We publish *Studio* magazine twice a year, and each time we prepare to go to print I like to take a moment to reflect on the prior six months. A half-year can encompass a lot, but it’s especially incredible how much has happened—in the arts and the world as a whole—since our last issue was published in summer 2014. In the same vein, it’s amazing how much has changed since the Studio Museum was founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, philanthropists and civic leaders. These visionaries drafted a proposal for an altogether new model of museum, one “with the ability to respond more directly and immediately to the creative climate.” Committed to expanding the resources, opportunities and institutional attention paid to black artists, the Museum’s founders wrote, “We have chosen Harlem as the place for this more experimental, less institutionalized Museum because of the sense of newness, strength and change which is present there.”

Last fall, I had an incredibly energizing trip to London for a spate of opening celebrations for high-profile exhibitions celebrating some of the most prominent artists working today, including Kerry James Marshall, Wangechi Mutu, David Hammons, Glenn Ligon and Steve McQueen—all of whom have deep ties to the Studio Museum and all of whom are of African descent. And on January 22, 2015, I had the great honor to be present as Secretary of State John Kerry awarded the U.S. Department of State Medal of Arts award to a selection of brilliant artists, once again including many names familiar to Studio Museum audiences: Mark Bradford, Sam Gilliam, Maya Lin, Julie Mehretu, Pedro Reyes, Kehinde Wiley and Xu Bing. All this exciting activity exemplifies the great progress the art world has made in the past half-century.

But as we all know, our world, our country, our city and our neighborhood continue to face many challenges. I am continually inspired by the ability of artists to draw our attention to and help us make sense of these challenges; I am truly impressed by artists who are on the front lines of social change and artists who offer moments of quiet contemplation in a complicated world.

The life of the Studio Museum to date has spanned an incredibly meaningful, complex and difficult time in history. I hope that our existence, exhibitions and activities—and, especially, the artists that we support—have in some way played a part in the progress we have made, and can offer us hope and inspiration for the work that is yet to be done. And thanks to all of you for your help along the way.

Thelma Golden
Director and Chief Curator

All photos from my Instagram.
Follow me: @thelmagolden
The Studio Museum in Harlem is at the forefront of black contemporary art and culture and we want you to join us!

Follow us online, share your experience and be a part of the conversation!

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Museum

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March 26–June 28, 2015
Trenton Doyle Hancock: Skin and Bones, 20 Years of Drawing
Concealed: Selections from the Permanent Collection
Salon Style
In Profile: Portraits from the Permanent Collection
Samuel Levi Jones: Unbound

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

Exhibition Schedule
Winter/Spring 2015

Check studiomuseum.org for the latest on our exhibitions and programs.
Introducing the 2014–15 Artists in Residence

Organized by Alani Bass,
Communications Assistant

In October 2014, the Studio Museum was thrilled to welcome Sadie Barnette, Lauren Halsey and Eric Mack as our 2014–15 artists in residence. During their year-long residency, these bright young artists will immerse themselves in the legacy of Harlem and the Studio Museum, cultivate their unique visions and join a lineage of more than a hundred participants of the Artist-in-Residence program. We’ve asked Sadie, Lauren and Eric to introduce us to their creative processes and give a little insight into the work they will be making in the coming months.

Sadie Barnette

My artwork is not based in any one medium or output, but instead conforms to and absorbs many formats. I use drawing, photography, installations, West Coast vernacular, subcultural codes, text and abstractions to construct a visual language system. What is at stake here, for me, is the gravity of the urban as fantasy, extralegal economies, luxury as drug, counterfeit capitalism, glitter as hypnotic, outer space as head space, the everyday as gold, family and lived-identity experience, and the party.

I am named for those my parents lost along the way, and I am named for those who named my parents, and so it goes. I am here as the improbable evidence of my parents’ acts of resistance, gender-defiant grace, fierce Midwestern kindness, dearly protected optimism and humor. I am the Oakland 1980s-baby celebration of the radical and armed movement of love, revolutionary vision, the interracial and disco idealism. I am the daughter of a Black Panther, of a Vietnam vet, of politicized factory workers. The soundtrack is amazing.

I make art from a place of humble urgency. My artistic endeavors are moments of criticality, multiplicity, transcendence, addiction . . . little exponential art actions unfolding in The Now, The Living Room, digital space, from Oakland to Compton and now (with love and thanks to the Studio Museum) Harlem!
Museum

Sadie Barnette
Untitled photograph, 2013
Courtesy Sadie Barnette
Introducing the 2014–15 Artists in Residence

Eric Mack

Currently, in the studio, I am working on a piece with accumulated value. This fabric collage has acquired meaning in its use of many materials: silk that has been bleached to a point of varied degradation cascades into a hanging rectangle of green cotton mounted to a brass curtain rod. The use of an Air Berlin blanket drapes with the symmetry of the rectangle towards the floor. The central draping is where silk meets cotton and cotton meets canvas, where polyester meets palm leaves.

The billowed rectangle is held to the brass curtain rod with distinct zip ties. The rectangle is organized in speckles of paint, speckles that allude to a grid beholden to a process of pigment dispersion.

The cascade exists not only in the form of Claudine (2014), but also in the paper documents used. The paper is a fragile map and tangential point of reference. Pages from a yellow legal pad sit against a concert photograph of Prince, fashion editorial from an Urban Outfitters catalogue and a photocopy of a Basquiat, images have seemingly no relation. However, they are placed on the same surface and questioned equally—under the condition of the orange slices.

This piece received a name based on the 1974 movie Claudine, the title character of which was played by Diahann Carroll. I have been invigorated by this movie, which is set in Sugar Hill. A narrative about a mother and six children sustaining life on welfare, Claudine’s love interest is an optimistic garbage man played by James Earl Jones.

The couple is apprehensive about getting married for fear that they would not be able to support the children without welfare.

I am interested in Carroll’s undeniable glamour even under the class-specified narrative of the film. The inherent dignity and pride involved in her image speaks to the complexity of identity. I am also interested in Diana Sands, who was originally intended to play Claudine but died of cancer and gave the part to Carroll.

I desire for the work to be a container for multiple narratives made through recognition in materials and allowing abstract painting to be central as a persistent project. I covet poetic relation in everyday spaces.

Lauren Halsey

“Kingdom Splurge” is an infinite project of endless becoming that entails liberation through Funk, fantasy architecture and the experimental development of space: gardens, lawns, vacant lots, churches, liquor stores, parking lots. The Kingdom is interested in the collective well-being of the neighborhood in which it lives. The Kingdom constitutes a fantasy-scape for people and creatures (i.e., fish, butterflies, birds, etc.) to inhabit in complete freedom—spatially and creatively, alongside representations of moments in nature, crystals, LEDs, lasers, iridescents and nomadic sculptures.

In the Kingdom’s early stages I, Pharaoh, high-voltage Funkateer and Master Architect, Lauren Danielle Halsey, will engage as Kingdom Planner of the habitat, constructing micro-neighborhoods (kingdoms) within preexisting neighborhoods for Funk cadets (you and your folks) to ponder and actualize new images and possibilities for a freer, Funkier and more optimistic tomorrow. Kingdom Splurge is a space of hypothesis for proposing new beginnings that are articulated through sculptures and environments built with what is already there. The goal is community-building—to revalue ephemera and existing forms (architecture, local businesses, gang tags, signage, etc.) as a method of restyling space. The Kingdom is interested in collaboration with those who have a passion for the future and are interested in stretching their imaginations to create grand visions of and for working-class neighborhoods.
In a career spanning nearly a decade, New York–born, Hudson-based artist Kianja Strobert (b. 1980) has become known for her dynamic and energetic works on paper. By layering and building up her material with thick, unrefined brushstrokes and nebulous swaths of color, Strobert puts the viewer’s eye in constant motion around the canvas with compositions that appear to be in flux. Many of Strobert’s paintings and drawings are inspired by the work of the abstract painter Alma Thomas, rooted in what the older artist, who turned to art late in life, called a “day in time,” or a commitment to the artistic practice of the present moment.

Kianja Strobert: Of This Day in Time, the artist’s first solo museum exhibition in New York, brings together a selection of paintings and drawings made over the last five years. Contemporary exhibitions have posited abstract painting as a continuous dialogue, both between artists and historical traditions of abstraction, and among artists of current and prior generations. Throughout its history, the Studio Museum has examined the intersections of abstract art and subjectivity in exhibitions such as Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction 1964–1980 (2006). The most recent addition to this lineage, Kianja Strobert: Of This Day in Time, presents an artist whose unique consideration of universal human emotions provides a fresh take on the legacy of twentieth-century abstraction.
Titus Kaphar’s (b. 1976) paintings, drawings and installations initiate a contemporary dialogue with history. Merging nineteenth-century American portraiture with modernist gestures, Kaphar creates paintings that are manipulated with contemporary modes of analysis, deconstruction and reconstruction to question the original contexts of the figures and re-present history. By collaging, crumpling, ripping, cutting and sewing, Kaphar reconstructs objects from the canon of art history. But in a marked departure in his practice, Titus Kaphar: The Jerome Project is composed of small-scale works that engage with contemporary social issues, particularly the criminal justice system.

In 2011 Kaphar began searching for his father’s prison records and found, on a website containing photographs of people who have recently been arrested, dozens of men who share his father’s first name, Jerome. The artist was influenced by the writings of Michelle Alexander and William Julius Wilson on the prison-industrial complex and its use by the U.S. government to address economic, social and political problems. The panels in this exhibition are based on police portraits of the men named Jerome that Kaphar found online. Although each work depicts an individual, this series represents a community of people, particularly African-American men, who are overrepresented in the prison population.

The Jerome Project draws on iconic historical artworks as well. With gold-leaf backgrounds and central figures, Kaphar’s portraits visually parallel Byzantine holy portraits, specifically those depicting Saint Jerome, the patron of librarians and scholars. Although the panels reference religious artworks, they are not meant to carry any assumption of innocence or guilt. Instead they allude to the notion of forgiveness, which is central to many religions. The artist views the inability to offer forgiveness as a shortcoming of the current criminal justice system.
Harlem Postcards

Summer 2014

Albert Vecerka
Born 1969, Sremska Mitrovica, Yugoslavia
Lives and works in New York, NY

Untitled (from “The Harlem Project” series), 2014
© 2014 Albert Vecerka/Esto

I have always been interested in the built and natural environments in which we live. I believe that taking a closer look at our immediate surroundings and the forces that shape them is valuable: Places that were, places that are and places that will be speak about our humanity.

I learned the basics of photography as I studied electrical engineering in the former Yugoslavia. My first subjects were mostly street scenes. When I moved to the United States, I studied both architecture and photography, and when I decided to pursue photography, architecture became a natural subject.

In both my personal projects and assignment work I look to tell stories about places: neighborhoods, buildings, rooms. As an artist I look for visual cues and elements, and then try to assemble them in compositions, just as a writer composes sentences or paragraphs. Looking for the right light, right day or right time of day is a part of that narrative.

“The Harlem Project” is about the evolution of a neighborhood, a place where I’ve lived for twenty years. I examined pieces of the old Harlem, and how they relate to the whole. I have continued my examination as the neighborhood has changed. In this case, looking at and learning about what was in front of me enabled a theme to emerge and defined the future direction of the project.

Delphine Diallo
Born 1977, Paris, France
Lives and works in New York, NY

Harlem, Winter 2014 with “l’enchanteur”, 2014

Delphine juxtaposes reality with imaginary conscience, fashion with documentary photographs, and tradition with modernity.

Kelvin De Leon
Born 1997, Bronx, NY
Lives and works in Bronx, NY

Forgotten, 2014

“Desolate” and “forgotten” are but two words that can be used to describe the barbershop located at 424 Lenox Avenue. Even though the barbershop gives off a feeling of loneliness, I could not help but be drawn to it. I could only imagine the site in its heyday, with the conversations had, the stories told and all of the special moments that occurred. To see the place that harbored all of those special memories to be allowed to go to naught is saddening, for me at least.

Heather Hart
Born 1975, Seattle, WA
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

Build-A-Brother Workshop (The Paper Doll Barbershop Poster), 2014

It is a slippery position between exploiting the black male archetype and honoring that same black maleness. In this illusion, between control and care, I want to begin to unpack power relations around race and gender. Through interaction, humor and material, I encourage viewers to relate to my work not only through physicality, but also by opening a dialogue that depends on their perceptions. “Through aesthetic stylization each black hairstyle seeks to revalorize the ethnic signifier, and the political significance of each rearticulation of value and meaning depends on the historical conditions under which each style emerges.”

Spaces of oral histories are central to my work. This piece was inspired by the timeless barbershop posters I find all over Harlem, and by the safety zones, educational spaces and playful social realms that black barbershops provide. I want to catalyze such a space through my work.

**Pamela Council**
Born 1986, Southampton, NY  
Lives and works in New York, NY  

*Tumbleweaves on the Frontier, 2014*

“Tumbleweaves” are hair balls from lost extensions and hair clippings that blow around on city sidewalks. These bits of detritus are temporary, site-specific little sculptures that are indices of artistic process, financial exchange and passing styles. In an ongoing project, “#pctweave,” the artist documents chance encounters with tumbleweaves and shares them digitally, live from Harlem, a place that some newer residents see as a kind of frontier town.

**Yashua Klos**
Born 1977, Chicago, IL  
Lives and works in New York, NY  

*GardenHarlem, 2014*

Harlem transforms. This corner of 125th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is the site of a pop-up jungle: there one day and gone the next. We remain camouflaged in the terrain. We are natives, transplants, guests and tourists, and Harlem is the destination.

**So Yoon Lym**
Born 1967, Seoul, South Korea  
Lives and works in Paterson, NJ  

*Harlem Window Display, 2014*

This photo was taken at a barbershop on Malcolm X Boulevard. The owner allowed me to tape up my poster of cornrow paintings and take some photos of the storefront. There was a big empty spot on the window, no doubt so that window watchers can see the barbers at work. The photo shows a window reflection of a building in Harlem. That, in and of itself, for me, identifies the place as Harlem, which was what I wanted, though the barbershop could be from any given urban environment. But it is “The Dreamtime” poster, which represents my series of acrylic-on-paper paintings of cornrow-hair patterns depicting Paterson teenagers, that brought the series international attention and notice, and ultimately the invitation to *Harlem Postcards*.

**Youssef Nabil**
Born 1972, Cairo, Egypt  
Lives and works in Miami, FL, and New York, NY  

*Tina Early Morning, Harlem, 2014*

Hand-colored gelatin silver print  
Courtesy the artist and Nathalie Obadia Gallery, Paris/Brussels  

I call this work *Tina Early Morning, Harlem* because Tina’s is the first face I see every morning. She works at the front desk of my building in Harlem and I am always so impressed by the fact that, no matter how early she has to come to work, she’s always very elegant and creative with her hair. When The Studio Museum in Harlem asked me to make a postcard work about Harlem, I immediately thought of her!
Trenton Doyle Hancock: Skin and Bones, 20 Years of Drawing

by Lauren Haynes, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection

Lauren Haynes: Trenton Doyle Hancock: Skin and Bones, 20 Years of Drawing is your first mid-career drawing survey, so I think it makes sense to start from the beginning. When did you first begin to draw?

Trenton Doyle Hancock: When I was about three years old. In 1977, I spent a lot of time with my elderly aunt, Fannie Rollerson. I affectionately called her “Fan Fan,” and she babysat me every day when my mother went to work. To amuse me, Fan Fan drew simple line drawings of farm animals on the backs of envelopes. She wasn’t an artist, but somewhere along the way, she learned how to make these great little animal drawings. For me, at age three, this was magical! That’s when I began to identify as an artist. It’s all I ever wanted to do. I spent hours trying to copy her animals. These were my first drawing lessons. I wish that I still had those drawings of hers.

LH: In addition to drawings on paper and canvas, Skin and Bones contains your first animation piece and a wallpaper work. How do these various aspects of your drawing practice fit in within your overall artistic practice?

TDH: Animation has always been a huge influence on my artistic sensibilities, but my engagement with the form has changed drastically from decade to decade. As a kid, cartoons were visual pacifiers and extended toy commercials. I didn’t pay too much attention to the quality of what I watched. In a way, it was all the same to me. Even though I wasn’t terribly discerning about animation, I never put it in the same category as comic strips. I also knew that comic strips serve a different purpose than animation and even comic books. Intuitively, I knew these forms were moving at different speeds with different concerns. It wasn’t until college that I was able to articulate these differences. The common denominator of the forms is line and time. There’s a certain calligraphy—line—in all of these formats, and the idea of transitioning from moment to moment—time—is central to their reading. For me, I had to figure out how to utilize “time” in painting. The “line” part was easy. I think in terms of drawing, so that was never a huge challenge. The problem I saw in the 1990s was that there were a lot of “cartoony” painters focusing on the perfect line, but very few focused on the element of time. This is more the stuff of comics. Comics deal with time in a very specific way. In the guts between the images, the viewer is expected to make leaps in time. It takes a certain proactivity to process comics. Animation moved way too fast for my purposes and wasn’t applicable to painting in a one-to-one way. Processing animation is a more passive experience and I wasn’t interested in incorporating that lazy gaze into my practice at the time. I’ve changed my tune now though. Truly observing and absorbing animation is anything but lazy. It’s quite challenging! It wasn’t until I collaborated on a ballet and saw my characters moving around that I even started to think about the possible translation of my work to animation. That was in 2008. Six and seven years later, I’m finally trying to deal with it. I’m dabbling at this point. It’s fun and new for me, and a little addictive. Textile design is an integral component of my practice and identity. I’ve been producing wallpaper for over twelve years now, and in my practice it serves as a vehicle for narrative forms, icons and looping vignettes. Wallpaper also creates a continuous ground to quickly immerse the spectator in the richness of a story. I’ve also executed large wall drawings to achieve this immersive effect. However effective it is to write all over the walls, wallpaper incorporates my interest in printmaking and the aesthetic of mechanical reproduction. It’s a hybrid of my interests in drawing, printmaking and environmental installation.

Trenton Doyle Hancock
Buff and Britches, 2010
Collection Sloan and Carli Schaffer, Los Angeles
Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York
LH: You created an activity page that has comic elements for this issue of Studio magazine. Can you talk a little bit about how your interest in comics developed and how it’s influenced your artistic career?

TDH: When I was a child I was fascinated by humans who could do extraordinary things, especially if they displayed superhuman strength. I paid extra attention in church when the lessons were about either David or Samson, and I thought Bruce Lee was the greatest. That said, the reason I first got into comics was to learn more about my favorite superhumans. When I graduated high school, I was going to start showing my portfolio to major comic companies in hopes that I could get work drawing Spiderman or something like that. Life and college took me in different directions, and I opened my mind to new diverse things. Between my problems at home, and images broadcast in the media, I wasn’t seeing a lot of superheroes to believe in. The style of comics I read began to reflect my changing worldview. I started reading the more confessional comics of Robert Crumb and Dan Clowes, and the psychodramas of Gary Panter. It just felt more honest to me. This renewed interest in comics bled into my painting, and I came up with my own brand of anti-heroes and weirdos complete with backstories. It’s something I wasn’t seeing in art at the time, aside from Henry Darger. Darger wasn’t quite accepted into the art world conversation in the mid-to-late 1990s.

LH: There are several site-specific drawings in Skin and Bones. How did these develop?

TDH: There’s a ton of work in the show under varied categories and subcategories. I thought that it would be effective to draw visual bridges between the groupings. Also, in the spirit of my practice, it seems appropriate to create fields of wall-drawn information that extend the boundaries of the framed works. These wall drawings arise from the desire to create an environment or context for the works.
**LH:** *Skin and Bones* was organized by Valerie Cassel Oliver for the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and then traveled to the Akron Art Museum. The Studio Museum will be the exhibition’s third venue. How has it been to see different iterations of the show?

**TDH:** Because each space is different, the shows end up being radically different from one another. Each new venue provides an opportunity to highlight different aspects of the show by responding to architecture and other particularities of the space.

**LH:** It’s obvious that text and language play a huge part in your artistic practice. What are some things you read for inspiration and enjoyment?

**TDH:** I have a daily routine of reading various articles that pop up on my browser or things recommended to me by my peers. It’s my version of reading the newspaper, and it keeps me somewhat plugged in. When I enter a new phase of my work, I usually read a ton about new subjects. This year I started producing toys based on my characters, so I’m reading a lot about toy developers, the history of toys and how to make my own toys. Last year, it was animation and animation history. Being a notoriously slow reader, I don’t have the attention span to get through most novels. I always feel like I can perform a million other useful tasks in the time it would take me to finish a book. I should try books on tape, I guess.

**LH:** Who are some artists who inspire you?

**TDH:** James Ensor and Otto Dix are a couple of my favorite painters. Philip Guston is great too, but Ensor and Dix have sharper edges. Terry Winters is always unstoppable. Hilma af Klint painted some of the most “ahead of its time” work to ever be made. In terms of animation, Richard Williams and Ralph Bakshi are gods. The toy designers that excite me are Lou Marx and Marvin Glass. Marx and Glass were considered the Walt Disneys of toy design in the 1950s and 60s.

**LH:** You were raised in Texas. Has Texas played a role in your work?

**TDH:** Yes, I’ve spent most of my life in Texas. There is a lot to celebrate and explore there, but also there’s plenty of negativity and strangeness to react against. There is a lot of space as well. The sprawl has helped shape my attitude and allowed me the space to nurture not only my collecting habits but also my anger. I would imagine that’s why someone like Erykah Badu maintains connections with Texas.
Salon Style

by Hallie Ringle,
Senior Curatorial Assistant

As Senior Curatorial Assistant, I’m often tasked with fielding questions about the permanent collection. I have to sift through the collection records, looking for artists, years, titles and courtesy lines, which gives me the opportunity, however fleeting, to examine the Museum’s collection. During one of my recent searches, I noticed that many artists highlight hair and fingernails in their work as both subjects and media. I realized that hair and nails are universal venues for self-expression, where identities and personhood are asserted, however temporarily. Though continually in flux, a hairstyle can help identify the wearer’s values, religion, class, race and even political beliefs. On a smaller scale, the manipulation of fingernails is equally indicative of the self. They can be artificially elongated, cut, shaped and painted to reflect the wearer’s interests and aesthetics.

I was especially drawn to several works in the collection that reference hairstyles using found materials. Chakaia Booker’s Repugnant Rapunzel (let down your hair) (1995) reimagines the fairy tale princess’ long, blonde hair as a thick, asymmetrical sculpture made out of tire rubber. In the style and material of the hair, Booker identifies and confronts economic, social and global issues. Another artist in the exhibition, Mark Bradford, uses hair accessories as a medium. In Enter and Exit the New Negro (2000), Bradford creates a minimalist, grid-like abstract work out of singed endpapers, the transparent rectangular papers used by hairstylists to perm hair. Though neither Booker nor Bradford literally use hair, both reference political discourses surrounding hair.

Outside of the permanent collection, artist Pamela Council (Harlem Postcard artist, fall/winter 2014–15) makes works created out of acrylic nails and clippings of hair found on the street that she terms “tumbleweaves.” In one series of works, Council engages with the mass and commercial production of cosmetic goods. In her “Flo Jo World Record Nails” (2012) sculptures and posters, she replicates in excess the fingernails of Florence Griffith-Joyner, the Olympic athlete who was well known for her long, colorful nails. In the sculpture, 2,000 acrylic nails form a 200-meter running course, referencing both one of Griffith-Joyner’s strongest events as well as the processes and people involved in the manufacture of these products, specifically factories in Korea, Hong Kong and China that create beauty products for American consumers. A beauty/athlete connection is well represented in the permanent collection as well. In looking at nails as representative of womanhood, Deborah Willis’s photograph, Bodybuilder #4 (1998) captures the beauty and power of bodybuilder Nancy Lewis. Highlighting Lewis’s painted nails against her pronounced muscles pairs the beauty of her atypical form with more traditional femininity and beauty. Both Council and Willis use fingernails as sites of gender expression alongside bodies that have been commercialized as female athletic icons. Whether using tires to create hair or photographs of athlete’s hands and bodies, Booker, Bradford, Council and Willis use hair and nails to demonstrate the political, commercial, economic and cultural value of these sites of self-expression.
Museum
Mark Bradford
Enter and Exit the New Negro, 2000
Purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee 01.9.1

Meschac Gaba
Lipstick Building, 2004
Purchase made possible by gifts from Anne Ehrenkranz, New York and Nancy Lane, New York 05.5.1

Chakaia Booker
Repugnant Rapunzel (let down your hair), 1995
Gift of Friend and Family of Chakaia Booker 96.7

Mark Bradford
Enter and Exit the New Negro, 2000
Purchase with funds provided by the Acquisition Committee 01.9.1
In Profile Portraits from the Permanent Collection

by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator

In Profile points to works in the Studio Museum’s permanent collection from particular sub-genres of portraiture: self-portraits, Greek busts, cameos, three-quarter commissioned portraits of elegant society women or flâneurs and slices of social life documented with photography. One specific image (seen here, Black Eyes / Light Series (Children playing in trees) [1978] by Jules Allen), for example, recalls to me Georges Seurat’s infamous pointillist rendering of French society enjoying a summer’s day in the 1884 Un dimanche après-midi à l’île de la Grande Jatte (A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte).

The concept of the exhibition borrows from a term coined by literary theorist Stephen Greenblatt in 1980, “self-fashioning,” which he used to define a sixteenth-century phenomenon in which European noblemen developed an increasing awareness about their ability to shape their own identities for public consumption. In this context, self-fashioning refers to a cross-section of the Museum’s collection that highlights black individuals’ conscious creation of their own images and personae. Where Greenblatt’s terminology refers to the kind of portraiture traditionally commissioned by its wealthy sitter to assert position and status, the portraits sourced here were created specifically to enforce the sitter’s presence.

In a global history in which, at the height of enslavement and discrimination, peoples of African descent were often not afforded complex identities, and their histories remained largely undocumented, it is essential that the portraits contained in the Studio Museum’s collection exist as primary examples of the black community having agency through images. In Profile is an affirmation of a long line of black members in our society who have contributed to various facets of American life—medicine, industry, art and culture—and perhaps also manages to represent, in some small way, those who have gone unnamed in ledgers and history books.

Top:
Jules Allen
Black Eyes / Light Series
(Children playing in trees), 1978
Gift of the artist 80.4.8

Bottom Left:
Martin Kane
untitled (artist seated in studio), 1980
TD06.4.3

Bottom Right:
Gwen Knight
The White Dress, 1999
Gift of Francine Seders Gallery, Seattle 00.4.1
In Profile

Portraits from the Permanent Collection
Concealed Selections from the Permanent Collection

by Hallie Ringle, Senior Curatorial Assistant

During one of my most challenging final projects at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I found myself dressed as a textbook. I wore two pieces of yellow posterboard with a crest mask from the Cross River region of Nigeria and big blue letters proclaiming that I was *A History of Art in Africa* (2nd edition) by Monica Blackmun Visonà, Robin Poynor and Herbert M. Cole. This wasn’t an elaborate attempt to cheat on my final exam. Rather, it was my final exam. The professor of my class, Carol Magee, tasked our class with turning a ritual or ceremony into a masquerade. Some people chose graduation or tailgating. My group chose finals: a slow masquerade ceremony that began with the subject embodying the spirit of a stressed-out college student who must interact with several different peripheral maskers on the way, including the textbook (me), notes and a blue book. The ceremony culminated in a dance between the student and the computer (another masker, who periodically froze to reflect the slow condition of the laptops we all used). Much like our own fates that day, it ended with a grade.

I still see masking rituals in the people and culture around me. When I started searching the Studio Museum’s collection, I was happy to find that my interest in masking was shared by a number of artists who either create masking rituals of their own or employ masks from different African peoples as part of larger works. For example, Robert Pruitt’s *Pretty for a Black Girl* (2005) features a drawing of a woman, perhaps a beauty queen, in strappy heels, a bikini and a sash, and carrying roses while wearing a Nimba mask. Pruitt adds recognizably African masks to his subjects to reference the duality of his sitters as African and American, while collapsing and questioning what many people see as the African past and American present.

Some interpretations of masks in the collection reference the style of masks. For example, Willie Cole’s *Domestic ID II* (1991) features iron scorches on two double-panel window frames. The imprints left by the hot iron closely resemble the minimalist marks of masks such as those used by the Pende and Dan peoples. Viewing these as anthropological objects, which masks are sometimes considered, Cole even labels the manufactures as “General Electric” or “Sunbeam,” as if those were cultures with masking practices of their own.

Whether artists fuse mask-like objects with contemporary consumer objects or mask their own subjects, it’s clear that I’m not the only one who sees masking everywhere.
One foot down, then hop! It’s hot.  
Good things for the ones that’s got. 
Another jump, now to the left.  
Everybody for hisself.

In the air, now both feet down.  
Since you black, don’t stick around.  
Food is gone, the rent is due,  
Curse and cry and then jump two.

All the people out of work,  
Hold for three, then twist and jerk.  
Cross the line, they count you out.  
That’s what hopping’s all about.

Both feet flat, the game is done.  
They think I lost, I think I won.

In memory of Maya Angelou (1924–2014),  
we are honored to reproduce her poem,  
*Harlem Hopscotch*.  
Reprinted with permission from Random House.
Elsewhere

by Thelma Golden,
Director and Chief Curator

Jacob Lawrence
The Migration Series, 1940–41
Panel 1: “During the World War there was a great migration North by Southern Negroes.”
Courtesy The Philips Collection, Washington, D.C.
© 2015 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
Beyond

Elsewhere

One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence’s Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North
April 3–September 7, 2015
Museum of Modern Art
New York, New York
moma.org

This April, MoMA marks the centennial of the beginning of the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North with an ambitious exhibition highlighting the ways in which painter Jacob Lawrence and others developed a set of innovative artistic strategies to offer perspectives on this crucial episode in American history. One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence’s Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North features sixty tempera paintings Lawrence completed in 1941 depicting radically new visions of the black American experience. Other accounts of the Great Migration—including novels and poems by Langston Hughes, music by Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday, photographs by Dorothea Lange and Gordon Parks, and paintings by Romare Bearden and Charles White—contextualize the landmark masterwork. One-Way Ticket also encompasses an extensive program of events, performances, digital resources, publications and commissions exploring the Great Migration’s wide-reaching impact on American culture, politics and society.

Don’t miss some of our favorite traveling exhibitions!

When The Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South
February 4–May 10, 2015
Institute of Contemporary Art
Boston, Massachusetts

Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist
March 6–August 31, 2015
Chicago Cultural Center
Chicago, Illinois

February 7–May 24, 2015
Hammer Museum
Los Angeles, California
Elsewhere

Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic
February 20–May 24, 2015
Brooklyn Museum
Brooklyn, New York
brooklynmuseum.org

This spring, our friends at the Brooklyn Museum will present the first museum survey of Kehinde Wiley’s illustrious fourteen-year career. A Studio Museum Artist-in-Residence alum and the subject of our 2008 exhibition The World Stage: Africa, Lagos ~ Dakar, Wiley approaches the complicated intersections of race, gender, class and power in the politics of representation. *Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic* will feature an exciting range of the artist’s work, from his early portrait paintings inspired by Harlem street life, to his ongoing “World Stage” series, to recent explorations in female portraiture, stained glass and bronze sculpture.

Kehinde Wiley
The Sisters Zénaïde and Charlotte Bonaparte, 2014
Courtesy Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, California
© Kehinde Wiley
I am very excited about two exhibitions presenting incredible series by artist and photojournalist Gordon Parks! Currently on view at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, *Gordon Parks: Segregation Story* features more than forty color prints documenting the daily life of an African-American family in segregated Alabama. As you may recall, the Studio Museum’s 2012–13 exhibition *Gordon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967* featured Parks’s photographs of Harlem’s Fontenelle family. The photographs in *Segregation Story* were taken for a moving *LIFE* magazine article in the 1950s and offer a look at Parks’s seminal social documentary practice in vibrant, captivating color.

At the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, *Gordon Parks: Back to Fort Scott* is largely informed by the photographer’s life story. Returning on assignment in 1950 to the Kansas town he left some twenty years earlier, Parks captured photographs that are engaged with personal memories of his childhood and also document the realities of living under racial discrimination. Both exhibitions are proudly presented in collaboration with The Gordon Parks Foundation.

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**Gordon Parks: Segregation Story**

November 5, 2014–June 7, 2015

*High Museum of Art*

Atlanta, Georgia

[high.org](http://high.org)

**Gordon Parks: Back to Fort Scott**

January 17–September 13, 2015

*Museum of Fine Arts Boston*

Boston, Massachusetts

[mba.org](http://mba.org)

Top Left:
Gordon Parks

*Untitled, Chicago, Illinois, 1950*

Courtesy The Gordon Parks Foundation

© The Gordon Parks Foundation

Top Right:
Gordon Parks

*Untitled, Shady Grove, Alabama, 1956*

Courtesy The Gordon Parks Foundation

© The Gordon Parks Foundation
Elsewhere

Project Gallery: Gary Simmons
Perez Art Museum Miami
November 14, 2014–October 4, 2015
Miami, Florida
pamm.org

Our colleagues down at the Perez Art Museum Miami have commissioned my dear friend Gary Simmons to create a work for the museum’s double-height project gallery. Taking up the back wall of the gallery—thirty feet high by twenty-nine feet wide—Simmons’s mural painting features his signature erasure effect that suggests the inevitable fading nature of time, history and personal and collective memory.

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art
January 10–April 5, 2015
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
philamuseum.org

An expansive showcase of art created by African Americans since the early 1800s, Represent: 200 Years of African American Art is a total must-see this exhibition season. The exhibition draws from the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s outstanding holdings and ranges from decorative pieces by free and enslaved individuals to works by prolific figures such as Glenn Ligon, Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson. A thrilling showcase of painting, sculpture, photographs, drawings, prints, furniture, ceramics, silver and textiles, Represent traces the multitude of ways African-American artists have explored varying notions of identity as their access to artistic training and opportunities for mainstream prominence have increased throughout American history. Curated by Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Associate Professor of American Art, University of Pennsylvania, and John Vick, Project Curatorial Assistant, Philadelphia Museum of Art, this exhibition will be accompanied by a major catalogue.

Kara Walker
no world (from the “An Unpeopled Land in Uncharted Waters series”), 2010
Philadelphia Museum of Art; purchased with the Marion Stroud Fund for Contemporary Art on Paper, 2010-142-1
© Kara Walker

Gary Simmons
Frozen in Time (installation view), 2014
Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York
Photo: Gideon Barnett
I am thrilled that Canada will host its first major retrospective of Jean-Michel Basquiat’s work. Jean-Michel Basquiat: Now’s the Time will feature a thematic installation of close to eighty-five large-scale paintings and drawings from private collections and public museums across Europe and North America, and will be accompanied by an original exhibition catalogue.

I am especially looking forward to this year’s Venice Biennale in large part because the inimitable curator, scholar and critic Okwui Enwezor will curate the 56th International Art Exhibition. Having organized formative exhibitions across the world, including documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany, the Gwangju and Seville Biennials, as well as Paris’s La Triennale, Enwezor has long been recognized for tackling historical misrepresentations of Africa by bringing postcolonial African and diasporic artists to the foreground of contemporary critical discourse. His appointment as the Venice Biennale’s artistic director marks the first time an African curator has organized the 120-year-old exhibition, and stands as a necessary acknowledgement of the vital global scope with which Enwezor approaches all his curatorial projects. Through this year’s Biennale, Enwezor will address the way contemporary art attempts to establish new understandings of current political, cultural, economic and social unrest. Titled All the World’s Futures and composed of contributions from fifty-three participating countries, the exhibition will be a multifaceted project composed of three “filters” through which core thematic ideas will be examined: “Liveness: On epic duration,” “Capital: A Live Reading” and “Garden of Disorder.” Venice’s historical identity as a city that looked outwards toward the rest of the world through cultural and commercial exchange make it an apt venue for the broad, global perspective and understanding that Enwezor will be sure to bring to Europe’s oldest contemporary art exhibition.
In Memoriam Geoffrey Holder

by Alani Bass, Communications Assistant

Through an expansive career in the performing and visual arts, Geoffrey Holder (1930–2014) left an unparalleled legacy on American culture.

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Holder knew since childhood that he would devote his life to two things: dancing and painting. He made his performing debut at the tender age of seven with the Holder Dance Company, a troupe founded by his older brother Boscoe. By 1952, Holder was not only an accomplished dancer but also a devoted painter. Two years later, he made his New York stage debut in, and contributed as a choreographer to, the 1954 production of *House of Flowers*.

With a persona as grand as the Broadway stage, Holder quickly and unsurprisingly began a dramatic ascent in the multifaceted world of New York culture. He went on to become a principal dancer with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and establish himself as an actor in roles in *Waiting for Godot* (1957) and *All Night Long* (1962). In the midst of performing in and directing his own dance company, painting remained a constant for Holder. Never wanting to be recognized as simply “an actor/dancer who paints,” Holder proved that he could simultaneously master both with grace and ease when he was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship to study painting in 1957. Characterized
by bright colors, quick brushstrokes and the spirit of his Caribbean home, Holder’s paintings are enlivened with gentle power and elegance. They have been exhibited in museums around the country and have also found a home in the permanent collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Holder’s award-winning career spanned six decades, including two Tony awards for Best Direction of a Musical and Best Costume Design for *The Wiz* (1975). He was an artistic visionary and innovator, capable of constructing magical experiences, whether it was through dance, direction or his art. His legacy as a maker blossomed at a moment that was harmonious with the birth of institutions such as the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the Studio Museum. Holder later contributed his multitude of talents to these very institutions and established himself as one of many tireless champions of black cultural production.

Holder is survived by his wife, the acclaimed dancer, actress and choreographer Carmen de Lavallade, and son Leo Anthony Lamont Holder. He will be remembered in his many roles as a dancer, actor, painter, director and choreographer, but he will be forever cherished as a husband and father.
niv Acosta is interested in creating a history for himself. Acosta is a dancer, choreographer and artist who is interested in exposing the structures of social and artistic performance. From 2006 to 2008 Acosta attended California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles and during the summers, the American Dance Festival at Duke University in North Carolina.

His performance series, “denzel” (2009–14), was inspired by the trailer to the 1989 film Glory, starring the iconic actor Denzel Washington. The trailer signaled for Acosta a series of contrasts and contradictions—black soldiers marching to the drum-heavy crescendo of the German composition “O Fortuna”—imbued with the archetype that Washington now represents. At a moment in which the Studio Museum is considering many of the unique ways that artists have engaged Ebony and Jet in their practices, I became increasingly interested in the iconography gracing its covers. A permanent fixture across the pages of both magazines, Washington stands in as the cultural ideal of black masculinity in the mainstream media. There is Denzel the man and Denzel the ideal, and Acosta is interested in interrogating the latter.

The six performances that make up the series—denzel (2010), denzel prelude (2010), denzel again (2011), denzel mini petite b a t h t u b happy meal (2011–12), denzel superstructure (2011) and i shot denzel (2014)—blur the
lines between dance, music, text and sculpture. Within these performances, “denzel” acts as a frame within which to question black masculinity and the performance of such. They suggest the existence of a spectrum illustrated by the insertion of Acosta’s own lived experience. “Obviously I am of a subversive masculine identity,” niv explains, “I was socialized female and then assumed the identity of masculine and then finally started passing as male.”

Meaning swaps and shifts within these performances, which becomes evident in Acosta’s use of music. For *i shot denzel*, Acosta employed three distinct musical touchstones: Louisiana funeral processions (“jazz funerals”); “El Amor De Mi Vida” by Camilo Sesto, a Spanish ballad about a gender-ambiguous unrequited love; and Igor Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring,” a 1913 avant-garde ballet that, quite literally, caused a riot in Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées when it debuted. The idea of clashing sound or polyrhythm functions as a rhetorical frame for this performance. Similar to the trailer for *Glory*, Acosta creates a certain dissonance by juxtaposing Western musical compositions with cultural movement based practices such as vogueing. The contrast complicates idealized performances of black masculinity.

Acosta is creating a history for himself and delicately weaving all of us into it.

In *i shot denzel*, Acosta implicates the audience in a critical moment, when the lights come up. Through lighting design and the configuration of the audience, Acosta chips away at the distinction between performer and audience, which makes us all complicit in the rigid binaries his work is deconstructing. We watch as Acosta exorcises “denzel” from his body by repeatedly throwing himself against a white wall on stage in a reimagining of Stravinsky’s virgin sacrifice scene. Questions of life, death and absence permeate Acosta’s work. Yes, there is the spectacular, but there is also the delicately poetic.

Acosta is currently working on an even more ambitious project for the New Museum’s 2015 Triennial, complete with disco, sci-fi, astrology and the appropriation of speculative narrative as coping mechanism. I must admit, I’m quite eager to escape into the aesthetic of disco ideology, which brings to mind Afrofuturism and the Studio Museum’s 2013 exhibition *The Shadows Took Shape*. This current work is concerned with locating a black American experience within astrological phenomenon and narrative, it’s about carving out a decidedly queer and trans space, it’s about the margins—and maybe writing in them a bit.
Shout Out to Africa!

by Malaika Langa,
Finance Manager

While my job at the Museum is Finance Manager, I have a great passion for film. I’m particularly interested in the diverse and growing body of cinema created by writers, directors and actors from all over the continent of Africa. Here are some of my favorites! In each, Africans tell their own stories, reflecting a myriad of cultures and worldviews.

The Legend of the Sky Kingdom (2004)
Director: Roger Hawkins

From Zimbabwe comes Africa’s first feature-length animated film, an homage to African folk artists. Using “junk animation,” the filmmakers have created the characters and landscapes from found objects. The Legend of the Sky Kingdom tells the story of three orphans who follow their faith to escape the evil ruler of an underground city in search of freedom in the legendary, titular realm.

Directors: Jean-Jacques Flori, Stéphane Tchalgadjieff

Pulsating with the pioneering music, political activism and raw energy of Afrobeat creator and legend Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Music Is the Weapon uses live performances and interviews to document Kuti’s resistance to the Nigerian military regime, social advocacy and impact as an ambassador for African culture.

Mama Africa (2011)
Director: Mika Kaurismäki

Miriam Makeba embodied Africa’s aspirations and struggles. Mama Africa offers an intense portrait of the global influence of this artist, activist and freedom fighter. The film profiles Makeba’s music with traditional South African roots, and also delves into the political firestorms created by her resistance to apartheid and support of Pan-Africanism.

Kwaku Ananse (2013)
Director: Akosua Adoma Owusu

The fable of Kwaku Ananse, the spider, intertwines with the story of a young woman, Nyan Koronhwea, who returns to Ghana to attend the funeral of her estranged father.

Lumumba (2000)
Director: Raoul Peck

Raoul Peck’s engaging feature captures the international political crisis that led to the rise of Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, and the intrigue that led to Lumumba’s downfall and assassination.
Beyond Call Me Kuchu (2012)
Directors: Katherine Fairfax Wright, Malika Zouhali-Worrall
Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) advocacy and litigation officer David Kato is profiled in this riveting documentary. “Kuchu” is a derogatory word describing LGBT people in Uganda. As an openly gay man, Kato lost his life advocating for his community, human rights and an end to discrimination in the form of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act. The film offers a rare in-depth look at the everyday lives and struggles of LGBT people in Africa.

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Shout Out to Africa!

Restless City (2011)
Director: Andrew Dosunmu
Djibril, a Senegalese musician trying to make it in the Restless City, connects with Trini, a woman living on the edge, in this dreamlike feature from photographer Andrew Dosunmu. The backdrop for this atmospheric film is Harlem, its vibrant streets captured with beautiful cinematography. Mother of George (2013), Dosunmu’s acclaimed second feature, follows the experiences of a Nigerian couple trying to conceive.

Call Me Kuchu (2012)
Directors: Katherine Fairfax Wright, Malika Zouhali-Worrall
Beyond Call Me Kuchu

Film Picks

Baptiste Black Girl (1966)
Director: Ousmane Sembene
Widely considered the father of African cinema, Ousmane Sembene made Black Girl, a seminal work about colonialism, racism and cultural perception. The story revolves around Diouana, a young African woman who leaves Senegal to work for a wealthy French couple, only to find her expectations of a better life thwarted and her sense of self and identity degraded. Others films by Sembene include Xala (1975), which takes political corruption as its theme, and Moolaadé (2004), which addresses the practice of female genital mutilation.

Train Train Medina (2001)
Director: Dout Mohamadou Ndoye
Dout Mohamadou Ndoye uses paper cutouts, recycled materials and sand to reflect on the environment. Using stop-motion animation and a soundtrack composed of city noises, Ndoye creates a village on a background of sand. The village swells to become a teeming city, which nature eventually destroys, returning the landscape to sand.

Aya de Yopougon (2013)
Directors: Marguerite Abouet, Clément Oubrie
Aya de Yopougon is based on the graphic novel series by Marguerite Abouet. The animated feature shows middle-class life in 1970s Ivory Coast, where the independent Aya, voiced by actress Aïssa Maïga, aspires to become a doctor, while her friends aspire to other interesting and humorous endeavors in a bustling neighborhood known as Yop City.
William Greaves

A Documentary Revolutionary

by Malaika Langa, Finance Manager

Born in Harlem on October 8, 1926, Greaves grew up on 135th Street and Lenox Avenue. He first won critical acclaim as an actor with the American Negro Theater, where he performed with Ruby Dee in John Loves Mary (1947). Greaves studied at the Actors Studio with Lee Strasberg. In the 1950s, Greaves honed his filmmaking skills at the National Film Board of Canada and held staff positions at United Nations Television and United States Information Agency. His films First World Festival of Negro Arts (1966), Still a Brother: Inside the Negro Middle Class (1968), Ali, the Fighter (1971) and From These Roots (1974) changed prevailing negative images of African Americans while pioneering filmic and narrative techniques that have set the standard for documentary films. Greaves won an Emmy as Executive Producer of Black Journal, the first television news magazine devoted to covering the black community.

In 2003, Greaves created Symbiopsycho, the follow-up adds another layer of realism and context to the themes first visited in his 1968 groundbreaking film.

Acclaimed director, producer and editor William Greaves (1926–2014) reimagined and revolutionized documentary film by using the medium as a platform for social engagement. Greaves’s landmark film Symbio-psychotaxiplasm: Take One (1968) is an avant-garde, cinema verité work that challenges notions of reality, narrative structure and temporality.

Influenced by Arthur F. Bentley’s Inquiry Into Inquiries: Essays in Social Theory, Greaves used the interaction between audience members, actors and filmmakers in Symbiopsycho, to show the interconnectedness of society and how individuals can be empowered to confront authority, through an allegory of the political and social movements of the 1960s.

In 2003, Greaves created Symbio-psychotaxiplasm: Take 2 1/2 (2003). Executive produced by Stephen Soderbergh, the film reunites two of the actors from the original and delves deeper into the psychology of the two lead characters. As in the first film, Greaves reveals the process of the filmmaker and lays bare the subtle nuances and variations of character, story, light and sound that can influence audience perception.
Beyond Studio Visit

Tony Lewis

by Dana Liss, Communications Coordinator

Like his drawings, the walls and floors of Tony Lewis’s studio are covered in graphite powder, a material that is near-impossible to contain. At one point, the Chicago-based artist—who earned his BA in Psychology and Art from Washington & Jefferson College in 2008 and his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2012—had worked hard to keep his workspace pristine and drawings free from marks and smudges. But eventually the graphite powder prevailed, and its presence became a condition of both the studio and the art made in it. In some ways, Lewis’s studio space is indicative of his practice in general, organized by the number of projects that he is working on concurrently. He has long been interested in how language is used to represent race and convey subjectivity, and each body of work stems from particular textual sources—or narratives, as Lewis refers to them—some of which Lewis invented, others which he appropriated.

One text that Lewis appropriates is the 1991 coffee table book, *Life’s Little Instruction Book: 511 Suggestions, Observations, and Reminders on How to Live a Happy and Rewarding Life*. Drawn to this book’s language, for its audacious simplicity and matter-of-fact tone, Lewis isolates quotes from the book and re-presents the advice in various forms of drawing. To make *362-Know when to keep silent* (2014), Lewis first drew the statement across a ten-foot wall, and then used nails to outline the shape of each letter and stretched graphite powder–coated rubber bands around the nails. In this context, the words not only have an embedded sense of irony, but they also raise questions about authority and voice in language.

Another body of work starts from a narrative that Lewis wrote, a short statement that is a conglomeration of euphemisms for black people. Like in the wall drawings, in these works on paper, Lewis assigns a material quality to language and text. *peoplecol* (2013), which was included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial, comingles words and letters with erasures, smudges and meandering lines, and encourages viewers to move away from reading what is recognizable and toward looking at the forms that make up the composition. Another work that samples from Lewis’s statement, *dope repoa* (2012), posits a different iteration of this text-as-image. By breaking down language to the level of pure, formal mark-making, Lewis’s works confound drawing and writing, and generate a host of interpretations of his text.

A new body of work that Lewis is currently making uses Gregg shorthand (the most popular form of stenography) as textual source material. In a 2000 essay on drawing, Benjamin Buchloh characterizes drawing practices in the twentieth century using the dialectic of matrix and grapheme.1 Simply put, according to Buchloh, “matrix” refers to the representation of objects and the perspective of the picture plane, while the “grapheme” model of drawing is expressive, a performance of the subject. Lewis’s new works bring to mind Buchloh’s essay because they package language—the lines and squiggles that make up Gregg shorthand—as simultaneously objective and subjective, matrix and grapheme. By omitting the familiar Roman alphabet, the Gregg shorthand works further Lewis’s ongoing investigation and deconstruction of language, and continue to question and subvert fundamental notions of communication.


Tony Lewis

*362 - Know when to keep silent*, 2014
Courtesy the artist; Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago; Massimo De Carlo, London
Photo: Genevieve Hanson

Tony Lewis

*peoplecol*, 2013
Courtesy the artist; Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago; Massimo De Carlo, London
Photo: Robert Chase Heishman

Next Page:
Tony Lewis

*peoplecol*, 2013
Courtesy the artist; Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago; Massimo De Carlo, London
Photo: Robert Chase Heishman
peoplecollected people
Remembering Gilda Snowden

A celebrated artist, educator and lifelong supporter of the arts in her native Detroit, Gilda Snowden (1954–2014) lived a full life committed to investigating the cultural identity of the art world at large. Known for her robust, figurative paintings and enthusiastic approach to arts education, Snowden taught painting at the College for Creative Studies (CCS) for over thirty years, and inspired many young artists who’ve gone on to be involved with the Museum. In celebration of her legacy, Snowden’s husband, students and colleagues describe her magnificent energy.

by Nico Wheaddon,
Public Programs Manager

William G. Boswell

I married Gilda Snowden in 1987 after a six-year courtship. She didn’t take my name because hers was already a recognized name in the art community in Detroit and she was blessed with a healthy ego. I always thought her art was truly original and many times stunningly exquisite. I always hoped she liked my poetry as much. The highest compliment she paid me was that her father told her, “Don’t ever marry someone who’s not as smart as you,” and then she married me. Our life was a joy of wit and friendly arguments. I watched her style evolve over the years from construction pieces coated with encaustic in earthy reds, browns and black, up to the last of her paintings, a six-by-twelve-foot landscape of brilliant colors of acrylic that she called a double tornado. I also watched her interaction with her colleagues, her art community and her students. I had never seen anyone write so many letters of recommendation. She constantly informed others about grants, upcoming shows, fellowships and awards, and encouraged them to try. At a recent student show that was a tribute to her, I cried when I read the sincere expressions of her student’s praises of her encouragement, teaching style and mentoring. As one said, “It won’t be the same.” One of the most instructive things said to me by an artist colleague was that “she brought people together.” Gilda was connected to every art organization I had heard of, and I’m sure some more I hadn’t, but she was always connecting people in the Detroit art community with people and art organizations in and beyond Detroit. Gilda and I have a daughter, Katherine Snowden Boswell, who was and is the center of our lives, but Gilda’s love included us all.

William G. Boswell is a published poet and has worked at the Detroit Repertory Theatre for fifty years as an actor, director and drama instructor.
Remembering Gilda Snowden

Kevin Beasley

Gilda was a believer in the struggles of artists and deeply understood what it means to support those who embark on this journey. Her studio practice was fierce and her intensity rubbed off on those around her. Gilda’s contagious laughter still rings vividly in my head and reminds me that to maintain an art practice, one must be open in life—that one can be kind, jubilant, smart, generous and respectful without sacrificing the rigor and criticality of one’s work. Through these lessons one discovered what it meant not only to be persevering artist, but also to be a person living at their greatest capacity.

Chido Johnson

Detroit’s postindustrial landscape has fueled artists for decades in their attempts to grasp its brutal reality: a physical decay commonly fetishized into ruin porn. The recent resurgence of social practice in Detroit shifted the large subject of our gaze from its landscape to its people. In the midst of these experiences, one Detroit artist looked beyond the gray, foggy environment and saw strong colors. Gilda’s vibrant paintings grow as layers upon layers of color are pushed, pulled, mixed, poured and shaped. This is how Gilda nourished us and illuminated the brilliant color in our lives. She affected many far beyond Detroit with her great modesty and humility.

Sabrina Nelson

Edith Warton writes, “There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.” Gilda was a master in creating a life of making and giving. As a student of hers in the late 1980s, I was lost navigating the maze of art school and art making in the historically white, male-dominated field. I was upset that, by senior year, I had yet to learn about any black artists. Gilda encouraged me to acquire and share the knowledge I sought, and empowered me to develop the class, “How Come Ain’t No Brothers on the Wall?,” the first of its type in the department.

Shani Peters

I had the great fortune and misfortune of meeting Gilda for the first time in 2013—fortunate for the opportunity to experience her curiosity, generosity and humility first-hand, and unfortunate because that opportunity was so short-lived. She sat casually among her students as I prepared for the guest lecture I was to give, thinking to myself, “Could that possibly be the acclaimed Art-Godmother I’d heard so much about?” There was no fanfare, or air of someone waiting to be impressed. Instead, I found enthusiasm, warmth and love. These qualities were evident in her character and in her work. That’s the kind of life that lives on and on.

Kevin Beasley was a 2013–14 artist in residence at the Studio Museum and received his MFA from Yale University and BFA from CCS.

Chido Johnson is an associate professor and the section chair of sculpture at CCS.

Sabrina Nelson is a graduate of CCS and teaches at the Detroit Institute of Arts Museum.

Shani Peters is a Harlem-based artist who completed her BA at Michigan State University and her MFA at the City College of New York.
Features
It's been a big year for Samuel Levi Jones. The Bay Area artist was awarded the 2014 Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, and will have his New York debut this spring in Samuel Levi Jones: Unbound at the Studio Museum. We invited his friend and mentor Mark Bradford to interview him at this exciting moment. Jones first met Bradford just over two years ago, when Jones was a newly minted MFA from Mills College in Oakland, California. Jones had been working with encyclopedias as a graduate student he found himself questioning the direction of his work, particularly his choice of material. Bradford encouraged him to continue his investigation of encyclopedias—advice that the younger artist credits as instrumental to his practice today.
Yes, there is a great deal of information in them, but there is also an entire world of knowledge that is excluded. Through my making I am thinking about the existence of this construct and the cultural ramifications of how we respond and react to it.

Mark Bradford: You were originally trained as a photographer, but now your work has evolved to disassembling objects such as encyclopedias and medical reference books. What precipitated your decision to change course? Do you view this transition as a change or continuation of your interests?

Samuel Levi Jones: The camera was an entryway into my art practice. In college, I was introduced to the 35 mm film camera and became fascinated by the whole process of imagemaking—from composing through the viewfinder through creating the silver print in the darkroom. Even though my recent work has evolved from photographed images to images created from other materials, the process is definitely a continuation of how I previously executed my work. Throughout this journey I have always created as a reaction to personal ideas and experiences within and around me. As my ideas have progressed, it has become necessary to find new materials, and techniques to work with them in an authentic way. The camera no longer serves my current process. It is my intention to work with the best possible medium to express what is going on in my head.

MB: What is your relationship to these objects? For example, did you grow up with encyclopedias?

SLJ: I grew up using encyclopedias for research. I specifically remember using them in junior high school. I remember these reference books being considered a true source for information, and that some other forms of source material were considered illegitimate. In my use of encyclopedias, I am considering the vast amount of information that never makes it into these objects.

SLJ: In my initial investigation of the encyclopedia during graduate school, I was thinking about the power of the encyclopedia and its reputation as a complete source of information about the world we live in. In the process of flipping through each and every page of this first set of books, I became unsettled. I began removing the formal portraits from each page to
create visual juxtapositions between high and low representation. This led to 736 Portraits and 48 Portraits (underexposed) (both 2012). As I was working with only one, black-and-white encyclopedia set, 736 Portraits and 48 Portraits (underexposed) are without color. It was not too long after school that you and I met, and you questioned where I was going with my work. I mentioned that I was considering a complete departure from the encyclopedia material. You challenged me to stick with it and dig deeper. I quickly realized the rich versatility of the material once I began further deconstructing the books. The deeper investigation that came from pushing myself to stay with it has been the most significant part thus far—not allowing myself to settle for one layer of discovery, but rather continuing to ask questions and looking for answers within.

**MB:** How do you source your materials and what is your process?

**SLJ:** A good deal of my material is found via the web. I recently completed a residency at a waste-management facility in San Francisco called Recology. All the material that I used for the work I created there was reclaimed from someone’s trash. I still acquire a lot of my material through purchase, but there is a great deal of it out there that is being discarded. My process consists of breaking down the source material then reconstructing it into something visually interesting in order to generate dialogue about the original material itself.

**MB:** Your work starts with found materials (encyclopedias, reference books, etc.), which are then transformed and abstracted. What would you say about the push-and-pull that exists between the abstract and figurative elements in your work?

**SLJ:** Visually the work is abstract, but the materials are very concrete. I feel the abstraction is a way of challenging the viewer to spend time with the work and the ideas. I attempt to create the work in such way that the viewer can’t approach it with an immediate reaction of, “Oh, books,” but rather have a many-layered experience. In 48 Portraits (underexposed), I have observed viewers looking at the grid and thinking they are seeing only black squares. Only after they are encouraged to spend more time with the work do they find the figures. The push-and-pull for me is about challenging people to slow down the process of experience, and to look and question.

**MB:** How does your use of the modernist grid format relate to your materials’ content? If the modernist grid declares the autonomy of art, do you see your work in any way removing its source material from the social realm?

**SLJ:** For the most part, the shape of the material lends itself to a grid format. In some of the most recent work I have broken the material down further to get away from the grid a little. These works that do not fall into a grid format are simply about pushing the work visually. The conceptual process of breaking down the material is cathartic, and the reconstruction is more playful.

**MB:** You are an emerging artist who has just been awarded the Wein Prize. How has this newfound recognition affected your work? Has your notion of your personal success changed or evolved over your career, and does it continue to do so?

**SLJ:** The recognition has definitely pushed me to challenge myself more and with greater enthusiasm. I feel that it has created a deeper ambition to continue challenging myself to push my work. My notion of personal success has been changing for a long time. I feel as though I have navigated my journey without particular long-term expectations. That is not to say that I have not challenged myself to achieve some sort of success. I just didn’t know the area in which that success would manifest. I would say that my expectations have evolved.

My passion for art did not begin until I was twenty-three. When I moved from Indiana to California for graduate school, my expectation was to have a career teaching photography at a university. I had little understanding of what it meant to be a successful practicing artist, or that I would even exist within that context.
Recently I sat down with photographers Isaac Diggs and Edward Hillel to discuss their new collaborative project, *125th Street: Time in Harlem*. The photograph series, beautifully showcased in their book of the same name, highlights the dramatic changes on 125th Street over a remarkably short period. We discussed their process, the importance of black spaces and how one street has become an iconic part of the Harlem community.

**Adeze Wilford**: What motivated you to start working on this project together?

**Edward Hillel**: When I met Isaac I was involved in various community groups that were studying the zoning plan that the city had offered for 125th Street. There were hundreds of people from Harlem wondering what the future of the street is going to do to the memory of this community and surrounding areas. So I was concerned about those issues and photographing 125th from that point of view.

**Isaac Diggs**: I think more than other artists responding, it was about people. We really had quite a dynamic relationship with people on the street who saw us working, and they could choose whether to participate or not.

**AW**: I loved the collaboration aspect of this project, because when you think of a photographer you think of a singular person making a photo. But you captured the collaborative effort really well. What were the responses from other artists when you were talking about this project?

**EH**: Franco Gaskin is part of the history of 125th Street. In the early eighties, Gaskin began painting the grates that are on many storefronts. He painted more than eighty of them, and only twenty-five remain. A lot have been destroyed as buildings have gone. He was very happy to be involved and to have his grates memorialized.

**AW**: What were the responses from other artists when you were talking about this project?
AW: That’s a huge characteristic of 125th Street, the characters that populate it. The drummers’ circle on Tuesday evenings is always going to be there. It’s a constant and people really respond to the street as a community in and of itself. That seems like what you were responding to.

ID: Exactly, and that’s one of the reasons why this book works. There is that sense of community amidst all of this change. You have H&M or Starbucks or AT&T, but you’re still going to have your drummers’ circle. I think that tension is really interesting to visualize.

EH: The other aspect is that people had time to get to know us because we were there. We weren’t stealing a picture. They’re a part of the landscape, so we became part of the landscape.

AW: In your book, you write about main streets in America and the idea of 125th Street functioning as a main street versus “Main Street” in other locations. Edward, you addressed 125th as a backbone of commerce and culture for Harlem. What’s the difference between the flux that’s happening here versus in Detroit? Do you think there’s a comparison to what’s going on in this community?

ID: I’m smiling because our next project is in Detroit. We’ve already started and it’s a very different take from a lot of the photographic books about Detroit that are simply about ruins. I feel really excited about where Harlem is going. It’s complicated but I feel like Harlem will always be an important community, primarily for African Americans.

AW: And I think of Harlem as this place of blackness and black history and black space that’s important.

ID: And that’s what draws them here. You have to understand that if you’re not going to damage that space as things change. The vibrancy, the color, the energy, that’s all here because of those things.

EH: People talk about gentrification in Detroit or other places, but Harlem is really very specific—it’s 125th Street and everything around it, of course. I think what really fascinates me about 125th Street is that that black space we’re talking about is almost bigger than the American experience.
AW: Can we expand a little on your work Bling #2 (2002) that was featured in Frequency? The scenes you highlighted are tied to ways people behave as consumers and performing culture. How do you see the idea of consumerism and the black body evolving in terms of this changing community?

ID: I think in that work I was very much aware and interested in the ideas of black sexuality and the body, and how they are played out in public space. During these African-American beach parties you have people almost reenacting scenes from popular culture—ideas that they had about what it meant to be masculine or feminine on a public beach with kids and the elderly and other people. So my work shifted to being less concerned about the body and more about space. How do we take up space and how do we use space? Thinking about the beach and these public spaces. What does black space look like? And I think that’s why my interest in working with Edward dovetailed nicely, because we can look at how culture is a direct reflection of the space we can occupy. In my own work since then, I’ve been working in Los Angeles, and trying to get a grip on that city and how issues of space are reflected there.

EH: And the challenge is always to make a work that will connect with you, so whatever the medium is or whatever reality you’re dealing with, the challenge remains to figure out a way to make a picture that will connect with the audience and open up a way for you to tell a story. It’s quite challenging when you’re dealing with just a street.
My Harlem

by Amanda Hunt,
Assistant Curator

Lorraine O’Grady
Art Is. . . (Woman with Stripes), 1983/2009
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York
©2014 Lorraine O’Grady / Artist’s Rights Society (ARS), New York
On September 21, 2014, I attended the 47th Annual African American Day Parade in Harlem. This grand processional stretches up Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, beginning at the top of Central Park at 110th Street, all the way to its culminating point at 136th Street. Having just returned to New York—and particularly to Harlem, my new home in this beloved, unwieldy metropolis—after five years in California, I was set on marking this next chapter in my life by attending a historic communal gathering and getting to know a few of my neighbors. To my delight, I encountered a number of local proprietors and storytellers throughout the day who helped me to paint a picture of Harlem’s past, present and foreseeable future. I live at the very top of Harlem, in the Sugar Hill area.

It is a richly storied microclimate within what is an already incredible cultural polestar. Harlem historically encompasses a legacy of creative genesis (and genius), of black-owned businesses and financial independence, and the right of black people to thrive in a geographical pocket dedicated as their own. There is not a day that goes by—on my way to work or in quiet moments in my apartment in a building named after a famed black, turn-of-the-century poet—that I don’t feel the comfort and weight of its history.

The parade possessed a deeply humanizing effect. There were various fraternities and sororities comprised of black, white, Latino, etc., folks marching, many of whom are the people we do not have the opportunity to acknowledge or celebrate because their work is, though essential, largely invisible. I inserted myself into the crowd of bystanders, and the first group of participants I caught sight of was a self-identified Scottish faction of the police force playing “Amazing Grace” on bagpipes. Their somber dirge was followed by a colorful float filled with municipal workers from Parks & Recreation, who danced atop a construct that sought to rival those seen at Carnival in Brazil. There was disco, there were drums. Then there were corrections officers who marched to represent their professional ilk, people who no doubt face horrors in the prison system on a daily basis. Following them was a group of young adults and children who led a step team with a strong sense of skill and self. All were visibly proud to contribute to this massive, historic convoy.

Typically, marches are motivated by other forces, such as when people galvanize in protest or to enact change. That very same day, midtown Manhattan was hosting the People’s Climate March in defense of the environment. In recent weeks, we have come to watch or participate in the many acts of protest in the wake of the failures of our justice system in the cases of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. The African American Day Parade functioned expressly as a celebration of the history of black culture and, from what I could see, incorporated many facets within this unified act. I was warmly reminded of Lorraine O’Grady’s 1983 performance

Art is . . . , in which she and other performers led a float, dancing and carrying around gilded frames in which the people of Harlem were encouraged and empowered to contextualize themselves within an artwork.

Above all, the African American Heritage Day Parade was a forum for self-expression. It offered a space for the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus, the National Association of Black Accountants, New York sanitation workers, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 237, the Penn & Scroll sorority and Order of the Feather fraternity, among many others, to march, in community. And to me, that is what The Studio Museum in Harlem, my new professional home, offers as its most fundamental and essential platform. Self-expression. Community. A shared space in which to celebrate a specific history.

At the end of the parade, a friend and I took a break at Miss Mamie’s Spoonbread on Lenox Avenue. Shortly after finishing our meal, two gentlemen (one younger with dreads, the other someone’s elegant grandfather) were seated next to us. They were dressed in beautiful period costumes, complete with muskets and a feather in each cap. Before I even had a chance to inquire, the elder offered: “Do you know who we are?” We replied that we did not. He proceeded to deliver a history: They represented the lesser-known 26th Regiment United States Colored Troops who had served, unrecognized, in the Civil War. These gentlemen had marched proudly in the parade that day, and their enthusiasm was infectious.

It was a beautiful exchange between strangers, and it reminded me of the value of our personal stories. I read recently that the great historian and collector of African-American literature Arthur Schomburg’s elementary school teacher informed him that he “had no history.” No child should ever endure the pain of being told such a lie. We all come from something. And for the purposes of sharing stories with strangers and celebrating a piece of my own history, I choose to live in Harlem. I am home now.
Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey

by Doris Zhao, Curatorial Intern

Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey features more than fifty of Bearden’s collages based on Homer's epics, and examines classical themes in literary narratives, particularly the heroic search for home and identity. Curated by Robert G. O’Meally, Zora Neale Hurston Professor of English and Comparative Literature and founder and former director of the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University, and organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the exhibition has traveled to seven venues so far. On view on at Columbia University’s Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery through March 14, the works are being exhibited in New York for the first time since their creation in 1977. Curatorial Intern Doris Zhao sat down with O’Meally to discuss the exhibition and Bearden’s relationship to Harlem.

Doris Zhao: What inspired you to pursue this project?

Robert G. O’Meally: I gave a lecture in 2005 about Bearden and classical themes. Bridget Moore, who owns DC Moore Gallery, attended the lecture and said to me, “Let’s do this show.” Working with Moore, I curated that show in 2007, which presented almost all of the collages and watercolors. Marquette Folley, from the Smithsonian, saw the show and said this should be a national traveling exhibition. This is a universal, modern, American and African-American tale.

DZ: Bearden’s interpretation of Homer’s Odyssey emphasizes the search for home as an African-American epic narrative. How do you interpret “home” in this series?

RGO: Edward Said wrote that the first stage of searching for “home” is a case of nostalgia, a baby form that we all experience. The next stage is where you feel at home anywhere you go. You can assert yourself in any community as you move. He said that the third stage is where you feel ill at ease everywhere you go. You’re always interrogating the world and I think Bearden had that. There’s always a question mark. In the “Odysseus” series, he gives us a very troubled home—but here’s a home where you have to ask what is going on. He’s not satisfied with what he’s finding. He wants to change it. That’s the way to look at Harlem. Bearden saw a beautiful, variegated, layered, complex community, but how are we going to maintain the greatest parts of it without closing it down, because that would defeat our vision of ourselves as global citizens of a global community.
DZ: Could you elaborate on the idea of Bearden as a jazz artist?

RGO: Bearden grew up with jazz, so it was part of the lingua franca, reflex and bone structure of the man. He talked about the experience of conversing with Stuart Davis and having Davis urge him to find visual equivalencies for the music that he loved. It was interesting for me to think about how some paintings are not explicitly about jazz, but are nonetheless improvisatory or have to do with the victories of facing the troubles that life brings. Bearden wanted you to feel something about the process, the layers, building it up and taking it down.

DZ: What is your own relationship to Harlem?

RGO: I grew up in Washington, D.C., which is an extension of Harlem. Black Washington had conditioned me to want to be here. I feel tremendous loyalty to Harlem as a beacon to the world. Insofar as this place stands for cultural richness, the highest standards we can imagine for proclaiming black life as whole magnetically alluring and beautiful, I identify with Harlem, very deeply. Thank God for The Studio Museum in Harlem. I’m just hopeful that somehow there’s a center that will hold as the neighborhood goes through the changes that all cities go through. Bearden as a Harlemite was a global citizen who never forgot where he was from. His visionary self-definition opens the door for all of us to a future where we can all hang together. We can all be drawn together. I’ll put it that way.
Whether you are a beginner or highly trained artist, you can connect with fellow art enthusiasts and discover your creative side through our adult art-making workshop series, Studio Squared. Studio Squared sessions are inspired by our exhibitions and designed to explore various modes of art making and creative expression in an informal, relaxed environment. Pulling from thematic elements and techniques on display, these workshops have something for everyone.

Our inaugural Studio Squared sessions were inspired by Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989. Each program began with a brief gallery tour to orient visitors to the work, followed by the hands-on activity. “Off the Grid” was a movement workshop hosted by Elliot Maltby for which guests created a series of rules to follow as they navigated the street. This was inspired by the systems and formulas that Gaines deployed in the “Regression” series. For example, participants might have to hold hands, walk in a circle and photograph every security camera they saw along the way. The last two workshops, “Numbers and Trees” and “Layers of Listening,” were visual arts activities.

“Numbers and Trees” was an en plein air drawing session at Marcus Garvey Park where guests sketched trees and made observational drawings. The workshop was influenced by the iconic trees throughout the exhibition. The last session featured musical selections curated by Gaines. Visitors were asked to paint and draw according to themes in the music. Later on, they traced portions of each other’s work. These were wonderful ways for audiences to engage with the exhibitions beyond the gallery space.

Studio Squared participants paint, sketch or sculpt depending on the prompt for the evening. Each teaching artist has been trained to give a tour of the works in the gallery, which allows the group to draw inspiration. Future workshops will include watercolor painting, figure drawing and walk-and-sketch tours. We hope that no matter your skill level or interests, you will be able to find a workshop that intrigues you. Studio Squared workshops are free with Museum admission, and supplies and refreshments are provided.

All photos: Nico Wheadon
Art Work, Two Ways

Godfried Donkor

by Doris Zhao, Curatorial Intern

Born in Kumasi, Ghana, in 1964, Godfried Donkor currently lives in London, where he primarily works in collage and printmaking. Since the 1980s, Donkor has created works that address the commodification of people of African descent in Europe and America. His mixed-media collages fuse symbols and images of the eighteenth-century slave trade with contemporary media, such as content sourced from magazines or newspapers. Donkor is interested in how black bodies are represented and marketed in various industries, from sports to music to modeling, particularly in print, as he views this medium as a common aesthetic space among different communities of people of African descent.

Donkor’s *Ebony Jo’burg edition*, *Ebony Lagos edition* and *Ebony Accra edition* (all 2014) address the magazine’s impact as an exported source of African-American life. This idea is significant to the artist, who grew up with no direct experience of African-American culture except that which was marketed, sold and circulated in mass media. In these three works, Donkor explores the relationship between *Ebony* and *Drum*, a South African magazine first published in the 1950s. Initially, *Drum* was designed to mirror *Ebony*’s aesthetic, and later differentiated itself with more politicized coverage of apartheid. Donkor juxtaposes imagery from both publications to examine the role of black Americans and Africans within greater systems of capitalism and globalization.

By incorporating elements from both publications into his collages, Donkor visually explores representations of people of African descent in the modern economy. The works are mixed-media collages on paper and are composed as periodical covers. With a sheet of newsprint reporting financial news as the base of each work, Donkor layers content from archival copies of *Ebony* and *Drum*. He places images of iconic athletes or models at the center of the collages, which form a poignant critique on how these individuals have been commodified and are used as sites of advertisement and commercialism. By incorporating a layer of lithographed eighteenth-century slave ships, Donkor further examines the evolving history of exploitation and capitalism. In *Ebony Accra edition*, Donkor uses the central image of Muhammad Ali with a band of purple, green and white printed slave ships. The work as a whole alludes to a periodical cover, as the artist added an archival *Ebony* logo and an image of a *Drum* cover. Interestingly, Donkor gives Ali a halo, which alludes to the dual nature of commodification, as both exploitation of an individual and ascent to popular sainthood or even martyrdom.
Introduction
Godfried Donkor’s work *Ebony Accra edition* (2014) provides students with an opportunity to explore the relationship between ideas and materials. Through visual inquiry and collage-making, educators can encourage students to use critical and creative thinking skills to investigate notions of identity and culture, share personal perspectives and further develop understanding of composition, pattern and color. Discussion topics and themes that emerge from Donkor’s artwork connect to New York State Learning Standards that focus on understanding relationships between social, cultural, political and historical aspects of the human experience.
Objective
To investigate identity through collage, and creatively express ideas through layering and juxtaposition of images.

Essential Question
How might you use collage to create a magazine cover that reflects your identity?

Materials
- Newspaper (various sections)
- Magazine cutouts (including objects, figures and shapes)
- Colored pencils
- Pastels
- Cardstock
- Drawing paper
- Tracing paper
- Scissors
- Glue

Vocabulary
- **Identity** is a person’s distinguishing characteristics or personality; sense of self.
- **Collage** is an assemblage of different materials that form a new whole and may contain items such as magazine and newspaper clippings or pieces of paper.
- **Print media** are portable, disposable publications such as newspapers, booklets and magazines.
- **Globalization** is the process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, is becoming standardized around the world. Factors that have contributed to globalization include increasingly sophisticated communications and transportation technologies and services, mass migration and the movement of peoples.
- **Capitalism** is a way of organizing an economy so that the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) are owned by individual people and companies rather than by governments.

Preparation
1. Display Godfried Donkor’s *Ebony Accra edition* and lead a visual inquiry to explore the image together. Questions may include: What do you notice first in the image? In what ways has the artist used text in the image? What connections can you make between the figure and other elements of the collage?
2. Introduce vocabulary words and draw connections to ideas that surfaced during the visual inquiry.
3. Set out the newspapers and magazine cutouts as collage materials, and provide each student with a piece of cardstock on which to work.
4. Provide each student with scissors, drawing paper and tracing paper as additional collage tools.
5. Consider placing glue on the table only after students have made decisions about their collage compositions.

Methods
1. Ask students the essential question: How might you use collage to create a magazine cover that reflects your identity?
2. Review the materials students have to work with and encourage them to begin by experimenting with layering and juxtaposing cutout images before gluing them down.
3. Remind students to consider the layout of words and images on a magazine cover, and how placement of collaged images may impact the meaning of a work.
4. Once collages are complete, students may apply additional color using colored pencils or pastels.

Closure
1. Display finished collages around classroom.
2. Ask students to take a gallery walk and view their peers’ collaged magazine covers.
3. Use visual inquiry with the class to discuss student artworks.
4. Invite students to share the choices they made in creating their artworks and challenge them to address the vocabulary words in connection with their work.
DIY Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

by Elan Ferguson, Family Programs Coordinator and Teaching Artist

The first exhibition devoted to ways contemporary artists use the magazines *Ebony* and *Jet* as resources and inspiration in their practices, *Speaking of People: Ebony, Jet and Contemporary Art* features more than thirty works by a multigenerational, interdisciplinary group of sixteen artists. *Speaking of People* includes photography, painting, sculpture and sound works that will occupy the Museum’s main galleries and project space.

For this do-it-yourself project, “Hair Today Gone Tomorrow,” participants will look at the work of prolific artist Lorna Simpson and her “Riunite & Ice” collage series. In this body of work, Simpson creates collages that reimagine the hairstyle from vintage Riunite Italian wine advertisements using ink and other images from the magazines. “Hair” can mean different things for different people. Outdated concepts of “good hair” and “bad hair” are abandoned for this project. This is a contemporary exercise of hair expression without judgment and/or limitations. Participants are to think of beauty in a broader sense, and to allow their portraits to promote an inclusive vision of loveliness.

Supplies
- Magazines or portrait images (color copies of self-portraits are really fun)
- Scissors
- Glue
- 3 to 4 pieces of watercolor paper or heavyweight paper
- Watercolors
- Collage materials (patterned paper, fabric, yarn, etc.)

Vocabulary
Collage, portrait, self-portrait, composition
DIY Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

**Step 1**
Find a female or male portrait that you like. Cut out the face but leave the hair behind.

**Step 2**
Glue the head down to another sheet of paper and begin to paint a new hairstyle. For children under four years of age, it may be best to let them paint first and add the face later.

**Step 3**
Repeat the same process, but this time, instead of using paint, use other materials, such as yarn, clay, fabric, paper, etc., to make the hair. Have fun with different styles, compositions and combinations of materials.

Lorna Simpson
"Riunite & Ice" Collage #3, 2014
Courtesy the artist and Salon 94, New York
On the occasion of Trenton Doyle Hancock: Skin and Bones, 20 Years of Drawing, the artist designed this coloring page featuring four characters from the imaginary world of his work. In Hancock's artistic storytelling, the evil “Vegans” are the enemies of the half-human, half-plant “Mounds.” Learn more about Hancock's work in the interview on page 16!
ETW Spotlight Interview with Alani Bass, '08

Gerald Leavell, Expanding the Walls/Youth Programs Coordinator, recently sat down with ETW 2008 alum Alani Bass to discuss her experience in the program and what she has been up to since joining the Communications Department in August 2014.

Gerald Leavell: I recently discovered one of your photographs from your participation in Expanding the Walls (ETW) 2008 in the Education office. Let’s begin with you telling me about your early experiences with photography.

Alani Bass: I enrolled in my first black-and-white photography class when I was eight at the Harlem School of the Arts. When I was just starting out, I always seemed to be in programs with students who were older than me, which I guess is a testament to my love of photography and genuine willingness to learn. I continued learning photography through high school and participated in ETW when I was fifteen. In retrospect, photography was definitely more than just a hobby—it was a tool that enriched so many other facets of my life.

GL: Thank you for raising that point. When explaining ETW to others, I try to stress that we don’t only focus on students who want to be photographers.

AB: Exactly. What I loved about ETW was that we used photography, specifically the work of James VanDerZee, as a vehicle to access and explore culture and history—a skill that I continued to develop as I pursued an art history degree in college. For me, my interest in making photographs eventually evolved into a strong desire to understand the points at which art, culture and knowledge converge.

GL: Thinking back to your experience in ETW, can you reflect on what made the program unique?

AB: One thing that sets ETW apart from other photography programs in the city is its commitment to exposing students to the positive histories within black American culture. Recognizing my place in this lineage was a definite confidence booster.

GL: You’ve been a part of the Studio Museum family since you were fifteen, returning multiple times for internships and other important projects. What is it like working here now that you are pushing thirty?

AB: Hey, I’m pushing twenty-three!

GL: [Laughing] Now that I think about it, that does make sense. I guess it’s a level of maturity you seem to have.

AB: I guess so. But to answer your question, working at the Museum has been wonderful in terms of allowing me to take on projects that interest me. I also feel so privileged to be able to work with and learn from such inspiring people.

GL: How do you see yourself growing here at the Museum and what are some of your goals?

AB: I have always known that I want to be involved in the art world in some capacity, and a curatorial career path seemed to make the most sense. However, after just three months working in another vital part of this institution, as the Communications Assistant, I am definitely beginning to reimagine what my contribution to the art community will look like. I’m eager to see how my involvement at the Museum will continue to reveal more about me.
Book Picks

Walter Dean Myers

by Jo Stewart, Education Intern

“Where are the people of color in children’s books?” inquired Southern-born author Walter Dean Myers (1937–2014). Raised in Harlem and always an avid reader, Myers made it his life’s work to address this very question. When he was a young man, books provided Myers with talismans to entertain, empower and protect himself. As he grew older, however, he discovered that the characters he found in his favorite stories rarely, if ever, resembled his life or what he saw in his community. “What I wanted, needed, really,” wrote Myers, “was to become an integral and valued part of the mosaic that I saw around me.” Fast-forward fifty years and more than a hundred books later, and Myers has written young black teenagers and inner-city youth into America’s literary landscape. He wrote poetry, young adult fiction, picture books and nonfiction in which he sought to validate and recognize the humanity of the black, the young and the poor—with a sense of urgency unparalleled in our time. The Studio Museum in Harlem would like to remember and extend our sincerest gratitude to Walter Dean Myers for his exceptional work in enriching a landscape gravely lacking in color.

Harlem (1997) is a book-length poem that recounts the vibrant sights and sounds of the Harlem community, illustrated by the author’s son, Christopher Myers.

Monster chronicles the trial of sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon, a victim of greed and bravado who is facing twenty-five-years-to-life in prison.

Darnell Rock Reporting (1994) portrays a young man’s attempt to placate his principal by joining the school paper and advocating for changing the parking lot into a community garden.

Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid (1988) is the story of how two siblings plan to help their best friend in her last-ditch effort to get adopted.

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Cover illustration © 1997 from HARLEM: A POEM by Walter Dean Myers

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Hamer Time

13 Years of Partnership

by Erin Hylton,
School Programs Coordinator

The Studio Museum in Harlem is proud to celebrate over thirteen years of partnership with Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (FLH) in the Bronx. Four primary goals shaped what has become a successful model for a long-standing museum-school relationship: introducing a variety of visual art experiences to young people, collaborating with teachers to create arts-based interdisciplinary curricula, establishing professional development programs for administrators and educators, and encouraging educators to use the arts as a tool for learning. Each year, nearly two hundred ninth- and tenth-grade humanities students from FLH visit the Studio Museum. Working with a teaching artist on projects directly connected to classroom curricula, the students create artwork that reflects both what they have learned and their personal perspectives as well. In studying topics such as revolution in Latin America and the transatlantic slave trade, students have worked in a variety of artistic media, including printmaking, drawing and painting.

As we celebrate this evolving partnership, Alison Gazarek, lead English Language Arts teacher at FLH and a six-year veteran of the partnership, and Traci Molloy, a Brooklyn-based artist and social activist who worked as the program’s teaching artist for a decade, share their reflections on the program’s impact on generations of FLH students.

Alison Gazarek: Imagine you are a high-school humanities teacher in the Bronx. Imagine your students run into your class asking, “When can we get started with our project?” Imagine the students are so eager to begin that they reach for materials before you can pass them out. After the project is completed, you hear things like: “Now I understand what the author was trying to say!” “In this piece I’m trying to demonstrate motif.” “I repeated this image because in the author’s language, he often repeats certain words that are important to his message.” “When do we get to do something like this again?”

Eleventh and twelfth grade Humanities students at FLH made self-portraits by tracing their photographs over a light box and incorporating symbolic images in their drawings.
Far too often, classrooms don’t look like this. Projects like this allow students to delve into English language arts and social studies skills, including analysis, interpretation and close reading, and explore the meaning of their findings through art. In our humanities classes, we want our students to become better readers, writers and speakers. With the help of the Studio Museum, they have accessed these skills in ways we couldn’t have taught with traditional means. Hopefully we have helped create the next generation of artists along the way.

Traci Molloy: In the last ten years, I have worked with twenty-one humanities teachers and more than 1,500 students, and witnessed the educational impact of arts integration on both. I have watched students that had been struggling in class come to life through the hands-on art projects and gain confidence in a multitude of ways. I have seen a school transform visually: from having barren hallways to spaces filled with art in every available space, including on windows. I have watched talented teachers challenge themselves and expand their pedagogic repertoires by utilizing arts integration practices to reach students in new ways. Teachers that have changed schools continue to use these methods in their new positions and introducing projects they learned during the partnership to new groups of students and peers. I have seen the enthusiasm the students bring to the Studio Museum, some of whom are attending a museum for the first time in their lives.

This program has had a profound effect on me as both an artist and an educator. I am honored that I have been able to help further the artistic and educational mission of The Studio Museum in Harlem with this program.
Mini-Curator!  
Maya Evans × Toyin Odutola

“Bring a Child to Work Day” feels so 1999. These days, kids want to flex their creative muscles in more hands-on ways. Such was the case when eight-year-old Maya Evans, affectionately known as “mini-curator,” confidently told me that she’d like to lead a studio visit and interview with artist Toyin Odutola. Sure, I could have simply smiled at Maya’s sassy demeanor and pink bow, but the New Jersey youngster meant business. So in October 2014, Tiana Webb-Evans (Maya’s mother), Maya and I met at Odutola’s downtown studio to talk contemporary art, inspiration and green apples.

—Naima J. Keith, Associate Curator

Maya Evans: When were you born? How old are you?

Toyin Odutola: I am twenty-nine. I was born in Ife, Nigeria, in 1985.

ME: Where do you live?

TO: Brooklyn!

ME: Who was your favorite artist when you were young?

TO: How much time do you have? I have a lot of artists, but if I had to name one or two, I would definitely say Takehiko Inoue, a very well-known comic book artist, and Kerry James Marshall.

ME: When did you become an artist?

TO: That’s a very good question! It wasn’t until someone called me an artist that I thought of myself as an artist. I would say that I really didn’t consider myself an artist until I started showing my work, which was around 2011.

ME: Do you like being an artist and why?

Photo: Naima J. Keith
**Mini Curator!**

**To**: Sometimes (laughter). I like that I can take something that exists in my head and make it exist in the world. I think that’s really cool. That’s one of the fun parts of being an artist. I think it’s also cool that someone who doesn’t know me very well sees my work and connects with it. The other stuff is not so interesting (laughter). But I love being an artist.

**Me**: How many works have you made so far?

**To**: It’s hard to say. I can make up to thirty, maybe forty drawings per year.

**Me**: Do you have brothers or sisters? Are they artists too?

**To**: I have two younger brothers, whom I draw a lot, and two older half-sisters, but I am the only con artist in the family (laughter). I am the only con artist in the family.

**Me**: Did you have to practice to become an artist? What did you like to draw when you were a kid?

**To**: I have two younger brothers, whom I draw a lot, and two older half-sisters, but I am the only con artist in the family (laughter).

**Me**: What is your favorite color?

**To**: Black.

**Me**: Do you have any other jobs?

**To**: Thankfully, I have only one job now. I used to have several jobs, but I’m now an artist full-time. As an artist, I feel like I have multiple jobs, but it’s all for one thing now.

**Me**: Where do you do your artwork?

**To**: In the studio.

**Me**: How do you make your pictures?

**To**: For some artworks, I make a preliminary sketch based on a photograph I’ve taken, and then I build and build until the work is done.

**Me**: How long does it take for you to make drawings?

**To**: It depends on the drawings. The pen-and-ink drawings take hours, days, weeks and years (laughter). The charcoal ones are a little different because I am working with a tool that is softer and allows me to work quickly. The charcoal drawings take days and weeks.

**Me**: Do you make mistakes on your work?

**To**: All the time! There are a lot of mistakes in this studio, but I’m not telling you which ones (laughter).

**Me**: What is your favorite color?

**To**: Black.

**Me**: Do you like apples?

**To**: This is important.

**Me**: How many interviews have you had? Is this your first time being interviewed by a kid?

**To**: No, actually. I just came back from a show in Lancaster, where middle school students asked me questions. But you’re definitely the youngest interviewer. You win!

**Me**: Do you like apples?

**To**: To eat? I like green apples a lot (laughter). That is a really important question.
We love to hear from our visitors! At the front desk and in our Museum Store, we invite guests to share feedback about their experiences at the Museum by filling out our “Talk Back!” form. We’ve shared some of our favorite responses and invite you to draw or write your own ideas in the box below. Share it on social media using #MyStudio so that everyone can see why you love The Studio Museum in Harlem!
Friends
On October 27, 2014, Studio Museum Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden awarded the ninth annual Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize to Samuel Levi Jones. The Wein Prize, one of the most significant awards given to individual artists in the United States today, was established in 2006 by jazz impresario, musician and philanthropist George Wein to honor his late wife, a longtime Trustee of the Studio Museum and a woman whose life embodied a commitment to the power and possibilities of art and culture. Inspired by his wife’s lifelong support of living artists, George Wein envisioned the Wein Prize as an extension of the Studio Museum’s mission to support experimentation and excellence in contemporary art. The $50,000 award recognizes and honors the artistic achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise and creativity.

Samuel Levi Jones was born and raised in Marion, Indiana. Trained as a photographer and multidisciplinary artist, he earned a BA in Communications Studies from Taylor University and a BFA from the Herron School of Art and Design in 2009. In 2012 he completed his MFA in Studio Arts from Mills College, Oakland, California. He currently works and resides in the San Francisco Bay Area. Jones’s work is informed by historical source material and early modes of representation in documentary practice. He explores the framing of power by degrading historical material and then reimagining new works. Jones investigates issues of manipulation and the rejection of control.

Building upon the themes found in his earlier work, Jones’s work currently consists of deconstructing found encyclopedias as a means of creating a medium that communicates a feeling of being on the outside, as well as to provide a possible resolution to the search, of an outsider, for a place of inclusion and identity. By literally tearing apart these books—widely published arbiters of authenticity—and reconstructing them into abstract two-dimensional works for the wall, Jones is able to forge a more personal alliance with the materials. It is through this intimate exploration of the materials that Jones is able to delve deeper into his behavior and practice of omission as he removes and fractures information.

Jones recently completed the Recology Artist in Residence Program in San Francisco, which concluded with a group exhibition. He has been featured in several group shows in California, including The Histories of Technologies (Jessica Silverman, 2014), Open (PAPILLION, 2014) and TRANSPORT...Where we go from here (Pro Arts, 2013). His work has been exhibited in the Latent Image Gallery, Indianapolis; the Cal State University Gallery; the Branch Gallery, Oakland; the Herron School of Art and Design, Indianapolis; Mills College, Oakland; the Watts Towers Art Center, Los Angeles; and PAPILLION, Los Angeles. His solo exhibition, Black White Thread, was on view at PAPILLION from November 8, 2014, to January 4, 2015. A solo exhibition showcasing his very first site-specific work will be on view at the Studio Museum from March 26 to June 28, 2015.
Amelia Ogunlesi, Kathryn Chenault, Carol Sutton Lewis, Teri Trotter, Jacqueline Bradley**
Gala 2014

George Wein and Samuel Levi Jones

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Hank Willis Thomas
Raise Up, 2014
Courtesy the artist and
Jack Shainman Gallery,
New York
**Member Spotlight**

Sarah and Derek Irby

---

**Do you recall when you first visited the Studio Museum?**

**Sarah:** Former Studio Museum Trustee Joyce Haupt first introduced us to the Museum in 2000 when she invited us to an event featuring acclaimed author Susan Fales-Hill. It was fantastic. We joined the Museum as members that night and have been involved with the Museum ever since.

**Derek:** I grew up in New York and had always heard of the Museum, though, admittedly, I had never been until that night with Sarah. I also loved the exhibition that was up at the time, *Images of Harlem: Selected Photographs by James VanDerZee*. The Studio Museum is one of the first things we discovered together, as a couple.

---

**What does it mean to you both to contribute to the Studio Museum and participate in Studio Society?**

**Sarah:** It’s so important to me to support a Museum dedicated to promoting artists of African descent. I also find the social aspects of Studio Society membership very enjoyable. I love reconnecting with old friends at the Museum and meeting new people who love art. I’ve also enjoyed past events hosted by the Museum, such as panels on the art of collecting and behind-the-scenes exhibition tours.

**Derek:** The Studio Museum is the cultural heartbeat of the city and is one of the only institutions focused on artists of African descent. The Museum’s focus on promoting and enriching black culture is what makes it so important to me as a donor. I personally love the Uptown Fridays! series. Sarah and I attended one this summer. It was such fun.

---

**How would you characterize the Museum’s role in Harlem?**

**Derek:** Even though the Studio Museum is an art institution, it doesn’t stop there. Over the past decade, I’ve seen readings, talks and musical performances at the Museum. The way the Studio Museum embraces all artistic media feels very representative of Harlem itself—and makes for an open and accessible environment. And through the Museum, I’ve actually gotten to know Harlem better.

**Sarah:** The Studio Museum is a gateway to Harlem.
The Board of Trustees and Director of The Studio Museum in Harlem extend deep gratitude to the donors who supported the Museum from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014.

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*Photo: Scott Rudd*
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**MAIL TO**

The Studio Museum in Harlem
144 W. 125th St.
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Visitor Information

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

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212.864.4500 x221
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**Museum Hours**
Thursday and Friday, noon–9 pm;
Saturday, 10 am–6 pm;
Sunday, noon–6 pm.

The Museum is closed to the public on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but available for school and group tours by appointment on these days. For more information on scheduling a tour, visit studiomuseum.org
The entire Studio Museum family mourns the untimely passing of Lea K. Green.

Lea was the Museum’s Director of Special Projects from 2006 until 2011. In this role she contributed so deeply to the life of the Museum, but her involvement both preceded and continued after her tenure here. She led the revitalization of our Contemporary Friends group in the early 2000s and continued as a supporter and friend of the Museum during her role as Vice President at Christie’s. Most importantly, she was a dear friend and a vibrant, brilliant, strong woman whose powerful love for art and artists informed her amazing career and generosity of spirit.

We extend deep and sincere condolences to her family, as well as her large circle of friends and colleagues. Her life and legacy continue to inspire us every day.
1
Titus Kaphar
Jerome IV, 2014
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
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2
Trenton Doyle Hancock
...And Then It All Came Back to Me, 2011
Collection KAWS, New York
Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York