

Bullock Museum hosts exhibit of Black art on paper from San Antonio collectors

Exhibition features works highlighting the rich history of Black art in America

MAY 16, 2023 (AUSTIN, TX) — *The Harriet and Harmon Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper* will open at the Bullock Texas State History Museum on Saturday, May 20. The exhibition features art from one of the most comprehensive collections of works by Black American artists.

Visitors to the exhibition can explore Black art from the early 20th century through the present. Collected over nearly 40 years by Dr. Harmon and Harriet Kelley of San Antonio, the works include watercolors, etching, screen prints, and more and highlight the rich history of Black art in America. The exhibition is presented in English and Spanish.

In 1986, Dr. Harmon and Harriet Kelley attended their first exhibition of African American art at their local museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art. A transformative visit, it was the first time they encountered an entire exhibition built around the works of African American artists, art that reflected them and their experience. The Kelleys vowed to learn more and teach others about the beauty, poignancy, and importance of African American art. They began collecting to help their children gain a deeper appreciation as well, initially building the collection on oil paintings and sculptures only, but soon expanding to works on paper.

“A beautiful exhibition filled with detailed and rich imagery reflecting the Black experience in America has been created from this dynamic collection,” said Margaret Koch, Director of the Bullock Museum. “We are excited to bring it to Austin, and thankful to the Kelleys for their dedication to preservation and education through sharing the work of these transformative artists.”

The works in the exhibit display a variety of mediums, including drawings, etchings, lithographs, watercolors, pastels, linocuts, and screen prints by noted artists such as Ron Adams, Robert Blackburn, Charles White, Elizabeth Catlett, and John Biggers. Spanning over one hundred years, the works represent historical moments such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Depression-era Federal Art Project, and the Civil Rights Movement.

Visitors have the opportunity to utilize a take-home exhibition booklet to guide their experience as they explore. The guides are printed in both English and Spanish and provide more information on the artists, techniques, and historical movements presented in the exhibition. Guests can also browse books related to these themes in the salon area of the exhibition and explore reading lists



for adults and children put together by the Austin Public Library.

Events celebrating Black art and culture will be offered throughout the run of the exhibit, including talks, children's art classes, storytimes, and film screenings. During the summer, the public is invited to a special series of Third Thursdays featuring local musicians The Peterson Brothers, Zach Person, and Mélat.

The Harriet and Harmon Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper will be on view at the Bullock Museum from May 20 to October 1, 2023. For more information, visit TheStoryofTexas.com.

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The exhibition *The Harmon and Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper* was organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA. Sponsored by the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Hall Fund.

Third Thursdays are sponsored by KUTX.

Image: Blackburn, 2002; color lithograph by Ron Adams (born 1934). Courtesy Landau Traveling Exhibitions.

The Bullock Museum, a division of the Texas State Preservation Board, is funded by Museum members, donors, and patrons, the Texas State History Museum Foundation, and the State of Texas.

ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, a division of the State Preservation Board and an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums, illuminates and celebrates Texas history, people, and culture. With dynamic, award-winning exhibitions, educational programming for all ages, and an IMAX® theater with the largest screen in Texas, the Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals across the world to bring the Story of Texas to life.

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