

STUDIO SALE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTIST VINCENT SMITH

May 27th at 12pm EST.

LARCHMONT, NY, UNITED STATES, May 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Vincent D. Smith (1929 - 2003) is distinctive for his adept utilization of mixed media, striking colors, and references to the rich visual culture of the African continent. Entering the world of the fine arts during a period of dramatic transition, Smith dedicated himself to bringing light to the black experience through his humanizing compositions.

Smith's artistic career began in the early 1950's with his studies at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. While his work initially focused on scenes of urban and rural African American life, he quickly became more overtly political upon witnessing resistance to desegregation in the South firsthand during the 60's. The artist drew from a diverse array of references, ranging from Cezanne and the German Expressionists, to his mentors Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden. These influences coalesce in his contemplative, yet dynamic vignettes of the African American experience, filling in the representational gap he had detected when he first began studying art history.

The faces of his subjects draw heavily from the physiognomies of Africa's masks and sculptures,



Lot 118: The Philosopher



Lot 169: Thought of Resistance

reflecting his long-standing admiration for their visual culture. Incorporated into much of his work is the collage technique that the artist first began implementing in the 60's. During the 70's, Smith's work was still mostly dedicated to representations of the city and rural life, but within this decade, he would also travel extensively to Africa, resulting in a series of works based on his trips.

As a pioneer within the black figurative art movement, Vincent D. Smith found himself at a crossroads. Speaking on his early years spent within cultural institutions, Smith mentioned, "I didn't see anything reflecting the black experience or black contribution[s] to American culture" (V.D. Smith, quoted in, Patton, S.F., African-American Art (Oxford History of Art), 1998, p. 195). Despite the social inequalities that he faced while establishing himself, he found successful gallery representation, later going on to show alongside renowned contemporaries including Alma Thomas and Barkley Hendricks. His expressive abstraction effectively unified numerous movements, offering a novel perspective of American life while capturing both the highs and lows of the black experience.

Ronan Clarke, owner of Clarke Auction Gallery, is honored to represent the estate of Vincent D. Smith. Since our founding in 1998, Clarke Auction has always offered African American art, and we are excited to continue this tradition with this important studio sale. The auction will offer fine art at all price points and cover a wide range of mediums. Everything from etchings to oil paintings can be found within the auction, which contains 179 lots of portraits and abstract works. Auction is Tuesday, May 27th at 12pm EST. View [catalog](#) at ClarkeNY.com.

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