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Artists Pass the Torch in Through Our Eyes exhibit: Each One Teach One: The Artist as Mentor

by Lydia P. Stewart, Curator, Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum

The image of the solitary artist laboring over his work all alone in the studio just doesn't fit the true picture of the artists who contributed to this year's Through Our Eyes exhibit currently on view at the Ritz Theatre and Museum through July 30th. Under the theme "Each One Teach One: The Artist as Mentor," twenty-four individual artists connected in a variety of ways to learn, teach, experiment and share a creative experience that produced a gallery exhibit that not only looks unique and intriguing, but serves as a laboratory for continued exploration.

When challenged to produce new work for this show by taking on the role of mentor or mentee, each artist eagerly embraced the idea and brought his or her own interpretation of mentoring to the table. Rhonda Bristol, a seasoned professional artist and art teacher who works in a wide range of media, including painting, clay sculpture and iron casting, inspired and collaborated with emerging artists Jeanece Lyles and Overstreet Ducasse, who each produced vastly different, but creatively related, pieces for the show. In turn, Ducasse partnered with fellow artist Adrian Rhodes on three non-traditional, large format mixed media on canvas installations that wrap around a column, curve around a wall and hang without frames. In another pairing, Laurence Walden, known for his signature "found object" masks and collages, mentored Imani Vidal, a budding photographer eager to experiment with her camera images. Textile artist Billie McCray embodied the spirit of "each one teach one" by teaching the art of the story quilt to two middle school students, Steve Hammond, Jr. and Zackery Williams.

The following quotes are taken from the artists' statements which accompany the works on exhibit and reveal the impact of this project:

"The opportunity to mentor has brought me back full circle. It is a truism that you only really know something when you can explain and teach it to another."

Rhonda Bristol

"Her willingness to pass on her artistic knowledge allows the cultural tradition of

**2009-2010
THROUGH OUR EYES**

EACH ONE TEACH ONE: THE ARTIST AS MENTOR
THROUGH JULY 30, 2010

"Each One Teach One:
The Artist as Mentor"

AN EXHIBIT FEATURING NEW WORKS BY LOCAL
AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS

EACH ONE TEACH ONE WORKSHOP SERIES
Second Saturday of each month
11 AM - 1 PM
This once monthly art class is designed to provide a variety of hands on visual arts experiences for all ages. Call for information on workshop topics, 904.632.5555.

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apprenticeship to thrive, reducing the peril of a practice that is much needed for the flourishing and continuity of life, unity and community becoming endangered.”

Jeanee Lyles on mentor Rhonda Bristol

This experience...taught me the importance of fellowship with other artists, planning and scheduling, and community workshops and involvement.”

Leon Bradley

“My job as his mentor was to get him to think outside of the box he had created for himself ...”

Marsha Hatcher on mentee Leon Bradley

“There was never a moment when our egos or set artistic habits interfered with the overall goal. We share a belief that art should do more than feed an appetite for beautiful things, but offer a glimpse into the soul of the artists and their subjects.”

*-Keith Doles on mentor Daniel Wynn
(Keith and Daniel in above photo)*

Outreach for this exhibit includes a series of art workshops on the second Saturday of each month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. through July. Call 904-632-5555 for more information.



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