

Magic, Mirth, and Mortality: Musings on Black Motherhood

February 15, 2022, St. Augustine, Fla. - The Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center (LMCC), St. Augustine Historical Society (SAHS), and Crisp-Ellert Art Museum (CEAM), are pleased to present a multi-institutional exhibition and panel series “Magic, Mirth, and Mortality: Musings on Black Motherhood” in April 2022. Both the exhibition and panel series are inspired by the lived experiences of writer, curator, wife and mother Shawana Brooks, and celebrates the resilience of Black mothers through the lens of visual and literary art, and historical and archival objects.

Centered on Brooks’ during her pregnancy and the premature birth of her son Roosevelt, her “musings” will be shown alongside artwork by Cheryl McCain, Marsha Hatcher, and Tatiana Kitchen. The visual and literary component will be supplemented with local and national statistics on infant and maternal mortality rates that demonstrates current inequities to healthcare access, and draws attention to the institutional bias that Black women continue to face.

Originally organized by Hope McMath at Yellow House in Jacksonville, “Magic, Mirth, and Mortality” was shut down due to the pandemic, and had only a limited public viewing in the Summer of 2020. With the original exhibition as a starting point, this iteration will be expanded to include material that reflects St. Augustine and St. Johns County’s unique history. Using their archival collections, each venue historically contextualizes some of the contemporary inequities Black women experience.

In conjunction with the upcoming exhibition, Laura Mongiovi, Professor of Art, and Isabella Worthington-Shea, Flagler College Fine Art student and CEAM Intern, will lead two knit/crochet circles on Tuesday, March 1st and Tuesday, March 22nd at 6pm at the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum (48 Sevilla Street, St. Augustine, FL). During these meetings we will make baby blankets to be donated to local women’s shelters. Supplies will be provided and light refreshments will be served.

The exhibition component of “Magic, Mirth, and Mortality: Musings on Black Motherhood” will take place in two separate locations: the LMCC (102 M L King Avenue, St. Augustine, FL) and SAHS (14 St. Francis Street, St. Augustine, FL). Both locations will open on Friday, April 1st from 5 to 9pm in conjunction with First Friday Art Walk. Old Town Trolley will operate a trolley between the two venues for the duration of Art Walk.

Related panels will take place at Flagler College throughout April. On Tuesday, April 12th, Dr. Martha Bireda, Scholar and Director of Blanchard House Museum of African History and Culture, will join Writer and Curator Shawana Brooks, and Dr. Lori Lee, Associate Professor of Archeology and Anthropology in a discussion that will focus on Black maternal health through a historical lens.

On Saturday, April 23rd, 2022 artists Shawana Brooks, Cheryl McCain, Marsha Hatcher, and Tatiana Kitchen will lead a panel discussion to discuss their work in relation to the exhibition, historical representations of Motherhood in art, and issues around the representation of BIPOC women artists within the fields of visual and literary art.

The exhibition will be made available [virtually](#) and our public programs will be live-streamed, and the recordings will also be made available online.

Public programming at Flagler College will be located in an accessible building. Sign Language Interpreters will be available for all panel discussions. Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center is an accessible building. An interactive virtual exhibition will be available at the St. Augustine Historical Society venue for those with accessibility needs.

Funding for this program was partially provided through a grant from Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of Florida Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“Magic, Mirth, and Mortality: Musings on Black Motherhood” is supported in part from grants from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and the St. Johns Cultural Council.

Old Town Trolley has generously provided transportation for the opening night events.

For more information about this exhibition and related programs, please contact Julie Dickover at 904-826-8530 or jdickover@flagler.edu or Jeanette Vigliotti at jeanette@sahs1883.com.

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