

LET THE

art

BE FIRST

LET THE ART BE FIRST

Recent work by

Sylvia Snowden
Denise Ward-Brown
Joyce Wellman

February 4-March 1, 1986

Washington Women's Arts Center
420 7th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Let the Art Be First

Sylvia Snowden
Denise Ward-Brown
Joyce Wellman

It seems rather courageous when one realizes all the problems around being an artist, the personal, the emotional, the technical, that three persons would agree that the theme of their show should be "Let There Be Art." However, the fact that each of these persons has struggled to make art, has come to live in Washington is not the subject of this exhibit. The subject is: let there be art for Sylvia, Denise, and Joyce, primarily. In fact, Joyce Wellman mentioned that she came to Washington some six years ago not only to assess her art, but to be able to perform it.

It is with similar interest that the others stayed in Washington following a very strong line of Washington women who have worked here. It is to all of these women that this exhibit is dedicated. Yet, it is a particular celebration of Black History Month that is also before us. All three women are artists. All three women are black. So, "let the art be first." This show is a rallying point for them in 1985, for staying in Washington and for being intent upon resolving the personal and emotional conflicts that center in art.

I personally hope that everyone observing this show will realize, as I have come to realize, that the art is superb, of first rank, of great depth and significance, regardless of the pluralities.

It should be first and it is first.

Sam Gilliam, jr.



I enjoy the experience/act of painting; particularly color and tactile texture.
As subject matter, the figure is used to express emotional states of being.

Sylvia Snowden

"Alice Shannon II" 1984
Mixed Media
62" x 49"
Courtesy Brody's Gallery,
Washington, D.C.

"Magaline, Brinson's Mother" 1985
Mixed Media
67½" x 52"
Courtesy Brody's Gallery
Washington, D.C.

"Barbara Doll II" 1985
Mixed Media
67½" x 52"
Courtesy Brody's Gallery
Washington, D.C.

"Clarice Little" 1985
Mixed Media on Paper
30" x 22"
Courtesy Brody's Gallery
Washington, D.C.



I am working with tightly composed fragments of architectural elements, furniture, picture frames, etc. The viewer has some type of personal history with these generic objects when they are whole. In visually compressing and overlapping these fragments, I am recreating coded, dreamlike recognition of oblique memories.

Denise Ward-Brown

Assemblages 1985

"Relief"

"Contextures"

"How Be Some Ever"

"Across the Way"

"Nodel Post"

"Take to the Sky"

"Night Cast"

"So and So"



The approach to my work is to create imagery that can be felt by the implosion of color, form, and space. By fusing that imagery into a communication that is abstract, I induct the viewer to perceive a combination of views, discoveries, and feelings. I seek to bring to the viewer a world which we feel but cannot see: a world that exists to nurture us beyond and on to the Path of the Spirit.

The concept overriding my work is the artist's alter-ego in metamorphosis. For me this means the artist's ability to go inside and touch base with that other self in us all that is interfacing subconsciously with our environment.

Joyce Wellman

"Jungle Journey" 1984
Color Viscosity Etching
20" x 26"

"Untitled Sky" 1984
Etching
20" x 26"

"The Water Family" 1985
Color Viscosity Etching
20" x 26"

"Journey Through Migration" 1984
Color Viscosity Etching
20" x 26"

"Dispersion of Original Haitian Boat People" 1985
Color Viscosity Etching
20" x 26"

"Untitled Series II B" 1985
Monoprint
20" x 26"

"Arlington Series" 1985
Monoprint
20" x 26"

"Untitled Series II D" 1985
Monoprint
20" x 26"

Paintings 1985

Acrylic on Paper, 22" x 30"

Dusk Time Sky—Purple Waves—Untitled #8
Untitled #9—Autumn Sun Set—Undersea Life
Lightening—Green on Red Crossing
Night Journey—News—Violet Journeys
Space Storm



Alice Shannon II, 1984, 62" x 48", Mixed Media

SYLVIA SNOWDEN

Born: Washington, D.C.

Education:

Howard University, Washington, D.C., M.F.A., 1965.

Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine, Certificate, 1965.

Howard University, Washington, D.C., B.A., 1963.

La Grande Chaumiere, Paris, France, Certificate, 1962.

Teaching:

Delaware State College, Community College of Baltimore, Morgan State College,
1965-73, Howard University, 1976.

Selected Exhibitions:

- 1985 Solo Exhibition, "Paintings and Works on Paper," Brody's Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- 1985 "Choosing an Exhibit of Changing Perspectives in Modern Art and Art Criticism by Black Americans 1925-1985," Group Exhibition, Invitational, Jacqueline Bontemps, Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia.
- 1980 "Alternatives by Black Artists," Washington Project for the Arts, Keith Morrison, Washington, D.C.
- 1979 "Emerging Artists," Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.
- 1975 Solo Exhibition, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, Australia.
- 1974 "Four Abstract Artists," Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland.

Publications:

Artnews, Lee Fleming, "Sylvia Snowden," December, 1985.

The Washington Post, Paul Richard, "Sylvia Snowden's Local Color," September 26, 1985.

The Washington Star, Benjamin Forgey, "Galleries: High-Voltage Intensity in Paintings from the Inner City," Sunday, March 4, 1979.



Nodel Post, 1985, Assemblage

DENISE WARD-BROWN

Born: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1953

Education:

Howard University, Washington, D.C., M.F.A., 1984.

Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, B.F.A., 1975.

Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, Maine, 1973-74.

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, North Carolina, 1974.

Selected Exhibitions:

1985 "The Washington Show," Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

1984-85 Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

1984 "History as Content," Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

1984 Solo Exhibition, "Thresholds and Portals," Cinque Gallery, New York City.

Teaching:

Fillmore Arts Center, Washington, D.C.

Publication:

The Artery, Volume 1, Number 2, "Window and Door Assemblages: Thresholds and Portals That Invoke Memories."



Untitled Sky, 1985, 20" x 16", Etching

JOYCE WELLMAN

Born: New York City, 1949.

Education:

City College of New York, School of Education, B.S., 1972.

University of Massachusetts at Amherst, School of Education, M.A., 1977.

Studio Museum of Harlem, Printmaking Workshop, 1972-79.

Bob Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, 1973-79.

Color Atelier, New York, 1979-80.

Selected Exhibitions:

1985 Solo Exhibition, Gallery 900, Art Department, University of the District of Columbia.

1984 Fourth Annual National Art Competition and Exhibition, Atlanta Life Insurance Co., Atlanta, Georgia.

1984 "Where We At, Black Women Artists," Cork Gallery, Lincoln Center, New York City.

1983 Gallery 62, National Urban League, New York City.

1980 "W.D. Printmaking Workshop," James A. Porter Gallery of African-American Art, Howard University.

Publication:

1985 *International Review of African-American Art*, Volume 6, Number 4.

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