



Artist

**ABDIAS DO NASCIMENTO**

There is great need to return black art to its original spiritual and symbolic place in the lives of black people. The black artist is entrusted with the obligation of creating new forms and symbols to represent our black Gods and Heroes. Before there can evolve a new form of black symbolism, black artists must acquaint themselves with the traditional gods and myths of our forefathers and move on from there. Brother Abdias Do Nascimento is doing just that—his work deals solely with the “Orisha” or “Black Gods” and myths of African Culture. In his native land of Rio de Janeiro, Brother Nascimento is totally involved in keeping black culture from being erased by the (so-called) White Western culture. His exhibit here at the Harlem Galleries marks the first in a series of shows by black artists from other countries. We hope through this exchange of ideas and exposure to the work of brothers and sisters from other countries we will begin to see more clearly that there is a common goal and a common enemy, and that through combined efforts Black Will Prevail!

Uhuru!  
Tony Northern  
3/69

March 14, 1969 Through April 6, 1969  
A One Man Exhibition of Paintings

THE HARLEM ART GALLERY  
2133 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10027



ABDIAS DO NASCIMENTO

## CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITION

- 1 – **Iemanjá, mae das aguas e de todos os orixas** (28 1/8" x 21")—  
(Iemanjá, mother of Waters and all the "orixas")
- 2 – **O vale de Exu** (50" x 31 3/4")—(The Valley of Exu)
- 3 – **Exu Black Power No. 2**—(Dedicated to Rubens Gerchman)—  
(30 1/8" x 24 1/8")
- 4 – **Processo da liberdade negra** (30" x 20")—The Process of Black  
Liberty)
- 5 – **Cristo Negro** (28 3/8" x 21")—(The Black Christ)
- 6 – **Xango crucificado ou Martirio de Malcom X** (40 1/4" x 25 7/8")—  
(Xango Crucified or The Martyrdom of Malcom X)
- 7 – **Ogun Vingador** (40" x 26")—(Ogun, the Avenger)
- 8 – **O passaro e a serpente** (22" x 15")—The Bird and the Serpent)
- 9 – **As serpentes** (22" x 15")—(The Serpents)
- 10— **Oxum Mare (macho)** (16" x 12")—(Oxum Mare—male)
- 11— **Oxum Mare (femea)** (16" x 12")—(Oxum Mare—female)
- 12— **Ogun No. 1** (18" x 14")
- 13— **Ogun No. 2** (18" x 14")
- 14— **Oxum Mare—femea (2)** (12" x 9")—(Oxum Mare—female) (2)
- 15— **Iao No. 1** (12" x 9")
- 16— **Iao No. 2** (9 3/4" x 14")
- 17— **Riverside No. 2** (21 3/4" x 13 3/4")
- 18— **Omulu azul No. 1** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")—(Blue Omulu No. 1)
- 19— **Omulu azul No. 2** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")—(Blue Omulu No. 2)
- 20— **Omulu azul No. 3** (30 1/8" x 24")—(Blue Omulu No. 3)
- 21— **Oxala na cruz** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")—(Oxala on the Cross)
- 22— **Exu Black Power No. 1** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")
- 23— **Xango crucificado** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")
- 24— **Senor de los venenos** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")—(Lord of the Venom)
- 25— **Riverside No. 1** (10 7/8" x 13 3/4")

All the paintings shown were made in crylics

## ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Abdias do Nascimento was born in the city of Franca, in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil. He resides in Rio de Janeiro (state of Guanabara) where he directs the *Teatro Experimental do Negro*—TEN—(The Experimental Black Theatre)—which he himself founded in 1944. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Economic Science from the University of Rio de Janeiro. For a long time he has been promoting a series of events that aim at freeing the Black Brazilian and the African culture in Brazil from the pressure that the White culture has been imposing on them since the days of slavery.

Accompanying his activities as director, actor and playwright, Abdias do Nascimento promoted the *I Congresso do Negro Brasileiro* (First Congress of the Black Brazilian), 1950; he created the *Museu de Arte Negra* (museum of Black Art), 1968, and he has published the following books: *Dramas para Negros e Prologo para Brancos* (Dramas for Blacks and Prologue for Whites)—anthology of Black-Brazilian theatre; *Teatro Experimental do Negro-Testemunhos* (The Experimental Black Theatre-Testimonies); *O Negro Revoltado* (The Black in Revolt)—studies of a social nature; *Sortilegio* (Sortilege)—Black mystery—a play which he wrote and presented himself; and *Rapsodia Negra* (Black Rhapsody), a musical drama.

The plastic work that Abdias do Nascimento presents here reveals his effort to rescue, by means of painting, the formal values and the essence of African culture, myths, religious history, fables, ritualistic signs, dance, singing, poetry and rhythm. These values have merely been tolerated in Brazilian culture as marginal, picturesque and folkloric expressions.

However, in the return to original sources, there is no historical retrogression, or flacid longing for the past. The "orixas" (African gods) that Abdias do Nascimento portrays on canvas are not subject to the immobilization of Time and Space. On the contrary, they are dynamic, mythical and mystical images of an Africa that does not become petrified in the grave of centuries. Abdias' "orixas" emerge as living and acting present-day forces, instruments of the spirit that joins with the militants of the Black Revolution, present in the prison of the heroes, present in the blood of the martyrs—"orixas" that prophesy the future of the Black race, "orixas" treading on historic ground of the here and now.

In a generic definition, "orixas" are the gods of the *Candomble* of the state of Bahia and the *Macumba* of Rio de Janeiro—Afro-Brazilian cults, similar, with observable slight variations, to the *Voodoo* of the Haitian Blacks of the *Santeria* of the Cuban Blacks. Abdias do Nascimento penetrates deep into the roots of the cults and myths. It is with joy and astonishment that he sees in his recent work with the brush, the enrichment of his human experience and the widening of his means of communication.

In this way he—Abdias do Nascimento—accomplishes his mission as an artist: founder and recreator of realities.

1-4-69

Meu caro Ivan

como mãe deslumbrada  
com o primeiro filho, te permito  
a lembrança desta primeira e  
talvez insignificante exposição.  
Entretanto meus quadros desper-  
toram enorme interesse entre  
a população negra do Harlem.  
A cultura dos artistas afro-brasi-  
leiros não haviam pisado antes  
de mim o território plástico  
deste país. Foi uma significativa  
experiência e uma alegria de lavar  
o peito. Desejo paide para você  
e família e votos de sucesso na  
sua muito bem sucedida trajetória  
artística. Abraços a você e ao con-  
silio do

Abdias