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*On behalf of Tacoma Art Museum*

## **Finalists Named for First Black Artist Award, The Current, at Tacoma Art Museum**

TACOMA, WA (September 29, 2022) – Two local artists have been announced as finalists for the inaugural year of The Current, An Artist Award, a program of Tacoma Art Museum.

Kenya Shakoor, photographer, and Darrell McKinney, interdisciplinary artist, were nominated for their artistic excellence and future promise. The Current is an annual, unrestricted award providing financial and institutional support to a Black artist living and working in the Tacoma area. The awardee will receive a \$15,000 unrestricted gift.

Additionally, The Current awardee has the option of receiving various forms of support from TAM. Whether career and artistry support or designing a program, all would include the full support of the museum's facilities, staff expertise, and labor. This dual investment champions the awardee directly and proliferates resources for the artist's community, providing resources and strengthening networks that make creating art easier for Black artists. The runner up will receive \$1,000 in unrestricted funds.

"The Current is an opportunity to honor the ongoing contributions of Black artists in Tacoma by generating recognition, providing connectivity, and strengthening our region's creative ecology," said Victoria Miles, The Current program director.

The finalists were selected by three regional nominators: Jamika Scott, Kemi Adeyemi, and Maikooyo Alley-Barnes. All three are Black artists and art administrators with expertise in the visual arts from across Washington state. Each nominator was asked to propose the name of a Black Tacoma artist whose work demonstrates excellence in execution.

### **Meet the Finalists**



**Kenya Shakoor** is a Tacoma native. She began her photographic journey by utilizing YouTube videos to teach herself the elements of photography. Since picking up her camera, she has used her lens to capture Black subjects imaginatively.

"I explore imagination as a liberatory practice through my conceptual approach to photography," Shakoor said. "My practice uses intentionality to explore my needs and desires. The common themes in my work include vulnerability, intimacy, and community."

In her nomination, Scott said “Kenya’s photography and cinematography work captures Black experience and existence in deep, yet soft and ethereal ways. Her work is savory and compelling and hard to ignore.”



**Darrell McKinney** is a Tacoma-based interdisciplinary artist. His practice explores the intersections across design, art, and architecture. The work speaks to how design can be utilized to explore the complexities of politics, race, and social infrastructure through the interconnectedness of history, people, and places.

He received a Master of Design from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been featured in exhibitions at EXPO (Chicago) and internationally at Salone Del Mobile (Milan), Spazio Rossana Orlandi (Milan), and the Venice Architecture Biennale. He was the recipient of fellowships and awards such as the Greg Kucera & Larry Yocom Fellowship Award (2022), A Tale of Today Emerging Artist Fellowship for the Richard H. Driehaus Museum (2019), Hilltop Lasting Legacy Fellowship (2020), and the Design Council Award (2018).

Currently, McKinney’s work spans spatial design, object design, and social practice. He continues to explore the built environment and the objects that populate it, exploring issues varying in scale: a community, a building, housewares, and people.

“McKinney’s multidisciplinary and conceptual practice stands out in the city’s largely 2D and figurative field,” Adeyemi noted in her artist nomination.

“McKinney has a body of work that I am confident in and deserves to have his undertakings underwritten further,” nominator Alley-Barnes said.



Kenya Shakoor, *Holly Ylloh*, 2017, photograph, courtesy of the artist



Darrell McKinney, *Black Space Design Show*, 2018, clay bricks and soap, courtesy of the artist

## **Meet The Current Nominators**

Jamika Scott is a writer and filmmaker from Tacoma.

Kemi Adeyemi is an Assistant Professor of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies and Director of The Black Embodiments Studio at the University of Washington, an arts writing incubator and public programming initiative dedicated to building discourse around contemporary black art.

Maikoiyo Alley-Barnes is a multimedia artist, curator, filmmaker, writer, and designer from Seattle.

## **What's Next**

The final juror will conduct a studio visit with each of the finalists to review some of their work and ultimately select the award winner.

An inaugural exhibition for The Current, An Artist Award, will open April 15, 2023.

“This exhibition will act as an art-filled interactive portal, providing a glimpse into the threads and inspirations that inform the work and values of The Current, An Artist Award Program,” Miles said. “This exhibition is an amazing opportunity to extend an invitation to showcase the values, mission and importance of this work. I am very excited to curate this and share with the public what has come and is to come from The Current.”

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## **About Tacoma Art Museum**

Celebrating over 85 years, Tacoma Art Museum is the leading resource for art of the Pacific Northwest and greater western region. TAM's mission is to transform our communities by sharing art that inspires broader perspectives and cultivates a compassionate future. TAM's collection contains more than 5,300 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. TAM is in the heart of Tacoma's vibrant Museum District, which consists of six museums, including the Museum of Glass, a leader and frequent partner.

**Hours:** Wednesday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday 10 a.m.-8 p.m. FREE Neighborhood Nights every Thursday 5-8 p.m.; Friday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Admission:** \$18 Adult, \$15 Senior (65+); free for TAM Members, children 18 and under, and active duty military, reservists, veterans and their families.

**Contact:** 253-272-4258 / [www.tacomaartmuseum.org](http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org)