

September 8, 2008

Colin Quashie
51 Carolina Street
Charleston, SC 29403

SOG Foundation
UNC at Chapel Hill
CB #3330 Knapp-Sanders Bldg.
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Selection Committee Members,
Thank you for the invitation to submit materials for consideration to create a work of art for the School of Government Foundation. I look forward to participating in the rigorous selection process to secure an individual with the vision and ability to correct and update the collection's interpretation of state history.

As an artist who has spent the past 19 years focused on issues of social relevance and importance, and more recently, as a participating artist on Pfizer's panel for the implementation of diversity recruitment and training, I understand the courage it takes to respond to viewer concerns with the current slate of images lack of recognition, perspectives and achievements by the state's African-American and American Indian residents. I applaud the desire to correct those glaring deficiencies and address the significance and importance of their contributions to the State's history.

I feel a close affinity with the missing histories narrative. In the past, my work focused on manipulating the content and context of current events to create works of art without the benefit of historical examination. The immediacy was fueled by the exuberance of youth and operated solely on the need to resonate with an equally enthusiastic audience and mirrored the lack of concern for anything falling outside of that periphery.

Over the years, much like the SOG's historical paintings, the art as well as the artist has matured, as has the response to both. Though the elemental use of current events and modern iconography remain intact, the contextual focus has evolved beyond immediate gratification and is now more concerned with appealing to a more thoughtful audience whose appreciation for a lasting legacy requires placing the current within context of the past to create greater value for future audiences.


The stated objectives and issues raised by the Selection Committee fit squarely within my sphere of interest. Not only do I consider updating the historical paintings an immensely challenging assignment, but also as the next logical step in the evolution of the artist and the art. I relish the opportunity to reverse my current

approach to the creative process by travelling backwards in time, and with the assistance of the History Committee, using archival source material relevant to that time period to create a work of art that restores missing histories and successfully place the new work in future historical perspective.

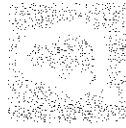
The task of opening a portal through time to examine the thoughts and actions associated with revered historic figures, combined with the responsibility to soberly judge their known and unknown motivations and visually place them in context for future generations to appreciate is the challenge of a lifetime and more than any artist can hope for.

I can assure you that I would approach such a commission with the utmost care and reverence it deserves to ensure the SOG will be able to proudly display a complete and unerring visual record of accomplishment worthy of contemplation and discussion.

Sincerely



Colin Quashie



VITA: COLIN QUASHIE

Colin Quashie's art faces off against hard issues of culture, politics and race with a self-conscious awareness that often offends (or disturbs) black, white and other; he discriminates with equality and equanimity. In this post-modern era, his highly charged political art may be called "conceptual". Artistically and aesthetically, much of it is closely allied to the ideals of the pop-art movement of the 1960's and 70's, but the subject matter is radically different from that explored in the earlier genre. Often the issues are camouflaged in pop-culture imagery and a form of Warholesque flashiness, which confounds as well as derides the spectator. By exploring the reservoir of possibilities offered by the resources of popular cultural imagery and using the mechanisms of representation, media based communication and satire, he investigates serious cultural, social, and political ideas and issues, with sometimes raucous, sometime genial, tongue-in-cheek humor. On occasion, he addresses cultural issues using witty, scathing sarcasm intended to spark popular debate and discussion among his viewing audience.

Operating in the tradition of the French avant-garde artists, Quashie challenges the status quo mentality and functioning on frustration with the vision of the masses. A vision he hopes to help shape and determine by raising questions that the audience might prefer to avoid. His work encompasses a conceptual element, which shapes meaning and underscores the use of art as didactic tools for society. Through the use of 'positive' social anger, Quashie uses his art to scrutinize the power bases of our social system, forcing us to examine our collective political perceptions. His point of view makes its mark by challenging us to be more thoughtful, expressive and more aware. With blatant disregard for compromise, he confronts our favorite beliefs, and forces us to think about the roles we occupy in society. Recurrently controversial, his art, "...is as current as yesterday's headlines, bold and brash like rap music...the equivalent of a three second sound byte; quick, easy and to the point."

Quashie was born in London, England (1963) and raised in the West Indies. At age six, his parents immigrated to the States and settled in Daytona Beach. The artist briefly attended the University of Florida on a full academic scholarship, but felt ill at ease in academia and left, eventually joining the Navy as a submarine Sonar Technician. It was there that his lifelong love for art emerged. After his discharge in 1987, he made the decision to pursue an art career. Showing steady growth, his art career ended abruptly in 1995 after two exhibitions were censored. Frustrated with the art world, he abandoned it, moved West and landed a job as a comedy sketch writer on Mad-Tv. His love for art re-emerged two years later and since then, in between writing gigs (he has since written for 5 comedy series, Associate Produced an independent feature film and in 2001 received an Emmy Award for documentary writing), he continues to produce his unique brand of art. He lives in Charleston, South Carolina where he paints while trying to finance his art through writing.



EXHIBITIONS: COLIN QUASHIE

1990 Freedom Space - Charleston, SC

Diversity and Directions - Halsey Gallery - College of Charleston, Charleston, SC

1991 Nouveau Noir - African American Gallery - Charleston, SC

1992 Triennial 92' - South Carolina State Museum - Columbia, SC

1993 Various Artists - Santa Monica Gallery - Santa Monica, Ca.

Conflict and Transcendence - Columbia Museum of Art - Columbia, SC

The Politics of Perception - The Art of Colin Quashie - I.P. Stanback Museum - South Carolina State University - Orangeburg, SC.

1994 Roots Revisited - Selected Works - Daytona Beach, Florida

1995 Triennial 95' - South Carolina State Museum - Columbia, SC

New South, Old South, Somewhere in Between - Winthrop University - Rock Hill, SC

1996 MOJA - African-American Arts Festival - African-American Gallery - Charleston, SC

1997 What's For Dinner? - Columbia Museum of Art - Columbia, SC

1999 100 Years / 100 Artists - South Carolina State Museum - Columbia, SC

2001 Evoking History - Rehearsing the Past - Spoleto Festival USA - Charleston, SC

2002 Larger Than Life: A Second Story Show - Piccolo Spoleto Festival - Charleston, SC

2003 The Felt Moment - Columbia Museum of Art - Columbia, SC

New South, Old South, Somewhere in Between - Levine Museum of the New South - Charlotte,

In Pursuit of Equity - Artists Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education Decision - I.P. Stanback Museum - South Carolina State University - Orangeburg, SC

2004 Contemporary Charleston 2004 - An Exhibition of 29 of Charleston's Prominent Artists - Waterfront Gallery - Charleston, SC

South Carolina Birds - A Fine Art Exhibition - Sumter Museum of Art - Sumter, SC

The Language of Adam: Conflict and Identity - The New Center for Contemporary Art - Louisville, Kentucky

South Carolina Birds - A Fine Art Exhibition - Franklin G. Burrows - Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum - Myrtle Beach, SC

Triennial 04' - South Carolina State Museum - Columbia, SC

2005 Selected Artwork on Display - McColl Center for Contemporary Art - Charlotte, North Carolina

Dialogues From The Diaspora - Art in an Age of Authenticity - The City Gallery at Waterfront Park - Charleston, SC

2006 South Carolina Birds - A Fine Art Exhibition - The City Gallery at Waterfront Park - Charleston, SC

RESIDENCIES

2005 McColl Center for Visual Art - Charlotte, N. Carolina