Joseph Delaney / 1970





Delaney Family, c. 1908
Standing: Samuel, Jr., Rev. Samuel Delaney, Mrs. Delaney
Seated: Joseph, Ogust, Beauford, Naomi



THE University of Tennessee feels privileged to present the paintings of Joseph Delaney to the people of Knoxville. Although Mr. Delaney has been acclaimed by critics in the New York art world, this is the first time he has been honored in his hometown.

Organizing and presenting an exhibit of this calibre requires many hours of work. We are grateful to the Black Student's Union, the Black Studies Committee, the Frank H. McClung Museum Gallery, the Art Department, and the Division of International Education, all of the University of Tennessee, and the Urban League of Knoxville for their financial support, to Oscar White, Charles Reynolds and Elsa Fine who organized the exhibit, to Richard LeFevre for the exhibition catalogue, to Joseph Hopkins for his assistance in hanging the show, and to the Art Department for including this exhibit in its exhibition calendar.

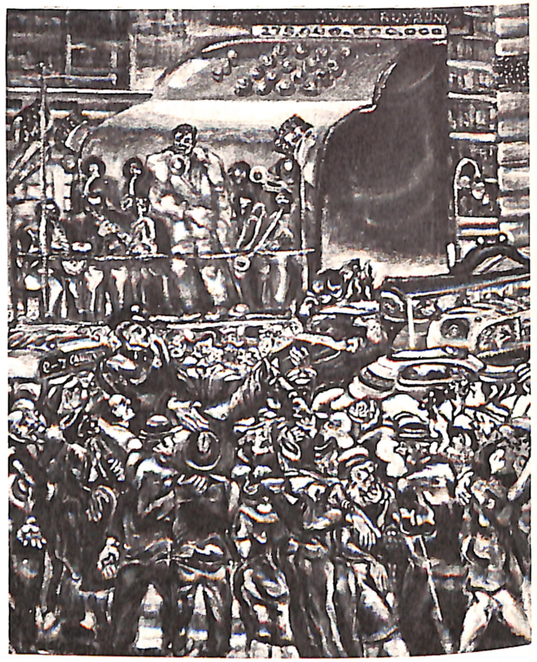
Frank H. McClung Museum Gallery
The University of Tennessee
September 27, 1970 through October 15, 1970

When former school teacher Mrs. J. S. Dailey (now ninety-two and a resident of Knoxville) gave the fourteen year old Joseph Delaney a fifty-cent piece as a prize for a sketch he had done, she helped launch an art career. Born in Knoxville, in 1904, the sixth son and tenth child of the Reverend and Mrs. Joseph Samuel Delaney, Joseph Delaney's life reads like the history of the twentieth century. After attending high school in Knoxville, he "hit the road," working at odd jobs in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Detroit. As a waiter at various night clubs and hotels in Chicago's Loop during the 'twenties, he "grooved" with the musicians who were creating a new kind of music—jazz, Chicago style. Many were the subjects of his paintings.

Arriving in New York at the onset of the Depression, Mr. Delaney enrolled at the Art Students League, where he and his friend, Jackson Pollack, studied with Thomas Hart Benton. Artists, rarely able to prosper during normal times, were hit hard when the economy failed. Fortunately, the Federal Government was "color-blind" when granting aid to artists, and Joseph Delaney, like so many of his colleagues, survived the period as a W.P.A. "easel artist." His copies of Paul Revere silver for the Index of American Design were later exhibited at the Library of Congress.

A recipient of many awards and fellowships, and an exhibitor at most of the major museums in New York, Mr. Delaney's work is in the permanent collection of Huntington Hartford, the Harry S. Truman Library, and the University of Arizona. He has done portraits of Eartha Kitt, Chester A. Arthur III, Arlene Francis, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Tallulah Bankhead, and hundreds of other lesser known people who have stopped to chat with him at the Washington Square Outdoor Art Show where he has been exhibiting his paintings, and communicating with the people for almost forty years.

Joseph Delaney's main interest is people. They appear in his canvases in all shapes and forms. While many artists have abandoned the figure, and others have rejected and then returned to figurative study, people, painted in a "self-mocking" expressionistic vein usually appear in Delaney's paintings. He recently received critical acclaim for his paintings at the Studio Museum in Harlem's 1968 exhibition, "Invisible Americans, Black Artists of the '30's." Hilton Kramer, art editor of the New York **Times** (November 24, 1968), wrote that in the exhibition there were several works of real quality,



War Rally, Times Square, 1949



Dr. Graham, 1969

among them Joseph Delaney's "Waldorf Cafe." Commenting on the same exhibition, Robert Pincus-Witten (**Art Forum,** February, 1969) wrote that Joseph Delaney was an "artist of stature." Continued Pincus-Witten, "A single artist of tremendous merit was revealed to me in terms of a developed, tough, and by moments self-mocking Expressionism—Joseph Delaney. [His] "Waldorf Cafe" is terrifically painted with a breadth and ease of caricature that would please an Ensor. . . . 'Clara' . . . is a fine painting with a wispy, meditative quality that at moments suggests Kokoschka and a lyricism reminiscent of Kuniyoshi."

Joseph has an older brother, Beauford, also an artist, and a resident of Paris for the past sixteen years.

Joseph Delaney compiled his thoughts on life and art in **Thirty-Six Years Exhibiting in Washington Square Outdoor Art Shows,** March 27, 1968. A few of them are:

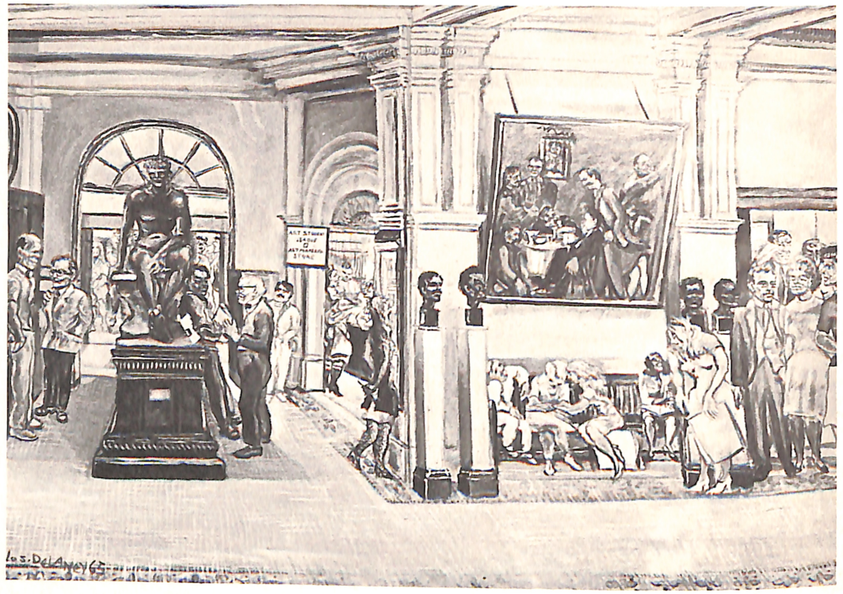
About himself and the world: "I am basically a religious man and I know that the divine plan for mankind is revealing the truth to the world now as always. Except today our communications have made the world a smaller place and all of us are living in a glass cage."

About the young: "I was impressed with the new freedom they expressed in most of their communication with each other. They all seem to get the message, whatever that is. . . . I get a charge from looking on [and feel their] vibrations."

About beauty: "Beauty that is pleasant and without question in people and surroundings is conventional. But beauty is not always good to look at. It might . . . [appear in people who] know the other side of reality which is suffering. The artist will understand the subject of life in all its expressions because he is always looking restlessly at life . . ."

About being black: "This evil [black bondage] has been matched by the great opportunity provided in the Constitution for all people who are equal and free in this country, like no where else. The ideal state is so perfect in its conception, but fear of it being realized by all Americans has been vigorously undermined by bias and discrimination, and other unchristian ways to keep the black people shackled by all the subtle and deliberate refusals to be equal and just in all relations. . . . The time is now for the black and all those who have grievances to use their energy to organize with that power which is indestructable . . . [to develop] the skills . . . and techniques . . . to be second to none in preparedness for all kinds of jobs and opportunities . . . . Falling apart and losing our cool would be less than proof that we are made of the good stuff that does not break under burdens which we can remove by stretching out all the way [with] love for ourselves and others who must join us in our fight."

Elsa Honig Fine



Lobby, Art Student's League, 1965

Drawings

1. Washington Square, 1960
2. Leapfrog, 1965
3. Chelsea Sweet Shop, 1942
4. Charleston Lunch Bar, 1942
5. Handshaking, Old South, 1935
6. Sunday School Class, Old South, 1935
7. Sketch of Blount Mansion
8. The Docking of the Enterprise, 1945, on loan from Dr. and Mrs. Harold Fine

Paintings

1. V.J. Day, Times Square
2. Mrs. Delaney, (The Artist's Mother), 1942
3. Sketch Artists, 1952
4. Lower Manhattan, 1952
5. Central Park Skating, 1963
6. Street Creatures
7. Olivia Wyndham, 1934
8. Waterfront Poolroom, 1942
9. St. Patrick's Day Parade, No. 2, 1953



Waldorf Cafe, Greenwich Village, 1945

10. Easter Parade, 1969
11. Clara, 1937
12. Albert Ammons, Jazz Musician, 1953
13. 14th St. and Eighth Avenue, 1940, on loan from Dr. and Mrs. Harold J. Fine
14. Bertha Star, 1944
15. Mountain Girl, 1936
16. Chelsea Bar, 1940
17. Crow's Nest, 1942
18. Holy Touch, 1950
19. Dr. Graham, 1969, on loan
20. View of New Jersey from New York, 1945, on loan from Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Hyatte
21. Chelsea Bar, No. 2, 1954
22. Waldorf Cafe, 1945
23. The McDonalds, 1950
24. Village Corner, 1965
25. Lobby, Art Student's League, 1965
26. Girl at the Window, 1957
27. War Rally, Times Square, 1949
28. St. Patrick's Day Parade, 1961
29. Clari at Piano, 1945
30. Coney Island, 1953
31. Lower Manhattan, 1953
32. Soldier's Day in Madison Square Park, 1963
33. Manhattan Bridge Crossing, 1953

(Prices available on request)

