

# Transparent Collages: Views from a New World Order or Light

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Figures and objects float in the luminous depths of Bunch Washington's Transparent Collages, creations that are fascinating assemblages of textures and colors changing and expanding as the light caresses them at varying angles and at varying degrees of intensity.

In his Transparent Collages, Washington follows a long tradition of artists and craftsmen who stem from the creators of the great stained glass windows of the Gothic age. That is, artists who depend upon the sun or some other light source as a definitive part of their work.

Washington explains that in his particular method of working he pours thin layers of plastic resin into a mold; maybe five or six layers of varying colors. Usually he begins with lighter colors and builds up to darker hues, a method somewhat similar to the way some old masters use colored glazes whereby painters like Titian and Tintoretto would often paint ten or more transparent washes of oil color to achieve an iridescent final effect. Into any one of these plastic layers Washington might place some object, an African gold weight, a semi-precious stone, even a small painting or drawing. After all

the layers are dry, the artist takes great care in the sanding and polishing of the outermost section. The work is then mounted, sometimes on old specially selected and well-seasoned pieces of wood or metal.

Mr. Washington said that one of his next projects will be to make creations to fit into windows and skylights. "I want to make a room glow," he said, "not only with colors shining in the window, but also with colored light as it falls across the floors and tables.

Some of the symbols that Washington uses relate to his study of Persian Arts and his dedication to the Bahá'í Faith, a religious system founded in Persia by Bahá'u'lláh, that teaches the unity of all religions and the over-riding duty of the Bahá'ís to serve the needs of mankind. The word "symbol" is stressed because the Bahá'ís are carefully enjoined not to use certain likenesses of their Founders, nor too literal interpretations of their concepts. It is interesting, therefore, that this artist, who uses some of the most modern methods, should at the same time concern himself with such ancient values; however, Washington's concepts are seldom superimposed upon his material, rather he actually creates with them.

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1 From the brochure for M. Bunch Washington's solo exhibit at the Off Broadway Gallery, April 13, 1975. A copy of the original document, signed by Mr. Bearden, is available at [journal.bahaistudies.ca](http://journal.bahaistudies.ca).