



focus. The result is quintessentially Purvis. Black life in the inner city, angels, horses, Jesus, pregnant women, mass incarceration, boat people, the transatlantic slave voyage, sharks, Holy men, protesters, halos, Over-town, the ghetto, crowded streets, people in praise, and dispossessed folk.

The value of this collection lies in the subconscious spiritual power that illuminates the soul of a man who was not influenced by his peers but driven by a spiritual calling to use his artistry and his angelic vision to make evident the deeply flawed underbelly of the socio-political infrastructure of contemporary American life. His signature artistic style is “original” and recognizable from any point of view in the universe.

As the curator for this show, I am humbly honored and excited to have the opportunity to add to the legacy of Purvis Young. I knew Purvis for over 25 years and had the good fortune of including his work in several of my South Florida art shows.

Purvis was an original American artist that lived his life according to the beat of his own drum. There was nothing conventional about him; he was never married, didn't own

# PURVIS YOUNG

An Iconic African American Visionary Artist

BY LUDLOW E. BAILEY | IMAGES COURTESY OF FATVILLAGE

Purvis Young is a deeply grown African American soul whose prolific and legendary work continues to capture the imagination of the American public and the art world in general. Purvis Young's contribution to American art is immeasurable.

Doug McCraw, founder of Fort Lauderdale's highly celebrated FATVillage, is considered to be a leading art advocate on the art of Purvis Young. In honor of Mr. Young's legacy, Mr. McCraw has chosen to produce a Purvis Young show to launch the FATVillage 2021 South Florida Art Basel season.

This collection of Purvis Young's work is sufficiently diverse and represents in some ways a holistic overview of his thematic

**TOP:** Em. Et et de nonsequas autemqu atecest, illuptions autatiam quae vendit vellaccatur mosam, si

**BOTTOM:** Em. Et et de nonsequas autemqu atecest, illuptions autatiam quae vendit vellaccatur mosam, si





a fancy car, and rode a bicycle. To say that he was from another time understates the extent of his colossal world presence down to his uniquely own attire.

Purvis died broke. His life story, in some ways, is an American tragedy, but it's also an inspiring story about the role of art in the pursuit of Freedom, a life of value, and the mastery of destiny. The discovery of art changed his perspective and gave him an outlet to express his soul's mission and purpose.

Whenever I was in his presence, I always felt that I was in the company of an Ethiopian High priest, a Shango man, a Freedom fighter, or a Zulu spiritual warrior. Purvis always talked to me about himself as a Zulu warrior. As a descendant of Africa, he was most definitely aware of his African roots. Drawing major inspiration from the Congo drums, he was also knowledgeable about Yoruba African spirituality. One of his closest and best confidantes, Silo Crespo, was an Afro-Cuban Santeria Priest.

In all my interactions with Purvis, what inspired me the most was his unique access to a divine fountain of resources that drove him to tirelessly pursue his calling. Purvis



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Young was an artist on a mission that didn't want to die without releasing the music inside him.

On the highest spiritual level, Purvis Young was a rare and beautiful soul who emerged from a troubled childhood to become one of America's leading visual artists. In the many conversations I had with him, I realized that he wasn't interested in

the monetary gain of capitalism or the status of power. At the end of the day, Purvis was a civil rights activist, urban historian, and a contemporary African American Griot who understood the power of art as a tool for social commentary in a platform to highlight the challenges of Afro-American urban life and the deep suffrages of racial injustices and inequalities endured by people of color in the United States with the end goal of reducing plight in the developing world.

Purvis Young: An iconic African American Visionary will open November 18, 2021, and will be available for general public viewing through January 30, 2022, at FATVillage in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. □



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