



# doings at pfp...

## Have you stopped by PFP's West Philadelphia rowhouse?

Monthly workshops, open houses, salons and exhibitions, offer chances to experience the region's folk arts. For example...

\* **Our "Folk Arts House"** season began with a December reunion of tap dancers who participated in in PFP's "Stepping in Time" concerts and "Plenty of Good Women Dancers" documentary project in the 1990s. Viewing the **"Rethinking Plenty of Good Women Dancers"** exhibition on display at PFP, people shared photos, appreciated one another's company, traded experiences as entertainers and friends, and remembered great artists now passed: LaVaughn Robinson, Henry Meadows, Edith Hunt, Libby Spencer, Hortense Allen Jordan, Michele Roberts Webster, Delores and Dave McHarris.

\* Over the years, neighborhood **Artist Christina Johnson** has documented African diaspora quilt and textile arts while developing her own work. She invited like-minded artists to "Tea with Christina" in December. Sharing needlework and the stories behind them, craftspeople

stopped by to show and tell. Viewing one another's beautiful work, people talked technique and motivation, history and practice.

\* Every corner and chair was occupied at a **June embroidery workshop**, as a half-dozen Palestinian women taught a diverse group—beginners to experts, all ages and backgrounds—to stitch tatreez, the needlework displayed in PFP's current exhibition (and described in the magazine article here).

\* **More Folk Arts Education:** More than 490 young people studied folk and traditional arts this past year at Preah Buddha Rangsi Temple, Patterson School, and the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) which PFP co-founded in collaboration with Asian Americans United. Check out the new Culture Tools website ([www.culturetools.org](http://www.culturetools.org)) to see work by artists, students, and activists. Culture Tools was developed by AAU, PFP and FACTS as part of a Scribe Video Center initiative.

\* PFP's redesigned website also features ([www.folkloreproject.org](http://www.folkloreproject.org)) more media and documentation of the work of local traditional

artists, lots to read, hear and watch, and plenty of resources for people working in (or interested in) folk and traditional arts.

\* **Looking forward: looking back** In the coming year, Germaine returns to a role as featured artist with the latest PFP "Dance Happens Here" initiative, **The President's House Project**, a multi-disciplinary collaboration between her (doing tap/choreography), jazz musician Bobby Zankel and visual artist John Dowell. The project aims to commemorate the nine Africans enslaved in the President's House (Philadelphia's White House during George Washington's presidency), reflect on the contradictions, ironies, and present-day resonances of slavery's practice in America's first seat of government, and explore using traditional arts to spark meaningful questions and thoughtful conversations about African/African American traditions, freedom of expression, and social responsibility. The first public discussion of their work is scheduled for December 11 at the African American Museum in Philadelphia. Full details are on [www.philadelphiafolklore.org](http://www.philadelphiafolklore.org).

Germaine Ingram has made tremendous contributions to PFP over the years, as a long-time board mem-



*Photos: L-R, top - bottom. Arij Yousef and Jane Gamal-Eldin, and Mary Yee and Alia Sbeikh -Yousef at the tatreez workshop. People at the Tatreez opening, photos: Thomas Owens. Losang Samten with a finished mandala at FACTS school, photo: Roko Kawai. Chamroeun Yin with a student at FACTS, photo: Roko Kawai. Christina Johnson and her work, photo: Walter Johnson. Tap dancers reunion: Joan Miller, Pearl Jackson-Bolvin, Mary Syres, Barbara Clayton. Culture Tools website front page by Kathy Sbinizu. Debora Kodish, videotaping at Tea with Christina, photo: Walter Johnson.*

ber, through her leadership of projects on African American tap dance (“Plenty” and “Stepping”, mentioned above), as a featured artist, and much more. From February 2008 through August 2009, she served as Associate Director, where she directed our folk arts education program and the Culture Camps described in these pages.

\* **Welcome** to ethnomusicologist Abimbola Cole, who will coordinate our new program, **the Community Folklife Documentation Workshop (CFDW)**, supporting local people in documenting the cultural traditions and folklife of their communities. PFP works with people from diverse communities who face hard issues everyday—newcomers impacted by harsh anti-immigrant policies, neighbors fighting for decent work and fair treatment, artists striving to create usable cultural traditions drawing on sources from sometimes distant times and places. We aim to use tools of folklife and ethnographic documentation to understand and address the forces that buffet us all. We see this new program as a means for diverse constituents to build connections with one another by investigating folk arts and social change: the historic responses and resources that communities make for themselves. Questions

of displacement and place-making will be central. The project will culminate in a “Home Place” exhibition at PFP and online in June 2010. We’re grateful for funding for planning and piloting this year from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, through its Heritage Philadelphia Program, PNC-Arts Alive, and Artography: Arts in a Changing America, a grant and documentation program of Leveraging Investments in Creativity, funded by the Ford Foundation. Stay tuned for more news...

\* **For information** about current programs, visit our website ([www.folkloreproject.org](http://www.folkloreproject.org)) or give us a call: 215.726.1106. To join and support these efforts, use the form on the back page, or donate through our website.