

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Mary Jane Dean  
Communications Manager

[mjdean@museumsc.org](mailto:mjdean@museumsc.org)

(707) 579-1500 x 101

Museum of Sonoma County

425 Seventh St

Santa Rosa, CA 95401

[museumsc.org](http://museumsc.org)

*Images below*



**Museum of Sonoma County presents *Collective Arising:  
The Insistence of Black Bay Area Artists***  
June 25 – November 27, 2022

**Santa Rosa, CA** – (May 26) The Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) is pleased to present *Collective Arising: The Insistence of Black Bay Area Artists*, co-curated by Ashara Ekundayo and Lucia Olubunmi R. Momoh opening June 25th and running through November 27th, 2022. *Collective Arising* presents contemporary Black artists in the San Francisco Bay Area who have participated in interdisciplinary collectives that provide a space of belonging and empowerment while amplifying the voices and work of Black artists and encouraging artistic and professional growth. Artist collectives historically have used their creativity to acknowledge and combat racial discrimination in the fight for civil rights. Black artist collectives remain relevant today as collective members address white supremacist ideology, confront state-sanctioned violence, and navigate and challenge institutional anti-Black racism.

*Collective Arising* will feature eleven multidisciplinary, multigenerational artists who have participated in Black, femme, and queer artist collectives in Oakland, Richmond, and San Francisco, including nure, 3.9 Collective, House of Malico, CTRL+SHIFT, The Black Woman Is God, and Black [Space] Residency. Their artwork—which includes textile, sculpture, glass, print, painting, photography, video, and installation—speaks to issues at the core of the formation of collectives, spaces where Black artists expand their practice, amplify their voices, and support and nurture one another while also building power and community.

**Exhibition highlights:**

- **Muzae Sesay**, a member of nure, explores the feelings that arise from pairing the absoluteness of everyday life with the strict, rigid fragments found in architecture and manufactured spaces. Utilizing skewed perspectives of space and shape collapsed into flat two-dimensional planes, he creates surreal geometric landscapes and structures. Inspired by ideas of cultural reflection and developed by questioning the validity of memory, Sesay's work often depicts worlds he's created in response to social introspection, challenging his own perceptions of reality.

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- **Cheryl Derricotte**, member emeritus of 3.9 Collective, is a visual artist working primarily in glass and paper. Derricotte makes art from research, which leads her to investigate economic and environmental concerns through observations of current events, politics, and urban landscapes. Her work in the exhibition explores the life biography and legacy of Mary Ellen Pleasant, a prominent Black female entrepreneur who lived in San Francisco in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and settled in Sonoma County, sharing Beltane Ranch in Sonoma Valley with friends, and was eventually buried in Napa.
- **Karen Seneferu**, member of The Black Woman Is God, is a mixed media artist whose work challenges the idea that beauty exists outside of one's cultural reality. Her work has been exhibited at the Oakland Museum, The California African American Museum, Yerba Buena Center, Skirball Museum, Tufts University Museum, and Museum of the African Diaspora. Seneferu is also the founder and Artistic Director of the exhibit *The Black Woman Is God*, which has changed the artistic and cultural landscape of California art. Due to her long history of creating spaces for the collective care and celebration Black femme-identifying individuals, Seneferu has been invited to create a new work of her own that centers the notion of Black womxn and the African continent as origins of humanity.

### **Participating Artists and their respective collective association(s):**

**Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo**, CTRL+SHIFT, **Sydney Cain**, aka sage stargate, 3.9 Collective, **Erica Deeman**, Black [Space] Residency, **Cheryl Derricotte**, 3.9 Collective, **Sasha Kelley**, House of Malico and We Are the Ones, **shah noor hussein**, House of Malico, **Ramekon O'Arwisters**, 3.9 Collective, **Yétúndé Olagbaju**, nure Collective, **Karen Seneferu**, The Black Woman Is God, **Muzae Sesay**, nure Collective, **Adrian Octavius Walker**, nure Collective.

### **About the Curators**

**Ashara Ekundayo** is a Black feminist interdisciplinary independent curator, cultural theologian, arts organizer, and strategist whose intersectional creative practice is rooted in the study and creation of Black archives, site-responsive ceremony, and the specific lives, traditions, and expertise of Black womxn of the African Diaspora. Her philanthropic platform *Artist As First Responder* serves as a container for imaginations and inquiries for creatives working at the intersection of design, technology and activism to heal communities and save lives. As a former gallerist at Omi Arts Project Space and Ashara Ekundayo Gallery where she mentored a new generation of cultural scholars and art collectors, she currently serves as a forum curator at the Museum of The African Diaspora and Co-Founder at Black [Space] Residency while also holding a seat on the Advisory Board of SFMoMA's SECA Committee. In Fall 2022 she will join the Headlands Center for the Arts as an Artist-In-Residence investigating and transcribing joy-informed pedagogies that reimagine collective liberation and document cartographies of Black power.

**Lucia Olubunmi R. Momoh** is a curator, writer, and scholar currently working as the Constance E. Clayton Curatorial Fellow at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Born in the East Bay and raised in Sacramento, Momoh previously served as a Curatorial Associate with Prospect.5 *Yesterday we said tomorrow* as a Curatorial Assistant at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and as a Curatorial Fellow at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Her research examines issues of anti-Black racism, sexism, and the production of history, as well as the role museums play in the formation of national and regional identities. Momoh views her curatorial practice as an extension of her social and environmental activism and her museum and academic work as decolonial interventions.

To support these and upcoming exhibitions contact: Development [development@museumsc.org](mailto:development@museumsc.org)

### **Programs and Events**

Public programs related to the exhibition will be posted on our website:

[www.museumsc.org/events](http://www.museumsc.org/events)

### **About the Museum of Sonoma County**

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. MSC is open year-round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events. MSC preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over 18,000 objects, the region's largest object documentation of Sonoma County's history and culture.

### **Mission**

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.

### **Smithsonian Affiliate**

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject—and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

### **Admission**

Adults: \$10.00

Seniors, Students, Disabled: \$7.00

EBT Cardholders: FREE

Museum Members: FREE

Children 12 and under: FREE

### **Museum Hours**

Open: Wednesday through Sunday, 11:00am-5:00pm

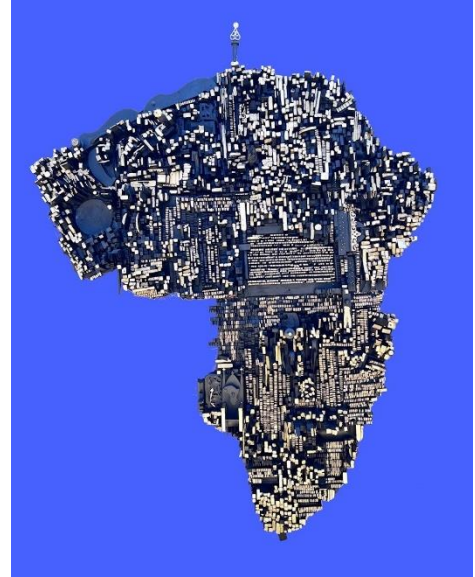
Details about closures available on the website: <https://museumsc.org/visit/>

IMAGES

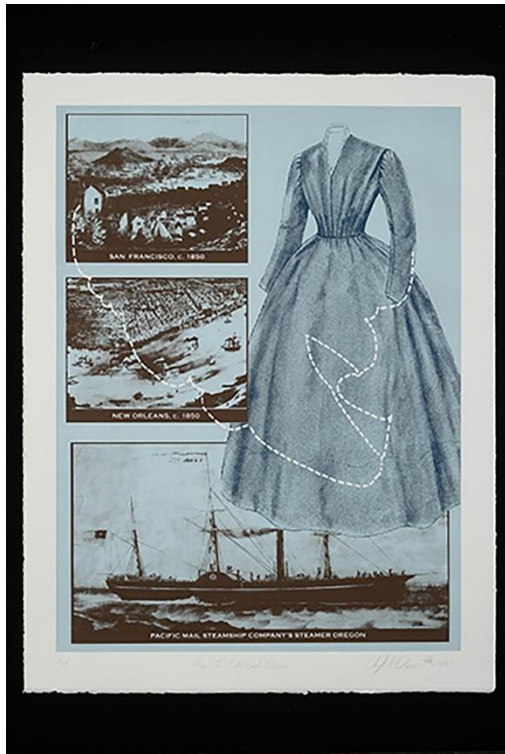
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Muzae Sesay, *We're Out With The Stars Again*, 2019, Acrylic, oil paint, aerosol, colored pencil, gaff tape, graphite on paper, 35 x 49 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Pt.2 Gallery, Oakland



Karen Seneferu, *Call Your Mamma*, 2019-2022, Mixed media, wood, 8 x 10 feet, Courtesy of the artist



Cheryl Derricotte, *How I Crossed Over*, 2021, Screenprint, Ink on Rives BFK, 19 x 26 inches, Image courtesy of the artist and re.riddle gallery



Adrian Octavius Walker, *STILL Pushing Through*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 10 x 8 feet, Image courtesy the artist and Pt.2 Gallery, Oakland

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