

## Lula Mae Blocton

### Statement

As an African-American woman artist, I can trace my heritage to slaves on an Alabama plantation. I have included parts of my ancestry in my artwork. Since I have always been an abstract artist, the challenge was to do it in a nonrepresentational manner using the power of light, color and structure.

Building the image through the perception of layering is important. I start with black and white triangles that are common in many African cultures. The authentic African patterns are chosen based on creating a contrast between geometric shapes and curvilinear. They are designed to repeat on both the black and white parts of the surface. Colors chosen for the central area are the colors of the rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. The transparent illusion of horizontal bands covers the entire painting and unites the layers.

Everything in the paintings has social and political connotations. The inclusion of black and white and the use of rainbow colors cover many symbolic race and human rights issues. I use a rainbow palette of six colors to define the shapes with variations of the same colors. This radiant spectrum has both a traditional and personal meaning. National and international organizations use the rainbow to represent their commitment to moving the world towards social, racial and economic justice. The rainbow, therefore, suggests the promise of uniting people of diverse ethnic, religious, economic and political backgrounds to make liberty and justice for all a reality. Furthermore, the gay and lesbian community uses these same colors as a flag to represent sexuality, life, healing, sun, nature, art, harmony and spirit. Thus the rainbow symbolizes the diversity and pride of gay people, the hope for justice, and an artistic transformation of past suffering.



Lula Mae Blocton, *Rhythms of South Africa*, 2007, Oil on linen, 20" x 32"



Lula Mae Blocton, *Benin Revisted*, 2008, Oil on linen, 36" x 48"