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On behalf of Tacoma Art Museum

Tacoma Art Museum Presents *what if*, an exploration of the inner lives and curiosities of Black artists; the second exhibition of *The Current: An Artist Award*

Tacoma Art Museum will present its second exhibition as a part of its annual artist award, *The Current*. The exhibition, titled *what if*, will be on display from June 29 to October 13, 2024.

what if is a multivocal and immersive exhibition, exploring the expansiveness of Black interiority using curiosity as a way finder, as evidenced in Black artists visual narratives. The exhibition will feature works from artists Kristina Batiste, Le'Ecia Farmer, and Cristina Martinez, including a variety of mediums ranging from ceramics and textiles to paintings and prints. Also included in the exhibition is a sound design inspired by the exhibition's theme and selected works, produced by Christopher Hill.

what if draws inspiration from Elizabeth Alexander's book of essays "The Black Interior", where she defines "the black interior" as a space in which "Black artists have found selves that go far, far beyond the limited expectations and definitions of what Black is, isn't or should be."

This exhibition explores how these artists remain curious, imaginative, and authentic to self, despite outside perceptions of Black art. Highlighting their sources of curiosity through interior monologues that flirt with ideas of time, ritual, tradition, and playful expressions of self and emotion. Through artwork, spaces for convening, and programming, *what if* invites visitors to be curious and consider how these artists have come to understand themselves and their worlds, away from the stereotyping of Black art, by tending to their curiosities and inner selves.

"Chasing your curiosities can be an act of refusal to limitations and being pigeonholed into genres and definitions," said Victoria Miles, exhibition curator and artist award manager of *The Current, An Artist Award*. "This is an exploration of the multiplicity of Blackness, a collective sense of identity, and how it manifests into very individual spaces highlighting each artist's personal expression, ideas, their what ifs. Curiosity is a powerful tool — it encourages us to honor and deepen relationships with ourselves and it connects us to one another."

Taking advantage of the space and designing it in a manner that complements the theme of the exhibition and story of *The Current*, the walls are painted in idyllic hues, a dreamy candy color palette that warmly invites visitors into the gallery. The exhibition will continue *The Current's*

tradition of including a communal area incorporating a library of books, resources and literature that embrace Black interiority and curiosity.

what if will present a schedule of programming, including some programming in the gallery in collaboration with the featured artists.

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 5,400 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.

Visit Tacoma Art Museum

Wednesday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m.–8 p.m., free admission 5 p.m.–8 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Contact: 253-272-4258 / www.tacomaartmuseum.org

Admission:

\$18 Adult, \$15 Senior (65+), \$15 Military (active duty or retired with ID), \$10 (youth 6-18), free for TAM members