

# Year Eight

ART + PRACTICE





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Leimert Park, Los Angeles, CA



# Introduction

October approaches and yet just last weekend Art + Practice reopened its exhibition space. After being closed for over a year, our enthusiasm about visitors returning to experience world-class art has been overwhelming.

Working from home has presented its challenges. But with the guidance from our founders Mark Bradford, Allan DiCastro, and Eileen Harris Norton, we charted the course, reassuring ourselves that one day we would once again open our doors.

In retrospect, 2021 has been a hybrid year. We started at home, revisiting our website's identity and planning a series of online programs. As vaccines were disseminated, we wanted to reconnect with artists in person. We visited their studios, learning how their practices evolved while being cooped up in their homes and workspaces. Our spring program series grew out of those visits.

Meanwhile, we joined arms with our collaborator, First Place for Youth, to address the needs of transition-age foster youth—young adults who will be living independently for the first time. Out of those conversations came the continuation of a \$100,000 scholars program that supports foster youth seeking to continue their education, a grocer gift card program, an aligned communications strategy between First Place and A+P that will help us convey the needs of these young

adults to our broader community in Los Angeles and abroad, and a virtual fundraising gala meant to raise awareness and funds in support of First Place's independent living program.

We also resumed a two-year collaboration with the Getty Research Institute. As part of that collaboration, we organized the first solo exhibition of the late choreographer and filmmaker Blondell Cummings and produced a companion exhibition catalogue, as well as online educational resources, for all to learn about her brilliant, inimitable work.

As we look to the future, A+P is planning a five-year collaboration with the California African American Museum. That collaboration will celebrate the work of artists of color through joint exhibitions and public programs on A+P's campus while contributing our resources to the 40-year-old institution dedicated to documenting Black life, history, and culture. We have also extended our collaboration with First Place for another five years with the intention of continuing to creatively better the lives of the foster youth we serve.

We are thrilled to share our journey with you. Thank you for sticking with us, and please come visit our exhibition space. We'll be masked and ready for your arrival. Cheers to another year of contemporary arts and foster youth programming in Leimert Park.

**OPPOSITE**  
Leimert Boulevard, Los Angeles. 4 November 2021.

# Foster Youth



# Supporting the Entrepreneurial Spirit

A Roundtable Discussion organized in collaboration with South Los Angeles nonprofit DREAMHAUS

JOSHUA ODUGA

Every year, Art + Practice and First Place for Youth organize Roundtable Discussions, workshops where First Place's young adults meet with industry leaders to learn about their lives and careers. For the 2021 session, the two collaborating organizations invited South Los Angeles nonprofit DREAMHAUS to host a workshop.

After speaking with their young adult constituents, including many who lost jobs and income streams because of the pandemic, First Place learned that most wanted to develop entrepreneurial skills as a means of navigating their displacement from jobs over the past year. These young people wanted to learn how to start their own businesses and devise their own projects, relying on their personal skills, hobbies, and creativity as a means to be self-sufficient.

Joshua Oduga, A+P's former Public Programs and Exhibitions Manager, worked closely with DREAMHAUS to design a Roundtable Discussion that was formatted as a game night. The resulting board game, created by DREAMHAUS, welcomed players to think about their own personal journey during the game.

This game taught First Place's young adults how DREAMHAUS's Founders Nikkolos Mohammed and Mike Reesé and Creative Director Sam Danan rely on each other to guide their collaborative work. The three creatives also spoke about their

experiences running a nonprofit, especially the obstacles and successes they encountered along the way. At the end of the night, each participant took home a risograph-printed business planner, a t-shirt, and a poster all designed by DREAMHAUS so they could remember the event and share what they learned with their communities.

## DREAMHAUS

DREAMHAUS is a Los Angeles-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and multifaceted art collective. Founded in 2014 by visual artists Nikkolos Mohammed and Mike Reesé, DREAMHAUS is dedicated to implementing arts as an educational tool and a vehicle toward universal innovation. The organization also hosts an annual toy drive to provide students in South Los Angeles with art supplies, clothing, and everyday gear. They have collaborated with brands and local communities through merchandising and interactive experiences, maintaining their goal of inspiring creativity among youth. DREAMHAUS strives to be collective and individual examples of not only envisioning your dreams but creating a process in order to fulfill them, and developing an ecosystem that can empower others to discover and pursue their own passions no matter their circumstance.

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

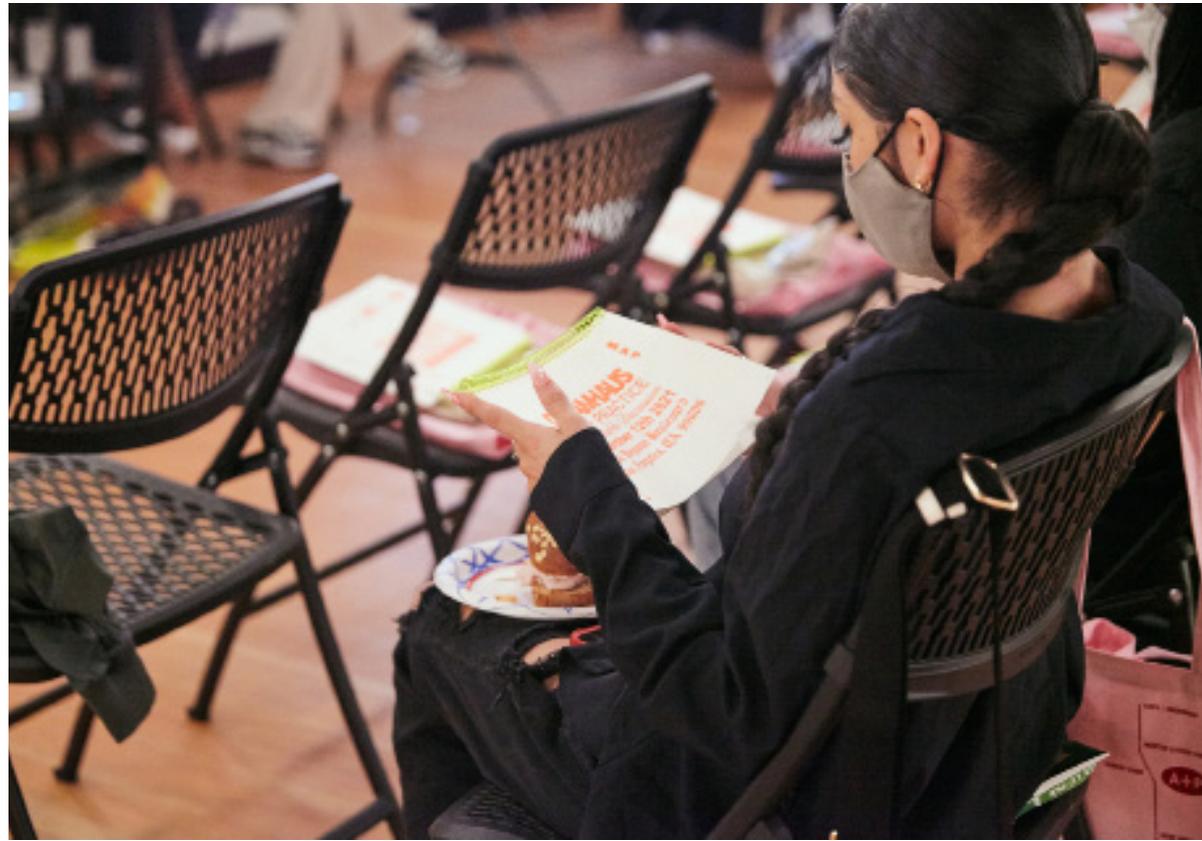
## OPPOSITE

(left to right) DREAMHAUS co-founder Nikkolos Mohammed, creative director Sam Danan, and co-founder Mike Reesé. Los Angeles, CA. 30 August 2021.





DREAMHAUS studio. Los Angeles, CA.  
30 August 2021.



OPPOSITE AND ABOVE  
 Roundtable Discussion with DREAMHAUS and First Place  
 at A+P. 12 November 2021.



Roundtable Discussion with DREAMHAUS and First Place at A+P. 12 November 2021.

# A+P Scholars Program, Year Three

Art + Practice and First Place for Youth award scholarships to foster youth pursuing higher education and professional development opportunities.

At the core of First Place's program is an investment in the educational and employment needs of foster youth, especially young adults transitioning into independent living. With the support of First Place's team and program, the organization's young adults are empowered to focus on their educational pursuits and find a career that suits their individual interests.

To decrease any barriers that First Place's young adults might face, A+P funds a dedicated scholarship program. Established in 2019, the A+P Scholars program supports a minimum of \$100,000 worth of scholarships per year. First Place's young adults are invited to apply for funding that addresses any financial hardships that might prohibit them from staying enrolled in school or continuing with their job. To receive the funds, young adults participate in an

application process administered by First Place where they learn basic budgeting skills and how to create a financial plan. Applicants apply for grants based on their individual needs, and receive funds to help purchase school supplies, supplement transportation costs, cover the cost of child care, or reduce tuition costs.

The 2021 A+P Scholars are an exceptional group of young individuals whose interests range from health care to financial management to entrepreneurial pursuits. Our scholars are dedicated to creating opportunities that extend beyond their time at First Place. A+P is honored to introduce a select group of A+P Scholars in this year's catalogue. By celebrating their accomplishments, we welcome the next generation of leaders in South Los Angeles and beyond.



OPPOSITE  
A+P Scholar Daijah with her daughter. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 6 August 2021.



Daijah

This is my second year receiving funds from the A+P Scholars Program. My first scholarship helped cover tuition costs for a sociology and theory class that I took at Cal State, Bakersfield. My second scholarship helped pay for my nursing certificate.

I am aging out of First Place's program, and I need to pay my own bills. I am currently a caregiver, but with a nursing certificate I will be more competitive in the job market until I finish my 4-year degree.

Long term, I want to become an elementary school teacher. First Place has helped me identify my passion for teaching. I have a strategy for staying on track of my goals, but with my A+P Scholarship I have expanded my goals—I want more! The program has been a very positive experience, and it has given me the opportunity to explore a new career and take more classes.



Kevon

I work at Grid Alternatives, a nonprofit installer of clean energy technologies for low-income communities in Los Angeles. I live in Compton, and commute to work in Downtown LA. Recently, I've been learning about the safety precautions associated with my job. I really enjoy the work. I wake up every morning and think, "What am I going to learn next?"

I first became interested in pursuing a career in construction while I was incarcerated. During my time there, I participated in a mechanics program that changed my life. Now that I'm in

First Place, I want to expand my mechanics skills and learn electrical, roofing, and carpentry skills to start my own construction business.

With my scholarship funds, I bought a laptop. Most of my construction classes are taking place online. My old computer couldn't handle the software required as part of my program. With my new Chromebook, I can keep up with my peers and even learn new skills. (I recently became CPR certified.) I am really thankful for the computer, and all my new skills are helping to build my résumé.



Nikki

I heard about the A+P Scholars Program from my Youth Advocate, Stephanie. I applied and received funding that helped pay for school supplies, clothes for my job, and my transportation fees. I am currently pursuing a bachelor's degree at Long Beach Technical College, and plan to transfer to UCLA. First Place has played a big role in connecting me with educational resources.

Because I'm leaving First Place's program next month, I am looking for my own place. It's stressful, but I'm figuring it out. I'd like to apply for the scholarship again to help with some of these moving costs.



Shane

With my scholarship funds, I purchased a Mac-Book Pro laptop.

I am currently enrolled in a Certified Nursing Program that includes online classes. Prior to receiving my scholarship, I didn't have a computer that supported my studies. My new computer is everything I wanted and more. I am now thinking about furthering my technical skills. I would like to take a computer proficiency class.

As a nurse, I'd like to work with children with disabilities. My father was a registered nurse. I want to follow in his footsteps, and eventually transfer to a 4-year university.

I genuinely appreciate the financial support I received from the A+P Scholars Program. It's made a huge difference in the quality of my education.

# Changing the Narrative of Transition-age Foster Youth

A conversation with First Place for Youth about their plans to change the public narrative about transition-age foster youth and how effective storytelling supports First Place's young adults.

In 2021, funded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation, the FrameWorks Institute published *Shared Purpose, Shared Narrative: Building a common communications strategy for and with transition-age foster youth*, a report which explained why nonprofits that support foster youth should reframe their public narratives about adults exiting foster care. Suzanne Brown, First Place's former Executive Director for Southern California, shared the report with A+P when it was first published, which led to a conversation about how First Place communicates with its donors, partners, and community about transition-age foster youth.

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Sophia Belsheim, A+P's Deputy Director, was joined by Brown and other First Place leaders in the Southern California region including Jessica Castañeda, First Place's Social Worker Lead; Jamie Kugelberg, First Place's Vice President of Housing and Supportive Services; Brandi Sperry, First Place's Office and Development Administrator; and LaMont Walker, First Place's Regional Director of Programs.



Portrait of First Place's staff following an interview with A+P's Deputy Director Sophia Belsheim about changing the narrative of transition-age foster youth. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 12 August 2021.



First Place Youth Advocate Ruby with young adult Era. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 6 August 2021.

**Sophia Belsheim:** Tell us about the history of First Place LA and its decision to establish an office in LA County?

**Brandi Sperry:** First Place was founded in the Bay Area in 1998 to help foster youth who were aging out of the foster care system find housing. Later, we began adding education and employment services with the intention to scale our model across California and the US. Much of our work focuses on LA County, which has the largest concentration of foster youth in the country.

**Jamie Kugelberg:** Today, we work with about 200 young adults per year. Our program now provides housing, education, employment, and healthy living services to foster youth ages 18 to 24—the exact age when most young people are first experiencing independence.

**Sophia:** Why does the work matter, and what are First Place LA's values?

**Suzanne Brown:** The work matters because we support a hidden population that through no fault of their own have ended up in foster care. The foster care system has limited resources, and it cannot adequately support foster youth beginning their adult lives. Many of the transition-age foster youth we work with frequently changed schools or support systems throughout their childhood. These unplanned changes disrupt their education, and become even more disruptive when they turn 18 and are supposed to be ready for independent living.

First Place is set up to bridge that gap. We help transition-age foster youth build a life plan, identify their goals, and acquire the tools and resources they need to pay their rent while pursuing a career or continuing their education.

**Jamie:** In essence, we believe that more is possible for these young people when they have the right support. Because our programs and services are driven by data and analytics, we're usually



A+P meets with First Place young adult Alize at the First Place Compton housing site. 6 August 2021.



(left to right) First Place County Program Supervisor Kimberly and First Place young adult Alize at First Place's Compton housing site. 6 August 2021.

able to isolate where our foster youth are struggling in their transition and pivot to better meet their individual needs. We are always measuring our program outputs, and trying to better understand how we can improve our services and therefore the livelihood of our foster youth.

**LaMont Walker:** I would also add that one of our most important values is uplifting our young people's voices. Not only to help us to identify what they need most, but to teach them that advocating for themselves is a major part of becoming an adult.

**Sophia:** How do you communicate that work to donors or peers who may be unfamiliar with the experiences of transition-age foster youth?

**Brandi:** We start by asking them to think back to when they were 18. What support did they have in place when they graduated from high school? How did they transition from receiving financial

support from their family to living on their own? That transition is never easy, even for young people who come from stable homes. A lot of our young adults don't have any support when they turn 18, and then they are suddenly responsible for paying rent, getting a job to cover their bills, and otherwise supporting themselves—that is an objectively difficult and overwhelming situation to find oneself in.

From there, we use storytelling as a tool to communicate those challenges but also to remind everyone that our young adults do succeed in surmounting them when given adequate support. We let our foster youth showcase their journeys in their own words because only they can accurately demonstrate how transformative a little bit of help can be.

**Sophia:** What is First Place's strategy when helping transition-age foster youth?



A+P Scholar Shane meeting with First Place Youth Advocate Gina. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 6 August 2021.

**Suzanne:** Because we are always collecting data and information, gathering evidence of efficacy is baked right into our programs and services. We want to institute positive change beyond our programs and expand the opportunities available to foster youth across the country.

Recently, we released our research and policy brief, *Raising the Bar*.<sup>1</sup> The brief highlights the evidence we use to make policy recommendations and program suggestions, so that First Place and other providers can more effectively serve transition-age foster youth in customizable ways. Overall, the data indicates that we need to meet them where they are.

Our young adults come from all walks of life, all types of experiences. This means our analytics can help identify ways that transition-age foster youth—even those outside our program—can and should be served. Our primary goal is to get our young adults to earn a living wage. With adequate

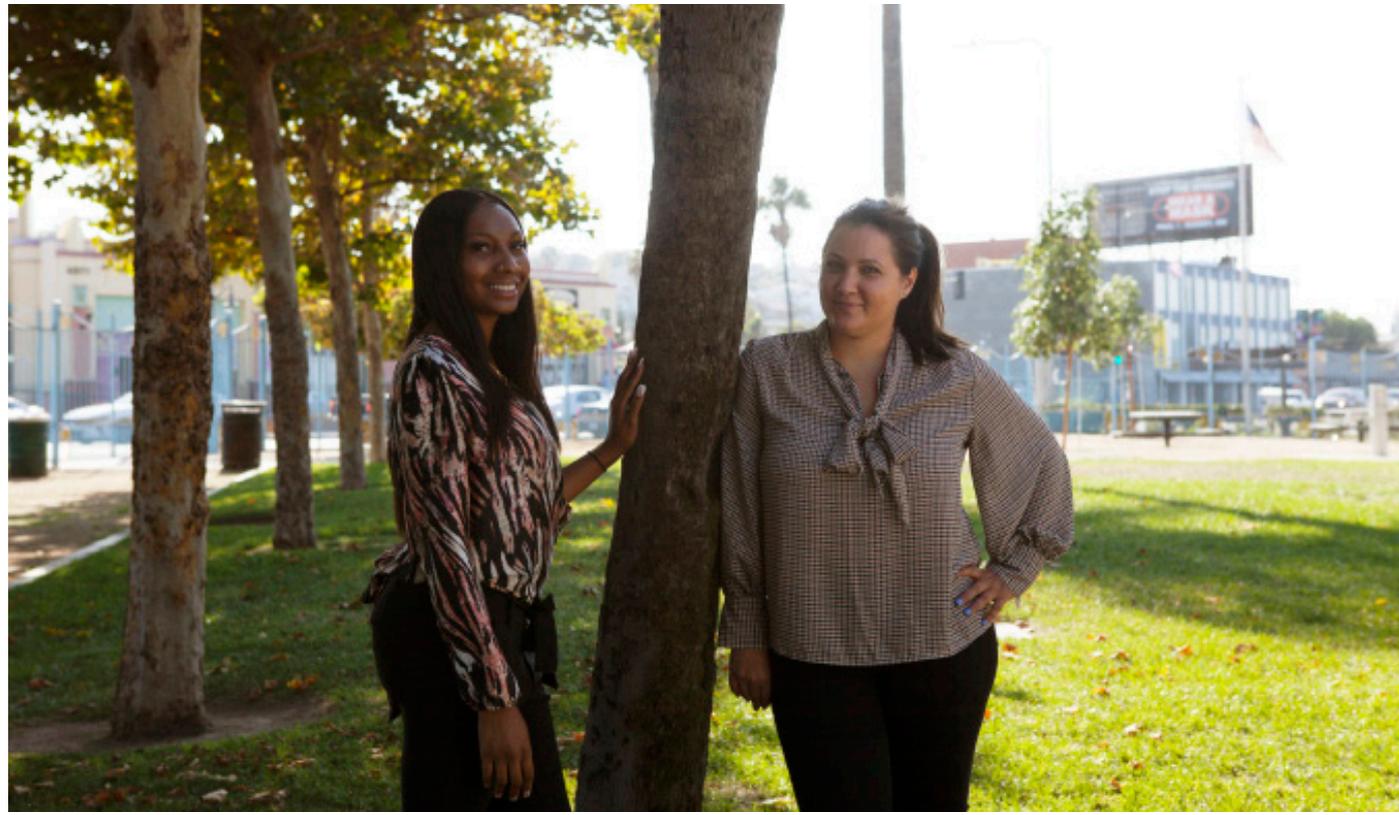
wages, they can move from extended foster care into self-sufficient adult lives.

**Jessica Castañeda:** Our teams also organize weekly workshops to address the issues that Suzanne just mentioned. These targeted workshops address our young adults' individual needs. We teach them financial literacy, household management skills, and how to build community.

**Sophia:** How has First Place LA's narrative evolved over the past 10 years?

**Brandi:** It took time to establish ourselves in Southern California, show that our model works, and build partnerships with other providers in the area. Now our focus has shifted to enhancing our services and programs for the young adults that we serve.

**Jamie:** Because we are the largest county-funded service provider for non-minor dependents in



(left to right) First Place alumna Danyell and First Place Clinical Program Manager Mariya. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 9 August 2021.

LA, we have a strong voice within the county and a sizable hand in regional policy development. We not only want to positively influence the young people that we house but also support all foster youth transitioning out of supportive care. At this point, we have the voice and reputation to be able to do that.

**Suzanne:** We want to be the best advocates for our young adults that we can be. They're not kids, they're adults. So we should be describing them as young adults who also happen to be transitioning out of foster care. This helps us draw awareness and empathy toward foster youth, but also reminds people that foster care isn't the end or the only aspect of their story. We also amplify that we're still here, doing our work because the population we serve is not going away.

**Sophia:** What are First Place's current priorities in telling the organization's story?

**Suzanne:** We're thinking about innovative ways to highlight our mission. Take our fall virtual gala event, a new endeavor for us. We want to expand our audience. We're trying to catch the attention

of our community by clarifying our message and raising awareness of our mission.

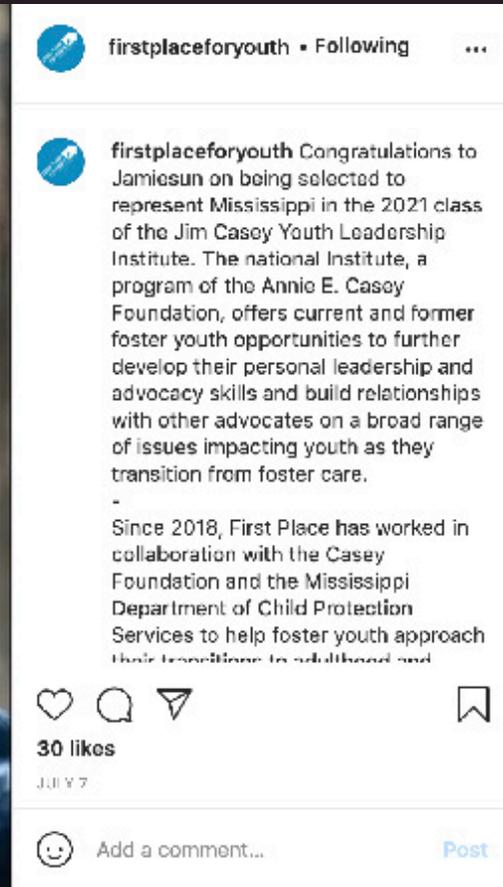
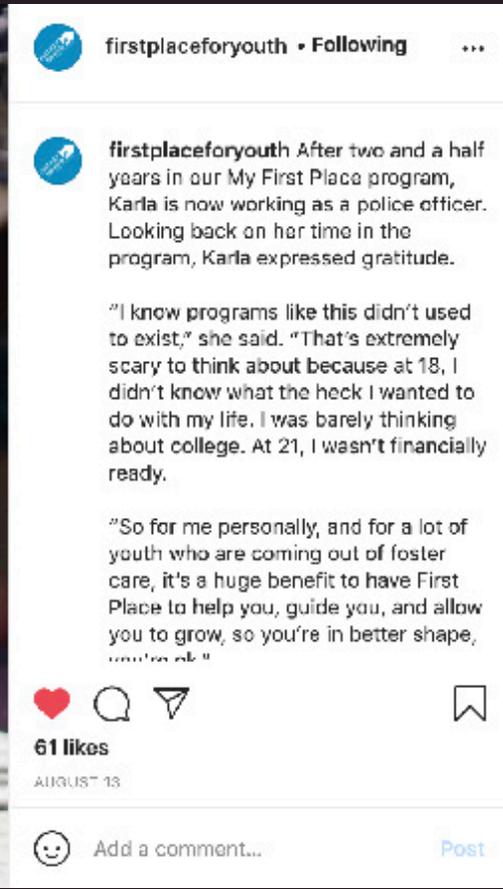
**Sophia:** How has First Place had to reframe its narrative around transition-age foster youth?

**Suzanne:** It's all about our young adults' voices. We seek to emphasize their needs and figure out ways to better serve them using their own perspectives. We ask for their input and adjust our programs in response to their feedback. It is vital to the success of our work.

**Brandi:** Also, as far as external communications, we incorporate young adults' stories into everything from our newsletter, to event programs and grant proposals. Each person experiences unique victories that we celebrate and share. During interviews, I tell them to be honest with me about their experiences in the program according to their level of comfort, explaining what they've accomplished, and how we've helped them to do that. I've also noticed we're getting better at celebrating a range of accomplishments for our young people.



First Place Compton housing site. 6 August 2021.



**Sophia:** How does this approach serve foster youth while they're transitioning into adulthood?

**LaMont:** Our youth-forward approach helps us build meaningful external partnerships with the organizations and businesses that we connect our young people to. We pride ourselves in cultivating relationships that align with our mission. Finding employment opportunities for our young adults not only supports their education and career pursuits, it also shows how individuals and businesses in the local community can get involved.

**Sophia:** What aspects of First Place's activities in LA are most challenging to describe to the outside world?

**Suzanne:** The lack of awareness about LA's foster youth population is a big challenge. I remember speaking to a potential donor, describing our need to surmount increased housing costs in LA. I had a hard time contextualizing the extent of our challenges. The donor prospect said, "Well, my son just got an apartment for \$2,300 a month, so I don't understand why it's challenging to find housing for your youth." What I gathered from that conversation is that they could not grasp the difference between their son, an individual who has significant family support, versus the many young adults who don't have the same support network.

In my role, it is important to contextualize the severity of the situation, clarifying the need and the reasons why our work is important. Sometimes it's hard to comprehend that severity, especially when you have no exposure to the system or experiences of our foster youth. That's the reason why we ask donors to imagine they're 18 but lack the support most of us did have at that age. This helps us contextualize what our young adults face every day while fostering empathy and acknowledging the significant challenges they incur.

**Jessica:** I would add that, with our partnerships, implementing a trauma-informed approach can also be a little difficult. It's hard to fathom the trauma that comes from losing your family

support then living in multiple foster placements or a group home. Businesses that hire our young adults are always excited to support our young people, but they frequently don't have the resources or training to address the complications that might arise during work hours. It is our job to have conversations with our young adults and prepare them for the workforce while also helping them navigate emotionally difficult, sometimes triggering parts of everyday life.

**Sophia:** What sort of tools do you guys use to communicate this narrative? Social media? Photography? Written narrative?

**Brandi:** Nothing beats having a direct conversation with a First Place team member or one of our young adults about the work that we do. Our communications are designed to run the gamut. They celebrate our youth while also introducing our programs and contextualizing high-level policy work.

In terms of the bigger picture, we want to get our foster youth's stories out into the world and deepen the common understanding of the vulnerable population we serve. For that reason, we break our work down to basics in one-pagers. We post content and updates to our social media channels. We craft newsletters for those who are unfamiliar with foster care and the situation in which these young people find themselves. We unpack how and why our programs—such as our "earn-and-learn" approach to apprenticeships—work. All this labor feeds into our larger communications strategy.

**Sophia:** What are First Place LA's future goals?

**Suzanne:** We want our young adults to talk about their accomplishments with their friends and contacts outside of First Place. We know that when we share their voices, we bolster our platform in the areas of policy, programs, and systems change—they are living proof of their own success. In short, we believe that our young adults are powerful, triumphant, and resilient. We want to use every available resource to make that message known, to make all foster youth visible.

**OPPOSITE**  
First Place's Instagram page.

# Celebrating Social Works: First Place for Youth's Virtual Gala

First Place organizes its inaugural virtual gala, honoring Art + Practice and United Airlines

Under the direction of Suzanne Brown, First Place's former Executive Director of Southern California region, the nonprofit organized a virtual gala to celebrate the achievements of its transition-age foster youth and honor its collaborators A+P and United Airlines. The inaugural event took place on October 21, 2021.

Over the course of a year, First Place and A+P worked together to conceptualize the gala. Together, they partnered with Polymode, a design studio founded by Silas Munro and Brian Johnson, to create the gala's graphic and visual identity. Expanding First Place's existing brand identity, Polymode designed a save-the-date invitation and produced digital art to promote the gala online.

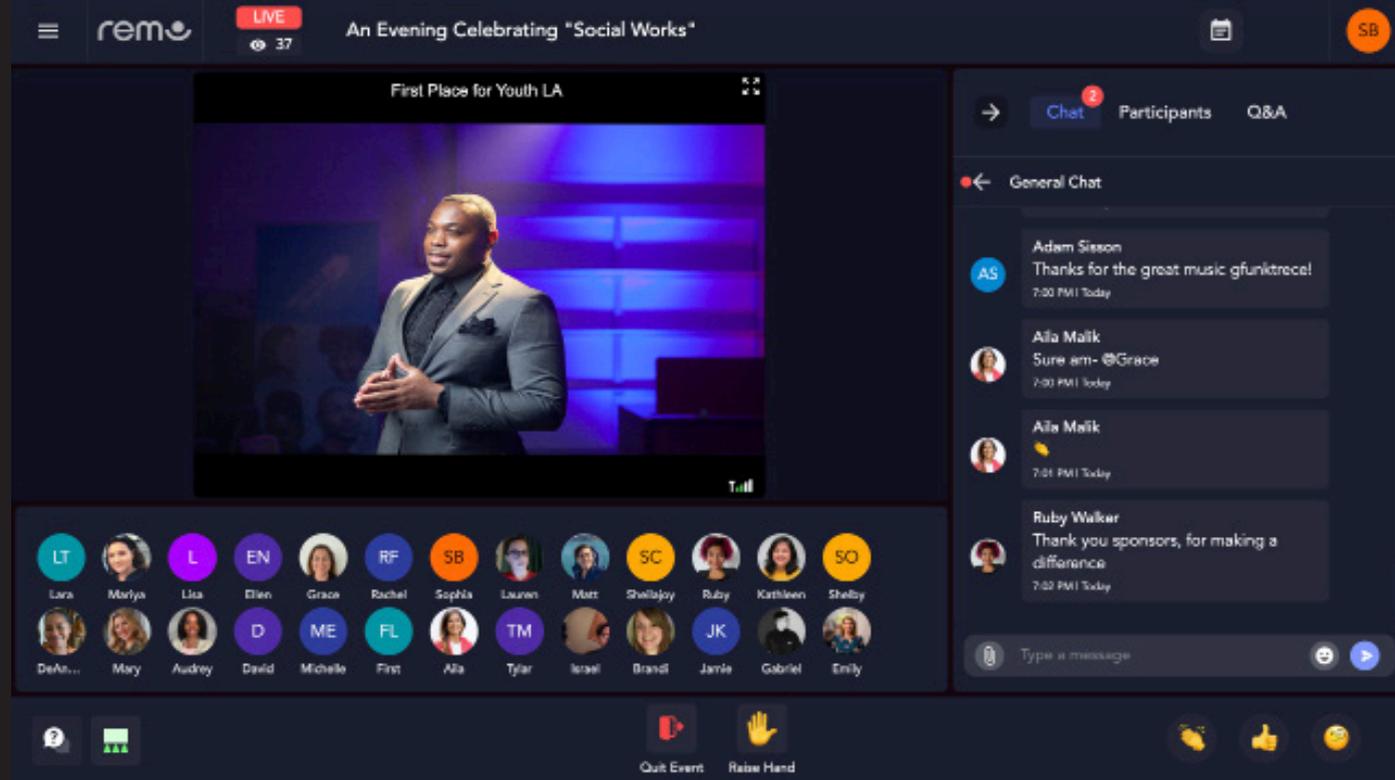
First Place organized the event with a live DJ to kick off and close the festivities. Yarbrough Studios' Brandon Yarbrough filmed the event, and organizations including Hauser & Wirth and JP Morgan Chase came on board as sponsors. The gala was a massive success, raising \$81,125 in support of First Place's foster youth.

[polymode.studio](http://polymode.studio)  
[yarbroughstudios.co](http://yarbroughstudios.co)

First Place's Regional Director of Programs LaMont Walker at the inaugural virtual gala. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 21 October 2021.



# Welcome



**LEFT**  
Behind the scenes at First Place's inaugural gala. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 21 October 2021.

**OPPOSITE**  
First Place young adult Era sings an original song at First Place's inaugural gala. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 21 October 2021.

Original  
Song by Era

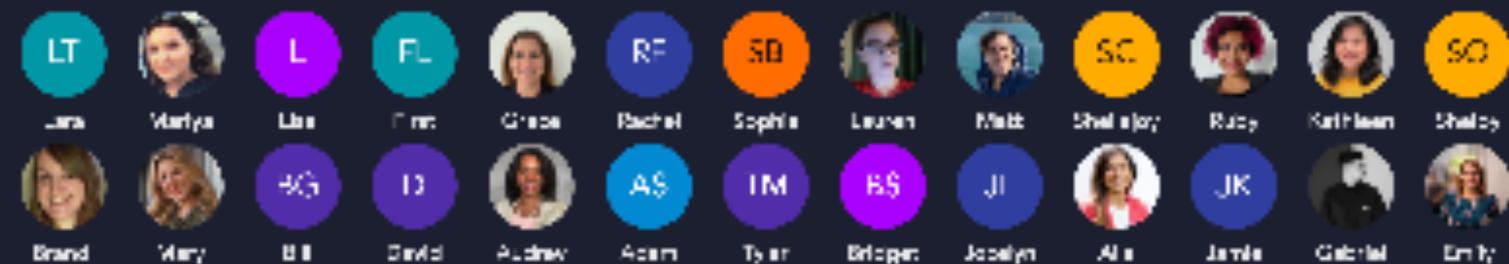
# Honoring First Place's Young Adults



# Honoring United Airlines



# Call to Action



ABOVE  
First Place honors United Airlines at First Place's inaugural virtual gala. 21 October 2021.



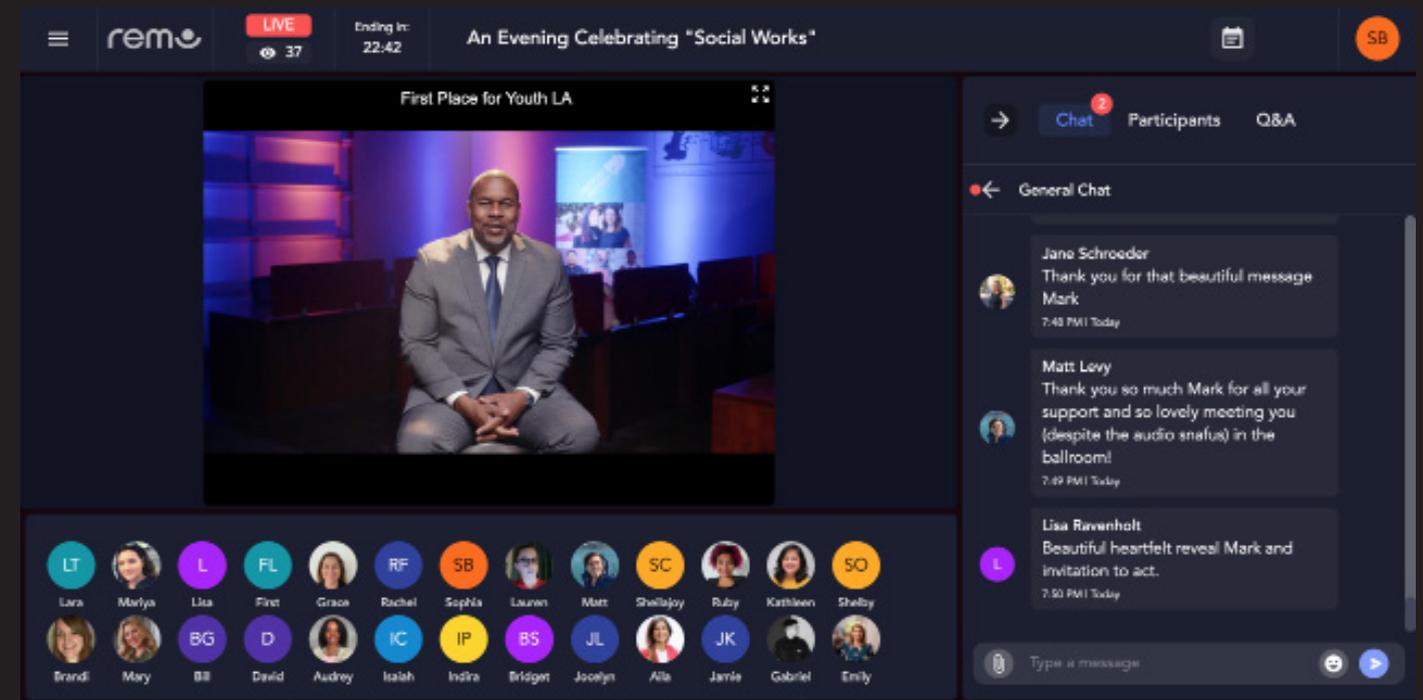
## Honoring Art + Practice



**TOP**  
First Place film shoot with Brandon Yarbrough and A+P co-founder Mark Bradford. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 19 August 2021.

**BOTTOM**  
First Place honors A+P at First Place's inaugural virtual gala. 21 October 2021.

## Introducing First Place's New CEO Thomas G. Lee



## A Closing Thank You

**TOP**  
First Place's CEO Thomas G. Lee introduces himself and thanks all for attending First Place's inaugural virtual gala. 21 October 2021.

**BOTTOM**  
Former First Place Executive Director for Southern California Region Suzanne Brown closes First Place's inaugural gala event with a thank you. 21 October 2021.

# Living History

THE VISION IS BEING REALIZED

Please excuse our dust.  
Renovation in progress.

Vision Theatre Information Contact:

(323) 290 - 2386 [dca.visiontheatre@lacity.org](mailto:dca.visiontheatre@lacity.org)



The Vision Theatre and Manchester Youth Arts Center Renovation Project is supported by Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Council President Herb J. Wesson, Jr., Council District 10  
Kevin James, President, City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works  
Gary Lee Moore, City Engineer, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering  
Charmaine Jefferson, President, Cultural Affairs Commission  
Danielle Brazell, General Manager, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs  
Concerned Community Members, like you!



WE LOVE LEIMERT PARK



MIKULASCH  
MURAL No. 1, 2010  
© MIKULASCH ART

# Nappily Naturals & Apothecary and NNaked

Nappily Naturals & Apothecary and NNaked founders Umaar Norwood and Sharon Williams-Norwood are invested in helping their community make healthy decisions. Their businesses seek to make the world a better place by emphasizing a holistic and organic approach to beauty, medicine, and nutrition.

Nappily Naturals & Apothecary is a holistic space that serves the mind, body, and soul. Founded in 2018 by husband-and-wife duo Umaar Norwood and Sharon Williams-Norwood, Nappily Naturals provides South Los Angeles residents access to holistic medicine and a natural approach to beauty and wellness. Their positivity-first approach is welcomed with open arms in Leimert Park, a community that proudly embodies an African consciousness and is dedicated to celebrating African American culture and identity.

Nappily Naturals sits squarely in the heart of Leimert Park on Degnan Boulevard. Walking into the store, you are greeted by a staff of dedicated naturalists with generations worth of experience working with natural products. Using organic, vegan, and plant-based ingredients, Umaar and Sharon have created an array of beauty, home, and health goods such as lotions, shampoos, herbal teas, and other natural medicines. Throughout the store, displays encourage customers to learn about the ingredients found in their products and how those products can naturally address their individual self-care needs. The store has also expanded to include products created by their talented staff, who, through their work and training at Nappily Naturals, are pursuing careers as apothecaries and herbalists.

In 2020, Nappily Naturals expanded its store, building out the adjacent storefront and establishing their second venture, NNaked. NNaked is a zero-waste refill store that carries home goods, bulk dry goods such as spices and seasonings, as well as oils, vinegars, and syrups. To reduce waste, customers are asked to bring their own containers, so there is no need to throw away any recycled plastic or landfill-destined paper bags. Umaar and Sharon are deeply committed to reducing their carbon footprint. They hope that NNaked can be a model for other stores seeking to distribute goods to their customers in environmentally conscious ways.

Umaar and Sharon's dedicated work at Nappily Naturals and NNaked reflect a lifestyle that welcomes all to participate. As the dedicated leaders of a holistic movement in Leimert Park, they hope to represent the change they wish to see in their community. They are also looking to further expand their business. Maybe a third store? Or a retreat program, out in nature, for their customers to further immerse themselves in Nappily Naturals' philosophy and approach to healthy living? Umaar and Sharon want their community to unplug from technology, get back to the earth, and center themselves in a space that is welcoming, caring, and kind for the whole body, mind, and soul.



PAGES 43-47  
Nappily Naturals & Apothecary and NNaked in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 9 August 2021.

Nappily Naturals & Apothecary  
4342 Degnan Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90008  
nappilynaturals.com

NNaked  
4340 Degnan Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90008

Let Thy Food Be Thy Medicine & Medicine Be Thy Food  
Imhotep





# Universal College of Beauty

Art + Practice sat down with Universal College of Beauty owner Kenneth Williams to learn about the school's nearly 100-year history and its dedication to training its students.

Universal College of Beauty is a family business. Founded in 1929 as the Henrietta Beauty School by Hazel Dell Williams, the school was the first cosmetology school to serve African Americans west of the Mississippi River, and was founded to be an institution where all people—no matter their race or creed—could train and learn the trade of hair care. The school is currently run by Kenneth Williams and his daughter Jasmine Williams. Kenneth is the third generation to run Universal College of Beauty, and when Jasmine takes over, she will continue the family's legacy as the family's fourth generation to run the school.

Universal College of Beauty was born out of the vision of African American entrepreneur, philanthropist, and social activist Madam CJ Walker, who made her fortune producing a line of hair care products designed for Black women. During the 1920s, Hazel moved to the West Coast and established herself in Los Angeles. She tried to enroll in a local beauty college, but she was denied entry because of the color of skin. However, at the time, she had two white girlfriends who attended the school. She shadowed her friends and used their textbooks to teach herself how to do hair. When it came time for her white friends to become certified and take their licensing tests, Hazel went with them to the test boards. Initially she was turned away, but that didn't stop her. She insisted that they allow her to take the test. When she did, she received the highest score

on the test at the time. Soon after, she opened her own beauty college in Downtown Los Angeles.

In May of 1988, nearly a half-century later, Universal College of Beauty established its current space in Leimert Park. Today, Universal College of Beauty trains its students in all aspects of hair care—from hair growth to hair absorption to hair color and beyond. All students are prepared to graduate the 16-month program, become licensed, and obtain employment shortly following their exams. Students are also eligible for the school's scholarship program, which provides work study opportunities to help them pay off their school debt and get hands-on experience in the process. Many students who have graduated from the program have gone on to open their own hair salons and start their own schools.

What's next for Universal College of Beauty? The school is about to reopen its doors in early 2022 with a state-of-the-art facility on West 43rd Place in Leimert Park. Kenneth and Jasmine are overseeing the construction of their new school with their students in mind. Students will have the opportunity to receive advanced training through dedicated course study. Universal College of Beauty is also nearing its 100th anniversary. The Williams family is dedicated to helping their students become the best that they can be, and will be around for another 100 years to train many future generations of hair stylists for years to come.

## OPPOSITE TOP

Exterior view of Universal College of Beauty during renovations. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 29 October 2021.

## OPPOSITE BOTTOM

Tour with Universal College of Beauty owners, father Kenneth Williams and daughter Jasmine Williams. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 29 October 2021.

Universal College of Beauty  
3419 W. 43rd Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90008  
[universalcollegeofbeauty.com](http://universalcollegeofbeauty.com)





Family photos and emphemera from the founders of Universal College of Beauty, dating back as far as 1910. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 29 October 2021.



Hazel Dell Williams in front of Universal College of Beauty. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. Courtesy of Universal College of Beauty.



Owner of Universal College of Beauty Kenneth Williams shares the school's ephemera dating back as far as 1910. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 29 October 2021.



**ABOVE**  
Owner of Universal College of Beauty Kenneth Williams in the school's supply closet housing cosmetology text books from almost a century ago. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 29 October 2021.

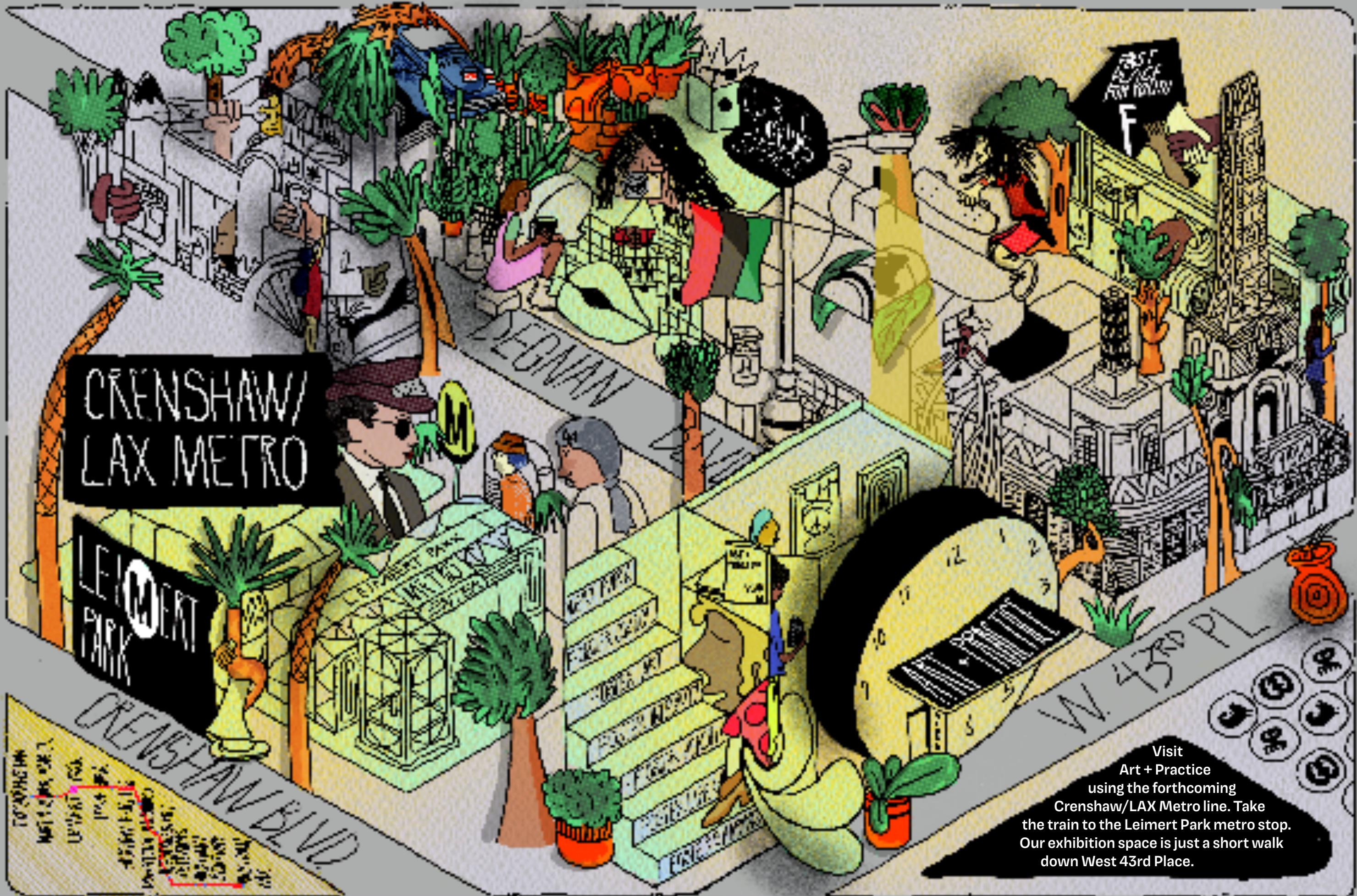
**BOTTOM**  
Vintage Beauty Tools from Universal College of Beauty.



TOP  
Universal College of Beauty students caring for the community by providing free services. Courtesy of Universal College of Beauty.

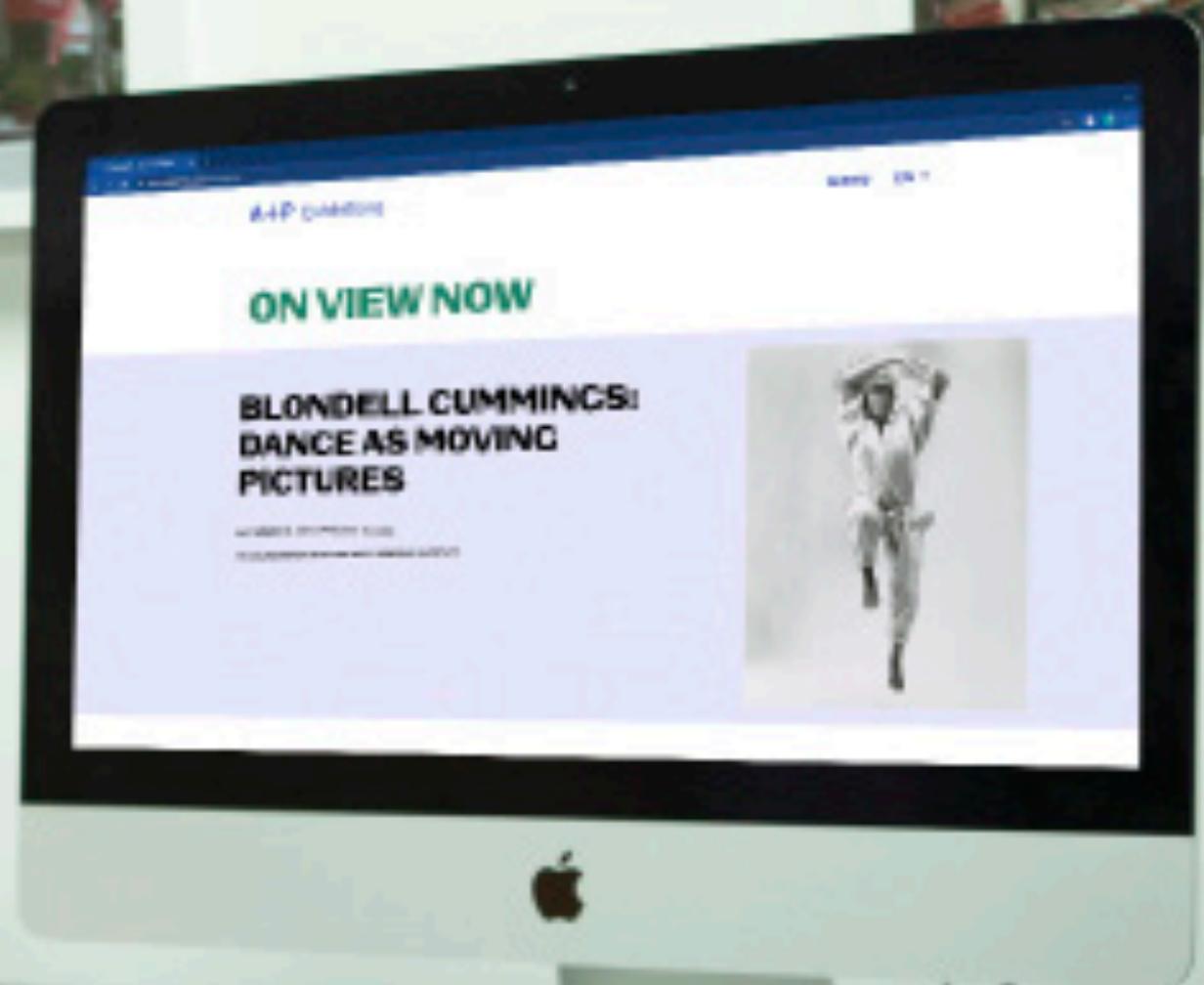
BOTTOM  
Universal College of Beauty students graduate with their cosmetology licenses. Courtesy of Universal College of Beauty.

Universal College of Beauty student and a satisfied client after performing a service. Courtesy of Universal College of Beauty.



Visit  
Art + Practice  
using the forthcoming  
Crenshaw/LAX Metro line. Take  
the train to the Leimert Park metro stop.  
Our exhibition space is just a short walk  
down West 43rd Place.

# Identity and Design

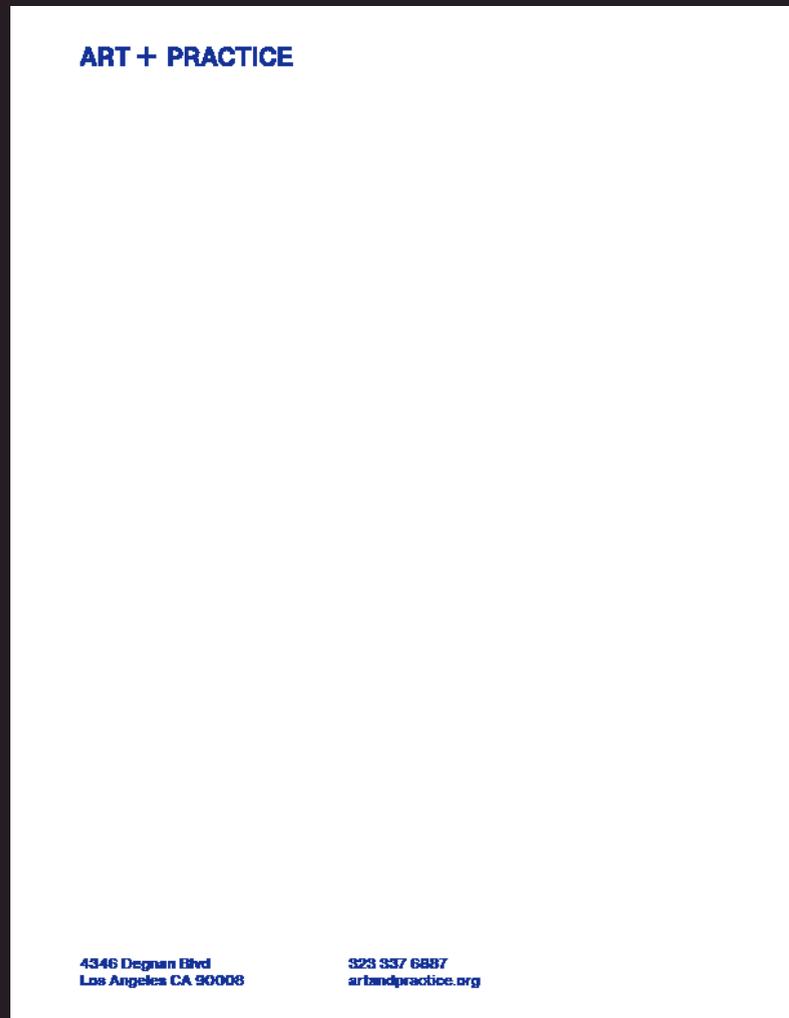


# An Evolution of Our Identity

Following the launch of Art + Practice’s new website, we explore our brand identity from 2013–2021, considering the three iterations of our digital presence.

A+P’s brand identity grew out of co-founder Mark Bradford’s studio. Initially, the idea was to create a clean, legible logo using Helvetica Neue as the typeface.<sup>1</sup> The logo would feature an art historical reference: the color Yves Klein Blue.<sup>2</sup>

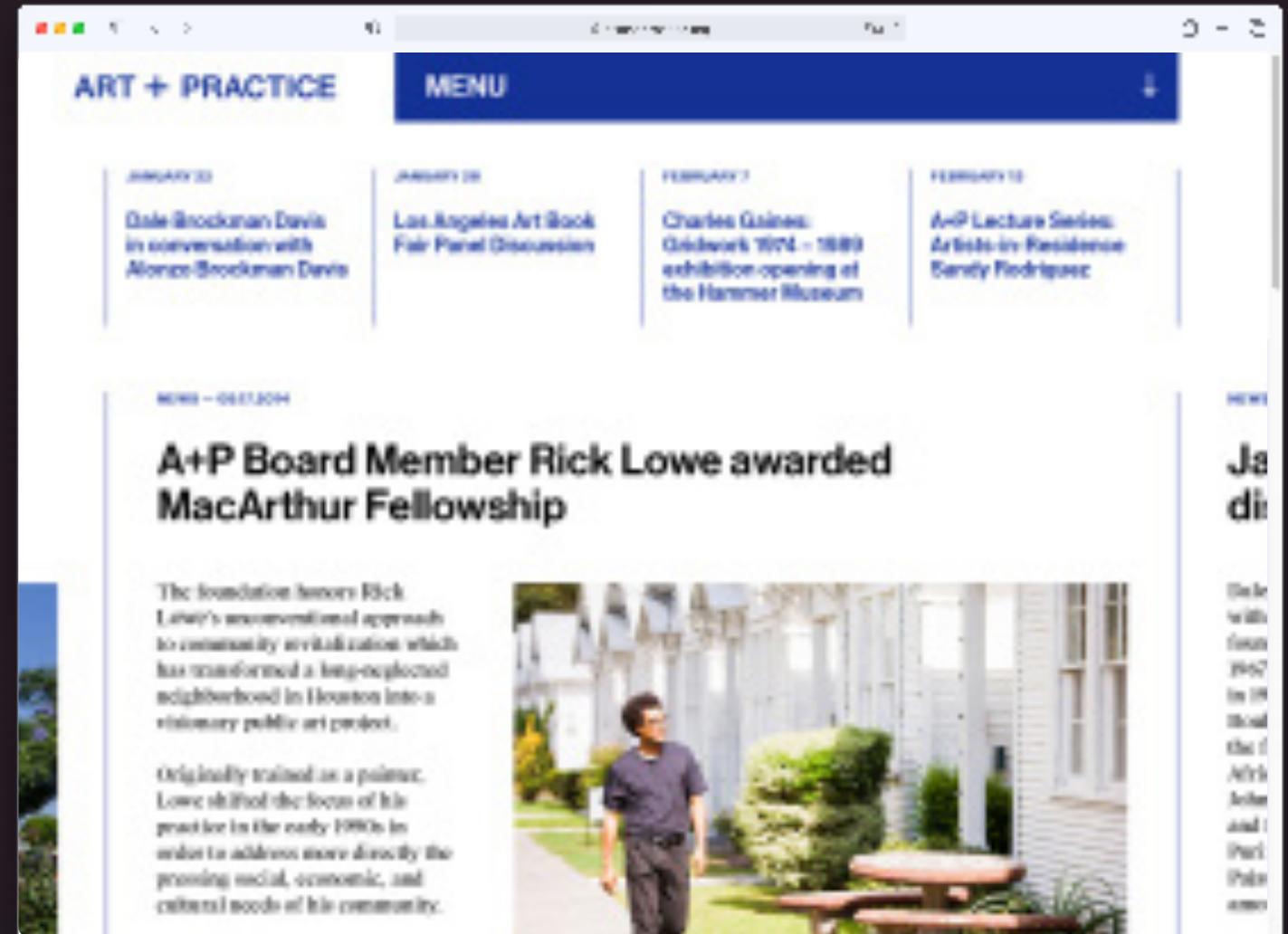
But as A+P developed its identity, Bradford and the other founders, Allan DiCastro and Eileen Harris Norton, were in conversation with various organizations and colleagues who helped guide the logo’s presentation and look.



**LEFT AND ABOVE**  
A+P letterhead and sample business card. 2014–2016.

1. A typeface is designed lettering that includes different variations in the size, width, and slope of that lettering. Each variation of a typeface is called a font. Example: Helvetica Neue is the typeface, while Helvetica Neue Light is a font.

2. International Yves Klein Blue is a color developed by conceptual artist Yves Klein, in collaboration with Edouard Adam, in 1960. The color, which uses a matte, synthetic resin binder to suspend the color so the pigment maintains its original intensity, was patented IKB. [wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Klein\\_Blue](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Klein_Blue)



Homepage of A+P’s website. 2014–2016.

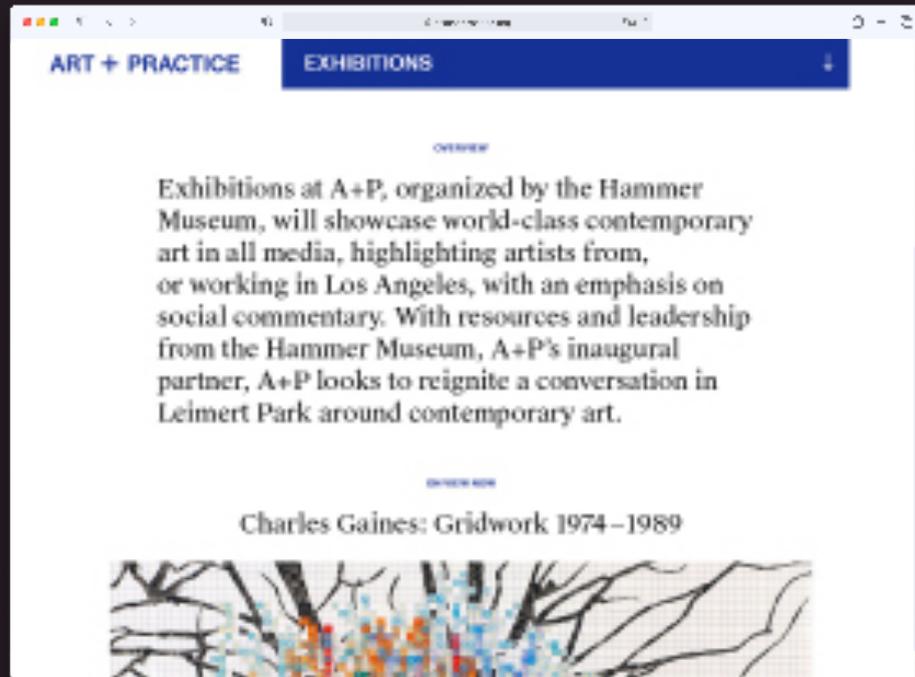
## FIRST ITERATION: A+P 1.0 (2014–2016)

A+P’s first website was designed by Common Name, a New York-based graphic design studio. The website had a bold design and its visual aesthetic was at the forefront of its presentation. During that time, A+P didn’t have many images or data visualizations available, so we had to rely

almost solely on written content to fill the site. What we learned from this iteration of our website was that A+P wanted its identity to act more as a container for our content than as a statement of our mission. We also wanted our design to be as unbiased as possible, considering our approach as *design* with a lowercase “d”.

Helvetica Neue Thin  
Helvetica Neue Light  
Helvetica Neue Regular  
Helvetica Neue Medium  
Helvetica Neue Bold

Developed in 1957 by Swiss typeface designer Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann, Helvetica (also known as Neue Haas Grotesk) is a sans-serif typeface. It was influenced by the 19th century typeface Akzidenz-Grotesk as well as other German and Swiss designs. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Helvetica](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Helvetica)



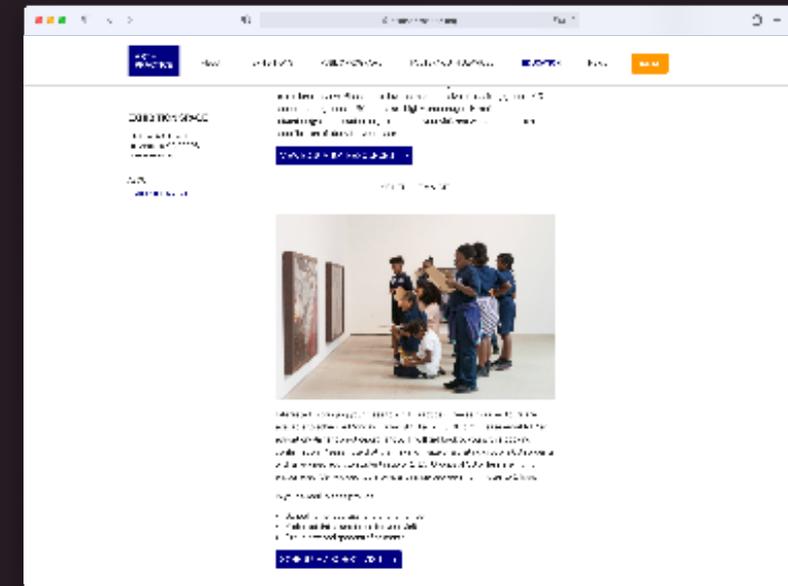
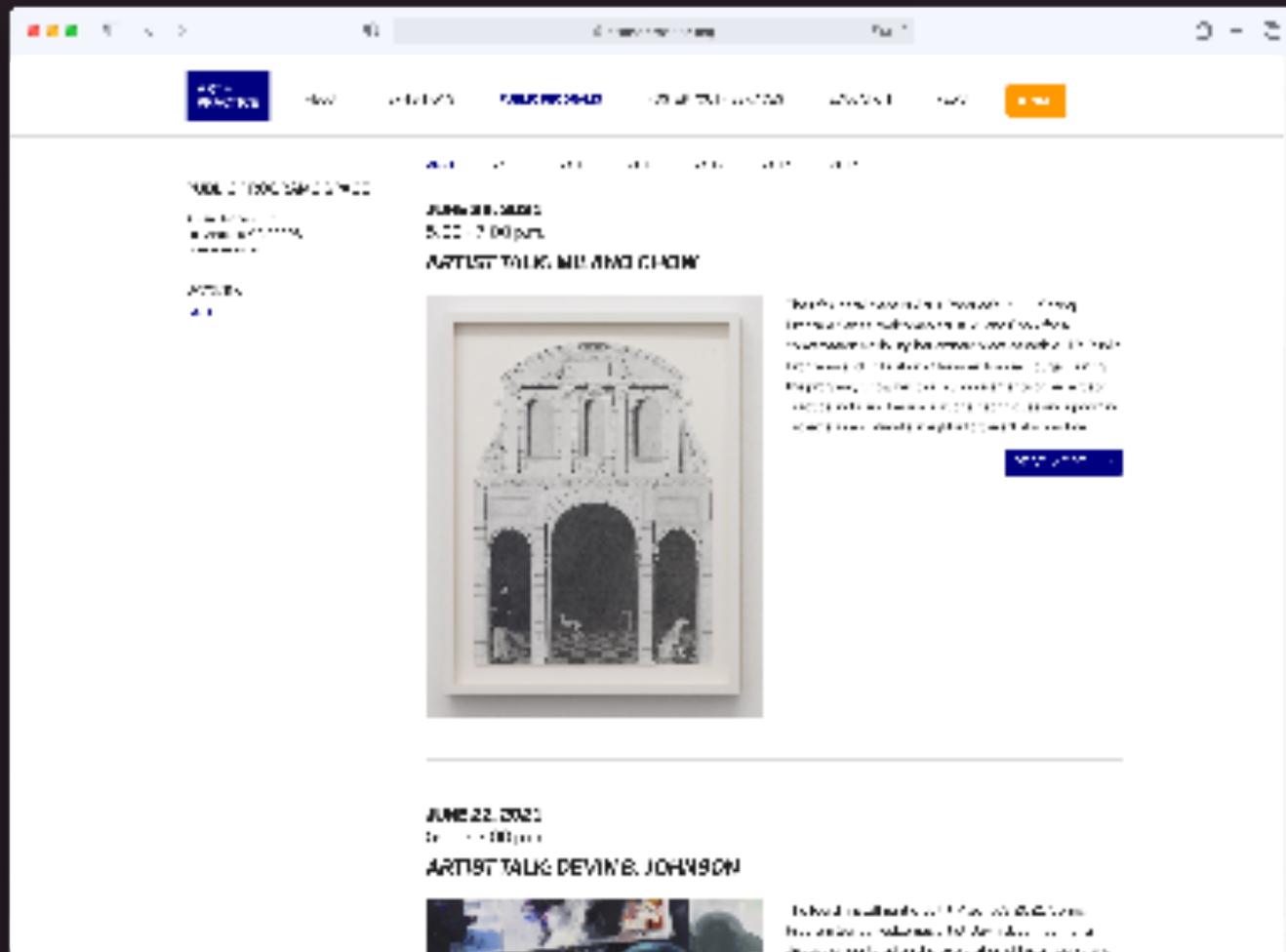
**SECOND ITERATION: A+P 2.0 (2016-2020)**

For the second iteration of our website, A+P went inward. Instead of working with an outside design team, we felt it was important to develop the design in-house, so we could better formulate our identity and understand its visual representation.

We wanted our website to invite our community in Leimert Park and beyond to participate

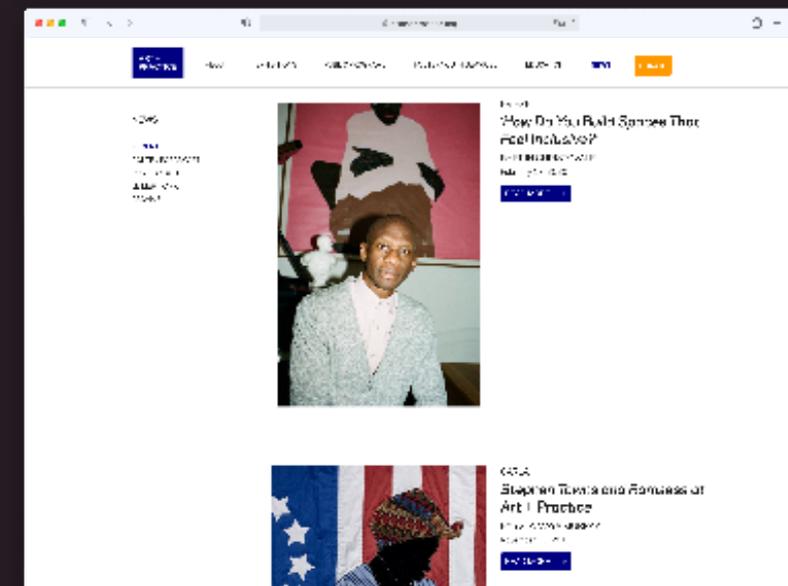
in our exhibitions and public programming while making information about our foster youth initiatives with First Place for Youth and similar collaborations available online.

At this point, A+P was in Year 3 of its operations. We had more images to communicate our vision than in Year 1, knew that our logo played well with others, and further understood the purpose of our work in Leimert Park.



**OPPOSITE TOP**  
Exhibition page on A+P's website. 2014-2016.

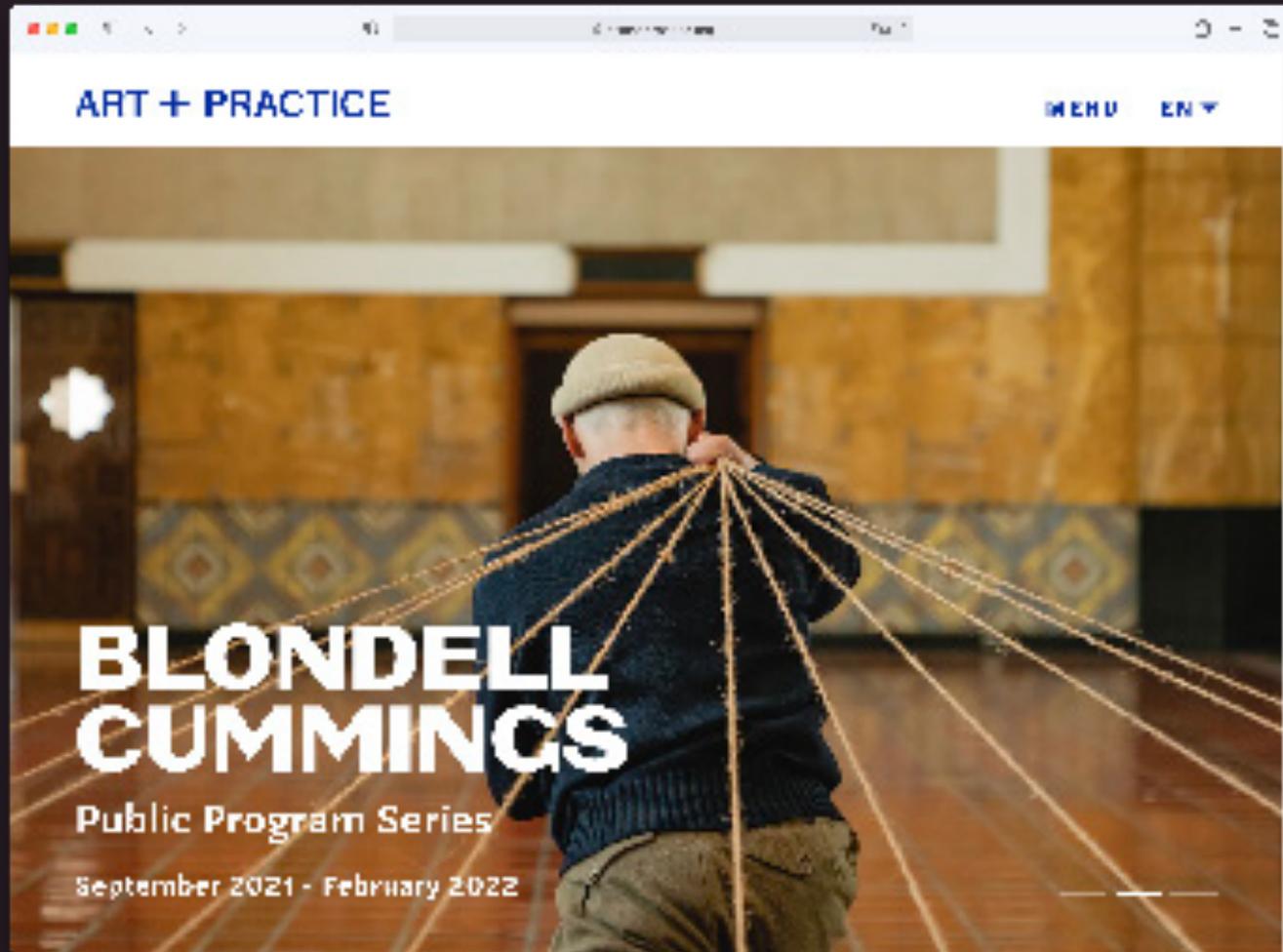
**OPPOSITE BOTTOM AND LEFT**  
Program pages on A+P's website. 2016-2021.



**THIRD ITERATION: A+P 3.0 (2021–ONWARDS)**

Now in Year 8, we are moving towards a more image-based identity. We have a robust backend system to share our content and manage our archive. We also now have a clear mindset about what designs work in relation to our brand identity and the identities of our collaborators.

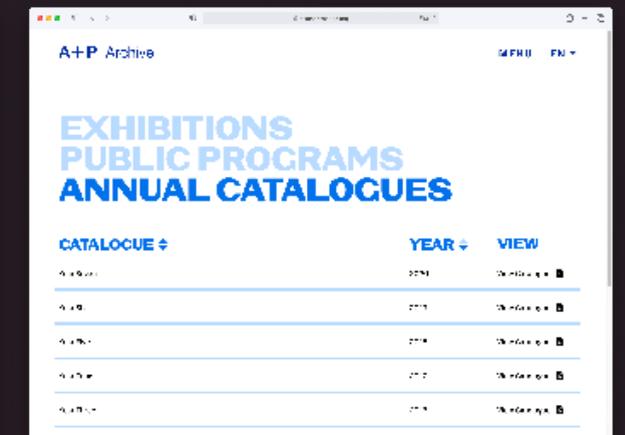
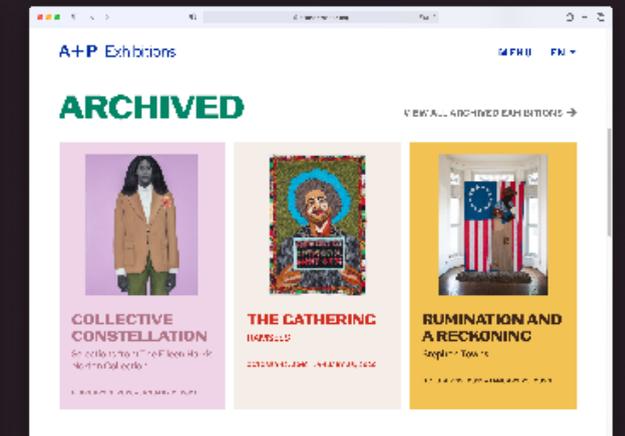
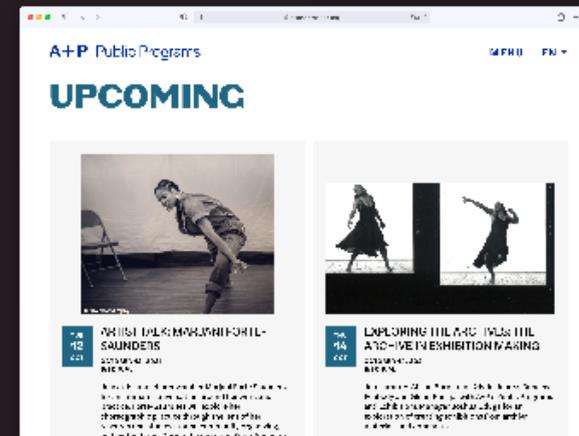
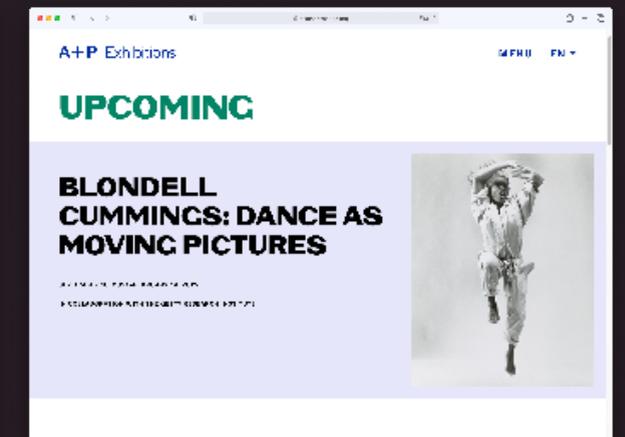
It's important for us to remain flexible, learn from our collaborations, and maintain a clear sense of self. In partnership with Kudos Design Collaboratory™ and Miko McGinty, Inc., our new website's design has evolved back to our original intent, but with a new twist that satisfies our current needs—keeping it simple and unbiased while letting informative content speak for itself.



Homepage of A+P's website. 2021.

Kudos Design Collaboratory™ is design agency that collaborates with forward-thinking brands, institutions, and creative agencies to create great branding, websites, apps, data visualizations, editorial design, packaging, motion graphics, exhibitions, and site-specific interactive installation in the U.S. and abroad. [kudos.nyc](http://kudos.nyc)

Miko McGinty, Inc. is a graphic design firm working with artists, museums, and publishers to design art books, identities, exhibition graphics and catalogues, print ephemera and more. [mikomcginty.com](http://mikomcginty.com)



Program pages on A+P's website. 2021.

# MARSHA

Marsha is a typeface named after transgender and gay liberation activist Marsha P. Johnson (August 24, 1945–July 6, 1992). The typeface is inspired by the sign that once hung outside the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Lower Manhattan, New York City—site of the historic 1969 riots that launched the gay rights movement in the United States.

Miss Johnson was among the protesters who rallied crowds after the police raided the bar in 1969. She also helped found the Gay Liberation Front, a human rights movement that sought to fight discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, and the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries

(S.T.A.R.), a radical political collective that provided housing and support for homeless LGBTQ+ youth in Lower Manhattan.

Miss Johnson embodied everything the “P” in her middle initial stood for: “pay it no mind,” her life’s motto. She is remembered for her drag performances and her tireless work protesting police brutality and discrimination.

Designed by Tré Seals, founder of Studio Seals and Vocal Type Co., Marsha typeface is the header font for A+P’s new website.

[vocaltype.co/history-of/marsha](http://vocaltype.co/history-of/marsha)

ABCDEF  
GHIJKL  
MNOPQ  
RSTU  
VWXYZ

**OPPOSITE**  
Kady Vandeurs and Marsha P. Johnson at gay rights rally at City Hall. 1973. Photo by Diana Davies, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.





**Art on at A+P**

# Don't go wide, go deep

A conversation with Cameron Shaw,  
Mark Bradford and Sarah Elizabeth Lewis

Starting in 2022, the California African American Museum and Art + Practice will launch a five-year collaboration. As part of their partnership, CAAM will take up residency at A+P, organize shows in A+P's Leimert Park exhibition space, and develop a hub to incubate new programming. In return, A+P will dedicate financial and staff resources to CAAM, a 40-year-old, Black institution that continues to reinvent itself, in support of the museum's residency in Leimert Park.

In the wake of the many reckonings that have happened in the art world—particularly demands for reimagined diversity, equity, and inclusion—CAAM Executive Director Cameron Shaw, A+P co-founder Mark Bradford, and Harvard Associate Professor of African and African American Studies and History of Art and Architecture Sarah Elizabeth Lewis sat down to discuss the impact of this historical moment for Black institutions. During that conversation, they explored why it's important for Black nonprofits and Black museums to collaborate when advocating for their shared community.

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

## OPPOSITE

(left to right) A+P co-founder Mark Bradford and CAAM Executive Director Cameron Shaw. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 12 October 2021.

**Sarah Elizabeth Lewis:** There's a deliberate grounding to this partnership. It reflects the legacy and role of historically Black institutions in the art world over the last century. It also gestures toward how CAAM and A+P can use their combined legacies to shape the future. Can you elaborate on how it is distinct from other CAAM and A+P collaborations?

**Mark Bradford:** A+P typically works with museums on one show per collaboration. But when we first launched, we held collaborations with the Hammer Museum for a two-year term—from 2014 to 2016. Since then, I've wanted to recreate that model by spending more time getting to know a collaborating museum, developing a relationship, finding shared interests, and identifying what we can learn from each other. I realize that it takes more than two years to establish that type of relationship, so I wanted to give CAAM our exhibition space for five years to organize groundbreaking shows.

**Cameron Shaw:** For me, it comes down to an issue of depth, especially as many historically white-centered institutions talk about what it





CAAM Ribbon Cutting, 1984.  
Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the  
California African American Museum.

means to now center Black, Indigenous, and POC artists. CAAM has been doing that work since our founding in 1977. By deepening our relationship with A+P, we're modeling ways of intentionally supporting Black institutional space and providing much-needed context for understanding and valuing the work of Black artists.

I've often heard it said in activist communities, "don't go wide, go deep." Now is the time to create deep trust, which is built slowly over time, and to focus on the deep exploration of ideas. That's where I believe we'll find our greatest sense of possibility.

**Sarah:** In our first conversation, Cameron, you described being primarily focused on what you called "cathedral time." During that talk, you discussed CAAM's mission and planning for the museum over a longer time horizon, to prompt more impactful, reflective consideration and planning. If you were to look back, even decades from now, what would you want this collaboration with A+P to signal for the art world, and the surrounding community? And, Mark, what would you want it to signal about your legacy and practice?

**Cameron:** I frequently look at a photograph from CAAM's ribbon-cutting ceremony in 1984. I do it to remind myself that our role in 2021 is to be as radical and audacious as our founders were when they imagined CAAM should exist and decided to make it a reality. I want to identify how we can build on the decades of work that has happened at the museum, using that work as both a blueprint and as a jumping-off point for greater experimentation.

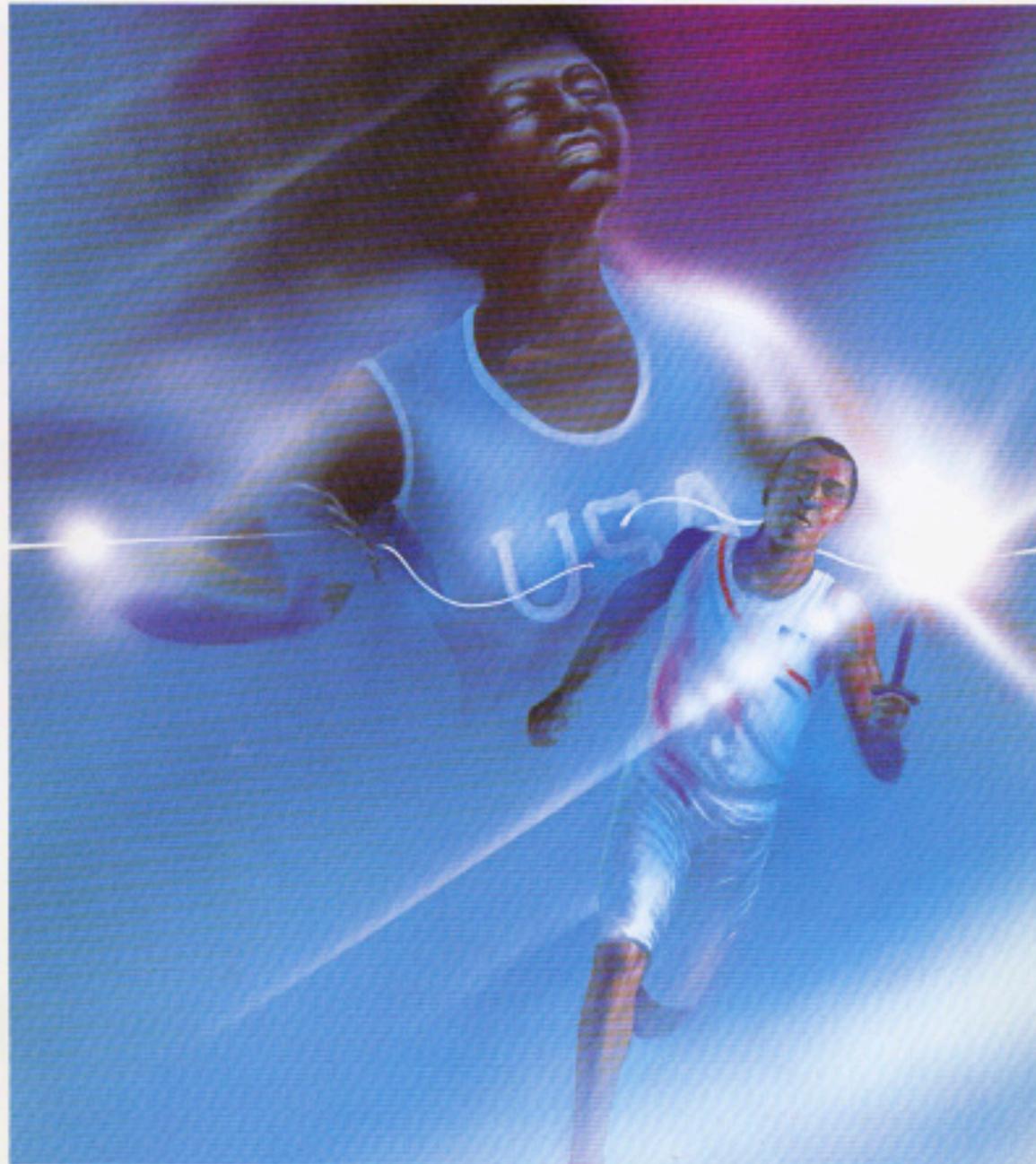
**Mark:** I feel the same. I want our collaboration to be radical, experimental, and cutting-edge. I'm not worried about it being called Black art. If it's Black folks making it in a Black place, then it's Black art. What I hope happens is that we see the depths of Black creativity. It doesn't always have to sit comfortably with everyone. But at minimum, we have to give it the respect it deserves. It's about Black plurality from within.

Opening of *The Black Olympians: 1904–1984* at the California African American Museum in 1984. Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy the Smithsonian Institution Archive. Image #SIA2020-005345.



# THE BLACK OLYMPIANS

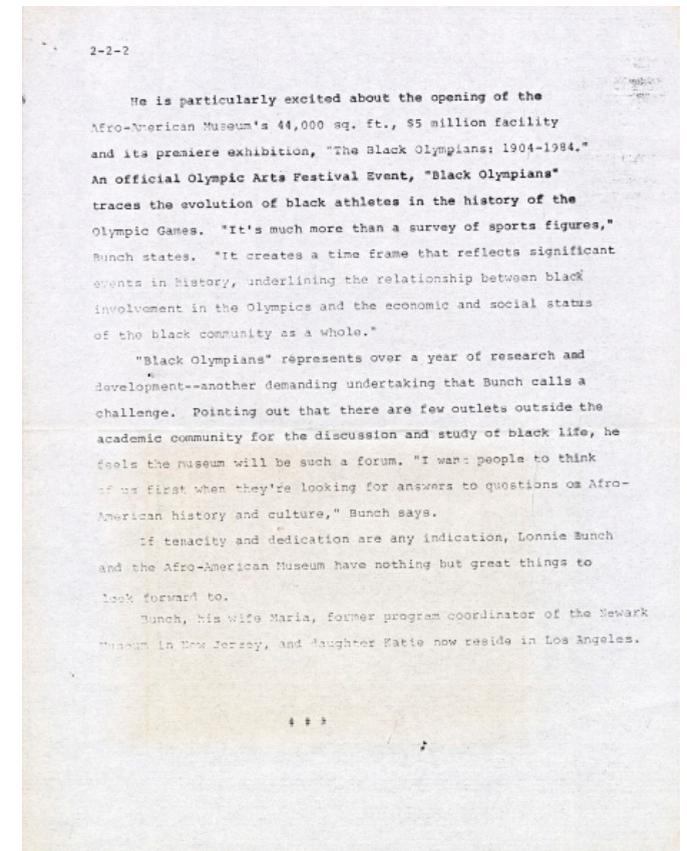
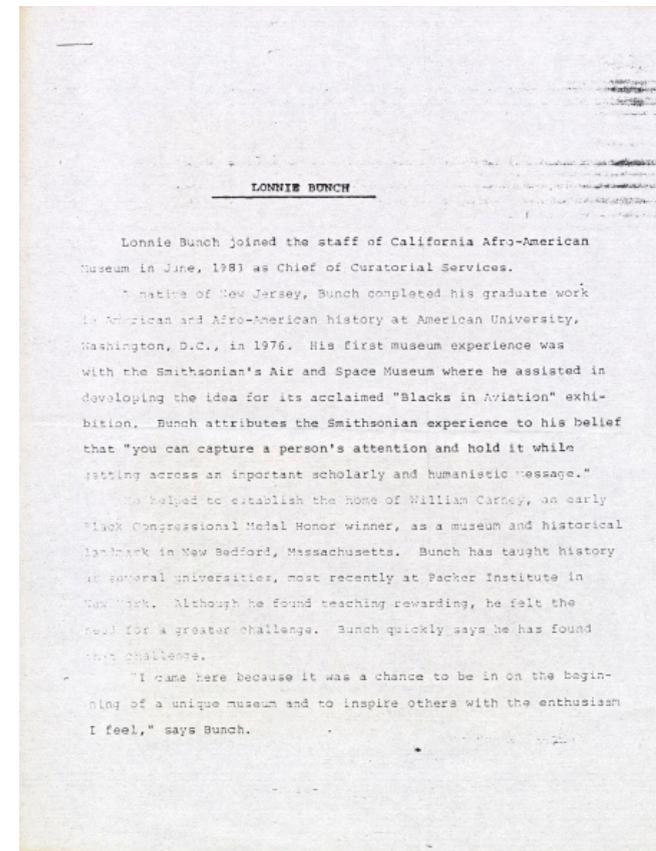
1904 · 1984



JULY 22, 1984 · JANUARY 15, 1985

CALIFORNIA AFRO-AMERICAN MUSEUM

Exhibition catalogue for the California African American Museum's exhibition *The Black Olympians: 1904-1984*. Courtesy the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Images #SIA2020-005344



Press release for the opening of the California African American Museum and its exhibition *The Black Olympians: 1904-1984*. Courtesy the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #SIA2020-005342, 43.

**Sarah:** I also want to salute what happened in 1984 at CAAM. In July of that year, the first exhibition was curated by Lonnie Bunch, now Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and previously the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. That show, *The Black Olympians 1904-1984*, was timed with the Olympics held in Los Angeles that year. For me, it is one example of the kind of nimble, powerful work I imagine only CAAM would've done in that moment. It also signals the kind of intellectualism and thought leadership that comes out of a space like CAAM.

**Mark:** It's important to remind people that the founders of CAAM were radical. They represent some of the firsts.

**Cameron:** We're coming up on the 50th anniversary of CAAM's charter in 2027. In 2028, the Olympics will return to Los Angeles and Exposition Park. It is a moment to reflect and say, "This is

where we've been, this is where we are now, and this is where we are hoping to go," while inviting an even wider audience into that conversation with us.

It's a critical moment for CAAM to tell its own history from the perspective of the folks who have built the institution alongside collaborators, like A+P, who are helping establish the course of the museum's future.

**Sarah:** With that on the table, are there ways that you envision A+P and CAAM's collaboration serving as a model for other BIPOC institutions and philanthropists?

**Mark:** I ground my actions, like everything that I think about, from an artist's perspective. I never think of myself as a philanthropist. But through this collaboration, I wish to encourage people of color, however they enter this conversation, to be present, make space for yourself, and to show love and support.



Exterior view of California African American Museum.

**Cameron:** Mark, along with A+P co-founders Allan DiCastro and Eileen Harris Norton, you are offering a powerful form of support through the unique decision to invite CAAM to A+P's campus and finance those efforts. This act grounds two institutions, founded by people of color, to collaborate in the production and celebration of Black life.

The role that Mark is playing as an artist, by conducting resources to CAAM, is an opportunity to show folks what it means to leverage Black wealth, to commit to Black community, and to invest in Black institutions. That piece, to me,

matters greatly. But it's not just about how to strategically leverage financial resources. Money isn't the only resource that we're talking about. There are also the resources of time and attention.

We live in a world that is flooded with content competing for people's attention. When we work together, we embrace the potential to amplify our work and the values and ideas that ground it. In this collaboration, we're geographically distributing that work across Los Angeles, in Leimert Park and Exposition Park. We're disseminating ideas that are important to us both—like the profound

and transformative value of Black creativity and imagination—to more people, quicker, and at a grander scale. Our ability to affect change depends on the depth in which we can touch an individual person, as well as the number of individuals we can reach.

**Sarah:** I sense this collaboration is more than a partnership. It's part of a cultural revolution that I'm very excited to witness over the next five years.

# Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures

“To me, choreography is  
always the act of sharing.”

—Blondell Cummings, 1992

*Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* is co-organized by Art + Practice and the Getty Research Institute, and co-curated by Kristin Juarez, Research Specialist; Rebecca Peabody, Head, Research Projects & Academic Outreach; and Glenn Phillips, Senior Curator, Head of Exhibitions, and Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections, with curatorial and research assistance from Samantha Gregg and Alex Jones.

*Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* 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.

Special acknowledgement is given to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of New York Public Library and the Blondell Cummings Estate. Together they provided invaluable access to Cummings’s archive.

None of this would be possible without Blondell Cummings’s vision, energy, and commitment to documentation.

## OPPOSITE AND OVERLEAF

Installation view of *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 18 September 2021–19 February 2022.





Small text block on the left wall, likely providing information about the artwork or installation.





ABOVE LEFT  
Blondell Cummings and Junko Kikuchi, *Women in the Dunes*, 1995; stills. © The Estate of Blondell Cummings.

ABOVE RIGHT  
Blondell Cummings, *Chocolate*, 1983; stills. © The Estate of Blondell Cummings.





**ABOVE AND PREVIOUS**

Installation view of *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P, 18 September 2021–19 February 2022.



**OPPOSITE**  
 Installation view of *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 18 September 2021–19 February 2022.

**ABOVE**  
 Blondell Cummings, *Commitment: Two Portraits*, 1988. Dir. Bernar Hébert. Video stills from video artwork. Courtesy Bernar Hébert. © The Estate of Blondell Cummings.

# An Initiative and an Archive

A conversation about the Getty Research Institute's African American Art History Initiative, and how the first retrospective survey exhibition of choreographer and video artist Blondell Cummings fits within that initiative's mission.

Over the past two years, Art + Practice and the Getty Research Institute have worked closely to develop an exhibition that presents the performances of Blondell Cummings. Drawing largely from Cummings's personal video archive of rarely seen works, *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* represents the first exhibition dedicated to the artist. It is also the first exhibition and publication presented by the GRI's African American Art History Initiative—a groundbreaking program that aims to establish the GRI as a major center for the study of African American art history.

Ahead of the exhibition, A+P sat down with the curatorial staff from the GRI to discuss the Institute's Initiative, and their process for

developing the exhibition, including the online research guide and companion book created to support further study of Cummings.

This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

Sophia Belsheim, A+P's Deputy Director, and Joshua Oduga, A+P's former Public Programs and Exhibitions Manager, are joined by Kristin Juarez, GRI's Research Specialist for the African American Art History Initiative; Rebecca Peabody, GRI's Head, Research Projects & Academic Outreach; Glenn Phillips, GRI's Senior Curator, Head of Exhibitions, and Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections; and Alex Jones, GRI's Research Assistant, Modern and Contemporary Collections.



**LEFT**  
(left to right) Rebecca Peabody, GRI's Head, Research Projects & Academic Outreach; Glenn Phillips, GRI's Senior Curator, Head of Exhibitions, and Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections; Kristin Juarez, GRI's Research Specialist for the African American Art History Initiative; and Alex Jones, GRI's Research Assistant, Modern and Contemporary Collections.

**OPPOSITE**  
Installation of *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 14 September 2021.



## AN INITIATIVE

**Sophia Belshem:** What's the intent behind the GRI's African American Art History Initiative (AAAHI)?

**Rebecca Peabody:** AAAHI focuses on the post-war art and cultural legacy of African American artists and artists of the African Diaspora. Our goal is to provide a more robust, accurate history of American art in which African American artists receive proper credit for their influence on global culture.

Also, the initiative is meant to support efforts already underway to document the heritage and influence of African American artists, and to enhance the visibility and enjoyment of their art. To that end, we organized the Initiative into three parts: discovery, new knowledge creation, and dissemination.

In the area of discovery, the cornerstone of AAAHI is the acquisition of new archives through our special collections. These new archives will gather original materials from artists and art professionals, and those contributions will be complemented by acquisitions we make in the library.

Tandem to these activities, we've launched an ambitious oral history program in partnership with the Oral History Center at the University of California, Berkeley. As part of the program, we are recording full-length oral histories with prominent African American artists.

In terms of new knowledge creation, we are generating original research projects, organizing exhibitions, and producing digital tools and resources. We have designated fellowships within the GRI's existing Scholar's Program—a program that since 1985 has welcomed scholars and artists to take up residency at the GRI for their research projects—to support scholars working on African American art history. We have also established new internship programs.

In the area of dissemination, we have our exhibitions, publications, public programs, and academic resources. We also hope to include digital projects and develop institutional collaborations in support of partner organizations' work.

**Sophia:** Where do the GRI's staff fit within that narrative?

The GRI and A+P install *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures*. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 14 September 2021.





**OPPOSITE TOP AND RIGHT**

The GRI installs *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 14 September 2021.

**OPPOSITE BOTTOM**

Installation for *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures*. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 12 September 2021.



**Rebecca:** Alongside my colleagues, I co-lead AAAHI on the ground at the GRI. My work is particularly focused on the oral history program, and on our academic outreach through the Scholar's Program and our internship programs—overseeing all the outcomes that come from those points of engagement.

**Glenn Phillips:** I oversee the modern and contemporary collections, and our exhibitions program. But our associate curator, LeRonn Brooks, is the primary curator who's working on building collections in African American Art History. *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* is the first exhibition that has emerged from this initiative, and we're very excited about that.

**Kristin Juarez:** As the Research Specialist for the AAAHI, I'm co-curator of this exhibition with Rebecca and Glenn, while also contributing to ongoing research projects on performance and archives of Black artists that will hopefully yield new discoveries and make connections between the GRI and other organizations and academic institutions. I also work with our two Getty undergraduate interns, Neil Grasty and Gabi Jones, who have been using our research to inform their own academic studies.

**Sophia:** How did the Cummings exhibition come about?

**Glenn:** It took a little while to arrive at the Cummings exhibition. We began by knowing that we wanted to look at work by women, while also thinking about performance.

Initially, we thought of The Kitchen and its archive.<sup>1</sup> The Kitchen is a performance space in New York City, and for decades it has brought together and supported musicians, dancers, performers, and every sort of avant-garde movement that you can think of.

From there, we studied the history of African American performance at The Kitchen, exploring what performance art, dance, or music was happening there through The Kitchen's collection of documentation and recordings.

We found amazing things. Blondell Cummings worked among the many artists who performed at The Kitchen. At first, we considered a group show. But the more Cummings was present in the work we viewed, the smaller the group kept getting. It was down to three people. Then it was down to two people. Then we decided, "Alright, we have to focus the exhibition on Blondell Cummings."

**Kristin:** While researching Cummings and her work, it became clear how community-oriented her practice is, so it made sense to collaborate with an organization that matched those values.

**Rebecca:** And from AAAHI's beginning, we wanted to partner with organizations in the Los Angeles area. A+P was already at the top of that list because its programming is driven by its local community.

**Sophia:** How does the show fit within the overall framework of the other AAAHI-associated projects?





**Rebecca:** Because Cummings’s work brings together distinct fields, such as dance and poetry, her practice helps us engage with a broader understanding of the visual arts—one that traces creativity through multiple expressive outcomes. Looking at those fields synthetically throughout her oeuvre, we are able to provide a deeper, more inclusive history of the American arts.

**Kristin:** Cummings worked primarily in dance, but she also collaborated with poets, composers, painters, video artists, and performance artists. She combined different disciplines in her dances. Later in her life, she started curating shows as well. One of the tapes we found in Cummings’s personal archive documented an exhibition she curated at The Bronx Museum of the Arts. The exhibition *Rhythms and Rituals That Feed My Spirit* demonstrated that she was thinking about how her own movement vocabulary, which she she called “moving pictures,” could be translated into a grander vision within an art museum. Her practice lends itself to thinking about the different ways that dance enters art spaces and museums.

#### AN ARCHIVE

**Joshua Odgwa:** How did the GRI work with Cummings’s archive while curating this exhibition?

**Kristin:** Seeing Cummings’s performance tapes in The Kitchen’s archives made us want to see more material. Through her community and peers, we learned that her friend, American choreographer and performer Elizabeth Streb, was spearheading the establishment of Cummings’s archive at The New York Public Library’s Jerome Robbins Dance Division.<sup>2</sup> Through Streb, we met Cummings’s family and got to see the 300 works included in the collection, which spans early video formats, VHS tapes, and audio cassette tapes. *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* represents a small glimpse—a glimmer of what is in Cummings’s personal archive.

**Glenn:** A testament to Cummings’s influence is just how immediately people, as soon as they heard about the show, wanted to share the photographs that they’ve kept. A whole community is a

Exhibition opening for *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 18 September 2021.



went into developing the exhibition. The guide is now one of the first public research deliverables presented under the banner of AAAHI. The significance of that is that we, of course, want to invite our audiences—which include researchers and scholars but also the general public—to consider and access the types of research materials that underlie an exhibition and make the process of translating primary materials into a public exhibition transparent to them.

The research guide is also one of many opportunities for us to share the ongoing work involved in our research and how many different types of knowledge production surround Cummings. Because it is a library guide specifically about Cummings, what you quickly start to see is that topics like dance and performance, dance and moving image, and art history and visual culture are necessary to any discussion about her work.

**Kristin:** One thing we noticed is that there are a lot of reviews, relevant scholarship, and archival holdings, which were critical to our research, but these materials were not consolidated in one

place. We hope that the guide will serve as a foundational resource for subsequent scholarship.

**Joshua:** How can the public access more of Cummings’s archival materials and GRI’s other archives?

**Kristin:** The research guide is a great place to start. Through its online interface, you’ll find out what relevant special collections we have: from dance and African American art history to performance. You’ll also find ways to connect with the reference librarians who can facilitate access to the special collections.

**Rebecca:** Anyone who visits our website can access a fully searchable database containing all of our resources, archives, and all the complementary resources we developed to support them.<sup>4</sup>

**Glenn:** People who want to work directly in the Cummings archive can also go to The New York Public Library’s site, specifically the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, to see more. There are also many other relevant holdings there.

part of this process; everything is interconnected. Trying to bring those parts together is the way that you tell the story. We hope that the exhibition, along with a companion book, are going to lead more people to know Cummings, then jump in and offer their own contribution, do their own research, produce their own work, and keep this conversation going. Because that’s the sort of legacy-building that we’re trying to promote when we organize a retrospective.

**Joshua:** What does the archive mean to you?

**Glenn:** Archives are the remaining records. With a medium like dance, archiving is typically achieved through video recording. It could also be a score or a dancer’s notes. An archive can be written records, reviews, or comments that people make about the work. These are all elements of an archive, and they each offer a different kind of perspective into the work.

**Kristin:** We also learned what the archive meant to Cummings through her dances. She organized community workshops where she learned how people moved, what kind of gestures they did in

their daily life, and what their family relationships were like.

Cummings captured oral histories from these workshops and then used them as her soundtracks. Workshop participants would also share their everyday gestures and Cummings incorporated them into her work, so dance became a kind of archive for the communities that she was talking with and building.

**Rebecca:** Archives also give us traces of the passage of time when we look at what works were and were not documented, the language that was used to describe them, and why certain versions are in the archive while others are not. We can raise questions that we may or may not be able to answer from what’s left behind by the artist or the people they worked alongside.

**Joshua:** Can you talk about the exhibition’s research guide?<sup>3</sup>

**Alex Jones:** The research guide is an online resource that we developed in coordination with our library staff at the GRI. It was first designed as an in-depth review of the research labor that first



**ABOVE AND OPPOSITE**  
Exhibition opening for *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* at Art + Practice. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 18 September 2021.

# Spring Program Series Artist Talks

A+P's former Public Programs and Exhibitions Manager Joshua Oduga speaks with artists Greg Ito, Shirley Tse, Melvino Garretti, Devin B. Johnson, and Milano Chow, and visits their studios after a year of being stuck at home.

In five separate discussions, Joshua interviewed artists Greg Ito, Shirley Tse, Melvino Garretti, Devin B. Johnson, and Milano Chow. Each conversation offered a unique and intimate perspective into the artists' lives and work.

Much of the program series' content was formed prior to the recorded programs via

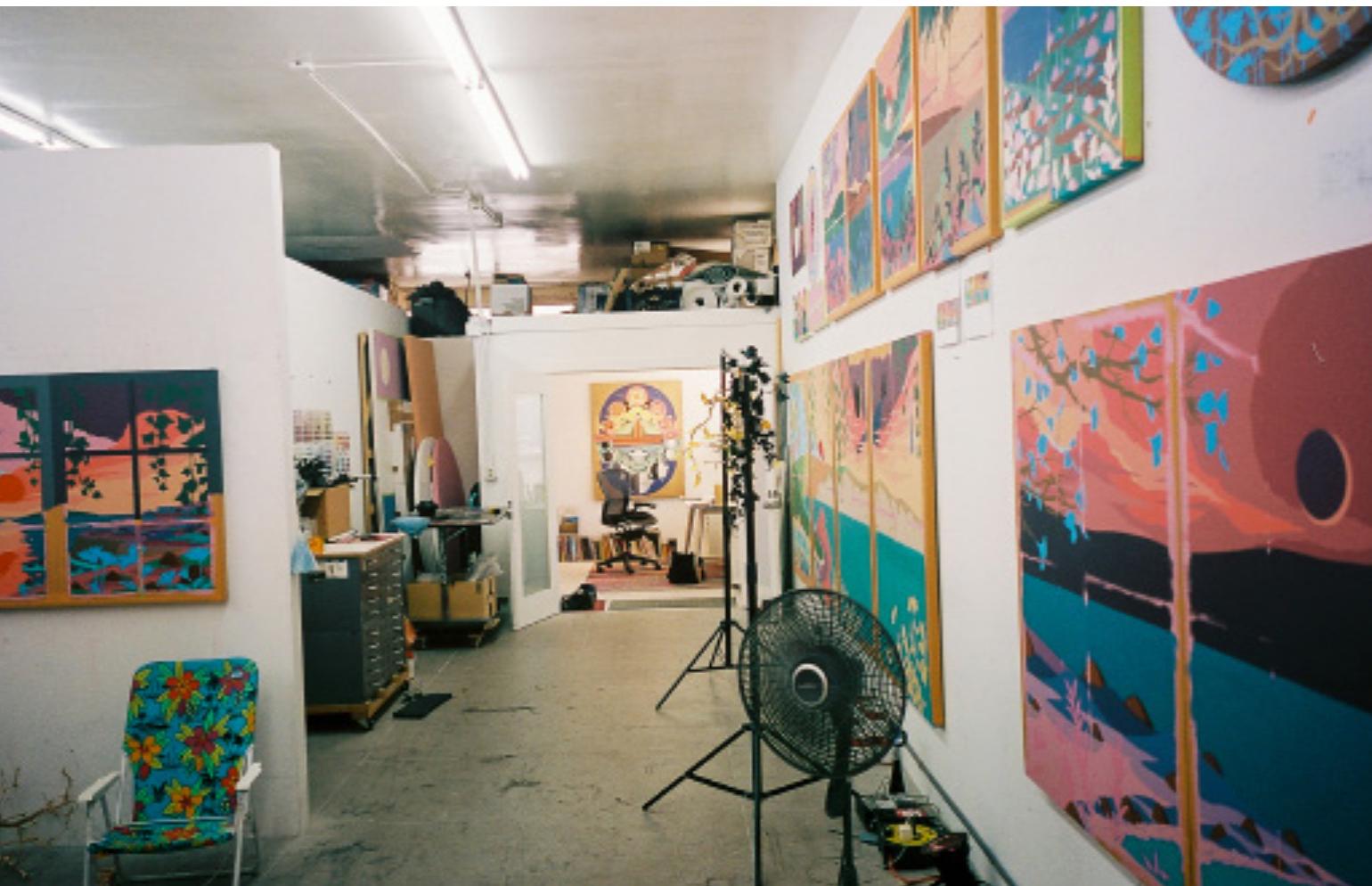
conversations between the artists and Oduga, who asked each artist about their particular creative journey.

These conversations are available on A+P's YouTube channel<sup>1</sup> for all to enjoy, experience, and share.



Greg Ito

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE  
Artist Greg Ito in his studio. Los Angeles, CA. 30 June 2021.



Greg Ito embraces a graphic visual style to create cinematic paintings and installations that address themes of time, love, loss, hope, and tragedy. Ito earned his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2008. His work has been exhibited widely in group and solo exhibitions including Maki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles, CA; Division

Gallery, Montreal, QC; Arsenal Contemporary, Toronto, ON; Jeffrey Deitch, New York, NY; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, IL; Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, CA; Et al, San Francisco, CA; and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), San Francisco, CA. A recent solo exhibition at Anat Ebgi Los Angeles opened in Fall 2021.



## Shirley Tse

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE  
Artist Shirley Tse in her studio. Inglewood, CA. 15 June 2021.

Hong Kong-born, California-based artist Shirley Tse works in the media of sculpture, installation, photography, and text. She at once deconstructs the world of synthetic objects that carry paradoxical meanings and constructs models in which

differences might come together. To visualize heterogeneity, Tse conflates different scales, fuses the organic with the industrial, moves between the literal and the metaphorical, merges narratives, and collapses the subject and object relationship.





## Melvino Garrett

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE  
Artist Melvino Garrett in his studio.  
Los Angeles, CA. 28 June 2021.

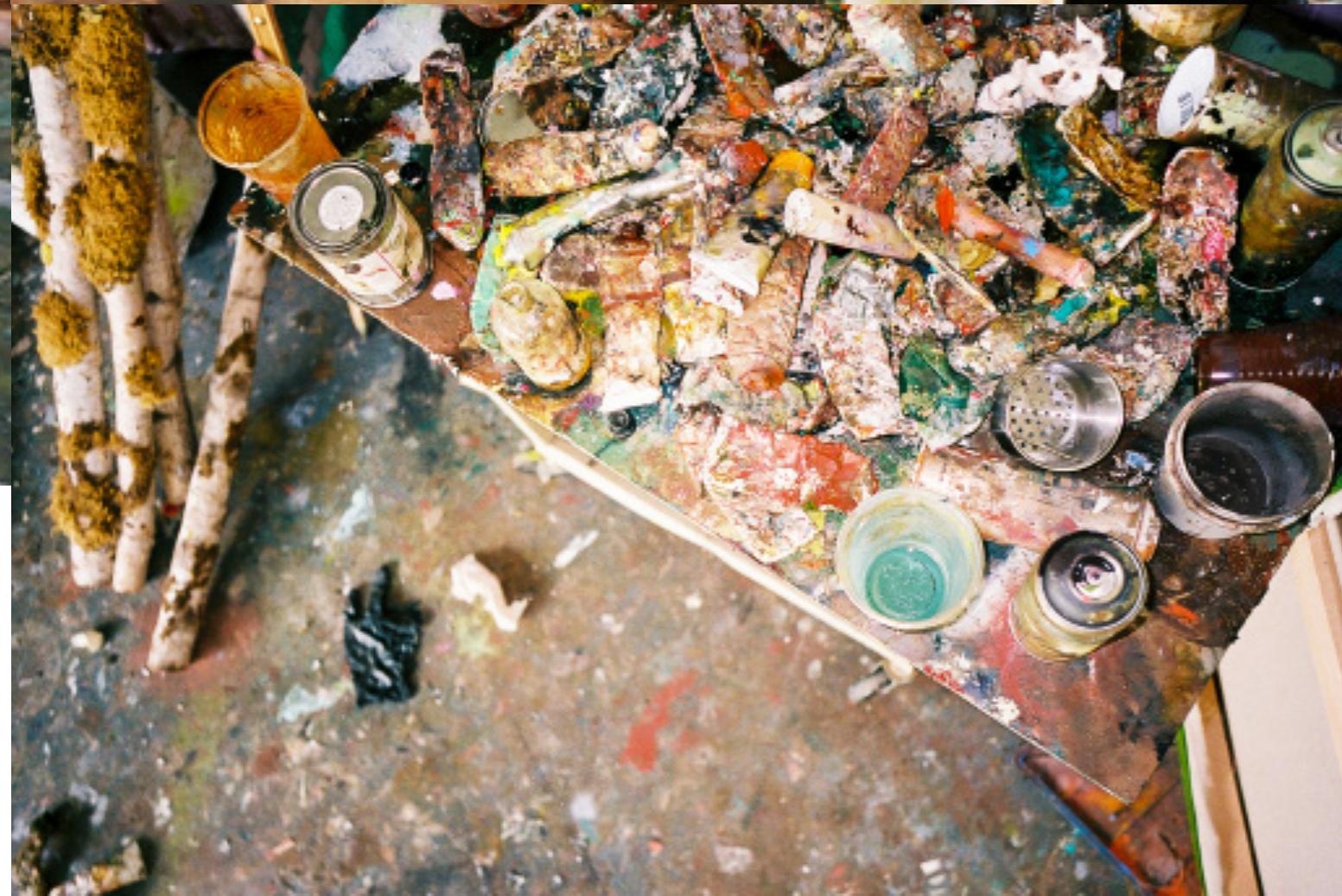
Known for his ecstatic forms, Melvino Garrett was among the first residents of the Studio Watts workshop in the mid-1960s, a pioneering nonprofit serving artists in South Los Angeles, fueling a rich period of creativity and experimentation within

the Black community. Garrett has been working predominantly in ceramics since, infusing the medium with the improvisational strategies of free jazz.



## Devin B. Johnson

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE  
Artist Devin B. Johnson in his studio.  
New York, NY. 28 July 2021.



Devin B. Johnson approaches the canvas like a musician. You hear his work as much as you see it. His rhythm is architectural and expressive with a heavy textural backbeat. He'll spray plaster on the substrate to pump up the bass through the subsequent layers. The paintings lie in a temporal space of bewilderment and undulation. Johnson obtained

his BA in Fine Arts from California State Channel Islands (2015) and received a Masters of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute (2019). He was one of sixteen artists from around the world selected for the inaugural year of the Black Rock Senegal residency, and was featured in Cultured's *Young Artists 2021*.



## Milano Chow

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE  
Artist Milano Chow in her studio. Altadena, CA. 21 June 2021.

Milano Chow lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her BA from Barnard College in 2009 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2013. She has held solo exhibitions at Bel Ami, Los Angeles; Adams and Ollman, Portland; Chapter NY, New York; Galleria Acappella, Naples; and Mary Mary, Glasgow. Recent group exhibitions

include the Whitney Biennial 2019 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *Loitering is Delightful*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles; and *The Props Assist the House*, Bel Ami, Los Angeles. She is a 2018 recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant.





Deborah  
Roberts

I'M

March 19–  
August 20, 2022



*Deborah Roberts: I'm* is organized by The Contemporary Austin and is co-presented in Los Angeles by Art + Practice and the California African American Museum. The exhibition is funded in part by the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

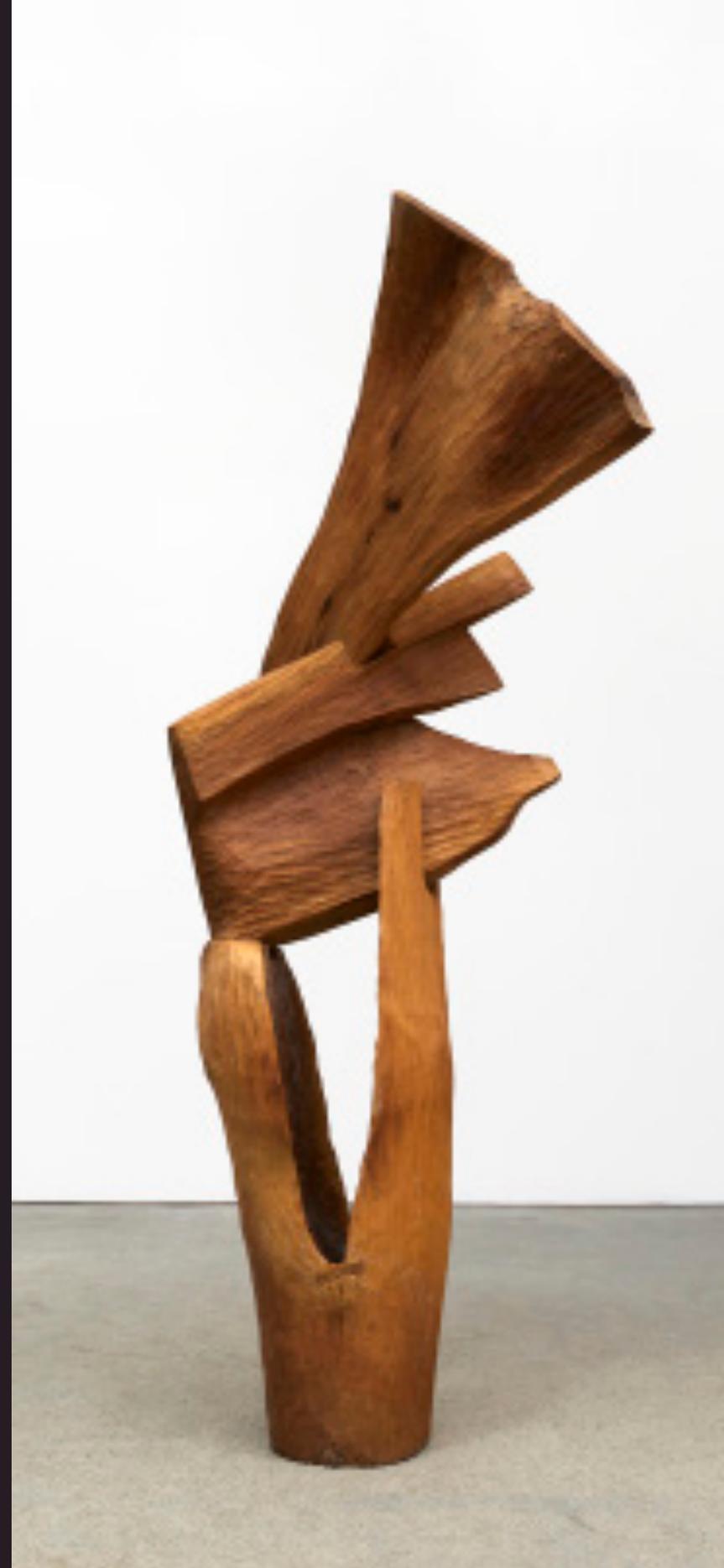
*Deborah Roberts, Jamal, 2020.* Mixed media collage on canvas. 65 x 45 in. Artwork © Deborah Roberts. Courtesy the artist; Vielmetter Los Angeles; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. Image courtesy The Contemporary Austin. Photograph by Paul Pardagjy.

Thaddeus  
Mosley  
FOREST

September 17, 2022–  
January 21, 2023

*Thaddeus Mosley: Forest* is organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art and is presented in Los Angeles by Art + Practice.

*Thaddeus Mosley, Opposing Parallels – Blues Up and Down for G. Ammons and S. Stitt, 2015.* Walnut. 89 x 36 x 38 inches. (226.1 x 91.4 x 96.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Karma, New York.



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## A+P Information

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FREE ADMISSION

### Public Program Space

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office@artandpractice.org  
(323) 337-6887  
artandpractice.org  
@artandpractice

## Program Collaborators

### California African American Museum

600 State Drive  
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caamuseum.org

### DREAMHAUS

dreamhausla.org

### First Place for Youth

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## Artworks Pictured

### MICHAEL BLACKWOOD

*Retracing Steps: American Dance Since  
Postmodernism*, 1988. Dir. Michael  
Blackwood. Courtesy of Michael Blackwood  
Productions. 9 min. excerpt of 89 minutes  
original. p. 90

### LORIN BROWN

*Crenshaw/LAX Metro*, 2021. pp. 54–55

### BLONDELL CUMMINGS

*1st Tape*, c. 1975. Video still from perfor-  
mance documentation. p. 83, p. 89

*Chocolate*, 1983. *Food for Thought*. Video  
still from performance documentation.  
p. 82 (right)

*Chicken Soup*, 1983. Video still from  
performance documentation. p. 81, p. 88,  
pp. 94–95

*Commitment: Two Portraits*, 1988. Dir.  
Bernar Hébert. Video still from video  
artwork. Courtesy Bernar Hébert. pp. 86–87

*Da Da*, 1989. Performed by Tom Thayer.  
Choreography by Blondell Cummings. Video  
still from performance documentation. The  
Kitchen, c. 1971–1999. Getty Research  
Institute. p. 79

*Inside/Out series at Jacob's Pillow Dance  
Festival*, 1984. Video still from performance  
documentation. pp. 84–85

*The Ladies + Me*, 1980. Video still from  
performance documentation. p. 92 (top)

*Women in the Dunes*, 1995. Blondell  
Cummings & Junko Kikuchi. Video still from  
performance documentation. p. 80 (left),  
p. 82 (left)

Unedited Footage of *Cycle*, 1978. Video still  
from performance documentation.  
pp. 66–67, p. 80 (right), p. 96

All artworks © The Estate of Blondell  
Cummings.

### LOIS GREENFIELD

*Chicken Soup*, 1982. Courtesy of Lois  
Greenfield. © Lois Greenfield. p. 79.

### BEATRIZ SCHILLER

Blondell Cummings. Gelatin silver print.  
Photo © Beatriz Schiller 2021. Getty  
Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6).  
Courtesy the Estate of Blondell Cummings.  
p. 4., p. 57, p. 63, p. 97

## Photography Captions

**COVER:** Artist Koffi Afandolo paints open/  
close signage for A+P's exhibition space.  
Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 6 October 2021.  
**FRONT INSIDE COVER:** A+P Exhibition Space.  
6 August 2021. **PP. 6–7:** A+P Scholar Kevon.  
Leimert Park, Los Angeles. 30 August 2021.  
**PP. 40–41:** Vision Theater. Leimert Park, Los  
Angeles. 6 August 2021. **PP. 54–55:** Crenshaw/  
LAX Metro illustration, 2021. **PP. 56–57:** A+P  
Office. Leimert Park, Los Angeles. **PP. 66–67:**  
Exhibition opening for *Blondell Cummings:  
Dance as Moving Pictures* at A+P. 18 Sep-  
tember 2021. **P. 112 AND BACK INSIDE COVER:**  
A+P ephemera. Leimert Park, Los Angeles.  
9 August 2021. **BACK COVER:** Front door of  
A+P Exhibition Space. Leimert Park, Los  
Angeles. 18 January 2022.

## Photography Credits

**PAUL BARDAGJY:** p. 108; **SOPHIA BELSHEIM:**  
cover, p. 4, pp. 6–7, p. 19, p. 28, pp. 32–35,  
p. 38 (top), p. 39 (bottom), p. 51 (bottom),  
pp. 56–57, p. 92 (bottom), inside back  
cover, back cover; **LEAH CASE:** pp. 12–15,  
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**HRDWRKER:** pp. 76–77; **YOUSEF HILMY:**  
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SHIM-BOYLE:** p. 69; **CHARLES WHITE:**  
pp. 79–81, pp. 83–86

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