

its limited and often cruel and racist view of the Bible—primarily the Book of Revelations and little else—is embraced by many in the religious right. This is a well-researched study of a phenomenon that should not be overlooked.

—Chuck Rothman
Siena College

Visual and Performing Arts

15-4-0508

Dallow, Jessica and Matilsky, Barbara C. **Family Legacies: The Art of Betye, Lezley, and Alison Saar.** Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2005. 144 pp. Illus. ISBN 0-295-98564-X, \$24.95 (pb).

This catalog is a comprehensive survey of signature works by Betye Saar and her two daughters, Lezley and Alison. A third daughter, Tracye, contributes an essay. The works were selected for an exhibition at the Ackland Art Museum, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Each of the artists explores relationships of memory and nature to the female body and African-American history and world cultures.

While Betye's works tend to evoke the spiritual presence of persons unseen through the meticulous arrangement of found personal objects of a bygone era, her daughters rely on more direct representations of the human form. Alison's works often suggest iconic statues from Central Africa that serve as vessels for the spirit world.

Betye refers to Alison as "the sculptor," Lezley as "the painter," and herself as "the object maker." Combining improvisation and rhythmic balance in a "stream of conscious way" is important to her creative process. Lezley appears to be more interested in conveying a subject's emotional content, and her works visually bridge the styles of both Alison and Betye by using an approach that incorporates the characteristics of portraiture common in certain traditional forms of commercial sign painting.

All three artists convey complex and compelling histories with works that are strong, sometimes defiant, and visually as well as thematically rich. The text provides a brief overview of each artist, allowing us to gain a better understanding of the influences that have contributed to their expression of identity through the processes of image making. *Family Legacies* is an inspiring chronicle of familial creative artistic expressions of great depth and universality.

—Stephen Tyson
Siena College

15-4-0509

Hills, Patricia and Renn, Melissa. **Syncopated Rhythms: 20th Century African American Art from the George and Joyce Wein Collection.** Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2006. 100 pp. Illus. Foreword by Ed Bradley. ISBN 1-881450-23-6, \$24.95 (pb).

The first public exhibition of this outstanding private collection of modern African-American art took place in Boston, during the 2005–2006 winter season. George Wein, the founder, in 1954, of the Newport Jazz Festival, and his wife Joyce collected the master works reproduced in the exhibition catalogue. The Weins had acquired some works by modern European artists, but once they bought a collage by Romare Bearden in 1970, they turned their intellectual and aesthetic interest to African-American artists of the twentieth century. That work was *New Orleans Farewell*, a jazz funeral.

The works of 34 artists are included, with from one to six of their paintings, drawings, prints, or sculptures reproduced in color for each. For the artists, curators Hills and Renn have written concise but informative biographical information. The discussion of each work's formal qualities and significance in the Weins' collection is of great interest and pleasure as the reader examines the reproductions.

Familiar artists are here: Alston, Barthe, Catlett, Crite, the Delaney brothers, Lawrence, Lewis, and Woodruff. Ernie Barnes, the athlete, and Miles Davis, the musician, are also included. Styles may vary from self-taught Minnie Evans to surrealist Wilfredo Lam, but the overriding principle is that of expressive modernism found in both the painting and in jazz music. That George and Joyce Wein collected so much of what they loved, and that it is available in this catalogue, is a boon to all art collections and the general reader. Recommended.

—Betty Kaplan Gubert
New York, N.Y.

15-4-0510

Seligman, Thomas K. and Loughran, Kristyne, eds. **Art of Being Tuareg: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World.** Seattle: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History; dist. by Univ. of Washington Press, 2006. 292 pp. Illus. ISBN 0-9748729-6-2, \$75.00 (cl); 0-9748729-4-6, \$45.00 (pb).

Tuareg! What does that name symbolize to you? Does it perhaps conjure a romantic image of the "Blue Men," nomads of the Sahara, resistance fighters of the 1990s, or the name of a Volkswagen SUV? Well, time to update! *The Art of Being Tuareg* showcases today's Tuareg: a proud, adaptive, and exceptional people (whose men cover their faces in vibrant indigo veils) living in many West African nations. With strikingly beautiful images, the authors blend the history, culture, and art of the Tuareg as the people deal with the increasing demands of globalization and modernity.

Stemming from an exhibition at Stanford University and UCLA, the book gives the reader a glimpse of the unique and often harsh world that the Tuareg inhabit. Covering three decades of research from American, European, and Tuareg scholars, it is organized into essays covering history, environment (the Sahara), poetry, language, the *inadan* (the artisans of smiths and leatherworkers), religious beliefs, Islam, music, clothing, gender roles, women, jewelry, amulets, the Cross of Agadez, and the Ouhoulou and Oumba family (three generations of male *inadan* and female *tinadan* artists) and how they

reflect Tuareg cultural values and identity. Including color photographs from the exhibition, images not included in the exhibit, and photos of Tuareg life, this is a wonderful book for scholar and student alike, highly recommended for academic, African, art, and ethnic studies collections.

—Melissa Aho
Metropolitan State Univ., St. Paul, Minn.

15-4-0511

Shaw, Gwendolyn DuBois. *Portraits of a People: Picturing African Americans in the Nineteenth Century*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2006. 184 pp. Illus. ISBN 0-295-98571-2, \$40.00 (pb).

A summation of the beginnings of American fine art would make two major points: its use and adaptations of European artistic conventions and styles, and its emphasis on subject matter of the "real world," namely, landscapes and portraiture. American artists saw art as a means of the verification of American's individualistic values and ambitions.

Given that the proprietors of destiny and success were largely white, middle-class males, it is perhaps surprising that African-American portraiture in the early nineteenth century even exists. The portraits examined in this book reveal not only unknown individuals and lives, but also the scope and influence of the free African-American population. Many know of Phillis Wheatley's poetry; less known is the significance of the inclusion of her portrait on the frontispiece of her book, which, as Shaw states, "visually [emancipates] Wheatley's middle-class, black, female body from a dehumanized social identity." The double portrait of the wealthy Jewish merchant Ashur Moses Nathan and his mixed-race son depicts a close, loving relationship between them; the son's arm on his father's shoulder and their clasped hands in front refute our stereotypical notions of the universal exploitation by white men of black women and their mutual children. More startling are the white faces included, treated as "black" in their time because their racial heritage was one-eighth African American.

Shaw clearly draws the evolution of the depiction of African Americans in art from human "spaniel dogs" in aristocratic portraits through their growing participation in society and the consequent humanizing of them in portraiture. Her vocabulary may be a bit scholarly for some, but the works tell a compelling story.

—Phyllis Chapman
Siena College

Biography/Autobiography

15-4-0512

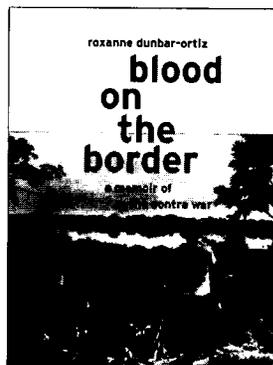
Blakely, Robert J., with Marcus Shepherd. *Earl B. Dickerson: A Voice for Freedom and Equality*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2006. 276 pp. Series: Chicago Lives. ISBN 0-8101-2335-5, \$24.95.

Blakely's biography fills important pieces of the puzzle regarding the poorly documented history of African Americans. He argues that leadership in the civil rights movement went beyond the handful of individuals highlighted in American history textbooks. By tracing the life of Earl Dickerson, Blakely chronicles the emergence of the black middle class, the impact of segregation, and the community support networks that allowed the highly motivated Dickerson to achieve success in a variety of ways.

The material for this biography is fascinating. The setting for the story of Dickerson's life is turn-of-the-century Jim Crow South and segregated Chicago. Blakely paints a picture of the daily struggles faced by African Americans as he describes Dickerson's constant striving for upward mobility and justice despite strong resistance. This book leaves one with a desire to read more accounts of unsung African Americans, heroes and otherwise.

The content is engaging, but the writing style is stiff and not lively. However, the content overcomes this weakness to make reading the book worthwhile. Dickerson is certainly an individual we ought to know about. His inspiring efforts to effect change have improved society for all of us.

—Jeff Torlina
Utah Valley State College



15-4-0513

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *Blood on the Border: A Memoir of the Contra War*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2005. 304 pp. ISBN 0-89608-741-7, \$18.00 (pb).

The Contra War in Nicaragua during the Reagan administration was a visible part of American foreign policy in the Cold War. Seemingly unable to distinguish

between a true nationalistic liberation movement and its own anticommunist rhetoric, the American government became fully involved in the affairs of Nicaragua by supporting the Contras, many of whom were associated with the previously overthrown Somoza regime. Activist Dunbar-Ortiz, currently a professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at California State University, East Bay, was part of the indigenous resistance during this time. She writes from the perspective of her own involvement and knowledge, including time in the Mosquitia region with the Miskitu people.

Blood on the Border, however, is not just an examination of the Contra War but also the third volume of Dunbar-Ortiz's memoirs recounting life as an activist. For those interested in developments and conditions in Nicaragua during the Contra War as well as in understanding the mind of an activist, this is a useful work. Of particular value are comments and analysis regarding the relationship between the indigenous Miskitus, the Sandinistas, and the Contras. To get

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