

unity



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

African-American History Month
February 2019
Edition No. 94

Ready for the flight of a lifetime



INSIDE:

**Proud symbols of heritage and hope
Chef's school graduates to culinary hall of fame**

Unity is published in February (African-American History Month), March (Women's History Month), May (Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month), June (Sustainability Issue), September (Hispanic Heritage Month) and November (Native American Heritage Month).

Artistic griot challenges historic narratives



A painter and sculptor, Titus Kaphar earned an MFA from Yale University.

Seeking “unspoken truths about the nature of history” is one of artist Titus Kaphar’s missions in life. An innovative painter and sculptor – as well as a social critic – Kaphar often manipulates Western art styles and mediums to address social concerns past and present. Or as the Boston Globe explained it: “His paintings might look like copies of well-known works, but they include crucial revisions, additions and subtractions that are both arresting and illuminating.”

“My work deals with history directly,” Kaphar told the Globe. “Coming to New England, seeing the history of this place, seeing the beautiful architecture that’s been around for hundreds of years, was mind-blowing for me. It was a direct inspiration for the work.”

Kaphar’s acclaimed approach to art played a large role in his selection as a 2018 MacArthur Foundation Fellow. He and 24 other recipients from across the country each received a \$625,000 stipend payable over a five-year period.

A native of Kalamazoo, Michigan, Kaphar earned a BFA from San Jose State University in California, in 2001, and a master of fine arts from the Yale University School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut, five years later.

Now a resident of New Haven, Kaphar is about to embark on a new venture that aligns with his commitment to social engagement. His New Haven-based art space, NXTHVN, is slated to open in winter 2019. It will provide studio spaces and residencies for artists and curators.

Kaphar is the recipient of numerous prizes and awards including a 2014 Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Fellowship, a 2015 Creative Capital grant, a 2016 Robert R. Rauschenberg Artist as Activist grant, a 2018 Art for Justice Fund grant and the 2018 Rappaport Prize.

The artist’s work has been included in solo exhibitions at the Seattle (Washington) Art Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; The Museum of Modern Art PS1 in New York City; and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Kaphar’s work is also at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; the 21C Museum Collection; The Museum of Modern Art in New York City; the Brooklyn Museum, in New York; the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven; and the Pérez Art Museum Miami in Florida.

Upcoming exhibitions include “Suffering From Realness” at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in New Bedford, which is scheduled to open April 13, 2019.



Titus Kaphar’s exhibit, “Suffering From Realness,” is slated to open in April 2019. Photos courtesy of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Effusive praise for a poignant playwright



Named a MacArthur Fellow in 2018, Dominique Morisseau is currently an artist in residence at the Signature Theatre in New York City.

“Actress, Playwright, Poetess, Detroit Girl w/ a Brooklyn Undertone and an LA chill.” Those are the words Dominique Morisseau chose for her Instagram bio, decidedly subtle descriptors that omit a slew of superlative achievements.

Morisseau has written nine plays. Among them is a much-acclaimed trilogy titled “The Detroit Projects.” She’s served as a co-producer of Showtime’s “Shameless” comedy series. And she’s amassed an enviable assortment of honors, including being named a Class of 2018 MacArthur Foundation Fellow. Morisseau was among what the foundation called “25 extraordinarily creative people” – including a computer scientist, art curator and social justice advocate – “who inspire us all.” Each fellow was awarded a stipend of \$625,000 (otherwise known as the “Genius Grant”), to be paid quarterly over five years.

The foundation recognized Morisseau for using “lyrical dialogue to construct emotionally complex characters who exhibit humor, vulnerability and fortitude as they cope with sometimes desperate circumstances. Her plays juxtapose beauty with destruction, hope with despair, and bring to light the complicated realities of urban African-American communities.”



Dominique Morisseau also campaigns for social and political change. Photos courtesy of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Morisseau began studying acting in 1996 at the University of Michigan. Disappointed with the theater department curriculum’s lack of diversity, she wrote “The Blackness Blues: Time to Change the Tune, A Sister Story,” a play for herself and other African-American women in theater.

After earning her BFA in 2000, she moved to New York City and delved even further into a career as a playwright. Morisseau has had work commissioned by the Steppenwolf Theatre, the Hip Hop Theater Festival, the South Coast Repertory and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; and her work has been staged at the Public Theater, the Williamstown Theatre Festival and the Atlantic Theater Company. She is currently a playwright in residence at the Signature Theatre in New York City.

Morisseau’s next major achievement as a playwright is expected to make its Broadway debut in spring 2019. The musical, “Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations,” has been performed in Toronto, Canada, and Los Angeles, California.

“It felt like a really good match for me to tell (the story of the Temptations, who hailed from the “Motor City”) since I was passionate about writing about Detroit,” Morisseau told Hour Detroit magazine. “For me, it’s important to reclaim our city from the myth-makers and tell the truth about who we are.”

Proud symbols of heritage and hope

Although their creations are distinctly different, each artist featured in this issue of *Unity* captures the essence of African-American culture in his or her work.

Jimmy James Greene

Jimmy James Greene was born and raised in the small community of Xenia, Ohio. He says his family and teachers always encouraged his artistic pursuits, and they viewed being an artist as a viable and worthwhile occupation. After an apprenticeship with an acclaimed afro-centric muralist, Greene graduated from The Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in illustration. Since then, his work has become indicative of the communal expressions of the African Diaspora generally, and the African-American experience specifically.



"Fiery Fro"
by Jimmy James Greene

African-American heritage and culture are constant themes in Greene's work. The image of the confident woman in "Fiery Fro" – a fusion of orange, blue, purple and hints of red – portrays the afro as a cultural symbol of racial pride, identity and a connection to an African heritage.

"Buddy Bolden's Jazz" pays tribute to a jazz pioneer who blends

church and social music. Greene says in jazz and democracy, group participation and cooperation are key. To make this point, the musicians in this piece are multiracial. The background is a reference to quilts that are a prevalent art form in the African-American community.

"Each One Teach One" is based on a photograph of an intergenerational reading lesson. The colorful background is meant to portray the overlapping of generations.

A resident of New York City, Greene says his artwork speaks to the African-American community through references to history, music and culture. His work has been shown in numerous one-person exhibits and group showings. One of Greene's well-known public works is "The Children's Cathedral" mural at the Utica Avenue Subway Station in Brooklyn, New York.

Picture That ART CONSULTANTS

For more information on our cultural fine art services, visit www.picturethatart.com.



"Buddy Bolden's Jazz"
by Jimmy James Greene



"Each One Teach One"
by Jimmy James Greene

Stella Singleton Jones

Stella Singleton Jones started her art career in the eighth grade when a teacher entered her plaster sculpture in a competition. Her entry won first place.

The Otis Art Institution recommended her for admission to Santa Monica High School, considered to have one of the best art departments in California. After high school graduation, Jones enrolled at Santa Monica Junior College, where she earned an associate's degree in liberal arts. While at the junior college, Jones discovered her true talent as an abstract stone sculptress. She also attended the University of California-Los Angeles, where she studied art and business.



"Unity" by Stella Singleton Jones

After mourning the death of her brother and recovering from a debilitating disease, Jones remembers responding to a challenge from her physician to not give up hope. "I remembered my study in college was the arts," says Jones, "and I decided I would give my all to the art world as long as I was able to inspire others not to give up on their dreams. I returned to my first love of stone sculpting."



"Strength" by Stella Singleton Jones

Jones' piece, "Unity," is a black chlorite stone sculpture that was given to the Obamas and displayed in the Oval Office at the White House. Jones says it is being stored in the archives until Barack Obama's library is completed.

The smattering of color on the tip adds a subtle accent to the piece titled "Strength." It was created for a pre-Academy Awards show, says Jones. Her visualization of shapes, colors and textures is expressed through "Solitude," which displays circular movements with swirls of gold, red and cream tones.



"Solitude" by Stella Singleton Jones

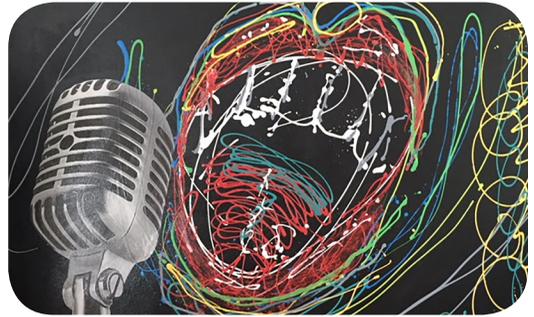
Jones believes her passion and strength are evident in her work, and the love and support from family and friends allow her the freedom to be creative.

Charles Caldwell

Charles Caldwell has traveled and lived throughout the United States but remains rooted in New Jersey. Caldwell's family has lived in Morristown and Newark since the 1900s, and it was in Morristown that his talent was first recognized and nurtured. He credits his mother and great-great grandmother with putting him on the artistic path.

"They enrolled me in my first art class and supplied me with inks and paints," says Caldwell, "and when an animated-film artist taught me how to draw Walt Disney characters at age 7, I knew I wanted to be an artist." Caldwell graduated from the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Art degree.

Mixed media and strong, abstract colorful lines are hallmarks of Caldwell's work.



"Perspective - Reclaiming My Pride" by Charles Caldwell

He says his latest series, Perspective, is an abstract expression of everyday themes.

"Perspective - Reclaiming My Pride" projects a contrasted juxtaposition of bright, drizzled colors symbolizing a mouth speaking out on social and political issues into a shaded gray mike. "The Dancer" represents all of us by communicating through the movement of dance.



"The Dancer" by Charles Caldwell

Caldwell says he always wanted to paint his piano outdoors and then have everyone play on it. His first piano became the artwork that inspired him to paint an actual canvas piece titled "The Pianist," using his wife, who's wearing a glittery dress, as his model.

Caldwell conveys his viewpoint and love for his community through his mixed-media artwork and he makes "giving back" a priority by donating time, talent and money to

neighborhood programs. His accomplishments include a piece presented to Maya Angelou, a commissioned portrait of musician Wyclef Jean, a mural in Jean's home and public artworks on display throughout northern New Jersey.



"The Pianist" by Charles Caldwell

Pioneering chef is all wrapped up in sushi



Marisa Baggett is the first female African-American graduate of the California Sushi Academy.



If Marisa Baggett were not a sushi chef, she would, she says, be a horticulturist specializing in succulents, a novelist, a linguist fluent in at least five languages or perhaps a comedian.

The first female African-American graduate of the California Sushi Academy, Baggett has made it her life's work to share the art of making sushi. She has also written two cookbooks, "Sushi Secrets: Easy Recipes for the Home Cook" and "Vegetarian Sushi Secrets: 101 Healthy and Delicious Recipes."

Baggett got her start at The Chocolate Giraffe, the Mississippi restaurant and catering company she opened when she was a mere 22 years old, and later expanded to The Chocolate Giraffe Coffeehouse. Her specialty then was Southern cuisine infused with global accents. A customer's request for a sushi dinner party piqued her interest in the art form and she added it to her restaurant's menu.

Later, she closed her restaurants in hopes of becoming a sushi chef, and headed to Memphis, Tennessee, to work at Tsunami Restaurant, a move that surrounded her with seafood and Asian fare and solidified her longings for a career in sushi.

From Memphis, Baggett headed to The Golden State to study at the California Sushi Academy as part of the professional sushi chef program, finding inspiration along the way. "There is inspiration in everything," she says. "The way a candle smells, the colorful pattern in a scarf, the sound of candies shuffled in a dish ... I like to think that by keeping my five senses open, I can translate the pleasant things of life into my food."

At the California Sushi Academy, Baggett studied under sushi masters and assisted head sushi chefs in Venice and Hermosa Beach. She also helped cater sushi for noteworthy events in Los Angeles and ultimately completed the program.

She returned to Memphis, working as a sushi chef for several years while gaining acclaim for preparing sushi with a Southern twist. Today, she teaches home cooks how to prepare sushi without needing expensive or exotic ingredients.

"Teaching the art of sushi has been the most meaningful experience," Baggett says. "Whether the students are children or adults, there is nothing like seeing the 'a ha' moment on someone's face when it just clicks."

"I like to think that by keeping my five senses open, I can translate the pleasant things of life into my food."

Chef's school graduates to hall of fame

From the year 2000, Chef Joe Randall's Cooking School in Savannah, Georgia, instructed students from coast to coast. Randall taught four classes almost nonstop with breaks only at Christmastime, New Year's Day and Fourth of July week. His students ranged in age from 30 to 70.



Chef Joe Randall has more than 50 years of experience in the food-service industry. Photo by John Carrington Photography

Randall closed the school in 2016 and began a brief period of retirement. Now his cooking school – where he once taught such popular classes as “Taste of Savannah,” featuring foods of the Lowcountry, and “Valentine’s Date Night – is the home of the African-American Chefs Hall of Fame. Randall is one of the hall’s inductees, along with the legendary Edna Lewis, Leah Chase (known as the “Queen of Creole Cuisine”) and Robert W. Lee.

A native of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Randall has been in the hospitality and food-service industry for 50 years. He worked his way up from Air Force flight line kitchens to executive chef at a dozen restaurants.

His earliest mentor was Robert W. Lee, “one of the first African-American chefs of a major property in Pennsylvania,” notes Randall. “There were a lot of Caucasians that didn’t want to work for him,” so he hired kitchen staffers from other places. “He ran that kitchen with an entirely African-American crew. I learned to cook Southern up north from all those wonderful cooks from cities such as Atlanta.”

Working in Lee’s kitchen “was a joy,” says Randall. “He believed in what he did. He studied and he shared it.”

Thanks to the tutelage of Lee and others, Randall shared his expertise in, and passion for, the cuisine he says has been universally badmouthed.

“In this country we have a habit of condemning something in order to legitimize something else. In the ‘70s and ‘80s, there was a clear push” to tie Southern cuisine to poor health.

Yes, generations of Southern cooks used ingredients – pork fat, butter and others – to season food. But Southern dishes, and the people who cook them, Randall says, have evolved.

COUNTRY CORNBREAD

Recipe by Chef Joe Randall

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup buttermilk

Combine the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar and salt in a large bowl. In a small separate bowl, combine the eggs and milk. Combine the liquid and dry ingredients.

Place the butter in a 9-inch, cast-iron skillet and place in a 425 F oven until the butter is sizzling. Pour the hot butter into the batter and stir well. Pour the batter into the hot skillet and bake 20 to 25 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Yield: 8 servings



Ready for the flight of a lifetime



A native of California, Victor Glover was stationed in cities across the U.S. and Japan while serving in the Navy. Photo courtesy of NASA

In 2019, Victor J. Glover Jr. will embark on a journey unlike any he's ever taken.

He'll be one of the first crew members on SpaceX, a commercially built capsule whose ultimate destination will be the International Space Station. SpaceX – launched atop a Falcon 9 rocket – and Boeing's Starliner are the first vehicles to put Americans into orbit since the space shuttle program ended in 2011.

Glover, selected as an astronaut in 2013 while serving as a legislative fellow in the Senate, is training for Crew-1, the first post-certification mission of SpaceX's Crew Dragon spacecraft, followed by a lengthy mission aboard the space station. He is the only African-American in NASA's new group of astronauts.

"I am overwhelmed and humbled to be a part of the @SpaceX team for my first flight!" Glover announced on Twitter on Aug. 3, 2018. "Feeling extremely grateful that the agency and our leadership have confidence in these crews to be part of such a critical mission. This is a big step for @NASA and for our Nation!"

Glover was born in Pomona, California. After graduating from high school (where he excelled in math and science), he earned a bachelor of science in general engineering, and master of science degrees in flight test engineering, systems engineering and military operational art and science. He also received a Certificate in Legislative Studies during his time as a fellow in the nation's capital.

His long stint as an aviator, which began in 2001, includes time spent as a test pilot in the F/A-18



Victor Glover undergoes skills training, with Doug Wheelock assisting. Photo by James Blair / NASA

Hornet, Super Hornet and EA-18G Growler. Glover, his wife and his children have been stationed in cities throughout the U.S. and Japan. The decorated Navy veteran, a lieutenant commander, was deployed during combat and in peacetime, and accumulated 2,000 flight hours in more than 40 aircraft, more than 400 carrier landings and 24 combat missions. During one of his deployments, he received a Space Systems Certificate from the Naval Postgraduate School.

In 2015, he completed Astronaut Candidate Training, including scientific and technical briefings, instruction in International Space Station systems, spacewalks, robotics, physiological training, T-38 flight training, and water and wilderness survival training. Two years later, he was featured in the PBS documentary "Beyond a Year in Space," which introduced viewers to the next generation of astronauts training to leave Earth's orbit.

Glover is a member of several organizations including Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Experimental Test Pilots.

About the International Space Station

The largest single structure humans ever put into space has been continuously occupied since Nov. 2, 2000. As of January 2018, 230 individuals from 18 countries have visited ISS. Top participating countries are the United States (145 people) and Russia (46 people).

On the cover: Astronaut Victor J. Glover Jr. Photo by James Blair / NASA. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitalityjv.com. ©2019 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Content Spectrum.

