



PRESS RELEASE:

January 15, 2014

For immediate release:

Through February 24, 2014

For more information:

Laura C. Lieberman, 770/949-2787

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBITIONS:
Works from Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild
& Gullah Master Jery B. Taylor**

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville and Douglas County, Inc., presents recent works by members of the Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild and Gullah artist Jery B. Taylor during January and February in celebration of Black History Month. The exhibit, developed with assistance from the Hammonds House Museum, features two of the most established African-American crafts - quilting by members of the Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild and basket weaving by South Carolina native Jery B. Taylor. The show will be on view through February 24th at the Cultural Arts Center. Hosted by the Douglas County Connection, the reception will be on Saturday, January 25th, from 6 until 9 p.m. Jazz pianist Rico Henry will be performing during the reception. Gallery admission and the reception are free and open to the general public.

The Brown Sugar Stitchers are a diverse group of quilters from throughout metro Atlanta. The organization was conceived in 1999 as the vision of co-founders Jocelyn Carter and Nancy Franklin. Encouraged and enjoined by former Dekalb County Librarian Doris Wells, the trio moved toward the realization of a quilt guild. In 2000, a core group of quilters formally organized as the Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild and elected Nancy Franklin as its first President. The guild's name is derived from the name of their meeting place—the William C. Brown-Wesley Chapel Library, where the group still meets to this day. Today, the guild has more than 45 active members and 2 honorary members - Doris Wells, former Wesley Chapel librarian, and Ricky Tims, a world renowned quilter.

Since its inception, the members' love of quilts has unified them to share, learn, teach, inspire and encourage others' growth through public service, cultural and educational events throughout the community. The Guild has been involved in enrichment programs of local public schools, Girl Scouts of America, the National Black Arts Festival, and the Wesley Chapel Friends of the Library. One of their long-term signature projects includes working closely with the Carrie Steele-Pitts Home for Children, where they work each year to create and donate quilts to abused, abandoned and neglected children in southwest Atlanta. For the past two years, the Brown Sugar Stitchers have also worked with the Quilts of Valor Foundation, a relationship established to collectively and individually donate quilts to combat service members and war veterans.

Guild members continuously create beautifully patterned traditional and contemporary art quilts—each individual quilt reflecting a wide variety of themes, voices and unique stories. O.V. Brantley's *Dream Like Crazy*, a large exquisitely constructed quilt, expertly uses color, textures and imagery combined with text to engage the viewer's imagination to unravel the story woven within. In Elaine Parker's *Emission*, the artist

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBITION**

embroiders two hands coming together—fingers interwoven as the thumbs meet in the lower portion of the quilt—leaving a small oval shape where a small infant lays comfortably. The imagery itself is compelling enough but the added beads which adorn the hands resemble a stippling technique used by painters and illustrators, and add depth to the image. Along with the use of color, this creates a safe and warm environment which emphasizes the special bond between mother and child.

In addition to the Brown Sugar Stitchers art quilts, the exhibition includes various styles of basket weaving and folk-art paintings by Gullah artist Jery B. Taylor. Ms. Taylor is a descendant of the West Africans of Sierra Leone where her style of basket weaving originates. Born and raised in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Ms. Taylor attended Rutledge College initially pursuing a career in phlebotomy and medical administration. Being taught basket weaving by her grandmother at the tender age of 5, Jery B. Taylor has practiced the art form throughout her life, but it was not until 1983 that she decided to devote her time entirely to basketry as a career.

Since then, Taylor has made many great achievements including exhibiting her work in the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., San Francisco’s airport, and the South Carolina Art Museum in Columbia. Like her baskets - each an original sculpture that reveals the artist’s skills as both designer and craftsman - Ms. Taylor’s paintings reflect the rich cultural heritage and history of a unique people—so it is no surprise that today her work is prized and collected among museums and collectors alike.

Other accomplishments by Jery B. Taylor include numerous workshops including galleries in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Mailou Arts Fest in Tampa, Florida and at the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. Through these workshops, she has been able to share her culture and a variety of basketry designs. Along with the famous “fanner” basket, a design used in Africa for centuries to “fan” the rice in the fields to separate grain from chaff , and brought over to America during the slave trade, the “sweetgrass coil baskets,” used to hold bread and fruit, are staples of her craft. Other elements used in the baskets themselves include pine needles, bullrush and palmetto. Additionally, Taylor’s mastery over the medium has captured the attention of a wide audience, leading her work to be featured in magazines like *Southeast Low Country*, *African American Tourist Host*, *Historic Preservation*, *American Visions*, *Southern Living*, and Home and Garden Television’s *Country Style*.

The mission of the Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is to nurture, guide and stimulate the enjoyment of and participation in the arts among Douglas County residents by providing an atmosphere conducive to the arts, broadening the spectrum of quality exhibits and performances available to the community, and fostering individual interactions with the arts through a wide range of satellite groups. The Cultural Arts Council and its exhibitions at the Cultural Arts Center are supported in part by the City of Douglasville, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, and the Georgia Council for the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is located at 8652 Campbellton Street in historic downtown Douglasville, Georgia. Hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For directions and more information, please visit our web site, www.artsdouglas.org or contact the Cultural Arts Council at 770/949-2787.

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CALENDAR LISTINGS: EXHIBITS

TITLE: BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBITIONS:
Works from Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild & Gullah Master
Jery B. Taylor

PLACE: The Cultural Arts Center of Douglasville / Douglas County
8652 Campbellton Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134

DATES: January 24 – February 24, 2014

RECEPTION: Saturday, January 25th, 6 – 9 p.m.

GALLERY HOURS: Mondays – Fridays, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

COST: Free and open to the public

CONTACT: Laura C. Lieberman, 770-949-2787