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During my tenure at the Studio Museum we’ve made several exciting forays into the field of architecture, notably with *Harlemworld: Metropolis as Metaphor* (2004) and *David Adjaye: Making Public Buildings* (2007). Architecture and art are deeply intertwined, and these projects have been a wonderful addition to our exhibition program. I am so pleased that with Stephen Burks: Man Made we are expanding into the world of design as well.

While I am eagerly anticipating what is sure to be a beautiful exhibition, Stephen Burks will be the first to tell you that design is not just about making good-looking objects. Instead, design is a way to solve problems. Burks’s approach to problem solving embraces not only the potential for an object to address a specific concern, but for design as a whole to have a role in positive social change. Much of his work involves sustainability, collaboration and economic development in countries ranging from Peru to Senegal.

Speaking with artists about their work is one of my favorite parts of my job, and so I am thrilled that this issue of *Studio* features a number of conversations. I had the great pleasure of conversing with Mark Bradford about his *Alphabet*. You’ll also find interviews with Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, dancer Trajal Harell, along with several artists and museum staff.

We’re also making some exciting forays into the digital conversation, improving our on-site visitor experience with electronic signage and information kiosks, ramping up our social media efforts (you can now find us on Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare and more!) and utilizing the new Studio Blog to communicate the latest happenings in the world of art and culture. Even I’m blogging! Check it out at studiomuseum.org/studio-blog. While our expanded Thursday and Friday evening hours make it more convenient to visit the Museum on your own schedule, the depth of information on the web means you can access Studio Museum programs 24/7.

These are just a few of the ways we are committed to making the Museum an accessible, enjoyable and educational space for all. Whether at a family workshop on Target Free Sunday or at a Friday night tour, I look forward to seeing you around, and definitely uptown!

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THELMA GOLDEN
DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR
RECENT ACQUISITION

Mequitta Ahuja

World, 2010

Museum purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee

10.17.4
EXHIBITION SCHEDULE
WINTER / SPRING 2011

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

NOVEMBER 11, 2010 – MARCH 13, 2011
LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE: Any Number of Preoccupations
MARK BRADFORD: Alphabet
VIDEOSTUDIO: Changing Same
THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE
DAWOD BEY’S HARLEM, USA
UNTITLED (LEVEL)
COLLECTED.
BLACK & WHITE

MARCH 31, 2011 – JUNE 26, 2011
STEPHEN BURKS: Man Made
BENJAMIN PATTERSON: In the State of FLUX/us: Scores
VIDEOSTUDIO: Playback
SCULPTED, ETCHED AND CUT: Metal Works from the Permanent Collection
COLLECTED. Vignettes

ALWAYS ON VIEW
HARLEM POSTCARDS
GLENN LIGON: Give Us a Poem
ADAM PENDLETON: Collected (Flamingo George)
STUDIOSOUND

Benjamin Patterson
String Music, 1960
Collection
Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles
The following is an excerpt from a short story, “Treatment for a Low-Budget Television Horror with the Working Title: ‘Dinner with Jeffrey’,” written by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye for the exhibition catalogue Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: Any Number of Preoccupations. Although she is a visual artist, writing is an important part of Yiadom-Boakye’s creative practice. It allows for what Studio Museum Associate Curator (and the organizer of Any Number of Preoccupations) Naomi Beckwith identifies as Yiadom-Boakye’s “allegorical impulses and barbed social criticism.” The selection below is from the beginning of “Dinner with Jeffrey,” which recounts the story of a ruthless social climber, Carl, as he dines with his latest fiancée and her family. Much to his surprise, the dinner does not turn out the way Carl hopes.

It is clear from the size and style of their country mansion that the Bromley-Rutherfords are not short of money. Old English money. The best kind, as it only ever runs out when the family is headed by the blackest of sheep: a gambler, whoremonger or lover of finery and fast cars who squanders every penny on bad investments and fast living. Thankfully this has not yet happened.

Carl is hoping to change all that. A hedonistic ne’er-do-well, he has recently made the acquaintance of a Miss Hecuba Bromley-Rutherford, daughter and only child of the Right Honourable Jeremy Bromley-Rutherford, and heiress to the Bromley-Rutherford banking empire. She is in her mid-twenties, clean and healthy looking, although not as beautiful as the word “heiress” normally suggests. She has a robust and muscular sort of face, handsome, with large white teeth—not unlike an Arabian thoroughbred horse.

Carl does not know a great deal about Hecuba but he knows about her wealth. It is this knowledge that attracted him to her in the first place. It is also what prompted him to ask her to marry him after a two-month courtship. Hecuba has accepted his proposal. She was quite vulnerable when they met. Her previous lover, Jeffrey, had simply disappeared without a word of explanation, leaving her quite distraught. Carl had known Jeffrey well (they had worked at the same office for a time) and had been equally baffled by his disappearance.

Although he was a complete bastard, Jeffrey had been the love of Hecuba’s life. He was a handsome devil, much like Carl, with strong, sturdy rugby legs, bright black eyes and impeccable manners. Carl is sad that Jeffrey left without saying goodbye. But his departure has created a vacancy in Hecuba’s bed which Carl is happy to occupy. Moreover, this is not the first time that Carl has married for money. And he is a seasoned professional when it comes to charming future in-laws. This is what he must do tonight. And as he stands outside the country mansion, he imagines that this will be an enjoyable evening.

He lifts and drops the large lion-head doorknocker twice and waits.

A weary old butler opens the door, smiles weakly and beckons him in.

The house is every bit as grand on the inside as it is on the outside. Paintings, sculptures and antique furniture spanning centuries line the entrance hall. Carl begins to salivate. He adores money.

The Right Honourable Jeremy Bromley-Rutherford (something of an antique himself) is holding court in the drawing room. He is smoking a pipe. And he is dressed for dinner...
In the more than a decade that Stephen Burks has been creating objects, he has gathered an impressive roster of collaborators and clients from around the globe, including Aid to Artisans, Cappellini, Estée Lauder, Missoni, Moroso, the Nature Conservancy and Swarovski. At Burks’s aptly-named New York studio, Readymade Projects, raw and recycled materials, found and repurposed objects, and artisanal and handmade crafts are transformed into clever, functional products with seductive details, immediate forms and vibrant colors.

Burks’s ongoing project reflects on the conditions that shape design in today’s world and reconsiders the status of the handmade object in an age of mass production and planned obsolescence. Burks is sensitive to the conditions of globalization—his works respond to how cultural traditions and craft technologies migrate from their birthplaces as artisans move around the world. These forces also bring more artisanal products to the marketplace, both in their original functions and as decorative objects.

As part of our spring 2011 season, the Studio Museum is pleased to present Stephen Burks: Man Made, a unique project that highlights Burks’s concrete talents and conceptual work as a design practitioner. Inspired by Burks’s collaboration with Senegalese basket weavers.
based in New York and Dakar, as well as projects with artisans in South Africa, Peru and India, *Man Made* starts with the traditional basket-weaving process as its core concept. During the exhibition, the Museum’s galleries will be transformed, literally, into a workshop where New York-based weavers and artisans will create a series of functional and experimental objects and installations conceived by Burks and involving natural materials such as sweetgrass, cloth and paper, as well as industrial materials such as polyethylene, polypropylene and Tyvek®. In addition to the central workshop, the exhibition will also include photographic and video documentation of Burks’s travels, as well as his own drawings and prototypes, so that audiences can experience the entire design process—from inspiration to development to completion. On one hand, *Man Made* is an interactive design exhibition, and on the other, it is an active platform for working with a collective of West African artisans whose objects and presence have become a significant part of the Harlem community.

*Man Made* is Burks’s first solo museum exhibition in New York and will run concurrently with his curatorial project at the Museum of Arts and Design, *Stephen Burks: Are You a Hybrid?*. The Studio Museum exhibition will be accompanied by a new monograph designed by Burks with Studio Lin, which will follow several of his recent projects, including those for the Museum and private clients. Through the book and exhibition, audiences will come to understand Burks’s singular vision of making, a vision committed to the expansive notion of design as an authentic basis for the production of culture in a contemporary, global context.

*Stephen Burks: Man Made* is generously supported by a grant from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

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2—Stephen Burks
*Wall Mounted Basket Mirror with Daniel,* 2010
Photo: Daniel Hakansson for Readymade Projects

3—Stephen Burks
*Wall Mounted Basket Mirror,* 2010
Photo: Daniel Hakansson for Readymade Projects
On the occasion of the exhibition *Mark Bradford: Alphabet*, Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden and Exhibition Coordinator and Program Associate Thomas J. Lax sat down with the artist to discuss his major new body of work, his ongoing inspirations and his future plans. For the exhibition, Bradford created twenty-six individual works on paper, each depicting a single letter. As in his “Merchant Posters” series, Bradford uses advertisements he finds in his South Los Angeles neighborhood, repurposing them to comment on the needs and desires of his local community and the greater social world it participates in.

**THELMA GOLDEN:** I’m thrilled to be here with you at the *Studio Museum* and to be able to talk to you about your exhibition *Alphabet*, now on view here. I’m wondering if you could describe your sense of how this body of work came to be.

**MARK BRADFORD:** I think one of the foundations of my work is the use of language. Being an abstract painter, I’m very much attracted to the notion of abstraction theoretically. My work is not text-based but I really respond to text both on a formal level and a linguistic level. I can look at text almost as an abstraction. I can look at it formally, and as an abstract painting, so I’ve always really liked text and language.

**TG:** Tell me how you made this series.

**MB:** I found a particular script that I was attracted to, and I stenciled it. I wanted to make sure that the text didn’t sit comfortably within the space. I wanted to make the size a little bit compressed so the language felt a little bit awkward. I used latex, and I used some paint... maybe I have billboard paper on it... detritus from the urban environment. This is actually one of the few works where I used paint. Not using paint is not a mantra of mine. I haven’t essentialized “I don’t use paint” because actually, I do use paint. I just use it in a very determined and printmaking way. I don’t use it as an aesthetic component. I use it as a structure, a support. I did use paint on these but I rolled it on.

**TG:** Why did you use paint?

**MB:** Because I wanted to actually see what it did. I was experimenting.

**THOMAS J. LAX:** The works have a scourged, tinged sensibility to them. I’m interested in questions of embodiment, site-specificity and the history and legacy of violence in Los Angeles. Is there any relationship, formally, between your work and that social history?

**MB:** My work is mining both social agendas and the
I met Mark because I was working on the exhibition that became Freestyle. It didn’t have a name at that point but I wanted it to be a survey of artists around the country and I went to LA and a colleague, Christian Haye, and Daniel Martinez, an artist whose work had been completely transformative to me, said to me that when I went to LA, I had to see Mark Bradford so I called Mark and he gave me his address.

She pulled up and she got out and I was a little nervous. I could see the way she was looking at me… She was like, “There’s something here. You’re different, but I think you have a place in all of this and I’m going to give you your chance to do your thing.”

I think what was clear to me is that when I went to your studio that day and saw the paintings that ended up being the paintings that we borrowed that were in Freestyle was that you had a fully formed aesthetic at that point. It was not work that was at all trying to figure itself out. It was all there and you were ready. I said something like, “Can I borrow this one and that one?” and you said “You can have them all.” You were so ready to begin presenting. The exhibition would be just a starting point to get to know your work so that’s why I’ve been thrilled that we can continue to have a relationship with your work at the Museum in our collection and in our exhibitions.

What’s next?

I’m most interested right now in education. I want to work a lot more with kids, 6th through 12th grade. I’ve been working a lot with that group and I’ll probably do a textbook for them. I also want to make a movie. I did a [multimedia installation] called Pinnochio Is On Fire (2010) that was really interesting. I might make that into a movie or I might expand it to explore the notion of abstraction and the male body.
BENJAMIN PATTERSON
BORN IN THE STATE OF FLUX/US: SCORES

Benjamin Patterson, a founding member of Fluxus—a loose and international collective of artists who infused avant-garde practices of the day with humor and anarchic energy—helped revolutionize the artistic landscape at the advent of the 1960s and usher in an era of new and experimental music. Now in his seventies, Patterson is being discovered by a new generation of artists. Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/US is a retrospective of the artist’s career, which now spans nearly fifty years and marks the artist’s first major exhibition, bringing together a multitude of works never before seen in the United States. The exhibition is curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver, Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, where the exhibition originated.

Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/US underscores the significant contributions of this artist, whose presence within the dynamic constellation of Fluxus is palpable. The exhibition provides audiences with their first comprehensive look at Patterson’s work and explores his contributions to both Fluxus and the larger contemporary art landscape.

Scores presents a selection of works from the exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, with a central focus on scores from Patterson’s performances ranging from 1960 to 2005. Born in the State of FLUX/US: Scores also includes video from recent performances, documentation and ephemera from twenty years in which Patterson withdrew from his career as an artist to embrace an “ordinary life.” During this period, Patterson was employed as a reference librarian, and became an arts administrator and entrepreneur, launching his own music management company, Ben Patterson Ltd.

Trained in classical music instrumentation and composition, Patterson made his most significant contribution to Fluxus with his concept of the “action as composition”—the resulting sound from simple and complex actions. This “spectacle of music” is rooted within the precepts of Dada, a movement that aimed at reinventing art in the midst of the cultural apocalypse of World War I. As with Dada, Fluxus saw the body as material, hence the group’s strong emphasis on the practice of performance. Of all the Fluxus artists, it is Patterson who explores the connection between action and music, creating compositions for both the body in action and unconventional playing of his instrument, the contra bass, through ordinary gestures and other actions.

After a nearly twenty-year hiatus, Patterson reemerged in the 1980s to resume his prolific career as an artist. In 1989, Patterson returned to Europe to live, creating a vast repository of work that has been assembled in the United States for the first time with this exhibition.

Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/US was organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and has been made possible by the patrons, benefactors, and donors to the CAMH’s Major Exhibition Fund. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.
"THE BLACK & WHITE FILE"

A PRIMARY COLLECTION OF
SCORES AND INSTRUCTIONS
FOR HIS MUSIC, EVENTS,
OPERAS, PERFORMANCES AND

BEN PATTERSON, WIESBADEN/ERBENHEIM
**VIDEOSTUDIO**

**CHANGING SAME**

*VideoStudio: Changing Same* presents the work of four artists—Dineo Seshee Bopape, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Akosua Adoma Owusu and Cauleen Smith—in a series of one-month programs, each focused on a single artist. *Changing Same* is a shared title for several significant literary works. These include the LeRoi Jones (now known as Amiri Baraka) essay “The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music),” in which he uses the term to describe an avant-garde black aesthetic, and scholar Deborah E. McDowell’s compilation of her black feminist criticism, *The Changing Same*, which takes its title from Jones’s essay. Influenced by an interest in how identity, gender and difference inform artistic practice, the exhibition brings together video and film by four artists who independently explore a set of overlapping themes. Together, their work encourages us to reflect on real and imagined understandings of the past and future, the importance of place and memory, consumer culture and social criticism, and the relationship between artist and viewer.

Dineo Seshee Bopape (b. 1981, Polokwane, South Africa) works in multiple media and combines elements of installation, performance, video, drawing and photography. Bopape saturates her videos with coded symbols, such as birds, flowers and peepholes. Through her use of production effects and editing, she reinterprets these images of femininity, romanticism and violence. LaToya Ruby Frazier (b. 1982, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) works primarily in photography and video, blurring the distinctions...
between self-portraiture and social documentary. Depicting personal scenes of chronic illness, drug use and familial tension, she explores ideas of discord and decay. Akosua Adoma Owusu (b. 1984, Alexandria, Virginia) appropriates found footage and creates original audio and visual material. Focusing on objects associated with certain social practices—braiding hair, playing with dolls and weaving textiles, for example—Owusuinserts her cinematic approach into the tradition of West African storytelling. Cauleen Smith (b. 1967, Riverside, California) makes nonlinear, experimental films and video installations about outsiders and aliens. Influenced by science fiction and comic books, Smith often uses text and Afrofuturist themes in her considerations of the relationship between art, science, fantasy and technology.

Changing Same is the third installment of VideoStudio, an ongoing series of video and film inaugurated in fall 2008. Reflecting the Studio Museum's commitment to time-based art, the program demonstrates the influence of recent technology on contemporary art. Organized by Exhibition Coordinator and Program Associate Thomas J. Lax, VideoStudio: Changing Same continues the Museum's mission to present work by international and emerging artists of African descent.

THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE

The Production of Space brings together artworks from the permanent collection that address the relationship between public space and bodies. Consisting mainly of conceptual photographs, The Production of Space investigates this theme in a number of ways, including through exploration of the urban terrain, performance or intervention, and the use of documents and regional borders as symbols of spatial policing.

Dawit Petros’s (b. 1972) Harlechrome No. 2 (2009), one artwork consisting of twenty-four photographs, indexes the artist’s walks around Harlem. On these excursions Petros took photographs of walls, isolating colors and textures in the Harlem landscape. The series of photographs “Transit” (1996–99), by Barthélémy Toguo (b. 1967), who lives in Cameroon and France, chronicles the artist’s staged confrontations on trains, at airport security checkpoints and at national borders. Toguo’s photographs expose the difficulties immigrants, often viewed as strangers or invaders, encounter while traveling, as well as the limitations to movement in a globalized world. Likewise, selections from South African artist Rudzani Nemasetoni’s (b. 1962) “Apartheid Scroll” (1995) series of photo-etchings illuminate the transformation that space undergoes as national policies change through history. During apartheid, the South African government required all black citizens to carry identification passbooks, which served to restrict the movement of blacks within the country, particularly in urban areas where they were allowed to work but not reside. Each of these artworks reveals how space influences lived experiences.

The Production of Space takes its title from the 1974 book by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in which he argues that space is not inert, neutral or pre-existing, but rather an ongoing production of spatial relations. “Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder,” he writes. This refers to space as a social construction equivalent to race, gender or class, which therefore makes it a determining factor in all cultural production. Lefebvre surmises that space is not merely created by humans, but also carves all human activity. Together, the artworks in The Production of Space illustrate that space is created through social practices and individual and collective action.

Organized by Curatorial Fellow Tasha Parker, The Production of Space is the culmination of the Museum’s first year-long fellowship involving work with the permanent collection.

1—Otobong Nkanga
Alterscape Stories: Spilling Waste (detail), 2006
Museum purchase 08.15.5a-b

COLLECTED. BLACK & WHITE

Collected. Black & White brings together twenty black-and-white photographs, paintings and works on paper from the Studio Museum’s permanent collection. Organized by Assistant Curator Lauren Haynes, this exhibition is a companion to another Studio Museum Fall/Winter 2010–11 exhibition, Dawoud Bey’s Harlem, USA. In an art historical context, the term “black-and-white” often brings to mind the medium of photography. Collected. Black & White explores how artists use this reduced palette across different media. Benny Andrews (1930–2006) created the black-and-white pen and ink on paper drawings on view as preparatory studies for Trash (1971), his monumental twelve-panel oil and mixed-media collage on canvas that was created in anticipation of the U.S. bicentennial in 1976. Meanwhile, former Studio Museum artist in residence Tanea Richardson (b. 1977) proclaims “He’s Actually Very Intelligent,” in a style reminiscent of pages in a lined notebook, in her 2007 acrylic on canvas painting. These artworks, along with the others on view, help expand notions of black and white.


First presented in spring 2009, the Museum’s exhibition series Collected. allows for in-depth looks into the permanent collection, provides an opportunity to reflect on the great treasures in the Museum’s care and prompts discussions about art created in the current moment and the past. The collection contains over 1,600 works of art, including paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, video and mixed-media installations. It traces the evolution of the Museum from its inception through the growth of the collection and the expansion of the exhibition and Artist-in-Residence programs. Today, the Studio Museum continues to build the collection through gifts and the stewardship of its Acquisition Committee.
In Dawoud Bey’s Harlem, USA, the artist takes viewers on a journey through the historic neighborhood with twenty photographs that provide glimpses into the lives of Harlem residents. The Studio Museum showed the complete “Harlem, USA” series in 1979 in Bey’s first solo museum exhibition. The artist’s engagement with Harlem and the Museum has continued for more than three decades and we are proud to present this series once again. The following are two of Bey’s reflections on Harlem, the first written on the occasion of his 1979 exhibition at the Museum and the second written to complement its 2010 reprise.

These photographs and the experience of making them was for me a homecoming of sorts. For while I never lived there, a large part of my family’s history was lived in Harlem. In addition to the aunts, uncles, and friends who eventually came to live there, it was in Harlem that my mother and father met. I was born shortly after they moved to the suburbs of Queens to escape the things they felt Harlem was becoming. Or perhaps, like other people, they wanted a chance for more than they felt Harlem offered. But others, thinking differently, had stayed. So we frequently found ourselves piling into the car for the ride to Harlem.

I remember those trips in an interesting kind of way. Driving through the crowded streets, I was amazed by what appeared to be the many people on vacation. It seemed to me that no matter what the day, everyday was Saturday in Harlem. But as the relatives one by one moved from Harlem, the trips became more and more infrequent, until finally they stopped altogether.

I began photographing in the streets of Harlem in 1975. At first these visits were just weekly excursions. On those occasions much of what I did was not photographing, but spending time walking the streets, reacquainting myself with the neighborhood that I wanted to again become a part of, seeing up close the people and the neighborhood I had glimpsed from the car window years before as a child. As I got to know the shopkeepers and others in the neighborhood, I became a permanent fixture at the public events taking place in the community, such as block parties, tent revival meetings, and anywhere else where people gathered. The relationships and exchanges that I had with some of these people are experiences I will never forget. It is in those relationships and the lives of the people that these pictures recall that the deeper meaning of these photographs can be found.

DAWOUD BEY, 1979

A writer once wrote that every place is simultaneously the place that it was and the place that it is. It is the combination of the two that constitutes the deeper meaning and experience of a place. And so it is with Harlem.

Typical of the changes that have transformed this community is the McDonald’s where Mr. Moore’s Bar-B-Que luncheonette used to stand on 125th Street and Lenox Avenue. As I pass the location...
pictures were made. It was that timeless quality that I was indeed looking for.

Much has happened in the thirty-five years since I began making these photographs. I am still committed to using the camera to describe the human community to itself. And I have come to find a home in museums all over the world. The Studio Museum, however, was the first time I came to understand what the relationship of a museum to its community could be, and that relationship remains central to a lot of the work and projects I currently do. The opportunity to have these works presented once again at the Studio Museum thirty-one years after they were first shown there reminds me of the ways in which the present is connected to the past, for the Museum, myself and the Harlem community.

DAWOUD BEY, 2010

Dawoud Bey received his MFA from Yale University School of Art in 1993 and is currently Distinguished College Artist and a professor of photography at Columbia College Chicago. He has received numerous awards and fellowships, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1991) and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (2002). Bey has also exhibited at the High Museum in Atlanta, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.
ON VIEW NOVEMBER 11, 2010 – MARCH 13, 2011

UNTITLED (LEVEL)
LESLIE HEWITT IN COLLABORATION WITH BRADFORD YOUNG

Leslie Hewitt
(in collaboration with Bradford Young)
Untitled (Level) (still), 2010
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee 10.8.1
Untitled (Level) (2010) is a dual-channel film installation by Leslie Hewitt (b. 1977) in collaboration with cinematographer Bradford Young (b. 1977). The film takes Manchild in the Promised Land, Claude Brown’s (1937–2002) seminal 1965 autobiographical work about growing up in Harlem in the 1940s and 50s, as its inspiration. Manchild in the Promised Land is not just one man’s coming-of-age story—like Untitled (Level), it is a portrait of Harlem. In the new film, still and moving images are used to show the passage of time. As a man wanders the early morning streets of Harlem, viewers are shown shots of Harlem streetscapes. Silent, Untitled (Level) draws viewers in, creating an atmosphere of longing and contemplation that allows each viewer to take his or her own journey through Harlem with, but separate from, the subject of the film.

Originally commissioned by The Kitchen, New York, Untitled (Level) is one of the Studio Museum’s newest acquisitions and is the first work in film for Hewitt, an artist working in photography, sculpture and site-specific installation. Her work addresses concepts of time, space and memory. She uses the camera as a tool not only to capture a specific moment, but also to change one’s point of view. By treating her photographs as installations, Hewitt challenges perceptions of space and the traditional roles of photography.

Untitled (Level) shares the feel of her other artworks through its engagement with shape, color and landscape, and how it positions viewers in very intentional and specific ways. Influenced and inspired by a variety of sources, including history, the Third Cinema movement, syncopation and Sun Ra, Hewitt is interested in, according to her artist statement, “the everyday and the transformative power of circumstance or situation.”

Leslie Hewitt is the 2010 recipient of The Studio Museum in Harlem’s Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize for innovation, promise and creativity (see page 81). Hewitt received a BFA in 2000 from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and an MFA in 2004 from Yale University, and was a 2002 Clark Fellow in Africana and cultural studies at New York University. She was the 2009–10 Mildred Londa Weisman Fellow for Creative Arts at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and was short-listed for the 2010 Grange Prize. Hewitt was first seen at the Studio Museum in Frequency (2005) and was a 2007–08 artist in residence at the Museum.

LAUREN HAYNES

For more information visit bradfordyoung.com and thekitchen.org.
Represented, revered and recognized by people around the world, Harlem is a continually expanding nexus of black culture, history and iconography. Venerable landmarks, such as the Abyssinian Baptist Church, Apollo Theater, Hotel Theresa, Audubon Ballroom and 125th Street, remain popular emblems of important historic moments and moods. The Studio Museum’s ongoing series Harlem Postcards invites contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds to reflect on Harlem as a site for artistic contemplation and production. Installed in the Museum lobby and available to visitors, Harlem Postcards presents intimate views and fresh perspectives on this famous neighborhood.
LEWIS WATTS  
Born 1946, Little Rock, AR  
Lives and works in the Bay Area, CA  
*Harlem Wishing Well, 2002*

*Harlem Wishing Well* is a reflection of my interest in looking for connections between the past and present. I've been photographing the “cultural landscape” in African-American communities, including Harlem, for the past thirty years. I love the fact that this improvised “well” eloquently uses found objects to evoke another time and place. Harlem is full of visual evidence of its cultural, political and spiritual past and present. It continues to be an inspiration to my southern-influenced “California eyes.” Harlem always seems like home when I’m here. I’m pretty sure I lived here in a past life.

PETRA RICHTEROVA  
Born 1978, Czech Republic  
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY  
*Dr. George Nelson Preston, 2010*

I photographed my mentor—scholar of African art, enstooled Akan chief (Ghana) and Harlem native, Dr. George Nelson Preston. As photographer, it was my goal to reach outside of the anonymity of street photography and venture into the homes and work places of individual artists and intellectuals. Posing in one of his exhibition spaces, Preston’s Sugar Hill brownstone is a residence as well as cultural institution. The three-floor Museum of Art and Origins, which houses one of the world’s finest collections of African art and is the only institution we know about where visitors are able to handle objects (when supervised), is one of Harlem’s cultural treasures and best kept secrets.

Up close and personal, some viewers will meet the face of an old friend and others will be introduced for the first time, but regardless of the relationship, I hope that the audience will become activated by this image and venture out to experience Harlem’s rich cultural life in person.

KWAKU ALSTON  
Born 1971, Philadelphia, PA  
Lives and works in New York, NY, and Venice, CA  
*Spring Time in Harlem, 2010*

A Fence in Harlem cannot keep the resurgence of spring from spilling out onto the streets, where it meets a humble ironing board and some trash bins.
I was photographing in a small boutique owned and operated by a woman from West Africa. “Which country?” I asked.

“Oh, I am a mix. From Cameroon and Sierra Leone.”

I acknowledged her response with a head nod, and then continued to photograph while she chatted with two other women. I was careful not to bump into the young boy who was tossing and rolling a ball across the floor.

There was an abundance of African fabric folded in perfect squares and neatly stacked on the far wall. On the opposite wall, pointy-toe shoes with matching clutch purses were stacked. Lots of them in all sorts of colors! Light aqua, lemon yellow, powder blue, emerald, silver, deep red and gold. It was eye candy, and I was tempted to buy rather than photograph.

I had almost finished with the shots, and while maneuvering around the women, I noticed the hands of one who wore a hijab. I made an internal note of her hands. I took the final picture in the space. I glanced at the woman’s hands again while she continued to speak with the owner and the friend.

When I look at the photograph I think of many things, obvious and not so obvious. However, gentrification comes to mind. There is history in her hands. There is history in Harlem. Her hands are seen in Harlem, but go further back to another land and another time, even before this woman’s time.

I love the way my mind travels when I walk around Harlem. I can only imagine the future absence of hands like this as parts of Harlem become more gentrified.

The Spring 2011 Harlem Postcards series will feature works by Jeanne Moutoussamy Ashe, Matthew Day Jackson, Demetrius Oliver and Hank Willis Thomas.
Matana Roberts (b. 1975) is an interdisciplinary artist and musician who may be best known for her alto saxophone jazz performances and innovative, conceptual “sound collage” compositions. For the last five years, Roberts has been working on an ever-evolving multimedia project she calls COIN COIN, currently composed of twelve chapters—two solo performances and ten ensembles—that overflow into smaller conceptual sound works called COIN COIN Happenings. For the Studio Museum’s front lobby this Fall/Winter 2010–11 season, Roberts created a nearly five-hour long, site-specific COIN COIN Happening composed of four parts: Fields of Memphis, Trail of a Tear, Mississippi Moonchile and Gens de Couleur Libre. The works combine snippets of traditional jazz improvisation with spoken prose, operatic singing and nuanced, subtle recordings of water, wind and other elements of the natural environment. When performing, Roberts reads music directly from detailed, pictorial scores that she creates for each version of COIN COIN. These scores incorporate collage, found family photographs, charcoal and pastel to create an elaborate language of symbols that denote types and lengths of sound.

Through comprehensive genealogical research, Roberts has traced seven generations of her family, which includes ancestors of African, Irish, Dutch, Danish, English and Scottish descent. COIN COIN is named for Marie Therese Metoyer, or “Coin Coin,” a distant Louisiana relative who was part of a well-known family of free blacks who also owned slaves. The stories of Coin Coin were passed down to Roberts through her immediate family, shaping a strong black female archetype around which Roberts could construct her own truths. In examining her roots, Roberts critically highlights a larger African-American history, particularly in the South, as well as the powerful roots of American musical expression, including jazz, blues and folk. Also, in tracing her family history back to a surprising range of nationalities, Roberts calls attention to the complexities of heritage, and the way that nationality and identity are constructed in the United States.

Born in Chicago, Roberts was a 2009 artist in residence at ISSUE Project Room in Brooklyn and a nominee for the Alpert Award in the Arts in 2008 and 2009. She has performed with her own ensembles, as well as with Vijay Iyer, Greg Tate’s Burnt Sugar the Arkestra Chamber and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, among many others. Roberts is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and the Black Rock Coalition.
Highlights from Beyond the Studio Museum

OFF/SITE 29
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IN THE STUDIO 36
This spring OFF/SITE—the Studio Museum’s collaboration with the Goethe-Institut New York—continues with two new innovative projects. *Up/Down, North/South* is a series of three public programs, beginning in January, that reflect on urban, regional and global geography and dislocation. In May, multimedia artist Marc Brandenburg presents a site-responsive installation that considers soccer culture and the notion of spectacle through sound, light and image.

Programs will take place at the Goethe-Institut Wyoming Building—a newly renovated space in the East Village—and the Studio Museum. Inaugurated in September 2010, OFF/SITE engages an aesthetic of experimentation, collaboration and interactivity, prioritizing local interventions that reference multiple identities and locations.

Visit studiomuseum.org/exhibition for more information and the calendar of events.
In fall 2010, the Studio Museum initiated a year-long collaboration with the Goethe-Institut New York. Titled OFF/SITE, the partnership examines and fosters contemporary ideas from culturally specific, global contexts. OFF/SITE is an exciting program for the Museum, and takes place downtown at the Goethe-Institut Wyoming Building on Third Street. The exhibition Xaviera Simmons: junctures (transmissions to), the first of OFF/SITE’s three installments of curatorial programs, was on view from September 24 to October 27. Embracing the unpredictability, experimentation, innovation and even awkwardness of collaborative relationships, Simmons created a project about the act of creating and the bumps and “junctures” inherent in the process. Two days a week, she invited fellow artists, writers, musicians, DJs and designers to converse with her for hours at a time inside a wooden studio structure built directly within the Wyoming Building gallery space and outfitted with materials such as computers, microphones, books, a copy machine and a record player. Outside the studio, photocopies that indicated the artist’s thought processes and inspirations filled a table and lined the floor. Simmons’s videos played on monitors, and seven live finches inhabited a birdcage in the corner—organic, breathing muses for the artist and a delicate counterpoint to the human activity occurring in the space.

Audience members were privy to the musings, silences, musical recordings and singing of Simmons and her collaborators, who were blocked from the gaze of the audience, and largely unaware if an audience was present at all. The effect was that of a selective interactivity—junctures (transmissions to) emphasized the restricted role of the audience and established the social relationships unfolding as the work of art itself. The performative nature of collaboration and intimate interaction among different people was heightened to newly tense and exciting planes—palpable even without having the performers in the direct line of vision.

On one occasion, Simmons spoke with industrial designer/artist Stephen Burks and DJ/artist/dancer Belinda Becker about art, community activism and world cultures, particularly in Haiti. She discussed the intersection of music, history and landscape with singer/songwriter Austin McCutchen. And with musician/artist/actor Tunde Adebimpe, she explored his processes of creating sound and the unexpected products of collaboration. Though the tone and form of each “juncture” was very different, Simmons was able to synthesize the social exchanges, conceptual beginnings and durational processes into an exhibition that considered the various raw materials of art-making.

ABBE SCHRIBER
Studio Lab is a new artist-centered program designed for ideas in formation. This year-long project invites select multidisciplinary artists and scholars—working locally, nationally and internationally—for a series of discussions and explorations.

Each artist investigation takes the form of an individual project or a public conversation. Check out studiomuseum.org for documentation of past Studio Lab participants as well as a listing of related programming.

Studio Lab is built on three specific conceptual platforms, which explore cultural specificity, performance and conceptions of “the public” in contemporary art. Artists are also given free rein to identify and develop hypotheses of their own making, including projects that respond to Harlem as a cultural site.

Studio Lab is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye’s pastel drawings created during the inaugural Studio Lab, November 2010. Photos: Liz Gwinn
Studio (un)framed is a new commissioning project inviting artists to use Studio as a jumping-off point for the creation of an accessible and affordable artist’s multiple. The first incarnation of Studio (un)framed, available exclusively at the Museum Store, is an intervention in the Fall/Winter 2010 issue by 2003-04 artist in residence Dave McKenzie. McKenzie’s work Fences (2010) is both a physical addendum to the magazine and an investigation into language: as part of the project, McKenzie is attempting to learn to speak Chinese.

Fences intersperses six photo postcards throughout Studio and wraps the magazine in a sheet that evokes schoolchildren’s brown-paper textbook covers, but unfolds to reveal McKenzie’s writings on language, travel, fences, neighbors and the meaning of life. For a limited time, Fences is available for purchase for $25 in the Museum Store.

Studio (un)framed is supported by a grant from Bloomberg.
GLENN LIGON: AMERICA
WHITNEY MUSEUM
OF AMERICAN ART
NEW YORK, NY
MARCH 10—JUNE 5, 2011
WHITNEY.ORG
Even though I have had the privilege of seeing much of Glenn Ligon’s profound and prodigious work over the twenty-five years we have known each other, there is no exhibition I am looking forward to more than his retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Our curatorial relationship began at the Whitney, where Glenn played a critical role both as an artist exhibiting in and a colleague encouraging the exhibitions I made while I was there. The exhibition, organized by the wonderful curator Scott Rothkopf, will be a comprehensive survey of Ligon’s work from these past twenty-five years. It will include over one-hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, sculptural installations and neon wall reliefs. Just as exciting is the Whitney’s publication of TWO accompanying books: an exhibition catalogue as well as a compilation of Glenn’s brilliant and incisive writings.
I also can’t wait to see new work by Brooklynite Lorna Simpson at the Brooklyn Museum! A highlight of the exhibition is the new series “May June July 57/09,” which juxtaposes selections from Simpson’s vast collection of vintage photographs of African Americans with precise contemporary replicas starring the artist. The exhibition also includes installations of black-and-white photo-booth portraits of African Americans from the Jim Crow era and a series of new works combining collage and drawing.

Valerie Piraino returns to her alma mater MICA for her very first solo exhibition. Building on the work she exhibited in last summer’s Usable Pasts and with help from the community-based philanthropy website kickstarter.com, Piraino will create her most ambitious project to date. Six new installations use furniture, slide projectors, picture frames and projection screens to build a domestic setting into which she projects an archive of family slides, exploring fictional memories, private life and visual fidelity.

Clifford Owens’s first solo museum exhibition, organized by Valerie Cassel Oliver, includes photographic, performative and hybrid works as well as restagings of historical performances by other artists.
I'm thrilled that this amazing student-organized exhibition—a collaboration between Yale and the University of Maryland, College Park—that debuted in Maryland last fall is coming to New Haven. Embodied: Black Identities in American Art from the Yale University Art Gallery features fifty-four works, many by Studio Museum alumni.

Organized by Studio Museum Director Emerita Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, Global Africa features art, design, fashion, furniture and more from around the world. The exhibition features many artists and designers I know and love alongside exciting new discoveries. And the beautiful catalogue features an insightful essay by Associate Curator Naomi Beckwith!

Read an interview with Dr. Sims on page 50.

5—Kerry James Marshall Untitled, 2009 Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund and a gift from Jacqueline L. Bradley, B.A. 1979 © Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

6—Gahaya Links Weaving Association Friendship Cathedral Basket, 2007 Courtesy Fairwinds Trading, Inc. Photo: Dean Ericson
CONTEMPORARY ART FROM THE COLLECTION
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK, NY
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 12, 2011
MOMA.ORG
The first exhibition organized for MoMA by Associate Director Kathy Halbreich, this multidisciplinary exhibition includes significant work by artists including Melvin Edwards, Ellen Gallagher, David Hammons, George Herriman, Kerry James Marshall, Kalup Linzy and Adrian Piper, many on view for the first time since their acquisition. I’m especially excited about a related public program featuring artists Kara Walker and Yoko Ono in conversation!

Don’t miss some of our favorite traveling exhibitions at their latest venues!
MARK BRADFORD
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
BOSTON, MA
NOVEMBER 19, 2010—MARCH 13, 2011
ICABOSTON.ORG

POISING BEAUTY: AFRICAN AMERICAN IMAGES FROM THE 1890S TO THE PRESENT
THE NEWARK MUSEUM
NEWARK, NJ
FEBRUARY 2—APRIL 28, 2011
NEWARKMUSEUM.ORG

VIDÉOSTUDIO: NEW WORK FROM FRANCE (ORIGINALLY SHOWN AT THE MUSEUM IN SPRING 2010) WILL BE ON VIEW AT THE ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA FROM FEBRUARY 5—MAY 22, 2011. ARTGALLERYOFHAMILTON.COM
IN THE STUDIO
DINEO SESHEE BOPAPE, NARCISSISTER, PAMELA PHATSIMO SUNSTRUM

DINEO SESHEE BOPAPE
Dineo Seshee Bopape’s *the eclipse will not be visible to the naked eye* (2009) begins, like much of the artist’s work, by inviting the viewer down a metaphorical rabbit hole. A *flâneuse*—dressed from head to toe in Corvette red, with a bucket hat and suitcase to match—walks in the middle of the road. Occupying the space a car would in an indistinct semi-urban landscape, the artist’s body is transfigured into an automotive protagonist whom the viewer follows during her time on the road.

A recent MFA graduate of Columbia University, Bopape (b. 1981) works across artistic media, often bringing together elements of installation, performance, video, drawing and photography. Of their interaction, Bopape says, “some things exist independently of each other, some others work as a group; they occupy different shapes in spaces.” Bopape’s videos take aesthetic cues from a variety of sources that refuse to fit together: the powerful optics of video surveillance, manipulation of digital media, visual tropes of popular movies and art house films, and ubiquitous forms of self-representation made available through the iPhone, Blackberry and other mobile devices.

Bopape’s videos depict mass-produced, inexpensive products, such as disco balls, kaleidoscopes and cubic zirconia jewelry. Collating her audio to her visual effects, Bopape sets these cheap, shiny commodities to a soundtrack of disjointed blings, chimes and rings, creating onomatopoec wordplay through which artificial objects speak their own names and functions.

Dineo Seshee Bopape
*the eclipse will not be visible to the naked eye* (video still), 2009
Courtesy the artist
Bopape liberally edits videos documenting simple actions—she speeds them up, slows them down, and rewinds and remixes them to build elliptical narratives. The gesture is repetition; the effect is seduction. Bopape calls seduction “the condition of ‘our’ world,” suggesting that it is both the shared ground on which collectivity is built—the way people give themselves to one another—and the motor for a community, which although fractured and inoperative has become inarguably global.

THOMAS J. LAX

All quotes: Dineo Seshee Bopape, e-mail message to the author, November 22, 2010.

NARCISSISTER

Imagine a doll come to life as a human, elaborately made-up and dressed in a full skirt—simultaneously innocent and eerie. Now imagine the human-doll is two-sided, with different faces front and back. The doll moves into an effortless headstand and as her legs flip upward, her skirt falls to reveal an entirely new two-sided doll—a real-life version of the traditional, folksy “topsy-turvy” dolls with two opposing sides—so that there are four “dolls” in total. Such an elaborately constructed character exists, and is the centerpiece of a new performance by the artist Narcissister. Based in New York, Narcissister is best known for her narrative, multilayered performances and videos that explore the spectacle inherent in a variety of salient contemporary subjects, including blackness, popular culture, female sexuality and consumerism. More recently, she has created mixed-media installations to accompany her performances and videos. Integral to Narcissister’s practice are the lush props and costumes she constructs by hand, such as the “topsy-turvy” doll costume, that consciously draw on traditional forms of dance, and the aesthetics of camp and excess found in burlesque and vaudeville.

As I sit with Narcissister—pared down to her civilian alter ego—over coffee in a local café, I feel far removed from the recent “post-studio” projects she describes, from her regular gigs in New York club The Box to performance festivals in Copenhagen. Narcissister masquerades as characters whose stories are inspired by scavenged, discarded materials: objects gathered from flea markets, thrift stores and the street. Part of the artist’s gift lies in her keen observation and darkly witty usage of culturally resonant clothing and materials that indicate a certain type of womanhood (or manhood). Her characters, often female, perform physically rigorous and improbable tasks generally involving choreographed agility as well as some measure of disrobing. Though they do not speak, their gestures are
infused with poise, power and a knowing wink. In the piece *I'm Everywoman* (2008), the main character dresses herself using clothing and accessories hidden on her person, playing on media-driven imagery and expectations of female sexuality. *The Workout* (2007) portrays a woman, dressed in 1980s exercise clothing and impossible heels, as she stretches and rides a stationary bike outfitted with mechanisms that seem equally suited to pleasure and torture.

Narcissister’s work as a multifaceted visual and performance artist makes important use of her background in burlesque, her past work as a stylist and commercial artist, and her abilities as a dancer and performer—she received her formal training with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Thus she “had the skill set,” she says, to transition into creating performance art. This statement has proved more than true—her works negotiate the fine lines between pain and pleasure, abjection and beauty.

ABBIE SCHRIBER

*All quotes: Narcissister, in conversation with the author, November 17, 2010.*

PAMELA PHATSIMO SUNSTRUM

Born in Mochudi, Botswana, multidisciplinary artist Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum has at times called various parts of Africa, Southeast Asia and the United States home. Motivated by her experiences in these diverse locales, Sunstrum explores how one’s sense of identity develops within geographic and cultural contexts. Her investigation takes various forms, including large-scale installations, stop-motion films, performances and works on paper. Her work has been exhibited internationally, and she currently lives and works in Baltimore.

Your work chronicles the journeys of “Asme,” your alter ego. What led you to develop this character?

Before I invented Asme, I was pulling from images of people I was finding in colonial photography and postcards, anthropological portraiture and ethnographic journals such as *National Geographic*. I was interested in how systems of power use image and narrative to define (and confine) identity and how those systems often involve an oversimplification of identity that denies nuances, complications and simultaneity. I was interested in how these images exoticized “the Other,” and I was trying to discover ways of reimagining and re-empowering those individuals by giving them new contexts and inventing new narratives for them through drawings and collage. However, I had a hard time using those images because I couldn’t distinguish how those bodies had been “used” to serve the needs...
and interests of systems of power, and how I was “using” those bodies to serve my own interests. I eventually began to shift my gaze towards my own experiences as a way of locating and deconstructing notions of power and identity as they pertained to me. I grew up in a multicultural family living in different parts of Africa and Asia, and as a result I have always had somewhat of a blurred notion of what constitutes a “self.” Asme was created out of my need for a character who could represent my own experience of blackness—an experience of always shifting between locations, between cultures, between definitions. I have always been fascinated by both ancient myths and science fiction, and I realized that as I was developing my work, I was telling myself stories. I have allowed Asme to become a mythological time-and-space traveler who slips between histories, between the real and the fantastical.

In developing the Asme story-cycle, I try to impose myth and ritual meaning onto ordinary landscapes and everyday events. I collect things, especially language—words on street signs, advertising, poetry, graffiti, pop lyrics, slogans—and imagine them as meaningful “transmissions.” This is how I came to the name “Asme”—it was a word I saw near a mirror in a public bathroom, and I thought it was the perfect name for an alter ego... a character that is like me, that stands in “as me” in an archetypal hero’s quest.

Not only did you experience a transnational upbringing, but you have participated in artist residencies all over the world. Is your continued engagement with foreign environments part of your practice?

Definitely. I recently had the opportunity to make work in Johannesburg, South Africa, and it was during this time that I allowed the sites and sights of one specific place, Johannesburg, to drive not only new developments in the ongoing Asme story-cycle, but also to influence my material choices and installation decisions. While in Johannesburg, I decided to walk from my house to the studio everyday. I wanted to get the “everyday” feel of the place, and during the fifty-minute walk I would be thinking about Asme and, of course, telling myself stories. These stories seemed to spin out of Johannesburg’s culturally complicated urban landscape: language from street signs and billboards, the fusion of so many relocated and dislocated ethnicities, the endless construction and deconstruction of extraordinary wealth and extraordinary poverty, the ruins of old gold mines and of new shanty towns. I feel this was an important shift in my way of thinking about the Asme myth—prior to this, the Asme story was vaguely situated in memories of past experiences that I kept alluding to but never fully allowed to materialize, whereas in Johannesburg a current and urban moment started to press in on Asme in a way I could not ignore. The work I did in Johannesburg was an in-situ drawing installation titled Asme in the Heart of the City, and it included mural-sized drawings, animation, poems I created by collaging news headline posters I collected on my walks and old enamel bowls I traded for in Soweto.

What are you working on at the moment?

Lately I have been working on trying to create more integration between my drawings, installations, animations and performance works. I am currently developing a collaborative project with Torkwase Dyson. Like me, Torkwase also incorporates an alter ego in her work. Hers is named “Black Rhino.” We first began working together in 2009 with an installation and performance work at the Creative Alliance in Baltimore titled Astro_Nautic. The most recent iteration of the collaboration is a series of transnational web-based and radio-based transmissions: Skype video exchanges, soundscapes, drawings and call-and-responses between Asme and Black Rhino. The first transmission will occur in January while I’ll be in South Africa and Torkwase will be at the Art Institute of Chicago.

For more studio visits and artists’ perspectives, check out studiomuseum.org/studio-blog.
Ariel Osterweis Scott, doctoral candidate in Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, speaks with noted choreographer Trajal Harrell. Harrell’s works have been seen at institutions including The New Museum, ICA Boston, The Kitchen and numerous international venues. Here, Harrell discusses his latest work.

This interview appears in condensed form.

ARIEL OSTERWEIS SCOTT: How did your piece Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church (S) (2009) come about?
TRAJAL HARRELL: I am dealing with the theoretical nexus between voguing and early Postmodern dance. The piece is a fashion show in which there’s dressing and undressing. I tend to be interested in histories of movement on women’s bodies, movement that hasn’t been recorded or hasn’t been historicized. Voguing fits in there, but is a little bit different. I came up with this proposition, what would have happened in 1963 if someone from the voguing dance tradition in Harlem had come down to Judson Church in the Village to perform alongside the early Postmoderns? If I were someone from that tradition coming down, what would I do? The first thing I was thinking of was selling. I would sell some things.

AOS: What things? Your body?
TH: Yeah. I was thinking I would try to make some money in this situation. What would it mean for vogue to change markets? Then I thought of this famous picture of David Hammons selling snowballs on the streets of Harlem [Bliz-aard Ball Sale (1983)]. They were different-sized snowballs, so I thought I should do the piece in different sizes. Literally, it is sold in different sizes to presenters on the dance market. I don’t want to deny the fact that the piece is for sale. That’s kind of how Twenty Looks came about.

AOS: Have you ever gone to the balls [formal voguing competitions]?
TH: In 2000 I went to my first ball, the Love Ball. I was blown away by it. At the time my work was super minimalist. I had gone to the ball and I had gone to my first fashion show. These two things were more interesting than what I was seeing in dance in terms of Postmodernism. The interplay of pedestrianism movement just like it was ballet. How can I learn this movement with no irony? How is the model putting her foot down? How are her hips moving? Really learning it academically.

AOS: What is your interest in the movement of voguing?
TH: I’m interested in the movement as a theoretical concept. If we think of voguing as a theoretical concept, I would say we are all always voguing. It’s like RuPaul said: “Who isn’t in drag?” I’m not a voguer. The whole thing is an imaginative possibility. I’m interested in the impossibility, that history that could not come together.

AOS: How did you do the research?
TH: A friend gave me videotapes of fashion shows and we would work in the studio. We would treat the

Trajal Harrell
Twenty Looks
(performance still), 2009
Photo: Miana Jun
and performativity on the runway is incredible—the way it's a character but it's not. In voguing, the idea of social performance is so clear—the way gender operates. You lose your ability to see gender or to automatically read gender.

AOS: What is your background and dance education?
TH: I grew up in Douglas, Georgia, and I went to Yale. I didn’t dance at Yale. I didn’t dance with anyone.

AOS: You weren’t the I-have-to-take-three-classes-per-day type?
TH: Oh no, never. I thought it was a waste of time.

I always did my own work. I had directed in the theater in college.

AOS: How does your background inform the work you make?
TH: If you ask people what kind of work I make, they say I’m a conceptualist. I’m so not a conceptualist—I’m really an expressionist. Usually the piece comes from some experience that I have in the studio, expressing something I can only express through movement, then trying to understand that and finally allowing that to crystallize into a piece.

Visit www.studiomuseum.org/studio-blog to read a more in-depth conversation between Ariel and Trajal.
REMEMBERING EVELYN CUNNINGHAM

Last April, Harlem lost one of its most cherished luminaries, Evelyn Cunningham. As a journalist and editor for The Pittsburgh Courier in the 1940s and 50s, Cunningham witnessed and reported on the emergence of the civil rights movement. Her tireless coverage of injustices committed against blacks and the effort to desegregate schools brought the urgency of the struggle for equal rights to the national consciousness. Throughout her journalistic career, Cunningham interviewed notable figures including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and Malcolm X, shining light on the emerging leaders who would change the course of United States history.

Cunningham’s shrewd understanding of the dilemmas facing the country eventually led to a career in politics. She served as a special assistant to New York governor Nelson Rockefeller in the early 1960s and continued to advise him during his term as Gerald R. Ford’s vice president. A tireless advocate of women’s rights, Cunningham served on President Nixon’s Task Force on Women’s Rights and Responsibilities, and in 2002, Mayor Michael Bloomberg appointed her to the New York City Commission on Women’s Issues.

Though born in North Carolina, Cunningham lived in Harlem for most of her life and was an enlivening force in the community until the day she passed away. She often entertained guests at her home on Riverside Drive, including President Barack Obama, who paid a visit to Ms. Cunningham in 2008. Numerous community organizations are fortunate to have had her support over the years, including the Apollo Theater and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. The Studio Museum is honored to count Ms. Cunningham as a former Trustee, and we are grateful not only for the contributions she made to our institution, but for the legacy she left to the world at large.

Ms. Cunningham was ninety-four at the time of her death, and she is survived by her niece, Gigi Freeman.

ALLISON CHANNING JONES
On Sunday, November 21, 2010, the co-founder of the DuSable Museum in Chicago, Margaret T. Burroughs, passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of ninety-five. During her long career, Burroughs worked as a poet, visual artist, educator and arts organizer, but is best known for her prolific body of artwork and her co-founding of the DuSable Museum of African American History.

Burroughs studied teaching and art education in Chicago, first at the Chicago Teacher’s College and then the Art Institute of Chicago, where she was one of the first African-American women to receive an MFA in 1948. Burroughs’s career as an artist—she was an acclaimed painter and printmaker—began in 1949, shortly after her graduation from the Institute. Her artwork was included in countless exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad.

With a career as an arts organizer spanning more than sixty years, Burroughs was responsible for founding multiple community organizations throughout Chicago. Most notable was the museum she founded in her living room at 3806 South Michigan Avenue in 1961, which would eventually become the DuSable Museum. Burroughs’s involvement in the founding of the museum would give her national recognition as one of the most important “institution builders” of her time and highlight her ardent commitment to preserving African-American history, specifically by engaging children in her community.

After the founding of the DuSable, Burroughs served as its director until 1985, when she was appointed as a commissioner of the Chicago Parks District.

The DuSable Museum’s President and CEO, Carol Adams said, “The DuSable Museum of African American History celebrates the life and achievements of its principal founding member, Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs. A transforming spirit who changed the lives of so many, not only by her actions, but by the testimony that was her life. Her legacy will live on through her art, poetry and institutions she helped to create. She will be truly missed.”

COLLIN MUNN

Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs (November 1, 1915–November 21, 2010) Courtesy the DuSable Museum of African American History

REMEMBERING DR. MARGARET T. BURROUGHS

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COLLIN MUNN

This week guest blogger Matana Roberts, our current StudioSound artist, shares some of her favorite music!

My thirst for sound knowledge spirals from the traditions of the jazz alto saxophone, which is my main tool of reference, or “weapon of choice,” as it was recently described to me. But it is heavily combined at this point with other sound aspects that intrigue me and filter through my work right now, such as language, repetition and trance. Below are items on my current playlist, chosen completely randomly. There's so much sound to explore out there, that I can barely keep track myself. By the time this posts, I will be onwards to completely different soundscapes most likely, but here are a few that I thought might pique any sound-seeker's interest...

Find out what Matana's playlist picks are at studiomuseum.org/studio-blog! Make sure to also check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/studiomuseum and follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/studiomuseum
BOOK PICKS

Dear Reader,
I must confess that I have on occasion been one of those pesky perambulators risking life and limb and certain death by telephone pole because I’m reading a book on a crowded New York street. These are the novels that did it to me. If Franz Kafka was right when he wrote, “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us,” these books should keep your heart open and winter at bay. Just make sure to keep your eyes up so you don’t have any unfortunate accidents or miss your subway stop.

It was decidedly difficult to narrow this list down to just ten books. So I did my urban version of the “stuck on a desert island” challenge. If I were marooned indefinitely on the A train between Columbus Circle and 125th Street, what books would I want nearby?

This list highlights work by young authors whose work is less widely read, as well as classics by more established writers. If you haven’t read recent works by Edwidge Danticat, Junot Diaz, Emily Raboteau, Danzy Senna, Colson Whitehead and ZZ Packer, do not pass “GO” until you plug these gaps with a visit to your local independent bookstore. While you’re there, keep your eyes peeled for new writers in journals such as Obsidian,

Callaloo, Farafina, Kwani?, Sable and Chimurenga. Two literary upstarts, Tongues of the Ocean in the Bahamas and Greg Tate’s forthcoming Coon Bidness are also worth checking out.

The books that speak to me are those written in unique narrative voices and with dynamic, lovingly drawn characters that haunt the reader long after the last page is read. I am particularly interested in writing from the Caribbean and Africa that answers certain questions. What are the rhythms, limits and possibilities of a close-knit community? What is the emotional cost of war? In what ways can love bloom and family form within oppressive contexts such as slavery? What can we understand about a culture, place and people by knowing how girls become women?

Yours in literature,
A. NAOMI JACKSON

A. Naomi Jackson is a writer at work on her first novel in Brooklyn, New York.

1—ZADIE SMITH, ON BEAUTY, PENGUIN BOOKS, 2006
2—VICTOR LAVALLE, BIG MACHINE, SPIEGEL & GRAU, 2010
3—MARLON JAMES, THE BOOK OF NIGHT WOMEN, RIVERHEAD TRADE, 2010
4—PRESTON ALLEN, JESUS BOY, AKSHIC BOOKS, 2010
5—TAYARI JONES, LEAVING ATLANTA, GRAND CENTRAL PUBLISHING, 2003
6—CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE, HALF OF A YELLOW SUN, ANCHOR, 2007
7—JAMAICA KINCAID, ANNIE JOHN, FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX, 1997
8—ATTICA LOCKE, BLACK WATER RISING, HARPER, 2009
9—KAREN LORD, REDEMPTION IN INDIGO, SMALL BEER PRESS, 2010
10—TIPHANIE YANIQUE, HOW TO ESCAPE FROM A LEPER COLONY, GRAYWOLF PRESS, 2010

1 Franz Kafka, letter to Oskar Pollak, January 27, 1904.
The following is an excerpt from Harlem is Nowhere, Sharifa Rhodes-Pitt’s recently published book that untangles the myth and meaning of Harlem’s legacy. Rhodes-Pitts was born in Texas, educated at Harvard University and is a recent Harlem resident. Her articles have appeared in numerous publications and she is the recipient of several prestigious awards. Harlem is Nowhere is her first book.

It was springtime when I finally met the creator of the chalk messages. I would like to tell you his name, to tell you about the way he dresses, to tell you about his eyes and the way he cocks his head to one side when he pauses to listen and also when he speaks. But the most important thing about our first meeting is that he didn’t want me to write about him at all. Because I had already been recording the chalk messages whenever I saw them, I had thought it would be a good topic for a local-color story I could pitch to the Times or a radio station as an “only in New York”—
type segment. Now that I had met the creator, the story had a protagonist. I told him I wanted to write about him, but he immediately brushed me off. He said he did not want to be written about, he did not want publicity. He said he had just met another girl who was a journalism student and wanted to write about him for a school project. He patted the pocket of his trousers and said it was full of cards from people who tell him to call because they, too, would like to write a story about him. I felt a bit rebuked. I wondered whether it was, in fact, a question of “publicity.”

You will ask why I am writing this anyway, only without mentioning his name. I have asked this, too. The man who writes the chalk messages (I will call him the Messenger) perhaps offers the clearest answer to us both. A while after our first meeting, when we had become friends, when I told him that my hands were hurting and I could not write, he scolded me because I had not been to see a doctor. He said that he hated to take a stern tone with me, but he had to because I had to get serious about my business. And once, when I complimented him on what he was doing, and how the messages were so important and so urgent, he shrugged and said that he was only trying to make his contribution, and that this was something we all had to figure out how to do. He often says that he is in touch with the reality of existence, and that this is what compels him to his task.

... When I meet him on Lenox Avenue, I never leave without thinking that I should like to make my task adhere to the Messenger’s simple mission: to share his wisdom and understanding. To make things simple so that people can see. To fill what is empty inside us. When I see the Messenger, we do not talk about the rezoning of 125th Street. We do not talk about land. We do not talk about politics. When I see him we stop and chat; if he sees me first, he always calls out my name as I am walking down the avenue. Recently he was perched on a standpipe beneath a tree at the corner by Liberation Books. One of his friends had recently bought him a whole bag of chalk that she’d gotten on sale at Target. When it’s blue it’s blue all the way through, he said, when it’s pink it’s pink all the way through. He pointed with insistence toward the sidewalk, really through the sidewalk, and with such force that I did not doubt the possibility of those pigments penetrating the earth’s crust. Noting the vibrancy of his new, better-quality colors, he wondered aloud whether maybe what he writes will last a bit longer. As I left, he told me he loved me, and I told him the same. He told me to check out the latest thing he’d written and tell him what I thought when we next met.

I walked a block down Lenox and saw his latest message. I didn’t write it down because I was in a hurry, or I didn’t have a pen, or I thought I would pass that way again later in the afternoon or even on the next day. But I did not leave the house at all the next day, and the day after that it rained.

Home to writers and revolutionaries, artists and musicians, Harlem has also long been a source of inspiration for countless photographers. Offering a sweeping survey of this distinctive landscape and those who have called it home, *Harlem: A Century in Images* looks through the lenses of some of the most important photographers as they documented this vibrant and bustling neighborhood.

Harlem has been considered the crossroads of the artistic, literary, and political currents of the African-American community, and this book features nearly two hundred vibrant images that narrate its history throughout the twentieth century. Images ranging from children playing in the streets, people dancing in the historic jazz clubs, and storefronts evolving over the years to politically charged protests and street art combine to give us a window into Harlem's dynamic life.

Thoughtful contributions by leading scholars of African-American studies and art—Deborah Willis, Cheryl Finley, and Elizabeth Alexander—add insightful voices to accompany the images.

Published by Skira Rizzoli in association with The Studio Museum in Harlem
Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims is the former Director and President of The Studio Museum in Harlem and is currently Curator at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD). On November 29 she sat down with Studio editor Elizabeth Gwinn to discuss The Global Africa Project, which she co-curated with Dr. Leslie King-Hammond. This is an edited and condensed transcript of that conversation. The Global Africa Project will be on view at MAD through May 15, 2011.

LIZ GWINN: Tell me about how The Global Africa Project came to be.
DR. LOWERY STOKES SIMS: When I first came to MAD in September 2007, they had been thinking of doing an African show. I considered all the pitfalls of organizing a continentally contained exhibition and decided—oh, why stop at the continent? Let’s just do the whole globe! I was struck by the fact that there are so many artists you can classify as African who were born outside of their parents’ native countries, and went to school and live someplace else. The contemporary, cutting-edge art career is very global and nomadic, and I wanted to think about what that means in terms of establishing some kind of association with a continent, country or group.

Organizing the show was a very organic process. You ask people, you email, your colleagues send you names, you contact artists, they send you names and you then start seeing that even within a varied, multifarious group of people, certain kinds of thematic organizations suggest themselves. And then you have to figure out the themes—and we went through many. Finally, one of the designers, Ousmane M’Baye from Senegal, sent me a fabulous interview published in a South African magazine, in which twelve people involved in design in Africa discuss issues with which they are concerned and challenges they face. Leslie and I thought it was fantastic. Instead of being curatorial overseers or anthropologists, we could organize the exhibition from the point of view of the creators.
I considered all the pitfalls of organizing a continentally contained exhibition and decided—oh, why stop at the continent? Let’s just do the whole globe!

LG: *It’s still kind of unusual to see art objects and craft objects together in a museum exhibition. What appeals to you about mashing up these separate forms?*

LSS: My posture towards art, when I was at the Metropolitan Museum or even the Studio Museum, might have been predicated on the fact that there are certain theoretical and critical constructs that privilege concept and idea over making. When I came to MAD—after being six, seven years out of active curating—and really started to go to galleries again, I was blown away by the amount of making and process that was in Chelsea. It was like this aspect of the art world had always been there, but was suddenly highlighted for me.

If I look back on it, having grown up during the first florescence of the feminist or women’s art movement, and having spent the last thirty or forty years dealing with artists of color who have reached into their own cultures for reference, the whole thing of materials and process, since they have certain kinds of cultural overtones, was really not that strange to me. I also had to admit to myself that a lot of my adjudication of art as a curator had this private moment where I said, “Now, is that well made?” So I realized that I have very strong feelings about the relationship of content to
form, materials and process. Coming to MAD at this point in my career brings together a lot of different currents in my personal journey in the art world, and I find that very fulfilling.

LG: It’s funny that you say that like it’s a secret. The art world has really moved away from judging work on how well it is made.

LSS: I know. I am fond of blaming Clement Greenberg. I think the line that he draws between modern art and kitsch, with kitsch being about sentimentality and personal involvement, and modern art being about this kind of extreme cerebral exercise, really has been a problem for most of my career, whether I was dealing with African-American artists and issues of content in the 1970s or looking at women’s work. It’s interesting that since I’ve come to MAD, where people know that “materials and process” is kind of a mantra, artists I have known for a long time, photographers and painters, are now talking to me about their processes! We never would have had those conversations in another context.

I’ve realized that there is now among artists less trauma when talking about craft—but it’s always with a small “c.” You raise the big-c “Craft” and people start distancing themselves immediately. I think part of it is financial—how you position yourself in the art world and what you can expect to get for your work—but the other part is that people think of craft as rote, without creativity. If artists have a concept, they can hire somebody to execute it—but often that person brings some creativity into the execution. So the point is that in many cases these two aspects have to go hand in hand. I think it’s really an interesting hierarchy. What we’ve tried to demonstrate at MAD is that “craft” people are moving past function and really beginning to interrogate and introduce concept into their work; that “art” people are very much involved in process and that “design” people are getting away from mass production. The three genres are coming together in a very interesting way.

LG: I was struck by the number of collaborations in the show, in which artists and designers working outside of Africa are asking African artisans, “can you make this for me?” And this can play out in a couple ways—a great craftsman can make something to exact specifications and it’s done, but it’s more interesting when there is a conversation.

LSS: I think the Algernon Miller piece Change is a perfect example of that. Miller worked with a women’s collaborative in Uganda. These forty women took a technique of making beads from paper that was pioneered by Sanaa Gateja, a designer who brought them together and has been very active in bringing arts to various sections of Uganda. Miller saw some handbags at an expo and they really fired his imagination. He never went to Uganda, never met the craftspeople, but through communications
with cell phones and the Internet he got them to think about making this large-scale piece, larger than anything they’d ever done. In a way, he’s dependent on them to execute his piece, but they are probably going to be transformed by the scope, scale and monumentality of it. That will change their own perspectives of what they can do and the possibilities they can create.

LG: How can that translate into scaling up production in a way that is economically beneficial?

LSS: The Gahaya Links weaving association is probably the best example of this. Janet Nkubana and her sister Joy Ndunguste started this collaborative with Hutu and Tutsi women. It began with the goal of creating economic opportunities and social reconciliation for survivors of the massacre. They now work with four thousand people, making baskets that have a global market—Macy’s is one of their purveyors. We tend to have this kind of cutesy-poo idea about artisanship: "Ooh! They’re carrying on their traditions." But what I found with Gahaya Links, along with a lot of the South African craftspeople in the show working in ceramics and basketry, is that each of them is known for his or her involvement in gender-bending, or introducing new techniques. Nothing is static. These are not naive people knocking things off. I think that while there previously was a tendency to make touristic, curio trinkets, people are getting the idea that there is a viable market out there for handmade things, and they better step up their game to compete. I think there’s a much more sophisticated approach across the board.

My MAD colleague Judith Kamien talks about “ethical consumption.” You can buy something even though you don’t like it in order to support somebody in Haiti or Rwanda. But these people are creating objects you really want, quality products you can incorporate into your life. We’re at an interesting point now in the global market. There is tension between the cheap, mass-produced objects and really important handmade ones that might be a little more expensive.

I think of Aboubakar Fofana, who makes incredible indigo fabrics. He uses wild cotton woven in Mali to produce this beautiful, exquisitely tie-dyed product that can be copied and mass-produced. So we as consumers have a choice. It’s about pricing, authenticity and how can you do that without coming to a kind of consumer snobism, without associating class or elitism with purchasing, but to think about how you’re spending your dollars, both in terms of a personal statement and who you’re supporting through your purchases. Those are interesting things that I never would have gotten to talk about at the Metropolitan Museum or even the Studio Museum.
Raised by his art-loving mom, Abdi Farah (b. 1987) was introduced to the arts at an early age. Growing up in Baltimore, a city with a rich artistic and cultural presence, he recalls being around art all the time. Farah remembers visiting art galleries and institutions such as the Walters Art Museum (formerly the Walters Art Gallery) and the Baltimore Museum of Art. His earliest memories of making art are when he went to work with his mom, a college professor, and sat in a quiet corner to draw with markers and crayons. “I grew up always drawing,” he says. “That’s kind of who I was.” This love of drawing manifested into a skill and passion that led him to attend the George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology High School, where he focused on studio art. It wasn’t until he won the NAACP ACT-SO Gold Medal in painting that he realized how much artistic talent he had, and that he could be an artist for a living. Prior to this realization, Farah was certain he was going to play professional basketball, a huge part of his adolescence. “My buddies and I worshipped it,” he says.

Continuing his academic career, Farah matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in fine arts and minored in religious studies. “I went to Penn because growing up, my mom and I used to listen to NPR all the time, to Tavis Smiley all the time, to Tavis Smiley, who would always have Michael Eric Dyson on his show, and I love Michael Eric Dyson. At the end [of the broadcast], it would always say Dyson was a professor in the religious studies department at the University of Pennsylvania,” he says. Farah knew then that he had to go to school there, where he was exposed to lots of art history, took religion courses such as “Styles of Atheism” and “The Devil’s Pact in Literature, Music, and Film” and studied things such as hip-hop culture and Africana studies. Farah’s diverse curriculum greatly impacted his art. His academic classes really started to fuel what he was thinking about art-wise. “Every time I went into class, I would conjure all of these images of things that would then be the beginning thoughts of visual art pieces,” he says.

ABDI ON THE RISE

I think art is really only about showing others how you personally see things, what your mind looks like.
Bernini (1498–1680), his sculptures are hybrids that take key aspects of the classical human form and infuse them with expressive body language conveying a range of emotions, and sometimes they are adorned with throwback Nike sneakers. He creates the molds and casts these life-size sculptures in his studio, comfortably located in the basement and garage of his mom’s house in York, PA. The self-reflexive nature of his work allows Farah to almost always be his own model. When asked about this choice, he says, “I use myself a lot in my work because I am always around. I have very clear objectives as to what sort of expressions or emotions I want to try to convey.” He also insists that his art is most powerful when it is has a strong subjective presence and is charged with his own feelings, history and interests. “I think art is really only about showing others how you personally see things, what your mind looks like. Everything else is journalism or documentation,” he says.

Farah’s use of objects, particularly sneakers, in his paintings and sculptures, such as in his piece Libation (2010) is another way of adding a bit of his own history to each piece. “I was obsessed with shoes,” he recalls. As a kid and teenager who played basketball, he loved sneakers. The two are almost synonymous. For him, the sneakers represent specific moments in his life. “I can remember how old I was, what grade I was in, when a particular shoe came after graduating in May 2009, Farah got a gig with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, teaching an art course to a group of high school boys. It was a temporary position with a very short shelf life. Fortunately, he soon learned that the cable network Bravo was holding a casting call for a new reality television show called Work of Art: The Next Great Artist. Farah was not only chosen to be one of the fourteen contestants on the show, but also survived each weekly challenge and won the entire competition. Farah was awarded a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum as part of his prize. Farah works primarily in oil painting, sculpture and drawing. Influenced heavily by Michelangelo (1475–1564), Rodin (1840–1917) and Abdi Farah

Baptism, 2010
Courtesy the artist
out and was popular,” he says. “I can remember how much a particular pair cost and how much more that was than I could afford.” Aesthetically, he adds, “I just think they’re really beautiful objects. They have a dash of color here, a splash there. They are so artistically creative and they have that cultural connection as well.” Farah explains that the sneakers are also representative of the objects in our society in which we have embedded meaning and specific significance.

Though much of Farah’s work is about him “looking back at the proclivities and weird stuff” in which he was so incredibly engrossed during adolescence, he is also very interested in portraying the duality of a moment—the moment between polar opposite emotions or feelings. The basketball player sculptures he created for the finale of Work of Art are supercharged with such emotion. Their facial expressions and body language are screaming out, but the viewer is not really sure whether each figure is experiencing pleasure or pain. The uncertainty of the moment’s emotion adds to the power of the piece. This ambiguity is most interesting to Farah as he attempts to depict split seconds between order and chaos, comedy and tragedy. For his latest batch of sculptures, Farah is strongly influenced by thermal imagery. He is experimenting with pouring different colored resins into the molds. The mixture of colors “speak[s] to the beauty of life inside [the body] that you can’t see physically but is always ever-present,” he says.

Farah’s life-size drawing Baptism (2010), which recently sold at the Phillips de Pury contemporary art auction, reminds viewers of Farah’s love of drawing. This seemingly larger-than-life drawing features a horizontal Farah levitating high above the paper’s edge. Again we are confronted with uncertainty, as the figure could be sleeping or dead. The dark dust particles cascading from the floating figure like lingering vespers from a star suggest that he is rising, but we can never be certain.

What’s next for Farah? “Working on a lot of art. I am not really sure there’s anything but art,” he says. Look out for new sculptures, paintings and drawings, as well as perhaps a few animations, definitely collaborations with other artists, musicians and dancers, and maybe even sneaker designs? Well, we can hope for that last one! The possibilities are endless and the future is bright for this talented young artist.

DOMINIC HACKLEY

All quotes from Abdi Farah, in conversation with Dominic Hackley, November 11, 2010.

Check out one of Farah’s latest artworks, created exclusively for Studio, on page 78!
The Studio Museum in Harlem offers paid internships during both the summer and the academic year. The Museum’s internship program provides high school, college and graduate students, as well as recent graduates, with a wide range of experiences designed to provide insight into the daily workings of a professional museum environment. Interns also engage in a series of workshops, meetings, off-site visits and public programs.

For more information or to apply, visit studiomuseum.org/learn/internships.
IN CONVERSATION

2010-11 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE
In September 2010, The Studio Museum in Harlem was pleased to welcome our 2010–11 artists in residence: Simone Leigh, Kamau Amu Patton and Paul Mpagi Sepuya.

Simone Leigh (b. 1968, Chicago) creates tactile ceramic objects that reference the colonial and anthropological histories, art-historical lineage and modes of production of ethnographic objects and artifacts. Often juxtaposing her handcrafted works with readymade, functional objects such as plastic buckets, Leigh’s works have a performative nature. Kamau Amu Patton (b. 1972, New York) creates atmospheric installations through multiple media. Through the use of sound, video, sculpture, drawing and painting, Patton provides an immersive multi-sensory experience that is also an exploration of modes of interconnectivity. He is interested in the structure and logic of spatial and temporal experience. Paul Mpagi Sepuya’s (b. 1982, San Bernardino, California) lush color photographs reveal his active engagement with the history and process of portraiture as well as his experiments with framing, cropping and editing. Sepuya largely portrays young men in his community, making visible the relationships and intimacy between his subjects. Recently Program Assistant Abbe Schriber and Curatorial Fellow Tasha Parker sat down with the three artists in residence to discuss their artistic practices in depth.

Photos: Dominic Hackley
ABBE SCHRIBER: Hi AIRs! Thank you for being here to have this conversation. Can you give us a brief overview of your practice and describe where you are at this stage of the program?

SIMONE LEIGH: Most of the sculptures that I create are built after I make or accumulate a lot of objects in one way or another. I’m definitely in the accumulation phase. I’ve been looking at different kinds of Americana and have a lot of tobacco leaves, hands of tobacco.

KAMAU AMU PATTON: I’m doing a bunch of drawing and printmaking, which for me is two-fold: it generates objects I can then look at and think about, that occupy the environment. Then there’s the process of sifting through what those objects are doing since they’re an accumulation of ideas I’ve had. So I’m really in the process of exploring, reading, making, thinking. There’s a materiality issue that’s starting to happen, just thinking about what materials I want to have access to, what materials are interesting to me.

PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA: I’m continuing to develop ideas about ways of working that I’ve started in the past year. I’ve recently been looking into the space that gives context and content to the social groups and relationships that go on in places where artists are imaging each other back and forth. It’s a very reflexive process. I’ve been doing not only portraits of couples and groups, but also portraits of artists making portraits...as well as doing a lot of snapshots and documenting my own editing process. I’ve been looking at the content that develops in the studio—the way things are edited and the way things are thrown across tables and the way things are hung up on the wall. This is also the first time that I’m shooting in a studio. I’m accumulating a lot of stuff.

TASHA PARKER: You all mentioned being in a phase of accumulation. Can you speak more about that?

SL: Well, for the past year or so, I’ve been interested in a collective called AFRICOBRA—African Commune of Bad, Relevant Artists—and the painting of Wadsworth Jarrell. I found the discussion about styles developed in AFRICOBRA really interesting. One principle was the use of Kool-Aid colors in artwork and the other was a style that developed a quality called “shine.” Shine would manifest as a beautiful quality of the black body—something that needed to be amplified in artwork. So I’ve been thinking about that quality of shine. I’ve been thinking about Kool-Aid color and also the material of Kool-Aid as something kind of abject.

TP: Kamau, you were speaking before about materials and
the adjustments that you’re making, figuring out what you’re using and scavenging. Can you talk more specifically about what you’re finding?

KAP: Part of how I make what I make has to do with various video and audio electronic equipment. I tend to use it as long as I need it and either pass it on to another artist or put it back into the cycle of things. I’ve gotten rid of a lot of equipment after my last couple of projects. Using certain types of machines or certain types of electronics you’re going to get a particular aesthetic. You can’t get away from the fact that something was made when it was made. So I’ve been trying to figure out ways to evolve the signature that is in some of the work that I’m doing. The noise of a radio signal is very specific. The noise of a television set made in a particular time. So, I’ve been thinking about that evolution and moving towards embracing the digital and fully evolving into it. On the other hand, in terms of materials that will be the actual objects that will interface with the public...paper, flexible metals. I like to work with my hands. So I don’t want to get into things that have to be fully machined at this point. Then, just returning to canvas, which wasn’t something that I was printing on or painting on for the past couple of years. It’s mostly been wood and metal.

PMS: Yeah, there’s some definite interaction between the prints as objects themselves and the things that have been photographed, which are often side-by-side or just exist in the studio. One thing I’ve been doing is bringing in materials from the home into the studio. Leaving them here, photographing them. Sometimes they stay here, sometimes they leave.

AS: Your photographs are very material, as objects specifically. Especially how you choose to frame them and place them.

PMS: That’s also in an in-between spot. Actually, until recently, I hadn’t ever hung anything on the wall before. The reason was because I wasn’t interested in fixing things. I made a photograph and that became an object that moved in many different ways over time and from place to place. Every time that something was shown, it could be different. Lately I’ve brought the content of editing into them. I’ve been making finished prints and putting them on the walls, but maybe side-by-side with snapshots of those pieces in the studio.

The Artist-in-Residence program is supported with funds from the: National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation; Jerome Foundation; New York Community Trust and Nimoy Foundation, and by endowments established by the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Trust and Andrea Frank Foundation.
EXCERPT

HARLEM: A CENTURY IN IMAGES

FROM “HARLEM PLAYS THE BEST BALL IN THE WORLD”
BY ELIZABETH ALEXANDER

Today’s Harlem lives ghosted by its past. Ghosts can haunt and can animate; Harlem’s evident sense of self, which we see in so many of the photographs in this book, harkens back to an almost century-old idea of itself—the mighty black metropolis sine qua non—that persists in these contemporary photographs from the last thirty years.

So in Alice Attie’s 2352 Harlem, NYC (2000), the woman in the image of the “Beauty & Hair Treatment Center” sports a marcelled 1940s hairdo; the sign still promises “miracle[s].” Attie’s Wake Up Black Man (2004) shows graffito that might have been made in the 1960s; its message urging race pride is quintessential Harlem. Harlem is like that, existing across time, grounded in space. Capucine Bailly’s Volunteers Campaign for Senator Obama in Harlem (2008) shows a Barack Obama sign painted in the fashion of a 1940s poster or an African barbershop sign, and Dawoud Bey’s A Boy in Front of the Loews 125th Street (1976) features a boy whose sweater and glasses could as easily mark him as being in a Malick Sidibé photograph from a decade earlier on another continent.

In so many of these photos of timeless Harlem it is strikingly difficult to tell if it is 1969 or 2010. The curvy lettering of the graffiti looks...
the same. The font of “Apollo” on the Apollo Theater is akin to the font of Minton’s Playhouse. The filigrees on the brownstones are the same. The sunglasses and high heels are the same. The style and style politics are the same. And yet it is a “changing same,” to use Amiri Baraka’s phrase to describe jazz, wherein its fundamental quiddity remains stable as the musician plays the changes.

In her classic essay “Characteristics of Negro Expression,” which was likely penned in Harlem, Zora Neale Hurston described “the Negro’s will to embellish.” Today the young folks say, “you’re so extra” to describe what Hurston saw, then as now, what she called “decorating the decoration.” People are still wearing phantasmagorical hats in Harlem, and always have been. People are wearing extraordinary corsages on Sunday and fur stoles in summer. There is a jump-up blue and green on storefronts and wall paint that is consistent across Harlem. Neon has always made sense in Harlem; it captures an emotional pitch, a verve, an announcing self-importance, even in the midst of decay.

Elizabeth Alexander is a poet, essayist, playwright and professor. In addition to publishing five books of poetry, she composed and delivered “Praise Song for the Day” at President Barack Obama’s inauguration. She is Chair of the African-American Studies department at Yale University.

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Re:Collection is the first book to document and reproduce, in full color, highlights from the Museum’s permanent collection. An ambitious project distinguished by the unique variety of esteemed contributors, Re:Collection pairs reproductions of work by 81 of the most recognized and innovative artists in the Museum’s collection with wide-ranging contributions by 71 different artists, scholars, writers, historians, and museum staff. Re:Collection is the perfect gift for an art lover or souvenir of your museum visit, sure to be read and treasured for years to come.
Would it be OK to talk about Beauford Delaney as a brother? I ask because I don’t want to disturb his natural reticence. A death does not mean the end of anything, really, except the end of our corporeal self—that mannequin made up of hair and teeth and a beating heart. So perhaps I’ll ignore Delaney’s emotional timidity for now and claim him as the brother I’ve always felt him to be. His protean output, his relative obscurity while he lived, his poverty, and his need to be loved are all familiar to me now. When I look at photographs of him, some taken with his great friend, James Baldwin (1924–1987), I wonder how Delaney felt about his body, and how it was treated—or, more likely, mistreated—as he made his way from his native Tennessee to New York to Paris, where he died in 1979, apparently broken but not alone since, along the way, he adopted as many of his kind as he could. That is a heavy, troublesome and enriching burden—to adopt black gay men. Since they are so rarely loved by the quotidian, let alone others of their kind, it takes them a long time to even acknowledge they want to be loved themselves. It’s my bet—given the ferocity of his little brothers’ commitment to Delaney, especially as he lay dying—that the artist’s rich and complicated paintings had a healing affect on his black gay viewers, even as they acted as a kind of mirror to those boys’ myriad selves. By painting his inner self, Delaney let his brothers see and learn from the story his body and mind had to tell, and what he had been through in order to make his very singular paintings: neglect and hope, trust and betrayal, in equal measure. When I ask if it would be OK to talk about Delaney as a brother, what I’m really asking is permission to take on the legacy he left me and my kind: a fraught fraternity one must battle through in order to find its center, which is hope.
COME SUNDAY

By Amina Gautier

He hopes she is remembering what he remembers...

Come Sunday, William thought better of it all, but didn’t know how to say so.

Lying beside him the night before, Natalie had said, “Sometimes I get the feeling that you don’t actually like me. It’s as if there’s something about me that just rubs you the wrong way.”

“It’s too late for this kind of discussion. I need to sleep,” William said, though they both knew he’d napped the afternoon and early evening away. “We’ll talk later.”

“You show your friends a patience I never seem to get from you.”

“They need it.”

She shifted away from him and the covers went with her, leaving him cold and exposed. “And I don’t? What about me?”

“It’s really late,” he said.

“I’m not going to feel better until I can get this off my chest,” she said.

“Later,” he yawned loudly, lacing his fingers behind his head underneath the pillow.

Some time afterwards, he felt her leave the bed. Several minutes later, the front door closed. After she’d gone, he got up to check. Her car keys dangled from their hook. It was too late and too dangerous for her to be taking a walk this time of night by herself, William thought. It was a ploy, to get him to come after her, to force him to talk.

He turned the lights off and got back into bed. Come Sunday, he will awaken to noise.

There will be two women in his living room helping Natalie pack. They have boxes, fat rolls of brown tape, tall nonfat lattes and crumbly scones. One braces herself against a box to hold its flaps tightly together while zipping a fat piece of tape straight down the middle and ripping it off against the metal teeth of the dispenser. The other woman packs elephant figurines from Natalie’s sorority days, swathing each one in newspaper to prevent breakage.

The women are not actually noisy. It is the sucking sound of tape being pulled off its dispenser, the sliding of boxes along the floor, the stacking of them on a hand truck against the wall by the front door—it is the sound of their efficiency that has jarred him awake.

Natalie directs them from the center of the room. William clears his throat and she raises red and sleepless eyes to him. She looks where he is looking, at the large framed painting on the wall above the sofa.

For a moment, he hopes she is remembering what he remembers.

William had bought the painting for her after she dragged him to one of her sorority functions, a jazz brunch for which he had to wear formal attire. Out of place in a room filled mostly with women, he stayed by her side while she greeted one sorority sister after another, until his head swam with introductions and he began to feel less like a boyfriend and more like an appendage. Excusing himself to the mimosa fountain, he wandered the perimeter of the room, perusing the items displayed for silent auction. William debated whether to write a bid on a basketball autographed by John Starks when he saw the painting on the wall.

In it, a woman emerges out of a collage. Head tilted, she gazes inquisitively at someone out of the frame. Standing on her front porch, she looks at the person as though to ask him to state his purpose. Hands wrapped around a weathered brown pole staked into the ground, she cradles a small child in the space of her arms. One hand only, on his ankles, she balances him easily, effortlessly, as if dropping him is an impossibility not to be borne. So sure and self-contained despite the precariousness of the child in her arms, despite the poor quality of her clothing, despite the bandanna tied around her head, despite the adult and child some distance behind her, walking away, she seems to say that she is the only one not in need of tending. The brown pole she clasps is striped with white lines that could be either
So sure and self-contained, she seems to say that she is the only one not in need of tending.

the pale wood beneath the bark, or the effects of chipping, flaking, rusting metal. Yet it is the pole—and only the pole—that is in disrepair. She and hers are fine, or soon will be.

The woman in the collage made him think of Natalie, though it wasn’t the kind of artwork he could be sure of her liking. There was the possibility that she would be insulted. One look at the bandanna and she’d think of Aunt Jemima. How to say to her that the woman was her? How to let her know that they both gave off that same sense of immense capability? Maybe Natalie would not care for it, but he liked it nonetheless. The way the artist put the woman together out of bits and pieces, shapes and colors and prints, made him think of quilts, of the patchwork quality of life, of the way his mother spent her life gathering the scraps of life and fused them into something meaningful for him and his brother, of the way generations before, grandmothers and great-aunts had collected the castaways of others and sewn together bits and pieces of fabric to create both beauty and warmth.

William signed his name on the bidding sheet and checked the list every fifteen minutes to see if anyone had outbid him. By the jazz brunch’s end, he paid more than he intended to, but he bought the painting for her and would be able to hang it and look at it whenever he liked.

“What about that?” he asks, wanting the painting to make her stay.

She says, “I’ll come back for it later in the week.”

The next day, William called in sick. He wanted to be there when Natalie came for the painting.

His doorbell rang mid-afternoon and he rushed to open it. Before him stood a man in blue, holding a clipboard. “Good afternoon sir. Are you happy with your cable television provider?” the salesman asked.

“No, I’m not happy at all,” William admitted.

“You'd love to talk,” William said.

William ushered the salesman into the foyer, where they stood awkwardly. The salesman launched into an explanation about the new improvements that had been made and listed the cost-effectiveness of switching to another carrier. He suggested the practicality of bundling services for even further savings.

“How does that sound sir?” the salesman asked him.

“It’s so hard to know what to do.”

“There’s a thirty-day guarantee,” the salesman said. “If you change your mind, you’ll only be charged the one-time installation fee. After that you’re off the hook. We’ll retrieve our materials and it will be as if they never were.”

The salesman snapped his fingers.

As the salesman took down his information and directed him to the appropriate places to sign, William wished it were that easy. Removal, indifference, upheaval all took work and required effort. One had to pretend the loss was miniscule. And it didn’t matter if you kept silent, ignored it, willed it away, or pretended everything was fine and that nothing needed saying. Silence would not save you. The loss would still come and linger and make it so you felt you could never escape it. He’d had a chance to speak, to say something that would have made things right. He could have gone after her the night before. He should have, for the sake of her safety. Instead he acted like a boy in grade school, showing affection through meanness, substituting cruelty for love.

After William signed the last document, the salesman rose from the couch, smiled widely, and tucked his clipboard under his arm. “Well sir, I guess that will be all.”

“Wait.”

“Yes?”

William turned from the salesman to the wall behind him. He crawled onto the couch and lifted the painting from the wall. It slid into his hands, heavy and solid. He gripped the canvas in both hands and thrust it at the salesman.

“Yours if you want it,” he said, to which the salesman could only stare, at a loss for words.

Amina Gautier is the 2010 winner of the Flannery O’Connor Award for her short story collection At-Risk (University of Georgia Press). Over sixty of her stories have been published, appearing in Best African American Fiction, Callaloo, Kenyon Review and North America Review. Gautier is a native of Brooklyn, NY and a professor at DePaul University.
Thanks to the generous support of Target, Museum admission is free every Sunday. Target Free Sundays reflects a shared commitment to engage the community and offer a vital cultural experience to all. To learn more about upcoming events, visit studiomuseum.org/event-calendar.
Over a delicious meal of assorted sandwiches and sweet potato fries at II Café Latte (189 Malcolm X Boulevard), I sat down with the wonderful (and very fly, I might add) Tasha L. Parker to talk about her time as the Curatorial Fellow at the Studio Museum, as well as the addictive nature of television shows such as *Hoarders* and *Intervention*. Here’s a brief transcript of the Museum-related parts, including Tasha’s questions for me about my time as Education and Public Programs Fellow at the Museum.

NIA: *Talk to me a little about your background and how you found out about The Studio Museum in Harlem?*

TASHA: I’ve been involved in the visual arts my entire life, as far back as I can remember. I was an artist growing up and began to focus on art history in college. I graduated from Brooklyn College and received my BA in art history, and from there went to Howard University, where I received my MA in art history as well. When I lived in Harlem, I often visited the Museum and always kept it on my radar. So I’ve always been familiar with the Museum.

N: *Nice. So how did you find out about the fellowship?*

T: I found out about it from a good friend who sent me an email he had received from Thomas Lax, Exhibitions Coordinator and Program Associate. When I got the email I immediately applied.

N: *And then you got called in for an interview. What were you doing prior to interviewing?*

T: At the time of the interview I was interning at the Museum of Modern Art in the Media and Performance department.

N: *As a fellow, what have been some of your responsibilities?*

T: I’ve been doing a little bit of everything, depending on what is needed in the office. I’ve organized and catalogued images for the permanent collection, and pulled info from past seasons. I’ve also worked on planning exhibitions and writing object labels and wall text.

N: *It sounds like you have been responsible for a lot. What*
are some challenges you have faced as a fellow?
T: Hmmmm… challenges…
One thing was learning how to write for the public.
During the fellowship I realized that the tone of scholarly writing and wall texts are totally different, so being able to write wall text that can be easily understood is a challenge—it’s a great skill that I have enjoyed learning.

Also, working in a small department and having to juggle many tasks at once has been a bit challenging, especially coming from the Museum of Modern Art, where there was a separate person for everything that needed to be done in a department.

N: Indeed. Indeed. Now that we have talked about challenges, what have been some of your favorite moments of the last year?
T: The opening of The Production of Space, which I curated for this season’s exhibition, was the biggest highlight.

N: What was that process like?
T: From the beginning I had a general idea for the theme of my show, and I had picked out a couple of works from the collection. The major part of the process was getting the okay from everybody in the Curatorial Department and Thelma Golden.

N: So what’s next?
T: Right now I’m not sure what. I’m planning to apply for PhD programs, specifically ones dealing with visual culture and some of the themes I explored in The Production of Space.

And then Tasha turned the conversation to me…
TASHA: What are some of your responsibilities as the Education Fellow?
NIA: I give tours of exhibitions and develop curricula for teachers and students.

T: Can you give me some examples of the curricula you create?
N: For Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: Any Number of Preoccupations, the exercises involved creating monologues and characters. Overall, the curricula help validate the need for art in schools.

T: How would you summarize your background in the arts?
N: I was not really involved in visual arts growing up, but I am a very visual person. I’ve been involved in dance and used to write poetry.

T: What is your educational background?
N: I have a BA in Africana studies from Howard University and I am currently pursuing a MEd in museum education at Bank Street College of Education.

T: What has been your shining moment at Studio Museum?
N: I gave a professional development lecture to social studies teachers. It was only my second time giving the talk, but I received a lot of praise from the teachers.

T: What has been your greatest challenge?
N: Adjusting to the work environment, a larger museum with a more institutional vibe. Previously, I worked at the very small American Poetry Museum in southeast Washington, D.C.

T: What was your favorite exhibition from an educational perspective?
N: Collected. in spring 2010 was easy to create curriculum around. It had a historical span and included many great artists, such as Romare Bearden and Beauford Delaney.

T: And which exhibitions were more challenging from an educational programming perspective?
N: The Artist-in-Residence show, Usable Pasts, was a challenge because of the video works. In general, videos are more difficult to include in an education walkthrough, since viewing time needs to be allotted.

T: Who are some of your favorite artists?
N: Otabenga Jones & Associates, Mickalene Thomas, Bearden and Deana Lawson, to name a few.

T: What do you plan to do after your fellowship?
N: I will continue my studies at Bank Street, student-teach and hopefully get through the first round of the Fulbright selection process.

T: What will you research if you are awarded the Fulbright?
N: I will study at the Gramophone Research Institute in Ghana, researching the relevance of jazz in the diasporic experience.

The Studio Museum in Harlem’s 2011 Education and Public Programs Fellow is generously supported by a grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The Studio Museum in Harlem’s 2011 Curatorial Fellow is generously supported by a grant from The New York Community Trust.
2010 was another robust year for public programs at The Studio Museum in Harlem. We celebrated the third kickoff of Target Free Sundays @ The Studio Museum in Harlem (TFS) on July 18th! That Sunday’s featured event, a children’s book festival, was held in tandem with Target's Arts & Wonder Free Family weekend, held nationwide. More than a thousand visitors joined us for a day of face painting, balloon animals, readings, performances and art-making workshops.

Every weekend I witness children and adults exercise their imagination and discover something new about themselves, and sometimes, their community. For example, artist Nyugen Smith (pictured above) facilitated a community-making workshop in our courtyard last summer based on his work Bundle House. Using cardboard, pastels, tape, paper, yarn and other found materials, guests
Every weekend I witness children and adults exercise their imagination and discover something new about themselves, and sometimes, their community.

built homes, parks, even a patio complete with beach umbrellas! After that, guests consolidated their individual cardboard sculptures and expanded the bigger sculpture—an architectural scale model! This summer we also collaborated with The Laundromat Project, a community-based nonprofit arts organization, for a three-part series designing t-shirts and creating collagraphs and sidewalk drawings with ground spices.

Notably, TFS recently featured two titles for our Books & Authors series. On October 17th, the Aaron and Alta Sawyer Douglas Foundation presented Love Letters from the Harlem Renaissance to a captivated audience. The volume features correspondence between the preeminent artist, prolific painter and major Harlem Renaissance figure Aaron Douglas and his wife, Alta. On November 14th we partnered with WNYC 93.9 FM (AM 820) to feature The Afro-Latino@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States as part of WNYC’s Black & Latino Literary Salon. Celeste Headlee of The Takeaway moderated the roundtable discussion with editors Miriam Jiménez-Román and Juan Flores. Attendance exceeded our expectations and our theater’s 120-guest capacity. This highly provocative talk explored the Afro-Latino identity, experience and label.

Similarly, Adult Programs began with a bang this summer. To inaugurate our new extended hours on Thursdays and Fridays, we were joined by Zwelethu Mthethwa for The Artist’s Voice to discuss his show Inner Views—the first New York solo museum exhibition for the South African photographer. The return of Uptown Fridays caused another summer splash! Many took advantage of the guided tours, shopped in the Museum Store, enjoyed drinks and refreshments at the Atrium Café and danced the night away in the courtyard. In September, fashion editor and icon André Leon Talley and fashion designer LaQuan Smith joined us for Intersections: Conversations on Art & Culture. December’s Art, Rhyme & Wine, a collaboration with our neighbor the Hip Hop Culture Center in Harlem for their signature event, featured three emcees who expounded on the current exhibition. The emcees, AtLas’, Albert Rhymestein and D-Nasty, were given tours of the show in advance and prepared lyrics and also freestyled while DJ Mike Doelo, the Center’s Musical Director, spun records. Curtis Sherrod, Executive Director, warmed up the enthused crowd by inviting the audience to compete with their best rendition of the “Wop.”

There’s more to come in 2011! I look forward to seeing you Thursday and Friday evenings for Adult Programs and every week for Target Free Sundays @ The Studio Museum!

AMALIA MALLARD

For more information about our upcoming public programs, please visit studiomuseum.org.

Adult programs are generously supported by a grant from the Metlife Foundation.
DIY IMAGINARY PORTRAIT!

First, think about who your character is. Is it a boy or girl? How old is he or she? What is his or her name? Where does your character live? What does he or she like to do?

Once you have a character in mind, think about what his or her portrait should look like. Is he or she sitting, standing or moving around? Which direction is your character facing? What is he or she wearing? Is your character alone or with a friend?

Next, think about the background. Is your character in front of a colorful backdrop, as in a school portrait? Or is he or she in a particular place—at home, on the beach or at the playground?

Finally, think about special items your character may want in the portrait. Consider drawing his or her favorite piece of clothing, book or toy.

Now add color with crayons or markers and introduce your character to your family and friends!

HERE’S WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- Pencil
- Crayons or markers
- Creativity and imagination!

The people you see in Lynette Yiadom-Boakye’s portraits seem as though they could be real, but they are all make-believe! Just like a writer creates fictional characters for a story, Lynette paints imaginary characters on canvas. You can make up your own character, too!
Abdi Farah
Call of Duty
Modern Warfare
Black Ops, 2010
Courtesy the artist
LESLEY HEWITT RECEIVES THE 2010 WEIN ARTIST PRIZE

On October 25, 2010, the Studio Museum celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize at our annual Gala by honoring Leslie Hewitt (b.1977), a New York-based artist working in photography, sculpture, site-specific installation and film. This year’s event was particularly memorable, as the Museum also celebrated George Wein, who established the prize in 2006 in honor of his late wife, Joyce. All the past winners—Lorna Simpson (b. 1960), Trenton Doyle Hancock (b. 1974), Nadine Robinson (b. 1968) and Glenn Ligon (b. 1960)—were also present to commemorate the anniversary of the prize that was inspired by Joyce’s lifelong support of living artists and envisioned as an extension of the Studio Museum’s mission to support experimentation and excellence in contemporary art.

Influenced and inspired by a variety of sources and practices, including Dutch still life, twentieth-century protest literature and the history and study of optics as it relates to the camera, Hewitt’s work addresses notions of time, space, memory and how perception is altered through technology. She uses the camera as a tool not only to capture specific moments, but also to reposition one’s point of view, subtly challenging the potentials, limitations and expectations of a photographic document. Expanding on her interest in site-specificity, Hewitt has collaborated on a film project with cinematographer Bradford Young (b. 1977), Untitled (Level) (2010). A silent combination of still and moving images of a man walking through Harlem, the work explores the personal, political and psychological aspects of moving from one place to another, exemplifying Hewitt’s interests in nonlinear perspective and, as she related in her artist statement, “the everyday and the transformative power of circumstance or situation.”

Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden announced the award in front of over seven hundred guests and friends of the Studio Museum. Upon accepting, Hewitt stated, “My selection for the 2010 Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize is truly a surprise. I feel extremely honored. This generous award will contribute greatly to the development of new film-based work. I am very thankful and humbled by this news!”

Hewitt has had a solo exhibition at The Kitchen in New York (2010), was included in the Whitney Biennial (2008) and was part of New Photography 2009 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Her work has been exhibited in a number of group shows, both nationally and internationally, and is represented in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago and The Studio Museum in Harlem, where she was a 2007-08 artist in residence.

GINGER COFIELD

Visit the Studio Blog at studiomuseum.org/blog to watch our video on the 2010 Wein Artist Prize!
The Studio Museum in Harlem sincerely thanks the following businesses and individuals for their generous support, which contributed to the overwhelming success of Gala 2010, where we raised over $1.5 million.

The Museum extends gratitude and congratulations to the phenomenal Gala Co-Chairs Kathryn C. Chenault, Joyce K. Haupt and Carol Sutton Lewis, as well as the dedicated Gala Vice-Chairs, Jacqueline L. Bradley, Amelia Ogunlesi and Teri Trotter. This year’s Gala celebrated both Pamela Fiori and George Wein, both avid and staunch supporters of the Museum. We also express our utmost gratitude to Mr. Wein, who established the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize five years ago, and wholeheartedly congratulate the 2010 Wein Prize recipient, Leslie Hewitt.
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On Friday, May 20, 2011, The Studio Museum in Harlem will hold its fifth annual Spring Luncheon at the Mandarin Oriental, New York. We hope you will join us for this fabulous event as we celebrate the Museum's commitment to education and creativity by saluting individuals and institutions who have made significant contributions to art and ideas in African-American culture. All of the Spring Luncheon’s proceeds are used to strengthen the Studio Museum’s arts education programs.

Please contact Gabrielle Lopez at 212.864.4500 x218 for more information or to make your reservation.
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Why is it important to you to be a member of the Studio Museum?
There is such a long and rich history of exhibitions, research, rigorous scholarship and an increasingly international reach with the Studio Museum. I feel that I should invest in something that is making a positive impact not just in Harlem, but globally. The Museum needs to be supported because it speaks to the entire diaspora, its roots in one little spot in the world.

You are a dentist, but you also work as a curator. How did you become involved in art? Were you always interested in both fields?
I was born in Windsor, Ontario, right across the river from Detroit, a place that is very influenced by African-American culture. I went for regular visits to the Detroit Institute of Arts Museum, every Saturday with my mom, where I saw James VanDerZee’s image of a couple wearing raccoon coats. I had never seen black people depicted in this way, so sophisticated and beautifully turned out in their Sunday best. It really opened my eyes and gave me a window into my culture.

The desire to be a health professional came from a role model I had in Jamaica, where both of my parents are from, but I am really an arts-oriented person. Now I have a dental practice full of people who are in the arts, and the waiting room has become an interesting testing ground for new acquisitions. I’m forever changing the art and the patients have come to enjoy that.

Your painting Any Number of Preoccupations (2010) by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye is currently on loan to the Studio Museum. When did you first become familiar with her work and what stands out to you about this painting in particular?
Lynette was on my radar since I first saw her work in London four or five years ago. She became much more well known after her inclusion in Flow (2008), at which point I realized I needed to acquire the work before it was too late. I reached out to her through a mutual friend and we spent the weekend of the Armory Show this past year getting to know each other, as artist and collector. She let me know that she had a show coming up in New York at Jack Shainman Gallery. Armed with that knowledge, I was able to get in early.

I also lent a work, Blood (Donald Formey) (1975), for the Barkley L. Hendricks show [Birth of the Cool] in 2008. Very interestingly, I feel that there is more than one reference to Barkley’s style of figurative painting in Any Number of Preoccupations. One can see Lynette as an antecedent or descendent of Barkley in some ways—not in the way they paint but the way they think.

What other exhibition or project have you enjoyed at the Studio Museum recently?
I loved Kehinde Wiley’s 2008 show [The World Stage: Africa Lagos - Dakar] and thought that was some of his best work and very appropriate for the space of the Studio Museum. I very much liked Chris Ofili’s Afro Muses (2005), so much so that I made it a mission to acquire one of the paintings for my own collection. 30 Seconds off an Inch (2009–10) was highly influential in terms of my development as a collector. Finally, I always go see what’s happening with the Expanding the Walls students. James VanDerZee is such an important figure in my collection and someone who I feel very close to, so I am very interested in the kind of reactions that young people are having toward that kind of seminal work.

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Work phone/home phone

Card number/exp. Date

Signature

Thank you for your support and welcome to The Studio Museum in Harlem! The Studio Museum in Harlem offers the best way to explore black culture and the latest trends in contemporary art!

Join online at studiomuseum.org/membership
GENERAL INFO

VISITOR INFORMATION

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

General Info
T 212 864 4500
F 212 864 4800

Media Contact
212 864 4500 ×213
pr@studiomuseum.org

Public Programs Info
212 864 4500 ×264

Membership Info
212 864 4500 ×221

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

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

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

studiomuseum.org

DIRECTIONS

Subway
A C B D 2 3 4 5 6
To 125th Street

Bus
M-2, M-7, M-10, M-100, M-102 or BX-15

Parking is available at the Municipal
Garage at 126th Street between
Malcolm X and Adam C. Powell Jr.
boulevards.

MEMBER SHOPPING DAYS

On the following days in 2011,
members will receive 20% off
all merchandise:

February 3-6
February 10-13
February 17-20
February 24-27
March 31-April 3
April 28-May 1

May 5-8
May 26-29

The Museum Store is closed on Monday, Tuesday and major holidays.
Please call 212.864.4500 x237 for the most up-to-date information.
IT TAKES TWO!

Every issue of Studio is defined by its cover image. Even within our office, we hardly ever refer to the “Summer 2007” or “Fall/Winter 2008-09” issue—they are “David Adjaye” or “Barkley Hendricks.” So it’s not surprising that one of the hardest parts about publishing Studio is deciding what to put on the cover. As this issue spans our Fall/Winter 2010-11 and Spring 2011 seasons, we wanted to feature exhibitions from both. So, while the inside content is exactly the same, one cover reproduces every letter from Mark Bradford: Alphabet (on view November 11, 2010—March 13, 2011) while the other offers a look at some of the quirky and innovative products designed by Stephen Burks (many of which will be in Man Made, on view March 31—June 26, 2011). Whichever cover you hold in your hands, we hope you’ll enjoy the Winter/Spring 2011 issue and let us know what you think!

Email comments, questions and suggestions to studio@studiomuseum.org.
WHERE BLACK ART LIVES

THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM MAGAZINE

WINTER/SPRING 2011

THE CONVERSATION ISSUE

Featuring Perspectives from:
Mark Bradford
Stephen Burks
2010-11 Artists in Residence
Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims
Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts
And more!