About the Artists

Master printer and project organizer, Jos Sances, thoroughly enjoyed the collaboration with some incredibly important and powerful artist when he initiated the Paul Robeson portfolio a quarter century ago.

We have lost two of some of the most stellar since. Eminent Black sculptor, activist and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett, and honored Bay Area Filipino American artist, activist and teacher, Carlos Villa died within a year of each other. Catlett was born in 1915 in Washington D.C and died in 2012, in Cuernavaca, Mexico. In the 1940s she lived in New York where she knew and was influenced by the important African American writers and artists including W. E. B. Dubois, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Jacob Lawrence and notably here, Paul Robeson. Her association with Communists in the US and while living and working in Mexico caused her to be barred from re-entering the US and she subsequently renounced her US citizenship and became a Mexican national. Known for her graphics focused on the African American experience, especially as it concerned women, she was a friend of Mexican muralists and for two decades a member of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* in Mexico City. In the 1950s, as her work shifted toward sculpture, she became head of the sculpture department of the *Escuela National des Artes Plasticas*. Her deep and authoritative knowledge of printmaking exhilarated Sances when she asked to see the individual color separations before he printed her piece for the portfolio.

Villa (1936-2013) was honored with a retrospective exhibition at San Francisco’s Asian Art Museum in 2022. He was a beloved and influential teacher at the San Francisco Art Institute for many years. His work refers to the spirit and aesthetic traditions of his heritage while expanding the vocabulary of 20th century modernism to include materials and approaches now familiar among post-modern practitioners.

Internationally celebrated Los Angeles artist Bettye Saar, best known for her iconic assemblage “The Liberation of Aunt Jemima” (1972) continues to produce and exhibit her work at the age of 97 as does distinguished Bay Area artist Raymond Saunders (b. 1934).

Oakland based Mary Lovelace O’Neal continues a robust art practice, as does her Chilean-born husband, Patricio Toro who now lives in Mexico City. Enrique Chagoya, born in Mexico City, is a professor of art at Stanford University and is in the permanent collections of some of America’s most distinguished museums. Trained as a printmaker and graphic artist, he and Sances collaborated on several screenprints together in the 1980s and 1990s and developed a friendly working relationship. Muralist Daniel Galvez is currently working on a mural in Washington State and has completed scores of murals in the Bay Area and across the U.S., some of them with Sances, his long-time friend. Also known for his murals and large-scale paintings, Dewey Crumpler worked with Sances to create several compelling and evocative screenprints over the years.

One of America’s most prominent contemporary African American artists, Mildred Howard, born in San Francisco, was raised in Berkeley and is also a friend having collaborated with Sances on a number of her multi-media and installation works since early in her career. Sances counts muralist Miranda Bergman and multi-media and graphic artist Elly Simmons as friends and has likewise worked with each of them on their personal and political projects over the years.