

## TOUCHSTONE GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

*June 10-July 4, 2009*

**UNAPOLOGETIC**

**Artists: Janathel Shaw (sculptor), Michael Platt (printmaker), Donna Coleman (painter) and Malia Kai (painter)**

**Opening Reception: June 12, 6 - 8:30 pm**

The works in this show explore the images and themes evoked by both the intimate and the broader society. Isolation, imprisonment, genocide, shoring up the family, saving our young, and community pride are some of the provocative themes explored. These artists share a desire to communicate their perception of the human condition. Some are bolder in approach than others.

What does it mean to be unapologetic? In short it's a form of defiance and a willingness to risk rejection in the defense of your position. The title encompasses a group of artists unafraid to explore and experiment in content, strong design and techniques. The work is rich in "soul". It has a "bite". The audience is invited to visually and emotionally peel back the overtones of each work.

**Sculptor Janathel Shaw's** work is direct in its expression and message. Her ceramic forms are textural, raw and weighty. They openly confront you with their presence and intent. Her themes often center on the sensitive dynamic within the family and broader Black Diaspora. They address feminism and genocide. A special focus is often given to the current evolution of the young and their longevity. Janathel holds nothing back. She is a local artist who has shown in venues throughout the metropolitan DC area.

**Printmaker and Photographer Michael Platt's** current series explores the human spirit as it transcends isolation and confinement within prison walls. His haunting and yet beautiful pieces incorporate woman as the vessel or personification of the human soul. His work is full-bodied and powerful. He integrates his mastery of his medium with an intellectual sensitivity to history and concept. If you don't want to be educated, then step away. His works will school you. Michael Platt is well known in the Washington area.

**Painter Malia Kai** specializes in portraits that celebrate universal bonds within the human experience by depicting pivotal rites of passage, particularly the birthing process. Her work serves to reveal the beauty within the individual and as shown through her/his deeds. She offers it as a mirror to reveal the underlying ugliness in the hope that this reflection might lead to a change. Her choice of acrylic, gouache and pen and ink help to convey her expressions through interwoven translucent layers and vibrant tones. Malia Kai has shown in the metropolitan DC area.

**Painter Donna Coleman** has deep roots in the Washington DC area. She was a frequent exhibitor at Gallery K, a major venue in the Dupont Circle art scene. Her style is surreal, narrative and layered in bold hues and strong strokes. Some slyly reveal undercurrents of unease or caution. They offer a lens into everyday human experience - a mother dealing with her sick child, dipping into healing waters, the frenzied dance of human frailty are just some of the themes of her work. When you look at her paintings there is an urge to turn the page to see what lies beneath. Donna has relocated to Oberlin Ohio, but her heart is still in DC.

For more information please contact Ksenia Grishkova at [info@touchstonegallery.com](mailto:info@touchstonegallery.com)

Images: *Mourning* by Janathel Shaw and *Shower Room* by Michael Platt

