Los Angeles 1972: A Panorama of Black Artists
Acknowledgements

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A Panorama of Black Artists is a survey of Afro-American artists in the greater Los Angeles area. Well-known artists have joined with younger talents in this co-operative venture of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Black Arts Council. This invitational exhibition provides a significant opportunity for many artists to gain a wider public — with the options to view, rent, and/or purchase their works — than would be possible in any other way. Panorama, therefore, addresses itself to one of the most critically persistent problems facing black artists — that of obscurity and its subsequent psychological and economic effects. Until very recent times few persons, either black or white, were aware of the existence of the black artist. Fortunately for both the artist and the public this situation is changing, albeit too slowly.

Let it be said from the very outset that the artists’ color of skin or ethnic background could not be inferred from the majority of works in this exhibition. The decade of the ’60s found Afro-American artists, along with their compatriots, actively involved in the aesthetic experiments characteristic of American art since the 1950s when abstract expressionism flowered. Since that time the vogue in the art world have been kaleidoscopic. And, for the most part, the black American artist has vied for a place in the mainstream of American and international art. Some few now enjoy international reputations.

However, the decade of the ’60s saw quickened socio-political developments and many social ills and needs were brought into the open with a new frankness. Importantly, that decade also saw the acceleration of the black struggle to achieve our legitimate aspirations as citizens and partners in the joint enterprise of nationhood.

Manifestations of this movement and the search for unity, identity, and values inevitably could not be evaded by the artists. The painters and sculptors who saw the need to reach out to the masses of black Americans began to experiment with “black consciousness” art. It was largely a figurative art which addressed itself to the condition of black people. It was art as social commentary and social criticism, art as eulogy to black heroes, art as perpetuator of history, and art as an inspiration to the accomplishment of social and political goals. All of these and other manifestations took place. Inevitably such art was community-based and frequently deliberately crude and far removed from modern standards of aesthetics.

But that was precisely the point. For, among black artists there was and continues to be a rejection of “art for art’s sake.” They hold that art during a revolutionary period must be socially purposive and not simply created for an elite. This has been a strongly anti-esthetist movement that has been willing to put aside mere aesthetics for values which it felt to be more compelling at the moment. Consequently, the didactic and functional aspects of art as exemplified in many African cultures and at various periods in Western art history have been emphasized. The Afro-American artists might have joined in Picasso’s statements of 1945:*  

What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who has only his eyes if he is a painter, or ears if he is a musician, or a lyric at every level of his heart if he’s a poet, or even if he’s a boxer, just his muscles? On the contrary, he’s at the same time a political being, constantly alive to heartrending, fiery or happy events, to which he responds in every way. How would it be possible to feel no interest in other people and by virtue of an ivory indifference to detach yourself from the life which they so copiously bring you? No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war for attack against the enemy.

Picasso has also made it quite clear that the enemy is the man who exploits his fellow human beings from motives of self-interest and profit, and these black artists have expressed similar sentiments.

The “black consciousness” art movement continues to develop. The often deliberate crudeness that was characteristic at an earlier period is taking on increasing sophistication and often transcends the immediate cause of its inspiration. The very title of John Riddle’s First Muslin Cow haunts us and reminds us of that senseless and tragic event of recent history. And his There’s More At Stake Here Than Just Attica is as provocative as it is original in conception and execution. Timothy Washington’s Kentucky Derby is a handsome picture of a young black man standing beside a horse, but his symbols suggest that both the man and the horse are pawns in a game from which they derive little. Bernie Casey’s handsomely rendered Memories of the Last Park also leaves us guessing.

Black Americans today are insisting on the “black image” in art (the way early Americans insisted on portraiture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) because this image has so obviously been absent in any, other than disparaging, forms. Lyle Suter’s more conventional painting Sistah is redolent with that indefinable quality of American blackness, or “soul,” which, however elusive, is recognized when authentically rendered. The pathos of Fred Wilson’s Detroit Pieta as as moving as John Outerbridge’s Traditional Hang Up is biting and cynical and M. Alex Bowie’s pop art Great American Still Life is humorously cynical. Noah Purifoy, who seems to have emerged from the ashes of Watts, again compels our imagination with his junk art Zulu piece. His skillful organization of disparate elements from our “throw away” culture into formal structures recalls the phoenix of old — the renewing of life and the inherent possibilities that life affords.

Black American artists at this juncture increasingly seek to be closer to the Afro-American people. In the main, they are life-affirming and life-nurturing. And, as Romare Bearden has said, “The life-style of the black American is perhaps the richest because it is the one life-style talking about life and the continuation of life . . . and through all of the anguish — the joy of life.” The fertility and vitality of Los Angeles 1972: A Panorama of Black Artists attests to the truth of that statement. And, as any survey of art by black Americans at this time must do, it tells us something not only of aesthetics but of passion, freedom, sorrow, hate, and love.

Carroll Greene, Jr. Guest Curator
Abdu
1. Knowledge-Evil-Wisdom
   Oil on canvas
   50 x 38½ in. (127 x 91.1 cm.)
   Lent by Ankrun Gallery
2. Lucifer and the Bride
   Oil on canvas
   48 x 24 in. (121.9 x 60.9 cm.)
   Lent by Ankrun Gallery

Eileen Anderson
(b. Chicago, Illinois)
3. The Family
   Acrylic on canvas
   36 3/8 x 36 3/8 in. (93.6 x 93.3 cm.)
4. Electric Impulses
   Acrylic on canvas
   36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm.)

Guillermo Anderson
(b. 1955, Los Angeles, California)
5. Prisoner
   Oil and collage on paper
   35 3/4 x 25 3/4 in. (90.8 x 65.4 cm.)

DeVoice Berry
(b. 1937, Montgomery, Alabama)
6. Young Fisherman
   Charcoal
   34 3/4 x 44 1/4 in. (88.2 x 112.6 cm.)

Melonee Blocker
(b. 1921, Los Angeles, California)
7. Symbols of a Heritage
   Intaglio
   27 3/4 x 16 3/4 in. (70.4 x 42.4 cm.)

Gloria Bohanan
(b. Atlanta, Georgia)
8. Ball Game
   Enamel and oil on board
   31½ x 21⅞ in. (79.9 x 54.8 cm.)
9. Cradled Thoughts
   Enamel and oil on board
   31½ x 21½ in. (79.9 x 54.8 cm.)

M. Alex Bowie
(b. 1942, Camden, Arkansas)
10. Great American Still Life, Series 2
    Oil on canvas
    30 x 24 in. (76.2 x 60.9 cm.)

David Bradford
(b. 1937, Chicago, Illinois)
11. Queen of Spades
    Oil and acrylic on canvas
    72 x 36 in. (182.9 x 91.4 cm.)
    Lent by Brockman Gallery

King Brock
(b. 1912, Pasadena, California)
12. Chieftain
    Oil on glass
    29 x 22¼ in. (73.6 x 57.7 cm.)
    Lent by Ankrun Gallery

Cecil R. Burton
(b. 1941, Williamsburg, Virginia)
13. Landscape II
    Polyester resin
    6½ x 8 x 39½ in. (16.4 x 20.3 x 100.2 cm.)
14. Untitled
    Polyester resin
    11¼ x 12 x 6 in. (28.5 x 30.4 x 15.2 cm.)

Nathaniel BUSH
(b. 1942, Gadsden, Alabama)
15. Pressure
    Pastel
    45 1/2 x 34 in. (116.5 x 87.8 cm.)
16. Black Image
    Oil on canvas
    59½ x 45 1/4 in. (150.1 x 116.2 cm.)

Bernie Casey
(b. 1939, Wyco, West Virginia)
17. Poem I
    Acrylic on canvas
    31 1/4 x 41 1/2 in. (80.2 x 105.3 cm.)
    Lent by Ankrun Gallery
18. Memories of the Last Park
    Acrylic on canvas
    39 1/2 x 29 1/2 in. (100.2 x 74.8 cm.)
    Lent by Ankrun Gallery

George Clack
(b. 1928, Seguin, Texas)
19. The Wood
    Wood
    27 3/4 x 11 1/2 in. (59.7 x 29.1 cm.)
20. And Down the King
    Wood and aluminum
    13 x 23 x 9 in. (33 x 58.4 x 22.9 cm.)

Dan Conchoar
(b. 1919, San Antonio, Texas)
21. Untitled
    Acrylic collage
    36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm.)
22. Zebra Man Coming
    Pen and pencil
    23 3/4 x 17 3/4 in. (60.3 x 44.5 cm.)

Frank Cummings III
(b. 1938, Los Angeles, California)
23. Body Ornament
    Ivory, gold, amber
    6½ x 7 5/8 in. (16.4 x 19.6 cm.)
24. Covered Container
    Ebony, mastodon ivory, bone, fur, feather, wood
    5¼ x 3½ in. (13.3 x 8.8 cm.)

Alonzo Davis
(b. 1942, Tuskegee, Alabama)
25. New Directions for the Yellow Bus
    Acrylic collage
    72 x 24 in. (182.8 x 60.9 cm.)
    Lent by Brockman Gallery

Dale B. Davis
(b. 1945, Tuskegee, Alabama)
26. God of Fertility
    Mixed media
    64 x 26 x 36 in. (162.5 x 66 x 91.4 cm.)
    Lent by Brockman Gallery

Raleigh D’Hue
(b. 1917, Cleveland, Ohio)
27. Emergence
    Mixed media on board
    40½ x 30½ in. (102.2 x 76.8 cm.)

Charles Edward Dickson
(b. 1947, Los Angeles, California)
28. Untitled
    Wood
    23 x 6½ x 8 in. (58.4 x 16.4 x 20.3 cm.)
29. Standing Nude
    Wood
    11 3/4 x 5 in. (29.8 x 12.7 cm.)

Greg Wiley Edwards
(b. 1948, Dayton, Ohio)
30. Praise for Shango
    Ink
    16½ x 22½ in. (41.8 x 57.7 cm.)
31. Prayer for Odlumare
    Ink
    16½ x 22½ in. (41.8 x 57.7 cm.)

Annette Lewis Ensley
(b. 1949, Birmingham, Alabama)
32. Mama N
    Mud and clay
    10 x 11 3/4 in. (25.4 x 8.8 cm.)
33. A Sleeping Spirit
    Mud and clay
    10 3/4 x 2 1/8 in. (26.6 x 6.9 cm.)

Marion Epling
(b. 1940 Forrest, Michigan)
34. Ying Yang
    Intaglio
    30 x 18 in. (76.2 x 45.7 cm.)
    Lent by Brockman Gallery

David Ferguson
(b. 1943, Los Angeles, California)
35. Slum Recreation
    Acrylic on canvas
    67 3/4 x 65 1/2 in. (172 x 167.3 cm.)

Leona Franklin
(b. 1898, Indianapolis, Indiana)
36. Blue Night
    Oil on canvas board
    24 1/4 x 20 1/4 in. (61.1 x 51.4 cm.)

David Hammons
(b. 1943, Springfield, Illinois)
37. Close Your Eyes and See Black
    Body print
    40½ x 27 1/4 in. (102.8 x 70.4 cm.)
38. Pray for America
    Body print with intaglio
    60 x 40 in. (152.4 x 101.6 cm.)

Ernest Herbert
(b. 1932, Los Angeles, California)
39. Black Anchor
    Silk screen
    11 x 14 1/2 in. (27.9 x 36.1 cm.)

Kenneth Kemp
(b. 1939, St. Charles, Missouri)
40. Three Figures
    Brass
    14½ x 9 1/2 in. (36.8 x 24.1 cm.)

John Martin
(b. 1938, Montgomery, Alabama)
41. Untitled
    Acrylic on paper
    26¼ x 20 1/4 in. (66.6 x 52 cm.)
Bill Maxwell  
(b. 1934, Los Angeles, California)  
42. "F"  
Acrylic on canvas  
9 x 12 in. (22.8 x 30.4 cm.)

Bobby J. McAister  
(b. 1938, Vernon, Texas)  
43. Creation of Man and His Destiny  
Pencil  
29½ x 19½ in. (74.2 x 49.5 cm.)

Karl McIntosh  
(b. 1940, Tulsa, Oklahoma)  
44. Mother and Child  
Oil on canvas  
54 x 35½ in. (137.1 x 90.1 cm.)

Yvonne Cole Meo  
(b. Seattle, Washington)  
45. Cotton Is Still King  
Etching  
26½ x 32 in. (66.6 x 81.2 cm.)

46. The Hard Core  
Plexiglass and acrylic  
37¼ x 43 in. (95.8 x 109.2 cm.)

Oliver Brown Nowlin  
(b. 1941, Syracuse, New York)  
47. We the People  
Etching  
27 x 21 in. (68.5 x 53.3 cm.)

John Outterbridge  
(b. 1933, Greenville, North Carolina)  
48. Jive Ass Bird  
Canvas, paint, thread  
32½ x 22¼ in. (82.4 x 57.7 cm.)

49. Traditional Hang-up  
Painted welded metal, wood  
30½ x 25 in. (76.8 x 63.5 cm.)

Harry Owens  
50. Portrait of a Soldier  
Mixed media  
29½ x 29½ in. (74.8 x 74.8 cm.)

W. E. Pajau  
(b. 1925, New Orleans, Louisiana)  
51. The Brothers  
Watercolor  
29½ x 39½ in. (74.8 x 100.2 cm.)  
Lent by Heritage Gallery

52. Church Service  
Watercolor  
29½ x 39½ in. (74.8 x 100.2 cm.)  
Lent by Heritage Gallery

Elliott Pinkney  
(b. 1932, Brunswick, Georgia)  
53. Militant  
Plastic resin  
57 x 29 in. (144.7 x 73.6 cm.)

Greg Pitts  
(b. 1949, Los Angeles, California)  
54. Wait . . . Until Tomorrow?  
Acrylic, enamel  
20 x 60 in. (50.8 x 152.4 cm.)

55. Dressed to Kill  
Mixed media  
71 x 74 x 10 in.  
(180.3 x 119.3 x 25.4 cm.)

Noah Purifoy  
(b. 1917, Snow Hill, Alabama)  
56. Totem  
Leather and wood  
70 x 15½ x 27½ in.  
(177.8 x 39.3 x 69.7 cm.)

57. Zulu  
Mixed media  
49⅞ x 36 in. (126.3 x 91.4 cm.)

John T. Riddle, Jr.  
(b. 1933, Los Angeles, California)  
58. 1st Muslim Cow  
Painted welded steel  
36 x 36 x 26 in (91.4 x 91.4 x 66 cm.)

59. There's More at Stake Here Than Just Attica  
Painted welded metal  
86 x 91 x 37 in.  
(218.4 x 231.1 x 93.9 cm.)

Elmer Rivers  
(b. 1923, Tallahassee, Florida)  
60. Runaway Welfare  
Oil and collage  
28 x 36¼ in. (71.1 x 92 cm.)

Betye Saar  
(b. Los Angeles, California)  
61. Self Window #2  
Mixed media  
15 x 24 in. (38.1 x 60.9 cm.)

62. Whitey's Way  
Mixed media  
9¼ x 17¾ x 9½ in. (24.7 x 45 x 24 cm.)

Francis Allen Sprout  
(b. 1940, Tucson, Arizona)  
63. Azo  
Acrylic on canvas  
84 x 84 in. (213.3 x 213.3 cm.)

64. Frostless  
Acrylic on canvas  
108 x 108 in. (248.9 x 248.9 cm.)

Donald Stinson  
(b. 1929, Detroit, Michigan)  
65. Mother and Child  
Enamel on copper  
11½ x 7½ in. (29.2 x 19 cm.)

66. Body with Bird  
Enamel on copper  
7½ x 7½ in. (19.6 x 19.6 cm.)  
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Patterson

Lyle Suter  
(b. 1928, New Orleans, Louisiana)  
67. Sister  
Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 18 in. (60.9 x 45.7 cm.)

Timothy Washington  
(b. 1946, Los Angeles, California)  
68. 1849  
Engraved aluminum on wood and rifle  
Wood: 4¾ x 6½ x 2½ in.  
(12 x 157.9 x 6.2 cm.)  
Rifle: 5 x 50½ x 1½ in.  
(12.7 x 128.2 x 3.4 cm.)

69. Kentucky Derby  
Etching on aluminum  
35 x 34½ in. (88.9 x 86.9 cm.)

LaMonte Westmoreland  
(b. 1941, Racine, Wisconsin)  
70. Untitled  
Print  
31 x 22 in. (78.7 x 55.8 cm.)

71. Mother and Child  
Print  
31 x 22 in. (78.7 x 55.8 cm.)

Fred Wilson  
72. Detroit Pieta  
Ceramic  
22½ x 15¼ x 12 in.  
(57 x 38.7 x 30.4 cm.)

Stanley Wilson  
(b. 1947, Los Angeles, California)  
73. Shaman  
Mixed media  
93 x 27 x 24 in. (236.2 x 68.5 x 60.9 cm.)

74. Female Bird Tribal Ritual Form  
Mixed media  
63 x 51 x 10 in. (160 x 129.5 x 25.4 cm.)

Richard Wyatt, Jr.  
(b. 1955, Lynwood, California)  
75. Grandma's Hands  
Charcoal  
32 x 35 in. (81.2 x 88.9 cm.)

Milton Young  
(b. 1935, Houston, Texas)  
76. Man's View of God—God's View of Man  
Acrylic on canvas  
52¼ x 52½ in. (132.6 x 133.2 cm.)

Unless otherwise acknowledged, all works are lent by the artists.

*Most works available for rental or purchase. Inquire at Art Rental Office.
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Cover:
John T. Riddle, Jr.
There's More at Stake Here Than Just Attica
Painted welded metal
86 x 91 x 37 in. (218.4 x 231.1 x 93.9 cm.)