

# Mapping Black Identities

**“What informs Black artists’ works is the Black experience, which is global.”  
—Frank Bowling, 1969**

“Mapping Black Identities” champions the voices and experiences of Black artists from the United States, Africa, and the greater African Diaspora. Taking inspiration from the recent acquisition of artist Frank Bowling’s map painting *False Start* (1970), the exhibition challenges the Western notion that Black identity is monolithic. The works in this and the adjoining gallery evoke the intersectionality of Black identities, defined not only by race but also class, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and more.

Today, the legacy of systemic white supremacy—systems that maintain the privilege of white peoples—is all around us. Mapping, as a tool to delineate and claim territory, has long been used to uphold and perpetuate these structures—to justify conquest, domination, and discrimination. But conceptually, mapping can also reflect a desire to represent something that is larger than oneself and give recognizable form to the world: to expand and represent, not divide and control. This exhibition goes beyond borders and boundaries. Artists represented here are part of a larger aesthetic conversation around the concept of Blackness that transcends time and place. Here, mapping functions as a powerful way to reclaim spaces—such as the museum—that have traditionally excluded or overlooked work by Black artists, and amplify their voices.

“Mapping Black Identities” is co-curated by Mia’s Contemporary Art Department, including Esther Callahan, Curatorial Affairs Fellow; Gabriel Ritter, Curator and Department Head; Nicole Soukup, Assistant Curator; and Keisha Williams, Curatorial Department Assistant and Artist Liaison, in collaboration with Mia’s Curatorial Advisory Committee. This Committee is composed of Mia staff who champion the prerogatives of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility by advising on Mia’s curation, labeling, and programming practices.

# Igshaan Adams

South African, born 1982

## **I Was a Hidden Treasure, Then I Wanted to Be Known . . . , 2016**

Fabric, fabric paint, metal, beads, rope, and tassels

Gift of funds from Mary and Bob Mersky 2018.57

The title *I Was a Hidden Treasure, Then I Wanted to Be Known . . .* comes from the *hadith qudsi*, or “sacred sayings,” a narrative record of the words and actions of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. This passage refers to the motivation behind the divine creation of humankind. It can also describe the deep desire of each of us to be known and loved by one another. Embellished with fabric, metal, beads, rope and tassels, the tapestry acts as a symbolic veil for the artist Igshaan Adams’s own unearthing of his true identity. It is also an invitation for viewers to remove their own symbolic veils in order to discover their true selves.



Photo: Earl Abrahams

Initially I grappled with deconstructing my hybrid identity, focusing on my multicultural, religious, and sexual identities in relation to the domestic and political environments in which they were formed, hoping to understand the conflict I was experiencing. My focus has since shifted to wanting to know more about the self from a multidimensional, universal, and mystical position.  
—Igshaan Adams, 2017

# Julie Mehretu

American (born Ethiopia), born 1970

## Entropia (review), 2004

Color screenprint and lithograph

Copublished by Highpoint Editions, Minneapolis and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis  
The Richard Lewis Hillstrom Fund 2004.185

For *Entropia (review)*, Julie Mehretu combined elements of maps, diagrams, and architectural drawings with her personal language of symbols. The artist refers to this style of composition as “psychogeographic” abstraction. Psychogeography is a way to explore the effects of the physical landscape on our emotions and behaviors. Mehretu uses it as a framework to imagine a place where people can freely move through space and time. In creating a fictional, chaotic landscape, she disrupts the cultural and political powers embedded in our everyday environments.



Photo: Tom Powel Imaging Inc.

I don't think it's possible for me, in general, to ever think about the American landscape without thinking about the colonial history—and colonial violence—of that narrative. The abolitionist movement. The Civil War. The move towards emancipation. All of these social dynamics that are part of that narrative, we don't really talk about in regards to American landscape paintings. So, what does it mean to paint a landscape and be an artist in this political moment?  
—Julie Mehretu, 2017

# Nick Cave

American, born 1959

## Soundsuit, 2010

Metal, wood, plastic, pigments, cotton and acrylic fibers

Gift of funds from Alida Messinger 2011.12a,b

Nick Cave created his first Soundsuit in the early 1990s as a response to the racial profiling and beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers, and the subsequent riots. The artist, who has been racially profiled, said at that time, “. . . my identity is really only protected in the privacy of my own home.” In reaction to that vulnerability, Cave created a second skin that protects the wearer from prejudice. The Soundsuits come in many shapes and forms; Mia’s Soundsuit is crocheted and then decorated with noisemakers and toys. The suits were intended to be worn and heard in performances that Cave choreographs. In acting like a second skin, the suits both protect and project beyond the body, claiming space from which marginalized bodies are often excluded.

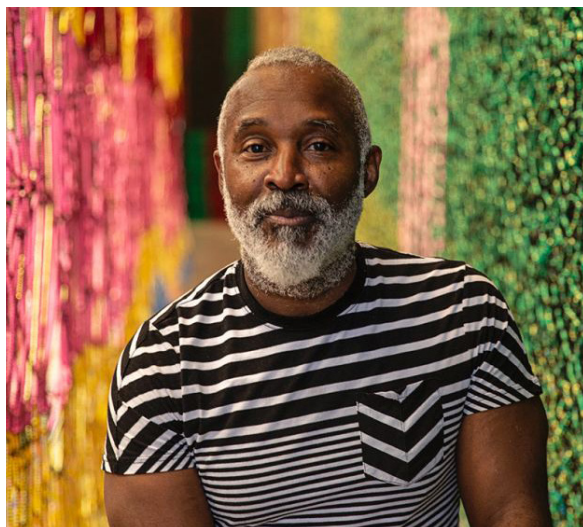


Photo: ABC Arts, Teresa Tan

I don't ever see the Soundsuits as fun. They really are coming from a very dark place. The Soundsuits hide gender, race, class. And they force you to look at the work without judgment. You know, we tend to want to categorize everything. We tend to want to find its place. How do we, sort of, be one to one with something that is unfamiliar?

—Nick Cave, 2016

# Charles White

American, 1918–1979

## Jessica, 1970

**Printed by Joseph Mugnani** (American, born Italy, 1912–1992) **and Hugo Mugnani**, American, 1916–2001, Los Angeles

Etching and plate tone in brown ink on cream paper

Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky 2017.80.5

Charles White's *Jessica* embodies the grace, beauty, and confidence of African American women at a time, the early 1970s, when Black cultural awareness was emerging as a social and political force. Within this context, White's portrait serves as a symbol of resistance to cultural suppression and restrictive definitions by others. White depicts his model with a *dhuku*, or, more commonly, head scarf. This cultural symbol holds significance for women of African descent both as an identifying mark of subjugation required of enslaved women and as a contemporary symbol of racial pride and consciousness—a reference to the centuries-old practice of wearing head wraps throughout sub-Saharan Africa.



Charles White in his Los Angeles studio, 1970

I think art should be owned by the people, by everybody; I think it should be part and parcel of the ownership of the buildings of the citizens.

—Charles White, 1965

# Frank Bowling

Guyanese, born 1934

## False Start, 1970

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

The John R. Van Derlip Fund 2018.56

In *False Start*, Frank Bowling maps an expansive yet intimate geography that charts his path from Bartica, Guyana, to London and New York. Rejecting the graphic formalism of pure abstraction, his Map Paintings (1967–71) contain references to postcolonialism—the social and political power relationships that sustained colonialism—his own Afro-Caribbean roots, and the broader African diaspora. The composition of *False Start* features prominent outlines of the continents of the Southern Hemisphere—Africa, Australia, and South America—rendered in tones of white and pink. Through its omission of Europe, the image challenges Eurocentric historical narratives while drawing attention to the expansive footprint of colonialism and imperialism.



What distinguishes or creates the uniqueness of the Black artist is not only the color of his skin, but the experiences he brings to his art that forge, inform, and feed it and link him essentially to the rest of the Black people.

—Frank Bowling, 1969

# Kwame Brathwaite

American, born 1938

## Untitled (Black Is Beautiful Poster from 1970), 1970 (printed 2018)

Archival pigment print

Courtesy the artist and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles L2019.4

For almost 60 years, Kwame Brathwaite has created positive images of African Americans and promoted the beauty of everyday people. Working as an artist and theorist, Brathwaite made photographs of African Americans that defied negative stereotypes and depicted a new vision of Black people. Together with his brother Elombe, Brathwaite cofounded Grandassa Models in the early 1960s, a Harlem-based modeling group that celebrated the beauty of Black women's bodies and natural hair through fashion shows and photography. The Grandassa Models were the first to openly promote the powerful slogan "Black Is Beautiful," defying the white, European-dominated fashion trends of the day and defining beauty on their own terms.



With photography as my medium of choice, I became an artist-activist. . . . Black Is Beautiful was my directive. It was a time when people were protesting injustices related to race, class, and human rights around the globe. I focused on perfecting my craft so that I could use my gift to inspire thought, relay ideas, and tell stories of our struggle, our work, our liberation. —Kwame Brathwaite, 2018

Photo: Kwame Brathwaite © / Courtesy of Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles

# Joe Overstreet

American, born 1933

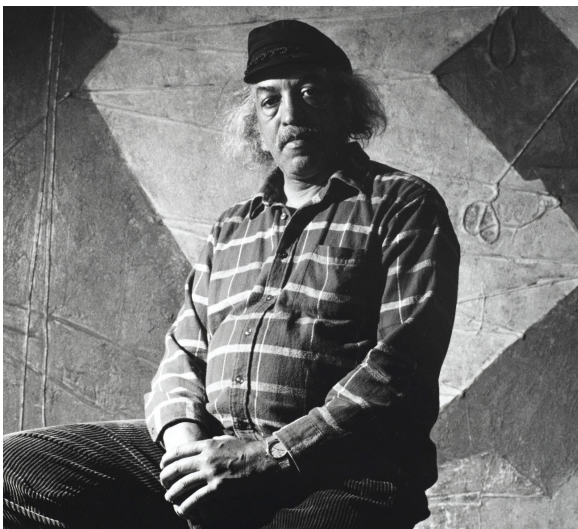
## **Evolution**, 1970

Acrylic on canvas with metal grommets and cotton rope

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection – Minneapolis L2019.7.7

After 1945 many African American artists resisted the pressure to paint images that told stories of the Black experience, but abstractionists such as Joe Overstreet found ways to resolve their art and their activism so that the very act of making abstract art was political in itself. Key to this was reclaiming African influences employed by earlier European modernists (such as Pablo Picasso) as their own direct cultural inheritance. Overstreet felt that modernist motifs, such as the highly stylized treatment of the human figure and vivid color palettes simply mimicked or exaggerated African forms while overlooking their deeper cultural meaning.

In works like *Evolution*, Overstreet sought to activate the space around the painting by detaching the canvas from its wooden stretcher and suspending the painting in space using a series of ropes and grommets.



I want my paintings to have an eye-catching “melody” to them—where the viewer can see patterns with changes in color, design, and space. When the viewer is away from the paintings, they will get flashes of the painting that linger in the mind like that of a tune or melody of a song that catches up on people’s ear and mind.

—Joe Overstreet, 2009

Arthur Mones (American, 1919–1998), *Joe Overstreet*, 1992



# Sam Gilliam

American, born 1933

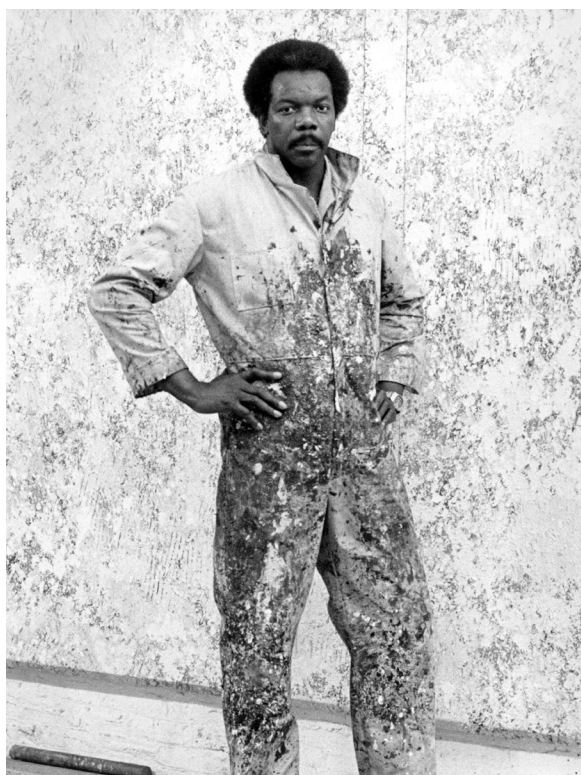
## Carousel Merge, 1971

Acrylic on canvas

Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Gift of Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation, 1971

Throughout his career, artist Sam Gilliam has been at the forefront of finding new ways to invigorate painting and challenge the legacies of abstract art movements of the 1940s and '50s, including Abstract Expressionism and color-field painting, which emphasized the materials and process of painting over subject matter. His hallmark “drape paintings” dispensed with traditional stretcher bars and instead suspended lengths of painted canvas from the wall in voluminous folds. Gilliam constructed these works by experimenting with various combinations of folding and crumpling the canvas as well as staining and splattering the paint. Their flexible installation allows for a certain degree of improvisation, which can be likened to the spontaneity of free jazz—a major influence for many African American painters at the time.



I think there has to be a Black art because there is a white art. . . . Being Black is a very important point of tension and self-discovery. To have a sense of self-acceptance we Blacks have to throw off the dichotomy that has been forced on us by the white experience.  
—Sam Gilliam, *Art News*, 1973

Sam Gilliam, 1969. Photo: Paul Feinberg

## Charles Gaines

American, born 1944

### **Numbers and Trees, Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #1, April, 2018**

### **Numbers and Trees, Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #2, May, 2018**

### **Numbers and Trees, Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #4, July, 2018**

### **Numbers and Trees, Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #6, September, 2018**

Color aquatint and spit bite aquatint with printed acrylic box

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection – Minneapolis L2019.33

Since 1975, Charles Gaines has positioned trees at the center of his visual vocabulary and of his systems-based conceptual practice. The ongoing series Numbers and Trees consists of a hand-rendered tree trunk and limbs behind the gridded surface of a plexiglass box embellished with a proliferation of “cells” or numbered squares. Each consecutive print layers the previous season’s tree with the next, resulting in an increasingly dense overlay of form, color, and numbers that visualizes the passage of time. Gaines’s conceptual work encourages us to notice the beauty within the artist’s intense, conceptually rigorous practice that challenges painting’s dominance in the history of visual arts.



I believe good work undermines categories, and its test (and its death) is its success. Aesthetic issues are by contrast very dull. Arguments over value and taste are dull. Confrontations are exciting.  
—Charles Gaines, 1981

# Todd Gray

American, born 1954

## Akwidaa: Phase Patterns, Unit Structures, 2018

Four archival pigment prints in artist's frames  
and found frames with UV laminate

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection – Minneapolis L2018.167

Todd Gray's photo-based work explores issues of Black masculinity, diaspora, and contemporary/historical notions of power. His most recent photo works are composed of images he created as the personal photographer of pop music icon Michael Jackson (1958–2009). Gray has recontextualized his images of the superstar by juxtaposing them with one another and using found frames as a way to structure his photographic compositions in a sculptural manner. Here, the artist pairs images of Jackson with photographs of life in Akwidaa, Ghana, where Gray has a studio, exploring the diasporic dislocations and cultural connections that link the United States to West Africa.



Photo: Jorge Herrera

The term is called “mental colonialism,” and it’s the idea is that the colonizers, they ban your language, they tell you your culture is worthless, and basically stir up racial self-hatred, and a desire to be white. . . . That’s when I realized, Michael Jackson isn’t an eccentric—he’s a product of white supremacist thinking and American systemic racism. That’s when my whole thought, and my whole relationship with Michael changed, and when I decided to use his photographs to criticize whiteness, to criticize systemic racism.

—Todd Gray, 2018

# Cinga Samson

South African, born 1986

## Ivory (vi), 2018

Oil on canvas

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection, Minneapolis L2019.32

Cinga Samson's self-portraits present a complex image of Black male sensuality and youthful pride. The figure's clothing and posture celebrate an aspirational vision of material wealth and luxury surrounded by rich foliage and bathed in lush patterning. The hollow eyes and dark overall palette, however, hint at a more brooding, introspective gaze that rejects superficiality. The empty white eyes "stare" out at the viewer but cannot connect. Perhaps the blank eyes are in fact looking inward, suggesting the focus on the interior life of the artist-subject over the external world. The background is partly real and partly imagined: a composite of his own fantasies and the scenic landscape of Cape Town, South Africa, and the rural Eastern Cape.



I wanted to present a man in his beauty as a young man, feeling exotic, even a bit desirable, complex, strange, weird, unusual. . . . Beauty and mystery were the feelings I wanted the man to have, but in the center the intention is that this is a young man desirable in his own sense.  
—Cinga Samson, 2017

Photo: courtesy of Established Africa

# Lonnie Holley

American, born 1950

## Climbing, 1997

Sandstone

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection, Minneapolis L2018.129

Lonnie Holley, a self-trained artist and accomplished musician, uses found materials to create carved sculpture and assemblage work, often confronting issues of personal identity and social justice. Holley first began carving with scavenged sandstone in 1979, when his sister lost her children in a house fire. His very first artwork was a small sandstone tombstone carved as a memorial for his deceased nieces—an object created in the wake of his difficult years in foster homes, working as a migrant, and caring for impoverished family members. The work here, also made of sandstone, features ancient Egyptian imagery including a pyramid and pharaoh's headdress, referencing the rich cultural heritage claimed by artists of the African diaspora.



Photo: David Raccuglia

Art is just in the eye of the beholder. . . . If these museums and galleries and all of these upper institutions cannot deal with our formula of art, our materials that we use, then there should be places and institutions created in America for us. We are just as important to America's values as Picasso, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Matisse—any foreign artist.  
—Lonnie Holley, 2013

# Kevin Beasley

American, born 1985

## Queen of the Night, 2018

Housedresses, kaftans, do-rags, T-shirts, CDs, guinea fowl feathers, clothespins, hair rollers, hair extensions (tumble weave), fake gold dookie chain, resin

Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York L2019.1

Kevin Beasley's sculptures are novel hybrids of assemblage and process art. The artist takes found objects—most often clothing—as his starting point and explores their personal and cultural meanings. This massive wall-like “slab” sculpture consists of clothing—housedresses, kaftans, and T-shirts—feathers, clothespins, hair rollers, hair extensions, and other objects encased in polyurethane resin. While these embedded elements reference the powerful female figures in the artist's personal life, the title of the work specifically references the Burney Relief, a 4,000-year-old rectangular clay relief from ancient Babylonia, in the collection of the British Museum in London. Also known as Queen of the Night, the ancient relief depicts a winged nude goddess figure with bird's talons, flanked by owls, and perched upon two lions. Beasley's composition reiterates that of the original, replacing the central goddess with a figure anointed with a halo of CDs surrounded by guinea fowl feathers.



Photo: Kristy Leibowitz

I am constantly thinking about how I get to an understanding of my surroundings (people, places, and such) in all of their nuances. It is how I end up using housedresses and kaftans in some work and then a crushed Cadillac Escalade in another—they are both connected to my navigation of the world because I've had compelling questions about those objects, people who have had an impact on my life, and the effects of society on the way I am perceived/perceive myself.

— Kevin Beasley, 2017

# Delita Martin

American, born 1972

## Between Sisters, 2018

Acrylic, charcoal, colored pencil, decorative papers, hand stitching

Gift of funds from Lucy Mitchell, Julie Steiner, and Kaywin Feldman and Jim Lutz  
L2018.180.2

Delita Martin's colorful works combine printmaking, drawing, and painting to celebrate African American women as icons of strength and community. Finding inspiration in oral traditions and vintage and family photographs, Martin's work explores the art of storytelling. By depicting her subjects as matriarchal symbols, she offers greater understanding and appreciation for the role of African American women in their families and communities. Her most recent body of work, the series *Between Spirits and Sisters*, is inspired by the Sande society of West Africa's Mende people, an exclusive community of women that prepares Mende girls for their transition into womanhood.



Photo: Karen E. Segrave

In this work, I am also exploring the different signs and symbols that help define the space the women reside in. . . . This body of work transitions the women and their place of residence into a spiritual realm, where the symbolism is less defined, the shapes are more organic, and the icons are left for the viewer to ponder and creating a space for the women to be birthed into.

—Delita Martin, 2018

# Delita Martin

American, born 1972

## The Soaring Hour (Self Portrait), 2018

Relief printing, charcoal, acrylic, colored pencil, decorative papers, hand stitching

Gift of funds from Barbara Longfellow L2018.180.1

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Photo: Karen E. Segrave

The duality of women in this body of work project the spirit and its connection to the physical world, which reinforces the bond amongst women and how they co-exist in the physical and spiritual realms. The mask seen in the work is my interpretation of the Mende mask, specifically created for young girls being initiated into Sande. These masks are created as a reminder that human beings have a dual existence viewed as one body.

—Delita Martin, 2018



# Deana Lawson

American, born 1979

## Eternity, 2017

Pigment Print

Promised gift on long-term loan , private collection, Minneapolis L2018.228.2

Eternity, a highly stylized portrait, challenges socially accepted images of women's bodies. Deana Lawson portrays her model as regal and powerful—a corrective to Western art, which has largely misrepresented or ignored the portrayal of Black bodies in an affirming manner. According to the artist, the figure represents the “Mitochondrial Eve,” the genetic origin and mother of all humanity and symbol of maternity, femininity, and fertility. As in many of Lawson's portraits, the composition is carefully constructed with items that have personal significance for the artist. Here, everything from the location and room decor to the model's pose and the hand-sewn fringe has been carefully selected and composed by the artist herself. The photograph was created in collaboration with another woman, the model, which makes it unlike most sensual images of femininity found in art history.



Photo: Deana Lawson, Self Portrait (2012)

With a history of certain voices not being included in the history of art, I think it is time to claim that space, to have bodies who might not have been celebrated within the institution. It is important for someone—if I was 16 years old and I was to go to a museum and see Kerry James Marshall, that would have influenced profoundly in my whole identity. So it becomes about gaining a wider audience and if that means through an institution, by all means I welcome that.

—Deana Lawson, TIME, Mar. 2, 2017

# Emma Amos

American, born 1937

## Thank You Jesus for Paul Robeson (and for Nicholas Murray's Photograph - 1926), 1995

Handwoven cotton, synthetic, and metallic fibers with pigments on linen

Promised gift on long-term loan , private collection, Minneapolis L2018.48

Spanning 40 years, Emma Amos's series *Black Bodies* examines the Black body as a source and site of power and beauty. Drawing inspiration from the civil rights movement, modern Western European art, and feminism, Amos explores the politics of culture and issues of racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism through her art. In this work, Amos juxtaposes her painting of the athlete, singer, actor, and civil rights activist Paul Robeson with Nicholas Murray's black-and-white photograph of Robeson from the 1920s and photo transfers of a Greco-Roman frieze. This arrangement emphasizes the sculptural nature of Robeson's form through classical images of masculinity, suggesting that the ideals these images promote are wholly constructed.



Photo: Becket Logan

For me, a Black woman artist, to walk into the studio, is a political act.  
—Emma Amos, 1998

# J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere

Nigerian, 1930–2014

## Onile Gorgoro Or Akaba, 1975

Gelatin silver print

The Linda and Lawrence Perlman Photography Endowment 2014.73.2

For his Hairstyles series, photographer J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere documented more than a thousand Nigerian women's hairstyles—at work, in the street, and at more formal occasions. Internationally celebrated in the worlds of fashion photography and social documentary, his work celebrates Nigerian femininity and gives hairstyles their due as artworks in and of themselves—some of them so sculptural they need thread to hold them together. For the women themselves, their hairstyles remain significant markers of individuality and cultural pride.



Photo: Corbis

All these hairstyles are ephemeral. I want my photographs to be noteworthy traces of them. I always wanted to record moments of beauty, moments of knowledge. Art is life. Without art, life would be frozen.  
—J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere

# Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

English, born 1977

## Shelves for Dynamite, 2018

Oil on linen

Promised gift on long-term loan , private collection, Minneapolis L2018.228.1a-c

Writer and painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye creates figures from imagination and memory that deliberately distance the viewer from any personal narrative, time, or place. According to Yiadom-Boakye, her painting and writings —short stories, poems, and the titles of her paintings—work in parallel to one another to allow space for one’s imagination to flourish. She describes her fictional subjects as “suggestions of people. . . . They don’t share our concerns or anxieties. They are somewhere else altogether.” While rooted in traditional portraiture—her subjects are often arranged in poses drawn from the history of European and Euro-American art—Yiadom-Boakye’s process is decidedly contemporary, her paintings typically completed in a day to best capture a moment or her stream of consciousness.



Photo: Anton Corbijn

Maybe I think more about Black thought than Black bodies. When people ask about the aspect of race in the work, they are looking for very simple or easy answers. Part of it is when you think other people are so different than yourself, you imagine that their thoughts aren’t the same. When I think about thought, I think about how much there is that is common.

—Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, 2017

# Elizabeth Catlett

American (active Mexico), 1915–2012

## Black Is Beautiful, 1968

Lithograph on cream paper

Promised gift on long-term loan, private collection, Minneapolis, L2017.141.6

Catlett, a member of the Black is Beautiful movement of the 1960s, said that the purpose of her art was to “present Black people in their beauty and dignity for ourselves and others to understand and enjoy.” Committed to creating socially conscious art, Catlett emphasized issues of race and the struggles of Black Americans. In its simplicity of form, her work, including *Black Is Beautiful*, reveals her skillful articulation of emotion and individuality through careful use of line and detail. Catlett used a primarily figural style to portray the physical beauty, humanity, and experiences of oppression of African Americans.



Elizabeth Catlett with *Burning in Water*, 1948

I have always wanted my art to service my people—to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential.  
—Elizabeth Catlett

# Kerry James Marshall

American, born 1955

## Untitled (Young Woman), 2010

Hard-ground etching with aquatint on Somerset White paper

Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky 2016.110.5

Kerry James Marshall's race-conscious art challenges the historical exclusion of African Americans in Western art history by depicting "unequivocally, emphatically Black" characters. In this print, Marshall presents a portrait of a Black woman in a style reminiscent of a silhouette (a dark figure contrasted against a light background). Silhouette is used by other African American artists (such as Aaron Douglas, Lorna Simpson, and Kara Walker) to investigate how Black bodies have been both literally and metaphorically made invisible. For Marshall, this style of silhouetted portrait emphasizes Blackness in both a socially critical and positive manner. Here, the young woman's skin tone is seen in stark contrast to the white background and simple lines of her clothing. In his work, Marshall intentionally flattens, darkens, and minimizes form to heighten its meaning.

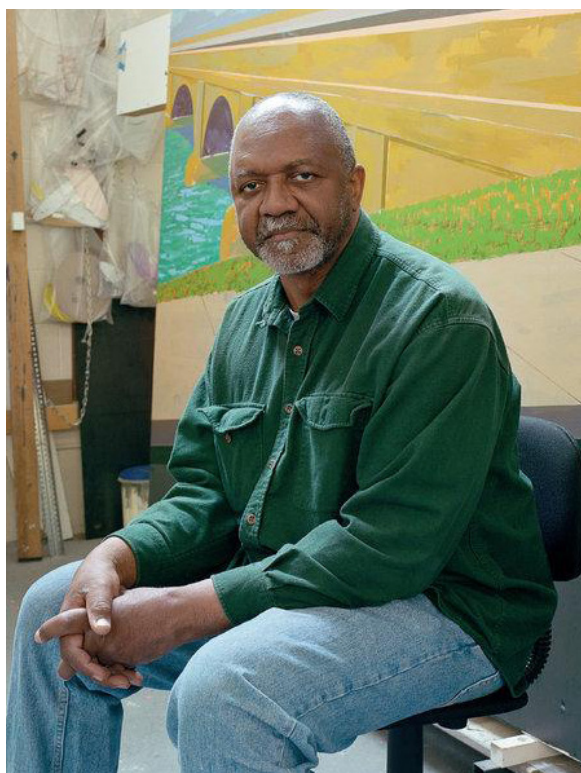


Photo: Broomberg & Chanarin

The way we understand art history, the way we encounter the idea of art in museums seemed incomplete to me. And a lot of that incompleteness was around the idea of what mastery was and masterpieces in the world of painting were. And so I, like everybody else, I only know what art is because people who wrote art history books and who put pictures in museums told me that's what it was supposed to be. And when I wasn't seeing a lot of pictures of Black folks in those paintings that everybody was supposed to be looking at, that was a problem for me. And resolving that problem became a paramount objective.

—Kerry James Marshall, 2017