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BAC GALLERY EXHIBITION SURVEYS THE 50 YEAR CAREERS OF TWO ICONIC BROOKLYN ARTISTS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Otto Neals & Emmett Wigglesworth: Kindred Spirits Forging Forward
Friday, September 24, 2010 - January 14, 2011

BROOKLYN, NY - (September 1, 2010) BAC Gallery, in conjunction with the year-long initiative *Black Brooklyn Renaissance, Black Arts + Culture, 1960 - 2010*, presents ***Otto Neals & Emmett Wigglesworth: Kindred Spirits Forging Forward***, opening on September 24 with a public reception. The exhibition features selected works on paper and canvas, and sculpture spanning the 50 year careers of two iconic Brooklyn artists whose works are highly influenced by personal history and life experience.

Private Preview Reception (open to press): Thursday, September 23, 2010, 6-8pm

Public Opening Reception: Friday, September 24, 2010, 6-8pm

Dumbo Arts Festival Hours: Saturday, September 25, 2010, 12-4pm

Black Brooklyn Renaissance is a holistic look at Black culture and arts in Brooklyn over the past five decades. The project explores the ways in which artists of the African Diaspora retain ties to mid-century social and political movements, and preserve traditions across generations. Joining together local cultural institutions and organizations across Brooklyn, Brooklyn Arts Council's goal is to educate a new generation of artists and audiences about Brooklyn's Black artistic legacies by encouraging attendance at a wide array of BAC curated and supported programs. For more info visit brooklynartscouncil.org/blackbrooklynrenaissance

As the early 1960's inspired solidarity among artists of African descent in the United States, a new visual vocabulary of symbols rooted in the African experience emerged. This new vocabulary is depicted figuratively in Neals' early woodcuts and in prose found in Wigglesworth's sketches from the 1970's. As artists living through a 50 year period wrought by significant change, including the upheaval of traditional values and the growth of the global community, Neals and Wigglesworth understand humanity's great potential and have long sought to demonstrate this through their art.

DUMBO FIRST THURSDAY GALLERY WALK EVENTS

Thursday, October 7, 2010 – 6:30pm:

Storytelling by Emmett Wigglesworth

Thursday, December 2, 2010 – 6:30pm:

Artist talk with Otto Neals and Emmett Wigglesworth

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Otto Neals is a primarily self taught painter, sculptor and printmaker who's career spans more than 50 years. Neals studied briefly at the Brooklyn Museum with Isaac Soyer and at the Bob Blackburn Printmaking Workshop with Mohammed Khalil, Roberto DeLamonica and Krishna Reddy. In 1958 Neals participated in the newly founded Fulton Art Fair where he met influential artists Tom Feelings, Al Hollingsworth, Vivian Schuyler Key, Vincent Smith as well as Ernie Crichlow and Jacob Lawrence, the co-Directors of the fair. He was also a founding member of the Harlem based group, Weusi Artists which maintained a gallery called, Nyumba Ya Sanaa.

In addition to exhibiting his work widely in galleries and museums, images of Neals' work have been included in magazines such as *Ebony Magazine*, *Elan Magazine*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *Time Out*, *African Voices*, *The International Review of African American Art*, *Who's Who in American Art* and the cover of the June 1986 *Black Enterprise*, for which he also posed. Artist and writer Elton Fax included Neals in "Black Artists of the New Generation," one of his many books about art. Neals also has work in several private and public collections including those of Harry Belafonte, Randy Weston, Congressman John Lewis, Oprah Winfrey, the Ghana National Museum, The Studio Museum and The Schomburg Library. Neals received several commissions through which he has produced work for the Harlem Walk of Fame, The Brooklyn Children's Center and the Imagination Playground in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY, for which he was awarded the NYC Arts Commissions Award for Excellence in Design. Originally from South Carolina, Neals has resided in Brooklyn, NY since childhood.

Emmett Wigglesworth is a muralist, painter, sculptor, fabric designer and poet who has been creating for over five decades. He was born in Philadelphia, PA, where he attended the College of Art and later enlisted in the military service. He was honorably discharged from the U. S. Marine Corp. in 1957 and has been a New York resident since 1958.

Wigglesworth has designed and illustrated several books and magazines for various publishing companies including Harper and Row, McGraw Hill, Macmillan Press, American Books and Sesame Street magazine. He has written poetry which he combines with his printmaking. He produced a documentary on aging, while simultaneously designing the covers for two volumes of the Journal of Black Poetry. He has also taught art at the New Muse in Brooklyn, the J.O.I.N. Center, the Children's Art Carnival, the Harlem Parents Association in Manhattan and for a number of special programs for the Board of Education, where he taught academics through art.

Wigglesworth has exhibited in Ghana, and throughout the U.S. His mural commissions include private homes, PS 181 Elementary School in Brooklyn, NY, the NY Cultural Council, Metropolitan Transit Authority, Kings County Hospital, Abyssinian Development Corporation and the Brooklyn New York Children's Center. Wigglesworth is a member of the National Conference of Artists, the Weusi Artists NYC, Association of Caribbean and American Artists, AAA Artists and Cross Sections, as well as the Fulton Art Fair Artists.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

WENDY JONES is a Brooklyn based independent curator and art consultant. Jones has curated exhibitions at several galleries and art spaces in Brooklyn. She has hosted art salons in her home and represented a number of artists at Art off the Main, an annual art fair in New York City. Most recently, Jones served as the Project Coordinator for

ARTCURIAN, a mural sized painting exhibition in Downtown Brooklyn, featuring the work of 40 artists from the African Diaspora. Jones also manages an online art gallery focused on painting on canvas and paper, sculpture and photography, is curator at the Grace Baptist Church Worship Arts Center in Mount Vernon, New York and serves on the board of South of the Navy Yard Artists (SONYA). Jones holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Syracuse University and a Master of Arts degree from New York University.

ABOUT BAC GALLERY

BAC Gallery (111 Front Street, Suite 218) is located in the heart of the vibrant DUMBO arts district and offers artists an opportunity to show their art in an environment frequented by a host of arts enthusiasts and professionals – from collectors, artists and administrators to art dealers and community organizers. Regular gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 11am-5pm. All of the artists included in the BAC Gallery exhibition program are members of BAC's Online *Registry of Brooklyn Artists*. Contact Gallery Director Courtney J. Wendroff @ 718-625-0080 or galler@brooklynartscouncil.org for more information.

ABOUT BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL (BAC)

Brooklyn Arts Council brings leadership and energy to every part of Brooklyn's arts scene, supporting and connecting it all. It doesn't matter where you fit into the arts—artist, audience member, participant, venue, educator or supporter—we want you to create and experience the arts in every neighborhood of Brooklyn.

BAC gives grants, presents free and affordable arts events, trains artists and arts professionals, teaches students, incubates new projects and promotes artists and cultural groups across our borough. Brooklyn's cultural anchor since 1966, BAC has also been the catalyst helping the arts community grow.

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BAC Gallery participates in DUMBO 1st Thursday. Come down the first Thursday of every month for special programming and extended gallery hours! BAC 1st Thursday programs are made possible, in part, by support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

MetLife Foundation

Black Brooklyn Renaissance is sponsored by MetLife Foundation.



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