



## **PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTIST ANN JOHNSON BRINGS FURNITURE TO THE BRAZOS VALLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM**

The Sankofa Project at the BVAAM premieres Friday, May 7.

**BRYAN**, Texas (May 5, 2021) - Eclectic furniture designs created by activist artist Ann Johnson and her team of architecture students of Prairie View A&M University will be unveiled at an opening reception on Friday, May 7 at the Brazos Valley African American Museum in Bryan, Texas. The furniture, based on African Adinkra symbols, is the result of a two-year partnership of the Texas A&M College of Architecture and Johnson's team from Prairie View A&M. Rich in cultural ancestral connection, the "Sankofa" Adinkra symbol literally means to "go back and get". The symbols can be experienced at large-scale in the forms of the furniture designs. In honor of African-Americans' labor in Texas oil fields, oil drums are repurposed as chairs.

"The Adinkra symbols come from Ghana where they are stamped onto African textiles," states Ann Johnson. "During slavery, gifted blacksmiths would incorporate Adinkra symbols into architecture. They can be seen on the porches of Charleston and New Orleans, as a way to honor their ancestors. I thought, what if we could make furniture from Adinkra symbols? And you have the Sankofa Furniture Project." Johnson celebrates the symbols' meaning as, "Wisdom, learning, and build for the future."

"I could not be more excited about this project, which brought together Prairie View A&M, the Wright Gallery of the College of Architecture, and the Brazos Valley African American Museum," states Cecilia Giusti, Associate Dean in the College of Architecture. "The vision was to go beyond our campus and into our community."

The Sankofa Project focuses on ancestral ties of African-Americans and brings them into a present-day experience. "The mission of the Brazos Valley African American Museum is to explore, develop and preserve the cultural history of African Americans," states Crystal Spruill Carter, BVAAM consultant.

Professor of art Ann Johnson is an interdisciplinary artist with a passion for exploring issues of the black community. Her work has been featured in the New York Times, and shown in the Smithsonian and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The Sankofa furniture, with support from the Texas A&M Academy for the Visual & Performing Arts, will become part of the permanent collection of the BVAAM.

### **About the event:**

**Event:** The Sankofa Project (Opening reception)  
**Date:** Friday, May 7, 2021  
**Time:** From 4 – 6 p.m.  
**Place:** Brazos Valley African American Museum, 500 E. Pruitt Street, Bryan, TX  
Social distancing and masks are required

For more information, contact Ann Johnson [ayjohnson@pvamu.edu](mailto:ayjohnson@pvamu.edu), or (936) 261-9835.



#### OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, May 7, 2021, 4 - 6 pm  
500 E. Pruitt Street, Bryan, Texas  
Brazos Valley African American Museum

With Bryan First Friday and Viz-a-Gogo  
Social distancing and masks required

#### A COLLABORATION WITH

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

#### ARTIST

ANN JOHNSON

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

THE BRAZOS VALLEY  
AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

The project is the result of a collaboration between the School of Architecture at Prairie View A&M University, the Texas A&M College of Architecture's Wright Gallery, with support of the Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts, the Texas A&M College of Architecture Diversity Council and the Automated Fabrication & Design Lab.

#### FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY

*Please join in the presentation of this thought-provoking collaborative furniture design project.*

*The Sankofa Project features eclectic student-designed patio furniture inspired by African Adinkra symbols.*

*The furniture will become part of the permanent collection of the Brazos Valley African American Museum.*



#### Opening Reception

Friday, May 7, 4 - 6 pm  
500 E. Pruitt St., Bryan

**Brazos Valley African American Museum**

Furniture designs by artist Ann Johnson and students of Prairie View A&M University, in collaboration with Wright Gallery and the College of Architecture

**Viz-a-GoGo and Bryan First Friday**



With support from the Academy for the Visual & Performing Arts

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**About Prairie View A&M University:** Designated an institution of "the first class" in the Texas Constitution, Prairie View A&M University is the second-oldest public institution of higher education in the state. With an established reputation for producing engineers, nurses, and educators, PVAMU offers baccalaureate degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degree programs through nine colleges and schools. A member of The Texas A&M University System, the university is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research, and service. For more information regarding PVAMU, visit [www.pvamu.edu](http://www.pvamu.edu).

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