August Wilson House presents

ART FOR AUGUST

August Wilson Birthday Celebration 2021

TOURING ART EXHIBITION IN HONOR OF AUGUST WILSON
APRIL 2021 - APRIL 2022

Presented by

DollarBank
Do the things that make memories.

Thank you for days like this. They help make our communities such special places to call home.

We are proud to support August Wilson House.

DollarBank
Let's get you there.

Dollar.Bank

Equal Housing Lender. Member FDIC.
CMD195_21
Art for August

To celebrate the birthday of August Wilson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, and support local artists and vendors, August Wilson House hosts Art for August, a community exhibit premiering April 27. Our title is adopted from Pittsburgh’s first Art for August, commissioned by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust in 2006.

We requested artists’ proposals and selected ten whom we commissioned for $1,000 each to create original works that pay homage to Wilson’s life and plays. Our selections were based on the artists’ previous work and current proposals, mixing artists by age, gender and experience.

After making its debut at the Energy Innovation Center on Mr. Wilson’s birthday, April 27, including photographs and video interviews, the exhibit will travel during the next 12 months throughout Pittsburgh. Host institutions so far committed include Duquesne University, the University of Pittsburgh Library System and community centers, with others expected to join in.

We intend to turn Art for August into an annual birthday tribute, with a new exhibit each year. The commissioned works become the property of August Wilson House, where they can expect to be shown in the future.

August Wilson House

Born Frederick August Kittel, the future August Wilson lived his first 12 years in two rooms (later four) at the rear of 1727 Bedford Ave., in what was once two buildings dating back to 1840 and 1880. Landmarked and named August Wilson House, with funding by Pittsburgh foundations and Denzel Washington and friends, it is now being renovated into an arts center for the Hill District and beyond, with expected completion in mid-2022.

The mission of August Wilson House is to celebrate and promote the cultural, artistic and personal legacy of August Wilson, to nurture Black artists at all levels of development and to add to the cultural vibrancy of the Hill District in return for all that it did for him and, through him, for us all.
Brandon Jennings used oil paint, a foam board, marker, and color pencil to create this piece. Jennings was inspired by Wilson’s play *Fences* because he “was impressed with how [August Wilson] was able to capture the essence of the Hill” in the play.

“Within my painting, I have a bird’s eye view of [Wilson] looking down on an earlier shot of the Hill District...If you look at the painting, you’ll see he has his head down, so he could either be writing or contemplating something, but it also looks like he’s looking over the Hill District and he’s kind of pondering and getting his ideas.”
Reflection 1 & 2

Both of Peterson's pieces are digital collages, with Reflection 2 incorporating some of his own photographs. The names seen on Wilson's hat in Reflection 1 are Peterson's "tribute to strong women, strong Black women." Peterson is the artistic genius behind the Freedom Corner sculpture in the Hill District.

"[The Hill has] always been something that's part of me, even when I tried to ignore it... It's always been that foundation you try to come back to"
- Carlos F. Peterson
CHARLOTTE KA

Spirit of Aunt Ester 1 & 2

Ka's mosaic masks are a representation of not only Aunt Ester from Wilson's play, *Gem of the Ocean*, but also of "the women, the spiritualist women, that a lot of black communities had. Ka said, "I grew up... right across the street from this woman by the name of Mother Diggs... people would flow into her house for fears of the heart, inspiration, for spiritual guidance, and I was always fascinated by her and fascinated by the women that keep this tradition that started in Africa."

"Masks of Aunt Ester are to recognize the strength of these powerful matriarchs."

- Charlotte Ka
COREY CARRINGTON

August Basquiat

Carrington created a digital collage, explaining that "the combination of their (August Wilson and Jean-Michel Basquiat) images came from the need to distinguish August as a Black genius from Pittsburgh who is just as important and influential as Jean-Michel is."

Carrington is an accomplished poet, collagist, and curator from the North Side of Pittsburgh. He curated two exhibits, Electric Kool-Aid and BREATHE, earned a B.S. in Communication and Creative Writing, and has been a changemaker within numerous organizations.
DAVID POHL

Nobody in Town Can Bake a Sweet Jelly Roll Like Mine (22 Times)

Pohl used mixed media on canvas, incorporating paper collage, old record album sleeves, oil paint, and latex paint. He expressed that "I specialize in creating highly conceptual works that convey multiple layers of meaning. I am essentially a storyteller. My work frequently examines themes of history, memory, nostalgia, cultural identity, social justice, environmentalism, and the human condition. I incorporate juxtaposition and visual metaphor as a storytelling device to illuminate complex narratives."

Pohl is an award-winning artist, illustrator, and founder of House of Pingting, an independent creative studio working with magazine and book publishers, institutions, design firms, and ad agencies since 1991.
The journey of August Wilson House
Together, the rear section (c.1840) and the front (c.1880) make a house of 11 rooms. In two rooms, second floor rear, the Kittel family lived when Frederick August Kittel Jr. (later August Wilson) was born in 1945, until they moved to Hazelwood in 1958.
Mr. Wright's Piano + Mr. Wright and Focus

In these two photographs, McDuffie "documented Mr. Wright, who was a Hill District resident of fifty years" from whom he gained great insight "just through conversation." McDuffie commented that while researching, he discovered "just how important the Hill District was to Pittsburgh and still is, and how it was a beacon of culture and art."

McDuffie is a self-taught artist born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA. His primary medium is film photography with which he hopes "to communicate the authentic Black experience."
DONNA BUNDY FORD

Phenomenal Woman

Ford made an embroidered cotton quilt as her medium of choice for *Phenomenal Woman*. She embroidered names of streets where Wilson grew up and other locations around Pittsburgh as well. The woman is inspired by Ma Rainey from Mr. Wilson's play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. The quilt is meant to represent phenomenal and strong Black women like Ma Rainey found in places like Pittsburgh.

When asked why she was inspired by August Wilson's plays, she said, "they're people like me... women that I'd like to be; not to be afraid to speak up... I'd like to be one of those women."
JASMYNIE MILLER

Emerge

Miller is an up-and-coming artist who is just beginning to get her name out into the world of artists. Her painting was done on a 16x20 canvas with high profile based off of the word "emerge". Her artwork portrays a young boy venturing into the world of art and creativity. The use of vibrant colors and small details bring this painting to life by creating an illusion of emergence.

Similar to Wilson, who gathered ideas for many of his plays by listening to people in the Hill District, Miller shared that a lot of her inspiration comes from people she listens to and her feelings during various experiences.

Her advice to new artists like herself is to "be unapologetically you, just let everything out... art is so open, it's so beautiful... everyone sees it in a different way."
Kemp created a mixed media quilt, including things like music notes and utilizing the photo transfer process to help bring her artwork to life. "Over the years my fiber works have evolved into an art form rather than just traditional weaving, quilting or dyeing fabrics."I love the journey of turning nothing into something utilizing as many fiber art forms as I can to add to the total piece."

Kemp’s award-winning textiles have been a feature of Pittsburgh’s fiber art community for the past four decades. She is known for her bold use of color, texture and patterns in her textiles and jeweled accessories.
MARLON GIST

The Life of August Wilson

Gist used acrylic on a 24x30 canvas, incorporating bright colors to keep his art upbeat and "to uplift people" in order to spread positivity. Marlon expressed that "as an artist you always want to have some type of platform and August Wilson provides that."

Gist is a "lifetime artist" taught by his father, David Gist at an early age. He excelled in art beginning in preschool all the way to The Columbus College of Art and Design in Columbus, Ohio. There, Gist honed in on his spectacular range of realism to abstract.
August Wilson House Programs

The central program of AWH is the restoration of the house itself, with an expected completion in mid-2022. It will pay tribute to the Hill’s nurture of August Wilson and nurture future artists in turn. But August Wilson House, the organization, has not waited for the physical house to be complete to start a robust array of programs, including the following.

* Visiting Fellowships in collaboration with Duquesne University (Natasha Trethewey, Njaimeh Njie) and the University of Pittsburgh Center for African American Poetry and Poetics (Xandria Phillips, Shikeith).
* Visiting Playwright Fellowship supported by Advancing Black Arts, starting in summer, 2021.

* Annual Happy Birthday August Wilson Block Party, grown by 2019 to 6,000 with 100 vendors; now on pandemic pause, replaced by online programs and Art for August.
* Outdoor productions, co-produced with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, of Seven Guitars, King Hedley II and Gem of the Ocean; summer 2021 TBA.

* Actors Talk August, a twice-monthly series of online interviews; guests have included Phylicia Rashad, Wali Jamal, Eugene Lee, Montae Russell, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, LeLand Gantt, Mark Southers, Eileen Morris and more. https://www.crowdcast.io/coa
* August in August, an online celebration.

* August in the Schools, now in pilot phase.
* Digital projects with Carnegie Mellon University.
* Your Story Matters, an oral history project with University of Pittsburgh, including Black Family Storytelling.

Co-sponsor:
* August Wilson Monologue Competition, with Bill Nunn Theatre Outreach; 2021 winners Katherine Bruce and Shakyna Golphin.
* National August Wilson American Century Cycle Award, with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, for theaters that complete the cycle.
* AWH-Arts in HD Blog.
* Great Lakes African American Writers’ Conference.

On pandemic pause:
* August Wilson Reading Roundtable.
* AWH Talent Showcases.
* AWH New Play Reading Series.
Artists' Insights
One-on-One with Art for August Artists

Scan the code below to watch one-on-one interviews from each of the 2021 Art for August Winners.

Enjoy behind the scenes action, a glimpse of their process and where they found inspiration.

iPhone - Use Camera & Click Link
Android - Use QR Scanner App