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## Passionate visions of the American South: self-taught artists from 1940 to the present: an Arts Administration internship at the New Orleans Museum of Art

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**PASSIONATE VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH  
SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS FROM 1940 TO THE PRESENT  
AN ARTS ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP AT THE  
NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART**

A Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Arts Administration

by

Nilima Z. Mwendo

B.S., Southern University at New Orleans, 1991  
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Ukali Mwendo, my partner in life/my illuminator

Jadi, Jenga, Juba and Jimani Mwendo  
my children/my faith keepers

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper demonstrates the overall success of bringing non-traditional audiences to a New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) exhibition, "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present." It also highlights the success of some of its public programs. However, the process of attracting these audiences to the museum falls short in its attempts at developing long-term relationships with NOMA.

The first chapter provides historical background on NOMA and offers an overview of the "Passionate Visions" project. Chapter Two describes, in relative detail, the project's community outreach component and implementation of its public programs. It closes with an analysis of short range and long term impacts. The final chapter further analyzes the project experience, inclusive of the management style of the project director, issues surrounding conflict of interest and ethics, and the degree of NOMA's commitment, or lack thereof, to long-term non-traditional audience inclusiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

Traditional, mainstream museums in the United States have begun to look more closely at the audiences they serve and those they wish to attract for a number of reasons -- U.S. population shifts (Latin- and African-Americans will be the majority ethnic groups in the next century), re-analysis of Western views (dominating the world's thinking at present), and limited financial resources (government cut-backs and recessions). They have begun to address this situation in varying degrees. One common approach has been to appoint a board member(s) or hire staff representative of the groups they wish to target. The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) has followed suit and has appointed African-Americans to their Board of Trustees and at specific times hired a person for outreach.

In February 1993, I was hired for a one-year period by NOMA as Outreach Coordinator for the exhibition, "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present." My main objective was to attract primarily non-traditional audiences, but also traditional ones. Beyond this, I implemented a number of the exhibition's public programs.

The challenges presented for the intern were (1) attracting audiences in a limited time frame for a particular show as opposed to developing an on-going long-lasting museum relationship, (2) being effective in outreach and at the same time being responsible for implementing some of the project's public programs, and (3) working within an institution that has not yet demonstrated to non-traditional audiences its commitment to truly serving and representing them.

This report will give an overview of the New Orleans Museum of Art, the "Passionate Visions" exhibition, and my year-long stint as Outreach Coordinator. I will detail the internship, which extended from the end of August to the middle of December 1993. Finally, I will close with an analysis of the experience and a concluding suggestion for equity and inclusiveness in NOMA.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### Mission and History

The mission of the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) is "to collect, in a systematic fashion, to preserve, to the highest aesthetic standards available; to display, in the best logical sequence and most pleasing manner; to interpret, in the most meaningful way, original works of art which best reflect the artistic achievements of all cultures throughout history; to provide programs of fine arts information, education and appreciation to the widest possible audience; and to represent in its overall activities the multi-cultural diversity of its city, state and region."<sup>1</sup>

Isaac Delgado, a Jamaican-born philanthropist and New Orleans businessman, founded the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art in 1910 and envisioned an art "building for rich and poor alike".<sup>2</sup> His \$150,000 donation enabled the city of New Orleans to build a two story Beaux-Arts structure in City

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<sup>1</sup>Adopted by NOMA's Board of Trustees, 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Prescott N. Dunbar, The New Orleans Museum of Art: The First Seventy-Five Years (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 20.

Park, its present location.<sup>3</sup> After the museum opened on December 16, 1911, the city of New Orleans agreed to invest in this institution of learning and preservation by providing an annual apportionment to the museum's operating budget.

Over the years the collection grew and in 1971, through a substantial contribution from the city of New Orleans, and other smaller but significant donations, three wings were added to the museum's original structure. Its name was then changed to the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA). This expansion allowed for the traveling blockbuster exhibitions "The Treasures of Tutankhamun" (1977-78), "The Search for Alexander" (1982), "The Precious Legacy" (1985), and "Carthage: A Mosaic of Ancient Tunisia" (1988-89).<sup>4</sup>

Art acquisitions continued during the 1970's at such a rapid pace that further expansion was deemed necessary. A capital campaign began in 1986. Again through a city of New Orleans voter-approved bond issue in November 1987, and the passage of a \$1.3 million capital outlay bill in the state legislature in July 1989, NOMA was able to further expand

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<sup>3</sup>Adele Adatto, et al, NOMA's 1990 Annual Report (New Orleans: The New Orleans Museum of Art, 1992), 2, and Dunbar, 19.

<sup>4</sup>NOMA's News Release, "New NOMA makes Public Debut April 18, 1993"; Alice Rae Yelen, "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present, A Proposal to the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund," unpublished, 19 July 1991, Special Projects Office, New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana, I, 4.

its facility from a total area of 75,000 square feet to 130,000 square feet. In January 1991, groundbreaking ceremonies marked the beginning of construction for the "new" New Orleans Museum of Art.

The "new" NOMA opened in April 1993 boasting 35,000 works of art valued at \$200 million,<sup>5</sup> placing it "in the top 25 percent of the nation's largest and most important art museums."<sup>6</sup> This \$23.5 million expansion increased space for galleries, expanded the education facilities and resulted in a new restaurant and shop.

NOMA proudly displays a number of diverse collections. Some of its smaller, but growing collections are African tribal art with emphasis on Nigerian and Cameroon pieces; Asian art, specializing in Japanese paintings of the Edo Period; and the art of the Americas, North, Central and South, from the Pre-Columbian period to the present, including some Native American art. Its largest collections are of Western art from the Renaissance to the present, with a high concentration in American and European prints, drawings and photographs, particularly of the 19th and 20th century, and European and American decorative arts (glass, ceramics, silver and furniture).

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<sup>5</sup>News Release; Yelen.

<sup>6</sup>News Release, "New NOMA makes Public Debut April 18, 1993."

### Organizational Structure

NOMA's governing body is a 33-member board of trustees consisting of eight standing committees: Executive, Finance, Legal, Development & Membership, Accessions, Building & Grounds, Nominating, and Long Range Planning. E. John Bullard, NOMA's fourth director, has held this position since 1973. He leads four departments, each managed by an assistant director: Administration, Jackie Sullivan; Art, William Fagaly; Education, Lee Morais; and Development, Sharon Litwin. (See the organizational chart, page 53.) NOMA employs a staff of approximately 100.

Alice Rae Yelen is Assistant to the Director and heads the Special Projects office. She is responsible for those projects that the director deems important to the mission of NOMA, but are usually temporary in scope, for example, traveling exhibitions. "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present" ("Passionate Visions") was a project of the Special Projects office and the first major traveling exhibition originating from NOMA.

As many non-profit organizations, NOMA has a multi-level membership program and, in addition, offers its members an opportunity to become a "Friend" of one of the art specialties: Contemporary, Decorative, Ethnographic, Asian, Photography, and Prints and Drawings.



### The Exhibition and Public Programs Overview

An increasing number of U.S. museums, art historians and university art departments have begun to recognize the importance of self-taught art. There have been but a few exhibitions on this topic in U. S. museums. William Fagaly, NOMA's assistant director and contemporary art curator, was among the first in the U.S. to begin organizing museum exhibitions of the work of self-taught artists. In 1973, he organized the show, "Louisiana Folk Painting: Clementine Hunter, Sister Gertrude Morgan and Bruce Brice" at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York. Among his additional exhibition credits are "David Butler" (1976), "Clementine Hunter" (1985) and "Sister Gertrude Morgan" (1988).<sup>7</sup> Others have been the North Carolina Museum of Art's "Signs and Wonders: Outside Art inside North Carolina" in 1989; The Corcoran Gallery's 1992 exhibition, "Black Folk Art in America, 1930-1980"; and "Common Ground/Uncommon Vision", an exhibition of the Michael and Julie Hall folk art collection, at the Milwaukee Museum of Art in 1993.

The purpose of the "Passionate Visions" exhibition was to identify and document the aesthetic value of 20th century

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<sup>7</sup>Yelen, Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-taught Artists from 1940 to the Present (New Orleans: New Orleans Museum of Art, 1993) 20; Yelen, "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present, A Proposal to the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund," unpublished, 19 July 1991, Special Projects Office, New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana, I, 3.

self-taught art and to highlight the achievements of its artists as artistic masters, not as oddities or eccentrics, which has been the focus many times in the past. An additional goal of the project was to increase the exposure, interest and appreciation for the artistic strength of this art, and to contribute to the small yet growing literature on the subject.<sup>8</sup>

"Passionate Visions" is considered unique in that it is the first major exhibition which featured works of self-taught artists (1) from the South and (2) based on its artistic merit, without regard to the artist's background, i.e., race, age, religion or gender. Previous large shows featured either black self-taught artists, or self-taught artists throughout the U.S. or from the Northeast region.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to her position as assistant to the director, Ms. Yelen was the Chief Curator of Education at NOMA for ten years. In this role she designed, oversaw and implemented in-house and outreach public programs for children and adults. She co-authored the catalog Zenga: Brushstrokes of Enlightenment (1990) and contributed an essay to the exhibition catalog A Kaleidoscope of Art: The Sunny and P.

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<sup>8</sup>Yelen, Passionate Visions, 6; "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present, October 23, 1993 - January 9, 1994," unpublished document, 1993, Special Projects Office, New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana, 1.

<sup>9</sup>Alice Rae Yelen, Assistant to the Director, interview by author, New Orleans, Louisiana, 09 October 1991.

R. Norman Collection (1987). She holds two masters degrees, one in Art History from Columbia University and one in Museum Education from George Washington University. She had done extensive research on self-taught art and artists in preparation for the "Passionate Visions" project.

Ms. Yelen, along with her husband, Dr. Kurt Gitter, art collector, former NOMA trustee, and current member of NOMA's Advisory Committee, conceived of the idea of "Passionate Visions". Ms. Yelen secured the funding and organized and implemented the project as project director and curator. The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund awarded \$300,000 for the exhibition and outreach component. The Henry Luce Foundation gave \$150,000 for the catalogue. The result was an exhibition of 270 paintings and assemblages by 80 southern self-taught artists, a 350-page catalogue with color illustrations, a wide array of public programs (including a national symposium, a video featuring six of the "Passionate Visions" artists, and an intensive outreach component), and a national tour. The tour's itinerary consisted of the University Art Museum in Berkeley, the Portland Art Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art, The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., The North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, and the Bass Museum in Miami Beach. (See "Passionate Visions" exhibition itinerary, page 55.)

A four-person staff assisted Ms. Yelen in this huge undertaking. Danna Perry, curatorial assistant, acted as liaison to other museum departments, catalogued the hundreds of slides used in selecting the pieces for the show, collected photographs of the artists from across the nation, developed and maintained the checklist of works, culled transparencies and research material, and administered the artists-in-residence program. For the "Passionate Visions" catalogue, Ms. Perry compiled the bibliography, checked footnotes, and wrote some of the artist biographies. Kimberly Nichols, volunteer project intern, wrote the majority of artist biographies for the catalogue, checked footnotes, and would lend assistance where needed. Rebecca Smith, administrative assistant, typed the drafts of the catalogue and kept the "Passionate Visions" office operating smoothly and efficiently. I was the outreach coordinator. My responsibilities are detailed later in this paper. Subsequently, Loren Schwerd took over the responsibility of the artists-in-residence program, following Ms. Perry's departure from the project. Although under the Special Projects Office, we called ourselves the "Passionate Visions" staff since all but the administrative assistant were hired for this project alone.

The criteria for selection of artists for "Passionate Visions" were that the artist (1) be born and raised in the

South<sup>10</sup> or had spent his/her formative years there, (2) has been producing art between 1940 and the present, and (3) has had little or no academic art training. The final selections consisted of works from 110 private and public collections in 23 states.

Following the selection process, artist commonalities were then examined. General characteristics were: (1) the majority of artists lived in rural areas, (2) most were senior citizens and had been blue collar workers all their lives, (3) many began their art making in their later years, (4) they operated outside the mainstream art community, (5) their inspiration often was a response to an inner vision, (6) their subject matter was taken from personal surroundings and life experiences, (7) most were devoutly religious and stated that their artistic inspiration came from God through visions, and (8) their materials were often from objects in their environment, (branches, mud, wood, metal scrapes, paper) that they found, had but no longer needed for its original purpose, or were given to them.<sup>11</sup> Many of the artists in the exhibition did not consider

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<sup>10</sup>In this exhibition, the South was considered the following thirteen states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

<sup>11</sup>"Exhibition and Program Information", unpublished document on "Passionate Visions," 1992, Special Projects Office, New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana, 1.

themselves artists, but rather had found a means to express their feelings, ideas, views, visions and experiences.

The exhibition was divided into six thematic sections: Autobiography, Daily Life, Religion and Visionary Imagery, Social Commentary and Popular Culture, Patriotism, and Nature.

A host of public programs was organized to coincide with the exhibition: (a) the artists-in-residence program, the core of the public programs, which presented visiting artists who spoke about themselves and their work, and demonstrated their techniques; (b) a symposium, which featured nationally recognized art scholars, critics, collectors and dealers; (c) the Members Preview Evening; (d) the Opening Day Celebration events, which included two of the artists-in-residence, Bessie Harvey and Clyde Jones, the Gospel Soul Children singing group, Southern Folk Stories, and a Family Activities Workshop; (e) the University and Visual Artists Evenings, special events for university administration, faculty and staff, and for artists, respectively; (f) lectures on "The Southern Folk and Music," "Passionate Visions", and "Folk Art and the South"; (g) Teacher Workshops, Family Activities Workshops, Storytelling, and Children's Art Classes, which were scheduled throughout the run of the show; and (h) the

"Passionate Visions" video, which ran continuously during museum hours. (See "Passionate Visions" brochure, page 57.)

#### Impact of "Passionate Visions"

Members of the "Passionate Visions" staff and NOMA's Marketing Department worked diligently on publicity. The strength and quality of the art, thematic clarity of the installation, and the growing interest in self-taught art made exposure that much easier and response that much greater. The exhibition was advertised in a number of national magazines, i.e., Mirabella, Elle, Southern Accents, Profiles Magazine, the in-flight publication of Continental Airlines, AAA World Magazine, and the New York Times. The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour aired a segment on "Passionate Visions" in December 1993. The exhibition and symposium were featured in various folk art magazines, such as The Folk Art Magazine, Southern Register, Folk Art Finder and Folk Art Messenger. Locally, Gambit, Where, Cultural Vistas, New Orleans on Parade, New Orleans Magazine and the Times-Picayune's "Lagniappe" featured major articles on "Passionate Visions." Stories about the exhibition were played on WWL-TV and WYES-TV, WZRH-FM, WBRH, WWOZ, WQUE, WYLD and WWNO-FM.

As the exhibition traveled around the country, there was increasing media coverage. It was highlighted in a number of magazines and newspapers, including the Washington

Post and the American Art Review. "Passionate Visions" was awarded second place for the Best Regional Show of the 1993-94 season from the International Association of Art Critics, an unsolicited award. The video was voted as a film of merit in the Association of American Museum's 1994 film competition. The catalog was in its second printing, before the exhibition had reached the last two venues on the national tour. (See Selected "Passionate Visions" Press, page 62.) According to Ms. Yelen, she continuously receives calls requesting permission to use the pictures in the catalog or clips from the video. The University of Central Florida in Orlando is using the catalog as a textbook for a course in southern folk art.

From letters and comments, the response to the exhibition by many who saw it has been positive. While in New Orleans, the show drew 42,683 people. The museums on the national tour have also reported large attendance records.

In January 1994, NOMA hosted a meeting of the American Art Museum Directors in which approximately 130 people attended. After viewing the exhibition, letters poured in from across the country from those museum directors in praise of the show.



## CHAPTER TWO

### OUTREACH AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

#### Outreach Component Overview

Since the mid-'80s, museum leadership has had growing concern about the audiences they serve. Due to changes in the tax laws in the mid-'80s, donations of art had declined and the cost of acquisition had increased. Operation costs have increased and reduced funds from the federal government have forced museum boards and management to rely more heavily on admissions for financial support. The increased dependency has further forced them to begin examining more closely who their audiences are and what they desire. Additionally, segments of the population, for the most part long ignored by the museum community, are no longer accepting this status and in many urban areas have wielded their growing power and influence.<sup>12</sup> As a result, museum leadership has begun to more fully recognize, acknowledge and serve the wider community.

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<sup>12</sup>Edmund Barry Gaither, "'Hey! That's Mine': Thoughts on Pluralism and American Museums," eds. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer and Steven D. Lavine, Museums and Communities (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 56.

That community is rapidly changing in the United States. The increasing numbers of African Americans and Latins will constitute one-fifth of this country's population by the year 2000. The Asian population is projected to double from 4 million to 8 million by that year. One-fourth of the current annual growth of the U.S. population is the result of immigration, and the majority of these immigrants are non-European.<sup>13</sup> From 1820-1945, the leading nations of immigrants to the U.S. were Germany, Italy, Ireland, U.K., U.S.S.R., Canada and Sweden. From 1991 to the year 2000, the leading nations are and will continue to be Mexico, the Philippines, Korea, China-Taiwan, India, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Canada, Vietnam, U.K. and Iran.<sup>14</sup>

These realities have challenged the mission of the more traditional, mainstream museum which in the past has focused on the history and accomplishments of the Western world and presented art of other ethnic groups from a Eurocentric perspective. For the survival of these traditional museums, new questions and issues arise that must be answered and addressed in these changing times. How is art presented, from what perspective, what is the underlying goal of

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<sup>13</sup>Gaither.

<sup>14</sup>Dr. Harold "Bud" Hodgkinson, "Changing Community: Diverse Needs," Lecture at A Community Forum on Diversity in The Metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge Areas, sponsored by the Greater New Orleans Foundation, New Orleans, Louisiana, 08 September 1994.

displaying art, how does this goal fit in a more egalitarian society? These lead to further questions dealing with structure and formal management. Who will control the museum, how inclusive will traditional museums be of other groups on boards and in management? At the same time, an honest study of the cultures of the various groups must be made to help in their proper representation. Finally, can they commit to having knowledgeable forthright representatives from each of the ethnic groups to participate in these impending discussions, can they humble themselves enough to listen and really hear what is being said, and then how committed will traditional museums be in response to these questions?

In varying degrees, some museum boards and staff have made attempts at addressing some of the inevitable coming changes in our society and have looked at some of the aforementioned issues. The range of attempts has been from appointing one or more trustees or hiring staff from these underrepresented groups<sup>15</sup> to having a community-centered museum where the impetus comes from the community through much conversation among community members and staff.

What many traditional museums have felt comfortable doing to attract audiences of a particular group or groups

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<sup>15</sup>Steven Lavine, "Audience, Ownership, and Authority: Designing Relations between Museums and Communities", eds. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer and Steven D. Lavine, Museums and Communities (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 137.

is to hire someone from one of those underrepresented groups, "usually in a lower-level and outreach position."<sup>16</sup> NOMA has followed this path as well.

Based on the criteria of the art chosen for "Passionate Visions" and the characteristics of the artists (discussed on page 8), Ms. Yelen felt this exhibition would be of particular interest to those who rarely if ever visit the museum. Non-traditional audiences have been low to middle income, blue collar, non-European-Americans. Ms. Yelen thought that art produced with little or no training by artists who were more demographically similar to non-traditional audiences would appeal enough to them to draw them in. The exhibition could be an excellent point of entry for these audiences and a way to expand and increase audiences for the museum.

Gerri Hobdy, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, State of Louisiana, knew of my work with a non-profit organization called NKOMBO. NKOMBO's purpose is "to educate and raise consciousness about culture, art and history of both Africans and African-Americans and to develop a respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity in the United States. It does so through the promotion of cultural arts, the cross-pollenization of cultural arts and education, the making of cultural arts

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<sup>16</sup>Lavine.

experiences available for young people and adults, and its support and encouragement of community-based cultural arts and educational groups and organizations."<sup>17</sup> I was the executive director of NKOMBO since 1991 and had been a part of the organization in various capacities for 16 years. Ms. Hobdy was also aware of my matriculation in the Arts Administration program at the University of New Orleans. She recommended me to Ms. Yelen. Throughout my years of community work, I had made many valuable contacts in the city, particularly in the African-American community. This was a key asset to the project director's outreach goals.

I was hired by Ms. Yelen in February 1993 and assigned to plan and implement an outreach component for the exhibition and its public programs. I was assigned to attract primarily non-traditional audiences, but also people who had an interest in art, but did not consider the art of self-taught artists a significant contribution to the art world, people who did have an interest in this art form and wanted more information and exposure to it, and families looking for a wholesome experience. The geographical area of concentration was New Orleans and surrounding Louisiana parishes.

To accomplish my assigned goals, I implemented three aspects of outreach: The Outreach Committees, the Three-Part Outreach Program and the Rural Outreach Program.

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<sup>17</sup>NKOMBO, Inc.'s mission statement, 1990.

Additionally, I was hired to organize some of the public programs, i.e., the Opening Day Celebration events, the national symposium, and the University and Visual Artists Evenings. Finally, I did the majority of the public relations for a few of the public programs, namely, the University and Visual Artists Evenings and symposium.

An extensive public programs component was developed to reach as many of these varied audiences as possible. This component would be used by NOMA as a blueprint for future exhibitions and hopefully result in the hiring of a permanent outreach coordinator.

I was not given a budget for my areas of responsibility. I reported my progress to Ms. Yelen on a regular basis. If I made suggestions which required money, she would simply say if we could or could not afford it. There remained throughout the project an unspoken secrecy concerning the budget.

#### Job Overview

Although I began this project in February 1993 and ended it a year later, the internship was during the 1993 Fall semester. This period is the focus of this paper. I will divide my term at NOMA in four periods; the internship being period three. I will give a brief summary of the first two periods, since in them lies the foundation work for the third, and a briefer summary of the fourth.

The first period of the year I spent forming the first six Outreach Committees, namely, (1) Artists/Arts Organizations, (2) Higher Education, (3) Primary and Secondary Education, (4) Religion, (5) Senior Citizens and (6) Rural. The titles of these "working" committees were chosen based on either common demographics to the artists or by logical interests as it related to art and art education. Most of the artists were senior citizens and lived in rural areas, thus the names of those committees. We learned later that "rural" was not an appropriate name to call the committee of people outside of the New Orleans area, since places such as Slidell, Hammond and Houma are not rural. The committees were called "working" because they had committed to taking a more active role in the outreach of "Passionate Visions," meeting regularly, about every two months.

We later added a seventh committee, called the General/Advisory Committee, chaired by Ms. Michaela T. Barthelemy, the wife of then Mayor Sidney Barthelemy. The members of the "Advisory" Committee were very active and influential people in the New Orleans area, who had an interest in this project, but very little time to dedicate to it. As with the members of the working committees, their ideas, suggestions and participation were essential to the success of outreach. The General/Advisory Outreach committee met only twice. Updates from the various working

committees were given at the two General/Advisory Committee meetings.

The purpose of the outreach committees was to create an outreach structure for increasing audiences, particularly non-traditional. Members were asked to suggest ways to reach the group(s) they represented, help plan the public programs, and bring in audiences, individually and in groups. Committee members included (1) grassroots organizers, (2) educators, (3) community activists, (4) artists, (5) art dealers, (6) government officials, (7) business professionals. Additionally, I attempted to include on each committee as many representatives as possible of each ethnic group we were targeting, i.e., African-American, Asian-American, European-American and Latin-American. (I had intended representation from the Native American community, but learned that the population in New Orleans and outlying parishes was relatively small and leads to finding an interested party were futile.) In total, there were 51 members in the seven committees. (See the Public Outreach Committees, page 64.)

Through the members on the Higher Education Committee, I attempted to form sub-committees on six university campuses, Dillard, Loyola, Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), Tulane, University of New Orleans (UNO), and Xavier. However, more time was needed to accomplish this,



which I nor the committee members had at that time, and the few gains were short-lived.

During the second period, the majority of my time was spent planning the public programs, as I continued the outreach. Additionally, I wrote the public programs section for the "Passionate Visions" brochure and Arts Quarterly, NOMA's publication, and worked with the publisher on the brochure and Members' Evening Preview invitation.

My list of responsibilities was extensive and I felt it necessary to obtain assistance. During the summer, I recruited three Xavier University visual art students, Therese Blanks, Darryl White and Michelle Lavigne. Ms. Blanks became my right-hand person and assisted in executing many of the duties required of my office. She remained at the museum past the time of my tenure and landed a part-time job in the Development Department's Membership office. Mr. White worked briefly on publicity with the folk art publications and designed a listing of local restaurants for out-of-town symposium participants to visit. Ms. Lavigne worked for a short time with symposium registrations.

### Internship

By the third phase of the project, the internship, I had completed the groundwork for the outreach component and public programs and had begun implementation.

## Outreach Component

### Outreach Committees

By the end of August, the seven outreach committees had each met at least once, had been introduced to the exhibition and public programs, had submitted their ideas for outreach, and had lent their support. I scheduled and held a series of final meetings before the exhibition opening, and prepared and distributed a packet to each member present. This was a resource packet to help them promote the exhibition and its programs.<sup>18</sup> Ms. Yelen and I asked committee members to tell family, friends and associates about the exhibition and public programs, using the "Passionate Visions" brochures as a resource; distribute the brochure in their groups, clubs and organizations; arrange speakers bureau presentations; and book group tours. Additionally, we offered "Passionate Visions" posters of the exhibition to those who could place them in heavily trafficked areas.

We also asked committee members to be a host to one or more of the artists-in-residence. Many of the artists had not been to New Orleans before. Some had hardly, if ever, traveled and felt very uncomfortable being in a "big" city.

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<sup>18</sup>The resource packet included a "Passionate Visions" brochure, a Symposium flyer, information on group reservation packages, and the October/November/December 1993 (Volume XV, Issue 4) issue of the Arts Quarterly, NOMA's publication, which featured the exhibition and its public programs.

We tried to make them feel as comfortable as possible by having hosts take them out for the evening or prepare a dinner for them in their homes.

We had asked members of the outreach committees for mailing lists from their affiliate organizations to send letters and brochures announcing the exhibition and public programs. The response to lists was greater than we expected. We received about eleven mailing lists each with no less than a few hundred names. Lack of time, money and resources prevented us from mailing to so many names. Ms. Yelen decided to send announcements to the presidents of the organizations on those lists requesting them to distribute information to their members. We also wanted to more directly target those who we thought had an interest in art or in this type of art. Mass mailing such as this may not have been cost effective even if affordable.

We thanked the members of the outreach committees with an official invitation to the Members' Preview Evening and two free tickets to the museum. Chairs of each of the committees were allowed free admission into the symposium.

We frequently asked outreach committee members for ideas and received some excellent suggestions on reaching particular audiences. We were able to accomplish a few of these. The suggestions are noteworthy. (See the Outreach Committee Meetings Update Letters, page 67.) Unfortunately, most of them required more time and more human power than

was available. A few of the suggestions that were implemented follow.

The Artists/Arts Organization Committee suggested that we organize the New Orleans art galleries to exhibit works by self-taught artists in November, corresponding with the "Passionate Visions" exhibition and the symposium. This was accomplished through two committee members, Sandra Berry of the Neighborhood Gallery and Arthur Roger of Arthur Roger Gallery. A Times Picayune article began by saying "It's not official, but November is starting to feel like 'Folk Art Month' at New Orleans galleries."<sup>19</sup>

The Higher Education and Artists/Arts Organizations outreach committee members suggested a special evening event for their particular group. Higher Education committee members suggested this event be an appropriate time to honor those universities which held long-standing membership with NOMA. We decided to honor them all with special recognition given to SUNO and Tulane for being the oldest members. The University committee felt quite strongly about having students participate in this occasion as an educational and inspirational experience, and as a tribute to them as young leaders. Thus, presidents of the student councils were invited. The University and Visual Artists Evenings were added to our public programs listing.

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<sup>19</sup>Christopher Rose, "An artist, of late," Times Picayune, 06 November 1993, sec. E, p. 1.

One of the suggestions from the General/Advisory Outreach Committee was to expand the artistic arena to include music and/or poetry readings. It was thought that this would heighten the entire experience. As a result, we ended the Opening Day Celebration with an outstanding performance by the Gospel Soul Children.

A previously scheduled Seniors Day was dropped from the public programs schedule because the members of the Seniors committee felt it would not be beneficial. Instead they suggested small group tours scheduled throughout the exhibition period.

In each outreach committee, there was at least one member, in most cases more, who felt that to increase and expand audiences, particularly from the African-American and Latin communities and from low to middle income families, the admission had to be lowered. Others suggested that there be a free or discount day on a weekend. The reduction in admission would offset the increase in visitors.

Ms. Yelen attempted to gain approval for a free day, preferably October 23, the opening day of the exhibition. However, the Director felt that the museum would lose too much needed income. In an effort to respond to the outreach committee members' suggestions, Ms. Yelen was able to use a portion of the outreach budget for free admission to groups that were booked through the outreach component, namely those groups who participated in the Three-Part and Rural

Programs. The outreach component of the "Passionate Visions" grant had already covered transportation costs.

### The Three-Part Outreach Program

The Three-Part Outreach Program was another method used to expose and attract audiences to the "Passionate Visions" exhibition. It consisted of three events: (1) a visit from one of the "Passionate Visions" artists, (2) a speakers bureau presentation, and (3) a showing of the "Passionate Visions" video. Following the three events, we would offer a guided tour of the exhibition with free transportation and admission.

The Three-Part Program began as a collaboration between NOMA and the Arts Council of New Orleans (ACNO). The National Endowment for the Arts awarded ACNO funds for the Neighborhood Performing Arts Program, whose purpose was to encourage and assist urban cultural centers in becoming presenters or become more active presenters of the arts. ACNO's goal was to reach audiences that may not regularly attend art-centered venues by bringing the arts to their neighborhoods. These non-traditional audiences were also one of the groups we were trying to reach.

In the summer of 1993, Ms. Shirley Trusty Corey, ACNO's director, and Joycelyn Reynolds, ACNO's Grants Director, invited their Neighborhood Performing Arts awardees to a meeting where Ms. Yelen and I gave a presentation on the

exhibition and explained the Three-Part Outreach Program. Three of the four organizations represented were interested: Christian Unity Baptist Church, St. Alphonsus Art and Cultural Center and the Trinity Artists Series. I had also brought the idea of the Three-Part Outreach Program to the outreach committees to solicit their participation. As a result, the Neighborhood Gallery, a member of the Artists/Arts Organization working committee, became the fourth organization to participate.

I realized early on how very difficult it was for these organizations to plan all three events due to (1) lack of preparation time, and (2) an already filled calendar of events. However, each group presented at least one of the events. Christian Unity Baptist Church and The Neighborhood Gallery each sponsored a program at their facilities featuring the "Passionate Visions" artist-in-residence Ms. Bessie Harvey. Trinity Artists Series had a speakers bureau presentation, where a trained speaker spoke on the exhibition and showed slides of some of the works in the show. St. Alphonsus Art and Cultural Center, located across the street from the St. Thomas Housing Development, sponsored all three sections. However, attendance was very low at each of their events since this organization was just beginning to develop its programming and had not yet reached its surrounding community effectively.

Each of the four groups, except Trinity Artists Series, scheduled a group tour and viewed the video at the museum. Christian Unity Church had the largest tour group, 91 visitors, 76 children and 15 adults. St. Alphonsus Art and Cultural Center graciously allowed the young women of Hope House to participate in the "Passionate Visions" tour and video viewing at the museum. Hope House is a social service organization in the St. Thomas Housing Development area, that, among many other activities, helps young single mothers "put their lives together," by helping them receive their GED, find jobs, and provide whatever emergency assistance they need. This group was appreciative of the NOMA visit as stated in the eleven thank you letters I received.

#### Rural Outreach

The Rural Outreach Committee was composed of two people, Gerri Hobdy, Assistant Secretary in the Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, State of Louisiana, and myself. Through Ms. Hobdy, I obtained a listing of local arts agencies in Louisiana and contacted those she recommended and those relatively close to New Orleans. The response was quite receptive and enthusiastic. I arranged either speakers bureau or Van Go (NOMA's museum-on-wheels) presentations. A member of the Slidell Art League trained as a speakers bureau presenter



gave a "Passionate Visions" presentation in Slidell. Van Go presentations were held by the Hammond Cultural Foundation and the Southdown Plantation House Museum in Houma. With the determination of Millie Mienville, Executive Director of the St. Mary Arts and Humanities Council, and the generosity of Lucretia McBride, an enthusiastic speakers bureau presenter for NOMA, approximately 3,750 students, parents and teachers in Morgan City were exposed to "Passionate Visions" in January 1994, through Ms. McBride's speakers bureau presentations. It is uncertain as to how many may have come to see the exhibition as a result, since timing prevented us from scheduling a group tour. Some may have come on their own. The Houma-Terrebone Arts & Humanities Council and the Slidell Art League each took advantage of a group tour.

Annually, staff from the Marketing and/or Public Relations Offices, sometimes with Van Go, travel beyond their designated outreach radius, meet with more distant Louisiana and Mississippi audiences, share the various types of NOMA art and invite them to the museum. In this year, Michelle Broussard, Development Associate for Corporate and Community Marketing, and Mike Strecker, Public Information Officer, traveled to central and northwestern Louisiana. Although they initially had not planned to do so, I was instrumental in their choosing "Passionate Visions" as their featured presentation. They were accompanied by Education

Department's Lila Heymann, the Van Go instructor, who gave "Passionate Visions" presentations and brought samples of works from some of the show's artists. Three hundred thirty-eight people, consisting of either family or school groups, attended workshops on "Passionate Visions", at St. Mary's School in Cottonport, Arna Bontemps African American Heritage Museum and two elementary public schools in Alexandria, the Natchitoches Parish Library, and Shreveport's Creswell Elementary, Shreveport Parks & Recreation Center, and Shreveport Memorial Library. Ms. Broussard and Mr. Strecker were instrumental in obtaining newspaper and television coverage on "Passionate Visions" in these areas.

#### Outreach Component Critique

Overall the outreach component of "Passionate Visions" was well executed considering the short time frame, the limited staff, the total range of my responsibilities, and the contributions of the outreach committees. The attendance numbers were high, the responses to the exhibition in the form of letters and comments ranged from good to moving to phenomenal. The exhibition received a great deal of key local and national media coverage. There were no major problems in execution and programs ran smoothly, although the time pressure was great at times.

It was important and necessary to have the outreach committees. Their insights, ideas and input added greatly to the overall project. I think we may have done them a disservice, however, by not being in a position to fulfill more of their suggestions. Most of these were doable, but required more time to accomplish. In this instance, I think that the outreach coordinator's responsibilities should have been totally dedicated to outreach and not have the additional responsibility to organize public programs. The major task I was hired to do suffered unnecessarily as a result. Relationships take time to cultivate, trust has to be built, negative feelings need time to be aired and results need to be witnessed by those with legitimate complaints.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, time was needed to enact the suggestions, which was not effectively possible for two people, Ms. Blanks and myself, with additional responsibilities. This could have been a golden opportunity for a deeper, more long-lasting relationship with NOMA if the outreach coordinator had been able to develop those relationships,

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<sup>20</sup>Some outreach committee members from the African-American and Latin communities were angry and hurt about them individually and their group particularly being ignored and snubbed in the past by NOMA. They expressed their feelings in the early committee meetings and needed to know that this would not continue, that they would see a difference. Understanding the philosophy of NOMA, as discussed earlier, and the lack of power Ms. Yelen and I possessed, there was little policy or organizational change we could offer.

implement many of their suggestions, fight for the ideas of those who felt pained by the museum in the past, and help promote change within the museum. The results could have been greater, longer-lasting support and participation from committee members. Also recruiting outreach committee members for only one project hurts the effectiveness that a long-term relationship built through many exhibits would accomplish. Further one can obtain a deeper commitment to a project if involved in the entire process. In the case of "Passionate Visions", the project was already planned before people were asked to help promote it. They were asked to add to or subtract from those plans. If outreach committee members were involved in the initial program and outreach planning, they would more likely than not have an invested interest in its success, a deeper commitment, and greater participation.

I had hoped that at least one person from each committee would take major responsibility in accomplishing the suggestions from their committee. I think this failed because (1) the relationships were new, (2) members were already very active, (3) this was a previously planned project, limiting their input to outreach, and (4) my time was not totally dedicated to this outreach process, limiting my effectiveness.

Two committee members, Sandra Berry of the Neighborhood Gallery, and Arthur Roger of Arthur Roger Gallery, were the

exception as they gave more of their time and energy to the project than any other member. Both were from the Artists/Arts Organization Outreach Committee; Ms. Berry was its chair.

The suggestions made by the committee members can apply to practically any exhibition and can still be used by NOMA.

### Public Programs

#### Opening Day Celebration Events

By September, I was finalizing details for the exhibition and its programs. The video was to play continuously on the half hour in the Downman Gallery of the museum. I made arrangements with the Audio Visual office for video equipment, contacted the Engineering/Maintenance office to set up the room, made arrangements with a sign making company for signs to identify public program locations within the museum and at the symposium. I word processed and copied handouts listing the events of the Opening Day Celebration, an explanation of the Louisiana Folk Stories, and the Family Activities Workshop, which were placed at the entrance desk. I booked the Gospel Soul Children for the performance that ended the day's events.

#### Symposium

The symposium featured art scholars, collectors and dealers from around the United States who spoke on a range of subjects about the art form, the art from a regional

perspective, the past, present and future of self-taught art, tutored versus untutored artists, about a particular self-taught artist, or a particular past show. It was held at the Hilton Hotel. Out-of-town accommodations were at the Meridien Hotel. The participants were bussed to NOMA on the evening of the first symposium day for dinner and a viewing of the exhibition. (See Symposium Schedule, page 79.)

The majority of my time through the summer and to the event was dedicated to the national symposium. By September, the major decisions and arrangements, such as location and contracts, had been made. Remaining were the many details necessary to assure that the symposium ran smoothly and successfully. Registrations, arriving daily, were processed and confirmation letters were immediately sent to the registrants. Ms. Blanks developed a computerized spreadsheet to list the nearly 300 symposium registrants, guests, lecturers and panelists and maintained this database up to the day of the symposium. Numerous telephone calls with questions about the public programs, particularly the symposium, came in daily. We made air and hotel reservations for the lecturers, panelists and artists. I was responsible for the symposium packet, consisting of 13 pieces of information pertinent to the participants about the symposium, the exhibition and NOMA. Different staff members completed parts of the packet and the "Passionate

Visions" staff and NOMA volunteers assembled the approximately 450 packets.

I priced various meal packages from a number of caterers for the dinner/exhibition event at NOMA on the first evening of the symposium; priced and booked bus service for symposium participants to and from NOMA for the dinner/exhibition event; finalized the bus service contract and scheduled their departure times; finalized contracts with the Hilton and the Meridien Hotels; had signs made for the symposium and arranged for their pickup; submitted appropriate forms and invoices to the Accounting office for payment on services rendered; designed a system of processing the participants at registration and at the dinner/exhibition event; directed the physical arrangements for the symposium (tables, chairs, food, presenters' preparation room); discussed and finalized audio visual arrangements with the Hilton; and assisted panelists and lecturers in their preparation for their presentations.

As a result of our efforts, a well-organized, well-executed symposium resulted in 350 participants from around the U.S. being, for the most part, very pleased with the experience. Numerous letters from dealers, collectors, art critics and art buffs were sent to Ms. Yelen congratulating her and her staff on a well done event.

The symposium is now being used as a model for comparison with other symposiums or in the planning of

future symposiums.<sup>21</sup> Dealers and collectors now use the symposium attendance list as a resource. Important contacts were made with those interested in self-taught art and dealers and collectors. The symposium introduced self-taught art to a larger audience, which at that time was in its early stages of development. Since then it has blossomed.

#### University and Visual Artists' Evenings

The University Evening was scheduled on the heels of the symposium, making it difficult to perform appropriate marketing and outreach. I faxed and mailed a letter to the presidents of each of the New Orleans member universities, seven in total, inviting them to attend, and asking them to send a representative from their office and one from the student council, preferably the president.

I designed and copied flyers announcing the University and Visual Artists Evenings. Each Higher Education committee member received at least 20 flyers for distribution on their campuses. Some members distributed their flyers in staff and faculty mailboxes. Follow-up calls were made to the contacts on the campuses.

Like the Higher Education Outreach committee, distribution of flyers for the Visual Artists Evening was

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<sup>21</sup>Alice Rae Yelen, Assistant to the Director, interview by author, New Orleans, Louisiana, 09 October 1991.



through the Artists/Arts Organizations Outreach committee. Each member received about 10 flyers and Arthur Roger received 50 to distribute to the members of the Warehouse Art District Association.

Each evening followed a similar program format. We welcomed participants and had them sign our mailing list. The lists were used for two purposes: (1) as a tally and a measure of outreach success and (2) a way to increase the "Passionate Visions" outreach mailing list. Ms. Yelen gave a brief presentation about "Passionate Visions," the public programs and the outreach committee of that evening, and led the groups on a tour of the exhibition. Guests were free to view the continuously running video at any time throughout the evening.

At the University Evening, we had about 35 guests representing all but two of the New Orleans member universities: Delgado Community College, Dillard, Loyola, Southern, Tulane and Xavier Universities. UNO and Nunez Community College were not represented. We sent a copy of the "Passionate Visions" catalogue to each university's library.

The Visual Artists' Evening boasted a higher attendance, approximately 70 people, mostly young art students from Richard Thomas' "Pieces of Power" program, McDonogh No. 35 Senior High School and YA/YA (Young

Aspirations/Young Artists). The largest group of adults were members of Sandra Berry's Neighborhood Gallery.

We attempted to have a "Passionate Visions" artist at each of the evening events to meet and speak with our guests. Although not always successful in doing so, we were fortunate enough to have Joe Louis Light as the guest of honor at the Visual Artists' Evening. He spoke about his art, his life, his views and touched many there, particularly the young students.

Both events were successful. Those who attended complimented us many times and encouraged us to continue having such special evenings.

#### Public Programs Critique

This was the first major exhibition which originated from NOMA. It was a learning process and in that process, department heads were sometimes uncertain as to the extent of their responsibilities to the exhibition. As a result, much of the work that we thought could or should have been done by other offices, fell on us, increasing an already heavy work load.

Although the project was a success, there could have been greater attendance at the public programs. I had expected the Marketing & Promotions Office to publicize the programs as it did the exhibition. Additionally, if time had permitted, I would have publicized the event more

extensively through the outreach committees and through my contacts on the campuses and in the New Orleans art arena. I would have also done more one-on-one, small and large group presentations outside of NOMA.

A number of times in early discussions about outreach and the public programs, I suggested we project, based on past data, the number of increased traditional and non-traditional visitors we wanted to attract, as a measure of success. This was not done, I can only assume because (1) it was not Ms. Yelen's experience to make such projections, (2) she did not see this step as important enough, or (3) she did not feel she had a suitable basis to make those projections. However, planning for a specific number, based on figures from large exhibitions in the past, would have given us a definite figure to reach and surpass. I could have designed my outreach plan in relation to that goal and would have had a more accurate measurement of goal achievement.

A project of this magnitude could not be accomplished without the input of staff from other departments. Lee Morais, Assistant Director for Education, was an integral player in the planning and implementation of the public programs. Ann Meehan, Curator of Education, worked with me on the Higher and Primary and Secondary Education Outreach Committees. Mr. Morais and Ms. Meehan were responsible for and implemented the storytelling, family activities

workshops, teacher workshops and children's art classes. Mr. Morais, Ms. Meehan and Ms. Yelen trained the speakers' bureau presenters. Rose Marie Huth, Activities Coordinator, booked the group tours and speakers bureau presentations I arranged.

I worked with the Marketing office, supplying public programs information for their media campaign. The Development Department had hired a Special Events Coordinator, Cherie Morial, whom I worked with to assure that all details of the evening events at the museum were secured, i.e., caterer (hired for the symposium dinner), table setups, refreshment, podium, microphone. Milton Vinnett, Chief Engineer/Building Superintendent, and Vince DiGiorgio, Chief of Security, were contacted for each event at the museum. Either Helen Bernier or Margaret Guidry, NOMA's bankers, were required to collect money at all paying events; they were contacted for the symposium registration. When a mailing of a few hundred or more was required, the Volunteer Services office was employed to do the mailing, supervised and assisted by myself or one of the other "Passionate Visions" staff members.

Others extremely helpful to me during this period were NOMA staff members Pat Curry, Public Relations Secretary, and Wanda O'Shello, Editor of the Arts Quarterly, who typeset the symposium flyer, the catalog order sheet and other handouts I needed but was unable to do alone.

#### Fourth Period

The fourth period of my tenure was spent planning a two-day workshop for curators who were from the museums on the "Passionate Visions" national tour, responsible for the exhibit prior to and upon its arrival at their museum. I continued, as well, to schedule speakers bureau presentations and began the wrap up of the outreach component of the project.

#### Short Range and Long Term Impacts

As a result of the outreach efforts, a total of 42,683 visitors saw the exhibition through group tours, special evening events and/or the symposium, and over 4500 were exposed to it through Van Go and the speakers bureau presentations. I am unable to officially determine how successful I was in increasing non-traditional audiences for this show, since a tool, such as a survey or entrance form was not used. However, in conversations with volunteers, docents and security guards, who have worked at the museum for a number of years, I learned that they had observed an increase in non-traditional audiences for the "Passionate Visions" exhibition as well as those exhibitions that followed which related to various ethnic groups. Additionally, Ms. Yelen shared with me that she had received a number of letters from non-traditional and traditional museum goers applauding the outreach effort. Madeline

Murphy Rabb, President of Murphy Rabb, Inc., an arts management consultant, and outreach consultant to Ms. Yelen on this project, was quite impressed with the work I had done. A comment book would have been helpful to determine the impact on non-traditional and traditional audiences.

The Development Department has since hired Jonn Yahya Hankins as Development Associate for Community Affairs to increase non-traditional audiences to a number of exhibitions. He has been instrumental in introducing another membership category. The Champions are "NOMA members who share a special interest in the art of African American and Caribbean artists. Activities include an interculturally diverse series of scheduled social and educational events focused on the appreciation and enhancement of NOMA's permanent collection and special exhibitions of the art and art history of African American and Caribbean artists."<sup>22</sup> There has also been an increased number of featured exhibits scheduled throughout 1996 on African-American and Caribbean artists and their works.

Sandra Berry, who was the chair of the Artists/Arts Organization outreach committee, and quite active in promoting "Passionate Visions," is now a member of NOMA's Advisory Committee. She believes her role on this committee

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<sup>22</sup>"The CHAMPIONS," NOMA circular, 1995, Membership Office, New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana.

is "to bring forth recognition and attention to those less known but just as talented and skilled artists."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Sandra Berry, Director, Neighborhood Gallery, interview by author, New Orleans, Louisiana, 27 October 1995.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE

##### Project Management

Ms. Yelen's leadership style was more authoritarian than democratic. Generally, staffers were not part of the decision-making process, information shared was for the most part limited to our area of responsibility, and recognition was generally not given for contributions made.

In the decision-making realm, Ms. Yelen's style was to invite questions and comments after announcing her decision. Under different circumstances, when grappling with a problem, she would ask for viewpoints, opinions and suggestions. However, when the decision was finally made, credit was not always given to those who helped shape it.

Staff meetings consisted basically of task delegation and general information sharing. These meetings could have been more productive, if they had been used for collective problem solving and decision making, which give staffers greater responsibility and sense of achievement, and ultimately increase job satisfaction.<sup>24</sup> Instead there were

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<sup>24</sup>Frederick Herzberg's theory on motivation states that the true motivator factors which lead to job satisfaction are recognition, achievement, responsibility, the work



constant complaints, particularly but not exclusively about Ms. Yelen, among staff members, indicating a lack of job satisfaction. Ill-feelings surfaced when a staff member felt forced to work on weekends or when Ms. Yelen changed a previously made decision in what appeared to be mid-stream. Without being a part of the thinking process behind that decision, the staff member felt resentful and sometimes manipulated.

More involvement from the staff in the decision-making process would have lessened the pressure on Ms. Yelen who, due to her management style, carried the full weight of the project and its many parts. Ms. Yelen, however, did not organize the project alone. Depending on the project aspect, she relied heavily on those whom she considered experts, within and outside of the organization. She had an impressive ability to network and to obtain valuable information from knowledgeable individuals and groups. However, she lacked the same level of faith and trust in the abilities of her own staff. Staff members felt this and it contributed to ill-feelings and low morale.

There seemed to be an unspoken secrecy about the budget. As mentioned earlier, I was neither given a budget for outreach and public programs I implemented, nor shown

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itself, advancement and growth. Frederick Herzberg, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?," eds. Louis E. Boone and Donald D. Bowen, The Great Writings in Management and Organizational Behavior (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987), 175.

the overall budget. Yet the outreach component was a major portion of the project. Not having access to a budget prevented my exercising the ability to be creative and innovative inside the constraints of a budget. It forfeited a level of control over financial decisions for my area of responsibility. It eliminated the possibility of shared responsibility and decision-making with my supervisor, and put total control in her hands. "Effective budgeting requires open communications channels so that this knowledge becomes available throughout the organization. . . . Wide participation in budgeting is also the foundation for effective control. All managers who have participated will have a better understanding of the budget and more interest in trying to make it work."<sup>25</sup>

### Institutional Management

I would suggest that a formal orientation be given to each new employee, temporary, as I was, or permanent, including mission statement, organizational chart, policy and procedure handbook and/or pronouncements, job description, facility tour and department heads and staff introductions. This would contribute to helping staffers understand the philosophy and culture (values and traditions) of the organization, the do's and don'ts, and

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<sup>25</sup>Daniel A. Wren and Dan Voich, Jr., Management: Process, Structure, and Behavior (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), 145.

the organization's expectations in an expedient manner. I learned through experience. However, a knowledge early on would have made for a smoother adjustment and more immediate understanding of the institution (at least from their viewpoint), which could have in time been balanced with my experience. Nonetheless I eventually learned through public statements by the director or assistant directors, in conversations with Ms. Yelen or co-workers, and by actions of staff members.

#### Conflict of Interest and Ethics

I had concerns throughout my tenure that raised questions of ethics and conflict of interest. Ms. Yelen and Dr. Gitter, her husband, were owners of a large collection of art by self-taught artists at the time they developed the concept for this project. Ms. Yelen sought funding, organized and implemented the project and curated the show. Members of the Gitter and Yelen families lent their works. A fundamental tenet is that museums enhance prestige and market value of art in a show and of the art form in general. Curating a show of art one and one's family members collect should be avoided.

"As a curator's collection can be of assistance in the development of his critical judgment and ultimately be of benefit to the museum, personal collecting by the curator should be encouraged. However, it is important that precautions be taken to avoid conflicts of interests or the appearance of conflicts of interests. It should be clear that the curator is not . . . using the

museum to enhance the value of the curator's collection."<sup>26</sup>

### Conclusion

I conclude with a statement about NOMA's long-term commitment to outreach and inclusiveness: The fact that the population in New Orleans is majority African-American and that non-European-American ethnic groups continue to grow at a rapid rate in the United States, will not assure a change in NOMA's present structure, method of operation, or whom it serves. NOMA's focus has not been on changing its Eurocentric philosophy -- steeped in elitism, possession and control and evident in its structure, viewpoints and art interpretations.

The increasing number of shows about African-American and Caribbean artists demonstrates an attempt at more representation and diversity in exhibition scheduling and should be applauded. However, this same representation is lacking in top management, where crucial day-to-day decisions are made. There are no African-, Asian- or Latin-Americans on staff, let alone those who will challenge some of NOMA's present thinking, viewpoints and interpretations.

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<sup>26</sup>John Henry Merryman and Albert E. Elsen, "A Draft Set of Principles and Code of Curatorial Conduct (1976)," Law, Ethics, and the Visual Arts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2, 1987), 708. Though a draft, it is a comprehensive, well-respected, and much circulated guide for curatorial conduct. There has yet to be an official document to this end as discussions on this subject continue.

As with so many traditionally Eurocentric institutions, the concentration of African-Americans is in low-level, low-salaried positions, such as security and maintenance. At NOMA, there is one professional African-American on staff, the Development Associate for Community Affairs, whose job is basically outreach. However, this position is part-time and temporary.

The "Passionate Visions" project director, with consultation from a few colleagues, developed the project then hired an African-American to bring the community in. But where was the community in the planning process? This idea of defining, shaping and creating a project to one's limited criteria and then presenting it to a group one thinks can best appreciate it, without their input, should be examined and challenged. The days when we were fed a reality of ourselves as defined by others are long gone.

I question the sincerity of this institution's desire for inclusiveness. It seems, in the case of the symposium, a price tag was placed on the opportunity to discuss, challenge, learn, explore and expand one's thinking on the art and the artists involved. This symposium was the place where self-taught art was being re-defined, refined and developed. Terms were being grappled with, explained and defended, but those who produce the art and those who were targeted to see the show were not there and/or could not afford to be there.

The foregoing points indicate an interest in maintaining the status quo and, at the same time, attempting to cash in on the majority (ethnic) populations. Increased exhibition scheduling of African-American and Caribbean artists will, of course, attract more African-Americans as visitors to the museum. The result will be increased revenue. But where are the attempts to answer some fundamental questions raised earlier in this paper about true representation and involvement by the wider community? What will this do for those thousands of tax-payers who support the museum, but feel it does not serve them, regardless of their ethnic background?

Philosophical change can only occur if conscious people (within and outside the museum) join with NOMA's leadership body to honestly answer those psychological and structural questions raised earlier in this paper and engage in on-going discussions. These conscious people are those aware of the broader and deeper issues present and the long-term impact, and are committed to equity and inclusiveness. Further, they must challenge NOMA to move away from a Eurocentric philosophy to a more egalitarian and inclusive one. Only then can NOMA truly serve the majority populations in New Orleans.

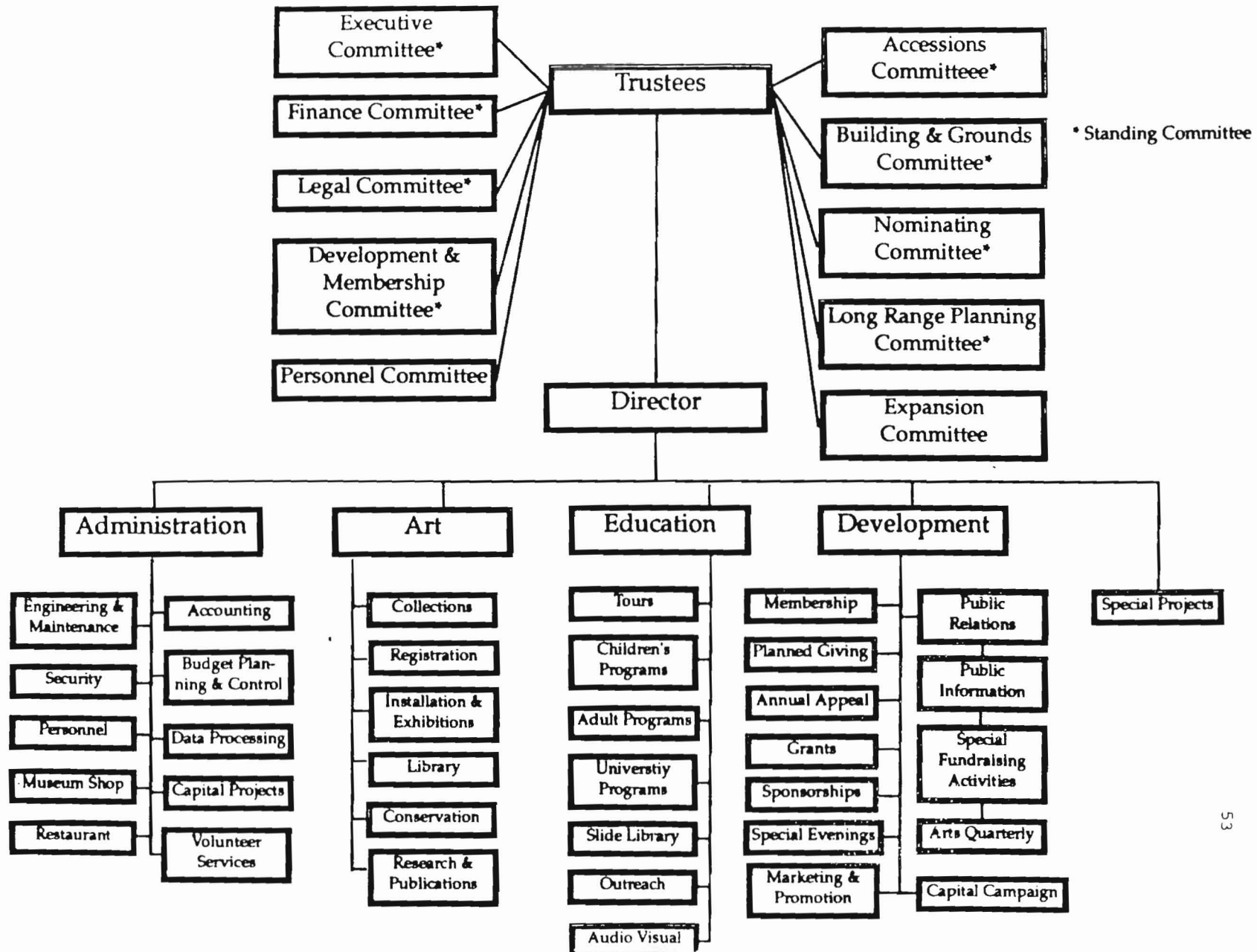
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**APPENDIX A**  
**NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART**  
**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



# New Orleans Museum of Art Organizational Chart



**APPENDIX B**  
**"PASSIONATE VISIONS" EXHIBITION ITINERARY**

**PASSIONATE VISIONS**  
OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

55

*Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*  
October 23, 1993 through January 30, 1994

EXHIBITION ITINERARY

New Orleans Museum of Art  
October 23, 1993-January 30, 1994

University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive,  
University of California, Berkeley  
March 2-July 10, 1994

Portland Art Museum  
August 19-October 23, 1994

San Diego Museum of Art  
December 10, 1994-January 15, 1995

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
March 4-May 5, 1995

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh  
June 17-August 27, 1995

Bass Museum, Miami Beach, Florida  
September 27, 1995-January 14, 1996

**APPENDIX C**  
**"PASSIONATE VISIONS" BROCHURE**

#### Family Activities Workshop

Sunday, November 14, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Members: \$3 Nonmembers: \$6, with museum admission

Participants in this workshop will use found materials to create model ships and visit with J.P. Scott, artist-in-residence. The workshop is designed for children ages 5-12; children must be accompanied by an adult. Limited to 30 individuals; please call the museum to register your family.

#### Storytelling

Sundays, 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.

November 21, December 19, January 16, and January 23

Southern folk stories for all ages.

#### Children's Art Classes

Saturdays, January 8 through February 19, 10:00 a.m.-12 noon (ages 5-7) and 1:30-3:30 p.m. (ages 8-12)

Members: \$50 Nonmembers: \$60

Qualified art teachers will help create an atmosphere where the making of the art object is more important than the final product. Classes will be held in a 6 session series. Limited to 25 students; please call the museum for a registration form.

#### Video

A 50-minute video on *Passionate Visions* featuring six artists will be shown continuously during museum hours.

#### Speakers' Bureau

*Passionate Visions* slide lectures can be scheduled for groups of 20 or more by appointment. Free of charge except for speaker's travel expenses to out-of-town lecture sites.

#### Van Go

"Van Go," NOMA's Museum-on-Wheels, is free to scheduled school classes, grades 2-6. Sponsored by WWL-TV/New Orleans and Latta & Blum, Inc./Realtors.

#### Docent-Guided Tours

Tuesday through Sunday, 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If an artist is in residence, the Saturday and Sunday 2:00 p.m. tour and an additional 5 p.m. tour will include a visit with the artist.

#### Scheduled Group Tours

Groups of 15 or more can purchase tickets to NOMA at discounted prices. Various special group packages, including docent-guided tours and refreshments in the Courtyard Café, are available upon request.

#### Restaurant

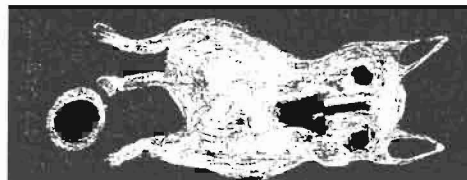
The Courtyard Café, providing light meals, is open to the public for lunch, Tuesday through Sunday, 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

#### Museum Shop

The exhibition catalogue, other books on self-taught artists, and posters are sold in the shop. *Passionate Visions*, a 552-page book, published by NOMA and distributed by the University Press of Mississippi, contains 225 full color and 100 black and white illustrations.

*Self-portrait*, Jimmy Lee Sudduth, *Edo with Bull*, red mud, chalk, and paint on plywood, collection of Dami M. Gershon

*Exit*, Rex Johnson Swearingen, *God Loves You* (detail), 1991, oil on canvas, collection of John and Stephanie Smither



Museum Hours  
Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Closed Mondays and all legal holidays. On Thursdays, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, the museum is open free to Louisiana residents with valid identification.  
Museum Admission  
Adults \$6 Children and senior citizens \$3

NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART

P.O. Box 19123 New Orleans, LA 70179-0123

## PASSIONATE VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Self-Taught Artists from  
1940 to the Present

New Orleans Museum of Art



October 23, 1993, through January 30, 1994

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New Orleans, LA.  
Permit No. 108

*Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present* recognizes the creative genius of 80 southern self-taught masters. Unlike trained artists, these self-taught individuals work outside the artistic mainstream; they do not seek its acceptance, nor do they depend on it for their livelihood. Typically they do not consider themselves artists, receive no formal training, and are largely uninfluenced by other artists' work. Self-taught artists create in response to an inner vision, deriving subject matter from personal surroundings and life experiences. Often they are older, blue-collar citizens who begin to make art only late in life to pass the time, find relief from personal anguish, or relate a message.

The passionate visions of self-taught artists are shaped by their communities, their traditions, the people with whom they interact, the visual world they witness around them, and the materials readily available to them. All the artists represented in *Passionate Visions* were born and raised, or spent a significant portion of their lives, in the southern states (the original Confederacy as well as some border states where strong pockets of southern culture exist). For them, the remarkably fertile cultural and historical environment of the South not only has facilitated their unique artistic expression but has allowed it to flourish. The 270 paintings and sculptures assembled on this occasion stand as testimony that the work of self-taught artists may prove to be the region's most significant contribution to America's visual arts in the past 50 years.

#### Exhibition Itinerary

October 25, 1995–January 30, 1996  
New Orleans Museum of Art

March 2–July 10, 1996

University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley

December 5, 1995–January 15, 1996

San Diego Museum of Art

March 1–May 7, 1996

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

June 10–August 27, 1996

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh

*Passionate Visions* is organized and circulated by the New Orleans Museum of Art.

The exhibition, its national tour, catalogue, and public education and outreach programs are sponsored by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

Additional generous support for the exhibition and catalogue is provided by The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All public program events held at the museum are free with admission unless otherwise specified. For more information, call 504-488-2651, ext. 759; for reservations, scheduling, and workshop registration, call ext. 790, or write P. O. Box 19125, New Orleans, LA 70179-0125.

#### Artists-in-Residence

Artists from throughout the South will demonstrate their work and meet the public. Friday and Sunday programs run from 1:50 to 4:50 p.m. Saturday sessions are from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 21

Bessie Harvey\* and Clyde Jones

Sunday, November 7

Jimmy Lee Sudduth, Charlie Lucas, and Purvis Young

Sunday, November 11

J. P. Scott

Saturday and Sunday, November 20 and 21

Howard Finster\*\*

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 5, 1, 5

Louise B. Holley

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 10, 11, 12

Mose Tolliver\*\*\*

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 17, 18, 19

Joe Louis Light

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 7, 8, 9

Bernice Sims

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 21, 22, 23

Minnie Black

\*Bessie Harvey will speak at the following locations as part of a collaborative program between the Arts Council of New Orleans and NOMA.

Friday, October 22, 7:00 p.m.

Christian Unity Baptist Church

1700 Conti Street

Saturday, October 25, 2:00 p.m.

St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church

2015 Constance Street

\*\*Howard Finster will speak at the museum on November 20 and 21 at 5:00 p.m.

\*\*\*Mose Tolliver will be in the museum from 11:00 a.m.

1:50 p.m. on Saturday, December 11. (The museum will close at 2:00 p.m. on December 11.)

#### Members' Preview Evening

Saturday, October 25, 6:00–9:00 p.m.

#### Opening Day Celebration Events

Sunday, October 24, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

#### *Southern Folk Stories*

12:00, 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 p.m. (30 minute segments)

#### *Family Activities Workshop*

2:00–4:00 p.m.

*Artists-in-Residence: Bessie Harvey and Clyde Jones*

1:50–4:50 p.m.

*Gospel Soul Children: Gospel Singing Group*

4:00–4:50 p.m.

#### Passionate Visions of the American South Symposium

Versailles Ballroom, Hilton Riverside Hotel

Thursday, November 4, and Friday, November 5

\$100 registration fee

This major symposium will feature nationally recognized scholars, critics, collectors, and dealers. In addition to 8 individual lectures, panel topics are "Self-Taught Art: Past, Present and Future," "Tutored and Untutored Artists," and "Collectors and Dealers of Self-Taught Art." Please call the museum for registration information.

#### University Evening

Thursday, November 11, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Professors and staff of Delgado, Dillard, Loyola, Southern University in New Orleans, Tulane, University of New Orleans, and Xavier—New Orleans NOMA college and university members—are invited to a free social at the museum, including a viewing of the exhibition and video. Admission with valid university I.D.

#### Visual Artists' Evening

Thursday, December 16, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

The New Orleans Museum of Art will host a special free viewing of the exhibition and reception for local visual artists. Please call the museum to register.

#### Lectures

Sundays, 3:00 p.m.

October 31, "The Southern Folk and Music"

Bill G. Malone, Professor of History, Tulane University

December 5, "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present"

Mice Rae Yelen, Assistant to the Director, NOMA

January 16, "Folk Art and the South"

William R. Ferris, Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi

#### Teacher Workshops

Saturday, October 30, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, November 2, 4:00–6:00 p.m.

The free workshop will preview the exhibition and suggest curriculum ideas for teachers of grades 1 through 12. Please call the museum to register.



## DAILY LIFE

Daily life and its experiences are a primary visual source and inspiration for southern self-taught artists. Their imagery narrates the essential elements of their everyday existence: their means of livelihood and sustenance, milestones from pregnancy to death, the secular aspects of religion, domestic scenes and daily tasks, local architecture and urban street life, friends and family.

The majority of the artists in this exhibition were raised in an agrarian setting; they labored as sharecroppers, farmhands, and occasionally, self-employed farmers. Through their renderings of rural daily life, self-taught artists depict the centrality of farming in southern life and demonstrate the deeply felt connection of southerners to their land, communities, traditions, and families.

Bill Traylor  
*Kitchen Scene, Yellow House* (detail), ca. 1939–42  
 pencil and colored pencil on cardboard  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase,  
 anonymous gift, 1992

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Self-taught artists are greatly influenced by personal experiences, and their artwork is implicitly autobiographical. Many paint themselves in insightful single-figure portraits, set within the framework of their secular and religious lives. Other artists commemorate loved ones, decorate personal objects, or form visual records of important events in their lives.

The materials used by self-taught artists reflect their environments and familiar milieus. Mammade materials found in junkyards, garbage heaps, flea markets, and around the house are often recycled into artworks. Some artists utilize natural media, such as plants and mud, often found on or near their property. Others create their own concoctions, using readily available, familiar materials such as cornmeal or sawdust. Only a few artists exclusively employ conventional art supplies.

Frederick Hunter  
*Self-Portrait with a Mirror* (detail), 1913  
 oil on an ordinary board  
 Collection of Bill and D. Traylor



## RELIGIOUS AND VISIONARY IMAGERY

A fundamental part of the secular and religious lives of southerners, the church and the teachings of the Bible have inspired countless works of art. Old Testament narratives have stimulated renderings of the Creation, Adam and Eve, and Noah's Ark. From the New Testament come stories of the life and death of Christ, the Book of Revelation, and the struggle for personal salvation. Some artists record personal translations of their beliefs or document divine revelations, visions, and communications from God. Many self-taught artists use their creations to preach salvation or teach the Bible.

Other artists are inspired by visions and dreams to create novel works not directly related to biblical imagery. Their inventiveness is expressed in a mélange of fantastic forms: architectural constructions, calendars, indecipherable script, peculiar creatures, and erotic images.

Howard Finster  
*No One Has to Cross Jordan Alone* (detail), 1976  
 enamel on tin  
 Collection of Chris K. and Jan Rossmann

## SOCIAL COMMENTARY AND POPULAR CULTURE

National and global politics, societal concerns, and racial issues inspire self-taught artists. The direct experiences of many African-American artists have generated artworks depicting slave auctions, Ku Klux Klan lynchings, the struggles of urban ghetto life, and the battle for freedom and equality. Other artists deal with homelessness, inhospitable street environments, and mankind's disregard for nature.

Stimulated by television, magazines, advertisements, and other print and visual media, self-taught artists frequently depict popular contemporary icons. Their subjects range from consumer products to athletes and entertainers: the Coca-Cola bottle, Elvis Presley, Red Skelton, Ray Charles, and Joe Louis are among those rendered.

36, 445  
 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 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**APPENDIX D**  
**"PASSIONATE VISIONS" PRESS**

# SELECTED *Passionate Visions* PRESS

## Book Reviews:

Southern Living, July, 1994  
 Folk Art Messenger, Winter, 1994  
 Christian Science Monitor, April 8, 1994  
 Folk Art Finder, Summer, 1994  
 Gambit, November 9, 1993

## Exhibition Reviews:

Newspapers: Washington Post, Sunday, March 5, 1995  
 Washington Times, Sunday, March 5, 1995  
 Washington Post Weekend, March 10, 1995  
 Oregonian (Portland, Oregon), August 21, 1994  
 San Francisco Examiner, March 29, 1994  
 San Francisco Chronicle & Examiner, March 6, 1994  
 San Diego Union Tribune, December 29, 1994  
 The New York Times, exhibition and photo listing December 17, 1993  
 The News & Observer, Raleigh, NC, June 18, 1995  
 The Charlotte Observer, NC, June 24, 1995  
 Winston-Salem Journal "Arts", June 25, 1995

Magazines: American Art Review, February/March, 1995, pp 144-147  
 Antiques and The Arts Weekly, December 17, 1993  
 American Way of American Airlines, December 1, 1994, pp 117-123  
 Cultural Vistas (Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities), pp 26-37  
 Elle  
 Mirabelle  
 Aspire Magazine, June/July, 1995

Symposium Review: New Art Examiner, February, 1994

Testimony for Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, May 3, 1994

MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour (aired December 29, 1993)

The International Association of Art Critics awarded *Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present* Second Place for the **Best Regional Show of the 1993-1994 season.**

The *Passionate Visions* VIDEO was voted as a film of merit in the Association of American Museum's 1994 film competition.

The CATALOG is currently in its second printing after only a year and a half, having sold 7,000 copies.

Alice PVHio.PR

**APPENDIX E**  
**PUBLIC PROGRAMS OUTREACH COMMITTEES**

**PASSIONATE VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH:  
SELF-TAUGHT ARTIST FROM 1940 TO THE PRESENT**

**Public Programs Outreach Committees**

The following committees were formed in order to further the success of outreach to traditional and non-traditional audiences.

**Advisory** -- Michael T. Barthelemy, Chair

Carol Bebel, Master Plan Development Associates, Inc.  
 Ruth Blytt, The People Program of Sisters of St. Joseph  
 Nini Bodenheimer, Visual Artist  
 Jack Bolanos, Hispanic Affairs  
 Quo Vadis Gex Breau, Dillard University  
 Mildred Brown, Community Volunteer  
 The Honorable Jackie Clarkson, New Orleans City Councilwoman  
 Shirley Trusty Corey, Arts Council of New Orleans  
 Keim Do, Asian-American Society of New Orleans  
 Diana Dunn, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond  
 Nora Fine, Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans  
 Karen Geiger, Louisiana Children's Museum  
 Gail Gelfand, Contemporary Arts Center  
 Linetta Gilbert, Greater New Orleans Foundation  
 Tim Green, Radio for the Blind and Print Handicapped, Inc.  
 Dr. Kabir Hassan, Asian-American Society of New Orleans  
 G. Jeannette Hodge, Black Arts National Diaspora  
 Dr. Stella Jones, Crescent City LINKS  
 Monsignor Dominic Luong, Vietnamese Catholic Community of  
 New Orleans  
 Barbara McCurdy, The People Program of Sisters of St. Joseph  
 The Honorable Marc Morial, Louisiana State Senator  
 Cecil Murphy, Jr., Asian-American Society of New Orleans  
 Marian Owen, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation  
 Joycelyn Reynolds, Arts Council of New Orleans  
 Francoise Richardson, President, Board of Trustees, NOMA  
 Vera Warren, Community Book Center  
 Jo Webb, Arts Council of New Orleans

**Artists and Arts Organizations** -- Sandra Berry, Neighborhood  
 Gallery, Chair

Ifama Arsen, Craft Artist  
 Claudia Barker, YA/YA, Inc.  
 Koala Calvet, Poet  
 Mary Christine Davis, Visual Artist  
 Robin Levy, Visual Artist  
 Patricia Martinez, Contemporary Arts Center  
 Arthur Roger, Arthur Roger Gallery  
 Jose Torres-Tomas, Multi-disciplinary Artist

## **Public Programs Outreach Committees (continued)**

### Higher Education -- Bobbie Malone, Tulane University, Chair

Fr. Joseph Brown, Xavier University  
 Jean Cranmer, University of New Orleans  
 Cheryl McKay Dixon, Dillard University  
 Dr. Sara Hollis, Southern University of New Orleans  
 Abdul Malik Ishaan, Tulane University  
 Mrs. Joel Weinstock, NOMA Trustee

### Primary and Secondary Education -- Aline San Juan, Alcee Fortier High School, Chair

Alison Sue Clarick, Educational Affairs  
 Lois Dejean, Community Activist  
 Anna Gershanik, Newman Middle school  
 Stacey Merren, George Washington Museum Education Program  
 Tayari Salaam, Vital Cultural Arts and Education Program  
 Barbara Warnie, Arts in Education, New Orleans Public Schools

### Religion -- Lois Dejean, Greater St. Stephens Baptist Church, Chair

Leah Chase, St. Peter Claver  
 Betty McDermott, St. Francis Xavier

### Senior Citizens -- Emelda Washington, Carrollton Hollygrove Multi-purpose Senior Citizen Center, Chair

Sandy Heller, Jewish Community Center  
 Norma Nollmann, Uptown Shephard Center

### Rural

Gerri Hobdy, Office of Cultural Development, Department of  
 Culture, Recreation and Tourism, State of Louisiana

**APPENDIX F**  
**OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
**UPDATE LETTERS**

March 19, 1993

Dear :

Thank you for attending yesterday's Artists/Arts Organizations Public Programs Committee meeting of Passionate Visions of the American South (PV). Your contribution is helping to enhance this project's success.

Two strong dynamics were presented at this meeting: Thoughts on (1) how to bring in traditional artists and recognized art galleries and (2) how to reach out to the various ethnic groups, specifically at this meeting, African-American and Latin-American artists and art galleries, in a way that says sincerely, "we want you here."

The following suggested solutions records the major ideas you have given us in our first meeting to the first dynamic were:

- (1) Organize the recognized art galleries to have self-taught artists shows at the same time as the PV exhibition. Have a sheet, accessible to NOMA visitors, listing those art galleries that are involved with self-taught artists exhibits. Arthur Rogers has offered to present this idea to the Warehouse District Association. The 2-page PV literature will be distributed to inform the galleries of the exhibition and to encourage their support for the show.
- (2) Schedule an artists night or evening (possibly with a discount) with a noted non-local curator to conduct the tour, i.e., Lowery Sims, Associate Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Suggestions for locals were Bill Fagaly, Assistant to the Director at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Richard Gasperi, owner of Gasperi Gallery or Dr. Sara Hollis, Chair to the Fine Arts Department at Southern University at New Orleans.
- (3) Advertise in the galleries (hand-outs) and art/calendar sections of Times-Picayune, Gambit, etc. New Orleans Art Review may do a feature story.

Suggested solutions to the second dynamic were:

- (1) Advertise in publications that target the various ethnic groups, for example, Tribune, Data, Louisiana Weekly, that targets the African-American community.

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- (2) Possibly have an entity underwrite a free family day or discount reduction arrangement.

The suggested solutions record the major ideas you have given us in our first artists/arts organization outreach committee meeting.

Nilima will be calling you about the next meeting date and time. Additionally, we hope to increase the number of committee members. Please feel free to call Nilima (483-2738) with any questions, additional ideas, comments and/or suggestions for new committee members.

Your input in this meeting is much appreciated. Your assistance in this project will make this aspect of outreach more meaningful and impactful than we can ever accomplish ourselves. Again, thank you so much for contributing your time and ideas.

Warm regards,

Alice Rae Yelen  
Assistant to the Director



March 12, 1993

Dear :

Thank you for attending yesterday's Higher Education Public Programs Committee meeting of Passionate Visions of the American South. Your contribution is helping to enhance this project's success.

Results of the meeting are as follows:

Each university will have its Passionate Visions outreach committee composed of faculty, administration, students and alumni to creatively involve these groups and others in the university community with the Passionate Visions exhibition, incorporating NOMA's resources, such as speaker presentations followed by tours.

Committees can:

- (1) present campus and community-based programs around the subject of folk art, particularly Passionate Visions.
- (2) announce the exhibition in the university's media systems (faculty's and student's newspapers, magazines, television programs, etc.).
- (3) schedule class periods at the museum.
- (4) find ways to involve the obvious disciplines, as fine art and art history, as well as the not so obvious, such as anthropology, women's studies, sociology, social welfare, psychology, education, religion, ethics, criminal justice, art therapy, etc. One way this can be done is in a letter from NOMA to the faculty.
- (5) generate lists of faculty, administration and alumni for mailings before this semester ends. If your university can actually handle the mailing, as SUNO (Sara Hollis) does, then that route is preferable. If not, then lists on labels as opposed to on paper is best. This will allow us to merely transfer those labels onto envelopes.

Committee's Use of NOMA Resources:

Speaker's Bureau, guided tours of exhibition, artists-in-residence, film, public lectures

Committee's Use of University Resources:

Student Center Staff, Alumni Associations university women's groups, auxiliaries, public information offices, etc.

NOMA can send letters to university faculty and administration announcing the exhibition, discussing the participation of students in various disciplines that can benefit from seeing this exhibition, suggesting a course offering on folk art, and inviting them to a cocktail party, for instance, at the beginning of the exhibition period, with a walk-through or with a speaker presentation on campus. SUNO can be honored at the social for their many years of commitment to the museum.

It is our hope that each committee be multi-cultural. For some universities, certain ethnic groups are not reached by broad university information distribution. Persons of that group serving on the outreach committee can probably be more successful in bringing in those audiences.

According to our records, Delgado, Dillard, Loyola, SUNO, Tulane, UNO and Xavier, are all members of NOMA. Students can enter the museum with their university ID.

The suggestion was to have our next meeting in two weeks with the committees of each of the universities. In the meantime, Nilima will be corresponding with you directly. Please feel free to call her (483-2738) with any questions, additional ideas or comments.

Again, thank you for contributing your time and ideas.

Warm regards,

Alice Rae Yelen  
Assistant to the Director

March 29, 1993

Dear :

Thank you for attending the first Lower Education Public Programs Committee meeting of Passionate Visions of the American South. Your contribution is helping to enhance this project's success.

Various suggestions made to increase the lower education community were:

- (1) Elementary education cultural resource and secondary education art teachers can be invited to a special exhibition tour 1 to 1-1/2 hours before the opening gala event.
- (2) Teacher workshops, explaining how to adapt this exhibition to their curriculum, will be scheduled. Materials on the exhibition and a visual packet for their students can be given to participants. This packet can include 1-2 page teacher guide with suggested before and after museum visit activities; for instance, have children bring to school something in their environment and create an art piece with it.
- (3) PTAs can use speaker's bureau and participate in guided docent tours.
- (4) A free pass may be given to children who attend the exhibition with a 50 percent discount ticket for the accompanying adult.
- (5) The Lower Education Committee should also include cultural resource representatives from the parochial and private schools. PTA presidents or their representatives can be targeted.

Barbara Warnie's Art-in-Education program can:

- (1) schedule a Passionate Visions (PV) presentation in its summer institute for cultural resource teachers in June.
- (2) focus again on PV during their annual showcase in October.
- (3) feature the exhibition in upcoming issue of Cultural Arts News.

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Because this committee and its ideas are very well related to our existing school program, Ann Moore, Curator of Education, who coordinates educational school programs, will be the liaison. Please feel free to call her (483-2797) with any questions, additional ideas or comments. Lee Morais, Nilima Mwendo and I will continue to be available to you.

Again, thank you for contributing your time and ideas.

Warm regards,

Alice Rae Yelen  
Assistant to the Director

March 16, 1993

Dear :

Thank you for attending yesterday's Religion Public Programs Committee meeting of Passionate Visions of the American South. Your contribution is helping to enhance this project's success.

As a result of your input, we learned that

- (1) Two approaches should be taken in reaching the religious communities:
  - (a) focus on the groups within the churches, i.e. youth, seniors, choir, outreach, etc.
  - (b) focus on the entire congregation at a Sunday service, for instance, so that those not in specific groups can be reached.
- (2) Church communities respond to a familiar face; therefore, it is more beneficial for persons known to that church to follow-up after NOMA letters announcing the exhibition and offering speaker presentations or tours are sent.
- (3) Announcements should be placed in church bulletins and put on bulletin boards.
- (4) Docent can give groups a potpourri of the exhibition with emphasis on the religious aspects of the art and then spend half their time in the religion section of the tour for a more in-depth presentation from a religious standpoint.
- (5) One of the artists-in-residence, who is a reverend, can lead workshops, specifically for the religious community.
- (6) Churches who you believe will respond positively (with scheduled speakers and tours) can be targeted.

When we have obtained the lists of churches from the Associated Catholic Charities, mayor's office and Federation of Churches, Nilima will call you for the next meeting date and time. Hopefully then we can target in on particular churches from those

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lists. In the meantime, please feel free to call Nilima (483-2738) with any questions, additional ideas or comments.

Our effort will not be limited by our enthusiasm, only by our staff time. Your assistance in this project will make this aspect of outreach broader than we can ever accomplish ourselves. Again, thank you so much for contributing your time and ideas.

Warm regards,

Alice Rae Yelen  
Assistant to the Director

Dear :

Thank you for attending yesterday's Senior Citizens Public Programs Committee meeting of Passionate Visions of the American South. Your contribution is helping to enhance this project's success.

As a result of your input, we learned that

- (1) Words used to describe seniors should emphasize their individuality, not their age.
- (2) A seniors' day would not be beneficial, but small group tours scheduled throughout the exhibition period would be.
- (3) Tours should be held primarily in the mornings.
- (4) Members from various seniors centers can combine for a speaker's presentation.
- (5) Seniors are very cost conscious; therefore, a reasonable package deal of tour, film and lunch would be appropriate -- about \$8 (\$3 for admission, about \$5 for lunch) -- if possible.
- (6) Publications that cater to seniors, i.e., Modern Maturity, as well as seniors sections in other publications, i.e., "Gray Matter" in the Times-Picayune can be approached to publicize.

We look forward to receiving your various lists. If there is a choice between a mailing list on paper and one on labels, please send us the latter. This will allow us to merely transfer those labels onto envelopes.

The next meeting, scheduled for Thursday, April 8th, from 3:30-5:00 p.m., is a general one of all the committees. I am looking forward to seeing you again at that time. In the meantime, Nilima will be corresponding with you directly. Please feel free to call her (483-2738) with any questions, additional ideas or comments.

Again, thank you for contributing your time and ideas.

Warm regards,

Alice Rae Yelen



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Museum of Art

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Fax 504 484-6662

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**  
**RESULTS OF GENERAL/ADVISORY OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**FOR PASSIONATE VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH**  
**May 12, 1993**

Latin-American Audiences

Approach the various Latin consulates, particularly the Honduran consulate, and have them send the announcement through their systems. They may want to sponsor a NOMA speakers' bureau.

Have a function where the various Latin consulate groups can come together for a viewing of the exhibition film. The World Trade Center was suggested for this purpose.

Have one of the galleries or the CAC present a show of Latin-American self-taught artists during the time of the exhibition.

African-American Audiences

Officially invite African-American sororities, fraternities and other social societies, i.e., Zulu Social and Pleasure Club.

Post announcement of the exhibition in bulletins sent out to various professional groups, i.e., doctors and lawyers, of the black community.

Children

Involve the schools through social studies fairs, field trips, school celebrations. The art can be integrated into various subjects: history, literature, music, etc.

Change the name of the Lower Education Outreach Committee to the Primary and Secondary Education Outreach Committee.

Organizations

Get lists of social and political organizations and send the information to those.

Give information to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program so the participants can bring their little brothers and sisters to the exhibition.



**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

2

General

To attract the audiences, especially non-traditional ones, a free or reduced admission or a reduced membership fee for certain groups is essential.

Expansions/Broadening

Integrate the various artistic mediums representative of the same cultural atmosphere of the art, i.e., blues or gospel music and poetry readings in the same genre in the public programs.

Sponsor a workshop that allows new self-taught artists a space to create and network with fellow self-taught artists.

Collaborations

Collaborative efforts between NOMA and other non-profit organizations: (a) host a workshop for children at NOMA. The participant receives a free certificate to a workshop at Children's Museum, for instance. (b) Van Go goes to the Children's Museum or senior citizens' groups.

Publicity

Put announcement of the exhibition in professionals' newsletters and in the billings envelopes of NOPSI and Sewerage and Water Board.

**APPENDIX G****"PASSIONATE VISIONS" SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE**

**PASSIONATE VISIONS**  
OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

79

*Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*  
October 23, 1993 through January 30, 1994

## SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

CO-CHAIRS: KURT A. GITTER, M.D., AND ALICE RAE YELEN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

6 P.M. - 10 P.M.

REGISTRANTS PACKET PICK-UP AND NEW REGISTRATIONS  
MERIDIEN HOTEL  
614 CANAL STREET

PLEASE NOTE: ALL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE HILTON HOTEL  
VERSAILLES ROOM (THIRD FLOOR)  
#2 POYDRAS STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70140  
(504) 561-0500

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1993

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 8 A.M. - 8:30 A.M.      | REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST   |
| 8:30 A.M. - 8:55 A.M.   | WELCOME: KURT A. GITTER, M.D., SYMPOSIUM CO-CHAIR  |
| 8:55 A.M. - 9:45 A.M.   | INTRODUCTION TO <i>PASSIONATE VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH: SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS FROM 1940 TO THE PRESENT</i> , ALICE RAE YELEN, EXHIBITION CURATOR  |
| 9:45 A.M. - 10:25 A.M.  | "FOLK ART AND THE SOUTH," WILLIAM FERRIS, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI   |
| 10:25 A.M. - 10:55 A.M. | COFFEE BREAK   |
| 10:55 A.M. - 12:25 P.M. | "SELF-TAUGHT ART: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE"<br>MODERATOR: JANE LIVINGSTON, INDEPENDENT CURATOR AND AUTHOR<br>PANELISTS:<br>HERBERT WAIDE HEMPHILL, JR., AUTHOR AND COLLECTOR<br>DAVID LEVY, DIRECTOR, CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART<br>ROGER RICCO, RICCO/MARESCA GALLERY, NEW YORK<br>CHUCK ROSENAK, AUTHOR AND COLLECTOR<br>GARY SCHWINDLER, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY, OHIO UNIVERSITY AT ATHENS<br>GERARD WERTKIN, DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART<br>ROGER CARDINAL, PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE AND VISUAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF KENT, CANTERBURY, ENGLAND |
| 12:30 P.M. - 2 P.M.     | LUNCH  |

2 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.	"OUTSIDE, FOLK ARTISTS AND COMMUNITIES," ROGER MANLEY, FREE-LANCE WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER	80
2:30 P.M. - 3 P.M.	"VISIONARY ENVIRONMENT," JOHN BEARDSLEY, INDEPENDENT CURATOR AND AUTHOR	
3 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.	COFFEE BREAK	
3:30 P.M. - 5 P.M.	"TUTORED AND UNTUTORED ARTISTS" MODERATORS: SUSAN LARSEN, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES AND TOM PATTERSON, WRITER AND CRITIC PANELISTS: JOHN BEARDSLEY RUSSELL BOWMAN, DIRECTOR, MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM PHYLLIS KIND, PHYLLIS KIND GALLERY, NEW YORK JOHN OLLMAN, JANET FLEISCHER GALLERY, PENNSYLVANIA LEO RABKIN, ARTIST AND COLLECTOR JOHN SCOTT, ARTIST	
7 P.M. - 10 P.M.	EXHIBITION VIEWING AND DINNER AT THE NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART	

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1993

8 A.M. - 8:30 A.M.	REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST	
8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.	WELCOME: E. JOHN BULLARD, DIRECTOR, NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART HISTORY OF PASSIONATE VISIONS, ALICE RAE YELEN, SYMPOSIUM CO-CHAIR	
8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	"THE SELF IN SELF-TAUGHT ART," ROGER CARDINAL	
9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.	"A VIEW OF PARADISE FROM A DISTANT SHORE," SUSAN LARSEN	
10:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.	"WILLIAM HAWKINS: AN ANALYSIS," DR. GARY SCHWINDLER	
10:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	COFFEE BREAK	
11:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.	"COLLECTORS AND DEALERS OF SELF-TAUGHT ART" MODERATOR: KURT A. GITTER, M.D. PANELISTS: JIM ARIENT, COLLECTOR ROBERT GREENBERG, COLLECTOR AND FILMMAKER CARL HAMMER, THE HAMMER GALLERY, CHICAGO IDA KOHLMAYER, ARTIST RANDALL MORRIS, CAVIN-MORRIS GALLERY, NEW YORK ISAAC TIGRETT, COLLECTOR ROGER MANLEY	
12:30 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.	LUNCH	
2:00 P.M. - 2:15 P.M.	ANN OPPENHIMER, PRESIDENT, FOLK ART SOCIETY OF AMERICA	
2:15 P.M. - 2:45 P.M.	"REFLECTIONS: FROM THE CORCORAN SHOW TO THE PRESENT," JANE LIVINGSTON	
2:45 P.M. - 3:15 P.M.	"THE EDGES OF THE FIELD: SELF-TAUGHT AND OTHER ARTISTS," TOM PATTERSON	
4 P.M. - 6 P.M.	OPEN HOUSES OF PRIVATE NEW ORLEANS 20TH-CENTURY COLLECTIONS OF SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS (SEE HAND-OUT IN REGISTRATION PACKET)	

### VITA

Nilima Mwendo was Executive Director of the Kellogg Project from 1994-95. The goal of this one-year project was to design a comprehensive childcare delivery model for young children and their families in the Lower 9th Ward. The success of this project is attributable to it being the first time numerous and varied Lower 9 organizations and residents joined together to improve the lives of young people and families in their community.

Prior to this position, Ms. Mwendo was Outreach Coordinator for the New Orleans Museum of Art's exhibition "Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present." In this capacity she brought many traditional and non-traditional visitors to NOMA. She also organized and coordinated some of the show's public programs.

Ms. Mwendo has been affiliated with NKOMBO, Inc. in varying capacities over the past 16 years. She was Executive Director from 1991-95 and board member from 1987-1990. NKOMBO, Inc. is a non-profit organization that works to educate and raise consciousness about culture, art and history of both Africans and African-Americans and to develop a respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity of this country, particularly New Orleans. COLOR MY WORLD and VITAL Cultural Arts and Education Summer Program are its two major projects.

Ms. Mwendo has been a community activist for the past 20 years. She is a founding member of AHIDIANA, a Pan-African nationalist organization of the 1970s, co-founder of the Black Woman's Group, a female leadership support group of the 1980s, and the founder and member of Cultural Voices, an a cappella group of female vocalists.

Ms. Mwendo received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Southern University at New Orleans in 1991.

## EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

**Candidate:** Nilima Z. Mwendo

**Major Field:** Arts Administration

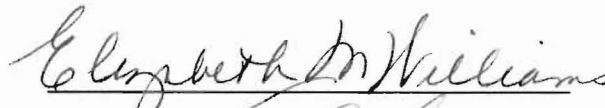

**Title of Thesis:** Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists  
from 1940 to the Present  
An Arts Administration Internship at the New Orleans Museum of Art

**Approved:**

  
Major Professor & Chairman

  
Dean of the Graduate School

**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**

**Date of Examination:**

November 8, 1995