



**August Wilson African American Cultural Center Announces
Virtual Gallery Tours Featuring Exhibitions by
Photographer L. Kasimu Harris and
Multidisciplinary Artists Ayana M. Evans and Tsedaye Makonnen**

*Tours to Highlight Exhibitions, Cut Short by COVID-19, on
Black History and Identity in America*

April 15, 2020 – Pittsburgh, PA – The **August Wilson African American Cultural Center** announced today that it is launching its first-ever [virtual tours](#) of its two most recent visual arts exhibitions: ***Vanishing Black Bars & Lounges: Photographs by L. Kasimu Harris*** and ***I came by Boat so Meet me at the Beach: Ayana M. Evans and Tsedaye Makonnen***. Following the decision to close its doors to ensure the health of its staff, patrons, and community, the Center made the difficult decision to postpone programming and end its gallery exhibitions early due to COVID-19. In response, the Center, one of the largest non-profit cultural organizations in the country focused exclusively on the African American experience and the arts of the African diaspora, has created virtual gallery tours to provide a platform to showcase the work of these artists, providing an online, artist-narrated walk-through of the exhibitions that can be accessed, for free, around the globe.

“These virtual tours get to the core of our mission to champion innovative young artists by offering them continued support and exposure, even at this time of social distancing,” said **Janis Burley Wilson**, President and CEO of the August Wilson African American Cultural Center. “The tour also serves as a cultural outlet for our patrons and, of course, provides access to a much larger constituency than can walk through our doors in Pittsburgh.”

Added Wilson, “The works of L. Kasimu Harris, Ayana M. Evans, and Tsedaye Makonnen address both universal truths and specific issues in the Black community. The questions that they pose and seek to answer in these exhibitions call to mind the same challenges that this Center’s namesake confronted in his plays.”

The virtual tours will allow viewers around the world the opportunity to experience these exhibitions as they were presented at the Center. Previous exhibitions at the Center have featured artists such as Romare Bearden, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Ben Jones, and Peju Alatise. The virtual gallery tours are one of several digital programs that the Center is implementing in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Starting April 27, on what would have been August Wilson’s 75th birthday, the Center is introducing *Last Mondays*, a monthly conversation series that will be streamed on the Center’s [Facebook](#) page between artists, actors, writers, and scholars. The first installment will feature the actor **Ruben Santiago-Hudson**, poet **jessica Care moore**, August Wilson scholar **Dr. Sandra Shannon**, and actor **Nathan James** in a streamed conversation with artist **Deesha Philyaw**. More details will be available closer to the event date.

In *Vanishing Black Bars & Lounges*, New Orleans-based photographer L. Kasimu Harris documents the once prominent Black-owned social spaces that are disappearing throughout his Louisiana hometown. His photographs situate local bars and lounges as both lively hubs and unique repositories of traditions, having served as music venues, unofficial headquarters, and social clubs for generations. *Vanishing Black*

Bars & Lounges marks the first major solo exhibition for Harris, who recently authored a photo essay on the same subject in [The New York Times](#).

I came by Boat so Meet me at the Beach—a collaboration between Ayana M. Evans, a performance artist based in New York City, and Tsedaye Makonnen, a multidisciplinary artist whose works combine sculpture, video, and performance—explores the intersection of womanhood and race in America through video and images. Evans is an adjunct professor at Brown University and Editor-at-Large at *Cultbytes*. Makonnen has exhibited and performed at such institutions as the National Portrait Gallery, National Museum of African Art, and the Corcoran Gallery.

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center provides a platform for established and emerging artists of color whose work reflects the universal issues of identity that Wilson tackled and which still resonate today. Through its rotating visual art exhibitions, and year-round programming the Center continues to expand its mission to celebrate Black culture and champion future innovators in arts and culture.

To learn more about the Center, its year-round activities, and *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape*, please visit <https://aacc-awc.org/>.

ABOUT AUGUST WILSON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts center located in Pittsburgh's cultural district that generates artistic, educational, and community initiatives that advance the legacy of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson. One of the largest cultural centers in the country focused exclusively on the African American experience and the celebration of Black culture and the African diaspora, the non-profit organization welcomes more than 110,000 visitors locally and nationally. Through year-round programming such as the annual Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, Black Bottom Film Festival, AWCommunity Days, TRUTHSayers speaker series, and rotating art exhibits in its two galleries, the Center provides a platform for established and emerging artists of color whose work reflects the universal issues of identity that Wilson tackled and which still resonate today. Opening in late fall 2020, the Center will continue to expand its commitment to August Wilson's legacy with *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape*, the first-ever permanent exhibition dedicated to the life and work of August Wilson.

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