

**The Kinsey African American Art & History Collection
Coming This Summer to Tacoma Art Museum (TAM)
One Of The Most Comprehensive Collections of African American
Art & History Outside of The Smithsonian**

Opening July 31, this groundbreaking exhibition features over 150 works of art, photographs, rare documents and more, celebrating the achievements and contributions of Black Americans from 1595 to the present day.

Tacoma Art Museum will present the widely acclaimed exhibition, **The Kinsey African American Art & History Collection**, celebrating the achievements and contributions of Black Americans from 1595 to present times. Considered one of the most comprehensive surveys of African American history and culture outside the Smithsonian Institution, the exhibition will feature over 150 of the shared treasures amassed by Shirley and Bernard Kinsey during their five decades of marriage. The collection includes masterful paintings and sculpture, photographs, rare books, letters, manuscripts and more. **The exhibition will run July 31 – November 28, 2021.**

Garnering national media attention and experienced by more than 15 million people, the groundbreaking exhibition has toured 30 cities in the U.S. and internationally, including the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, EPCOT Walt Disney World, California African American Museum, the Norton Museum of Art, the University of Hong Kong Museum and Gallery, and The African American Museum, Dallas, to name a few. The exhibition has been cited in three national awards, including the National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Representing the intersection between art and history, the exhibition covers the lives, accomplishments, and artistry of African Americans from the 16th century through the years of slavery and emancipation, to the civil rights movement and modern day. Important examples include bills of sale, advertisements, letters, and legal papers documenting the slave trade; hand-colored tintypes from the Civil War era; art and literature from the Harlem Renaissance; and items spotlighting key moments in the civil rights movement, including the Woolworth store boycotts and the 1963 March on Washington.

Shirley and Bernard Kinsey, Floridians by birth and graduates of Florida A&M University, began collecting to remember their travels. Soon their collection became a repository for African American intellectual, historical, and artistic works. The Kinseys believe their collection helps give a well-rounded look at the African American experience and the integral roles African Americans played in building this country, providing new perspectives on chapters of the nation's history which have been ignored. The collection is a family affair, with the Kinsey's son Khalil serving as General Manager and Chief Curator.

"The Kinsey Collection strives to give our ancestors a voice, a name, and a personality, enabling the viewer to understand the challenges, obstacles, triumphs, accomplishments and extraordinary sacrifice of African Americans in building this country," said Bernard Kinsey. Khalil adds, "This is a

family story, illustrating what our family has done to tell its story. But it's also about America. Most people only know half of the story.”

A history of African Americans in art is charted through works by numerous celebrated artists, including **Alma Thomas, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Aaron Douglas, Sam Gilliam, Charles White, Augusta Savage, Lois Mailou Jones, Artis Lane, Robert S. Duncanson**, and many more.

Other items include the earliest-known Black baptism record and Black marriage record, from 1595; a 1773 first-edition copy of poems by **Phillis Wheatley** and a copy of the 1857 Dred Scott Decision. Other noteworthy items include an early version of the Emancipation Proclamation; an illustration of the “first colored senator and representatives” in the 41st and 42nd U.S. Congress; a letter from Malcolm X to Alex Haley, author of *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*; and a signed copy of the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, a landmark legal decision made in 1954 by the Supreme Court ending school segregation and creating legal barriers to Jim Crow laws.

While this exhibition has been shown in numerous locations covering the Eastern Seaboard, the Midwest, the South, the Mid-South, the Southwest, and the West Coast, this will be the first time the exhibition has been presented in the Pacific Northwest. According to Bernard Kinsey, “Our collection has been front-page news all over the world, from Hong Kong, to Colombia, to Dallas, Texas. It represents an opportunity for people in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to see books, manuscripts and paintings that they will never have a chance to see again, outside of our nation’s capital. People, you are not going to see this UNLESS you go to TAM.”

David F. Setford, TAM’s Executive Director, said, “When I travelled to Dallas in September 2019 to see this exhibition and meet the Kinseys, I was overwhelmed. I was amazed by the power of the documents, and works of art on display, by their ability to tell an untold story, and by the commitment of the Kinseys to share that story. I resolved that we needed to tell this story at TAM. Then, as 2020 rolled in, the relevancy of the choice of this exhibition to our region and to the Museum’s DEIA work became even clearer.”

The exhibition’s presentation at TAM and related community programming is being developed in collaboration with a Kinsey Collection Advisory Committee, comprised of 18 Black leaders, artists, educators, and activists from the greater Tacoma area. Special tours, performances, talks, youth programs, and more will be hosted at TAM and virtually during the exhibition.

The Kinseys will give a sneak peek of their collection in celebration of Black History Month on Feb. 21, 1pm. Details are below.

Additionally, a richly illustrated book with a foreword by **Douglas A. Blackmon**, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, accompanies the exhibition and will be available for sale in the TAM Store along with other items related to the Collection.

This exhibition was organized by The Bernard & Shirley Kinsey Foundation for Arts & Education and KBK Enterprises, Incorporated.

Exhibition Dates

July 31 – November 28, 2021

Program

In Conversation: Introducing The Kinseys, Feb. 21, 1pm

As we celebrate Black History Month we are excited to introduce our upcoming exhibition *The Kinsey African American Art & History Collection*, to be shown in the Northwest for the first time this summer.

Join us for an intimate conversation with the Kinseys about how their family's collection started, how it has grown, and how it relates to Tacoma and the Northwest. The Kinsey Collection is where art and history intersect, telling the often-untold stories of African American achievement and contribution through historical objects dating as early as 1595, as well as artworks from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries by significant Black artists. Don't miss this first look at this incredible collection.

Press Tour

Thursday July 29 at 10am

Please contact publicrelations@TacomaArtMuseum.org for more information.

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Tacoma Art Museum remains closed to the public.

About Tacoma Art Museum

Celebrating over 80 years, Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in Tacoma's downtown with a mission of connecting people through art. TAM's collection contains more than 5,000 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader Western region, 25% of which consists of studio glass. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on permanent view; the most significant collection of studio art jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2012, TAM received a gift of more than 300 works of western American art from the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier such collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub family also contributed \$20 million for an endowment and expansion completed in 2014. In January 2019, TAM inaugurated the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Wing which features the extensive Benaroya collection of studio glass as well as TAM's own collection of studio glass, which was started in 1971. TAM is located in the heart of Tacoma's vibrant Museum District which consists of six museums including the Museum of Glass, a frequent collaborator.

CURRENTLY CLOSED

ADMISSION – \$18 Adult, \$15 Student/Senior (65+), \$40 Family (2 adults and up to four children age 6-18), Children 5 and under free every day. Children 18 and under free every Saturday. TAM Members; active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families always free.

CONTACT – 253-272-4258/ www.tacomaartmuseum.org