

Artists of color

By **TAHREE LANE**
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The anticipation 6-year-old Elizabeth Jordan felt awaiting her mom's return from Saturday shopping was not for the groceries she'd bring, but for the stiff, brown-paper bags. They were fresh canvases for the child, tabularas to be covered with outpouring from her imagination.

Decades later, when she worked as a welder on torque converters at the Chrysler Machining plant in Perrysburg Township, she would be commissioned to draw a portrait of former Chrysler CEO Deiter Zetsche's family. Her pencil drawings are on view through March 10 at 20 North Gallery, 18 N. St. Clair St., along with many others.

Jordan aims to represent the African-American experience in an uplifting light, usually beginning with a photograph, followed by a painstaking sketch using eight or so graphite or charcoal pencils. She was encouraged by the late Wil Clay, whose work is also in the gallery.

Robert Shorter's oil-based pencils give smooth hue to the animals and people he draws on thick paper.

"I try to catch the richness of painting with pencils. And I have no clean-up," said the Libbey High School graduate. He's done sports figures, dogs, and recently, horses. Norman Rockwell is an inspiration.

"I always loved the sharpness of Rockwell, the color, the human factor, the storytelling," said Mr. Shorter, adding that he's drawing more since 2009, when he sold the engineering/drafting business he co-owned.

Painting for 46 years, Mack Walton's greatest influences were the late Cuthbert Ryan, his teacher at Scott High School, and the late Toledo artist LeMaxie Glover. With soft edges and vivid reds and blues, his beautiful *Still Life with Watermelon* suggests Impressionism.

"Most of the famous people I paint are African Americans. Otherwise I like to do landscapes and everything else," said Mr. Walton, who studied art via correspondence courses. Before retiring from Jeep, he produced more than 100 oil portraits for coworkers.

Bronx-born Yolanda Woodberry

was imprinted with a vivid palette during the 20 years she lived on the Caribbean island of Antigua, her mother's homeland. She and her husband opened a restaurant, and to decorate it, she painted. "I like more of an abstract style and I love color; bold reds, blues, and greens. I am an acrylic lover but I also enjoy oils."

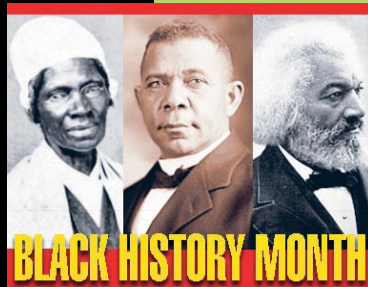
In 1995, the Antigua and Barbuda General Post Office commissioned her to paint a block of four stamps, stunning depictions of Caribbean life. "In the Caribbean I'd do some funky something and somebody liked it and it would take off," she said, explaining how she'd experiment and sell her work. An influence: Peter Max, best-known for his psychedelic art in the 1960s and 1970s.

Warren Woodberry picked up his wife's old brushes and found talent. He's doing a John Lennon series, giving the Beatle brown skin, and he did a terrific take-off on a 1948 photo of Picasso bearing a beach umbrella and walking behind a beautiful woman. Mr. Woodberry's Picasso holds an umbrella over an African woman, surrounded by masks. "I have him hold the umbrella for a black woman and have him apologize for distorting women's bodies so much, and to acknowledge he was influenced by African masks."

Charles T. Gabriel originally shot weddings and family portraits, then did model and fashion photography, learning by trial and error, from books, and other photographers. Retired after 30 years at the Toledo Jeep plant, Gabriel has an eye for tranquility (a blue bench against a white stucco wall) and majesty (a mountaintop view of a lake edged by forest, with a castle in foreground). "I like to capture a certain atmosphere or feeling with each image so that it tells a story."

With a Bronica camera, he uses medium-format film, has it developed in Indiana, the negatives returned on a disk, and he prints on metallic paper. "I don't manipulate it."

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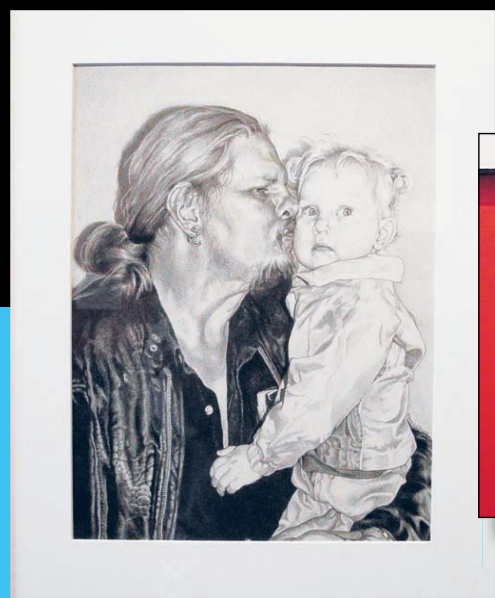
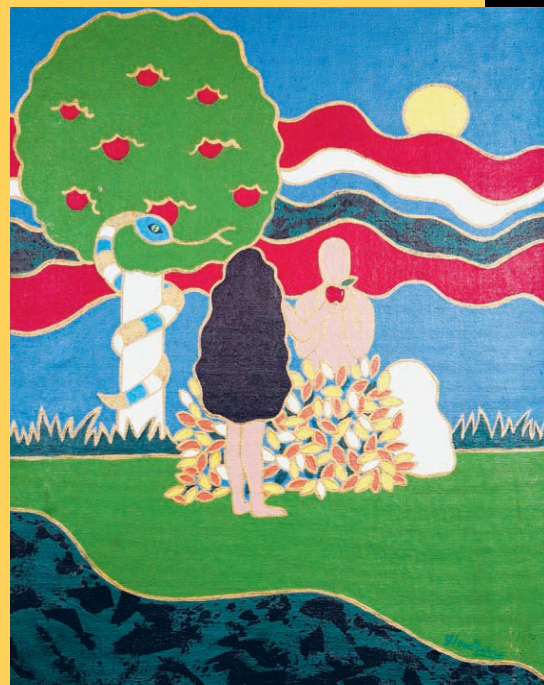
Mack Walton with his painting titled 'Still Life with Watermelon,' above.



Warren Woodberry and his painting 'Picasso in Africa,' below.



Yolanda Woodberry and her painting 'Adam and Eve,' below.



Elizabeth Jordan with her pencil drawing 'Tough Love.'



Charles Gabriel, Jr., with his photo, below, titled 'Blue Bench.'



Robert E. Shorter with his painting 'Mr. Gaston from Kentucky.'

