

Tonika G. Johnson

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BIOGRAPHY

Tonika Johnson is a photographer/visual artist from Chicago's South Side neighborhood of Englewood. She received her BA in Journalism & Photography from Columbia College Chicago in 2003 and her MBA from National-Louis University in 2005. In 2010, she helped co-found Resident Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E), whose mission is to "mobilize people and resources to force a change in Englewood by identifying barriers, addressing them while promoting positivity through solutionbased approaches" and now she serves as its full-time Program Manager. She was featured in Chicago Magazine as a 2017 Chicagoan of the Year for her photography of Englewood's everyday beauty, countering its pervasive media coverage of poverty and crime. Her "Everyday Englewood," images were exhibited at Loyola University's Museum of Art (LUMA) earlier this year. Her multi-media project, *Folded Map* that shows the disparities among Chicago residents while bringing them together to have a conversation was also exhibited at LUMA July 3rd to October 20, 2018.

WEBSITE: www.tonikaj.com

GRANTS + FELLOWSHIPS

- 2017 – City Bureau Photography Fellow (Summer)
- 2016 - City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Individual Artists Program (IAP) Grant
- 2013 - Magnum Foundation's SEE POTENTIAL Project Fellow Chicago, IL

EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 (Summer) – *Folded Map*, Loyola University Museum of Art, Featured Artist, Chicago, IL
- 2018 (Spring) – *Everyday Englewood*, Loyola University Museum of Art, Featured Artist, Chicago, IL
- 2017 (Oct.) - *Alter Call: The Architecture of Black Sacred Space*, RootWork Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2017 (August) - *Shoot Your Shot: Evolution of Chicago's Street Art + Culture*, RootWork Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2017 (April – June) – *From the INside*, Harold Washington Library Featured Artist, Chicago, IL
- 2017 (Feb.) – (New Work) *Everyday Rituals*, RootWork Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2017 (Feb-April) – *Chicago: Places, People & Possibilities*, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
- 2016 (Oct. 15) – *From the INside*, First Annual Englewood Art Fair featured artist, Chicago, IL
- 2016 - *Urban Geographic*, N'Taaya Dream Boutique at La Petite Cremerie de Paris Paris, France
- 2014 - *Urban Geographic*, featured artist at Kusanya Cafe Chicago, IL
- 2011 - *Black Pearls Exhibition*, Garfield Park Arts Center (GPAC), Indianapolis, IN
- 2011- *WBEZ 3rd Annual Winter Block Party for Chicago's Hip-Hop Art*, Chicago Urban Arts Society Chicago, IL
- 2010 - *Urban Geographic Experience (Solo Exhibition)*, The Movement Studios & Gallery Chicago, IL

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- July 24, 2017 – Photographer for WBEZ's Every Other Hour "In Verse" photo-poetic-crime reporting series

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2014

- Academy for Global Citizenship, Chicago Photography Teaching Artist (Dec.- March 2015)
- Pilsen Elementary Community Academy, Chicago Arts & Literacy in Action Afterschool Program Teacher (Oct.-Dec.)
- Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School, Chicago Digital Photography Teaching Artist (Jan.-June)

2013

- *Johnson Elementary School, Chicago Introduction to Photography Teaching Artist, (Jan.- June)*
- *Hearst Elementary School Photography Teaching Artist, (April-June)*
- *Pilsen Elementary Community Academy, Chicago Photography Teaching Artist, (Aug.-Dec.) 2012*
- *Hearst Elementary School Arts & Cultural Connections After-School Program, (Aug.-Dec.)*
- *Tilden Career Academy High School Photography Teaching Artist, (June)*
- *Gregory Elementary School Photography Teaching Artist, (Feb.-May)*

PRESS

Oct. 15, 2018 - Bad At Sports, “Tonika Johnson & Natasha Ritsma Bring Englewood to the Magnificent Mile”
Sept. 16, 2018 - ABC 7’s Sunday Morning News, “Folded Map project puts Chicago’s Inequities on Display”
Sept. 4, 2018 - ABC 7’s Windy City Live, “Folded Map Project Capturing the Division of the City”
Sept. 25, 2018 - Sixty Inches From Center, “Tonika Johnson Uses Visual Activism to Combat Distorted Truth”
Sept. 12, 2018 - Loyola University, “Where North meets South”
 Sept. 10, 2018 - A Beautiful Perspective, “In racially divided Chicago, ‘map twins’ break down barriers”
 Aug. 30, 2018 - WBBM NewsRadio, “Newsmaker Making a difference: Tonika Johnson, Folded Map Project”
 Aug. 30, 2018 - CITYLAB, “ ‘Map Twins’ Bridge the Gap in a Segregated Chicago”
 Aug. 26, 2018 - Chicago Magazine, “Tonika Johnson Bridges Neighborhoods to Break Down Walls of Segregation”
 Aug. 26, 2018 - LensScratch, “Yvette Meltzer on Tonika Johnson”
 Aug. 14, 2018 - VICE, “These Powerful Images of Chicago’s South Side Are Filled With Love”
 Aug. 14, 2018 - Next City, “Chicago Segregation Mapping Project Makes Real-Life Connections”
 Aug. 7, 2018 - WGN Radio Cornerstore Podcast, “Tonika Johnson: Documenting Englewood”
 July 5, 2018 - ABC 7 Eyewitness News, “Art exhibit looks at Chicago segregation in a new way”
 June 20, 2018 - Backseat Rider, “Tonika Johnson changing Chicago one map at a time”
 June 8, 2018 - Newsy, “Artist’s Folded Map Project Aims to Break Down Cultural Barriers”
 May 26, 2018 – U.S. News & World Report, “Chicago Photographer’s Project Shows Disparities in the City”
 May 23, 2018 – WBEZ’s Morning Shift, “Folded Map Project Addresses Segregation in Chicago”
 May 22, 2018 – The Chicago Tribune, “Bid to bridge a segregated city”
 May 21, 2018 – Chicago Sun-Times Online, “Activist’s art project analyzes Chicago’s segregation in Folded Map project”
 May 12, 2018 – WGN’s Outside The Loop radio show, “The Folded Map Project”
 Mar. 1, 2018 – National Geographic, “MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora”
 Jan. 24, 2018 – The JAM TV, “Englewood: Through An Artist’s Lens”
 Jan. 4, 2018 – Columbia Journalism Review, “Lens of an Insider: Photographer defies media portrait of Chicago Neighborhood”
 Dec. 2017 – Chicago Magazine, “2017 Chicagoans of the Year”
 Nov. 28, 2017 – Windy City Live, “Chicago Magazines Chicagoans of the Year 2017”
 Aug. 2017 – Chicago Reader Arts & Culture Feature, “Englewood: Beyond the Headlines”
 July 2017 – WTTW Chicago Tonight, ‘Englewood Rising’ Campaign a ‘Reflection of What Already Exists’
 Mar. 2017 – The Establishment, “The Role of Photography in Resisting Trump and Racism”
 Feb. 2017 – Vocolo (91.1FM), Featured artist on Morning Amp
 Feb. 2017 – FOX 32 Good Day Chicago, “Tonika Johnson examines “Everyday Rituals” in Englewood
 Feb. 2017 – FOX 32 News (8pm), “Chicago Artist Captures the Reality and Beauty of Englewood”
 Jan. 2017 – South Side Weekly, Englewood Through My Lens Photo Essay (<http://southsideweekly.com/>)
 Dec. 2016 – N’DIGO, Featured Photographer Photo Essay
 Nov. 2016 – Northwestern’s Social Justice News Network, Englewood Through My Lens Essay & Photos
 Aug. 2011 - Published essay “Remembering the Wonder Years,” Chicago Reader, By: Tonika Johnson
 Mar. 2011 - “Journalism Program a Study of Perceptions,” Chicago Tribune, By: Joel Hood

COMMUNITY WORK

2017 – Present

Program Manager for Resident Assc. Of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.)

The Resident Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.) is a grassroots organization whose guiding principle is that the key to improving Englewood is activating more residents to be involved with positive change. Today, R.A.G.E. boasts nearly 300 members however, in November 2010, R.A.G.E. was founded by a collective of 13 residents with Asiaha Butler at the helm. R.A.G.E.’s overarching mission is to convene residents, Englewood’s public officials, business owners, and other organizations to strategize, build their power, promote healing, create community solidarity and tangible solutions while actively serving as a credible source for critical information about Englewood.

2013 - 2017

Program Manager for Growing Home, Inc.

Growing Home is an organic urban farm in Englewood that offers 25 hours per week of paid on-the-job experience and job-readiness training plus the support to conquer issues like criminal records, medical needs, child-care, and housing. Each year Growing Home, Inc. start 40+ people on the path to self-sufficiency and uses their unique model to impact neighborhoods with the greatest need. That’s why its farms are located in Englewood, a community on the South side of Chicago that has been

under-served for decades and has extremely high rates of unemployment and poverty, hundreds of acres of vacant lots, and a distinct lack of healthy food choices.

2011 - 2012

Co-Founder & Lead Teacher

MEDIA-N-MOTION MNM) is free, 8 week, youth journalism program for youth in Englewood. During two, two-hour sessions each week for two months, Media-N-Motion created and implemented a news writing & reporting curriculum for three cohorts of 15 middle to high-school students. MNM utilized a variety of effective and professional teaching techniques and methods to assist students in attaining the performance objectives of Media-N-Motion. MNM's culminating project included a newsletter, written by the youth and a student showcase. Reporter Joel Hood wrote a feature article about Media-N-Motion in the March 02, 2011 issue of the Chicago Tribune titled "Journalism Program : A Study Of Perceptions by Joel Hood.

2010 - Present

Co-Founder of R.A.G.E.

Resident Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.) is a resident-driven association established to build relationships with fellow residents, Englewood's public officials, business owners and organizations. R.A.G.E. is a grassroots organization that strategizes to address community problems, creates tangible solutions and actively seeks ways to keep fellow residents informed about the latest news in Englewood, Chicago. R.A.G.E. is the voice speaking out to empower, educate, uplift and motivate fellow residents and stake holders on many of the issues that face the community. R.A.G.E.'s main focus areas are Education/Youth Development, Economic Development and Civic Engagement & Empowerment in the Greater Englewood neighborhood.