


TOUCHSTONEGALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6 – March 1, 2015
Preview: February 4-5, 11-6pm

Unspoken Messages: the Art of Janathel Shaw

**Opening Reception:
Friday, February 6, 6-8:30pm**

Touchstone Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition, *Unspoken Messages: the Art of Janathel Shaw*, opening on Friday, February 6, 2015 with an evening reception 6-8:30 pm. An encore reception will occur on Saturday, February 21, 1:30-3:30pm. The exhibition will remain on view until March 1.

In an unexpected change from previous shows, Janathel Shaw will feature large drawings in addition to her sculptures. Her body of work looks at how we view people of color. Special focus will examine the implied threat of the Black male as a viable figure of power within the community. In recent months, Americans have shed our naiveté on race and revealed hidden perceptions. The strides that we pretend to have made are still weighed down by fear, bigotry and entitlement.

The recent killings of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Jordan Russell Davis, Jonathan Ferrell, Michael Brown and Eric Garner have left a jagged scar on the nation's consciousness. In each case these boys and men were seen as objects of fear and therefore disposable. It recalls decades of civil rights injustice supported by our legal system in which people of color were killed without consequence. In a similar fervor, like that of the 1950s and 1960s, it has taken social media and diverse grass roots protests to gain national attention in a call for social justice. It is evident that "separate and unequal" is still a cultural norm.

Although, Ms Shaw's works may seem to project controversy, they are meant to be seen as beacons and homages to the strength of the human spirit, remembering our youth, fostering hope, and depicting familial love. Like the transformation of the moth, change is inevitable and that is at the heart of her work.

Future Deferred, is a sculpture that shows a noble view of the black male. He looks forward with his head held high and with distinction. The verso of the form shows an intricate detailed relief of a hooded young black male in the burgeoning of innocence and promise (Tamir Rice and Trayvon Martin). Underneath lies the skull, promising an early death. On the sides of the neck, are sgraffito drawings like tattoos of Jordan Russell Davis and Michael Brown. "I love the beauty of the human figure especially when it is developed through clay. Clay is a pliable medium that is tempered and cemented by fire. Sometimes the end result is unpredictable, but there is a beauty in the process."

Her large bold graphite and charcoal drawings depict images of young men up close and scenes that reveal their humanity and vulnerability. Expect lots of texture and lyrical lines.

Ms. Shaw is a graduate of George Washington University, a recipient of the Lorena Salter Fellowship at Baltimore Clayworks, has been published in Studio Potter, Ceramics Monthly and Ceramics Technical. She is a member of Touchstone Gallery and has shown locally. She is also an educator.

Image: Janathel Shaw, *Future Deferred*, copyright 2015, stoneware (front and back)

