

Letter to Kathryn Bogle  
April 23, 1984  
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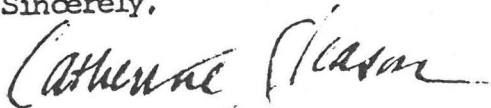
Arts Commission. Again Isaac's proposal for a pioneer history mural, sign paint on wood, 8 x 16', with an emphasis on the contribution of black people to the settling of the West, was recommended. Mr. Shamsud-Din's feeling, which was shared by the Committee, was that the black contribution to the settling of the West has largely been ignored in historical accounts.

In the winter-spring of 1982, Mr. Shamsud-Din was contracted. Some frustrating delays had occurred due to the Justice Center's owners' requirement that building contractors drill the holes in the wall where the mural would be installed. Eventually, Isaac was at work, and a Justice Center subcommittee continued to work with him as his "client" and to review his progress. All the contracted artists worked with these subcommittees. Isaac's consisted of Bob Frasca and Harry Widman. Arts Commissioner Dottie Schoonmaker, who had initially voiced concern over the anger she saw in the proposal for the mural, joined the subcommittee.

As progress on the mural went forward, Commissioner Schoonmaker changed her mind. With the entire subcommittee, she was impressed by the strength of the figures, by the vital, vibrant colors in which they were depicted, by the richness of the history, and by the inner light which flows out of the faces and figures of black men and women who valiantly made a new life in a new land. Their struggles are realistically depicted by Isaac Shamsud-Din, who spent months researching their past. In the mural the artist combines historical and fictional figures to create a sweeping panorama which takes the viewer from the cotton fields of the South to the Willamette Valley. The mural was installed December 3, 1983.

Thank you very much for your interest.

Sincerely,



Catherine Gleason  
Public Art Program Manager

cc: Isaac Shamsud-Din

Enclosures: Press releases  
Article

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phone (503) 287-6474

RESUME

Artist  
Teacher  
Community Worker  
Cultural Worker

Co-Director - KINTU Community Cultural Arts Festival      SUMMER 1978

Responsible for proposal writing and administering grants from the Oregon Committee for the Humanities and the Oregon Arts Commission, planned and implemented with Albina Mural Project staff and advisory community citizens committee the First Annual KINTU Arts Festival, including negotiations with City, County and State agencies, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the speakers, performers, crowd and traffic control, recruitment and supervision of volunteers, public relations, and acted as spokesman for the Albina Mural Project.

Designed and produced billboards, posters and other promotional art for the Festival.

Conducted workshops in toy-making for youth at the Portland Art Museum in connection with the Alexander Calder exhibition outreach program.

Director - Albina Mural Project      June 1977 through June 1978

Conceived and designed the Albina Mural Project, including theme, site, make-up of staff, job descriptions, salaries, initial and on-going research, production schedules, time-lines, and the lobbying of appropriate sources of support for murals depicting the local and historical themes of the African-American experience.

Wrote proposal and administered Portland CETPA Special Projects grant, purchased supplies and materials, supervised payroll and personnel consisting of staff assistant and six artists. Conducted workshops, tours and presented "Walls of Fire" film on mural art at the Portland Art Museum to the arts and general community to raise funds.

Reconciled art concepts with budget and production costs, supervised refurbishing of building as studio facility, and supervised design, production and completion of murals including assigning research, layout, preliminary and final drawings, painting and erection of murals.

Led negotiations with State agencies and owners of the site for placing murals on a public building, and represented the project to various public and funding agencies. Conducted press interviews, film, video and television presentations on behalf of the project.

Painter of two murals depicting Pacific Northwest Black history of the 1940s' Portland Shipyard era and the Vanport Flood of 1948.

The project murals are installed on the Albina Human Resources Center building, 5022 N. Vancouver Avenue. They were dedicated to the community July 4, 1978 at the KINTU Festival. "Kinta" is an African word meaning to make an object, "kintu" is the ceremony in which the object is invested with life and enters into the vital activity of the people.

Art Instructor, Board of Directors member - Albina Art Center 1976

Taught graphic arts classes to youth at Portland community center.

Owner and Artist - Black Gold Ltd. Graphics, Portland, Oregon 1970 - 72

Produced original graphics, including signs, supergraphics, posters and other printed art. Clients included: Standard Dairy, YMCA, Portland State University, Muhammad's Mosque, Interstate Press, and Nate Hartley Fuel Company.

Lecturer - Black Studies Institute, Reed College, Portland. 1970 - 71

Taught survey courses dealing with in-depth study of indigenous African societies, their cosmology and systems of social dynamics, U.S. slavery and its effects upon the African creative consciousness, African-American artists, visual art as a revolutionary tool, and Islamic architecture. The Islamic lecture included a slide presentation produced by the instructor which is now in the permanent collection of Reed College.

Lecturer - Black Studies Department, Portland State University 1970 - 71

Taught the same courses as those for Reed College, described above.

Associate Director - Project TEACH, Portland State University 1968 - 69

Co-writer of original criteria for the State of Oregon's 3% Program for Disadvantaged. In charge of recruitment, tutorial management, securing housing and on-going support and counseling services for a group of thirty-seven first year students. Duties consisted of representing students to administration and vice-versa, coordinating and overseeing work-study and financial aid, and presenting lectures to participants about self-identity and problem solving. Implemented first State support of PSU student housing.

President - Black Student Union, Portland State University 1968 - 69

Head Instructor, Distribution Manager, Sales Representative 1968 - 76

- Muhammad's Mosque of Islam, Portland

Art Director - 'Black Summer' Portland, Oregon 1968

Funded by the Portland Council of Churches.

Coordinator - Oregon Participants, Poor Peoples Campaign 1968

Recruited over 75 Portland community residents and students who attended the Poor Peoples Campaign in Washington, D.C. Acted as contact person and Official Campaign Representative.

Community Representative - Robert Kennedy for President Campaign 1968

Appeared on speaker's podium with Mr. Kennedy, his staff and other representatives and officials in Portland.

Lecturer - Black Studies, Experimental College, San Francisco 1966 - 67  
State University, San Francisco

One of six instructors in the first Black Studies program offered by a major non-African-American College.

Community Organizer - Office of Economic Opportunity, 1966 - 67  
San Francisco, California

Organizer - Conference on Black Power & Art, San Francisco 1966 - 67

Participants included LeRoi Jones (Imamu Baraka), Etheridge Knight, Marvin X, Ed Bullins, Sonia Sanchez, Bobby Seale, Jimmy Garrett, etc.

Art Director - Black Arts West, San Francisco, California 1966 - 67

Produced original graphics, billboards, posters, programs for the theatre works of Ed Bullins, Marvin X, Leroi Jones, Ben Caldwell, etc.

Field Secretary - Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, 1965 - 66  
(SNCC), in Stuttgart and Little Rock, Arkansas

Established first Freedom School to be located in Stuttgart. Led successful desegregation of public facilities. As Director of Freedom School, taught basic math and english skills, and began a drama troupe performing "Blues for Mister Charlie" to local audiences.

Editor - Arkansas Voice, official State SNCC newspaper. Duties included all phases of news gathering and production.

Campus Traveler - coordinated student support groups at major African-American schools in Tennessee, Arkansas and Georgia.

Muralist - Student Union Building, Portland State University 1964 -65

Painter - one-man, juried and invitational exhibitions at Portland Art Museum; Museum of Art of the University of Oregon; Portland State University; Albina Art Center; Lewis and Clark College; Mt. Hood Community College; Portland Community College; City Hall (Initiating the Portland City Hall as an exhibition site); Salem, Oregon; Little Rock, Arkansas; and San Francisco, California.

Married and father of eight.

Resident of Portland's Albina neighborhood and former resident of Vanport. Coaches Little League baseball and has served as a Cub Scout official.

Working towards the establishment of genuine incentives for young African-American artists who die on the vine at a rate that is tremendous.

# # #

ISAAC SAHMSUD-DIN

281-3716

PRICE FOR WORKS FOR SALE

① PYRAMID MAKER DRAWING 658.00

② PILGRIMAGE OIL AND MIXED MED 700.00

③ HEART OIL ON PAPER 850.00

- Proposal For Justice Center Mural -

The struggles and accomplishments of African-Americans, determined to share in the challenge of the discovery, opening up, and settlement of the western frontier, is a rich history. The mural I propose should convey in a very alive way some of that proud legacy. It is a theme which has been a source of study for me since 1962, and one which will require continued extensive research on my part.

The central figure of the mural will represent York, William Clark's slave on the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition. Rather than stately portraits, the other subjects rendered will relate the great spirit of those who fought Indian Wars, drove cattle, settled towns, became chiefs of Indian nations, rode in covered wagons, were gunslingers and sometimes swtlaws. Models will be employed from local families, some of whom are descendants of figures in the mural. By using models, I find that people become intimately affected by my work, a situation which is highly gratifying for me.

(B) The painting itself will be 8 ft x 16 ft. The design has been developed with the architecture and nature of the structure foremost in importance; from a distance of 50 feet, the painting will appear to grow out of the wall, much like strongly stated and carved images; and as the viewer approaches the work, it will become more intense (although not harsh) in color and individual shape. The attitudes of the near-life-sized figures are calculated to create an illusion of a crowd in front of the elevator, busily engaged in making history.

The mural palette will be largely earth-toned (deep umber, maroons and warm deep greens). By moving my color around - cooling and warming, disappearing and re-entering - I will tease and challenge the viewer with an adventure, while maintaining luscious drawing and linear movement. There are repeats of the floor pattern in unusual places, and as the mural is fully developed, a more conscious feeling of architectural dynamics will be an important element in the total overall composition. This is calculated to give an impression of wedge-like shapes coming forward and then receding as the eye picks up

© other elements within the painting.

The materials have been selected for their durability, appearance, and ease of restoration qualities. I have used this particular paint for twelve years as a sign painter and will have a greater degree of freedom because of the accelerated drying time compared to regular "artists" oil colors. The finish will be "satin", the framing will be Oregon Ash, which, because of its yellow hue, will frame the piece and give it a floating effect, outlined by the marble material.

The overall intent of this mural is to educate, inspire and delight, through the presentation of important, but little known figures. It is my hope that this work will speak to the public throughout the generations, both through the senses and the heart. It is a project to which I am deeply committed.

Peace and Knowledge,  
Aug. 1981 / Saad Shamsud Din



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(503) 281-3716

PROPOSAL FOR JUSTICE CENTER MORRAL  
ELEVATOR BANK SITE  
BUDGET

DESIGN & EXECUTION

INCLUDES ARTIST AND 3 PART-TIME \$14,617  
ASSISTANTS

MATERIALS:

LUMBER	320.
MISC. HARDWARE.	55.
PAINT, PRIMER, THINNERS, ETC.	560.
SPACE RENTAL @	3,000.
EQUIPMENT RENTAL	300.
MODELS	100.
RESEARCH MATERIALS	150.
TRAVEL	288.
INSTALLATION	200.
PHOTOS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION	225.
TOTAL	\$20,000