

Buffalo, NY - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Buffalo Arts Studio presents:**

**Aitina Fareed-Cooke and Get Fokus'd Productions,**

***Tales from the Porch, Part IV: Art is a Language***

**July 26–September 7, 2024**

**Opening Reception, Friday July 26, 2024, 5:00-8:00 pm**



Experience the power of storytelling and the expressive nature of art at the upcoming multimedia exhibition, *Tales from the Porch, Part IV: Art is a Language*, presented at Buffalo Arts Studio by Aitina Fareed-Cooke. Building on the original project launched in 2019, this immersive exhibition is an opportunity to celebrate and amplify community voices through the creative arts.

*Tales from the Porch, Part IV: Art is a Language* is an exploration of visual, performing, and literary arts through a documentary film, multimedia arts exhibition, and live performance series. This year's iteration focuses on artists with deep connections to Buffalo Arts Studio: Julia Bottoms, Bob Fleming, George Hughes, Phyllis Thompson, and Muhammad Zaman.

Buffalo Arts Studio will present the multimedia exhibition portion of the *Tales from the Porch IV; Art is a Language* project, which will include artwork by Julia Bottoms, Bob Fleming, George Afedzi Hughes, Phyllis I. Thompson, and Muhammad Zaman as well as Fareed-Cooke's photography and poetry. Together, the paintings, prints, poems, and photographs serve as a call and response, creating a conversation between artists and artforms. The exhibition will be on display **July 26–September 7, 2024**, with an **opening reception on Friday, July 26, from 5:00–8:00 pm**. The exhibition and reception are free and open to the public.

**The documentary film featuring the artists will be screened later this fall.**

"We all have our porches. Our platforms from which we share our stories. Our lives. From these porches, we learn perspectives. We learn of the varying commonalities and complexities that exist, human to human." Fareed-Cooke states. "As we exchange these tales, we share our hopes, fears, and dreams. Together we discover the beautiful weight of reality, which is that we are all human. Different, yet the same."

Julia Bottoms is a Buffalo-based visual artist, painting primarily in oils and acrylics. Her portraiture work seeks to explore themes of race, identity, and representation among people of color in relation to the mainstream cultural narrative. Bottoms studied at the State University of New York College at Buffalo, receiving her Bachelor's in Art in 2012 and her Master's in Multidisciplinary Fine Arts Studies in 2017.

Bob Fleming is a visual artist whose practice includes painting, printmaking and other media – including film. Fleming has a BA in Political Science from Cornell University and worked as a lawyer for a number of years. During this time, he also maintained an active art practice and studied Printmaking at the University at Buffalo. In 2018, Fleming co-founded and opened Mirabo Press, a printmaking studio and edition facility in Buffalo, New York.

George Afedzi Hughes is an internationally renowned painter and performance artist. Hughes was born and raised in Ghana and received a BA in Painting and Drawing and an MA in Art Education from The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, College of Art. He relocated to the United States in 1994 and earned his MFA in Painting from Bowling Green State University. Hughes is currently an Associate Professor of Painting at SUNY Buffalo.

Phyllis I. Thompson is a Western New York artist known for her multi-media works that include prints, fabric, and drawings. Her works feature depictions of family, relationships, and various

memories. Thompson received her BFA in printmaking from the Philadelphia College of Art and her MFA in printmaking from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. She has a Ph.D. in Urban Education/Art Education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is currently a Studio Artist at Buffalo Arts Studio.

Muhammad Zaman is a visual artist who specializes in Arabic calligraphy. His works are predominantly acrylic or mixed media on canvas, wood, and paper. His technique transforms the written script of three languages--English, Bangla, and Arabic-- into a new script that is distinctly his own. Muhammad Zaman joined Buffalo Arts Studio as a Studio Artist in July 2016. He has shown in solo and group exhibitions all over the world, including the United States, England, United Arab Emirates, Luxembourg, Japan, and Italy.

Aitina Fareed-Cooke is a multi-hyphenate, Creative Arts Strategist, and Founder of Get Fokus'd Productions, an international award-winning media arts company. Recently appointed as Buffalo's Poet Laureate, Fareed-Cooke aims to amplify the importance of the creative arts, emphasizing unity, healing, and economic stability.

Fareed-Cooke earned her Master of Science in Education from Buffalo State University, where she serves on the foundation board and was an adjunct professor. Her involvement in developing community-based arts initiatives in Buffalo and beyond laid the foundation for her creative career. She has curated, performed, presented, delivered keynote speeches, and exhibited work at Kean University, Atlanta's Hydration Records Super Bowl Celebration, NYC Kingdom Choice Awards, Sheas Performing Arts Center, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Burchfield Penney Art Center, to name a few. She has earned numerous grants and honors, including contributing to a Grammy award-winning album, Citizens Bank Community Champion Award, 43 North's Ignite Buffalo \$100K Award, and SUNY Buffalo State's Young Alumnus Achievement Award.

Buffalo Arts Studio receives exhibition support from The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Erie County Cultural Funds, Humanities New York, John R. Oishei Foundation, M&T Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Arts & Culture Initiative, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the New York State Council for the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and through Arts Services Inc.'s Creative Impact Fund program thanks to a New York State Senate Initiative supported by the NYS Legislature and the Office of the Governor, and administered by the New York State Council on the Arts.

### **About Buffalo Arts Studio:**

Buffalo Arts Studio (BAS) connects diverse communities through visual arts via inclusive exhibitions, educational programs, mentorships, and public art while also providing affordable

studio space, exposure, paid opportunities, and ongoing professional development for visual artists. BAS is a catalyst for self-empowerment, innovation, and action focused on enhancing our region

Buffalo Arts Studio connects diverse communities through exhibitions, educational programs, and public art while providing support for visual artists. BAS is a catalyst for self-empowerment, innovation, and action focused on enhancing our region.

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*Note to Editors: High-resolution images and additional press materials are available upon request.*