



Contact
Isabel Morales, isabel.morales@msichicago.org, (773) 947-6003
Warren Stokes, warren.stokes@msichicago.org, (773) 753-6230

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HISTORIC BLACK CREATIVITY PROGRAM

Program features largest selection of African-American art in its history, introduces new exhibit, honors STEM innovators, and more

CHICAGO (January 20, 2020)—This year, the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Black Creativity program, which honors African-American achievement in science, technology, engineering, art and medicine. The Museum is commemorating this milestone anniversary with a robust calendar of experiences and events throughout Black History Month.

“The achievements of African Americans are front and center during Black Creativity, from arts and industrial design, to medicine and film making,” said David Mosena, MSI’s president and chief executive officer. “As an institution that welcomes so many families and students, it’s critical to highlight the African-American leaders who are creating real change in their professional fields and within their communities, inspiring young people to add their own ideas to the legacy of African-American innovation.”

Black Creativity runs from January 20 to March 1 and is included in Museum Entry.

Celebrating 50 Years

Black Creativity began in 1970 as a tribute to the culture, heritage and contributions of African Americans in the arts. It was conceived and organized by a group of local artists along with key staff members of the Chicago Defender. Initially called Black Esthetics, the early years captured the cultural pride among African Americans at the time, with the *Juried Art Exhibition* and live musical, dance and theatrical performances.

In 1984, the program was renamed Black Creativity and soon expanded to celebrate the contributions of African Americans in the sciences. New experiences were added, including an exhibit, educational programs and a gala to support the annual program.

Exhibits

MSI is introducing ***Black Creativity: 50 Years***, a new exhibit that tells the story of the program’s significant moments and Chicagoans whose work pushed boundaries, including Charles Harrison, the designer of the View-Master, and Black Creativity founding collaborators Chicago Defender photographer Robert (Bobby) A. Sengstacke and artist Douglas A. Williams. *Included with Museum Entry.*

The 50th anniversary of the ***Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition***, the nation’s longest-running exhibition of African-American art, will showcase the most work in its history. Selected by a panel of jurors, the exhibition features more than 200 works by professional artists from across the nation as well as local student artists. Winners receive a cash prize, and one student artist receives a scholarship to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Early College Program Summer Institute. Many artists whose work was previously shown have achieved critical acclaim, such as Hebru Brantley, Harmonia Rosales, Theaster Gates and Amanda Williams. *Included with Museum Entry.*

Events

- **Family Day** – To celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the start of Black Creativity, Super Heroic CEO and co-founder Jason Mayden will be a part of **Family Day** on January 20, a free day for Illinois residents. Super Heroic’s mission is to ensure children believe in their abilities, and Mayden will lead kids in making their own superhero identity as they create superhero origin stories and leave with capes. *Included with Museum Entry.*
- **Black Creativity Gala** – The Black Creativity Gala, planned in collaboration with a committee of prominent African-American leaders, raises money to support the annual Black Creativity program at MSI. This black-tie event on January 25 is a celebration of art and innovation, providing guests with late-night access to the Museum’s world-renowned exhibits as well as exclusive experiences. *Additional ticket purchase required.*

Education

Black Creativity will again offer a range of education programs designed to expose African-American youth to career opportunities and deepen their engagement through hands-on learning.

- **The Innovation Studio** – Use design thinking to build an invention that helps a superhero! On weekdays, school groups learn about how to create a prototype and get hands on to invent their own device. The Innovation Studio also spotlights African-American leaders in STEM fields who are transforming Chicago. *Open to the public on weekends. Included with Museum Entry.*
- **Career Showcase** – The Career Showcase on February 29 offers students and their families the chance to explore innovative careers by speaking with dozens of professionals in art, science and engineering stationed throughout the Museum for hands-on activities and one-on-one discussions. *Included with Museum Entry*

Black Creativity season sponsors include The Allstate Insurance Company, ComEd, NextLevel Health and Zing Health.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can’t be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family educational programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI’s larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. The Museum is exceptionally grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.

###