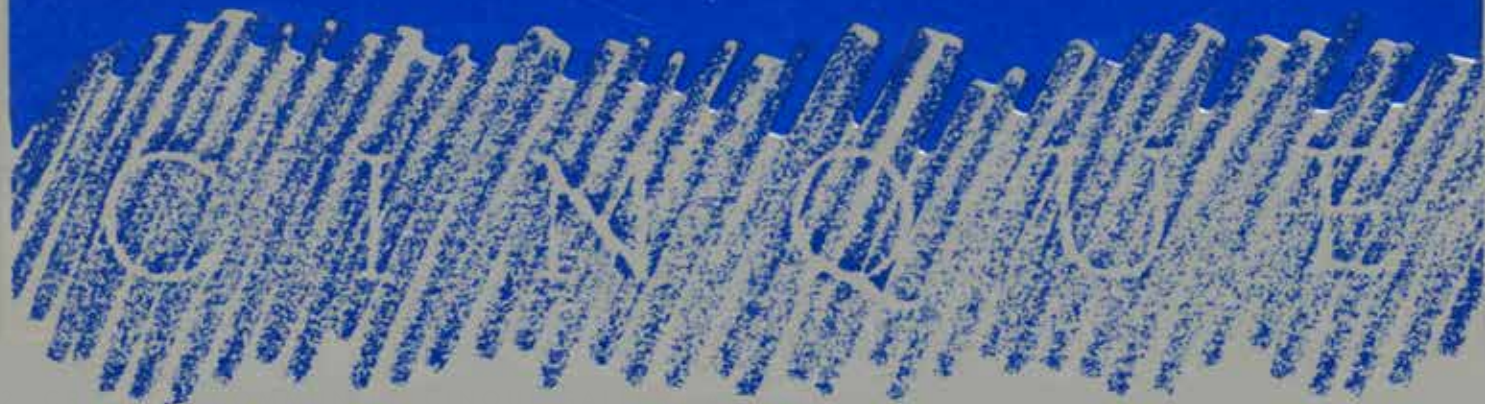




CINQUE

CREATING COMMUNITY.
CINQUE GALLERY ARTISTS
MAY 3 – JULY 4, 2021



CREATING COMMUNITY. CINQUE GALLERY 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

ESSAY BY GUEST EXHIBITION CURATOR, SUSAN STEDMAN
RECOLLECTION BY GUEST PROGRAMS CURATOR, NANETTE CARTER

MAY 3 – JULY 4, 2021

THE PHYLLIS HARRIMAN MASON GALLERY
THE ART STUDENTS LEAGUE OF NEW YORK

Cinque Gallery Announcement. Artwork by Malcolm Bailey (1947–2011). Cinque Gallery Inaugural, Solo Exhibition, 1969–70.

CREATING COMMUNITY.
CINQUE GALLERY ARTISTS
A CHRONICLE IN PROGRESS

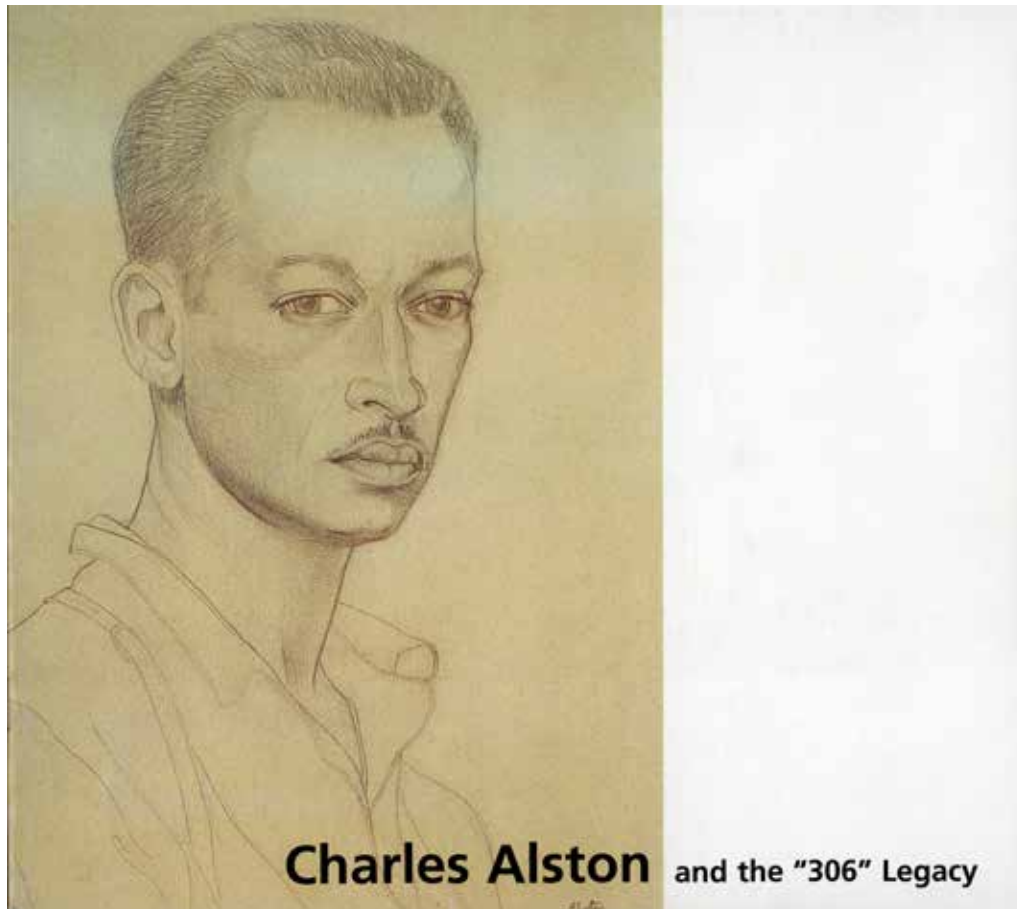


Former "306" colleagues. Norman Lewis, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow. c 1970.

SUSAN STEDMAN
GUEST EXHIBITION CURATOR

Cinque Gallery has a valuable place on a long arc extending from the Harlem Renaissance to the present. An artists-centered organization, it sought through its mission to renew influential models of community created by artists working together in the past, shaping the foundations of American culture.

The three founders of Cinque Gallery, Romare Bearden (1911–1988), Ernest Crichlow (1914–2005), Norman Lewis (1909–1979) and their contemporaries, Charles Alston (1907–1977), Gwendolyn Knight (1913–2005) and Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000) enjoyed experiences in common as young, versatile artists. Their experiences were linked with the creativity of Harlem Renaissance predecessors, flourishing only a decade earlier. During the 1930s they were prominently active in the Federal Arts Project, Work Progress Administration (WPA) in Harlem, the Harlem Artists Guild (est. 1935), and Augusta Savage’s influential Harlem Community Art Center (est. 1937). With other creative innovators, Harlem and national leaders and intellectuals, they took part in “306” (306 West 141 Street), the legendary center founded by Charles Alston. It was an outgrowth of Savage’s highly successful Art Center. The strength of creative communities in these centers of thriving activity was an enduring experience for the artists involved. Arguably it contributed to their ideals and inspiration when the same artists formed organizations such as the Fulton Art Fair (est. 1958), Spiral, 1963–65, and Cinque Gallery, 1969–2004. [1]



Cinque Gallery Exhibition Catalogue. *Charles Alston and the "306" Legacy*. Julia Hotton, Curator, 2000. Susan Stedman Collection.

“The interconnected histories of the artists of Cinque Gallery and The Art Students League also help shape our deeper understanding of the foundations of American culture and art.”

In 1950 Charles Alston became the first African American instructor in The Art Students League where he continued teaching until 1971. Eventually he was joined by other artists associated with Cinque Gallery: Richard Mayhew (1965–1972), Jacob Lawrence (1967–69), Norman Lewis (1972–79), Hughie Lee-Smith (1972–85), Ernest Crichlow (1980–1994), Romare Bearden (lecturer, 1984), Alvin D Loving, Jr. (1998–2000). They mentored generations of artists, whom they introduced to Cinque Gallery as well as to other exhibition and professional opportunities.

Robert Blackburn studied at The League in 1939 with Vaclav Vytlacil and Will Barnet. (Barnet became a faithful advocate supporting Blackburn’s Printmaking Workshop for decades.) Romare Bearden enrolled in George Grosz’s class, and during the 1940’s Elizabeth Catlett and Charles White, her husband at the time, studied printmaking with Harry Sternberg. Many other artists, celebrated in this exhibition, who participated in Cinque Gallery, enrolled in League classes: Norma Morgan (1947–55), Ed Clark (1949–51), Vivian Browne (1954), Ray Grist (1959), Mavis Pusey (1960–65), Betty Blayton-Taylor (1961–62), Cynthia Hawkins (1969–70), Robin Holder (1969–71) .



Norman Lewis, League Instructor and Students, 1978. Archives, The Art Students League of New York.

A panel discussion presented by The Romare Bearden Foundation's Cinque Artists Program, 2019, Harlem School of the Arts, stirred renewed focus on the motivations, social and cultural context in which Cinque Gallery was formed. [2] Our ensuing conversations led to an invitation from The Art Students League to organize this 2021 exhibition and accompanying public programs celebrating the three founders and participating artists. Themes of interconnections, enduring relationships among generations of artists and the common denominator of mentorship and community have framed "*Creating Community. Cinque Gallery Artists.*" It was a special advantage to be able to draw from The League's permanent art collection to select works of art by its former teachers and students. On request, artists, artists' estates, gallerists and private collectors generously loaned valuable paintings, sculptures, prints, collages, photographs, sculpture and archival materials. Our interviews and on-going search, gathering unique historic documents, photographs, correspondence, exhibition announcements in artists' and collectors' personal files and archives, promises to illuminate the Cinque Gallery narrative making up this chronicle in progress. Six artists were invited to offer personal recollections of their Gallery experience: Ray Grist, Cynthia Hawkins, Robin Holder, Bill Hutson, Howard McCalebb, Debra Priestly as well as Nanette Carter, Guest Program Curator. These 2020-21 accounts, along with insightful recorded interviews with several exhibition artists conducted by Carter and distributed online by The League, will be incorporated in future, more extensive oral documentation. The underlying philosophy and approach of the founders guided Cinque Gallery through three and a half decades. They sought to embrace a wide range of interpretations, creative investigation, various forms and media, social and political convictions reflected in "*Creating Community...*". Soon after the Gallery's founding, mid-career as well as young artists were invited to exhibit their work: Artists associated with the Kamoinge group, Weusi Artists Collective, Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, AfriCOBRA, Art Workers Coalition, Black Arts Movement and cultural traditions representing the Caribbean and

the African Diaspora were among hundreds of artists whose works were shown in solo and group exhibitions. Year-round, an unpredictable, diverse array of exhibitions featuring abstract or figurative, representational artwork, illustrations, photography attracted thousands of visitors.

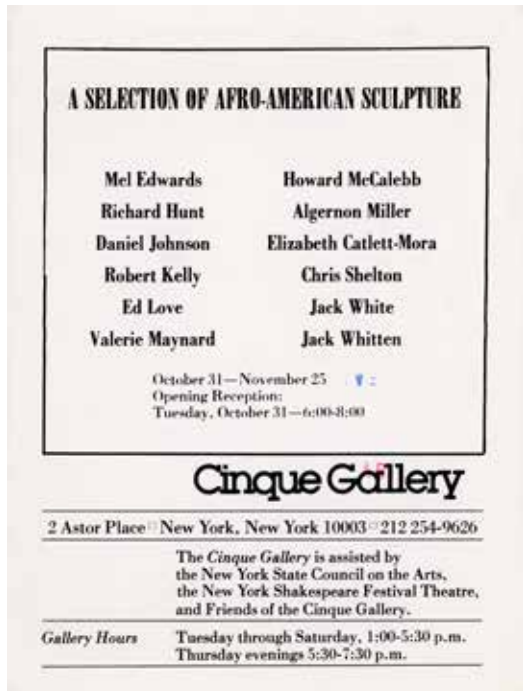
I am deeply grateful for what I learned in 1969, and years that followed, from the three Cinque Gallery founders—Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, Norman Lewis—with whom I enjoyed special friendships. We discussed the Gallery's plans, its compelling purpose and how the nonprofit would be sustained. At the time of the Gallery's founding, among circles of artists and art workers, passionate discussions were fired by our aspirations and determination to promote acclaim and activate independent communities of support by and for creative African Americans and other marginalized visual and performing artists, playwrights, poets. For too long recognition and full participation were denied in the environment of cultural apartheid maintained by established, mainstream arts and education. Half a century after Cinque Gallery's founding the fundamental need for correcting institutional policies, revising critical appraisals, scholarship and historical documentation continues to demand solutions.

In a mid-year 1977 report Cinque Gallery founders re-stated their purpose, the mission which essentially guided the nonprofit organization throughout its thirty-five years.

The report emphasized that "Another function of the Gallery is to serve as a bridge and training center for artists and the employed personnel interested in gallery management and direction. It was the hope that artists and personnel could move, should they desire, into the mainstream of contemporary art." [3] (Romare Bearden Archives, The Romare Bearden Foundation)



Cinque Gallery Exhibition Poster. Norman Lewis. Inaugural, 560 Broadway, Exhibition and Gala. June–July 1988. Susan Stedman Collection.



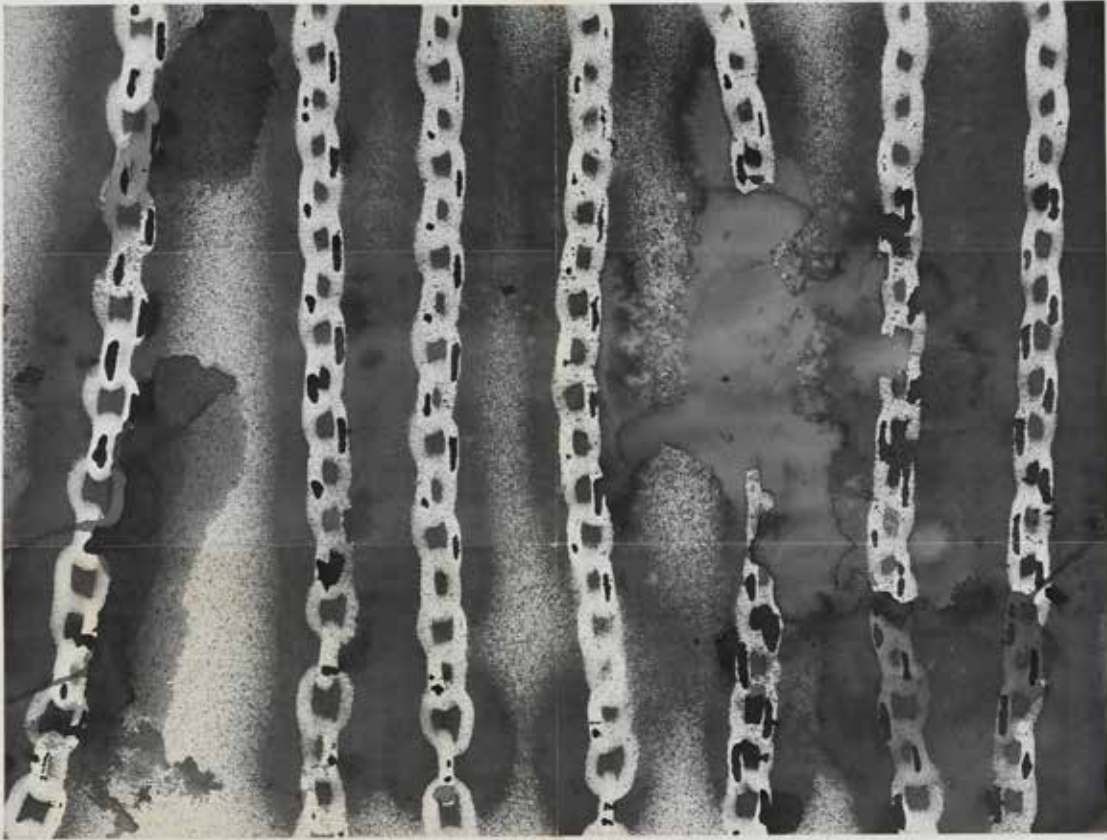
Cinque Gallery Exhibition Announcement. Selection of Afro-American Sculpture. October–November 1978. Susan Stedman Collection.



Cinque Gallery Invitation, Fundraising Exhibition, Sag Harbor. July 1985. Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall Collection, Lancaster, PA.

“...to provide an essential encouragement so vital to the development of serious young artists who have already demonstrated ability and a concern for universal aesthetic criteria. The Directors knew that many dealers and museum curators were unwilling to ‘gamble’ on the artistic maturation of young unknown artists. This was especially true for minority painters and sculptors...who could not be expected to fulfill their potential unless they were encouraged in a positive way.”

—Cinque Gallery 1977 Report



MEL EDWARDS CINQUE GALLERY 442 LAFAYETTE STREET NEW YORK MARCH 1-29, 1975
OPENING SATURDAY MARCH 1 FROM 2-6 PM. CONTINUING TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY 1-5 PM. AND BY APPOINTMENT. 212-533-9380

Cinque Gallery Watercolors Exhibition Poster. Mel Edwards. March 1975. Susan Stedman Collection.

Joseph Papp (1921–1991), Director of The New York Shakespeare Festival Theatre/Public Theatre made it possible for Cinque Gallery to open initially in a space near his offices in the Theatre’s complex at 2 Astor Place and 425 Lafayette Street. It continued to operate in the 425 complex until 1979, presenting solo and group exhibitions of young and mid-career artists while collaborating with many educational and cultural organizations in and beyond New York City’s boroughs. By 1980 the gallery had re-located to the 4th floor of 36 West 62nd Street, renting and sharing Richard Allen Theatre’s offices. The next move, c. 1982, was to 20 West 72 Street, a ground floor space in the Hotel Franconia near Central Park West, with street-level windows.

By 1988 it leased upgraded spaces at 560 Broadway (on the 5th and subsequently 3rd floors), a desirable destination location among other SoHo galleries. Its exhibitions had already received a modicum of press attention and critical reviews from *ArtNews*, *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Black Enterprise*, *Essence*, *Amsterdam News* as well as other media. Attracting critical attention from mainstream art press was continually challenging.

From the outset, promotion of Cinque Gallery artists among gallerists, curators, as well as a growing class of Black executives and collectors had been one of the founders’ objectives. Peg Alston was engaged in the Gallery’s opening years to assist in this effort. By 1974-75 she had launched her own gallery, still functioning today. At the same time, Kenkeleba House, the enduring achievement of artist Joe Overstreet and art historian, Corrine Jennings began its making-history journey “dedicated to celebrating

and presenting the visual aesthetic and cultural legacy of African American artists and other artists of color that have been historically overlooked.” It continues to fulfill this purpose. Another pioneering enterprise, undertaken by Linda Bryant, Just Above Midtown (JAM) gallery (1974–86) pursued a parallel path against the odds. Their collective presence along with a proliferation of nonprofit artists organizations in Harlem, Brooklyn and throughout other city boroughs, in conjunction with the rising force of dance, theatre companies and cultural centers—El Museo del Barrio, Studio Museum in Harlem, The Bronx Museum of the Arts—had a vitally significant impact. Motivated by irreversible changes originating in Civil Rights movements in New York, and other cities, new arenas of recognition and support were opening, celebrating African American and other artists of color. Cinque Gallery became more widely acclaimed for its exhibitions and valued for collaborating with other cultural, educational organizations. [7]

Municipal, state and federal grants, newly established by the mid-1960s, and a limited pool of corporate and private foundation funding in the arts gradually expanded. These highly competitive resources helped to foster an energetic environment for young arts organizations. However, the fragile sustainability of most nonprofits such as Cinque Gallery depended, then as it is true today, primarily on dedicated volunteers, in-kind support, devoted board members and relatively small circles of loyal friends and donors. Admired by civic and cultural leaders, praised by grateful artists and appreciative actors, writers, musicians who enjoyed its memorably lively receptions the Gallery’s story exemplifies this reality. Talented, caring individuals and resourceful artists were its sustenance, spirit and life force. [4,5,6]



Top: Felrath Hines, Norman and Ouida Lewis, Ernest Crichlow at Cinque Gallery, c. 1970-73. © ChesterHiggins/chesterhiggins.com

Left: Ernest Crichlow, Ruth Jett with Cinque Gallery friends, c. 1990s

Right: Ernest Crichlow, Romare Bearden, Herbert Gentry and family at Cinque Gallery, c. 1970-73. © ChesterHiggins/chesterhiggins.com



Cinque Gallery Exhibition Announcement. Bill Hutson. Ten Paintings. November 1991. Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA.



Cinque Gallery Artists and Friends. Beryl Basham, Nanette Carter, Edward Clark, Melvin Edwards, Mary Anne Rose and Herbert Gentry, Barry Johnson, Ron Ollie, William T. Williams. New York, Late 1990s. Photograph, courtesy Monique Ollie.

Actively engaged in the Gallery’s operations and programs throughout the first decade, the three founders were the primary board members in these initial years. They were continually present, greeting visitors at exhibition receptions, recommending artists, persuading supporters. After Norman Lewis’ passing in 1979, Romare Bearden, with Ernest Crichlow, continued to be supportive so long as his health permitted, until 1988.

For virtually the entire thirty-five year life cycle of the Gallery, Ernest (Ernie) Crichlow was an instrumentally valuable board member and leader, an encouraging friend to so many artists, until his passing in 2005. Fortunately, during the organization’s final twenty years he was joined in this role by Director, Ruth Jett (1914–2014) who had earlier served on the board.

Soon after Cinque Gallery’s closing in 2004 I was invited by The Romare Bearden Foundation to join a committee of Gallery friends. We met with Ruth Jett and several board members to discuss how the Gallery’s legacy could be sustained. One outcome was the formation of the Foundation’s Cinque Artists Program (CAP) that “supports artists in their professional, artistic and personal development” and partners with organizations that share this purpose. Full circle: in the 2019 CAP panel we renewed a dialogue that opened the opportunity for “*Creating Community. Cinque Gallery Artists.*”

NANETTE CARTER

GUEST PROGRAMS CURATOR

“On the heels of the 60’s Civil Rights Movement, three African American artists, Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis and Ernie Crichlow, proclaimed the humanity of their Black community by channeling the beauty, pride and sense of self worth in a new gallery. Cinque Gallery opened in 1969. The name Cinque, came from an enslaved African named Joseph Cinque, who was captured illegally and then led a revolt on the Amistad slave ship around 1839. The goal for Cinque Gallery was to exhibit, acknowledge and celebrate Black artists. The landscape in the 60’s for Black artists exhibiting in New York City was bleak. There were a plethora of museums and galleries but exhibiting artists of color was infrequent. Cinque Gallery started in a small room off Joseph Papp’s office in The Public Theater on Lafayette St. in downtown Manhattan. By the early 80’s to 2004, Cinque Gallery was in the heart of Soho, New York when Soho was the nexus of the art world.

I am pleased that The Art Students League is celebrating Cinque Gallery (1969–2004) with its’ exhibition *Creating Community: Cinque Gallery Artists*, and I’m honored to be the Curator of Programming for this timely exhibition. An institution that was founded by Blacks, run by Blacks (all Black Board of Trustees and Artistic Board), and was vital for 35 years is an historical gold mine. The last 20 or more years of the gallery saw Ruth Jett as Director and Ernie Crichlow, one of the founders, leading a space that exhibited well over 450 artists with both group and solo exhibitions. In 1969, due to the lack of visibility, you could easily be a Black artist in your 50’s or 60’s and still be emerging. For many it was their first group or solo exhibition in NYC. So many nascent careers began and later flourished due to Cinque Gallery. The roster of Black artists is visible in this most exciting show.

“Cinque Gallery introduced me to a number of both older and younger artists. The people I met helped me to expand my horizons and network within the community... I had a taste of what a full-time artist’s life felt like and soon left my full-time teaching job to pursue that life.”

In 1984, after attending many openings and meeting the founders and Director, I was invited to be their first artist-in-residence with funding from the NY State Council on the Arts. A part of the residency sent me to Harlem’s Abyssinian Baptist Church on Saturdays to teach children art and to help adults create items for cottage industries. The residency culminated in a solo show at the gallery in 1985 when Cinque Gallery was on the ground floor on West 72nd Street near Central Park. My show was entitled “*Illumination*” after a trip to Brazil, reflecting on the African retention I witnessed through their culture, music, religion and spirit.

I recall the hard-working Board of Trustees raising funds to keep the Gallery afloat for 35 years. Board members included Patricia Hinds, who was on the board for over 25 years, John Lewis, Walter Christmas, Natalie Jones, Michael Kenny along with so many others. A few of the artists on the Artistic Advisory Committee were William T. Williams, Mel Edwards and my mentors Bill Hutson and Alvin Loving. Alvin Loving and Bill Hutson recognized that there were no women on the Artistic Board and invited me to join. My first curation was a two-person exhibition with Cheryl Hanna and Stephen Mayo.

The openings at Cinque attracted Black actors, writers, along with business people and politicians. The Black community was quite supportive. My parents bought several works when Cinque had its summer fundraising sales in Sag Harbor in the Hamptons. Different families would sponsor the art sale in their yards, and folks would come to purchase works from large group shows. Director Ruth Jett and her sister Ginny Jett would pack up a U-Haul, drive out to Sag Harbor and hang the art on makeshift walls. It became an event where New Yorkers would drive out for the day to enjoy art, sun and the beach.

There is a trove of historical material and anecdotal stories that we are putting together with the help of The Art Students League in hopes of awakening all to Cinque Gallery’s rich and consequential history.”



Charles Alston, *Red, White and Black*, ca. 1960, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



Emma Amos, *On Top of the World*, 1996, silk aquatint with textile chine colle, 30 x 22 in.
© Emma Amos Estate. Courtesy K. Caraccio Collection



Benny Andrews, *Growing Up*, 1974, etching 34/35, 30 x 22 in.
© Licensed by VAGA, NY. Courtesy Petrucci Family
Foundation Collection of African American Art



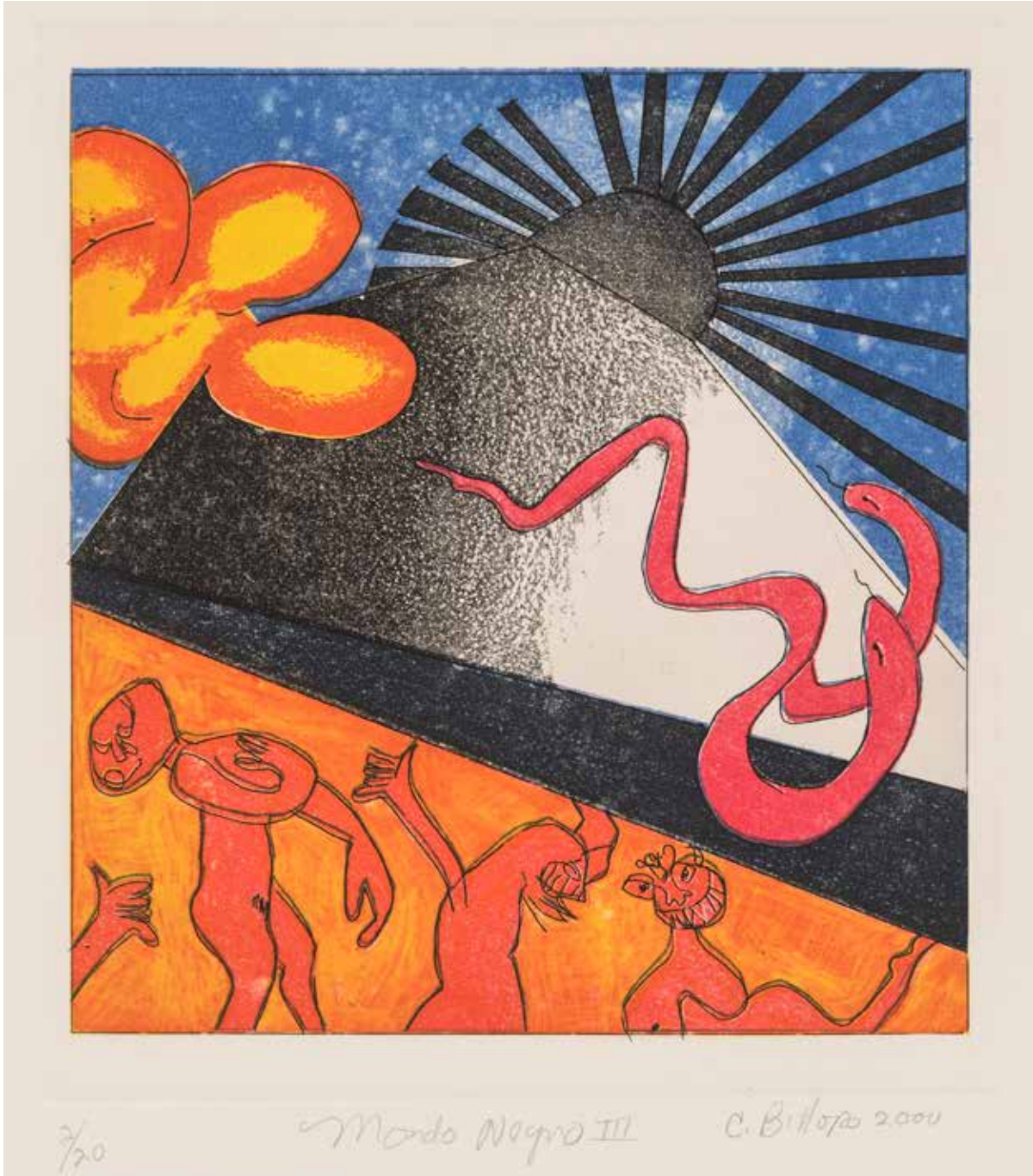
Romare Bearden, *Culture: Hartford Mural*, 1980, collage on fiber board, 18 x 12 in.
Artists Rights Society (ARS). Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York



Romare Bearden, *Near Three Rivers—Martinique*, 1984,
collage on fiber board, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 in.
Artists Rights Society (ARS). Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York



Dawoud Bey, *A Man Walking Into a Parking Garage*, 1981, silver gelatin print, 20 x 24 in.
© Dawoud Bey. Courtesy Stephen Daiter Gallery.



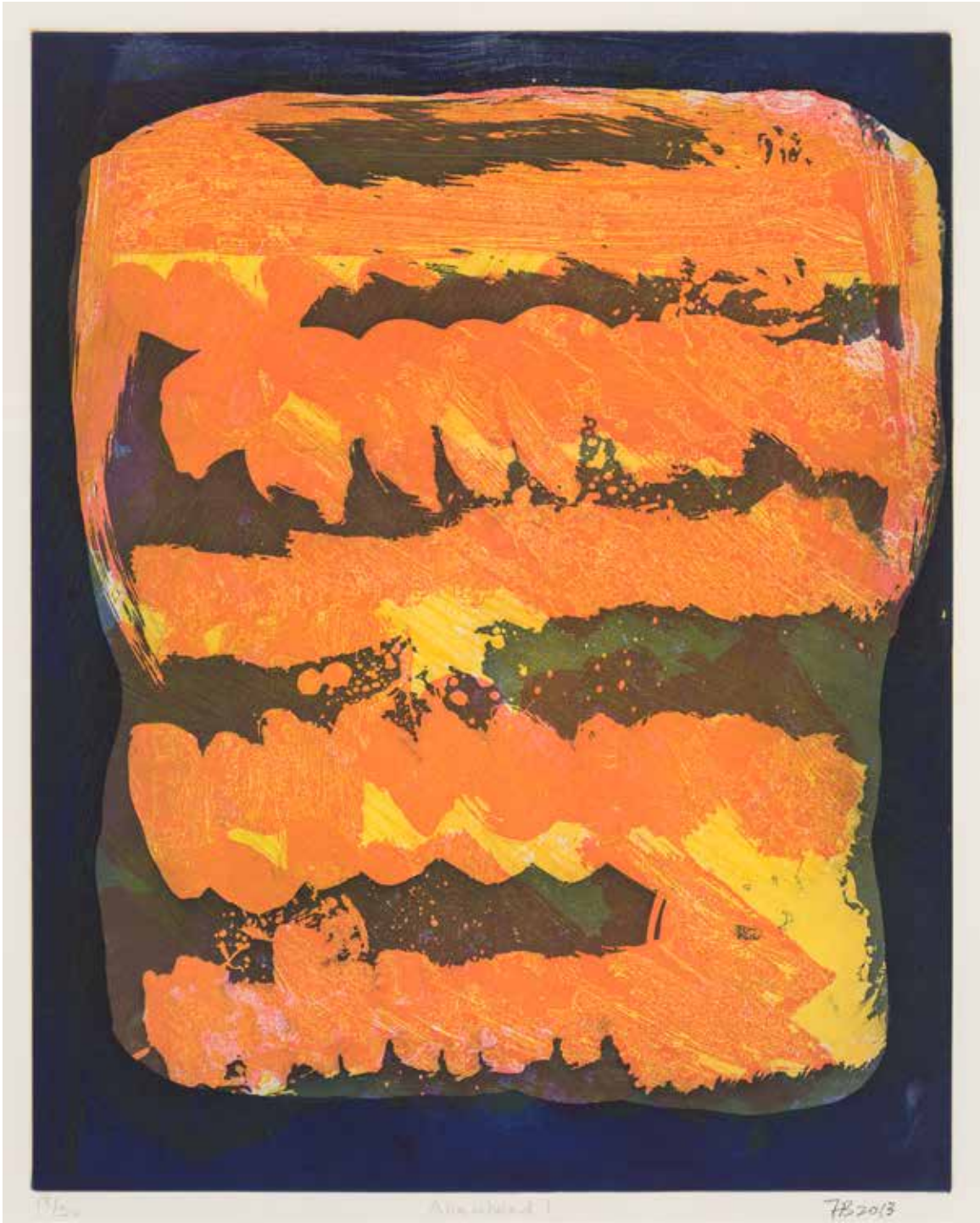
Camille Billops, *Mondo Negro III*, 2000, etching 2/20,
17 x 15 in. sheet, 8 x 7 ½ in. image
© Estate of Camille Billops. Courtesy Susan Stedman and Alfred E. Prettyman



Robert Blackburn, *Youth*, 1944, lithograph, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



Betty Blayton-Taylor, *Detours #3*, 1998, monoprint, 19 ½ x 28 in.
© Betty Blayton-Taylor Estate. Courtesy Wiliam Burgess II, The Burgess Fine Arts Collection



Frank Bowling, *AHAA AHEAD!*, 2013, etching 13/30, 29 ½ x 22 ½ in.
© Frank Bowling. Courtesy Susan Stedman and Alfred E. Prettyman



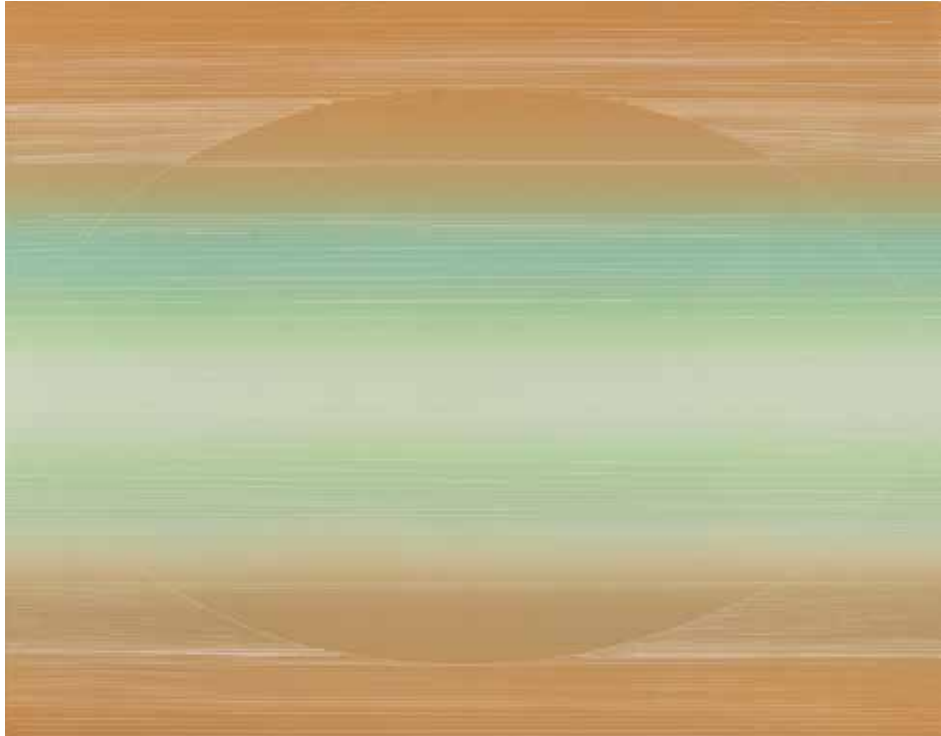
Vivian Browne, *Horseman*, 1974, etching 34/35, 30 x 22 in.
© Vivian Browne. Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art



Nanette Carter, *Cantilevered #39*, 2018, oil on mylar, 15 ½ x 21 ¾ in.
Courtesy Nanette Carter



Elizabeth Catlett-Mora, *Glory*, 1981, cast bronze, 14 x 9 ½ x 10 in.
© Elizabeth Catlett/Licensed by VAGA, NY.
Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art



Edward Clark, *Yucatan Series "Green"*, 1979, relief etching, ed. 30, 28 ½ x 34 in.
© Edward Clark Estate. Courtesy K. Caraccio Collection



Ernest Crichlow, *The Strengths of Black Families*,
c. 1970–73, oil on board, 15 x 10 ½ in.
© Estate of Ernest Crichlow. Courtesy Alfred E. Prettyman



Ernest Crichlow, *Head of a Woman*, 1990, oil on board, 20 x 15 in.
© Estate of Ernest Crichlow. Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection
of African American Art



Melvin Edwards, *Holder of the Light*, 1985, stainless steel, 11½ x 7 x 14 in.
© Melvin Edwards. Courtesy Susan Stedman and Alfred E. Prettyman



Tom Feelings, *Middle Passage Series*, 1987, lithograph 128/560, 17 ½ x 19 ½ in.
© Tom Feelings. Courtesy Alfred E. Prettyman



Sam Gilliam, *Square Space II*, 1987, mixed media collage with etching and aquatint. ed 50, 41 ¼ x 40 ¼ in.
Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art

“I knew Reggie Gammon for a number of years, since the late 1950s. It was through him that I met Romare Bearden, Hale Woodruff, Ernie Crichlow and Norman Lewis. He invited me to attend meetings of the Spiral group, which I did a few times. I did not become a regular member of Spiral, though. In the mid-to late 1960s I had a studio on East 11th Street, and worked as a bartender at the Dom, one of the very early discotheques in New York. In 1969, I was invited to participate in “First Painters’ Weeks,” a symposium of painters and sculptors from many countries, which took place in Eisenstadt, Austria, under the auspices of the Austrian government. We were given studios and supplies and we produced a number of works during a period of eight weeks, followed by an exhibition of all works the participating artists produced. That was the first time I had shown my paintings anywhere.

When I returned to New York, I set out to find a place to show my paintings. I went to the newly established Cinque Gallery and the Studio Museum in Harlem. It was at the Cinque Gallery that Romare Bearden offered to show ten paintings of mine. At the time, the gallery was located in the Public Theater, in a small room just outside the office of Joseph Papp, director of the theater. My show was one of the first mounted at the gallery, and was organized and curated by Chris Shelton, director of the gallery. Shortly after that Cinque show, I had a solo show at The Studio Museum in Harlem entitled “*Impact Africa.*”

—Ray Grist,
Artist, New York
Cinque Gallery Solo 1970
and Group Exhibitions



Ray Grist, Untitled, 1969, oil on canvas. 52 ¼ x 59 ½ in.
Courtesy Ray Grist

“Cinque Gallery was a wonderful place. My good friends, Irene and Herb Wheeler introduced me to the gallery and to Ernie Crichlow, Romare Bearden. I will never forget going with them to meet Norman Lewis at his studio. It had been eight years since my last solo exhibition prior to my 1989 exhibit at Cinque, “New Work: The Currency of Meaning.” My paintings were rather large, 76” x 56”, full of color, with organic geometric forms, marks and symbols that read as language. “Plato’s Cave” was a turning point, no longer imagining color and form for gesture and expression rather seeing fragments of form that created their own narrative in a new, different way.

While installing my show Ernie gave me great advice—consider how the color of each painting relates to the one adjacent, and how much space is needed between each painting. That was an important lesson and one that informs me in my current position as gallery director and curator. Cinque Gallery’s wonderful director, Ruth Jett, promoted my show. Over the years when I often stopped by to see the latest show, I enjoyed spending time talking with her and she loved seeing my young children.

My family, my children Ianna and Zachary, attended the opening along with friends and artists: Natsu Ifill, Debra Priestly, Colin Chase, Patricia Bowens. After my solo exhibition, my work was included in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut group shows. Cinque Gallery was a true bright spot in the New York art scene for African American artists. I am proud to have been part of it.”

—Cynthia Hawkins, Ph.D.

Artist, Curator,
College Gallery Director, Geneseo, NY
Cinque Gallery Solo 1989 and Group Exhibitions



Cynthia Hawkins, *Plato's Cave*, 1988–89, oil on canvas, 57 x 77 in.
Courtesy Kenkeleba House

“As a teenager studying at The Art Students League I learned about the recently opened Cinque Gallery from League instructors Rick Mayhew, Norman Lewis and Al Hollingsworth. The aspiration of one day exhibiting at Cinque, becoming part of the contemporary Black New York artist community and meeting the extraordinary three founders remained a goal of mine for 20 years.”

—Robin Holder,
Artist, New York
Cinque Gallery 1990’s Group Exhibitions



Robin Holder, *No Toy Guns*, 1998, monoprint with stencils and Prismacolors, 32 x 44 in.
Courtesy Robin Holder

“In 1969, after working in Europe six years, I traveled to West Africa, the same year the Cinque Gallery opened. I knew next to nothing about African American visual artists and had no idea that returning to America about a decade later, my first (1978) and thus far, last (1991) solo exhibitions in New York City would occur at the Cinque Gallery almost framing a brief residence in the city where at the time, issues of visibility, exhibition opportunities and support for ‘Black’ artists were urgent, critical, punctuated by intense and optimistic dialogues, some yelling and audible silence.

Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow and Norman Lewis designed a dynamic response to confront widely practiced exclusion of ‘not white’ visual artists. They knew the nomenclature ‘Cinque Gallery’ alone announced a mission and trajectory the historic Amistad rebellion had framed. Cinque Gallery thus started, functioned, and ended while anchored, often not securely, to rescuing, informing and resisting, effectively respecting in principle the spirit of the liberator Sengbe Pieh/Joseph Cinque. (b. ca 1814—d. 1879). The Cinque Gallery, other cultural and socially conscience initiatives parallel to it helped ‘open doors’ and minds, to and for some African American artists that were closed less than fifty years ago.

An index of administrators, artists hosted by and associated with Cinque Gallery through their generosity and voluntary service during hundreds of exhibitions it represented, underscores the success the gallery realized for over three decades as it was ‘kept floating’ to accommodate selected and too often ignored visual artists.”

—Bill Hutson,

Artist, College Faculty, Pennsylvania
Cinque Gallery solo 1978, 1991 and group exhibitions;
Artists Advisory Committee

“Exhibiting art by African American artists and providing community educational programs Cinque Gallery was a powerful demonstration of collective effort and a challenge to the so-called ‘Art World’, inviting it to be more inclusive and woke.”

—Bill Hutson



Bill Hutson, *Ten Series #10*, 1991, acrylic on paper, mounted on board, 60 x 40 in.
Gift of the artist, Courtesy Phillips Museum of Art, Franklin & Marshall College



Mohammad Omar Khalil, *Homage to Miro I and IV*, 1985, etching and transfer 25/25, 7 x 10 in.
Courtesy Mohammad Omar Khalil



Hughie Lee-Smith, *Abandoned*, 1986, oil on canvas, 37 1/4 x 47 1/4 in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



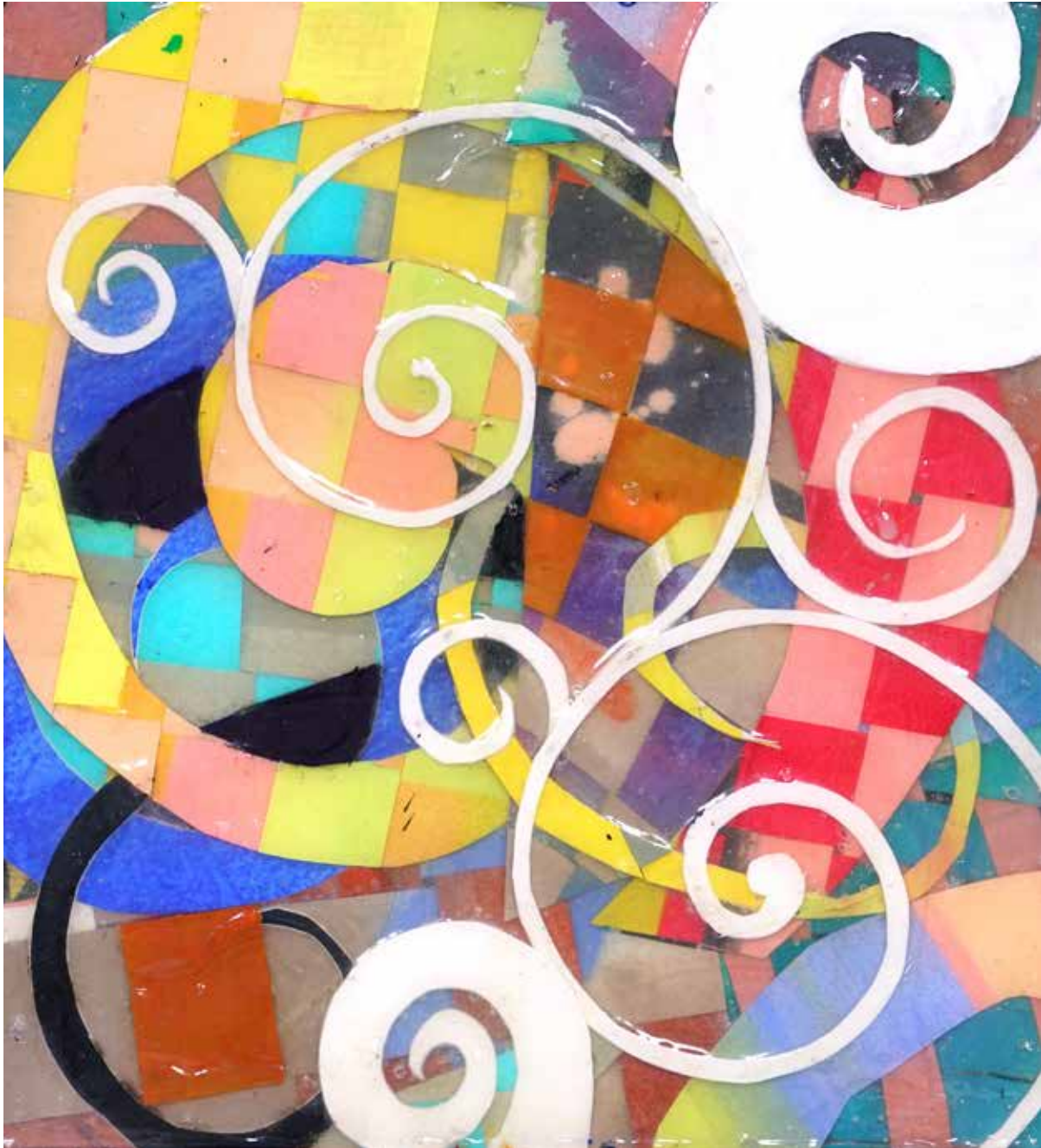
Norman Lewis, Untitled, 1976, oil on canvas, 50 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 72 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



Norman Lewis, *Red Umbrella*, 1970, etching 6/25, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
© Estate of Norman Lewis. Courtesy Susan Stedman and Alfred E. Prettyman



Whitfield Lovell, *Hand XXII*, 1995, oil stick and charcoal on paper, 54 x 40 ¼ in.
Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York



Alvin Loving, *Home*, 2003, acrylic on rag paper, mounted on plexiglas, 13 x 12 in.
Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art

“I had my first New York solo exhibition at Cinque Gallery in the Fall of 1973 soon after I graduated, MFA, from Cornell University. I first came East with George Jones (Cinque Gallery solo, 1974) for our graduate studies in art at Cornell on the recommendation of our Cal State, Hayward art professor and mentor William Majors. I had met Mel Edwards at Cornell. Norman Lewis, to whom Majors introduced me, led to my Cinque solo exhibition. I came to know a community of Black artists: Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, Vivian Browne, Edward Clark, William T. Williams and gallerist, Peg Alston. My 1973 exhibition opening was fun. Ed and William T. both showed up pushing strollers, side by side, with their baby daughters. Benny Andrews, whom George and I had first met at Cal State, was very generous towards me as a young artist, giving me the keys to his studio while I was at Cornell so I could visit the New York art world at my leisure.”

—Howard McCalebb,

Artist, Gallery Founder, Berlin, Germany
Cinque Gallery solo 1973 and Group Exhibitions;
Artists Advisory Committee



Howard McCalebb, Untitled, 1970, chrome plated stainless steel, 17 x 25 x 5 in.
© Howard McCalebb. Courtesy Susan Stedman and Alfred E. Prettyman



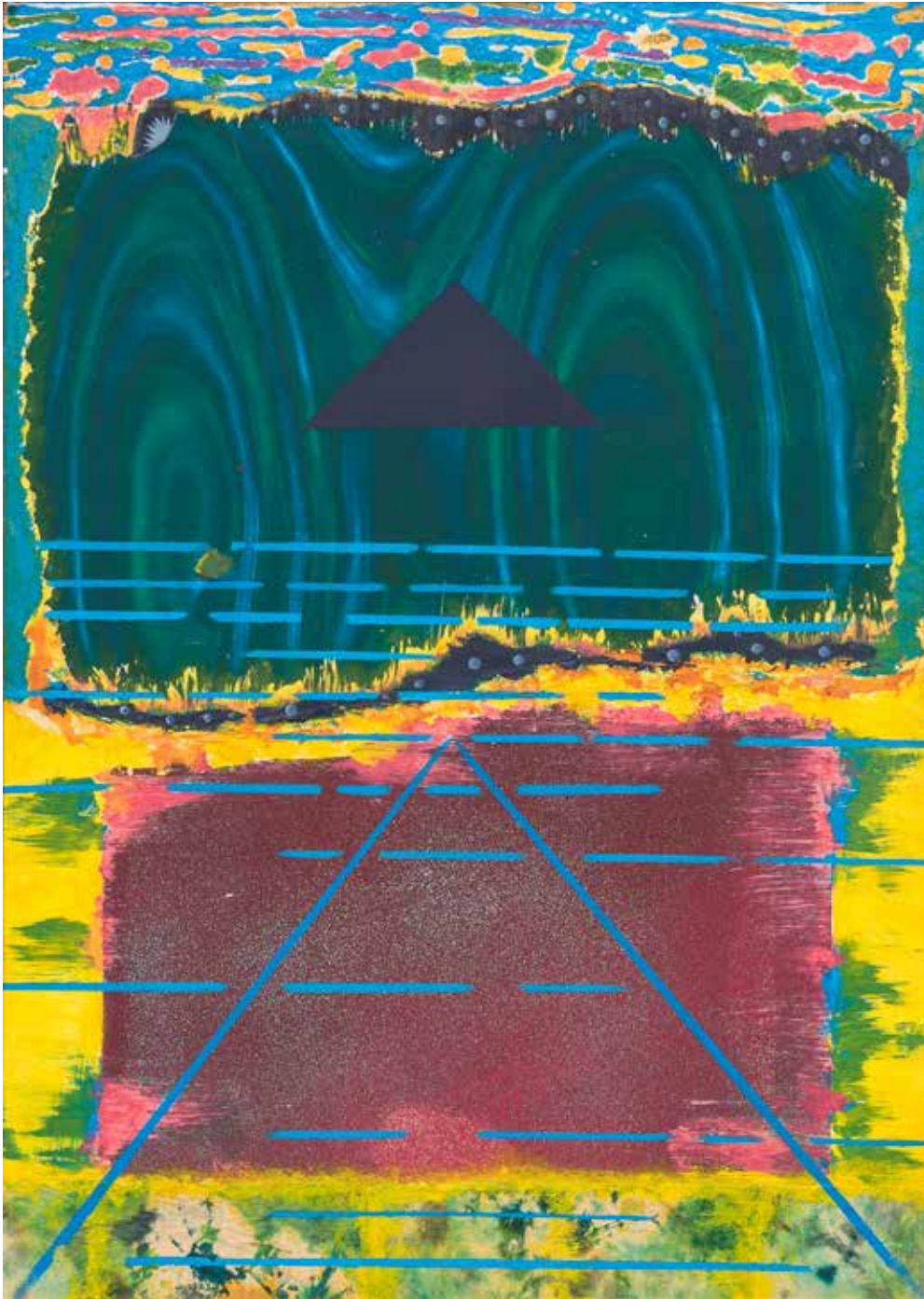
Richard Mayhew, Untitled, 1967, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



Norma Morgan, *Elk Lake Adirondack Mountains, NY*, 1993, engraving 6/10, 24 ½" x 50 ¾ in.
Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art



Otto Neals, *Young General Moses*, 1984, maple wood, 20 x 14 x 13 in.
Courtesy Otto Neals



Ademola Olugebefola, *Sun Ra*, 1995, mixed media, 40 x 30 in.
Courtesy Thomas-Matthias FC Ltd.

“I learned about Cinque Gallery while studying art at The Ohio State University. During that time, I traveled with fellow students from Columbus to Cleveland to meet Romare Bearden who was visiting Malcolm Brown Gallery for his Mecklenburg County series exhibition.

In 1986, my professor and mentor Lawrence Campbell at Pratt Institute, who also taught at The Art Students League, introduced me to Ernest Crichlow, co-founder of the Cinque Gallery. My work was later selected for a Gallery solo exhibition (1988) curated by Deirdre Scott, Gallery Director. I was the first artist invited to show at the new 560 Broadway, Soho venue. The Cinque Gallery exhibition and Lawrence Campbell’s 1989 Art in America review of the exhibition later led to my representation by June Kelly Gallery.

I came to know Ruth Jett, then Cinque Gallery board member, through the Gallery and through Studio Museum in Harlem where I worked for three years as Registrar after graduating, MFA, from Pratt Institute. Through the Museum I met Deirdre Scott and artists Nanette Carter and Cynthia Hawkins.”

—Debra Priestly

Artist, College Faculty, New York.

Cinque Gallery Solo 1988 and Group Exhibitions



Debra Priestley, *Mattoon #4*, 2001, mixed media on paper, 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Courtesy Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art



Mavis Pusey, *Decaying Construction*, silkscreen, 32 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



1/10

A. Tanksley

Ann Tanksley, *Untitled*, 1997, silk aquatint, 11 x 14 in.
© Ann Tanksley. Courtesy K. Caraccio Collection



Mildred Thompson, *Atmospherics #2*, 2003, pastel on paper, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
© Mildred Thompson Estate. Courtesy Kenkeleba House



Charles White, *Mother (Awaiting His Return)*, 1945 lithograph, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 in.
Permanent Collection of The Art Students League



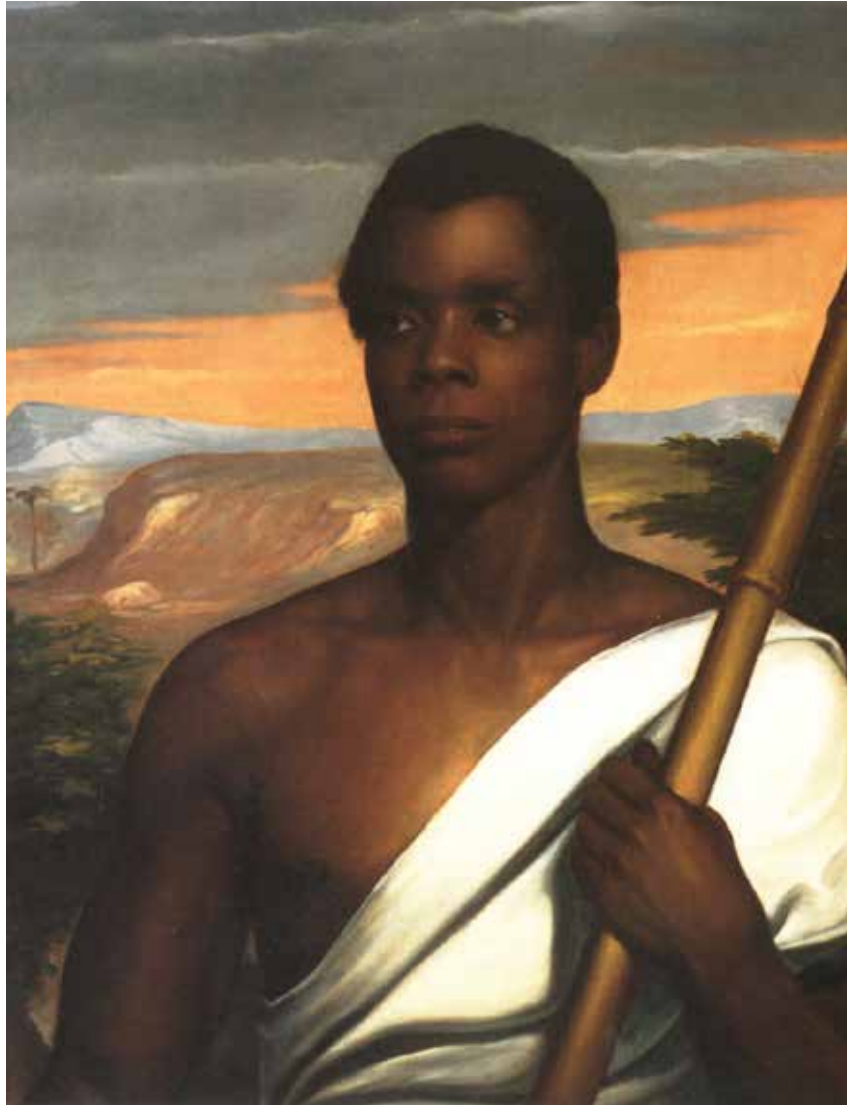
Benjamin Wigfall, Untitled, 1971, etching, 18 ¼ x 12 in.
© Courtesy Estate of Ben Wigfall



Frank Wimberley, *Sand Bar*, 1995, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 42 in.
Courtesy Berry Campbell, New York



Hale Woodruff, *Blue Landscape*, 1970, oil on canvas, 49 x 37 in.
© Hale Woodruff Estate. Courtesy Kenkeleba House



Joseph Cinque, Portrait, by Nathaniel Jocelyn (1796–1881),
Oil on canvas, c. 1840, 30 ¼ x 25 ½. Commissioned by African American abolitionist,
Robert Purvis, Esq; donated, 1898, by his son to New Haven Museum and Historical Society, CT

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Aicon Art New York

Archives and Special Collections, Franklin & Marshall College

The Art Students League of New York

The Romare Bearden Foundation

Dawoud Bey

Berry Campbell Gallery

William Burgess III, The Burgess Fine Arts Collection

Nanette Carter

K. Caraccio Collection

Stephen Daiter Gallery

Ray Grist

Robin Holder

Bill Hutson

Kenkeleba House

Mohammad Omar Khalil

Whitfield Lovell

DC Moore Gallery

Otto Neals

Ademola Olugbefola

Petrucci Family Foundation of African American Art

Phillips Museum of Art, Franklin & Marshall College

Alfred E. Prettyman

Susan Stedman

Thomas-Matthias FC Ltd.

Frank Wimberley

Michael Gino Wigfall

CINQUE GALLERY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1998

NEW YORK CITY

The Cinque Amistad Connection

By John Felder

When Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow and Norman Lewis chose *Cinque* as the name of the art gallery they founded in 1969, they reached back into black history for an image which symbolized their struggle as black male artists against the white establishment. They chose the image of a successful and relatively swift revolt. In so doing, they, like other organizations of the era, conjured the name of a significant, if not well known, figure in the perpetual fight for black liberation.

Cinque led 53 Mende slaves in a mutiny on the slave ship *Amistad* just off the coast of Cuba in 1839. Cinque and the other Africans killed the captain and cook of the *Amistad* and seized control of the schooner. They spared the lives of Ruiz and Montaz, the Spanish owners of the vessel, and ordered them to navigate the ship back to Africa. Ruiz and Montaz instead steered the ship northward. When the ship reached Long Island Sound it was seized by the United States Coast Guard off the coast of Long Island near Montauk and was towed to Connecticut. Cinque and the other Africans (including several children) were then imprisoned and charged with piracy.

After wending its way through various United States Courts, in March 1841, the Supreme Court declared the Africans free to return home. With the financial assistance of black and white abolitionists, most of the Africans sailed for Sierra Leone in late November 1841.

As Cinque's story is poised to enter a wider



domain, it uncovers ripe possibilities for further revelations. The case raised the question of enforcement of the 1808 congressional ban on the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It aroused the former president John Quincy Adams to become the senior counsel for Cinque arguing the case before the Supreme Court. It highlighted the continuing involvement of decadent European powers, in this case Spain, in the slave trade. Ironically, the case was adjudicated in the Supreme Court of Chief Justice, Roger B. Taney, later made infamous by the disgraceful Dred Scot Decision of 1857.

Cinque was not the only slave ship mutiny. "In Black abolitionists"

Benjamin Quarles mentions, without elaborating, Madison Washington and the *Creole*. There may have been others.

Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow and Norman Lewis knew the Cinque Gallery would have a fierce battle merely to survive. How apt that they named it for an African hero who did.

Letter From the Director

The Cinque Gallery has ended its 28th year of showcasing the work of minority artists (predominantly African-American). Founded in February of 1969 by three illustrious artists, Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow and Norman Lewis, the Cinque Gallery seeks to aid in the

Portrait of Joseph Cinque. Painted from life by Nathan Jocelyn in New Haven, 1840. New Haven Colony Historical Society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & NOTES

SUSAN STEDMAN, GUEST EXHIBITION CURATOR

I appreciate the unexpected, enthusiastic invitation by former Executive Director, Michael Rips and former Director of External Relations, Genevieve Martin of The Art Students League who asked me to organize “*Creating Community. Cinque Gallery Artists.*” They envisioned making a meaningful contribution to the history of American art by celebrating interconnecting communities of artists associated with Cinque Gallery and The League. The realization of the exhibition and public programs has been expertly, patiently managed by Anki King, Associate Director, Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery to whom I am especially grateful. Her colleagues, staff of The Art Students League, have provided us with exceptional support. Nanette Carter, Guest Program Curator, has thoughtfully provided us with significant insights and knowledge in a collaborative, sharing spirit. Her artists’ interviews complement the exhibition and will be of enduring significance. The League’s Curatorial Fellow, Jewel Ham’s skillful, timely research has contributed measurably to exhibition and program planning.

Our partners, Diedra Harris-Kelley and Johanne Bryant-Reid, Co-Directors of the Romare Bearden Foundation, helped guide the original concept of “*Creating Community. Cinque Gallery Artists*” and readily shared their knowledge of the artist’s legacy and Foundation’s resources.

Documenting my chronicle of Cinque Gallery and its artists while organizing the exhibition I have relied on the guidance, expertise and encouragement of many advisers, artists, artists’ estates, gallerists, curators, scholars and the resources of key institutions.

Peg Alston, Christine Berry, Dawoud Bey, Oscar Blayton, Berrisford Boothe, William Burgess III, Kathy Caraccio, Nanette Carter, Melvin Edwards, Richard Frumess, Erin Gilbert, Ray Grist, Jewel Ham, Michael Kenny, Cynthia Hawkins, Chester Higgins, Patricia Hinds, Robin Holder, Bill Hutson, Anki King, Corrine Jennings, Heidi Lange, Louise LoBello, Whitfield Lovell, Lindsay Marino, Richard Mayhew, Howard McCalebb, Dindga McCannon, Otto Neals, Ademola Olugebefola, Alfred E. Prettyman, Debra Priestly, Deirdre Scott, Howard Singerman, Debra Vanderburg Spencer, Frank Stewart, John Treadwell, Marjorie VanDyke, Claudia Volpe, Frank Wimberley. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; The Romare Bearden Foundation; Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Collection; New Haven Museum and Historical Society.

The Art Students League Staff

Michael Hall, Artistic / Executive Director

Anki King, Associate Director, Gallery and Exhibitions

Paul Livornese, Marketing & Creative Services Director

Deborah Ferrell, Art Director

NOTES

[1] Julia Hotton, Charles Alston and the “306” Legacy (New York: Cinque Gallery, Inc., 2000).

[2] Cinque Artists Program, Romare Bearden Foundation, “*The Legacy of Cinque Gallery*” presented at Harlem School of the Arts, New York, February 26, 2019. Panel discussion: Artists, Nanette Carter and Ademola Olugebefola, former Cinque Gallery board member, Michael Kenny, and arts administrator, Susan Stedman.

[3] *Cinque Gallery Directors, Curators (partial List)* Joan Allen, Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, Audreon D. Bratton, Marie Dutton Brown, Sherry Turner DeCarava, Marcia DuVall, Janet M. Harrison, Jim Harrison, Cheryl Hanna, Ron Hines, Julia Hotton, Ruth Jett, Jacob Lawrence, Rosemary McLoed, Louise Parks, Juanita Penn, Deirdre Scott, Chris Shelton, Debra Vanderburg Spencer, Ed Strickland, Eugenia Tsai.

[4] *Sources of Institutional Funding (partial list)* Countless generous individuals including board members, advisory committee members, artists, business executives, cultural and civic leaders. Institutional Sources: The Art Students League, Allen Tucker Fund; Avon Products; The Romare Bearden Foundation; The Brooklyn Union Gas Company; Consolidated Edison Company of New York; The Cottonwood Foundation; The Charles E. Culpepper

Foundation; The General Foods Corporation; HSCB Foundation; The New York Community Trust; New York Public Theater; The Nzingha Society; Restoration Supermarket Corp.; The Rockefeller Brothers Foundation; The Judith Rothschild Foundation; The Urban Center, Columbia University (inaugural grant, 1969-70, funded by The Ford Foundation); The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. *Employee Match Grants:* American Express Co; Citicorp, Inc.; IBM Corp; McGraw-Hill, Inc.; Pepsi; The Pfizer Foundation, Inc. Phillip Morris Companies, Inc.; Time Warner, Inc. *Public Sources:* The Department of Cultural Affairs of The City of New York; National Endowment for the Arts; The New York State Council on the Arts

[5] *Cinque Gallery Board Members (1969–2004, partial list)*. Shirley E. Barnes, Romare Bearden, Marion Bondurant, Walter Christmas, LaVerne Cornwell, Ernest Crichlow, John Curtis, John Felder, Alexine Fenty, Beverly Harrison, La Quita Henry, Patricia M. Hinds, Ruth Jett, David A. G. Johnson, Jr., Dr. Billy Jones, Natalie Jones, Michael Kenny, Norman Lewis, Wallace Nottage, Ray Simon, Alwyn Thomas, John Treadwell, Gail Wright.

[6] *Cinque Gallery Artists Advisory Committees (late 1980–mid 1990s, partial list)*: Nanette Carter, Edward

Clark, Melvin Edwards, Bill Hutson, Alvin D. Loving, Howard McCaleb, Ben Wigfall, William T. Williams. *Cinque Gallery Friends, Advisory Council (1990s, partial list)*. Vivian Hewitt, Julia Hotton, John Morning, Louida Lewis, Lani Kennedy, Dennis Derryk, Jo Ann Graham, E. T. Williams, Carl Nelson, Barbara Lawrence, Franklin Sirmans, Jason Wright.

[7] During the Gallery’s long lifespan board members, artists, curators, and friends developed a variety of ways to partner with community-based and civic organizations, churches, and schools. They resourcefully arranged collaborative programs, traveling exhibitions, educational programs, artists residencies, sponsorships and fundraising events. Many members opened their homes to host arts events. One of the Gallery’s reports, 2001-2, described its recent ambitious activities: traveling exhibitions hosted by school districts in Harlem, Queens, Bronx, Brooklyn; exhibitions and art sales in Sag Harbor, NY and Martha’s Vineyard, MA; art tours on behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, NY State Division of Housing, and 100 Black Women, CT; exhibitions exchanged with the African-American Master Artists in Residency Program, Northeastern University, MA.

[8] Sengbe Pieh, Mende, known as Joseph Cinque (Cinquez), 1814–c.1879, was kidnapped in 1839 from his homeland, currently Sierra Leone, and sold into slavery. Enslaved on board La Amistad, a schooner transporting slaves along the coast of Cuba, he led fifty-three enslaved Africans to revolt by overtaking Captain Ferrer and most of the crew. The mutineers demanded to be returned to Africa, however, surviving crew deceptively steered the ship north to Long Island Sound. The mutineers were apprehended by a U.S. Navy ship, imprisoned and tried in courts in New Haven, CT and environs. Trial defense by well-known abolitionists in Connecticut of Joseph Cinque and his fellow Africans was widely celebrated in the press and illustrated by contemporary artists in paintings, drawings, newspaper illustrations, and a traveling exhibit (135 foot mural). By 1841 the trial reached the U.S. Supreme Court where former President John Quincy Adams successfully defended Cinque and fellow Africans. Joseph Cinque, with fellow-Mende and other Africans succeeded in returning, c 1842, to West Africa (Sierra Leone).

Artwork References:

Contemporary (1839) drawings (22) of the Amistad Prisoners by William H. Townsend (1822–1851). Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. Sengbe Pieh (Joseph Cinquez), 1839. mezzotint by J. Sartain (1808–1897), a copy of Nathaniel Jocelyn portrait. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Sengbe Pieh (Joseph Cinquez), 1839, lithography by Moses Vale Beach (1800-1868) based on a published drawing by James (aka Isaac) Sheffield. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Heydt, Stephanie Mayer. 2012. *Rising Up*. Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talladega College, Atlanta: High Museum of Art.

[9] There is a dearth of consistent records, particularly about Cinque Gallery's first two decades. One incomplete source, pertaining primarily to the Gallery's final sixteen years, is located in the Cinque Gallery Records and Ruth Jett Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington,

D.C. Unique personal recollections and vivid accounts generously offered in interviews and correspondence with artists, artists' estates, as well as with former Cinque Gallery board and advisory committee members will continue to be irreplaceable.

Promising research is being pursued by graduate students, scholars and curators. The collegial exchange of findings, for example, with Howard Singerman, Ph.D., Hunter College, CUNY, has been especially valuable. He shared his 2021 research abstract:

"Black Artists in the New York Scene: Acts of Art and Cinque Galleries, 1969–1975. This project explores two gallery spaces established by and for African American artists in Greenwich Village in 1969 in response to the geography of a still segregated mainstream art world: Cinque Gallery and Acts of Art. The project will map the networks of Black artists showing at each gallery and it will situate those networks and institutions in relation to the white-identified art world and to the politics of cultural nationalism and a community of Harlem-based artists who consciously rejected that art world and its audiences."



CINQUE

CREATING COMMUNITY.
CINQUE GALLERY ARTISTS



THE PHYLLIS HARRIMAN MASON GALLERY
215 WEST 57TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10019