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Collective for Black Iranians inaugural art exhibition “Hasteem: We Are Here” on View at Twelve Gates Gallery

Philadelphia - August 6, 2021 - Twelve Gates Arts (12G) and The Collective for Black Iranians are hosting “Hasteem: We Are Here” from September 3-24, 2021, with an opening reception on September 12, 2021 from 1-3 pm.

The Collective for Black Iranians is a creative and critically conscious initiative proposing an Iranian culture that stands fully at its Black and African intersections.

Hasteem: We are here ما اینجایم - هستیم

is an exhibition produced by the Collective for Black Iranians to further raise awareness on the intersection of being Black, African and Iranian. Through poetry, visuals, historical facts and using a myriad of other mediums, the Collective affirms the interconnectedness between Blackness and the Iranian identity.

This inaugural art exhibit from the Collective for Black Iranians brings you a sample of otherwise silenced ‘histories’. Histories such as that of Khyzran trafficked into slavery from Zanzibar to 19th century Iran to that of the Zang rebellion and the pearl divers. The Collective with resident historian, Professor Beeta Baghoolizadeh and resident artist Mina M. Jafari, brings creative reality to these intersectional segments of history, thereby widening horizons by unearthing erased stories between Africa and Iran.

The exhibit powerfully brings for the first time in the Iranian community the words “سیاه زیباست” Black is Beautiful. This series is in collaboration with artists from across the diaspora and beyond. The sample produced by the Collective brings you a collaboration with Iranian British artist Sahar Ghorishi. It is an artistic invitation by the Collective into the intersection of Blackness, Iranianness, Iran and Africa, an invitation into seeing Blackness within Iranian identity and Iranian identity within Black/African identity.

The Collective will come to creatively disrupt the 12G gallery space with its trailblazing Consciousness series, a call to shift the conversation around Africa and Blackness. Introducing thoughts and proverbs from the most acclaimed Black/African and of African descent, authors and changemakers from around the world, the Collective comes with Iranian American artists Kimia Fatehi and Black American artist Chyna Dumas to amplify Black and African thought leadership and complete the mainstream narratives around Blackness and Africa.



106 N. 2nd St Philadelphia PA 19139

And trailblazing further, the Collective is displaying art from Afro-Iranian artists based in Southern Iran, Arefeh Avazzadeh and Sarah Farajzadeh from Bandar Abbas and Bandar Bushehr, Iran, as well as featuring short films directed by a range of Black and Afro-Iranians in and outside of Iran, including founding members Priscillia Kounkou-Hoveyda and Alex Eskandarkhah.

Members of the Collective and Gallery are available for an interview upon request, and high-resolution images for press publication are also available upon request.

About 12G: Founded in 2011, Twelve Gates Arts is an arts gallery located in Old City, Philadelphia that uplifts South & West Asian diasporic artistic voices within the local cultural landscape. 12G quarterly visual exhibitions and community events focus on an emerging art landscape that maps the cultures of migration, inclusive of the systems that influence it: race, gender, creed, empire, and economy. A nod to the archetypal fortified walls that surround Imperial medieval cities worldwide, our namesake underlies our exhibitions and events, which celebrate the melange of cultural identity that foments as peoples move and settle.

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