FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *JALEEL CAMPBELL: COMMON THREADS* EXHIBIT OPENS AT PDS SEP 4, 2026

Princeton, NJ – The Anne Reid '72 Gallery at Princeton Day School proudly presents *Jaleel Campbell: Common Threads*, opening on September 4, 2026, with a public reception from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibition features handmade dolls and illustrations by artist Jaleel Campbell.

Exhibition Dates: September 4 – December 1, 2026
Private Viewings*:* Contact annereid72gallery@pds.org
Media Inquiries: Contact Director of Communications Deanna Harkel, dharkel@pds.org



Forgotten Innocence, 2024, Digital illustration, 32x40 inches. Courtesy of Jaleel Campbell, 2026.

Common Threads brings together a selection of works by multidisciplinary artist Jaleel Campbell, whose practice spans illustration, textiles, sculpture, and storytelling. Across each medium, recurring elements of line, shape, and pattern reflect a practice rooted in memory, identity, and the enduring influence of play.

Presented at Princeton Day School, the exhibition holds special significance for Campbell, inviting him to reflect on his own childhood and the creativity that has shaped his life. Play remains central to his work, serving as both inspiration and a lifelong source of resilience.

The exhibition features Campbell's *Jalethals* dolls, a series of hand-sewn felt sculptures he describes as "little extensions" of himself. Inspired by his childhood love of dolls—and the shame often attached to that interest because of gender expectations—the *Jalethals* reimagine the doll as a gender-inclusive object that invites care, empathy, and belonging. Drawing inspiration from handmade cloth dolls created by enslaved women in the Americas, Campbell transforms the doll into an object meant to be cherished, existing somewhere between toy, sculpture, and heirloom.

Campbell's practice combines traditional craft with digital tools. He began sketching his first doll by hand in 2017, eventually refining the design in Adobe Illustrator, then cutting each piece out using a Cricut machine, and finishing by sewing every figure by hand, balancing precision with technique.

Storytelling is central to Campbell's work. Through a series including *In Secrecy* and *Feel That Funk* (2018), he explores Black queer identity, family lineage, and cultural memory. He also cites Virginia Hamilton's *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales* as a lasting influence on his artistic practice.

For the students who will experience *Common Threads*, Campbell hopes the exhibition affirms the value of creativity as a lifelong resource.

"When I was ten years old, I found comfort in making during a difficult time in my life. I learned how to crochet and began selling hats and scarves to my mother's co-workers at the Chrysler plant that she worked at, along with my classmates and teachers in school. Through every high and low point, the arts have been there for me. Creativity is a transferable skill—it can guide you for the rest of your life."

About the Artist: Jaleel Campbell (b.1995) is a Syracuse, NY-based artist whose work ranges from illustration, curating, directing, performing, and doll making. Jaleel attained his BFA in Visual Communications with a specialization in Graphic Design from Cazenovia College and his MFA in Media Arts & Culture from SUNY Purchase.