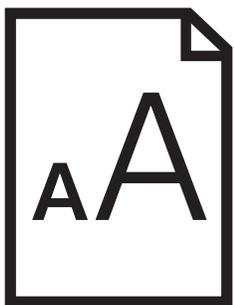


SAY IT LOUD: AAMARP, 1977 TO NOW

On View

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Large Format
Text

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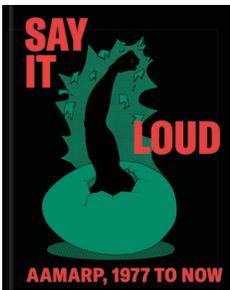
Founded in 1977 by influential artist, educator, and activist Dana C. Chandler Jr., the African American Master Artists-in-Residence Program (AAMARP) at Northeastern University is one of the few longstanding residency programs for Black artists in the United States. With the university's support, AAMARP has stood at the intersection of art, activism, and community for nearly five decades. A vital outgrowth of the Black Arts movement in Boston, AAMARP was envisioned as both an artistic haven and a cultural force — providing a “living focus” on “the diverse dynamics of African American aesthetics,” according to an early program description. Conceived as a Black artist-run alternative art space, AAMARP offered more than free studio space — it nurtured a thriving hub for exhibitions, poetry readings, dance performances, lectures, films, workshops, and public gatherings. Today, the program is still supported by Northeastern University and operates as a vibrant, intergenerational collective of thirteen transnational artists whose works across media offer a rich and varied reflection of the arts of Africa and its diaspora.

Countless artists have been involved with AAMARP, either as residents, exhibiting artists, or program participants. *Say It Loud* presents a dynamic selection of artworks by thirty-nine artists differently affiliated with AAMARP from its founding in 1977 to the present. During this period, the history of the

program has unfolded across three locations: first, at 11 Leon Street on Northeastern's campus, then in a rented space at 590 Huntington Avenue, and finally, its current location at 76 Atherton Street in Jamaica Plain. Pieced together between archival documents and personal recollections, the histories recounted here are necessarily fragmented, incomplete, and at times contested. *Say It Loud* offers an in-depth look at the program through the lens of sixty artworks made or exhibited there, even as the program's full scope exceeds any one exhibition. Tracing the evolution of AAMARP through the artists' voices, their engagement with global artistic and political movements, and their deep-rooted sense of community, this exhibition illuminates a living archive of creative resistance, cultural memory, and artistic excellence.

Credits

The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly publication that includes a richly detailed and illustrated chronology of the program, and is available for purchase in the ICA store.



Say It Loud: AAMARP, 1977 to Now is organized by Jeffrey De Blois, Mannion Family Curator, with Meghan Clare Considine, Curatorial Assistant.

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Public Media Partner



Room 1

In the late summer of 1973, Dana Chandler returned from vacation to find his studio on West Brookline Street in Boston's South End ransacked. Many of his artworks, materials, and personal belongings were stolen or destroyed. Though this was not the first time Chandler's studio was looted or his artwork vandalized, this violation eventually occasioned an offer from individuals at Northeastern University for Chandler to move into approximately 32,000 square feet of unused space on the second floor of 11 Leon Street — the site of a former clothing factory located on Northeastern's campus. Three years after he moved his studio to 11 Leon Street, Chandler had garnered the support of Northeastern's leadership (including a substantial budget), for his vision of AAMARP: an artist-run, visual arts complex. Between 1977 and 1985, there was a vibrant spirit of inclusivity that characterized the exhibition program, which Chandler described as “nondiscriminatory.” The range of activities hosted at AAMARP during this period extended well beyond exhibitions to include dance performances; poetry readings; artist talks; workshops; gatherings of community organizers; awards ceremonies; and student group visits

from daycare centers, Boston Public Schools, and the city's universities, especially Northeastern, whose students and faculty visited the complex regularly.

Reginald L. Jackson

Born 1945 in Springfield, MA

Dana Smiles, c. 1976

Giclée print

Courtesy the artist

Reginald L. Jackson

Born 1945 in Springfield, MA

African Meeting House, 1976–77

Chromogenic color print

Things Go Better?, c. 1970

Gelatin silver print

From the series *Urban Ceremonial Mask*

Courtesy the artist

As a Yale University student, photographer Reginald L.

Jackson was a founding member of the Black Workshop, an influential group that sought to illuminate antiblackness in art and architecture curricula and

redirect training toward serving communities. Later, Jackson traveled across postindependent African nations documenting cross-cultural influences and Pan-African celebrations. In Ghana, Jackson shot his iconic *Things Go Better?*, featuring individuals in traditional dress strolling past a massive Coca-Cola advertisement. Jackson and Dana Chandler met by happenstance in Ghana in 1970 and Jackson soon joined the initial cohort of AAMARP artists; today he serves as its director. African-derived religious practices and their contemporary hybrid manifestations (which crystallize in series such as *Urban Ceremonial Mask*), are key themes for Jackson. In the late 1970s Jackson traversed Boston with Allan Rohan Crite, whose work is also on view in this exhibition, while Crite made *An Artist's Sketchbook of the South End: A Walking Tour about Black People* (1977). Jackson photographed the same sites significant to Boston's Black community as Crite illustrated them, and later overlaid the images with sacred African objects, such the Benin Ivory Mask (an icon of Pan-Africanists globally) featured in *African Meeting House*.

Dana C. Chandler Jr.

Born 1941 in Lynn, MA; died 2025 in Gallup, NM

Pan-African Man, c. 1970

Acrylic on canvas

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

In 1967, after Dana Chandler witnessed Boston police brutalizing a group of protestors demanding better welfare conditions, his work adopted a political urgency and a social realist style conveyed in paintings and prints, as well as murals across the city of Boston. Many of his paintings depicted the social problems faced by Black people and their experiences of racism. He also frequently created expressive paintings as tools of empowerment. *Pan-African Man* depicts a recurring image of Black self-determination seen throughout his work: a silhouetted head of a young man shown in profile, whose headspace is painted red, black, and green, the colors of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, a Pan-African organization founded in 1914 by Marcus Garvey. Chandler adopts the reduced form of the silhouette from the nineteenth-century portrait tradition as a means of depicting a Black “everyman” whose identity is formed in relation to the African diaspora.

Arnold Trachtman

Born 1930 in Lynn, MA; died 2019 in Cambridge, MA

Spirit of '76 (Louise Day Hicks and Ted Landsmark), 1979

Acrylic on canvas

Estate of Arnold Trachtman; Courtesy Childs Gallery, Boston

Arnold Trachtman, a non-Black artist working within AAMARP's orbit, was embraced by the collective for his shared sense of justice, exemplifying one of Dana Chandler's preferred maxims: "AAMARP is for everyone." Trachtman's 1982 solo exhibition featured realist paintings including *Spirit of '76 (Louise Day Hicks and Ted Landsmark)*. Here, Trachtman depicts a brutal episode in Boston's school desegregation busing crisis. On April 5, 1976, Black attorney and civil rights activist Ted Landsmark was rushing into City Hall when he was intercepted by a throng of anti-bussing demonstrators who were exiting a rally hosted by Louise Day Hicks, a notorious local politician staunchly opposed to school integration. There, Landsmark was assaulted by Joseph Rakes, a white teenager wielding an American flag, an event rendered iconic through photojournalist Stanley Forman's widely circulated image *The Soiling of Old Glory*. Tensions were high in Boston during this period

as school desegregation faced significant resistance from white residents. Trachtman's painting captures this tumult through a dizzying composition whose title invokes a bitter sense of irony on the eve of the nation's bicentennial. Exhibiting this work at AAMARP was meaningful; Chandler served as president of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity from 1977 to 1986 and hosted desegregation organizer meetings at AAMARP.



© Stanley Forman

Benny Andrews

Born 1930 in Plainview, GA; died 2006 in Brooklyn, NY

Nene, 1978

Oil and collage on canvas

From the series *Women I've Known*

Andrews-Humphrey Family Foundation; Courtesy

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York

Renowned painter and activist Benny Andrews was a founder of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC), a collective that fought for greater representation of Black artists in New York City museums. Dana Chandler participated in BECC picket lines in the late 1960s and grew to admire Andrews's commitment to organizing artists, an ethos that would lay crucial groundwork for AAMARP. Andrews and Chandler were close allies, and Chandler curated a solo exhibition of Andrews's work at AAMARP in January 1980. The exhibition featured roughly fifty works, including *Nene*. Here, the artist's future wife Nene Humphrey leisurely rests against a richly colored tree at MacDowell, an artist residency program in New Hampshire where the pair met. Andrews and Chandler's relationship demonstrates a cosmopolitan network of support and exchange across regional centers

of the Black Arts movement, in which a diverse group of Black artists and intellectuals fought for self-determination through music, literature, drama, and the visual arts.

Dana C. Chandler Jr.

Born 1941 in Lynn, MA; died 2025 in Gallup, NM

Check out yo' mind!, 1970

What Amerika Means to the Black Man circa 1775–1970,
1970

*Black Man break free of the Sucking, Mutherfucking White
egg*, 1974

Offset prints

Courtesy Jeff Chandler

Alongside his paintings and murals, Dana Chandler created what could be described as “poster art,” prints he distributed widely in the community that foreground the graphic immediacy and political potency of his work. *Check out yo' mind!* employs the same silhouetted head from *Pan-African Man* to explore the formation of Black consciousness. *What Amerika Means to the Black Man circa 1775–1970* calls attention to the high rates of incarceration for Black men. *Black Man break free of the*

Sucking, Mutherfucking White egg transforms a symbol of Black power into a scene of liberation. Each print uniquely conveys principles of Black self-determination and the political consciousness at the center of the Black Arts movement.

Don West

Born 1937 in Boston

Elma Lewis, c. 1985

From the series *Portraits of Purpose*

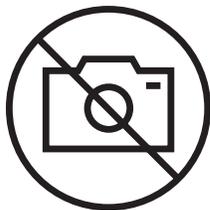
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy the artist

In 1980, Don West began working as a photographer for the *Bay State Banner*, New England's longest-running Black-owned newspaper. Through this work, West grew close with AAMARP-affiliated artists while also serving as official photographer for politicians visiting Boston, such as Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama, as well as for exhibitions, protests, and athletic events. West's formative experiences in photojournalism provided the basis for what would become his most ambitious project, *Portraits of Purpose*, a decades-long series featuring well over one hundred portraits of Black leaders. Here, West's sensitive

portrait of arts educator Elma Lewis deep in contemplation serves as a tribute to a visionary whose work paved the way for AAMARP and a generation of artists. In 1950, Lewis founded the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts, which offered art, dance, drama, and music classes in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and in 1968, she founded the National Center of Afro-American Artists, whose museum has long supported AAMARP artists and is a major lender to this exhibition. She was a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship in 1981, the year the award was founded.

“[The] African American Master Artists-in-Residence Program . . . evolved into a local, national, and international resource for students, scholars, and the general public to gain insight into an expanding culture within a culture After over forty years, AAMARP is still serving the community, and continues to grow with new artists and contemporary ideas.”



Room 2

Edward Strickland

Born 1930 in New York; died 1998 in Boston

Beacon Street Arches, 1981–82

Acrylic on board

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

After Dana Chandler's unceremonious dismissal in 1993 from his post as AAMARP director, the university appointed well-respected artist and critic Edward Strickland as Chandler's replacement. Strickland attempted to rehabilitate AAMARP's image with the university, even as Chandler continued working in his studio. Strickland's *Beacon Street Arches* depicts the architectural features on one of Boston's most iconic streets. During Strickland's tenure, there were fewer exhibitions and programs, and they were funded by the artists themselves, without institutional support from the university. While fewer people attended AAMARP events and openings — primarily due to the distance from Northeastern's campus to the building in Jamaica Plain — under Strickland's leadership the remaining

collective members concentrated on community partnerships both locally in Boston and through their many international connections.

Renée Stout

Born 1958 in Junction City, KS

My Dog and I Discussed the Moon, 1985

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of Lauren Thomasson

Renée Stout met Dana Chandler in Richmond, Virginia, where he spoke about AAMARP at the National Conference of Artists, the oldest and largest African American visual arts organization in the United States. Chandler invited Stout and her friend, artist Jackie Jordan, to share a studio space at AAMARP, which was Stout's first studio experience. Until that point, she had been making photorealistic paintings in her bedroom at her parents' home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Inspired by the communal setting, and working closely alongside other artists, she made paintings such as *My Dog and I Discussed the Moon*, which depicts the artist and her dog from behind. While at AAMARP, Stout began creating the assemblage-based works for

which she is best known. Just before she arrived in Boston, she became aware of the box assemblages by artists Joseph Cornell and Betye Saar. As Stout recalls: “Since I didn’t feel safe in the city to take photographs to paint from, I stayed inside where I felt safe. I started creating boxes at AAMARP with found objects and constructions. Creating the boxes was a metaphor for putting myself in a box.”

Stanley Pinckney

Born 1940 in Boston

Title unknown, c. 1978

Resist-dyed fabric

Collection of Reginald L. Jackson

Stanley Pinckney is a multidisciplinary artist who was a member of AAMARP’s first cohort of master artists and showed his work in the collective’s earliest exhibitions. This tapestry is a testament to Pinckney’s commitment to textile arts. Pinckney studied indigo resist-dying techniques (*adire*) with Yoruba communities in Nigeria and returned to Boston to share them with generations of students as a longtime instructor at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. His intricately dyed

compositions use elaborate tying, stitching, and folding techniques to develop unique patterns that creatively embrace and depart from traditional forms. Today, Pinckney is a leader in the New England Fiber Collective, a group that has exhibited and taught traditional textile arts since 1982.

Michael Jones

Born 1959 in Brooklyn, NY

Meditation—Inner Force—Lotus, 1982–84

Acrylic on shaped canvas and artist's frame

Courtesy the artist

Following his undergraduate studies at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Michael Jones first presented his work at AAMARP as part of a two-person exhibition in 1982 with painter Bryan McFarlane. He was featured in several subsequent AAMARP group exhibitions before leaving the program in 1986 to pursue further studies in Baltimore, where he lives today. *Meditation—Inner Force—Lotus* is a portrait of artist Lotus Do, who likewise presented her work at AAMARP. Jones depicts Lotus Do practicing meditation cross-legged in lotus position, her eyes closed except for the wide-open third eye on her

forehead. Do's third eye (a symbolic gateway to higher consciousness), radiates light, just as her hands, whose thumbs touch the tips of her index fingers, appear to generate energy. Indeed, her whole body emanates an aura that is barely contained by the triangular canvas whose shape complements Lotus Do's posture.

Bryan McFarlane

Born 1956 in Moore Town, Jamaica

I Dream of African Souls, 1986

Oil, acrylic, charcoal, and found fabric on canvas

Courtesy the artist, AAMARP, and Gallery NAGA, Boston

Bryan McFarlane is a painter who, after studying at the Jamaica School of Art, travelled to Boston to pursue his MFA at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 1983. During that time, he began to show his work at AAMARP and remains an active member today. McFarlane's work is informed by extensive travels as well as his familial history of marronage — he was born in Moore Town, Jamaica, whose population descended from self-liberated, formerly enslaved people. Works such as *I Dream of African Souls* are testaments to these histories of diaspora, rupture, and ancestral memory.

McFarlane's paintings foreground that African material culture is infused with history and storytelling, connecting him to Moore Town where retentions of African spiritual traditions are part of everyday life. Across the top panel, the artist affixes an ornate strip of kente cloth from his grandmother, calling to mind material histories of inheritance and memory.

“My entire growth as a visual artist since the 1980s, along with countless others, was nurtured and encouraged at AAMARP. The program played an invaluable role in healing our communities of color, and greater Boston, whose population was severely isolated, racially divided, and culturally conservative. Some art institutions struggled to create a dignified and inclusive space as the city experienced brutal riots which tore communities apart. Even today, AAMARP remains a beacon and carries this possibility forward.”

Richard Yarde

Born 1939 in Roxbury, MA; died 2011 in Northampton, MA

The Parlor, 1980

Watercolor on paper

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, MA,

Gift of the American Academy of Arts and Letters

Richard Yarde was a skilled watercolorist devoted to capturing Black history, culture, and everyday life from Roxbury, Massachusetts, to Harlem, New York. As an AAMARP-affiliated artist in the late 1980s, Yarde exhibited large-scale watercolor paintings on paper. Yarde's work is characterized by an exuberant color palette and experimental, fragmented compositions often featuring detailed, gridded backgrounds. Yarde attributed his interest in such patterning to the segmented constructions of his mother's quilting practice. Sensitive domestic scenes, such as in *The Parlor*, demonstrate Yarde's dynamism in the medium through a complex array of intersecting colors, patterns, and textures.

Marcia Lloyd

Born 1946 in Glen Cove, NY

Arboretum #2, 1988

Oil on canvas

Collection of Binkley Shorts

Based in Boston's South End, artist and educator Marcia Lloyd paints tranquil, unpeopled scenes of the natural world. For decades, she was an influential professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where she was an advocate for diverse students and founded the precursor to the college's Black Artist Union affinity group, which included many AAMARP-affiliated artists, such as Bryan McFarlane and Paul Goodnight.

Arboretum #2, painted from life at Boston's Arnold Arboretum, is typical of Lloyd's monumental landscapes, attempting to capture what she describes as "the ineffable, felt impact of a particular place." For Lloyd, the landscape is an always-dynamic subject, whose various elements of light and space are beyond control, stimulating her deep interest in light, color, atmosphere, and distance. Lloyd's mastery of landscape painting, a departure from AAMARP artists dealing more explicitly with social problems facing Black people, complemented

Chandler's investment in the work created at AAMARP being varied and eccentric.

"AAMARP was a refuge from the constant struggle to be "seen" in the wider world. A most welcome and stimulating place to simply be myself."

Wen-ti Tsen

Born 1936 in Shanghai, China

Peaceable Kingdom, 1971

Oil on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Wen-ti Tsen is a Chinese American painter based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, whose realist paintings have long addressed contemporary issues and events unflinchingly. In 1968, Tsen's teaching contract at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was suspended due to his politics, so Tsen moved to Lebanon to continue his involvement in global progressive movements. There, he painted *Peaceable Kingdom*, a hinged, multipanel painting later exhibited at AAMARP. When closed, as seen below, the work includes multiple discrete scenes fused together, including a murder

suspect of three civil rights workers in Mississippi, a child in the arms of a member of Concerned Citizens Against Pornography, and a 1970 Cadillac Coupe DeVille. At the center is a grayscale portrait of a captured and wounded Vietcong soldier with a pained expression, visible regardless of the orientation of the work. On either side of the opened panels are U.S. soldiers holding the bisected body of the Vietcong soldier. At the center, Tsen appropriates Edward Hicks's *Peaceable Kingdom*, a complex allegory of earthly harmony painted by the Quaker artist over 100 times between 1820 and 1849. For Tsen, Hicks's work becomes an uncanny backdrop, a meditation on the complicated dynamics of everyday life in America that continued largely unabated during the war in Vietnam.

“In Boston in 1972 . . . there was widespread collaboration, and because my work was overtly political I connected with other progressive artists. This is how I met Dana Chandler . . . I later understood how meaningful that moment was, of everyone searching for a way to work together toward common causes, because soon after people separated into different identity-based groups who advocated for a more limited set of interests.”



Calvin Burnett

Born 1921 in Cambridge, MA; died 2007 in Medway, MA

Angela Davis, c. late 1970s

Oil on canvas

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

In 1980, AAMARP staged a retrospective of forty-plus years of work made by Cambridge-born Calvin Burnett, an influential artist and educator affiliated with the program from the beginning. Burnett, who worked principally in painting and printmaking, taught at Massachusetts College of Art and Design for more than thirty years, where several generations of his students subsequently became AAMARP-affiliated artists. His work depicted a range of subjects, from scenes based on his experience working at the Boston Navy Yard in the early 1940s, to later depictions of African Americans who experienced anti-Black violence at the voting booth. *Angela Davis* portrays the titular American political activist and philosopher, one of the most enduring and influential icons in the struggle for Black liberation. This practice of depicting key figures from African American history continues at AAMARP today.

Rudolph R. Robinson

Born 1938 in Philadelphia, PA; died 1988 in Boston

TRY BLACK, 1983

Street Boy, 1983

Gelatin silver prints

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, Museum purchase

A highly skilled technician who believed in the transformational possibilities of the darkroom, Rudolph “Rudy” R. Robinson was an energetic and prolific photographer and one of the original group of AAMARP artists. In addition to freelance museum work, Robinson’s wide range of subjects included the street photography on view here. Made during the period when Boston Public Schools were under court control to desegregate through a system of busing students, *TRY BLACK* depicts a nighttime scene framed so a Black Velvet billboard advertisement’s suggestion to “try black” speaks directly to graffiti on a wall in the foreground that reads “Desegregate Boston.” Robinson frequently photographed Black subjects, whether in Boston as in *Street Boy*, or later as part of the series *Invisible Man/ Europe*, where he documented the growing communities of Black people living in Europe.

Ellen Banks

Born 1938 in Boston; died 2017 in Brooklyn, NY

Scott Joplin, 1982

Acrylic on canvas

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy,
Andover, MA, Museum purchase

Ellen Banks was a member of AAMARP's first cohort.

Her painting *Scott Joplin* responds to the compositions of the titular "Father of Ragtime," and is emblematic of her remarkable geometric abstractions that derive from musical scores by a range of composers. Here, certain colors correspond to particular pitches, and different shapes indicate duration and tempos. Although AAMARP has always fostered an eclectic range of artistic approaches, founder Dana Chandler was also part of the dominant strand of politically engaged artists who were hostile toward abstraction. Art historian Lowery Stokes Sims has described the prevailing dogma of the Black Arts movement as such that "if an artist was black, then he or she did black art, and their mission was to . . . create images of an idealized black nation." Banks balked at such an expectation, noting that to conform to the tendency would be an "intellectual and

emotional...failure,” and that the “Black Community is not well served by failure.” Instead, Banks found freedom in developing a meticulous system that used written musical scores as structures to build upon.

Room 3

Allan Rohan Crite and Susan Thompson

Born 1910 in North Plainfield, NJ; died 2007 in Boston

Born 1945 in Cincinnati

Freedom, Justice, Equality, 1989–2012

Applique and painted quilt

Courtesy Susan Thompson

A textile-based artist and protégé of Allan Rohan Crite, Susan Thompson first presented her work at AAMARP in 1982 and officially joined the program in 1985, one month before the move from 11 Leon Street to 590 Huntington Avenue. Prior to working at AAMARP, Thompson had a small studio in the attic of Crite's home at 410 Columbus Avenue in Boston's South End. After meeting Crite, Thompson showed the elder artist wall hangings and costumes she had made for her child's grade school play, and he declared her an artist

and began introducing her to the Boston art community. With Crite as her mentor, Thompson went on to master a range of artistic techniques, especially transforming various fabrics, sometimes found, often dyed or painted, into narrative quilts, such as *Freedom, Justice, Equality*. This collaborative work with Crite is based on one of his drawings from the late 1980s, and depicts protesters marching in a street scene like those frequently featured in Crite's paintings. Thompson depicted similar scenes inspired by her mentor in a cycle of public murals displayed in the lobby of the MBTA's Roxbury Crossing T stop since the late 1980s.

Rene Westbrook

Born 1950, New York

***Strange Fruit*, 1986**

Oil pastel, graphite, and turpentine wash on paper
Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

Multidisciplinary artist Rene Westbrook learned about AAMARP while she was still a student at the nearby Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She described AAMARP as “bursting out all over”—famous for their

open studios, parties, and exhibitions. In 1984, after she finished her studies, Westbrook began presenting her work at the program and was soon invited to become a resident artist, where she stayed until 1989. While at AAMARP, she created works such as *Strange Fruit*, whose title references the euphemism for lynched African Americans. The term was immortalized in the protest song of the same name written and composed by Abel Meeropol (under the pseudonym Lewis Allan), and famously performed by singer Billie Holiday. Meeropol's lyrics were based upon his late 1930s poem protesting racial violence. Westbrook's *Strange Fruit* renders the "pastoral scene" of Meeropol's and Holiday's song in impressionistic forms and washes of expressionistic color. Westbrook, like many others, described her time at AAMARP as pivotal to her success as an artist, setting her on a path she still follows today.

"Talking with other artists, the comradery [and] exchange of ideas and techniques, was exactly what I was looking for at that time. Working [at AAMARP] I understood the drive to master oneself as a creative person, something that has never slowed down for me.... To have the audacity to express yourself is a precious thing that needs to be protected, and the lifespan of AAMARP where I learned so much of this needs to continue."

Theresa-India Young

Born 1950 in New York; died 2008 in Boston

Blue Bird, 1981

Cotton, silk, wool, and synthetic yarn with cowrie shells

Estate of Theresa-India Young; Courtesy Jacqueline L.

McRath

Innovative fiber artist Theresa-India Young, who used a variety of materials and techniques, was among the original cohort of AAMARP artists. As an arts educator, Young founded the Kush Club, a teen docent program developed as a collaboration between the Nubian Gallery and the Egyptian Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. As a child, Young learned basketry, finger weaving, and braiding from her grandmother, and later traveled throughout Africa to study traditional craft techniques. Valuing thrift and reuse, common household scraps such as grass, rope, hair, wire, and sticks frequently appeared in Young's richly textured fiber sculptures. *Blue Bird* is a knit, blue-and-orange sculpture of a larger-than-life bird with outstretched wings, as if in flight. Sightings of blue birds suggest a range of symbolic meanings across various cultures,

such as happiness, love, hope, and spiritual transcendence.

Milton Derr

Born 1932 in Milwaukee, WI; died 2021 in Boston

Confined, 1980–87

Oil on cotton duck

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

Another of the original cohort of AAMARP artists, Milton Derr (formerly Milton Johnson) was a master painter who taught for forty years at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Derr's paintings were inspired by his interest in Asian cultures, especially the expressive linearity of Chinese landscape painting and Japanese screen paintings, as much as by Western traditions. *Confined* depicts a seated Black man locking eyes with the viewer at the center of an indeterminate, richly colorful interior space whose hard edges suggest architectural details. While his hands appear bound, they are rendered in red and look as if shot through with an electricity breaking him free of his confinement. Derr began painting *Confined* in 1980 when he was teaching art classes to

imprisoned people as part of the Prison Art Project of Massachusetts. Seven years later, he completed the painting to be housed in a South Boston courthouse, though the judge who presided over the court responded negatively to the painting and it was taken into the collection of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists.

Vusumuzi Maduna

Born 1940 in Cambridge, MA; died 2007 in Cambridge, MA
JuJu Blue, 1978–79

Wood, paint, and metal
Collection of Vuzi.org

Vusumuzi Maduna (formerly Dennis Didley) pursued a synthesis of traditional African forms in expressive sculptures constructed of painted wood, though he maintained that the belief systems that gave rise to such forms “were not mine.” The name Vusumuzi Maduna was bestowed on him by a group of people from South Africa. For the artist, the name Vusumuzi in particular — which he took to mean “builder of culture” from isiZulu — was indicative of how he viewed his artistic identity and cultural role. Maduna’s sculptural masks,

such as *JuJu Blue*, were greatly inspired by the intricate, hand-carved ceremonial masks of the Dogon people of present-day Mali in West Africa. Assembled from found wood and metal, *JuJu Blue* features an expressive face with a wide-open mouth made of wood filled with nails, topped by rigidly cut pieces of perforated metal. The exploration of African forms in Maduna's works was an attempt to connect to his roots, even as, according to curator Edmund Barry Gaither, "the Africa which they suggest is tomorrow's Africa; it is the Africa of the quiet, reflective moment."

Allan Rohan Crite

Born 1910 in North Plainfield, NJ; died 2007 in Boston

The Artist and the Community, c. 1984

Offset print

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

Often hailed as the Dean of African American Artists in New England, Allan Rohan Crite described himself as a painter historian who depicted scenes of everyday Black life in and around the South End neighborhood where he lived for more than ninety years. Crite was wildly prolific from

an early age and was later a mentor to many younger artists. In 1985, AAMARP staged a retrospective exhibition surveying decades of the artist's work. Emblematic of Crite's work, *The Artist and the Community* depicts a large gathering of Boston artists in an urban setting, including AAMARP affiliates Paul Goodnight, Reginald L. Jackson, Napoleon Jones-Henderson, Vusumuzi Maduna, and Susan Thompson, with Crite himself at center, alongside others from the community. The artists and the community, from which they are indistinguishable, are surrounded by detailed depictions of African royalty and their courts, equating the artists with royalty in the same way Crite elevated scenes of everyday life in his work.

Don West

Born 1937 in Boston

Edmund Barry Gaither, c. 1985

From the series *Portraits of Purpose*

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy the artist

Don West's ambitious photo series, *Portraits of Purpose*, testifies to a robust Boston arts ecosystem inextricably

tied to the political project of self-determination. Here, Edmund Barry Gaither, founding director and curator of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, stands proudly alongside John Wilson's iconic outdoor sculpture *Eternal Presence* (1985). Gaither has been a steadfast advocate for AAMARP-affiliated artists since before AAMARP formally existed and has been the standard-bearer for Black artists in Boston for more than fifty years.



John Wilson

Born 1922 in Roxbury, MA; died 2015 in Brookline, MA
Study for Martin Luther King, Jr. (Buffalo), 1981

Charcoal on paper

Estate of John Wilson; Courtesy Martha Richardson Fine Art, Boston

John Wilson was a member of the first cohort of AAMARP artists. He studied in Paris and Mexico City before

returning to his hometown, where he taught for many years at Boston University. An immensely skilled draftsman often working in charcoal, Wilson also made public sculptures. *Study for Martin Luther King, Jr. (Buffalo)* exemplifies Wilson's approach to portraiture, one rooted in a deep sense of pathos, gravity, and dignity for all subjects. This work is a study for an eight-foot-tall bronze bust that has been sited in Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Buffalo, NY since 1983. Wilson's study was a key work in *Baker's Dozen* (1990), AAMARP's thirteenth anniversary exhibition. The organizing principle of the exhibition was a tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., and featured the work of Ellen Banks, Milton Derr, and Marcia Lloyd, among others.

Room 4

In 1985, to accommodate the renovation of the building that originally housed the program, AAMARP moved temporarily to a building Northeastern rented from Wentworth School of Technology at 590 Huntington Avenue (a.k.a. 590). Even though the rented building was not ideal for artist studios, AAMARP artists continued in their work there until 1988, when the renovations at 11 Leon Street were completed. Because the renovated building housed many other programs, there was only enough studio space for half of the artists to return to 11 Leon Street, now an impressive facility next to the newly constructed Ruggles subway station on the MBTA's Orange Line. The other half of the artists remained at 590. Only a year later, administrators at Northeastern indicated that AAMARP's facilities at 11 Leon Street were needed for other purposes, just as the lease of 590 expired, leaving the program in search of a new home.

Tyrone Geter

Born 1945 in Anniston, AL

Girl Reading (Janice Posey), c. late 1970s

Pastel on colored paper

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

Tyrone Geter was a key contributor to Boston's art scene during the relatively brief period in which he lived in the city between 1976 and 1978. Geter had an outsized impact and was invited to show his precise figurative paintings and drawings in some of AAMARP's earliest exhibitions. This large-scale pastel drawing features a young woman rendered rapt by her book. The sitter, Janice Posey, was so taken with her likeness that she entreated the artist to include her name in the title so that she might be recognized in perpetuity. Today, Geter lives in South Carolina where he continues to make and exhibit his portraits.

James Reuben Reed

Born 1920 in Kansas City, MO; died 2022 in Boston

The Mask Maker (Portrait of Susan Thompson), 1983

Acrylic on canvas

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

The winner of the prestigious Atlanta University Purchase Prize in 1950, James Reuben Reed was a figurative painter who became an influential mentor to Dana Chandler. In AAMARP's early years, the pair served as codirectors. Reed's 1984 exhibition *A Tribute to Black Women* featured over forty paintings, pastels, and drawings, including *The Mask Maker (Portrait of Susan Thompson)*. This sensitive portrait pictures Thompson, his fellow AAMARP artist, donning denim overalls, work gloves, and metalworking tools, thereby framing her as a skilled craftsperson. *A Tribute to Black Women* adopted an experimental format and was framed as a "works-in-progress exhibition." Exhibition announcements encouraged visitors to "come watch the show grow!" positioning AAMARP as a studio space encouraging organic connections between community members and resident artists. *A Tribute to Black Women* coincided

with a multiyear period of significant Black feminist organizing in Boston, led by the Combahee River Collective.

Vusumuzi Maduna

Born 1940 in Cambridge, MA; died 2007 in Cambridge, MA
Ibeji (The Twins), 1981
Wood, rope, and metal
Collection of Vuzi.org

Maduna's *Ibeji (The Twins)* is based on the sacred figures carved by the Yoruba people of present-day Nigeria. The Yoruba have a high rate of twin births, meaning that twins have special significance in their culture. Maduna's *Ibeji* houses a brother and sister, hand-carved from wood and nested within a wood window frame. Presented at AAMARP in 1988 as part of a solo exhibition, *Ibeji (The Twins)* was especially meaningful for the artist: he carved this portrait of himself with his twin sister after she was killed in a car crash at the age of twenty-five.

Gloretta Baynes

Born 1954 in Cambridge, MA

Ghana, c. 1992

Quilted fabric, airbrush paint, photo transfers, raffia, and fan

Collection of Jemadari Kamara

A member since 1988, Gloretta Baynes had several stints leading AAMARP in the late 1990s following the death of program director Edward Strickland, and later throughout the early 2000s. Baynes's travel to such places as Cuba and Ghana often informs whole bodies of work, or are the subject themselves. Following AAMARP's rich tradition of Pan-Africanist work, the multimedia wall piece *Ghana* takes the shape of a woman's body, with a black, yellow, and green fan as a head and a raffia skirt. The figure's torso features an array of airbrushed symbols, such as a head in profile emerging from the African continent, with the flags of Ghana and the Pan-African flag on top and bottom respectively. Among airbrushed patterns is a photograph of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana and a founding member of the Organization of African Unity, fashioning Ghana into a meaningful symbol

of embodied solidarity between African nations and people of the African diaspora.

“[In] the Black Artist’s Union (BAU) at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, I found inspiration in the murals and works of Dana Chandler and Gary Rickson, as well as the exhibitions at the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. In 1980, Dana invited me, along with other BAU members, to participate in the AAMARP exhibition Young Black Artists Under 36 The AAMARP collective embodies a praxis of revolutionary change, synthesizing a new visual language directed toward social justice. The didactic themes of the Black Arts movement are integral to the fabric of AAMARP, where we continue to lift up the voices of the African diaspora.”

Gloretta Baynes

Born 1954 in Cambridge, MA

African Trio, c. 1992

Airbrush

Collection of Mary E. Lawson

An AAMARP member since 1988, Gloretta Baynes had several stints leading the program in the late 1990s following the death of program director Edward Strickland, and later throughout the early 2000s. Baynes has extensive experience working as a curator and arts administrator in addition to her leadership position at AAMARP, including as assistant director at the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Baynes is an expert draftsman who works extensively with airbrush techniques, fabric, and digital media. *African Trio* features three women delicately rendered with fine lines, their mostly nude bodies covered with intricately detailed jewelry. Inspired by Baynes's extensive travels in the Caribbean and throughout Africa, *African Trio* continues AAMARP's rich tradition of Pan-Africanist work.

Barbara Ward

Born 1940 in Cambridge, MA; died 2013 in Boston

New Race II, 1987–88

Mixed media

Cambridge Public Library Archives and Special Collections

One of the earliest AAMARP artists, Barbara Ward was a self-taught soft sculptor whose beguiling and often life-size works drew formal inspiration from African mask-making traditions — especially those of the Kuba people in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo — while also incorporating fabric swatches from countries including Afghanistan and Guatemala. This collision of cultures allowed Ward to position her figurative sculptures (each with a distinct personality), as compelling expressions of Third-Worldist feminist solidarity. *New Race II* was commissioned by the Young Woman's Christian Association as a statement against racism and was displayed in a Filene's Basement department store window. Ward's works often served as an ode to her multiethnic and intergenerational community. For example, the artist referred to the central figure in *New Race II* as "Chicken George"; this seated sculpture was modelled after a woman Ward encountered dancing

with a chicken on her head outside of a grocery store in Roxbury, Massachusetts, with “chicken legs dangling as though they were two long earrings.”

Paul Goodnight

Born 1946 in Chicago

A Room Full of Sisters, 1997–98

Mixed media with unique artist’s frame

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists,
Boston

Paul Goodnight is a prolific Boston-based artist who began to paint and draw to manage a PTSD-related speech impairment after returning from military service in Vietnam. His work is characterized by experimental color palettes and celebratory scenes of African and Afro-diasporic groups of people in communion. *A Room Full of Sisters* features an intergenerational assembly and takes its title from a 1992 poem by Mona Lake Jones. Just as Goodnight’s composition is characterized by his key central placement of an African mask, Jones’s poem shares a Pan-Africanist ethos, writing: “Speaking with smiles on their African faces; their joy and laughter filled all the spaces They were smart, articulate and well

read, with all kinds of African history stored in their heads.” Goodnight’s work was commissioned by the Boston Coalition of Black Women, a social and political club dedicated to leadership training and mentorship. A longtime resident of the Piano Craft Guild in Boston’s South End, Goodnight is an integral member of multiple thriving and overlapping networks of Black artists in Boston.

Room 5

GBH archival footage, 1969–2000

Video (color, sound; 34:59 minutes)

Courtesy GBH Archives

This video compiles archival footage from GBH Boston, mostly collected from *Say Brother*, a weekly television series airing on GBH beginning in 1968. *Say Brother* was created to reflect the concerns and culture of African Americans through short-form documentaries, performances, and interviews, and continues today as *GBH News Rooted*. The show was originally hosted by James Spruill, an actor and cofounder of the New African Company, an influential Black theater company who took up residence at AAMARP and whose motto, “Theatre for the People,” matched the program’s inclusive ethos. Chandler appeared on *Say Brother* as early as 1969 as part of a panel of artistic luminaries, including Elma Lewis and John Wilson, among others. He preaches, “[Black people] must organize ourselves,” espousing the community minded mentality that would lead him to found AAMARP several years later. Over the years, numerous programs featured AAMARP artists,

including Marcia Lloyd, Vusumuzi Maduna, Bryan McFarlane, Rudolph R. Robinson, and others. Programs even featured the original location of the program at 11 Leon Street. This footage is meaningful documentation of the program's vitality.

Dana C. Chandler Jr.

Born 1941 in Lynn, MA; died 2025 in Gallup, NM

For the Children We Strive, 1991

Photocopy collage printed on board

Courtesy Jeff Chandler

In the early 1990s, Chandler began experimenting with photocopy collages that combined found images and drew potent cross-cultural and transhistorical connections. *For the Children We Strive* juxtaposes the faces of Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Nelson Mandela with fugitive slave ads, abolitionist imagery, and line-drawn interpretations of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Surrounded by evidence of the transcultural continuities of racism, the group of Black children at the center of the work are its true subject. The historical consciousness held within the collage surrounds the children, suggesting that the

struggle for Black liberation finds its motivation in safeguarding future generations.

Ephemera wallpaper

Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections
Designed by Angela Torchio

“The battle that Dana fought for the existence of AAMARP is being fought all over again. Dana left a template through his work and activism to fight for its survival. You can’t sit around and deal with people who don’t like you. You must learn how to fight.” — Jeff Chandler

Dana C. Chandler Jr.

Born 1941 in Lynn, MA; died 2025 in Gallup, NM

Urban Newsletter Art Piece, 1993

Newsprint

African American Master Artists-in-Residence Program
records, Northeastern University Archives and Special
Collections

Chandler created his *Urban Newsletter Art Piece* in a spirit

of protest and rebuttal. In May 1993, Northeastern provost Michael Baer announced a devastating 75 percent budget cut to AAMARP and the dismissal of Chandler as director, on the grounds that the program was not effectively integrating into broader campus initiatives and needed “refocus” and “rejuvenat[ion].” This twenty-five-page experimental newspaper (surreptitiously printed in a run of 5,000 in Northeastern University’s print shop and distributed widely across Roxbury and Jamaica Plain), teems with evidence of fifteen years of AAMARP’s integral role in both university and civic life. This trenchant artwork refutes the accusations of university leadership through the logic of testimony, and marks a key juncture in the history of AAMARP as its resources grew more precarious.

Wall Text

In 1990, Northeastern acquired a former industrial building in Jamaica Plain at 76 Atherton Street, in part with the promise to house the program. At 76 Atherton Street, where AAMARP is still located today, the program was reunified for the first time in five years, though now nearly two miles away from Northeastern’s campus. The program occupies two floors of the building, including

studio space for thirteen artists and two exhibition spaces. A year after the move, the program's budget was cut substantially as part of university-wide austerity measures. A year later, the budget was reduced almost entirely, Chandler was removed as director, and other staff were laid off. Chandler created *Urban Newsletter Art Piece* (1993), on view here, in protest of these changes. Over the intervening years, despite shifting circumstances, the artists have continued to make impressive work in advancement of the program's mission. AAMARP's community also grew more international in reach, thanks to individual artists' connections to Brazil, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Pakistan, and Sudan.

Room 6

Theresa-India Young

Born 1950 in New York; died 2008 in Boston

Native Dancer, 2000

Sisal rope, shells, copper, and beads

Estate of Theresa-India Young; Courtesy Jacqueline L. McRath

Innovative fiber artist Theresa-India Young was among the original cohort of AAMARP artists, and worked with a variety of materials and techniques. As a child, Young learned basketry, finger weaving, and braiding from her grandmother, and later traveled throughout Africa to study traditional craft techniques. Young valued thrift and reuse, and common household scraps such as grass, rope, hair, wire, and sticks frequently appeared in her richly textured fiber sculptures. Young's fiber-based sculptures were often inspired by "tree forms and environments, particularly the colors and textures of mountainsides and aerial landscapes." One of her later fiber sculptures, *Native Dancer*, recalls a dancer adorned in ceremonial dress. Made predominantly of sisal rope — a durable fiber derived from the sisal agave plant native to southern

Mexico — the sculpture includes intricately braided segments wrapped with copper wire, a conductive element whose presence on the sculpture suggests the transfer of energy in dance from one form to another.

Kofi Kayiga

Born 1943 in Kingston, Jamaica

Spirit Energy/Angel, 2004

Acrylic on tar paper

Courtesy the artist

Kofi Kayiga is a Jamaican painter whose formative years coincided with the heyday of the island's independence movement, which culminated in 1962. Social and political struggles for self-determination held deep consequences for Jamaican artists and intellectuals, who sought to abandon Eurocentric practices in favor of returning to precolonial traditions and strengthening ties to the African continent. A cosmopolitan artist, Kayiga traveled across Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in the early 1970s studying African arts and religions and where, as he noted in 2017: "I saw myself in a larger context beyond Jamaica." Kayiga later settled in Boston and taught at Massachusetts College of Art and Design for over

thirty years. Works such as *Spirit Energy/Angel* are a testament to the artist's intense investment in spirituality, astrology, numerology, and metaphysics, calling to mind traditions of mask-making and adornment in a uniquely syncretic and dynamic fusion of forms.

Marlon Forrester

Born 1976 in Georgetown, Guyana

Warrior Dance, 2014

Oil and mixed media on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Marlon Forrester, the newest member of the collective, joined AAMARP in 2014 when he was approached by other members at an exhibition opening. *Warrior Dance*, a large-scale painting made around that time, is demonstrative of the play between abstraction and figuration in much of Forrester's work, which often explores forms of Black masculinity. The beady-eyed titular warrior at the center of the canvas, who holds a sword and sacrificial kill, is set against a geometrically dynamic and shifting background of vibrant colors and patterns inspired by Zulu attire. Following an influential return visit to Guyana, Forrester increasingly examines

the instability of identity and complex ideas of homeland for individuals of the Caribbean diaspora, situating him as part of a lineage at AAMARP that connects directly with Kofi Kayiga, Bryan McFarlane, and others.

“AAMARP has afforded me the necessary space to contemplate and reflect on my process but also it has allowed me to be in a community of some of the baddest Black artists in Boston. To be in their presence and find fellowship with artists of their stature has changed my life and the trajectory of my artwork. My residency has been a dream come true experience: exposing communities of young artists to a rich cultural history they never knew, incorporating new theoretical discourses in my practice, embracing the revolutionary call for social justice, working to transform both public and institutional spaces through the lens of painting and sculpture.”

Sharon Dunn

Born 1946 in New York

Resilience, 2026

Wood and charcoal with beeswax, clay, and metal

Courtesy the artist

When multidisciplinary artist Sharon Dunn was invited to take residence at AAMARP in the mid-1990s, she was already a well-known figure in the community. Not only was she a renowned muralist by that time, but she is also the daughter of Robert Haggins, a personal photographer to Malcolm X. In *Resilience*, Dunn revisits a key work made while in residence at AAMARP: *Floor Piece* (1994). For Dunn, ephemeral installations such as these pay homage to African and diasporic altars and floor rituals, including the Haitian vèvè floor drawings central to Vodou cosmologies. *Resilience* is a wooden sculptural frame featuring tiered fields of charcoal overlaid with small balls of organic materials such as beeswax and clay. Dunn sees these materials as holding healing properties and has described the work as an intuitive attempt to “call up sacred geometry summoned as if from a dream.” Like many AAMARP artists, Dunn has traveled widely to research Afro-diasporic spiritual and material traditions,

including to Cuba, Ghana, Nicaragua, and Nigeria. These travels form fertile ground for ongoing investigations of syncretism, ritual, and ancestral memory.

“I carry deep respect, fond memories of creative insightful conversations and studio exchanges . . . and I carry lifelong loving and heartfelt warmth for AAMARP studio neighbors and colleagues . . . who inspired and informed my journey . . . and opened ancestral passages.”

Jeff Chandler

Born 1955 in Boston

Shaman's Trilogy, c. 2000

Wood, raffia, feathers, synthetic leather, metal, and acrylic paint

Courtesy the artist

Self-taught sculptor, woodworker, and percussionist

Jeff Chandler (Dana Chandler's younger brother by sixteen years), got his start at AAMARP thanks to his experience working in construction. His woodworking skills were indispensable in renovating AAMARP's studios at 76 Atherton Street, and he frequently helped

install the exhibitions on view in the galleries. Since the beginning, Chandler has worked with materials close at hand. His earliest works were made from reclaimed kitchen cabinets, bedroom sets, and other cast-off wood found at construction sites. As his work progressed and became more expansive in scale, he took on his own studio at AAMARP. In such works as *Shaman's Trilogy*, Chandler incorporates cross-cultural forms and motifs related to spiritual traditions, like African shamanic practices related to spirit possession, ancestor reverence, and folk rituals. Chandler combines natural materials such as raffia, a natural fiber with various uses throughout Africa, with synthetic materials such as fake feathers, as a means for engaging with such forms, motifs, and traditions from afar.

“AAMARP has afforded me the opportunity to travel the world without leaving my studio. I can learn from everyone who goes to different African nations, through the Caribbean, even those with connections to the American South. Just being in the building, I am affected by what everyone else does.”

L'Merchie Frazier

Born 1951 in Jacksonville, FL

Ogun: God of War to Love, 1995/2015

Mixed media assemblage

Courtesy the artist

L'Merchie Frazier has had a variety of roles in the Boston arts ecosystem, most prominently through designing educational programs at the Museum for the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Roxbury for seven years and serving as the director of Education and Interpretation for the Museum of African American History, Boston/Nantucket. Frazier has been a member of AAMARP since 1999, making works in a variety of media, from quilts dedicated to Black American history to shrine-like devotional sculptures related to her extended stays in Brazil. These works, such as *Ogun: God of War to Love*, are based on *terreiros*, or houses of worship in Candomblé, an African diasporic religion practiced in Brazil. Dedicated to Ogun — a central figure in Yoruba religion who is the patron saint of metallurgy — this shrine features beaded metallic effigies, image transfers, a dedicatory poem written by the artist, and a framed quote from Mel King, an influential community organizer and lifelong resident of Boston's South End.

OGUN

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT
THE BREAK OF TWILIGHT
THE FOG CLEARS
OGUN APPEARS CLOTHED IN BLUE
TO OPE THE WAY
RAFFIA SWEEPS THE URBAN STREETS
SPIRIT JARS BREAK AGAINST THE SIDEWALK
EXPOSING MY FATHER'S SOUL
SPIRIT JARS BREAK
AGAINST THE SIDEWALK LACED WITH
CLAY/COAL
SPIRIT JARS BREAK AGAINST THE SIDEWALK
EXPOSING MY MOTHER'S SOUL
SPIRIT JARS BREAK AGAINST THE SIDEWALK
EXPOSING MARAUDER'S SOUL
STORIES UNTOLD
COME TO THE TRENCHES THAT
MYSTERIES HOLD
WATCH THE JAGGED PIECED UNFOLD
SAINT MICHAEL THE DEFENDER OF THE CHILDREN
WARRIOR OF JUSTICE AND ORDER
SLAY DRAGONS OF DRUG ABUSE
WITH YOUR SWORD

YOUR TOOLS TILL THE SOIL, URBANE REFUSE
BANISH THE BEAST OF VIOLENCE
PURIFY OUR EARTH WITH PEACE, MATHEMATICS,
SCIENCE
YOUR VALOUR IN BLUE REMAINS
SPIRIT JARS OF THE CHILDREN
SPIRIT JARS OF THE CHILDREN
SPIRIT JARS OF THE CHILDREN!!!!
BREAK AGAINST THE SIDEWALK
EXPOSING MY MOTHER'S SOUL . . .

L'Merchie

Susan Thompson

Born 1945 in Cincinnati

Call of the Ancestors 1 and 2, 2007

Pieced quilts with applique

Courtesy the artist

Whereas some of Susan Thompson's narrative quilts depict street scenes, others, such as the indigo-dyed, pieced quilts *Call of the Ancestors 1 and 2*, are more abstract and meditative, with shadowy, featureless figures against a patchwork landscape that suggests an ancestral realm.

Call of the Ancestors 1 features a male-coded figure holding a briefcase, while the figures in *Call of the Ancestors 2* appear to be a woman and child. Presented together they are fellow travelers, the artist's reverential tribute to her ancestors.

“Being an AAMARP artist has been the highlight of my artistic career To me, it made all the difference in the world to be in that atmosphere, where on a regular basis I could see great works of art from my contemporaries I had to try to prove that I am an artist. I used to work all night, until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, after making sure everything was good at home. Because that's what I had to do.”

Hakim Raquib

Born 1946 in Colón, Panama

The Tent, 1992/2025

From the series Canvas Cathedral

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy the artist

In the late 1960s, Hakim Raquib encountered a unique model of community arts and employment: the Roxbury

Photographers Training Program. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the program sought to provide professional photography training for Roxbury youth. Raquib quickly became aware of the power images wielded to combat mainstream narrative and bias, recalling: “You know there are good people in this community, beautiful people. And that was the option, to use the camera to show that. We were special, because we had cameras. And we knew that we could walk into most situations.” Raquib has been involved at AAMARP since the mid-1980s. A mentee of Rudolph R. Robinson, whose work is also on view in this exhibition, Raquib became regarded for his skillful control of light, as evident in *The Tent* from his Canvas Cathedral series. Raquib captures a nighttime Baptist tent revival congregation in Roxbury. While it is pitch-black around the tent, light appears to emanate from underneath it, from a poetic flash of spiritual energy.

“AAMARP served as the springboard that propelled my career as a visual artist. In the early stages of my photographic journey, opportunities for artists of color to pursue a professional path in the arts — especially in Boston — were scarce. AAMARP changed that.”

Room 7

Jeff Chandler

Born 1955 in Boston

Sister Sara, 2010

Bubinga and acrylic

Courtesy the artist

Jeff Chandler's work often demonstrates meaningful forms of mentorship and exchange among collective members, as AAMARP has, according to the artist: "afforded me the opportunity to travel the world without leaving my studio." The bubinga, commonly referred to as African rosewood, used for *Sister Sara* was brought back from the continent by fellow AAMARP collective member Hakim Raquib. Chandler carved the titular figure's stoic face by hand from the evocative, reddish wood, surrounding her with crosses of various religious denominations to imagine a spiritual figure who transcends any fixed associations.

Keith Morris Washington

Born 1956 in Gary, IN

*George Armwood: Front Lawn of Judge R. Duer's Home;
Princess Anne, Maryland, 1999*

Oil and acrylic on linen

Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, MA, Museum Purchase,
Sinon Collection Fund, Marjorie Doyle Rockwell Fund,
General Collection Fund, in honor of Susan Roetzer's
service as President of the FAM Board of Trustees, 2016–
2021

In the late 1990s, thanks to his generous studio space at AAMARP, Keith Morris Washington began an ongoing series of large-scale paintings titled *Within Our Gates: Site and Memory in the American Landscape*. Each work takes as its subject the site of an American lynching; as the artist says, he is “mediating spaces, investigating a past still present, interrogating tradition, [and] questioning discrepancies extolled in Hudson River / Luminist Painting.”

The presentation of *George Armwood: Front Lawn of Judge R. Duer's Home; Princess Anne, Maryland* is always accompanied by the following text written by the artist:

PRINCESS ANNE, Md., Oct. 18 — In the wildest lynching orgy the state has ever witnessed, a frenzied mob of 3,000 men, women and children, sneering at guns and tear gas, overpowered 50 state troopers, tore from a prison cell a Negro accused of attacking an aged white woman, and lynched him in front of the home of a judge who had tried to placate the mob.

Then the mob cut down the body, dragged it through the main thoroughfare for more than half a mile and tossed it on a burning pyre.

Fifty State policemen were beaten to the ground and the others were swept aside by the fury of the townsmen and farmers, who used a heavy wooden battering ram to smash three doors and reach the cell of the terrified prisoner, George Armwood, twenty-four years old.

Armwood was dragged by the neck through the streets, to the home of Judge Robert F. Duer, who, earlier in the day had called the Somerset County grand jury in special

session next Monday to hear testimony against the Negro.

While the prisoner pleaded desperately for his life and members of the mob shouted, “lynch him!” a rope was placed about his neck. The other end was swung over the limb of a tree directly in front of the judge’s dwelling.

To accompanying shouts of “let him swing,” the struggling Negro was hoisted into the air. Five minutes later he was cut down, dead.

Under the oak tree, despite the presence of women and children, all the victim’s clothes were torn from his body and he hung there for several minutes nude.

Then members of the mob, shouting, seized the loose end of the rope and dragged the body half a mile on Main Street to a blazing pile in the center of the thoroughfare. The dead man was lifted high by half a dozen men and flung to the flames.

Hundreds of persons, packed so thickly about the fire that police could not fight their way through, watched the body burn.

L'Merchie Frazier

Born 1951 in Jacksonville, FL

Ericka Huggins: Liberation Groceries, 2019

Thinsulate fabrics, nylon, and synthetic tape

Courtesy the artist

L'Merchie Frazier has been a member of AAMARP since 1999, making works in a variety of media, from quilts dedicated to Black American history to shrine-like devotional sculptures related to her extended stays in Brazil. *Ericka Huggins: Liberation Groceries* is a tribute to the activist and leading member of the Black Panther Party. Emblematic of Frazier's approach to underrecognized figures in American History, *Ericka Huggins* features Huggins set against a black background and holding a bag of groceries emblazoned with the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense logo. This image of Huggins alludes to her involvement in the People's Free Food Program, a community service program focused on providing free breakfast for children before school, and by extension, to the role of Black women in enacting revolutionary change more broadly.

Frazier's advocacy within the Women of Color Quilter's Network exemplifies the ongoing national and international connections forged through AAMARP.

“The African American Master Artists-in-Residence Program proudly continues the legacy of earlier Black artistic guilds . . . including the Harlem Renaissance, Spiral, Weusi, Obassi, and AfriCOBRA, to intentionally utilize aesthetics and creative expression to advance Black liberation across all periods of time and geographic locations. These organizations confronted the impact of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism by waging resistance against systemic, racist exclusion from the Western art canon. These self-identified, self-acknowledged networked organizations created an artistic archive to deliberately present and record Black material and cultural production, thereby achieving a liberation model.”

Khalid Kodi

Born 1961 in Sudan

Excessive Narrative: Echoes of Eden, 2025

Oil on canvas

Courtesy the artist and Skoto Gallery, New York

Khalid Kodi is a Sudanese artist who joined AAMARP in the early 1990s after immigrating to Boston to attend Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Since then, he has made works across a range of media invested in what he describes as “excessive narrative.” In works such as *Excessive Narrative: Echoes of Eden*, resplendent color and sinuous forms are informed by myriad aesthetic influences: the artist’s upbringing in Sudan; his Eurocentric art education; and the frictions and intersections between Islamic, Christian, and Indigenous spiritual practices. As such, for the artist these works, “encapsulate the complexity of cultural and political entanglements that shape identity, history, and artistic expression within African and African diasporic contexts.” Like many AAMARP artists, Kodi is also an organizer and curator. He mentors young Sudanese artists and activists, hosts conflict resolution workshops, and, with artist Walter Crump, organized *Out of Pakistan* in AAMARP’s

galleries in 1995, featuring a group of Pakistani artists including Ambreen Butt, whose work is also on view in this gallery.

“My journey to AAMARP was less a geographical migration than an existential one It was more than a collective — it was a space of unlearning and reimagining. Here, African and African American aesthetic values were not marginalized but centered, interrogated, and celebrated AAMARP became a methodology, a way of thinking.”

Ambreen Butt

Born 1969 in Lahore, Pakistan

Behind the Walls, 1993

Feudal prince and his disciple puppets, 1993

Manipulator, 1993

Title unknown, 1993

Watercolor and white gouache on handmade Wasli paper
Courtesy the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco

While a Fulbright Scholar, artist Walter Crump spent two years teaching at the National College of Art in Lahore,

Pakistan, where he encountered many of the country's prominent artists. When he returned to Boston, he invited several artists — including Ambreen Butt — to pursue their studies at Boston-area colleges. At AAMARP in 1995, Crump co-organized an exhibition with artist Khalid Kodi entitled *Out of Pakistan* featuring twenty-eight Pakistani artists and two American counterparts. The exhibition, which included artists such as Ambreen Butt, Rashid Rana, and Shahzia Sikander, presented works across media, but centered on the traditional miniature paintings at the center of Pakistani culture for centuries. Butt elaborates on traditional Persian miniature painting in works laced with both historical reference and contemporary resonance, such as the four intricate paintings presented here that were included in *Out of Pakistan*. The exhibition reinvigorated the program's rich history of exhibiting groundbreaking artists from outside the collective.

Shea Justice

Born 1971 in Roxbury, MA

Scrolls of Justice (excerpt), 2001–present

Graphite, ink, and collage on paper

Constitution: Ghost of Taney Still Haunts Us, 2021

Collage on paper

Constitution: Douglass and Ida B, 2020

Collage on paper

Courtesy the artist

Growing up in Roxbury, Massachusetts, Shea Justice was profoundly impacted at a young age by Dana C. Chandler Jr.'s mural *Knowledge Is Power–Stay In School* (1972), seen below. With the socially engaged, historically conscious work of Chandler as a model, Justice employs collage as a means of bringing the past into direct contact with the present to bear witness to American history. Shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, when the United States invaded Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom — a decades-long war waged throughout the Middle East — Justice began a still-evolving project called *Scrolls of Justice*. For more than twenty years, Justice has continued adding dense admixtures of illustrations, paintings, handwritten text,

and collage diaristic in form to miles of paper scrolls as part of an attempt to catalog the historical complexity of present-day life in America. This exhaustive sense of complexity is encapsulated even in his smaller collages, such as *Constitution: Douglass and Ida B* and *Constitution: Ghost of Taney Stills Haunts Us*, which combines newspaper clippings and sensitively rendered portraits ovetop of the United States Constitution, highlighting the racist underpinnings of the American project.

“I grew up in Grove Hall in Roxbury during the 1970s. Every day, whenever I went to school or took a bus to Downtown Boston, I saw at least one of Dana Chandler’s murals When he retired, he grandfathered me into AAMARP, and I’ve been a member ever since Even now, a lot of the content of my work continues to deal with the many issues Dana has addressed.”



Ricardo “Deme5” Gomez

Born 1975 in Santiago, Dominican Republic

Select mural documentation

Projected images, concrete, and acrylic

Courtesy the artist

Ricardo Gomez, who paints as Deme5, is a graffiti artist working within the rich history of mural painting in Boston. Influenced by artists in Chicago, the mural movement in Boston was built on notions of Black empowerment as put forward by Dana Chandler, Sharon Dunn, and others in and around Boston’s communities of color. As Chandler said at the time: “Since the museums in almost every city in the country have no use for, and very little intention of, exhibiting or adding to their collections the works of contemporary Black artists; and since there is an imperative need for the Black artist to bring before his people his expressions about the state of Black people in America, the artist must use the next most obvious means, which is the wall mural.”

This earlier mural movement was celebrated in a 1970 ICA exhibition presented at Boston City Hall and titled *City Walls—City Hall*. Gomez is one of a younger generation of graffiti artists continuing this rich legacy. Featured here

is documentation of a selection of murals painted by Gomez and a host of collaborators, such as *Roxbury Love* (2014), a no longer surviving seventeen-by-one-hundred-foot mural. Gomez painted *Roxbury Love* with Thomas “Kwest” Burns after an iconic image of Nelson Mandela inspired by the South African activist and former president’s visit to Boston in 1990. Though *Roxbury Love* was a beloved neighborhood mural, it was destroyed in 2020 to make way for a mixed-use development. All that remains of the original mural are some painted architectural fragments like those seen here. Other murals from around Boston depicted here include: *From the Pyramids to the Projects* (2002, no longer extant), painted by Timmy “Zone” Allen, Thomas “Kwest” Burns, Victor “Marka27” Quiñonez, Rob “ProBlak” Gibbs, and Gomez at Peters Park; *Bartlett El* (2013, no longer extant) at Bartlett Yard; and Gomez’s portrait of Frederick Douglass as part of the *Grove Hall Mural* (c. 2022) on the exterior of Grove Hall Post Office.