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New Art Show Launches in Naples: How the Pandemic Inspired Connection, Unexpectedly

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NAPLES, FL – As the Covid-19 Pandemic rocked the world, Americans faced new struggles, from being forced to isolate to losing childcare, and missed opportunities to travel and celebrate life's biggest moments together. While the time separated us from others, an unexpected connection occurred.

"The mask mandates prevented us from seeing the faces of others. By losing our ability to focus on superficial characteristics, we gained the chance to reflect on our profound similarities as humans," said Lia Newman, Director and Curator of the Art Gallery at Davidson College.

That is the inspiration behind artwork included in the "[True Likeness](#)" exhibit launching June 25 at the Baker Art Museum. The exhibit showcases that despite differences in race, sexuality, and gender, all humans share and connect through emotions, fears, and hopes.

"Art promotes understanding and gives joy," said Moses Luski, an attorney and art collector. "I am glad to share my art collection with the community at large."

Moses, a partner at Shumaker, is lending two of his pieces to be part of the exhibit. The first is by [Mickalene Thomas](#), "Afro Goddess with Hand Between Legs." Thomas is known for empowering black imagery in Western Art, where African Americans were once left out.

The second piece is by [Latoya Ruby Frazier](#), "Self Portrait (March 10 am)." She created this portrait when she had a lupus attack living near the steel mills in Braddock, Pennsylvania. Frazier has documented the unsafe working conditions in her hometown and the health care inequities.

"I gravitated to this art because the artists had something to say. The outsiders are now regaining their voice," Moses said.

For Moses, promoting the arts has been a family tradition. When his parents fled to the United States from

Cuba after Fidel Castro seized power, they could bring only four suitcases. But they included two paintings from a local artist, which helped them cope with leaving their homeland. After achieving much success in commercial real estate, the Luskis became two of Charlotte's premier arts patrons and philanthropists. Last year, in the middle of the pandemic, Moses' father, Isaac, passed away. His mother, Sonia, had passed away two years earlier.

"It is an honor for me to carry on their legacy and commitment to inspire others through art," Moses said.

"We need inspiration and connection more than ever before. The past couple years have been some of the most divisive in our history. It is time to celebrate our diversity, and "True Likeness" is an opportunity to explore what unites us all," Lia said.

The "True Likeness" exhibit presents a collection of contemporary portraits from diverse makers in a variety of media including video, photography, painting, collage, installation, sculpture, printmaking, and drawing.

This showcase began at Davidson College and has traveled to University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa and Pennsylvania State University. Visitors can see the display at the Baker Art Museum from June 25–September 25, 2022. The exhibition will have future stops at the Eckert Art Gallery at Millersville University in PA; Gregg Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC; and the DeVos Museum of Art in Marquette, MI.