



P.O. Box 7506
Newark NJ 07107

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEWARK, NJ
PERMIT NO. 497

VOL. 2 NO. 1
FALL 2002

Dreamtime is published twice a year.

ALJIRA

A Center for Contemporary Art

DREAMtime

DREAMtime



TRANSFORMATIVE MOVE

The finishing touches are almost completed for Aljira's move. We're excited about reopening our doors and grateful for our supporters who have cheered us on during the transition. Aljira trustees and staff are also thankful for Fausto Sevilla and students from Malcolm X Shabazz High School who created the mural for the temporary façade of our new galleries at 591 Broad Street in Newark. The mural depicts students anxiously waiting to enter Aljira's new space and participate in a series of transformative art experiences. We look forward to seeing you soon!

ABOVE: Mural on the temporary façade at 591 Broad Street by students from Malcolm X Shabazz High School: Sarah Aushberry, Taurean Banks, Mark Berry, Lashay Carraway, Steve Causette, Raheem Chestnut, Willie Clark, Kassin Clyburn, Atiya Coleman, Tishonna Cooper, Amina Curry, Toccara Davis, Tikiyah Goode, Tiyana Green, David Heminway, Juan Hernandez, Carlos Hidalgo, Shaquana Lee, Charisma Marker, Gilberto Lebron Melendez, Saleete Michell, Latoya Mills, Elijah T. Mitchell, Lataya Murchison, Askia Murray, Kareem Payne, Tiffany C. Pompey, Carlos Quinones, Rabih Samuels, Bernice Sanchez, Mustafa Sanders, Jacqueline Smith, Henry Traval, Keyour Watson, Bilal Watson, Kahea Williams and Earl Williams.



PHOTO: ARTHUR PAXTON

RIGHT: New space at 591 Broad Street under construction.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dear Aljira Donor:

The New Jersey Cultural Trust recently designated Aljira as a "Qualified" organization and certified \$300,000 in large gift donations to our endowment fund, making Aljira eligible for additional matching payments in the amount of \$60,000 from the Cultural Trust Fund.

Established in July 2002, The New Jersey Cultural Trust seeks to build a more stable arts, history and humanities community, one that is able to withstand financial downturns, grow its assets and provide the people of New Jersey with the fullest measure of its many benefits. Through a combination of private contributions and State of New Jersey appropriations,

this public/private partnership seeks to initially amass \$200 million, the interest income from which will build endowments, stabilize organizations and fund capital projects.

Aljira thanks and acknowledges Prudential Foundation, JPMorgan Chase and the Warhol Initiative for their awards that not only helped Aljira meet its endowment goal for the period ending June 30, 2002, but also leveraged the 20% match of \$60,000 from the Cultural Trust Fund to our Endowment. We express our gratitude to all who supported the legislation, and particularly to ArtPride and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for their vision and advocacy. To learn more about the New Jersey Cultural Trust, visit their website at www.NJCulturalTrust.org.

And, remember, you can help by making a gift to the Aljira Endowment Fund before June 30, 2003. Questions concerning your contribution should be directed to Lisa R. Saroop, business administrator, at 973-643-6877.

Sincerely,

Victor L. Davson
Executive Director
Aljira, a Center for
Contemporary Art



PHOTO: GREG LESHE

IN TIMES LIKE THESE...

BY CARL E. HAZLEWOOD

I've been thinking of milestones. Most of all the personal milestones of age, coupled—hopefully—with growing wisdom. This wisdom is usually hard won, the result of experiences, some good and a lot bad. Our personal lives are constructed from this residue—what's left over after we have survived the confusion, and cleared away the pain. In a way, organizations like Aljira are living systems afflicted and controlled by experiences and random forces similar to those affecting individuals. How we solve our problems and how we weather sudden storms become the measure and definition of our character.

Now, in its nineteenth year, Aljira's carefully expanding operations have achieved an uneasy adulthood. And, as a maturing organization, in light of our nation's recent tribulations, there are basic questions to be asked that would determine the relevance of its programs to the times we live in. Is art really that important? Can it still exist as a set of insular, self-referential and ritualistic procedures set apart from life?

Each day we watch mesmerized as the surging intensity of real dramas born of human nature and political life are



PHOTO: ROGER L. BROWN

played out in blood and struggle across the world. How does art remain an effective and useful practice within such a contested global system?

How Aljira as an institution responds to questions such as these will be made clearer as we move toward our third decade. But Okwui Enwezor, in his *DOCUMENTA II*, now in Kassel, Germany, has provided a partial means of approaching such questions.

A few years ago Enwezor, as co-curator with this writer of Aljira's, *Modern Life*,

Carl E. Hazlewood in front of an early self-portrait at The Aljira Fine Art Auction 2002

examined the mediumistic objects and installations created by artists as documents of contemporary life. In the catalogue for the exhibition he wrote, "...the 'blasted allegories' of modern culture...haunt contemporary experience and existence. In art, they are reorganized in the most brooding moments where images of loss, conflict, depletion, desire, identity (gendered or racial, national or Diasporan) converge

In Times... continued on page 5



PHOTO: PROPERTY OF THE ARTIST

LEFT: Greg Leshé, *Personal Radar*, 2000. Iris Glicléé print, computer manipulated video still from "Personal Radar", self performance. 17 x 21 in.

BELLOW: *Emerge 2001* artists Megan LeBorious and BJ Ervick.

Aljira's opening exhibition, *Emerge 2001*, would not exist without the help of a group of extraordinary individuals. Guest curator, Arlene Raven, deserves special thanks for her support of every aspect of the program as do members of the Aljira staff who nourished, assisted and encouraged everyone involved with the program. Most importantly, appreciation goes to the 18 enthusiastic artists who made *Emerge 2001* a phenomenal success.

MOVED BY AWE: EMERGE 2001

OPENING JANUARY 16, 2003
Arlene Raven, Curator

Eighteen dreamers gathered in Newark on a September evening last year for the beginning of *Emerge 2001*. Twelve seminars spanned four months, tackling topics that ranged from getting organized and getting into galleries to protecting images with copyright and embarking on financial planning for solvency and retirement.

Over the past 18 years, Aljira has supported emerging and mid-career artists—exhibiting work that defies categorization, often providing an emerging artist's first major exhibition venue.

The *Emerge* program is an exemplary display of Aljira's commitment to artists. Now in its fourth year, *Emerge* has offered more than 70 artists from the greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area the opportunity to expand their careers through a series of professional development seminars, exhibitions and catalogs.

In the language of the Aborigines, "Aljira" is "dreamtime."

A season apart from ordinary existence, Aljira takes time but abides eternal—embracing all that is mythological, utopian, and potential.

For this writing
I search out
the altered state of Aljira,
a place in the mind and heart
where visions emerge
in the process of creation.

Moved by... continued on page 6



PHOTO: ARTHUR PAXTON

TAKING IT TO THE STREET

Aljira's Campaign To Educate Audiences Through Contemporary Art

For more information on how you can support the campaign for contemporary art and art education at Aljira call 973 643-6877 or visit our new location at 591 Broad Street, Newark beginning this fall.

COMPUTER RENDERING: MISS-CATHCART ARCHITECTS



In the last issue of *Dreamtime*, Aljira board chairman, William Jones, described his experience as an art collector in search of contemporary works in Nairobi. This is the second installment of his essay.

PHOTO: ARTHUR PAXTON



LOOKING, LISTENING & COLLECTING:

Art Notes from Nairobi BY WILLIAM JONES

Price is always an issue for collectors. It has been an issue for me at Standard Street galleries for nearly twenty years. I had questions about how much contemporary artists in Kenya benefited financially from the activity that brought their work international attention. Prices of \$4,000 and more are common.

The thinking that resulted in this Standard Street pricing was laudable—that African artists should have spaces designed to present their work advantageously and representation that places them in a league with artists in the West—that art in Nairobi be priced the way it is in New York, London, Paris Berlin, and elsewhere internationally. I suspected, however, that the philosophy was driven by the marketing savvy of a gallery owner who understands the value of slick brochures and judiciously placed press statements.

Art galleries are businesses. They exist to make profits. Unfortunately, artists in Kenya did not protect themselves from exploitation. The clarification of this was at the center of the story that two young artists unfolded for me

The thinking that resulted in this Standard Street pricing was laudable—that African artists should have spaces designed to present their work...

when I stumbled onto the Kuona Trust, an artists' workshop at Kenya National Museum.

Richard Kimathi and John Kamicha, both painters, said that since July 1995, the Museum has provided workspace and materials for visual artists—principally painters, print makers, and sculptors working in wood, clay and metal. These

workshops had predecessors. Kimathi and Kamicha, both in their late twenties, were aware of Paa Ya Paa's tradition of workshops and artists' residencies. (Paa Ya Paa was the first African-owned art center in Kenya.) Kamicha had heard that Paa Ya Paa residents were paid. They were most conversant about the association started in the early 80s by the Ngecha artists, a group of painters who take their name from a village outside Limuru about thirty miles north of Nairobi.

Sane Wadu, Shine Kamau, Meek Gichugu, Chain Muhindi, Eunice Wadu and Shade Kamau, among others, are now familiar names. Sidney Littlefield Kasfir wrote about them in *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa*, the publication that accompanied the 1995 White chapel Art Gallery exhibition of the same name and in *Contemporary African Art*, the 1999 Thames and Hudson

publication. All of these artists came together first in Ngecha to encourage painting among themselves but soon became associated with the exotic naive aesthetic that a Standard Street gallery owner encouraged and brought to the attention of the world. *

THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF THIS ESSAY WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT EDITION OF DREAMTIME.



TAKING IT TO THE STREET

I WANT TO SUPPORT ALJIRA'S CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE AUDIENCES THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ART.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Enclosed is my check for: \$ 100 \$ 250 \$ 500 Other _____

If more convenient, your contribution may be made via:

MasterCard Visa American Express

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

I will submit this to my employer for a matching gift

Name of Employer _____



ALJIRA

A Center for Contemporary Art

P.O. Box 7506

Newark, NJ 07107

ph 973 643-6877 fx 973 643-3594 Aljirainc@aol.com



FROM TOP, CLOCKWISE: Steve Miller, director of the Morris Museum, his wife Jane and Auction chair Linda Finney (in rear); Victor Davson with Clarice and Alfred Jakson; Vickie Snoy (center) with auction volunteers.

AUCTION 2002

REALIST
Prudential
Museums Magazines

EXPRESSIONIST
JPMorgan Chase
Sills Cummis Radin Tischman
Epstein & Gross PA

CUBIST
Johnson & Johnson
PNC Bank
St John & Wayne LLC
Verizon, New Jersey

MODERNIST
City National Bank
of New Jersey
Kirkpatrick &
Lockhart LLP
LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene
& MacRae LLP
The MCJ Foundation
and Amelior Foundation
PSE&G
Robertson, Freilich,
Bruno & Cohen LLC

MEDIA SUPPORT
WBGO/Jazz 88.3 FM

By all accounts The Aljira Fine Art Auction 2002 was an evening of celebration and new experiences. Scores of first-time auction-goers, many of whom were attending their first Aljira outing, watched with delight as each piece of artwork was sold off by veteran auctioneer Harmer Johnson.

Aljira gratefully acknowledges the support of its honorary chairs, Clarice and Alfred Jackson, and its impressive list of sponsors:

In Times... continued from page 2

and become redeployed in the postmodernist critique...and the technological excesses of mass media culture.”

DOCUMENTA II, an expansive, dour, but convincingly global expression of this cultural, political, and social moment, expands vastly upon ideas that could only be touched upon in our own modest *Modern Life*. The exhibition at Kassel has been presented as the ‘Fifth Platform’. The first four platforms were international conferences presented in various parts of the world featuring topics such as *Creolite and Creolizations*, in St.Lucia, and *Under Siege: Four African Cities*, in Lagos, Nigeria.

At home, coming to grips with our confusion after the milestone event of 9/11, we eventually put aside our

doubt and remembered that one of the positive things about art is its transformative nature. It allows us to speak and dream in metaphor. It may not be redemptive in a religious sense, but it holds the possibility of affecting lives in positive ways. Thus, artists continue to do their work.

Aljira affiliated practitioners, Paul Gardere, Helen Ramsaran and Freddy Rodriguez, showed together in *Nexus II: Transformation/Transfiguration*, an exhibition curated by this writer for Skoto Gallery in Chelsea in addition to Whitfield Lovell’s epic drawings at DC Moore Gallery in New York City, have evolved into new tableau steeped in eloquent poetics concerning the elusiveness and fragility of cultural memory. Photographer and artist, Manuel Acevedo was featured at the Jersey City Museum in a solo exhibit, *The Albizu Project*, a multi-media meditation on the life and mythology of



Nationalist Puerto Rican political leader Pedro Albizu Campos, (1891–1965).

So, while that recent real-life American tragedy has left its burden upon the cultural community, the idea of art as an affective practice, and Aljira’s role as a facilitator for artistic realization in this region, will not fade anytime soon. In practical terms, as an after-effect of tragedy, goals for both individuals and organizations have been altered to address the essential, the practical and the personal. ●

PHOTOS: ARTHUR PAXTON



RIGHT: *Emerge 2001* participants at Ken Butler's studio

BELOW: Ken Butler

Move by... continued from page 3

Straddling waking and dreaming, Aljira offered choice and invited complexity. Sheila Ross merged memory and aspiration in the metaphorical form of the building block. Brick by brick, she casts, layers, and collages found detritus and colorful store-bought artifacts. From raw, recycled, and commercial materials in the New York landscape, Ross constructed unique portable walls that exemplify the nomadic nature of her urban existence.

Lisa Lagunes viewed the perimeters of her paintings (brushed and sculpted forms, old pie tins and pillows, in



indeterminate fields of white) to draw the boundary between the two worlds. "My objects are about being on the edge between the art space of galleries and the domestic architecture of personal life."

Rita Grendze pieced and wove original personages from familiar objects. Because her colanders and strainers have each had a utilitarian life in someone else's kitchen, the artist deliberately held their history as she made them new. Emerging always proceeds from obscurity toward visibility. Becoming—as legacy, continuance, reinvestigation, and forward motion—is thus fundamental to the body of visual works of *Emerge 2001* artists. ●

*This article is based on Arlene Raven's essay in the Aljira *Emerge 2001* exhibition catalog.*

ALJIRA RECEIVES MAJOR GRANTS FOR FY 2003

The trustees and staff of Aljira are grateful for the following support:

\$75,000 to \$40,000

JPMorgan Chase Foundation
New Jersey State Council on the Arts

\$25,000 to \$20,000

The Prudential Foundation
Johnson & Johnson

\$16,000 to \$10,000

New Jersey State Cultural Trust
Governor's Award
New Jersey Commerce and Economic
Growth Commission



Funding for Aljira has been made possible, in part, by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (administered by the City of Newark); The JPMorgan Chase Foundation; Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; Johnson & Johnson; Prudential Foundation; NJ Commerce and Economic Growth Commission; membership and individual contributions.

Special thanks to the New Newark Foundation, Victoria Foundation, Edison Properties LLC, Newark Downtown District, Lowenstein Sandler PC, and Clarsen Investment Research.

ALJIRA Board of Trustees

Hugo X. Bastidas
Peter Bocour
Vice Chair
Linda Finney
Paula Hunchar
William Jones
Chair

Frederick A. Morton, Jr., Esq.
Secretary
Clarence H. Seniors
Jacqueline Thomas
Finance Chair

ALJIRA Staff

Victor L. Davson
Executive Director
Shana O'Hara
Associate Director of
Programs & Operations
Cicely Cottingham
Art Director,
Aljira Design

Bambang Widodo
Principal Designer,
Aljira Design
Lisa R. Saroop
Business Administrator