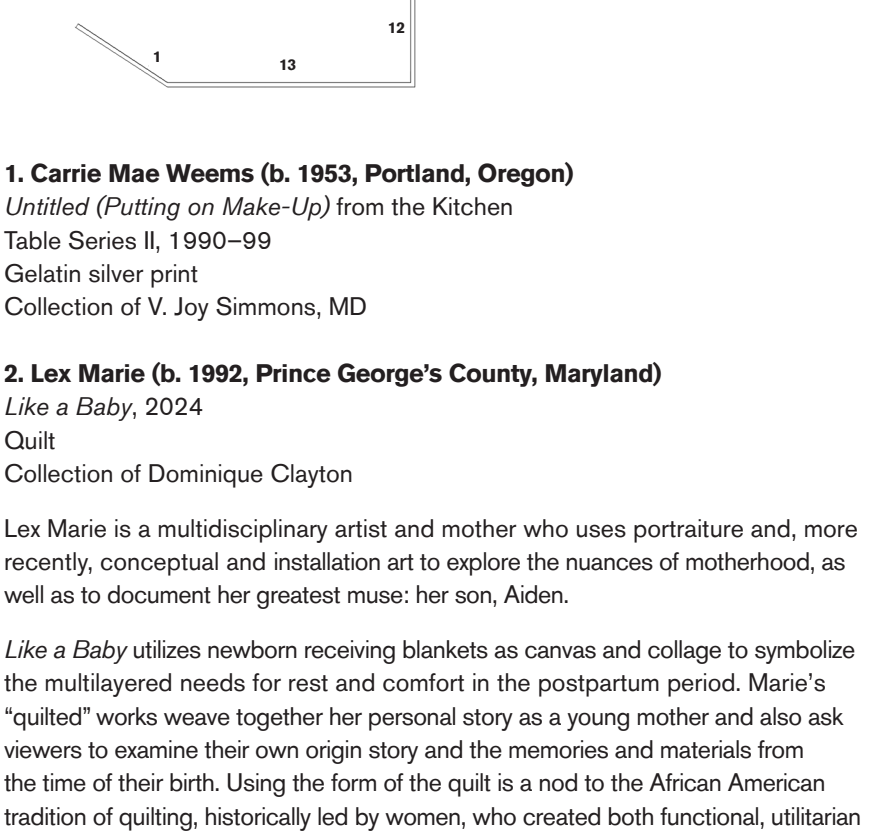


Oct 11, 2025 – Mar 7, 2026

Giving you the best that I got



1. Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953, Portland, Oregon)

Untitled (Putting on Make-Up) from the Kitchen Table Series II, 1990–99
Gelatin silver print
Collection of V. Joy Simmons, MD

2. Lex Marie (b. 1992, Prince George's County, Maryland)

Like a Baby, 2024
Quilt
Collection of Dominique Clayton

Lex Marie is a multidisciplinary artist and mother who uses portraiture and, more recently, conceptual and installation art to explore the nuances of motherhood, as well as to document her greatest muse: her son, Aiden.

Like a Baby utilizes newborn receiving blankets as canvas and collage to symbolize the multilayered needs for rest and comfort in the postpartum period. Marie's "quilted" works weave together her personal story as a young mother and also ask viewers to examine their own origin story and the memories and materials from the time of their birth. Using the form of the quilt is a nod to the African American tradition of quilting, historically led by women, who created both functional, utilitarian tools and art objects that mapped family histories and archives.

3. Ferrari Sheppard (b. 1983, Chicago)

Bond, 2020
Charcoal, acrylic, and 24k gold leaf
Cash Family Collection

Ferrari Sheppard is a Los Angeles–based artist who makes paintings that tow the line between abstraction and figuration and speak to shared human experiences. His work typically features a pair or group of people rendered with large brushstrokes alongside details enhanced with gold-leaf. *Bond* is a meditation on rebirth and resilience, a reflection of the matriarchal wisdom that carries us through life's cycles. The work draws from memory and ancestry, suggesting both protection and transformation. The figure, rendered with raw gestures and embedded with gold, becomes both fragile and eternal—a reminder that what is broken can be remade, and that what nurtures us continues to shine through generations.

4. Sydney Vernon (b. 1995, Prince George's County, Maryland)

Mother & Child, 2019
Oil, charcoal, pastel, and silkscreen on paper
Collection of Nilani Trent

Raised by a mother who studied art in New York, figurative artist Sydney Vernon and her sibling, Sam, also an artist, started their arts education at an early age. Most of Vernon's portraits between 2018 and 2022 depict her family members, with photographs and personal stories serving as prompts for each composition.

In *Mother & Child*, Vernon illustrates Sam and her mother, Doreen, dressed up during a cruise vacation. While little Sam wears a frown, Doreen remains poised, calm, and collected, evoking the conflicts children often have with their mothers who attempt to keep up appearances amid the stresses of family life. Vernon depicts her mother in a manner that resembles Anita Baker, the beloved singer adored by multiple generations of Black women and mothers, whose popular song, "Giving You the Best That I Got," gives this exhibition its title.

5. Shaniqwa Jarvis (b. 1988, New York)

With Intention, 2017
Photograph
Courtesy the artist and Rajendra Debah

Currently based in Los Angeles, Shaniqwa Jarvis is an artist with an extensive background in fashion, editorial, and commercial photography who also dedicates her time to portraiture. Using an aesthetic that is both nostalgic and familiar, she looks to capture universal emotions and sentiments. *With Intention* features a maternal figure grooming a young girl's hair with tender love and care. She stands behind her in a position familiar to many girls who have fond memories of time spent with their mothers.

This past spring, Jarvis lost her mother, Janine. Maternal loss is something no child, young or old, is ever prepared for. Yet Jarvis's work as a photographer and artist exemplifies her deep commitment to reflection, memory, and storytelling, which are gifts that help her and others come to terms with grief and loss.

6. Harmonia Rosales (b. 1984, Chicago)

Queen Moremi, 2023
Oil on wood panel with 24k gold
Courtesy the artist

Harmonia Rosales is a Los Angeles–based artist who makes work inspired by her multicultural Afro-Cuban background. Emphasizing Black female subjects, she reinvents them into historical narratives and classical Renaissance-style portraiture, thus offering a corrective to art history and a spiritual restoration of self love and respect among Black women and mothers. Much of Rosales's inspiration originates from her own mother, a children's book illustrator who primarily focused on Black characters.

This portrait features Moremi, a Yoruba queen who sacrificed her child to the Esimirin river spirit in order to defeat a rival tribe. A mother who relinquished her own flesh and blood in order to protect the children of her entire kingdom, Moremi and her selfless act are cemented in Yoruba legend. Rosales presents Moremi as a mother and a leader: she wears gold, a symbol of her status, and cowrie shells, connecting her to the Esimirin spirit. Looking toward the light, her expression solemn and knowing, she cradles her child—wrapped in white to symbolize innocence—ready to make the ultimate sacrifice.

As a busy mother of three, Rosales balances motherhood and studio time, conjuring the same precision, magic, and love.

7. Calida Rawles (b. 1976, Wilmington, Delaware)

Wade, Ride This Wave of Mine, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
Private collection

Calida Rawles is a Los Angeles–based painter who makes photorealistic portraits of Black bodies, usually submerged in water. While pregnant with her third daughter, Rawles took up swimming as a form of exercise and relaxation and developed a newfound attachment to water. Since then, Rawles's works have featured water as both a literal background and environment for her subjects as well as a symbol of healing, protection, and meditation.

8. Shefon N. Taylor (b. 1988, Wilmington, Delaware)

The Archive We Must Look, 2023
Risograph print on fabric
Courtesy the artist

In An Attempt to Reconstruct, 2023
Digital collage on fabric panels
Courtesy the artist

*There bloomed a silence too old for language
and too precise for forgetting*, 2025
Stitched collage sculpture
Courtesy the artist

Based in Delaware, Shefon N. Taylor is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice incorporates collages and sculptures that explore memory, nostalgia, and fragmentation. Following the traditions of artists such as Lorna Simpson, Mickalene Thomas, and Helina Metaferia, Taylor manipulates materials to unearth unspoken memories and piece them together into new narratives. Motherhood itself is an act of fragmentation, where the female body is stretched and divided before coming back to center to regain internal and external balance. As the title of Taylor's work *In An Attempt to Reconstruct* suggests, women and mothers are often faced with the challenge of reconstructing our body, mind, and spirit through the ups and downs of womanhood and motherhood.

Taylor's works also carry the weight of matrilineal inheritance. Her relationship to her own mother, marked as much by absence as by presence, shapes her ongoing inquiry into how memory fragments over time, how bonds fray, and how images and objects become sites of both wound and remedy. After several years spent balancing her art, work, and parenting her teenage son, Taylor is entering a more flexible chapter of motherhood to continue building a practice that allows for personal reflection and constructing new narratives for herself and her muses.

9. Ciarra K. Walters (b. 1992, Norfolk, Virginia)

Eileen's Daughters, 2024
8mm film transferred to video, 5 min.
Courtesy the artist

Untitled I, 2025
Eggshells, canvas, and silkscreen on Okawara paper
Courtesy the artist

Untitled II, 2025
Eggshells, canvas, and silkscreen on Okawara paper
Courtesy the artist

Untitled III, 2025
Eggshells, canvas, and silkscreen on Okawara paper
Courtesy the artist

A recent graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art, Ciarra K. Walters is an artist based in Baltimore whose multidisciplinary work centers the female body and its attempt to find, form, and sustain agency and autonomy. Walters's deep connection to nature also informs both her studio and performance practice, particularly in the outdoor spaces she uses as the backdrops for her video works.

Walters's mother, Eileen, succumbed to her battle with cancer in 2021, leaving behind Walters and her four younger siblings. Walters is now the primary guardian of her two youngest sisters, and in assuming this maternal role, she conjures her mother's tenacity and generosity in order to balance her family obligations and personal goals. The video *Eileen's Daughters* presents Walters's performance *Fragility*, which features a "fragility suit" made of eggshells that she began collecting after her mother's death. In this video version of the performance, Walters includes her three younger sisters, shifting the work from an individual effort to a collective one. By hugging and crushing eggshells against one another (instead of against a wall as in earlier performances), the siblings embody the fragility and intimacy of their relationship and underscore their commitment to each other in their mother's absence.

10. February James (b. 1977, Washington, DC)

*Will you give up everything you know for something
you know nothing about?*, 2025
Mixed media on linen
Courtesy the artist

February James was born and raised in Washington, DC, and recently returned home after spending several years in Los Angeles. Self-taught and naturally introspective, James makes work that tows the line between abstraction and figuration, channeling the gray area between external reality and inner life where we find personal meaning.

Her use of soft and fluid materials, such as watercolor, alongside the bold colors and marks of pastels result in portraits that play between notions of transience and permanence. As an artist and single mother who lost her own mother in 2014, just eight days before her son's second birthday, James recalls, "I lost my mother just as I was learning how to mother, while becoming a mother and finally in a place to see and hear my mother." James continues to navigate her grief and maternal memories while also forging a new path on her own. Now living between LA and DC, James nurtures her craft and her son, giving the best she can to both.

11. Derrick Adams (b. 1970, Baltimore)

Family Portrait #1, 2019
Oil on canvas
Private collection, Florida

Brooklyn-based artist Derrick Adams is best known for his work illustrating Black joy, leisure, and nostalgia. Using bright colors, bold geometric shapes, and collage, he depicts family celebrations, vacation time, and the joys of everyday life.

Family Portrait #1 is part of a series entitled *We Came to Party and Plan*, which charts Adams's life growing up in Baltimore. With this timeless image of his aunt and nephew enjoying outdoor time listening to music—likely the soul or Motown sound of the 1960s and 1970s—Adams highlights the bond between a Black woman and child, which can take many forms, including as mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, or friend.

12. Ashley January (b. 1987, Rantoul, Illinois)

Preeclampsia affects 1 in 25 pregnancies in the US, 2024
Oil on linen
Courtesy the artist

In *Preeclampsia affects 1 in 25 pregnancies in the US*, Ashley January depicts a mother and a child reading together in what feels like a normal routine, but the blood pressure monitor tethered to the mother suggests the silent threat of preeclampsia, a pregnancy complication that disproportionately affects Black women.

13. Ashley January (b. 1987, Rantoul, Illinois)

A Saving Grace, 2021
Oil on linen
Courtesy the artist

Kelli, Kendra, and their daughters, 2024
Oil and oil stick on linen
Courtesy the artist

Kendra, 2024
Oil and oil stick on linen
Courtesy the artist

Narrative - Kendra, 2024
Audio, 4:05 min.
Courtesy the artist

January is a painter and maternal health advocate based in Chicago. Battling severe preeclampsia during her son's premature birth, she saw firsthand the fragility and strength of mothers, as well as the medical racism that limits too many Black women's access to necessary and quality care. January now highlights these issues in her work.

Kelli, Kendra, and their daughters is a work from January's series *Environments of a Heavy Joy*, which examines perseverance in relation to the Black maternal health crisis. This painting is accompanied by a compelling audio installation in which the subject, Kendra, shares her pregnancy journey, which resulted in a high-risk premature birth and a daughter born with special needs. Kendra's pain as she shares the tale is a call to action for women to talk to one another about their experiences as a basis for advocating for change.

14. Helina Metaferia (b. 1983, Washington, DC)

Headdress 64, 2024
Hand-cut and assembled mixed-media collage
Collection of Lizzie and Steve Blatt

Helina Metaferia is an interdisciplinary artist working across a wide array of mediums, including sculpture, video, and performance. Her series *By Way of Revolution* centers women activists as symbols of power, adorning their portraits with a headdress of collaged images from the civil rights movement and other revolutionary archives. Metaferia's crowns evoke a shared collective memory and history, and their strong, iconic images give a nod to contemporary waves of feminism and fortitude. Metaferia began *By Way of Revolution* in 2018, after the death of her mother, an Ethiopian expat living in the United States who dedicated forty years of service as a women's rights activist. Metaferia has since committed her practice to preserving the legacies of women changemakers, whose work to uphold democracy is often overlooked in historical accounts.

15. Bisa Butler (b. 1973, City of Orange, New Jersey)

Shady Grove Hibiscus, 2023
Cotton, silk, lace, and velvet, quilted and appliqued
Collection of Ayesha Selden

Bisa Butler is a textile artist known for her large quilted portraits, which often depict Black people in various moments of daily life. Butler utilizes references from notable photographers, including Gordon Parks, whose original Shady Grove series is the source for this piece.

Butler's use of textiles, which includes variations of lace, beaded mesh vinyl, and West African Dutch wax prints, represents a beautiful and resourceful evolution in a practice that began with painting. Butler's journey into motherhood directly correlates to this artistic evolution since she found herself at a crossroads in her last few months of college at Howard University juggling her first pregnancy and trying to maintain her studio practice. Paint fumes worsened her pregnancy symptoms and morning sickness, so her professor suggested she work with other materials. Since Butler often made clothes for herself and her housemates, textiles seemed like a natural substitute for her experimentation with paint and became the primary medium for her work.

16. Kenturah Davis (b. 1980, Los Angeles)

planar vessel XXX (marcella), 2024
Shifu weaving (cotton warp, paper-thread weft), hand-debossed text, and carbon rubbing on igarashi kozo paper in walnut frame
Collection of Ayesha Selden

Kenturah Davis is a Los Angeles–based artist known for her large-scale portraits and, more recently, mixed-media works combining various natural materials and multicultural artistic traditions. She often incorporates text in her works, signifying the importance of language and narrative in capturing the totality of her subjects. *planar vessel XXX (marcella)* comes from Davis's planar vessel series, in which she incorporates figurative ink photographs, hand-debossed text, and carbon pencil rubbings—a labor-intensive process that takes time and attention to detail. In the series title, Davis references the two-dimensional plane of the artwork alongside the "vessel," or person, who holds the story.

Davis embarked on her motherhood journey later in life after working and traveling between Los Angeles, New Haven (where she attended Yale University's MFA program), and Accra, Ghana. She currently divides her time between the studio and caring for her busy toddler son. Having recently survived the Eaton Fire, which destroyed her home and her family home, Davis's faith and perseverance have been tested beyond measure as she started the rebuilding process and maintained a sense of normalcy for her son. In this way, Davis is a vessel for her own family's story, healing and growing in real time.

17. Jill Knox (b. 1982, New York)

Reflections of the Firmly Rooted, 2025
Mirror and wood
Courtesy the artist

18. Helina Metaferia (b. 1983, Washington, DC)

Crown (Kandake), 2024
Brass crown with etching
Collection of Ayesha Selden

19. Lanise Howard (b. 1993, El Centro, California)

The Nucleus (Pyramid), 2025
Oil on canvas
Courtesy the artist and Mindy Solomon Gallery

20. Lex Marie (b. 1992, Prince George's County, Maryland)

At His Daddy's House, 2021
Oil and pastel on canvas
Courtesy the artist

Lex Marie, whose quilted work *Like a Baby* is on view in the previous gallery, also explores Black women's identities outside of motherhood. Her self-portrait *At His Daddy's House* shows a woman on pause, free from the labor of motherhood, and relaxing in her own skin—a rare occurrence for many mothers. This work

invites a collective deep breath by all women who seek rest and leisure amid the quiet storm of domestic labor. Marie's portrait reminds us that when the kids are gone, we are still women who need to be loved, nurtured, pampered, and, sometimes, just left alone.

21. Jill Knox (b. 1982, New York)

This is a Broken Promise, 2025
Magazines, acrylic paint, and wood
Courtesy the artist

22. Kwame Brathwaite (b. 1938, Brooklyn, New York; d. 2023, New York)

Sikolo Brathwaite, 1968, printed 2016
Archival pigment print, mounted and framed with Optima
Courtesy the Kwame Brathwaite Archive and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles

Photographer Kwame Brathwaite captured this portrait of his wife, Sikolo Brathwaite, at his studio in 1968. At the time she was pregnant with their son, Kwame Brathwaite Jr. Sikolo's signature afro and colorful patterned dress marks the style that many Black women donned in the "Black is Beautiful" movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, when many leaned into celebrating their natural beauty, regality, and connection to the greater Black diaspora.

23. Lanise Howard (b. 1993, El Centro, California)

With Open Arms (The Life Bearer), 2024
Oil on canvas
Courtesy the artist and Mindy Solomon Gallery

Lanise Howard is a Los Angeles–based figurative painter whose work combines cultural narratives and references with a strong focus on the feminine mystique. In some of her canvases, Howard adds surrealist touches that further highlight the dreamlike and in-between realms of her subjects. The scale and composition of Howard's works, as demonstrated in *The Nucleus*, signify power and permanence, while the palette and other details exemplify softness and beauty.

Having lost her own mother in 2024, and with no children of her own, Howard channels her grief through her work, celebrating Black women, exploring spirituality, and analyzing dreams and fantasies. *With Open Arms (The Life Bearer)* is a familiar image in many Black women's lives: the mother, grandmother, or aunt in her nightgown, who in one capacity is a sexual being and muse, and in another represents the ultimate nurturer with open arms.

24. Jill Knox (b. 1982, New York)

Reflections of the Firmly Rooted, 2025
Mirror and wood
Courtesy the artist

Arts and entertainment have long been central to Jill Knox's life, but her artistic journey was deepened by profound personal loss. After earning her MFA in Theater Arts from Brown University, she shifted her creative focus to visual art, a passion nurtured from childhood by parents who are devoted art patrons and museum board members. Following years of infertility and the stillbirth of her first child, Knox dedicated herself further to art and community as a means of healing and transformation. Her work now serves as both a tribute to her experiences and a celebration of resilience.

Today, as a mother of two, Knox embodies the spirit of the "art mama"—creating in her home-based studio while raising a family. Her growing body of work reflects themes of motherhood, memory, and the enduring power of creativity.

25. Karon Davis (b. 1977, Reno, Nevada)

The Nun (Mother Superior), 2021
Plaster bandages, steel, glass eyes, chicken wire, and wooden ruler
Courtesy the artist and Wilding Cran Gallery