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ARTnews

Hauser & Wirth and Fort Gansevoort to Co-Represent Winfred Rembert Estate

By Maximiliano Duron – January 19, 2023



Portrait of Winfred Rembert. Photo: Renan Ozturk. © 2023 The Estate of Winfred Rembert / ARS NY. Courtesy the artist, Fort Gansevoort and Hauser & Wirth.

Mega-gallery Hauser & Wirth will team up with New York’s Fort Gansevoort to represent the estate of artist Winfred Rembert, who has had a surge in interest in his art and life in the past two years.

Hauser & Wirth will stage its first Rembert show at one of its New York spaces next month. He was the subject of a solo exhibition at Fort Gansevoort in October 2021, just months after his death that March at age 75. It was his first solo show in New York in nearly a decade.

In a statement about the partnership, Fort Gansevoort founder Adam Shopkorn said, “Since 2003, I have closely watched Marc Payot and Iwan and Manuela Wirth build an outstanding art gallery by putting artists first. I made a promise to Winfred shortly before he passed away that I would do all I could to share his remarkable art and story with the world, and I am confident that by collaborating closely with our good friends at Hauser & Wirth, we will continue to introduce Rembert’s vision to a broader audience in the United States and beyond.”

Prior to his death, Rembert began working on his memoir with Erin I. Kelly, a philosophy professor at Tufts University. Published in 2021 by Bloomsbury, *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist’s Memoir of the Jim Crow South* recorded his life through his autobiographical paintings, documenting several major episodes in his life: growing up in Georgia during the Jim Crow era, his participation in the civil rights movement, his incarceration and near lynching, and finally his release and turn, at age 51, to a full-time

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career as an artist. For *Chasing Me to My Grave*, Rembert was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize in the biography category.

While he was incarcerated, Rembert learned how to craft leather from a fellow inmate. He would later adapt leather as his main material for his spellbinding paintings of masses of prisoners, Black people working in cotton fields, and moments of celebration and joy, like baptisms and scenes of dancing.



Winfred Rembert, *Dinnertime in the Cotton Field*, 2011 © 2023 The Estate of Winfred Rembert / ARS NY. Courtesy the artist, Fort Gansevoort and Hauser & Wirth

In a statement, Hauser & Wirth president Marc Payot said, “During his lifetime, Rembert courageously documented his experiences as a Black man in America while simultaneously applying his vision and technical mastery to elevate a humble, homegrown medium that otherwise would be relegated to the margins of art history. He transformed the story of one life into a mirror of the larger world and called the rest of us to action. ... The complexity and virtuosity of Rembert’s work makes us look; but its abundant humanity makes us see.”

The artist had his first solo show at York Square Cinema in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1998, and his first major solo institutional show at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, New York, in 2012. That exhibition, which traveled to four venues, was titled “Amazing Grace,” which Rembert once said was because “‘Amazing Grace’ is one of the songs I remember that was sung in the fields. I just loved to listen to the singing. Singing was the only thing about the fields that I loved.”

Rembert was the subject of a feature-length documentary, *All Me: The Life and Times of Winfred Rembert*, that was directed by Vivian Ducat and released in 2011. His work is in the collections of the Blanton Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Glenstone, the High Museum of Art, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and the forthcoming Lucas Museum of Narrative Art.