



★ **TALES** ★  
*of the*  
**CONJURE**  
★ **WOMAN** ★

**RENÉE STOUT**

January 30 - May 17, 2014

SPELMAN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF FINE ART



Renée Stout, *The House of Chance and Mischief*, 2008 — 10, wood, acrylic, paint, glass mixed media, and found objects, 72 x 21 x 13 inches. Courtesy the artist and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, DC

## *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman*

January 30 – May 17, 2014

**R**enée Stout's work explores the contours of African American experiences and the existence of an underground system of African-derived folk beliefs as transmitted from slavery to the present. This system, known variously as Hoodoo or conjuring, has its origins in herbal medicine, root work, and a belief in the spiritual attributes of plants and animals. These traditions have had to morph and adapt to several new sets of cultural conditions, including plantation life, Christianity, and the vagaries of modern urban existence. This conjuring tradition persists, although it is rarely spoken of in public.

Via two alter egos, Madam Ching and Fatima Mayfield, Stout illuminates the contemporary Hoodoo landscape by presenting viewers with objects and images that focus our attention on these shadowy traditions. *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* brings viewers into Fatima's lair of found objects, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, glassblowing, installation, and compelling storytelling. We witness the magical trait of the conjure woman: the ability to see the world through two sets of eyes—one on the physical realm, the other on the spiritual.

*Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* offers a peek into a fascinating world ruled by superstition and ancestral wisdom. Stout is an able guide, but she only leaves a trail. Her role is to awaken us to the unseen forces at work all around us—to heighten our senses. Through her art, we are presented a prism that enables us to view a particular aspect of the rich traditions and cultural practices of African America.

Mark Sloan, Exhibition Curator  
Director, Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art

## RENÉE STOUT



**R**enée Stout (b. 1958) grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 1980. Her family worked creatively with a variety of materials: her mother did needlework; her father was a mechanic who enjoyed a tactile connection to his tools; and both of her grandfathers worked in steel mills. Her early environment, which was rich in art and lore, helped shape her worldview. In 1985 she moved to Washington, D.C. and began to explore the roots of her African American heritage.

Though she began her career as a photorealist painter, Stout later expanded her work to include a variety of media, such as painting, drawing, mixed media sculpture, photography, and installation using found and collected objects. The African Diaspora, her immediate environment, current events as well as the power of objects to transfer ancestral wisdom and healing are sources of inspiration for her work.



Madam Ching and Fatima Mayfield—Stout’s alter egos—serve as vehicles to role-play and confront issues such as romantic relationships, social ills, or financial woes in a way that is open, creative, and humorous. Through the guise of these invented characters Stout encourages self-examination, introspection, and the ability to laugh at the absurdities of life.

Stout is the recipient of many distinguished awards including the Janet and Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize (2012), the David C. Driskell Prize (2010), Anonymous Was a Woman (1999), and two Pollock Krasner Awards (1991, 1999). Additionally, her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States, and in England, Russia and the Netherlands.

Renée Stout, *Listening to the Voice of a Spirit*, printed 2007, archival pigment print, 40 x 30 inches, Courtesy the artist and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.



Renée Stout, *Armored Heart/Caged Heart*, 2005, found wire, fabric, acrylic paint, 25 x 14 x 12 inches. Courtesy the artist.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Artist Lecture and Preview Reception

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014

6:30 p.m.

Meet artist **Renée Stout** and be among the first to view *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman*.

### Community Conversations\*

Three Iyawos: A Transatlantic Orisha Initiation . . .

The Transformative Awakening of Three African Descended Women

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014

11:00 a.m.

**Dr. Ade Ofunniyin (Dr. O)**, Gullah Conjuring Consultant and Cultural Anthropologist

**Dr. O**, a Charleston-based cultural worker and spiritual advisor to *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman*, will present a multimedia lecture on a Yoruba initiation ceremony that he officiated in 2005.



### Gallery Walk with Renée Stout and Dr. Ade Ofunniyin

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014

6:30 p.m.

### Yoga in the Museum

MONDAYS, FEBRUARY 3 - MARCH 17, 2014

12 Noon

Look closely at works of art through the lens of balance, focus, and strength. Then connect these ideas with a yoga class led by certified yoga instructors **Felesha Love**, Wellness Specialist, Spelman College, and **Makeba Dixon-Hill**, C'2003, Curator of Education, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art.

This program, which is free and open to beginner and experienced yogis alike, is organized in partnership with the Department of Physical Education, Recreation, and Wellness and is a part of the Active for Life Wellness Initiative.

### **BLACK BOX:** Shantay Robinson, *Untangled: Getting to the Roots of a Hair Movement*\*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014

6:30 p.m.

This 45-minute documentary by **Shantay Robinson** examines the socio-cultural motivations behind why more Black women are wearing their hair natural.



**Community Conversations\***  
**Diasporic Healing Traditions in the Work of Visual Artist**  
**Renée Stout**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2014**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Alix Pierre, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, African  
Diaspora and the World Program, Spelman  
College**



**Alix Pierre, Ph.D.** presents a multimedia paper on Renée Stout's use of Fatima Mayfield, her healer alter ego, to unpack her thoughts on "the last missing piece" in the narrative of the African Diaspora and how her aesthetic (re)claims an African-based spirituality.

This Community Conversation is organized in partnership with the African Diaspora and the World Program.

**Community Conversations\***  
**Biomythography and Black Speculative Fiction**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014**

**4:00 p.m.**

**R. Nicole Smith, Administrative Assistant,  
Department of History, Spelman College  
and Doctoral Student**



**R. Nicole Smith, C'1995,** will discuss "biomythography" (a term coined by Audre Lorde), Black speculative fiction written by women, and her graphic short story *Metamorphosis Chronicles*.

**Community Day**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2014**  
**1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Enjoy fun filled explorations of *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* tailored for participants of all ages including storytelling, movement demonstrations, make-and-take workshops, art scavenger hunts, interactive tours, and more!

Community Day is free, but registration is strongly encouraged. Please contact us at 404.270.5607, [museum@spelman.edu](mailto:museum@spelman.edu), or [@spelmanmuseum](https://twitter.com/spelmanmuseum) on Twitter with questions and for more information.



## A Conversation with Sarah Lewis and Kevin Young

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2014

6:30 p.m.

**Sarah Lewis** is a New York-based art historian, curator, and author of *The Rise: Creativity, The Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*. **Kevin Young** is a celebrated poet, the Atticus Haygood Professor of Creative Writing and English, Curator of Literary Collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University, and contributor to the *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* exhibition catalogue. Join us as they discuss their work, interdisciplinary projects, and the Black female radical imagination. A book signing follows.



### Community Conversations\* In Search of My Mothers' Gardens TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014

11:00 a.m.

**Jessica Scott-Felder**, Creative and Instructor of Art, Spelman College

Inspired by spaces created by her mother and grandmother, **Jessica Scott-Felder**, C'2005, will offer a unique performance and lead an interactive discussion on feminine ancestral memory in private spaces.



### Community Conversations\* Listening to the Voice of a Spirit: Can I Be a Conjure Woman and Still Make Heaven My Home? TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014

11:00 a.m.

**Alvelyn Sanders**, Curatorial Assistant, Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries

**Alvelyn Sanders**, a writer, filmmaker, and an ordained Christian minister, will discuss how issues about identity, memory, and tradition provide insight on the notion of different belief systems sharing the same sacred space.



**BLACK BOX: Gloria Wilson, Center of Gravity: Assimilation, Self-Determination, Resistance, and the Black Art Teacher\*\***  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Gloria Wilson, an artist, researcher, and educator, draws on the fields of cognitive psychology, visual culture, and education to examine how Black art teachers navigate academia and the art world.



**Community Conversations\***

**Allow Me to Reintroduce Myself . . . And Reintroduce Myself . . . And . . .**

**TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2014**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Danielle Deadwyler**

Multimedia artist **Danielle Deadwyler**, C'2003, back to the Museum by popular demand, will present a performance-based dialogue on the sexual, social, and personal benefits of “conjuring the other woman.”



**\* Community Conversations**

Join us as various artists, faculty, staff, students, and Friends connect their passion and interests to the works of art featured in *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman*.

**\*\* BLACK BOX**

Dancers, designers, musicians, playwrights, scholars, visual artists, and other creative producers:

- Do you have an in-progress work based on the art and culture of the African Diaspora?
- Are you looking to share it with like-minded individuals and expand the reach of your work?

If so, present your work at **BLACK BOX**. **BLACK BOX** is a site for play, dialogue, and creative risk taking that encourages artists in various disciplines to engage with others who are directly connected to their subject matter. If you are interested in participating, send an email to [museum@spelman.edu](mailto:museum@spelman.edu) for submission guidelines.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



The *Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* exhibition catalogue includes essays by several contributors, including Mark Sloan, Director of the Halsey Institute, Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Director of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, and award-winning poet/essayist Kevin Young. This 172-page hardcover publication is \$39.95 and available at Museum gift shop and the Spelman College Bookstore.

Funding for this publication has been generously provided by Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund. Additional support was provided by Accola Griefen Gallery in New York City, the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Hemphill Fine Arts in Washington, D.C., and Zanatta Contemporary Art / Zanatta Editions in Shawnee, Kansas.



*Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* was produced by the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art and co-organized with the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art and the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College.

This exhibition was made possible by



Additional support provided by the Fulton County Commissioners under the guidance of Fulton County Arts & Culture.



Exhibition-related programs were made possible with support from the Mary Alice and Bennett Brown Foundation, Inc.

*Renée Stout: Tales of the Conjure Woman* is part of Africa Atlanta 2014, a citywide year-long series of events highlighting Atlanta as a nexus for reinventing the cultural and economic bonds among Africa, Europe, and the Americas.



## STAY CONNECTED |



The Museum is increasingly using the web, email and social media to connect with visitors and Friends. For advance notice about upcoming exhibition-related programs, subscribe to the Museum at [museum.spelman.edu](http://museum.spelman.edu), follow the Museum on Facebook at [facebook.com/spelmanmuseum](https://facebook.com/spelmanmuseum), on Twitter at [twitter.com/spelmanmuseum](https://twitter.com/spelmanmuseum) and on Instagram at [instagram.com/spelmanmuseum](https://instagram.com/spelmanmuseum).

## BECOME A FRIEND

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art is the only museum in the nation that emphasizes art by and about women of the African Diaspora. The Museum relies on the support and generosity of Friends and Patrons. By joining this unique cultural institution, you will support the Museum's new acquisitions, special exhibitions, related programs, exclusive events, and outreach programs. See [museum.spelman.edu](http://museum.spelman.edu) to join today.

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY

The Museum is printing and mailing less frequently and, therefore, saving resources and reducing its impact on the environment. Instead, it is increasingly communicating with its growing community online. Subscribe to our newsletter and join the conversations at [museum.spelman.edu](http://museum.spelman.edu).

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SPELMAN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF FINE ART  
*in the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby, Ed.D. Academic Center*

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Hours: Tuesdays - Fridays | 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Saturdays | Noon - 4:00 p.m.  
Closed Sunday, Monday, holidays, and Spelman College breaks

COVER IMAGE: Renée Stout, *Marie Leveau*, 2009-2010, archival pigment print with graphite X's, 22 x 22 inches. Courtesy the artist and Zanatta Editions, Shawnee, Kansas