

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Napoleon Jones- Henderson

PERSON

Jones-Henderson, Napoleon,  
1943-

**Alternative Names:** Napoleon Jones-Henderson;

**Life Dates:** November 23, 1943-

**Place of Birth:** Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Residence:** Roxbury, MA

**Occupations:** Mixed Media Artist

## Biographical Note

Napoleon Jones-Henderson was born in 1943 in Chicago, Illinois. Jones-Henderson attended the Sorbonne Student Continuum Student and Artists Center in Paris, France in 1963 where spent one year immersed in an independent study program. Upon

returning to the United States, he enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago and received his B.F.A. degree from there in 1971. Jones-Henderson went on to earn with his M.A. degree from Northern Illinois University in 1971 and his M.F.A. degree from the Maryland Institute College Art in 2005.

In 1968, during the apex of the Chicago Black Arts Movement, Jones-Henderson became involved with a Chicago-based artists' collective called COBRA (Coalition of Black Revolutionary Artists). The collective changed their name in 1969 to AfriCOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists). During the formative years of AfriCOBRA, Jones-Henderson created large pictorial weavings that were included in the group's important series of exhibitions mounted at the Studio Museum in Harlem in the early 1970s. He has been an active member of AfriCOBRA since 1969 and is the longest standing member of the group. In 2011, Jones-Henderson produced *Africobra: Art for the People* (2011), a documentary about the groups' involvement with the 1960s Black Arts Movement.

Jones-Henderson became the Executive Director of the Research Institute of African and African Diaspora Arts, Inc., in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1979. He then went on to serve in various academic positions at Malcolm X College in Chicago, the Massachusetts College of Arts, Emerson College in Boston. Jones Henderson was appointed adjunct artist critic and lecturer at the Vermont College of Norwich University in Montpelier, Vermont in 1989. In addition, Jones-Henderson served as an artist-in-residence at Towson University, Syracuse University, and the McDonough School. In 2005, Jones-Henderson was appointed associate professor of art at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. His artwork is housed at the DuSable Museum of African American History, Schomburg Center of Research in Black Culture, Southside Community Art Center, Hampton University Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, and the Studio Museum in Harlem.

In recognition of his art, Jones-Henderson received the Merit of Honor Award from the Walters Art Museum and the Award for Outstanding Recognition from the Museum of Science and Industry. He was also honored by the National Conference of Artists with the Award of Excellence.

Napoleon Jones-Henderson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 22, 2013.

## Related Entries

**George Washington Carver High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Diploma**

**Wilson Junior College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**None**

**Shore Shore Junior College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**None**

**School of the Art Institute of Chicago** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.F.A.**

**Northern Illinois University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.A.**

**Maryland Institute College of Art** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.F.A.**

[EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1969 to ?]

**Massachusetts College of Art and Design** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1974 to 1979]

**Instructor**

**Research Institute of African and African Diaspora  
Arts, Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1974 to ?]

**Executive Director**

**Roxbury Community College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1987 to ?]

**Assistant Professor**

**Emerson College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1968 to ?]

**Adjunct Professor**

**Vermont College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1989 to 2003]

**Visiting Lecturer/Critic**

**Benedict College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to ?]

**Associate Professor**

**Association of African American Museums** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to 2005]

**Member**

**AfriCOBRA** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1968 to ?]

**Member**

**National Conference of Artists** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1968 to 2000]

**Member/Officer/President**

**American Craft Council** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1980 to ?]

**Member**

**College Art Association of America** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1999 to 2009]

**Member**