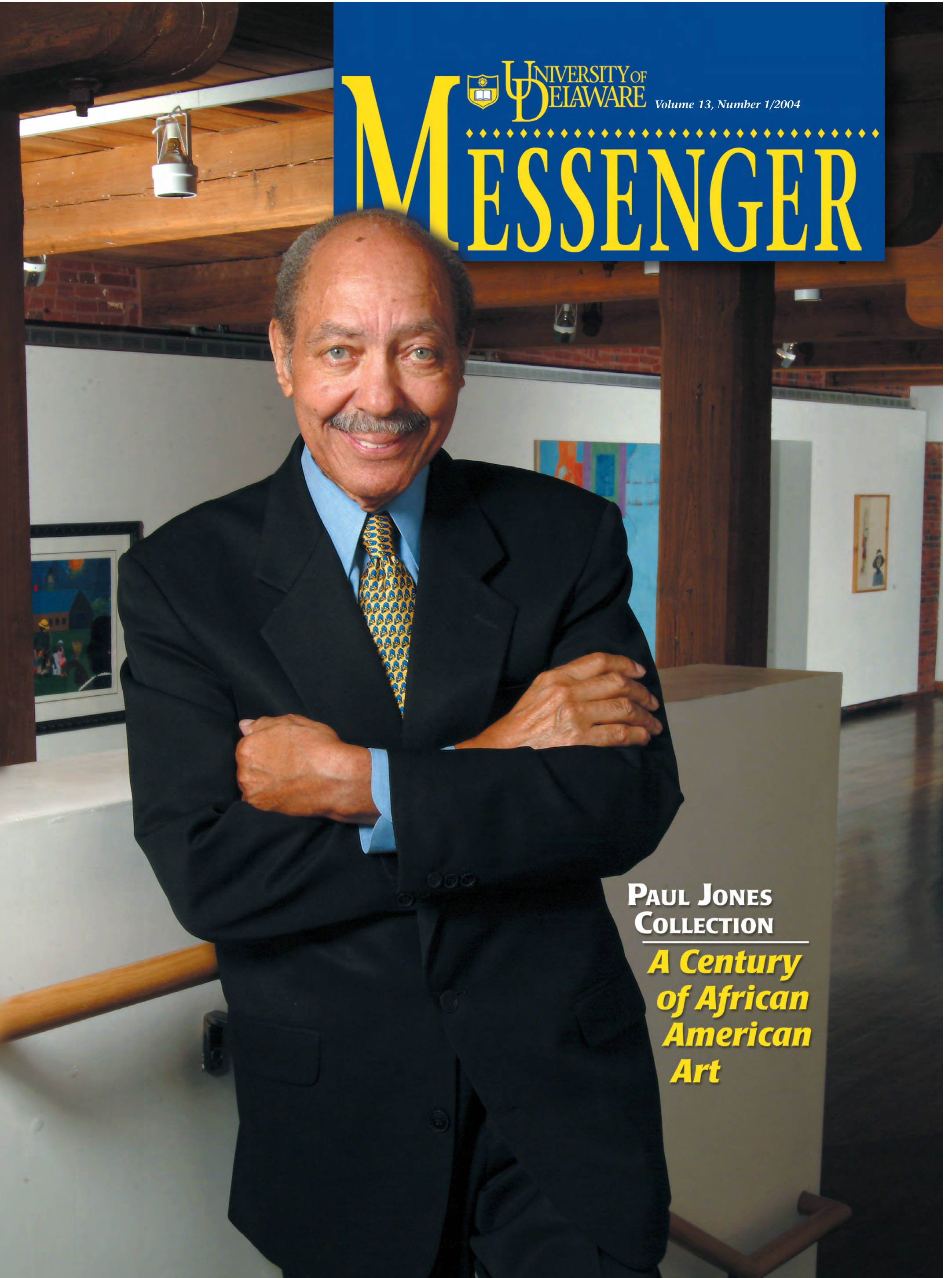


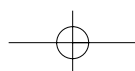
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE *Volume 13, Number 1/2004*

MESSENGER



**PAUL JONES
COLLECTION**

***A Century
of African
American
Art***



Showcasing a world-class collection of African American art



Jungle Fever by Lionel Lofton is in the Paul R. Jones Collection.

A major exhibition drawn from the Paul R. Jones Collection, which is among the oldest, largest and most comprehensive collections of works by 20th Century African American artists, was on display throughout the 2004-05 academic year at the University of Delaware in Newark and is now traveling.

The exhibition, titled "A Century of African American Art: The Paul R. Jones Collection," will open in fall 2005 at Spelman College in Atlanta and then will continue on to Montana State University.

Meanwhile, UD has mounted a new exhibition, "Abstract and All That: Selected Works from the Paul R. Jones Collection," in historic Mechanical Hall, the home of the Paul Jones Collection, on the Newark campus. This exhibition features 27 works by 17 artists important to the abstract movement in America, and is on free public display through Dec. 9.

The major traveling exhibition of "A Century of African American Art" features 101 significant works by 66 artists, including Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, Henry Ossawa Tanner, James Van Der Zee, Carrie Mae Weems and Hale Woodruff. Also included are the works of emerging artists such as Aimee Miller, Cedric Smith, D.H. Caranda-Martin and Michael Ellison.

The art objects represent the range of visual expression comprising the collection housed at UD, and the exhibition is designed to provide an opportunity for careful study of the interaction between works, individual images, the artists who created them, as well as the social and historical contexts that engendered them, according to Amalia Amaki, curator of the collection.

"The exhibition initiates discussions between disciplines centered around historical and contemporary observations of portraiture and realism, abstraction and collage, color, narrative and multiple originals," Amaki says.

"In so doing, it charts the critical engagement of African American artists during the 20th-Century African American experience," she says. "In the process of exposing the breadth of inclusiveness of these artists in American visual expression, the exhibition contributes to a fuller and deeper appreciation of this area of cultural studies."

Jones, a businessman and former federal administrator, first began collecting works by African American artists in the early 1960s. He gained an affinity for the beauty of art from his parents while growing up in an iron ore mining camp in Bessemer, Ala., and began his collection by purchasing three prints on a street corner and framing them himself.

Michael by William Artis



RICH DUNOFF

Paul R. Jones stands in the newly renovated Mechanical Hall, which houses his collection of African American art, with works by Amos "Ashanti" Johnson, Frank Bowling and David C. Driskell.

Jones said he found he enjoyed having the art on the walls of his home and soon decided that it would be even more rewarding to collect original works, with a focus on those by fellow African Americans. A pioneer in the field, he visited many art museums and galleries and found that African American artists were greatly underrepresented.

As one of the few collectors of such works at the time, Jones often found himself taking on the role of social worker by providing artists their next meal or month's rent through his purchases. As such, he developed close personal relationships with many of the artists whose works are now included in the collection.

Eventually, the more than 1,500 works filled Jones's home, taking up nearly all of the wall space and spilling over into closets and drawers. He came to realize the collection required a permanent home in an institution that could not only exhibit the work but conserve it, use it in academic programs, work cooperatively with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and use leading edge technology to digitize the works for online viewing by as wide an audience as possible.

He turned to the University of Delaware and, in 2001, announced the gift of the Paul R. Jones Collection, citing the institution's significant resources to professionally conserve and exhibit

the vast array of paintings, drawings, photographs, lithographs and sculpture.

Jones said he had wanted to find a way to keep the collection together so that it would have the greatest impact on artists, scholars and students. He was seeking a home where the collection would be wanted and woven into the fabric of an institution, where it would be used for teaching and exhibitions, and he said he found that place in the University of Delaware under the leadership of President David P. Roselle.

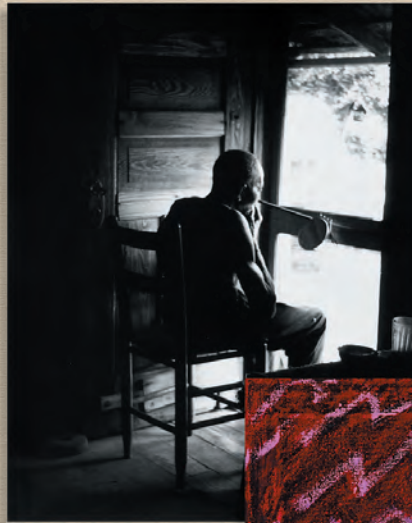
Upon presentation of the collection, UD began working to fulfill Jones's dreams by developing a working relationship with President Audrey Forbes Manley and Spelman College in Atlanta, sharing the collection through traveling exhibitions and creating digital images of works that can now be enjoyed online.

Today, the collection is housed in UD's historic Mechanical Hall, which recently underwent a \$4.6 million facelift to provide

appropriate space for storage, conservation, academic endeavors and exhibition space.

In October 2002, the internationally known Brandywine Print Workshop, an organization that champions cultural diversity in the visual arts, presented Jones its James Van Der Zee Award for lifetime contributions to the arts during a gala 30th anniversary celebration at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. Brandywine further honored Jones with a gift of several hundred prints that will be added to the total gift from the collector.

In March 2003, Jones was named one of the Top 100 Collectors in America by the magazine *Art & Antiques*. ♦



Man Shaving by William Anderson



Sonny Rollins by Reginald Gammon