CREATIVITY IN A TIME OF SOCIAL CHANGE
African American Art in Cleveland, 1940-1970

By Pamela McKee

In the years between 1940 and 1970, the city of Cleveland experienced tremendous social, political and economic changes which were to have a profound impact on the lives of its residents. The war years brought a continuing influx of African Americans from the rural South to fill the additional manufacturing jobs, but the city's housing and infrastructure were increasingly inadequate. The East side of the city, once a racially-mixed area of working and middle class families, became progressively ghettoized as retail businesses, industry, and those who could afford it, left the inner city for the newly-constructed suburbs. While the new racial character of the city's eastern wards insured increased political representation for African Americans, lax housing codes and absentee landlords accelerated the area's decline. A series of short-sighted planning remedies were proposed: most were never implemented, and nearly all focused on the business district, with little or no attempt to significantly redress the housing shortages and lack of businesses in the poorest neighborhoods.

The relatively enlightened quality of race relations which had distinguished Cleveland in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was gradually eroded, as segregation and other discriminatory practices, both official and unofficial, became the norm. The city's economic downturn in the post-war era, exacerbated by suburbanization and significant losses in the industrial sector, was especially hard on African Americans, who were often the first to lose jobs in periods of downsizing or shop closings. Even the historic election of Carl Stokes in 1967 could do little to stem the frustrations which, just two years after the 1966 Hough riots, were to erupt in violence again in Glenville in 1968.

What is remarkable about this era in Cleveland history is the strong tradition of community support and racial pride which persisted in the African American community in spite of these obstacles. These years also witnessed a growth in the number of African American artists, reflecting the accessibility of arts instruction in the city's many fine institutions. Karamu House continued to be a nationally recognized center for creative endeavors, and the city's public schools, particularly East Technical High School, produced a number of talented artists in all fields.

Of the many important legacies of the WPA and early Karamu era, perhaps the most significant was an emphasis on technical proficiency in all artistic endeavors. While Karamu, as well as The Cleveland Museum of Art's Saturday classes, offered African Americans artistic encouragement and study, the WPA had afforded many the opportunity for full-time work as artists. As a result, those talented artists who had been fortunate enough to be included in the various government-sponsored programs were able to concentrate their efforts on perfecting technique and addressing formal issues in their artistic development. It is not surprising, then, that the next generation of African American artists in Cleveland, those working from 1940 through the 1960s and '70s, exhibit a mastery of technique and a stylistic maturity which places them on a level with their better-known peers in New York and Washington.

If training was readily available, exhibition opportunities were somewhat less pervasive. Fortunately, The Cleveland Museum of Art had, from the time of its opening, maintained a mission of supporting local artists through its heralded annual May Show. In this juried exhibition, local artists were able to hang their works in a prestigious institution, and the shows were well-attended and fairly well patronized. At a time when black intellectuals were beginning to question the ultimate utility of all-African American shows, which many believed fostered the public's perception of these works as distinct from 'mainstream' American art, Cleveland's African American artists could access this important venue.

The museum's philosophy dictated that it encourage the industrial applications of the creative arts, in keeping with its location in one of America's foremost manufacturing centers. To this end, its permanent collections and May Shows included works in all techniques, helping to foster the public's interest in such diverse media as glass, enamel, metalworking, textile arts, and jewelry and furniture design. Furthermore, this multi-media focus encouraged artists to experiment in various techniques.

Since the turn of the century, Cleveland had also been an important center for lithography and engraving. While the mechanization of graphic reproduction had somewhat diminished the commercial importance of these techniques...
by the mid 1920s, their earlier prominence had helped to create a taste for graphic arts among the general population. The founding of the Print Club of Cleveland in 1920 attests to the popularity of these media, which would be locally exploited in the Depression era under the auspices of the WPA printshops. The post-war growth of the service industries also sparked a new commercial demand for graphic artists, with American Greetings and several advertising firms expanding their operations in the 50s and 60s. Not surprisingly, many of the African American artists of the period found employment in this field, and continued to explore the expressive potential of prints.

Printmaking has long been championed by African American artists because it can reach a larger audience, and is more readily affordable, than either painting or sculpture. Many of the most important figures in African American art of the twentieth century have worked in the various print forms, contributing to the general rise in interest in this medium. James Lesesne Wells, Sargent Johnson, Hughie Lee-Smith, and Elizabeth Catlett have all created extremely important and innovative works which often feature compelling images of the black experience.


52. W. HAL WORKMAN. *In the Sun* (1955). Woodblock, 31 1/2 x 12 1/2". Courtesy of the artist.
The woodcuts of Cleveland artist W. Hal Workman fit well within this tradition. An experienced commercial artist, Workman has also devoted a considerable portion of his career to teaching high school students. His own educational experiences at East Technical High School were unfulfilling, and throughout his teaching career Workman has sought to provide the encouragement and support which he felt his own instructor had neglected.

Something of the artist's personal warmth is present in his early 1960s woodblock print *In the Sun* (Fig. 52). The figure occupies most of the narrow space, which Workman divides into thirds through his arrangements of light and dark. The jagged linear treatment energizes the composition, imbuing the seated figure with a vitality which is further developed in his facial expression. In its opposition of vertical and curvilinear forms, the piece resembles some of Elizabeth Catlett's later linocuts, particularly her famous *Sharecropper* (1968). Workman's exploitation of the woodblock medium, both employing and defying the surface grain, bespeaks his mastery of technique. *The Magi* (Fig. 51), another work from this period, combines the same line treatment found in *In the Sun* with a greater attention to detail and patterning. The exoticism of the Magis' costumes starkly contrasts with their pious actions, conveying the sense of wonder suggested in the biblical texts.

Perhaps the best-known African American artist of this period to explore religious imagery is the celebrated stained-glass artist Douglas Phillips. However, Phillips began working in glass only later in his career. Originally trained in portraiture and illustration at the Cleveland Institute of Art and Syracuse University, Phillips also had an early interest in graphic media. In *Artist's Portrait* (Fig. 53), a lithograph from the 1930s, the carefully described frame, mask, drapery and torso are used as emblems of the sitter's identity as artist, and reveal Phillips' sophisticated approach to figural arrangement. In its juxtaposition of elements, the work is somewhat reminiscent of Hughie Lee-Smith's *Artist's Life #1* (Fig. 21). However, while Lee-Smith's work is jarring because of its disturbing imagery, Phillips' piece relies on sharp contrasts of light and shadow to create a vaguely unsettling mood.

The interest in illumination which characterizes *Artist's Portrait* was to become the central focus of Phillips' artistic development. Beginning in the early 50s, he opened his own stained glass studio, and in addition to several commissions for area churches, he created innovative lighting designs for commercial and residential settings. Fascinated by the spatial dimension suggested by the penetration of light through colored glass, he studied the psychological and religious effects of illumination and color. His inventive light boxes, already three-dimensional, almost take on a fourth in their tinted glow.

But it is Phillips' windows which serve as the greatest testament to his artistic abilities. Sometimes creating works for new buildings, sometimes for older structures containing earlier stained glass, Phillips was particularly adept at fusing traditional religious symbols with a more contemporary approach to line and color. The nave windows for Lakewood Presbyterian Church exemplify this, as the large central figures are swept upward in a tempest of surging

53. DOUGLAS PHILLIPS. *Artist's Portrait* (1940s). Lithograph, 10 x 8". Photograph through the courtesy of Karamu House, Inc.
lines to the jeweled blue area in the tracery. The repetition of colors serves not only to unify the composition, but also to relate it to its pendant in the opposite nave. Phillips explained that the recurrent “kite-shaped forms symbolize the Trinity and the rhythmic bands symbolize the Grace of God which encompasses all of mankind in the same sense that they encompass and relate various parts of the window.”1 In a medium so steeped in tradition, it is this ability to translate religiosity into a language both contemporary and deeply personal which establishes Douglas Phillips as a singularly gifted individual.

A less accessible spirituality pervades the enigmatic works of Beni E. Kosh. Born Charles E. Harris in 1917, the artist changed his name in the 60s as a statement of pride in his racial heritage. Little is known of Kosh, except that he was honorably discharged from the military in 1944, and briefly studied under Paul Travis at Karamu eight years later. If Kosh received only limited formal training, his works nevertheless reveal a strong awareness of contemporary artistic traditions and a willingness—almost a compulsion—for stylistic experimentation. Throughout his oeuvre, however, he recurrently depicts both his home city and his religious beliefs.

In the untitled work with two nuns (Fig. 54, 1961), Kosh presents an unsettling image of his East side neighborhood. With muted, cool hues he depicts three children in a vacant lot. The clapboard siding of the structures to the left pulls the viewer into the center of the scene, where the straight, horizontal thrust of the planks is countered by the disorderly jumble of rooflines and the frenzied branches of the trees. While there is a suggestion of movement, the children do not engage with each other, but instead direct their attention to the two nuns to the right of the canvas. Indeed, Kosh depicts motion toward the women, clearly suggesting the pull which drew him toward his faith.

This calm spirituality, emphasized through the cool hues employed throughout, is achieved again in Woodland Cemetery (Fig. 50). Both paintings are evocative of the works of Horace Pippin, a self-trained Pennsylvania artist who achieved fame in the 1940s following the inclusion of four of his pieces in the heralded Masters of Popular Painting show held at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1938.2 Pippin, like Kosh in these works, often muted his colors in his many depictions of scenes from his native Chester County, and his own deep faith in the redemption of God manifested itself compellingly in his Holy Mountain series of the 1940s.

Kosh escalates this tranquility into the visionary in his startling image of the crucified Christ rising over a city street. Unlike the children drawn toward the two nuns in the earlier piece, here the figures are unaware of the presence of God. If the disparate elements suggest the surreality
of a dream, Kosh nevertheless locates the scene in Cleveland through the inclusion of a Transit System bus stop sign. By limiting his palette primarily to bold reds and yellows, the artist succeeds in creating a unified whole out of the intentionally dislocated parts of the work.

This dream-like quality is precisely to the point in the untitled painting with the Terminal Tower (Fig. 50), a self portrait of the artist asleep in his home on Townsend Street. In a deliberately destabilized composition, Kosh juxtaposes the imposing Cleveland landmark, surrounded by teeming skyscrapers and smoke-belching factories, with a verdant image of pastoral life outside of the gray metropolis. Significantly, there is a winged heart (Kosh’s?) shown fleeing the chaotic forms of the city for the comfort afforded by the straight, stable forms of the numerous country churches.

Not all of Kosh’s cityscapes are characterized by this disquieting mood. In the untitled work of the East 105th St. Rapid Stop (Fig. 55, 1957), the artist captures, almost photographically, a brief moment in time. The figures, all turned away from the viewer, await the arrival of the train on the opposite track. Slightly right off center, Kosh depicts a figure moving toward the turnstile exit, making it clear that another train has just departed. The painstaking detail of the railroad ties and floorboards creates a convincing spatial recession, which is abruptly halted by the green and black blur of the background.

Kosh’s interest in recording the particularities of his city is shared by watercolorist Malcolm M. Brown. A relative latecomer to the Cleveland area, Brown quickly assumed an important role in the city’s artistic community, teaching art in both the Shaker Heights public schools and in the evening sections of the Cleveland Institute of Art for many years. He has consistently gained in stature as an extremely accomplished watercolorist of national prominence and has exhibited in a number of one-man and group shows in such prestigious institutions as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Cleveland Museum of Art, and in an American Watercolor Society exhibition which travelled to American Embassies in Europe. He has won numerous awards, including the Mainstreams International Award of Excellence (1970), the National Exhibition of Black Artists’ Henry O. Tanner Award (1971), for four consecutive years the Virginia Beach National Juried Exhibition’s first prize (1971-74), more recently the Rocky Mountain National Juried Show’s Watermedia Award (1980), several Ohio Watercolor Society awards (1983-85), and a Cleveland Art Prize (1994). His paintings are now in private collections and in the collections of many large corporations in
Cleveland and throughout the country.

Although Malcolm Brown has spent much of his life elsewhere, his works continue in the long tradition of outstanding watercolors which had, by the 1930s, enabled Cleveland to supplant Boston as the most important national center for work in this medium. From the mid 1920s, watercolors claimed preeminence in the annual May Shows at The Cleveland Museum of Art, and indeed Brown's work was juried into this venue. Primarily landscapes, his paintings are generally characterized by a beautiful blurring of line and form to create an exceptional atmospheric quality. In an untitled work set in the Flats (Fig. 42, 1968), and Pier No. 2 (Fig. 56, 1970), Brown manipulates the thickness of his paints to minimize the visible detail in the water, thus counterplaying tangible form and reflection. By placing the major architectural elements slightly off center, he introduces a dynamic visual tension into the otherwise still image. In Bay Fishermen (Fig. 41, 1960s), Brown again explores the atmospheric magic of water imagery, though here his palette is considerably brightened. By reserving the heaviest application of color for the tree and the figures, Brown focuses the viewer's attention first on the tangible reality of the subject matter in the upper portion, and then, through a repetition of colors in thinner washes, leads the eye downward to the reflections cast by the figures and tree.

In his Untitled (1968) and Sunflowers (1969), Brown is after slightly different effects. In these he reveals his mastery of detail, carefully delineating the fence rails and flower petals. Once again, the forms are positioned slightly off center, pushing most of the visual weight toward the bottom of the paintings where the details are concentrated. Both Sunflowers (Fig. 70) and Untitled, like most of Brown's works, exude a certain sense of isolation. Even when the artist chooses to include figures in his landscapes, there remains a moody loneliness, intensified by the misty environments which he so masterfully conjures up.

This sense of isolation is more explicitly developed in the works of Clarence Perkins, a long-time friend and colleague of Malcolm Brown. Born in Louisiana, Perkins came...
to Cleveland in the 1940s to escape the segregated schools of his native Louisiana. At East Technical High School, his talent was soon recognized, and he became an honor student of Nicholas Livaich. In his senior year he garnered top honors in the National School Art Competition. However, despite several scholarship offers elsewhere, Perkins ranked only as an alternate at the Cleveland Institute of Art, and after a job offer mysteriously fell through at American Greetings, he left Cleveland for employment in Chicago.\(^4\)

It took Perkins several years to overcome his early disappointments and return to painting. In the mid 1960s, he studied under Fred Leach at the Cooper School of Art, where he attempted his first work in watercolor. This change in medium was immediately successful: the painting was exhibited in the Midyear Painting Show at the Butler Institute of Art and, to boot, Perkins was asked to assume Leach's teaching position when his former instructor was forced to change his schedule. Soon thereafter, Perkins and Brown were invited to a two-man show at the Canton Art Institute.\(^5\)

Like Brown, Perkins works in the grand Cleveland tradition of watercolor landscapes. Stylistically, however, the two are distinct. While Brown generally employs thin washes of color to create a hazy atmosphere, Perkins chooses a more tightly controlled style to exhibit a wealth of finely detailed brushwork. This is especially evident in his *Bentleyville Lane* (Fig. 57, 1967), where he carefully delineates each leaf and blade of grass in the foreground. He manages to impart a convincing sense of space and receding background by skillfully manipulating tone and hue. In *Louisiana Bayou* (Fig. 93), Perkins reproduces in painstaking detail the tangle of bollards and patches of seagrass in front of the main structure. With its restricted palette and minimal juxtaposition of complementary colors, and despite the inclusion of human figures on the pier, the work elicits a more subdued emotional response than does *Bentleyville Lane*.

In perhaps his most visually arresting piece, Perkins is again inspired by his Louisiana childhood. A watercolor collage, *Vieux Carre* (Fig. 43, 1969) is full of exquisite detail, so typical of Perkins' style. Unlike his other works, however, the artist here severely curtails his depth by rendering the back of the picture plane in bits of printed paper. Besides suggesting the handbill-covered walls of America's urban neighborhoods, the device serves to flatten the image, compressing the solitary figure into the very foreground where his sharply foreshortened left leg seems to project directly into the viewer's space. And while the inclusion of the carefully rendered grillwork and the large "monsieur" locate the image in Louisiana, the dejected figure and peeling wall poignantly evoke the increasing isolation of African Americans within a decaying urban landscape.

In *...And Yet I Still Rise* (Fig. 34, 1970), William E. Smith responds very differently to the unequal treatment of African Americans in American society. Where Perkins' lone figure remains isolated despite its intrusion into the viewer's space, Smith in this later work depicts a figure who confronts the viewer, not only by his physical placement in the extreme foreground, but also through his compelling gaze directly at the viewer. Extreme foreshortening combines with a dramatic use of light and dark to produce an image of startling intensity and barely suppressed motion. Any suggestion of the downtrodden is here replaced by an image of defiant resilience and ultimate triumph.

The appearance of more overtly race-conscious themes and imagery in the works by Cleveland's black artists of the late 60s and early 70s is of course directly linked to the Black Power movement which was then sweeping America's urban centers, but perhaps also to the works and teachings of Nelson Stevens.\(^6\) One of Cleveland's preeminent African American artists, Stevens was a co-founder of AfriCOBRA, a black artists' collective based in principles of commitment to the African American community and to cooperative exploration of a black aesthetic. Through the use of "bright colors, the human figure, lost and found line, lettering, and images which identify the social", AfriCOBRA members sought to create works which could visually communicate a positive sense of group identity to the African American community, as jazz had done so successfully for nearly fifty years.\(^7\)

Akron resident Edith Brown successfully applies many of the principles championed by AfriCOBRA in her *Collage for Black History* (Fig. 58) of the 1960s, where she incorporates photographs, text and painting to create a testament to the African American experience and culture. Through a careful manipulation of images and blocks of painted color, Brown arranges the forms into the shape of the African
continent. The inclusion of photographs of bronze sculptures from the kingdom of Benin underscores Africa’s creative legacy, while the black experience in the New World is recorded through textual references to Toussaint L’Ouverture, the hero of Haitian independence, and to American Revolutionary War hero Crispus Attucks. More recent political struggles are memorialized in photographs of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Finally, the common cause of justice and equal rights which unites these historical figures is made poignantly clear by the selection of lines from the Declaration of Independence inscribed on the piece’s right side.

Brown’s work is, both in media and message, evocative of the collages of Romare Bearden. Like Bearden, she is a skillful colorist whose technique reveals a commitment to excellence and a keen awareness of art history. A graduate of Ohio University, Brown pursued additional studies in fine art and art history at Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C. (where she later taught), Kent State University, and at the Akron Art Institute under Leroy Flint. Much of her work is non-objective. As her other untitled works attest, Brown exploits color and shape to convey an often deeply personal emotional state.

In an artist’s statement, Brown describes her efforts “to achieve a harmony where there is a dynamic balance of the plastic forces and what I consider the poetry of the painting.” By dispersing multiple shades of the same hue in large blocks around her canvases, she creates a dynamic motion which engages the viewer’s attention, leading it horizontally and vertically around the works. These linear arrangements give outward expression to the “time and space, sign and significance, the real and the imaginary” which the artist views as “parallel and simultaneous forces moving toward an ultimate truth.”

Edith Brown is not the only Western Reserve-based African American artist of this period to explore the formal possibilities of an Abstract Expressionist style. Virgie Patton-Ezelle, in her untitled collage from the 1960s (Fig. 46), similarly exploits shape and color to achieve a work of extraordinary balance. While Brown’s palette is characterized by highly saturated reds, yellows and blues, Patton limits her range of colors through a careful mixing of complements. By concentrating the lightest values in the center of the canvas, she pulls the viewer directly into the work, binding the gaze between the massive, dark shapes on either side. The artist’s presence is everywhere suggested by the frenetic brushstrokes left in the thick impasto.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Patton-Ezelle developed an early interest in art, attending the children’s classes at The Cleveland Museum of Art while still in grammar school. She went on to study in nearly every venue in the city: the Cooper School, John Huntington Polytechnical Institute, Karamu, and the Cleveland Institute of Art. Of these experiences, she cites Karamu as especially important, for she found the warm support and encouragement it so freely dispensed decidedly lacking elsewhere. Like Malcolm Brown and Clarence Perkins, she was briefly employed at American Greetings during the 1960s, but felt the company was unsupportive.

In spite of these setbacks, Patton-Ezelle’s considerable
talents have developed throughout her career. Indeed, her self-assured works produced in more recent years – and therefore not included in the present discussion – show remarkable artistic growth, leading to an honorary degree bestowed by the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1994. Then and now, her works consistently reveal an extremely able technique coupled with a strong awareness of artistic traditions. Her representational works show the same expressive brushwork and generally muted palette contained in the non-objective collage. In Autumn Medley (Fig. 59, c.1967), Patton-Ezelle presents a landscape viewed sharply from above, so that the sky is but a tiny blue strip at the top. She counters the strong horizontal arrangement of the bands of trees and rooflines by describing the foliage in vertical brushstrokes.

Conversely, in Three Girls (Fig. 45, 1963) a bold verticality is established by the parallel standing figures. Working in a long tradition of mythically inspired subject matter (the Three Graces, the Judgment of Paris, etc.), Patton-Ezelle reveals herself here as both a master colorist and a sensitive portrayer of the female form. By restricting her colors to light tints of red, yellow and blue, the artist builds up the figures in thick layers of mottled color, which are repeated in larger patches in the background. The negation of depth thus achieved is heightened by the cropping of the image at the figures’ feet, diminishing the distance between viewer and subject.

The very hues which comprise Patton-Ezelle’s works are used to entirely different effect by Curtis Tann in his Cityscape (Fig. 35) of the 1960s. Tann’s mastery of the enameling technique is here evidenced in his subtle modulation of the large blocks of color with which he constructs the building. Concentrating his darkest shades at the bottom of the work, he gradually lightens the middle and upper sections, replicating the sun’s effects in densely built cities. The emphatic verticality of the skyscrapers is strongly countered by the sharp diagonal shadows created by the unseen light source at top left. Tann’s reduction of the imagery to crisp, rectilinear forms, evocative of modernist architecture, is achieved by masking areas with stencils when applying the powdered glass used for enameling.

In contrast, Tann employs a wet application technique to blur the edges of juxtaposed colors in his untitled portrait of the 1960s (Fig. 103). Reproducing Henri Matisse’s
60. HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Portrait of Peyton Lemon* (1951). Oil, 21½ x 18". Courtesy of the artist.

61. HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Untitled* (1949). Oil, 24 x 18". Courtesy of the artist.
celebrated *The Green Stripe (Mme. Matisse)* of 1905, Tann shares his predecessor’s interest in the play of seemingly arbitrary colors in the unification of the composition. However, the uneven, glossy surface of the heavy enamel layer in Tann’s reproduction does not duplicate the painted flatness of the earlier piece.

**Henry Williamson** was working throughout this period as well. His later works in portraiture reveal a keen eye for detail and interest in conveying the personality of his sitters. In *Portrait of Peyton Lemon* (Fig. 60, 1951), Williamson presents a bust-length view of the sitter at a slightly oblique angle. A smile illuminates the figure’s features, creating the impression of a warm rapport between artist and sitter. The pocket square serves as a visual counterbalance to the brightness of the background and lightens the visual weight of the sitter’s dark, off-centered jacket.

In his *Reverend Jackson* (Fig. 38, 1949) Williamson once again uses starkly contrasted elements. The suggestion of a smile is here absent, as the sitter stares straight ahead, holding the viewer rapt in his gaze. Again, Williamson reveals his talent for modeling, presenting every facial feature in sharp detail. Only the skin tones are rendered in warm hues, the remainder of the work consisting mostly of varying values of blue. The eye is thus drawn immediately to the face, and from there to the tiny church positioned in the dark and vaguely unsettling landscape. By directing the viewer’s gaze first to the individual, and then to the emblem of his calling, Williamson captures both the private and public persona of his subject.

This device is frequently employed by **Ernest William Trotter** in his many portraits of jazz musicians and other cultural figures. In *Edgar Allen Poe* (n.d.), Trotter perches the author’s famous raven on the figure’s shoulder, beak open as if assuming the role of muse. The drawing, rendered entirely in black magic marker, is typical of Trotter’s bold, jarring work. Instead of rendering the facial projections in lighter tones, the artist renders three-dimensionality through his use of jagged lines to suggest contours and recessions. Though known mostly for his portraits, Trotter occasionally depicts landscapes and buildings, as in an untitled work of about 1970 (Fig. 62) which features the same bold contrasts and jarring use of heavy, black line against a white ground.

If there is a unifying current throughout all the works of these many talented artists, it is the remarkable commitment to technical expertise. When viewed as a whole, this otherwise disparate body of works reveals both an awareness of, and proficiency in, the mainstream currents in art of the mid-twentieth century. If society was increasingly coming to identify these individuals in terms of their race, they themselves were declaring their identities as artists first, and as perpetuators of the “Cleveland Style” second. The engagement with race issues which characterizes much of the art of African Americans elsewhere would, with few exceptions, have to wait for the next generation of black artists in Cleveland. In a city characterized by segregated neighborhoods and diminished economic opportunities for minorities, Cleveland’s African American art of the 1940s, ’50s and ’60s reflects the more inclusive policies of its many art institutions.

**PAMELA McKee**
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Michigan

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5. ibid.


