

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Art Students League of New York Presents
*Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists***

**The first introductory survey exhibition to chronicle the celebrated artists-centered
Cinque Gallery (1969–2004) founded by master League artists
Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, and Norman Lewis**



Public Exhibition: May 3 – July 4, 2021

(New York, NY): **The Art Students League of New York (ASL)** is pleased to present *Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists* on view May 3–July 4, 2021. The exhibition is the first introductory survey to focus on Cinque Gallery, the innovative non-profit artists' space dedicated to promoting the achievements of Black artists from its founding in 1969 until its closure in 2004. The exhibition celebrates a diverse selection of late twentieth century and contemporary artists who participated in this pioneering collaborative enterprise and highlights the interconnected histories of the artists of Cinque Gallery and The Art Students League.

Founded in 1969 by three master League artists, **Romare Bearden** (1911 – 1988), **Ernest Crichlow** (1914 – 2005), and **Norman Lewis** (1909 – 1979), Cinque Gallery was created to “provide a place where the works of unknown, and neglected artists of talent...” primarily Black artists “would not only be shown but nurtured and developed.” (*Excerpts. 1969 Cinque Gallery by-laws*) The artist-led, nonprofit space fostered a mutually supportive community of artists young and mature, exhibiting the work of new and established African American artists for nearly four decades.

Relying on a series of volunteers, Cinque Gallery hosted solo, group, and touring exhibitions, presenting artwork by approximately 450 artists in its 35-year history and was known for its lively receptions and social events attracting writers, musicians, actors, and artists. Named after Joseph Cinqué, the leader of the Amistad slave ship mutiny of the 1830s, the Gallery was initially located in a space offered by Joseph Papp's New York Public Theatre. Cinque then later moved to various venues, before finally re-locating in 1988 to 560 Broadway in Soho, where it remained until its closing in 2004.

Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists is organized by guest curator and arts administrator Susan Stedman, a long-time Cinque Gallery associate and chronicler, alongside artist, educator, and Cinque's first artist-in-residence, Nanette Carter. The exhibition features paintings, works on paper, photographs, sculptures, and archival documents drawn from loans and the League's permanent collection, and is part of Stedman's ongoing oral history project illuminating the achievements of several generations of artists:

Charles Alston, Emma Amos, Benny Andrews, Romare Bearden, Dawoud Bey, Camille Billops, Robert Blackburn, Betty Blayton-Taylor, Frank Bowling, Vivian Browne, Nanette Carter, Elizabeth Catlett-Mora, Edward Clark, Ernest Crichlow, Melvin Edwards, Tom Feelings, Sam Gilliam, Ray Grist, Cynthia Hawkins, Robin Holder, Bill Hutson, Mohammad Omar Khalil, Hughie Lee-Smith, Norman Lewis, Whitfield Lovell, Alvin D. Loving, Richard Mayhew, Howard McCalebb, Norma Morgan, Otto Neals, Ademola Olugebefola, Debra Priestly, Mavis Pusey, Ann Tanksley, Mildred Thompson, Charles White, Ben Wigfall, Frank Wimberley, Hale Woodruff

“The League is honored to present *Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists*, paying tribute to this important collaborative enterprise and the contributions of its artists, including many former League instructors and students,” said **Michael Hall, the League’s Artistic & Executive Director**. “The mission of the League reflects that of Cinque in terms of ethos and access – a platform created by artists to develop and showcase the work of other artists and foster a creative community through mentorship. In this spirit, we are committed to providing accessibility for the next generation of artists and cultural producers through our affordable classes and free programs.”

Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists is supplemented by a series of online public programs and recent artist interviews organized by Guest Program Curator, Nanette Carter, and are available to view online featuring artists including Ray Grist, Frank Wimberley, Robin Holder, and Otto Neals, among others. An illustrated catalog accompanies the exhibition and features never-before exhibited archival images and documents with contributions from Cinque Gallery artists. Presentation of the exhibition was assisted by The League’s inaugural curatorial fellow, Jewel Ham. The objective of The League’s Curatorial Fellowship Program is to provide quality experiences and mentorship for graduate students from backgrounds generally underrepresented in the arts and to facilitate their transition from academic to professional careers. The Romare Bearden Foundation is an institutional partner of The Art Students League in this tribute.



SUSAN STEDMAN, Guest Exhibition Curator, is an arts administrator, grants and foundations director, and advisor to museums, arts and social justice organizations. An independent curator, she also lectures and manages art collections and artists’ estates.



NANETTE CARTER, Guest Program Curator, is an artist who presently teaches art at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Her paintings and drawings can be found in the collections of the Studio Museum in Harlem; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba; The Newark Museum; The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; and many others. Carter had a solo exhibition at Cinque Gallery and served on its artistic advisory committee, 1988-1994, and on the board of the Harlem School of the Arts, 2002 – 2006.



JEWEL HAM, Inaugural League Curatorial Fellow, is a 2020 Summa Cum Laude Howard University graduate, with a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts. As a working visual artist, Jewel is interested in the production, curation, and distribution of fine art alike. Her work intends to increase visual arts accessibility within Black and Brown communities and promote development of sustainable opportunities in related fields.



THE ART STUDENTS LEAGUE OF NEW YORK

The Art Students League of New York: The League was founded in 1875 by students breaking away from the National Academy of Design. That independent spirit remains at The League today, where students pursue their work unconstrained by dogma, politics or burdensome tuition. We educate students in the language and process of making art in an environment where anyone who wishes to pursue arts education can realize his or her full potential. The League fulfills this mission by offering affordable, high-quality education and instruction in painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and assemblage. Artists who have studied at the League include Georgia O'Keeffe, Romare Bearden, Jackson Pollock, Carmen Herrera, Robert Rauschenberg, Adrian Piper, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, James Rosenquist and Ai-Weiwei, among others.

www.theartstudentsleague.org

The Art Students League of New York

Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, 2nd Floor
215 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

The Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery is open 11:00am through 6:00pm Monday through Friday, May 3 – July 4, 2021

The Art Students League Public Programs are supported by NYC Cultural Affairs.



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Members of the media who wish to visit the exhibition in person please contact annabel@hellothirdeye.com.

High-resolution press images and exhibition materials are available upon request.