

Sankofa: Movement

Sankofa explores the African diaspora and its connection to Canadian history. Movement focuses on the transportation of West Africans from their native land, to their arrival in Canada, and understanding the critical roles Black people have played in Canadian history. Far too often American Black history overshadows Canadian Black history, and the contributions many Black Canadians had in shaping Canada are rarely told. As well, often Black history is told and taught in fragments, becoming the responsibility of Black individuals putting the pieces of their history together. However, Sankofa which is Twi (Ghanian language) for “go back and get” will connect the fragmented pieces of Black history into one complete story. The objective is to empower youth especially those that identify as Black to understand Black history does not begin at slavery. Our history begins in Africa. Where we are the descendants of African royalty, warriors, and leaders. Understand our past to know where we are going.

The exhibit will be divided into five chronological phases: Kingdoms, Enslavement, New Land, Reclamation and Warriors. Visitors will be transported over centuries, as they walk the similar journey many Africans of the past travelled. Through developing a multisensory and interactive exhibition the object is to evoke an emotional connection while encouraging conceptual and abstract thinking among visitors. This will be done through incorporating pictures, words, sound, textiles, weaving, beading and video. The purpose of narrating the exhibit in this manner is to answer questions, highlight untold stories, and empower the next generation Black Canadian youth to continue to use their voice to shape our society.

Utilizing polls, questionnaires, surveys and social media (TikTok) are some of the strategies that will be used for audience engagement. Online polls, questionnaires and surveys will be used to test audiences' knowledge about Black Canadian history. Participants will be encouraged to ask the questions they have always pondered but never knew whom to ask or where to find the answers, as well as gauge what information they already know. While the theme of the exhibit is African diaspora it is strongly encouraged that those not of the African diaspora will be encouraged to participate. The responses collected from all participants will also help to compare how much we know about our own stories and how much we know about other stories. In addition, cultural workshops on Traditional African drumming and dancing as well as Ghanian needle work. Through these cultural workshops the goal is to recreate the sharing of knowledge within a community. Participants will also have the opportunity to make connections of their new found learnings and take part in on the African Canadian Heritage Tour. After participating in this exhibit the objective is that all participants would have been moved; physically, intellectually and sentimentally.

Project Deliverables and Timeline:

Phase One- Story Development– (January- March 2023)

- Connect with Afiwi Dance group to discuss and finalize workshop objectives
- Connect with Knotted Naked to discuss and finalize workshop objectives & custom pieces
- Identify any accessibility barriers that may arise for in – person workshops.
 - Connect with Deaf Spectrum to address accessibility needs within deaf and hearing-impaired community
- Design questions that will be used in polls, surveys
 - Build strategic digital plan for distribution of polls and surveys
- Story Development: in-depth research and organizing factual information of significant events, people and activities connected to the African Diaspora.
- Itemize list of pieces and pictures to be used in the exhibit

Phase Two- Strategical Design & Curation: (February- May 2023)

- Analyze story outline with the results of polls, surveys-incorporate results in final story outline
- Installation Design – developing a solid design for the exhibit space to allow participants to experience the movement
- Construction plan for exhibit installation
- Finalize itemize list of elements needed for construction
- Organizing and gathering of installation of each phase of the exhibit
- Finalize permits and insurance policies

Phase Three - Implementation and Development: encompasses organizing all the elements of the exhibit in sequential order and installing the pieces into the exhibit. (June – August)

- Construction of elements and exhibit space
- Implementation of installation design for each section of the story
- Developing each section of the movement in sequential order with all the pieces
- Installing pieces of each story of the exhibit
- Organizing workshop materials and resources

Phase Four- Exhibition (September- December)

- Sankofa opens to the public
- Monthly community and workshops
- Post-Workshop survey
- Exhibit deconstruction
- Administrative wrap up- confirm all payments complete and invoices

Required resources and itemized project breakdown.

Item	Purpose	Budget
Deaf Spectrum	ASL translation services	2000.00
Knotnaked	Custom textile pieces	1500.00
Framing & Printing Services	Printing of imagine	2542
Afiwi Groove Dance School	African dancers & drummers	2000.00
Installation design & set- up		1500.00
Audio & Visual	Development of audio and visual content and equipment	3000.00
Curation Fee		1000.00
Textile (Kente Cloth)		500.00
Insurance & Permits	Special Event Permits	
https://posterjack.ca/products/framed-prints		

5 36 & 48 prints – 1630

6 24 x 32 = 912

Total= 2542

Shakira's Bio

Shakira Rouse is the creator and founder of Special Compass, keynote speaker, facilitator and yoga instructor. She has an incredible passion at connecting people to understand that learning disabilities shouldn't deter one from accomplishing their goals. Merging her personal experience and education, Shakira Rouse created Special Compass in 2015. Special Compass is an organization dedicated to helping students with learning disabilities achieve success in and outside the classroom.

Through her educational background in Inclusive Education, Shakira works at creating engaging learning experiences that are accessible and engaging to a diverse audience. A true creator, she has designed, managed and facilitated each of the programs and workshops delivered. Some examples of these programs included: What Happens Next (helping parents support their child with a special need in the education system, as well as helping students prepare for post-secondary education), Goal Getting, how to be a CEO and Reading 4 Success.

Her work and ideas on accessible education has led to speaking engagements, interviews at various events in North America. Such as the Ontario National Alliance of Black Students Educators annual conference, the Learning Disability Association of Canada Speak Up 4 Ability conference and presenting at the National Alliance of Black Student Educators 2019 annual

conference in Dallas, Texas. In 2016 she received the Black Role model award for her work and recently, has been nominated for the 2021 Women of Influence Award.

In the summer of 2022, Shakira took a trip to Ghana. It was a tour of the Slave River, and the route enslaved Africans were forced to travel, Shakira was inspired to share this experience and story with others. Until this moment, Shakira had to teach herself her own history and what she knew was fragmented. On this tour, she was finally able to put the pieces of her history together and understand the African Diaspora connection to the Americas, and more specifically Canada. Compelled to share this story in a creative and artistic fashion she began working on Sankofa.

Curatorial Statement

Sankofa: Movement

Curated by Shakira Rouse

In 1999 Canada legislation unanimously voted to make February black history month in Canada. Black history did not start in 1999. Who are the Canadian Freedom fighters? Who are the influential Black Canadians that have helped shape our society?

Black history has been told in pieces. It was not until I was in my second-year university, that I had my first lesson in black history. Even as an adult, I continue to put the pieces together to understand my ancestral roots. I realize, if I do not actively do the work and learn my history, who is going to tell it to my children? Many influential Black Canadians helped to shape our society; however their stories have been overshadowed by prominent African-American leaders like Malcom X, Martin Luther King, or W.E.B Dubois.

To learn black history, one needs to understand the African Diaspora by going back to our roots (Sankofa) and putting the pieces of our history together. I had the opportunity to take a trip to Ghana and see the beauty and strength of the country as well as travel the same route enslaved Africans traveled. It was at that moment, all the pieces of my history came together and made sense.

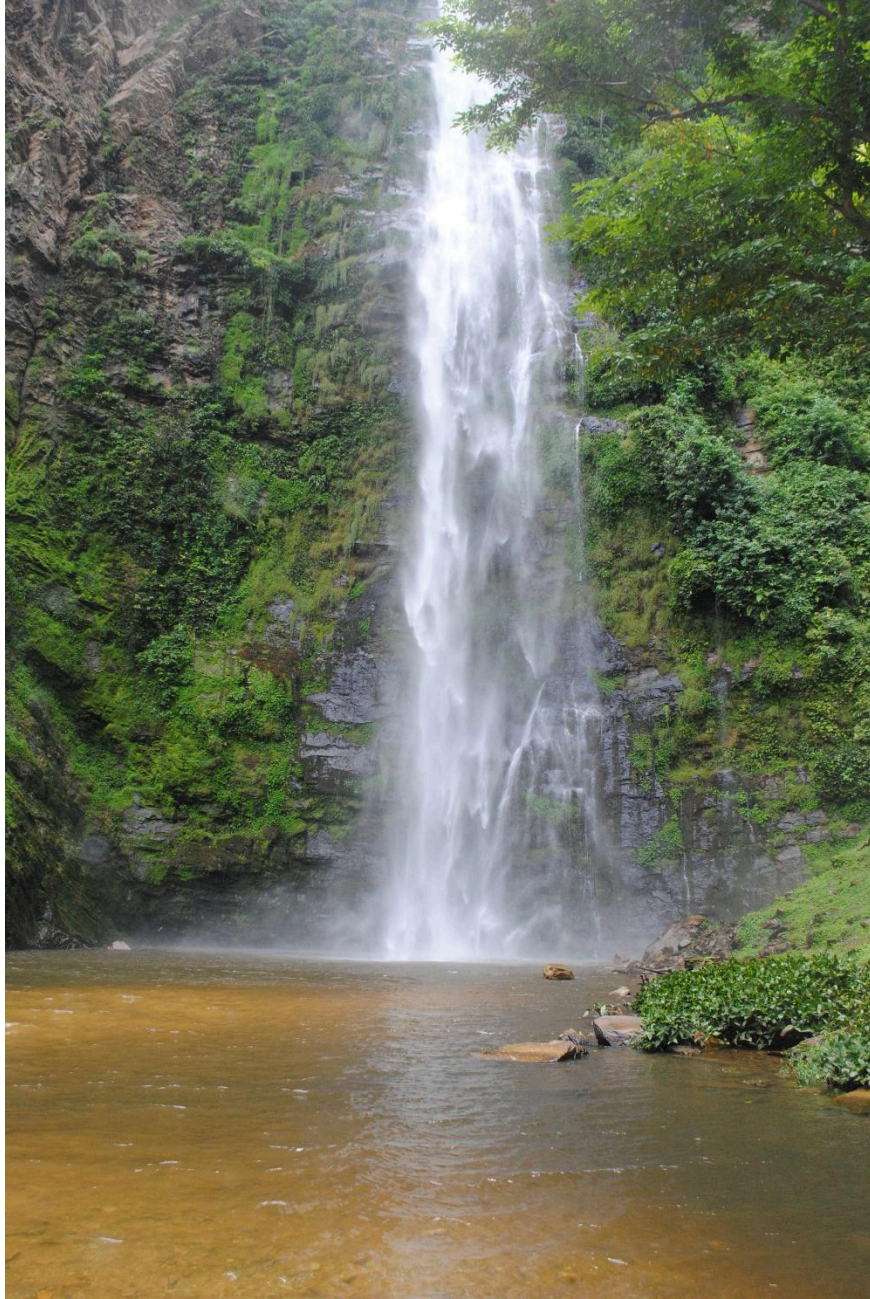
This exhibit shows the journey from West Africa to Canada. Who was the first Black person in Canada? Did Canada have slavery? Are there black people in the prairies? I want to create a space where people can ask questions. They can return to the beginning of the story and walk the journey from West Africa to Canada. After walking that journey they can share what they learned with others and/or be moved to ask more questions and explore more of the African Diaspora. To know where you are going, you need to have an understanding where you come from. I wanted to create an exhibit that helps black youth to understand their history. Teach them that they are descendants of intellectuals, artists and business people. That royalty is in their blood. Despite what others may say or try to do, just adjust your crown and keep going.



The tree of Life. Sculpted out of an old Christmas tree. The artist tells the story of life, how man and women need each other



to achieve success.
You cannot reach success without the support of someone pushing and pulling you up. If you chose to not listen to wisdom, you wont be able to get far.



Wi Falls. The largest waterfall in West Africa.



Ghanians believe in soul names. The day of the week a person is born is connected to the character and soul of that person. After participating in a naming ceremony in a local village with the Chief, Queen mother and other highly respect elders of the community.





Slave trade narrated in illustration. Europeans raided villages capturing men, women and children. Enslaved Africans walked for miles to the slave river, where they would take their 'final' baths. The final bath was when slaved bathed in the river to be cleaned and be prepared to sold into slavery. Following the bath, an auction would take place at the shores of the river. Any capture African that was not bought at the auction was silenced. If they were not sold, it signified they were worthless and to prevent them from returning to their village and telling others about what was happening, they were instantly killed.

Black history is not taught but learned in fragments. Often, individuals (especially Black people) are left to learn about Black history on their own, researching about specific people and periods. Most of the time these stories of Black history are told from an American perspective, overshadowing the voice of influential Black Canadians in our society. Sankofa which is Twi (Ghanian language) for "go back and get" will connect the fragmented pieces of Black history into one complete story. This project will allow participants to move on a journey from West Africa to Canada, connecting the African Diaspora with Canadian history. Divided into five chronological phases: Kingdoms, Enslavement, New Lands, Reclamation and Warriors. Kingdoms explores the roots of the African diaspora, learning and understanding West African cultures and traditions. Enslavement explores discussing the slave trade system and the objective of dehumanizing and oppressing enslaved Africans. New Lands explores the arrival of the first known Black person to arrive to Canada, and their role in colonization in their New World. Reclamation, Black Canadians reclaiming their voice and building a new society in their new world. Warriors, exploring the Black Canadian Freedom Fighters who used their voice to

advocate for change and break barriers for marginalized Canadians. Sankofa: Movement main objective is to move participants from the past, to the present and empower them to keep using their voice to bring movement and change in our society.







Thousands of enslaved Africans would arrive in the Slave Castles. Men and women were separated into dungeons. The dungeons held hundreds to a thousand of enslaved Africans. No window or ventilation only a tiny light. Many were forced to go to the bathroom in the same space they slept and ate. On a daily a guard would open the cell to see who had survived. Those that did not make it would be carried out and thrown into the ocean.







The door of no return. After weeks even months, the enslaved Africans were being prepared to board slave ships that would take them to the Americas. Many Africans had dwindled down in size from the malnutrition and inhumane treatment. The narrow opening of the door is designed to only permit one African to exit. Once they are out, they cannot return or try to help a friend. They walked from one dungeon directly out on to the Slave ships that took them to America





The living quarters for the General of the slave castle. In contrast to the enslaved Africans, the living conditions for the General was spacious, bright with plenty ventilation. The European officials lived on top of the salved castle. On Sunday church would be held, on top of the dungeon and a secret stair case would lead from the women's dungeon to the general's bedroom.