

## EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

### NADA NY 2023 | Dindga McCannon + Otto Neals | Two-Person Booth

Early members of WEUSI, Harlem-based Black art collective, they first started worked at The Printmaking Workshop in the 1970s. Recently, they were invited as Blackburn Legacy Fellows to make new prints with Master Printers Jazmine Catasús, Justin Sanz and John Andrews.

Born in New York City and raised in Harlem and the Bronx, **Dindga McCannon** came of age as an artist and young mother during the rise of feminist art in New York City and the civil rights movement across the nation. Dindga began her career studying under Harlem Renaissance artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Charles Alston, Richard Mayhew, and Al Loving at the Art Students League of New York and the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. She went on to become a pillar of the influential African-American art collective Weusi, and later a co-founder of Where We At Black Women Artists, a noteworthy collective affiliated with the Black Arts Movement. Throughout Dindga's career, she created space for her own artistic exploration while building a support network for generations of Black artists to follow.

McCannon's use of oil painting, printmaking, and sewing made her an early influencer of textile assemblage, found-object quilting, and wearable art, all of which expand upon the legacy of African and African-American culture and historical memory, and are artforms that have gained new energy across today's arts and cultural landscape. McCannon's implementation of non-traditional materials, including personal objects, photographs, and ephemera draw the viewer into her world as she imbues her canvases and tapestries with the sounds, feelings, and vibrancy of her community and ancestors. Her works often focus on the history and stories of women — iconic public figures, unknown heroines, family, and friends who shape her vibrant universe.

McCannon's work is in the public collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and Michigan State University, among others. Her work has been included in recent exhibitions, including *We Wanted A Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-1985* organized by the Brooklyn Museum; and *Black Power* at the National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, Tennessee.

She is represented by Fridman Gallery, New York, NY.

**Otto Neals** was born in Lake City, South Carolina in 1930 to Gus and Della Neals. Before he was five years old, his family left the South and settled in Brooklyn, New York, where he still lives. All of Mr. Neals' schooling was in Brooklyn, where he studied commercial art at George Westinghouse Vocational High School.

Mr. Neals describes himself as a self-taught artist although he studied briefly at the Brooklyn Museum Art School with Isaac Soyer and printmaking at the Bob Blackburn Printmaking Workshop with Krishna Reddy, Mohammed Khalil and Roberto DeLomanica. He was introduced to stone carving by sculptor Vivian Schuyler Key, who presented him with his first set of stone carving tools. The Prospect Park Alliance and Ezra Jack Keats Foundation commissioned him in 1995 to create a bronze sculpture entitled "Peter and Willie", based on the works of author and illustrator Keats. For this work, which is located in the "Imagination Playground" in Prospect Park, Mr. Neals was presented with the New York City Arts Commission's "Award for Excellence in Design".

Other commissions include 10 bronze plaques for the "Harlem Walk of Fame," a bronze sculpture for the Brooklyn Children's Center, a 20-foot mural for Kings County Hospital and recently a bronze portrait of the late Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton for the City University of New York.

Besides traveling to Africa several times, Mr. Neals has made more than a dozen trips to St. Helena Island, South Carolina, for the Heritage Festival. He has been featured in several publications including *Black Artists of the New Generation* by Elton Fax, *The New York Times* and *Ebony Magazine*.

Neals' art work has been exhibited at the Columbia Museum of Art, the Huntsville Museum of Art, The Ghana National Museum, The Library of Congress, The Smithsonian Institution, and the collections of Congressman John Lewis, jazz musician Randy Weston, actor/singer Harry Belafonte and Oprah Winfrey.

About his art, Neals said, "My talent as an artist comes directly from my ancestors. I am merely a receiver, an instrument for receiving some of the energies that permeate our entire universe and I give thanks for having been chosen to absorb those artistic forces."