

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The True New Mexico 2023 *Self Portraits* exhibition will be on display Saturday, May 27th, 5:00-7:00 pm at the Orpheum Community Hub.

On Saturday, May 27th, the True NM 2023 *Self Portraits* exhibit will showcase a collection of artwork by young AAPINH and Black New Mexican artists. This exhibition was put together by True NM, an annual antiracism, youth-centered arts-based project developed as a collaboration between the New Mexico Asian Family Center (NMAFC) and the New Mexico Black Leadership Council (NMBLC). Now in its third year, the project's 13 youth artists look to build cross-racial solidarity, explore identity, and dismantle the state's tricultural myth. They have created artwork and presentations discussing their experiences being AAPINH and Black in New Mexico guided by the prompt "What's your True New Mexican story?"

True NM itself was so named as a play on, and counter to, *New Mexico True*, the ubiquitous state tourism campaign. Recognizing the pervasive tricultural myth of New Mexico's demographics and history, True NM hopes to create conversations about this notion that removes the experiences of AAPINH and Black people in the state and ignores prevalent prejudices and racism, with the ultimate goal of redefining and rewriting *true* New Mexican narratives.

NMBLC Deputy Director, Kindra Hill, explained that the show's young artists received stipends for supplies and their time to complete the projects. They had a month to create their artwork, starting this past April, gathering weekly to build community, support each other's projects and progress, and participate in workshops facilitated by local, BIPOC artists with the goal of informing their work and expanding their network of vibrant, young, BIPOC artists. The mediums vary from sculpture to sewing to paint, and from multimedia to digital work. Kindra is glad to see the exhibit come to fruition, noting, "We want the community to know that these young people have worked hard on their projects."

The project has long-term goals to build authentic and meaningful visibility of and investment in AAPINH and Black communities in New Mexico, while also honoring the current reality and context that our youth exist within. "As AAPI History Month comes to a close, we will continue to celebrate and uplift AAPINH *and* Black history and representation, knowing that on-going investment in cross-racial movement building is critical to our collective work. We will not settle for token visibility and racial wedging," shares Executive Director of NMAFC, Sachi Watase.

The exhibit will run from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Saturday, May 27 at the Orpheum Community Hub at 500 2ND St. SW in downtown Albuquerque. The project was made possible by funds received by the AAPICivic Engagement Fund's Anti-Racism and Intersectional Justice Grant.

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The New Mexico Asian Family Center is a local 501 (c)(3) community-based organization providing culturally sensitive programs and services creating a Pan-Asian community that advocates for and supports itself. NMAFC provides survivor-led and centered direct social services, programs centering traditional methods of healing, youth and community leadership programs, financial education workshops, cross-racial movement building, and civic engagement work. For more information, call 505.717.2877 or visit www.nmafc.org.

The New Mexico Black Leadership Council is a local 501 (c)(3) social profit organization committed to fostering sustainable leadership, creating inclusive opportunities, developing multicultural capacity and cultivating progressive partnerships that support Black and other communities of color. Its various initiatives and programs strive to achieve positive collective change, racial, educational, and health equity, and economic independence. For more information, call 505.407.6784 or visit www.nmblc.org.