

For Immediate Release

Contact: Catherine Wynn

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chatcat141@gmail.com

**Clare Gallery's new exhibit: *Color and Identity: A Visual Conversation*  
October 19–December 3, 2023**

Hartford, CT — Clare Gallery's final 20th Anniversary exhibition, *Color and Identity: A Visual Conversation*, reveals national artist Stanwyck Cromwell's ongoing artistic journey. Cromwell is originally from Guyana—a northern country in South America that borders Venezuela, Brazil, and Suriname. Guyana is a coastal country and is considered part of the mainland Caribbean. Though it is not an island, it is culturally Caribbean, with a mix of African, Indian, European, and Latin heritage.

An artist reception will be held on **Sunday, October 22**, 1-3 p.m. A panel discussion will be held on **Sunday, November 19**, 1-2 p.m. Panelists will include the artist; [John Motley](#), past president of the Amistad Center for Art & Culture and of the Wadsworth Museum of Art; and [Fiona Vernal](#), Associate Professor, History and Africana Studies at the University of Connecticut. The panel will be moderated by Nancy Wynn, Associate Professor, Visual and Performing Arts, Merrimack College and Chair of the Clare Gallery.

Cromwell's artwork is a visual representation of the nostalgic memories of his Guyanese home, Caribbean influences of the West Indies (including its spirituality), as well as his experiences living in New England for fifty-three years—specifically Hartford, Connecticut. He has a love and respect for the West End community in Hartford—living on Cleveland Avenue, teaching at The Artists Collective and Capital Community College. He immigrated as a young man and states, “I grew up in a time when you worked hard and your word was your bond.” He associated with people from all walks of life. Those unique and varied conversations have made their way into his work. The artworks are rich hybrid abstract expressions of his Guyanese home blended with his American experiences. Cromwell states: “Even though I left home, I never left home.”

In much of his work, you can see the influences of his mother, both a seamstress and a craftsperson, a father who was a graphic designer, and many artistic uncles—a long artistic ancestry. His work weaves together overlapping shapes, diverse edges, thick textural strokes of paint in rhythmic patterns and vibrant colors. His media consists of graphite, color pencil, watercolor, collage, and oils. When Cromwell paints with oils, he uses the “wet on wet” and “dirty brush” techniques. Wet on wet allows him to build up layered colors, and the dirty brush technique lets him blend colors right on his canvas. Both techniques produce more diverse, vibrant colors to create dynamic mixed-media compositions. Cromwell states: “I paint like I drive, I get lost quick.” He does not really “get lost,” rather he views the process as revealing new creative discoveries along the way.

Cromwell's artistic compositions are filled with symbols, where meaning shifts based on a viewer's visual literacy, their own memories, and an understanding of metaphor. For example, shells may represent an ocean vacation and relaxation, but they are also about rebirth and eternity. For Cromwell, they make direct connections to the Guyanese coastal beaches. Additionally, mask-like images and

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## GALLERY

at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry

African-American facial features are part of his work. They reference Guyanese, African and Indigenous cultures, along with a connection to Carnival. Cromwell states: “Wide noses and thick lips are frequent in most of my work. I use these features, not as cultural stereotypes, but to emphasize the natural beauty of African features. I’m drawn to these features and continue to use them in my work, because I find them sculpturally strong, ruggedly handsome, and spiritually connected to my work.” Many of his symbols express pregnancy, fortitude, food, moving, and swimming.

Cromwell received his MFA from the University of Hartford, Hartford Art School, and credits Professor Ellen Carey as his mentor, for she understood and encouraged his process-oriented work and its vibrant colors. He has been an artist-in-residence and a visiting artist for numerous New England arts and educational organizations, as well as higher educational institutions. These include, but are not limited to the Organized Parents Make a Difference, (OPMAD) and the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT; Mont Pleasant Middle School, Schenectady, NY; Wheelock College in Boston; and the University of Connecticut.

Starting in 1990, Cromwell has consistently exhibited his artwork. Recent solo exhibitions have been at Akwaaba Gallery in Newark, NJ; Five Points Center for the Visual Arts, Torrington, CT; the Gallery on The Green, Canton, CT; the William Benton Museum of Art, Storrs, CT; and at Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, MA. Recent group exhibitions have been in Harlem, NY; New Jersey; Wisconsin; Indiana; Illinois; St. Louis, MO; Brooklyn, NY; and Philadelphia, PA. In 2021, Cromwell received the “100 Men of Color Distinguished Award, Hartford, CT.”

Cromwell is a member of many arts organization. A select list includes the National Conference of Artists-New York, Inc.; Black Dimensions in Art (BDA); Caribbean Society of Visual Artists, Inc., (CSVA); The Artists Collective; and Windsor Art Center. His artwork is in numerous state and private collections. An abridged list includes the Connecticut Historical Society Museum; Eastern Connecticut State University; the Ray Allen (NBA) Collection; Travelers Insurance Company; and the Collection of Archbishop, Dr. LeRoy Bailey, Jr. For more detailed information, visit Stanwyck Cromwell’s website, [stancromwell.com](http://stancromwell.com).

The Clare Gallery primarily features exhibitions that emphasize world religions or interfaith themes, as well as social justice themes, on either a global or local level. The Gallery is housed in the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry at 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT. The Center is part of St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church, a vibrant and active downtown faith community.

The Clare Gallery’s hours are from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and Sundays from 9–11:30 a.m. The Gallery is open to the public. Free parking is available directly across from the church, and the facility is accessible to all. Masks are optional.