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WHAT: BLACK MATTER

WHEN: May 6 - June 19, 2021

WHERE: Main Gallery @ The Arts Center

WHY: Showcasing Five Black Oregon Artists

WITH: Guest Curator, Tammy Jo Wilson

TAMMY JO WILSON

The exhibition Black Artists Matter showcases contemporary Oregon artists in an effort to address an imbalance in representation. Their voices should be heard, not because they are black, because they are human beings with unique life experiences. It is essential to lift up the contributions of black artists above systematic oppression in life and in art. Black artists should be recognized as individuals, without the filter of what the Western art canon tells us black art is or should be. The artists in this exhibition are all important black and African artists living and working here in Oregon. The artwork in this exhibition expresses more than their experience of living in a state and country rooted in systematic racism; their work speaks to the experience of being human.

"It's almost as if, in order to be a successful black artist, they must perpetually create art that speaks on black culture and racism. It's not important for an artist's race to be apparent just by looking at their work but, knowing that there are an increasing number of black artists being featured in museums and galleries is important. True progress will be achieved when work by black artists are collected based on the same criteria as their mainstream white counterparts instead of being judged as having an inherent racial bias. It is up to modern day art collectors, curators, and art historians to change the perspective."

- Tania Inniss

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JEREMY OKAI DAVIS

Jeremy Okai Davis (b. Charlotte, NC) received a BFA in painting from the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, NC. Davis relocated to Portland, OR in 2007 where he has continued his studio practice in addition to working as a graphic designer and illustrator. His work has been shown nationally at the Studio Museum of Harlem (New York, NY), THIS Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA), Wa Na Wari (Seattle, WA) and The Rotating Art Program at Portland International Airport (Portland, OR). Davis's work resides in the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon's permanent collection. Elizabeth Leach Gallery began representing Jeremy Okai Davis in 2019.

MAYA VIVAS

Maya Vivas is a multidisciplinary artist working in a variety of mediums such as ceramic, performance, painting, social practice and installation. Maya has exhibited work, spoken on panels and hosted workshops throughout the United States including venues and institutions such as Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, Louisiana State University and Yale. Vivas is also co-founder of Ori Gallery. Whose mission is to redefine "the white cube" through amplifying the voices of Queer and Trans Artists of color, community organizing and mobilization through the arts.



"Through sculptural gesture, absurdity, carnality, speculative fiction, and body horror, I navigate questions of diasporic body memory and space as filtered through the senses."

- Maya Vivas



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JAMILA CLARKE

"I live in the urban wilds that are the Pacific Northwest, its cities, forests and seaside providing a backdrop for my work. I discovered my first camera at eight and fell in love with film in middle school but it wasn't until I discovered digital photography that everything came together. I was able to create impossible moments, narratives worthy of folktales and add a little magic to everyday life. When I'm not creating surreal and fantastical narratives, I'm hiking, reading sci-fi/fantasy, sewing costumes or crafting."

- Jamila Clarke



7a. connected with or invoking the supernatural and especially the devil

CHRISTINE MILLER

Christine Miller (b. 1990, New York, NY, she/her) is a conceptual artist and curator currently based in Portland, OR. Her work centers around racial imagery, products and histories while simultaneously reframing her own cultural identity. In addition to her own work, Christine's curatorial practice centers on bringing underrepresented contemporary artists to the front of the Portland art community and beyond.

Miller holds B.A from Hunter College (2013), and AA in Textile Surface Design from the Fashion Institute of Technology (2016). She has been the recipient of various artist grants along with participating in select artist talks and grant panels. Miller is currently working on her curated magazine Black Playground - which features the work of ten Portland based artists and plans to continue expanding her portfolio of art publications.



MOSLEY WOTTA

“Ghutter Artist” is not a term widely used though it accurately describes Mosley Wotta’s labor tested style, evergreen grit and overall career path. Jason (McNeal) Graham, better know as MOsley WOtta is a Windy City Heartland transplant living in Central Oregon. Wotta’s work spans nearly two decades of exploration in multiple mediums including writing, painting, performance, video. His catalogue includes: Scrap Mettle (2008), Wake (2009), Amalgam x (2010), Kink Konk (2012), Markets Flooded (2014), Crack in the Bell (2014), RDJ (2017), Didn’t Grow up (2018), Let it fly (2019), What Comes After (2019), This is Not All There Is (2020), Head On (2020).

Mosley Wotta’s music, literary performance and visual art have featured internationally, including: Living Future Con, TED X, Fish Trap Writes, Oregon Community Foundation invited speaker, Goddard College (Resident Scholar), High Desert Museum “Desert Reflections” Exhibition. Street Con Dubai, Valley Forge Fiesta, Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute. Mosley WOtta is an Arts Beautification & Culture award recipient. Individual Artist Fellowship Recipient. City Club Community Leader Honoree, Oregon Slam Poetry Champion 2008, Creative Laureate (Bend, OR.), Oregon Humanities Conversation project leader, and, a Bridging Oregon (North Coast) Facilitator.

BLACK MATTER is made possible with support from:



NAACP
Corvallis/Albany Branch



Oregon Cultural Trust, NAACP Corvallis/Albany Branch,

The Steele Family Fund, Tom and Kelli Steele, Sharon Rackham King



The Arts Center

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