

The West Hollywood Plummer Park Community Center Hosted Event To Revive Jamaican Jonkonnu Artistic Tradition



Jeffrey Anderson Gunter and Marie Kellier

The City of West Hollywood Community Center in Plummer Park came alive with history, culture and heritage on Saturday, August 10th, when International Eye LA presented 'Two Faces of Jonkonnu: Resistance and Joy.' The event was part of an ongoing project by Jamaican artist Marie Kellier to support revival of Jamaica's Jonkonnu tradition. It was funded by a grant to International Eye LA from the City of West Hollywood Arts Division.

International Eye LA empowers individuals and communities by activating safe spaces with creative, multicultural and

healing activities in arts, culture, business, education and humanities.

The almost capacity audience for 'Two Faces of Jonkonnu: Resistance and Joy' was enraptured as artist Marie Kellier presented an evening devoted to the history, heritage and socio-cultural context of Jamaica's Jonkonnu tradition, which she presented through a contemporary and creative lens. The room was beautifully framed with several 8-foot banners reproduced from a series of lithographs by Jamaican artist Isaac Mendes Belisario, who captured and presented first person accounts of Jonkonnu performances, accompanied by paintings of the elaborate costumes they wore in the 1700's. The lithographs, which Kellier said initiated her investigation into the status of the tradition, were first published in Jamaica between 1837 and 1838 and more recently by the Jamaica Gleaner to shed light on the almost total disappearance of the tradition. Additional paintings of Jonkonnu images by Jamaican artist Bernard Stanley Hoyes rounded out the display and helped to represent a modern interpretation of the practice.



Jankano Supporting Belly Woman

Master of Ceremonies Jeffrey Anderson Gunter officiated the evening's activities and helped to welcome Jonkonnu characters Queen, Belly Woman, Pitchy Patchy, Actor Boy, Jack in the Green and Devil to the red carpet. Original music composed by Ricardo Wilson, M.D. provided the rhythm to which each character walked the red carpet, wearing beautiful Jonkonnu costumes designed and fabricated by Kellier. Each character was highlighted and their history and purpose shared with the intrigued audience.

In presenting excerpts from her ongoing research, Kellier described Jonkonnu as a performance masquerade that was developed and used as a tool for resistance, survival and celebration among enslaved Africans in Jamaica in the 1700's. For those unfamiliar with the tradition, she went on to comment that "Amidst the toil, confinement and rigors of enslavement, artists, musicians, dancers and other creatives from diverse African communities gathered the materials and supplies they needed, found ways to communicate with each

other, carved out time to develop characters, fabricate costumes and present this unique and iconic art form with dance, pantomime and music. Research into Jonkonnu practice she shared, indicated that Jonkonnu performers were feared by plantation owners both because they did not understand it and because Jonkonnu were always suspected of being involved in 'subversive behavior' while 'jonkoonooing.'

A dramatic interpretation of the the Belly Woman character in relation to slave owners during 'Two Faces of Jonkonnu: Resistance and Joy' explored origins of the 'Belly Woman' character in the context of cultural retention, creative resistance, freedom and the human ability to survive and thrive in the face of unspeakable acts of oppression.

Upcoming development of her work on the Jonkonnu tradition, Kellier revealed, included fabricating additional original costumes for the characters King, Horse Head, Cow Head, and House Jonkonnu. She is currently seeking more funding sources while preparing a manuscript, a website, and a feature length film.

The evening concluded with acknowledgement of some of the organizations and individuals who have been instrumental in supporting the work and a photo op session with the Jonkonnu characters. International Eye Los Angeles is additionally supported by grants from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) and Office of Supervisor Holly Mitchell, with organizational support from LA County Department of Arts and Culture and California Arts Council.

The event was produced by MARIKEL.



Jankano Enactment

Bernard Hoyes' "Seven Paintings, a Story in Performance" Wows Spectators at Los Angeles County's Ford Amphitheatre



"Passion of Hexing Rites" scene from Bernard Hoyes' "Seven Paintings" photo credit:

Navis Oliver

Los Angeles – Visual icon Bernard Stanley Hoyes wowed an enthusiastic house recently with his “Seven Paintings, a Story in Performance” at the Ford Amphitheatre. Included as part of the venue’s ever-popular dance series, Hoyes’ production proved to be magical as his art literally jumped off the canvas and came to life in an interdisciplinary materialization that included dance, music and song! Presented by Bernard Hoyes’ Caribbean Fine Arts Publishing and the Jamaica Cultural Alliance, “Seven Paintings” served as a fitting tribute commemorating the 50th anniversary of Jamaica’s Independence.



Scene from “Possession” in
Bernard Hoyes’ “Seven
Paintings”

photo credit: Navis Oliver

“Seven Paintings” serialized a story of ambition and redemption featuring art selections from Hoyes’ popular Revival Series, the choreography of Pat Taylor with her Jazzantiqua Dance Ensemble, drumming in the Yoruba/ Nyabengi tradition from the Kabasa Drum Ensemble and the “Tambourine Chorus.”

“This evening will always hold a special place in my heart,” reveals Hoyes. “I couldn’t have done it alone and am thankful to every single individual that lent their energy to the manifestation of this most wondrous night! It’s not many artists that live to see their art actually come to life on stage. I am humbled by the experience.”



Visual Icon Bernard Hoyes
and wife Lavera take a bow

at “Seven Paintings”

Photo Credit: Harmon Outlaw

A native of Kingston, Jamaica, Hoyes’ recognition and affirmation of traditional African religion and spirituality has continuously garnered international attention stunning audiences worldwide. Oprah Winfrey, Natalie Cole, Steve Harvey, Keenan Ivory Wayans and the National Urban League are among his collectors. Selections of Hoyes’ work have been featured in several television shows, including the Showtime hit series, “Dexter” and movies including Chris Rock’s “I Think I Love My Wife.” President Barack Obama has even been photographed in front of his work.

To experience the work of Bernard Hoyes’ seven paintings and beyond, go to <http://www.BernardHoyes.com>.

Visual Art Master Bernard Hoyes Presents “The Bernard Hoyes and Friends Holiday Art Sale Gala”



Los Angeles – This holiday season will be a wondrous celebration of love, light and vibrant color when Los Angeles’ own cultural icon, visual artist Bernard Stanley Hoyes, not only opens his studio for a two-day sale, but also invites several of his friends from the art community to participate with the offerings as well. The Bernard Hoyes and Friends Art

Holiday Sale Gala will be held Saturday, December 17 and Sunday, December 18 from 2:00 pm- 6:00 pm at his Artist's Studio located at 985 Westchester Place (one block west of Wilton, off Olympic Blvd.) in Los Angeles.

Hoyes' work is currently on display as part of the "Places of Validation, Art & Progression" exhibit organized by the California African American Museum as part of the Getty initiative "Pacific Standard Time: Art in LA 1945-1980" exhibitions; and can be seen in Lyn Kienholz's coffee table New Art Encyclopedia pictorial, "L.A. Rising: SoCal Artist before 1980" also supported by the Getty Foundation.



"Candlelight Vigil"
by Bernard Hoyes/
Finalist in Bombay
Sapphire Artisan
Series

"The holidays always present a special time to gather with family and friends. This gathering of my friends from the art community to offer our crafts to the public is therefore noteworthy at this time. We are artists who have been documenting culture since the 1970's, so this is an incredible opportunity to purchase distinct and exceptional gifts at affordable prices," cites Hoyes.

An internationally celebrated painter, Hoyes' work is known for its African American and Jamaican influences, brilliance in color and depth of spirituality. His recent exhibits include the Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series in San Francisco, presented in partnership with Russell and Danny Simmons' Rush Philanthropic Art Foundation and "Shout" an exhibition celebrating gospel music at Avisca Fine Art Gallery in Atlanta. Hoyes is the recent recipient of the 2010 Florence Sabin Distinguished Alumni Award at Vermont Academy in Saxtons River, VT and selections of Hoyes' work have been featured in

several television shows including the Showtime hit series, "Dexter" and collected by Oprah Winfrey. President Barack Obama has even been photographed in front of his work.

Originals from his collection, as well as watercolors, serigraphs, etchings, limited editions, and poster, framed and unframed art will all be available for discount purchase. The event is free and open to the public and offers made are good for the sale days only.



"Ribbons to Unite"
by Bernard Hoyes

Art lovers unable to attend may browse online at <http://www.BernardHoyes.com> and call 323-732-4601 for discounts and to arrange pick up. Online shoppers may also use Promo Code: HG999 for a 50% online discount good from December 5th through December 20th. (Please note that December 20th is the last day for orders to be received with express shipping in time for Christmas.)