

# BILL HODGES GALLERY

## Bearden & Co.

February 27 - April 11, 2020

Opening Reception:  
Thursday, February 27th  
6 - 8pm

Right: Romare Bearden, *The Rites of Spring*,  
1967, Gouache on Cardboard 31 ½ x 56 in.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York City – Bill Hodges Gallery is pleased to announce a dynamic and nostalgic show, *Bearden & Co.* at its new Chelsea location. The show will be on view from February 27th through April 11th and will feature a selection of preeminent artists—Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, Charles Alston, Edward Clark, Sam Gilliam, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Adam Pendleton, Roy DeCarava and Al Loving—all whom have contributed artistically and socially to the robust African-American Contemporary art scene we see thriving today. Bill Hodges Gallery was founded in 1979 by Bill Hodges as a solo endeavor to fulfill his addiction of buying and re-selling artwork he was passionate about. This obsession grew into a business; a family-owned and operated business now over 40 years in the making. The re-birth of the gallery is ushered in with a robust survey of museum quality artist's work sought to awaken collectors and inspire art-enthusiasts.

Bearden & Co. is a collection of works most lucid in a series of progressive and regularly scheduled group shows depicting African-American Masters. Typically, this involves paintings from decades ago alongside recent works. Adam Pendleton's large 2006 painting *Afro-Futuristic*, sharing space with a wonderful little Henry Ossawa Tanner painting *Moise Dans Les Joncs* from 1921. There are several of things to compare here — and to be quite frank — the mere possibility of comparing and engaging with such a varied group of Masters is what matters. One of the largest known Charles Sebree portraits, from 1939, *Woman in White Turban* (previously owned by the artist and philanthropist, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney) pairs nicely with a rare monoprint by Romare Bearden, from his distinguished *Jazz* series (1979) entitled *Introduction for a Blues Queen (Uptown at Savoy)* which is the original used to print the entirety of the sequence, as confirmed by the Bearden Foundation and the ink on the back of the work. A standout treat is a couple of varied and interesting Norman Lewis paintings. Lewis' untitled 1945 oil on canvas epitomizes the skillful color and robust composition we have collectively come to celebrate and appreciate following decades of exclusion. Lewis' presence is felt through this and another larger untitled work on paper created nearly 30 years later. Thematically, most of the works on display are from post-

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Modern to Contemporary. Romare Bearden and others were tasked with portraying the African-American culture of the South partially in thanks to the WPA. The WPA was enacted by Franklin D. Roosevelt as an ambitious attempt to boost the national economy and morale. At one time, the WPA employed more than 5,000 artists to create celebratory paintings and murals to adorn new institutions. Like many of the works included in this show, figurative forms were prevalent, however, heavily abstracted. The WPA held a preference for figurative art. In spite of this prevailing attitude, many artists like Romare Bearden and Norman Lewis made a push towards abstraction after the WPA's dissolution in 1943. Norman Lewis' untitled, 1945 oil on canvas epitomizes this expansion. Bearden & Co. highlights the breadth of artists the gallery carries. For instance, the rare photography inclusion of Roy DeCarava's gelatin silver print, *Untitled (Man Smoking Cigar on Trashcan)*, 1978. The way in which African-American artists have been influenced by color and the absence of it, composition and the relation to places embody the assemblages of culture, which is yet another significant element of the show.

We encourage you to visit the new gallery space under the leadership of Director Navindren Hodges and Owner Bill. The gallery is a leading post-Modern to contemporary secondary market art gallery representing a survey of some of the most significant Artists of Color of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

**The Bill Hodges Gallery is located** on the 10th floor of 529 W. 20th Street between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue. Our closest subways stations are at 14th St. & 8th Ave. (A-C-E-L) and 23rd St. & 8th Ave. (C-E). Gallery Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10am – 6pm and Saturday 12:30pm – 5:30pm. Press viewings can be arranged. For more information or to arrange a viewing, please contact Bill or Navindren Hodges at (212) 333-2640 or via email at [info@billhodgesgallery.com](mailto:info@billhodgesgallery.com)



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