



Special Thanks :

Claudia Volpe, Director of the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection

Dr. Michelle Kiec, Interim Vice Provost for Extended and Lifelong Learning and Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Bradley Shope, Interim Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts

Dr. Dan Haxall, Professor of Art History, Dept of Art & Design

Karen Stanford, Director of University Galleries and Community Outreach

Jerry Shearer, Associate Dean for Inclusion and Outreach / Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative

KU students: Kalei Custer, Katherine Raudenbusch, Nick Roberts, Danielle Schwesinger, Emma Smith, Judas-Lane Steigerwalt, Corrinne Stumpf, Brianna Toscani, and the students of ARH 324 Contemporary African American Art, Spring 2021

Visiting Artists: Lavette Ballard and Curlee Holton



Jacob Lawrence, *Confrontation at the Bridge*, 1975. Silkscreen on paper, 36 1/2" x 29 3/4"

KUMillerArt Gallery millerartgallery_kutztown kutztown.edu/millerartgallery

cover image: Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Woman and Daughter with Make Up)*, edition of 87 of 100. Silver Print.1990. 16" x 9 3/4"



FIGURES AND PROJECTIONS

Selected work from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art

October 28 - December 12, 2021



Mequitta Ahuja, Emma Amos, Lavett Ballard, Dawould Bey, John Biggers, Romare Bearden, Donald E. Camp, Tawny Chatmon, Sonya Clark, Willie Cole, Alfred Conteh, Adger Cowans, Kenturah Davis, Didier William, Sam Gilliam, Latoya Hobbs, Curlee Holton, Ed Hughes, Ronald Jackson, Rashid Johnson, Sargeant Claude Johnson, Titus Kaphar, Paul Keene, Columbus Knox, Jacob Lawrence, Nate Lewis, Chris Ofili, Delita Martin, Kermit Oliver, Angela Pilgrim, Steve Prince, Faith Ringgold, Alison Saar, Lezley Saar, Dianne Smith, Nelson Stevens, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Charles White

THE MARLIN AND REGINA MILLER GALLERY
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY

The Marlin and Regina Miller Gallery at Kutztown University proudly presents, *Figures and Projections: Selections from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African-American Art*. Co-curated by Art History professor Daniel Haxall, Gallery Director Karen Stanford, and students from Kutztown University, *Figures and Projections* includes more than 40 works in collage, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, and diverse print mediums. This exhibition explores how African American artists portray the human form to represent the Black experience in America. From formal portraits and images of everyday life to abstracted suggestions of bodies in motion, these works project the beauty, aspirations, and achievements of African Americans while commemorating ongoing efforts for equality and social justice.



Mequitta Ahuja, *In Back Garden*, 2013. Mixed media on vellum, 58" x 41"

Stevens among those who locate strength and spirituality within female figures ranging from mythological goddesses to everyday people. Creating the likeness of a person often includes the fashion and style of the sitter, and many artists emphasize hair to celebrate Black identity. Dawoud Bey, Tawny Chatmon, Sonya Clark, LaToya Hobbs, Chris Ofili, Angela Pilgrim, and Dianne Smith depict unique hairstyles to assert cultural specificity while addressing complex issues of stereotyping and socialization.

Figures and Projections incorporates art produced from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s to present day, featuring diverse imagery and narratives connected to the human body. Portraits and artistic studies by Mequitta Ahuja, John Biggers, Alfred Conteh, Rashid Johnson, Columbus Knox, and Charles White convey the dignity and self-possession of their subjects, often empowering individuals through their beauty and visual presence. The experiences of African-American women feature prominently through-out the show, with Emma Amos, Romare Bearden, Nate Lewis, Delita Martin, Alison Saar, and Nelson

Kara Walker, *The Emancipation Approximation (Scene 18)*, 1999-2000. color screenprint, 50" x 40"



The family remains central to the formation of identity, and artists including Carrie Mae Weems, Lezley Saar, and Titus Kaphar represent ancestral legacies and acquired behaviors through family portraits. The role of memory in generating these narratives spans the personal and communal, and figural representation provides artists with a means of contesting histories of racism and segregation while affirming the humanity of their subjects. The photography of Lorna Simpson and mixed media works of Willie Cole examine the experiences of those displaced by slavery, whereas Kara Walker and

Curlee Holton trace histories of desire and objectification through the female form. Faith Ringgold revises iconic portraits and images from the past to challenge the contradictions of American history, and Lavett Ballard and Ronald Jackson revisit their southern heritage in collage and painting.

Efforts to restore the agency of African Americans inspire many artists to celebrate bodies in action, particularly moments of political activism or cultural achievement. Jacob Lawrence, Steve Prince, and Paul Keene derive inspiration from those protesting Jim Crow laws or performing jazz music, while Sam Gilliam and Adger Cowans establish the presence of the African American through the physicality of their artistic gestures and use of tools typically associated with the body, including combs and rakes.

The artists represented in *Figures and Projections* craft diverse responses to American history grounded in Black figuration. From portrait likenesses to scenes of cultural achievement and political activism, the African-American body remains a statement of human strength, creativity, and beauty. Recent events have amplified the need for cultural understanding and social change, and the mission of the Petrucci Family Foundation—to stimulate education and knowledge of African-American art history—aligns with Kutztown University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. *Figures and Projections* provides the community with an opportunity to experience a significant art collection on campus while additional programming will further the dialogue generated by this timely exhibition. —Dr. Dan Haxall