



African-American Film Culture Profiled on Quilts for Exhibition

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Sun Smith-Foret's 'Art About Film' on Display Through Feb. 14

Godfrey, Ill. – Local artist Sun Smith-Foret's "Art About Film" African-American-themed exhibition opens this weekend in the Trimpe Advanced Technology Center, to run through Valentine's Day in conjunction with Black History Month at Lewis and Clark.

This mixed media textile exhibit focuses on African-American films, actors and directors – from Billie Holliday and Tupac Shakur to Malcolm X and Spike Lee.

"There are many ways for artists to frame interpretations of African-American or interracial experiences. Each piece in this ongoing series signifies my long-term commitments to both my psychotherapeutic and art-making practices, cross cultural research and study, and personal and professional relationships with African Americans and other people of color," said Smith-Foret of Elsay.

In 2007, she participated in a panel at the Southwest Popular Culture Conference in Albuquerque, NM, where a colleague asked why, since she uses African-American improvisational quilting techniques, she didn't have more pieces about African American actors and movies.

"I took the observation to heart, since there were a number of biopics about prominent African Americans and many African-American actors I admired. Greater focus on African-American themes just felt right," Smith-Foret said. "In the late 20th century, filmmaking process had finally become accessible as a vehicle of expression for talented people of color: artists, writers, actors, directors, technicians, and an audience that could

see itself mirrored on a big screen.”

Jim Price, professor of Art History and Culture at Lewis and Clark Community College, (left) works with Chris Green, of maintenance, installing the upcoming Sun Smith-Foret exhibit in the college's Advanced Technology Center on the Godfrey campus. The exhibit opens Jan. 10 and continues until Feb. 14.

She immediately started working on PAM GRIER, a piece based on the iconic blaxploitation film actress, followed by a piece on Gordon Park's SHAFT and a piece called ALI, based on Michael Mann's film on heavy weight boxing champion Muhammad Ali starring Will Smith, she said.

Other pieces featured in the exhibit include: THE BLUES: FEEL LIKE GOING HOME, 2006 (June 2010), based on a series by Martin Scorsese for HBO on the history and development as the blues as an American art form; LADY SINGS THE BLUES, 2008, based on a 1972 Billie Holliday biopic directed by Sidney Furie; STRANGE FRUIT, 2009, based on Holliday's 1939 song by the same name; HEADING SOUTH (VERS LE SUD), 2010, based on the film “Vers la Sud” directed by Laurent Cantet in 2005; OPRAH WINFREY, 2008; RAY, 2010, based on the biopic of the same name about Ray Charles and his music; SHAFT/ISAAC HAYES, 2007, a tribute to multiple films and Hayes' unforgettable score; BIGGIE AND TUPAC, A NICK BROOMFIELD FILM, 2006, based on a documentary by Bloomfield, a British director, about his suppositions and conclusions regarding the deaths of the two rap stars; TUPAC RESURRECTION, 2005, based on a series of documentaries made after the rapper's death; BASQUIAT, NOVEMBER 2011, based on artist Jean Michel Basquiat and films made about his life and work; MALCOLM X, JANUARY 2012, based on the Spike Lee joint; BAMBOOZLED/SPIKE LEE 2008, based on the brave director and a film that came out in 2000 skewering racial issues in America; and more.

Smith-Foret studied History and Archaeology in college, and holds Master's degrees in Social Work, Mental Health and Family Therapy, as well as Printmaking and Painting from Washington University. Her tapestries have been exhibited through the Midwest, including the Steinberg Gallery of Art's Duane Reed Gallery at Washington University; The Regional Art Commission in St. Louis; Craft Alliance in St. Louis; St. Louis Museum of Art and Belger Arts Center in Kansas City, Mo.

Gallery hours will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Sunday. The quilts will also be on display during the Concert for Zambia event, being held from 6-11 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14 in the Trimpe Building Advanced Technology Center.

“Each of these art quilts by Sun Smith-Foret combine important themes regarding race, popular culture and film, into which she creates her own unique visual metaphor. These

pieces of art then provide the viewer with a vision that challenges the traditional notion of all of these concepts,” said Jim Price, professor of Art History and Culture at Lewis and Clark.

For more information on this exhibit, contact the college’s Media Services Department at (618) 468-3200.