



Artsreach

GLORIA E. LINDSEY

Renowned artists explore diaspora

Powerful. The Diggs Gallery exhibition featuring Ed Love, a sculptor, and Floyd Newsum, a painter, is just that. Two men who interpret life, offer us multiple views. Their works stir emotions and stimulate the mind.

For Love, the works on exhibition represent his personal quest to make sense of human kind, race relations and the condition of African Americans. Born in 1936 in Los Angeles, Love has been a part of history in the making. This, in conjunction with his research of ancient cultures, slavery and politics, form the basis of the complex sculptures seen in the exhibition.

Love believes that as "African-Americans" we are the hyphen. We are in the middle, not African or American, we have no liberation or freedom. Series like "Passages from the Middle," "The Wake of the Amistad" and "Ark of Bones," are his attempt to illuminate the atrocities suffered on the voyage through the Middle Passage. Moreover, these works represent the idea that we are still in the middle. The artistic results are large, weighty, rustic colored, structures.

"I create these sculptures not because I'm interested in being an artist, but because something inside me needs this level of physical work and mental engagement, to keep me in balance...I am discovering myself."

Through Love's journey, a historical path of art is forged. His metaphoric use of chains, shackles and ships, he reminds us that "We are all chained together, first class and steward, in this space ship called life."

Newsum also deals with the ills of society, but through African folklore, religious and cultural stories. And, at the center of each story is the African American woman, the glorified "glue," who keeps it all together.

"In my work, women soar. They are a source of freedom, a pillar. The woman has always worked hard, and should be honored, not stereotyped...she can do or be anything."

Symbolically, the paintings visually depict the story through interpretive images. Newsum uses "Symbols like the bird who takes the woman's soul to heaven; the fish who is my bird of the sea; the eyes are a woman's wisdom; and pearls because women are treasures."

The art of Floyd Newsum offers a unique view of women in relationships and religion. Paintings, like "The Advent of Grace," and "An Angel Came From Time to Time," depict women as heroines and healers. Newsum believes that in many contemporary relationships women are often the givers of grace, thus "The Advent of Grace" is from the woman. In "An Angel Came From Time to Time," Newsum depicts the angel as a woman stating that, "The Bible tells us that an angel came to trouble the water and that the first person to go in, got healed. What it does not say is whether the angel was a woman or a man...my angels are women."

The work of these two extraordinary men is on exhibit now through September 19. Diggs Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Group tours are available by calling 750-2458.



Belafonte receives first Marian Anderson Humanitarian award

By DINAH WISENBERG BRIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — Entertainer Harry Belafonte led several hundred people in a chorus of "Day-O" on Saturday after Mayor Edward G. Rendell presented him with the city's first Marian Anderson Award for humanitarian efforts.

Belafonte, 71, a singer, actor and civil rights activist who has won Tony, Grammy and Emmy awards, received a crystal sculpture and a \$100,000 check in the name of Anderson, the late opera singer.

The award pays tribute to

artists whose leadership benefits humanity.

Belafonte has served as host of the World Summit for Children at the United Nations and as a Goodwill ambassador for UNICEF. He spearheaded efforts to benefit African famine relief in 1985, including the "We Are the World" concert.

Anderson, a Philadelphia native who died in 1993 at age 96, was the first black soloist to sing at New York's Metropolitan Opera and the first black performer to sing at the White House.

In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to

allow her to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, so the concert was switched to the Lincoln Memorial, where 75,000 people heard her perform.

"The world wanted her gift and she gave it to them, but in return, they had to accept who she was," Belafonte said at an awards ceremony.

"The purpose of art is not just to show life as it is but to show life as it should be. The artist must be the constant teller of truth," he said, quoting from his mentor, the late singer and actor Paul Robeson.

"Marian Anderson was just such an artist," Belafonte added.

More minorities needed on TV

By JANELLE CARTER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON — Too often minority children are getting inaccurate self-images when they watch television, actor Jimmy Smits said in kicking off a public-private effort to boost minority representation in entertainment.

More minorities are needed not just among performers but among management "so that we can... (be) more representative of all of the diversity that this country has," said Smits, who is Hispanic and stars in "NYPD Blue" on ABC-TV.

The National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, which Smits co-founded, the Federal Communications Commission

and President Clinton's Initiative on Race will hold a forum Sept. 22 in Washington to address the issue.

That forum will look at a number of issues, including ways to help minorities obtain capital to buy radio and television stations as well as ways companies can afford training opportunities.

"Children are bombarded with a number of images," said FCC Chairman William Kennard. "Not all of them are fair."

"I remember growing up as a child in the 1960s and there was a virtual absence of minorities on the television at that time in America," said Kennard, who last year became the first black

to head the five-member commission. "I remember very distinctly as a child when there was a black face that appeared on television: It was an event in my household."

In 1996, minorities owned only 3.1 percent of broadcast properties in the United States, according to FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani. A year later, the number dropped to 2.8 percent, she said.

Minorities make up 20.2 percent of employees in those industries, Tristani said. "But those employees are concentrated in areas like laborers and clerical workers," she said. "We need to increase the numbers of minorities in management positions, where editorial decisions are made."

The Chronicle's e-mail address is: wschron@netunlimited.net

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