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CARRYING ON:
**Black Panther Party Artists
Continue the Legacy**

Gayle Asali Dickson
Emory Douglas
Malik Edwards
Akinsanya Kambon
curated by Colette Gaiter

January 27 - March 15, 2025

Reception and artists panel: **Saturday, February 8th**
Panel begins at 3 PM, reception to follow

Artwork featured: Emory Douglas, *Educate to Liberate*,
2015, Inkjet on paper, 17 x 22 inches. © 2024 Emory Douglas, AFLaw.

Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum Presents
Carrying On: Black Panther Party Artists Continue the Legacy

Featuring Artists Gayle Asali Dickson, Emory Douglas,
Malik Edwards, and Akinsanya Kambon

Curated by Colette Gaiter

GLASSBORO, NJ—Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum is excited to announce ***Carrying On: Black Panther Party Artists Continue the Legacy***, a new exhibition celebrating the works of former Black Panther Party artists: Gayle Asali Dickson, Emory Douglas, Malik Edwards, and Akinsanya Kambon. Curated by Colette Gaiter, *Carrying On...* showcases the legacy and current work of these cultural pioneers together for the first time to honor their lifelong commitments to people, justice, liberation, and the freedom to express their creative visions. This exhibition will be on view from January 27 to March 15, 2025. In celebration of Black History Month, a panel discussion with the artists and curator will take place on Saturday, February 8 from 3-4 pm, followed by an opening reception from 4-6 pm.

These four artists were teenagers and young adults when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legal segregation and discrimination in the United States. They grew up in the Jim Crow era, restricted by laws and practices that affected every aspect of their lives

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and severely limited opportunities to pursue their dreams. Through talent, perseverance, and serendipity, they became and remain artists.

The Black Panther Party and *The Black Panther* newspaper are the common denominators unifying their early artistic careers. As Curator Colette Gaiter explains, “*Carrying On...* brings together four artists who participated in a radical justice experiment that resonates today over half a century later. Emory Douglas joined the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1967 and practiced the Party’s mantra, “Each one teach one.” He later worked with Gayle Asali Dickson, Malik Edwards, and Akinsanya Kambon at various times on *The Black Panther* newspaper in the early 1970s. Edwards and Kambon joined the BPP after serving in Vietnam. Like Dickson and Douglas, they saw a way to work for liberation. The artists’ early work (made during the late 1960s- early 1970s global social movements and uprisings against oppression of all kinds) alongside their later and current work reveals personal and artistic evolutions. Dickson and Edwards use spiritual elements in their art just as they did in their lives to transcend oppression and bring others along with them. Douglas and Kambon connect with ancestors for the same purpose. Various media and work styles represent the artists’ need to increase their expressive range and expand their thinking. From the beginning, each artist used their talents and insights to visualize a radical future and motivate others to imagine beyond their current conditions. Their work helped make lasting changes in the world. Carrying on the BPP’s teachings, all four artists still work with communities, telling visual stories that sustain a steady movement toward liberation for everyone.”

In the decades following their work at *The Black Panther* newspaper, each artist has expanded their ways of using figures to represent realities and communicate aspirational ideas. *Carrying On...* will feature drawings, paintings, clay sculptures, graphic design, digital prints, and images generated from Artificial Intelligence (AI) prompts. The juxtaposition of viewing the artists’ early work next to their later and current work will also offer insight into the artists’ perspectives on social progress and change, while celebrating their dedication to the belief that art motivates and inspires people to work for their own liberation.

About the Artists

Gayle Asali Dickson

The Reverend Gayle Asali Dickson is a San Francisco Bay Area native, an artist, a member of the Black Panther Party, and an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ denomination. In 1970, she joined the Black Panther Party in Seattle, and in 1972, she and other Seattle members migrated to the Oakland headquarters. Dickson was the only woman artist for *The Black Panther* newspaper between 1972 and 1974,

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drawing primarily women and children during the “Oakland Base of Operation” period. Between 1974 and 1976, she taught at the Oakland Community School using art as a teaching tool. After ordination in 1998, she served as Pastor of a church in South Berkeley for eight years. She started the Friday Night Art and Dinner Program, exposing children to world cultures through art and food. Her Little Bobby Hutton Youth and Adult Literacy Program at the church used *The Black Panther* newspaper as a teaching tool. Over the years, she continued her creative work, exhibiting in the Bay Area and nationally. Currently, she is working on a painting project about six women called “The Empowering Voice of Women from the Bible and African-American Women in History.”

Emory Douglas

Emory Douglas has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1951. After studying commercial art at City College of San Francisco, he was the Black Panther Party’s Revolutionary Artist and then Minister of Culture from February 1967 until the early 1980s. He art directed, designed, and illustrated for *The Black Panther* newspaper. Working with other artists and designers, his direction sustained the paper’s bold graphic look. After the BP newspaper ceased publication, he worked at the San Francisco Sun Reporter, a Black newspaper in San Francisco. In 2007, a monograph of Douglas’s work for The Black Panther brought his visual activism to new generations. Douglas had solo exhibitions at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (2008) and the New Museum in New York (2009). In 2015, he became the first living Black person to win an AIGA Medal for contributing to the field of visual communications. In 2022, he was inducted into the Society of Illustrators’ Hall of Fame. In addition to exhibitions and inclusion in museum collections around the world, he speaks to all ages of students and audiences at a range of venues. Remaining community-minded, he often collaborates on a local project when he gives a talk or exhibits his work.

Malik Edwards

When he was young, Malik Edwards discovered his talent by drawing Captain Marvel, Superman, and other superheroes as Black, imagining himself in those roles. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) in 1963 and served in Vietnam. After returning in 1966, the Corps recognized his artistic talents and assigned him to work as a Corps illustrator. In 1970, Edwards moved to Northern California and trained as an apprentice with the Black Panther Party’s (BPP) Minister of Culture, Emory Douglas. He learned the technical details of drawing, printing, and layout there, working alongside Gayle Asali Dickson. As the head of the Black Panther Party’s Washington, D.C. regional branch, he designed posters, flyers, and magazines for pro-Black events and anti-drug campaigns. Edwards left the BPP in 1973. He also taught art and worked as a drug counselor. Throughout his long career, Malik Edwards has used various media and methods as a graphic designer and artist. He later learned to use digital media and, most recently, incorporated AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools. His work has been exhibited

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in galleries in the Washington D.C. and San Francisco Bay areas. He currently works at a high school in Oakland, California, as a Restorative Practice Case Manager.

Akinsanya Kambon

Working in clay for almost four decades, Akinsanya Kambon creates vessels, figures, and wall plaques. These ceramics visualize narratives of the Black diaspora, including African histories, mythologies, and stories of violence and revolution from throughout Africa and the Americas. From 1966 to 1968, Kambon served in Vietnam with the U.S. Marine Corps as a combat illustrator and infantryman and was awarded several Purple Hearts for his bravery. Upon his return, he joined the Sacramento chapter of the Black Panther Party. As Lieutenant of Culture, he worked on the layout and illustrations for *The Black Panther* newspaper. Kambon earned a BA and an MA from California State University, Fresno. He has been working as a professor of art at the California State University, Long Beach, for twenty-six years and running free youth art programs devoted to African, Indigenous, and Latino culture out of his Long Beach studio. Recent solo exhibitions include the Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento. Recent group exhibitions were at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Oakland Museum of California; and Joyce Gordon Gallery, Oakland. In 2023, Kambon received the Mohn Award for Artistic Excellence from the Hammer Museum of Contemporary Art.

About the Curator

Colette Gaiter's career started in graphic design and morphed into digital and interdisciplinary art. Her visual work, exhibited internationally, includes artist books, photographic digital prints, multimedia collage, assemblage, artist websites (from the early days of digital art), and interactive computer-based installations. Now, she writes about artists, designers, and previously unexplored aspects of visual culture. Since 2005, her essays and articles on the activist and Black Panther Party artist Emory Douglas have appeared in various publications, including the books *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas* (2023) and *The Black Experience in Design* (2022). Other recent arts writing includes catalog essays for the Delaware Art Museum's *Jazz Age Illustration*, the Poster House Museum's *Wonder City of the World: New York City Travel Posters*, the Norman Rockwell Museum's *Imprinted: Illustrating Race*, and book reviews for *The Brooklyn Rail*. The Rockwell catalog essay featured Black Panther artists included in *Carrying On*. She is working on a book about Emory Douglas's continuing post-Black Panther Party work as an activist artist. She retired as Professor Emerita from the Department of Africana Studies and Art & Design at the University of Delaware. Her work as an educator and other creative pursuits always investigate activism.

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Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum serves as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and the surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that encourages dialogue and collaboration between exhibiting artists, students, faculty, the general public, and other cultural institutions through the presentation of interdisciplinary art exhibitions, artist talks, and other public programming. We present diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists with content that is thought-provoking, relevant, and timely. Our mission is to engender curiosity and a passion for contemporary art, enrich the quality of life for area residents, create a welcoming and inclusive cultural destination at Rowan University, and function as a resource for contemporary art throughout the region. For more information, visit: rowan.edu/artgallery/

Location

301 High St W, Glassboro, NJ 08028

Gallery Hours

Monday - Friday, 10 am - 5 pm

Saturday, 11 am - 5 pm

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