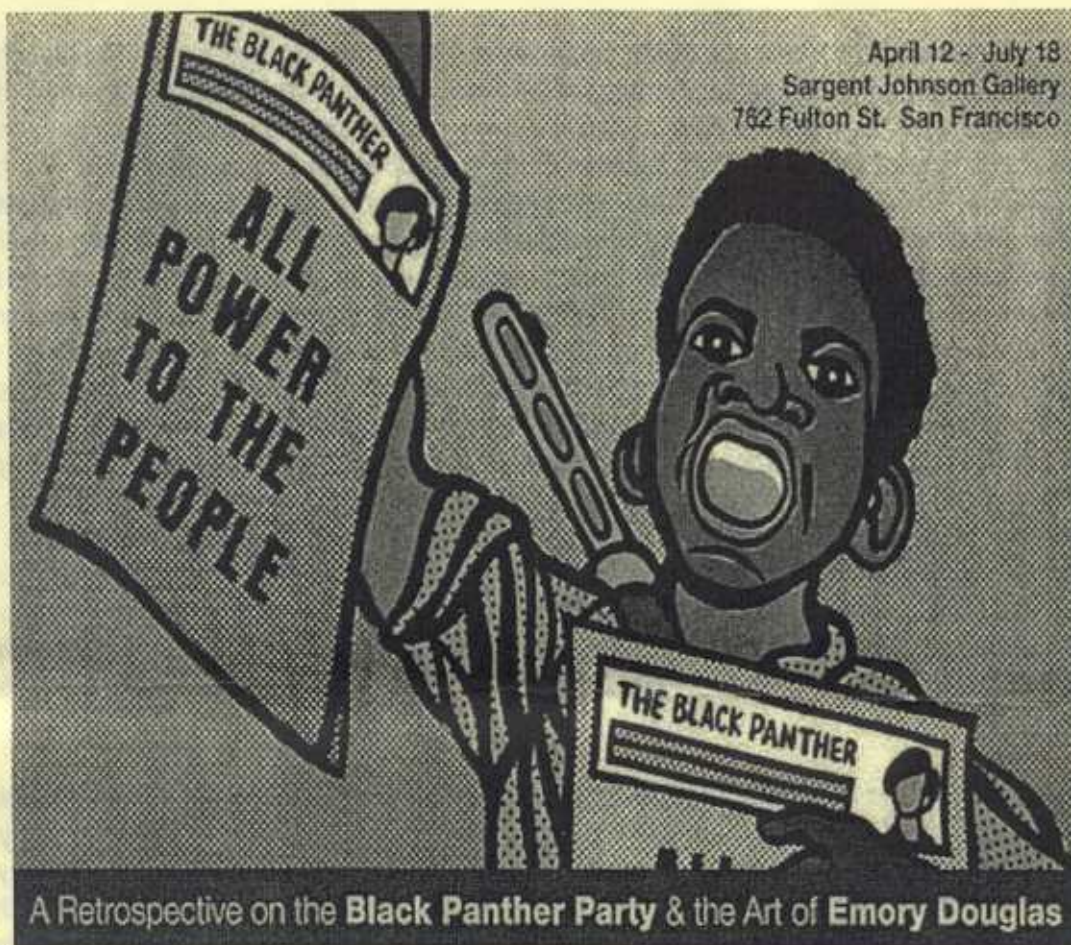


THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ART & CULTURE COMPLEX
Presents...



Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

Programs include

OPENING RECEPTION: Thursday, April 22, 2004

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Includes a slideshow w/ **EMORY DOUGLAS**

Thursday, May 6, 2004 7:00 p.m. /an interview with

BOBBY SEALE by Killu Nyasha

Archive: Alden Kimbrough & Mary Kimbrough

Guest curator: Greg Morozumi

THE ART OF EMORY DOUGLAS

By Alden Kimbrough

This exhibition is the latest in a series of exhibits, beginning in 1986, where my sister, Mary Kimbrough and myself have featured the art of Emory Douglas and images of the Black Panther Party. This current exhibit reflects the largest amount of Emory's work that we have shown in a single exhibit. We are especially happy to present these images here at the Sargent Johnson Gallery because Emory grew up in this very neighborhood. We hope this show does justice to Emory's art and to the many years he has devoted to the struggles of black people and for the liberation of all oppressed people. The archive of works we have gathered here for this showing consist primarily of art posters, political posters, newspaper articles, books, magazine articles, rare photographs, political buttons and related archival memorabilia from the 1960's and 1970's. All of us see posters and/or billboards everyday, perhaps not quite like those in this show, but certainly they surround us in our everyday lives. We are so used to being saturated and inundated by consumer product advertising through poster art that we seldom notice the aesthetics of the kind of art you see in this exhibit. We certainly do not see as many political art posters around us as there were in the 1960's and 1970's when the black liberation movement, anti-Vietnam war movement and anti-apartheid groups were in full swing. Yet I think that what is actually more eye-opening and puzzling to us as we present these exhibits year after year, is that there is almost an entire generation of young people and students who do not recognize images of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Huey P. Newton, Angela Davis, Amiri Baraka, Kathleen Cleaver, George Jackson and the like. So many youth have not seen nor even heard of these heroes who epitomized resistance in the 1960's and 1970's. So that said to us, as presenters and organizers of these poster shows that we surely need to keep these images in front of our young people and not simply during Black History Month, but all year long.

We are therefore committed to let young people know that there were and are ongoing serious struggles, serious resistance, and movements that have taken place not only in the United States, but world-wide. Many of the individuals depicted in these art works and other materials gave their lives in these struggles, and they certainly need to be remembered. We want to connect the exhibit's theme, "A Retrospective of the Black Panther Party," to the content of these posters, because this art is in truth, art as propaganda, it is art to create and sustain our national heroes, to glorify historical and contemporary events. It is art to dignify a people, and perhaps more important, to serve as a catalyst for action, to motivate people to take a stand against racism, imperialism and police brutality, and to sustain free clinic and breakfast for children programs.

Thus, what we hope we can get across in this show is that these works are not only Emory's fine examples of creative graphic design, rich colors and important historical memorabilia, but will also serve to jog our historical memories, to engage you, to activate you. We all should remember that in a society where art often become an investment commodity for the rich and wealthy elite, there is a tendency to restrict the scope of "appropriate" artistic subject matter.

Only a small percentage of art actually reflects real social and political issues – even less ever gain acceptance by the dominant art culture which determines critical and public interpretations of art, especially by black artists. The art of Emory Douglas stresses themes of resistance, struggle against racism, oppression and exploitation, as well as the joys that life offers and the richness of a people's cultural heritage and history. We need to remember the famous quote by Bertolt Brecht that "Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality, but a hammer with which to shape it."

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY
by EMORY DOUGLAS
TALKING BLACK POWER - TALKING REVOLUTIONARY ART

The theme of the Black Panther's art was "survival". It was a reflection of the Black Panther Party's politics. Like the Party's politics, the art focused on the community and its many difficulties and issues. The art gave the community a visual interpretation of the struggle for human rights, whereas our ideology gave the people our political perspective and understanding.

Before a visual interpretation of the struggle for human rights could genuinely and truthfully be expressed artistically, one had to realize that revolutionary art was an art that flowed from the people in their daily lives to survive, and that it was meant to motivate and inspire the community to take a stand for their human rights.

The community itself became the gallery for the art. Plastered on the walls, storefronts, fences, telephone poles and booths, sides of buildings, convenience stores, in the windows of barber shops, beauty parlors, drug stores, and wherever it was possible. By extending the museum concept to the community, the art became a tool for educating the community and cutting through the smokescreen of the oppressor's reactionary images.

In the final analysis, the Black Panther Party's art transcended the African American community and took on a national and international flavor. As the Black Panther Party's politics evolved, so did the art reflect those changes.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Emory Douglas was born on May 24th, 1943 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has been a resident of the Bay Area since 1951. Emory attended City College of San Francisco where he majored in commercial art. He became politically involved as a member of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California in February of 1967 until its dissolution in the early 1980's. His art was always seen on the back pages of the *Black Panther Newspaper* with full page illustrations that reflected the rhetoric and ideals of the Black Panther Party. Emory's art was also widely circulated and published in the United States, Europe, and Third World publications. His skills as a commercial artist were useful to the Black Panther Party's development of its printed materials such as the various publications and display art.

Emory's posters were also posted on the exterior of many buildings, walls windows and telephone poles in Black communities across the United States. The Black community was truly the art gallery for his work - "the people's art," he says. "I like to paint pictures that reflect the social concerns of the African American community." Over the years, Emory continues to practice in his art what he believes.

by KATHLEEN CLEAVER
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The Black Panther Party for Self Defense was barely a year old on the night Huey Newton landed in Highland Hospital with a bullet in his stomach. He was wounded in an incident following a traffic stop that led to the shooting of one Oakland police officer, the death of another, and Newton's arrest for murder...

The Black Panther Minister of Information, the writer Eldgride Cleaver, only recently released from prison, started a public campaign for Newton's freedom...That's where I came in, arriving from the Atlanta headquarters of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), where I worked with Stokely Carmichael...

We handed our leaflets about our demonstrations in the community, I mailed out press release to attract radio, television and newspaper coverage, and announced press conferences to explain Newton's case. I identified myself to the media as the Communications Secretary.

We galvanized students, community people, and Panthers into a "Free Huey" movement that spread the Black Panther Party across the state. Many women I met during the intense days we expanded the "Free Huey" campaign started on one project, like putting out the newspaper, marching at the courthouse, or sitting in on a political education class. They'd show up at a rally, then come to a Panther meeting, and gradually become absorbed as full fledged Party members, like David Hilliard's wife Pat, who volunteered as the treasurer of Huey's legal defense fund, or Bobby's wife Artie Seale, or the San Francisco State student JoAnne Mitchell, who became the Women's Captain. The urgency of our effort to prevent Huey from reaching the gas chamber bound us together, and as we committed ourselves to a revolutionary movement, we rarely talked about what it meant to be women in the Black Panther Party. We enjoyed the challenges of fighting side by side with men for freedom.

The Black Panther Party's paramilitary style fed a false assumption that all its members were men, even though women went on the early patrols and were part of all subsequent activity. Men and women alike were animated by the upsurge in black pride and unity, we all insisted upon respect for our right to defend our community, and refused to tolerate racist abuse. We repudiated the subservient attitude of our parents' generation with bravado. It was the brutal retaliation visited against us all Black Power activists who articulated the collective demand of our people for justice that promoted such intense emphasis on "manhood", and self-defense...

The Black Panther Party fused divergent activities in a unique way. Free breakfasts for school children and other programs provided community service, but unlike ordinary reformers, we simultaneously ran electoral campaign, challenged racist exploitation, published a newspaper, organized schools, engaged in armed clashes with police forces, formed international alliances with nations and movements that shared our ideologies, and advocated a revolutionary transformation of the political system of the United States. Above all, our abiding love for our people, for each other, and for the coming generations whose lives we fought to change is what remains - a spark that continues to capture people's imaginations.

(Excepted from the 2002 publication of *Black Panthers 1968*)

POWER TO THE PEOPLE
Curator's Statement: Greg Jung Morozumi

Memory can serve to empower a people with a long history of unresolved struggle, whereas the loss of memory (or its intentional disappearance) can only serve to perpetuate a people's oppression and enslavement.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE - a retrospective on the Black Panther Party & the art of Emory Douglas is meant to conjure up the recent past, which has been deliberately negated or distorted by institutionalized mis-education and the mass media. A remarkable legacy of militant Black resistance, which once upset the national and international balance of power, and born right here in our midst, was almost all but forgotten were it not for its symbolic revival through Hip Hop culture and Hollywood mass marketing. The cultural bulldozers of the Powers-That-Be are actively covering up any evidence of resistance in order to maintain their hold on history and therefore, the future.

This exhibition is a rare collection of artifacts from a war of propaganda between the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and its hostile detractors in the mainstream mass media. It focuses on works by its chief creator of image weaponry, the preeminent Minister of Culture Emory Douglas. His unabashed graphics graced the covers of the popular weekly organ, *The Black Panther* newspaper, and thousands of posters were distributed and wheat-pasted throughout the northern cities of America. Their charismatic and photogenic leaders became notorious household names and revolutionary fold heroes to the newly radicalized generation of the 60's.

Oakland was but one city, and the Black Panther Party was only one organization of a tumultuous time when a widespread and far-reaching Black liberation movement challenged the political system and its keepers. The many posters and flyers and publications reflect the expansiveness of the Panthers' reach. They document the ideological transitions of the Party line, the grassroots survival programs, the armed confrontations with police, the electoral campaigns, the internationalist solidarity, the united fronts against racism and imperialism, and the ongoing battles to free their incarcerated comrades. For every memory, there is a different story and a different interpretation of events.

The point of the retrospective is not to evoke sentimentality or nostalgia. It is hoped that you, the viewer, will recognize the conditions out of which the Panthers arose, are not so different today. With a political climate shifted so radically to the Right that any mention of 'fascism;' or 'genocide' is deleted from the press, we are indeed in deep trouble. Witness the current martial state of affairs both internationally and domestically: an 'endless war' abroad against the elusive multifaceted enemy of terrorism (i.e. any nation or force who dare challenges U.S. world supremacy) and at home, the total erosion of basic civil liberties with expanding armies of police securing our communities from drug wars, and the mass roundup of Black youth in sterling new prisons. The Panther legacy still lives, not only in the spirits of martyred revolutionaries, but also in a lifetime of prison cells filled with political prisoners who remain anonymous, their fate rested on the selfless liberation of all of society. The Black Panther's slogans remain relevant. **FREE POLITICAL PRISONERS! BLACK POWER TO BLACK PEOPLE! ALL POWER TO ALL PEOPLE!**

July 30, 2004

It's About Time
C/o Mr. Bill Jennings
P.O. Box 221100
Sacramento, CA 95822

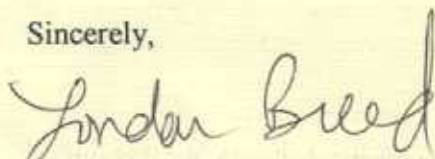
Dear Mr. Jennings:

On behalf of the African American Art and Culture Complex and the community we serve, I would like to thank you for the generous use of your photographs that you contributed to "Power to the People: *A Retrospective of the Black Panther Party and the Art of Emory Douglas*" Photo Exhibit. Your participation helped to make this exhibition a valiant success.

As part of our ongoing community-based programs, the Black Panther Party exhibit was able to reach hundreds of people who had not had the opportunity to see and hear the strong message of unity and empowerment that the photographs expressed. Both the young and the young-at-heart were able to experience the rich legacy in their own neighborhoods of Oakland and San Francisco Bay Area.

It is my hope that this exhibit will not only motivate our youth to participate and take action in their community, but continue to be a lasting example to all of us of what we can do when we come together. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,



London Breed
Executive Director