Each issue of Studio is released with two covers and this season, we're honored to feature an incredible portrait of Romare Bearden by Frank Stewart and a painting by Emma Amos, Spiral icon.
Old and new. Contemporary and modern. Reconsidering the past and creating the future. In my work at the Studio Museum, I am by nature and necessity constantly looking ahead, but I am always conscious of the past. This, the second half of 2011, is an especially exciting time for me. The past and future are happily colliding in the Museum’s galleries, beginning with our summer 2011 exhibitions. *Spiral: Perspectives on African-American Art Collective*, an unprecedented and intimate look into a unique collective of 20th-century modern masters, brings to view a moment essential in the founding genealogy of The Studio Museum; while our annual *Artists-in-Residence* exhibition affords us an opportunity to explore in depth the latest iteration of the Studio Museum’s founding principle: support for emerging artists of African descent.

At the same time our acclaimed *Expanding the Walls* program, now in its 11th year, presents the work of its latest high school participants—the next generation of influential artists—alongside select works by James VanDerZee, the iconic Harlem photographer they have studied and taken as inspiration. Their work complements the exhibition *Lyle Ashton Harris: Self/Portrait*; Harris, like VanDerZee, uses photography to document and interpret his community.

We continue intergenerational dialogue with our fall 2011 exhibitions, notably our tribute to Romare Bearden—the 100th anniversary of whose birth we celebrate on September 2, 2011—who we will celebrate through a new exhibition engaging some of the most exceptional contemporary artists working today with collage, the medium Bearden pioneered during his Spiral days. In addition, we feature this fall the second iteration of *VideoStudio: Playback*, an ongoing investigation into pioneering video and performance art from the 1970s and 80s.

As always, we are thrilled to feature in Studio diverse perspectives from our multitalented staff and guest contributors, including studio visits, book excerpts, a recap of our 2010-11 partnership with the Goethe-Institut and an overview of *Studio Lab*, our new program embracing ideas in formation.

As always, we want to hear from you about our exhibitions, programs and plans for the future. Check out page 26 for my Q&A engaging @studiomuseum’s more than 5,400 Twitter followers, and join the conversation: follow us on Twitter, “like” us on Facebook, explore studiomuseum.org, but most of all, come by for a visit.

I’ll see you around and definitely uptown!

Thelma Golden
Director and Chief Curator
Lyle Ashton Harris
Untitled (Face #155 Lyle), 2000
Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery, New York
# Museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What's Up: Exhibition Schedule</th>
<th>05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collected. A Brief History of our Permanent Collection</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem: Red, Black and Green</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudioSound: OJO</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR Playlist</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem Postcards: Spring 2011</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF/SITE: Marc Brandenburg: Version</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Program Highlights</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Invades the Museum Store: Saya Woolfalk’s Diorama for Empathic Life</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Amos: Spiral Icon</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Lab</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#AskThelma</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Conversation: Lyle Ashton Harris and Chuck Close</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Features

| My Harlem: Cash for Gold | 58 |
| In the Studio with the 2010-11 AIRs | 60 |
| Pacific Standard Time | 64 |
| A Legacy Continues: Celebrating the Bearden Centennial | 68 |
| Be With Me: The Revelatory Work of Dean Moss | 72 |

# Studio Jr.

| Collage DIY | 75 |
| Coloring Page | 76 |

# Beyond

| Critical (Re)Issue: “Ralph Ellison’s Romare Bearden” | 31 |
| Elsewhere | 33 |
| A Beautiful Thing | 36 |
| Kellie Jones’s Eyeminded | 38 |
| A. Naomi Jackson’s Star Side of Bird Hill | 39 |
| If you like... | 42 |
| Glenn Ligon’s Yourself in the World | 44 |
| Studio Visit: Angel Otero | 46 |
| Studio Visit: Maren and Ava Hassinger | 47 |
| Happy 80th, David Driskell! | 49 |
| For Whom the Bell Curves | 50 |
| Dispatch: CA | 51 |
| Remembering Edouard Glissant | 55 |

# Friends

| Luncheon 2011 | 79 |
| Member Spotlight: Cheryl Bruce | 83 |
| Facts and Figures | 84 |
| Members | 86 |
| Supporters | 90 |
| Membership Info and Form | 94 |
| Visitor Info | 96 |
What’s Up?

Exhibition Schedule
Summer/Fall 2011

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

July 14 – October 23, 2011
Spiral: Perspectives on an African-American Art Collective
Evidence of Accumulation | 2010–11 Artists in Residence: Simone Leigh, Kamau Amu Patton, Paul Mpagi Sepuya
Lyle Ashton Harris: Self/Portrait
as it is, as it could be: Expanding the Walls 2011
StudioSound: Kamau Amu Patton

November 10 – March 11, 2012
Romare Bearden Centennial
VideoStudio: Playback II

Always On View
Harlem Postcards
Glenn Ligon: Give Us a Poem
Adam Pendleton: Collected (Flamingo George)
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 long 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 store fronts 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

**Price: $55.00 / Member: $46.75 / Item#: 2907**
A Brief History of Our Permanent Collection

by Tasha Parker, Curatorial Fellow

The permanent collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem is a fundamental element of our institutional identity and has permitted the Museum to act on its mission of supporting and promoting the work of African-American artists and artists of African descent. While not an encyclopedic survey of black visual arts, the collection reflects the Studio Museum’s history and the initiative and commitment of trustees, collectors, and artists who understood the importance of having a collection to complement the Museum’s exhibitions and education programs.

When The Studio Museum in Harlem opened in 1968 in a rented loft on Fifth Avenue and 125th Street, the new and experimental institution was initially conceived as a non-collecting museum. However, the Museum’s commitment to the presentation and preservation of diverse works by black artists soon made a permanent collection necessary. The Studio Museum Board of Trustees adopted an acquisition policy in 1979. In 1986, the Museum received the Award of Merit from the Municipal Art Society of New York for establishing the premier collection of black art in the country. Two years later, the Museum was the first dedicated to African-American visual arts to be accredited by the American Association of Museums.

Today, the collection includes works ranging from portraits by eighteenth-century painter Joshua Johnson (1763–1824) to multimedia installations from recent Artist-in-

1 Collected. Reflections on the Permanent Collection (installation view), 2010

Photo: Adam Reich
Residence exhibitions, demonstrating expansive yet strategic priorities within the history of black culture and international art. Areas of focus within the collection include American art and Modernism; nineteenth- and twentieth-century African- and Latino-American art; and contemporary African-American, African and Caribbean art. Within these areas of focus, the collection prioritizes iconic moments in black cultural history, including the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement, as well as work by artists who do not easily fit into historical or aesthetic categories.

With the Artist-in-Residence program playing a central role in the Museum’s founding and its continued success, acquisitions from former artists in residence account for a significant part of the permanent collection. Each year, the current artists in residence have a show during the summer exhibition season, from which artworks are acquired. Like most recent additions to the permanent collection, a number of these works are acquired through the Museum’s Acquisition Committee, which was formed in 2001 to steer collecting practices and continue to build the enduring legacy of the Museum’s collection for generations to come. The committee meets three times a year.

In recent years, The Studio Museum in Harlem has heightened its focus on the permanent collection, finding new ways to re-contextualize familiar artworks and introduce new acquisitions. In 2009, the Museum marked its first forty years by presenting Collected. Propositions on the Permanent Collection, the largest collection exhibition held at the Studio Museum to that date. Collected. took over the
entire Museum, and included fourteen themed takes on the collection and over two hundred artworks. Among the themes in the show were “By Hand: The Craft Tradition in Contemporary and Visionary Art,” “New Additions: Recently Acquired Works on Paper,” “Internationalisms,” “A Family Affair” and “Forms and Figures.” The Museum continued the tradition started by that landmark exhibition into what has come to be recognized as a Collected exhibition series. In spring 2010, the Museum presented another massive collection show, Collected. Reflections on the Permanent Collection, again featuring several themed mini-exhibitions and isolated highlights. Smaller iterations of Collected have followed, including Collected. Black & White (fall 2010), an exhibition of works in various media and from time periods that are linked by their color palette of black, white and gray, and Collected. Vignettes (spring 2011), an exhibition taking Hale Woodruff’s (1900–1980) 1970 painting Vignettes as a point of departure. Overall, the Collected series offers alternatives to chronological presentations of art.

Other recent collection shows include Dawoud Bey’s Harlem USA (fall 2010), a series of photographs the artist took in Harlem during the 1960s, and Sculpted, Cut and Etched: Metal Works from the Permanent Collection (spring 2011), an intimate grouping of works made either with metal or using metal in their techniques or processes.

In 2010, the Museum published Re:Collection: Selections from the Studio Museum in Harlem, the first book documenting the Studio Museum’s permanent collection. The book includes reproductions of eighty-one works of art, each with an accompanying essay contributed by an artist, curator, scholar, writer, historian or Studio Museum staff member. Re:Collection offers a less conventional approach to a permanent collection text, with essays written in a variety of styles that provide personalized readings as an alternative and complement to more straightforward scholarship.

In 2011, the Museum continues to expand public access to the permanent collection with a growing online archive of works.
Expanding the Walls: Making Connections Between Photography, History and Community is an eight-month photography-based program that challenges young artists to explore the legacy and work of photographer James VanDerZee, learn digital photography and engage with the larger Harlem community. This year’s Expanding the Walls artists were asked to investigate the neighborhood through a personal lens and share their photographic interpretations. This is how they see Harlem.

Expanding the Walls is made possible with support by the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Colgate-Palmolive; Deutsche Bank; The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust; Dubose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund and The David Rockefeller Fund.

1. Amyrah Arroyo
   The Watermelon Man of Malcolm X Boulevard, 2011

2. Alexandra Barlowe
   Harlem’s Baptism, 2011

3. Trevin Dehere
   Art Outside a Museum, 2011

4. Edwin Doval
   Death After Life, 2011
5 Victor Ferreras
Strength in Numbers, 2011

6 Senetchut Floyd
Harlem Got Game, 2011

7 Sapphire Hilton
Harlem's Desecration, 2011

8 Matthew HRW Morgan
The Journey Ahead, 2011

9 Nadienka Morillo
Black Supremacy, 2011
10  Genevieve Pierre
    Untitled, 2011

11  Jamilla Reid
    Love Not Hate, 2011

12  Neil Robinson
    The Prison, 2011

13  Sim E. Smith
    Legacy, 2011

14  Genesis Valencia
    Harlem: Connected, 2011

15  Michael Vargas
    Untitled, 2011
Studio Sound: OJO

by Abbe Schriber, Program Assistant

StudioSound, the Studio Museum’s ongoing audio installation in the Museum’s lobby, continued in the spring with Los Angeles-based collective OJO, a group that experiments with the spaces between music, art and performance. Comprised currently of six members—Joshua Aster, Chris Avitabile, Justin Cole, Moises Medina, Eamon Ore-Giron and Brenna Youngblood—OJO first came together in 2005, evolving out of a mutual passion for improvisational sounds and interactive, multisensory performances. Voluminous Sparks, the group’s StudioSound contribution, blends studio-recorded material, and recordings of live performances, into one continuous, looping playlist. OJO often wields the background noises of daily life as instruments, weaving everything into their pared-down, textural soundscapes from Roland-TR 808 drum machines, bass, and synthesizer, to the clapping, whistling and chanting of live audiences. The group’s loose, ambling tracks also take notes from hip hop, dubstep and electronic music, among other genres. As implied by the collective’s name—OJO means “eye” in Spanish, and is also slang for “look out!”—there is a deliberate play with synesthesia underpinning their work. Each member is a practicing visual artist (Youngblood is represented in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection), and their experimentation with music, performance and experience maintains a dynamic, at times interchangeable, connection with visual art.

OJO balances their traditional studio-recording practice with experimental performances that test the boundaries and limits of sound using unconventional materials and means. In one performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, audience members were asked to push two cars (wrapped in wallpaper depicting human flesh) down the street, each blaring different parts of a musical score, creating compositions that differed depending on where one stood. In the end, the cars crashed, and OJO sampled and looped the sound of the collision to reverberate throughout the composition. Public participation and interaction of this sort is vital to OJO’s practice, and they often leave ample space for spontaneity and improvisation, allowing their compositions to grow and change every time they are performed.

OJO has created projects at numerous Los Angeles venues, including Esthetics as a Second Language, the Hammer Museum and LAXART, among others. In 2009, they were invited by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles to participate in the annual, three-month “Engagement Party” series dedicated to presenting art by Los Angeles-based collectives.

This summer, look for a StudioSound presentation in the lobby by current artist in residence Kamau Amu Patton! Stay tuned . . .
AIR Playlist

Artists in residence share what they’re listening to in their studios

SIMONE LEIGH

Alice Coltrane
Journeys in Satchidananda (1970)
Universal Consciousness (1972)

Donny Hathaway
Extension of a Man (1993)
LIVE (1994)

Queen
News of the World (1977)

Brian Eno
Another Green World (1975)

Lijadu Sisters
Double Trouble (1984)
PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA

Sugarcubes
*Life’s To Good* (1988)

Womack & Womack
*Love Wars* (1983)

Eurythmics
*Touch* (1983)

Ciara
*Deuces (NGUZUNGUZU MIX)* (2010)

Lansing-Dreiden
*Suggested Arrangement* (2008)

KAMAU AMU PATTON

Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra and George Lewis
*Metamorphic Rock* (2009)

MEV
*Musica Eletronica Viva* (1968)

Yasunao Tone
*Noise Media Language* (1961)

Pamelia Kurstin
*Thinking Out Loud* (2006)

Philip Jeck and Jacob Kirkegaard
*Soaked* (2002)
Harlem Postcards

MATTHEW DAY JACKSON

Born 1974, Panorama City, CA
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY
March 19, 2011 at about 10:30 pm, 2011

This image is an abstraction of the moon at its closest position to the Earth since 1993. Originally, I attempted to show the moon as accurately as possible by taking a photograph through a telescope on 125th Street. But after numerous attempts, I came to realize that we actually see the moon as a reflection, or perhaps projection, of ourselves. We see it as it exists in the imagination. I chose to include the Apollo Theater in the photograph to indicate my location with respect to the moon and to make the image distinct to Harlem. And there is a connection between the celestial body and the famous theater. Both the Apollo Theater and the Apollo moon missions have provided stages to which to aspire and feature the best humanity has to offer. Fitzgerald, Wonder, Armstrong and Aldrin, to name a few, took steps into the unknown, at the risk of great harm and potential failure.

JEANNE MOUTOUSSAMY-ASHE

Born 1951, Chicago, IL
Lives and works in New York, NY
Holcombe Rucker Playground, 2000

Also known as The Rucker, this playground was founded in 1946 by Holcombe Rucker, a Harlem schoolteacher who wanted to use sports as a way to provide direction and teach life skills to thousands of boys and girls. An immediate success, it expanded to after-school programs and, in 1950, a pro division for professional basketball players anxious to assist Rucker. By the 1960s, The Rucker, located on 155th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard, was the place for top college and pro stars to prove their skills. Today Chris Rucker continues the legacy started by Holcombe years ago. While many consider The Rucker a place for building hoops skills, “its real success has been in building a community,” according to Chris. This photograph shows the rhythm, fluidity of form and expression of the human spirit that came from Holcombe Rucker’s commitment over half a century ago.
DEMETRIUS OLIVER

Born 1975, Brooklyn, NY
Lives and works in Harlem, NY
Argentum, 2011. Design by Stephanie Gonzalez-Turner

For The Studio Museum in Harlem I created a postcard that also serves as an invitation to a show outside of the Museum, along the Harlem River. On the appropriate dates, visitors can observe the work on the surface of the river after sundown. Much of my work deals with nighttime phenomena when the firmament is unobstructed. Ancient astronomers thought the moon contained oceans, which is why they named portions of it “mare.” Until recently, this theory was ignored, but then it was discovered that at one time in its four-billion-year history, the moon did, in fact, contain water. I use the camera in much of my work, so it’s worth noting that the moon is also associated with silver, a reflective metal that aids in the production of photography.

HANK WILLIS THOMAS

Born 1976, Plainfield, NJ
Lives and works in New York, NY
Change gonna come, 2010

Change gonna come is a tribute to the lyrics of a Sam Cooke song that refers to the hope and aspirations of the African-American community during the 1960s. It also frames the new and old businesses and entertainment venues that sustain the notion of change—cultural, economic, iconic. I find it intriguing that the song was likely performed by Cooke at the Apollo on 125th street. As someone who virtually grew up at the Schomburg Center on 135th Street and has been coming to the Studio Museum his entire life, I have countless recollections of walking down these streets. Harlem has once again become an epicenter of change. Striking to me now is the bold presence of new buildings, chain stores and high-end restaurants, and fewer street vendors. Also I see a marked change in the diversity of the residents of Harlem. This piece speaks to nostalgia and many complex thoughts of times—good and bad—that have come and gone, and continue to come again.
From May 6 to June 4, 2011, the Goethe-Institut Wyoming Building hosted Marc Brandenburg: Version, the final installment of OFF/SITE, the Studio Museum’s partnership with the Goethe-Institut New York.

Marc Brandenburg (b. 1965) is a multimedia artist born in Berlin, where he currently lives and works. Interested in scenes of power and excess, the artist is known for his graphite-on-paper drawings that adopt the look of photographic negatives. Brandenburg makes and appropriates original and found photographs in his drawings to depict crowds at soccer games and political protests, as well as celebrities and consumer objects borrowed from the mass media.

The exhibition Marc Brandenburg: Version built off of the artist’s ongoing “Hirnsturm” series into a site-specific installation of screenprints in an enclosed space illuminated by black light, as well as a sound installation in the storefront entrance. Referencing the aesthetics of cinema, music and dance club culture, Version emphasizes the tension between the precision of photo-realist figuration and the abstraction of images from their original contexts and forms.

Brandenburg’s stunning transformation of the Wyoming Building space was a spectacular finish to the OFF/SITE collaboration. Both the Studio Museum and the Goethe-Institut New York are committed to examining contemporary ideas from a culturally specific, global context—black culture and culture from Germany, respectively. OFF/SITE featured two site-specific artist projects and a series of public programs at the Goethe-Institut Wyoming Building in the East Village. To learn more about the OFF/SITE collaboration, visit studiomuseum.org.
Benjamin Patterson spoke at the Studio Museum on Thursday, March 31, about his exhibition *Born in the State of FLUX/us: Scores*. The conversation was moderated by Valerie Cassel Oliver of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, who curated the Patterson retrospective from which the Studio Museum exhibition was excerpted. They discussed the artistic landscape of the early 1960s and how Fluxus ushered in a new wave of experimental music by making the leap between action and music. This important exhibition showcases Patterson’s compositions as a founding member of the artistic collective. Although he is a classically trained musician, contra bassist and composer, Patterson challenges multiple senses—clearly demonstrated by those in attendance who volunteered to perform scores as Patterson read them aloud. The highlight of the evening was *Paper Piece*, a rousing performance in which Patterson conducted the audience in a concert of sounds produced by rustling our programs.

Pamela Newkirk’s edited volume, *Letters from Black America: Intimate Portraits of the African American Experience*, was featured as part of our *Books & Authors* series in April. We were deeply honored to have legendary performer, writer, and activist Ruby Dee join us for a dramatic reading, as well as distinguished actor Anthony Chisholm. Their resonant voices filled the theater and captured the profundity of the letters they read. For example, Dee read a letter from enslaved woman Annie Davis to President Abraham Lincoln written a year after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation:
Mr. President It is my Desire to go to see my people on the eastern shore my mistress wont let me you will please let me know if we are free and what I can do I wrote to you for advice. Please send me word this week or as soon as possible and oblige.

Dee poignantly closed the evening by reading author Alice Walker’s letter to President Obama from November 2008—in direct symmetry with Annie Davis’s letter from 147 years prior.

Also in April, nearly four hundred people attended the second installment of this year’s Artist-in-Residence Open Studios. Guests were treated to previews of works by Simone Leigh, Kamau Amu Patton and Paul Mpagi Sepuya. Be sure to check out their summer exhibition, Evidence of Accumulation (July 14–October 23, 2011). Please also join us on July 21 at 7pm for The Artist’s Voice to hear them discuss their art and practice with Assistant Curator, Lauren Haynes.

Spring 2011 also featured two installments of Intersections: Conversations on Art and Culture. The May event featured Misty Copeland, the first African-American female soloist for the American Ballet Theatre in over two decades, and Raven Wilkinson, the first African American to become a member of a major ballet company. The conversation was moderated by Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Professor Emerita at Temple University. The three discussed the roles and opportunities—or lack thereof—for African-American ballerinas and dancers in general. “Where are all the real Black Swans?” was a common theme for discussion. June’s session focused on The Legacy of Black Songwriters in Popular Music, and was a conversation with singer/songwriter Eric Roberson, author David A. Jasen, and radio personality and Black Music Month co-founder Dyana Williams, moderated by Terrance McKnight, host for Classical WQXR 105.9 FM. This lively conversation addressed the racial climate of the nineteenth and early-to mid-twentieth centuries, when many black songwriters did not receive credit—or payment, royalties or recognition—for their compositions.

And on June 24, DJ1NEn2WO spun the latest and greatest tunes for the kick-off of Uptown Fridays! and gave us a preview of the rest of the summer series.

As always, I look forward to seeing you Thursday evenings for Adult Programs! For more information about Public Programs, including Adult Programs and Target Free Sundays!, please visit studiomuseum.org.
Visit the Museum Store and you might suspect that you’ve stumbled on a rift in the space-time continuum. In the area where you previously would have found our usual displays of fantastic books, jewelry and gifts, you’ll encounter mysterious figures clad in elaborate costumes, emerging from an otherworldly terrain.

This fantastical diorama by former artist in residence Saya Woolfalk (b. 1979), Empathic Life (2010), allows visitors to engage with art beyond the Museum galleries. Woolfalk is the first artist to participate in a new, ongoing project in which artists are invited to install artwork in the store. The diorama is a site-specific installation of pieces from Woolfalk’s recent exhibition, Institute of Empathy, at Real Art Ways in Hartford, Connecticut. Stop by the store to learn more about Empathic Life and experience it for yourself!
“I like that people can read their own meanings into my paintings and that those readings may be quite different from mine.” – Emma Amos

In late April, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the studio of visual artist Emma Amos (b. 1938). Amos is a painter, printmaker and weaver who has exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide for almost fifty years. Amos was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. She lived there until she went off to school—first to Antioch College in Ohio and then to graduate school in London and later at New York University. Since then, Amos has lived in New York. In addition to her career as a visual artist, Amos is also a teacher; she taught at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University for twenty-eight years and served as Chair of Visual Arts for two years. Although Amos has retired from teaching, she has not retired from making art. Not only is her studio filled with work she has created over the years, it is also filled with materials she is currently using on new works. She has been in the same incredibly organized studio in NoHo for twenty years. The walls of the space are filled with artwork—her own and by other artists she has known and whose work she appreciates, including Norman Lewis (1909–1979) and Nellie Mae Rowe (1900–1982). While in Amos’s studio I was able to see artwork she’s created from the mid-1960s to the present, including works in progress. Most of Amos’s paintings since the late 1980s have been acrylic paintings on linen, surrounded by a border of African fabric. Amos and her studio assistants were in the process of picking the
border for a recently completed painting during our visit.

Much of Amos’s work is figurative. Amos has a series of works featuring bodies moving through water (“The Water Series”), a series of bodies falling through the air (“The Falling Series”) and a series that juxtaposes images of athletes with those of animals. She began working on these series in the mid-1980s and continues to add to them today. While in her studio, I was able to see images of an artwork called The Gift. In the early 1990s, Amos painted fifty-five watercolor portraits of her female artist friends. Together, these paintings make up The Gift, which includes no male artists because, as Amos told me at the time, “There were enough images of them.”

During our studio visit, we also discussed Amos’s involvement in the legendary Spiral group and the Museum’s exhibition Spiral: Perspectives on an African-American Art Collective, which will be on view from July 14 to October 23, 2011. The Spiral group was a collective of African-American artists that met once a week from the summer of 1963 to 1965 to discuss the role of black artists in the civil rights movement. Founded by Charles Alston (1907–1977), Romare Bearden (1911–1988), Hale Woodruff (1900–1980) and Lewis, Spiral’s membership eventually expanded to fifteen. Amos was one of the youngest and the only woman. Woodruff, who was also from Atlanta and a professor at New York University while Amos was in graduate school, invited her to join. “I was the only woman and I was the youngest member, when they did invite me,” Amos says. “I’m not sure they invited other people by looking at their work, but they were very nervous about having a woman in their group, and they wanted to make sure I was a real artist and not a dilettante or something. I think they asked me to join the club (which met once a week for discussion) instead of the women they knew, because those women represented some sort of threat, and I was only ‘a little girl.’” During our visit, Amos talked about how much she enjoyed being in Spiral and how she spent the meetings yelling, laughing and arguing just like everyone else. Other members of Spiral were Calvin Douglass (b. 1931), Perry Ferguson (active New York, New York, mid-60s), Reginald Gammon (1921–2005), Felrath Hines (1913–1993), Alvin Hollingsworth (1928–2000), William Majors (1930–1982), Richard Mayhew (b. 1934), Earl Miller (b. 1930), Merton D. Simpson (b. 1928) and James Yeargans (1908–1972). Although the Spiral group only showed together a limited number of times, their legacy has made a mark on art history and influenced generations of artists. The Studio Museum’s 2011 exhibition Spiral: Perspectives on an African-American Art Collective takes an exhibition of the same name organized by the Birmingham Museum of Art as its starting point, and then brings selections from the Studio Museum’s permanent collection and significant works from New York-area collections, including rarely seen paintings from the mid-1960s by Amos and the Studio Museum’s iconic Bearden photo projection, Conjur Woman (1964).

Spiral: Perspectives on an African-American Art Collective was organized by Emily G. Hanna and Amalia Amaki for the Birmingham Museum of Art (December 5, 2010–April 17, 2011). Organized by Studio Museum Assistant Curator Lauren Haynes in collaboration with Hanna, the Studio Museum presentation of Spiral will be on view July 14 to October 23, 2011.

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Studio Lab

by Thomas J. Lax

Studio Lab is an artist-centered program designed for ideas in formation. Inaugurated in October 2010, this twelve-month project is divided into two components: Artist-Initiated Explorations and Think Tanks among artists, scholars and curators.

The Think Tanks, which will take place and be documented in summer 2011, explore three interrelated topics: cultural specificity now, performance in the expanded field and conceptions of “public-making” in contemporary art. In addition to these multidisciplinary conversations, over the course of the year, three artists living and working locally, nationally and globally were invited to Harlem and New York to use the urban environment for one to two weeks. Given free rein to identify and develop hypotheses of their own, they were guided by a single caveat: that their residencies should facilitate their ongoing artistic interests and in some form engage in the idea of public conversation.

In November 2010, British artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (b. 1977) arrived at the Studio Museum in anticipation of her exhibition Any Number of Preoccupations. After exploring Harlem with Studio Museum Visitor Services Assistant Timothy Stockton, she headed out to Coney Island, Brooklyn, with a stack of paper and a carton of pastel sticks. While Yiadom-Boakye is known for her large-scale paintings of figures and small-scale busts, she describes drawing as formative to her paintings. Like her portraits, the artist’s drawings are composites. Made from memory, they are formal and fictional impressions of multiple encounters. Yet these works on paper also reflect subtle shifts in Yiadom-Boakye’s practice, extending her interest in landscape, (which to this point had appeared only a handful of times) and emphasizing an observational, even voyeuristic, quality. Rather than looking out at the viewer, as many of her sitters do, the individuals in this series are caught in simple acts of meditation and reflection. Titled according to the time of day that each was created, these works emphasize the ephemeral, transient interplay of color and light—and of experience more generally.

While Ohio-born, Houston-based artist Steffani Jemison (b. 1981) lived for several years in uptown Manhattan—where she completed her undergraduate education before moving to Texas—in her return to Harlem for Studio Lab, she was interested “in developing an itinerary that would shape a slightly different path to the city.” During her week-long stay, Jemison visited five sites, across the city’s boroughs, where stand-offs had occurred between patients who had escaped from psychiatric institutions and law enforcement authorities. In her expansive multimedia practice, Jemison explores and frames the impositions and possibilities of moving-image and reading cultures in American urban communities. Her research for Studio Lab is part of an ongoing series of videos she started in 2008 that examines the cinematic representation of escapees from mental institutions at the turn of the twentieth century. Jemison is particularly drawn to the 1904 film Maniac Chase, Escaped Lunatic that depicts four African-American figures running through a looping urban landscape. Interested
in the film’s simple narrative and reductive form, Jemison directs our attention to the ways pre-World War I anxieties around racial terror and psychiatric disorder influenced the structure of the earliest fiction films, and suggests perhaps that its recursive organization continues to resonate within a contemporary matrix of visual pleasure and fugitiveness.

Across the Artist-Initiated Explorations and the Think Tanks, two themes emerged. Site, place and space not only inform aesthetic experience, but also are tools for making and contesting social meaning. Process, unknowing and vulnerability are critical to the development of meaningful ideas. As museum curators, it is our task to converse with artists as they develop projects, and ultimately translate their ideas from objects and experiences into the physical and social space of a gallery and the printed format of a publication. Studio Lab frames and formalizes this role to draw attention to the ways contemporary artists work—itinerantly, between multiple institutional locations and in direct response to opportunities and community formations. This new endeavor also reflects how the Studio Museum as an institution relates to our various constituencies, including artists, funders, supporters and visitors. At a time when artists have extended far beyond traditional media—or even the making of art objects—to include time-based performances, the formation of social relationships and virtually-mediated experiences, contemporary art institutions have relocated to new regions of the globe and are reevaluating the basic demands of the architectural footprint. In this context, what do we mean then when we invoke an “artist” or a “museum”? Thus far, Studio Lab has shown that even as the identities, expectations and aspirations of both remain in flux, they continue to be linked by their relationship to a viewing, hearing, thinking, acting and participating public.

1 Steffani Jemison’s Studio Lab research led her on a journey throughout New York. Photo: Amiel Melnick

2 Lynette Yiadom-Boakye’s pastel drawings created during the inaugural Studio Lab, November, 2010. Photo: Liz Gwinn
Recently, we asked our Twitter followers if they had any burning questions for Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden. They asked, and she answered. We hope you’ll join the conversation: follow @studiomuseum and visit facebook.com/studiomuseum for up-to-the-minute news and interactive features like #AskThelma!

@artfagcity: Does Golden have any Freestyle-type exhibitions planned for the future?
TG: Freestyle (2001), Frequency (2005-06) and Flow (2008) were large, group exhibitions of emerging artists, the support of whom remains central to our curatorial focus. There might be another “F” show in the future…but exhibitions in that vein develop as the work demands, so all I can say is: stay tuned!

@ohashuhlee: What books are you currently reading, Ms. Golden?
TG: In addition to what seem like thousands of exhibition catalogues and art books that come across my desk, two current favorites are the amazing Open City (2011) by Teju Cole and Gabrielle Hamilton’s fantastic memoir Blood, Bones & Butter (2011).

@hragv: Which public constituency has been the hardest for the Studio Museum to attract into its galleries?
TG: We work especially hard to engage audiences who don’t think an art museum is a place that’s interesting or relevant to them. Through innovative programs and nontraditional outreach, we hope that they will see us in a new way.

@weegee: What can museum do 2 improve follow up? If I like an artist, how can I follow their career after I leave the Museum?
TG: You can start by exploring the web! Many artists have their own websites, but of course studiomuseum.org is a great place to begin your search. Our commitment to the artists we show continues even after their exhibitions come down and we love to share what they’re working on in Studio and Studio Blog.
Make More Than Copies

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
Lyle Ashton Harris: Self/Portrait includes works reproduced in the book Excessive Exposure (2010), a compendium of approximately two hundred photographs from Harris’s decade-long work with a large-format (20” × 24”) Polaroid camera. Excessive Exposure also features a foreword by Henry Louis Gates Jr., an essay by Okwui Enwezor and a conversation with fellow artist, portraitist and Polaroid user Chuck Close—a section of which we are thrilled to share with you here.

This conversation between Lyle Ashton Harris and Chuck Close took place in April 1999, in New York City, as Harris was beginning this series of portraits.

Lyle Ashton Harris: Chuck, what’s your experience of being photographed by me? Let’s begin there.

Chuck Close: For somebody who shoots as many people as I do, I have to occasionally submit myself to the process—it’s only fair. But it’s really a different experience. I’ve dealt with my own image through my self-portraits—which I’ve done way too many of! I’m used to posing myself, being in control of my own image, but it’s very different to submit to someone else, to try and let someone else direct you. Of course, I wanted it to end up looking like your work somehow. They’re real professional posers, so they want to make it look like their work. Of all the people you’ve photographed, how many of them…

LAH: Self-fashion themselves? It’s quite obvious with artists such as Iké Udé, Vanessa Beecroft, and Renée Cox. But I also think it extends to people like my grandmother, Joella Johnson [Untitled (Face/Back #1 Joella)], or Mother Dear, an amazing Jamaican woman with a botanica in the Bronx [Untitled (Face/Back #34 Mother Dear)]. I have observed that people have a strong desire to present themselves in a particular way.

It was interesting when you recently took my portrait for the painting you’re doing and suggested that perhaps we should select one where I’m smiling. It sort of caught me off guard because I always imagine myself as being quite serious. Your comment made me realize that perhaps I smile more than I think I do.

CC: You had an interest in the back of the head for a long time, but it’s never come to the fore as much as in this series.

LAH: These images also play on the discourse of ethnographic photography and the pseudo-science of phrenology with its history of cataloguing and pathologizing difference. I’m curious, where do you see this project vis-à-vis the history of painting and photography?

CC: They are very painterly photographs, actually.

LAH: I was thinking about an observation by Roland Barthes, that the best portraitists are mythologists—whether it’s Nadar in terms of the French bourgeoisie, Sander in terms of pre-Nazi Germany, or VanDerZee in terms of the African diaspora in Harlem.

CC: One of the things that amazes me after making portraits for thirty years looking at so many other portraits—particularly after the experience of doing the portrait show at MoMA in 1991, where I picked portraits and self-portraits from the Modern’s collection—is that for something which seemed so bankrupt in the middle...
of the century, it’s an incredibly elastic set of conventions and traditions. Portraiture always ends up being capable of embracing something else. And it’s great to see somebody considerably younger than me who’s finding new urgency and new reason to extend and expand the possibilities.

**LAH:** When you say the portraits are painterly photographs, what do you mean?

**CC:** I suppose that I think they’re painterly because I bring as much painting baggage with me when I look at them as I do photographic baggage. It’s interesting that photography was supposed to put painting out of business. In some way it did. There was no reason to make slavishly duplicated images. In fact, painting started going to all those places that are very different from what a camera can do. It was black and white, so paintings became much more about color. There were these long, static, fixed poses—so we got impressionism, post-impressionism, futurism, various kinds of flickering impressions or effects rather than detail. Lots of things drove painting somewhere else, but at this point, at the end of this century, it’s interesting to see how photography has been affected by painting. So it’s all come full circle; I think there’s a dialogue happening.

**LAH:** Yes, I would agree.


Excessive Exposure is available in the Museum Store for $75 ($63.75 for Members)
Beyond
To look critically at how meaning has been made from what black artists do, even and especially by their advocates, yields valuable instruction about historical relationships between blackness, the work of art, and the social functions of both. On the assumptions that the exaggeration of these functions has proved as dangerous as it is easy, and that a black artist’s work is itself only ever as black as the language that describes it, I address the issue here through the narrow, hopeful lens of a single essay on Bearden’s work by Ralph Ellison.

The difficulties that arise from even the most innocent confusion of aesthetics and sociality were not lost on Ralph Ellison. By 1968, his essays on culture, democracy, and the nature of art were frequent and esteemed enough to compete with what Kenneth Burke called his “epoch-making” Invisible Man.1 As a longtime and close friend of the painter, Ellison was well positioned to address this issue on Bearden’s behalf. But it is Bearden the artist and artistic comrade—not Romie the friend—who animates “The Art of Romare Bearden.”2 The essay is an impassioned, defensive text that Ellison wrote to accompany Romare Bearden: Paintings and Projections, a small exhibition mounted at the State University of New York at Albany in autumn 1968.3

In Ellison’s essay, the stresses fall on what he calls the black artist’s “freedom of self-definition” with respect to black anxieties concerning art.4 Ellison’s art writing aims at nothing less than “that which [is] affirmative beyond all contradictions of social hierarchy and racism,” and it is well known that Ellison regarded these “contradictions” as historical and complex.5 For instance, he deeply appreciated the kinds of thought and creation that the notion of a separate “Negro aesthetic” had provoked on the American scene. But Ellison’s endorsement of this approach was conditional: more precisely, it was a function of his commitment to a more broadly conceived American modernism. Thus in 1973 Ellison—knowing that Alain L. Locke’s seminal collection of 1925, The New Negro, had helped establish the conditions in which contemporary late-sixties and early-seventies aesthetic racialism fomented—told the audience at a Harvard symposium on Locke that,
although “I didn’t always agree with him,” Locke “did point a direction... he did move in the direction of some sort of conscious assessment of the pluralistic condition of the United States.” The trouble was, when it remained singularly black, the consciousness produced in that assessment did not sufficiently pluralize its own condition.

It was on such grounds that Ellison had famously dismissed the nationalist Richard Wright as “no spiritual father of mine.” Explaining this heresy in 1964, Ellison wrote: “While one can do nothing about choosing one’s relatives, one can, as artist, choose one’s ‘ancestors.’ Wright was, in this sense, a ‘relative,’ Hemingway an ‘ancestor.’?” Here Ellison refused a compulsory, commonsense identification with Wright the fellow novelist and “race man” in deference to his own expressive priorities. In doing so, Ellison not only distanced himself from a simplistic vision of blackness as a duty but also drew an important distinction between black inspiration and black style, the latter being less desirable in requiring that one take a creative exemption from whatever nonblack contexts one inhabits. In this way, Ellison showed an alertness to the presence of competing universalities within black cultural politics, and a willingness to negotiate them in his work, that were rare at the same time.

4. Ellison, “ARB,” 689
**Beyond Surface Value**
May 6–September 4, 2011

**Keys to Our Heart**
May 6–July 31, 2011

Des Moines Art Center,
Des Moines, Iowa
desmoinesartcenter.org

*Surface Value* features recent work by Mickalene Thomas (2002–03 Studio Museum artist in residence) as well as James Gobel and Alison Elizabeth Taylor. All three artists create meticulous two-dimensional works that incorporate unusual everyday materials—rhinestones, felt, wood, yarn—to convey their singular visions.

If you make it to Des Moines before July 31, don’t miss Kalup Linzy’s *Keys to Our Heart* (2008), a short melodrama inspired by cinema history. Linzy (who you will remember from *Frequency* (2005–6) and *If it Don’t Fit* (2009) at the Studio Museum) plays Lily, a woman who dispenses advice to three people caught in a love triangle.

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**Elsewhere**

by Thelma Golden

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**Completely Biased, Entirely Opinionated Hot Picks**

Daniel González

*Pop-Up El Museo Disco Club*, 2011

Courtesy the artist

Photo by Matteo Danesin

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**The (S) Files 2011**
June 14, 2011–January 8, 2012

El Museo del Barrio, New York
elmuseo.org

*The (S) Files 2011* is the sixth installment of El Museo del Barrio’s biennial surveying the latest work by New York’s Latino, Caribbean and Latin American artists. This year’s iteration focuses on the aesthetics of street art, and aims to develop a broader, more complex understanding of the phenomenon. Through the work of seventy-five artists, the show examines core elements of street art, including graffiti and murals, as well as the medium’s broad influence on popular culture, music and fashion. *The (S) Files 2011* extends beyond El Museo to satellite venues throughout New York, including the Lehman College of Art Gallery, the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, Socrates Sculpture Park and Times Square.

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Mickalene Thomas

*Don’t forget about me (Keri)*, 2009

The Sender Collection

Image courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York
Nari Ward: Sub Mirage Lignum
MASS MoCA
massmoca.org

MASS MoCA’s cavernous galleries provide rare opportunities to experience artwork that requires freedom from spatial constraint. Enter Nari Ward’s extraordinary exhibition, Sub Mirage Lignum. Ward has constructed immersive installations that test visitors’ ability to discern reality from the imaginary with environments that evoke the artist’s childhood memories of Jamaica.

Bruce L. Davidson
Woman being held by two policemen,
© Bruce Davidson/Magnum Photos.
The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas menil.org

The Whole World Was Watching: Civil Rights–Era Photographs from Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil
March 5–August 20, 2011
The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas menil.org

This exhibition presents remarkable photographs that capture the civil rights movement through the eyes of photographers Bob Adelman, Dan Budnik, Bruce Davidson, Elliott Erwitt, Leonard Freed and Danny Lyon. The Whole World Was Watching features a selection of the 230 civil rights–era photographs recently gifted to the Menil Collection by Carpenter and de Menil, and will be complemented by a summer film series curated by Gerald O’Grady of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute.

Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now
March 23–August 14, 2011
The Museum of Modern Art, New York moma.org

This exhibition of roughly one hundred prints, posters, wall stencils and books from MoMA’s collection reflects the remarkable printmaking practices that have come out of South African communities. Featuring artists Sandile Goje, William Kentridge and John Muafangejo, Impressions from South Africa explores how printmaking has provided a versatile means of expression in moments of political and social turmoil.

Nari Ward: Nu Colossus (detail), 2011
Courtesy MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA

Nari Ward; Nu Colossus
MASS MoCA massmoca.org

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Nari Ward: Nu Colossus (detail), 2011
Courtesy MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA

Nari Ward: N
Beyond

Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine
June 26–September 11, 2011
High Museum of Art
high.org

Atlanta, where Radcliffe Bailey grew up and continues to live and work, celebrates the artist with his largest and most comprehensive exhibition to date. Pieces in Memory as Medicine range from works on paper to large-scale mixed-media installations, and will be divided into three sections that signify central themes in Bailey’s work: “Water,” “Blues” and “Blood.”

Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial
February 25–September 18, 2011
Indianapolis Museum of Art
imamuseum.org

Thornton Dial’s large-scale abstract paintings take on sculptural qualities—found objects are lodged in the surface, subsumed by layers of paint. Close inspection reveals discarded or forgotten remnants of daily life, including dolls, shoes, plastic flowers and rags. In addition to his paintings, Hard Truths will also include drawings and sculptures, as well as a continuous loop of Mr. Dial Has Something to Say (2007), an award-winning documentary on the artist.

Stephen Burks: Are You a Hybrid?
May 3–October 2, 2011
Museum of Arts and Design
madmuseum.org

While Stephen Burks: Man Made at the Studio Museum focused on the designer’s collaboration with Senegalese basket weavers, Are You a Hybrid? examines a different dimension of his work—his penchant for joining diverse cultural practices with contemporary modernist aesthetics.

Becoming: Photographs from the Wedge Collection
August 11, 2011–January 8, 2012
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University
nasher.duke.edu

Toronto-based collector Kenneth J. Montague (recently featured in the Studio Member’s Spotlight!) has, under the auspices of the Wedge Collection, amassed a significant collection of artwork with a focus on photography and explorations of cultural identity. Becoming, curated by Montague, presents over sixty photographs from the Wedge Collection that examine identity through portraiture. Artists include Dawoud Bey, Rashid Johnson, Dawit Petros (2008-09 artist in residence), Jamel Shabazz, Malick Sidibé and James VanDerZee.
We are thrilled that the Metropolitan Museum of Art will be showing the 9/11 Peace Story Quilt. Made by New York students in a 2006 master class taught by artist Faith Ringgold, the quilt expresses the significance of global communication in the pursuit of peace.

Faith Ringgold and young New Yorkers (ages 8-19) 
9/11 Peace Story Quilt, 2006 
Commissioned by InterRelations Collaborative, Inc. 
Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Working at the Studio Museum has offered many fantastic opportunities, including chances to meet people whose artwork or scholarship helped shape my thought processes and my career goals when I was in school. They are surreal and amazing moments. Meeting Kellie Jones was one of those moments. Her essays on and conversations with artists such as David Hammons, Lorna Simpson and Pat Ward Williams guided me, and her writings continue to be an incredible resource for us here at the Studio Museum. Her new book, *EyeMinded: Living and Writing Contemporary Art*, is a collection of some of her writing on contemporary art from the last twenty years. The book is divided into four sections—each featuring an introduction and contribution by a member of her family (her father, activist and writer Amiri Baraka; her mother, poet and author Hettie Jones; her sister, screenwriter, journalist, playwright and author Lisa Jones; and her husband, professor, author and musician Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr.). All are amazing writers who provide new insight into her writing and career as an art historian and curator. *EyeMinded* is at the top of my summer reading list.
The following is an excerpt from A. Naomi Jackson’s forthcoming book Star Side of Bird Hill.

Star Side of Bird Hill

Summer 1989, Bird Hill, St. Michael, Barbados

The people from the Hill liked to say that God’s smile was the sun shining down on them. In the late afternoon, before scarlet ibis bloodied the view of sunset, light flooded the stained glass windows of Bird Hill Church of God in Christ, illuminating the renderings of black saints from Jesus to Absalom Jones. On days when there wasn’t prayer meeting, choir rehearsal, Bible study, or Girl Guides, the church was empty except for its caretaker, Mr. Jeremiah. It was his job to chase the children away from the cemetery that sloped down behind the church, to shoo them from their perches on graves that dotted the backside of the hill the area was named for. Despite his best intentions, Mr. Jeremiah’s noontime devotionals at the rum shop brought on long slumber when children found freedom to do as they liked among the dead.

So it was that Deidre and Andre came to lie on their backs on the cool limestone of Deidre’s great-grandmother’s grave, talking about their morning at Vacation Bible School. Deidre strutted along the stone slab, imitating their Texas teacher’s nasal twang while Andre looked up her skirt.

“Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is the only sure way to avoid a life of eternal damnation,” Deidre pronounced, her arms akimbo.

Andre murmured. His eyes were caught on the shimmer of Deidre’s yellow lace panties.

Deidre and Andre’s younger siblings, Chris and Phaedra, played tag down below. They ran and hid behind the miniature graves of children who were casualties of the 1952 cholera epidemic. Nineteen girls and one boy had died before the Hill folks abandoned their suspicion of the outside world in general and doctors in particular to seek help, motivated more by the death of a prized boy child than by trust in what they called outside people. This was just one of the stories that Deidre and Phaedra’s mother summoned as evidence for why she left the Hill as soon as she could.

“They’re clannish. They wouldn’t know a free thought if it smacked them on the behind,” their mother would hiss, her mouth specked with venom.

Deidre, the oldest, was a copy of her mother at her age. The summer she turned sixteen, her mouth was fixed into a permanent scowl just like her mother’s. They shared beauty too; Deidre had the same long legs that had first led her father to Tara, and a freckle that disappeared when either woman wrinkled her chin.

Now, Deidre’s frame was slim compared to her mother’s, which was puffed first by inertia and then by medication. She hoped that one day she and her mother would again be mistaken for sisters like some of the flirtatious shopkeepers in Flatbush used to do back when her mother still made small talk.
Deidre sat down on the grave and traced the name of her ancestor while Andre’s hand worked its way underneath her dress and along the smooth terrain of her upper thigh. From their earlier conversations in the cemetery and long walks made longer by their slow gait beneath the hot sun, Deidre knew that Andre was small-minded like the other people on the Hill her mother so scorned. He would do, for now.

“What do you think will happen when you die?” Deidre said to Andre.

“I don’t know. Seems to me it’s just like going to sleep. Except you never wake up. Why do you think so much about death anyways?”

Two steps down, the grass gave way to red dust, gravel, and graves. Chris and Phaedra darted between the tombstones, browning the soles of their feet, losing track of the shoes they shook off on the steps at the top of the hill. They were fast friends since Phaedra and her sister had arrived from Brooklyn four weeks before. Phaedra was small for her ten years; her head reached only the crook of Chris’ elbow. Her knees were a deep cacao, scar-pocked and darkened from running in the sun all day in spite of her grandmother’s protests. She wore her hair in one long French braid, its length tucked away from the girls who threatened to cut her locks after reading the Bible story about Samson and Delilah.

Until this summer, Chris hadn’t known what it meant to like a girl. But now Chris could see Phaedra’s future beauty peeking out from behind her pink heart-shaped glasses that were taped together with scotch tape. He often found himself looking at Phaedra, admiring her hair, the almonds of her eyes, her serious turns of phrase. After hearing her go on about how their VBS classmate Thomas Benton’s hands were so soft, he stuffed the stocky fingers of both his eternally ashy hands into his pockets, willing them to be like Thomas’ and if not like his, then at least invisible.

“Touch it,” Chris said. He dared Phaedra to touch the grave of her namesake, her great-aunt Marguerite Phaedra Hill, who had died from cholera like the others.
“What if I don’t want to touch it?” Phaedra said.

“Then I’ll make you.”

Chris picked up an enormous rock from the graveyard’s edge and threw it at Phaedra. It landed, opening her right temple in the same place where the doctor had almost succeeded in pulling her prematurely down the birth canal. The force of the blow knocked Phaedra to her feet.

Just as Andre succeeded in touching the lace frill of Deidre’s panties, the dull thud of stone against skull roused the mischievous couple, stopped them cold.

Deidre ran to see what happened and gasped when she saw her sister prone on the grave, her head turned sideways and blood running down.

“But what happen here?” Deidre said. Her voice broke into the patois she usually kept hidden under her tongue.

“Why did you do that?” Deidre asked Chris.

“Mummy said wail woman head can’t break,” Chris said, incredulously, over and over again. Blood seeped out of Phaedra’s head and merged with the Hill’s red dust.

Deidre thought about shaking Chris, but took off instead up the Hill with Andre trailing behind her. She pressed her hands to her breasts to still the shaking there. She’d long since outgrown the training bras that she’d brought with her; the homemade ones her grandmother had sewn lay unused at the bottom of her dresser drawer.

Deidre and Andre swept past the church and stopped at the rectory, a white clapboard house with a view of all the other houses on the Hill. The boys’ mother, Mrs. Loving, was where she always was, sitting on her veranda, listening while her radio played worn cassettes of Jamaican rockers. Something in the way that Mrs. Loving stared out for hours over the hillside, unmoving except to tell her helper what to do, reminded Deidre of her mother.

Deidre told Mrs. Loving what had happened to her sister and bade her come. Mrs. Loving went running behind Deidre, moving unexpectedly fast.

Hill women were busy putting laundry out on the line, picking okra for cuckoo, and humming along to the grand old gospel of salvation on family radio. They formed a circle at the Hill’s bottom, looking on.

“Christopher Alexander Loving, what have you done?” Chris’ mother bellowed as she walked towards him. Upon hearing his full name, Chris would usually have run to hide. Instead, he stood still at Phaedra’s feet, her shade from the noon high sun.

Chris looked down at Phaedra, transfixed and still mumbling to himself.

Mrs. Loving took Phaedra’s head in her lap and let the blood soak her white dress. She slapped at Phaedra’s face, coaxing her to stay awake. “Come now, child, don’t let sleep take you. I’m not ready to lose any more children.”

Finally, Phaedra opened her eyes. “Mummy, what happened? Everything’s starry.” The words were sharp pebbles in her mouth.

“Hush, child, hush. Mummy’s not here, but she soon come,” Mrs. Loving whispered. “Everything’s going to be all right,” she said, still cradling and hushing her.

Phaedra looked up into Chris’s long shadow and knew for sure that he had done this to her. She was struck by a rough sense of his mind turning. If Phaedra’s mummy and grandmother are still alive and they are both wail women and they can’t die, if she is one, then she can’t dead and she shouldn’t bleed. His logic went round and round, ending at the same point, dizzying him and then Phaedra as she tried to follow.

Before a trickle of yellow leaked down Chris’ bare calf, Phaedra could feel Chris say to himself, I think I’m going to have an accident. Chris’s thoughts crashed hard against the ringing inside her ears. And just as she was adjusting to this feeling, Mrs. Loving’s sadness as she remembered the last time that she held her own baby girl crushed Phaedra’s already aching head. Give the child to me, the man said. But I could see the devil behind his eyes and there was no way I was going to hand my baby girl over to him. Just give me one more day with my baby before you wash her in the blood, I told him. One more day before you feed her to the demons.

For the first time, Phaedra was unsure of where her thoughts ended and others began. Her grandmother had warned her that one day she would have to learn how to turn down the volume on everything that came from outside so she could hear herself be. Now, that day had come.

A. Naomi Jackson is a writer born and raised in Brooklyn. She will begin the fiction program at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop fall 2011.
If you like...

by Tasha Parker

If you like...

Kerry James Marshall
Born 1955, Birmingham, AL
Lives and works in Chicago, IL

SOB, SOB, 2003
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman
Gallery, New York

Then check out...

Nathaniel Donnett
Lives and works in Houston, TX

Broad Caste Systems, 2010
Courtesy Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York

If you like...

Kara Walker
Born 1969, Stockton, CA
Lives and works in New York, NY

Untitled, 2009
Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

Then check out...

Toyin Odutola
Born 1985, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Lives and works in San Francisco, CA

Letting the Ring Finger In, 2009–10
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman
Gallery, New York
If you like...  

Laylah Ali  
Born 1968, Buffalo, NY  
Lives and works in Williamstown, MA  

*Untitled*, 2000  
Courtesy 303 Gallery

Then check out...  

Devin Troy Strother  
Born 1986, West Covina, CA  
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA  

*Keep It In Line & Everything Will Be Fine*, 2011  
Courtesy Richard Heller Gallery, Santa Monica

If you like...  

Wangechi Mutu  
Born 1972, Nairobi, Kenya  
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY  

*Magnificent Monkey-Ass Lies*, 2004  
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee and a gift from Jerome Stern, New York  04.13.4

Then check out...  

Firelei Báez  
Born 1980, Santiago, Dominican Republic  
Lives and works in New York, NY  

*Ciguapa Habilis*, 2010  
Courtesy the artist
In conjunction with the exhibition Glenn Ligon: America, Yale University Press and the Whitney Museum of American Art are publishing Yourself in the World, the first-ever compilation of Glenn Ligon’s writings and interviews, edited by America curator Scott Rothkopf. The book begins with “Black Light: David Hammons and the Poetics of Emptiness,” the first of a number of articles that propelled Ligon into “the ranks of ‘artists who write about art.’”1

“Black Light” comprises seven riffs, each centered around a quote, recollection or anecdote. It addresses Hammons’ work specifically as well as the broad and sometimes problematic construct of “African-American Art,” which Ligon calls “a noisy cul-de-sac at the end of a long and winding road that lots of folks are curious about but only want to visit during the summertime.”2 Here we reproduce #3 and #7. Pick up a copy of Yourself in the World at the Museum Store to read more.

3. Another quotation by Hammons—this time from a 1993 interview with Deborah Rothschild, curator at the Williams College Museum of Art. In reference to James Turrell, Hammons says:

Turrell, he’s on a different wavelength. He’s got a completely different vision. Different than mine, but it’s beautiful to see people who have a vision that has nothing to do with presentation in a gallery. I wish I could make art like that, but we’re too oppressed for me to be dabbling out there. . . . I would love to do that because that also could be very black. You know, as a black artist, dealing just with light. They would say, “How in the hell could he deal with that, coming from where he did?” I want to get to that, I’m trying to get to that, but I’m not free enough yet. I still feel I have to get my message out.

Ten years after that interview Hammons indeed figured out how to make light “very black” for Concerto in Black and Blue, his exhibition at Ace Gallery in New York.3 At the entrance to the gallery visitors were given tiny pressure-activated LED flashlights no bigger than gumballs. When the flashlights were clicked on they gave off a blue light, which lasted until the pressure was released. Visitors were ushered through a door into the main gallery space, which comprised more than twenty thousand square feet spread over several rooms with twenty-five-foot ceilings. The gallery was completely dark. And what was in that twenty-thousand-square-foot space? Nothing. It was completely empty except for the blue light emitted from your flashlight and from those of other people walking around in the space with you.

When talking about Turrell, Hammons said, “We’re too oppressed for me to be dabbling out there,” and “I want to get to that, I’m trying to get to that, but I’m not free enough yet.” The movement to “get free,” to cross boundaries, is what’s interesting in Hammons’s recent work, in particular its radical dematerialization over the last several years. But let me reject a reading of Hammons’s project that sets up too strict an opposition between “free” and “not free,” “message” and “post-message,” objects and dematerialization, “white” work (Turrell) and “black” work (Hammons). For one, Hammons’s work has never been “on point” because it’s always too Fellini, too carnivalesque, too damn freaky-deke to be useful as a set of cheering fictions, an expression of an essential, unchanging blackness, or a standard-bearer for some multiculturalist agenda. What to make, for example, of a work like Flying Carpet, 1990, where fried chicken wings are attached with fish hooks to a Persian carpet hanging on the wall? Or Traveling, 2002, a drawing made by bouncing a basketball covered in Harlem dirt on a piece of paper with a suitcase stuck behind the frame pushing the drawing off the wall: playground virtuosity, nomadism, performance art, and Rauschenberg’s tire print, all elegantly rolled into one? Also, it would be a misreading of Hammons’s project to describe it as a linear movement toward dematerialization, for that doesn’t take into
Beyond consideration earlier pieces like *Cold Shoulder*, 1990, giant blocks of ice with coats thrown over them, or *Bliz-aard Ball Sale*, 1983, where the artist sold snowballs on the streets of New York, or more recent pieces like *Global Fax Festival*, 2000, an empty exhibition hall with ceiling-mounted machines spewing faxes, or his *Flash-light Drawing*, 2000, which records the movement of a flashlight in a darkened room. Process, ephemeral-ity, and transformation have always been part of Hammons’s work. In a word: Lightness.

7. One last David Hammons quote:

*I like being from nowhere; it’s a beautiful place. That means I can look at anyone who’s from somewhere and see how really caught they are.*

Sun Ra wasn’t from here either—“here” meaning Earth. He also wasn’t human. “I’m not real,” he says in a 1974 film, to a group of black children. “I’m just like you. You don’t exist, in this society. If you did, your people wouldn’t be seeking equal rights.” For Sun Ra—and for Hammons—not being from here is a movement toward placelessness, toward the utopic, the posthuman, and a deep critique of American society. Their genius was to employ a postmodern concern with the emptying out of the self as a critical strategy, one that might have particular resonance with a people historically positioned at the margin of what was considered human.

Hammons says light could be “very black,” but how to reconcile the desire to be from nowhere, to have no identity and no personality, with the desire to make light “very black,” when “black” is suggestive of a particular history, culture, and practices? What, for example, made *Concerto in Black and Blue* “very black” as opposed to merely “dark”? Well, nothing really, at first. But then I remembered a friend of mine’s suggestion that Hammons could write a masterpiece with one-syllable words, and it pointed me toward the one-syllable words in the work’s title: “black” and “blue.” “What did I do to be so black and blue,” or “the blues,” or Amiri Baraka’s “Blues People,” or “Kind of Blue,” or “Say it Loud . . . ,” or “Fugitive Blue,” or “Blue on Blue,” or “Black is the color of my true love’s hair,” or “I wear black on the outside, as black as I feel on the inside,” and on and on and on. You went into the show looking for the art, but you came out having been the art. What’s there is what we bring to the space. Blackness is a transient hotel, as a drawing by William Pope.L suggests. If blackness is a construct, then we are all construction workers, and what Hammons has done is to provide the space in which blackness can be constructed in light, like the famous photo of Picasso drawing a centaur in the air with a flashlight, except this time it’s us with our little blue flashlights, signaling one another in the dark. What was black about *Concerto in Black and Blue* is whatever you think blackness is, whatever you brought to it, and what you did with what you brought when you got there.


3. *Concerto in Black and Blue* was on View at Ace Gallery, (date) to February 1, 2003.
Working in his sunlit Ridgewood studio, Angel Otero (b. 1981) produces three or four new oil paintings on glass each day. After drying, he scrapes the paintings off the glass (creating “oil skins”) and applies them to large, resin-coated canvases. The process results in the rippled, semi-abstract paintings that characterize the artist’s signature style. Otero stumbled upon this unusual technique while at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he saved scraps of dried oil paint and collaged them on to canvas in an effort to save money. “I didn’t have the courage to throw [the scraps] away because oil paint is very expensive and I was dead broke,” he remarks.

Heavily influenced by artists Mark Bradford (b. 1961), Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), and Gerhard Richter (b. 1932) Otero’s use of text manipulation and image distortion offers the viewer an experience of a painting that is not dictated by his initial inspiration, often a memory of his family. Though many of Otero’s paintings begin as depictions of family members and past experiences, he insists that they “are not meant to be narratives about my family.” Otero’s fondness for chairs is apparent in both his painting and sculpture work. “I haven’t figured out why I’m so attracted to chairs, but I find myself painting them a lot and incorporating them into many of my sculptures.” In Up All Night (2011), a sculpture spawned from a memory of returning home to a very angry mother after being out all night, Otero impales a Victorian chair with wooden rods covered in oil paint skins.

Recently, Otero has been experimenting with variations on his process by eliminating the canvas. After the scraping is finished, the complete oil-skin painting is mounted and framed. “I think the results of this experiment are pretty successful and really cool,” he comments proudly while posing with the neon-yellow, text-based painting Volar (2011).

Otero’s work has garnered much-deserved attention and acclaim. I look forward to the evolution of his craft and the continued success of his career. This summer, check out Otero’s newest work in El Museo del Barrio’s sixth biennial, The (S) Files 2011, on view through January 8, 2012.

1. All quotes from Angel Otero, in conversation with the author, April 15, 2011.
Maren Hassinger (b. 1947) is no stranger to collaboration. The artist has a longstanding partnership with Senga Nengudi (b. 1943) and has worked with Houston Conwill (b. 1947) and Ulysses Jenkins (b. 1946), among others. But her latest collaboration is markedly different from the rest. This time, the artist is working with her daughter, Ava Hassinger. Born in 1986 in New York, Ava Hassinger is a curator and an artist in her own right. In 2008, she received a BFA in Photography and Imaging from the New York University Tisch School for the Arts, and she recently co-founded The Project Collective, a community based emerging artists and musicians initiative. While Ava’s artistic practice has largely been separate and distinct from her mother’s, her appreciation of Maren’s work led to an interest in collaboration. However, it wasn’t until Maren was invited to participate in a project at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) that the right opportunity arose.

In celebration of the Fluxus movement, MoMA asked artist Pope.L (b. 1955) to organize a day and a half of Fluxus-inspired workshops and performances. Pope.L gathered a list of seminal performances by Fluxus artists and invited contemporary artists to respond. Maren chose Eric Andersen’s (b. 1940) Opus 9 (1961) (“Let a person talk about his/her death”) but decided to invert Andersen’s directive to create a piece that would lead to the contemplation of life, rather than death. While crafting her response, Maren reached out to Ava, who she describes as “more concerned with images” whereas Maren is more interested in “movement and space”. As they exchanged ideas, their first collaboration emerged.
The resulting piece, SEE LIFE, was an interactive workshop and multimedia performance. During the workshop portion, Maren and Ava installed mirrors in a classroom in MoMA’s education building and invited visitors to examine themselves and compare their physical characteristics with those of the artists and other participants. Later that day, the work moved to a theater space for a performance that further explored physical semblance. Maren and Ava stood a few feet apart, and two cameras stationed in front of each sent a live feed that was projected onto a screen behind them. Mirroring one another, they danced in ways that accentuated particular body parts, complementing each other’s movements. As the feed alternated from one camera to the other—focusing on Ava’s fluid movements and then Maren’s—it formed a comparison of their physical likenesses. All the while, the ethereal sounds of an original composition specially produced by Walrus Ghost for the occasion reverberated throughout the room. Maren and Ava concluded the performance by removing the cameras from their tripods and directing them towards the audience, so that the viewers’ own facial features were projected in large scale on the screen before them. The objective, the artists stated, was to explore life, kinship and visual likeness to discover a greater sense of connectedness.

Following the success of their first collaboration, the mother and daughter teamed up again soon after for another interactive performance. The occasion was the third installment of “Be Black Baby a House Party Presents,” an exhibition series at Recess Activities Inc. in Soho, organized by current Studio Museum artist in residence Simone Leigh (b. 1968). This iteration, co-curated by former Studio Museum Assistant Curator Naomi Beckwith, prompted artists to respond to activist and writer Emma Goldman’s (1869–1940) famous statement, “If there’s no dancing at the revolution, I’m not coming.” Charged with this task, Maren and Ava presented a twenty-minute performance, Dancing in the Street (2011). While a soundtrack including 1960s hits by The Shirelles and Martha and the Vandellas played, the two danced in front of the gallery, inviting viewers and passersby to join and, at times, weaving around traffic. As Leigh later recounted, the gesture was simple but the impact was great. “I just love the economy in Maren’s work,” Leigh says. “She engages with so little—newspaper and movement—her work is ferociously economic and to the point. Ava and Maren transformed Grand Street and we will forever be grateful to have witnessed the beginning of their work together.”

Indeed, this is just the commencement of Maren and Ava’s artistic partnership—which they have named “Matriarch”—and they anticipate much more to come. As both mother-and-daughter and artists with immense respect and admiration for one another’s work, this unusual collaboration is sure to yield remarkable results.

1. Simone Leigh, email message to author, April 21, 2011.
Happy 80th, David Driskell!

by Nora Woodin, Research Fellow

The Studio Museum is pleased to wish David Driskell a very happy eightieth birthday, with enormous gratitude for his outstanding contributions as a preeminent professor, historian, curator and artist.

Born in Eaton, Georgia, on June 7, 1931, David Clyde Driskell was instilled with the essential belief in education at an early age. In 1950 he began his undergraduate studies at Howard University where, under the tutorage of James A. Porter (1905–1970), his focus quickly turned to art. In 1962 he received his MFA from Catholic University of America and thereafter embarked upon a career of teaching in art and art history. As a professor and historian, Driskell transformed the field of African-American art with curricula that expanded its historical narrative and cultivated the next generation of artists and scholars. He taught at Howard University (1962–66), Fisk University (1966–77) and the University of Maryland (1977–98). Throughout each of these positions, Driskell curated pioneering art exhibitions and published numerous books, articles and catalogues. In particular, his 1976 exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Two Centuries of Black American Art: 1750–1950*, and accompanying catalogue helped solidify his legacy. The groundbreaking show realized his goal of integrating African-American art into the canon of American art history.

Driskell has also achieved enormous acclaim as a studio artist. Favoring an aesthetic of saturated colors and overlaid forms, Driskell blends modernist abstraction and folk traditions. His oeuvre covers a range of media, including printmaking, collage, painting and drawing. Nature is often the subject of his work as a means of exploring spirituality and personal experience. Other works include iconographic and geometric forms that reference the art of Africa but are reappropriated with his individual as well as collective American sensibilities. As Driskell explains, “Part of the message that I desire to communicate in my art is that I am a Black American. I have experienced the haunting shadow of an African past without knowing its full richness. I am American.”

Driskell has been the recipient of countless awards and honors throughout his career. The University of Maryland appointed him Distinguished University Professor in 1995 and established the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora upon his retirement in 1998. In 2000 he was awarded the National Humanities Medal from President Clinton and, in 2007, the title of National Academician from the National Academy.
For Whom the Bell Curves

by Pulane Mpokwane,
Winter 2011 Public Relations
and Publications Intern

Golden yokes

adorn necks dignified and burdened,
heavy with the chains of trade
against a bleached background,
shushing the quiet noise of the passage.

Dig farther.
A golden chain holds the shimmer of your name.
Gently curving, swaying, quietly screaming

an intertwined, hanging chorus on a whitewashed sea.

These are different necks, but
some of the chains –
some of the chains remain
the same.

Robert Pruitt
For Whom the Bell Curves, 2006
Museum purchase
made possible by a gift
from Rena Bransten,
San Francisco and a
gift from Burt Aaron
06.14.1
As a New Yorker, making the move to California was difficult. It seemed an alien place, unfamiliar and unwelcoming. The landscape was arid and forbidding, and temperatures fluctuated wildly—I was quickly acquainted with the two seasons of Southern California: day and night. This was not a landscape for whiners, a truth borne out even in the vegetation: water-retaining succulents, spiny prehistoric cycads, shockingly colorful sprays of hardy desert wildflowers Image 1 (page 52). Add to this my distaste for driving and a sneaking suspicion that all I would find in the way of culture was Us Weekly and self-tanner, and you can see why I was worried about adjusting.

San Diego was my destination, and at first it seemed just a sprawling suburban city of swaying palm trees, crisscrossing freeways and people isolated in their cars. It did not have the supposed glamour and glitz of Los Angeles, or the counter-culture allure of San Francisco. Instead, it had beaches and the military—at least in the popular imagination. But, as I have found out over the last two years, there is much more to each of these cities. Narrow first impressions and superficial reputations do not tell the whole story. Though my unshakeable belief in the virtues of walking and public transportation persists, I have come to appreciate the vastness of the state and the diversity of experience in its multitude. Similarly, I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of exciting cultural institutions, thriving arts-related businesses and nonprofits, and other random places of interest I have come across up and down the coast.

What follows is a semi-transplanted New Yorker’s suggestions of places to hit up in San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is by no means a complete guide, and it is without a doubt entirely biased. However, a little insider knowledge makes all the difference when you’re in a new place. New York will always be home, but in the meantime I’m on a California adventure!
SAN DIEGO
Balboa Park | balboapark.org
Balboa Park is San Diego’s Central Park, albeit with fifteen museums, beautiful gardens, indoor and outdoor performance venues, hiking trails, the San Diego Zoo, and more. It is simultaneously a place to go for a walk, visit the dog park or sunbathe, and a place to hear lectures (Deborah Willis recently spoke at the San Diego History Center), learn about the cosmos (at the San Diego Air & Space Museum) or view works of art (at the Museum of Photographic Arts, the Timken Museum of Art or the San Diego Museum of Art).

Chicano Park | chicano-park.org
In the mid-1960s, San Diego embarked on two major construction projects: Interstate 5 and the Coronado Bay Bridge. When completed, they bisected Barrio Logan, a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood. Although the community was heavily impacted, there was little dialogue and no compensation. In defiance, community members staged fierce protests, forcing the city to give them the land beneath the freeway to create Chicano Park. They planted gardens and installed tables and benches, and decorated the concrete pylons with vibrant murals—it’s an ongoing process. Too few visitors to San Diego get to Chicano Park, which is a shame considering it is such a historic and striking landmark! Image 2

Museum of Contemporary Art
San Diego | mcasd.org
The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego is the city’s only museum dedicated exclusively to contemporary art. With two locations, its people put on a wide range of exhibitions and play an integral role in San Diego’s arts community. Recent noteworthy events include lectures by William Kentridge (b. 1955) and Robert Storr; the 2010 exhibition Viva la Revolución: A Dialogue with the Urban Landscape, which featured work by Mark Bradford (b. 1961), (recently on view at the Studio Museum) and William Cordova (b. 1971, 2004–05 Studio Museum artist in residence); and the current exhibition Jennifer Steinkamp: Madame Curie. I’m looking forward to the upcoming Pacific Standard Time exhibition, Phenomenal: California Light, Space, Surface! Images 3, 4
Watts Towers | wattstowers.org | wattshouseproject.org

The Watts Towers were created by an Italian immigrant named Simon Rodia (1875–1965) who settled in the Watts neighborhood. Motivated by a desire to “do something big,” he spent over thirty years (1921–54) working on this iconic monument. Almost a hundred feet tall, the towers are made of steel girders and mortar inlaid with bits of found glass, shell, ceramics, tile and stone, and was made without heavy machinery. The site is a National Historic Landmark and has inspired several cultural projects in the community, including the Watts Towers Arts Center, which offers guided tours and other public programming, and organizes exhibitions, an artist residency and annual festivals. Also inspired by the work is the Watts House Project, an “ongoing, collaborative artwork in the shape of a neighborhood redevelopment” directed by artist Edgar Arceneaux (b. 1972, included in several past Studio Museum exhibitions). The Watts Towers are definitely a Los Angeles must-see! Images 6+7

LOS ANGELES

Skylight Books | skylightbooks.com

One of the things I miss most about New York is the independent bookstores. The experience of wandering idly down the street and popping into an enticing bookstore to browse is, sadly, not easily had in Southern California. Enter Skylight Books. Located in Los Feliz, it fulfills all my bibliophile needs. There’s a general store stocking the usual fiction, non-fiction, children’s books and more, as well as an Arts Annex next door where you can find art books, exhibition catalogues, graphic novels, magazines and more. Image 5

Ooga Booga | oogaboogastore.com

Ooga Booga is a gallery/art/book/clothing/music/everything shop in Los Angeles’s Chinatown. Packed into a teeny space above a delicious bakery, the store organizes exhibitions and regular parties, and sells everything from zines, glossy art books, scholarly works and artist-commissioned prints to mixtapes, one-of-a-kind jewelry and highly covetable heels and/or sneakers—depending on your taste. My recent purchases include a back issue of Chimurenga magazine and a backpack; recent coveted items include a tie-dye cutout dress and a gorgeous Bas Jan Ader catalogue. Their online shop, while lacking the tactile experience of squeezing past fellow patrons and display shelves, is also excellent!

Images 6+7

Watts Towers
Photo: Rujeko Hockley

Image 5
Recent finds at Skylight Books
Photo: Rujeko Hockley

Image 6
Watts Towers
Photo: Rujeko Hockley

Image 7
Watts Towers
Photo: Rujeko Hockley
SAN FRANCISCO
Headlands Center for the Arts | headlands.org
You can find the Headlands Center for the Arts just over the Golden Gate Bridge, on the other side of a single-lane tunnel that bores through a mountain. It is only twenty minutes outside the city, but the quiet and contemplative atmosphere and stunning coastal setting make it literally feel a world away. A nonprofit arts organization, Headlands hosts a range of public programs including lectures, exhibitions and performances. Most notably, they run an artist-in-residence program that offers support of some kind to up to fifty artists annually. Past residents who have been exhibited at Studio Museum include Hurvin Anderson (b. 1965), Sanford Biggers (b. 1970), Whitfield Lovell (b. 1959) and Shinique Smith (b. 1972), among others.

Marcus Books | marcusbookstores.com
Marcus Books has been around for over fifty years, making it the oldest independent black bookstore in the country, according to the proprietors. Stocking “books about black people everywhere,” they have two Bay Area locations. I went to their Oakland branch one evening as they were setting up for a reading. There, I found a copy of Angela Davis’s seminal text *Women, Race and Class* and a warm and welcoming atmosphere that transported me right back to Harlem. They say Oakland is the West Coast’s Harlem, and I think there might be some truth to that. I felt right at home!

Park Life | parklifestore.com
Located in the Inner Richmond, Park Life is a store and art gallery. The store sells an eclectic range of art-related items, including books (exhibition catalogues, academic texts, artist books and graphic design), design objects, housewares, prints and original works of art. Meanwhile, they also self-publish books and catalogues, and operate a gallery in the back showcasing emerging and established contemporary artists. I’m looking forward to their summer show—a two-person show of individual and collaborative, mostly drawing-based works, by artists Sadie Barnette and Ian Johnson.

Rujeko Hockley is a writer, curator and student currently pursuing a PhD in art history at the University of California, San Diego. She advises you to always dress in layers when in California.
Beyond

55

Remembering Edouard Glissant

by Derica Washington, Director’s Office Intern

Acclaimed Martinican poet, scholar and novelist Edouard Glissant’s (1928–2011) work illuminated the complexities of the colonial condition in the Caribbean and throughout the African diaspora. Born September 21, 1928, in Sainte-Marie, Martinique, Glissant has become a major influence in Caribbean and postcolonial literature as a writer and theorist. His oeuvre includes eight novels, nine volumes of poetry, fifteen collections of essays and one play, cementing him as one of the most important writers of the French Caribbean. Glissant received his PhD in philosophy at Paris-Sorbonne University, and then studied ethnology at the Musée de l’Homme. He split his time between Martinique, Paris and New York. In 1989, he obtained a post as distinguished professor at Louisiana State University and later left to teach at the City University of New York, where he continued to teach until his death on February 3, 2011.

In the 1950s, Glissant began his prolific literary career, publishing his first collection of poems, Un champ d’îles (1953), and his first novel La Lezarde (1958). Motivated by the complexity of blackness and identity, Glissant looked away from Africa and into the diaspora as a harbor for Caribbean and New World identities in the Americas. He posited the notion of Antillanité, the presence of a distinctly Caribbean identity, during the waning of Négritude, a movement that characterized diaspora identities as firmly rooted in African culture. Furthermore, Glissant’s theory of creolization positioned the fusion of multiple linguistic and cultural relationships as a fundamental element of identity, in opposition to the concept that identities emerge from singular, nationalist roots.

Glissant belonged to a generation of Caribbean intellectuals, including Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, who carved out a formidable space for thinking about and through the Caribbean as a crucial site of the cultural development of the Americas. Glissant’s contemporaries and inheritors remark on his legacy as one of the preeminent twentieth-century French Caribbean scholars. He is remembered by Anthony Bogues of Brown University, associate editor of Small Axe and an associate director of the Center for Caribbean Thought at the University of the West Indies, Mona. “Glissant opened an intellectual space in which literature could be worked through as history,” Bogues states.¹

Glissant has been widely recognized and his work has been studied closely. A brilliant visionary, activist and scholar, his legacy lives on and has been the subject of study for many scholars. For further reading on Glissant, see J. Michael Dash’s Edouard Glissant (1995) and Celia Britton’s Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance (1999).

¹. Anthony Bogues, e-mail message to the author, May 3, 2011
Target Free Sundays

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
The glow of a Harlem brownstone, as it is cooled by the evening, is what I look forward to on my daily meanderings around Harlem. I like to believe that each brownstone represents a chapter in the illustrious history of Harlem. While walking on my daily commute to work, I look for a story in each brownstone I pass. Multiple doorbells tell me which ones are now apartments and iron gates reveal newer buildings, while differences in decay lead me to suspect whether additions had been made to the exterior. While growing up in the suburbs of Maryland, the most exciting neighborhood observations I could make were newly paved speed bumps—so imagine how my affection for city architecture has replaced the vinyl siding I’m used to.

There’s always something new to arrest my attention: an art gallery hidden here, a bakery, barbershop or small boutique there. The beauty of a brownstone mixed with the energy of a local business reinforces why I love Harlem so much. It’s invigorating when you find something that can only be found in your community. As if collecting pieces of gold, I wander, capturing experiences only I can keep.

My most recent treasured experience lead me to uptown’s only antiquarian bookstore, Jumel Terrace Books, in Harlem’s historic Sugar Hill district. In a beautiful 1891 brownstone, which also functions as a bed and breakfast, Kurt Thometz has one of the most fascinating homes in Harlem. Thometz’s home was once owned by Dr. Thomas Matthews, the first black neurosurgeon to graduate from Harvard Medical School. His reputation was so prominent-ly known throughout New York that Queen Elizabeth II asked to have tea with him while here for the 1976 Bicentennial. Not only has his living room hosted tea with a queen, but his home was also once a pop art house in the 1970s (evidenced by the hot pink radiator in the living room). Thometz bought the home from a fellow rare book dealer, he told me, before quickly rattling off the history of his home and the surrounding community. He told me which jazz legend, black leader or artist lived where, and guided me through the history of the oldest home in Manhattan—the Jumel Terrace mansion directly across the street.

After a tour of the four libraries in his home, he led me to the bookstore on the ground floor.

Thometz selects what he sells based on who lived in the neighborhood. To him, the bookstore is more for the community and socializing than for a source of income. Organized by categories such as R&B, Autobiography, Art, Drama, etc., the selection is so overwhelming I had an extremely hard time making a choice. Caught between his rarest book, The Confessions of Rick James: Memoirs of a Super Freak, and his best seller I Was a White Slave in Harlem, I came away with three relatively cheap and rare finds: Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin ($45), I Was a White Slave in Harlem ($35) and Beware ($50), a catalogue of work from artist Michael Ray Charles (b. 1967). I truly paid cash for gold, not only walking away with chapters in books, but also unlocking one of Harlem’s many brownstone chapters.

For more information, visit jtbandb.wordpress.com and jumelterracebooks.com
All photos
William Armstrong
In the Studio with the 2010-11 AIRs

As they prepare for their summer exhibition, *Evidence of Accumulation*, 2010-11 artists in residence Simone Leigh, Kamau Amu Patton, and Paul Mpagi Sepuya take a moment to share a bit of their experience thus far.
This year was marked with the passing of Poly Styrene, lead singer of British punk rock band X Ray Spex. “I chose the name Poly Styrene because it’s a lightweight disposable product . . . that’s what pop stars are meant to be, and therefore I thought I might as well send it up,” she said in a 1978 interview. As we now know, polystyrene has proved to be anything but an easily disposed product. This highly durable toxic substance has contributed to widespread environmental degradation. I hope to bring the irony and humor of Poly Styrene’s statement to my sculptural objects of heavy, durable materials, such as clay, iron, and salt.

During this residency, I returned to experimenting with atmospheric firings, a term that refers to the type and quality of air in a kiln during the firing process. The creation of such an environment, where clay bodies interact with the atmosphere often results in unpredictable and varied surfaces, colors and textures, depending on the object’s placement within the kiln. I have found these kinds of firings both formally and metaphorically rich.

Last fall and this spring I traveled to Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts in Maine to fire in a soda/salt kiln. I created objects for my current installation *All That Glitters*, with reference to Brenda Fassie (1964–2004). Fassie was an iconic singer known as the Queen of South African pop. Her popularity was often attributed to her illuminating wit. She once said, “One malicious columnist, wrote that I look like a horse. And some people say that I am ugly. I don’t want to be beautiful. My ugliness has taken me to the top. I have proved that I have style, and all that glitters is not gold.”

For the installation, I made cowrie-shell–like objects with molds made from a cast of watermelons. These objects were created via a firing process that produces a glossy, orange-peel–like texture formed by throwing common salt into the kiln when it attains the highest temperatures. Sodium from the salt reacts with silica in the clay body to form a glassy coating of sodium silicate.

This year, working within a museum dedicated to African-American art, has led me to think about African-Americana, such as face jugs created by slaves in the South. These grotesque pots are part of an array of diasporic modes of production that I’m interested in. At the same time, I continue to think about AfriCobra aesthetics like the quality called “shine”—a quality in work that glistens like the luster of a “freshly washed Afro.” I draw inspiration from shine as an aesthetic that develops from an exploration of the body and how it is constructed via intimate everyday rituals in domestic space.

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Kamau Amu Patton

If one proceeds with intention, in a general direction, day will follow night and so on. Having embarked upon a coherent production, the movement is toward an image of the intended destination, recognizable to a degree consistent with the outcome imagined. It is true that such measured processes manifest expected results. Then, there is noise and distortion. The aberrant form in the infinite field of possible outcomes is insistent. I think that this is the fundamental question. Compelled in the direction of introspection does one choose to recognize only the state or conditions that meet the intended objective? Or does one push the limits of the system and allow the process to communicate beyond the range of intention? The criteria for failure are a matter of individual perspective. They are dependent on the context of use. Existing as such, within a floating frame, I accept myself as a reference point and allow for differential outcomes and unanticipated appearances.

In my work I am concerned with the construction of space. I then fill this space with objects as a means toward establishing a particular atmosphere. Lately I’ve been experimenting with ways to photographically reimage my installation and sculptural work. I guess I’m trying to capture the aura of the moment and present that as an analog to the original. I think of these images as repetitions, other-spaces, mirror images, copies or new iterations of the original. The image above is an example of the necessity of this form of repetition in my work. I built a mirrored wall sculpture that I designed to function as an object to sculpt reflected light. The finished work fell off of the wall. The event captured is a moment of failure. It is an event that defies inclusion in most institutional settings. For me the image/repetition of the event allows for the concept of failure to exist in a form that has enough distance from the original to support contemplation. The actual failure, through an image repetition, becomes a representation of the concept of failure. Pushing this forward, the concept expands to considerations of improvisation and chance in my practice.
This is an image of a print pinned to my wall, a detail of a larger, linear, evolving edit of portraits and snapshots that I have installed along several walls of my studio. The central print in this image is of a self-portrait taken while arranging images along the line. The print itself has taken the place along the wall of the framed portrait being arranged in the image.

During my Studio Museum residency, I am exploring how the studio environment, as the site of reflection “after-the-fact,” affects the initial act of making itself, and its effects on the development of meaning and context of the resulting image-objects. Brian O’Doherty suggests this in his 2006 essay, “Studio and Cube”:

The studio is more or less crowded with artworks, periodically depleted as they migrate to the gallery. Artworks lie around, parked, ignored in remote corners, stacked against the wall, rehuffled with the cavalier attitude allowed only to their creator. As one work is worked on, the others, finished and unfinished, are detained in a waiting zone, one over the other, in what you might call a collage of compressed tenses. All are in the vicinity of their authenticating source, the artist. As long as they are in his or her orbit, they are subject to alteration and revision. All are thus potentially unfinished. They—and the studio itself—exist under the sign of process, which in turn defines the nature of studio time, very different from the even, white, present tense of the gallery. 3

In short, how does the accumulated experience in the studio influence me as an artist and work that is continually made there? In this studio I have been making self-portraits and inviting friends to spend time and have their portraits made as well, in formal setups as well as snapshots. Each portrait is constructed amid the unfinished editing process of the works that preceded it, and in reference to the other images that surround us.

I make portraits, snapshots and text-based works mainly in photography, about the pleasures and burdens of portraiture. The portraits are of the people in my life and my projects focus on the roles the camera, the act of portrait-making and the resulting image-objects play in the understanding of and construction of friendship, sex and intimacy. The portrait does not claim an objective record of the subject, as the portrait is by nature tied to my own desires and concerns. I use repetition and simple formal elements to set up a visual language to open the possibilities of reading the work, which is often presented in simple, nonnarrative shelf installations. The presentation and installation of these projects, involving un-fixed placement of these works on shelves, tables and floors, reflects my shifting views and relationship to the work over time. In treating photographs as objects I am making works that must be “dealt with.”

Pacific Standard Time

by Allison Channing Jones
In the often told narratives of the evolution of the arts in America, accounts of the celebrated post–World War II years when the country rose to dominance as a major presence in the international art scene tend to revolve around New York. Too often untold are the stories of Southern California during that period, where the art scene flourished and gave rise to many of America’s notable artists and institutions. In an effort to preserve and illuminate California’s rich artistic heritage, the Getty Foundation has provided over $5 million in grants to museums, libraries, archives and other cultural institutions throughout Southern California. This generous resource has funded an extensive research and programming initiative known as Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980, uniting more than fifty institutions—including virtually all museums in the greater Los Angeles area—in the largest partnership of its kind. From October 2011 through April 2012, this initiative will present a series of concurrent exhibitions that will examine the vibrant and prolific Los Angeles postwar art scene.

The postwar era was a crucial period for African-American artists in the Los Angeles area. Despite their exclusion from the collections and exhibitions of Los Angeles museums—save a few rare exceptions—they persisted in creating art and establishing platforms for their work to be seen. Two Pacific Standard Time exhibitions, at the Hammer Museum and the California African American Museum (CAAM), focus on the African-American community and illuminate different facets of its vital contributions to the Los Angeles art scene.

The Hammer Museum will present Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980, an expansive exhibition featuring the work of thirty-five artists and guest-curated by Kellie Jones, Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University. In the 1980s, Jones came to know many artists in New York—her hometown—who originally hailed from Los Angeles, including Maren Hassinger (b. 1947), David Hammons (b. 1943) and Senga Nengudi (b. 1943). Jones’s effort to seek a greater understanding of the context from which these artists came—a distant community where their ideas and practices took shape—led to a prolonged academic investigation of the Los Angeles African-American art community. Her forthcoming book, Taming the Freeway and Other Acts of Urban HIP-notism: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s, examines the subject.

Jones always intended to do an exhibition based on her research, and when the Hammer approached her with an offer, she seized the opportunity. The resulting exhibition, Now Dig This!, explores the Los Angeles African-American art scene during the postwar decades through a narrative divided into four thematic sections. With a checklist count-
2  
Charles White  
Love Letter #1, 1971  
Private Collection.  
Courtesy the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

3  
Betye Saar  
Black Girl’s Window, 1969  
Collection of the artist  
Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, LLC, New York

4  
Dale Brockman Davis  
Swept, 1970  
Blocker Collection  
c/o Rick Blocker.  
Courtesy the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
ing one hundred and forty works, the exhibition represents the output of a broad range of artists, both established and lesser known. Among the artists included are Fred Eversley (b. 1941), John Outterbridge (b. 1933), Noah Purifoy (1917-2004), Betye Saar (b. 1926) and Charles White (1918-1979).

Understanding the story of African-American artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s requires an examination of the political atmosphere of the time. With the Watts Riots of 1965 and the Black Power movement in full swing, the city was gripped by the intensely charged debate surrounding the rights of African Americans and what defined African-American culture and identity. Now Dig This! addresses this history in a section titled “Assemblage,” which explores how African-American artists in this context viewed their art in relation to the larger community in which they lived and worked. The title bears multiple meanings, referring to assemblage as an artistic practice, assembly in the political and social activism sense, and assembling as the formation of a community of artists and supporters. Artists responded to and engaged the political events of the 1960s and 70s in a multitude of ways. As Jones highlights, Purifoy and the artists who worked around him used the detritus of the Watts Riots to make work that served as an abstract commentary on African-American life.

This is but a glimpse of what Jones has in store for Now Dig This!, which opens October 2, 2011 and runs through January 8, 2012. While the exhibition marks the culmination of Jones’s research and is a telling of a significant chapter of American history, Jones is more than eager to give thanks to the curators and scholars whose tremendous work has helped elucidate the subjects of her scholarship. “My research is heavily indebted to all of the people who have been working in this area for many years,” she states, citing the research and exhibitions produced by many, including Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins, Dale Davis, Mark Greenfield, Malik Gaines, Samella Lewis and CAAM, whose own Pacific Standard Time exhibition will provide a different perspective on Los Angeles’s postwar African-American art community.

CAAM will present Places of Validation, Art and Progression, an in-depth exploration of the cultural institutions, organizations and communities formed to support African-American artists in Southern California. Curated by Charmaine Jefferson, Executive Director at CAAM, and Mark Greenfield, artist and Curator at CAAM, the exhibition tells the story of African-American artists, curators and scholars who, in response to their exclusion from major cultural institutions, created their own spaces and platforms to validate their work. The exhibition will include art, artifacts, photos and ephemera that will shed light on the cultural framework that made it possible for work by African-American artists to be shown.

One institution that played a key role was Brockman Gallery, founded in 1967 by brothers Dale and Alonzo Davis. The brothers opened the gallery in Los Angeles’s Leimert Park neighborhood to show their own work and that of their peers, and to provide a space where black artists including Houston Conwill (b. 1947), Hammons, Ulysses Jenkins (b. 1946) and Outterbridge could convene and exchange ideas. The gallery also functioned as a community arts center, offering art classes, public programs and festivals. Though the gallery closed in 1989, it has a lasting legacy: Leimert Park remains the locus of the black artistic activity in the city, due in large part to the community surrounding the Brockman Gallery.

The exhibition will also celebrate the prolific career of Samella Lewis (b. 1924), a revered leader who has provided tireless support to California’s African-American art community. Originally from New Orleans, Lewis moved to Los Angeles in 1963 and became a critical force in the art scene as a painter, scholar and curator. In 1976, Lewis founded the Black Art: An International Quarterly, a journal dedicated to publishing leading scholarship on African-American artists. The journal continues to do so today under its new name, International Review of African American Art. Lewis also wrote African American Art and Artists (1978), the first definitive text on the contributions of African-American artists.

CAAM itself emerged in 1977 out of a need to remedy the dearth of support for African-American artists and the museum has since stood as a pillar of that community. Since its inception, CAAM has presented groundbreaking exhibitions that focus on both art and history to provide an experience of African-American culture with context and depth. Places of Validation furthers this commitment and will be on view from September 29, 2011–April 1, 2012.

Now Dig This! and Places of Validation serve as indispensable contributions to the momentous Pacific Standard Time initiative, without which our understanding of California’s significant cultural history would be far from complete.

For more information on these exhibitions, visit the Hammer Museum at hammer.ucla.edu and CAAM at caamuseum.org. More information on the full scope of programming at all of the institutions participating in Pacific Standard Time can be found at pacificstandardtime.org.

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A Legacy Continues: Celebrating the Bearden Centennial

by Lauren Haynes, Assistant Curator
This year, 2011, marks the centennial of the birth of visual artist Romare Bearden. Bearden was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on September 2, 1911 and then went on to live in New York and St. Maarten in the Caribbean. He is very important to the Studio Museum—his involvement was critical to the Museum’s founding and his work stands at the center of our collection. In honor of this occasion, the Studio Museum initiated a project in conjunction with the Romare Bearden Foundation to mark this special moment. From September 2, 2011, to September 2, 2012, museums big and small, across the tri-state area, will install Bearden works from their respective collections. This project is a way to celebrate Bearden’s life and artistic practice, and for museum-goers to see a wide selection of his works. Participating museums include the Bronx Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Hofstra University Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Montclair Art Museum, Parrish Art Museum, Queens Museum of Art and Whitney Museum of American Art. Works will be put up starting this June. For additional information on the special Bearden Centennial exhibitions and programs at cultural institutions both in the tri-state area and beyond, visit BeardenCentennial.org.

In addition to the centennial project, for our main fall/winter 2011–12 show, the Studio Museum will host an exhibition featuring work by contemporary artists inspired by Bearden’s legacy. This exhibition will feature recently created collages and feature a cross-generational selection of artists who work in a wide variety of media. Check out the next issue of Studio and our website, www.studiomuseum.org, for more information.

Conjur Woman (1964) will be on view in Spiral: Perspectives on an African-American Art Collective from July 14 to October 23, 2011. Read Mary Schmidt Campbell’s illuminating essay on this work and then come see it in person!

Romare Bearden: Conjur Woman by Mary Schmidt Campbell

When Romare Bearden first publicly exhibited his collages—“Projections,” he called them—in October 1964, he launched a revolution in the representation of black people. Conjur Woman was one of these “Projections.” His scenes of black life in this series go beyond the literal, documentary images of black people common in popular culture of the time. He constructed rituals and ceremonies of black life that metaphorically allude to the paintings of European masters, ancient African art or black folk traditions. Process is as important as product in these works. Starting with a surface the size of a sheet of typing paper and filling it with his memories of people and places from his youth in Charlotte, Pittsburgh and Harlem, Bearden constructed photomontages from bits and pieces of paper and photographs cut from popular magazines. He then photographically enlarged them to billboard-size black-and-white images. The result in this case is a startling image in which the figure of a woman from black folklore—who some believed was magical and whom Bearden pieced together from disparate photographic elements—stands alone in the woods with her power. Iconic, her authority is uncontested. As a black woman, she has few precedents in the history of art.

Bearden continued to develop his collages until his death in 1988, eliminating the photographic enlargement step and, in some cases, photographic elements altogether. In some of these later works, he invented dazzling solutions to the problem of representing space and light, using meticulously cut and painted paper, or fragments of fabric. The revolution he launched with the “Projections”—to represent black life in rich symbolic terms—remained, as in the collage Prelude to Farewell. His collages often contain motifs that appear and reappear in different guises. Some are present in Prelude to Farewell: a woman bathing, generational contrast, sensuous treatment of the black nude, a train (which Bearden has said represents departures and arrivals), contrast between exterior and interior space, and an aura of constrained yearning and desire. Bearden successfully invented a new visual language for communicating and understanding the beauty and complexity of black life that, in the words of one critic, is “like a personal dictionary whose self-definition is its own voice and its own authority.”

71 Features

Romare Bearden
The Farmer, 1968
Museum Purchase
and a gift from
E. Thomas Williams and
Audlyn Higgins Williams
97.9.12
A sense of becoming, or metamorphosis, permeates the work of artist/choreographer/curator Dean Moss. As an attendee to one of Moss’s immersive, multidisciplinary performances, you might be selected to transition from audience to performer, in a shift that is sure to forever alter your conceptions of the roles of each. Moss is above all committed to his audience and trusts the intense emotional and aesthetic power of the ultimate surrender: of audience to the performers’ instructions. And conversely, Moss engages in a kind of surrender of his own, by allowing room for spontaneity and risking the direction of an artwork on participation and interaction. As audience contribution has been increasingly privileged by performance artists and art institutions, Moss’s work stands out as especially generous and powerfully about his viewers in a way that differs from most performance, which might use participation to further the ends of the artist. All of Moss’s work displays a vested dedication to the contradictions and fragility of interpersonal connections—though his performances can be quite dark, they constantly work toward the possibilities of understanding, embodying, and ever really knowing another human being.

Over the last decade, in addition to becoming more concerned with the role of the audience, Moss has investigated collaboration as a conceptual conceit and creative process. Though he works closely with musicians, set designers, dancers, choreographers and writers, Moss’s collaborative efforts with visual artists in particular have proved to be especially fruitful starting points for the open exchange and reconfiguration of ideas, usually through a performative translation of the artist’s body of work.

Moss’s first collaboration was the 2005 piece figures on a field with artist Laylah Ali (b. 1968), whose work is represented in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection. figures on a field, like Moss’s collaborative performances since, translated the experience of the artwork to the stage, rather than the work itself. Based on Ali’s ongoing series of detailed paintings that depict flat, brightly colored characters called “Greenheads,” figures on a field included a docent-led tour of the performance during the perfor-
dance, rethinking the relationships between audience and performer, and audience and work. In addition, Moss used movements, gestures and props—dodgeballs, clothing, belts—that subtly referenced the suggested narratives in Ali’s paintings.

The artist’s latest project, two years in the making, is a tour de force called *Nameless forest* that debuted at The Kitchen in May 2011. *Nameless forest* expands and challenges the scale of collaboration and audience involvement found in Moss’s previously mentioned works, further questioning the responsibilities of community and the individual in both art-making and society at large. It was created in conjunction with Korean sculptor, painter and installation artist Sungmyung Chun (b. 1970) after the two recognized shared elements and processes in their respective practices. Part sculpture and part installation, Chun’s dystopic mise-en-scènes are heavily influenced by theater and cinema, featuring a muted color palette and dramatic lighting. The figures, who wear striped shirts and whose faces are eerie clones of the artist’s, interlock in scenes of aggression and violence. As he did with Ali in *figures on a field*, Moss renders, translates and distills the unnerving aesthetics and theatrical storytelling of Chun’s work into the environment of *Nameless forest*. The choreography generates movement that, though meticulously tailored to each performer’s role, is unrestrained and highly physical, convulsive and even violent, seeming to trace the unresolved storylines in Chun’s work. Through motion, Moss establishes narrative in unconventional, fragmented ways, eschewing any linear, expository structure—as he put it, dance is itself an “automatic narrative,” one that by default provides an “abstract story of personhood.”

*Nameless forest* is a collective enterprise on a larger scale than any of Moss’s previous works. In addition to the aesthetic collaboration with Chun, there are audio recordings of journal entries by war photojournalist Michael Kamber, neon sculptures by artist Gandalf Gavan, original music by sound artist Stephen Vitiello, costuming by Roxana Ramseur and lighting by Vincent Vigilante. Then there are the performers, representing a wide variety of backgrounds, technical abilities and interests, and ranging in age from twenty-six to fifty-seven. Many of the movements are derived directly from their idiosyncrasies and individual responses to the choreography Moss—who does not appear in the piece—proposed. Again, Moss involves the audience, too, in a kind of ritual process of *becoming* that wavers between comfort and discomfort, intimacy and distance, stability and uncertainty. Discussing the piece, he invoked a quote by Andy Warhol that begins with the phrase, “being born is like being kidnapped.”

Though not quite a metaphor for birth, *Nameless forest* echoes the arbitrary, overwhelming reality of where and how we emerge into life, and how we then muddle through the isolation, pain, and crisis that weaves throughout it. Thus Moss describes the effect of the work on these participants as “a wounding and examination of the audience.” Up to twelve audience members are seated onstage and called upon to interact directly with the performers, while the remainder of the audience watches from the traditional, removed perspective. This separation creates two vastly different experiences of *Nameless forest*: a full immersion into the events unfolding onstage and a more distant, consumptive experience, in which we empathize with our fellow audience members from afar. The brilliance of Moss’s work lies partly in this emotional mixture of compassion and confusion we feel while watching the metamorphosis, as audience members engage in situations that are by turns awkward, unpleasant, intimate and instructive.

“Be with me,” the performers whisper at one point to the audience participants, and no matter our level of spectatorship, we have no desire to do anything but—Moss’s work draws us in, invites us not just to be, but to become.

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1. Dean Moss, in conversation with the author, April 19, 2011.
2. Ibid.
Multimedia artist and educator Elan Ferguson invites readers to add some color to the figments of his or her imagination! Create a collage inspired by artist Romare Bearden and check out Elan’s coloring page. Visit studiomuseum.org/event-calendar to find out when you can participate in an art making workshop here at the Museum led by Elan!

Romare Bearden created collages using many different types of paper, photographs, fabrics, foils, found images and a variety of paints. With materials easily found around your house and a few simple steps, you can create a collage too!

Here’s what you’ll need:
Newspapers and Magazines
Watercolors or crayons
Scissors
Glue

Start by cutting a large rectangle out of the newspaper. Make sure to pick a page that has a lot of text. This will be your background. Next, draw or paint scenery on your background with the crayons or watercolors. You can draw things like grass and trees or sidewalks and buildings. Once you have created your background you can add paper cut-outs of shapes and images. Look through magazines and newspapers to find images of people and things that you want to put in your collage. Remember that you can mix and match images from different places. Using the pair of scissors, carefully cut the images out of the magazines. Now, paste your images onto the background scenery using the glue. It won’t be long before you’ve made a fantastic collage!
I love Lil’ Studio...
Friends

This year, guests saluted Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell and Marcus Samuelsson.

Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell has been Dean of the New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts for the past 20 years. Previously, she was New York City Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Executive Director of The Studio Museum in Harlem from 1977-1987.

Marcus Samuelsson is an internationally acclaimed chef and proprietor of Red Rooster Harlem, the author of three award-winning cookbooks, the winner of the second season of Bravo’s “Top Chef Masters,” and was the guest chef for the Obama Administration’s first State Dinner.

The proceeds from the Luncheon are a fundamental source of support for the Museum’s outstanding exhibitions and public programs and help strengthen the Museum’s arts education programming. The Studio Museum in Harlem would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their generous contributions to the success of the Luncheon 2011.
Spring Luncheon

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List in formation as of May 21, 2011

Photos: Ray A. Llanos
Member Spotlight: Cheryl Bruce

by Ginger Cofield

As a former employee of the Studio Museum in the mid-1980s, you have a direct connection here. How did you become interested in the visual arts?

I’ve always found a world of wonder in the visual arts. They’re a tangible expression of the untouchable, the ephemeral, and the unseen-but-felt, and they throw my imagination into overdrive. I’m especially drawn to figurative work, but not exclusively. Perhaps because I’m a performing artist and tell stories with living pictures it holds particular sway, I’m not sure. I just know the human heart hungers for stories, no matter the form.

You’ve performed in several plays set in Harlem, including The Old Settler (2010) and Intimate Apparel (2005). Could you speak about your time in New York, and working in Harlem, and how those experiences have influenced your work?

I lived happily in Brooklyn, first on the top floor of a lovely brownstone on Grand Avenue and later in an apartment on Vanderbilt, both in Fort Greene. I hail from the south side of Chicago and grew up in a modest, but comfortable, bungalow with a swing my father made that sat in a big backyard with a birdbath and a garage. We had alleyways for garbage trucks and milk trucks, so New York and her ways were a big shift for me.

Harlem truly is Black Mecca, a City of Refuge and the Capital of the Black World. Oh, it was thrilling to walk down, work on, and explore the very same streets Harlem Renaissance artists had a mere five decades before. So now, when I read plays set in Harlem, I know what the houses look like, where the streets are. It’s all very particular and real for me.

Could you tell us about a Studio Museum exhibition or project that was of particular interest to you and why?

Oh, yes, I have several personal favorites, but first among them is the Museum’s inaugural debut in its present home, because that was my formal introduction to the world of the Studio Museum.

I’d been hired specifically to prepare its mailing lists for the inaugural events. That opening was really to be a closing for me. However, I’d so thoroughly enjoyed my time there, I couldn’t bear to leave. So I offered to set up an ad hoc gift shop for opening night stocked with early Studio Museum postcards and posters I’d come across in storage. I decorated the space with lots of African textiles and baskets from home, and that night I sold over a thousand dollars worth of merchandise! That little experiment ultimately led to full-time employment and I was home.

Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980 was a profoundly moving experience. During its run, especially on Mondays when the galleries are closed to the public, I slipped inside and fell silent in the presence of riveting works by Bill Traylor, Sister Gertrude Morgan and Harriet Powers. That show was breathtakingly personal, too, because it uniquely touched and celebrated my African and American selves.

As someone who no longer lives in the New York area, how do you feel you benefit from a Studio Museum membership?

Through my membership I join forces with a broad and committed cadre of believers dedicated to actively supporting and preserving the varied artistic expressions of the black diaspora, and that’s a charge I embrace. Receiving this magazine in the mail through my membership is a great way to “keep our antennae bright,” and many of the artists profiled are good friends of ours. I must also add that I cherish the deep and lasting friendships that began at the Studio Museum.

So what’s next for you?

Well, I’ve recently opened in a Chicago premiere that’s already garnered critical notice. A couple of weeks ago I accepted an offer of several juicy roles in what promises to be a rollicking fall production. And I’m in the middle of an exciting research residency at Yale. Just trying to hang loose and stay out of trouble, I guess.

Ginger Cofield is a writer living in Brooklyn, New York.
Since its inception in 1968 the Studio Museum has been the nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally and internationally and for work that has been inspired and influenced by black culture.

Located on Harlem’s historic 125th Street, the Museum has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent.

The number of artists who have participated in the Museum’s Artist-In-Residence program.

Amount of people who participated in the Museum’s Target Free Sundays and events this year.
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As the nation’s leading venue for black art and culture and a site for the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society, the Studio Museum in Harlem is committed to sustaining innovative exhibitions, the Artist-in-Residence program for emerging artists and an extensive schedule of enlightening education and public programs. We rely on the generosity of members and individual donors to support the Museum’s exhibitions and programs. Please consider making a 100 percent tax-deductible contribution today. At each donation level, your support will:

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Harlem Floral atelier

The Studio Museum in Harlem makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of its lists of supporters. If your name is not listed as you prefer or if you believe that your name has been omitted, please let us know by contacting the Development Office at 212.864.4500x221 or membership@studiomuseum.org.
Have Your Next Party with us!

Consider The Studio Museum in Harlem for your business or organization’s next event! Hosting your event at the Studio Museum will allow your guests to:

- Experience the Museum’s exciting exhibitions
- Mix and mingle in the Museum’s glass-enclosed Atrium
- Enjoy personalized programming in the Museum’s new Theatre
- Take in Harlem under the stars in the Courtyard
- If you arrange to have the Museum Store open, your guests will also be able to find the right gift for any occasion.

The Museum is not available for weddings, wedding receptions, private/political social events or fundraisers. Nonprofit organizations receive a special rate.

For more information, please call 212.864.4500 x247
Membership Info

Join today!
Becoming a member has never been easier.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

*Individual $50* (Fully tax-deductible)
- Free admission to the Studio Museum for one
- Personalized membership card
- One-year subscription to Studio magazine
- Invitations to exhibition opening receptions
- Invitations and e-mail reminders for upcoming events at the Studio Museum
- 15% discount on all Museum Store purchases
- 20% discount on exhibition catalogues published by the Studio Museum
- 10% discount at the Atrium Café at the Studio Museum
- Invitations to member shopping days at the Studio Museum throughout the year, with additional discount offers
- Free admission or discounted tickets to all Studio Museum educational and public programs
- Special Studio Museum member’s discount at select local Harlem businesses
- Annual recognition in Studio magazine

*Family/Partner $75* (Fully tax-deductible)
- All the preceding benefits, plus:
- Free admission to the Studio Museum for two adults (at the same address) and children under eighteen years of age
- Personalized membership cards for two

*Supporter $100* (Fully tax-deductible)
- All the preceding benefits, plus:
- Member privileges of the North American Reciprocal Museum Program, allowing free or member admission and discounts at hundreds of museums across the United States
- Free admission for one guest when accompanied by a Studio Museum member

*Associate $250* ($220 tax-deductible)
- All the preceding benefits plus:
- One complimentary Studio Museum exhibition catalogue

*Donor $500* ($450 tax-deductible)
- All the preceding benefits, plus:
- Invitations to behind-the-scenes tours and talks with art connoisseurs and curators
- Two complimentary guest passes for family and friends

*Benefactor $1,000* ($900 tax-deductible)
- All the preceding benefits, plus:
- Member privileges of the North American Reciprocal Museum Program, allowing free or member admission and discounts at hundreds of museums across the United States
- Free admission for two guests when accompanied by a Studio Museum member

*Student/Senior $25* (Fully tax-deductible)
- All the benefits of Individual membership. (Must present student or senior ID [62 years or older] for eligibility)

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP

*Studio Society*

Studio Society is comprised of major donors to the Studio Museum. For more information on this special group, please call 212.864.4500 x244.

*National Membership $1,000* ($900 tax-deductible)
National members are a special group of supporters outside the New York metropolitan area. All Individual membership benefits, plus:
- Access to private tours with Studio Museum staff when you’re in New York City
- Free admission for two guests when accompanied by a Museum member
- Seasonal listings of exhibitions around town
- Invitations to select private events in your town and in New York City

*Contemporary Friends*
Contemporary Friends is a dynamic leadership group of young professionals committed to supporting the Studio Museum and interested in gaining greater access to the world of contemporary art.

*Individual $200* ($175 tax-deductible)

*Couple/Partner $300* ($250 tax deductible) (For two people living at the same address) All Individual membership benefits, plus
- Invitations and VIP passes to a variety of events throughout the year, including private previews, guided gallery tours (both on- and offsite), studio visits, seminars and networking events

Membership Gift
If you are looking for that special gift for a friend or loved one, give the gift of membership and share all the Museum has to offer. A Studio Museum membership makes a unique and rewarding gift that can be enjoyed throughout the year—perfect for birthdays, milestone celebrations or any other occasion.
YES! I WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM.

_______ 1 Year
_______ Renewal
_______ Gift

Name of membership holder

Name of additional member
(Family/partner level members and above)

Address

City                                   State             Zip

Work Phone   Home Phone

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

Please list as Anonymous.

MAIL TO
The Studio Museum in Harlem
144 W. 125th St, New York, NY 10027

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
_______ Benefactor $1,000
_______ Donor $500
_______ Associate $250
_______ Supporter $100
_______ Family/Partner $75
_______ Individual $50
_______ Student $25*
_______ Senior $25*

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

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP
_______ National $1000
_______ Contemporary Friends Individual $200
_______ Contemporary Friends Couple $300
_______ Studio Society $1500
_______ Studio Society $2500
_______ Studio Society $3000
_______ Studio Society $5000

PAYMENT METHOD
_______ I have enclosed my check
(make check payable to The Studio Museum in Harlem)

PLEASE BILL MY:
_______ American Express
_______ MasterCard
_______ Visa

Name of cardholder

Address

City/State/Zip

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
Visitor Information

VISITOR INFORMATION
Address
144 W. 125th St. New York, NY
10027 (between Malcolm X and Adam C. Powell Jr. Boulevards)
studiomuseum.org

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
visits 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).

DIRECTIONS
Subway

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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.
Each issue of Studio is released with two covers and this season, we're honored to feature an incredible portrait of Romare Bearden by Frank Stewart and a painting by Emma Amos, Spiral icon.