



14AB Peters Rest
St. Croix USVI
walshmetal.com
773-8169

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Barbara Walsh Tel: 773-8169 Email: bbw928@yahoo.com

Ghanaian Artist Has First Solo Exhibition In VI

St. Croix, USVI – Thursday, March 15th, 2007 – Walsh Metal Works Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition **Pomp & Ceremony**: a new series of paintings that depict Ghanaian tribal royalty, by Ghanaian artist Hacajaka. The exhibition opens at the Walsh Metal Works Gallery in Peters Rest on Friday, March 16th with a reception from 5-9pm.

Hacajaka's **Pomp & Ceremony** forms part of the worldwide independent jubilee celebration of Ghana, the first country south of the Sahara to attain independence under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Independent Ghana turns 50 on March 6th this year.

Artist Hacajaka's new paintings for the **Pomp & Ceremony** exhibition evoke the atmosphere of a typical 'durber', which is a traditional gathering of royal chiefs during festivals in Ghana. Hacajaka's works explore the pageantry surrounding Ashanti chieftaincy and royalty in Ghana, which exhibition curator Widdup Coubagy calls "the most unifying, awesome and visually stunning institution in Ghana." Mr. Coubagy, who also serves as Curator of the Ghanaian National Theater Gallery, will accompany the works to St. Croix and will be available for interview and to answer questions about Ghanaian royalty and traditions.

The most important festival in the Ashanti cultural calendar is called **akwasidae**, held every 40 days to commemorate the Golden Stool and the Ashantihene. During the festival, amidst a spectacular kaleidoscope of umbrellas, canopies and the sound of horns, the Ashantihene is carried in a palanquin, followed by his sub-chiefs and an entourage of musicians, through the streets of Kumasi. The akwasidae is intended to unify and parade the 'might' of the Ashantis. Hacajaka captures the spirit of the event: the pomp, the pageantry, the pathos, the majesty and the splendor of the akwasidae.

The Ashanti Empire was founded in the 17th century by King Osei Tutu the First, with the guidance of his chief priest, Okomfo Anokye, who, it is said, conjured up the Golden Stool from the heavens. The Golden Stool is the 'soul' of the Ashanti people. The Ashanti Empire spread its authority through military and diplomacy as far as what is now known as Burkina Faso. The Ashanti Empire was dissolved in the 19th century by the British, who later merged it with other states into present day Ghana.

Hacajaka is a painter, sculptor, and performance artist who also works as a fashion designer. An Ashanti himself, Hacajaka's late father is related to the current Ashantihene. Hacajaka works in a figurative style on canvas, and in the past has used dimensional mixed media in his work, affixing masks and gold-weights to his canvasses. His work is bright and vibrant, with bold traditionally representative color choices ('Ashanti reds') and an atmospheric, painterly style that uses bright swaths of color to create powerful, symbolic compositions.

Hacajaka has an M. A. in Fine Arts from the College of Art at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. A founding member of the groundbreaking 'Prekese Art Group' and Ntonsu School, Hacajaka has exhibited in Ghana, Togo, Britain and the U.S. Hacajaka's works are in the private and public collections including the Leasafic Collection, the National Theatre of Ghana, the National Museum of Ghana and the collection of Texas senator Rodney Ellis. This is Hacajaka's first solo exhibition in the Virgin Islands.

Pomp & Ceremony will be on exhibit from Saturday, March 17th through Saturday, March 31st 2007 at the Walsh Metal Works Gallery. The opening reception for the show is Friday, March 16th, from 5 to 9pm. The exhibition will also be accompanied by the **Second Annual African Market** over the second weekend: Thursday through Saturday, March 22nd - 24th, a selection of crafts, clothing, artworks and other African products will be for sale at the Gallery. Gallery hours are 10am – 4pm Monday through Saturday, or by appointment. For more information, call the gallery at (340)773-8169 or check out our website at walshmetal.com.

#

Photos enclosed. Byline Christina Frederick Gasperi.

SIDEBAR/CALENDAR INFO:

Who: West African artist Hakajaca

What: Exhibiting new paintings in a premier solo show in the Virgin Islands

Where: At the Walsh Metal Works Gallery, 14AB Peters Rest (behind the Coca Cola plant)

When: Opening reception Friday, March 16th 2007, from 5 to 9 pm. Exhibition runs through Saturday, March 31st. 2nd Annual African Market Thursday–Saturday, March 22nd - 24th during Gallery hours.

(Exhibition Hours: 10am – 4pm Monday through Saturday or by appointment – 773-8169)

Other: Free of charge, parking available. Groups welcome by appointment

For more information, contact gallery owner Barbara Walsh. Phone: (340)773-8169



“Three Umbrellas” by Hacajaka



“Swearing In Before Dawn” by Hacajaka