

OFF THE WALL

News & Views from JUST LOOKIN' GALLERY

Published for Ethnic Art Lovers Everywhere Summer 1997



NEWS FROM: *HERE & THERE*



Spotlight On:
James Denmark

❖ **Keith Mallett** and Paloma Editions were recently honored by Rachel Robinson and the Jackie Robinson Foundation to produce the only official limited edition print commemorating the 50th anniversary of Robinson's integration of major league baseball. Keith entitled the piece "Dawn of a New Era." It depicts Robinson, in Dodgers uniform, in four different stages of his career. In an edition of 1500 pieces this one is flying out of here. It's an exciting view of history. Don't miss it. ❖ **Gilbert Young's** latest social commentary "The Heritage" is an inspirational gift idea for college bound youth. ❖ "All the Riches in the World" is **Paul Goodnight's** latest limited edition offset. Showing a father and two children, it's one of the sweetest pieces Paul's ever created. ❖ **Katherine Kisa** has just created some wonderful linocuts. She is producing these as a series of monoprints with great colorations. ❖ For the clown lovers among us, **George Nock** has four new limited editions. I especially like "Acey Duecey." ❖ **Olivia Gatewood's** new canvases are knockouts! Using a "liquid mosaic" technique, they look like glass fused to canvas. ❖ **John Holyfield** has a very special handpulled serigraph called "Nurture." With only twelve in the edition, I've already stashed mine. ❖ **Michael Brown's** original painting, "Kiss the Sky" was recently purchased by the Baltimore Urban League for permanent display in their conference room. Michael is busy at work on two new etchings. We expect to have artist proofs of these real soon. ❖ **Gilbert Young** and **Charles Bibbs** recently collaborated on a piece. Called "Lilies from Charles", it should make its debut this summer. ❖ We're also awaiting a new serigraph from **Anthony Armstrong** entitled "Nude with Drape." ❖ **Alex Corbbrey** has a new silkscreen "Thank God It's Friday" showing an very elegant woman with Art Deco styling. ❖ **Rosalind McGary Lightner's** India ink on bark paintings & prints are selling well. If you haven't already seen this California artist's work, her paintings have an ethereal, almost mystical look. ❖ **Melvin Clark** has been selected to create the official poster for the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival. ❖ We're thrilled to introduce **Dorothy Wright's** mixed-media canvases. She uses paint, fabric, beads, etc. to create beautiful three dimensional works that beckon to be touched. Until next time, have a great summer.

What can you say about an artist in his sixties who continues to explore his craft with childlike enthusiasm? The main thing that comes to my mind is "thanks James." More than any artist I have ever met, James Denmark never seems to be limited by either his imagination or his talent. Master of all mediums, James is always pushing to new heights. He has recently returned to sculpting after almost 25 years.

Born into a family of artists in Winter Park, Florida; James' path was set at a very early age. He won a county-wide sculpture contest at the age of seven. A track scholarship took him to Florida A&M where he came under the tutelage of Dr. Samella Lewis and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Upon graduation, James felt the pull of New York City. He began a career as an art teacher in the New York public school system that would last more than thirty years. Working primarily in watercolors and charcoal; he began studying at the Pratt Institute. It was during this time that his collages were born. By the time he received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Pratt in 1976, he had been in more than 20 one man art shows and his reputation in New York art circles was well established. National and international acclaim was soon to follow.

It is impossible to describe the richness and strength of James' work. One has to experience the mastery of technique and the intensity that infuses each piece. His images deal with universal themes of family, love, music; common issues elevated to beautiful perfection by his masterful manipulations of form and color.

I've tried many times in the years we've known James to discover what he views as his best work. He always says its the piece he is working on now. This freshness of vision is what makes his work so exciting.

To list all of his collectors, both public and private, would take an entire newsletter. In 1980 the National Urban League presented him with their Living Legends Award. Even that does not fully reflect the brilliance and depth of James Denmark.



"A Brush of Culture"

Home Art Parties

Get a few friends together and enjoy the latest art in the comfort of your home. We can produce a show around a theme such as jazz or history; show strictly original works or a general selection of gallery offerings.

All you have to do is invite at least 15 and no more than 50 friends, and provide light refreshments.

JUST LOOKIN' provides invitations, promotional materials, door prizes and a great host/hostess incentive package.

Dates for summer are filling up fast! Don't miss the chance to have the luxury of a "gallery for a day" in your home.

*"Art is not a mirror to reflect the world
but a hammer with which to shape it"*
Vladimir Mayakovsky



Your Opinion Counts!

This issue's topic: Limited editions

Does the size of the edition effect your decision to buy a piece of art? Would you like to see smaller or larger editions? Call with your opinion.

Last issue we asked you about Art Shows. The majority of you said you would prefer art shows not to have crafts or bazaar type of items. Thanks for sharing with us.

*"THE ROAD FOR THE SERIOUS black ARTIST THEN,
WHO WOULD PRODUCE A RACIAL ART, IS MOST CER-
tainly rocky and the MOUNTAIN IS high."*

LANGSTON HUGHES

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER !!!

To stay on our mailing list:

- ❖ Make a purchase - OR
 - ❖ Call and ask for the Fall issue - OR
 - ❖ Subscribe for \$10.00 per year
(4 issues and notice of all prepubs)
-

ARTY - FACTS

"The Dual Personality of Lithographs"

Lithograph and offset lithograph. Sound like the same thing? They're not! Lithography is probably the least understood term in art. That's because two very different methods of producing prints have a similar name. Both printmaking techniques are based on the antipathy of grease and water. And that's where the similarity ends.

Original, hand drawn lithography is a planographic technique perfected by Aloys Senefelder in 1798. Senefelder was a frustrated playwright who wanted to see his plays in print and began experimenting with different printing methods. He found a fine Bavarian limestone and struggled with technical problems until 1798 when his first print is dated. As mentioned before, all lithography is based on water and grease not mixing. The artist draws with a greasy crayon or ink on a finely polished stone (aluminum or mylar plates are used more frequently now) which is fixed with chemicals. The stone is then moistened with water. The stone will only absorb water where there is no grease to repel it. A greasy ink is rolled over the surface, adhering to the drawn areas. A paper is placed over the stone and the ink image is transferred. This must be repeated for every color. Lithography involves lots of handwork and is a fine art printmaking technique.

Offset lithography, also called photo offset, is a reproductive technique using a printing press. Most posters are produced by this method; as are most printed items we see such as brochures, menus and the like. This method is commonly called 'four color' printing. This technique uses a plate treated so that ink will only adhere to the areas to be printed. The plate transfers its ink to a rubber cylinder which in turn offsets it onto the paper. All colors are created by four basic colors (hence the term four color printing). Both open and limited edition prints are produced by this method. Because this is a photographic technique, if you look at these prints through a magnifying loupe, you will see a dot pattern. Anytime you see these 'dots', you know this is a reproduction not a fine art print.

What does all this mean to us? Offsets are priced lower and generally printed in much larger editions than hand-pulled lithos. If you love the image, the printing technique probably doesn't matter. If you are collecting, handpulled lithography is of higher quality and falls into the category of original graphics. It all depends on how you want to spend your money.

Hang Ups

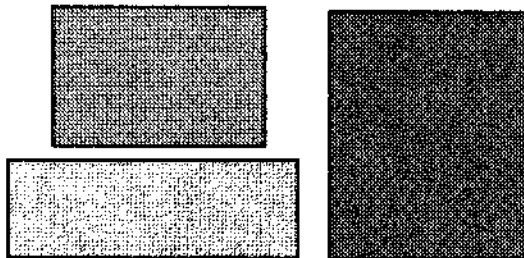
Ever wonder why some walls are a visual feast and others chaotic clutter? Fantastic groupings do take a little bit of work and a few "tricks" of the trade. These are the questions I ask before we put the first nail in the wall:

What are the relationships between the pieces? Do they have similarities of subject matter or medium? Do they share similar colors or texture?

Are any of the pieces a lot larger, darker or brighter than the others? If one of the pieces is more dominant than the others, it is usually the one to hang in the center of the grouping.

What is the flow of each piece? Some pictures flow up or down, left or right. Some pieces are balanced to the center. Artists call this compositional direction. It causes the viewer to follow the direction indicated. For most of us this is subliminal until pointed out. Take a look at your art and use this flow to help balance an arrangement. And remember, left facing pieces should usually be hung to the right and right facing pieces should be hung to the left.

Does any of your art have very strong horizontal lines? This may be a great anchor for pictures of different sizes. A piece with strong vertical lines? It may look great hung right or left of a series of smaller prints.



The most important thing is to work out the arrangement on the floor or on paper first. Take your furnishings into account also. A massive wall grouping looks best when balancing large pieces of furniture. And remember, an uneven number of objects is usually more interesting.



John Holyfield

I almost hate to put John in this column because his work has been on my walls for so long. We had the pleasure of meeting John while he was still attending the University of D.C. I was immediately entranced with his use of distortion and movement. His work back then reminded me of Ernie Barnes, an influence that John readily admitted. He was already on his way to gaining attention with his prints and now has legions of national and international collectors. His work has matured and he has become a master of fluidity and subtlety. All his paintings tell a story but sometimes we have to step inside them to understand all the nuances of John's visions. Every element, from his gentle colors to the background details are carefully conceived and created. His oil paintings are incredible. If you haven't added one of his originals to your collection, don't wait. They are still very affordable with smaller acrylic pieces under \$1,000. If that's out of your budget, his limited edition Romance series is within everyone's reach. John's talent and reputation continue to grow. I'm glad we got a chance to be part of it.

Maurice Evans

Those of you that have been with us for awhile have shared my love of Maurice's work since we got his first jazz originals. Hard to believe it's been almost five years. For those that haven't experienced Maurice's paintings yet, he is (in my opinion) one of the best abstract expressionists ever. And he's only 28! Maurice uses texture, color, and exaggeration in amazing ways. Since getting his first commission at the age of fourteen, Maurice has been constantly defining and redefining his own style. His jazz pieces burst forth with such harmonic intensity you can hear the music playing. Still Life paintings have always bored me, but Maurice's have such a luminescence that I've had to change my mind. No matter what subject he tackles, his unique vision elevates it to a new level. In today's world of crass commercialism, Maurice stands out as a true individual. Don't wait any longer to discover him. He truly is one of the fastest rising stars.

Black Heritage Museum

One of Hagerstown's hidden treasures is Doleman's Black Heritage Museum. Curator Peggy Doleman is a walking encyclopedia of African-American life and history, especially in the state of Maryland. She has been able to trace her husband's family back nine generations! The museum includes letters, photographs, artifacts and all kinds of memorabilia. When you plan your visit to **Just Lookin'**, let us make an appointment for you at the museum.

*"Great art can only be created out of love."
James Baldwin*

SHOWS & SPECIAL EVENTS

August *"Sisters of the South"*
Group exhibition Olivia Gatewood, Grace Kisa,
Katherine Kisa, Joann Martin, and Deborah Shedrick

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY SALE - 7/15 to 8/15
FIGURINES, ANGELS, XMAS CARDS, SANTAS and More
15% to 30% OFF

September - "Culture & Crisis" The art of Gilbert Young

Late October - Meet James Denmark

Check our **Fall issue** for show dates and details.

BUYER BEWARE !!!

Many of us have gotten caught up in buying canvas and print copies of famous African - American works of art. Sold primarily through home shows, these copies are done without the artist's consent or compensation. Our industry has been fighting this for years and a large publishing company is currently suing one of the companies for copyright infringement.

How can you avoid buying fakes? Ask lots of questions. Buy from a reputable dealer. Always learn as much as you can about the artists. It is their reputation that makes a piece of art increase in value. Find out about the medium of the piece. Any certificate of authenticity should contain the title of the art, artist's name, the size of the edition and date of publication. Ask that the bill of sale for any originals you buy contain the title, artist, medium and any other info that is available. This information is often needed by insurance companies.

Please follow these tips and help us preserve the integrity of ethnic art today and for the future.

Collector's Corner

We don't have space to cover all secondary market info in this newsletter. These are the asking prices culled from gallery surveys across the nation. All the pieces listed below are ones we still have in stock or have been able to locate for our clients in the last six months. If you need a price that isn't here, call us or subscribe to our quarterly Ethnic Art Market Update. Remember the art market is extremely volatile and prices change constantly.

| TITLE | ARTIST | LOW | HIGH |
|-------|--------|-----|------|
|-------|--------|-----|------|

LIMITED EDITION OFFSET LITHOS

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|------|------|
| Main Street Pool Hall | Barnes | 850 | 1200 |
| Footprints | Bibbs | 200 | 350 |
| Sweet Lillies | Bibbs | 600 | 750 |
| The Keeper | Bibbs | 450 | 650 |
| Umoja | Bibbs | 250 | 450 |
| Stars & Stripes | M. Brown | 1500 | 3000 |
| Easter Sunday | Denmark | 500 | 800 |
| Princesses | Denmark | 450 | 800 |
| Spiritual Rhythm | Fennell | 125 | 300 |
| Madonna & Child | Joysmith | 2500 | 4000 |
| View of the Bay | Joysmith | 900 | 1500 |
| Tree of Life | Mallett | 350 | 600 |
| From Strong Roots | Mallett | 300 | 450 |
| In Mothers Hands | Mallett | 85 | 600 |
| The Only Way Out | Nelson | 400 | 650 |
| Journey | Young | 500 | 700 |
| Smitty's Catfish Pond | Young | 375 | 500 |

ORIGINAL GRAPHICS

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Warmth Within | L. Beale | 600 | 750 |
| In Arm's Reach | Goodnight | 2000 | 4000 |
| Genesis Portfolio | Lawrence | 25000 | 30000 |

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