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Thirty years

Jerald Melberg Gallery in Charlotte celebrates its 30th anniversary with an exhibition of gallery artists and estates

Through March 29

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When Jerald Melberg opened his eponymous gallery in Charlotte, North Carolina, 30 years ago, he knew that the secret to success would come from working with a national base of clients and collectors.

“I must admit, I’m amazed that I’ve been able to hang in there and do this outside of a major metropolitan area for the last 30 years,” says Melberg. “I have plenty of wonderful regional clients but I knew from the beginning that if I were to succeed, I would have to make my client base national. So, I made a very conscious effort to develop relationships at a national level. We do a lot of art fairs and that has really helped us get the word out.”

For this 30th anniversary show, Melberg will have new work by classic contemporary artists such as Wolf Kahn, Lee Hall, and Brian Rutenberg, and then works by estates he represents such as Robert Motherwell, Romare Bearden, James Rosati, and Esteban Vicente.

“With the gallery, I have two parallel tracks that we work in,” says Melberg. “The first is well-established mid- to late-career living artists and the second is important late-20th-century estates.”

With Motherwell, Melberg

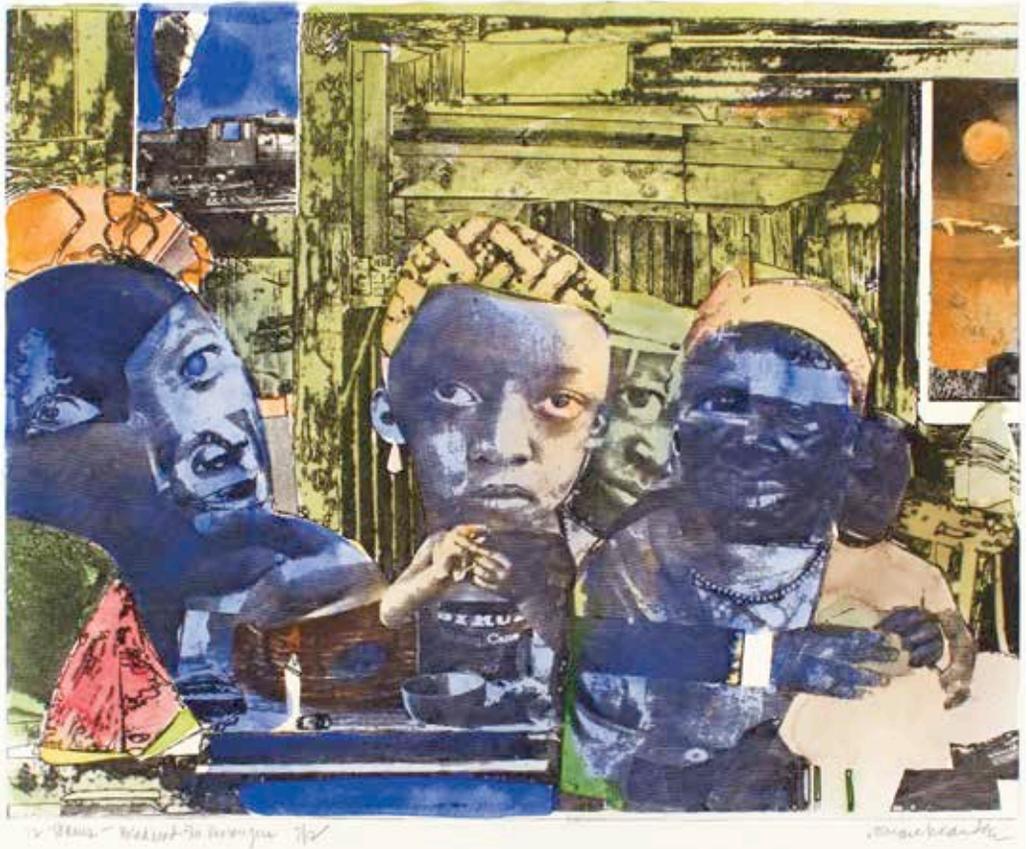


James Rosati
(1911–1988).
Ode V, 1980–81.
Stainless steel,
46 x 22½ x 20½ in.

represents the Dedalus Foundation in the Southeast. The Dedalus Foundation operates six major programs, each dedicated to informing the public about the principles of modern art and modernism, as expressed in the works of Motherwell and other modern artists.

“We have a terrific relationship,” says Melberg, “and we’ve worked together very well over the years.”

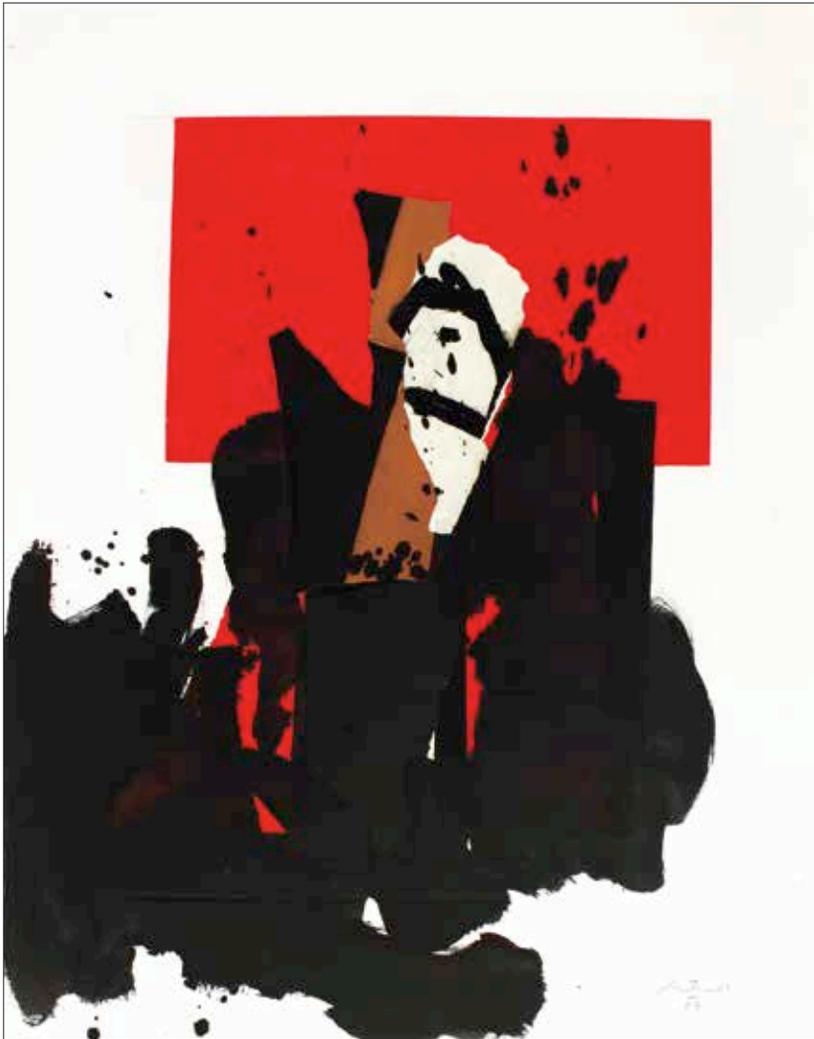
Melberg first came to the area in 1980 to serve as the curator of the Mint Museum in Charlotte. At the time, the first project he proposed was



Romare Bearden (1911-1988), *12 Trains—Deadhead—No Passengers*, 1974. Hand colored etching, 17¼ x 22¼ in.



Robert Motherwell (1915-1991), *Open Study in Tobacco Brown*, 1971. Acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 20 x 30 in.



Robert Motherwell
(1915-1991),
The Red and Black No. 48, 1987-88. Oil-based
etching ink, pasted
papers and aquatint on
paper, 31½ x 25 in.

a major show for Bearden, a 10-year retrospective featuring his work of the 1970s. Bearden was important to Melberg as the artist was from Charlotte as well.

“When I left the museum to open the gallery I had lunch with Bearden in New York City,” says Melberg. “I told him that I was leaving and he said, ‘Jerald, I already know.’ And, when I said to him that it would be a real privilege and an honor to represent him in his own hometown,

he responded by saying that he would’ve been very disappointed if I didn’t ask. We had a wonderful relationship over the last 15 years of his life and I really saw him as a second grandfather to me. He was a dear friend and we knew each other very well.”

Melberg is proud of the fact that the city of Charlotte recently built an 8-acre park in the center city and named it after Bearden. It’s just one of the many elements of the city that has

kept Melberg there over all these years.

“Sometimes I feel that there are people who still hold a prejudice against the South,” says Melberg. “But people don’t really understand that Charlotte is a big, booming city. It is very contemporary, very modern, with great architecture and wonderful cultural amenities. The opera is great, the symphony is great and the art museums are first class as well. It’s a great place to live and the last 30 years have been a blessing to me.” ■