

### Georgia Mills Jessup (b. 1926)

**“Prolific, gifted, inspirational...Georgia Jessup has created a body of work so diverse, so ambitious, it seems impossible that one woman could be responsible for it all.”**

–SUSAN CONNELL, 1989.

Georgia Mills Jessup was born in Washington D.C., to an artistically talented family. She was the thirteenth of eighteen children. Both of her parents were artists, and by the mid-1980s, twenty-nine of her family members supported themselves through the arts, including her brothers and two of her children.

Jessup had an early interest in art and was an apprentice to the W.P.A. artist Herman L. Walker while she was a teenager. She studied painting at Howard University, receiving her B.F.A. in 1959, and ten years later earned her M.F.A. in ceramics and sculpture from The Catholic University of America. She then continued her studies at The American University and the District of Columbia Teachers College.

Jessup works in a variety of media, including painting, collage, ceramics, wood, and stone, and textiles. She has also been active as a muralist. She credits her interest in working with clay to her ancestors, the Pamunkey Indians of Virginia, whose pottery tradition predates the settling of Virginia by many centuries. In subject and technique, the work Jessup does in different media is diverse, encompassing decorative and functional stoneware, sculpture, and abstract and representational paintings.

For many years Jessup taught art in the Washington D.C., public school system, later became its Art Supervisor, and founded the program “The World Is Your Museum,” which was the forerunner of the Capitol Children’s Museum. She received numerous awards and grants, including a two-year artist-in-residence from the Smithsonian Institution’s Anacostia Neighborhood Museum and a later residency at the Smithsonian Conference Center.

#### Selected Bibliography

Connell, Susan. “The World According to Georgia.” *Columbia Magazine*, Spring 1989, 49–52.

*National Museum of Women in the Arts* (Catalog of the Permanent Collection). New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987.