

# New Book Reveals Newfound Details about Personal and Professional Lifestyle of African American Sculptor Selma H. Burke

*Fresh Facts about Personal Relationships of Prolific Artist Selma H. Burke*

MOORESVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES,  
March 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ --  
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New Book Reveals Untold Story of  
Selma Hortense Burke: A Pioneering  
African American Artist

[Mooresville, NC/March 26, 2024] – Selma Hortense Burke, a renowned African American artist whose talent transcended boundaries, is the focus of a groundbreaking new book that sheds light on her extraordinary life and career. Written by L. Melissa Smith, “Graven Images: An In-Depth Chronicle of the Life of Prolific Artist Selma Hortense Burke” offers a compelling narrative that delves into Burke’s journey, revealing previously undisclosed aspects of her personal and professional life.



"Graven Images" author L. Melissa Smith, displays copies of her book about the life of prolific artist and sculptor Selma H. Burke

Born in the small Southern town of Mooresville, North Carolina, Burke defied societal norms and racial barriers to become a prolific artist of her time. While her artistic contributions are widely recognized, the book unveils intriguing details about her personal life, including her marriages and divorces, which have remained largely unknown until now.

Burke’s belief that her bas relief portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was plagiarized to create the iconic Roosevelt Dime is a central theme explored in the book. Despite her relentless pursuit of recognition for her work, she faced numerous challenges, including the alleged appropriation of her art by U.S. Mint Chief Engraver John Sinnock.

One of the most astonishing revelations in “Graven Images” is the discovery of Burke’s previously undisclosed marriage to a man who remained unnamed until now. And, contrary to her claim of widowhood in 1955, a “dead” husband was found to be alive until 1966, residing in another country with a new wife. The book also addresses longstanding speculation regarding Burke’s marriage to Harlem Renaissance pioneer Claude McKay in 1935. These revelations add a new layer of complexity to Burke’s personal history, and the intricacies of her relationships.

“Graven Images” offers a comprehensive exploration of the life of Selma Hortense Burke, presenting a nuanced portrait of an artist who defied conventions, and left an indelible mark on the art world. “Graven Images” provides readers with a deeper understanding of Burke’s legacy, and her enduring contributions to American art history.

The print and eBook versions of Graven Images: An In-Depth Chronicle of the Life of Prolific Artist Selma Hortense Burke” by L. Melissa Smith will be available on Amazon.com.

For interviews with the author or further information about “Graven Images: An In-Depth Chronicle of the Life of Prolific Artist Selma Hortense Burke,” please contact L. Melissa Smith at [selmaburkebook@gmail.com](mailto:selmaburkebook@gmail.com).

#### About the Author:

L. Melissa Smith, a native of Selma Burke’s hometown of Mooresville, North Carolina, is a journalist and librarian, and was a student of Geneva Burke Miller, a sister of Selma Burke. Smith’s curiosity about Mooresville’s most famous citizen led her to delve into the life of Burke, resulting in this groundbreaking book.

Book Title: “Graven Images: An In-Depth Chronicle of the Life of Prolific Artist Selma Hortense Burke”

Author: L. Melissa Smith

ISBN: 979-8-8803-2069-1

Available: Amazon.com or [BUY](https://www.selmaburkebook.com) via PayPal on SelmaBurkeBook.com

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