

HUE



Spring 2021

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Who We Are

The Duluth Art Institute enriches daily life with dynamic, innovative visual arts programming that upholds excellence and promotes inclusive community participation.

DIRECTOR

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Reality and Perception



Christina Woods

It was my very first college class, Psy 101. The first question of the semester: “What is real?” Is that tree real or our perception? Am I real or a perception? Is my experience real or a perception? And the fundamental question: Is perception reality? These questions prompted my love for this perspective on reality and changed my way of living in the world.

In recent months, I found myself in the same conversation about reality: What is it? This is so important today as we gather ourselves off the perceived floor to bring forth new ways of being. Over and over this construct has become the basis of talks about inclusion, meeting folx where they are at, and the importance of listening. Reality is, like beauty, in the hands of the beholder. And, like beauty, is worthy of investment.

Exhibitions like *DEFUSE*, *Tignon*, *Nature Re-envisioned* and *Reality Transformed*, *Perceiving Places Through Our Tenderness*, and *Closer*

to the Wild challenge our frameworks of reality. These visual experiences bring much needed opportunity to exercise inclusion, meet people where they are at, and listen to the absent narrative about realities different from our own.

We are interested in exploring the challenging questions and concerns of our community and the broader world to gain a deeper understanding of the role visual arts can play in our humanity. Since its inception in 1897, the Duluth Art Institute has worked



“We believe visual art should be both a voice and a mirror for the rich human and cultural tapestry. . .”



to make sure that art is available and accessible for all citizens of our community. We pride ourselves on exhibiting a diversity of voices and mediums, and we function as a space for artists to take risks, explore ideas, and reveal the everyday inventiveness and intellectualism of art, for people in our region.

Duluth and the Western Lake Superior area are home to people of numerous cultures, customs, and interests: the Anishinaabe who first lived here and continue to thrive in the area; early Scandinavian and European settlers; and individuals and groups young and old who still venture north to inhabit, work, or play in this exquisitely beautiful place. We believe visual art should be both a voice and a mirror for the rich human and cultural tapestry. . . (*continued on page 11.*)

Notes

Did you know we have gift certificates available to purchase? These make perfect gifts for the moms, dads, and grads in your life.

We stand up for artists' rights.

ON VIEW

Morrison Gallery

Tia Keobounpheng
DEFUSE
June 15-September 12

Steffl Gallery

Chesley Antoinette
Tignon
May 24-September 6

Corridor Gallery

Karlyn Atkinson Berg
*Nature Re-envisioned
and Reality Transformed*
June 21-September 27

DEFUSE

Tia Keobounpheng
George Morrison Gallery

“Using metal and fiber techniques as a language, I make work that speaks to specific moments of clarity.”

—Tia Keobounpheng

Seeking a path beyond the hold trauma evokes on our minds and bodies, *DEFUSE* brings context to human thoughts and behavior. Specifically addressing the systems and pathways connecting extrinsic triggers and intrinsic coping mechanisms, Tia Keobounpheng asks, “Through diffusion, is it possible to reverse the fusion between instincts that keep us tied to old ways?” Approaching art as a practice, a journey, Keobounpheng explores inherited and lived trauma through patterned watercolors

and woven materials that create organic sculptures and two-dimensional paintings. “Sculptural installations,” she explains “invite the visitor to cross the threshold in order to literally and viscerally see themselves in the artwork.”

DEFUSE reflects Keobounpheng’s process of reconciliation, founded on the idea of unweaving—creating space between our elemental fibers in order to identify connections and broader patterns within our behavior. Keobounpheng examines how we defuse the behavior shaped by epigenetics, ancestry, and generational trauma in order to trust a deeper embodied wisdom.

Tia Keobounpheng (aka Tia Keo) is a multidisciplinary artist and designer living and working in North Minneapolis. She has spent much of her life exploring at the intersections of architecture, design, craft, and art. Together with her husband, she founded Silvercocoon jewelry in 2001. Keobounpheng is a 2020 and 2017 Artist Initiative grantee from the Minnesota State Arts Board and a 2018 Next Step Fund grantee from the McKnight Foundation through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council.

www.silvercocoon.com

www.tiakeoart.com

[@tiakeo.art](https://www.instagram.com/tiakeo.art)

Image Credit: *(left)* Tia Keobounpheng, “PATTERN MAP series” (detail), draftboard, paint, and thread, 2021, 9.5”x9.5”x0.25”; *(right)* “FORCED/FORCE no.4” (detail), copper sheets, 2020, 72”x72”x3”.





Tignon

Chesley Antoinette
John Steffl Gallery

The Duluth Art Institute is proud to present Chesley Antoinette's *Tignon* in the John Steffl Gallery, Spring 2021. Antoinette's exhibition debuted on DAI's Smartify venue with a tour of her headwraps and photographs. She presented a history of the Tignon law during DAI's virtual gala, followed by her *Heart of the Headwrap* workshop. Now, see *Tignon* and experience the power of Antoinette's art in person.

Tignon presents a collection of sculpted headwraps alongside large-scale contemporary photographs and essays that provide historical content—visual and written—into the Tignon Law. In an attempt to oppress the beauty, intelligence, and mobility of free women of color, the late-18th century-Spanish government of Louisiana enacted a law forcing women of African descent to cover their hair. This oppression led to rebellious self-expression as women of color donned exquisite head pieces with colorful and textured fabrics, wrapping ribbons, feathers, and a variety of objects in their folds.

Chesley Antoinette is the creator and designer of Cantoinette Studios where she explores wearable art and sculpture. Antoinette, teacher at Mountain View College in Dallas Texas, holds a BFA in sculpture from Stephen F. Austin University and an MFA in Fiber Art from University of North Texas.

www.cantoinettestudios.com

@cantoinettestudios

Image Credit: (above) Chesley Antoinette, "San Luis La Nuit & Gota," photography: Inkjet print on cotton paper with archival pigment, 2018, 34"x44" (right) Karlyn Atkinson Berg, "Elephant Walk," hand-cut collage and acrylic on clayboard, 20"x20".

We create interesting, dynamic exhibits.



Nature Re-envisioned and Reality Transformed

Karlyn Atkinson Berg
Corridor Gallery

Inspired by the natural world and the literary genre magic realism, Karlyn Atkinson Berg's collage paintings merge nature with fantasy. As with magic realism, Berg's paintings explore nonlinear stories: viewers find imagery without a clear beginning, middle,

or end. "Collage can tell a story by connecting shapes and images without being bound by the need to make an illustration," she explains. In addition to investigating shapes, Berg explores color, texture, space, and form. By placing the real and imaginary side by side, Berg experiments with scale and composition: insects overpower snakes while horses and humans float among statues and machinery. *Nature Re-envisioned and Reality Transformed* chronicles a journey of the known and unknown, elevating the viewer's imagination while delivering a fantastical artistic experience.

Karlyn Atkinson Berg graduated from Rhode Island School of Design and continued graduate studies at Pratt University. Collage is her passion and has been the main focus of her artistry for fifty years. She lives in the northwoods of Minnesota with her German shepherd. Together they train and compete in obedience, scent work, and tracking. Berg has exhibited throughout the United States and was awarded Minnesota State Arts Board grants in 2017 and 2020 and Arrowhead Regional Arts Council grants in 2018 and 2019.

www.karlynatkinsonberg.com

UPCOMING



Stay connected at duluthartinstitute.org

The DAI Annual Member Show

August 17-September 24, 2021

The Duluth Art Institute's most celebrated event of the year showcases a creative, inspirational, and moving collection highlighting DAI members' artistic endeavors over the past year. Members' work matters to the community, and this show promises to be unlike any other. We are excited to bring community together in celebration, and to ensure the health and safety of DAI members, staff, and St. Louis County frontline workers, the DAI Annual Member Show is rescheduled for August 2021. Tentative drop-off dates are Monday, August 9 and Tuesday, August 10, 2021, with after-show pick-up days starting Monday, September 27.

63rd Arrowhead Regional Biennial

Opening October 4, 2021

This exhibition features a wide range of artwork produced within the last five years from artists residing in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Michigan and Ontario, Canada. Juried by Kayla Aubid.

Roshan Ganu | *Perceiving Places: Through Our Tenderness*

Opening September 20, 2021

Roshan Ganu finds herself at the intersection of humanity and our fast-paced world trying to find answers to our human condition. Ganu creates mixed media miniatures that examine the sense of place while touching upon two crucial parts of our human experience: the ability to imagine and feel.

Michael Letts | *Closer to the Wild*

Opening October 11, 2021

Michael Letts fosters connections to people in rural diners, bars, and northern Midwest crannies and finds an odd beauty in the isolation of the sparse, bucolic margins. Letts' monoprints reflect the impact of how our world is lived more and more on a screen, through glass, literally flattened, in contrast to life lived closer to the wild.

Image Credit: Juliane Shibata, "Daisies," porcelain and real daisies, 2016, 77"x48"x54". Juliane Shibata was the first-place award winner from the 62nd Arrowhead Regional Biennial and a panelist on the 2020-22 exhibition selection committee.

We mentor emerging artists.

Looking Ahead

As we continue to imagine a world full of beauty and possibility, we look ahead for opportunities to grow. Beginning this spring and continuing into the summer, we are offering a mix of virtual, in person, and hybrid classes and camps for youth, teens, and adults. These opportunities for learning will challenge you to create meaningful work and imagine new ideas, while being inspired by excellent teachers and motivated classmates.

Classes and workshops inspired by current exhibitions will provide community members the chance to work directly with exhibiting artists or local artists working with similar mediums. Learning side by side with artists



at different stages in their careers not only benefits students, it also inspires artists, giving them new insights and inspiration.

The Birkenstein Art Movement, an arts and leadership program inspired by the activist Jean Birkenstein, resumed this winter. A group of 12 young artists are pairing art classes with John Lewis' graphic novel, "March," learning how youth just like them were leaders in the 1960's civil rights movement.

This summer we are incorporating themes of ecology, social justice, self-expression, accessibility, and more into our camps and classes to inspire artists of all ages to consider how their skills and interest areas can create positive change in their own lives and the lives of others. We will investigate a wide variety of mediums, utilizing studio space and the natural

environment as inspiration.

Free ArtDAI (formerly Free Family Day) is a day for exploration, play, and building community through art in a new virtual format. Free ArtDAI continues April 17, August 21, and November 20.

Check out our website for upcoming registration information. We hope you will join us as we begin to imagine new possibilities and ways to come together. ●

We showcase underrepresented points of view.

Reality and Perception

(continued from p. 3) that is this place, and of art that speaks to us and contributes to our cultural conversation.

I'd like to conclude by being a bit patriotic. President Obama, in his Presidential Proclamation making October National Arts and Humanities Month [September 29, 2016] stated, "In seeking to break down barriers and challenge our assumptions, we must continue promoting and prioritizing the arts and humanities, especially for our young people. In many ways, the arts and humanities reflect our national soul. They are central to who we are as Americans—as dreamers and storytellers, creators and visionaries. By investing in the arts, we can chart a course for the future in which the threads of our common humanity are bound together with creative empathy and openness."

Let's deliver on that reality to break down barriers and challenge our assumptions together, for each other. Invest in the arts by experiencing our next season of exhibitions, purchasing art, taking classes, and sharing news about artists and arts happenings. The reality is we opened April 1. The other reality is we will meet you where you are at and look forward to coming back together again, soon. That is our reality. What is yours? ●



Image Credit (Page 11 top to bottom): Chesley Antoinette, Art of the Headwrap Installation Image, 2018; Michael Letts, "Woods Man," acrylic monoprint on canvas (glass plate transfer), 2020, 15"x16"; Roshan Ganu, "East 25th Street," diorama (found shelf, paper maché, fairy lights, my voice, street sounds and other mixed media), 21"x10".

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Member Spotlight



Gloria DeFilipps Brush

I am a photographer and professor in the UMD Art and Design Department. A Chicago native, I did my MFA work at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before coming to Minnesota. In my own work, I make montaged images that draw from what I call my “sources file”—images I collect over time that are slivers of visual thoughts and notations. In an evolving, long-term series of photographs, I use containers, often books and envelopes, as multivalent objects and contexts for new visual metaphors. As a complement to my creative work, I’ve deeply enjoyed working with students over the years on their own projects and creative development.

Why did you become a member?

When I first moved to Duluth with my husband, Leif Brush, in the mid-1970s, the DAI enabled me to connect with many visual artists in the area and adapt to my new home. It’s since been an important part of my life, and I’ve seen a group of inspired Directors like Bob DeArmond, John Steffl, Ann Dugan, and now Christina Woods each bring new ideas to work with their committed and energized Boards of Directors, volunteers, and staff members to make the DAI the fine professional space it is for artists and arts enthusiasts to thrive.

How has art impacted you or your community?

As a former arts administrator, it’s been so exciting to watch the DAI continue to expand its membership base and receive support from major arts funders—an important recognition of the quality of its programming in serving both artists and the community. The strong support of local businesses attests to the significant role the DAI plays in the cultural life of the area. Expanding to the Lincoln Park building has brought the visual arts directly into neighborhoods and reached people of many different ages. Seeing how the DAI has successfully adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic that is ravaging so many arts organizations is heartening. This is a time when

everyone’s support is so critical to maintaining its exhibitions and services.

As an art enthusiast, what opportunities do you find at the DAI?

A personal highlight for me has been working with Exhibitions Director Amy Varsek, on the annual Emerging Photographers exhibition that showcases the work of excellent students in our UMD program and affords what often for them is a first opportunity to make contact with the public through an external professional arts venue. The process of assembling their work for review and developing their artist statements is such an invaluable learning experience and preparation for their future life in the arts. It’s one of the many ways the DAI contributes to our area and to the vitality of the arts.

Image Credit: Sarah Brokke, “Gloria DeFilipps Brush,” oil on canvas, 2015, 20”x 20”.

Through art we connect people of differing backgrounds

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to our current members. Membership is vital to the DAI, supporting education programs, exhibitions, and studio spaces.

To learn more about membership at the DAI, visit www.duluthartinstitute.org/membership.

Benefactor Members

Janet Sklaris

Collector Members

Virginia Alexander
Gloria DeFilipps Brush
Julia Chen
Rosemary Guttormsson
Bea Levey
Richard Levey
Edie Michalski
Roger Michalski
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Lynn Anderson
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Daniel Grindle

Paula Gudmundson

Ann Gumper

Patricia Hagen

Kari Halker-Saathoff

Ralph Hanggi

Melissa Harper-France*

Katie Harvey

Mark Harvey

Art Headley

Margaret Helstrom

Daryl Hendrickson

Doreen Hendrickson

Anna Hess

Ashley Hise

Thomas Hoff

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Warren Howe

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Nancy Jesperson

Jean Johnson

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Tad Johnson

Tyler Johnson**

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Will Wilson

Bill Wise

Denise Wise

Christina Woods*

Naomi Yaeger

Ruby Zallar

Tom Zelman

Julie Zenner

Kathy Zerwas

Samual Zimmerman

It's a Matter of Time

Ta-coumba T. Aiken

Artist

The year 2020 was painfully foggy, recounting the journey was like going through a swamped forest of thorns. At 68, I was determined that 2020 was the year of accomplishments of breaking the not-so-silent barriers of racial social injustices and aesthetic divisions. I felt that I had positioned my attitude and emotions in the right place for the launch of a newer, clearer, more concise me. I, Ta-coumba Tyrone Aiken, was going to play my part in healing the hearts and minds of people and their communities by evoking a positive spirit. I had already commandeered a speaking gig at an international conference. Several public arts commissions were in place, both corporate and private. I saved money to invest in the materials needed to launch the projects. Despite a politically charged atmosphere creating fear and divisiveness, I was ready.

Our country was already falling apart, and BIPOC people were being attacked on an hourly basis. One by one, my commissions were canceled and my investments for materials, travel, and research were gone. Clients wanted to wait a few months until this all went away. Being a child of the fifties

and sixties, I knew better, but I had nothing to hunker down with. Desperate to survive this, I put an early call out for people to invest in me any way they could. I needed prayer, well wishes, and money. To my delight, I got them all in many ways that moved me, like five one-dollar bills wrapped up in torn yellow stationary paper. This came in the mail from an unknown woman who was compelled to help me. Her note said something like, "I don't know you, but I do know your work. I am on social security. I hope this helps." OMG! I cried, like a baby, overwhelmed with joy and deep respect. This and many other acts of kindness moved me forward.

The country was facing so much hate directed at Jewish, Asian, and BIPOC people. We had a leader of our country rubber-stamping this violence, stoking the fire. This was never a dream for me, but it was an awakening one way or another for our communities. I worked tirelessly on my art to address inequalities and hatred. I painted within my COVID-19 shut-in state of existence resolve. Businesses and schools closed down and work dried up. The pressure cooker was set to high. Black women and men were openly murdered live on the internet. This could not be tolerated. This was the last straw

Image credit: Ta-coumba T. Aiken, "Birth of a Giant," acrylic on canvas, 6" x 8".

that broke the camel's back, as my elders would say.

Then, the unspeakable. On May 25, 2020, Mr. George Floyd was murdered, and his death was on display for the world to see and feel. It created a tsunami of anger, sorrow, disbelief, and protest. It brought out the truth about the injustices bestowed upon BIPOC people. Angry people tried to peacefully protest, but I knew from my beatings in the late sixties that this was not going to be tolerated. "No Justice, No Peace" was one of the chants. I long to change it to "JUSTICE! PEACE!"

I was not asking for permission anymore. People could not rely on leadership and had not yet formulated a voice for many voices. There was much to be done. How could I help? I finally painted on some storefront panels. Many came before me expressing their realities, getting their points and pain across. Still, what more could I do? Most of the time I was shut in and about to lose shelter. Yet, I had hope.

It's a matter of time.

I was fortunate to have a neighbor who was trying sell three large 6' x 8' beautifully stretched canvases. I had only a few dollars to my . . .

name, but my ancestors pushed me to buy them. I had no idea what I was going to do with them, but after Mr. Floyd’s murder, I figured I could pour my feelings into my art. After months of painting, I created the triptych titled NO WORDS. It was on display in the Lowertown Lofts Atrium Gallery when an anonymous patron asked if I would allow them to buy the work. After a lot of thought, I finally said, “Yes.” Then, to my surprise, I was asked to find a proper home to donate it to so the community and the world could experience it. I was pleasantly stunned and took on the task of finding a museum that would accept a gift of this magnitude. I made many inquiries around the country and realized that its home should be in the epicenter of this tragic awakening.

The triptych is now permanently installed at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis with a plaque that reads, “Anonymous gift, in memory of George Floyd (10/14/1973-5/25/2020). May the wrongs committed against the Communities of Color and Indigenous peoples of Minnesota never be lost to history, 2020.”

The most amazing thing is, I now am able to keep my living space and studio. I donate to the arts and social service agencies that helped me, plus many others that help the poor and BIPOC communities.

It’s a matter of time. ●

Ta-coumba T. Aiken has received numerous awards and honors including the Bush Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship, Pollock-Krasner Foundation Fellowship, Minnesota State Arts Board Cultural Community Partnership grant, Knight Arts Challenge Award with Walker|West Music Academy, and a Sally Irvine Ordway Award. He currently serves on the board of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

The St. Louis County Depot is open and free to the public with new hours: 10am–5pm, seven days a week. All guests over the age of 2 are required to wear a mask inside the building. For the best experience visiting the DAI galleries, please download a QR code reader and the Smartify app prior to visiting.

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Visitor Information

DAI Business Offices & Galleries
506 W Michigan St.
Duluth, MN 55802
218-733-7560

Galleries and offices are located on Level Four of the St. Louis County Depot. While some Depot museums require paid admission, the DAI is free. Galleries are accessible by elevator. The DAI Darkroom is on Level Two.

DAI Lincoln Park Building
2229 W 2nd St.
Duluth, MN 55806
218-723-1310

The DAI Ceramics Studio, Printmaking Studio, and multi-use classrooms are located at the Lincoln Park Building.

Gallery Hours

Open Daily
10 AM - 5 PM

Business Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday
12pm-5pm

Parking

Metered parking for the Depot is available on city streets, and the Library/Depot Pay Lot - 502 W Michigan Street. A bus transit center is two blocks away with year-round access, and DAI is also accessible by the Port Town Trolley in summer months.

Parking for events occurring after 5 pm is free. For the Lincoln Park Building, a small parking lot is available on the West side of the building, as well as free on-street parking.



May 24

Chesley Antoinette
Tignon
John Steffl Gallery

Jun. 15

Tia Keobounpheng
DEFUSE
George Morrison Gallery

Jun. 21

Karlyn Atkinson Berg
Nature Re-envisioned and Reality Transformed
Corridor Gallery

Aug. 21

Free ArtDAI
11:00am-12:30pm

Nov. 20

Free ArtDAI
11:00am-12:30pm

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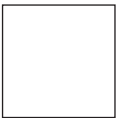
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AMENDMENT

The Duluth Art Institute’s programs and services are made possible in part through the support of the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the State Legislature from the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

506 W Michigan St.
Duluth, MN 55802

HUE



THANK
YOU

