PROGRAMMING

Sapphire & Crystals Café Exhibition and Silent Auction

Wednesday, September 20 through Friday, October 13, 2023
Café Logan

The Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression Launch Reception & Exhibition Preview
Friday, October 6 | 5-7PM
Logan Center Gallery and Café Logan

**Freedom’s Muse Opening Reception and Silent Auction**
Friday, October 13 | 6-8PM
Logan Center Gallery and Café Logan

**UChicago Humanities Day: Guided Tours of Freedom’s Muse with Bill Michel and Artists from Sapphire & Crystals**
Saturday, October 21th | Noon – 1:15
Logan Center

**Freedom’s Muse: Envisioning a New World Through Artistic Expression panel discussion**
Friday, October 27th | 6-8PM
Logan Center Gallery and Café Logan

**David Weathersby’s Sapphire & Crystals Film Screening**
Sunday, November 19 | 1-2PM
Screening Room, Logan 901

**Artist Talk with Sapphire & Crystals**
Sunday, November 19 | 2:30-4PM
Logan Center Gallery

**Logan Center Family Saturday Workshop**
Saturday, December 2nd | 2-4PM

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**Opening Reception + Silent Auction**

Friday, October 13
6:00 pm
Logan Center Exhibitions

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**Sapphire & Crystals**

**Friday, October 6**
5-7PM
Logan Center Café

**Friday, October 13**
6-8PM
Logan Center Gallery

**Friday, October 27**
6-8PM
Logan Center Gallery

**Saturday, October 21**
Noon – 1:15
Logan Center

**Sunday, November 19**
2:30-4PM
Logan Center Café

**Sunday, November 19**
1-2PM
Logan Center Gallery

**Sunday, November 19**
2-3PM
Logan Center Café

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**Exhibition Team**

**Programming and Production Staff:**
- **Logan Center:** Jan Brugger, Ben Chandler, Caleb Clemente, Emily Hooper Lansana, Rodolfo Hydro, Anika Steppe, Marcus Warren, David Wolf
- **Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression:** Tony Banout, Megan Gamiz, Tom Ginsburg

**Sapphire & Crystals:**
- **Lead Curator:** Arlene Crawford
- **Curatorial Committee:** Rose Blouin, Candace Hunter and Dorian Sylvain

And special gratitude to all the women of Sapphire & Crystals

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**Image Credits**

Unless otherwise noted, all images appear courtesy of the artists

1. Marva Lee Pitchford Jolly, My Mama’s Light, ceramic. Photo by Rose Blouin.
2. Sapphire & Crystals at Bridgeport Art Center. Photo by Tony Smith.
3. Shyvette Williams, Walking the Dog photograph, 36” x 24”.
4. Felicia Grant Preston, Real Freedom WWI Come When We Overcome the Darkness, mixed media, 24” x 24”.
5. Pearlie Taylor, My Body My Choice, acrylic on canvas, 36” x 72”.

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**Opening Reception + Silent Auction**

Friday, October 13
6:00 pm
Logan Center Exhibitions

Logan Center Exhibitions is pleased to present Freedom’s Muse featuring members from Sapphire & Crystals, a collective of African American women artists in Chicago initially conceived by Marva Pitchford Jolly and Felicia Grant Preston in 1987. This exhibition explores the intersection of art and freedom of expression in celebration of the 36th Anniversary of the collective and the launch of the university’s new Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression.

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**Logan Center Exhibitions**

**Logan Center**

Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts
915 E 60th St
Chicago IL 60637
773.834.8377

logancenterexhibitions@uchicago.edu

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**UChicago Arts**

This year marks Sapphire & Crystals’ 36th anniversary as an active art collective. Our mission is to give voice and opportunity to African American women artists by participating and increasing our visibility in arts institutions, and to honor our history and culture. When our collective was formed in 1987, we declared our freedom from the status quo and demanded a place at the table.

For this exhibition at the University of Chicago’s Logan Center for the Arts, we chose the theme Freedom’s Muse to explore the ideas of freedom, creativity and self-determination. In mythology, the Muses were nine goddesses who symbolized the arts and sciences. Today, a muse serves as inspiration. We find our Muses in activists, ancestors and art forms. We find Muses in sacred spaces and special places, and they always encourage freedom of expression and creativity. Shirley Chisholm is certainly one of our Muses. She advocated for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion when she became the first Black woman to be elected to Congress in 1968, and throughout her presidential campaign in 1972. Over 50 years later, our nation continues to aspire to her ideas. These values are also our hope for humanity, and thus we celebrate our Muses.

In this exhibition, Sapphire & Crystals artists address Freedom’s Muse in painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, quilting, drawing, and mixed media. We hope our individual and collective creative expressions inspire our viewers to muse more deeply about freedom, inclusion, diversity and respect for all cultures and contributions; to Be and Do as a philosophy of life; Be the change we want to see in the world, and Do what is necessary to achieve it.

Many thanks to the artists of Sapphire & Crystals, and to the Logan Center Staff for their invaluable support. This exhibition makes us proud of our perseverance to live, grow and create.

Arlene Turner Crawford & Rose Blouin, Co-Curators

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“America is composed of all kinds of people, and part of the difficulty in our nation today is that we are not utilizing the abilities and the talents of other brown and black peoples and females that have something to bring to the creativity, the rejuvenation and the revitalization of this country.”

Shirley Chisholm
A History of Sapphire & Crystals

Sapphire & Crystals is a collective of African American women artists in Chicago. Conceived initially by Marva Pitchford Jolly and Felicia Grant Preston, the idea that women artists of African descent produce their own shows resulted in the collective’s first exhibition at the historic South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC) in 1987.

Throughout its thirty-six-year history, Sapphire & Crystals has held exhibitions at many galleries and art centers within the city and beyond including ARC Gallery, Artemisia Gallery, Carson Pirie Scott Vergie Burton Gallery, Wood Street Gallery, Nicole Gallery, Baghi Gallery, Satori Fine Art, Union Street Gallery, South Shore Cultural Center Fine Art Gallery, Woman Made Gallery, and Noyes Cultural Art Center. The individual work by each member addressing various themes such as race and gender, limited palettes, and honoring their pasts, exemplifies the diversity within the group. Many of our members are teaching artists, educators, curators and mentors. We work in many media including painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, collage, quilling, drawing, and mixed media.

Current active Sapphire & Crystals members include Rose Blouin, Dorothy Carter, Arlene Turner Crawford, Makaba Kedum-Dubitso, Juarez Hawkins, Candace Hunter, Malka Jackson, Renee Williams, Jeffrey, Kees Meriweather, Yacundali Olu, Felicia Grant Preston, Patricia A. Stewart, Dorian Sylvain, Pearlie Taylor, Shabari Caron Weaver, Shiyvette Williams and Trish Williams.

Participants over the years include JoAnne Scott, Cheryl Toles, Nicole Malcolm, Janet Sheard, Stephanie Bird, Lillian Morgan Lewis, Carol James, Akeisha Bandele, Evelyn Davis-Frazier, Simone Bouyer, Faith Davis, Debra Dilworth, Jan Splivey Gilchrist, Monica Plott Ratcliff, Annie Lee, Dorothy Perry, Beverly Warner, Patricia Bohannon, Margaret Burroughs, Geraldine McCullough, Peggy Tarr, Esther W. Hayes, Annie Lee, Eileean Henderson, Kiela Smith, Flora Smith, Lillian Townsend, Rhonda Wheatley and Shirley Sullivan. Members who have passed away but held in memory are Marva Pitchford Jolly, Venus Blue, Renee Townsend, Mary Reed Daniel and Anna M. Tyler.

Their most recent exhibition was Sapphire & Crystals: Forward at Bridgeport Art Center Gallery in 2022. The Sapphire & Crystals collective was featured in the Black Metropolis segment of the series Art & Design in Chicago which aired locally on WTTW (October, 2018). Members were also featured on the arts site Sixty Inches From Center in The Vessels that Marva Made: An Interview with Members of Sapphire & Crystals, December, 2018.

A video showcasing the artists and their work is available at:
https://tinyurl.com/sapphirecrystals

Freedom’s Muse for SisterGirlFriends
Arlene Turner Crawford

U B Inspiration & examples for the mission;
U B perpetuating existence & Penetrating the moment.

SisterGirlFriends U B Mentors, Sheros and Comrades in MAAT, working for truth, justice & righteousness for all eternity.

U B consistently representing culture, love & magic.

U B SisterGirlFriends to the soul; Confidants, partners & giggle buddies; always there to lend a hand, give a care & make laughter thru the pain.

SisterGirlFriends, U B about music & art & institution building & teaching & family & productivity towards community.

SisterGirlFriends, U B the continuation of our people.

SisterGirlFriends U B part Orisha, Neter, Goddess, Totem, Muse and the archetypes for “Glory and Love”.

SisterGirlFriends, in this lifetime you have been sanctuary, solace, support for the spirit.

U B Marva, Margaret, Mary, Rene, Venus, Anna, Frances, Owendolyn & all those kin to my ancestors, your ancestors and the yet unborn.

SisterGirlFriends U B our people; our MAAT; our meaning.

SisterGirlFriends U B Race Women who inspire purpose to paint & create & participate in building community for all time and times of ALL SISTERGIRLFRIENDSHIPS!

Candace Hunter


This summer in particular was caught on 35 mm film by photographer Rose Blouin. In this installation for Freedom’s Muse, I want to offer to our viewers Rose’s eye set on a day in that park - a day of sunshine and music and pure Black joy. Come in, stay a spell, and dance and laugh with us.