

WHEATONARTS ANNOUNCES TWO SPECIAL EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Caribbean Carnival: Tradition of Artistry, Visions of Change and
SANKOFA: Reflections on Cultural Heritage and Shared Humanity

MILLVILLE, NJ (June 24, 2016) – Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center is pleased to announce the opening of two special exhibitions, *Caribbean Carnival: Tradition of Artistry, Visions of Change* and *SANKOFA: Reflections on Cultural Heritage and Shared Humanity*. Both exhibitions, *Caribbean Carnival* in the Down Jersey Folklife Center and *SANKOFA* in the Gallery of Fine Craft, will open on Friday, July 8, 2016. *Caribbean Carnival* will run through November 27, 2016, while *SANKOFA* will run through August 14, 2016.

Both shows are part of the 2016 Down Jersey Folklife Center (DJFC) program, *Shades of Past, Colors of the Present: Preserving Caribbean Cultural Heritage in New Jersey*. In partnership with the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission and Cumberland County College, the project will address the history and cultural heritage of New Jersey's residents of Caribbean descent through a multi-faceted project that includes research, documentation, exhibition, educational programs and public presentations of Caribbean arts and culture. The two special exhibitions will feature works that focus on the exploration and interpretation of Caribbean culture, heritage, and expression.

“The *Shades of Past, Colors of the Present* project and the special exhibitions are about engaging artists and audiences in a profoundly meaningful conversation about the Caribbean - history, life, spirituality; individual identities and social issues - all interpreted through arts,” said Dr. Iveta Pirgova, Director of Folklife and Cultural Studies at WheatonArts. “Visual art forms can represent perceptions of past, challenges of present, and visions of future through the lens of diverse yet central and unifying elements of cultural values and aesthetics that continue to inform and influence life and art.”

Shades of Past, Colors of the Present is the sixth program in the Creative Community Connections initiative that began at WheatonArts in 2004 through the DJFC. The Creative Community Connections initiative was designed to raise awareness of cultural heritages and to create a welcoming community setting for appreciating, preserving and perpetuating the folk and traditional arts of our region's extraordinarily diverse population. The Down Jersey Folklife Center at WheatonArts was initiated 1995, in conjunction with a major NJSCA initiative to create a state-wide folklife infrastructure. The Center has presented programming to diverse audiences at WheatonArts, in area schools, and at other sites. Public programs include exhibitions, demonstrations by artists/tradition bearers, performances, festivals, classes, training for educators and interns, lectures and seminars.

On Friday, July 8th, a media ‘open house’ will be held from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; WheatonArts staff and community members as well as represented artists will be present at the media event. For more information about WheatonArts or the Down Jersey Folklife Center, call 1-800-998-4552 or 856-825-6800, or visit online at wheatonarts.org. Please submit requests for press images to wheatonartsnews@wheatonarts.org.

WheatonArts strives to ensure the accessibility of its exhibitions, events and programs to all persons with disabilities. Please provide two weeks notice for additional needs. Patrons with hearing and speech disabilities may contact WheatonArts through the New Jersey Relay Service (TRS) 800-852-7899 or by dialing 711.

Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Jersey Cultural Trust. WheatonArts receives general operating support from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs in the New Jersey Department of State, and is supported in part by the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.

About WheatonArts

With a history spanning four decades, WheatonArts has earned regional, national and international recognition for its unique collections and programs. The Museum of American Glass, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, houses one of the most comprehensive collections of American glass in the country...from the first glass bottles made in America to celebrated works by Dale Chihuly and other contemporary artists who work in glass. Visitors experience the art of glassmaking, ceramics and flameworking in the Artists Studios. From April through December the Museum of American Glass and Gallery of Fine Craft present special exhibitions. WheatonArts also offers traditional and multi-cultural programs, classes, workshops, performances, and weekend festivals. The award-winning Museum Stores offer traditional and contemporary art and craft in all mediums.

About the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission

The Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission promotes the arts and history of the county from the bayshore to Vineland and all points between.

About Cumberland County College

Cumberland County College is a comprehensive community college that is accessible, learning-centered, and dedicated to serving a diverse community of learners and employers through quality innovative programs, services, and the appropriate use of technology for life-long learning. It also serves as a catalyst for creating collaborative relationships across the county that enhance the quality of life through excellence in education, community leadership, and economic growth.

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