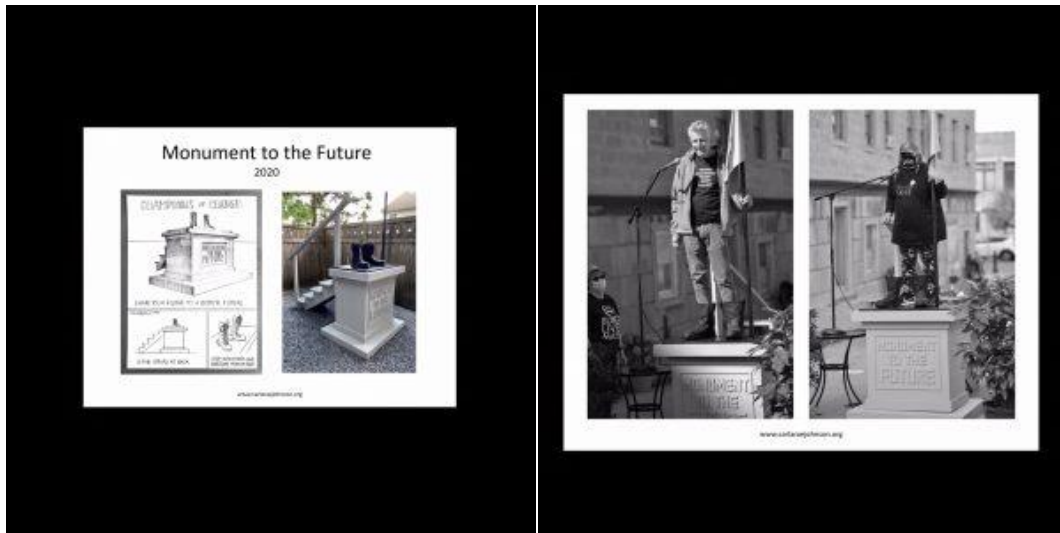


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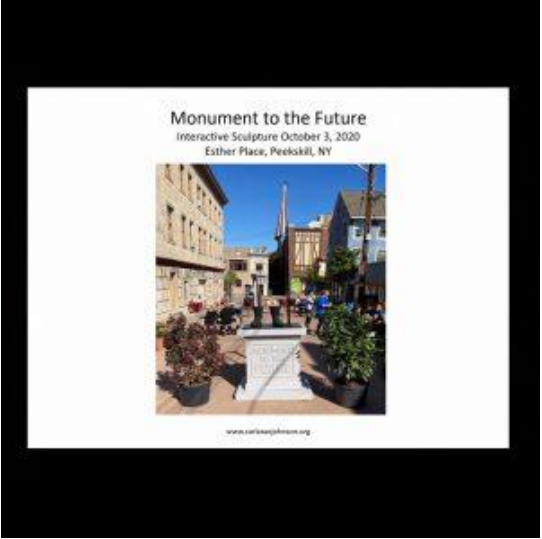
Peekskill Extension Center Hosts Artist Carla Rae Johnson



Artist and former professor at WCC, Carla Rae Johnson presented her most recent interactive work, *Monument to the Future*, at a Virtual Artist Talk hosted by the Peekskill Extension Center on October 22, 2020.

“What do you do when the house is burning? Make art.” The sculpture was inspired by the march on July 3rd from the youth of Peekskill, addressing the present social climate. Impressed by their engagement Johnson asked herself, “How do we anoint them? They have inherited what we have instilled in them. How do we offer them empowerment?”, fostering the imagery of the, *Monument to the Future*. The sculpture has steps with a railing that lead to a pair of boots on top of a pedestal. The audience is invited to stand in the boots to make a pledge as to what they can and will do (for social justice). Johnson’s presentation took the viewer on a journey, beginning with her inspirations and ending with past work both individual and collaborative. Carla Rae Johnson appeared in *Gorilla Mask*, inspired by The Gorilla Girls, a tongue in cheek perspective, highlighting the ‘place’ of women artists in society. Work from artists Mel Chin, Francisco Goya, Doris Salcedo, and Kehinde Wiley were some of Johnson’s inspirations. The Q & A portion begged the question, Should art be political? Johnson answered, “...intended or not, art is always political.”

Her advice to the WCC art student, “Read, look at the world, look for the passion, look at history, at the people who made a difference in the world. Emily Dickinson for example, was creating powerful and incredible work, you don’t need outside reinforcement when you’re going to do it no matter what.... work with materials that feel good to you, it is a medicine, and fall in love with those things.”



Link:

<https://www.sunywcc.edu/news/peekskill-extension-center-hosts-artist-carla-rae-johnson/>