

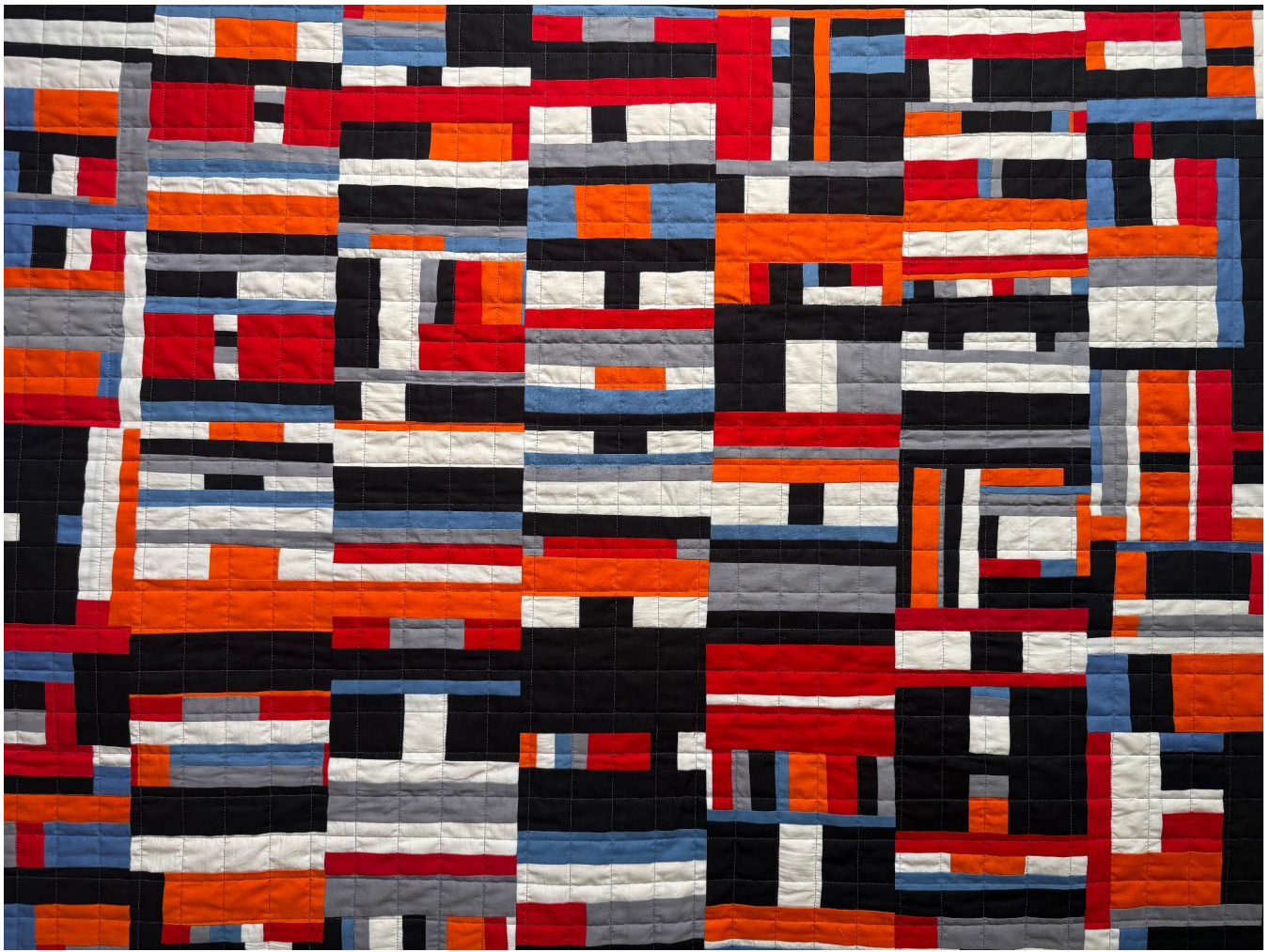
LEEDY-VOULKOS ART CENTER

Legacy Artist

EST. 1985

Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin





Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Inner Colour Movement

June 5 - July 25, 2026

Back Gallery

Colour is an identifier; it dictates perception without conversation. Through movement, negative space, and layered surfaces, colour reveals, disrupts, and transforms reality

—Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Inner Colour Movement explores the relationship between colour, movement, rhythm, and presence through layered surfaces, negative space, and the creative language of cloth. Through solid fields of colour and movement-inspired forms, the Inner Colour Movement examines how it influences the way we think, feel, and communicate colour.

Rooted in emotional presence, the work exists between stillness and motion — where fabric becomes gesture, colour becomes vibration, and cloth becomes a vessel of memory, atmosphere, and sensation. Influenced by rhythm, sound, breath, and movement itself, each work reflects unseen emotional frequencies carried within the spaces it inhabits. Colour is used in many ways, metaphorically, emotionally, and politically — carrying meanings that often exist beyond language itself. Negative space always functions in silence.

Within the exhibition, colour is approached, not as visual experience, as an emotional presence — shaping connections. Inner Colour Movement invites viewers into an immersive environment where abstraction, movement, and colour exist as living forces — revealing powerful ways colour rules our lives in everything we do, feel, and say.



Studio

As an artist, I translate light into colour and sound, carrying each design in my mind until I find the exact piece of fabric that belongs within it. My process is guided by pure intuition, there is no formality to the way I work; every choice is made through emotional resonance. I hold Colours, textures, and patterns in my memory, waiting for the moment when they align with the vision I am creating.

My work is a movement of memory, sensation, and instinct. Colour becomes rhythm. Fabric becomes language. The act of making becomes a dialogue between what is seen and what is felt. Drawing from a gift of emotional literacy, I create intuitively, allowing memory, experience, and feeling to guide each decision. Rather than following prescribed rules, I trust the emotional connection between colour, texture, and form.

A single colour can evoke comfort, excitement, reflection, or joy. A familiar sound can transport us across decades in an instant. These elements surround us everyday, quietly shaping our experiences, influencing our environments, and enriching our understanding of the world. To engage with colour and sound is to engage with forces that move beyond words-forces capable of awakening memory, inspiring creativity, transforming space, and revealing deeper layers of our humanity. Their power is ever-present, whether we consciously acknowledge it or not.

Do we truly understand the power of colour and sound? Perhaps not as fully as we imagine. Colour affects us far more than we often realize. It has the ability to influence mood, memory, perception, and even the way we move through a space. Sound carries a similar power, shaping emotion, atmosphere, and experience in ways that are both immediate and deeply personal. Together, they form an invisible language that speaks directly to our emotions, memories, and imagination.



Community Dignity represents the connection between the police and the neighboring community, measuring 30-feet by 16.5-feet.

Leon Jordan Precinct Campus, Kansas City, MO

Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin is a renowned fabric artist known for her work using vibrant colours to explore the reality of human space. Through layered forms and movement-inspired compositions, her work reflects the relationship between memory, sound, and existence.

Her artwork has been exhibited and she has conducted workshops at museums and cultural institutions including the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Spencer Museum of Art, the Sloan Museum, the American Craft Museum, the Holter Museum of Art, Spiva Center for the Arts, and International Quilt Market.

Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Spencer Museum of Art, Museum of Kansas City, and the 21c Museum Hotel Collection. Her public art can be found at Pembroke Hill School Hall collection, University Health (formerly Truman Medical Center), and the Leon Jordan Campus and Crime Lab.

Sonié is a two-time nominee for the United States Artists Fellowship and is a Charlotte Street Visual Arts Fellow, Art Omi Fellow, Persimmon Creek Arts Fellow, Storyteller's Inc. Fellow, Kansas Governor's Choice Artist, Kansas Masters recipient, Alliance of Artists Communities Scholarship recipient, and a selected artist for Alvin Ailey's Race, Place & Diversity initiative. She is also a recipient of the Delta Sigma Theta Arts and Letters Award.

A founding member of the African American Artists Collective, Sonié served for eight years as Curator of the American Jazz Museum's Changing Gallery in Kansas City's historic Jazz District. She serves on the Museum of Kansas City Board and the Leedy Foundation Board.



LEEDY-VOULKOS ART CENTER





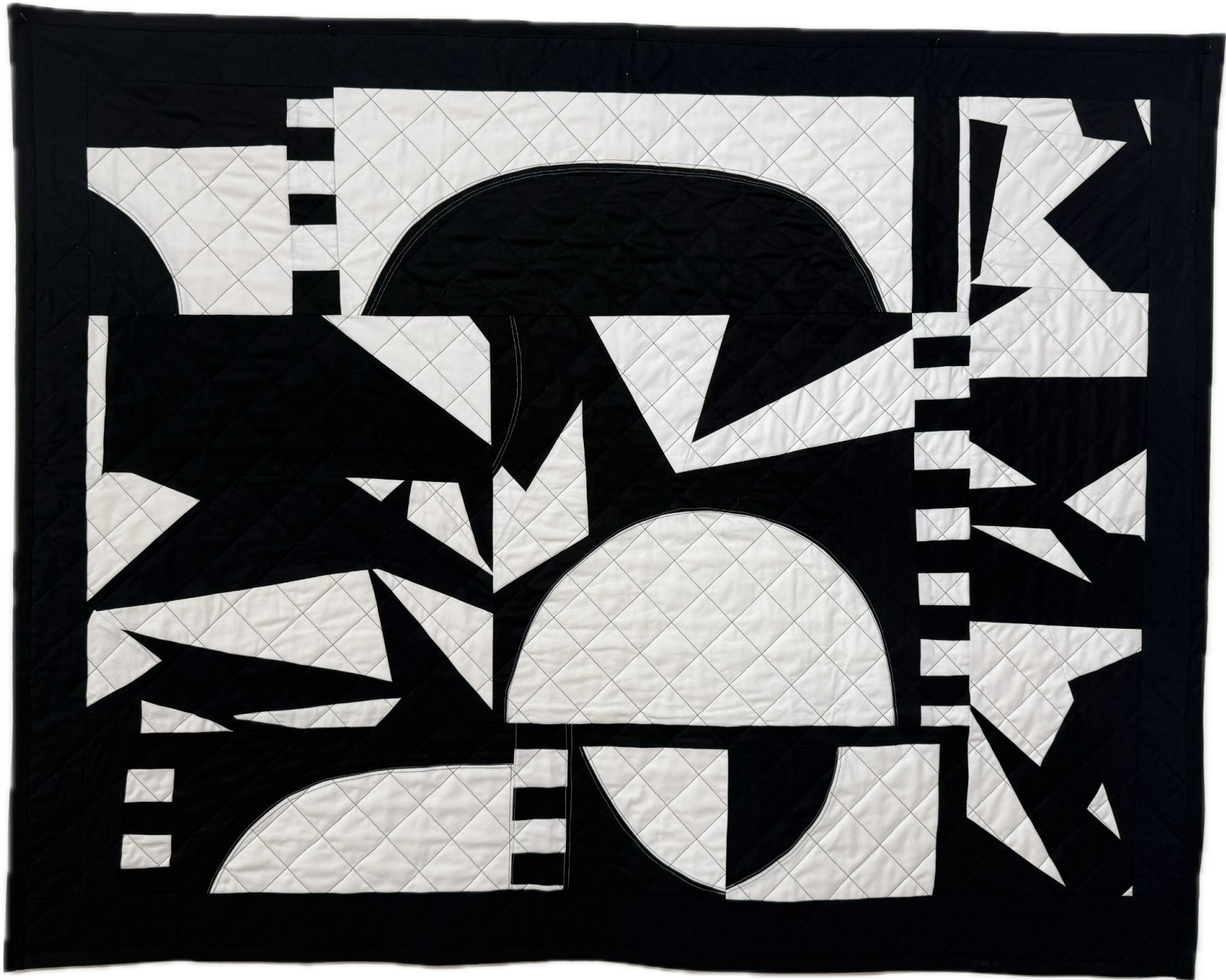
Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

41" x 52"

2025

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.



Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

54" x 42"

2025



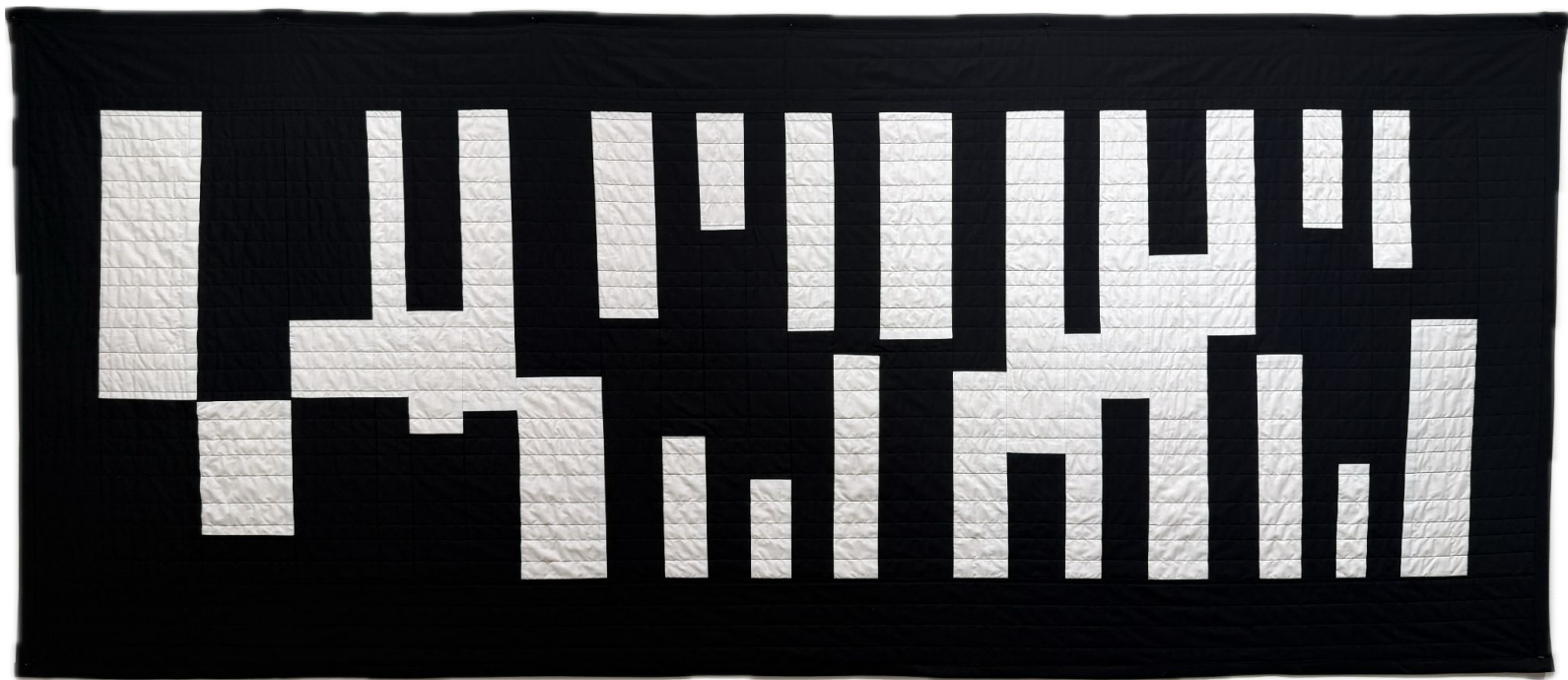
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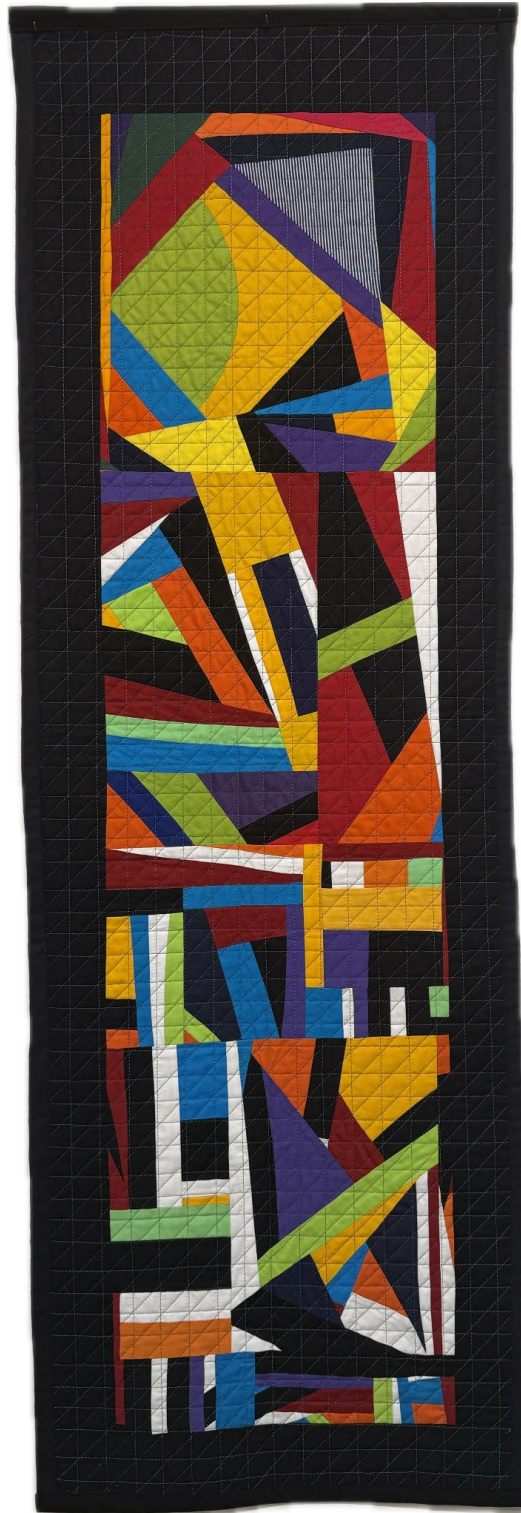
Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

91" x 39"

2026

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.



Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

54" x15"

2024

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.



Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

54" x 76"

2025

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.



Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

95" x 38"

2026

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.



Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin

Kona Cotton

65" x 34"

2026

For pricing and purchase inquiry, click on this link.

Black Keys in the Shadow of Negative Space

The black keys-F#, G#, A#, C#, and D# exist within the shadow of negative space, where absence becomes as important as presence.

Rising above the white keys, they form the pentatonic scale, one of humanity's oldest musical languages. Five notes. Five voices. Five pathways into harmony.

F# stands as the foundation, a reminder that every journey begins with a single vibration. G# reaches forward with curiosity and movement. A# carries the strength of expression, refusing to remain silent. C# introduces reflection and balance, while D# opens the door to possibility and transcendence.

Together, these notes create a sound that avoids conflict and embraces connection. They do not struggle against one another. They coexist. Their harmony emerges not from sameness, but from purpose.

The space between the notes is where their true power resides. Negative space is not emptiness; it is the sacred ground upon which meaning is built. It is the silence before prayer, the pause within a jazz improvisation, the breath that gives life to a classical masterpiece. Without that space, the notes lose their depth.

Within these five keys lives the spirit of countless traditions. The resonance of faith. The freedom of jazz. The structure of classical music. Each finds expression within the same pentatonic language, proving that different traditions can share a common foundation without losing their identity.

The black keys reveal a profound truth: what stands apart is not necessarily separate. What exists in the margins can shape the center. What appears small can carry the weight of history, culture, memory, and hope.

F#, G#, A#, C#, and D# are more than notes.

They are evidence that harmony is not created by filling every space.

Harmony is created by understanding the value of the space in between.

White Negative Space

White negative space is often mistaken for emptiness.

It is not empty.

It is the pause between thoughts, the margin around an idea, the silence that allows a voice to be heard. In a crowded world, white space performs a quiet act of resistance. It refuses competition. It creates order where chaos threatens to take over.

A page filled edge to edge with words becomes exhausting. The eye searches desperately for a place to rest. Introduce white space, and suddenly meaning emerges. The content has room to breathe. Attention becomes focused. Clarity appears.

White negative space communicates confidence. It does not need to shout. Luxury brands understand this. Museums understand this.

Architects understand this. What is left untouched often becomes more valuable than what is filled.

Psychologically, white space lowers tension. It slows perception and encourages reflection. It invites contemplation rather than reaction. The absence of visual noise becomes a form of communication itself.

White negative space teaches a profound lesson: more is not always more. Sometimes the greatest impact comes from restraint. Sometimes what is omitted carries as much meaning as what is present.

Its power lies not in what it contains, but in what it allows everything around it to become.

Representation

Colour holds a power that so many have yet to fully understand When you view these colors, you are viewing a heritage that not many people know about or fully appreciate.

Life is an experience shaped by struggle, strength, wisdom, hope, and achievement.

Together, these colors represent a rich cultural legacy that continues to inspire and connect people to their history and identity.

Gold - Achievement, success, prosperity, and excellence

Blue - Peace, unity, harmony, and trust

Green - Growth, hope, renewal, and connection to the land

Red - Sacrifice, resilience, struggle, and strength in the face of adversity

Black - Pride, wisdom, strength, identity, and heritage

White - Peace, goodness, purity, and spiritual values

Inner Colour Movement

Red is the color of energy, urgency, and emotion. It accelerates attention and demands recognition. Throughout history, red has been associated with power, passion, courage, and action. In design, red creates focal points and directs the eye immediately toward what matters most. It can communicate strength, excitement, and determination. Red reminds us that some moments require movement rather than hesitation. Its presence is bold, confident, and impossible to ignore. Sonio Joi Thompson- Ruffin

Inner Colour Movement

Blue is the color of trust, stability, and reflection. Like the sky and the ocean, it suggests depth and continuity. Blue encourages calm thinking and measured decisions.

Organizations often use blue to communicate reliability and professionalism because it creates a sense of confidence and security. Blue invites contemplation and balance. It demonstrates that strength does not always need to be loud; sometimes it is found in consistency, patience, and clarity. Sonio Joi Thompson- Ruffin

Inner Colour Movement

Yellow is the color of optimism, illumination, and possibility. It captures attention through brightness and warmth. Yellow is often associated with sunlight, learning, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. It energizes spaces and can inspire fresh ideas. When used thoughtfully, yellow communicates hope and opportunity. It serves as a reminder that innovation often begins with a spark of curiosity and the willingness to see the world from a different perspective. Sonio Joi Thompson-Ruffin