

DREAMtime

D R E A M @ W I T

Current

Aljira's summer exhibition is *Dancing in the Dark, Part II*, July 17–August 27. (*Part I* was on exhibit May 22–July 2) Curated by artist/critic Calvin Reid, *Dancing in the Dark, Parts I and II* include the work of the thirty-five artists who participated in the fall and spring sessions of *Emerge 2002*. The exhibiting artists include: (*Part I*) Gema Alava-Crisostomo, Patty Cateura, Nicole Agbay Cherubini, Mike Childs, James Costanzo, Jennifer Crupi, Michael Eade, Elise Engler, Nancy Goldenberg, Timothy Hutchings, Josh Jordan, Megan Maloy, Robert Marbury, Annie Murdock, Heidi Pollard, Elisa Pritzker, Kit Sailer, Robert Walden, (*Part II*) Michael Bramwell, Jeongtae Chae,

Francks Deceus, Ricardo Francis, James Harbison, Ketta Ioannidou, Marlene Lewis, Norma Markley, Vivian Massry, Kim Mayhorn, Jim Nolan, Jodie Olson, Kristen Palazzo, Jinnie Seo, Hyungsub Shin, Suzanne Walters, and Angela Wyman. A color catalog of *Dancing in the Dark* will be available for purchase.

...this exhibition offers a lively survey of a bunch of artists you're going to hear more about, if you haven't heard about them already. And on top of all that we're just plain lucky to be able to present the work in Aljira's brand new space. All that time sitting in the dark, looking at slides has finally paid off.

Calvin Reid



Opening reception for *Dancing in the Dark, Part I*. Photo: Bambang Widodo



Welcome to Aljira

“In today’s economy creativity is pervasive and ongoing: We constantly revise and enhance every product, process and activity imaginable, and fit them together in new ways. Moreover, technological and economic creativity are nurtured by and interact with artistic and cultural creativity.”

—Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*

Welcome to Aljira. We want you to meet our artists and the people of the creative class that come to Aljira. We invite you to join the open dialogue across lines of race, ethnicity, gender, class and age, that Aljira has begun.

Aljira artists, in addition to representing a diverse range of backgrounds, also represent artistic excellence. They are innovators, activists and leading citizens in communities where they live and work. They are founders of community-based organizations, which, through community action, educational outreach and acts of art, privilege those who are culturally underserved.

So, beyond its function of fostering an ethos of invention, Aljira also sees itself as a catalyst for societal change through creative intervention. Our arrival at 591 Broad Street builds on the value already being created by other cultural and educational institutions in the area. Indeed, given the plans of Cogswell Realty Group to build out the historic Hahne’s Building next door within the next year, Aljira’s move anticipates the needs of the some 400 or more expected residents at that address and gives them yet another good reason to

choose the downtown arts district as a place where they would want to work and live.

Over 350 people attended Aljira’s opening reception this past January. It was 15 degrees outside. I wonder, what were they thinking?

Victor L. Davson

Executive Director

Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art



Can't Start a Fire Without a Spark

Calvin Reid’s title for the *Emerge* 2002 exhibitions, *Dancing in the Dark*, puts me in mind of Bruce Springsteen’s passionate rock classic of the same title. Who could forget the line, “You can’t start a fire without a spark,”—a line that is particularly applicable to the *Emerge* program. Our goal is to spark fires. And we’ll supply the flint.

When Victor Davson phoned me five years ago (at the suggestion of Bronx Museum’s AIM program director Jackie Battenfield) to ask if I would consider

becoming the program director for *Emerge*, I welcomed the opportunity. It had been over five years since I worked

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in the educational field and I missed the contact, the dialogue and the challenge of teaching. More than that, *Emerge* was a chance to offer my experience—the dumb moves, the right moves, the “if I could do it over” moves—to the next generation. As a young artist, I had no mentors that spoke about the business side of art. I was ejected into the art world without a clue about anything—except the making.

The *Emerge* program works like this: artists from the New Jersey and New York metropolitan area with at least five years of professional experience fill out an application for the program; the application must include representative slides, a brief description of recent work, and a one-page resume; these materials are screened by me and the guest curator; forty finalists are chosen to be interviewed; eighteen participants are chosen for the program; the participants attend twelve seminars on the business of art conducted by prominent arts professionals; the participants bond, exchange studio visits, critique one another’s materials, develop a dialogue, form a network (that eventually extends to participants from other sessions); an exhibition is curated; a catalog is published; the network of *Emerge* artists continues to grow.

How does one evaluate the success of the *Emerge* program, I am often asked. It is rather simple, I reply. I take into account every exhibition announcement I receive, every grant award, publication or residency that includes an *Emerge* artist. Plus, there are letters and phone calls reporting sales to museums and

Participants Emerge

(top) Gema Alava-Crisostomo (Emerge 2002) with *Land of No One* at the opening of her solo exhibition at Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY.
(bottom) Shigeno Ichimura (Emerge 2000) with *Moment Series*, created as a result of a 2002 New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship in painting, and installed at Tower 49, New York, NY.



(top) Jinnie Seo (Emerge 2002) with *Blue Borders* at the opening of *Artists to Artists*, Ace Gallery, New York, NY.
(bottom) Nicole Cherubini (Emerge 2002) in her studio with *G-Pots with Flowers* at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME.



(top) Julie McConnell (Emerge 2001) at the opening of her solo exhibition, *Shooting Heads*, at Art Resources Transfer, New York, NY.
(bottom) Michael Eade (Emerge 2002) in front of his paintings at the opening of *Hybrids* at Wave Hill, Bronx, NY.



Terry Boddie (Emerge 2000) with his students' prints at Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY.



Charley Friedman (Emerge 2003) and Sheila Ross (Emerge 2001) at the opening of Charley's *White Room* exhibition at White Columns, New York, NY.



Francks Deceus (Emerge 2002) with friends at the opening of his exhibition, *Give and Take*, UFA Gallery, New York, NY. Photo: T. Jenning.



(top) Ellen Harvey (Emerge 2003) in her studio preparing for her solo exhibition, *A Whitney* for the Whitney at Altria, which opened in January of 2003 at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York, NY.
(bottom) Elizabeth Riley (Emerge 2001) with *Sculpture with Note Exchange*, created during her residency with Dave Hickey at Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Symrna Beach, FL.



(top) Michael Bramwell (Emerge 2002) returned to Aljira to lead an Emerge 2003 session, *The Real Deal—An Artist Discusses Galleries, Alternative Spaces, Museums, Public Art Projects, and Grants*, Newark, NJ. Photo: Greg Leshé.



(bottom) Hyungsub Shin (Emerge 2002) installing *Centipede* at the Seoul Animation Center, Seoul, Korea.

collectors, promising studio visits, and teaching fellowships. There are nearly too many announcements for me to keep an accurate count. But I can say, without exaggeration, that there is an *Emerge* artist in a public forum every week of the year somewhere in this wide, wild and often wonderful world. It is an extraordinary record of achievement—a firestorm of success.

Above are recent visual highlights from thirteen of the eighty-nine artists who have participated in the *Emerge* program.

Congratulate them, celebrate them, and spark some fires of your own.



Judith Page
Program Director
Emerge

Aljira Receives Major Grants for FY 2003

The trustees and staff of Aljira are grateful for the following support:

\$75,000 to \$40,000

JPMorgan Chase Foundation
New Jersey State Council on the Arts
Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

\$25,000 to \$20,000

The Prudential Foundation
Johnson & Johnson

\$16,000 to \$10,000

New Jersey State Cultural Trust
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TAKING IT TO THE STREET

The Campaign for Contemporary Art at Aljira

Aljira has "taken it to the street." Since opening at 591 Broad Street early this year, Aljira has splendidly reestablished itself as the premiere space for contemporary art in Newark. In its new location, Aljira can, not immodestly, assert that the development of an Arts District downtown is becoming a reality, for it makes visible the cultural path linking NJPAC, Aljira, and the Newark Museum. More importantly, the three strong exhibitions it has mounted announce a distinctive aesthetic vision and unique contribution to the appreciation and understanding of art in this city.

Nonetheless, each successful exhibition only underscores the work that remains to be done. Many have praised the beauty of Aljira's space, but this is only the beginning of our planned expansion. The entire back half of the ground floor at 591 Broad awaits renovation so that we can build two more exhibition spaces—including a specially-designed new media gallery. And with these new galleries, we can expand significantly our public and educational programming.

So while we congratulate ourselves for having opened our doors directly "on the

street" of downtown Newark, and thank all of you who have helped in this success, we ask again for your additional support—for financial contributions and pledges of sustained support—for our Capital Campaign. Please email me at crr@andromeda.rutgers.edu or call me at (973) 353-5279, ext 501 to find out how you can help Aljira continue to grow.

Charles Russell, *Chair*
Capital Campaign Cabinet

TAKING IT TO THE STREET

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ALJIRA

A Center for Contemporary Art

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Upcoming

Frank Bowling

September 18–December 10, 2003

Bowling, a Guyanese artist with studios in Brooklyn and London, will exhibit paintings which, according to exhibition curator Dorothy Desir, are evidence of “the Kreyolization process that [shaped] the aesthetic sensibilities of the violently mixed indigenous, African and European cultures born of the earliest days of slavery and imperialism in America.”

Judy Brodsky

January 8–March 31, 2004

Known as the founding director of Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper, Brodsky is also a distinguished artist. Rosemary Miles, a specialist in printmaking at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is the curator of a major exhibition of Brodsky’s art which Miles characterizes as “...a rare and special reflection of [Brodsky’s] particular concerns and cultural identity...” as a person of Jewish heritage, a woman and a leader in the arts.

Opening reception for *Dancing in the Dark, Part I*, May 22–July 2.
Photo: Bambang Widodo



Recent



Estella Lackey's exhibition, *The Universe Within*, March 27–May 7. Photos: Bambang Widodo



Opening reception for *Moved by Awe*, January 16–March 12. Photos: Bambang Widodo

In the last two issues of *Dreamtime*, Aljira board chairman, William Jones, described his experience as an art collector in search of contemporary works in Nairobi. This is the final installment of his essay.

Looking, Listening & Collecting:

Art Notes from Nairobi

By William Jones

Kimathi and Kamicha disparaged the style and the gallery's role in entrenching, to their minds, a virulent tourist art. I recognize that such commentary is close to the center of the larger debate about what is appropriate image making in Africa at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There is wisdom, however, in stepping out of that discussion, aware of the wise reminder that much of the late nineteenth century genre painting in France could properly be labeled "tourist art."

In fact, much of the work of the Ngecha painters is visually arresting. Meek Gichugu, for instance, paints grandly surrealistic figures in profile. Likewise, village scenes that are the subject of an artist like Shine Kamauare are often of equal delight and should not be trivialized as gestures toward a nostalgic past that never existed. On the contrary, in remarkable ways, they record a current reality that is apparent to anyone who spends time in rural communities where daily life asserts itself in vibrant contrast to what can be experienced in Nairobi and up-country towns like Nakuru, Eldoret, and Kitale.

What these young men were interested in was a counter-exploitation narrative. The Kuona Trust, they reported, operated differently from Standard Street galleries. With funding principally from the Ford Foundation, the Dutch Embassy, and the Commercial Bank of Africa, artists participate in workshops conducted by an annual roster of artists from Africa and elsewhere.

Teresa Musoka, a painter from Uganda, led a workshop. Willard Bopple from Zimbabwe and Takugi Asana from Japan, both sculptors, worked with Kuona members. The Makonde sculptor, Danstani Nyendi, explored that carving tradition with sculptors who work in wood. Other workshop leaders have come from the United States, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Artists at the Trust

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also find exposure at embassies, hotels, galleries away from Standard Street, and in cultural centers run by the Italians, Japanese, Dutch, British, and the French. Some artists earn considerably from their work. Not one artist needed to contribute a single page to the horror stories of exploitation that spring from experiences with Standard Street galleries.

Everyone at the Trust knew of the artist with an international reputation who became aware of the prices of his work on Standard Street only when a collector visited his studio and registered surprise at the price that the artist was willing to sell his work for. The rage that the artist took to the Standard Street gallery does not seem to plague these young artists. Their work is the source of satisfaction, a means of personal fulfillment, and, for some, the source of at least a modicum of financial security.

It is remarkable that the government, in donating space for the Trust, is involved in their good fortune, if only indirectly. It makes sense to look for work to collect in a place like this. I bought two pieces and promised myself a return visit.

A complete copy of this essay may be obtained by contacting Matt Brown at mbrown@aljira.org or 973-622-1600.



Funding for Aljira has been made possible, in part, by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (administered by the City of Newark); Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; The JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; Johnson & Johnson; Prudential Foundation; NJ Commerce and Economic Growth Commission; membership and individual contributions.

Special thanks to the New Newark Foundation; Victoria Foundation; Edison Properties LLC; Newark Downtown District; Lowenstein Sandler PC; and Clarsen Investment Research.

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