





# Year Six

The Art + Practice Year 6 Catalogue celebrates our 2019 programming. By gathering exhibition walkthroughs, highlighting the A+P Scholarship Grant awardees, showcasing the exhibitions A+P organized with its peer museum institutions, and welcoming artists to discuss their diverse practices, this catalogue invites A+P's community to remember, learn, and engage with the ideas explored on A+P's campus throughout 2019.

A+P thanks its collaborators, including the California African American Museum, The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Broad, and First Place for Youth as well as our visitors and friends for continuing to help champion our mission. Your support makes A+P's vision possible.

## ART + PRACTICE

Leimert Park, Los Angeles, CA

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# Foster Youth



# 2019 Foster Youth Interns



In 2019, Art + Practice welcomed interns Priscilla Solano, George Harvey, and Anari Barnes from First Place for Youth. Priscilla worked as A+P's Admin and Communications Intern. She was responsible for creating and tracking social media content, assisting with public programs, and designing signage for events. Following her internship at A+P, Priscilla was accepted into the prestigious internship program at international gallery Hauser & Wirth. Priscilla continues to expand upon her experience working in the arts and plans to pursue a degree in art history to support this dream.

While at A+P, George and Anari worked as A+P's Security and Community Engagement Interns. They were responsible for overseeing the safety of visitors and artworks in A+P's exhibition space. George brought his passion to work hard and often engaged with the artworks on view, interpreting their meanings and symbolism. Anari attended extensive security trainings with A+P's security consultant, Securitas Inc., where she learned CPR and aggressive behavior management. She enjoyed meeting and engaging with different types of people.

## A+P Admin and Communications Intern Priscilla Solano

### What trainings did you attend as part of your internship?

During my internship I attended three offsite trainings, two at the Hammer Museum and the other at Hauser & Wirth, a blue-chip gallery.

At the Hammer, I toured the museum campus with a UCLA student and had lunch with Theresa Sotto, the museum's Associate Director of Academic Programs. I enjoyed a nice discussion with Theresa about her work at the Hammer. After lunch, I went to a museum studies career panel with over 100 UCLA students. Panel participants talked about their positions at the museum as well as their education and career trajectory.

At Hauser & Wirth, I toured the gallery, had lunch, and met with the gallery's interns. I learned about what the interns do and their impressions about their work.

### Are you interested in pursuing a degree and career in the arts?

Yes, I am. Prior to working at A+P, I knew very little about the art world. I've enjoyed learning about how a museum functions and what jobs are available. The training I attended at the Hammer, for instance, made me realize that a museum was the type of environment I would enjoy working in.

### What are some skills you've developed while interning at A+P?

I learned how to use Adobe InDesign and Photoshop. As part of my internship, I gathered social media analytics for A+P on a weekly basis. I just started working with MailChimp, a marketing automation platform. I was also responsible for tracking the data associated with A+P's visitor observation surveys, storage rooms, physical archives, and supporting public programs.

A+P has trained me to use the computer in ways that I never knew were possible. The Adobe Creative Suite programs I learned to use will definitely come in handy.

### What was your favorite part about interning with A+P?

I've most enjoyed having a creative outlet and learning new things. I also have enjoyed the work environment.



### What do you plan to do after your internship ends?

I hope to apply to an internship at Hauser & Wirth. I'd like to be able to learn how a gallery works as opposed to museums like A+P and the Hammer. I also want to see what private galleries are like and add to the skills I've learned at A+P.

### Do you have any advice for future participants who are looking to intern with A+P or in the art world?

I think that they should have an open mind and accept the challenges that come their way. People get discouraged, but it's just about making the mistakes and learning from them. You can use the skills you learn here in the future. If you catch yourself thinking "I can't do this," it means you need to accept the challenge.

Opposite and Above  
Art + Practice Admin and Communications Intern, Priscilla Solano.  
27 June 2019 (opposite) and 12 June 2019 (above).

## George Harvey

**What training did you undergo to prepare yourself for your role as A+P's Security and Community Engagement Intern?**

I was trained by Securitas, Inc., A+P's contracted security company. I attended multiple trainings that taught me how to deal with the public, how to peacefully defuse conflict, and how to keep others, especially myself, out of danger.

**Have there been any moments during your internship when you had to reference those trainings?**

Yeah, there was an incident where a man came into A+P. He was loud, aggressive, and disturbing visitors in the exhibition space. When the incident occurred, I started thinking about the classes I participated in and the trainings I received from Securitas. I also saw my security supervisors, Paul Mate and Glendee Sanchez, apply the skills they had learned from their trainings. It was a good learning experience because it was my first time in a situation like that.

**What have you most enjoyed learning during your internship?**

I began my art journey here at A+P. It has been great to learn that art is a platform with endless possibilities to express yourself. I've enjoyed learning how art can change how you feel or even change your perspective, such as your political views. I think that art has a powerful effect if you open yourself to it.

**Do you think you can apply what you've learned from your internship to your personal life? If so, how?**

There have already been a few times where I've applied the things I've learned through my internship to my personal life. I've managed conflict using the experience and knowledge I gained at A+P. In those instances, I thought back to my trainings and was able to prevent the situation from getting out of control. I know to be proactive, to keep situations from getting worse.

## Anari Barnes

**Before starting your internship at A+P, how much knowledge did you have about working in a museum or art gallery?**

None. I knew you're supposed to be quiet. That's about it.

**What type of trainings did you have to undergo before beginning your internship at A+P? Did you have to utilize any of the specific trainings on campus?**

I went through Securitas' training. I learned CPR but never had to use it!

**What are your plans after your internship ends?**

I'll go back to working my other job. I'm an after-school mentor at Quincy Jones Elementary. I help the students with their homework. I work with kids in kindergarten through fifth grade.

**What skills has your internship helped you gain?**

Better communication.

**What has your experience working at A+P been like?**

It's been interesting and fun. Interesting to learn about different personalities and fun to meet new people.

**Do you have any advice for future participants who are looking to intern with A+P or in the art world?**

Don't give up.

**Opposite**  
A+P Security and Community Engagement Intern, George Harvey, at A+P's Exhibition Space. 22 March 2019.

**Below**  
A+P Security and Community Engagement Intern, Anari Barnes, at A+P's Public Programs Space. 24 July 2019.



# On Empowering Foster Youth Through Outreach, Data, and Art

**First Place for Youth's Chief Executive Officer Heidi McIntosh sat down with Art + Practice Deputy Director Sophia Belsheim to discuss McIntosh's experience working in foster care and her recent appointment as CEO.**



**Above**  
First Place for Youth Chief Executive Officer, Heidi McIntosh. 31 July 2019.

**Opposite top and bottom**  
Wall of Fame event at First Place for Youth. 26 April 2019.

**Sophia Belsheim** Why were you initially interested in becoming a social worker?

**Heidi McIntosh** From a young age, I've always wanted to help people. As the middle child, I acted as the mediator in my family. Assisting others was a skill I naturally developed. I thought a career in social work would be a good application of that skill.

**Belsheim** What was your first job as a social worker? What were some of the challenges you experienced in that position?

**McIntosh** My first job as a social worker was working as a child welfare investigator for Child Protective Services (CPS). I was responsible for investigating claims of child abuse and neglect. Looking back, it was one of the hardest jobs I've ever had. There were many obstacles I faced because I wanted to make a difference. I sought to help as many children and families as I could.

As a child welfare investigator, I was constantly aware there were more needs in the communities I served than my employer had answers, resources, and support for. At times, this experience made me feel inadequate and helpless. However, that job shaped how I now think about social welfare and foster youth. It was a critical juncture in my career. I recognize that I could have walked away, but the work was too important for me to do so. I wanted to find a way to advocate for the communities that I cared about.





Today, I choose to continue being an activist in a system that is ripe with challenges. I fight for resources within the foster care system because I want to make a long-term difference.

**Belsheim** You have served in numerous leadership positions, including as Deputy Commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Senior Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the Obama administration, Deputy of Programs at the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and now Chief Executive Officer of First Place for Youth.

What experiences influenced you the most and how have those experiences shaped your opinions of the foster care system?

**McIntosh** While I think all my experiences have shaped my opinions of the foster care system in a unique way, as a leader, I am always seeking experiences that keep me humble and in direct contact with the kids who I wish to support. The foster youth I've worked with continue to share

their personal experiences with me. I've heard that the system has failed them. Those stories touch my heart.

I consider working with foster youth a privilege, and I find connecting with those young people to be an honor more rewarding than being in a leadership position. For me, it's important to never lose contact with the community that I wish to support, to never stop listening.

**Belsheim** Considering your work in government, how have you engaged with our political leaders? Have you experienced any barriers working with elected officials?

**McIntosh** That's a good question, because I believe that keeping our political leaders informed about the issues foster youth encounter is crucial. One must consistently approach and educate our politicians about the issues prevalent within the foster care system, but there is a certain approach that we should champion. I find that sharing real-life, personal stories about foster youth makes a huge difference to our political

leaders, because it helps these leaders understand how policy change can improve the lives of these often-forgotten young people.

We need our politicians to envision what the foster care system could look like if certain policies and regulations changed. But to do so, our political leaders must understand how federal and state policy impacts the financial and personal well-being of foster youth. I recognize that our political leaders are our partners in this work. One must approach them in a way that allows for positive change for foster youth in this country.

**Belsheim** Now let's jump ahead and consider First Place for Youth. Why were you initially interested in working at First Place? What was your first impression of the nonprofit?

**McIntosh** There's something absolutely thrilling about putting myself, and those who also do this work, out of business. I hope that one day foster care reform will be unnecessary, and would love to end my career on that note. But in the meantime, First Place represents a platform

that captures everything that I've learned throughout my career working in social welfare.

As First Place's new CEO, I can think strategically about the number of children in foster care.<sup>1</sup> It's a finite number, which represents a problem that I believe can be solved, especially with respect to the number of foster youth transitioning out of care. We must reduce the likelihood of negative consequences for this group of young people.

I believe one must look at the local impact in order to make change. But it is also important to examine national policy and determine how we can make a difference there.

I should also say that First Place was not new to me. The previous CEO, Sam Cobbs, and I are both Annie E. Casey Foundation Fellows. When I was Deputy Commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Sam was

**Opposite** First Place for Youth hosts a roundtable discussion with HBO *Ballers* actor, Carl D. McDowell. 12 June 2019.

**Above** First Place for Youth hosts a summer barbecue. 2 July 2019.



First Place's CEO. We were introduced through the fellowship program. So I've known about First Place's excellent reputation for quite some time because I've worked in foster care. I respect the progress that First Place has championed for over twenty years.

**Belsheim** Does First Place have any influence over policy development in Washington, D.C.? If so, how?

**McIntosh** First Place has been working on policy development in California for decades. We gather statistics about homelessness, incarceration, pregnancy rates, school attendance, employment, and other key measures of success before, during, and after young people are in our program. Our goal is to significantly and positively impact the lives of youth aging out of the foster care system. We also acknowledge that First Place needs to change existing policies to best support this effort.

Based on our research, California has the highest number of children in foster care

throughout the United States. We take that information, think critically about how to change it, and then bring that discussion to Congress. In Washington, D.C., there are numerous committees—committees that specifically address foster care and mental health, for example—to support our efforts to make policy change. We tell these committees and Congress that we have a model that we know works because we have the data to support it. That starts the conversation on the Hill. Then we take our ideas and conversations to our federal policymakers. It's about engaging politicians as partners. This is what makes policy change happen.

**Belsheim** As First Place's CEO, what are your priorities and responsibilities?

**McIntosh** One of my main priorities is to amplify our foster youth's voices. I believe that the majority of foster youth living in the United States aren't heard enough. As a leader, I make sure that their voice, presence, and needs are lifted up and cared for.

I am also responsible for educating potential donors and politicians about the foster care system. If a person who could potentially support First Place or make a difference in our young people's lives doesn't understand the difficulties those in foster care experience, then it's difficult for me to move forward with getting them to support meaningful change. If I can talk to them about these issues, while also providing opportunities for First Place's foster youth to speak out firsthand, then I can make a difference.

Another priority that I have is to expand First Place's influence. I hope to showcase our model—which includes safe, stable housing along with employment and education mentorship—to a larger audience. I want more organizations and people to understand what a career pathway looks like and how it's possible to help our foster youth pursue an education. I also want to demonstrate First Place's effectiveness and communicate that we're improving the foster care system overall.

**Belsheim** How was First Place's collaboration with A+P first introduced to you?

**McIntosh** Hellen Hong, First Place's former Executive Director of the Southern Region, introduced A+P to me. When I met her, she expressed how excited she was about First Place's collaboration with A+P. The collaboration was one of the first things she wanted to discuss.

In all my years of working in foster care, I have visited all 50 states and U.S. territories, examining their existing child welfare systems. I have also visited countless agencies and nonprofits supporting foster youth. Yet, First Place and A+P's collaboration is probably the most unique collaboration I have come across. From the campus, to meeting with the board and staff, I think that the collaboration is outstanding and one that I am proud to be a part of.

**Belsheim** What are your goals with First Place's collaboration with A+P? How do you wish to see the collaboration grow and develop?

**McIntosh** In working with foster youth, I have come to identify art as one of the most powerful ways that foster youth work through their pain and trauma. Exposing our young people to the arts, like A+P does, is important.

I also see First Place and A+P's collaboration as an opportunity to showcase innovative thinking. I want people to connect with the collaboration's mission and learn about the difference it is making in our foster youth's lives. Positive outcomes are happening at the ground level.

I hope to take these ideas to, Washington, D.C. and to our political leaders, educating them about the possibilities of what art can do. Right now, for me, it's qualitative. But I think education is the most powerful piece of it. From there, we can help other organizations make similar models across the United States.

A+P's Deputy Director Sophia Belsheim conducted this interview with First Place for Youth's CEO Heidi McIntosh on May 15, 2019.

1. There are over 443,000 foster youth in the United States with nearly 25,000 foster youth who turn 18 annually. Source: U.S. Administration on Children, Youth and Families/ Children's Bureau (2017), [acf.hhs.gov](http://acf.hhs.gov).

**Above**  
A+P Public Programs and Exhibitions Manager, Joshua Oduga, leads an exhibition walkthrough of *Stephen Towns: Ruminations and a Reckoning* with First Place for Youth at Art + Practice. 24 October 2019.

# On Accessible Education for Foster Youth

Words by Jamie Kugelberg

**Jamie Kugelberg oversees First Place for Youth's Southern California programs. Here, Kugelberg explains how Art + Practice and First Place are, through the A+P Scholars Program, teaming up to ease the financial hardships foster youth experience while pursuing their education.**

In 2019, Art + Practice awarded First Place for Youth a \$100,000 grant for an A+P Scholars Program. Expanding First Place's ability to support foster youth in Los Angeles, the program directs stipends to youth seeking to defray the incidental costs—such as school supplies, childcare, transportation, tutoring, room and board, and tuition fees—associated with pursuing higher education or professional development. Over the past 12 months, 32 A+P Scholars received grant funding.

## Education: Common Good, Common Barrier

School in general is a barrier for foster youth. Even at a young age, foster youth move around a lot. The average foster youth will attend between six or seven different elementary, middle, and high schools. Every time they move, they have to catch up, which means they often graduate high school or complete their GED much later than their peers. While frequent changes to their living circumstances may cause them to fall behind, it doesn't account for those students with disabilities or special needs, who may, for example, find better support with an individualized education program (IEP).

Even then, maybe this young person has a misdiagnosis. Or if they are already behind, they have an internalized belief that they're not good at school. Those students encounter further complications when pursuing specialized help. Sometimes foster youth will avoid school altogether because school was a negative place for



**Above**  
First Place for Youth Regional Director of Programs, Southern California, Jamie Kugelberg. 18 June 2019.

**Opposite**  
First Place for Youth hosts their annual Career and Education Resource fair. 18 July 2019.

them growing up. Just being a kid in foster care can cause all kinds of social anxiety.

## Making Time for School Can Be Difficult

Then there's the lack of resources. It's important to remind ourselves that secondary education is a luxury, especially to be able to attend and solely focus on your education. Someone who didn't experience foster care often has a support system—parents, friends, social connections—that allows them to flourish during their post-secondary education. On the other hand, youth who have gone through the foster system don't always have that support. They have to get a job right after graduating high school to support themselves. They need to work, but in order to make more money they need to go to school. How are they supposed to find the time and money for school when they're busy working? They get trapped in a cycle.

There are a lot of resources available for foster youth looking to receive a postsecondary education. These young people, however, often don't even know about those resources. And if there is no one to help them access those resources, that's a barrier.

First Place for Youth's foster youth are four times more likely to enroll in college. The first

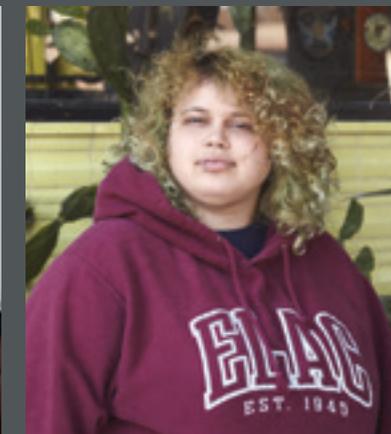
thing that we provide them with is the space to go to school. We pay for their housing so they can dedicate their time and focus to their career and education goals. We also provide education and employment specialists and MSW-trained social workers, who walk them through those processes. Our staff guides them, helps them find resources, supports them in navigating applications and works with them in identifying what motivates them so they can pick the right career path.

## Picking the Right Career and Education Path

A lot of First Place's youth get frustrated with general education requirements or getting their associate's degree. Some determine that community college or a four-year university isn't for them. There are other career paths where they can achieve their educational goals and lead successful careers.

Many of these young people will enroll in but not attend school. Or, they don't finish because whatever else is going on in their life. By partnering with First Place's staff, they have a team to coach them through those rough spots. So that when a crisis does occur—because everyone goes through crises—someone is there to help, and they don't drop out or stop pursuing their goals.





## 2019 A+P Scholars

### Ah'jale

**Age** 19  
**Application of Funds** \$1,619 for a cosmetology kit  
**Career Goals** Acquire a cosmetology license

**Where do you go to school?**  
El Camino Community College in Torrance.

**How did you hear about the A+P Scholarship?**  
My Education and Employment Specialist at First Place told me about the scholarship program. I had been explaining to him how I had wanted to take a cosmetology course because there was a kit I had to buy that was expensive. That's when he recommended the scholarship to me.

**What advice would you give another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**  
At first, I was I afraid to apply. When my Education and Employment Specialist told me about it, he explained that it would be a good way to get a computer. But then I started thinking, "Why do I need a computer? I'm in cosmetology, what purpose would that serve?"

Then I decided to ask for money for the kit. I was like, "That's a lot of money, but wait and see." I didn't know how I was going to pay nearly \$2,000. Working is cool and everything, but I have bills to pay. In the end, A+P paid for the whole kit. I'm just really grateful. So don't be scared to ask!

### Alexis

**Age** 21  
**Application of Funds** \$250 for transportation and school supplies  
**Education Goals** Study cosmetology at LA Trade Tech

**What educational pursuit did you request the funding for?**  
I was interning as a call representative in Orange County at Bank of America. It was expensive going back and forth four times each week. I used my scholarship to offset transportation costs. I was part of a carpool system, and I'd have to help with gas. Each week, I had to give the driver \$40.

**How did being able to pay for the carpool benefit you in the long run?**  
I was able to get to my internship on time. I was able to work.

**What skills did you gain during your internship? Anything you can utilize outside of banking?**  
I learned a lot about customer service. It was a different working environment for me, because I'm not used to working with large groups. I learned how to adapt as well.

**What are your current educational goals?**  
I'm not in school now. I'm working, but I do plan on going to LA Trade Tech.

**What do you want to do at LA Trade Tech?**  
I was thinking cosmetology.

**What do you hope to do after studying cosmetology?**  
I want to open a hair salon. I already studied business in school. I feel like going to school for hair and combining that with what I know about business, that would be a smart thing to do.

### Asja

**Age** 21  
**Application of Funds** \$545 for EMT Certifications  
**Career Goals** Become a paramedic

**What did you need the scholarship money for?**  
I currently work as an EMT. There are a few extra certifications you can get that allow you to do more things in the future. I wanted to use the scholarship for electrocardiogram training as well as advanced cardiac and pediatric life support certification—so I can further help my patients.

**What are you studying right now?**  
I'm in a certificate program. EMTs can also work in the hospital. Depending on the hospital, they let you do more things, under more supervision. If I have certification, instead of just doing CPR for a patient, they might ask me to do a scan or draw blood. I'm going to learn phlebotomy next.

**What are your current educational goals?**  
Overall, I want to be a paramedic. That's one step above an EMT. The certifications I mention are things I will have to complete during paramedic school. But I like to be ahead of things, so I want to get them before attending. I plan to start school in Spring 2020.

**What do you plan to do with all your education and certifications?**  
Really, I want to be a paramedic for the fire department. That requires that you also be a firefighter. I still have to get in shape and toughen up. I know that I want to be a paramedic for the fire department because they are the main people that will show up if you call 911.

In a large city like Los Angeles, the fire department runs everything. But I want to help people in the worst emergencies. That's why I became a first responder. I wanted to be able to help people when they truly needed it.

### Azia

**Age** 19  
**Application of Funds** \$925 for cosmetology school materials  
**Career Goals** Open a mobile hair salon

**How did you hear about the A+P Scholarship?**  
I'm currently studying cosmetology. My youth advocate from First Place thought the scholarship could help pay for my school materials.

**How long have you been in school for cosmetology? Why were you initially interested in pursuing this career pathway?**  
I have been in school since August 2019. But I've been doing hair and beauty since I was in high school. I've always loved the hands-on aspect of working with hair. I recently got into makeup and started a YouTube channel.

**What are you learning in the cosmetology program at Santa Monica College?**  
The cosmetology department at Santa Monica College splits a semester into halves, so it's eight weeks. For eight weeks, you have classes of your choosing, whether you want to do hair care, nail care, whatever you want to choose.

This semester, I chose cosmetology. I do hair, skin, and nails as a combo. These past eight weeks, I also had a hair-coloring class where we did highlights, ombre, and all-over coloring. We learned how to work with the chemicals and how to properly apply them.

I also had a nail-care class where we learned how to do basic manicures and pedicures, how to prevent infection, and how to clean our tools. I also had a hair-cutting class where we learned how to cut a one-length bob.

**What are your long-term educational goals?**  
After I finish my associate's degree in cosmetology, I plan on opening my own mobile salon. I want to convert a bus into an on-the-go salon.

**What advice would you give another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**  
I would tell them to make sure it's something that they would really want to do. This is a generous offer, a program that helps us purchase the tools and resources we need to succeed.

### Donald

**Age** 21  
**Application of Funds** \$3,936 for covering living expenses while enrolled in a bank training program  
**Career Goals** Get a job at a bank then pursue a degree in sociology

**What education pursuit did you request funding for?**  
Banking.

**What are your current educational goals?**  
The program I'm in right now is called JVS BankWork\$. It's an eight-week program where they train you in every aspect of banking. After finishing the program, I hope to land a position at a bank. Their success rate is pretty high, so I'm pretty sure I'll be leaving with a job.

**What made you interested in going through a banking training program like JVS BankWork\$?**  
I'm good with numbers, money, and customer service. Who doesn't want a job where you can go to work every day, looking professional and helping others?

**What do you hope to do after completing the JVS BankWork\$ program?**  
After the program, I want to go back to school and pursue my bachelor's in sociology. I'm a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) kid, so I have to go to an HBCU. But I really just want to see where life takes me.

**How has the scholarship supported your educational and personal goals?**

Because I was working full-time, the scholarship allowed me to take a step back focus solely on the banking program, so I could become the best banker I could be without having to worry about the stress of bills or work.

**What advice would you give another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**  
I would say take full advantage of the opportunities granted to you. As foster youth, we've been through a lot, so we have to get resources where we can. One thing that I've learned was to not let my past struggles define who I am, but to take full advantage of all the resources granted to me so I can become the best me possible.

### Kassidi

**Age** 21  
**Application of Funds** \$2,310 for phlebotomy tuition costs  
**Education Goals** Become a medical assistant

**How did you hear about the A+P Scholarship?**  
My Education and Employment Specialist told me about the scholarship program. I was almost finished with First Place's program, but I still hadn't finished school. I didn't know what to do. That's when my EE told me about the A+P Scholarship. I wanted the scholarship so I could finish school and begin my career.

**How long have you been in school studying phlebotomy?**  
This is my second month. I'm also doing an internship at the school's medical clinic. It's been great.

**Why were you initially interested in pursuing a career pathway in phlebotomy?**  
I heard phlebotomy was something that I could learn quickly. It turned out to be a really good fit because I'm



familiar with customer service jobs. I just have to help comfort the patient while I draw blood.

I'm not really squeamish about pulling blood with needles. It's easier than I thought it would be. The job suits my mental pace as well. In high school, I was really good at science. But I didn't think healthcare would be way easier than cosmetology!

**What sort of things are you learning at the clinic?**

I'm learning about how to safely draw blood from people. Like when you get a physical and they draw five valves from you. I'm also learning about the cultural differences in the medical field so I can accommodate customers from diverse backgrounds.

**What are your long-term educational goals?**

I've recently taken an interest in becoming a medical assistant. I want to get my degree so I can work with more patients in a clinic. I also want to get my EKG and CPR certificates.

**Karina**

Age 19

**Application of Funds** \$750 for a laptop repair, recording interface, and transportation

**Career Goals** Become an interdisciplinary artist

**What educational pursuit did you request funding for?**

My laptop broke six months ago. It sucked because I'd been trying to record music. I asked to repair the laptop so I could fix it and buy a recording interface. I'm currently setting up a studio in my house right now. My scholarship is going towards all of that.

**What are your current educational goals?**

Right now, I'm getting my diploma. I

should graduate in December. After that, I want to major in film and music and take some business classes as well. I want to open a beauty and clothing line.

**What do you hope to do with your talent in the future?**

Honestly, being in the foster care system, I felt alone. I've had other friends that are system kids, as well. We all want to make each other feel less alone. That's my goal. I want to advocate for other youth and let them know it doesn't always have to be this way.

I know if I had more guidance, then I wouldn't have had to go through so much turmoil. My hardships made me a better person, but I want to guide youth and educate everybody. Because there's just so much that foster kids don't know that they should be learning.

**Anything else you want to say?**

I think organizations that help foster youth are important. Honestly, many of these kids have a lot of potential. They're so talented, but they're dealt the wrong cards. I know foster youth who could be something, who could really help the world, but they just never have the opportunities or the resources.

I'm also really thankful for the scholarship and First Place, because the programs really gave me a chance to start again.

**Keyatta**

Age 20

**Application of Funds** \$790 for acting classes

**Career Goals** Become a professional actor and entrepreneur

**How did you hear about the A+P Scholarship?**

I wanted to take some acting classes at



LA Acting Studios. First Place told me that A+P could help pay for it.

**Why did you think it was a good idea to apply?**

I get a lot of acting work, and I want to make acting a long-term career. I needed classes, help, and resources to make that happen.

**What have you learned from your acting classes so far?**

Right now, I'm taking a commercial acting class. The class is teaching me how to audition, how to walk into the room, and how to book a role. The class is relatively small. There are about eight of us, which I find helpful.

I'm also enrolled in the theater program at El Camino College and have done some work on the set of the CW's *All American*.

**Have you applied what you've learned in class while on the set, or is that completely separate?**

The CW acting is little different. It's background, which I don't have to audition for. I just submit a portfolio. If they like your look, then you get the job. But I've used the stuff I've learned in class for a couple auditions. I got my first commercial, which was for ESPN Football.

**What are your long-term educational goals?**

I want to continue my acting classes, but I also want to take business classes. I want to make passive income, to become an entrepreneur. I want to figure out how to do that.

**Kevin**

Age 21

**Application of Funds** \$500 for a laptop computer

**Education Goals** Finish an associate's degree at Los Angeles City College and transfer to the University of Southern California.



**What did you use the scholarship funding for?**

I used it for a laptop. All of my homework is online. I needed a laptop to have access to my homework instead of going to a library.

**How many hours would you spend going to a library?**

At the time, I didn't have a car. I would take the bus, which took about five hours getting to and from the library. I would sit there and use the computer, but the computers in the library are old. The computers also had a time limit, so I would have to log in and start over every hour.

**What are you planning to do after finishing your associate's degree?**

I want to pursue a bachelor's degree. I'm thinking of transferring to USC.

**What do you want to study at USC?**

Business, because that's what I'm studying right now. I'm interested in real estate and investment.

**How do you think this scholarship has helped you reach your educational goals?**

It's been very beneficial. Thanks to this laptop, I'm working at home, where I feel comfortable. At home, I've gotten so much homework done.

**Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Thanks to the A+P Scholarship, I was able to stay in school. I was stressing out before I had the funding and laptop. I was thinking, "Damn, I'm going to do this for the rest of the year. I have to go to a library. It takes so much time." I was ready to give up, but it's all worked out now.

When my sister told me about the program, I was like, "Oh, this is an opportunity." I took the opportunity and applied. It put me back on track to stay focused and remember what my goal was.



**Rami**

Age 20

**Application of Funds** \$2,000 for a laptop computer and school assistance

**Career Goals** Become a dancer

**How did you apply your scholarship funds?**

With the funds, I purchased a laptop computer to help with my school and work. Also, after I applied, Ann, my Education and Employment Specialist at First Place, showed me an IT certification program that I could take.

The program taught me how a computer works, how take it apart, and put it back together. By having a laptop computer, I was able to complete the certification.

**Where do you go to school?**

I am currently enrolled at Santa Monica College.

**What are your current educational goals?**

I want to finish the semester with a 4.0 grade average. I am currently pursuing my associate's degree in psychology. I plan to transfer to UCLA for my bachelor's, then get my master's degree shortly after.

**What do you want to pursue after graduate school?**

Going to graduate school is my backup plan. I've always wanted to be a dancer, but I'm getting my education so that I will have options. My dream is to explore the world through travel and dance.

**What advice would you give to another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**

I would tell them to never miss out on any opportunities that come their way, and to always take full advantage of what you're given. It's important to take chances in life.



**Sandra**

Age 21

**Application of Funds** \$500 for a laptop computer

**Career Goals** Become an elementary school teacher

**What are your current career and educational goals?**

I want to get my associate's degree in early childhood education at Pasadena City College then transfer to Channel Islands University and major in child development. I want to become an elementary school teacher someday.

**What excites you about the field that you're studying?**

Getting to know how every child develops in a different way. I used to play teacher with my younger siblings when I was little.

**How has the scholarship helped you in your educational goals?**

Now, I'm able to do all my homework. I can turn it in on time, instead of worrying about emailing my teachers or having to stay late after school to finish it.

**Why is it important to have organizations like First Place and A+P that assist young people with expenses like this?**

A lot of foster don't have resources like this scholarship program. Some of them end up homeless, because they don't have access to resources such as financial aid or housing.

**What advice would you give to another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**

Take full advantage of it. You won't have people telling you what to do, so you have to motivate yourself.



## Savannah

Age 20

**Application of Funds** \$800 for purchasing a work uniform and school supplies

**Education Goals** Finish associate's degree and get professional experience before pursuing a bachelor's degree

**How long have you been in school for psychology?**

This is my fourth semester at Compton College, where I'm pursuing an associate's degree in psychology. I'm currently taking a math class. After, I'll take a statistics course. I'm also taking a public speaking class. That's my favorite class.

**What are your current part-time jobs?**

I work for an organization that partners with the Los Angeles Unified School District. We go into schools and provide structured activity time for the kids. I work at 59th Street Elementary. When I first started work, the kids came out and went everywhere. It was chaos! Now, when they come out, I have them line up. I do exercises with them and then I'll divide them into groups to teach them games.

For my second job, I work at Shoe Palace as a sales associate and cashier. I've been there for about a year. I also intern at First Place.

**What are your long-term educational goals?**

I know I want to transfer to a university. As far as my major, I don't know. I feel like this public speaking class changed me. I enjoy public speaking and I'm good at it, too. Growing up shy, not being able to advocate for myself. Public speaking opened my eyes up to a skill I never knew about.

But for my future, I don't want to be the person that goes to college, gets a bachelor's degree, tries to get work in

their work field, and then can't get a job because they have no experience. After I finish my associate's degree, I'm going to put myself in the field and gain experience. I want to have the experience as well as the credentials.

## Sergio

Age 21

**Application of Funds** \$1,200 for a MacBook computer and transportation support

**Education Goals** Become a physical therapist or social worker

**Are you currently enrolled in school?**

I go to Cerritos College in Norwalk full-time.

**How has having a computer helped you?**

Before receiving the A+P scholarship and buying the computer, I was staying at school until late at night—sometimes as late as 10:00 p.m.—writing essays. With a laptop, I can now write essays at home, check my emails, respond to people faster, look up information. I don't have to rely on other people to get my homework done.

**What do you currently wish to do in school?**

I haven't decided yet, but I'm between becoming a physical therapist or a social worker.

**What made you interested in physical therapy?**

I picked physical therapy because throughout high school I played a lot of sports. But I was always getting injured. I was already into cars and how cars work, so I became interested in how the body works, too.

**What do you want to do after you finish your associate's degree at Cerritos College?**

I'm planning to go to Cal State Dominguez Hills or Long Beach.

Hopefully I'll choose between physical therapy or social work. I also want to start a podcast, so foster youth can share their stories. I want to inspire people and show other foster youth that they're not alone.

**What advice would you give another young person applying for the A+P Scholarship?**

Help is out there. If people see you trying your best, they will help you achieve your goals.

**Previous portraits**  
A+P Scholar and First Place for Youth participants, Ah'jale, Alexis, Asja, Azia, Donald, Kassidi, Karina, Keyatta, Kevin, Rami, Sandra, Savannah, and Sergio. 2019.

**Opposite**  
First Place for Youth hosts their annual Career and Education Resource Fair. 18 July 2019.





### Flexible Funding Model

In collaboration with Art + Practice, First Place structured the A+P Scholars Program to reduce the education barriers I described. That's why we have a flexible funding model and offer scholarships at different amounts—some large amounts, some small amounts. First Place and A+P want to accommodate their needs, and help them overcome whatever barriers they're experiencing.

But First Place also wants this to be a learning process for our foster youth. We want them to learn, for instance, how to apply for professional opportunities, and to provide a safe environment where they can practice that skill. We use a learn-by-doing model, so they have to e-mail in the application and get letters of recommendation. Their applications are reviewed by a committee administered by First Place, too.

We want them to get a feel for that process. We receive a good amount of applications and those that we deny receive feedback so they can strengthen future applications. That way, when they apply to something like this later on, they have that experience and know what to do.

### Funds for Everyday Needs

Our foster youth have been so grateful to have this opportunity. While there are a lot of professional resources out there, none specifically which model the application process and guide them through these tricky professional barriers. To have an opportunity where they can think about these barriers on a personal level, to think about what would financially help them as an individual, and be able to access similar opportunities, I think they're really excited about that.

Most of the applicants request funding for technology and transportation—financial barriers that keep from them going or participating in school. Some apply for funding toward direct education or certificate-program funds, but I think it's important to note that many ask for assistance with day-to-day services or tools, such as laptops.

**Above**  
First Place for Youth hosts their annual Career and Education Resource Fair. 18 July 2019.

**Opposite**  
Art + Practice Deputy Director Sophia Belsheim interviews First Place for Youth Regional Director of Programs, Southern California, Jamie Kugelberg. 12 August 2019.

Obstacles that prevent these students from showing up on time or having the tools they need to participate often keep them from going to school. They need computers to write papers, to go online and do research. Maybe it's an online course that they're wanting to take. Things like that. They need a computer to participate and keep pace with their peers. We need to remember that education is competitive and that the odds are already stacked against them. First Place and A+P want to give them equal footing in a system that is not designed around their life experience or needs.

### Application Process

Foster youth applying to the A+P Scholars Program have to identify their educational goals and outline how their specific requests will enable them to achieve that goal. They also have to identify what education—specific coursework, work experience, extracurricular activities—they have completed so far.

Additionally, applicants have to write a personal statement about how and why their life will change if they receive the scholarship. Then they need to submit two letters of recommendation, and only one can be from a First Place for Youth staff member. We want them to build relationships with mentors outside of the program, external supports who will continue to help them after their time with us ends. It's important to teach them that they can rely on those connections, to invest in those relationships as their career develops.

### Goals, Results, and Logistics

We have 32 students who have received funding from the A+P Scholars Program in 2019. We've been able to fund tutoring support for an additional 32. About 73 percent of the youth who apply to the A+P Scholars Program receive funding.

And, as I said earlier, many of the foster youth who are denied are given specific feedback so they can improve their application. Those youth are either working on providing more complete answers or being more specific about how the grant will make their goals a reality. We predict a lot of these applicants will end up receiving scholarships, and other scholarships like it, in the future.

The average awardee receives \$500, which can really make a difference in their lives. We're still making small changes to the application process. Shifting the deadlines to ensure that the process moves smoothly on our end, for example, and developing a scoring rubric so we can give objective feedback. We have also considered switching to a rolling, as opposed to quarterly, application process.

We're always refining the selection process to make sure we're being fair. We're making little tweaks just to guarantee that the grant does what it was intended to do, to honor the spirit of that project. Overall, it's been incredible to see that it doesn't take a ton of money to remove these education barriers, that these awards are really life-changing for our youth.



# Roundtable Discussions

Foster youth roundtable discussions are organized in collaboration with First Place for Youth to welcome leaders in their respective fields to talk, inspire, and expose A+P and First Place's foster youth to the many successes, obstacles, and barriers that everyone faces each day. Roundtable discussions are private and only available for First Place's participating foster youth.



## In Discussion with Bruno Mars

On March 7, 2019, American singer, songwriter, producer, and GRAMMY Award-winning Bruno Mars participated in a foster youth roundtable discussion at Art + Practice. The discussion centered on Mars' history working in the music and entertainment industries. Mars touched upon the hardships he's faced as well as some of the successes that he's celebrated. Mars offered foster youth advice and guidance on how to overcome any barriers that might stand in their way. The more than 80 foster youth in attendance

thoroughly enjoyed their time with Mars. The youth gained great insight into the music and entertainment industries and learned about tools that can help them take a step back, reflect, and move forward in life with positivity and perseverance.

**Opposite and above**  
First Place for Youth hosts a roundtable discussion with singer, songwriter, producer, and GRAMMY Award-winning Bruno Mars. 7 March 2019.



**In Discussion with**  
**Carl D. McDowell**

On June 11, 2019, actor, producer, writer, and musician Carl D. McDowell participated in a foster youth roundtable discussion at First Place for Youth's classroom space on Art + Practice's campus. McDowell shared his history surviving the gang-ridden streets of Chicago's South Side, excelling at sports in high school and college, finding acting as a career pathway, and now pursuing a successful career in Hollywood. McDowell discussed growing up with a mother with substance-abuse issues, and how he and his sister

were put into foster care by the State of Illinois at a young age. McDowell encouraged the group to practice making positive changes in their life when times are hard. McDowell reminded the youth that a great opportunity is only one acquaintance away.

Follow McDowell on Instagram @CarlDMcDowell.

**Above and opposite**  
 First Place for Youth hosts a roundtable discussion with HBO *Ballers* actor, Carl D. McDowell. 11 June 2019.



# Suzanne Brown Outlines Her Vision

As Executive Director for Southern California, Suzanne Brown leads First Place for Youth's teams in Los Angeles County with program sites in Koreatown, Compton, Leimert Park, and Santa Monica. Prior to First Place, Brown served as National Director of Talent Solutions for LeadersUp, where she oversaw and advanced youth employment initiatives. Below, Brown shares her reasons for joining First Place and her experience working with foster youth.



**Above**  
First Place for Youth Executive Director for Southern California, Suzanne Brown. 4 November 2019.

**Opposite**  
First Place for Youth hosts a 4th of July BBQ. 3 July 2019.

**As First Place for Youth's Executive Director for Southern California, you're responsible for strengthening and cultivating critical partnerships that support growth for the nonprofit. What is your current vision for the organization?**

When I started this role, I entered a time of organizational evaluation, especially within my first 90 days. I reviewed the resources available to First Place in Southern California, then considered what resources foster youth in our care need. Beginning with the relationships First Place had already created, I began to identify regional partnerships that could further the goals of the organization and materialize those needed resources.

As First Place's new Executive Director for Southern California, I hope First Place can inspire people across the United States to support foster youth. I would like for individuals to see that issues such as homelessness are affecting not just our transition-age youth but all of us as a nation, that these issues are interrelated, and together, we might be able to halt this epidemic.

As an organization, First Place will continue to advocate for policy change and provide critical resources for young adults as they transition out of foster care. As Executive Director for Southern California, I want to continue proving that our program achieves meaningful outcomes for our young adults. As a colleague, I want our peer organizations to consider aligning themselves with our model, so we can improve the lives of foster youth outside the communities we



collectively serve. And on a personal level, I want to continue our practice of examining ourselves, sharing our best strategies, and demonstrating what works. I want to amplify our message that helping foster youth attain self-sufficiency is our highest goal.

### **How do you measure success at First Place?**

We measure success using quantitative data and qualitative experience. We use metrics to track, for example, how many young adults use our services and how they are progressing in school, work, or adopting healthy lifestyle choices. We also look at how many months they stay in First Place's program. Because we know that the longer they stay, the greater the likelihood of success. While we offer over 18 months of support, some

who use our services encounter obstacles that force them to preemptively exit our program. Some young adults need more intensive support and fit better with another model, while others reunite with their families, or want to try to make it on their own.

Data can show us these patterns, but we still need a personal touch to understand the story behind the numbers. Qualitatively, we look to the relationships our young adults are able to form while they are in our care. We are in their lives for a short period of time, but we meet them during a critical period where our resources can change their entire life. We want foster youth to leave the program ready for adulthood.

We start with a meaningful conversation, identify their needs, desired goals, and then



connect our youth to an employment opportunity or educational pursuit based on readiness. We tailor our services to support young people, to secure services for them even when obstacles arise. We support them in safe spaces where we can model emotional support and professional development from a trusted adult.

**How would you describe First Place's collaboration with A+P, and what are your goals for the collaboration going forward?**

Every organization that services foster youth should aspire to a collaboration like the one between First Place and A+P. Our collaboration is an opportunity for us to cull exposure in the private sector and leverage resources available to each organization while creating mutually beneficial opportunities. We are proud to move forward with the collaboration while we explore how can we really work together to sustain the future of our young adults.

Although First Place can't eradicate the need for foster care, we can make the transition out of foster care seamless. Yes, it's going to take multiple entities—not just public entities, not just nonprofits—to make this change. But that's why our collaboration with A+P is exciting. It shows that public, private, and community organizations can work collectively to support foster youth.



**Top**  
Exhibition walkthrough of *Ramsess: The Gathering* and *Stephen Towns: Ruminating and a Reckoning* with artist Ramsess and First Place for Youth at Art + Practice. 24 October 2019.

**Bottom**  
Exterior view of the First Place for Youth's space on Art + Practice's campus. 2 July 2019.

**Opposite**  
First Place for Youth's Executive Director for Southern California, Suzanne Brown, tours Art + Practice with Art + Practice's Executive Director Allan DiCastro. 27 June 2019.



# Leimert Park

**HAPPY DR. MARTIN  
LUTHER KING JR. DAY!**

*Come visit us inside for free A+P swag and  
to learn about our upcoming exhibition  
co-organized with The Broad:*

**TIME IS  
RUNNING  
OUT  
OF TIME**

*Experimental Film and Video  
from the L.A. Rebellion and Today*

**PUBLIC OPENING RECEPTION:**  
*Saturday, February 2 from 2–5 pm  
Always FREE admission*

**ART + PRACTICE**



# Harun Coffee

## with Chace Infinite and Capricorn Clark

**Harun Coffee offers a unique storefront experience in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. Owned and operated by entrepreneur Chace Infinite and his partner Capricorn Clark, Harun Coffee is an extension of the Harun International brand. As a clothing and merchandise store that hosts art and music events, Harun Coffee serves more than coffee: it memorializes Leimert Park's legacy as a community.**

**Harun Coffee**  
4336 Degnan Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90008

**Tuesday–Thursday**  
7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

**Friday**  
7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

**Saturday and Sunday**  
11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

### Mission and Vision

**Chace Infinite** Our mission is to provide a gathering place in the historic Leimert Park neighborhood. We want a space for community, and for people to get to know each other. Harun Coffee is not just a coffee shop. We want to connect people who didn't know they needed one another. From there, we want to provide a platform for young artists to express themselves.

trifecta of art, culture, and retail. But also coffee and smoothies. We wanted to open a place where, if you lived here, you would have a place to walk, somewhere you can take your dog or your kids, or somewhere to go have a nice morning.

When we bought a house in the neighborhood and found that experience wasn't available, Harun Coffee was our answer. We wanted to better people's lives; to create a memorable experience in our own neighborhood instead of driving hours away.

**Capricorn Clark** We want to take what our community has and make it better, not necessarily overhauling it though. We want to create a place of respect and learning from the past. But the potential for growth, the potential for what Leimert Park could be, is something special. It's more than a typical LA neighborhood by its design and cultural demographic. We want to see that potential happen here.

### An Independent Business

**Infinite** I want new visitors to know that Harun is a clean, safe environment. That I run an independent business. We have no investors. There are no shadow hands here, just us. I want them to know that we care about the community, that we know what we are talking about when it comes to coffee. I also want them to admire our interior design. Because I think people come to South LA and expect to see something that's overly commercial. Most people who come to the cafe don't even know Leimert Park exists. They've never seen anything like this in Los Angeles!

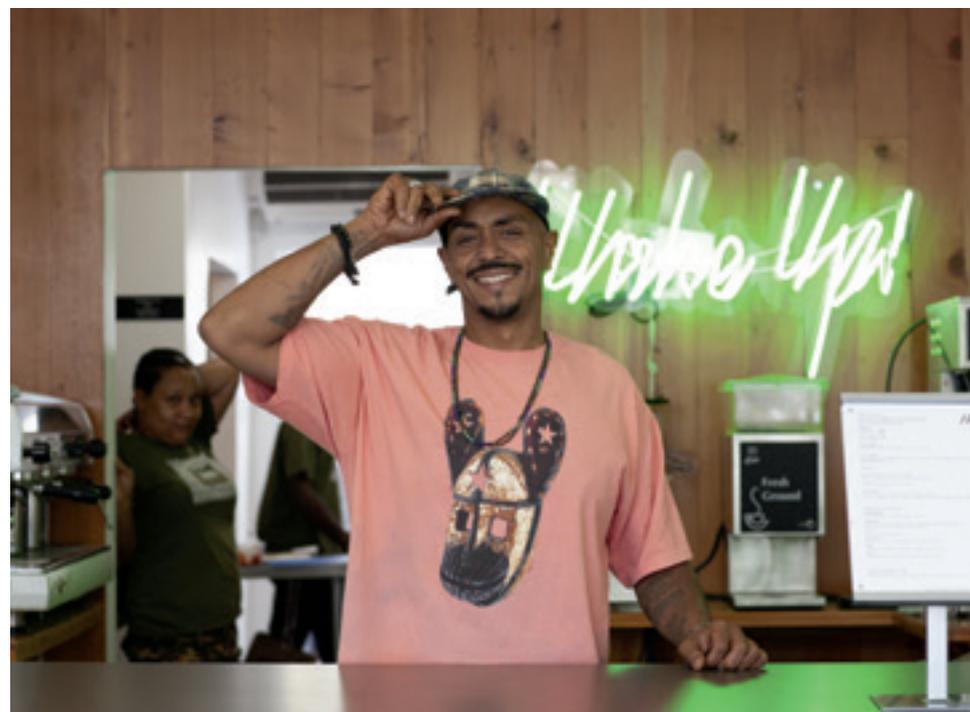
### Why Leimert Park?

**Infinite** We decided to open Harun Coffee in Leimert Park because Capricorn and I used to take walks in the neighborhood, but we had nowhere to get coffee. We ended up finding a space about 300 yards from my house, which made it easy. Capricorn is also a coffee fanatic. It just felt like in such a walkable neighborhood, we needed a place that could bring the community together.

### Events at Harun Cafe

**Infinite** A lot of our events involve music because Capricorn and I still work extensively in the music industry. We plan release parties, lectures, album-listening events, and popup shops for local brands, friends and family.

**Clark** We want our customers to experience a welcoming neighborhood business that offers a



**Top**  
Exterior view of Harun coffee.  
29 October 2019.

**Bottom**  
Chace Infinite, founder of Harun Coffee at his shop.  
23 July 2019.

So far, my favorite has probably been the Raphael Saadiq event we did. Raphael came here about a month before his album was released. He played the entire album for a select audience. Saadiq is one of my favorite artists. To premiere his record in LA, that opportunity was dope.

### Layout, Merchandise, and Curation

**Infinite** I've been working in the music industry for a long time. As a result, I've had to go to all these fashion shows, like MAGIC and Agenda, forever. And I know a lot about streetwear and lifestyle brands. That's what made me want to do this version of the store.

I've been involved in retail in some way all my adult life. Since the early 2000s, I've worked at a store, owned a store, and had store experiences. I've also traveled and seen places that are a combination of retail outlets.

Harun having coffee on one side and then a gallery and store on the other was inspired by stores like Colette, which was a boutique in Paris. I'm a fan of cafes like Monocle, a London-based magazine and retail store, and Colette that offer other things besides coffee as well. Places like that made me want to start a coffee shop.

Colette is closed now. But back in the day I'd go and spend hours there. I seldom see businesses like that in what are considered urban communities. I think that's why people are surprised when they come here. Because they probably expect to see the aesthetic and some of the brands in places like Brentwood or West Hollywood.

### Coming Changes?

**Infinite** Not on the coffee side. But we're working on a clothing line. We sell some of the clothes in Harun.

The Harun International brand started 10 years ago. Its message and mission have been constantly evolving. Harun Coffee is the most recent iteration of the brand, which includes the clothes we carry on the store side. Of the clothes, 60 percent of them are Harun, our inhouse brand. We also carry Harun coffee merchandise.

The clothing brand is debuting three different tiers. The cut-and-sew stuff is going to be

Opposite top and bottom  
Visitors at Harun Coffee. 25 July 2019.

printables, suiting. I'm designing a complete line, like 22 pieces. We do all the patterns and design here then send them out for production.

We're planning to debut the new Harun International Collection right here. Hopefully in November.

### South Los Angeles Pride

**Clark** I'm proud to be based in South Los Angeles because I was born and raised here. I was born in Daniel Freeman Hospital in Inglewood on Prairie Avenue. All my family is buried at Inglewood Cemetery. All of my life will start and end basically on one street.

To me, there's no place like Los Angeles. The climate, the mixture of people and cultures that you get here. We're unique. I'm proud to be in South Los Angeles because my mother and father have been here since 1958. We've always had Black businesses that are successful in this area. It's important for me to be a part of that legacy.

### 2020 and Beyond

**Infinite** We're going to keep supporting culture here in South LA. LA is a big place. It's hard for people to understand what culture means to us or how we express ourselves.

There's a lot of money being spent in the city. My vision is that Black communities will get rid of some of the problems that we continue to have over and over again. We have managed to take care of ourselves and keep our neighborhood clean.

I'd love to see more commerce, because of the artistic community that is here and all the people that gather around that. The future of Los Angeles is about supporting artistic movements and education.

**Clark** Just something that makes the local people, the Black and Brown people, proud. This is where they exist, we're not visitors here. At the same time, we want to be welcoming to what's new and what's incoming.

This really is a place for the people that know the potential and love it already. People who know that one day, they'll look back and be like, "Remember when it was just one store here?"

We want Harun to be your favorite place. Where everyone feels welcome, where you might see something cool, or experience something new.



# Hot & Cool Cafe

## with Anthony Jolly

**Anthony Jolly, founder and owner of Hot & Cool Cafe, chats with Art + Practice about the beginnings of his business and why he decided to open shop in Leimert Park. Originally a hub for coffee and food, Hot & Cool has transformed into a space for art, music, and community events.**

**Hot & Cool Cafe**  
4331 Degnan Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90008  
**Monday-Saturday**  
8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.  
**Sunday**  
9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.

### Mission and Vision

The overall vision was to open a place for people of color, specifically African Americans, to have their own version of Starbucks—a coffee shop to collaborate, to meet and grow while Leimert Park undergoes rapid change.

I originally wanted to roast coffee. I've been in coffee for about 20 years now. I was a coffee hunter, so I worked in Ethiopia and imported coffee for a company. Then I started to do it on my own. I wanted a retail outlet to display a crop-to-cup model, so I taught myself how to roast.

### Why Leimert Park?

I was at a coffee conference and my rental car attendant told me about this former LAPD detective, Eric Moore. He said Eric wanted to open up a coffee shop in LA. At that time, I was looking at San Jose.

I got Eric's number from his friend and visited him. He seemed solid. He took me to Leimert Park and said, "This area will be growing." I was like, "Oh, no. Can we go near USC? Can we go to DTLA?" He said, "No dude, it's going to happen here."

So, I did research. The metro was coming. To be frank, knowing that the neighborhood was changing, that the rents were lower here than anywhere else in LA influenced my decision. After doing more research, understanding the growth that Leimert Park was about to undertake, I saw visionaries like A+P establishing roots in Leimert Park. All these factors added up to my decision to open Hot & Cool in Leimert Park. It was a business decision. We wanted to be on the forefront of the change.



**Above**  
Anthony Jolly, founder and owner of Hot & Cool Cafe. 26 July 2019.

**Opposite**  
Hot & Cool Cafe hosts a performance. 26 August 2018.



### Center for Community and Collaboration

I find that people often reconnect here. People will come in and see a friend they haven't seen in years. You'll see laptops open and people working. But you also might catch a community meeting with a politician or a music event with young artists from South LA.

Hot & Cool is more of a community center for adults and creatives. You'll find someone working on their art. You'll find someone working on a script. You'll find people developing their start-ups. Hot & Cool is a collaborative space. It's definitely a unique experience.

### Events at Hot & Cool

We have this ongoing, socially conscious poetry night, Spit Justice, where artists and poets discuss prevalent issues that Black and Brown

communities face, such as police brutality and economic precarity traceable to colonialism.

Spit Justice holds group discussions about these issues, then they recite related poems. We also started a Sunday night event, Afro Xen Sundays, where we welcome musicians and singers. They do covers, but Afro Xen grew more into its own night, where LA musicians and singers will come here on Sunday night, sit in and just jam.

We organize another event called HipHop Detox. It's more like a community event. Anybody can be involved: dancers, writers, singers, rappers. This event is beautiful because halfway through the performance, they stop the show and ask everybody to introduce themselves to someone they have never met before. Then each participant asks the person they met three things about them—like their favorite food, where are they from, what they like to do—to get to know



them. At the end, there's a unity circle. You talk about what you learned, about the show, about the people you met. It's a real tight family event that's derived from hip hop culture.

### Expanding the Menu

We're about to expand the menu and really change the shop. We're going to add more seating, including couches. We have a vegan shop that's going to come in and take over the food menu. We had a small menu when we opened. Then I started to focus on entertainment. I worked to make this place accommodating for the community, but I stepped away from the coffee in that process.

For the next venture, I want to reconnect with the coffee. We're going to roast coffee onsite. We

just connected our roaster. I'm really excited about launching the Hot & Cool Cafe coffee brand.

Like I said, when I started this I was a coffee guy. I had a 72-page business plan with soups on the menu because they're easy, healthy, and produce little waste. After being open for a week, customers were like, "We had your soup six times. What else do you have?"

We had to add more food to the menu. This place wasn't built to have a kitchen. It was built to be a huge coffee shop. But we started adding items that we like. The avocado grilled cheese was a hit. Our avocado toast is really good. Those were the initial add-ons to the menu. Lately, we've had this vegan barbecue dish, which people love.

We're going to have more specials, too. We don't want to outprice the community. We

want to have some daily specials that are five, six, and seven dollars. That's going to be implemented very soon.

### South Los Angeles Renaissance

I'm originally from Washington, D.C. It's not a predominantly Black city anymore. Being in South LA, you see a fight to keep what South LA was and is alive.

I really believe, after traveling and living in different places all over the United States, that the heart of the African American community, the

**Opposite**  
Hot & Cool Cafe hosts a terrarium-building workshop by Easton Garden Designs. 6 July 2019.

**Above**  
Visitors at Hot & Cool Cafe during Juneteenth celebrations. 19 June 2019.

culture of African Americans, is here in Leimert Park. Even in Harlem, that culture is fading.

There's a rich African American culture here, and people are fighting to preserve it. Keeping the drum circles going every Sunday, for example. I don't see the change that happened to the East Coast cities like Brooklyn happening here in South LA. The African Americans and minorities that are living here in South LA won't be removed, they'll be a part of that development.

It's a good time to be here. To ride the wave of what a lot of us strongly believe is a renaissance that's happening throughout the country. There's so much good forming that renaissance, and it's creating its own art, culture, language, and science.

LA is one of the leaders of this renaissance, and I think that South LA is going to be an epicenter.

# Exhibitions



February 2–September 14, 2019

# Time is Running Out of Time

Experimental Film and  
Video from the L.A.  
Rebellion and Today

Words by The Broad Programs Manager Jheanelle Brown and The Broad Associate  
Curator and Exhibition Manager Sarah Loyer



# “Time is running, running, running . . . TIME’S DONE RUN OUT!”

cries Abiodun Oyewole of The Last Poets in the first track of the group’s 1970 album. The next year, Haile Gerima included the song in his film *Hour Glass* (1971), where it played as a subconscious plea during the protagonist’s political awakening. The forceful intonation underscores the urgent sociopolitical circumstances of the era. Today, the phrase is a reminder of the continued imperative to support both the work of LA Rebellion filmmakers and the efforts of subsequent artists taking on important contemporary issues—issues that echo this recent past.

*Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* presents early short works of Black filmmakers and video artists in Los Angeles. Central to the exhibition is a selection from the pioneering student work of the LA Rebellion. In the aftermath of the 1965 Watts Uprising, a

group of Black diasporic students entered the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Theater, Film and Television as part of the University’s Ethno-Communications Initiative. These students collectively became known as the Los Angeles School of Filmmakers, or the LA Rebellion. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, they produced experimental, documentary, and narrative film and video work. The LA Rebellion films display burgeoning diasporic consciousness, strong characterizations of women, and formal experimentation.

In dialogue with these films are works from following generations of filmmakers and artists in Los Angeles. Unlike the LA Rebellion, these younger filmmakers do not share a common educational background. As individuals, they share qualities and concerns—both aesthetic and political—with the LA Rebellion. Across generations, themes include the robust representation of communities, families, and lineages and the complexities of identities informed by social and political realities.

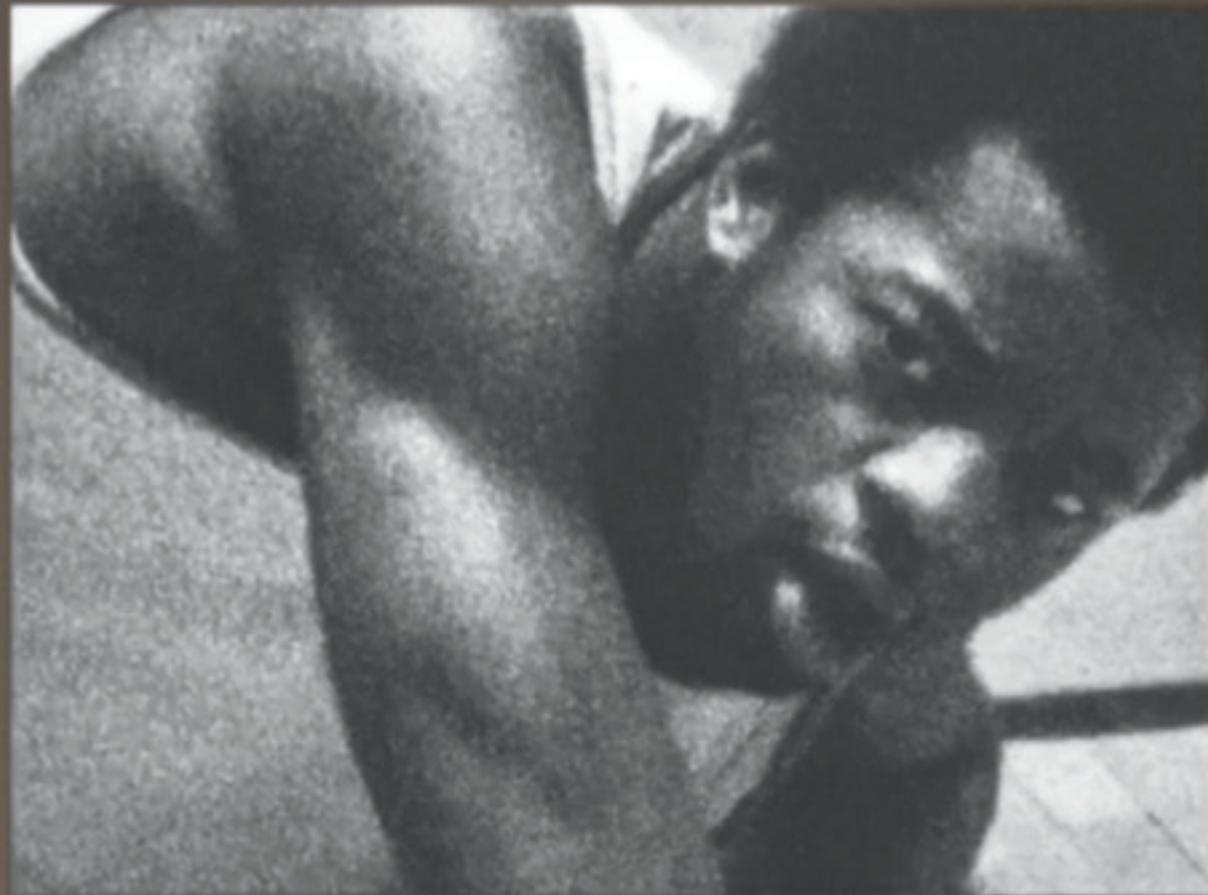
**Below**  
*Time is Running out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* opening reception at Art + Practice, 2 February 2019.



Installation view of *Daydream Therapy* (1977) by Bernard Nicolas in *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice, 2 February–14 September 2019.



All photographs  
*Time is Running out of Time:*  
Experimental Film and Video  
from the L.A. Rebellion and  
Today opening reception at Art  
+ Practice, 2 February 2019.



Installation view of *Hour Glass* (1971) by Haile Gerima in *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice. 2 February–14 September 2019. Leimert Park, Los Angeles CA.



Several works use archival materials as a driving force to create narratives that examine expansive arcs of history. In Ben Caldwell's *Medea* (1973), photographs of the diasporic Black experience are interspersed with a woman giving birth. The images quickly accumulate to animate an unborn child's inevitable cultural inheritance in the wake of the transatlantic slave trade. Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton's *Black Superman* (2014) depicts Black American struggle and resilience during the Civil Rights era. Moments of Black trauma abound: colored-only fountains, lynchings, and Fred Hampton and Emmett Till in their coffins. They provide a filmic representation of scholar Fred Moten's notion of "Black mo'nin'," the concept that, through sound, photographic representations of Black suffering can challenge ways of seeing. Countering these images are depictions of resistance, joy, and the quotidian: a triumphant Angela Davis, a *Soul Train* line, and children jumping rope. In Philana Payton's *Remix: A Litany for Survival* (2015), Payton precisely reveals the threshold between performativity and non-performativity. The work assembles segments of performances by Black femme entertainers, uncovering unique moments of Black femme subjectivity, such as Lena

Horne's feigned composure off-camera and a defiant Whitney Houston.

In *Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification* (1979) Barbara McCullough takes a different approach, creating a narrative in the desolate cityscape. Filmed in an area of Watts that had been cleared and abandoned, McCullough's film lies somewhere between fact and fiction. Engaging a womanist rhetoric of liberation through the use of ritual and politicized expression, the character Milanda responds to erasure, as a Black woman and second-class citizen, partially by undressing. Her naked body is a potent form of resistance in the face of racialized violence and oppression.

Like McCullough, who models Black femme subjectivity as a manifestation of political power, several filmmakers bear witness to the complexities of Black womanhood. Their works are vital documents of the present and visual manifestations of the West African tradition of griot storytelling. The deeply vulnerable subjects of these films shed light on a variety of lived

Above  
Educator Karina Yanez leads a school visit and tour of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice. 19 July 2019.



Installation view of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice. 2 February–14 September 2019.

experiences. Sophia Nahli Allison's *Portrait of My Mother* (2016) and Alima Lee's *Naia* (2017) are intimate documentaries that elevate their subjects to witnesses and frame Black motherhood with reverence. *Portrait of My Mother* is an homage to Allison's mother, Sybil Desta, a former member of the Leimert Park-based Griot Workshop who survived breast cancer and the death of her husband. *Naia* is an observational documentary that follows its 14-year-old namesake as she describes her past isolation in school as one of a few Black students, her mother (who is a hardworking teacher), and her father (who is incarcerated), with whom she maintains a close relationship. Lee's collaborations with Chris Bordenave (*La Fleur Noire* [2017]) and Mandy Harris Williams (*Portals 1: Ja'Tovia Gary* [2018])

examine the circumstances and implications of Black femme performance. *La Fleur Noire* captures dancers, framing their lived experiences as challenging, but ultimately gesturing towards strength and optimism. Lee and Williams ruminate on social violence through a conversation with the filmmaker and artist Ja'Tovia Gary. Gary delivers a sharp and necessary critique of socialized forms of love, the implications of social proximity to whiteness, and the isolation that Black artists can experience.

Finally, dana washington's *Current State of Everything: The Body as Archive* (2018), commissioned for this exhibition, lays bare washington's roles as an artist, filmmaker, and writer. washington at once questions strategies she uses in her work and shares intimate details about

herself. Her sociopolitical and aesthetic concerns—decolonizing academic language, the archive, and the conversion of Blackness into the digital—are decidedly based in the present. But they also reference the timeless circumstances of being Black. In the video washington declares, "The very act of being and the various ways that Blackness is formed and performed is equally a proclamation and an explanation."

Filmmakers and artists in the exhibition include Sophia Nahli Allison, S. Torriano Berry, Chris Bordenave, Ben Caldwell, Renata Cherlise, Jacqueline Frazier, Haile Gerima, Russell Hamilton, Ijoema Iloputaife, Alile Sharon Larkin, Alima Lee, Barbara McCullough, Bernard Nicolas, Philana Payton, Cauleen Smith, Martine Syms, dana washington, and Mandy Harris Williams.

*Time is Running Out of Time* was on view at Art + Practice from February 2 to September 14, 2019 and was presented in conjunction with *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power 1963–1983* on view at The Broad from March 23 to September 1, 2019.

This exhibition was presented by Art + Practice in collaboration with The Broad, and was curated by The Broad's Jheanelle Brown, Programs Manager and Sarah Loyer, Associate Curator and Exhibitions Manager.

*Time is Running Out of Time* was made possible in part by the digitization and scholarship of the UCLA Film & Television Archive. "L.A. Rebellion: Creating a New Black Cinema" is a project by UCLA Film & Television Archive developed as part of *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980*. The original series took place at UCLA Film & Television Archive in October–December 2011, curated by Allyson Nadia Field, Jan-Christopher Horak, Shannon Kelley, and Jacqueline Stewart.

# Bringing Home the Soul

Joanne Helyer, Founding Director of The Broad and Director and Chief Curator of The Broad Art Foundation, explains to Art + Practice how and why the museum brought the exhibition *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power, 1963–1983* from the Tate Modern in London to Los Angeles in 2019 and why The Broad approached A+P to collaborate on an extension of the exhibition in Leimert Park.



**Top**  
Exterior view of The Broad. Downtown Los Angeles CA. 14 January 2019. Courtesy of The Broad.

**Bottom**  
Installation view of *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power, 1963–1983* at The Broad. Los Angeles CA. 12 October 2019–20 January 2020. Courtesy The Broad.

**Opposite**  
Joanne Helyer. 30 January 2014.

*Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power, 1963–1983* has been described as a groundbreaking survey of Black art. What was your first impression of the exhibition when you saw it at the Tate Modern in London?

I was immediately impressed by *Soul of a Nation* when I saw it in London. It is rare that each artist's voice is clear in an ambitious historical group show, but *Soul of a Nation* is exceptional in that regard. Even with over 60 artists included, the exhibition encourages diverse perspectives rather than one neat, accessible story. The works on display also confront searing racial injustices in postwar America—injustices which we must continue to confront as a society.

The exhibition likewise surveys the complex experience of many Black artists who faced discrimination and inadequate recognition at the time. That's why the show devotes gallery space to the collaborative and activist groups Black artists formed within an art world that actively ignored or minimized their achievements and message—from the Spiral Group<sup>1</sup> founded in 1963 by Romare Bearden to the commercial art gallery Just Above Midtown,<sup>2</sup> which Linda Goode Bryant ran in Manhattan from 1974 to 1986. I admire how *Soul of a Nation* puts artists in the lead and includes a wide range of artmaking practices while keeping the show legible for its audience.

**What sparked your decision to bring *Soul of a Nation* to Los Angeles?**

The Broad wasn't looking for a traveling exhibition to host this year, but we made room for *Soul of a Nation* because it says vital things about the postwar US art scene—especially in Los Angeles—about activism, and about the ongoing struggle for racial justice. I was also thinking about our audience at The Broad being uniquely young (our visitor's average age is 33), diverse (67 percent non-white), and often new to contemporary art (45 percent of our audience consider themselves new to contemporary art). *Soul of a Nation* is an opportunity to introduce our younger visitors to some incredible artists, such as Noah Purifoy, Betye Saar, Senga Nengudi, Mel Edwards, David Hammons, and so many others. I also considered the resonances this show has with the Broad's collection. A visitor to *Soul of a Nation* will see—to name just one—Faith Ringgold's painting *The Flag is Bleeding* (1967) in the same building where, in our



collection upstairs, the Jasper Johns flag painting from the same year, *Flag* (1967), is also on view. The juxtapositions offer so much and raise many important questions.

The Broad Art Foundation helped fund the exhibition *Now Dig This!: Art and Black Los Angeles* at the Hammer Museum in 2011, curated by the prominent scholar Dr. Kellie Jones, Professor in Art History and Archaeology and the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University, and Naima J. Keith, who is now Vice President of Education and Public Programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). That show, which originated in LA, was an incredible, eye-opening milestone that I remember well. And I did consider whether *Soul of a Nation* was duplicative of their work. Ultimately, for reasons already mentioned and many others, we felt *Soul of a Nation* was distinct enough from prior exhibitions to show at The Broad in 2019.

***Soul of a Nation*, which originated at the Tate Modern and was curated by Tate Senior Curator**





**Mark Godfrey and Tate Curator of International Art Zoe Whitley, has been presented at Crystal Bridges Museum of Contemporary Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, the Brooklyn Museum, and now The Broad. How is The Broad's presentation unique to the other presentations?**

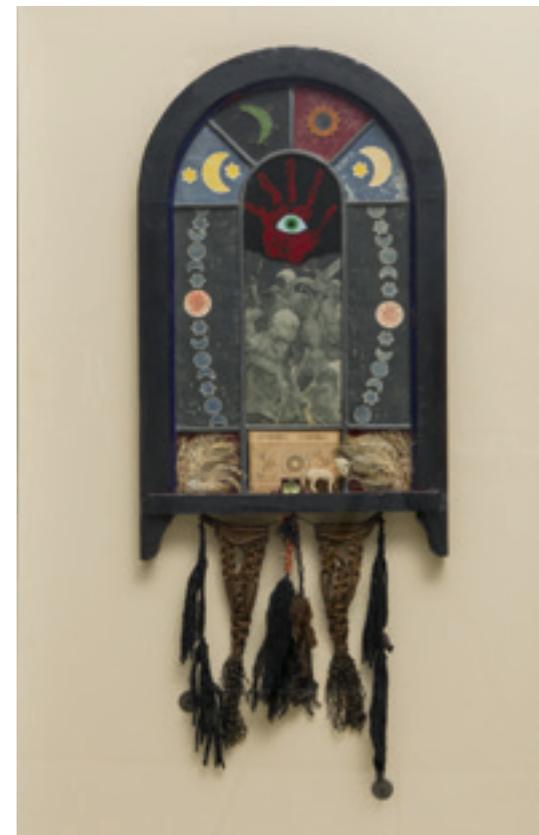
Los Angeles artists have been central to every presentation of *Soul of a Nation*, which is why we wanted to bring the show to LA. The Broad's presentation has added depth to each of the three galleries centered on the LA artists. For example, in a gallery dedicated to the assemblage movement, we included additional works by Daniel LaRue Johnson and John T. Riddle. We also expanded the materials devoted to LACMA's 1971 exhibition, *Three Graphic Artists*, which featured works by Charles White, David Hammons, and Timothy Washington. And, in the gallery dedicated to Betye Saar's first survey exhibition at Cal State LA in 1973, we built a faux-finished wall that mimicked her original installation. In the same gallery, we included a work, Saar's *Mojo Bag #1 Hand* (1970), on view for the first time since the 1970s.

We also developed dynamic programming that included a symposium spotlighting *Soul of a*

*Nation* artists and art-world visionaries; a night of unforgettable music as well as a playlist, curated by legendary music producer Quincy Jones (available on Apple Music), to accompany the exhibition; innovative musical events called the *Black Fire Sessions*, a program about artist-led activism and community support for Black artists in LA; and free gallery talks by LA activists and artists.

**What was The Broad's overall vision and approach to organizing its presentation of *Soul of a Nation*?**

The Broad always considers harmonies between the special exhibitions, which take place on the first floor of the museum, and the permanent collection on display on the third floor. When visitors see works included in *Soul of a Nation*, such as Noah Purifoy's famous work *Watts Riot* (1966), an assemblage of singed materials gathered from the buildings destroyed in the 1965 Watts Rebellion, they can also see, on the third floor, Mark Bradford's *Deep Blue* (2018), a new acquisition by the museum that draws its epic composition from street maps of Watts the city used to mark the locations of those same buildings destroyed or looted during the

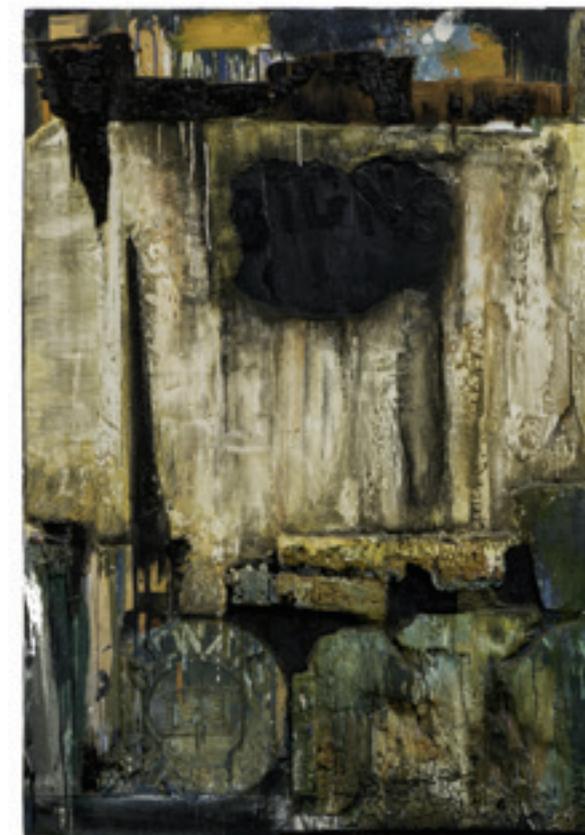


Betye Saar, *Nine Mojo Secrets*, 1971. Wood, paper, acrylic paint, fabric, glass, feathers, yam, metal, beads, and plastic objects, 49 3/4 x 23 1/2 x 1 3/4 in. (mount with plexibox). Courtesy of the California African American Museum. Collection of Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. CAAM Foundation Purchase, with funds provided by the City of Los Angeles, Cultural Affairs Department.

uprising. Made by two artists from different generations, both are poignant and powerful works about race relations in the U.S. and the painful legacy of that cataclysmic moment.

**How has Los Angeles responded to the exhibition? What aspects of the exhibition have stood out to visitors?**

The responses from our visitors as well as the press have been overwhelmingly positive. Many visitors have reflected on how fresh and relevant the exhibition feels in relation to today's social and political environment. Others have noted how moving it is to see artists getting much deserved attention, some for the first time. Still other visitors have commented on the breadth of the works shown as well as the educational aspects of the exhibition, which introduced unfamiliar audiences to the artworks and politics of postwar America.



Noah Purifoy, *Watts Riot*, 1966. Mixed media assemblage, 61 x 46 in. Courtesy of the California African American Museum. Collection Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. Bequest of Alfred C. Darby.

**Opposite**  
Installation view of *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power, 1963-1983* at The Broad. Los Angeles CA. 12 October 2019-20 January 2020. Courtesy The Broad.

### **The Broad and Art + Practice's Collaboration in Leimert Park**

**As you considered *Soul of a Nation* for Los Angeles, why did you think to approach Art + Practice to organize an exhibition in Leimert Park?**

Part of The Broad's mission is to foster appreciation for the art of our time by reaching the widest possible audience. With *Soul of a Nation*, in addition to presenting the exhibition onsite at The Broad, we wanted to move beyond our museum walls to access a broader community throughout Los Angeles. Collaborating with Art + Practice in Leimert Park and in South Los Angeles was a great opportunity to serve a neighborhood that is home to many Black artists both today and in the 1960s and 1970s, when Brockman Gallery was active on Degnan Boulevard, while also expanding upon the rich content of the exhibition.



Top and opposite top  
Patrons view *Soul of a Nation:  
Art in the Age of Black Power,  
1963–1983* at The Broad in  
Downtown Los Angeles. 1 June  
2019. Courtesy of The Broad.

Bottom and opposite bottom  
Installation view of *Soul of a  
Nation: Art in the Age of Black  
Power, 1963–1983* at The  
Broad. Los Angeles CA.  
12 October 2019–20 January  
2020. Courtesy The Broad.



*Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* opening reception at Art + Practice. 2 February 2019.

civil rights and Black Power movements, and that we celebrate artists' diverse perspectives, both politically and aesthetically, across LA. As we continue to face racial inequities and injustices in our world, exhibitions like *Soul of a Nation* and *Time is Running Out of Time* enable us to look to the recent past with a critical lens, to better understand where we are now and where we want to go from here.

1. The Spiral Group was a collective of Black artists formed by Romare Bearden, Charles Alston, Norman Lewis, and Hale Woodruff from 1963-1965. The group often discussed the role of Black artists in politics, the civil rights movement, and the art world.

2. Founded in New York City in the early 1970s by Linda Goode Bryant, Just Above Midtown was a commercial gallery that created space for and celebrated Black artists such as Lorna Simpson, Senga Nengudi, David Hammons, Lorraine O'Grady, and Fred Wilson.

**Below**

Installation view of *Daydream Therapy* (1977) by Bernard Nicolas in *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice. 2 February–14 September 2019.

**How did you envision The Broad and Art + Practice's exhibition titled *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* would be in conversation with *Soul of a Nation*? Why did The Broad propose a film-based exhibition featuring the LA Rebellion to A+P?**

While Los Angeles artists feature prominently in *Soul of a Nation*, the exhibition includes little time-based artworks. We felt this was an area where we could expand on the themes of the exhibition while focusing on the robust production by Los Angeles filmmakers working from the 1960s to the early 1980s. *Time is Running Out of Time* came out of the impulse to investigate parallels between the artists represented in *Soul of a Nation* and the filmmakers working in Los Angeles during the same period. At the time, Los Angeles was a great place for experimentation. Visual artists as well as filmmakers often worked collectively and supported each other. There is also crossover between the filmmakers and visual artists in both exhibitions. For example, filmmaker Barbara McCullough, whose film *Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification* (1979) is included in the exhibition at A+P, collaborated with artists such as David Hammons and Senga Nengudi, whose works are included in *Soul of a Nation* at The Broad.

**Why did The Broad highlight a selection of student works from the LA Rebellion in conversation with a younger generation of filmmakers?**

As the group of filmmakers, known as the LA Rebellion, have gained critical reception in recent years and their films have been historicized, we felt it was important to remember that these works were made by students—often during the filmmakers' first year of college. At A+P, these films are placed in dialogue with work made by younger generations of filmmakers to draw connections between the radical early work of different generations. We felt it was important to create cross-generational dialogues, to consider both formal and content-driven connections between young filmmakers working in the 1960s and 1970s and their filmmaker counterparts working in recent years.

**Why is it important to champion exhibitions like *Soul of a Nation* and *Time is Running Out of Time*?**

These exhibitions showcase visual artists and filmmakers who have not historically received the critical reception they deserve. Exhibitions that work to correct inequities in art history are deeply important when telling a richer history of American art. In Los Angeles, it is crucial that we understand our city's deep involvement with the

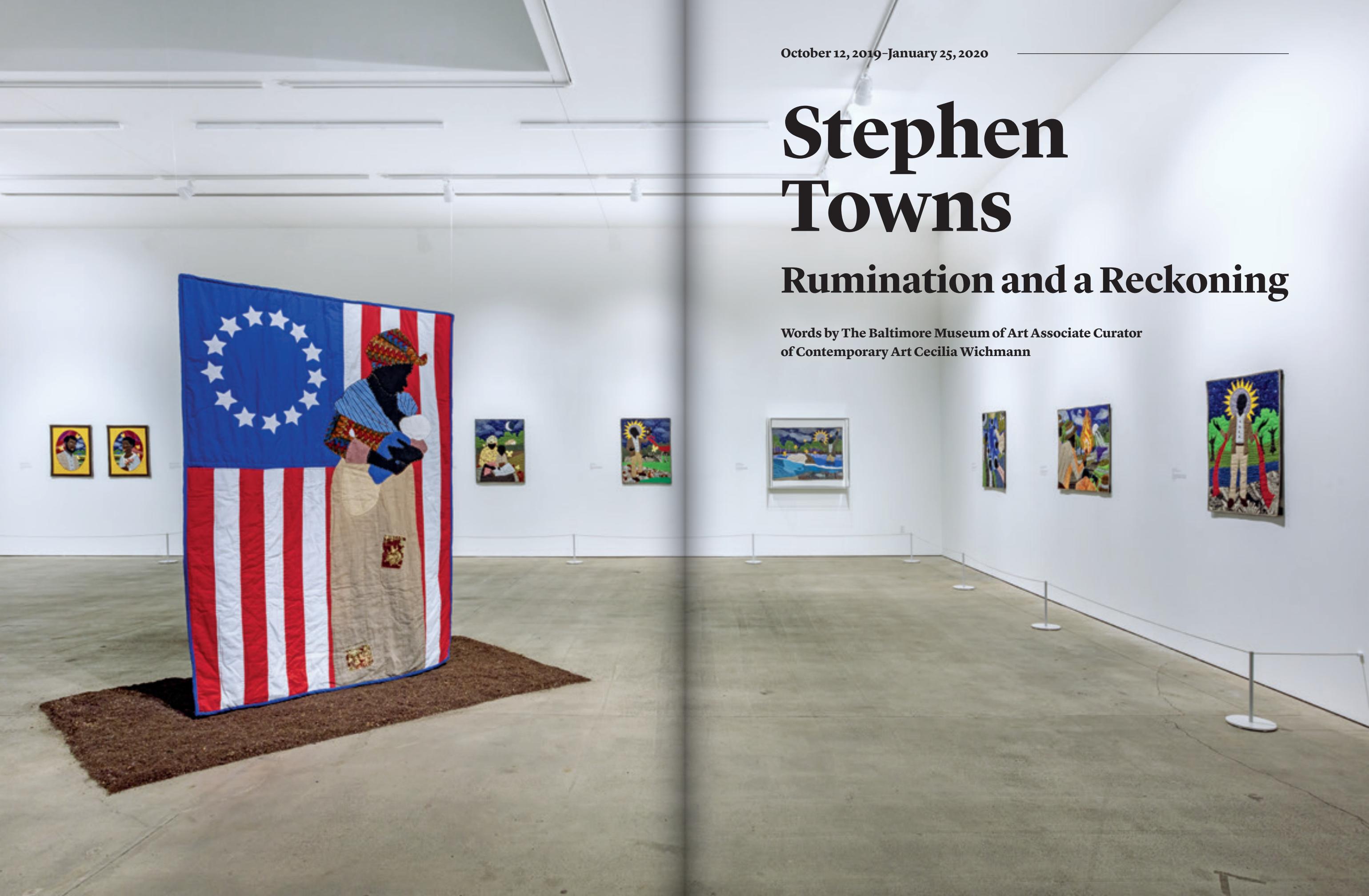


October 12, 2019–January 25, 2020

# Stephen Towns

## Rumination and a Reckoning

Words by The Baltimore Museum of Art Associate Curator  
of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann



Baltimore-based artist Stephen Towns examines the origin myths, legends, and religious beliefs that shape conflicting understandings of American history. His stunning textiles center Black people as encompassing, creative forces whose lives on earth are coextensive with the cosmos. *Stephen Towns: Ruminations and a Reckoning* sets forth this notion of sacred and inalienable personhood in three interrelated subjects. At center, *Birth of a Nation* (2014) combines the figures of a wet nurse and an early American flag to assert the profound contributions Black women have made to American society. Surrounding this installation, Town's *Story Quilts* (2016–2019) chronicle the life of Nat Turner and the rebellion he led against slavery in 1831. A pair of oval portraits represents Nat and Cherry Turner in the context of their marriage. The resulting exhibition unfolds as a pilgrim's journey for the present moment.

Trained as a painter, Towns embarked in 2014 on a rigorous, self-taught quilting practice. Quilting offers the artist a means to examine his relationship to a creative field shaped primarily by women, particularly in the African American traditions of narrative quilt-making. While Towns adopts the techniques of quilting, his visual vocabulary is drawn from painting and photography. Combining simplified forms, brilliant hues, and patterning of quilts with the poses, gestures, and storytelling strategies of sacred art and portraiture, Towns

materializes a luminous vision of history told as a human story.

In *Birth of a Nation*, a Black woman stands before the American flag nursing a white infant. Wet nursing, or breastfeeding another person's child, was commonly required of enslaved women in the U.S., and the practice continued into the 20th century as a prevalent form of domestic labor. In suspending this quilt above a mound of earth, Towns refers to a provision of the U.S. Flag Code, which states that the banner must "never touch anything beneath it." By elevating the woman as well as the flag, *Birth of a Nation* asserts the reverence and respect due, and long denied, to women of color. The intimate pose recalls Madonna and Child imagery, and the ring of white stars suggests a halo. The woman's garments reimagine the Mammy type, a racist caricature of Black women in domestic servitude that permeates American visual culture. Meditating on the real experiences of Black women, which this stereotype attempts to erase, Towns devotes care to every detail of his subject, hand-dyeing her skirt with coffee, tea, and pigment and constructing her headwrap with a fabric his sisters used to make their own clothes.

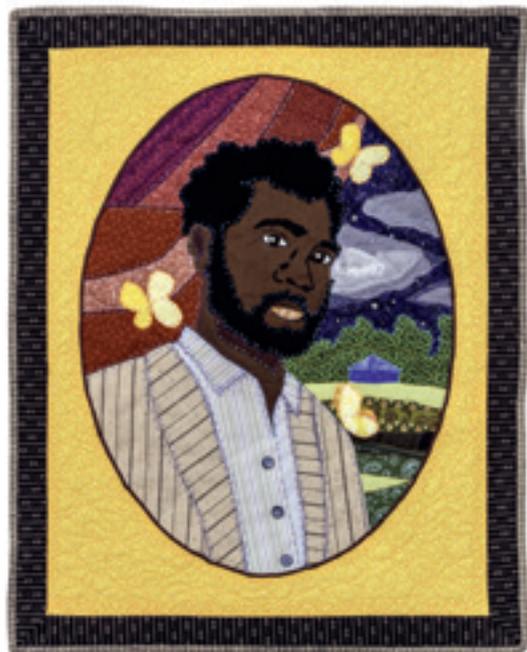
Below  
Opening for *Stephen Towns: Ruminations and a Reckoning* at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019.



Top  
Stephen Towns, *The Revelation*, 2019. 67 × 48 in. Natural and synthetic fabric, nylon tulle, polyester and cotton thread, metallic thread, crystal glass beads, resin buttons. Courtesy of the artist.

Bottom  
Stephen Towns, *Working the Fields*, 2019. 67 × 48 in. Natural and synthetic fabric, nylon tulle, polyester and cotton thread, metallic thread, crystal glass beads, resin buttons. Courtesy of the artist.





Stephen Towns, *Let Not Man Put Asunder: Portrait of Nat Turner*, 2018. 30 × 24 in. Natural and synthetic fabric, nylon tulle, polyester and cotton thread, metallic thread, Thermoweb, cotton/polyester blend batting, crystal glass beads. Courtesy of the artist.



Stephen Towns, *Let Not Man Put Asunder: Portrait of Cherry Turner*, 2018. 30 × 24 in. Natural and synthetic fabric, nylon tulle, polyester and cotton thread, metallic thread, crystal glass beads, resin buttons. Courtesy of the artist.

Towns' *Story Quilts* narrate the life of Nat Turner, who led a rebellion of enslaved and free Black people against white slaveowners in southeastern Virginia in 1831. Born into slavery, Turner was a visionary preacher. The uprising he organized against the institution of slavery resulted in the deaths of 55 to 65 white people. In retaliation, white militias killed more than 200 Black people. Turner was tried, convicted, and executed in November 1831. The revolt itself, and the political upheaval that followed, were precursors to the Civil War and the eventual prohibition of slavery in the United States. The facts of Turner's life have been absorbed into a complex mythology characterized by conflicting beliefs and competing testimony. Towns condenses the story into emblematic moments that focus on the person of Turner himself. Beginning with Turner as a child learning to read, the series charts his trajectory as a prophet, laborer, minister, organizer, revolutionary, and martyr for a cause. Celestial imagery—sun, moon, stars, butterflies, and dazzling clouds, appliquéd in layers of tulle and glass beads—identify Turner as a deeply spiritual being and reference the solar eclipse he took as a sign to proceed with the rebellion.

Side by side and mirrored in posture, portraits of Nat and his wife Cherry Turner affirm and memorialize their union. Oval formats and quilted yellow frames evoke daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, photographic processes used widely for portraiture in the United States from 1839 to the 1860s. Protected under embossed brass mats, such portraits recall for Towns the gold-leaf grounds of religious icons, similarly enveloping their sitters in preciousness and light. In mourning rituals of the 19th century, photographs of the deceased began to serve as memory aids for loved ones. This intimate gesture holds a metaphor for Towns' human-centered model of history—one that clears sacred space to meditate on the complexity of our representations of the past, so as to illuminate our relationships to one another in the present.

This exhibition was presented by Art + Practice in collaboration with The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and was curated by Cecilia Wichmann, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the BMA.

**Opposite top and bottom**  
Opening for *Stephen Towns: Ruminations and a Reckoning* at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019.





October 12, 2019–January 25, 2020

# Ramsess

## The Gathering

Words by The Baltimore Museum of Art Associate Curator  
of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann



For more than 40 years, Los Angeles artist Ramsess has created portraits of historical figures whose significance is overlooked, underestimated, or distorted in American culture. Ramsess began drawing in 1976 to connect with subjects he recognized as seismically important and yet largely excluded from his education. “I knew of these people but didn’t know what they looked like,” he explains. “I drew them big so that I could see them.”<sup>1</sup> Since 2006, Ramsess has used quilting as a potent tool for analyzing how public images of individuals such as Sojourner Truth, Malcolm X, George Stinney, Jr., and Ruby Bridges, are constructed and circulated. Ramsess refabricates such images into complex portraits, at once tender and heroic. Drawing selectively on art history and entertainment media, news and law enforcement photographs, Ramsess transforms his source material to declare his subjects’ agents of history.

**Above and opposite top**  
Opening for Ramsess: *The Gathering* at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019.

**Opposite bottom**  
Ramsess, *The Gathering*, 2012. Cotton fabric. 58 × 166 in. (Detailed View)

The exhibition title was drawn from the 14-foot quilt at its center. *The Gathering* (2012) reimagines one of the most recognizable images in art history—Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper* (c. 1495–1498), depicting Christ’s final meal with his 12 apostles—to honor young Black people killed in their teens and twenties. Ramsess positions Trayvon Martin (1995–2012) in the seat of honor, his final meal of skittles and an AriZona-brand beverage arrayed before him. At his right-hand, from left to right, sit Adebayo Adenika (1971–1988), Oscar Grant (1986–2009), Emmett Till (1941–1955), Jordan Davis (1995–2012), Hadiya Pendleton (1997–2013), and LaTasha Harlins (1975–1991). From his left hand onward, are The Unknown Victim, Fred Hampton (1948–1969), Hector Pieterson (1963–1976), Malala Yousafzai (born 1997), George Stinney Jr. (1929–1944), and Larry King (1993–2008).

These subjects are united in “just [wanting] to live in a world that did not judge and condemn them because they were the wrong color, the wrong gender, loved the wrong person, or were on the wrong side of history.”<sup>2</sup> Ramsess introduces his subjects one-by-one and in communion with each other, inviting viewers to learn their



names and their stories. Luminous garments and glowing halos stand out against stone-hued ground, recalling sculpted decorations on ancient funerary monuments. As its only living subject, Yousafzai holds a special place in the tableau—this activist for girls’ educations survived being shot by members of the Taliban at age 15 and earned a Nobel Peace Prize. Her gesturing arms compel viewers to witness: “[This] is for those forgotten children who want an education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change.”<sup>3</sup>

The resilience and bravery of women, girls, and gender nonconforming individuals is an ongoing theme in Ramsess’ work. *Sojourner Truth* (2006) refers to photographs that the abolitionist, women’s rights activist, and orator—with her signature cap, shawl, and spectacles—deployed strategically in support of her cause. Ramsess draws especially on an 1864 image of Truth standing with her right hand on her cane; he amplifies her presence, adorning her in brilliant patterns and emphasizing her unyielding posture. *Cathay Williams, Buffalo Soldier* (2016) evokes a Western movie poster. In 1866, Williams assumed the name “William Cathay” and enlisted as a man in the U.S. Regular Army, serving for two years. Soldier and buffalo loom larger-than-life against the mythic landscape of the American West. *Ruby Bridges* (2008) examines an iconic, uncredited photograph of the six-year-old Bridges, escorted from school in 1960 after the federal order to desegregate Louisiana schools. Ramsess clothes the U.S. Marshals in the American flag; presuming to protect the child, they usher her over a field of barbed wire, “the thorns of history, as if she’s walking barefoot over glass.”<sup>4</sup>

Malcolm X, Dr. Huey P. Newton, and H. Rap Brown appear in a suite of more intimately scaled portraits based on mugshot photographs. This format—close-up, repeated in profile or holding a placard—offers a framework for considering the complexity of historical legacy, while echoing the form of the religious icon to sanctify each man’s quest for justice. In a memorial at once heartbreaking and searing, Ramsess responds to the mugshots of George Stinney, Jr., the 14-year-old child executed on the electric chair in 1944. With this portrait, Ramsess compels us to remember Stinney, and also to act against the continued brutal treatment of marginalized children by the U.S. government.



Ramsess, *Sojourner Truth*, 2006. Cotton Fabric. 51 × 104 in. Courtesy of the artist.

This exhibition was presented by Art + Practice in collaboration with The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and was curated by Cecilia Wichmann, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the BMA.

1. Ramsess in conversation with the author, June 24, 2019.
2. Ramsess by email to Art + Practice, June 11, 2019.
3. Malala Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai: Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” Oslo, Norway, December 10, 2014. [malala.org/newsroom/malala-boel-speech](http://malala.org/newsroom/malala-boel-speech).
4. Ramsess in conversation with the author, June 24, 2019.

**Opposite top**  
Installation view of *Ramsess: The Gathering* at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019–20 January 2020.

**Opposite bottom**  
Community Quilting Workshop with artist Ramsess, working with A+P’s community to honor Nipsey Hussle at Art + Practice. 20 January 2020.

# A Tale of Two Institutions

**The Baltimore Museum of Art Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford and Art + Practice Deputy Director Sophia Belsheim examine their organizations' reasons for collaborating and discuss how A+P and the BMA can set a precedent for inclusion in Baltimore, Los Angeles, and the art world.**

In April 2017, Art + Practice and The Baltimore Museum of Art launched their collaboration with *Spiral Play Loving in the '80s*, an exhibition that featured 12 collages by artist Al Loving. Bedford and Katy Siegel, BMA Senior Curator and Thaw Endowed Chair at Stony Brook University, organized *Spiral Play*. Intended to correct the 20th- and 21st-century canon to change the face of Loving's story, clarifying that art is a place for conversation and inclusion, *Spiral Play* was an alignment in vision and ambition between two vastly different institutions at opposite ends of the country who share a conviction that art must be made accessible to the broadest demographic, specifically urban communities that are too often ignored by museums.



**Sophia Belsheim** Why was the BMA interested in collaborating with A+P? Had the BMA been involved in any similar collaborations with other nonprofit institutions or galleries before?

**Christopher Bedford** The BMA's new vision centers diversity, equity, and inclusion. In every decision we make, we want to broadcast those values. We were interested in working with a nimble, cutting-edge institution on the West Coast so that our programming could span the entirety of the United States, from coast to coast. A+P, a Los Angeles museum extremely compatible with our mission and goals, made abundant sense to us strategically.

A+P and the BMA agree that the future of art museums and art centers in this country needs to be rethought and revised. The existing exhibition models and practices are ready for reassessment. Organizations like A+P, Titus Kaphar's NXTHVN,<sup>1</sup> or Rick Lowe's Project Row Houses,<sup>2</sup> which are all founded by Black American artists, showcase why the BMA looks to artist-driven, need-focused, nonprofit exhibition spaces, especially those that embed themselves within the artists' communities of origin.

Artist-driven nonprofits tend to be very rigorous when thinking about the relationships they form with their communities through art. I was interested in making sure the BMA remains attuned to how these spaces evolve so the museum could incorporate their vision as we reimagine our role as an institution going forward. In other words, if you were to take A+P and scale it up to the level of a civic museum on the East Coast, what does that museum look like?

For the BMA, it's about fleshing out our exhibition history, so that our mission of equity and inclusion is written into everything we do in

**Opposite**  
Christopher Bedford at The Baltimore Museum of Art, 2018.

**Top**  
The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) exterior in Baltimore, Maryland. 29 June 2015. Courtesy of The Baltimore Museum of Art.

**Bottom**  
Art + Practice Exhibition Space exterior. 6 May 2019.



the coming years. We buy work for the collection that represents this vision, so that it's the story that we tell.

**Belsheim** How did organizing *Spiral Play* establish that vision? How did the exhibition set the precedent for how A+P and the BMA would approach future collaborative exhibitions organized and presented in Los Angeles and Baltimore?

**Bedford** Although postwar art is well represented in the BMA's collection and exhibition history, and despite the fact that Al Loving is central to the emergence and reinvention of abstraction in the 1970s and '80s, we had never shown or collected his work.

When looking for ways to articulate Loving's story and to explain the later emergence of

artists like Mark Bradford and Julie Mehretu, we determined we needed to find their kin and their predecessors, to mine history knowing this information might not be freely available. If we can connect the faces and the minds of those makers with new audiences, I believe we can show that Black American artists have always scaled the mountaintop of abstraction.

I also believe that it's up to us, museums like the BMA, to find artists who have made vital contributions to society and write them into art history. Providing access to those stories is a huge part of the BMA's mandate. In Baltimore, admission to *Spiral Play* was free because we're a free museum. The idea of presenting the exhibition for free to a majority Black community in South Los Angeles strikes us as an extension of that goal.

**Belsheim** When the exhibition traveled to Baltimore, how did critics and the museum's visitors react to the work? What aspects of the exhibition resonated with the BMA's community?

**Bedford** *Spiral Play* was one of the early research-based commitments I made upon my arrival at the BMA. But I think there's an enormous difference between the rhetoric that surrounds that conviction and its actualization in a gallery. The BMA's board, staff, and local audience were completely surprised that Loving's work had not been exhibited at the BMA and that Loving's story had never been told in a museum setting. While *Spiral Play* has not been the



Opening reception for *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s* at Art + Practice. 22 April 2017.

largest exhibition that we've organized, it was one of our first attempts to establish a different level of trust with our local audience. I also think *Spiral Play* extended the promise of what the BMA could become to Baltimore, and held us accountable as an institution.

**Belsheim** The second exhibition organized by A+P and the BMA welcomed artist Maren Hassinger in early 2018. Curated by former BMA Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Kristen Hileman, the solo exhibition *Maren Hassinger: The Spirit of Things* highlighted Hassinger's performance art, site-specific interventions, and abstract compositions.

Born in Los Angeles, Hassinger had a long history of working and collaborating with many local Los Angeles artists, such as Senga Nengudi, Ulysses Jenkins, and May Sun, in and around Leimert Park during the 1970s. Hassinger was also the director emeritus of the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute of College of Art in Baltimore for twenty years. Did Hassinger's personal connections to Los Angeles and Baltimore influence the BMA's decision to propose her as an artist for A+P's consideration?

**Bedford** *The Spirit of Things* was just a pitch-perfect exhibition binding A+P and the BMA. I rarely encounter an artist or exhibition proposal that was so serendipitous to two institutions. Hassinger was working here in Baltimore for a very long period of time, taught at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and we did not have any of her work in the BMA's collection. She has also collaborated with many of the artists, such as Senga Nengudi, that the BMA's curators were beginning to emphasize within our programs. Nengudi also has a really deep relationship not only to Los Angeles but specifically to Leimert Park. Nengudi was among the first generation of Black artists who defined Leimert Park as an artistic capital.

**Belsheim** The third and final exhibition of the initial three-part collaboration invited Nengudi. Curated by you and Cecilia Wichmann, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)* brought extraordinary examples of Nengudi's early and recent sculpture in dialogue with the artist's performances, photographs, and videos from the mid-1970s.

How has Nengudi redefined the influence of art in Los Angeles and beyond? Why was her work selected to bookend A+P and the BMA's collaboration?

**Bedford** As an institution, the BMA strategically advocates for established artists who perhaps have not received the recognition they deserve. In the case of Al Loving and *Spiral Play*, that recognition was unfortunately posthumous.

With Hassinger and Nengudi, there was a threefold motivation to do those shows. First, to correct the canon. Second, to tell history through relationships. And third, to raise awareness about Hassinger and Nengudi's work, to properly represent their trajectory as professional artists.

I really liked the idea that the two exhibitions could function together as a story with two artists speaking to each other through their work over time. That was compelling to me.

As a result of the exhibition, Hassinger and Nengudi have received increased exposure and commercial viability, which should result in more museum exhibitions, additional placements of their work in museum collections, and having a presence in the commercial world. In many ways, *The Spirit of Things* and *Head Back and High* touched on every one of these points. They helped A+P and the BMA build their representations as institutions while supporting the artists tangibly as well.

**Belsheim** For each exhibition that A+P and the BMA organized, A+P designed a series of public programs that expanded upon the curatorial ideas generated in the exhibitions. Programs welcomed artists like Shinique Smith, May Sun, EJ Hill, Ulysses Jenkins, Barbara McCullough, and others. Did the BMA have a similar approach to its public programs organized on the occasion of *Spiral Play*, *The Spirit of Things*, and *Head Back and High*? How did the BMA consider its local community when organizing these programs?

**Bedford** The BMA introduces new names and new ideas to our established audiences while attracting new audiences at the same time. We attempt to make the complexities of art history as accessible and as alive as possible in our public programs. That includes trying to bring in speakers who inherently crossover into the mainstream, who don't speak a cloistered scholarly



language, while also bringing in artists to enliven the work of previous generations that can't speak for themselves. I never tire of saying that.

I also believe that the BMA's principle asset—I think this applies for A+P as well—is living artists. In addition to our ideas and scholarship, BMA can bring makers to the fore. That intention remains a huge emphasis in our public programs.

**Belsheim** In 2019, A+P and the BMA decided to extend our collaboration. Next, A+P and the BMA will organize two concurrent exhibitions with artists Ramsess and Stephen Towns. Reviewing the original structure of the collaboration, have the BMA's initial intentions changed? How might the vision of the collaboration develop as A+P and the BMA continue to work together?

**Bedford** I do think that the collaboration will evolve in the coming years. We have established a proof of concept here where A+P and the BMA, though institutions operating at different scales, with different orientations, can work together seamlessly. Each organization reciprocally teaches the other about engaging with and bringing complex content to their respective audiences.

If you look at artist Fred Eversley's exhibition *Fred Eversley: Black, White, Gray*,<sup>3</sup>—one of the first A+P exhibitions I was involved with while I

was still Director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University—and the exhibition *Spiral Play*, these shows were elegant and formal resurrections capturing the history of postwar art, which fit snugly within the familiar vocabularies of modernism. You can see, for instance, how Fred relates to the light and space movement of the 1960s and '70s. You can see how Al Loving is a precursor to artists like Bradford as well as a peer to Frank Stella. A+P and the BMA have established our capacity to create these types of conversations, and these exhibitions are fabulous because they relay a developing, inclusive canon.

If you fast-forward to the upcoming Ramsess and Towns exhibitions, there is a far more acute spirit of boundary-pushing and adventure there. In 2019, A+P and the BMA will welcome Ramsess, an artist who exists on the peripheral consciousness of the art world, and thrust him into the center of that world. We've also decided to welcome Towns, a Baltimore artist also working with textiles—a material that is not always comfortably associated with fine art discourse—and thrust him into that dialogue as well. To me,

**Above**  
Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, *Performance Objects* (1976-2017) opening reception at Art + Practice. 23 June 2018.



the idea of making the core of the art world more permeable to different voices, different cultures, different backgrounds, different methods of making, to the activity happening at its periphery, is really interesting. I believe A+P and the BMA's efforts will allow both institutions to receive mainstream attention and attract larger audiences. To me, that's the next frontier in the collaboration.

Interview conducted on April 23, 2019.

1. NXTHVN is an art space founded in 2015 by artist Titus Kaphar, Jonathan Brand, and Jason Price to cultivate a sustainable creative community that attracts and supports talent within and beyond New Haven, Connecticut. [nxthvn.com](http://nxthvn.com).

2. Project Row Houses is a community platform in Houston, Texas that enriches lives through art with an emphasis on cultural identity and its impact on the urban landscape. [projectrowhouses.org](http://projectrowhouses.org)

3. Organized by Kim Conaty, Curator at the Rose Art Museum in 2016, *Fred Eversley: Black, White, Gray* included artist Fred Eversley's sculptures.



**Top**  
Students from Inner City Education Foundation visit Art + Practice to see *Maren Hassinger: The Spirit of Things*. 23 May 2018.

**Bottom**  
Installation view of *Maren Hassinger: The Spirit of Things* at The Baltimore Museum of Art. 17 June 2018. July 18, 2018–November 25, 2018. Courtesy of The Baltimore Museum of Art.

FEBRUARY 8–AUGUST 1, 2020

# Collective Constellation

SELECTIONS FROM THE  
EILEEN HARRIS NORTON COLLECTION

*Collective Constellation: Selections from The Eileen Harris Norton Collection* will be on view at Art + Practice February 8 through August 1, 2020. This exhibition is co-organized by Art + Practice and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. The exhibition is organized by Hammer Museum associate curator Erin Christovale.

Art + Practice  
Hours: Monday-Saturday | 12–6 P.M. | Free Admission

Amy Sherald, *When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be (Self-Imagined atlas)*, 2018. Oil on canvas. 54 × 43 × 2 in.  
© Amy Sherald. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. The Eileen Harris Norton Collection. Photo: Charles White.

**ART + PRACTICE** | CO-ORGANIZED BY  
**HAMMER MUSEUM**



September 12, 2020–January 23, 2021

# Blondell Cummings

This exhibition will be on view at Art + Practice September 12, 2020 through January 23, 2021. Co-organized by Art + Practice and the Getty Research Institute, and co-curated by Kristin Juarez, Research Specialist; Rebecca Peabody, Head, Research Projects & Programs; and Glenn Phillips, Curator and Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections, this exhibition is generously supported by Maria Hummer-Tuttle and Robert Holmes Tuttle, with additional support from Gary and Kathi Cypres and Michael Rubel and Kristin Rey.

Art + Practice  
Hours: Monday-Saturday | 12–6 P.M. | Free Admission

Blondell Cummings in *3B49*. Photograph. Photo: Beatriz Schiller. Getty Research Institute, 2014.M.6. Courtesy the estate of Blondell Cummings.

**ART + PRACTICE** | CO-ORGANIZED BY  
**Getty Research Institute**



# Public Programs





Workshop: Reimagined Reflections with Sophia Nahli Allison at Art + Practice. 27 July 2019.



Documenting Los Angeles: A Conversation with Alima Lee and Kya Lou at the Art + Practice Public Programs space. 25 April 2019.

## 2019 Public Programs

**Exhibition Walkthrough with Ben Caldwell and Jheanelle Brown**

February 26, 2019

**In Conversation: Alile Sharon Larkin, Cauleen Smith, and dana washington with Jheanelle Brown**

March 27, 2019

**Documenting Los Angeles: A Conversation with Alima Lee and Kya Lou**

April 25, 2019

**In Conversation: Ijeoma Iloputaife and Philana Payton**

May 14, 2019

**Points of Access: Getting Your Sh\*t Together for Artists**

Organized with the California African American Museum  
June 25, 2019

**In Conversation: Zeinabu Irene Davis and Barbara McCullough with Desha Dauchan**

June 27, 2019

**The Archive in Film and Video: Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton with Darol Olu Kae**

July 11, 2019

**Points of Access: A to Z Grantwriting and Proposals**

Organized with the California African American Museum  
July 24, 2019

**Workshop: Reimagined Reflections with Sophia Nahli Allison**

July 27, 2019

**Film Screening and Discussion: Brick by Brick with Jheanelle Brown and Yusef Omowale**

August 13, 2019

**Points of Access: Contemporary Art Writing**

Organized with the California African American Museum  
September 19, 2019

**In Conversation: Stephen Towns and Ramsess with Cecilia Wichmann**

October 15, 2019

**Artist Talk: Luis Flores**  
November 14, 2019

**Points of Access: Speed Mentoring Mixer**

Organized with the California African American Museum  
December 4, 2019

**Artist Talk: Kenturah Davis**  
December 12, 2019

# Exhibition Walkthrough of *Time is Running Out of Time* with Ben Caldwell and Jheanelle Brown

On February 26, 2019, artist, educator, and independent filmmaker Ben Caldwell and The Broad's Programs Manager Jheanelle Brown led a walkthrough of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today*, which Brown co-curated. The following is an edited excerpt from their conversation.

In the late 1960s following the aftermath of the Watts Uprising, a group of African American students entered UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, as part of an Ethno-Communications Initiative—an initiative designed for students to respond to communities of color. From the two decades that followed that initiative emerged a group of students who are now referred to as “The LA Rebellion.” Together, these students developed a unique cinematic voice, one that shed light on Diasporic consciousness, collective memory, personal narratives, and positive characterization of Black women and men.

**Ben Caldwell** It's good to have this work in Leimert Park. The work has traveled around the world and back again in 40 years. It's good to see it here—the place where I started, Brockman Gallery, which is now part of Art + Practice's public program space.

**Jheanelle Brown** There are a few concepts that organize this exhibition. One of them is the idea of urgency. Another is that when Black artists make work, their work is understood critically. It is important to understand that a lot of the LA Rebellion folks are still actively making work, they're still engaging. These artists and their work deserve to be recognized. There is an all too common tendency for work to be appreciated and critically acclaimed only long after it's made.

As curators of the exhibition, Sarah Loyer, The Broad's Associate Curator and Exhibitions Manager, and I wanted to make sure that the early student work of the LA Rebellion continues to be celebrated, but also that the work that is being created by younger generations of filmmakers is included in that conversation. We should recognize and identify how the LA Rebellion pioneered and informed Blackness as an aesthetic but also the innovative ways they used visual mediums to convey their ideas.

**Caldwell** Seeing Haile Gerima's *Hour Glass* (1971) was our initiation as students at UCLA. Haile set a pace for the LA Rebellion when he made *Hour Glass*. I would like younger generations to experience the work because it will give them an idea of the environment that we experienced at UCLA, which, at the time, was going through a crisis. All of us went to school intending to make positive images for our culture, but we ran into the opposite energy instead.

**Brown** Another film that was made during this time was Bernard Nicolas' *Daydream Therapy* (1977). *Daydream Therapy* was the first LA Rebellion film that I saw, and it made something go off in my mind. The film led me to discover other films from the LA Rebellion and to think about films made by Black folks in a particular way. Another film that moved me was Barbara McCullough's *Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification* (1979).

**Caldwell** By making *Water Ritual #1*, Barbara broadened my understanding of Louisiana's spirituality and its inner connection to the Earth. To me, the film presented a way of looking at the world that was quite unique. I thank Barbara for that, because it led me to projects with artists outside the realm of film. Avant-garde artists like David Hammons, Noah Purifoy, Senga Nengudi, and John Outterbridge, whose rethinking the usage of materials, informed my work. We used the materials around us in a way that imbued them with spirit.

I now see *Water Ritual #1* keeps with the LA Rebellion's methodologies because it embraces the intergenerational discussion that we are having here with our work today. The art world is constantly showing the old school with the new school. From generation to generation, we are still burdened with the same psychosocial trauma that has attacked Black culture.

Exhibition Walkthrough of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* with Ben Caldwell and Jheanelle Brown at Art + Practice. 26 February 2019.

Collectively we are using film as a way to address our need to heal.

As a filmmaker in the 1960s and '70s, I became conscious during the Vietnam War—the worst time that a person could become conscious. I was able to see how what we were going through here in the United States was similar to the war in Vietnam, especially for Black Americans and Native Americans. We sometimes forget about the ongoing violence against Black and Native people, because we're 400 years into American colonialism, which is why Black and Native people have a lot of psychosocial trauma. Filmmaking is one way to help heal. That's my reason for being a filmmaker.

The first film I did was called *Medea* (1973). *Medea* allowed me to work through my psychosocial trauma. For me, *Medea* was a ritual, a chant. The film was also a way to demonstrate all of the things I noticed had happened or were happening to us, Black people, as a culture. At the time, the Smothers Brothers had an animation piece that showed 100 years of European history in a minute. I said, "Wouldn't it be hip if I captured 400 or 500 years of African civilization in a few minutes?" For *Medea*, I wanted to show that DNA goes into a child from their parents, and show how past information goes into the formation of a person. At the end of the film, I say a culture provides identity, purpose, and direction. If you know who you are, then you know what your purpose is.

**Brown** While preparing the show, Sarah and I talked about and found a lot of richness in the ways LA Rebellion artists used archival materials. Ben mentioned that *Medea* animates a history that becomes an inheritance. A lot of young Black filmmakers and artists are mobilizing the same archives today. Ben drew from archives as a way to empower and reclaim Black narrative and Black modes of production.

**Caldwell** Yes, the archives are important to me because I started working with them as if each picture has a cultural memory. For example, if I show you an image of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., everybody personalizes it in accordance with who they are and what they are feeling at that time. Each picture presses different points in different people.

Also, by the nature of film as a medium, filmmakers are constrained to 24 frames per

second. Making film is a ritualized process in which filmmakers put their viewer under a veil. Reality is suspended, so the viewer can believe all that they see. If we can control that in a healthy manner, then there is a possibility for humans to heal. As filmmakers, we can make sure that we pass into that veil and create health and wellness there.

Another thing that is wonderful about film is that you can't do it alone. Film forced us, the LA Rebellion filmmakers, to be a collective. When we started at UCLA, we found that the school was not as welcoming as we had expected. It forced us to unite. We were the few Black filmmakers that were, for the first time, in a real film program. Before us, film students at UCLA who were not white were a part of the "ethnographic film program."

Thirteen of us, women and men, got together. From then on, every weekend, at least five of the thirteen filmmakers would show up to help each other finish our films. We needed gaffers, grips, lighting, cameras, camera assistants, and all of that in order for us to get our films made. It was a collective that lasted consistently for 10 years.

Our name, the LA Rebellion, was given to us later. Just because we refused to demean ourselves in our work, we were considered rebellious. We didn't want to create negative images about ourselves and, apparently, Hollywood calls that "The LA Rebellion."

**Brown** Sarah and I also thought about Black femme subjectivity as well as how many of these films and videos elevate griots, African storytellers. We paired *Water Ritual #1* with *Portals 1: Ja'Tovia Gary* (2018), in which filmmakers Alima Lee and Mandy Harris Williams profile New York experimental filmmaker and video artist Ja'Tovia Gary. Lee and Harris Williams document and witness Gary, who talks about what it means to be a Black woman, to be a Black femme, to be a Black artist, to perform as an artist, and to perform personhood. Ja'Tovia describes how Black women and Black femmes are forced into proximity with patriarchy and white supremacy.

While I was watching *Portals 1*, I was thinking about how Black women and femmes are the keepers of cultural memory. I felt this powerful conversation was happening in *Water Ritual #1* as well.

One of the things with the younger generation's work that resonates with me is a reckoning



**Top**  
LA Rebellion filmmakers (from left) Haile Germa, Johnny Withers, and Larry Clark during the filming of "Bush Mama". Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Ben Caldwell.

**Bottom**  
LA Rebellion members (from left) Glen Dixon, Jack Radar (first to pass), Garry Gaston, Al Cowart, person unknown, John Reai, and Don Adams. 1974-75. Courtesy of Ben Caldwell.





Top and bottom  
Photos from Alile Sharon  
Larkin's personal archive.

with Blackness and the sense of social or political consciousness, which is then translated into the digital and visual.

**Caldwell** The unique thing about the LA Rebellion is that we were a bunch of 20-year-olds who had women as our main protagonists in all of our films. Haile made all of his films with female leads, and I did the same thing.

Because we're about to screen Alile Sharon Larkin's *Your Children Come Back to You* (1979), Alile, would you like to say a few words about your film?

**Alile Sharon Larkin** Ben, this film was made possible because of the brothers who were there and, as you said, had all of these beautiful images of Black women. I went to film school because I wanted to make films that the earlier classes of LA Rebellion filmmakers were already making. I was nurtured in an environment that was created by brilliant young Black men. When I got to school, I was asked, "What do you want to do?" and was told by my peers, "Whatever you want to do, we will help you do it." That's how this film was made.

I feel that *Your Children Come Back to You* has had a life of its own. It's 40 years old now. I'm done with it in the sense that I want you, the audience, to have your own reaction to it without my commentary. Just react to it.

**Brown** You'll notice that the films are formally narrative in nature. They muddy your expectations about experimental film. *Your Children Come Back to You* is almost a spooky film. Tovi, one of its main characters, keeps saying to Chris, another character, "Are you adopted? Are you adopted?" For me, it's interesting how the film makes me think of rupture and dispersal, and the ways Black people were dispersed around the world. Tovi homes in on that feeling succinctly, in a way that only kids can. Tovi's commentary

shows how strong the shared themes that circulate through some of the films in the exhibition are. These films often reckon with a sense of pan-Africanism that was burgeoning at the time. They tackle the hard questions that a lot of Black people have regarding our unique position in the world.

**Caldwell** All of the narrative films that came from the LA Rebellion are experimental. Each person had their own stylized version. It was almost like a fingerprint in the sense of differences. Some of us also incorporated music in our films to help put the structure together. *Your Children Come Back to You* uses silence, pauses, and moments of reflection. The film touches you.

With *Your Children Come Back to You*, Alile was investigating how to tell a story without a whole lot of funds. You have to be creative and resourceful to get the whole idea across. I think that was the magic of all the works we made. Like the blues, you don't have to hear every note but you get the feeling.

**Audience Member** Ben, you said something about how filmmaking can heal trauma, that if you know who you are, then you know your place in the world. How did the work you created when you were a 20-year-old student at UCLA reveal to you who you were?

**Caldwell** One of the things I found unique was being able to see one's face as well as other individuals of color, Blackness, up on a big screen. To see each of the artists from the LA Rebellion dealing with unique hues and different looks, people and ideas that you don't normally see in the European movie theaters, changed me. It was important that everyone had a different approach to telling the story of America's psychosocial trauma. At UCLA, there was a whole swath of ideas about representing Blackness other than just my own.

# The Archive in Film and Video

## A Conversation with Renata Cherlise, Russell Hamilton, and Darol Olu Kae

On July 11, 2019, filmmakers and archivists Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton spoke with curator, archivist, and filmmaker Darol Olu Kae on the occasion of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today*. Cherlise, Hamilton, and Olu Kae discussed archival practices, issues of access and ethics, and their observations about the increased use of archival materials in video work. Their conversation is excerpted below.

**Darol Olu Kae** A lot of folks think about the archive as a digital or visual site of remembrance. You've each described using the archive to travel in time or create alternative futures. What is the archive to you? And why do you employ the archive in your practice?

**Renata Cherlise** I go to the archive when I want to see people like me. I created Blvck Vrchives<sup>1</sup> because I was uneasy about the ways I saw people using archives. I wanted to create an alternative that was not flat, gray images. Something people could interact with and visualize through.

In the archive, I weave historical moments together. I show people that it is equally necessary to archive work and, in our case, document the Black experience. So, when Black people look through that archive, there is content available for them—content that represents Blackness. The stuff that people don't want to show, that photo editors gloss over. More than mainstream images, I want images that resonate within the hearts of Black people.

Yes, the archive is time travel. But it's also historical footage and imagery. If we can see something that happened, for example, 60, 50, or 40 years ago, and it's still happening today, the archive allows us to relate to and interact with, to feel that information.

**Russell Hamilton** The archive shows what has already occurred and what is possible. In doing

so, the archive helps people process what they're going through in the present. For me, reviewing archival materials is the closest thing to time travel. There is a joy ingrained in breaking a photograph into its details and finding familiarity in what those details show. You can glean a lot of information by looking through an archive. What makes Renata's research so important is that she brings forgotten Black photographers and their communities back into the conversation. Black people need this information to develop our self-image and identity.

**Olu Kae** Can you describe your day-to-day archival practices? What methodologies do you use to approach the archive? How do you start your projects?

**Hamilton** As an editor, it's initially a matter of research. Once I find content, I really lock into it. I dedicate myself to building a framework, figuring out what space it inhabits. Then I spend hours looking over the materials, finding those significant moments, the portions that resonate with each other. After I've found those moments, then it's a matter of filling in the blanks, of exploring the language and energy within a video or photograph. I want to expound on the urge

**Opposite**  
(Left to Right): Darol Olu Kae, Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton at Art + Practice. 11 July 2019.



that makes someone want to share. To do that, you have to find content that can raise our consciousness as a group.

**Cherlise** When Russell and I work together, there isn't necessarily a purpose for all the materials we gather. But we try to draw attention to something visually that sometimes needs to be seen in isolation.

I create based on what resonates with me. I feel like everything that I share, I have a piece. There is a piece of me. Or, a piece of my family or someone that I know. I'm attached to all of these stories, and I think that helps because all of us

are connected that way. That's how we share that joy, like, "Yo, I remember that."

**Olu Kae** I want to talk about archives within an institutional context. Your work draws on historical archives, which can be a space of intense violence and erasure, specifically regarding narratives of Black women during slavery. How do you confront the limitations or failures of the institutional archives?

**Hamilton** I don't come from an academic background, I'm self-taught. When I came into the art world, I encountered gatekeepers and people



who believed they had ownership over the images of Black people.

When you are from these historically Black places, when your life is touched by the events that have happened there, and someone who is not from that culture, that doesn't have that life experience, says, "It costs this much to use this image," it's frustrating. I also think some people who are in these gatekeeping positions don't have passion.

Renata and I have long conversations about how we can ethically work within the archives. As a photographer, for example, you photograph people you may never come into contact with again. I think you have an obligation to use that photograph as a way to gratify or edify that individual. When producing archival material, you have to approach those subjects with the same sensitivity and care. In many cases, the people in the footage may no longer be with us. If you're not thorough, you risk exploiting the material and misrepresenting the people—our ancestors—the archive memorializes.

**Cherlise** I agree. Because I work with archives, clients contact me looking to source content. But sometimes it's hard for me to get content

depicting Black people, because there's an outrageous price tag attached to it. Two 30-second clips can sometimes blow an entire budget.

I'm trying to work around those financial impasses and create spaces where we, as Black people, can sustain our own archives. It's important to have those images and their stories come back into our communities. We need to know the people who took the photographs, too, because sometimes we lose their stories as well. Archival work is also silent. It's not work you can always share on social media. It's work you do because it serves a purpose.

**Olu Kae** As you've noted, there is a very precarious, difficult, and contentious relationship between the university and Black filmmakers. Should we be thinking collectively or independently about the afterlife of our work? What conditions will they be archived? Who owns the Black image?

**Above**  
Still from *Black Superman* (2014) by Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton. Courtesy of the artists.

**Opposite**  
The Archive in Film and Video: Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton with Darol Olu Kae at Art + Practice. 11 July 2019.

How are you working in, against, and beyond these institutions? Should artists today, contemporary artists, be thinking about archiving their own work independently or collectively?

**Hamilton** For most people, photo albums are the first tangible material that shows a time before them or a time in their infancy. Like a reference point, that experience shapes their perspective of themselves and their families. But because we're in the digital era, we forget how easy it is to lose our histories, which makes it important to make those stories tangible.

With the archive, it is no one else's priority to document our culture, Black culture. If we don't consider something important enough, we forget. We may lose access to those stories.

We have to take initiative and maintain those cultural repositories if we want our history to exist.

For instance, while I'm not from Los Angeles, Leimert Park is my home now. As a photographer, ever since I moved here, I have documented this community. In a short amount of time, I've seen significant changes. I photograph knowing that 10, 20, 30 years from now an archivist can look at this image and understand what was happening in the Crenshaw District in 2019.

**Cherlise** They should be archiving collectively and individually. Take Muhammad Ali, for example. Ali has millions of pictures, there was always a photographer with him. But, when we need to tell the story of Muhammad Ali, we have to go through an institution that is going to charge us

an exorbitant amount of money to create the documentary about a famous Black figure. Ali and the photographer documenting him each have their story, their own community. And that community is larger than just them. We need to think about those intersections in the future and consider how some institutions might be leveraging a community's success against its less-fortunate members.

We also need to consider that we don't know how technology will evolve. Right now, we have digital cameras. But I'm in the process of digitizing family videos, 8-millimeter film. I know what it's like to see technology change over 10, 20 years, but we can't predict what comes next.

**Hamilton** When you're dealing with the archive, you're dealing with people. You're dealing with people's spirits. I think you have to approach archival work with that level of seriousness.

It's about playback value as well. We want you to sit with the material and really expound on it. We work to layer the content so that you might miss something the first time. Renata and I are also big on nostalgia. A lot of our work is about taking you to those periods of time and feeling their significance. I think it's important to sit down and recognize the significance of these eras while challenging our contemporary views.

If I see joy in a family photograph from the '40s, that's something I can connect to. I know what brings about that body language or that smile. That's familiar to me. I might think, "That looks like my uncle, or that looks like a friend." That's what's affirming about archival memory. To see the similarities and realize a timeless truth.

**Renata** I think social media is increasing accessibility, too. Many libraries and archives have digitized their content so people like me can access it. Then I can share that content, and I can see other people are doing the same thing. Black people want to explore their communities, they want to figure out their place in the bigger picture.

Through my Instagram platform, I ask for submissions. People who want to share their family history, to highlight and honor their family, flood my inbox. They're eager to share.

**Russell** People are excited to join the conversation. They're realizing how significant their story is. Renata has created an outlet that acknowledges people while they're alive instead of after they've



become a history lesson. These people are still around, let's celebrate that! Let's make sure that we have space to acknowledge the life and joy that exists among us right now. I'm always talking about Black joy and the majesty that exists within Black joy, especially in familial or celebratory spaces. It's unmatched. That's fascinating to me given the trauma Black people have lived through. The fact that we have endured such hardship but are able to experience such high levels of joy and togetherness is significant.

**Olu Kae** What does it mean to commit something to the archive? When people send in submissions?

**Cherlise** I feel like people understand the work that I do. When I'm sharing images, they know that it comes from a good place. When they're

submitting work, they know that I'm not going to exploit them.

Blvck Vrchives is a safe space. There's trust. That really moves me because there are people who'll open up their family photo albums. They're like, "This is so-and-so. My aunt, my grandmother." They may have passed. They may still be with us, but they are reaching out to me to share this.

Sometimes I get images or submissions that they don't even want me to post to the archive. They just want to share it with me personally so we can have a conversation about their family. Sometimes I think about it and I feel like I'm doing work for the people who are gone.

**Above**  
(Left to Right): Darol Olu Kae, Renata Cherlise and Russell Hamilton at Art + Practice. 11 July 2019.

**Olu Kae** Absolutely, you're a conduit. People are trusting you. These are people. These are their memories, their objects, and their histories.

**Cherlise** These are stories. That's what I try to share with people because sometimes, when I do post images, a lot of people recognize themselves. "That was my grandfather" or "That was my dad." It goes way beyond just being a cool picture, there's a story attached to it. I want Black people to know their time and their life matter, that there was someone who was there to honor them, that their stories will live on.

1. Blvck Vrchives is a photo-based website of visual narratives, created by Renata Cherlise. To learn more visit [blvckvrchives.com](http://blvckvrchives.com).

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Mon - Sat, 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
FREE ADMISSION

### A+P Public Program Space

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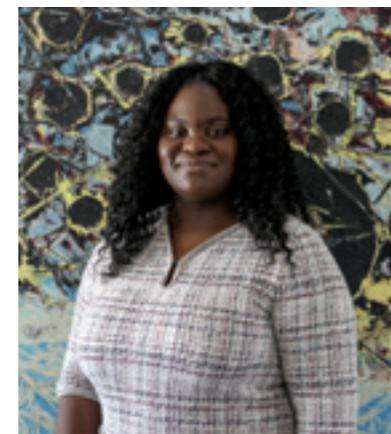
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## Photography Captions

**Cover, front inside spread, and p. 2** Visitors contribute to the Community Quilt honoring Nipsey Hussle at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019. **pp. 86–87** Artist Talk with Kenturah Davis at Art + Practice. 12 December 2019. **pp. 6–7** First Place For Youth hosts a roundtable discussion with singer, songwriter, producer, and GRAMMY Award-winning Bruno Mars. 7 March 2019. **pp. 36–37** Kingdom Day Parade takes place on Crenshaw Boulevard. 21 January 2019. **pp. 46–47** *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* opening reception at Art + Practice. 2 February 2019. **pp. 48–39** Installation view of *Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* at Art + Practice. 2 February–14 September 2019. **pp. 66–67** Installation view of *Stephen Towns: Rumination and a Reckoning* exhibition at Art + Practice in Los Angeles CA. 12 October 2019–20 January 2020. **pp. 72–73** Opening for

*Ramsess: The Gathering and Stephen Towns: Rumination and a Reckoning* at Art + Practice. 12 October 2019. **pp. 86–87** Artist Talk with Kenturah Davis at Art + Practice. 12 December 2019. **Back inside spread and back cover** Artist Ramsess leads a community quilting workshop with A+P's community to honor Nipsey Hussle at Art + Practice. 20 January 2020.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken at Leimert Park, Los Angeles CA.

## Photography Credits

**Molly Adams** cover, front inside spread, p. 2, p. 68, pp. 71–73, p. 74 (top), p. 75. **Leah Case** p. 8, p. 20 (left), p. 21 (left and right), p. 22 (right), p. 24 (left), p. 27, p. 32, p. 38 (top), p. 76 (bottom), pp. 86–87, p. 89, p. 90, back inside spread, back cover. **Florent Dechard** pp. 6–7, pp. 28–29. **Pablo Enriquez** p. 58 (bottom),

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