

OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM OF ART



A GREAT CONCEPT

THE ART OF EUGENE MARTIN

Beau Rivage Resort & Casino Gallery
Gallery of African American Art
June 5 - December 1, 2012

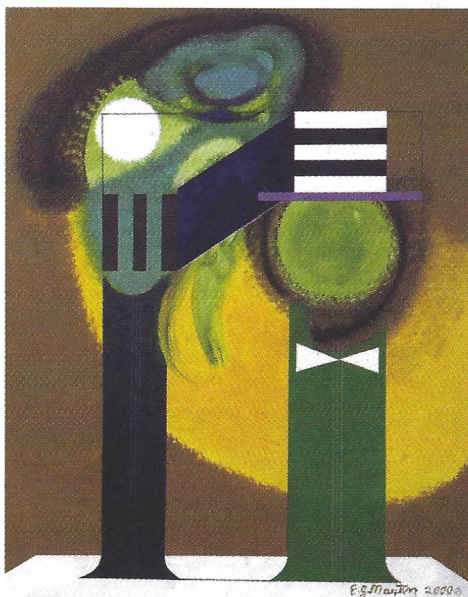
*Funded in part by the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency,
and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency*

A GREAT CONCEPT

EUGENE JAMES MARTIN (1938-2005) was born on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. His father was a traveling jazz musician. After Martin's mother died in 1942, he and his brother entered the foster care system. After trying to run away several times, Eugene Martin was placed in reform school at the early age of six years.

Martin eventually spent the rest of his childhood years on a farm in Clarksburg, Maryland with a foster family. While living on the farm he enjoyed drawing realistic portraits and nature scenes. He also loved music and learned to play upright bass, thunder bass and slide trombone. He played in a local rhythm and blues group called *The Nutones*.

After high school, Martin debated about whether to become a full-time musician



Mean and Green, 2000
Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 24"
Estate of Eugene James Martin

Cover Art: A Great Concept, 1987
Mixed media on paper, 14" x 11"
Estate of Eugene James Martin

or a visual artist; he decided on the latter because painting and drawing better suited his temperament as a loner. He attended the Corcoran School of Art during the day from 1960-1963, working at night as a janitor for the Montgomery County School Board.

From 1963 until 1988, Eugene Martin lived in Washington D.C. in group houses, with friends, and was sometimes homeless, continuing to create art according to his circumstances: graphite and pen and ink drawings on paper in libraries, outside parks, or in airports. He drew on napkins when he was too poor to afford materials.

Martin was invited to stay for long periods of time in the homes of friends – Thomas Stark, Al Stern, Isabel Taylor, and Marco Leonardi. During these times, when he had access to studio space, he created increasingly more elaborate mixed media artworks on paper and oil paintings. Martin occasionally participated in group shows, and the Munich Museum of Modern Art acquired several of his works of art.

Eugene Martin became a painter who considered artistic integrity his guide, not adhering to any particular school or movement. As an artist, he remained an individualist whose art defies categorization.

Eugene Martin spent most of his adult life in Washington, D.C. In 1982 he met Suzanne Fredericq, a native of Belgium who came to the United States to study biology. They married in 1988, and moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina where they lived from 1990 until 1994. During his years in North Carolina, Martin was invited to show his work in solo exhibitions at Duke University and the Horace Williams House. Bonnie and David Hobbs invited him to participate in several group exhibitions at Fridholm Fine Arts in Asheville, North Carolina. Around this time there was also a solo exhibition of

"If you seek just a little truth, as most, you should not ignore abstract forms, the basis from which all short-lived experiences we call reality spring."

- Eugene Martin

his work at the Michel Rooryck Gallery in Ghent, Belgium.

Eugene Martin returned to Washington D.C for two years before moving in 1996 to Lafayette, Louisiana, where his wife serves as a member of the faculty in the Department of Biology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. In Louisiana he continued to exhibit his work at galleries and museums.

In December 2001, while on a visit to Belgium, Eugene Martin simultaneously suffered a brain hemorrhage and a stroke. Upon returning to Lafayette, he underwent extensive physical therapy. Martin resumed creating art in the studio in his home until his death on January 1, 2005.

Throughout over 40 years actively devoted to art, Martin created an extensive body of work. He is best known for imaginative, complex, mixed media collages, humorous pencil, pen and ink drawings, and paintings on paper and canvas that often incorporate whimsical allusions to animal, machine and structural imagery among areas of pure, constructed, biomorphic, or disciplined lyrical abstraction. Martin called many of his works that straddled both abstraction and representation "satirical abstracts."

Eugene Martin's paintings feature bands of playful colors and uncomplicated shapes that form the base upon which he constructs more complex figures. Circles recur throughout his work, reminiscent of the faces and eyes of humans and animals. Images of "hats" and "bowties" are also recurring images, juxtaposed with areas of bold stripes. The final likeness is one of playful harmony.



Eugene Martin painting in his studio, September 2004

Photograph by Terri Fensel

© 2011 Estate of Eugene James Martin. All rights reserved

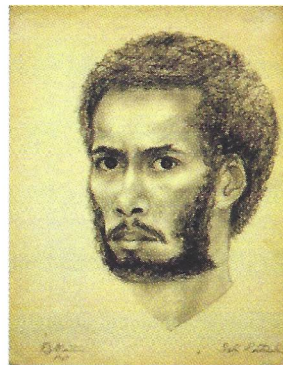
SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1990:** *Eugene J. Martin*, Michel Rooryck Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
- 1992:** Horace Williams House, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 1994:** Lilly Gallery, Duke University, Durham, NC
- 1996:** Cultural Center, Town Hall, Oudenaarde, Belgium
- 2000:** *NOMA Paintings Exhibit at OMA: Louisiana Contemporary Paintings by E. J. Martin and F. Pavy*, Opelousas Art Museum, Opelousas, LA (two-man show)
- 2004:** *The Gravy Train People and their Pets*, Galerie Lafayette, Lafayette, LA
- 2005:** *Ornithology*, Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA
- 2006:** *All That Jazz*, Stowitts Museum, Pacific Grove, CA
- 2007:** *Eugene Martin: Retrospective*, Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA
- 2007:** *Eugene James Martin: Works on Paper*, Alfred C. Glassell Jr. Exhibition Gallery, Shaw Center for the Arts, LSU School of Art, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2007:** *Eugene James Martin: Man of Color*, Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs, MS
- 2009:** *Eugene Martin in Black and White*, Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA
- 2011:** *Dancing String Bean: Paintings & Drawings by Eugene Martin*, New Orleans African American Museum, New Orleans, LA
- 2012:** *Improvisations in Time: Eugene J. Martin and the Masur Museum of Art*, Masur Museum of Art, Monroe, LA

THE ART OF EUGENE JAMES MARTIN (1938 — 2005)

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

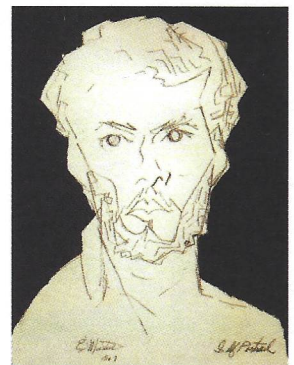
- Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA
- Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA
- Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA
- Masur Museum of Art, Monroe, LA
- Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile, AL
- Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
- Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE
- The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA
- The Paul R. Jones Collection, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
- The Stowitts Museum and Library, Pacific Grove, CA
- The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art, Savannah, GA
- Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs, MS



Self Portrait, 1967

Graphite on paper
10 7/8" x 8 3/8"

Estate of Eugene James Martin



Self Portrait, 1967

Ball point pen and ink on paper
10 7/8" x 8 3/8"

Estate of Eugene James Martin

OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM OF ART

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

- 1. Self Portrait, 1967**
Graphite on paper
10 7/8" x 8 3/8"
EL2012.2.1
- 2. Self Portrait, 1967**
Ballpoint pen and ink on paper
10 7/8" x 8 3/8"
EL2012.2.2
- 3. Untitled, 2001**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.3
- 4. Untitled, 1993**
Acrylic on rag paper
30" x 25 3/4"
EL2012.2.4
- 5. Mean and Green, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.5
- 6. Untitled, 1969**
Oil on canvas
57 3/4" x 48"
EL2012.2.6
- 7. What Are You Looking At? 2001**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.7
- 8. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
24" x 30"
EL2012.2.8
- 9. Untitled, 1999**
Acrylic on canvas
2 panels; 36" x 48"
EL2012.2.9 A & B
- 10. Untitled, 1996**
Acrylic on canvas
36" x 48"
EL2012.2.10
- 11. The Fall of Icarus, 1998**
Acrylic on canvas
60" x 84"
EL2012.2.11
- 12. Untitled, 1999**
Acrylic on canvas
36" x 48"
EL2012.2.12
- 13. Untitled, 2001**
Acrylic on canvas
24" x 30"
EL2012.2.13
- 14. Untitled, 2001**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.14
- 15. Untitled, c. 1993**
Acrylic on paper
8 3/4" x 11"
EL2012.2.15
- 16. Untitled, 1966**
Colored pencil on paper
11" x 8 1/2"
EL2012.2.16
- 17. Untitled, 1973**
Gouache and watercolor
11" x 8 1/2"
EL2012.2.17
- 18. Untitled, 1965**
Colored pencil on paper
11" x 8 1/2"
EL2012.2.18
- 19. A Great Concept, 1987**
Mixed media on paper
14" x 11"
EL2012.2.19
- 20. Untitled, c. 1987**
Ink and colored pencil
12" x 10 1/4"
EL2012.2.20
- 21. Untitled, 1988**
Ink and graphite
13" x 10 1/4"
EL2012.2.21
- 22. Untitled, 1987**
Ink and graphite
13" x 10 1/4"
EL2012.2.22
- 23. Untitled, 1997**
Brown and blue ink on paper,
applied with bamboo reed stick
pen
9 1/2" x 8"
EL2012.2.23
- 24. Too Slippery, 1981**
Brown ink on paper; applied
with bamboo reed stick pen
9 1/2" x 7"
EL2012.2.24
- 25. Untitled, 1981**
Brown ink on paper; applied with
bamboo reed stick pen
9" x 6 3/4"
EL2012.2.25
- 26. Untitled, 1982**
Brown ink on paper; applied with
bamboo reed stick pen
9 1/2" x 7"
EL2012.2.26
- 27. Untitled, 1995**
Collage, mixed media
15 1/2" x 10 1/2"
EL2012.2.27
- 28. Wheeling Kate, 1973**
Mixed media on paper
14" x 11"
EL2012.2.28
- 29. Untitled, 1972**
Mixed media on paper
15" x 12"
EL2012.2.29
- 30. Untitled, 1987**
Colored pencil on paper
11" x 8 1/2"
EL2012.2.30
- 31. Untitled, 1988**
Acrylic on paper
16" x 11"
EL2012.2.31
- 32. Untitled, 1973**
Mixed media on paper
15" x 12"
EL2012.2.32
- 33. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.33
- 34. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.34
- 35. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.35
- 36. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.36
- 37. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.37
- 38. Untitled, 2000**
Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"
EL2012.2.38



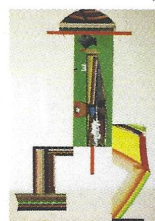
9



28



14



27



7



32



4



29

Compiled and edited by Barbara Johnson Ross
2012 Copyright Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Inc. All rights reserved