

Cicely Cottingham

BIOGRAPHY

Cicely Cottingham was born in Brooklyn, New York, and received a BFA degree in 1966 from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

After leaving Pratt, she lived for a time in Manhattan, Cambridge Massachusetts and England before eventually settling in New Jersey where she spent her childhood in an old farmhouse surrounded by woods. It was there that she immersed herself in the light that is particular to the New York Atlantic coast. Her childhood environment became her primary creative influence. Other early influences were her mother, Marjorie, who instilled in her a deep satisfaction in the making of things; the first modernist, Cezanne, whose paintings she visited routinely and reverently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (how can a still life composed of mere paint and canvas be so alive and elicit such an emotional response?); and later, the American Hudson River School, the Luminist painters and artists of the New York School. The landscape of her youth continues to be a primary influence.

Cicely Cottingham has received The Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, a Pollock-Krasner Grant, three New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship Awards, a Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper Fellowship Award and a Hereward Lester Cooke Grant. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Newark Museum of Art, the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University-Newark and the State University of New York, Geneseo. Her print *Still Life Design for Living (variation): Beauford* is in the permanent collections of the Montclair Art Museum, Jersey City Museum, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, The Noyes Museum of Art, Newark Public Library, Morris Museum and New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Exhibitions include *Sustained Investigations*, Kresge Gallery, Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts, Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ; *Everything is Sky*, Lockhart Gallery, State University of New York, Geneseo (solo); *The Divine and Sublime*, Drawing Rooms, Jersey City, NJ; *Cicely Cottingham's Flags*, Gallery Aferro, Newark, NJ (solo); *The Marjorie Paintings and Kitchen Table Drawings*, Stewart Leshé Collections, Milburn, NJ (solo); *Aljira at 30, Dream and Reality*, NJ State Museum, Trenton; *Subject Matter*, The Gallery at Nell Painter's Studio, Newark, NJ; and a drawing invitational *Drawn to New York* at The Bertha V.B. Lederer Gallery, State University of New York, Geneseo.

Earlier exhibitions include *Paintings from True Blue* (solo) and *Cicely Cottingham Drawings* (solo), Jersey City Museum, NJ; *Do Nothing at Present*, Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton NJ (solo); *Bending Over Backwards*, Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ (solo); *Recent Acquisitions*, Newark Museum, NJ; *New Jersey Curator's*

Choice, Paul Robeson Galleries, Rutgers University-Newark, NJ; *Drawing Invitational*, Jersey City Museum, NJ; *Selections: Aljira and Artists Space*, NYC; and *Regular Beauties*, La Mama's La Galleria, NYC. Her work has been included in New Jersey Arts Annuals at the Newark Museum, Montclair Art Museum and New Jersey State Museum. Her work has been written about in the New York Times, New Art Examiner, Review, and Artnet Magazine.

Cicely Cottingham's significant association with the nonprofit visual arts organization Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, NJ dates from 1984 when she was included in their second exhibition. Aljira's mission was to serve emerging and underrepresented artists. In 1991 she cofounded a revenue generating enterprise, Aljira Design, which provided over 40% of Aljira's operating budget and helped to facilitate Aljira's development into a "Major Arts Institution", a designation of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Cottingham served as Aljira Design's Art Director from 1996 to 2009. Aljira closed officially in 2019.

Cicely Cottingham currently lives and works in West Orange, New Jersey.