

# 5B ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Exhibit has political leanings



By Janet Tyson

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

DALLAS — If you love art that gets in your face, grabs you by the guts and shakes up your sensibilities, you're going to love the new exhibition at the African American Museum.

Titled "In the Spirit of Resistance/En el espíritu de la resistencia," it illuminates the political and aesthetic lessons that black American artists, in the wake of the Harlem Renaissance, learned from the Mexican mural painters — Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo, among them — as well as Celia Calderon, Francisco Mora and other artists of the Popular Graphic Workshop/Taller de Grafica Popular.

The African-American artists exhibited are Charles Alston, John Biggers, Elizabeth Catlett (who is married to Mora), Sargent Claude Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, John Wilson and Hale Woodruff. Apart from emphasizing the extent to which Mexican artists influenced the Americans' efforts to shape cultural identity, the show provides marvelous insights into early works by Lawrence and Biggers, tracks remarkable stylistic evolution on Alston's part and offers an in-depth look at Catlett's prints and paintings.

Inspired by Marxist theories of social and political revolution, the Mexican artists sought to create inspiring images for the common people of Mexico. Among other things, their art recognized the importance of pre-Columbian Indian heritage. It emphasized the people's need for self-determination and, at the same time, solidarity.

Although Rivera and other of his colleagues had training in European modernistic ideas about composition, they also were inspired by the monumental imagery of pre-Columbian cultures and by European social realism. From these and other disparate sources they forged the visual means of communicating information about human dignity and the need to resist oppression.

For the most part, the imagery they devised took one of two forms — the mural or the print — both of which were more accessible to the masses than traditional, European-style easel paintings.

With both murals and prints, their focus was on the human figure on monumental individual forms or rhythmically arranged masses of figures that seem ready to burst off the surface. The works are replete with intensely expressive faces and hands, and bodies that sag with grief or surge with strength.

Not surprisingly, the Mexicans' political and artistic ideals, and successful visual strategies, struck a sympathetic chord with black artists living in a country still cruelly divided along racial lines.

Of course, any number of white American artists and art theorists also were persuaded by socialist and communist ideals. But they did not share the common ground of suffering experienced by black

## Friends planning to give 'Bingo' Smith a lift

By Winfred B. Cross  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The outpouring of support for Unseld "Bingo" Smith continues this weekend with a benefit that will give him and his family a lift — literally.

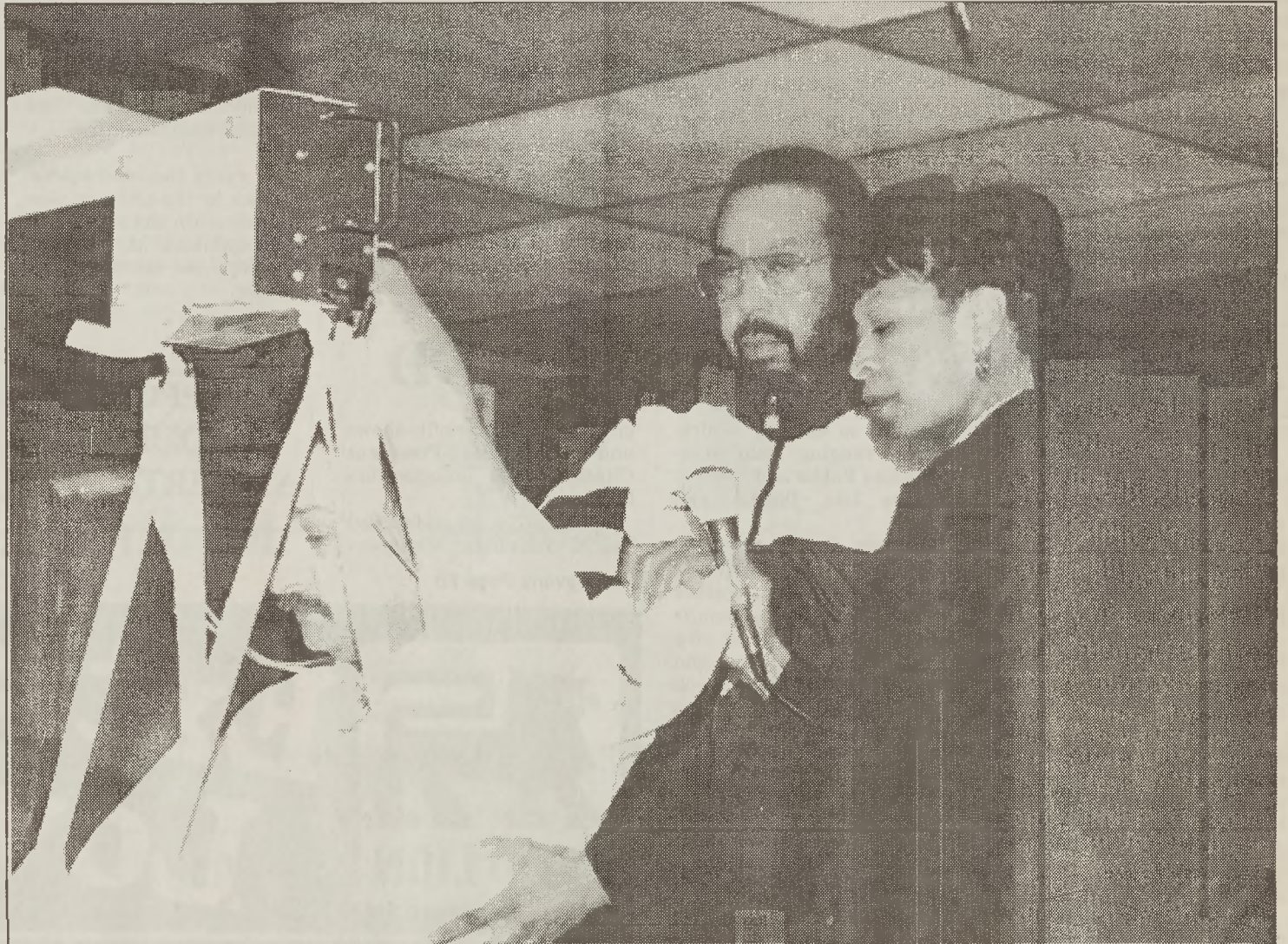
Smith, 23, paralyzed from the neck down in a 1995 car accident, will get a \$6,000 donation from the Friends of ECHO (Excelsior Club Humanity Organization) to purchase a motorized lift system. The benefit will be 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. Sunday at the Historic Excelsior Club. The Michael Porter trio will perform, as well as Delano Rackard, who will reenact Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

Pete Cunningham, owner of the Excelsior, said the idea for the benefit was an idea that took shape quickly.

"Some of the fellows that come here were sitting around talking about all the things we have at the club like the Anita Stroud Radiothon. . . . The guys were saying we needed something else charitable to do," Cunningham said. "Mrs. Smith had called me back in October at the request of Jim Richardson. I told her we could probably do something after the holidays."

True to his word, Cunningham talked to about eight of his patrons about a benefit, to which they responded, "let's do this." The group knew what it wanted to do. How to do it was the problem.

"We wanted to get this done to coincide with King's birth-



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

L.C. and Carolyn Smith watch Ken Whitaker demonstrate a motorized lift at the Historic Excelsior Club Tuesday.

day, so we had to do it quickly," Cunningham said. "We decided to get 50 or 60 people to either sell at least 10 tickets each, or buy the 10 tickets and

donate \$100. It's not that we didn't want the general public involved. We just needed to get this done quickly."

Cunningham said he had 47

participants as of Tuesday. He said the group would have no problem raising the rest of the money by Sunday.

ECHO is a non-profit organi-

zation. Not all the people associated with Sunday's benefit are members of ECHO. "They are either members or friends

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## Murphy flounders in 'Metro' mess

### Movie Review

By Winfred B. Cross

**Metro**  
**Eddie Murphy, Michael Rapaport, Art Evans and Carmen Ejogo**  
**Directed by Thomas Carter**  
**Caravan Pictures/Touchstone Pictures/Disney**

☆ 1/2

Eddie Murphy scored a huge hit last summer with the hysterically funny remake of the Jerry Lewis classic "The Nutty Professor" (☆☆☆☆ 1/2). But a nagging question remained. Can Murphy do two quality films in a row.

No, he can't. Murphy's latest film "Metro" is a near disaster, ranking with 'Beverly Cop III.'

Well, it's not that bad. At least Brigitte Nielson isn't in this picture. That's one of the few saving graces this film has. The other is Carmen Ejogo who portrays Ronnie Tate, girlfriend to Murphy's character. She's a fresh new face that's going to get some notice.

Not that she turns in a great acting performance. No one in this movie does. That's because none of the characters are given much to do. None are developed more than surface-

deep. The story doesn't deviate much from the average action adventure script of the last 10 years. Nor does director Thomas Carter ("Swing Kids" and star of CBS' "The White Shadow") leave anything to the imagination. Every bit of the action is telegraphed a mile before it happens. You know when a character is about to be killed. You know when a killer is going to appear. You know when the bad guys are going to get theirs and you know who's going to give it to them. Carter delays the obvious on a couple occasions, but, it's still obvious when it happens.

Murphy plays Scott Roper, a cocky hostage negotiator who isn't afraid to place himself in danger to save lives. He eventually has to train a partner, Kevin McCall, portrayed by Michael Rapaport ("Higher Learning," "Zebrahead"). He's an expert marksman on a SWAT team who wants to be Murphy's successor. The two are a likable pair, but their relationship never develops, much like the rest of the movie. You don't know if they like working together, hate

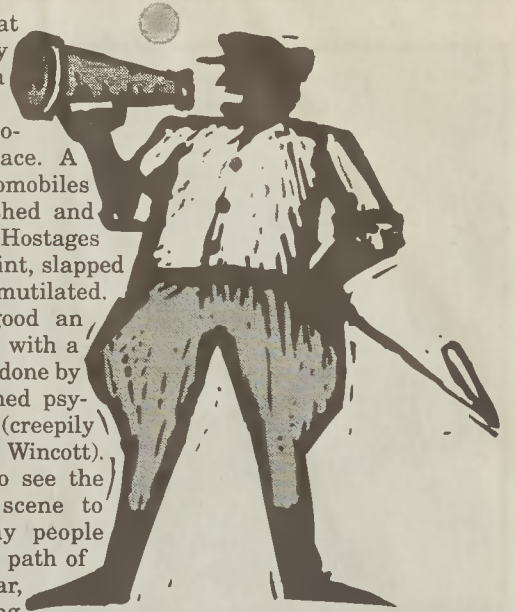
each other or what have you. They simply exist in a two-hour space.

It's a very, very violent two-hour space. A multitude of automobiles are smashed, crashed and blown to pieces. Hostages are held at gun point, slapped around, shot and mutilated. Art Evans, too good an actor to associated with a film like this, is undone by a creepy, but cliched psychotic jewel thief (creepily played by Michael Wincott). You really have to see the cable car chase scene to believe that many people would drive in the path of a runaway cable car, going in the wrong direction, mind you. And this is a Disney film.

Also, I can't remember the last time Murphy has used the "F" word so profusely. Maybe it was his HBO special "Delirious?" No, I think it was the movie "Raw." Actually, if you combine the two this would still rank first in "F" word use. Did I say this is a Disney film?

Yes, it is, and it is continuing

a streak of bad live-action films by that company, if you don't count the "101 Dalmatian" remake. This will not kill Murphy's career (which he just got back on track last year) and it may not even slow it down. Sometimes the movie going public will like such a film because there is nothing else out. God, those would have to be some movie-starved folks.



## Main library to host a bumper crop of storytellers

By Winfred B. Cross  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The North Carolina Association of Black Storytellers, South Central Region, is sponsoring a storytelling festival this weekend at the main branch of the public library.

The event, the 1997 Storytelling Harvest, is 4 p.m. Saturday. Six local storytellers — Annette Grier, Elisha Minter, Cheryl "Sparkle" Mosley, Connie Ellington, Nooma Rhue and Mona Ferguson — will be performing in the Main Public Library Auditorium, 310 N. Tryon St. Admission is free.

Wekesa O. Madzimoyo of Fayetteville, NC, president of the state affiliate of the National Association of Black Storytellers will perform "Love & Justice," a tribute to Martin Luther King.

Mosley, representative for the South Central Region and president elect of the state affiliate, is excited about the event.

"I think this will help pull together storytellers that are professionals, those who are looking to get into the profession or just as a hobby," she said. "We have people in different professions (she's in banking) who enjoy storytelling.



They enjoy the oral tradition. Our goal is to promote and perpetuate the art of storytelling.

"As storytellers, we educate and entertain through the oral tradition," Mosley said. "What we try to do is preserve and pass on historical traditions, morals, cultural myths, legends — things about our history and our culture."

North Carolina is the only state affiliate of NABS, which was established in 1984 by Mary Carter Smith and Linda Goss. It is the parent organization of "In The Tradition. . . Festival of Black Storytelling."

The state affiliate was established Nov. 18, 1995. North Carolina is divided into five regions, West, North Central, South Central, North East and South East.

The South Central Region was established in 1996 and encompasses Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Union, Cabarrus, Stanly, Anson, Montgomery, Richmond, Moore, Lee and Scotland. Mosley hopes to establish a chapter in each of the region's counties.

The Storytelling Harvest is the South Central Region's first event.