

Baring our soles

Written by Christina Garner
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“Nobody knows my story and nobody’s walked in my shoes,” are the words that came to Verlene Green’s mind when a friend asked her to attend the Sister Stories Shoe Project a few weeks ago at the Minnesota African American History Museum.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” said the 57-year-old Minneapolis Public Schools assistant principal. But Green was intrigued when her friend told her that they would be sharing their shoe stories.

Sister Stories Shoe Project is a four-part art series workshop sponsored by Obsidian Art. The project gives women the opportunity to bare their souls through art, which happens to take on the form of a shoe.

“We’re trying to acknowledge the weight that women have to carry as they walk the world,” said Roderic Southall who works with both Obsidian Art and the Minnesota African American History Museum.

“Going with the theme of migration,” said the 45-year-old “we thought we’d take shoes, have women in conversation about stories of their lives and transition and create an art exhibition from it.”

Led by visual artist and Minnesota native Ester Osayande, women shared their stories and created distinct shoes that visually shared their past, present and future. The heel of the shoe represents the past, life lessons learned to shape the present are the body of the shoe and the future is the toe.

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