John Edward Dowell
Contemporary American Artist

Photographs
of the President’s House
Archeological Site
A joint project of the
Office of the Mayor, City of Philadelphia
and Independence National Historical Park

On Display
Independence Visitor Center
6th and Market Street, Philadelphia, PA
Hours: 8:30am-6pm

Learn more…

About this Project…
Creating the Photographs…
Artist John Edward Dowell…
The President’s House Site…
The historical developments of the President’s House archeological excavation have been recorded by renowned, African American artist, John Edward Dowell Jr.
As the excavation progressed during the spring and summer of 2007, John Dowell created a series of unique, photographic art pieces.

This art work was commissioned by the Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

John Edward Dowell Jr. (left figure, *middle picture right*) and an assistant photograph the President’s House site in July of 2007.
These photographs document the archeology of freedom and slavery during the birth of our nation.

They document our nation’s acknowledgement of this truth more than 200 years later.

The archaeological discoveries will live on, immemorial, in the photographs created by John Edward Dowell.
A selection of John Dowell’s President’s House site photographs are now displayed at the Independence Visitor Center (IVC) in Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

This IVC photographic display is located directly across the street from the site of the President’s House excavation at the corner of 6th and Market streets.

This symbol marks the location of the President’s House Archeological Site located at the corner of 6th and Market Streets in the Old City portion of Philadelphia.
John Edward Dowell’s photographic art involves large format photographs. These range from 2 x 5 feet through 4 x 20 feet in size.

Dowell creates these large images using a 4-by-5 format field camera.

After developing the prints, Dowell digitally scans them to produce highly detailed, deeply contextualized, images.
Dowell’s photographic style is known both for how it conveys life in the urban metropolis and for its unique perspective and lighting. His pictures are shot from high-rise vantage points and are generally taken at sun-up and sun-down. "Dowell’s photographs capture a natural, ethereal-type of iridescence that results from a blend of light and movement. As guests survey the multi-dimensional photographs, they marvel at the spectrum of color and cutting-edge photographic style. They also point out the clarity of everyday life captured in the photos, which convey the tale of metropolitan life in each respective city." (Bobbie Booker, Blog, at WorldPress.com).

Twin Towers, (Chicago) copyright John Dowell

www.johndowell.com
After more than 35 years working as a painter, etcher, and lithographer, contemporary American artist John Edward Dowell Jr. now creates in the photographic medium. Dowell finds artistic inspiration for his works in the music of jazz greats such as Miles Davis, Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp, Percy Heath, Dave Brubeck, and John Coltrane and in the work of Abstract Expressionists, including Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. An eclectic mixture of ethnic influences—from Caribbean and Latino art to Afro-Cuban Santeria, Brazilian Macumba, and Haitian voodoo—also shape his work.
Dowell’s works in canvas, ceramics, and print are in the permanent collections of 70 museums and public collections worldwide, including the Biblioteque Nationale Museum in Paris, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and Yale University Museum.

Dowell has had more than 50 one-person exhibitions at prestigious venues including the 35th Venice Biennale, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Boston Museum, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

www.johndowell.com
Work by John Edward Dowell, Jr. was included in the Chicago Art Institute’s exhibition “A Century of Collecting African American Art”. Dowell has been part of formal discussions on the realities of being an African American artist.

John Dowell’s photographs have been added to the collections of the Huston Museum of Fine Arts, the Fog Museum of Harvard University, RISD Museum, Lehigh University Museum, Clark University Art Galleries permanent Collection, and the Davison Art Center Collection of Wesleyan University.

In April of 2008, a selection of John Dowell’s President’s House photographs were put on display in the Independence Visitor Center at 6th and Market Street in Philadelphia.
Philadelphia-born John Edward Dowell Jr. received a BFA from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in 1963. He earned his MFA in printmaking and drawing from the University of Washington in 1966.

John Edward Dowell Jr. is Professor of Printmaking at the Tyler School of Art of Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

John Dowell (in white, middle right) and assistant photographing the President’s House site in July, 2007.
The archeological research conducted at the site of the President’s House was supported by the Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia. The excavation took place in the spring and summer of 2007, during the John Street Administration. The excavation was a gift to the nation from the people of Philadelphia.
The archeological research at the President’s House site was a joint project of Independence National Historical Park and the Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia. The National Park Service provided project oversight. Field research was performed by archeologists from URS Corporation. Park Service personnel and volunteer archeologists assisted with public interpretation.

Archeologists excavating at the site of the President’s House in the summer, 2007.

Photo by P. L. Jeppson
A commemoration is to be built at the site of the President’s House. It will honor the house and all those who lived there, including nine enslaved Africans brought to the property by George Washington. The commemoration project is a joint undertaking of Independence National Historical Park [US DOI National Park Service] and the Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

The commemoration design selected for the site of the President’s House has been revised to include some of the discovered archeological ruins.
Learn more about...

John Edward Dowell Jr.
www.johndowell.com

The Independence Visitors Center
http://www.independencevisitorcenter.com/

The President's House Project
www.Ushistory.org
http://www.phila.gov/presidentshouse/

Archeology in Independence National Historical Park
http://www.nps.gov/inde/archeology.htm
http://www.nps.gov/inde/james-dexter-site.htm

Art and Archaeology:
NPS Southeast Archeological Center’s Interpretive Art Project
http://www.nps.gov/history/seac/ancientmuses/CD/04_pate/
Archeology and Opera http://www.nps.gov/seac/zabette.htm
http://www.cyberpursuits.com/archo/art-arch.asp

African American Archaeology
African Diaspora Archaeology Network http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/
Archaeology for the public/African American Archaeology
http://www.saa.org/public/links/archaeologywebsites_AfAM.html

General Archaeology
Archaeology for the public (www.saa.org/public)
About.com Archaeology http://archaeology.about.com/
ArchNet http://archnet.asu.edu/

Archaeology in Philadelphia
Philadelphia Archaeological Forum (www.phillyarchaeology.org)
Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
http://www.museum.upenn.edu/