

# Cultural Magic

BY PENNY DICKERSON

**M**asters of imagination at Walt Disney World Resorts have partnered with one of America's most philanthropic families: Bernard, Shirley, and their son, Khalil—the Kinseys—a savvy triad of preservationists whose exhibit, *Re-Discovering America: Family Treasures from the Kinsey Collection*, spans 400 years and includes authentic and rare art, artifacts, books, documents and manuscripts representing African-American achievement.

Initially scheduled for a three-year run, the exhibit highlighted 40 pieces at its debut at The American Adventure pavilion in Epcot in March 2013. But—just like magic—it's now been extended through 2018.

"*The Kinsey Collection* shares powerful and previously untold stories of those who dared to dream," says Erin Youngs, vice president of Epcot. "Representing more than 400 years of African-American achievement and history, *The Kinsey Collection* showcases the best of the American spirit with a nod to ingenuity and innovation."

Visitors gaze with awe upon viewing rare finds such as *Slave Songs of the United States* (1867), tintype photographs from the 1850s, Benjamin Banneker's 1796 *Almanac* or a book by 19-year-old Phillis Wheatley—the first African American to publish poetry.

Cultural patrons Bernard and Shirley are Florida A&M University alums and more than 20 million enthusiasts have seen their collection at locales nationwide, including the Smithsonian National Museum of History. The five-year journey to launch at Disney was spearheaded by

Carmen Smith, vice president of creative development of Walt Disney Imagineering, who traveled to the Kinseys' Los Angeles home along with 20 other Disney executives to view their priceless cultural collection.

"Walking through their door was like walking into history. More importantly, I'd never met storytellers like the Kinseys. They made me realize how much I didn't know, and they made me want to know so much more."

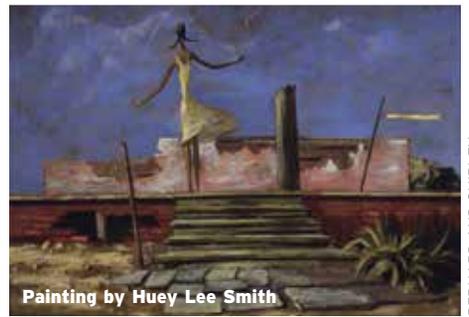
For the exhibition, Executive Producer Trish Cerrone recruited television writer Anthony Sparks, Ph.D., and a team of Imagineers to create an innovative, walk-through experience boasting touch screens and guest-activated lanterns with narration by celebrities such as Whoopi Goldberg.

"This exhibit lets everyone know we're all part of the same story," explains Smith. "It's not black, it's not white ... it's everyone's story for all of us to enjoy."

Admission to Epcot includes *The Kinsey Collection*. For more, visit [thekinseycollection.com](http://thekinseycollection.com). **oam**

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Painting by Huey Lee Smith

BERNARD AND SHIRLEY KINSEY COLLECTION

*Epcot offers guests an immersive exhibition of African-American history, thanks to the Kinsey family.*



The Kinseys



DAVID ROARK (2)



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