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- EST. 1994 -



Activity: Unscramble the words of describe Purvis and his artworks below.

collage expressionist
urban vernacular
storytelling African

1. B R U N A _____
2. A N E R C L A R U V _____
3. E A L L O C G _____
4. I O N S S T S I E E P X R _____
5. S G N I E L L O T R Y T _____
6. F A A N R I C _____

Try This at Home!

Purvis Young used old office folders and envelopes that he cut and stapled to a board and then painted to create a collage that meant something to him. With your parent's permission, explore around your home and collect discarded objects. Create your own collage with different materials on paper or cardboard that say something important to you!



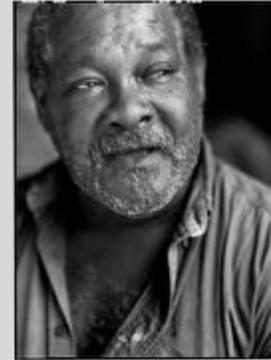
Purvis Young

Vernacular Artist



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Written & Designed by Zhiju Liu



Purvis Young was born on February 4th 1943 in Miami, Florida. He lived most of his life in the Overtown neighborhood of Miami. At a young age, he was introduced to drawing by his uncle but later lost interest. Young never attended high school as he dropped out after his ninth grade. Being a self-taught American artist, Young blended collage and painting styles and used objects found on the street to describe his experiences in life.

Young was known for his distinctive expressionist vision of urban life based upon the experience of African Americans in the South. Young used wooden scraps to frame his work. His paintings or drawings were created from found materials as diverse as cardboard, discarded doors, telephone bills, orange crates, manila folders, and printed book pages. Most of his work depicted cacophonous, urgent representations of urban strife and what he saw around him. His work drew a large following of tourists who would visit the Overtown alley he used to display his art to purchase paintings.

Purvis Young painted images of trucks, trains and railroad tracks depicting the possibility of escape and methods of connection between the inner city and the outer world. It is undeniable that there is a storytelling aspect in his work that resonates with the plight of the underprivileged, consequences of racism, daily violence and pervasive hypocrisy in the world.



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More About Purvis Young...

In 2007, Purvis Young, then living in a Miami nursing home, was confined to a wheelchair after a kidney transplant that due to his diabetes. He also had disputes with his art agent and family, and eventually, Young was deemed unfit to tend to his own affairs. At the time of his death in 2010, he was virtually penniless despite the recognition and popularity of his art. A fundraiser for his funeral and burial was lead by Jane Fonda and Geraldo Rivera who praised his work.

Young's artwork has been widely exhibited in museums and galleries around the globe including: the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, the Miami Art Museum, and Bass Museum of Art in Miami, Florida, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia.

Links:

To learn more about Purvis Young, visit his official website:
<http://www.purvisyoung.com/>

Glossary

vernacular artists - artists that are untrained, often living in isolated settings, who create art in response to their environment and experiences

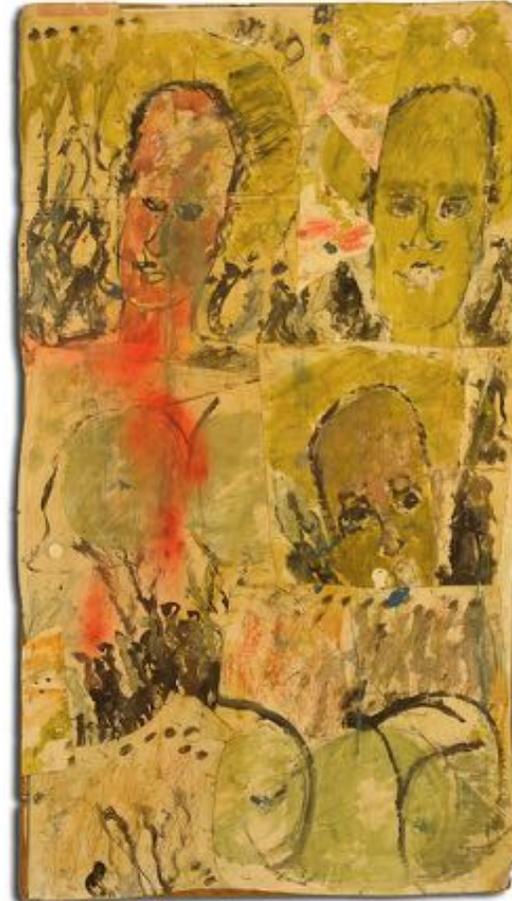
collage - a type of artwork that is made by attaching cut pieces of paper to a flat surface

expressionist - an artist who is an adherent of expressionism

expressionism - a style of painting, music or drama in which the artist or writer seeks to express emotional experience rather than impressions of the external world

painting - color mixed with water or other substances that is typically applied to a surface with a brush; specific mediums include watercolor, acrylic, and oil

Untitled



Purvis Young created this collage using several old office file folders and envelopes that he cut and stapled to a board and then painted. Three large faces and various smaller figures float throughout the composition. Young applied a thick varnish to the surface of the collage that is not uniform and adds additional texture to the work.

Purvis Young, untitled, n.d., collage, paint on wood, 24 x 43.5 inches, Gadsden Arts Center & Museum Permanent Collection, 2009.1.9

Questions for Discussion

Artists often tell stories through art and so can you! Find Purvis Young's artwork in this exhibition and use these questions to lead a discussion with your group.

1. What is the story about?
2. What is happening in the story?
3. What emotion do you feel the artwork expresses and how does it make you feel?