

CRISTAL SABBAGH

OOPS! POW! SURPRISE!

MARCH 8 - APRIL 21, 2021



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MARCH 8 - APRIL 21, 2021

Glass Curtain Gallery

Columbia College Chicago
1104 S Wabash Ave, 1st Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

This project is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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(Crist)alis

ABRA M. JOHNSON

I. WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, YOU WERE MOVING...

A. Somewhere in the early '90s, I saw Cristal (then) Smith in a college production of Samm-Art Williams's *Home*. Not unusual fare for college theater kids. Certainly not for Black students majoring in art or theater in college, to reinterpret and produce their own version of the play. *Home* was often a critical part of our upbringing, of the repertoire of Black theater kids. Williams's *Home*, a bit like Wilson's *Two Trains Runnin'* and Shange's *For Colored Girls*, was a rite of passage for Black children who loved theater, loved writing, and imagined their own written work performed upon the stage. And this is where I first saw Cristal, in black box theater on campus at Champaign-Urbana. She was an ensemble member in the show, directed by a mutual friend I recently made as a freshman on campus. He invited me to his show, himself cast as Cephus. But I was interested in the woman I saw, who was in constant motion as a muse, a temptress, a reminder to Cephus that no matter where or how low he was, he could always find and go home.

II. "COME HOME!, THE LAND CRIES . . ."

A. Cristal, as Cephus's muse, danced a lithe disco to house music in the round—a symbolic reference to Cephus's deep dive into the darker, seedier side of urban life. Here the disco lights sprinkled glitter amidst bright cobalt blue wash across the stage dance floor; and here is where I remember Cristal came alive! Everylong-limbed—arched-back—hip-dip. Each spin around Cephus, accented the one-piece blue floral on white mini dress. She seemed to be a personification of the disco—and of urbanity—itsself. She became the proverbial angelic demon upon Cephus's shoulders—a crossroads offering a glimpse into what lay ahead in the dim city blues or a clearly lit road back from whence he'd come . . . and yet still too distant to discern what awaited him. And as Cristal, both muse and temptress, moved around him and headed off stage, she could be heard chanting, as if she knew the road Cephus would choose, "Come home, the land cries . . ."

III. WILD WOMEN DON'T WEAR/GET NO BLUES . . .

A. Unlike the women in *Home*, who also return home, as well as forebode and await the return of men, Cristal's work often feels like a deep exploration of what it means to be human within her own body and experience, and to be humane—with numerous collaborations and explorations of the humanity with and within others. In often improvised work, Cristal uproots the story from every inch of her body. There is no skin and bone left unexamined. From toes planted to face reshaped and to hands and digits flexing each joint of phalanges, there is something that Cristal is intent on uprooting and expressing. Movement is a daily practice, as we get to see on her social media. Movement is a ministry, as we often see her in and around her public-school classroom, working with students or just young people generally—a great example of this is the Chalkboard piece. In this particular performance at Chicago's Experimental Station, Cristal actively engages not just adults but also children in improvisational movement. Movement reflects the life one lives and desires to live freely

B. I saw her when she took them off.

She threw them in the air and ripped an opening in the sky enough for her to enter there.

I saw her when she took off.

She soared up through the air, and left the world at her leisure, without a care . . .

IV. FREEDOM FROM/FREEDOM TO

A. The Freedom From/Freedom To, in my exceptionally humble opinion, is a future-facing, innovating form of collaboration that includes both instrumental and voice musicians, and movers of various levels and kinds of training. It is even a collaboration between these movers and visual artists who film and photograph the work. The series centers on and asks the artists to consider themes of freedom/liberation from various limitations and boundaries and to consider what could be if these limits were obliterated. Typically, improvisations of sound are separate, even within the same performance. But here, even the musicians and instruments are fair game for engagement with dancers, and the experimentation with voice blends with that of the bodies in all manner of contact and intimacy. Even musicians and vocalists become dancers and move in and out of partnered motion with skilled improvisational, often professional dancers. But there is order within this presumed cacophony. Cristal has either carefully paired dancers with selected musicians, or has the audience pull the names of musicians and dancers out of a manila envelope, all while maintaining what looks to be a sort of "house band." And more interestingly, the project seems to organically be creating an ensemble of some dancers and musicians who've been a part of the work since its first iteration. This anchors the work organizationally while welcoming new artists to the forum, as artists themselves seem to find the work liberating, perhaps even inspiring, within their own praxes. One look at the incredible photography from the event shows the fire of new works created in the moment, the generation of works, of a kinesthetic forum breathing itself into existence, and into the future. This work is new life.

V. THE DIVERSITY WITHIN US

A. One of the primary drivers of Cristal's work, she says, is to explore and express the diversity within us. Cristal has a sort of "calling card" of referencing pop culture movement trends and physically engaging them with modern/post-modern movement vocabularies. Not unusual, as BIPOC—and Black people in particular (as well researched throughout scholarship on the subject)—are often the source/historic roots of pop music and movement trends in the U.S. Here we might also position this part of Cristal's work as a by-product of parenting a teenage daughter—a blossoming dancer and performer in her own right, who has shared stages with Cristal—where being knowledgeable about these trends is essential to contemporary parenting. What is unique is the persistency—and sometimes the urgency—with which Cristal engages in these conversations between "classic" and "current," never fully tethering herself to either. Instead, Cristal appears to be not only conversing with these forms of movement but also excavating every inch of her body for their inhabitancy; bringing them up and out of her very skin and bone for examination and experimentation. Moving between the ebbs of flow and staccato, Cristal uproots these shards of her own blood and body memory, and presents them to us, as if inquiring if we remember or connect to them too. Above all, Cristal fully embodies the search for connection, I think, using whatever form facilitates this search, given her performative context. Bucking, embracing, or practicing newer trends in dance, she is not tied to any particular medium or style of performance or presentation. One might argue that this untethering is her pattern, her style. Cristal seems bent on opening, tearing a sort of wormhole in the performative fabric of the "fourth wall." For many artists and performances, engaging the audience as a "fourth wall" has been on trend for decades in Chicago (see the work of ThickRoutes/HoneyPotPerformance, Mango Tribe, Striding Lion, Asimina Chremos, etc.) and an innovative standard of BIPOC artists for nearly four decades.

But in Cristal's work, there is a definite seeking of the "beyond;" an asking of "what is beyond the fourth wall? . . . Is there a fifth dimension, an unexplored territory of movement-centered performance? More than this, Cristal openly explores the boundaries of identity—of her own, of a collectivity of Blackness, of femme-ness/femininity, of Black femme-ness/Black womanness, and of class.

Nowhere is this more visible than in her work with Damon Locks, where she is bound both within and to a duffle bag, struggling to just get out of it, even to be birthed from it. Here the boundaries of identity become oppressive entanglements, a weighted tying-down, from which Cristal, and thus all of us, must be liberated. This is heard in the title, in the imperative to *Make More With Less*, where a class-unifying mantra of what it means to survive this presidential era of so many, stringing together multiple jobs, minimizing passions, in the union-busting, healthcare-dismantling war and fear-mongering culture that looms from Trump's administration. How could one not feel overwhelmingly bound? And as if all of our potential, and all of what we are, is forcibly compressed in the service of an indomitably domineering, globalized capitalism? Capitalist nihilism? Who are we now that we are so socially-politically chained to our 3-D selves? What can/will we become if we cannot move freely? All these questions are also tied to the racial capitalism of police brutality and even COVID-19 death and contraction disparities. If we are all experiencing these binds, imagine what the most marginalized of us are experiencing? If white groups are feeling oppressed, imagine what BIPOC are also feeling at this moment? Cristal, like so many of us, attempts not only to imagine but to portray. She articulates these layers of oppression as psychological as much as they are physical and material, and as intensified for bodies imposed upon by several intersections. Yet even in marginalization and oppression, our diversity remains—individually and collectively. But what is its composition? Cristal explores not only the complicated connections of our lives to the current economy, but the complexity of our identities under these conditions, and in particular, the exponential expanding of what it means to be Black, to be a woman, to be a Black woman, to be middle and working class, amid a political chaos that openly seeks to hunt and haunt us. The diversity of who we are, is done and shown in the actions of survival, in the fight to live and thrive, in the struggles for equity and for justice, not only by everyone or anyone but by Black people and Black women specifically—and with the dogged determination to just be who and what we are, whenever and wherever we are.

B. A kaleidoscope
that subtly shifts flavor with each slice.
It is never the same movement twice.
Who are the “us” explored here?
Your body as canvas actively seeks each stroke of sound,
becoming not the brush
but
the paint eagerly consuming every crevice and corner.
You coat the world in holograms of color . . .

VI. BACK TO BLACK

a. Cristal has also said that she explores “the diversity of Blackness . . . what it means to be Black.” No doubt, this is personal. In Cristal's own life, as a Black woman with a mostly suburban background including being one of a few Black people or often one of a few people of color in spaces she's navigated, the bar(s) used to invisibly measure Blackness, including the one(s) used by Black people ourselves, Cristal has been routinely subjected to, even while being hypervisible in these spaces. No doubt, the backdrop of Black people (cis and trans) murdered by police deepens an already personal interrogation of Blackness. But there is also no doubt that many modern forms of dance and improvisation do not openly engage race, and are, in many ways, deemed race-less, or at minimum, race-neutral—if not for the work of BIPOC dancers and scholars (BeBe Miler, Ralph Lemon, Geselle Mason, Meida McNeal, etc.) that have contested this notion. And yet these forms of improv'd contemporary dance still retain the perception of whiteness, often for BIPOC viewers. So it is interesting to place Cristal in this context, particularly as a dancer who insists on improvisational forms. What does it mean to persistently watch a brown-skinned woman with long loc'd hair move? Move to music by non-Black artists or to no music at all? Move without prescribed or well-established Afrodiasporic rhythms and patterns? To contort her body in modes inconsistent with more historic Black dance tropes? To move in these and a variety of ways with other Black and brown people? In many ways, Cristal's contemporary work seems to be a return to questions of her own Blackness and broader expectations of what Blackness has been allowed to be. And this latter notion places her in the current canon of Black artists who pursue while exploding the limits of expectation, and simultaneously, firmly rooting themselves in the cultures and politics of both historic and 21st-century Blackness(es). One of the best general examples of this exploring, expanding, exploding, and more deeply rooting, is dancer and scholar Marie Casimir's *The Instigation Festival*, a national improvisational collaboration between musicians and Black women dancers, mostly from New Orleans and Chicago. And herein, among multiple noteworthy performances, I duly note Cristal's work and movement in the Festival. In particular are her moments of walking directly up to audience members, her contemporary movement rooted in current urban popular trends, her use of the floor and even her body, and unused musical instruments for percussive movement and sound—including her direct engagement and performative dialectics with specific instruments and musicians as they play, as well as her command of modern dance frames and physicalizations.

These markers of engagement, not only with dancers, but also with instrumentalists, show up in her later work and throughout the Freedom From, Freedom To (FFFT) series, in which West African and modern dance vocabularies submerge in deep “play” with blues, jazz, and other Black/Afrodiasporic idioms. The connections between the women as well as those between musicians, and between dancers and musicians—in both The Instigation and the FFFT series—are just so palpable, impassioned, and important. It begets the question of what or who is instigating or produced from the instigation; exactly what or whom is this instigation about? And this was just my sentiment as an audience member. I can only imagine what this meant for the performers and to Cristal, particularly in her follow-up works. But I do believe the conception and presentation of Cristal’s own performance series, Freedom From, Freedom To, which she produced, by these deeply rooted Afrodiasporic connections, influences, investigations, and instigations—from the regular appearances of Angel Bat Dawid and Ugochi, to the frequent collaborations with Keisha Janae and Damon Locks. Cristal is not just improvising movement and music but creating a future-facing foundation of dance and performance rooted in the 21st century and Afrofuturistic Blacknesses in persistent and agitated discourse with its history.

B. There’s a Black girl in the ring

Tra-la-la-la-la
There’s a Black girl in the ring
Tra . . . la la la la la
There’s a Black girl in the ring
Tra-la-la-la-la
And she looks like she doesn’t know where she comes from . . .

Show me a motion
Tra-la-la-la-la
You must show me a motion
Tra . . . la la la la la
Show me a motion
Tra-la-la-la-la
Then . . .
she moves as if she knows exactly where she’s from
From . . .
From . . .

VII. RESPONSE TO/RESPONSE FROM

(a section of responses to the work)

I have been responding all along.
What I am writing has hibernated in my mind for years,
the words upon pages periodically sprouted to make sense of so much making.
But I have been responding mentally all along.
Scribbling notes in the darkness of audience,
lit stages the perimeter in which my writing is framed,
rooted
in the context of so much scribing, I see so much in her.
I see the future of dance, move in and through her,
where all questions of authenticity have ceased, and the work springs only from within.

Scribbling notes in the seated dark of audience,
staged lighting framing my improvised responses
as she invents, codes, and revises the language shared by musicians and dancers
between instruments and hips
between voice and feet
indistinguishable from spirit.
Ethers conjured upon the sweaty traces of motion
act as the landing place of glutes and toes and phalanges and drum and cello stand and
wooden instrument case
a space of whirling bodies and scaling sonic fulcrums
forcing motion;
demanding every inch of everyone in this experiment
this play between skin and sound; meaning and making.

VIII. PANDEMIC CURATION

(a repose to Cristal’s daily IG improvs and responses from other artists)

What does it mean to watch a Black man’s dancing body in persistent and seductive conversation with white women, in this historic moment?
What does it mean for white women to embrace this man without fear or hesitation?
Or even fetish?
What does it mean to symbolically portray the possibility of pure play and pleasure and joy and justice?
Between bodies customarily positioned as conflicting?
What does it mean for a Black woman to lead this imposition of improv?
To lead this presentation and projection of symbolic identities at play?
What does it mean to hear the constant symphony of Black women singing, moaning, chanting down this performative Babylon?
And
What does it mean for us to watch Black women lead, influence, collaborate with other women of color?
With white women?
With other people who don’t reject you before you are heard? Who consider what you offer as you offer it? Who follow your feet and voice, and accept your lead and their assigned roles? Who await your beck and call, and eagerly seek to respond? Who respond to you as if you hold a cure to what ails us?

IX. SIP... SHIFT: MANIFESTING THE MUGS

When I first encountered Cristal's ceremonial ceramic homages to her favorite entertainers, I was scrolling through my Instagram, observing so much emerging artistic work in conversation with newly implanted quarantines—"Art in the Time of COVID," if you will. Cristal was already beginning a daily practice of posting improvisational movement work—in different parts of her home and engaged online with other artists doing the same. So the ceramic mugs, I duly noted, appeared to be made onsite at the school where she works, with and for her students—at least initially. The first mug I noticed was an homage to Prince, circa Little Red Corvette or Purple Rain—Edwardian/Victorian white ruffles, purple-studded cat tailed-tux-inspired jacket. Only the bust of this iconography occupied the side of the mug. But this was enough. I recall immediately sharing this post with one of my good friends, Felicia Holman—uber Prince fan, as everyone who met or knows her, knows. And as always, Felicia was already in the know about Cristal's equally passionate Prince fandom—from Cristal's well-known Halloween costuming as Prince (or really, for any Prince occasion) to her public performances in Prince drag. This is a fandom they both share.

But as this train wreck of a year went forward, her ceramics were not just a music-inspired production but 2020-inspired statements, dialogues, forums. The mugged faces of memorialized victims of police brutality and of murdered Black transwomen, as symbols of the Black Lives Matter vocalized what I perceived as the unspeakable sentiments, resentments, rage, and sensitivity emerging from within Cristal—the expression of her empathy with these historic happenings. And like all well-crafted art, these resonant ceramics born of her persistent and public production—a kind of quarantine performance in itself, where, vis-à-vis Instagram, Cristal allowed us into her creative spaces to see each phase of each ceramic created as she created it—were the expressions of collective consciousness of this cultural grief. These beautiful renderings of societal sympathy were not lost on us. So many of us requested and purchased these artifacts for our own archiving. Or, perhaps, for our own comforting collecting, reflecting that we were not alone in all this heartbreak and frustration; this desperate desire to connect to the best in us, sought out in the comfort these ceramics and Cristal provided.

And Cristal sold these publicly, using the proceeds to donate to activists and for other artists/projects in need.

And this, to me, is Cristal, is the embodiment of her work, her artistic praxis—experiments in generosity and coalition building rooted in the play between Afrodiasporic tools of inquiry and critique and the vast coffers of mediated offerings we globalized humans provide—even in the throes of worldwide quarantine, which is, after all, just another hurdle, obstacle, or challenge to overcome, or when as extrasensory as Cristal, to strategically outrun; just another dare for all of us to create precisely from where we are rooted and from where we are coerced to take root, working within the confines of our particular diffusions of media but really springing from the infinite resources and resourcefulness from within us all.

And it is this instinctive knowing, this intuitive insight of all this, that is evident in all that Cristal creates and connects . . .

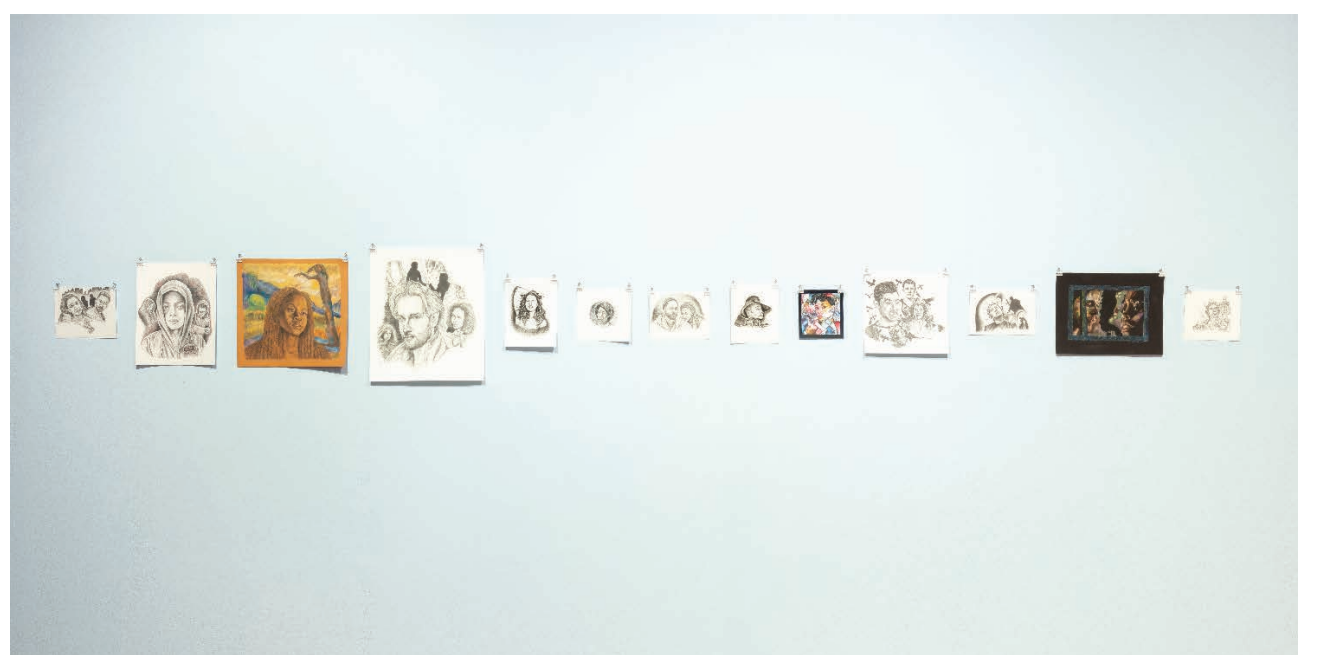
EXHIBITION INSTALLATION



Photographs by Jonathan Castillo

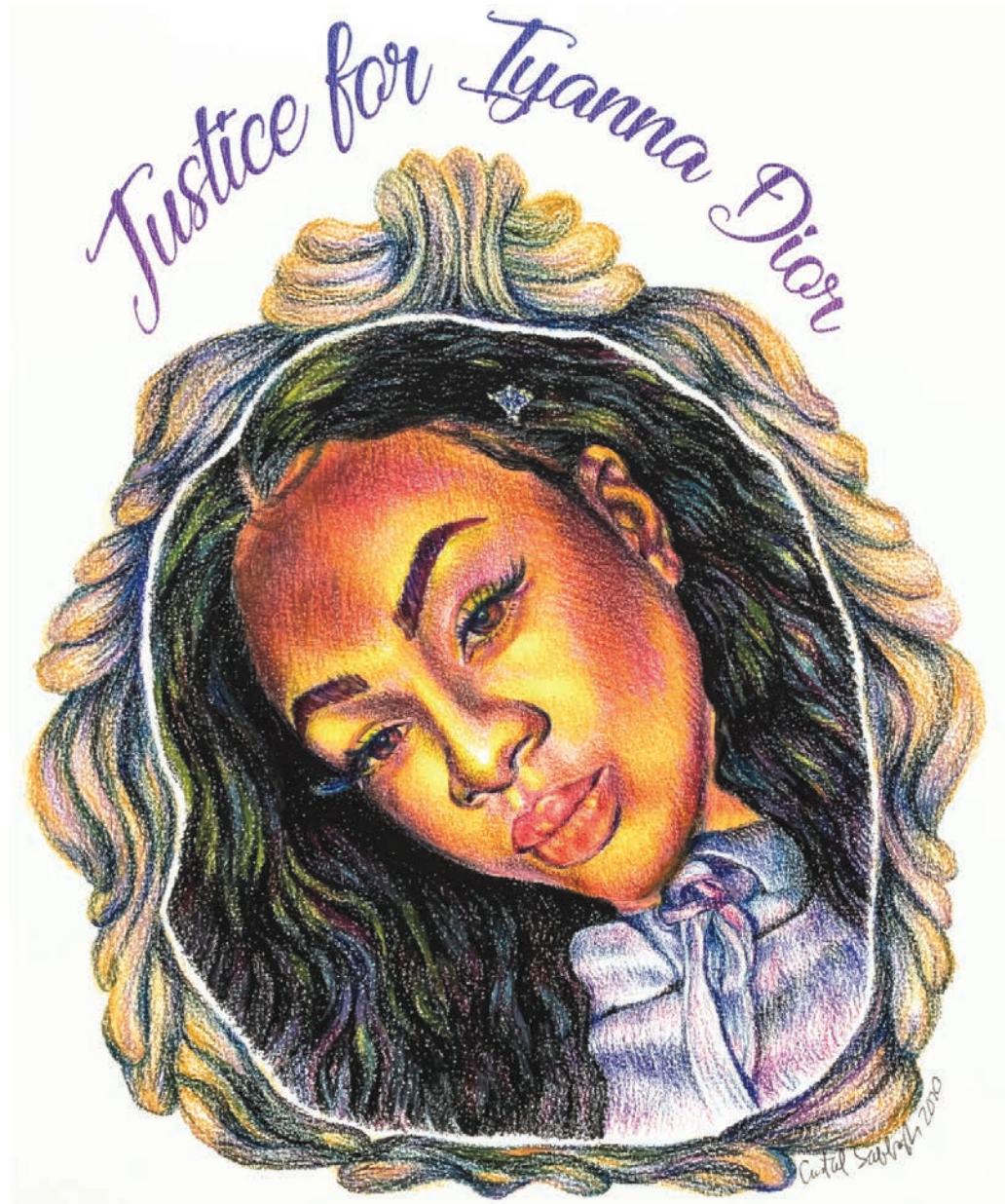








JUSTICE FOR PORTRAITS



Justice for Tyanna Dior, 2020
marker, colored pencil, soft pastel, watercolor



Justice for Tony McDade, 2020
soft pastel and graphite

PORTRAIT MUGS



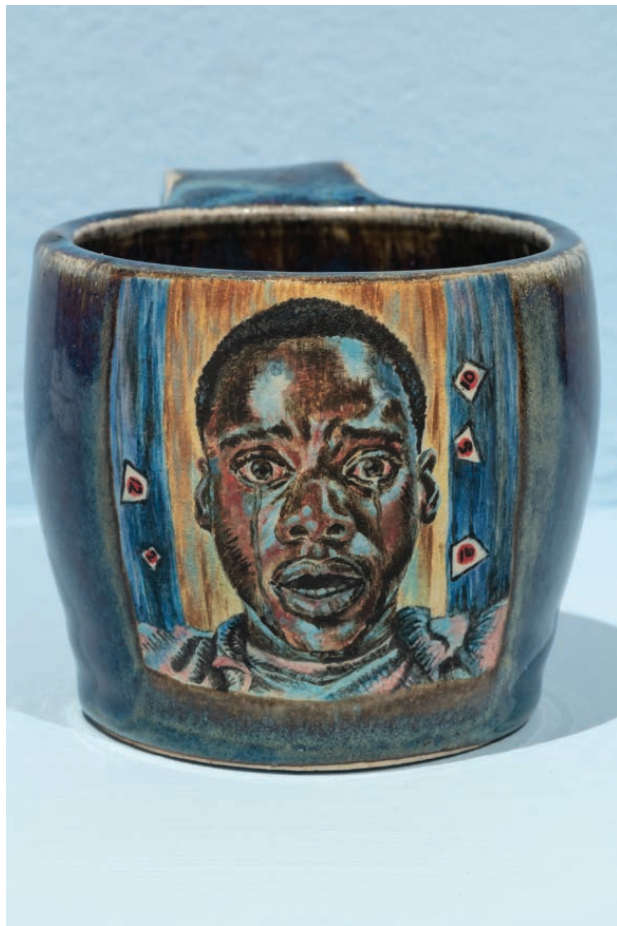
Say Her Name, Oluwatoyin Salau, 2020
graphite and colored pencil



Stacey Abrams, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glaze



Bianca, Mother of the Year, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes



The Sunken Place, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes

Passion of Joan of Arc, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes



David Bowie, 2018
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes





The King Has Returned to the Ancestral Plane, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glaze



Angel, is This Love?, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes



It's Time to Keep Your Appointment with the Wicker Man, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes



The Crowning, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glaze



And the Category Is, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glazes



Cicely Tyson, 2021
stoneware with underglaze watercolors
and cone 6 glaze

PORTRAIT SCULPTURES



Figure Study 4, 2016
stoneware clay and acrylic paint and polish



Figure Study 1, 2014
stoneware clay



Portrait Study 1, 2014
stoneware clay



Millie, 2014
stoneware clay and cone 10 glaze

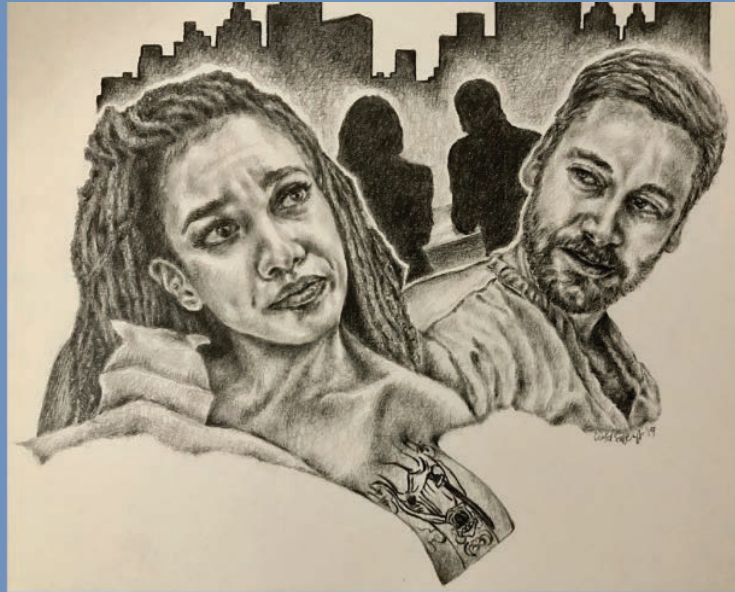


Sojourner, 2015
stoneware clay

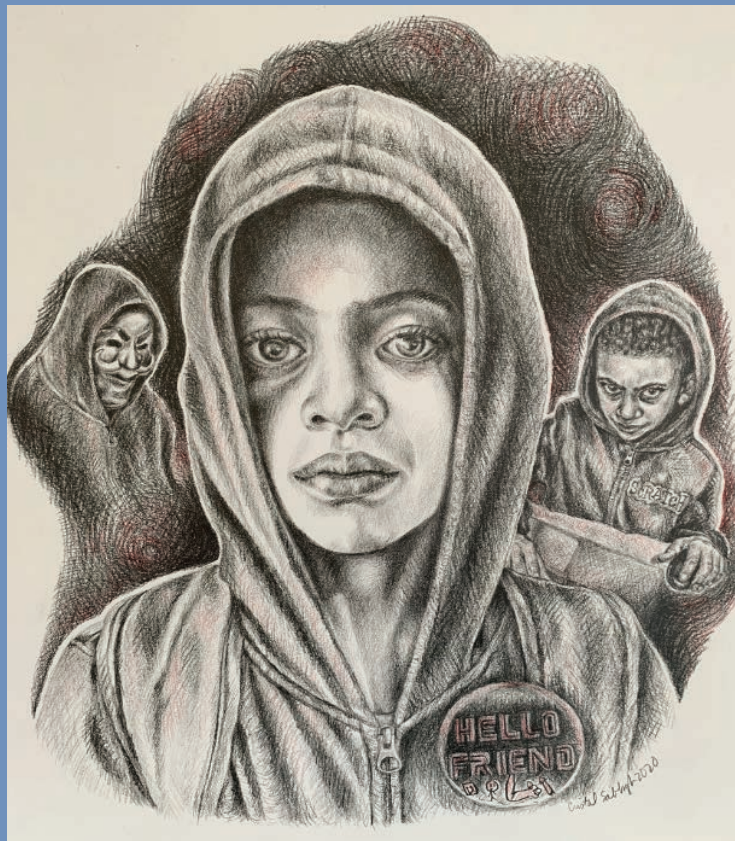


S.O.S., 2015
stoneware clay and underglaze

PORTRAIT SKETCHES



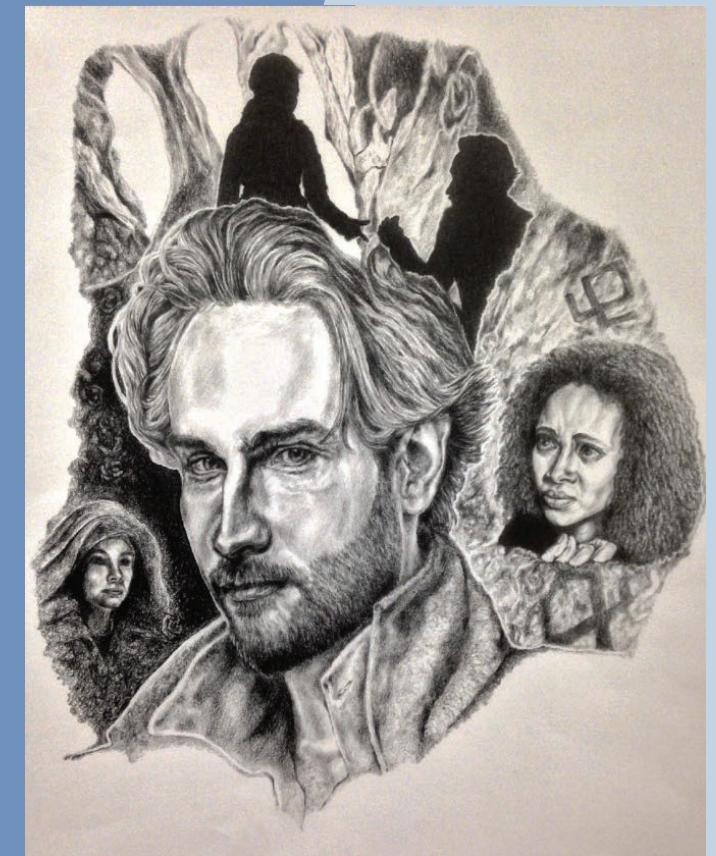
Sharpwin - King of Swords, 2019
graphite



Robo Julius, 2020
graphite and colored pencil



Michonne's Dream, 2017
soft pastel, charcoal, and graphite



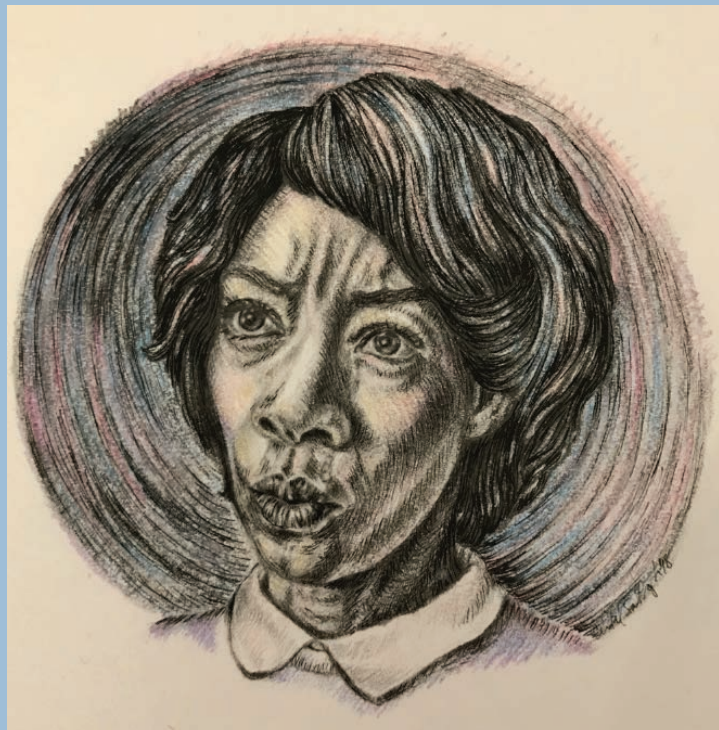
Michonne's Dream, 2017
soft pastel, charcoal, and graphite



Alexander Hodge 'AsianBae', 2018
ink pen



Sharpwin - Hope, 2019
graphite and colored pencil



No, No, No - sketch, 2019
graphite, marker and colored pencil



Billy Porter - sketch, 2019
ink pen



5 7 8 2 1, 2018
tempera paint and marker



Don't Look Them In The Eyes, 2020
graphite



Passion of Joan of Arc - sketch, 2020
graphite



I trust you, 2017
soft pastel



It's Time to Keep Your Appointment with the Wicker Man - sketch, 2019
graphite



Freedom From and Freedom To (original drawing), 2019
marker and colored pencil



Underneath the Purple Rain Emoji, 2018
Adobe Illustrator



Electric Lady, 2018
Adobe Illustrator vector drawing

PERFORMANCE VIDEO



Still image from *Freedom From and Freedom To (excerpts)*, 2020
digital video

additional dancers: Lorene Bouboushian, Ed Clemons, Keisha Janae,
Carole McCurdy, Erin Peisert, Michael Strode and Sara Zalek
musicians: Johanna Brock, Angel Bat Dawid, ah Malebranche, Janice
Misurell-Mitchell, Luc Mosley, Jefferey Thomas, Eli Sabbagh, Adam Zanolini



Still image from *High Zero Festival: Improvisation Performance*, 2018
digital video, 26 minutes and 34 seconds

musicians: Samuel Burt, Eric Leonardson, Stewart Mostofsky



Still image from *Milwaukee Art Museum Improvisation*, 2020
digital video, 45 seconds



Still image from *Instigation Fest: February 2020 (excerpt)*, 2020
digital video, 14 minutes, 28 seconds
additional dancers: Kristal Jones, Shannon Stewart
musicians: Simon Lott, Mars Williams, Eric Boeren



Still image from *Alien Robot Improvisation*, 2020
digital video, 53 seconds



Still image from *Lens (Excerpt)*, 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 54 seconds
musicians: Scott Rubin; **Painter:** Lewis Achenbach



Still image from *Metamorphosis: Improvisation Prompt*, 2020
digital video, 58 seconds



Still image from *Lens (Excerpt)*, 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 54 seconds
musicians: Scott Rubin; **Painter:** Lewis Achenbach



Still image from *Lens (Excerpt)*, 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 54 seconds
musicians: Scott Rubin; **Painter:** Lewis Achenbach



Still image from *Lens (Excerpt)*, 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 54 seconds
musicians: Scott Rubin; **Painter:** Lewis Achenbach

EXHIBITION PROGRAMMING

Freedom From, Freedom To
Presented in partnership with Elastic Arts
April 2-3, 2021



performers: Tuli Bera, Cristal Sabbagh, Olivia Harris, Luc Mosley
photograph by Ricardo Adame



performers: Keisha Janae, Julian Otis, Janice Misurell-Mitchell, Ramah Malebranche
photograph by Ricardo Adame



performers: Erin Peisert, Darling Shear, Angel Bat Dawid, Scott Rubin
photograph by Liina Raud



performers: Aurora Tabor, Goldgrl, Cameron Pfiffner, Ugochi Nwaogwugwu
photograph by Ricardo Adame



performers: Sara Zalek, Erin Peisert, Julius Sabbagh
photograph by Liina Raud



performers: Carole McCurdy, Ed Clemons, Jefferey Thomas, Adam Zanolini, Janice Misurell-Mitchell
photograph by Liina Raud

Oops! Pow! Surprise!
Glass Curtain Gallery
April 15, 2021



performers: Keisha Janae, Erin Peisert, Cristal Sabbagh
musicians: Ramah Malebranche, Scott Rubin
photograph by Liina Raud



performers: Keisha Janae, Erin Peisert, Cristal Sabbagh
musicians: Ramah Malebranche, Scott Rubin
photograph by Liina Raud



performers: Keisha Janae, Erin Peisert, Cristal Sabbagh
musicians: Ramah Malebranche, Scott Rubin
photograph by Liina Raud

MERCHANDISE



performers: Keisha Janae, Erin Peisert, Cristal Sabbagh
musicians: Ramah Malebranche, Scott Rubin
photograph by Liina Raud



*Freedom From and Freedom To: t-shirt
and canvas bag, 2019
mug and bag with digital illustration*



*Freedom From and Freedom To: mug, 2019
porcelain mug with digital illustration*



Printed mug Robo Julius, 2020
porcelain mug



Don't Look Them In The Eyes, 2020
porcelain mug



Electric Lady - mug, 2019
porcelain mug with Janelle Monae vector
drawing graphic



No, no, no - mug, 2019
porcelain mug with No, no, no sketch

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

JUSTICE FOR PORTRAITS

Justice for Lyanna Dior, 2020
marker, colored pencil, soft pastel, watercolor

Justice for Tony McDade, 2020
soft pastel and graphite

Say Her Name Oluwatoyin Salau, 2020
graphite and colored pencil

PORTRAIT SKETCHES

Sharpwin - King of Swords, 2019
graphite

Robo Julius, 2020
graphite and colored pencil

Michonne's Dream, 2017
soft pastel, charcoal, and graphite

Witnesses - Sleepy Hollow, 2017
graphite drawing

Alexander Hodge 'AsianBae', 2018
ink pen

No, No, No - Sketch, 2019
graphite, marker and colored pencil

Sharpwin - Hope, 2019
graphite and colored pencil

Billy Porter, 2019
ink pen

5 7 8 2 1, 2018
soft pastel, charcoal, and graphite

Don't Look Them in The Eyes, 2020
graphite

Passion of Joan of Arc - Sketch, 2020
graphite

I Trust You, 2017
soft pastel

It's Time to Keep Your Appointment with the Wicker Man, 2019
graphite

Freedom From and Freedom To: logo, 2019
digital illustration

Electric Lady, 2018
digital illustration

Underneath the Purple Rain Emoji, 2018
digital illustration

PORTRAIT MUGS

Bianca, Mother of the Year, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

The Sunken Place, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Passion of Joan of Arc, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

David Bowie, 2018
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

The King Has Returned to the Ancestral Plane, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glaze

Stacey Abrams, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glaze

Angel, is This Love?, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

It's Time to Keep Your Appointment with the Wicker Man, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

The Crowning, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glaze

And the Category Is, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Cicely Tyson, 2021
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glaze

Starfish and Coffee, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Frida, 2018
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Mugs For Friends, 2019
stoneware with underglaze and cone 6 glazes

Baby Snakes, 2018
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

James Baldwin, 2020
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

No, No, No, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Commissioned Mug, 2020
stoneware with underglaze and cone 6 glazes

Pull Up to the Bumper, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Mug for a Friend, 2020
stoneware with underglaze and cone 6 glazes

Killing Eve, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

Get Out, 2019
stoneware with underglaze watercolors and cone 6 glazes

PORTRAIT SCULPTURES

Figure Study 4, 2016
stoneware clay and acrylic paint and polish

Figure Study 1, 2014
stoneware clay

Portrait Study 1, 2014
stoneware clay

S.O.S., 2015
stoneware clay and underglaze

Sojourner, 2015
stoneware clay

Sojourner's Bounty, 2014
stoneware clay and cone 10 glaze

Millie, 2014
stoneware clay and cone 10 glaze

Maro Bizarro, 2015
stoneware clay and cone 10 glaze

PERFORMANCE VIDEOS

Down for Some Ignorance: Improvisation to Saul Williams' Song, 2020
digital video, 2 minutes, 20 seconds

Healing: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 50 seconds

Improvisation to Josh Goldsmith's Drumming, 2020
digital video, 51 seconds

Improvisation to Macie Steward, 2020
digital video, 52 seconds

Lemon: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 8 seconds

Lipsynch: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 50 seconds

Melt: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 56 seconds

Metamorphosis: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 58 seconds

Vision: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 59 seconds

Water On My Knees Improvisation, 2017
digital video, 52 seconds
musician: Ramah Malebranche

Water: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 48 seconds
additional dancer: Julius Sabbagh

Alien Experimentations Improvisation, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 59 seconds

Halloween Performance: Joker, 2019
digital video, 1 minute, 33 seconds

The Tiny Improvisation, 2019
digital video, 47 seconds

Rolling Chair Improvisation, 2017
digital video, 50 seconds

Paper Experiment, 2020
digital video, 45 seconds

Prince Quick Improvisation, 2020
digital video, 1 minute

Releasing Supplies, 2020
digital video, 2 minutes, 58 seconds
musician: Scott Rubin

Sparkle: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 23 seconds

Rejuvenation: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 3 minutes, 22 seconds

Remote Teaching: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 28 seconds

Resonate: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 20 seconds

Uplift: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 3 seconds

Wonder: Improvisation Prompt, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 48 seconds

Kim Alpert's Scanlines (excerpt), 2018
digital video, 1 minute, 59 seconds

Kim Alpert's Scanlines (excerpt), 2018
digital video, 8 minutes, 58 seconds

Chalk, 2020
digital video, 18 minutes, 18 seconds

Lewis Achenbach's Sequester Sessions (excerpt), 2020
digital video, 5 minutes, 9 seconds

Move Move Collaboration (excerpt), 2019
digital video, 3 minutes, 53 seconds

Move Move Collaboration (excerpt), 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 19 seconds

Ateez Dance for Tedessa's Birthday, 2020
digital video, 26 seconds
additional dancer: Tedessa Sabbagh

Android Cento (dancer for this song in Sara Goodman's Ethereal), 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 12 seconds

Thom Yorke Improvisation, 2019
digital video, 1 minute, 3 seconds

Milwaukee Art Museum Improvisation, 2020
digital video, 45 seconds

Shadow Dance at the Art Institute of Chicago, 2017
digital video, 37 seconds

Alien Robot Improvisation, 2020
digital video, 53 seconds

Improvisation with My Trainer Casey, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 8 seconds
additional dancer: Casey May

Love My Way Improvisation with my Trainer Casey, 2020
digital video 21 seconds
additional dancer: Casey May

You Look Like You Sound, 2017
digital video, 58 seconds
dancers: Michael Strode, Allegra Dolores

Ancestral Call, 2020
digital video, 3 minutes, 10 seconds
music: Leslie Odom, Jr.

For Damani, 2020
digital video, 59 seconds
music: Cassandra Wilson

For Eddie Van Halen, 2020
digital video, 1 minute, 18 seconds

Freedom From and Freedom To (excerpts), 2020
digital video
additional dancers: Lorene Bouboushian, Ed Clemons, Keisha Janae, Carole McCurdy, Erin Peisert, Michael Strode and Sara Zalek,
musicians: Johanna Brock, Angel Bat Dawid, ah Malebranche, Janice Misurell-Mitchell, Luc Mosley, Jefferey Thomas, Eli Sabbagh, Adam Zanolini

Cave, 2020
digital video, 22 minutes, 11 seconds

Cave, 2020
digital video, 5 minutes

Even Harder For Less (excerpt), 2017
digital video, 5 minutes, 25 seconds

High Zero Festival: Improvisation Performance, 2018
digital video, 26 minutes and 34 seconds
musicians: Samuel Burt, Eric Leonardson, Stewart Mostofsky

Instigation Fest: September 2020, 2020
digital video, 8 minutes, 35 seconds

Instigation Fest: February 2020 (excerpt), 2020
digital video, 14 minutes, 28 seconds
additional dancers: Kristal Jones, Shannon Stewart
musicians: Simon Lott, Mars Williams, Eric Boeren

Lens: (excerpt), 2020
digital video, 30 seconds
musician: Scott Rubin;
painter: Lewis Achenbach

Lens: (excerpt), 2020
digital video, 4 minutes, 54 seconds
musician: Scott Rubin;
painter: Lewis Achenbach

CRISTAL SABBAGH

OOPS! POW! SURPRISE!

MARCH 8 - APRIL 21, 2021

Cristal Sabbagh is a teaching interdisciplinary artist influenced by film, history, politics, Butoh, and improvised sound. She's currently curating and performing in *Freedom From and Freedom To*, an improvisational, cross-medium performance piece. She was awarded a DCASE IAP grant to help fund an opportunity to combine most of her creative interests in a risk-taking and vulnerable way. It uses an ensemble of dancers and improvising musicians that are remarkably diverse in their approaches to dance, instrumentation, and backgrounds. She's a core member of Marie Casimir's Djasporas dance collective, seen at the Instigation Festivals in Chicago and New Orleans over the past four years. For the past three years, she's also been a member of Move Move Collaborative, in Baltimore, Maryland. Her portrait prints are featured in Seer Gallery's Collection in Chicago.

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