

Sarah Ditlinger | Senior Manager, Marketing & Strategic Engagement  
[sditlinger@taftmuseum.org](mailto:sditlinger@taftmuseum.org) | (w) 513.684.4526 | (c) 317.507.4491  
[taftmuseum.org](http://taftmuseum.org) | 316 Pike Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Taft Museum of Art Announces 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Duncanson Artist-in-Residence, Project Runway alum Asha Ama Bias-Daniels**

*Exploring Black identity through fashion, Daniels will lead public programs, teach workshops, and visit schools across Greater Cincinnati April 12-26, 2021*

**CINCINNATI**—January 26, 2021—The Taft Museum of Art and the Robert S. Duncanson Society welcomes fashion designer Asha Ama Bias-Daniels as the 2021 Duncanson Artist-in-Residence, which will now take place annually each Spring.

Bias-Daniels is most widely recognized as the first Cincinnati designer to be a competitor on the television series Project Runway, a finalist on *Under the Gunn*, and as a returning contestant for the newest *All Stars* season. As a couture designer, Bias-Daniels is no stranger to runways, creating pieces for a diverse range of artists from Zendaya to Little Big Town and for her own line, Asha Ama.

The Cincinnati native graduated as a FISC (Fund for Independent Schools, Cincinnati) Scholar from St. Ursula Academy and went on to study as a Cincinnati Scholar at the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning, graduating magna cum laude with a degree in fashion design. Daniel's designs include clothing for men, women, and children, as well as lingerie, swimwear, embroidery, draping, knitting, and tailoring. Her work for women possesses a duality: soft, rhythmic draping against pieces with an armored feel—protection for Black women. She incorporates ornate detailing, print mixing, strong lines, and cut-outs that accentuate curves in the female form. Bias-Daniels' latest creative endeavor is exploring a new collection with an emphasis on the meaning of the year 2020, focusing on the revealing truths of this year, and the topic of Black identity.

Bias-Daniels' impressive resume made her a top contender for this year's residency theme—fashion design— but for all Duncanson Artist-in-Residents, a commitment to community involvement is paramount. With a heart for mentoring and education, Bias-Daniels believes that her experience as a Black woman (often feeling misunderstood, stereotyped, and misidentified) can help her help others find their sense of self through fashion. Bias-Daniels is an active leader in this work as the founder of the mentorship program, Created to Create. Through this initiative, she teaches fashion design to Black underprivileged teenage girls in Cincinnati.

To learn more, visit [taftmuseum.org/duncanson-artist-in-residence](http://taftmuseum.org/duncanson-artist-in-residence).

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## About the Duncanson Artist-in-Residence Program

Established in 1986 by the Taft Museum of Art and the Robert S. Duncanson Society, this program honors the achievements of contemporary Black artists working in a variety of disciplines. The program honors the relationship between painter Robert S. Duncanson and his patron, Nicholas Longworth, who commissioned Duncanson to paint landscape murals in the foyer of his home, now the Taft Museum of Art. Asha Ama Bias-Daniels will be the 34<sup>th</sup> artist-in-residence through the program's long tenure. Residence sponsor: Ohio National Financial Services. Programming sponsors: Phyllis McCallum and Steve Jemison, Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

## Public Events & Features

For two weeks in April 2021, Bias-Daniels will lead public programs, teach workshops, and visit schools across Greater Cincinnati. Details to be announced.

For an early sneak peek, guests to the Taft Museum of Art will also be able to see a few examples of her work alongside the museum's upcoming exhibition, *Walk This Way | The Stuart Weitzman Collection of Historic Shoes*, opening February 27. Details to be announced.

## The Duncanson Society

The Robert S. Duncanson Society was founded in 1986 by Doris Rankin Sells, the late William Joel McCray, and Ruth K. Meyer to affirm an ongoing Black presence within the structure of the Taft Museum of Art, including the Duncanson Artist-in-Residence program, and to celebrate Robert S. Duncanson's artistic contributions.

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## About the Taft Museum of Art:

The Taft Museum of Art is a living landmark tucked away in downtown Cincinnati, where art and history lives on the walls—and *in the walls*. Built around 1820 as a private home for several of Cincinnati's most prominent citizens, the Taft Museum of Art is now one of the finest small art museums in America and holds National Historic Landmark status for its [historic house](#) and [Duncanson murals](#).

Throughout our 2001–2004 expansion, guests can also always enjoy special exhibitions, the historic outdoor garden, our Museum Shop and [Lindner Family Café](#), events and programming

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for all ages, and complimentary on-site parking. It is all under one roof, culminating in a one-of-a-kind, multi-sensory experience that puts you at the center of art and history.

For more information, visit [taftmuseum.org](http://taftmuseum.org).