

FW: 1. FW: The Art of Frank Calloway

Blum, Alan

Sent: Monday, December 08, 2014 1:13 AM
To: Nancy.Jones

Dear Ms. Jones,

Hope you had a pleasant Thanksgiving. I would like to follow up on our discussion last month about preserving and photographing the artworks of Frank Calloway and wanted to make sure that you'd received the six related emails I sent on November 20.

Sincerely,

Alan Blum, MD

From: Blum, Alan
Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2014 2:57 AM
To: Nancy.Jones
Subject: 1. FW: The Art of Frank Calloway

Dear Ms. Jones,

Thank you for taking time to call to discuss my concerns about the safekeeping, preservation, photodocumentation, and display of the wonderful artworks created by the late Frank Calloway. Please forgive my delay in following up with you on our dialogue. I was immersed in the preparation of a presentation and commemorative exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the Surgeon General's Report at LSU School of Public Health and have only just returned from New Orleans.

As we discussed, I very much look forward to meeting with you and to assisting with the documentation of Mr. Calloway's body of work. It would be wonderful if examples of the artworks could be on permanent display in Alabama art museums and also at Bryce and at Heritage nursing home, where he received such beneficent care. As I wrote to his guardian six years ago, I am again offering to have the artworks photographed and documented.

Below is my (excerpted) email of May 5, 2008 to a fellow family physician, Dr. Steven Simons, whom I met at a continuing medical education course and from whom by coincidence I learned that his wife Cheryl Rivers is an art historian with a specialization in American folk art. My full email correspondence with Mr. Calloway's then-guardian is included.

In five additional emails that I am forwarding to you, I am including examples of photographs of Mr. Calloway's art by a professional photographer whom I was prepared to pay to photograph the artist's entire known body of work. I'd still like to do this. The other emails (including correspondence with Cheryl Rivers) relate to Mr. Calloway's exhibit at Kentuck, the inclusion of his work at the American Museum of Visionary Art in Baltimore, and the representation of the artist by a New York City art gallery. Ms. Rivers also invited me to submit a profile of Frank Calloway and his art for her book, but I felt blindsided by the arrangement with the art gallery and did not submit the essay. We also mention The Living Museum at Creedmoor Hospital in Queens, New York, the director of which would be a good person to contact (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Living_Museum).

Again, thank you for your thoughtful call. I look forward to meeting you and to assisting you in any way I can.

Sincerely,

Alan Blum, MD
Professor and Gerald Leon Wallace MD Endowed Chair in Family Medicine
Director, The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society
Department of Family Medicine
University of Alabama School of Medicine

Phone: 205.348.2886 | Fax: 205.348.2889 | ablum@cchs.ua.edu | <http://cchs.ua.edu>
The University of Alabama | 850 5th Avenue East | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

From: Blum, Alan
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2008 2:37 AM
Subject: FW: The Art of Frank Calloway

It was nice to reconnect with you, Steven....

...the delay in trying to bring Frank Calloway's art to a larger audience. Below is much of the recent correspondence. Note the first letter at the bottom of the page, in which I alluded to having identified an art scholar who might be interested in meeting Frank and viewing his artworks. That would be Cheryl.

By separate email, I'll send you two digital photographs of examples of Frank's pieces. They happen to be the two smallest of the five I have (2' x 9' and 3' x 12' respectively; the largest one is 3' x 22'). The photographer and I were experimenting with ways to photograph them. He was concentrating on ways to fuse digital images to make a seamless shot, so neither the lighting nor the background was good. But you should get the flavor of them. At least four lengthy articles have been written about Frank in The Tuscaloosa News and The Birmingham News, but they are too large to scan and email.

... I want to emphasize how strongly I feel that the American Visionary Art Museum is the natural place for an exhibition of Frank's art.

...Frank will turn 112 on July 2, by the way, and he is still making his art many hours each day. His legal guardian has not been in touch lately in regard to my offer to provide a stipend to a photographer to shoot over 200 of Frank's works. A local producer with Public Television is also interested in doing a documentary on him, but nothing is happening so far. I would like to write a brief piece on Frank, but someone such as Cheryl really ought to undertake to write a scholarly essay or book.

Sincerely,

Alan

Alan Blum, MD
Professor and Endowed Chair in Family Medicine
Director, The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society

From: Blum, Alan
Sent: Tue 2/19/2008 12:40 AM
To: Zondra Hutto
Cc: rebecca
Subject: RE: The Art of Frank Calloway

Dear Zondra,

Last Monday I had a very productive and upbeat conversation with Rebecca Hoffberger, founder and director of the American Visionary Art Museum. I described both the hope you have for preserving, displaying, and gaining recognition for Frank Calloway's art, as well as the concern that sharing his work with the public ought to attract sufficient resources to endow a center in Frank's name to perpetuate programs that will stimulate artistic endeavors by mentally disabled persons.

Rebecca is very interested in learning more about Frank and his art, doubtless with an eye toward hosting an exhibition at the Museum, which could then serve as a repository for various works by him. She also recognizes the importance of documenting Frank in the process of creating art. When I mentioned that I was about to hire a photography student at the University of Alabama to photograph Frank's art, Rebecca mentioned the extraordinary photographer Larry Yust, who produced an amazing book of largescale "photographic elevations" of the Paris Metro (see www.whatinternational.com/photos/photos.html). I'll try to contact him this week.

I think the next step is for you and Clay to meet with Rebecca Hoffberger when you return from Tokyo. I would be pleased to help host her whenever she can visit Tuscaloosa.

I'm cc'ing this to Rebecca at
Museum

the American Visionary Art

Warmest regards and bon voyage. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Alan

Alan Blum, MD
Professor and Endowed Chair in Family Medicine
College of Community Health Sciences
The University of Alabama

From: Zondra Hutto
Sent: Mon 1/28/2008 2:52 PM
To: Blum, Alan

Subject: RE: The Art of Frank Calloway

February 8th will be great. We will expect you at 10:30, but if you need to set it at 11:00, that will be fine as well. We are located at 1788 McFarland Blvd. No, Suite B -- this is next to Bedford Place and across the street from Open Door Baptist Church.

See you then.

Zondra Hutto

"Blum, Alan" <ablum@cchs.ua.edu> wrote:

Thank you for your thoughtful note. February 8 would work best for me (I'll be away the following week.) I am scheduled to give a lecture from 9-10 that morning. Would 10:30 be acceptable (I could also try to be there by 10:15)?

Alan Blum, MD

From: Zondra Hutto
Sent: Thu 1/24/2008 3:33 PM
To: Blum, Alan
Subject: Re: The Art of Frank Calloway

Dr. Blum:

I am sorry that I have not responded sooner, but it has been a hectic week. I will be out of town the end of next week, but hopefully can schedule a meeting the week after. I would suggest that we meet at my office if possible to discuss your involvement and how we proceed from here. Please check your schedule for the following dates and let me know when you might be available. Friday, 2-8, 10AM, Wednesday, 2-13, 10 AM or 2PM, Thursday, 2-14, 10AM or 2PM, or Thursday, 2-21, 10AM or 2PM.

I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

Zondra Hutto

"Blum, Alan" wrote:

Dear Ms. Hutto,

It was good to speak to you again last week in regard to ways to ensure greater appreciation of Frank Calloway and his art. As we discussed, I have a number of ideas both for preservation of his works as well as for scholarship and exhibition.

I have identified an extraordinarily skilled and creative photographer who I believe would be able to develop a digital photographic archive of the artworks, and I am willing to help underwrite this cost.

Two years ago, I did mention Frank and his work to the founder and director of the American Visionary Art Museum (who is herself a visionary). But this was in the midst of a festival she was hosting at the museum, so the timing was not opportune. This is the foremost museum of its kind in the world. It is ranked among the 25 best art museums in the US, as it is in my own top 5. There is no question whatsoever that this would be the ideal museum in which to showcase Frank's works, because of the museum's spaciousness, its mission, and its dynamic environment. It's simply a great place.

I have also identified an art scholar who has edited books about unconventional artists and would likely be interested in visiting Tuscaloosa to meet Frank and view the artworks.

As I also mentioned, on May 23, 2006, I sent the following letter to Dr. Richard Powers, then Medical Director of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation:

"Following publication of the article in The Birmingham News about Frank Calloway and his art, I attempted to contact you in the hope of discussing ways to preserve and display this marvelous work. It was I who recommended to the social workers who have helped facilitate Mr. Calloway's continuing to make his art that these delightful drawings be catalogued before any more of them are sold.

"I have a longstanding interest in self-taught artists, and (as an untrained artist myself) I have had several exhibitions of my sketches that relate to the experience of illness. I also have a great interest in Bryce and its preservation. Having visited The Living Museum at Creedmore, I would hope that there would be a possibility of creating a similar environment at Bryce to showcase the works of Frank Calloway and other unusual artists.

"There are several museums that I believe would also be interested in acquiring and exhibiting Frank Calloway's artworks. The most logical and noteworthy would be the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. By an Act of Congress, this museum has been designated as a repository for such unusual art. Having been a frequent visitor to the museum since it opened, I have become a great admirer of the museum's energetic founder, Rebecca Hoffberger. The museum has recently opened a spacious annex that would be idea for exhibiting Frank Calloway's full-sized drawings.

"I would like to contribute time and resources toward the preservation of Frank Calloway's art. It is fitting that Frank lives at the Harper Center. I had the privilege of getting to know Dr. Harper when she lived in Tuscaloosa, and she is a pure inspiration.

"At your earliest convenience, I would appreciate the opportunity of discussing the preservation, cataloguing, and exhibition of Frank Calloway's art."

That offer still stands. Again, thank you for taking time to discuss Frank's art. I look forward to continuing our dialogue. Please let me know how I might best assist you in the endeavor to gain greater exposure and appreciation for these works.

Sincerely,

Alan Blum, MD
Professor and Endowed Chair in Family Medicine
College of Community Health Sciences
The University of Alabama School of Medicine