

PRESS INQUIRIES

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Art Center Sarasota's New Exhibitions:

January 27-March 5

Vitus Shell: “31 Flavors”

The Louisiana-based artist Vitus Shell investigates the past, present, and future of Black experience and identity in America in his mixed-media artworks.

JAVO: “Revisited”

These intricate works on canvas explore the beauty and tragedy of culture-making within the native Puerto Rican’s adopted society.

Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative Juried Exhibition:

“Visions in Black”

A juried art exhibition celebrating the works of local art students alongside works by seasoned artists of African descent. In partnership with ACS and sponsored, in part, by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

Juried Exhibition: “Anything Goes”

A juried exhibition of artwork spanning a range of mediums, including paintings, drawings, photography, and sculpture.

Opening reception for all exhibits is Thursday, January 27

(January 13, 2022) Art Center Sarasota’s 2021 exhibition season continues with four exhibits, January 27-March 5. **Vitus Shell: “31 Flavors”** features large-scale, mixed-media works exploring the Black experience by the Louisiana-based artist Vitus Shell.

JAVO: “Revisited” features intricate works on canvas that explore the beauty and tragedy of culture-making within the native Puerto Rican’s adopted society. In the juried exhibition, **“Visions in Black,”** Art Center Sarasota partners with the Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative to showcase the works of local art students alongside works by seasoned artists of African descent. The “Visions in Black” exhibit is sponsored, in part, by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. **“Anything Goes”** is a juried exhibition of artwork spanning a range of mediums, including paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture. **The opening reception for all four exhibits is Thursday, January 27, 6-8 p.m. Masks are required. Art Center Sarasota is part of #SafeArtsSarasota. Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For information, visit www.artsarasota.org or call 941-365-2032.**

The Louisiana-based artist **Vitus Shell** investigates the past, present, and future of Black experience and identity in America in his mixed-media artworks. His powerful, mixed-media creations offer a unique take on Black identity by deconstructing, sampling and remixing the realities of identity, civil rights, and contemporary Black culture. He’s informed and inspired by contemporary Black artists working across a spectrum of media. But Shell is also inspired by Black history. His artistry references the painful legacy of Jim Crow and mass media’s racist stereotypes. To paraphrase Faulkner, the past isn’t dead in Shell’s work. It isn’t even past. Shell keeps one eye on today — and another eye on yesterday. The result is a complete field of vision. The goal? According to Shell, to open the eyes of viewers of all origins and identities. What does he hope they will see? According to Shell, the reality of the Black experience can be viewed as “what we identify as Black and perceive to be Black.” Shell has been

invited to participate in a number of prestigious artist residencies, including the Hermitage Artist Retreat, the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, and the Anderson Ranch Art Center. He has received numerous grants, including the Joan Mitchell MFA Award. Shell received a BFA from Memphis College of Art in 2000 and an MFA from the University of Mississippi in 2008.

Javier Rodriguez, known as “**Javo**,” was born in Puerto Rico and now lives and works in Sarasota. He creates intricate works on canvas that explore the beauty and tragedy of culture-making within his adopted society. “This new work gave me an excuse, an opportunity to expose myself one more time and travel out of my comfort zone to where every inch mattered,” he says. “These new paintings are a compilation of my vulnerabilities, risks, some wonderful accidents, and nothing more. They could also be seen as a bit bold and candid, maybe naïve, but definitely genuine.” With its strong line work, simple and sometimes provocative concepts, and an unstoppable urge for creating, Javo's work has evolved towards a style that is both bold and unmistakable. After studying fine art in Puerto Rico, Javo graduated from Ringling College of Art and Design and began his career as an illustrator. He has exhibited in the U.S., China, Puerto Rico, Dubai, and Russia. Javo is represented by Museum of the Americas in Miami and Chasen Gallery in Sarasota.

In the juried exhibition, “**Visions in Black**,” Art Center Sarasota partnered with the Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative to celebrate and showcase the works of local art students alongside works by seasoned artists of African descent. A grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation helped fund the exhibition.

“Anything Goes” is a juried exhibition of artwork spanning a diversity of mediums, including paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture. The juror is Tom Casmer, who has served on the faculties of the College of Visual Arts and Brown College in Minnesota, and the Ringling College of Art and Design. Over his career as an artist, Casmer has also worked as an illustrator and designer.

About Art Center Sarasota

Art Center Sarasota was the first arts and cultural institution in Sarasota. Founded in 1926 as the “Sarasota Art Association” by Marcia Rader, the art supervisor for the Sarasota County schools district, the Association was later incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 1943 and has been in its current location in the Sarasota Bayfront Cultural District since 1949. Art Center Sarasota is a member-supported organization that offers curated and juried exhibitions, adult and youth education programs, outreach initiatives for underserved youth, and culturally related public programming. Art Center Sarasota is admission-free and open to all public; its mission is to inspire individual creative expression, nurture artistic talent and provide the community with accessible and diverse visual art opportunities.

Art Center Sarasota

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Gallery Hours

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: noon-5 p.m.