



Smithsonian American Art Museum

Participant Bios for *American Art in Dialogue with Africa and its Diaspora*

Renée Ater (symposium advisor) earned a B.A. in art history from Oberlin College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Maryland. She is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Ater's scholarship and teaching focuses on American art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a specialization in African American visual culture. She is the author of *Keith Morrison*, volume 5 of *The David C. Driskell Series of African American Art* (Pomegranate Books, 2005) and *Remaking Race and History: The Sculpture of Meta Warrick Fuller* (University of California Press, 2011). Currently, Ater is researching a book entitled *Unsettling Memory: Public Monuments to the Slave Past in the United States*.

Mia L. Bagneris received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2009 and teaches African diaspora art history and studies of race in Western art at Tulane University in New Orleans. Her scholarship concentrates on the construction of race in British and American art and visual culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She is particularly interested in the place of images in the history of slavery, colonialism, empire, and the construction of national identities and in images of interracial contact and mixed-race bodies. Her current book project *Coloring the Caribbean: Agostino Brunias and the Painting of Race in the British West Indies, c. 1765-1800* (from which her paper at this symposium is a welcome respite) challenges conventional designations of Brunias's paintings as uncomplicated plantocratic propaganda that functioned as visual "field guides" for reading racial identity and social status, examining instead how the artist's images reflected and refracted ideas about race commonly held by Britons in the colonial Caribbean during the long eighteenth century.

Anne-Grit Becker is a Ph.D. candidate in art history at the Freie Universität Berlin, completing her dissertation with the title "Körperabdruck und Bildprozess. Materialitäten der Zeit bei Cy Twombly und Robert Rauschenberg" ("Tracing the body--Mattering time. Temporality in the works of Cy Twombly and Robert Rauschenberg"). She studied art history, East Asian art history, and the science of religion in Berlin and Paris (Université Panthéon-Sorbonne I). Becker was the recipient of a 2012 Gerda Henkel Ph.D. scholarship and a fall 2012 research stipend at New York University. She has worked at the Daimler Art Collection in Berlin and at the Deutsche Forum für Kunstgeschichte in Paris as a research assistant for the publication *Max Ernst: Vie et Œuvre* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2007). For the upcoming semester, she is teaching a seminar on "Physicality and Time in Post-Abstract Expressionism" at the Universität der Künste Berlin.

Celeste-Marie Bernier is Professor of African American Studies at the University of Nottingham, and Associate Editor of the *Journal of American Studies* (Cambridge University Press). She is currently the Senior Research Fellow at the Rothermere American Institute and an Academic Visitor in the History of Art Department and at Wolfson College, all at the University of Oxford; an Associate Fellow at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University; and Visiting Professor at King's College London. Her single-authored books include: *African American Visual Arts, Characters of Blood: Black Heroism in the Transatlantic Imagination, Suffering and Sunset: World War I in the Art and Life of Horace Pippin*, and *Imaging Slavery:*

The Body, Memory and Representation in Fifty Years of African American and Black British Visual Arts. In 2010, she received a Philip Leverhulme Prize in Art History, and in 2011, she was awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellowship. During 2014-15, she will be the Dorothy K. Hohenberg Chair of Excellence in Art History at the University of Memphis.

David C. Driskell is a renowned painter and collector of art, as well as one of the leading authorities on the subject of African American art and the black artist in American society. His contributions to scholarship in the history of art include many books and more than forty catalogues for exhibitions he has curated. His articles and essays on the subject of African American art are extensive and have appeared in more than twenty major publications throughout the world. Driskell is Distinguished University Professor of Art Emeritus at the University of Maryland, College Park. He received his B.A. from Howard University in 1955 and his M.F.A. from Catholic University in 1962. He also attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1953 and studied art history in 1964 at Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorisches Documentatie, The Hague, Netherlands.

Tuliza Fleming (symposium advisor) is a curator for the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is slated to open its doors on the National Mall in 2015. She served as co-curator and contributing essayist for the museum's nationally touring exhibition and catalogue "Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing: The Apollo Theater and American Entertainment" (2010-2012). Prior to joining the Smithsonian, Fleming worked for five years as the Associate Curator of American Art at the Dayton Art Institute in Ohio as well as at other institutions. Her publications include "The Convergence of Aesthetics, Politics and Culture: Jeff Donaldson's *Wives of Shango*" (*AfriCOBRA in Chicago*, 2013), "The 'Museum Baby' Grows Up: Being a Curator of Color in a Monochromatic Art Museum World" (*Museum News*, 2005), and *Breaking Racial Barriers: African Americans in the Harmon Foundation Collection* (National Portrait Gallery in association with Pomegranate Press, 1997). She holds a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Daniel Haxall is Associate Professor of Art History at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania where he teaches courses on contemporary art, African American art, Africa and the diaspora, and the history of collage. He received his Ph.D. from the Pennsylvania State University, where his dissertation, "Cut and Paste Abstraction: Politics, Form, and Identity in Abstract Expressionist Collage," was supported by fellowships from the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Institute for the Arts and Humanities. In addition to abstract expressionism, his research interests include contemporary corporate patronage and the intersection of sports and art. His scholarly work has been published by the Grey Art Gallery of New York University, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, *Journal of Black Mountain College Studies*, *Woman's Art Journal*, Cambridge Scholars Press, and the University of Iowa. Haxall will be presenting a paper, "Fair Ball? Rethinking Sports Fetishism in Contemporary African American Art," at the College Art Association Annual Conference in Chicago this winter.

Camara Dia Holloway earned her Ph.D. from Yale University. She is Assistant Professor of American Art in the Art History Department at the University of Delaware where she teaches courses on American art, African American art, modern art, the history of photography, and issues of race and representation. She is completing a book manuscript entitled *Afrochic*:

Photography, Race, & Modernist Style that explores how shifting concepts of race shaped modernist subjectivity and aesthetics, which had a profound impact on the development of photography between the two World Wars. She is the founding co-director of the Association for Critical Race Art History (ACRAH).

Christine Mullen Kreamer (symposium advisor) is Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution. Her exhibitions and publications explore art, ritual, gender, African systems of knowledge, and museum practice. In addition to research in Togo, she has worked on museum training projects in Ghana and Vietnam. She received her Ph.D. from Indiana University. In addition to articles and essays on traditional and contemporary African arts and museum practice, her co-authored publications include *African Cosmos: Stellar Arts* (2012), *Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art* (2007), and *African Vision: The Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection* (2007).

Anne Lafont is Associate Professor of Early Modern Art History and Visual Culture at the Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée in France. She was a scientific advisor in historiography at the Institut National d'histoire de l'Art in Paris from 1997 to 2012 and a fellow at the Académie de France à Rome/Villa Medici in 2000. Her research concerns artistic theory and visual cultures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the visual construction of race, and gender issues. She is the author of a monograph on the French painter Girodet (2005) and editor of the volumes, *1740, un Abrégé du Monde* (2012) and *L'artiste savant à la conquête du monde moderne* (2010). She is currently preparing an exhibition on the African presence in French and British visual arts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the Musée du Louvre.

Peju Layiwola, born in 1967 in Nigeria, is a visual artist and art historian. She works in a variety of media producing installations, sculptures, prints, and jewelry. Layiwola began her studies in the arts at the University of Benin, Nigeria, and obtained a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She has had several group and solo exhibitions both locally and internationally. Her most recent traveling exhibition and edited book, *Benin1897.com: Art and the Restitution Question*, present an artist's impression of the cultural rape of Benin. She has also published widely on various aspects of the visual culture of Nigeria. She runs an active studio in Lagos, Nigeria, and currently teaches studio art and art history at the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Virginia Mecklenburg (symposium advisor) has been a curator of painting and sculpture at the Smithsonian American Art Museum since 1979. Her research interests include African American art, Ashcan art, New Deal art, mid-century abstraction and realism, folk art, and Latino art. Mecklenburg has organized more than twenty-five exhibitions, the most recent of which is *African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Era, and Beyond*, which is currently on a national tour. She has contributed articles on twentieth-century American painters to numerous exhibition publications as well as *Antiques Magazine*, *American Art Review*, and *American Art*. Mecklenburg has lectured widely in the U.S. and abroad and served on advisory committees for the Inter-American Development Bank, the Museum of Latin America (OAS), Reynolda House Museum of American Art, and the Washington Sculptors Group. She earned her Ph.D. in history (1983) from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Nicholas Miller is a sixth-year Ph.D. candidate at Northwestern University and current predoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. His dissertation, “Primitivist Encounters? African American Painting, Diasporic Objects, and the Making of Modern Art, 1927-77” follows the artistic practices of Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson, Thelma Johnson Streat, and Jeff Donaldson in order to trace the ways in which African American artists throughout the twentieth century have used African art to generate new forms of black representation and to affiliate themselves with the broader African diasporic world. In approaching these primitivist operations, he concentrates on a set of concerns—about the visual articulation of diasporic history, the transmission of plastic forms between mediums, and the continual import of African diasporic cultures to modernist painting. His work has been supported by the Smithsonian Institution, Northwestern University, and a Luce Pre-Dissertation Award.

Venny Nakazibwe is a textile designer and art historian, currently a Senior Lecturer and Dean of the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Makerere University, Uganda. She holds an M.A. in textile design and a Ph.D. in art history. She has conducted extensive research on the history of African textiles, focusing on indigenous fabric design and decorative techniques, as well as the contemporary use of these materials in art and design practice. Nakazibwe is the winner of the 2007 Roy Sieber Award for her outstanding Ph.D. dissertation on bark-cloth of the Baganda of southern Uganda. She has conducted lectures, workshops, and consulting work locally and internationally on the historical and contemporary use of bark-cloth in art and design practice and on design education for creative enterprises.

Chika Okeke-Agulu is Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Archaeology and the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University. He was the Robert Sterling Clark Visiting Professor of Art History at Williams College in 2007, a Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute Fellow in 2008, and a Woodrow Wilson National Foundation Fellow in 2010-11. As an art curator, he (co-)organized *Who Knows Tomorrow* (Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 2010), the 5th Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju, 2004), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994* (Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, 2001), *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa* (Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1995), and the Nigerian section of the First Johannesburg Biennale (1995). His writings on modern and contemporary African art have appeared in numerous scholarly journals, and his books include *Contemporary African Art Since 1980* (2009), *Who Knows Tomorrow* (2010), *Phyllis Galembo: Maske* (2010), and *Ezumezu: Essays on Nigerian Art and Architecture, a Festschrift in Honour of Demas Nwoko* (2012). His book, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in 20th-Century Nigeria* is forthcoming from Duke University Press. Okeke-Agulu is a co-editor of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*.

Ikem Stanley Okoye teaches at the University of Delaware. His work is focused on the interfaces between African, European, and American histories of art, architecture, and film, in particular the differentiated representations of historical phenomena with cognates in artistic imagination or practice such as capture, memory, modernity, migration, ennui, originality, spread (diaspora?), and loss. Okoye has held fellowships in the U.S. and abroad, including at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the Advanced Study Center at the University of Michigan’s International Institute, and the Center for Modern Oriental Studies in Berlin. He has

published essays in several journals, among them: *The Art Bulletin*, *The Harvard Architecture Review*, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, and a volume of *New Observations*, guest-edited by Adrian Piper in 1993. His work also appears in edited volumes including Mariët Westermann's *Anthropologies of Art*; Kobena Mercer's *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers*; Chima Korieh's *The Aftermath of Slavery*; Amalia Amaki's *A Century of African American Art*; and Lovejoy/Opoku-Agyemang/Trotman's *Africa and Trans-Atlantic Memories*. Okoye's book *Hideous Architecture* will be published by E.J. Brill in 2014.

Kelly Quinn (symposium advisor) is the Terra Foundation Project Manager for Online Scholarly and Educational Initiatives at the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, she was Assistant Professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and Sojourner Truth Visiting Faculty Lecturer at the University of Michigan, where she won two teaching awards. Quinn earned a Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, with certificates in Historic Preservation and Women's Studies. Her dissertation, "Making Modern Homes," documents the early architectural and social history of Langston Terrace, a housing project designed by African American architect Hilyard Robinson for Washington, D.C., as part of the New Deal; in 2007, it garnered the John Reys Prize for Best Dissertation in American Planning History from the Society for American City Regional and Planning History.

Tanya Sheehan is Associate Professor in the Art Department at Colby College, where she teaches American and African American art history. She is the author of *Doctored: The Medicine of Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Penn State Univ. Press, 2011) and editor of *Photography, History, Difference* (Dartmouth College Press, 2014). Dr. Sheehan has also recently contributed essays on race and representation to *The Image of the Black in Western Art Vol. V* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2014) and *A Companion to American Art* (Blackwell, 2014). With fellowship support from the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and other major research libraries, she is completing a book that explores ideas about blackness and whiteness in transnational photographic humor.

James Smalls is Professor of Art History and Theory and Affiliate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. His research and publications focus on the intersections of race, gender, and queer sexuality in the art of nineteenth-century Europe and in the visual culture of the black diaspora. He is the author of *The Homoerotic Photography of Carl Van Vechten: Public Face, Private Thoughts* (2006) and *Gay Art* (2008). He is currently working on a book about the African dancer and artist's model Féral Benga in relation to transatlantic diasporic visual art and culture.

Shawn Michelle Smith is Associate Professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the author of *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Duke, 2004), and co-editor of *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Duke, 2012), among other books. She is currently guest-editing a special issue of the journal *MELUS* on visual culture and race (forthcoming June 2014), and her new book on early American photography, *At the Edge of*

Sight: Photography and the Unseen, will be published by Duke University Press in November 2013. Smith is also a visual artist and her photo-based artwork has been shown most recently in a solo exhibition at the Sheldon Art Galleries in St. Louis, Missouri.

Jeffrey C. Stewart is Professor of Black Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the chair of the Black Studies Department. In 2011-12, he was a Charles Warren Center Fellow at Harvard University. He has studied issues of race and culture in art, history, literature, and music. His most important research has been on the Harlem Renaissance, the black arts movement of the 1920s, and the work of Alain Locke, a Howard University philosopher and impresario. Stewart has authored several books, including *1001 Things Everyone Should Know about African American History* (Doubleday, 1996). Stewart was the guest curator for the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition *To Color America: Portraits by Winold Reiss* (1989) and curated the national traveling exhibition *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen* (1998-2000).

Krista Thompson is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at Northwestern University. She is the author of *An Eye for the Tropics* (2006) and articles in *American Art*, *The Art Bulletin*, *Art Journal*, *Representations*, *The Drama Review*, and *Small Axe*. A recipient of fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and awardee of the David C. Driskell Prize in art history from the High Museum of Art, Thompson is currently working on *The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Practice*, a study of the intersections among black vernacular forms of photography, performance practices, and contemporary art in the Caribbean and the United States (forthcoming, Duke University Press).

Rebecca Keegan VanDiver is currently a Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at Vanderbilt University. She received her B.A. in the history of art and architecture from Harvard University; and an M.A. and Ph.D. in the Department of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University, where she also received a certificate in African and African American Studies. Prior to her appointment at Vanderbilt, she was a pre-doctoral fellow at the University of Virginia's Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies. Her research centers on African American artistic engagements with Africa and images of Africa in Western art and visual culture.

Tobias Wofford is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Santa Clara University. His research focuses on issues of race, identity, and globalization in contemporary art of the African diaspora. He earned a Ph.D. from UCLA with a dissertation entitled "Africa as Muse: The Visualization of Diaspora in African American Art 1950-1980." Before joining the faculty at Santa Clara University, he was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University from 2010-2012 and a Wyeth pre-doctoral fellow at CASVA from 2008-2010. He is currently working on a book manuscript that extends his dissertation research to recent African American art.

The Terra Foundation for American Art also supported symposium attendance for the following international graduate student guests:

Hannah Durkin is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow based at the University of Nottingham. Her dissertation and current book project concern the transatlantic film careers and writings of Josephine Baker (1906-1975) and Katherine Dunham (1909-2006). Her Leverhulme-funded project, which commences in the fall, will explore the pioneering contributions to art and anthropology of Black and Jewish women ethnographic filmmakers working in the U.S. South, the Caribbean, and Africa in the mid-twentieth century. Durkin's articles have appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journals including *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, the *Journal of American Studies*, and *New Review of Film and Television Studies*. Along with Celeste-Marie Bernier, she co-organized the symposium, "Art across the Black Diaspora: Visualizing Slavery in America," at the Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford (May 2013), and is co-editing the resulting volume, *Visualising Slavery and Reimagining Memory: Art across the Black Diaspora* (in progress).

Same Mdluli is a Ph.D. candidate in art history at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She completed her B-Tech in Fine Arts in 2006 at the University of Johannesburg and an M.A. in Arts and Culture Management at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2010. Her research examines the construction of art historical narratives and explores the production of art, its reception, and representation within a South African context. Her work focuses on the art of black rural artists in South Africa and examines how these artists were represented and received in particular ways during the early 1980s while questioning why they have since disappeared from the mainstream art market. This investigation includes a critical analysis of museology as an attempt to demonstrate how institutions generate and frame particular kinds of art historical narratives through the display of art, written texts, and inclusion of certain artists.

Nengi Omuku is an artist from Nigeria who completed her B.A. and M.A. at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, and is currently a Ph.D. student in art history at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She has had a solo exhibition at Open the Gate in London and group exhibitions in Greenwich, London, and Bristol. She is about to partake in her first group exhibition in Nigeria since her return. Her artistic practice has won her scholarships and awards including the Pranker Jones Memorial Prize and Nancy Balfour Art Scholarship, both awarded by University College London; the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency M.A. Scholarship, awarded by the Government of Nigeria; and the British Council CHOOGM Art Award, presented by HRH Queen Elisabeth II in 2003 in Abuja. Her work is currently held in private collections in Africa, Asia, and Europe.