

Art on Purpose And The Walters Art Museum Present Two Exhibitions About Baltimore Heroes

***A Thousand Ships* looks at Baltimore City school communities' heroes and *Twenty Years of Wandering* explores the experiences of immigrants and the homeless**

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Baltimore—Art on Purpose, an organization dedicated to using art to bring people together around issues and ideas, in partnership with the Walters Art Museum, presents *Heroes in Our Midst*, a series of exhibitions and events to explore, uncover and celebrate the lives of contemporary Baltimore heroes.

Using the Walters' upcoming exhibition *Heroes: Mortals and Myths of Ancient Greece* as a point of departure, Art on Purpose has worked with numerous community groups throughout spring 2009. Story-sharing and art-making workshops have revealed experiences, deeds and attributes among ordinary people akin to those of ancient Greek heroes. Art created in these workshops will be on view at the Walters in a series of exhibitions in 2009 titled *A Thousand Ships* and *Twenty Years of Wandering*.

"Through these exhibitions, which celebrate some of Baltimore's own unsung heroes, we hope to offer visitors a deeper understanding of the Baltimore community and its citizens, as well as an awareness of the role that dedicated nonprofits play in supporting the community," said Walters Director Gary Vikan.

A Thousand Ships will be on view Sept. 16 to Nov. 8, 2009, with a reception and community event on Sunday, Oct. 25, from 2–5 p.m. *A Thousand Ships* is based on the heroism of Helen of Troy and will celebrate 12 individuals in Baltimore City public schools whose inherent charisma has had a life-altering impact on those who come to know them. Students and adults from each school have come together to create works of art, shining a light on positive stories from within Baltimore's school system.

Twenty Years of Wandering, on view Nov. 11, 2009 to Jan 2, 2010, with community events on Sundays, Dec. 6 and 13, from 2–5 p.m., is about the Odysseus-like heroism it takes for refugees, immigrants and the homeless to survive and thrive in Baltimore. It will

feature artwork created by clients of several Baltimore social service organizations that serve the homeless and refugee populations, including Healthcare for the Homeless, My Sister's Place, Education Based Latino Outreach, Adelante Familia and The International Rescue Committee.

Each of the three community events combines celebration, advocacy, networking, performing arts and community dialogue on issues raised by the exhibitions. On Oct. 25, Sabine Albersmeier, curator of *Heroes: Mortals and Myths of Ancient Greece*, will be joined by Chief Executive Officer Andres Alonso of the Baltimore City Public School system, to examine affinities between heroes of ancient Greek mythology and those present day individuals involved with having a positive impact on Baltimore's school communities. On Dec. 6, Founding Director of CASA de Maryland, Gustavo Torres, will join Albersmeier to explore the experiences of many immigrants today with those of the Greek hero Odysseus. On Dec. 13, Jeff Singer, director of Healthcare for the Homeless, and Albersmeier will explore the issue of homelessness as it relates to Odysseus.

Art on Purpose previously partnered with the Walters in 2008 on *Maps on Purpose*, a project featuring artistic community-made maps from 23 Baltimore neighborhoods shown in eight exhibitions over a course of 14 weeks. The community-based project was so successful at building connections between populations that might not ordinarily avail themselves of Baltimore's cultural treasures that it was inevitable to follow-up with additional projects at the Walters such as with *Heroes in Our Midst*.

Images available upon request.

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