

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Taft Museum of Art Announces 35th Duncanson Artist-in-Residence—Ajanae Dawkins—Writer and Performance Artist

Dawkins will lead public programs, teach workshops, and visit schools across Greater Cincinnati April 10–23, 2022

CINCINNATI, OH—January 25, 2021—After a nationwide call for artists, the Taft Museum of Art and the Robert S. Duncanson Society welcomes writer, performer, and educator Ajanae Dawkins, as the 2022 Duncanson Artist-in-Residence April 10–23, 2022.

The Taft’s Duncanson Artist-in-Residence was established in 1986 by the Robert S. Duncanson Society (founded by Doris Rankin Sells, the late William Joel McCray, and Ruth K. Meyer) to affirm an ongoing African American presence within the structure of the Taft Museum of Art. The program honors the relationship between African American painter Robert S. Duncanson and his patron, Nicholas Longworth, who commissioned Duncanson to paint a series of [eight landscape murals](#) in the foyer of his home, now the Taft Museum of Art. Dawkins will be ushering in the residency’s 35th year as a fitting prelude to the completion of the museum’s \$12.7 million [Bicentennial Infrastructure Project](#) (June 2022) which is ensuring the preservation of its prized National Historic Landmarks: the Taft historic house and the Duncanson Murals.

Dawkins has performed, and has been featured, at venues across the country including opening for the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and for the Taft’s first Duncanson Artist-in-Residence, poet Nikki Giovanni. Her work has been published in the *EcoTheo Review*, *The BreakBeat Poets Black Girl Magic Anthology*, *The Offing*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Winter Tangerine*, *The Blueshift Journal*, *Voicemail Poems*, *The Underscore Review*, *Word Riot*, *Gramma Poetry*, and other anthologies and journals. Dawkins’ work has also been featured on *For Harriet*, *Def Jam*, and *Button Poetry* and in *EBONY Magazine* for the “Faces of Frustration: A Year of Racial Protest.”

Dawkins has not only demonstrated her talent with numerous published and performed works but has garnered national recognition for her craft. Dawkins is the winner of *Tinderbox Poetry Journal’s* Editors Prize; a finalist for the Cave Canem Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Chapbook prize; and a finalist for the Brett Elizabeth Jenkins poetry prize. She is a two-time individual finalist for the Rust Belt regional slam, crowning her as one of the top five poets in the Midwest, twice. She was also a contributing writer for the Theatre LILA of Madison, Wisconsin.

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Currently, Dawkins is a fellow of The Watering Hole writer's retreat for African American writers and of Pink Door Writing Retreat. She is also an editor for *Voicemail Poems*, the 2020 Nancy Craig Blackburn Fellow as an MFA candidate at Randolph College, and an Alford Scholar as an M.Div. candidate at Methodist Theological School of Ohio.

For two weeks in April 2022, Dawkins will lead public programs, teach workshops, and visit schools across Greater Cincinnati. Details to be announced at taftmuseum.org/duncanson-artist-in-residence.

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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](#).

Residence sponsor: Ohio National Financial Services. Media support provided by *The Cincinnati Herald* and The Voice of Black Cincinnati.

Learn more at taftmuseum.org.