

FREESTYLIN' HOMAGE TO ED CLARK



WORKS BY JOYCE WELLMAN

HER ARTIST WAY: JOYCE WELLMAN

BY MICHELLE PARKERSON

A note from the author:

If you want to set (yet another) daunting task for yourself in Life, try writing an insightful appreciation about a longtime friend and fellow “creative” for her solo exhibition. Joyce Wellman’s art has been part of my world for nearly 40 years. I’ve long admired her vibrantly unbound, adventurous vision and even been fortunate enough to purchase some her work.

We’ve shared the uneven terrain of the artist’s journey—Joyce’s as a visual artist and mine as a writer and filmmaker. We’ve also shared the amazing mixed blessing of being artists who teach, encouraging coming generations and “just plain folks” to flex their creative potential.

If there’s one key thing I’ve grasped from knowing Joyce Wellman, it is to be blindly courageous and to venture “out of one’s lane”—frequently! And so with this preface, I now undertake that challenge: jumping into the art world pool fearlessly and without flotilla.

Your consideration, please...

It’s the way creative people do their thing, live their lives and generate Art that has always fascinated and inspired me—the way they fashion dreams, beauty, memory, redemption and resistance into tangible expression through dance, film, music, storytelling and, of course, visual art. Joyce Wellman is one such artist.

Over our 38-year friendship, I’ve been privileged to witness her evolution, sometimes as a patron, sometimes just dropping by her studio for tea.



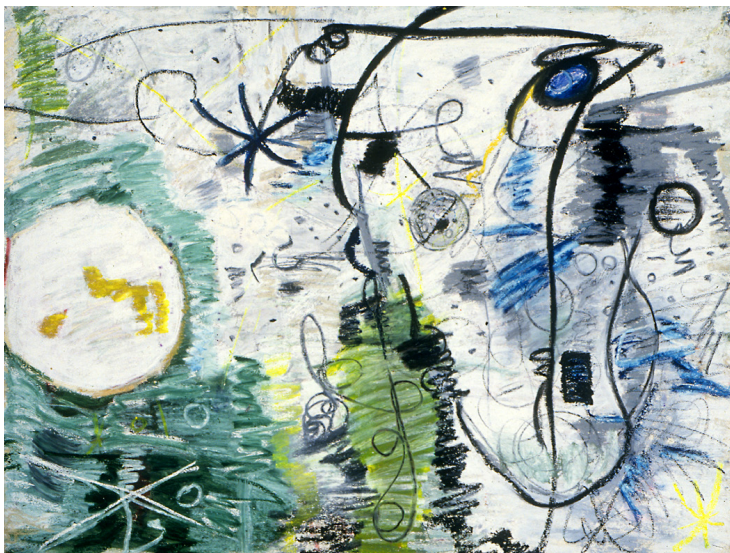
Offspring II, 2002. Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in.

What I began to recognize in Wellman’s work across media (paper, canvas, wood, artist’s books, and multimedia) is what attracts and energizes me about Art—the power of intimacy, the way an artist invites you to feel and to respond through their work.

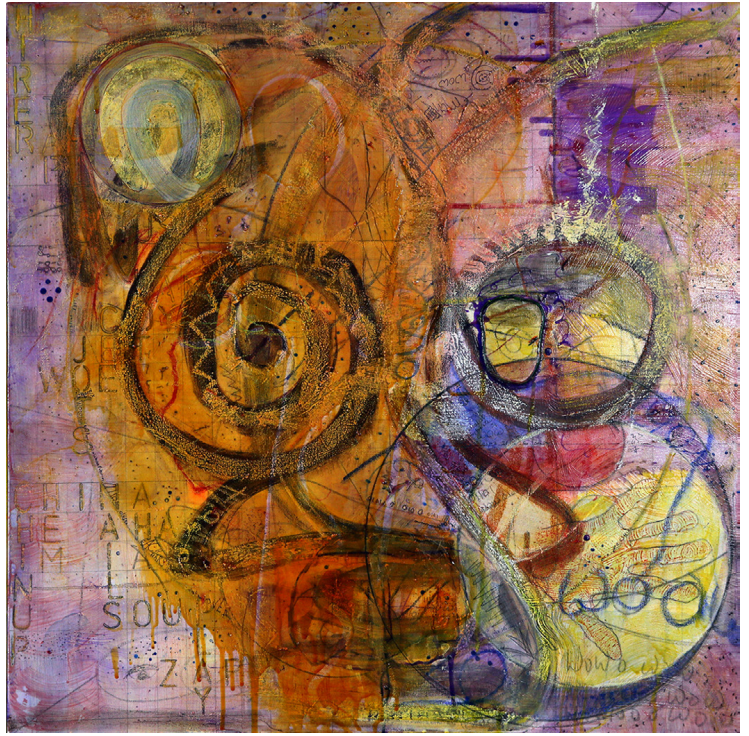
Joyce Wellman’s work displays this alchemy. She sparks dialogue between the viewer and the art—encouraging us to create our own narratives, discover larger stories and embedded truths. Using line, circles, glyphs, color, clash, vacancy, dimension, metaphor, anthropomorphic and sacred imagery and geometry, she transforms message into form. She reveals myriad worlds from deep within her own.

Mentored as a young New York artist by the groundbreaking Abstract painter, Ed Clark (1926-2019), Joyce Wellman has entitled her Foundry Gallery solo exhibition, *Free Stylin’ - Homage to Ed Clark*, acknowledging Clark’s approach to creative technique and his life as an artist. The show presents a range of Wellman’s larger format works and stylistic signatures—all populated with abstract imagery and explosions

of visual movement. She summons you to take interior excursions with: *Listen Here* (acrylic on canvas)—suggests, in form, a speaker and hints of a turntable in the center space projecting a range of sounds and emotions through its brilliant color spectrum; *Someone Different* (oil paint stick on paper)—is a crafted refrain of Wellman’s visual signature found in her work of the 1980s and early 90s; *Offspring II* (acrylic on canvas)—presents eclipsing circles with trailing lines and color “bleeds” implying Pac-Man swiftness transcending fixed lines of demarcation; *What World? Why The Upside Down One!* (acrylic on canvas)—Ovals, line and color respond to what lies outside the frame; gradations of red unite the internal streams of consciousness; *Freestylin’* (etching)—represents the graphic impulse and the power of black/white/gray variations using form abstraction and texturing; *Hidden Hand Woo* (acrylic on canvas)—combines the swirling abstraction of Wellman’s earlier work with recent approaches to background, layering and graphic messaging; form, language and color experimentation resonate in this collaboration.



Someone Different, 1990. Oil paint stick on paper, 38 x 50 in.



Hidden Hand Woo, 2016. Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 in.

Clark’s influence surfaces in Wellman’s work through the detailed, painterly physicality with which she textures those images. Her attention to color palette (which resonates for me as a filmmaker) also aligns Wellman’s aesthetic with Clark’s legendary experimentations using light, hue saturation and visual suggestion. Wellman’s use of and variations in the color red are particularly absorbing. Red is her artistic touchstone and it is encountered in unlikely places.

In 1992, Julia Cameron’s best-selling book and journal, *The Artist’s Way*, illuminated a new understanding of self-discovery and artistic practice. The Foundry Gallery exhibition, *Free Stylin’- Homage to Ed Clark*, beautifully conveys Joyce Wellman’s irrepressible response to the creative spirit and the potency of its dynamic rendering. From the personal to the presentational, it is her artist way.

Open your eyes...



Free Stylin' - Homage to Ed Clark

Works by Joyce Wellman

Foundry Gallery - January 3-February 2, 2020

Images: front: *Listen Here*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 in.

Above: *Butterfly*, 2017. Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 40 in.

Flap: *What World? Why the Upside Down One!* (detail), 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 in.

All works courtesy of the artist.

foundrygallery.org
joycewellman.com

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Free Stylin', 2008. Etching, 12 x 9 in.

MICHELLE PARKERSON is a writer, lecturer and award-winning filmmaker based in Washington, DC. Her work has screened at prestigious international festivals including The Sundance Film Festival, The Berlin Film Festival and AFI Fest. She has documented the lives of LGBTQ icon, Audre Lorde, jazz innovator Betty Carter, acappella activists, Sweet Honey in the Rock and legendary male impersonator, Storme' DeLarverie.