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**“MELTING POINT” Exhibit Opens September 5
at Tai Sophia Institute’s Himmelfarb Gallery**

Laurel, MD (August 24, 2009) – “Melting Point,” recent works by Baltimore-area artists Laura Vernon-Russell and Kini Collins, opens September 5, 2009, in the Himmelfarb Gallery at the Tai Sophia Institute. **An artist reception, which is open to the public, will be held Thursday, September 24, 2009, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

The common elements that unite the two artists’ work is the use of beeswax and the love of visible artistic process in finished artwork. Vernon-Russell is presenting encaustic paintings, and Collins is presenting 40 small, mixed media prints.

(Note to Journalists: Digital images are available by request.)

Artworks from the show will be on sale through The Meeting Point bookstore, which is adjacent to the gallery. Visit the Himmelfarb Gallery online at www.tai.edu/Himmelfarb.aspx.

“Melting Point”

Recent Works by Laura Vernon-Russell and Kini Collins

September 5 – November 27, 2009

Himmelfarb Gallery, Tai Sophia Institute

7750 Montpelier Road, Laurel, MD 20723

Artist reception: Thursday, September 24, 2009, 5:00–8:00 pm

Regular Himmelfarb gallery hours are:

Monday–Thursday: 8:00 am–7:00 pm

Friday: 8:00 am–5:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am–4:00 pm

Call 410-888-9048 for additional weekend hours. The gallery will be closed November 26-27.

About the Artists and the Artworks

Although exploring different themes in “Melting Point,” the common elements that unite these artists is their love of visible artistic process in finished artwork and their use of beeswax. The point at which the wax melts (is transformed from solid to liquid) is the point at which it becomes useful to the artists. After repeated applications, the wax eventually hardens in a new solid form, thus completing the cycle. This concept of transformation is an underpinning of each artist’s work.

Vernon-Russell's new encaustic paintings derive from her experiences of environmental energies, movement, and change of season. Underlying drawings are hidden by melted beeswax mixed with pigment and are then revealed by scraping and re-melting the wax. This process produces artifacts of shape and pattern that are integral to her decisions about composition and color. Some of her most intense responses to the natural world are to the fractal patterns and movements of tree branches, leaves, and water in wind; the movement of schooling fish and flocking birds; the patterns left behind in the sand and mud by retreating tides. She combines photo-transfer with encaustic drawing on her emotional responses to the landscape, in the moment. Her photographs and photographic digital prints can be seen at galeriemichelle-online.com/lauravernonrussell.aspx and secondstightdc.com/Photographers/LauraRussell.html.

Collins will present approximately forty 4"x 6" mixed media prints created in response to transformative moments in her life. The size of the work is intended to mimic family snapshots. Birth, death, loss of mobility and physical function, as well as observation of the natural aging process will form the foundation for this body of work. The prints are multi-layered images, painted with wax, charcoal and pastel, and then "skinned" with a final coat of wax. Her artworks can also be seen at www.1448.org/artists/collins/portfolio and www.thebevelededge.com/art/mixedmedia/collins/collins.htm.

About Tai Sophia Institute

Tai Sophia Institute, a private, nonprofit organization based in Laurel, Maryland, is a center for wellness-based education, client care, and public policy discourse. Founded in 1975 as a small healing arts clinic, the Institute has evolved into a diverse resource providing graduate academic programs, continuing education, community wellness programs, and clinical services in acupuncture, nutrition, and herbal medicine. Its 12-acre main campus also houses a bookstore, a library, and herb and meditation gardens.

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