



Black Artists of Oregon

Exhibition Celebrating the Work of Black Artists

This fall, the Portland Art Museum presents Black Artists of Oregon. This exhibition highlights and celebrates the work of Black artists in Oregon over more than a century, exploring this history both through the lens of Black artists whose works are represented in the Museum's collection as well as the works of influential artists who, historically, have not been exhibited or held in museum collections. The exhibition opens September 9, 2023, and will be on view through March 17, 2024, with a temporary closure from November 26 through January 17



Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Woman with daughter)*, from the series *Kitchen Table*

to accommodate construction at the Museum.

Considering both their presence and absence is critical to understanding the breadth of Black artistic production in Oregon—even in the midst of historic exclusion—as well as how the impact of that history affects

our understanding of American art history and the history of the Pacific Northwest. This exhibition serves to deepen our awareness of the talented artists who have shaped and inspired artists regionally and nationally, and it will be the first of its kind to consider the work of Black artists collectively in Oregon.

Beginning in the 1880s and spanning through today, the exhibition captures the African American experience particular to the Pacific Northwest with 67 artists and over 200 objects. Artists in the exhibition will include Thelma Johnson Streat, Al Goldsby, Charlotte Lewis, Isaka Shamsud-Din, Ralph Chessé, Charles Tatum, Arvie Smith, Shedrich Williams, Harrison Branch, Bobby Foucher, and Carrie Mae Weems, among others. The exhibition and programming will also include the works of contemporary and younger artists working now,

functioning as bright threads and offering intergenerational conversation throughout the exhibition, including Sidney O'Neal, Jeremy Okai Davis, Damali Ayo, Sharita Towne, Melanie Stevens, Lisa Jarrett, Tristan Irving, Ebin Lee, and Jaleesa Johnston.

Through the narrative flow of the exhibition, visitors will experience work by Black artists across decades and generations. Particular attention is given to the works of Black artists who were producing work during the Black Arts Movement of the late 1960s, '70s, and early '80s, such as Portland-based painter Isaka Shamsud-Din. The exhibition will also mark regional artistic connections with global movements for Black liberation, as seen in the work of Charlotte Lewis alongside Portlanders Organized for Southern African Freedom and artists like Sadé DuBoise, whose "Resistance" poster series contributed to

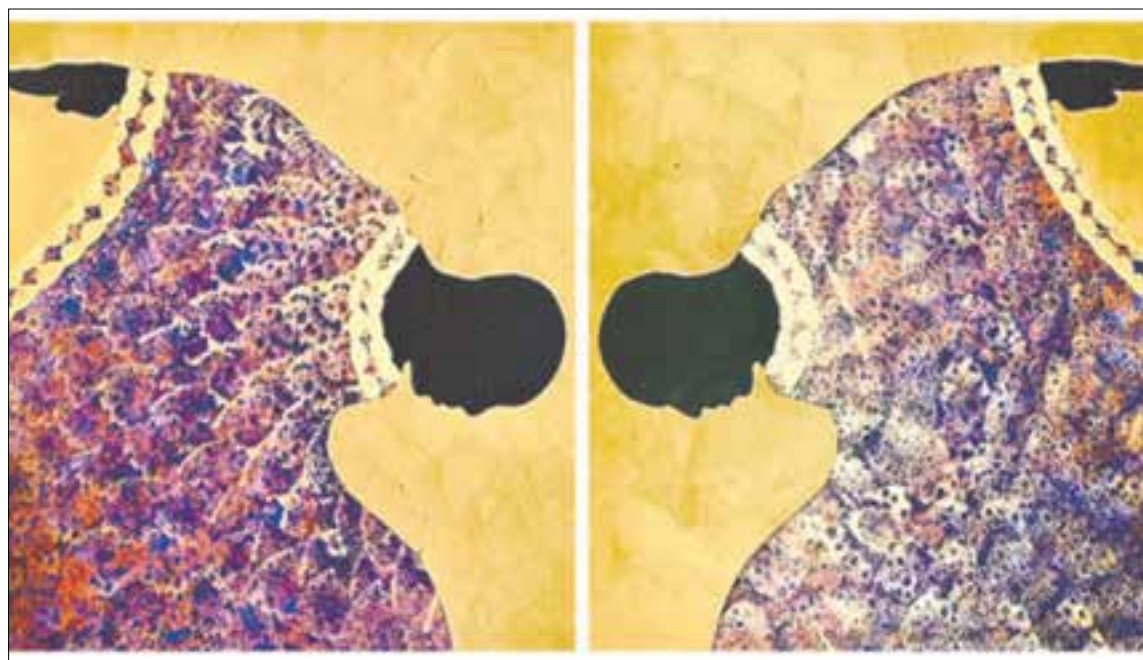
Portland's 2020 Black Lives Matter Movement protests. Without chronological constraints, the exhibition is grounded by the work of elder artists, intergenerational conversations, and live activation in the exhibition galleries.

Black Artists of Oregon builds upon guest curator Intisar Abioto's original research exploring the lineage and legacy of Black artists in Oregon which began in 2018. The exhibition will continue Abioto's research, which is grounded in Black American practices of listening, keeping, and passing on each others' stories.

"Far from isolated or ancillary, Black arts and cultural production in Oregon has been in conversation and interchange with the world, and a part of its arts and cultural movements, all this time," says exhibition curator Intisar Abioto. "Black Artists of Oregon is a heralding of Black presence, interchange, influence, and impact."



Shedrich Williams (American, born 1934), *Untitled*, 1972



United Stories, Acrylic painting by Bobby Foucher. A combination of two ideas representing the inner and outer self.