

**February 3, 2009**  
**For Immediate Release**

## **SPENCE GALLERY presents Self-Portrait for Black History Month**

Five local and international Spence Gallery artists create a repertoire of images representing people of African heritage. Working in very different styles they construct the portrait of a heterogeneous people. In a culture where we often see stereotypical representations of Black people, the artists celebrate the features of their subjects revealing their humanity, beauty, strength and colour.

**Rosslyn Berot-Burns** creates tender yet rich images where light is used to create the tone. She allows light to enter in her compositions to create an atmosphere that quietly influences the viewers' mood and shapes our responses.

**Opal Dunbar-Adams** continues to paint women and children with care and detail. The hauntingly beautiful faces withhold secrets the viewer is compelled to discover. Adams' portraits of African people can be mistaken for familiarity rather, it is a longing for a place she has never been.\*

Award-winning African American artist **Charly Palmer** celebrates the strength and dignity of his subjects and adorns them with flowers. His colourful mixed media pieces remind us of the history of the African Diaspora through the use of historical documents and photographs.

Toronto-based **Bushra Junaid** employs bold lines, shade and shadow to depict Black people in her charcoal drawings. Her interest in the culture and history of the African Diaspora leads to deliberately create non-commercial images in her work.

**Freddy Sánchez's** use of bold, vibrant colours does not conceal the somber mood evident in the faces of this series of Black Pacific women of Columbia. Using acrylic and a spatula, Sánchez hopes to give a voice and form to the reality and history of these people.

Dunbar-Adams and Berot-Burns will be present for the opening reception. \*A minimum donation of \$5 gets a ticket for a draw to win a painting by Opal Dunbar-Adams. Tickets are available at Spence Gallery until the opening reception when the draw will be done - Saturday, February 21, 6 – 9 p.m. A portion of the proceeds will go to NOAH - **Nurturing Orphans of AIDS for Humanity**.  
[www.noahorphans.org.za](http://www.noahorphans.org.za)

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SPENCE GALLERY, located at 600 Markham (Bathurst & Bloor), is a one-of-a-kind gallery in Toronto. The gallery was founded to share culturally diverse artistic expressions. It provides a taste of contemporary art of Caribbean, Latin American and African artists and the Diaspora. It is dedicated to diversity and celebrates the cultural influences of the artists.

For further information and to schedule interviews with the artists please contact:

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Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Friday 5 – 8 pm | Saturday & Sunday 12 - 6 pm