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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 21st | Noon – 1:15 pm and 1:30 to 2:30 pm
Logan Center Gallery

Freedom's Muse: Envisioning a New World Through Artistic Expression panel discussion

Friday, October 27th | 6-8PM
Performance Penthouse, Logan 901

David Weathersby's Sapphire & Crystals Film Screening

Sunday, November 19 | 1-2PM
Screening Room, Logan 201

Artist Talk with Sapphire & Crystals

Sunday, November 19 | 2:30-4PM
Logan Center Gallery

Logan Center Family Saturday Workshop

Saturday, December 2nd | 2-4PM

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 Will Come When We Overcome the Darkness*, mixed media, 24" x 24".
5. Pearlie Taylor, *My Body My Choice*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 72".
6. Rose Blouin, *Washington Park People 84* (detail), photograph.

Exhibition Team

Programming and Production Staff:

Logan Center: Jan Brugger, Ben Chandler, Caleb Clemente, Emily Hooper Lansana, Rooke Hyde, Anika Steppe, Marcus Warren, David Wolf

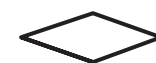
Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression: Tony Banout, Megan Gamiz, Tom Ginsburg

Sapphire & Crystals:

Lead Curator: Arlene Crawford

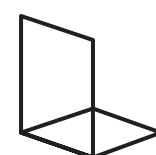
Curatorial Committee: Rose Blouin, Candace Hunter and Dorian Sylvain

And special gratitude to all the women of Sapphire & Crystals



Freedom's Muse is presented by Logan Center Exhibitions and Sapphire & Crystals in partnership with the Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression, and with the support of the Logan Center Endowment funded by the Reva and David Logan Foundation, and friends of the Logan Center.

For any interested collectors wishing to purchase art, please contact Malika Jackson at MalikaTheArtist@yahoo.com. She will put you in touch with the artist to complete your purchase.



Opening Reception +
Silent Auction

Friday,
October 13
6:00 pm

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.

Logan Center
Gallery

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

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773.834.8377

Tues – Sun
9am – 9pm

loganexhibitions.
uchicago.edu



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Arts

LOGAN
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO
FORUM FOR FREE
INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

LoganCenter
Exhibitions
f @

Rose Blouin
Dorothy Carter
Arlene Turner Crawford
Makeba Kedem-DuBose
Juarez Hawkins
Candace Hunter
Malika Jackson
Yaoundé Olu
Joyce Owens
Felicia Grant Preston
Patricia A. Stewart
Dorian Sylvain
Pearlie Taylor
Shahar Caren Weaver
Shyvette Williams
Trish Williams

*with work by JoAnne Scott
and the following Sapphire &
Crystals Ancestors:*

Venus Blue
Mary Reed Daniel
Marva Lee Pitchford Jolly
René Townsend
Anna Tyler

Sapphire & Crystals

Freedom's Muse



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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

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

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 Buxton Gallery, Wood Street Gallery, Nicole Gallery, Bagit 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, quilting, drawing, and mixed media.

Current active Sapphire & Crystals members include Rose Blouin, Dorothy Carter, Arlene Turner Crawford, Makeba Kedem-DuBose, Juarez Hawkins, Candace Hunter, Malika Jackson, Renee Williams Jefferson, Kee Merriweather, Yaoundé Olu, Felicia Grant Preston, Patricia A. Stewart, Dorian Sylvain,

Pearlie Taylor, Shahr Caren Weaver, Shyvette Williams and Trish Williams.

Participants over the years include JoAnne Scott, Cheryl Toles, Nicole Malcolm, Janet Sheard, Stephanie Bird, Lillian Morgan Lewis, Carol James, Akosua Bandele, Evelyn Davis-Frazier, Simone Bouyer,

Faith Davis, Debra Dilworth, Jan Spivey Gilchrist, Monica Plott Ratcliff, Annie Lee, Dorothy Perry, Beverly Warner, Patricia Bohannon, Margaret Burroughs, Geraldine McCullough, Peggy Tarr, Esther W. Hayes, Annie Lee, Eselean 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>



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Freedom's Muse for SisterGirlFriends Arlene Turner Crawford



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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 'bout 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, Francis, Gwendolyn & 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!

Washington Park. Chicago, Illinois. Summer 1987. Candace Hunter

A place of joy. A place of laughter. A place of families. A place of friends. Baseball and barbecues and weddings. Children playing at the edge of ponds.

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.



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