

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

Tyree's TIME

2026
Kresge
Eminent
Artist

Tyree
Guyton

Tyree's

Tyree
Guyton

Nichole Christian
Editor and Creative Director

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

I-R-I-S
Art Direction and Book Design

2026
Kresge
Eminent
Artist

TIME

Detail view of one of Tyree Guyton's *Aussie Series* paintings.





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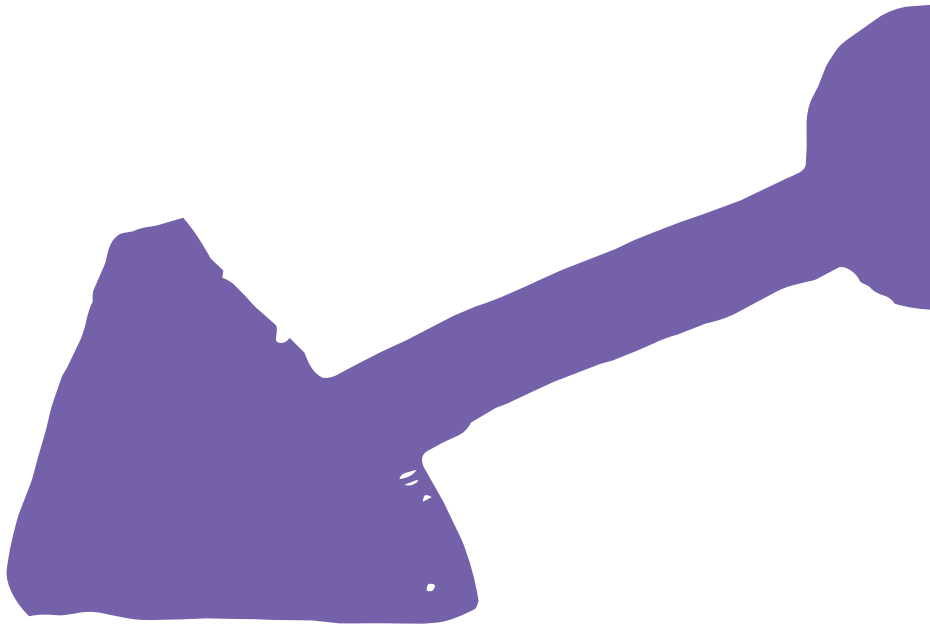
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FOREWORD

Rip Rapson

President and CEO,
The Kresge Foundation

I vividly remember my first encounter with the art of Tyree Guyton in the Heidelberg Project, but then again, who doesn't? I rounded the street corner and the world abruptly turned from grayscale to a tornado of Tyree's colors, not only with his trademark painted polka dots and asynchronous clocks but also the junkyard detritus and curbside bric-a-brac repurposed and reassembled to reanimate the street. As a longtime urbanist, I had heard about Heidelberg decades earlier when the upstart art project clashed with Detroit's feisty and eminently quotable Mayor Coleman A. Young. It made news around the country and even abroad.

Now as the incoming president of The Kresge Foundation, in 2006, I had learned more about how this scrappy arts insurgency had weathered roughly two decades of challenges — and continued to evolve. But nothing quite prepared me for the delight of seeing his work firsthand. I was utterly unprepared for the ambition of Heidelberg's scope and complexity. It was frankly thrilling, the sort of expression of community-grounded art that supersedes all sorts of abstract urbanist theorizing. Tyree was gracious in giving me a tour, but candid in his depiction of the obstacles Heidelberg continued to face — not the least of which were the continuing disagreements with city government about whether it was a cultural statement to be celebrated or a nuisance and blemish to be dismantled.

I had seen variations of this dynamic many times over my decades in the trenches working to support the forces of urban revitalization, although indifference to the arts was more frequently the issue than the outright hostility Heidelberg sometimes faced. Yet, here on the east side of Detroit was an inspirational case study on why we should move arts inward from the periphery of municipal priorities to the core; a project like Tyree's Heidelberg can shape and reflect community aspirations, energize community revitalization and promote healing in the face of disinvestment and violence.

That said, I was more than pleased a few years later when I learned that Tyree was chosen by an independent panel as one of 18 vital metro Detroit creators in the inaugural class of Kresge Artist Fellows. I am likewise delighted that another distinguished panel — more than 15 years later — has honored Tyree's lifetime of achievement by naming him as the 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist for a rich oeuvre of which Heidelberg is only one part, though a stunning one. Like his 17 Eminent Artist predecessors, he has created a body of exceptional work, contributed to the advancement of his chosen artistic field and made generous contributions to the cultural communities of our region.

And in conjunction with that award comes this monograph, the most thorough consideration to date of Tyree's life and work. Our aim is to shed light on one artist who has done so much to lift and define our community and its possibilities. We have much to learn from both his travails and his triumphs.

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Katie G. McGowan

Director,
Kresge Arts in Detroit

Each year, Kresge Arts in Detroit (KAID) assembles a group of local artists and longtime members of the arts and culture community to select the Kresge Eminent Artist for the coming year. The panel chooses the Eminent Artist based on a distinguished record of high-quality work, professional achievement in the arts, and a lifetime of contributions to their art form and the cultural community of metro Detroit.

We entered the final round of conversations on a snowy December afternoon at the president's office at the College for Creative Studies (CCS) — Kresge Arts in Detroit, a signature Kresge effort, is administered by the college. After sharing a nourishing meal, KAID staff cleared the dishes and the way for meaningful deliberation as the panel narrowed the pool of finalists down to a single artist. The conversation was thoughtful, rigorous and confidential.

This panel reflected the breadth of Detroit's creative ecosystem. Photographer, educator and curator Carlos Diaz, a professor emeritus at CCS and 2024 Guggenheim Fellow, brought the perspective of a lifetime in visual arts education and image making. Lauren Hood, founder and director of the Institute for AfroUrbanism and assistant professor of practice in urban planning at the University of Michigan, offered a vantage point rooted in community design and the shaping of the built environment. Suma Karaman Rosen, executive director of InsideOut Literary Arts and a McGregor Fund Miller Fellow, represented the literary arts and decades of work nurturing Detroit's young writers. Mandisa Smith, fiber artist and founder of AKOMA Art House & Dye Garden and Detroit Sistas Sew, whose practice connects craft traditions, community knowledge and material culture, shared her deep knowledge of the art world and the city. Completing the panel was Haleem "Stringz" Rasul, dancer, choreographer, educator, filmmaker, 2010 Kresge Artist Fellow and founder of Hardcore Detroit, whose work spans movement, film and cultural storytelling.

Together, this group, representing different media, generations and vantage points within metro Detroit's cultural landscape, arrived at a shared conclusion. As Tyree Guyton's name surfaced, the room lit up. Through consensus, they solidified what has long been in the air: Tyree Guyton's work resonates at a frequency that transcends age, discipline and neighborhood.

Guyton is an impassioned communicator, whether speaking out loud or communicating through his trademark polka dots or juicy brush strokes on wood — the artist is present. His facility and playfulness with language expose his tenderness, as does his wry sense of humor. His story is deeply intertwined with the story of Detroit itself, something creative director, editor and lead writer Nichole Christian explores with care through this monograph.

As the Watts Towers installation is to Los Angeles or the Reverend Howard Finster's Paradise Garden is to Summerville, Georgia, Guyton's artistry creates

immersive environments where labor is an act of devotion to the vernacular architecture of Detroit. The work itself can be viewed through myriad different lenses — from the sociopolitical to the art historical — and, most viscerally, it can be felt in the body. His creations feel both tethered and visionary, compelled by a higher power. As panelist Stringz put it, “Guyton’s work was medicine for the community.”

But for decades, the city government didn’t get it. When Detroit Mayor Coleman Young ordered the demolition of a number of the Heidelberg houses in 1991 and Mayor Dennis Archer did so in 1999, it didn’t stop the project from expanding, eventually transforming the entire block into an open-air museum and, as Guyton put it, a “beautiful rebuttal” to municipal disinvestment.

By 2008, the tides had turned. That year, the Heidelberg Project was selected to represent the United States in the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale, one of the world’s premier exhibitions of art and architecture. I had the chance to visit the Biennale that year, while in nearby Croatia for an artist residency. As I wandered through the pavilion, circling objects I knew were 4,500 miles away from home, I watched people from around the world regard Guyton’s work in a way that, by then, two mayoral administrations in his own hometown lacked the imagination to consider.

The following year, Guyton was honored as one of 18 inaugural Kresge Artist Fellows. Over the next two decades he went from fighting those who were intent on dismantling his life’s work to accepting a Lifetime Achievement Award from then-Mayor Mike Duggan.

The path is rarely straight, and 40 years after its inception, the Heidelberg Project stands as a monument to artistic vision and persistence. Thousands of visitors from more than 144 countries have traveled to the same street where Tyree first painted his dots. What strikes so many of them is that same insistence on endurance: things meant to live inside, like children’s stuffed toys, left outside. Things meant to fall apart — or deemed broken — that endure. Despite the elements, despite circumstance and in the face of brazen attack, they remain. A reflection of their creator, who is himself an undeniable reflection of his city.

Guyton speaks to how part of his project’s mission is to “spread the idea of ‘Heidelbergology,’” a trademarked phrase that means first the studying of found materials and people, then the art of weaving them back into the fabric of community.

In many ways, Heidelbergology echoes the work of the Kresge Eminent Artist panel itself: artists studying the creative life of this city and collectively recognizing when something essential is present among us. I am deeply appreciative of the thoughtfulness and care the panelists brought to the selection process, and the entire KAID team is so very honored to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions and achievements of Tyree Guyton, 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist.

Tyree Guyton photographed at his exhibition 40 Years in the Hood: Detroit's Heidelberg Project at the Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson, Michigan, February 2026.



ARTIST

STATEMENT

Forty years—and I ain't tired yet. And I can't stop traveling this journey called life. My work is a kaleidoscope of color that gives life to the dead. I work with the detritus—things we throw away. And sometimes, people, too. I love how art speaks a universal language—one the entire world can hear.

I grew up in a world marked by poverty, racism, and hardship. As a young Black man trying to understand that world, I carried anger, confusion, and brokenness for many years. There were times when I questioned whether life itself was worth continuing.

God placed people along my path to guide me, but most significantly, Jenenne Whitfield, my friend, partner and wife. She came into my life in 1993 at exactly the right moment. She stood with me through the fires set to destroy the Heidelberg Project, through the demolitions, through the courtrooms and public trials. She remained steady when everything around us seemed uncertain. She challenged me to go where I was afraid to go. She has been the linchpin that made it possible for me to keep flying. Without that gift, much of what I have been able to create would never have been possible. This honor belongs to us both

As I create a new kind of art—one that doesn't have to make sense—it's a reflection of life, now, today. The world itself is a work of art, forever changing—a new kind of art every day, as I keep on learning. I am deeply grateful for this extraordinary honor, for the woman who has walked beside me every step of the way, and for all the people who helped carry the Heidelberg Project through its darkest and brightest days.

No one accomplishes a life's work alone.

—Tyree Guyton, 2026

Nichole M. Christian

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Tyree Guyton, *Untitled*, 1998.

“There are years that ask questions
and years that answer.”

The Harlem Renaissance writer and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston ushered these words into literature, and eventual fame, in 1937 with the publication of her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The book debuted 18 years before Tyree Guyton was born, nearly a half century before he began his life’s work as one of Detroit’s most internationally recognized public artists, and almost 90 years before the moment in 2026 that he now describes as the most defining of his career.

Ordinarily, drawing a link between two icons from vastly different art forms and eras might appear a stretch. Yet a leap beyond the ordinary is exactly what is required for the person attempting to rewind the decades and details of a boundary-breaking artist whose imagination is itself beyond realms. The dimensions of Tyree Guyton demand the widest lens possible and at least a temporary willingness to suspend reality and believe instead in a world where art is the antidote to all.

Even Tyree is daunted by the task of summing up his 40-year career. By choice, he eschews all traditional visions of the artist's life. Tyree does not retreat to a studio to create in solitude. His art is born on the street, inspired by social chaos — racism, poverty and neighborhood abandonment — and intentionally left exposed to, and sometimes destroyed by, elements beyond an artist's control.

"As an artist, you want people to recognize you. But you get to a point, especially someone like me, with all the criticism, the trials, tribulations, the fires... you stop caring. You stop thinking about any kind of validation. You keep moving, for yourself."

Then came 2026, a year that, much like Hurston's words, provided a thunderous answer to the question of who is Tyree Guyton? "I felt like Moses when he heard the voice of God," Tyree recalled, referring to his selection as the 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist. "It's not something I ever expected, but then, the more I thought about it: Why not me? Finally chosen?"

Though the news arrived as a surprise, the honor's heft is more than fitting for a man who, at age 70, has carved out such a singular place in Detroit's cultural landscape that he moves through the city known simply as Tyree. That singularity grows out of his visionary and headline-grabbing work as the founder of the Heidelberg Project, Detroit's earliest and best-known outdoor public art installation. "Tyree Guyton exemplifies the spirit of a city whose Latin motto — 'Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus' — translates to 'We hope for better things; it shall arise from the ashes,'" said Rip Rapson, president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation.

Tourists documented from 144 countries have come to marvel at the uniqueness of his art practice — elevating everyday detritus into mesmerizing, sometimes circus-like installations and sculptures. "Heidelberg is one of the most highly visited spaces in Detroit for a reason," says Detroit native Aku Kadogo, who is chair of Spelman College's Department of Theater and has promoted Tyree's art nationally and internationally. "He showed us that art is for everyone, it's not just for museums. Tyree put it right there for us all to see and have an experience with, good, bad or indifferent." Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 150,000 people visited annually, and a 2017 study by the Center for

Creative Community Development at Williams College estimated the Heidelberg Project's economic impact in Wayne County amounted to \$3.2 million to \$3.4 million annually.

Recognition is not new for Tyree. He was previously honored with the Spirit of Detroit Award in 1989, the Michiganian of the Year Award in 1991, and the City of Detroit's Award for Artistic Excellence in 2007. His artwork is featured in the permanent collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the University of Michigan Art Museum and the Studio Museum of Harlem, among others. In 2012, Guyton spent a year as an artist-in-residence in Basel, Switzerland, at the invitation of the Laurenz-Haus Foundation.

In 2020, he received the prestigious Best Cultural Activation Award, an international prize widely considered as the "Oscar" of the museum world. The award recognized Tyree for transforming blight into a world-renowned "visual wonderland."

Yet for a man who lives with an open respect for spirituality and metaphysical thinking, the timing of the Kresge award — 2026, which marks the Heidelberg Project's 40th anniversary — sets the honor apart as both a career-defining and "supernatural" achievement.

"I keep thinking about the universe and the great philosopher Plato, saying that time is just the moving image of our reality; if we can just hold on, time connects everything, every dot, every lesson. That's what this moment feels like — like someone saying, 'Tyree Guyton, this is your reality, see how it's all come together. All things happen at the right time.'"

In Tyree's retelling of his life as an artist and as the founder of Heidelberg, each year is a book-length lesson in questioning, striving, struggling and creative resilience. "It's been a long journey to get to this point."

Tyree can recount, as if it were yesterday, the many times he clashed with political powers in Detroit, watching city-ordered bulldozers flatten his street sculptures, and witnessing back-to-back arson fires that sought to destroy what remained of his daring interpretation of public art.

"I've had to cry a lot of tears over the years, put myself through a lot of painful questioning and loss, so many years." He keeps notebooks filled with details of those experiences, and among the art that hangs throughout his home are pieces salvaged from the rubble of the Heidelberg Project's darkest days.

The most prominent relic, a metal sign nicknamed "the million-dollar piece," sits atop a pedestal in the foyer of his home. A faint smell of soot is now more striking than the once-bright blues and yellows Tyree used to paint the smiling face that stared back from it. "It was originally this flat old sign," said Tyree's wife,

Tyree Guyton at the
Heidelberg Project,
February 2026.



Jenenne Whitfield. “But the fire literally burned it into a free-standing sculpture. It represents all the layers of the journey, the struggle, the brokenness, and the proof that even through it all, you come out and you’re still whole. We’re still standing.”

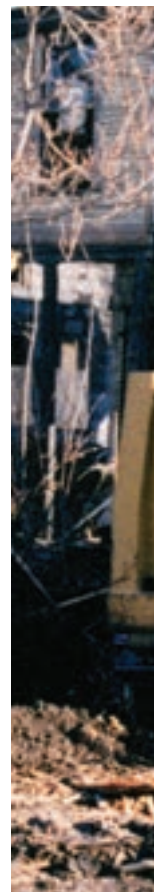
Guyton launched the Heidelberg Project in 1986 on Detroit’s east side along the very block generations of his family called home. Under his vision, vacant lots along Heidelberg Street and abandoned homes became the centerpieces of an open-air gallery where he resurrected everyday discarded items — shoes, dolls, stuffed animals, televisions, car hoods, clocks — and surrounded them with an array of abstract faces, bright polka dots and politically edgy messages, all painted by Tyree. “A lot of people viewed my brother’s creations as junk and not real art,” said Dewand Guyton, 53, the youngest of Tyree’s nine siblings. “But he always had a vision, and he stuck to it no matter the criticism or the setbacks. I’m glad he’s getting the respect he deserves and that he’s alive to see it.”

From its inception, Tyree’s Heidelberg vision was simple, bold and always personal: beauty as a creative rebuttal to the blight, poverty, and widespread economic abandonment gutting his neighborhood and scores of other once vibrant streets across Detroit. “This was always a message of love from me to the city,” he said. “We needed a way to wake up the giant, the creativity, the beauty, that’s all around us.”

Yet the waves of camera-toting tourists coincided with the local controversy that Tyree’s version of neighborhood rejuvenation created, especially during the 1990s. “The mean-spiritedness he faced was so obvious,” said Marilyn Wheaton, who directed the City of Detroit’s Cultural Affairs Department during many of the project’s toughest years. Early on, neighbors in some of the neighborhood’s few remaining homes viewed Tyree as out of control, a visionless “junkman” more crazy than creative. Media reports documented clashes with mostly Black neighbors who were as angry about Tyree’s passion for polka dots and neon colors as they were about the sudden, often white, throngs of tourists and artists descending on their block.

An unfazed Tyree continued to make outdoor sculptures of toys, doors, car hoods, body forms, bicycles and anything else he could haul into the back of his truck. “He would take me with him sometimes to the different scrap yards and abandoned buildings, but it just looked like thrown-away stuff,” explained Dewand. “We would pick up shoes, old baby doll heads, street signs, doors, toilets and bathtubs. We’d go down to the old train station and get pieces off the trains. Sometimes, we’d go into abandoned schools and get chalkboards and desks. You name it, we got it.”

Dewand adds, “I used to get so upset, like, why are we bothering with this crap, it’s nasty. But we’d always go to McDonald’s or Burger King after. That was more



Top
A demolition at the Heidelberg Project, 1999.

Right
A demonstrator at a Heidelberg Project action, 1999.





important to a kid than understanding, ‘Hey, my brother is an artist.’”

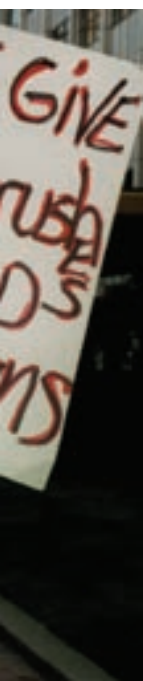
Now, as a clinical therapist, Dewand sees his brother in a different light. “He grew up in Detroit at a particular time, seeing a lot that was traumatic. Art was his therapy, his way of soothing himself and the community. It makes sense now. My brother was creating his own therapy.”

As Tyree’s early displays grew more colorful and dramatic, so, too, did the frequency of complaints from displeased neighbors and battles with city officials. “I don’t know of any other artist who has faced the kind of extreme negativity from people that Tyree has,” said Wheaton. “You see a sculpture that you don’t like, but rarely does that artist suffer any consequences. Tyree suffered.” At the orders of two different mayoral administrations, bulldozers destroyed swaths of the Heidelberg Project. “He knew it was always politics,” Wheaton said.

The demolitions of the 1980s and 1990s were followed by greater devastation in the 2010s: a series of unsolved arson fires, 12 in total over the course of 14 months. The city-ordered demolitions and the rash of fires turned several of the Heidelberg Project’s early and most recognizable “housescapes” to rubble, including: the Obstruction of Justice House, Taxi House, Party Animal House, Penny House, Clock House, House of Soul, You House, and War House. “The wonderful thing about Tyree,” says Wheaton, “is that he lives his life by a certain set of principles; bulldozers were never going to stop him.”

Today, only two of the original art houses remain, the Numbers House and the Dotty-Wotty. “It’s been a long journey to get to this point,” Tyree said. Fast-forward to the day of his 2026 Kresge announcement phone call, and memories of the difficult years come flooding back — minus the tears. “Suddenly, after 40 years of doing this, after all the tribulations, the criticism, the ups and downs, you have a moment that makes it all make sense. I’m standing here looking back at all the years,” he said. “It feels surreal.”

So goes the sense of wonder that comes along with learning, on an otherwise average day in Detroit, that you are the recipient of the cultural community’s most distinguished arts award. The recognition comes with a no-strings-attached \$100,000 cash prize, a celebratory short film, and a published monograph. Seventeen other esteemed past winners have echoed Tyree’s take on the experience: visual artists Charles McGee, Ruth Adler Schnee, Shirley Woodson, Marie Woo, Olayami Dabls and Nora Chapa Mendoza; musicians Marcus Belgrave,



Tyree Guyton assembling donated objects onto the Dotty-Wotty car at the Heidelberg Project, 1997. The car was exhibited at Cranbrook and later crushed by the city.





Patricia Terry-Ross, Wendell Harrison and Marion Hayden; authors Bill Harris, Naomi Long Madgett, Gloria House, and Melba Joyce Boyd; photographers Leni Sinclair and Bill Rauhasuer; and impresario-composer David DiChiera.

Tyree is the third Kresge Eminent Artist to have first won a Kresge Artist Fellowship, which he earned in 2009, during the program's inaugural year. (Fellows Dabls and Hayden were previously recognized as Eminent Artists.)

"He's had a lot of different successes and moments of recognition," said Thomas Porter, a longtime supporter and friend, who helped Tyree establish the Heidelberg Project's first board of directors in 1987. "It's not like he's been ignored for 40 years, but a lot of the normal recognition got lost or undone each time a bulldozer came, or some other bad thing happened."

Like Tyree, Porter, who is a retired venture capitalist, surmises that the timing of the Kresge Eminent Artist heightens the impact of the achievement: "What makes this so special is that it comes after 40 years, and it's not following a disaster. It's a full celebration of everything he's done and of all the setbacks that came but somehow never stopped him."

Kadogo, who co-created a public art installation that introduced Tyree to Australia, says Kresge's recognition is a kind of repair akin to one of Tyree's most-quoted beliefs about his art — that it's medicine, that it heals. "I don't believe Detroit ever really loved up on Tyree," he said. "But he loved himself and his community so that he kept making a statement, pushing against the very notion of art. This is a testament to the power of what he was trying to help us see and feel about art. He was never wrong."

For members of the 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist selection panel, creative perseverance was a key deciding factor. "Tyree deserves a public reckoning for all that he's been through in the name of art and community," explained panelist Lauren Hood, founding director of the Institute for AfroUrbanism and an assistant professor of urban planning at the University of Michigan. "His selection is a chance for Detroit to get in right relationship with someone whose creativity has influenced the city for years and is still pregnant with so much possibility."

Panelist Carlos Diaz said adding such an internationally acclaimed yet controversial artist to the list of Kresge Eminent Artists could broaden public perceptions of art with social impact. "At one time," he said, "the city fought against the construction of his work, and even the definition of it as art. Kresge has now come along and countered that negative energy, holding Tyree and his work to the highest level. His art really is the community."

BORN TO BE

More than the day of his actual birth, August 24, 1955, Tyree Guyton charts the beginning of his life — "my purpose for being born" — to an otherwise ordinary April morning in 1986. He was 30 and openly haunted by the decline of his vibrant neighborhood; houses that once overflowed with generations of families were suddenly empty eyesores and easy prey for vandals. But that morning in April, standing on the porch of his family's home at 3658 Heidelberg Street, aimlessly staring up and down the block, Tyree's vision shifted. A "small voice" from within, quiet but commanding, caught Tyree's attention.

What he heard was too clear to question. "The street told me I had to paint it," said "you have to bring the beauty back." The memory of the moment remains sharp. "Looking out at all of the vacant land, the broken houses, I heard the solution so clear, I saw it in my mind — the street needed medicine, a new kind of medicine, and I had to be the one to do it."

With help from his grandfather and his first wife, Karen Guyton, Tyree turned his focus to the lots that had become dumping grounds, slowly prepping them into his eventual creative playground and showroom for Detroit's detritus.

"I went out here," he recalled, "and I started creating this incredible oasis, this spectacle of beauty, a new way of seeing the beauty in chaos. It came from a higher source, an energy that's bigger than all of us. Government couldn't see it, but the world could, and people came from all over."

Art historian Marion "Mame" Jackson was a mesmerized young art professor at the University of Ann Arbor when she started making weekly Saturday pilgrimages to Heidelberg Street in 1987. "At first, I didn't know what it was or why I was so drawn there," she said. Eventually, Jackson became both an art collaborator and an early board member of the Heidelberg Project, smitten by "the underlying theme that's always made Tyree a powerful messenger for our times."

Tyree's message, then and 40 years later, remains a creative call to connection, she says. "He was saying, 'Wake up, we really can change something by making a mark.' I think that's what the Heidelberg still stands for: A way for us to hope beyond the troubles of our times."

To understand how Tyree learned to believe "art is medicine" is to understand his childhood on Heidelberg Street, a time marked by the ache of wanting to belong, to be seen. "I was different," he said. This was the first of two big truths growing up as the third of Betty Jean and George Guyton's 10 children. Tyree was the imaginative one, a boy born questioning. Though his mother was loving, she was also a woman raising children largely on

her own and mostly in poverty, a circumstance which she worked to overcome by teaching Tyree and his siblings to “make the best out of every situation.” Tyree recalls, “She had a particular way of dressing her children so that we never really knew what we didn’t have. Our job was to keep moving.”

As a loner, young Tyree was always trying to make something or draw something. “I liked to use my hands.” Creativity helped Tyree cope with the second big truth: “I hated school, I mean, absolutely hated it.” He attended Detroit’s Ralph J. Bunche Elementary and Miller Junior High School. He attended classes at Northern and Martin Luther King High School. “You come home with your homework. But I never did it because I was drawing. That’s all I did.”

The future Tyree envisioned for himself had already been previewed through Saturdays spent shadowing his grandfather, Sam Mackey, who worked as a sign painter. “He would take me with him and show me things,” Tyree said. “He always said he saw something in me.”

At age 9, Grandpa Mackey gave Tyree a paintbrush. In the years that followed, Grandpa began sharing a prophecy, too. “He would say all the time that he could see the wind blow. He could hear it, too, like a voice. He told me that in time, it would come to me, and that I would be able to see it and understand it.”

But it would take years and a few professional detours before adult Tyree inevitably returned to the vision Grandpa Mackey foretold.

Enlisting in the military came first, a choice Tyree made in 1972 after dropping out of school, but it also failed to captivate him. A year later, he was back in Detroit. By age 19 he was married and was slowly beginning to dream up new ways to support himself, including obligatory stops on the assembly lines at two of Detroit’s big automakers: Chrysler and then Ford Motor Company. He later became a Detroit firefighter, but soon found greater satisfaction in drawing and sketching in his free time. So, he quit.

The time, Tyree says, had come to tend to the talent he believes God gave him. “I couldn’t keep putting off what was inside me. I was born to be an artist, to create beauty.”

LESSONS IN FREE

Ironically, Tyree’s love of art convinced him to return to the one place he had worked to escape: school. Determined to chase his childhood dream, he began taking classes and seeking mentors to deepen his skills. Someone he met while earning his GED suggested that Tyree prepare and submit a portfolio to apply to the Center for Creative Studies, now known as the College

for Creative Studies.

CCS admitted him largely, Tyree recalls, on the strength of paintings that most people would struggle to associate with him, meticulous landscapes, primarily watercolors. “They looked like the art in most people’s minds when they think of art,” Whitfield, his wife of 33 years, said jokingly as she showed off one of Tyree’s early works. “You wouldn’t look at any of it and think Tyree Guyton.”

The Tyree Guyton celebrated today emerged, he says, from a pivotal moment at CCS. “I attended for a few semesters. Then I was told I didn’t fit in. I wasn’t good enough.” (Decades later, CCS would signal a very public change of heart by granting Tyree an honorary degree.)

At the time, that critique from a CCS professor stung. Hard. “I didn’t see it then, but CCS did me a favor. I was not supposed to be there. Something bigger was happening with me, not just learning how to fit into a traditional box.”

Tyree decided to give formal art education one more try, this time at Marygrove College. He studied for two semesters just as the Heidelberg Project was getting underway and beginning to draw some media attention. “They got mad at me, too,” he recalled, referring to his professors, “because I was starting to do a few media interviews about Heidelberg.” He recalls one professor in particular asking, “Do you want to be an artist or a movie star?”

Tyree’s retort: “Can I do both?” Ultimately, he gave up on school again. “I saw both institutions as a machine, in a way. I can see it now; I was starting to think big, art as medicine, as magic, as freedom.”

For Tyree, free was just a word, an abstract longing, until he met the man he credits as his second great teacher, trailblazing Detroit painter, sculptor and arts educator Charles McGee.

“I was told I had to meet Charles, so I got my portfolio and went to his studio, knowing I was about to blow his mind.”

McGee set up a series of easels so that he could review each piece of Tyree’s work. An excited Tyree looked on with pride. “I had this attitude. I was arrogant.”

Tyree was also unprepared for what he now calls the lesson of a lifetime. “Charles McGee started to paint over my damned paintings. It’s a true story,” he said with his voice giving way to laughter. “I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. What the hell is wrong with this guy? was all I kept thinking. I was so upset; I wanted to choke Charles McGee.”

Fortunately, McGee was quick to explain. “He said, ‘I had to do that. I had to break you down because you had taken on that European way of painting and

One of Tyree Guyton's paintings,
later painted over by his former
teacher, Kresge Eminent Artist
Charles McGee.





Vision on the Wind



Above
Tyree and Jenenne in 1995.

Right
Tyree's work on view at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, Michigan.



making art.' And you know what? Charles was right: I wasn't even close to being Tyree."

That exchange began a three-year private apprenticeship with McGee — much later the first recipient of the Kresge Eminent Artist award in 2008 — and left an indelible mark on Tyree. "Charles McGee set me free."

BEYOND TYREE

Forty years from now, Tyree hopes that history will define 2026 as the year he finally began to think beyond all boxes, even the one that cemented his creative legacy: Heidelberg. "This is the moment to really make some time for Tyree," he said, sipping tea during an interview in his dining room. "I've been on a journey called Heidelberg for 40 years; now, how can I, Tyree, go deeper?"

By his wife Jenenne's estimation, Tyree and the Heidelberg Project have already expanded the idea of art beyond what she initially believed he was capable of. When they met in 1993, neither Tyree nor his work matched her picture of an artist. Jenenne, a serious-minded banker, recalls being more aghast than awed. "I didn't even want to roll down my window when I turned on to the street," she recalled with laughter. "What the hell am I looking at? I kept asking myself."

Meeting the man behind the work did ignite sudden sparks, though not the sort people associate with future lovers. "He pissed me off," she recalled. Tyree, then a twice-divorced father of five, triggered anger with one question: "What are you doing to give back to your community?"

A dumbstruck Whitfield drove back home to Detroit's west side, undone. "I was a corporate Black woman climbing that ladder. That's the only thing I thought about until I met this bird-brain man, and he asked me a question I couldn't answer. He made me think."

Later, she not only returned to the block with her curiosity fired up, but also, through conversations with Tyree, who was beginning to draw increased media attention, she found an answer to his question. She noticed that Tyree's mail and media inquiries, including one from Oprah Winfrey, had begun to pile up unanswered. "He was ignoring all of that stuff," she recalled. "I met him at a time when he was still recovering from Sam's death and from the demolitions. Plus, he's an artist, that's all he's ever cared about," she said. "One response led to another, and suddenly, the Heidelberg Project's first office was in the basement of my house."

Then, Tyree made the move that cemented her view of him professionally, too: He showed her his sketchbooks. "Not until I saw those did I believe he's really an

artist. I remember saying, 'Well, if you created like that, you probably wouldn't be in so much trouble.'" Today, she adds, "He also wouldn't have become Tyree."

For his part, Tyree jokes, "I didn't like her at first either, but she told me she was going to get my life together, and she did."

In addition to serving as the Heidelberg Project's first executive director, Tyree says Jenenne helped push his vision beyond the street where it began. Together, they've begun laying the foundation for his next chapter. In 2025, they co-produced two solo exhibitions of Tyree's art, including Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now? at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. That exhibition was the largest of his career, featuring 10 massive works from the project alongside more than 50 works from Tyree's studio, many of which were never-before-seen sculptures and paintings, as well as examples of his private passion, sketching. "Everything starts with a thought in my mind," he said. "Then I grow it because I was always told, if you can put it on paper first, then you can make it tangible."

At the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, Michigan, the couple launched a smaller, more personal exhibition titled 40 Years in the Hood: Detroit's Heidelberg Project. The ultimate goal is to allow Tyree, the solo artist, to take center stage while others take on the work of guiding the project's creative direction.

On the heels of his Kresge award, Tyree and Wayne State University mutually agreed to give the Heidelberg Project's archive a permanent home at its Walter P. Reuther Library.

"These materials offer real-world examples of creativity as strategy, resilience in the face of obstacles, and the transformative impact of community-driven vision," said Walter P. Reuther Library Director Katrina Rouan. "We hope this archive becomes a catalyst for people across Detroit and beyond who are building their own models of artistic expression, social enterprise and neighborhood empowerment."

With the archive's future secure, the Heidelberg Project's evolution officially begins, explained former Executive Director Andy Sturm. "We see ourselves transitioning from something that has been known for 40 years as Tyree Guyton Heidelberg Project, into Detroit's Heidelberg Project."

The plan calls for infrastructure investments including new indoor spaces for year-round programming. The multiphase transformation includes renovating the Numbers House into a welcome center and community space. A \$125,000 grant from the Gilbert Family Foundation will help pave the way for that portion of the transformation. Tyree's childhood home, the Dotty Wotty House, will eventually become the HP History House, the project's first official narrative space.

A funding pipeline for visiting artists, performers and resident fellows is also planned for the Numbers House. “Tyree’s going to be involved as long and as much as he wants to,” Sturm said. “But over time, visitors will see less and less of his work and more work for new artists, so that 40 years from now, the Heidelberg Project is still a sacred space that Tyree created, but one that is also a fully active platform.”

Tyree’s future vision is not unlike Sturm’s. “I’m really just learning the real Tyree,” he said. “I feel like life is saying, this is the moment, and I want to see how far it can take me.”

Most days visitors can still find Tyree walking the grounds, inspecting, and even shifting various installations. The street, every inch of it, still speaks and inspires. “I still see magic, so many possibilities. It’s all happening at the right time, too.” Heidelberg as a creative incubator, Heidelberg as a living canvas and Heidelberg as a place of peace.

In the world according to Tyree, “The only question is how far,” he said.

“How far do we want to go when it comes to letting imagination and beauty be the medicine in the city, in our lives?”

Strolling in front of the house where his artistic legacy started, Tyree grins and then says, “I think the world already knows my answer. No limits.”





Above

Tyree's work on view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Nichole M. Christian is a writer and veteran journalist. She is the creative director, editor and lead writer of seven past Kresge Foundation Eminent Artist monographs: *Daughter of the Way* (2025), honoring Marion Hayden; *Su Arte, Su Vida* (2024), honoring Nora Chapa Mendoza; *The Book of Melba* (2023), honoring Melba Joyce Boyd; *The Culture Keeper* (2022), honoring Olayami Dabls; *A Palette for the People* (2021), honoring painter and educator Shirley Woodson; *Wonder and Flow* (2020), honoring ceramicist Marie Woo; and *A Life Speaks* (2019), honoring poet and activist Gloria House.

Nichole is also the co-author of *Canvas Detroit*. She has written about artists and their impact on cities for Art Basel, the PBS American Masters Series, and the online arts journal Essay'd. Her writing also appears in the poetry chapbook *Cypher*, summer 2021; *Portraits 9/11/01: The Collected "Portraits of Grief"* from The New York Times; *A Detroit Anthology*; and *Dear Dad: Reflections on Fatherhood*.

Nichole M. Christian

DEC
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ING

TyREE

Throughout his career, Tyree Guyton has returned to a select group of objects and themes. Muses meant to convey an unapologetic sense of wonder and a brazen commitment to not just questioning the world around him but redefining it too. Yes, there is chaos and a cacophony of color on the street, and his canvases too. This is the science of Tyree, a man who wholeheartedly insists and urges others to join him in believing in a more imaginative world, a limitless realm where $2 + 2$ absolutely = 8.

Make the mistake of asking Tyree for a concrete meaning of any of the creations that greet you while walking or driving through the Heidelberg Project, or in museum exhibitions featuring his paintings and assemblages, and you miss the main mission that has guided Tyree across four distinct decades. What Tyree wants most is for viewers to see his art as permission “to open the doors of your mind. I challenge the so-called tradition and convention. I see magic in what I do. The shapes, the colors, the disregarded objects, I’m only asking you to look. It’s up to you to find the magic and the beauty.”

Those fortunate enough to catch Tyree wandering, creating, or, on some days, simply sitting in his chosen studio — the streets of Heidelberg — have heard his beliefs firsthand. He calls it Heidelbergology, a whimsical, metaphorical mix of philosophical clues clues that he and his wife, Jenenne Whitfield, coined about some of his signature themes and ideals. This is a brief guide to seeing Tyree — his world, his way.

Time, Numbers and Clocks



Clockwise from upper left

Tyree Guyton's sculpture *The Dispensation of Time*, 2020. Signature rectangular plywood clock paintings at the Heidelberg Project, a flexible language Guyton uses to fill scraps of various sizes. *Numbers House*, 1996.



“

Time consists of numbers. The days, weeks, and months are based on numbers. Our days are numbered: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. I’m just one of many numbers that exist.

Throughout my career, I have explored the concept of time from a visual perspective by playing with clocks. Caricature in style, these clocks often have no hands, or the numbers are traveling backwards, or are mixed up, or the clocks have no numbers at all. My goal is to help people explore how time factors into our lives and how it sometimes hinders our ability to progress, or accelerates our anxiety of not being productive at all.

Plato said, *Time is the moving image of reality*. What this means to me is that everything we do revolves around time and yet the only time that we ever really have is the very moment we’re in.

I’m always asking myself, Tyree, what time is it?
It’s my time.

”

Doors



Clockwise from upper left

Tyree Guyton's sculpture *Invisible Doors*, 2007, painted steel, at Wayne State University, Detroit, commissioned with support from The Joyce Foundation. Assorted *Doors of Opportunity* sculptures. Installation view of works from Guyton's *Door Series* hanging on gallery walls.

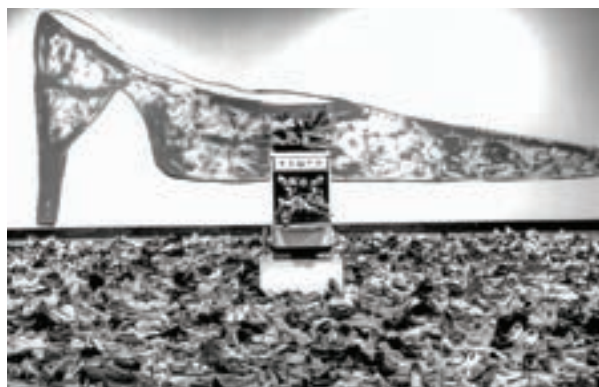


“

We move in and out of doors every day.
The most important are the doors to and
within your mind. It's time to open new
doors of the mind, of the spirit. We choose
what we see and what we believe.

”

Shoes



Clockwise from upper left

Various shoe installations at the Heidelberg Project. Tyree Guyton's 2011 installation piece *Street Folk*, a public artwork on Edmund Street at Woodward Avenue, Detroit. Guyton's painting *Soulology*.



“

I see the power of movement through shoes
– shoes of all colors, all sizes, all styles, all
shapes and all moving. Shoes then become
the transient tool, moving the human spirit
from place to place and in all directions.

Without the energy of people in motion, there
would be no need for other types of motion.
We're all energy moving through time.

”

Dots



Clockwise from upper left
 Installation view of Tyree Guyton's Kohler Arts Center exhibition Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now?, featuring wall-painted dots. Connect the Dots Festival, 2006, celebrating the Heidelberg Project's 20th anniversary. Assorted vehicles painted with Guyton's signature dots. A former Heidelberg Project welcome sign.





“

To me, they're the circle of life
and the people, the way we keep
on keeping on, humanity in all its
colors. It's beautiful to see.

”

Dolls



Clockwise from upper left
Party Animal House at the Heidelberg Project. Installation view of Tyree Guyton's exhibition Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now? at the Kohler Arts Center. A small sculpture at the Heidelberg Project featuring a lone doll.





“

The dolls tell the stories of children, the horrors that many go through as children of drug abuse, child abuse, all kinds of neglect. Their pain, their broken parts, is the city's pain. Each doll tells the horrors that drugs have cost us as a city.

”

Televisions



Clockwise from upper left
Televisions at the Heidelberg Project,
February 2026. Installation view of
Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now? at the
Kohler Arts Center.



“

What do I see happening in the world? I put it on those TV sets, put it in a museum, turn it into works of art, to give it back to the public and to say to them, look at what's happening. Like, can we see it? I see it through me.

”

Faces



Clockwise from upper left
Face House at the Heidelberg Project.
Various studio works and Heidelberg
Project signs emblazoned with faces.
Detail view of Heidelbergology: Is It Art
Now? at the Kohler Arts Center, showing
Guyton's application of faces to car
hoods and cinder blocks.



“

Faces are like windows into the soul, a way to explore the inner man or woman and all the beauty and pain we carry inside. Can we smile? Can we see the beauty in our own journey? We are all children of God, whether we see the connections or not.

”

Nichole M. Christian

SAM SAW, SAM SAID

48

Grandpa Sam Mackey at the Heidelberg Project, circa 1988.

How Tyree Guyton's Grandpa Sam Mackey Shaped His Life

In the fall of 2025, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, mounted the largest gallery presentation of Tyree Guyton's career, a five-month retrospective entitled: Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now? One of the exhibition's focal points was a collection of crayon and ink drawings suspended inside a house-shaped structure. From a distance, the installation looked to be just another captivating Guyton creation, colorful and raw.

However, neither the images nor the structure were typical Tyree. Rather, this was Tyree Guyton in full tribute mode, a rare and deeply personal homage to his earliest creative inspiration, the man who connected the first major dots for the Detroit visionary and helped to root his lifelong love of art-making.

That man was Sam Mackey, Tyree's grandfather. For a boy who found himself longing for visibility in a family of 10 children, Mackey became a towering figure. "He gave me his attention, so much love," Tyree recalls, emphasizing Grandpa Mackey's early and outsized impact on his life and eventual career path.

"He was the father that I didn't have," Tyree said, adding, "More than a Grandpa, he was my first teacher."

As Tyree's childhood story goes, it was Grandpa Mackey who first saw a creative spark in "Red," the boy who would grow up to one day saturate his family's home and the entire street in a kaleidoscope of colors and creative controversy. "Grandpa always said he felt I had something inside of me that I wanted to say."

One day, Grandpa Mackey gave Tyree what would become his key to a lifetime of daring and dreaming: "He gave me a paintbrush when I was 9." Anyone who asks Tyree Guyton to rewind time to share how he became a boundary-breaking outsider artist travels back with him to this pivotal moment. Proof of the tale's singularity spreads quickly across Tyree's face, bright eyes, and broad smile, signs of a joy still alive some 61 years later.

"It was like magic. I can still see that moment in my mind today. It was like bells and whistles went off in my head," he said, sitting at his dining room table, selecting and layering each word carefully, much like colors from his palette. "My hand was burning. I knew then I was put here to be an artist."

Sam Mackey's vision of a future Tyree was more than one loving family member's hopeful wish. Mackey, who moved to Detroit in 1918, made a living as a commercial sign painter and scrap-yard handyman.

"He didn't just listen to me," recalled Tyree. "On the weekends, he took me with him. I would help out and just watch everything he did." A mesmerized Tyree absorbed as much as he could and, decades later, continues to trace some of the most identifiable elements of his art-making to the early wonder and curiosity that Grandpa Mackey ignited in him.

"He was the first person to teach me how to mix colors and clean my brushes," Tyree said. "He loved color. So do I because of Grandpa, the way he taught me to see it and use it to redefine beauty. He was really the first artist I ever knew before I even really knew what an artist was."

Born in 1897 in St. Louis, Missouri, Grandpa Mackey learned much of what he knew about art outside of formal training. Wielding a paintbrush by day helped him put food on the table, but drawing with electric-colored crayons on paper or whatever other material he could find is, to Tyree, what "made Grandpa free."

One of the greatest gifts of Tyree Guyton's life, he says, is that Grandpa Mackey lived long enough to witness the fulfillment of his early "prophecy" about Tyree and to co-create some of the installations that ultimately made their home on Heidelberg Street famous. The Heidelberg Project exists, Tyree said, because "Grandpa saw the vision too. He knew what beauty, what color, could do for the street, for the city."

Every tree and polka dot that Grandpa painted became a personal expression. "Seeing so many





Tyree Guyton with his grandfather Sam Mackey, circa 1990.



Installation view of Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now?, Kohler Arts Center, February 2026, featuring a custom installation of works on paper by Guyton's grandfather Sam Mackey intermingled with the artist's own works from the Heidelberg Project and studio practice.



people come to Heidelberg from all over the world, it gave Grandpa new life, from the time he was 88 until his 90s.”

Throughout the late 1980s, as Tyree Guyton’s name and passion for transforming detritus into eyebrow-raising social commentary made headlines, Grandpa Mackey was right by his side, painting dots, posing for portraits, and occasionally pontificating to the media about the project’s meaning for Detroit. “All these things were alive once,” is how Mackey often answered tourists and reporters asking him to explain the art emerging on Heidelberg Street. “People throw things away when they can’t see the beauty in it anymore, but we have to still look at it the same as when it was part of some people’s life.”

But Grandpa Mackey’s bright spirit soon changed as the City of Detroit brought bulldozers to destroy his and Tyree’s creations. In the aftermath, photos and newspaper clippings show Grandpa Mackey alongside Tyree, sifting through the rubble, his face heavy with grief.

“I think all the problems with the city really started my grandpa’s demise,” explained Dewand Guyton, Tyree’s youngest brother. “He was old, but being out

there with Tyree kept him active.” Grandpa Mackey had helped Tyree transform the Heidelberg Project’s first six housescapes, including the eerie yet wildly popular Doll House and the politically edgy Obstruction of Justice House.

Sam Mackey died in 1992 at age 94, years before another wave of destruction—this time arson, 12 fires in total—would visit Heidelberg Street. As a final ode to their artistic bond, Tyree covered Grandpa Mackey’s coffin in vibrant polka dots. But even before Grandpa Mackey’s death, Tyree attempted to return what was his version of the gift his grandpa had given him as a boy.

Instead of a brush, Tyree gifted bedridden Sam with a blank sketchbook and a fresh set of crayons. During visits to Detroit’s Receiving Hospital, Tyree watched the old man pour his heart onto dozens of pages, so immersed in his art that he sometime even began to “eat the paint.” Even as he was dying, Grandpa Mackey, Tyree recalls, was still teaching. “What he was saying is that art is medicine, art is life and even there in that hospital bed, he was showing everyone that art was still his life. He was feeding his spirit even as he was dying.”



The pages of Grandpa Mackey's final sketchbook overflow with strokes of bold colors, reminiscent of the unrestrained markings of a child. "He created until his last breath." For Tyree, the book is part heirloom, part life blueprint. "I hope my work will live on when I'm dead and become energy for someone," he said slowly thumbing through the pages. "He said that's what I came into the world to do. Don't stop, he told me."

If time could allow one more moment with Grandpa Mackey, Tyree is certain how the two would spend their time: "I'd hug him so tight, tell him, thank you," Tyree said. "I can see it now, all the beauty he saw in the world, in me. I see it just like he said it."

Left

Tyree Guyton with one of his many car hood paintings, emblazoned with the name of his grandfather, Sam Mackey.

Below

Grandpa Sam Mackey's final sketchbook, photographed at Tyree Guyton's home in Detroit.

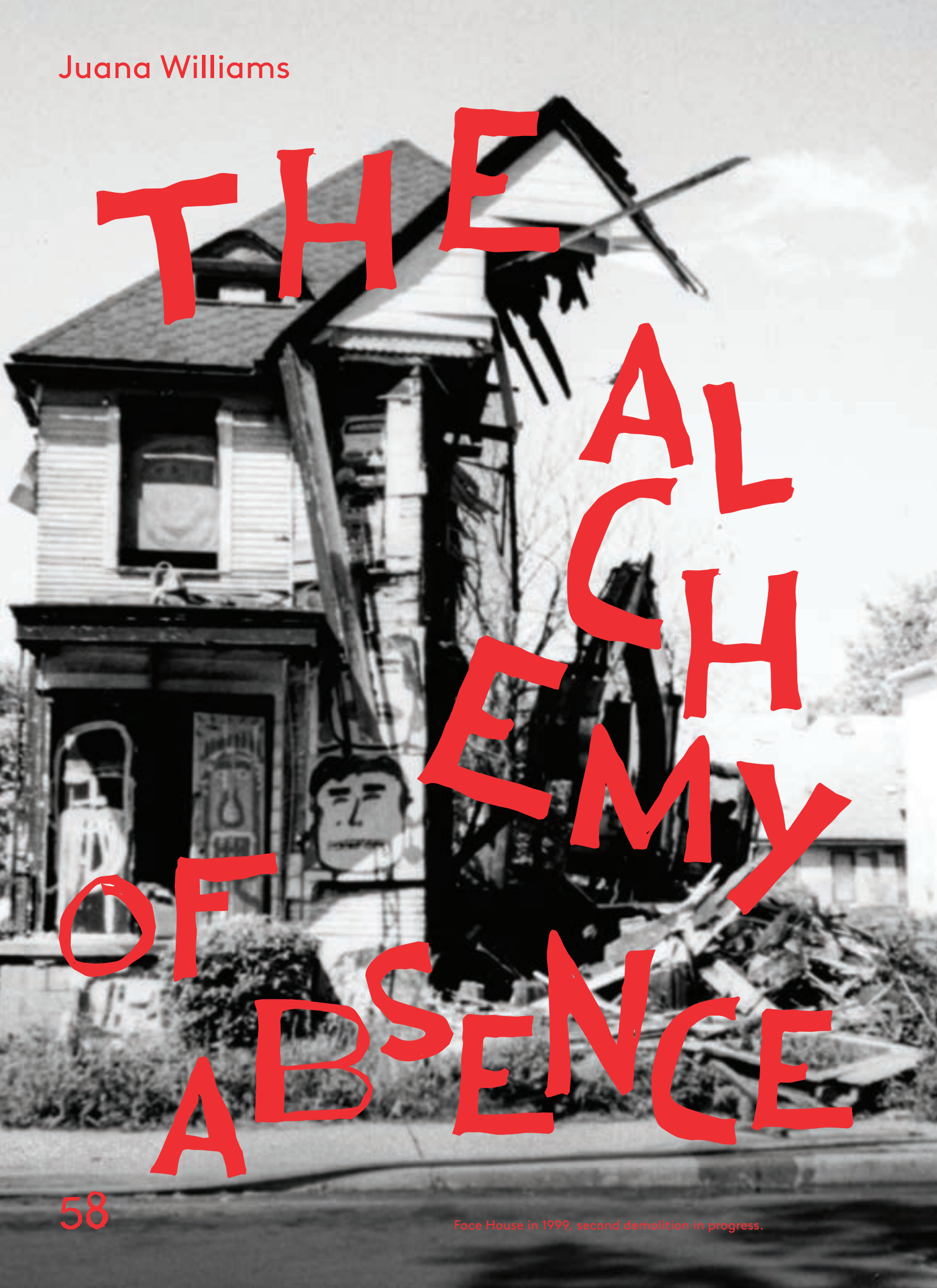


“
HE CREATED
UNTIL HIS LAST
BREATH.
”



Juana Williams

THE AL CH EMY OF ABSENCE



The booming automotive industry and high employment rates of the 20th Century catapulted Detroit into the spotlight. By the 1950s, it was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Unfortunately, Detroit's prosperity began to decline later that same decade as the automobile industry decentralized, resulting in unprecedented job losses and rapid depopulation. By the 1980s, Detroit was at the center of an economic collapse and drug epidemic that left many of its neighborhoods filled with abandoned homes and vacant lots, stark casualties of the city's rising crime rates and economic downturn.

For Guyton, absence was the catalyst for creating one of the most groundbreaking and influential public art installations of our time, a vivid counterpoint to the naked absences of care. His vision to transform his neighborhood was born out of necessity. In interviews, he explains how he created something out of nothing — specifically, the Heidelberg Project.



Throughout the project's history, we've seen houses covered in stuffed animals representing wildlife returning to the area; vacant lots filled with gloved-handled vacuum cleaners assuming the position of a frozen army criticizing the governmental failure to clean up the city; and a multitude of faces painted on abandoned car hoods and other surfaces offering visibility and representation of a neighborhood people tried not to see. The myriad of shoes is also impossible to overlook, whether visiting or surveying the project's storied history. Piled high, wrapped around fences, stuffed into empty spaces, hanging from branches, or simply paired as if waiting to be worn again, these shoes are an homage to souls: those who currently inhabit the city, those long gone from this world, and those who remain but are ignored. The many compilations of footwear become an indictment of poverty, abandonment and America's history of lynching, as well as a tribute to victims of the Holocaust. Yet, while shedding light on these tragic themes, the shoes are also meant to offer a semblance of hope by uplifting the "souls of the community," serving as a balm against blight.

ART OF NECESSITY

What is particularly unique about Guyton's practice is not only its material form but also his listening skills. Rather than working in a traditional sense to create art, he lets the community and the universe serve as muses speaking through him. He uses found objects to explore topics such as neglect, inequality, consumer waste and community empowerment. His canvas is the neighborhood: the streets, houses, sidewalks, yards and trees of what was once a community filled with homes and families, but has since been depleted like a rechargeable battery waiting to be electrified.

As Guyton creates, he loses track of time, enraptured in another world where time has no impact on momentum. With the Heidelberg Project, he began charging his neighborhood's battery with the strength to regenerate. Conceptual references to time became prevalent. The many versions of discarded clocks, along with clocks painted on found materials, are reminiscent of Guyton's central recurring question: "What Time Is It?" The clocks are multivalent, representing transformation, the passage of time and its healing power, a call to action in life and community, the need for change, and the conceptual nature of time. There's also a house covered in numbers, the Number House, which serves both as a tool for teaching neighborhood children to count and as an expression of Guyton's emphasis on the importance of children in the community.

Guyton also uses numbers to signify the limitless

possibilities of art. His philosophical formula, $2+2=8$, lends itself to the idea of absence creating space for infinity. This equation breaches the boundaries of conventional logic, and without logic, anything is possible. His formula invites us to look beyond limitations and reject permanence to see the beauty in everything and to create new realities. Despite my education in number theory, Guyton's philosophy of $2+2=8$ makes perfect sense to me, in the most rebellious, nonsensical way. It's an encouragement toward worldbuilding, pushing imagination beyond its limits, and not just building something out of nothing, but taking zero and transforming it into literally anything, with no restrictions. When one person refuses to limit themselves and instead ignores criticism in favor of inner truth, it permits others to do the same.

The extraordinary innovation of the Heidelberg Project has been so successful that it has pushed Guyton's concept of Heidelbergology beyond the geographical confines of Detroit, encouraging a change in how people consider public art, urban blight and community empowerment. It is now an internationally recognized cultural and economic asset for the city of Detroit despite controversy and sabotage.

BEAUTY FROM ASHES

I've personally watched the changes that have unfolded within the Heidelberg Project. I've always seen it as a pillar of courage and a builder of community. Guyton once said, "When other people are saying don't do it or are laughing at you, that's when you know you're on the right track." My favorite house in the neighborhood grew out of arson. In 2013, the House of Soul, which was covered in thousands of music albums, was destroyed by arson. It was rebuilt with pieces from the original house and now stands as a collection of studs forming a stick frame of a house, covered in music records. It's been reborn.

Throughout my life, I have visited the neighborhood more times than I can count, but it wasn't until I was an adult that I realized how unique and impactful the Heidelberg Project has been on both my life and my sense of self. What once seemed to me like a constant in the landscape revealed itself to be a force of transformation. I can only read about the height of the city's economic success driven by the automotive industry, but I am living through the continued decimation of Detroit because of that absence, alongside recent changes that attempt to return the city to its previous levels of prosperity. From its origins until today, the Heidelberg Project has served as medicine for a disregarded community, building something beautiful out of absence and neglect.

Heidelberg Project in 1992, showing
the polka dotting process.





When Guyton started collecting and building, he had no idea that his art would make such a mark on Detroit or on the world. Beneath the blight notices, disgruntled city officials and upset neighbors lay a rumbling that no one could stop and, eventually, no one could ignore. It was the start of something new, and there is no new life without first experiencing discomfort.

The foundational challenges of the Heidelberg Project started long before its birth. When traditional avenues of exhibiting his art proved to be unpredictable and inadequate — stifling, inconsistent, inept and surprisingly unfulfilling — Guyton didn't stop making art. He transformed the devastation of his neighborhood into the foundation of a community-based mission.

Like Guyton, I envisioned my curatorial career as a steady climb up the ladder of institutional success. However, I quickly realized that path would not be the most meaningful and productive direction for my work. As a community-based curator, my vision often conflicted with the internal structures and priorities of organizations I encountered. Similar to Guyton, I have come to recognize that my mission can only be realized through genuine creative freedom and the determination to stay the course despite discouragement.

Guyton's artwork is in a category of its own. He is dedicated to creating art that is legible, accessible, and continually relevant, pointing to his innate love for humanity, which is apparent in every brushstroke and intentionally placed object. It's difficult to quantify the value of a space that bridges so many gaps and builds so many possibilities.

His artwork criticizes and heals, condemns and beautifies, preserves and generates. It is a protest against a future of neglect, a catalyst for changing the present, and a foundation of hope for the future. It positions art as a powerful and transformative tool for social change and community healing.

I was born in 1986, the same year as the Heidelberg Project, with my umbilical cord wrapped around my neck, so I knew resilience before my first breath. We were just two Detroit kids who grew up like play cousins on opposite sides of the city, and like the Project, I was almost destroyed but persevered. Similar to the Heidelberg Project, I've had to embrace my differences and lean into challenges, and I've had many experiences of getting back up after a fall. It's a joy to see how far we've come.

The Heidelberg Project is more than art. It's a mission, a community, a heartbeat, an act of alchemy, and Tyree Guyton is a disruptor, an originator and an architect of the future. He is why I believe in magic, and why you should, too. After all, anyone who can create something out of nothing is, by definition, a magician.



Juana Williams is an independent curator and writer whose work explores the intersections of cross-border intellectual history, cultural memory, and identity formation, as expressed through modern and contemporary art from Africa and its diasporas. Through this lens, she works to deconstruct cultural and social issues, challenge traditional boundaries of art criticism and curation, and counter anti-Blackness within the arts.

Williams has held curatorial and academic appointments at organizations including the Detroit Institute of Arts, Library Street Collective, Wayne State University, and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art. Her curatorial projects have been presented at institutions across the United States and France, including the Grand Rapids Art Museum, the Muskegon Museum of Art, Palais de Tokyo (Paris), and the Westmoreland Museum of American Art. She has presented lectures at various museums and universities and contributed to numerous exhibition catalogs. Her work has been featured in publications such as Artsy, Beaux Arts Magazine, Condé Nast Traveler, Michigan Chronicle, and Observer.

Williams holds a BA in Fine Art and an MA in Art History from Wayne State University.

John Beardsley

ART FOR EVER

On February 4 and 5, 1999, the City of Detroit invaded its own east side with cherry pickers, front-end loaders, and helicopters escorted by police.

The target was neither a dangerous criminal nor an enemy, foreign or domestic. It was the work of an artist.

While police cars blocked the streets, public service employees tore down hundreds of objects that sculptor Tyree Guyton had hung in trees, and they demolished two vacant houses that he had turned into giant works of assemblage art — one on Heidelberg Street, another on Canfield. The former, which Guyton had titled Happy Feet, was festooned with shoes; the latter was similarly decorated on the outside and contained countless paintings and sculptures by the artist on the inside, all of which were destroyed. The city claimed the abandoned dwellings were safety hazards.

This wasn't the first time that Detroit leaders had made Guyton their target. In the early hours of November 23, 1991, bulldozers had also rumbled onto Heidelberg Street, destroying three derelict houses that Guyton had transformed with his art. The origins of the conflict between the artist and the city go back to 1986, when, with the help of his grandfather Sam Mackey and his then-wife, Karen, Guyton had all but obliterated the houses under layers of scavenged materials — tires, hub-caps, broken toys, battered dolls, rusty signs, busted appliances, and automobile parts — all brightened with stripes, polka dots, and splashes of paint.

His actions were an expression of both outrage and art. Then in his thirties, Guyton had grown up on this street and had watched it decay, as family after family fled in the face of poverty and crime. Abandoned dwellings became crack houses. "You'll think I'm crazy," Guyton said, "but the houses began speaking to me... Things were going down. You know, we're taught in school to look at problems and think of solutions. This was my solution." (Unless otherwise attributed, quotations are from conversations with Guyton.)

Disinvestment had made Guyton an urban guerilla, a one-man adaptive reuse program. Perhaps more than he could have imagined, Guyton's action put him in the center of a class of values that illuminates the cultural and political complexities of contemporary urban life — in Detroit and elsewhere.

It is hardly surprising that the Heidelberg Project has been a lightning rod for inner-city frustrations. The kind of spontaneous, sanctioned art created by the likes of Tyree Guyton typically has several audiences, often with distinctly different views. The pattern is the same for other monuments of what has been called outsider art (a term I use reluctantly), including the fabulous shell-and-tile encrusted Watts Towers in Los Angeles, which is the work of the late Italian immigrant Sam (or Simon) Rodia, and the Orange Show in Houston, a tribute to the health-giving properties of orange built by Jeff McKissack, a retired mail carrier.

Opinion about these creations fractures somewhat along class and educational lines, although not entirely. Spontaneous constructions attract an international audience of well-educated art enthusiasts, and I include myself among them. Those who cleave to a notion of art as a critical or transformational practice typically applaud the way outsider artists thumb their noses at both artistic and social norms; connoisseurs appreciated the connections in work like Guyton's to a junk aesthetic that can be traced back through assemblage art at least to Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau*, a profusion of grottolike changers made by the German artists from salvaged materials in his Hanover house in the decades between the world wars.

Immediate neighbors, who are likely to be unfamiliar with such histories and who have to live with these offbeat constructions, are more likely to be intolerant of them. From a safer distance, they are typically viewed with some curiosity. City bureaucrats, who often regard such installations as an affront to their authority, are usually the most hostile. In fairness, many unsanctioned creations are of dubious legality: Like parts of Guyton's project, they can constitute an instance of artistic "squatting," or occupation of condemned property. In such cases, city officials tend to trot out city codes and regulations, sometimes in concert with neighborhood opposition, as a justification for the city's intervention.

Such was the case with an ambitious but ill-fated wooden ark that rose on city-owned vacant land in the ruins of the Central Ward in Newark, New Jersey, in the 1980s. The creation of a woman named Kea Tawana, who worked in the construction trades, the ship was fabricated of scavenged materials. Nearly ninety feet long and thirty feet high, it featured a hand-hewn keel and ribs joined by mortise and tenon. Like Guyton's houses, Tawana's ark was an emblem of resilience and survival in desperate circumstances. But city officials wanted it gone. Though she offered her creation to the city as a community facility and as a museum of shipbuilding techniques, they made her move and dismantle the ark, citing it with many safety and zoning violations. Apparently, Newark has no zoning that allows arks.

It is hard not to view this pattern of bureaucratic hostility to underground artists with some skepticism. I wonder whether city officials aren't motivated more by embarrassment than by sincere concern for their injured constituents. The attention generated by Guyton or a Tawana underscores a municipality's inability to substantively improve poor neighborhoods. These failures are hardly personal — they are more the result of market forces and demographic trends than bureaucratic indifference. Still, officials seem to have little tolerance for idiosyncrasy, notwithstanding that the harm done by the Heidelberg Project or Tawana's ark is minor compared with the social inequities caused by disinvestment in the inner cities. As icons of imaginative life, these places strike me as worthy of official sufferance, if not support. Like them or not, they are emblems of resurrection, of the capacity of individuals — arguably, even of communities — to re-create themselves from ruins, with or without official involvement.

My own efforts at evaluating Guyton's work express the larger divergence of opinion. On the one hand, as an aging product of the '60s counterculture, I am cynical of the city's motivation. Why target the Heidelberg Project when Detroit has plenty of other desperate neighborhoods and plenty of other derelict houses in need of demolition? As the Free Press columnist Heather

Welcome to the Heidelberg Project

the works of The Heidelberg Project and its founder, Tyree Guyton and other contributing artists are protected under the United States Copyright Act, Title 17, United States Code. All Copyrights, Moral rights (to the extent such rights are protected under applicable law) and any and all rights to register and maintain copyrights in the creative works of The Heidelberg Project are strictly enforced. Please respect the rights of our community and of our artists. Photos and videos may be taken for personal and educational purpose only. Commercial exploitation is Strictly Prohibited.

* Please do not photograph any of the residents *

* Please do not park in front of any of the residences *

THANK You for Visiting Us!!!

Newman pointed out in 1988, "If Heidelberg were the last block of abandoned buildings in the city, I could see the logic in talking about dismantling the project to protect property values. But as we all know, it's not. And sadly, it's going to be a long time before it is, which is one of the points of Guyton's art in the first place." Going after artists like Guyton is a diversionary tactic, a crusade for officials with an urgent need for high-visibility accomplishments.

On the other hand, the inchoate communitarian in me feels some real sympathy for Guyton's neighbors. In a putative democracy, some attention should be paid to community standards. This is not a simple matter of the artist's standing alone against a monolithic community — both sides have energetic and persuasive partisans. Perhaps what is called for is some sort of demographic analysis to determine the majority view — though questions of how the community would be defined and who would be given a voice in this analysis raise potentially complex problems.

As an avowed partisan of the more offbeat forms of cultural expression, I recoil from the notion of art by consensus. If creation has to appeal to a common denominator, it is bound to be dull or normative at best, repressive at worst. As in other efforts to curtail free expression, the city needs to articulate a compelling interest if Guyton is to be silenced — especially on his

own property. Instead of hounding him, perhaps the city should draw a line around Guyton's activities, giving him and his supporters an opportunity to buy out the immediate neighbors and letting him get on with his work.

Some larger benefit might yet come of it. There is a precedent for the idea that Guyton's project might become a focus of community life. Los Angeles has created an arts center in association with the Watts Towers and a private foundation, with city help, administers the Orange Show. Houston's cultural life is much the richer for the existence of the Orange Show Foundation: it hires neighborhood kids to help maintain the project, offers art classes and residencies for artists, and sponsors the annual Art Car Parade, an armada of outlandish vehicles that invades the city one Saturday morning each April and has got to be the nation's most amazing show on wheels.

Call me a Pollyana, but if art is valuable at least in part as the inspiration for communication across the frontiers of class and race, then Guyton's work is fabulously successful. Someday, if it happens, I'll be sorry to see a project born as an artistic and political manifesto grow into a mainstream amusement. I might then be willing to see Guyton pack his suitcases — and all his other stuff — and move on. In the meantime, the cultural conditions that created the Heidelberg Project remain largely unchanged. Keep on, Tyree Guyton.

“

IF ART IS VALUABLE AT LEAST
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THE FRONTIERS OF CLASS AND
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”



Tyree working with neighborhood children at the Heidelberg Project, 1995.

John Beardsley is an author, curator, and educator. His books include: *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, *Gardens of Revelation: Environment by Visionary Artists* and *James Castle: Memory Palace*.

Jenenne Whitfield

HEIDELBERG BIOLOGY

IS IT ART NOW?

Whenever was it not
Oh, we heard what they said
It seems the base things of the world have confounded the mighty
Wild, whimsical, and so much fun—
like a Fourth of July explosion on the run
Don't let your eyes fool you, though
Deeper than what appears on the surface
thought-provoking metaphoric truths
lie beneath the layers
calling out to humanity
Streets turned into questions
Paint turned into prayers
Broken things singing in despair
Colors shouting freedom
Every piece a witness
Every brushstroke a dare
It's a mirror, cracked and whole
a canvas stretched across a neighborhood soul
Discarded things reborn
speaking louder than the polished and the new
Art that breathes
Art that bleeds
Art that heals what time tried to erase
Not just art
a map, a mirror, a movement
A living language rising from the rubble
asking, daring, calling
The sign read:
Heidelberg is
sayin
seein
feelin all things
Do we see
Will we hear
Are we feelin...
And still the question remains—
Is it art now
Whenever was it not

Jenenne Whitfield is an arts executive with more than 30 years of experience in cultural leadership and community transformation, including serving as the Heidelberg Project's first executive director and president. She also served as executive director of the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, where she expanded institutional partnerships and community engagement. Today, Jenenne serves as a consultant to the Heidelberg Project and manages the careers of Tyree Guyton and two additional visual artists. She advises artists, cultural organizations and community initiatives on creative placemaking, fundraising, leadership and strategic development.

Meg Handler

THANK
YOU,

Heidelberg Street

TYREE

Photographs take time. It may take only a fraction of a second to capture an image, but the resonance, the currency, and any lasting cultural value can take decades to emerge.

The same process is true of my photographs of Tyree Guyton and the Heidelberg Project over the years.

In the summer of 1989, I was an excited 22-year-old photography student, at the start of my career, in the midst of an internship at the Detroit Institute of Arts. I worked for Dirk Bakker, who led the museum's photography studio. I spent my days assisting Dirk as he photographed ancient objects and other works from the DIA's collection. One day, early on in my time at the DIA, he drove me to Heidelberg Street to meet Tyree and to see the houses. Dirk had the keen sense that I would love Tyree's creations. As we turned off Mt. Elliott and onto Heidelberg Street, my eye caught a glimpse of the official sign.

Instantly, I was pulled — I had never seen art outside of traditional settings, museums, and galleries. The irony of spending my days looking at ancient objects at the DIA, then going to Heidelberg Street to see reclaimed abandoned houses made into art, paired with objects from everyday life and culture, was not lost on me. I'd arrived at someplace special. Someplace rare.







The Heidelberg Project taught me how to see. When I began my internship at the DIA, I was just starting to learn how to communicate with the people I was photographing, how to observe, and how to frame those observations. I recognized the significance and rawness of the moment and that I needed to document it thoroughly. That meant I would not only photograph Tyree and his work. I would also photograph the neighbors. The houses were intertwined with their daily lives.

Part of Tyree's purpose is to advocate for his community, for ideas, for social justice, and for fun. He brought the neighborhood to life, and he made that street look and feel like a rainbow of polka dots. For the neighborhood kids, the Heidelberg Project was a much-needed playground.

The first house I photographed was the Baby Doll House. A former crack house, with precisely arranged baby dolls and baby doll parts, it was a sight to behold. I made photographs of the front and side of the house, along with some details. It was only a short time after my first visit that Mayor Coleman Young ordered the house torn down. The next time I visited, there was a fresh pile of rubble where the house was, right behind the welcome sign.

These were also monuments of modern consumption, built with contemporary pop and historical objects that became art objects. A drinking fountain wasn't just that; it was a historical symbol of a deeply racist culture. The installation of the powder-blue drinking fountains, reclaimed as objects of art, formed a circle that read as a calm pool.

Above

Detail showing a doll's head on the porch, a few days before it was torn down.

Opposite

The Baby Doll House: Deemed "an eyesore and a fire hazard," the house was demolished by Mayor Coleman Young's administration in 1989.



Thank You, Tyree

I kept coming back because the Heidelberg Project was always growing and changing. It was fascinating to watch Tyree tend to his work like a master gardener. Along with his then-wife Karen, their creative spirit was boundless and intoxicating. Adding in Grandpa Sam Mackey, I became creatively alive. With his vision expressed in words and images, on paper with crayon, Grandpa Mackey was a true, born artist and inspiration. I felt so lucky to spend time with this creative family. Rather than treating me like a simple casual observer, Tyree welcomed me into the home, and we ate sandwiches and chatted in the living room.

In 1990, I moved to New York City to begin my career as a photography editor. I continued to make photographs, focusing on social justice movements and advocacy work. The passion and commitment I brought to that work were always quietly informed by what I believe Tyree Guyton taught me: Art has the power to shape ideas, connect communities, and make change. I am just one of the many who, through Tyree, learned to stop and see new possibilities in the world around me.

Ultimately, that is the simple focus of these photographs, and my great gratitude to Tyree for the lesson.



The Fun House was the most featured attraction of the Heidelberg Project. It was layers of found objects, Detroit street signs, and Tyree's drawings.





Above

On the saddest day, Tyree and his wife, Karen, were holding dolls salvaged from the ruins of the Baby Doll House.

Opposite

Tyree's OJ House







Opposite Above

Every shoe was once worn, an island of lost souls, according to Tyree.

Opposite Below

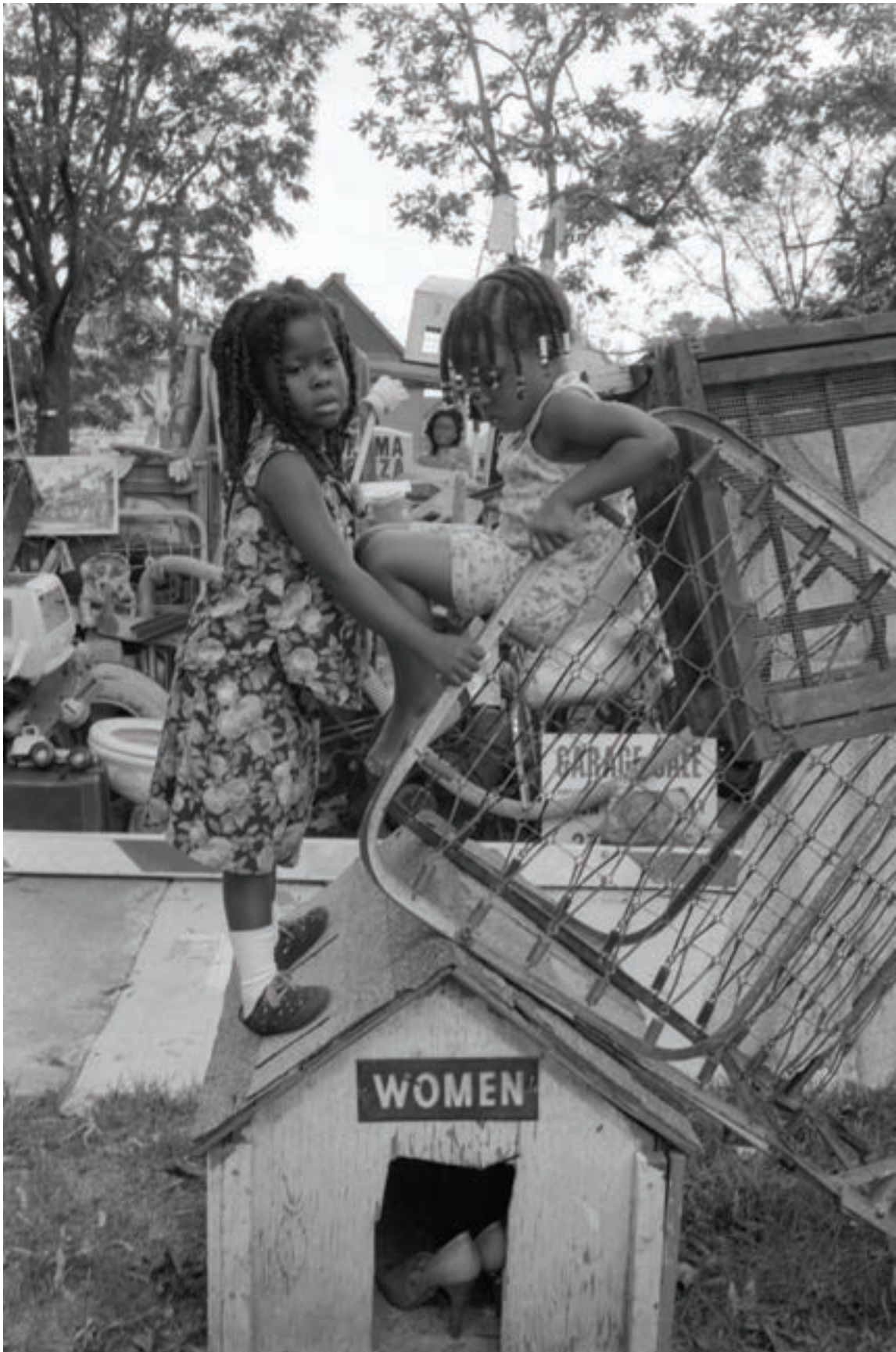
Polka Dot House.

Above

Tyree at Canfield Project in 1992.











Meg Handler lives and works in the metro Detroit area. She is a documentary photographer, photo editor, and curator. She began her advocacy work in 1991 as a volunteer photographer for Gay Men's Health Crisis. As a member of the Women's Health Action and Mobilization, she documented pro-choice actions and HIV/AIDS activism, while also photographing the anti-abortion organization Operation Rescue. Handler served as photo editor at the Village Voice from 1995 to 2000, and has since worked at publications including U.S. News & World Report, Blender, New York Magazine, and COLORS. She is co-founder of Chicago Women in Photography and, in 2017, co-curated *Whose Streets? Our Streets: New York City 1980–2000* at the Bronx Documentary Center, an exhibition of activist photography.



A WALK THROUGH TIME

Over the past four decades, the Heidelberg Project has evolved from a radical act of neighborhood reclamation into one of the most recognized public art environments in the world. Founded by Tyree Guyton in 1986 on Detroit's east side, the project has weathered demolition, controversy, arson, economic upheaval and profound personal loss — while continuing to inspire generations of artists, residents and visitors through its uncompromising vision of creativity, community and transformation.

What follows is a timeline of that remarkable journey: the milestones, setbacks, collaborations, exhibitions and acts of perseverance that have shaped the Heidelberg Project across 40 years. Together, these moments tell the story not only of an artist and an organization, but of a living artwork that continues to evolve alongside the city itself.

1986

Tyree Guyton founds the Heidelberg Project with his first wife, Karen, and grandfather and mentor Sam Mackey.



1988

The Heidelberg Project receives national media attention from People and Newsweek magazines.



1989

Tyree receives Spirit of Detroit Award from Detroit City Council.

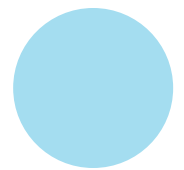
Heidelberg Project launches first children's program in partnership with the civic organization New Detroit.

1990

Tyree presents concurrent solo exhibitions at Detroit Institute of Arts and Ledisflam Gallery in New York.

Clockwise from upper right
Children at Tire House in 1989, across
the street from Dr. Ralph J. Bunche School.
Tyree Guyton with his grandfather Sam
Mackey, 1986. A number of Guyton's early
works are now in the permanent collection
of the Detroit Institute of Arts, including
House, 1989, oil and crayon on paper.







1991

Tyree appears on the Oprah Winfrey Show alongside opposing neighbor Otila Bell.

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young orders demolition of three Heidelberg Project houses.

1992

Sam Mackey passes away at age 94.

Tyree receives Governor's Artist of the Year Award from Governor John Engler and is listed in Who's Who in Black America.

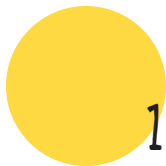
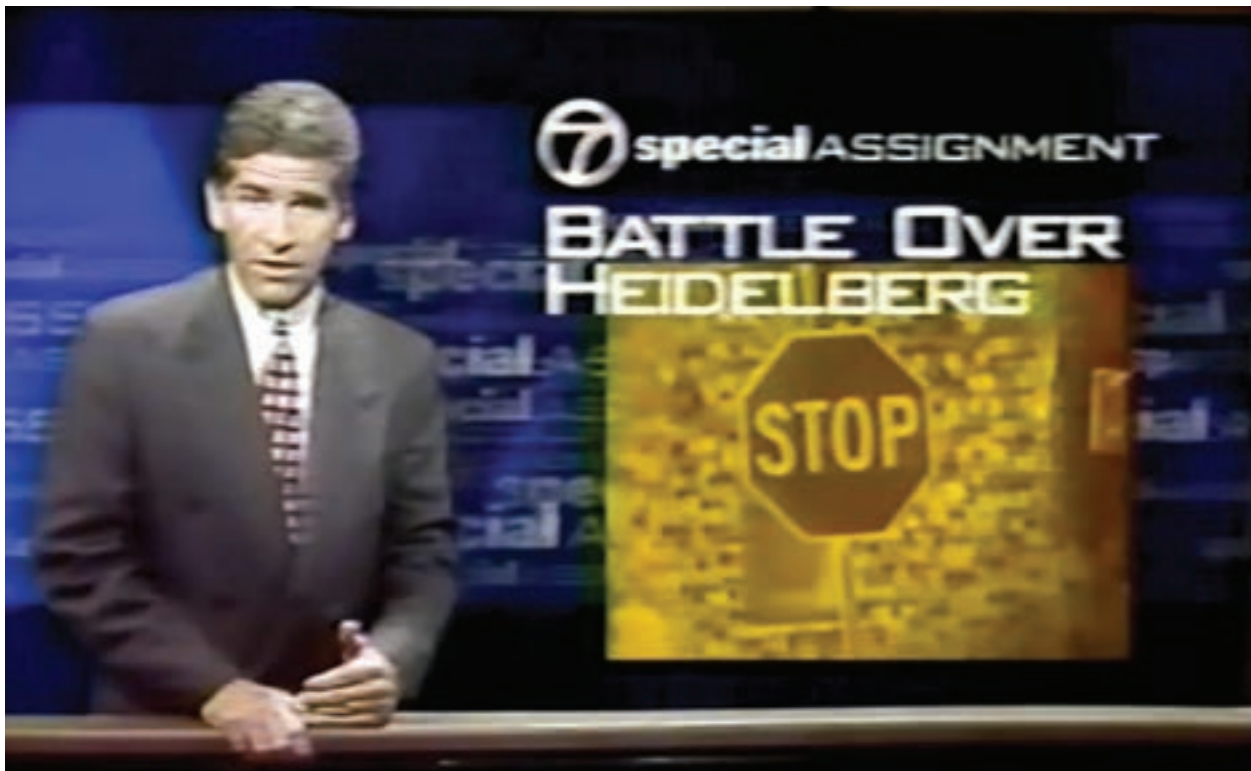
1993

Jenenne Whitfield joins Heidelberg Project as founding executive director.

Clockwise from upper left

Demolitions and demolition crews at the Heidelberg Project, 1991. Tyree Guyton on the Oprah Winfrey with former wife Karen Guyton, 1990.





1994

Heidelberg Project hosts its first official street festival. Speakers include City Council member Maryann Mahaffey and Motown Museum founder Esther Gordy Edwards. Martha Reeves and Spain Middle School Marching Band perform.

1995

Tyree and Jenenne meet regularly with Mayor Dennis Archer about the future of Heidelberg Project.

Heidelberg Project establishes educational tours.

Clockwise from upper left

A Heidelberg Project feature on ABC Channel 7's Special Assignment, 1997.

Tyree Guyton meets with students during a tour of the Heidelberg Project site, 1995.

1996

Tyree and Jenenne make presentations in Germany.

Tyree is commissioned for project in Minneapolis.

Heidelberg Project photo exhibit travels throughout Europe.

Tyree featured in Time and Essence magazines.

Programs begin at Bunche Elementary School.

1997

Heidelberg Project receives its first substantial grant from the City of Detroit Cultural Affairs Department.

Some City Council members attempt to have the Heidelberg Project demolished.

Tyree is featured on The Today Show.



1998

Heidelberg Project identified as Detroit's third most visited cultural destination, with over 275,000 visitors annually.

Tyree and Jenenne make a presentation in Hungary.

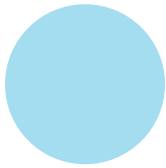
Come Unto Me: The Faces of Tyree Guyton premieres at Detroit Institute of Arts. It later airs on HBO and wins 10 awards, including an Emmy and Sundance Film Festival honorable mention.

Wayne County Circuit Court restraining order blocks demolition by Archer administration.

1999

Restraining order lifted, and city tears down part of Heidelberg Project for second time.

Tyree and City Council member Kay Everett appear on Court-TV.



2000

Tyree and Jenenne make presentations at Harvard University, Three Rivers Art Festival in Pittsburgh, and in Ecuador.

Detroit's historic Scarab Club makes Tyree an honorary member.

2001

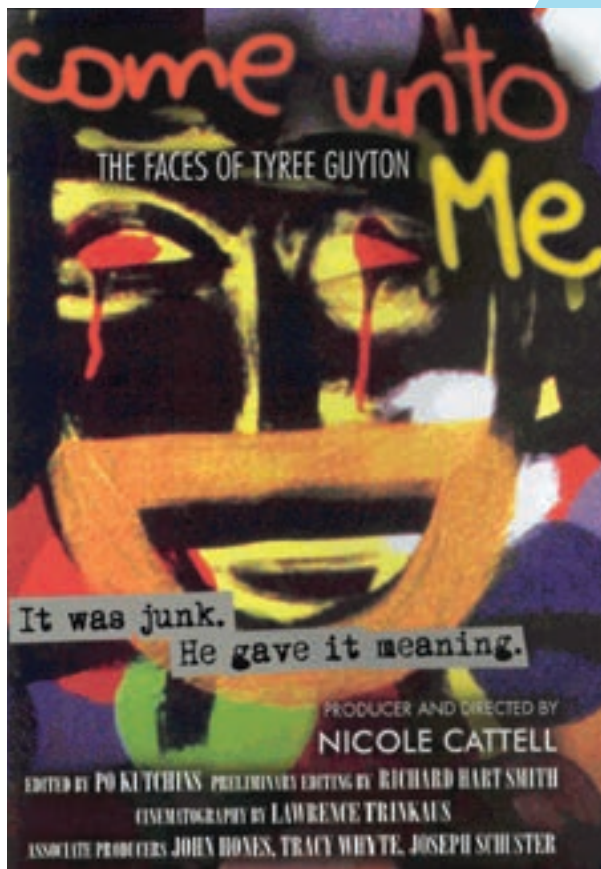
The DIA invites Tyree to create a house installation titled Open House as part of Detroit's 300th birthday.

Commission from Pelham Art Center for project in Mt. Vernon, New York.

Tyree and Jenenne's New York wedding makes The New York Times' Style section.

Opposite

Come Unto Me: The Faces of Tyree Guyton, documentary film directed by Nicole Cattell, 1999. Tyree Guyton's Open House installation at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 2001.



2002

City of Detroit Cultural Affairs Department commissions Tyree to participate in the city's Thanksgiving Day Parade with garbage truck installation called Tic Tock on the Spot.

2003

Planning begins for the development of the House that Makes Sense.

Tyree exhibits in New York City show titled D'troit.

Heidelberg Project goes to West Bloomfield's Scotch Elementary School, where over 700 children paint Faces of Scotch.



2004

Tyree travels to Australia for his largest project to date, *Singing for That Country*, spearheaded by renowned performance artist and former Detroiter Aku Kadogo.

The Heidelberg Project receives funding from Hip Hop philanthropist Russell Simmons.

2005

The Heidelberg Project wins the Silver Medal Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Tyree presents solo exhibition, *An American Show*, at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

2006

Heidelberg Project celebrates its 20th anniversary with an international Connect the Dots festival directed by Aku Kadogo.

Tyree exhibits *An American Show* at Michigan State University Law School.

2007

Connecting the Dots: Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project, a book of essays published by Wayne State University Press, wins a Michigan Notable Book Award and the Eric Hoffer Award.

Wayne State University and Tyree receive the Joyce Award, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Heidelberg Project.

Tyree exhibits at Western Michigan University and receives a Lee Krasner Award.

The Heidelberg Project introduces the Young Adults of Heidelberg (YAH) program.



From left

Guyton's sculpture *All Parties* at the Charles H. Wright Museum, 2022, where the artist previously presented his 2005 solo exhibition *An American Show*. Guyton's honorary doctorate from the College for Creative Studies, permanently displayed in his Detroit home. Installation view of *Singing for That Country* in Sydney, Australia, in 2004, created for Out and About Festival with Aku Kadogo.

2008

Heidelberg Project represents the United States at Venice Architectural Biennale in Italy.

Tyree's 20th anniversary exhibition travels to the Marshall Frederick Sculpture Museum in Michigan.

Heidelberg Project launches the Art, Community and Environmental Education (ACE2) program in Detroit schools, serving more than 600 students over three years.

2009

Tyree receives one of 18 inaugural Kresge Artist Fellowship awards.

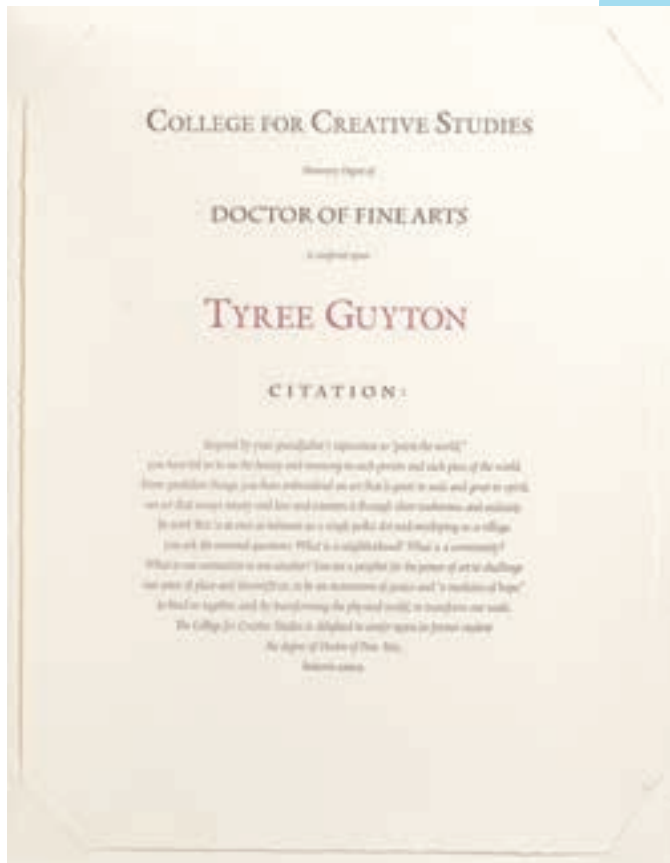
Tyree exhibits at the McColl Center for the Arts in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Daimler Financial sponsors Tyree and Jenenne for a five-city European tour.

Tyree creates installation at Handwerk Vocational School in Bolzano, Italy.

Heidelberg Project receives major grant from Erb Family Foundation.

Tyree receives an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the College of Creative Studies in Detroit.





Clockwise from upper left
Tyree Guyton's Art X Detroit
installation, *Street Folk*, 2011
featuring donated shoes
displayed near the artist's home
and studio in Detroit. Guyton
returned from Switzerland with
binders full of small studies and
works on paper, including these
four compositions photographed
in his home in February 2026.



2010

Tyree receives Community Leadership Award from Wayne State University.

Tyree presents a one-man exhibition in Bern, Switzerland.

The Heidelberg Project receives support from The Kresge Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Heidelberg Project launches Emerging Artist program.

2012

Williams College study says Heidelberg Project generates \$3.2 million annual economic impact for the Wayne County region and \$2.4 million for the city — on a budget of \$410,000.

Otila Bell, Heidelberg Project opponent for 25 years, becomes a supporter. Tyree and Jenenne lecture in Aix-en-Provence, the United Kingdom, and London, Ontario.

Heidelberg Project receives support from Rauschenberg Foundation.

2011

Tyree accepts prestigious one-year residency at the Laurenz Haus in Basel, Switzerland. As bon voyage, Erb Family Foundation commissions The Heidelberg Suite from jazz composer-arranger Gerald Wilson; performance features notable Detroiters such as Marcus Belgrave and national recording artists Geri Allen and Anthony Wilson.

2013

Tyree and Jenenne deliver keynote address in Bochum, Germany, at conference titled This Is Not Detroit.

Eight arson fires strike Heidelberg Project between May and December.

Number House gift shop opens on Heidelberg Street.

2014

Four additional fires strike the site.

Tyree receives awards from National Conference of Artists and Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture.

Heidelberg Project launches drop-in workshops for youth.

The POST-HAB gallery opens with first rotation of exhibits inside Number House.



2015

Exhibits honor Heidelberg Project's 30th anniversary at University of Michigan Museum of Art and U-M Department of Afroamerican and African Studies.

Tyree represents United States at Shenzhen Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism in China; Tyree and Jenenne create a large-scale house installation there.

Tyree partners with James and Grace Lee Boggs School, transforming blighted house nearby into the House of Stars.

Support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

2016

Tyree receives honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit.

Chrysler UAW honors Tyree and Heidelberg Project for 30 years of artistic excellence.
State of Michigan declares December Heidelberg Project Month.

Tyree creates the Gold Street mural for Detroit's Murals in the Market and exhibits Face-ology at Detroit's Inner State Gallery.

Above
The aftermath of the first OJ house fire.

2017

Commission from Monument Lab in Philadelphia.

Stabilization of Number House begins — one of two art houses surviving 2013–14 fires.

Heidelberg Project purchases properties on Heidelberg Street for a new headquarters campus: a 7,000-square-foot commercial building, a residence and five adjacent lots.

Tyree's mother, Betty Guyton, passes away on September 25 age 79.

2018

The Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy (HALA) launches at four schools in the surrounding McDougall-Hunt neighborhood.

Heidelberg Project partners with digital agency Isobar to create walking tour app.

Major exhibits of deconstructed works from Heidelberg Project open at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and at SiteLab in Grand Rapids in conjunction with ArtPrize.

Heidelberg Project hosts its first conference, 360° of Heidelberg.



Heidelberg Project moves into its new headquarters and campus.

Heidelberg Project is featured in The New York Times Sunday Magazine.

HALA students commissioned to paint a Heidelberg-inspired bus for Detroit Bus Company.

Heidelberg Project hosts an inaugural Heidelbergers pop-up at Heidelberg HQ.

Tyree exhibits at Martos Gallery in New York.

2020

Heidelberg Project wins LCD Berlin SoftPower Destinations of the Year award for Best Cultural Activation.

HALA activates its classroom and podcast studio at Heidelberg HQ.

Tyree installs The Dispensation of Time: A Divine Ordering of Worldly Affairs, a large-scale clock sculpture, at Mack Alive in partnership with the Heidelberg Project and Wayne State University.
Tyree exhibits in Art Basel's OVR:20c.



After 29 years as founding executive director and eventual CEO/president, Jenenne transitions out of her role.

Jessica B. Williams becomes interim director.

2023

Tyree presents a major solo exhibition in New York.

Heidelberg Project begins financial restructuring, including layoffs and scaled-back programming.

Heidelberg Project headquarters on McDougall Street sold.

2024

Second Saturdays launch, activating Heidelberg Project site with art, music and a block-party vibe.

Longtime board chair Andy Sturm named executive director.

Andy spearheads the acquisition of vacant lots on Heidelberg and Elba streets.

2025

40 Years in the Hood: Detroit's Heidelberg Project, an exhibition curated by Tyree and Jenenne, opens at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, Michigan.

Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now? opens at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, showcasing monumental works and archival material from Heidelberg Project and Tyree's practice.

WSU's Walter Reuther Library announced as home for Heidelberg Project archives.



Tyree is named the 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist. The Heidelberg Project turns 40.



STUDIO ARCHIVE

Opposite

Tyree with Grandpa Sam Mackey.





Models of envisioned houses on the Heidelberg Project, including People's House (a replica of the White House), Penny House, and House of Words.





Clockwise from upper left

A maquette of a door sculpture at Wayne State University. BIBLE = It Was Painful, mixed media work. A mixed media sculpture "Protect the Babies."





The Heidelberg Reading Room at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, MI in January 2026.





Various ephemera related to
Grandpa Sam Mackey's art career.



Sam Mackey: "Grandpa Speaks"

BY ARWOLF ARWOLF

The birds are leaping or scowling, ear-to-ear, lots of teeth. Bodies rubbery and waxy, slithering or hovering, snick in front of you, staring directly into you. Most of these creatures seem to be female. There are almost always breasts and often a vulva breathing or talking or maybe even singing at the bottom of the torso.

Some of us are reminded of Liberia-Na-Gig, ancient protection and birthing goddess, often found over church doorways in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Liberia-Na-Giggyris, squabs and arms ready to deliver herself of child or merman. No pale saints going heavenward in those doorways. Nor do those ladies drawn in crayon esp any woman-be-sacrificed poses. They've got their own sanctity happening. Some have legs apart, blood between. Signs of life.

We are in the presence of the drawings of Grandpa Sam Mackey, born near St. Louis, Missouri in 1907, and resident of Detroit since 1948. Grandpa left his body in June of 1992, but can be met in person if you visit his drawings which are on display at Galerie Jacques through the end of February. Sam is very much alive there, ready to meet you through the faces of the people he drew.

Friday and Saturday, January 12th & 13th there was a very well-attended opening in memory of Grandpa, with Detroit poets Sharon Smith-Rogers and Ron Allen hosting it up on the first night. Jacques tells me his place was jammed with good people. My hamster-on-a-wheel schedule kept me away until Saturday night, when the Galerie was easily packed with more of those good people. They had come not to be seen, not to



Grandpa: "I can see the wind blow."

Tyre: "What do you mean?"

Grandpa: "You're not old enough. Takes time."

play any dopey games with each other, but to be for awhile in a space dedicated to sincerity and honest expression.

Tyre Guyton, grandson of the artist, stood humble and sweet as he told us about Grandpa, his life and artwork. He asked for some of Thelma's music for background, and I shall never forget the way his voice moved alongside the jazz. Many times he stopped and gave the floor to Mack as if to finish the idea. These are some of the things he shared with us.

"Grandpa was a professional house painter. He gave me my first paint brush when I was nine. It was magic. Fireworks

went off in my head. My hand felt like it was on fire. I never forget that. Later, he told me to go to art school and paint. I went to art school for six years. But going to school doesn't make it happen. It's got to happen inside." His real instruction ended up taking place in Grandpa's house at 3658 Heidelberg St. in Detroit.

After his wife died, Grandpa was feeling lonely. One day, in 1986, Tyre gave him a sheet of paper and asked him to draw something. The results were so amazing that he brought in more paper with lots of crayons and pens. Grandpa became a full-time visual artist, seated at the kitchen table, drawing for hours on end. He had many visitors, "lots and lots of women" but few then departed in the drawings, and it seems he was sexually active right up until his very last days. Grandpa "loved to party."

"Grandpa inspired me, gave me life, gave me hope. His work, those pieces, is what he wanted to say. Grandpa is why I'm here. He gave me this magic. And when he was 88 years of age I gave him back what he gave me when I was nine. Lots of times we would draw around the city, collecting junk. It was fascinating. I wanted to play with it."

And play with it they did. Today the Detroit neighborhood is internationally famous as The Heidelberg Project, where entire houses have been covered with found objects and lots of paint. Polka dots have appeared on the houses, sidewalks, even tree trunks. Hundreds of shoes line the pavement. Pictures hang from trees. Grandpa was the force behind all of it.

Sam Mackey loved Thelma's Monk, and played piano in a style not unlike Monk's. "Straight No Chaser" was among his favorites, and the title is seriously appropriate for the art he has left for us to get with. Healthy up front with no euphemisms. Workflows, maturity, innocence, ramshackle fame.

Coleman Young had the Heidelberg Project bulldozed in 1991, giving the artists almost no warning. It's interesting to consider how the government allowed a city to deteriorate into a wasteland, and then look paths to brutally counteract such creative attempts to revitalize one of the most down-

trodden parts of the city. Grandpa, who'd moved into the neighborhood in 1947, was not to be stopped. "Plan B. Let's polka dot the house! You can't let the city get away with this!"

During his final illness, Sam started drawing on the hospital walls. On being asked about it he said "I didn't do it." When he was told that other patients had seen him doing it, Grandpa replied: "I did not sign my name." The doctor smiled and said "Just leave it up."

One day a ten-foot glowing angel came to Tyre and said "everything's gonna be all right." Three days later Grandpa made the transition. Once Grandpa had said "I'll be better you, please take me and put me on a house." This didn't happen. Tyre did think about polka-dotting the old man's body, and ended up polka-dotting the casket. We were shown a photograph of the family in mourning clothes (Tyre kneeling in an impressive suit) clustered around a coffin with large colorful dots painted all over it.

As for the Heidelberg Project, it's back and is happening as ever. Tyre says he saw it, they tore it down, he saw it again. "If they tear it down again I'll do it again and again. I'll do the whole city next time. The government's gonna have to listen to the artists." With the help of business spokeswoman and activist Jeanette Whitfield, the future of the Project is quite promising.

Meanwhile, Grandpa Sam Mackey's drawings are on display at Galerie Jacques in Ann Arbor, at a gallery in Paris as part of an eight-month international Art First exhibit, and, with some of Jacques Karanouskian's own works in a group exhibit in Switzerland. I could end by saying "Join The International Art First Conspiracy," but instead I leave you with Jacques' own statement about Grandpa Sam Mackey's artwork: "It is the purest gesture of a mature man who doesn't have anything to lose and who expresses himself in the most total freedom."

You can see Sam Mackey's art through the month of Feb. at Galerie Jacques, 665-8888.



BIG MAMA SERIES
STUDIES





IES



RAHNEY'S
EXHIBIT
102



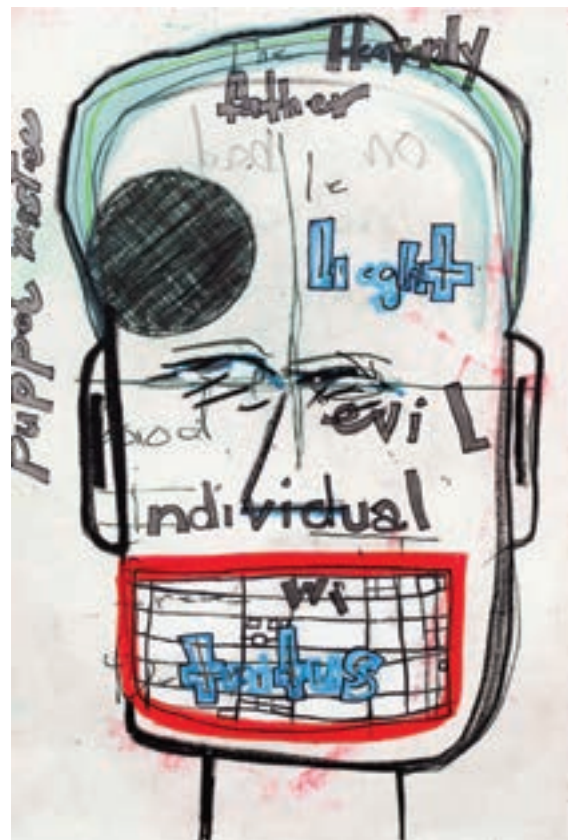
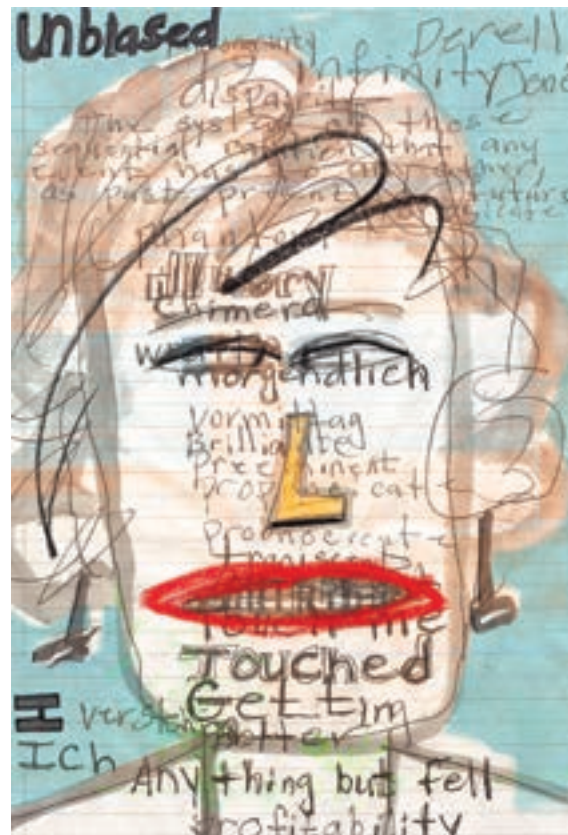
A mixed media study with found shoes exhibited in.



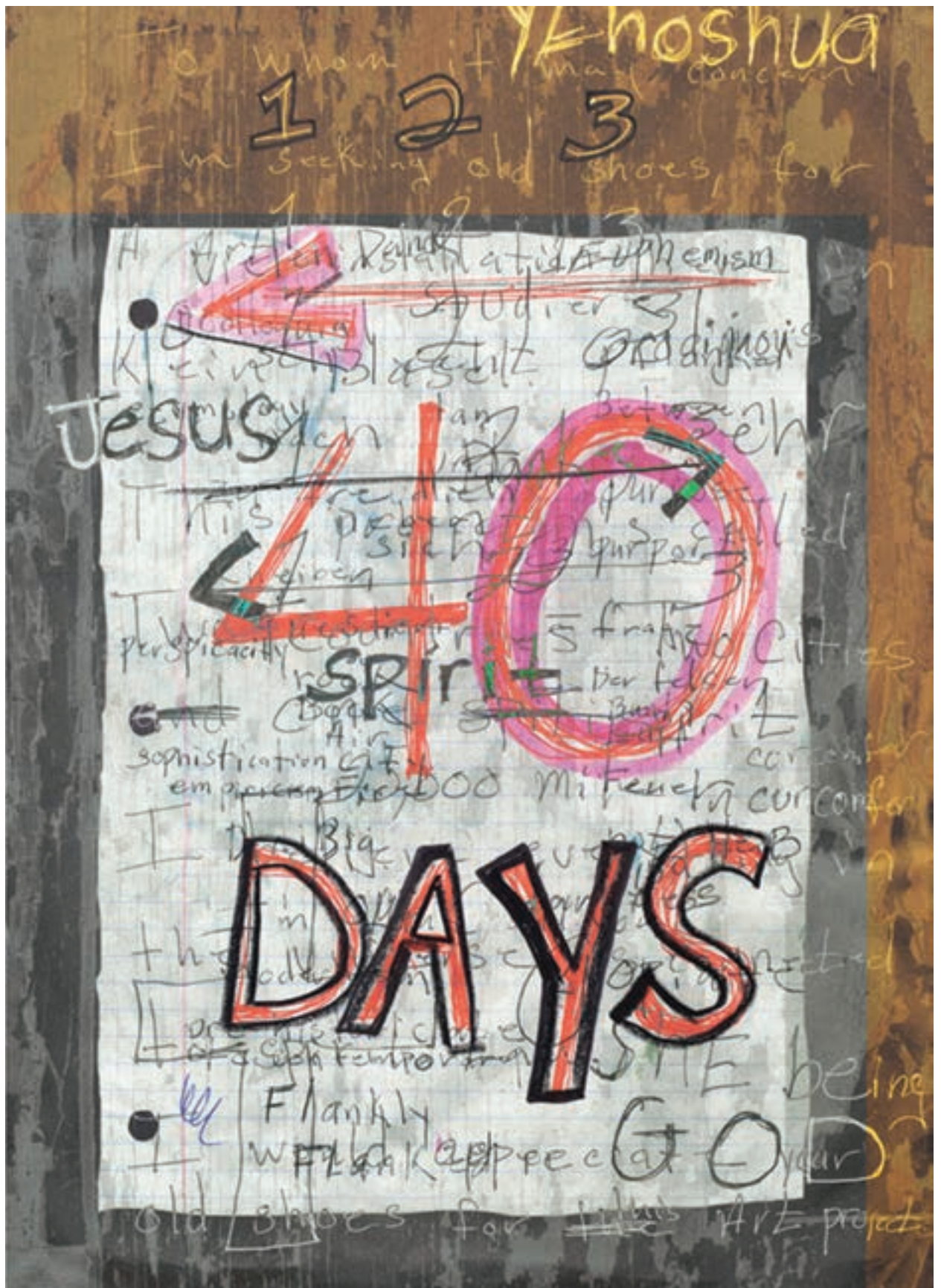
A charred plywood clock, removed from the ruins of Clock House.



House on Fire, 2013, a watercolor study completed after the fire.



Various ephemera related to Grandpa Sam Mackey's art career.



TYREE GUYTON

HONORS AND AWARDS

HONORARY DEGREES

Honorary Doctorate, College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI

Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025

40 Years in the Hood: The Heidelberg Project,
Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson, MI

Heidelbergology: Is It Art Now?"
John Michael Kohler Arts Center,
Sheboygan, WI

2023

I Ain't Playin, Martos Gallery, New York, NY

2022

The Heidelberg Project, New York,
Martos After Dark, New York, NY

2021

Frieze New York Online Viewing Room

2020

Tyree Guyton, Martos Gallery
Viewing Room, New York, NY

2019

FIAC, Paris

Love, Sam, Martos Gallery, New York, NY

2018

2+2=8: Thirty Years of Heidelberg, MOCAD, Detroit, NY
NADA Miami, Miami, FL

2016

Face-ology, Inner State Gallery, Detroit
What Time Is It? Tyree Guyton, New Work,
Lawrence Technological University, Detroit
Center for Design + Technology

2015

Power to the People, Bi-City Biennale of
Urbanism \ Architecture, Shenzhen, China
The Art of Tyree Guyton: A 30 Year Journey, University
of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), Ann Arbor, MI
What Time Is It? Tyree Guyton, New Work, Gallery
DAAS, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

2014

Spirit, Inner State Gallery, Detroit, MI

2013

Faces of God on Fire, Cue Foundation, New York, NY

2012

Tyree Guyton, Gallery Tom Blaess, Bern, Switzerland
Two Countries, Two Cities, One Spirit,
The Bollag Studios, Basel, Switzerland

2011

Heidelbergology-Art In The Streets, Charles H. Wright
Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI
Tea for Two: Sam Mackey and Tyree Guyton,
College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI

2009

Totally Connected, Handwerk
Vocational School, Bolzano, Italy
An American Show, McColl Center for
Visual Art, Charlotte, NC

2008

Street Sense, Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture
Museum, University Center, Saginaw, MI

2007

The Inland See, Western Michigan
University, Kalamazoo, MI

2006

An American Show, University of
Michigan Business School, Ann Arbor, MI

2005

An American Show, Charles H. Wright
Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI

2004

Singing for That Country, Sydney, Australia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023

Passages, organized by Reilly Davidson and Alex Chaves, Martos Gallery, New York, NY

Expressions: Works on Paper by African American Artists, Flint Institute of Arts, NY

Curriculum / Collection: Arts & Resistance, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

2022

Nature Does Not Know About Us curated by Ugo Rondinone, Sculpture, Milwaukee, WI

2020

Felix Art Fair, Los Angeles, CA

2019

AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN,
Philips, New York, NY

Horology, organized by Elizabeth Jaeger and Silke Lindner-Sutti, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY

2018

Paradise, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2017

Constant as the Sun, Museum
of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH

2012

44th President, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI

2011

Venice Architecture Biennale, Out There-Architecture Beyond Building, United States Exhibition, Into The Open: Positioning Practice, Venice, Italy

2004

D'Troit, Urbis Museum, Manchester, England

2003

D'Troit, GAS Gallery, New York, MI

2001

Artists Take On Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, MI

Centro de Memoria e Cultura dos Correios,
Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

City Rhythms, Pelham Art Center, Pelham

1999

Art in Embassies Program, American Embassy, Ecuador

SELECTED SPECIAL PROJECTS

1986-Present

The Heidelberg Project, Detroit, MI

SELECTED PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

2017

The Times, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
Monument Lab in conjunction with Mural Arts

2015

Power to the People of Shenzhen, China, Bi-City
Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture

2010

People in Motion, Los Angeles Metro, California

2008

Invisible Doors, Wayne State University, Detroit

2004

Singing for That Country, Sydney, Australia

2002

Tick Tock on the Spot, City of Detroit

SELECTED AWARDS

2021
Lifetime Achievement Award from City of Detroit

2018
White Columns / Shoot The Lobster Award

2016
A Resolution to Declare December
as Heidelberg Project Month in the State
of Michigan, House of Representatives

2015
Starr Commonwealth Art of Resilience Award for
inspiring and mentoring young artists, Detroit

2014
The American Institute of Architects Michigan's
Balthazar Korab Award for Excellence in
Architecture at the Eli and Edith Broad Art Museum,
Michigan State University, East Lansing

2007
Joyce Foundation Award for artists of color
in major Great Lakes cities who strengthen
cross cultural understanding by bringing diverse
audiences together, Chicago

2005
Rudy Bruner Award for Urban
Excellence, Cambridge, MA

2004
Great Places Award for excellence in urban design from
the Environmental Research Association

1991
Artist of the Year Award from The State
of Michigan, Governor John Engler
Michiganian of the Year Award from the Detroit News

1989
Spirit of Detroit Award from the Detroit City
Council in recognition of exceptional achievement,
outstanding leadership, and dedication to
improving the quality of life

David A. Harmond Award from the City of
Detroit for people who live according to ten
values that enhance the wellbeing of individuals,
families, and the community

SELECTED ARTIST IN RESIDENCIES AND GRANTS FELLOWSHIPS

2015
Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for established visual artists

2011-2012
Invitation only artist residency at the Laurenz Haus Foundation,
Basel, Switzerland

2009
Kresge Artist Fellowship, Kresge Arts in Detroit, Michigan

SELECTED PRESS

2022

Miller, M.H, "A Fashion Designer's First Home Collection Pays Homage to Haiti and New York," T Magazine

Diehl, Travis, "What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now," New York Times, May 12

Beddingfield, Duante, "Detroit presents medals to longtime arts figures in inaugural awards ceremony," Detroit Free Press, April 12

2021

Whitfield, Jenenne, "How Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project Helped Revitalize Detroit," Freize, April 19

Bence, Sarah, "How a Detroit artist turned a crumbling city block into a sprawling public art project," Roadtripper, March 2

2020

Chloe Wyma, "Tyree Guyton," Artforum, February

2019

Heinrich, Will, "New York Galleries: What to See Right Now," The New York Times, November 14

Raymond, Katie, "The Heidelberg Project isn't going anywhere- its evolving," NPR Michigan Radio, August 1

Groce, Nia, "How Emerging Initiatives are Highlighting Detroit's Evolving Arts Scene," Hypebeast, July 26

Miller, M.H., "Tyree Guyton Turned a Detroit Street into a Museum. Why is he Taking it Down?", The New York Times Magazine, May 9

2018

"The Artists Everyone Talked about during Art Basel in Miami Beach," Artsy, December 7

"Detroit's Famous Heidelberg Project Goes to the Beach," Vulture, December 5

"Tyree Guyton's polka-dotted Heidelberg Project career enters its next phase," Detroit Metro Times, September 5

"Tyree Guyton Wins 2018 White Columns / Shoot The Lobster Award," Artforum, February 2

2016

"The end, and a new beginning, for Detroit's iconic Heidelberg Project," Detroit Free Press, August 14;

2015

"Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project Through the Years," Detroit News, August 15

2014

Hodges, Michael and Terek, Donna, "New Tyree Guyton Exhibition Forged by Fire," Detroit News, October 17

Davey, Monica, "Fire in Detroit Destroys Canvas: Vacant Houses," The New York Times, April 3

Fassinger, James, "Who is Burning Down Detroit's Famous Street Art?," The Daily Beast, March 14

2013

"Heidelberg Project is Under Attack," News Genius, December 19

"Detroit's Heidelberg Project: A State-of-the-Art Cultural Village," Examiner, March 9

2011

Chiu, Lisa, "A Detroit Artist's Whimsical Beautification Project Spurs Urban Renewal," Chronicle of Philanthropy, December 4

"Heidelberg Project Founder Tyree Guyton Heads for Europe as Art Marches On," Examiner, October 13

Householder, Mike, "Noted Artist Fills City Block With Shoes," Associated Press, April 7

"Four Mayors In, Detroit's Heidelberg Project Finally Gains Support," Crain's Detroit Business, March 23

2010

"Swiss Mission for Tyree Guyton," Detroit News, November 16

Lagger, Helen, "Die Seele einer gebeutelten Stadt," Berner Zeitung, October 29

Yablonsky, Linda, "Artists in Residence," The New York Times, September 22

Hughes, Ivy, "Coloring Detroit," Next American City, August 30

Walker, Rob, "Art as Security System," The New York Times, July 5

Fras, Damir, "Der Traum von Detroit's ? Wiedergeburt," Berliner Zeitung, February 9, "Detroit's Blight Becomes Canvas for Artists," Jet (adapted from Associated Press), January 18

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2014

May, Jamaal, Tyree Guyton's Caged Brain,
Johns Hopkins University Press

2011

Shapiro, J.H., Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton
and His Art (book), Charlesbridge Publishing

2007

Whitfield, Jenenne, Connecting the Dots: Tyree Guyton's
Heidelberg Project (book), Wayne State University Press

SELECTED DOCUMENTARIES

1999

Come Unto Me, the Faces of Tyree Guyton.
Emmy Award winning production

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Charles Wright Museum of African
American History, Detroit, MI

Daytona Museum of Arts and
Sciences, Daytona Beach, FL

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan
State University, East Lansing, MI

Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA

Housatonic Museum of Art, Bridgeport, CT

Kresge Art Museum, Michigan
State University, East Lansing, MI

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

NIU Art Museum, DeKalb, IL

Museum of Harlem, New York, NY

The University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

KRESGE EMINENT ARTIST SELECTION COMMITTEE 2025-26

Tyree Guyton was named the 2026 Kresge Eminent Artist
by a distinguished multidisciplinary panel of metro
Detroit artists and arts professionals:

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Photographer, educator, curator; emeritus professor,
College for Creative Studies; 2024 Guggenheim Fellow

LAUREN HOOD

Founder/director, Institute for AfroUrbanism;
assistant professor of practice, urban planning,
University of Michigan

HALEEM "STRINGZ" RASUL

Dancer, choreographer, educator, filmmaker;
founder, Hardcore Detroit; board member, Screen
Dance International; NBA dancer, Detroit Pistons;
2010 Kresge Artist Fellow

SUMA KARAMAN ROSEN

Executive director, InsideOut Literary Arts;
McGregor Fund Miller Fellow; alum, National
Arts Strategies Chief Executive Program

MANDISA SMITH

Founder, AKOMA Art House & Dye Garden
and Detroit Sistas Sew; director, Hope for
Flowers Artisan Studio; fiber artist

The Kresge Eminent Artist award celebrates artistic innovation and rewards integrity and depth of vision with an unrestricted cash prize of \$100,000. The award is presented annually to an artist who has resided and worked in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb counties for a substantial number of years. Along with the Kresge Artist Fellowships, and the Gilda Awards – administered by the Kresge Arts in Detroit office of the College for Creative Studies – the Eminent Artist award reflects The Kresge Foundation's belief that support for artists themselves is integral to a robust arts and culture ecosystem across metropolitan Detroit. Since 2008, Kresge Arts in Detroit has awarded \$10.6 million through 18 Kresge Eminent Artist awards, 327 Kresge Artist Fellowships, and 82 Gilda Awards.

KRESGE EMINENT ARTISTS

2009 – 25



2025 Marion Hayden



2024 Nora Chapa Mendoza



2023 Melba Joyce Boyd



2022 Olayami Dabls



2021 Shirley Woodson



2020 Marie Woo



2019 Gloria House



2018 Wendell Harrison



2017 Patricia Terry Ross



2016 Leni Sinclair



2015 Ruth Adler Schnee



2014 Bill Rauhauser



2013 David DiChiera



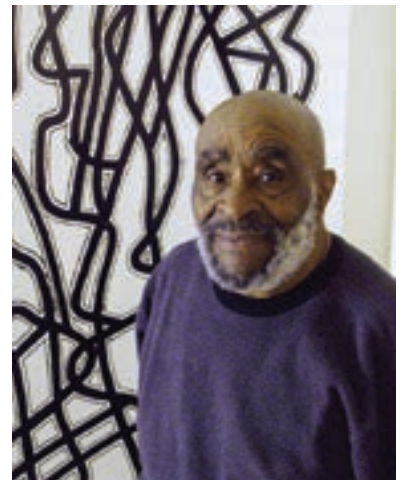
2012 Naomi Long Madgett



2011 Bill Harris



2009 Marcus Belgrave



2008 Charles McGee

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to equity and opportunity for low-income people in America's cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grants, loans and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change.

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Tyree's Time
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