

From January 11 through March 5, 2021, the exhibition, ***Works by William E. Johnson***, will be on view at Mary Baldwin's Hunt Gallery.

William E. Johnson, a native of Albemarle County, started his creative journey at a very early age. At the age of nine William discovered that he had a special ability. Growing up in the country, William had many resources to create from. He would collect bugs, shells, rocks, dried plants, and draw from observation. He taught himself how to use shading to make his drawings have a sense of volume and life. He also was inspired to create from his grandmother, mother, classmates, and the village where he grew up. Art making was a strong part of his village. The civil rights movement, Integration, cultural identity, self-discovery, and understanding have been the main sources of his work.

The artist writes the following about his work:

My work reflects the experiences of African Americans. As an artist, I am driven by needs that are both aesthetic, spiritual, and social.

I am in search of cultural identity, self-discovery, and understanding. It is very important that my work becomes a vital community resource. I want to establish a direct relationship with people of all socioeconomic and educational levels. I want my work to reflect a continuum of aesthetic principles derived from Africa and America.

My challenge, as an artist, is to find ways to use both the spiritual and material powers of art in such a way that my expressions become a vehicle for the understanding of people.

Mr. Johnson earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University where he majored in Painting and Printmaking. He is presently an adjunct professor at both Virginia State University and Virginia Commonwealth University's Art Education Department. He was a secondary art teacher for Richmond Public Schools for twenty-nine years. He retired in June 2019. He is one of the co-founding members of BAAAR (Black American Artists Alliance - Richmond). Art making, working with different materials, is a big part of William's life.

Hunt Gallery is dedicated to the exhibition of contemporary work in all media by regionally and nationally recognized artists. The gallery is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday during the academic year. Visitors to the gallery will be limited to thirty visitors at a time, maintaining 6 feet of social distance and all parties wearing masks (unless otherwise posted). Hunt Gallery's schedule for the 2020–21 academic year can be found online at www.marybaldwin.edu/arts/huntgallery.