he be-

came serious about a teaching career, which has since spanned Philadelphia's Public Schools, Talledega College in Alabama, and schools and colleges here in California.

During the construction of BART, Clark took the issue of the absence of Black foremen and surveyors on the job in his own hands you might say, by inserting them in those roles in his paintings. "This must be done," Clark stressed, "if we are interested in the psychological well-being of our children."

Among his numerous art exhibitions are included the Sorbonne, in Paris, the 1939 World's Fair and the Library of Congress, with several one-man shows, two-man shows with his son, and goodwill exhibitions throughout the country.

His travels have taken him to Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, and Ghana and Nigeria in Africa. "There were things Africans were doing that I haven't seen since I was a child," Clark reminisced, referring to the tradition of roasting corn on the ear and boiling peanuts. "There, I saw a living museum of things we have long since forgotten about here."

One of his purposes in going to Africa, Clark said, was to help the Africans protect 'our' art treasures. "They must be preserved," he said.

Asked if there was any one particular thing that he had a burning desire to do, Clark predictably replied "Yes, this summer I hope to find the time for creativity, to capture on canvass the feelings and images that I saw in my travels to Africa."

Oral History (Continued from Page 1)

soldier is as important as the general.

Our primary goal, and the one for which the project is funded, is to enrich and revivify the humanistic content of curricula by inclusion of oral history in existing and new courses. We believe that students learn and digest that learning when the facts encountered in the course are related closely to life and when the gap between book knowledge and knowledge derived from life is somehow bridged. Oral history provides a remarkable means for bridging that gap.

Secondly, we feel that an unquantifiable fall-out of the use of oral history is the bridging of another gap — that between generations. We see time and again the pride of the young in discovering the lives of their grandparents and the pride of the old in recounting

their stories to a young and interested student historian.

We see as well the possibilities of bringing into the orbit of Merritt College whole new audiences — pensioners, housewives, national communities such as the Finns and Italians, new and perhaps older segments of the Chinese, Latino and Black communities.

And lastly, we see the recorded oral and visual histories made available in the Merritt College Library both for students and the community for educational and scholarly purposes.

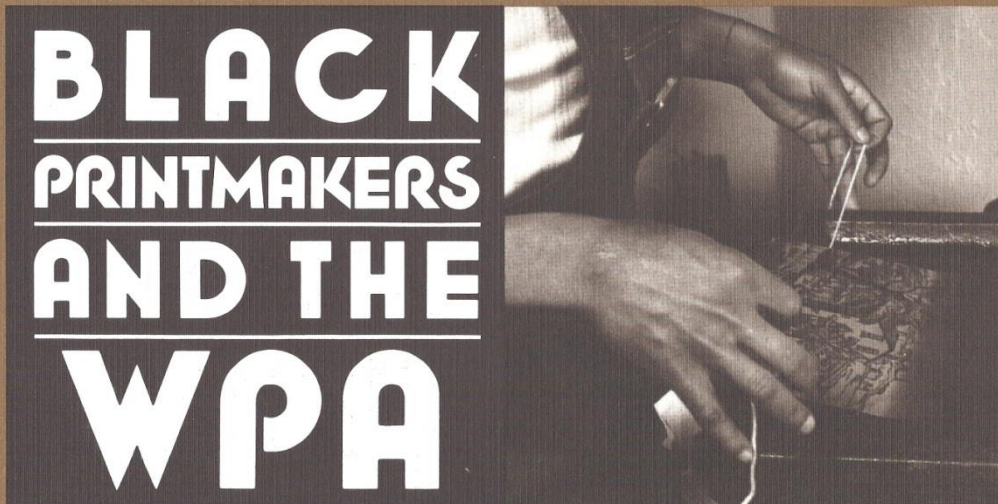
Because the primary commitment of the Oral History Project involves curricular changes the Merritt College Oral History Project adapts and modifies conventional oral history ap-

proaches. The use of oral history assignments in a given class must at all times be appropriate to the content and intent of the class. Consequently the focus of the assignment as well as the manner of carrying it out differs widely. For example, in a course on sociology in which students are studying the Great Depression, students are asked to secure the reactions of people who lived through it. They learn not only about deprivation as recorded in the history books but also about the actual effects the depression had on a parent or uncle.

At the present time, over fifty oral histories are available in the library. By the end of the grant period it is anticipated there will be double that number. At such time as the amount of histories collected warrants it, the Data Processing Department will make a class project of working out a retrieval system.

Black Printmakers and the WPA, New York, NY 1989

Lehman College Art Gallery, The City University of New York



BLACK PRINTMAKERS AND THE W.P.A.

THE LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

FEBRUARY 23—JUNE 6, 1989

Leslie King-Hammond, Curator

Biographical entries by Elisabeth Lorin

Exhibition organized by the Lehman College Art Gallery,
The City University of New York, Bronx, New York

Circulated by Gallery Association of New York State

BLACK PRINTMAKERS AND THE W.P.A.

"For the first time since the plantation days artists began to touch new material, to understand new tools and to accept eagerly the challenge of Black poetry, Black song and Black scholarship."¹

By 1934 the economic destruction wreaked by the Great Depression had put between eleven and fifteen million people out of work. Ten thousand of these jobless citizens were artists. A year earlier, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the newly elected president, had signed into legislation the Federal Emergency Relief Act. Based on a system of work relief, this project's primary objective was simply to get people back to work, artists included. The government had no particular commitment to the arts, but it realized that artists "have to eat like other people."² New Deal employment projects, however, didn't just put food on the artist's table. Through an innovative set of programs, the government set the scene for a richly productive era in American art.

In 1935 Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (later the Work Projects Administration) or WPA. Its purpose was to create all kinds of jobs at every level of the skill ladder, preserving professional and technical skills while helping individuals maintain their self-respect. Artists in the program were paid \$15 to \$90 a month for a wide variety of assignments. Work-relief programs functioned under this basic design from 1935 to 1939, when the WPA was renamed the Work Projects Administration and placed under the supervision of the Federal Art Project (FAP). The WPA/FAP lasted until 1943, when productivity and employment soared as the country marshalled its resources to fight World War II.

From 1935 to 1943 the WPA/FAP had four major areas of activity: the creation of art, art education, art as applied to community service, and technical and archaeological research. The most prolific divisions were those responsible for easel painting, murals, sculpture, and fine prints.

"Black Printmakers and the WPA" specifically addresses the area of fine prints and the community art centers where they were made. There, art education and community service combined to give significant numbers of Black artists the rare opportunity to be

supported in their chosen line of work, to gain new avenues for expression, and to have contact with white artists, which under other circumstances would not have occurred.

The Black printmaker has only a few recorded historical antecedents. While there is documentation showing that Black printmakers were active in this country as early as 1724, the anonymity of the slave makes it almost impossible to trace individual achievements. We know that the only known portrait of the slave poet Phyllis Wheatley was engraved by Scipio Moorehead, a Boston slave, in 1773.³ Half a century later, three slaves, a father and his two sons, are known to have been active in the Boston printing shop of one Thomas Fleet, who had come to Massachusetts from England in 1821 to escape religious persecution.⁴ Only the two sons are identified by name—Caesar and Pompey—but all three men were said to have been "bred to press." These artisan slaves were trained in Fleet's shop to set type and to do woodblock engraving. According to Fleet, the father was an exceptional artist, "who cut on wooden blocks, all the pictures which decorated the ballads and small books of his master."⁵

Patrick Reason (1817–c.1850), known to have been an engraver, draftsman, and lithographer, apprenticed as a youth to an engraver in New York. And Grafton Tyler Brown (1841–1918) owned and operated his own lithography firm in Oakland, California.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Blacks who followed this profession found outlets for their work in magazines, newspapers, journals, and other popular publications. Access for Black artists was primarily limited to the pages of publications that focused on issues of race relations and their sociopolitical ramifications. Magazines such as *Crisis*, *Survey Graphic*, and *Opportunity* afforded these artists the greatest amount of exposure.

It was not until the years of the WPA that Black artists found viable conditions to explore their own creativity, develop print-making processes and gain access to new technologies. The graphic arts division of the WPA/FAP directly assigned artists in the Philadelphia program to develop original prints in all media, but many of the artists assigned to other projects also found time to experi-

5

ment with print making. The main catalysts for creativity were the community art centers that sprang up in various urban centers and at Black colleges. The Harlem Recreation Art Center is the most famous, for its list of alumni reads like a Who's Who in Black American culture: Selma Burke, Aaron Douglas, Palmer Hayden, Jacob Lawrence, and Augusta Savage all worked there. But there were also vibrant centers in Cleveland, Chicago, Atlanta, Richmond, Oklahoma City, Memphis, Tennessee, and Jacksonville, Florida. One of the most exciting aspects of research into this era of American art is that a great many of the artists are still living, and they are without exception still actively pursuing their art.

The community art centers provided young Black artists with new experiences in the arts, experiences from which they had been largely excluded by the segregated social conditions of the times. As teachers in the centers, professional Black artists were able to gain access to printing presses and tools. A very special relationship between artists, teachers, and students evolved during this time. Roles freely shifted or merged, as teachers and students explored new technologies together. Riva Helfond, one of the artist-teachers at the Harlem center, recalled the lithographic process, and learning "how to manipulate the technique involved in printing from these mysterious, beautiful surfaces."⁶

In 1945, painter and art historian James Porter wrote, "The opportunities afforded...so far through the WPA Federal Arts Projects raise the hope that equal opportunities will soon appear through private and commercial patronage and that the prejudice and mistrust that have restricted the Negro artist and warped his milieu will be abolished."⁷ While such hopes have yet to be fully realized, during the years 1935 to 1945, Black artists—and in particular Black printmakers—attained remarkable artistic and technical levels of achievement.

Artists in the WPA graphic arts division produced more than 200,000 fine prints from more than 11,000 designs. They used the traditional media of woodblock, lithography, etching, and aquatint extensively, but the division's claim to fame was its artists' successful experiments with new techniques. As WPA historian Francis V. O'Connor observed, "This aspect of the WPA/FAP's activities was most noted for its many technical innovations—especially its perfection of color lithography and the serigraph (silk

6

screen) for creative purposes and the invention of the Carborundum etching."⁸

A large share of the credit for such innovations goes to the Philadelphia graphics division—the only one of the WPA's community centers to be specifically designated a fine-print workshop. The program had to its credit four young Black artists—Dox Thrash (1893–1965), Claude Clark (b. 1915), Raymond Steth (b. 1918) and Samuel Brown (b. 1907)—who were intensely committed to developing and expanding the print medium. Thrash, Clark, and Steth were assigned directly to the print department; Brown was officially attached to the watercolor department, but he found the need and the time to test his skills at print making.

The kind of close working relationships and creative energy fostered by the centers is exemplified by the Philadelphia group. Thrash, the head of the graphics division, had only three other artists, who were white, in his section. None had much experience with the various print-making processes. Roswell Weidner, one of the shopmates, described the scene: "We worked there every day. Five days a week. Nobody kept time on us, but we all were gung-ho.... This was a great opportunity...we all helped each other. The blind helping the blind."⁹

Weidner admits that it was a shock for him to find himself working with Thrash, a Black man. Yet he said, "To me, he was a man." And besides, Weidner recalled, the shop's energy was completely focused on the development of various print processes. "He was a nice guy, but he didn't talk. He came in and worked and we got along, and there it was. Print making, that was the extent of the whole thing."¹⁰

The Carborundum print can be directly attributed to Thrash. Carborundum is the trade name for a coarse, granular industrial product made of carbon and silicone that is used for grinding and polishing. The Carborundum print grew out of Thrash's use of Carborundum crystals to resurface used lithographic stones. Thrash experimented by manipulating various grades of Carborundum crystals until he achieved a wide range of tints and tonal variations in the final print.¹¹ In notes for a book he was planning to write, Thrash acknowledged his colleagues for their assistance in "perfecting" the method, but he clearly and definitively stated, "I do claim credit for the discovery."¹²



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CLAUDE CLARK

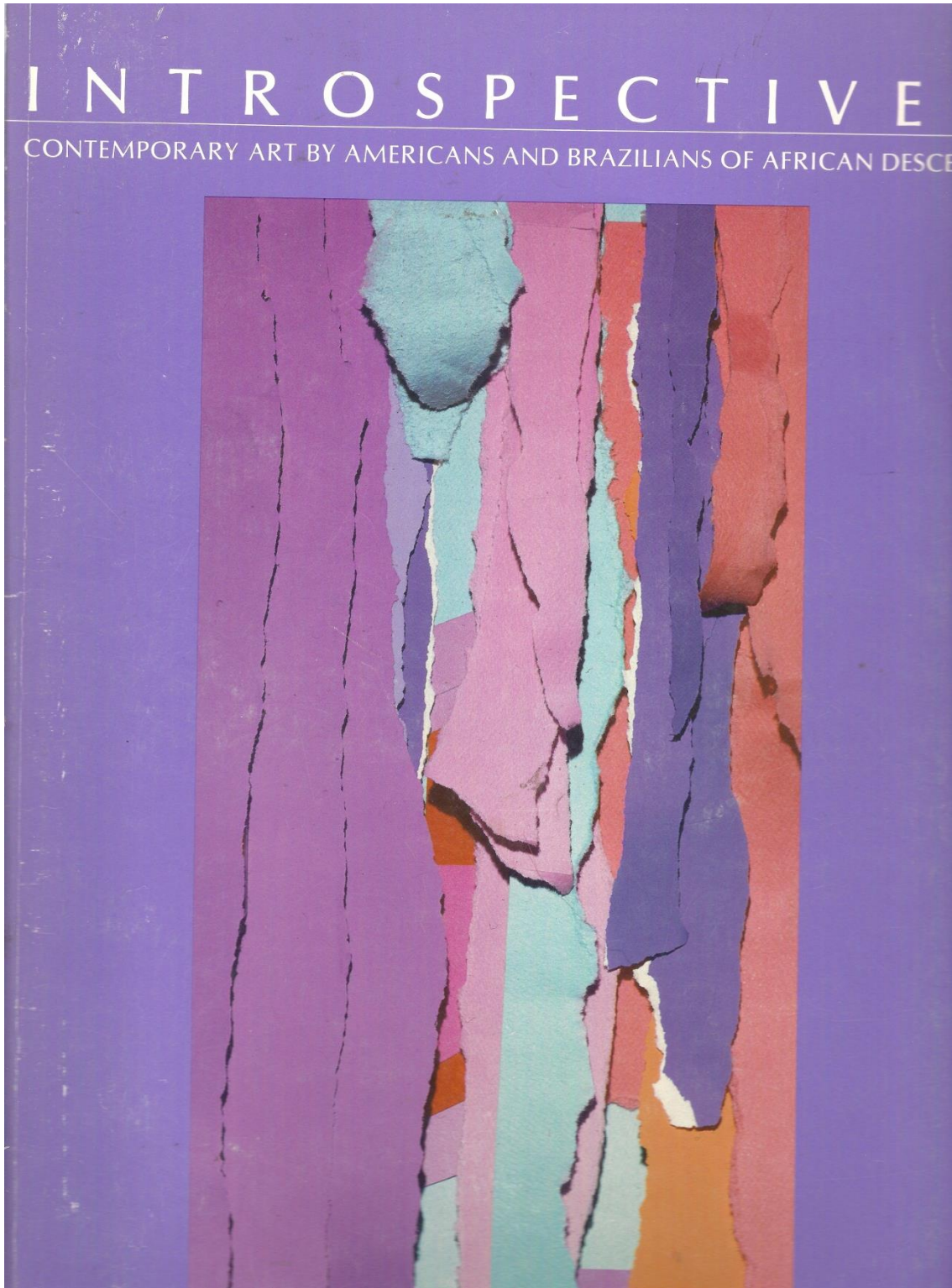
Claude Clark, Sr., painter, draftsman, and educator, was born in 1915 in Rockingham, Georgia. He studied at the Philadelphia Museum School; the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia; Sacramento (California) State College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree; and at the University of California, Berkeley, where he received his Master's degree. Clark resides in Oakland, California, where he has retired as professor emeritus from the Merritt Campus of the Peralta College District, Oakland. He established the art department at the Talladega College in Alabama and participated in the development of the carbograph with Dox Thrash and Raymond Steth. Clark's work is represented in the collections of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York City Public Library; the Oakland Museum; Atlanta University; Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee; and at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. During the Depression he was a member of the WPA/FAP Graphics Division in Philadelphia where he shared a studio with fellow artist Raymond Steth. Clark continues to produce his own prints, which will be represented in the exhibition of contemporary Brazilian and American artists of African descent in Brazil in 1989.

Time Out, n.d.

Etching
11" x 13 1/2"

Free Library of Philadelphia,
Print and Picture Department

***Introspective, The California Afro-American Museum,
Los Angeles, CA, 1989***



INTROSPECTIVES
CONTEMPORARY ART BY AMERICANS AND
BRAZILIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

CURATORS

HENRY J. DREWAL
AND
DAVID C. DRISKELL

ORGANIZED BY

THE CALIFORNIA
AFRO-AMERICAN MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

CONTRIBUTIONS BY

LUIZA BAIROS

SHEILA WALKER, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
BERKELEY

EXHIBITION

Henry J. Drewal and David C. Driskell, Curators

Teri A. Knoll, Exhibition Coordination

Jack Carter, Exhibition Design

Ed Carrasquillo, Exhibition Installation

CATALOGUE

Essayists

Henry J. Drewal

David C. Driskell

Sheila S. Walker

Luiza Bairros

Graphic Design

Rosalind Nzinga Vaughn, Los Angeles

Typography

Bowens & Bowens Typesetting, Inglewood

Photography

Wm. Stetz Design, Los Angeles

Editor

Nancy McKinney

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Museum Foundation
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permission of the California Afro-American
Museum Foundation.

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 88-64040

AMERICAN ARTISTS

YVONNE PICKERING CARTER (b. 1939)
Washington, D.C.

Morning Mist, 1983
acrylic on canvas
6' x 5'7"

Wadmalaw Night Search, 1984
acrylic on canvas
6' x 7'11"

CLAUDE CLARK (b. 1915)
Oakland, California

Crucible, 1961
oil on canvas
32" x 38"

The Vision, 1961
oil on canvas
31" x 35"

ROBERT COLESCOTT (b. 1925)
Tucson, Arizona

*An American Rescued in the Desert by
the Mahdi and the Emperor Haile
Selassie*, 1987
acrylic on canvas
84" x 72"

HOUSTON CONWILL (b. 1947)
New York, New York

Blues Bag, 1975
mixed media
5' x 2½' x 3"

New Orleans, 1983
mirror, wood, earth
8' x 8' x 6"

EMILIO CRUZ (b. 1938)
Brooklyn, New York

Agoraphobia, 1986
oil on canvas
6' x 8'

Hour Severing the Hour, 1986
oil on canvas
6' x 8'

MEL EDWARDS (b. 1937)
Plainfield, New Jersey

Everready Tayali, 1986
welded steel
12" x 9" x 7½"

Beyond Memory, 1987
welded steel
12" x 7" x 8"

4th Day, 1988
welded steel
10" x 9" x 8"

Message Critic, 1988
welded steel
14" x 6" x 8"

Ogun Again, 1988
welded steel
9" x 6" x 6"

Pamberi, 1988
welded steel
13" x 10" x 6"

Culture, 1988
welded steel
48" x 32" x 40"

New History, 1988
welded steel
36" x 36" x 48"

SAM GILLIAM (b. 1933)
Washington, D.C.

Painted Fingers, 1986
acrylic on canvas and enamel on
aluminum
110" x 114" x 8"

BILL HUTSON (b. 1936)
Columbus, Ohio

Day One/Day Twenty, 1988
acrylic on canvas
50 5/8" x 37 5/8"

Family Portrait, 1988
acrylic on canvas
84 1/8" x 31 1/8"

Journey to Basra, 1988
acrylic on canvas
48 5/8" x 35 5/8"

MARTHA JACKSON-JARVIS (b. 1952)
Washington, D.C.

Time Gatherer III, 1988
clay, copper and wood
3'9" x 2'6" x 1'2"

Time Gatherer V, 1988
clay, copper and wood
3'7" x 2'7" x 13"

Time Gatherer VII, 1988
clay, copper and wood
3'8" x 2'9" x 1'4"

TYRONE MITCHELL (b. 1944)
New York, New York

Horn for Wilfredo, 1987
polychromed wood
65" x 55" x 7"

Sunday Samba, 1988
wood
4'10" x 4' x 16"

KEITH MORRISON (b. 1942)
Washington, D.C.

Chariot, 1988
oil on canvas
64" x 87"

Zombie Jamboree, 1988
oil on canvas
62" x 69"

MARY LOVELACE O'NEAL (b. 1942)
Oakland, California

Hammem (Morrocan Bath House),
1986-87
mixed media
6'9" x 11'6"

*Senseless Superstition Meaningless
Ritual*, 1986
mixed media
6'9" x 11'6"

Untitled, 1988
mixed media
6'9" x 11'6"

MARTIN PURYEAR (b. 1941)
Chicago, Illinois

Untitled, 1982
cast bronze
25 3/4" x 25 1/2" x 14 5/8"

On the Tundra, 1984-85
cast iron
19¼" x 9½" x 12"

FRANK E. SMITH (b.
Washington, D.C.

Jazzonia, 1983-84
acrylic and fiber
9' x 5' x 4'

VINCENT D. SMITH (b. 1929)
New York, New York

Dry Bones (Fire From the Diaspora),
1984
oil, sand, rope, dry pigment on canvas
50" x 72"

Obeisance For Biko, 1984
oil, sand, rope on canvas
54" x 68"

The Tomb of King Tutankhamun, 1984
oil, sand, rope, dry pigment, collage on
canvas
50" x 72"

SYLVIA SNOWDEN (b. 1942)
Washington, D.C.

Michelle Haberon I, 1985
mixed media on masonite
60" x 40"

Ethel Moyd, 1986
mixed media on masonite
48" x 48"

Monica Johnson, 1987
acrylic on paper
39" x 55"

JACK WHITTEN (b. 1939)
New York, New York

Summit 1987: Dedicated to C. Wilmarth,
1987
acrylic on canvas
84" x 72"

*Black Monolith: Homage to James
Baldwin*, 1988
acrylic on canvas
96" x 82"

WILLIAM T. WILLIAMS (b. 1942)
New York, New York

Tune for Nila, 1980
acrylic on canvas
84" x 60"

Double Dare, 1984
acrylic on canvas
84" x 54½"

ON THE NATURE OF THEIR WORK: TALKING WITH AMERICAN ARTISTS

For more than three centuries, American artists of African ancestry have found ways to highlight and celebrate their achievements in the visual arts, despite the formidable obstacles of race. Indeed, they have risen to the challenge, and shown themselves capable of expressing the aesthetic qualities inherent in the original African concept of art. At the same time, they transcend their ancestral art heritage to work as individual contemporary artists inspired by the romantic concept of daring to pursue the American Dream.

The quest for a personal style of expression in art is an ongoing process for artists of all media, all races. American artists seem to be particularly engaged in the search to recycle, revive and reinvent, to create art that is new and shockingly different from what preceded it. Yet Black American artists also continue to draw upon that critical mass of their historical and cultural legacy, upon the everyday surroundings, and upon the rich reservoir of memory, imagination and dreams. The creative works that result often combine and transcend the common attributes of several styles of expression.

YVONNE PICKERING CARTER

Yvonne Pickering Carter is an abstract painter who calls up many contemporary sources in her work to inform the viewer of free play with non-objective shapes and color flows—that imitate movement in an attempt to be

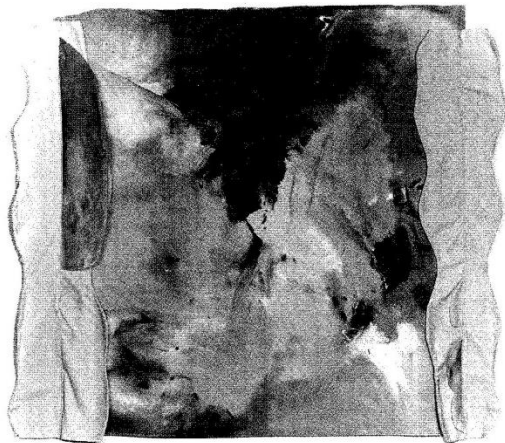


Fig. 18 Yvonne Pickering Carter
Morning Mist, 1983

inventive with abstract subjects that relate to musical experiences. She joins a host of artists of African descent in the United States and from Brazil who are able to articulate this middle ground of individually and highly charged mass in contemporary art, without sacrificing creative vision for what may be described as racially motivated content.

Her decision to display canvases without traditional frames takes nothing away from the formal structure or personal integrity of her work as can be seen in *Morning Mist* (figure 18). Rather, she imbues the work with contemporary qualities that are evident in the traditional art of our recent past. In many ways, her art resembles the quiet spaces observed in African tie-dyed textiles, with an infusion of the spiritual that seems akin to the atmospheric veil so often found in nature. Carter says of this form of visual expression in her work:

My work has always been in the vein and spirit of abstract expressionism. Perhaps, it relates to the essence of experimentalism or improvisation. Perhaps, it is the sensitivity to openness that allows the works to grow. In my most recent work, the collage technique is more dominant. The changes in my work have made divisions unclear. Are the paintings sculpture or sculptural paintings? The process of painting has grown into performance works. The performance is wedded to the idea of collage. The difference is that the fragments are various media. The fragments are poetry or the written word. The fragments are movement or motion (dance). My work, the fragments, are forms of expression integrating the various disciplines into one image or experience.

For the artist, artistic growth is process. The need to evaluate that process is necessary only in retrospect. The challenge to be receptive to the drives of the moment have sustained her. The difficulty lies in sustaining the openness to explore in depth the creative drives, on both the intellectual and the instinctual levels.

Her works selected for this exhibition are from the period that falls between the three-dimensional paintings and the beginning of the serious performance works. The palette is strong in comparison to the pale and minimal watercolor paintings Carter exhibited some years ago. Her composition reflects early spatial problems that she thinks may never resolve themselves on canvas.

CLAUDE CLARK

For more than forty years, Claude Clark's name in art has been synonymous with African-American Art. In the

1940s, when many Black artists were turning to genre scenes, still lifes and traditional landscape painting as a means of self-expression, Clark was already seriously investigating the iconography of African art and finding a place for it in his own life and work.

As a young man, he had been exposed to one of the finest collections of African art in America, the Barnes Collection in Merion, Pennsylvania, where one of the outstanding collections of modern masters was also housed. So Clark acquired an ongoing education in the art of the West and of African at a time when most artists of his generation had settled into work in mainstream abstraction or the social-realist tradition.

Moreover, Clark bridged the gap between the artists of the Harlem Renaissance and those of the cultural revolution of the 1960s. He understood and practiced, in a painterly manner, the ongoing spirit of Alain Locke's decree to Black American artists: the legacy of Black involvement in the arts of America would be better understood if they chose to . . . "return to the ancestral arts of Africa" for sources of content in their work. Thus, Black American themes, African masks, and everyday events, particularly those related to the folkways of peoples of African descent in the southern states and the Caribbean islands, were dominant subjects in Clark's art until the late 1950s.

Spurred by the questions of his teachers when he returned to college to complete a graduate degree in 1960, Clark investigated pure form in the direction of a rich color field. This led to the creation of numerous canvases that were abstract in nature. Among the works from that period that best exemplify Clark's commitment to pure abstraction, in what he has descriptively referred to as "Non-objective Expressionism," are *The Vision* (plate 9) and *Crucible*, (figure 19), both created in 1961. But his main interest remains Africa and its cargo of human wealth to the Diaspora. Clark wrote in 1988:

As a child in the churches, the schools and the community, I dreamed of a destiny. My search became a single purpose for the dignity of Black people instead of attempting to solve the concerns of all humanity. Early on I was convinced that a creative spirit must soar beyond compartments of religion and politics. It was through the roots of African Art that I learned of the creative source of most Western art. As I stood near the Nile at Cairo and looked toward the Mediterranean in awe, I envisioned how the Greeks, Persians, Romans, etc., had sailed up the Nile, taking away the fine arts, sciences, history and other disciplines. There were records on paper, on stone, on walls in the temples that rivaled anything produced later in the Renaissance. . . .

Over the years, I have painted representative and figurative subjects. About thirty years ago, I was

introduced to Non-Objective Expressionism. I didn't attempt abstract art in the 1930s, nor did I try during my years at the Barnes Foundation. Dr. Barnes not only has the world's finest collection of Modern Art, but presents the theory in his book, "The Art of Painting," that the format of the Modern Masters was the same as that of old Western Masters. For instance, the contemporary artist presents a simple design, while the old Master presented the same format, but built in the detailed subject matter. I believe that the African creative artists gave the format to the Western world and they are masters of design (especially Egyptians). I feel that I understand contemporary directions; and I relax for a while, to have fun such as with inventive avant-garde. I have learned much that I have applied to my craft, and I feel that I have become a more flexible creative spirit.

ROBERT COLESCOTT

As mentioned earlier, for Robert Colecott abstract format got transformed into works that related more specifically to the general studio format of painting traditional academic subjects. This transformation from an abstract style to a more liberal way of presenting subject matter began in 1949.

Colecott went to Paris that year to study with Fernand Leger. He arrived at the modern master's studio with a portfolio of abstract works in hand. Much to Colecott's surprise, Leger refused to look at them. "Abstract art," Leger said, "does not communicate ideas to people." Colecott relates that he can now trace his . . . "contriving concern for the human figure (and the human condition)" to that first encounter with Leger in Paris forty years ago.

Leger had often four or five models set up for us. They held flowers and bicycle wheels with ropes twining between their legs, you know the set up. I drew and painted the figure from observation in Leger's studio, and when the work looked weak he would demote me to the still-life. Later I worked from imagination and memory, as I do now.

Irony and humor reared their ugly head about 1964 and by 1968 I was involved with painting as narrative. Artistically, I was reared on the emotion that subject matter doesn't matter, but I'd come not to believe that any more.

Colecott started showing his present style of work in New York in 1970. It represented a vital part of a new artistic climate that was forming. He describes it as . . .

sleeping under the doors and coming out of the woodwork. The narrative was a vehicle for social satire, and for almost twenty years I've been focusing on issues of race in America, the tragicomedy of . . .



Fig. 19 Claude Clark
Crucible, 1961

*A Book of Postcards, National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, 1991*

Paintings by African-Americans

from the
collection
of the
National
Museum of
American
Art



Smithsonian Institution

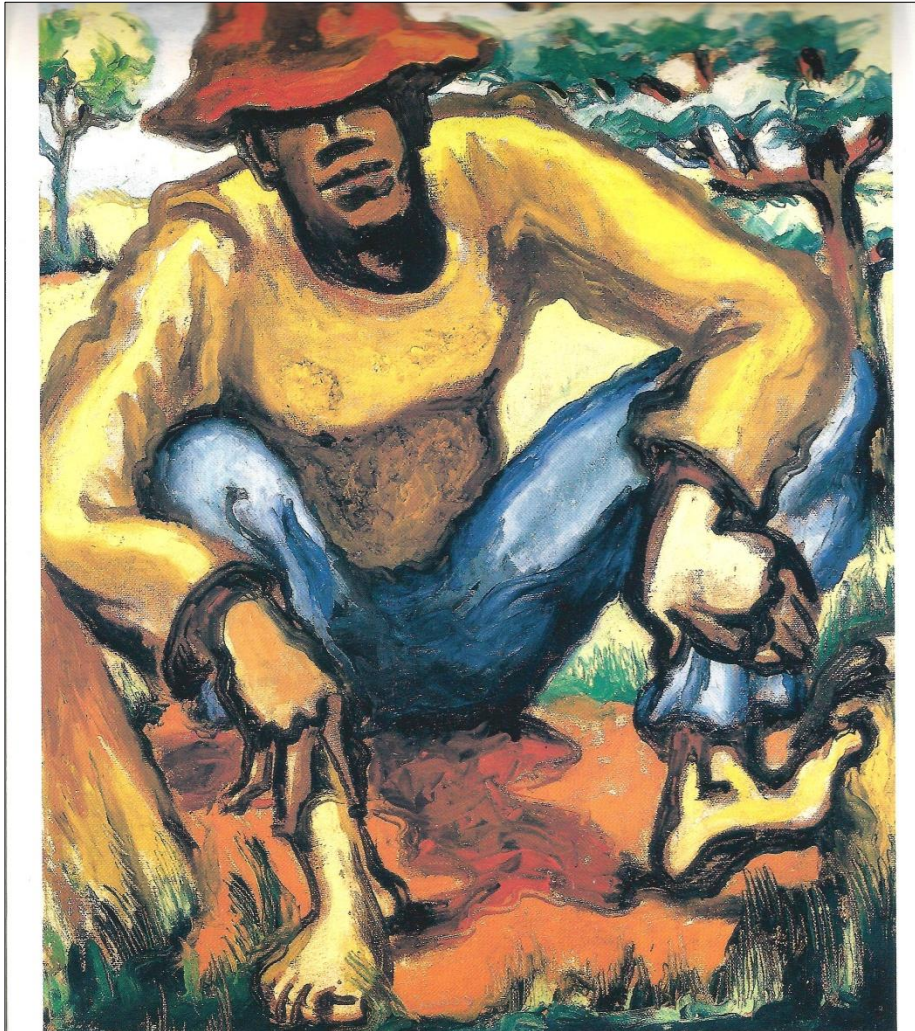
A Book of Postcards

Paintings by African-Americans

CLAUDE CLARK (born 1915) has taught art since 1948 in Alabama and California and continues to research the roots of African-American art in Africa, specifically Ghana and Egypt.

Pomegranate • Box 808022 • Petaluma, CA 94975

Resting, 1944
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in.
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
Gift of the Harmon Foundation, 1967.57.32
© Smithsonian Institution



The 30 paintings in this book of postcards have been selected from the National Museum of American Art, home of one of the finest collections of works by African-American artists in the world today. Diverse images in a variety of media are represented, from portraiture of the early republic to the creative expressions of contemporary men and women.

ISBN 0-87654-748-X



Paintings by African-Americans

National Museum of American Art
Smithsonian Institution

A Book of Postcards

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ASIN



*Fifty Years of Painting, Hammonds House Galleries,
Atlanta, GA 1991*

FIFTY YEARS OF PAINTINGS

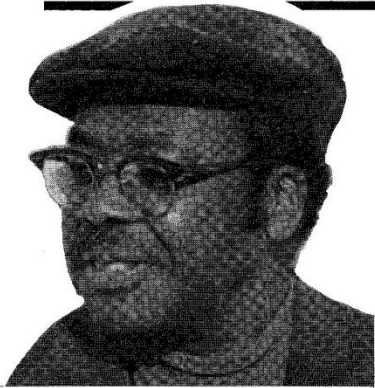
by Georgia artist

CLAUDE CLARK

November 18, 1990 - January 6, 1991



Hammonds House Galleries and Resource Center of African American Art
503 Peoples Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30310
404 - 752 - 8215



CLAUDE CLARK

Claude Clark was born in 1915 on a tenant farm near Rockingham, Georgia, the second eldest of ten children. His family migrated to Philadelphia in 1922 and by the time he entered junior high school he knew that he wanted to be "a poet or artist". He graduated from high school with honors as class poet and artist of the Year Book and was awarded a four-year tuition scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum of Art where he studied pictorial expression and painting. From 1939-1944 he studied art history, philosophy and art appreciation at the internationally known Barnes Foundation on the estate of Dr. Albert Coombs Barnes in Merion, Pennsylvania where Philosophy professor Alain Locke and artist Aaron Douglas had previously been invited to study. Here Claude Clark was able to systematically investigate the hundreds of original Old Masters, Moderns, and French paintings as well as to develop a deep appreciation for African aesthetics through studying in one of this country's

first important (and inaccessible) collections of African art.

Clark was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) artist for three years. He was active in a Philadelphia graphics arts workshop run by the WPA's Federal Arts Program as was Dox Thrash (d.1965), another Georgia native, who like Clark, managed to attend art school and had settled in Philadelphia. (Thrash was one of the artists who perfected the carbograph process--known commercially as Carborundum--which "produces a sculptural, tonal image rather than a linear one.")

With his solid professional training Clark went on to teach and to achieve a Master's degree at UC Berkeley. He has been a professor of art at Talladega College in Alabama and at Oakland, California's Merritt College. His travels have taken him to Africa, the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico and he has made use of subjects from all of these cultures reflecting the common concerns of humanity.

His subjects exemplify both rural and urban folkways. In his work we find expressionistic figures and character studies, landscapes, seascapes and still life compositions executed primarily with a palette knife rather than a refined brush; Clark's artwork mirrors his psychic life--an affinity and love for folk culture, workers, nature, his people, truths. His

content is ever reminiscent of the Social Realism of his maturing years when content and style cohered into "clear and precise" truths about man's humanity and inhumanity. "My approach has been largely conditioned, I believe, by my religious and social background. As a son of a tenant farmer, I decided early to help in some small way to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. As a painter I concerned myself with the people close to the soil because I am interested in how they live and the things they do." (The Christian Scholar. Volume XXXVII, Autumn, 1954, p. 312.) Man at peace, man at war, man against the forces of nature are the constant subthemes of Claude's life work.

Claude has exhibited at the World's Fair 1939-40, NYC; Academy of Fine Arts, Downtown Gallery, Bonstell and Roko Galleries, NYC; Sorbonne, Paris; E. B. Crocker Galleries, Sacramento, CA; Oakland Museum, Grand Oak Gallery, Merritt College, Oakland, CA; Museum of African American Art 1983-84, Los Angeles, CA; Frames 'n Fine Art 1983, Atlanta, GA; Kenkeleba House 1986, NYC; October Gallery 1987, Philadelphia, PA; Masters Art Exhibition (NCA) 1988, Salvador-Bahia, Brazil.

Cover: Boogie - Woogie

Traveling shows:

Amistad II Afro-American, 1975-76. Two Centuries of Black American Art, 1976-77. Hidden Heritage: Afro-American Art 1800-1950, 1985-88 Chicago, Portsmouth VA, Washington, D.C.-Howard University. Choosing 1925-1985, 1986 IL, VA, Washington, D.C. Introspective Contemporary Art By Americans and Brazilians of African Descent 1989.

Collections:

Library of Congress, Fisk University, Hampton University, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Tallegade College, Atlanta University.

Publications:

Directory of American Scholars 1951; American Negro Art by Cedric Dover 1967; International Directory of the Arts, Berlin SW61, Germany 1965, 1976; Who's Who In American Art 1956, '62, '64, '76, '82; Amistad II--Afro-American 1975-76, 1975; Two Centuries of Black American Art 1976; Hidden Heritage 1985; Choosing 1986; Unbroken Circle 1986; Engagement Journal and Art Book-Hampton University 1985-86.

Catalog of the Exhibition

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Dreamer, 1938
Oil on Board
22 x 38 | 12. Meditation 1944
Oil on Canvas
18 x 25 |
| 2. Nude (in Classroom) 1983
Oil on Board
16 x 20 | 13. Downbeat 1944-46
Oil on Canvas
16 x 20 |
| 3. Remorseful (Nude) 1938
Oil on Board
15 x 20 | 14. Pallbearers 1944
Oil on Canvas
30 x 40 |
| 4. Boogie-Woogie 1939
Original Lithograph
16 x 20 | 15. Good Samaritan 1946
Oil on Board
13 1/4 x 23 1/4 (oval) |
| 5. In the Groove 1940
Original Lithograph
16 x 20 | 16. Decoration 1946
Oil on Board
20 x 26 |
| 6. Play Off 1940
Oil on Wood
14 1/2 x 23 1/2 | 17. Field Dressin 1946
Oil on Board
18 x 24 |
| 7. Lathe #2 1940
Oil on Board
12 x 17 | 18. Freedom Morning 1944
Oil on Canvas
30 x 40 |
| 8. Drill Press 1941
Oil on Board
12 x 17 | 19. Neighbors 1946
Oil on Board
15 3/8 x 18 5/8 |
| 9. Hillside Landscape 1942
Oil on Board
16 3/4 x 2 1/4 | 20. Barn (Pindle Hill) 1947
Oil on Canvas
16 x 20 |
| 10. Jam Session 1943
Oil on Board
18 x 21 5/8 | 21. Pine Ridge Station 1947
Oil on Board
12 x 16 |
| 11. The Slaughter House 1944
Oil on Board
18 x 24 | 22. Trumpet Vine 1948
Oil on Board
12 x 16 |

-
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 23. Coconuts 1950
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 35. Tortola Waterfront 1950-52
Oil on Board
20 x 24 | 48. U.S. and Rider 1971
Oil on Canvas
24 x 30 |
| 24. Coffee 1950
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 36. Dahlia bouquet 1954
Oil on Board
20 x 24 | 49. Construction Huddle 1970
Oil on Board
24 x 48 |
| 25. Caribbean Playground 1952
Oil on Board
16 x 20 | 37. Together 1961
Oil on Board
18 x 24 | 50. Percussion Dialoguq 1979
Oil on Board
18 x 24 |
| 26. Sponge Fisherman 1944
Oil on Board
18 x 24 | 38. Boats on the Bayou 1961
Oil on Board
24 x 30 | 51. Men and Boat 1979
Oil on Board
18 x 24 |
| 27. Upmeads 1947
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 39. Black Orchid 1961
Oil on Board
18 x 24 | 52. Rise Up Africa! 1987
Oil on Board
33 1/2 x 36 |
| 28. Lemons 1950
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 40. Phoenix 1961
Oil on Board
24 x 37 | 53. Birth of the Sun 1987
Oil on Board
20 x 24 |
| 29. Rain 1950
Oil on Board
16 x 20 | 41. Homestretch 1961
Oil on Canvas
36 x 48 | 54. Transfusion 1972
Oil on Board
18 x 24 |
| 30. Men And Machetes 1950
Oil on Board
16 x 20 | 42. Crucible 1961
Oil on Canvas
32 x 38 | |
| 31. Worker's House 1950
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 43. The Vision 1961
Oil on Canvas
31 1/4 x 36 | |
| 32. On the Bayou 1952
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 44. Tranquility 1961
Oil on Canvas
36 x 48 | |
| 33. Building the Tug
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 45. Navajo Happening 1967
Oil on Canvas
39 1/2 x 36 | |
| 34. Oasis 1952
Oil on Board
12 x 16 | 47. Tombstone 1962
Oil on Canvas
18 x 24 | |

This exhibition has been supported by funds from the membership program of Hammonds House and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners through the Fulton County Arts Council.

Hammonds House is the only fine arts museum in Georgia dedicated to the works of artist of African descent.

Claude Clark, House of Vai, Oakland, CA, 1991

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Claude Clark

A Pioneer African American Visual Artist



A. BOOGIE WOOGIE (16 x 20) —1940

"Truckin, peckin, shaking the body and snakin on down..."



B. IN THE GROOVE (16 x 20) —1939

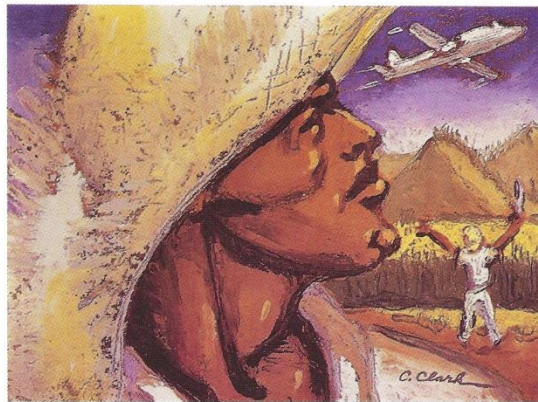
was the body language of popular dances during the Great Depression.



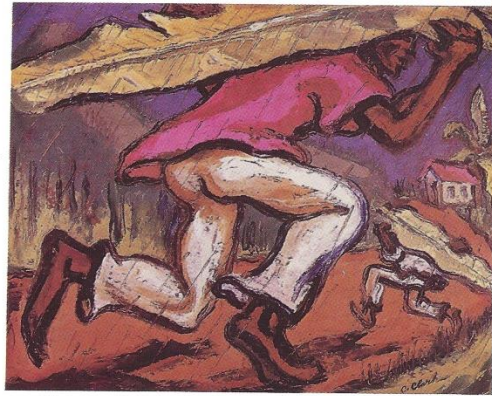
C. CARVING AN ASHANTI STOOL (18 x 24) —1977
An African wood carver celebrates an ancient art of sculpting wood



D. WORKING MADONNA (12 x 16) —1949
Many African mothers nurse babies while carrying heavy loads.

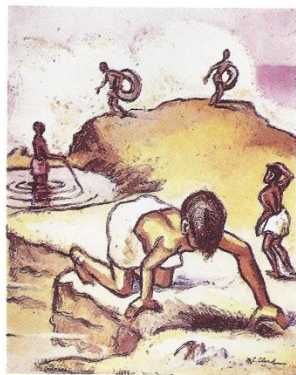


E. MAÑANA (12 x 16) —1950
In Puerto Rico a peasant dreams of flight to the United States



F. RAIN (20 × 24) —1950

In harmony with nature, this peasant demonstrates that environment provides cover during a tropical downpour.



**G. CARIBBEAN PLAYGROUND
(20 × 24) —1952**

These Puerto Rican children regard the sea as playmate and the shore as their playground.



**H. GROWING DAHLIAS
(20 × 24) —1953**

Plants raise their blossoms toward the sun in praise.

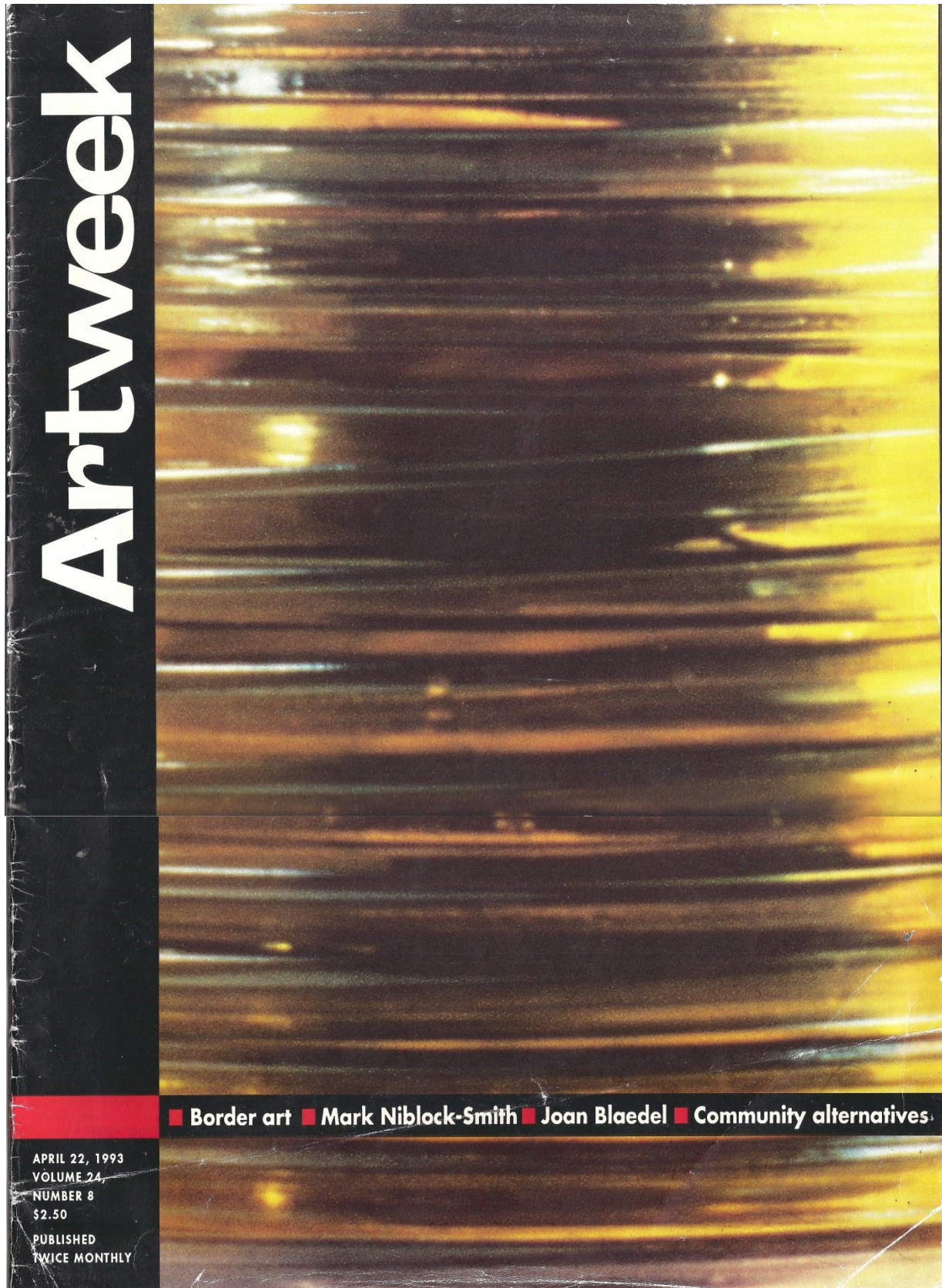


I. BLACK ORCHID
(18 x 24) —1961
An image that celebrates African
pride in Black Womanhood.



J. TOGETHER (18 x 24) —1961
A Haitian couple has known adversity, yet celebrate togetherness.

Art Week, April 22, 1993



Bloodlines

Lineage: Claude Clark, Sr., and Claude Clark, Jr., at Pro Arts

BY MARY HULL WEBSTER

As African Americans our experiences have been different from those of the homeland. We must assert ourselves to learn our African heritage and African crafts, then apply these tools to our experiences here in America.

—Claude Clark, Jr.

The specific living quality of lineage is that it stretches into the past while implying future.

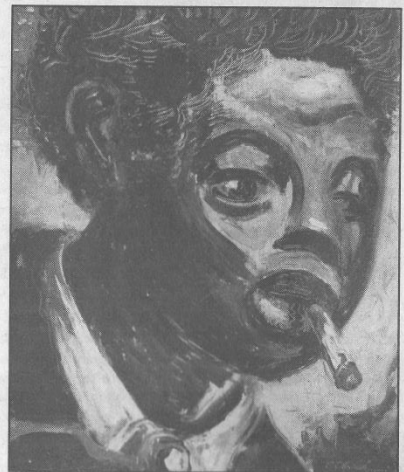
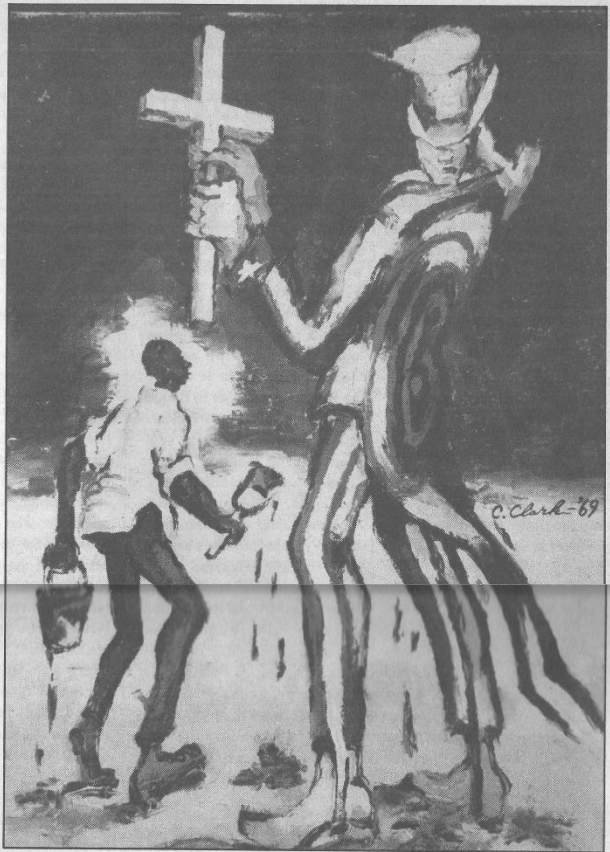
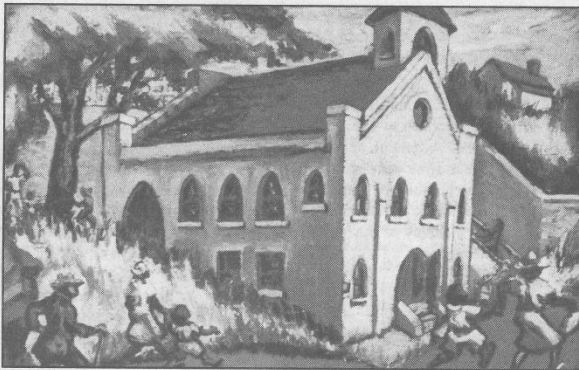
Because it relies not on a history of factual events but on the underlying exigencies of bloodline, lineage locates the individual present in a larger continuum without which realization of differentness—necessary for consolidation of identity—can be a deeply fragmenting and lonely experience. Coursing through this exhibition, admirably curated by Woody Johnson, a stream of people and ancestry organizes the paintings of Claude Clark, Sr., and the carved wooden sculpture by Claude Clark, Jr., two Bay Area artists and educators who are father and son.

It opens with the carved walking sticks of Claude Clark, Jr., but the exhibition focuses on Clark, Sr.'s paintings, which unfolds as the extraordinary odyssey of an African American man's search for his place in the world. Born in 1915, Clark, Sr., was recognized in high school as a promising artist. Early figurative paintings like *The Gang*, *Guttersnipe* and the lively *On Sunday Morning* (1946) speak eloquently of the work, social and spiritual life of his community, and presage the socially-aware canvases of the 1970s. By the early sixties, he was working in an abstract expressionist manner, and his personal imagery had taken on an overt shamanic spiritual tone; in *Descent*, the painful and angry *Aboriginal Refuge*, and *A World Below* (1961), Clark has evidently set sail for a more adequate home. A number of works from 1966 to 1967 depict Navaho and Hopi life, and one can imagine a longing in these paintings to be at home with the people he paints, both in their daily lives (*Shearing the Sheep*) and in their spiritual rituals (*Kachina Dancer*).

In the 1970s, Clark's journeying included paintings of black people who inhabit black countries that might be

Africa, the Caribbean, or the artist's gradual creation of his own internal land. The smiling woman with a baby on her back in *Come to My Village* (1977) is a strong picture of refuge, a primary boon for those who can live imaginatively in the body of the ancestors. The child on her back absorbs warmth and relatedness from this woman who will remain with him always—mother as kin, as earth and sunlight—who accompanies her child through the long stretch of adulthood. Her purple-black color and golden clothes suggest that she is a royal figure whose juxtaposition with the haughty *Princess* (1959) demonstrates how far Clark's soul-figure has come.

The prize group of paintings in this show, however, image the artist's return to the ordinary reality of his Bay Area life. Employing social satire that cuts to the issues with the clarity of a diamond, Clark's seamless paint handling, wit and intelligence mediate the bitterness of living under racial oppression by white-bearded Uncle Sam. These pieces, spanning the years 1969 to 1977, hit the



bull's-eye consistently, as inner feeling and physical painting meet political reality. *The Addict* depicts the Statue of Liberty, crowned with the star of American specialness, managing to light a cigarette with its torch while shooting up with a syringe. A merciless sun and New York skyline bear witness from the background, carrying forward the ritual quality of the earlier *Kachina Dancer*. But here, there is no earth—only the blind light of fire, an ungrounded burning in the veins that is as good a metaphor for urban life as one could hope to see. These pictures derive their bite and clarity from their engage-



Clockwise from upper right: Claude Clark, Sr., *Target Area*, 1969, oil on board.

Claude Clark, Sr., *Guttersnipe*, 1942, oil on wood.

Claude Clark, Jr., *Mask*, walnut.

Claude Clark, Sr., *On Sunday Morning*, 1946, oil on board.

Claude Clark, Jr., *Memphis Scoop*.

In *Lineage*, at Pro Arts, Oakland.

ment with otherness. In this encounter, which can happen only if an artist is willing, and strong enough, to meet the world outside his own group, Clark has risen to his fullest power and taken his social commentary, and his spiritual experiences, into the country of his birth. In these pictures where both black and white live, for better or for worse, the relationship is still characterized as a battle, but at least the two colors acknowledge each other's pres-

ence in the same world. Clark, Jr.'s articulate carvings, fully steeped in African art history and sacred reality, have still to make the return trip to find the artist's place, as his father has done, in American art lineage. ❖

Lineage by Claude Clark, Sr., and Claude Clark, Jr., through April 24 at Pro Arts, 461 Ninth St., Oakland.

Mary Hull Webster is a Bay Area painter, writer and teacher, and a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

A conversation with Claude Clark, Sr., and Claude Clark, Jr.

BY MEREDITH TROMBLE

Lineage, the title of the joint exhibition of work by Claude Clark, Sr., and Claude Clark, Jr., refers both to their own familial relationship and to the way in which both artists turned to their African heritage as a creative source. After early training as a painter at the Pennsylvania Museum School and the Barnes Foundation, Claude Clark, Sr., embarked on a long career as an artist/educator; he taught at a number of different colleges and in the late 1960s, while at Merritt College in Oakland, created what may have been the first American college course in African American art history. His early paintings often depict African subject matter in a realist style. He moved through an abstract expressionist period while working on his master's degree at UC Berkeley, then returned to a figurative mode to create allegories with strong sociopolitical content. His sculptor son, Claude Clark, Jr., turned directly to the African art form of wood carving.

Artweek *What first made you want to be an artist?*

Claude Clark, Sr. Art was compulsory in the junior high school I went to in Philadelphia. When I was in seventh grade, there was a teacher, Katherine O'Donnell, who had an art club after school. I joined, and also had her for my classes. From the very beginning she was encouraging. She knew the family was poor—there were ten of us—so she would give me carfare to go to Saturday classes. I tried to pay it back to her. She said don't bother—just pass it on. She gave me paper to sketch over the summer holidays, and when we needed food in our house, she would send a basket, she would send coal to heat the house when we needed it. I couldn't have had a finer friend. She lived long enough to see my first one-man show in

Philadelphia.

AW *Does any of her art teaching remain with you?*

CCJ She had impaired sight. She said that she had a glass eye. Whenever I took something up to her to look at, I noticed she made a bold design suggestion of how I should cover the format. I think I've unconsciously carried that idea through most of my work. I'm pretty sure she did it because of her sight but I do it because it simplifies the format.

AW *And what early influences led you to sculpture, Claude Clark, Jr.?*

Claude Clark, Jr. I always saw my father's work and it was something that made the family a little different. I was looking for something that would identify myself.

AW *Your carving seems to stem from the African work that your father was introducing to his students.*

CCJ It started with father. When he was teaching in Alabama, he introduced that art in his courses and I saw what his students produced. I've always been critical of things I see. Even as early as age seven or nine I had already decided that wood things should look like wood things, clay things should look like clay things, and you don't mix them. These students were working in clay but you could still see the metal mask or wooden influence. I don't think I ever mentioned anything about this to my father, but I looked at these things and thought, that's not the way it's supposed to be. I thought one day I'd like to make it the way it's supposed to be made.

CCS That's an interesting critique that I'm hearing at this late date. At that time, the early 1950s, I was glad to see them do something with the African sculpture in any way. The students were just imitating what they saw with the clay and I was glad they were interested. I had never seen an adze or the other traditional woodworking tools, so I

couldn't introduce them to that.

AW *How did you first learn the African woodcarving techniques?*

CCJ Father had an exhibit at Fisk University in 1972, and an African artist named Lamidi Fakeye came through Fisk and wanted to meet him. Father then sponsored him so he could come to California. The Peralta Community College District and African American Historical Society paid for a carving demonstration. I saw him do three live demonstrations, and had a videotape made of the fourth one, so I had the chance to see where I could go. It was very easy to start, and within three years time I was doing things like that stool over there.

CCS I had never seen the adze used before and it was quite magical to me. Fakeye had eighteen pieces of carved sculpture completed. I took money out of my own pocket and paid for their transportation.

When he came to Fisk, he had this tool bag on his shoulder, but when he came to us in Oakland he came without the tool bag. They took his tools away from him because they were afraid of having the plane hijacked. I got on the phone and I talked to those people so bad that he was afraid for me.

When we asked him for someplace to get the tools that he was using, I think he was a little fearful because he said it would take a lifetime to learn how to carve and he never followed up on our request. In the meantime, there was a cousin of my wife's who had financed a Yoruba from the same group at the University of Washington and she said, why don't you try my son—she called this man her son. So we finally got the tools through him.

AW *What different qualities do these tools give to your sculpture?*

CCJ Different technologies will develop the thinking process a certain way. The adzes and axes really speed up the process of removing wood. Another thing, in the particular method that I use, there are no clamps or vices to hold the item down. You have to constantly move it, shape it, and see all sides of it. The adze allows you have one hand free to move and one hand free to carve.

AW *I would like to hear from both of you about the direction of your new work.*

CCS I've got sight difficulty now, but I don't think it's so severe I can't get at something. I've been to Egypt three different times recently, learning about what went on there and how it relates to us as a people. I've done a few paintings on that theme, starting out with the idea of the workers, because somebody had to support the Pharaohs. I call them Nubians, even though I know that they weren't all Nubians. Then, among the Egyptian



Claude Clark, Sr.

gods I was looking for the one responsible for creativity, and the closest I could find was the god of the scribes, called Thoth. I did several versions of him. Maybe I'll get to one or two of the other gods later.

CCJ Father and I have both done work dealing with the African American experience in the spirit of protest. I am attempting in my own work now to come back to more solutions. I decided that if I was going to deal with African art, I was going to deal with it directly. I tried using motifs and things of that nature, but wasn't coming up with anything different. It was still basically a Western approach with an African cover, and I knew the difference. I decided to get immersed in African art and use it as a springboard. Probably I'll continue to do things that are functional and occasionally an Emma [a nonfunctional carving] may emerge. You take one step backwards, then move forward. The tradition in art isn't there in the African context, so you move as far and as quick as you can with it, not worrying about how much time it takes because maybe the next person will come along and pick it up from there. ❖

Meredith Tromble is a painter who also does art commentary for KQED-FM. She is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

Claude Clark, Jr., *Walking Sticks*, myrtle and oak, at Pro Arts, Oakland.

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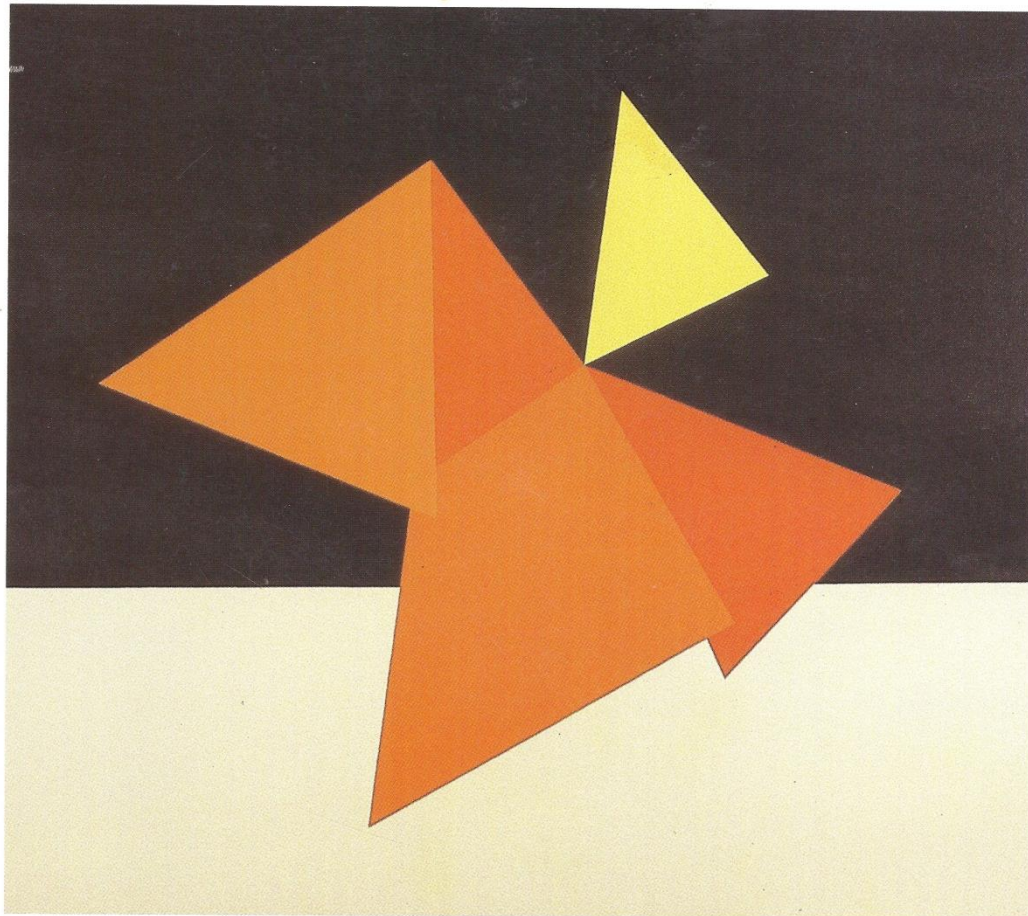
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International Review of African American Art, 1993

THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN ART



Kubuki, Felrath Hines

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JAMES LESESNE WELLS 1902-1993

We are saddened by the loss of our dear friend, master artist, and devoted teacher, James Lesesne Wells. As a longtime member of the Howard University art faculty, Professor Wells was instrumental in shaping the careers of numerous distinguished practitioners in the field of African American art. Although Professor Wells will be missed by all of us, his works live on as reminders of his insightful nature and commanding aesthetic.

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FELRATH HINES
Kubuki
1992
Oil on linen
52"x 58"

ERRATUM

In /RAAA, vol. 10, no. 2, two images were switched: lower image on page 39 is by Angela Perkins, not Debela; lower image on page 44 is by Acha Debela, not Perkins.

CLAUDE CLARK, SR.

A REMINISCENCE

Painter, printmaker and educator, Claude Clark Sr. has fully lived the 20th century African American experience. One of Clark's most well-known prints, "Boogie-Woogie", was inspired when he saw a dancing couple attempting to combine Truckin', Peckin' and the Boogie in a single routine. He drew the picture in reverse on limestone, from which the original print was pulled in 1940. His paintings typically depict black folk activity in rural and urban settings in the United States and the Caribbean.

Clark studied at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art, the Barnes Foundation (PA), Sacramento State University and the University of California at Berkeley. His work is in numerous collections including those of the National Gallery of Art, Talladega College and Fisk, Atlanta and Hampton Universities. He now lives in Oakland, California. The 1993 exhibit, *Lineage*, consists of paintings by Claude Clark, Sr. and sculpture by Claude Clark, Jr. The following remarks were transcribed from a 1984 panel presentation given by Claude Clark, Sr.

I first saw the light of day in a little town called Rockingham in South Georgia. Rockingham is no longer on the map. Last year, after more than 60 years, I went back to South Georgia where I found cousins by the dozens in a little place called White Oak, Georgia. I heard my mother speak of this little place many times and it was almost like a legend to go back and find human beings living in this little town. And they all looked like me! I remember seeing one of these relatives in Atlanta. He had a sister living there. I happened to be coming up the stairs in my daughter's house and he looked, and then he looked away, and then he said, "Damn!" So I had found home — found the place where my mother married and I found a woman who was there at the time my mother married over 60 years ago.

My father was a sharecropper and he worked for many people. Finally, with my mother nagging him, telling

him that he ought to be independent, I remember he built a little house in a place called Alma, Georgia. About a year after he build this little frame house there was no work in this locality. Some of you have seen Jake Lawrence's group of pictures called, "The Migration" series — about 60 panels, I believe. My family was part of that group migrating out of Georgia.

My grandfather was an herb doctor carrying on some of the great healing [practices] of Africa. There was one person who used to live in a hole. It was right after slavery and he had escaped. He had to steal food and go back to the hole in the ground. This man was connected to another man who they knew who came from the continent of Africa. There is an attachment there. My grandfather, while helping the herbal practices along, got into the business of moonshining when other things did not work. He was after surviving and he wasn't going to sweat in the heat of the day. When the moonshiners came, he did not let them take his still, either. But his place was burned to the ground. Some people came past our house one day heading north to Philadelphia. My father followed and that is how I got to Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia, I went to school and also became very active in church. I learned something about black history in Sunday school because some of the Sunday school teachers taught this. And I also became interested in creativity. I did some writing at first — some prose, some poetry in high school. I did not have the kind of interaction that they had in Harlem. We had one book in high school on black history: Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*, and I don't believe I ever got into that thoroughly. But in the local community libraries, I found books of poetry by



CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
Another Spring

1946, Oil on board, 18" x 24"
COLLECTION OF HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Countee Cullen, Claude McKay and people like that. I took those back home and read those. So the writing and reading came simultaneously with the drawing.

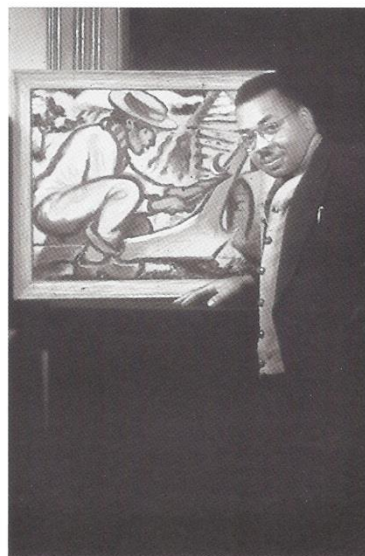
In high school I had two teachers that I will never forget. We have today in the British empire a war between the Irish and the English. We had it there in that school. My first art teacher was Irish; the second was English. They never got along. However, I got a lot of encouragement from the Irish teacher. I had worked hard for the art scholarship [to the Philadelphia Museum School] and was assured that I would get it. No black person had ever gotten one from that community. There were about 3,000 students and about 30 blacks. I was the only black person in my graduating class. The English woman came to me and said, "No colored people ever do things like that. You would be better off at Wilberforce or Lincoln, and I would highly encourage you to go to one of those places."

I insisted that I wanted to go to art school, that I wanted to compete with the best. (I later went to Talledega to teach.) The point is, I got the scholarship on a very strange fluke. The English art teacher said to me, "Now I will not recommend you for that scholarship but if you want to go over my head to the Principal, you could do that." And I dared to do it. The thing was open to me in the first place.

There was a group of white students in my class who said to me one day, "We are going to withdraw because we know that if we compete against you, we will win." They told me, "You worked for it. We did not work for it." So my English art teacher was left holding the bag. That was the way I was able to go ahead and the principal made the award. Then she [English art teacher] said, "It

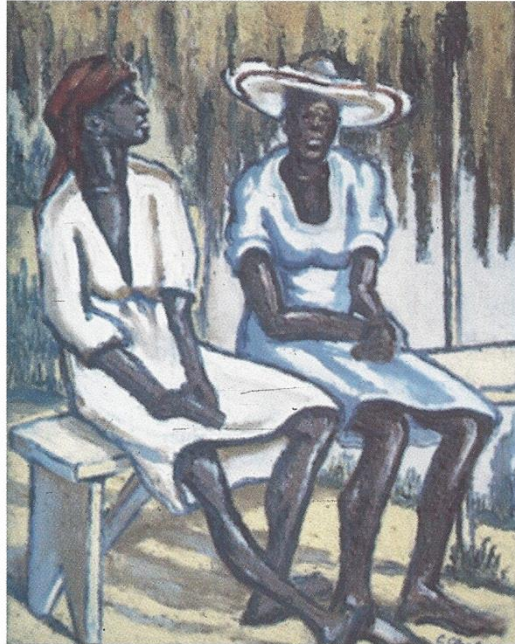
isn't free you know. You will have to be able to make it in art school." It was true, but over the same summer the Philadelphia Museum School came up with another \$50, which wasn't much, and the school district came up with another \$50, so I was able to go.

My mother died but had won a promise from my father that he would let me go. My father never really learned to read and write but when I would see him sometimes riding across that Franklin Parkway on his ashwagon working as a trash collector, in front of that art museum, he would wave in a knowing fashion, and I would wave back, and we fully understood each other's status.

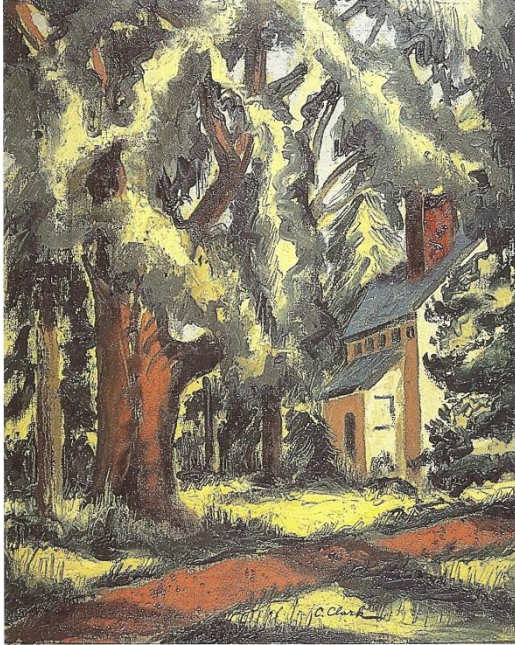


Claude Clarke with The Plow, 1946
PHOTO CREDIT: HARMON FOUNDATION

CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
Women Waiting
1952
Oil on board
20" x 16"
COLLECTION OF HAMPTON
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM



CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
Attack
1941
Oil on wood
21 1/2" x 17 1/2"
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST



CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
At Pendle Hill

1946
Oil on board
24" x 26"
COLLECTION OF HAMPTON
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
Sponge Fisherman

1946
Oil on board
18" x 24"
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST



We had no electricity in our house. I went through high school doing whatever I had to do by kerosene lamp. I had to go to a relative's house to do my art school work. My father would see me coming in sometimes at five o'clock in the morning. He did not ask where I was because he knew. At that time we did not play. We worked at whatever we were doing. And artists who came through at that period worked at the craft.

Getting into the art school, I also found that I had no money for materials. I learned to prepare all my paints from dry pigments. I dared to paint in the drawing classes instead of using charcoal. The students at that school were quite amused. They were actually amazed that I did some of the things I did because I wanted to see how far I could go with the sort of thing I wanted to do. I wanted to get as much painting as possible. The drawing teacher gave me a passing grade but I had a teacher who was very much interested in what I was doing and gave me the highest grade possible, A+, which neutralized the other grade. So I was able to keep up my average and keep my scholarship.

I heard the other students called me "a filthy modernist", because I was applying the paint with a palette knife. One of the critics of one of my exhibits in New York — *The New York Times* — said it was a technique of "clotted impasto." I have no name for what I do. I have seen it listed as "neo-primitive", "neo-Baroque".

I was on one of the WPA projects in Philadelphia. Philadelphia is not known [for] anything like the activity you had in Harlem but some things did happen in Philadelphia. We had a printing process that was discovered there by a black man. It was the first one in 140 years since Alois

Senefelder discovered the process of lithography in Germany. All of us who were there worked on it at the time. It looked something like a mezzotint. I was involved in working with it in an etching process.

I was a painter when I was in art school. I enjoyed painting. But I went into the print shop so I could learn more. All my life I have been involved in learning as much as I could about this "racket" as I used to call it — this craft — so that I could give it to somebody.

Like other [WPA] painters, I could have given the Government one painting every six weeks but I did not do that. I reported to work every day and worked with the presses they had there. I worked in the print shop during the day and in the afternoon I went over to the studio and loosened up again and created paintings. I have operated simultaneously on many things throughout my life.... I was talking to Eugene Grigsby a few days ago and he was amused because he realized that I had a plan. I wasn't going to give the Government my originals. I kept them for myself.

I paint and have had a good time doing it, fighting not only for myself but thinking of all the other artists who might be coming along and needing a break in the galleries also. I would never let a dealer make me change prices. My wife worked along with me on this and once we set a price on something, if someone wanted to buy out the show, we did not change. We had to hold the fort for our brothers and sisters coming along, never going with the idea that we will give our work away rather than getting decent prices for it.

THIS ARTICLE CONTINUES ON PAGE 58.



CLAUDE CLARK, Sr.
Kindling

1946, Oil on board, 18"x 24"
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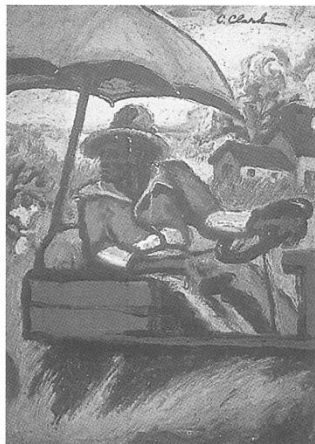
CLAUDE CLARK, SR.
Triumph
1946, 11" x 14"
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

CLAUDE CLARK, SR.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

There is an artist that I got to know in Philadelphia: Horace Pippin. At the time I contacted him, I got to know his dealer very well. The dealer told us not to go and bother Horace Pippin because he was happy the way he was. (Now this is coming into the price thing again.) He had a contract with Pippin and I have never seen anything like it before. It was *exclusive*!

Even though he did not want us to make the contact, one day my wife and I just went out in the neighborhood and looked around until we found where he lived. We got to the door and Brother Pippin looked out with a twinkle in his eye, but puzzled. He said, "You have come to see me? No other painter has come to see me. All those other guys are fighting me." Then I found out that the academicians had ganged up on Pippin because he was a self-taught painter. And his work was selling and they were unable to sell their work. Then a group of them tried to get me to join them to make the attack.



CLAUDE CLARK, SR.
Farmer and Tractor

1946
Mixed media collage
18" x 26"
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST



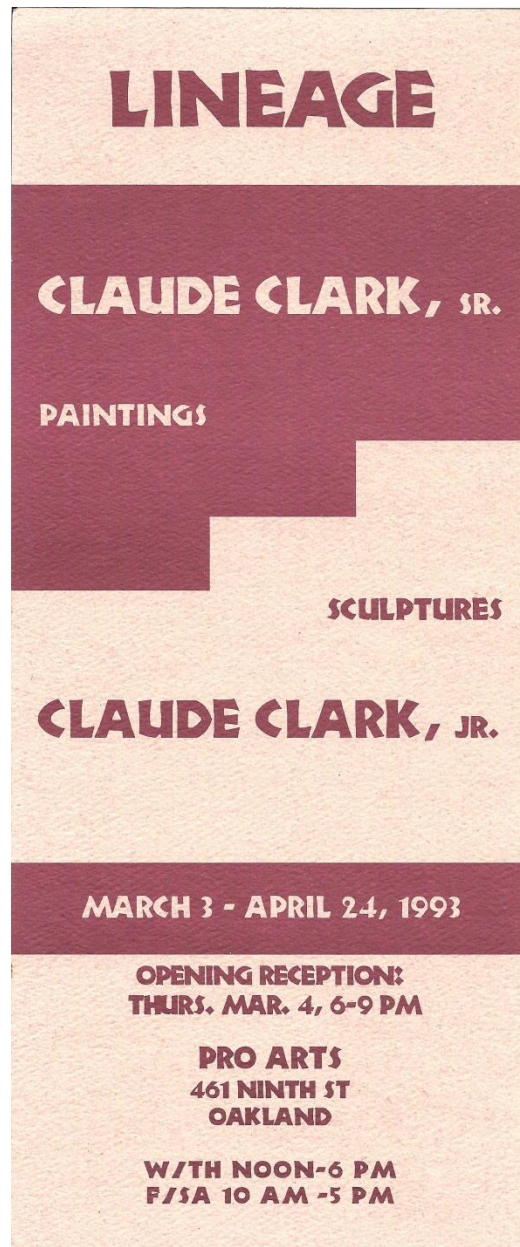
CLAUDE CLARK, SR.
The Gang

1943, 19" x 20"
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

One day in Washington, D.C., I was talking to Alain Locke who wanted to meet Pippin also. He had been kept away from him even though he owned one of Pippin's works. That afternoon [that Clark arranged for Locke to visit Pippin] was one of the beautiful days in the life of Alain Locke. When we went into Pippin's house, here I became aware of two giants—one a great philosopher; the other, a kind of handyman in the neighborhood but a great religious believer reading his Bible and interpreting the religion the way he wanted. Those two men enjoyed each other. I never saw anything like it in my life!

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CLAUDE CLARK, SR.

Claude Clark was born in 1915 on a tenant farm near Rockingham, Georgia, the second eldest of ten children. His family migrated to Philadelphia in 1922 and by the time he entered junior high school he knew that he wanted to be "a poet or artist." He graduated from high school with honors as class poet and artist of the Year Book and was awarded a four-year tuition scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum of Art where he studied pictorial expression and painting. From 1939-1944 he studied art history, philosophy and art appreciation at the internationally known Barnes Foundation on the estate of Fr. Albert Coombs Barnes in Merion, Pennsylvania where Philosophy professor Alain Locke and artist Aaron Douglas had previously been invited to study. Here Claude Clark was able to systematically investigate the hundreds of original Old Masters, Moderns, and French paintings as well as to develop a deep appreciation for African Aesthetics through studying in one of this country's first important (and inaccessible) collections of African art.

Clark was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) artist for three years. He was active in a Philadelphia graphics arts workshop run by the WPA's Federal Arts Program as was Dox Thrash (d.1965), another Georgia

native, who like Clark, managed to attend art school and had settled in Philadelphia. (Thrash was one of the artists who perfected the carbograph process—known commercially as Carborundum—which "produces a sculptural, tonal image rather than a linear one.")

With his solid professional training Clark went on to teach and to achieve a Master's degree at UC Berkeley. He has been a professor of art at Talladega College in Alabama and at Oakland, California's Merritt College. His travels have taken him to Africa, the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico and he has made use of subjects from all of these cultures reflecting the common concerns of humanity.

his subjects exemplify both rural and urban folkways. In his work we find expressionistic figures and character studies, landscapes, seascapes and still life compositions executed primarily with a palette knife rather than a refined brush; Clark's artwork mirrors his psychic life—an affinity and love for folk culture, workers, nature, his people, truths. His content is ever reminiscent of the Social Realism of his maturing years when content and style cohered into "clear and precise" truths about man's humanity and inhumanity. "My approach has been largely conditioned, I believe, by my religious and social background. As a son of a tenant farmer, I decided early to help in some small way to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. As a painter I concerned myself with the people close to the soil because I am interested in how they live and the things they do." (The Christian Scholar. Volume XXXVII, Autumn, 1954, p. 312.) man at

peace, man at war, man against the forces of nature are the constant sub-themes of Claud's life work.

Claude has exhibited at the World's Fair 1939-40, NYC; Academy of Fine Arts, Downtown Gallery, Bonstell and Roko Galleries, NYC; Sorbonne, Paris; E.B. Crocker Galleries, Sacramento, CA; Oakland Museum, Grand Oak Gallery, Merritt college, Oakland, CA; Museum of African American Art 1983-84, Los Angeles, CA; Frames 'n Fine Art 1983, Atlanta, GA; Kenkeleba House 1986, NYC; October Gallery 1987, Philadelphia, PA; Masters Art Exhibition (NCA) 1988, Salvador-Bahia, Brazil.

Traveling Shows:

Amistad II Afro-American 1975-76. Two Centuries of Black American Art, 1976-77 Hidden Heritage: Afro-American Art 1800-1950, 1985-88 Chicago, Portsmouth VA, Washington, D.C.-Howard University. Choosing 1925-1985, 1986 IL, VA, Washington, D.C. Introspective Contemporary Art By Americans and Brazilians of African Descent 1989.

Collections:

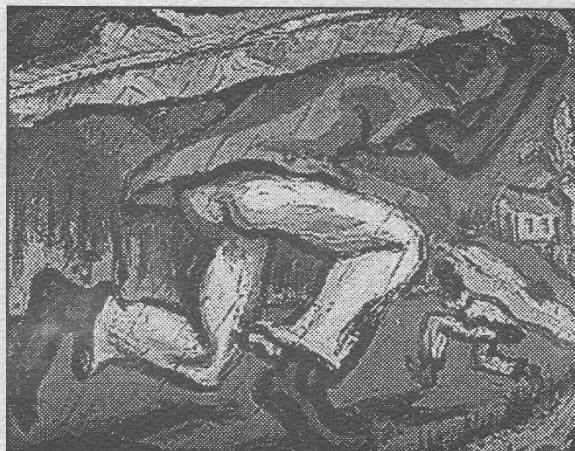
Library of congress, Fisk University, Hampton University, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Talladega College, Atlanta University.

Publications:

Directory of American Scholars 1951; American Negro Art by Cedric Dover 1967; International Directory of the Arts, Berlin SW61, Germany 1965, 1976; Who's Who in American Art 1956, '62, '64, '76, '82; Amistad II—Afro-American 1975-76, 1975; Two Centurie of Black American Art 1976; Hidden Heritage 1985; Choosing 1986; Unbroken Circle 1986; Engagement Journal and Art Book-Hampton University 1985-86.

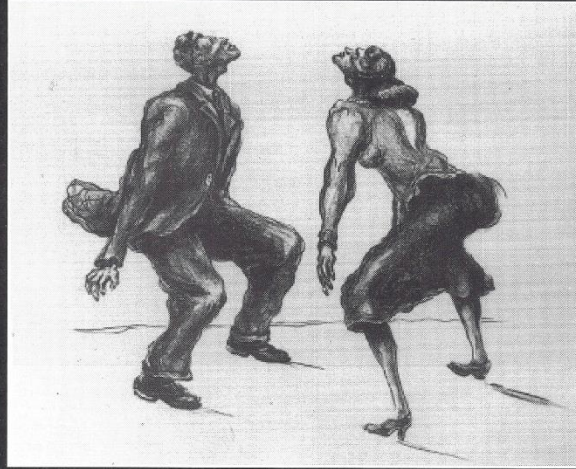
CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

Dreamer, 1938 Oil on Board 22 x 38	Meditation 1994 Oil on Canvas 18 x 25	Coconuts 1950 Oil on Board 12 x 16
Nude (in Classroom) 1983 Oil on Board 16 x 20	Downbeat 1944-46 Oil on Canvas 16 x 20	Coffee 1950 Oil on Board 12 x 16
Remorseful (Nude) 1938 Oil on Board 15 x 20	Pallbearers 1944 Oil on Canvas 30 x 40	Caribbean Playground 1952 Oil on Board 16 x 20
Boogie-Woogie 1939 Original Lithograph 16 x 20	Good Samaritan 1946 Oil on Board 13 1/4 x 23 1/4 (oval)	Sponge Fisherman 1944 Oil on Board 18 x 24
In the Groove 1940 Original Lithograph 16 x 20	Decoration 1946 Oil on Board 20 x 26	Upmeads 1947 Oil on Board 12 x 16
Play Off 1940 Oil on Wood 14 1/2 x 23 1/2	Field Dressin 1946 Oil on Board 18 x 24	Lemons 1950 Oil on Board 12 x 16
Lathe #2 1940 Oil on Board 12 x 17	Freedom Morning 1944 Oil on Canvas 30 x 40	Rain 1950 Oil on Board 16 x 20
Drill Press 1941 Oil on Board 12 x 17	Neighbors 1946 Oil on Board 15 3/8 x 18 5/8	Men and Machetes 1950 Oil on Board 16 x 20
Hillside Landscape 1942 Oil on Board 16 3/4 x 20 1/4	Barn (Pindle Hill) 1947 Oil on Canvas 16 x 20	Worker's House 1950 Oil on Board 12 x 16
Jam Session 1943 Oil on Board 18 x 21 5/8	Pine Ridge Station 1947 Oil on Board 12 x 16	On the Bayou 1951 Oil on Board 12 x 16
The Slaughter House 1943 Oil on Board 18 x 24	Trumpet Vine 1948 Oil on Board 12 x 16	Building the Tug 1951 Oil on Board 12 x 16
<hr/>		
U.S. and Rider 1971 Oil on Canvas 24 x 30	Percussion Dialogue 1979 Oil on Board 18 x 24	Come to My Village Oil on Board 1977 18 x 24
Construction Huddle 1970 Oil on Board 24 x 48	Men and Boat 1979 Oil on Board 18 x 24	Transfusion 1972 Oil on Board 18 x 24



RAIN 1950
Oil on Board
16 x 20

SAMUEL'S GALLERY
presents



Boogie Woogie Lithograph 1940

POST HARLEM RENAISSANCE ARTIST
CLAUDE CLARK, SR.
FEBRUARY 12, - MARCH 13, 1994

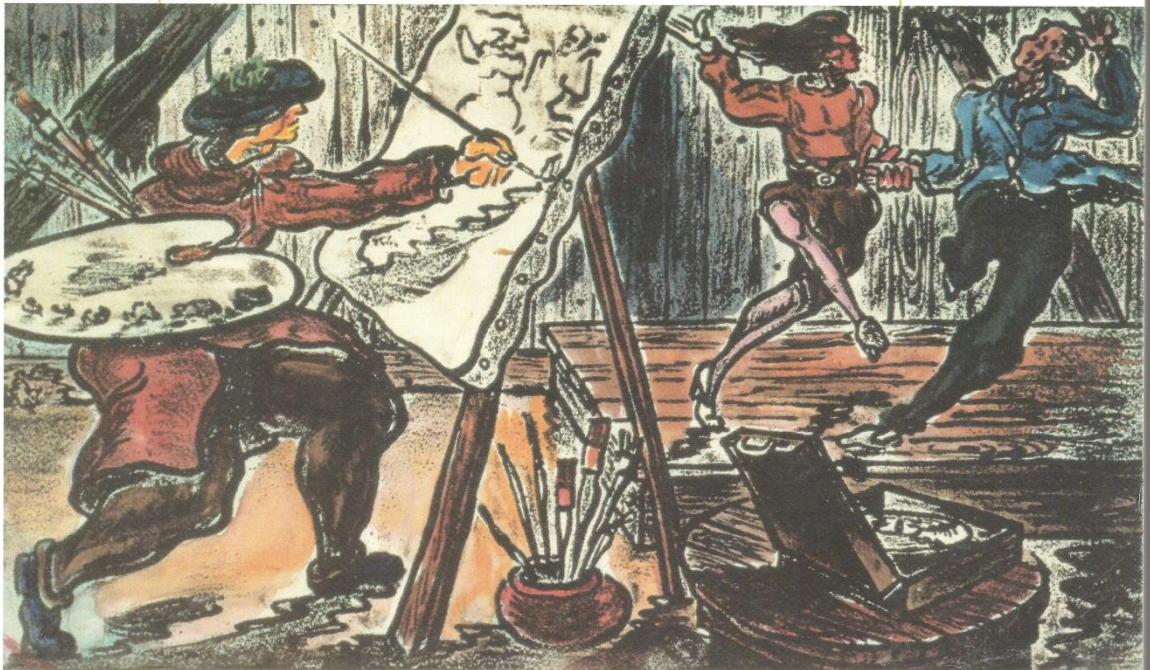
RECEPTION FEBRUARY 13, 1994
2:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Join us for this appearance of nationally acclaimed artist Claude Clark, Sr.
This exhibit has been touring nationally since 1990 to galleries and museums in
Atlanta, Savanna, New York, Philadelphia and San Antonio. Now returning home
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*When the Spirit Moves, National Afro-American Museum,
Wilberforce, OH, 1999*

*When
the Spirit
Moves*



*African American Dance
in History and Art*

National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center

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Edited by Barbara Glass

Essays by:

Barbara Glass

Brenda Dixon Gottschild

Melanye White-Dixon

Jacqui Malone

Katrina Hazzard-Donald

Samella Lewis

This catalogue was developed to accompany the history exhibition *When the Spirit Moves: The Africanization of American Movement* and the companion art exhibition *When the Spirit Moves: African American Art Inspired by Dance*. The exhibitions were organized by the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. They opened in 1999 at the National Afro-American Museum and the Springfield Museum of Art (Springfield, Ohio). Partnering venue museums include the Atlanta History Center and the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, both in Atlanta; the Detroit Historical Museum and the C.H. Wright Museum of African American History, both in Detroit; and the Center for African American History and Culture (both exhibitions) of the Smithsonian Institution, located in the Arts and Industry Building on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

For ordering or additional information, contact Museum Shop, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, P.O. Box 578, 1350 Brush Row Road, Wilberforce, Ohio 45384. Phone (937) 376-4944 Fax (937) 376-2007.

This catalogue was printed on Mead Signature Dull Text and Mead Signature Dull Cover paper.

Cover: *Jivin' Scribe* by Claude Clark

ISBN 1-880179-07-5



CLAUDE CLARK

Prior to the WPA, African American artists only had the option of applying to the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship Program, or of participating in or receiving awards from the Harmon Foundation for support. Among the artists of superior abilities who participated in the WPA program were Claude Clark, Eldzier Cortor, and Jacob Lawrence.

CLAUDE CLARK (1915-), a painter of genre scenes, was born in Rockingham, Georgia. A prolific artist of African American figurative art he studied at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art from 1935 to 1939, where he was primarily exposed to European art forms. Impressed by African art when he later studied at the Barnes Foundation near Philadelphia from 1939 to 1944, Clark recognized the great influence that African art had upon European art. His personal artistic style evolved to combine these significant influences. In his works, the artist records brightly colored images of dancing figures and prison inmates on chain gangs, as well as everyday activities recalled from his early years in the South. Clark joined the Works Progress Administration in 1939 and remained with the program until 1943, when he left Philadelphia to teach art at Talladega College in Alabama, where he remained for several years. In 1958, the artist moved to Oakland, California, where he has resided the remainder of his life.

Jivin' Scribe, 1941

Carbograph etching
13 x 17"

Courtesy Claude Clark, Sr.

African American Art Inspired by Dance





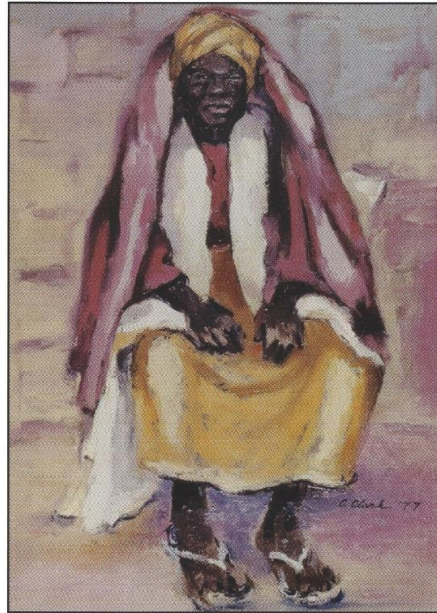
Postcard, ca. 1900, *Waiting for the Sunday Boat*.
National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center.

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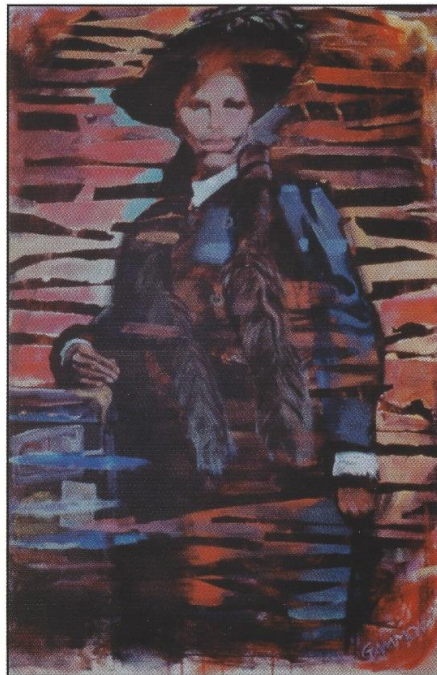
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**20th Century Icons, Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA,
2000**

**20th
Century
African
American
Icons
Series II**



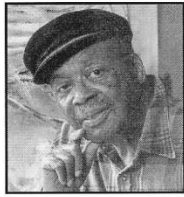
Claude Clark Sr.



Reginald Gammon

STELLA JONES GALLERY

**March 1
to
April 30, 2000**



Claude Clark

A wise man who knows his proverbs can recognize difficulties.

Nigerian Proverb

Oftentimes, the things that we do are never realized or recognized until very late in life. Icons are sometimes hidden away and must be brought out into the open to be venerated again. But the power of these icons comes through in the spirit evoked in their work. Claude Clark's work, which characterizes the African American experience, summons the spirit. His paintings speak to us while the vibrant colors sing to us in harmonic spiritual tones. The people within his canvasses evoke past memories...of childhood, the sound of music, the smell of flowers and fruits, the feel of sunlight on bare skin and the rippling reflection of deep blue water. Art "canons" would tell us very little about Claude Clark, the painter, printmaker and educator. Yet, his work denies obscurity.

Born November 11, 1915 in rural Rockingham, Georgia, he was the second son in a family of ten. His father was an itinerant laborer and his mother was a housewife, who frequently took in laundry to make ends meet. Clark spent his early childhood in an array of small Georgia and Florida communities between Valdosta and Orlando as his father desperately sought work to keep the family from going hungry. However, his mother was an ambitious woman, whose greatest wish for her son was independence from the life of a sharecropper.

In early August 1923, Clark's parents became part of that great exodus of blacks leaving the south for a better life. They traveled to Philadelphia where Clark attended a predominantly white school. Johns Staples, a friend and fellow student whom Clark met in first grade, encouraged him to try art and later influenced his radical political thinking. While attending Roxborough High School, Staples also urged him to try Catherine O'Donnell's art club. She was a white teacher who was supportive of Clark and impressed by his bold artistic work. However, as it was with other black artists, Clark experienced overt racism while attending high school. His teacher refused to submit his name for an art scholarship. Clark went to the school principal to present his grievances and his efforts won him a recommendation and the scholarship. His graduation in June 1935 was cause for celebration. His poem and illustrations were published in the school's yearbook. However, this celebration was countered by his grief at the death of his mother during childbirth of her fourteenth pregnancy. Though, his father was contemptuous of education, he promised his mother that he would provide the fifteen cents needed for Clark's carfare to school.

Clark refused to let adversity rule his life as other misfortunes followed. In his home, there was no electricity and the kerosene lamp used for illumination damaged his eyes. As a result, in the first month of entering art school, he had to obtain eyeglasses. Subsequently, all of his paintings were done under natural lighting. But Clark's favorite high school teacher, Catherine O'Donnell, had a glass eye. He thought, if this handicap did not stop her, he vowed that it would not deter him from his goals.

From 1935-1939, Clark attended the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, now the University of the Arts. While there, Clark was introduced to the technique of Van Gogh in the handling of still life. It formed the basis of his approach to drawing.

Instructors Frank Copeland and Earl Horter were very supportive of his art. Henry Pitz, influenced his figurative work and Franklin Watkins was inspirational in showing him the freedom inherent in painting. By the third year, Clark won the painting prize and Watkins purchased four or five of his works. Clark was inspired to apply to the Barnes Foundation in 1938 but missed his appointment. He reapplied and was accepted in 1939. The Barnes Foundation's collection consisted of an array of artwork from European Impressionism to American art works. However, Albert Barnes, who later became friendly with Clark, was well known for his African Art collection. Clark saw in this African art, with its emphasis on the pyramid, sphere, and cylinder forms, the similarity that coincided with the art of Van Gogh. His bold strokes in *Cutting the Sheet, 1941* is a reflection of this style.

In 1939, Clark found work through the Artist's Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He worked with the WPA from 1939-1942. Because of his belief that art should benefit the common man, he wanted to work in a medium that would reach the masses. He joined the graphic arts shop where he worked with and shared a studio with Raymond Steth and also became acquainted with Dox Thrash. Thrash discovered a new carborundum printing technique while employed there. Clark, along with others at the shop, experimented with new techniques including a color etching process.

In 1943, Clark married Effie Mae Lockhart and obtained jobs in Philadelphia after his tenure with the WPA. He taught art in junior high school in Philadelphia from 1945-1948. His art appeared in numerous shows including the Albany (NY) Institute of History and Art's for the 1945 presentation, "The Negro Comes of Age." His first solo show was at the Artist's Gallery of Philip Ragan Associate in Philadelphia in 1944. He was also the first Black artist featured by Dorothy Grafly. In 1951, he had a solo exhibition at the Wharton Settlement. His first New York show was at the Bonestell Gallery in 1945, followed by one at the Roko Gallery 1946 and 47. With the purchase of "Cutting Pattern" from his 1944 Artist's Gallery show, by Albert Barnes, Clark became only the second living African American artist, after Horace Pippin, to have his work displayed by the Barnes Foundation.

In the 1940s, Clark became interested in working at a black college. After writing may letters for employment, he received offers from two, Jackson State University in Mississippi and Talladega College in Alabama. Jackson State offered the higher salary, but he chose Talladega because it provided housing, which he desperately needed, for his family. He originally went to Talladega in 1948 to do a workshop. However, many of his students, who were war veterans, requested art training. Due to an increased student demand, he established a full time art department. He exposed them to African and African American art. He won a Carnegie Fellowship in 1950, allowing him to spend the summer in the Caribbean, mainly Puerto Rico, painting flowers and landscapes that he saw as universal subjects.

At the end of spring term 1955, Clark left Talladega. Without another employment engagement, he moved to California. In the fall, he registered at Sacramento State College and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1958. Majoring in painting with a minor in social studies, he obtained his Master of Arts degree from University of California in 1962. His works during this period showed a lighter color palette, a freer technique and experimentation with abstraction as in *Homestretch, 1961* and *Ascending, 1961*. Clark found employment at Merritt College in 1968, and stayed until his retirement in 1981. In 1976, Clark fulfilled a lifelong dream to go to Africa. It profoundly affected him. He began to believe that in order to change things for his people, "one has to think Black and dream Black..."

20th Century African Americans Icons Series II

"Conversations with the Artists"

CLAUDE CLARK, SR. and REGINALD GAMMON

Moderator/Interviewer: Dr. Eloise Johnson

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2000 ~ 11 am to 1pm

Sponsored in part by Amistad Research Center

ARTIST RECEPTION

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2000 ~ 6pm to 9pm

Selected Public and Private Collections

CLAUDE CLARK, SR

Hammonds House
Smithsonian Institution
National Gallery of Art
DuSable Museum of African American History
Oakland Museum
Library of Congress
Atlanta University
Afro-American Museum, Wilberforce
Hampton University Museum
Talladega College

REGINALD GAMMON

Western Michigan University
Battle Creek Fine Arts Permanent Collection
Kalamazoo College
National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center
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Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
Fisk University
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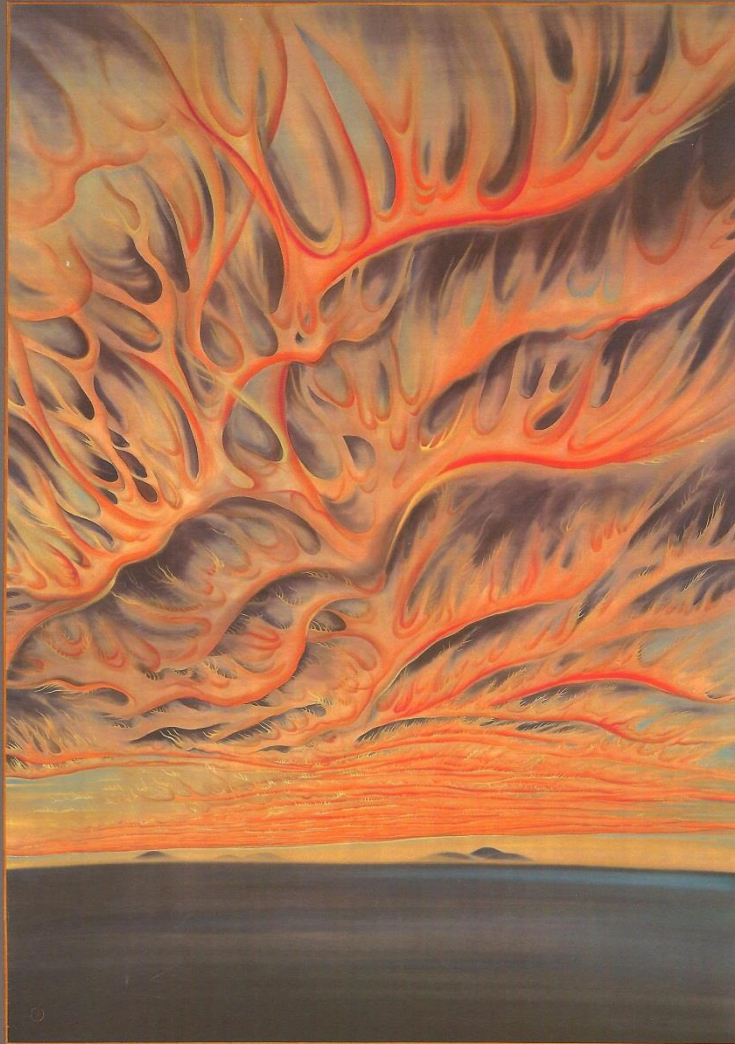
FRONT COVER

TOP: CLAUDE CLARK, SR., "Nigerian Grandmother, 1977, 18"x24," Oil on Board
BOTTOM: REGINALD GAMMON, "Mysterious Lady," 1976, 52"x38," Acrylic on Canvas

Fine Arts, M.H. Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco,
CA 2009

FINE ARTS

M.H. DE YOUNG MEMORIAL MUSEUM CALIFORNIA PALACE OF THE LEGION OF HONOR



FALL/WINTER 2000

FINE ARTS

M.H. DE YOUNG MEMORIAL MUSEUM CALIFORNIA PALACE OF THE LEGION OF HONOR

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FALL/WINTER 2000

ACQUISITION

M.H. de Young Memorial Museum
Gallery 33

*“The Talented Tenth” and the Man in the Street:
Claude Clark’s Guttersnipe*

TIMOTHY ANGLIN BURGARD
The Ednah Root Curator of American Art

The Fine Arts Museums have acquired *Guttersnipe* (1942), a major painting by Claude Clark (b. 1915), a respected elder among African American artists. Born in Rockingham, Georgia, Clark spent his childhood in impoverished rural areas of Georgia and Florida. In 1923, his family joined the Great Migration, in which two million African Americans migrated from the South to the North between the world wars. Settled in Philadelphia, Clark studied art with the Roxborough High School art club and attended Saturday classes at the Graphic Sketch Club (Fleisher Art Memorial).

Between 1935 and 1939 Clark attended the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, where he studied with Earl Horter, Henry Pitz, and Franklin Watkins, and received the painting prize in his third year. Soon after graduating, Clark was arrested for picketing a delicatessen that refused to hire African Americans, even though they comprised the majority of its patrons. Clark found a creative outlet for his social concerns working for the Graphic Division in the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from 1939 to 1942.

In 1939, while working for the WPA, Clark began attending interdisciplinary classes in art history and aesthetic philosophy at the Barnes Foundation in the Philadelphia suburb of Merion. Although the founder, the philanthropist Albert Barnes, was best known for his collection of art by modernists such as van Gogh, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso, he also was among the first Americans to champion the aesthetic value of African art. Barnes’s philanthropy initially benefited Philadelphia’s African American community, and a foundation fellowship (1942-1944) provided full tuition and a monthly stipend that enabled Clark to paint fulltime.

Clark’s years at the Barnes Foundation were among his most productive and produced *Guttersnipe* (1942), *Jam Session* (1943, Philadelphia Museum of Art), and *Resting* (1944, National Museum of American Art). Barnes’s purchase of Clark’s *Cutting Pattern* (1944) made him the second African American artist (their mutual friend Horace Pippin was the first) to have his work exhibited in the permanent collection at the foundation. Clark also exhibited two works in the Albany Institute of History and Art’s pio-

neering exhibition *The Negro Artist Comes of Age* (1945), and he received Carnegie Foundation Fellowships in 1949 and 1950.

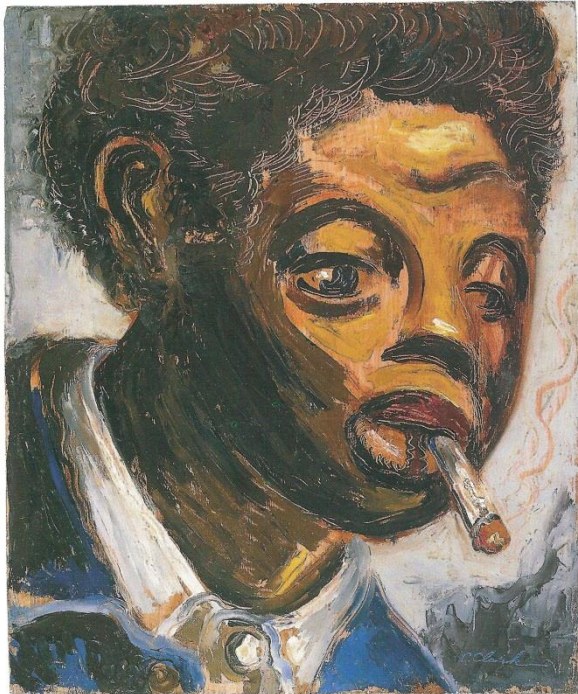
Soon after his appointment as head of the art department at Talladega College in Alabama in 1948, Clark's students were asked to submit artworks for the inaugural exhibition of the new museum at the racially segregated University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Informed that he could not attend the

inaugural dinner because of his race, he wrote to Albert Barnes, who helped to coordinate a boycott that received attention in the national press.

In 1955, Clark left Talladega and moved to his wife's native California, where he completed his B.A. degree (1958) at Sacramento State College and received an M.A. (1962) degree from the University of California at Berkeley. He taught arts and crafts at the Alameda County juvenile justice facility between 1958 and 1967 and taught art at Oakland's Merritt College from 1968 until his retirement in 1981. Clark is the author of an influential handbook entitled *A Black Art Perspective: A Black Teacher's Guide to a Black Visual Art Curriculum* (1970).

Throughout his career, Clark has embraced working-class African American genre subjects as the natural outgrowth of his own childhood experiences with racism and poverty, as well as his mature interest in the class-conscious art of Depression-era Social Realists. In a letter written in 1972, Clark reaffirmed his artistic and political philosophy: "Today, [the Black artist] has reached the phase of Political Realism where his art becomes even more functional. He not only presents the condition but names the enemy, and directs us toward a plan of action in search of our own roots and eventual liberation."

Clark's powerful painting *Guttersnipe* (1) depicts an economically and socially disenfranchised street urchin. The close-cropped composition, swift execution, and inclusion of a prominent smoking cigarette ("snipe" is hobo slang for a cigarette butt) convincingly convey the impression of a momentary encounter on the streets of Philadelphia. Painting on the verso of a print woodblock that had been discarded by his WPA print studio, Clark used the natural wood color to render the skin tones of his subject. The lush palette-knife brushstrokes reveal Clark's interest in the emotionally expressive



1.

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works of van Gogh, which he had studied both in Philadelphia and at the Barnes Foundation.

The most striking element of *Guttersnipe* is its fusion of iconography derived from African Baule masks (2) with the facial features of its African American subject. Visual similarities include the incised hair, almond-shaped eyes, prominent mouth, pointed chin, and the nose and eyebrows that are shaped by a continuous line. Clark had encountered African art at the Graphic Sketch Club in the late 1920s, and at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in the early 1930s. After a friend photographed African art objects at the university museum, he gave several prints to Clark, who later used them as inspirations for *Guttersnipe*. Clark's renewed interest in African art during the early 1940s was no doubt encouraged by the prominence accorded African art and aesthetics in the galleries and lectures at the Barnes Foundation. Clark later recalled that Barnes had juxtaposed works by Picasso with examples of the African sculptures that had inspired many of his greatest pictorial innovations.

Guttersnipe was titled by the African American philosopher Alain Locke, who had taught Clark's wife, Daima (Effie M. Lockhart), while she was enrolled in an M.A. philosophy program at Howard University. It was during a visit to Clark's Philadelphia studio that Locke saw the painting and declared, "That looks just like a guttersnipe!" Locke would have viewed Clark's use of African art in *Guttersnipe* as a validation of the aesthetic philosophies he had outlined in his famous book *The New Negro* (1925), the defining text of the Harlem Renaissance. In an influential essay, "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," included in the book, Locke urged African American artists to embrace their heritage as a source of cultural pride and artistic inspiration.

The class issues inherent in the painting's subject and title provide an instructive counterpoint to the aesthetic and social philosophies of Harlem Renaissance writers such as Locke and artists such as Aaron Douglas. Locke's and Douglas's messages of intellectual and social uplift through education were shaped by the theories of the author, educator, and civil rights leader W. E. B. Du Bois. In his famous essay "The Talented Tenth" (1903), Du Bois argued that "the Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men"—the most talented tenth of the population.

While Clark shared many of the ideals of his Harlem Renaissance predecessors, his perspective was tempered by the harsh realities of rural and urban poverty during the Great Depression. Clark's conscious choice of a disenfranchised "guttersnipe" as the vehicle for a fusion of African cultural heritage with contemporary African American experience served as a powerful reminder that this, too, was the face of Africa—and African America.



1. Claude Clark (b. Rockingham, Georgia, 1915). *Guttersnipe*, 1942. Oil on wood. 20 x 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. American Art Trust Fund, 2000.21a-b.

2. Unidentified Baule artist, Ivory Coast. *Mask*, 20th century. Wood and pigment. 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Bequest of Dean C. Barnlund. 1994.28.10.

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Richard Diebenkorn (1922–1993). *Ocean Park 116*, 1979. Oil on canvas. 82 x 72 inches.
Museum purchase, gift of Mrs. Paul L. Wattis, 2000.20.

International Conference – Ghana, West Africa

RENEWING OUR SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

National Conference of Artists

Announces

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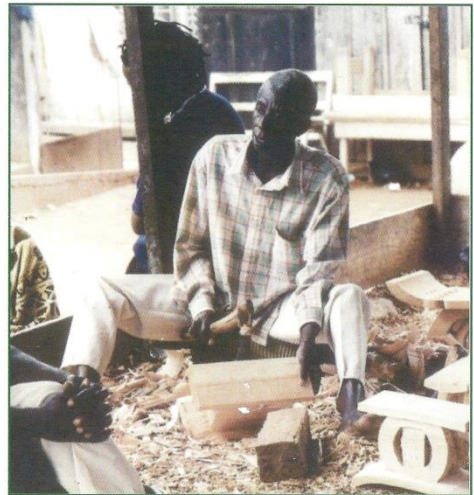
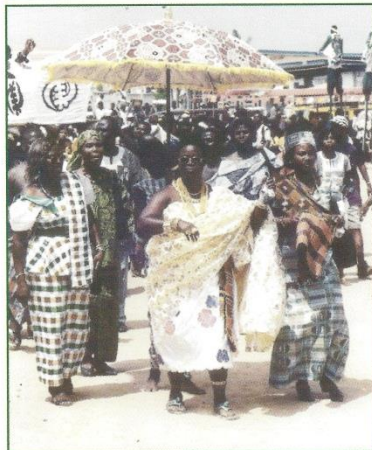
(43rd Annual Convention)

Ghana, West Africa

July 18 - 26, 2002

or

July 18 - August 1, 2002



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Mission Statement

The mission of the National Conference of Artists is to preserve, promote, and develop African American culture and the creative forces of the artist that emanate from the African American and African World experience. All who attend our 2002 NCA Fourth International Conference and Educational Tour in Ghana are invited to share the Ghanaian culture with our African brothers and sisters, and absorb the numerous opportunities for cultural and intellectual exchange.

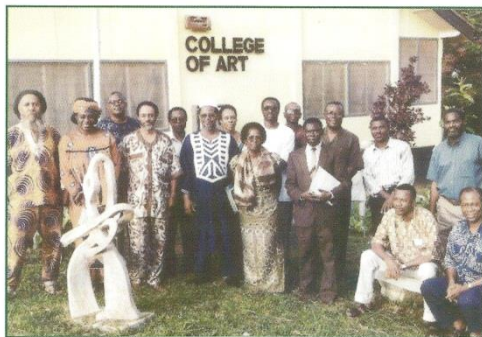
**RENEWING OUR
SPIRITUAL CONNECTION**



Beginning July 18, 2002, the NCA will celebrate its 4th International Conference in Ghana. Join us as we *Renew Our Spiritual Connection* and experience the splendor and excitement that is Ghana. Enjoy unique cultural events while sharing the genius of artistic minds and soul-stirring art work.

This convention is an extraordinarily rare, historic opportunity for meaningful exchange between African and African-American artists under the auspices of the National Conference of Artists (NCA), the premier African American artist organization in the US.

The NCA Ghana Chapter will host this convention in collaboration with the NCA 2002 Ghana Planning Committee, representatives of the Ghana Government, the US Embassy in Accra, Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Travel agencies in the U.S. and Ghana have coordinated what will be an unforgettable trip of a lifetime for all. The numerous scholarly, cultural, and historical discussions will astound you. The tours will awaken a sense of wonderment; the exhibits will touch your soul, and the performance will leave you breathless.



Many individuals have worked tirelessly to develop the most enriching and informative experience for you. Your fees will include the following accommodations and events:

- Round-trip airfare from New York to Accra, Ghana
- Attendance at all NCA Convention Activities in Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast, Ghana
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International Review of American Art, 2001

THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN ART



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Cover:

PAUL A. HOUZELL
Lady Magnolia's Beautiful Tongue
2000, oil on linen, 40" x 30"

This work is one of the winning entries in *Private Show II*. See article on *Private Show* beginning page 61.

CLAUDE CLARK'S GUTTERSNIPE

FROM "THE TALENTED TENTH" TO THE MAN IN THE STREET

BY TIMOTHY ANGLIN BURGARD

Claude Clark's lifelong commitment to racial and economic equality grew out of the hardships of his early life, prompting him to observe, "as a son of a tenant farmer, I decided early to help in some small way to alleviate the sufferings of humanity."¹ Clark pursued this goal both through personal political activism and through the working-class African American genre paintings that established his reputation as an artist. Clark's belief that his artwork could serve as a powerful social catalyst is evident in works such as *Guttersnipe* (1942), in which Clark fused African and American art traditions to confront the discrepancy between American ideals and the realities he observed in the streets.

MIGRATION AND EDUCATION

Born in Rockingham, Georgia in 1915, Clark spent his childhood in impoverished rural areas of Georgia and Florida, where his father worked as a sharecropper and itinerant laborer. In the year of Clark's birth, his paternal grandfather, a traditional herbal healer, left Alabama for Philadelphia after the Ku Klux Klan burned down his house.² In 1923, Clark's own family joined the "Great Migration," in which over two million African Americans sought to escape racism and poverty by migrating from the South to the North between the World Wars. Clark later recalled that Jacob Lawrence's famous *Migration* series (1940-41) mirrored his family's diasporic experience.³

Settled in Philadelphia's Manayunk neighborhood, Clark commenced his art studies at Roxborough Junior/Senior High School (1929-35), where he joined the Art Club. He augmented his studies with classes at the Graphic Sketch Club (Fleisher Art Memorial), the oldest tuition-free art school in the United States. The only non-white in his Roxborough graduating class, Clark initially was hindered in his attempt to obtain an art scholarship because of his race. Clark's protests, along with the support of his classmates, who felt that he deserved the scholarship and withdrew from the competition, ensured his receipt of the four-year tuition scholarship (1935-39) that enabled him to become a professional

artist. He studied at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art (now the University of the Arts), with Earl Horter (1881-1940), Henry Pitz (1895-1976) and Franklin Watkins (1894-1972) and was awarded the painting prize in his third year.

From 1939 until 1942, Clark found financial security working for the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration. He chose to work in the Graphic Arts Division, which enabled him to retain his paintings and to create mass-produced prints that reached a populist audience. Also in 1939, Clark began attending interdisciplinary classes in art history and aesthetic philosophy at the Barnes Foundation in the Philadelphia suburb of Merion. The founder, Albert C. Barnes (1872-1951), was best known for his pioneering collection of art by modernists such as Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso, but he also was among the first Americans to champion the aesthetic value of African art.⁴ Barnes Foundation funds previously had supported African American artists such as Aaron Douglas (1899-1979), and Clark's fellowship (1942-44) provided full tuition and a monthly stipend that enabled him to paint full-time.



Dox Thrash and Claude Clark (right) in the W.P.A. print shop, Philadelphia, ca.1939-42
PHOTO: MYRON KRASNEY

GUTTERSNIPE

Clark's paintings of the W.P.A./Barnes Foundation period were strongly influenced by his socialist politics and typically focused on working-class men and women. *Guttersnipe* (1942), in the permanent collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, depicts a teenage denizen of Philadelphia's streets. Clark painted *Guttersnipe* on the verso of a carved woodblock that had been salvaged from his W.P.A. print studio and utilized the natural wood color to render the skin tones of his subject. The close-cropped composition, swift execution (the painting was completed in a single sitting), inclusion of a prominent smoking cigarette, and the subject's diverted gaze, convincingly convey the impression of a momentary street encounter.

Clark's lush palette-knife paint strokes reveal the influence of Vincent Van Gogh's physically and emotionally expressive paintings, including the portraits of the postman *Joseph-Etienne Roulin* (1889) and *Man Smoking* (1889), which he had studied in the permanent collection of the Barnes Foundation.⁵ Van Gogh's choice of working class subjects for these paintings was as influential as their technique and Clark's wife has noted that her husband "identified immeasurably with Van Gogh's use of subject matter and color."⁶

Clark's "guttersnipe" or street urchin subject had a long lineage in American art and achieved a state of incestuous sterility in the saccharine shoeshine boys painted by John George Brown (1831-1913). More relevant to Clark's work were the precedents provided by another artist with strong Philadelphia ties, Robert Henri (1865-1929). Henri's portraits of African American children such as *Willie Gee* (1904) and *Sylvester* (1914), helped to introduce sympathetic depictions of working class African Americans into the realm of fine art.⁷ However, in sharp contrast to Clark's *Guttersnipe*, Henri's children are idealized innocents—urban landscape equivalents to the picturesque rural peasant subjects popular in late nineteenth-century art.

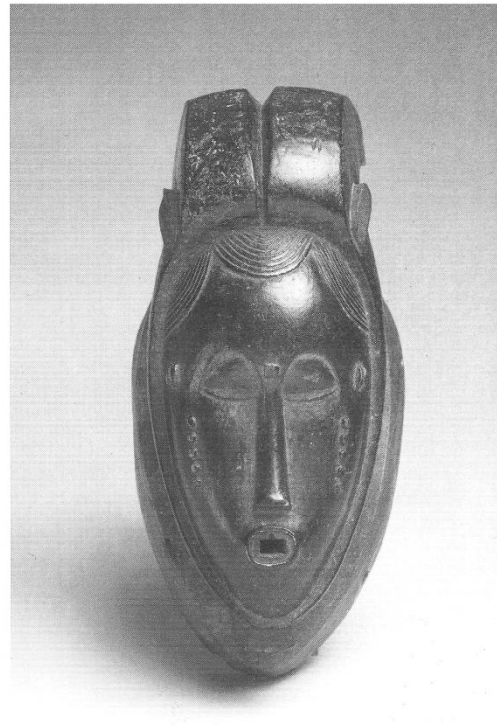
AFRICAN ART AND THE BARNES FOUNDATION

Guttersnipe, however, owes its greatest artistic debt to African Baule masks which provided an iconographic source of inspiration for the subject's facial features. Visual similarities include the distinctive depiction of the nose and eyebrows with a continuous line, as well as the almond-shaped eyes, prominent mouth, pointed chin, and incised hair (which was scratched into the wet pigment with Clark's brush handle).

Clark's fascination with Africa dated to his childhood in Philadelphia, where he had been entranced by African Methodist Episcopal Church ministers who

recounted their missionary experiences in "mother Africa."⁸ While still a high school student in the early 1930s, Clark had sketched the African art objects on display at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.⁹ After a friend, Sol Freeman, photographed some of these works, he gave several of the prints to Clark, who used them as visual referents for *Guttersnipe* nearly a decade later.¹⁰

Clark's interest in African art was reinforced by his studies at the Barnes Foundation, where African and European art and aesthetics were accorded equal respect, both in the classrooms and in the permanent collection galleries. This philosophy was conveyed to visitors by the startling juxtaposition of classical architectural elements and African art motifs at the entrance to the Foundation building (1922-25) designed by Paul Philippe Cret (1876-1945). Flanking the entrance door are two ceramic tile wall reliefs whose conjoined animal motifs were inspired by a carved Baule door from the Ivory Coast displayed in the Foundation's perma-



UNIDENTIFIED BAULE ARTIST
Kpan Mask (Ivory Coast)
20th century, wood and pigment, 12³/₄" x 5¹/₂" x 5¹/₂"
BEQUEST OF DEAN C. BARNLUND, 1994.28.10
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO



CLAUDE CLARK
Guttersnipe
1942, oil on wood, 20" x 16½"
AMERICAN ART TRUST FUND, 2000.21A-B
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

ment collection. The lintel frieze above the door incorporates images of Senofo figures from the collection, while cast iron railings on the exterior and interior of the building incorporate a Baule mask motif.¹¹

Clark always admired Barnes for the respect that he accorded to African art, noting, “he was the first collector, to my knowledge, to place the art of Black Africa in an art gallery and not in an ethnic museum. He also placed the paintings of Pablo Picasso side by side with Congo sculpture to document the sources of some of the elements in the paintings of the internationally known Spanish artist.”¹² These didactic juxtapositions, still visible in the galleries of the Barnes Foundation include Picasso’s *Head of a Woman* (1907) and *Head of a Man* (1907), which hang adjacent to wall-mounted African objects and above a glass display case containing additional African objects, including five Baule works.¹³ The two Picasso heads document the Spanish artist’s appropriation of African art while working on *Les demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907), and may have provided additional inspiration for Clark’s use of the conjoined nose and eyebrow motif, as well as his expressionistic brushwork.¹⁴

In 1954, echoing the teachings of the Barnes Foundation, Clark explained his motivations for creating paintings inspired by African art:

Through the years my interests have broadened into a search for insight into African sculpture. Many Western masters found the African culture fertile ground for modern art. Until a little more than 50 years ago, Western art was influenced almost exclusively by Grecian forms of beauty. But by the turn of the century this source of inspiration was exhausted. Perhaps in our culture many feel that only a “classical” body can house the soul. On the other hand, the African primitive, so-called, has his conception of beauty and no one can deny that his creations have made a world-wide impact on art. I have executed many canvases in this vein . . . [that] show my interest in fetishes for their aesthetic values.¹⁵

ALAIN LOCKE AND
“THE LEGACY OF THE ANCESTRAL ARTS”

Unlike many European and American modernists, Clark’s interest in African art was never exclusively aesthetic—it was also deeply rooted in cultural concerns. This interest was shared by the African American philosopher Alain Locke (1886-1954), a family friend who had taught Clark’s wife Daima (Effie M. Lockhart), while she was enrolled (1939-41) in an M.A. philosophy program at Howard University. Locke would have viewed

Clark’s use of African art in *Guttersnipe* as a validation of the aesthetic philosophy he had outlined in his anthology, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925), the defining text of the Harlem Renaissance. Locke’s influential essay in this book, “The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts,” illustrated with reproductions of African art objects owned by the Barnes Foundation, urged African American artists to embrace their African art heritage as a source of cultural pride and artistic inspiration.¹⁶

Locke’s philosophy is embodied by an earlier depiction of an African American child, Augusta Savage’s *Gamin* (1929). Although Savage’s nephew, Ellis Ford, posed for *Gamin*, it was widely interpreted by viewers as a realistic representation of a young, urban African American.¹⁷ Upon first impression, *Gamin* appears to share kinship with Robert Henri’s idealized paintings of African American street urchins. However, Savage’s sculpture may have been influenced stylistically by the famous bronze portrait heads created for the Royal Palace in Benin City, Nigeria. If so, *Gamin* fused contemporary racial pride with the historical heritage of noble Benin bronzes, the first African objects to be widely accepted as art in Europe and America.



AUGUSTA SAVAGE, *Gamin*
1929, bronze, 9" x 5½" x 3½"
COLLECTION OF DAVID C. AND THELMA DRISKELL

‘THE TALENTED TENTH’ AND THE MAN IN THE STREET

Alain Locke’s message of intellectual, cultural and social uplift was shaped by the writings and example of Harvard’s first African American Ph.D.—the author, educator, and civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963). In his famous essay “The Talented Tenth” (1903), Du Bois argued that “the Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men”—the most “talented tenth” of the population. Locke’s own social stature as Harvard’s first African American Rhodes scholar and a prominent exemplar of “the talented tenth”—a new elite black intelligentsia—influenced his response to Clark’s paintings.

Locke first met Clark after delivering a lecture at Philadelphia’s Pyramid Club and subsequently visited the artist’s Lombard Street studio in 1942. Viewing a recently completed painting, Locke exclaimed, “That looks just like a guttersnipe!”—the title immediately adopted by the artist as accurately conveying his subject’s identity.¹⁸ Dictionary definitions of “guttersnipe,” a hobo term that originally described a collector of cigar or cigarette butts (“snipe” is slang for a butt), include “a person of the gutter; a bum,” “a child brought up in the gutter,” or “person of the lowest moral or economic station.” As the pejorative connotations of Locke’s title imply, *Guttersnipe* is a portrait of a real, rather than an idealized youth—a denizen of the streets rather than of the artist’s studio. The antithesis of Augusta Savage’s idealized *Gamin* and “the talented tenth,” Clark’s unvarnished synthesis of street style and attitude in *Guttersnipe* more closely resembles the depictions of Chicago’s “Bronzeville” residents by Archibald J. Motley Jr. (1891-1981).

Guttersnipe reveals a shift from cultural pride to political engagement by overtly introducing the element of economic class—an issue that intersected race in every aspect of African American life. Clark later summarized the evolution of his political consciousness, explaining, “during the Negro Renaissance of the 1920s our Black image came sharply into focus. During the 1930s the African American artist was engulfed by Social Realism—stating his case about racism, lynching, unemployment and living conditions.”¹⁹

Clark’s street subject had attained new social relevance during the Great Depression, when many unemployed Americans were forced to fend for themselves on the streets, dependent upon soup kitchens, itinerant labor, and handouts from sympathetic pedestrians. In an early artistic manifestation of his lifelong identification with the working class, as an aspiring high school writer Clark had authored “The Pretzel Man,” a moving portrait of a stoic street vendor struggling to survive the

Great Depression.²⁰ Closer to home, while Clark pursued his art career, his father supported the family by driving a garbage wagon in the streets of Philadelphia.

By the time Clark painted *Guttersnipe* in 1942, many Americans had been lifted out of the Depression by the economic boom associated with World War II. In stark statistical contrast, poor or unemployed African Americans continued to suffer severe economic hardship that was compounded by racism and by legal, labor and housing discrimination.

LANGSTON HUGHES AND THE “RACIAL MOUNTAIN”

While Clark shared many of the cultural ideals of Alain Locke, Augusta Savage and other Harlem Renaissance predecessors, his political perspective was shaped by the realities of African American experience during the Great Depression. Clark’s *Guttersnipe* thus is less the offspring of Locke, who named the painting, than of the writer Langston Hughes (1902-1967), who named the race and class problem it confronts—on both sides of Du Bois’s “color line.” Clark had emulated Hughes’s literary style as an aspiring teenage poet, and continued to read the elder writer’s published works as an adult, but it was Hughes’s socialist beliefs and political activism that provided a role model for the artist’s mature work.

In his influential essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” (1926), Hughes readily acknowledged the pervasiveness of white racism, whether overt, covert, or patronizing. However, he also critically contrasted the “smug, contented, respectable” Negro middle class and their aspiration to assimilate into white America with the “low-down folks, the so-called common element,” who “live on Seventh Street in Washington or State Street in Chicago.”²¹ As Hughes observed, working-class African Americans

*furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations. And perhaps the common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself. Whereas the better-class Negro would tell the artist what to do, the people at least let him alone when he does appear. And they are not ashamed of him—if they know he exists at all. And they accept what beauty is their own without hesitation.*²²

Wearing the face of an ancestral African mask, Clark’s *Guttersnipe* not only challenged middle-class conformity and complacency, but also unmasked the



Wall Ensemble from Gallery Room XXII, South Wall, Barnes Foundation
 PHOTOGRAPH © REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION™, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

discrepancy between America's ideals of racial equality and economic opportunity, and the harsh realities in the streets of America. Clark took his messenger, a "guttersnipe" who embodied both his historical African heritage and his contemporary African American experience, from the streets and introduced him into the realm of the fine arts, where he could confront "the talented tenth" face-to-face. To paraphrase Langston Hughes, Clark's *Guttersnipe* served as a powerful reminder that this, too, was the face of America, and the visual embodiment of the resounding declaration that closed the essay "The Negro and the Racial Mountain":

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too.

*The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.*²³

Timothy Anglin Burgard is the Ednah Root Curator of American Art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

For a reminiscence by Claude Clark containing seven color reproductions of his works, see *IRAAA*, vol. 10 no. 3. Back issues of *IRAAA* can be ordered through our website: www.hamptonu.edu. Go to the "Museums" pages under the "University Services" link.

NOTES

- 1 David C. Driskell, *A Retrospective Exhibition, 1937-1971: Paintings by Claude Clark*, April 19–May 11, 1972, ex. cat., Nashville, Tennessee, The Carl Van Vechten Gallery of Fine Arts, Fisk University, n.p. I am grateful to Daima Clark and Steven L. Jones for sharing their expertise and documentation regarding Claude Clark's life and art.
- 2 Steven L. Jones, "First Think and Then Act': Aspect of the Life of Claude Clark," published in *Claude Clark: On My Journey Now: A Selection of Paintings from 1940-1986*, July 7-August 31, 1996, ex. cat., Atlanta, Georgia, The Apex Museum, 1996, n.p.
- 3 "Claude Clark, Sr.: A Reminiscence," *International Review of African American Art* 10 (no. 3, 1993), p. 41.
- 4 Barnes Foundation funds enabled the Parisian art dealer Paul Guillaume and the Barnes Foundation teacher Thomas H. Munro to publish *Primitive Negro Sculpture* (1926), one of the earliest and most influential English texts on African art. See Richard M. Wattenmaker et al., *Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post Impressionist, and Early Modern*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf in association with Lincoln University Press, 1993, p. 14.
- 5 For Van Gogh's portrait of *Joseph Etienne-Roulin and Man Smoking*, both acquired by Barnes in 1912, see Wattenmaker et al., pp. 6-7; 168-171. Clark's expressionistic color and brushwork also were influenced by the works of Chaim Soutine collected by Dr. Barnes, one of the artist's most prominent American advocates. See *ibid.*, pp. 11-12, 214-217.
- 6 Letter from Daima Clark to the author, May 26, 2001, *Guttersnipe* object file, American Art Department, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.
- 7 For reproductions of *Willie Gee and Sylvester*, see *Catalogue of a Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Robert Henri*, ex. cat., New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1931, plates 28 and 58.
- 8 Claude Clark, *A Black Art Perspective: A Black Teacher's Guide to a Black Visual Art Curriculum*, Oakland, California, privately published, 1969, p. 1.
- 9 Clark, p. 2.
- 10 Interviews with Claude Clark by Steven L. Jones, summarized in letters from Steven L. Jones to the author, January 9, 2000

and April 3, 2000, *Guttersnipe* object file, American Art Department, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.

11 For a description and photograph of the entrance to the Barnes Foundation, see Wattenmaker et al., pp. 10-11.

12 Clark, p. 3.

13 According to Barnes Foundation records, this particular arrangement of the two Picasso paintings and the adjacent African art objects has remained unchanged since Barnes death in 1951, and was probably present in similar or comparable form during the period of Clark's Barnes Fellowship (1942-44).

14 For Picasso's *Head of a Man* and *Head of a Woman*, see Wattenmaker et al., pp. 204-207.

15 Claude Clark, cited in Driskell, n.p.

16 Alain Locke, "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," in Alain Locke, ed. *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, New York, A. and C. Boni, 1925, reprinted as *The New Negro*, with a new preface by Robert Hayden, New York, Atheneum, 1969, pp. 254-267.

17 Juanita Holland is credited with discovering the identity of the sitter for *Gamin* in Terry Gips et al., *Narratives of African American Art and Identity: The David C. Driskell Collection*, San Francisco, Pomengranate, in association with the University of Maryland, 1998, p. 89.

18 Interviews with Claude Clark by Steven L. Jones, summarized in a letter from Steven L. Jones to the author, January 9, 2000, *Guttersnipe* object file, American Art Department, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.

19 Letter from Claude Clark to David C. Driskell, March 12, 1972, cited in Driskell, n.p.

20 Claude Clark, "The Pretzel Man," published in the Roxborough Junior/Senior High School *Wissahickon*, ca. 1929-35, courtesy of Mrs. Claude [Daima] Clark copy in Claude Clark artist file, American Art Department, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.

21 Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *The Nation* 122 (June 23, 1926), p. 692, reprinted in David Levering Lewis, ed., *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, New York, Penguin Books, 1994, pp. 91-92.

22 *Ibid.* pp. 91-92.

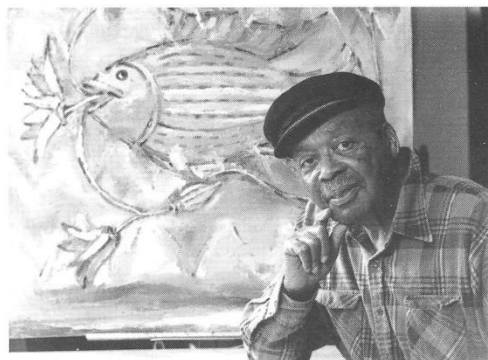
23 *Ibid.* pp. 95.



Top Row—Paul Knadra, Blanche Ceman, Stella Komupka, Helen Oroski, Claude Clark
Bottom Row—John Adams, Jane Clements, John Benincasa, Helen Kennedy, Aloysius Ballisty, Wilma Butler

Honor Society

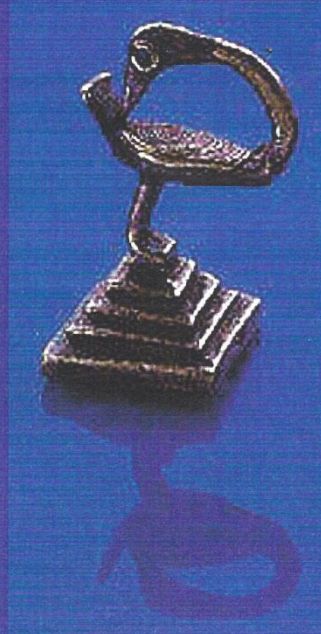
Claude Clark (top row, right) with the Honor Society at Roxborough Junior/Senior High School, ca. 1935



Claude Clark (1915-2001)

MUSEUM
HAMPTON UNIVERSITY

Sarkofa – Claude Clark's Memorial Service, 2001



Sarkofa

Claude Clark's Journey

Nov. 11, 1915 - April 21, 2001

Look back and take something from
the past, then move forward with it.

CREATIVE SOURCE



In Memory of Artist: Printmaker, Easel Painter and Educator –

CLAUDE CLARK

(b. NOVEMBER 11, 1915 - d. APRIL 21, 2001)

Photography by Jonathan Eubanks

ARTIST'S STATEMENT MADE IN 1989

As a child in the churches, the schools and the community, I dreamed of a destiny. My search became a single purpose for the dignity of Black people instead of attempting to solve the concerns of all humanity. Early on I was convinced that a creative spirit must soar beyond compartments of religion and politics. It was through the roots of African Art that I learned of the creative source of most Western art. As I stood near the Nile at Cairo and looked toward the Mediterranean in awe, I envisioned how the Greeks, Persians, Romans, etc., had sailed up the Nile, taking away the fine arts, sciences, history and other disciplines. There were records on paper, on stone, on walls in the temples that rivaled anything produced later in the Renaissance....

CELEBRATING CLAUDE CLARK'S JOURNEY
November 11, 1915 - April 21, 2001
Friday, June 22, 2001 1:30 P.M

ORGAN MUSIC Sister Betty Gadling
Minister Of Music

PROCESSION Family and Friends
"Lift Every Voice And Sing" Congregation

SCRIPTURE READING Dr. Ndugu T'Ofori-Atta
Pastor, M.E. Zion Church, Atlanta, GA.

PRAYER Rev. Jessel C.Strong, Pastor, Bethel
A.M.E. Church, Oxnard, CA

Speaker Mrs. Pamela M. McDonald, Director
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REESTABLISHING AN AFRICAN HERITAGE: Claude Lockhart Clark
MUSIC: Instrumental

Speaker Robert Bain, Director, JOYSMITH
Art Gallery Memphis, TN

Speaker Dr. Stella Jones, STELLA JONES
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MUSIC: "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" Mrs. Phyllis E. Sneed

Speaker Dr. George Herring, Senior Vice Chancellor
Peralta Commuity College District

Speaker Anglin Burgard, Curator Of American Art,
The fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

EXCERPTS FROM last Formal Interview of Claude Clark taped by ADAMATION
Media Software

Speaker Ms..Kimberly Camp, C.E.O., Barnes Foundation,
Merion, PA

Projection of Claude Clark Paintings: Arthur Henry Pippins,Jr. Accompanied by
Readings of several of Claude Clark's poems and essays by Rev. Morris Buchanan,
Pastor, Bethel A.M.E. Church,Highghland, CA.
And Ms. Violetta Peters, Englewood, CA.

EULOGY Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Senior Pastor,
Allen Temple Baptist Church

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL: "Hallelujah Chorus"

RECEPTION : FELLOWSHIP HALL

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

By James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the Faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.
Shadowed beneath thy Hand
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our Native Land.

Claude Clark---

the second eldest child in a family of 10, was born November 11, 1915 in Rockingham, GA., to John Henry, Sr. and Estelle Clark. In 1923 after struggling as a tenant farmer trying to support his growing family, Claude's father moved his family to Manyunk, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia where Claude received his elementary and high school training. His family lived on the canal in this small community of predominantly European immigrants; one Chinese family and about 30 African- American families. Young Claude's mother helped him overcome some of his shyness by teaching him to recite little ditties.

When he and his older brother, John, were in Jr. High school, the pastor of the small Josie B. Hurd A.M.E. Church came to the Clark home early before Sunday School on Sundays to help the two brothers chop wood for their mother's cook stove so the boys could attend Sunday School. Teaching and mentoring of his art by his art teacher in Junior High plus encouragement from his Sunday School teacher and the pastor's occasional commentaries during Church Service on the art work Claude performed while in Sunday School, probably helped Clark decide on a career as artist instead of a poet.

Toward the end of his senior year in Senior High, Claude's classmates who majored in art told him they would not compete for the scholarship to an Art School because they had not worked for it; but he did. Clark did all of the artwork for student events as well as contributed poems and essays to the student publication, THE WISSAHICKON. Clark's senior high art instructor advised him to apply to Wilberforce College in Wilberforce, Ohio because "they are nice people." Clark told her he wanted to attend an art school where he could learn more about art. She told him she would not recommend him for the scholarship, that he could go over her head. Clark approached the principal who awarded him the scholarship to The Penna. School of Industrial Arts, where he matriculated from 1935 to '39.

From 1939-1942 Clark worked on the WPA (Works Public Administration) in the Graphic Arts (printmaking) division and he painted after hours in a studio he shared with Raymond Steth, after hours. His goal was to help the common man in whatever medium of expression he chose.

From 1939 to 1944 Clark was exposed to African images placed side by side with modern master European painters at the Barnes Foundation. The influence of traditional African images upon modern European masters was inescapable. A door at the Foundation from the Ivory Coast was carved in the 16th Century. Clark could not help but take pride in the knowledge of Africa's worldwide influence upon the arts.

When he went to Talladega College, Talldega, Alabama (1948 - 1955), Clark built an art department, teaching students traditional European and African Art forms. While working at Sacramento State College toward his B.A. degree (1956 to '58) Clark was paid to teach art history to students who were studying for their teaching credentials at Sacramento State. In 1962 Clark earned his MA from the Univ. of Calif. at Berkeley. In 1968 he was hired to teach studio art courses; courses in African and Afro-American Art history at Merritt College in Oakland until his retirement in 1981. He designed and wrote the first curriculum for African and African American Art; A BLACK ART PERSPECTIVE, A Black Teacher's Guide To A Black Visual Art Curriculum, 1970.

Throughout his career Clark chose to express himself in the culture he knew best which was the folkways in which he was nurtured in America and the parallel low-waged and no-waged peoples in the Caribbean with whom he readily identified: notably Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Virgin Islands; and later West Africa.

Claude Clark leaves a legacy of great art which speaks on behalf of and to the struggling masses. His work will always hold its own among America's great colorists. It is hoped his legacy will be remembered by this nation for many many decades.

Claude Clark is survived by his wife: Daima; son, Claude Lockhart; daughter, Alice T'Ofori-Atta; two sisters: Lera Clark and Estelle Mack of Philadelphia; three brothers: David and Jonathon of Philadelphia, James of South Carolina; three grand children and a host of nephews, nieces and cousins.

**** **** **** **** **** ****

In 1987 Clark was among 8 professors from American colleges and universities whose letters were included in "Messages From Abroad" in the BLACK STUDIES JOURNAL, No. 57, 1987 OF THE BLACK STUDIES ASSN., Kobe City University Of Foreign Studies in Japan.

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He wrote the following:

Members of our local Association of Africans and African American are busy making final plans for an international conference in Aswan, Egypt (Kemet). We expect black people from all over the world, meeting on the site of Ancient Nubia, the most ancient of our ancestral homelands.

You might have been aware that there is a national black organization in the United States committed to the study of Classical African civilizations, and we are interested in our heritage and roots among these cultures.

Today, the Nubians are an oppressed people, but very much alive in the Sudan, Ethiopia and Aswan of Kemet (Egypt). These descendants tell us that their ancestors came to the Nile Valley more than 8,000 years ago and that they were the rulers in the first kingdoms in the region, before the reign of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

We are just beginning, but some members who read hieroglyphs are busy rewriting the history of Kemet. You are aware that the European mind set does not reason or understand the non-European psyche. The more we get into ancient African classical thought, the more we see and feel the ancient presence in the rest of the African continent, in the Americas and wherever Africans have been dispersed.

We salute the Japan Association of Black studies, and the #57th issue of Kokujin Kenkyu. As to the attitude of the Prime Minister, we understand---as there is one of those with the same attitude in the United States of America who, as a racist, endangers international economy. Here is an echo of the closing sentence of your letter, as we also believe that our research will help in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary forces of our world.

Yours truly,
Claude Clark
Artist & Prof. Emeritus

Claude Clark appears in two books by Furukawa Hiromi, professor at Kyoto Women's University. One is A STUDY OF AFRO-AMERICAN LITERATURE---In search of Its Roots and Soul---, published in 1989. The second is Professor Hiromi's personal account of his visit with faculties in African American Studies at a number of American colleges and universities. The book includes photos of groups and individuals; one in which Claude Clark is pictured hosting Professor Hiromi in his home in 1992.

-3-

Claude Clark
School Of Industrial Arts
Broad & Pine Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY

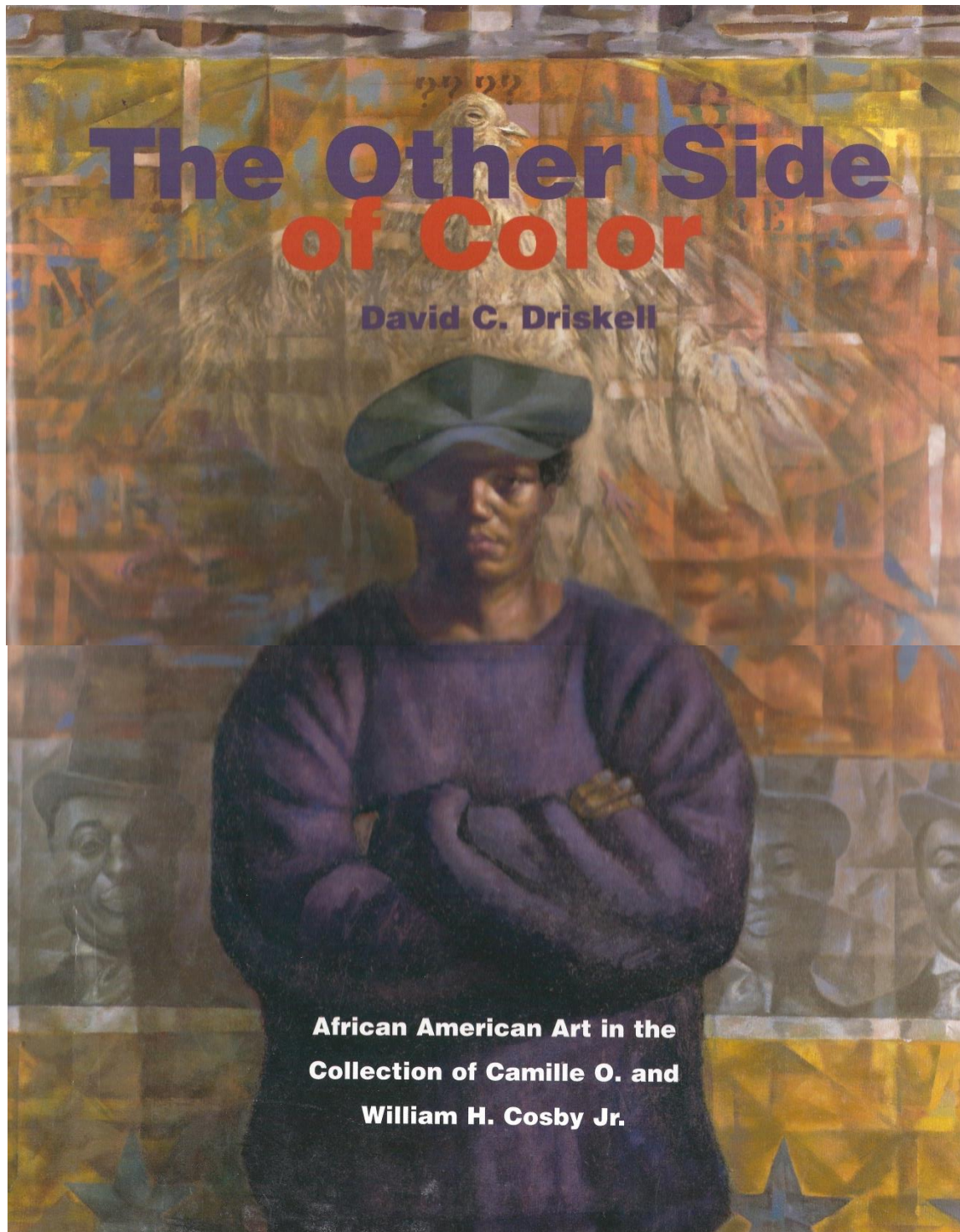
By
Claude Clark

The heavens declare the glory of God
And resound at the sound of His voice.
Along a great river of the aged earth
Which the red-man called, Mississippi
There lived a town of sinful people;
God spake,
And the heavens responded
The thunder rolled
And the lightning flashed,
And the rain descended upon the earth,
And the earth was cleansed once more.

Deep in the heart of the thirsty West
There lay fields of forlorn, forsaken grain
And the cattle were hungry,
Because of a forgotten earth;
God spake softly,
The heavens replied.
The soil drank in the soft refreshing rain;
God spake again
And the heavens answered,
The golden sun broke through the clouds
To ripen the refreshed, golden grain;
Grass spouted from the bowels of the earth
And the cattle fed their hungry maws
And a starving people were saved from famine.
The heavens declare the glory of God
And resound at the sound of His voice....

The Other Side of Color, by David Driskell, 2001

African American Art in the Collection of Camille O. and William H. Cosby Jr.



The Other Side of Color

African American Art in the
Collection of Camille O.
and William H. Cosby Jr.

*To Laima Clark, with thanks and sincere
appreciation*
Art, Driskell
David C. Driskell

with Introductions by
Camille O. Cosby and William H. Cosby Jr.

Biographies by
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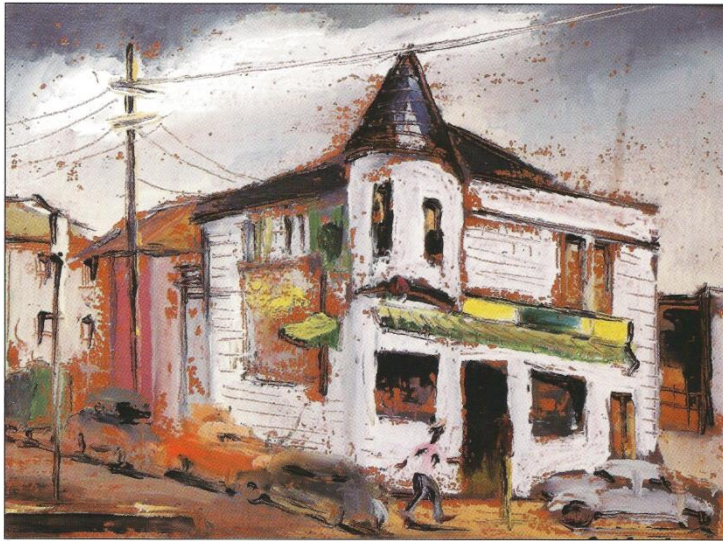
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Tapestries of Life, Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA,
2003

“Tapestries of Life”
Series 1



Claude Clark "The Street Corner, 1954" 12"x 14 Oil on Board



Beverly Buchanan "Old Macon Road, 1992" 40"x60" Oil Pastel on Paper

STELLA JONES GALLERY

Gallery Reception
Saturday, January 4, 2003



Beverly Buchanan

"I've been making things all of my life; I made all sorts of stuff from leftover, thrown-out things. And, I guess that eventually transformed into what later was called art. It was just never called that, it was called "making things."

Beverly Buchanan is an artist who works in a variety of media including sculpture, drawing, painting and photography. Buchanan has earned a great amount of respect in the art community by celebrating the architecture of the southern landscape. Populated by shacks abandoned by descendants of sharecroppers and perhaps even slaves, she transforms these images into classical forms of timeless dignity, which illuminates the triumph of adversity over circumstance.

Buchanan was born in 1940 in Fuquay, North Carolina. She grew up on the campus of South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina, which was at this time the only state-supported school for blacks. Here, her father was the dean of the School of Agriculture. Buchanan started drawing at an early age, becoming fascinated with shacks while traveling with her father in rural South Carolina. When she was seven or eight years old, the daughter of the school's first Black president asked if she could borrow some twenty drawings from Buchanan. Soon thereafter, she took Buchanan to the YWCA building, where her work was hanging in an exhibition for university women.

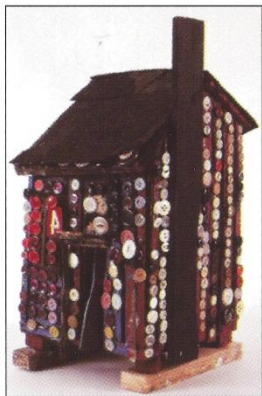
She received a bachelor's degree in medical technology and a Masters of Public Health from Columbia University. After graduating, Buchanan logically thought that she would attend medical school. However, in 1977, while working as a health educator in the city of East Orange, New Jersey, she had an epiphany. She realized that "I wanted to be an artist, not a doctor who paints. I had to do what I really wanted to do. It was hard and my mother continued to say 'Beverly's a health educator for the city of East Orange.' It wasn't until I got the Guggenheim in 1980 that she said, 'My daughter is an artist.'"

Having earned her master's degree in parasitology and public health, Buchanan worked as a medical technologist in the Bronx by day and spent her spare time beating the pavement throughout the city trying to interest galleries in her drawings and paintings. Buchanan was undaunted by the negative reception she sometimes received. She recalled, "My philosophy was, 'All they could say is no. I read all the art magazines, entered contests, and took every opportunity to show my work. I started out exhibiting outdoors on a church fence in a show sponsored by a neighborhood art store.'" In 1977, after achieving a great deal of success and notoriety in New York, she left her job to pursue a career in art full time and moved to Georgia. Initially, she moved to Macon, then to Atlanta and finally Athens. "I miss New York sometimes," she says. "I miss my friends, I used to miss the energy, but there's a similar energy in Athens. You can try anything you want to try here; no one hassles you. It's okay to do what you do. It's kind of like family."

In 1980, Buchanan was awarded both a Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship after the submission of her three-dimensional work. "When I look back, I realize I experimented a lot," Buchanan stated. "The grant money gave me a mental freedom that allowed me to explore other things." Her three-dimensional work from this period included small architectural structures made of clay or concrete for which she is best known. Much like those who built the actual shacks, Buchanan often utilizes recycled material for her constructions. Cardboard, foam core, scraps of metal or scraps of recycled wood are the media of choice. One particular construction was made of computer discs. The people she has known inspire many of her shacks. She often accompanied her father on field trips as he traveled through the countryside researching and giving presentations to tenant farmers. She was able to glimpse the often-hard life of these people and celebrates their existence in her shack sculptures and paintings. Texts often accompany her work, recalling the oral tradition of African American culture.

Buchanan displays her shacks with text panels featuring the "legends" she has written about. Her imagination gives voice to the people who have lived in these shacks. Buchanan takes the high road in telling these stories; there are no tales of woe and poverty. Indeed, her presentation is an uplifting glimpse into the lives of these black people, often told with wit and humor. Like Zora Neale Hurston, she gleans the personality of the southern sensibility of black folks and gives us stories that delight and inspire us.

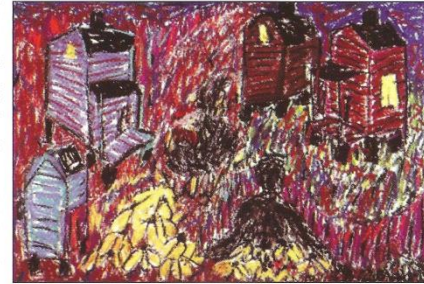
Buchanan is not interested in slavishly replicating these houses but is more inclined to display the "spirit" of them. In such compositions as Old Macon Road, 1992, the artist takes artistic license in her expressionistic use of color. Two identical shacks are positioned adjacent to each other, creating a sense of harmonic camaraderie. There is a tension in the architectural forms, which almost connect-but barely. People who have lived in these buildings are connected, in a sense, with the same problems, hopes, and dreams. Poverty pervades the material means of the place but there is richness of spirit in the people who reside there. The bright vibrant primary colors give a sense of cheerfulness to what would otherwise be a depressing scene. *Murder Creek Shacks, 1991*, is also composed of smaller shacks arranged in a circle.



"Button Shack, 1990-95", Wood & Mixed Media

It is interesting that Buchanan's structures take on humanistic qualities. They seem to move and resonate with the personality of the dweller. One conjures up southern families with bare front yards swept clean with a broom or one can see children playing ring-around-the-roses with tightly knit hands. There is a recollection of the smell of food cooking and clothes being boiled with pungent lye soap over an open fire.

Memories flood over us and are evoked by the spirit that hovers over houses that have been abandoned. But they have a human story to tell that Buchanan has uncovered. Zora Neale Hurston did the same with the folktales collected from Eatonville's black community.



"Augusta's Flowers, 1995", Oil Pastel on Paper

Another composition entitled *Augustus Flowers, 1995*, shows what it means to be connected in a communal sense. There is something about "connection" in her compositions. Shacks are "entities" that reflect the life energy of the dweller. These shacks are feisty, with vibrant lines of color activating the composition and the life of the house. Buchanan insists that "The shacks incorporate more than just the physical properties of the structure, they hold the personality of the people that live there."

Buchanan's three-dimensional constructions are painted in layers of bright primary colors and scattered with patterns of squiggles, crosses and dots and constructed of found objects. *Button Shack, 1990-95*, a three-dimensional construction wood and mixed media composition is made up of colored buttons that covers the entire house except the roof. The buttons deny the structural integrity of the building but gives it character. In fact, it reminds one of "yard art" which is common in the south. The use of bottle caps, hubcaps, glass bottles, discarded automobile tires and mirrors are used as decorations by some famous folk artists living in the south. It is also a reminder of reliquaries where objects of great religious and spiritual importance were kept and venerated. *The Johnson Family House, 1990*, made of cedar and pine, is pristine in its tightly constructed silhouette. Buchanan pays homage to the spirit of the house. There is reverence in the construction. This same reverence was felt when the community came out to help build a house. A sense of pride was felt in owning one's home in the south where ownership was rare indeed.

Although her shack drawings and three-dimensional work is familiar to her audience, Buchanan multi-talented oeuvre extends to many genres. Her fascination with rural southern people and their homes has led her to photography. *Ms. Mary Lou Furcron's House, 1989*, color photograph, reveals the powerful and poignant image of a house, which barely stands with its rickety construction, but stand it does and probably Ms. Mary Lou did too, in spite of her adversities.

Buchanan has shown in numerous group and solo exhibitions. Both private and public collectors own her work. Some public collectors include: Amerasia Hess Corp, New York; ARCO Corporation, Pennsylvania; AT&T Corporation, New Jersey; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Carter Center Library, Atlanta; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk; Colgate Palmolive Corp; Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia; General Mills, Minneapolis; Hanes Corporation, Winston-Salem; Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey; Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, Georgia; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Reader's Digest, New York, Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa; and The Morris Museum of Southern Art.

Buchanan has returned to the place of her heritage. With a renewed interest in the south and its cultural identity she has re-acquainted us with a time that still lingers in the shacks that she has encountered. That time is compressed in our memories of childhood to our adulthood. The tapestry she has created is woven from tightly knit threads of the community that shared the dwellings. The threads woven in her visions of Miss Sue, Uncle Bob and Cousin Jane living in the country are bright and colorful. We remember their stories; these old abandoned shacks whisper them to us as we pass by. The hollow eyes of the window and doors look and speak to us and implore us to tell the stories so that no one will forget. Beverly Buchanan has done this for them. She has captured the voice and "soul" of these houses...

1. A World of Art, "Biographical Sketch: Beverly Buchanan," <http://www.learner.org/collections/multimedia/artfilm/waseries/wabios/Buchanan.html>
2. Melissa Link, "Colored Shacks: Beverly Buchanan's Rich Hues Illuminate A Lost World." *Flagpole Magazine Online.* http://www.flagpole.com/Issues/05.26.99/beverly_buchanan.html
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.



Claude Clark (1915-2001)

"As a child in the churches, the schools and the community, I dreamed of a destiny. My search became a single purpose for the dignity of Black people..."

Claude Clark was born November 11, 1915 on a tenant farm in rural Rockingham, Georgia. A painter, printmaker and educator, his work characterizes the African American experience. Clark's subject matter is woven from the threaded Diaspora of African American culture. It includes dance scenes, street urchins, landscapes and still-lives executed primarily with a palette knife. His bold, assured strokes of the paint illuminate the exaggerated movement of Black dance and the luscious texture of foliage and fruit.

In early August 1923, Clark's parents became part of that great exodus of blacks leaving the south for a better life during the Great Migration. They traveled to Philadelphia where Clark attended a predominantly white school. Clark experienced overt racism while attending high school, but did not allow it to deter him from his dream of becoming a poet or an artist.

From 1935-1939, Clark studied at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. While there, he again experienced racism from some of his instructors. However, others like Frank Copeland and Earl Horter were supportive. Henry Pitz influenced his figurative work and Franklin Watkins was inspirational in showing him the freedom inherent in painting. By the third year, Clark won the painting prize and Watkins purchased some of his works. While studying at the school, Clark's teachers introduced him to the technique of Van Gogh in the handling of the still life. The execution of this style formed the basis of his approach to drawing and painting. In his composition, Van Gogh and Cézanne's influence can be felt in the thick creamy texture and loosely applied paint. The palette knife became his tool of choice and Clark's deft handling of it has been his signature trademark. Clark recalled: "I dared to paint in the drawing classes instead of using charcoal. The students at that school were quite amazed...I wanted to get as much painting as possible. But doing this time there was a suspicion of modernist techniques as opposed to the traditional methods of making art. "I heard the other students called me 'a filthy modernist,' because I was applying the paint with a palette knife." His work was sometimes labeled "neo-primitive" or "neo-Baroque." It is important to note that there would be a backlash against this type of art during the next decade in which abstract art would be considered modern while realistic painting would be condemned as non-progressive.

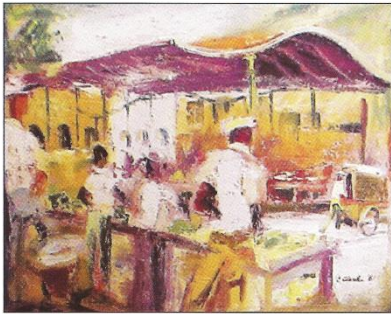
Wilhelm DeKooning would be vehemently scandalized a couple years later for painting realistic subject matter, while the use of the palette knife would become the norm in artistic circles.

Clark applied to the distinguished Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania in 1938, but missed his appointment. He reapplied and was accepted in 1939. The Albert Barnes collection consisted of an array of works that included: African art, European Impressionism and American art. Clark was able to investigate the hundreds of original Old Masters and modernist works and to study first hand one of the first important collections of African art in America in the Barnes collection.

In 1939, during the Great Depression, Clark was desperately searching for a job. He heard that the Artist's Union would provide jobs through the Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He contacted the union and they found him a job at the WPA. Clark worked with the WPA from 1939-1942. The artist's credo about art was that it should benefit the common man. This related to the ideology of the Mexican muralist who was committed to an art for the people. Thus, he began to work in a medium that would reach the masses. He joined the graphic arts shop where he worked and shared a studio with Raymond Steh. Here, he became acquainted with Dox Thrash. During this period Thrash discovered a new carbonundum printing technique while employed there. Clark along with others at the shop would experiment with new techniques; including a color etching process.

In 1941 Clark met Effie Mae Lockhart from California, the daughter of an AME minister. They married in June 1943. Clark then obtained jobs in Philadelphia after his tenure with the WPA. His work has appeared in numerous shows including the Albany (NY) Institute of History and Art's 1945 presentation "The Negro Comes of Age." His first solo show was at the Artist's Gallery of Philip Ragan Association in Philadelphia, 1944. Also, he was the first black artist featured by Dorothy Grafly. His first New York show was at the Bonestell Gallery in 1945, followed by one at the Michael Freilich's Roko Gallery 1946-1947. With the purchase of "Cutting Pattern" from his 1944 Artist Gallery show, by Albert Barnes, Clark became the second living African American artist, after Horace Pippin, to have his work displayed by the Barnes Foundation.

Clark's WPA work shows his affinity for social realism. An example of this is seen in *Guttersnipe, 1942*, a recent purchase by Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. It shows a cocky street-kid smoking a cigarette. The subject matter examines issues of race and identity that continues to haunt African Americans. Other early works from the 1940's reveal a celebratory spirit in such common themes as *Jam Session, 1943*. These dance scenes are an exploration of African Americans partaking of the life in the urban landscapes. In contrast, *Vase, 1946*, a still life of vibrant colors, reminds us of the sheer



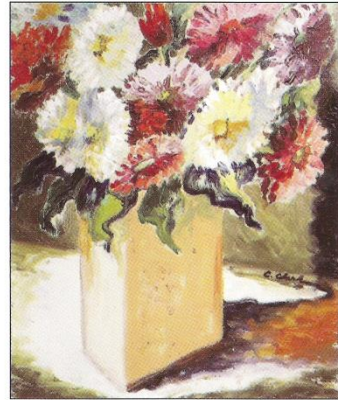
"Market Place (Virgin Isles), 1946", Oil on Canvas 24"x 20"

pleasure that a vase of flowers can give. Its sensuous textures emphasized by the palette knife make the flowers pulsate with energy. The color harmonies within the composition add a subtle touch to the luscious paint textures. In the 1950s and 1960s Clark's themes changed due to his travels abroad to Africa and the Caribbean. In *Street Scene, 1954*, Clark examines the sense of loneliness and abandonment that prevails in urban areas. The abandoned building is reminiscent of William H. Johnson's *Jacobia Hotel, 1930*, with its expressive character and movement. The atmosphere also relates the sense of alienation and abandonment in the work of Edward Hopper.

As early as the 1940's, Art News recognized his rare artistic ability:

*"Claude Clark (Roko: to March 31, 1947)...presents...an art in which strong feelings are translated into paint. Forceful army scenes, figure studies...and powerful landscapes reveal Clark's concern with human and psychological values. Brilliant color harmonies and a moving sense of design contribute to their achievement. The flower paintings show his feeling for color at its purest..."*¹

In the 1940s, Clark became interested in working in a black college. After writing many letters of employment, he received offers from two: Jackson State University in Mississippi and Talladega College in Alabama. Jackson State offered the higher salary, but he chose Talladega because it provided housing, which he desperately needed for his family. Originally, he went to Talladega in 1948 to do a workshop. However, many of his students, who were war veterans requested art training. Due to an increased student demand, he established a full time art department. Determined to educate his students in their own cultural history, Clark exposed his students to African and African American art. In 1950, he won a Carnegie Fellowship, which allowed him to spend the summer in the Caribbean, mainly Puerto Rico, painting still lifes and landscapes.



"Vase of Flowers, 1946", Oil on Canvas 24"x 20"

In 1955, at the end of the spring term, Clark left Talladega. Without another employment engagement, he moved with his family to California. More importantly, he was urged to do so by Mrs. Clark; she recalled, "I could see that we could not send our two kids to college if he stayed in Talladega. I couldn't find a job in Talladega."² Mrs. Clark had a Master's of Philosophy degree from Howard University and had studied under Alain Locke. She could not obtain a job at the college nor in the public school system. The move became a career and economic necessity for both of them. Subsequently, in the fall of 1955, he registered at Sacramento State University and received his undergraduate degree in 1958. He moved to Oakland California in 1959 and attended the University of California at Berkeley. Majoring in painting with a minor in social studies, he obtained his Master's of Arts degree in 1962. Meanwhile, Mrs. Clark managed to obtain two additional degrees at the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley. One was a Master's of Theology and the other, a Master's in Religious Education.

During this period Clark's color palette lightened and his technique became freer with such works as *Homestretch, 1961* and *Ascending 1961*. *Market Place (Virgin Isles), 1961* also shows the lighter color palette and his continued interest in abstraction. Clark found employment at Oakland's Merritt College in 1968 and stayed until his retirement in 1981. In 1969 Clark wrote "A Black Art Perspective: A Black Teacher's Guide to a Black Visual Arts Curriculum."

Clark has exhibited with many famous African American artists such as Henry O. Tanner, Romare Bearden, Richmond Barthé, William H. Johnson, Aaron Douglas, Charles White, Ellis Wilson and Jacob Lawrence. Additional exhibits have been held in Paris, Puerto Rico, Mexico and throughout the United States. In addition, to private collections, his works can be found in public and museum collections, including the Smithsonian Institute, National Gallery of Art, Talladega College, Fisk University, Atlanta University, Hampton University, DuSable Museum, Chicago; Oakland Museum, Oakland; Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco; the Library of Congress and Bill Cosby purchased a painting entitled *My Church* as a gift to Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Claude Clark died April 21, 2001 leaving behind a void in the African American art community. Mrs. Clark talked about his sense of humanity in his art and life. "I felt that he was a very generous man with his art and his knowledge. He didn't have any working hours because he was always working...sometimes to his own detriment. I consider him one of America's greatest colorist. He ground his own paint, you know..."³ Clark's brilliant work has secured him a position within the history of art.

An innovator, an educator, and an icon of the first caliber he has woven a tapestry that is rich with the extraordinary design of our lives. Within its pattern, we danced the jitterbug, we laughed, we cried, we played and listened to jazz music, we remembered the southern folk tradition. We knew that we were connected to others in Africa and the Caribbean; we sensed it in his wonderful paintings. A transplanted Southerner living in California, he maintained his "southern ethos" in the midst of urban life. Yet, he was a participant in the black nationalistic movement, too. The tattered threads of the weave are older but no less rich in its pattern that reflect a life that connected the threads of others to an art that continues to trace the patterns of our lives and history.

Eloise Johnson, Ph.D.
African American Art History

1. Art News, March 1947
2. Interview with Mrs. Clark, December 9, 2002 by the author.
3. Ibid.

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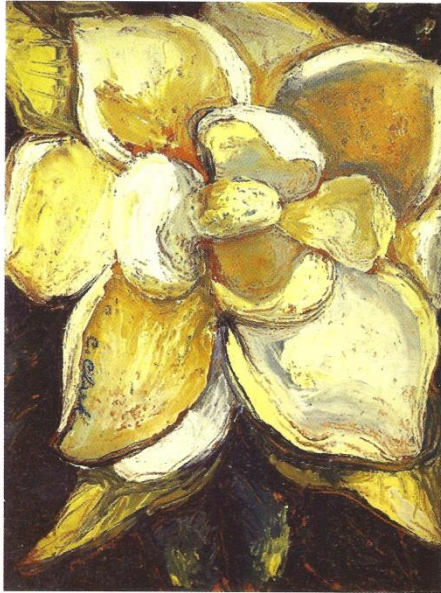
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Claude Clark

American Artist, 1915 — 2001



Magnolia Blossom, 1950
Oil on Board, 9" x 12"

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Talladega College, Talladega, AL

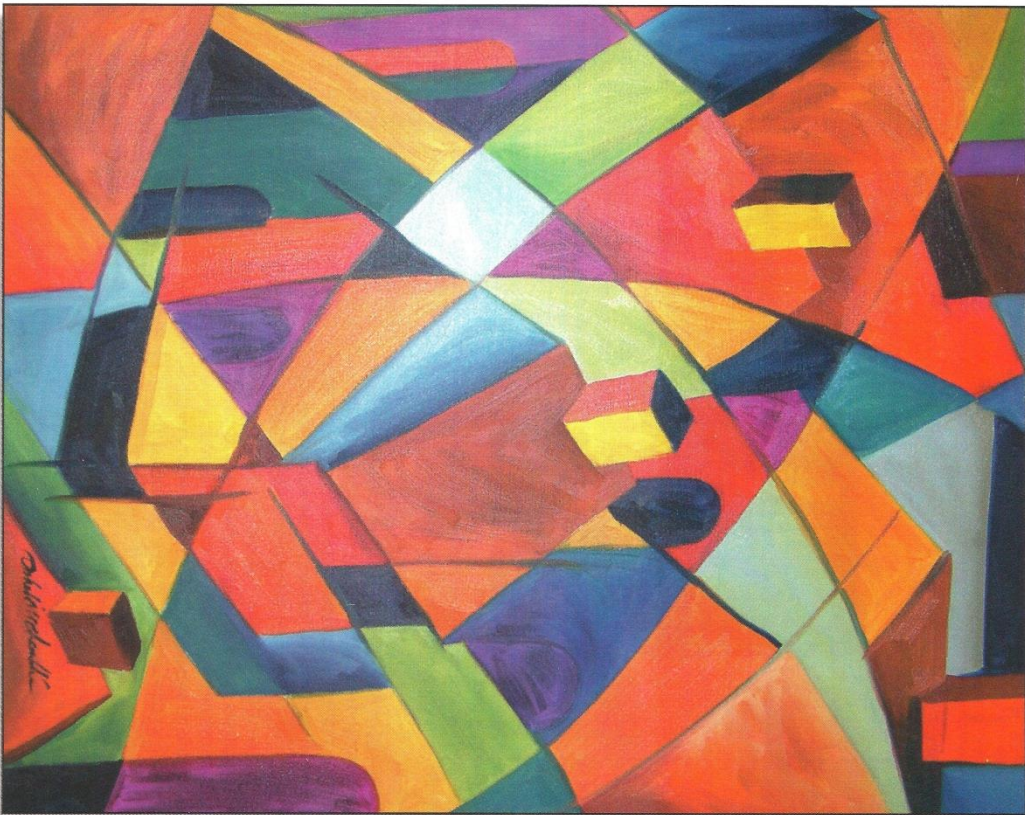
A Salute to African American Artists Calendar, 2005

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A SALUTE TO
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OPHELIA CHAMBLISS
ROOFTOPS
Oil on canvas



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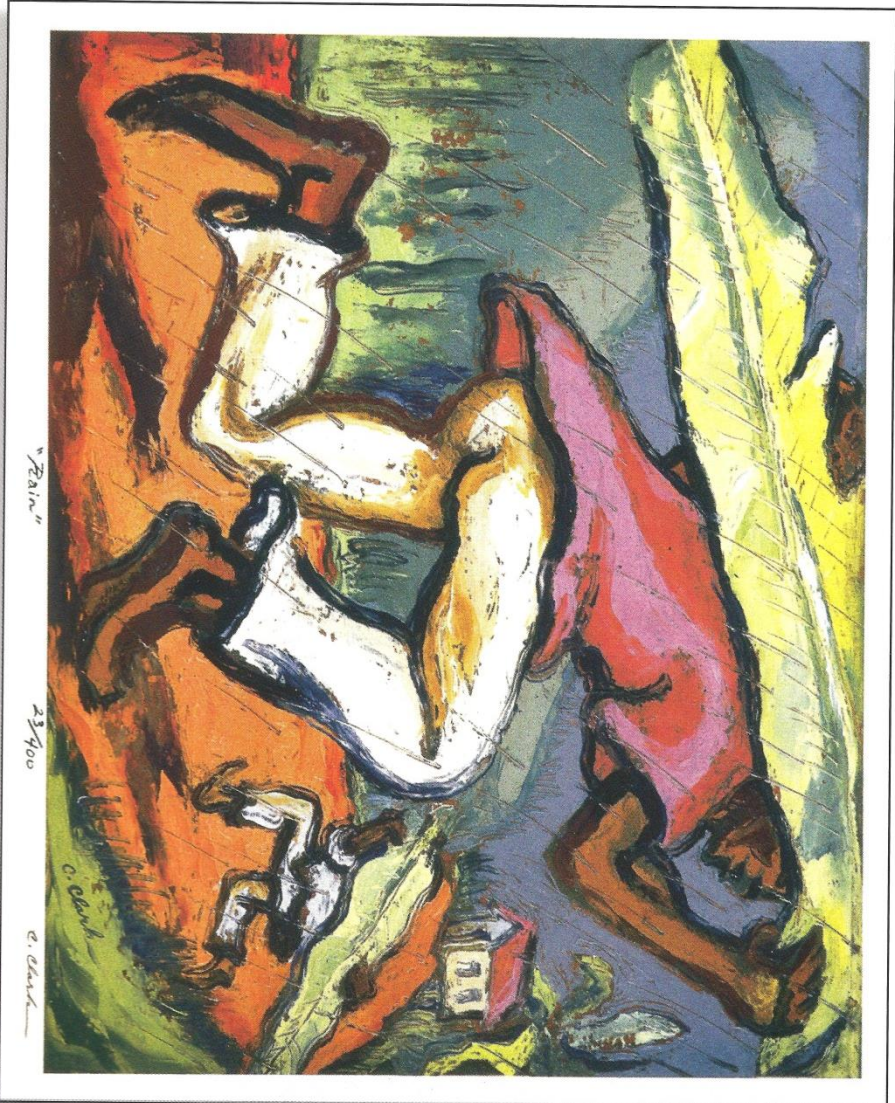
CLAUDE CLARK

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One of America's most respected black artists, Claude Clark was an influential educator as well. As an art instructor, Clark was instrumental in establishing the Art Department at Alabama's Talladega College. He taught the first Afro-American Art Courses at Merritt Community College starting the spring of 1968.

From black genre to political commentary, Claude Clark's own work focused on the varied experiences of black people in the Americas.



RAIN
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Photo of Claude Clark by Jonathan Eubanks

FEBRUARY 2005

