



Painting by JERRY BUTLER, from *A Drawing in the Sand: The Story of African American Art*, to be published by Zino Press in January of 1998

Jerry Butler: Drawing in the Sand

PROFILE BY ROLPH BLYTHE

A Drawing in the Sand: The Story of African American Art
By Jerry Butler
Zino Press
64 pages, \$24.95

Hunched over hoes in a dry field, dancing in a Harlem nightclub, or lifted up in songs of praise, Jerry Butler's brilliantly colored figures speak eloquently about the African American experience. His paintings appeared as illustrations in *Sweet Words So Brave: The Story of African American Literature*, written by Barbara J. Curry and James Michael Brodie (Zino Press, 1996), along with historical photos and text documenting the literary achievements of America's most prominent black writers.

Currently at work writing and illustrating his forthcoming book, *A Drawing in the Sand: The Story of African American Art* (Zino Press, January 1998), Butler, who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, discussed his background in a recent telephone conversation.

Mississippi. I never like to use the term *poor*. I don't think that I was poor. I didn't have any worldly goods, but I had other things that I thought were a lot more valuable. Through church I did some illustrations that paid a lot. As a youngster, to get three hundred dollars to do a painting was just unbelievable. It would be like me getting a half a million dollars today. It seemed that every time people from other churches visited my church and saw my mural they wanted one on their wall.

In order to familiarize young readers with black America's long artistic tradition, Butler began writing and illustrating *A Drawing in the Sand* over a year ago. The book combines the story of his own artistic journey with the lives and works of important African American artists such as Henry O. Tanner, Edward Bannister, Jacob Lawrence, and Augusta Savage.

It was very interesting to take a look at the whole scheme of African American art and see where I fit in. In *A Drawing in the Sand* I look at the Harlem Renaissance and the artists that were peripherally involved in it: Elizabeth Cantlet, Lawrence Jones, and Charles White. I

wanted to tell a worthwhile story using images that depicted the way I saw the world as a young person. This book was extremely challenging to create because it was so personal. This time, I didn't just work from historical newspaper clippings. I used more in-

cluded paintings to tell my own story. I presented the material from my point of view.

Part historical overview, part art book, and part memoir, *A Drawing in the Sand* offers a unique perspective on African American art.

A PERFECT TREAT!

An ABA Pick of the Lists

by NANCY SHAW
illustrated by
MARGOT APPLE



What will happen when the lovable muttonheads go trick-or-treating? Will there be wolves lurking in the forest? What sorts of treats will they get? Young fans of the adventuresome flock will revel in the silliness of this Halloween treat.

Ages 4-8
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