



LAY BARE



Brew House Association (BHA) is a non-profit art center that provides creative space and support for people to connect and expand their relationship with the arts. Founded in the early 1990s in the former Duquesne Brewing Company facility by a community of artists committed to social awareness, BHA carries these ideals forward in its' programming today. BHA helps artists to grow professionally and creatively by connecting them to audiences, professional resources, and other arts organizations throughout the region and beyond. Housed in a 14,000 sq. ft. facility, BHA has the space, elements, and tools to support the imaginative work of a wide spectrum of creatives.

To learn more about Prospectus, visit brewhousearts.org/prospectus

Brew House Association Staff:

Natalie Sweet, *Executive Director*

Stephanie Garrison, *Operations Director*

Brent Nakamoto, *Program and Marketing Coordinator*

Helen Trompeteler, *Prospectus Program Mentor*

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Gallery guide edited and designed by Point Line Projects

Front cover: Evangeline Mensah-Agyekum, *As We Are*

Title spread: Bekezela Mguni, *Untitled*

BEKEZELA MGUNI
JULIANDRA JONES
BLACK GIRL ABSOLUTE
KARLISSIA COUNCIL
RELL RUSHIN
JAMEELAH PLATT
IVORY EDDINS
EVANGELINE MENSAH-AGYEKUM

February 2 – April 1, 2023

ZEAL

EVA

LAY

BARE



ZEAL EVA is a visual storyteller whose mission is to celebrate the Black experience through both her art and in the working relationships of the community. Originally from Bethlehem, PA, Zeal Eva's work is deeply rooted in personal history and the histories of the communities through which she navigates. Through her personal artistic practice, Zeal Eva has taken a humanistic approach to curation, putting the needs of the artists first and working to make sure opportunities are open to individual artists within the Black community who have not had the chance to exhibit work in a gallery setting.

Prospectus is a curatorial development program of Brew House Association that supports emerging talent and produces two fully developed exhibitions at the Brew House Gallery.



01 - Evangeline Mensah-Agyekum
As We Are



UNVEILING NEW BEGINNINGS

Lay Bare explores the Black experience through the lens of Black women by asking selected artists, *Who would you be if you could be your most authentic self?* The resulting exhibition speaks to the artists' current lived and imagined experiences and to the constant duality of both, creating space for others and taking space for the self.

Heavily influenced by Carrie Mae Weems's *The Kitchen Table Series* (1990), in which she staged scenes that "explore female identity, experiences, and relationships in the context of a traditionally female domain,"¹ this exhibition will take you on a journey of humanity—community, family, relationships, and the self—and speak on the balance between work, pleasure, and rest. Unveiling their unique life stories, histories, and futures, these artists create works that both connect to one another and draw from the world encompassing them.

In a 2019 study published by the City of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission, Black women in Pittsburgh consistently ranked lowest when it came to health, poverty, income, employment, and education. In spite of these glaring realities, the artists in *Lay Bare* convey experiences, moments, and memories that represent different stories.

These artworks tell stories of angels, of nature, of deep relationships. They unveil the complexities of humanity and illustrate how one can become something greater in spite of resistance.



02 - Jameelah Platt
Chosen

03 - Karlissia Council
Vintage Shirt

04 - Evangeline Mensah-Agyekum
As We Are
(on following spread)

¹ Victoria L. Valentine, "Carrie Mae Weems on Kitchen Table Series: 'Not Simply a Voice for African American Women, but More Generally for Women,'" *Culture Type*, August 13, 2020, culturetype.com/2020/08/13/carrie-mae-weems-on-kitchen-table-series-not-simply-a-voice-for-african-american-women-but-more-generally-for-women





Lay Bare provides an opportunity for us to move closer to the worlds these artists envision. The exhibition offers alternative possibilities for their communities and themselves, serving as a way for Black women to reimagine the past and the future.

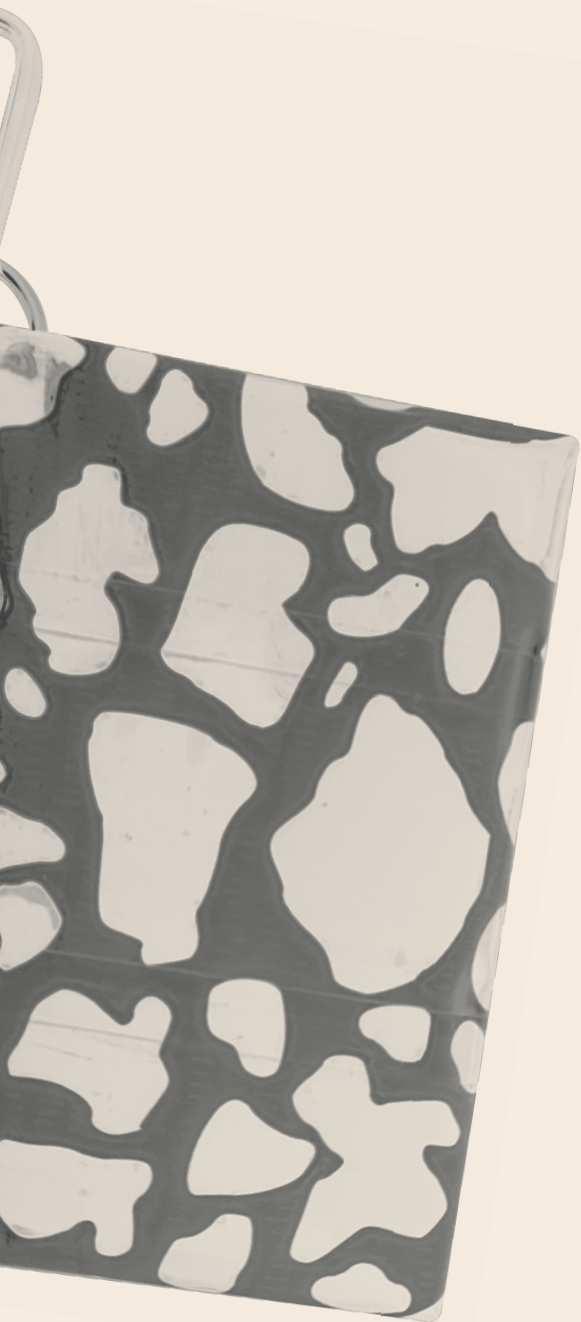
In her piece *a way/away with words*, Bekezela Mguni works to find her own revelation, wanting to look beyond the surface, to find the things that affirm her life and soul. Ancestral lineages, plants, and spirit guide this work. She explores imperfection and its relationship to effort, learning, wisdom, beautiful possibilities, and an awareness of an everlasting love within.

Adorned with jewels, glitter, gold, and paint strokes that showcase abstract thought, the works of artists Black Girl Absolute, Jameelah Platt, and Ivory Eddins weave in and out of their relationships to their loved ones.

They celebrate their bodies, the death of self and the resurrection of one that has outgrown the expectations of others, arriving at the ability to live out their own truths.

Artists Karlissia Council and Evangeline Mensah-Agyekum peek into the old familiar and reveal the unseen. Their installations encompass photography, sculpture, and clothing, and depict Black individuals as angels grounded in their most comfortable state. In doing so, they create a space to be, to let down your guard, to unwind; to embody your personal definition of an authentic self—the elusive you that is discovered—in rare and serendipitous situations—stumbled upon, and created by simple moments of life, in preparing the self for the future, and in looking back to the past to reveal in your present.





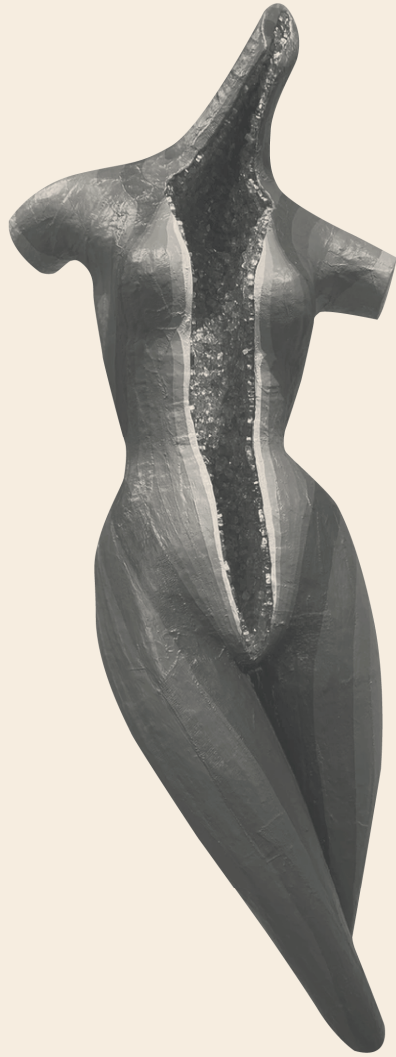
05- Karlissia Council
Wallet

06 - Jameelah Platt
Dorsé

07 - Ivory Eddins
We Bloom

08 - Bekezela Mguni
Untitled





09 - Black Girl Absolute
Our Most Here

10 - Juliandra Jones
Remnant

A journey into self-awareness also drives Juliandra Jones' (PBJ Customs) work, explored through a process of self-healing. Jones uses paint, digital rendering, crystals, and found materials to depict abstract renderings of the female form. Similarly, Rell Rushin layers her paints in ochre, blues, and red, creating self-portraits that are both an ode to her past and a confirmation of her present. As a self-portraiture artist, Rushin makes corrections to her pieces by overlapping them in different colors and modes of being, taking things a moment at a time, and immersing herself in the process of maladaptive day-dreaming. Her piece *Untitled* is her way of "moving about the world [and] creating as little harm as possible to others, and also to myself." In this artwork, she speaks to the duality of life, grieving things that she may never have—all while still loving life and thriving through it.

Lay Bare seeks to capture the individual lived experiences of Black women through their own creative mediums and to support them as they shape their own identities and meaning.

This exhibition looks to transform the gallery space into a hub for creative thought, interaction, conversation, and deeper understanding of the Black femme community that exists within Pittsburgh.



11 - Jameelah Platt
Growing Into Safety

12 - Rell Rushin
Untitled



ARTIST INFORMATION

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EXHIBITION NOTES

