

Black Heroes

Celebrating Black History Month



A unique
collection of
paintings
by
Tony Nero





Nelson Mandela (1918-)

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela a former President of South Africa, the first to be elected in fully representative democratic elections. An anti-apartheid activist and leader of the African National Congress Mandela was imprisoned in 1964 and spent 27 years in prison most of it on Robben Island. He

was released in 1990 and have recieved over one hundred awards over the years including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. Currently a celebrated elder statesman who continues to voice his opinion on topical issues has credited Gandhi for being an inspiration in his life.



Malcolm X (1925-1965)

Born Malcolm Little, he was an African American Muslim minister, public speaker, and human rights activist. He was accused of preaching racism and violence and has also been described as one of the

most influential African Americans of the 20th century. By the age of 13, his father had died and his mother had been committed to a mental hospital. Malcolm became involved in the underworld and in 1945 was sentenced to prison where he became a member of the Nation of Islam. He was assassinated while giving a speech in New York.



Mary Seacole (1805-1881)

Mary Seacole was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1805 and using herbal medicines based on the knowledge of slaves, passed down to her through her mother, helped to treat the cholera epidemic. In spite of her experience Mary's application to join Florence Nightingale was rejected, but later

on her own expense she travelled to Crimea where she treated wounded soldiers on the battlefield. At the end of the war Mary was bankrupt but in her honour to aid her, soldiers held fundraising events. She was awarded several medals and died at the age of 76.



Bob Marley (1945-1981)

Nesta Robert Marley born in Nine Mile in Jamaica, with his band The Wailers took Reggae music to the world. His first ever Ska and Rocksteady group were called the Teenagers and later "The Wailing Wailers, working with producers, like Coxson Dodd and Lee 'Scratch' Perry. The Wailers' first

album, *Catch a Fire*, was released worldwide in 1973. In 1978 performing at a political concert in Jamaica, Marley got the two political rivals, Michael Manley and Edward Seaga, to shake hands on stage. After refusing to amputate his toe following an injury, lost his battle with Cancer.



Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr (1887-1940)

Marcus Garvey was born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, after seven years of schooling he worked as a printer and later became an active trade unionist. In 1911 Garvey

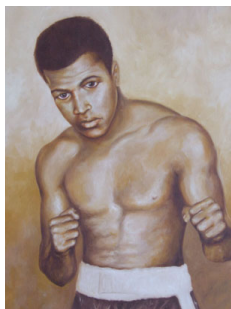
moved to England and briefly studied at Birbeck College where he met others who were involved in the struggle to obtain independence. Garvey purchased two steamships, and had talks with the Ku Klux Klan about his plans to repatriate African Americans to Africa. He later toured the world making speeches on civil rights, until his death in London on 10th June 1940.



Claudia Jones (1915-1964)

Feminist, black nationalist, political activist, community leader, communist and journalist. Born in Trinidad, at the age of eight moved to New York with her family. When she was 12 her mother died of exhaustion and poverty. In 1955 she was deported from the US and given asylum in England,

where she spent her remaining years working with the African-Caribbean community. She founded and edited *The West Indian Gazette* and established the first ever West Indian Carnival in 1959, which to this day every year continues on Notting Hill streets.



Muhammad Ali (1942-)

Born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. in Kentucky, Ali was named after his father and is a former three-time World Heavyweight Boxing Champion. To date, he remains the only man to have won the linear heavyweight championship three times and is also the winner of an olympic gold medal. In 1999,

Ali was crowned “Sportsman of the Century” by Sports Illustrated and the BBC. Ali changed his name after joining the Nation of Islam in 1964. Ali was known for his fighting style, which he described as “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee”.



Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)

Martin Luther King was an American clergyman, activist and prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. His main legacy was to secure progress on civil

rights in the United States and he is frequently referred to as a human rights icon today. In 1964, he became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end racial segregation and racial discrimination. King was assassinated in 1968 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of freedom in 1977 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004.



Oladuah Equiano (1745-1797)

Born in Benin in the late 18th century, Equiano is hailed as the first political leader of Britain’s black community. Enslaved as a young boy of 11 with his sister and renamed Gustavas Vassa, he was beaten until he answered to his new name. Equiano saved and purchased his freedom in 1766 and

managed to acquire enough learning and independence to become a major voice advocating an end to slavery. A friend of Thomas Hardy, Equiano published his autobiography in 1789, a detailed account of his experiences and later married in Cambridgeshire.



Barack Obama (1961-)

Barack Obama, the man who made history by becoming the first black president of the United States, was born 4 Aug 1961 in Hawaii. He was elected to the US Senate in 2004 and became the 44th President of the United States 20 Jan 2009. I actually started laying background tones

on this painting on Christmas morning. Don't ask why but when you're feeling creative, you just have to go with the flow. The painting was finally completed the day after his inauguration in January.



Rosa Parks (1913-2005)

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks was an African American civil rights activist whom the U.S. Congress later called "Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement". On December 1, 1955

in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks refused to obey bus driver James Blake's order that she give up her seat to make room for a white passenger. Her action was not the first of its kind: Irene Morgan and Sarah Louise Keys had won rulings before the supreme court. Her action sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This turned Parks into an international icon.



Out of Africa

This painting, being the most recent addition to the collection depicts an abstract image of how slaves were packed onto the ships and taken out of Africa. With the painting of Equiano featured

on the inside pages, "Out of Africa" graced the cover of a set of Teachers Notes, 'Beyond the Bicentennial', which is being rolled out across the schools in Peterborough. This pack is aimed at helping students learn about the history of slavery and examine the social history of England, the Caribbean and Africa.

Black Heroes collection

This selection of work I call my Black Heroes collection, consist of a collection of oil paintings which I started in 2007. The idea behind this collection was to create a body of work that portrays some of our positive roll models and to celebrate their lives. With the hope that our young people may have a closer look at how these people made a difference and influence some of us.

In October 2008 this fine collection of work was first shown at the Peterborough Town hall, in an event celebrating 60 years of diversity in the NHS and Black History.

Earlier this year The National Portrait Gallery in London said that they will print out the images and keep for their research files in their Archive and Library.

This collection of work continues to grow slowly with new work added as time and creativity sees fitting. I hope my work evoke some thought, feeling or inspiration.



Hanging out with Martin Luther King at my recent exhibition in July.

A couple of these paintings may not be at the exhibition due to limited space but all can be seen on my website.

Prints are also available and commissions undertaken in oils, pastels, pencils or water colour, contact for info.

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