

ELLA WEST GALLERY

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High res images available upon request

Ella West Gallery Opens August 19 with Inaugural Exhibition Celebrating Black Artistic Expression and Honoring Historic Location

Exhibition Return to Parrish Street: A Dream Realized on View August 19–October 21, 2023

Durham, North Carolina – Ella West Gallery will open in downtown Durham with the launch of its inaugural exhibition [Return to Parrish Street: A Dream Realized](#). The gallery will proudly showcase extraordinary new works from North Carolina artists Kennedy Carter and Clarence Heyward and North Carolina native Ransome, and honor the legacy of its location in the heart of Durham’s Black Wall Street.

Dedicated to the memory of iconic artist and Durham native Ernie Barnes (American, 1938–2009), the exhibition will open with works on view by the celebrated late artist in conversation with new photography and paintings available for purchase by Carter and Heyward; portraiture by Ransome will be added September 11. These works probe perception, identity, and vulnerability, creating a visual dialogue around dreams and destiny.

Ella West Gallery invites collectors and community members to join in the celebration of its grand opening on Saturday, August 19, from 11 am to 6 pm, at 104 W. Parrish Street in Durham. The gallery will then be open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm, with private appointments available upon request. *Return to Parrish Street: A Dream Realized* is on view through October 21, 2023, offering budding and established art collectors and enthusiasts a unique opportunity to access these internationally acclaimed artists.

This exhibition marks a significant milestone for Ella West Gallery as it endeavors to create a vibrant artistic space that champions underrepresented artists and cultivates a new era in the world of art. Nestled within the heart of Black Wall Street’s Parrish Street in the building that once housed the printing presses of *The Durham Reformer*, a 1920s-era Black newspaper, the gallery is poised to act again as a destination for raising marginalized voices.



Little Girl, Kennedy Carter

Return to Parrish Street: A Dream Realized reflects gallery founder Linda Shropshire’s mission to amplify diverse voices and provide a platform for emerging and established regional, national, and international artists.

“*Return to Parrish Street: A Dream Realized* looks both backward and forward, celebrating generations of Black achievement while working to nurture the artistic growth of a new class of artists poised to shape the future of art history,” said Shropshire, a longtime collector and arts advocate. “Through their distinct art practices, Ernie Barnes, Kennedi Carter, Clarence Heyward, and Ransome express a sense of agency and autonomy that embodies the spirit of Ella West Gallery and more importantly, the neighborhood the gallery calls home.”

Photographer Kennedi Carter (American, b.1998) creates lush images that celebrate beauty, the body, and Blackness. After honing her skills as a celebrated editorial fashion photographer working with *British Vogue*, *Essence*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The New York Times*, Carter’s fine art practice explores the aesthetics of the Black quotidian, capturing the unexpected, unknown, and unimaginable slices of life that she finds tucked away in the corners of society often overlooked, and aims to reinvent notions of creativity and confidence in the realm of Blackness. She lives in Durham.



Mother and Child, Clarence Heyward, acrylic on canvas

Clarence Heyward (American, b.1983) is a painter and collagist whose work explores notions of the Black American experience through his dynamic and fresh take on figurative art, investigating cultural truths, challenging stereotypes, and questioning identity. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Heyward relocated to North Carolina to study art education at North Carolina Central University.

He has shown his work at venues including the 21c Museum of Durham, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for Cultural Arts, the Block Gallery in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, and (CAM) the Contemporary Art Museum of Raleigh. Heyward was the recipient of The Brightwork Fellowship residency at Anchorlight, Raleigh in 2020, the Emerging Artist in Residence at Artspace, Raleigh in 2021, and was the 2022 Artist in Residence at North Carolina State University. His work is in the collections of several notable private and public institutions, including a recent acquisition by the North Carolina Museum of Art. He currently lives and works in Raleigh.

Artist and illustrator Ransome (American, b.1961) fuses together the tactile patchwork motifs of rural quilters with the rhythm and spontaneity of hip-hop DJs. His expansive portfolio is cinematically

colored and richly layered; household names like Harriet Tubman and Serena Williams share focus with everyday working heroes, intertwining the narratives and references of Black history across the canvas with every stroke.

The Rich Square, North Carolina native graduated from the Pratt Institute in addition to receiving a Master of Fine Arts from Lesley University. He is a recipient of The Hudson Valley Artists Annual Purchase Award from the Dorsky Museum and has exhibited his work in the Katonah Museum of Art, The Sigal Museum of Easton, Pennsylvania, The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) Museum of Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the Visual Art Center of New Jersey. *The View from Here* was his first solo exhibit which opened in 2020 at the historic Barrett Art Center. *Say It Loud* at the Elaine Bailey Augustine Gallery at the University of North Alabama, Alabama, and *Harmony of Difference* at the Alpha Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts, both opened in 2022. He was awarded the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration and IBBY Honor Award for children's books *The Creation* and *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*. Ransome lives in Rhinebeck, New York.



Gee's Bend Quilter Sis, Ransome, acrylic on canvas

For more information about Ella West Gallery, the upcoming exhibition, or to enquire about available works for purchase, visit www.ellawestgallery.com, contact ellawestgallery@gmail.com, or call (919) 485-9602.

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About Ella West Gallery and Founder Linda Shropshire

[Ella West Gallery](http://www.ellawestgallery.com) is a contemporary art gallery dedicated to diverse, underrepresented artists from around the world who are committed to pushing the boundaries of art that will redefine art history. Located in the vibrant neighborhood of Black Wall Street in downtown Durham, North Carolina, the gallery serves as a catalyst for artistic growth by fostering dialogue and creating connections between artists and art enthusiasts. By creating space for Black people, people of color, women, and other marginalized communities who have been historically underrepresented based on race, sex, national origin, sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, or disability, Ella West Gallery aims to redefine the art world and leave an indelible mark on the history of art.

As a former leader for corporate social responsibility and human rights for a Fortune 100 company, gallery founder Linda Shropshire brings both a passion for art and business acumen. As a member of the Board of Trustees for the North Carolina Museum of Art, Shropshire serves to steward the museum's permanent collection as a leader of the art acquisition team. As a member of the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums, she spends time in a national collective community of museum and gallery leaders, ensuring museums and institutions create more space for Black artists and those who are traditionally left out of the art history narrative. Shropshire studied at North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Sotheby's Institute of Art. A Charlotte, North Carolina native, she has lived in Durham since 1993.