



REFLECTIONS ON THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC ARE INSPIRATION FOR DR. IMO IMEH'S NEW EXHIBITION *THE HOPE OF RADIANCE*

The Hope of Radiance* brings together art works and texts created between 2020 - 2022 that are part of Dr. Imo Nse Imeh's developing project titled *Benediction

January 18, 2023 (Pittsburgh, PA) – The August Wilson African American Cultural Center announced today the opening of a new exhibition from Dr. Imo Nse Imeh. *The Hope of Radiance* will open February 17, 2023. This exhibition addresses Imeh's emotional and spiritual tumult during the pandemic, when the world went silent under lockdown and became an unwitting witness to the horrors of Black life.

With the *Benediction* series, Imeh tells the story of a group of angels that have been cast down to earth and bound to the skins of Black boys and men. The angels' task is to serve as witnesses to the traumas and triumphs that they experience through their "hosts." A "benediction" is a short invocation, a prayer for help or guidance, usually given at the end of a service of worship. But a benediction is also often a declaration that comes at the commencement of something wonderful. In Imeh's work, "benediction" speaks to both the death and resurrection of Black men.

The Hope of Radiance guides us down a road of reflection about Black boys and men, faith and despair, solitude, loss, and the realities of the human condition. The question at the center of this project considers the cyclicity of Black trauma and triumph, and the hope for acknowledgement, beauty, resplendence, and so much more.

"We're thrilled to bring new work from the talented Dr. Imeh to the August Wilson African American Cultural Center as we continue to explore art and conversation from some of the most intentional and skilled voices of this generation" says curator Janice Bond. "Our hope is to be a platform for the different stories and perspectives from around the diaspora and create an environment that nurtures learning and understanding across cultures."

About Dr. Imo Nse Imeh

Dr. Imo Nse Imeh is a visual artist and scholar of African Diaspora art, whose work considers historical and philosophical issues around the Black body and cultural identity.

Dr. Imeh's work has been exhibited in numerous public venues including the Fine Arts Center Galleries of Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio), the Sigal Museum of the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society (Easton, Pennsylvania), the Mariposa Museum (Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts), University Museum of Contemporary Art (Amherst, Massachusetts), and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art (Grand Rapids, Michigan). His work is represented in the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art; in the museum collection of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; as well as in a number of private collections; and it has been featured by the *PBS News Hour*, *New England Public Media*, *Orion Magazine*, and in the contemporary art and culture magazine *Art New England*. In 2023 a series of Dr. Imeh's works will appear on the covers of six issues of the medical journal *Biological Psychiatry*, edited by Dr. John Krystal of Yale University. Dr. Imeh has been the recipient of a Project Evolution Grant from the ValleyCreates Program of MASS MoCA and The



Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, a Holyoke Cultural Council Grant, and Springfield Cultural Council Grant.

Imeh earned a BA from Columbia University and PhD in the History of African Art from Yale University. He is Associate Professor of Art and Art History at Westfield State University in Massachusetts.

ABOUT AUGUST WILSON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center is a non-profit cultural 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 119,000 visitors locally and nationally. Through year-round programming across multiple genres, such as the annual Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, Black Bottom Film Festival, AWCommunity Days, TRUTHSayers speaker series, and rotating art exhibits in its 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.

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