



# SOUTHERN OHIO Museum

## Queen Brooks Beloved Ohio Artist

Queen Brooks was born in 1943 in Columbus, Ohio. As a young adult with no background in art, Brooks took an interest in renowned African American Columbus photographer, Kojo Kamau, after reading an article about his work. Brooks hesitantly visited Kamau's gallery, and after peering through the window for the third day in a row, Kamau invited her in. Brooks had never visited an art gallery before, but became a regular visitor thereafter. Brooks started working for Kamau as an apprentice and soon started creating and exhibiting her own photographs.

In 1980 Queen Brooks took a job at the J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center as an instructor of arts & crafts. At the center, Brooks discovered pyrography (better known as wood burning). According to Brooks, "I traded in my camera for paint, wood burning, and mixed media. Color, pattern, mark making, and symbols make up my artist life."

In 1990 Queen Brooks went back to school to study fine art. She graduated in 1992 with a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Ohio State University. Experiencing great success as a professional artist, Brooks has received many awards including a residency in Abidjan, Republic of the Ivory Coast, in West Africa in 1993. Brooks also taught art at Otterbein University and at Ohio Dominican University. In addition to creating her own work, Brooks now works with children in the Columbus area making art as the lead artist in the Gladden Community House's "Art in the House" program.

The purpose of her art, according to Brooks, is to give joy. A deacon at Broad Street Presbyterian Church, spirituality and her African heritage are recurring themes in Brooks' work.

Queen Brooks considers herself an abstract artist that occasionally uses symbols for storytelling. Brooks calls fellow Columbus artist, woodcarver Elijah Pierce her, "spiritual model." "He always believed that [making art] is a God-given talent to share."





Coloring page adapted from: *Life Force*, colored pyrography

Southern Ohio Museum & Cultural Center  
825 Gallia St.  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

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