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Celebrate Tucson's amazing black artists at this series of May art shows

Johanna Willett
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The hotel opened in 1970 as the Silverbell Inn. It is named for the McCoy Mountains near the Arizona-California border.
Mamta Popat / Arizona Daily Star

More than 100 people packed into Hotel McCoy on Saturday to celebrate black artists in Tucson.

If you missed it last weekend, you're in luck — Black Renaissance is an event series happening every Saturday evening in May.



Seanloui Dumas, a local R&B artist who performs under the name Seanloui, organized the event series after putting together an open mic night in February to highlight black artists.

The response blew him away.

"A lot of people came out and said we should do it again," he says. "But let's do more than singing."

So Dumas put up a Facebook post, sharing his desire to showcase black artists in Arizona. Within an hour, it had more than 130 shares, he says.

"We want to give black artists who are up and coming, already arrived and growing a chance to have a light shined on them from the Tucson community," he says.

Most of the artists at the showcase are from Tucson — a few are traveling down from Phoenix.

"There are pockets of the community looking for something like this to bring the community together to connect with each other and support each other," he says. The name — Black Renaissance — is inspired by the artistic discovery and revitalization of the Italian Renaissance, he adds.

Each Saturday in May, the art showcase has a different theme. Last weekend celebrated hip hop artists. This Saturday will focus on spoken word performances, with visual artists taking over the next week. A concert will conclude the month.

Ashley La Russa, the founder of Roux Events, partnered with Dumas to pull everything together.

"I hope it's an opportunity to educate those who may not have attended these type of events in the past," La Russa says. "When we had the hip hop event, it was nice to hear from a couple in their 70s who stayed at the hotel about how they had never attended a hip hop concert or show ... and this was an opportunity for them to experience it and they loved it."

Dumas plans to make Black Renaissance at least an annual occurrence.

"The whole goal is to keep shining the light and bring the black community together in Tucson, because there are so few of us," Dumas says. "But we still impact the community."

If you go

What: Black Renaissance

When: Saturdays May 11, 18 and 25, 8-10 p.m.

Where: Hotel McCoy, 720 W. Silverlake Road

Cost: Free

More info: blackrenaissance.online



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