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Textile Center and Women of Color Quilters Network (WCQN) announce extended schedule for *We Are the Story*, seven quilt exhibitions curated by Carolyn Mazloomi, September 10, 2020 through June 12, 2021

Group and solo exhibitions will build upon symbols of liberation, resistance and empowerment, offering a visually compelling account of the breadth of experiences and struggles that comprise Black history in an honest and critical way

(Minneapolis, MN) – When Minneapolis became the epicenter of the nationwide protest movement against police brutality and racism in America following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, **Textile Center** and **Women of Color Quilters Network (WCQN)** joined forces to create ***We Are the Story***, a multi-venue initiative in the Twin Cities, September 10, 2020, through June 12, 2021.

Under the curatorial direction of **Carolyn Mazloomi**, WCQN founder and member of Textile Center’s National Artist Advisory Council, *We Are the Story* opens in September with exhibitions at **Textile Center** and the **American Swedish Institute**.



Cracked Justice by Carolyn Crump of Houston, TX, will serve as a signature quilt for *We Are the Story*, and will be exhibited at Textile Center September 15, 2020, through June 12, 2021.

Due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Textile Center is extending the previously announced timeline for *We Are the Story* into June 2021, which will ensure that the quilts can be seen in person by as many people as possible in safe, socially distanced environments. Extending the timeline also allows the exhibition of quilts to coincide with the observation of the first anniversary of George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis.

Two juried exhibitions– ***Gone but Never Forgotten: Remembering Those Lost to Police Brutality*** and ***Racism: In the Face of Hate We Resist***– serve as a centerpiece for *We Are the Story*. Given the

urgency of these issues in America, quilters from around the nation worked under an extremely tight creative timeline. The calls were open in mid-June to all artists regardless of age, color, national origin, citizenship status, race, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity in mid-June, and **423 quilts were submitted by the July 31 deadline. Mazloomi selected 89 quilts for the two exhibitions.** Today, Textile Center and WCQN announce the quilts selected for these exhibitions below.

As part of *We Are the Story*, the American Swedish Institute will present the Minnesota premiere of WCQN's *We Who Believe in Freedom* September 10 through November 1, 2020.

Assembled in 2016 to honor the 55th anniversary of the Freedom Riders, *We Who Believe in Freedom* represents works by members of WCQN that tell the story of the African American Experience.

We Are the Story also includes four solo exhibitions. ***I Wish I Knew How it Feels to be Free (Quilts by Dorothy Burge, Chicago, IL) will be presented at Textile Center September 29 through December 24, 2020.*** The venues and dates for the following three venues will be announced soon: *Sacred Invocations* (Quilts by Sylvia Hernandez, Brooklyn, NY); *The Protest Series* (Quilts by Penny Mateer, Pittsburgh, PA); and *Freedom Rising: I Am the Story* (Quilts by L'Merchie Frazier, Boston, MA.)

Select quilts will also be presented with community partners later this winter and spring including the University of Minnesota's **Weisman Art Museum, Division of Indian Work** in South Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota's **Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center** in North Minneapolis, **Homewood Studios** in North Minneapolis, **Studio 106** in Burnsville, and **St. Catherine University's Apparel, Merchandising and Design Gallery.**

A series of Zoom talks, including ***We Are the Story: Let's Talk about Race*** presented by Textile Center, WCQN and Friends, will be announced soon. These Zoom presentations will focus on issues of police brutality, racism, and inequities in America in support of Black Lives Matter, as well as introduce the more than 100 quilters featured in these exhibitions. The Zoom talks will be open to the public.

ABOUT WE ARE THE STORY – FROM CURATOR CAROLYN MAZLOOMI

“George Floyd’s cry to his Mama for maternal help, mirrors a symbolic guttural cry for help from the belly of our nation,” Mazloomi says. “Our citizens are crying out for protection, comfort, and education. In response to that cry, and to help educate the public on brutality, inequities, and racism in America, Textile Center and the Women of Color Quilters Network (WCQN) and Friends, together, are sponsoring a series of art quilt exhibitions. Collectively the exhibition quilts will tell the unsung stories that affect our understanding and inspire our resolve to end this unholy trinity of societal ills. The series will be organized around the following themes: remembering those lost to police brutality, history of civil rights, and racism in America.

“Throughout history, Black liberation movements have been deeply influenced by our cultural gifts and have often birthed new and beautiful forms of creative expression,” Mazloomi adds. “Artistic production, as seen throughout the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power movements, has operated as a vehicle for change and consciousness raising alongside the protests and organizing efforts employed by Black communities across the U.S.

“We at WCQN feel compelled to follow the blueprint of our ancestors, using the work of our hands as tools for storytelling and social change,” adds Mazloomi, who founded WCQN in 1985. “Quilting has long served as an act of self-determination and community support within African American history. The creativity and support manifested by enslaved women through quiltmaking directly informed the work of the quilting bees of the 60s and 70s whose work funneled social, financial and education resources into the fight for freedom and civil rights. As cultural stewards in today’s fight for justice, our mission is no different.”

WE ARE THE STORY CALENDAR OF SCHEDULED EXHIBITIONS

All seven exhibitions will also be presented virtually on the websites of Textile Center & WCQN. A comprehensive list of exhibition hours will be posted at textilecentermn.org. All exhibitions will be free and open to the public, but appointments may be required at venues due to the COVID pandemic.

We Are the Story – Exhibition #1

Gone but Never Forgotten: Remembering Those Lost to Police Brutality

Textile Center, Joan Mondale Gallery

September 15 through December 24, 2020

Gone but Never Forgotten: Remembering Those Lost to Police Brutality is a national juried exhibition showcasing 26 quilts that honor those whose lives were violently ended due to police negligence and brutality and critiques the targeting and criminalization of Black bodies throughout history.

Enee Abelman (St. Petersburg, FL) – *Say Their Names!*

Linda Asbury (Stone Mountain, GA) – *Her Name is Beloved Speak Her Name: Secoriea Turner*

Sharon V. Buck (Newport, TN) – *Don't Let My Name Fade Away*

Ora Clay (Oakland, CA) – *And Counting...*

Donnette A. Cooper (Washington, DC) – *Justice Flatlined*

Cheryl M. Coulter (Bloomington, MN) – *Last Cry*

Rebecca Cynamon-Murphy (Wheaton, IL) – *Everybody Gonna Shine*

Deborah Fell (Champaign, IL) – *WRITING on the Wall*

Gloria Gammage Davis (Philadelphia, PA) – *Hands Up*

Gwen Gordon (Tucker, GA) – *Know Their Faces*

Marilyn Hamilton Jackson (Springfield Gardens, NY) – *Say Their Names*

Gloria Kellon (Shaker Heights, OH) – *Emanuel Nine Martyrs*

Susan Brubaker Knapp (Chapel Hill, NC) – *I'll Fly Away*

Angela Lanier (Oxon Hills, MD) – *Inspangered*

Carol Larson (Petaluma, CA) – *Somebody's Child*

Zoe Lautz (Minneapolis, MN) – *Sandra*

Tomasita Louviere-Lignons (Austin, TX) – *Invocation*
Clara Nartey (West Haven, CT) – *Charleena*
Gwen Triay Samuels (Albuquerque, NM) – *View of Heaven from My Window*
Gwen Schagrin (Minneapolis, MN) – *George Floyd: A Tipping Point*
Jill Slipper Scholtz (Eden Prairie, MN) – *Not Minnesota Nice*
Carole Gary Staples (West Chester, OH) – *Corona Virus with Police Brutality on the Fringe*
Jane Hill Stokes (Lewes, DE) – *How Many Deaths Will it Take*
Dixie L. Walker (Clinton, MA) – *Justice*
Janice Willis (Altadena, CA) – *A Mother's Lament*
Sauda A. Zahra (Durham, NC) – *Mourning*

We Are the Story – Exhibition #2

Racism: In the Face of Hate We Resist

Textile Center, Joan Mondale Gallery, Mary Giles Gallery, Community Gallery

March 26 through June 12, 2021

An international juried exhibition featuring 63 quilts, *Racism: In the Face of Hate We Resist* builds on these narratives by sharing the stories of resistance and fortitude that have been integral to the survival of Black people in America. During this time, quilts from the other *We Are the Story* exhibitions are intended to be exhibited at venues to be determined as part of a community-wide outreach initiative, providing an opportunity for our community to have one last comprehensive viewing as our community observes the first anniversary of George Floyd's death.

Allyson Allen (Sun City, CA) – *Enough*
Dianne D. Gates-Anderson (Union City, CA) – *And It's Very Big AND*
Gwendolyn Aquí-Brooks (Wesley Chapel, FL) – *The Fight Continues*
Ellen M. Blalock (Syracuse, NY) – *Murder*
Annie Chen (Minneapolis MN) – *Generational Talks*
Tambra Chisolm (Baltimore, MD) – *Say Their Name*
Ora Clay (Oakland, CA) – *Massacres!!*
Holly Cole (Triangle, VA) – *Don't Shoot*
Laura M. Croom (Cleveland, OH) – *Equality for All*
Carolyn Crump (Houston, TX) – *Cracked Justice*
Carolyn Crump (Houston, TX) – *Waiting to Have My Say*
Norma J. Dixon (Cleveland, OH) – *How Life Slips Away*
Eileen Doughty (Vienna, VA) – *Dancing in Spite of Tear(s)/Gas*
Jacqueline Dukes (Cleveland, OH) – *Lola's Lament*
Michelle Flamer (Philadelphia, PA) – *Dear White People*
Renée Fleuranges-Valdes (North Charleston, SC) – *The COLORism of America*
Jeanette Floyd (Gonzalez, LA) – *Man with Locs (Handsome)*
Zinda Foster (Seattle, WA) – *The Threat Continues – Bite Back*
Marjorie Diggs Freeman (Durham, NC) – *Different Targets ...Why?*
Lynette Gallon-Harrell (Seattle, WA) – *The Letter*
Gloria Gammage Davis (Philadelphia, PA) – *Shirley*

Mimi Goodwin (St. Paul, MN) – *We Rise Up Over and Around ALL Fences*
Edith Gross (Belle Chasse, LA) – *Generational March*
Maude Wallis Haeger (West Chester, OH) – *Icons of Despair*
Deborah A. Moore Harris (Helotes, Texas) – *American Legacy*
Peggie Hartwell (Summerville, SC) – *Breath*
Cheryl Willis Hudson (East Orange, NJ) – *Great Day the Righteous Marching*
Ingrid Humphrey (St. Augustine, FL) – *Mother Akoben*
Christina E. Johnson (Philadelphia, PA) – *Mama Floyd*
Maureen O. Johnson (Lakeville, MN) – *Chaos in the City*
Gloria Kellon (Shaker Heights, OH) – *Dawn at the Million Man March*
Sharon Kerry-Harlan (Wauwatosa, WI) – *Bloody Sunday*
Beverly Kirk (Oklahoma City, OK) – *The Sipuel Legacy*
Evelyn Oliver Knight (Waterbury, CT) – *Black and Blue*
Evelyn Oliver Knight (Waterbury, CT) – *Actions Speak Louder Than...*
Viola Burley Leak (Washington, DC) – *Black Lives Matter*
Viola Burley Leak (Washington, DC) – *In the Face of Hate We Resist*
Betty Leacraft (Philadelphia, PA) – *Nation Time 2020: Power and Protection from Racial Terrorism*
Cynthia Lockhart (Cincinnati, OH) – *Enough is Enough: Stop the Killing*
Lisa Longacher (Castle Rock, CO) – *No Justice, No Peace*
Ann Baldwin May (Santa Cruz, CA) – *Let Us Breathe*
Ed Johnetta Miller (Hartford, CT) – *I Have Lived With Injustice All My Life*
Sandra Noble (Warrensville Heights, OH) – *To Serve & Protect*
Bobbe Shapiro Nolan (Eagle Lake, TX) – *Flyover Series #5: Chains, Rope, Shame*
Mary D. Pinckney (Cleveland, OH) – *When Will the Chains Be Broken?*
Ellaree Pray (Piscataway, NJ) – *Urban Jungle*
Susi Ryan (Worcester, MA) – *We Are All Homosapiens*
Gwen Triay Samuels (Albuquerque, NM) – *Hard Times Require Furious Dancing*
Lorin Arrington Savage (San Antonio, Texas) – *Pushing the Envelope*
Marlene Seabrook (Charleston, SC) – *I Just Want to Get Home*
Barbara Sferra (Cincinnati, OH) – *Redlining*
Ruth Smith (Aptos, CA) – *Reckoning*
Carole Gary Staples (West Chester, OH) – *Defeat Racism*
Felecia Tinker (Columbus, OH) – *Say Her Name*
O Jean Thomas Richmond (San Antonio, TX) – *Black Lives Matter*
Deanna Tyson (London, England) – *It Is History*
Mary Vaneecke (Tucson, AZ) – *White Silence is Violence*
Mary Vaneecke (Tucson, AZ) – *Unraveling the Case for Reparations*
Brenetta Ward (Seattle, WA) – *Sorrow, Grief and Righteous RAGE*
Kathy Weaver (Chicago, IL) – *Panopticon*
Trish Williams (Peoria, IL) – *A Triptych of Evil – (See No Evil, Speak No Evil, and Hear No Evil)*
Trish Williams (Peoria, IL) – *Stolen Girls*
Sauda A. Zahra (Durham, NC) – *Count Us In*

We Are the Story – Exhibition #3

***We Who Believe in Freedom* (Quilts by members of WCQN)**

American Swedish Institute, Osher Gallery

September 10 through November 1, 2020

We Who Believe in Freedom was first presented in 2016 to honor the 55th anniversary of the Freedom Riders, and it represents works by members of WCQN that tell the story of the African American Experience. This exhibition is free to the public — visit asimn.org/reopening to get your free ticket to visit this exhibition. Select “We Are the Story – Registration.”

We Are the Story – Exhibition #4

***I Wish I Knew How it Feels to be Free* (Quilts by Dorothy Burge, Chicago, IL)**

Textile Center, Community Gallery

September 29 through December 24, 2020

Dorothy Burge, a member of WCQN, is a multimedia artist and community activist who is inspired by both historic and current social justice issues. She is one of the strongest voices in Chicago for police accountability and reparations for survivors of police torture. Dorothy will be a featured guest in our Zoom *Let’s Talk About Race* conversations.

WE ARE THE STORY EXHIBITIONS TO BE SCHEDULED SOON

We Are the Story – Exhibition #5

***The Protest Series* (Quilts by Penny Mateer, Pittsburgh, PA)**

Penny Mateer, artist/activist, works with textiles and recycled materials. Her art is rooted in quilting and embroidery, traditionally thought of as “women’s work.” Drawing from this rich history of creating functional objects intended to provide warmth and comfort, she chooses fabric as her primary material to establish connection through shared experience and spark discussion around current events. Her social practice centers on a community-made public art project to promote voting.

We Are the Story – Exhibition #6

***Freedom Rising: I Am the Story* (Quilts by L’Merchie Frazier, Boston, MA)**

L’Merchie Frazier, a public fiber artist, quilter, historian, innovator, poet and holographer, has served the artistic community for more than 25 years nationally and internationally with visual and performance art residencies in Boston, Brazil, Taiwan, Costa Rica, Africa, France, and Cuba. A public lecturer and community workshop presenter, her spatial and social justice artistic work activates youth and adults in a co-design model that reflects the participants as creative actors and their occupancy in democratizing the socio-economic political landscape.

We Are the Story – Exhibition #7

***Sacred Invocations* (Quilts by Sylvia Hernandez, Brooklyn, NY)**

Sylvia Hernandez is a celebrated and self-taught master quilter, and she creates timeless, handcrafted works that address community and human right issues. Sylvia is currently the president of the Quilters of Color Network of NYC, co-president of the Brooklyn Quilters Guild, and she is a member of the WCQN. She teaches at El Puente Academy of Peace and Justice, MS 50 and has worked with AgitArte, a social justice group that has led community educational and art programs in marginalized communities in Puerto Rico and locally.

ABOUT THE WOMEN OF COLOR QUILTERS NETWORK (WCQN)

For African American women quilts have always been at the core of artistic expression, taking form in the social, economic, and spiritual lives of the women who make them. Founded by Carolyn Mazloomi in 1985, WCQN is a non-profit national organization whose mission is to educate, preserve, exhibit, promote and document quilts made by African Americans. WCQN showcases the work of its members through critically acclaimed traveling exhibitions that tour museums throughout the United States, including the Smithsonian. WCQN has exhibited quilts in Japan, England, South Africa, Italy and Australia as part of art programs sponsored by the United States Department of State. For more information, visit: wcqn.org.

ABOUT CAROLYN MAZLOOMI

Historian, curator, author, lecturer, artist, mentor, founder, and facilitator — the remarkable and tireless Carolyn Mazloomi has left her mark on many lives. Trained as an aerospace engineer, she turned her sites and tireless efforts in the 1980s to bring the many unrecognized contributions of African American quilt artists to the attention of the American people as well as the international art communities. From the founding of the African-American Quilt Guild of Los Angeles in 1981 to the 1985 founding of the WCQN, Carolyn has been at the forefront of educating the public about the diversity of interpretation, styles and techniques among African American quilters as well as educating a younger generation of African Americans about their own history through the quilts the WCQN members create.

A major force as an artist in her own right, Carolyn's quilts can be found in private collections around the world as well in distinguished museum collections in the United States. To date she has published 12 books highlighting African American-made quilts. Her artistic work, as well as her defense of solid research, has disrupted long-standing myths about African American quilts, myths much debated among quilt historians and quilters alike, and thus moved the conversation about African American quilt history forward to more a solid academic footing. For more information, visit: carolynmazloomi.com.

ABOUT TEXTILE CENTER

Textile Center is unique as America's national center for fiber art, with a mission to honor textile traditions, promote excellence and innovation, and inspire widespread participation in fiber arts. The Center's resources include exceptional fiber art exhibitions, an artisan shop, a professional-grade dye lab, a natural dye plant garden, and one of the nation's largest circulating textile libraries open to the public. Textile Center produces more than 200 classes a year for all ages and skill levels through its youth, adult, older adult, and outreach programs. A dynamic hub of fiber activity more than 25 years, Textile Center brings people together in community to learn, create, share, and be inspired by fiber art. For more information, visit: textilecentermn.org or call 612-436-0464.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE (ASI)

ASI is a museum and cultural center that is a gathering place for all people to share experiences around themes of culture, migration, the environment and the arts, informed by enduring ties to Sweden. The ASI is located at 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418. *The Wall Street Journal* called ASI “[a] model of how a small institution can draw visitors through exciting programming.” For more information, visit www.ASIminn.org or call 612-871-4907.

WE ARE THE STORY FUNDERS

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