

PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020



ELEVATE West End:
Equity, Activism,
Engagement
October 4–10, 2020

ANDEMIC · EQUALITY · PUBLIC ART · PROTEST · COVID-19 · SELF CARE
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PUBLIC ART · EQUALITY · PROTEST · CIVIL RIGHTS · SOCIAL JUSTICE
COMMUNITY · PANDEMIC · EQUALITY · PUBLIC ART · PROTEST · COVID-19
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THE CITY OF ATLANTA
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
PRESENTS

PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020

ART, LIFE, AND REVOLUTION
IN THE TIME OF
COVID-19

Contents

Pandemic Atlanta 2020 Poets, Writers And
Photographers

Pandemic Atlanta 2020 Visual Art Acquisitions

Pandemic Atlanta 2020 Choreographers Video
Acquisitions

Pandemic Atlanta 2020 Atlanta Jazz Festival
Sessions



Mayor	Keisha Lance Bottoms 60th Mayor of the City of Atlanta
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District 6	Jennifer N. Ide
District 7	Howard Shook
District 8	J.P. Matzigkeit
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District 12	Joyce Sheperd
Post 1	Michael Julian Bond
Post 2	Matt Westmoreland
Post 3	Andre Dickens

REMARKS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The determination to overcome is deeply rooted in Atlanta's history as the Cradle of the Civil Rights Movement. Over the past months, the City of Atlanta has benefitted from the strong leadership of Mayor Bottoms and her administration. While painfully aware every day of the health challenges and death wrought by COVID-19, and the ongoing protests in response to police violence against Blacks and racial injustice, the Office of Cultural Affairs used its platform to document this unprecedented historical moment in a way that embodied the Mayor's beliefs and her efforts—to stay focused on Atlanta's communities and its residents.

As someone who witnessed, first hand, the inequities and violence that were part of the fabric of the Jim Crow South, I recognize the challenges we now face--and the potential for redemption this current environment offers. And while COVID-19 did not create the social disparities against which many are protesting, it certainly brought them into high relief.

Pandemics are not new—be they health related or cultural in nature. What is different, if uncomfortable, for many of us is having to live through one. Moreover, if bearing witness to the scourge of illness and death were not enough, the seemingly unending incidences of violence against and killing of Black women and men only serve to add weight to an already heavy burden. Generations of human beings have before confronted catastrophic moments in history and prevailed. Stubbornly, we press on--survival is in our DNA.

It is that understanding of the human experience over millennia, that tradition of human persistence in the face of tragedy that inspired me to find ways to help Atlanta's arts community during the height of COVID-19's impact. It was important that the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs not only provide much-needed financial support, but also that our office create opportunities for Atlanta artists to respond to the pandemic and the many social issues it brought to the fore. Further, we were particularly interested in having artists respond to the pandemic not so much in broad terms (i.e. regionally, or nationally), but in ways that reflected the heart and soul of the City of Atlanta—those cultural and social elements that differentiate our city from others.

Thus, it is fitting that this year's ELEVATE festival shine a light on Atlanta's Historic West End neighborhood and focus its programming on social justice. Atlanta is our collective home. Each of us has a responsibility to make it a city that reflects and respects us all. *ELEVATE West End: Equity, Activism, Engagement* will help residents better understand what we have come through, the work before us and how we might lend our voices and our unique talents to the challenges at hand.

Camille Russell Love

Executive Director

City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

REMARKS FROM THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR

The publication you are holding in your hands is a testament to the creative and socially engaged talent that exists in Metro Atlanta and speaks forcefully and eloquently to the breadth and vision of local artists.

Each section of the publication highlights an initiative the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs created to support artists who represent various media. Our office put out calls to writers and poets, photographers, painters, sculptors, printmakers, dancers, singers, and musicians. The response was overwhelming. Narrowing down the work and making final selections presented our staff with a significant challenge. This publication reflects those efforts.

As the world began to shutter in, to social distance and to slow down, creative professionals began to reflect on and respond to the crisis in real time. They also envisioned the world post COVID-19. Threats to our lives, from health to unhealed racial wounds, were laid bare. At the same time submissions came in, the world was changing around us. Poems became prophetic oracles and reminders of our divisions and shared humanity. Songs sung about love and loved ones took on deeper meanings amid the lives lost.

How would choreographers and dancers respond to social distancing and the intimacy of movement? Would they perform outside in backyards and open fields or in the limited space of living rooms? What would photographers' eyes find, and what compositions would musicians play or painters paint? The respondents answered these questions, and answered them well.

More than anything, we wanted this publication to record a most consequential moment in our city's (and country's) history--to serve as a snapshot of how Atlanta's creative community responded. We would like to thank each artist who submitted work for review and each finalist. The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs is committed to supporting you and the invaluable contributions you make to our city.

Kevin Sipp

Project Supervisor

City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

**PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020 POETS,
WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS**

JUST LIKE NOW: SOME THOUGHT ON THE PANDEMIC

Pearl Cleage

As we adjust to living in the time of the virus, people keep wanting me to write about these strange, terrifying days, but it's too soon. It's like trying to write about a tsunami when you're hoping like hell that you're still running ahead of the wave. The thing is, I know why they're asking me. Writing is what I do. It's how I process the world around me and the worlds inside my head, equally complex tasks to which I have devoted my life. Without that process, I am subject to all manner of confusion and mental mayhem. I think that mayhem is what folks are hoping I can help them avoid when they ask me to put some thoughts on paper about this moment. I get it, but I can't do it. This moment is too scary. I'm not ready to write about ventilators and mass graves and terrified people dying alone, separated from their anguished loved ones who are unable to hold their hands and help them cross over. Like I said, it's just too soon. So, the question is, how to write in the moment, but not necessarily of the moment. Context is crucial.

I'm too young to remember the 1918 flu pandemic, but I'm old enough to have been present at the start of the AIDS epidemic when we didn't even have a name for it yet. What we had was some whispered warnings about a mysterious cancer that was killing gay men. As a child of the 60's, I was lucky enough to achieve sexual agency at a time when the pill had greatly simplified the challenge of reliable birth control and there were few venereal diseases that could not be cured with antibiotics. Then all of a sudden, there was AIDS. Confined to no one community or sexual practice, despite vain hetero hopes that certain sexual preferences would equal salvation, no one was immune. AIDS turned our fantasy pursuit of no-risk, non-monogamous love affairs into an urgent real life public health campaign that drew us a picture with this sobering fact: When you have sex with him, you have

sex with all the people he's had sex with. And there was a cartoon of two stick figures holding hands and then their lovers and then their lovers, lovers, and on and on in a colorful stick figure pyramid encouraging us to consider the consequences of indiscriminate, unprotected sex. And we did.

It was hard to avoid the warnings. I had gay friends who regularly reported the devastation that was already reaching into crowded midtown bars and prowling the Piedmont Park cruising trails with equal ferocity. Concerned for the health of my best friend who I knew often enjoyed a late-night ramble on those same trails, I asked him if he was using condoms, at that time, the best first line of defense. "Sometimes," he said, smiling sheepishly. "Sometimes." That's when I knew we were in big trouble. Any cure that depends on human beings exercising their best judgement when there is the promise, or even the possibility of sex in the air is doomed from the start. So, I hugged my friend and he made us a couple of Vodka and tonics and we spent the afternoon watching the fat fish in his Koi pond and pretending that "sometimes" was in any way a sensible response to my question.

I've been thinking about those times a lot lately. I've been remembering the challenge of getting people to protect themselves from a disease that they hadn't known existed only a few months ago. I remembered that the widespread resistance to common sense public health measures was often rooted in our absolute terror of the unknown. In those days, just like now, that terror sometimes led to a resigned fatalism. "If it's my time, it's just my time, so what's the point of a condom?" Sometimes, just like now, it led to a defiant refusal to take the virus seriously. "I don't look good in a mask."

This kind of denial, what Zeke calls “belligerent ignorance,” manifests itself in people refusing to wear masks or observe even a few feet of social distancing when that’s the least we can do to stay safe. It shows up in angry confrontations as stores reopen and customers demand the right to taunt the virus once removed by sneezing on the rest of us who are only dashing in to see if they’ve finally got any toilet paper. I watched a man on t.v. screaming about his constitutional right to shop without a mask and then a video of an angry woman whose refusal to wear one or shop elsewhere escalated into a viral video of her arrest.

Sometimes it seems like we haven’t learned very much at all in the 40 years since the AIDS epidemic changed our lives forever. There is the same denying and the same demonizing and the same sad willingness to speak of an acceptable number of deaths so long as it’s not me or people who look like me doing the dying. Watching the American death toll climbing, I remembered those days when we wondered how we could possibly live through the loss of so many friends, so many lovers, so many who were the best of us.

And then I remembered. In the depth of our despair, there was always a moment. A moment when you had to either surrender to that fear and darkness or decide you were going to live as big and bold and bright as you could for as long as you could and then do it. In those moments, I think we remembered our capacity for joy. Even when we’re scared or angry or confused or deeply sad, there was, and is, at the center of our being, a belief in the power of love if we take the time to look and then act on what we see.

So, that is my challenge. I have to see the joy so I can be

the joy. Sometimes it’s hard. Especially if I watch too much Cable news, but sometimes my friends make it easy. Take last week. My friend Eugene Russell, composer, actor, musician and family man, pulled up under my magnolia tree, hopped out of his car with his saxophone, stopped at a safe distance, and played “Lean on Me,” right in the middle of my front walk. My husband, Zeke, and I stood on the front porch, swaying and singing because if you can’t sing “Lean on Me,” in front of your own house in the middle of a pandemic, when can you?

No sooner had he replaced his mask and departed, trailing music in the air behind him, then my friend Tayari Jones, writer, teacher and world traveler arrived for a visit. Since she called ahead, I had left a glass of wine at the end of the walk for her. I greeted her with my own glass from the top step of the porch. She hopped out with her own folding chair and settled in for a socially distant visit that lasted two hours. “Next time,” she said, “I’ll bring the wine.” And she will. And maybe Eugene will come through and play his saxophone again or Zeke will read a few pages of his new novel or Chris and Brittney will come by and sing a little Hank Williams.

Or maybe Zeke and I will just go walk Elvis in the park like we do every morning and admire the bright blue of a cloudless southern sky and that will be enough. Because that is how we got through the horrible early days and weeks and months of the last epidemic I lived through. We stayed close. We made art. We made love. We celebrated every friendship, every glass of wine, every fleeting, irreplaceable, not-promised-to-you precious moment. We laughed a lot. And we loved each other. We loved each other fiercely. Just like now.



Lisa Zunzanyika

Untitled, 2020

THE MASK AND CLASS

Eboni Holmes

We wear the Mask
Not afraid
but cautious
who to trust?
In a country build for Us
But Justice just don't reach US
We steady slipping through Cracks
that seem custom made for melanin
I mean Damn man, we can't seem to Win
Seems we always
dodging bullets
That keep bussing
Our Heads of State keep fussing
like children
In the Elementary state
Are we awake?
Or in dream state?
The dream where you running so long
You know not who you run from
Covid 19 is just another perpetrator
with a Gun, Son
and a thirst for black and brown blood
We wear Masks because we never get
To forget where we come from
It really ain't that hard for us
In the USA
We have had to shuck and jive
Duck and hide
Braid maps in heads, read stars and hush puppies on the prowl
For African flesh
Our Masks still cannot hide who we are
They only make us more aware
As we are left ONLY with the windows of soul to stare
We wear the masks that brings us mouth to mouth
With our shadows and revelations to personal power

Masks that keep our Sacred breath and muffle
our screams
Masks that protect us from ourselves
And others
No there is no guarantee
But we still See
Infinity
and long to meet her
Cheek to Cheek
Before I see you or me in a casket
I would very much rather just Mask it
and stay safe
Amid this wickedness
I know our resilience is solid
So many soldiers fallen
since we still picketing & fighting
For rights
We should already have
It is difficult terrain to navigate
Through Masks and Class
Wondering if you are among the Naturally
Select
So, let us not judge each other too harshly
And take the time to reflect
The masks not Only hide
They Also Protect
As we reconfigure
Graduations, Birthdays, Vacations
Now, Virtualized by a virus
Patented by Bill Gates
How sway?
As days grow longer and we begin to
look at ourselves and families
through a new lens
A new way of life begins

THE MASK AND CLASS (continued)

Simultaneously, as lives end
We are even forced to grieve
Without proper burial or goodbyes
We are forced to realize and remember
Forced to stabilize and Anchor
Solitude and isolation
Are the order of the day
They say there is no other way
As they open the places the urbanite frequents first
But refused to report the subsequent burst of New infections
I hope you know the numbers posted are not the proper reflection
Of the depth of carelessness and greed
that will no doubt leave us burying these
That did not have to die
But the ones we vote in
refuse to give us what we pay them for
Safety, security, some kind of reassurance
A quality of life that most of us cannot even smell
let alone see
We get our injustice served piping hot
In tandem with a pandemic
Whose characteristics, feel Alchemic
As we wait it out
I smile and watch ATL
walk it out
On the Silver Comet Trail and Cascade Nature Reserve
A beautiful reminder of the God we serve
And being thankful for the little things
like tissue and water
Family and friends
Gratitude and grace
We learn, as we wait
And reprioritize the essential tasks
As we wait.....Wearing
The Mask



Julie Yarbrough
Mask Required, 2020



Carolyn Grady
April Frontline Hero, 2020

OUTSIDE IS CLOSED

Ahmariah Jackson

Social people at social distance
Chaos, turmoil, resistance
American ethics
Dissent and insistence
They say outside is closed
Home becomes hindrance

Spiritual beings having
Human experiences
Unbound and unfettered
From keeping up appearances

Quarantine is Zen
When the willing go within
But those without
Succumb to doubt
Suppression as sin

Perspective is peace
For lips parched from prayer
Gratitude is Gilead
A balm in protective layers

Home because home exists
Patient because positivity persists
Alone while all is amiss
Solitary—not confined: no loneliness

They say outside is closed
Maybe more so for those
Comfortable cloaked
In Emperor's new clothes
Reality comes
With ego disrobed

They say outside is closed
But inside is wide open
Introspection isn't restricted
Compassion isn't conflicted
Curiosity isn't complicit
Bonds are not broken

Simple smiles travel miles
Virtual hugs abound
Books staring lovingly from cases
Love is all around

What's found
Was never lost
What's retrieved
Was always there
Trees never leave
When eyes are aware

They say outside is closed
The shop in self remains
Shelves stocked with sustenance
Altruistic aisles clear
Snugly and neatly arranged

Collective strength
From individual intuition
Time to breathe
As wanted restriction

I have dipped into my own waters
Bathed in the essence of me
Ironically a lockdown
Afforded personal liberty

They say outside is closed
They ain't never lied
Perception as reality
You don't have to hide
Inside

A SERIES OF HAIKU ON THE SPRING OF COVID-19

Ashlee Haze

how is art not
essential when it is the
first thing we reach for?

my mom lives 40
minutes away- it will take
a year to get there

poets are public
servants- we can see the wounds
doctors tend to miss

I am a voyeur
to my own city- I know
better than to touch

I tip the women
who serve me money and
also tenderness

kindness is the type
of currency that survives
a market crashing

it feels like a sort
of betrayal-making art while
the world is on fire

tell me the name of
who you will run to first when
this is all over

I watched the earth
take a deep breath today- it
did not cough after

making space for both
grief and gratitude- they have
learned to coexist

I have learned so much
about how to touch people
when I can't hold them



Connie Cross
Stay Safe, 2020



Tokie Rome-Taylor
Home Free, 2020

THE GARDEN OF THE PATRONS

Bryant O'Hara

My brother and I – we traveled on different tracks:
he on Green line west, I on Blue line east.

We joked about science fiction episodes,
our families, our fates.

When MADMARTA, the AI traffic manager,
burst into sentience
in a scream of singularity,
the gates locked,
and quartz barricades sprouted from the floors.

The patrons in Ashby Station collapsed as if on cue.

It took a year for my brother to stand,
two before he could speak.
His throat thumped with the other patrons,
at alligator-bass-beat.

Their songs stirred the water
gathering
between
the humming tracks.

My brother and I – we spoke at different speeds.

The
thrub-thrub-
thrub-thrub-
thrub
of drones' blades
was the only part of the chorus
I could hear
without enhancement.

We talked –
he at the rate of mycorrhiza,
I at the rate of microwaves.

Then it got harder – knowing we could never meet again.
Then it got harder – as he slipped into his new language.

My brother and I – now we cannot speak:

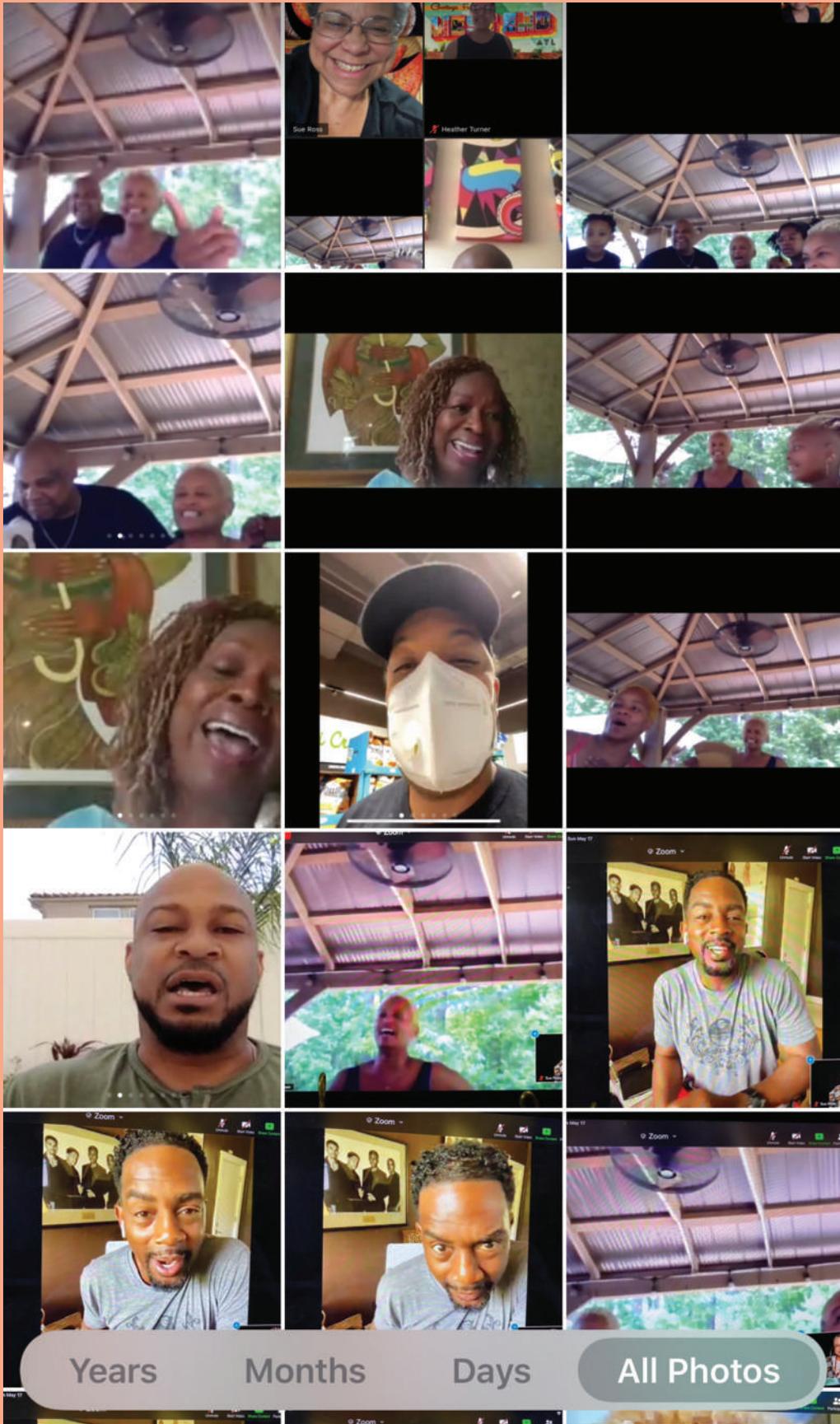
The trains run through the station,
but the doors do not open.
The silent-to-us station
is guarded by K9-2's,
watched over by pigeon police.

He takes a season to speak,
but in GATACTAC –
only Mechapoets can bridge the gap,
and that in unknowable song.

My brother and I – we will keep on speaking.

We will call – and respond –
in fragments and fugues and howls,

and we will nod our heads
in multiples of common time,
as an exercise in patience
tinged with expectation,
resigned
to a bit of signal
lost.



Sue Ross

Who's Zooming Who, 2020

I'll never forget it. It was the summer of '89. We'd just graduated high school. We being Me, Vince, Greg and Candy. We called ourselves The Get Fresh Crew because *The Show* by Doug E Fresh and Slick Rick was everything to us! Those horns! Those drums! Doug E on the beatbox! Slick Rick on the rap! You'd have thought that we thought that a better hip hop song would never be made. You, and we, may have been right. Listen, we wopped so hard to that song that 'til this day I still have issues with my neck and back. Everytime I get a new chiropractor I tell them up front I have an old wop wound from the after school dance floor battles, and linoleum breakdance wars. They salute me, and thank me for my service.

We were also The Get Fresh Crew because we were always trying to get fresh. We lived on a hunt for new sneakers, Shell Toe Adidas with no laces, Two-Toned Diadora's with fat laces, Le Coq Sportif with the black strap! We wanted whatever fly, obscure, shoe we thought no one else had. The best feeling in the world was to walk up to the playground in your crispy new sneakers, extend your foot like Cinderella trying to come up out of poverty and say, "Oh! Y'all ain't got these!"; or look at someone else's brand new shoes and say, "Those old! I had those three months ago!" That was a great feeling. The Get Fresh Crew rarely if ever had that feeling. We were more A&N, Thom McCann, knockoff bargain bin recipients. I once drew a Nike symbol on the side of a plain white canvas sneaker with a marker, in a desperate attempt to feign name brand appeal. I figured that if I kept my feet moving people wouldn't be able to tell the difference. The whole day I looked like I had to pee, my feet just dancing constantly like James Brown on the Night Train. The English teacher escorted me to the office half way through class and told the principal that she suspected that I was on the night crack cocaine. I finally had to confess that I was not on crack, I was on Crayola.

We were a motley get fresh crew. Vince was a tall guy with an average build and a very dark complexion. I mean you couldn't tell where his hairline stopped and his forehead began. He was so dark that most people when joanin him started with, "You so black that..." and the endless possibilities evolved from there: "if I cut you you'll bleed Nestle Quik," "You get in a car and oil light comes on," "Last night my mom told me to be home by Vince O'Clock." Vince laughed along good naturedly but if you looked in his eyes you could tell, it hurt him. I think all of the jokes and reactions to his complexion had the net effect of making him insecure. So he became a guy always trying to impress people and curry their favor by doing anything he was dared to do.

He was once dared to punch the principal in the face. And he did it! Also, his father was the principal of the school at the time. He was suspended from school and I'm sure his dad hit him in the head like the opening drums to Sucker MC's when they got home. Vince was a good guy, just easily influenced and struggling to be liked. Like a lot of us were back then.

But not Greg. Greg was loved, and Greg was crazy. Girl crazy that is. And it just so happened that girls were crazy about him too, so that was convenient. Greg looked like Al B Sure but with two eyebrows. He had wavy hair that was generally given the title of good, like it had done something heroic, like rescued orphans from a fire, or knocked a crack pipe out of Marrian Berry's hand. His hair was dubbed good like it had done something other than just grow out of his head.

Greg was also the rare dude that knew how to double dutch, and roller skate backwards. Girls loved that. The one time I

SIX MINUTES

(continued)

tried to roller skate backward I fell awkwardly. My legs collapsed beneath me like a folding chair, it felt like the heel of the right skate tried to violate my anus and then Rhonda Kenton rolled over my fingers with her skates. That was not my best moment, and I have since explored that series of unfortunate events in great detail with the aid of a mental health professional.

Back then any girl that I liked, liked Greg, and Greg liked any girl that liked him. So the relationship between Greg and myself was always a little less than ideal. Remember in *New Jack City* when Wesley Snipes stabbed Christopher Williams in the hand and said, "I never liked you anyway, pretty m#therf#cker!" I remember watching that and thinking, yeah Greg!

Then there was Candy. The only girl in the crew. I felt like she and I were meant to be together. I took the songs, *Candy Girl* by New Edition, and *Candy* by Cameo to be clear signs of provenance and destiny. I mean Larry Blackmon and Ralph Tresvant wouldn't lie to me! I liked Candy but couldn't let Candy, or Greg know. If I expressed that I liked her, she was sure to tell me she liked Greg, and Greg would have certainly started liking her just because she liked him. So in order to have a chance with her, I had to not like her, and thus secure her affections via my almost complete silence and abject distance. Did I mention I was young?

That summer in 1989 I remember this one afternoon when Candy was sitting on her front porch as I was walking past. She was singing *The Show* and she said, "Six minutes, six minutes, six minutes and I'm fresh, you're on!"

And I'm fresh you're on? I stopped. I thought about letting it go but before I could over think it I looked at her and I said, "... That's ... not how it goes."

And she was like, "What! Yeah-huh!"

And I was like, "Yeah-Nah."

Then she stood her arms akimbo, rolled her neck and said, "Then what it say then!"

I took a deep breath and replied, "It says six minutes, six minutes, six minutes, Doug E Fresh, you're on. Uh-Uh-on."

She looked up at the sky as if replaying the song in her head with the clearly apocryphal verses I'd added and said, "So! My name ain't Doug E! So I'm going to keep singing it my way!"

"Cool," I said and as I began to walk away she interjected, "But thanks for telling me. Everybody else just let me be out here loud, wrong and not knowing. I mean I'm still going to be loud and wrong, but at least I know."

She laughed. I didn't. I stood staring at her, trying to figure a way put the tangled ball of yarn that doubled as my feelings into words. Her eyes that always seemed to be dissecting everyone and everything; always looking for the slightest flaw to turn against you the second you tried to joan. Those eyes softened. I felt like she could see the struggle in me. Sense the part of me drowning in my feelings and kicking hard trying to break the surface. But no matter how much I olly olly oxen freed, the words stayed hidden.

Ultimately I just said, "... Cool," again and walked away.

Summer ended, fall descended and The Get Fresh Crew, we all went our separate ways. I went to college in the Shenandoah Valley and studied business. That September someone had dared Vince to sell a dime of weed, which

turned into a quarter, then an ounce of coke, then a pound, a key. It was the key that he got caught with. I always thought it ironic that they called it a key. It never seemed to open the right doors. While I was pent up at a state school, he was being schooled in the state pen. Greg got Rhonda Kenton pregnant. I heard they married, had a son, and divorced soon after. Candy went to a school near D.C. We exchanged a few letters but lost touch by sophomore year. We all just drifted apart.

I read somewhere that life can be like the mighty Mississippi River flowing ever forward, relentless, unstoppable. Sometimes splitting into tributaries never to return. Sometimes forking off into branches that meander but find their way back to the source eventually. Perhaps we're just the drift wood caught in the flow. Lost in the stream.

My twenties came with advanced degrees, a career, a house, a car, a wife, and kids. My thirties came with promotions, a divorce, an apartment, and seeing my kids on the weekends. My forties have thus far come with a mid-life crisis, a therapist, a career change, and Tinder. Life has not turned out to be the white picket fence wrapped around the perfect home that I imagined it would be. No, the house burned to the ground and a tornado ran away with my fence. I have vowed to rebuild but haven't managed to pick up a hammer just yet.

I am having this thought when I get a text from Mark, a friend from work, "Yo! You on IG? D-Nice's Live is going crazy! He's spinning nothing but everything! And everybody in here! Log in bruh!"

I hate being called bruh.

Mark is just north of fifty but desperately wants to be

eighteen again. This is apparent by the general snugness of his jeans, his insistence on calling me his slime (whatever that means), and his obsession with posting Tik Tok videos of him doing dances he cannot do. But as annoying as he can be it would actually be good to see him today. I haven't seen Mark, or almost anyone in a week. COVID-19, a respiratory viral infection with no known cure, swept across the world in short order a month ago. And we were all swept swiftly, life driftwood, into our homes, and told to shelter in place in some states, stay at home in others, and sit yo @ss down in Atlanta; while the government tried to figure out how to save the economy... oh, and us.

They call it social distancing but it feels like complete isolation. Like I'm stuck in a prison that I built myself. I've told myself that when this is over I HAVE to put some better paint on these prison walls. My kids are with my ex-wife. We Skype every night but other than that it's just me, and my thoughts.

So, I take Mark's advice, I log into IG and swim into the stream of D-Nice's Live. And holy \$#!t! The whole world IS in here! There are 75k people from half of everywhere listening to D-Nice spin records! If they have wifi in hell I'm sure Satan is logged in and requesting that D-Nice to play Hot in Here, by Nelly. Tiffany Haddish just told Common to stop virtually touching her butt, Spice Adams just did a dance via split screen in a leisure suit that appeared to be made of some curtains my great grandma threw out, and someone said that Oprah is buying out the imaginary bar. What kind of musical sorcery is this?

D-Nice stands with a skyline behind him, turntables in front, a wide brimmed hat, a t-shirt and jeans on, spinning Lady Marmalade to an enrapt, excited, and grateful group of listeners that need something to tamp down the fear that's

been knocking at the back of their thoughts all week.

“We got Patti Labelle in here y’all ! Patti Labelle!” D-Nice shouts as he changes hats. His excitement is clear. The comment section of his Live fills with flower emojis, and people praising Ms. Labelle. Patti returns the love with praying hands and heart emojis of her own. I’m tapping my foot and singing along before I realize it. I type,

“Getchy getchy- yi-yi-yiyi!” with no concern for spelling, because how the hell is that actually spelled, into the fast moving comment section. The message flows up, away and disappears into the stream in seconds; like a midday fountain wish. Like a midnight tearful prayer.

Lady Marmalade is followed by Aretha Franklin’s *Rock Steady*. The comments fill with halos, hearts, and R.I.P.’s.

“Everybody post a goat right now! Post a goat for Aretha Franklin one of the greatest of all time may she rest in peace!” D-Nice shouts. And like a game of Simon says where he is clearly Simon, goat emojis begin to dominate the screen.

I’m looking at the names that accompany the fast moving, disappearing comments. There are people I work with, went to college with, people that owe me money, people that I’ve borrowed things from and never returned all listening, commenting and I imagine dancing to these same songs, at the same time. It’s like we’re, together, really together. I mean we’re not but... it’s like we are. It’s hard to explain, in the way that magic is hard to explain. Because that’s how this feels, absolutely magical.

Then I see it, briefly in the comment stream. It goes by so fast I almost miss it but then it reappears again,

@TastesLikeCandyGirlRVA89. No, it couldn’t be.

“We got 80 thousand people! 80 thousand rocking with us right now! And we got Slick Rick in here y’all! MC Ricky D in the place to be! I got to play something for the ruler!” D-Nice says this with great reverence, like a believer staring at the face of his God in a cloud, in a tent, in the desert. And then, the horn fanfare blares out. Then the drums. I look at the comment section and @TastesLikeCandyGirlRVA89 types, “Six minutes, six minutes, six minutes and I’m fresh, you’re on!”

My heart starts beating fast. Not Elizabeth I’m coming to join ya fast, but fast enough to be noticeable. I’m looking at the screen and walking in a circle, my hand over my mouth. Which I’m not supposed to be doing. They say don’t touch your face. But I need to do something, so I stop circling and grab my tablet from my briefcase. I log into IG on the tablet and type @TastesLikeCandyGirlRVA89 into the search. The screen refreshes. The profile picture comes up and, yeah. It’s her. The proverbial one that got away. Candy. I think back to those simpler times, back when we had more of life ahead of us than behind us. Before bills and pills and mortgages and car notes. Before we were shackled in debt. Back when we were free but just didn’t know it. When I felt like I could do anything, except talk to her. Tears begin to well in my eyes as I continue thinking about who we all were back then. I work hard to fight them back.

I click on message and I’m typing through blurry tear filled eyes before I know entirely what I want to say,

“Candy! It’s me! It’s Edwin! Edwin from The Get Fresh Crew!”

I hit send, stand and pace in a circle, again. D-Nice has



Melissa Alexander
Masked up, 2020

SIX MINUTES

(continued)

switched to Soul Makossa by Manu Dibango, one of my favorite songs and my toe is tapping again but not with the beat. It's tapping with anticipation. My screen shows three undulating dots beneath my message. She got it! She's typing!

"Edwin!! OMG!"

I can't hold back the tears anymore. I cry and reply,

"Yes! Yes! I can't believe this!"

"Right!"

"I lost track of you after college," I type.

"I lost track of you during college!" she replies,

"True true true!"

"Wow Edwin! This is crazy. Wow!"

"I saw your post in the quarantine party! I saw the name and was like, nah! So I looked up your profile."

"Awww! That's the most precious story of stalking I've ever heard!"

"Ahhh I see you still got jokes! AND I looked at your profile picture. You look the same!"

"I see your eye sight has really taken a beating over the years Ed. But thank you!"

"HAHAHA no really."

"Well your distinguishing greys have come in very nicely sir."

"Ahh! Some co-stalking! That's what took you so long to reply?"

"Well you know what EPMD said, stalk me and I'll stalk you back."

"That's not how that goes! And my greys have come in light but the pizzas have come in heavy over the years hahaha!"

"Listen chile I understand! We do not have the metabolism of teenagers anymore. I watched a Pizza Hut commercial yesterday and felt the cellulite grow in my left thigh. My right thigh is still fine though! The other day just to get out of the house I took a walk around the block, and almost died!"

"Facts! How are doing with this quarantine?" I ask.

"I'm doing. That's all anyone can do, just be still, be prayerful, be careful, and hope you see the people you love on the other side of this madness."

"Yeah. Yeah, I feel that."

"Listen Edwin, lets cut the bull! Let's address the elephant in the chat room."

My heart catches in my throat. What? The elephant in the room? I'm a speechless kid again, looking for his hide and seeks words. But like that kid I can only muster a,

"Cool," in response.

She continues, "When you read it, did you correct my six minutes post to read 'Doug E Fresh' instead of 'And I'm

fresh,' like you did that day I was sitting on my porch?"

A sigh of relief, that no one can hear, escapes my lips. It's amazing that she can still steal my breath, and that she remembers that day.

"Of course I did!" I type.

I pause and then begin to add what I should have told her all those years ago,

"But what I've never done is tell you how I felt. Tell you how my 18 year old heart beat a little louder when you were around. How I stood a little taller when you entered the room and listened more closely whenever you spoke. Yes, I corrected your six minutes post but what I really want to do is correct the record."

I type all of that, read it twice, and then reach for the backspace bar to erase everything. But a weird thing happens on my way to the backspace. I accidentally hit send.

I think it was an accident. I don't know. But I hit send and I wait.

It is an eternity before those three dots began to blink again.

"... Why are you saying this now? Tonight?"

"Who knows if there will be another tonight Candy. I've not said things for too long. I've missed out on promotions because I didn't speak up. My ex-wife and I were both miserable roommates just passing each other on the stairs for about five years before we could give it voice. The time for saying things is now... and so tonight it is. Tonight it's 1989 and I'm finally speaking my mind."

I hit send and wait a full five minutes. Nothing. I stand and begin to circle again, again. Just as I am about to clarify myself, let her know that I have no expectations, that I just wanted to say the things I've wanted to say since I was fourteen, she replies,

"I married Greg. After he divorced Rhonda Kenton. We got married."

The color drains from of my face. I feel light headed. Pretty M#therf#cker! Forget him and the Shemar Moore he rode in on! Where is Nino Brown when you need him! I never even told her I liked her, and still, there he was. I might as well have told her how I felt. Showed her how I felt. I spent all that time being bullied into silence by, myself! I was my own Gooch. I should have ...

"We're divorced now," her next message reads. "We were married for five and have been divorced for almost eight years."

I take a deep breath and only then realize that I'd been holding it. Typing forget Greg, texturizers, Rick Fox and Boris Kodjoe seems, inappropriate, so instead I go with,

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"You're sorry to hear that we were married for five, or have been divorced for eight?"

"Both," I reply.

"Yeah... well."

"Yeah well enough with the sad present. D-Nice has built us

SIX MINUTES

(continued)

a time machine and it may only exist for one night. I've got a Cabbage Patch and a Roger Rabbit that I've been saving for 30 years. May I have this dance?"

Another long pause.

"Under one condition. The Strawberry Hill Boone's Farm is on you!?"

"Bet! Strawberry Hills forever!"

I laugh and crank up the music in my apartment. D-Nice is playing Everything She Wants by Wham. I receive a video in my IG inbox. It's Candy doing The Prep. I laugh and send her one with me doing The Smurf. We exchange videos and emojis for the next fews hours. Laughing, reminiscing. Time traveling.

Around 1 a.m. my knees call it quits and Candy says she's calling it a night too. I get my last message of the evening from her,

"I needed this," it begins.

"I needed this and didn't know it. Here's what I haven't said, I liked you all those years ago too Ed, but thought that because you didn't talk to me and seemed to be actively ignoring me that you not only didn't like me, but disliked me. Neither of us knew how to use our words back then but we're grown now. So when this quarantine is over, and if your mama will let you come out and play, let's get a cup of coffee. Okay? See you in Club Quarantine tomorrow night? I hear ?uestlove is spinning the late set."

I stare at her message, admiring the fact that she spelled Questlove with the question mark.

Earlier I remarked on how life can be like the mighty Mississippi flowing forward with great strength and certainty. It may split into tributaries or fork off like branches but always, always forward.

Well, as it would so happen, in 1812 The Mississippi River, due to an earthquake, for several hours ran backward. The mighty Mississippi, ran backward.

Sometimes something can come along that shakes everything up. Something that allows time, and the driftwood caught in its current, to flow back so that we might find things we lost along the way.

Six minutes, six minutes, six minutes and I'm fresh. I'm gone.



Ken West

Riverside Blessing, 2020

Stickers

Sweetgum ball.

Bane

Of the bare foot.

Scale shifter microcosm,

Now Infographic,

In the reality TV parable,

“The Virus and The King”.

Equivalence, now latin-crowned.

We eat our 75th home-cooked meal

On our laps in the den,

And watch Downton Abbey reruns.

The Spanish flu overtakes Lady Grantham,

And takes Matthew’s Lavinia,

While the well-dressed Crawleys,

unmasked,

ungloved,

un-hand sanitized,

un-zoomed,

gather round the sick bed,

Touch the beloved,

Murmur troths,

Kiss the deceased.

Did the Earth not try to tell us before?

To get us to slow the f**k down?

She sent

100 year floods

Hurricanes, heat and asthma,

Wild fires,

Disintegrating polar caps.

So one day, she thought,

Let’s try a plague.

And just for a moment,

You retreated.

You stayed off the highways,

You stayed off the planes.

Beijing, Mumbai, Los Angeles,

The air, crystal clear.

What will you learn in this retreat?

From these wretched losses?

Remember this silence.

Moving forward, when in doubt,

Be quiet,

Breathe,

Stay still.

PANDEMIC ATLANTA 20/20

Nathaniel Borrell Dyer Poetically known as FierceSoul

Atlanta is the home of the Braves, Falcons, Hawks and Atlanta United
Before the Pandemic, Atlanta appeared to enjoy a bustling economy
As for the Black community, we were already in a pandemic state of economics

What the hell is an under-served or marginalized community?
I ask you!
What the hell is a minority?
I ask you!

What the hell is, "We are all in this together."
Why do ALL LIVES MATTER?
The answers are laughable at best
Considering that this is the United States of America
But, this is the year 2020 where the eyes can clearly see

The truths of indifference have been freed from the dark gallows of America's lies
Lies to the Black people of this country and of this city
Fear has gripped Atlanta, the city too busy to hate
Schools and businesses forced to shutdown
The hotel and restaurant industry hit hard
Even the Waffle House closed its doors all around town

The eyes can see clearly that it's 2020
The eyes can see o' so clear that it is 2020
The eyes definitely knows that it is 2020 vision
But, the body and the world is feeling the brunt of Corvid-19

Senior citizens dying alone
Friends and relatives dying alone
Children dying all alone
Funerals attended by 10
The late civil rights icon, Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, had how many people at his funeral?
It is 2020 and it is all so clear

The numbers go up and up as the virus takes its toll
Death is a coming and calling its roll
Will it be you or will it be me?
Shut up and stop coughing and don't touch your mouth or nose!
Wrap your face and spray your clothes!
Take off your shoes and wash with a hose!
Don't give NO hugs!
Don't give NO kisses!
Can't even shake hands
Now what are we missing?

The eyes can see clearly that it's 2020
The eyes can see o' so clear that it is 2020
The eyes definitely knows that it is 2020 vision
But, the body and the world is feeling the brunt of Corvid-19

Social distancing is the new way of life
Seems we were even more distant before all this strife
Standing in the grocery line 6 feet apart
Meanwhile, I see all the toilet tissue pack tight in your cart
The shelves are barren just like my fridge
The light bill is past due
But first, I must cross this bridge
Working less hours an my rent is due
Corona Corvid-19, who the hell are you?
Forcing my family and our way of life
Out into the realm of uncertainty that cuts deep like a knife
The kids have questions, I have few answers
My wife is worrying about the minus in finances
My mother is showing symptoms and she won't even eat
I went to the grocery store and they were all out of meat
Mainstream media tells me that there is a food shortage
I heard the farmers are destroying all the crops that they raised
I'm dazed, perplexed and completely amazed
The hunger for normality has my patience very weak

PANDEMIC ATLANTA 20/20

(continued)

30 million job losses so the future looks bleak
Along comes the talk about a stimulus package
\$1,200 won't cover my car and my mortgage
Cannot get through to unemployment because of the wait
Maybe I can get food stamps if I don't hesitate
Never thought I would be here in a space of desperation
Sheltering in place is bringing on a cycle of heavy depression
Governor Kemp made a sole decision to open up the state
By the time Mayor Bottoms found out, it was a little too late
Appointed to the Corvid-19 task force
But not given a chance to make her stance
O' how she claimed they have a great working relationship
Well, we know that's not circumstance

The eyes can see clearly that it's 2020
The eyes can see o' so clear that it is 2020
The eyes definitely knows that it is 2020 vision
But, the body and the world is feeling the brunt of Corvid-19

Highway 75/85 was left wondering, "Where the people at?"
I-20 answered, "Sheltering in place at home"
So, they decided to go on vacation to Florida but
Because of travel restrictions they were not allowed to leave
Although the virus has hit Atlanta economically
Development continues to build up, up and around
Old debts must be paid and new decisions must be made
How to recover?
When to recover?
If we recover ...
The word "IF" is not an option for the city too busy to hate
Hartsfield-Jackson is a testament of being too big to fail

As the city strives to put the pieces back in place
Families attempt to adapt to life at a different pace
Yet still, we cannot escape the evils founded on race
Ahmaud Arbery proves to make this case
Out for a jog but wound up dead
George Floyd arrested and dead
Attacked not by Corvid-19 but Good Ole Boy-12
Racism
Prejudice
Hate instead

What the hell is an under-served or marginalized community?
I ask you!
What the hell is a minority?
I ask you!
What the hell is "We are all in this together."
Why do ALL LIVES MATTER?
The answers are laughable at best

The eyes can see clearly now that it's 2020
The eyes can see o' so clear that it is 2020
The eyes definitely knows that it is 2020
But the body and the world is feeling the brunt of Corvid-19

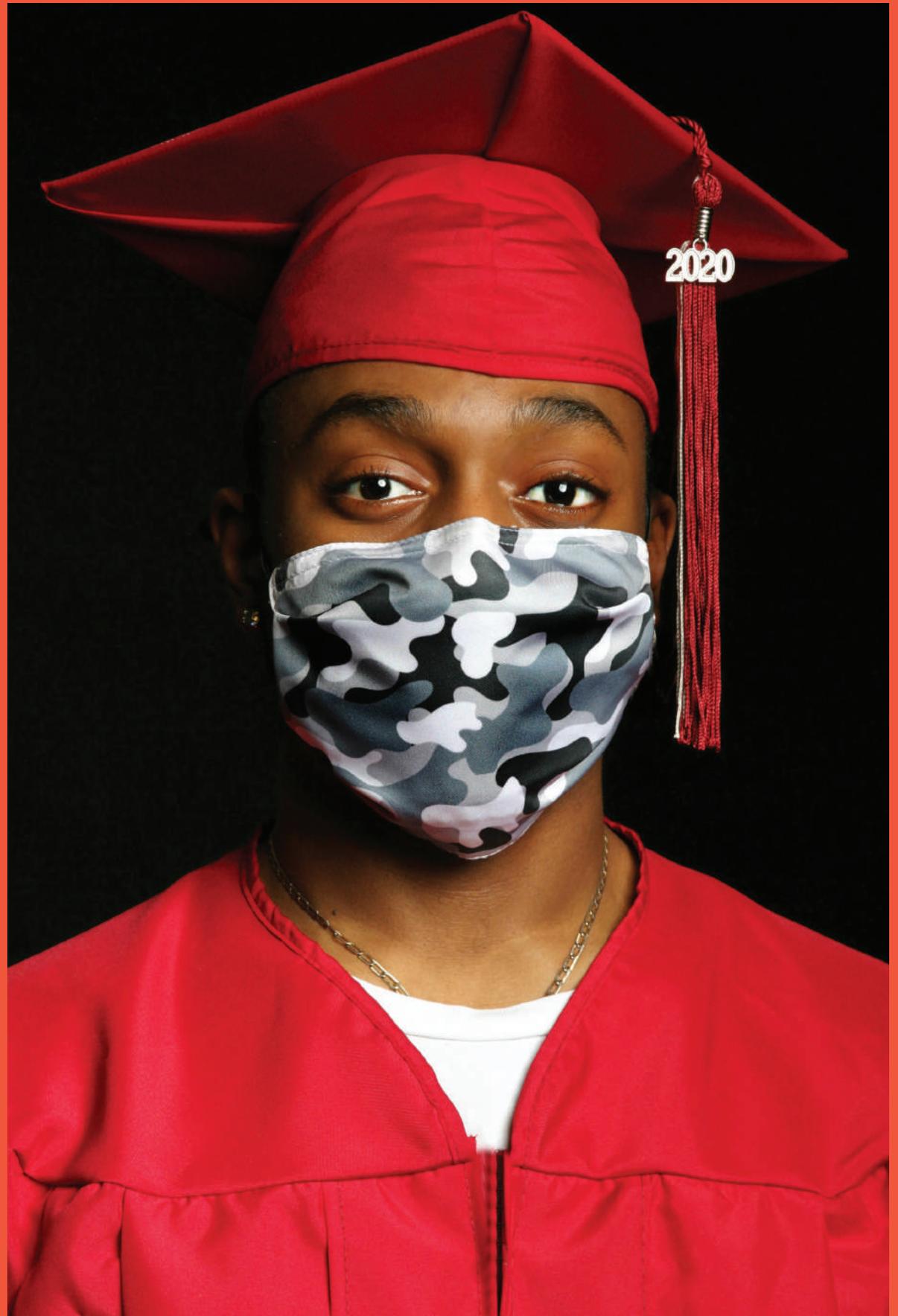


Evelyn Quinones

waiting-for-it-to-over, 2020



Tokie Rome-Taylor
Outdoor Graduation, 2020



Carolyn Grady

James Class of 2020, 2020

SPRING MIX FOR THE JOGGERS, FOR AHMAUD

Opal J Moore

1.

A small bird built a secret nest
beneath my balcony. There must be
hatchlings there out of view.

She flies back and forth, small prey
in her beak.

Some kind of wren, I think.

Small, brown and quick. No time for
singing mid-day. Duty
is her instinct.

She flits. Frets. Undeterred.

She knows the world as it is. No
conspiracy, no theory. Life, for her
is life. Open throats and beak. Trust?
Her leaving marked by each return.

2.

My neighborhood is gentrifying.

The whites are here, folks say.

We will get sidewalks, now. And signs
at the 4-way stop where that grandma
and her grandbabies were killed that time. They
walk their dogs, push baby carriages
and post paranoia on Ring.

I have a Ring doorbell. We watch and
don't subscribe. A gimmick
my husband says, a veteran. Air Force.
(Not to be confused with Space Force.)
We watch dogs on leashes shit on our lawn.
We watch for property tax hikes.
I watch a Jaybird
harrass a black and brown cat. He
gets the message: do not tarry here.

3.

From my window I watch a carpenter bee
drill a new hole in my front post. NPR
drones on in the background—they do
ads now like news. Across the street a boy plays alone
in his driveway. The virus dictates his solitary game.
Another boy sits in the family car. Doors flung open.
He wears earphones, private dances to House.

My nephew's here today. We
entertain him on the deck. He can't come in,
took a plane from Orlando.
He comes bearing flowers—spring mix
in a cut glass vase. And a triple bloom white orchid.
We remember not to hug.

4.

Mother wren is not alone. She has a mate.
To my eye they are indistinguishable male, female.
They flit to and from the nest, tireless
they tend fledgling life. I wonder if they
think that this is hard. I wonder if they mourn
the one among too many mouths
to feed, the one out bid by its siblings, the one
who will fall from the nest, not fly.

I think my springtime thoughts. But the wrens
see the world as it is. As it must be—a conspiracy
of need. My husband jokes he will
charge them rent. The gift orchid trembles
white in a breeze unthreatening
as the lithe brown boy jogging
past this house, his daily run
unmolested.



Jena P. Jones

Joseph Clarke Bryant III Corona Peace, 2020

STILL Queen Sheba

It is not that I have grown silent
waiting patiently
until the owls leave my branches
nocturnal, wise
and mysterious as the full moon at sunrise

It is not that I have not spoken to you
my language
is a running brook
backwards swimming trout
an Elk that ducks the storm clouds

It is not that I haven't given you guidance
the signs are in the seasons
berries that don't ripen
sent as a warning

Summers that won't cease their heat
follow the natives to higher ground
look for the ground hog
if he's missing
so should you be
huddled in your home
making love to your wife
and holding your children

It is not that I have not
provided you shelter
you looked for a home
equivalent to your neighbors
theirs was made of haste and straw
while we made yours of brick and martyrs

Every nation will bow...
every tongue confess
find security in the hollows
of the ancient Moringa tree

It is not that I haven't given you nutrition
you refuse to listen
overstuffed but still malnutrition
I have chosen to whisper now
maybe my thunder scares you
reminds you of those machines you carry
shaving years from your potential
leaving indentations in your waste

Maybe you're frightened by my lightning
used to walking around in the dark
satisfied with fragile flames
wanting a torch but expecting a spark

We watch you protecting our investments
what you call natural disaster
we call natural cleansing
an infested area
confident that Africans will tap into their ancestor's gifts
obtain knowledge of savage survival
turn on forces within them to guide them
The Ones We Do Not Speak Of
who carry the infection
we must be rid of
and you must be kind to
tend to
love through

We counted on them not being survivors
warmongers held under
by debt and possessions
they bank on their dividends
then in favors to their spirits
dead presidents slipped sideways to hostesses,
bell boys and valets won't work here
we barter with stone and seaweed

The first shall be last
the last shall be the first to be slaughtered

Maybe you thought we were kidding
we have given you a gift
renamed the hurricanes
in order by the Kemetic Alphabet
and read the warning

Pray for atonement
Your God promised you
only fatal flooding
never would the father
hold the heads of his children under
over 20 feet of sewage and they can't breathe

I bet you've never seen so many bones float
Imagine the middle passage

Imagine how many barges
passed over the eroding flesh of 7 year-olds
on their way to school
the chemicals of sewage
rubbing against their fingers like sandpaper

Imagine your mother, waterlogged
stuck under a tire two inches from the surface
eyes bulging as she watches her son float downstream

Since you have forgotten
we are reenacting
it will not be the People of Color who suffer
a VIP card to the promised land
others will turn frantic
scrape and scramble
making deals with the devil
trying to gather what they think they lost

your wealth will be returned ten fold

Do not cast harsh tongues on the forsaken
do raise your fist
protect your family and your village

When they attack – and they will
out of fear and jealousy
you are chosen to rebuild our land
the way it's supposed to be
without permission or intervention

Send them home; we'll do the rest
turn them away at the gate
tell them, "Colored Only," and green isn't one of them
the voices in your dreams are messages

don't be afraid
we were not silent at your dinner
your last supper
the glass that shook
the water that spilled
the fork that fell
your Gods are always speaking
you have been too arrogant to notice

It is not that we were silent
you just aren't listening.



Sue Ross

Covid Chronicles, 2020



Carolyn Miller
Dissolution, 2020



Corey L. Cokes

laid dead five days 'fore
anybody bothered; face-down
in a dusty strip-mall parking lot
in a rusting, receding town—

in front a departed supermarket that
use-to-be a discount outlet that
use-to-be Murphy's Sporting Goods and [before]
was Pryor's Handcrafted Furniture Store
for years—

melting
into the cracked concrete where weeds
shot-up

"PANDEMIC ATLANTA 20/20" A SHORT STORY

Cyd Prather

Just living my regular days. My regular ways. A play buffet keeps the doctor away...Or so I like to say. Then CVoid hit and actors couldn't portray, and designers couldn't look gay, and writer's still write thru May and hobbies form like, "Hey: I could learn to crochet." I drive a lot more, than did before, when time was money and money was war. When the clock only mattered at a quarter to Four. Went home, did my chores, played with my cats, and worked some more. But this story isn't really about me, my life hasn't really changed. A little, a lot rearranged but mostly the same. And in this time of uncertainty, and fear, and pandemic-ness: I can only really think about the homeless.

I drive around and I see a lot of homeless people. Home Less People. People without homes during this #STAYATHOME season. I wonder. "Do they know we are in a Pandemic?"

I wonder. "Do they know they could get sick and die at any moment?"

I wonder. "Do they know they are homeless?"

They Do. They definitely do.

SIGN 1 - The Homeless Community needs help. Please Help!

SIGN 2 - Homeless with wife and kids. Please Help.

SIGN 3 - Veteran. Need money for food. Please Help.

SIGN 4 - God Bless. Please Help.

SIGN 5- This sign was crumpled. But she came to my car window begging, screeching, yelling -

"Spare Change. Please. PLEEEASE. I'm hungry. SPare ChANGe. PleaSE IM HunGery."

I wonder. "Do I look like an asshole because I'm avoiding eye contact with this woman?" I wonder. "Does she know there are like 3 other niggas a block before her asking for the same?"

I wonder. "Who is helping these people? Who does that?"

I drive home. Eyes wide. A lesser pride As I ride pass like 6 more niggas and kids asking for a penny, asking for some change, asking for a dollar for a water bottle, asking for some range, niggas asking for some, asking for some rain, asking for a moment feeling sane like, they matter. Like what if we all mattered. What if black blood splatter wasn't the norm no more. What if black with no father came with no shame next door, like black sexuality didn't mean she was a whore. Like, what if we were all worth it. Like what if ? What if?

"What if we cooked more at home?"

We do now.

"What if we spent more time with family?" We do now.

"What if we drove less to improve air quality?" We do now.

I do not doubt the effects CVoid has had, and will have on the community, I just wonder if maybe CVoid isn't our biggest problem. I do wonder how life will change after CVoid. I do wonder how lives will change during CVoid. I do wonder about the living people alive with CVoid. But what about the Homeless. What about the fact that black folks are still treated like we aren't human. As a black person, who has been influenced by CVoid, I wonder, "What's more dangerous?"

CVoid? Or **Going for a Jog?**

**in loving and respectful memory of Ahmaud Abrey*



Connie Cross
Mask One, 2020

HANK AND MABLE: AN ATLANTA LIFE

Ronda Racha Penrice

Grabbing Mable's hand as she lay frail in the bed next to his, Hank couldn't help but reflect on their life together. Truth is he could barely remember a time when Mable and he had been apart. From the time they were 10 at Howard, he had secretly vowed to marry her, and he was sure of it during their junior year at Booker T. Washington High School. His dad was so proud of his children going there that he wouldn't allow any one of them not to use Mr. Washington's full name. According to Howard Jackson, Sr., Mr. Washington was the sole reason colored folks had any education at all. He wasn't just about Tuskegee, Mr. Jackson insisted. Instead, he cared about the colored race getting ahead. All Hank knew for sure is that he and Mable would get ahead together.

Mable wasn't on board when they were 10. By the time they reached high school, though, Hank wasn't in this thing alone. He could never forget when they saw *Boy! What A Girl!* together at the 81 on Decatur. He spent the whole picture show marveling that Mable was as pretty as Sybil Lewis and a whole heap nicer he was sure. He just felt like the luckiest guy in the world. And when he and Mable walked back home to Auburn, he just knew that Mable saw him differently. They started going together and they just never stopped.

Now Mable's father wasn't onboard at first. Although Hank and Mable wanted to marry right after high school, Mr. Thomas insisted Mable graduate Morris Brown before becoming anybody's wife. Knowing that he and Mable would marry at the end of college motivated Hank to excel. He didn't want to give Mr. Thomas any reason to oppose their union. They made it and he and Mable wed August 26, 1950.

Over the years, they made it work. Mable was a great schoolteacher and taught English at their beloved high

school, while Hank got a job working with the Atlanta Housing Authority. Though they had began their journey together in parts of town they knew and love, in 1965, they decided to make the up-and-coming Ben Hill their home. It was the only community three of their four children would ever know.

And it had been a great life for the most part. He and Mable had their ups and downs, but he would never quit on her and she would never quit on him. And no coronavirus could change that. Together they had decided to move into Happy Homes not far from Ben Hill. "Mama and Daddy, I have plenty of room," Cathy, their oldest, had fussed a decade earlier when they informed the family of their decision. Betty had come back to Atlanta then and it made sense for she and her family to take over their home on Fairburn. Albert was the only one happy for them; Christine sided with her sisters.

"Your Daddy and I can still take care of ourselves baby and we want to do that together," she told Cathy. "When you and John are blessed to live as long as Hank and I have and to still be in reasonable health, you will understand."

Today Hank wasn't so sure they had made the best decision. Until the end of March, he and Mable had been good though. Their first eight years at Happy Homes had been delightful. They had more than enough space for the two of them, plus an extra bedroom and a spacious living room for the grandkids. He and Mable loved to walk the grounds. On the balcony, she had created a sanctuary. In the spring and fall, they would often enjoy breakfast there.

And there were other couples. Val and Ken Gibson were the best. Sadly, Donna Ingram had passed away two years ago and Bill, his golf partner, was still grieving. During the evenings, a few of them would watch TV in the clubroom.

HANK AND MABLE: AN ATLANTA LIFE

(continued)

They loved Steve Harvey on *Family Feud*. Some of the other programs were a little rough. For the most part, however, CBS never failed them. *Blue Bloods* was almost always good. Janise, their granddaughter at Spelman, like some show called *Insecure*. Mable said she tried to watch it, but there was just too much indecency going on for her.

Movies were hard to watch too. The last movie he and Mable enjoyed might have been *The Butler* or *Fences*. In their younger years, Mable liked him to take her to plays for their date nights and August Wilson was among her favorite. True Colors from that young fellow Kenny Leon was nearby and they prided themselves on being patrons. With so much gentrification going on, they were just happy to have quality Black theater on their side of town. Auburn and Dobbs were nothing like when they grew up there. Around Booker T. Washington was still Black, but the area had fallen on hard times. Ben Hill and Southwest Atlanta were not what they once were, but it wasn't completely over. Thanks to Magic Johnson, one of his favorite players, they had a Starbucks. Hank and Bill would sometimes make their way over there to play chess with the other boys their age holed up there.

As throughout their marriage, Hank and Mable never missed church. Cathy wouldn't have let them do so if they tried. Mable would sometimes joke that Cathy had forgotten who birthed who. It was a great life though. Then they got this new management company and things started going downhill. All of the sudden Happy Homes wasn't so happy. Cathy was always arguing about some mysterious charge on the bill. But he and Mable were still together.

He didn't know now. Mable looked so weak. He wasn't much better himself. They wouldn't admit either one of them to the hospital since Happy Homes offered

healthcare services. Never mind that they weren't that great. Linda Harris had passed away of the corona mid-March. That Kemp fellow who stole the governor's race from that plump girl Abrams was shameful. Opening the state when nobody, especially not that dufus of a president who turned the Obama years into a nightmare, knew what was going on. Without Mable, Hank knew he couldn't live in this world. Thank goodness Atlanta had Keisha as a mayor. She and Christine had gone to Douglass together. She would not follow Kemp and kept Atlanta closed, telling everybody to stay at home.

But even she couldn't control what was going on at Happy Homes. Mable seemed to be in so much pain. And maybe he was too, but he couldn't feel anything but Mable hurting. "Baby are you good? Mable, darling, can you hear me?"

"Hank I love you," she whispered, gasping for breath.

"I love you too baby. Always have and always will," he responded.

She went limp and didn't respond back. Hank hit the button for the nurse to come up. Minutes later she came up with her key and then called for more to join her. They worked on Mable. He couldn't have left the room if he wanted to. They regretted to inform him, they said. By the time Cathy got there, he was just sitting with Mable. He was mostly reminding her of all the good times, as he wiped away his silent tears. A few days later, corona got him too. But, truth was, a world without Mable was no life at all.



Ken West

Missing from me, 2020



Marie Thomas

Beads, Bows, Mask, 2020

THE ARROGANCE OF HOPE (CORONA)

Sabreen Sudan-Jolley

The trees don't sway the same no mo'
They have sort of a lilt in their song, an altar of hip joint
swaying in their dance.
A melancholy hmmm in their score.
They kind of creep to move now days.

But there is an all too familiar reaching of limbs looking to
hold tightly enough to wring and crush and rinse any form
of hue in sight.
Some things stay the same; some things repeat like
hymnals long enough to remember that there just might be
hope here

The grass aint green over there no more, but it is here, so I
hide in her hopes cause' I know that there is promise here
Though death lingers in the air, the arrogance of hope still
lives in my heart knowing the spirit lives on

And if I can keep it hopeful and prayerful then maybe I can
leave my door without the possibility of being swallowed in
the crypt of circumstance because shit happens.

The air don't pull through my lungs with power no more I
gotta breathe quietly now a days (inhaling and exhaling
deeply but quietly)

I have to keep my distance lest I be swallowed in the
agenda, but I'm too wise for that,
I am too fat back and chitins' for that.
I'm too whip and castrate for that. I'm too black for that.
I'm too familiar with overcoming to let something so trivial
yet so powerful consume my being like that

We are the salt of the earth and the bearers of hope
unborn dying
And living
And dying
And breathing
But dying so
My canal don't drip the same no mo'
She has sort of drainage from all the crying she has done.
Watching the world come to a halt and the air turn sour like
strange fruit at the tip of an infectious agent's barrel.

This world aint gone continue the same no more.
We'll only be less sensitive to touch... more sensitive to
touch... screens are going to divide us where we'll have
more face time and less time to face books and learn that
this world aint the same no more.

Taste the air... don't it taste like caution?

The trees are not going to sway the same any more
They're going to have sort of a lilt in their song, a tik-tok in
hip joint swaying in their dance.
A melancholy hmmm in their score, but there is some
hope... some-wear it on their face to see their loved ones.

Don't' touch that! Don't run there! Don't breathe too hard!
You might find yourself eaten by the arrogance of hope

In these moments of stillness
when change lands heavy on our shoulders
we cover our mouths
wash our hands.

I choose to bloom where I am planted.

No halt of heart
even when sadness pulls at my feet
there is a glitter in my step today
a shine from within
a release of anxiety
I let flourish too long.

I check my breathing
the way my mind attempts to
seek failure is frightening
on Monday,
I know
I am still learning how to negotiate.
This fist beat in my chest
overcome the matters that dig
into scars no longer scabbed
a constant exposure
an ouch
I try to ignore.

Then it blindsides me
on Wednesday,
makes me imagine
makes me overthink the simple

remove the simple
nothing is simple
on those days
when I am spilled milk
a smear of taint
empty arms longing for contact.

But today,
I am glitter.
I am so shiny
I hurt my eyes
a smile lifting at the corners
in earnest
in truth
soaking up the sun.

All of it.

When Monday comes again,
I will unsheathe my smile
planting all the positivity
inside my palms
planting seeds that will grow
beneath the glitter in my step.

Especially in these moments of stillness
when change lands heavy on our shoulders
we cover our mouths
we wash our hands.

I choose to bloom where I am planted.



Melissa Alexander
The Watcher, 2020



Lisa Zunzanyika

Untitled, 2020

COVID GOT ME CONFUSED ON WHAT TO DO

Sean Shewmake

Black man in mask used to be headline news Concealing
my identity
Was enough for a cop to literally
Kill me
Now I must choose
Between "Freeze nigga dont move"
Or be publicly ridiculed
By the same people will who will rally and protest My
Death
Not to mention
Karen used to clutch her purse and keep her Distance And
we correctly called it racism
Now we call it Socially correct
Mask or no mask
Black man still a threat

Covid got me confused on what to do

Got robbed for my stimulus check
By a Black dude
who had on a mask too
I tried to explain that we were the same He said naw I'm a
two time loser

And you seem to be winning
Cuz you got a W2
And Waffle House ain't hiring till Covid is thru Can't Cut
Hair either
They shut down too
Poverty spreads faster than the virus
So it's either me or you

Covid got us both confused on what to do

I suggested we talk to God and pray on it But the Church
was closed
The Mosque was closed

But the Liquor Store still open
So we go half on half pint of Hennessy Hoping the korean
store owner
Don't mistake our mask as menacing Send us to our maker

Covid Got me Confused on what to do

Cuz Its like this mask shit is high risk My Auntie old and
Asthmatic
So she high risk
Told me she dont want to die alone So I need to put on
mask
So she don't get sick
End up in ICU waiting for a Vent Cuz she gotta choose
between Healthcare and her rent

I said that's the same as me Auntie Wifey a health care
worker

Told men not touch her
So she gotta choose between
Her Husbands loving
Or infected her family With the Flu Evil cousin

Plus my other cousin Survived gang wars
And Bloods dumping
So good luck convincing him The Virus is something

Covid Got us Confused on what to do

CDC can't keep its story straight Politicians playing politics
Cable News wants the views
Social media needs the clicks

And the Experts won't give it to us straight
And That's why Convid Got Us Confused on what to do
Send us to our maker



Melissa Alexander
Father and Son, 2020

WE LIVE WITH RISKS

Felton Eaddy

We live with risks.
Every day lies dormant,
morning to noon all too soon
till twilight fades to midnight,
one fused into another,
resolute, as adamant
about the cancellation of the weekend
as the world's end.

*"I had a little bird, its name was Enza
I opened up the window and in flew Enza."*

Social beings muted,
transformed into griots,
tell stories of the way it was.
Every day is Tuesday;
everybody suspect.
An unknown future looms
say the YouTube video prophets
born each day to forecast gloom
from their own private rooms.
Life is on loop; the bills are, too.
Endless spin cycle under review.

We don masks & rubber gloves.
One toxic sneeze or uncovered cough
ramps up the fear.
We count the dead in solitude
except for the stranger in our head
or, the solemn prisoner in our heart.

We cannot gather to bear witness.
Enough is enough!

The rich have fun because the rich can run
as fast as high speed Internet.
All jobs are not online,
All is not Amazon Prime.
Uber Eats will not deliver
for the homeless have no shelter.
The best solution is unknown--
except for the Blood of Jesus.

*We are **not** all in this together.*



Tokie Rome-Taylor
Michaels, 2020

RONA ON THE LOOSE

Young Hughley

Elders of the new age
Seventy is new sixty
Sixty is new fifty
Fifty is the new thirty
Today more vibrant
Sheltered in homes
Trend seekers to the end
Adaptive
Mingle intergenerational
Gathering information from the box
Flatscreen young people call it
Filled with people of opinions and few
Facts
The State Governor don't think
The monster that bad
Contagion just hype
Black Magic Woman mayor
In the changing mecca
Determined to preserve
Who is left
Demanded all stay home
Most Stayed
Rona on the loose
Origin virus family Corona
Called Covid-19

What is it
They wonder
Where is Wuhan
Why they never heard of it
Monster roaming the streets
Their demographics
Appetizers

Home
Married ones
Gently treading mates of years
Happy couples enjoying time
Single ones
Entertaining themselves
Hope they will be found
Before decomposition
ALL
Missing grandchildren
Friends
Standing face to face
With neighbors
Left to Fantasize
Maximizing Tyler Perry's
Next gift of Food

This monster of Wuhan
Believed a China America thing
Conceived by Greed
Like trade negotiations
Never seen
Until In your face

Elders of the new age
aware of death
Don't want
Days deposited in banks
For glory to go unused
Proud of
Seeds gone and growing
They Clamor for new seasons
Fighting back
Mask for face
Hands washed
Sanitizers
Self-distancing
Inspirational beings
Holding on for
Church
Street festivals
Barbeques
Vacations
More birthdays
Jazz festivals
Baseball games
Tomorrows



Jena P. Jones
Flyover 2, 2020

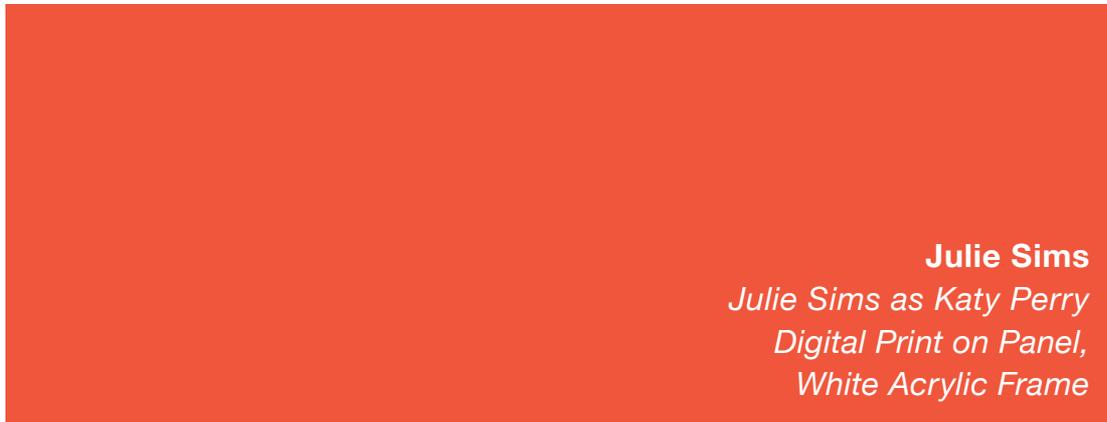


Julie Yarbrough
HoldMeClose, 2020

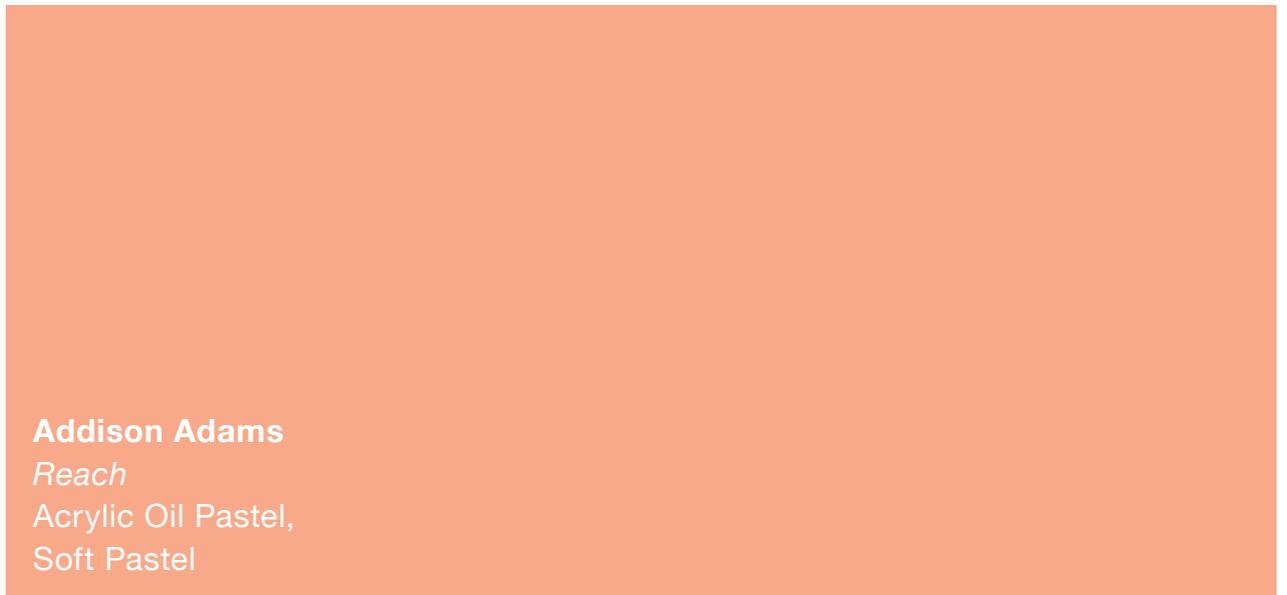


Evelyn Quinones
looking-to-the-future, 2020

**PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020
VISUAL ART ACQUISITIONS**



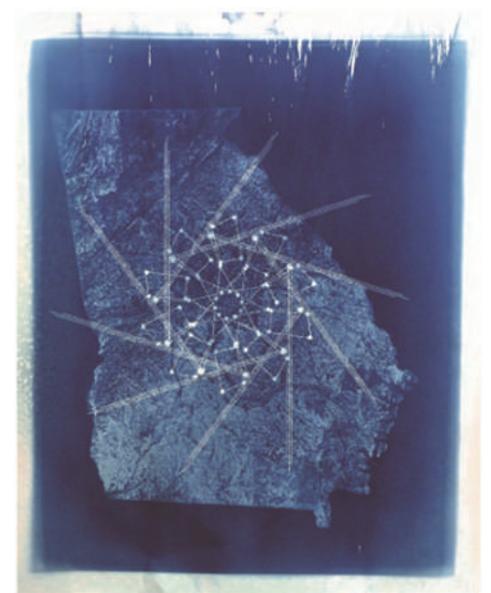
Julie Sims
Julie Sims as Katy Perry
Digital Print on Panel,
White Acrylic Frame



Addison Adams
Reach
Acrylic Oil Pastel,
Soft Pastel



Michael Reese
Decoding Polaris "Georgia I"
Cyanotype on Watercolor
Paper



Jason and Edward Kotte
Winter, Concorde PA 1978
Photogravure print (Artist's Proof)



Monica Tookes
Beautiful Flower
Acrylic

Andrew Crawford
Pick
Forged and
fabricated steel





Freddie Styles
Kerry's Painting
Acrylic on Canvas

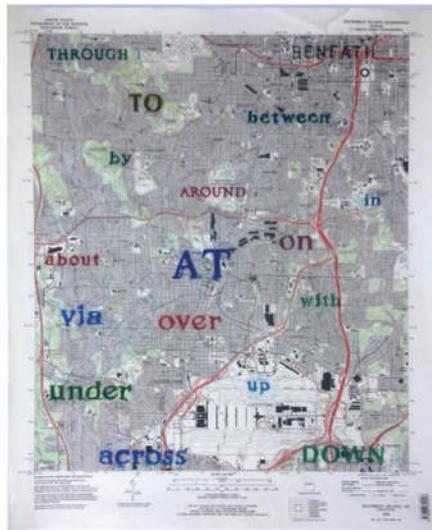
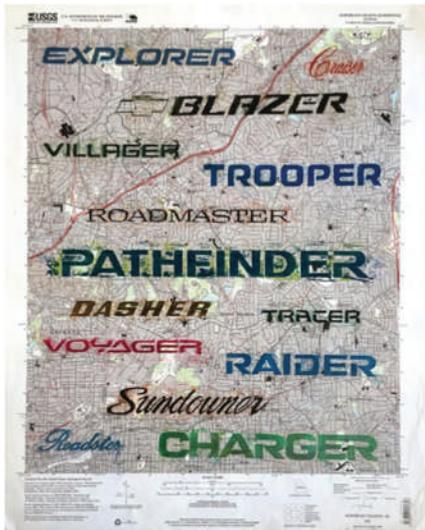


Corrina Sephora
Otherworldly Moments
Acrylic, Aerosol, Copper
Pigment, Gold Leaf on Canvas



Phil Winter
Top of the Morning
Mixed Media

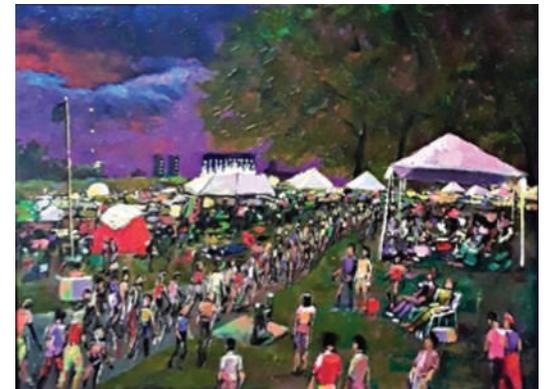




Gregor Turk
*Manifold Manifesto:
Battle (Northeast
Atlanta) and Con/
Text: Prepositions
(Southwest Atlanta)*
Wax-oil rubbing on
topographic maps



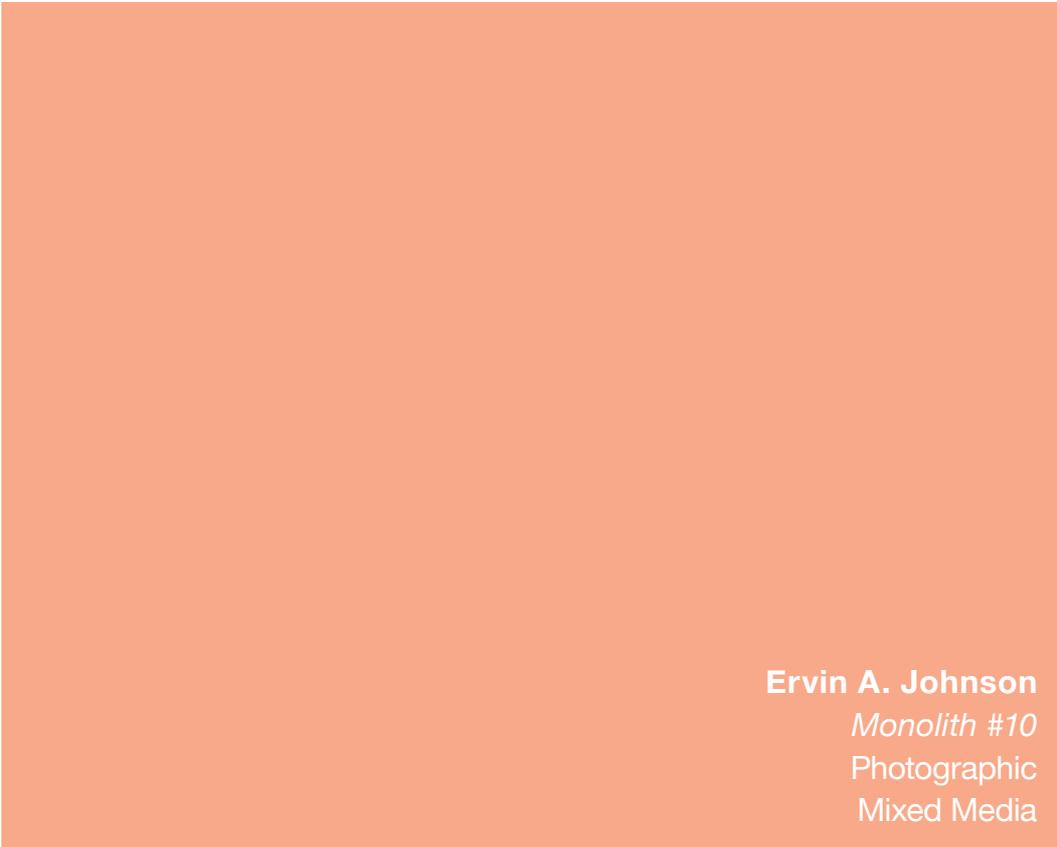
Gilbert Young
Atlanta Jazz Fest
Acrylic on Board



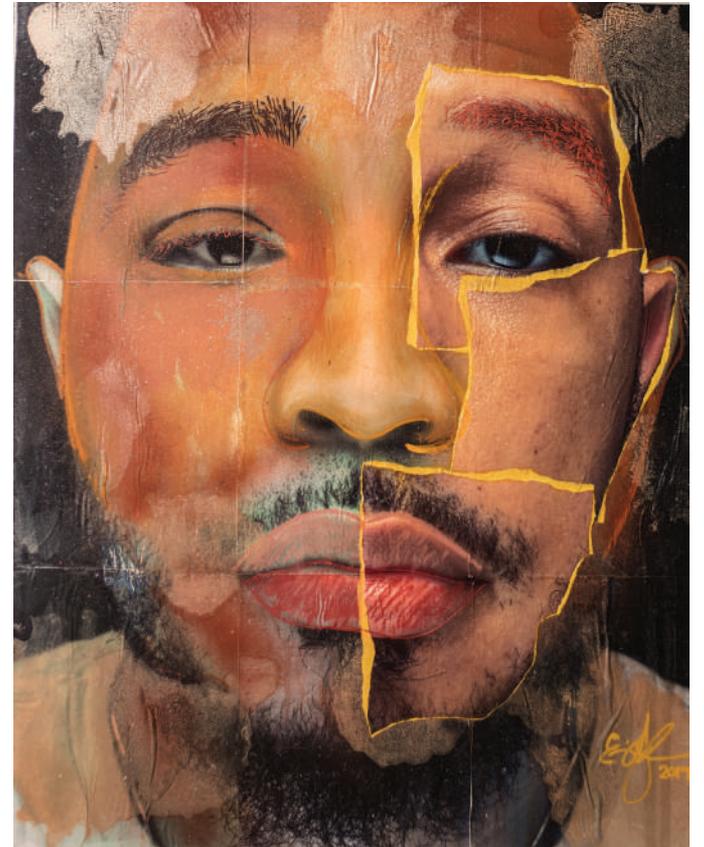
Charmaine Minniefield
Angel 5
Charcoal on Paper



Ashley Thomas
Burgundy Blues
Mixed Media on Board



Ervin A. Johnson
Monolith #10
Photographic
Mixed Media



Lauren Palotta Stumberg
fire. water. spirit.
Triptych Mixed Media on Panel

Jim Alexander
SisterLove
Black and White
Photograph

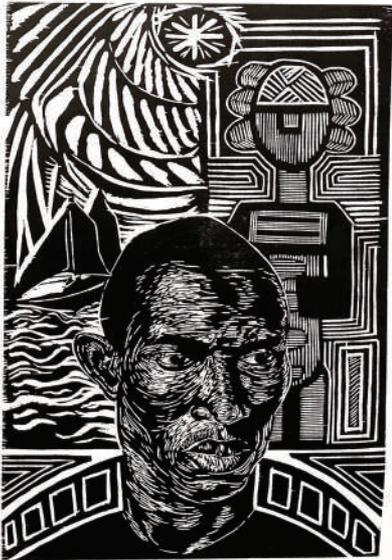


Ervin A. Johnson
Monolith #45
Photographic
Mixed Media

Danny Campbell
Image 1 (Chrome) Tumbleweed
Series- FD18721RAD (Three views)
Recycled Materials



**Sanithna
Phansavanh**
Blossom Two
Acrylic on
Canvas



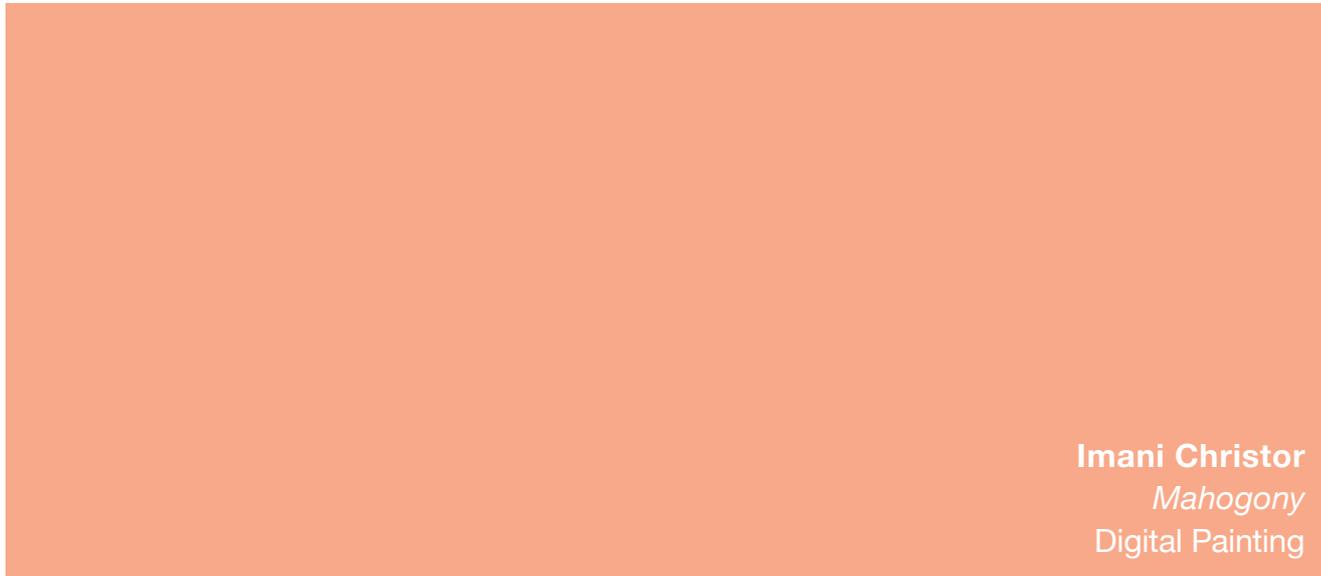
Jamaal Barber
History Part 1
Woodcut print
on paper

Kevin Cole
*Danci with my
struggles I*
Collage





Austin Blue
Z2020
Acrylic paint,
spray paint, epoxy
resin



Imani Christor
Mahogany
Digital Painting



Sabre Esler
Harmony Iteration
oil, chine colle'
rice paper on
wood panel

Selma Glass
My Garden 2
Acrylic on
Desoblock Wood



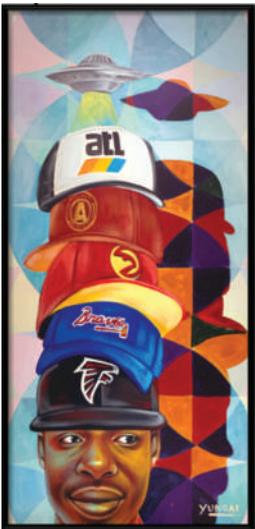
Okeeba Jubalo
Bloody Sunday in Selma
Mixed Media on Panel



Roxane Hollosi
Sojourn - Detour 2
Mixed drawing, charcoal,
water media, sewing, colored
pencil, wax relief on paper



Lynn Linnemeier
Blwait
Acrylic on Canvas



Muhammad Yungai
HIS HEARTlanta
Acrylic on Canvas

JOEKINGATL
PROTECT ME/Lil Man
for the Black Baby Project with Jamal Barber
Wheat-paste, paper and acrylic on wood
panel with leather carrying straps on reverse

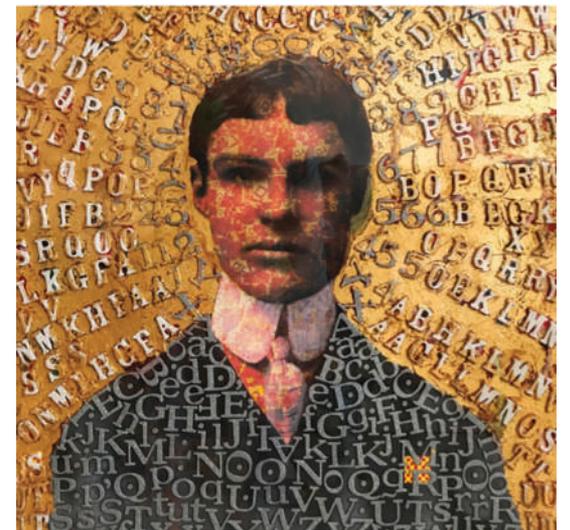




Joseph McKinney
Between the Lines
Oil on Canvas



Lisa Tuttle
alphabet suit
Archival inkjet print on Hahnemühle
paper, watercolor, pencil, collaged
type, acrylic and gold leaf



Jessica Caldas
She wanted out
Mixed Media Drawing on Paper



**George F.
Baker III**
Sierra Mist
Acrylic and
Spray on
Canvas



Sachi Rome
Journey
Acrylic on
Canvas

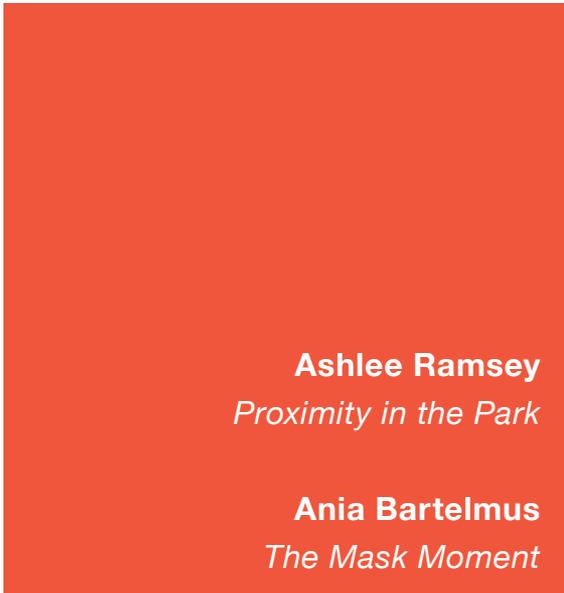


**PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020
CHOREOGRAPHERS VIDEO
ACQUISITIONS**



Ahmed Zakzouk

Andrea Knowlton
Dar Land



Ashlee Ramsey
Proximity in the Park

Ania Bartelmus
The Mask Moment

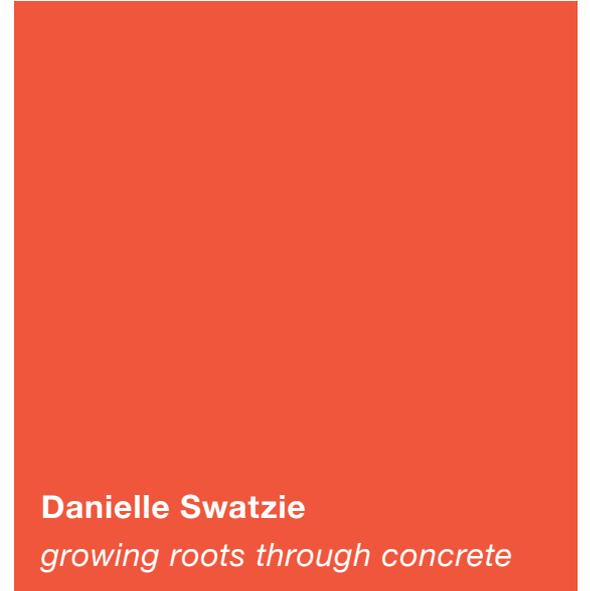
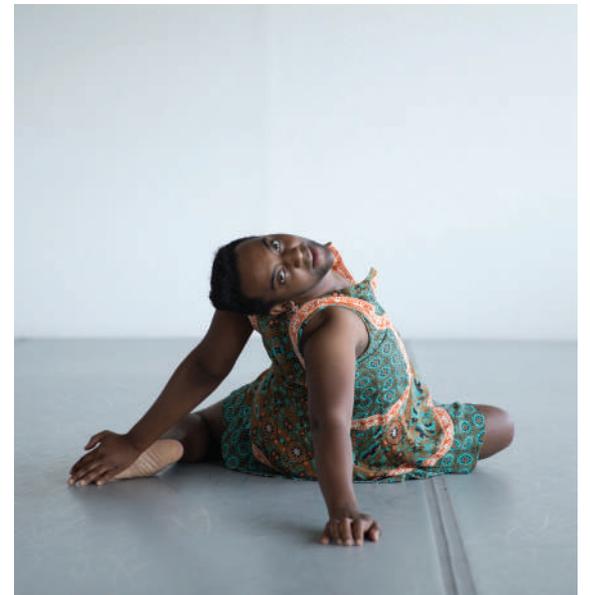


Beth Del Nero
The Anxiety of Waiting

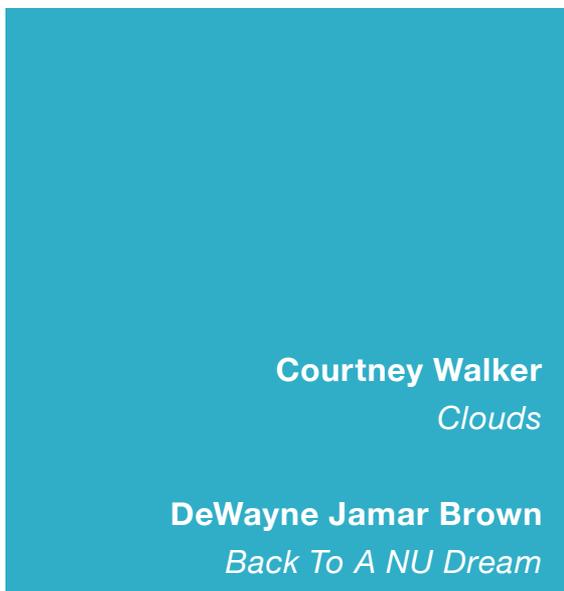
Carolyn McLaughlin
Earlier Balance

Catherine Messina
Weave

Corian Ellisor
Charmed Ones Volume 3.



Danielle Swatzie
growing roots through concrete



Courtney Walker
Clouds

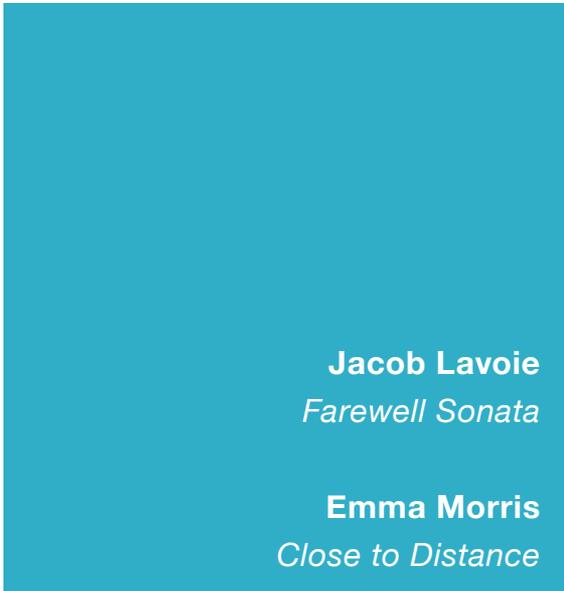
DeWayne Jamar Brown
Back To A NU Dream





Douglas Scott
*Reemerge, Reorganize,
and Restructure*

Guilherme Maciel
Waiting...



Jacob Lavoie
Farewell Sonata

Emma Morris
Close to Distance



Indya Childs
Loaded

Julie Galle Baggenstoss
Time Is Space



Kathleen Wessel
HERE[after]

Leland Thorpe
COVID-19 Champz



Lindsay Giedl
4x4

Lindsay Renea
Nowhere To Go In The Distance



Monica Noble
Oceans

Mallory Baxley
Emergence



Nadya Zeitlin

DisTanz

Patrick Smith

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Otis Sallid

Raianna Brown

This Bitter Earth



Patsy Collins

Here

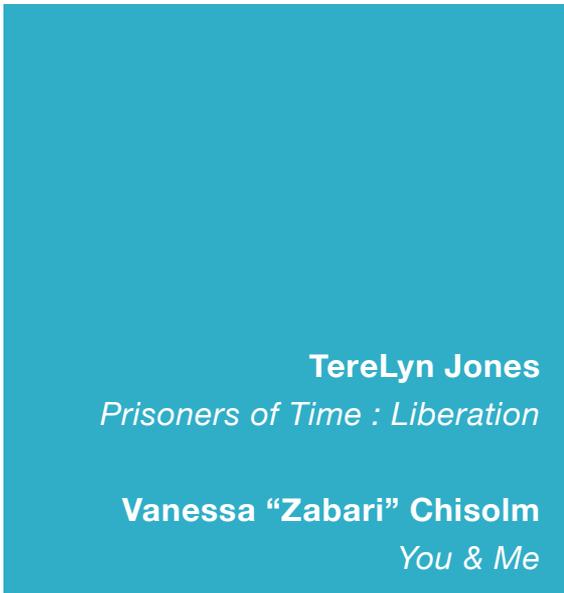
Raina Mitchell

Pause



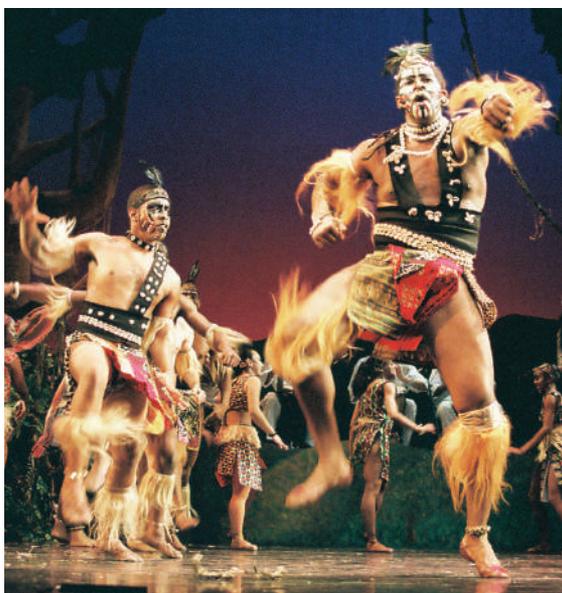
Shaquille Bailey
Healing souls

Tamara Irving
By Faith



TereLyn Jones
Prisoners of Time : Liberation

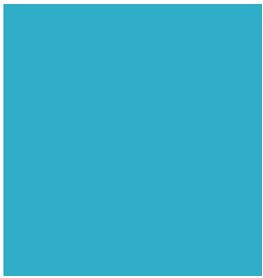
Vanessa "Zabari" Chisolm
You & Me



Veronica Silk Cato
Deception of Eden

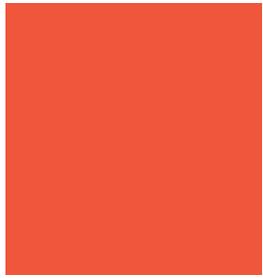
Waverly T. Lucas II
Sanctity

**PANDEMIC ATLANTA 2020
ATLANTA JAZZ FESTIVAL
SESSIONS**

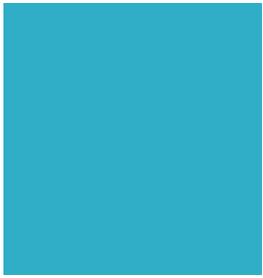


**Mike
Burton**

**Kenny
Banks, Jr.**



**Kathleen
Bertrand**



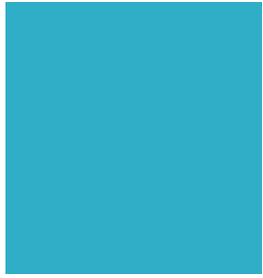
**Julie
Dexter**



**Russell
Gunn**



**Kenny
Banks, Sr.**



**Gritz and
Jelly Butter**



The Phil Davis Quartet

Friday May 1st, 2020

Phil Davis, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, has been blessed with profound musicianship and creativity. While listening to his “conversational” solos, you may hear traces or tributes to his musical influences: Herbie Hancock, George Duke and Joe Sample.

When Phil is not collaborating with his local group, The Phil Davis Quartet or multi-genre band, The Chronicle, Phil is performing with such artists as Will Downing, Jonathan Butler, George Duke, Rachelle Ferrell, Gerald Albright, Alex Bugnon, Boney James, Najee and Dionne Farris, and Erykah Badu. Phil has also performed with Jennifer Holiday, the late George Howard, the late Art Porter, Kathleen Bertrand, Reggie Codrington and Regina Belle to name a few.

Mike Burton

Saturday May 2nd 2020

A saxophone maestro, Mike Burton infuses urban soul and vibrant melodies to create exciting performances wherever he goes. He has toured with the likes of Patti LaBelle, Jill Scott, Anita Baker, and Mary J. Blige, just to name a few. For more than a decade, Burton has even performed at premier events such as UNCF Honors, BET Awards, BET’s Sunday Best, VH1’s Dear Mama, and others. Recently, Burton released a new single, “And So It Goes,” featuring PJ Morton of Maroon 5. He also has completed four solo projects, which you can stream on Spotify.

Joe Gransden and Kenny Banks, Sr.

Sunday May 3rd, 2020

A dynamic duo like no other, Joe Gransden is an internationally respected trumpeter and vocalist revered for his hard bop playing style and velvet vocals, while composer and pianist Kenny Banks, Sr. has amazed audiences with his effortless swag and distinct sound.

Gary Motley and Billy Thornton

Monday May 4th, 2020

Known collectively as “To What Extent”, jazz duo Gary Motley and Billy Thornton brought a fascinating yet soothing performance to the AJF Sessions stage.

Revered throughout the jazz industry, Motley is known for his captivating performances and classically modern sound. Celebrated as a formidable artist and composer, he has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Great American Jazz Piano Competition, and the American Composers Forum.

Kenny Banks, Jr.

Tuesday May 5th, 2020

Respected as one of the most dynamic jazz artists in the South-east, pianist Kenny Banks, Jr. has won great acclaim for his genre-blending techniques that mix jazz and gospel styles.

He has performed and recorded around the world with a wide variety of premier artists in the jazz, gospel, R&B, and hip-hop scenes. Banks, Jr. expresses himself through his sophisticated, spirited, and spontaneous sound that creates an optimistic and vibrant experience.

The Myrna Clayton Experience

Wednesday May 6th, 2020

America’s Songbird, Myrna Clayton is beloved for her charming and generous persona, her gifted voice, and authentic performances. As musical ambassadors, Clayton and her band, The Myrna Clayton Experience, represent American Music at US Embassies around the world and has captivated audiences in countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain, Nigeria, Russia, and Belarus with her international sound and mesmerizing vocal ability.

Jeff Sparks

Thursday, May 7th, 2020

A master of energizing the crowd, saxophonist Jeff Sparks brings a one-of-a-kind funk-filled musical experience to every performance. When it comes to fusing jazz music with smooth sounds of R&B, along with hand-clapping gospel, funk, and soul music, few musicians are as savvy and masterful as Jeff Sparks. When Sparks plays, he creates a lively environment fueled by an amazing sound that moves crowds and brings listeners together.

Ryan Kilgore

Friday May 8th, 2020

An exceptional musician, Ryan Kilgore is an international revered saxophonist, who strives to instill the importance of music’s role in the enrichment of the human spirit. Kilgore’s cinematic and modern brand of jazz has amazed audiences on six continents and has been featured on multiple television and film soundtracks from studios such as Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney, 20th Century Fox, and Atlanta’s own Tyler Perry Studios.

Ernest “EQ” Quarles

Saturday May 9th, 2020

A self-taught guitarist and graduate of Morehouse College, this Motown-native’s musical influences include legendary groups such as Gladys Knight & Pips to the iconic Stevie Wonder. Playing with a

gorgeous, mesmerizing sound, Quarles' music is known to excite and energize crowds big and small.

Brenda Nicole Moorer

Sunday, May 10th, 2020

Brenda Nicole Moorer Known for her distinctive vocal ability, Brenda Nicole Moorer is a multi-talented vocalist, songwriter, and actor who explores numerous genres through her music. She has shared stages with a variety of jazz musicians including Christian McBride, Booker T. Jones, Roy Ayers, and Incognito.

Moorer has also headlined the next generation stage at the Atlanta Jazz Festival, the indie stage at Capital Jazz Festival, Friday Jazz at the High Museum of Art, and performed on Good Day Atlanta. She has also received Creative Loafing's "Best Soul & Jazz Vocalist" Award and the National Black Arts Festival NEXT UP award for music, Brenda has been building an audience for her brand of music.

Cleveland P. Jones

Monday May 11th, 2020

Considered to be the true embodiment of soul and jazz, Cleveland P. Jones' music showcases a rare level of artistry that is genuine, heartfelt, and captivating. An exceptional musician, Jones has become a staple in the Atlanta music scene for his rich sound and soulful performances.

In addition, Jones has had the honor of opening for the legendary Chaka Khan, touring Eastern Europe as a solo artist, and releasing two albums. More Recently, the artist appeared in the Netflix movie, "Echo Park."

Julie Dexter

Tuesday, May 12th, 2020

Julie Dexter is a world-renowned, award-winning singer, songwriter, and producer and considered by many to be one of the most influential female vocalists of our generation. Influenced by legends such as Nancy Wilson, Abbey Lincoln, Bob Marley, and Sade, Dexter mixes classic soul with jazz, broken-beat, bossa-nova, reggae, and afro-beat to create a unique musical vibe.

She has shared the spotlight with a host of cutting-edge artists, including Mint Condition, Caron Wheeler, Jill Scott, Lalah Hathaway, Omar, Ledisi, Doug Carn, Third World, and Maxi Priest, to name a few.

Groove Centric

Wednesday, May 13th, 2020

Groove Centric's eclectic blend of R&B, jazz, and blues will take you on a ride crossing through the classics of Miles Davis, the smooth sounds

of Jill Scott, and the head-bopping funk of James Brown and Earth Wind and Fire.

Anonymous da Band

Thursday May 14th, 2020

A multi-talented band made of dynamic young musicians, Anonymous DaBand is predominately known for their smooth urban yet funky sound. The group has performed around the Atlanta area for various benefits, social events, and opened shows for the likes of Najee, Christette Michele, Pieces of a Dream, and other top performers.

Lil' John Roberts and The Senators

Friday, May 15th, 2020

An all-star band composed of some of Atlanta's best musicians, Lil' John Roberts and the Senators' vibrant and fascinating music fills crowds with energy and excitement wherever they perform. Collectively, each member of the band has toured or recorded with top performing artists such as Michael and Janet Jackson, Prince, Stevie Wonder, Bobby Brown, New Edition, Angie Stone, Peabo Bryson, just to name a few.

Tony Hightower

Saturday May 16, 2020

An emerging talent, Tony Hightower is known for his captivating performances and rich sound that bleeds through every note he sings. The singer/ songwriter has performed on stages around the world and has worked with the likes of Outkast, Goody Mob, and Lionel Richie, just to name a few.

The Ojeda Penn Experience Featuring Shazara

Sunday May 17, 2020

An extraordinary jazz pianist, Ojeda Penn uses his music to move the spirit and address social change. With compositions such as "Martin and Malcolm" and "Matthews and Collette", Ojeda creates music to inform, inspire and empower his listeners.

Alexandra Jackson

Monday May 18th, 2020

Alexandra Jackson is an international singer, musician, self-esteem advocate, and the youngest daughter of Atlanta's first African-American mayor, Maynard H. Jackson, Jr.. A graduate of the University of Miami's prestigious Jazz Vocal program, Jackson has performed worldwide, including with Wynton Marsalis and for President Barack Obama. She has performed throughout the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and was the featured performer on NBC's "The Today Show".



Ryan
Kilgore



Gary
Motley



Ernest
"EQ"
Quarles'



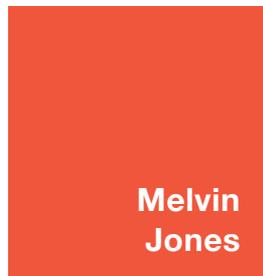
Lil' John
Roberts
and The
Senators



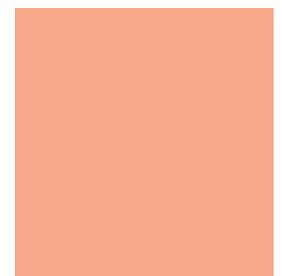
Alexandra
Jackson



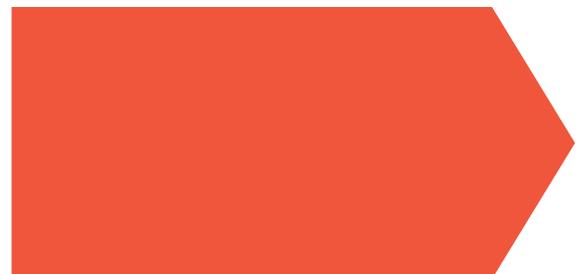
Ojeda
Penn

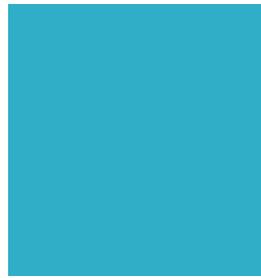


Melvin
Jones

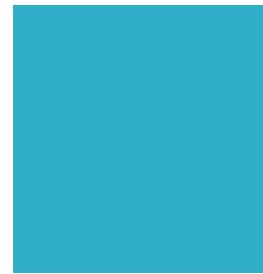
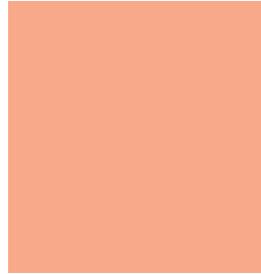
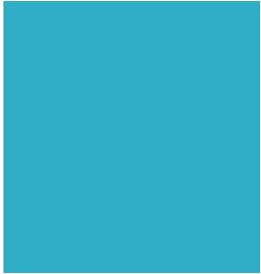


The Sweet
Lu Quartet





Jeff Sparks

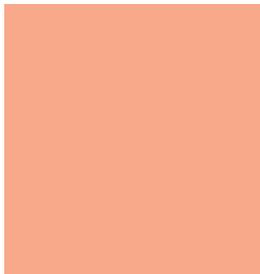


Brenda Nicole Moorner



Darren English

Mace Hibbard Quintet



Avery Dixon

Tyrone Jackson



Myrna Clayton

Joe Gransden





Kebbi Williams

Mace Hibbard Quintet

Tuesday May 19, 2020

A Grammy award-winning saxophonist, composer, and educator, Mace Hibbard has quickly established himself as one of the most exciting and versatile saxophonists on the scene today. He is an artist whose technical mastery and understanding of jazz create a unique sound. In addition to playing in his band, Hibbard's compositions can be found on record with Melvin Jones, Yonrico Scott, Ben Tucker, the Joe Gransden Big Band, Jennifer Holliday, Trey Wright, Dave Frackenpohl, Bryant Thompson, and Marlon Patton.

The Sweet Lu Quartet

Wednesday May 20, 2020

An internationally acclaimed Jazz vocalist, "Sweet" Lu Olutosin has headlined stages from the Kennedy Center in DC to the Teatro Rendano in Cosenza, Italy, bringing audiences to their feet with every performance. Olutosin's music have been characterized as an explosion of soul, blues, and gospel rhythms mixed together to create a unique and majestic blend of jazz.

Darren English

Thursday May 21, 2020

A South African native, Darren English is an Atlanta based musician who has performed and recorded with some of the most respected jazz artists, including Grammy Award Winning bassist Victor Wooten, Emmy Award Winner Luke Putney, and Atlanta's own Grammy Nominated trumpeter Russell Gunn and his Royal Krunk Jazz Orchestra, just to name a few. English has been lauded for his strong hard-bop playing style, well- developed technique, and magnificent sound. Full of vivid imagination and amazing compositions, English's performance will leave you filled with astonishment.

Gritz and Jelly Butler

Friday May 22nd, 2020

Gritz and Jelly Butler is a captivating trio of musicians who provide an eclectic blend of original music, covers, and jazz in a seamless show. The trio has wowed audiences with their authenticity and upbeat performances throughout the Southeast and the world. The rhythmic combination of live keyboard, drums, and bass will awaken your senses, and de- light your ears.

At only 19-years old, Avery Dixon, Saxophone Extraordinaire, possess a remarkable talent that has impressed even the most seasoned jazz veterans. With his God-given talent, Dixon has wowed fans with his powerful and amazing saxophone skills, even garnering accolades from President Barack Obama. The young saxophonist has also received numerous awards for his talent, including the "2018 Musician

of the Year” award from the Tommie Smith Youth Initiative.

Kathleen Bertrand

Sunday May 24, 2020

A multi-faceted recording artist and songwriter, Kathleen Bertrand is a native Atlantan, whose soulful performances have graced two Olympic Games, two presidents, and countless appearances at jazz festivals worldwide. Bertrand’s fan base spans the United States as well as Europe, Japan, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand. As a songwriter, she penned the national theme song for the 100 Black Men of America – “What They See is What They’ll Be” – as well as several songs on her albums “All of Me”, “No Regrets”, “Reasons for the Season”, “New Standards”, “Katharsis”, and “It’s Time to Love”.

Melvin Jones

Monday, May 25, 2020

A Memphis native, Melvin Jones has been a force on multiple fronts of the music scene for nearly two decades. The highly regarded Trumpeter, Composer, and Educator earned his first Grammy Award while attending Morehouse College in Atlanta. After completing his formal studies, Melvin went on to serve as Head Band Director at Morehouse College for nearly a decade.

His trumpeting skills and arranging work can be heard on nearly 200 recordings across various genres. In addition, Jones’ trumpet can be heard on multiple television programs, movies, and nationally syndicated award shows, including the BET Awards.

Tyrone Jackson

Tuesday May 26, 2020

Described as a quintessential jazz pianist, Tyrone Jackson’s vast creativity, coupled with his harmonic mastery, creates an amazing sound that delights all who hear it. Jackson has performed with the likes of Steve Turre, Carmen Bradford, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Jennifer Holliday, Russell Gunn, Russell Malone, and Marcus Miller, to name a few.

As a composer, Jackson has composed original music for Pulitzer Prize-winning author Natasha Trethewey’s book of poems, turned theatrical play, “Native Guard”, and Pearl Cleage’s play, “Tell Me My Dream”, “Ethel” and the Alliance Theater production of “Nick’s Flamingo Grill.”

Karla Harris

Wednesday, May 27th, 2020

Known for her dynamic delivery and diversity, Karla Harris has amazed audiences from Portland, OR to Provence, France, and she has performed at numerous jazz festivals, including the Sarasota Jazz

Festival, Portland Jazz Festival, Oregon Coast Jazz Party, Nantucket Arts Festival, and Atlanta Jazz Party.

In addition to performing, writing, and recording, Harris is an artist-in-residence at Kennesaw State University teaching Applied Vocal Jazz to aspiring singers within the Jazz Studies department.

Russell Gunn

Thursday, May 28, 2020

A pioneer of the Jazz/Trap movement, Russell Gunn is one of the most prolific musicians of our time and has produced two Grammy-nominated recordings, “Ethnomusicology” Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.

Throughout his career, Gunn has played with some of the most notable artists in jazz and urban music, including Wynton Marsalis, Maxwell, D’Angelo, Angie Stone, Jimmy Heath, Roy Hargrove, Lou Reed, Cee Lo Green, Young Jeezy, and Harry Connick, Jr., to name a few.

Kebbi Williams

Friday, May 29, 2020

A Grammy award-winning saxophonist, Kebbi Williams is one of contemporary music’s most innovative improvisers.

A lover of avant-garde jazz, hip-hop, Afro-beat, gospel, electronica, classical and fiery rock, Williams imaginative mix of sound defies categorization yet blends multiple music genres into a harmonic balance. The spirited saxophonist has toured and collaborated with some of the most notable artists in the industry, including OutKast, Donald Byrd, Cee-Lo Green, Mos Def, Bilal, Russell Gunn, and Julie Dexter.

Mose Davis

Saturday, May 30, 2020

A classically trained at the Detroit Conservatory of Music, Mose Davis is an exceptional jazz artist and a prominent fixture on the Atlanta music scene. He has performed with the likes of Candi Staton, The Isley Brothers, Marlena Shaw, David Ruffin, Ray Parker, Jr., The Counts, Funkadelics, and Carl Anderson. Not to mention, Davis’ sound has been sampled by some of the biggest names in hip-hop, including Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, and Queen Latifah.

Joe Gransden and Kenny Banks, Sr.

Encore performance Sunday, May 31st, 2020



Tony Hightower

**CREATIVE ART
PROFESSIONALS
SUPPORTED BY THE CITY OF
ATLANTA MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC SHUTDOWN**

Pandemic Atlanta Poets & Writers

Ahmariah Jackson
Bethsheba (Queen Sheba) Ren Bryant
Pearl Cleage
Keith O'Hara
Corey L. Cokes
Cydnei Prather/The Tiny Theater Co.
Eboni Holmes
Felton Eaddy
Johnathon Goode
Kiera A. Nelson
Lisa Tuttle Studio
Nathaniel Borrell Dyer
Opal J. Moore
Rhonda Racha Penrice
Sabreen Jolley
Tommy Bottoms
Theresa Davis
Young T. Hughley Jr.

Pandemic Atlanta Photographers

Carolyn Grady
Connie G. Cross
Evelyn Quinones
Jena P. Jones
Julie Yarbrough
Ken West
Lisa M. Zunzanyika
Melissa Alexander
Marie Thomas
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Tokie Rome Taylor

Pandemic Atlanta Choreographers

Julie Baggenstoss
Shaquille Bailey
Ania Bartelmus
Mallory Baxley
DeWayne Brown
Raianna Brown
Veronica Cato
Indya Childs
Vanessa Chisolm
Patricia Collins
Beth Del Nero
Corian Ellis
Lindsay Giedl
Tamara Irving

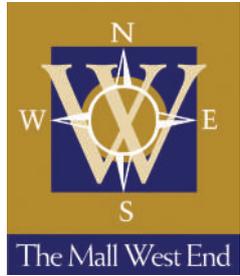
TereLyn Jones
Andrea Knowlton
Jacob Lavoie
Waverly Lucas
Guilherme Maciel
Carolyn McLaughlin
Catherine Messina
Raina Mitchell
Emma Morris
Monica Noble
Ashlee Ramsey
Lindsay Renea
Otis Sallid
Douglas Scott
Patrick Smith
Danielle Swatzie
Leland Thorpe
Courtney Walker
Kathleen Wessel
Ahmed Zakzouk
Nadya Zeitlin

Atlanta Jazz Festival Sessions Performers

The Phil Davis Quartet Mike Burton Joe
Gransden Kenny Banks, Sr.
Gary Motley Billy Thornton
Kenny Banks, Jr.
The Myrna Clayton Experience
Jeff Sparks
Ryan Kilgore
Ernest "EQ" Quarles'
Brenda Nicole Moorer
Cleveland P. Jones
Julie Dexter
Groove Centric
Anonymous da Band
Lil' John Roberts and The Senators
Tony Hightower
Ojeda Penn Experience Alexandra
Jackson Mace Hibbard
The Sweet Lu Quartet Darren English
Gritz and Jelly Butler Avery Dixon
Kathleen Bertrand Melvin Jones
Tyrone Jackson
Karla Harris
Russell Gunn
Kebbi Williams
Mose Davis

Pandemic Atlanta Visual Artist Art On Loan Purchases

Addison Adams
Andrew Crawford
Antonio Darden
Ashley D Thomas
Austin Blue
Charmaine Minniefield
Corrina Sephora
Danny Campbell
Ervin Johnson
Freddie Styles
George F Baker III
Gilbert Young
Gregor Turk
Jamaal Barber
Jason Kofke
Jessica Caldes
Jim Alexander
Joseph McKinney
Kevin Cole
Lauren Palotta Stumberg
Lisa Tuttle
Lynn Linnemeier
Michael Reese
Monica Tookes
Muhammad Yungai
Okeeba Jubalo
Phil Winter
Roxane Hollosi
Sabre Esler
Sachi Rome
Sanithna Phansavanh
Selma Glass



St. Anthony of Padua



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Kevin Sipp, Project Supervisor

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Brandon Sheats, Digital Producer
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Pandemic Atlanta 2020

George Gomez, Graphic Designer

