In November 2016, I sent an email to supporters and friends of The Studio Museum in Harlem. In it, I wrote:

For nearly fifty years, the Studio Museum has been a site for this intersection between art and history, art and instigation, art and critical reflection. We believe passionately that the radical voices of artists telling the truths of the moment are essential to our democracy.

Today, this work is more necessary than ever. We must continue our commitment to artists by giving them a space to share their gifts of provocation and insight, as well as nurture our friends, neighbors and families, whose voices and actions have the power to illuminate our bright future.

I was incredibly touched by the outpouring of support and positive feedback that I received in response. Your messages confirmed my deep belief that the work we do at the Studio Museum is meaningful and important. But even more, it reminded me how incredibly lucky I am to be a member of a community that believes in the power and possibility of art and artists.

Just as they fill the galleries of the Studio Museum, the voices of this community fill the following pages—from the emerging voices of our tremendously talented 2016–17 artists in residence, to tributes to great artists and friends who have recently passed, including Betty Blayton-Taylor, one of the Museum’s founding board members and a passionate supporter of our mission. I hope that this issue fills you with the same joy and pride I feel to be a part of this community, and the artistic and cultural legacy of our Museum and our iconic neighborhood.

I’d like to offer special congratulations to my dear friend and a cornerstone of our community, curator, historian, educator and tireless advocate for artists of African descent, Kellie Jones. Like countless others in our field, I have been privileged to know Kellie since the very beginning of my career, and have learned so much from her. I am thrilled she has been awarded a 2016 MacArthur Fellowship in acknowledgement of her vision, intelligence, commitment to scholarship and tremendous impact. Congratulations, Kellie!

And I want to thank each and every one of you in the Studio Museum’s broad and diverse community for your support—past, present and future. We could not have become who we are today without you, and we are so grateful to have you by our side as we face the challenges of the future.

I can’t wait to see you all uptown.

Thelma Golden
Director and Chief Curator
inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk, Rudy Shepherd is presented in partnership with NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks, along with the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance. inHarlem is made possible thanks to support from the Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation, William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance with funding provided by the Harlem Community Development Corporation.
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What’s Up

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

Exhibition Schedule
Fall/Winter 2016–17

On view November 17, 2016–March 5, 2017
Circa 1970
VideoStudio: Meeting Points
The Window and the Breaking of the Window
Black Cowboy

On view January 26–July 2, 2017
Excerpt

Always on View
Harlem Postcards
Glenn Ligon: Give Us a Poem
Adam Pendleton: Collected (Flamingo George)

On view through July 25, 2017
inHarlem: Kevin Beasley
Morningside Park

inHarlem: Simone Leigh
Marcus Garvey Park

inHarlem: Kori Newkirk
St. Nicholas Park

inHarlem: Rudy Shepherd
Jackie Robinson Park
Introducing the 2016–17 Artists in Residence

This year The Studio Museum in Harlem is delighted to welcome Autumn Knight, Julia Phillips and Andy Robert as the 2016–17 artists in residence. A core component of the Museum’s mission and history, the Artist-in-Residence program provides each artist with studio space, a stipend and the opportunity to exhibit at the end of the eleven-month residency. Here, Autumn, Julia and Andy share a little bit about their practices and what inspires them.

Autumn Knight

Well, there was that time that I fell off a basket at a grocery store and blacked out. When I was revived, I told the doctor that I was reaching for the pink cookies. The ones with the frosting and sprinkles. And the time I called a mechanical puppet a “motherfucker” for his poor performance skills at my fifth birthday party. Or the moment I had to respond quickly to why my elementary classmate told me she didn’t like black people. Oh, and the fire.

And there is now the use of terms such as “projective identification” or “performance” to define and script this material into coherence and worthiness. The activity I produce is therapy, dance, theater, encounter, sculpture and collaboration. What exists as a thread throughout a series of performances, installations and video works is essentially experimental improvisation, an exhaustion of the possibilities of liveness.

My process builds on assessing the texture of relationships and exploiting/exposing the dirty absurdities and inaccuracies that lie in those bonds. Basically, where’s the lie? The inclusion of humor in my work is nonnegotiable. It is the place to dialogue openly with death and pain. (I think?) The output attempts to produce a visual language and feeling that my mama/yo mama can understand, but also lends itself to criticality (or not).

Introducing the 2016–17 Artists in Residence

Andy Robert

When in the studio I allow things to permeate; my paintings reflect life and speak to all its complexities and contradictions. I see a world of mass communication yet increased voicelessness, and see art as a viable tool, mode and form of critical reflection capable of addressing this paradox. I am looking at things in our community. I am thinking about conversations we have publicly as a nation, and the ones we have in private. The documentation and representing happening here is discursive, and it’s experimental—it’s one of voice, it’s narrative and attitude, it’s a worldview. It’s both black and abstract, diasporic and of many people. It’s life on the street and viral, and simultaneously our joys and our concerns. And I reflect on economic debt as linked invariably to a brokenness of being. I am interested in what happens to things when they come into proximity and/or collide, and view painting from observation and various sources—photographic source material and documents—as a way to address fragmentation as a state of being and inequality of wealth and power. Snapshots, photo albums and found imagery also act as points of reference, rough drafts, a first take at an idea for a painting.

I’m balancing abstraction with recognizable imagery. I’m working at the edge of representation and interested in slowing down recognition, and enjoy the experimentation and tinkering that comes with painting pictures. I believe images are to be taken apart and put back together. This allows for elements of chance and contingency. I find poetry in how things come together—in the dériva (“drift”)—in getting lost, in texture, in roughing the surface, in the gravity of drips and runs. There is tension and contrast between gridded systems, layering, process and line, between drawing, gesture and the phenomenal experience of color and paint.

Making paintings takes time. Like a form of study, it happens slowly. This experimental, improvisational approach takes my hand—the artist’s body—history and our contemporary moment into account. Images come against the body. Thus rendered variations in finish, surface, texture and detail emphasize friction in the layering, the breaking of the picture plane, and the shift of perspective and time. The act of painting is reflective, it’s spending time with. It’s the fragmentation and blur of reflection(s) and memory. It’s being in dissonance. It’s taking something apart to put it back together; you risk breaking it. And in the process a different kind of play happens—slowed down, something else is learned. Something unexpected is seen, translated and made anew. A provocation that the viewer must confront and come to terms with. It is in the discursive act of painting pictures, in its transformative power and shifts that I ask, “What is at play?”

Andy Robert
Western Union: Bless Their Little Hearts, 2015
Courtesy the artist and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles
Introducing the 2016–17 Artists in Residence

Julia Phillips

I invent tools and apparatuses of imaginary functions. The objects relate to the human body and I often create them with an interaction between two bodies in mind. My primary medium is ceramics, which I combine with metal structures and hardware that hold the ceramics in place.

The functions of each object are ambiguously revealed by the title, but also by some identifiable body casts, such as handles, footprints or partial masks, and by mechanical adjustments, such as wing nuts, hinges and straps. The titles suggest subject-object relationships—Regulator, Positioner, Observer or Objectifier—the “doer” and the “done-to.” These titles and relations that I intend to visualize through objects are metaphors and can be understood on a broader sociopolitical level. For example, the concept of “regulation” can happen physically between two bodies, but also applies to gender and colonial relations.

Because the functionality of an object serves as a metaphor and a play with imagination, I think of the tools and apparatuses as being in a passive state. They are nonactivated devices, almost like domestic tools hanging in a broom closet. The fragility of ceramics also negates actual use.

The functions of the objects remain unresolved. The oppressive and forceful elements in the objects hint at the power dynamics between two entities. In the larger apparatuses the tile elements often carry glaze traces that indicate a specific position of an absent body.

I like it when viewers approach my objects like crime scenes and make assumptions about potential use. Viewers are invited to identify with either side of the subject-object relationships, which brings them closer to the function and hence the meaning of the work.

Julia Phillips
Positioner (installation view, top, and detail, bottom), 2016
Courtesy the artist and Campoli Presti
Harlem is about family and all of the many intertwined cultures that provide richness and texture. I redrew a Jazz Age–era typeface and added my own family and friends to the mix, including my ninety-six-year-old Aunt Pearl, who lived in Harlem when I was a kid. The art serves as a poster for both old and new Harlem, and makes a subtle nod to the neon signs that lit up clubs and theaters in days gone by.

Gail Anderson  
(b. 1962, The Bronx, NY)  
Lives and works in New York

Nayland Blake  
(b. 1960, New York, NY)  
Lives and works in New York

As a child, I was taught that leaving a hat on the bed is unlucky, and that I shouldn’t wear yellow. But I’ve always loved to swim in the summer style of New York’s street vendors, so when I saw this hat I couldn’t resist.
This work appropriates a detail of Paolo Veronese’s 1552 Portrait of Count Giuseppe da Porto with his Son Adriano, which depicts both the loving embrace of father and son, as well as Italian aristocracy and excess. Talwst’s interest in Renaissance imagery stems from the erasure and whitewashing of black historical figures such as Saint Maurice and Saint Jerome. In this work, the artist literally paints over the work of the great master to reclaim this violent act through a subversive gesture. The complete blackness results in a total removal of the previous identity, but it is also an act of reclamation. The appropriated painting displays that positive images of white fatherhood have saturated the Euro-Western consciousness since the Renaissance. Today they are perpetuated and upheld by modern media. No comparable mainstream discourse exists with regards to black fatherhood, which is too often depicted through damaging stereotypes. This work is inspired by the artist’s own memories of weekends spent with his father. Thus he seeks to depict an alternative to the prevalent historical narrative through physically rendering the figures black.

In the winter of 2012 in Harlem, Zoë Buckman had a loaded encounter with a Hindu spiritual leader that prompted her to write a poem entitled “Swami-ji.” Here Buckman revisits the piece, but this time she explores the relationship between sculpture and written text by superimposing an excerpt from the poem onto a gynecological examination table from the 1800s that she reupholstered with vintage lingerie. This work is part of her ongoing series “Mostly It’s Just Uncomfortable,” her response to the recent attacks on Planned Parenthood in the United States—attempts to curtail women’s access to sexual health and their right to choice.
Circa 1970 presents paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and sculpture from The Studio Museum in Harlem's collection. The featured works, all made between 1970 and 1979, reflect the historical, sociopolitical and cultural landscapes of these years. Following the tumult of the 1960s, the 1970s brought further victories in social activism and radical progress in culture and history, particularly for African Americans. Black artists who previously had been overlooked in favor of their white contemporaries received recognition from major art institutions. Artists working throughout this decade had complex practices that challenged prior conventions of art, through media and technique or with subject matter that addresses social justice and African diasporic histories. Radical forms of making such as body-based art or performance art emerged and were embraced by artists and critics alike. Recent, key gifts to the Studio Museum’s permanent collection of artworks by McArthur Binion, Robert Blackburn and David Hammons conceptually and formally drive the exhibition's examination of this rich decade.

The decade of the 1970s is marked with firsts in American social and cultural history. Technology and scientific innovation became part of everyday life, from the millions of Americans who watched the moon landings in the early 1970s to the invention of the microprocessor and the first cell phone. Many major American cities elected their first African-American mayors in the 1970s. In 1972, Shirley Chisholm became the first black person to seek presidential nomination by a major political party, and the first woman to seek nomination by the Democratic Party. This decade of increased social consciousness and awareness allowed for greater inclusivity within a more progressive mainstream art world. After protests by artists and audiences, the art world experienced a shift in the early 1970s and began opening its doors to black artists. In expanding media, material and subject matter, the artistic practices of the 1970s were charged with aesthetic and institutional critiques.

The 1970s was also the first full decade in the life of the Studio Museum and laid the groundwork for much of the work the Museum continues to do today. The Museum was fortunate to have the vision of its founding directors and curators, as well as the generosity of many artists and donors, to collect strategically and to support the careers of artists of African descent. Today the collection numbers more than two thousand works, and the Museum continues to preserve and present the achievements of these artists. This exhibition considers a key moment in black culture and history, and includes works by two dozen artists.

Circa 1970 is organized by Lauren Haynes, former Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and now Curator, Contemporary Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.
Circa 1970

David Hammons
*Untitled,* 1976
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Glenn Ligon  2016.17
Photo: Adam Reich

Known for his wry and provocative works that reflect on the African-American experience while subverting art market commercialism and normative art audiences, multimedia artist David Hammons is a critical pioneer in black performance art and assemblage. Hammons incorporated performance and his own body into this untitled body print, pressing his grease-covered body on paper with a series of movements and multiple impressions. He then sprinkled the paper with powdered pigment to reveal traces of his body and face that were abstracted and transformed by the process. This print features elements of collage and painterly gestures, along with the materials of grease and powdered pigment. The graphic, figurative and performative work is embedded with identity politics and critically questions the implications of the historical reduction of the black male body to physical features. By using his body in performance and as material, Hammons challenges audiences to face their prejudices.

Senga Nengudi
*R.S.V.P.* V, 1976
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee  2003.10.22
Photo: Adam Reich

Los Angeles–based sculptor and performance artist Senga Nengudi began her “R.S.V.P.” series in 1975 as a set of objects activated by performance. Early in her career, Nengudi worked alongside a group of avant-garde black artists working between Los Angeles and New York who often incorporated performance into their work, such as Maren Hassinger and David Hammons. The artist considers her nylon pantyhose and sand compositions, such as *R.S.V.P.* V, “abstracted reflection[s] of used bodies . . . ” Nengudi choreographed a set of movements through the sculptures, pulling, twisting and shaping the forms to create ephemeral impressions in the material. The works were activated by the artist herself or collaborators such as Hassinger, as seen in the series of photographs titled *Performance Piece* (1978). Fleshy, elastic and activated by the body, the sculpture connects the history of figurative art with both assemblage and feminism, particularly black feminism. In contrast to the hard-edge minimalism practiced by many male artists in the 1960s and 1970s, Nengudi’s sculpture is biomorphic and fragile—but resilient. The title of the series, “R.S.V.P.” is the acronym for the French “répondez, s’il vous plaît,” the common call for response to a social invitation. Through this title, Nengudi implicates viewers in how they receive and interact with the works.
**Frank Bowling**  
*Blond Betsey, 1976*  
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Ninah & Michael Lynne  
2015.22  
**Photo:** Adam Reich

In the 1960s Frank Bowling moved to New York, where he was influenced by the Abstract Expressionism movement that was increasing in popularity across the city. Using formalism—the study of the purely visual—and expanding upon the boundaries of the canvas, Bowling uses bright hues and saturated color fields in ways that were innovative and contrasted with the work of other color field artists practicing during the same period. Bowling applies color to large canvases in large, heavy swaths. *Blond Betsey*, named after Elizabeth Baker, long-time editor of *Art in America*, is one of Bowling’s poured paintings, works where he would pour wet paint onto previously stained canvases. Characterized by a vertical tension and motion in the paint, these works come from a brief moment of experimentation through application of color and form in the early 1970s. The negative space on the outer edges of *Blond Betsey* is in stark contrast to the washes of deep citrine and blue that dominate the work. The viewer is given a moment of pause before the eye is brought to the outer edges, where paint is applied less densely. This interplay between closely packed pigment and the absence of color allows Bowling’s technique and gesture to shine through.

**McArthur Binion**  
*History of Application: Talking to You, 1977*  
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase with funds provided by Barbara Bluhm-Kaul and Don Kaul  
2016.20  
**Photo:** Adam Reich

McArthur Binion is best known for using oil stick and crayon to create densely packed, patterned works. Often using a grid structure in which forms are repeated to make subtle shapes, Binion compares his work to the improvisational bebop style of jazz. The crayon markings ebb and flow throughout Binion’s works, reflecting the musicality that he feels is a crucial part of his practice. Binion’s 1970s abstractions rely heavily on color and pattern to create subtle mirror-image shapes. Blending autobiographical elements and formalist abstraction, Binion creates rich swaths of color that shimmer across the surface. Layered onto the aluminum, the constrained palette references a popular color scheme from the decade. Mossy green interplays with a bright orange, while saturated yellow and brick red intermingle with a deep blue. All the colors intersect in the middle, yet there is a line that painstakingly separates the two halves of the work. The rectangles become foils for each other, and explore light and dark and the application of material. The impact of his labor and meticulousness stretches across every inch of the surface, while simultaneously presenting painterly gestures.
VideoStudio: Meeting Points presents videos by Theo Eshetu, Zineb Sedira and Ezra Wube that explore the formation of identity through cultural exchange. Each work depicts this exchange through three eras of European and African interaction: slavery, colonialism and contemporary immigration. In these videos the marketplace and ports become the physical landscapes for this contact, where both resistance and the negotiation of cultural identities take place.

In his video installation *The Slave Ship*, Theo Eshetu uses seascapes and landscapes to explore the history of slavery. The video references J.M.W. Turner’s 1840 painting of the same title, in which a boat sails through turbulent waters after enslaved men and women have been thrown overboard. Eshetu readapts the mythical tale of *The Flying Dutchman*, a ghost ship that sails the oceans but can never make port. Eshetu’s *The Slave Ship* suggests that ghosts of deceased enslaved men and women have reached the ports of Europe to haunt the waters of the transatlantic trade. The video was filmed in the free trade port of Hamburg, historically a site where raw materials from Africa have arrived in Europe to be processed. Connecting the past trade of people and present trade of goods, Eshetu questions the roles of freedom and slavery in the context of contemporary global economies.

Zineb Sedira’s *Saphir* explores the significance of arrival and departure, as Sedira’s two protagonists play out a developing dialogue between the sea—as site of both connection and separation—and the colonial hotel Es Safir in the port of Algiers. On one screen, a solitary man walks up and down a waterfront, observing ferries coming and going from the port. The other shows an unnamed woman, the daughter of French settlers who left Algeria for France before independence, as she travels across the Mediterranean to Ethiopia to reconnect with her roots. Here, the word “sapphire” takes on many meanings: the color of the sea, the name of the hotel where the unnamed woman stays and “safir,” the Arabic word for ambassador. Through the narratives of these two figures, Sedira examines the legacy of colonialism in Algeria, particularly the contemporary emigration of people to other countries and the struggle to assert its independent cultural identity. In this context water acts as the element by which colonialism arrived, and the method by which contemporary migration takes place.

Ezra Wube’s video work *Menged Merkato* is inspired by Emanuel Admassu’s essay of the same title. In the essay, Admassu explores the history of the largest open-air market in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The market was founded in the late nineteenth century as means of centralizing trade, and was moved to the northwest portion of the city by the Italians during their occupation in World War II. Though the Italian occupiers saw this as means of segregating the local population on the periphery of the city, the market served as an important meeting ground that helped form and strengthen Ethiopian identity. In Wube’s video work, the architecture of the market serves as the crossroads that brings different people together and provides a physical site of cultural exchange.

*VideoStudio* is an ongoing series of exhibitions of works in video and performance that was inaugurated in fall 2008.

*VideoStudio: Meeting Points* is organized by Hallie Ringle, Assistant Curator.

Opposite:
Theo Eshetu
*The Slave Ship* (installation view), 2015
Courtesy the artist, Axis Gallery, NY & NJ and Raw Material Company, Dakar
*Photo*: Adam Reich
Black Cowboy

*Black Cowboy* offers a window into several communities of American cowboys, people with long traditions of horse keeping and training. The cowboy has often been pictured in visual culture as a symbol of white masculinity, including in early twentieth-century American paintings and more modern images of John Wayne or the Marlboro Man. But what about the black cowboy?

Historians estimate that in the 1800s, one in four Texan cowboys was African-American, and that the cowboys of the American West were much more diverse than stereotypes depict—a mix of black, white, Mexican and Native American cattle hands. Black soldiers who fought during and after the Civil War in the 1860s, known as Buffalo Soldiers, were enlisted by the U.S. government to protect settlers during the westward expansion, and could be considered cowboys. The tradition of the black cowboy continues today, and such communities are alive and well in places such as Queens, New York; Philadelphia;
Black Cowboy

The communities represented in film and photographs in Black Cowboy reflect this long history. We find some cowboys in unexpected places: riding down a city avenue in Ron Tarver’s Concrete Canyon, or in more complicated spaces, such as those Chandra McCormick captures in her photograph Angola Prison Rodeo, Men Breaking Wild Horses, of a rodeo staged within the confines of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Women and children are equal to men in their ability to embody the cowboy’s independence and stoic pride, as seen in several of the images by Deana Lawson and Brad Trent. Black Cowboy expands our idea of what constitutes an American icon and legacy, and complicates a narrative that has been uniquely and inseparably woven into popular culture.

Black Cowboy is organized by Amanda Hunt, Associate Curator.
The Window and the Breaking of the Window

The Window and the Breaking of the Window is a focused look at the current sociopolitical climate. Inspired by poignant words found in one of conceptual and performance artist Pope.L’s “Skin Set” drawings, the title of this exhibition at once addresses policies and violence that historically impact communities of color, and also offers an allegory for the breaking of the very cycle of violence being protested. The works in the exhibition confront the overwhelming, often brutal, frighteningly regular incidents across present-day America, which have led to a surge in public protest.

Many of these works reveal the grit, pain and, ultimately, integrity of people who have been moved to protest the injustices they see in their communities. There are many parallels, in the images seen on televisions and social media streams today, to a larger established American history, including the marches and protests for equality during the civil rights movement and marches staged here in Harlem after World War I.

Communities of color continue to suffer disproportionate consequences of legal policies that seem to support cycles of violence. Some of the works on view detail events that have led to protest or rioting, such as Deborah Grant’s 56 Blows, which starkly addresses the 1991 Rodney King beating in Los Angeles.

The Window and the Breaking of the Window asks us to consider the current landscape of political activism. Devin Allen responds to this quickly evolving question in his powerful black-and-white photographs taken on the ground during the protests in Baltimore after the death of Freddie Gray, a member of his community. Allen’s photographs, excerpted from his larger series, “A Beautiful Ghetto,” are an example...
of a tactic of sharing images in real time, in this case with the Baltimore Uprising as its subject. Today, images taken during protests across America are shared immediately on social media. This transmission of visual information via technology had not been possible until now, and this exhibition is a way of contributing to that urgency.

Since its founding in 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem has exhibited work by black artists committed to bearing witness to acts of protest. Many of the works in this exhibition are from the Museum’s collection, or are by alumni of its Artist-in-Residence program. Works by Kerry James Marshall and Chris Ofili are in conversation with newer voices to create a historical context for the act of protest, and are a continued exploration of this complex subject and history.

The Window and the Breaking of the Window is organized by Amanda Hunt, Associate Curator.

Opposite: Devin Allen
Untitled (from “A Beautiful Ghetto” series), 2015
Courtesy the artist

Above Right: Deborah Grant
56 Blows (from “Blackboard” series), 2003
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase made possible by a gift from Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn 2003.10.3
Photo: Sasha Mendez

Above Left: Pope.L
Black People Are the Window and the Breaking of the Window, 2004
The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase made possible by a gift from Barbara Karp Shuster, New York 2005.4.2
Photo: Sasha Mendez
Rudy Shepherd’s work explores the nature of evil through painting, drawing, sculpture and performance. Over the past several years, Shepherd has developed an ongoing series of watercolor portraits depicting victims and perpetrators of violence. He explores the complexity of these stories and the gray areas between innocence and guilt in a series of paintings and drawings that make no visual distinctions between criminal and victim. In The Window and the Breaking of the Window, curator Amanda Hunt chose to feature sixteen portraits of victims on a rotating basis—one each week for the duration of the exhibition. Here we reproduce all sixteen portraits, alongside other works in the series, including those of perpetrators.
Tywanza Sanders, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Paul Ciancia, twenty-three-year-old suspect charged in the deadly 2013 shooting at Los Angeles International Airport, 2014

Michael Brown, shot and killed by police in Ferguson, MO, 2014

Darion Marcus Aguilar, Maryland Mall shooter, 2014

Avonte Oquendo, missing autistic teen from NYC, 2014

Tywanza Sanders, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Paul Ciancia, twenty-three-year-old suspect charged in the deadly 2013 shooting at Los Angeles International Airport, 2014

Michael Brown, shot and killed by police in Ferguson, MO, 2014

Darion Marcus Aguilar, Maryland Mall shooter, 2014

Avonte Oquendo, missing autistic teen from NYC, 2014

Ethel Lance, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Depayne Middleton, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Myra Thompson, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Sharonda Coleman Singleton, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Clementa Pinckney, church pastor and state senator killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Cynthia Hurd, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Kwame Kilpatrick, former mayor of Detroit, sentenced to 28 years in corruption case, 2014

Avonte Oquendo, missing autistic teen from NYC, 2014

Tywanza Sanders, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Paul Ciancia, twenty-three-year-old suspect charged in the deadly 2013 shooting at Los Angeles International Airport, 2014

Michael Brown, shot and killed by police in Ferguson, MO, 2014

Darion Marcus Aguilar, Maryland Mall shooter, 2014

Avonte Oquendo, missing autistic teen from NYC, 2014
Susie Jackson, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Reverend Daniel Simmons, killed in the Charleston church shooting, 2015

Amadou Diallo, shot and killed by New York Police Department officers, 2008

Oscar Grant, executed by Bay Area Rapid Transit police, 2009

Alex Hribal, sixteen-year-old who stabbed twenty-two students at his high school, 2014

Sandra Bland, found dead in a jail cell after being stopped for a traffic infraction, 2016

Terence Crutcher, unarmed black man shot and killed by police in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2016

Corey Jones, killed by plainclothes police officer in an unmarked car, after his car broke down, 2016

Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazaney Rodriguez, Fort Hood shooting victim, 2014

Philando Castille, killed by police at routine traffic stop in Minnesota with girlfriend and daughter in the car, 2016

Alton Sterling, father of five killed by police in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2016

Eric Garner, Staten Island man killed in a chokehold by NYPD, 2016

Mohamed Bouazizi, Tunisian fruit vendor who set himself on fire in 2010, which sparked the Tunisian Revolution and then the Arab Spring, 2014

George Zimmerman, killer of Trayvon Martin, 2014

Ariel Castro, kidnapped and imprisoned three women in his basement in Cleveland, 2014

Trayvon Martin, 17 yr. old fatally shot by George Zimmerman, 2014
EJ Hill  

A Monumental Offering of Potential Energy

by Amanda Hunt, Associate Curator

As part of Tenses: Artists in Residence 2015–16, EJ Hill presented his first sculptural work to contain a durational performance, entitled *A Monumental Offering of Potential Energy*. During the days The Studio Museum in Harlem was open to the public, Hill lay inert on a wooden platform at the foot of his large-scale illuminated sculpture. Hill’s performance, a meditation on black and queer humanity, lasted an astonishing total of 512 hours. Here, Associate Curator Amanda Hunt asks Hill to reflect on the work after the close of the exhibition.

**AH:** What did you want to achieve by making this work, and specifically here at the Studio Museum?

**EH:** Doing something like this requires an almost total removal from one’s everyday existence—a metaphorical solo journey through the desert. The past year has been particularly rough for a lot of reasons but mostly because of the racism that continues to leave black bodies bleeding in the streets. I just couldn’t take it anymore. And where some might respond by organizing and marching in those very streets, or pushing local and national officials for policy change, my way of processing and dealing is to make art.

I had been thinking a lot about the image of the still, prone/supine black body because it’s really how I felt during all of this—completely emptied out. I was still developing and building the roller coaster sculpture around the idea of a stage or platform, but I hadn’t yet settled on what action would take place atop it. And I think it wasn’t until the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando when I decided “Alright y’all, I’m checking out.” I completely shut down. Maybe it’s a futile exercise, but sometimes I try to explain to non-queer and non-black people of color what it feels like to leave the house in the morning and very sincerely have the thought, “Today, it could be me.” When that’s your reality it’s difficult not to self-isolate, just sit with that thought for a while and try to figure out how to move past it and still live a beautiful, graceful life despite it all.

As far as making this work here at the Studio Museum, I knew that this would be the place that would actually take care of me—not as a work of art, not as an artist in residence, but as a living, breathing person who is part of a community that needs a little extra protection, care and comfort right now.

**AH:** If you could isolate and/or identify them, what were your singular most challenging and rewarding moments in the performance?

**EH:** My greatest challenge was maintaining a sound mental state. After the first few weeks, the physical part of it became business as usual. The wood was no longer hard on my back, the lights were no longer harsh on my eyes. But it was my mind that was slowly slipping. There were a lot of difficult days, even on my days off. But I held firmly to the belief that if I made it through to the end, an unyielding fortitude would be developed. And my biggest reward has been the relationships I’ve developed with the guards. They were so present, attentive and generous throughout this time and my words of gratitude will never be enough. If we want to talk about the real endurance MVPs, it’s them. They were there every day, before I even arrived, and on their feet for much longer than I was on the platform. None of this would have ever been possible without their help and support. Special shout out to Ivette, Keisha, Gibbs, Lisa and, of course, Mr. Reynolds, who went above and beyond each time.

**AH:** What will you take from this experience to your next performance? How do you want this work to live on after the exhibition?

**EH:** I hope to take this amplified spirit of resilience with me into the next phase. Not just for the next performance, but for whatever life throws at me. Because I know it’s coming. And I really would love for this work to exist in the hearts of people who were able to witness it. And in the minds of those who hear through the retellings of this moment, of some truly dark times in this country, when there were some people who, after being knocked down, after being emptied out, continued to stand up—continued to ascend.

Opposite:

EJ Hill
*A Monumental Offering of Potential Energy* (performance view), 2016
Courtesy the artist
Photo: Adam Reich
Excerpt explores the ways artists use language as a form of resistance to traditional methods of historicizing and disseminating information. For generations, artists have utilized text and books to challenge the purveyors of knowledge and question the certainty of recorded facts. By physically breaking down the medium, pushing the scope of text and blurring the lines between written word and visual landscape, these artists create fuller narratives. The works in Excerpt thus confront dominant discourses and make space for alternative voices.

Works by Kara Walker and Martin Puryear explore identity and self-definition through the Harlem Renaissance. Puryear created a series of etchings in response to Cane, a 1923 novel by Jean Toomer, a black writer living in Harlem. In “Dustjackets for the Niggarati,” Walker’s series on black modernity and upward mobility, the artist renders her own words in a modified version of a typeface popular in the early twentieth century. Together these works highlight the range of artists exploring the boundaries of text, and assert that Harlem remains an important space for cultural production and the exchange of ideas.

Julianna Huxtable’s Untitled (Casual Power) from the series “Universal Crop Tops for All the Self Canonized Saints of Becoming” is a statement of authority in the form of black cultural identity. Crafting a world “beyond GPS software,” Huxtable creates a safe space, one where the voices of Missy Elliot, Aaliyah and Angela Davis ring out, affirming and legitimizing the experience of the other.

By breaking down words physically, removing them and remixing them, the works in this exhibition take ownership over their history and context. The artists included in Excerpt place themselves in the historical discourse and posit their narratives as worthy of commemoration, knowledge and perpetuity. Reworking our reading, these fifteen artists provide new understandings for themselves and the viewer.

Excerpt is organized by Adeze Wilford, Curatorial Fellow at The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum of Modern Art.
Beyond
Elsewhere

by Thelma Golden,
Director and Chief Curator

Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush
February 16–July 16, 2017
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University
Durham, NC
nasher.duke.edu

Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush is the first solo museum exhibition of Chicago-born artist Nina Chanel Abney. Drawing on mainstream news media, animated cartoons, video games and hip-hop culture, she visually articulates the complex social dynamics of contemporary urban life. Abney’s paintings, drawings and collages are replete with figures, numbers and words that tumble onto the canvas. Royal Flush includes more than fifty works, including several monumental paintings.

Nina Chanel Abney
Forbidden Fruit, 2009
Courtesy Kravets | Wehby Gallery, New York
Since the mid-1970s, Stanley Whitney has been known for his multicolored, irregular grids on square canvases, recently on view at the Studio Museum in Stanley Whitney: Dance the Orange (2015). His process is expressive, improvisational, and can be linked to jazz, which continually inspires the artist. This solo exhibition is part of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth's FOCUS series—a trio of annual exhibitions highlighting emerging and mid-career artists who have not yet had solo exhibitions in the Fort Worth area.
Elsewhere

Deana Lawson
January 27–April 16, 2017
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis
St. Louis, MO
camstl.org

Deana Lawson’s work is deeply concerned with challenging conventional representations of the black body throughout the history of photography. Her highly staged photographs depict individuals, couples and families in both domestic and public settings, visualizing ideas of kinship, ritual, identity and desire. In this solo exhibition, Lawson will premiere several new works from her latest travels and present a series of recent photographs shot on location around the world. She will also present several found-image works, including a new site-specific installation of her large-scale work Assemblage.

Deana Lawson
Kingdom Come, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2015
Courtesy the artist and
Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

In the Tower: Theaster Gates
March 5–September 4, 2017
National Gallery of Art
Washington, DC
nga.gov

I am looking forward to viewing Theaster Gates’s new body of work, The Minor Arts, at the National Gallery of Art this spring. Featuring several pieces created exclusively for the Gallery, this installation examines how discarded and ordinary objects, including the floor of a Chicago high school gym and the archives of Ebony magazine, acquire value through the stories we tell. This exhibition is presented by The Tower Project, which provides support for modern and contemporary exhibitions in celebration of new directions and approaches in art.

Photo: Sarah Pooley
**Constructing Identity**
January 28–June 18, 2017
*Portland Art Museum*
Portland, OR
[portlandartmuseum.org](http://portlandartmuseum.org)

Portland Art Museum’s *Constructing Identity* examines the ways in which black artists contemplate the complexity of race and ethnicity. Berriford Boothe, guest curator and Professor of Art at Lehigh University, brings together paintings, sculpture, prints and drawings by more than eighty prominent contemporary African-American artists with a selection of historical works by artists from the 1930s, 1940s and the civil rights era. The exhibition will include works by Kara Walker, Norman Lewis, 2002–03 artist in residence Mickalene Thomas and Elizabeth Catlett, among others.

*Arvie Smith
Trapeze Artist, 2014
Courtesy the artist*

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**Mark Bradford**
May 13–November 26, 2017
*Venice Biennale 2017*
Venice, Italy
[markbradfordvenice2017.org](http://markbradfordvenice2017.org)

I am thrilled that The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University and The Baltimore Museum of Art, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will present Mark Bradford as the representative for the United States at La Biennale di Venezia-57th International Art Exhibition. The Venice Biennale—directed this year by Christine Macel, Chief Curator at the Centre Pompidou in Paris—is one of the most important international biennials in the world, fit for one of the most significant abstract painters of his generation. Bradford’s sweeping canvases recapture mid-century American art’s capacity to conjure the sublime and evoke deep feeling, while incorporating layers of social comment.
I arrived in New York to live in 1980, and though I considered myself well informed of Harlem’s hallmark players from the Harlem Renaissance and beyond, I soon discovered that I lacked any real knowledge of the in-the-trenches Harlemites, those people who facilitated and inspired the talents of both the brightest and lesser lights of the community. My home was to be in Harlem’s Hamilton Heights, and through friends such as quilt artist Michael Cummings, I was introduced to the Children’s Art Carnival and came to serve on the board of Harlem Textile Works, headed by the textile print artist Kerris Wolsky. In conversations about The Studio Museum in Harlem or the Harlem art scene, they both immediately reverted to referencing “Betty!”

As I came to know Betty Blayton-Taylor (1937–2016), I learned of her 1960s “streetwise” toughness and moxie. At the time she seemed to understand how to engage Harlem politicians to leverage what were then federal inner-city dollars for work focused on the arts, and also had the savvy to tap, when necessary, support from the Museum of Modern Art and other downtown artistic, liberal and socially conscious institutions. Betty believed, “the arts provided youngsters with an opportunity for self-reflective thinking, which serves to give them insight on who they might become,” at a time when the city’s public school system had virtually abandoned any meaningful art programs. As founding director of the Children’s Art Carnival she looked to make the arts a gateway to other disciplines, such as history, storytelling and mathematics. When asked to discuss Jean-Michel Basquiat, the Carnival’s most famous student, Betty often bristled. She felt the questions had more to do with his celebrity and fame, and seldom reflected on to what extent art rescued Basquiat from his many demons, if only for a while.

Through other community and cultural efforts, I was also fortunate to come to know as a neighbor Marvin Smith, the surviving brother of the Harlem photographers M & M Smith, and later Elizabeth Catlett while she was completing the Ralph Ellison Memorial in Riverside Park. At the mention of Harlem artist and teacher Augusta Savage, both Smith and Catlett beamed and glowingly spoke of her supportive nature. They obviously saw in her a mentor, an inspiring gatekeeper and facilitator who directed them along a path to creative lives. Betty, too, through her guiding leadership in cofounding the Studio Museum, the Children’s Art Carnival and Harlem Textile Works, was all about providing artists with opportunities to create—not just through establishing a venue for them to exhibit art, but also by creating a space where artists of African descent had the freedom to contemplate, create and produce art. That’s an amazing accomplishment when you consider the legacy of artistic talent inspired and nurtured for more than forty years by these three Harlem institutions.

I thought of Betty Blayton-Taylor the other day as I walked through the current Kerry James Marshall exhibition at the Met Breuer. Peering at art from Marshall’s early days as an artist in residence at the Studio Museum I came across several striking works made from items that originally were probably discarded on the streets of Harlem. Betty, like Marshall, saw the potential for beauty in all of us, that no one of us was to be discarded and that art could both reveal beauty and hold the key to a creative part of ourselves that could offer some of our own unique beauty back to the world. Dear Betty, we thank you for laboring so hard in that belief and, to quote Adam Clayton Powell Jr., for always “keeping the faith, baby!”
In Memoriam

by Elizabeth Karp-Evans, Communications Coordinator

Houston Eugene Conwill (1947–2016), a multidisciplinary artist whose public works span the American landscape, passed away in November 2016 at sixty-nine years old. A sculptor, painter, and performance and conceptual artist, Conwill is best known for his site-specific public artworks that marry his deep-seated spirituality with the achievements of African-American artists, activists and intellectuals. His multigenerational work is as much a lasting monument to black culture as it is a series of discerning and delicate designs meant to extend wisdom and compassion to all.

Conwill was born in Louisville, Kentucky. He spent time in a Benedictine monastery and served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War before receiving a BFA from Howard University in 1973. In 1976 he received an MFA from the University of Southern California. While at Howard he met his wife, Kinshasha Holman Conwill, also an artist. Holman Conwill, now Deputy Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, served as Director of The Studio Museum in Harlem from 1988 to 1999.

Conwill’s first public commission was in 1974 for the St. Augustine Church in Louisville, in partnership with Holman Conwill. This was followed by additional commissions throughout the 1980s, including at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and for New York’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority. He collaborated regularly with his sister, the poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph De Pace.

Of the many significant works in Conwill’s oeuvre—which includes the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial Revelation (1993) at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Poets Rise (1989) in South Jamaica, Queens—Rivers (1991) at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is the seminal work of his career. Created in honor of Langston Hughes and Arturo A. Schomburg, Conwill’s brass and terrazzo cosmo-gram takes its title from Hughes’s 1921 poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” The artwork is positioned above an underground tributary of the Harlem River, and the place where Hughes’s cremains are entombed in a book-like urn. “If there is one location in Harlem that represents the Harlem Renaissance and its myriad of connections of the past, present and onward, it is the Cosmogram,” According to Christopher P. Moore, historian and curator at the New York Public Library.

Conwill enjoyed an enduring collaborative relationship with the Studio Museum that began in 1982. In 1984 he made The Joyful Mysteries (1984–2034 A.D.), consisting of seven bronze time capsules that will remain buried at the Museum until 2034. Each capsule contains a confidential testament from an important cultural figure in the black community: Artist Romare Bearden, writer Toni Morrison and opera singer Leontyne Price are among them.

Along with artworks in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection, Conwill’s work is also held by the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. He is the recipient of various awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Prix de Rome and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award.
Benjamin Patterson (1934–2016) was an extraordinary human being. Truly. He was otherworldly. Not in the sense of Sun Ra, as Patterson was committed to terra firma, but rather Patterson's thoughts and ideas sought out and highlighted the complex nuances of the mundane and ordinary. He had the rare gift of nearsighted acumen. Patterson found great enthusiasm in small discoveries—the raw beauty of an ordinary sheet of paper as instrument (Paper Piece [1960]), words that could be used as percussion in a polyrhythmic sequence as dictated by windup toy frogs in the score Pond (1962). Added to these artistic interventions were movements and/or simple gestures that could be framed as “scores” for actions. Patterson’s world was determined by a mindset that most everything with predetermined criteria could be reframed as “art.”

Formally trained as a composer and classical performer of the double bass at the University of Michigan in the mid-1950s, Patterson was poised for a life in classical music. Yet, as early as his college days, Patterson began questioning his engagement with classical music, and often sought out what lay between classical music as postulated by Europe and the intrinsic sounds of human gestures or their manipulation through electronic mechanisms. His interest in new music gestated during his years in the military, when he served with the Seventh U.S. Army’s Symphony Orchestra. It was in Europe that he serendipitously found his way to the Mary Bauermeister Studio and ultimately into the constellation of Fluxus. Patterson was instrumental in the successes of this merry band of radicals, and coordinated along with Emmett Williams the first-ever festival of new music in which the term Fluxus was used.

Though Patterson eventually stepped away from events with the group, he never stopped pushing innovations in contemporary music. He later resumed his life as an artist with a solo exhibition at the Emily Harvey Gallery, Ordinary Life (1987).

I had the great fortune of working with Patterson while assembling some fifty years of works for his retrospective, Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of Flux/us (2010). The exhibition traveled to the Studio Museum and later the Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden in Germany. It is inconceivable to me that in the ensuing years Patterson, this radical presence amid the backdrop of radical artistic inventions of the mid-twentieth century, had simply been forgotten. Working with him, I learned that, beyond his keen intellect and deprecating humor, Patterson was a man of great integrity and determination. In an age of civil rights, black determination and artistic innovation, he remained true to his own path—his own tone, as it were. He became a great friend and an unsuspecting mentor.

Patterson often recounted an anecdote that inspired the score A Fluxus Elegy (2006). It was a story told to him by Robert Mann, a violinist for the Juilliard String Quartet. When the quartet traveled to Africa and played for a Bantu village that Mann said was “deep in the bush,” they felt deeply gratified knowing that they were exposing the less fortunate to the great European classics. They were, however, dismayed when the villagers simply walked away despondent at the end of the performance. Later the chieftain spoke to the quartet on behalf of the village. He stated that the people felt a great sympathy for the musicians—that they had not found their own “tone.”

I think Patterson often told this story because it resonates far beyond the immediate narrative. It is about following something deep and intrinsic, something of one’s self. I am so grateful that Patterson found his own tone all those years ago. I know that it will ring throughout the constellations of time and space.
I first came across multidisciplinary artist Santiago Mostyn’s work on a visit to Moderna Museet in Stockholm. His video performance Delay (2014) followed the artist through the streets of the Swedish capital as he encountered affluent white men and addressed each racially charged interaction with the simple touch of his hand. It is in this way that Mostyn approaches his experiences, by becoming a character through which social forces are reflected, that drew me to his work.

Eric Booker: When we first spoke you brought up this idea of the American diaspora, which is an interesting point to start with, given your international upbringing.

Santiago Mostyn: I was born in San Francisco but my parents moved to Grenada when I was five months old. When political turmoil erupted there, they were airlifted out—against their will. My mother and I moved to Zimbabwe after that, but we ended up spending the majority of my adolescence in Trinidad, where I lived until I went to college at Yale. It’s this experience of having gone back and forth between all these different places, the reversed triangle of the African diaspora, that stayed with me. After university I started traveling and living between New York and other cities. I ended up coming to Sweden to study, and it’s developed into a good place to work from and to make sense of some of the strange forces in the world right now.

EB: This experience of movement and migration has really tied your work to place. Your photographic project All Most Heaven (2008) documented your travels throughout the United States. How has travel motivated your practice?

SM: There’s an obvious tear that occurs when someone has experienced being taken out of the place that they considered home. It was something that I felt was missing inside of me, that I needed to make
sense of in order to figure out who I was—not that there’s ever an answer to that question. When I first started thinking about making artworks, it felt like I was trying to fill this space with the images I was making or the projects I was doing. Early on, the Mississippi project wasn’t just a documentation of this underground, radical train-hopping community. This was a life, and a community, that I was deeply committed to, with friends who were like family.

**EB:** How long did that project last?

**SM:** Initially two summers. We built rafts in Minneapolis and charted them down the Mississippi River, performing in each small town. I guess I’m always trying to just make sense of space and take on large topics with . . . some kind of lightness of touch. I always think of Italo Calvino’s *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (1988), where he talks about a delicate touch being the most productive way to face these massive, heavy subjects, and to really register their weight.

**EB:** What are you working on now?

**SM:** I’ve been working on a project called *Citizen*, a real world performance that is then documented on camera, but in such a way that the documentation is both part of the work and a work itself. To make the work, I rowed a small boat from the Turkish coast to Samos, Greece, one of the nearest islands. So the work is the physical effort of having to row this great distance, unaided, between two landmasses that are actually not so far away from each other but are different realities—inside and outside of Europe—across a fluid, invisible border. It was an illegal crossing but obviously it was much less of a crime for me than for others. I would have been arrested and taken to jail if I had been caught, but I would not have been put into a camp. I’m not trying to take away from the extreme tragedy of the journeys that so many are
Beyond few years. I showed a film I made in Prospect Park. I used to live close to the park and ride my bike through there and always saw these shadowy figures hanging out among the trees at dusk in an area called the Vale of Cashmere. This part of the park is beautifully gardened, just a strange and wonderful, dreamlike place. I started going in there and meeting these people, who I found out were mostly gay men cruising, and—like me—were almost all black and brown men from the Caribbean or Central America, places that have extremely homophobic cultures. They came to New York, which is more tolerant, but still had that sense of shame within them from having grown up in these repressed places. It was a strange combination. They'd come from lush tropical places to the one exotic place they'd found here where they could meet and hook up. So I made video portraits of these men that I developed into a film called *Walker Association* (2009), which I hoped would resonate with the strangeness of bodies and landscapes and place. I think, even then, the film had all the elements that I've been developing in my work ever since.

**EB:** I’m interested to hear your thoughts on Harlem, as a place that’s at the crossroads of so many diverse black worlds, and specifically as it relates to your relationship with the United States and your identity?

**SM:** Actually, one of my first shows was at an old church in Harlem. It was an empty building that was going to be swept up in the process of being rebuilt and resold, the way Harlem has changed over the last few years. I showed a film I made in Prospect Park. I used to live close to the park and ride my bike through there and always saw these shadowy figures hanging out among the trees at dusk in an area called the Vale of Cashmere. This part of the park is beautifully gardened, just a strange and wonderful, dreamlike place. I started going in there and meeting these people, who I found out were mostly gay men cruising, and—like me—were almost all black and brown men from the Caribbean or Central America, places that have extremely homophobic cultures. They came to New York, which is more tolerant, but still had that sense of shame within them from having grown up in these repressed places. It was a strange combination. They’d come from lush tropical places to the one exotic place they’d found here where they could meet and hook up. So I made video portraits of these men that I developed into a film called *Walker Association* (2009), which I hoped would resonate with the strangeness of bodies and landscapes and place. I think, even then, the film had all the elements that I’ve been developing in my work ever since.

Read the extended interview with Santiago Mostyn on studiomuseum.org/studio-blog/.

*Citizen (video still), 2016*

*Courtesy the artist*
The Studio Museum in Harlem’s Artist-in-Residence program is a testament to the Museum’s commitment to supporting emerging contemporary artists whose work is inspired or influenced by black culture. The Museum’s community of teaching artists reflects a similar type of engagement. Serving at the intersection of the institution and the public, Museum educators are creative, pedagogical hybrids who navigate the fascinating line between the role of teacher and practicing artist.

ray ferreira, for example, is an interdisciplinary artist from Corona, Queens, who received their MFA in studio art from Hunter College in 2016. On any given Target Free Sunday, ferreira leads group tours of the exhibitions on view for curious visitors or teaches art-making workshops inspired by the processes and materials of an exhibiting artist. An educator at Studio Museum for more than a year, ferreira first engaged their artistic expression in high school with an interest in costume and fashion design. Their affinity for bending the rules continued as they explored art making as an undergraduate student at the State University of New York at Geneseo.

A self-described magpie, ferreira often incorporates personal, decorative and other iridescent materials into their artwork and defines their practice as a combination of text-based images, site-specific installation and performance. Their most recent projects are informed by their proclivity for collapsing time and space, a concept that traces the historical colonialism of marginalized communities and treats language as material and materials as language. Currently ferreira is...
concentrating on their performance practice in which they use their body to complicate and confront the audience’s normative ideologies through confounding movement and language. Their performance work reorganizes and attempts to break down progressive ideas about access and agency. They cite contemporary artists Juliana Huxtable, Diamond Stingily and Rashaad Newsome as inspirational references for what ferreira regards as distinct gestures of black queer femme intersectionality—the creation of transformative artworks that recognize their place within imperialistic power structures while simultaneously liberating themselves from these positions.

Frequently switching between their roles as a practicing artist and Museum educator, ferreira explains that the differences are often not so clear. Their method for each is framed by a drive to facilitate relationships with art objects that carry relevance outside the Museum’s walls, and that resonate directly with contemporary issues. As a visual artist they are constantly seeking to reassess and challenge their practice, and admit that they enjoy working with teenagers most, as they find teens are more inclined to challenge their own biases and privileges—a facet of the teaching experience that informs a more expansive art practice for ferreira.

In the coming months ferreira is preparing to participate in several collaborative performances and other projects, and remains curious as to how the Museum will continue its work in the community through inHarlem. They are hopeful that the initiative will continue to break down barriers by offering inclusive and accessible art programming.

ray ferreira

donchuhearamecallinu (performance still), 2016
Courtesy the artist
Photo: 315 Gallery
In Hannah Black’s book of essays *Dark Pool Party* (2015), philosophical aphorisms turn into diary entries that themselves become expository, but the exposition leaves the reader dizzy and emotional. Everything is held together: black American popular culture, nineteenth-century German idealism, instant message conversations with friends and so forth. There’s nothing “high” nor “low,” no “leveling” or “reversal”—everything is simply equidistant from the central question of what it makes one think, which might be to say how it makes one feel. The operations of thinking and feeling get jumbled. Experiences that are ostensibly immediate and personal turn out to be generalizable, universal and ideologically mediated—while abstraction and ratiocination end up being the ground of genuinely funny body humor: the transcendental joke of having a body.

Most of the book, which is copublished by Arcadia Missa and Martine Syms’s artist press Dominica Publishing, is composed to be read aloud in a performance setting where the author might read the room and decide whether to ironize, negate or omit passages. The book is best read not as a collection of essays, but as a set of performance relics. Residual though they are, they come to us here as complete and self-sufficient artworks brimming with the energy of their own self-critique.

The texts develop from the traditions of black radicalism, various feminisms, Marxism and the artistic avant-gardes, but are unsatisfied
Beyond

Book Review

Dark Pool Party
by Hannah Black

with these well-trod techniques of criticism. “Wary” and “weary” of them, beyond critique and its ethical redemption, the book pushes these traditions forward by means of its pleasurable, “ultra-personal” reflections on social life that are thickly, richly mediated.

If, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel claimed, our era of critique is driven by its fear of being wrong, then Dark Pool Party is both contemporaneous and anachronistic—unfearful because it finds itself already compromised and guilty. In one of its chapters, a contemporary artist remarks to herself, “Perhaps critique is over and this is unexpectedly the era of joy, but I am still luxuriating in the interesting feeling of shame.” In another, a character asks, “How to distinguish intractability from bravery?” Part of Dark Pool Party’s brilliance comes in that it would rather die than bear out such distinctions.

1. This phrasing is borrowed from Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013), 55.
The 1970s was a decade rife with sociopolitical struggle and awareness, growth and change on both national and international scales. For the majority of the 70s, The Studio Museum in Harlem was located in a rented loft at 2033 Fifth Avenue that was much smaller than the current location on 125th Street. From the loft, the Museum presented innovative exhibitions that engaged the issues of the time, a tradition that has continued for almost fifty years.

As I continue with my fellowship in the Studio Museum archive, I have come to fully appreciate the role the Museum plays as an influencer of black culture across the world. It is always exciting to see materials in our archive colliding with a greater historical narrative, especially since the Studio Museum holds the honor of being the first accredited art museum dedicated to black artists. With that in mind, it is no wonder that the Museum presented AfriCobra II in 1971, which featured work from the cooperative of African-American artists who were “going about the righteous business of identifying and making use of the styles and rhythm qualities, both apparent and actual, that finds expression in the lives of black people everywhere,” The cooperative described their work in
terms of a “black aesthetic” that took inspiration from music and poetry.

Another exhibition from the early 70s that took place in the loft space was Impact Africa in 1970, which examined the effect African art had on modern and contemporary art movements in the West. Impact Africa featured the works of LeRoy Clarke, Ray Grist and Ademola Olugebefola, as well as works by Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.

My final choice here is an image from the opening reception of Harlem Artists ’69. The man pictured is dressed in the fashions of the day, indicative of the celebration of blackness taking place globally during that time period. The exhibition featured more than a hundred works and sought to bring young black artists together in the Harlem community. The exhibition challenged the prevailing practice of mainstream institutions excluding artists of color, and emphatically asserted the place of black artists working, creating and contributing to culture. This exhibition set the precedent for the Studio Museum as the destination for contemporary art by black artists.

An Afternoon with Betty Grayson

by Chloe Hayward,
Family Programs Coordinator

Hands On workshops offer an opportunity for children, adults and families to investigate how and why art is made. Art can at times feel inaccessible. Through this offering of inspirational materials and ideas, families and children of all ages can further digest the work on view at the Studio Museum in Harlem. We sat down with Betty Grayson, longtime attendee of Target Free Sundays, to find out what role art plays in her life.

Chloe Hayward: How long have you been attending Target Free Sundays?

Betty Grayson: I’ve been coming for over five years now.

CH: Can you tell me about your first memory visiting the Studio Museum?

BG: I don’t remember what show it was, I can barely remember yesterday, memory isn’t what it used to be [smiles]. I was really impressed, really in awe to see such wonderful art for free. I’ve lived in Harlem for over twenty-five years and I’ve been coming here a long, long time.

CH: What is your favorite art material to work with?

BG: Collage! I love doing collages.

It’s like you’re able to just piece together things that make you happy or give you something to say. I’ll put things like “beauty” and “well done,” things like that.

CH: Why do you keep coming back to Target Free Sundays? What draws you to the Hands On workshops?

BG: I like practically all of them. I love coming here, the staff is great. I like that you don’t have to follow a script or anything when you’re working. You’re just creating what you want, and I like seeing the kids making their masterpieces [laughs].

CH: What do you like most about the Studio Museum?

BG: To me, it’s a way of release and relaxing, especially after working all week. It’s just enjoyable since I live alone. I like to get out and come here, it just makes me happy… [sings] Happy!
inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk, Rudy Shepherd is the first in a series of artist projects that take our institution beyond its walls.

Each of you has made a work that is public by its very nature, serving as a catalyst for shared experience within Harlem. How do each of you feel about the role of public art as it functions in your own practice?

Kevin Beasley: I am always grappling with the distinction language provides between a public and private experience, and am always interested in how a work is contextualized. As an artist, it is important to consider your process and the outcome of the work as affective to some kind of community. My work always has traces of a public. I like to think I can bring the public into my studio while simultaneously addressing its populism if I must. If this kind of symbiotic relationship can exist more frequently between institutions, the artists and the general public then I think the possibilities can be expanded. Most public art, in my opinion, just isn’t as challenging as the work I find in museums and galleries, and I hope to see that change.

Simone Leigh: Although this is my first public art installation, it is not the first time the Studio Museum has supported me to expand my practice. During my 2010–11 residency, I began using a mold of a watermelon to make large cowrie-like sculptures for my installation, conflating these American and African objects and their meanings. I still work in this way, using forms that are disparate to create hybrid meanings.

Kori Newkirk: I like to think that most, if not all, art is public, or at the very least has some sort of public life. Obviously this is not always the case, but I like to think that way. I tend to think about this “public life” of art-works often when working, looking and thinking—in the studio and beyond. I don’t make things to keep for myself. The goal is to get them out in the world and away from me.

Rudy Shepherd: Public art has been central to my work almost from the beginning and is something I have thought a lot about. I love that public art takes the work and the artists out of the safe, familiar confines of the studio and gallery/museum space and puts them out in the world with regular people. I have always had an interest in communicating with people in a direct way, and working in public seems like the best way to do that. It strips away the barriers some people feel to entering art spaces and brings the work and ideas directly to them in a space where they feel comfortable.

I didn’t have the privilege of working with each of you until the final stages of the project, once we started fabrication and installation, so could you talk about your process for the commission from the beginning?

KB: I have made previous works using the same kinds of materials, and have explored the concave dish form, but never needed to sustain the outdoor elements. Most of the material comes from a dress shop on 116th Street between Lexington and Park here in Harlem, so I felt the work already spoke to the specificity of the site. Most of my efforts in making the work were steeped in preparing it for an outdoor presentation that would last for a year. All of the clothing is dipped in a UV-resistant, two-part liquid resin and then spread out over a mold. After they hardened, each sculpture had to be baked at 200 degrees for eight hours in my studio, so I made a temporary oven to accomplish this. I designed the metal support structure and had them refined and fabricated so they could withstand the conditions of being out in public.
SL: After I went to Zimbabwe in 2010 I began thinking about traditional African architecture, particularly these buildings I had seen behind the National Gallery at the time. These were on my mind when I received the Studio Museum commission. Gemme Rodi, an art historian, had also recently shown me some photographs of these stunning kitchen houses in rural Zimbabwe, so these things were percolating. The subject became the kitchen houses, known as imbas, which are traditional structures built by the Shona-speaking people that have a lot of symbolic, ritual and cultural significance. Collaboration is an important part of my practice, so in approaching this project, my first architecturally scaled work, I consulted with the architect Maxwell Matanda. Unfortunately, I couldn’t make a sculpture that had interiors in a park because it would become a dwelling, so I started to play around with the conundrum of not having a window or a doorway, or access to the inside. The surface of the imbas in the installation is actually my mimicry of the texture on the extraordinary Mougoum Teuleuk in Cameroon, and the roofs were made with a system that is used in Burkina Faso. So this sculpture is very hybrid.

KN: This opportunity was a bit different for me. I was approached about translating something very specific for this project. A classic burden-and-privilege situation . . . which took some pressure off and applied even more pressure as compared to working from scratch with a specific place or idea in mind. I can say that some things changed in the process, mostly when it came to materials, but the underlying structure of the work remained constant.

RS: This first part of the project for me was choosing a site. I chose Jackie Robinson Park because of the time I spent there at a seminal time in my life. When I split up with my first wife I moved to the Dunbar Apartments around the corner from Jackie Robinson Park and would bring my kids to the park and the pool on the weekends. Somehow it feels good to put a Black Rock Negative Energy Absorber there to neutralize the negative connotations of that time and make space for a new experience there. Turns out it is a highly used park and I ended up spending much of my time on the site talking to local residents about my project in a very engaged way.
Kevin, your installation *Who’s Afraid to Listen to Red, Black and Green?* inhabits a charged site. Situated in Morningside Park, effectively the boundary between Harlem and Morningside Heights, the three sculptures stand in a place where racial and neighborhood tensions have long played out. How do you see your work responding to this history?

KB: I feel like the primer was the Studio Museum extending their reach to the park to begin with. That was the first act of reclaiming the understanding about the park and its history. My approach in making work is often centered on the idea of focusing and/or questioning yourself when experiencing it, so naturally it made sense to refine those intentions through aesthetics. The color choice felt like a simple gesture that in this context becomes a question about the symbolism of those colors and what they mean to those who encounter them. For me there is definitely a question about representation. Unless you have synesthesia, no one is hearing a color when they go to that park, but when one thinks about what those colors represent then that becomes a much more charged and difficult space to exist in because it refers to the tension and troubled relationship between the black and white communities.

Simone, the connection between *a particularly elaborate imba yokubikira* and the park’s namesake, Marcus Garvey, really resonates. Garvey’s advocacy for Black Nationalism, particularly the building of an independent nation in West Africa for black Americans, speaks to the celebration of and concern for the diasporic communities you address in this work. Do you see Garvey’s legacy adding another level to the work at all?

SL: The setting in Marcus Garvey Park was very important to me. I wanted to make a Pan Africanist gesture through the work while also thinking about the changing demographics of Harlem, which has become the home of so many people from various African countries.

St. Nicholas Park was designed around the rugged landscape of northern Manhattan, making it the most
geographically varied and leafy of the four Historic Harlem Parks. Kori, the steps that anchor your sculpture were once indistinct and overgrown, but now you have given them new life. Can you talk about your relationship to found materials? Did this shift in scale, from your domestic-sized curtain works to this monumental sculpture, change the subject at all?

KN: Found materials do play an important role in my work, or rather material concerns are super important. I spend a huge amount of time working out the materials and their meanings and just trying to figure out what, where, how, when and why of the material things that might or might not go into a work. It’s a laborious process but it really drives a lot of things going on. The increased scale had never been a question. While *Sentra* is visually related to my beaded curtains—in its horizontality and some basic formal considerations—it is about completely different things overall. Like a lot of my work, it aims to speak about place and the body, but there is so much more that can be thought about and understood from viewing this work in this location at this time.

Although you live in Los Angeles you’ve said that you don’t necessarily identify as a Los Angeles artist. How has working on this piece then, since having your major exhibition at the Studio Museum back in 2007, renewed your relationship to Harlem?

KN: There was a time when I felt that the “L.A. Artist” moniker was a bit more restrictive and spoke about a certain type of artist with certain types of artistic concerns. That was not the reality in my studio, and while I have been living and working in California for over two decades, my relationship with New York and particularly Harlem has remained strong as ever.

Rudy, this is your fifth *Black Rock Negative Energy Absorber*. I think it’s great that the work is in Jackie Robinson Park, a place steeped in efforts to bring the community together. How has it felt to have this project in Harlem? Have you observed any remarkable interactions with *Black Rock*?

RS: The first thing that comes to mind is the overwhelming amount of dialogue I had each day while working on my sculpture in the park, from people walking their dogs each morning, to kids hanging out in the park, to folks that work in the park in different capacities. Everybody wanted to know what I was doing and why. I had people filming and photographing me. I met many local artists, musicians and actors, and I was challenged by each with the fact that I was not working in my quiet studio alone. This was something else—I was in someone else’s space, a communal space used by many different people. It was fun to see how people reacted to my ideas and I was happy to be understood and appreciated. Though one kid did tell me she thought the title of the piece was too long!

*Black Rock* follows a series of smaller “Healing Devices” you have made, sculptures that make formal and magical analogies to ancient artifacts. Can you talk about the progression of this work?

RS: There are three major strains in my work right now: a series of drawings that chronicle things happening in the world such as the killing of black men by police officers, the Black Rock Negative Energy Absorber sculptures and Healing Devices that offer up a spiritual solution to these seemingly vast, unsolvable problems, and the Healer performances that articulate my emotional response. They link together to create a gestalt that represents my opinion on the state of the world today. It serves as a historical record of a black man living in America in 2016 in a way the history books or the Internet never will. It represents not only the things I am seeing, but also how I feel about it and how I would like to see it change. There are plenty of people that will organize marches and write legislation to try to fix these problems, but I believe it is the artist’s job to articulate the problems of the world they live in and bring them alive for people to feel, to open up dialogue and create a space where people feel safe discussing these issues without feeling like they have to be an expert to have a voice. During the construction of my project at Jackie Robinson Park I had many discussions with people young and old, rich and poor, about the state of the world right now, and for me that is what it’s always been about.
Collection Visit: Marilyn Nance

Marilyn Nance was born in Brooklyn in 1953. She received her BFA in communications/graphic design from the Pratt Institute, an MFA in photography from the Maryland Institute College of Art and completed the Interactive Telecommunications Program at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. She was a 1993–94 artist in residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem. Trained in film and photography, Nance creates works that investigate and celebrate African and African-American history and life. In November 2016, she presented work documenting the Festac ‘77 festival in Nigeria during a panel discussion at the “Black Portraiture[s] III: Reinventions: Strains of Histories and Cultures” conference in Johannesburg, South Africa.

We visited Nance in her studio in October 2016 and invited her to visit the Studio Museum’s permanent collection to respond to three works we felt related to her practice, whether conceptually or formally: Sam Gilliam’s Tapestry 1 (1992–93), Sadie Barnette’s Untitled (2014) and Lorraine O’Grady’s Sisters (from the Miscegenated Family Album) (1994).

by Doris Zhao, Curatorial Assistant
and Zalika Azim, Registrar Assistant
Primarily known for her photography of African-American and African diasporic life, Marilyn Nance is a visual storyteller who has been known to celebrate life and death as equal aspects of the human condition. Meditating on the quotidian and the spiritual, Nance connects space and time by juxtaposing and repeating photographic images, often presenting seemingly disparate moments as diptychs and triptychs. The ability to combine linear storytelling with nonlinear visuals initially inspired Nance’s embrace and use of the medium. Her black-and-white photographs observe and capture the nuances of humanity, both exploring how people relate to one another while highlighting the ability of the body to exist in multiple spaces and times at once.

Nance’s first trip out of the United States, to Lagos, Nigeria, at age 23 for Festac ‘77, impacted her understanding of family lineages and human connections. Recalling the feeling that she could have been related to every person she met while abroad, she casually notes during our visit how a recent genetic test allowed her to trace a portion of her lineage back to Nigeria. She states, “I have family everywhere that I go . . . a cousin here and another one there. Recently, Nance has found herself returning to the work she made while at Festac ‘77, where she was assigned the position of photographer for the North American Zone. Also known as the second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, Festac ‘77 was recognized at the time as the largest cultural event held on the African continent. The month-long gathering of more than 17,000 attendees from 50 countries was promoted as the largest migration of African Americans from the United States to Africa—representing for many a symbolical reversal of the transatlantic slave trade.”
In From the Studio: Artists in Residence 1993–94, Nance presented an installation entitled *Egungun Work* (1994), which recalls an Egungun festival she attended in 1981 while photographing the Oyotunji African Village in Sheldon, South Carolina. Stemming from the Yoruba cultural traditions of West Africa, the Egungun serve as the members of the community that have been gifted the responsibility of venerating and contacting the spirits of important ancestors on special occasions. From her expansive documentation of African spirituality in the United States, Nance constantly finds herself considering her ancestors. The photographs of gatherings in her installation are reconfigured to employ new signifying entities; the visual articulation of the Egungun’s message indicates remembrance, honor, celebration, release and mourning. Through her incorporation of banners, church fans and pews, she actively claims agency as the catalyst to the collective narrative. In her studio, we discuss how the event was attended by more than 400 African-American artists, writers and performers.

Using her documentation of this event as a departure point for new works that incorporate collage and quilt making, Nance notes that both practices have long played a major role in her immediate family’s narrative in New York and Alabama. We sit in her studio, a space filled with photographs, fabrics and other ephemera, discussing her time in residence at the Studio Museum, as well as how her travels to New Orleans, Nigeria, Brazil and beyond have continued to influence her work as a photographer. Looking through several archival boxes containing the photographs she created during Festac ’77, Nance shares that her new collage series, created with artist Rafia Santana, would celebrate artists such as Valerie Maynard, Sun Ra and Ademola Olugebefola, who participated in the events during the festival and who are today represented in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection.

*From the Studio: Artist-in-Residence, 1993–94 (exhibition view)*
The Studio Museum in Harlem, October 19–December 31, 1994

*Photo:* Marilyn Nance

*Opposite:*

Sam Gilliam Jr.
*Tapestry 1, 1992–93*
The Studio Museum in Harlem, gift of Sam Gilliam and Annie Gawlak, Washington, DC 1995.6.1

*Photo:* Sasha Mendez
presentation of her contact sheets and magnifying glasses, both elements of her installation, work to invite viewers to interpret and edit her work. She recalls two women who came to see the exhibition and their discussion of the works they felt she should have printed for larger display. Her observation of this interaction sheds light on her interest in the construction of communal family albums, which empower the collective to unpack ancestral wisdoms while reimagining themselves in relation to the history of the black body in photographic imagery.

With these interests in mind, we selected three works from the Studio Museum’s permanent collection, beginning with Abstract Expressionist painter Sam Gilliam, who is best known for his works on folded, creased and draped canvases that challenge the mediums of painting and sculpture. His experiments in transforming two-dimensional paintings into sculptural, geometric and architectural objects rose from a career-long interest in finding new ways to use painterly materials. Closely associated with the Color Field and Washington Color Schools, Gilliam prioritizes color in his compositions. As such, his works are emotive and energetic. Upon setting her eyes on Tapestry 1, Nance immediately felt the joy projected by the mix of textures and colors. “It’s delicious,” she states, referring to the thick, lush layers of red and orange that were screened onto the paper. Tapestry 1, as suggested by its title, is an assemblage of different materials and techniques, woven together by the hand of the artist. The layering of scribbles, stamped shapes and watery stenciled icons unite to create a cohesive composition—but each element is aesthetically and formally dense on its own. There is a patch of printed paper stitched into the larger composition, which recalls patchwork quilt making. For Nance, seeing Gilliam’s technique, of utilizing the textures and finishes of different materials in conjunction with represented images, challenges her to rethink the role of fabric.
Family history, lineage and forging relationships are essential to Nance’s identity and crucial to her artistic practice. Her proclivity for storytelling emerges when she speaks of photographic and research projects. She speaks of her subjects and other artists as her family, and her deep appreciation for human connection and shared histories emphasizes this passion. Her interest in ancestry, legacy and history is shared by Sadie Barnette, a fellow alumna of the Studio Museum’s Artist-in-Residence program.

Barnette, like Nance, investigates the intersections of personal and political relations. Barnette’s untitled graphite drawings meticulously demonstrate her interest in typography, as well as self-realization and identity formation through relationships. One work features the names of Barnette’s grandparents—“Luverne” and “Sadie”—and functions as a self-portrait. She distills these relationships to showcase the impact of one’s name and the multiple histories its legacy imparts. While at first startled by the subtle markings of Barnette, Nance deeply admires her precision in reproducing different typographies on paper, particularly in her detail and control. History, relationships and memories inevitably change as time passes, but Nance questions whether there is great privilege afforded to those who can preserve legacy and identity through text, rather than just intangible memories or images. With literacy comes power and authority, she suggests, and Barnette’s works preserve personal histories while maintaining an openness that allows for a variety of interpretations and levels of engagement.

Extracted from her performance Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline (1980), Lorraine O’Grady’s photographs Sisters (from the Miscegenated Family Album) subtly mourns and reconciles the estranged relationship that preceded the untimely death of the artist’s sister, Devonia. Throughout four sets of diptychs, O’Grady juxtaposes portraits of Devonia and her daughter with sculptural busts of Nefertiti and her family. Linking Devonia’s early death to the theorized disappearance of the Egyptian queen, the pairings hold immense metaphorical relevance, encapsulating both historical and personal narratives that imply the universal family condition is comprised of complex and segmented layers. In this work, individual loss becomes muddled with the artist’s gain of a larger global family through the visual resemblances that O’Grady noticed while visiting Egypt in her twenties, shortly after her sister’s passing. We admire the pairings while discussing the underlying notions of race, class and ethnology. Nance makes note of the consistent scale throughout the series, and observes how the diptychs actively eliminate concepts of hierarchy, further guiding her to concentrate on the reinforced links between the two ancestral narratives.

Enthralled by the intergenerational connections between women of color and the ways in which information is passed on, especially through archives, Nance seems to be pulled immediately toward the O’Grady series for its ability to situate antiquity with respect to one’s personal journey. Alluding to the narratives that congregate within the photographs, as well as the spaces between the frames, our conversation comes full circle to O’Grady’s speculation that the vantage point from which the center and the margins align might best be viewed in their totality through the diaspora.

Looking:

Jessica Bell Brown on Diamond Stingily and Tschabalala Self

by Jessica Bell Brown

The fall 2016 art season in New York featured a remarkable number of exhibitions of work by black artists, from Lorna Simpson to Rashid Johnson to Kerry James Marshall. In this era of artistic flowering and visibility, it is hard to imagine that the United States is experiencing some of the most heightened levels of racial tension and cultural emergency since the close of the civil rights decade. In the age of Black Lives Matter, what are we to make of contemporary investigations of black life?

In an installation by artist Diamond Stingily, five portals emerge from the wall. On each door, she has leaned a baseball bat. Some are metal, others wood. “My grandma keeps a bat by her front door and a bat by her bed,” says Stingily. “As a kid I didn’t really pay attention, then I lived with her for a year on the west side of Chicago and I understood the paranoia of her safety.”1 The doors, collectively entitled Entryways (2016), are of uniform height and width, with varying inset designs. Thick black metal posts hold each upright. Details begin to manifest as subtle differences are illuminated: One doorway is secured with a wooden plank and two dead bolts. I peer through holes in some of them where handles and knobs once were. The installation has the feel of a high-security prison or an abandoned lot. Behind a silver security fence, Stingily projects a snippet of Pizza Pizza Daddy-O, a 1967 Bess Lomax Hawes documentary about the evolution of children’s games at a Los Angeles school. Behind the fence—again, another barrier—we see a circle of little girls playing hand games. Stingily has focused on a scene in which the girls comfort another who falls down. They resume their play. “A lot of my work is based off of experiences from my childhood,” Stingily reveals, describing a context for her video installation How Did He Die (2016).

“Even on the playground, one of the girls was crying, we still gotta comfort her. A lot of kids grow up where you gotta be tough, but that doesn’t mean you have to be violent or angry. You gotta handle yourself. For a lot of black women, you have to carry yourself a certain way and be strong. A lot of young black girls at an early age realize that you have to be strong.”

Stingily’s work conjoins myriad themes that feel prescient, in the way that violence and police brutality have threatened to foreclose on the possibilities for black childhood—from Trayvon Martin to Cameron Sterling, the sixteen-year-old son of Baton Rouge native Alton
Diamond Stingily

Entryways (installation view), 2016

Courtesy Ramiken Crucible, New York
Sterling, whose death was documented on video. Though not a response to Black Lives Matter, the social movement named by activists Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi, Stingily’s provocation compels us to examine the precariousness of black childhood and innocence, as well as the power of youthful resilience, even in a state of social upheaval. How does the possibility for danger become another quotidian occurrence? How will children remember these trying times? Is there a place for joy, despite a culture of strength and reserve?

Rising artist Tschabalala Self offers another vector to honor the complexity and beauty of black life. “Black people matter to themselves and other black people. That’s enough of a reason in and of itself,” Self says. “Despite tragedy, people have a desire for basic human fulfillment.” In a recent body of work, Self, known as a figurative painter, takes up the intimate quarters inhabited by two lovers, a man and a woman standing on a checkered tile floor in Bellyphat (2016). The pair are unapologetically black and blissful. The woman is the center of the universe, her lover, a mere shadow, attends to her unflinchingly. Yet her smiling visage disarms the viewer’s intrusion. Their dignity is protected from our gaze; their moment of embrace, created through a patchwork of bright fabrics stitched and made indistinguishable from the fields of bright opaque color on the canvas, is not our own to enjoy, but merely to witness. “[Black] people have the capacity to make love, be in love and feel every possible emotion,” the artist proclaims. Self is careful not to suggest a kind of grotesque figure that conveys abject victimization. She has a refreshing take on the canon of art history. Another canvas, Thigh (2016), escapes the trope of the shock effect, like Pablo Picasso’s Les Desmoiselles d’Avignon (1907) or Édouard Manet’s Olympia (1863), which render their female subjects exposed to male gaze with surgical precision. Instead Self’s character playfully subverts this gaze with a trail of sunflowers emanating from the upper regions of her thigh down to her feet. She is unguarded, in full command of her body, her sexuality and her own pleasure.

Stingily’s and Self’s practices are compelling because they murmur quietly amid moments of extreme social anxiety and increased structural inequity. Their work demands an interiority and a hyper-specificity that don’t lose sight of humanity—declared and fought hard for every day, in the way we love, the way we live, the way we dare to dream and imagine again and again after we fall down.

1. Diamond Stingily, phone interview with the author, October 27, 2016.
2. Tschabalala Self, phone interview with the author, October 26, 2016.
As a joint fellow at The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), I often think about points of commonality between these two institutions that vastly differ in size and mission. Much of the first year of my fellowship at the Studio Museum has involved getting to know its permanent collection and artist files. As I delve through these documents and images, I have given a lot of thought to the nature of institutional collecting, what it means for an artist to have work in a museum space and the ways in which museums canonize specific artworks through acquisition. Both the Studio Museum and MoMA have a variety of holdings by artist, educator and curator Howardena Pindell, who is perhaps best known for her abstract paper cut-out works and videos. The Studio Museum is fortunate to have two mixed-media works and a video by Pindell in its permanent collection.

Recent encounters with Pindell’s work in each institution have helped me not only consider both museums as context, but also expand my understanding of Pindell’s work and historical contributions. In June 2015 at MoMA, on the occasion of One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence’s Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North, artist Steffani Jemison presented a series of performances called Promise Machine. The performances took the
Howardena Pindell
Feast Day of Iemanja II, December 31, 1980
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Diane and Steven Jacobson, New York 1986.2
Courtesy the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York
Photo: Marc Bernier

Opposite:
Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art
form of a processional through MoMA’s galleries during which musicians addressed selections from the collection and Lawrence’s “Migration Series.” During one of the performances I attended, the singers and saxophonist paused in a gallery with paintings from the 1970s to serenade Sam Gilliam’s 10/27/69 (1969). While the performers faced Gilliam’s work, I felt the strong presence of others in the space—in particular, Pindell’s monumental Memory: Past (1980–81). It shimmers and billows along the wall, beckoning viewers to step closer to relish its details.

Almost one year later I thought about the performance and Pindell, and wrote to Jemison to ask her how she planned her performance. Jemison explained, “Howardena’s work was relevant when I decided to pause in the 70s painting galleries, particularly because of the permanent collection hanging that triangulated Gilliam, Pindell and [Jack] Whitten. The three works struck me as galactically expansive and simultaneously almost molecularly attentive to detail.”

The curatorial logic of placing these works in this space similarly resonated with me. It was an important moment to see Pindell’s painting in the context of this gallery, and to celebrate Lawrence, whose foundational work continues to inspire.

The nature of collecting varies across institutions, but for both the Studio Museum and MoMA, collecting is related to the act of writing art history. As perhaps the largest and most established of modern art museums, MoMA’s collection often influences how other institutions acquire works, and in turn reinforces the canon of modern and contemporary art through its collection. On the other hand, the Studio Museum is known for fostering relationships with contemporary artists who go on to alter the dominant discourse of the art world. To be a part of both collections—for so many years—speaks to the long-standing impact of Pindell’s work.

It is also important to look at the exhibition history of Pindell’s work at both museums. For example, MoMA’s 1976 exhibition Some American Drawings: Recent Acquisitions featured two of the artist’s signature paper cut-out and graphite works. The Studio Museum’s 1986 mid-career retrospective Odyssey focused on works Pindell produced from 1982 to 1985 in her “Japan” and “India” series. These examples signal an enduring relationship and interest in her career, which continue today.

One work that both institutions are privileged to have in their collections is Pindell’s important performance/video from 1980, Free White and 21. Most recently exhibited in 2013-14 in Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art at the Studio Museum, the video work is a departure from her drawing and painting practice. The work discusses racial biases that Pindell has encountered throughout her life in two ways. She speaks as herself discussing instances such as a racist teacher in kindergarten. The second way involves Pindell in a blonde wig performing as a white woman who shrilly denounces each of Pindell’s life experiences as non-factual. The character acts as a counter-point to the calm and impersonal delivery of the shocking and painful stories, and the brusque attitude heightens the discrepancy in treatment the artist observes. A valuable addition to both collections, Free White and 21 shows that both institutions are open to acquiring works from throughout an artist’s career, including moments of experimentation.

In many ways the history and legacy of an institution is based on what it deems necessary to collect, display and preserve. In the case of Pindell, both the Studio Museum and MoMA have used her works in their collections to engage audiences and present multiple moments of display. While the two institutions vary in scale, both physically and in the quantity of their holdings, both work to make sure that their collections are full of work significant to artists and art history, and are exhibited in ways that activate new perspectives for thinking about art.

Research materials from the Studio Museum’s Pindell artist file
Photos: SaVonne Anderson
Studio Jr.
DIY Red/Black/Green Found Collage

by Chloe Hayward, Family Programs Coordinator

Inspired by inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, a site-specific installation in Morningside Park, create your own transformative work of art using found objects! Be sure to check out Beasley's work, Who's Afraid to Listen to Red, Black and Green?, yourself!

Key Words
- **Composition:** the way in which something is put together or arranged
- **Layer:** to place objects, images or materials on top of one another
- **Resin:** a sticky organic substance often used as a protective layer in art

Materials
- Cardboard
- Black paint
- Scissors
- Elmer's Glue or Mod Podge
- Paintbrush
- Found paper and/or old clothing

Kevin Beasley
Who's Afraid to Listen to Red, Black and Green? (installation view), 2016
Photo: Adam Reich
DIY Red/Black/Green Found Collage

**Step 1**
Collect paper and old fabric (such as T-shirts or other items you no longer use) that are red, black and/or green from around your home or community.

**Step 2**
Tear or cut up your found material into interesting shapes.

**Step 3**
Once all the shapes are cut, find a piece of cardboard and have an adult help you cut it into a large circle.

**Step 4**
Paint your cardboard circle black.

**Step 5**
Use Mod Podge or Elmer’s Glue to collage your found materials into a composition by layering shapes and colors. You can also paint a thin coat of glue on top of your composition for a glossy, resin-like effect!

Coloring Page: Derrick Adams
*People on the Block, 2016*
*Courtesy the artist*
Lesson Plan

United Power

by Ginny Huo, Expanding the Walls/Youth Programs Coordinator

Artist Barbara Chase-Riboud is known for work that explores topics such as identity, historical narratives and notions of power. Chase-Riboud’s 1973 sculpture Le Manteau (The Cape), on view in Circa 1970, provides educators with an opportunity to explore contemporary art and its relationship to history and culture. The mixed-media sculpture provides a basis for discussion of symbols, storytelling and tradition. The art-making process will engage students with experience in designing individual symbols, layering materials and concepts, and working collaboratively to complete a collective piece.

**Activity Objective**

Students will explore how symbols might be used as a form of language and expression in order to communicate ideas about power. Inspired by Le Manteau (The Cape), each student will design his or her own symbol of power on gold paper that will be joined together to form a collective “power cape” for the class.

**Essential Question**

How is understanding culture and society informed by art and language?

**Materials**

- Gold paper
- Construction paper
- Assorted metallic paper
- Hole punch
- Twine
- Gold and black permanent markers
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue or glue stick
- Pencils

**Vocabulary**

**Symbol**: an action, object, event, etc., that represents a particular idea or quality

**Symbolism**: the practice or art of using symbols

**Power**: the ability to control or influence things or people

**Collection**: a group of objects brought together for show or study

**Setup and Preparation**

1. Display an image of Le Manteau (The Cape) and discuss the artwork with visual inquiry.

2. Introduce vocabulary words and discuss the meaning of symbols, symbolism, power and collection with the class.

3. Distribute scrap paper and pencils for the students to use to brainstorm ideas.

4. Set out construction paper, glue, twine, scissors, markers, permanent makers and hole punch to provide students a variety of options from which to choose.

**Methods**

1. Create a dialogue with students about power by asking questions. What is power, who holds power and how is power represented? Brainstorm symbolic shapes and encourage students to invent new shapes that will represent power.

2. Provide scrap paper for students to practice drawing their symbolic design of power.

3. Present the materials and allow students time to explore how they might use them to create their symbols. Assorted metallic paper and construction paper can be used to collage layers, twine can be glued on to make a design and markers can be used to draw.
Lesson Plan

4. Once they have decided their final designs, students can create their symbols on the gold paper. Discuss how shapes, colors and placement of the designs all add symbolic meanings to their ideas.

5. Allow time for their artwork to dry.

6. Once the designs are dry, use the hole punch and twine to connect students’ work in a creative shape inspired by Chase-Riboud’s sculpture. Encourage students to braid the twine to each other’s work, as seen in the artwork.

7. After the artworks are connected, display them to show all the symbolic power designs.

Closing

1. Ask students to explain their design processes and decisions.

2. Discuss how symbolism is found throughout the artwork, individually and collectively.

3. Invite students to share what they learned from making their designs and connecting the pieces together.

Barbara Chase-Riboud
Le Manteau (The Cape), 1973
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of the Lannan Foundation 1998.7.4
Photo: Adam Reich
Expanding the Walls: My Story

by Sapphire Hilton,
Education Assistant, Expanding the Walls ‘11

It was a beautiful sunny January day in 2011. I pulled open the front door of The Studio Museum in Harlem for my first day as an Expanding the Walls: Making Connections Between Photography, History and Community participant. Butterflies in my stomach, I was excited yet nervous to meet my fellow participants, and wondered who they were and how close we might become through the experience ahead of us. I walked up to the front desk, smiled at Mr. Parker, a veteran member of the Museum’s security staff, and introduced myself. His smile was infectious and vibrant as he gave me directions. I walked down the stairs and into the Expanding the Walls room, and looked around and see my peers sitting at a large table. We all looked at each other and understood that we were about to begin a journey together as one. This is what I will always remember as the beginning of a long and enriching relationship with the Studio Museum.

I was seventeen years old and had been accepted into one of the most prestigious teen programs New York museums have to offer. Expanding the Walls is an eight-month program in which high school students explore issues related to community, history and culture while learning the basics of photography. During the program, I had the wonderful opportunity to interact with Thelma Golden, Chief Curator and Director of the Museum, and visit the studios of living artists, and numerous galleries and museums. We also learned how to frame and mat our final images for the summer 2011 exhibition. as it is, as it could be was the product of our time together—the hard work, laughter, disagreements, support and learning. Expanding the Walls provided me with insight into and exposure to a world that many do not have the privilege of accessing. I know so many youths who attended schools that did not nurture their creativity or expose them to different careers in the arts. At only seventeen, I had the opportunity to learn the practice of photography and have my artwork included in an exhibition on the prestigious walls of the Studio Museum.

My experience here helped pave a path to becoming the Photo Editor for La Voz Magazine at Syracuse University, and created opportunities to photograph prominent lifestyle bloggers and build up a portfolio over the years. “It’s not a good bye but a see you later” is the perfect quote to describe my relationship with the Studio Museum. After I graduated from Syracuse University I looked for my next destination. Because I had kept in touch with our Expanding the Walls coordinator throughout the years, I was offered an opportunity to intern here over the summer with the class of 2016. Working with such a talented group made me proud to see the direction in which the program is heading. I found myself wishing that I could be a permanent part of this world-renowned cultural institution—and my wish came true. After my internship ended, I was given the opportunity to continue to be a part of this amazing network and family as the Museum’s Education Assistant. Expanding the Walls has been and continues to be an integral part of my development. Thank you, Studio Museum, for being a constant presence and source of growth in my life.
Expanding the Walls: My Story

Top:
Sapphire Hilton
Lights, Action, 2011
Courtesy the artist

Sapphire Hilton
during her 2011
Expanding the Walls
program year.
On October 24, 2016, Derrick Adams was awarded the eleventh annual Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize at The Studio Museum in Harlem Gala 2016. Established by jazz impresario, musician and philanthropist George Wein, in memory of his wife Joyce, a dedicated Trustee of The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Wein Prize honors the legacy of a woman whose life embodied a commitment to the power and possibilities of art and culture. In keeping with Joyce's support for living artists, the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize recognizes and honors the artistic achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise and creativity. Envisioned as an extension of the Studio Museum's mission to support experimentation and excellence in contemporary art, the Prize includes an unrestricted monetary award of $50,000.

Derrick Adams is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York and the former Curatorial Director of Rush Arts Gallery in Chelsea. His diverse practice spans collage, sculpture, performance, drawing and video. Adams often explores the force of popular culture in black lives and plays with perception of objects, text and iconography. He frequently reconfigures familiar objects in deconstructivist manners to challenge how viewers read bodies and space.

Adams's work has been presented frequently at the Studio Museum in exhibitions including *Veni Vidi Video* (2003), *Harlem Postcards* (2009), *The Bearden Project* (2011), *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (2012) and *The Shadows Took Shape* (2013). His work has also been seen nationally and internationally at institutions including MoMA PS1, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, the Birmingham Museum of Art and the PERFORMA biennial. His work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Studio Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Birmingham Museum of Art.

A recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2009), S.J. Weiler Award (2014) and an Agnes Martin Fellowship (2001–03), Adams received his BFA from Pratt Institute (1996) and his MFA from Columbia University (2003). He is also an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2002) and the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program (2003–04). Adams recently served as guest curator for the inaugural curated section of VOLTA NY 2016.
Gala 2016

The Studio Museum in Harlem held its annual gala on Monday, October 24 with an evening of dinner, dancing and celebration among artists, patrons and Museum friends. The Museum was also honored and delighted to acknowledge the great work of its long-time partner, the Ford Foundation, and to have the Foundation’s President Darren Walker share words on the importance of equity in the arts and in cultural institutions worldwide. Gala 2016 also hosted the presentation of the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, which was awarded to Derrick Adams, the eleventh artist to receive this prestigious $50,000 cash award, thanks to the significant support from philanthropist George Wein. Gala 2016 raised a record $2 million to directly support the Studio Museum’s exhibitions, public programs and renowned Artist-in-Residence program.

The Studio Museum would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the supporters listed on the following pages.

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Studio Society

Studio Society is an extraordinary group of dedicated supporters who have embraced the mission of The Studio Museum in Harlem and are devoted to building our reputation as the leading venue for black art and culture in the country. As the Museum’s premier membership group, Studio Society provides a behind-the-scenes look at contemporary art in and around Harlem. Our members come from many professional backgrounds, but all are invested in and dedicated to learning about and supporting artists of African descent.

Studio Society members are able to participate in exclusive events that highlight both established and up-and-coming artists. This past September, members were treated to a Harlem arts crawl of institutions around our neighborhood. Highlights included visits to the inHarlem sites created by Simone Leigh in Marcus Garvey Park and Rudy Shepherd in Jackie Robinson Park, as well as historical and architectural points of interest.

Studio Society programming also engages the Museum’s current and former artists in residence, from private studio visits to gallery tours. In the spring of 2016, members enjoyed a last-chance viewing of David Hammons: Five Decades at Mnuchin Gallery and have attended talks led by artists in residence. Additional benefits include access to contemporary art fairs and invitations to exclusive tours.

Members join Studio Society because they want to connect with the Museum and feel strongly about the work we do. Their support goes toward all aspects of the Museum, from our amazing exhibition series to our education and public programs. Studio Society is a great way to become involved with Studio Museum, meet others that are passionate about art and ensure that the Museum continues to grow and expand.

If you are interested in learning more about Studio Society or becoming a Member, we welcome your participation!

For more information on Studio Society, please contact Chanice Hughes-Greenberg, Membership and Direct Mail Coordinator, at 212.864.4500 x221 or cgreenberg@studiomuseum.org.
**Member Spotlight**

**Kojo Ade**

Kojo Ade has been a proud Member of The Studio Museum in Harlem for over twenty years. Born and raised in Harlem, he has been involved at the Museum since its earliest years at 2033 Fifth Avenue. Ade has been affiliated with many of the cultural institutions in the neighborhood and is frequently spotted at Uptown Fridays!

**Tell us about the first time you visited the Studio Museum.**

Well, which one?! The first time I encountered the Studio Museum was in 1969. The Museum provided a lot of creative opportunities and experiences for young people. There were visual arts classes, photography, cinema. I came to study drama—I said “Wow, I want to learn how it feels to be on the opposite end of the camera.” Others in the program went on to become accomplished filmmakers. I was pursuing it out of curiosity, looking out and capturing images.

**What made you want to become more involved in the Studio Museum?**

It goes back to my relationship to the Schomburg Center and to black theater. The next step in being involved is offering support. When I interact with people I like to tell them that I’m a Member. When you go to see art, bring two friends along to see a show, send an email to five friends letting them know what’s going on. I worked in marketing and audience development, and from doing that I just had to become a Member. I had to join to show people how to support and teach them. When funding fades, that’s where membership comes in.

**What has been your favorite experience or exhibition at the Museum so far?**

In 2008 there was a show, *Flow*, featuring young international artists of color. I remember talking to some of the artists at the opening. I speak many languages so I was able to talk to some of them in their native tongues. I loved it because you had diversity, and not just European countries but also some from African countries.
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Photo: Scott Rudd
Membership Form

Yes! I want to be a Member of The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Name of membership holder

Name of additional Member (Family/Partner level members and above)

Address

City state zip

Work Phone Home Phone

Email Address

Please do not make my name, address and other information available to third-party providers.

Please list as Anonymous.

Name of cardholder

Address

City state zip

Work Phone Home Phone

Card Number Expiration Date

Signature

☐ 1 Year
☐ Renewal
☐ Gift

MEMBERSHIP
☐ Donor $500
☐ Associate $250
☐ Supporter $125
☐ Family/Partner $75
☐ Individual $50
☐ Student $25*
☐ Senior $25*

STUDIO SOCIETY
☐ Studio Society $1500

*(Student/Senior Membership will not be processed without a copy of a valid ID)

☐ American Express
☐ MasterCard
☐ Visa

☐ I have enclosed my check (make check payable to The Studio Museum in Harlem)

» MAIL TO

The Studio Museum in Harlem
144 W. 125th St.
New York, NY 10027
## Visitor Information

### Address
144 W. 125th St. New York, NY 10027 (between Malcolm X and Adam C. Powell Jr. boulevards)

### Admission
Suggested donation: $7 (adults), $3 (seniors and students). Free for Members and children (12 and under).

### Follow us on social media!
[studiomuseum](https://www.studiomuseum.org)

### General Info
- T 212.864.4500
- F 212.864.4800

### Media Contact
- 212.864.4500 x213
- pr@studiomuseum.org

### Public Programs Info
- 212.864.4500 x282
- programs@studiomuseum.org

### Membership Info
- 212.864.4500 x221
- membership@studiomuseum.org

### Museum Hours
- Wednesday, 5–7 pm (Members only)
- 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

### By Bus:
- 125th Cross-town: M100, M101
- Up/Downtown: M1, M7, M102, M1

### Municipal Garage

### Map of Studio Museum Harlem vicinity

![Map of Studio Museum Harlem vicinity](image-url)