



One Plus One Equals Three

Collage and assemblage by Romare Bearden,
Roy Fridge, Marty Greenbaum, David
McManaway, Robin Ragin, Nancy Willis Smith,
and Roger Winter

Curated by Roger Winter
Kirk Hopper Fine Art
January 19–February 26, 2019



▲ **Roger Winter**, *Hester's House*, 2018, oil on museum board, 7" x 11.5"

◀ Front cover: **David McManaway**, *Imp Shrine*, 1997, mixed media assemblage, 14" x 6.5" x 3.5"

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Essays by Roger Winter

In the early 1960s, I worked for the Texas sculptor, Charles Williams, at his studio on the outskirts of Arlington, Texas. Nearby was a junk store called "One Flag Under Texas." The owner, an eccentric middle-aged man, had filled every available space of his property, including the trees, with debris he had collected over decades. In one tree, he had installed an old elevator shaft. Near the shaft and ten feet off the ground was an ancient refrigerator. The placement of objects, like the refrigerator in the tree, never had a rational relationship that one could see. Charles and I would muse that the owner was a primitive assemblage artist. We'd imagine how his entire operation would look moved into the gallery of a museum. Perhaps anyone reading this has seen similar examples of natural collage or assemblage. And perhaps the human—and sometimes other animals, like the bowerbird—has an inborn urge to collage and assemble.

But collage, as an art medium to juxtapose images that destroy expected relationships, is barely more than a century old. All visual collage in art, whether pictorial or non-objective, may have evolved from early twentieth-century writers such as Guillaume Apollinaire, André Gide and Gertrude Stein, who liberated word from meaning in the traditional sense. And the

metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico certainly impacted the space and content of surrealistic collages and paintings.

My introduction to collage and assemblage was in university art history classes where we viewed slides of works by artists from Picasso to the Dadaists to Kurt Schwitters to Joseph Cornell. But the idea of combining unrelated images in a single work was personalized for me after moving to Dallas, meeting David McManaway, and working with the installation crew at the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts. My own work began to evolve toward paintings of invented geometric spaces that included paintings of people and objects based on snapshots from my childhood. The impact and history of the DMCA will be enlarged on in Susie Kalil's forthcoming book, *Roger Winter: Fire and Ice*, a comprehensive study of my life in art, to be published by Texas A&M University Press.

*The title is an expression that David McManaway used to describe his "Jomo" works. It relates to Max Ernst's comment that when more than one reality exists in a single work, it causes a "spark of poetry which leaps across the gap as these two realities are brought together."



Romare Bearden

The most powerful synthesis of collage and painting in twentieth-century art is found in the works of the African-American artist Romare Bearden. His passionate dream of merging cultures, energized by comprehensive knowledge of world art and literature, was further intensified through identification with the art of Africa, his catalyst. Bearden's work manifests emotional content through his choice and juxtaposition of images, his dramatic distortion of scale, and his orchestration of disjunctive space. His work grew from an early foray into the gestural approach of Abstract Expressionism into the cutting and pasting of found images: people, architectural details, animals, abstract shapes and lines. His cutting and pasting interacted with paint and pencils. Bearden had an uncanny gift for evoking the places of our collective memory. He derived his repertoire of subjects from New York's Harlem neighborhoods and the North Carolina rural community of his youth.

Bearden said that he wanted to paint his people as Brueghel had painted his people. And while Bearden accomplished this, his great knowledge and curiosity expanded his art

◀ **Geneva Print Maquette**, 1971, collage on plywood, 20" x 14.5"

into retelling works of Homer in brilliantly colored collages. He resurrected the Conjure Woman. He designed costumes and stage sets and posters, and he made perhaps thousands of drawings in whatever medium was at hand. During his late years, he found a subtly different world through drawing with his left hand. In my opinion, Bearden's energy and dedication and protean nature allowed him to produce a body of work that surpasses most, if not all, of the work of his time. There's only one Romare Bearden.



◀ **Culture:
Hartford Mural**
1980
Collage on
fiberboard
18" x 12"



Roy Fridge

Roy Fridge was born in Beeville, Texas, in 1927. He was an only child and liked to make his own toys. He studied filmmaking at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he met the eminent theater director Paul Baker. He also met one of Baker's students, Mary Sue, who became Roy's wife for a number of years. When Baker moved to Dallas to direct the Dallas Theater Center, Roy and Mary Sue also moved there.

In Dallas, Roy whittled wooden sculptures with moving parts, designed many of the catalogs for the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts, and, above all, produced his own very original non-linear films. Among these were "Jomo," (a film about David McManaway and his work), and "Concert Tonight," where Roy pretends to play "The Stars and Stripes Forever" on a piano as a myriad of unrelated images pass by on a screen. Roy never wanted to be called a sculptor, but a whittler. He labeled himself an "amateur hermit." He often lived in makeshift dwellings that he himself built on the beach at Aransas Pass on the Texas coast. Once he lived in a tree house he built on a patron's property in South Texas. He made what he called "sun ships"—skeletal vessels from found wood—that were sometimes small enough to be viewed in an art gallery.

Roy was, at times, a gregarious man who loved wild parties. But he could also be a very private person. Yes, he was an amateur hermit, and one of the most gifted and versatile artists and craftsmen I've known.

◀ **Cat Mask for Norma**, 1975, carved wood mask and fibers, 10" x 7.5" x 3"



Marty Greenbaum

From an interview with Roger Winter

What got you started making things? What artists have you admired the most?

In 1956, I returned to New York after four years at the University of Arizona. I had read Kerouac, Ginsberg, William Carlos Williams and Walt Whitman, and fortified with my camera I became "a walker in the city." My rambles led me to the museums and a rich absorption of artists—Joseph Cornell, Matisse, Klee, Dubuffet, Picasso, Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank.

I worked for the New York City Youth Board at my first job in 1957. From Monday to Friday I oversaw the after-school activities of Brooklyn high school boys at loose ends; some were already dropouts and belonged to a group called The Pharaohs. One of my job requirements was to write a report for the South Brooklyn Neighborhood Settlement House overseeing the project. In a combination of work and play I discovered the city and began making things for the first time in my life. A developing personal vision was to take from daily life and make something. This reinforced my work with the boys and my own work. I lived the advice I gave them: go out

◀ **Walking Again**, 2004, mixed media, 17" x 11"

into the city, find something. Write about it, draw it, dance to the music you hear. Make something.

What were the centers of art activity in the 50s and 60s?

The museums were the treasures of the city but the Village, West and East were where the dreamers debarked. An exodus of small manufacturing from the city was underway, offering an abundance of cheap living and working spaces. The Italian coffee houses on MacDougal Street, and the neighborhood's family-run restaurants made Little Italy and, a bit more to the south, Chinatown, sustaining sources of cheap food. Entertainment was everywhere: folk music along Fourth Street, opera on the Bowery at the Amato, Jazz at the Five Spot, artists' bars like the Cedar . . . New York City was on fire if you were young and a romantic nomad.

Under the stewardship of Rev. Howard Moody (from 1957 to 1992), the Judson Church became a hot spot. It offered space and absolute artistic freedom to a stream of choreographers, dancers, poets and artists; all were welcome. Happenings, theatrical productions, dance performances, exhibitions and a Hall of Issues flourished. On the lower eastside, the Henry Street Settlement House attracted young artists and filmmakers. The Educational Alliance hosted Friday night discussion groups. Popular, loud artists would argue raucously over aesthetic differences.

Where did you get the materials that you use in your books and other objects?

In the late 50s–60s, the scrap and waste regularly regurgitated by small, light manufacturing companies occupying the gray, 19th-century buildings onto the streets of downtown Manhattan were a geological stew, a windfall of materials for artists. Anonymous flotsam and jetsam of fur, feathers, beads, trinkets, boxes—especially cigar boxes (you could put a world in a box)—wood, ledgers, “findings” of all kinds formed a vast outpouring that I collected and used in my collages and assemblages.

Does your love of jazz music relate to your constructions?

Music was and still is a very important part of my life. At one point in the 50s I lived on 8th Street right next door to the Jazz Gallery. Thelonious Monk played there often and had a major influence on my work. My peripatetic, here-and-now romantic yearning to express the wonders of my life and the act of working, and to get to the heart of many significant moments, has kept close the following line from William Carlos Williams: “sing your song, quickly! or not insects but pulpy weeds will blot out your kind.” I'm still singing.



David McManaway

David McManaway was born and bred in Chicago, Illinois. Once, while still a boy, he saw a movie, *Juke Girl*. One scene showed a street vendor with a cart of unidentifiable objects and a sign that read “Buy A Jomo.” The objects and the sign were transfixed in David’s memory for life. While an art major at the University of Arkansas, he became close friends with another art student, Harold Hill. Harold, nicknamed “Hobo,” had also seen *Juke Girl* and remembered the Jomo cart. He and David started collecting flotsam: printed material that caught their eyes, dime store jewelry, odd toy parts, etc. From this accumulation, they would choose objects to arrange in cigar boxes that they called “Jomo Boxes.” They pledged to each other that Jomo would be an activity between the two of them—never to be called art.

As an adult and artist, David struggled between giving his energy to “serious” painting—the values he learned in art school—or taking a chance on his natural gift for finding lost or discarded objects through archaeological digs into his own culture, and combining those objects in carefully crafted boxes or on boards. “Jomo Boards,” he called them. When I first knew

◀ **Self Portrait Board (Private World)**, 2001, mixed media on polystyrene under flex, 43" x 42.5" x 5"

David and saw his work, I was more excited by the Jomos and his treasure of found objects than I was by his paintings. The boards and boxes were dynamic and provocative and highly personal. His paintings were well done but more predictable. David was seven years my senior, so I never revealed that I felt that way. To abandon painting had to be his own decision. He often mentioned to me that he felt some guilt toward breaking his pledge to Harold Hill. But then he would forgive himself by saying, "I had to do it. Jomos meant so much to me."

David's process of putting objects together, in aesthetic as well as in craft terms, was painstaking work. He never forced a decision. Sometimes he would wait years before an idea fell into place. Despite his brooding over joinery and surface, I still see his life and art dominated by a spirit of play. He was a living example of Lippold's three "P's" of art: patience, persistence and play. David left the world an exquisite body of work.

David's influence on my own work will be presented in detail in Susie Kalil's book, *Roger Winter: Fire and Ice*, to be published by Texas A&M University Press.



▲ **Homage to Magritte**, 1975, mixed media assemblage in wood box, 12" x 12" x 12"

Robin Ragin

In a traditional sense, Robin Ragin was David McManaway's apprentice. She knew David and his work through her job as an assistant at Eugene Binder's Dallas gallery where David was one of the gallery artists. Her apprenticeship started in the mid-1990s when David offered to help Robin with her paintings in return for helping him in his studio. Unknown to David, Robin was already skilled in working with wood, adhesives and shop tools because of the many years of her childhood helping her father, a pilot, restore the family's 1937 Waco biplane. She had also studied art at UCLA, so Robin and David began a uniquely well-suited, fifteen-year work relationship. In time, she became like the daughter that David and Norma didn't have. With David's passing in 2010, Norma asked Robin if she would be responsible for overseeing Norma's proper care and paperwork. At this writing, eight years later, Robin is still deeply committed to this responsibility. Norma is now in her ninety-first year.

In 2005, when David's physical strength and eyesight started to fail him, he turned his studio over to Robin. She finished a commission for David and then started making assemblages of her own. The body of work that Robin has produced proudly

▶ **Tidbits from David**, 2011, glass globe, wood base, tidbits gathered from David McManaway's studio floor, 10" x 7" x 7"





▲ **Star Crossed Lovers**, 2016, wood and ceramic, 6.5" x 14.5" x 2.5"

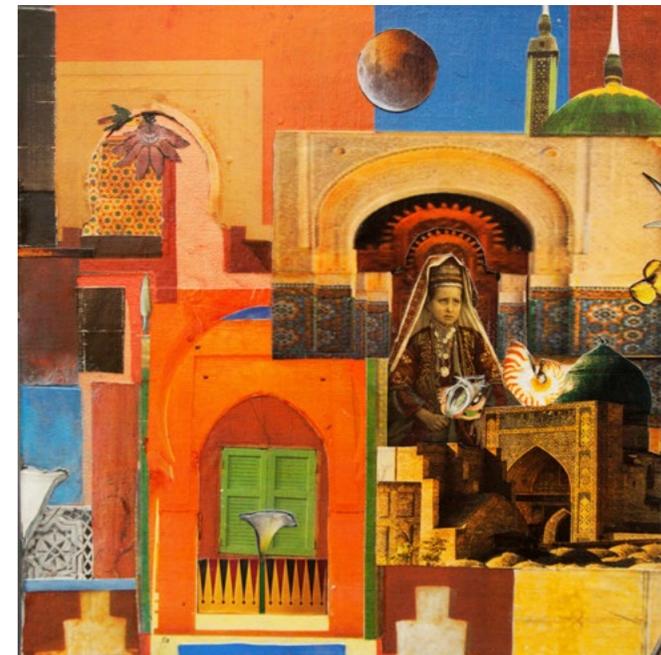
continues the spirit of works by the "Unholy Trio": Roy Fridge, Jim Love and David. Yet Robin has a simplified directness and wit that is entirely her own, as seen in her assemblage of a tiny white dog wearing a Santa hat and a red ball between its feet on a dark green spool-like stand, in a glass column filled with hundreds of colorful trinkets and placed on a circular black base.

She placed a small religious figure in a niche and titled it Saint Norma because of Norma's tolerance of David's mood swings during his late years. So, despite the inevitable influence of David, Jim and Roy, Robin Ragin has her own eyes, her own skills and her own voice.

Nancy Willis Smith

Born near Chicago, Nancy Willis Smith started her professional life in music and then law, despite her lifelong interest in visual art. While a partner in an international law firm in San Francisco, she left the practice and moved to Southern California. She accepted a friend's invitation to visit her in Qatar, not knowing the impact this was to have on her future life. Her visit to Qatar turned into a multi-year stay when she became the attorney for an organization founded by the wife of the then-ruling Emir.

Nancy's work allowed her to travel throughout the Middle East and North Africa, both before and during the Arab Spring. Although her experiences during this time were sometimes difficult, they were also rewarding and life altering. Her natural curiosity led her to knowledge of religions of the region, the writings of Rumi and the practices of Sufi mysticism. She became fascinated with the Whirling Dervishes. During her travels to Yemen, Syria, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan, she studied the architecture inside and out. The result of her experiences in the Middle East during this eventful time altered her world view and her concepts of man, nature and the universe. This intellectual and spiritual evolution reawakened Nancy's need for a visual medium. She began making collages combined with areas of acrylic paint. She put together found natural



▲ **Bey of Tangiers**, 2016, acrylic and paper on canvas, 12" x 12"

objects with photos and other machine-made images to bring into material life her complex inner life of senses, thoughts and knowledge. Collage allowed her to work quickly, catching ideas on the wing. In an early collage diptych, *Bey of Tangiers*, she combined images of outer planets with Islamic math-based



mosaics, a human corpse, a nautilus shell, a sacred boy on a throne, a paintbrush and more. The images and symbols are held together with a multi-colored geometric design, partially abstract and partially architectural.

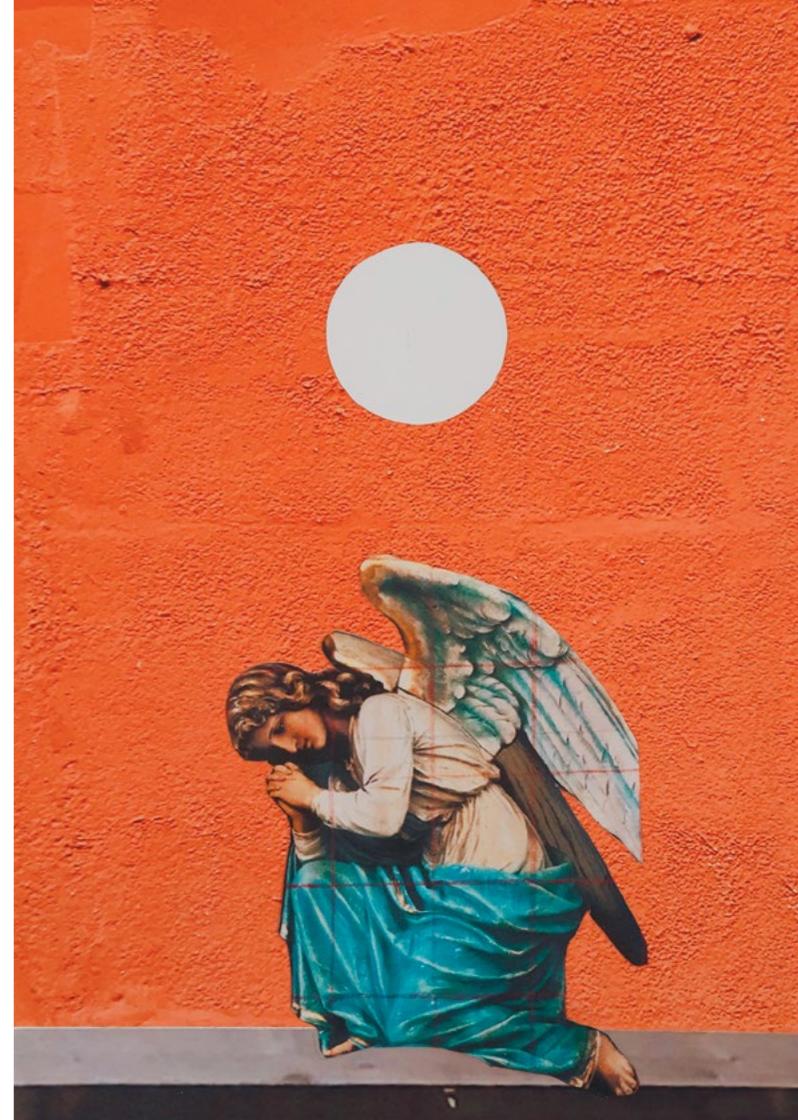
After her re-entry into art and after the Arab spring began, Nancy returned to the United States and has lived several years now in New York City. She has studied, and has been a prize-winning student, at the Art Students League. She works alone, and works feverishly. Her travels have enabled her to be a citizen of the world, but I would never reduce her work to the category of "global art." Global art was an expression generated by the Internet and high-end art collectors describing an international art market. Rather, I think of her work as cosmic. Her meanings relate to a spiritual, mystical cosmos, and how and where the time/space life forms on our planet fit into the macrocosm.

◀ **Bubble Boy**, 2016, natural materials (vines, leaves, berries, nuts) with ceramic and metal in glass cloche, 9" x 9" x 18"

Roger Winter

The composer, Ned Rorem, once told me that art cannot be abstract nor can music be concrete. It's beyond me to know whether or not his pronouncement is accurate, but my view of painting has always been that it is either objective or subjective—or a combination of the two. The words "abstract" and "concrete" have never occurred to me while painting. Early on, I worked directly from life with an occasional foray into a made-up figurative subject. When, step by painful step, I discovered collage, I began painting details from snapshots interacting with made-up geometric backgrounds. This way of painting causes one to look inside oneself, to invent the related placement of realistic images in unrealistic scales, to flatten background areas so space is seen only through the push and pull of color or through overlapping planes. This approach used, and uses, more of me than painting directly from life. But to balance and incorporate memory, twilight sleep, dreams, etc., into an invented space of color and form is difficult, and sometimes emotionally painful, work. Yet it continues to resonate for me like no other work I've produced.

▶ **Fallen Angel**, 2018, paper on museum board, 10.5" x 7.5"



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