



RESPONDING
TO RACIAL TENSION
IN AMERICA

PRESS RELEASE

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ART + DIALOGUE, A MULTI-ORGANIZATION COLLABORATION ANNOUNCES SPECIAL PROGRAMS

(Greensboro, NC) *Art + Dialogue: Responding to Racial Tension in America (A + D)*, September 24 through October 11, 2015, is a collaborative project bringing the community together in dialogue around racial tension. *A + D* uses art as an equalizing, thought-provoking platform, and has four interconnected parts: a juried art exhibition, a series of town hall style panel discussions, open dialogue sessions and educational programming.

The juried art exhibition opens at Greensboro College on Thursday, September 24 at 5:30 PM. Eighteen artists were selected based on artistic quality and relevance to *A + D* themes: intersection of race with gender, age, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability status and other identities; visibility of multi-racial individuals and families in the U.S.; how art can express pain, grief, rage—and still inspire healing; historic roots of race and racism and resulting realities today and visions for the future; different forms of racism; cultural appropriation versus cross-cultural exploration/inspiration, and how immigrants and immigration status are defined. Selected visual artist include:

- Inga Kimberly Brown, Greensboro NC
- Renee Cloud, Charlotte NC
- Susan Fecho, Tarboro NC
- Kerith + Krystal Hart, Greensboro NC
- Titus Heagins, Durham NC
- Kathleen Jardine, Pittsboro NC
- Alexis Joyner, Elizabeth City NC
- Willie Little, Oakland CA
- Frank Myers, Raleigh NC
- Mariana Pardy, Jamestown NC
- IlaSahai Prouty, Bakersville NC
- Tyler Starr, Davidson NC
- Kulsum Tasnif, Raleigh NC
- Devon Tucker, Raleigh NC
- Chris Watts, High Point NC
- Monica Weber, Winston-Salem, NC
- Andrew Wells, Sanford NC
- Antoine Williams, Chapel Hill NC
- Gesche Würfel, Chapel Hill NC

Artist Kulsum Tasnif explains her work selected for the exhibition, “In *New Paint, Old Scars*, I translated a quote by Martin Luther King into Urdu, the Pakistani language, ‘we may have all come in different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.’ The themes that I’m dealing with and the message that my work seeks to convey is ‘despite discrimination, racism, sexism, and all the devastations that hate brings, the resilience to overcome will allow us to really understand each other.’ ...My art has given me a voice that I just didn’t have as a child...I have this voice and I can use it.”

Intertwined with the juried art exhibition are a series of town hall style panel discussions coordinated around a topic or theme responding to racial tension in America. These discussions are guided by a facilitator and a group of community leaders who can speak to multiple perspectives on each topic. Panel discussions may also include thought-provoking performances to open minds and offer moments of healing. Selected multidisciplinary artists include:

- Ann Deagon, writer, poet, Greensboro NC
- Larry Draughn, Jr., music, Greensboro NC
- The Poetry Project, spoken word, poetry, Greensboro NC
- Shelley Segal + La Shon Hill, theater, Greensboro NC
- Ashley Williams + April Marten, performance art, Charlotte NC
- Camerin Watson, dance, Charlotte, NC
- Alexandra Warren, JOYEMOVEMENT, dance, Greensboro NC

Charlotte-based performance artists Ashley Williams + April Marten explain, “We are creating this piece and working together as a visual reminder of difference. We are two bodies and two perspectives who have merged into one art piece. We aim to investigate and test the limits of our own subjectivity and we aim to speak to the world about the multi-dimensions of racism. Some of our questions include: What can we charge the audience with? What can we tell people to expect out of themselves? Our hope is that the work speaks to the importance of process and the labor of questioning. We believe that all humans living on this earth, in this country, in this state, in our collective communities, contribute to creating meaningful dialogue and lifting the oppressed.”

Independent of panel discussions are Open Dialogue Sessions which are performance and experience driven open dialogues that include an afternoon of athletics and poetry with Clement Mallory of Poetry Kids Basketball, an interactive workshop using mixed media with artist Charlena Wynn, a guided meditation with Dr. Alexis Pauline Gumbs, and a collaborative evening of performances with Found Space Theater, Department of Theater at A&T, and Greensboro College alums.

Liz Seymour, former Executive Director of the Interactive Resource Center and Art + Dialogue Panel Design Committee member comments, “We will never be able to heal the divides of race, class and ethnicity in Greensboro--or anywhere in the United States--until we can truly see and hear each other. Artists are the community's eyes and ears and A+D gives us a wonderful opportunity to look and listen and learn.”

Educational programming will provide engaging experiences for both children and adults. On October 10, an Education Day led by the African American Atelier at the Greensboro Cultural Center will begin with a Teacher Workshop at 10 am, talking about and dealing with racial tension in the classroom. At 1:00 pm the program is geared towards family oriented activities, and ending with Films and Open Mic Night at 5:00 pm. ArtQuest at Greenhill will be open free of charge from 1:00 – 5:00pm during Education Day. The goal for *A + D* educational programming is to expose racial tension in the Triad; utilizing social art practices as a catalyst for learning and growing in our community. Through the use of community organizations, gallery hosts, activity tables, artists and local volunteers, participants will have the opportunity to gain exposure and knowledge of various cultures and ethnicities. The Atelier hopes this project will plant seeds of love and respect for all races; teaching the community that mere tolerance is not enough.

A + D Partner Organization Planning Team members include Dara Nix-Stevenson, Center for Visual Artists, Ivan Canada, NCCJ, LeShari Clemons, African American Atelier, Laura Way, Greenhill, Ruth Revels, Guilford Native American Art Gallery. A + D would not be possible without the support from ArtsGreensboro, Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation, SJ Edwards Foundation and Greensboro College. Go to www.artanddialogueso.wordpress.com for the full schedule. For questions or ways to volunteer email Michelle Carello, A+D Project Manager at artanddialogueso@gmail.com.

ABOUT

THE PARTNERS

AFRICAN AMERICAN ATELIER

The African American Atelier, Inc., a non-profit art organization, seeks to promote an awareness, appreciation and sensitivity to the visual arts and culture of African Americans and to work in harmony with other ethnic groups. The French term “Atelier”, literally means “in the studio.” Founded in 1990, this organization facilitates community involvement and participation in the arts both inside and outside of the studio located in the Greensboro Cultural Center. The Atelier provides a diverse range of exhibits, programs, activities and services for all age groups and ethnic backgrounds.

CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTISTS

The Center for Visual Artists (CVA) is a non-profit organization that supports emerging artists of all ages through educational programs, exhibition opportunities and community outreach. Our program of work grows from our efforts to create opportunities for families to participate in the arts and local artists to share their talents with others. The desired outcome for our organization is to ensure that there are visual art offerings in Greensboro that are approachable, accessible, and affordable. Learn more about CVA at www.greensboroart.org.

GREENHILL

Greenhill is the only non-collecting organization dedicated to presenting, promoting and advocating for contemporary visual art and artists of North Carolina. Since its founding in 1974, Greenhill has presented and sold artwork of over 9,800 visual artists and engaged over 1 million visitors through free access to The Gallery, InFocus Gallery, The Shop and the educational programs of ArtQuest. Exhibitions are composed of two complimentary programs, The Gallery and InFocus Gallery. The Gallery represents the primary space within which Greenhill presents exhibitions that demonstrate the creative and artistic expressions of NC artists. With aesthetic quality invariably at the forefront, exhibitions are planned to give emerging, mid-career and established artists opportunities throughout their careers. InFocus Gallery is an art space designed to bring together new and seasoned art collectors and artists with exceptionally collectable works for sale. InFocus Gallery is Greenhill’s platform for investment in art in combination with The Shop, which offers unique, handcrafted artworks from selected NC artists in a variety of mediums and serves as an accessible entry point for new collectors.

GUILFORD NATIVE AMERICAN ART GALLERY

The first gallery of its kind in the Southeast promoting and selling traditional and contemporary Native American art and crafts. Four exhibitions are showcased annually. The gift shop carries a variety of authentic Native American art and crafts such as works by the Papago Tribe of Arizona and the Soap Stone sculptures by the Tuscarora tribe of New York.

NCCJ

The National Conference for Community and Justice of the Piedmont Triad, Inc. (NCCJ) is a human relations organization that promotes understanding and respect among all cultures, races and religions through advocacy, education and dialogue. Our mission is to build compassionate and just communities free of bias, bigotry and racism. NCCJ does not advocate for any particular group or philosophy, but works to build mutual respect among all people—regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic background or faith. To promote understanding and respect across groups, NCCJ believes society must acknowledge the dynamics of power and privilege and the role individuals play in creating attitudes, behavior and practices that support systems of exclusion and oppression either overt or covert. To fulfill its mission, NCCJ programs must create inclusive, respectful and just communities.

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