

## **Floyd Newsum, Jr. (1950–2024)**

Floyd Newsum, Jr. was a multidisciplinary visual artist whose career spanned nearly five decades. He earned his MFA from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia and lived in Houston, Texas, where he served for many years as a professor of art at the University of Houston–Downtown. He was married to his wife, Janice, and together they raised two accomplished children.

Newsum, Jr. participated in more than 100 solo and group exhibitions across the United States and internationally. His work was featured at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA); the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati; the Polk Museum in Lakeland, Florida; the David C. Driskell Center at the University of Maryland; and the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans. His international exhibitions included Califia Gallery in Horazdovice, Czech Republic, and the American Center in St. Petersburg, Russia.

His works are held in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, and the David C. Driskell Center, among other major institutions.

Newsum, Jr.'s practice, which encompassed painting, drawing, printmaking, and sculpture, was grounded in bold color, layered symbolism, and a deep engagement with personal history, African diasporic traditions, and contemporary social issues. Though known primarily as a painter, he completed six major public art commissions, including four sculptural installations. In 2022, he installed a 38-foot by 16-foot relief work in the lobby of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston.

His work has been widely published in catalogs, books, and journals, including *Outside the Lines*, published by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. At the time of his passing, Texas A&M University Press was preparing a forthcoming monograph celebrating 50 years of his work, including essays by prominent curators and scholars such as Valerie Cassel Oliver, Alvia Wardlaw, Maria C. Gaztambide, and Melanee Harvey.

A co-founder of Project Row Houses in Houston's Third Ward, Floyd Newsum, Jr. was a cultural force whose legacy continues to resonate through his artistic contributions, public commissions, and dedication to community empowerment. Though his career spanned more than four decades, his creative path began in childhood—art was not just a profession, but his lifelong passion.