

# Arts Organizations and COVID: Albright Visual Arts Organization (AVAO)

By Thania Inoa De Jesus '21

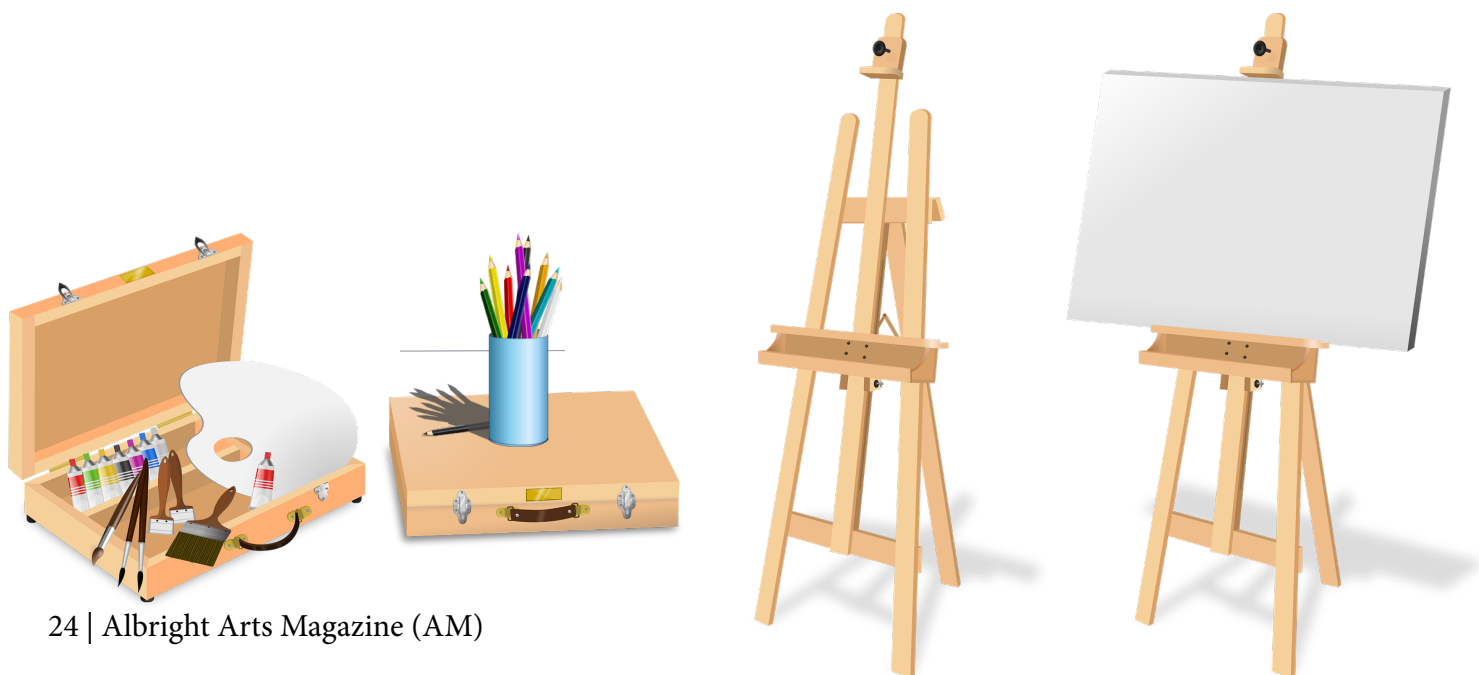
During the Fall 2020 semester, the executive board of the Albright Visual Arts Organization (AVAO) have been working towards future programs for current members. The president, Dallas Roberson, has been keeping students up to date with any gallery shows, or arts events going on campus. However, things have been more difficult than they seem.

"I do not feel like I can effectively do my job from home," she said. For her things have been more challenging as she is currently out of campus and is staying home for the fall semester.

COVID-19 has made things very difficult for the organization. AVAO is a hands-on organization, which makes it difficult for them to follow through with their programs, which they cannot do due to social distancing. While the officials are not happy with the situation, they have made sure to work

towards a more organized next semester. AVAO was able to have an event alongside the Hispanic Culture Club where participants were able to paint and share their experiences as Latinos/Hispanics with one another. "The event was a great success," says Thania Inoa De Jesus, the organization's vice president.

Currently the executive board members are looking for ways to continue to provide a space to create art in a safe manner, be more inclusive in the work that they do and to navigate doing the physical things with restrictions. They are all working hard to ensure that in the future everything is set and ready to go. In addition, to prepare for future fundraising, the executive board members have been working on future designs for stickers, so be on the lookout for those!



# Arts Organizations and COVID: Students of Caribbean-African Association (SOCAA)

By Deborah Afolabi '21

The pandemic has caused a lot of issues and needed adjustments for organizations on campus. The need for social distancing and the shift to online has disrupted many programs and leadership of organizations on campus have had to rethink how they run their clubs. This shift has especially been difficult for arts-based organizations who rely on the hands-on experience their clubs require.

The Students of Caribbean-African Association is one such organization that has been impacted by COVID-19. In addition to regular meetings and events, the club also has a dance team, and all of these aspects have had to be rethought to fit with social distancing guidelines. The new president of the organization was willing to answer some questions regarding how the organization is doing this semester.

## Is SOCAA still active this semester?

Yes, SOCAA is active this semester, at least we tried our best to be.

## If so, in what capacity? Are you doing more or less of what you'd originally do?

We attempted to have online club meetings and we were approved for one event; however, it was canceled due to the recent increase of cases on campus. This would've been our only event this semester because the process for in-person events is so extensive and dumb.

## What events has SOCAA been able to do/been part of this semester?

Part of the SOCAA dance team was able to participate in AAS's fashion show.

## How has COVID and the new restrictions affected the organization?

No one likes Zoom and finding a time when people would participate in the club meetings is annoying. Additionally, student Zoom accounts only allow for 40-minute meetings

and our meetings usually run longer. It would be great if club presidents, at least, could be provided with unlimited meetings like the professors. Secondly, the process for applying for in-person events is extensive, especially when the advisor or another staff member must be present. I feel like clubs are not taken as seriously, especially when compared to Greek life and clubs run by professors/adults on campus. Katy Mangold has been a huge help and the college is trying to move in a way that supports African American clubs on campus but honestly, SOCAA has always been overlooked.

## What do you wish could be done differently/better to help your organization flourish in the future?

I started to touch on this earlier, but I feel like the college as a whole needs to have a lesson on black and Caribbean cultures in general since I feel like that is a big reason why our events get denied or shut down. I think there should be more black leaders on campus and in administration, and for Albright to actually listen to its students. The college would be better if the leaders were more open to the possibility of being able to learn something from its students.