Letter From the Director

One of the many amazing things about life at The Studio Museum in Harlem is the opportunity my work provides to engage with our contemporary moment while being reminded, on an almost daily basis, of the wonderful legacy of so many of the Museum’s signature programs. I’ve been thinking quite a bit about “legacy” recently—about the strange and unexpected after-lives so many of our projects assume after we think they’ve made their final marks: and about the ways in which projects can evolve, take on new meanings and gain new audiences long after we consider them realized.

The Studio Museum’s series of “F” shows—a series that began early in my curatorial career at the Museum and has been taken up by our talented team of Assistant Curators—is just one example of a program that has grown in ways I could have scarcely expected. With the most recent exhibition in this series, Fore, the Studio Museum presents the work of twenty-nine emerging artists of African descent, each of whom provides challenging insight into contemporary art-making. I’m looking forward to seeing how this group of artists, like our previous “F” show alums, will continue to shape an important dialogue about the work of artists of African descent in the years to come.

I’m also incredibly proud that another of our signature programs, Harlem Postcards, is celebrating its tenth anniversary with an exhibition that brings together an astonishing collection of postcards created by contemporary artists that reflects the rich visual landscape and photographic legacy of the Harlem community.

I’ve been personally inspired because, in addition to showcasing artists of African descent on my Instagram account (instagram.com/thelmagolden), I’ve been compelled to post my own photos from in and around Harlem!

And one artist whose photographic work continues to have an impact on how we view and discuss Harlem’s past, present and future is Gordon Parks. It was my extreme pleasure to co-curate our exhibition in celebration of Parks’s centennial, Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967. This exhibition features an iconic collection of images, originally published in LIFE magazine, alongside some previously unpublished images by Parks.

Looking ahead to this spring, I’m thrilled that a work that was first presented in 1993 and is now a part of our permanent collection—Fred Wilson’s installation, Local Color—will be reinstalled in a presentation curated by Lauren Haynes. Also, the work of an artist interested in cultural legacy and African-American print culture, David Hartt, will be presented in an exhibition curated by Thomas J. Lax entitled David Hartt: Stray Light.

And finally, I look forward to another exciting year of original and inspiring programs. As always, I’ll see you around and definitely uptown!

Thelma Golden
Director and Chief Curator

Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders
What’s New

Recent Acquisition

Derrick Adams
Head #4, 2011
Museum purchase
with funds provided
by the Acquisition
Committee
12.21.1
Museum

What’s Up: Exhibition Schedule 05
Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967 06
A Similar Existence
Introducing the 2012–13 Artists in Residence
Harlem Postcards Fall/Winter 2012–13 14
Spring 2013: David Hartt in conversation with Thomas J. Lax and Thelma Golden
Spring 2013: Fred Wilson: Local Color 21

Beyond

Remembering Richard V. Clarke 25
Elsewhere 26
Book Picks 32
The Next Generation: Hugo McCloud, Kambui Olujimi and E.J. Hill 34
The Next Generation: Checking in with Senetchut Floyd, Ivan Forde and Kareen Dillon 38
A Beautiful Thing: Shinique Smith Shopper 40

Features

Fore: Made in 2012 42
dDOCUMENTA (13) 52
This time and place for art
Harlem Then & Now 58
Robert S. Duncanson and the Landscape Tradition 62
144 West 125th Street 64
Dancing Visual Art: An Interview With Dianne McIntyre 68

Studio Jr.

Coloring Page by Michelle C. Kane 71
DIY: Postcard Remix/Journey Journals 76
Lesson Plan: Image as Me/Layered Collage Project 78

Friends

Fall/Winter 2012–13 Opening Reception 81
2012 Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize 82
Gala 2012 84
Supporters List 86
Member Spotlight: Ryann Galloway 89
Members List 90
Membership Info and Form 94
Visitor Info 96
What’s Up? Exhibition Schedule

Winter/Spring 2013

Check studiomuseum.org for the latest on our exhibitions and programs

November 11, 2012–March 10, 2013
Fore
Harlem Postcards: Tenth Anniversary

November 11, 2012–June 30, 2013
Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967

March 28–June 30, 2013
David Hartt: Stray Light
Fred Wilson: Local Color
Assembly Required
Brothers and Sisters

Always on View
Harlem Postcards
Glenn Ligon: Give Us a Poem
Adam Pendleton: Collected (Flamingo George)
Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967
A Similar Existence

by Lauren Haynes, Assistant Curator

Like LIFE, I have received hundreds of letters and questions asking “what can I do?” The answer is far too big and complex for me to attempt: society must give its conclusions. I can only speak through personal experience.

—Gordon Parks

Gordon Parks’s interest in photography was sparked by seeing the work of documentary photographers working for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the late 1930s. Soon after purchasing his first camera in 1938, Parks gained acclaim for his portraits of African-American women while launching a career in fashion photography, shooting advertisements for a department store in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1940, at the suggestion of Marva Louis—wife of renowned boxer Joe Louis—Parks moved to Chicago to continue this career. While working commercially, Parks used his spare time to explore and photograph the South Side of Chicago, experimenting with the narrative documentary style that first drew him to the medium. Parks’s experiences on the South Side would eventually lead to a 1942 fellowship with the FSA in Washington, DC.

This fellowship would eventually help Parks become the first African-American staff photographer and writer for LIFE, the photo-centric weekly news magazine, where he worked for twenty years. Not only was his mere presence on the masthead a historically significant first, but Parks’s work also expanded notions of narrative photography.

In addition to photographs of actors, actresses and sports stars for LIFE, Parks accessed a side of America that many of the magazine’s other photographers did not. Some of his best known stories for the magazine were about social issues facing the country at the time, including poverty, racism and the burgeoning civil rights movement.

When “A Harlem Family,” Gordon Parks’s story about race and poverty in America featuring the Fontenelle family of Harlem was published in LIFE in March 1968, the response was overwhelming. Many people, touched and moved by Parks’s images and text about the Fontenelles, wanted to help. The editors of LIFE received letters and donations on behalf of the family from large cities and small towns across the country. Not all of the responses were positive; many echoed much of the debate and turmoil that was boiling in this country in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

One could imagine the Fontenelles’ story, in the hands of some other journalists, inspiring a range of reactions. But the breadth and depth of the responses to the story may have been so great in large part because of the way Parks told the story—a way that was accessible to many people across the country. Parks brought his unique perspective and his ability to become a part of people’s daily lives to the Fontenelle family’s story and his tenure at LIFE. Part of Parks’s ability and skill as a photojournalist came from his desire and hope to not exploit his subjects.

Catalogue excerpt

Published in honor of Gordon Parks’s centenary, the Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967 catalogue features beautiful reproductions from Parks’s original 1968 photo essay for LIFE magazine, as well as additional rarely seen images included in the Studio Museum’s exhibition Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967. Also published by Steidl in association with The Studio Museum in Harlem and The Gordon Parks Foundation, a division of the Meserve-Kunhardt Foundation, the catalogue also features contributions by Thelma Golden, Raymond J. McGuire and Peter W. Kunhardt Jr.

Limited copies are available for purchase in the Museum Store or at studiomuseum.org/shop!

Gordon Parks
Untitled (Harlem, New York), 1967
Copyright and Courtesy The Gordon Parks Foundation
Before embarking on the story of the Fontenelle family, Parks questioned if it was the right thing to do:

> During the weekend before I was to start work, the misery of the Fontenelles’ cold surroundings juxtaposed against the comforting warmth of my living room slowly got to me. I was sitting before my fireplace with a glass of wine, observing the smoldering logs. Suddenly I was hit with a discomforting thought; while a lifetime of beautiful moments awaited me here before my hearth, the Fontenelles would be imprisoned in their misery forever.

> Was I about to exploit their despair? I questioned my motives for the assignment. Then for several days I did something that would have been questionable to my colleagues. I went to visit the Fontenelles, but I left my camera at home. And it remained there until I brought in a turkey for their Sunday dinner. I longed to continue my generosity but there was also a job to do. The truth of their suffering lay ahead, and it would be terrifying and sorrowful.²

By spending a significant amount of time with his subjects, as both journalist and friend, and treating them as equals and collaborators, Parks was able to present narratives rather than snapshots, allowing readers to see parallels between their own lives and the lives of the people in Parks’s stories. “A Harlem Family” was created at a moment when the country was on the cusp of change. Created after the turbulent summer of 1967, the Fontenelle family’s story was Parks’s attempt to help bridge the divide in the country and show that, regardless of race and class, families across America were working to provide for their children. Maybe, at the end of the day, people had more in common than they thought. Although the Fontenelle family continued to be marked by hard times and their story was ultimately a tragic one, a large part of Parks’s legacy is his role as an activist and advocate for families like the Fontenelles across this country. Or, in his own words, “Sometimes I question my reasons for having ever touched the Fontenelles. I’ve been told that their story helped other Black families escape a similar existence. Perhaps that’s so, but it doesn’t alter my feelings about that family’s misfortunes or those untimely deaths they met. The painful memories are still there, still rumbling through me like the vestiges of a shipwreck.”


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*Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967*

*A Similar Existence*

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*Gordon Parks*

*Untitled (Harlem, New York), 1967*

Copyright and Courtesy The Gordon Parks Foundation

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*Opposite*

*Gordon Parks*

*Untitled (Harlem, New York), 1967*

Copyright and Courtesy The Gordon Parks Foundation
Introducing the 2012–13 Artists in Residence

In October 2012, Steffani Jemison, Jennifer Packer and Cullen Washington Jr. moved into the Studio Museum’s third-floor artist studios. During their year-long residency they will develop their respective practices and create work for their summer 2013 exhibition. We asked the new artists in residence to share a little bit about their processes with us.

Organized by Dominic Hackley, Managing Editor

Cullen Washington Jr.

My process begins with everyday life. Everything is material for work. From the building on the corner to the paper on the street to the bit of conversation I had last week, everything is drama for making work. I am particularly drawn to geometric forms that take the shape of architectural structures. These buildings and their geometric forms do not exist independent of themselves, but in the context of an urban environment. Therefore, both the buildings and their surroundings are inspiration for my process. I often take pictures of cityscapes with skewed, heightened perspective, and collect the physical objects that inhabit them. The photos are cropped, enlarged and printed in low-resolution to give them more abstractness. The geometric forms rendered through the combination of photograph and collected detritus reference the idea of matter—the placeholder for time and space. When I enter the studio, I have my collected materials and enlarged prints in hand. I also have a strategy of attack. Each piece created has a conversation with its predecessor, and my previous works serve as guideposts. Connections of color, concept, content and composition are intentional and allow for the synergy necessary for a cohesive body of work. I move between ideas of complexity and simplicity, micro and macro, light and dark, and other contrasting juxtapositions. The works are made with the idea of lineage or a stream of consciousness that narrates a story about finding infinite solutions to visual problems. This is necessary, as no one piece encapsulates the complete measure of an idea. An idea can always be defined more dynamically or more simply. This is the true impetuous nature of the work—to capture in one image what cannot be totally captured. The act of making the work is intuitive but also dependent on skill and a repertoire of signs and symbols that, when compiled, become a visual language. When I begin, I enter a zone in my mind I call “the land before words.” It is a playful place where there is no direction or limitation. There, I allow the marks and process to lead me, as opposed to me leading them. I have no predisposition, and I allow one mark to follow another in a sort of dance of call and response. In other instances I see the work in my mind’s eye beforehand and work to clear a mental path to the end product. And in still other instances, I work in the opposite manner and rely on a lexicon of words and language to help me complete a piece that was initiated as an ineffable act. I sway back and forth between these strategies, sometimes relying on skill and intellect and other times on absolute intuition to accomplish the goal of making a good work.
Introducing the 2012–13 Artists in Residence

Cullen Washington Jr.
SpaceTime, 2012
Courtesy the artist
Steffani Jemison

We say that we “conduct” a conversation, but the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct. Rather it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will “come out” of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us. Thus we can say that something was a good conversation or that it was ill fated. All this showed is that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it—i.e., that it allows something to “emerge” which henceforth exists.

—I consider conversation a strategy for making art, and a model for the connection between artist, work and viewer. My art-related activities include looking, lying, calling, pushing, pinning, staring, marking, reading, cutting, projecting, reflecting and opening. I work solemnly, reproachfully, improperly, intently, utterly and optimistically. I respond to cinema, the news, family matters, literature, history and the history of art. The tools and materials I use most include paper, plastic, wood, hammer, scanner, computer, camera, printer and books. Lots of books.

Introducing the 2012–13 Artists in Residence

Jennifer Packer

I am interested in human experience mitigated through the lens of solitude. The experiences of my body, for example, whose contextual legibility varies from weightless indiscernibility to undeniable gravity, significantly influence the pictures. I wonder about the touch of the shared experience of seclusion, which Carrie Mae Weems describes as “a cloud of invisibility,” and an “erasure out of the complex history of our life and time.”

I love painting and the possibility it holds as a place for active generosity. My practice has always branched from an insatiable yearning in my life and the shadow of criticality that follows. This criticality concerns an understanding of the necessity for relentless particularity in every image, in ways that resist the potential for lurking fear, nonchalance and shameless incuriousness. I hope to produce images and objects that are incessantly and thoroughly cared for. Within that, there is a definite investment in the idea of mastery for me—not as an endpoint, but as a moving target, the achievement of which depends on the intensity of connectedness I feel for my questions at that particular moment in time.

In part, the paintings have become about consolation in relationship to the image, the experience of its making, and the comfort and support of the object or body depicted. I feel that I recognize all of the bodies painted to a degree that never feels quite adequate. There is always the presence of something more complicated, something that longs to separate itself from the immediacy of casual identification.
Way back in 1964, I was hired to make a film of an urban renewal project in Harlem where families were able to move from substandard dilapidated apartments to newly renovated tenements across the street. We filmed the policy planning and community meetings and then followed one family through the process. I filmed them as they had been living, on moving day, and then in their new apartments. I’m reminded of two films I made, first in Cuba in 1962, of a fisherman and his family living in a thatched-roof cabin. Dirt floor, no electricity or hot water. The new house, paid for by the government, was only fifty feet away and had all that made for good living. Then, in 2000, I filmed an African-American family living in Mississippi, enjoying the trailer they had just moved into. In each case, whether Harlem, Cuba or the South, the move meant a great deal to the family. Everyone seeing the films could share in the experience of basic hopes coming true.

Black Judaism is a syncretic religion that developed in Harlem in the 1920s. It combines practices learned from Jewish neighbors and employers, the Old Testament emphasis of southern black Protestantism and Garveyite nationalism. In 1962, the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation acquired the townhouse at 1 West 123rd Street (built in 1890 for the owner of Arm & Hammer baking soda) and converted it into the first black synagogue in the country. The group’s spiritual leader Rabbi Matthew died in 1973 and an internal struggle for power ensued. In 2007, nine members falsely claiming to be the last of the Commandment Keepers sold the historic landmark to a developer. The developer hammered away the Star of David above the entrance to “reveal original detail.” The same year, five Torahs and other religious items were stolen from the site. The building was resold in 2009. Its new owners are converting the synagogue into a single-family dwelling.
Frank Stewart
Born 1949, Nashville, TN
Lives and works in New Rochelle, NY

God’s Trombones, 2009

This image shows a mass baptism, on 105th Street between Frederick Douglass and Adam Clayton Powell. They do it every year: it’s the followers of Daddy Grace, a Pentecostal preacher, with a trombone choir. Every year they re-baptize the community—whoever wants to get born again, so to speak. Sometimes it’s a thousand people, sometimes a few hundred, depending on the day and how hot it is. The image harkens back to James Weldon Johnson’s book God’s Trombones and poem “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” which is what I had in mind when I took this photo.

My work is motivated by things that have to do with the African-American experience, which I have tried to document over the course of my career. We reinvent ourselves every ten years or so, but there is a ritual to our existence. This is part of a ritual that goes back probably to Africa, which is what I’m seeing in this image. “The prevalence of ritual”—to quote Albert Murray and Romare Bearden.

Deborah Willis
Born 1948, Philadelphia, PA
Lives and works in New York, NY

The Upper Room, from the “Sundays in Harlem” series, 2012

In his book The Best of Simple, Langston Hughes depicts a fictional Harlem resident, Jesse B. Semple, a freethinker, charmed by—but serious about—his view of life in Harlem. Originally written as a newspaper column for the Chicago Defender, Semple’s stories about the Harlem community of the time are full of folk philosophies on love, death, religion and friendships set against the streets of Harlem.

In this work, I attempt to weave Hughes’s narrative of an imagined past into my contemporary photos, to evoke the beauty and spirituality of cultural memory. My photography in Harlem on Sunday afternoons revisits the Langston Hughes world of Jesse B. Semple’s Harlem. I am intrigued by Hughes’s ability to describe his love for the Harlem community and to express it through the voice of an imagined character. As was the case with Jesse B. Semple, the contemporary reality that I find—a complex web of politics, race and identity—is not so simple at all. My camera unravels these complex tales, offering a visual response to Hughes’s narrator that focuses on public art found on Harlem streets.

*Stray Light* was originally organized by Michael Darling at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. A monograph published by Columbia College accompanies the exhibition and includes contributions by Darling, Hartt and art historian Darby English. Hartt sat down with Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden and Assistant Curator Thomas J. Lax to discuss the project’s arrival at The Studio Museum in Harlem.
THELMA GOLDEN: In looking at any new work it is always important for me to go back to the beginning. So can you just say what made you become an artist?

DAVID HARTT: Oh wow. (laughs)

TG: What moment, what scene, what idea? I’m not looking for a chronologically exact answer, but what was the spark of the moment that made you an artist?

DH: I have to say, my mother is a pretty advanced amateur photographer. She took me in the darkroom when I was around eight years old, and it was just the most magical experience. Ever since then, I have always been deeply interested in photography. Whether I was thinking about it as art or not is debatable, but I was definitely deeply compelled to explore that tool as a mode of expression. It is something I did throughout high school, through amateur camera clubs.

TG: This opens up so many things. Tell me what your mother took pictures of?

DH: Well, I come from a multiracial family. My parents are white, Jewish educators and I have eight brothers and sisters, all of whom, except for my youngest brother, are adopted from around the world. I have a brother from Vietnam, a sister from Haiti, another sister from Bangladesh. I am mixed-race and so are a few of my brothers and sisters. Some of us are Jewish—my birth mother was Jewish, and one of my brothers is, as well. So my mother used photography as a mode of capturing this incredibly diverse family.

TG: So she was taking pictures of you all?

DH: Yes. Our whole house was decorated with the prints that she and I made. One night a week we would convert the downstairs bathroom into a darkroom.

THOMAS J. LAX: I’ll start with another kind of beginning—a look at some of the projects that led up to Stray Light. In the Belvedere project (2009), you focused on the Mackinac Center for Public Policy in Michigan, a free-market think-tank. In Reference area at The Bartholomew County Public Library, Columbus, Indiana (2008), you captured scenes from that city, Columbus, Indiana, a city that is home to the largest collection of modernist architecture in the Midwest outside Chicago. Your work with The Greening of Detroit (2008) looks at sites that promote sustainability and environmentally friendly growth. In each, you capture mundane and everyday moments whose actions—despite the specificity of their sites—could have taken place almost anywhere.

Each of these different sites is politically and aesthetically different, but at the same time there are some through lines. Each speaks to a flash point in an ongoing history of modernism or ideological thinking in the Midwest. How do you approach an individual project, and how do you organize these very different sites as you look back at your body of work?

DH: What I am looking for are ideologically differentiated sites, different expressions of community, as arrayed within the American experiment. One of the things that excites me and interests me is the difference between the ideological potential of a site and how the space actually defines itself—that gap between one’s experience of the space and one’s knowledge of the activities that actually go on there.

The work that I am doing currently, post–Stray Light, is starting to take me abroad. I think the work I have done in the United States has created a methodology of how I approach and interrogate different sites and explore their ideological potentials.

TJL: Can you talk to us about Elizabeth Catlett’s The Black Woman Speaks (1970), featured on the cover of Elizabeth Alexander’s book The Black Interior (2003)? I know the work and the book are both reference points for the project. Catlett’s sculpture was made just a year before the Johnson Publishing building opened, and it also rhymes with the ideology of a black aesthetic of that time.
DH: I came to the sculpture and *The Black Interior* after I had already started on the project. But they helped me contextualize what I had done and better understand some of the possibilities for interpreting, extending, maybe even prioritizing, certain things that I found there.

I loved the image of *The Black Woman Speaks*, and recognized immediately how it was an extension of the visual language that I found within the environment of Johnson Publishing. The Johnsons have an incredible collection not only of African-American art, but also of African art. I wanted to acknowledge the Catlett work as an extension of those aesthetics and reintegrate it into my visual vocabulary. So that sculpture is not the only thing that I am quoting. It is actually consistent with some of the other elements that I found within the institution.

Something that I didn’t anticipate going in was how the environment became an expression of femininity. But once I immersed myself in the environment and had time to distill what I found there, I realized how strong and emphatic that was in my subjective reordering of what I found.

TJL: What was it specifically? Can you talk in sensual terms about questions of texture, touch and color? How did you come to foreground Eunice Johnson—John H. Johnson’s wife, the founder-director of the Ebony Fashion Fair, and an executive at the company—and her sensibility instead of the narrative of Mr. Johnson’s influence on the space?

DH: I think there are explicit and implicit points. So explicitly, in my conversation with [Eunice Johnson’s daughter and current Chairman of the company] Linda [Johnson Rice], she told me about the color of her mother’s office: ivory. The color palette throughout the rest of the space is shades of black and brown. Linda told me her mother was trying to deal with the full spectrum of possibility in terms of being African-American, and how that expressed itself through the color palette of the environment and reinforced it. She said that her mother felt ivory was an expression of femininity. I thought that it was really interesting how different colors can be attributed with specific characteristics and values. And I loved how it lined up with some of the more implicit references.

There’s of course the art collection itself. In *Award Room* (2011), you see the awards room as it frames the hallway, where there are two pictures hanging. One of them is a gift from Jimmy Carter, a watercolor, I believe, of the White House, and the second one is an oil painting, a beautiful rendering of an African-American woman. I believe the title is actually *Beauty*. Then it is framed by this incredibly sensuous curved window.

TJL: Your photographs could be used as a device for a different understanding of what a black aesthetic might be today. The project exhibits both a reverence and apprehension about the terms of a black aesthetic, but, ironically, that personal ambivalence begins to articulate another shared black sensibility—
Spring 2013

David Hartt in conversation with Thelma Golden and Thomas J. Lax

David Hartt
Award Room, 2011
Courtesy the artist and Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago
a contemporary set of mixed emotions about the ways race and identity are correlated with aesthetics and artistic production. We know the critiques of a historic black aesthetic—its presumed masculinism, nationalism and heterosexism—but at the same time I think many of us still yearn for a supple enough reading of art and culture that can take questions of race and black collective identity into account. In what ways do you think the project might unintentionally channel what a black aesthetic might mean today, especially when seen in Harlem, at the Studio Museum—sites that are invested in redefining the meaning of authenticity?

**DH:** I think that my own relationship to participating within a black aesthetic was more antagonistic. It was something that I firmly rejected. You used the word “authenticity.” I didn’t feel as though I had a right to participate because it wasn’t my own experience. So I was looking at it; I felt very much on the outside.

[The curator] Hamza Walker is a good friend of mine. One of the things that he helped me get over was my inability to participate. And one of the things he made clear to me was just how generous that opportunity really was. And that all I had to do was take part. The technical meaning of “stray light” describes light in an optical system that was not intended in the design. For me, it also reflects an itinerant approach whereupon my methodology acts as a stray light within a system, a way of recognizing a different possible reading or a different possible outcome. So as opposed to having to conform, which is the way that I was thinking about it initially, instead it is about through the act of participation this aesthetic becomes expanded.

**TG:** There was space for you in the conversation.

**DH:** Yes. And not only that, but [artist] Kerry [James Marshall] and Darby both expressed that it was almost necessary to have an outsider come in and do this kind of analysis. But through exploring that metaphor of stray light, there is also a necessity for a different reading, a different outcome, a different sensibility.

Once I understood that as a possibility, I think I became liberated, if you will, to see where it took me. I have to say that part of what attracted me to the subject to begin with was asking, how do I acculturate myself in this? If I am already being thought of as part of it, then how do I get up to speed? (laughs)

**TG:** There was space for you in the conversation.
In 1993, one year after his acclaimed installation, *Mining the Museum* (1992) at the Maryland Historical Society, Fred Wilson (b. 1954) brought his practice of creating site-specific installations for museums, based in large part on using works from their collections, to The Studio Museum in Harlem. Wilson was one of the seven artists asked to participate in *Artists Respond: The “New World” Question*. In 1992, five hundred years after Christopher Columbus’s “discovery” of the Americas, there were numerous events, discussions and performances around Columbus’s historic 1492 travels at venues all across the country. In 1993, the Studio Museum contributed to the ongoing discussion of the “New World” with *Artists Respond: The “New World” Question*. For *Local Color*, Wilson’s contribution to the exhibition, the artist took twenty-eight objects from the Studio Museum’s holdings of African and Caribbean art and combined them with materials all sourced and purchased on 125th Street in front of the Studio Museum. *Local Color* is a look at a specific moment of the Studio Museum’s collecting history as well as the history of 125th Street as a site for commerce and economic action. What resulted was an exploration of the connections between popular culture, as seen in the objects purchased on 125th Street, and “authentic” African culture, as seen through the traditional objects from the Studio Museum’s collection. In his artist statement for *Local Color*, written in 1993, Wilson posed a series of questions that now, twenty years later, are still relevant and in need of answers.
Fred Wilson: Local Color

Artist's Statement

Is African sculpture in American museums like Spike Lee movies dubbed in Japanese, or ninja movies dubbed in English?

When does popular culture become high culture?

When does high culture become popular culture?

When art/religion becomes a commodity or a symbol, does it lose its spirituality?

When a commodity/symbol becomes art or religion does it gain spirituality?

Can a diverse group of people really find a commonality in a shared cultural form interpreted completely differently?

When a cultural object moves through time or inhabits an alien place is its meaning unrecognizably transformed?

Is that meaning as valuable as the first?

Who owns the meaning?

—Fred Wilson, 1993

Local Color is now a part of the Studio Museum’s collection and will be on view during the Museum’s spring exhibition season (March 28–June 30, 2013) for the first time since 1993.
Fred Wilson
Local Color (installation view), 1993
Photo: Becket Logan
Beyond

Remembering Richard V. Clarke

by Dominic Hackley, Managing Editor

Richard “Dick” V. Clarke (1927–2012) was highly regarded for his innovative approach to creating employment opportunities for minorities, and for his philanthropic commitment to organizations including The Studio Museum in Harlem. He illustrated how the energies of an individual can make a difference and a strong impact on society.

Clarke was born in Harlem but spent his early life in D’Abadie, Trinidad and Tobago. The economic disadvantages of life in the Caribbean preceding World War II made a distinct impression on the young man. His parents, Emelda and La Roi Mills, instilled pride and a deep love of people. Upon his return to New York, even as he established a sterling reputation and a successful career in business, he dedicated himself to giving back to the African-American community.

After graduating from City College in 1950 with a degree in business administration, Clarke worked for seven years in the laboratories of the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research. After years of unsuccessfully trying to find a job that more fully utilized the skills he gained in college, Clarke founded the first New York employment agency dedicated exclusively to placing African Americans in jobs in corporate America. In 1957, on the day after Labor Day, Clarke’s Hallmark Employment Agency opened in an office space above a bar on Lenox Avenue. The agency grew rapidly and soon Clarke had more positions available than there were workers to fill them. Five years later, the Hallmark Employment Agency relocated to an office in Rockefeller Center. For Clarke, this was symbolic of both his company’s success and a change in corporate America’s acceptance of African Americans.

Clarke then saw an opportunity to create a new method for recruiting eligible job seekers. The Hallmark Employment Agency morphed into Richard Clarke & Associates. Clarke’s innovation was to remove human resources representatives from their corporate environments and place them in hotels where they could meet with and interview numerous job candidates. Richard Clarke & Associates was the country’s first company with the stated goal of placing qualified minorities in positions on Wall Street and throughout the private sector. The company operated in New York and Chicago from the early 1960s until 2004, when Clarke retired.

Shortly before closing the company’s doors, Clarke engaged twenty-first-century technology to maintain his legacy by building a database of professional minority hires, which he made available to companies looking to diversify their workforces.

Clarke’s success allowed him to contribute significantly to the arts, a field that he was very passionate about. During the 1970s, Clarke was Director of the Board of Trustees of The Studio Museum in Harlem, and was instrumental in the relocation of the Museum to its current building on 125th Street. His commitment to diversification did not stop with corporate America—it also characterized his philanthropic work. As a Trustee Emeritus at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he founded the museum’s Multicultural Audience Development Advisory Committee. He also served as a Board Member on the New York Council on the Arts and the New York chapter of 100 Black Men of America. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed Clarke to the Advisory Committee on Personnel for the Executive Office of the President.

The Studio Museum in Harlem salutes Clarke for his many philanthropic contributions to the arts and for his indelible impact on the advancement of the African-American community.
On a recent trip to St. Louis I had the opportunity to preview *The Progress of Love*, a three-venue, two-continent project that brings together the work of more than thirty artists working in a wide variety of media. The three concurrent but unique exhibitions that make up *The Progress of Love* constitute a narrative arc, addressing love as an ideal, love as a lived experience, and love as something lost. Look for work by many Studio Museum alums, including Joël Andrianomearisoa, Dineo Seshee Bopape, Lyle Ashton Harris, Zwelethu Mthethwa, Senam Okudzeto, Toyin Odutola, Nadine Robinson and Yinka Shonibare, MBE.

*Lyle Ashton Harris*

*Untitled (Green Field)* 1/10

© 2012 Lyle Ashton Harris

Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery, NY

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**The Progress of Love**


Center for Contemporary Arts

Lagos, Nigeria

November 16, 2012–April 20, 2013

The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts

St. Louis, Missouri

December 2, 2012–March 17, 2013

The Menil Collection

Houston, Texas

theprogressoflove.com
Beyond

Elsewhere

Hammer Projects: Latifa Echakhch
February 23–July 18, 2013
Hammer Museum
Los Angeles, California
hammer.ucla.edu

Latifa Echakhch, whom you’ll remember from Flow (2008), reprises her 2007 installation À chaque stencil une révolution (For each stencil a revolution) for the Hammer’s lobby wall. Covering the wall with hundreds of sheets of carbon paper, Echakhch highlights the duplication technology used to disseminate information and opinions by political groups of the 1960s. However, she strips the paper of the opportunity to carry a message by treating the paper with a solvent that causes the ink to drip to the floor. Taking its name from a quote by Yasser Arafat, À chaque stencil une révolution reconsiders the relationship between politics and abstract art.

LaToya Ruby Frazier: A Haunted Capital
March 22–August 11, 2013
Brooklyn Museum
Brooklyn, New York
brooklynmuseum.org

LaToya Ruby Frazier: A Haunted Capital features approximately forty photographs highlighting the effects of deindustrialization on Frazier’s hometown of Braddock, Pennsylvania. A Haunted Capital offers an intimate look at Frazier’s family, connecting their experiences to the history of Braddock, and its decline from one of America’s first steel mills to the “distressed municipality” it is today.

Lorna Simpson
May 28–September 1, 2013
Jeu de Paume
Paris, France
jeudepaume.org

The Jeu de Paume and Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography present thirty years of Lorna Simpson’s work in her first European retrospective. The exhibition gathers a broad range of Simpson’s work, from the large-format photo-texts of the 1980s to a new video installation made especially for the occasion. Lorna Simpson will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue featuring essays by the exhibition’s curator, Joan Simon, as well as the Studio Museum’s Assistant Curator Thomas J. Lax and former Associate Curator Naomi Beckwith (now a curator at the MCA Chicago). The exhibition will travel to Haus der Kunst, Munich, and the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, in 2013–14.

Lorna Simpson
Waterbearer, 1986
© Lorna Simpson

LaToya Ruby Frazier
Grandma Ruby and Me, 2005
Courtesy the Brooklyn Museum
© LaToya Ruby Frazier

Lorna Simpson
Waterbearer, 1986
© Lorna Simpson

LaToya Ruby Frazier
Grandma Ruby and Me, 2005
Courtesy the Brooklyn Museum
© LaToya Ruby Frazier
Elsewhere

Jack Whitten: Erasures
December 18, 2012–March 31, 2013

Odili Donald Odita: Heaven’s Gate
December 27, 2012–June 2, 2013

SCAD Museum of Art
Savannah, Georgia
scadmoa.org
defineart.scad.edu

I’ve been excitedly following SCAD Chief Curator Isolde Breilmeir’s work in Savannah since she relocated from New York in 2011. I can’t wait to see her new exhibition, Jack Whitten: Erasures. This groundbreaking and historical exhibition features a selection of paintings and works on paper, many on view for the first time. Erasures includes emblematic examples of the artist’s leading technical innovations, and is presented as part of the 2013 deFINE ART program. Odili Donald Odita joins Jack Whitten and many others in a full roster of deFINE ART exhibitions, speakers and public events. Like he did at the Studio Museum in 2007, Odita will create a series of colorful and site-specific wall paintings for SCAD MoA, inviting the viewers to contemplate a space that is imbued with a sense of history while also housing dynamic cultural elements of the present.
Beyond Completely Biased, Entirely Opinionated Hot Picks

### Beyond Elsewhere

**Gravity and Grace: Monumental Works by El Anatsui**  
February 8–August 4, 2013  
Brooklyn Museum  
Brooklyn, New York  
brooklynmuseum.org

The first solo exhibition in a New York museum by the globally renowned contemporary artist El Anatsui, this show will feature more than thirty works in metal and wood that transform appropriated objects into site-specific sculptures. Anatsui converts found materials into a new type of media that lies between sculpture and painting, combining aesthetic traditions from his birth country, Ghana; his home in Nsukka, Nigeria; and the global history of abstraction.

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**Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey**  
March 21–July 21, 2013  
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina  
nasher.duke.edu

Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey is the 2003–04 Studio Museum artist in residence’s first major solo museum exhibition. Sure to be true to its name, A Fantastic Journey includes a comprehensive collection of more than forty works including collage, drawing, installation, sculpture, performance and video. A Fantastic Journey also reveals Mutu’s sketchbooks, new commissions and rare early works, all organized into a site-specific installation that choreographs the visitor experience in a tactile and sensual realm.

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**NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star**  
February 13–May 26, 2013  
New Museum  
New York, New York  
newmuseum.org

It’s hard to believe that it has been twenty years since 1993, but this anniversary offers an exciting opportunity to revisit the art, culture and politics of that watershed year. NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star looks at artwork made and exhibited in New York in 1993, and includes work by Coco Fusco, Félix González-Torres, David Hammons, Jack Whitten and many more. I am especially excited that the New Museum will re-present Nari Ward’s Amazing Grace (1993), originally realized in an abandoned fire station in Harlem shortly after his residency at the Studio Museum. The NYC 1993 exhibition catalogue will pair new scholarly work with texts from twenty years ago, including one of my own.

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**Nari Ward**  
Amazing Grace (installation view), 2013  
Courtesy New Museum, New York  
Photo: Jesse Untracht-Oakner

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**El Anatsui**  
Gravity and Grace, 2010  
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York  
Photo: Andrew McAllister, courtesy the Akron Art Museum

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**Wangechi Mutu**  
Riding Death in My Sleep, 2002  
Collection of Peter Norton, New York.  
©Wangechi Mutu
This winter’s FOCUS series at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth brings two Studio Museum favorites to Texas. Gary Simmons’s exhibition includes several major, large-scale works in his signature erasure style, including *Subtlety of a Train Wreck* (1998) and *In This Corner* (2012). Yinka Shonibare, MBE restages his monumental installation about the Berlin Conference, *Scramble for Africa* (2003) and presents the *Swan Lake*–inspired video *Odile and Odette* (2005).
Beyond

Elsewhere

Completely Biased, Entirely Opinionated Hot Picks

Gary Simmons
Senator Drive-By, 2010
Courtesy Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco
What is so exciting about living and working with contemporary art in this moment is that there are infinite conversations about how art intersects with other academic fields and disciplines, or how it is an integral part of the social world and forces that are larger than us. These important conversations take place in public dialogue, the blogosphere and social media, but they of course still live in the rather more traditional medium of print. The books below elaborate on ideas that are particularly resonant now for us at the Studio Museum as we take stock of the past year and consider what is to come.

**Book Picks**

*by Abbe Schriber, Curatorial Assistant*

**NW**

_Zadie Smith_

_Penguin Press, 2012_

In the hands of Zadie Smith, realism attains transcendental linguistic form. Her latest novel situates itself in the northwestern corner of London to stake out and pick apart the confluence of cultural details in contemporary, urban British life. It employs the perspectives of four narrators whose lives intersect in humorous, painful and poignant ways.

**Seeing Through Race**

_W.J.T. Mitchell_

_Harvard University Press, 2012_

Mitchell applies his incisive readings of visual culture and media to the ways in which race is deployed—or ignored—in our culture. His argument for the necessity of “seeing” racial difference comes to bear in a world that claims to be “post-racial,” and begins to form a new way of thinking about identity in the twenty-first century. Mitchell begins to provide some answers to the question of how to separate specificity from difference.
Beyond

Book Picks

Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery
Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer
Temple University Press, 2013

Deborah Willis is a respected curator and historian of African-American photography and culture. Drawing on her vast experiences in these fields, Willis examines photographic representations of enslavement, emancipation and freedom in the United States between the 1850s and the 1930s. Willis and Krauthamer, a noted historian of slavery and emancipation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, discuss how these photographs record an African-American presence in the historical archive. The images provide direct source material on a vital aspect of American history and consider how the subjects of the photographs both “position themselves and were posed by others.”

What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation
Tom Finkelpearl

What We Made examines the participatory nature of contemporary art projects that take place in the structures and settings of the “real” world. Finkelpearl, Executive Director of the Queens Museum of Art, is interested in artists who create work alongside everyday people, who are considered vital coauthors in bringing such projects to life. He includes conversations with fifteen artists and colleagues, who offer firsthand accounts of “cooperative” art-making experiences, including one with Naomi Beckwith, former Associate Curator at the Studio Museum.

David Hartt: Stray Light
Michael Darling and Darby English
Columbia College Chicago Press, 2013

This catalogue will be published to accompany the eponymous exhibition, a version of which will come to the Studio Museum in spring 2013. In his multimedia practice, Hartt documents the Johnson Publishing Headquarters in Chicago, which produced African-American lifestyle magazines such as Ebony and Jet. Hartt’s work illuminates the meticulous architecture and interior of the building, which was designed by John Moutoussamy, an African-American architect, and the developing aesthetics of the black upper-middle class from the 1970s on.

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The Next Generation

Kambui Olujimi

by Kristina Maria Lopez, Curatorial Intern

In the former milk-bottling plant that houses Columbia University’s Visual Arts MFA program, Kambui Olujimi prepared the logistics for one of his newest pieces, Finding and Forgetting (2012), in an organized studio—filled with technical equipment, lithograph tests hanging on the wall and black sequins glistening on the floor. Olujimi’s studio location has shifted through numerous residencies and programs, as he has sought the best possible environments to foster his projects. His transcendental definition of the studio is that it is an ephemeral space whose physical properties change with his ideas. This takes him to photo labs and film sets, and on short pilgrimages through New York.

In one of his more expansive projects, Wayward North (2010), Olujimi imbues quilting with celestial navigation in a narrative that bridges the personal and historical. The immense size of the twelve tapestries Olujimi inscribed with thread and rhinestones beckons the viewer to move back and forth between them. Despite this grand gesture, Olujimi has noted that a workspace should be mobile, collapsible and able to disappear. A newer work, Lead to Light (2012), an allegorical reference to the alchemist’s quest for transmutation, reflects this nomadic attitude. The luminous cadence of a battery-powered chandelier invokes science and literature references, from Nikola Tesla’s electrical research to the iconic light-filled basement in Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man.

Olujimi’s interdisciplinary work spreads between visual and literary forms that explore the historical value of mythologies. Community and space immediately came to mind during our studio visit as a result of the ways he interacts with the public. I left Olujimi’s studio building with the image of him slowly moving in Finding and Forgetting, a dawn-to-dusk performance based on dance marathons of the late 1920s. Anyone was invited to join him atop the capricious stage he constructed. The work exemplifies how an artist’s practice does not consist of singular actions by the artist hidden in a studio, but rather is a collaboration between making and looking that always leads to dialogue between colleagues, family, friends and even strangers.
Hugo McCloud

by Allison Channing Jones

Through a labor-intensive, deliberate process, self-taught artist and designer Hugo McCloud experiments with understanding and recreating processes of organic deterioration. The resulting paintings are striking abstract compositions coaxed out of industrial and found materials. During a recent visit to his studio, McCloud shared the background and process behind his work.

What led you to create art?

My dad is a sculptor and my mom is a designer, so I grew up in the realm of art, but I did my own thing. I went off to college for business and one summer I came home and started doing design work—playing around with metal—at my mom’s store. I kind of just fell in love with it. I went back to school for two months and couldn’t do it anymore. So I dropped out to pursue art and design.

What kind of work were you doing when you started out?

I was doing just metalwork, mostly on the design side, like furniture and industrial design. I always wanted to get into painting, but I wasn’t drawn to painting on canvas. I went with a couple of friends on a trip to South Africa and I visited a lot of townships and saw how the shanty houses were built out of metal. The texture of the rust and the oxidation of the materials immediately sparked the idea to use the industrial metal materials with which I was already familiar as my canvas. I started using this process called patina, which is the chemical oxidation of metal, and that became my way of painting in the beginning.

You still do design work in addition to painting. Is there a unifying thread between the two?

I’ve always tried to keep them separate, but in a way they’re not because they come from the same eye. I try to distinguish them because design is all about exactness and realizing a specific idea, and I can’t approach art the same way. Everything changes and evolves continuously. At the same time, there are a lot of architectural and dimensional aspects of my art that are similar to my design work, but my artwork isn’t the result of a formulaic process.

How would you describe your art-making process?

It’s a natural process, driven by the materials with which I’m working. I investigate the materials to explore their limits. Because I use industrial materials, I have the freedom to use aggressive tools, such as grinders and torches, that stretch the capabilities of the materials. You can always apply materials to a surface, but I’m more interested in drawing something out of the materials themselves.

To learn more about Hugo McCloud’s work, visit hugomccloud.com

Hugo McCloud's studio
Photo: Dominic Hackley
E.J. Hill

by Jamillah James, Curatorial Fellow

E.J. Hill is an MFA candidate in New Genres at the University of California, Los Angeles, specializing in performance. Hill is interested in questions of identity, territory and alienation. Using durational and interventionist strategies, he advances counter-narratives in which marginalized bodies are free to inhabit spaces of their choosing—physical, emotional, social or political.

Can it just be a body?

Hill moved to Chicago in 2007 to study at Columbia College, where he initially focused on painting and drawing. After watching a collection of videos by artist Chris Burden, known for his confrontational performance style that tested the limits of the human body, Hill initiated what he refers to as his first performance: a psycho-geographical duration exercise for which he crawled, à la William Pope.L, between the town center and a so-called “bad part of town” in Evanston, a suburb on the far north side of Chicago that is home to prestigious Northwestern University. Weighted down with a backpack filled with drywall from an abandoned house, Hill intended for this—as well as a later work, This Is an Imaginary Border (2009)—to open a dialogue about the economic (and occasional racial) segregation that remains a reality in cities such as Chicago.

“I had no idea I was ‘black’ until I moved to Chicago,” says Hill. “I’m a first-generation American—my family is from Belize. They moved to Los Angeles in the 1970s. When I got to Chicago, my Belizean identity was taken out of conversation, unless I brought it up.” Hill is conscious, to the point of frustration, of how his body while performing will be viewed through the prism of race and gendered expression. “The kind of performance work I was initially acquainted with was done typically by straight, white men,” says Hill. “I began to wonder whether other artists like [Hannah] Wilke or [Fluxus artist] Shigeko Kubota could escape their gender or cultural baggage in the reading of the work.” Hill remains optimistic, however, that through a rigorous and diverse practice, the conversation can move beyond the personal and immediate to broader, universal ideas and relations.

Now back in Los Angeles, Hill is working closely with artist Andrea Fraser at UCLA, noted for her performance grounded in institutional critique. Hill is testing new work in drawing, video and photography to combat what he sees as “expectations” of his work. “A friend once said, ‘We choose who we bleed for. Most people don’t deserve to see you struggle [during a performance], or sweat or cry or bleed.’ It’s a strange psychology, [for a viewer] to come to a place hoping to see or experience something really intense,” Hill says. A recent performance, Drawn (2011), has Hill, dressed in a white button-down shirt and tie, licking the walls of a gallery until his tongue bled, leaving behind a faint trail of pink. When asked why he doesn’t do more performance for video in the controlled space of his studio, Hill says that while there are problems with making performance in public, he views an audience’s presence as “silent encouragement” to “go where [his] mind didn’t think it could go”—beyond limits or inhibitions.

For Hill, performance is a complicated practice. His family has mixed emotions about his choice to be an artist. He refers to a recent suite of photographs as a “peace offering” to his family, so that he “has something to show” them about what he does. Is performance, using the body as site and medium, more ideal for bridging the perceived divide between the “art world” and the “real world”? What about the added complexity of being an artist of color making less traditional work? Of this, Hill remarks, “I feel a certain responsibility to my family and neighbors in Englewood to bridge the gap... The position we assume is not that of just being an artist, but an artist-educator, to express how we got to this point, and that there’s a legacy we’ve inherited as art workers.”

1. All quotes from E.J. Hill, interview with the author, November 24, 2012.
The Next Generation

Checking in with Expanding the Walls alumni Senetchut Floyd, Ivan Forde and Kareen Dillon

Moderated by Gerald L. Leavell II

Expanding the Walls and Youth Programs Coordinator Gerald L. Leavell II had a chance to catch up with three Expanding the Walls alums, Senetchut Floyd (2011), Ivan Forde (2008) and Kareen Dillon (2006), to discuss where their paths have led them since graduating from the program.

Tell us about the moment or experience that set you on your current path in the arts.

Senetchut Floyd: I have always known I want to be an artist, but not what type. I dipped and dabbled in various forms, but nothing really stuck until I entered Expanding the Walls. There, I met artists like myself and began to indulge in the visual art of photography. After Expanding the Walls I knew what path I wanted to follow—to become a visual artist and a photographer.

Ivan Forde: My current studies in photography began with transitioning from college back home to the city. Most of my friends had similar feelings toward being back home and kind of starting again. Therefore, the images I am currently making add to this ongoing conversation between us because sometimes words do not express ideas entirely.

Kareen Dillon: My current journey was inspired by my year in Expanding the Walls, when I was exposed to a new culture and art in a fun, hands-on environment. I was given the chance to see how it felt to be an artist, work with artists, curate an exhibition and have in-depth conversations about art while learning more about my own black heritage. After we put on our first exhibition, I realized that I found joy, adventure and life in curating. I fed off the creative juices that surround the Studio Museum. I knew then I wanted my career to be within a museum setting.
The Next Generation

Senetchut Floyd
When Forms Digress, 2012
Courtesy the artist

Ivan Forde
The Fall of Man, 2012
Courtesy the artist

What ignites your creativity?

SF: My surroundings, obstacles and challenges I face, and the different people I encounter. For example, I tend to find myself staring into the faces of the people I come across during my daily travels. I think to myself, oh, what a great face, and immediately take a mental snapshot and imagine scenarios for the subject to be in. Like a movie director, I like to plan how I want an image to look.

IF: Before, it was mainly in times of emotional crisis that I produced work. Now, I am a bit more mature, and conversations and literature spark my creativity. In general, the point is not to change people’s opinions, but simply to offer another point of view from which to judge, so that others may clearly see and understand their perspectives.

KD: My creative explosions are usually ignited when looking at works of other artists. When I see artwork, specifically photography and abstract paintings, I’m instantly motivated to pour out my own creative thoughts. There’s so much power behind the lens of camera because each image tells an individual story, inviting the viewer as a guest. Another catalyst that spurs creativity is commercials, because I love their clever slogans and/or images that attract attention.

What is a topic that inspires the artwork produced by you and/or your peers?

SF: For me, it’s definitely music. I have a large group of friends with a diverse range of interests, but one common thread that connects us is music. Though we all have different rhythms and like different genres, I can say it is one of the main themes that inspire our work.

IF: The current topic that my peers and I are exploring is the dark digital age. We live in a time in which so much information is accessible, which creates anxiety over ends, new beginnings and the pace of change. We express those dark thoughts and emotions in a light and sometimes humorous way.

KD: The topic that inspires artwork among me and my peers is the concept of self-identity. Everyday someone discovers something new about themselves—a personal quality, purpose or goal in life. The artist that placed this topic in my head is Kehinde Wiley, with his focus on black subjects making their presence known in museums, with a European twist.
We are thrilled to announce our latest artist collaboration, a limited-edition shopping bag designed by artist Shinique Smith. This reusable bag folds neatly into its own pocket and features a detail of Smith’s mixed-media collage, *Through native streets* (2011).
Beyond Features
FORE: MADE IN 2012

“What has influenced or inspired you and your artwork in 2012?”

Organized by Dominic Hackley, Managing Editor
1. Akosua Adoma Owusu
2. Harold Mendez
3. Noah Davis

4. Nikki Pressley

5. Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle


7. Sadie Barnette
8. Nate Young

9. Kevin Beasley

10. Narcissister
1. Akosua Adoma Owusu

Akosua Adoma Owusu
Kwaku Ananse
Photo: Pedro Gonzalez-Rubio

2. Harold Mendez

The title for my submission suggests what I have been influenced by and has inspired my work this past year. I have been open to the notion that “darkness” or a space/place of “shadows” instead of “light” can be used as a source of strength for guidance. Just as “silence” is an expression of something “shadows” can bring into focus another perspective not often mined.

Harold Mendez
Let the shadows in to play their part, 2012
Courtesy the artist

3. Noah Davis

In December 2011, I lost my father Keven Davis to brain cancer. Since then, he has inspired me in my paintings and to look at my practice differently. So I created my own museum, The UNDERGROUND MUSEUM. The UM. initiative is to provide the highest form of art for the inner-city residents who may not have access to such exhibitions. Through rigorous events and exhibitions, The UNDERGROUND MUSEUM and Inner-City Avant-Garde will continue Keven Davis’s legacy of supporting the arts and, more importantly, the underdog.

Photo: Noah Davis

4. Nikki Pressley

Nikki Pressley
Relation, Relations between ideas, histories, spaces, narratives, objects, texts, lines and beings, 2012
Courtesy the artist

5. Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle

Daring to play and evoke my imagination at all cost.

Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle,
A Child’s Heart, 2003
Courtesy the artist


Nothing inspired me in 2012. Or to be more precise, No Thingness.

“There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing.”

—Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb (with the assistance of Barnett Newman), in a letter to The New York Times on the Subjects of the Artists School of abstract painting, June 13, 1943

Cullen Washington Jr.
SpaceTime, 2012
Courtesy the artist
7. Sadie Barnette

Photo: Sadie Barnette

8. Nate Young

I've been interested in the idea of presence and removal of presence, more specifically related to visibility.

I recently had a conversation with a friend about how the election and now reelection of Obama affects black America. He maintained that black visibility was not to be conflated or mistaken for black freedom. I maintained a contradictory agreement with this claim, while at the same time wanting to believe that having a black man as the President of the United States somehow produces some kind of progressive social political atmosphere.

The further one opens up the complexities on each side of these positions, the more polarized they become. It is this and other kinds of controlled contradictions that I seek to manipulate in my work.

Nate Young
*A Container for the Projection of a Political Assertion Posited by a Negro Artist*, 2009
Courtesy the artist

9. Kevin Beasley

*Sonia and the Cotton Gin Motor in Bobby’s shop*
Maplesville, Alabama. February 10th, 2012
Photo: Kevin Beasley

10. Narcissister

*Narcissister*
*Venus*, 2012
Courtesy the artist

Abigail DeVille

1. Being evicted from my grandmother's apartment on March 9, 2012
2. *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
3. *Invisibility Blues*, Michele Wallace
5. Roy DeCarava

Toyin Odutola

My family influenced and inspired me the most this year. Much of the work I created in 2012 consists of portraits of members of my family, mainly my two younger brothers. Without family, there is no grounding for what I do and I truly would be lost. I am honored and privileged by them.

Eric Nathaniel Mack

*Richard Tuttle, Systems, VIII-XII* at Pace Gallery inspired me this year. Tuttle’s genuine search for language through abstraction, through fragmented detritus. What is left is a quiet idiosyncratic intimacy in his sculptures that I can’t help but covet.

Kianja Strobert

Without the support of my friends, family and business associates, many of my projects would have fallen flat this year. Their contributions inspired me and were integral to sustaining my practice.

Taisha Paggett

My work this year has been inspired by attempts to put myself in dialogue with aspects of popular culture, namely mainstream aerobics practices as they relate to embodiment, knowledge, and personal and cultural memory. Additional concepts and ideas that have been fueling my practice include perception and repetition as a way of knowing, energy as material, notions of personal realness and memory versus history, an acceptance that simultaneous realities are unfolding at all times and a willingness to let meaning tumble around and be messy.

Jennifer Packer

My mother’s unwavering support for my life and work has been really important this year. It feels as though her concepts of generosity, sincerity and unconditional love have made their way into the paintings.
12. Nicole Miller

13. Yashua Klos

14. Sienna Shields

15. Valerie Piraino

16. Zachary Fabri
11. Crystal Z. Campbell


Crystal Z. Campbell
‘I Live To Fight (No More) Forever’
(work in progress, with Dr. C. Backendorf and G. Lamers) 2012
© crystalzcampbell

12. Nicole Miller

Nicole Miller
History, 2012
Courtesy the artist

13. Zachary Fabri

Forget me not, as my tether is clipped
(video still), 2012
Courtesy the artist

14. Sienna Shields

Saw a girl in a barbershop window in paris in 2010 . . . wondered what she was seeing. she led my wanders all last year

In some far off place
Many light years in space
I’ll build a world of abstract dreams
And wait for you
—Sun Ra

The end is in the beginning and lies far ahead.
—Ralph Ellison

Sienna Shields
Video and hair bead installation, 2012
Courtesy the artist

15. Valerie Piraino

David Lynch, Walter Benjamin, Fitzgerald, Peter Krapp’s book on déjâ vu, natural disasters, have all been on my reading/looking/thinking list this year. The past, history and subjectivity have become even more mutable things to reckon with.

Valerie Piraino
Study for By Proxy, 2012
Courtesy the artist

16. Zachary Fabri

Forget me not, as my tether is clipped
(video still), 2012
Courtesy the artist
13. Yashua Klos

... So he speaks to his confidants in riddles, in odd and glacially handled specifics; so that the graphite deepens, so that the nativities measure. His gestures eaten by lines of force, by ruthless patterning magma, so that his wise electrical adherence, rise into a force with a brutish state of innocence. The image being, an unstated being from the shifting blood of Vega. A torso, with the power of a sheep and antlers rising from the gulfs of swirling sodium luminescence. Without critical and sobering contusion, where the fundamentals give way, and the phosphorous in his field turns into a fleeting maniacal violet. All rudiment, turned to fanatic skeletal tracings, to tragic up-thrust and stars. All this being imaged in the core of his ceaseless mental geography. For instance, his mind becoming a collective excavation, speaking in regards to the pulse in orbit between Venus and Saturn. So as a renegade, he mines his pulse, he inculcates asteroids ... 

—Will Alexander, *The Heliotropic Mandarin*

Jaume Plensa
*Sho*, 2007

Caitlin Cherry

I have been inspired by arms dealers and motorcycle fabricators.

Jessica Vaughn

In 2012 my studio practice was influenced by my daily commutes for work between Philadelphia and New York. Seeing the shifting economic and social landscapes of these cities inspired me to insert my sculptures outdoors in open deserted and occupied spaces.

Firelei Baez

I've been thinking a lot about potential histories, time loops and cycles.

**Books:**
- Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed and Kindred*
- Isaac Asimov's “Foundation” series
- Samuel R. Delany's *Babel-17* series
- Orson Scott Card's “Enders Game” series
- Three stories from Albert Camus's *Exile and the Kingdom*: “The Adulterous Woman,” “Jonas, or the Artist at Work,” “The Growing Stone”

**Popular media:**
- Thai ladyboys
- East Coast body Pumpers
- The Twerk Team

Allover tattoos:
- Burmese women's face tattoos
- Prison tats
- Face tats
- The growing popularity of full body tats in black pop culture (i.e. Lil Wayne, Wiz Kalifa, Soulja Boy et. al)
- Yakuza Japanese body tats
- Chinese Miao crowns and body jewelry
- Circassian beauties
- Azabaches
- Mughal miniature paintings

... Okay, I'll stop now

Jacolby Satterwhite

2012 was an avalanche of inspiration. I found inspiration from living with amazing artists and writers at the Headlands Center of Arts and the Fine Arts Workcenter, Michael Clark’s Whitney Biennial 2012 performance, William Forsythe’s methods of making dance drawn and pictorial, *Final Fantasy I–VIII*, Hieronymus Bosch, Beyoncé Giselle Knowles Carter, Rihanna’s Instagram account, James Blake, Andy Warhol, Yayoi Kusama, Bjork’s interdisciplinary project “Biophilia” and my mother, Patricia Satterwhite.

Steffani Jenison

I’m inspired by the present moment. Says Brian Massumi on international-festival.org: “The present’s ‘boundary condition’...is never a closed door. It is an open threshold—a threshold of potential. You are only ever in the present in passing.”

international-festival.org/node/111
dOCUMENTA (13)

This time & place for art

by Katherine Finerty

Theaster Gates
12 Ballads of Huguenot House (installation view), 2012
Photo: Katherine Finerty
An abandoned house turned assemblage of labor and performance, an anthropological stockroom conflating human expression and suffering into universalist encounters, a five-screen video installation of twirling anthropomorphic disciplines to the disjunctive beat of an oscillating machine, and four soaring canvases collating architectural details and abstract expressions into a metaphorical map...

These were just four highlights from this year’s vast and ambitious documenta (13), the latest installment of the international exhibition that permeates the city of Kassel, Germany, once every five years, lasting one hundred days and featuring two hundred artists. The works listed above—created by Theaster Gates, Kader Attia, William Kentridge and Julie Mehretu, respectively—exemplify the diverse modes of representation that penetrated the city’s exhibition venues, from more traditional sites such as the Kunsthalle Fridericianum and documenta-Halle, to the massive Kassel Hauptbahnhof train station and the abandoned historic Huguenot House.

documenta was founded in 1955 as a symbolic attempt to break postwar cultural repression and instigate the country’s involvement in the discourse on modern art. Kassel was heavily bombed during World War II, and thus to this day functions as dialogical site of past and present reflection on geopolitics. This year’s exhibition, directed by curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, took a holistic, geo-poetic approach, collapsing the boundary between art and life. Crucial subjects that arose amongst the overwhelmingly broad and multifarious installations included ecology, archiving, intuition, the locational and a reflexive sense of collective consciousness. As Christov-Bakargiev reflects, “Art does not just come after life, but rather it offers the immensity of a temporality constituting spaces where one sees the event yet to come in the absolute of an immediate consciousness.”

Theaster Gates, 12 Ballads of Huguenot House (2012)

During the last week of documenta (13)’s hundred-day run, I had the privilege to not only to visit, but to actually live inside one of the most acclaimed and immersive works in the program: Theaster Gates’s 12 Ballads of Huguenot House. The historic German family home, bombed during the war and since abandoned, was restored with deconstructed materials from 6901 Dorchester, Gates’s cultural redevelopment initiative on the South Side of Chicago. After the building proved fully functional to accommodate a live-in crew, local performers, dancers from Tino Sehgal’s neighboring performance piece and throngs of daily visitors, the Huguenot House was further adorned with rustic yet handsome furniture and thoughtful installations to create an eccentric space imbued with as much purpose as wonder. It was a space equally suitable for collaborative making and for intimate reflection, functioning as a “a new model for cultural investigation.” Furthermore, the original home in Chicago and new home in Kassel were finally married in a poignant serenade of video installations presenting potent musical offerings scattered throughout the building and resounding off the relocated timber materials, connecting cities, stories and souls. “We wanted to bring that gift of activation and occupancy here,” Theaster explains. “We [had] this amazing sound of Chicago musicians and the black voice resonating, restoring, healing the house.”
Kader Attia, *The Repair from Occident to Extra-Occidental Cultures* (2012)

A dark and daunting warehouse, invoking ethnographic display strategies, confronts viewers with a series of heads: Italian marble portrait busts depicting regal Africans gaze at contemporary African wooden sculptures evoking harrowing photographs of mutilated war victims. The busts sit among vintage colonial archives—a stacked labyrinth that ultimately leads to a stark projection of photographs that juxtapose the “repaired” faces of injured World War I soldiers with traditional African body adornments and mended masks. This provocative display is at once mystifying and seductive, ultimately offering a thoughtful reconsideration of the cruel and magnificent malleability of the human form, colonialism and globalization. The profusion of unforeseen collocations instigates new narratives—simultaneously deconstructivist and universalist—of how Western and “Outer Western” worlds encounter one another politically and allegorically.

William Kentridge
*The Refusal of Time* (installation view), 2012
Photo: Heimo Aga

*Opposite*
Kader Attia
*The Repair from Occident to Extra-Occidental Cultures* (installation view), 2012
Photo: Katherine Finerty


Immediately enveloped by the bellowing idiosyncrasies of a metronomic beat, viewers are lured toward an intricate wooden breathing machine in a dark room. Five video projections come to life, surrounding and displacing the audience with Kentridge’s diverse techniques of audiovisual collage. The work explores the history of the control of world time through an assemblage of evocatively synced visual fluctuations. Contrapuntal metronomes beat to different rhythms, the artist recurrently traverses across the screens, a theatrical couple enact nostalgic African vignettes in illustrated sets, white strings and paint sketch an abstracted starry night, and anthropomorphized measurements of time and space (a pneumatic globe, akimbo telescope and winding clock gears) transform from purposeful, meticulous machines to agitated, triumphant bodies. By denaturalizing and spectacle-izing the contrived measurements, zoning and control of time, Kentridge exploits a charming aesthetic and immersive installation to displace the viewer and interrogate imperialist geopolitical constructs and global cultural production. The work’s dramatic denouement remains ominously poignant, as the audience follows a relentless procession of silhouettes from left to right—shadows bounding, marching or staggering to the same demise of further darkness and illusion: a black hole.
Julie Mehretu, *Mogamma (A Painting in Four Parts)* (2012)

At the end of a narrow, light-drenched hallway in the modern documenta-Halle, eyes are immediately drawn to four soaring canvases. Upon nearing the works my attention was magnetically pulled even closer to marvel at and consume the intricately detailed compositions for which Mehretu is known. Underneath gestural lines, bold shapes and scattered beats of color, finely rendered and structured architectural details emerge, whispering eloquently to the viewer. These edifices resemble the Mogamma, Cairo’s main government building, which embodies 1940s modernist style. Its name means “collective,” and also references a site-sharing a religious structure, introducing nuanced metaphors into Mehretu’s stirring abstract lexicon.

These four artists, drawn from the diverse group of two hundred, convey a contemporary global art alliance in their representations of distinct transdisciplinary productions of knowledge, research and production. Yet the intuitive ecological and spatial mindfulness embodied throughout this year’s *documenta* ultimately depicts how art now is as much about signifying cultural belonging and becoming as it as about invoking breadth and sound—its resonance is social and physical, reflexive and intuitive. The holistic impact of *dOCUMENTA* (13) is aptly exemplified by Brooklyn-based dancer and choreographer Will Rawls’s reflection on the title of Tino Sehgal’s enigmatic aura-spatial performance *This Variation*: “For me ‘this’ refers to *this* particular moment in time, with *this* particular visitor or reader and with *this* particular interpreter. It is an attempt to draw a visitor into direct dialogue with the work that tries to illuminate their presence and the presence of the work in the space where they both happen to be.”

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3. Ibid.

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Julie Mehretu  
*Mogamma (A Painting in Four Parts)* (installation view), 2012  
Photo: Katherine Finerty
Harlem Then

by Sophia Bruneau

Gordon Parks’s 1968 *LIFE* photo essay gave an intimate and, at times, stark view into the lives of the Fontenelles, an African-American family living in Harlem during the 1960s. The collection of images in this essay, which appear as part of the Studio Museum’s current exhibition *Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967*, serve as black-and-white portraits of America’s inner-city poverty during the civil rights era. In one of the images, Parks has photographed one of the Fontenelle children asleep on a bare bed, with only a coat and thin blanket for warmth, framed by gaping holes in a nearby wall. In another, Bessie Fontenelle, the matriarch of the family, together with her children, is bent over a kitchen oven for warmth. Inside the walls of a tenement building somewhere in Harlem lived a family that Parks chose to photograph as an important and, in a sense, political depiction of a family existing and breathing in America’s neglected inner cities.
Looking through Parks’s images, it is clear that the Fontenelle family existed in a very specific environmental and physical context. Outside the walls are cracked sidewalks and dilapidated tenements. The buildings themselves seem to hold a thousand secrets beneath their dirt and grime. As Harlem is currently in a period of change and evolution, I wanted to photographically investigate the areas that were once the Fontenelles’ Harlem. I wanted to see if the building that housed this family and the buildings they passed every day were still there. I wanted to explore what is there now. I worked from two of Parks’s images that showed the Fontenelles out and about in their neighborhood. Together with The Gordon Parks Foundation, which graciously offered to take a closer look at the original prints, we were able to identify a number on one of the buildings, a meat and poultry shop matching the present address of 2290 Eighth Avenue/Frederick Douglass Boulevard (at 123rd Street).

On a grey and brisk November afternoon, days before Gordon Parks’s centennial, I took the A train to 125th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. I wanted to walk the street Bessie and her children once walked. I saw the building that once read “Arlene’s Cleaners” and the building that was once the meat and poultry shop. They were pinned right next to new developments and condominiums.
In the images here, I’ve tried to match some of Parks’s original compositions with current photographs of the same areas. In the first set of images (page 58-59), Parks’s image was shot in the evening, with what looks like a light coating of snow on the ground. It seems Parks may have taken this shot from the roof of the Fontenelle’s building, which now is the 28th Precinct of the New York Police Department. Arlene’s Cleaners, on the corner of Eighth Avenue and 123rd Street, is in the bottom right corner of the original photo, with the butcher shop across the street. In the more recent photo, one can still see remnants of Parks’s original from 1967. The building at 2290 Eighth Avenue, constructed in 1889, is still in very good shape and appears to have been renovated. The smaller building to the left, at 2292 Eighth Avenue, though not clear in Parks’s photo, also seems to be the same, and now houses a floral shop.

In the second set of images (right and above), Bessie Fontenelle and her three children walk toward Eighth Avenue. The tenement buildings to their right no longer exist. The entire block where they once stood is occupied by the 28th Precinct, a large gray complex with police vehicles obstructing a good portion of the sidewalk and street. In the more recent image (above), we see a Harlem family on their way home from church walking toward what would
have been the meat and poultry shop on Eighth Avenue, just as Bessie and her children did many times, decades ago.

On St. Nicholas Avenue and 123rd Street stands a large brick apartment complex that looks as if it existed when the Fontenelles lived on the block. There are a few alleys between the buildings and, as I approached, I noticed that some of the bottom windows were boarded up or sealed off. One window revealed a ripped and tattered flag draped as a curtain. Another Parks image came to mind, an image of children sitting in an unmarked alley amid trash and rubble, framed by a wall of sooty brick and boarded up doors and windows. No children sat in my image.

The alley was completely empty save for a pile of neatly lined-up trash bags and a few boarded windows. Yet I couldn’t help but be reminded of the Fontenelle children.

We are far, but not so far, from 1967. As I sifted through my images and Parks’s images of Harlem, I observed a mixture of disappearance and reappearance—of people, families and buildings, as well as things that cannot be captured by a camera, but rather are felt and heard. As I stood where the Fontenelles once stood, I was saddened, awed, grateful, humbled and proud at the evolution of this very complex neighborhood and community.
Robert S. Duncanson and the Landscape Tradition

by Abbe Schriber, Curatorial Assistant

Robert S. Duncanson
Landscape Mural (with rocky riverscape and waterfall), ca. 1850-52
Courtesy the Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, Ohio
Though it is rare for the Studio Museum to show artwork made before the mid-twentieth century, we are excited to highlight and learn more about artists of African descent working in earlier time periods. These artists and the scholarship around them can allow us to think anew about the language of landscape—a popular genre of painting in the nineteenth century—and how it can so strongly reflect the social and political values of our times.

From September 5 to December 8, 2012, Columbia University’s Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery exhibited the work of an artist named Robert S. Duncanson (1821–1872), a painter of lush Midwestern landscapes and one of the most prominent African-American artists working in the antebellum era. A “free colored person,” he was born in Seneca County, New York, to an African-American mother and a Scottish-Canadian father, but made his name in Cincinnati, where he later moved with his family.

Part of an established group of Ohio River Valley landscape painters, Duncanson worked in the vein of the Hudson River School artists, including Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand. Like these artists, he portrayed an idyllic and romantic vision of the American countryside, untouched by industry or social realities. These paintings symbolize growing cultural and nationalistic pride as the country acquired more western territory, as well as the importance of landscape painting in molding a national identity. Inspired by Cole in particular, and the moral imperative to preserve and idealize the natural beauty of the United States, Duncanson often used allegory in his paintings. Land of the Lotus Eaters (1861), his largest and most celebrated easel painting to that point, portrays a group of indigenous people presenting a lotus blossom to a group of white men. Possibly an allusion to the Civil War or the strained race relations of the time period, Land of the Lotus Eaters was based on a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, whom Duncanson visited, with his painting in tow, in the 1860s. Cincinnati, where Duncanson lived and worked throughout his career, was at the time a major economic and cultural center in the developing western United States based on its proximity to the Ohio River and convenient location between North and South. In addition to its industrial prosperity, the city was a beacon for the arts, with many venues and exhibition sites. Though technically part of the North, Cincinnati was caught squarely between both worlds, and was a stronghold for both pro- and anti-slavery movements: Ohio had abolished slavery, Kentucky had not. On the border of the two states, Cincinnati was home to many stops on the Underground Railroad, and was often the first sight of newly escaped slaves. Duncanson supported the abolitionist cause, donating paintings and contributing to abolitionist societies. Many of his earliest patrons were anti-slavery activists who helped him get commissions and attain his stature as one of the most highly sought-after artists of the period.

Like many landscape paintings, Duncanson’s tranquil, light-filled scenes do not reveal their complicated social and political context on first glance. Reading landscape through works in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection and past exhibitions, we can link Duncanson to other significant African-American painters in the nineteenth century who often depicted landscapes without a trace of the complicated events that took place in them. Edward Mitchell Bannister (1826–1901) was a contemporary of Duncanson—his Untitled Landscape (c. 1878) in the Studio Museum collection displays the cloudy calm of a river and a sliver of shoreline, likely on the East Coast. Working in the tradition of the French Barbizon school, Bannister caused a stir by winning first prize at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, preceding artists such as Charles Ethan Porter (1847/49–1923).

Porter was the subject of the survey exhibition Charles Ethan Porter: African-American Master of Still Life at the Studio Museum in 2008. Unlike Duncanson or Bannister, Porter was less commercially successful and not as well known in the art establishment. Though he largely painted still lifes, which were not in vogue at the time, he did create landscapes on occasion. Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937) came to prominence after Duncanson, Bannister and Porter, and is also an important artist of landscape, allegorical and biblical scenes, and historical paintings. Tanner is represented in the Studio Museum collection with the naturalist lithograph The Three Marys (n.d.), which depicts Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James; and Mary Salome, traveling to anoint the body of Christ in his tomb. Tanner was the son of African Methodist Episcopal minister Benjamin Tucker Tanner and his wife Sarah, a former slave who escaped on the Underground Railroad. After studying with Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, he settled in Paris in the late nineteenth century to escape racial prejudice. However, he maintained ties with contacts such as Booker T. Washington and contributed regularly to the NAACP.

As curator Hildegard Cummings wrote of Charles Ethan Porter, “Fragmentary though it is, his story contributes to the larger African-American story that is still in the making. It involves, among other things, family values, the American dream, the effects of suppression and prejudice, and the power of hope.” This statement, in fact, could apply to Duncanson and many of the black landscape artists working in the eras before and after the Civil War. At once in the thick of and far removed from the plights of fellow African-Americans, their landscapes convey not the social realities of life, but the moral and spiritual realm promised by nature.

14-14 West 125th Street

by Hallie Ringle, Summer 2012 Curatorial Intern
In the center of Harlem, in the hustle and bustle between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, there was once an unassuming bank building. Over the last few decades, the five-story, turn-of-the-century structure has been transformed into a marriage of classic and modern architecture. Today, David Hammons’s green, black and red Untitled (African-American Flag) (2004) waves from the second story, and a modern glass facade greets visitors and passersby alike. Perhaps the most important change is the presence of the staff and collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem, which now calls this space home. The Museum has inextricably intertwined its institutional history and identity with the building’s—in turn changing the history and mission of the institution, as well as the community in which it thrives.

Before the Museum moved to its current location at 144 West 125th Street, the Studio Museum rented two stories of a building at 2033 Fifth Avenue. The previous location, a 8,700-square foot loft above a restaurant and liquor store, housed the Museum from its founding in 1968 until 1982. In 1977, the Museum began searching for a new building, with more space to accommodate a burgeoning permanent collection and expanded programming. Advocates of the move argued that the Fifth Avenue location was inadequate. Mary Schmidt Campbell, Executive Director of the Museum from 1977 to 1987, said of the old location: “Our temporary exhibition space was limited and this lack of physical presence undermined the legitimacy of the art on display. Afro-American art needed a facility that could communicate its depth and range.” A move to a better, permanent space would symbolize the continuing dedication of the Museum to the art of local, national and international artists of African descent, and present the ability to foster considerable exhibitions. The cultural community agreed. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a philanthropic organization, identified the Studio Museum as a “principal center for study of black art in America” whose “major need was for new space for continued growth.” The new building would, hopefully, provide room for offices, storage for the collection, studios for artists in residence, space for workshops and even extra space to rent out for income.

Despite suggestions to move the institution closer to other museums on the Upper East Side, Courtney Callender, then Executive Director, believed the institution had a responsibility to the community. Callender argued moving “away from the core” would go against the mission of the Museum and ultimately harm the neighborhood. Disagreements arose over the role of the institution in the community. Callender stated “We belong in the political and cultural center of the black Western World, and while we can’t be solely responsible for keeping this community intact, we could make a significant contribution.” Opponents of the move to the Upper East Side also expressed concern about impinging on El Museo del Barrio’s audience and community in East Harlem. After protests from the staff and community
members, the Board agreed to search for a new space in central Harlem and retain the original name. The decision to stay in Harlem ultimately meant a commitment to revitalizing the historic neighborhood, fostering artists of African descent and cultivating creative engagement with the community.

In 1979, after a long search, Arthur Barnes, Chairman of the Museum’s Fund Development Committee and president of the New York Urban Coalition, proposed the Board approach the New York Bank for Savings, which had an empty building on 125th Street. As luck would have it, the bank was in search of a nonprofit institution to which to gift the space after they were unable to find a buyer for the $1 million building. Named the Kenwood Building, the turn-of-the-century structure formerly housed offices for the bank. With approximately 60,000 square feet, including a basement and five stories, the space was an ideal location and size. The bank agreed, stating “We hope that this donation of the Kenwood Office Building will serve to inspire other institutions to continue to contribute to the vitality of such communities as Harlem.” On October 12, 1979, the Museum received the deed and began planning a $1.4 million restoration, marking the official decision to keep this important institution in the Harlem—perhaps leading to the revitalization of other Harlem landmarks.

The Kenwood Building was renovated by the firm Bond Ryder and Associates, under the direction of J. Max Bond Jr. (1935–2009), a Harvard-educated architect known for his modern and sometimes controversial designs. Though primarily based in New York, Bond had completed buildings around the world, including the Regional Library in Bolgatanga, Ghana. Bond was a perfect candidate, for he was intimately familiar with the Harlem community after having served on the Architects Renewal Committee of Harlem. Bond had also designed numerous buildings in New York, including the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, as well as the modernist addition to the Harvard Club of New York.

The renovation created a modern and versatile exhibition space that has allowed the curators to create groundbreaking exhibitions, alongside other complementary or independent exhibitions. Bond opened the first floor to its maximum height, and the inclusion of a mezzanine created four distinct yet interconnected spaces. During the renovation, Bond also created a shop, archive area, administrative spaces, art storage, studios for the artists in residence, darkrooms, framing shops and conservation spaces. Strongly focused on the interior of the building, this renovation created one of the largest and most preeminent spaces for African-American art in the country.

The building was further renovated throughout the 2000s. To create a more accessible entrance, the architects opened up the first floor of the building by adding a glass facade, which encourages street and sidewalk interaction with the Museum. This clear facade contributes to the formal breakdown of spaces—especially between the outside public areas and the formal interior gallery—and highlights the Museum’s commitment to community engagement. The renovated exterior made the building a distinct landmark in Harlem through its unique marriage of turn-of-the-century architecture and the modern glass entrance. The building also fashioned, from a derelict lot next door, a courtyard, café and public space. Renovations also included an auditorium for public programming and a new shop. Retaining the Museum’s community connection has led to the formation and success of important public programs, lectures and cultural activities unique to the institution.

Since The Studio Museum in Harlem’s conception in 1968, it has been a dedicated center for artists of African descent. The decision of the Museum to stay in Harlem is a true testament to its dedication to the neighborhood—the very place that has been a cradle of black culture for over a century.

3. Ibid.
(Front L-R) Councilman Fred Samuel; Mayor Edward I. Koch; Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell, Executive Director; C. Elaine Parker, assistant to Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein; Terrance Moan, Deputy Commissioner; (Rear L-R) Unknown; Charles A. Shorter, Jr., Chairman of the Board (Studio Museum) Commissioner Bess Myerson, Department of Cultural Affairs; Fred Price, assistant to City Council President Carol Bellamy, circa 1979

The Studio Museum in Harlem's current location, 144 West 125th Street, circa 1993
Photo: Sherman Bryce

(L-R) Eleanor Holmes Norton, Vice President; Carter Burden, President; Charles Innis, Director; Campbell Wylly, Trustee; Betty Blayton Taylor, Secretary; Frank Donnelly, Vice President at The Studio Museum in Harlem on opening night in 1968

(Front L-R) Councilman Fred Samuel; Mayor Edward I. Koch; Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell, Executive Director; C. Elaine Parker, assistant to Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein; Terrance Moan, Deputy Commissioner; (Rear L-R) Unknown; Charles A. Shorter, Jr., Chairman of the Board (Studio Museum) Commissioner Bess Myerson, Department of Cultural Affairs; Fred Price, assistant to City Council President Carol Bellamy, circa 1979
Dancing Visual Art: An Interview with Dianne McIntyre

by Katrina De Wees, Education Assistant and Choreographer/Performance Artist

Dianne McIntyre founded Sounds in Motion in 1972, and celebrated its fortieth anniversary in September 2012, when the American Dance Guild honored her along with dance pioneer Elaine Summers. I invited McIntyre to discuss her art-making process in light of the potential impact of Sounds in Motion in the contemporary art world. The interview took place during the fall/winter 2012–13 exhibition season at the Studio Museum, coinciding with Fore and its collection of young artists who work in diverse media, often blending artistic practices in new and innovative ways. I am most intrigued by the presence of performance and dance artists in Fore, and the contemporary fine art practice in which media blend and disciplines cross, as well as how artists such as McIntyre—who have worked in a similar fashion since 1970s—experience this work.

Katrina De Wees: You recently told me that Sounds in Motion was, for a few years, based at The Studio Museum in Harlem’s inaugural location at 2033 Fifth Avenue at 125th Street. How did your relationship with the Studio Museum form?

Dianne McIntyre: I think we were at the Studio Museum from 1976 to 1978. It was two or three years in the late 1970s. I do not remember how we got there, though. In that era, there was a network of black artists. We all just knew each other across disciplines—the theater people, the dancers and the visual artists. I don’t know if it’s like that now. We all knew each other and supported each other. It was natural. We were expressing the inner world and outer world of the black consciousness of that time in a unique way. Each person had his or her own voice, helping to advance the energy, freedom and creativity of the black community—community meaning the whole world. Nothing we did was conservative. It was quite bold.

Katrina De Wees: How has Harlem influenced some of the things you were creating?

Dianne McIntyre: It was exciting to be working inside a museum. It was exhilarating to me! And, in a practical sense, it was a bigger space. It was very expensive. The community honored the Studio Museum, and it was a divine location for us. The space was spotless. We had to be very careful because of the kind of work in our classes. In dance, you go across the floor, and do your combinations across the floor. Sometimes people were flailing across with leaps. People would always catch each other going across the floor to protect the artwork. I didn’t notice it at first, but I would take on the moves or themes or energies or colors of the work exhibited. It was all around me. We had no mirrors. Our mirrors were the paintings on the wall. So we reflected those.

Katrina De Wees: What brought you to the Studio Museum at that time? Were you interested in the physical space, or was there another advantage to working inside a visual art museum?

Dianne McIntyre: It was the vibrancy and the energy on the avenue, people selling things on the street, the junkies nodding out on the corner, the playing with the fire hydrants and the feeling of neighborhood that I didn’t find in other parts of Manhattan. There was always music in the air, from boom boxes and windows. The whole community was really just like one dance.

What also made me aware of Harlem’s influence was Talley Beatty, one of the master choreographers of the twentieth century. He was a person I idolized, and later I got to know him, which was such an honor. I allowed him to come to the studio to rehearse anytime. He came, and not to rehearse. All he would do is just stand and look out the window. He told me he would get ideas from watching people walk down the street, their interactions with each other and their heads, and the way they did their little bop walks. He could tell the stories that were transpiring between them by body language.

Katrina De Wees: In the essay “Moves on Tops of Blues,” dance scholar Veta Goler mentioned that Romare Bearden was an explicit influence in some of your work. In what way have you been influenced by Bearden’s work?
DM: I was influenced mostly by Bearden’s collage work. You could say I was directly influenced. The great thing about visual art is that it is continual. It touches you in your gut, in your heart. You feel, through his images. He touches on something you cannot translate into words. I wanted to be like Romare Bearden. I wanted to do my work, which comes out of my experience, about my people, and it will reach far and wide, and touch many people. So in one way, he influenced me in the way his art looks and feels. I also was jealous that he was able to work all by himself. You could say my dancers were like my art materials. Later, I did get to work directly with him. I choreographed a piece, Ancestral Voices, for Alvin Ailey. He asked me if I would like Romare Bearden to do the costumes and set. I about fainted. I was just thrilled beyond anything you could ever imagine. Romare’s part was very successful. His rendering for one of the characters for the dances became a poster for the Ailey season that year.

KD: What other visual artists did you encounter at the Studio Museum who may have influenced your work?

DM: A few names I remember are Al Loving, Ed Clark and Valerie Maynard, who was a sculptor based in Harlem. George Mingo, Betty Blayton Taylor, Howardena Pindell, Charles Searles and Melvin Edwards, as well. Frank Stewart, David Hammons, Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold and Senga Nengudi. Senga and I did a collaborative work together, right before Sounds in Motion went to the Studio Museum. Maybe she has something to do with us being there. I don’t know! The pieces that inspired me most were really big in size. And they were bold, crossed between abstract and realism, Black Power and mysticism. That was the Black Arts Movement. The work was bold and metaphorical. When I was at the Studio Museum the whole exhibit was about caskets. During that period, I did this piece called The Voyage about the Middle Passage. A lot of the power of the piece came from that exhibit. I choreographed it at the Museum. I had to use extra energy during that period. In The Voyage, the people had chains on their legs. There was hopefulness to it, because they would break out of the chains. They would dream about freedom. It was abstract and colors and geometric shapes. Also, the shape of the sculpture was a big influence on me. I liked to create sculptural movement, and when there were sculptures on the floor, we had to be very careful about how we moved through the space. It influenced my own tradition of making shapes.

According to Time Out New York, Dianne McIntyre is one of modern dance’s reigning divas. She has been an inspirational force in modern dance for four decades as a performer, choreographer and teacher for work in concert dance, theater, film and television. McIntyre’s choreography has been on Broadway and in screen classics Beloved and Miss Ever’s Boys, which received an Emmy Nomination. Other awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, three Bessies and two AUDELCOs. Most recently, she choreographed Ntozake Shange’s why I had to dance at Oberlin College and the Nina Simone Project for Dallas Black Theater in 2011.

For more information, visit diannemcintyre.com

by Michelle C. Kane

This issue’s coloring page is created by New York–area artist, graphic designer and former Studio Museum design intern Michelle Kane. Kane received her BFA from St. John’s University in 2009, and her MFA from New Jersey City University, where she is currently an adjunct professor. Her MFA show Iconic showcased the sleek yet playful aesthetic that has become the foundation of her work, which spans many media. Nerd culture, Korean and Japanese pop culture influences, and a fascination with mass production and marketing collide in works that, according to Kane, are bits and pieces of herself, simplified and packaged for consumption.

Instructions

1. Draw our bodies
2. Give us clothes
3. Make us colorful

Turn the page to color in Michelle’s latest creations!
DIY Postcard Remix

by Elan Ferguson, Family Programs Coordinator

In celebration of the tenth anniversary of Harlem Postcards at the Studio Museum, you can use postcards to make an accordion-style book. Postcard Remix: Journey Journals is about reusing and repurposing beloved postcards into artistic journals that can hold ideas, pictures and more.

You will need:
• 2 postcards
• 17” ribbon
• 6” x 30” sheet of plain paper
• Scissors
• Glue
• Color or patterned paper and tape (optional)
Step 1
Place the postcards face down on a table, and pick the one you want for the back of the book. Place a line of glue down the center of the postcard.

Step 2
Attach the middle of the ribbon to it—so that equal lengths of ribbon hang off each side. Set the postcards aside while the glue dries.

Step 3
Cut plain paper into a long, narrow rectangle. If the paper you have is not large enough, you can tape together smaller pieces to make the 6" x 30" rectangle.

Step 4
Using the unglued postcard as a guide, begin to fold the long rectangle back and forth, like an accordion. Make sure each fold is within the edge of the postcard, so that the finished accordion is smaller than the postcard itself. This will ensure that your accordion-style book will fit neatly between its postcard covers.

Step 5
Attach each end of the accordion to the back of one of the postcards with glue. Don’t use too much, as it can make the postcard warp. Then fold the accordion together, with a postcard on each side, and tie the ends of the ribbon together on the front of the book while the glue dries.

Step 6
Your Journey Journal is complete, and you can begin to fill its pages with writings, sketches, photos or other items you glue into it. Use color or patterned paper to cover the postcards if you like, or to decorate the insides of the journal. Let your imagination roam. We hope you can keep the journal with you always, and make any trip into a journey of discovery.
Introduction:
Brenna Youngblood’s *Buffalo Burger* (2012) provides educators with a variety of parallels between contemporary art and their curricula through its connections to the humanities and language. Providing the basis of the concept of “the image as text,” the mixed-media canvas provides a basis for discussion on identity, connections to community and tradition, as well as art exploration. As students engage in the art-making process, they will gain experience with a layering technique, investigate identity and explore relationships between symbols, found objects and collage.

Activity Objective:
Students will explore objects around them, investigate found objects and relationships between materials, and create artwork in which they express an aspect of their own identities.

Materials:
- 14” x 11” or larger posterboard
- Empty boxes found around the house or classroom, such as cereal boxes, pasta boxes, tissue boxes or fast food containers
- Paper scraps of various sizes, colors and textures, including tissue paper, cardstock, construction paper or newspaper
- Images from magazines, cards or photos for use in collage
- Ziploc bags
- Tape and glue

Vocabulary Words:
- **Symbol** - Something that represents or stands for something other than itself. A symbol may be an object, person, idea, etc.
- **Symbolism** - Practice or art of using symbols
- **Focal Point** - Center in a piece of art that draws your attention
- **Collage** - Artwork made from assembling different materials into a new whole. It may contain newspaper or magazine clippings, portions of photographs, texts or ribbons applied to a piece of paper or canvas with an adhesive.
- **Found Object** - Objects or products with non-art function used within artwork

Set-up and Preparation:
1. Introduce vocabulary words and discuss the meanings of symbolism, focal point, collage and found objects with class.
2. Ask students bring in empty boxes prior to the project. Keep a collection of extra boxes in your classroom.
3. Distribute Ziploc bags to students and ask them to fill them with images they can identify with, such as depictions of animals, places or items taken from publications. Be sure to have a collection of collage images set aside to show examples of what they might collect.
4. Place adhesives and posterboard at center of table. Leave space for work to develop since it is a layering project.
5. Set out collage materials, making sure students have access to a variety of paper scraps and other objects from which to choose.
Lesson Plan

Image as Me/Layered Collage Project

Methods (Steps):

1. Ask students to identify the variety of items and brands in front of them.
2. Ask students to pick an image from their collected collage scraps with which they most identify.
3. Students can then begin to place their first layer of paper scraps on a sheet of posterboard with adhesives such as glue and tape. Remind them that the colors they choose and the placement of scraps and found objects are symbolic of their ideas.
4. Have each student place his or her chosen image as a focal point on the posterboard.
5. Students can then add another layer of scraps to fill loose or empty areas.
6. Ask students to think of one word to name the image they have created. Have them take the collected boxes and cut out printed letters composing the titles of their works. Show Brenna Youngblood’s Buffalo Burger as an example.
7. Have the students adhere the letters to the posterboard. Remind them of the use of a focal point as they decide how to arrange their letters.
8. Allow time to dry.

Closure:

A. Display finished collages and ask students to explain the choices they made in creating them
B. Ask students to explain their connections to the focal point images they chose.
C. Discuss symbolism in the finished projects.
Friends
Fall/Winter 2012–13 Opening Reception

Photos: Scott Rudd
The Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize was established in 2006 by jazz impresario, musician and philanthropist George Wein to honor his late wife Joyce Alexander Wein, a longtime Trustee of the Studio Museum and a woman whose life embodied a commitment to the power and possibilities of art and culture. The $50,000 award recognizes and honors the artistic achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise and creativity. Jennie C. Jones is the 2012 recipient.

Jennie C. Jones creates visual and sonic abstractions that explore the histories of music and sound. Calling her artistic approach “listening as a conceptual practice,” Jones creates work in many forms—from drawing and painting to sculpture and sound installation—investigating how sound and music can be portrayed with a sparse visual language. Jones is particularly interested in the simultaneous innovations in art and music of the 1950s and 1960s, drawing upon the influences and aesthetics of experimental jazz and Minimalist art as she embraces improvisation, ready-made objects and the material culture of music.

Born in 1968 in Cincinnati, Ohio, Jennie C. Jones lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1991) and an MFA from Rutgers, Mason Gross School of the Arts (1996). She has completed residencies at the Lower East Side Printshop (2011), the American Academy in Rome (2008), the Liguria Study Center for the Arts and Humanities (2003–04), the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (1999) and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1996), among others. Jones has exhibited her sculptures, drawings and audio works nationally and internationally at institutions including Artists Space, the Aspen Art Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, The Kitchen, The Menil Collection and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Her work was included in the Studio Museum exhibitions Freestyle (2001), 30 Seconds off an Inch (2010) and Shift: Projects, Perspectives, Directions (2012). Solo exhibitions of her work will open at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in 2013 and at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston in 2014.
Gala 2012, originally scheduled for October 29, 2012, was postponed due to the impact of Superstorm Sandy. We were all deeply saddened by the extraordinary circumstances that affected and continue to affect many of our colleagues and neighbors in New York and the surrounding areas.

We recognize and thank our supporters and vendors for their patience and understanding. We are thrilled to announce that Gala 2012 was rescheduled for Monday, February 4, 2013. Gala 2012 celebrates the incomparable Agnes Gund and marks the seventh year of The Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize.
### Gala 2012 List

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Member Spotlight

by William Armstrong, Development Associate

Why do you think it is important to become a Member of The Studio Museum in Harlem?

Going to the Museum, seeing the art, having intellectual dialogue—the moments we would never encounter outside of this space—make the Studio Museum so special. But we should not assume the things we love will always be there. A lot of museums are like vaults, holding the knowledge of the past, while still collecting contemporary markers of where art is going. I feel the Studio Museum does this in a really, really smart way. The Museum reaches out to the community and it’s not about who you are, or if you are old or young. I want the Studio Museum to be here, and as a Member I am helping steward that.

Do you have a special memory that connects you to the Studio Museum?

Let me tell you the story of how I fell in love with the Studio Museum. I was a sophomore at Wheaton College doing an independent study on black art, specifically black art in America. I was having a very hard time finding black art on display. Many museums have African art in their collections, but it was hard to find contemporary black art, which is why I love the Studio Museum. The first time I actually saw a Kehinde Wiley painting was at the Studio Museum. It stands out in my memory. The work was gorgeous.

Do you have a favorite work in Fore?

My favorite piece in Fore is the one with a church pew (Nate Young, Closing No. 1 [2012]). You’re sitting on a bench, listening to this preacher, and he’s talking about painting. Sitting there, I was thinking, “I love this, this is for what I see, feel, and what I know.” There is this incredible mash-up, and it makes you feel happy. “I’m happy this is here, and happy that this is here for other people to encounter.” I’ve been thinking about this every day. I just have to support this kind of work.

You also work in the arts. What do you enjoy the most about the field?

I love knowing that my work creates and funds opportunities for art education. Whether I have a good day or a bad day, it feels good going home knowing that I made an impact, made someone else’s life better. I also like getting to meet the talent and going to incredible performances. I recently got to walk backstage with the Four Tops. [Galloway reveals a picture with the singing group on her phone.]
The Museum’s Membership Program has played an important role in the institution’s growth for over forty years. Thank you to all the following who helped maintain our ambitious schedule of exhibitions and public programs during the 2012–13 season.

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**Admission**
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**Museum Hours**
Thursday and Friday, noon–9 pm; Saturday, 10 am–6 pm; Sunday, noon–6 pm.

The Museum is closed to the public on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but available for school and group tours by appointment on these days. For more information on scheduling a tour, visit studiomuseum.org
The Studio Museum in Harlem is the nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally and internationally and for work that has been inspired and influenced by black culture. It is a site for the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society.