



## Najee Dorsey

Black Art In America™ Founder, Artist, Gallerist, Art Activist & Patron

Born in Blytheville, Arkansas on January 26, 1973, visual artist and entrepreneur Najee Dorsey is known for embracing southern roots in his work by relaying scenes of African American life in the south on canvas. He began his journey as an artist at the age of five, selling his artwork to his mother for candy. From that point on, Dorsey continued making art as a favorite pastime. Dorsey's first endeavor as an aspiring entrepreneur became evident in his earliest business venture selling cinnamon toothpicks at age twelve to his classmates. In High School, Najee earned a partial scholarship in 1991 to Memphis College of Art (later known as the Memphis Academy of Art). He eventually left the institution prior to completing his first semester due to a combination of financial challenges, and the need for a more dynamic environment. Still, Dorsey continued creating art part-time while working different jobs over the years.

Balancing his schedule as an artist and an employee, Dorsey went through a phase where he became indifferent about creating; lending more time to making a living than creating art. During this period, Dorsey met Najjar Abdul-Musawwir, an artist and community arts activist, who became his friend and an early mentor. This newfound relationship with Abdul-Musawwir provided inspiration toward refocusing some of his energy on his first love, art. Between 1992 and 1993 Dorsey again continued honing his craft and later producing an airbrushed work that became his first response to civil rights issues containing a message of social responsibility in a piece entitled, Guidance in the Time of Ignorance which was purchased by Mr. Abdul-Musawwir soon after.

In advancing both his art and entrepreneurship, Najee opened a creative hub in Blytheville, Arkansas with the help of his wife, Seteria (who is also an artist). This creative space functioned as an art gallery, coffee-shop, and used book store during the summer of 2000. Najee used the space as a launch pad for his career as "artrepreneur"-- a title referenced to in a 2012 BlackEnterprise.com article on Dorsey.

In 2005, the Dorseys' moved to Atlanta, GA, where Najee became a full-time artist. Focusing solely on his art resulted in a fruitful career. Now, more than fourteen years later, his work has been featured in nine museum shows including, Visions of our 44th Collection at the Charles H. Wright Museum in Detroit, MI and Leaving Mississippi: Reflections on Heroes and Folklore at the Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA, Houston Museum of African American Culture (HMAAC) Houston, TX and the African American Museum in Dallas, TX. Over the years, Dorsey's changing mediums have resonated with many people, but his consistency in exhibiting imagery rooted in his southern heritage is what Najee

*cont'd Bio Najee Dorsey*

Dorsey is known for. Over the past twenty-five years, Dorsey's work has been consistently featured and acquired by a number of institutions, and private collections across the United States.

Since becoming a full-time artist in 2005, Najee has become well acquainted with the trials and tribulations of most African American artists: the closed doors in the arts community, the lack of representation in art institutions, and the undervaluation of African American art and its creators by dominant society. Being the proactive individual that he is, Najee founded Black Art In America™ (BAIA) in 2010 as a free online media platform for African American artists, collectors, art enthusiasts, and arts professionals. In the company's conceptual stages, influencers from BAIA's audience were surveyed and it became clear that their issues were centered on exposure, appreciation, and access to each other. BAIA™ was founded as a centralized location for profiling the African American artist -- giving members of the network access to the work of African American artists (past and contemporary), and most importantly, opportunities for interchange. Since 2010, the network has become the leading online portal and resource focused on African American art, artists, collectors, industry leaders, and arts enthusiasts. The BAIA™ online network currently has a monthly virtual reach of half a million people and growing.

As an artist, Najee Dorsey has developed much in his craft over the years, and has become known for his mixed media collage, digital media collage images of little known and unsung historical figures, as well as nostalgic scenes from African American life in the southern United States. In his work, as Najee chronicles moments in Black life throughout history, he maintains that, "stories untold are stories forgotten". Far from the days after dropping out of arts college, and becoming uncertain about his future in the arts, Dorsey has forged a successful career as an artist, being featured in numerous solo and group museum shows, television broadcasts and print publications -- a major feat for any artist. As well as these accomplishments, he has skillfully combined his creative edge, and business acumen to develop a steadily growing online community that documents, preserves and promotes the contributions of the African American arts community. Najee currently lives in Columbus, GA with his wife, Seteria.

Najee Dorsey is represented by Arnika Dawkins Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- 2021 Social Justice and Artistic Expression and Mental Health Through Art” – Part 2: Najee Dorsey - - January 16, 2021
- 2019 Historic Columbus Preservation Award, Mildred L. Terry Library for the creation and installation of a new mural depicting the history of the Liberty Historic District, October 29, 2019 -Columbus, GA.
- 2019 The Grant Hill Collection of African American Art - Florida
- 2019 Stonecrest Library, Dekalb County Public Library -“*Poor People’s Campaign,*” permanent collection, Lithonia, GA.
- 2019 Mildred Terry Library, commission 8 feet x 40 feet Mural Project, Columbus, GA.
- 2018 Petrucci Family Foundation: Collection of African American Art, Private collection, NJ.
- 2018 Together Columbus 2017, “My River Valley” commission 10 feet x 20 feet Mural Project, Columbus, GA.
- 2016 Collection of David W. Mullins Library at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR.
- 2016 Collection of Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: PAFA, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2016 Paul R. Jones Collection, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.
- 2016 David C. Driskell Collection, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.
- 2015 Community Folk Art Center, Syracuse University, NY.
- 2012 Visions of Our 44th President, Charles H. Wright Museum/Our World LLC. One of 44th artist selected.
- 2012 "Devil's Knot" with Colin Firth and Reese Witherspoon -- Featured Works in Film
- 2012 Lifetime Television "Steel Magnolias" -- Featured Works in Film
- 2012 Black Enterprise Cool Jobs Artrepreneur -- Featured Artist
- 2012 Tidal Basin Literary Review -- Featured Artist
- 2011 44 on 44: Forty-Four African American Writers on the Election of Barack Obama 44th President of the United States, by Lita Hooper, Sonia Sanchez and Michael Simanga (Book Cover Art by Najee Dorsey)
- 2011 Syracuse University, Permanent Collection
- 2011 New Orleans Jazz Festival, Congo Square- Best of Show
- 2009 African American Museum Of Dallas, Permanent Collection
- 2009 Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show: Louise Binswanger Award (best new artist)
- 2009 The Community Annual of Metropolitan St. Louis: Artist Laureate
- 2009 New Orleans Jazz Festival, Congo Square- Best of Show

2008 Rovema Packaging & Machines, L.P.- Atlanta, GA, Permanent Collection

2008 Newnan County Public Library of Georgia, Permanent Collection

2008 Marietta Museum of Art Connecticut/Florida- Permanent Collection

2008 Liberty Bank and Trust Company of New Orleans - Permanent Collection

2008 Southern Illinois University College of Carbondale, School of Art & Design: Incorporation of works into curriculum studies.

2007 Merit Award: Juneteenth Festival of Gainesville, FL

2007 Ira F. Aldridge Elementary School of Chicago, IL, Permanent Collection

2006 Patrons Purchase Award: Polk Museum of Art/Mayfaire Volvo Arts Festival

2006 First Place Juried Award: Celebration Spring Arts

2002 Shawnee Community College - permanent collection

Abyss Jazz Magazine - Featured Artist.

Clinton Hill Publishing The Autobiography of Aquarius Jones by Author/Publisher SAKI. (Book Cover Art by Najee Dorsey)

Commission, corporate - City Capital Entertainment -2007 Jazz Festival Design

Commission, corporate - 2006 "Wild Shrimp and Grits Festival," Jekyll Island, GA & Cohn, Overstreet & Parrish Marketing Firm

Commission, private - Cafe' 290, Atlanta's Legendary Jazz Club

### **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2021 *"Seen and Told: Alternative Narratives"* -The Art of Najee Dorsey - Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Biloxi, Mississippi -January 18, 2021 thru April 2021

2019 *"Poor People's Campaign,"* Stonecrest Library, Dekalb County Public Library -June 08- August 30, 2019 -Lithonia, GA.

2018 *Somewhere South,* Nicole Longnecker Gallery -June 30 to August 18, 2018 - Houston, TX.

2016 *Moving Earth: Works In Clay at Black Art In America™ Gallery* – December 03, 2016 –February 28, 2017, Columbus, GA

2016 *Remixed: Something Ole, Sum Nu Roux,* University of Arkansas-Mullins Library, Fayetteville, AR.

2015 *Resistance:* Community Folk Art Center, University of Syracuse – October 15- December 05, 2015, NY.

2015 *Leaving Mississippi: Reflections on Heroes and Folklore* works by Najee Dorsey at Houston Museum of African-American Culture –April 25, 2015 – July 12, 2015, Houston, TX

2015 *Leaving Mississippi: Reflections on Heroes and Folklore* works by Najee Dorsey at Jackson State University; Gallery 1 –January 29, 2015 – April 22, 2015- Jackson, MS

2015 *Leaving Mississippi* by Najee Dorsey at Mississippi Museum of Art (in collaboration with JSU) – January 29, 2015 –April 22, 2015- Jackson, MS

2014 *Leaving Mississippi — Reflections on Heroes and Folklore: Works by Najee Dorsey* at the Columbus Museum –August 21, 2014 –January 04, 2015, Columbus, GA

2012 BAIA / NRM "Do You Basel?" LMNT Gallery, Miami, FL

2011 *Leaving Mississippi: Marietta Walk* - September 02- 09, 2011 - Avisca Fine Art Gallery Marietta, GA

2007 Nicole Gallery, Chicago, IL

2003 Southeast Missouri University: Cape Girardeau, MO

2002 Shawnee Community College- Exhibition- "Homage to American Architectures" : Ullin, IL

2001 John A. Logan, College/Museum - Exhibition/Lecture "Reflections of Cubism" : Carterville, IL

2000 St. Bernard's Hospital- Breast Cancer Awareness: Jonesboro AR

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 Griffin Museum of Photography, *"Digits: A Parallel Universe,"* March 9 – June 9, 2021, Winchester MA

2020 Steffen Thomas Museum of Art – "Black Heritage and the Brotherhood of Man exhibition," – Feb 1- March 30, 2019, GA.

2019 Spectrum Miami Art Fair – December 4-8, 2019 – Miami, FL.

2019 Art Beat Miami, Little Haiti Optimist Foundation – December 4-8, 2019 – Miami, FL.

2019 Art Africa Miami Arts Fair – December 3-8, 2019 – Miami, FL.

2019 Griots' Art Gallery and Academy – December 3-8, 2019 – Miami, FL.

2019 Prizm Art Fair: Miami Art Week, *Love In The Time of Hysteria* – December 2-8, 2019 -Miami, FL.

2019 Small Treasures, Zenith Gallery –, Washington, D.C. November 22, 2019 – January 11, 2020

2019 Black History Museum & Cultural Center/Walton Gallery, *Sundry Souls* – Richmond, VA., September 14- December 21, 2019

2019 Current Art Fair, *Bon Secours* – Richmond, VA., October 24-27, 2019

2019 *March on Washington Film Festival: Praising the Bridges, We Crossed Over-* Washington, D.C.- September 22 -28, 2019

2019 *400 A Collective Flight of Memory*, Aviation Community Cultural Center – May 18 -July 15, 2019, Atlanta, GA.

2018 *March on Washington: The Art of Resistance*, Washington Film Festival, Washington, D.C.- July 12 to July 14, 2018

- 2018 *M.I.A (Military Inspired Art)*, Buffalo Soldiers National Museum - July 27-28, 2018, Houston, TX
- 2018 *Made in Louisiana: Louisiana Tricentennial*, Stella Jones Gallery, March 10- May 31, 2018 New Orleans, LA
- 2018 *Made in Midtown*, ArtBeats 2018 Art is for Everyone Exhibition, Columbus, GA.
- 2017 *Made of Clay*, at SW Arts Center Performance Theater Gallery, Fulton County Arts & Culture Southwest Arts Center, Atlanta, GA. (November 11 – December 8,2017)
- 2017 *A Creative Adventure In Printmaking: Prints From The Experimental Printmaking Institute*, at the Hudgens Center For The Arts, Duluth, GA.
- 2017 *A Collaborative Language: Selections From The Experimental Printmaking Institute*, at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: PAFA, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2017 *Afrotopia: Art And The Politics Of Representation*, at Nova Southeastern University NSU, Miami, FL.
- 2016 *The Great Migration; The Journey and New Beginnings*, at Southside Community Art Center, Chicago, IL.
- 2016 *Afrotopia, Sixth African Diaspora Art Fair* Miami, FL.
- 2016 *Inspired: 20 Years of African-American Art Exhibition*, Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA.
- 2016 *Two Man Art Exhibition: Art Space and Walton Gallery*, Richmond, VA.
- 2015 *Freedom Expressions ATL*, Exhibition presented by the Center for Civil and Human Rights and the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Atlanta, GA
- 2015 *All Hail to Hale — Homecoming: The Hale Woodruff Family Collection*, American Jazz Museum, Kansas City, MO.
- 2015 *Resistance*: House of Art Gallery, Brooklyn, NY.
- 2015 *Black Art In America™ Fine Art Show — Harlem on My* at Faison Firehouse Theatre, Harlem, NYC
- 2015 *Lagniappe: Imagining New Orleans in a Post-Katrina World*, Stella Jones Gallery, Katrina Exhibition, September 21 – October 01, 2015 New Orleans, LA
- 2015 *BACKTRACK - Narratives On Race*, Moen Mason Gallery, August 01, 2015- Tucson, AZ.
- 2015 Work added to the Permanent Collection at Clark University Art Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2014 American Jazz Museum, *Jazz Then and Now* (Featured Work), Kansas City, MO
- 2014 St. Louis Museum University Museum of Art, *Hands Up Don't Shoot* (Featured Work), St. Louis, MO
- 2014 Booth Western Art Museum-*Western American Art South of the Sweet Tea Line IV* (Featured Work), Cartersville, GA
- 2014 Hammonds House Museum, *The Rupture In The Complexity of Black Manhood: Selected Works By Claude Clark, Najee Dorsey and Steve Prince*, Atlanta, GA
- 2014 Bentonville Fine Art Show with Black Art In America™ and the Silver-Parker Group

2013 *Black Art In America™ Fine Art Show — African American Master Artists and their Contemporaries* at Faison Firehouse Theatre, Harlem, NYC

2013 Black Art In America™ Fine Art Show at the Firehouse Theatre, N.Y., NY

2013 Works From Collection of Carnetta and Norm Davis at The Paul R. Jones Gallery, University of Alabama

2013 Southwest Black Fine Arts Show, African-American Museum of Dallas, Dallas, TX

2013 African-American Master Artists and their Contemporaries -- Faison Firehouse Theatre, NY.

2013 The Art of Hope Benefit Gala hosted by Circle of Friends

2013 Royal Vanguard™ Art Benefit Exhibition, Harlem Jazz Getaway, NYC

2012 Visions of Our 44th President, Charles H. Wright Museum

2012 *BoomBox Exhibition*, House of Art Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2011 *Mahalia Jackson: Queen of Gospel Music*, Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA

2006 *Men Are Human Too*, Exhibition & Talk: Atlanta, GA

2006 Hammonds House Museum: *Masterful Mix*, Atlanta, GA

2006 Coca-Cola Corporation: Atlanta, GA

2001 Black History Month Exhibition - Southeast Missouri State University: Cape Girardeau. MO

2001 Downtown Jonesboro Association "Deer Season, A Public Art Exhibition": Jonesboro AR