

# Tennessee State University

## Avon Williams Library - Art Exhibit

Exhibit: July-August, 2018

Reception: July 19, 2018

### "A Creative Trifecta of Expression"

#### Artist's Biographies

##### Benneth Wilson



Art is life and life is art. Where there is life there is art.

Born in 1959, Benneth's love for art started at an early age by watching an older sister draw in his kindergarten drawing pads and trying to copy her. After spending hours of drawing and he eventually decided to ask his mother for money to purchase his own drawing pads from the corner store. This led him to take art classes throughout elementary and high school.

Benneth joined the military in 1980, but never lost his love for painting and drawing when time allowed.

After returning from serving his country, he decided to try the art world by putting his work in art galleries in Nashville Tennessee. His first success was when he won the T-Shirt and poster contest at a major festival called Summer Lights Music Festival held in Nashville. This event was the city's largest annual festival of local, regional, and international talent that provided a variety of entertainment for the entire family – music, visual arts, dancing, food, etc. It took place at Legislative Plaza and included famous artists such as: Dixie Chicks, Reba McEntire, Wynonna Judd, and Loretta Lynn. This festival proceeded Bonnaroo

that lasted from 1981-1997. Benneth started to sell his work to business and art collectors.

After some success, Benneth decided to attend Nossi College of Art in Nashville and graduated in 2005. Sculpting became his favorite art medium that he learned to love while in school. Now he spends time involved with aluminum can sculpting. While exhibiting in shows and galleries, CBS television Studios took notice and purchased his art for the show "NCIS : Los Angeles."

He states that, "Art has given him a lifetime of happiness, which I will have, to the day I die."

##### Elisheba Israel Mrozik

Elisheba Israel Mrozik is a fine artist and Tattooist. She graduated from Memphis College of Art in 2006 with a BFA in Computer Arts. After moving to Nashville, TN in 2007, she began to work full time as a freelance artist in graphic design, anime, and fine art. Elisheba was a part of Nashville Black Artists Renaissance, and has shown at Columbia State, The Ha Factory, Boheme Collectif, Corvidae Gallery, and other venues. She has done live murals at events with the Goo Goo Dolls in Buffalo, NY. She was a New York Comic Con artist in 2010 and has also been in various music videos and commercials like Motley Crue, Budweiser, Yelowolf. Late 2010, she became interested in tattooing after viewing work by some world renowned artists. In 2011, Elisheba started

tattooing and opened One Drop Ink Tattoo Parlour and Gallery in Nashville, TN on Jefferson. She moved the shop to its current location across from Tennessee State University and it serves as her current fine art and tattoo studio. Elisheba is now an Award Winning Tattoo Artist in many categories. She won Indieville TV's 2015 Nashville Tattoo Artist of the Year and was an artist on the international TV show Inkmaster. She released her first coloring book titled



Notable Nashville about historic marginalized people of Nashville in 2017 and is releasing her second book- Sovereign Goddess- a collection of her drawings Fall 2018 She prides herself on being a hard working mother, wife and artist every-day.

##### Artist Statement

I am a woman. There is nothing I know better than myself. I focus on women as my main subjects and

Melanated women as our portrayal is usually one mired in exploitive intentions.

I Uplift and highlight our form in all of the colors in all of the waves of light that flow through the glass prism. As a Black female Artist, nothing speaks to my life and my work as much as Maya Angelou. We all feel caged at some point in our lives. Whether it be in our jobs, our relationships or even in our own mind. These pieces remind me that cage is temporary and we need but look around us to see the reasons why we still need to sing. That song can be a hum or whisper or a belting whine or a scream and shout. That song can be for the greater good or for our own selfish purposes. Either way we have to sing. Either way we have to fight. Maybe the door to the cage will be left open one day but until then we must break the latch.

##### James Threaskill



Native Nashvillian, Artist, Teacher, Advocate, Leader

Upon graduation from East Nashville High School, James earned his way to Vanderbilt University as an athlete and

scholar. After completing his degree in Fine Arts from Peabody College of Vanderbilt, James returned to the public housing community of his youth as a leader. He used his creative skills as an artist and teacher to develop neighborhood youth art programs. He was also involved with community outreach and fundraising efforts for the community.

In 1995, James was asked to serve as Special Assistant for Community Affairs and Arts in the Office of the Mayor of Nashville, Tennessee, Philip N. Bredesen. This endeavor allowed James to use his experience and connections in the Nashville community to help bring diversity awareness and policy to local Nashville government.

James has served as Executive Director for 100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee;

managing the organization's administrative support services, recruiting members and coordinating the youth activities. He has also served as the Community Services Director of Edgehill Center, Inc., where he established several successful programs for youth. He used art as a teaching tool to educate youth on the importance of staying drug-free and in school.

James became a nationally recognized artist and advocate of the arts and has received many awards in his career not only for this gift, but also for his involvement with numerous organizations. In 1994, James received the Metropolitan Jaycees Distinguished Service Award. He has received national recognition for a mural program he established and received an Emmy Award in 1994 for a mural created for the Viacom Television Network. He was

named CSAAM Man of the Year in 1997 and in 1998 the YMCA Black Achievers Program named him "Achiever of the Year".

James traveled to South Africa in 1995 to create a mural with South African art students. During his trip he also had the opportunity to visit with President Nelson Mandela. James was also the co-illustrator of a successful children's book series that has been featured on Sesame Street. His work has also been featured in the Disney movie; "Snow Dogs", "The Jamie Foxx Show", "Living Single", and "NCIS" on CBS.

James has also established a reputation as a motivational speaker, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, Community Outreach expert, and a designer of unique hand-painted coffee mugs.