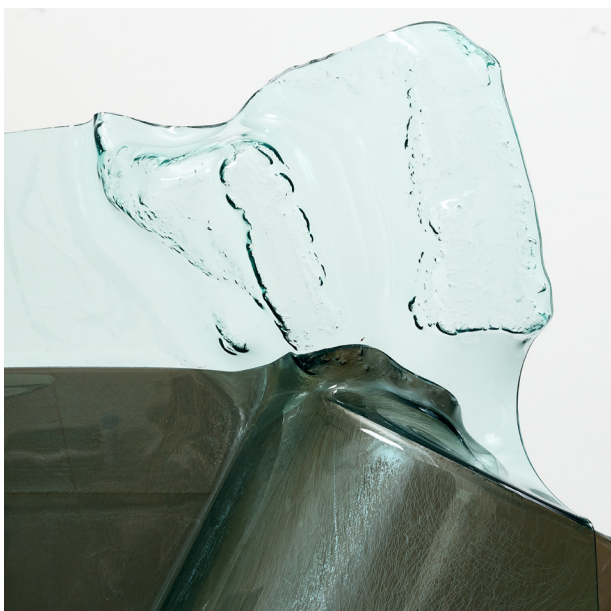


# MOSS ARTS CENTER

SPRING 2025  
EXHIBITION

## STUDY GUIDE



### **CHARISSE PEARLINA WESTON**

*I saw the room but darkly dreamed it...*

*Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and  
Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery*



### **SHAUNTÉ GATES**

*This Is Not a Test*

*Ruth C. Horton Gallery*

Thursday, January 23-Sunday, March 30

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*The Moss Arts Center would like to thank each of the artists and their respective galleries for providing these images for our educational resources. For more information about each artist, visit the links and additional resources in the guide.*

Cover: (left) Charisse Pearlina Weston; *hallucinatory field (one)*, 2024 (detail); slumped and fused Mirropane and Solax glass panels etched with text, cast concrete, lead, epoxy, and frit; 53 ½ x 37 x 20 inches; © Charisse Pearlina Weston; image by Joseph Krauss; courtesy of the artist and collection of Courtney Sherrer

(right) Shaunté Gates; *The Four Huntresses II*, 2023 (detail); acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, charcoal, ink, and collage on wood panel; 24 x 48 x 3 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York



## ABOUT THE MOSS ARTS CENTER GALLERIES

The Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech provides transformative arts experiences to young people through gallery tours, artist engagements, and special school-day performances from renowned touring artists for young people, teachers, and families.

Explore exciting new opportunities to connect with the arts through exhibitions and study guides created especially for young audiences. Contact us to register for a gallery tour and to sign up for emails to learn more about the Moss Arts Center's PK-12 programs.

### **Plan Your Visit**

#### **Gallery Hours**

Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-5 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

*(during exhibition run dates)*

Admission to the galleries is always free and open to the public. The Ruth C. Horton Gallery is located downstairs in the Moss Arts Center near the Alumni Mall entrance. The Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery are located upstairs near the Turner Street entrance. Find parking information [here](#).



## WE WANT EVERYONE TO **ENJOY THE EXHIBITION**

Please prepare your students for their visit to the Moss Arts Center by practicing museum manners. The following guidelines will ensure that everyone can enjoy the exhibition.

- Always stay a safe distance away from each work of art to keep the art untouched for all viewers.
- If you want to rest and observe, you can sit on the benches or floor (watch out for gallery walls and pedestals, as these aren't meant to be leaned against).
- Food, gum, and beverages are not allowed inside the galleries.
- Please remove backpacks and place them in a safe place away from the art.
- Use only pencils when writing or drawing in the galleries.
- Photography is allowed, but please do not use a flash.

### **We're Here to Help**

Please reach out to schedule a visit or for questions about teaching, learning, and engaging with our programs.

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# SHAUNTÉ GATES

*THIS IS NOT A TEST*

*Ruth C. Horton Gallery*

*Suitable for students in grades PK-12*

## **About the Exhibition**

Shaunté Gates (b. 1979) Washington, D.C.-based artist Shaunté Gates' solo exhibition features a survey of mixed-media paintings and densely layered works that combine photography, painting, collage, and found materials, resulting in surreal, dreamlike compositions that merge portraiture, landscape, and architecture.

▲ Shaunté Gates; *Josh and the River*, 2023; acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, pastel, and collage on wood panel; 48 × 72 × 4 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York



## Artist Statement

Growing up in and around public housing projects during the “war on drugs,” Gates witnessed how mythologies produced social constructs, imagination, and the limits therein inform our reality. Friends and family are often the photographed figures transfigured into a half-animal form or other motifs of mythology. They appear concurrently ancient and futuristic, exploring themes of duality, religion, introspection, and escapism.

“I see these works as allegories of spiritual and psychological resilience, where I imagine the scenes I create as labyrinths of social constructs.”

— Shaunté Gates

## Biography

Shaunté Gates lives and works in Washington, D.C. Gates trained in traditional oil painting and representational portraiture early in his career. His experience as a tattoo artist and television editor and motion graphics artist with BET Networks caused a profound shift in his artistic practice. Gates was a participating artist in the Smithsonian Institution’s *Men of Change* four-year traveling exhibition (2019-2023), spanning 10 museums, including the California African American Museum, Cincinnati Underground Railroad Museum, and Washington State History Museum. He has many public art commissions from schools throughout D.C., including *Transcending*, a painting commemorating the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Howard University School of Law. Gates has been awarded the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Grant (2022) and residencies with the Nicholson Project (2023), Kennedy Center (2019), and Washington Project for the Arts (2018 and 2017). Gates has works in the collections of the Studio Museum in Harlem and Munson in Utica, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *In Light of the Hunt* at Sperone Westwater (New York, 2023) and *Poppies & Parachutes III: We Should Be Flying by Now* at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery (Paris, 2024).

▲ Shaunté Gates; *The Four Huntresses II*, 2023; acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, charcoal, ink, and collage on wood panel; 24 × 48 × 3 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York

## Helpful Terminology

**Caste:** A division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race.

**Duality:** The quality or state of having two different or opposite parts or elements.

**Escapism:** The use of art to distract from current situations and immerse the viewer in an alternate reality.

**Introspection:** Examination of and attention to your own ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

**Mythology:** A body of traditional stories, legends, and beliefs that explain the origins, values, and worldview of a particular culture or group.

**Symbology:** The study or interpretation of symbols.





# CHARISSE PEARLINA WESTON

*I saw the room but  
darkly dreamed it...*

*Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery*

*Suitable for students in grades PK-12*

## **About the Exhibition**

Charisse Pearlina Weston (b. 1988) features an installation of mixed-media paintings and glass and concrete sculptures presented on custom plinths emerging from the site architecture.

## **Artist Statement**

Weston writes, "Central to the artistic methodology is the reuse and re-articulation of materials." From photographs of past installations or fragments of discarded glass, Weston formulates "yet another representation of meaning's capacity of shatter [...] These reoccurrences develop into new forms that represent the ways in which repetition is both a symbol of black cultural production and its reliance on an order of temporal engagement in which the second time encodes an emergent originality."

— Charisse Pearlina Weston

▲ Charisse Pearlina Weston; *at the same velocity, the same altitude*, 2024 (detail); slumped Mirropane panels, laminated glass panel, and casted concrete; 60 x 24 x 10 ½ inches; © Charisse Pearlina Weston; image by Joseph Krauss; courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York and Patron Gallery, Chicago



## Biography

Charisse Pearlina Weston (b. 1988, Houston, Texas; based in Brooklyn, New York) is a conceptual artist who works across sculpture, writing, installation, and photography. Her work utilizes techniques such as concealment, repetition, and enfoldment and posits Black interior life as a central site of Black resistance.

Weston holds a bachelor of arts from the University of North Texas, a master of science in modern art: history curating and criticism from the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh College of Art, and a master of fine arts in studio art from the University of California-Irvine. She is an alumna of the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program.

Weston was awarded a Creative Capital Award in 2024, was an artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and was named a 2023 Jerome Hill Fellow and a 2023-24 Hodder Fellow at the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. She was also awarded the Burke Prize by the Museum of Art and Design in 2021. Recent solo exhibitions include the Project Row Houses and the Moody Center of the Arts at Rice University (Houston), as well as the Queens Museum (New York).

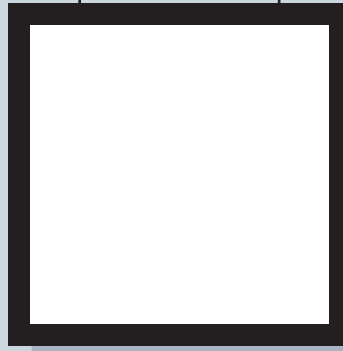
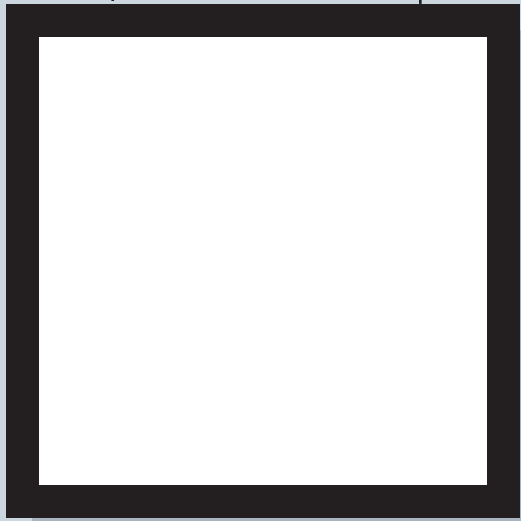
## Helpful Terminology

**Conceptual art:** Art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object.

**Conceal:** To place out of sight.

**Enfold:** To closely hold or completely cover someone or something.

**Temporal:** Lasting only for a time; transitory; temporary, not eternal.



## Activities in the **GALLERIES**

### *Where in the World?!*

Shaunté Gates' work plays with the idea of psychogeography: how you feel about places you know. You can see how he feels from colors, textures, and images he implements in his collages, as well as from the expressions of his characters. Can you create a world that portrays one of the feelings below?

#### **FEELING BANK**

- Fear
- Happy
- Sad
- Disgust
- Brave



► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** K.1, K.4, K.14, 1.1, 1.4, 1.14, 1.17c, 2.1, 2.4, 2.14, 2.17, 3.1, 3.4, 3.14, 4.1, 4.4, 4.14, 4.17, 5.1, 5.4, 5.14

# Imagination Station

Shaunté Gates' work is a mix of fantasy (fiction) and reality (non-fiction). Select one fiction object and one non-fiction event and see you can blend them together in a drawing!

FICTION	NON-FICTION
Invisibility Coat	Eagle
Dragon	Butterfly
Batman	Dog
Unicorn	The Sun
A Magical Castle Under the Sea	A School Field Trip

## DRAW IT!



► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** K.1a, K.14, K.17, 1.14, 1.17, 2.3a, 2.17, 3.3, 2.14, 2.17, 3.17, 4.3a-c, 4.17, 5.3c, 5.17



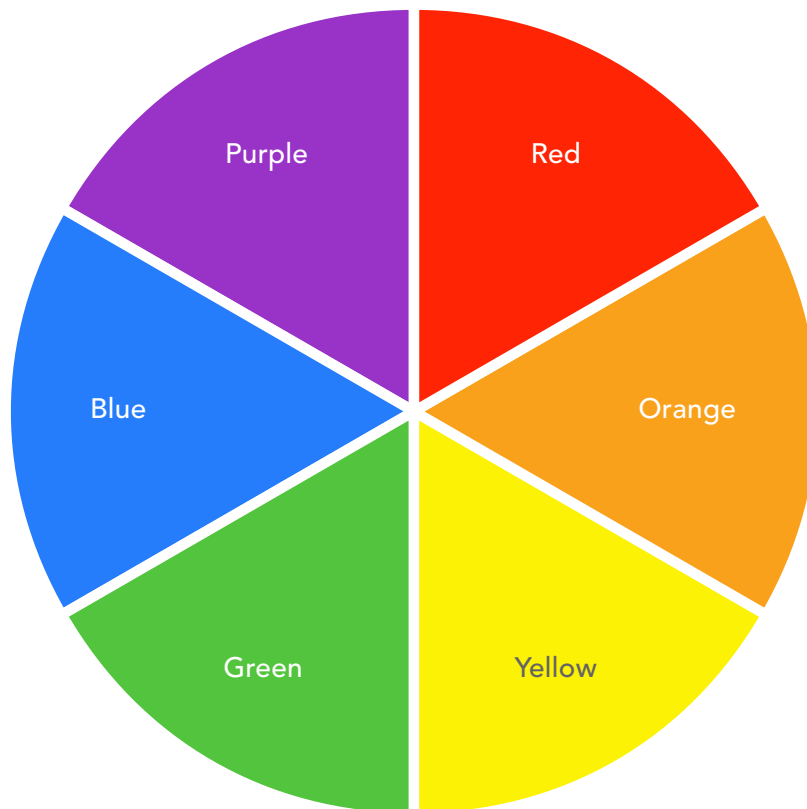
# Color Theory

Charisse Pearlina Weston uses color theory in order to blend the glass colors in her sculptures. How many colors can you make? Fill in the blanks below and see how many you get correct! Use the color wheel below for assistance.

Blue + \_\_\_\_\_ = Purple

Yellow + \_\_\_\_\_ = Green

Red + \_\_\_\_\_ = Orange



► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** K.8, K.10, K.12a, 1.10, 1.12a, 2.10, 2.12a, 3.10, 3.12a, 4.12a, 5.12a

Answer Key - Page 19

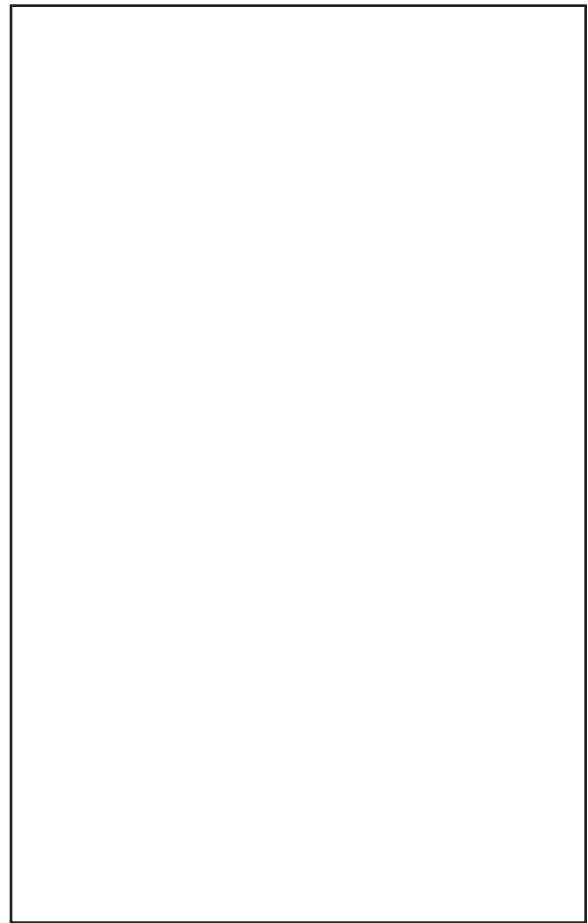
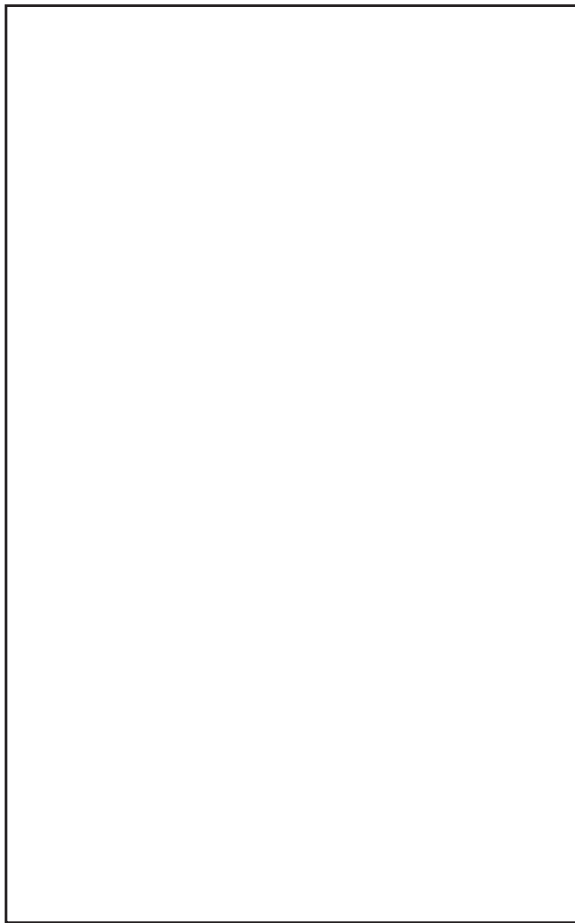
# The Broken Window Theory

Charisse Pearlina Weston’s work heavily explores the Broken Window Theory. This criminology theory suggests that visible signs of disorder in a community can lead to more disorder. For example, the theory uses examples of small issues — like vandalism, broken windows, and littering — as catalysts for an environment where larger crimes can occur.

Think about a place you know that feels disordered or, sadly, neglected, like an empty lot, an old school playground, or an abandoned building. On one side of the study guide, draw a picture of this “disordered” place (use scribbles, tear the paper, or make messy shapes).

Now, on the other side of the paper, draw that same place with small acts of change (like fixing broken windows, adding plants, or cleaning the area). How can you make positive changes in your community like the ones you are drawing today?

## DRAW IT!



► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** 4.7, 4.11, 4.17, 5.7, 5.11, 5.17, 6.1, 6.11, 7.1 7.11, 8.1, 8.11

# Gallery Bingo

Take a look in the galleries to find qualities in the works that can be matched to each square. To win bingo, you must find five horizontal, vertical, or diagonal squares in a row. Cross the squares off with your pencil as you find them.

B	I	N	G	O
Art with shapes 	Art or artist with the first letter of your name 	Art with animals 	Art with your favorite color 	Art you love 
Art with a pattern 	Art that looks cold 	Sculpture art 	Art that looks very light 	Art that looks bumpy 
Art with two similar things 	Art that looks very heavy 	<b>FREE</b>	Art that looks warm 	Art with a LOT of colors 
Art that makes you want to move 	Art that looks like it took a long time to make 	Art that is very small 	Art that reminds you of a song 	Art with a story 
Art that makes you think 	Art that is light or dark 	Art that makes you happy 	Art that is very large 	Art that makes you sad 

► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** K.3a - c, 1.3a - c, 2.3a - b, 3.3a - c, 4.3a - c, 5.3b - d, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3c - f, A1.3a, A11.3b, A111.3d, A1V.3b



# Activities in the **CLASSROOM**

## *Fragments of Me*

Begin by introducing Charisse Pearlina Weston and her captivating use of glass to explore themes of concealment and identity in her art. Engage students in a discussion about how Weston’s work reflects cultural themes and the complexities of personal identity.

Ask students to consider what personal characteristics represent their own identities or cultural backgrounds. Encourage them to jot down words, phrases, or symbols on sturdy construction paper, allowing for a range of expressions that resonate with their experiences.

Distribute drawing utensils, scissors, glue, printed images (from photos, magazines, or newspapers), construction paper, and various clear plastics (such as kitchen cling wrap, Ziploc bags, or transparent film). Instruct students to create layered collages on colored construction paper, using the clear plastic as an overlay for the words and images they wrote earlier. Explain that this “glass” symbolizes concealment, reflection, and fragility — key elements in Weston’s work.

Finally, allow students to share their collages with the class, explaining the meanings behind their choices. This will foster a rich discussion about identity, cultural themes, and the role of materials in expressing personal narratives.

► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** 3.1, 3.3c, 3.13, 4.1, 4.12e-f, 4.13, 5.1, 5.12b, 5.13

# The Myth of Me

Begin by immersing students in the vibrant world of Shaunté Gates through a Notice-and-Wonder activity.

Looking at several examples of Gates' collages, **notice:**

- The innovative use of diverse materials that reflect cultural identities
- How Gates embodies the concept of the *Land of Myth*, using everyday objects and symbols to weave rich stories of heritage and belonging
- How the use of specific colors, textures, and shapes convey deeper meanings and narratives



*Shaunté Gates; Cobalt Is Red, Poppies Are Too, 2023; acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, pastel, collage on wood panel; 48 × 96 × 4 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York*



*Shaunté Gates; The Four Huntresses II, 2023; acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, charcoal, ink, and collage on wood panel; 24 × 48 × 3 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York*



*Shaunté Gates; Josh and the River, 2023; acrylic, photo, pulled paper, colored pencil, pastel, and collage on wood panel; 48 × 72 × 4 inches; courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York*

Now, it's time for the students to **wonder**:

- What cultural backgrounds, traditions, and values shape identities?
- What personal symbols or myths resonate with my experiences?
- What objects or images remind me of my family or heritage?
- Are there stories or legends from my culture that inspire me?
- How do these elements define my personal narrative?

With reflections in mind, encourage students to dive into the creative process of making their own collage. Use a wood panel or sturdy cardboard as the canvas for each student and prompt them to begin layering a variety of materials — fabric, photographs, magazine cutouts, and natural elements — to craft a visual representation of their personal mythology.

Remind students there are no strict rules in art; they can explore different textures and shapes, drawing inspiration from Gates' style. As they layer materials, encourage reflection about how each piece adds depth and meaning, mirroring the complexity of their own identity.

Once collages are complete, set up student artworks for a vibrant gallery walk. As they move through the space filled with stories and expressions, encourage reflection on each piece, considering the cultural symbols and personal narratives represented.

► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** 6.1, 6.4, 6.10, 6.13, 7.1, 7.4, 7.10, 7.13



## Reflections of Resistance

Introduce Charisse Pearlina Weston's innovative use of glass, focusing on themes of resistance and identity. Discuss how glass symbolizes both fragility and strength, encouraging students to consider these concepts in their own lives.

Have students research the significance of glass in various cultures, especially in relation to identity and resilience. Each student will write a brief concept statement about their sculpture idea, reflecting on themes of concealment and strength.

Students will design and build their sculptures using glass-like fragments, including plastic bags, cling wrap, CD and DVD discs, reflective tape, and other translucent or shimmering materials. They should incorporate elements of layering or repetition in their designs to symbolize the complexities of identity.

After completing their sculptures, each student will present their work, discussing their materials, the symbolism behind their pieces, and their connection to Weston's themes. Facilitate a discussion on the intersection of materiality and identity in art.



*Charisse Pearlina Weston; pyrolytic envelop I (into the bright and distributed subject side), 2024; text etched on slumped and folded Mirropane surveillance glass and concrete; 51 ½ x 22 x 14 ½ inches; courtesy of the artist and Dr. Charles Boyd*



*Charisse Pearlina Weston; at the same velocity, the same altitude, 2024; slumped Mirropane panels, laminated glass panel, and casted concrete; 60 x 24 x 10 ½ inches; © Charisse Pearlina Weston; image by Joseph Krauss; courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York and Patron Gallery, Chicago*

► **VIRGINIA VISUAL ARTS SOLS:** AI.1a - b, AI.2, AI.13, AII.2, AII.13, AIII.2, AIII.13, AIV.2, AIV.4, AIV.13

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**PAGE 12 ANSWER KEY:** Blue + Red = Purple, Yellow + Blue = Green, Red + Yellow = Orange