

SAAR

MOSCOW-PULLMAN  
**DAILY NEWS**

**Social justice,  
artistic impact:** WSU exhibit  
showcases 20 visions of Black Lives Matter  
movement and the fight against systemic racism

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Artist Alison Saar speaks to an audience while discussing her art exhibit, "Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison Saar, From the Collections of Jordan D Schnitzer and His Family Foundation" at the WSU Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on Tuesday afternoon in Pullman – Zach Wilkinson/Daily News



Spectators view a statue called "Hooch n' Hoochie Coochie" created by artist Alison Saar  
– Zach Wilkinson/Daily News



Teresa Sroufe, of Lodi, Cali., views wall art by Alison Saar as Saar speaks to an audience while discussing her art exhibit, “Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison Saar, From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation” at the WSU Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on Tuesday Afternoon in Pullman. – Pete Caster/Daily News

Working in an array of visual media, artists have given life to their visions of the Black Lives Matter movement at Washington State University’s latest exhibition at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum.

The museum’s “Black Lives Matter Artist Grant Exhibition” showcases 20 Washington artists who each received a \$2,500 grant to create art that communicates the voices, experiences and artistic expression of social justice efforts in response to systemic racism.

One of the featured artists, Rene Westbrook, has used various media to explore the persistence of racism in American society. As a child, she saw the posters and protests of the civil rights movement and felt inspired. By

the time she was 13, social activism had become a large part of her background.

“I had a voice, but I didn’t have the language,” Westbrook said. “The visual construct of imagery became far more the language for me.”

Her latest works, paintings called “Hieroglyphs of Hate” and “Deliverance,” are featured in the exhibition. “Hieroglyphs of Hate” includes 16 panels illustrating the pain and suffering imposed on Black people.

The Black Lives Matter movement is important to Westbrook because it changes the way people think. Instead of emphasizing Black bodies, it brings attention to Black lives. As long as Black people were seen as bodies, she said they could be owned, beaten or castrated.

“The Black Lives Matter movement has many generations,” Westbrook said. “There’s a lineage, a direct line, from Africans in America whose lives were not considered anything other than property. Their bodies were important, but not their lives.”

Other artists featured in the exhibition include Aisha Harrison, Lisa Myers Bulmash, Hasaan Kirkland, Troy Riley Miles, Jasmine Iona Brown, Robert J Lloyd, Grace June, Zinda K Foster, Whitney Evans, Jennifer Kuhns, Cynthia Camlin, Myron Curry, Jackie Schaubel, Derek E Johnson, Maya Milton, Bonnie Hopper, Tracy Poindexter-Canton, Damon Brown and Felicia Follum.

The display runs through Dec. 18, and the museum is open from 1-4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Another exhibition, “Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison Saar,” celebrated its opening Wednesday alongside the other works. It will be on display until March 12.

Alison Saar is a Los Angeles-based artist practicing sculpting and printmaking. “I love how reflections and shadows kind of reveal who we are truly,” Saar said. “Because I identify as Black but appear to be white, I always feel like I need to show the Black shadow of myself.”

That sentiment is what inspired her pieces in “Mirror, Mirror,” and is particularly evident in “Mulatta Seeking Inner Negress,” where she shows a pale-skinned woman looking for her reflection in a skillet. A Black woman is seen staring back.

“She’s looking in this mirror of the skillet, and it’s giving her a reflection of her ancestry,” she said. “Her Black self is not necessarily perceived because of the likeness of her skin.”

Jordan Schnitzer, president of The Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, said he hopes the artworks bring awareness to racial injustice.

“I would hope that everyone who comes in and sees this exhibition leaves thinking about their own values and how they can do a better job,” Schnitzer said. “The Black Lives Matter movement has hopefully shaken everyone in this country to their core, whether they thought they had any racist tendencies or not.”

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