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COLUMBIA STATE'S PRYOR ART GALLERY WELCOMES BACK

SAMMIE NICELY

Show Runs Through February

(Columbia, Tenn. – February 5, 2009) - - - Columbia State Community College welcomes back well-rounded artist, Sammie Nicely to the Pryor Art Gallery. Nicely will display drawings, ceramics, and found-object sculptures throughout February. The show will culminate with a reception in the Pryor Gallery, open to the public, on Saturday, February 28 from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m.

Nicely was an artist-in-residence for Maury County public schools throughout the 1990s. He presently lives and teaches in Atlanta, Georgia. Nicely graduated from MTSU with a degree in Art Education in 1975 and did graduate work in the same field from 1985-1990 at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (Columbia State exhibit, September 2005), then affiliated with the University of Tennessee. His focus was producing clay masks in the ancient pit-fired tradition.

“Nicely is a Renaissance man of the arts – he is a practicing multi-media artist, while at the same time teaching children and curating exhibits that relate African images with African-American crafts,” said Lucy Kuykendall, Pryor Gallery curator. More specifically, he unites African traditions with the spirit of African-Americans in Appalachia, as he grew up in Russellville, an East Tennessee community, and founded the From Africa to Appalachia Foundation. He has received a Tennessee Arts Commission Fellowship for craft, advised an installation on the UT Knoxville campus about the cultural progression of African-American families, and created the commissioned piece, “Out of Many One,” for the Hartsfield Airport in Atlanta. Nicely has been featured in multiple one-man and group shows since the late 1980s. His work is a part of many collections, including the TVA, Bell South, the National Afro-American Museum, ETSU, MTSU, and Georgia State. He has taught at the Penland Craft School in North Carolina, as well as in the public schools systems of both Tennessee and Georgia.

Artist Statement: As an artist, my work is an extension of myself and helps me to better understand my cultural heritage. It is a crucial means of self understanding. I see art as the medium through which such understanding can be attained. I create art for self satisfaction and as a way of communicating with others. My art serves as a common ground for communication where each person has to bring their own identity into play in order to appreciate my work... ”

Columbia State Community College is proud to bring the work of Sammie Nicely back to Middle Tennessee. Select pieces will be for sale. The Pryor Gallery is located in the Waymon L. Hickman Building, open during campus hours, 7:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m. Monday through Friday, and for special events on the weekend.

Columbia State is a two-year college, serving a nine-county area in southern Middle Tennessee with locations in Columbia, Franklin, Lawrenceburg, Lewisburg and Clifton. As Tennessee's first community college, Columbia State is committed to increasing access and enhancing diversity at all five campuses. Columbia State is a member of the Tennessee Board of Regents, the sixth largest higher education system in the nation.

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