

# Craven Allen Gallery in Durham

continued from Page 35

stereotypes and myths about the Black American experience. Through a mix of self-portraits and portraits of others, Heyward explores both the presence and absence of Black Americans in history and contemporary media. Green skin is a recurring feature of Heyward's subjects, evoking the green screen used by the film industry for special effects, calling into question the ways in which the viewer may project their opinions and biases of the subjects depicted. Heyward's paintings on panel are sometimes enhanced by gold leaf or other unusual materials, referencing pop culture in a bold, contemporary style.

William Paul Thomas chooses to immortalize, and by extension, uplift individuals from his personal life. Whether they be friends, family, collaborators or colleagues, Thomas strives to codify his own life path by honoring those who have been present and significant along the way. Thomas uses oil or acrylic on canvas, in a loose, painterly style. His portraits are often much larger than life, giving them a sense of immediacy and power. He teaches at Guilford College.

For *TRIPLE THREAT*, Charles Edward Williams uses both self-portraiture and landscape to explore the nuances of his emotional relationship with water. Williams survived almost drowning three times, and often depicts himself in protective swim gear and goggles. "Water is where I am most vulnerable," says Williams. "It's a place to intersect with my authentic self." Often painting with oil on mylar or watercolor paper, his refined, elegant brushwork captures every nuance of the natural world, and his place in it. He is SunTrust Endowed Chair of Painting and Drawing at North Carolina Central University.

Clarence Heyward offered the following statement, "Using painting as my primary tool of communication, I make works examining my identity as a Black American man, husband and father; compositions documenting my life experiences and how the media and historical documentation contribute to the perception of Black Americans and our collective culture. Much of my work is influenced by my memories which serve as a database filled with television shows, movies, music, and pop-culture which become metaphors and or references used in my compositions."

Clarence Heyward is a painter whose work explores notions of the Black American experience, primarily focusing on how the use of media and historical documentation is used to shape perceptions of Black American culture. His work investigates cultural truths, challenges stereotypes, and examines identity.

He has exhibited his work in spaces nationally including the 21c Museum of Durham, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for Cultural Arts, the Wiregrass Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry Chicago, Art Miami Art Fair, the Dallas Art Fair, the Container-Santa Fe, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, and (CAM) the Contemporary Art Museum of Raleigh.

Heyward was the recipient of The Brightwork Fellowship residency at Anchorlight Raleigh in 2019-2020, the Emerging Artist in Residence at Artspace, Raleigh in 2021, the Ragdale (IL) artist fellowship in 2022 and was the 2022 Artist in Residence at NC State University. His work is in the collections of several notable private and public institutions including the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Nasher Museum of Art, the Ackland Art Museum, the Cameron Museum of Art and the Rubell Family Collection.

William Paul Thomas offered the following statement, "I paint representations of people in my social circle and sometimes scrawl text directly over their likenesses. That text is often tinged with dry humor, at times it is politically incorrect, and is regularly derived from the spoken vernacular of the communities I have lived in. My overarching goal is to



Work by Clarence Heyward

share with diverse audiences what I see as worthwhile subject matter. That might include religious symbolism or popular slang. I make pictures to document select parts of my life."

"Many of us have immediate psychological connections to representations of the human face. We look for similarities between ourselves and those represented; note key differences between 'us' and 'them'. 'He looks like so-and-so'. 'She reminds me of whatshername'. Assumptions or questions about the subject's state of mind usually follow. If the expression that the subject wears is ambiguous enough, we might begin to project our own emotions onto them to interpret the painting's message," adds Thomas.

"I choose specific models as a way of recognizing their significance in my life's path. I relish being able to honor everyday people through making images. We regularly celebrate women and men of prominence in mass media, so I take advantage of the opportunity to highlight the people that impact me on a more direct level than any untouchable celebrity or distant historical figure could. I integrate text and other symbols into the portrait work to narrow the subject matter to a certain degree and complicate the viewer's understanding of the portrait subject's identity. The work begins as an intimate acknowledgement of an individual and is subsequently transformed into a set of symbols poised for the viewer's investigation."

William Paul Thomas is a visual artist and independent curator based in Durham, NC. His work is centered on making images to record his life experiences and observations. For over 15 years he has created intimate painted portraits of everyday people, giving special attention to other Black male subjects that he chooses as a way of recognizing their significance in his life's path. Thomas presented a talk on "The Invisible Notoriety of Strangers" at the 2022 TedX Duke Conference. In addition to oil and acrylic painting, he also experiments with video and photography to capture idiosyncratic, abstracted depictions of love, joy, and adversity. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Art degree in Studio Art from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and a Master of Fine Art Degree in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Thomas was the youngest artist, and the only figurative painter, in *Front Burner: Highlights in Contemporary Painting* at the North Carolina Museum of Art. He is currently the Visiting Assistant Professor of Painting Foundations at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC.

Charles Edward Williams offered the following statement, "The paintings in this exhibition, Refine, show specific quiet moments, self-portraits and landscapes, in which I confront the power of nature, of water, and the society in which I strive to create art. With each brush stroke I seek to express, in a more perfect way, a response to the complexities within our culture, history, and my own internal struggle. Water is where I am most vulnerable - it's a place to intersect with my authentic self. I encourage others to self-examine, question the false boundaries that separate us, and view the inner connectedness of our common existence."

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Charles Edward Williams has an impressive BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Georgia and an MFA from the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG). Williams has attended summer artist residencies at Otis College of Art and Design (CA), SOMA (Mexico City, Mexico), the Gibbes Museum (SC), and the McColl Center for Art + Innovation (NC). Solo traveling exhibitions include *Sun + Light, Warm Water* and *Swim*. *Sun + Light* has been on view at Polk Museum of Art (FL), Gibbes Museum of Art (SC), and Residency Art gallery (LA). *Warm Water* has been on view at the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (MI), SECCA (NC), and Weber State University (UT). *Swim* was displayed at Morton Fine Art (DC). His work was also recently exhibited at Aqua and Scope Art Fair / Art Basel (FL) and Texas Contemporary Art Fair (TX).

Group exhibitions have included the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (CT), David C. Driskell Center of the University of Maryland (MD), Kunstraum Potsdam (Berlin, Germany), Barnes Foundation & Rush Arts Foundation (PA), Post Collapse Art (Zurich, Switzerland), and other domestic institutions. Works have been reviewed in local and national publications and media, including the Washington Post, NPR, and South Carolina's ETV network (PBS affiliate). During Williams' ongoing residency at Pike School of Art (MS), he created the project FORWARD, which the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Ruth Foundation for the Arts partly supported.

Permanent collections include the North Carolina Museum of Art (NC), the Gibbes Museum (SC), Georgia Museum of Art (GA), Knoxville Museum of Art (TN), Delaware Art Museum (DE), Mississippi Museum of Art (MS), Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University (NC), and the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art (NJ). Williams also received the Riley Institute Diversity Leadership Award from the State of South Carolina for developing enriching art programs within local communities. Williams is SunTrust Endowed Chair and Associate Professor of Art at North Carolina Central University.

Beverly McIver is widely acknowledged as a significant presence in contemporary American art and has charted a new direction as a Black female artist.

She has accumulated more awards and honors than many artists receive in a lifetime, which she pays forward by teaching younger generations about the power of art and the hard work it takes to make it a career. There are numerous artists today who credit McIver for their professional



Work by William Paul Thomas

achievements.

McIver grew up in Greensboro, NC, as one of three daughters - including her sister, Renee, who has developmental disabilities - of a single mother who worked multiple domestic jobs to make ends meet. The artist's paintings are reminders to herself and her audience of the journey she endured in order to understand the many aspects that collectively shape her identity. The images are also powerful statements about larger issues that affect and challenge everyone, including stereotypes, self-acceptance, family, otherness, illness, death and, ultimately, freedom to express one's individuality.

A retrospective exhibition of McIver's work, entitled *Full Circle*, began at the Scottsdale Museum of Art, and traveled to the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, SC.

McIver's work can be found in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Weatherspoon Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Nelson Fine Arts Center Art Museum at Arizona State University, and the Mint Museum, to name a few. McIver is Professor of the Practice in Studio Arts at Duke University, and prior to this appointment, taught at Arizona State University for 12 years. Recent honors include a yearlong residency at the American Academy in Rome, where she was featured in *Beverly McIver e il colore nero*, a documentary for Italian television. In 2017, she received the lifetime achievement award from the Anyone Can Fly Foundation in a ceremony hosted by Faith Ringgold. McIver was named one of the "Top Ten in Painting" in *Art in America* in 2011.

*Raising Renee* - a feature-length documentary film produced in association with HBO by Academy Award-nominated and award-winning filmmakers Steven Ascher and Jeanne Jordan - tells the story of McIver's promise to care for Renee when their mother dies. The film played in festivals around the country, was nominated for an Emmy® for Outstanding Arts and Culture Programming and is now available on Amazon Prime.

For further information check our NC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 919/286-4837 or visit (cravenallengallery.com).

## Hillsborough Arts Council Gallery & Gift Shop in Hillsborough, NC, Features Works by Holly North and Wendy Scott

The Hillsborough Arts Council Gallery & Gift Shop in Hillsborough, NC, is presenting *Enter the Garden of the Heart*, featuring paintings by Holly North and mosaics by Wendy Scott, on view in the HAC Gallery, through Oct. 23, 2023. A reception will be held on Sept. 29, from 6-9pm, during the 4th Friday ArtWalk.

"I first encountered Holly and Wendy separately at the beginning of the year. I sensed a serene aura around both of them. It was evident their creative energies would seamlessly blend to form an extraordinary exhibition. And now, the time has come to witness their artistic journey unfold," says Kim Freeman, HAC's Gallery & Volunteer Manager.

Holly North draws inspiration from urban garden oases, each painting a window into a microcosm within the macrocosm, a place offering potential to connect with your inner self.

In North's own words, "By sharing my art with the world, I hope to cultivate a connection between ourselves, each other and nature through being in alignment with our hearts."

Wendy Scott loves repurposing glass, ceramics, and tiles, old and new. "I feel as if I am working on a puzzle and am inspired and



Work by Holly North

surprised with the outcome," says Scott.

The two came together to create *Enter the Garden of the Heart*.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Council at 919/643-2500 or visit (www.hillsboroughartsCouncil.org).