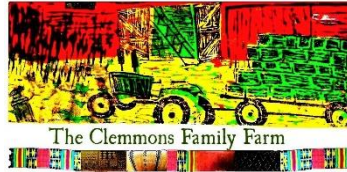


BUILDING A CREATIVE COMMUNITY WITH VIRTUAL ART AND TECHNOLOGY

November 1, 2020

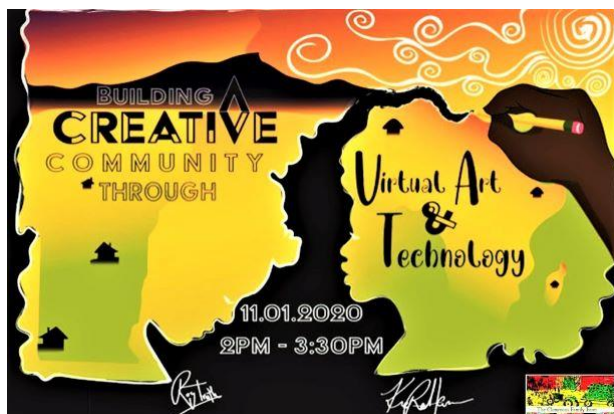


Program Overview

In these historic times, COVID19, police brutality, racism and civil unrest may increase our feelings of stress and loneliness. Participants joined us for an interactive remote 90-minute program on Zoom with award-winning scholar Van Dora Williams, and featured artists Kia'Rae Hanron and Kenroy Walker, to explore how the virtual art and technology can help us reach across our isolation and build a creative community. Directed by Pamela Donohoo, the program was held on Sunday November 1 from 2 - 3:30 PM.

Mrs. Lydia Clemmons, Senior, and her eldest daughter, also named Lydia, welcomed the participants to the program. Lydia explained what "easter eggs" are in film, video and digital games and invited the audience to take another look at the short doodle video she created to promote today's program. The video is packed with "easter eggs" hidden in plain sight. The audience had fun finding them and hearing one or two Clemmons family stories about the "easter eggs".

As part of our ongoing community-building work, the program included a segment where participants engaged directly with each other, and with two of our Vermont artists to create visual art in response to given prompts. Participants showed their individual artwork on their screens and screen shots were captured.



After the interactive element, Kenroy and Kia'Rae explained process of co-creating their artwork (shown below) "in the cloud" and facilitated an audience analysis and discussion of the artwork. Many found new images and meaning during the discussion that they hadn't noticed the first time they saw the artwork!

Produced by the Clemmons Family Farm, *Building A Creative Community With Virtual Art and Technology* was a remote interactive program held on Zoom. The

physical farm has been closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaker Bios



Mrs. Lydia Clemmons, Senior (RN, CLNA, JD)

Ninety-seven-year-old Lydia Clemmons and her husband, Jackson Clemmons, are two of Vermont's oldest living African American residents. She and her husband [purchased their 148-acre farm in Vermont in 1962 for \\$35,000](#) and have lovingly stewarded it over the years, never selling a single acre. One of the 0.4% of farms in the nation that is Black-owned, it is now transitioning into an African-American Heritage and Arts Center, with its arts, culture and educational programs run by Clemmons Family Farm, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Mrs. Clemmons was the first African-American nurse anesthetist at the University of Vermont Medical Center and was President of the New England Association of Nurse Anesthetists. She received an honorary degree in Law (JD) from the University of Vermont in recognition of her service and achievements in Vermont and New England. With her husband, she served as co-president of the Charlotte Central School PTA in the 1960s. She also started the Charlotte 4H Club, and remains a vibrant member of her community. In addition to her career in nursing, Lydia Clemmons is a Reiki healer and pursued fulfilling vocations as a farmer, an artist, an activist and a world traveler. In 1984, Mrs. Clemmons launched [Authentica African Imports](#), the very first African art mail order import business in the United States right on the farm in Charlotte, which she ran for nearly 25 years. With a grant from Vermont Arts Council to cover her mileage, she put her favorite African art pieces into the back of her old station wagon and drove all around the state of Vermont to speak in K-12 classrooms and [bring her stories of the peoples and cultures of Africa to teachers and students.](#)

Mrs. Clemmons and her family were part of the Great Migration of more than six million African-Americans who left their lives in the rural south and moved to the north, Midwest and California to find better opportunities and safe places to raise children and thrive. Her family were among the millions of Black farmers who lost a combined total of 93% of their land assets since the 1920s. Her grandparents, uncles and cousins escaped with their lives when a mob of jealous white farmers burned their farm to the ground in Louisiana. But that's [another story!](#) She is the mother of five children and the grandmother of 13 children. She is also a gifted storyteller who blends gentle humor and humility with vivid descriptions of the people, places, and events in her long and adventurous life.



Van Dora Williams, Co-host

Van Dora Williams, PhD is the Program Director for the Broadcast Media Production, Filmmaking and Sonic Arts programs at Champlain College. She holds a PhD in Communication from Regent University and a Master of Arts degree in Professional Writing from Regent University.

Her time as a journalist included writing, reporting and editing in the print, radio, TV and online mediums. Most of her work was done as a PBS senior producer and reporter in Norfolk, VA and it is where she earned multiple awards for her work, especially in the

documentary genre. Her international reporting on reconciliation in West Africa earned her yet more local, state and national awards including a regional Emmy and a national Telly Award and it was nationally distributed throughout the PBS system.

As an independent producer, she worked on national documentaries on civil rights leaders and race issues. She served as the associate producer for the acclaimed 2008 PBS documentary, *Banished: American Ethnic Cleansings*. While working on her doctorate, she provided archival research for the 2018 PBS national documentary, *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities*.

Dr. Williams finds it very easy to combine her passion of storytelling with her second passion, teaching. She has been teaching in higher education institutions for 15 years. She is currently an Associate Professor at Champlain College.



Kia'Rae Hanron, Featured Artist

A prolific visual artist, these days Kia'Rae's work focuses mainly on creating digital portraits. She is also a gifted spoken word artist. Kia'Rae has a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Art Education from the University of Vermont, with an interest in Psychology and Social Emotional Learning. Kia'Rae is Clemmons Family Farm's K-12 Learning Adviser as well as a collaborating artist.

Kenroy Walker, Featured Artist



Kenroy Walker is a multifaceted artist specializing in graphic design, journalism, music production, and video editing. Born in Jamaica, Roy has been a Vermonter since 2014. He has a Bachelor of Arts & Sciences in Popular Music from Florida Memorial University, Miami Gardens, with a Bachelor of Arts & Sciences in Popular Music. He is a Clemmons Family Farm collaborating artist.



Pamela Donohoo, Director

Vermont artist **Pamela Donohoo** is the Clemmons Family Farm's Director of Programs for The Storytelling Room arts and culture online series. She is an international performing artist (aerialist, acrobat, dancer, and choreographer) and has worked with performing arts organizations throughout the US and internationally. She has done commercials, award shows, large-scale events and spectacular acrobatic shows. Pamela received her degree in Cultural and Social Anthropology from Stanford University. She completed field research projects and worked with nonprofit organizations throughout Africa, India, Latin America and the Caribbean. Her research interests

include: social justice, peace-building, sustainability and the environment, folklore, culture, and history. Pamela specializes in creating socially relevant and globally engaged acrobatic performances. Her vision is to generate art that inspires people to think critically and contribute positively to their world.

Pamela is also a collaborating artist of the Clemmons Family Farm and appeared most recently as our featured artist in *Juneteenth in the Air*, the first of our Storytelling Room series. She is founder and Artistic Director of her own company, [Awaken Circus and Dance Theater](#).