



JOHN RHODEN SCULPTURES

June 23 through October 1, 1982

AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MUSEUM
7th and Arch Streets
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



JOHN W. RHODEN was born on March 13, 1918, in Birmingham, Alabama, where he attended the public schools and, later, Talledega College. There was very little stimulation for the prospective sculptor in Birmingham during these years. While in college, he taught several private courses to assure a continued interest in the arts, but his formal training was, at this time, quite limited.

Upon his arrival in New York City in the late 1930s, Mr. Rhoden had the opportunity to study under Richmond Barthe, who had already acquired an important reputation. A three-year duty in the Armed Services interrupted his training, but his artistic talent was utilized well: he was commissioned to sculpt portraits of certain generals. After his tour of duty, he enrolled in the School of Painting and Sculpture of Columbia University, with Oronzio Maldarelli, Hugo Robus and William Zorach as his principal instructors. Mr. Rhoden received his first major award in 1947 as the recipient of a Rosenwald Fellowship. In the same year, he was awarded First Prize in sculpture from Columbia University, and was the recipient of two additional First Prizes between 1948 and 1950. As a participant in the exhibition of the Painters and Sculptors Society of New Jersey in 1950, he received a Prize and Honorable Mention. He was also selected for a Tiffany Award (one of two winners) and a scholarship from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in the same year.

Between 1951 and 1954, two major awards were given Mr. Rhoden: A Fulbright Fellowship in 1951, and the coveted Prix de Rome Fellowship, which he maintained from 1952 to 1954. After completing his work at the American Academy in Rome, he returned to New York where he opened his studio at 23 Cranberry Street in Brooklyn. In 1955 he received a first prize from the University of Atlanta. It was at this time that he made his first major tour with sculpture under the auspices of the United States Department of State. During the year-long tour he exhibited in Iceland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. In 1959, he was further honored with a Rockefeller Foundation grant and made a second major tour to the Soviet Union, nine Soviet Republics, Poland and Yugoslavia as a member of a four-party artist delegation. He commenced another tour the following year, again under the auspices of the Department of State, of India, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Korea, Japan and the Philippines.

In 1961, he received an Honorarium and Medal Pro Sculptura Egregia from Howard University, as well as Guggenheim Fellowship. As a Consultant at the Institute Teknologi Bandung Indonesia in 1962, Mr. Rhoden rejuvenated earlier interests in carved wooden sculpture since fine woods were easily accessible.

On his return to New York, he received a commission for a bronze sculpture for Harlem Hospital from the City of New York Department of Public Works. This he executed between 1963 and 1965. The years 1967 and 1968 brought him three additional awards: an Honorarium from Flisk University in 1967, a Life Membership in the Municipal Art Society of New York, and an Honorarium from the University of Georgia in 1968. He was again commissioned in 1968 by the City of New York to execute a work for the Metropolitan Hospital. His work also stands as a permanent installation in the Philadelphia Sheraton Hotel, a zodiacal structure and curved wall of universal symbols executed in different metals.

His commissioned work entitled "Nisaika" stands at the entrance to the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum. The name derives from the Chinook Indian West Coast trade language and means "we", "us", or "our".

The statue is cast in the age-old Cire Perdue method of bronze casting developed on the West Coast of Africa.

Mr. Rhoden describes this work as "Neo-Africanism" which is to translate the aesthetics and essence of African art into the American cultural language of sculpture.

"Nisaika's" name is primitive American, the forms are primitive African, the result, a unity of heritage – African-American.

In addition to his world tours, Mr. Rhoden has exhibited extensively within the United States at the Metropolitan Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the National Academy, the Chicago Art Institute and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has also appeared in group and one-man shows in numerous university and private galleries. His works are included in the permanent collections of the Carl Milles Museum in Stockholm and the Delaware Museum and in many private collections throughout the country.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Toni Nash, consultant to the Museum, is thanked for her continuing supportive services and encouraging spirit.

Bless you all!

Teri Doke

Dr. Teri Y. Doke
Executive Director

Pow Wow
 1970, Bronze and Jewel Glass
 64"

Eve
 1958, Bronze
 46"

Hommage De/Africa
 1969, Bronze and Jewel Glass
 8"

Ritual of Circumstance
 1980, Bronze
 19½"

Safari
 1958, Bronze
 27" x 38"

Line Portrait
 1972, Bronze
 35¼"

Challenge to Jupiter
 1953, Bronze
 39"

Dedicated Public Servant
 1958, Bronze and Jewel Glass
 40" x 12"

Search for Truth
 1953, Bronze
 34"

African Dancers
 1974, Bronze
 36½"

The Garrison
 1970, Bronze and Jewel Glass
 28" x 16"

Seated Figure
 1958, Bronze
 10"

Manhattan
 1959, Bronze, Nickel Silver and Jewel Glass
 65½"

Generations
 1961, Teakwood
 8' 4"

Bronze Head
 1980, Bronze
 19"

Nyanza "Presence of Africa"
 1976, Bronze
 7' 8"

Clone
 1979, Bronze
 40"

C A T A L O G

Cover and Brochure Design by Cheryl D. Jones
 Reproduction of "Nisaika" by Deryl D. Mackie
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