

TINA WILLIAMS BREWER

Guided by the Ancestors





COVER: "What Goes Around Comes Back" (mask detail).

Tina Williams Brewer family photos: Arthur J. Williams (Grandfather), Georganna Jordan (Great Grandmother) and Bessie Jordan (Great Aunt).
Locket from Christine Williams (Grandmother).

OPPOSITE: Standing L to R: Arthur J. Williams, Jr. (Father), Duke Dobbins (Uncle), Arthur J. Williams Sr. (Grandfather).
Seated L to R: Marcelene Williams (Mother), Christine Williams (Grandmother), Dorothy Dobbins (Aunt).
Locket from Helen Williams (Great Aunt). Locket photos: Great Great Great Grandparents.

TINA WILLIAMS BREWER

Guided by the Ancestors

PITTSBURGH FILMMAKERS

PITTSBURGH CENTER FOR THE ARTS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT 2009

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH GRANTS FROM THE

MULTICULTURAL ARTS INITIATIVE

and the

A. W. MELLON EDUCATIONAL & CHARITABLE TRUST FUND

OF THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION





Card Tricks

2005

27" x 12"

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TINA WILLIAMS BREWER

2009 Lifetime Achievement Artist



Throughout the past 30 years, the artistic mention of “story quilt” has been synonymous with just a few names, and Tina Williams Brewer is one of them. She is an innovator whose insight has permitted her to encourage others in the creative process and allowed her to generously embrace the collaborative process.

Internationally-honored creator of story quilts, Tina Williams Brewer is known for her artistic exploration of African American history and the personal experiences associated with it. She uses symbolism, textile and fabrics to create story quilts that are motivated by issues focusing on family, women and children, and the spirituality of the culture.

Her work has been celebrated and displayed in locations as geographically distant and diverse as the United States Embassy in Ghana, and the American Craft Museum in New York City.

Never an advocate of the traditional, Brewer has worked toward guiding her work and that of others toward the unusual and unexplored. Brewer generously shares her talents on a regular basis with both young and old aspiring “artists.” She has brought the joy of quilting to hundreds of individuals through her residency programs as well as her volunteer efforts.

Brewer has been a leading force with the Pittsburgh-based residency program of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts as well as the Art and Kids Museum Project with the Society for Contemporary Craft and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts’ Preserving the First Culture traveling program. She is also a member of the board of directors of Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

A member of the Fiber Arts Guild of Pittsburgh, the Women of Visions and an emeritus board member of Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, Brewer is sought-after for lectures, workshops and other creative ventures. Tina has also received the 2008 award for Service to the Arts.

Brewer graduated from Columbus College of Art and Design with a Bachelor of Arts. She is a native of Huntington, West Virginia and lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with her husband, John Brewer. She has two children, John Emery and Kristine, and four grandchildren.



INTRODUCTION

Laura Domencic

THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD of Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts honors accomplished artists whose involvement with the Center and the Pittsburgh region has made a lasting impact. Tina Williams Brewer is the second artist ever to receive this distinction.

Tina was working in a residency program with the Society for Contemporary Craft when I first met her. Her genuine passion for mentoring was striking. Witnessing her guide a class in creating story quilts that depicted the students' family history and traditions, it was clear that she was not only developing young artists, but helping to shape the character of the next generation.

Tina truly has had a lifetime of achievements. She is an invaluable educator at the Center School and PCA residency programs, an active member of several PCA artist guilds in addition to being a dedicated volunteer in the community. Although internationally recognized for her powerful story quilts, Tina maintains her humble spirit. When put in the well-deserved spotlight, she deflects it to shine on her students and collaborators.

A few years ago, she was a part of a panel discussion of artists that dealt with family as their subject matter. Tina likened her artistic and maternal experience to acting as a vessel through which creativity flows, with inspiration coming from a higher power. People gravitate toward her because of this deep sense of purpose grounded in her history, family and faith.

PF/PCA is proud to present *Tina Williams Brewer: Guided by the Ancestors*, an exhibit of a selection of her work over the past 30 years. It also features her latest series based on the *Pittsburgh Courier's* 100th anniversary, using images and stories as source material to emphasize notable African Americans' impact on the shaping of American culture. This comprehensive catalogue is a valuable and insightful resource of one of Pittsburgh's most influential artists and educators, who inspires those around her to reach beyond what they had thought was their potential.

Laura Domencic
Director, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

LAURA DOMENCIC is the Director of the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. She received her BFA in Art from Carnegie Mellon University and studied abroad at the University of Tasmania in Australia. She exhibits her paintings, sculptures and installations locally and nationally. As an art educator and administrator for the past ten years, she organized artist residencies, developed art education programs, and curated solo and group exhibitions at several non-profit arts organizations in the Pittsburgh community. When the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts closed its doors in 2004, she volunteered to organize and present animator Jim Duesing's Artist of the Year exhibit, so that this important 50-year trademark exhibition would continue. During this time, she was integral to the rebuilding and stabilizing of the Center and managing its eventual merger with Pittsburgh Filmmakers.



THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY

Samuel W. Black

THE ART OF TINA WILLIAMS BREWER conjures up symbolism, folklore, history, and most of all, spiritualism. In each fiber art piece, Brewer tells a story and most often the story is about universal peace, humanity and the spirituality of Africa. Brewer takes special care and skillfully weaves layer upon layer of fabric, jewels, photographs, idols and other three dimensional objects into each art piece that for greater appreciation one has to lend close inspection. Brewer is a highly trained artist. A Columbus College of Art and Design graduate trained in ceramics and interior design, she transitioned long ago into quilts and fiber arts.

Much of her inspiration comes from within and is supported by superior study of African and African American history and spirituality. A quiet, introspective artist, Brewer's pieces are not by accident, using traditional and non-traditional quilt patterns and techniques. She also offers new patterns and new meaning to the story quilt category. One could say that Brewer is beyond category, or at least the categories applied in western art. Story quilts are not new and are the most popular of contemporary quilt forms. But Brewer's fiber art pieces stand out. Various layers of her pieces are examples of her artistic training and cultural understanding. Many of her stories touch more on the spiritual impact of historic events such as the slave trade, middle passage, music, family, and culture. When I view one of her pieces I am taken aback—similar to the way a great jazz tune moves beyond category and registers in your spiritual subconscious.

EARLY QUILTING AND IMAGERY

Once Brewer began quilting in the early 1980s her early work reflected an approach to using fabrics that allowed for imagery. She wasn't enthusiastic about using traditional quilt styles—such as Amish quilt blocks with log cabin, Roman or Grecian squares but rather guided by her intuitive skills to reflect the Black experience. To a certain degree, the traditional styles constrained her creativity. She wanted to do story quilts that told the African and African American experience. Without knowing it, she was venturing into the early development of the African Diaspora reflected in art, literature, music and history. An almost natural progression from the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, the African Diaspora cultural movement is fusing the art and culture of Africa's dispersed children in the west, Asia and on the continent.

In 1993 she began to attend African history courses at the Carnegie Library's Homewood Branch. These community discussion groups opened a new world of greater sources and academic learning for Brewer as she was able to expand her knowledge of African and African American history, spirituality and culture. The classes also offered Brewer a source to critique her work because the early historical story quilts preceded this study of Black history. By the end of the 1990s Brewer was well versed and understanding enough of the Black experience to begin to expand her incorporation of these themes in her fiber art pieces. She also had her husband, John, a much-studied lay historian for content support.

AFRICAN SYMBOLISM CENTRAL TO STRUCTURE

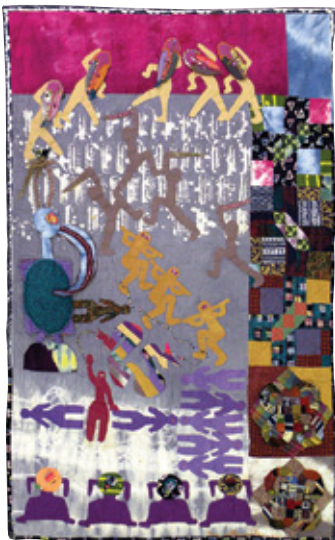
Among the African cultural groups Brewer introduces are the *Akan* and *Dogon* of West Africa and *Kemetic* culture of ancient Egyptian-Nile valley. The use of Akan culture can be found in *Adinkra* symbols dispersed in various fiber art pieces. The Dogon spirituality is represented in figure depiction that brings to mind the *Nommo*, a mythological ancestor. Cartouches, hieroglyphs and Egyptian cosmology represent Kemetic styles in her fiber arts.

These spiritual symbolisms and icons represent a respect for traditional African beliefs systems, but also provide a cultural platform for the story-telling in Brewer's work. Material culture such as cowry shells, cartouches, and other idols of Africa are interwoven to help tell a story or a perspective, such as the four-limbed figure with outstretched legs and arms often representing African ancestors or the collective in the Diaspora.



The Harvest p. 18

1989 | 60" x 40"



See The Music p. 17

1990 | 72" x 48"

Because Brewer does not rely on traditional quilting patterns, her style begs for greater examination. Her intuitive skill mimics traditional African art and architectural styles. This structure is fundamental to African cosmology. Symbolism such as circles and birds, and other inanimate and animate designs have cultural meaning. Technically fractal styles abound in the layout of the works. Repetition of symbols and patterns indicate a mathematical structure as well as a spiritual synthesis embracing a celestial world. Brewer utilizes balance and space and multiple symbols into one work of magnificent art.

Each stitch, each strip of fabric, each color, each pattern symbolizes some aspect of the African Diaspora cultural ethos. In this essay, five fiber art pieces are recognized as points of departure for the artist's collective work: *The Harvest*; *See the Music*; *Oh to Gory*; *Yo Bloodline*; and *Crossing Over*.

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

One of her first pieces, **THE HARVEST**, tells the story of the middle passage. A common theme in these early pieces, it takes a horrific experience, slavery, and depicts the Africans will to overcome and celebrate life's conquest over bondage. A vertical chain stretches through the center representing bondage and figures lying horizontally around the chain give the impression of the formation of live bodies on a slave ship, while harvest birds at the top ponder the harvest or new growth.

The chain does not continue through the piece, but appears broken with three-and-a-half links. The piece is about survival and African Americans eventual conquering of slavery, oppression, and racism. It represents the first of Brewer's fiber art pieces that utilized research. A significant note is her use of the figures that here are called "ancestors" that show up in various other pieces sometimes in slightly different form. Quilts can be made of personal materials and Brewer made THE HARVEST for her daughter and included fabric from ties belonging to her father-in-law.

THE HARVEST was somewhat of a point of departure as Brewer began to slowly phase out traditional quilt patterns into a more fractal structure in future works. You can still see quilt blocks mounting the sides in the *Jacob's Ladder* pattern.

In **SEE THE MUSIC**, Brewer gets more expressive with the story of enslavement. The quilt combines various aspects of the historic record, cultural symbolism, art and music to communicate the experiences of Africans in the Diaspora. Dance plays a major part as dance icons such as Alvin Ailey influenced this work. A line of masked dancers at the top of the quilt depict ritual, the basis of African spiritual ceremony. Just below, imposed over the slave ship diagram are African warriors dancing in defense of their humanity. The slave ship diagram is of an historic document often used to tell the story of the slave ship. The slave ship 'Brooks' was detailed by abolitionists in 1788 to show how Africans were packed like cargo on a typical slave ship. The image was used then as propaganda that historian Marcus Rediker describes as coming "to epitomize the cruelties of the Atlantic slave trade."¹

In its lifetime the Brooks carried over 5,000 Africans across the Atlantic. Brewer utilizes the Brooks' image nearly two hundred years later as a reminder of the inhumanity that Africans have overcome. Captured Africans with stock-styled manacles around their shoulders descend diagonally as they are watched closely by the horn bill bird. It is an ancient bird viewed as sacred in Africa and is said to forecast death, bad luck or natural salvation.

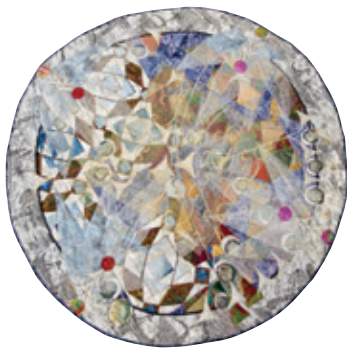
Below the hornbill is a two-headed snake that symbolizes the role of Africans on both ends of the slave trade. A slave trader is grasping the tongue of one snake head, the other snake tongue is wrapped around the legs of African figures like a manacle. A backdrop of multi-colored tie-dyed fabric lays a foundation for which, on the right side, five blocks of traditional quilt patterns descend. At the very bottom of the piece, four dance figures with wide brim hats, typical for the American South, portray movement. The same hat-like pattern is repeated in the traditional quilt pattern off to its right.



Oh To Gory p. 20
1993 | 65" x 31"



Yo Bloodline p. 23
1997 | 72" x 50"



Crossing Over p. 8
2005 | 51" diameter

The entire piece portrays movement and humanity in the face of inhumanity. The piece is telling a profound story of the impact of the past on today's generation. Interpreted by John Brewer, the artist's husband, he asks "to see the music inherent in the African experience and to look beyond the pain and suffering of years past, as well as today."²

By 1993 the African history classes at the Homewood Library aided the historical knowledge of Brewer. **OH TO GORY** was her next venture into the realm of the slave trade and impact on the African Diaspora. Goree Island is located off the west coast of Senegal and has one of the hundreds of European built slave-castle/trading forts built between the 17th and 19th centuries along the West African coast from Mauritania to Angola. Goree is infamous for its castle or "house of slaves" which served as a holding pen for European slave ships. A window that overlooks the Atlantic Ocean is known as the "door of no return." Most photographs of the "door" show it shaped like the fiber art piece by Brewer. Starting at this juncture, Brewer has immediately drawn the viewer into the "door" and takes you into the enslaved subconscious. Peering at the piece you are looking out the "door" into the Atlantic or the inhumanity inflicted on Africa. Three stick figures extend with arms and legs outstretched as if falling into the abyss. Ascending from the bottom are obelisk-like structures with roots and cartouches that cross the left and center structures. Birds and fish symbolize strength and nurturing. The use of Kemetic symbolism is a direct reflection of the historical connections between the Nile Valley and West Africa. It is a symbolic note on the history of the height and depth of African civilization.

OH TO GORY has a double meaning. Using the spelling of the term for violent, gruesome, brutal, horrific acts, Brewer makes a statement about the slave trade. Fractal styling in an almost abstract pattern frames the piece.

TEACHING INFLUENCES WORK

For over a decade Brewer has taught the art of quilt making for various schools, community groups, and special programs. During the 1990s her teaching experiences led to the creation of **YO BLOODLINE**. A multi-layered collage of African prints and tie-died fabric, Brewer makes a connection between the hip-hop culture of her students and the heritage of African Americans. Backward-hat-wearing youth, generation-x'ers and other figures raise their fists recalling Black Power salutes of the 1960s. A chain-like thread weaves its way through the center of the piece recalling the bondage of their ancestors. African symbolism appears in the form of the ritualistic black and white tattooed figure in the lower right escorted by a lion, crocodile, and the female gender symbol. In many African societies the lion represents strength and leadership. The crocodile in Dogon society represents a guardian, usually adorning granary doors to protect the value of the harvest. The female gender symbol reminds the male dominated hip-hop culture of the positive role of women in African heritage. Four birds, a familiar symbol in Brewer's work, swarm upward around the spirit figure to symbolize the freedom and enlightenment that Black heritage represents.

CROSSING OVER represents a departure from the square or rectangle shape of Brewer's previous fiber art pieces. A piece that speaks about transition—transition from life to death; from slavery to freedom; from ignorance to enlightenment, Brewer again courts the Black experience in her work. **CROSSING OVER** also is a change in color scheme. Muted colors and variations of white and pastel-colored fabrics respond to comments that her previous works were dark and mysterious.

The circle pattern in African culture signifies the continuation of the life cycle. The concentric circle is common and used in cultural symbolism and architectural styles. The *Adinkrahene* symbol of concentric circles represents greatness, charisma, and leadership. Brewer subtly uses this symbol, striking another meaning to the piece.

HISTORY AND CULTURE CRITICAL TO THE FUTURE

Brewer has made a conscious choice to interpret the Black experience in her fiber art. She uses her art to teach about Black heritage and the power of humanity that it holds. She is concerned about whether young people are learning and even more importantly, appreciating the world of their ancestors. Brewer has commented, "I look and I see only the past forgotten by our African American youth and I am compelled to piece visual symbols to bring forth those strong images to make a link to our history."³ Superior study of the African past and appreciation of traditional spirituality has given Brewer a platform to connect Africa with its descendants. Popular story themes such as slavery and the middle passage serve as a backdrop to reconcile the African consciousness and provide an understanding of the African cosmology. Brewer's work proves that there is not a disconnection between the Africans of the past and its descendants today. She finds history and culture relevant to address the impact of this history on Black society.

Tina Williams Brewer is a story teller, guided by her ancestors, whose fiber art serves as her medium to open the world of Africa to our contemporary times.



SAMUEL W. BLACK is the Curator of African American Collections at the Senator John Heinz History Center. He is the editor and curator of "Soul Soldiers: African Americans and the Vietnam Era." He is the recipient of the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History and the S.K. Stevens Award from the Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations. A Smithsonian Fellow, he serves as the vice president of the Association of African American Museums.

1. Rediker, M., *The Slave Ship: A Human History*. New York: Viking Publishing, 2007, page 309.
2. Brewer, J., "See the Music" poster print, 1990.
3. Thompson, E., *15th Southwest Black Art Exhibition*. Dallas: Neiman-Marcus and the Board of Trustees of the Museum of African-American Life and Culture, 1993. Brewer was quoted in the exhibition catalog describing her work.

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Guided by the Ancestors

by Tina Williams Brewer

MY HOPE IS TO BRING A NEW VISION TO AN ANCIENT STORY. I work as a conduit for messages from ancestors in the form of the story quilt. Each quilt I create is a celebration of the African American heritage.

At times this means addressing troubling issues—racism, the breakdown of the family, the loss of the innocence of children and other challenges of life. It is my hope that people who see, think about and experience these issues through my work can learn and grow. Once there is an understanding, it takes away the mystery and fear. There aren't as many differences between people as some think.

I hope my work can be both mind stirring and soul soothing. I am passionate about giving dignity to the human suffering of a stolen people.

When I create a piece, I need silence to listen to the words inside my soul. I try to give those words a visual interpretation. I hope to inspire research and exploration for other people about issues, for example, what it is to be a woman, particularly an African American woman—a wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister or girlfriend looking for a place of peace and calm in the universe.

I hope to excite the viewer by the beauty of the layers of scrap fabric, metallic threads and bead work. The expressive photos in some of my work are drawn from the archives of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and provide a rich and telling backdrop, helping to create a collage of twisted truths from our past. The images are layered as the work builds itself into an instrument of beauty for a narrative quilted canvas that brings to the surface a sense of antiquity.

Each quilt is nuanced with symbols and expressive colors that are intended to enhance the overall story of the piece and to bring an everlasting impression of the sometimes obscure history of the African American presence on this North American shore.

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE

My designs are a free-flow approach to quilting akin to the crazy quilt patchwork, log cabin, and applique traditions. My quilts consist of many layers of opaque and transparent fabric overlays that provide the visual depth and movement to tell the story. (My thanks to Risë Nagin for teaching me how to use transparent layers). I consider a light source to aid in definition and clarity of the abstract surface. The final layer consists of metallic threads, beads, and jewels. I use a variety of fabrics collected over many years from all over the world including a large stack of shibori-dyed fabric donated by fiber artist and friend, Jan Myers-Newbury. All the quilts are predominately hand quilted mixed media, some include photo transfer.



Crossing Over

2005

51"

I COME FROM A LONG
LINE OF BIG BONED
BLACK WOMEN

(EXCERPT)

If you looked at my family tree
my evolution
my beginning
then you would see
that I comes from a long line of big
boned black women
I'm tellin' you that my hips are
thick and rich,...
and my seed is everlasting all
powerful
and I let it all go with the wind
cause I comes from a long line of
big boned black women

and Nandi
and Makeda
and Ida
and Johnetta
and Vernell
and Miss Georgia
and Daisy
and Aretha
and my mama
and your mama
we all comes from a long line of
big boned black women
and no one can top us.

— Marta J. Effinger



I Come From A Long Line Of Big Boned Women

2002

44"x 31"



Humble Beginnings

2006

90" x 53"



Veiled Perspectives

2007

23" x 41"

WOMEN: COMPLEX. POWERFUL. STRONG.

The emotions a woman experiences sometimes feel as if they could shatter everything within her.

Her sadness—when a dear one passes, when her child feels pain, when her spouse fails to understand. Her weariness—when her work goes well into the night, when her responsibilities seem endless and the rent is overdue. Her frustration—when she sees inequities and can't make them right, when she pours her heart and soul into her children and meets with scorn and disdain, and when she tries to balance everyone else's lives, but can't seem to relieve the angst within her own heart.

Her joy—when the sun is shining, her children are happy and her heart feels free. Her wisdom—when she reaches an age of understanding, life makes more sense and she can not only accept, but appreciate, the differences in people around her. And her ability to enjoy the feeling of laughing and crying at the same time.

All of these feelings—both positive and negative create a groundswell within a woman.

And yet, despite the overwhelming intensity of her emotions, one of the greatest accomplishments of a woman throughout her life is her ability convey an aura of strength and calm, no matter how devastated or elevated she may feel.

The view each woman has is different and yet equally intense. The circle of strength she creates throughout her life, both within and outside of herself is the key to her ability to contain her intensity—to allow others to have the experiences they need to grow—and to enjoy the process of watching them do so.

The strength of a woman is unparalleled and unselfish. It links all women together in an esoteric, but very real way. It gives them an immediate compassion with one another. And it allows the world to continue to move forward—driven by the strength, compassion and love—of women.

— Laura Horner



Cycle Of Life

2007

52" x 36"



I Have Known Rivers

2004

27"

(Inspired by a poem written by Langston Hughes)



Hail To The Fire Of Life

1994

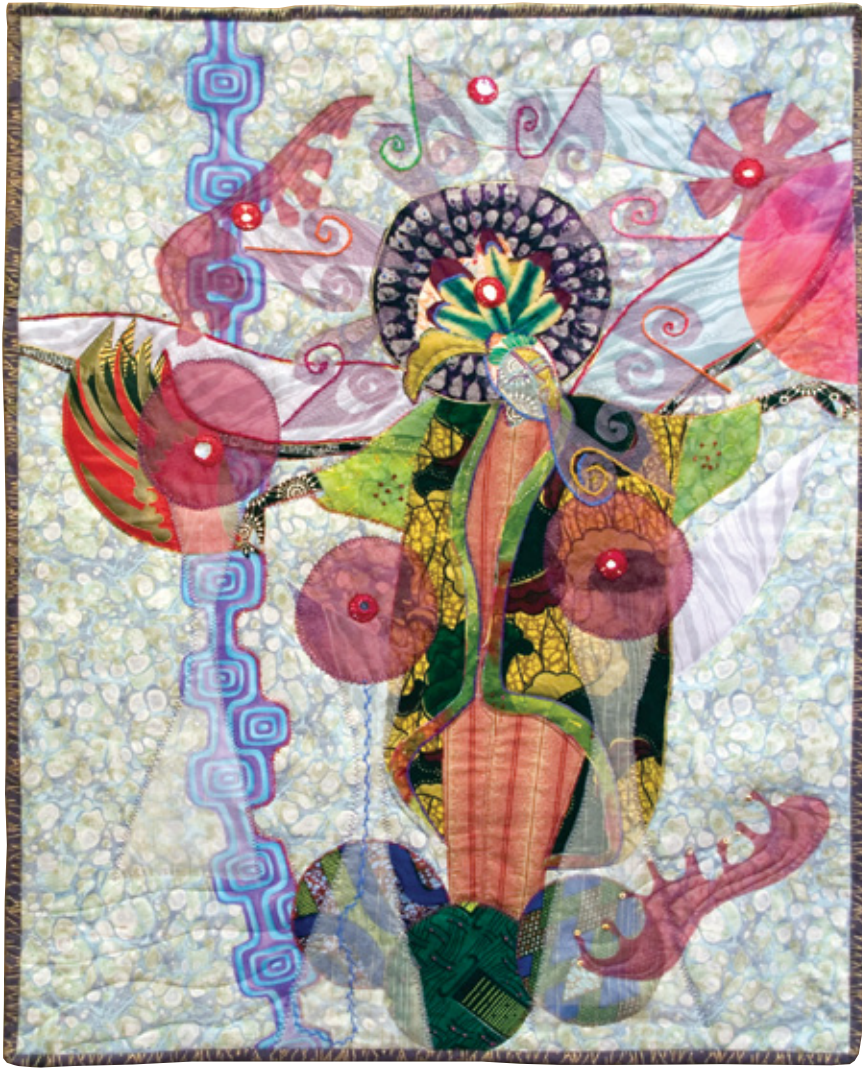
44" x 35"



Divine Plan

2003

90" x 50"



Sing Courage

2008

43" x 35"

Can't you see the music
strolling thru hailstorms
waving her mighty beat
telling us about our
glorious past
helping us to see our
next ascension.
— John Brewer



See The Music

1990

72" x 48"



The Harvest

1989

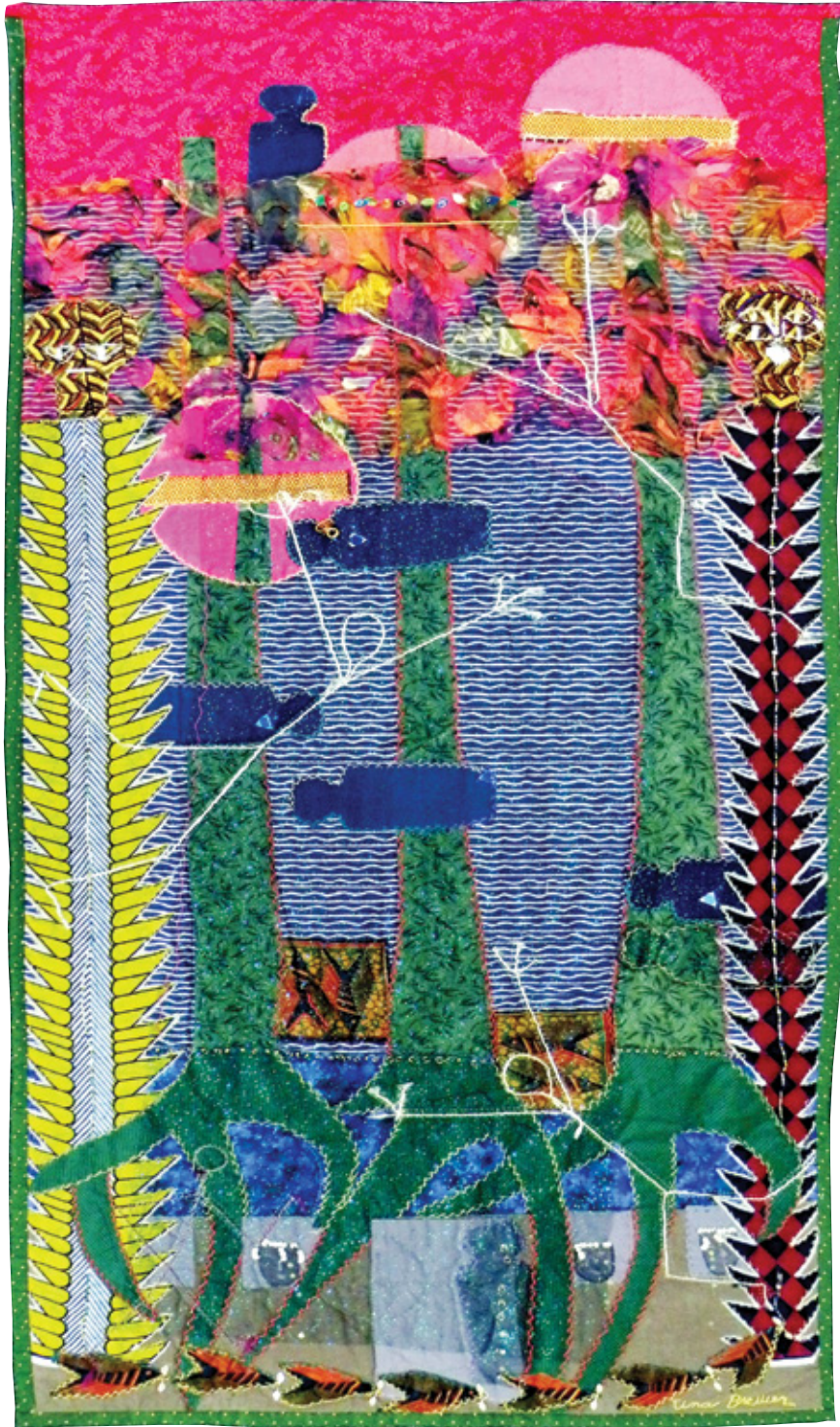
60" x 40"



Time After Time

2006

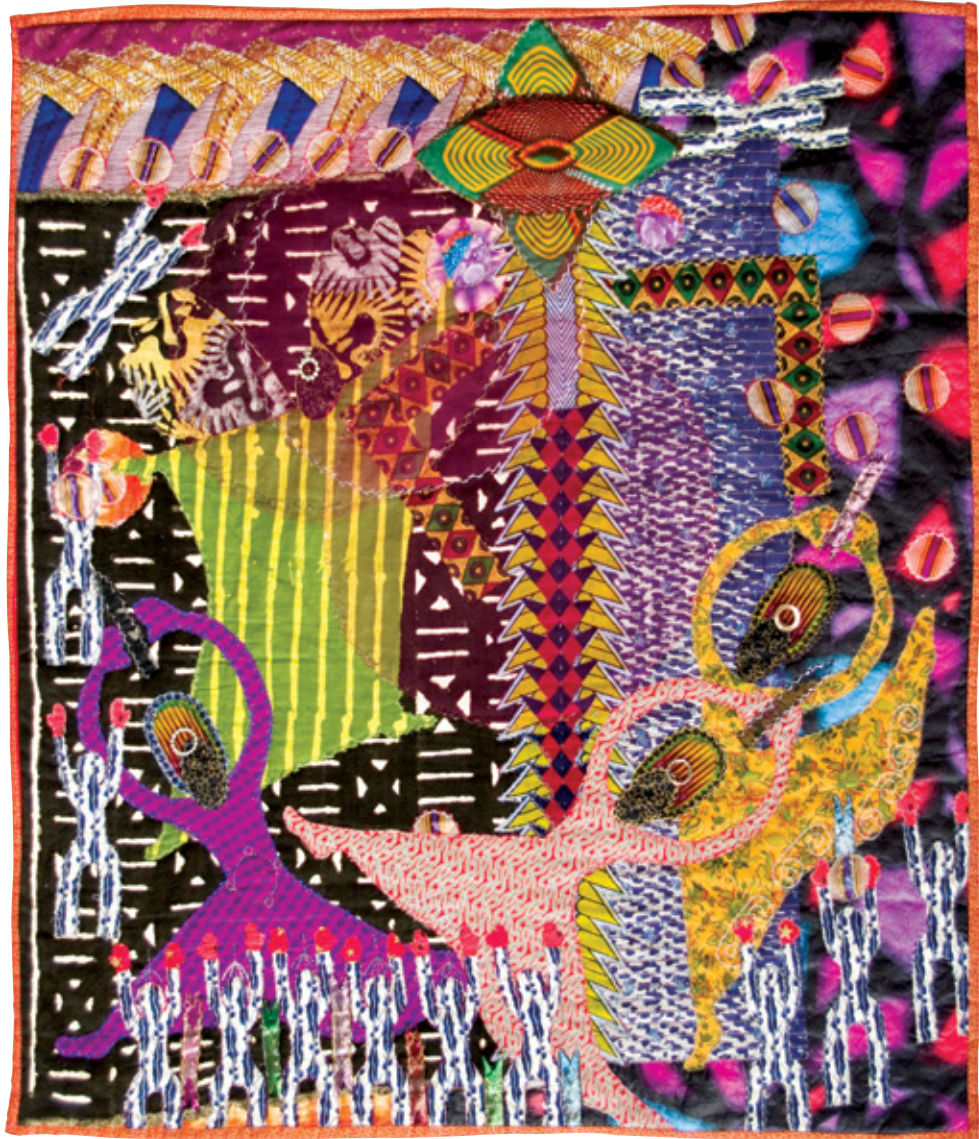
38"x 41"



Oh To Gory

1993

65" x 31"



There Are No Mistakes

1997

45" x 50"



Inner Life

2005

27" x 20"



Celebration

2008

25" x 29"



Yo Bloodline

1997

72"x 50"



Into The Night

1990

72" x 63"



Close Ties

2000

32" x 45"



If You Don't Hear The Tap You Hear The Bang

1998

75" x 50"



Time After Time II

2006

36" x 40"



Extension

2005

42" x 36"



Darlings Of Rhythm

2005

38" x 32"



Yoko: Ethiopian Princess

2008

28"x 26"



Say It With Iron

2002

44"x 25"



This Is Joy

1996

85" x 47"



Dogon Country

2001

40" x 50"



Raise Your Hands

2007

16" x 23"



Migration Blues

1998

42" x 60



The Waves That Nurture Humanity

2003

60" x 40"



The Force In The Trees: A Metaphor For 2001

2001

50"x 25"



Formation

2002

80" x 52"

The tale of *Eshu* (represented by an orange feather) states that one must cultivate the art of recognizing significant communication, or else the lessons of the crossroads—the point where doors open or close, where persons have to make decisions that may forever affect their lives—will be lost.



What Goes Around Comes Back

1994

50" x 50"



From The Drums Came All That Jazz

1994

55" x 55"



Sweet Vintage Red

2005

62" x 34"



Family 2001

2001

55" x 30"



Tributaries Of Genius

2006

56" x 44"

...a soul journey in the music
told the rhythm to leap
to run
to glide
to hit the sky
to swing...

— vanessa German



In The Flow

2004

24" x 24"



Flotation

2004

26" x 24"



The Will of the Full Circle

2008

30"

This work depicts various reflections that we all see in life and in viewing art. Each reflection possesses our very own vision and is interpreted within our own mind. The colors convey a mode of celebration, the dancing figures a rhythmic movement and the hand of God. As you view this piece of art, and are aware of a vision... Yes, it is that... it is just what you think you see.



Ode To Kye

2004

75" x 60"



Guided by the Ancestors

A New Generation

by Mary Brenholts



Umbrella Project, Homewood Montessori School

Created by the staff and students under the direction of Tina to honor the memory of the school's beloved principal, Celia Flewellen.

Project funders include: Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts*, Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, Weed and Seed Program, The Grable Foundation, the Heinz Endowments and the Pittsburgh Children's Museum.

TINA WILLIAMS BREWER IS AN AMAZINGLY TALENTED ARTIST and gifted educator with a long history of high quality community art-making in southwestern Pennsylvania. Her quilts are wonderful explorations of color, texture, shape, personal experiences, and historical references and she is adept at inspiring others to explore their own cultural commonalities and personal meanings through the use of layered fabrics, symbols, colors, and patterns. Ms. Brewer's dedicated and passionate work as a Resident Artist in the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts' Artist Residency Program has touched the lives of thousands of students and hundreds of educators over many years.

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts serves as the regional Arts in Education Partner for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts providing Artist Residency services to schools and community organizations in Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, and Washington counties. An Artist Residency Project is designed to have lasting benefits for all of the participants: students are fully immersed in an art form and see how it connects to life and learning, teachers are exposed to alternative ways of teaching in order to bring more creative learning experiences to their classrooms, and administrators recognize the ways in which the arts fully engage students and impact their learning across the curriculum.

In her Artist Residency work Ms. Brewer is an exemplary collaborator who empowers all participants (teachers, students, and administrators) by providing them with guidance and inspiration while facilitating their creative processes with patience and insight. Students are encouraged to try new things, to persevere when ideas tumble around in their heads, and to be resilient when things don't turn out quite as anticipated.

There are lots of life lessons when making art with Tina Brewer! She carefully balances the art making process and finished product as each has integral value when measuring the long-term success of each project. It is important to her work that students, teachers, and parents all recognize the importance of women and quilts and their place in African American history and culture as well as the strength of collective vision while working together towards a vibrant whole.

MARY BRENHOLTS has over 25 years of experience working in arts education and community arts. She is currently the Director of School & Community Programs at Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts where her department provides high quality arts in education services and resources to more than 25,000 participants in southwestern Pennsylvania each year.



Oakland Catholic High School, Oakland, PA

Tina and multi-media sculptor, Adrienne Heinrich, combined forces in 2007 to guide 113 Oakland Catholic High School seniors in the creation of a series of four intricate quilts that were presented to the school as a parting gift from the students. The quilts were displayed as part of *Fiberart International 2007*, produced by the Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh, Inc.

This project was made possible through a matching grant from the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*

**This project was made possible through the Arts in Education Partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the citizens of Pennsylvania through the annual legislative appropriation process. The AIE Partnership is administered regionally by Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, the art center where artists and the community can create, see, support, and learn about the arts. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.*



Reflections: Mother Of Sorrows and St. Charles Lwanga

Created under the direction of Tina and fellow artist, Adrienne Heinrich.

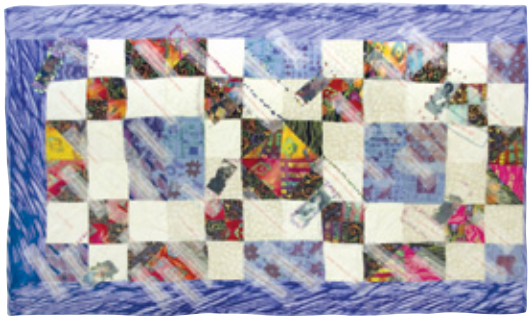
"This Quilt allowed me to help others visualize my Catholic self and my private self. My square symbolized the importance of family, worship, money, and believing that the sun always shines in the morning. I firmly believe that there is no problem that destroys us if we have faith. We have to accept challenges and to learn to re-adjust from setbacks and defeat. There is victory, if we let it reign."

— Imogene Hines

Sister Quilts: Honoring 250 Women of Western Pennsylvania

Created by the Ellis School Class of 2014 and instructor Linda Tonetti Dugan with guidance from Tina.

Funded in part by Courtney and Chip Muse with a matching grant from the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*





Urban League Charter School, East Liberty, PA

Created under the direction of Tina in 2008 by nine students in the third, fourth and fifth grade, with instructor Catherine Brown. Made of Kenta cloth, the same material as the school's uniform vests.

This project was made possible through a matching grant from the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*



Helen S. Faison Arts Academy, Homewood, PA

Guided by Tina, third graders at the Academy created this vision of the Homewood Community in 2006.

This project was made possible through a matching grant from the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*



Pittsburgh Linden Elementary, Pittsburgh, PA

Tina worked with art teacher Deb Lieberman and fifth grade students at Pittsburgh Linden k-5 to create individual medallion quilt blocks.

This project was made possible through a matching grant from the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*



Guided by the Ancestors

100 Years Of History

John Brewer and Laura Horner

The *Sankofa* is a mythical bird from the *Akran* people of Africa that wisely reminds us that we must know and understand our past to truly be able to move forward.

ALMOST 100 YEARS AGO the *Pittsburgh Courier* was first published, eventually becoming the most widely circulated Black newspaper with 21 regional editions and an international edition. At its height, more than 450,000 people received the *Courier* each week and were given the opportunity to read an unvarnished version of cultural and historical events that told the story of the Black experience in America. The information reported in the *Courier* had a profound impact on African American politics, world events, civil rights, sports, entertainment, business, and journalism.

It was clear from the early days of the *Courier* that the twentieth century African American experience was irrevocably connected to slavery. The Emancipation that was eventually decreed by the Union Government unlocked gates of oppression and allowed a previously dehumanized culture to begin to understand and value its existence. The process was not easy. As the Black intellectual and distinguished writer, W.E.B. DuBois said, "The twentieth century challenge to resolve the issue of color is the greatest challenge America will have to overcome." His words were truly prophetic.

This series of ten quilts created by Tina Williams Brewer attempt to provide perspective on pivotal issues, events, and individuals that contributed to the past 100 years of African American history as reflected in the *Pittsburgh Courier*. They are sequential in a general sense, providing both specific and broad-based views on some of the critical areas that affected the state of the African American population in America today.

^{NEW} *Pittsburgh Courier*

It Happened: The Courier Was There

FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS we have been fortunate to have a devoted team of volunteers who have worked diligently to bring the information in our photo archives to life through exhibitions, books, and now, fine art. My thanks to fiber artist Tina Williams Brewer for creating the quilts. To John Brewer, our curator, and Laura Horner, the project director, who collaborated to provide narratives for the work using the *Courier* archives to tell the stories.

My thanks also to Ralph Proctor and Randy Harper, who helped provide the original historical perspective of our archive; John Emery Brewer and Ken Brown who shared their video talents; our staff led by Stephan Broadus; Mariellen Garman and Paul Ramsdell of Ad1 Partners, our graphic designers and creators of our signature line: *It Happened: The Courier Was There*; and many others who have contributed along the way. Thanks to all of you for helping to bring the glorious story of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and its rich history and accomplishments to light.

We are honored that Tina chose to use the *Pittsburgh Courier* as the source for her artistic storytelling and we hope that these quilts help to convey some of the rich story contained in our photographic archives.

Rod Doss, Publisher, New *Pittsburgh Courier*



UNITY
28" x 25"

UNITY

In the early 1900s, the Niagara Movement, led by W.E.B. DuBois, was strongly encouraging African Americans to work with its educated leadership to move from simply a "state of existence" into inclusion in the American mainstream.

As an outcome of this movement, three critical and longstanding organizations were formed during this time—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

In 1909, the NAACP emerged under the leadership of many devoted people including: Mary White Ovington, Mary Church Terrell, Joel and Arthur Spingarn and W.E.B. DuBois. Its goal was to ensure equality of rights to all people and to eliminate racial hatred and discrimination. It remains today as the nation's oldest, largest, and most widely-recognized grassroots civil rights organization.

Almost simultaneously, the Urban League, a community-based group dedicated to empowering African Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream, was formed under the guidance of people including Mrs. Ruth Standish Baldwin and Dr. George Edmund Haynes. This organization remains a central force in the economic development of the Black community today.

The evolution, setbacks and accomplishments of both the NAACP and Urban League were recorded in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a Black newspaper founded by a Heinz company security guard Edward Harleston, and brought to life by a group of businessmen including Cumberland Posey Sr., Robert L. Vann, William E. Hance, Samuel Rosemond, William Paige, and numerous others. Attorney Robert L. Vann assumed the leadership role of publisher and editor, and his influence and that of his supporters spread across the country, offering unified solutions to problems faced by the African American population.



CREATIVITY
44" x 32"

CREATIVITY

During this era, men including Langston Hughes and Richard Wright helped lay the foundation for America's first social, cultural, and intellectual Renaissance in Harlem, New York, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the rest of the nation. More liberated lifestyles for the African American culture and less restricted expression of personal taste became manifest in everything from styles of clothing to social relations. African Americans courageously began to come together to operate their own businesses despite the harsh economic and social conditions that confronted them daily. The culture's forces of creativity in art, writing and music also began to emerge and be recognized.

People like Bessie Smith, a talented and fearless Black singer, began to raise their voices in defiance of repression. Even when members of the Ku Klux Klan tried to stop her performances, she successfully continued on, showing that openness and acceptance could prevail.

Internationally known historian J.A. Rodgers wrote a weekly article for the *Pittsburgh Courier* during this time, accompanied by illustrations from *Courier* artist, Sam Milai. As a combined force, they were instrumental in helping to change negative cultural stereotypes by bringing to the foreground business, scientific, and historical facts highlighting significant contributions made by African Americans that served the greater good of all Americans.



COLLECTIVE ECONOMICS

37" x 37.5"

COLLECTIVE ECONOMICS

African Americans had been excluded from every level of social, political, and economic development mainstream America had to offer, but during this time a new mindset began to form—an attitude that said—“I will take my ball and create my own team.”

During the Great Depression hundreds of black-owned or operated businesses were begun, financed by a new form of bank called, “The Numbers.” Strong entrepreneurial spirits permeated Black America and in Pittsburgh men like William “Woogie” Harris and Gus Greenlee became leaders in this form of business development. Indoor golf courses, Negro League baseball teams, community centers, restaurants, and barber shops were created almost overnight. A circle of cooperative economics began to emerge.

Pittsburgh Courier writers George Schuyler and John L. Clark wrote passionately about this period of time. Pittsburgh’s artistic renaissance proved second to none in the nation. Venues like the Roosevelt, Crawford Grill #1, the Washington Club, and many others became the proving ground for musicians and artists from across the country.

Black sports heroes began to emerge as names like Joe Lewis, Satchel Paige, and the Harlem Globetrotters began to be featured in the pages of the *Courier* on a regular basis. By the end of the 1930s, African Americans living in the Pittsburgh region had their own stadium, Greenlee Field, where they could cheer on their favorite Negro League players. A parallel world to the mainstream white world was being created.



COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY

43" x 35"

COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY

International issues were beginning to come to the foreground with intensity and the symbol created by the *Pittsburgh Courier* of the “Double V” representing victory at home and abroad became a clear message and goal of Black people everywhere.

The victory overseas would come in the form of freedom from fascism and racism. Thousands of Tuskegee Airmen and Black soldiers worked tirelessly to support democracy, and the efforts of those men conveyed in articles in the *Pittsburgh Courier* eventually led to the desegregation of all armed forces in the United States.

The *Pittsburgh Courier*, at this point under the leadership of Mrs. Jessie Vann, the widow of Robert L. Vann, worked to unify the international and national efforts for freedom and covered stories from as far away as Ethiopia, India, and Africa about the brave battles being waged by African Americans to gain freedom for their country. Reporters including Roi Ottley and Frank Bolden provided those stories with the details and dignity they deserved. Their coverage moved beyond the boundaries of the military and included stories of Black entertainers such as singer Paul Robeson and bandleader Duke Ellington, who often received more acclaim outside of the United States than from within. It was an era where geographic boundaries started to become less significant.

The victory hoped for at home was a victory against “Jim Crow,” a series of state and local laws in America that allowed for “separate, but equal” status for Blacks and other non-white races. These laws allowed segregation in public schools, public transportation, restaurants, and even restrooms. This victory was slower in coming, but was a goal of the Double V campaign, nonetheless.



PURPOSE
56" x 36"

PURPOSE

Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, the 1954 landmark court case stating that separate but equal facilities are inherently unequal, set the tone for this period in history. This paved the way for integration and the Civil Rights Movement. But progress was slow.

A startling incident in Mississippi drew the attention of the entire country and the Civil Rights Movement began to make significant strides. A young boy from Chicago named Emmet Till was visiting his cousin in Mississippi when he was accused of whistling at a white woman who walked into a store. Subsequently, he was kidnapped, brutally murdered and tossed into a river. His mother forced the entire nation to view his body by demanding an open casket. People watched in horror as his assailants were quickly acquitted. *Pittsburgh Courier* writers and photographers covered that story among many others that underlined to the nation the need for dramatic change.

Civil Rights icons like Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr., Martin Luther King, Jr., and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell led a coordinated effort, with the support of the *Courier*, to end racial discrimination.

Simultaneously in Pittsburgh, the Black community, which had been enjoying vibrant business and arts activity in the "Hill" District, was about to experience dramatic change. The building of the Civic Arena significantly affected the geography of the Lower Hill District, and fragmented the previously-centralized community.



SELF DETERMINATION
52" x 37"

SELF DETERMINATION

Martin Luther King, Jr., John and Robert Kennedy, A. Phillip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Malcolm X. These were just some of the leaders who filled America with faith and hope in the '60s.

College campuses across the country staged "sit ins", or protests to demand equal rights for all Americans. Labor union, gay rights movements, women's organizations—all pounded the pavement to demand new policies and practices. In 1963, the well-organized and unified march on Washington, DC legitimized the Civil Rights Movement in a way it had never before been.

Then, a series of shots almost shattered that hope. Within a two year period, President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. were all killed in pursuit of their shared dream of a country free of racial discrimination. The war in Vietnam added to the stress and confusion of the country and a lesser nation might not have survived.

But America is resilient and, as a nation, drew together to move forward as best it could. In Pittsburgh, local influentials such as Jim McCoy of the United Negro Protest Committee, Bouie Hayden, and Dr. Charles Greenlee helped people try to make sense of what had happened and provided strong leadership during a critical time. Joe Robinson's Crawford Grill and Birdie Dunlap's Hurricane provided places for people to gather, talk, heal and formulate plans about how to improve Pittsburgh for the future.



FAITH
47"x 37"

FAITH

Sports have always provided a forum for breaking barriers, and African Americans throughout time have shown prowess on the fields, tracks, and courts of the world, providing opportunities for achievement and celebration.

The Negro League glory days with Josh Gibson, the "Black" Babe Ruth, and Satchel Paige's "Bee Ball", provided cause for admiration. *Pittsburgh Courier* writer Bill Nunn, Jr. made sure everyone read about their talents, along with the facts associated with Roberto Clemente's legendary throwing arm and superior batting skills.

On Jan. 1, 1956, Bobby Grier became the first Black player to play in the Sugar Bowl. Leading up to that game, Governor Marvin Griffin of Georgia, a segregationist, demanded that Georgia Tech not play against Pittsburgh because the team included a black player. The Sugar Bowl appearance in Georgia highlighted African American sports talent on the football field, but the integrated bleachers at the game constituted an even greater achievement. With the support of the writing talents of Bill Nunn, Jr. and Bill Nunn, Sr., Black athletes around the country received recognition and opportunities to play with college and professional teams. The Pittsburgh Steelers "Steel Curtain" provided the ultimate group of players who dominated their sport and took their team to the top of the football world.

In other arenas, Ralph Boston's long jump, Flo Jo's speed, and Muhammad Ali's agility broke barriers and helped them dominate their sports. Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe, and the Williams sisters took talent on the tennis court to new levels. Tiger Woods transformed the world of golf for minorities while Kareem, Wilt, and the great Michael Jordan left the basketball court taking the bar of achievement to heights that had not yet been imagined.



DESTINY
51"x 37"

DESTINY

Music is a universal language and the immense contributions of African American artists to the body of American musical work are undeniable. The destiny of many talents was formed in music halls across the country and reflected the lives of those who performed. In the early days, Gospel ballads told the stories within the souls of those who were held as slaves, and in time, Swing and Bebop began to tell a more joyful, uplifting story. Jazz and Blues gave a combination of messages—all of them compelling.

Ella Fitzgerald offered songs of faith and hope, Duke Ellington's compositions are timeless, and in Europe Lawrence Dunbar led the European classical orchestra to new beginnings. Billy Eckstine, Nat King Cole, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Miles Davis, Smokey Robinson, Roy "Little Jazz" Eldridge, Errol Garner, Count Basie, and Lionel Ritchie were just some of the talents who emerged over time. More recently, talents like Jay Z, Beyonce, and Whitney Houston have continued to carry the torch.

In Pittsburgh, Billy Strayhorn found his roots and went on to become a national presence along with George Benson, Ahmad Jamal, and many others. Phyllis Hyman, Etta Cox, Al Dowe, Patricia Prattis Jennings, Dwayne Dolphin, Walt Harper, Nathan Davis, and others have kept our city in the music spotlight over time.

Other art forms like the poetry of Maya Angelou and Gwendolyn Brooks, the acting of Sidney Poitier, the sculpture of Selma Burke, the playwriting of August Wilson, and the world class writing of Homewood-born John Edgar Wideman have created an enviable artistic legacy for African Americans.



ACHIEVEMENT
67" x 46"

ACHIEVEMENT

Business, education, politics, the arts, sports—have all been pathways to success and achievement for African Americans over time. Pittsburgh has been and continues to be rich with African American men and women who continue to achieve in all arenas of life making our region stronger for the future.

Reverend Dr. Leroy Patrick had a dedication to the spiritual as well as the practical liberation of Black people, and remains as an example for men and women of the cloth to follow. Duane Darkins, with his dual role as a politician and minister, also set the bar for those who preach the Gospel.

Lawyers, judges, and legislators have helped shape our system over time by defending the rights of African Americans, and include luminaries such as Wendell Freeland, Homer S. and Byrd Brown, Livingstone and Justin Johnson, Wendell Stanton, Paul Jones, James Jordan, Richard Jones, and Everett Utterback.

Educators have been critical to our ability to move forward, and 55 years ago, Pittsburgh's first Black principal, John M. Brewer, Sr., defied the odds against educating inner city youth in the lower Hill District. Other educators and activists including C. Delores Tucker, Dr. Helen Faison, Frank Bolden, and K. Leroy Irvis helped allow our youth to pursue their dreams.

In business and politics, national powerhouses like Oprah Winfrey and Carole Mosely Braun, the first Black female Senator, have taken the stage. Locally, families like the Davenports have stepped forward to bring our community's first Black radio station into existence. Our Urban League has boasted tenacious leaders including Art Edmunds, Leon Haley, Dr. Oswald Nickens, and Esther Bush.



HOPE AND HEALING
56" x 37"

HOPE AND HEALING

A long line of men and women have been part of the continuing journey of the African American culture. They had no map or trail to follow; rather for the past two hundred years, they have created the path themselves. Integrity, faith, and courage have been their trademarks, and no one person could have achieved what he or she has without all of the others.

The election of America's first Black president, Barack Obama, represents the most recent landmark in a history that has been marked by many tremendous accomplishments and is a clear outcome of all who came before him.

Carter G. Woodson, known as the "Father of Negro History", the intellectual observations of W.E.B. DuBois, and the historical research of John Hope Franklin were critical forces in the recording of Black history as well.

Robert L. Vann, Jessie Vann and John H. Sengstacke's endless pursuit to put an end to segregation using the force of communication through the *Pittsburgh Courier* were key figures in the culture's past. Nobel Prize winner Ralph Bunche bears mention as a maverick, along with Mabel Keaton Stauper, the president of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses.

Leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela will never be forgotten and have left a legacy of conviction and courage matched by few. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, carrying on the battle for human rights in the courts, A. Phillip Randolph's public stance on social and human rights, Jessie Jackson, Rev. Al Sharpton—the list goes on.



Guided by the Ancestors

The Journey

Tina Williams Brewer and John Brewer

TINA AND HER HUSBAND JOHN'S families approached African American history very differently as they were growing up. Tina's family told stories, but tended to leave out some of the more difficult aspects of the culture's history in America. John's family, on the other hand, was very academic in nature and explored every aspect of the culture's history, no matter how painful or difficult it was.

When Tina initially began to quilt, her work was shaped mostly by her large extended family. She was blessed to know one of her great grandfathers and three of her great grandmothers, all of whom gave her different creative perspectives. But as she began to learn from her husband John and his family, and started to study different dimensions of African American history, her work began to tell different stories.

She and John would have long, involved discussions about various aspects of the culture's history, including not only slavery, discrimination and challenges, but also the joy and accomplishments of African Americans throughout time. All of these stories are reflected in Tina's work throughout her career.

Her early work is more focused on the primary issues Africans and African Americans faced as they began to build a culture in America. Her first piece centered on the holocaust of Black people in an attempt to give them some dignity. Her work continued to address various issues throughout time and is now more likely to be focused on more jubilant and hopeful themes. John is often the person who will translate the meaning of her beautiful fabric images into words, helping viewers understand the stories behind the images.

Laura Rankin, a friend and colleague Introduced Tina to the *Lukasa*, a memory board used by the Luba people for remembering history and ancient folklore. Images and symbols create a dialogue to help reinforce the tradition of oral history.

Tina and John experienced the living history in their trip to Africa in 1998. They were enriched by the culture and experienced the true essence of *sankofa*.



TINA WILLIAMS BREWER

AWARDS

Lifetime Achievement Artist, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, 2009
Service to the Arts Award, Guild Council, 2008
New Pittsburgh Courier 2008 Woman of Excellence Award
Associated Artist 98th Annual Exhibit, Buncher Foundation Award
Duquesne Light Award, Duquesne Light Company 2006
Walter Gropus Master Artist Award, 2006
Lincoln Larimer Community Development Corporation, Outstanding Humanitarian Award, 2005
Woman of the New Tribe Award, August Wilson Center for African American Culture 2005
Woman of Distinction, Girl Scouts of Western, PA, 2004
Trailblazer Award, *Renaissance Magazine*, 2004
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship, 2001, 1998
The Fitz Award for the Advancement of Women, Pittsburgh, PA, 2000
Celebrating Those Who Care, Artist of the Year (Carnegie Mellon, Shady Lane, Office of Child Development)
Art of the State Best of Show Award, State Museum of Pennsylvania and Greater Harrisburg Arts Council, 1997
Mid-Atlantic Arts Grant, Clay Center, Charleston, WV

PUBLICATIONS

Designing Home Lifestyles, Gallery Feature, by Janice Milliner, 2009
"Bravo!" *The Meadville Tribune Magazine*, feature article, 2009
International Review of African American Art, Vol 21, Number 4, 2008
Celebration of Visual Traditions: New Work of Diverse Pennsylvania Artists, PA Council on the Arts and Penn State University, 2008 (also 2006, 04, 02, 00, 1998)
Textural Rhythms: Quilting the Jazz Tradition, by Carolyn Mazloomi, 2007
U.S. Department of State 2006 Desk Diary, Regional Program Office
Celebration of Visual Traditions, PA Council on the Arts and Penn State University, 2006
Threads of Faith: Recent Works From the Women of Color Quilters Network, by Carolyn Mazloomi and Patricia C. Pongracz, 2004
"Ancient Symbols, New Meanings: A Modern Quilter Explores Old Images", *Quilting Quarterly*, 2003
Spirit of the Cloth: Contemporary African American Quilts, by Carolyn Mazloomi, Preface by Faith Ringgold, 1998
Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
"Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects" *Ornament Magazine*, by Anne L. Ross, 1994
Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African American Craft Art, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, Ohio, 1993
Women's Holistic Health, Ellen Olshonsky, DNS, RNC

LECTURES / WORKSHOPS

Issues in Education, African Art and Culture, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Pittsburgh PA
Individual Artist Fellowship Panel, Ohio Arts Council
One-Person Show and Lecture, Westminster College, Wilmington, PA
The National League of American Women, Pittsburgh, PA, 2002
The Ties that Bind, Panel Discussion, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, 2004
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Organizational Development Conference, 1998
Oakland Catholic High School Symposium for Young Women
Historical Society of Pennsylvania, *Stitch Me a Story: The Origins of the Story Quilt*, Workshop
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Conference
Minority Arts Program, Lecture
Society for Contemporary Craft / Museum/School Partnership (14 years)
Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise (PACE), Cultural Enrichment Program (3 years)
Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Columbine Quilt Guild, Guest Speaker, Denver, CO
Open Space Gallery, Celebrating Visual Tradition: Part III, Open Space Gallery, Allentown, PA, Workshop and Lecture
West Overton Museum, Greensburg, PA, Slide Presentation

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, 1993-present, Emeritus Board Member
Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Board Member
Women of Vision, 1986
Fiber Arts Guild, 1985
Senator John Heinz History Center, Advisory Board, 1994
Trolley Station Oral History Center, 1993

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009

Seeing Jazz, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA
Tina Williams Brewer, Solo Exhibition, Westmoreland Community College, Youngwood, PA
Celebration of Visual Tradition, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Traveling Exhibition from 2008 (also 2006, 04, 02, 00, 1998)
Women of Vision Exhibition, Penn State New Kensington, PA (also 2008, 07, 06, 05, 04)

2008

Quilting African American Women's History: Our Challenges, Creativity and Champions, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center (traveling)
In the Making: 250 Years, 250 Artists, Fe Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
Living Red, Women of Vision, Kings Art Complex, Columbus, OH

98th Associated Artists of Pittsburgh Annual Exhibition, Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, (also 2005)

SoulScapes, Women of Visions, Inc., August Wilson Center for African American Culture, Pittsburgh PA

2007

Art Within, Manchester Craftmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA

Textural Rhythms: Constructing the Jazz Tradition, Carolyn Mazloomi, curator (traveling)

2006

Up Over Down Under, Fiber Arts Guild of Pittsburgh and Australian Textile Art and Surface Design, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA (traveling)

Art for August, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Pittsburgh, PA

Migrations of the African Diaspora, Women of Visions, Inc., Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

A Two Person Show Retroactive, Huntington Art Museum, Huntington, WV

Three Rivers Arts Festival Annual Exhibition, Three Rivers Arts Festival Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA

Invitational, Clay Center, Charleston, WV

2005

Mid Atlantic Art Exhibition, Hoyt Institute of Fine Arts, New Castle, PA

Color: Ten African American Artists, Society for Contemporary Crafts, Pittsburgh, PA (Traveling from 2005 - 2010)

Threads of Faith, American Bible Society, New York, NY (traveling)

Three Rivers Arts Festival Invitational, Three Rivers Arts Festival Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA

Living Red: Are You Feelin' Me? Women of Visions, One Mellon Center Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA

Generations: Six African American Artists, African American Cultural Center, Pittsburgh, PA

2004

Dreams and Legacies, Spirits Embodies Gallery of Fine Art, Pittsburgh, PA

Accomplishment Twenty2, Manchester Craftmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA

Common Threads, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

2003

Connections Across Time and Space, Department of State's Artists in Embassies Program

Symmetry: Voices + Images, Women of Visions, Inc., Foreland Street Studio Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA

Appalachian Corridors Juried Exhibition, Avampato Discovery Museum, Charleston, WV

120 Years of African American Quilters, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, PA

Stop Asking, We Exist: Twenty African-American Craftsmen, United States Embassy in Accra, Ghana

African-American Quilters of Western Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania History Center, Harrisburg, PA

2002

African Inspirations, Apple Valley Museum, Victorville, CA

Patterns in Time: Quilt Making in America, Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA

Art of the State, Harrisburg, PA

One Person Show: Tina Williams Brewer, Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Golden, CO

One Person Show: Westminster College, Wilmington, PA

Beyond & Behind the Mask, Women of Vision, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

Eight Regional Artists of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

19th Carroll Harris Simms National Black Art Competition and Exhibition, Dallas, TX (Also 18th, 17th)

2001

Spirit of the Cloth: Contemporary African American Artists, Carolyn Mazloomi, curator (traveling)

Stop Asking/We Exist: 25 Contemporary African American Artists, Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA (traveling)

Fiberart International Regional Fiber Art Exhibition, One Mellon Bank Center Bank Gallery at Steel Plaza, Pittsburgh, PA

Africa: One Continent, Many Worlds, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA

Threads Unraveled, Stories Revealed, (traveling)

Beyond and Behind the Mask, Women of Vision, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

Art of the State, Pennsylvania State Museum, Harrisburg, PA

Tina Brewer Story Quilts, Westminster College Art Gallery, Westminster, PA

Tina Williams Brewer: An African American Perspective, Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Golden, CO

2000

I Can Still Quilt Without My Glasses, Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, Cathleen Bailey, curator (traveling)

African American Craft National, Lexington, KY

1999

The Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Golden Colorado, CO

Spirit of the Cloth: Contemporary African American Quilters (traveling)

Quilts: The Fabric of Spirit, African American Museum of Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA

Tina Williams Brewer Story Quilts, Penn State University, Harrisburg, PA

1998

Heritage of a Stolen People, African American Story Quilts by Tina Williams Brewer, Institute of Texan Culture, San Antonio, TX

1996

Of the Spirit, Women Artists of Color, Women of Vision, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

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Uncommon Beauty in Uncommon Objects, Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, OH (traveling)

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When I am working, I often feel as if my fingers are being guided by forces I don't completely understand, but that help me create far more insightfully and knowledgeably than I would be able to otherwise. I believe these forces are the thoughts, feelings and insights of my ancestors—those whose stories I try to tell.

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SYMBOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS

All of the quilts are stitched with traditional African symbols from different countries.

Below are some of the symbols and their meanings.



CREATION



GUARDIAN



LIES



DIVERSITY



COMPLETENESS



WATER



CONSCIOUSNESS



CHANGE



LIGHT



BEGINNING



PROTECTION



SCIENCE



WOMAN



ALLIANCE



GOODNESS



WEALTH



LIFE



GENERATION



MESSENGER



PROTECTION



RESPECT



KNOWLEDGE



FERTILITY



OBEDIENCE



RADIANCE



FIRE



WIND



COURAGE



ABUNDANCE



WISDOM

When I am working, I often feel as if my fingers are being guided by forces I don't completely understand, but that help me create far more insightfully and knowledgeably than I would be able to otherwise. I believe these forces are the thoughts, feelings and insights of my ancestors—those whose stories I try to tell.

— TINA WILLIAMS BREWER

