

March
2003

OUTSIDER ARTIST FINDS SUCCESS AT HAI



"The Battle of Hastings" by Rodney Thornblad.

In January, the Outsider Art Fair brought aficionados of self-taught art from around the world to the Puck Building in Soho. Many enthusiasts also attended HAI's Outsider exhibit mounted concurrently at HAI's loft gallery. Rodney Thornblad's "The Battle of Hastings," pictured above, drew the attention of one particular viewer, the representative of a Miami based nonprofit organization, who later purchased the work.

Created in HAI's Saturday Art Program over the span of approximately one year, the drawing is immense in size, over six feet long and two feet high and equally intricate in detail. The third work completed by Thornblad, (two earlier drawings, one depicting a medieval battle scene and the other a representation of The Last Supper are now held in private collections) "The Battle of Hastings" shows a highly developed personal style reflecting several years of experience within the medium.

Born in the Bronx in 1959, the artist has lived with mental illness since he was diagnosed as a young adult. During his twenties, he developed a drinking problem that would persist for several years. Now in his forties, Thornblad maintains an alcohol-free life and has participated in mental health treatment programs and HAI art workshops for over ten years.

The artistic technique Thornblad now fluently expresses in his work was cultivated during his thirties when he began drawing in small scale. Using lead pencil to create the countless meticulously drafted figures and battlement structures, Thornblad adds colored pencil with painstaking detail and completes his tableaux by outlining figures in black ink.

"The Battle of Hastings" is the most recent in a series of medieval battle scenes that are emblematic of personal hardship encountered by the artist. Thornblad consistently works to overcome challenges that appear before him and strives to make the most of life. "I draw because it gives me fulfillment. And it gives me a little money to get what I need. I feel very good about exhibiting my work. It gives me a sense of purpose."

HAI has exhibited the work of talented artists in workshops for over ten years and arranges exhibits or commercial representation by galleries in New York and around the country. Work by HAI artists appear in the permanent collections of institutions ranging from the American Folk Art Museum to the Outsider Archive of London, now housed at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Thornblad is among several exceptionally talented artists whose work has recently garnered the attention of prestigious institutions through his success in HAI's Arts Workshops Program.

Over...

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This March, HAI will provide **Hope And Inspiration** to an audience of more than 30,900 people at more than 430 events by offering opportunities...

...to enjoy dance, theater, concerts and more

* In March, the **Cultural Events Program** will make arrangements for over 3,500 people to attend over 50 events including:

<i>Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus</i>	Madison Square Garden
<i>Amateur Night at the Apollo</i>	Apollo Theater
<i>Our Lady of 121st Street</i>	Union Square Theatre
<i>New York Knicks</i>	Madison Square Garden
<i>Cabaret</i>	Studio 54
<i>New York City Opera's A Little Night Music</i>	New York State Theatre
<i>Ma Rainey's Black Bottom</i>	Royale Theatre
<i>Baz's Luhrman's La Boheme</i>	Broadway Theatre
<i>Vienna Choir Boys</i>	Staten Island Center for the Arts

*HAI's **Community Performing Arts Series** will present *AILEY 2* at Aaron Davis Hall on March 13th at 2pm and 8pm. For tickets to these performances please call (212) 575-7660.

* HAI's **Describe Program** makes live theater performances accessible to visually impaired and blind individuals. In March, participants will enjoy a presentation of *Beauty and the Beast* at The Palace Theater.

* HAI's **Omni*Bus Program** will enable over 540 individuals to participate in 27 outings in March including trips to Queens Theater in the Park, Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus, The Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Botanical Gardens and *AILEY 2*. In the past year HAI's Omni*Bus Program has had over 500 trips, providing recreational outings for approximately 9,500 elderly people residing in nursing homes and rehab programs throughout New York City.

* **Tickets to Go** provides New York City seniors, age 60 and over, with greatly discounted tickets to renowned cultural and entertainment events. In March, 1,386 registered members of the program will enjoy productions of *La Boheme*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Paul Taylor in concert*, *Mark Morris Dance Company*, *Cabaret*, *The Fifth of July*, *Ailey 2*, *Joe Egg* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

* The **On-Site Performance Program** will entertain more than 12,500 people at over 250 events in March. Performances range from a Women's History Month celebration featuring the vocal and guitar performance of Robin Greenstein at New Horizons, to Irish folk music at New York Foundling Hospital. Other highlights include The Jazz Elders' Big Band Jazz Performance at University Nursing Home and Harpbeat's Latin Percussion at the Herbert G. Birch School.

...to develop competence through artistic expression

* In March, 700 hours of **Arts Workshops** will take place, for an attendance totaling 10,700 individuals. New workshops are underway at numerous sites: Astor Home for Children, Forest City Day Treatment Center of Carl Fenichel Community Services/The League School, Friendship House of JASA, Herbert Birch group residence for MR/DD adults, Lavin Day Program of Heartshare Human Services, The Living Room of Citizens' Advice Bureau, Project Moving On of Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services and Sunset Park I of Lifespire. In addition, the exhibit of elegant paintings by Frances "Lady Shalimar" Montague is continuing at the HAI loft space. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 1 pm to 6 pm.

...to acquire skills for supportive/independent living

* The HAI **Prevention Education Program** uses theatrical role-play to develop decision making skills with respect to HIV/AIDS, Homelessness, Youth Leadership/Violence Prevention and Medicaid Managed Care. In March, more than 60 workshops will take place reaching over 4,200 individuals. *Peace by Peace* performances, Youth Leadership/Violence Prevention, HIV Prevention and Housing Readiness workshops will be taking place at Lexington Ave. Women's Shelter, William E. Grady HS, Richard R. Green HS, Alfred E. Smith HS, and Covenant House. Also in March, the new cast of this year's *RESPECT Project*, directed by George Faison, will begin performing in New York City High Schools.

...to gain access to information and to learn more about our mission

* HAI has developed various publications designed to aid disabled and elderly people, and to enlighten and stimulate the general public. Visit HAI's website, www.hospitalaudiences.org, view *Access for All: Guide for People with Disabilities to New York City Cultural Institutions*, its update, *Addendum 2001* and *On the Go: A Guide to New York City Culture at a Discount for Seniors*. Hard copies of these publications are also available by writing to HAI. The third edition of *Live Arts Experiences: Their Impact on Health and Wellness* can also be viewed on HAI's website.