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'Black Panther' passes \$1 billion at global box office

The Civil Rights Museum is a Hidden Jewel in Watts

By Shirley Hawkins  
Contributing Writer

Many Los Angelenos might be surprised to know that the Watts Labor Community Action Committee in Watts houses a fascinating Civil Rights Museum filled with colorful murals, historic photos and lifelike images.

Tourists who first stroll the seven-acre grounds of the non-profit organization founded by community organizer Ted Watkins and now operated by his son Tim Watkins are greeted by the Mother of Humanity, a 16-foot bronze statue created by sculptor Nigel Bens. Draped with a scarf shaped like the continent of Africa, the statue was inspired by the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion.

Attendees are then shepherded into the replica of a slave ship, the actual facade from the movie The Amistad where lifelike statues of captive Africans stare balefully from the bowels of the darkened vessel. It is a moment to recall the ancestors who survived the perilous trip to America



as well as those who lost their lives crossing the Middle Passage.

A colorful mural depicting community heroes and painted by artist Elliott Pinkney features Billy Mills, Yvonne Braithwaite-Burke, Tom Bradley and many others.

Attendees then enter a rustic site de-

picting Meridian Mississippi, the birth place of WLCAC founder Watkins, who had fled the South in his youth to avoid a lynching.

Tourists viewed a dusty abandoned car which symbolically represented the vehicle driven by James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, three civil rights workers

who had traveled South to register blacks to vote. The missing trio spurred an extensive search by the FBI but were later found to have been murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in June 1964.

A replica of an early southern '50s diner is prominently displayed

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Menthol Cigarettes The Unknown Women's Health Problem

This year, Women's History Month comes at a pivotal time – women's voices and stories are being heard and lifted up in a way they never have before. This opportunity should be celebrated, and gives us a chance to see history in new ways – including stories about things that impact women's health.

Many may be surprised to know that one of the most critical health issues facing women today are menthol cigarettes. They are a key reason why lung cancer is actually the leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the U.S. In fact, almost twice as many women die from lung cancer than breast cancer, even though breast cancer is more prevalent. Legendary African American singers, Mary Wells and Sarah Vaughan, had their voices silenced too early and suffered health related issues caused by smoking cigarettes. Mary developed cancer of the larynx because of her smoking habit. She smoked two packs of cigarettes a day, lost all of her finances to expensive cancer treatments, and suffered with cancer until she died of pneumonia at age 49.



A longtime smoker, Sarah developed lung cancer and carcinoma of the joints in one hand. Sarah's amazing contralto voice became huskier after years of smoking, and she died at the age of 66. It's important to understand the history behind menthol cigarettes. They were actually created by tobacco

companies specifically for women. For decades the tobacco industry advertised and marketed them intentionally and directly to women by showing images of group fun, freedom, and glamour in their marketing. Unfortunately, it worked. Women are nearly twice as likely as men to smoke menthol cigarettes, and more

than 50% of menthol smokers are women. In California, 70% of African American adult cigarette smokers smoke menthol cigarettes compared to only 18% of white adult cigarette smokers. Research shows that menthol cigarettes are actually worse for the user

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# Gomorra's New Crime Boss Q & A

*By Quanda R. Graves*

Tell me a little about yourself?

I was born in Italy and I started to travel at an early age. After spending some years in L.A., I'm now at the moment living in the north of Germany, Hamburg with my wife and twins. My background in acting comes from studying with different teachers from the Actors Studio. As you know, I was ordained in 2001 in the Zen soto tradition and I should also mention another school that shaped my education, the Gurdjieff's teaching, which I followed in Rome, Los Angeles and London. I love to train in boxing as an amateur, to keep myself alert!

- When reading about you I found something quite interesting, to my understanding you're guided and deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism. Can you tell me how you manage this with entertainment being known as somewhat a chaotic business?

To answer your question I would say: it is the opposite of what many people think. A chaotic business like



experience and this matches with the craft of acting and storytelling. I like to mention that I founded a Company - "Research Company art and

"O' Sharmant" from the French word (charmant) - enchanting, glamorous.