



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Month-long exhibit featuring local artists pays homage to Ward 7's indigenous land  
and climate change rolls out April 1**

*Down to Earth artist in residency program culminates with exhibits, artist talks and oral histories  
at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens and Honfleur Gallery*

**WASHINGTON, DC–** The national climate emergency and its intersectionality with systemic racism is delved into through the lens of Ward 7 residents during a month-long, two-location exhibit called Down to Earth, a creative project partnership between Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Caandor Labs and Capital Fringe. Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens national park and Honfleur Gallery will host Down to Earth April 1-30 with oral histories, fashion, maps and paintings created by local Washington, DC-area artists and historians.

"Down to Earth is an effort to focus on humans' impact on our land and water, and humans' ability - and inability - to change the course of where we are headed. Through art, we have spent the last year visualizing and storytelling the environmental risks facing certain areas including Kenilworth and the Anacostia River in hopes to incite awareness," said Julianne Brienza, founding director of Capital Fringe. "This is a pandemic project bringing together art and nature to examine interdisciplinary issues affecting us all. Our hope was to have outdoor exhibits so our artists, residents and visitors could really connect with the artists, the land and the issues but had to transition into a digital series featuring podcasts, videos and online exhibits. Finally, now we are especially excited to bring all the artists together for a culmination of this project in person throughout April."

Using the creative process and through a diverse collection of media, Down to Earth grapples with the preparation, incubation, and illumination that comes along with creative work and community advocacy. Over the past year, it has evaluated learning from each season's artists as they fulfilled their creative visions of the community and environment paying homage to the land of the Piscataway people of the Algonquin-speaking tribes, as well as the lands of the Native American people of the greater Anacostia, Potomac and Tidewater regions.

Winter 2021 artist, Rik Freeman created paintings illustrating life along the Anacostia 1200 BC to the present day. Spring 2021 artist Nikki Hendricks created three fabric designs: African



American Rights, Native American Rights and Climate Change for her 12-piece sustainable fashion collection based off of the plant and wildlife of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Summer artist in residence Siobhan Rigg produced a series of drawings and maps of the tidal Anacostia River (from Bladensburg, MD to its confluence with the Potomac) as a multimedia investigative project to document and represent the networks of political influence, financial speculation, language, and activism flowing through the ecologies and communities along the tidal Anacostia River in coming times of climate change and rising water. The final residency by Thomas Stanley, Malik Thomas, and Mark Cooley will be unveiled in April as a series of oral histories that can be heard on smartphones while Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens.

"It was great to follow a different set of artists every season as they offered their creative take on our neighborhood national park, a backyard oasis along the the Anacostia River, and our historic communities that make up Ward 7," said Tina O'Connell. "Issues of climate and systemic racism have been and continue to be present in our community and unless we do something to raise awareness, will continue to harm the most vulnerable among us." Before the pandemic, we planned to have several outdoor exhibits so our artists, residents and visitors could really connect with the artists, the land and the issues. We transitioned into a digital series featuring podcasts, videos and online exhibits and now we are especially excited to bring all the artists together for a culmination of this project in person throughout April." Events are free and open to the public. [Schedule](#) is as follows:

March 28 – April 30	8am – 4pm	Down 2 Earth and Up 2 Us Community Voices on Environmental Justice audio tour at the Gardens
Friday, April 1	7pm– 10pm	Exhibit Opening
Saturday, April 2	12pm	Community Conversation with Dennis Chestnut, Justin A. Lini, Tina O'Connell and Trey Sherard
Sunday, April 3	12pm	Artist Talk with Rik Freeman, Winter season artist
Wednesday, April 6	7pm	Artist Talk with Nikki Hendricks, Spring season artist
Sunday, April 10	12pm	Artist Talk with Siobhan Riggs, Summer season artist
Wednesday, April 13	7pm	Artist Talk with Thomas Stanley, Mark Cooley and Malik Thomas, Fall season artists
Saturday, April 24	9pm – 3pm	Earth Day clean up. Community is invited to participate. Down to Earth partners and artists to attend.

For more information visit <https://kenaaggardens.org/the-arts/>. For interviews with the artists or directors, please contact Zerline Hughes Spruill at 202.876.2992 or [zerline@fokag.org](mailto:zerline@fokag.org) or Laura Gross, [press@capitalfringe.org](mailto:press@capitalfringe.org) / 202.695.8223

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