

Vote!

Hutchins Center for African & African American Research Harvard University

Co-sponsored with the Harvard Black Alumni Society & the Harvard Alumni Association



September 27, 2024 - December 7, 2024
Neil L. and Angelica Zander Rudenstine Gallery
104 Mount Auburn Street, Floor 3R, Cambridge, MA 02138
hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu

Exhibition Curatorial Statement

As we approach the historic U.S. presidential election with Vice President Kamala Harris serving as the first Black woman to be the Democratic Party's nominee, we retroactively gaze back toward figures and organizing efforts that force American democracy to be thrown into relief, reexamined and held accountable.

On the occasion of Harvard Black Alumni Weekend, the largest alumni gathering in the University's history, the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research proudly presents *VOTE!* - an exhibition of artworks featuring those who dared to define what civic participation and possibility can and should be.

Through primarily a figurative and historical lens, this exhibition features work by Haili Francis A.L.M. '18, Rico Gatson, Lisa Jones Gentry, and Titus Kaphar as well as selections from the Hutchins Center's permanent collection which includes artists Jules R. Arthur, Mariana R. Cook, Shepard Fairey, Ray A. Frieden '65, M.Arch. '69, Harvey J. Hacker '65, M.Arch. '69, Isaac S. Hathaway, Richard McCrary, David Mosley, James Roux, Robert A. "Bobby" Sengstacke, Moneta Sleet Jr., Charles W. White, and John W. Wilson.

In each work, the viewer is presented with art that speaks to the past as well as the present. As such, the exhibition begins with thoughtful reflection on this country's original sin of enslavement. Fueled by the failed promises of the Reconstruction era and the terror of state-sanctioned violence during the Jim Crow period, numerous individuals emerged as courageous African Americans, who caused what the late Congressman John Lewis called "good trouble, necessary trouble."

The collective impact that is highlighted in this exhibition potently set the stage for massive transformations in American society such that activists continue to mobilize in the ongoing struggle to protect and realize the promise of democracy. Rooted in experiences of grief, protest, righteous rebellion, and the power of Black artistry, we hope that *VOTE!* ignites viewers to move toward bold approaches in justice, liberation, and self-making.

VOTE! is curated by Dell Marie Hamilton, Acting Director of the Cooper Gallery for African & African American Art and is co-sponsored by the Harvard Black Alumni Society, the Harvard Alumni Association and Harvard's Hutchins Center for African & African American Research.

Cover image: Rico Gatson, *Fannie Lou*, 2024, Colored pencil and photograph collage on paper.

Exhibition Checklist



1.

National Archives and Records Administration

Forever Free: Lincoln's 1863 Draft of the Emancipation Proclamation

Digital reprint

Dimensions: 25.5"x 37.75"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 379

President Abraham Lincoln (b. 1809-1865) issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring that "all persons held as slaves" in the rebellion states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, (sections of) Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia "are, and henceforward shall be free." While the proclamation did not liberate those held in bondage in loyal border states, or Confederate states that had already come under Northern control, the executive order emancipated more than 3.5 million African Americans. It also opened the door to the acceptance of almost 200,000 African American men into the Union Army and Navy. New's Year's Eve is also known as "Freedom's Eve" as the Emancipation Proclamation's relevance stretches into the present with Black churches holding watch night services in remembrance of ancestors who stayed up until midnight to await its passage. On the fifth page of this digital reproduction, a wafered impression of the seal of the United States can just barely be made out.



2.

Haili Francis A.L.M. '18

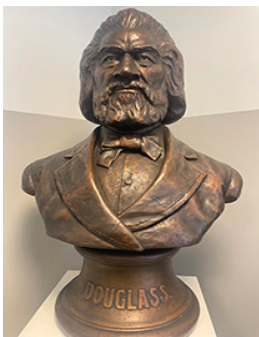
Sidney Revels Redmond, 2024

Oil on wood with 21 carat gold

Dimensions: 31"x 41"

Courtesy of the artist

Haili Francis's portrait illuminates the legacy of Sidney Revels Redmond (b. 1902-1974), grandson of Hiram R. Revels (b. 1827-1901), the pioneering African American senator from Mississippi, who served during the Reconstruction era between 1871-1873. Redmond graduated from Harvard College in 1923 and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1925. Redmond was a distinguished NAACP civil rights attorney, who was also active in Missouri politics as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1940.



3.

Isaac S. Hathaway

Bust of Frederick Douglass, 1919

Bronze-painted plaster, signed by the artist

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 63

Isaac S. Hathaway presents Frederick Douglass (c. 1818-1895) in a majestic sculpture that highlights his critical role as the most important African American figure of the 19th century. Born into bondage in Maryland, Douglass escaped slavery in 1838 and became a tireless advocate for Black self-determination. His domestic and global impact are undeniable with Douglass becoming the first African American to be nominated for Vice President of the United States in 1872. He was appointed to the post of U.S. minister resident and consul-general to Haiti and chargé d'affaires for Santo Domingo (present-day Dominican Republic) from 1889-1891.



4.
Titus Kaphar
Drawing the Blinds, Thaddeus Stevens, 2014
Oil on canvas with assemblage
Dimensions: 72" x 71"
Courtesy of Dr. Charles Boyd, M.D. '92

Thaddeus Stevens (b. 1792–1868) was an American lawyer, who represented the state of Pennsylvania during two terms as a member of the United States House of Representatives. He was an ardent abolitionist and advocated for fundamental protections for newly emancipated African Americans during the Reconstruction era. Stevens also pushed for the ratification of the 13th and 14th Amendments. In Titus Kaphar's treatment of Stevens, he rolls up the canvas to reveal a seated Black woman, hinting at the relationship that Stevens had with his mixed-race born-free housekeeper, businesswoman and abolitionist, Lydia Hamilton Smith (1814 – 1884). While Smith was never enslaved and could pass for white, the painting keenly shrouds Black women's embodied and circumscribed experiences under enslavement.



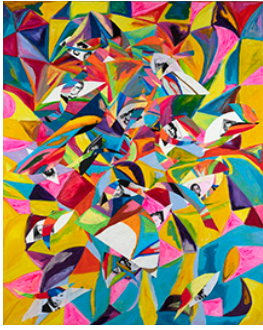
5.
Charles W. White
Raffle, 1970, from the "Wanted" series
Oil wash on illustration board, signed by the artist
Dimensions: 33"x 64.5"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 136

Created in 1970 and inspired by ads promoting slave auctions as well as posters calling for the return of a runaway slave, "Raffle" is one of 14 drawings and 7 lithographs in the "Wanted" series. Developed by Charles W. White between 1969-1972, each work has a geo-faceted surface resembling crinkled newspaper that evoked the mass-produced distribution of these materials. In this instance, an assortment of stenciled words is printed along the top, middle, and bottom of the drawing: "ONE DOLLAR CHANCE," "FEB 12, 4:30," "CANCELLED," "A.K. AYERS" and "BROKER AUCTION COMMISSION DEPOT." The drawing depicts a nude, pregnant, Black woman, who looms large suggesting the centrality of Black women's sexual subjugation. White used tissues, rags, and Q-tips to create layered tones of color and wash that "abused" the surface of the drawing to mimic the abuses that permeated the lives of enslaved African Americans.



6.
Jules R. Arthur
Liberté, 2015
Oil on canvas with assemblage
Dimensions: 27.75" x 47.5"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HU 496

The subject of this richly constructed assemblage portrait by Jules Arthur is Rosalie, (b. 1767?) the concubine of Michel-Vincent (b. 1730-1804), a French colonist, who contemplated fleeing the island of Saint-Domingue during the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). Also known as Marie Françoise, she has been the recent subject of scholarly inquiry particularly in Rebecca Scott and Hortense Spillers' work. *In Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation*, Scott and Jean Hébrard, chart the astonishing odyssey of Rosalie and her children against the backdrop of the great political and military struggles of the Atlantic world: the Haitian Revolution, the Civil War (1860-1865), the Reconstruction era (1865-1877) and the Cuban War for Independence (April 21-December 10, 1898).



7.
Lisa Jones Gentry
THEY DIED FOR YOU: VOTE, 2024
Acrylic on canvas, silkscreen fabric, paper, and oil pastels
Dimensions: 36.75" x 48.75"
Courtesy of the artist

During the most pivotal years of the modern Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968), white supremacists assassinated civil rights activists as well as ordinary citizens with impunity. Scan the QR code on the wall to learn more about the individuals represented in this painting: Rev. George Lee (d. 1955), Emmett Till (d. 1955), Willie Edwards Jr. (d. 1957), Herbert Lee (d. 1961), Cpl. Roman Ducksworth Jr. (d. 1962), William Lewis Moore (d. 1963), Medgar W. Evers (d. 1963), Addie Mae Collins (d. 1963), Denise McNair (d. 1963), Carole Robertson (d. 1963), Cynthia Wesley (d. 1963), Virgil Lamar Ware (d. 1963), Louis Allen (d. 1964), James Earl Chaney (d. 1964), Andrew Goodman (d. 1964), Michael Henry Schwerner (d. 1964), Viola Gregg Liuzzo (d. 1965), Jonathan Myrick Daniels (d. 1965), Vernon Ferdinand Dahmer (d. 1966), Ben Chester White (d. 1966), and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (d. 1968).



8.
Lisa Jones Gentry
VOTE, 2020
Acrylic on canvas, paper, and oil pastels
Dimensions: 38" x 48"
Courtesy of the artist

Collaged elements and bold use of color emphasize the importance of voting and civic participation in this work. Lisa Jones Gentry states that her approach to art is to look within. In her view, that internal world "is awash in brilliant color and abstraction that represents the pain in a way that allows us to move beyond it into a new present-day reality where it can no longer define or limit us."



9.
Rico Gatson
Fannie Lou, 2024
Colored pencil and photograph collage on paper
Dimensions: 25.5" x 33.5"
Courtesy of the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery

Rico Gatson's ongoing "Icon" series features portraits of historical African and African American figures from politics, literature, and popular culture, set against colorful rays framing them like halos. By portraying these luminaries stripped of their original context and environment, Gatson transforms them into timeless archetypes. In this work, Gatson features activist, community organizer, and vice-chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Fannie Lou Hamer (b. 1917-1977). Hamer was a key architect of Freedom Summer and her stirring demand to be seated as the official delegation from the state of Mississippi at the 1964 Democratic National Convention continues to be a riveting example of the tensions within the Democratic party.



10.
David Mosley
Kathleen Cleaver, 1969
Offset lithograph on paper
Dimensions: 23" X 30.75"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 739

Kathleen Cleaver (b. 1945) is a law professor best known for her activism in the Black Panther Party. As the communications secretary for the organization, she was the first female member of the Party's decision-making body and was frequently interviewed by media outlets across the country. Her twenty-year marriage to Eldridge Cleaver (b. 1935 -1998) made her family a target of several police investigations and was marked by multiple moves to Algeria, France, and North Korea. Born in Dallas, Texas, Cleaver graduated from Yale with Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude honors in 1984. She decided to pursue a career in law after watching the Watergate hearings, obtaining her Juris Doctor from Yale Law School in 1989. Through layering with charcoal and graphite, the artist sensitively portrays Cleaver in a relaxed and pensive moment.



11.
Richard McCrary
Angela Davis, I Am A Black Woman, 1971
Offset lithograph on paper
Printed by Afro-Arts Inc. on behalf of the New York Committee to Free Angela Davis
Dimensions: 27.25" x 33.75"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 770

Angela Davis (b. 1944) is a philosopher, activist, feminist scholar, and author. She is Distinguished Professor Emerita of Feminist Studies and History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, she grew up on "Dynamite Hill" which was regularly bombed by white supremacists bent on driving out the Black families that resided there. In 1970, she befriended Jonathan Jackson (b. 1953-1971) and his brother, George Jackson (b. 1941-1971), a member of the Soledad Brothers, who were imprisoned at San Quentin State Prison. In a courtroom shoot-out, Jonathan took Judge Harold Haley, Deputy District Attorney Gary W. Thomas, and three jurors as his hostages. Davis allegedly purchased the guns that were used in the crime and was charged with aggravated kidnapping and first-degree murder in the death of Haley. During her imprisonment, there was a global movement to secure her release. Davis was acquitted of all charges in 1972.



12.

James "Jamie" Roux

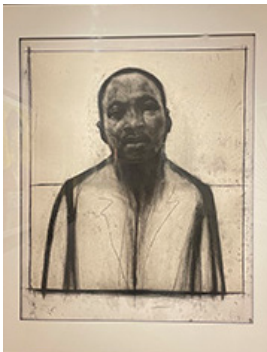
Rosa Parks, 2011

Offset lithograph on paper

Dimensions: 22"x 28.5"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 278

Rosa L. Parks (b. 1913-2005) paved the way for the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and is affectionately known as the "mother of the freedom movement." In 1955, she was arrested for defying bus driver James F. Blake's order to give up her seat in the "colored" section so that a white passenger could sit down after seats in the "whites only" section had filled up. Parks's detainment was strategically deployed to draw attention to Alabama's racist segregation laws. The 385-day boycott and legal case led the Supreme Court to strike down Alabama's segregation laws as unconstitutional in 1956. As an integral member of the NAACP, Parks was the Montgomery chapter's secretary, who organized an important social justice campaign on behalf of two rape victims, Recy Taylor (b. 1919-2017) and Gertrude Perkins. In this expressive drawing, Parks is depicted holding her inmate number, 7053.



13.

John W. Wilson

Martin Luther King Jr., 2002

Etching and aquatint on chine collé

Dimensions: 40.25" x 48"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 65

In this preparatory drawing, John W. Wilson rendered a haunting 2-D study for the bronze bust of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (b. 1929-1968) that was produced for the U.S. Capitol rotunda in 1986. King is undoubtedly the most recognizable figure of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He was a key architect of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and was the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Council. He pioneered the movement's non-violent protest actions which became a feature of countless campaigns of civil disobedience across the United States. His goal was to produce mass arrests that would create destabilizing social unrest that would lead to both confrontation and negotiation. During his 1963 arrest, he penned the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" – a manifesto of civil disobedience in response to "A Call to Unity," a statement by eight white clergymen who critiqued King's methods. A gifted orator, his "I Have a Dream" speech was delivered during the historic March on Washington in 1963, and the speech is still widely taught and performed by young students across the country and beyond. He was arrested 29 times and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. In 2005, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston purchased a copy of Wilson's print together with the copper printing plate and 20 progressive plates that led to the finished image.



14.

Rico Gatson

Harry, 2024

Colored pencil and photograph collage on paper

Dimensions: 25.5" x 33.5"

Courtesy of the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery

The works in Rico Gatson's "Icon" series resemble early medieval depictions of saints and elevate cultural icons to the status of, in the artist's words, "superheroes." The selected color palette approximates a Pan African sensibility and features cultural sources. In this work, Gatson features singer, actor, and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte (b. 1927-2023), who was the first African American to win an Emmy. A close confidante of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he deftly married political activism with Hollywood style, bankrolling the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in 1960. Belafonte's lucrative career enabled him to pay out-of-pocket or raise money to post bail for incarcerated civil rights activists.



15.

Associated Press Images

Betty Shabazz at the Funeral of Her Husband, Malcolm X, 1965

Digital reprint

Dimensions: 21.5" x 14.75"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Educator and activist Betty Shabazz (b. 1936-1997) is captured poignantly at the funeral of her husband, Malcolm X (b. 1935-1965) who was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem shortly after leaving his post as spokesman for the Nation of Islam. A graduate of Tuskegee Institute, she became a nurse after relocating to New York to escape the racism that she encountered in Alabama. At a Nation of Islam meeting in the late 1950s, she heard Malcolm speak for the first time and recalls being impressed with his demeanor, work ethic, selflessness, and forceful rhetorical style. Raised as a Methodist, she converted to Islam shortly after their meeting. After her husband's death, she supported her six daughters with the royalties from the publication of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, co-written with Alex Haley. Haley also donated his royalties from the 1976 publication of *Roots* to Shabazz and her family. Shabazz credits her Hajj to Mecca in 1966 as the catalyst for rebuilding her life after her husband's death. She later earned a doctorate in education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and taught for over twenty years at Medgar Evers College in New York.



16.
Robert A. "Bobby" Sengstacke
Mamie Till at the Funeral of Her Son, Emmett Till, 1955
Digital reprint
Dimensions: 22" x 20.5"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

In this gut-wrenching 1955 photo by Robert A. "Bobby" Sengstacke, Mamie Elizabeth Till-Mobley (b. 1921-2003) is pictured in mid-scream during the funeral of her 14-year-old son, Emmett Till. Till was murdered during a fateful summer vacation visit to the home of his extended family in Mississippi. Till was abducted by Roy Bryant (b. 1931 –1994) and J.W. Millam after Carolyn Bryant (b. 1935-2023) claimed that Till had insulted and flirted with her. Till's brutal murder made headlines across the country after his mother insisted on having both Black-owned media and mainstream media outlets publish photos of his mutilated body. Till's brave insistence on leveraging the news media catapulted the barbarism of lynching and racial terror into the public square thereby mobilizing and buoying subsequent protest actions by African Americans in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement.



17.
Associated Press Images
Myrlie Evers at the Funeral of Her Husband, Medgar W. Evers, 1963
Digital reprint
Dimensions: 27.75" x 20.75"
Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Activist Myrlie Evers-Williams (b. 1933) is the widow of Medgar W. Evers (b. 1925 -1963), who was assassinated by white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith (b. 1920 – 2001) as he pulled into the driveway of his home. In the wake of the 1954 *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision overturning segregation in educational institutions, Evers and the NAACP mounted a legal case against the University Mississippi Law School to challenge their discriminatory treatment of African American applicants. The couple worked closely together to establish the NAACP's first field office for the state of Mississippi and regularly received death threats. In the years since Evers was murdered, Evers-Williams emerged as a formidable civil rights organizer in her own right. She was the chairperson for the NAACP's National Board of Directors from 1995-1998 when the organization had entered a rocky patch in their illustrious history. A successful educator and businesswoman, she was the first Black woman to be appointed to the Los Angeles Board of Public Works. In 1964, De La Beckwith was tried twice for the murder, each time ending in hung juries. Based on new evidence, he was tried again in 1994 and died in jail. In this somber photo, Evers-Williams comforts her son Darrell Kenyatta Evers (b. 1953-2001) at the funeral of her husband.



18.

Moneta Sleet Jr.

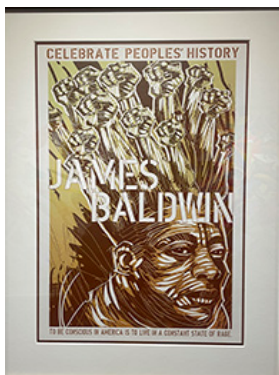
Coretta Scott King at the Funeral of Her Husband, Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968

Digital reprint

Dimensions: 20.5" x 24.5"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Moneta Sleet Jr.'s Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of Coretta Scott King (b. 1927-2006) and her youngest daughter, Bernice (b. 1963) at the funeral of her husband, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commands the viewer's attention with clarity and strength. Bernice's inscrutable facial expression and her white dress juxtaposed against traditional black funeral wardrobe powerfully conveys the profound weight of the moment. The couple met in Boston, while he pursued a doctoral degree at Boston University, and she was studying voice and piano at the New England Conservatory of Music. In the wake of her husband's death and the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., she delivered the 1968 Class Day Speech to a packed audience at Harvard's Sanders Theater. In her provocative speech, King stated that "today's student is now recognized as a significant political actor with amazing power to influence the course of societies all over the world. In many ways, American students have now, with all of their innocence and open generosity, become the prodding conscience to those in power and those aspiring to it." As a prominent civil rights leader, she founded the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and relentlessly campaigned to make the slain civil rights leader's birthday a national holiday. The legislation was signed into law in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan (b.1911-2004)



19.

Artist unknown

James Baldwin, Celebrate People's History

(To be conscious in America is to live in a constant state of rage), 2017

Offset lithograph on paper

Dimensions: 16" x 22.25"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Born James Arthur Jones in New York City, novelist, playwright, and poet, James Baldwin (b. 1924-1987) emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as one of most incisive public intellectuals of the 20th century. Over the course of his prolific career, he wrote seven novels including the semi-autobiographical *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Giovanni's Room*, *Another Country*, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*, which was adapted into an Academy Award-winning film directed by Barry Jenkins in 2018. Published in 1963, Baldwin's collection of essays in *The Fire Next Time* is an important example of his searing cultural criticism expertly deconstructing the enduring impact of race and religion in American society. In the first essay, *My Dungeon Shook: Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation*, Baldwin writes "And if the word integration means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it. For this is your home, my friend, do not be driven from it; great men have done great things here, and will again, and we can make America what America must become."



20.

Ray A. Frieden '65, M.Arch. '69 & Harvey J. Hacker '65, M.Arch. '69
Black Studies, 1969

Screen print on craft paper

Dimensions: 23.5" x 18.75"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 362

In response to the shocking assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968, African Americans participated in major uprisings in Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. As an extension of that outrage, Harvard's Black student organization, AFRO, published an ad in *The Harvard Crimson* demanding that the University "establish an endowed chair for a Black professor, establish courses relevant to Blacks at Harvard, establish more lower-level Black faculty members, and admit a number of Black students proportionate to our percentage of the population as a whole." Four days later, they formed the Adhoc Committee of Black Students, as an organizing body charged with articulating to the University their concerns regarding admissions, faculty, and curricula. Later in the fall of 1968, the students called for the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department and regularly clashed with the views of University administrators. The students were incensed at the recommendations presented in the "Rosovsky Report" which called for standing Faculty Committees that would grant degrees in Afro-American Studies and African Studies. In 1969, during a period of extreme campus unrest, members of AFRO used direct action in the form of strikes, rallies, and sit-ins to insist on the creation of Afro-American Studies as a department that also included student input on the hiring of faculty and the development of coursework. By the fall of 1969, the University made nine faculty appointments, agreed to create the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research (the Hutchins Center's flagship visiting scholars program), and appointed Professor Ewart Guinier (b.1910-1990) as the first chair of the Department of Afro-American Studies.



21.

Haili Francis A.L.M. '18

Shirley Chisholm: Unbought, 2024

Oil on canvas with genuine silver

Dimensions: 21" x 17"

Courtesy of the artist

This portrait of Shirley A. Chisholm (b. 1924-2005) elegantly captures the leadership of the first Black woman elected to the United States House of Representatives. Chisholm represented New York's 12th congressional district between 1969-1983 after serving in the New York State Assembly between 1965-1968. She is credited with helping to expand access to the food stamp program and for partnering with Senator Robert "Bob" Dole (b. 1923-2021) to create the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Chisholm's mantra: "unbought and unbossed" articulates her perseverance and courage and is one of the many stories of Black and Caribbean women who have broken barriers. Chisholm was the first Black woman to run for President of the United States declaring her candidacy in 1972. The story of her historic campaign was recently brought to life in the 2024 Netflix film "Shirley," starring Regina King.



22.

Mariana R. Cook

A Chicago Couple (Barack and Michelle Obama), 1996

Selenium-toned silver gelatin print

Dimensions: 24.75" x 31"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 470

This black and white image of Barack H. Obama J.D. '91 (b. 1961) and Michelle Obama (b. 1964), before they were the President and First Lady of the United States, informally illustrates the intimacy and respect they have for each other. Mariana R. Cook photographed them in their Hyde Park home in Chicago in 1996 for a project she was producing on couples in America. In Cook's interview, Michelle Obama stated that "Barack has helped me loosen up and feel comfortable with taking risks, not doing things the traditional way, and sort of testing it out, because that is how he grew up." While musing about his relationship with his wife, the then law professor said "Michelle is a tremendously strong person and has a very strong sense of herself and who she is and where she comes from. But I also think in her eyes, you can see a trace of vulnerability that most people don't know, because when she is walking through the world, she is this tall, beautiful, confident woman." He goes on to say that "we represent two strands of family life in this country – the strand that is very stable and solid, then the strand that is breaking out of the constraints of traditional families, traveling, separated, mobile."



23.

Shepard Fairey

Kamala Harris, Forward, 2024

Political campaign poster

Dimensions: 33.25"x 41.25"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Kamala Devi Harris (b. 1964) is the first woman and the first African American Vice President of the United States, serving alongside President Joe R. Biden since 2021. She is the highest-ranking female politician in American history. Born in Oakland, California to an Indian mother, Shyamala Gopalan (b. 1938-2009), and a Jamaican father, Donald J. Harris, (b. 1938), Harris is also the first Black woman to be selected as the Democratic Party's 2024 nominee for president. She graduated from Howard University, a historically Black college, and obtained her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. Between 2003 – 2007, she was the first person of color to serve as the district attorney of San Francisco. In 2011, she became the first woman, African American, and South Asian American to become the Attorney General of California. She is the author of three books, *Smart on Crime: A Career Prosecutor's Plan to Make Us Safer* with Joan O'C. Hamilton, *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey*, and a children's book, *Superheroes are Everywhere*. Shepard Fairey's dynamic representation of Harris in his signature bold graphic style exemplifies purpose and optimism for America's future. Fairey states: "I believe V.P. Kamala Harris and her V.P. pick, Tim Walz, are our best chance to move forward. They are our best chance to push back on encroaching fascism and threats to democracy, and our best chance for creating the world we all desire and deserve."



24.

Shepard Fairey

Barack Obama, Change, 2008

Political campaign poster

Dimensions: 27.75" x 40.5"

Courtesy of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, HC 192

This iconic Shepard Fairey campaign poster of former President Barack H. Obama quickly became viral when it was printed in 2008 during his historic campaign and became one of the many features of his multimedia approach to election politics. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii to a white mother, Ann Dunham (b. 1942-1995), and a Kenyan father, Barack Obama Sr., (b. 1934-1982), Obama became the first Black president of the Harvard Law Review. He was elected to the Illinois State Legislature in 1997 and then represented Illinois in the U.S. Senate between 2005 – 2008. During his tenure in the White House, Obama achieved a major legislative milestone with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, enacted in 2010. His nomination of Justice Sonia Sotomayor (b. 1954) to the United States Supreme Court made her the first Latina and woman of color to be appointed to the bench. His signing of the Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal Act made important strides in ending the ban on openly serving LGBT military personnel. Obama also signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act which expanded federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. The passage of that law earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009. He is the author of four books, *Dreams of My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters*, a children's book, and *A Promised Land*. He has won two Grammys in the category of Best-Spoken Word Album, two Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Narrator, and two Children's and Family Emmy Awards. He and former First Lady Michelle Obama have produced two documentaries under their Higher Ground Productions imprint.

Artist Bios

Jules R. Arthur (b. 1970)

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Jules Arthur combines passion and formal traditions into works that brim with sensitivity. In 1995, he moved to New York City to attend The School of Visual Arts where he received a bachelor's degree in fine art. The following year, he was privileged to receive guidance from Robert Blackburn while attending the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. Since then, he has been the recipient of several awards, and his work has been reviewed in the *New York Times*. Committed to the path of being a student of life and art, he states that "if one is to master the human form, one must remain in constant pursuit of it."

Mariana R. Cook (b. 1955)

Mariana R. Cook is a fine art photographer whose works are in the collections of various museums, among them the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; National Portrait Gallery, London; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, and the National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C. Twelve of her books have been published including the best-selling *Fathers and Daughters* published in 1994, and *Stone Walls: Personal Boundaries* was her first book of landscapes and was released in 2011 to much acclaim. The last protégé of Ansel Adams, Cook prefers to work with black and white film and natural light.

Shepard Fairey (b. 1970)

Shepard Fairey is an American graphic artist and social activist who is part of the Street Art movement along with artists such as Banksy and Mr. Brainwash. Fairey blurs the boundary between traditional and commercial art through type and image, communicating his brand of social critique via prints, murals, stickers, and posters in public spaces. Born in Charleston, South Carolina, Fairey graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992 where he earned a bachelor's degree in illustration. In 1989, Fairey created the "André the Giant Has a Posse" sticker campaign, featuring a stylized image of the wrestler, André the Giant. This project was the foundation for his seminal "Obey" series which propelled him into the public eye. Fairey currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Haili Francis, A.L.M. '18 (b. 1984)

Haili Francis is an artist, scholar, and cultural producer specializing in African American and contemporary art. While earning her fine arts degree at USC, she was a Getty intern at the California African American Museum and studied Italian Renaissance painting and glazing techniques while abroad in Italy. Her practice explores Black beauty and legacy through portraiture and her work has been exhibited at prominent venues such as L'Accademia di Cortona in Italy and at SoFi Stadium in California. Francis has worked extensively with The Kinsey Collection, a prominent African American traveling art collection. As a public servant and mayoral appointee to the Washington, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, she helped distribute over \$60M in grants from 2016-2019. She works at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. where she currently has work in a staff art exhibition. She earned a graduate degree in museum studies from the Harvard Extension School where she received the public service prize at commencement.

Raymond A. Frieden '65, M.Arch. '69 (b. 1943-2021)

Born in Galveston, Texas, Frieden attended Harvard University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics followed by a master's degree in architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Frieden also appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine in support of Harvard students during the infamous 1969 Harvard Strike that rocked the campus. After graduating from Harvard, he spent two years serving in the Peace Corps in Iran, later working as a city planner for the Ministry of Interior. After returning from Iran, he worked in the private sector, followed by a stint as the town of Plymouth's planning director. He later opened his own real estate consulting firm and was the director of the Bureau of Housing Development and Construction at the Massachusetts Bureau of Housing. He also served on the Conservation Commission for the City of Worcester.

Rico Gatson (b. 1966)

Rico Gatson received his bachelor's degree of fine art from Bethel College in 1989 and his master's degree of fine art from Yale School of Art in 1991. He is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award for Visual Artists; Prized Pieces Video Award from the National Black Programming Consortium; Oil Bar Ltd. Award for Excellence in Sculpture from Yale School of Art, and the Pew Charitable Trust Graduate Fellowship.

Gatson has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions including "Rico Gatson: Icons" at the Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, CA; "Rico Gatson: Visible Time" at the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL and "Wall to Wall: Rico Gatson" at the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL, where his work is also part of the permanent collection. His work is also in the collections of the Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

Lisa Jones Gentry

Lisa Jones Gentry first began showing her work professionally in Los Angeles in the late 1990s. Her first group show was at the M Hanks Gallery in Santa Monica, California. That exhibition was followed by several other group shows, including at Loyola Marymount University. Her first solo show was at the Vanek Collection Gallery in Venice, California. Earlier this year, Gentry's painting "BLACK GIRL MAGIC" was selected by curator Pier Penic for The Kennedy Center's interactive art display which highlights the history of the Ring Shout and the formation of the Gullah Geechee community. Recent group shows also include "Imagine: Celebrating Black Female Creativity" which was curated by Adrienne Childs and included the work of Nanette Carter, Emma Amos and Della Martin at the Featherstone Center for the Arts in Martha's Vineyard. Gentry's work has also been featured in television and film, including five seasons on the Fox sitcom, "Living Single," the Showtime film, "Circle of Pain," and the indie feature film, "Making Mavis" starring Alfre Woodard. She is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

Harvey J. Hacker '65, M.Arch. '69 (b. 1941)

Descended from Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland, Harvey J. Hacker attended public school in Los Angeles. When he arrived at Harvard College, he had no defined direction but was open to exploration. Admiring the images that were published in *The Harvard Crimson*, he joined the paper and honed his skills as a photojournalist. Those experiences led him to take courses in art and architecture which influenced his decision to pursue a graduate degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. While there, he developed a strong interest in graphic design, becoming the "poster guy" for announcements of school events. As the ongoing tensions between students and the University roiled the campus and culminated in the 1969 Harvard Strike, Hacker and his classmates observed that the sentiments of that climactic period lacked a visual identity. That "graphics gap" that he and other students astutely identified motivated innumerable collaborators to use the commanding symbol of a fist as a vehicle for expressing the urgency of the moment. Together with his classmates, they cobbled together a DIY poster and t-shirt production workshop that was rooted in freedom and creativity. After leaving Cambridge, Hacker founded his own architectural firm, Harvey Hacker Architects in San Francisco.

Isaac S. Hathaway (b. 1872-1967)

Isaac S. Hathaway was an educator and artist most known for creating busts of prominent African Americans. He taught at what is now the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff where he was the founding chair of the department of ceramics. Born in Lexington, Kentucky, he attended Chandler Junior College and the Pittsburg Normal College in Pittsburg, Kansas. He continued to develop his expertise in ceramics through study at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, the Cincinnati Art Academy in Ohio, the State University of Kansas, and the College of Ceramics of the State University of New York at Alfred. He was also a founding member of the department of ceramics at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama where he taught from 1937-1947. His skills as a sculptor were in demand by both Black and white patrons which enabled him to launch his own company to produce sculptures on a national scale. In 1946, he became the first African American to design a U.S. coin when he was commissioned by President Harry S. Truman (b. 1884–1972) to design a fifty-cent piece to commemorate the life of Booker T. Washington (b. 1856–1915). In 1951, he was also commissioned to design a commemorative fifty-cent piece of George Washington Carver (b. 1864 – 1943).

Titus Kaphar (b. 1976)

Titus Kaphar's paintings, sculptures, and installations examine the history of representation by transforming its styles and mediums with formal innovations to emphasize the physicality and dimensionality of the canvas and materials themselves. His practice seeks to dislodge history from its status as the "past" to unearth its contemporary relevance. He cuts, crumples, shrouds, and shreds paintings thereby reconfiguring them into works that reveal unspoken truths about the nature of history. Born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Kaphar received a master's of fine art from the Yale School of Art and is a distinguished recipient of numerous prizes and awards including a 2018 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2018 Art for Justice Fund grant, a 2016 Robert R. Rauschenberg Artist as Activist grant, and a 2015 Creative Capital grant. Kaphar's work has been included in solo exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem in New York, MoMA PS1 in Queens, and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D. C. His work is included in the collections of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

Richard McCrary

Richard McCrary is a postwar artist and is known for his print and poem, *Angela Davis, I Am A Black Woman*, and for his 1975 poster *Jesus: Look Not Upon Me Because I Am Black* which depicts Jesus as a Black man in a pastoral scene surrounded by white sheep while holding a staff in his right hand, and cradling a small black sheep in the other.

David Mosley (b. 1941)

David Mosley was born in Shreveport, Louisiana and later moved to Watts, California. As a child, he spent many hours drawing images and murals for his classmates and teachers which stoked his pride and confidence. He studied art at the Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Otis Art Institute, and the University of Ghana. When he was incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison, his beautiful portraits drew the attention of fellow inmate and prison activist George Jackson, (b. 1941-1971), who encouraged him to create work that reflected the values of the emerging Black Power movement. "I was doing portraits but now it would have a meaning to it. Suddenly I was just lit up. I said, 'That's what I'll do if I get out alive.'" As a result, Mosley spent many years working as an artist for several Black-led organizations including the Black Panther Party and The Brotherhood Crusade.

James "Jamie" Roux (b. 1986)

Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, James "Jamie" Roux grew up in Freeport, Maine. He attended Reed College in Oregon and later moved to New York to hone his artistic skills. He holds a graduate degree from the Cranbrook Institute of Art in Michigan. In the years since leaving the art world, he has shifted into stand-up comedy.

Robert A. “Bobby” Sengstacke (b. 1943–2017)

Robert A. “Bobby” Sengstacke spent more than a half century photographing Chicago’s cultural and political landscape, most notably for the weekly newspaper *The Chicago Defender*, for which he also worked as an editor. The paper was founded by his great-uncle Robert Sengstacke Abbott (b. 1870–1940) in 1905, and his father, John H. Sengstacke (b. 1912–1997), ran the paper for nearly 60 years. In the mid-1950s, after attending Florida’s Bethune Cookman College, Sengstacke returned to Chicago and became a member of a tight-knit network of South Side photojournalists who created intimate documents of Chicago’s black community, from political rallies to the city’s lively entertainment scene.

Moneta Sleet, Jr. (b. 1926–1996)

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer, Moneta Sleet, Jr.’s first box camera was a gift from his parents that led to a life-long obsession with photography. Born in Owensboro, Kentucky, he attended Western High School where he was editor of the school newspaper, and a member of the camera club. He served in World War II in an all-Black unit, the 93rd Engineers, and utilized the G.I. Bill to attend Kentucky State College where he honed his skills photographing on-campus events and students. His work at a commercial photography studio cemented his interest in working professionally and he obtained a master’s degree in journalism from New York University. He subsequently landed a job at the Black-owned weekly publication, *The Amsterdam News* and at *Our World*, which was acquired by Johnson Publishing. That business merger led to his fortuitous tenure at *Ebony* magazine where he spent the next 41 years covering notable events of the Civil Rights Movement including the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 1963 March on Washington, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance in 1964, and the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965.

Charles W. White (b. 1918–1979)

Painter, printmaker, and teacher Charles W. White attended the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York City. He also taught at the George Washington Carver School in New York from 1943-1945 and was an artist-in-residence at Howard University in Washington D.C. He was deeply influenced by the work of David Alfaro Siqueiros (b. 1896 – 1974) and Diego Rivera (b. 1886 – 1957). As a much sought-after muralist, he was commissioned by Hampton Institute, the Mary McCleod Bethune Library, and the Chicago Public Library. His prodigious body of work centered the lives of African Americans with painstakingly detailed portraits rendered in a variety of materials that presented them with dignity and strength. White has been the subject of a recent solo exhibition at the blue-chip gallery, David Zwirner, and a retrospective traveling show of his work was organized in 2018 by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. His work is in numerous collections including the Los Angeles County Museum, CA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Newark Museum, NJ, and the Santa Barbara Museum, CA.

John W. Wilson (b. 1922–2015)

John Woodrow Wilson was a sculptor, painter, and printmaker, best known for his powerful portraits of Black men that highlighted his interest in both politically, and socially conscious art that experimented with figuration and bold abstraction. Wilson was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and received his earliest training from art teachers at the Roxbury Boys Club where he studied with the Russian émigré, Alexandre Jacovleff (b. 1887–1938). Wilson enrolled in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) on a full scholarship in 1939 and graduated from Tufts University in 1947. Like his colleagues, Charles W. White, and Elizabeth Catlett (b. 1915–2012), he was deeply influenced by the Mexican muralist movement which pushed him to use stylized graphic compositions that emphasized color and space. Wilson later pursued training in Europe with Fernand Léger (b. 1881–1955). Wilson was a professor of art at Boston University between 1964 – 1986 and was remembered for teaching what he called the “laws of spatial logic.” In 1982, Wilson’s monumental head sculpture, “Eternal Presence,” was commissioned for the grounds of the Museum of the National Center of African American Artists in Roxbury. His work is in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA.

The Ballot Is The Only Safety

- Frederick Douglass

**Is this America, the land of the free
and the home of the brave, where we
have to sleep with our telephones off
the hooks because our lives are
threatened daily, because we want
to live as decent human beings in
America?**

- Fannie Lou Hamer



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