

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Encore

August 14 – September 6, 2014

New York, NY- As promised, Bill Hodges Gallery is pleased to announce it will reopen, not uptown but downtown at 529 W 20th St. Our first exhibition appropriately titled *Encore*, opens August 14th and will be on view through September 6th. This initial exhibition will feature the work of Charles Alston, Frank Bowling O.B.E., Edward Mitchell Bannister, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Beauford Delaney, Melvin Edwards, Joshua Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Charles Sebree and Merton D. Simpson.



Joshua Johnson, *A Baltimore Shipowner*,
ca. 1815, 19 ½ x 15 ½ in.

Encore highlights the breadth of artists the gallery carries. For instance the rare pair of portraits, *A Baltimore Shipowner and his Wife* (ca. 1815) painted by the first recognized African-American painter, **Joshua Johnson**, are juxtaposed with one of largest known **Charles Sebree** portraits from 1939, *Woman in White Turban* (previously owned by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney) and Beauford Delaney's bright and unusual portrait of a veiled black woman from his very important Paris years.

The exhibition includes the work of another 19th century African-American painter, **Edward Mitchell Bannister**. *Harbor View*, a small oil painting on canvas, exemplifies Bannister's aesthetic, a celebration of nature's inherent serenity in connection to the manufactured world.

The way in which African-American artists have been influenced by other places and cultures is another significant element of the show. *Symbol*, a striking 1953 oil painting by **Charles Alston** is reminiscent of the work of Mexican master painters Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo. In fact, Tamayo likely would have known **Elizabeth Catlett**, an African-American artist who lived and worked in Mexico for over 50 years. Catlett's 2002 museum-quality bronze sculpture of Mahalia Jackson, a prominent piece in the exhibition, reflects the aesthetic of Mexican modernism in art, which aimed to celebrate the country's pre-Columbian, pre-European past. Similarly, **Merton D. Simpson**'s assertive painting *Confrontation II-A* (1968) from his seminal "Confrontation" series (from which the Brooklyn Museum has acquired an impressive work) demonstrates his proclivity for African sculpture through his work as an art dealer.

A student of Alston, **Jacob Lawrence**'s artwork is highly significant; the exhibition includes two distinctive examples of his work, a well-documented important drawing, *Children at Play* (ca.1955) and a salient painting on hardboard, *After the Show* (1953). Both works were notably created during a period in between the making of Lawrence's most influential works. A recently acquired rare monoprint by **Romare Bearden**, from his distinguished Jazz Series (1979) entitled *Introduction for a Blues Queen (Uptown at Savoy)* 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.

Bocchi (1957), an early example of Abstract Expressionist **Norman Lewis**' iconic "little people," exhibited at the Willard Gallery, displays a melodic procession of abstract black figures and highlights his work as colorist through his usage of pastel purples and blues. The English-Guyanese abstract painter **Frank Bowling O.B.E.**, inspired by Lewis' use of color, is also included in the exhibition. Bowling's textured painting *Totem* (1993) is a post-modern illustration of the use of abstraction in the post-colonial period.

An impressive iteration from **Melvin Edwards**' Lynch Fragments series (1968-present) *A Song That Comes to Mind* (1992) completes the exhibition. Edwards uses recycled metal objects to create sculptures which reference racial violence in the United States as well as a personal interest in African art, serving as an amalgamation of the themes investigated throughout the exhibition.

The Bill Hodges Gallery is located on the 2nd floor of 529 W. 20th Street between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue. Our closest subway 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

BILL HODGES GALLERY

529 W. 20th Street, 2E, New York, NY 10011 • 212.333.2640 • www.billhodgesgallery.com • info@billhodgesgallery.com