

Reshaping the Field: Arts of the African Diasporas on Display
November 4–6, 2021

Thursday, November 4

4:15 p.m. Opening welcome and land acknowledgment

4:30 p.m. Keynote I: Art, Museums, and the Fear of a Black Planet
Bridget Cooks (University of California, Irvine)

Chair: Nana Adusei-Poku (CCS Bard)

5:05–5:30 p.m. Q&A

5:30–5:40 p.m. Break

5:40 p.m. Keynote II: Africa & the Anthropological Myth-Making of Museums
Monique Renee Scott (Bryn Mawr College)

Chair: Nana Adusei-Poku (CCS Bard)

6:10–6:35 p.m. Q&A

Friday, November 5

9:45 a.m. Opening welcome

10:00 a.m. Marginalized Legacies and Networks

This panel highlights the networks of artists and historically Black colleges and universities that not only exhibited Black artists but also fostered a dialogue that spanned across the United States. For example, the artist Hale Woodruff (1900–1980) founded the first art department at a Southern Black university, where he taught alongside the sculptor Nancy Elizabeth Prophet from 1931 to 1946. Woodruff also established the Atlanta Annuals in 1942 (until 1970), which showed exclusively African American artists. Closing the link between artists of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden and influential art educators like J. Eugene Grigsby, Woodruff taught at New York University from 1946 until his retirement in 1967.

Through their collections, historically Black colleges and universities created an often marginalized foundation for the flourishing of Black art, art education and artists and in recourse to exhibition-making.

Mapping Art History at the Atlanta University Center

Cheryl Finley (Spelman College/Yale University)

Fisk University Galleries

Jamaal B. Sheats (Fisk University)

Title Forthcoming

Abby Eron (Howard University)

Chair: Richard J. Powell (Duke University)

10:50 a.m. Discussion and Q&A

11:35 a.m. Break

12:15 p.m. Between Inclusion and Making Space

This panel addresses the tension between “anthropological” exhibitions organized via an ethnic signifier and exhibitions that aim at establishing art as a universal. Within this tension, Black artists have insisted on inclusion by organizing exhibitions outside mainstream museums, while others have utilized the museum, as artist David Driskell did, to highlight Black artists contributions. This panel will also assess where we are at today.

Insisting on Inclusion and Making Space Downtown

Howard Michael Singerman (Hunter College)

Revisiting *Exhibiting Blackness*

Brittany Webb (John Rhoden Collection)

More than Preamble: Anticipating *Two Centuries of Black American Art*

Julie L. McGee (University of Delaware)

Chair: Bridget Cooks (University of California, Irvine)

1:05 p.m. Discussion and Q&A

1:50 p.m. Break

2:50 p.m. Ruptures

The 2001 exhibition *Freestyle* at the Studio Museum in Harlem, curated by Thelma Golden and Christine Y. Kim, heralded with the term “post-Black” a shift in the positioning of Black artists who were born after the Civil Rights Movement and at the same time reintroduced the ongoing debate on identity and art. *Freestyle* and its format of exhibiting emerging Black artists in a group show emphasized the Studio Museum’s role in fostering young talent and introducing them to

the wider public while “redefining” the meaning of Blackness for the 21st century. Art historian Derek Conrad Murray, for one, argues for the queering of post-Black art, while CCS Bard Associate Professor Nana Adusei-Poku argues for the importance of post-structural discourses and transdiasporic connections as part of the post-Black discourse.

Does the Plantation end when the Market begins?

Personal reflections and more than a few questions in personal and public practice post-Freestyle

Senam Okudzeto (artist, Switzerland)

Blackness on Display: On Racial Fetishism and the Right to Opacity

Derek Conrad Murray (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Post-Post Black

Chair: Nana Adusei-Poku (CCS Bard)

3:35 p.m. Discussion and Q&A

4:20 p.m. Closing remarks and housekeeping for tomorrow

5:00 p.m. Virtual tour of the exhibition: *The Open Work: An Exhibition History of Elvira Dyangani Ose* with curator, Serubiri Moses, on view in the CCS Bard Galleries

Saturday, November 6

9:45 a.m. Opening welcome

10:00 a.m. Dialogics of Diaspora

The Thin Black Line (1980), curated by Lubaina Himid, *The Other Story* (1989), curated by Rasheed Araeen, and the later *Transforming the Crown* (1997), curated by Mora Beauchamp-Byrd, are just three examples from and focusing on the UK that exemplify the intense debates on the ways Black artists have been exhibited. Araeen advocated for an acknowledgment of African and Asian artists’ contribution to postwar Britain and their engagement with modernism, instead of reducing their work to their ethnic signifiers. Beauchamp-Byrd’s *Transforming the Crown* (1997-98), on the other hand, took a corrective stance on the History of British Art and continued the activism for visibility and inclusion that Marlene Smith and many other Black artists fought for. This panel reflects on this rich history and includes several speakers who shaped the discourse through their practices.

Lucy Steeds (Central Saint Martins)

Mora J. Beauchamp-Byrd (University of Tampa)

Kobena Mercer (Bard College)

Finding the Room Next to Mine

Chair and contextualization: Marlene Smith (Black Artists and Modernism)

10:45 a.m. Discussion and Q&A

11:30 a.m. Break

12:45 p.m. Curating Black Futures Now—roundtable conversation

This closing panel aims to give space to the perspective of contemporary curators working within the field of African diasporic art. How do they see the future of the field, what influences their work, and in which historical dialogue to they see their work?

Ways out of Black Difference and White Normalcy

Amber Esseiva (Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University)

No Real Closure

Languid Hands (Imani Robinson and Rabz Lansiquot) (independent curators)

El Agua Que Hace Dulce El Plátano/ The Water that Makes the Banana Sweet

Serubiri Moses (independent curator)

Title Forthcoming

Brittany Webb (John Rhoden Collection)

Chair: Nana Adusei-Poku (CCS Bard)

1:30 p.m. Discussion and Q&A

2:30 p.m. Closing