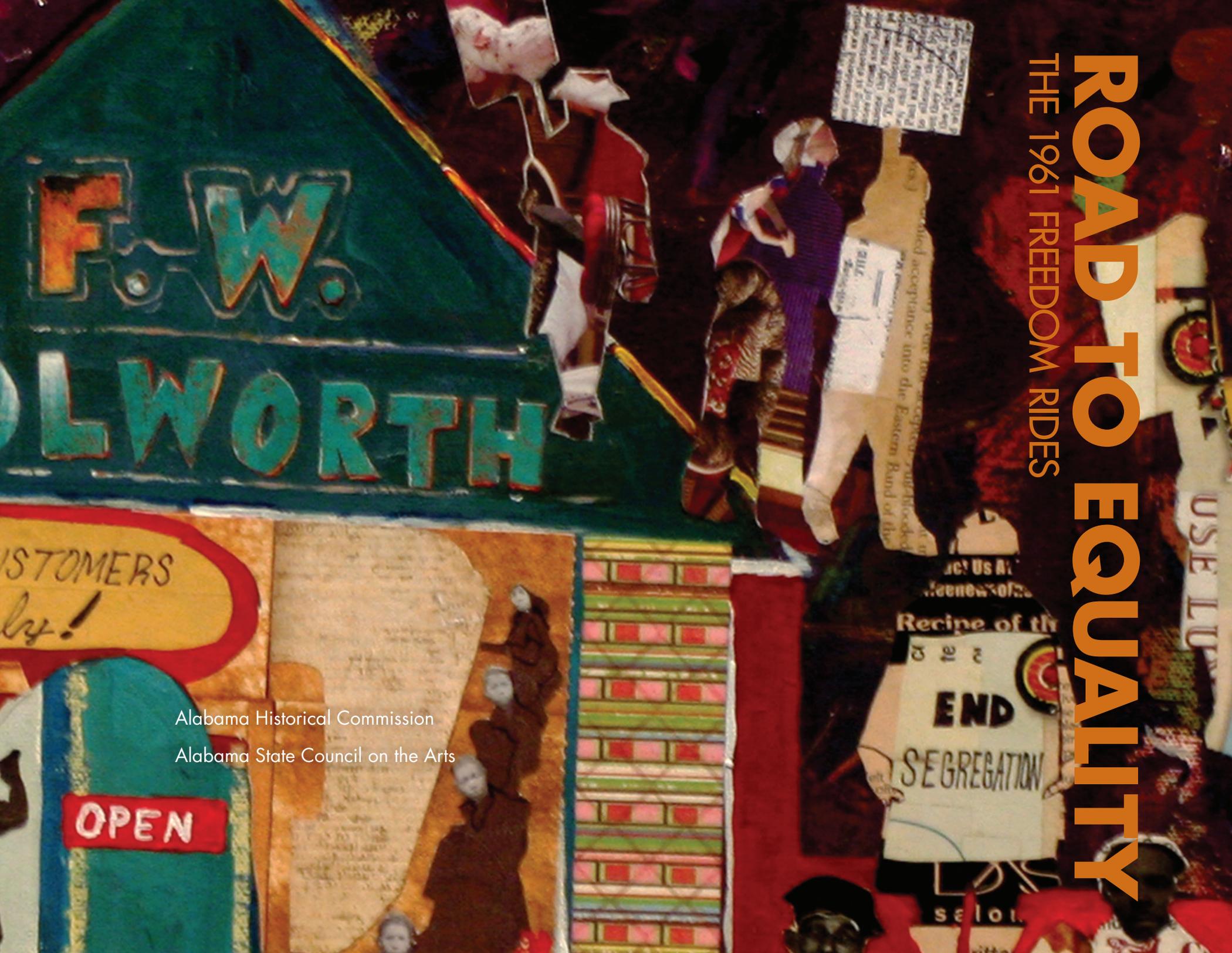


# ROAD TO EQUALITY

## THE 1961 FREEDOM RIDES



Alabama Historical Commission  
Alabama State Council on the Arts

Cover: Detail from *A Time for Change* by Eugene Campbell

Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

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# ROAD TO EQUALITY

## THE 1961 FREEDOM RIDES

An exhibition of art inspired by the Freedom Rides  
at the Freedom Rides Museum in the historic Montgomery Greyhound Bus Station,



commemorating the 50th Anniversary  
of the arrival of the Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama,  
on May 20, 1961

Alabama Historical Commission  
Alabama State Council on the Arts

**NORA EZELL** 1917-2007  
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA



In 1999, on behalf of the Montgomery Improvement Association, Louisa and Michael Weinrib commissioned Alabama quilt artist Nora Ezell to tell the story of the Freedom Rides.

Because of a lifelong interest in history, the Weinribs sought a quilt maker who could capture the epic tale of the Freedom Riders' journey through the South. Alabama quilter, Nora Ezell, became their obvious choice. She possessed the skills to produce a commemorative work of art out

of cloth, thread, and objects that pleased her.

Ms. Ezell was a self-taught artist whose legacy of narrative quilts expressed her deeply personal aesthetic. Alabama State Council on the Arts recognized her for her work in 1990 with a Folk Heritage Award. In 1992, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded her a National Heritage Fellowship. *My Quilts and Me: the Diary of an American Quilter*, published in 1999 by Black Belt Press, documents many of Nora Ezell's quilts.

With her quiet commitment to make something beautiful out of anything and everything, Ms. Ezell commemorates the Freedom Riders and the Civil Rights Movement with her quilt. "I created my own style to do quilts in," she once observed, "because I didn't want to do what nobody else did."

FREE AT LAST  
**Freedom Riders. May 1961.**

REAL COMMUNICATION HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE FEEL FREE

**Burning Bus**  
 May 1961  
 Birmingham - Selma  
 Birmingham, Ala.

I HAVE BEEN ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP

Birmingham Jail  
 5 Day Sentence  
 1961

**Martin L. King**

**Riot:**  
 STUNG U.S.A.  
 WATTS  
 DETROIT  
 B'HAM  
 NEWARK  
 CHICAGO  
 ATLANTA  
 SELMA  
 UNCLE  
 HOW LONG?

SCHOOL DESEGREGATED 1963

**16th St. Baptist Church**  
 Birmingham, Ala.

FROM RIVER  
 FINE DELPHIA MS.

**Schwerner, Chaney, Goodman**

PRES. KENNEDY  
 KILLED IN  
 DALLAS  
 NOV 1963

**The Book On The Freedom Riders**  
 1955-67

DEPT. 15th May  
 WHEN A BOMB  
 DROPPED IN B'HAM  
 ROCKED THE WHOLE  
 SOUTH

**Jimmie Jackson SELMA**  
 Ala. 1965

**Holt St. Baptist Church**  
 Montgomery, Ala.

JUNE 12th 1966 B.E. White  
 Watches Me Blackman

**Judge F. Johnson**

**THE Freedom Riders TEN - COMMANDMENTS -**

1. No lie can live FOREVER
2. You shall REAP what you SOW.
3. Staying with the Struggle to the END.
4. Desegregation AT LAST
5. We shall Overcome SOME DAY.
6. The light that CAN SHINE through ALL DARKNESS.
7. Student DEMONSTRATION.
8. Kennedy exhibited MORAL COURAGE.
9. March ON WASHINGTON.
10. I have A DREAM.

By Laws of Martin L. King, Jr. - The Truth Shall MAKE YOU FREE  
 MISS EXP 11  
 1961 - 1963

**Life** BELONG TO THE LIVING, He Who Lives MUST BE PREPARED FOR **Change**

Photograph by Robert Fouts

Freedom Riders - May 1961  
 1999 / Quilt, fabric and  
 found objects / 89" w x 81" h

Alabama Historical Commission collection, gift of the  
 Montgomery Improvement Association.

## THE ARTISTS

VINNIE BAGWELL  
SCULPTOR

CYNTHIA BUOB  
PAINTER

EUGENE CAMPBELL  
PAINTER

KRISTIN CASALETTO  
PRINTMAKER

KEVIN COLE  
SCULPTOR / MIXED MEDIA  
ARTIST

TIA-SIMONE GARDNER  
PHOTOGRAPHER

JEAN GROSSER  
MIXED MEDIA ARTIST

TERRY S.HARDY  
SCULPTOR

STEPHEN HAYES  
SCULPTOR

SÁLONGO LEE  
MIXED MEDIA ARTIST

GWENDOLYN MAGEE  
FABRIC ARTIST / QUILTER

WILLIE ROBERT  
MIDDLEBROOK  
DIGITAL MEDIA ARTIST /  
PHOTOGRAPHER

CHARLOTTE RILEY-WEBB  
PAINTER

DEBORAH SHEDRICK  
PAINTER / MIXED MEDIA  
ARTIST

KATHERINE STRAUSE  
PAINTER

## **ROAD TO EQUALITY - THE 1961 FREEDOM RIDES**

Historians tell the story of the 1961 Freedom Rides through text, photographs, and sometimes film. In May that year, bus riders, both black and white, left Washington, D.C. headed for New Orleans, bringing non-violence to protest segregation laws already ruled unconstitutional. Violence met them at several locations. College students continued the Ride from Birmingham to Montgomery, Alabama—and met more violence. Hundreds rode different routes, on buses, trains, and planes, into late fall. Many spent time in jail. The Freedom Riders achieved their goal of equality in interstate transportation. That is the history.

**THE PROJECT** The Alabama Historical Commission preserves, protects, and interprets Alabama's historic places. One of those places is Montgomery's historic Greyhound Bus Station, where on May 20, 1961, young Freedom Riders arrived, seeking to change the world. They made themselves and this bus station an important part of the story of Civil Rights in America. How do we interpret that story in this bus station? How do we help visitors make connections with this historic site and with the people who arrived here? How do we make the past relevant to visitors' lives? We try to tell the story simply, using words and images. We help visitors to find the parts of the story that the building has to tell. We ask people who were there to share their stories with others.

**THE PROCESS** As a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides and for the opening of the Freedom Rides Museum, the Alabama State Council on the Arts joined with the Alabama Historical Commission to add another dimension to interpretation. We asked artists to produce work inspired by the Freedom Rides, not simply presenting history. We searched for artists who would bring depth of feeling and human understanding of this time and history; who could move past documentation of the events to a place of challenge, inspiration, and meaning.

**THE ARTISTS** We selected fifteen artists from the national submissions and gave them an honorarium and an expense budget to create a piece for the exhibition *Road to Equality - The 1961 Freedom Rides*. In the selection process, we noted that much of their previous work had been addressing the struggle for equal rights in America. Several of the artists live along the historic route of the Freedom Rides. We were honored to see the national reputations, public commissions, exhibition history, and publication records of the participants.

**THE WORK** Exhibition space in the Museum is limited, and the artists generally wanted to create objects of significant scale. We worked to accommodate that wherever possible. Works range from cast sculpture, collage, printmaking, painting, photography, and quilt making to sculptural assemblage. The variety of materials used adds to the complexities of the artistic statements.

The work on exhibit is at the intersection of art and politics, at the place of social change. It is first of all visual storytelling, bringing diverse symbols together and often changing their function or allowing them to read differently because of their proximity to differing elements. Collages in the exhibition assemble a variety of historical images to tell complex stories. Symbols such as neckties, burned suitcases, and street signs help us to ponder the events, the hopes, and social change brought by the riders. Use of arrest “mug shots” by several artists helps us focus on the emotions of the individuals and transform images of hate into beauty and humanity. Photographs prompt us to remember: places, people, events, and most of all stories.

We give you the work of these fifteen artists, matched with the historical interpretations in the historic bus station. Together they allow us to celebrate history, understand failures, seek a hopeful future, and especially to honor the brave individuals who came on those buses. As a final symbol, wrap your minds in the quilts of Nora Ezell and Gwendolyn Magee. Quilts: gentle statements of warmth, comfort, and healing.

*Georgine Clarke*, Project Curator  
Visual Arts Program Manager  
Alabama State Council on the Arts

*Mark Driscoll*, Project Director  
Director of Historic Sites  
Alabama Historical Commission

# VINNIE BAGWELL

YONKERS, NEW YORK

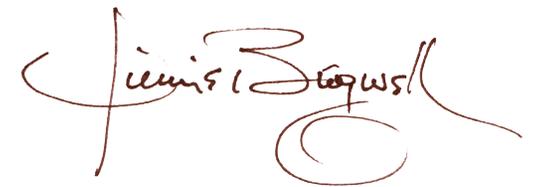


Photograph courtesy of the artist

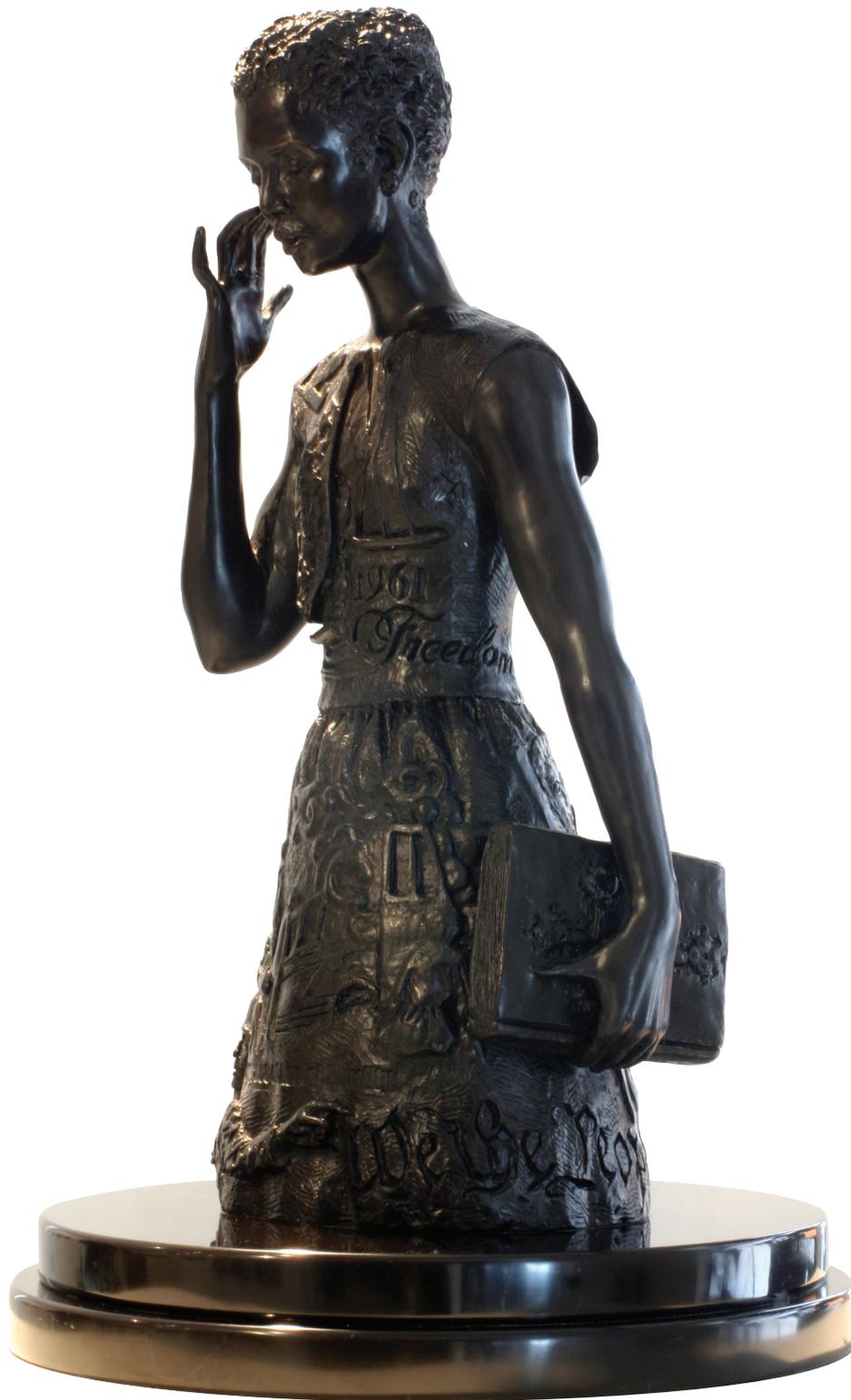
*My pursuit of artistic excellence via public art is grounded in my desire to use sculpture as a visual language that is resonant and has the power to reach out, strike the heart, and enrich the lives of others. I define my style by portraiture that provides insight into human character and shows a precise articulation of the human spirit.*

*My subjects are meant to be engaged, to invite memories of experiences and feelings. I design each character to remind viewers that artistry is a powerful, useful tool of social transformation—one capable of condensing our thoughts, distilling our minds, and renewing our hopes and aspirations.*

*I am particularly committed to creating fine art representing people of color, which offers a panorama that illuminates the vast identity of black people and attests to our full range and variety of characteristics and abilities. Making this artwork gives me a distinct sense of purpose. This is what I came to this life to do. It is how I serve God and humanity.*



Vinnie Bagwell holds a BS in Psychology from Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland. Commissions include the conception and development of *The Enslaved Africans' Rain Garden* for Yonkers, New York, and *Legacies*, a bronze public artwork for Chickasaw Park in Memphis, Tennessee.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

## Liberté

2011 / Bronze /  
9" w x 22" h x 8" d

Anchored in realism, *Liberté* provides insight into human character and shows a precise articulation of the human spirit. She is meant to be engaged, to invite memories of experiences and feelings.

I designed *Liberté* to remind viewers that artistry is a powerful, useful tool of social transformation—one capable of condensing our thoughts, distilling our minds, and renewing our hopes and aspirations.

# CYNTHIA BUOB

COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI



*Since 1998, I have enjoyed living in Mississippi. Originally from Peoria, Illinois, I think my work reflects my reaction to the south.*

*I have always been interested in the figure. Most recently, I have worked from found photographs of people that interest me. These photos present more questions than answers. The questions motivate me to paint from them. What was their*

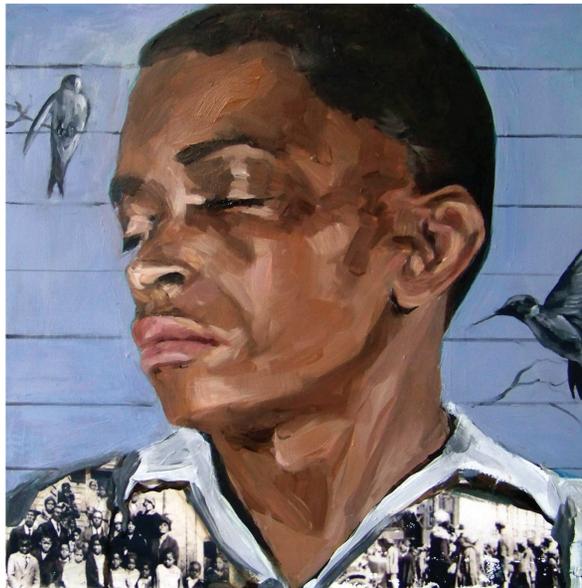
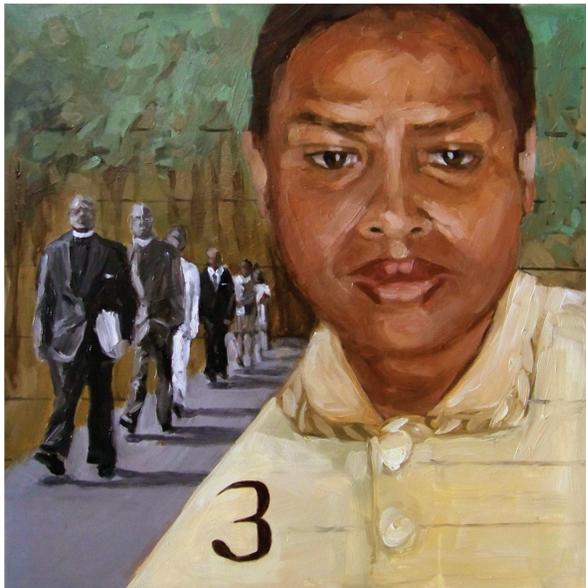
*story? What were they thinking at the time of the photo?*

*While working with mug shot photos, I came across photos of women arrested in the Civil Rights-era boycotts. What were they thinking, and what brought them to that point in their lives? Will they always be defined by their crime? Are they putting themselves through being arrested because they are hopeful?*

*In narrative images, I like to recreate the thought that the image brings to me. I imagine the hopes and dreams of the people while portraying the emotions of a tense moment. What is the interaction of the people with each other? If I were there, what would I be feeling? In these paintings, I can create the story myself. It is visual storytelling. My paintings help me answer questions and redefine images. They tell stories about people we may never meet.*

*Cynthia Buob*

Cynthia Buob is a painter and art educator. She holds an MFA from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Born in Illinois, she has lived in Columbus, Mississippi, since 1998.



Photograph courtesy of the artist

## Objection

2011 / Oil on board /  
24" w x 24" h

*Objection* is comprised of mug shots from the Civil Rights era and images from the Freedom Rides. I chose four people to portray. The portraits are a visual storytelling. I broke the piece into four parts to compare visually the expression and emotion felt by each person.

The top left portrait of the woman is juxtaposed with the anger and fear of the protester above her. This intensifies the courage the older woman showed while being arrested. The numbers and lines are all reminders of the arrests that they experienced.

All of these people had the common purpose of objecting to their condition and the society that surrounded them. In addition, their society has objectified them as they sought basic equality.

LEWISVILLE, TEXAS  
**EUGENE CAMPBELL**

Photograph courtesy of the artist



*In my attempt to document and capture the actions and results of the 1961 Freedom Rides, it is my intent to illustrate both the cause (injustice) and effect (desegregation) that resulted from the protest.*

*I want to focus not only on how the Freedom Rides brought an end to segregation in public transportation across the American South, but to expand on the contagious nature of the movement that also led to boycotts, protest, and marches across the Jim Crow South. Thousands of people joined the movement to show their support for the war against injustice. This was met with steady opposition from those non-conformists who stood with the confederate mentality, ready to hold steadfast to their beliefs.*

*Eugene W. B. Campbell Jr*



A Time for Change  
2011 / Collage on canvas  
/ 24" w x 18" h

Bring Down the Signs; the  
Death of Jim Crow  
2011 / Collage on canvas  
/ 20" w x 24" h

During the Civil Rights Movement, numerous compelling moments defined the era and made monumental history. Through these pieces, I attempted to capture a fraction of the events that contributed to this crusade.



# KRISTIN CASALETTO

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*I work with printmaking and mixed media processes to address social and human issues. My work regularly is represented in shows dealing with Civil Rights and Southern history.*

*In the late 1990s, I moved to Mississippi. My experience there of the remnants of Jim Crow, persistent poverty, repressive social systems, and the weaving of religious faith into the fabric of public and daily life dovetailed with my interest in*

*conscience, politics, and the complex relationship among corruption, redemption, and justice/injustice. I produced a body of work called Mississippi Voices, addressing the complexity of such issues as racism, spirituality, and poverty. It included woodcuts, etchings, lithographs, projected animations, and digital sound pieces based on oral history interviews.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Casaletto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Kristin Casaletto holds a BFA in drawing, a BS in physics, a Masters in art history, and an MFA in painting. She is head of the Printmaking Area and director of the Humanities Program at Augusta State University in Georgia.



Photograph courtesy of the artist

Burial at Montgomery  
2011 / Color intaglio with  
touches of watercolor and  
charcoal / 30" w x 22" h

In this piece, and with a nod to El Greco and Courbet, I've tried to honor the courage and determination of the Freedom Riders without stooping to mere illustration of events, or worse, encouraging the re-seeding of hate through perpetuation of separation and blame.

Here, the earthbound struggle to right their wrongs, which the heavens allow, if unwillingly, watching.

# KEVIN COLE

FAIRBURN, GEORGIA



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*When I turned eighteen years old, my grandfather stressed the importance of voting by taking me to a tree where he was told that African-Americans were lynched by their neckties on their way to vote. The experience left a profound impression in my mind.*

*It's funny how those things that are etched into our psyche while young have a way of working themselves out as we age. Throughout my artistic journey, the tie has been more than just a recurring motif and icon. It has been foundational to the work that I have produced, to who I am as artist, husband, educator, father, and friend. Transformed from a symbol of powerlessness to a symbol of strength, it represents my beliefs in change, my sense of a more connected community, and even my faith in a higher power.*

*While evolving from a more expressionistic place to one of abstraction, the ties and scarves have also evolved. Since 1992, I have more deeply explored the interplay between color and music, particularly influenced by the musical art forms born out of African American culture: jazz, blues, rap, and gospel. Additionally, my journey has led me to the incorporation of other idioms and symbols that go beyond my purely American existence.*

Kevin Cole is an artist and art educator living in Atlanta, Georgia. He holds a Master's degree in art education from the University of Illinois at Urbana, and an MFA from Northern Illinois University.



Photograph by Tom Meyer

Colorless Dreams I  
2011 / Mixed media on  
tar paper /  
22" w x 28" h x 22" d

In this recent work, *Colorless Dreams*, I used a process called "mapping", where I traced the path of the Freedom Riders. These brave individuals really helped further the cause for justice and human rights. Because of their fight, it triggered numerous backlashes against justice. I used the necktie as a symbol of a noose. In each of the ten states, events happened that initiated the Civil Rights movements. This catastrophe, like slavery and lynching, brought us together as well as made us stronger piece by piece.

**TIA-SIMONE GARDNER**  
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*"Tell us what the world has been to you in the dark places and in the light... Tell us what it is to be a woman so that we may know what it is to be a man. What moves at the margin. What it is to have no home in this place. To be set adrift from the one you knew. What it is to live at the edge of a town that cannot bear your company."*

*This quote from Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison is a poetic description of the artistic act. It spells out a tradition of women retrieving history through storytelling both through literature and through visual narratives. It is with great respect for this tradition and this historical moment that I would like my work for this exhibition to respond.*

Tia-Simone Gardner teaches at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. She holds an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania, has been a Studio Fellow in the Whitney Independent Study Program. She has participated in several international residency programs.



### The Recitation

2011 / Photography /  
55" w x 36" h

To recite is to give an account, especially from memory. This moment that we are remembering is a part of our nation's not so distant past, close enough for our mothers and grandmothers to recall for us their firsthand accounts of it, close enough that they still cringe or laugh at these recollections.

Thirteen women met at the site of the old Trailways Station in Birmingham. We carried with us a large banner with an image of the old station. With an intergenerational group of women, all dressed in white, it was my goal to capture a space of joy, mourning, learning, exchange, and reverence.

Thanks to the 13 women who participated in this ritual: Ejella Gardner, Willow Scott, Sharifa Wip, Kathleen Hamrick, Simone Jones-Snelling, Tatum Preston, LaQuin Taylor, Catherine Burkes-Brooks, Sandra Sanders, Karen Percy, Tiffany Taylor, Jessica Latten, and Lynsey Weatherspoon.

JEAN GROSSER  
HARTSVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*My purpose is to give visual expression to issues of social and political conflict. These interests stem from a family tradition of political activism. My grandfather was a conscientious objector during World War I. His experiences in military prisons (Alcatraz and Leavenworth) between 1918 and 1921 have been the subject of my artwork in the past.*

*My recent artistic focus developed out of a call for entries for the Holter Museum in Helena, Montana. The museum asked artists to “transform*

*hate” by making works of art from Neo-Nazi hate literature obtained by the Montana Human Rights Network. I created a series of artworks for this exhibition.*

*I continue to wrestle with the idea of transforming hate by exploring issues of racial tension in the American south, specifically the controversy concerning the treatment of the Jena Six in Louisiana, and the use of the noose as a source of fear and intimidation. I am interested in tapping into the power of images of hate and transforming their meaning.*

Jean Grosser is the Art Department chair and professor of art at Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina. She holds a BA in history from Barnard College; a BFA in sculpture from Alfred State College in New York; and an MFA in sculpture from Ohio University, Athens.



20887  
Doris Castle  
Age 18



20916  
David Fankhauser  
Age 19



21137  
Charles Biggers  
Age 23



20892  
Peter Ackerberg  
Age 22



20936  
Carolyn Reed  
Age 21



20897  
Dion Diamond  
Age 19



20878  
Joseph Carter  
Age 22



20879  
James Bevel  
Age 24



21046  
Margaret Leonard  
Age 19

Photographs courtesy of the artist / Image credits: Library of Congress and Mississippi Department of Archives and History, State Sovereignty Commission

Transforming Hate: Freedom Riders, 1961

2011 / Mixed media / 56" w x 44" h

I want this artwork to take images of hate and transform them into something of beauty and humanity.

When I first looked at the mug shots of the students who boarded buses in Montgomery and other southern cities, I was struck by how young they were and by the impact they had on the future of our country. These college students have made America a better place. They took risks for what they believed and we have all benefited from their sacrifice.

# TERRY S. HARDY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Drawing courtesy of the artist



*Over the last five years, my art has become very autobiographical and at times uncomfortable. My installations deal with prejudice, discrimination, and religion.*

*In most of my recent installations/works, my attempt is to strip away as much detail as possible as to leave the public room for their own ideas and interpretations.*

T S. H

Terry S. Hardy is an artist originally from Vernon, Alabama, currently living in Atlanta. He studied at Beville State College in Fayette, Alabama, and the Art Institute of Atlanta. His work, frequently outdoor installation, is exhibited internationally.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

### Monument

2011 / Assemblage,  
found objects /  
29" w x 72" h x 18" d

A suitcase is a historic and  
useful object.

Each with a life of its own.

One can never know just  
where they have been,  
what they have held, or to  
whom they have belonged.

*Monument* represents a  
series of these histories.

Histories that were all  
traveling on that same  
road: a road to equality.

# STEPHEN HAYES

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Photograph courtesy of the artist



*I am a creator that dreams and enjoys creating interesting objects out of voids. Through my creations, there is a pushing of repetition and form to speak with a silent voice, being more like lightning seen and not heard. In the case of repetition of forms, it gives an object a new existence through patterns and shape. My work is mixed media consisting of wood, clay, cement, fiber, found objects, metal, and recycled*

*materials, in conjunctions with printmaking.*

*My goal is to create a sculpture that relates to the 1961 Freedom Rides, the struggle to be treated as equal, and its impact on the present day.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Hayes".

Stephen Hayes is from Durham, North Carolina, and currently lives in Atlanta. He holds a BFA from North Carolina Central University and an MFA in sculpture from Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

Detour

2011 / Wood, steel,  
rubber, ink-jet, paper, wire  
/ 48" w x 84" h x 48" d

*Detour* is a sculpture about the journeys that were taken to reach the road to equality.

They may pop the tires and burn the transportation, but where there is a will there is a way. The wheels on this bus will keep going round and round, the next stop to unity.

# SÁLONGO LEE

NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI



Photograph courtesy of the artist

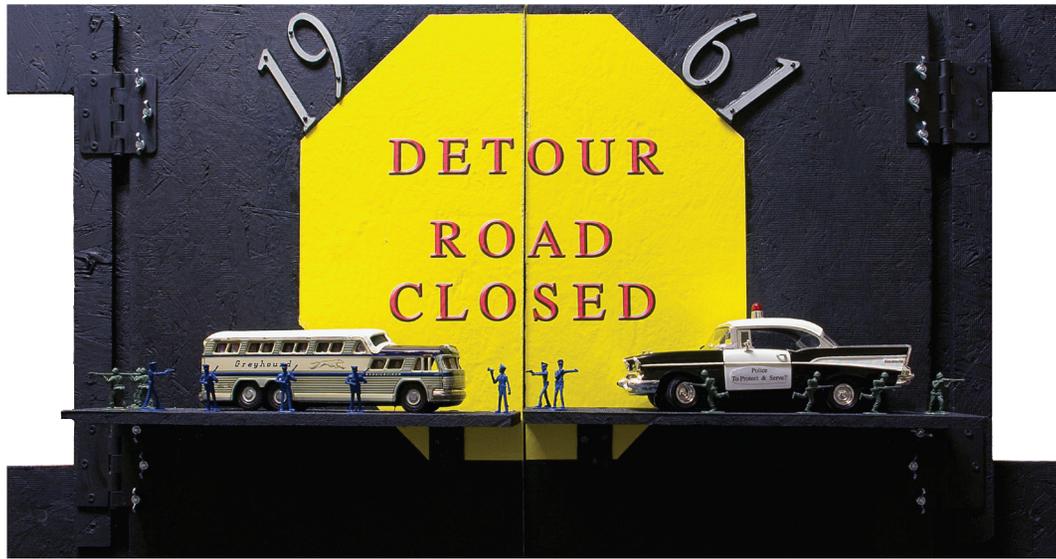
*Fifty years ago, I discovered photography. That has been my passion and career for 35 years as a commercial photographer, performance photographer, and photojournalist. In 1990, I returned to school, which led me in a new direction of creative and artistic expression. I have come full circle in a way; in the beginning, I used photography to document the beauty I saw in the world around me and as a vehicle to make a living. Now I create artwork that speaks to the condition of the world I live in.*

*I use my art to talk to the world to make the viewer aware of what is in plain sight, but missed as we hurry about our lives. Using photography, text, and other media, I create installations, images, and artist books to address political and social issues that affect us as a people. We tend to forget that history can repeat itself. Because laws are passed does not mean that the issues addressed are forgotten and everyone obeys the laws.*

*What I hope to communicate with my artwork is that, despite all that has transpired these past fifty years; we have to be on guard. I want to remind us that we are our own worst enemy, if we take for granted the sacrifices of those who marched and died during the Civil Rights marches and think that because we have a black president that all is well in America.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sálongo Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sálongo Lee's background includes a studio art major in photography with a minor in print-making from San Francisco State University. He works from Natchez; has been artist-in-residence and art instructor; and has exhibited and curated exhibitions throughout the country.

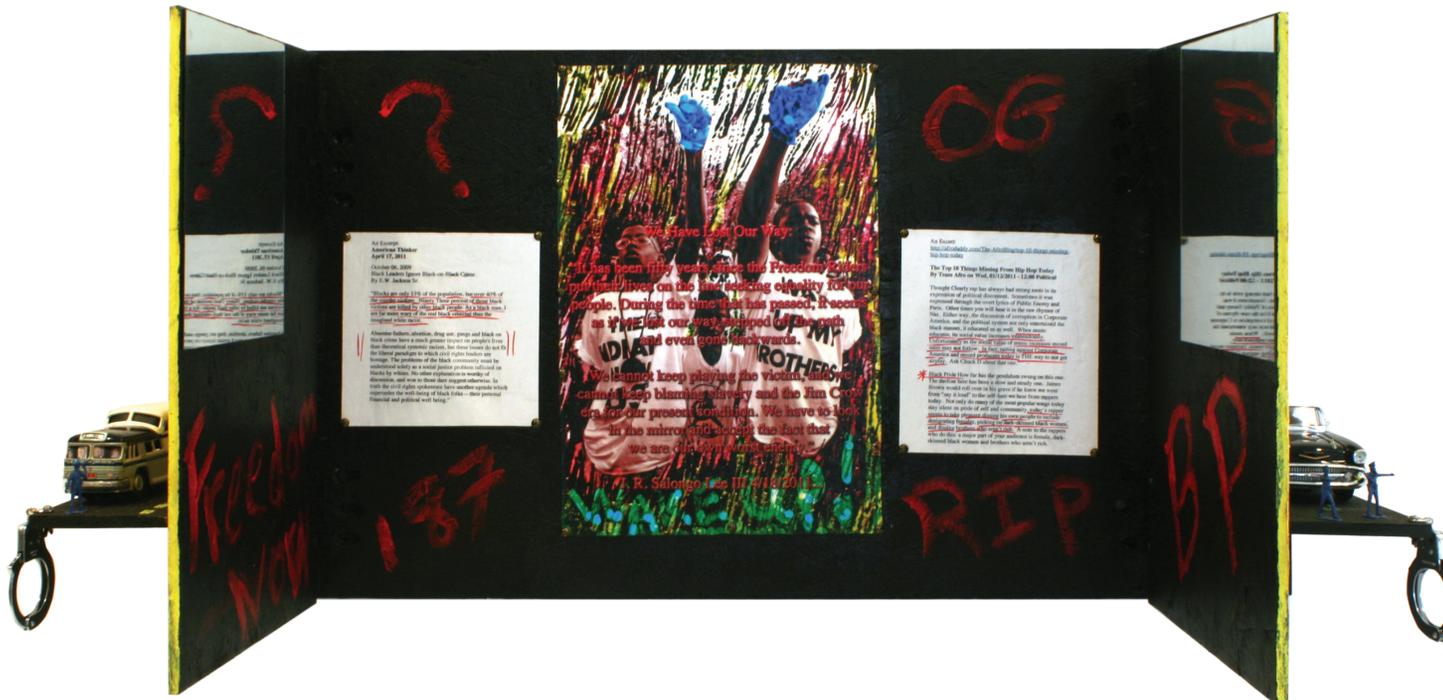


Closed: Photograph courtesy of the artist / Opened: Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

Detour: We've Lost Our Way  
2011 / Mixed media /  
closed 48" w x 24" h x 8" d;  
opened: same x 24" d

After all the sacrifices that were made and the work that has been done to bring forth the expectations of equality that freedom offers, there has been a detour along the road. It seems that we have stepped back in some ways and have lost direction.

It seems we have become our own worst enemy in some instances and will not achieve that which so many fought for along the road to freedom and equality.



**GWENDOLYN MAGEE**  
1943-2011  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*My art focuses on presentation of dramatic, visual representations of African American experiences from slavery through present day with each piece designed as a forum for dialogue and communication.*

*Textiles, fibers, and threads are my artistic medium of choice in honor of ancestral matriarchs who toiled untold hours in servitude and painstakingly made quilts to keep their families warm using whatever materials they could find and whatever time they could manage to eke out of bone crushing days. I find it fitting to use versions of those humble, unpretentious quilts to tell their stories and those of their descendents; to use the quilt format as the medium through which their trials and tribulations are depicted as well as present day issues and challenges.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwendolyn A. Magee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gwendolyn Magee was a quilt artist in Jackson, Mississippi, and a 2011 recipient of the Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Her work was included in the national tour *Tradition/Innovation: American Masterpieces of Southern Craft & Traditional Art*.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

By Bus, By Train, By Plane -  
They Came!

2011 / Textile /  
72" w x 72" h

Gwendolyn Magee sadly passed away before she could finish her quilt for the exhibition. Her family has graciously allowed us to exhibit and publish the unfinished piece.

Her proposal was to "create an artwork honoring the 443 foot soldiers without whom the historic Freedom Rides would never have occurred, whose specific participation is usually unremarked, whose names are rarely cited, and whose particular sacrifices primarily go unnoted. They were not just a group entity—each was a unique individual." She included all the names on her quilt.

**WILLIE ROBERT  
MIDDLEBROOK**  
INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Photograph courtesy of the artist



*the Americans. It talks about our (Black Folks) relationship to this country and its love, need, and hate feelings about us. I will add two inspired by the Freedom Rides to the series.*

*My goal as an artist is to make art that speaks to us about how we relate to each other, life, love, and our relationship to the environment.*

*The Project "from FREEDOM to slavery to Freedom?" is a series of works discussing the relationship of Africans to*

Willie Robert Middlebrook is a full time professional artist with an extensive 30-year exhibition and commissioned public art record. His awards include two Visual Artist Fellowships in photography from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Getty Trust Visual Artist Fellowship.



Photographs courtesy of the artist

from FREEDOM to slavery  
to Freedom? #12  
2010 / Digital art, archival  
pigment print / 36" w x 24" h

from FREEDOM to slavery  
to Freedom? #14a & 14b  
2011 / Digital art, archival  
pigment prints, diptych /  
72" w x 24" h

**from** (the beginning of the  
story, how we (Africans)  
were to stolen to the  
Americas)

**FREEDOM** (Africans in  
Africa)

**to** (trip from Africa to the  
Americas—the Middle  
Passage)

**slavery** (life in the  
Americas from the Middle  
Passage to beginning of the  
Civil War)

**to** (fight for freedom, the  
Civil War)

**Freedom?** (are we  
really free living in America  
Now!)

©WILLIE ROBERT MIDDLEBROOK



# CHARLOTTE RILEY-WEBB

STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA

Photograph courtesy of the artist



*Much of my work over the past 35 years includes memories and impressions that profoundly affected my life during the 60s. I vividly remember the tumultuous times that led to the riots, demand for equality, and legislative changes that many take for granted today.*

*My work not only speaks to the political issues, but the artistic humanitarian issues. I will explore how the times of the Freedom Rides reflected in and influenced the works of contemporary artists, musicians, and writers.*

*Because I am a figurative abstract painter, given the opportunity, I would render the full spectrum of emotions associated with the times with my signature rhythmic stroke and active color palette.*

CHARLOTTE RILEY-WEBB

Charlotte Riley-Webb holds a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art. Her extensive exhibition record includes a three-year traveling painting exhibition, *From Stories of My America*. She has illustrated six children's books and contributed to the 2010 NAACP Image Award winner *Our Children Can Soar*. She has completed three artist residencies at the Hambridge Center in Georgia as well as receiving a Pollock Krasner Foundation Award.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

## Solidarity in Song

2011 / Acrylic on canvas  
/ 72" w x 42" h

*Solidarity in Song* portrays the musical thread that held the Freedom Riders together in a cohesive bond throughout their journey. These songs, which were usually spirituals with the words changed to fit the occasion, were a powerful instrument of strength for these brave young men and women.

Throughout the piece are vignettes of some of the activities they encountered along their turbulent journey by bus, determined to desegregate the transportation system.

Through it all, the music offered support and solace for riders as well as helped relieve some of the anxiety and tension shared by all.

**DEBORAH SHEDRICK**  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA



*Art is my passion.*

*Combining realism and abstraction, I utilize the palette knife, rollers, and assorted objects to create work that is vibrant and full of color.*

*After receiving a MA degree in psychology, I began to explore my artistic skills in 1986 through workshops with prominent artists. This has developed into a career.*

*As I create, I reflect on the Master, the Author of Creativity, God. I share the spirituality from which my art is born. The art speaks of love, inner peace, strength, and joy. I have dedicated work that relates to civil rights and human rights. My proposed work for this project will be in the form of assemblage: portraying the struggles, accomplishments, and Individuals shaping the movement for equality.*

*SHEDRICK*

Deborah Shedrick has been a professional visual artist since 1986. She has a Master of Science in Psychology from Auburn University Montgomery. Her artwork is a part of public and private collections in the US and abroad.



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

They Chose To Take a Stand So You Could Choose a Seat

2011 / Mixed media sculptural assemblage / 48" w x 69 1/2" h x 25" d

The journey of the Freedom Riders that continues with you. *They Chose To Take a Stand So You Could Choose a Seat* is a documentation of their philosophy, inspiration, suffering, sacrifices, and legacy.

# KATHERINE STRAUSE

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS



Photograph courtesy of the artist

*Found photographs are the source material for my paintings. By altering and re-arranging the original compositions, a provoked subject matter emerges. At times, the active witness appears in the paintings; at other times, the active witness was the person behind the camera who took the original photograph. Through careful visual editing, I encourage the audience be a witness as well, as they interpret the finished work.*

*My images are always of women and from a woman's perspective. When I select these images, I feel as though I know about these women's lives, the joy, heartache and pain, disease and death endured. The paintings help us see ourselves and reflect on just what kind of story line have we created for ourselves—how we look, where we work, what we eat, what we love or hate. These are our own collection of things we think we are. We feel these choices speak for us in some definitive way, that they distinguish us from others, when in fact we are all creating our own fictional world full of rules and biases. We think this will keep us safe. Part documentary, part naturalistic expression, the painted compositions take on a provocative stance towards their topics, be they discarded family album photos, archived civil rights photography, or beauty pageant publicity photographs.*

**KATHERINE ANN STRAUSE**



Photograph by Alabama Historical Commission

### Scenic Route

2011 / Oil on canvas and linen, diptych / 30" w x 40" h

I chose these images from the Freedom Rides because they reveal something about the sitter or scene that I see in current society, something universal or lasting. To revisit these stories should help us understand our own identity, ignorance, and biases. Are we repeating our past mistakes? Are we ignoring how far we have come? Even with these lessons learned, are we allowing liberty and freedom for all?

## 1947 Journey of Reconciliation Riders

Louis Adams  
Dennis Banks  
Ernest Bromley  
Joseph Felmet  
George Houser  
Homer Jack  
Andrew Johnson  
Conrad Lynn  
Wallace Nelson  
James Peck  
Worth Randle  
Igal Roodenko  
Bayard Rustin  
Eugene Stanley  
William Worthy  
Nathan Wright

## 1961 Freedom Riders

Julia Aaron  
Ralph Abernathy  
Peter M. Ackerberg  
Elizabeth S. Adler  
Zev Aelony  
C. Donald Alstork  
Alexander M. Anderson  
Harold Andrews  
Thomas Madison  
Armstrong III  
Johnny Frank Ashford  
Michael James Audain  
Gilbert S. Avery III  
Byron Mark Baer  
William Barbee  
Carroll Gary Barber  
Albert Barouh  
Patricia Dale Baskerville  
Robert Earl Bass  
Abraham Bassford  
Robert M. Baum  
Margaret Winonah  
Beamer  
Larry Bell  
Marshall Bennett  
Frances Bergman  
Walter Bergman  
leora Berman  
Charles Berrard  
Harold L. Bethune  
James L. Bevel  
Albert Bigelow  
Charles Biggers  
Harry Blake  
Edward Blankenheim  
George Marion Blevins

Myron B. Bloy, Jr.  
Leo Vone Blue  
Mildred Juanita Blue  
Jerald Bobrow  
Earl C. Bohannon  
Charles Henry Booth  
Gloria Leevare-Dee  
Bouknight  
Willie Bradford  
Tommie Eldridge Brashear  
James Pleasant Breeden  
Paul Breines  
Travis O. Britt  
Edward J. Bromberg  
Arthur Brooks, Jr.  
Paul Brooks  
Elmer L. Brown  
Robert McAfee Brown  
Joan Browning  
Patricia Elaine Bryant  
Daniel E. Burkholder  
Catherine Burks  
James Burnham  
Carl Bush  
Charles Butler  
Jerome Byrd  
Herbert Callender  
James T. Carey  
Stokely Carmichael  
Julian Carswell  
Clyde Carter  
Joseph Carter  
Rita J. Carter  
Allen Cason, Jr.  
Doris Jean Castle  
Frank Caston  
Price Chatham  
Fred Douglas Clarke  
William Sloane Coffin, Jr.  
John W. P. Collier  
Lucretia Collins  
Norma F. Collins  
Ray Allen Cooper  
John Lee Copeland  
MacArthur Cotton  
Benjamin Elton Cox  
John Crocker, Jr.  
Edmond Dalbert, Jr.  
Marvin Allen Davidov  
James Keet Davis, Jr.  
Jessie James Davis  
Paul David Deitrich  
David J. Dennis  
James Emerson Dennis  
Alfonzo Denson, Jr.  
Dion Tyrone Deitrich  
Ralph Diamond  
Paul David Dietrich  
John Luther W. Dolan  
Grady H. Donald

Israel (Si) Dresner  
Albert Lee Dunn  
Marjorie Dunson  
Marilyn Irene Eisenberg  
James Walker Evans  
John Marvin Evans  
Malcolm Evans  
David B. Fankhauser  
James L. Farmer  
Robert Farrell  
Miriam (Mimi) Feingold  
Ralph Fertig  
Robert Earl Filner  
Ralph Floyd  
James Forman  
Martin Freedman  
Mary Freelon  
Judith Ann Frieze  
Winston Fuller  
John W. Goodrich  
Gager, Jr.  
Glenda Jean Gaither  
Thomas Gaither  
Donna Sage Garde  
Francis L. Geddes  
Joseph Edward Gerbac  
Samuel Givens  
Richard LeRoy Gleason  
Bertha Gober  
Lionel Goldbart  
Albert Forrest Gordon  
Quinland Reeves Gordon  
Rudolph Graham  
Miller G. Green, Jr.  
Paul S. Green  
Reginald Malcom Green  
Robert Lee Green  
Stephen John Green  
Joel Ben Greenberg  
Del Greenblatt  
Gwendolyn T. Greene  
Stephen Greenstein  
Frankie Lee Griffin  
Robert G. Griffin  
Joe Henry Griffith  
Richard P. Griswold  
Michael R. Grubbs  
Joseph Henry Gumbiner  
Blanton Hall  
Herbert Hamilton  
Mary Lucille Hamilton  
Willie Handy  
William Walter Hansen, Jr.  
William E. Harbour  
Arthur L. Harge  
Gordon Lau Harris  
Herman K. Harris  
Jesse J. Harris  
Jesse L. Harris  
Mary Magdalene Harrison

Wayne (Chris) Clyde  
Hartmire, Jr.  
John C. Harvard  
Phillip Jay Havey  
Sandra Cason (Casey)  
Hayden  
Tom Hayden  
Gannel Hayes  
Charles A. Haynie  
Robert Lawrence Heller  
Susan Hermann  
Jeanne H. Herrick  
Elizabeth Slade Hirshfeld  
Holly Hogrobrooks  
Frank George Holloway  
Andrew Horne, Jr.  
Erma Lee Horne  
Leon Daniel Horne  
Albert Roy Huddleston  
Genevieve Hughes  
Franklin W. Hunt  
Larry Fred Hunter  
John Hutchins  
Margaret Ihra  
Louise Jean Inghram  
Glenda Jackson  
Reginald Jackson  
Gwendolyn C. Jenkins  
Patricia Jenkins  
Robert L. Jenkins  
Edward B. Johnson  
Frank Johnson  
Percy Lee Johnson  
Charles Joseph Jones  
Eddie Jones  
James Garrard Jones  
James Wilson Jones  
Joseph Charles Jones  
Rev. Charles A. Jones  
Robert E. Jones  
Mary L. Jorgensen  
Russell F. Jorgensen  
Edward W. Kale  
Alan Kaufman  
Robert Paul Kaufman  
Barbara Jane Kay  
Marian Alice Kendall  
Margaret Ann Kerr  
Ellen Kleinman  
Pauline Edythe Knight  
Pat Kovner  
Karen Elizabeth Kytle  
Ronald La Bostrie  
Bernard Lafayette, Jr.  
Candida Lall  
Mark Lane  
Per Laursen  
James Morris Lawson, Jr.  
George Leake  
Joyce Lebowitz

Bernard Lee  
Eugene Lee  
Frederick Leonard  
Margaret Burr Leonard  
William Leons  
Allan Levine  
Eugene B. Levine  
Joe Lewis  
John Lewis  
Norma Libson  
Claude Albert Liggins  
Morton G. Linder  
John Lowry  
Annie Lumpkin  
Orville B. Luster  
Delores Williams Lynch  
John Maguire  
William Carl Mahoney  
Bliss Anne Malone  
Saul Bernard Manfield  
Herbert S. Mann  
Eddora Mae Manning  
Robert Magnus Martinson  
Robert William Mason  
Sheree Massaquoi  
Norma Matzkin  
Salynn McCollum  
Paul Duncan McConnell  
Jimmy McDonald  
Joseph John Michael  
McDonald  
James Thomas  
McDonough  
Delores McGinnie  
Marie B. McGinnie  
Petty McKinney  
Lester G. McKinnie  
Landy McNair, Jr.  
Steven McNichols  
Robert Allen Miller  
Rudolph Mitaritonna  
William B. Mitchell, Jr.  
John H. Moody, Jr.  
Marian Moody  
Ivor (Jerry) Moore  
John Burnett Morris  
David Kerr Morton  
Edward Morton  
Ruth Esther Moskowitz  
Mae Frances Moultrie  
Frederick Dean Moutean  
Grant Harland Muse, Jr.  
Charles David Myers  
Samuel Timothy Nash  
Gordon Negen  
Frank Arthur Nelson  
Sandra Marie Nixon  
Gaylord Noyce  
Claire O'Connor  
James O'Connor

Robert Lewis Owens  
Hilmar Ehrenfried Pabel  
Alpha Zara Palmer  
Ernest (Rip) Patton, Jr.  
Max Gregory Pavesic  
James Peck  
Thomas Peete  
Joseph Perkins  
Philip Jonathan Perkins  
Teri Susan Perlman  
Charles Person  
Jean Estil Kidwell Pestana  
Lestra Alene Peterson  
Alphonso Kelly Petway  
Kredelle Petway  
Matthew Petway  
West Davis Phillips  
Robert Laughlin Pierson  
Walter Plaut  
Joan Frances Pleune  
Katherine A. Pleune  
Philip M. Posner  
Michael Harry Powell  
Joseph Marion Pratt  
Catherine Jo Prenskey  
Elnora R. Price  
Michael Leon Pritchard  
Henry Proctor  
Beverly Radcliffe  
John Curtis Raines  
Roena Rand  
Frances B. Randall  
Laura Randall  
Raymond B. Randolph, Jr.  
George Raymond  
Cordell Hull Reagon  
Meryle Joy Reagon  
Carolyn Yvonne Reed  
Claude Reese  
Janet Reinutz  
Isaac (Ike) Reynolds, Jr.  
Leon N. Rice  
David Lering Richards  
Janice Louise Rogers  
John Copeland Rogers  
Ralph Robert Rogers  
Henry Rosell  
Marcia Arlene Rosenbaum  
Rose Schorr Rosenberg  
Jane Ellen Rosett  
Joseph Lee Ross  
Sally Jane Rowley  
Ralph Lord Roy  
Heath Cliff Rush  
Leon Russ, Jr.  
Steven Sanfield  
Henry Schwarzschild  
Judith Norene Scroggins  
Charles G. Sellers, Jr.  
Sidney Shanken

Charles Sherrad  
Rick Stanley Sheviakov  
Kenneth Martin Shilman  
Fred Shuttlesworth  
Jorgia B. Yvonne Siegel  
Carol Ruth Silver  
Obadiah Lee Simms  
Etta Simpson  
Geoffrey Sedgewick  
Simpson  
Pauline K. Sims  
Felix Jacques Singer  
Helen Irene Singleton  
Robert Singleton  
Morton Bruce Slater  
Doratha Smith  
George B. Smith  
Jerome H. Smith  
Leon Felton Smith, Jr.  
Leslie Smith  
Mary J. Smith  
Perry A. Smith  
Ruby Doris Smith  
Shirley B. Smith  
Woolcott Smith  
Peter Sterling  
Daniel N. Stern  
Herman (Chaim) S. Stern  
Daniel Stevens  
Joseph McClendon  
Stevenson  
Richard C. Steward  
Robert J. Stone  
Peter Harry Stoner  
Terry John Sullivan  
Percy Sutton  
Willard Hooker Swanoe  
David E. Swift  
Lenora Taiti  
Patricia Tate  
John Charles Taylor, Jr.  
Lever H. Taylor  
Robert Page Taylor  
Wayne Leslie Taylor  
Buren Lewis Teale  
Cecil A. Thomas  
Clarence Lloyd Thomas  
Henry J. (Hank) Thomas  
Willie James Thomas  
Alice Thompson  
Daniel Ray Thompson  
Jean Catherine Thompson  
Shirley Thompson  
Richard Thorne  
Leotis Thornton  
Lonnie Thurman  
Widjonaiko  
Tjokroadisunatto  
Evelyn Toney  
Claire Drew Toombs

Sam Joe Townsend  
Jan Leighton Triggs  
Lawrence Triss, Jr.  
Joan Harris Trumpauer  
Eugene John Uphoff  
Thomas Valentine  
Thomas Van Roland  
Earl Vance, Jr.  
Oneal Vance  
Cordy T. (C. T.) Vivian  
Norma Wagner  
James Robert Wahlstrom  
Matthew Walker, Jr.  
Theresa Edwards Walker  
Wyatt Tee Walker  
McRaven (Mack) Warner  
James Edward Warren  
John R. Washington  
Leo Vernon Washington  
Ralph Edward Washington  
Hezekiah Watkins  
Joe Watts, Jr.  
Tommie Watts, Jr.  
Ernest Newell Weber  
Alexander Weiss  
Mack Charles Wells  
William Andrew Wendt  
Robert Wesby  
Dupree White  
Edward White  
Lula Mae White  
Melvin Lorenzo White  
Susan Wilbur  
Douglas Albert Williams  
Ralph Alan Williams  
Eddie Wilson  
Frances L. Wilson  
Helen Dorothy Wilson  
Benny Winston  
Jack Mikhail Wolfson  
Lowell A. Woods, Jr.  
Vernon P. Woodward  
Leslie Word  
Tanya Wren  
Clarence M. Wright  
LeRoy Glenn Wright  
Elizabeth Porter Wyckoff  
Merrill Orne Young  
Paul Edward Young  
Robert Zellner  
Ellen Lee Ziskind  
Lewis Richard Zuchman  
James Zwerg  
Gordon Casey and Diane Nash were principle coordinators of the 1961 Freedom Rides



