

LIFE....A COMMENTARY ON AN ART EXHIBIT

Life is who we are/who we think we are/where we are/where we've been/how we got there and why. It's where we think we are going and how we plan to get there. It's what we are doing and all the things that we want and what we've never gotten because of.....

Life is for most Black folks, the day to day reality of living in an alienated racist society with built-in strictures with which one must grapple constantly.

Life is all those unspoken things that go on inside one's head and find expression perhaps in a silent smile/the timbre of one's voice/ the way one walks-small things that shape one's style.

These are just a few of my thoughts which were stimulated by a portrait of a woman by artist Lorraine Sando entitled, "Life is." A simple yet elegant rendering in gray-white charcoal and contour crayon set on dark ground/it reminds me of a face from a Langston Hughes poem or the legy of early Trane showing us the warmth/depth and the mastery of the Coltrane yet to come. There is music, poetry and so much life/understanding of life in Ms. Sando's work. Her paintings have a way of jumping off their canvases right into one's life stream causing a fusion of one's past with one's present.

Life bursts into exotic plumage and suggests the foliage of another place, perhaps the Caribbean in two acrylics by E. R. James. The bold fabric designs of Etta Norwood also present striking illusions in still another idiom: decorative cloth.

Other artists included in this show are Paul Dusenbury, Beth Parsel and Milt Simons.

To sum up my feelings about this exhibit is to say, here is a group of enterprising artists in our community who definitely have their heads together, for when you stop to think about it, the credit union is probably one of the most frequented institutions in the Black community and provides the artists with a captive audience. Unlike banks, heavily trafficked with with a constant whirr of momentum, the average customer can spend a bit more time per visit in the credit union and the environment at CAFCU tends to be friendlier and aesthetically more pleasant than the average bank; that is,

as far as an art exhibit is concerned. The irony here is that art is exhibited where money is transacted and you may or may not feel the impact of the art. Ideally art is ex-

hibited in the gallery/gallery--the museum/gallery---the cultural center/gallery, but since we do not have any of these kinds of institutions in the Central District, we do the best

with what we have to bring art closer to its sources/ to make it more accessible to Black people.

Plaudits to the artists for their productivity and for their idea and thanks to

Mrs. Elizabeth Wells, director of the Central Federal Credit Union, for encouraging this project which shows us how functional community institutions can/should be.



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