

## OUTSIDER ART



Leave No Child Behind, Varnette P. Haywood

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL - -** “Outsider Art” is a term that means art created outside the boundaries of official culture. Art critic Roger Cardinal coined this term in 1972 and museums and galleries define the culture. Originally these artists would have never had an opportunity to visit a museum or attend any official art course. They would typically have not had a chance to go to college and would be completely self-taught. Usually the works would have been discovered after their deaths. This art is also associated with the terms naïve art, which is characterized by a child-like simplicity in its subject matter and technique.

What is this technique that the museums originally found to be inside of the culture? The answer is in perspective and would be found in the progressive painters of the Renaissance.

The specific perspective rules are as follows:  
 •Decrease of the precision of details with distance  
 •Decrease of the size of objects proportionally with distance  
 •Muting of colors with distance

Naïve art would be characteristic of the exact opposite to the painters of the Renaissance.

Naïve art is often seen as outsider art, which is without formal training or degree. This would have been a true statement before the 20th century. There are now academies for naïve art and it is a fully recognized art genre. There is an annual Outsider Art Fair that takes place in New York and in Paris, France that is over 20 years old. There are also journals that are dedicated to the subject. I often see the hash tags in social media when artists are identifying their art for perspective buyers. When searching for the term on Google, it brings back over 2.5 million results.

Why is outsider art important to the Black community? In the time of segregation, Black artists and all other artist of color would not have been exposed to opportunities within the mainstream of the art culture. A great example would be the famed Florida Highway Men: their art follows rules of perspective but, they still would have been considered outside artists because they were majority self taught. They were often accused of not being the originators of their art because of its depth and truism to its subject. This would not be considered to be a characteristic of a self-taught artist. They are now highly celebrated and could be found in museums and have collectors that own dozens of the paintings.

The naïve art that was found on the Bill Cosby show helped to popularize collecting works from Black artisans. Varnette Haywood was an artist whose work adorned the set of the Cosby show. She was a graduate of Spellman College where she studied art. She also assisted Cosby with the creation of the Lil Bill cartoon before her death at the age of 59.

There are many works that I have seen in our South Florida community where each of the artists is painting and creating from their soul. Some of them have degrees and some of them are self-taught. I have seen many works of masters that have the same naïve qualities as outlined in the naïve art definition. The whole purpose of art is to evoke emotion and for the viewer to identify feelings with the subject. Looks like what was once outside is now inside. I leave you this week with a quote from Richard Kamler, contemporary American artist and educator.

“Art is our one true global language. It knows no nation, it favors no race, and it acknowledges no class. It speaks to our need to reveal, heal, and transform. It transcends our ordinary lives and lets us imagine what is possible.”



Greens and Money, Varnette P. Haywood



Kelvin Hair, Second Generation Highway-

Artists of all ages have a message to share in helping eradicate this epidemic that is affecting our community. Broward County has the highest AIDS Rates in the USA!



## ART ON AIDS/HIV

THE WORLD AIDS MUSEUM AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER  
 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WESTSIDE GAZETTE PRESENTS

# SAVING grace

A multimedia exhibit confronting the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Black community.

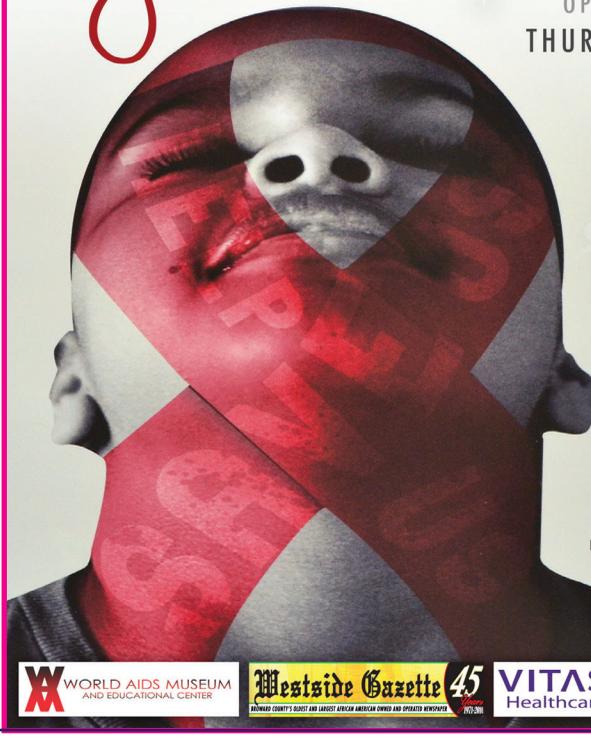
OPENING RECEPTION  
 THURSDAY, APRIL 28  
 6:30PM - 9 PM

Old Dillard Museum  
 1009 NW 4th Street  
 Fort Lauderdale, 33311

WINE & LIGHT REFRESHMENTS SERVED

Witness this moving and powerful experience via photography, poetry and artwork by local Black artists and writers, filmed interviews with members of the community and a family tree showing the profound and far reaching effects of HIV/AIDS on families.

Five members of the Black HIV/AIDS Community will be honored with the Saving Grace Award - Sponsored by VITAS



From The Centers for Disease Control

“Blacks/African Americans have the most severe burden of HIV of all racial/ethnic groups in the United States. Compared with other races and ethnicities, African Americans account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses, those living with HIV, and those ever diagnosed with AIDS.

**The Numbers - HIV and AIDS Diagnoses**  
 In 2014, 44% (19,540) of estimated new HIV diagnoses in the United States were among African Americans, who comprise 12% of the US population.

Among all African Americans diagnosed with HIV in 2014, an estimated 73% (14,305) were men and 26% (5,128) were women.

Among all women diagnosed with HIV in 2014, an estimated 62% (5,128) were African American, 18% (1,483) were white, and 16% (1,350) were Hispanic/Latina.

Women accounted for 25% (5,168) of the estimated 20,792 AIDS diagnoses among adults and adolescents in 2014 and represent 20% (246,372) of the estimated 1,210,835 cumulative AIDS diagnoses in the United States from the beginning of the epidemic through the end of 2014.”