

# OPEN DOORS

Artwork on loan February - August, 2022

For generations, artists have reflected on and referred to the work of their predecessors to serve as a blueprint guiding them toward new possibilities. This exhibition is a timeless cross-generational discourse between Black artists operating in a variety of contexts socially and aesthetically. From figuration to abstraction, contributing artists share a communal dialogue with their forbearers and successors acknowledging those that carved their path and centering concerns rooted in Black experiences.

Portrayals of Black subjects, life, and history showcase the breadth, the multidimensionality, and the wholeness of the Black life, past and present. Highlighting a spectrum of artists within various generations not only reflects a spectrum of the community but is also a visual reclamation of Black history as well as an observance of their inspirations.

We aim to celebrate past artists that have opened doors while amplifying the present artists that push their vision and values forward. We hope for this exhibition to serve as an entry point to shift how to engage in the world around us and enlighten and inspire viewers of all backgrounds.

Cedars-Sinai's Advisory Council for the Arts would like to make special thanks to the following for their generous support and contributions: Jeanette Brewer, Dale Cochran, The Davidson's, Los Angeles, Mandy and Cliff Einstein, Brenda and Bill Galloway, Cynthia and Eddie Greenwald, Ben Lee Ritchie Handler and Nicolette Mishkan, Anne and Charles Johnson, Channing Johnson, Esq. Devin B. Johnson, Debra L. Lee, Mattie McFadden-Lawson and Michael Lawson, KC Miller, V. Joy Simmons, MD.



## OPEN DOORS DIGITAL GALLERY



Cedars  
Sinai





## Chaz Guest

### *Portrait of Gordon Parks*

2005

Ink and oil resin on handmade paper

30" h x 22" w

Artwork on loan from The Davidsons, Los Angeles

Chaz Guest is an American artist known for his portraits which capture the essence and reflection of the human spirit. He has said, "when I'm painting a portrait, I finish the eyes and mouth first...so my subject can speak to me."

In this painting, Guest portrays the American photographer, musician, writer, and film director Gordon Parks (1912-2006). Inspired by photographs of migrant workers he had seen in a magazine, Parks taught himself photography at the age of 8 after he purchased a camera from a pawnshop in Seattle, WA. In 1942 Parks received the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship which gave him the freedom to explore photography and photojournalism further. As Parks moved from job to job, he developed his striking approach to photojournalism. Whether he was photographing; the Tuskegee Airmen while working for the Office of War Information, fashion models for Vogue magazine or Ella Watson, the subject of his well-known photograph American Gothic, Washington D.C. while working at the Farm Security Administration, Parks' photographs commanded your attention.

In the 1950s, Parks began consulting on various Hollywood productions and soon directed a series of documentaries which focused on life in Black underserved neighborhoods. Parks went on to become the first major Black film director, not only known for his documentaries, but for also creating films such as Shaft, Super Cops and Leadbelly.

To learn more about the life and incredible work of Gordon Parks, please visit [The Gordon Parks Foundation](http://TheGordonParksFoundation.org).







## Charles White

*Exodus*

1966

Lithograph, 17/50

28" h x 31 5/8" w

Artwork on loan from The Davidsons, Los Angeles

Charles White (born April 2, 1918) was an American artist known for his commitment to creating powerful images of African Americans and what White himself described as "images of dignity". Throughout his four-decade career, White used his skills as a draftsman, printmaker, and painter to address changing concerns and challenge racist ideas through humanistic portraits of Black Americans.

White was born in Chicago, later lived in New York, and, finally, moved to Los Angeles. White was a critical member of creative communities in each of these cities throughout his career. Friends and colleagues included photographer Gordon Parks, painter Jacob Lawrence, and singer and actor Harry Belafonte. From his earliest days as a mature artist, White was also a gifted and dedicated teacher at Los Angeles's Otis College of Art and Design, where he influenced notable students such as Kerry James Marshall and David Hammons.

His practice of making rigorous, socially committed art inspired a generation of artists, some of whom continue his legacy in their work. As Marshall noted, "Under Charles White's influence I always knew that I wanted to make work that was about something: history, culture, politics, social issues...It was just a matter of mastering the skills to actually do it."







## **Forrest Kirk**

*Fist #38*

2021

Acrylic and gorilla glue on canvas

36" h x 36" w

Artwork on loan from Cynthia and Eddie Greenwald

Forrest Kirk (b. 1975) lives and works in Los Angeles. Kirk studied at California State University, Los Angeles and spent time studying classical painting techniques in an atelier in Paris, France. The bold chromatic diversity of Kirk's paintings are achieved using a variety of media ranging from oils and acrylic to bubble wrap, fabric and gorilla glue.

His images often reference psychological uncertainty and anxiety arising from underlying power structures, specifically those experienced in contemporary urban settings. For his recent bodies of work, Kirk has focused on dramatizations he envisioned referencing Ralph Ellison's 1952 classic novel "Invisible Man" where the main character has become invisible as a result of the refusal of others to acknowledge him. In these works, Kirk absorbs the experiences and visions as dictated by the story's besieged narrator.







## Forrest Kirk

*Armoire*

2019

Acrylic and gorilla glue on canvas

30" h x 24" w

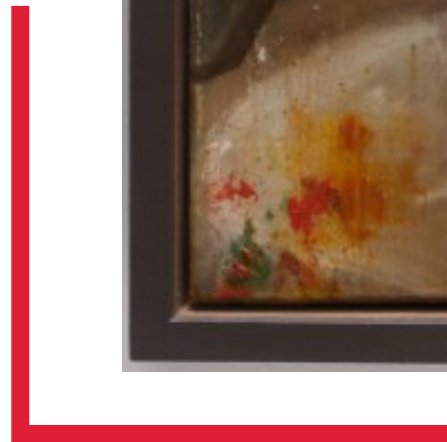
Artwork on loan from Cynthia and Eddie Greenwald

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## Devin B. Johnson

*Perch*

2021

Oil and spray paint on linen

30" h x 24" w



Artwork on loan from Ben Lee Ritchie Handler and Nicolette Mishkan

Devin B. Johnson (b. 1992) is a multi-disciplinary artist living in Brooklyn. He works primarily in the language of painting. Johnson paints from improvised, freestyle digital collages sourced from personal and historical imagery arranged into fictional, sentimental situations. The paintings are an amalgam of exterior and interior moments which are inspired by Johnson's walks around Brooklyn. The work follows the idea of meta-physical transformations of both exterior and interior spaces while referencing the body and landscape in relation to memory.

Johnson obtained his BA in Fine Arts from the California State University of Channel Islands (2015) and received a Masters of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute (2019). He was one of sixteen artists from around the world selected for the inaugural year of the Black Rock Senegal residency, and was featured in the Northeast and MFA issue of *New American Paintings* (2019), and included in *Cultured's* "Young Artists 2021."







## Jacob Lawrence

### *Confrontation at the Bridge*

1975

Lithograph

35" h x 28.5" w

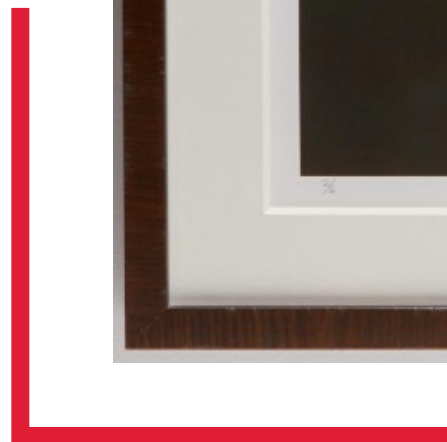
Artwork on loan from Channing D. Johnson Esq., Los Angeles.

Jacob Lawrence's powerful *Confrontation at the Bridge* depicts the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches which would enable African Americans to register and vote without harassment. Lawrence uses strong colors and an expressive composition to highlight the strength and courage of the peaceful march just as they are met by the opposition of the state troopers represented by the snarling dog on the far left.

Lawrence (born September 7, 1917) was an American painter known for his portrayal of African American historical subjects and contemporary life. The son of Southern migrants, he moved with his mother and sister to Harlem in 1930 at age 13. There, Lawrence became one of the first artists to be trained by the African American community of Harlem, receiving special attention from sculptor Augusta Savage, leader of the Harlem Community Art Center, and from teachers such as painter Charles Alston. Throughout the 1930s, Lawrence's art was inspired by the cultural visionaries of the Harlem Renaissance.







## John Dowell

*It's Just Cotton*

2012

Photography

28" h x 19" w

Artwork on loan from Debra L. Lee

John E. Dowell, Jr. (born March 25, 1941), a nationally recognized artist, captures the pulse of cities and agricultural landscapes of America in his large-scale photographs. Working primarily from sunset until dawn, he focuses on the surface of buildings, the reflections of their exteriors and, quietly, their interior spaces. Illuminating the unseen, he brings awareness to a single moment.

For the past several years, he has also built extended photographs of the modern agronomy. These crops provoke thoughts of cultural, political, and economic concerns that are often overlooked. He strives to incite the viewer to re-examine their assumptions of place and time. Now imagine being inside a field of cotton, corn, or a banana plantation. Sense the evolution of history.

An artist and master printer for more than four decades, Dowell's fine art prints, paintings, and photographs have been featured in more than 50 one-person exhibitions and represented in the permanent collections of 70 museum and public collections. Among them are the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, France. Dowell's photographs are in the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and have been added to his work in the collections of the Fogg Museum of Harvard University, the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design and the Lehigh University Museum.

John Dowell is a Philadelphia native and Professor Emeritus of Printmaking at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University.







## Miles Davis

*Don Quixote*

Date Unkown

Serigraph 47/450

24.5" h x 18.5" w

Artwork on loan from Debra L. Lee

Miles Davis (born May 26, 1926) was an American trumpeter, bandleader, and composer widely considered as one of the most acclaimed and influential figures in jazz history. Born in Alton, Illinois, Davis began playing trumpet at the age of 13 and ultimately moved to New York in 1944 after receiving a scholarship to The Julliard School. While in New York, he began playing alongside jazz legend Charlie Parker as part of the saxophonist's bebop quintet from 1944-1948. Shortly after, Davis collectively assembled his band with John Coltrane, Paul Chambers, Red Garland, Cannonball Adderly, and Philly Joe Jones. In 1957, he released his first album for Capitol Records entitled, *Birth of Cool*. Inspired by musical theorist George Russell, Davis experimented with playing modes rather than standard chord changes which birthed his iconic album *Kind of Blue* in 1959. In 1968, Davis shifted his musical direction and showcased his electric jazz skills with the release *In a Silent Way*. Davis continued expanding this sound with the release of his late albums, expounding the electronic and rock elements and spearheading major stylistic developments of Jazz.







## Miles Davis

*Spider Web*

Date Unknown

Serigraph 94/300

29" h x 21.5" w

Artwork on loan from Debra L. Lee

Miles Davis (born May 26, 1926) was an American trumpeter, bandleader, and composer widely considered as one of the most acclaimed and influential figures in jazz history. In 1972, Davis was in a terrible car accident causing him to recede from music for nearly a year. It was during his recovery from his injuries that

he turned to painting, which ultimately became an integral part of the last decades of his life. Davis obsessively worked on paintings, taking the same passionate energy as he applied to music. He once stated, "Painting is like therapy for me, and keeps my mind occupied with something positive when I'm not playing music." Davis's painterly style was strikingly bold, vibrant and whimsical, incorporating geometric elements and bright colors evoking artists such as Kandinsky, Picasso, and Basquiat, who all were underpinned by the indisputable influence of traditional African art.







## **Phoebe Beasley**

### *Streetcar Line*

2002

Collage and Mixed Media

24" h x 36" w

Artwork on loan from Anne and Charles Johnson



Phoebe Beasley (born June 3, 1943) is an acclaimed American collage artist from Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1993, President Clinton presented the Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps with one of Beasley's monoprints entitled "Clinton Inaugural" which was accorded the coveted Presidential Seal. It was the second time she had received this honor. The first time was when she produced a commissioned artwork for the inauguration of President George H.W. Bush in 1989.

In 1998, she collaborated with Dr. Maya Angelou on an oversized limited-edition coffee table book comprised of poems by Langston Hughes entitled *Sunrise is Coming After While*. Dr. Angelou selected the poems, titled the book, and wrote the forward. Beasley created several serigraphs based on the poems







## Frank Walter

### *Birds #2 with Rainbow Sky*

Date Unknown

Oil on paper

12.5" h x 14.5" w



Artwork on loan from Mandy and Cliff Einstein

Frank Walter (1926-2009) was a prolific Antiguan artist, sculptor, photographer, composer, writer, and philosopher who produced paintings that dealt with landscape, portraiture, and identity, as well as abstract explorations of nuclear energy and the universe.

By temperament, Walter was a quiet person who kept to himself. He liked people and was known to be courteous. However, connecting to others often proved difficult, as he had an intense need for privacy. Highly aware of his surroundings, the natural environment became his sanctuary, and Walter's seclusion gave him a rarefied perspective. His artistic vision naturally reflected his isolation and was connected to his remarkable sense of history and place.

Walter found tranquility in the wilderness of his agricultural and industrial estate known as Mount Olympus in Dominica from 1961-1968. After clearing invasive trees by hand to prepare the property for farming, Walter was shattered when the government confiscated the land. Returning to city life in St. John's, Antigua from 1969-1993, he worked as a photographer, frame maker, and artist; however, the urban conditions were at odds with his reserved personality. In 1993 he designed and built a home, art studio, and gardens near relations in a remote location on Bailey's Hill in Antigua. Walter created an environment embracing the natural world, complete with staggering views of the surrounding countryside and ocean, where he pursued his dreams as an artist until his death in February of 2009.

Throughout Frank Walter's life, art was his anodyne, and he created over 5,000 paintings, 1,000 drawings, 600 sculptures, 2,000 photographs, 468 hours of recordings, and a 50,000-page archive.







## Chris Ofili

*Untitled*

2000

Watercolor on paper

16" h x 20" w

Artwork on loan from Mandy and Cliff Einstein

Christopher Ofili (born October 10, 1968) is a British Turner Prize-winning painter who is best known for his playful, kaleidoscopic canvases that contemplated desire and identity, specifically in relation to African diasporic traditions. A member of the Young British Artists, Ofili has referenced Zimbabwean cave paintings, blaxploitation films, and Catholic iconography. He utilizes resin, beads, glitter, and —perhaps most famously—elephant dung.

Ofili's early work was heavily influenced by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Georg Baselitz, Philip Guston, and George Condo. In 2014, art critic Roberta Smith held that Ofili has much in common with painters like Mickalene Thomas, Kerry James Marshall, Robert Colescott and Ellen Gallagher, along with more distant precedents such as Bob Thompson, Beauford Delaney and William H. Johnson.

Ofili studied at the Chelsea School of Art before receiving his MFA from the Royal College of Art. He has exhibited extensively in New York, London, Paris, Miami, Berlin, Tokyo, and Los Angeles. Ofili has presented at the Venice Biennale twice, in 2003 and 2015, and in 1998, he won the Turner Prize. His work is within the collections of the British Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Walker Art Center, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.







## Gary Simmons

*I Wish, I Wish...Forever*

2003

Charcoal on velum

36" h x 36" w



Artwork on loan from V. Joy Simmons, MD.

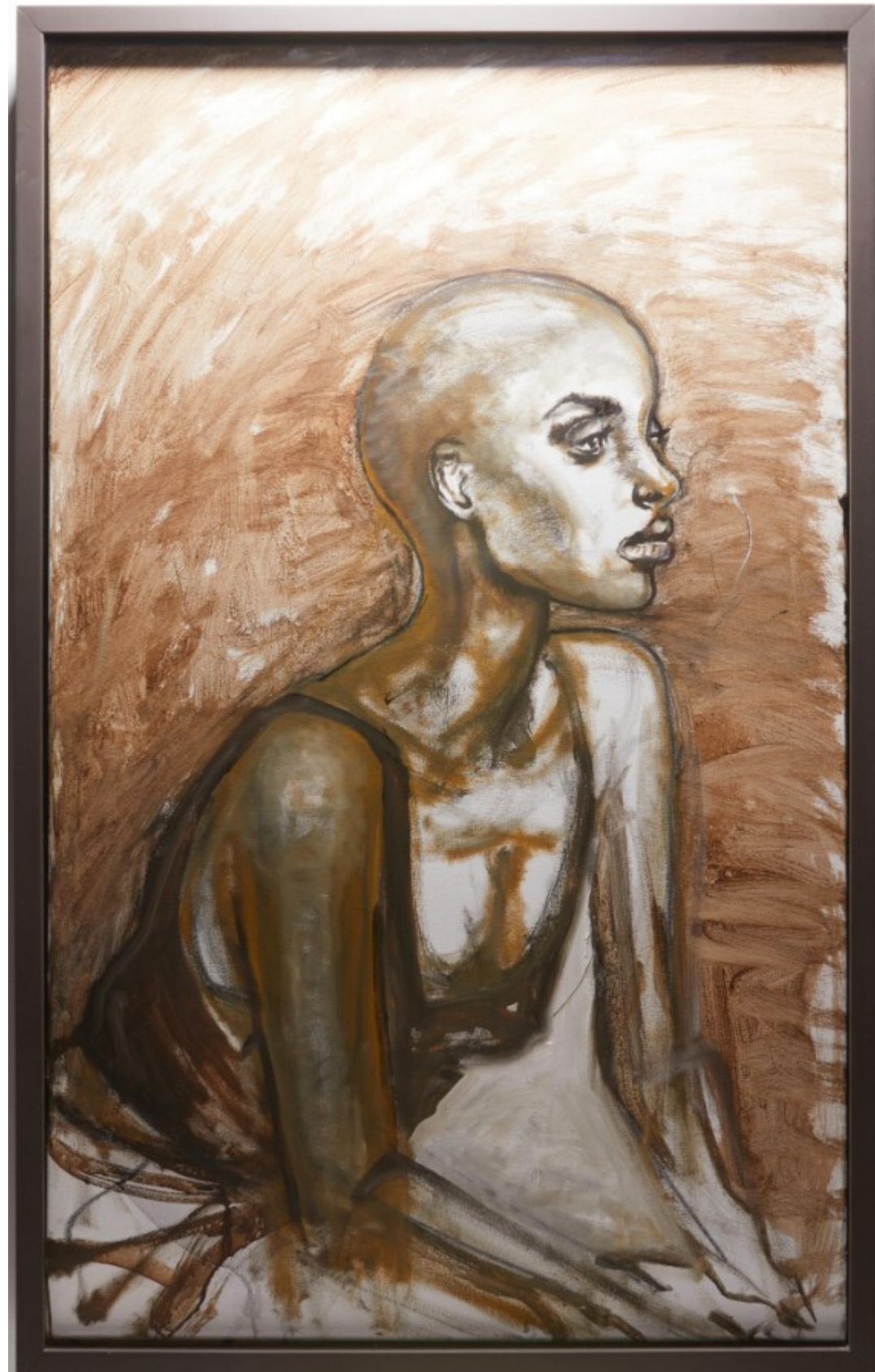
Gary Simmons (born April 14, 1964) is an American artist from New York City that uses icons and stereotypes of American pop culture to create work that addresses personal and collective experiences of race and class. He is best known for his “erasure drawings”, in which he draws in white chalk on slate-painted panels or walls, then smudges them with his hands.

Simmons received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 1988, and his MFA from CalArts in 1990, studying under the tutelage of Charles Gaines, Michael Asher, Catherine Lord, and others. Upon graduation, Simmons established a studio in a former school in New York City. At this stage, he was working predominantly in sculpture, a medium he would return to in subsequent decades.

Simmons’ use of pedagogical motifs, in particular readymade chalkboards, led to the formal and aesthetic breakthrough that would inform much of his subsequent work, in which erasure of the image has been a powerful and recurring theme. The tropes of erasure and ephemerality suggest the fleeting nature of memory and histories re-written. Simmons draws from popular culture, music, vernacular, and cartoon imagery, specifically the racist characters of early animations. A landmark piece commissioned for the Whitney Biennial, “Wall of Eyes” (1993), explored the aesthetic possibilities of chalkboard at a monumental scale. Simmons drew cartoon eyes in chalk over slate paint applied directly to the wall, then deliberately hand-smudged the chalk lines. As the artist explains: “I started to think about how images on blackboards can never be fully erased. It was about trying to erase a stereotype and the traces of the racial pain that you drag along with you”.







## Chaz Guest

*The Look*

2021

Oil and ink on canvas

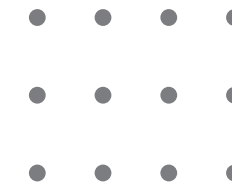
48" h x 30" w

Artwork on loan from Mattie McFadden-Lawson and Michael Lawson

Chaz Guest (born May 2, 1961) is an American painter and sculptor that captures the essence and reflection of the human spirit. He is described by the Huffington Post as "an American artist of profound inventiveness". From his acclaimed "Cotton Series" paintings of enslaved African Americans rendered on 100% pure Georgia cotton flags to his latest graphic novel creation Buffalo Warrior, Guest proudly inserts his culture into every piece he makes.

The works of Chaz Guest are found with prominent collectors such as President Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Beth Rudin DeWoody, Javier Baz, Ted Sarandos, Nicole Avant, Angelina Jolie, Tyler Perry, Spike Lee, Samuel L. Jackson and Ruth Carter. Icons from the late Gordon Parks to Misty Copeland have also sat before him to be rendered into immortality.

Guest states, "The greatest thing that people get from my paintings is seeing themselves within them - no matter who you are... By the time I leave this earth, I want to see people moving closer together".







## Phoebe Beasley

### *Another Fireside Chat*

1997

Collage

25" h x 25" w

Artwork on loan from Brenda and Bill Galloway

Phoebe Beasley (born June 3, 1943) is an American artist from Cleveland, Ohio. The acclaimed collage artist has had numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide and was honored by the State Department for her participation in the Arts in Embassies program.

Beasley was one of 44 artists commissioned to create a collage on a life-size bust of the 44th President Barack Obama in 2012.

Beasley's collage artwork was part of two major touring museum exhibitions, including a group show mounted by the Smithsonian Institution entitled *In the Spirit of Martin*, honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (2003). Beasley's work was part of a museum show entitled *Portraying Lincoln: Man of Many Faces*, based on the life and work of President Lincoln. (2008).

With a background as an artist, educator, civic activist, and charitable volunteer, Phoebe Beasley is able to draw upon her multifaceted endeavors to create stunning and memorable bodies of work.







## Betye Saar

### *Conscience of the Court*

1999

Mixed media on paper

25" h x 21" w



Artwork on loan from Brenda and Bill Galloway

Betye Irene Saar (born July 30, 1926) is an American artist known for her work in the medium of Assemblage. As a visual storyteller as well as an accomplished printmaker, Saar was a contributing force in the 1970s Black Arts Movement. Her work engaged myths and stereotypes centering on race and femininity and is often considered highly political, as she reflects on African American identity and spirituality as well as challenges negative ideas about African Americans.

For over six decades, Saar has created assemblage works that explore the social, political, and economic underpinnings of America's collective memory. She began her career at the age of 35 producing work that dealt with mysticism, nature, and family. Saar's art became political in the 1970's namely with the assemblage *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* in 1972. As did many of the women who came to consciousness in the 1960's, Saar takes on the feminist mantra "the personal is political" as a fundamental principle in her assemblage works. Among the older generation of Black American artists, Saar is without reproach and continues to both actively produce work and inspire countless others.

*Conscience of the Court* was created to complement a short story of the same title by Zora Neale Hurston, a relatively simple story of devotion and justice, and the author's last original short story published in the *Saturday Evening Post*.







## Jeanette Brewer

*Safe Place*

2002

Acrylic on canvas

36" h x 24" w

Artwork on loan from Jeanette Brewer

Jeanette Brewer is a contemporary artist who currently lives in central California. Brewer's works explore the light and beauty within nature, spirituality, humanity, and culture.

Safe Place is from the Women of the Underground Railroad Series. In this series, Brewer amplifies the relationship between women from the Bible and the women who participated in the Underground Railroad. In the Bible, there is a woman by the name of Thecla, a follower of Paul the Apostle. Thecla waited by her window both day and night to hear the message from Paul, "Wait with patience and receive the gifts of the Lord." The pattern of the quilt on the fence is a nod to Jacob's Ladder. In the Bible, Jacob's Ladder refers to the prophetic dream in which Jacob sees a ladder stretching from heaven to earth. In Brewer's piece, this reference signals that the Underground Railroad is a safe place, a place that will give you food, shelter and protection.







## Ernie Barnes

*Untitled*

c. 1997

Oil on canvas

60" h x 36" w

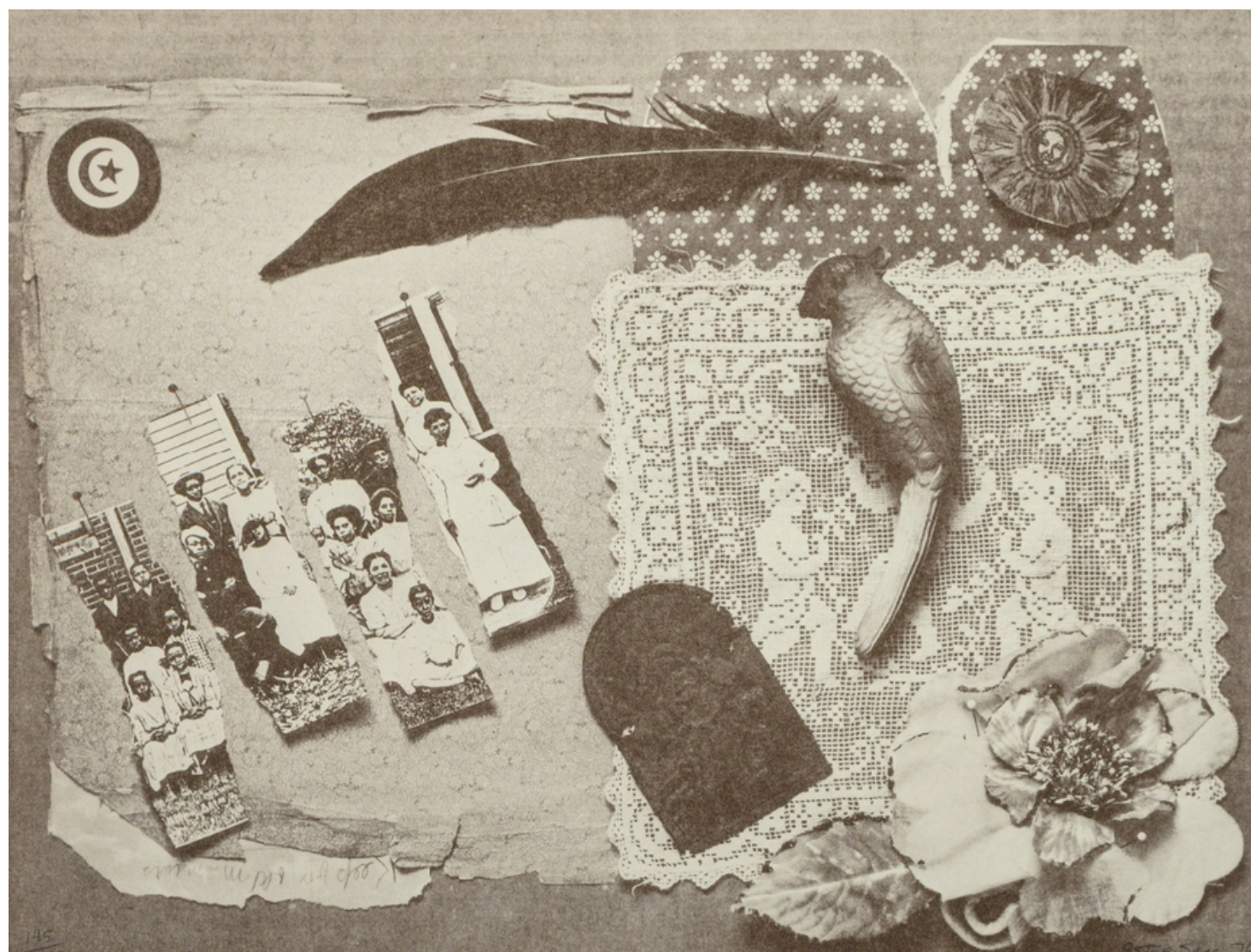
Artwork on loan from Dale Cochran

Ernest Eugene Barnes Jr. (born July 15, 1938) was an American artist from Durham, North Carolina known for his unique style of elongation, energy, and movement. Barnes' involvement with art began at an early age. In the first grade, Barnes was intrigued and captivated by the works of master artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Delacroix, Rubens, and Michelangelo.

When he entered junior high school, he could appreciate, as well as decode, many of the cherished masterpieces within the walls of mainstream museums – although it would be many more years before he was allowed entrance because of segregation. When he reached high school his creative endeavors were temporarily detoured in his determination to become a successful athlete. He graduated from high school as a hero and star football player, with 26 full athletic scholarships to choose from. He chose North Carolina Central University and a major in art. After college, he continued in an illustrious professional athletic career, but never let his love for football overshadow his love for art.

Affectionately nicknamed "Big Rembrandt" by his teammates, Barnes is the first American professional athlete to become a noted painter. In his prolific body of work, Barnes documented his personal experiences with sports, music, dance, love, education, church, and the South. In pop culture, Barnes' paintings appeared in the groundbreaking African American sitcom *Good Times* and his iconic Sugar Shack dance scene appeared on Marvin Gaye's album cover *I Want You*.





## Betye Saar

*Untitled*

1976

1-color lithograph, 7/250

15" h x 19" w

Artwork donated to Cedars Sinai by Lenore and Bernard Greenberg

Betye Saar's (born 1926) dense, symbolic assemblages reconsider the social, political, and economic underpinnings of American race relations and collective memory. Infusing all her works with a sense of mysticism, Saar combines found objects such as washboards and birdcages with elements of painting, photography, drawing, and printmaking. Her iconography ranges from folk references to cosmological symbols. Saar studied at California State University, Long Beach; the University of Southern California; and California State University, Northridge. She was largely influenced by the artists working in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, including Simon Rodia, John Outterbridge, and Noah Purifoy.

Further exploring the idea of the cross-generational discussions happening in art, Betye's daughters, Alison and Lezley Saar, are also contemporary fine artists known for highlighting race, gender, culture, spirituality and humanity through their figurative sculptures, paintings, and mixed media. While describing her work, Alison has been quoted as saying, "The pieces always feel like children to me, in that they have their own personalities and their own needs and desires, and their own abilities".

One can't help but be inspired by such creativity and passion as seen throughout the Saar family and throughout the artworks found in this exhibition.







## Romare Bearden

### *Jelly Pepper Lady*

1980, 72/150

Lithograph

36" h x 21" w

Artwork donated to Cedars Sinai anonymously

Romare Bearden (born September 2, 1911) was an American artist, author, and songwriter. He worked with many types of media including cartoons, oils, and collages. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden grew up in New York City and graduated from New York University in 1935. He began his artistic career creating scenes of the American South. Later, he worked to express the humanity he felt was lacking in the world after his experience in the US Army during World War II on the European front.

Bearden's early work focused on unity and cooperation within the African American community. After a period during the 1950s when he painted more abstractly, this theme reemerged in his collage works of the 1960s. The New York Times described Bearden as "the nation's foremost collagist" in his 1988 obituary. Bearden became a founding member of the Harlem-based art group known as The Spiral, formed to discuss the responsibility of the African-American artist in the civil rights movement.







## Charles Gaines

### *Color Regression #2*

1980

Lithograph, X/X

28" h x 31 5/8" w

Artwork donated by the David C. and Sarajeane Ruttenberg Arts Foundation, Chicago



Charles Gaines makes systems-based, conceptual artworks—spanning drawing, photography, installation, and sculpture—which consider tensions between objectivity and subjectivity and the ways in which numerical systems shape perceptions of language, politics, aesthetics, and identity. The artist is perhaps best known for his grid-based paintings: Since the 1970s, Gaines has broken images of faces, trees, and other forms into individual, numbered squares of color, then applied them to sheets of acrylic. While these works appear somewhat abstract, the figurative whole is never lost; the canvases explore how our brains derive meaning from patterns.

