

# BLACK TRANS FUTURES





# Editor

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# Photographers

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THE ROSE HAT PHOTOGRAPHY

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To the Black Trans Futures graduating class of 2023-2024, we say thank you. We thank you for your participation, your wisdom, your heart for this work, and we thank you for your radical imagination. You are proof that there is a tomorrow. You all are proof that there is a Black Trans Future waiting on us that is full of promise, and we will see it in this lifetime.

Congratulations.



**TC CALDWELL**

**ARTS & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR  
TKO SOCIETY**

Reflecting on the journey of these past five months, I am truly moved by the strength of community. This experience has shown me the possibilities we can achieve collectively.

I am so grateful for everyone who supported this project and contributed to realizing its vision. Your belief in us is a living testament that together, we can effect meaningful change.

Creating this project was a deeply collaborative effort, made possible by the dedication of the Black Trans Futures fellows. Their courage in proudly being their true, authentic selves not only shaped this project but also deeply impacted my life. To each of you, I extend my heartfelt thanks for your trust, patience, support, brilliance, and the light you bring into this world.

**KAMILAH KENYATTA**

**GENDER JUSTICE & ORGANIZING FELLOW  
ACLU OF ALABAMA**



# CLASS OF 2024



**Black Trans Futures is an organizing and storytelling collaboration between the ACLU of Alabama and The Knights and Orchids Society. In a five-month paid training program Black and trans Alabamians develop community organizing and storytelling skills that combat the anti-trans rhetoric and legislation gaining ground in the legislature. In addition to the training intensive, we develop a storytelling campaign highlighting the everyday lived experiences of Black and trans folks living in Alabama.**

**In the second year of Black Trans Futures, we witnessed ten trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming Black Alabamians come together to build a better future. Over the course of the five-month program, they developed relationships with Alabama organizers, learned about the history of Black queer individuals, practiced self-care techniques to protect their well-being, became informed about legislation and issues relevant to the trans community, and expressed their identities through various mediums.**

# AI STAR

he/they

Ai Star has embarked on a bold journey in the South, discovering that strength lies in creating change from within. They've found that genuine transformation comes from building a supportive community where you are. Through a transformative fellowship, Ai accessed healthcare, hormones, and a supportive network that's become like family. Ai's dream is to create freedom and joy for Black trans individuals, envisioning a future where authenticity is safe, and love and acceptance are unconditional. They're passionate about ensuring access to good food, actively participating in local farming and supporting the community through various initiatives, from clothing swaps to promoting mutual care. Ai Star isn't just dreaming of a better future; they're actively making it a reality.





# BRONZIE DE'MARCO

she/her

Bronzie DeMarco is not just an entertainer; she's a trailblazing advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights, dedicating over five decades to the cause. As a Black trans woman, she has marched for equality with unwavering determination. Her message to youth is clear: stand firm, be proud, and demand respect and love. Bronzie envisions a future where belonging is unquestioned, advocating for equal rights and self-determination. Her work is a beacon of hope, symbolizing the fight for a world where everyone is seen and respected. She reminds us of the power of persistence and inspires others to carry the torch of change. In her words, being LGBTQIA+ means being "worthy of love, respect, and unapologetic in the pursuit of happiness."



# DAQUON ALLEN

**any pronouns**

DaQuon Allen's journey is a narrative of resilience. Growing up in a religious environment, DaQuon faced the challenge of reconciling their personal beliefs with the anti-LGBTQ+ teachings around them, all while maintaining an open-minded perspective. Unlearning and rediscovering their identity has been a challenging yet enlightening process. DaQuon now values living authentically, celebrating spaces and communities that embrace individuality. Their dream is a transformed Alabama, affirming and supporting Black TGNC individuals and the queer community. They advocate for queer rights, voting accessibility, and justice reform, countering anti-trans legislation through community education. DaQuon's creative spirit shines in fashion design, blending activism with expressive art, embodying hope and resilience for the future.



# KERRA CRUTCH

**they/them**

Kerra Crutch's journey as a Black gender-nonconforming individual is a deeply cherished and personal narrative. They felt a disconnect from traditional concepts of womanhood from a young age, yet they hold onto the unique sense of community and love found in Black womanhood as an integral part of their identity. Kerra sees their Blackness and queerness as inseparable, highlighting the complexity of navigating both gender and racial identities. They envision a future where Black trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals in Alabama can live authentically, free from the need to justify or alter themselves for others' comfort. Kerra's journey also involves ongoing self-discovery and understanding of their gender identity. They are passionate about improving Black mental healthcare, drawing from their own experiences with mental illness. Kerra aims to open a counseling practice dedicated to Black queer individuals, emphasizing the importance of accessible and empathetic care. In their free time, they enjoy creating niche playlists.



# PEYTON FULLILOVE

**she/they**

Peyton Fullilove is a passionate young advocate who values solidarity within the LGBTQ+ community, especially for those at the intersection of race and gender. As a Black lesbian, Peyton's journey of self-discovery and acceptance is deeply influenced by the strength of the Black trans community. They envision a future where Black trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals can live authentically without fear, promoting acceptance, equality, and addressing critical issues within the LGBTQ+ community. Peyton's commitment to building a more inclusive society is driven by their experiences and challenges faced by their friends. Outside of advocacy, Peyton finds joy in the circus.



# MAHOGANY TONEY

**she/her**

Mahogany Toney exemplifies resilience and transparency as a trans woman navigating life's challenges, using her journey to uplift herself and pave the way for others. Her story is a testament to rising above obstacles and transforming personal struggles into opportunities for community support and advocacy. Mahogany envisions a future where judgment is obsolete, and the trans community experiences progress, equity, and opportunity. She dreams of a world where respect, diversity, and basic constitutional rights are guaranteed for all trans individuals, promoting a society where everyone can live freely and authentically without fear of discrimination. Mahogany's advocacy focuses on improving access to care, particularly hormone replacement therapy and supportive services, through her role as the chair of the Gender Health Clinic in Birmingham. She also leads a support group for newly diagnosed trans women with HIV, extending mutual aid to Black trans individuals in need. Beyond her advocacy, Mahogany loves to sing.



# VALENCIA WASHINGTON

**they/she**

Valencia Washington is an artist whose identity is intricately woven into their work, reflecting the complexities of being a Black queer individual in the art world. Art is not just an escape but a vital form of self-care and spirituality for them. Despite facing challenges in finding acceptance and opportunities in a space often marked by curiosity or caution, Valencia uses art to assert control over their environment, especially coming from the rural South. They envision a future where individuals, especially in the Black and LGBTQ+ communities, can be their authentic selves without fear of vilification. Valencia is passionate about self-care and mental health awareness, emphasizing the mind-body-soul connection and aiming to uplift marginalized individuals. Their innovative spirit seeks to honor the legacy of Black creators who have found beauty in adversity. In their free time, they love to watch bad horror movies.



# SINSERITI BANKS

**she/her**

Sinseriti Banks' life as a Black trans woman embodies resilience and transformation. Despite facing early incarceration, homelessness, and engaging in sex work, she has navigated extreme adversity, including wrongful imprisonment and harassment, emerging as a fighter and advocate for social change. She envisions a future in the South with advocates for socio-economic change, better housing programs, mutual aid, and accessible gender-affirming care. Sinseriti hopes for an accepting Alabama with cleaner environments and supportive communities. Her passion for addressing the needs of marginalized individuals led her to dream of establishing a Pardon Reentry and Legal Program, clearing criminal records and improving opportunities. She also focuses on enhancing safety for those coming from domestic violence situations. Sinseriti shares her journey through her powerful voice, embodying resilience and hope.



# WYNTER BRISKER

she/her

Wynter Brisker embodies the struggle and beauty of living authentically as an African American trans woman in a world often resistant to difference. Finding strength in community support, she envisions a future where young people exploring their identities are met with love and acceptance rather than judgment. Wynter is passionate about preserving trans and queer history, emphasizing the importance of unity and collective strength to combat feelings of being overlooked. Her humor and outgoing personality contribute to her resilience and ability to foster connections with others.





# ZARIYA WILLIAMS

**they/them**

Zariya Williams shares a journey of struggle, joy, and pure love as a Black trans non-binary individual. They have found a strong voice in writing, advocating with pride since coming out. Zariya envisions a future of liberation and community solidarity, where the struggles of the Black trans family are lessened, and Black trans disabled individuals take on leadership roles. Their work with organizations like Hometown Action, Political Healers, and Yellow Hammer Fund focuses on healing and reproductive justice workshops. Alongside their advocacy, Zariya is a talented freelance photographer.



# **DAILY AFFIRMATIONS**

**I am allowed to be loud.**

**My thoughts and feelings matter.**

**I like me. I love me.**

**I am not perfect and that's okay.**

**Good things are coming my way.**

**I am doing my best, and that's good enough.**

**Today is going to be a great day.**

**I am capable of achieving my goals.**



Sinsерiti Banks launched the Prevent 2 Protect 2 Prevent initiative in 2018. This holistic project provides vital support spanning sexual health, mental well-being, and legal guidance. Despite facing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sinsерiti remains dedicated to expanding the initiative into a physical space that offers education, advocacy, and support, creating a comprehensive safety net. Their unwavering commitment to the community's welfare drives them, as they work towards a future where comprehensive protection is a reality for every trans and GNC individual, leaving a lasting legacy of empowerment and resilience.

# DID YOU KNOW IT'S POSSIBLE TO DIE OF A BROKEN HEART?

**BY KERRA CRUTCH**

Upon hearing this not-so-fun fact from a friend in middle school, I had a haunting yet familiar feeling that it would be my ultimate demise. I inherently assumed it would be a romantic endeavor to shatter my heart, but the realization of it possibly being from the world surrounding me became clear as I grew older. I was a very “sensitive and emotional” child, and those traits have followed me throughout my entire life despite hating the labels as a kid. I felt that these labels were just a bandage that was slapped onto my identity to make it easier for people to get away with not taking the time to truly understand me. In my adulthood, though, I see these labels as strengths, and they help me to find joy and beauty in places I wouldn't find otherwise.

One of the main places I've recently found joy is within my Black Trans Futures family. Young me had such a difficult time pinpointing what made it so difficult to feel seen by others, and it made me wonder if I would ever feel truly at home with anyone. Though I have many friends from before BTF who are intentional with how they show their presence in my life, it was a refreshing experience to receive it from a group of people with whom I share similar experiences in navigating both race and gender. The sense of effortless community and understanding that filled the room during our meetings was something I had never thought I'd be able to witness. I'm forever grateful to have had this opportunity with such lovely people, and I'm so excited for the next class of BTF fellows to have their time in this incredible program. To my Black Trans Futures family, I can't thank you enough for helping young me to mend their broken heart.

# SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

BY PEYTON FULLILOVE

In a world where colors dance and intertwine,  
Our joy gleams, a radiant sign.  
Somewhere over the rainbow, a space we find,  
Where love blooms freely, and souls entwined.

Amidst the shadows, where acceptance may wane,  
We create a haven, our own joyous terrain.  
Beyond the spectrum of doubt and dismay,  
Harmony blossoms in a vibrant display.

In hues of courage, our true selves unfurl,  
A tapestry woven, an affirming swirl.  
Over the rainbow, where dreams dare to soar,  
Hope whispers "We are worth more."

Red as the heartbeat, unyielding and strong,  
Orange, a warmth where we truly belong.  
Yellow, a sun beam, breaking through the night,  
Through unity, we find our own light.

Green, the growth of self-love takes hold,  
Blue, a calm sea where our stories are told.  
Purple, a spirit that rises above,  
In the melody of life, we're wrapped in love.

So, somewhere over the rainbow, our spirits take flight,  
In hope, we find our respite.  
A celebration of life, love, and being,  
In this colorful haven we're forever freeing.

In the canvas of existence, we boldly paint,  
A portrait of harmony, where love has no restraint.  
Beyond the rainbow, where dreams align,  
Black queer joy sparkles, forever divine.

**HONOR  
THY**

**ANCESTORS**



# HERSTORY OF A BLACK TRANS WOMAN

**BY MAHOGANY TONEY**

Here is a Herstory of a Black Transwoman, intertwined between two worlds that desperately need each other to survive, yet cannot cohabit at the exact same moment in time. Mahogany is a woman whose previous world was accustomed to being riddled with pain and trauma. After losing her mother to a volatile mix of alcohol and substance abuse addiction, she found herself masking emotions with an active sex addiction, just to cope with all the pain. Unknowingly, she was spiraling out of control, falling into the arms of even more strife named HIV, which threatened to devour her and suck all the life out of her – sinking to rise no more, or so she thought.

After sitting in that eerily uncomfortable, necessary clinic room and seeing that poster detailing all the ways HIV could be transmitted into the body, she began to live again. She knew she had to do it; it was time to transcend into her new world and write a new narrative for herself. As she educated herself about her diagnosis and learned all she could, she stepped out into the world to advocate not only for better health but for a better sense of regaining the right to live. Bit by bit, she began to pull herself up by the passion buried so deeply inside her. She didn't know her own strength, but now she was discovering it had been right there all along.

As she grew within her transition and broke barriers in that realm, simply by deciding to be authentically herself, she continued on her self-defined pursuit of happiness, no longer living for others' approval. This journey truly made her the inspiring Black Trans advocate she is today. Now, her world is filled with meaningful purpose and pure intent, because her passion created her purpose, and her purpose made room for her passion.

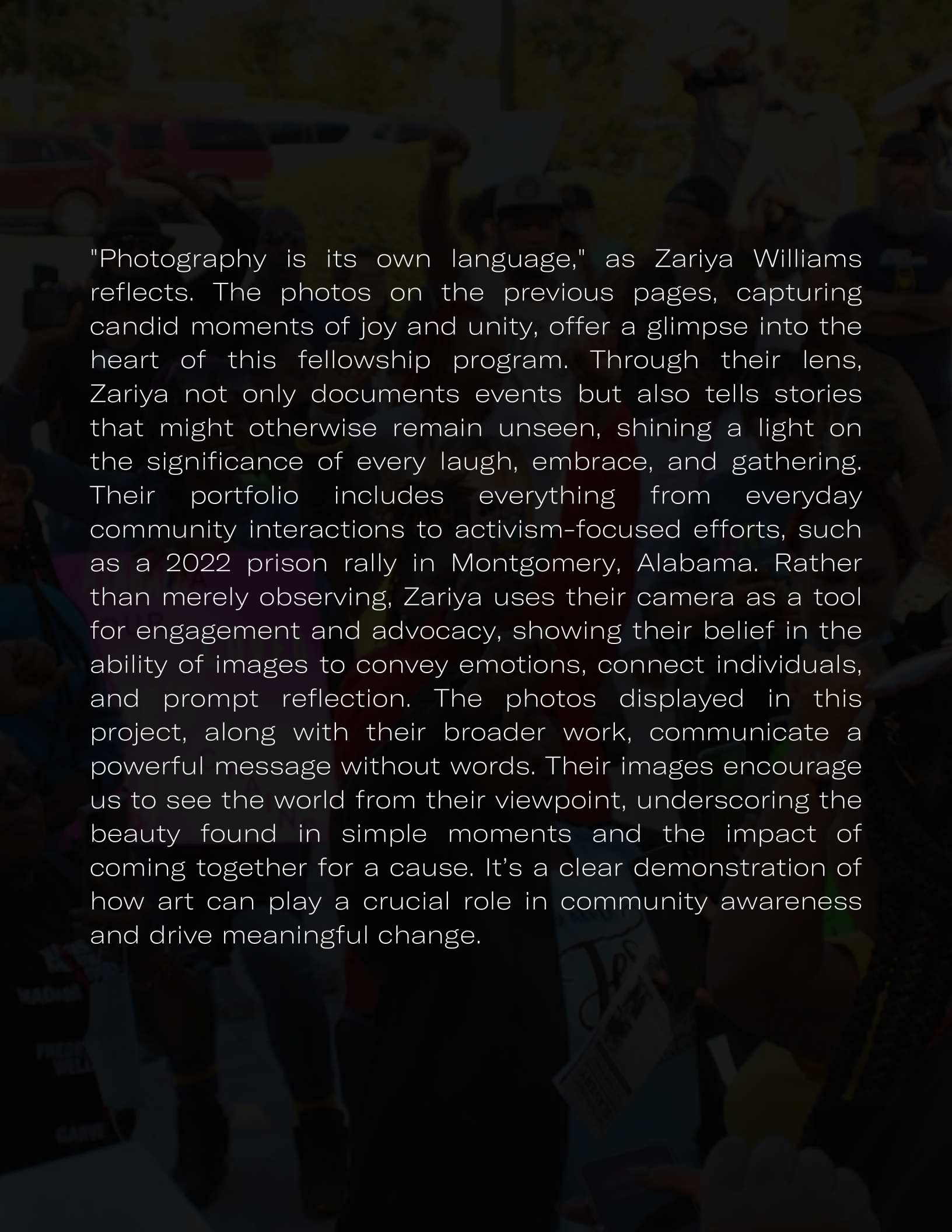
She is me, and I am she. I am on the road to eternal gladness, one day at a time, one step at a time. The journey of a thousand miles is most trying, but the reward of liberation makes it all worthwhile in the end.

So, my question to you today is: What world will you choose to live in?









"Photography is its own language," as Zariya Williams reflects. The photos on the previous pages, capturing candid moments of joy and unity, offer a glimpse into the heart of this fellowship program. Through their lens, Zariya not only documents events but also tells stories that might otherwise remain unseen, shining a light on the significance of every laugh, embrace, and gathering. Their portfolio includes everything from everyday community interactions to activism-focused efforts, such as a 2022 prison rally in Montgomery, Alabama. Rather than merely observing, Zariya uses their camera as a tool for engagement and advocacy, showing their belief in the ability of images to convey emotions, connect individuals, and prompt reflection. The photos displayed in this project, along with their broader work, communicate a powerful message without words. Their images encourage us to see the world from their viewpoint, underscoring the beauty found in simple moments and the impact of coming together for a cause. It's a clear demonstration of how art can play a crucial role in community awareness and drive meaningful change.

GIVE

US

OUR

FLOWERS

BY VALENCIA WASHINGTON



**FOR  
THOSE  
WHO  
WALKED**



BY DAQUON ALLEN AND WYNTER BRISKER









# THANK YOU, MISS MAJOR.

We extend our deepest gratitude and honor to Miss Major, a beacon of hope and resilience for our community. Her unwavering commitment to the fight for trans rights and advocacy for marginalized voices has left an undeniable mark on us all. Meeting Miss Major, in collaboration with the ACLU of Georgia, was momentous for Black Trans Futures, reinforcing the importance of our mission. As we move forward, we carry her spirit with us, committed to the fight for justice and equality with the same tenacity and love she has shown throughout her life. Thank you, Miss Major, for being a trailblazer, mentor, and unwavering support; your impact is immeasurable, and we are honored to continue your passionate work.



# THIS IS BLACK HISTORY IN-THE-MAKING.

As we turn the page on another chapter of Black Trans Futures, we can't help but feel a sense of pride and optimism for what lies ahead for us in Alabama. We've come together, shared our stories, and found strength in our shared experiences. It's this bond, this unspoken understanding and support, that makes us confident about our path forward.

We've seen change, slow but steady, and it's change that we've driven. It's in the conversations we've sparked, the awareness we've raised, and the community we've built. We're not just dreaming of a better future; we're laying the groundwork for it. Each of us, in our own way, is contributing to a shift in how the world sees and treats the Black trans community.

Looking ahead, we see us continuing to grow stronger. We see us taking up more space, unapologetically, in all spheres of life. There's a future where our voices aren't just heard but are influential, where our rights are not up for debate but are a given. That's the future we're moving towards, step by step.

It's about more than just fighting for rights; it's about living our lives to the fullest, in a place that we call home. It's about the small joys, the everyday victories, and the simple freedom to be ourselves. We're building a future where the next generation of Black trans individuals in Alabama can look back and say, "They did this for us."

So, let's keep pushing forward, with the same determination and hope that's brought us this far. We're not just imagining a better tomorrow; we're creating it with every action we take, every story we share, and every moment we live authentically.

Thank you to Raquel Willis, Carmarion Anderson-Harvey, Courtney Haskin, Kris Wells, and Joshua Baker for sharing your knowledge, time, and energy with us. You've truly helped shape this program.



We've prepared a special form with a QR code below. It's a chance for you to share your messages, thoughts, or words of support. Whether it's a simple greeting, a meaningful reflection, or a message for someone special in our program, your words will make our community's dialogue even richer.







**ACLU**  
Alabama



**THE  
KNIGHTS &  
ORCHIDS**  
*Smith*