

# Jenkins Johnson Gallery

## Wadsworth Jarrell

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## WADSWORTH JARRELL

**Wadsworth Jarrell** (b. 1929, Albany, GA) Wadsworth Jarrell is a founding member of AfriCOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists)\*. AfriCOBRA, founded on the South Side of Chicago in 1968 by a collective of young Black artists, whose interest in Transnational Black Aesthetics led them to create one of the most distinctive visual voices in 20th Century American art. The characteristic of the classic AfriCOBRA look are vibrant “Cool Ade” colors, bold text and positive images of Black people, essential to everyday life in the community from which the movement emerged. AfriCOBRA established a philosophical and aesthetic foundation for the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 70s. The founders’ vision has its roots in the streets, classrooms, studios and living rooms of the South Side, yet its impact has extended around the world, influencing artists such as Kerry James Marshall and Kehinde Wiley. Throughout his career, Wadsworth has celebrated the struggles, strengths and beauty of African Americans in his art.

Jarrell is a painter and photographer who creates pattern-intensive portraits that combine vibrant colors with Black Power slogans to depict the intensity of political activism. He also documented the musical life that flourished in Chicago in the late 1960s and 1970s. Jarrell was a member of the Organization of Black American Culture and painted the “Rhythm and Blues” section of The Wall of Respect mural that was located on the South Side of Chicago. Currently, he continues to experiment in his practice with past and present topics surrounding blackness. He is married to Jae Jarrell.

Mr. Jarrell’s work is in many collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, High Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, National Museum of African American History and Culture, and The Studio Museum in Harlem. He was included in *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* organized by Tate Modern which traveled to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Broad, DeYoung Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Other recent exhibitions include the *AfricaCOBRA: Nation Time* an official collateral event of the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, *AfriCOBRA: Messages to the People* at the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, *The Time Is Now! Art Worlds of Chicago’s South Side 1960-1980* at the Smart Museum of Art, *Heritage: Wadsworth and Jae Jarrell* at The Cleveland Museum of Art, and *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now* at MCA Chicago, ICA Philadelphia, and The Studio Museum in Harlem. In 2020, Wadsworth debuted his book *AFRICOBRA: Experimental Art Towards a School of Thought* and was interviewed with Jae Jarrell by Hans Ulrich Obrist as part of Obrist’s *Interview Project*. He attended the Art Institute of Chicago and received his MFA from Howard University. Jarrell taught painting at Howard University and University of Georgia. In 2022, Wadsworth and Jae Jarrell will have solo exhibitions at Jenkins Johnson Gallery. He lives and works in Cleveland, Ohio.

\*Five AfriCOBRA Founding Members:

Jeff Donaldson, Jae Jarrell, Wadsworth Jarrell, Barbara Jones-Hogu and Gerald Williams.



Wadsworth Jarrell, *Revolutionary*, 1972,  
screen print printed in color on white wove paper  
33 x 26 inches



Wadsworth Jarrell, *Navaga*, 1974, acrylic  
on canvas, 50 x 24 inches



**Wadsworth Jarrell**

*Prophecy*, 1974

acrylic on canvas

48 x 85 1/2 inches

signed recto



**Wadsworth Jarrell**  
*Homage to a Giant, 1970*  
acrylic on board  
48 x 90 x 3 inches  
signed recto



**Wadsworth Jarrell**

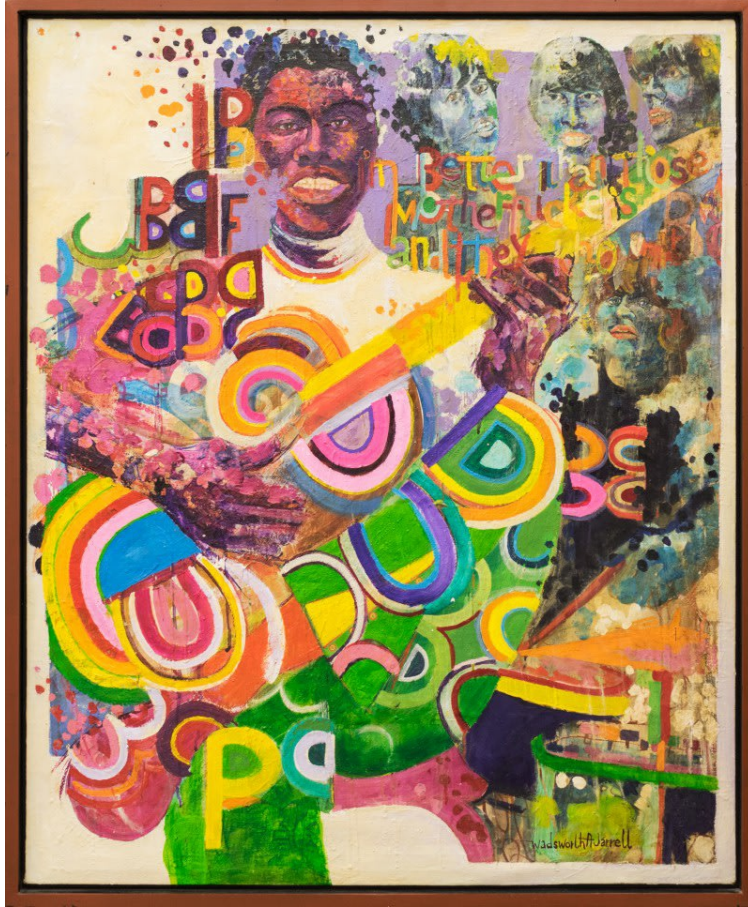
*Revolutionary*, 1972

screenprint printed in color on white wove paper

33 x 26 in

Edition 109 of 300 (no record of full edition printed), Original Edition of 300, rare few remaining as many were lost, or damaged by water.

signed recto



Wadsworth Jarrell  
*Compared to What: I Am Better Than Those Motherfuckers and They Know It*, 1969  
acrylic on canvas  
42 x 34 inches  
signed recto



**Wadsworth Jarrell**  
*Come Saturday, 1959*  
watercolor and ink on paper  
43 x 32 inches  
signed recto

## WADSWORTH JARRELL

### BORN:

1929 Albany, GA, lives and works in Cleveland, OH

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

- 2022 Title TBA, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA (forthcoming)
- 2021 Art Basel Miami Beach, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Miami, FL  
The Art Show 2021, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY  
*Angela Davis – Seize the Time*, Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick, NJ  
*Invincible Summer*, Minnesota Street Projects, San Francisco, CA  
The Armory Show, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY  
Frieze NY, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY
- 2020 *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX  
The Armory Show, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY  
FOG Art and Design, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2019 *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, The Broad, Los Angeles, CA traveled to: de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA  
*AfriCOBRA: Nation Time*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2018 *AfriCOBRA: Messages to the People*, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, FL  
*The Time is Now! Art Worlds of Chicago's South Side, 1960-1980*, Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL  
*Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, traveled to: Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR  
*We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-1985*, ICA Boston, Boston, MA  
*AfriCOBRA: Now*, Kravets Wehby Gallery, New York, NY  
*Heritage: Wadsworth and Jae Jarrell*, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH
- 2017 *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, Tate Modern, London, UK  
*IFDPA Fine Art Print Fair 2017*, Aaron Galleries, New York, NY  
*We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-1985*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
*Art of the Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement*, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI
- 2016 *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, ICA Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
*It Takes a Nation: Art for Social Justice with Emory Douglas and the Black Panther Party, AfriCOBRA, and Contemporary Washington Artists*, American University Museum, Washington, D.C.
- 2015 *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, MCA Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2013 *AfriCOBRA: Philosophy*, Logan Center Gallery, Chicago, IL  
*AfriCOBRA: Art and Impact*, The DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago, IL
- 1977 *AfriCOBRA/Farafindugu*, Afro-American Historic & Cultural Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 1973 *AfriCOBRA III*, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA  
*AfriCOBRA III*, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
- 1972 *AfriCOBRA II*, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL  
*AfriCOBRA II*, Howard University, Washington, D.C.  
*AfriCOBRA II*, Malcom X College, Chicago, IL  
*AfriCOBRA II*, Hati Gallery, Rochester, NY  
*AfriCOBRA II*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
- 1971 *AfriCOBRA II*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY  
*AfriCOBRA II*, Langston Hughes Center for Visual & Performing Arts, Buffalo, NY  
*AfriCOBRA I*, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
- 1970 *AfriCOBRA I*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY  
*AfriCOBRA I*, Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Roxbury, MA  
*AfriCOBRA I*, Black Expo, Chicago, IL

### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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- Valentine, Victoria L. "Cleveland Museum of Art Acquires Key Works by African American Artists Amy Sherald, Barbara Jones-Hogu, Wadsworth Jarrell, and D'Angelo Lovell Williams." *Culture Type*, 30 March 2021. Online.
- Litt, Steven. "Cleveland artist Wadsworth Jarrell sets record straight on history of revolutionary AfriCOBRA collective in new book." *Cleveland.com*, 10 January 2021. Online.
- 2020 Ruggiero, Bob. "Timely 'Soul of a Nation' Finally Reaches the MFAH. But See It, Quick!" *Houston Press*, 29 June 2020. Online.
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- 2019 Valentine, Victoria L. "AFRICOBRA in Venice: Curated by Jeffreen Hayes, 'Nation Time' Explores the Powerful Roots and History of the Collective." *Culture Type*, 23 November 2019. Online.
- Wheeler, André. "How the art of black power shook off the white gaze." *The Guardian*, 9 November 2019. Online.
- Shaw, A.R. "Black power and beauty on display as 'Soul of a Nation' opens in San Francisco." *Rollingout*, 8 November 2019. Online.
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- Martin, Liv. "First Giordanos, Portillos. Now, Mia brings 'Art from Chicago.'" *Minnesota Daily*. 3 September 2018. Online.
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- 2013 Vogel, Carol. "New Showcase for a Neglected Era." *The New York Times*, 17 January 2013. Online.
- 1996 Douglas, Robert L., and Wadsworth Jarrell. "Wadsworth Jarrell: the Artist as Revolutionary." Pomegranate Artbooks, 1996.

#### SELECTED PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND ARTISTS TALKS:

- 2020 *The Interview Project: Jae and Wadsworth Jarrell in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Conversations on Culture: Jae and Wadsworth Jarrell in conversation with Reto Thuring*, Online.
- 2018 *Panel Discussion: AfriCOBRA*, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, AR.
- 2016 *AfriCOBRA NOW: Panel Discussion*, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, AR.
- 2015 *Points of View: AfriCOBRA: Power, Politics + Pride*, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH.
- 2014 *Artist Talk: Jae Jarrell and Wadsworth Jarrell*, The Hood Museum of Art, NH.
- 2013 *AfriCOBRA: Panel Discussion with Founding Members of AfriCOBRA*, University of Chicago, IL.

**SELECTED COLLECTIONS:**

Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL  
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH  
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA  
The Johnson Collection, Spartanburg, SC  
Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia, Atlanta, GA  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA  
The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick, NJ