



FAITH RINGGOLD CHRONOLOGY

- 1930** Born October 8 at Harlem Hospital, New York City, to Andrew Louis Jones Sr. and Willi Posey Jones. Faith has two older siblings, Andrew and Barbara. She is frequently sick with asthma as a small child; art becomes a major pastime.
- 1942** Ringgold's family moves from the "Valley" to Sugar Hill in Harlem.
- 1950** Marries Robert Earl Wallace, a classical and jazz pianist, while majoring in art at the City College of New York. Obtains first studio space for independent oil painting projects in their apartment at 365 Edgecombe Avenue.
- 1952** Has two children: Michele Faith Wallace, January 4; Barbara Faith Wallace, December 15.
- 1954** Permanent separation and divorce proceedings begin, completed in 1956.
- 1955** Graduates from the City College of New York with a BS in Fine Art and Education. Begins teaching art in the New York City public schools (1955–1973). It is at this time that Faith first hears about James Baldwin, through his younger sister, Paula, who was a student of Faith's.
- 1957** Spends the first of many summers in Provincetown, Massachusetts, rendering oil paintings of houses, landscapes, fishing boats, and the ocean.
- 1959** Completes an MA in Art at the City College of New York.
- 1961** Takes her first trip to Europe (with her mother and her daughters) aboard the S.S. *Liberté*. Tours the museums in Paris, Nice, Florence, and Rome. Her brother Andrew dies while they are in Rome, so they abruptly return to the United States. Faith's dining area in her home becomes her studio space.
- 1962** Marries Burdette Ringgold, May 19.
- 1963** Does her first political paintings. During a summer spent at Oaks Bluff on Martha's Vineyard, Faith develops her first mature painting style; the content is influenced by the writings of James Baldwin and Amiri Baraka (then Leroi Jones)—the artist calls her style "super realism." Begins painting *The American People Series* of oil paintings (1963–1967).
- 1964** Begins a search for a New York Gallery. She writes letters to Romare Bearden and Hale Woodruff in an attempt to join Spiral, the black artists group, and to exhibit in the first Black Arts Festival in Senegal, but is unsuccessful in both instances.
- 1965** Meets Leroi Jones at his Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School in Harlem.
- 1966** Participates in the first black exhibition held in Harlem since the 1930s. Meets Romare Bearden, Ernie Crichlow, Norman Lewis, Charles Alston, Hale Woodruff, Betty Blayton—her first real contact with black artists. Joins Spectrum Gallery on 57 Street; Robert Newman is the director.
- 1967** Paints her first murals, *The Flag Is Bleeding*, *U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black Power*, and *Die*, while her daughters are in Europe for the summer. Holds her first one-person show at Spectrum Gallery. Meets James Porter of Howard University,

who buys a painting from *The American People Series*. Begins development of “black light,” in which she uses a palette of darkened colors, in pursuit of a more affirmative black aesthetic.

- 1968** Participates in a benefit exhibition for Martin Luther King Jr. at the Museum of Modern Art. Meets Jacob Lawrence, Henri Ghent, and Ed Taylor. Initiates first demonstration of black artists at the Whitney Museum. Joins Art Workers Coalition. Meets Lucy Lippard, Carl Andre, and Lil Picard. Demonstrates with Tom Lloyd, a light sculptor, against MoMA to achieve a black artist wing named after Martin Luther King Jr. Instead, their efforts result in two blacks being appointed to the Board of Trustees of the museum and major exhibitions for two black artists at MoMA in 1971.
- 1969** Paints *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger* as a response to the first U.S. moon shot. Begins a series of political posters. Her daughters are in Mexico for the summer; her father dies.
- 1970** Has second one-person show: *America Black*, featuring her black light paintings, at Spectrum Gallery. Begins teaching at Bank Street, Pratt Institute, and Wagner College. Meets Robert Morris and Poppy Johnson through Art Strike. Participates in demonstrations of the Ad Hoc Women’s Art Group against the Whitney Museum. Her particular contributions result in the inclusion of Betye Saar and Barbara Chase-Riboud in the Whitney *Sculpture Biennial*, making them the first black women ever to exhibit at the Whitney. Creates her first dolls, *The Family of Woman Masks*, and *The Slave Rape Series* of paintings. Collaborates with her mother, Willi Posey (a fashion designer), on costumes for masks and thangkas for paintings.
- 1971** Cofounds Where We At, a black artists group. Serves as guest curator of a *Where We At* show at Acts of Art Gallery. Meets Kay Brown and Dinga McCannon. Creates the *United States of Attica* poster. Wins a CAPS Grant to do a mural for The Women’s House of Detention. As a result of being on the television show *On Free Time* (PBS), hosted by Julius Lester, she meets Louise Nevelson, Alice Neel, and Pat Mainardi.
- 1972** *For the Women’s House*, in which Faith first uses all-female imagery, is permanently installed at the Women’s House of Detention on Riker’s Island. As a result, Art Without Walls (an artists group dedicated to bringing art to prison inmates) is formed. Develops thangkas (soft cloth frames) after viewing an exhibition of Tibetan art at the Rijk Museum in Amsterdam. Puts political posters and feminist papers in Documenta in Kassel, Germany. Participates in the *First American Women Artists Show* in Hamburg. Begins lecture tours and traveling exhibitions to colleges and universities around the United States.
- 1973** A ten-year retrospective of the artist’s work is held at Voorhees Gallery at Rutgers University. She resigns from her teaching position in the New York City public school system to continue touring and to create art full time. She does her first dolls, *The Family of Woman Series*.
- 1974** Develops hanging soft sculptures, *Wilt* and *Couple* series; both series feature painted coconut heads. Does *The Windows of the Wedding Series*, abstract paintings based on African Kuba design, and uses them as the environment for soft sculptures. Her daughter Michele graduates from City College; Barbara completes her senior year of college at the University of London.

- 1975** Curates *11 in New York*, a black women's show held at the Women's Interarts Center. Begins to do art performances with masks and costumes. Creates her first stuffed figures, *Zora & Fish* (bagman and woman), and the first portrait masks of *The Harlem Series*, which includes Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Martin Luther King Jr. Develops appliquéd soft masks for a workshop at the University of Wisconsin. Barbara graduates with a BA in Linguistics from the University of London and stays on to do graduate work.
- 1976** Serves as Artist-in-Residence at Wilson College, where she develops *The Wake and Resurrection of the Bicentennial Negro*, an environmental performance piece. Is co-director with Monica Freeman, Margo Jefferson, Pat Jones, and Michele Wallace of *The Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts*, which is held at The Women's Interarts Center and includes the exhibition of *Dear Joanna Letters*, a documentation piece. Travels to Africa for the first time; tours Ghana and Nigeria to see the art and the people.
- 1977** Participates in Festac 77 in Lagos, Nigeria. Does her first freestanding soft sculptures, the *Women on a Pedestal Series*. Begins writing her autobiography, *Being My Own Woman*. Daughter Barbara receives a graduate diploma from the University of London and returns to the United States to study for a doctorate in African Linguistics at City University Graduate Center. Her mother remarries. Faith meets Moira Roth.
- 1978** Receives the National Endowment for the Arts Award for sculpture. Develops *Ringgold Doll* and *Harlem '78*, a series of soft sculptures and a public participation graffiti mural.
- 1979** Develops the *International Dolls Collection* and the *Ringgold Doll Kits (Sew Real)*. Michele publishes her first book, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, and appears on the cover of *Ms. Magazine*—a photograph of the family is featured in the article.
- 1980** Faith and her mother begin work on a final collaborative project, *Echoes of Harlem*, a quilt for the *Artist & Quilt* show. Completes the first draft of her autobiography. Michele begins doctorate in American Studies at Yale University. Barbara marries and receives a Masters of Philosophy from City University of New York (CUNY).
- 1981** Faith and her mother work on the packaging of the *Ringgold Doll Kits*. Creates *The Atlanta Series* in memory of the children killed in Atlanta. Her mother dies. Barbara divorces. Michele leaves Yale and returns home.
- 1982** Curates the *Wild Art Show* at P.S. 1 for the Women's Caucus for Art. Her first grandchild, Faith, is born. She begins painting again at the MacDowell Colony: the *Emanon* series and *Baby Faith and Willi* series. Michele and Faith perform *No Name Performance #1* at Kenkelaba House. Does painted dolls. Her sister Barbara dies.
- 1983** Begins the *Dah* series of paintings. Initiates the *Upstream Women* series of workshops and panels. The first excerpt from her autobiography is published in *Confirmation: An Anthology of African American Women*, edited by Amiri Baraka and Amina Baraka. Does *Mother's Quilt*, the first story quilt, and *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?* quilt and text. Wins the Wonder Woman Award from Warner Communications. Performs *No Name Performance #2*, in which the audience dances, speaks out and, in the finale, takes over the stage.
- 1984** Has a 20-year retrospective at The Studio Museum in Harlem; Michele Wallace edits the accompanying catalog. Is a visiting Associate Professor at University of California at

- San Diego. Continues painting the *Dah* series (*California Dah*), to be used as a backdrop for *No Name #2*. Does a series of aquatints called *The Death of Apartheid* and participates in exhibitions organized by Artists Against Apartheid. Begins printmaking as Visiting Artist at Printmaking Workshop. Does etching on canvas to be used to make story quilts. Michele begins teaching at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.
- 1985** Continues the story quilts, and develops a new storytelling performance: *The Bitter Nest*. Appointed to a tenured position as full professor in the Visual Art Department, the University of California at San Diego; she is now living bicoastal, half the year in San Diego and the other half in New York. Exhibits the *Flag* series of paintings from the 1960s in a group exhibition, *Tradition & Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade 1963–1973*. Barbara marries and has a second baby girl, Theodora-Michele.
- 1986** Receives her first honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Moore College of Art. Joins the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery and prepares for a solo show of story quilts to be held in January 1987. Loses over 100 pounds and documents the weight loss in a videotape, quilt, and performance titled *Change: Faith Ringgold's 100 Pounds Weight Loss Performance Story Quilt*. Receives the Candace Award from One Hundred Black Women.
- 1987** Has a solo show and catalog, *Change: Over 100 Pounds Weight Loss Performance*, at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, followed by major articles in *Arts*, *Art in America*, and other periodicals. Meets Eleanor Flomenhaft. Receives a fellowship from the John Solomon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and a Public Art Fund Award from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Awarded an honorary doctorate from College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. Has three one-person shows, including one at The Baltimore Museum, and twenty-one group shows, and curates the *Home Show* at Goddard Riverside Community Center. Travels to Japan for an exhibition.
- 1988** Has a solo exhibition at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery. Exhibits *Tar Beach* as part of *The Women on a Bridge Series*. Performs *Change 2: Faith Ringgold's Over 100 Pounds Weight Loss Performance Story Quilt*. Receives a New York Foundation for the Arts Award and is included in Leslie Sills's *Inspirations: Stories of Women Artists for Children*.
- 1989** Receives many important honors, including a National Endowment for the Arts Award for painting; the La Napoule Award, to spend 4 months in France; the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Award; and a commission to create a story quilt to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first black graduate, Gaius Bolin, from Williams College. Is also included in the *Stitched Memories: African American Story Quilts* exhibition at the Williams College Museum, Williamstown, Massachusetts; and in a major survey traveling exhibition of women's art, *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Moving into the Mainstream*. Receives an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, The City College of New York.
- 1990** Opens a major retrospective traveling exhibition, *Faith Ringgold: A Twenty-Five Year Survey*; begins a thirteen-museum tour at the Fine Arts Museum of Long Island (FAMLI), curated by Eleanor Flomenhaft; followed by openings at The High Museum of Art, Georgia Pacific, and The Arizona State Art Museum, Tempe, Arizona. Completes her forthcoming book, *Tar Beach*. A silk screen edition of twenty-four quilts titled *Tar Beach 2* is printed at the Fabric Workshop, Philadelphia. She creates *The French Collection Series* while painting in studios in Paris and at the La Napoule Château

in the south of France. In La Napoule she meets Linda Freeman, who is there to videotape the artist for *Faith Ringgold: The Last Story Quilt*.

- 1991** *Tar Beach*, Faith's first children's book, is published (Crown Publishers, New York) in January. She returns to Paris and takes an apartment at the Hotel Ferrandi on rue de Cher Che Midi while making sketches for part 2 (pertaining to Gertrude Stein and Josephine Baker) of *The French Collection Series*. Completes nine of the series and *Change 3*, a nude appraisal of 40 years of weight loss and gain. Moves to a studio in the garment district in New York to work on a large-scale mural, *A Percent for Art Commission*, for P.S. 22 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Continues the tour of *Faith Ringgold: A Twenty-Five Year Survey* at Miami University Art Museum, Oxford, Ohio; Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola, Florida; and African American Museum of Fine Arts, Los Angeles, California. Receives an honorary Doctorate in Fine Art from her alma mater, The City College of New York, and an honorary doctorate from the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston.
- 1992** Receives *The New York Times* Best Children's Book Award, a Caldecott Honor for best illustrated children's book of 1991, and The Coretta Scott King Award for best illustrated book by an African American. Crown publishes her second children's book, *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*. The *French Collection* exhibition opens at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery in New York City. Severs relationship with the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery and resumes self-representation in a new studio on West 38th Street in New York. Buys a ranch house in Englewood, New Jersey, with plans to build a studio in the country. Receives a commission from the Metropolitan Transit Authority to create two 30-foot mosaic murals for the 125th Street IRT subway station platform. Continues the tour of the twenty-five year survey at the Museum of Art Davenport, Iowa; University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Women's Center Gallery, University of California, Santa Barbara; Mills College Art Gallery, Oakland, California; and Tacoma Museum, Tacoma, Washington, through the end of February 1993. Receives an honorary Doctorate in Fine Art from Brockport State University, Brockport, New York, and an honorary Doctorate of Fine Art from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California.
- 1993** Receives a National Endowment for the Arts travel award to collaborate with Moira Roth on the *Moroccan Holiday*, the last of *The French Collection Series*. Travels to Tangier, Morocco, to prepare texts and drawings for the quilt. Returns to the apartment at the Hotel Ferrandi on rue de Cher Che Midi in Paris. Meets Michel Fabre at the Sorbonne and discusses the upcoming African American in Paris Conference. Publishes *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House* (Hyperion Books), a book based on the story quilt *The Dinner Quilt*, created in 1988. Receives an honorary doctorate from the California College of Arts and Crafts and meets Marlon Riggs, the celebrated filmmaker. Creates *The Black Family Dinner Quilt*, a tribute to Mary McLeod Bethune and Dr. Dorothy Height, and donates it to the museum of the National Association of Negro Women. The Children's Museum of Manhattan mounts an exhibition of *Tar Beach*. Receives a commission to create a 9 x 17 foot painted mural based on *Eugenio Maria de Hostos, The Man and His Dream* for de Hostos Community College.

- 1994** Begins rewriting her autobiography, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, with Moira Roth as editor. The first editing session begins in Paris in January during the African American in Paris Conference at the Luxembourg Gardens. Howardina Pindell, Lorna Simpson, Bette Saar, and Sam Gilliam attend the conference, which is organized by Raymond Saunders and Maica Sancone. Moves back to her Harlem studio in preparation for building a new studio in Englewood, New Jersey. Participates in two major exhibitions abroad, *Cocido y Crudo*, curated by Dan Cameron, in Madrid, Spain, at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia; and the *Cairo Biennial*, Cairo, Egypt. Joins Bob Blackburn, Mel Edwards, Kay Walkingstick, Juan Sanchez, and Michael Kelly Williams in Egypt for the opening. The exhibition is slated to travel throughout East Africa and the Middle East and is curated by Debbie Cullen of the Printmaking Workshop. The painted quilt, *Eugenia Maria de Hostos, The Man and his Dream*, is completed and hung in the atrium of De Hostos Community College. *Le Café des Artistes, #11*, part 2 of *The French Collection*, and the painted quilt *Marlon's Quilt*, in memory of Marlon Riggs, who died of AIDS in 1994, are completed; the sale of *Marlon's Quilt* benefits AIDS care and research. Receives seventh honorary doctorate, from Rhode Island School of Design. On June 10, Birdie and Faith attend a black tie dinner in the Rose Garden of the White House and are seated next to Hillary Clinton. Faith gives Chelsea Clinton a life-size *Cassie Doll* and donates a painting Faith had made for Clinton's inauguration, which shows the Clinton family flying from Arkansas to the White House; "Four good years, 1993 to 1997, and then four more" is written across the sky.
- 1995** On May 19, Faith attends the 75th Anniversary of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor at the White House. Is commissioned to create a benefit poster titled *Women's Work Counts* to celebrate the occasion; the work is exhibited first at the White House and later at the Department of Labor. Receives the Townsend Harris Medal from the City College of New York Alumni Association. Publishes four books. *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Little, Brown and Company) is her first adult book. Two children's books are *My Dream of Martin Luther King*, and *Talking to Faith Ringgold* (Crown Publishers), an autobiography for children, with Nancy Roucher and Linda Freeman. Brighton Press, San Diego, California, publishes an artist's book, *7 Passages to a Flight*. Visits Damascus, Syria, when the *Cairo Biennial* tours the Middle East. Is now represented by the ACA Gallery in New York and has her first solo show there.
- 1996** Exhibits in *Consensus and Conflict: The Flag in American Art*, a traveling group show curated by the Whitney Museum of American Art at Champion, which opens July 18. Publishes her fifth children's book, *Bonjour Lonnie* (Hyperion), and is invited to exhibit *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger (1967)* in *Face a l' Histoire* at the Pompidou Center. Returns to Paris for the exhibition and stays at the Hotel le Bretonnerie on St. Croix de Bretonnerie; Moira Roth also attends. Does first interview for the catalog for the upcoming traveling exhibition, curated by Dan Cameron of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, *Dancing at the Louvre: The French and American Collections and Other Story Quilts*. Ringgold receives her ninth honorary doctorate from Russell Sage College, Boston, Massachusetts. *Crown Heights Children's History Quilt* is installed at P.S. 90 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Ringgold begins painting *The American Collection* for the

- upcoming exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art. Receives an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the Parsons School of Design, and an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Russell Sage College.
- 1997** Receives an honorary Doctorate of Education from Wheelock College, Boston, an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from *Molloy College*, in New York, and a New Jersey Artist of the Year Award from the New Jersey Center for the Arts. Spends most of the year in California painting *The American Collection Series* while her studio and garden in Englewood, New Jersey, are under construction.
- 1998** Crown Books for Young Readers publishes *The Invisible Princess. Dancing at the Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts*, a traveling show curated by Dan Cameron for the New Museum in New York City, opens at the Akron Museum, Akron, Ohio.
- 1999** The art studio and garden at Jones Road, Englewood, New Jersey, are completed. The first Anyone Can Fly Foundation garden party is held October 1. The Foundation's mission is to expand the art establishment canon to include artists working in the tradition of the African Diaspora (1765–1920) and to introduce those artists and art traditions to children as well as adult audiences. The artist begins a series of paintings (*Faith's Garden Party #1, 2, and 3*) of the attendees from photographs taken of them in the garden. Faith begins *Coming to Jones Road, # 1*, a series of eight story quilts "inspired" by neighbors' attempts to prevent construction of the studio, in her new studio. Three children's books are published: *If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks* (Simon & Schuster), *Cassie's Colorful Day* and *Counting to Tar Beach* (Crown Books for Young Readers). Receives an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the Bank Street College of Education and an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Marymount Manhattan College, both in New York City.
- 2000** *Racial Questions and Answers* (www.Racialquestions.com), a conceptual study, begins an online survey of race and color in the United States. Completes *Coming to Jones Road # 1*. A solo exhibition opens at ACA Galleries in New York City. Receives the 31st NAACP Image Award for Best Children's Book *If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks*; a New York Chapter Continental Societies Inc. First Annual Women of Distinction Award; and an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan.
- 2001** Publishes *Cassie's Word Quilt* (Crown Books for Young Readers), her eleventh children's book. Begins a series of jazz paintings in gouache and acrylic on paper. Receives an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from William Patterson University, Wayne, New Jersey, and an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from The Chicago Institute of the Arts. (Ringgold has now received sixteen honorary doctorates since 1986.) The Anyone Can Fly Foundation, Inc. establishes a website at www.Anyonecanflyfoundation.org to announce its programs
- 2002** The Anyone Can Fly Foundation receives (5(O)1(c)3 tax-exempt status and begins a Foundation Art Collection to benefit the Foundations Granting Programs. Completes the last in a series of three *Garden Party* paintings of the attendees (1999, 2000, 2001). Retires from teaching at the University of California at San Diego. *Freedom of Speech*, a

painting executed in Paris, France, in 1990 (created for the exhibition *Celebrating America's Great Rights—The Artist's Perspective* at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) is purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and made into a poster that quickly becomes a museum best seller.

2003 *On The Steps at Uris Library*, a commissioned painting for the Columbia University Women's School of Business, is installed at Columbia. Completes illustrations for *Oh Holy Night*, a children's book of Christmas carols with a CD by The Boys Choir of Harlem (HarperCollins, 2004). Contracted to publish four more books with HarperCollins, to be completed by 2006. Begins painting jazz series of quilts: *Soul Suite #1: Movement in Black and Blue*; *Soul Suite #2: Mama Can Sing*; and *Soul Suite #3: Papa Can Blow*. *Street Story Quilt* (1985), purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1990, exhibited in *Modern Story Tellers* on the first floor of the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing (Gallery 6) in the Metropolitan. An online exhibition from the Metropolitan, *Artists View New York*, also includes *Street Story Quilt* and provides downloadable access to the text. A poster of *Street Story Quilt* is included in the exhibition resource kit, *Art by African-American Artists: Selections From the 20th Century*. One copy is free to New York public schools for the asking. Tonya Lewis and Spike Lee promote the poster.