



AT FREEDOM'S DOOR

CHALLENGING SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

**Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American
History and Culture and the Maryland Historical Society
in Collaboration with Maryland Institute College of Art**

February 3–October 28, 2007





LEFT: Romare Bearden, *Roots Odyssey* (detail), 1976, Romare Bearden Foundation
RIGHT: *Portrait of Elisha Tyson* (detail), 1800–1810, formerly attributed to Robert Street, MdHS

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Romare Bearden, *Roots Odyssey*, 1976, Romare Bearden Foundation

At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland is a collaboration among the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture (RFLM), the Maryland Historical Society (MdHS), and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). This collaborative endeavor was essential to achieve the exhibition's vision of depicting meaningful connections between art and real life experiences. *At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland* has been developed and produced by students from MICA and Morgan State University (MSU) enrolled in MICA's Exhibition Development Seminar, in collaboration and with support and oversight from the professional staff of both museums and MICA.

The exhibition's primary objective is to challenge the public's perception of slavery and freedom by teaching visitors about resistance to slavery, whether it occurred through formal organization or individual efforts. *At Freedom's Door* attempts to answer a question crucial to the understanding of our state's past, present, and future: How did Marylanders—both enslaved and free—respond to, challenge, and ultimately defeat slavery as a legal institution? Historical art and artifacts as well as contemporary art are used throughout the exhibition to investigate Maryland's complex and often contradictory relationship to slavery. The exhibition asks us to consider what it meant to be free in the early United States and what it means to be free in the world today.

The production of *At Freedom's Door* was conceived as an educational experience that would provide a new model for museums developing an exhibition. The creative talent and efforts of 36 MICA and MSU undergraduate, graduate, and continuing studies students from my Exhibition Development Seminar formed the basis of this collaboration. Drawing on a decade of research conducted by MdHS, students used T. Stephen Whitman's forthcoming book, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, as the foundation for their subsequent primary and secondary research. For the past two years they examined the curatorial process while working in nine teams on every phase of the exhibition's conceptualization, organization, and implementation and under the mentorship of professionals from the community. Intensive weekly seminars were combined with practical experiences at RFLM, MdHS, MICA, community sites, and with the two resident and seven commissioned artists. They began with weekly readings, contemporary artist and art research, and writing assignments to develop the object list, exhibition script, interpretive texts, publications, graphic and exhibit designs, educational activities, Web site, exhibition programs, and a state-wide community outreach initiative to schools and non-profits. Proposals received rigorous feedback and criticism from

peers, mentors, and personnel from the three institutions. The students always repeatedly confronted the question: How did their ideas contribute to connecting the exhibition's goals to the larger community?

At Freedom's Door gave the involved institutions an opportunity to enhance their public service goals while enabling MICA to expand its twofold mission of educating professional artists and serving as a community cultural resource. Everyone contributed enormous time and energy to this multifaceted project. I express my sincere thanks to MICA's administration for its invaluable assistance and encouragement and to the two museum collaborators whose staffs worked with students to make the most of our combined resources. Finally, I am indebted to the extraordinary students from MICA and MSU for the invaluable part they played by working together as a unified team to formulate and produce *At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland*. This project created new approaches, concepts, presentations, and methods of teaching art, which helped the students build their careers as artists, educators and museum professionals.

George Ciscle
Curator-in-Residence, Maryland Institute College of Art

AT FREEDOM'S DOOR

At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland is presented at two museums. While chronologically the story begins at the Maryland Historical Society (MdHS) and continues at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture (RFLM), there is a constant dialogue. One exhibit can be seen without the other, but visiting both museums can give the viewer deeper insight into the questions the exhibition raises: Where have we been, where are we now, and where are we going?

The MdHS presents the history of slavery's beginnings in Maryland, from the Middle Passage to the relationships between the enslaved and the slaveholder. MdHS also tells stories of Marylanders' resistance to slavery.

The RFLM offers perspective on African American life in early 19th-century Baltimore. Through their sustained efforts to achieve freedom in the aftermath of the Civil War—through work, faith, and organization—antebellum black Baltimoreans created traditions for subsequent generations. The difficult decades following slavery's end would test the strength of those traditions.

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland investigates identity as a composite of past and present through historical artifacts and contemporary artworks representative of both periods. We hope these temporal interactions will initiate a dialogue to shape our future. Maryland is chosen for its geographical location as the southernmost northern state and northernmost southern state, enabling us to examine our shared experience highlighting our history. This project aims to bring together the state's communities and to reflect and initiate a conversation about the history of slavery and what 'freedom' means today.

To help facilitate the journey, the exhibition concentrates on four underlying themes, two at each institution. In the pages that follow, Kym S. Rice and David Taft Terry, two of the exhibition's three co-curators, offer historical essays that provide insight into the themes. The primary themes explored at the MdHS are *Slavery in Maryland* and *Resistance to Slavery*. The primary themes addressed at the RFLM are *Building Foundations for Freedom: African American Survival Legacies from the Antebellum Era* and *Beyond the Door: The Challenge to Freedom After Slavery*. We hope that conversations within each institution can carry on beyond the doors and out into the community at large. We intend visitors to be inspired by witnessing the story unfold at both museums. The themes addressed by both institutions are distinct and detailed. However, the "conversation" among themes is vital to understanding the entire to understand the entire exhibition.

At Freedom's Door addresses how history has literally and metaphorically branded contemporary understandings of slavery. Unique and varying viewpoints of resident artists, commissioned artists, and existing artworks inspired by identity and freedom acknowledge the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of the legacy of slavery. Contemporary artworks respond to the exhibition's historical artifacts in an effort to portray the present response the restrictions that slavery demanded. They also address the ever-changing meaning of slavery and freedom as handed down to us from previous generations. The juxtaposition of historic artifacts with contemporary art serves to examine, challenge, analyze, contrast, and, most important, to question where we come from, where we are today and where we are headed.

"We are united by our cumulative history. Through understanding our past and its consequences we will be able to develop a unified, compassionate, and holistic community."

-Students in the Exhibition Development Seminar

By examining our past, we shed new light on the present. The underlying objective of the exhibition's programmatic effort is to encourage the viewer to examine the context from a multitude of perspectives. *At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland* represents a true meeting of the minds: a complex collaboration that initiates a conversation that we hope acknowledges the struggles and victories of many groups and individuals, both past and present. Through these conversations wounds can heal and empowerment may begin.

This statement was written by the students of the Exhibition Development Seminar, who are listed on the Credits page.

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Album Quilt* (detail), 1842-43, MdHS
TOP RIGHT: Benny Andrews, *I Dream a World*, 2006
RIGHT: Benny Andrews, *Still Here*, 2006, both courtesy of ACA Galleries, New York



SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

Charles Ball's first memory was of his mother holding him in her arms. Walking along a road in southern Maryland, she begged her master not to sell her only remaining child. As she sobbed, the two were separated, and his mother was beaten back with a rawhide whip. He never saw her again. Many years later, Ball recalled how "the horrors of that day sank deeply into my heart...the terrors of that scene return with painful vividness upon my memory." Sold many times, Charles Ball regularly drank "the cup of sorry to the very dregs." He encountered awful working and living conditions, endured repeated beatings by his owners, and faced permanent separations from his own wife and children.

Ball's story poignantly reminds us of just how fragile a situation enslaved African Americans occupied in Maryland. Among the first English colonies to make African slavery hereditary and legal in 1664, Maryland remained firmly committed to slavery through law, economics, and social custom for another 200 years.

Before 1710 nearly all Maryland slaves African-born men, women, and children who survived the terrible "Middle Passage" arrived in the colony either directly or via the Caribbean. Because men outnumbered women at first, a native-born population did not appear for several generations. Until later in the 1700s, Maryland Africans lived mostly in small groups, which made life more difficult at first but may have helped ensure the persistence of some African cultural traditions.

Francis Guy, *Perry Hall Slave Quarter* (detail), 1805, MdHS

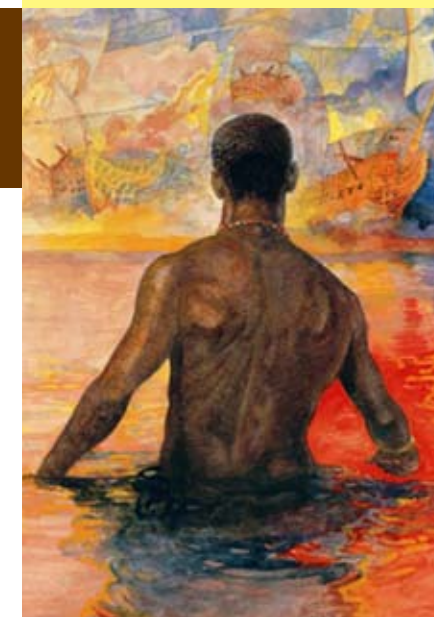


Whether living on a large plantation or a small farm, life for enslaved Marylanders remained physically demanding as well as tedious. As Dennis Simms, a former Prince George's County slave remembered, "It was a pretty hard and cruel life." Even so, enslaved men and women managed to carry on personal relationships, establish families, create communities and worship their god, but these activities often occurred in the slave quarters, out of sight of their white owners. From sunrise to sunset, they raised cash crops such as tobacco and later, wheat; tended livestock and vegetable gardens; fished; worked as boatmen; maintained and repaired property, and performed menial tasks such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, and washing. Through ingenious methods such as refusing to work or running away, many resisted their bondage. Bondmen learned trades like blacksmithing and became highly skilled artisans, sometimes becoming so competent that their owners leased them to work for other whites, allowing them to live off the premises and keep a small portion of their wages. Just as former slave Frederick Douglass discovered, early 19th-century Baltimore's growing commercial industry offered economic opportunities to enslaved Marylanders that included contact with free blacks while also according them some precious measures of autonomy provided by urban life.

"Life for enslaved Marylanders remained physically demanding as well as tedious."

By the outbreak of the Civil War, Maryland occupied, in the words of historian Barbara Fields, a precarious "middle ground" between slavery and freedom. It remained loyal to the Union and in 1864 by a narrow margin adopted a constitution that abolished slavery yet supplied thousands of troops to the Confederacy. Baltimore's free black community openly raised money to benefit black Federal soldiers, many of them former Maryland slaves, and welcomed contraband slaves as refugees. Escaping from Maryland to serve in the Union Army, John Boston wrote his wife Elizabeth, who remained enslaved there, "I can Address you thank god as a free man." He continued, no doubt speaking for countless others, "But as the lord led the Children of Israel to the lands of Canon so he led me to a land Where freedom Will rain in spite Of earth and hell. Dear you must make your Self content. I am free from all the Slavers Lash."

Kym S. Rice
Assistant Director, Museum Studies Program
The George Washington University
Guest Curator, Maryland Historical Society



TOP: Unknown, *Spiked Slave Collar*, 1820, collection of Derrick Beard
ABOVE: Jerry Pinkney, *The Old African*, 2004–2005, courtesy of the artist

RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY



Whites organized the first formal opposition to slavery in Maryland. Soon after the American Revolution, ordinary citizens throughout the Atlantic world began to register their opposition to the slave trade. Among the first to contest slavery on moral grounds, Quakers urged their members to give up slaveholding. The constitution of Baltimore's Abolition Society, established in 1789, pledged that "the human race, however varied in colour or intellects, are all justly entitled to liberty."

Perhaps influenced by America's new independence or "bound by conscience," upper South slaveholders began to manumit (free) their slaves in large numbers. A Maryland slaveholder noted plainly in a court document, "Black people are as much entitled to natural liberty as whites." Although individuals continued to free slaves outright or allow self-purchase, slaveholders, with increasing regularity, created timetables for freedom that allowed them to benefit from an enslaved person's labor for years to come.

"Many free and enslaved individuals strove to practice freedom in their daily lives by devoting their meager resources to liberating family members and friends."

Not surprisingly, antislavery arguments did little to prevent slavery's entrenchment in Maryland. As the free black population grew, some whites championed the colonization movement (founded 1817), which advocated the removal and resettlement of free African Americans in Africa, as a moral and economic solution to the problem. In fact, Maryland eventually furnished the largest number of American emigrants to Liberia. Many African Americans saw colonization as deportation and vehemently opposed it. A Baltimore group protested that this is "the land in which we were born [and] our only true and appropriate home." Some, like the educator Daniel Coker who left for Liberia in 1820, grew pessimistic about life in a profoundly racist society.

Formal antislavery sentiment in Maryland peaked in the early 1830s. Working with black churches, Elisha Tyson founded the Protection Society to thwart the growing practice of kidnapping free African Americans and selling them into slavery. John Needles reportedly hid antislavery literature in the furniture his factory shipped south. In 1825 Benjamin Lundy briefly located his antislavery newsletter, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, in Baltimore, publishing William Watkins as



the "Colored Baltimorean." Watkins influenced young William Lloyd Garrison, then working for Lundy, against colonization. Garrison left Baltimore in 1830 after being imprisoned for libeling a slave trader.

E. Poulson, *Slave Brig with Royal Navy Brig in Pursuit* (detail), c.1850, Penobscot Maritime Museum

Throughout the period, enslaved Marylanders, in the words of historian Stephen Whitman, "sustained a constant movement towards freedom." They opposed their bondage by purchasing their liberty, by suing for freedom in court, and by rebelling against those who called themselves their masters. Free people of color held on to their hard-won status, resisting kidnappers who sought to re-enslave them, assisting fugitive slaves, and coping with growing legal restrictions. Many free and enslaved individuals strove to practice freedom in their daily lives by devoting their meager resources to liberating family members and friends, by founding churches and schools, and by working to acquire businesses and property.

Traveling on foot, along water routes, or in disguise, enslaved men and, in smaller numbers, women, sought their freedom across the Mason-Dixon Line. Maryland stood literally "at freedom's door" and, by one estimate, supplied the largest number of successful runaways. African Americans, together with whites, operated the antebellum Underground Railroad, an informal national movement that aided runaways. Although romanticized today, these undertakings involved great risks and required courage and ingenuity for success. When a slaveholder refused to sell her free father his wife, despite a prior agreement, Caroline Hammond's family escaped from Anne Arundel County. The family traveled under a forged pass to Baltimore where a white family "who were ardent supporters of the Underground Railroad" sheltered them. "Fearful of being apprehended," with a bounty on their heads, the family made their escape to freedom in Pennsylvania concealed in a wagon transporting goods.

Kym S. Rice
Assistant Director, Museum Studies Program
The George Washington University
Guest Curator, Maryland Historical Society

TOP: Josiah Wedgwood, *Am I not a Man and a Brother?* circa late 1700s, The Walters Art Museum
ABOVE: Jacob Lawrence, *Douglass*, 1999, DC Moore Gallery

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR FREEDOM: AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVIVAL LEGACIES FROM THE ANTEBELLUM ERA

“I HAD THE STRONGEST DESIRE to see Baltimore,” Frederick Douglass (1817–1895) confessed in his first autobiography, published in 1845. Even as a young child on the remote Eastern Shore, like most other Maryland blacks, Douglass (né Bailey) knew of the haven on the Patapsco. When faced with opportunities to go there, not even the thought of separation from the only home and community he had known seemed to discourage the young boy. He left the Eastern Shore, at his slave owner’s behest, though “without a regret,” eagerly bound for Baltimore, “with the highest hopes of future happiness.”

The size of the African American population set Baltimore apart from any place else in the nation, North or South. The determination of the city’s blacks to strive for economic, cultural, and educational opportunities beyond what the larger society intended for them also proved key. And citizens’ willingness to be participate in varied and multifaceted efforts toward resisting slavery was a hallmark of the city’s antebellum life. Thus, in spite of its slaveholding status, its function as a stronghold for some of the most brutal and virulent practitioners of slavery and racism in the nation, and the frequent heart-wrenching scenes of the domestic slave trade, African Americans constructed in Baltimore an environment of freedom unavailable anywhere else.

This environment of freedom owed much to the extensive family and community networks among black people. The impact of this environment could sometimes be spectacular, frequently providing the genesis of

genius. On his family’s farm, just beyond the western limits of Baltimore, the scientist Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806) not only produced scholarly studies, but also intellectually engaged the holders of racist notions, capably defending his people’s dignity. Less spectacular, but more important perhaps than the personal accomplishments of those such as Banneker, was the impact freedom for *some* could have on the possibilities of freedom for *others*. Indeed, runaways relied upon kin and friends. The fugitives tell us this themselves through the filters of 19th-century narratives, some of which even predate the Underground Railroad. Furthermore, when the abolitionists and their movement did connect with points south of the Mason-Dixon Line, Baltimoreans were prominently involved.

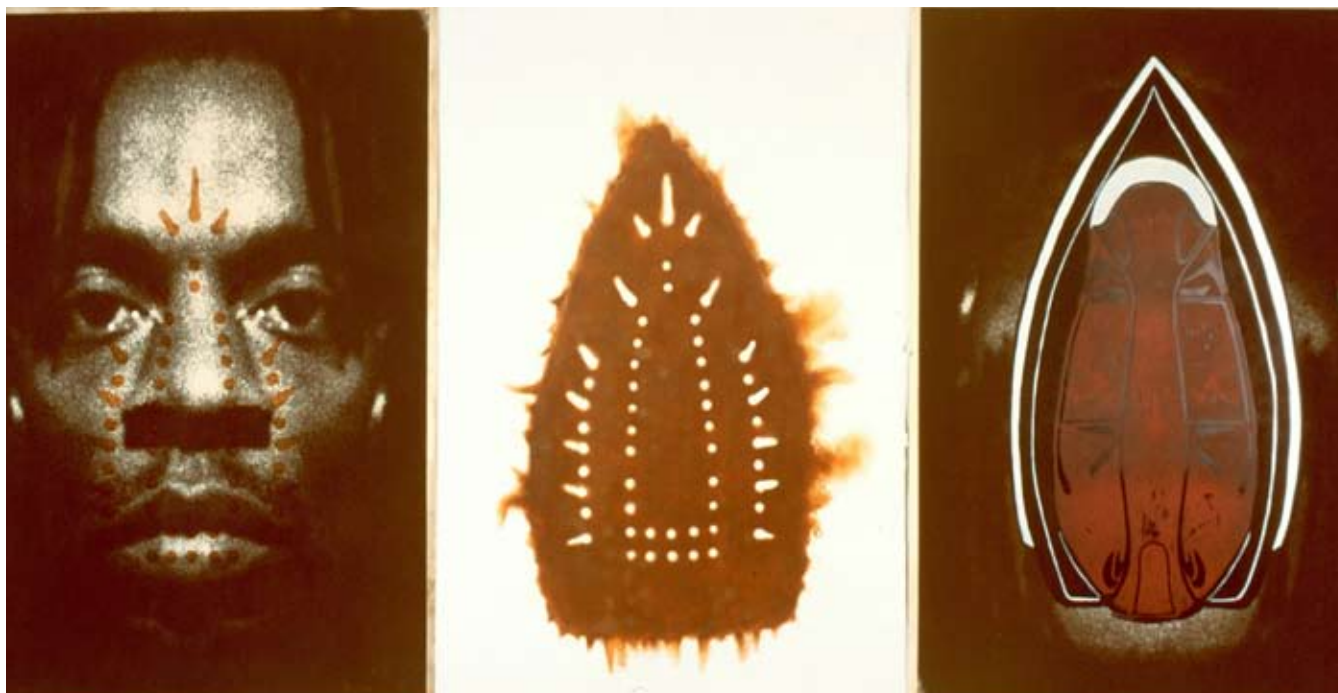
“This environment of freedom owed much to the extensive family and community networks among black people.”

Legal freedom came to all African Americans in Maryland as it did to the rest of the slave-holding South as a result of the U. S. Civil War. Yet, the challenge slavery had posed to black people did not disappear with its death following the victory of the ratification of a new state constitution in 1864. Rather, the rights of legitimacy, equality, and self-definition remained as battles still to be won or lost in future days; battles some argue rage on to *this* day. What black Baltimoreans must have known, however, was that the cultural survivals they carried forward with them out of the age of slavery represented an effective foundation upon which they could mount opposition to any challenges freedom might bring.

David Taft Terry, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of
Maryland African American History and Culture



Daniel Payne, *The Presentation of a Gold Snuffbox to the Reverend R.J. Breckinridge, D.D.* (detail), 1845, MdHS



OPPOSITE PAGE: Willie Cole, *Man, Spirit and Mask*, 1999, published by the Brodsky Center (formerly the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper), collection of Nancy Lane

BEYOND THE DOOR:

THE CHALLENGE TO FREEDOM AFTER SLAVERY



David Levinthal,
Mammy, 1995–1998,
Conner Contemporary Art
and the artist

“I AM OPPOSED TO THE NIGGERS VOTING,” Mississippi politician James K. Vardaman quipped during the early 1900s, at the dawn of the age of racial circumscription. In his mind, all blacks were unacceptable as full citizens—from the educated and cultured, to the “coconut-headed, chocolate-colored typical little coon... who blacks my shoes every morning.” This section of *At Freedom’s Door* signals a move beyond the chronological framework of slavery and seeks to reflect the history of America’s memory of slavery and the uses to which that memory has been applied. The memory is cast here as both personal recollection and publicly debated characterization of the past.

The two centuries of racism which underpinned legal slavery did not disappear in the aftermath of the Civil War. Rather, a struggle emerged to identify and then harvest slavery’s legacy and historical import in America. In the end, by the time of Vardaman’s remarks, a new second-class status had been affixed to African Americans as a group. Seeking neither truth nor reconciliation across the color line, in the wake of the Civil War, white America agreed that whatever direction their society would take, it would be of, by, and for white people. Defeating this effort was the challenge slavery’s death left unmet.

“The traditional responses often brought frank confrontations from artists and have continued through modern day.”

Perhaps more than any other agent in these developments, art and visual imagery warped the nation’s memory of African American history. In cahoots with politics, custom, and economic practice, all manner of artistic expression generated for and by “mainstream” audiences served to push African Americans back again toward slavery. These interpretations of black America suggested that freedom had been a mistake and that granting equality to the freed people would only compound the error. So, as tools of white power, a deluge of fictitious “typical little coon” images (to borrow Vardaman’s phrase) depicted black citizens as less-than-human, undeserving of equality. In art and advertisement, blacks were reduced to what they had been—servants, helpers, and comforters of whites in every way. Iconic in this way were the multitude of “mammies,” which proliferated throughout the period. A more disturbing psychology, however, is suggested by bootjacks cast around 1880 in the form of a lasciviously postured black woman, upon whose bellies white men were literally invited to clean the crud from their shoes.

Hank Willis Thomas,
Branded Head, 2003,
collection of Deborah Willis



Representing a continuation of the antebellum degradation of free blacks, the unfortunate visual aesthetic of the late 19th century worked to establish the perception that an innate racial inferiority, *not race discrimination*, lay at the root of black wretchedness. Yet, as the promulgation of racism through artistic depiction mounted, it served only to feed the inner resolve and communal resilience of African Americans.

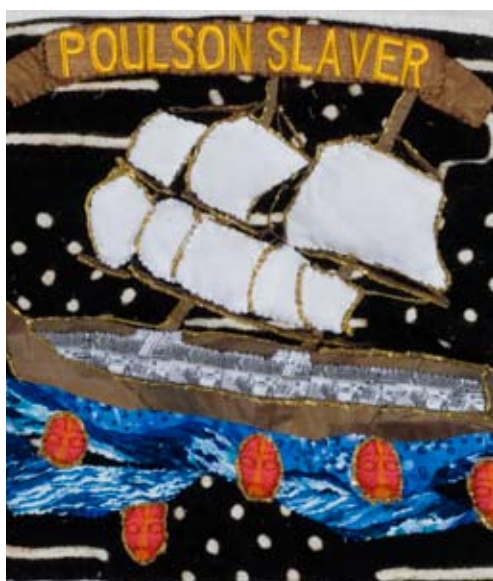
Blacks rose to their own defense, demanding respect and claiming for themselves a just role within the national life. Hand-in-hand with other forms of intellectual production (like historiography, which sought to reclaim a more factual African American past), African American art responded to the aesthetic assault almost as it began. The traditional responses often brought frank confrontations from artists and have continued through the present day. Others have taken a different tack, seeking to appropriate and recontextualize the most troubling images and icons, in hopes that turning them against their original intent might offer important statements on the persisting inequities in modern life. Everyday folk had something to say too, albeit more subtly, more personally. In this important way, the preservation of family histories in Bibles, oral traditions, and the like, did much to countermand the deleterious impact of the racism around them.

David Taft Terry, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of
Maryland African American History and Culture

David Claypool Johnston, *Early Development of Southern Chivalry* (detail), c. 1861–65, MdHS

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE:

JOAN M.E. GAITHER



Joan M.E. Gaither is a native of Baltimore and currently the undergraduate coordinator for art education at MICA. She was involved in helping to integrate local schools and businesses during the Civil Rights Movement. Gaither received a bachelor's degree from Morgan State University and both a master's degree in education and a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has exhibited at MICA, most recently in Fall 2006, as well as at the Maryland Art Educators Association Annual Exhibition (1990–1997) and the Milwaukee Art Educators Annual Exhibition (1993–1995). Gaither has received many honors and awards including the National Art Education Association's Maryland Art Educator of the Year Award (2005), Howie Award–Outstanding Educator (1992), the Boston Museum School's Excellence in Teaching Award (1991), and the Rhode Island School of Design Excellence in Teaching Award (1984). She was Maryland's runner-up for the Thanks to Teachers Excellence Award (1990).

According to Gaither, "I juxtapose issues of slavery and racism with the warmth and comfort that quilts provide. I highlight the consequences of laws, codes, beliefs, and values for those who continue to be marginalized. These quilts are layered, embedded and embellished with images, text, objects, and symbolic cloth to make emotional connections with issues of identity and freedom of body, mind, and spirit. The Baltimore album style quilt focuses on particular people, places, objects, and events that challenge the complexities of the institution of slavery. The *How Much Longer* quilt represents the lingering pain of racism and the vestiges of slavery."

ABOVE AND BELOW:
Joan Gaither, *Poulson's Slaver Quilt*
(details), 2006



ARVIE SMITH

Arvie Smith was born in 1938 and spent his childhood in rural Texas and Watts and South Central neighborhoods of Los Angeles. As an artist and educator, his work examines various aspects of the African-American experience, including slavery, racism, commerce, and entertainment. Smith has participated in more than 30 solo and group exhibitions and has served as an instructor/lecturer at MICA; Pacific Northwest College of Art; University of Oregon; Creative Arts Council of Manucha, Oregon; Oregon College of Arts and Crafts; and Studio Art Center International. He received a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) degree from Pacific Northwest College of Art and a master of fine arts (MFA) degree from the Hoffberger School of Painting at MICA. During a sojourn in Italy, Smith studied at Il Bisonte and SACI in Florence. He has traveled extensively through West Africa and researched the slave castles of the Gold Coast.

According to Smith, "I transform the history of African Americans into lyrical two-dimensional paintings. My paintings commonly depict psychological images revealing deep sympathy for the dispossessed and marginalized members of society in an unrelenting search for beauty, meaning, and equality. This work reflects powerful injustices and the will to resist and survive. Memories of growing up in the South add to my awareness of the legacy that slavery has left with all Americans today. The intention is to critique the memory of atrocities and oppression so this will never be forgotten nor duplicated. I create this work because I must."



ABOVE AND BELOW:
Arvie Smith, *Baltimore*
My Baltimore (details), 2006



COMMISSIONED ARTISTS



William Christenberry, *Klan Room* (detail), 2006



Linda Day Clark, *Plantation Diary #1*, 2006



Maren Hassinger, *Legacy* (detail), 2006

WILLIAM CHRISTENBERRY

William Christenberry is an acclaimed multi media artist living in Washington, D.C, best known for his works depicting his hometown of Hale County, Alabama. In *At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland*, Christenberry exhibits work from *The Klan Room* (1962), an installation of his Ku Klux Klan-related paintings, drawings, photographs, and found objects. Commenting on the disconcerting nature of this work, he said, "I hold the position that there are times when an artist must examine and reveal such strange and secret brutality."

LINDA DAY CLARK

Clark's work has been exhibited in museums and galleries in 11 states and is included in collections at the Baltimore Museum of Art, James E. Lewis Museum of Art at Morgan State University, and the Maryland Historical Society. She is a professor at Coppin State University. Clark received an associate's degree from Howard County Community College, a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) degree from MICA, and a master of fine arts (MFA) degree from the University of Delaware. Clark's work in *At Freedom's Door* builds on past works honoring her slave ancestors and finally allows her to put the African slave first.

MAREN HASSINGER

Maren Hassinger, a native of Los Angeles, is director of MICA's Rinehart School of Sculpture and has mounted many solo exhibitions, participated in more than 120 group shows, and performed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She has been the recipient of Anonymous Was a Woman and International Association of Art Critics awards and has received grants from the Gottlieb Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work comments on the natural and manufactured world using wire rope and fiber.



Sam Christian Holmes, *At Freedom's Door* (detail), 2006



Whitfield Lovell, *Guide My Heart* (detail), 2006



Michael Platt, *Tattoos in the Walls* (detail), 2006



Joyce J. Scott, *Him*, 2006, courtesy of Goya Contemporary

SAM CHRISTIAN HOLMES

Sam Christian Holmes was born on the east end of Long Island, New York, and currently resides in Baltimore. He received both bachelor of fine arts (BFA) and master of fine arts (M.F.A.) degrees from MICA. In working with metal, Holmes attempts to access his cultural and personal history on several levels. He said, "It's more the issues of recycling of materials (tin used in earlier works) or the utilitarian nature of the gate form (in later works) that suggest boundaries of symbolic communities and storytellers of folklore and personal memory."

WHITFIELD LOVELL

Whitfield Lovell is a Bronx native who received his BFA from Cooper Union. His work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the National Museum of American Art. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Joan Mitchell, Penny McCall, and New York Foundations. Working from studio portraits of African Americans, he uses objects found in flea markets and antique shops to enhance and evoke their legacies.

MICHAEL PLATT

Michael Platt is a Washington, D.C., artist known for printmaking, charcoal drawings, installations, and computer-generated images. His subjects are survivors and the marginalized, for whom he feels that respect and passion are paramount. For *At Freedom's Door*, Platt based images on his combined experiences at slave dungeons in Ghana and at the Historical Hampton Plantation's slave quarters. The work represents a survivor of the Middle Passage, who carries the marks of the past and bears memories and marks of a new life in Maryland.

JOYCE J. SCOTT

Joyce J. Scott is a sculptor, jeweler, printmaker, installation artist, performance artist, and educator. Her work draws from African and Native American experience with comic books, television, American pop culture, as well as contemporary urban scene on the streets of her Baltimore neighborhood. For more than three decades Scott has created objects that offer distinctive commentary on social issues such as racism, sexism, violence, stereotypes, and other forms of social injustice.

CREDITS

CURATORS:

George Ciscle (MICA), Kym S. Rice (MdHS), David Taft Terry (RFLM)

PROJECT COORDINATORS:

George Ciscle (MICA), Nancy Davis (MdHS), Jeannine Disviscour (MdHS), Margaret Hutto (RFLM)

ART EDUCATION:

Whitney Frasier, Sarah Hanson, Anna Ishii, Aidah Rasheed
Mentor: Michelle McCallum (Community College of Baltimore County)
Resources: Joan Gaither (MICA), Erin Kimes (MdHS), Michael Roman (RFLM), Terry Taylor (RFLM), Jennifer Yaremczak (MdHS)

CONTEMPORARY CURATORIAL:

Jennifer Copeland, Natalia Panfile, Piero Spadaro, Zeynep Oz
Mentor: George Ciscle (MICA)

EXHIBITION DESIGN:

Nick Chow, Yve Colby, Richard Daniels, Tyler dePerrot, Sarena Ebelacker, Rebecca Nagle
Mentor: Glenn Shrum (Flux Studio)
Resources: Heather Erst and Charles Mack Associates, Margaret Hutto (RFLM), Gerald Ross (MICA)

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Alex Matzner, Sylvia Suh, Leroy Taylor
Mentor: Curt Kotula (Fastspot)
Resources: Kim Carlin (MICA), Christy Wolfe (MICA)

HISTORICAL CURATORIAL:

Charlotte Albertson, Myrtis Bedolla, Katie Dobbins, Jennifer Lee, Sally Massad
Mentors: Kym S. Rice (MdHS), David Terry (RFLM)
Resources: Nancy Davis (MdHS), Jeannine Disviscour (MdHS), Hagay Hagochen, Stan Squirewell, T. Stephen Whitman (Mount St. Mary's University)

MEDIA:

Tyler dePerrot, Madiz Gomez, Kimberly Holland, Ekua Holmes, Jamal Thorne
Mentor: Sam Christian Holmes (Morgan State University)
Resources: Andy Shenkar, Rebecca Yenawine (Kids on the Hill)

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Amber Carroll, Melani Douglass, Elena Rosemond
Mentor: Emily Blumenthal (The Walters Art Museum)
Resources: Erin Kimes (MdHS), Nicole Shivers (RFLM)

WEBSITE DESIGN:

Dan Hoerr, Yen Shu Liao, Sandy Triolo
Mentor: Chris Styles (Fastspot)

WRITING:

Joanna Barnum, Angel Nelson, Claudette Rhone, Lisa Rigby
Mentor: Leslie King-Hammond (MICA)
Resources: Cheryl Knauer (MICA), Heather Marchese (MICA)

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE:

Joan M.E. Gaither (MdHS), Arvie Smith (RFLM)

COMMISSIONED ARTISTS:

William Christenberry, Linda Day Clark, Maren Hassinger, Sam Christian Holmes, Whitfield Lovell, Michael Platt, Joyce J. Scott

EXISTING WORKS BY:

Benny Andrews, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Willie Cole, Leo and Diane Dillon, Edmund Duffy, Shirley Hunt, Jacob Lawrence, David Levinthal, Valerie Maynard, Anderson J. Pigatt, Jerry Pinkney, Danny Simmons, Hank Willis Thomas

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At Freedom's Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland has been developed and produced by students from Maryland Institute College of Art and Morgan State University enrolled in MICA's Exhibition Development Seminar, in collaboration and with support and oversight from the professional staff of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, the Maryland Historical Society, and Maryland Institute College of Art.

Support for this project has been made possible through the generosity of The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund of the Baltimore Community Foundation; The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation; The Lois & Irving Blum Foundation; M & T Bank; The Macht Philanthropic Fund of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore; The Maryland Humanities Council; The National Endowment for the Humanities; R. Gant Powell Jr.; T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation, Inc.; The Alvin and Fanny Blaustein Thalheimer Foundation; Verizon.

Publication of *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775-1865* by T. Stephen Whitman was made possible through generous support of the William L. & Victorine Q. Adams Foundation.

We are also indebted to the Friends of the Exhibition Development Seminar for helping to make the exhibition's educational programs and brochure possible. Additional support was provided by our community partners Kids on the Hill, Morgan State University, and St. Mark United Methodist Church.

A special thanks goes to all the staff from the three institutions for their support of this project. We would like to acknowledge MICA's Communications, Development and Exhibitions Departments for their invaluable support to the Exhibition Development Seminar.

More information on *At Freedom's Door*, including detailed project credits, images, bios of team members, lesson plans and a discussion forum, can be found online at: <http://www.mica.edu/atfreedomdoor>.

Copyright © 2007. Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, Maryland.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form by any means without written permission of the museums, artists or publisher.

LENDERS:

ACA Gallery
Albin O. Kuhn Library, UMBC
Derrick Beard
Romare Bearden Foundation
Belair Mansion
Carroll Park Foundation
Conner Contemporary Art
Chester County Historical Society
DC Moore Gallery
David C. Driskell
Eisenhower Library,
Johns Hopkins University

Historic Annapolis Foundation
Hampton National Historic Site
Howard University
James E. Lewis Museum,
Morgan State University
Lancaster County Historical Society
Nancy Lane
Greg Lehne
Sam Margolin
Maryland State Archives
Maryland Historical Society
National Archives
Pennsylvania Historical Society

Penobscot Maritime Museum
Sandy Spring Museum
Swarthmore College Friends
Historical Library
The Walters Art Museum
Deborah Willis
Winterthur Museum



PROGRAMS AND EVENTS FEBRUARY–MAY 2007

For more information and descriptions of programs and events, please visit: www.mica.edu/afreedomsdoor

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free with museum admission. Museum admission is free to RFLM and MdHS members and MICA and Morgan State University students with ID

OPENING RECEPTION
Saturday, February 3
7:30–10 p.m.: RFLM

FILM: BOYS OF BARAKA (2005)
Saturday, February 10
2 p.m.: MSU

**COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
OPENING**
Sunday, February 11
Noon–4 p.m.: MdHS

ART IN AN HOUR
Wednesday, February 14
Noon: RFLM

TEACHER WORKSHOP
Saturday, February 17
9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: MdHS

**FREE SATURDAY FAMILY
WORKSHOP**
Saturday, February 17
1–2 p.m. or 2:30–3:30 p.m.: RFLM

CURATOR'S TALK
Saturday, February 24
1p.m.: RFLM

MIXED MEDIA
Thursday, March 1
5–8 p.m.: MdHS

ART IN AN HOUR
Wednesday, March 14
Noon: RFLM

**FILM: FREDERICK DOUGLASS:
WHEN THE LION WROTE
HISTORY (1994)**
Saturday, March 17
2 p.m.: MICA

**FREE SATURDAY FAMILY
WORKSHOP**
Saturday March 17
1–3:30 p.m.: MdHS

**CONVERSATIONS AT
FREEDOM'S DOOR, PART I**
Saturday, March 24
1–4 p.m.: MdHS

**WILLIAM CHRISTENBERRY:
SWEET HOME ALABAMA:
THE PULL OF PLACE**
Tuesday, April 3
7 p.m.: MICA

MIXED MEDIA
Thursday, April 5
5–8 p.m.: RFLM

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S STUDIO:
QUILTING WITH JOAN GAITHER**
Saturday, April 7
10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: MICA

FILM: 500 YEARS LATER (2005)
Saturday, April 14
2 p.m.: MICA

ART IN AN HOUR
Wednesday, April 18
Noon: MdHS

QUILTING FOR THE SOUL
Saturday April 21
10.30 a.m.: St. Mark United
Methodist Church, 1440 Dorsey
Road, Hanover, MD

**CONVERSATIONS AT
FREEDOM'S DOOR, PART II**
Saturday, April 28
1–4 p.m.: RFLM

MIXED MEDIA
Thursday, May 3
5–8 p.m.: MdHS

ART IN AN HOUR
Wednesday, May 9
Noon: MdHS

FILM: BAMBOOZLED (2000)
Saturday, May 12
2 p.m.: MSU

LEFT: Arvie Smith, *Baltimore My Baltimore* (detail), 2006
RIGHT: *The Peculiar Institution* (detail), 1860s, Albin O. Kuhn Library, UMBC



REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM
of Maryland African American
History & Culture



www.mica.edu/atfreedomdoor

