

Festival features black artist Caldwell

"I have never seen art in a military establishment before — nor an academy for that matter. So I suppose I am interested to see how it's handled," said Bill Caldwell in a recent interview.

Caldwell, guest artist during the Academy's Festival of Black Culture, will speak in L3, Fairchild Hall, today at 12:35 p.m. His slide-illustrated talks will deal with his own works, those of Romare Bearden, internationally recognized "dean" of Afro-American artists, and those of other "black artists."

"I will go into the development of black artists in this country and their historical references," said Caldwell.

"I want to point out all the different aspects of being a Black artist, and, if possible," he continued, "give a clear definition of the black artist and of art as a black experience."

"Or," he concluded, laughing, "maybe I just want to talk about man, the artist, as a person who happens to be black."

Writer, poet, interviewer, artist Caldwell is a native of Chicago, where he studied at the Chicago Art Institute and the Institute of Design.

He moved to New York City in the early 1950's to study with the late Hans Hoffman. Since then he has lived in Germany, Italy, Holland, Norway and Sweden, where he taught at the University of Oslo. His lectures have taken him to the Universities of Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Cologne and others throughout Europe.

He has had one-man shows in Europe at the A. C. Olsen Gallery, Oslo, the Franz Mueller Gallery, Hamburg and the Eric Stomson Gallery, Helsinki. Exhibitions have included the Simpson Gallery in London and at universities in Geneva, Zurich, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Rome. His poetry and articles have been published in a variety of European magazines and journals.

Since his return to the United States after a 15-year absence, Caldwell has exhibited at Heritage House in Staten Island, the Metropolitan Applied Research Center, the Showcase for Black Artists, the New Yorker Club in New York City and the University of Atlanta's Black Art Center.

"An artist is like a humanistic computer, affected by the explosions and the silences that dictate our futures," Caldwell said. "When that in-take is acted upon, then the painter gives back some of what he has received and makes a contribution."

Caldwell feels that for him painting has always represented "an immediate desperation," a kind of unwilling psychological response to both interior and exterior reality — an act of "input."

... reality, an act of putting things down quickly and, in doing so, trying to clarify some of my own concepts and ideas and to relate them to the mainstream of life."

He links his works to experiments. "Each experiment is a small bridge to something that is a little more profound."

He said that he finds himself "in constant state of transition," and that his work is now "projecting a great deal of emotion that seems to have been latent during previous years."

Of his paintings he said "they are related to the world we live in." And he said also that "art is not a separate entity but is related to how you get food, where you live, your ability to clothe yourself and your family."

Speaking about his upcoming visit to the Academy, Caldwell expressed his wishes for the success of the Festival of Black Culture. And he added, "I hope that it will be relevant not only to the Academy but to the Armed Forces in general. The festival should help establish greater understanding and communication between people even while helping blacks affirm their identity."

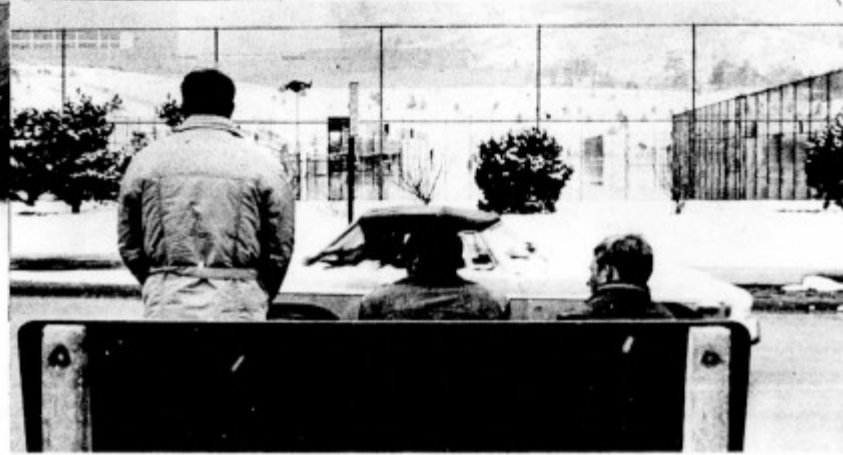
Bill Caldwell will help in establishing that communication and understanding by talking about the works of artists who happen to be black.



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