

WHEATONARTS ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM, *SHADES OF PAST, COLORS OF THE PRESENT: PRESERVING CARIBBEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEW JERSEY*

MILLVILLE, NJ (June 7, 2016) – Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center is pleased to announce the 2016 special Down Jersey Folklife Center 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. *Shades of Past, Colors of the Present* is the sixth program in the *Creative Community Connections* initiative that began at WheatonArts in 2004.

The exploration of Caribbean art, history, and culture began with a program launched this past spring as part of in-school residency programs in the Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland school districts. Exhibitions and events throughout the remainder of 2016 include:

- *Caribbean Carnival: Tradition of Artistry, Visions of Change*, an exhibition in the Folklife Galleries at WheatonArts from July 8 through November 27
- *SANKOFA: Reflections on Cultural Heritage and Shared Humanity*, an exhibition in the Gallery of Fine Craft at WheatonArts from July 8 through August 14
- *Between Worlds – In a World*, an exhibition in the Rowan College Gallery at Rowan College at Gloucester County from September 8 through October 28
- *Oil Down: (A Recipe for) Uniqueness Born from Differences*, an exhibition at Cumberland County College Gallery at Clay College from December 1 to December 31
- *An Epistle of Resilience*, a traveling exhibition that will be featured at local libraries throughout Cumberland County, dates to be announced
- *Classes and Workshops* in the following areas: mask making, clay instrument making, storytelling, drumming and dancing, painting, found object art, palm weaving, and coconut and bamboo carving, fall dates to be announced
- *Caribbean Communities and Cultures: Preservation and Adaptation*, a conference for educators and interested community members at WheatonArts on October 28
- *Caribbean Cultural Heritage: A Day Celebration!*, a one day Festival bringing together music, dance and visual arts that represent the many faces of the Caribbean cultural heritage at WheatonArts on September 17

“This project reflects our commitment, the commitment of WheatonArts as well as the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission and Cumberland County College, to programming that celebrates, educates, and unites communities to promote tolerance and deep respect for artistic and cultural diversity,” said Executive Director Susan Gogan. “This nine month exploration of Caribbean history and culture that has impacted South Jersey will enrich the entire community.”

The Down Jersey Folklife Center (DJFC) 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. The Creative Community Connections initiative, a DJFC program, 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.

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 & 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 country that enhance the quality of life through excellence in education, community leadership, and economic growth.

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