Office of Institutional Safety & Equity (OISE)

February 2021

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Link to Submission Form.

From Our Collection

PAFA’s 2021 Black History Month theme is | Black Histories | Black Futures | explored through four vignettes:

Hyper-Realism | Material Culture | Sankofic Realities | The Black Imaginary

Black Histories | Black Futures

In December, the Diversity Awareness Calendar was introduced to celebrate and raise awareness of religious observances, ethnic and cultural festivities, and significant events that may affect students, colleagues, and friends in the PAFA community. This month we salute Black History.

The song, “Say It Loud, I’m Black, and I’m Proud” by James Brown, was sung when African-Americans needed to establish their self-worth, not just in the entertainment arena but also in every other walk of life. February is Black History Month, which is an excellent time to spotlight the contributions from people of African and Caribbean backgrounds who have contributed to American history and world history, as well as the presence and collection of African-American artists at PAFA.

Did you know...Imhotep, a Black Egyptian, is considered the first physician in recorded history? He opened one of the first hospitals in 2700 B.C. and carved the familiar caduceus that is still recognized as the symbol of medicine. He is often referred to by the Greeks as their god of healing. Also, Imhotep was a great architect and engineer!

Did you know...in 1834, PAFA was the first to exhibit African American artist Robert A. Douglass? Or that PAFA purchased Nicodemus by Henry O. Tanner, in 1900, the early work of an African American artist in our collection? In 2018, PAFA acquired hundreds of works by John Rhoden, an African American sculptor who worked primarily in wood and bronze. And in the last ten years, PAFA...
has collected 393 works by African American artists - more than any other museum in the country.

As we aspire to be more diverse, not just in our collections but in our work and learning spaces, it is essential to advance inclusion by developing a culture of belonging. We are not yet doing all that is possible; however, starting to use the monthly calendar to uplift our community helps. Let’s make an effort with humility and an open heart to learning about one another will continue to foster a culture of appreciation and create a doorway toward a richer community.

Use February’s Diversity Awareness Calendar to celebrate African-Americans and African-American artists’ contributions to PAFA and the world and support the cultural, ethnic, and gender observances that are part of the PAFA tapestry. Please make a point to join the events celebrating our friends, peers, and colleagues of African and Caribbean backgrounds and heritages!

-- Dr. Lisa Biagas

PAFA Remembers Cicely Tyson

Cicely Tyson (1924-2021)

"In a remarkable career of seven decades, Ms. Tyson broke ground for serious Black actors by refusing to take parts that demeaned Black people. She urged Black colleagues to do the same, and often went without work. She was critical of films and television programs that cast Black characters as criminal, servile or immoral, and insisted that African-Americans, even if poor or downtrodden, should be portrayed with dignity."

-- Robert D. McFaddon, NYTimes

Buy this book from Harriet’s Bookshop (Philly, Black, Woman owned)

Black Histories, Black Futures | Calendar of Events

WEEK #1: HYPER REALISM
How does hyperrealism celebrate Black culture? How can hyperrealism show the rawness of the Black experience? Enhancing and emphasizing aspects of reality that can be hidden, join us in considering how hyperrealism can be a tool for equity and social justice.

- Artist Chat with Olumide Oresegun** - Tuesday February 2nd at 12pm (Join us on IG Live - @pafastudentlife)
- Screening and Discussion of "13th" - Wednesday February 3rd at 4:30pm

Visit Olumide Oresegun's website

WEEK #2: MATERIAL CULTURE

An aspect of reality that has been engrained into history by way of ownership. How does Black material culture juxtapose with the colonization that history shows as part of the Black experience? Are they for your spectating, consumption, or usage? Explore the tangible aspects of Black culture, past and present, and how they play a role in the future of the Black experience.

- "Brick House" Chalk Talk -- We invite you to go and view Simone Leigh's "Brick House" on 34th & Walnut (UPENN) and add your reflections to our virtual forum.
- "Fashion as Material Culture," a panel Discussion with local Fashion Designers** -- Thursday February 10th at 4:30pm
- "Poetry As Public Art" w/ Philly Poet Laureate Yolanda Wisher -- Friday February 12th at 12:15 (Zoom)
- Radical Journaling Workshop w/ Ashley Lagrange - Friday February 12th at 6pm (Graduate Student Centered)

WEEK #3: SANKOFIC REALITIES

It is often said that the past haunts the present. Sankofa is a word in the Akan Twi and Fante languages of Ghana that translates to "Go back and get it." Sankofa symbolizes the Akan people’s quest for knowledge with the implication that the quest is based on critical examination,
and intelligent and patient investigation. It expresses the importance of reaching back to knowledge gained in the past and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress. This week we locate remnants of the past in the everydayness of the present.

- **In Conversation: Reading Alongside Art** -- a weeklong virtual event
- **Spoken Word Showcase** - Friday February 19, 2021 at 4pm
- **Radical Journaling Workshop w/ Ashley Lagrange** - Friday February 19th at 6pm (Undergraduate Student Centered)

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**WEEK #4: THE BLACK IMAGINARY**

With the deep-rooted pain and trauma of the past, where do we go from here? The past and the present have sown a seed. What will become of it? With metaphorical paintbrush in hand, the Black Imaginary has the power to transcend and paint a world of possibilities. By simply imagining the possibilities of the future, we can work to make it a reality.

- "I Am Not Your Negro" (2016) -- We invite you to watch the documentary based on James Baldwin’s unfinished manuscript *Remember This House*

- "What Does It Mean When A Man Falls From The Sky?" An Afro-Futurism Reading Group -- Tuesday February 23rd at 12pm (Zoom)

- "The Space for Creative Black Imagination" w/ Dr. Raël Salley** -- Thursday February 25th at 1pm (Zoom)

Read "What Does It Mean When A Man Falls From The Sky?"
dedicated to the study of culture, race, social justice, and imagination beyond established paradigms.

Its orientation is Black and Feminist, yet broadly inclusive, focusing on the intersecting dynamics that shape marginalized communities and their impact on creative production.

Researchers and makers at The Space will expand and challenge the meanings and impact of creative Black imagination, developing writing, practices, and pedagogies that amplify the intersections of art, culture, and society.

Dr. Raél Jero Salley is an artist, professor, speaker & writer. You may know him from his role as the Founding Director of The Space for Creative Black Imagination, the Chair of the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at MICA, and as former faculty at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Dr. Salley is also a martial arts instructor, a yoga instructor, a plant lover, and Mazie's grandson.

Dr. Salley will be speaking to the PAFA community about his work with building spaces for Black Futures on Thursday February 25th at 1pm.

Raél Salley’s website

Throughout the Month of February

Live Raffle!

As an added incentive to attend our programming, we will be raffling off the following gifts: (1) "Artist. Creator. Threat." tshirt from The Sable Collective (Philly based); and (2) A guided Self-Reflection Journal from Evolving Still.

**Drawings will take place during the events with an asterisk.**

The Sable Collective
**Power Break w/ Kukuwa**

Work up a sweat with us **every Friday at 12pm** for a 15min virtual workout session with Kukuwa Fitness. (Feel free turn your video off)

[Learn More About Kukuwa](#)

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**Support Black Businesses!**

Together, we can create a great future for Black people everywhere.

#BuyBlack is "a way to build wealth in the black community by encouraging people to spend their money with Black entrepreneurs and businesses. The #BuyBlack Movement was encouraged by leaders such as Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey. Garvey believed economic success was the quickest and most effective way to independence." -- Kelley D. Evans, *The Undefeated*

This month OISE encourages you to support and purchase products from Philly based Black-owned businesses.

[Read More](#)

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**Open Call for Student Art Work**

This Black History Month, PAFA is interested in **amplifying and strengthening Black and African voices**. We invite you to submit work for "Black Histories, Black Futures," an exhibition showcasing artwork by PAFA's Black students. We are looking for Black and African artists who are interested in showcasing work that fits into the theme, "Black Histories, Black Futures" or into one of our four weekly sub-themes.

**AMPLIFY BLACK STUDENT VOICES!**

Submit your work inspired by the four vignettes:

- Hyper-Realism
- Material Culture
- Sankofic Realities
- The Black Imaginary

[Submission Form](#)
We challenge you to check **PAFA’s Diversity Awareness Calendar** monthly and attend monthly OISE sponsored events. OISE will send out an email with more information about the calendar.

**Office of Institutional Safety & Equity**

_Being an ally for a S.A.F.E. Community at PAFA_