

Family Gallery Guide

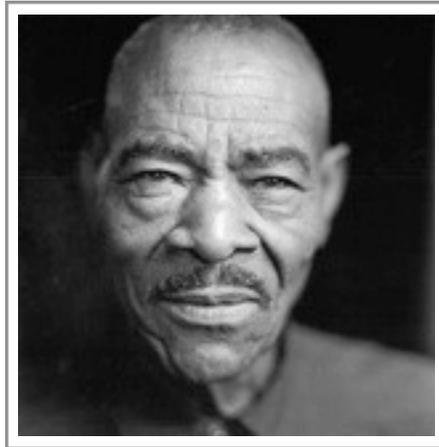
Selections from the Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection: Suzanna Winton and Thornton Dial, Sr.

Thornton Dial, Sr., born 1928

Thornton Dial, Sr. (right) is a vernacular artist from Emelle, Alabama. He grew up in poverty, which led him and his siblings to create toys from the discarded objects around them. Dial had little formal schooling, yet his works reveal his unlimited creative imagination.

Dial worked at a railroad car factory until it closed, and then began working on his art full time. Dial says he learned about drawing from his job at the factory, studying designs for the steel machines. In 1987, a local art collector, Bill Arnett, noticed Dial's work, and helped bring his work to public attention.

Joanne Cubbs, a curator at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, who recently mounted the largest exhibition of Dial's artwork to date says, "If anybody else had created a major opus of this scope, he or she would be recognized as a major force in the art world. Instead Dial struggles at the margins." In 2007, Dial was featured in a documentary (visit our Children's Learning Area to see the film) and exhibitions of his work can now be seen in major art museums around the United States including the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.



GAC Permanent Collection

These watercolor artworks in the Permanent Collection have been donated by collectors and are now owned by the Gadsden Arts Center. They require special protection to preserve them for generations of people to appreciate and enjoy. Watercolor is particularly sensitive to light. Over time light can damage both the paper and the dyes within the watercolor paint. Because light damage cannot be reversed, the Gadsden Arts Center plans to protect these special works by only exhibiting them occasionally.

Suzanna Winton

Suzanna Winton (left) has been studying and painting faces since 1994. Her work captures the personality and history of each of her subjects. She specializes in watercolor and practices her art daily. She has also received more than 30 awards throughout her painting career and now lives in Thomasville, GA.

A core component of her style is the way she captures the expression and skin tones of each subject. She says of her work, "it's important that you scrutinize your subject's complexion, including the true tones, expression, and texture of human skin."



Suzanna Winton
The Haitian Hat Man, 2000

The Haitian Hat Man demonstrates Winton's technical skill as a portrait artist, but Winton also shows the soul and history of the man in the painting. Winton often works from photographs, but does not simply transfer from one medium to another; there must be something more for the artist to transfer. Winton ensures that her subjects reflect not only their likeness, but their soul, because as she says, "the worst thing an artist can do is try to capture a subject with a blank expression because the image is technically interesting." Notice how the hazy background around the man sharpens the viewer's focus on the subject himself.



Thornton Dial, Sr.
Love Picture (As Life Go On), 1990s

In this image a woman holds a bird beneath a tiger and swirling foliage. Tigers and birds often appear as symbols in Dial's works. Dial has said that the tiger represents man's "struggle." A large portion of Thornton Dial's artworks are large-scale assemblages, however his paintings emerged after an art critic once wrote that Dial made women look ugly. He then began depicting women frequently, and often in communication with emblems of nature: birds, nets, tigers, and fish. Dial's artworks touch on themes of racial inequality, struggles in a modern world, and relationships between men and women; these themes resonate with audiences around the world. When asked why he makes art in the first place, he answers, "I make it for people to love." What other symbols do you see in Dial's art?



Interested in learning more about our Permanent Collection? Visit <http://www.gadsdenarts.org/gacnew/view/PermanentCollectionArtists.aspx>

Glossary

- medium** - the material, tools, and skills used to create an artwork (watercolor, acrylic, etc)
vernacular art - art by untrained artists in response to their immediate environment and experiences
portrait - a likeness of a person
symbolism - meaning attributed to natural objects
Haiti - a country located in the Caribbean, which shares the Hispaniola island with the Dominican Republic
assemblage - a three-dimensional work of art made with found materials