

January 24-February 28, 2025

Seed & Sower

A Black History Month Exhibit



About this show

The Seed & The Sower is a showcase about the strength of connectivity found in black female, familial relationships. Science states that a female child is born with all of the eggs she will ever carry in her lifetime. With this knowledge, it can be understood that a piece of us, no matter how microscopic- has been with our mother, our grandmothers, our great-grandmothers, and so on. We will eventually go from being 'seeds' of our ancestors to 'sowers' as we pass along the traits, ideals, and dispositions that were passed to us.



Using the labels in our gallery

This guide is organized alphabetically by Artist Last Name

Artist Name

Title of Artwork

Medium (material or technique used in creation)

Purchase Price

Comfort

Tiara Tiana

Intaglio

100



Featured Artists

Beatrice Atencah
Tamla Boone
Dionna Bright
Karen Buford
Sherell Chillik
Tammy Clark
Colleen Coleman
Diane Davis
Michelle Davis Petelinz
Helen Ellis
Meredith Estes
Lauren Falls
Michele Falls
Michelle Ferrier
Desirae Foston
Kourtnei Goodman
Edith Graves

Felicia Greenlee
Karen E. Griffin
Cheryiah Hill
Marquia Humphries
Halima Ibrahim
Natalie Jackson
Sanjé James
Takeisha Jefferson
Wilma King
Symone Lakes
Tyamica Mabry
Ashley Marshall
Mike Martin
Tinisha McCroskey
Camisha McDaniel
Nadias Meadows
Amina Meckel-Sam

Onikia Moore
Morgan Overton
Kassandra Pantoja
Tameka Phillips
Dyanis Reed
Delayna Robbins
Debra Roberson
Alma Roberts
Arial Robinson
Rachel Stephens
Kelvonnah Stidhum
Leticia Thomas
Angela Uriyo
Tiffonye Wilkins
Chase Williamson
Janice Withers
Belina Wright

But a Burden

In "But a Burden", I aim to illustrate the beauty of stress, weight and burden of navigating through life experiences alone. Through my diasporic experiences, I communicate visual languages such as restriction, boundaries and constraint positively to question the idea of belonging.

Beatrice Atencah

Artist Statement

My primary pursuit is to explore feminine bodies, movements and identity of my personal experiences navigating between spaces informed by my background in fashion. Through craft processes like sculpting, sewing, and beading, I delve into re-discovery and transformation of identity by folding and draping of contrasting hard and soft materials such as copper, fabrics and corset boning by what we put on. I discuss my impermanent existence, constraint, bittersweet memories and beauty through the action of hand sculpting to reveal internal unfiltered narratives and survival moods as a female migrant.

These materials communicate my malleable existence in new spaces, serve as a symbol of feminism and reveal my identity as Akan re-identified as Black. My background in fashion design has enabled me to consider the wall as a mannequin on which I drape these undulating sculptural forms. By allowing the folds surprise me in various ways, I create these works to account for the vulnerability, hybridity, and my powerful presence in the West.

My style of wrapping connects viewers to ideas of covering, protection and concealment. Sewing embraces community reliance and diversity whereas weaving illustrates the spirit of continuity and travelling routes. Through visual languages and histories of the material, I metaphorically represent my identity using tools of vulnerability and aesthetics.

Aunt Betty Aunt Frank Aunt Nancy

These 3 pieces are from a larger show called 77 in which I did research on my DNA and featured a family member from each West African country.

Aunt Betty, my mother wears a necklace made of crystalline glaze. Aunt Frank, my mother's oldest sister wears a necklace made of crystalline glaze. Aunt Nancy, my mother's sister wears a necklace made of crystalline glaze.

Tamla Boone

Artist Statement

As a conceptual artist, I am driven by the desire to leave a lasting legacy on canvas. As a storyteller, I strive to craft narratives that captivate my audience, inviting them to engage deeply with my work. I aim for viewers to converse with their eyes, minds, and souls. In my artistic vision, Eyes asks Mind, "What are we seeing in her piece?" Mind responds thoughtfully, "It will require effort to comprehend," initiating a search through archives to assemble harmonious stories. After delving into old tales and secrets, Mind finally informs Eyes, "It's her history!" Eyes, curious and unfamiliar with this portrayal, remark, "I've never seen this representation before." Mind explains, "It's from other cultures.

Let's listen to what it conveys." Despite this, Eyes remain restless, questioning, "Does the piece tell a story? Does it reveal secrets about her heritage?" Mind confirms, "Yes, they call it oral traditions." This interaction stirs Soul, who asks, "Whose secrets are we uncovering?" Eyes and Mind respond together, "Hers!"

During a visit to one of the world's most prestigious museums, I was captivated by the marble sculptures, gold wreaths, and intriguing depictions of foreign gods. Each floor showcased art from around the globe. However, it was disheartening to realize, once again, the absence of Afrocentric culture in these exhibits.

Despite the museum's proximity to Africa, there were no representations of brown people. The sculptures, figurines, and etchings lacked braids, broad noses, or full lips. This absence of representation was discouraging, yet it also inspired me to create and disseminate art that celebrates the beauty of people who look like me.

Ancestral Frames
Gwen | Ancestor
Divine Play | By the Bamboo

Archival Pigment Print

Dionna Bright

Artist Statement

Dionna Bright is a self-portrait artist and photographer based in Charlotte, North Carolina, whose work is deeply rooted in exploring Black identity and the multifaceted narratives of the African diaspora. Through self-portraiture and portrait photography, she delves into themes of memory, vulnerability, and resilience, using photography as a means of reclaiming personal and collective histories.

Her practice integrates tactile materials such as fabric, wood, and found objects to create visual stories that center the lived experiences of Blackness. By weaving together ancestral connections, healing, and heritage, Dionna's work reimagines identity as a layered and evolving tapestry. Whether working in her studio or immersed in nature, her portraits illuminate the raw complexities of existence, balancing tension with moments of release, and offering an introspective lens into the interconnectedness of Black history and the human experience.

Hair Day Secret Family Recipe

Hair Day captures the intimate moment between a mother and daughter as they share the experience of combing and braiding hair. The girl sits on the floor while her mother sections her curly tresses to apply hair products and start the braiding process to craft the perfect hairstyle.

Secret Family Recipe captures a heartwarming scene of a grandmother and her granddaughter working together to make a pie. Set in a cozy kitchen, both are focused on crimping the pie crust, preparing to fill it with a treasured family recipe. This piece has a dreamlike effect of fond childhood memories.

Karen Buford

Artist Statement

I want people to feel the magical mystery that I feel when I photograph ordinary places, people and objects. I use my artistry to capture the imagination, evoke curiosity, promote contemplation, ask questions and engage in discussions. I want to change people's opinions and long held beliefs or ideas about art, artists and their role in society. I want people to become entranced by my artworks to help them to realize the majesty of nature, the beauty of ordinary people, and be able to view everyday natural and man made objects with new insight. I want them to appreciate how fantastic it is to be alive during this time.

Mrs. McKinney Million Dollar Property

Sherell Chillik

Artist Statement

Through her traditional oil, acrylic, and collaged figurative paintings, Sherell captures moments of the daily life of an African American through travel, portraiture, and contemplation, often reflecting her family and friends. These works reflect a dreamy, traditional, and saturated palette on an intimate-sized mixed media paper. Her figurative works often feature a subject isolated or closely grouped against textured suggested locations or specific landmarks. These works reflect her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother is painted in the comfort of her home, and her mother is painted in a space she hopes to create for her. Inspired by her travels, Sherell has taken personal images of her family members and placed them in positions of relaxation and glee.

I Believe She Was a Great Thinker Halima

"Great Thinker" features a photo of my great, great grandma Lillie, which is all I know of her. Everyone who could have offered insight into who she was as a person has passed away, so I began to imagine what she may have been like when she was in this realm. I believe she was probably extremely intelligent. Her photo rests on a colorful monoprint. Dried flowers have been placed on either side and against it to show reverence for her. Dots emphasize her silhouette to make her stand out more from the background in the photo. A watercolor cutout is placed over her head, along with butterflies to indicate her intelligence, transformational perspective, and ability to think outside the box.

Tiya Caniel

Artist Statement

"Halima", which is part of a larger body of work, offers inquiry into what happens when our loved ones pass away and become ancestors. In my Aunt Debbie's case, I have begun to wonder if she has evolved into an otherworldly being, a Halima (beings I created). When she was living, Debbie was a colorful character, full of laughter with a glimmer of party girl charm. This piece is an imagining of her evolved spirit, adorned, regal, still complex and layered, which is portrayed in the layering of textures throughout the piece.

Artist Statement

Mariah and Eden

Mariah and Eden- "Mariah and Eden" is an ode to the resilience and beauty of motherhood, in its purest form. Through this piece, I aim to celebrate the power of nurturing and challenge perceptions of breastfeeding by presenting it as both ordinary and sacred, along with sharing the bond of motherhood by "freezing" a moment in time.

Courtney Cheatham

Afro GurL

From the art form and discipline of watercolor. palette: sepia, burnt sienna

Tammy Clark

Artist Statement

The seed and the sower: The seed eventually becomes the sower. A female child is born with all of her eggs she will ever have, to bring forth descendants while on earth. 11X17 watercolor on watercolor paper "Sowing seed in dry ground" expresses the likes of "The seed and the sower. Many times we lack preparation time to bring forth our harvest. Like a field a farmer has to ward off pestilence from his harvest. We must do as well, especially when it comes to our offspring, or our children. We must be diligent and aware of what surrounds us, to destroy or re-route us.

Spinning Strange Things Happen During An Eclipse

Strange Things : Re-contextualizing Winslow Homer's 1876 painting *The Cotton Pickers*. By merging my portrait with historical depictions of Black women, I challenge narratives of disempowerment. Introducing time-travel aliens with liminal events, the work reframes trauma, creating spaces for healing and agency

In Spinning, a Black woman reclaims freedom and self-sufficiency as she stands outside a slave shack with a spinning wheel. The wheel symbolizes tools for independence and connection across time and space. The infant's holographic head reflects the souls of future generations born into liberation.

Colleen Coleman

Artist Statement

Colleen L. Coleman: RECIPE FOR MY CREATIVE PROCESS

1 pound of flesh and bone

1 pound of spirit

1 pound of psychic energy

1 pound of respect and appreciation for my ancestors

1/2 cup of unearthing the hidden stories behind what we have been told is true

1/2 cup longing for Home

1/2 cup of Archival Material

Archival material, foraging, and provenance are strategically crucial to the creative process.

An aged blend of seven girl ancestral voices that have time-traveler wisdom but stumble through this plane as child-like spirits

A pinch of ideologies of traditional history, culture, and science

A balance of Catholicism and Afro-Indigenous religions
Seasoned with Robert Farris Thompson's work and the writings of bell hooks

2nd
Place
Winner

Weeksville Family

The Weeksville Family's image is from the Weeksville Heritage Center Archive; Weeksville was one of the country's first free black communities established during the 19th century. The Family is surrounded by holographic spheres, which represent energy centers/ life forces and ancestral eye

Colleen Coleman

Artist Statement

In creating parafiction, I see myself as a catalyst for healing and drawing attention to significant Black navigators, both historical and ancestral. My performance drawings are cartographic, vibrational readings that interpret time and space. In all of my work, there is always the impulse to search for home and connectedness to the human experience.

FLH : Cottonfield to Congress

Two image portrait of civil rights icon
Fannie Lou Hamer juxtaposed with
scenes of African American women
picking cotton and a rendering of the US
Capitol

Helen Ellis

Artist Statement

I'm a multi-media fine artist whose work fosters a celebration of African American history and culture. I'm a Jersey girl now living in Massachusetts. I've been drawing & painting since I was a youngster and attended Newark Arts High School as a fine arts major. I took additional art instruction at Rutgers University in Newark. My work has been publicly shown in NJ, CT, MA, MD, NC and CA.

5 Generations

"5 generations each one 25 years apart.
The grace of God to allow the strength of a
family to be repeated every 25 years.

My grandmother gave birth at 25 years of
age, my mother gave birth to me at 25. I
gave birth to my daughter at 25 and my
granddaughter was born 25 years after my
daughter."

Meredith Estes

Artist Statement

Meredith Estes A VISUAL ARTIST raised in
Michigan, residing in Atlanta. A woman of
vision who shares with the world through her
expressions of art. Beginning her love for art
at a young age her desire to improve and
evolve to selling works of art world wide.

Kindred Roots

Graphite, Ink, Acrylic

Lauren Falls

Artist Statement

"As a black mixed-media artist, I endeavor to take up space in places where I may struggle to fit in. I create art that explores my journey with my mental health. I illustrate abstract portraits with natural elements intertwined into the composition.

Through nature I am grounded to the familiar, whether that is my surroundings or my history. In nature, I am free to explore, create, honor, and witness. By witnessing, I am able to see humanity in my surroundings. Mostly, I am connected to tapping into the female form echoed in nature through the curvature of the tree trunk and limbs. It is interesting to create the metamorphosis of finding the human body in the trunk and watching the figure come to life as I move my way to the crown of the tree.

In addition to nature, I am highly influenced by surrealism and abstract art. My muse, Salvador Dali and surrealists have a way of connecting the dreamlike state and evolving that idea to the real world. I have taken this idea of the metamorphosis between the dream and waking world into the real world into my own work."

Motherhood

Self portrait with my first born

Michele Falls

Artist Statement

Drawing from the wabi-sabi philosophy, I embrace the beauty of imperfection and impermanence in my work. I enjoy finding inspiration in everyday people, objects and natural materials, fostering a sense of curiosity and wonder about the world around me. I always infuse my work with a sense of gratitude for life and its momentariness.

Shoulder Ready

Mixed Media

Michelle Ferrier

Artist Statement

"As above, so as below. Many of my artworks invite viewers to explore the stories beneath their feet and trace the green, growing edge..."

I am a mixed media artist, technologist and journalist, who uses acrylic, ephemera, fabric and paper and a riot of color, words and images to excavate and explore spaces. In these recent works, I explore New Orleans' Free People of Color communities and Mardi Gras through abstract and figurative artworks that capture the vibrant landscapes, history, and culture of the city. This series invites the audience to explore multiple narratives at once, creating an immersive environment where the boundaries between art, place, culture and time blur.

In the abstract landscapes and backgrounds, I use organic forms and textures to depict the energy of Louisiana's bayous and landscapes, evoking the vitality of the natural environment through bold colors and fluid motion. The lush live oak trees with their communities of Spanish moss and ferns take prominence in many pieces, connecting past, present and future along a green, growing edge. They represent the sacred ground on which generations meet to commune, to share, to learn.

Figurative pieces like those representing ceremonial and celebratory scenes highlight the cultural depth of New Orleans, offering a celebration of community, tradition, and resilience. In all my works, cultural heritage is at the forefront, with pieces that celebrate the spiritual connections between people, ancestors and land, inspired by the ceremonies, history and practices of New Orleans' Free People of Color.

Many of the figures represent the Black Divine Feminine as leaders in the spiritual worlds created. These woman powerfully move between time and space to lead this generation with music, song, story, dance, beauty and the lessons of the ancestors.

Mother Daughter Dance

Digital Art

Desirae Foston

Artist Statement

"In many ways, my work is a reflection of the way that Black communities have persisted and thrived in the face of adversity. It is a celebration of our collective history and heritage, and an affirmation of the importance of community and family. Through my art, I hope to inspire others to embrace their own ties to each other and to see the beauty and strength that can be found in the connections between people. I believe beauty is as fundamental and as fluid as air. It can be seen in a gesture, posture or attitude. I seek to express this belief in my artwork.

Each piece is a unique exploration of color, line and form inspired by what I see and imagine.

I am a self-taught artist who lives in Brooklyn."

Back Series

Oil Paint

Kourtnei Goodman

Artist Statement

My work explores the tension between the familiar and the surreal, capturing figures suspended in dark, dreamlike environments. Through the interplay of shadow and form, I aim to evoke a sense of mystery, where the figures often feel as though they are both searching for something and being consumed by their surroundings.

In these pieces, the human figure becomes a vessel of narrative and ambiguity. Rather than offering clear answers, my compositions invite viewers to immerse themselves in the atmosphere, where light is scarce and reality is elusive.

By placing figures in these dark environments, I seek to blur the line between the tangible and the ethereal, challenging viewers to confront the complexities of their own inner worlds.

Layers of Mom (Madear)

Mother adjusting the sleeve of shirt under
the girls sweater.

Edith Graves

Artist Statement

As an artist, my work is profoundly grounded in the exploration of heritage and the intricate web of moments and emotions it encompasses. I see art as a powerful means of storytelling, enabling us to connect with our history and reflect on our collective experiences. In my creations, I utilize a wide array of styles, media, and textures, with each selection made purposefully to deepen the narrative and emotional resonance of the piece. Each artwork begins with a deep feeling; it is this emotional bond that drives my creative expression. If I cannot relate personally to my subject, I struggle to convey that experience to others.

Once the piece is complete, I look forward to the moment when it resonates with viewers, fostering a shared experience that goes beyond the canvas. My artistic journey invites others to join me in delving into the depths of emotion, the richness of heritage, and the beauty of shared moments. Through my art, I aspire to foster a dialogue that honors both our individual and collective narratives.

Where I'm From

"Where I'm From" is a very personal piece because it represents the maternal side of my family. I felt "The Seed & The Sower" call for art spoke to me. I feel a connection to my ancestors and that our lives are a repetitive circle in which we live the same experiences throughout history and time.

Felicia Greenlee

Artist Statement

The intent of my work is to invoke social change by sharing how I see America. As a black woman, I know disparities exist in our society because I have felt it throughout my life. Growing up as a young girl, I never experienced black art in museums and galleries; so, in my work, I felt compelled to challenge how society views Black America and how we see ourselves. I transformed the simple idea of storytelling into what I call, "wood collage". I create layers of imagery with wood to engage the viewer to not just glance but ponder over the work. The use of the chain is a reminder of our past and the sacrifice of our ancestors.

The Lady is, Tribal Ceremony

The circular African prints represent a foundation and historical journey my Great-Great Grandmother, Great-Grandmother, Grandmother and Mother laid down to assist me with sewing seams to create stories for my daughters, and grand-daughter to experience and explore.

Karen E. Griffin

Artist Statement

"As a dynamic Art Quilter and Certified National Storyteller, she weaves narratives through the artistry of fabric and performance. Her creative process is an innovative alchemy, transforming materials into narratives that engage the senses and intellect alike. Her artworks, be they art quilts, abstracts, or panels, are intricate tapestries featuring musical notes, adinkra symbols, and diverse prints and patterns on mediums like denim and 2D surfaces. These pieces are crafted from paper, traditional African or cotton fabrics, all set against backdrops of canvas or wood panels.

Embarking on a 21-day creative journey, she enters a state of deep focus to conceive and frame her pieces. Revealing the layout, she meticulously chooses patterns and threads to weave textiles. Her artistic expression is diverse, including black outline drawings, digital designs, photographic elements, and crayon sketches on poster board, all converging through the meditative act of sewing—whether by machine or hand—on paper, canvas, or cotton.

This process is a tranquil pilgrimage, guiding her hands to tell a story—a narrative of her ancestors' odyssey to and within America. The exhibition was crafted to enlighten all ages about the journey of the enslaved in their quest for freedom within America. The creation of such textiles, embedded with stories, can span months from inception to exhibition. They are not merely decorative but are vessels carrying the legacy of African Americans, designed to engage, enlighten, and educate onlookers about their rich history.

Her work is an educational journey, a tribute to the Afro American experience, which she is privileged to share through her art and storytelling. Her inaugural solo exhibition was more than a display; it was a historical landscape, with textiles hanging on clotheslines stretched between posts, framed by burlap, buckets, and concrete each element a chapter in the pursuit of freedom."

Hidden Words Cherished Moments

This piece is a tribute to my great-grandmother who I knew as Nana, and our special bond. Inspired by late-night word search races, this piece uses word search paper and her funeral program to preserve those cherished memories and celebrate her lasting impact on my life.

Cheryiah Hill

Artist Statement

"My art is a tribute to the memories that I share with my family and friends. Each piece is inspired by photographs, whether from family albums or my phone gallery. These photos capture moments in time, and when I revisit them, I reflect on the people and emotions they hold. My work is about reliving and recreating those moments and really appreciating the people that shaped my life.

I often incorporate elements of the memory into my art, with titles that play on songs, scriptures, pop culture, tv shows, books, etc. I'm also dedicated to bringing the essence of each memory into my art, by incorporating specific details from the experience, like portraying my grandfather as a cowboy or using word search paper for a piece about my Nana who loved word searches. I do all of this to deepen the connection between the memory and the artwork. Collage allows me to incorporate all these details by using a mix of colors, patterns and textures.

When people look at my collages, I want them to relive these memories with me. I hope my work reminds them of their own childhood or connects them to someone in their life who may be long gone. My journey in art is about continuously finding new ways to bring these memories to life, displaying the love I have for my family and friends."

Does Our Love Scare You?

Mixed media painting of artist's parents with artist at the bottom. This piece is on a curtain.

Marquia Humphries

Artist Statement

"My art is a tribute to the memories that I share with my family and friends. Each piece is inspired by photographs, whether from family albums or my phone gallery. These photos capture moments in time, and when I revisit them, I reflect on the people and emotions they hold. My work is about reliving and recreating those moments and really appreciating the people that shaped my life.

I often incorporate elements of the memory into my art, with titles that play on songs, scriptures, pop culture, tv shows, books, etc. I'm also dedicated to bringing the essence of each memory into my art, by incorporating specific details from the experience, like portraying my grandfather as a cowboy or using word search paper for a piece about my Nana who loved word searches. I do all of this to deepen the connection between the memory and the artwork. Collage allows me to incorporate all these details by using a mix of colors, patterns and textures.

When people look at my collages, I want them to relive these memories with me. I hope my work reminds them of their own childhood or connects them to someone in their life who may be long gone. My journey in art is about continuously finding new ways to bring these memories to life, displaying the love I have for my family and friends."

Mother, Won't You Call Me Beautiful?

'Mother, Won't You Call Me Beautiful?' Is a series of self portrait diptychs exploring post-Colonial identity and African Beauty Standards.

Halima Ibrahim

Artist Statement

In North Africa, it was once said that an un-tattooed woman could not be seen as beautiful. However, as western beauty standards took over, the practice of tattooing fell out of fashion and disappeared. This project is reflecting on what shapes the reflection of my own beauty as a Nubian Egyptian woman. I am part of the third generation of un-tattooed woman in my family. Due to western beauty standards attached to colorism and anti-blackness, along with religious biases against tattoos, it is not possible for me to tattoo myself the way the women of my family used to adorn themselves. 'Mother, Won't You Call Me Beautiful?' is an investigation into the question: Where can I find beauty when I cannot be beautiful with or without it?

**Ancient Urn
Basketweave
Dark skies over desert plains**

All vessels are wheel-thrown.

Ancient Urn is impressed and Raku
reduction fired.

Basketweave is impressed and fired in
oxidation.

Dark Skies is textured with sodium
silicate and Raku fired in the Bavarian
Obvara technique.

Diane Davis

Artist Statement

Diane is living the retirement dream! Volunteering and teaching at the Franklin G. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum's pottery studio has been a wonderful opportunity to contribute while continuing her own informal ceramics education. Davis' work can be described as functional pottery with a primitive organic quality, or as she refers to her style - "Mud in the Moment". After working almost exclusively in reduction for many years, she made the switch to electric in setting up her home studio. She has thoroughly enjoyed recent forays into anagama, fire pit and various forms of Raku firing.

Warrior Seed

Depicting survival, strength, and resilience. The black and white portrait shows us in our truest form of beauty and vulnerability. The addition of the seed in this photo collage adds a sense of something greater in the making, our insignificance to the power of Nature.

Natalie, Jackson

Honorable
Mention
Winner

Artist Statement

As a Black photographer, I am not afforded the luxury of rose-colored glasses. My existence and artistry are shaped by a juxtaposition of lenses that have historically defined my beauty, worth, and humanity. In 1851, Sojourner Truth delivered a powerful message to America with her question, "'Ain't I a Woman?'" She addressed the blurred lines of humanity in our country, challenging why her existence was not seen in the same light as others.

Through my work, I carry forward this inquiry, focusing my prime lens on the often overlooked beauty and dignity of my subjects—individuals who, like Truth, have been marginalized by a society that dims their light. My photography seeks to place us front and center, bathed in the glowing light that has been denied us for too long. I strive to capture the essence of humanity that Sojourner Truth so poignantly demanded, showing the world that our beauty, worth, and humanity are undeniable.

In every frame, I challenge the narratives imposed upon us, redefining how we are seen and, more importantly, how we see ourselves. My art is a testament to our resilience, a celebration of our existence, and a reclaiming of the light that belongs to us."

Your Soulful Meal Remains

Your Soulful Meal Remains reflects a memory that resonates deeply with many BIPOC families and cultures. The piece encapsulates the intimate sight of sisterhood as a family prepares a meal with love and tenderness. Featuring a scanned, edited, archived Polaroid of my grandmother and her sisters gutting fish, encased in a window panel, it symbolizes the times I've spent watching her cook. This kitchen window frames a memory of not just food, but family meals being passed down for generations.

Sanjé James

Artist Statement

"I aim for viewers to be transported to their own cherished memories of loved ones preparing precious meals. In Black Southern families, soul food provides comfort that transcends time. Although my grandmother has passed, and I can no longer savor her unparalleled cooking, the title Your Soulful Meal Remains signifies that her essence and the warmth of her kitchen have and will continue to be cherished."

The Call Upper Hand Until

Upper Hand, a digital nod to tintype aesthetics, features a veiled black woman with a potent gaze, indicative of her relentless forward momentum. Her radiant skin in black-and-white conveys a captivating, timeless beauty.

Takeisha Jefferson

Artist Statement

My photography focuses on Black people centered on Black women - the architects of my world, from my mother and sisters to my daughters, aunts, and friends. Through my lens, I capture the unsung stories of Black women, who are both our collective's seed and sower. Each photograph is an intimate dialogue between past and present, preserving the wisdom and strength that flow through our generations like an unbreakable current. These images are more than memories; they are promises - testaments to the enduring spirit of Black women who cultivate hope, nurture dreams, and transform landscapes of possibility with their unyielding grace.

Visitation

Acrylic on stretched canvas

Wilma King

Artist Statement

"Yes, even the smallest or simplest of things can have the greatest impact! For me, getting up early each morning to look out over my deck is that simple thing that inspires and sets the tone for contemplative prayer. I can't make sense of the story I want to my paintings to tell until after this ritual.

The stories are my story. I am in each painting.

My story gets richer the more I live it! I learned that it is important to create beautiful and positive visual stories born out of life's tragedies and disappointments. My life journey and relationships have led to where I need to be, even though it may have been unexpected or challenging.

Staying true to my core values and beliefs is sometimes difficult for the sake of telling a compelling story. So, in the quietness of the morning, I listen and allow my art to speak from the fullness of my heart and to let my peace control my heart. Then I begin to piece together the montages of memories and images in my artworks.

After a 30-year career life filled with many wonderfully amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, I moved back to SC in 2015, from being an associate professor in Higher Education to my new caregiver role and reality. Caring for my mother was special. I finally understood the relationship between mother and daughter.

My mother and I had said goodbye more times than I care to remember. I don't know what it was like for her, but I always left in tears. Yet, she gave me the wings, support, and strength to fly. The birds that I love to paint are symbolic of that. The hands you see in my work are an homage to all of the times I manicured her nails so that I could hold her hands."

Last of Her Name

In "Last of Her Name", I'm exploring themes around aging and the end of fertility for a childless woman. The green, representing the most fertile years, are behind her. The womb, represented by the satin rose, though pristine in form, is black from age. Cradled in her arms. Still treated with a softness and protection, despite the things she's endured because of it. Outside hands still grasp, sometimes "well meaning" making demands...legislating what should be done next. Are these people sovereign of her body? Is she? Or is her body sovereign of her?

Symone Lakes

Artist Statement

As a Black girl growing up in the 80s and 90s, I was introduced to fashion, style, luxury and what it meant to be cool through women in and adjacent to hip-hop. Like many other girls and boys my age, popular teen magazines like Word Up!, Yo!, and Right On! were staples in my home. Those magazines were filled with posters that I'd carefully remove and tape to my bedroom walls. I didn't know it at the time, but the women in these magazines would help shape my views on fashion, feminism, and what it meant to be a confident, powerful, and conscious Black woman. It showed how style could be used to convey a message about myself and my beliefs without having to speak.

In my process, cutting and pulling imagery from both modern and vintage publications connects me to my younger self who pulled those posters from the magazines and ultimately, a cultural practice of making the best of what you have. Instead of working primarily with those smaller images, I'm blowing them up for more impact. Then, much like fashion, I'm accessorizing with acrylic paints, fabric, markers, and any type of embellishment to make each look even more my own.

Healing

A woman sewing herself together, filling her heart with rose quartz while a monarch butterfly sits on her shoulder to remind her that her ancestors are with her through this difficult journey. She is surrounded by peace lilies.

Tyamica Mabry

Artist Statement

These images were created with a "Human Nature" theme, but their interpretation may change based on the audience.

Each image represents a black woman finding her place, overcoming a tragedy, or just being herself in a world that has created their own story about her.

In this collection, "Human Nature", Tyamica used acrylic paint and other mixed media to depict the connection between humans and nature. This collection came at a very difficult time in Tyamica's life. Her fiancé passed away only a few months before creating this series. While she has been grieving, she has used art as a therapy to help get through this difficult time. Being in nature as much as possible has helped her find peace.

Tyamica captures the beauty of nature and incorporates human likeness into each scene.

Appreciating the gift of the present and her surroundings, she has poured her emotions into each painting. Love, sadness, growth, spirituality, and acceptance have all been depicted. While this collection is very personal to Tyamica, she encourages others to embrace the healing benefits of nature and art. During a time when human interaction is minimal, connecting to nature may fill a void within you.

Third
Place
Winner

Granddaughter and Great Grandmother

Together, we are building a visual archive that celebrates family, memory, the beauty of seeing the world through different eyes, and the unbreakable ties between generations. In every photograph, we see the love and history that binds us—captured by a mother and daughter who are both learning and growing together.

Ashley Marshall

Artist Statement

As a mother and daughter photography team, we share a unique, personal journey through our lens, capturing moments that bridge generations. Our collaboration reflects a special bond—one that transcends the technical aspects of photography and speaks to our creative, playful, and emotional connection to our maternal lineage. Through the eyes of my five-year-old daughter, she captures the essence of her grandmothers. Her photos are filled with wonder, spontaneity, and innocence, offering a fresh lens on familial love and generational ties.

Meanwhile, as a mother, I focus my lens on my daughter—recording her vibrant energy, playful spirit, and the moments of wonder filling her young life. I record the growing independence of my five-year-old, witnessing firsthand how her creativity, spirit, and joy unfold behind the lens. I am both witness and creator, capturing my daughter's growth and the legacy of the women before her while reflecting on the love that sustains and shapes us.

All that Glitters Comes Out When Gold

Mixed Media

Mike Martin

Artist Statement

"Michaela nichelle 'Mike' Martin (She/They) is an interdisciplinary artist whose creative journey is a vibrant exploration of Black expressionism and experience. With an eye for detail and a radical Love for the Black every day, Martin delves deep into the complexities of identity, culture, and history through their art.

Martin's background in African American and African studies & arts and humanities enriches their desire to capture the multifaceted nature of Blackness; Martin's work transcends traditional boundaries, blending various mediums such as painting, printmaking, and photography. Their pieces are visual narratives, each telling a story of resilience, resistance, and celebration."

Balancing Act

The balancing act of a mother. The sun still shines and the world continues as she works on one of the hardest balancing acts.

Tinisha McCroskey

Artist Statement

I make art about the black female experience as a mythical internal experience. I mix acrylic, oil and other media to give a colorful interpretation of the beauty of the black woman and the aspects of her life. I studied art history in college and although life has not allowed me the opportunity to study and practice art full time I refuse to let the passion and love for art die. I have no studio space and limited time. My paintings often require full realization in one sitting which itself is limited to 1 to 2 hours of stolen time. Combining personal myth and black feminine beauty I aim to express myself by adding to the beauty that exists in the world. I love to focus on the face and portrait painting and mixed media illustration.

Calling All Ancestors Heritage Feast

Mixed Media

Oil

Takeisha Jefferson

Artist Statement

"As an artist, I am deeply committed to creating work that fosters inclusion, unity, and healing. My

practice is rooted in the belief that art has the power to bridge divides, bring people together, and

create spaces for reflection and growth. I explore themes of identity, community, and the human

experience, using a range of media—including painting, installation, and sculpture—to craft

immersive environments that invite dialogue and connection."

Living History

Elements such as okra, cotton, and tobacco leaves are woven into the piece, each carrying layers of meaning tied to African American history and experience. These materials evoke stories of resilience, labor, and cultural identity, reminding us of the struggles endured and the progress made.

Nadias Meadows

Artist Statement

"Nadia Meadows is an accomplished sculptor and visual storyteller, hailing from the vibrant city of Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2020, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Since her graduation, Nadia has rapidly ascended in the art world, with her works being prominently featured in numerous galleries and exhibitions. Her creations have consistently garnered critical acclaim, fostering dialogue and discourse that catalyzes societal development and transformation. Nadia's sculptures serve as a medium for promoting intercultural exchange and understanding, transcending conventional societal, economic, and political norms. Her artistic ingenuity is demonstrated through her skillful use of unconventional materials, including human hair, which she expertly molds into interactive installations that artfully communicate experiences and perspectives that have often been marginalized in public discourse. Nadia's innovative approach to sculpture redefines the boundaries of the art form, offering immersive experiences that inspire profound insight into the prerequisites for unity, mutual comprehension, and the full realization of individual potential.

Living History is a piece that speaks to the intertwining of the past and present, reflecting on the history that predates me and the history I have lived through. This work is deeply rooted in African American culture and is crafted entirely from hair, felt, and found objects that serve as powerful symbols of that heritage. Elements such as okra, cotton, and tobacco leaves are woven into the piece, each carrying layers of meaning tied to African American history and experience. These materials evoke stories of resilience, labor, and cultural identity, reminding us of the struggles endured and the progress made. These gaps reflect the ongoing journey of history and the layers yet to be acknowledged or understood."

You Did Not Say Goodbye When You Left Home

You Did Not Say Goodbye When You Left Home is a zine that uses Ghanaian indigenous adinkra symbols to discuss a proposed anti-queer bill in Ghana and its effects on Ghana's queer community.

Museum Note : The artist invites you to pick up and read this work. Please gently put the item back on the pedestal when you are finished reading.

Amina Meckel-Sam

Artist Statement

Amina Meckel-Sam (they/them) is a Ghanaian-American artist. They work in mediums of print on paper and clothing with themes of race, gender, and identity across the current digital landscape.

Hear Me

Onikia Moore

Artist Statement

"Onikia Moore is a Georgia based artist specializing in authentic, edgy paintings that illuminate her current thoughts or life experiences through her paint brush or art utensil.

She discovered her passion at the tender age of 13 and has been deeply involved ever since. Each of her masterpieces express a nostalgic, thought provoking reaction from any audience. Onikia's rollercoaster style of art cannot be put in any particular category and she is not afraid to display a risqué' and sensual style as well. The confidence she has inside is maximized in realizing that art is her destiny! The passion that Onikia has for her craft is undeniable and the accolades she has received is an example of her pure natural artistic ability.

Onikia has a bright future in the art industry and plans to open an art gallery of her own. Trend-Setter describes Onikia and she plans to inspire every up and coming pursuant in the industry."

Honorable
Mention
Winner

Mlezi (Swahili for Guardian)

"Mlezi" is a Swahili word for "Guardian". Our ancestors can serve as our protectors, as they have paved the paths before us. An ancestor, wearing all white is in the center, while holding her descendants on either side. They find respite and relinquishing in her spiritual presence and guidance.

Morgan Overton

Artist Statement

"Morgan Overton is a visual artist in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her work is a visual dialogue that addresses the intersections of identity, culture, and societal issues, with a particular focus on lived experiences at the intersections of race and gender. Morgan utilizes art as a vehicle for change, capturing narratives that challenge the status quo and uplift marginalized voices.

Her creative process is an intentional usage of using portraiture, textures, and abstract forms across all mediums. Each piece she creates serves as a testament to resilience and a call to action, encouraging viewers to engage critically with the world around them. Morgan extracts from historic moments, to reimagining how to perceive our world, with an eye toward justice, empathy, and transformation.

Morgan's work has been widely showcased across institutions and community organizations in Greater Pittsburgh. Her solo exhibition "'I Stand on Their Shoulders'" was on view at the United States Capitol to honor International Black Women's History Month in 2023. She has shown in group exhibitions at prominent National venues such as the Carnegie Museum of Art, and Spectrum Miami. Internationally, in St. Paul de Vence, (France), London (England), and Helsinki (Finland).

Morgan is currently the inaugural Artist-In-Residence at the University of Pittsburgh Frederick Honors College. Her residency, "Democracy in Focus", aims to amplify art as a platform for civic engagement. From the University of Pittsburgh, Morgan earned a Masters in Social Work, and a Bachelor's in Psychology with a minor in Studio Arts. In 2024, Morgan was honored with the 'Community Artist-Activist' Award by the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh."

Third Eye Rising

Fabric Collage

Third Eye Rising is my offering of respect to the women of both my future and my past.

Kasandra Pantoja

Artist Statement

I am an artist without formal training. I granted myself permission to become an artist at my half-century mark. Raised in a Caribbean household that honored stability via hard work and practicality, art was outside that paradigm. My artistic expressions were supported but considered a hobby. The trifecta of middle age, an empty nest, and a global pandemic released my inner artist from its incubation period.

As I create works of art, I am creating a better understanding of myself. Art is a portal to reflect on the woman I am and the one I am becoming. The usage of fabric remnants layered onto each other illuminates the complexity of womanhood as I know it. I incorporate raw edges and recycled material as a reminder of our ability to intentionally construct beauty. Each piece is a visual story narrated by fabrics to illustrate the personal biography and journey of the woman depicted.

Ancestral Stories: Ancient Artifacts Duafe

Part of my "Ancestral Stories" series which references my West African ancestresses; "Ancient Artifacts" features low-fire clay elements simulating ivory or bone within its central niche, suggesting items they may have created or used. The tissue paper covered MDF surround is embellished with inks.

Inspiration for this work is Duafe (the wooden comb), the Ashanti Adinkra symbol of feminine qualities: patience, fondness, love and care. The river stones, mimosa twigs, raffia, paper beads, thread, paint, and embellished low-fire clay domes reference beloved memories of my female ancestors.

Michelle Davis Petelina

Artist Statement

As I create my mixed media work, I am irresistibly drawn to incorporate symbols, patterns, textures and colors found in West African and Native American cultures which are my heritage. My wall pieces often feature original, hand cut stamps; low-fire clay; gelatin prints; metallic threads; paper beads; and hand painted papers. Natural elements of wood, feathers, shells, stones, and bone beads imbue my work with strong tribal connections.

I often work in a series, visually exploring the cultural significance of decoration and symbology. My influences include the Ndebele painted houses of South Africa; Korhogo cloth patterns from the Ivory Coast; Ghanaian gold weights; Bogolan mud cloth from Mali; patterns used in scarification; and Ethiopian body painting. My goal is to interpret these visual elements to resonate with the viewer as objects at once unusual and familiar; evoking ancestral and contemporary design, speaking across cultures to the deep well of the universal.

Symphony in Gold In the Vines Hunch

Acrylic, ink, color pencil

Tameka Phillips

Artist Statement

"My name is Tameka Phillips. I am an artist and educator in Georgia. My current works explores celebrating the multifaceted aspects of black women in portraiture, from styles, body, and the relationship with hair. These are mixed media pieces done on paper. Using different patterns I try to convey different moods that person may reflect. In my earlier works I made textile sculptures to explore the ideas of multi-culturalism and cultural/ethnic identity that as humans we all share. Some colors and patterns have become so deeply rooted as being representative of a certain demographic that when seen a story about the wearer is created.

By using mixed color palettes and patterns with the use of various textiles, I create viewpoint of how we interpret various aspects of cultural identity. We all share similarities with one another as well as having more unexplored aspects of culture within ourselves than what we choose or restricted into identifying with. Creating art exploring different aspects of cultural identity with an emphasis in ethnic identifying patterns I feel would inspire others to explore deeper how we associate and represent visual aspects of multiculturalism and how those aspects are present within ourselves."

Gram Grandma Hands

I captured this image of my grandmother I call her "Gram" I came to visit he I will never forget sitting there with her laughing with her at a show we were watching. I noticed her hands and admired how much her hands were used to nurture her kids and grands and used to cook meals for her community.

Dyanis Reed

Artist Statement

I photographed these images of my grandmother (Gram) to capture a woman that has cared for me since I was born. She passed away last year so I cherish all the moments I spent with her up until her last year earth bound at the nursing home in which she had resided. My grandmother hands tells a story of the love she had for her family and community she would used her hands to cook dinners for people and use those same hands to rejoice on Sunday with her Usher board choir. I am reminded of her and her mother and her mother before her that they survived the test of times so I can thrive today, I take their ancestral teachings with me everywhere.

A Mother's Touch

Acrylic on aluminum

Delayna Robbins

Artist Statement

"My creative process is deeply personal and is usually inspired by a memory, a dream, or a conversation. By journaling, through these thoughts, I came up with a library of symbolisms that creates a unique language and a portal into another world exploring the themes such as ancestral reverence, connections through nature and the human experience.

Inspired by Afro-Surrealism, for me, it is more than just an art style—it's a means of exploring identity, culture, and history. It enables me to challenge and offer new perspectives on the Black experience. My practice has always been a way of therapy for me and has helped me in my own healing journey. The golden scars and flowers growing from people are a signature of personal growth and healing from one's traumas.

An important goal of my practice is to aid in the healing of generational trauma common among black people that will resonate with the collective consciousness. By interviewing my community, I draw inspiration from their stories and experiences, exploring what makes them feel empowered, loved, and protected. Through these personal narratives I want to create a form of escapism for my audience away from the negative narratives of violence and racism, and highlight our resiliency and beauty."

Green Book Chronicles: Driving While Black

This picture depicts the saga BIPOC face
while traveling in Amerikkka!

Debra Roberson

Artist Statement

"Those who don't remember the past are doomed to repeat it" - George Santayana

I like telling stories with my camera as a documentary photographer recording past and current history through my lens. The things I choose to record/ design are of a time not so long ago, in the lives of African Americans whether on a plantation, "getting religion" on a Sunday morning, or just a day in the life. My parents grew up on plantations and I am the first generation not to. This history has influenced my outlook on life, and I want to capture these frames of time in the hope of leaving a legacy for future generations. I do this because I love uplifting people. I love to give back to the community and I want to encourage others to do the same.

The Rite of Transfer

Each generation has the responsibility to pass forward the stories, and creations to the next generation. We hold dear those stories and add new ones from the present to pass forward to the future

Alma Roberts

Artist Statement

"I am an African American Abstract Expressionist painter. I am an Elder. I am an Activist and an Optimist. My art is my medicine. It is my messenger. It is my legacy.

When I step up to and into a blank canvas, I enter spaces that bring me into contact with different realms unlike those I experience in what I have come to consider "the real world." As I paint my emotions, my interpretation of life, about things beautiful or somethings unsightly and unfathomable, I get to create a new dialog using a different language with each painting.

My paintings allow me to bring colors, shapes, movement, feelings, and new dimensions from those other realms onto my canvas and into my "real" space for others to experience, stretching their imaginations beyond what they see and think is "real." This is the joy of painting abstractions. It is also the responsibility of painting abstractions.

When the viewer encounters one of my pieces and "sees" or feels something they can't quite explain, then I know that I have done my job as an abstract artist. I know I have created a bond between the work and the viewer no matter how fleeting. And in that fleeting moment, I also get to convey a message of hope; because no matter how dark the subject, every one of my paintings will have an element of hope included, and that, more than anything, is the message I want to convey repeatedly through my art. As Thomas Carlyle stated, and I firmly believe: "He [she] who has Hope, has everything."

Additionally, I am honored to wear the mantle of "elder", accepting the charge to convey messages through my art that translate society, culture, faith, values, and relationships for those who follow after me."

The Tragic Intricacies of Black Beauty

Ingrained in our history but not in our DNA, this piece seeks to illustrate that even in our experience of tragedy there is still purity and virtue in the existence of the Black woman. Constantly under a microscope, we deserve magnification in a way that honors our full identities.

Arial Robinson

Artist Statement

"I am a middle child born in the middle of the week. I have always had a natural gravitational pull to the beginning and the end. Through my multidisciplinary artistic practice, I utilize a combination of mediums for any given project to provide a voice and perspective that echoes over generations of complex souls birthed in the south dreaming of the stars. Intrigued by the aesthetic of space and our ability to occupy it, my work is a visualization of time, energy, emotion, and femininity sourced from the mundanity. Including but not limited to photography, creative writing + poetry, music + sound art, painting, and digital to physical design. My projects seek to preserve the past, collect the now, to one day relinquish to the future. With the help of modern technology, I produce physical and print works that I hope will serve as objects used to report the Black woman experience of the 21st century. I resonate deeply with the natural world. Through movement that bridges art, sport, and science, my goal is to honor afrocentric principles through future forward thinking. Curiosity, community and love, live at the core of my artistic practice."

Solitude II

Melanie Royster

Artist Statement

Melanie Royster is a versatile Caribbean-American Artist who uses her artwork to influence change and to empower the community, especially women. Ever since childhood she has used art to express herself, tell stories, and to make people feel good about themselves or feel seen. She realizes that as a black female artist she has an important role in that art marks history and that it is very important to uncover current trends and to be truly authentic.

From Her, We Rise

From a solo show titled "One Thought,
Different Expressions"

Rachel Stephens

Artist Statement

"From Her, We Rise" speaks to the gift given to the woman by the Creator. This gift consisted (consists) of the power to carry and nurture life. One that goes beyond nurturing her own children, but also children born to others. We have seen the demonstration of this gift, particularly in women of color, shown throughout her lineage. This gift has given strength, courage, and power for us to rise and fulfill purpose."

Protected Roots Southside Forever Remnants of Youth

Protected Roots are earrings composed of cowry shells and braided hair.

Southside Forever is a cross-stitched afro pick.

Remnants of Youth are earrings created from embroidered barrettes and rubber bands set in resin.

Kelvonnah Stidhum

Artist Statement

"My work celebrates my upbringing and pays tribute to Black culture by exploring our shared experiences, joy, and effortless swag. I draw deeply from my personal stories to highlight the beauty and significance of my heritage.

My favorite medium is metalsmithing. There's something magical about transforming raw materials into tangible objects through fire and craftsmanship. I use synthetic hair, combs, steel, and copper to tell stories about the love and effort involved in caring for Black hair. Each piece is a testament to the empowerment and artistry inherent in the practice.

This body of work carries the essence of nostalgia, a heartfelt tribute to the cherished rituals of Black girlhood. I hope that these works beckon Black women to remember, to feel, and to celebrate."

Cut from the Same Cloth

A diptych that features two images printed on celosia velvet fabric. On the left, the 1st image depicts a tender moment between the artist and her mother. On the right, the 2nd image mirrors the composition, capturing a similarly heartfelt interaction between the artist's daughter and granddaughter.

"Cut from the Same Cloth" delves into the intricate dynamics of intergenerational Black womanhood, showcasing the powerful bonds that exist between mother and child, and the resilience of our lineage in the face of both triumph and trauma. This diptych features two images printed on celosia velvet, capturing tender moments shared between myself and my mother, and my daughter and granddaughter, both at the age of four months.

Leticia Thomas

Artist Statement

Reflecting the unbroken connections within our family, these images remind us of the shared experiences, emotions, and values that flow from generation to generation. Through triumphs and challenges, we find solace and strength in the knowledge that our familial relationships are constant, and our legacies are deeply intertwined.

Each image serves as a mirror, showcasing the enduring love and support passed down through generations, as well as the inherited experiences that have shaped our lives. We recognize that the seeds of our being carry both the victories and struggles of our ancestors, and as sowers, we have the opportunity to nurture a new generation with understanding, empathy, and compassion.

By exploring these intergenerational connections, I aim to honor the strength of Black female familial relationships, while acknowledging the complexities that arise from our shared histories. The soft velvet material and mirrored images invite viewers to reflect on the delicate yet enduring nature of generational love, as we all navigate the intricate fabric of life, bound together as a family.

This piece embodies the essence of The Seed & The Sower exhibition, highlighting the rich heritage and lineage passed from seed to sower. It pays homage to those who have come before us, while recognizing the immense potential within the next generation, affirming the beauty and resilience of our interconnected journey as we heal, grow, and thrive together."

First
Place
Winner

Artist Statement

Watchers 3

Watchers 3- My current research investigates the ideas of migration and residual ancestral memories that examine space and place that reference human existence. Through continuous mobility and the physical process of reduction made by nature, human beings create pathways that explore physical space that may produce visual silence, evoke the imagination, offer notions of commodities and value, and illustrate a sense of desperation that provides insights to various cultural practices and traditions. I also see my images as reminders of the past and current lessons that we need to learn about the persistence and preservation of one's own culture.

Lydia C Thompson

Lydia C. Thompson is a mixed media artist and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The Ohio State University and her Master of Fine Arts degree from the New York College of Ceramics at Alfred University.

Her awards include a Fulbright Hays grant to conduct research on traditional architecture in Nigeria, a Windgate Distinguished Fellow for Innovation in Craft. South Arts Individual Artist Career Opportunity Grant, National Edowment for the Arts. Arts & Science Council Artist Support Grant, and received the NCECA Honorary Member award. She was an artist-in-resident at the Medalta Ceramic Center in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, the Guldagergaard International Ceramic Research Center in Denmark and at the Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts & Sciences. Her work has been included in galleries, art centers, and museums such as the Mindy Solomon Gallery, the Society for Contemporary Crafts, the Baltimore Clayworks, the Ohr O'Keefe Museum, the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, James A. Michener Art Museum, the Crocker Art Museum, the Mint Museum, and the Northern Clay Center. She has completed public commissions for businesses and her work is in private and public collections in the US, New Zealand, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. She has conducted workshops for youths and adults, given public lectures and served as a juror and curator for national and regional exhibitions. Currently she resides and maintains her studio in Charlotte, NC and is a Professor of Ceramics in the Department of Art & Art History at UNC Charlotte.

Development Comfort

Tiara Tiana

Artist Statement

My works convey the concept of self-improvement and growth, represented through the use of floral motifs. The repetitive usage of floral and foliage is a metaphor for the rigorous efforts taken to improve ourselves. My new body of work is focused on interpreting the action of caring for hair as a metaphor for how relationships are cultivated or dissolved. In African American culture, black women view hair as a token of pride. From different hair care methods to a variety of hairstyles, black women have carefully implemented the traditions of hair through matriarchy, passed down between generations. My references to hair practices and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships are an introspective analogy.

Past is Prologue

A front view of a body-contouring, knee-length sheath dress crafted from gold dupioni silk. The centerpiece of the garment is its asymmetrical sunburst pleated front neckline, made by transforming darts into pleats. A black invisible acts as the closure located at the center back of the garment.

Angela Uriyo

Artist Statement

In creating Past is Prologue, I drew inspiration from the transformative legacy of Zelda Wynn Valdes, an African American fashion designer whose work epitomizes cycles of creativity, empowerment, and heritage. This design embodies the exhibition's theme by exploring the connections between ancestors and descendants, showing how the past informs the present and lays the groundwork for the future. Valdes' artistry exemplifies how the seeds sown by one generation blossom in the next. As Deihl (2018) notes, Valdes celebrated the beauty and strength of Black women through her couture, particularly her body-conscious silhouettes, which challenged societal norms and empowered her female clientele. Past is Prologue features a body-contouring, knee-length sheath dress in gold silk dupioni, symbolizing the richness of ancestral contributions and the resilience of collective histories. The fitted silhouette, iconic in 1950s evening wear, pays homage to Valdes's philosophy that clothing should fit the woman, not the reverse. This effect was achieved by converting traditional darts into seamlines that elegantly follow the body's curves. The centerpiece of the garment is an asymmetrical sunburst pleated neckline, radiating outward like sunlight. These pleats, transformed from darts, signify the wisdom of the past illuminating the future. The neckline emphasizes individuality, echoing Valdes's dedication to celebrating uniqueness. Using a fabric remnant to create this design reflects sustainability, honoring past ingenuity while advocating for a responsible future. Creating Past is Prologue has been an introspective and celebratory journey. This garment honors Valdes's artistry while recognizing the broader legacy of Black women who have sown seeds of creativity and resilience.

Untitled

This piece is inspired by Kara Walker. Ms. Walker is the perfect example of being both, the seed and the sower. Her father was an art and at the age of 3 she knew that was her path as well. I wanted this piece to tell her story. **This painting is a in work progress**

Tiffonye Wilkins

Artist Statement

Tiffonye' Wilkins a published African American abstract portrait artist, muralist, and storyteller whom resides in Charlotte N.C. Her work can be recognized by its lustrous colors and unique concepts, highlighting the beauty that she sees in the world around her. Although her art career has just begun, she is already considered a beacon in the art industry.

Our Soulful Summer

Oil and glitter on canvas

Chase Williamson

Artist Statement

Storytelling is the medium that channels the exploration of my work. Through this, I delve into the connection between Black women and the healing components exuded by gardens and the element of water. Using oil paint, fabric, and glitter, I choose to depict women in a state of simmering joy and a rested state of mind, sitting cheek to cheek and skin to skin. The deep history associated with blackness, land, and water is linear, but not unbreakable. Our stories of sisterhood and triumph become unbound and transgenerational. Created to show unfiltered, unposed, and joyous posture, these portraits showcase the quiet action of letting the sun shine on our faces and embrace leisure activities - an act that we don't see fitted on the stature of Black women often. And yet, Black joy is a topic that has been circled many times. It is one of our most key, yet unexamined tools for surviving this world. Each woman I depict has taught me how to take root in some form - whether physically through soil or in metaphorical situations. It is because of them that I aim to evoke the visual testimonies of the resilience found in engaging with our roots, an act that embodies bold defiance in praise of Black errantry and agency.

Mother and Child

This painting depicts a young mother named Shaunna, and her newborn daughter Indigo.

Janice Withers

Artist Statement

Janice Withers is an accomplished Artist, Muralist, and Art Educator hailing from Raleigh, North Carolina. Her journey into the world of Visual Arts began during high school, where she discovered her innate talent and passion for creativity.

Janice pursued her academic aspirations at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's Degree in Art Design. Her thirst for knowledge and artistic growth led her to achieve a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from Howard University, specializing in Studio Painting. Additionally, she holds a Master's Degree in Art Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Throughout her academic journey, Janice Withers immersed herself in diverse artistic media, including drawing, watercolor painting, acrylic painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, and graphic design. This extensive background not only enriched her artistic skills but also fueled her passion for teaching others. As an artist, Janice Withers believes in the transformative power of art, particularly in public spaces. Her works often reflect themes of community, identity, and cultural heritage, resonating deeply with viewers.

In her own words, "An empty wall creates an empty mind," encapsulates Janice's belief in the ability of art to inspire, provoke thought, and create meaningful connections within communities.

It Takes a Village

This painting depicting Haitian women, both young and old, carrying baskets and sharing each other's burdens.

Belina Wright

Artist Statement

I am a self-taught artist and because of this I create freely without fear of breaking artistic rules. I have various methods of creating my work and do not like to be labeled as only one style of painter. My art has a strong Haitian art style influence. Living in the U.S. I didn't get to experience much of the Haitian culture growing up. This style allows me to identify with that part of my heritage. When I did visit Haiti, as a child, I remembered the movement and the energy of people talking, laughing or haggling in the marketplace and the spirit of community. I try to capture the beauty in the day-to-day and extraordinary features of my cultural background. I often include faceless stylized women dancing or working. I also use bright colors and bold strokes in the backgrounds to create energy and movement. I am a very loose painter. I don't believe a lot of detail is needed to capture the essence of a piece. Initially you notice the color in my work but if you look closely you will see the beauty of hidden details showing through the layers. I am currently working on a series of paintings inspired by my recent trip to Haiti. On this trip, I could view the country with an adult's perspective. Although there were changes with time and the recovery from the earthquake, the peoples' resilient spirit is still intact. I want to continue to capture these elements of the country in my work.

Have more questions?

We are here to help!

Find an Arts Council staff member and ask any additional questions you have.

