



The subjects possess an uncanny pizzazz, whether a fez-wearing Masonic matron in a billowy white lace gown or a regal patriarch in his bold blue blazer with wide "Mr. B" lapels. They appear to be taking naps. (Heyert's last project, "The Sleepers," was a collection of dormant nudes.) They almost invite a tap on the shoulder.

There are even touches of humor, as in a portrait of Preston Washington Sr. in which the old gentleman reclines with his tie askew, as if windblown, and hands placed at deliberately haphazard angles. There's personality here, though its animating spirit is gone.

For all the aesthetic beauty Heyert captures, there's an undertow of sadness, especially if you pause to read the cards that identify the subjects and cite their life spans. "Jay Moe" Jones was not yet 22 when he died last spring. His attire, a creamy white-and-gray Sean John track suit with a matching New York Yankees cap and a clutch of dollar bills stuffed in one pocket, underscores shifting fashions in the Harlem community. But his premature death suggests a different, grim trend. His story resonates all the more tragically once you glimpse the photograph of his mother, Daphne Jones, who died a year earlier in her 40s. She appears dainty as a bird, her head tilted gently to one side, hands sheathed in white lace gloves. Such sweet relief invites questions that carry far beyond these poignant images.