GALLERY AFERRO

Well Hung
Curated by Jo-El Lopez

Ron Powell, Brand US (detail), oil on canvas, 24x30, 2018

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Gallery Aferro and Newark Arts are honoring the lives of two powerful and much-beloved Newark culture workers: Rodney Gilbert (July 27, 1967 - November 8, 2017) and Eleta J. Caldwell (June 13, 1945 – December 13, 2017). Ms. Caldwell was Mr. Gilbert’s teacher, and both were working artists passionately committed to cultural leadership in Newark, and to mentorship of the artistically inclined youth of the community. The new Memorial Gallery, located within Gallery Aferro’s downtown location at 73 Market Street, is an intimate space appropriate for visual arts exhibits, poetry readings, screenings, and other sorts of gatherings where people connect with ideas and each other. The gallery is a place to linger, and a place for remembering.

**Participants:**
- Mashell Black
- Anthony E. Boone
- Willie Cole
- Kevin Darmanie
- Victor Davson
- Jerry Gant
- Steve Green
- Ben F. Jones
- Sulinman Onque
- Ron Powell
- Kern Samuel
- Ceaphas Stubbs

**Feb 10 - March 16, 2018**
Eleta J. Caldwell & Rodney M. Gilbert Memorial Gallery
73 Market Street, Newark

**OPENING RECEPTION**
February 10th, 2018
7pm - 10pm

**GALLERY HOURS**
Wednesday - Saturday
12pm - 6pm
and by appointment
The inaugural exhibition, running February 10 – March 16, 2018, curated by Gilbert’s friend and colleague Jo-El Lopez, explores Black male identity and showcases the talents of local, Black male artists. Lopez writes: “My friend Rodney Gilbert and I spoke about creating the “Well Hung” show numerous times before he passed away this December. The title that I suggested in jest took on a life of its own as we spoke about the overwhelming need to highlight nuanced portrayals of African-American male identities. He reminded me of the importance of creating an art show like this. He wanted to take on a powerful stereotype and give it a totally different direction. I want to create something influential, evidencing an extraordinary range of personalities, impulses, and ideas too complex to ever be contained or constrained. This show in Rodney’s memory is about the African-American Male artist: his power, identity, joy and his trajectory for the future.

In selecting these artists, ranging from established, mid-career, emerging and novice, I focused on artists who have had positive influences and are great role models to their community. Our working definition of these criteria differs from the reactive pressures sometimes put on artists to make exclusively “affirming images;” we instead find that when people are their most authentic, idiosyncratic and personal, they lead the way by showing others that it is possible to live freely.”

For Gilbert and Caldwell’s contemporaries and (now-grown) mentees, the dedication of the gallery is evidence that another new generation of youth will be inspired by the lives these two led, what they accomplished and the example of public service they modeled. Gallery Aferro, being close to Arts High School, is a frequent destination for students to visit, both informally as well as with field trips, and as such is a space where moments of inspiration and discovery happen for youth on the verge of believing they, too, can succeed. As an LGBTQ-led space, we also can honor the legacy of those who lead proud, out, professional lives. Planned exhibits throughout 2018 showcase the extraordinary talent and stylistic range of Newark-affiliated artists.