

Cicely Cottingham

BIOGRAPHY

Cicely Cottingham was born in Brooklyn, New York, and received a BFA degree in 1966 from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

After leaving Pratt, she lived for a time in Manhattan, Cambridge Massachusetts and England before eventually settling in New Jersey where she had spent her childhood in an old farmhouse surrounded by woods. It was there that she immersed herself in the light that is particular to the New York Atlantic coast. Her childhood environment became her primary creative influence. Other early influences were her mother, Marjorie, who instilled in her a deep satisfaction in the making of things; the first modernist, Cezanne, whose paintings she visited routinely and reverently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (how can a still life painting composed of mere paint and canvas be so alive and elicit such an emotional response?); and later, the American Hudson River School and Luminist painters. Her more recent work moves toward abstraction: color and shape reflect a more urban environment, yet the landscape of her youth is never entirely out of the picture. Her work in design over the last twenty years has provided another fertile ground for expanding her vocabulary as a painter.

Cicely Cottingham has received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, a Pollock/Krasner Grant, three New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship Awards, a Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper Fellowship Award and a Hereward Lester Cooke Grant. Her work is in the permanent collections of The Newark Museum, and the Institute for Jazz Studies, Rutgers University. Her print *Still Life Design for Living (variation): Beauford* is in the permanent collections of the Montclair Art Museum, Jersey City Museum, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, The Noyes Museum of Art, Newark Public Library, the Morris Museum and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Corporate collections include Prudential, Bristol-Meyers Squibb Co., Johnson & Johnson and McGraw Hill. Notable solo exhibitions have been (two) at the Jersey City Museum, the Hunterdon Museum of Art and Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art. Notable group exhibitions are *Recent Acquisitions, The Newark Museum; New Jersey Curator's Choice*, Paul Robeson Galleries, Rutgers Newark; *Drawing Invitational*, the Jersey City Museum; *Selections: Aljira and Artists' Space* and *Regular Beauties*, La Mama's La Galleria, NY. Her work has been included in New Jersey Arts

Annuals at The Newark Museum, the Montclair Art Museum and the New Jersey State Museum. Recent exhibitions include *Cicely Cottingham's Flags* (solo) at Gallery Aferro, Newark, NJ; *The Marjorie Paintings* and *Kitchen Table Drawings* (solo) at Stewart Leshé Collections, Milburn, NJ; a drawing invitational *Drawn to New York* at The Bertha V.B. Lederer Gallery, SUNY Geneseo and *Subject Matter*, The Gallery at Nell Painter's Studio, Newark, NJ. Cottingham currently lives and works in West Orange, New Jersey. Her work has been written about in the New York Times, New Art Examiner, Review, and Artnet Magazine.

Cicely Cottingham's significant association with the nonprofit visual arts organization Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, NJ dates from 1984 when she was included in their second exhibition. Aljira's mission is to serve emerging and underrepresented artists. In 1991 she cofounded a revenue generating enterprise, Aljira Design, which provided over 40% of Aljira's operating budget and helped to facilitate Aljira's development into a "Major Arts Institution", a designation of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Cottingham served as Aljira Design's Art Director from 1996 to 2009.