

T.J. Dedeaux-Norris: Second Line

Two-part exhibition on view at University Galleries of Illinois State University from August 4 through December 12, 2021. The exhibition is sponsored in part by grants from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, Alice and Fannie Fell Trust, Harold K. Sage Foundation, and the Illinois State University Foundation Fund.

Part II Checklist

On view from October 8 through December 12, 2021

All works courtesy of T.J. Dedeaux-Norris and The Tameka Jenean Norris Estate

Curated by Jessica Bingham



Installation view of *T.J. Dedeaux-Norris: Second Line* on view at University Galleries.

In recognition of the artist's past and present personas, the following artist-approved names, pronouns, and descriptions are included throughout the checklist.

Tameka Jenean Norris (she/her): Politicized Black American artist

Meka Jean (she/her): Rapper, vocalist, and performer

T.J. Dedeaux-Norris (they/them): Art professor, estate executor, and **embodiment of all three**



Chain-link Fence

Graphite drawing on wall
ongoing, 2015-present

The chain-link fence drawing and inclusion of both physical and painted chain-link fencing throughout the exhibition represent the artist's pursuit to find distinctions between the fluidity of their multiple personas. Sections of the drawn fence are intact, providing the illusion of a barrier, while other areas are mangled with tattered ends, suggesting access to that which is guarded.



Joel, you wanna hamburger?

2016

Fabric, canvas, acrylic paint, thread, shelf, candy dish, candy, and mug

The title of this painting stems from a question Tameka's mother, Shirley, asked her sister, Joel, while on her deathbed. In a desperate attempt to care for Joel one last time, Shirley began yelling, "Joel, you wanna hamburger?" at her incoherent sister. This was the first time Tameka witnessed the emotional intensity of grief. The artist has since experienced her own tremendous grief with the passing of her grandmother (2020) and mother (2021).



Grandma Bernadine, "I'm Making Water"

2016

Fabric, canvas, acrylic paint, thread, oil pastel, sewing machine, table, rug, fruit, and slippers

Tameka had very few memories of her maternal grandmother, Grandma Bernadine, outside of her house. A phrase Tameka remembers from her childhood is her grandma saying she was "making water" when using the bathroom. While not necessarily a sweet memory, it is an example of a mundane moment shared in a family setting.



left and right

Amber, "I wanna come to N.O. an Hang out & party now that I'm off weekends"

2016

Fabric, canvas, acrylic paint, thread, and cordless phone

Kim, "I'm thankful n blessed not to look like what I've been thru"

2016

Fabric, canvas, acrylic paint, and thread

Having lived in many locations, including Guam, Mississippi, Louisiana, California, New York, Berlin, and now Iowa, the artist often feels estranged from family. Tameka attended different schools than her cousins, grew up on a military base with access to a variety of resources and cultures, and left home at a young age to pursue a career as a rapper, and, eventually, her education in art. Time away from family led to this emotional distance.

In an effort to connect with her cousins, Tameka created these portraits through sourcing imagery and text from their Facebook pages—the platform where a semblance of connection has taken place. They honor those relationships and their stories regardless of the familial strain.



left and right

Cc

2019

Found fabric, canvas, bedsheets, discarded clothing, and ceramic knobs

Ff

2019

Found fabric, canvas, bedsheets, discarded clothing, and ceramic knobs



From the series *Monkey's Uncle*, the imagery in these three paintings was sourced from a 26-page alphabet schoolbook the artist attempted to complete as a child. Including uppercase and lowercase letters, the booklet was designed for students to pair imagery with the corresponding letters, building on their visual associations. As an adult, T.J. flipped through the pages noting the age-inappropriate references in the collaged imagery she cut from magazines. For example, D was a whiskey glass that they assume must represent "D for drink." T.J. views this series as a call-and-response collaboration with their younger self.

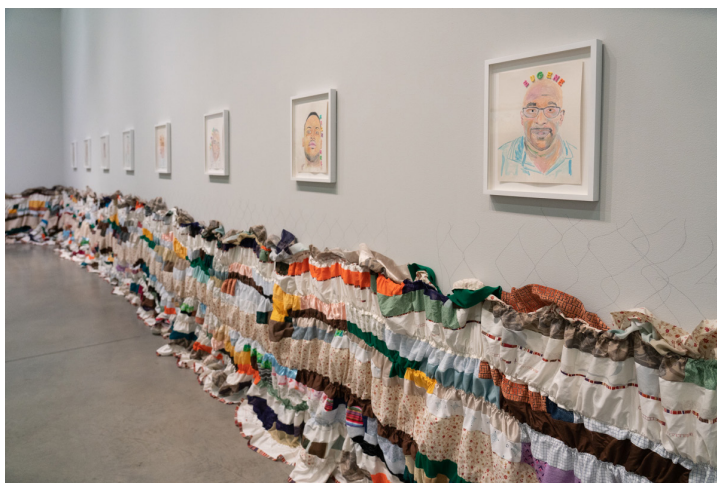


The Fabric of Our Lives

ongoing, 2015-present

Fabric

The Fabric of Our Lives is the only consistent piece in the exhibition, shown for both Part I and Part II. The piece represents human interconnectedness and the disturbing history of cotton in the United States. Sewn with found and gifted clothing, bedding, and other utilitarian linens, this fabric installation includes materials collected from the artist's family and friends. This ongoing and versatile artwork addresses relationships between cotton production, the expansion of slave labor, and resulting generational trauma.



Cut From the Same Cloth series

2016

Fabric, canvas, acrylic paint, and thread

below, left and right

Reginald, First Cousin

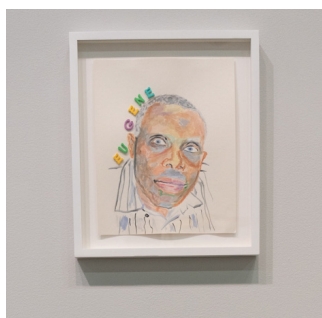
2014

Acrylic paint on paper

Eugene, Pawpaw

2014

Acrylic paint on paper



Part of the *Cut From the Same Cloth* series, these portraits represent the men in the artist's life including her father, maternal and paternal grandfathers, uncles, and cousins. The small size of the portraits and lack of text beyond their names stresses the limited connections between Tameka and these men, unlike the larger portraits of women from Tameka's life. Images for these portraits, including mugshots, were found online. Tameka included their names in colorful letters to honor their stories and add childlike textures to their worn expressions.



left and right

Jerusha

2013

Bedsheets, found fabric, and thread

Zeresh

2013

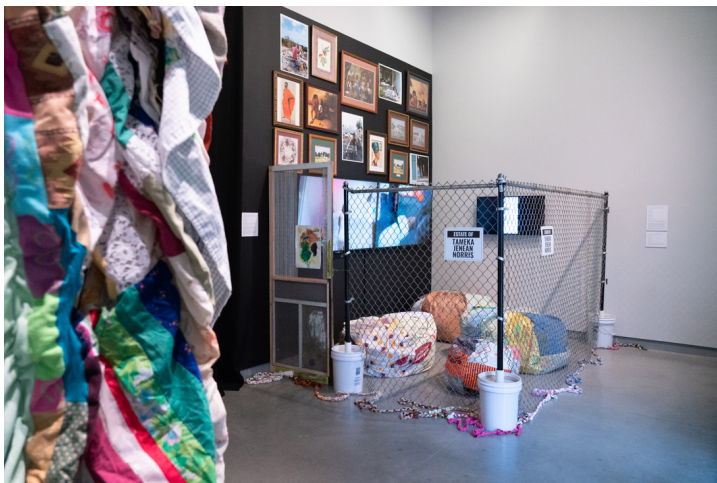
Bedsheets, found fabric, and thread

Hamutal

2013

Bedsheets, found fabric, and thread

These three fabric collages from Tameka's *Contrapposto Series* were completed during a period in which the artist was exploring the female figure and narrative in relation to art historical poses and biblical stories. The titles of these works, *Jerusha*, *Zeresh*, and *Hamutal*, are the names of women in the Bible who led complicated lives for various reasons. Their roles as wives, queens, and mothers to prominent men solidified their political and economic statuses. Their brief biblical cameos and rarely mentioned stories connect to the artist's desire to share accounts of the women in their own life.

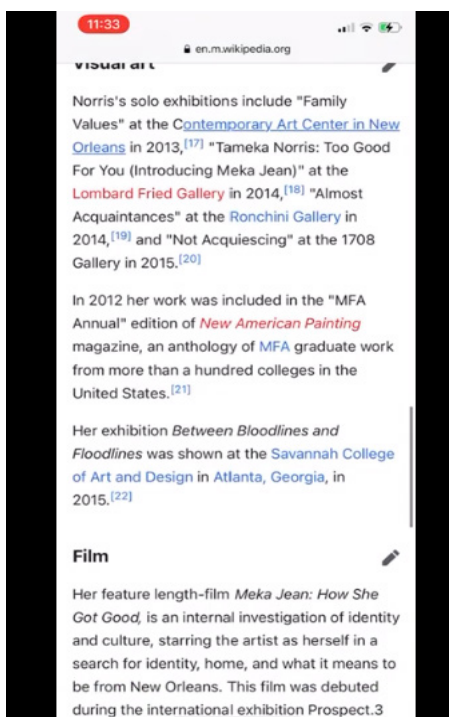


Site-specific installation

2021

Framed and unframed photos and prints, paint, monitors, soft sculptures, screen door, braided fabric, plastic plaques, and chain-link fencing

This installation includes: three videos; four of the artist's self-portraits; soft sculptures, braided fabric; and artworks collected by the artist's mother; The works are kept behind chain-link fencing with plaques reading "Estate of Tameka Jenean Norris."



Wikipedia, Institutional Critique, Tameka Norris

2021

Single-channel video, 2:02 minutes

On its own next to the framed works is a third monitor showing a scrolling video of Wikipedia's "Institutional Critique" webpage. This page includes Tameka Norris as an artist who has contributed to the criticality of art museums and their "role as a public and private institution." The artist is listed alongside their former faculty members, Barbara Kruger and Andrea Fraser.



By(e), Tameka (channel one and two)

ongoing, 2012-present

Playing side-by-side, these two videos reveal intimate moments in the artist's life and feature all three personas: Tameka Jenean Norris, Meka Jean, and T.J. Dedeaux-Norris. Both videos are works-in-progress to honor T.J.'s grieving process and their ongoing embodied research—a practice of healing their body from fatigue, disease, generational trauma, and loss of their grandmother (2020) and their mother (2021).



By(e), Tameka (channel one)

ongoing, 2012-present

Single-channel video, 83:27 minutes

By(e), Tameka (channel one) is an 83-minute-long video shot over the course of nine years in several cities, including New Orleans, London, and Iowa City. In the artist's words, "the film is like a quilt in that it's been stitched together by many, many people who have played various roles in supporting this film." Through heart-wrenching conversations between the artist and loved ones, including her recently deceased mother, this video captures discussions about drug use; sex; racial discrimination the artist has faced in educational, housing, and healthcare systems; as well as celebratory and problematic situations in the art and music industries.



By(e), Tameka (channel two)

ongoing, 2021-present

Single-channel video, 18:05 minutes

By(e), Tameka (channel two), the most recent in-progress video, includes footage of T.J.'s embodied research practice through the exploration of tarot cards and boxing. The video takes place within Big George's Boxing Club and the artist's home. George is shown coaching T.J., helping them confront issues of their past while building the physical and mental stamina needed to protect and take ownership of their body. Near the end, T.J. is shown showering, cleansing their skin—a moment of reclaiming and caring for their nude Black Queer body from the years of trauma, abuse, strain, and expectations.