

Adelson Galleries & Peter Tillou Works of Art to Present the Paintings of Self-Taught Artist Winfred Rembert in New York, April 7-May 28, 2010

In a special event, Adelson Galleries and Peter Tillou Works of Art will present the paintings of Winfred Rembert next spring. This exhibition, taking place April 7-May 28, 2010, will be Rembert's first major solo exhibition in New York. A fully-illustrated color catalogue with an essay by Jock Reynolds and special events will accompany the show.

A self-taught artist, Rembert grew up working in the cotton fields of Cuthbert, Georgia, in the 1950's. He was arrested after a 1960's civil rights march and survived a near-lynching before serving seven years in jail. It was in jail, creating wallets next to another inmate, that he first learned to hand-tool leather. Years later, at the suggestion of his wife, Rembert integrated storytelling and the tales of his youth into tableaux on sheets of tanned leather. He soon attracted the attention and support of Jock Reynolds, Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, who exhibited his work next to that of renowned African-American artist and educator Hale Woodruff.

Rembert often begins his pictures with drawings to work out detailed patterns. When the stories are carved and tooled into the leather, his images take on texture and depth, and finally he paints the surfaces in vivid dyes. The surface of the piece becomes an important aspect of the composition. The final images offer a flamboyant narrative of life in the still-segregated South of the mid-twentieth century.

Rembert draws heavily from his own experience, populating his paintings with pool sharks, reverends, midwives and chain gangs—all of which come to life with the richness and vitality of oral tradition. The scenes range from cotton fields to night life. Each is as finely detailed as it is emotionally powerful.

Cotton Rows (FIG. 1) is a spiritual image. Rembert's vibrating patterns, a consistent theme in his work, undulate in this picture. They flow like music. The workers' arms are raised toward the heavens. Each is bowed in gentle curves that resonate across the painting. Floating cotton balls give the image a mosaic quality.



FIG. 1 *Cotton Rows*, 2009, Dye on carved and tooled leather
23 x 24 ¾ inches, 58.4 x 62.9 cm

Note the large bags slung over each of the pickers' shoulders, dragging behind with the fresh-picked cotton. The strong color palette and graceful characters convey a beauty that belies the brutal labor taking place.

In *Jazz Dancing* (FIG. 2), we feel the pulsing heartbeats, breathless swinging and strutting feet of exuberant dancers. Jamming, soulful music exudes from the band: we can hear it. Pleasure radiates from the girls in dresses: we share it. Storylines and recurring characters appear throughout Rembert's body of work. You know these are his stories; he was there and he remembers these powerful experiences as if they were yesterday.

Peter Tillou Works of Art in Litchfield, CT, specializes in 17th- and 18th-century American and European furniture, antique carpets, American folk art, arms and armor, early African sculpture, Pre-Columbian art, European Old Master paintings and sculpture. Peter first met Winfred Rembert seven years ago at a school in Waterbury, CT, and was immediately drawn to the



FIG. 2 *Jazz Dancing*, 2008, Dye on carved and tooled leather, 29 ¼ x 35 ¼ inches, 74.3 x 89.5 cm

person behind the stories. Over the ensuing years, Peter has remained committed to supporting Winfred and his family and dedicated to getting Rembert's works of art out to public and private collections.

For over 40 years, Adelson Galleries has handled some of the finest American paintings to come to market, placing works in major private collections as well as leading public institutions. Distinguished for its expertise in the fields of American Impressionism, Realism and Modernism, the gallery was founded in 1964 by Warren Adelson in Boston, and is located today in a turn-of-the-century townhouse on New York's Upper East Side.

In addition to sponsoring both the John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt catalogue raisonné projects,

the gallery regularly handles works by leading 19th- and 20th-century American artists. The gallery also exhibits works by selected contemporary artists, Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, among others. Recent Adelson Galleries exhibitions have included *Andrew Wyeth: Helga on Paper*; *Sargent's Venice*; *Frederic Edwin Church: Romantic Landscapes and Seascapes*; *Jamie Wyeth: Seven Deadly Sins*; *Mary Cassatt: Prints and Drawings from the Collection of Ambroise Vollard*; and *Stephen Scott Young: New Works*.

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