

# African American Artists at Mia

Part 2

LYNETTE YIADOM  
BOAKYE B. 1977



# SHELVES OF DYNAMITE 2018



# EMMA AMOS

1938-

•“MY WORK HAS OFTEN TAKEN SHOTS AT ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SKIN COLOR AND THE PRIVILEGES OF POWER AND WHITENESS. THE WORK REFLECTS MY INVESTIGATIONS INTO OTHERNESS, ALONG WITH THE NOTION OF DESIRE, THE DARK BODY VERSUS THE WHITE BODY, RACISM AND MY WISH TO PROVOKE MORE THOUGHTFUL WAYS OF THINKING AND SEEING.”



# ABOUT EMMA AMOS....

- BORN IN ATLANTA, GA. TO A MIDDLECLASS FAMILY WHO ENCOURAGED HER EARLY ARTISTIC TALENT.
- PAINTER, PRINTMAKER, AND WEAVER. DURING THE 1960'S SHE WORKED FOR DOROTHY LIEBES AS A DESIGNER/WEAVER. THIS LEAD TO HER LOVE OF FABRIC, WHICH AT ONE POINT SHE WOVE TO PAINT ON. SHE ALSO CREATED A CRAFT SHOW FOR PUBLIC TV AND WROTE FOR SESAME STREET MAGAZINE AND HERESIES, A FEMINIST JOURNAL.
- WHILE SHE PAINTED, HER EARLY WORK PRIMARILY CENTERED AROUND PRINTING. SHE WORKED AT SEVERAL PRINTING ATELIERS INCLUDING LEO CALAPAIS AND ROBERT BLACKBURN'S WORKSHOP. THE USE OF COLOR IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HER WORK.
- HER WORK FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON RACIAL IDENTITY AND GENDER POLITICS. SHE USES HERSELF AS A MODEL AND IMAGINES BEING IN SITUATIONS THAT CREATE CONCEPTUAL COMMENTARIES.
- HER LOVE OF FABRIC AND PRINTING INSPIRED THE MIXED MEDIA WORKS WITH AFRICAN BORDERS THAT BECAME HER MATURE SIGNATURE STYLE.
- IN 1964 SHE BECAME THE YOUNGEST AND ONLY FEMALE MEMBER OF SPIRAL.

THREE LADIES 1970



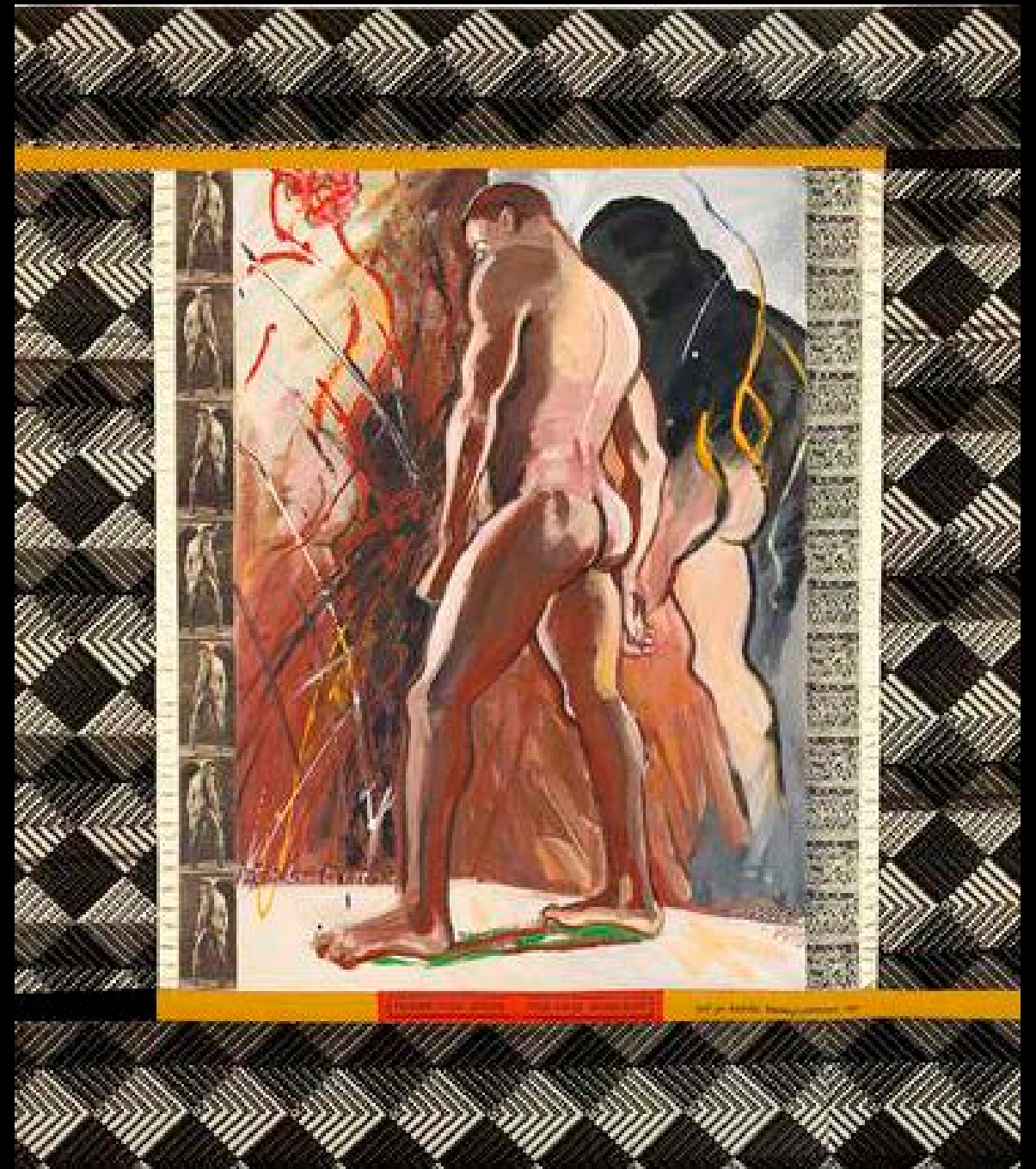
DOROTHY LIEBES 1947



LIFE

THANK YOU JESUS FOR  
PAUL ROBESON

(AND FOR NICOLAS MURRAY'S  
PHOTOGRAPH-1926)





SANDY AND HER  
HUSBAND 1973



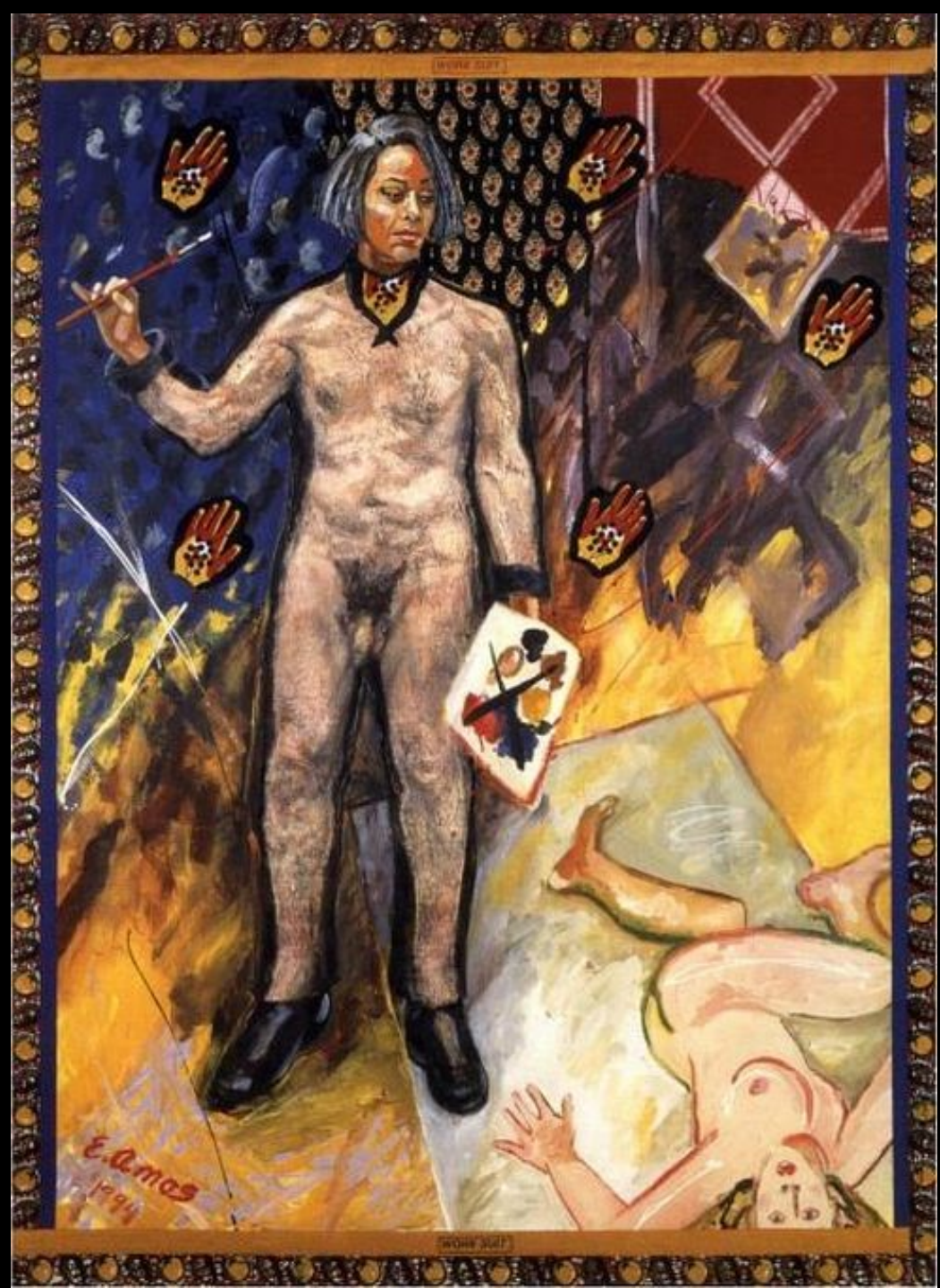
EQUALS 1992



TIGHT ROPE  
1994



WORK SUIT 1994



PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA  
B. 1982

" I WANT THESE QUEER, BLACK  
PHOTOGRAPHS TO EXIST WITHIN  
HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY  
CONVERSATIONS ABOUT  
PHOTOGRAPHY."



# ABOUT PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA

- BORN IN SAN BERNARDINO, CA. LIVES AND WORKS IN LA.
- KNOWN FOR PORTRAITURE. PHOTOS FIRST APPEARED IN PRINT FORMS. AIMS FOR AN INTIMATE PRESENTATION OF THE PERSON. FRAGMENTATION IS VERY IMPORTANT. HE OFTEN RIPS APART A PHOTO, RE-ARRANGES IT AND TAPE IT BACK TOGETHER TO FORM A DEEPER MEANING OF QUEER CULTURE.
- HE THINKS OF THE SPACE OF PHOTOGRAPHY AS THE CRAFT OF NEGOTIATING SPACE AND LIGHT.
- PONDERES THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHY, VOYEURISM AND IDENTITY.

# PARIS PHOTO

(MIA HAS COLLAGE OF THIS PHOTO)



# DARKROOM MIRROR





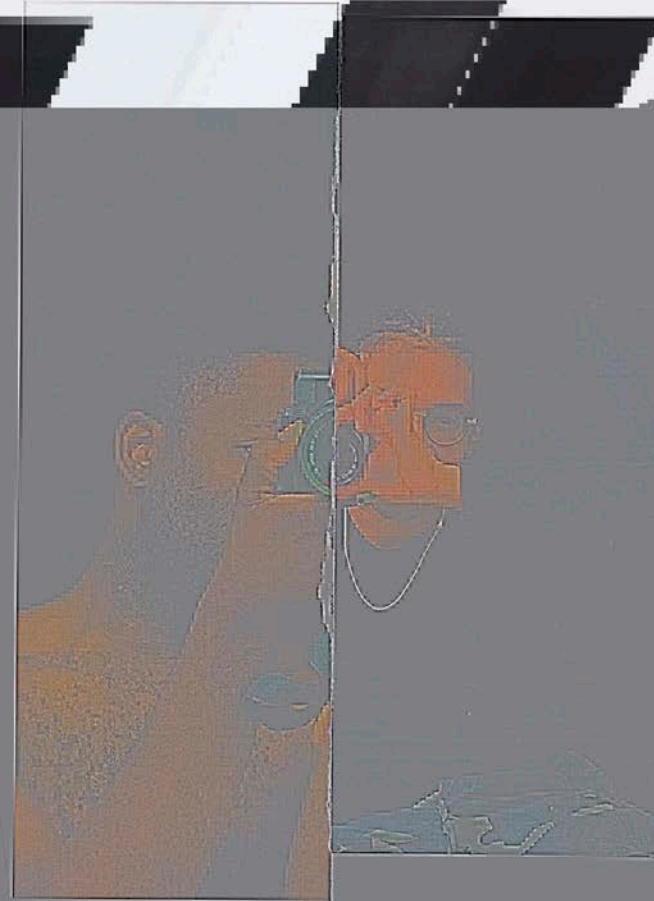
IN CONVERSATION



MIRROR STUDY 2018



UNTITLED 2019



ART FORUM COVER  
MARCH 2019

# ARTFORUM

MARCH 2019

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

KEVIN BEASLEY  
BOUCHRA KHALILI  
MATTHEW BARNEY  
PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA



DELITA MARTIN

B. 1972

"MY WORK IS ABOUT  
RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY BY  
PIECING TOGETHER SIGNS SYMBOLS  
AND LANGUAGE IN WHAT COULD BE  
RECALLED EVERYDAY LIFE FROM  
SLAVERY TO TODAY. MY GOAL IS TO  
CREATE A VISUAL LANGUAGE."



# MAJOR INFLUENCE

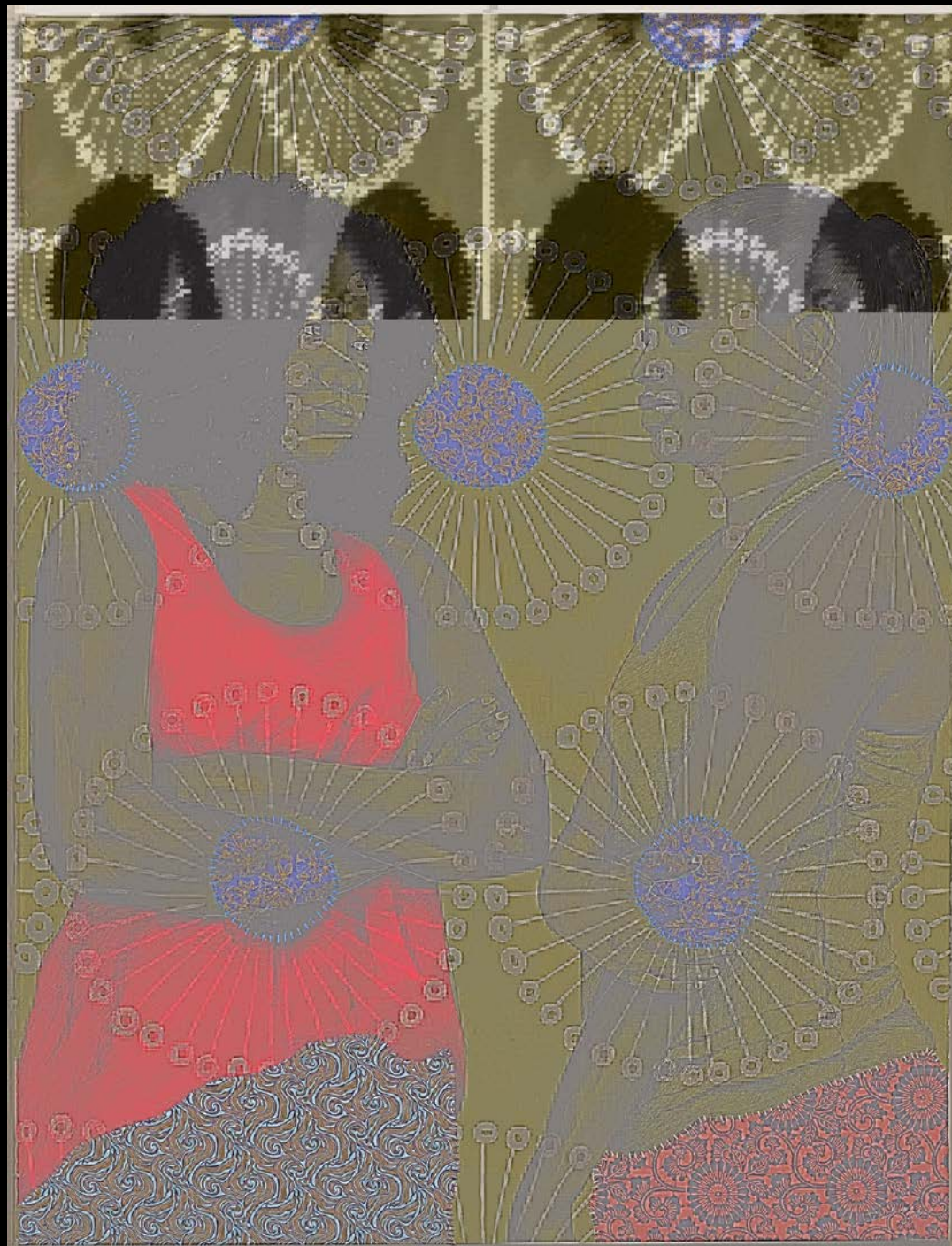
• "DR. JOHN BIGGERS' WORK PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN MY DEVELOPMENT AS AN ARTIST LONG BEFORE I BEGAN MY STUDIES AT TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY. I GREW UP IN A FAMILY OF ARTISTS, CREATING WAS JUST WHAT YOU DID. MY FATHER WAS A PAINTER. HE DID HIS UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES WITH DR. BIGGERS SO I LEARNED HIS PHILOSOPHY OF HONORING YOUR ANCESTORS A VERY YOUNG AGE. HIS ART WORK WAS THE FIRST WORK I WAS INTRODUCED TO OUTSIDE MY FAMILY. GROWING UP IN A SMALL TOWN THAT WAS PREDOMINATELY WHITE I WASN'T SEEING ART THAT LOOK LIKE ME OR ANYONE ELSE IN MY FAMILY. SO SEEING HIS WORK ALLOWED ME TO SEE MY COMMUNITY IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. I WAS SO FASCINATED BY HIS WORK THAT I WOULD SIT FOR HOURS COPYING HIS DRAWINGS. THAT'S HOW I LEARNED TO DRAW. AROUND THE AGE OF 12 MY FATHER MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DR. BIGGERS TO LOOK AT MY ART WORK. THIS WAS MY FIRST ART CRITIQUE. THE ONE THING I REMEMBER DR. BIGGERS SAYING TO ME, "YOUNG LADY, DON'T EVER MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO UPLIFT YOUR PEOPLE THROUGH YOUR WORK". I TAKE THOSE WORDS INTO THE STUDIO WITH ME EVERYDAY." -(JOHN BIGGERS- STARRY CROWN 1987-RIGHT)



THE SOARING HOUR  
2018



BETWEEN SISTERS

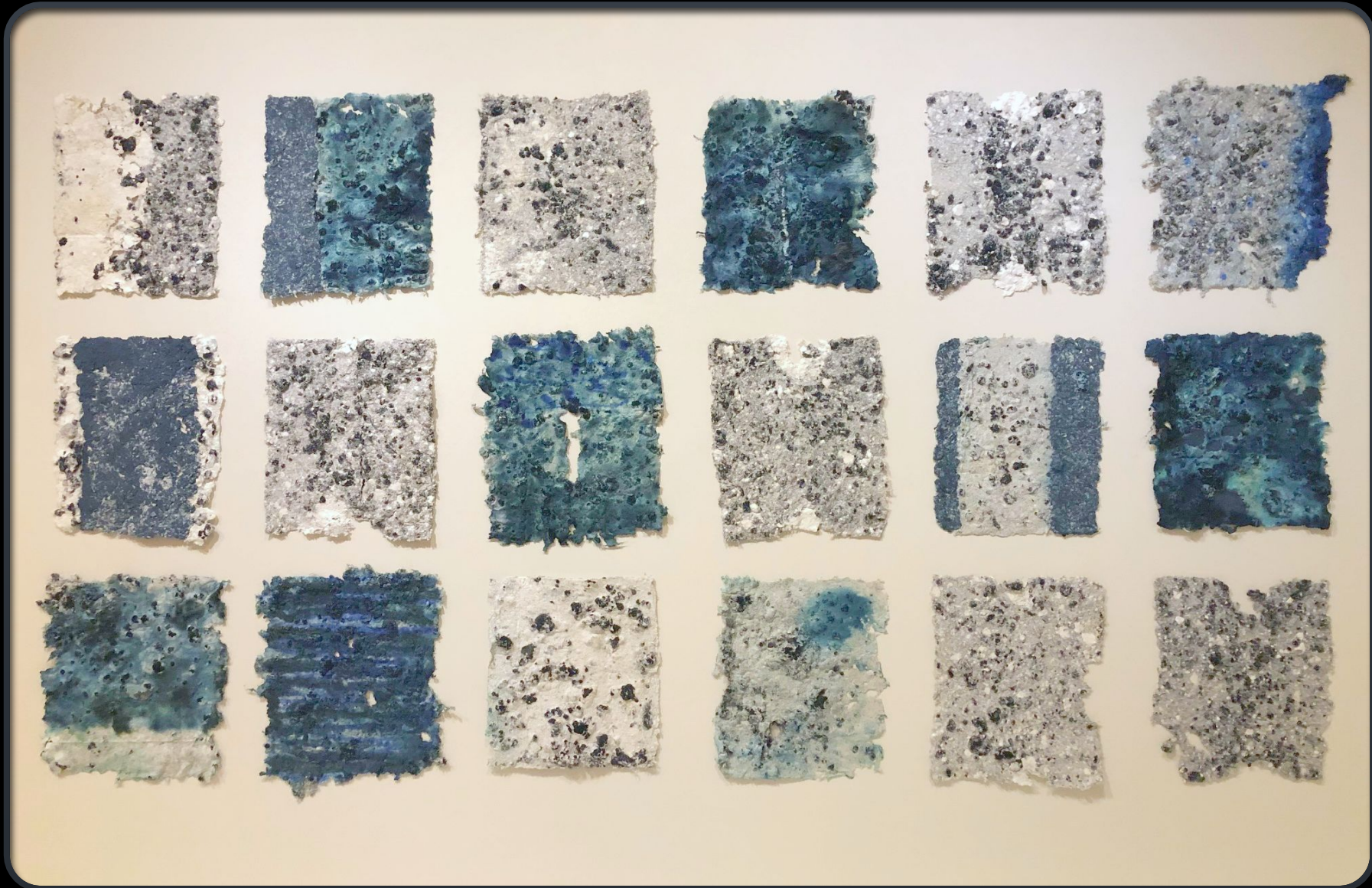




ADE BUNMI GBADEBO  
B. 1993

HER PRACTICE IS EXPERIMENTS IN A  
SEARCH FOR IDENTITY THAT IS DRIVEN BY  
HER SEARCH FOR CONNECTIONS TO HER  
ANCESTRY WHICH SHE HAS THOROUGHLY  
RESEARCHED.





# HISTORY PAPER 2019

HISTORY SQUARE  
DETAIL



# ABOUT ADEBUNMI GBADEBO...

- EXPLORES CONCEPTS INVOLVING LAND, MEMORY, AND ERASURE. HER HISTORY PAPERS ARE A MIX OF COTTON, INDIGO DYE AND HUMAN HAIR, COLLECTED FROM BLACK BARBERSHOPS, WHICH THE ARTIST PULVERIZES AND COMBINES TO CREATE SHEETS OF HAND-LAID "PAPER". THESE PAPERS ARE VIEWED AS ABSTRACTED DOCUMENTS, LOADED WITH GENETIC HISTORIES AND RACIAL REFERENCES.
- THE ARTIST'S OWN HISTORY IS REVEALED FROM ANCESTORS LOCATED ON PLANTATIONS IN CAROLINA; HER USE OF INDIGO AND COTTON REFERENCE HER OWN FAMILY IN PARTICULAR BUT ALSO THE ENSLAVED AFRICAN DIASPORA AS A LARGER CONCEPT. GBADEBO'S STUDIO PRACTICE IS AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER LINGERING QUESTIONS AND PROCESS OF THESE HISTORIES. POUNDS OF KINKY HAIR, COTTON, DENIM, AND INDIGO HAIR DYE ARE BAPTIZED IN WATER, THEN PULLED OUT TO FORM COMPOSITIONS REMINISCENT OF AERIAL MAPS OR BODIES OF WATER. THESE ACTIONS BECOME A WAY OF ACCESSING PLACE AND TIME THROUGH MATERIAL AND PROCESS.

# KWAME BRATHWAITE

## B. 1938

" I WANTED VIEWERS TO FEEL THAT THEY WERE HAVING THIS EXPERIENCE THROUGH MY EYES, THROUGH MY LENS, AS IF THEY WERE THERE THEMSELVES. MY GOAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO PASS THAT LEGACY ON AND MAKE SURE THAT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME, EVERYONE WHO SEES MY WORK KNOWS THE GREATNESS OF OUR PEOPLE."



# ABOUT KWAME BRATHWAITE

- BORN IN THE BRONX TO IMMIGRANTS FROM BARBADOS. HE LEARNED ABOUT THE TEACHINGS OF MARCUS GARVEY FROM HIS FATHER, ONE OF WHICH WAS BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL.
- AS A TEENAGER HE TAUGHT HIMSELF PHOTOGRAPHY WITH A CAMERA HE GOT AS A GRADUATION PRESENT. HE AND HIS BROTHER WOULD LATER FORM A MODELLING AGENCY, GRANDASSA, THAT PROMOTED NATURAL BLACK STYLE AND LAUNCHED THE BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL TO CHALLENGE THE WHITE STANDARD OF BEAUTY AND INCREASE RACIAL PRIDE.
- IN ADDITION HE DOCUMENTED EVENTS IN NEW YORK'S BLACK COMMUNITIES.

# BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL POSTER 1971



SIKOLO WITH  
HEADRESS 1968





JOANNE PETIT FRERE  
2018

NEW YORKER SHOOT AT MOMA  
PS1



CAROL LEE PRINCE  
1964



ROBERT PRUITT  
B. 1975

INTERESTED IN BLACK CULTURAL  
SELF REALIZATION.



# ABOUT ROBERT PRUITT...

- BORN IN HOUSTON, TX
- INTERESTED IN CREATING IMAGERY THAT RESULTS IN A NEW VOCABULARY THAT IS ABLE TO SERVE AS BIB-WHITE BINARIES THAT BOOKEND A SPECTRUM THAT IS DEVOID OF THE WHITE GAZE AND UNIVERSALIZE MARGINAL IDENTITIES.
- IN HIS WORKS THE SYMBOLS ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS THE INDIVIDUALS. HE DRAWS PEOPLE IN HIS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT THAT ARE ALSO IN HIS IMAGINATION.
- SOME OF HIS ARTISTIC INFLUENCES ARE; BOB THOMPSON, JOHN BIGGERS, CHARLES WHITE, YORUBA HEADDRESSES, CLASSICAL AFRICAN ICONOGRAPHY, SCIENCE FICTION, GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMIC BOOKS.

ALL THE HYPE 2016



BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL  
2016



USHER BOARD  
PRESIDENT 2018



# KEVIN BEASLEY

## B. 1985

"THE OBJECTS I CHOOSE FOR MY SCULPTURES ALL HAVE SOME PERSONAL CONNECTION TO ME OR AT LEAST TO SOMEONE CLOSE TO ME. I HAVE A STORY OF WHERE EVERYTHING CAME FROM AND WHY, THE WORK OPENS UP FROM THERE. THEREFORE THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME."





# ABOUT KEVIN BEASLEY . . . .

- BORN IN LYNCHBURG, VA, NOW WORKING AND LIVING IN NYC.
- SCULPTOR, INSTALLATION AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST WORKING IN SOUND AND VIDEO MEDIA.
- SPENDS TIME AT A RURAL PROPERTY HIS GRANDPARENTS LEFT HIS FAMILY. WITH THE GRAVEYARD THERE HE FEELS THAT THE PROPERTY HOLDS A HISTORY OF A LOT OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND INFORMATION, A SORT OF RESIDUE OF HIS ANCESTRY. "SPENDING TIME THERE HELPS ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES ME: WHO AM I ?; WHAT AM I DOING?; AND WHY AM I MAKING WORK?"
- COMBINES FOUND MATERIALS MOSTLY CLOTHING, PERSONAL EPHEMERA, STUDIO DEBRIS AND SAMPLES FROM VARIOUS MUSICAL GENRES. HE USES HOUSE DRESSES AND CAFTANS BECAUSE THEY REMIND HIM OF GARMENTS HIS GRANDMOTHER WORE.
- THE FINAL SCULPTURES, SUGGEST THE DETRITUS OF MODERN CULTURE EMBEDDED IN MOLTEN STRATA, INDEX THEIR OWN PROCESS OF CREATION, WITH THE ACTIONS OF THE ARTIST'S BODY IMPRESSED ON THEIR SURFACE.
- EACH SCULPTURE EMBODIES A SPIRITUAL DIALOG. THE PURPOSE IS NOT THE MATERIALS IN THEMSELVES, OR EVEN THE PROCESS. IT'S REALLY ABOUT HOW ALL OF THOSE THINGS ACTUALLY CONNECT, AND THEN HOW WE SORT OF REACT AND RESPOND AND NEGOTIATE.

# THE PROCESS...

AFTER SELECTION OF OBJECTS HE BEGINS TO CREATE A DESIGN THAT CONTINUES TO FLOW THROUGH THE PROCESS. HE THEN USES MALLEABLE SUBSTANCES LIKE RESIN AND POLYURETHANE FOAM AS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS THE OBJECTS TOGETHER. THE SCULPTURES ARE PRODUCED BY MOLDING AND MANIPULATING THE ADHESIVE MATERIAL WITH THE OBJECTS UNTIL THE SCULPTURAL ELEMENTS BEGIN TO TAKE FORM. HE ONLY WORKS THE MASS UNTIL THE RESIN BEGINS TO HARDEN, ALLOWING THE INHERENT PROPERTIES OF THE MATERIAL TO ESTABLISH THE TEMPORAL BOUNDARIES OF THE PROCESS AND THE FINISHED FORM OF THE SCULPTURE TO TAKE ITS FINAL SHAPE. HE CREATES TWO KINDS OF SCULPTURE; LARGE RECTANGULAR 2-D "SLABS" AND STAND ALONE 3-D SCULPTURES.

QUEEN OF THE  
NIGHT 2018



ORGAN  
2015



# THE SEA





# KINGDOM CHAIR



MOSE ERNEST  
TOLLIVER  
C.1920-2006

"I LOVE TO PAINT. I PAINT WHAT I  
FEEL LIKE PAINTING—WHAT IS IN  
MY HEAD,"





# ABOUT MOSE TOLLIVER...

- BORN N ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY TO A SHARECROPPER IN THE PIKE ROAD COMMUNITY NEAR MONTGOMERY ALABAMA. HE WAS ONE 12 CHILDREN AND HE FATHERED 13. ELEVEN SURVIVED TO ADULTHOOD. AFTER HIS FATHER DIED HE AND HIS MOTHER MOVED TO MONTGOMERY.
- HE WORKED AS A GARDENER AND LANDSCAPER WHICH HE LOVED BUT WHEN HE WAS INJURED AT THE McCLENDON FURNITURE COMPANY WHERE HE WORKED PART-TIME { A THOUSAND POUNDS OF MARBLE CRUSHED HIS LEGS} MAKING HIM UNABLE TO WALK WITHOUT ASSISTANCE.
- AFTER THE ACCIDENT HE BECAME DEPRESSED AND DRANK. HE CREDITS PAINTING WITH ALLOWING HIM TO MOVE FORWARD. "I WOULD HAVE NEVER PAINTED IF I HADN'T GOTTEN HURT." HE PAINTED BEFORE THE ACCIDENT BUT NOT VERY MUCH. ONE VIVID MEMORY ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD HOME WAS THAT HIS MOTHER HAD THEIR FARM SHACK COVERED WITH PICTURES.
- HE WAS ALSO ENCOURAGED BY HIS FORMER EMPLOYER AT THE FURNITURE COMPANY, McCLENDON A PAINTER HIMSELF WAS IMPRESSED BY HIS WORK AND OFFERED TO PAY FOR ART CLASSES BUT MOSE REFUSED BECAUSE HE WANTED TO USE HIS OWN TECHNIQUE. HE WORKS SITTING AT THE EDGE OF HIS BED GENERALLY USING HOUSEPAINT ON PLYWOOD HOWEVER, HE ALSO PAINTED FURNITURE, OTHER OBJECTS AND WORKED ON MASONITE.
- FOLK ART EXPERTS HAVE SAID THAT HE HAS A DEEP PERSONAL VISION. HE IS DYSLEXIC WHICH LEADS HIM TO EXPERIMENT WITH HIS WORK BEING UPSIDE DOWN. HIS SUBJECT MATTER IS VARIED, SOMETIMES BASED ON REQUESTS FROM CUSTOMERS. HE OFTEN SHOWS HIS SENSE OF HUMOR AND SOMETIMES AN INTEREST IN EROTICA. HE HAS DONE MANY CROSSES AND SELF PORTRAITS.
- HE CREATED A "GALLERY" IN HIS FRONT YARD. HE WAS DISCOVERED IN 1981 WHEN ONE OF THE PATRON TURNED OUT TO BE A FORMER CURATOR OF ART FOR THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF ART.
- TWO OF HIS CHILDREN, ANNIE AND CHARLES ARE ALSO PAINTERS.

MOSE WORKING ON  
BED



CROSS WITH WHITE  
JESUS, WITH A FRENCH  
BIRD, A MOUNTAIN BIRD  
AND A PINTO.  
1987



CROSS WITH CHRIST  
AND MAN WITH HAT  
1987



ME AND WILLIE MAE  
1987

TOLLIVER PICTURES HIMSELF ON CRUTCHES  
STANDING NEXT TO HIS WIFE



MOOSE LADY WITH A  
GENTLEMAN NAMED  
CHARLES BAILEY. HE  
TOLD HER HE WANTED  
TO TALK TO HER AND SHE  
TOLD HIM HE COULD  
TALK ALL HE WANTS TO

1987



JOE MINTER  
B. 1943



# ABOUT JOE MINTER...

- BORN AND CURRENTLY LIVES IN BIRMINGHAM, AL.
- USES FOUND MATERIALS TO CREATE ALLEGORICAL MIXED MEDIA WORKS THAT EXAMINE THE HISTORY OF RACE AND CLASS INEQUITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. DRAWING ON HIS TRAINING IN CONSTRUCTION AND WELDING, HE REPURPOSES THE DETRITUS OF RURAL LIFE TO MAKE DENSE GEOMETRICALLY COMPLEX SOUTHERN ART.
- CREATED AFRICAN VILLAGE ON HIS PROPERTY.
- HAD A WORK ACCIDENT WHERE ASBESTOS GOT IN HIS EYES. ONE WAS OPERATED ON BUT STILL IS IMPAIRED.
- PARTICIPATED IN THE 2019 WHITNEY BIENNIAL



# VOYAGE IN CHAINS 2000

RECALL MILLIONS ON A FORCED VOYAGE  
THROUGH THE MIDDLE PASSAGE.  
CHAINS AND TOOLS ARE A SYMBOL FOR  
400 YEARS OF YEARS OF OPPRESSION  
INFLECTED ON BLACKS.



## CHILDREN IN JAIL 2013

•MINTER REFLECTS BACK ON BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA'S CHILDREN'S CRUSADE: ON MAY 2, 1963, MORE THAN 1,000 STUDENTS SKIPPED SCHOOL AND TOOK TO THE STREETS FROM THE DOORS OF THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, AND FOR DAYS FACED POLICE VIOLENCE AND DOG ATTACKS, BRUTAL SPRAYS OF FIRE HOSES, AND MASS ARRESTS. ULTIMATELY, MORE THAN 3,000 CHILDREN TOOK PART IN THE DIRECT ACTIONS. MORE THAN 500 CHILDREN WERE JAILED BY ALABAMA PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSIONER BULL CONNOR, INCLUDING 75 KIDS CRAMMED INTO A CELL MEANT FOR EIGHT ADULTS, AND STILL OTHERS LOCKED INTO ANIMAL PENS AT THE FAIRGROUNDS FOR DAYS ON END.





# '63 FOOT SOLDIERS

## LEONARDO BENZANT

"MY ARTWORKS DRAW FROM THE UNIQUELY SHARED HISTORY OF CODE SWITCHING, DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MULTIPLE NARRATIVES THAT PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT HAVE INHERITED AND ARE COMPELLED TO ADOPT AS A SURVIVAL STRATEGY FOR DAILY LIFE. LIKE THIS COMMON EXPERIENCE, MY WORK STRADDLES TWO WORLDS."



# ABOUT LEONARDO BENZANT...

- BENZANT IS A DOMINICAN-AMERICAN ARTIST, WITH HAITIAN HERITAGE, BORN AND RAISED IN BROOKLYN, WHO AT TIMES, METAPHORICALLY, REFERS TO HIS PRACTICE AS URBAN SHAMANISM INSPIRED BY A CHARACTER HE CREATED CALLED KAMARIOKA, THE CHAMELEON. HIS PRACTICE IS INFORMED BY HIS STUDIES OF THE KONGO AND HIS SPIRITUAL BELIEFS SHAPED BY RESEARCH INTO WESTERN, EASTERN, AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN RELIGION, ART, HISTORY, CULTURE AND RITUALS.
- THERE IS A PRAYER INSIDE EVERY FORM. THE WORK DELVES INTO OUR AFRICAN INTENSIONS.
- INITIALLY INSPIRED BY THE GEES BEND QUILT EXHIBITION AT THE WHITNEY.

RADIATIONS OF THE  
MIDNIGHT WALKER  
2019



COSMOLOGY OF  
RESISTANCE 2016

