

# CIVILIAN

ART PROJECTS

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## CURTIS WOODY

### A SKETCH OF SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



**EXHIBITION ON VIEW:**  
May 2 – August 31, 2018

**OPENING RECEPTION:**  
Wednesday, May 2, 2018, 6-8pm

Civilian Art Projects is helping to promote a special exhibition at the historic Dumbarton House in Georgetown of new work by the mixed-media collage painter Curtis Woody, in conjunction with Dumbarton's *100 DOLLARS REWARD.*, a special exhibit on display at Dumbarton House from February

to August, 2018 that examines urban slavery, and specifically slavery in Georgetown from its founding in 1751 to 1830.

For the exhibition, *A Sketch of Slavery in the District of Columbia*, Maryland-based artist Woody has created work specifically for Dumbarton House to reflect upon the experience of slavery in Washington, D.C., at this particular time in history. According to the artist, he seeks to “draw inspiration from historical connections that link individuals, families, generations, and communities.” His work seeks to breathe new life into -- and enhance the unique characteristics of -- a common historical heritage. He writes, “My richly layered work invites viewers to step in closer, explore details, and create or reflect on their own stories of connection. Because of the multi-layering it is my expectation that the paintings become thoughtful, spiritual, interesting and sensitive creations.”

Woody’s artist statement:

*Life is a circle, and I take pleasure in salvaging the old to create something new: Asking the viewer to recognize the past, while appreciating the here and now. My paintings are research-based collages and layers which are fabricated in a variety of ways. I highlight impactful images, and also play close attention to minute details. Some paintings start with hand-cut museum board blocks that are painted, embellished, scratched, and merged together. I use found materials (old books, aged photographs, buttons, letters, vintage newspapers, rusty metal) combined with an assortment of artistic mediums. The meaning of the attached elements often becomes clearer to me as they are assembled. The result is a continual search for balance between spontaneity and historical relevance.*

One of the challenges of the *100 DOLLAR REWARD*. exhibition was the lack of primary sources left by enslaved and free blacks. This made it difficult to create a picture of what daily life was like for enslaved and free blacks living in Georgetown from their own perspective. Woody was able to gather resources from libraries and databases, and scraps of material from Dumbarton that included metal locks, wallpaper, and letters written about the enslaved and indentured in the residence, to create new artworks reflecting a time of slavery in Georgetown.

His work and the exhibition serve as a companion to a historical timeline and narrative gathered by Dumbarton House scholars from other sources including census records; Dumbarton House archives; period maps; church archives; and neighboring museum archives, including Tudor Place, the Octagon House, and the White House Historical Society.

**Curtis Woody** has exhibited extensively in countless juried art festivals on the east coast, the mid-west, and in selected group exhibitions. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including a grant won from Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council, with which he created *A Struggle for Dignity, An Artistic Exploration of Slavery and Emancipation*. This exhibition was highly acclaimed at Prince George’s County African American Museum and Cultural Center in North Brentwood, MD. His work is in corporate, government, museum, and private collections in Africa, Europe, and throughout the USA. Curtis is presently represented by Zenith Gallery of the Nation’s Capital and Gallery Serengeti in Capitol Heights, Maryland.

## Events and Programs:

### **OPENING RECEPTION:**

Wednesday, May 2 from 6 - 8 p.m.

Join Dumbarton House for the opening of multi-media artist Curtis Woody's *A Sketch of Slavery in the District of Columbia*. Woody has created work specifically for Dumbarton House to reflect upon the experience of slavery in the District of Columbia during the founding of our nation. His exhibit opens in conjunction with two other exhibitions that explore the history of slavery in Georgetown. The evening will also include performing artists who will explore issues of race and gender. Tour the museum, explore art, and enjoy wine and cheese.

### **DUMBARTON AT DUSK**

Thursday, May 17 from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Tour the museum after hours, including Dumbarton House's newest exhibit, *A Sketch of Slavery in the District of Columbia*. The event include a cash bar, food, music, and pop-up history activities.

### **ARTIST TALK, Featured event for DKMC's Museum Walk Weekend**

Saturday, June 2 from 1 – 2 p.m.

Join artist Curtis Woody for an engaging discussion of his new exhibit, *A Sketch of Slavery in the District of Columbia*, during the *Dupont Kalorama Walk Weekend*. In addition to the artist talk, visitors can explore Dumbarton House and four other diverse museums free of charge for this weekend long celebration in one of Washington, D.C.'s most beautiful neighborhoods. Discover Anderson House, Dumbarton House, National Museum of Jewish Military History, The Phillips Collection, and the President Woodrow Wilson House. *Walk Weekend* is scheduled for Saturday, June 2 and Sunday, June 3 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Free.

Dumbarton House is located in Georgetown at 2715 Q Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007. Limited parking and ADA-access is available behind the Museum via 27th Street. Metrorail: Red Line, Dupont Circle. For additional information, visit [www.dumbartonhouse.org](http://www.dumbartonhouse.org), email [info@dumbartonhouse.org](mailto:info@dumbartonhouse.org), or call 202-337-2288.

Dumbarton House is a 1799 Federal period historic house museum, whose preserved historic structure, interpretation, and collection serve to educate the public about life in Washington, D.C., during the early years of the Republic. Dumbarton House serves as the headquarters of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America ([www.nscda.org](http://www.nscda.org)), a women's organization that actively promotes our national heritage through historic preservation, patriotic service and educational projects. Dumbarton House is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The museum hosts a variety of public and youth programs, as well as private rental events. [www.DumbartonHouse.org](http://www.DumbartonHouse.org)

**Image credits:** "Flight to Freedom, A Sense of Their Own Power," Curtis Woody, 2018.

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