

New exhibit comes to Bob Rauschenberg Gallery

January 17, 2024 By Staff



The "Purvis Young: Honey in the Sky" exhibit will run at the Bob Rauschenberg art gallery at FSW through July 13. COURTESY PHOTO

"Purvis Young: Honey in the Sky" is now on display at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida SouthWestern State College.

In an effort to "solve how every man could get along," the late, African-American and self-taught painter Purvis Young once equated his artistic practice to putting "honey in the sky — where it could drip down and make the world sweet."

This is the largest solo survey exhibition of Young's paintings ever presented in Southwest Florida and features more than 75 original artworks spanning four decades of the artist's prolific career.

Young was born in Miami, on Feb. 2, 1943, and died in 2010.

His grandparents had immigrated to Florida by boat from the Bahamas. As a child, Young spent time with his uncle, a well-known local sign painter, who introduced him to drawing and painting.

Young had a very limited formal education and did not complete high school. At the age of 18, he was sentenced to three years in prison at Raiford State Penitentiary in North Florida for breaking and entering.

While incarcerated, Young realized a life of crime was not for him and decided to dedicate himself to making art, drawing and studying art books.

An avid consumer of public television, National Public Radio (NPR) and books found at the Miami-Dade Public Library, the artist became deeply concerned with the history of oppression and plight of the underprivileged. Depicting the systemic and recurring

racial, social and economic struggles within his community, Young connected past with present — addressing themes and commenting on the African American experience.

Like the gallery's namesake, Bob Rauschenberg, repurposing found materials while walking once (or sometimes twice) around his city block to assemble his combines, Young was an "urban expressionist" who transformed discarded plywood, cardboard, carpet and other detritus into compelling works of art.

Widely shown and critically acclaimed, Young's works are now in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, American Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and many other prestigious institutions.

The exhibit will be on display at the gallery until July 13. |

In the KNOW

Purvis Young: Honey in the Sky

- **Where:** Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW
- **When:** Now through July 13
- **Hours:** Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m; closed Sundays
- **Info:** www.rauschenberggallery.com

