

# Color In Freedom: Journey along the Underground Railroad

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Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other  
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## For Immediate Release

The United States Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva is pleased to announce *Color in Freedom: Journey along the Underground Railroad*, an exhibition of 50 paintings, etchings and drawings by Joseph Holston created to capture the struggle for freedom, and expression within the framework of the first half of the 19th century in America before the abolition of the institution of slavery, will be on display at the Palais des Nations, Mezzanine, E Building (Access via Pregny Gate, Door 40) from November 1 through November 12, 2010.



"Jubilation" by Joseph Holston, 2008, mixed media.  
(Image courtesy of Joseph Holston)

The stories of the Underground Railroad are some of the most powerful in American history. Joseph Holston's visual interpretation and expression of human experiences and emotions within the framework of this distinct period in American history captures the essence of the courage and determination required to escape, enhances understanding of the condition of slavery and explores the powerful instinct toward freedom. Holston uses the power of color organized into compositions that relate to a physical environment, specifically to the locations where travelers followed the Underground Railroad. His vocabulary of color produces an emotional response for the viewer before the form solidifies into the objective image.

*Color in Freedom* consists of four movements that track the flow of events in the lives of those who traveled along the Underground Railroad: [The Unknown World](#), [Living in Bondage—Life on the Plantation](#), [The Journey of Escape](#), and finally, [Color in Freedom](#).

The Unknown World depicts the dichotomy between the old world and new, using strong juxtaposition of warm colors against somber and muted tones, depicting despair, loss and the harsh adjustment to the unknown life that awaits the enslaved.

Living in Bondage opens with Dawn of Despair, as the slaves awaken not simply to the dawn of a new day, but of an entirely new world where Holston's trademark use of line, form and color are employed to convey a wide range of emotions.

Journey of Escape showcases Holston's use of light to interpret the dream and hope of freedom and the conviction of those in search of freedom despite grim realities.

*Color in Freedom* depicts music and dance through an exhilarating explosion of color signaling the beginning of a life in freedom. *Color in Freedom*, echoes past accomplishments and forecasts future achievements, each requiring courage and fierce determination of spirit.

Painter and printmaker, Joseph Holston is best known for his use of vivid color, abstracted forms and expressive lines, reflecting his appreciation for musical composition. His abstract style draws from the cubist tradition, perfecting his ability to communicate his subjects' emotion. Viewers quickly understand the love and emotion shared between his figures. Holston's cubist abstractionist style has evolved over a fine arts career spanning more than 35 years. A critically acclaimed artist, he has exhibited all over the United States, including the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum in Washington, DC. Holston has been an artist-in-residence and a guest lecturer at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, and at the Experimental Printmaking Institute at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Works by Joseph Holston are included in numerous museums, institutions, and private collections. Among these are the permanent collection of the Yale University Art Gallery; the Lyndon B. Johnson Library at the University of Texas; DePauw University, Howard University, the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York; the King-Tisdell Cottage Museum in Savannah, Georgia; the AFL-CIO, Washington, DC; the Hubert H. Humphrey Collection, the Evans-Tibbs Collection, the Donald Byrd Collection, and the Jean and Robert Steele Collection.

*Color in Freedom* was developed by University of Maryland University College and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

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