

TCC
BLACK ART and
BLACK ARTISTS
EXHIBIT

PROGRAM

February 21 – March 17, 2023

Contents

Introduction 5

Events 5

Featured Artists

Dionne BONNER 6

Jasmine Iona BROWN 7

Sabreehna S. ESSIEN 8

JW HARRINGTON 9

Lourdes JACKSON 10

Marquis JOHNSON 11

Gwen JONES 12

Jason MACDONALD 13

Necashaw R. MONTGOMERY 14

Lauren NAPIER 15

Savannah RENAULDI 16

Kenya SHAKOOR 17

Shirley Ann SIMMONS 18

Edgar VALENTINE 19

INTRODUCTION



Funding support
provided by



Tacoma Community College, The Tacoma Urban League, and the Pierce County Black Collective are proud to present “Black Art and Black Artists,” an exhibition that shines a spotlight on the talent that lives and flourishes in our region.

Curated by a panel of art jurists, the exhibition includes powerful work by painters, photographers, glass artists, pastel artists, muralists, and art therapists. Their work explores themes of time and place, of history and identity, of imagining and re-imagining.

As you interact with this exhibition and its associated events, you will encounter some of the Black artists who enrich our communities with their incredible art. We hope that you will take some time to experience their work, and to gain a deeper appreciation for their creative practices by attending a Gallery Talk, Panel Discussion or Family Day event. And we hope that the exhibition inspires you to seek out, celebrate and support Black art by Black artists.

EVENTS

All events listed below will be held in The Gallery (Building 4 at Tacoma Community College) and are free and open to the public.

Panel Discussion

March 2 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Listen as a panel of local experts engages with the exhibition and its themes.

Family Day

March 4 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Bring the kids for hands-on art activities and an exhibition “treasure hunt.”

Gallery Talks

Listen to exhibiting artists discuss their art, inspiration, and creative processes. Engage with the artists and gain a deeper understanding of their lives and works.

Lourdes Jackson	Feb. 27, noon – 12:30 p.m.
Stephen Simmons	Feb. 28, noon – 12:30 p.m.
Jasmine Iona Brown	Mar. 3, noon – 12:30 p.m.
Gwen Jones	Mar. 3, 12:30 – 1 p.m.
Sabreehna S. Essien	Mar. 6, noon – 12:30 p.m.
JW Harrington	Mar. 7, noon – 12:30 p.m.
Kenya Shakoor	Mar. 7, 12:30 – 1 p.m.
Nescashaw Montgomery	Mar. 16, noon – 12:30 p.m.

Dionne BONNER



I'm a local community artist from Tacoma Washington, and a graduate of the Art Institute of Seattle and Evergreen State College.

What inspires me is using art and design as a catalyst to open dialog and reflection.

My work focuses on telling stories about people and places, and our intricate connections to cultural influences. Through a storytelling lens I illuminate the Black experience and its multidimensional connection to many different cultures.

I use a layered painting technique that helps me create luminous paintings with depth and character.

My work has been exhibited in group and solo shows throughout the state of Washington and abroad.

A Pioneering Spirit, A Fight for Liberty and Freedom is an educational art exhibit that explores little-known facts about WA state history through written biographies and larger-than-life portraits.



Title: **Nettie Asberry**

1865-1968, Tacoma, Washington

Date: 1994

Medium: Oil paint

Size: 48" x 36"

Dr. Nettie Asberry was born in Leavenworth, Kansas on July 15, 1865.

She led efforts to organize the Tacoma Chapter of the NAACP in 1913, the first chapter west of the Rockies. Later, she also led the efforts to organize chapters in Seattle, Spokane, Portland, Alaska, and British Columbia.



Title: **John Conna**

1836-1921, Tacoma, Washington

Date: 1994

Medium: Oil paint

Size: 48" x 36"

John Conna was born in Texas. He lived in Seattle before settling in Tacoma in

1883. Mr. Conna is credited with lobbying for the passage of the Public Accommodations Act of 1890. This law allowed Blacks equal access to restaurants and hotels in the state.



Title: **William Owen Bush**

1833-1907, Thurston County, Washington

Date: 1994

Medium: Oil paint

Size: 48" x 36"

William Owen Bush was the only

Black person in the first legislative assembly for the State of Washington in 1889. He is credited with the establishment of a college for the study of agricultural science in Washington State, which became Washington state University.



Jasmine Iona **BROWN**



Title: ***Listen***

Date: Unknown

Medium: Mixed media

Size: 20" x 30"

This work is from a series based on African proverbs. This one is about elders teaching the young. This pair is a father and son or two brothers. We can see their closeness as the older man talks to the young boy about the events in the newspaper.

Born in Indianapolis, IN, Jasmine Iona Brown earned her B.F.A in Design at Howard University and her M.A. in International Studies from UCLA. Brown received two Puffin Foundation Grants and an Artist Trust GAP Award.

Her public art installation *Black Teen Wearing Hoodie* has been displayed in Photo Center Northwest, Frye Museum of Art, and Amazon headquarters.

Her works are in the Wing Luke Museum, the Trayvon Martin Foundation, Spokane Libraries, Sound Transit, Evergreen Tacoma and Africatown Community Land Trust.

Brown is a member of the Tacoma Arts Commission, Public Art coordinator for Spaceworks Tacoma, and founder of the non-profit Swan Creek Academy.



Title: ***Land of 1000 Hills***

Date: 2012

Medium: Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood

Size: 14" x 11"

This work's full title is *Land of 1,000 Hills and 800,000 Gone*. It is about the Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994. When I decided to make a memorial icon about this tragedy and began looking for reference photos, I found many pictures of rotting corpses. That is not the way I wanted to portray the victims. I wanted to portray them with dignity and full of life, so I used a young South African man, named Reply, as my model for this work.

Sabreehna S.
ESSIEN



Born and raised in Tacoma, WA, I live in Tacoma with my husband Joseph Essien and our two sons Joseph Jr and Israel.

I took basic drawing and basic painting while attending Tacoma Community College.

My work has been exhibited at the UW Towers, UW School of Social Work, C Art Gallery, Festival Sundiata, Handforth Gallery, Washington State History Museum, B2 Fine Art Gallery, People Center, 253 Collective, and Tacoma Urban League.

Love Yourself was my first commissioned public art piece by the Tacoma Art Commission and City of Tacoma. I have curated several shows, taught Art in Ghana, and done art workshops in Pierce County.



Title: ***Purple Hues***

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic and Oil on canvas

Size: 5' x 5'

Purple Hues was inspired by an abstract drawing I completed over a period of days during NOC shift working as a Recovery Specialist at an Outpatient Behavioral Health Facility. I explored different brush strokes, varied application, and multiply layers. Before I added the mountains, the piece resembled something like purple rain.



Title: ***Abstract Series 1***

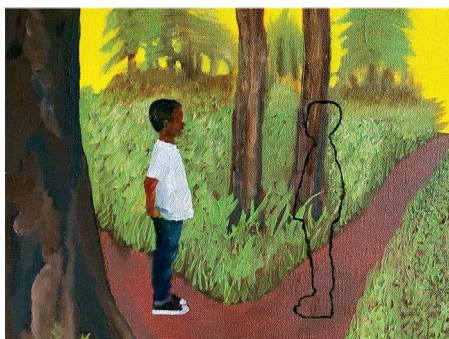
Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic and Oil on canvas

Size: 18" x 12"

Abstract Series 1 is a contemporary of Malcolm X who is the inspiration behind this series. There is an *Abstract Series 2* as well same inspiration with different color combinations. I beheld one of Malcolm X famous headshots and instead of paint a descriptive image, the Abstract manifestation came. The process of creation happened over a several week process.

"The Impossibility of Knowing" series refers to the strength of memory and imagination, compared to what is "real" or "observed." In these paintings, a solid shape, figure, or silhouette interacts with its mirrored outline: something that seems substantive is augmented with its mirror, shadow, or luminescence. The interplay creates dynamism, as each shape is pulled in its opposite direction.



Title: ***The Impossibility of Knowing (30)***

Date: 2022

Medium: Oil on canvas

Size: 18" x 24"



Title: ***The Impossibility of Knowing (10): Seekers***

Date: 2017

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 18" x 24"



JW
HARRINGTON

JW Harrington is a painter, social science professor, and baritone, living, painting, and singing in Tacoma, Washington.

Harrington was born in South Carolina, educated at Harvard University and the University of Washington, and has worked on east and west coasts of the U.S.

He's studied painting and drawing with Sandy Bricel Miller in Seattle. He is a member of Gallery 110 (Seattle). His work is also available through Berkano Gallery (Seattle), Ryan James Fine Arts (Kirkland), and jwharrington.com.

Lourdes JACKSON



Artist and designer Lourdes Jackson has always created, as a child drawing cartoon characters to a man doing portraiture for friends and family. With no formal training he honed his skills during incarceration throughout his 20s.

Born in Portland, OR, Lourdes lives in Tacoma, WA. In 2018, Lourdes created and exhibited work in American art capitals Los Angeles, New York and Miami, where he gained creative control of a wall within the World Famous Wynwood Arts District.

Since 2019 he has focused on large scale works, installations and murals. In 2021 he spent three months creating art in Mombasa, Kenya.

Most recently, Lourdes is the designer of the 11th & L development with Tacoma Housing Authority in the hilltop area. Find work @lourdesenfleur and www.lourdesenfleur.com



Title: **Hoop Dreams**

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 84" x 56"

I remember walking through a slum in Mombasa, Kenya with a strange woman who had it in her head that I would marry her and take her to America. She took me through the entirety of this particular slum. At one point we came across a group of boys on a basketball team practicing on a court made of rubble and stones with chipped rims and half-torn nets. I remember thinking, making it to the NBA would feel like heaven coming from a place like this. Something you only see in a dream. I found so many similarities to young Black inner city boys.



Title: **To the Sun**

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 84" x 56"

Upon meeting the Maasai tribesmen, I was greeted with wide smiles and an urgency to take photos and videos of the "Adumu," a traditional dance in which Maasai warriors jump in demonstration of strength. During my stay I became great friends with the Maasai chief's son. Many times he would take me throughout the village and into the wild to explore. The "Adumu" was a regular sight.



Title: **Maasai Portrait**

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 60" x 56"

The Maasai warriors are like celebrities (or perhaps more like a tourist attraction). Either way, they love having their photos taken. As an American you feel a bit ashamed to have a new iPhone out in public documenting this experience in the midst of such immense poverty. However, the Maasai look for any opportunity they can to take a photo in hopes that it may end up in a work of art such as this.



Marquis **JOHNSON**



Title: ***The Need for Time***

Date: 2021

Medium: Landscape Photography

Size: 30" x 20"

I am a self-taught photographer from the eastside of Tacoma, Washington, with over a decade of experience.

Growing up, I have always tried to see the beauty in the gritty landscape I was raised in. My surroundings influenced my unique eye for color within my photographs.

After going to school for broadcast journalism, in my early years of secondary education, I chose to switch my focus to business administration, while taking photographs in my spare time.

I currently own a photography company called Telvanni Visuals, where we focus on highlighting the extreme beauty and simplicity of the areas around us.

Gwen
JONES



I was born in El Paso, Texas.
Currently, I live in Tacoma WA.

My Dad and Mom are my
creative Inspiration.

They both served in the United
States Army, but the United
States of America did not
serve them. They served the
country despite racial, social,
and economic injustices.

My father, William Jones,
a Buffalo Soldier, and
Mother, a (WAC) Women's
Army Corps Branch.

Both keepers of The Fire.
I am working to keep the
fire burning.



Title: **Blue Bird of Paradise**

Date: 2017

Medium: Stained Glass

Size: 17" x 10"

The Bluebird is a symbol of Joy and Hope, and represents a connection between the living and those who have passed away.

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken winged bird

That cannot fly.

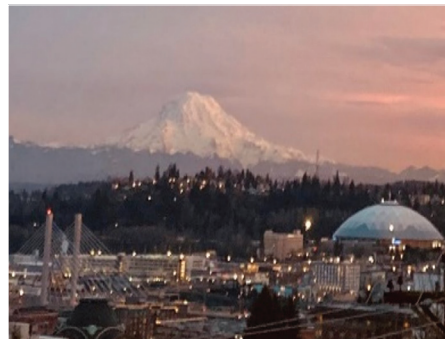
Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow

Langston Hughes 1901-1967



Title: **Hilltop Mountain View**

Date: 2021

Medium: Photography

Size: 20" x 24"

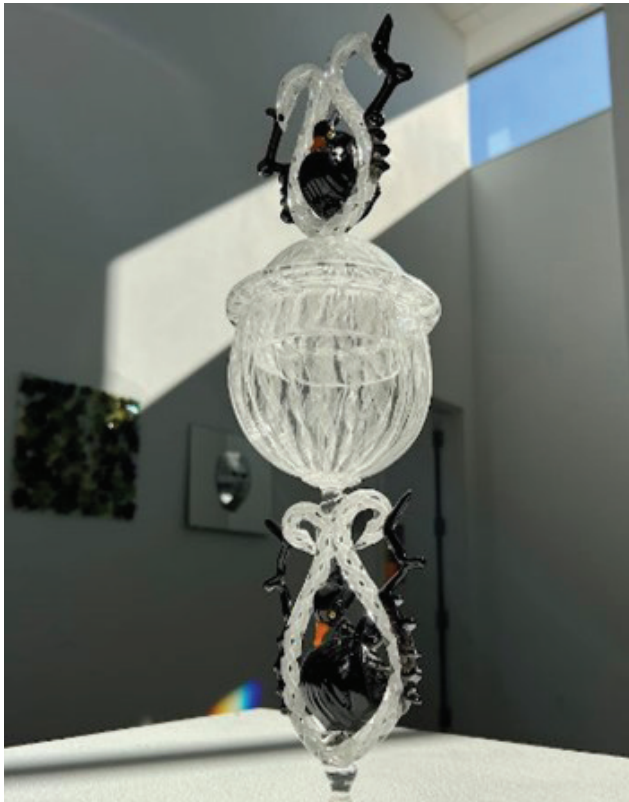
Tacoma Hilltop has a magical panoramic view of the Cascade Mountains, Olympic Mountains and Mount Rainer. The sacred mountains are central to certain religions. The mountain is a house of great spirits. For many the most symbolic aspect of a mountain is the peak because it is believed that it is closest to heaven.

"I am big bird winging over high mountains, down into serene valleys. I am ripples of waves on silver seas. I'm a spring leaf trembling in anticipation of full growth."

Maya Angelou 1928-2014



Jason MACDONALD



Title: ***Lidded Swan Goblet***

Date: 2022

Medium: Glass

Size: 18" x 4"

This goblet features both blown and sculpted glass elements. Black swans sit in the stem and handle, and an intricate cane pattern flows from the foot to the tip of the goblet's lid

Jason McDonald is an artist living in Philadelphia, PA. He got his start in glass art at the age of 14 through Hilltop Artists in his hometown of Tacoma, WA.

Jason completed his undergraduate degree at California College of the Arts in Oakland, CA in 2018 and was a 2020 recipient of the Windgate-Lamar Fellowship from the Center for Craft.

Jason was a featured contestant in season two of the Netflix show *Blown Away*. His work has been featured at multiple exhibitions including *GATHER: 27 Years of Hilltop Artists* at the Tacoma Art Museum.

He is currently completing an MFA degree at Tyler School of Art and Architecture, and is a member of Better Together, an artist team that celebrates and supports the careers of BIPOC makers.

Necashaw R.
MONTGOMERY



Necashaw Montgomery was born on the ancestral lands of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples known as Long Beach, CA.

They moved to the ancestral lands of the Puyallup tribe and Coast Salish peoples known as Tacoma, Washington at the age of eight years old.

In gratitude to all that have come before, Necashaw offers this quote:

*“Don’t ask
what the world needs.
Ask what makes you come
alive and go do it.
Because what the world
needs is people
who have come alive.”
-Howard Thurman*

Necashaw uses pronouns
they and she.



Title: ***Be Loved (VM2)***

Date: 2022

Medium: Iridescent and metallic acrylic

Size: 36" x 24" MDF board

In the image shown is a lush iridescent, deep purple and black Japanese peony outlined in copper metallic acrylic paint against a textured gold metallic backdrop. A vagina blooms from the center of the flower. *Be Loved (VM2)* is the second in a collection of works developed and to be developed as sites of remembrance, reclamation, and reconnection.



Lauren
NAPIER

Title: ***Bass Reeves in the Arizona Desert***

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 20" x 10"

History is about reading between the lines. Bass Reeves, a shadowed cowboy figure, leans against a saguaro: a spiritual pillar of the desert. The Lone Ranger was popularized in popular culture as a white cowboy but was, in truth, based upon the living figure of Bass Reeves, a Black cowboy and sheriff. The silhouette and surreal placement symbolize the mystifying white-washing of American history.



Title: ***Pan African Bunnies***

Date: 2021

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Size: 16" x 12"

Set against a backdrop of red, green, and black, two bunnies make clear symbolism. They are bound by a gold snake - the fetters, choke of capitalism. For all that glitters is not gold and the streets were not paved with gold for those of certain hues.



Lauren Napier is a Renaissance woman who creates a world of poetry, painting, melody, and journalism.

An often traveling military brat, she currently has an address in Tacoma; her travels inform and inspire her artistic output.

Often dwelling in the landscapes of the desert, Lauren's art seeks to spark conversation about themes of drought, the history of the American West, and the flora and fauna that live within.

Napier graduated from Bowdoin College, has penned children's books, toured with the Black Opry, and continues the hope of offering moments of softness and pause to the world.

Savannah RENAULDI

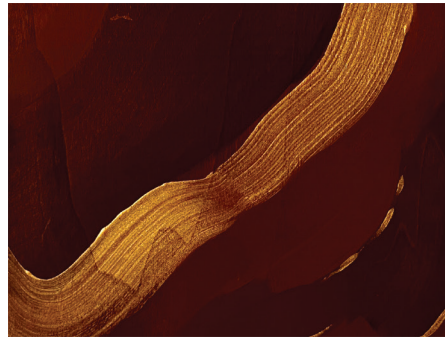


Savannah Renaudi is an abstract artist, sex educator, and training art therapist living in Olympia, Washington.

They were born in Evanston, Illinois, and displayed a natural passion for healing through the performing arts. However, it was through their first fine arts class in 2013 that Savannah discovered the healing power of color theory through still-life replication.

They then majored in Theater with a minor in Art at the University of Miami in Florida to develop their style to help others.

As a result, Savannah honed their voice by creating a career path through sexual healing and art therapy.



Title: ***Nourishment***

Date: 2022

Medium: Acrylic on wood

Size: 8" x 10"

This is a piece that celebrates nourishing the body, soul, and abundance. Brown helps us reclaim our link to the Earth through healthy boundaries, encouraging structures, maintaining a balanced perspective, and offering safe ways to integrate our shadow side in order to offer deeper insights and growth. Gold provides clarity in decision-making expands awareness and clears the path to joy, wisdom, and knowledge. Combined, these colors offer the chance for us to step into our power and create ourselves through self-knowledge, empathy, and self-devotion.



Title: ***Betrayal***

Date: 2022

Medium: Oil on canvas

Size: 12" x 12"

In the Fall of 2022, Savannah experienced a disorienting breakup with a dear friend. During the grieving process, Savannah lay awake one night, unable to go back to sleep. To heal her heartbreak and help regulate her nervous system, she got up at 3 AM, set up her easel, and started exploring her emotions through color. Intuitively, she went to oils to support her somatic experience in letting emotions of betrayal, loss, confusion, and hurt flow and be released through the art-making process.

Kenya
SHAKOOR



Title: ***Reimagining Oshun***

Date: 2017

Medium: Digital photograph
on photo paper

Size: 14" x 11"

Reimagining Oshun is a digital photograph that reimages Oshun, the Yoruba deity of sensuality and manifestation, as a present-day woman.

Kenya Shakoor is a self-taught photographer and lifelong Washington resident.

She held her debut photo exhibition *Dreaming in Black* in 2019. The exhibition was an ode to the awe-inspiring softness and grace so intrinsic to Black life.

In 2022, Kenya presented an original workshop at Tacoma Art Museum entitled *Framing Portraiture as an Act of Love*, exhibited a new photo series at Wa Na Wari's Walk the Block and was named as a finalist for The Current, an artist award from Tacoma Art Museum.

Kenya is committed to visual storytelling that facilitates conversation and expands our collective imagery.

Shirley Ann **SIMMONS**



Shirley Ann Simmons, born 1932 and raised in Washington D.C., also lived in Brooklyn New York, Montclair N.J., and St. Louis Missouri.

She was a graduate of Howard University, with a major in Fine Art and later became an elementary school educator.

She produced most of her artistic work in St. Louis, Missouri. Her work was of friends and family and Shirley's portraits were commissioned by Washington, D.C., and Missouri notables.

Ms. Simmons was also selected to submit an entry to the 1996 Olympic Mural Contest where she was given an honorable mention.

Since her passing in spring of 2022, Simmons's son has been looking to begin a traveling exhibition of her work to share her talent and artistic eye for the African American culture, working with pastels and graphite media. The vivid colors and realism are apparent in all of her works of art.



Title: **Curls**
Date: Unknown
Medium: Pastel
Size: 9" x 7.5"



Title: **Diva**
Date: Unknown
Medium: Pastel
Size: 17.5" x 13"



Edgar **VALENTINE**



Title: **Comb Artifact**

Date: 2022

Medium: Glass

Size: 9.3" x 3.2"

In modern times, the afro comb is a symbol of strength and pride, representing Black Power. But these artifacts date back thousands of years. Where tribes would use them as a token of gratitude

to trade with. Still digging up these ancient pieces today, this comb shows the old tribal designs, along with years of wear.



Title: **Hungry Heron**

Date: 2019

Medium: Glass

Size: 17" x 15"

This piece is part of an African bird study. Focusing on texture and realism. Capturing emotion from the eyes of both the heron and snake. Relating to some days you're the bird,

and some days you're the snake.

Growing up in the Tacoma/Seattle region, Edgar Valentine was bound to cross paths with glass art at some point.

Luckily, through the Hilltop Artists program, he was able to start working with hot glass at the young age of 12. What started as just an after school activity, soon became a passion and lifestyle.

Seeking to gain more knowledge and learn from many different artists, Edgar started taking more advanced glassblowing classes at public and private studios, where he discovered a true connection with the glass community.

As he continues his glass journey 15 years later, he's still always ready to learn from other artists, along with sharing what he's learned along the way.

THE GALLERY AT TCC

LOCATION:

The Gallery is located in Bldg. 4 at Tacoma Community College, near the corner of 12th and Mildred streets. Visitor Parking is available in Lot G.

HOURS:

The Gallery is open to the public 10am-5pm Monday-Friday, on days the College is open. Admission is free to the public.

Questions? Call 253-460-4306.



6501 S. 19th Street, Tacoma, WA 98466 | tacomacc.edu/blackartexhibit