

The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

JACKSON LIBRARY



CQ

no. 1159

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

TILLOTSON, ROBERT MARK. The Colored People. (1974)
Directed by: Carl Goldstein. Pp. 4.

The exhibit consists of nineteen paintings and two lithographs.

The basis of this thesis is to search for meaning through extreme states of being. To go beyond the surface, to explore with painting and lithography the depths of the self. To elevate the importance of one's emotions and to subordinate form to emotional and visionary experience.

7

THE COLORED PEOPLE

by

Robert Mark Tillotson

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1974

Approved by

Walter Parker
Thesis Adviser

This thesis has been approved by the following
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The
University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser Walter Barker

Committee Members

G. J. Langford
Paul H. Hest

Jan S. Sney
P. H. Hest

April 16, 1974

Date of Acceptance by Committee

"I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green."

Vincent Van Gogh -- referring
to his painting "The Night
Cafe"

"One evening an actor asked me to write a play
for an all-black cast. But what exactly is a black?
First of all, what is his color?"

Jean Genet -- referring to his
play The Blacks

"One evening I was walking along a path. On one
side lay the city and below me the fjord. I was tired
and ill. I stopped and looked out across the fjord.
The sun was blood. I felt a scream pass through nature;
it seemed to me that I could hear the scream. I painted
the picture -- painted the clouds as real blood -- the
colors were screaming. This became the picture "The
Scream" from my "Frieze of Life."

Edvard Munch, 1889

457453

CATALOGUE

TITLE	DIMENSIONS	MEDIUM
1. Frustrated Artist	30 x 24	Mixed
2. Headdress	30 x 24	Mixed
3. Discussion	30 x 24	Mixed
4. The Offering	30 x 24	Mixed
5. Ondine	30 x 24	Mixed
6. Red Cheeks	30 x 24	Mixed
7. Red and Black Meanies	30 x 24	Mixed
8. The Loved Ones	30 x 24	Lithography
9. Thinking, Talking Trash	30 x 24	Mixed
10. Colored Measles	30 x 24	Mixed
11. Silhouette	30 x 24	Mixed
12. Green and Red	30 x 24	Mixed
13. Sara and Sarah	22 x 28	Lithography
14. Quarrel #1	24 x 18	Mixed
15. Quarrel #3	24 x 18	Mixed
16. Twosome	24 x 18	Mixed
17. The Touch	24 x 18	Mixed
18. The Pink One	24 x 18	Mixed
19. Sisters 3 & 4	45 x 43	Mixed
20. Save Me the Waltz	60 x 48	Mixed
21. Sisters 1 & 2	96 x 48	Mixed

The exhibition consists of paintings, drawings, and a few accompanying lithographs. The exhibit is entitled "The Colored People." There is no connotation or reference of racial overtones. What is being considered here are the psychological dimensions of color theory; colors' mental and emotional expressive values.

All the works are executed with acrylic paint, acrylic washes, cray-pas (oil-based crayons), and Ebony pencil on white arches paper and the same materials on raw and primed canvas. No preliminary sketches are made. The usual method is to begin by executing a contour line drawing with Ebony pencil, then by filling it in coloring book style with flat two-dimensional colored areas; then working back into the colored area with penciled arabesque lines. Frequently a deliberate line accents a painterly area to create a tension based on contrast. There is no illusion of physical reality or naturalism. Like Redon, I often ignore the physical rules of the universe and of drawing by flattening perspective, negating gravity, and ignoring natural light.

Basically, the purpose of this thesis is to show emotion through color, line, and form with the possibilities of color as abstract shapes creating and controlling the form of the picture, rather than in the traditional sense. I search for meaning through extreme states of being and to

go beyond the surface; to explore with painting, drawing, and lithography the depths of the self; to elevate the importance of one's own emotions; and to subordinate form and color to emotional and visionary experience.

I create an imaginary world, but one which is credible in spite of the most audacious simplifications. Like Beardsley and the Art Nouveau genre, I delineate the bizarre and avant-garde; as in the Japanese prints, I strive for a singleness of purpose, rhythmic vitality, synthetic coherence, sweep of line, flat perspective, linear composition (i.e. flat areas linked by lines that vary in strength to suggest something of the arrested quality in the outlines of a bas-relief). The outlines are all closed, and the forms are therefore rationalized. The German Expressionists' use of color as an emotional mode and factor is an inevitable influence. My art also draws nourishment from literature, especially characters from the work of Djuna Barnes, Jean Genet, Tennessee Williams, and Oscar Wilde; fluxed by the formidable role that good and evil portrays in their works.

The figures are nebulous: asexual in that they are purposely indefinite in regards to age, race, profession, facial emotion, and sexual gender. What is being considered are the symbolic and associational meanings of color. The faces are expressionless so that color carries the emotional content. Therefore, the purpose that color portrays has a

more acute impact (the way Ensor's masked people are asexual, much in the way that Kuhn's clown paintings are camouflaged by abstract make-up as opposed to the underlying asexual mood of a Bonnard nude woman lying in a bath). With these uncertainties, the viewer has no pre-imposed suppositions or pretensions of how one normally registers instinctively when seeing a female, a male, a smile, a grimace, an old person, etcetera. Emotional register is transcended through the color of their flesh, which leads the viewer to register the "colored" people according to the emotional value one derives from the color the figures are. Although the emotional context of the color is personally influenced by each individual, the colors used are not far removed from a universal color system. Therefore, in the psychological realm of color theory, feeling tones most obviously can be evoked from the viewer-observer by a particular color.

I work primarily from black and white photographs of one or two figures for greater freedom. The backgrounds are void to dramatize the subject and to make the color, line, form, and emotional presence more acute and intense. The characters are represented in complete naturalness without posing.

In the drawings and prints, I co-ordinate the facial area motif with a three-quarter length pose. As a form, the human face is the most complex and challenging entity.

Disintegrating the face and supplementary motifs into parts, the dissolution of those parts into a viable composition and emphasizing the acute role color plays with regard to the emotional content has been the basis for my thesis presentation.