

# Charles Criner

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*Dancing with Butterflies*  
Lithograph on paper  
22 x 30 inches

LMFA Permanent Collection

## Artist Biography

**Charles Criner** was born in 1945 and raised in Athens, a small town in East Texas. He attended Texas Southern University in Houston between 1964 and 1968, studying under the guidance of the renowned late artist, Dr. John T. Biggers. While in college Criner supported himself by working as a sign painter, graphic artist, and billboard illustrator. After graduating he worked for NASA, producing drawings for Apollo 11. Two years later he worked as the advertising art director at The Houston Post that was interrupted for a two-year stint in the Army. He returned to The Houston Post after his service where he served as Advertising Director until the newspaper closed in 1995.

He then started his own business and was lured away to create advertising art for The Houston Chronicle. Criner is noted for his cartoons including the "Johnny Jones" series created while in the Army and later adapted for The Houston Post, The Job Crowd, The Dogs and a few others. He also collaborated with his longtime friend, newspaper columnist and sportswriter William Henry Hygh on the "Johnny Jones" cartoon carried in The Houston Post with Hygh providing the narrative for Criner's art. Criner's art, ads, and cartoons have been featured in Ebony Magazine, Houston Business Journal, the Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and in advertising for the Houston Oilers. Since 1997, Criner has been the Artist-in-Residence at the Museum of Printing History in Houston, where he operates a studio, further defines his craft, and leads stone lithography workshops using the museum's antique press.

The scenes of Criner's stone lithographs, the medium he prefers best, are biographical images pulled from both childhood memories and the artist's immediate environment. Of his art, Criner states, "My art reflects my beliefs and the things that I like to do. Fishing has always been one of my favorite pastimes...I also love to recapture the Black experience in the form of people working in the fields. I believe that these images are important and that they should be cherished windows into our past."

Additionally, several of Criner's student works completed during his time at Texas Southern University are published in the 1978 book *Black Art in Houston* by John Biggers Carroll Simms, and John Edward Weems, published by Texas A&M University Press.