



EFA Robert
Blackburn
Printmaking
Workshop

The Only Thing That Lasts:

An Oral History of Robert Blackburn's Printmaking Workshop interview with Nanette Carter

Nanette Carter was born in 1954 and grew up in Montclair, New Jersey. She earned her BA from Oberlin College in 1976, during which time she spent a year studying in Italy and traveling. She earned her MFA in 1978 from Pratt Institute of Art. During the 1980s, her work was featured in group and solo exhibitions in New York, among other cities, receiving much recognition. She was a Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop fellow in 1989. From 1990 to today, Carter has continually evolved in her work and actively participated in gallery and museum exhibitions. Her shaped works, produced in multimedia on Mylar since 1997, are evocative of concepts in the history of abstract art and reflect the African-American abstract art tradition. In 2007, Carter was chosen by the US State Department to represent the nation at the International Women's Art Festival in Aleppo, Syria.

In this excerpt, Carter goes into detail about Bob supporting Black artists, "again in the Black world '70s, '80s, '90s, New York City – this man was behind all of us...Everyone knew him."

Interview conducted by Camille Crain Drummond

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Nanette Carter:

1981, I received a National Endowment for the Arts. Now, I didn't know who the jurors were, I was just so happy. I was around 27 at the time. I was just so happy to be receiving this grant. It was \$7,000—1981, that was a lot of money. And I'll never forget, I was at an opening, Bob was there and he saw me, and he ushered me over to the corner and he said, "Nanette, you don't know this, but I was on the jurying committee. I was a juror." And of course, I was like, "Oh, wow, fantastic. Thank you, Bob, this is amazing for me." And he said, "Well, believe it or not . . ." It was probably the year that they had the most Black recipients. I recall him saying there were five, a total of five. Now, I don't know if he actually got all five in under printmaking or if that was some painters and sculptors and other folks. But I'm sure he was able to pull in some other Black artists into that, which was incredible.

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I have some photos I want you to see, actually, yeah. And one is of Bob at an Ed Clark opening with a bunch of Black men circled around the two of them. And what's so amazing is that, although this is

Ed Clark's show in this photo, Ed is next to Bob like this, you know, his whole body and gesture is to this guy, to this man. And Bob is just beaming, you know. Again, in the Black world, 70s-80s-90s New York City, this man was behind all of us. And it was just incredible because I think in many ways he didn't really push his own art as much as he should have. He was pushing others' works. I also have a wonderful photo that was taken up at the Schomburg library, and the Schomburg had decided to do a big show of the African-American artists in New York City. And this is in the 90s. And it's just this huge group of artists. And Bob is in that shot, too. Everyone knew him. He was, you know, there was a world that just circled around him.