



**A LOVE  
SUPREME**

**MCCORMICK HOUSE  
REIMAGINED**

*Curated by Norman Teague  
& Rose Camara*

**ELMHURST  
ART  
MUSEUM**

**ART, EDUCATION  
& ARCHITECTURE**

**GALLERY  
GUIDE**

**JANUARY 20 - APRIL 28, 2024**

## MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

*A Love Supreme* seeks to provide a new narrative about the bold, bright, and vast number of designers who are the future of American design. For the McCormick House installation, curators Norman Teague and Rose Camara ask, "What is your Coltrane story? Who awakened you personally and artistically?" The exhibit celebrates a variety of jazz and jazz-influenced influences on Chicago design, and will include key musical performances throughout its run.

*A Love Supreme* is part of Art Design Chicago, a citywide collaboration initiated by the Terra Foundation for American Art that highlights the city's artistic heritage and creative communities. It is sponsored by the Terra Foundation for American Art, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and in part by a grant from the League of Chicago Theatres and ComEd. With programming in partnership with Elmhurst University Department of Music.

*A Love Supreme: McCormick House Reimagined* is co-curated by Norman Teague and Rose Camara. This exhibition is presented in partnership with the Chipstone Foundation.



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**MUSIC IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE HUMAN HEART,  
OF THE HUMAN BEING ITSELF. IT DOES EXPRESS  
JUST WHAT IS HAPPENING... IT EXPRESSES  
THE WHOLE OF A HUMAN EXPERIENCE AT THE  
PARTICULAR TIME IT IS BEING EXPRESSED.**

**- JOHN COLTRANE, 1966**

A gong is struck followed by lilting piano chords, shimmering cymbals, rhythmic bass, and then the drums—sounds made whole by mesmerizing “sheets of sound” from John Coltrane’s saxophone. A truly original aural experience unfolds as we are drawn into the musician’s 1965 seminal album *A Love Supreme*.

Coltrane’s “free jazz” masterpiece was recorded in a single session and divided into four movements reverently titled “Acknowledgement”, “Resolution”, “Pursuance”, and “Psalm”. The session literally was an act of pure improvisation. At the same time, it also was an act of healing and redemption that reflected a deep spiritual awakening and belief in God’s omnipotence—what Coltrane described as “truly a love supreme.” The recording goes beyond merely expressing the musician’s religious sensibilities and speaks more fully to his entire lived experience. How does one describe such a moment? This inevitably will differ from person to person. In jazz and in the larger world of visual art the term “flow state” describes that level of consciousness where the ability to make is the result of unbridled creativity, exploration, investigation, and improvisation. Creating becomes a type of meditative state, and life’s journey an abundant well from which to draw motivation. For the purpose of this exhibition, which is inspired by *A Love Supreme*, we are invoking a new term to describe the vast array of experiences that inspire acts of human artistic expression: The Coltrane Moment.

Coltrane’s legendary record was the sum of many parts. Likewise, within this small Modernist space— Mies van der Rohe’s McCormick House—we imagine not only a gallery but a home, a moment, a world, and a set of beliefs that together highlight the immense power of Black and Brown creativity. We invite you into a reimagining of this space through the consideration of 35 BIPOC artists and the voicing of their own Coltrane Moments. Much in the way that *A Love Supreme* was a musical evocation of Coltrane’s spirituality, memories, hardships, and triumphs, each of these talented makers had their own epiphanies, rooted in music, spirituality, the body, and movement. Reflect on each artist and consider their words, their musical inspirations, and of course their work. Perhaps they even relate to your own Coltrane Moments.

**The QR codes that follow link to songs selected by the  
artists that inspire their lives, work, or artistic practice.  
Tap twice in your camera app to launch and enjoy!**



**OR scan here for  
the full combined  
exhibit playlist.**



## MUSIC

The word "music" comes from the Greek term *mousikhē teknē*, which means "the art of the muses". As such, music is not simply a set of harmonious sounds or a nice melody but, in fact, an inspiration, catalyst, energizer, healer. From the most sacred moments to the most mundane tasks, music gives energy to our day-to-day in so many unexpected ways. For example, music is a keeper of time, both in tempo and duration, and helps to time fly by faster or move along slower. Music is also a means of worship. Even in our own secular worlds music can cause a trance-like state, channeling emotions and memories that are beyond words. Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* has had this transitory effect on people for decades. When listening, the rest of the world falls away and the body is enveloped in the sounds.

In this exhibition, we link *A Love Supreme* to art. In so many ways the two go hand-in-hand. Rhythm, tempo, and lyrics have the power to give shape to sounds but also to shape objects and images, to drive the artist's energy and their desire to make.

Some of the artists and designers in this exhibition were directly inspired by John Coltrane, while others were motivated by other genres such as jazz, funk, house, blues, hip hop and film scores. Improvisation and play materialize. The austere angles of Mies van der Rohe's initial design are enlivened by movement, repetition, organic shapes, color, found objects and assemblage.

01



**Steve Bravo**

***Light & Heavy Heart, 2023***

Resin

Lent by the artist

"Make peace with yourself  
Before you can love another  
Understand who and what you are  
Before you can go any further  
You can lie all you wanna  
But one day you're gonna, gonna break down  
Break down and let it all out"

"The song that consistently finds its place in every single one of my playlists is "You Can't Hide From Yourself" by Teddy Pendergrass. There are times when I will listen to this song on repeat for almost an entire day. There are very few songs that affect my mood in an uplifting way; this song is always a guarantee. The way that Teddy soulfully charges in with the truth about you, about me, and about us is the daily reminder I need. It reminds me that my happiness, my peace, and my understanding of myself are essential to my human experiences and to how I am experienced by others."

***You Can't Hide  
From Yourself -  
Teddy Pendergrass***



02



*Happy Feelin's*  
- Maze, Frankie  
Beverly



**Brandon Breaux and Alex Carter**  
***Tote Coat*, 2022**

Silkscreen on raw canvas

Lent by the artists

"This work employs concepts of improvisation and sampling through a need to problem solve around waste. I accumulated a huge collection of tote bags in my apartment over the years and I started to think about the best way to repurpose the items so they don't end up in a landfill. The solution was to create a garment that is the polar opposite of fast fashion, making an undeniable garment/piece of art that wouldn't make sense to discard. In addition to this the piece serves as a form of self-portrait as the tote bags themselves tell a story of the interests and life of the donor (in this case me). "You are what you buy." is also the idea and in a way it borrows from the work of Barbara Kruger - "I shop therefore I am" striking a chord about the idea of consuming goods being used as a method to establish status and social climb."

- Brandon Breaux

03



*Workinonit* -  
J Dilla



**Roger Carter**  
***A Trane*, 2023**

Broken records

Lent by the artist

"Music plays a major role in art. Coltrane's music got me through college."

04



**Juan de la Mora**  
***Manipulación*, 2002**

Museum board, spray paint, piano wire, foam core  
Lent by the artist

05



**Juan de la Mora**  
***Cuatro Caminos*, 2001**

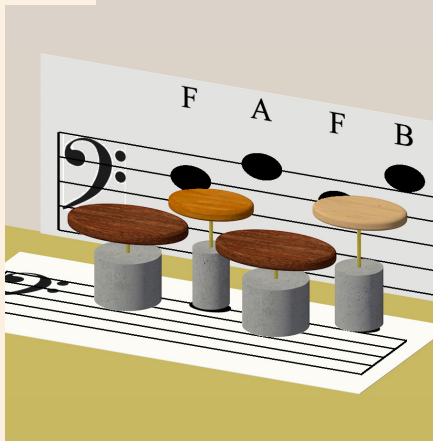
Museum board, acrylic, spray paint, plywood  
Lent by the artist

"*A Love Supreme* had an enormous significance for me when I dropped out of Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid (ETSAM) in 2005. Shortly after, I left Spain, and moved to Portugal to pursue an artist residency. In Portugal, I was introduced to the album, which freed my mind from architecture, and focused my attention on art. Ironically, the more I played the album, the more I wanted to go back to school. After two years, I returned to Chicago to finish and graduate with a bachelor's in architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). These models represent two student projects from Madrid that I selected for this exhibition. I revisited my frustrations in Madrid through the models, by finding peace in repairing, adding scale figures, and trees to them, while re-listening to *A Love Supreme* with a different ear and heart".

*My Favorite Things*  
- John Coltrane



06



*Pt. I  
Acknowledgment  
- John Coltrane*



**Brian Keith Ellison**  
***F-A-F-B Collection*, 2023**

Solid walnut, polished concrete,  
satin finished brass

Lent by the artist

"Listening to Coltrane's first piece "Acknowledgement", on the album *A Love Supreme*, I was immediately captured by the repetitive 4 beat/3 note repetition of "F-A-F-B". Recently becoming a student of Bass guitar, I became obsessed in playing this basic pattern, where these notes are represented on the Staff in Bass Clef notation.

For this exhibition, I designed a concept where these notes are represented by a collection of 4 small sofa tables, where both the design proportions and placement of the tables correspond to the repetitive beat in Coltrane's piece "Acknowledgement": These tables are made from a combination of Maple, Walnut, Ash, Steel, and Concrete. The heights of the tables, and the size of the tops also abstractly represent the "F-A-F-B" Staff pattern of the notes."

07



*I Can't Breathe -  
Tony Smith*



**Tony Smith**  
***Kinda Blue*, 2010**

Photograph

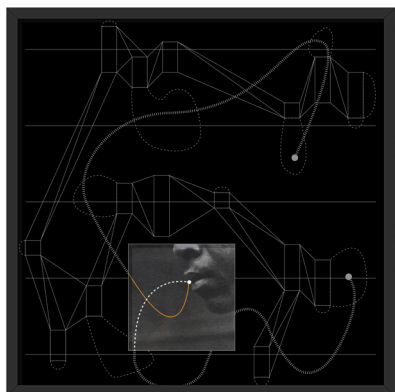
Lent by the artist

"I fell in love with John Coltrane and Bebop music as a teen, listening to my parents Jazz and Blues album collections. Growing up the '70s I joined the Mendel High school jazz band, and performed at our talent shows. I was blessed to be surrounded by the sons of Chicago music legends, i.e., Curtis Mayfield, Ramsey Lewis and Phil Upchurch. I was not an exceptional musician like my peers, but I loved the feeling of playing Jazz, Blues and R&B music. My instruments of choice were the electric guitar and piano.

My mother awakened me personally and artistically in the second grade as she taught me the basics of the piano. She used to sing and play the organ in church while growing up in Mississippi. My dad bought me my first guitar, and Minolta camera in the fifth grade. His love of photography inspired me to photograph people, and ultimately become a portrait photographer and documentary filmmaker.

The rest is history."

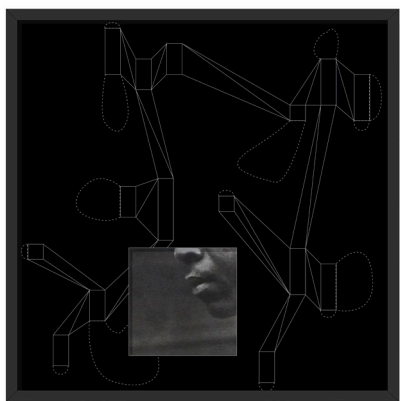
08



**Andres L. Hernandez**  
***Supreme A. (With the Love, Love) Score I, 2023***

Hand-altered gatefold LP covers,  
engraved acrylic sheets, acrylic paint  
Lent by the artist

09



**Andres L. Hernandez**  
***Supreme A. (With the Love, Love) Score II, 2023***

Hand-altered gatefold LP covers,  
engraved acrylic sheets, acrylic paint  
Lent by the artist

"I was raised in a music-filled household. My father was an avid record collector and semi-professional DJ. Vinyl records and audio equipment literally surrounded me at home. My father was most fond of jazz, especially bebop. Charlie "Yardbird" Parker was his favorite musician, and he nicknamed me "Bird" in his honor. John Coltrane was another favorite, and I grew to love *Blue Train*, *Giant Steps*, and *My Favorite Things*. *A Love Supreme* is the most transcendent album I have ever heard.

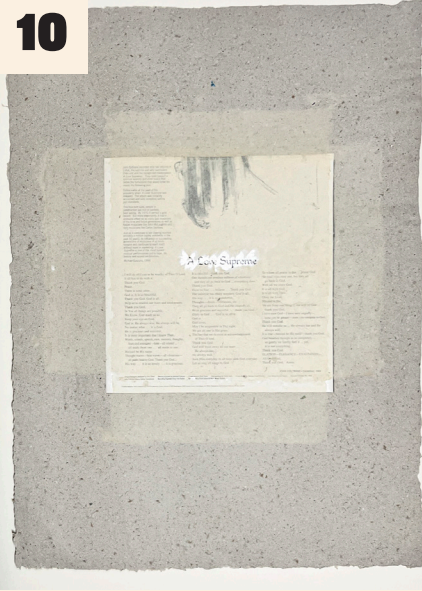
*Supreme A. (With the Love, Love) Scores I & II* creatively interpolates the vinyl LP format of *A Love Supreme*. The gatefold album cover is hand-altered and paired with original graphic notations for sound. The notations are scored into new acrylic covers, with cut-outs partially revealing Coltrane's face below. In the sonic absence of the framed album, the notations serve as visual prompts to be interpreted for future performances."

***Pt. II Resolution -***  
***John Coltrane***





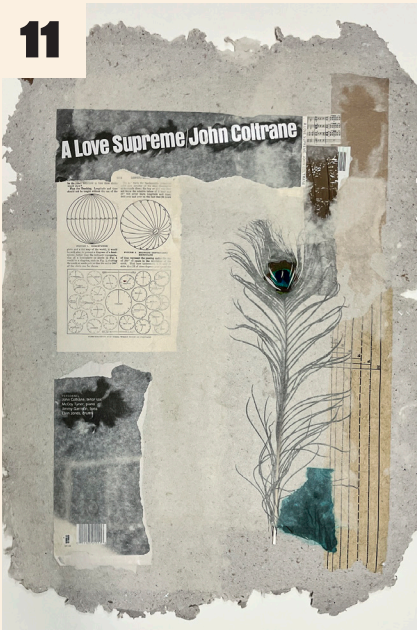
10



**Krista Franklin**  
***Resolution*, 2023**

Collage in handmade paper  
Lent by the artist

11



**Krista Franklin**  
***Psalm*, 2023**

Album cover in handmade paper  
Lent by the artist

"1990. Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues* was my introduction to the brilliance of John Coltrane. "Acknowledgement" was one of the songs in that movie, and when I heard it I became instantly curious about it and the work of Coltrane. I've always loved music and records were my main mode of listening growing up. Since my work deals primarily in paper, I now see album covers as material. The works I'm submitting for this exhibition incorporate the albums of John Coltrane."

**FOMO -**  
**April + Vista**



12



*The Inflated Tear  
(Live) - Rahsaan  
Roland Kirk*



**Norman Teague / Fo Wilson  
*Improv*, 2018**

Plastic, brass instruments, wood frame  
Lent by the artists

"This piece, aptly named, came together during a few days in my former Chicago studio. Using remnants of an Ikea chair, found instruments, chair parts and scrap wood, Norman and I originally made this work for an Object Society popup exhibition displayed in the Montauk showroom for the 2018 iteration of NeoCon. It references African American improvisation techniques that are essential to the development of jazz idioms and methodology, a unique American musical genre."

- Fo Wilson

13



*Pt. I  
Acknowledgment  
- John Coltrane*



**Norman Teague / Florence Knoll  
*Sofa, Exhibit #2 Quilted*, 1954**

Steel frame, upholstery collaboration  
Lent by the artist

"Through the years Coltrane's music has provided me with creative inspiration and freedom, but I feel even more affinity to him because of his personal struggles and artistic journey. I see parallels of his life in my own tragic failures and successes, and similarly have a deep dedication to perfect my craft."

\* This image is #1 Quilted and not featured in the exhibition.

## LISTENING LOUNGE

In music a *rest* is “an interval of silence, a break in between the actual musical notes.” The intention of the Listening Lounge is to similarly be a space for rest in order to focus on music more closely. In BIPOC communities acts of rest, recovery, and rejuvenation are forms of resistance for bodies that have historically been exploited for labor. When a body at rest is allowed to stay at rest, it creates an opportunity to relax, to reflect, to commune and to have conversations.

You are invited in this space to experience the exhibition by physically and aurally participating in the art and design—to get a fuller sense of the Coltrane Moments experienced by some of the artists in the exhibition.

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**Paul Branton**  
***Evolution of My Man***  
***Trane, 2023***

Found speakers, acrylic, oil pastel

Lent by the artist

“In creating this piece, I thought about Coltrane’s sobriety and my father’s lifelong struggle with alcohol and substances. I stacked the speakers upon each other to show the evolution of a man. On the surface I begin to paint multiple portraits in various styles, perspectives, and colors. Our journey in life is never one direction nor monochromatic; it’s filled with twists, both sunny and dark days. Hopefully we are all evolving along the way.”

*Naima – John*  
*Coltrane*



15



**Julius C. Dorsey**  
***Credenza*, 2023**

Cherry wood  
Lent by the artist

"My awakening as an artist was triggered by my mother and father. They weren't artists by trade, but they were marketers and taught me to look at the world from a place of curiosity."

*Liberation -  
OutKast*



16



**Daniel Overbey**  
***Lotus Chair*, 2023**

Laminated plywood and cotton upholstery  
Lent by the artist

"Since before I could speak (according to my mother's records), I have had a love for jazz. I grew up in a house full of music, but it was always the Bebop classics and jazz standards that resonated. I was raised in North Carolina and expected to spend my life there. Then, an abrupt move to Oakland, CA made me feel disconnected from my roots. I was then introduced to John Coltrane's album *Giant Steps* and found myself entranced, listening cross-legged as I fell in love with a new sound and a new city.

This piece facilitates the relaxed and mindful listening posture that I found myself taking when first experiencing Coltrane."

*Giant Steps -  
John Coltrane*





**The People's Radio**  
- Sadie Woods



**Sadie Woods**  
***The People's Radio*, 2021-22**  
Sound sculpture, installation  
Lent by the artist

*"The People's Radio* sound sculpture is an entertainment center complete with a bookcase and radio speaker. This sound sculpture is created from a variety of sources, including media, books, ephemeral objects, and a radio broadcast featuring cultural sounds, political speeches from the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and chairman Fred Hampton, and oral histories contextualized and propelled through Black music. *The People's Radio* explores radio as a technology developed and pioneered by the U.S. military industrial complex as political warfare and later made available for consumer markets often for home entertainment and social gatherings. Here, public radio is utilized as a conduit for Black expressive culture and radical imagination, emphasizing resistance during times of social unrest in aims to recuperate and make legible repressed histories, reminding us of the political dimensions under the surface of Black life."

# SPIRITUALITY

John Coltrane's struggle with alcohol and heroin eventually caused him to be fired from Miles Davis' band. After this setback in his career, Coltrane experienced relapses but also empowering victories over his addictions, and he ultimately found redemption through the creation *A Love Supreme* – a suite of songs dedicated to his devotion to God. The musician's religious commitment was not expressed strictly towards a Christian god. Though raised a Christian, Coltrane sought inspiration from other belief systems such as Islam, Hinduism, Jewish Mysticism, and Zen Buddhism. He likewise expressed openness towards secular philosophies of the ancient Greeks, cosmology, and African history, stating "I believe in all religions, the truth itself doesn't have any name on it to me, and each man has to find it for himself."

Coltrane's open mindedness here is entirely logical. After all, spirituality is defined differently from person to person. It is an intimate and profoundly personal experience that cannot be summed up in words or emotions. Rather, religiosity and spirituality can be a great many things, which can leave the body awash with feelings of inspiration, awe, pleasure, joy, comfort, peace, etc. The Coltrane Moment for these artists is similar in that they are inspired by music, art, faith, as well as by ancestor veneration, geographical origins, tribal histories and belief systems, cosmology, and rituals.

18



**Funlola Coker**

***Ailopin*, 2023**

Copper, alabaster

Lent by the artist

"The overarching themes of my research are recollection, imagination, and the surreal, connecting me to multiple aspects of my culture. Embracing the literary style of biomythography, I build new narratives and sanctuaries of comfort with objects that stand in for lost memories. Through the immigrant lens I tell stories of slippery, liminal spaces - dream-like and half remembered, yet sacred. The longer I am away from home without regular visits, the more I find myself questioning my perceptions and experiences.

I am interested in my personal history, ancestry, Yoruba cosmology, the intricacies of Yorubaland, and what brings people together. These manifest as objects, offerings and acts of care towards myself and others. I examine how these gestures and phenomena live within our consciousness. This piece uses stone and metal because I feel a deep connection to those materials through my ancestry as well as the process I explore. Carving, chiseling, and electroforming lend themselves to the act of memory recollection and recreation.

Yoruba people celebrate music in all aspects of life, from small gatherings and community celebrations. I am inspired by the tonal Yoruba language and the ability to communicate through drumbeats. As I explore Yoruba history, and cosmology in my life and work I find music embedded in our culture."

*Osondu - The Cavemen*



19



**Obiora Nwazota**

***Ikenga (Horns Down), 2023***

Resin

Lent by the artist

**Obiora Nwazota**

***Ikenga (Horns Up), 2023***

Resin

Lent by the artist

20



***No Agreement  
- Fela Kuti***



"Ikenga - God of fortune and industry. Ikenga ("place of strength") is a horned Alusi (deity) of the Igbo people in southeastern Nigeria. Ikenga is a personal god of human endeavor, achievement, success, and victory. Ikenga is grounded in the belief that the power for a man to accomplish things is in his right hand. He is the Alusi of Time, Success and Achievement. This is a ritual object that is being re-imagined for contemporary lifestyles.

Music is a vital component of my creative journey, delves deeply into exploring my Igbo heritage. My process often unfolds in solitude, where music induces tranquility, enhancing creativity. The trance-like African rhythms act as a spiritual gateway, deepening my Igbo connection.

Nigerian music's rich diversity inspires me. Its indigenous, continental, and global influences reflect modern African hybrid culture. My influences range from experimental to popular genres, deeply connected to Nigerian childhood memories. This spectrum includes reggae, dub, Congolese soukous, highlife, Afrobeat, Afrobeats, juju, and '70s Afro rock. Fela Kuti, an Afrobeat icon, profoundly inspires me. His music, with its African essence, connects diaspora members to their roots. It's not just music, but a statement against Western dominance, celebrating African values. This narrative empowers Africans and challenges global African perceptions. My design career has tackled African heritage underrepresentation. Fela's celebration of African identity has guided my journey, embracing African roots. His political and social themes - colonialism, corruption, human rights - inspire exploration of Black history and struggles. Influenced by Fela, I founded Okpara House. It's a platform using design, dialogue, and research to reinvigorate Igbo culture. We aim to assert Igbo culture's relevance in contemporary life, within and beyond the community. Fela's global impact mirrors our ambition to elevate Igbo culture worldwide."

21



**Marvell Lahens**  
***You're Invited*, 2023**

Steel, polypropylene  
Lent by the artist

"Aretha Franklin and Mahalia Jackson anchored the soundtrack for much of my childhood. Early Saturday mornings, as we prepared for church, their voices would ring loudly through our home, serving as a form of worship, before worship. I'll never forget the feelings I experienced of inexplicable and transcendent elevation as the music surrounded my very being. In those moments, I would almost feel beside myself. To this day, their voices bring me to that other plane, elevating all my senses, allowing me to feel and to observe and to think and to see and to hear and to...be. When those things come together, I tend to find myself in a place where I can make.

*You're invited* explores the tension between the inaccessible pinnacle of design and its purveyors, and the utilitarian, often denigrated aesthetic that inhabits the halls and homes of Black America. In reappropriating one of the seminal contributions to modern design, the Barcelona Chair by Mies Van Der Rohe, *You're invited* not only makes this contrast plain, but through it's amalgamation of at times polar histories and aesthetics, offers a boundary crossing moment, pushing a representation of the Black aesthetic (though not at all monolithic) to the forefront, and demanding it's place within the walls of an ivory tower."

***Be Real Black for Me - Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway***



22



**Sadie Woods**  
***Soothsayer*, 2020**

Wood, aluminum, paper, silver leaf, music composition  
Lent by the artist

"Soothsayer is an exploration of Arawakan and Taino traditions, cultural practices and spiritual relationship with trees. Trees have been sacred for prayer, connection to the spirit world, and also functioned as burial sites for loved ones. This sound sculpture is made of poplar (which has uses and healing properties for love and abundance, banishment and protection, divination, and communication within inter dimensional realities) and spruce (for healing and protection, renewal and resilience.) This sculpture plays original compositions and reworked pop and folk songs that function as a fork of storytelling, cultural memory, and preservation."

***Soothsayer (Dancing in the Streets EDIT) - Sadie Woods***



23



Naima -  
Bobby Matos

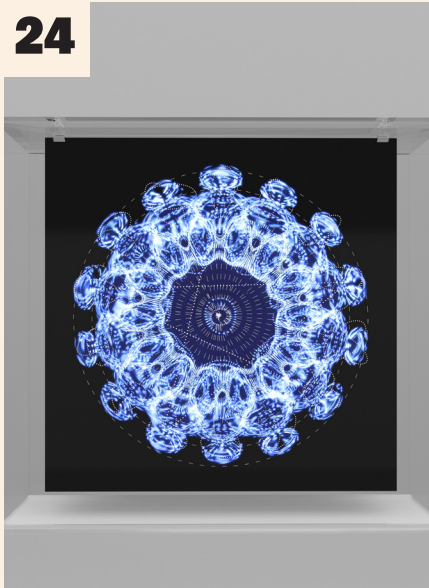


**Roger Noel**  
***Conversatin' Ritual Seat*, 2023**

Reclaimed wood, paint  
Lent by the artist

"This piece springs from two sources: an Adinkra symbol called 'House of Peace' that I've painted and the other is a healing ritual that aims to resolve intractable conflicts with conversations. Malidoma Patrice Somé depicted this practice in his book titled *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community*. Facing away from each other, the participants draw a circle around the seat in chalk, then they take turns speaking about the matter. One critical part is that the parties have their backbones touching while they speak. It is thought that the vertebral column has a resonant ability that amplifies the words that come from the heart. After the chat folks wash each other's hands, symbolically washing their hands of the matter. The House of Peace Adinkra made more sense to me when I flipped it sideways. Then it seemed to depict a celestial house above a terrestrial abode, an image reminiscent of the occult phrase "as above so below." Restoring peace to the Souls of hurting folks seems a worthy goal, music and other healing rituals make it possible."

24



Naima - John  
Coltrane



**Suchi Reddy**  
***Autophysio poetic (drawing)*,  
2023**

Durajet UV print  
Lent by the artist

"*A Love Supreme* was an epiphany, a brainstorm, and a revelation. It made me understand music as a synthesis of vibrational movement through time, in space, to generate emotion: much like architecture. The ethos of my practice, distilled into the mantra "form follows feeling" was influenced by Coltrane's mastery. My personal ritual, for decades, has been to start my Sundays with *A Love Supreme*. "*Autophysio poetic*" is an exploration of spirituality as a three-dimensional vibration, and a play on the word "autophysio psychic", coined by Yusuf Lateef aka Bill Evans, Coltrane's long-term friend and collaborator. He received a gift from John Coltrane on his birthday, which was a drawing of the mathematics of music, the circle of fifths, with Coltrane's own innovations reflected. Its form relates closely to the "voiceprints" created by chanting Sanskrit mantras which are designed as powerful vibrational fields of sound. This confluence between my spiritual heritage and Coltrane's focus on spirituality, particularly in *A Love Supreme*, continues to fascinate me and lead me to exploring the philosophy of oneness that might underlie our realities."

25



Detail

## Raymond A. Thomas

### *Portal*, 2023

Mixed Media

Lent by the artist

In one of the darkest seasons of my life, I happened to discover the music and genius of our dear brother the legendary John Coltrane. It was in 1986 when my best friend Victor Donnan had died tragically at the very young age of 19 and my entire existence and the relevance of life itself had become a huge question mark in my mind. I began to probe the cosmos for answers. My art, which had always been my haven when life grew beyond my comprehension, yielded no answers or reprieve from my sadness. I began seeking a spiritual answer, literally crying out to the heavens. Then slowly, whispers of soul reconciliation and healing from something larger than myself began to take root within and a gradual transformation began. My elder cousin Jimmy, RIP, who I confided in about my new spiritual birth was an avid jazz listener. He suggested I listen to the music of John Coltrane and more specifically his album *A Love Supreme*. I immediately went and purchased the album. The moment the needle dropped on the vinyl, my life was never the same. I instantly identified with his longing and attempt to connect with something larger than himself through his music. His art was on an elevated frequency, a portal to another place and all places at once. I was transfixed. He, at that moment, became a major benchmark for me as an artist and my ultimate artistic muse.

My new work *Portal* pays homage to John Coltrane and his seminal work *A Love Supreme*. For me it is one of the purest expressions of art, love, and praise for the Creator of all things by anyone at any time in the history of mankind. The album for me is also a personal portal, linking my past to my present while experiencing my future. It exclaims the notions of purpose and passion which are foundational tenets of Black art and culture. And as a creative, a maker and transformer of space and time, I strive to uphold these tenets.

*Pt. IV Psalm -  
John Coltrane*



26



Detail

26

**Jomo Tariku**  
***Ashanti*, 2023**

Baltic birch plywood and ash solid wood

Lent by the artist

27

**Jomo Tariku**  
***Boraatii*, 2023**

Baltic birch plywood and ash solid wood

Lent by the artist

27



Detail

“Watatu means trinity/three in Swahili and in this series I created three designs by synthesizing three African cultures grounded in history, modernity and sensibilities by applying an Afrofuturist design language that gazed at past indigenous cultural contributions while marrying it with new construction techniques. Designed as functional seats, but used by many as a stand for plants, sculptures and books, the *Ashanti*, *Boraatii* and *Dogon* stools are a meditation on the universal human desire to seek meaning through connection to one’s own ancestry. Beyond mere utilitarianism, these objects embody a duality observed in household objects from various corners of Africa, seamlessly transforming daily from functional objects of everyday use to beautiful works of art, bringing calm and serenity in one’s dwelling.”

*In a Sentimental  
Mood - Duke  
Ellington & John  
Coltrane*



## BODY

Music has the power to activate the body or to calm it down both internally and externally. This is manifested as dancing, stomping, swaying, marching, and keeping time with a beat, but also sometimes as relaxation, meditation, or even the simple human need to cry and let emotions travel through the body. *A Love Supreme* is Coltane's personal ode to God, but it also reflects his own humanity, his own life. The album is a celebration of his ability to surmount his addictions and pay homage to his talents as a saxophonist and band leader. The album is a reminder that the redemptive qualities of humanity are embedded in creativity and sharing our talents. *A Love Supreme* is an impassioned piece on the body: how it heals, expresses, creates, and works in concert with others. The works in the McCormick House that center the body in practice and as the subject embody this same sentiment. These works reflect on and celebrate what it means to be, to harness humanity, the nuances of Blackness, having perception and being perceived.

28



### **Bryana Bibbs** **3.20.23 from *The Journal Series*, 2023**

Handwoven Needle Felted Wool  
and Hand-spun Wool

Lent by the artist

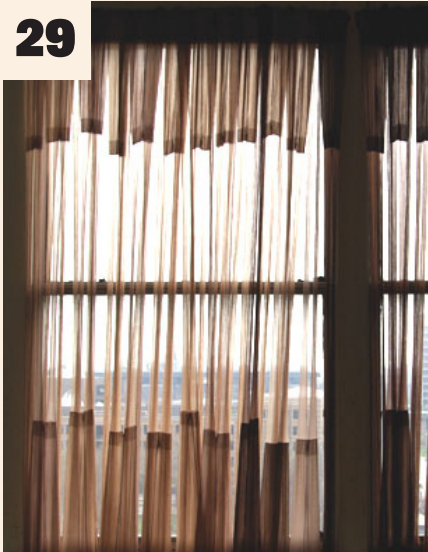
"For me, weaving is an act of muscle memory, record keeping, narrative building, emotional documentation, and a reflection on how the body relates to time and space. Since they began in July of 2020, the weavings from *The Journal Series* have evolved to reflect these acts using various materials, colors, and textures. This evolution highlights time, place, and emotions. Although the emotions aren't known to the viewer, each piece is woven with my personal emotion that was felt in the process of making. The piece in this exhibition is from March 2023 and features the beginning of my experimentation with needle felting.

When working in the studio, I often listen to music on shuffle, and that's when film score composer Hans Zimmer plays. The one song I will never turn from is "Man of Steel (Hans' Original Sketchbook)," which is an incredible 28-minute and 17-second piece from the *Man of Steel* soundtrack. Although the song does not inspire the series conceptually, it does inspire me to keep moving forward in whatever I am doing that day."

*Man of Steel - Hans' Original Sketchbook*  
by Hans Zimmer



29



*Nature Boy -  
John Coltrane*



**Summer Coleman**  
***Shade, 2023***

Installation, African American shades of women's one size fits all panty hose, staples

Lent by the artist

"Road Trips are at the center of my Coltrane story. Family reunions were the annual vacation for my family. Every year we would hit the road with a leather-bound tape holder full of blues and endless jazz tapes. Coltrane was always first up in the tape deck as we headed out of Illinois headed for the Mississippi Delta.

Shade expresses my love for African American skin tones and variations. This piece explores the effects of sunlight on different material(s). While the darkening of skin is a biological response to UV exposure, other materials may undergo bleaching or discoloration due to the photodegradation of their components. The works in this series explore melanin production, tanning, photo degradation discoloration, and the effects of sunlight on different materials such as fabrics, wood and plastics."

30



*FanMail - TLC*



**Shani Crowe**  
***ATOMZ, 2023***

Archival ink print on german etching paper

Lent by the artist

"As an afro-futurist, I admire the future forward art direction in Hip Hop and R&B in the late '90s and early 2000s. The visuals that accompanied TLC's Fanmail album imagined Black women in virtual spaces, interfacing with AI, with bold hair designs, and sci-fi inspired textiles. The title track "Fanmail" juxtaposes high energy production and computerized vocals with lyrics of longing and loneliness, suggesting that these feelings are a symptom of our shared humanity. The drum patterns and layered sounds remind me of how my brain perceives detail and intricacy in my braid work. TLC's catalog offers feminine perspectives that unabashedly spoke about pleasure and sexual health without packaging themselves as objects for male pleasure. I like for my portraits to depict the divinity in our humanity as an existential truth. I seek to capture beauty as a fact that's alluring only after reconciling its eminence."

31



**Stephen Flemister**  
***Reflective Gesture*, 2019**

Cardboard, wood, paper  
Lent by the artist

"I've always loved portraits. The pose, gesture, and familiarity of the subject and the relationship between the gaze of the viewer. My practice explores the common portrait as image and form. This is often visible in print media, drawings, and forms. Much of the forms operate as weighted drawings, exploring the gravity of features in the exhibited space.

Much of the material I choose to work with is accessible and malleable and commonly found in abundance. When I was younger, I made things with these materials. There's a passion for the refining of forms with folds, and the removal of material, wedging pieces, and then adhering layers of print. These objects are more than the subjects derived from, they become figures reflective of conversations shared among so many of us."

*Naima - John Coltrane*



32



**Lola Ayisha Ogbara**  
***Blue Magic II*, 2023**

Ceramic stoneware with custom glaze  
Lent by the artist

"My clay work brings together experiments rooted at the intersections of the Black Haptic (sub)Conscious and speculative cartography led by the bodily mark or form. Blue—in all of its violently layered and colorful idioms, allows for pain, beauty and reflection to be held in the initial examination of the work.

There was no 'eureka!' or no one solitary moment of 'wokeness' to my own personal glory and/or artistic desire. It has always been with[in] me and came as natural as breathing. Instead, I'd say I am called to be more and more awakened with each day that passes. I find that through experience and connection to all things that live harmoniously, I am either moved, galvanized or possessed to be synchronized with all that inspires me. My Coltrane story is forever unfurling and shaping me, much like John Coltrane's legacy of the blue[s] in perpetuity. Coltrane's rendering of the blue[s] is reminiscent of a sweet memory worth returning back to—so rich you can absolutely taste it. I like to believe my rendering of the blue[s] compels those to want to reach out and touch the memories that live within their own dreamstate."

*My Blue Heaven - Mary Lou Williams*



**33**



*Pt. I  
Acknowledgment  
- John Coltrane*



**Max Davis**  
***Embrace, 2023***

Steam bent ash wood

Lent by the artist

"*Embrace* stands as an evocative homage to embracing humanity, akin to John Coltrane's iconic album *A Love Supreme*. This chair, a visual representation of a minimalist hug, transcends conventional furniture, offering a profound engagement. Its clean lines and weighty presence symbolize the raw essence of human connection, echoing Coltrane's pursuit of spiritual unity in his music. Just as Coltrane's album celebrates the complexities of love and spirituality, *Embrace* invites introspection into the depth of human experience. The chair's brutalist design mirrors the album's raw emotive power, both serving as vessels for contemplation on our shared humanity. As a platform for interaction, it resonates deeply with its focus on the human form, identity, and perception. Like *A Love Supreme*, *Embrace* prompts individuals to explore the intricate layers of our existence and the imperative significance of embracing the richness inherent in our humanity."

**34**



*Liberation -  
OutKast*



**Julius C. Dorsey**  
***Drafting Chair, 2023***

Cherry wood

Lent by the artist

"My awakening as an artist was triggered by my mother and father. They weren't artists by trade, but they were marketers and taught me to look at the world from a place of curiosity."

## MOVEMENT

"Acknowledgement", "Resolution", "Pursuance", and "Psalm" are the four movements of *A Love Supreme*. In music, a movement is defined as a contained section of a larger musical piece that is distinctively unique on its own in terms of theme and characteristics. Another way to think about musical movements are separate journeys. When considering the titles of the movements of *A Love Supreme*, Archbishop Franzo Wayne King of the Saint John Coltrane African Orthodox Church has stated, "you have to acknowledge and then you resolve, and then you pursue, and the manifestation of it is a love supreme." Acknowledging is a journey. Resolving is a journey. Pursuing is a journey. These artists embody movement as a Coltrane Moment, delving into journeys that are physical, emotional, and spiritual. Movement for these artists considers geography, changes in time and place, the physical body, migration, immigration, and the inheritance of knowledge over the passage of time.

35



### Oluwaseyi Adeleke *Hawker's Crown*, 2023

Plaster, Spray Paint

Lent by the artist

"In the summer of 2022 in Nigeria, I reflected on society, focusing on the intriguing aspect of "hawkers" - vendors selling various goods. Despite their historical roots and societal stigmatization, the government's recent ban in Lagos aimed to curb crime has adversely affected livelihoods, particularly in a country with limited upward mobility. Discovering that my mother was a hawker during her youth added a personal dimension to this exploration. Her daily efforts to support the family by selling goods before school reflect the dreams and aspirations shared by many hawkers today. My piece connects the hawker's narrative with the rich history of Yoruba art, highlighting how statues traditionally immortalize significant individuals, places, or ideas. Unfortunately, society often marginalizes voices like my mother's, deeming their stories insignificant. My piece delves into the concept of being a "hero" in a world that dismisses one's worthiness for immortalization. The woman who emigrated from the only home she has ever known to build a better life for her future generations does not matter in the grand scheme of life, but my mother's sacrifice, and all the ancestors who brought me to this moment, is a love so supreme, it deserves to be celebrated."

Ojuelegba - Wizkid





**36**



**Oluwaseyi Adeleke**  
***Hawker's Crown*, 2023**

Found photo  
Lent by the artist

**37**



**Germane Barnes**  
***Los Angeles*, 2022**

Poured Resin, Powder Coated Steel  
Lent by the artist

*"Los Angeles was a part of my solo show Unsettled. The ultimate theme was my travels and various stays in other countries all due to my design career. Some moments were inspiring and others were harsh. I never knew architecture and design would take me so many places. The song, Paris/Tokyo is about being from Chicago, but also being worldly, accepting and partaking in cultures from other places."*

*Paris/Tokyo -  
Lupe Fiasco*



**Cedric Mitchell**  
***Enjoué Cone Bottle in***  
***Magenta & Black, 2023***

Glass

Lent by the artist



"The artworks I craft embody a profound essence of expression and delight, expertly weaving vibrant hues and intricate patterns into the very fabric of glass. These vivacious colors stir emotions, harmoniously blending with geometric forms to create a symphony of visual delight. Each piece is a testament to my relentless quest for mastery, reflecting the deep reservoirs of love and happiness infused into every component. In my creative endeavors, I strive to capture the ineffable essence of human emotion, allowing the viewer to embark on a captivating journey through a kaleidoscope of feelings. The interplay of colors and shapes becomes a language of its own, speaking volumes about my dedication to the art form and the joy I derive from it. Each artwork I craft is a tangible manifestation of my commitment to the craft, a canvas that whispers stories of passion, artistry, and an unyielding pursuit of beauty.

*The Enjoué Trio*, a set of vibrantly colored glass vessels, embodies the effervescence of joy much like the emotion evoked by Donny Hathaway's soulful hit "Love, Love, Love." Each piece in the trio is suffused with a hue that captures the eye and ignites the spirit, reminiscent of how Hathaway's melody uplifts the heart. The swirling, dynamic lines etched into the glass, much like the crescendos of Hathaway's voice, express a depth of feeling that goes beyond mere utility, transforming everyday objects into resonant expressions of emotion.

Like the song, which wraps listeners in a blanket of warmth and jubilation, these vessels present an aesthetic experience that goes beyond visual pleasure, reaching into the territory of the sentimental. Love, as Hathaway croons, is ever-present in the gentle curves and bold contours of these designs, showcasing a harmonious blend of art and emotion. This trio stands not just as mere containers, but as ambassadors of joy, holding within them the essence of a song that has touched many hearts, and now, graces our space with the same exuberance and tender passion."

*Love, Love, Love -*  
*Donny Hathaway*



**39**



**Cedric Mitchell**  
***Delphic*, 2023**

Glass

Lent by the artist

**40**



**Cedric Mitchell**  
***Enjoué Dome Bottle in Azul & Black*, 2023**

Glass

Lent by the artist



*Yo te nombro  
- Iris Chacon*



**Edra Soto**  
***Graft (Fragment)*, 2023**

Wood, plastic, paint, view finders,  
ink jet prints

Lent by the artist

"Graft is an ongoing architectural intervention series that addresses the complex sentiments generated from migrating to the US while remaining connected to family on the island—a feeling of dislocation compounded by Puerto Rico's ambiguous status as an unincorporated territory of the United States. The series Graft, which means to move living tissue from one side to another, to imagine the transplant of my homeland to the place I now live, Chicago.

The decorative motifs constant in my work are representative of the residential architecture ubiquitous among houses throughout Puerto Rico. Graft seeks to acknowledge the history of residential architecture and design in Puerto Rico through the decorative motifs called rejas (wrought iron gates) and quiebrasoles (breeze blocks). Rejas and quiebrasoles are normally used as a security measure, creating a barrier and demarcating a boundary and simultaneously providing shade, allowing air to flow into the house. They delineate what belongs inside and outside the home which in turn informs notions of private and public life - the visible and the invisible. These motifs have been traced to African symbols transported through colonial trade routes. Over time, I have deepened the concept of Graft to discuss the overlooked influence of Afro-diasporic cultures on Puerto Rico's architecture and identity in addition to the transplantation of Puerto Rican identity onto US territory and culture. I have persisted in developing the project Graft for over a decade because I learned rather quickly that I had much more to explore within this project after the first two years of making it public. My biggest learning curve became evident as I continue to travel back and forth to Puerto Rico. The experience of relearning over and over about the place I used to live is the archive and the heart of this project. I document my journeys as if I was a tourist of my own land. I want to see it all and I want to remember all that I see. I rely on my archives to remember what I saw as well, as my memory has been deteriorating though time. The archives have helped me weave the story that my work tells. Migration is a place of fear, grief and tremendous feelings of loss. The loss of the land, the loss of the loved ones, the longing, the waiting. There's no division between my geographical and personal relationships and the relationships to the communities that I have met along the way: it is all a part of the same experience. The political is personal and the personal is political."

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Detail

**Cain Baum**  
***Mangos*, 2023**

Plaster, Epoxy  
Lent by the artist

"These images submitted are continuations of my sculptural goal - to capture an image, an object in motion. After diving into *A Love Supreme* the four-part album seems to me a work of art at an important point in time, a culmination with reflections on growth and place. I understand the spiritual interpretations of the piece and feel that connection in the momentum of making. I think about that timeline in my own artworks and life around this pursuit, I too reflect on the Pursuance, Psalm, Acknowledgment, and Resolution of the matter.

*Holy Mango* started with recognition of something I liked and shared. The work is also about journey like most of my work. Through expressive lines, shape and color, densities, mass, and their relationships to gravity I present *Holy Mango* as a recognition of something tasty and sweet. To fully appreciate the work, it's important to know how the process started. I devoured a six pack of mangos with my mom, sister, wife, and niece. I saved the recyclable plastic mango holder to make concrete casts. I spent the next year using the casts to weigh down the in-progress sculpture. The concrete mango positive was then recast to create a silicone negative, I then poured plaster into the negative of the positive. I memorialized the tasty mangos I indulged in one day with good people. The song selected, "Shady Grove" by Taj Mahal shares a similar story. It is an excellent song for hitting the road with good people and heading out into the woods."

***Shady Grove***  
**- Taj Mahal**





Detail

**Roland Knowlden**  
***Black Tributary 02 &***  
***03: The Burning of Fort***  
***Dearborn, 2023***

Acrylic, paper, acetone, and ink on wood panel

Lent by the artist

*Workinonit -*  
*J Dilla*



"My experience of musical and artistic awakening comes through hip hop. Lil Wayne's "Fireman" would play on my Myspace page. J Dilla's "Donuts" is a classic album that I come back to often in the studio. The apex of hip hop sampling - collaged music, fragmented and seamed together reminds me of the philosophy of jazz music, but also to a language of collage. The production on that album holds up across time. The philosophy of jazz in hip hop, in the sampling by J Dilla, and in my work is the "Expansion of Freedom" (as the artist Jack Whitten puts it). This improvisational, malleable, present, and unfixed quality of music characterizes the aesthetics that interest me in the world and informs the approach to my practice.

*Black Tributary 02 & 03: The Burning of Fort Dearborn* is a cityscape collage that piece together fragmented maps of Chicago's streets, buildings and waterways. The large compositions are composed of smaller 18" x 24" wood panels with the ability to be moved, shuffled, and reconfigured. The ability for these works to change, to be reformed, highlights the spirit of sampling, and jazz improvisation that is informed by my own "Coltrane Story". It is informed by the agency to change our map, to change our landscape. That is an agency that I hope to redistribute through the work's ability to create new landscapes."

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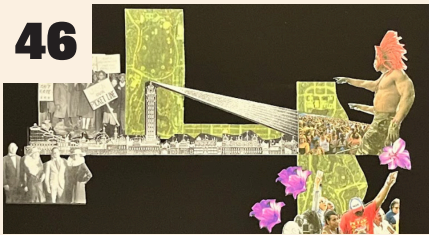
**Toni L. Griffin**  
***Flight Over Oppression*, 2023**  
Collage

45



**Toni L. Griffin**  
***We Will Be Seen*, 2023**  
Collage

46



**Toni L. Griffin**  
***Amusement Will Be Ours*, 2023**  
Collage

47



**Toni L. Griffin**  
***Land is the Fabric of Our Wealth*, 2023**  
Collage

Publicly expressing Black pain can render reactions of solidarity, healing, and empowerment or exhaustion, guilt, and helplessness. However, Black voice can be a powerful instrument of change – used as a currency to be saved or spent or as a carrier of demand and solution. Post the public murder of George Floyd, mainstream and academic efforts have emerged to unearthed untold public knowledges that give additional context to the root of what drives Black voice – its trauma, its demands and its joy. Making this knowledge more public can help to inform how we understand and engage one another; how we disrupt harmful Black narratives that shape public perception; and how the power of Black creativity and resiliency as a political device, can produce spaces of Black-centered freedom and liberation.

South Side Land Narratives is a series of collages that represent the confrontation of pain and quest for joy found in the Black public realm of Chicago's Mid-South Side. Each collage illustrates the relationship between publicness for Black Americans and the current urban landscape of vacancy, from southern migration in response to public denial; the public scars left by urban renewal's land mutilation; and the relentless pursuit of public freedoms in the public realm. The series offers a reflection on the contests that exist over land, space and place alongside the aspiration of Black Americans to simply occupy and be carefree in public, unincumbered by fear and liberated from self-consciousness.

Using present-day mapping and photography, historic images and representations of Chicago's southside by notable African American artists, the project aims to make public some of the lesser-known narratives about these historic Black neighborhoods. The narratives are rooted in the ownership and occupancy of land, revealing the practices of institutional racism, exclusion and extraction, juxtaposed against images of the undiminished spirit, ambition, productivity and creativity of Black Chicagoans despite the forces of oppression. Richard Wright describes this as the "extremes of possibility" in his introduction to the book *Black Metropolis*, the seminal 1945 study on Negro life in Chicago. "There is an open and raw beauty about the city that seems either to kill or endow one with the spirit of life. I felt those extremes of possibility, death and hope, while I lived half hungry and afraid in a city to which I had fled with the dumb yearning to write, to tell my story."

*Galaxy - War*



# A LOVE SUPREME

January 20 - April 28

ELMHURST  
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MUSEUM**  
ART. EDUCATION  
ARCHITECTURE

Now on view *A Love Supreme*, a solo exhibition by Norman Teague inspired by legendary jazz musician John Coltrane, with an adjoining installation in Mies van der Rohe's McCormick House by Chicago-based BIPOC designers.

Join us for exhibition programs, including jazz performances, curator tours, family day programs, and more.

*A Love Supreme* is part of Art Design Chicago, a citywide collaboration initiated by the Terra Foundation for American Art that highlights the city's artistic heritage and creative communities. It is sponsored by the Terra Foundation for American Art, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and in part by a grant from the League of Chicago Theatres and ComEd. With programming in partnership with Elmhurst University Department of Music.

*A Love Supreme: McCormick House Reimagined* is co-curated by Norman Teague and Rose Camara. This exhibition is presented in partnership with the Chipstone Foundation.



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## Featured Programs Include

Scan the code for full Events Calendar

**Curator Tour of  
*A Love Supreme:*  
McCormick House  
Reimagined**

Saturday, March 23  
1:00pm

***A Love Supreme*  
Panel Discussion**

Saturday, February 3  
1:00pm

**An Evening of Jazz**

Thursday, April 18  
6-9pm



Scan here to learn more

## McCormick House Artists

Oluwaseyi Adeleke

Germane Barnes

Cain Baum

Bryana Bibbs

Paul Branton

Steve Bravo

Brandon Breaux

Alex Carter

Roger Carter

Funlola Coker

Summer Coleman

Shani Crowe

Max Davis

Juan de la Mora

Julius C. Dorsey

Brian K. Ellison

Stephen Flemister

Krista Franklin

Toni L. Griffin

Andres L. Hernandez

Roland Knowlden

Marvell Lahens

Cedric Mitchell

Roger Noel

Obiora Nwazota

Lola Ayisha Ogbara

Daniel Overby

Suchi Reddy

Tony Smith

Edra Soto

Jomo Tariku

Norman Teague

Raymond A. Thomas

Fo Wilson

Sadie Woods

Curated by Norman Teague  
& Rose Camara