



---

# JOINING FORCES

---

HUGHIE LEE SMITH

AND

---

JOHN W. RHODEN

---

# JOINING FORCES:

## Hughie Lee Smith and John W. Rhoden

This exhibition, *Joining Forces*, brings together two distinguished American artists.

John W. Rhoden, a sculptor, is largely self taught, which is visible in his sculpture, and who displays the richness of America in his work. The artist has stated: "What comes out of a mature artist is primarily what he is born with."

The other artist, Hughie Lee Smith, is a painter. What impresses the viewer most about this artist's paintings is their monumental power, their eloquence, and their extraordinary color harmonies. "I am sincerely trying to get at something invisible and almost impossible to express," he has said.

These two artists have admirably combined two seemingly divergent artistic philosophies that they encountered early in their careers. Under close observation both artists present a metaphor of spiritual oneness in their aspirations and commitment towards art.

**Lorenzo Pace**

*Director of Galleries*

*Guest Curator*

**Ellen Mohammed**

*Technical Assistant*

**Jennifer Hein**

**Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman**

*Dean, School of Fine  
and Performing Arts*

**Caron Van Gilder**

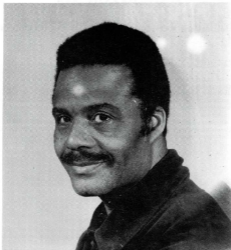
*Director of the Governor's  
Challenge Grant for Excellence*

*exhibition at:*

**MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE  
ART GALLERY IN LIFE HALL**

**OCTOBER 14 - NOVEMBER 9, 1988**

*Artists' reception - October 19, 4 - 7 p.m.*



**JOHN W. RHODEN**

*Sculptor*

## POSTSCRIPT

John W. Rhoden was born on March 13, 1918, in Birmingham, Alabama, where he attended the public schools and later, Talladega 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 Barthé, 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 Maddaleni, 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 a 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 Fisk 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 sedonial structure and curved wall of universal symbols executed in different metals.



THE ACTIVIST BRONZE 1966 38" x 60"

## MATERIALS/PHILOSOPHY

The art of Rhoden is essentially figurative. It thus shares in a long tradition of representational sculpture. For our purposes, it can be most easily interpreted in terms of the modern sculptor's use of the human figure for both formal and iconographic ends. Since he carries on many investigations begun by his immediate predecessors, Rhoden's art is not, as such, mainstream. That is, he is not primarily interested in the most current explorations, such as minimal, light, cybernetic, junk or robot sculpture. Nor does Mr. Rhoden contend to be, strictly speaking, mainstream. He has shunned current trends which may often back artists against a wall, resulting in repetitions and clichés in their works. Rhoden has shown that modern need not merely imply the mechanical, the technological or scientific. Nor does it necessarily imply that the artist must assume the role of political or social activist. He examines a problem more far-reaching: man's everyday experiences and their relation to mythology. To Rhoden, myth is the basic source of life. Rhoden has drawn his formal vocabulary mainly from primitive sources.

Rhoden's most personal contribution is his bronze sculpture. It is in these works that his artistic purpose reaches its fullest expression. Technically, the works are executed through the combination of the lost wax casting process with a welding technique which seems to be exclusively his own. Although currently working with rougher, more crudely welded surfaces he has proven his great technical proficiency in bronze casting.

Compared to the wooden sculptures, the bronze works are approached in a reductive way. The emphasis shifts from mass to line, to the interaction of form with its surrounding space and to the play of silhouette. The 'Adam E Eva' of 1956 is most indicative of this reductive process. The two figures are conceived in terms of the linear, with emphasis on the symbolic union of the couple through joining of the arms. The particular stress on curve and reduction is somewhat reminiscent of Matisse's concern in his 'La Serpentine' of 1909 (Museum of Modern Art, New York). The light-catching protuberances on the surface add to the overall vitality.

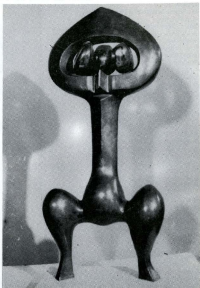
Rhoden's concern with form, and more specifically with those forms which can best express the

mythological basis, is the main issue in his bronze works. The problem of discovering and creating forms which could best conjure up a spontaneous suggestion of the hallucinatory has been the central concern of the modern artist ever since the early investigations of the surrealists in the 1920s.

Rhoden has set out, however, to penetrate the imagination in order to comprehend the basis of myth and explain it as an actual part of reality. In that way, metaphysics is not dead. His art does not shun the present. Although he approaches numerous subjects in his works, many of the themes are specifically contemporary.



'EVE' BRONZE 1958 46"x16"x10"



"KEESONG", Bronze, 1968

## AWARDS/EXHIBITIONS

### AWARDS

- 1947-48 Rosenwald Fellow  
1947-50 Columbia U., First in Sculpture (3 Times)  
1950 Tiffany Award in Sculpture  
1950 Scholarship Student, Slowhogan School  
1950 Painters and Sculptors Society of N.J., Prize  
1951-52 Fulbright Fellowship  
1952-54 Prix-de-Rome Fellowship  
1952 Atlanta University, First Prize in Sculpture  
1959 Rockefeller Grant  
1961 Howard University, Honorarium and Medal Pro Sculptura Egregia  
1961 Guggenheim Fellowship

### EXHIBITIONS

Work exhibited in major shows at: The Metropolitan Museum, Audubon Animals, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, National Academy, American Academy of Arts, British-American Gallery, Chicago Art Institute, University of Illinois Annual, Howard, University Museum, Exhibitions of Foreign Academies in Rome, Camino Gallery, Schneider Galleria in Rome (one man show), Fairweather-Hardin Gallery in Chicago, Sandenberg Gallery in New York, Fisk University, Frick Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa., Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Brooklyn College, Whitney Museum.

### SPECIALIST GRANTS

1953-56 Under auspices of the U.S. Department of State, made an exhibition tour in the following countries: Iceland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar.; Afro-American Museum, Philadelphia, Pa., Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Ala., Keneleba Gallery, New York (Gallery 62, N.Y.)

1959 Was a member of a four-party artist delegation to: The Soviet Union, Nine Soviet Republics, Poland and Yugoslavia. Toured under the auspices of the Department of State to the following countries: India, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Korea, Japan, Philippines.

1962 Consultant - Seni - Rupa Institute Teknologi, Bandung, Indonesia

### COMMISSIONS:

1957 Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, Pa., radial Structure and Curved Wall made up of Universal Symbols with the use of various metals and jewel glass.

1966 Harlem Hospital:  
Monumental  
Bronze (22'x16')

1968  
Metropolitan  
Hospital:  
Monumental  
Abstraction.

1971 Clifton  
Senior High School,  
Baltimore, Md.;  
LS 223, N.Y.; Afro-  
American Mus-  
eum, Phila., Pa.;  
Bellevue Hospital,  
N.Y.

### COLLECTIONS:

Stockholm  
Museum, Carl Mil-  
les Collection,  
Samuel Marx, Wal-  
lace K. Harrison, G.  
David Thompson,  
Heinz Collection,  
Pittsburg, Pa.,  
Steinberg Collec-  
tion, St. Louis, Mo.,  
Delaware Museum  
and many others.

"POPULATION  
EXPLOSION"

Wood, 1963

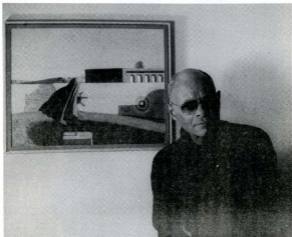
8'x2'





"RICHANDA", Wood, 1982 25"x12"x12"





**HUGHIE LEE SMITH**

*Painter*

## POSTSCRIPT

Born September 20, 1915 in Florida, the artist Hughie Lee-Smith was educated in the Cleveland Public Schools. He attended Cleveland East Technical High School (on art school) and graduated with honors from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1938. Some years later he received the B.S. degree in Art Education from Wayne State University (1953).

From 1938 to 1939 Lee-Smith was employed by the Ohio Federal Arts Project. For the last four decades there have been innumerable one person exhibitions. In 1945 there were two shows in Chicago, at the South Side Community Art Center and at the Snowden Gallery. There were other one person exhibitions in the 1950's. First, at the Ten Thirty Galleries in Cleveland in 1950; in 1952 at the Detroit Artists Market, I; in 1953 at the Garelick Gallery in Detroit; in 1954 at the Anna Werbe Galleries, Detroit, the Forsythe Gallery in Ann Arbor, Michigan; in 1958 at the Howard University Gallery of Arts in Washington, D.C. and at the Peine Gallery (Janet Neesler).

There were three shows in New York City at the beginning and at the end of the decade of the 1960's. In 1960 and 1962 the artist exhibited at the Janet Neesler Gallery and in 1969 at the Grand Central Art Galleries. Lee-Smith also exhibited, again, in Chicago in 1969. This time at the University of Chicago's Bergman Galleries. In 1971 the J. L. Hudson Company and the Arwin Galleries, both in Detroit, featured Hughie Lee-Smith in one person exhibitions. In the 1980's the artist had one person shows at the Summit Art Gallery in New York, 1982; the Evans-Tibbs

Collection in Washington, D.C., 1983; Malcolm Brown Gallery, Shaker Heights, Ohio in 1984 and the June Kelly Gallery in New York City in 1987.

Hughie Lee-Smith has won innumerable art prizes including the 3rd Prize in freehand drawing and Honorable Mention in Linoprint in 1938 from the Cleveland Museum of Art and 2nd Prize and 2nd Prize in Lithography, again, from the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1939 and 1940. He received the Anthony Malucello Prize (oil, 1951); Wineman Prize (oil, 1952); 2nd Popular Prize (oil, 1952); Founders' Prize (regional honor, oil, 1953); the Winkelman Foundation Prize (oil, 1955) and the Roundtable Prize (oil, 1955). Each of these prizes was awarded by the Detroit Institute of Art. At the Michigan State Fair Art Exhibition in 1952, 1953, 1954 Lee-Smith won 4th, 2nd and 3rd Prizes, consecutively, for oil painting. In 1954 at the Kirk-in-the-Hills Art Exhibition the artist won the popular prize for oil painting and in 1956 the Purchase Prize for oil painting at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters.

In 1976 Hughie Lee-Smith was elected to the National Academy of Design. He was awarded several prizes from the Academy before his election. In 1957 he received the prestigious Emily Lowe Award; the Clark Purchase Prize in 1959 and another purchase prize for his oil painting in 1963. In 1980 the National Academy of Design elected the artist to its Award and Membership Committee.

Other oil painting prizes include the Allied Artists Purchase Prize and Honorable Mention from the City Center Gallery in 1958 and the First Purchase Prize in 1960 from the American Society of African Culture.



"FACADE", oil 1963 12"x24"

## MATERIAL/PHILOSOPHY

Mr. Lee-Smith's meticulous oil paintings are immediately striking: they are quiet, gently colored, sparsely composed, unabashed by beauty and (must I say "nevertheless?") equipped with built-in staying power.

The art of Hughie Lee-Smith stands quietly apart from the mainstream. While today many artists are experimenting with styles and new media, Lee-Smith is the kind of artist who follows one vision on a steady course. His mystical landscapes are painted in a traditional way, not nearly so fashionable as action painting or that art which mirrors the external environment and copies it faithfully. He says, "I am sincerely trying to get at something invisible and almost impossible to express. I'm not so much concerned with whether people like it or understand it. I never have been. I never painted for the crowd."

The subjects of his paintings are spiritually inward, poetic, and solemn, perhaps best related to metaphysical painters such as Morandi, deChirico, and Balthus, with all of whom he feels a kinship. He is fascinated by "the ultimate reality," or that which has meaning beyond what is obvious. "I think my paintings have to do with an invisible life—a reality on a different level," comments Lee-Smith.

His paintings are haunting and memorable. They are more like dreams than familiar realities. Figures in them move silently across the stage of a barren universe and seem to be teetering on the very edge of another kind of reality...perhaps that of sleep. Often the subject is a desolate, dark landscape occupied by one or a few solitary figures related somehow by their

proximity but nevertheless adrift in separate worlds of being and action.

Movement is slight, but there is always a gesture, a form of suspended motion, where the individuals seem to be frozen in time and place, condemned to endlessly repeating their actions.

The theme of loneliness permeates Hughie Lee-Smith's paintings, and the communication of this is largely dependent upon his choice of symbols. There are certain symbols used that Lee-Smith refers to as "insistent symbols"—symbols for which he holds an "unconscious fascination." He has been developing a personal language of symbols for more than 40 years, since his student days at the Cleveland Institute of Art, and the subjects of his paintings today have amazing continuity with his early works. Ribbons; brick or stone structures—most often walk in a state of decay, cracked or collapsing; wooden poles that stand like sentinels, unattached to anything; and scattered remnants of festivity, gaily-circus tents, balloons, waving pennants and sheets of confetti—are a few of these persistent elements that make up the environment for his lonely figures.

Another symbol enters some of the newer pictures; an oddly shaped metallic form resembling wrought iron sculpture, which somehow converts modern technology. With these few elements he has been able to create close to a thousand compositions over the years.

The character of Hughie Lee-Smith is notable. His recent years have been spent privately and alone. He is a spiritual man, given to meditation and philosophy, who is content with the freedom he discovers in being an individual.



"MAN WITH FLAG", ca. 1987, 36" x 48"



"BLACK BOAT", c. 1983 24"x16"

## AWARDS/EXHIBITIONS:

### ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS: Galleries

National Headquarters of the Urban League, NYC, 1988

Isobel Neal Gallery, Chicago, ILL 1987

Jane Kelly Gallery, NYC 1987

Battle Creek Art Centre, Battle Creek, MI 1986

Century Association of New York, NYC 1984

CRT's Craftery Gallery, Hartford, CT 1984

Malcolm Brown Gallery, Cleveland, OH 1984

Evans-Tibbs Collection, Washington, D.C. 1983

Summit Gallery, NYC 1982

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 1977

San Giuseppe Gallery, Mt. St. Joseph College on the Ohio 1974

Grand Central Art Galleries, NYC 1968,1973

J.L. Hudson Company, Detroit, MI 1971

Arwin Galleries, Detroit, MI 1971

University of Chicago (Bergman Galleries) 1969

Forsyth Gallery, Ann Arbor, MI 1954,1966

Detroit Artists,Market,Detroit, MI 1952,58,61,66

Janet Nesler Gallery, NYC 1960,62,64

Petite Gallery, (Janet Nesler) NYC 1958

Howard University Gallery, Washington,D.C. 1955,58

Anna Werbe Galleries, Detroit, MI 1954

Garclick Galleries, Detroit, MI 1953

Ten Thirty Galleries, Cleveland, OH 1950

Snowden Gallery, Chicago, ILL 1945

South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, ILL 1945

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS: Museums, Institutions, etc.

Associated American Artists Galleries, NYC 1943

Museum of Modern Art

Whitney Museum

Whitney Museum, Downtown Branch, NYC

Boston Museum

San Francisco Museum

Cleveland Museum of Art, 1938, 39, 40

Cleveland Institute of Art

Detroit Institute of Art

Brooklyn Museum

Philadelphia Civic Center Museum

Albany Institute

Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Denver Museum

Wayne State University

Atlanta University

Howard University

Los Angeles Museum

High Museum, Atlanta, GE 1970s

Dallas Museum, TX 17

U.S. Mission/United Nations, 1970s

The Lawrenceville School, NJ 1970s

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT 1960, 83

Lever House, NYC 1986

West Collection, "ART ? THE LAW" (Travelling Show, 1986-87)

Silvermine Guild, CT 1950s

Greenville Museum, SC

Sarah Lawrence College

Sarasota Art Association

Pennsylvania Academy Annual

Eastern States Annual

City Art Museum, NYC 1969

Columbia Museum, ALA

Cinque Gallery, NYC 1970s, 80s

Hudson Guild Art Gallery, NYC 1987

Merrill Lynch World Headquarters, Princeton, NJ 1987

Kenkeleba House, NYC 1980

American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters 1987

### COLLECTIONS: Corporate, Institutions, Public

Standard Oil of Ohio, Cleveland, OH

Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA

New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ

Letras Club, NYC

The National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.

Chase Manhattan Bank, NYC

Kidder & Peabody Co., Inc., NYC

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Parrish Museum, Southampton, L.I.,NY

## OTHER EXHIBITIONS ON CAMPUS



"CLASSICAL SETTING", 1988 oil 28"x34" [www.museumofart.org/collections/1980-1999](http://www.museumofart.org/collections/1980-1999)

Open to the public, the Museum of Art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a free admission museum. For more information, visit [www.museumofart.org](http://www.museumofart.org) or call 919.951.6100.



"MERRY GO ROUND II", oil, 1984 12x18"

# OTHER EXHIBITIONS ON CAMPUS

**GALLERY ONE:** Hours, Monday thru Thursday 9-8

10/13-26

Barry Giblin's masters thesis exhibition will include figurative and landscape type paintings.

11/1-23

This poster exhibition, sponsored by the Montclair Art Museum, will coincide with the publication of Richard Allen's new book.

**SPRAGUE GALLERY AREA:** Hours, Monday thru Thursday 8-10, Friday & Saturday 11-4

9/23-10/28

25th Anniversary exhibition of Sprague Library

11/1-23

Poster exhibition coinciding with the publication of Richard Allen's new book.

Special thanks to Garry Rideout, Emily Scherer Gleason and Thomas Tamburin of the Office of Publications, and John Budesa of Central Printing.



# DIRECTIONS TO MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE



## DIRECTIONS TO CAMPUS FROM:

**Blazenfield Ave, Montclair:** North on Valley Road (by fire department), 3.3 miles to Normal Avenue light, turn left.

**Route 46:** East and West Valley Road, Montclair exit (at route 3 junction), south for approximately one mile to Normal Avenue light, turn right.

**Garden State Parkway North:** Exit 1009 (left lane) to Route 3 West, to Valley Road, Montclair exit, south for approximately one mile to Normal Avenue light, turn right.

**Garden State Parkway South:** Exit 154 to Route 46 West, to Valley Road, Montclair exit, south for approximately one mile to Normal Avenue light, turn right.

**New Jersey Turnpike:** Exit 104V to Route 3, to Valley Road, Montclair exit, south for approximately one mile to Normal Avenue light, turn right. **Motorist Parking on the Turnpike South to Exit 11** may exit there to Garden State Parkway North.

**Lincoln Tunnel:** Follow Route 3.

**George Washington Bridge:** Route 60 to Route 46.



**COLLEGE ART GALLERY**

SCHOOL OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE

UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043

**The College Art Gallery is located in Life Hall at Montclair State College,  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10 am - 4 pm and Friday-Saturday 1 pm - 5 pm  
For more information: (201) 893-5113**