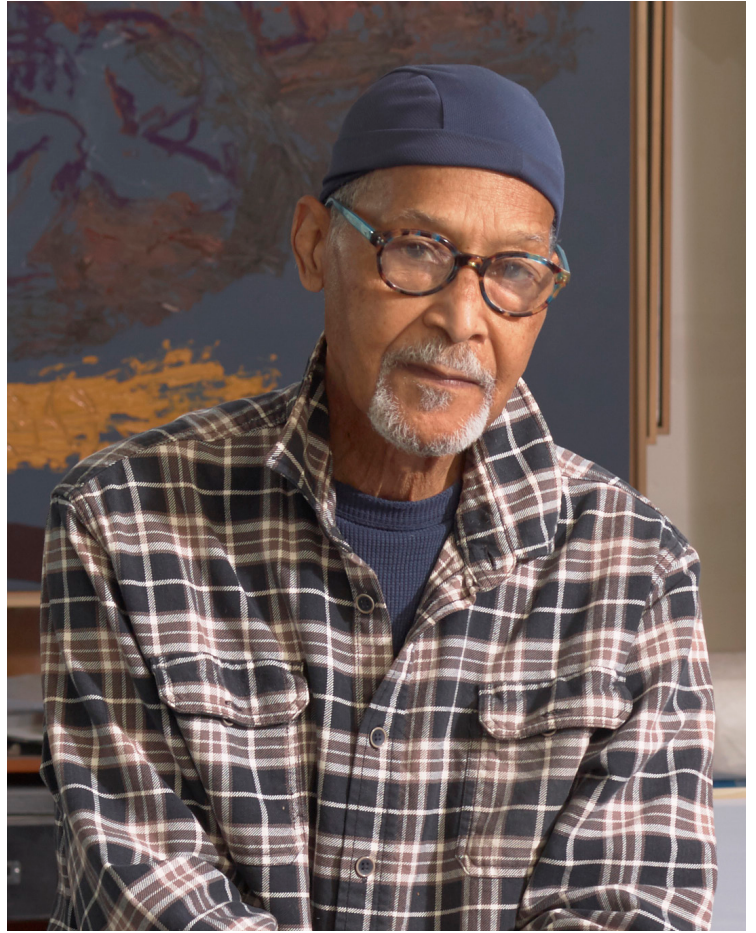


LISSON

OLIVER LEE JACKSON

BIOGRAPHY



Oliver Lee Jackson is a painter, sculptor and printmaker whose creations open up spaces for contemplation and interpretation, as well as encounters with seen and unseen worlds. He has long engaged in freeing form and matter from the strictures and false oppositions between figuration and abstraction, preferring hybridity, ambiguity and improvisation with his materials over fixed meanings and didacticism.

Beginning with gridded compositions in the 1960s and then moving his large canvases to the floor in the 1970s, in order to approach his work from multiple orientations, Jackson's images remain based in reality and bound to human experience. "Every exchange we have, regardless of whether we call it spiritual or not," says the artist, "is through the world, by the senses, absorbing things in things, exploiting things by things, always relationships with things."

His chosen materials – stone, steel, wood, marble, fabric, paint – become the conduit for him to communicate emotions, moods and shared phenomena through the making of objects and images. The figure is a constant presence – sometimes overt, sometimes fragmentary and fugitive – in all of Jackson's work, acting as both starting point and anchor for the marks, glimpses, moments and motives behind each composition. Even in two dimensions, the relative weights and volumes of brushstrokes, handprints and color expanses create fluctuating densities, depths and spatial possibilities. Demonstrative narratives or references to actual historic events are fleeting and non-linear, excepting important series such as his 1970s paintings inspired by photographs of Anti-Apartheid demonstrators fleeing the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960

in Johannesburg. Otherwise, Jackson cites influence from both African and European art traditions to feed his gestural representations that suggest a timeless, bodily flow of life force, memory and atmosphere.

Oliver Lee Jackson was born in 1935, St. Louis, Missouri and now lives and works in Oakland, California, USA. After attending the University of Iowa and advising the St. Louis collective of musicians, poets, dancers and artists known as the Black Artists Group (known as BAG) in the late 1960s, Jackson relocated to the West Coast to be a professor of art at the California State University, Sacramento, from 1971 until 2002, where he initially developed a curriculum for the Pan African Studies program. In addition to numerous collaborations with writers, musicians and dancers, Jackson has worked on large-scale commissions and held major solo presentations at the Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2021); di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA (2021); National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2019); Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2012); Harvard University, Cambridge MA (2002); Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA (1993, 1984, 1977); Seattle Art Museum (1982) among others.

In 2023 he was presented with the Lee Krasner Award for lifetime achievement by the Pollock Krasner Foundation, and he was the recipient of the Award in Painting and Sculpture, Awards in the Visual Arts, Flintridge Foundation, Pasadena, CA (2003/2004); the Fleishhacker Foundation Eureka Fellowship (1993); a grant from Art Matters, New York (1988); the Nettie Marie Jones Fellowship (1984); and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1980-81). His work is included in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Detroit Institute of the Arts, Detroit, MI; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR; Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA and many more.