



TO AFRICA, WITH LOVE

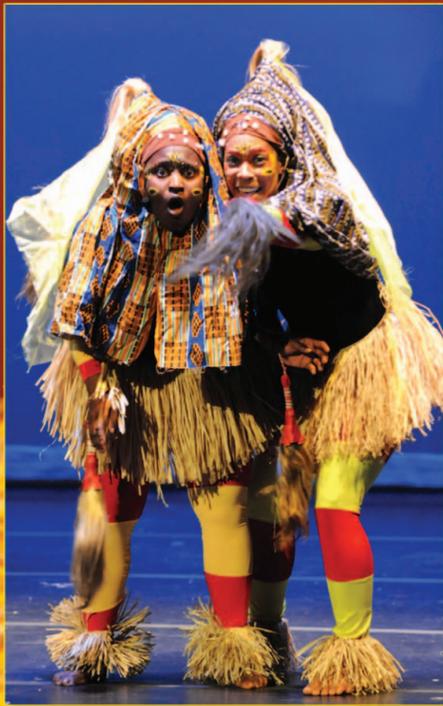


**AFRIKY LOLO'S
'GODDESS ZAULI'
USES TRADITIONAL DANCE
TO DELIVER EMOTION**

Afriky Lolo's sixth annual performance, *The Goddess Zaouli*, is the company's unique interpretation of a time-honored West African celebration and welcoming dance. "Zaouli" tells the ancient traditional tale of a lion and his daughter waiting to be married and the snake, bird and eagle who pursue her.

Exquisite costumes and elaborate choreography carry the audience through Zaouli's life journey from a place of pain and hurt to peace, forgiveness – ultimately leading to love. The story is told through different African dances, drum rhythms and styles.

Photos by Wiley Price



BLACK & SINGLE When you know they bad for you

Don't peep it and keep it

By Bill Beene
Of the St. Louis American

Well, I think my colleague and I have just about exhausted what men and women look for in one another. But Kenya Vaughn did one of the very things that drive men crazy during an argument with the opposite sex. She took off on a point and countered by flipping it around and inside-out – then dropped it as the latest gospel. When I said women often go for looks – instead of adding other attributes women go for – Kenya played up a long list of other things that women consider *after* a handsome man has swept her out of her stilettos. In neck- and eye-roll spirit, Kenya said, "It's more along the lines of 'Does he have a degree? Does he have any kids? How many kids does he have? Does he have a good job? How much does he make? Who does he know? What kind of car does he drive? Does he go to church? Does he have a reputation with the ladies? Does he wear a suit to work, or a uniform? Is he funny? Is he boring?'"

Those questions, she said, tend to factor in women's unrealistic quest for Mr. Right. Indeed. But you best believe looks play a big part. I've known good-looking brothers to pull women day after day, week after week, on their looks alone. It didn't matter how many

kids, if he had a degree, who he knew, if he was boring, if he went to church or even had a car. A lot times for women, looks seem to trump all those things. Brothers are guilty of the same thing. A pretty face and nice, round gluteus maximums, and brothers are good. She could be the twin sibling of the devil himself and he would hit it until he fell in love and got his heart and spirit broken and checked into an institution.

Which reminds me: How many times do we ignore clear signs that we should steer clear of a person. No question mark necessary – that's rhetorical. The person could have horns and a tail, and many of us would ignore the signs. And God forbid that person be fine.

Granted, people do put their best face forward during the gestation stage of romance, but look for the signs and be honest with yourself. When you peep something that you know you shouldn't put up with, get out before love chains you there and make you slave to their good looks.

This is old-school advice, but too many people refuse to subscribe to it. And it works both ways: I once misunderstood plans with a young woman and consequently stood her up. Now, she could have forgiven me, toss me another chance – something.

Nothing. Didn't hear from her in weeks, and when I did it was just a quick hi and bye. She wasn't going for it, and she wasn't going to let me get away with standing her up – no matter the circumstances.

Dean Mitchell: Everything's a Portrait opens at Portfolio Gallery Friday, March 27 and the artist speaks at the gallery (3514 Delmar) Saturday afternoon.



Portrait of the portrait artist

Dean Mitchell opening Friday and gallery talk Saturday at Portfolio

By Kenya Vaughn
Of the St. Louis American

Last week, Robert Powell was dutifully unwrapping the artwork of Dean Mitchell in preparation for Portfolio's latest exhibition *Dean Mitchell: Everything's a Portrait*. As he pulled away the packaging from the art, each piece was a surprisingly dramatic contrast to the one that preceded it.

"His pallet is so broad," said Portfolio Gallery founder Robert Powell. "To me, Dean really has something for everybody."

The art of Dean Mitchell ranges from undeniably black to ethnically ambiguous. A fuzzy bearded blues man in dark glasses throwing down on the harmonica to a simple portrait of an 18th century door that is reminiscent of New Orleans' French Quarter.

An excerpt of Mitchell's prolific

catalogue of paintings will be presented and sold at Portfolio Gallery under the moniker of "Everything's a Portrait" starting next Friday, March 27 through May 31.

"Most of us think we are in the art world, but we're not really in the

■ **"Sometimes you have to look outside your community. It doesn't mean you don't love your community, and once you get that support it's important to come back."** - Dean Mitchell

world," said Portfolio Gallery founder Robert Powell. "Dean is *really* in the art world."

Powell spoke of Mitchell in the same manner that a doting father brags on the accomplishments of a son who has successfully perpetuated a family legacy.

The friendship extends past the 20-year mark, and Powell recalled Mitchell's early experiences in their journey in the art world with pride. Back then, Mitchell was just an infant in the industry – but driven to make a name for himself – in Powell's home-

town of Kansas City.

"He would leave from Kansas City and go across the country driving in a U-Haul," Powell said.

But after winning the coveted Arts in the Park Award in Connecticut, things picked up for the Florida native at a whirlwind pace, and from

then to now the momentum has continued. Mitchell has been hailed by the *New York Times* as a "virtual modern-day Vermeer" and named a "Best Bet" for collectors by R. Cosby

See ARTIST, C5

See SINGLE, C5



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