

# GreaterRestonArtsCenter

Press release

## *Incubator: Renée Stout and Odinga Tyehimba* April 24 - July 5, 2014

Reston, VA: Greater Reston Arts Center is pleased to present *Incubator: Renée Stout and Odinga Tyehimba*, a collaborative project pairing Washington, DC-based Renée Stout with self-taught artist Odinga Tyehimba, who hails from Durham, North Carolina. The exhibition will run from April 24 - July 5, 2014 at the gallery, located in Reston Town Center.

In *Incubator*, Stout will exhibit her provocative mixed-media works, ranging from sculptural assemblages to meticulously executed drawings, along with Tyehimba's powerful wooden totems and multimedia objects, and many jointly-created works. Together, the two will present an unprecedented installation at GRACE reflecting their shared interest in exploring power, ancestry, history, and belief systems through visual art.

Stout met Tyehimba in 2012 when both were included in a group show at the Gregg Museum of Art and Design in Raleigh, North Carolina. Recognizing an affinity in their approaches, they decided to collaborate and explore their commonalities—shared thematic interests such as identity, race, spirituality, and healing—as well as their differences—Stout is female and trained as an artist, while Tyehimba is male and self-taught. GRACE will present the works resulting from the fertile “incubation” period of their artistic collaboration. In addition to a shared interest in African spirituality and ritual objects, a mutual fascination with radio and cell phone towers, electrical generators, circuit boards and other objects representing the transference of power or information is apparent in the works the two have created jointly and individually. Their unique shrines, diagrams, and machines are informed by sources as diverse as contemporary video games, recent occurrences in the Ukraine, and tragic local events exposing society's failure to protect its youth. Suggesting a post-apocalyptic reality, their works beckon us to consider the shifting balance of power in this world, and our direction within it.

Raised in Pittsburgh, Renée Stout received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University. In 1985 she moved to Washington, DC, where she shifted her focus from painting in a photorealistic style to creating multimedia bodies of work. The narratives she creates through her works are inspired by the aesthetics of

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traditional African ritual objects, the myriad cultures of the African Diaspora, current world events, and her own personal history and experiences. Through her created alter-ego Fatima Mayfield, Stout has explored the links between creativity, magic, and spirituality. Utilizing painting, photography, mixed-media sculpture, installation, and repurposed found objects, Stout creates highly imaginative, personal works that are deeply rooted in global contemporary challenges, lending them a universal relevance. The recipient of many awards, her work is held in prominent museum collections across the United States, including the National Gallery of Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in the immediate region. Stout is the recipient of awards from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, among others.

Odinga Tyehimba was born Stanley Gardner on August 9, 1972, in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Growing up on military bases near Chicago and in southern California, he enlisted in the Marines before his last year of high school and later joined the Army. While traveling abroad with the military, he began to experience a growing sense of cultural awareness. With Hip Hop as an early guide, Odinga was exposed to the political narratives of skilled emcees who rhymed long, intricate monologues about oppression, colonialism, enslavement, and the need for unity. Inspired, he started to create art that reflected his feelings about the history of African Americans and the Diaspora. Active as an artist for the past seventeen years, Odinga utilizes wood as his primary medium, combined with a wide variety of found objects and assembled materials. He unites his interest in the traditional art and cultures of African peoples with his interpretation of the historic and contemporary experiences of Africans in the Americas.

For more information please contact Holly McCullough at [hmccullough@restonarts.org](mailto:hmccullough@restonarts.org) or (703) 471-9242.

**Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11am – 5pm**

Instagram and Twitter @restonarts