

Color + Form = Blackstraction



Four women drawn together by abstraction merge decades of creating in parallel universes into a unified vision. Women Of An Undetermined Age synthesize the improvisation, the spirit, the spontaneity, the rhythm and the experience of being Black in two and three dimensions.

**Claudia "Aziza" Gibson-Hunter
Gail Shaw-Clemons
Adjoa J. Burrowes
Sheila Crider**

Curated by Terence Nicholson

August 20 - September 24, 2022

Reception/Artists' Talk TBA

Gallery hours: Thurs thru Sat 12-5 pm

Honfleur
gallery

1241 Good Hope Rd SE
Washington, DC 20020



**WOMEN
Of An
Undetermined
AGE**

Claudia “Aziza” Gibson-Hunter Gail Shaw-Clemons Adjoa J. Burrowes Sheila Crider

Four artists in different cities grow up with the Black Arts Movement. They begin practicing during the Postmodern 1980s. Using mixed media with that foundation across disciplines, they accepted the challenge to make art expressive of black experience. After traveling the world and living many places, Women of An Undetermined Age (WOAUA) are now all based around Washington, DC and have joined forces.

Our four decades of object making rooted in the Black Arts Movement gives intellectual and physical agency to an ideology of black aesthetics that evolved through our point of view alongside the dominant male and western philosophies. In our work, surface, form, structure, image and material are employed through painting, printmaking and sculpture in an improvisation of process and experience that pushes our knowledge and the boundaries of each discipline.

Our goal as a group is to exhibit what we do in a fundamental and meaningful way that will influence dialogue going forward. The merging of our voices produces complex multifaceted exhibitions that promote interesting and thought-provoking conversations, a rich platform demanding a fresh look and reevaluation of abstraction from the 1980's on.

Claudia “Aziza” Gibson-Hunter

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ms. Gibson-Hunter was awarded the Individual Artist Fellowship Program Grant, from the DC Commission of the Arts and Humanities several times. Her work can be found in the collections of the Washington DC Art Bank, the Liberian Embassy, Montgomery County, Maryland and other noted collections. She completed two public commissions for Washington, DC Department of General Services. The Wall of Unity (2017) and ANCESTORS (2019) are both located in Washington, DC public schools. In 2019 Aziza was a Pyramid Atlantic Denbo Fellow. She is a cofounding member of Black Artists of DC and studio member of STABLE in NE, DC. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Artist’s Statement

The “idea” is central to my work. I am inspired and humbled by the tenacity to continually resist the internal and external forces which attempt to constrain the African mind, body, and spirit. In the past decade it has fueled my adversarial relationship with the square, and rectangle (boxes), prompting my work to be asymmetric, serrated and uneven, protruding in different directions, and expanding at different rates in space. I utilize layers of color, pattern, texture, form and gesture to express syncopated thoughts, discoveries and meditations. Paper has been both matrix and media because of its connection to nature, malleability, its ability to absorb, its range of textures, and weights. My process includes painting, drawing, printmaking, collage, papermaking, and assemblage in various combinations. I provide titles to act as clues and to note the chronological order of the works created.





Gail Shaw-Clemons

Born in Washington, DC, received her Masters' Degree in printmaking from the University of Maryland. She is a printmaker and mixed media artist and activist. She has exhibited extensively, with many works included in public and private collections in the USA, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, China and the Republic of Ireland. Her work is also in the collection of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Library of Congress, and the Banneker-Douglass Museum. Shaw-Clemons has a studio at Stable Art and prints at the Bob Blackburn Printmaking Studio in New York as well as the Pyramid Printmaking Studio in Hyattsville MD. Recently retired as an art instructor from the United Nations International School in New York, she is currently an adjunct professor at Bowie State University in Maryland.

Artist's Statement

This series entitled: "Stick a fork in me, I'm done" was a phrase I found myself saying often in frustration to the current rise of racial tension and Covid-19. It expressed that pivotal point where one has had enough and commits to a drastically different way of processing information for the betterment of one's sanity. My work represents the fact that beauty can be created in response and in spite of trauma, akin to how fusion in jazz can translate feelings into sound, yet create beautiful music.

No longer interested in printing editions, my 3-D monotypes continue to push the boundaries of printmaking, merging traditional and contemporary methods. I want to create modes of transformation along with medicinal healing experiences, while appealing to one's emotions rather than just one's intellect. My forms reveal and hide information at the same time, leaving you tempted to interact and get up close and personal with the forms.





Adjoa J. Burrowes

is a mixed media artist and educator born and raised in Chicago. Burrowes was recruited by AfriCobra artist Jeff Donaldson to attend Howard University and earned a B.F.A. in printmaking. She holds an M.A. in Art Education from the Corcoran College of Arts and Design at The George Washington University and has studied with contemporary African artists in Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her prints, collages, sculptures, and illustrations have been exhibited throughout the U.S. and are represented in collections around the nation and world including the Banneker-Douglass Museum, Pyramid Atlantic Art Center, Art Colle Museum of Collage in Plemet, France, and Verbeke Foundation in Belgium. Her works are in the archives of the Library and Research Center at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Burrowes currently lives and maintains her studio in the DC metropolitan area.

Artist's Statement

In my art practice, I navigate between printmaking, sculpture, and painting, depending on the materials explored and the message I want to convey. As my work evolves my prints and paintings have become more sculptural as I push beyond their restraints by cutting, folding, or suspending strips of paper that activate a shadow play on walls. I enjoy the physicality of the process. Either wall hung or free standing, these artifacts take on a new meaning when transformed. Some of the painted patterns recall the bright textiles I saw while traveling in Ghana and Nigeria many years ago. As a young person I spent many hours watching my father work with his hands fixing broken appliances, making picture frames or lining the walls of furnaces with bricks. My mother carefully sewed dresses from unusual materials for my sister and I. From them I learned how to make something from practically nothing and the quiet discipline it takes to create. My painted sculptures, embodied with vibrant colors and patterns, are a testament to Black peoples' inventiveness and tenacity throughout history.





Sheila Crider

is an independent artist raised and currently based in Washington, DC. She has always made her living as an artist, starting with The Original Response Handmade Envelopes and Books in art fairs and craft markets. Encouraged by public response to this work, she began applying to exhibit collages and wall hangings made from the same hand dyed papers through open calls. In 2009, she was awarded the first of many public art projects. Recent commissions included a lobby project for The Community of Hope (DC), original art for a children's room for The DC Public Library and relocation of an earlier work for Art-In-Public-Places DC. In 2022, 2020 and 2017 she was awarded Artist Fellowships by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Her work is included in many public and private collections including Art-in-Public-Places (WDC), James E Lewis Museum (Baltimore, MD), Yale University Book Collection (New Haven, CT), State Department Print Collection (WDC), African American Museum (Dallas, TX), Ranger Italy (Serengo, Italy), Mino Washi Paper Museum (Mino, Japan), Hyatt Regency Hotel (Crystal City, VA) and the Library of Congress Print Collection (WDC).

Artist's Statement

blackstraction (*blak-strak' sh-n*) *n.*

1. the objectification of abstract painting 2. A non-representational transcendental work of art stressing formal internal relationships using African/Asian/American art practices at times employing craft techniques and three-dimensional presentation.

I coined the term *blackstraction* to refer to the objectification of painting in 2000, the result of research that began in 1980. Then a poet looking at language as art, I saw poetry as the original formalist abstract art because a poem's meaning is based on relationships created with words contained in the body of the work. Experimenting with painting and drawing to study abstract art as language, I started looking at all kinds of paintings to understand how the materials are used. I found styles of painting correspond to the introduction of studio methodology. Reading Jeanette Winterson's 1995 essay "Art Objects" helped to solidify my belief that the future of painting is in objects- a natural outcome of Modernism. "Ghosts Stories" is a series of double-sided non-static canvases using randomly applied color and mark making to suggest narratives around physical and metaphysical encounters.



