

An abstract painting by Frank Bowling, featuring a complex composition of layered colors and textures. The palette includes shades of blue, green, pink, purple, and grey, with visible brushstrokes and splatters. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and depth.

# FRANK BOWLING

O.B.E., RA

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**FRANK  
BOWLING** O.B.E., RA  
**PAINTINGS 1974-2010**

**ESSAY BY MEL GOODING**

SEPTEMBER 14 - OCTOBER 16, 2010

**SPANIERMAN MODERN**

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FIG. 1. **SCOTT'S EYETOOTH** 1982 MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS 68¼ × 54¾ IN.

## A POET IN NEW YORK: REFLECTIONS ON THE EXHIBITION

For *I is someone else*. If brass wakes up as a bugle, it is no fault of its own.

That is obvious to me: I am present at the hatching of my thought. —Rimbaud

### TITLE AND WORK

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.*

—Shakespeare

I will begin with a very recent, exemplary painting by Frank Bowling: *Pondlife* (2010). I am struck by the evocative title, at once seeming celebratory (of the natural) and ironic (being a term of mild abuse, a demotic misappropriation of something intrinsically interesting and beautiful). It is in fact an abstract painting created without premeditation of any such kind of evocation or reference, and its title is arbitrary, even whimsical: it might have been something quite other. (This in itself carries a hint of irony in the relation of work to spectator: you want a title? I will give you a title: how about *Pondlife*?) The title hints nevertheless—just—at description, and yet it is open to possibilities of poetic ambiguity, as is the picture itself.

The one-word contraction is a poet's device, suggesting that the watery space, which we are invited by the central panel to imagine, is in itself an enclosed world-entire, in a condition of interactive being, dynamic and fluid. This is a world in which the discrete lives of the plants and creatures that inhabit it—as spatter and speckle, paint-stain and combed flow of acrylic gel—are at one with their aquatic element, simultaneously separating and coalescing, in dynamic suspension between becoming and entropy.

This is how poetic suggestion works, and I am reminded that Bowling as a young man set out to become a poet and to study literature: his titles have always given license to his love of word-play. Bowling is aware of the title as the subtle hinge that attaches a painting to the world beyond its edges and surfaces, the world of imaginative response, reflective thought and natural language. The title is in this sense the first contact the painting makes with the wider critical and historical discourse. (Withholding a title—besides making life difficult for historians—is itself a way of determining aspects of the first round of critical response.)

While acknowledging that abstract painting might want to admit into its ambit of effect and affect the power of the poetic allusion, Bowling has never, in his paintings after 1972, extended this to any kind of mimetic figuration or sign-making, however ghostly or subliminal. In the paintings prior to that date—a period that culminated in his one-person show of the abstract “map paintings” at the Whitney in 1971—it was just such use of the map-sign, as a vague emanation or a fading cipher, that had drawn critical and public attention to his paintings as carrying, like flags, some kind of political implication, and as having affinities with Pop.

But Bowling has always made cunning and witty use of titles: he knows that a title may be intriguingly enigmatic or helpfully allusive; it may be anecdotal, celebrating or commemorating a person or an event, whether trivial or momentous; it may summon to mind a myth or legend; it may prompt a recollection of things past; it may refer to a natural phenomenon, a place or an effect of light. A title may also, of course, deflect immediate associations of a color, form or texture in order to free the observer's mind to imaginative invention. In these ways his titles are very like those we often encounter in modern jazz—another abstract modernist art—a number of which Bowling has knowingly and pointedly appropriated or adapted.

It might seem in pondering *Pondlife* (and its title) that I have hitherto been concentrating solely on that band of richly worked canvas, its surface agitated, which is stitched and stuck on to the larger thinly painted canvas that supports it. But in fact it is easy to see how the atmospheric parallels of translucent pink and green acrylic-wash might in themselves be seen as an invitation to the ambiguities of the title: the impression they give is of an untroubled watery surface catching the evening sun.

The simultaneous sensations as of peering into depth (into the hectic self-contained world of the sewn strip) and of scanning an illuminated aqueous surface receding into the distance remind me of Monet's exploitation



FIG. 2.  
**POND LIFE** 2010  
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
 57 × 51 IN.

of the same simultaneity—a vertiginous sensory ambivalence—in *Les Nymphéas*, those great paintings of pond life. Such a recollection of the late work of Monet (which is not of immediate resemblance but of resemblances of effect) is not infrequent in contemplating Bowling's painting, bringing with it always the implications of a critical conflict between an art of associative impressions (of objective natural phenomena, say, or of feelings of awe or wonder) and that of a purely abstract objectivity of the kind advocated by Clement Greenberg as truly "modernist" painting.

#### PAINTINGS AND THEIR HISTORIES

*The poet makes himself a seer by a long and systematic derangement of all the senses.*

—Rimbaud

That complexity of effect, in which our viewing of a painting veers between the perception of naturalistic effects in the picture, and our apprehension of a surprising and beautiful object—the painting itself—in our immediate world, is one that Bowling achieves without fail, in different ways, in all his later paintings. The powerful contradiction of image and object is not entirely unlike the effect of early Jasper Johns, where the common sign disappears from mind, so to speak, in the face of a rich tactile complexity of facture, the objective physicality of the work as a whole. As in the paintings here, it is a facture that

suggests no effort at self-expression; rather, a kind of objectivity.

In respect of this, there is an aspect of *Pondlife* which serves to give it a particular historical poignancy. For the canvas on which is laid the ground (for want here of a more accurate term) of pale purple, pink and green translucencies, an ambience of light created by lightly brushed thinned acrylic, is in fact recycled (in a process habitual to Bowling's practice) from an earlier, abandoned painting, of 1972. That year Bowling came to know Greenberg, who began a kind of Socratic dialogue with the younger artist (Bowling was in his mid-thirties). The critic subtly opened up a critical-creative space within which Bowling found that he could move beyond an art of direct reference or overt symbolism (of the kind indicated by the stenciled images of his mother's house and hemispheric maps) to a formalist abstraction that freed him from any kind of quasi-political identity not of his own choosing.

It may be said, in passing, that for Bowling at this time the espousal of a non-referential, non-symbolic formalism was in fact a crucial moral and political act: "Formalist art... is almost always hard on itself and indulges in rigorous self-criticism, within the given discipline alone," he wrote in May 1972. "[The] practice of painting within the boundaries of Formalism provides a setting in which I am able to test and ultimately prove my own freedom." These words closely echo in spirit those of Greenberg in his classic 1961 essay, "Modernist Painting" in which a purist (and puritan) definition of formalist abstraction is provided with great clarity.

It quickly emerged that what the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique to the nature of the medium. The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would be rendered "pure," and in its "purity" find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence. "Purity" meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance.

The juxtaposition in *Pondlife* of two distinct styles, one sampled, as it were, from an earlier music, has implications at once ironic and nostalgic. It is ironic, in that a beautiful and



FIG. 3.  
**BASKET** 2010  
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
 26½ × 51 IN.

moving object has been created with deliberative procedures, objective craft, and arbitrary, even automatic, decisions, but it is an object made without premeditation of its eventual appearance and effect. Bowling could not *know* that he would see possibilities of allusion suggested by a title given *post facto*.

The incorporation of strips and fragments cropped from earlier work was to be an enduring creative ploy of Bowling's. That *Pondlife* as a whole retrieves (as memory may be said to retrieve) material that belongs to the innocent and earnest purity of his earlier formalist intentions brings nostalgic resonance. It is a visible remembrance of his briefly held ambition, under the immediate influence of Greenberg, to succeed as a post-painterly color-field abstractionist. A handful of beautiful paintings survive from 1972–73 as proof of that success. But *intention* in Bowling's procedures does not extend to the allusive or affective. He works close to the surface, close to the materials of his art. After "the long and systematic *dérèglement*" of the working process, the magician-seer steps back and—*voilà!*—*Pondlife!*

The primary purpose of the collage elements in Bowling's paintings is to draw attention to these deliberative procedures—at once experimental and constructive, automatic and determined—by means of which the work is created. The stitched and stapled matte chromatic strips and rectangles are juxtaposed directly with richly variegated painterly surfaces that glimmer and shine. The contrasts operate as a kind of alienation effect, drawing attention

to form and facture. Frequently these fabric retrievals provide a simple-seeming frame or border to a complex newly painted image. As a secondary effect this can intensify evocation: in *Old Dutch Vase*, *Vines* and *Basket* (all 2010), for examples, the titles may suggest that we are looking at still-life pictures in which floral color and petal-scatter are set against window light: a marvelous new kind of flower painting. In *Amelia* (2002) we look over a sill into a night sky. In *Resting*, *Alighting*, *Hovering* (all 2010), the color stiles at either side serve to stabilize quasi-cosmic images of subtle stasis or kinesis, themselves cut from recent "zipper" paintings, such as the beautiful, ethereal *Fairmaid* (2009).

**PROCEDURES TO MAKE PAINTINGS;  
 PAINTINGS TO GENERATE IMAGES**

*Nature is not mechanical. . . . Its prodigy is not identity but resemblance and its universe of reproduction is not an assembly line but an incessant creation. Because this is so in nature, it is so in metaphor. Nor are we talking of imitation.*

—Wallace Stevens

**I**mmersed as he was in the painting culture of New York in the late 1960s and 1970s (as a critic-polemicist as well as a painter whose acquaintance extended beyond the *milieu* of abstract painting), Bowling was keenly aware of the theoretical discussion that animated the studios, apartments and bars inhabited or frequented by the painters of the time. He became increasingly aware of the ways in which

these technical aspects of a painting might add complexity to a work and its reception. He had always worked, and continued to do so thereafter, with an intense critical reflexivity, a consciousness of relations between different aspects of a work, and between the painting itself and other paintings, his own or those of other artists, past and present. This self-consciously critical aspect is always visible in Bowling's paintings as a kind of meta-subject. It is part of the experience, part of the fun.

"Modernism," as Greenberg had observed, characteristically "criticizes from the inside, through the procedures themselves of that which is being criticised." So it is not surprising that soon after his experiments with color-field Bowling looked for other ways, less indebted to Newman and Rothko, in which to create an imagery that not only eliminated personal touch and signature, but were less easily read as pictorial and atmospheric. Thin-wash acrylic fields, translucent, diaphanous, cannot but evoke pictorial space and induce mood. Bowling became increasingly concerned, however, to create brilliant objects rather than beautiful images.

In a competitive environment, Bowling was working now with a keen awareness of the inexpressive post-painterly procedures of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Larry Poons and Jules Olitski. Pouring, spraying, staining, masking, cropping, screening, applications of acrylic gel, un-stretched canvases, shaped supports; acrylic paint applied with openness of design and a self-declarative clarity of execution: these were the technical and stylistic characteristics of much of the most critically successful New York abstract painting. Bowling's own response to the challenge of "modernist" formalism, to forgo the "expressive touch," to discover a new reality in painting-as-painting (in what the early Russian abstractionists he admired would have called "painting-as-such") was extreme.

The poured paintings of the mid-1970s were created by means of a mechanical device of Bowling's own invention: a tilting board-platform, whose angle of tilt could be controlled by pegs at each end, and which allowed the paint to flow downwards over the stretched canvas at a determined speed, its velocities susceptible to adjustment. In effect the painting made itself with a minimum of assistance from the painter. In their thrilling unpredictability,

and their vertiginous disposition of the pure materials of their art, these poured paintings have about them something very close to the free-form excitement of contemporaneous advanced New York jazz, itself a brilliant manifestation of the Modernist spirit. "The inventions of the unknown," wrote Rimbaud, "demand new forms."

What gives these objects their extraordinary power, their startling visual impact, is another kind of unpredictability altogether. They are images of the natural processes which made them what they are. They cannot therefore avoid resemblance to other phenomena whose forms and effects are created by similar dynamics. The titles Bowling has given to the poured paintings, it seems to me, fall into the category of those intended to deflect immediate associations, to emphasize that they are in no way descriptive, and that any resemblance they may have to other things (natural things) is unpremeditated, most certainly not intentional. But "the mind, the mind has mountains": the receiving imagination will work as it will, its play over things—voluntary and involuntary—determined by association, the perception of similarity, memory and desire.

"[The] resemblance between things," said the great American poet Wallace Stevens, "[is] one of the significant components of the structure of reality." "Resemblance" may exist, as Wallace suggests, not only between two or more parts of reality (as one waterfall resembles all others) but also "between something real and something imagined or, what is the same thing, between something imagined and something real as, for example, between music and whatever may be evoked by it." Thus a resemblance may be found between an inner feeling (a thrill, a mood) and an outward object (in this case a painting); or we may perceive a resemblance among paintings such as *Courteous Shade* (1974), *Irma Kurtz Visits Broadway* or *13th Hour* (both 1976) and a natural phenomenon such as a fire or a waterfall; or we may see a similarity between a poured painting and a representational painting. I have mentioned Monet; now I may say that these paintings bring to my mind the beautiful light-falls and waterfalls of Frederick Edwin Church.

Bowling had devised a method of painting that would create, he may have thought, sensational effects, but the neutrality of the

pouring mechanism and the natural dynamics of gravity would eliminate the stroke and the mark, the disposition of paint on canvas as indices of personal expression. It was a technique that made possible what might be termed “controlled automatism.” (Those adjusting pegs, like those of a stringed instrument, allowed variations of pitch. Bowling could not renounce the temptations of melody.) Although it could be infinitely productive, the method was limited in its formal outcomes. However spectacular the individual effects of color, of the mix of the chromatic and tonal, of the speed of flow and the density of texture, the generic resemblance of one such poured painting to another predicated a need to develop and change.

Bowling nevertheless carried over into his later work the objective free-form cool of this approach to the making of paintings: improvisation in search of effect; effect to match vision and generate feeling in the spectator. Like his free-jazz contemporaries and their great postwar predecessors, he was seeking grandeur and grace, wit and sonority: the expression of the medium not the performer; reverberations from elsewhere in the immediacy of now. The wonderful constellation paintings of the early 1980s, such as *Ah Susan Woosh* (1981), *Odysseus’s Footfalls* and *Around Midnight Last Night* (both 1982), with their wheeling galaxies and shadowy moons, demonstrate a rapid and dramatic progression to the mastery of the varied techniques and procedures that were to serve Bowling’s purposes from that time on.

It occurs to me that the contradiction, “controlled automatism,” is as good a description of Bowling’s primary creative methodology as we are likely to find. It applies to the whole repertoire of his techniques and procedures. In every case there are elements of choice: of scale, color, secondary materials, quantities of medium, etc. There is frequently evidence of design decisions: the stitching on of chromatic color strips and borders, red, blue, yellow, green; painted stripes as in *Kiteeye* (2002); and in the latest paintings the purposeful central “zipper” device and the deliberate placement of arcs and circles. As in *Cybele’s Yellow Door to Fishes* and *Scott’s Eyetooth* (both 1982) there are often underlying quasi-geometric forms and structures; in many paintings these are provided by strips of acrylic foam, attached to the canvas at the outset of painting. These are all instances of

evident control and determination, but in every case the image presented by the completed painting is unpremeditated. “Poetry (like craps) is managed chance,” wrote Dan Chiasson. It is “called (over the ages) by other names: inspiration, the unconscious, ‘craft.’”

The complicated surfaces of Bowling’s later paintings are aspects of work done one throw at a time. They are the outcome of diverse processes and procedures: chemical fusing and dissipations of pigment, refractive and reflective layerings of acrylic gel (as subtle in their refinements of the image as the applications of varnish to nineteenth-century landscape paintings), embeddings of foam-strip and found objects, stitched and glued collaged borders and frames of stained textile. The total image, immediate as it is, has been created slowly and carefully out of a succession of discrete actions, retractions, cancellations, reflections, additions and subtractions. A process of contemplation, of willed chance and arbitrary interventions creates unexpected relativities and syntheses, ambiguities of space, contrasts of light and darkness, modulations of color, optical and textural complexities. Each painting presents an enthralling spectacle of simultaneities, an image coterminous with the beautiful and complex object which carries it.

#### MEL GOODING

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Mel Gooding is a well-known British writer on art and architecture. His extensive publications on abstract painting include *Abstract Art* (2001) for the Tate series “Movements in Modern Art.” He is the author of monographs and essays on artists as diverse as Frank Auerbach, Patrick Caulfield, John Hoyland, Gillian Ayres, Robert Motherwell and Pierre Soulages. He is currently writing a book on Frank Bowling, to be published by Royal Academy Publications in 2011.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES** Rimbaud is quoted in each case from the seminal letter to Paul Demy, May 15, 1871. Wallace Stevens discusses “resemblance” in the first of his “Three Academic Pieces.” See *The Necessary Angel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960; first published in *Partisan Review* in 1947). Clement Greenberg’s “Modernist Painting” was first published by *Arts Yearbook* (New York), no. 4 (1961). Frank Bowling’s statement is from “Problems of Criticism,” *Arts Magazine* (May 1972). Dan Chiasson was writing about the New York poet James Schuyler, in the *New York Review of Books* (May 27, 2010).



1. **CORINNA'S ADAM** 1974 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 78 × 31½ IN.



2. **SIMON & MATHEW** 1975 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 90 × 47 IN.



3. **IRMA KURTZ VISITS BROADWAY** 1975 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 80½ × 51 IN.



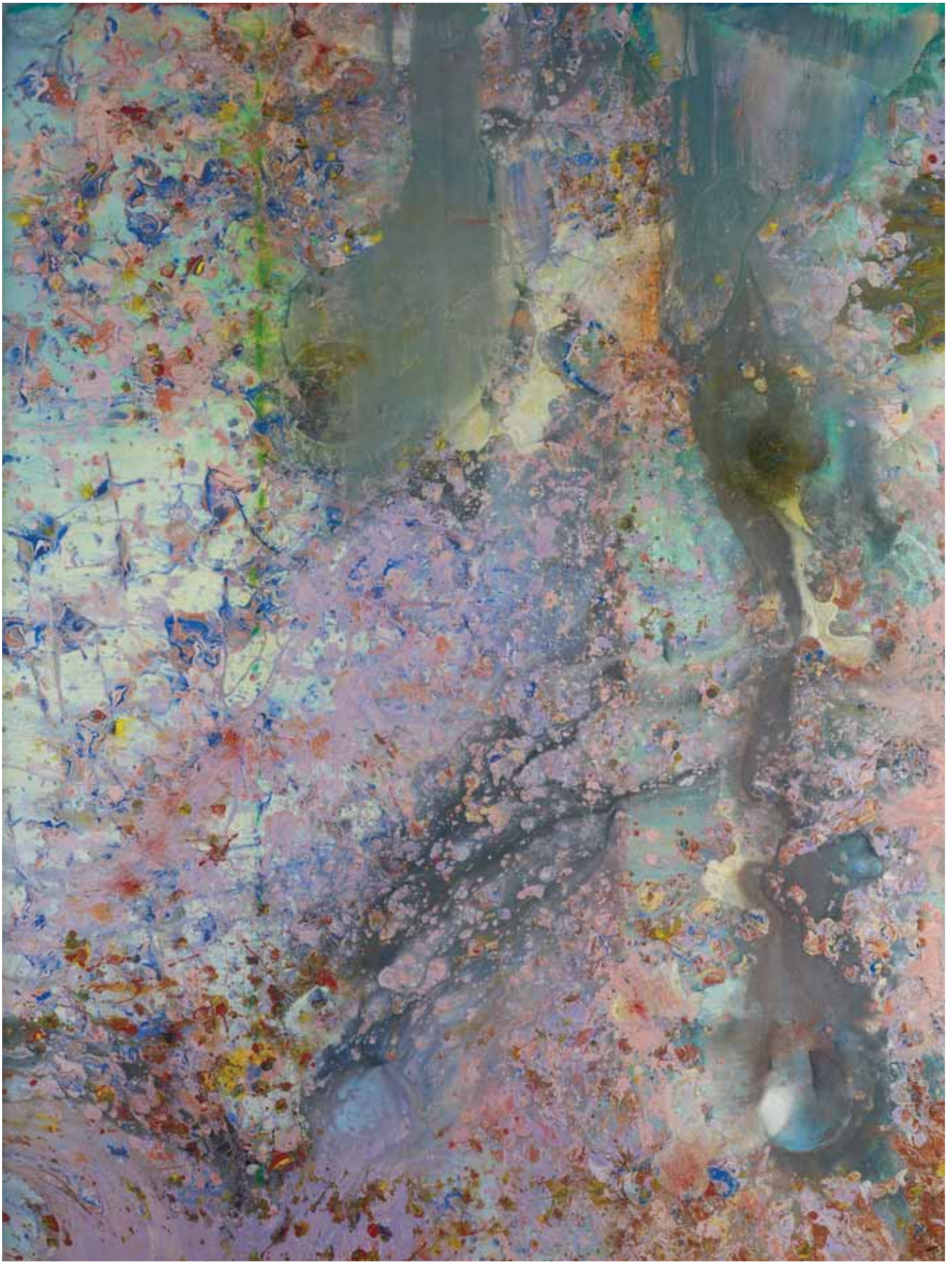
4. **13TH HOUR** 1976 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 68 × 42 IN.



5. **AH SUSAN WOOSH** 1981 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 95 × 69¼ IN.



6. **AROUND MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT** 1982 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 95¼ x 69½ IN.



7. **ODYSSEUS'S FOOTFALLS** 1982 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 93¼ × 70 IN. (COVER DETAIL)



8. **CYBELE'S YELLOW DOOR TO FISHES** 1983 MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS 68¾ × 55¾ IN.



9. **FAIRMAID** 2009 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 68 × 25 IN.



10. **RESTING** 2010 MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS 25 × 31 IN.



11. **OLD DUTCH VASE** 2010 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 46 × 33 IN.

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

**13TH HOUR**, 1976 (Cat. 4)  
Acrylic on canvas, 68 × 42 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed  
on verso: *13th Hour* /  
*Jan 20th 1976* / *Frank Bowling*

**AH SUSAN WOOSH**, 1981 (Cat. 5)  
Acrylic on canvas, 95 × 69¼ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed  
on verso: *Frank Bowling* / *1981* /  
*"Ah Susan Woosh"*  
Inscribed on stretcher: *"Woosh"*



**ALIGHTING**, 2010  
Mixed media on canvas, 25 × 30 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Alighting" 2010*



**AMELIA**, 2004  
Mixed media on canvas, 14 × 13¼ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Amelia" 2004*

**AROUND MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT**, 1982 (Cat. 6)  
Acrylic on canvas, 95¼ × 69½ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed  
on verso: *1982* / *"Around Midnight Last Night"* / *Frank Bowling*

**BASKET**, 2010 (Fig. 3)  
Acrylic on canvas, 26½ × 51 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Basket" 2010*



**BENWOODICK**, 2002  
Mixed media on canvas, 23¼ × 17¼ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling 2002* / *Benwoodick*

**CORINNA'S ADAM**, 1974 (Cat. 1)  
Acrylic on canvas, 78 × 31½ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*"Corinna's Adam"* / *Frank Bowling* / *Spring 1974* / *March 1974* / *London* / *March 1974* / *Corinna's Adam* / *Frank Bowling*



**COURTEOUS SHADE**, 1974  
Acrylic on canvas, 76 × 61 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*"Courteous Shade"* / *Frank Bowling* / *Aug* / *1974* N.Y.C.

**CYBELE'S YELLOW DOOR TO FISHES**, 1983 (Cat. 8)  
Mixed media on canvas, 68¾ × 55¾ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*"Cybele's Yellow Door to Fishes"* / *Frank Bowling* / *Winter 1983*

**FAIRMAID**, 2009 (Cat. 9)  
Acrylic on canvas, 68 × 25 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*"Fairmaid"* *Frank Bowling 2009*



**HOVERING**, 2010  
Acrylic on canvas, 25½ × 30 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Hovering" 2010*

**IRMA KURTZ VISITS BROADWAY,**  
1975 (Cat. 3)  
Acrylic on canvas, 80½ × 51 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*Irma Kurtz Visits B'way [sic] / Frank  
Bowling / June 11th 1975*



**KITEEYE, 2002**  
Acrylic on canvas, 72½ × 36¼ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling / "Kiteeye" / 2002*



**MASACOURAMAN I, 2009**  
Acrylic on canvas, 68 × 24 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*"Masacouraman I" Frank Bowling 2009*

**ODDYSEUS'S FOOTFALLS,**  
1982 (Cover, Cat. 7)  
Acrylic on canvas, 93¼ × 70 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*"Odysseus's Footfalls" / Frank  
Bowling / 1982*

**OLD DUTCH VASE, 2010** (Cat. 11)  
Acrylic on canvas, 46 × 33 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Old Dutch Vase" 2010*

**PONDLIFE, 2010** (Fig. 2)  
Acrylic on canvas, 57 × 51 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Pondlife" 2010*

**RESTING, 2010** (Cat. 10)  
Mixed media on canvas, 25 × 31 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*2010 Frank Bowling "Resting"*

**SCOTT'S EYETOOTH, 1982** (Fig. 1)  
Mixed media on canvas, 68¼ × 54¾ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*Scotts eyetooth [sic] / Frank Bowling / 1982*

**SIMON & MATHEW, 1975** (Cat. 2)  
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 47 in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*"Simon & Mathew" / Frank Bowling /  
June 1975*



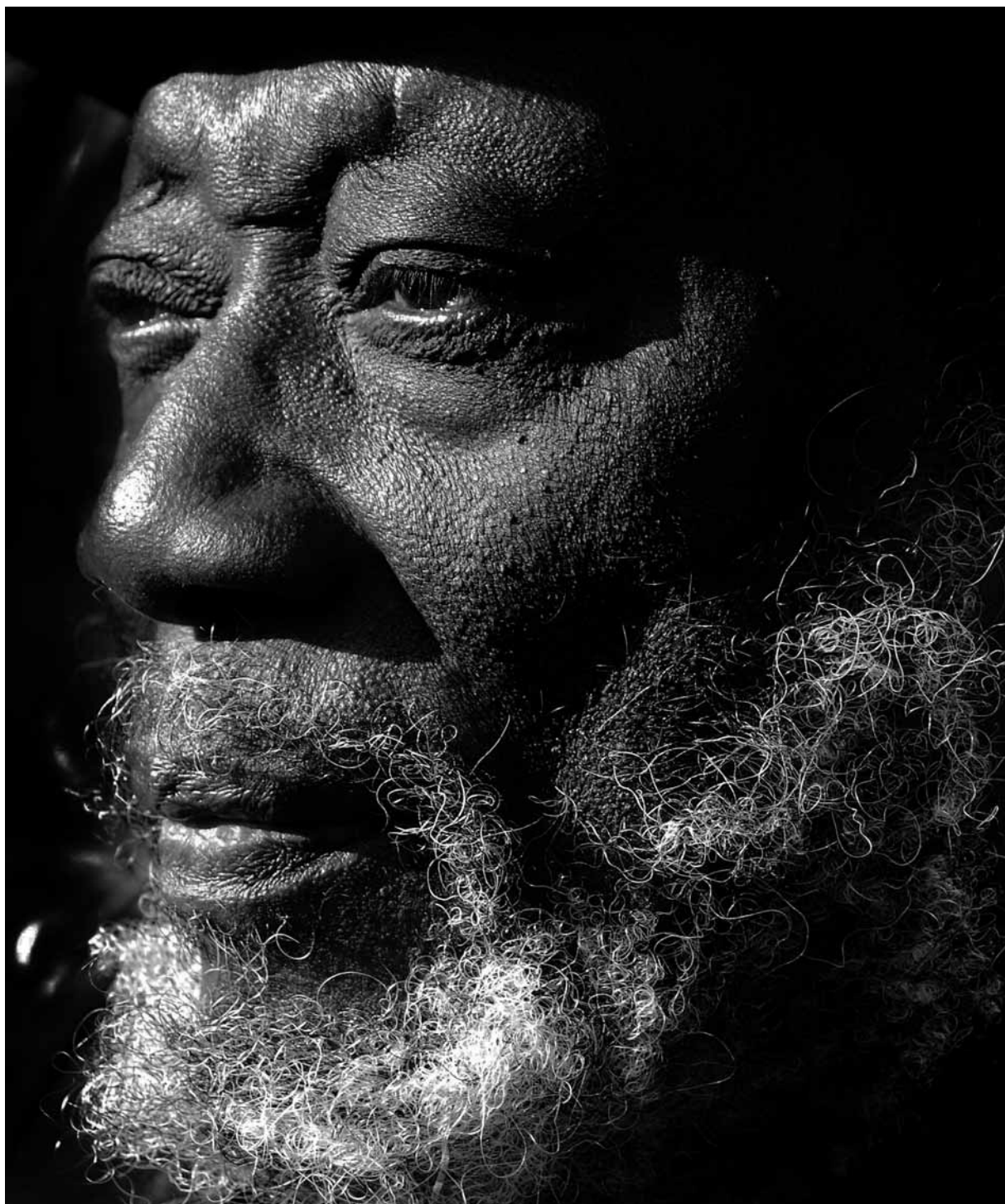
**SUNKIST, 1976**  
Acrylic on canvas, 91 × 46½ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on verso:  
*Frank Bowling / Summer 1976 / "Sunkist"*



**VINES, 2010**  
Acrylic on canvas, 46¼ × 17¼ in.  
Signed, dated, and inscribed on stretcher:  
*Frank Bowling "Vines" 2010*

**FRANK BOWLING** was born in British Guiana in 1936, and moved to London in the 1950s. He studied at the Royal College of Art, a contemporary of David Hockney, Ron Kitaj and the famous generation which laid the foundation of Pop Art in Britain. Bowling was twice awarded Guggenheim Fellowships (in 1967 and 1973). From the mid-1960s he lived

and worked for ten years in New York, and has subsequently divided his time between New York and London. His studio loft in Brooklyn overlooks the East River. In 2005 Bowling became the first black artist in history to be elected to the Royal Academy. In 2008 he was honored with the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for his service to art.



## BIOGRAPHY

1936, born Bartica, Essequibo, British Guiana  
1962, received M.F.A., Royal College of Art, London  
Currently resides in London and Brooklyn, New York

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 1971.  
Polytechnic Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, *Frank Bowling Retrospective*, 1978.  
Municipal Art Gallery, Limerick, Ireland, 1988.  
The Senate House, University of Liverpool, 1988.  
University Art Gallery, Reading, *Bowling through the Decade*, 1989.  
The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, 1990.  
National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 1993.  
Heimatmuseum, Eckernforde, Schleswig Holstein, Germany, 1993.  
Leicester City Gallery, *Bowling through the Century*, 1996.  
Gallery 11, University of Bradford, Yorkshire, 1997.  
South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell, Berkshire, 1997.  
The Herbert Art Museum & Gallery, Coventry, 1997.  
Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham, 1997.  
The YAA Asantewaa Arts Centre, Paddington, London, 1997.  
Center for Art & Culture, Skylight Gallery, Restoration Plaza, Brooklyn, New York, 1997.  
Georgetown Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2001.  
Rohde und Nerlich, Berlin, Germany, 2001.  
Aljira, A Center for the Arts, Newark, New Jersey, *Bending The Grid*, 2002.  
The Phillips Museum of Art, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, *4 Decades with Color*, 2004.  
ArtSway, Sway, Hampshire, 2006.  
Sir Hugh Casson Room for Friends of the Royal Academy, London, *Frank's Colour*, 2006–7.  
The Arts Club, Dover Street, London, 2007.  
The Gallery, The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Dorset, *Big Paintings*, 2008.  
University of Wolverhampton School of Art+Design, 2008.  
Winchester Discovery Centre, Hampshire, *Frank Bowling, OBE, RA: Paintings*, 2009.  
Clifford Chance, Canary Wharf, London, *Light and Water*, 2009.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Tate Gallery, London, *The London Group*, 1964.  
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, *The Obsessive Image*, 1968.  
The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey and *State University New York, Stony Brook*, 5 + 1, 1969.  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Whitney Annual Contemporary American Painting*, 1969.  
Rice University, Houston, *Some American History*, 1970.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Afro-American Artists, Boston—New York*, 1970.  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Whitney Biennial: Contemporary American Art*, 1971.  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Contemporary Black Artists in America*, 1971.  
Guyana Consulate, New York, *Two Guyanese Painters: Phillip Moore and Frank Bowling*, 1972.  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., *The Golden Door: Artist Immigrants of America, 1876–1976*, 1976.  
Philadelphia College of Art, *Artists' Maps*, 1977.  
Royal Academy, London, *25 Years of British Painting*, 1977.  
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield (traveled to Newcastle and Bristol), *British Art Show*, 1979.  
Bronx Museum, New York, *Contemporary Caribbean Artists—African Expressions*, 1979.  
Russell Coates Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, *The Russell Coates Modern Artists Exhibition*, 1979.  
The Studio Museum, Harlem, New York, *Another Generation*, 1979.  
Hayward Gallery, London, *Hayward Annual*, 1980.  
John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, *Maps*, 1980.  
Royal Academy, London, *Summer Exhibition*, 1980.  
Galleries of the University of Texas, Austin and Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, *Mapped Art*, 1981–83.  
The Currier Gallery, Manchester, New Hampshire; The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York; and Kresge Art Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, *Bowling, Loving, Mohr*, 1982.  
Colby College Art Gallery, Waterville, Maine, 1984.  
Leicester Museum, *Caribbean Expressions in Britain*, 1986.

Americas Society, New York; El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; Boston University Art Gallery; University of Florida, Gainesville; and Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, *The First American: Selections from the Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Latin American Art*, 1987.  
Royal College of Art, London, *Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art*, 1988.  
Royal College of Art London, *Summer Exhibition*, 1988.  
Whitechapel Gallery, London, *Whitechapel Open*, 1988.  
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield; Hatton Gallery, Newcastle; and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, *The Presence of Painting, Aspects of British Abstraction*, 1988.  
Whitechapel Gallery, London, *Whitechapel Open*, 1989.  
The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, *National Mid-Year Exhibition*, 1989.  
South London Gallery, *Recent Painting and Sculpture*, 1989.  
Hayward Gallery, London (traveled to Wolverhampton and Manchester), *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain*, 1989.  
Royal Academy, London, *Summer Exhibition*, 1989.  
Royal Academy, London, *Summer Exhibition*, 1990.  
Kenkeleba House, New York (traveled to Cleveland Institute of Art), *The Search for Freedom: African American Abstract Painting 1945–75*, 1991.  
State University of New York, New Paltz, 1991.  
Lanchester Gallery, Coventry Polytechnic, 1991.  
South London Gallery, *2nd Coming*, 1992.  
Whitechapel Gallery, London, *Whitechapel Open*, 1992.  
Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal, West Africa (traveled to Abidjan, Ivory Coast), *A/ Cross currents, synthesis in African American Abstract Painting*, 1992.  
Fitchburg Museum, Massachusetts, *Landscape as Metaphor: the Transcendental Vision*, 1993.  
Newport Art Museum, Rhode Island, 1993.  
Farnsworth Museum, Rockland, Maine, 1993.  
Brenau University, Gainesville, Georgia, *Gala*, 1994.  
Center for Fine Arts, Miami, *Caribbean Visions: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, 1994.  
New Orleans Museum of Art, 1994.  
The Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut, 1994.

Harlech Biennale 1996, Wales, 1996.  
 CUNY, The Institute For Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean, *Space, Time & Object—Black Abstractionists*, 1997–8.  
 New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, *The African-American Fine Arts Collection of the New Jersey State Museum*, 1999.  
 The Custom House Gallery, Mill Dam, South Shields, Tyne & Wear, England, *In A Marine Light*, 2000.  
 Katonah Museum of Art, New York, *Jazz and Visual Improvisation*, 2001.  
 Sugar Hill Art Center, Harlem, New York, *Six American Masters—Bowling, Carter, Clark, Hutson, Loving, Pindell*, 2002.  
 Director Institute of International Visual Arts, London, *Faultlines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes*, 2002.  
 Venice, *50th Venice Biennale*, 2003.  
 The Phillips Museum of Art, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (traveled to The Heckscher Museum of Art, New York; Beach Museum of Art, KSU, Kansas; California African-American Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Texas Tech University; Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan; Morris Museum of Art, Georgia; Robeson Galleries, Penn State University), *Something to Look Forward To: An exhibition featuring abstract art by 22 distinguished Americans of African Descent*, 2004–8.  
 Tate Britain, London, *This Was Tomorrow: Art and the 60s*, 2004.  
 University of Delaware, *A Century of African American Art: The Paul R Jones Collection*, 2004.  
 The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, *Energy/ Experimentation: Black Artists, 1964–1980*, 2006.  
 Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland, *[c] artography—Map—Making As ARTFORM*, 2007.  
 Muzeum Azteki, Lodz, Poland, *Swingujacy London, Kolekcja Grabowskiego [Swinging London, Collection of Grabowski]*, 2007.  
 The Discovery Centre, Winchester, Hampshire, 2009.  
 Spanierman Modern, New York, *Mark of the Hand*, 2009.  
 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London, 2009.  
 Spanierman Modern, New York, *Gallery Selections*, 2009.  
 Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida, *Expanding Boundaries: Lyrical Abstraction*, 2009.  
 Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York, *British Subjects: Identify and Self-Fashioning 1965–2009*, 2009.

University Museums, Mechanical Hall Gallery, University of Delaware, *Sound: Print: Record: African American Legacies*, 2009.  
 University Museums, Mechanical Hall Gallery, University of Delaware, *Abstract Relations*, 2010.  
 Tate Liverpool, England, *Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic*, 2010.  
 London Earls Court Exhibition Centre, Brompton Hall, *The Modern & Contemporary Latin American Art Show*, 2010.  
 Spanierman Modern, New York, *Gallery Selections*, 2010.

**SELECTED PUBLIC AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS**

American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, New York  
 Arts Council of Great Britain  
 Boca Raton Museum, Florida  
 Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal  
 Carmen & G.R.N'Namdi Collection  
 JPMorgan Chase, New York  
 Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, London  
 Cornell University, Herbert F. Johnson Museum, Ithaca, New York  
 Currier Gallery, Manchester, New Hampshire  
 Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland  
 De Menil Foundation, Houston  
 Franklin and Marshall College, The Phillips Museum of Art, Lancaster, Pennsylvania  
 Guyana National Collection, Castellani House, Georgetown  
 Herbert Art Gallery And Museum, Coventry, England  
 John Simon Guggenheim Foundation  
 Lloyds of London  
 London Borough of Southwark  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
 Museum of Modern Art, New York  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
 Michigan State University, Kresge Art Center, East Lansing  
 National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston, West Indies  
 New Jersey State Museum, Trenton  
 Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase  
 Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corporation, Toledo, Ohio  
 Port Authority of New York, World Trade Center

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence  
 Royal Academy of Arts, London  
 Royal College of Art, London  
 Tate Gallery, London  
 University of Liverpool  
 University of Delaware  
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
 Westinghouse Corporation  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

**AWARDS**

1962  
 Royal College of Art, Silver Medal  
 1963  
 Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, Painting Purchase Award  
 1966  
 First World Festival of Negro Art, Dakar, Senegal, Grand Prize for Contemporary Art  
 1967  
 Painting Prize, Edinburgh Open 100, Scotland  
 1967  
 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship  
 1973  
 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship  
 1975  
 New York State CAPS Award  
 1977  
 Arts Council of Great Britain Award  
 1992  
 Pollock Krasner Award  
 1998  
 Pollock Krasner Award  
 2006  
 Honorary Fellow, The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Dover, England  
 2007  
 Honorary Doctorate, University of Wolverhampton, England  
 2008  
 Order of the British Empire, Painter and Writer and Services to Art

**SPANIERMAN MODERN**