

# Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC, Offers Work by Whitfield Lovell

The Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC, will present *Whitfield Lovell: Passages*, curated by Michèle Wije, PhD, on view from June 29 through Sept. 22, 2024.

Consisting of two immersive installations and approximately 30 additional works, *Whitfield Lovell: Passages* is the most comprehensive exhibition of works by artist Whitfield Lovell.

Lovell (born in 1959) is renowned for his masterful conté crayon portraits and multi-sensory installations that focus on aspects of African American history, while raising universal questions about identity, memory, and America's collective heritage. The exhibition brings together two of Lovell's major installations, *Deep River* (2013) and *Visitation: The Richmond Project* (2001), with a selection of freestanding tableaux and works on paper from his acclaimed *Kin* series (2008–2011) and *Spell Suite* (2019–2020), as well as the premiere presentation of his forthcoming *Card Pieces II*. Through a combination of visual projections, sound, and found objects, as well as examples from Lovell's works on paper, visitors will be enveloped in hidden histories and cultural memory of the African American experience.

The subtitle, *Passages*, also refers to the subject matter of his work, which explores the struggle for equality, physical migration, social progress, and self-sufficiency that have been part of the African American experience. The exhibition includes works from Lovell's past series, *Kin* (2008–2011), and his newest, *The Reds* (2021–2022). Audiences will bear witness to works created on luscious, deep crimson paper that evokes warmth, passion, and the sanguine. The Reds are presented alongside two operational telephones that, when their receivers are lifted, emit the familiar and galvanizing refrain of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the hymn written and set to music by brothers James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) and J. Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954).

Photographs of African Americans taken between the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil Rights Movement provide inspiration for his work created on paper or salvaged wooden boards. He uses a highly refined portrait style to depict stories of African American individuals' daily lives and extraordinary journeys.

Organized by the American Federation of Arts (AFA) in collaboration with the artist, the exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Terra Foundation for American Art, the exhibition will fill galleries on Level 3 and Level 4 of Mint Museum Uptown. This is the first exhibition these multisensory installations by Lovell are presented together in



Whitfield Lovell (American, b. Bronx, NY) "Because I Wanna Fly", 2021 Conté on wood with attached found objects Diam: 114 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

a museum-wide show of this monumental size and scope.

Whitfield Lovell is the recipient of a 2007 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, colloquially referred to as the "genius grant," and the 2014 National Academy Award for Excellence. Lovell has had solo exhibitions at the Smith College Museum of Art (2011) in Northampton, MA, and The Phillips Collection (2016) in Washington, DC, and he was a featured artist at the opening exhibition of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. His works are featured in the collections of major museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the National Museum of African American History and Culture; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; the Yale University Art Gallery; the Hunter Museum of American Art; the Brooklyn Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; the Seattle Art Museum; and many others.

Michèle Wije, PhD, is a former curator of exhibitions at the American Federation of Arts. She began her career at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and has organized several exhibitions including *Sparkling Amazons: Abstract Expressionist Women of the 9th St. Show* (2019) and *Bisa Butler: Portraits* (2020) for the Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, New York.

The American Federation of Arts is the leader in traveling exhibitions internationally. A nonprofit organization founded in 1909, the AFA is dedicated to enriching the public's experience and understanding of the visual arts through organizing and touring art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishing exhibition catalogues featuring important scholarly research, and developing educational programs.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 704/337-2000 or visit ([www.mintmuseum.org](http://www.mintmuseum.org)).

# Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture in Charlotte, NC, Offers Works by Qualeasha Wood

The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture at Levine Center for the Arts, in Uptown Charlotte, NC, is presenting *Qualeasha Wood: code\_anima*, curated by Leandra-Juliet Kelley, on view through Sept. 22, 2024

*Qualeasha Wood: code\_anima* explores identity, physical and digital boundaries, and the process of individuation through analysis of complex and socially accepted paradoxes. Defined as "an individual's true inner self," anima serves as a leitmotif in Wood's introspective work, which examines the archetypes found within physical and digital societies. As the artist states, "This body of work draws inspiration from the concept of *deus ex machina* - a narrative device that introduces an unexpected, external force to resolve a complex situation. This device allows us to highlight the paradoxical position of Black women in society - cast simultaneously as both saviors and scapegoats within a white supremacist framework."

Wood's technical skills are evident in the digital collages of her tapestries as well



Qualeasha Wood, "come outside, (we finna jump u)", detail, 2024, woven jacquard and glass seed beads, 80 x 58.62 inches, © Qualeasha Wood. Courtesy of the artist, Gallery Kendra Jayne Patrick, Bern and New York, and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London

as the colorful scenes of her hand-made tuftings. The materiality of these textiles (the warp and weft) are embedded with a "code," serving as a symbol for the inner workings of the dual experiences felt by Black people, particularly Black women, as well as the multifaceted online identities that mirror or oppose our physical exist-

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For Wood, "*code\_anima* delves into the complexities of identity, expectation, and erasure through the prisms of race, gender, and sexuality. This exhibition is a critical examination of the roles historically ascribed to Black women, which demand both a resolution to systemic issues and the simultaneous stripping of personal autonomy and agency."

Qualeasha Wood (b. 1996 Long Branch, NJ) is a textile artist whose work contemplates realities around black female embodiment that do and might exist. Inspired by a familial relationship to textiles, queer craft, Microsoft Paint, and internet avatars, Wood's tufted and tapestry pieces mesh traditional craft and contemporary technological materials. She navigates both an Internet environment saturated in Black Femme figures and culture and a political and economic environment holding that embodiment at the margins. Like the vast majority of her age-peers, Wood has operated one mortal and multiple digital avatars since pre-adolescence. For her, intuitive combinations of analog and cybernetic compositional processes make for a contemporary exploration of Black American Femme ontology.

While Wood's tapestries blend images from social media with religious, specifically Catholic, iconography, her 'tuftings' represent cartoon-like figures that recall the racist caricatures widespread in popular family programs of the early-mid-20th century and beyond. The tuftings have a distinctly different visual style from the artist's tapestry pieces. In them, Wood adopts a naïve aesthetic that calls on the nostalgia of cartoon animations and their association with racial stereotyping to unpack notions of Black girlhood. Despite their formal simplicity, the tuftings reveal a lurking tension drawn from the artist's own experiences of consuming media rife with anti-Black prejudice throughout her life. Where the

tapestries are absorbed in consumption and cyberculture, the tuftings speak to inherited trauma and necessarily implicate accountability in the viewer.

Wood has exhibited at The Art Institute of Chicago, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Hauser and Wirth (New York, Los Angeles, and Somerset, UK), Kendra Jayne Patrick (New York), Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, (London), Cooper Cole (Toronto), New Image Art (Los Angeles), and more. Her work is held in institutional collections, such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as international private collections. Wood lives and works in Brooklyn and Philadelphia, and is represented by Gallery Kendra Jayne Patrick and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery.

Celebrating 50 years, Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture is a multidisciplinary arts institution located in the heart of Charlotte, NC. Founded in 1974, the Gantt Center's mission is to present, preserve, and celebrate excellence in the art, history, and culture of African-Americans and those of African descent through visual and literary arts, dance, music, film, educational programs, theatre productions, and community outreach. The Gantt Center features fine art exhibitions from around the world and is home to the nationally celebrated John and Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art, which was generously donated by Bank of America and is accessible online. Named for Charlotte civic leader and former mayor Harvey Bernard Gantt, the Gantt Center is housed in an iconic, award-winning structure designed by architect Philip Freelon, co-designer of the Smithsonian National Museum for African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Center at 704/547-3700 or e-mail to ([gsa@ganttcenter.org](mailto:gsa@ganttcenter.org)).

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be May 24th, at 5pm for the June 2024 issue and June 24, at 5pm for the July 2024 issue. After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month.

But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now.  
And where do you send that info? E-mail to ([info@carolinaarts.com](mailto:info@carolinaarts.com)).