

# Year Nine



ART + PRACTICE



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Leimert Park  
Los Angeles, CA



# Contents



## Social Engagement 6

Thomas G. Lee, a Fearless Leader in Support of Transition-age Foster Youth	8
Roundtable Discussion with Mario Vincent Johanson	18
Living at First Place for Youth	22
Roundtable Discussion with Dr. Peyman Tashkandi	28
Going Global: Art + Practice Launches a New Collaboration with PILAglobal	32

## Living History 40

Ackee Bamboo	42
Take a Ride Down the Metro Rail K Line	48
A Tribute to Barbara Morrison	58
Neighbors Skate Shop	60

## Art at A+P 66

Representing Leadership at the California African American Museum	68
Deborah Roberts: I'm	78
The Permanent Collection at the California African American Museum	86
Chloë Bass   #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America	96
Justen LeRoy: Lay Me Down in Praise	100
Thaddeus Mosley: Forest	106





# Introduction

*Sankofa* is a proverb from the Akan tribe in Ghana that roughly translates to, “It is not too taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.” This proverb speaks to the idea that one should remember their past when looking toward the future.

Art + Practice is nearing completion of its ninth year in Leimert Park, and we are already planning for our tenth anniversary in 2023. With the passing of another year, A+P brings forth the knowledge and experiences we have gained from working hand-in-hand with our collaborators to bring contemporary art and foster youth programs to South Los Angeles. Our initiatives represent years of rich dialogues about how to innovate and expand our support of transition-age foster youth while providing access to museum-curated contemporary art. Our journey has manifested into a long-standing collaboration with nonprofit social service provider First Place for Youth, and a five-year collaboration with the California African American Museum.

Since 2016, we have worked with First Place to organize programs in Leimert Park that are grounded in education. We fund an annual \$100,000 educational scholarship program, organize roundtable discussions with industry leaders, and invite new stakeholders to participate in conversations about foster care, hoping to ignite meaningful change and opportunity in the futures of our foster youth.

In early 2022, A+P announced a five-year collaboration with CAAM. We launched this collaboration with a solo exhibition of mixed media works by artist Deborah Roberts, followed by a series of diverse public programs, and two solo exhibitions with conceptual artist Chloë Bass and multidisciplinary artist Justen LeRoy. While our

commitment to providing CAAM with space on our campus to organize exhibitions and public programs as a museum-residency model was a new concept, our history working together dates back to 2016 with a conversation centered on CAAM's exhibition, *The Ease of Fiction*. Together, we believe in the necessity to champion Black artists whose rigorous, thought-provoking work questions conventional power structures.

Now A+P is expanding its mission. Building on what we've learned by working with First Place and CAAM, we are welcoming a new collaborator to the group, PILAglobal. This collaboration aims to support PILAglobal's mission to provide quality education for children and families impacted by displacement and poverty world-wide. As part of the collaboration, A+P is funding teachers' salaries and is supporting the nonprofit's sustainability efforts through outreach and grantmaking for two years. Education is central to our vision, and our work with PILAglobal will take that vision forward to a global scale.

Our three collaborations speak to *Sankofa's* message: A+P joins hands with CAAM and First Place to reflect on our work, bringing forward what is useful to continue our collaborations for the next five years while welcoming PILAglobal into our fold. This work is done together, and with more supporters than we can count, including you.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and your support of our work.



# Social Engagement





# Thomas G. Lee, a Fearless Leader in Support of Transition-age Foster Youth

Art + Practice's Director Sophia Belsheim sits down with First Place for Youth's CEO Thomas G. Lee to discuss his background, leadership style, and vision for how best to support First Place's foster youth



First Place for Youth CEO Thomas G. Lee

This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

**Sophia Belsheim:** How did you come to work in foster care?

**Thomas G. Lee:** I've been fortunate enough to live a couple of lifetimes. From 1990 to 1994, I was a professional baseball player—I pitched for the Kansas City Royals and the Seattle Mariners. Once my baseball career was over, I went to junior college. I knew I had a natural gift for working with kids, and wanted to pursue a career working with them. My first job out of school was with Children's Institute Incorporated. I was responsible for working with young kids who were just taken from their biological parents and put in custody.

Next, I worked at an organization called Hillsides in Pasadena. The organization had two job openings—an educational position in their adolescent boys group home and another in their recreational department. Being an athlete, I initially thought, "Wow, working in the rec department sounds like a sure fit for me. I can go play with kids all day long." But when I interviewed, I was asked, "What do you ultimately want to do?" and I said, "I want to teach kids." I opted for working with the boys in the group home.



Art + Practice Director Sophia Belsheim and First Place for Youth CEO Thomas G. Lee in conversation

**Sophia:** What do you think made you want to teach?

**Thomas:** I had just transferred to Cal State Los Angeles, where I was majoring in English. A fire turned on in me. I fashioned myself as a kind of Promethean figure who would educate, mentor, and share the fire with young people that needed it most. That's the kind of educator I wanted to be.

**Sophia:** And how long did you work at Hillsides?

**Thomas:** I worked at Hillsides in the boys group home for six-and-a-half years. Every day I worked with the young men who lived there. I taught them how to cook, do their homework, clean, and take care of themselves. I developed a higher sense of empathy and understanding for how tough it is to be in foster care. I also saw them matriculate through the program and then go off into different areas of life. Some were successful, others struggle to this day.

When I finished my schooling, I jumped into teaching. I taught English Literature for seven years, spending most of my teaching career in Watts at King Drew Magnet High School. I taught 9th and 12th graders.

**Sophia:** When did you stop teaching?

**Thomas:** What brought me back to the world of child welfare was a set of extraordinary events in 2005. Early in that school year, I had a 12th-grade student named George Williams III who was shot and killed. My mentor at the time said, "I see you're taking this a little too hard. You're going to get used to it." And that's when I knew I needed to stop teaching. I didn't want to get used to burying my students; I wanted to do more.

As fortune would have it, Hillsides came knocking on my door again. They were developing a program that would give more time and





A+P Scholar  
Wendy



A+P Scholar  
Karrueche



support to their youth before leaving foster care. This was before AB 12,<sup>1</sup> and there were only a few programs supporting foster youth exiting state care. I jumped at that opportunity, and helped build Youth Moving On.

**Sophia:** Can you tell us a little about Youth Moving On?

**Thomas:** Youth Moving On was a housing program that started with the purchase of a 50-unit apartment complex in Pasadena. We created a natural revenue stream by renting out two-thirds of the units at market rate and setting aside the remainder for our foster youth. The program started with two foster youth and grew to serving over 650 foster youth every year. I ran that program for more than a decade.

My next role was with the Alliance for Children's Rights. They were expanding their program to improve foster youth's college and employment outcomes. I worked there for about three years, until Friends of the Children approached me about another opportunity.

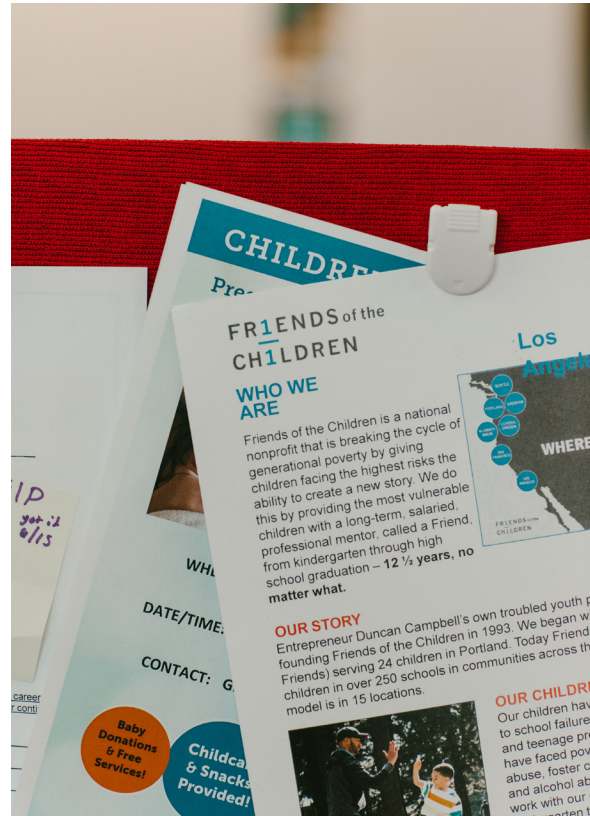
**Sophia:** When we talked about Friends of the Children before, you mentioned that it has a unique mentorship model.

**Thomas:** Yes, Friends of the Children walks alongside children for a 12-year commitment. They start with children from ages four to six and stay with them until they graduate from high school. It was one of the most cutting-edge kinds of mentoring I've seen.

In 2018, I launched Friends of the Children—Los Angeles. Under my leadership, we became one of the fastest growing sites in the national network, focusing on parenting foster youth as we wanted to ensure that we could stop the cyclical nature of young people going into foster care. Then in 2020 I found out that First Place was looking for a new leader.

**Sophia:** Had you worked with First Place before?

<sup>1</sup>. Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12) took effect on January 1, 2012. AB 12 created California's Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program, which allows eligible youth in the child welfare and probation systems to remain in foster care until age 21. Source: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/>



Friends of the Children flyers at First Place for Youth

**Thomas:** I first partnered with First Place eight years ago to develop permanent housing for foster youth. It was one of the most impactful programs that we launched at Hillside because all of the youth from that effort are still thriving in their homes to this day. When you think about permanency and making sure that people are stably housed, and then you pair that opportunity with mentorship and supportive services, the sky's the limit. First Place champions that model every day. It was an organization that I wanted to serve and be a part of in a big way.

**Sophia:** How would you describe your leadership style?

**Thomas:** When it comes to supporting foster youth, I am fearless servant-leader. I approach my work with humility, as a teacher, and servant to others. I aim to get the best out of people, drawing out answers they already have within themselves. I am also a systems person. I believe that our work at First Place has to focus on how we change social systems while creating better







conditions for our foster youth. I also believe in designing strong internal systems so that our staff can do their jobs easily and at their highest levels.

**Sophia:** How do you view foster care in Los Angeles? And in your opinion, what is needed most for our transition-age foster youth on a local level?

**Thomas:** I'm looking at my role at First Place as an opportunity to forge relationships.

The world of foster care is obscure to many. We have to make our invisible work visible. Los Angeles has the largest child welfare system with approximately 2,500 transition-age foster youth who need stable housing and supportive services. It's a small enough issue for us to fix.

Out of all of the counties in California, LA County has the largest economy. Yet Los Angeles' child welfare system is the poorest resourced county in the state. LA County only pays about 50 percent of the costs for the young adults in our program. It's been that way since 2011. With housing prices and inflation continuing to rise, this arrangement makes our work that much harder.

Right now, First Place serves about 218 foster youth in LA County—more than any other service area. We could easily grow and scale, serving a lion's share of LA County's youth with greater investment from the public and the private sectors. I am currently putting pressure on our local and national systems, allowing for the private side to help where they can. I want to start locally and then grow our initiatives on a national scale.

**Sophia:** In speaking with First Place's young adults, what aspects of the nonprofit's programs best serve their needs?

**Thomas:** First, we always look at housing as the first intervention. Having a stable place to call home, and to be free from all threats is one of the most crucial elements of our work.

The second part is building relationships. Our foster youth need to trust us, so we can work together. But it's also important for our young adults to build healthy relationships outside our community. Building those support systems helps prevent social systems from coming in and taking over that role.

Last but not least is making sure our foster youth have the skills to become financially

independent. That's duly managed through support with their workforce and post-secondary educational goals.

**Sophia:** Now switching gears, what aspects of First Place and A+P's collaboration stands out for you?

**Thomas:** It's the nature of our relationship. Our collaboration is transformational. A+P is committed to supporting our transition-age foster youth in all ways. I think that our collaboration is the gold standard for what any nonprofit leader would want to have with a supporter.

Finally, on a much more granular level, A+P's support helps us address the need to support our foster youth's education in an innovative way. The A+P Scholars Program empowers us to decrease any barriers that our foster youth face in pursuing their education. It's important to be able to serve our young adults in ways they need to be served. The A+P Scholars Program allows us to do just that.

**Sophia:** What are some of your current goals for our collaboration?

**Thomas:** I would like to continue acting as a good steward and great partner in this work. I want to make sure that we achieve all of our outcomes, making sure that our young adults are performing, and achieving the outcomes that we set out to achieve together.

In addition, I wish to grow our collaboration, looking for opportunities to get more people involved including our young adults, people within A+P's universe, and the broader Leimert Park community. A lot of people see us here, but they don't necessarily know what we do. We've got to do better with that outreach.

**OVERLEAF:** First Place for Youth and Art + Practice staff outside A+P's Exhibition Space



# California African American Museum

# ART + PRACTICE

ON VIEW

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# Roundtable Discussion with Mario Vincent Johanson

Sharing tools for supporting one's mental health



OPPOSITE, ABOVE, AND FOLLOWING SPREAD: Roundtable Discussion with Mario Vincent Johanson

Mario Vincent Johanson grew up in South Los Angeles in the early 1970s. After being separated from his mother as a young child, he spent time living in the foster care system—an experience he remembers as incredibly traumatic and life-altering. Fortunately, two years later, Mario was reunited with his mother, who remarried and moved the family to Santa Monica. As one of the few children of color in the Santa Monica school system, Mario was frequently met with suspicion by the white majority or outright ignored. Knowing what it feels to be deemed unworthy of an education, especially during his time spent in foster care, shaped Mario's sense of self, and propelled him to embody a conception of leadership that is grounded in a deep love and respect for humanity.

On July 13, 2022, Mario told his story to a intimate group of foster youth from First Place's program in A+P's public program space. He spoke about how his traumatic childhood experiences resurfaced as physical ailments, including painful headaches, and how, after years of trying to treat these symptoms using various forms of therapy, spiritual practices, and

medicine, he eventually started seeing a somatic therapist. This form of therapy changed the course of Mario's life. It led him down a path of healing from his past.

Somatic therapy draws from a range of different therapeutic practices ranging from psychotherapy to physical exercise. By strengthening the relationship between mind and body, it hopes to provide a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. While there are many types of somatic therapy, most incorporate breath work, meditation, visualization, sensitivity awareness, and movement. All practices foreground the body in the therapeutic process, allowing for a person's physical body to release any mental or emotional strain that may be causing chronic pain, discomfort, stress, or tension.

Mario's discussion of somatic therapy was a new concept for First Place's young adults. Many young adults connected with Mario's story, and shared how they also experienced trauma from living in foster care. Some said their traumatic experiences manifested in physical forms, such as chest pain, and that in many instances traditional therapy only addressed part of their





issues. Mario acknowledged that while traditional forms of therapy work for many people, they don't always work for everyone. He welcomed young adults to explore somatic therapy as an alternative to those approaches. The discussion ended with Mario thanking the young adults for sharing their experiences, and invited them to lean on their community for support when addressing their history of trauma.

**About Mario Vincent Johanson**  
Mario Vincent Johanson is the Director of Student Wellness and Human Development at New Roads School in Santa Monica and a founding member of the school's educational team. He is responsible for supporting institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion for the New Roads community.





# Living at First Place for Youth

In December 2021, Alex moved into her Santa Monica apartment after living in another apartment complex managed by First Place for Youth in Compton. When Alex turned 21, she aged out of the Transitional Housing Program for non-minor dependents (THP-NMD)—a program that serves youth ages 18 to 21. She applied to remain in extended foster care in First Place's Transitional Housing Plus program (THP-Plus) for young adults ages 21 to 24.<sup>1</sup>

Alex works closely with her Youth Advocate, Lauren, who works out of the building's community space, to support her daily needs as well as the other young women who live there. Alex loves her new apartment, especially the magnolia tree outside her window, but most importantly, Alex says she feels safe.

Alex is currently working at Western Bank, and is enrolled as a sociology major at Los Angeles Southwest Community College. After graduating, she is interested in pursuing various career pathways, including social work, cosmetology, and finance. At the bank, she is learning to work with clients, how to handle money, and applying her mathematical skills on a daily basis—skills that will help her no matter what passion or career path she chooses.

So what advice would Alex give a young adult entering First Place's program?

"Being in First Place's program gives you space to create something for yourself that will benefit you when you exit the program," Alex says. "I put away \$250 a month, so I can leave

First Place with some savings. It's important to pay yourself before you pay anyone else. It's also important to stay on top of your responsibilities. At the end of the day, you are working for yourself. Nobody else is going to help you support your goals or dreams. Make sure you put yourself first. Take care of yourself by paying your rent, going to school and your job, and staying in good communication with your team at First Place. They'll help you out."



First Place for Youth Housing Complex



First Place for Youth participant Alex

FOLLOWING SPREAD:  
The magnolia tree located outside Alex's apartment









ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: First Place for Youth Housing Complex



# Roundtable Discussion with Dr. Peyman Tashkandi

Dr. Peyman Tashkandi, a double board-certified psychiatrist, shares his educational and career journey as a doctor with young adults from First Place for Youth

Born in Iran and raised in Los Angeles, Dr. Tashkandi's work is centered in exploring the inner workings of the mind, specifically examining the relationship between human experience, psychiatry, and medicine. He talked with our young adults about how growing up as an immigrant in Los Angeles shaped his career and inspired him to raise awareness about mental health in underserved communities.

Many of our young adults are interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. During his visit, Dr. Tashkandi answered their questions about working in the medical field. He shared his own difficulties navigating medical school and residency programs, and even admitted that he often had to remind himself of his end goal during many sleepless nights.

Dr. Tashkandi also offered insights about how diverse the field of medicine is, reminding our young adults that they do not need to become a doctor to work in medicine and that there are other areas of the field, such as in administration, research, or direct patient care.

He recommended that attendees consider volunteering in a hospital before deciding what field of medicine they want to pursue. This experience, he said, will present them with the opportunity to work in multiple departments and focus their interests, especially as they consider taking out a sizable student loan for school.



General Adult, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital  
Dr. Peyman Tashkandi

Dr. Tashkandi said that despite the struggles he faced, the effort was worth it. He said "that when things get tough, it's important to keep moving forward to pursue your dream"—a concept we all can relate to and one that can be applied to other aspects of life.

Dr. Peyman Tashkandi is a psychiatrist at Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital in South Los Angeles. He is also a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and the Behavioral Sciences at Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California.



ABOVE AND FOLLOWING SPREAD: Roundtable Discussion with Dr. Peyman Tashkandi







# Going Global: Art + Practice Launches a New Collaboration with PILAglobal

Art + Practice was founded in 2014 by Mark Bradford, Eileen Harris Norton, and Allan DiCastro with the intention to establish a small arts nonprofit in Leimert Park that would serve a diverse array of communities and needs. They envisioned A+P as a space that would house museum-quality exhibitions and public programming while supporting the housing, education, and employment needs of transition-age foster youth in South Los Angeles. In their plan, A+P's campus would be a container in which collaborators such

as the California African American Museum and First Place for Youth could host their programs and initiatives, and A+P would help sustain their programs administratively.

Our founders saw A+P not as the main story but as the space where our collaborators' narratives could take shape. As we near the end of our ninth year operating in Leimert Park, we are expanding our mission beyond contemporary art and foster care by welcoming nonprofit PILAglobal as our third collaborator.

PILAglobal is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit founded in 2014 by a group of educators with the belief that all children are entitled to a quality education. In its early years, the nonprofit partnered with local teachers, transforming their classrooms and sharing innovative educational practices meant to improve the lives of students with challenging socioeconomic backgrounds.

In 2018, with the intensification of the global refugee crisis, PILAglobal expanded their programs on a global scale. Stationing themselves in Lesvos, Greece, PILAglobal created a "Nest"—a beautiful and engaging early learning environment—where young children fleeing wars in Syria and Afghanistan could have a safe, peaceful space to learn, play, and heal. Four years later, PILAglobal has six Nests spread throughout Mexico, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, and Greece. These sites are run by a dedicated team of teachers who are trained in healing-centered pedagogies and practices.

A+P first learned about PILAglobal's work from our co-founder Mark Bradford, who has a long history of engaging with nonprofit organizations and using his art to support their work. In collaboration with international art gallery Hauser & Wirth, Mark established a one-year collaboration with PILAglobal in 2021, and donated art supplies as well as art publications to create a resource library and creative learning programs that have served over 500 displaced children at PILAglobal's nests in Tijuana and Athens. When A+P learned of PILAglobal's dedicated work, we were seeking to expand our philanthropic impact on a global scale with education at the forefront. PILAglobal seemed like a natural fit to join our collaborative roster of nonprofit partners.

Over the next two years, A+P and PILAglobal will work together to provide educational support to children and families experiencing forced migration and poverty worldwide. A+P will fund



OPPOSITE, ABOVE, AND OVERLEAF: Children learn and play at PILAglobal Canyon Nest School in Tijuana, Mexico







teachers' salaries and support PILAglobal's efforts in outreach, brand awareness, and fundraising. By contributing economic resources toward learning centers that prioritize participation and interactivity, trauma-informed care, art programs, and well-compensated teachers, A+P joins PILAglobal in the nonprofit's mission to advance equal access to education in Europe, Africa, and the US-Mexico border. This work will prepare displaced children for formal schooling by cultivating soft skills like communication and critical thinking as well as hard skills including reading and early math.

Education is central to A+P's vision. Like PILAglobal, we believe access to a quality education is a human right. PILAglobal's educational model recognizes the success of that work begins with teachers. The following portraits capture the teachers who make PILAglobal's work possible. We celebrate their leadership and dedication in helping support displaced children and their families across the world.

To learn more about PILAglobal, visit PILAglobal's website at [www.pilaglobal.org](http://www.pilaglobal.org).



**ABOVE:** Art teacher Soraya Vazquez sets up art projects at PILAglobal's Canyon Nest School in Tijuana, Mexico  
**OPPOSITE:** PILAglobal teacher Soraya Vazquez







ABOVE: PILAglobal teacher Maximilano Alfaro

OPPOSITE: Children learn and play at PILAglobal's Canyon Nest School in Tijuana, Mexico



# Living History





# Ackee Bamboo

Family-owned and -operated restaurant Ackee Bamboo shares the taste of their Caribbean heritage with South Los Angeles

In the late '90s, Marlene Sinclair Beckford was working as a nurse at Kaiser Permanente, but she dreamed of opening a restaurant in Los Angeles with her family. Having grown up in Jamaica, where her mother was a chef, Marlene wanted to serve the Jamaican dishes she had been raised on and loved. Marlene's mother not only taught her how to cook and shared her recipes, she also

instilled the importance of sharing culture and community through food.

In 2004, Marlene and her husband Delroy Beckford took a leap of faith and opened Ackee Bamboo. The Beckfords named the restaurant after the national fruit of Jamaica. Ackee, which is native to West Africa, represents diversity—its outer layer is red and its interior layers are yellow



OPPOSITE: Ackee Bamboo's Jamaican patties, a customer favorite  
ABOVE: Ackee Bamboo co-owners Marlene and Delroy Beckford





Richard prepares Jamaican patties in the Ackee Bamboo kitchen



with black seeds—while the name “bamboo” symbolizes the strength of the Jamaican people. Ackee Bamboo embodies a space where people of all nationalities and backgrounds are welcome to eat a home-cooked meal.

The Beckford family works as a team to keep the restaurant running. Marlene is the main cook in the kitchen. Delroy also cooks, and oversees the finances. Their eldest daughter, Melissa, who recently graduated from San Francisco State University, runs the restaurant's social media accounts and manages catering. Their second daughter, Lauren, who also recently graduated college from Cal State Long Beach, enjoys working with her parents in the kitchen and helping her sister manage the restaurant's social media accounts. Lauren is both a great cook and baker. On any given day, you'll find the family behind the cashier desk, taking orders, and cooking in the kitchen. It's a collective effort that makes the restaurant possible.

As Ackee looks to the future, Marlene and Delroy have big plans for the restaurant. They wish to buy a space to house their restaurant for their two daughters and son Rhyann to take over one day. Marlene and Delroy also want to push the direction of their Jamaican patties—a customer favorite—to provide a larger variety of flavors and stuffings. The Beckford family are proud of their accomplishments and continue to innovate their restaurant's menu. They welcome Leimert Park's community to continue enjoying their cuisine for years to come.

**OPPOSITE TOP:** Richard and Lloyd, two cooks in the Ackee Bamboo kitchen

**OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Ackee Bamboo co-owner Marlene Beckford

**FOLLOWING SPREAD:** Ackee Bamboo in Leimert Park



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## Take a Ride Down the Metro Rail K Line

The long-awaited Metro Rail K Line is now open. The first phase of the opening includes a 6.5-mile route with six new stations located between the Expo Line at Crenshaw and Exposition Boulevards and northern Westchester at Florence and Hindry Avenues. The second phase of construction is slated for completion in late 2024.

Phase two of construction will connect the K Line to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Take a ride down the Crenshaw Boulevard. Make sure to stop by A+P via the Leimert Park Metro Station, located at Crenshaw Boulevard and W. 43rd Place.



OPPOSITE, ABOVE, AND PP. 50-57: The Metro Rail K Line opens in Leimert Park





**K**  
**LEIMERT PARK  
STATION**  
**METRO RAIL  
K LINE**  
**PLATFORM 1 TO  
WESTCHESTER/  
VETERANS**

Braille text is present at the bottom of the sign.



# Leimert Park

### Metro Rail & Busway

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# Leimert Park

### K Line Stations North

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# Leimert Park

### Metro Notice of Civil Rights

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. In addition to Title VI, Metro also prohibits discrimination based on sex, age, disability, religion, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation or any other protected classes as described in State or Federal laws. Any person who believes he or she has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice may file a complaint with Metro. For more information on Metro's civil rights program and the procedure to file a complaint, please contact Metro using the information listed below.

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# A Tribute to Barbara Morrison

On March 16, 2022, legendary singer and educator Barbara Morrison passed away in Los Angeles. She was 72 years old.

Morrison was born in Ypsilanti, a suburb of Detroit, MI, in 1949. Her father was a doo-wop singer who encouraged his daughter to take up

his craft, and he supported her love of music throughout her early years.

In 1971, Morrison moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in music. She landed herself a singing spot with Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson's band, and regularly performed on *The Johnny*

*Otis Show*. The time she spent in Los Angeles influenced and set the foundation for Morrison's love of jazz and blues.

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, Morrison extensively toured and performed throughout the world with numerous acts, including The Philip Morris Superband. As an avid studio artist, she recorded many of her own albums, and appeared as a guest on many reputable artists' recordings, including on jazz trumpeter

Doc Severinsen's 1999 track, *Swingin' the Blues*. Morrison worked extensively with the likes of Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie, Etta James, Tony Bennett, and many others.

In 2009, Morrison opened The Barbara Morrison Performing Arts Center in Leimert Park, with a mission to support emerging artists. In 2017, she opened the California Jazz and Blues Museum to honor California's influence on the larger history of jazz and blues music. Morrison's performing arts center and museum were pillars in the Leimert Park community. Both served to advance and provide access to Morrison's love—jazz and blues music. While running her spaces in Leimert Park, and continuing to perform professionally, Morrison was an adjunct professor of Global Jazz Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 2020, UCLA launched the Barbara Morrison Scholarship for Jazz in her honor.

A Leimert Park intersection at the corner of West 43rd Street and Degnan Boulevard has been named Barbara Morrison Square to continue her legacy. Morrison is remembered for her soulful voice, her devotion to the Leimert Park community, and her desire to support the next generation of performing artists.



Barbara Morrison Square in Leimert Park

LEFT: Grand opening event for the California Jazz and Blues Museum in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. April 2, 2017.



# Neighbors Skate Shop

A brand celebrating the legacy of Leimert Park with the vision to bridge generations of people through skateboarding

Neighbors Skate Shop is building history one skateboard at a time.

Founded in February 2019 by Tre, who was later joined by his business partner and co-owner, Cleon, Neighbors is a store that has been described as an epicenter of youth culture in Leimert Park.

The two business partners established the skate shop with the vision to cultivate a lively gathering space for their community. In 2021, they worked with their local neighborhood council members to create a safe space for kids to skate and be themselves. As a result, the City

of Los Angeles granted Neighbors two parking spots for a skate ramp, which is why you'll find a half-pipe just outside the shop with folks skating there throughout the day.

While Tre and Cleon both grew up seeing the world through the lens of skateboarding, they developed their perspectives in different worlds. Tre was born and raised in Leimert Park while Cleon hails from Phoenix, AZ, but their diverse experiences fuel their passion and form the foundation that Neighbors is built on.

Neighbors represents Tre and Cleon's latest creative endeavor. The two like to say that



Neighbors Skate Shop co-owners Cleon and Tre



Clothing sold at Neighbors Skate Shop

Leimert Park is the brand of their store because Neighbors wouldn't exist without the South LA neighborhood and its cultural vibrancy. They're proud that folks travel near and far to visit their shop, which carries a variety of merchandise, including art supplies, clothing, shoes, hats, skateboards, and related accessories. For them, it's important that their customers can find the latest and hottest street wear, including popular brands like Nike, Stussy, and Converse, on their shelves in South Los Angeles. "Folks don't have

to go out of their own neighborhood to buy the things they want. They can get them at Neighbors, and invest in a local Black-owned business," Tre and Cleon say.

So, what does the future hold for Neighbors? They've barely scratched the surface in terms of how they wish to serve their community. Tre and Cleon are working to continue scaling their vision, while keeping roots in Leimert Park to preserve and protect the neighborhood for what it is, a rich cultural space for Black Los Angeles.





Neighbors Skate Shop co-owner Tre inside the shop





WE ARE  
STILL  
HERE

ENTIBO  
SKATE SHOP

GORILLA OLIVE

HAR  
RES

Neighbors Skate Shop  
co-owners Clean and Tre

Hardcore Fat Cap

Fat Pink Cap



# Art at A+P





# Representing Leadership at the California African American Museum

The California African American Museum is an institution dedicated to researching, collecting, preserving, and interpreting for public enrichment the history, art, and culture of African Americans. This institution's work is executed by a talented group of individuals who share a

commitment to fulfilling CAAM's mission with grace, innovation, and the intention to welcome Los Angeles into their doors with a vision for the future. Here, we introduce select members of CAAM's staff who make CAAM's Leimert Park presence at A+P possible.



## Cameron Shaw Executive Director

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, so I have a homegrown passion for sharing CAAM's work with the people of this city and ensuring that we're a museum that's prepared for the future.

Right now, that means building the infrastructure to support innovative work with living artists and scholars, as well as expanding our collections and making them more accessible to the public. I'm particularly interested in artists who have research-based practices or who are driven by big ideas that take time to develop. These types of projects can be demanding, both for artists and institutions. My task is to better understand the frameworks needed to support those practices. From an institutional perspective, what does CAAM need to build to help usher revolutionary ideas into the world?

In hindsight, living in New Orleans for eight years shaped the trajectory of my career. There, I was the co-founder of a small arts organization called Pelican Bomb, and my work building that organization has influenced the skill set and perspective I bring to CAAM. In New Orleans, I was immersed in conversations about arts organizing, artist collectives and collaboration, and the importance of protecting and supporting Black culture bearers. At the same time, I was learning about how to fund-raise, scale, and sustain a business. I realize these lessons inform how I show up as a museum director—you have to be deeply invested in the arts, while also thinking about the needed financial resources, and how best to work with people and other institutions.

To me, the collaboration between A+P and CAAM is not only about connecting institutions but also about linking two neighborhoods that have been central to the celebration of Black life in Los Angeles. We're building on four pillars that are also guiding our work at the museum's home in Exposition Park. Those pillars—one, Black abstraction; two, Black Lives, green justice; three, Black spirituality and ancestral technologies; and four, liberating the Black archive—were developed out of conversations that we were having at the museum, and from ideas that were important to our curators about Black life and some of the most pressing issues of our time. We have planted some seeds, and we're seeing how these ideas can grow and take shape.

The two shows that we have on view at A+P in fall 2022 with Justen LeRoy and Chloë Bass create a rich dialogue about Black abstraction and its histories. Both exhibitions are grounded in a type of Black environmentalism—looking to the natural world to investigate the relationship between Blackness, public space, and the future of our planet. In 2023, CAAM will exhibit work by Helen Cammock. Cammock has spent researching the archives at the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans, where she reviewed sculptor Elizabeth Catlett's papers, mining them to meditate on how artists perceive their creative freedom in relation to the physical forms they put into the world. Cammock's research will take several forms at A+P, all foregrounding her commitment to the language of abstraction and her beautiful sense of poetry.





## Isabelle Lutterodt

### Deputy Director

I am an artist who has worked within the arts and cultural sector for over twenty years engaging in various strategies to connect communities with the arts.

My journey with CAAM started in 1999 when I was hired to teach art classes to kids whilst attending graduate school at CalArts. Later, after the curator I was working with had visited a show that I co-curated at the Watts Towers Art Center and the Armory Center for the Arts, we were invited to propose a show at CAAM. At that time, we were really interested to see how artists might explore particular topics based on specific briefs we developed. Our collaboration culminated in a 2004 show at CAAM that examined the aftermath of the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. The show was a departure for CAAM at the time and cemented my interest in how institutions engage audiences through exhibitions and programming. Given my history with the organization, joining CAAM as the organization's Deputy Director in late 2021 has felt like a homecoming.

CAAM plays an important role in Los Angeles and the state of California, as the only state-funded institution centered on the celebration of

Black life. Over the last 40 years, CAAM's mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the African American and African diasporic experience, through history, art, and culture, has had a major impact on our community.

I am excited to be able to build upon CAAM's rich legacy, while adjusting to the many changes that impact Black people's lives and the communities we reside in. Under the leadership of our current Executive Director, CAAM is entering a new era of growth and possibility. We are building internal capacity, considering how we continue to center the Black experience for the next generations of Californians and looking at opportunities that allow us to stretch programmatically.

CAAM's collaboration with A+P provides an opportunity to be in dialogue with the Leimert Park community in their neighborhood over a sustained period of time through thoughtful exhibitions and programming. Our collaboration provides CAAM an opportunity to nurture and deepen our relationships with communities in South Los Angeles. My hope is that visitors, especially children, will feel celebrated and welcomed.



## Alexsandra M. Mitchell

### Manager of Education and Public Programs

I'm a Philadelphia native, and my family was really intentional about maximizing my educational and creative outlets, so I grew up being exposed to the arts. I grew up with my family's art collection: my nana's original Henry Ossawa Tanner, my dad's Ernie Barnes, my mother's collection, and my godmother's best friend founded one of the only Black women-owned art galleries in Philadelphia. They started my art collection at a very early age. My mother owned a salon and day spa, so I had early positive images of Black beauty. I was enrolled as a student at Philadanco (The Philadelphia School of Arts) and danced there until I graduated high school. My nana, the Reverend Dr. Sadie S. Mitchell, took me to my first museums as a child. She was a retired teacher and principal who also worked for the school board. Most people in my family have been a teacher or educator in some capacity. Merging art and education has been central to my life.

My undergraduate degree at Howard University was in African American Studies. After Howard, I taught in Senegal and later received a dual Master's in Africana Studies and Library Science from Pratt University and NYU. After that, I taught Clyde Taylor's course at NYU, and then transitioned to my role at The Schomburg Center

for Research in Black Culture and taught at Pratt's grad program. Later, I continued my graduate studies through a doctoral program at Cornell University, where I examined work by contemporary Black artists, especially those with interdisciplinary practices, like Kara Walker. My background and interests set me up for my career today, merging my interests in public programs and education at CAAM.

As I work on developing programs at A+P, I'm interested in supporting conversations about the unique sanctuaries that Black spaces and Black institutions provide for Black artists, and propelling dialogues that deepen our understanding of the relationship between gender and the Black body. These conversations are organically happening at CAAM. We are thinking about how artists help us make sense of and think deeply about contemporary political and social movements.

At the same time, CAAM is expanding its programming beyond discussions about artistic practice. We're considering the many ways people are looking to improve and build upon their health and wellbeing. We want to support folks being intentional about joy with a bit of levity. It's important to balance out the heady, forward-thinking intellectual work by providing spaces for people to freely enjoy and experience Black art.







## Essence Harden

Visual Arts Curator

I'm from Oakland and Berkeley and moved to Los Angeles in 2015.

I went to UC Berkeley, for undergrad and graduate school, receiving an undergraduate degree in History and a Master's in African American Studies, respectively. My PhD (still ABD), also at UC Berkeley is in African Diaspora Studies.

My sense of art and artistic practice is rooted in California. Coming from a family that has been in the state for several generations, going to public school here, and having conducted most of my early scholarship here has deeply informed my thinking about Black cultural traditions and practices within California specifically and the West more broadly.

I am really intrigued by how Black Californians can and do create a broader sense of collective and Black migratory diasporic histories.

Artists who tend to be underrepresented—whether that's within exhibitions, writing, economically, or any other context of doing this work—are the people whom I concern myself with. I also love abstraction as a way to not only deal with questions of race and technology, but also, as this exploratory side that deals with amorphous ideas, such as theorizing place, belonging, and the cosmos.

I am currently working on organizing three exhibitions: a two-person exhibition with Adele Roberson and Azikiwe Mohammed at CAAM; a three-channel video installation with Justen LeRoy at A+P; and am co-curating the Orange County Museum of Art Biennale in fall 2022.



## Taylor Renee Aldridge

Visual Arts Curator and Program Manager

I've been working at CAAM as Visual Arts Curator for two years, though I'm originally from Detroit.

I've been grateful to collaborate with Chloë Bass for her exhibition at A+P in fall 2022, as her public artwork that will be installed in South Los Angeles in 2023. Bass's practice has allowed me to think from multiple perspectives about how intimacy, encounters, and boundaries can be upheld in public spaces, and how public art can instigate those types of experiences in a fabricated environment.

Bass's public art installation, a sundial-like sculpture exhibited outdoors, is CAAM's first public art project under its new leadership and collaboration with A+P. The dial needs at least two participants to work: one to make the shadow and one to read time. So the very function of the work requires collaboration and shared reading—

not to mention the natural element of the sun. I'm eager to see how Angelenos play and engage with outdoor work.

I think both CAAM and A+P encourage intersubjective dialogues. So much of curating necessitates writing, editing, translation, and is an exchange between multiple groups. I see those roles as being all one in the same.

In addition to organizing exhibitions, we also recently printed *Enunciated Life*, CAAM's first self-published catalogue under the museum's new publishing initiative, in collaboration with ELLA Press. This work represents a new direction for CAAM. At the moment, we're doing a lot of incubation and dreaming work to imagine what a bookstore at CAAM might look like, and how we can develop infrastructure that supports that vision.





## Daniel Caballero

### Exhibition Designer and Coordinator

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, and spent most of my youth going to hip-hop shows and competing in breakdancing competitions. In 2012, I was accepted to UCLA's art program as a painter, and graduated as an installation, video, and performance artist. Shortly after graduating, I began working as a fabricator and installer at the Hammer Museum. I worked as an independent contractor with CAAM for a few years and officially joined the staff in January 2022 as the organization's Exhibition Designer and Coordinator.

With CAAM's in-house curators, I handle the technical aspects of the exhibitions and their production. My role is multifaceted and ranges

from designing and 3D modeling the exhibition layouts to supervising teams of diversely skilled contractors and preparators who transform the exhibitions from ideas into material realities.

My favorite part about working with the artists and curators at CAAM are the conversations. We essentially all sign on to create a new language and experience together, navigating and deeply considering what that experience is, how it is represented, and how we can articulate it at the museum. So when you enter CAAM, you are invited into an ongoing negotiation of the collective self and an exercise in interpreting the human experience.



## Susan Guadamuz

### Registrar of Collections

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, and have been working at CAAM for 13 years. Prior to working at the museum, I worked at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. I have a Master of Arts in Museum Studies, a Master in Archives and Records Administration, and am a certified archivist.

My role involves oversight of the legal, preservational, and logistical aspects of the exhibitions. I administer loan paperwork, maintain exhibition records, and secure insurance for borrowed artworks, document the condition of artworks loaned to the museum, monitor the gallery's conditions—such as light, temperature, humidity, and pest control—to ensure they are

ideal for artworks and objects, and coordinate the shipping of works to and from the museum for exhibitions.

Originally, my background was in history. I gained an understanding of art through my experience working at museums, especially CAAM. During my time here, I have developed an interest in art for the story it can tell through its visual representations and the journey by which raw materials become a work of art. As CAAM expands its focus to contemporary art, I have been introduced to artists whose work has grabbed my attention, namely Bisa Butler, Adia Millett, and Robert Pruitt.



# Deborah Roberts: I'm

Deborah Roberts's work confronts notions of beauty, race, and identity in contemporary society. Using a mixed media collage technique that combines hand-painted elements with fragments of found imagery, Roberts creates striking portraits of Black children. Set against white or black backgrounds, the artist's collaged figures combine cut-out details, such as hands and facial features, from a diverse array of photographs. Composed of images of everyday people to household names, these composite children form a sense of collective identity.

Roberts utilizes the visual effects of color and pattern to draw viewers close while adding subtle visual references to the social and political atrocities forced on Black children. While her portraits acknowledge these varying constraints, Roberts foregrounds the strength and autonomy of Black children by situating them in moments of joy, pleasure, and abundance. Tenderly crafted and lovingly presented, these figures refuse the limits imposed upon them and instead affirm their place in the world. In addition to her collages, the exhibition includes recent works from Roberts's text-based *Pluralism* series as well as a new audio-visual sculptural installation, *What if?*, that also engage with the vernacular of anti-Black racism, confronting biases and employing gestures of empowerment through the visual repetition and sonic utterance of Black American names.

The title of Roberts's exhibition, *I'm*, signals a merging of the individual self (the "I") with a

larger sense of being ("am") and suggests a sense of self-determination and a reclaiming of community.

Deborah Roberts (b. 1962, Austin, TX) is a mixed media artist whose work has been exhibited internationally across the US and Europe. Roberts's work is held in international collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; SFMOMA, California; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Scottish National Galleries, Edinburgh, UK / American Patrons of the National Library and Galleries of Scotland; ICA Boston, Massachusetts; Brooklyn Museum, New York; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; and LACMA, California. Roberts was selected to participate in the Robert Rauschenberg Residency (2019) and is a recipient of the Anonymous Was A Woman Grant (2018), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2016), and the Ginsburg-Klaus Award Fellowship (2014). She received her MFA from Syracuse University, New York. She lives and works in Austin, TX. Roberts is represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, and Vielmetter Los Angeles.

*Deborah Roberts: I'm* is organized by The Contemporary Austin and is co-presented in Los Angeles by Art + Practice (A+P) and the California African American Museum (CAAM). CAAM at A+P is a five-year collaboration.

The exhibition is funded in part by the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

P. 82 AND P. 84: Installation views of *Deborah Roberts: I'm* at Art + Practice. March 19–August 20, 2022.

OPPOSITE, FOLLOWING SPREAD, AND P. 85 BOTTOM: Opening for *Deborah Roberts: I'm*

P. 83 AND P. 85 TOP: Exhibition walkthrough for *Deborah Roberts: I'm*

















# The Permanent Collection at the California African American Museum



CAAM Registrar of Collections Susan Guadamuz conditions works in the museum's galleries

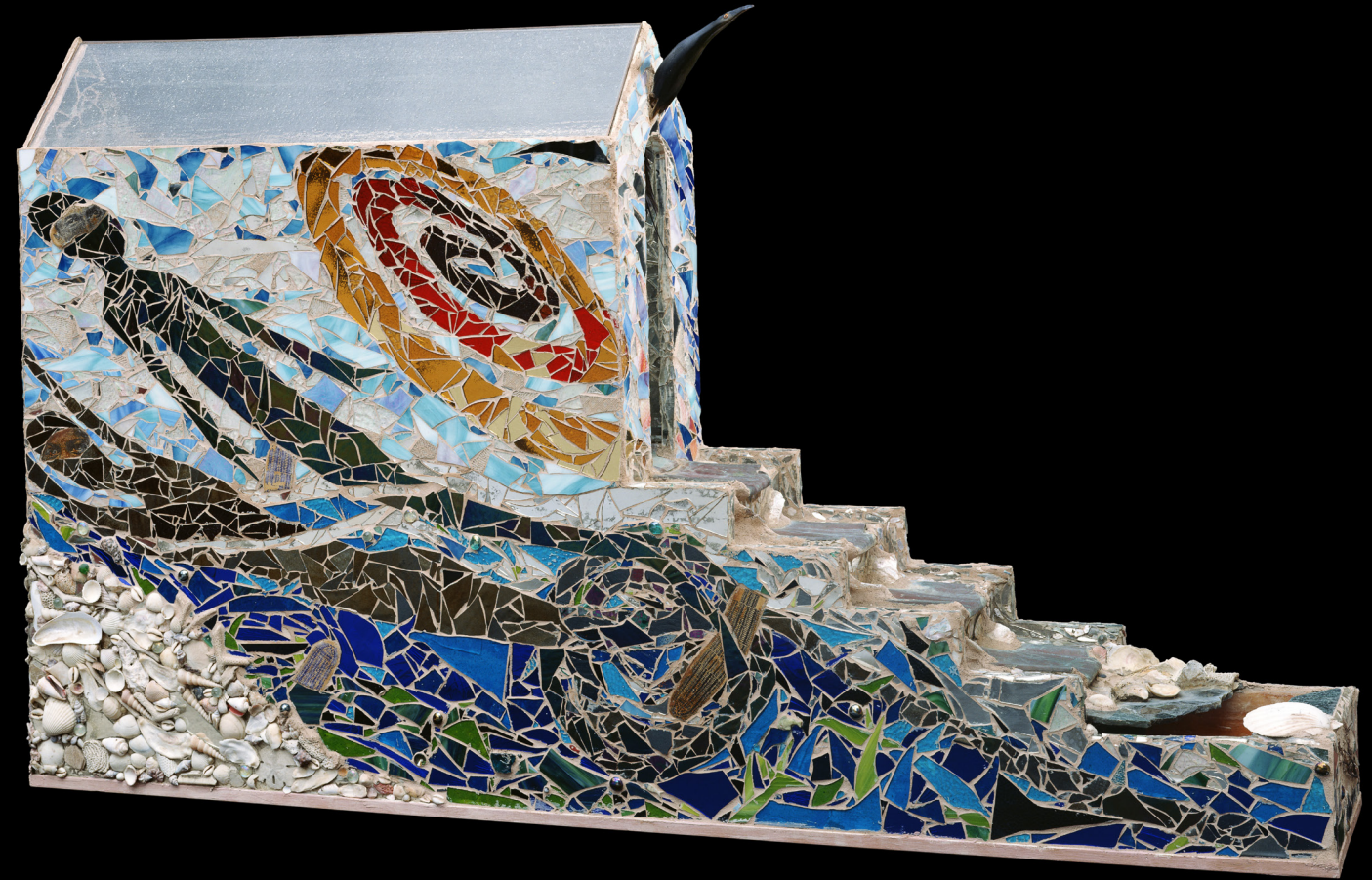
The California African American Museum has a long history of collecting works by African, Diasporic, and African American artists. With more than 5,000 objects dating from the 1800s to present day, the museum's permanent collection is the largest of its kind in the Western United States.

CAAM's collection preserves the identity, cultural heritage, and treasured stories of the people that the museum celebrates—it is a "living body" that constantly grows and evolves. The collection hosts a wide variety of works, including paintings, photographs, film, and sculpture, as well as historical documents, ephemera, and artifacts.

The museum's acquisitions and curatorial staff add new artworks, including works by contemporary artists, to the collection on a quarterly basis. Researchers are encouraged to use the museum's archive to gather source material and high-resolution images. Works from the collection are also available for loan to other museum institutions.

The following images represent select holdings from CAAM's collection. These selections were handpicked by CAAM's staff with personal meaning tied to each work.

Learn more and engage with CAAM's collection at [caamuseum.org/collection](http://caamuseum.org/collection).



ABOVE

**Dominique Moody**  
*Ancestral Praise House, 1996*

Wood, salvaged glass, shells, stones, grout, copper, iron, mirrors  
42.5 × 13.5 × 72 inches  
Collection of the California African American Museum. Museum Purchase. Courtesy the artist.

"When I joined the museum in 2019, CAAM was preparing for the exhibition *Dust My Broom: Southern Vernacular from the Permanent Collection*, which included *Ancestral Praise House* by Dominique Moody (b. 1956, Augsburg, Germany). The artwork is a working fountain made of shells,

seaglass, and other materials Moody collected in part from Ibo Landing, a site of African resistance on Georgia's St. Simons Island. It's a piece that has stayed with me because of the stories Moody told me about its creation as well as her travels through South Carolina and its Gullah communities in the 1990s. *Dust My Broom* was my first opening at CAAM, and I was fascinated by how museum guests interacted with the sculpture, sometimes leaving coins as if it were a wishing well. My family also came to the show so I was able to tell them everything I learned from Dominique. It was a special moment for me."

—Cameron Shaw,  
Executive Director





ABOVE

**Henri Paul Broyard**  
**UGDA, 2021**

Acrylic on spray paint on canvas  
30 × 40 × 1.5 inches

Collection of the California African American Museum. Gift of Burton Aaron.

“UGDA is a rumination on interority. Interested in site as both real (material and physical) and imagined (memory and desired), UGDA is a domestic scape in excess of presence. Remnants and geometries of home—stacked books, a dish, and a shelf—situate the things of life. Henri Paul Broyard (b. 1989, Los Angeles, CA) works from found and sourced photographs and family albums to create these acrylic paintings. These images of bedrooms, parties, living rooms, and

other interior spaces become studied as he builds his painting onto the photographs. Broyard's interest in abstraction begins here as the photograph becomes painting, people become strokes of color, and objects appear untethered.

Broyard, born and raised in Windsor Hills and Leimert Park, centers his practice in LA. Paintings often begin here, physically or psychically, and feature his grandparent's home, childhood rooms, businesses, and cityscapes that no longer are here. Though based in New York, Broyard considers—and proves—himself a California artist as his training, investment, and sites of reverie remain in Los Angeles.”

—Essence Harden,  
Visual Arts Curator





PREVIOUS PAGE

**John Outterbridge**

*REVIEW54/-Outhouse, 2003*

Mixed media assemblage construction

84 × 32 × 40 inches

Collection of the California African American Museum. Gift of the artist.

"I love this particular work by John Outterbridge (b. 1933, Greenville, NC; d. 2020, Los Angeles, CA). It was commissioned for the exhibition *Through the Gates: Brown vs. Board of Education* that I helped curate at CAAM in 2014, many years before I joined the museum's staff as Deputy Director. Growing up in North Carolina during the Great Depression, Outterbridge witnessed the challenges Blacks faced as they sought an education. This piece presents a dichotomy of themes, ideas, emotions, goals, events, and aesthetic concerns. I will always remember visiting John in his studio as he talked about his art practice, his art collection of antique objects, and the personalities of the different chickens he raised."

—Isabelle Lutterodt,  
Deputy Director

OPPOSITE

**Jacob Lawrence**

*General Toussaint L'Ouverture, 1986*

Serigraph

28 × 18 inches

Courtesy of the California African American Museum. Collection of Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. Foundation purchase.

"This particular piece is one of 41 artworks created by Jacob Lawrence (b. 1917, Atlantic City, NJ; d. 2000, Seattle, WA) in his series on *L'Ouverture*. Lawrence's practice and exploration of African Diasporic Black life were deeply rooted in the centrality of a shared Black historical experience. Looking to Haiti as the first Black republic in the West due to the successful rebellion led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, Lawrence represents freedom, tenacity, resilience, and self-determination using the traditional West African spiritual rites the Haitian revolutionaries practiced during the revolt. His ideas, themes, and approach are essential to my own work, life, and practice."

—Alexsandra M. Mitchell,  
Manager of Education  
and Public Programs







**OPPOSITE**

**Robert Colescott**

*A Stroll Through the Neighborhood, 1986*

Acrylic on Canvas

84 × 72.25 × 2.25 inches

Courtesy of the California African American Museum. Collection of Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. Gift of Eileen and Peter Norton.

“The Norton Family Foundation donated *A Stroll Through the Neighborhood* by Robert Colescott (b. 1925, Oakland, CA; d. 2009, Tucson, AZ) to CAAM in 1989, the year I was born. The work exemplifies Colescott’s composition style, which combines figurative and abstract elements of painting, as well as his explicit use of satire to provide social commentary and critique. As a person who was born and raised in Detroit, a city whose population has been more than 80 percent African American since the 1970s, this particular painting brings to mind the complexities around crime in impoverished and disenfranchised Black neighborhoods. It communicates how these complexities are reduced to stories about “Black on Black crime” in mainstream media—dehumanizing Black neighborhoods who suffer from government neglect in the process.”

—Taylor Renee Aldridge,  
Visual Arts Curator  
and Program Manager

**FOLLOWING SPREAD LEFT**

**David Hammons**

*The Door (Admissions Office), 1969*

Wood, acrylic sheet, and pigment construction

79 × 48 × 15 inches

Courtesy of the California African American Museum. Collection of Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. CAAM Foundation Purchase, with funds provided by the City of Los Angeles, Cultural Affairs Department.

“*The Door (Admissions Office)* by David Hammons (b. 1943, Springfield, IL) is my favorite work in CAAM’s collection. I chose this work because of its poetry and its assertion. The work embodies a closed and open state simultaneously—it is a threshold. Emerging from a reflective black base is a wooden door with the index of an impact site; a black body that holds space on the monolithic door’s clear pane. As viewers must circle this work to see it completely, they must also consider which side of the door they are on.”

—Daniel Caballero,  
Exhibition Designer  
and Coordinator

**FOLLOWING SPREAD RIGHT**

**Noah Purifoy**

*Watts Riot, 1966*

Mixed media assemblage

52 × 37 inches

Courtesy of Noah Purifoy Foundation © 2023  
Collection of the California African American Museum. Bequest of Alfred C. Darby.

Through its message in raised letters and use of burnt wood and debris from the fires, *Watts Riot* by Noah Purifoy (b. 1917, Snow Hill, AL; d. 2004, Joshua Tree, CA) illustrates both history and art in its reference to the 1965 Watts Rebellion. The sculpture’s connection to South Los Angeles and its history makes it an unmatched embodiment of CAAM’s mission.”

—Susan Guadamuz,  
Registrar of Collections









# Chloë Bass | #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America

*Chloë Bass | #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America* is a photography, text-based, performance art, and public sculpture project by conceptual artist Chloë Bass. The presentation is a culmination of the artist's ongoing project, *#sky #nofilter*, which began in the lead up to the 2016 US presidential election. In the aftermath of the election, continued killings by police, and the grief and anxieties caused by these events, the artist captured images of cloudless blue skies in an effort to mark time. Bass then coupled the photographs with personal and political writings that she shared publicly through Instagram over the course of a year. The project later expanded into a scripted lecture-performance, set before a video backdrop depicting the shifting blues Bass had collected in her year of photographing. An edited version of the script for the lecture-performance was also published in 2020 as a chapbook accompanied by a hand-cut sky viewer.

*#sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America* extends the artist's ongoing interest in minimalist public art that materializes abstract ideas and investigates forms of social engagement and scales of intimacy. In this and previous works, the artist probes the anxieties caused by state violence, lack of governmental oversight in the face of crises (including mass shootings, housing shortages, and an ongoing global pandemic), and how these struggles mold our shared space and time. Looking at the sky, one hopes to suspend thinking around such pervasive threats, despite the agoraphobia (fear of being trapped in uncomfortable situations) experienced by the artist and many others in the wake of these threats. In *#sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America*, innermost feelings—usually hidden and unavailable—are shared in public space so that visitors may find refuge in the communal exchange of fears and affirmations of hope for a world without such violence.

For the 2022–23 presentation of *#sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America*, Bass presents a public sculpture in South Los Angeles, commissioned by the California African American Museum, which features sixteen hand-tinted blue glass panels adapted from the original *#sky #nofilter* photographs. Together they form an analemmatic sundial—a structure that tells time when hit with direct sunlight. The viewer's body functions as the "gnomon," the shadow-casting element that determines the time of day. Each sundial panel is also engraved with text drawn from Bass's original *#sky #nofilter* writings that casts its own shadow onto the ground, offering a linguistic point of reflection. The sundial makes visible both the passage of time in public space and our interdependency with one another in naming, sharing, and losing time. In advance of the public art installation, which debuts in 2023, Bass is exhibiting a series of works on paper, glass studies, and a "magical painting" video work at Art + Practice.

Chloë Bass (b. 1984, New York, NY) is a multi-form conceptual artist working in performance, situation, conversation, publication, and installation. Her work uses daily life as a site of deep research to address scales of intimacy, exploring where patterns hold and break as group sizes expand. She began her work with a focus on the individual (*The Bureau of Self-Recognition*, 2011–13), later concluded a study of pairs (*The Book of Everyday Instruction*, 2015–17), and will continue to scale up gradually until she reaches the scale of the metropolis. Her current project, *Obligation To Others Holds Me in My Place* (2018–22), investigates intimacy at the scale of immediate families.

*Chloë Bass | #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America* is curated by Taylor Renee Aldridge, Visual Arts Curator, California African American Museum (CAAM). The exhibition is co-presented by CAAM and Art + Practice (A+P). CAAM at A+P is a five-year collaboration.

The public art sculpture is commissioned by CAAM with the support of the Teiger Foundation.



## Chloë Bass | #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America

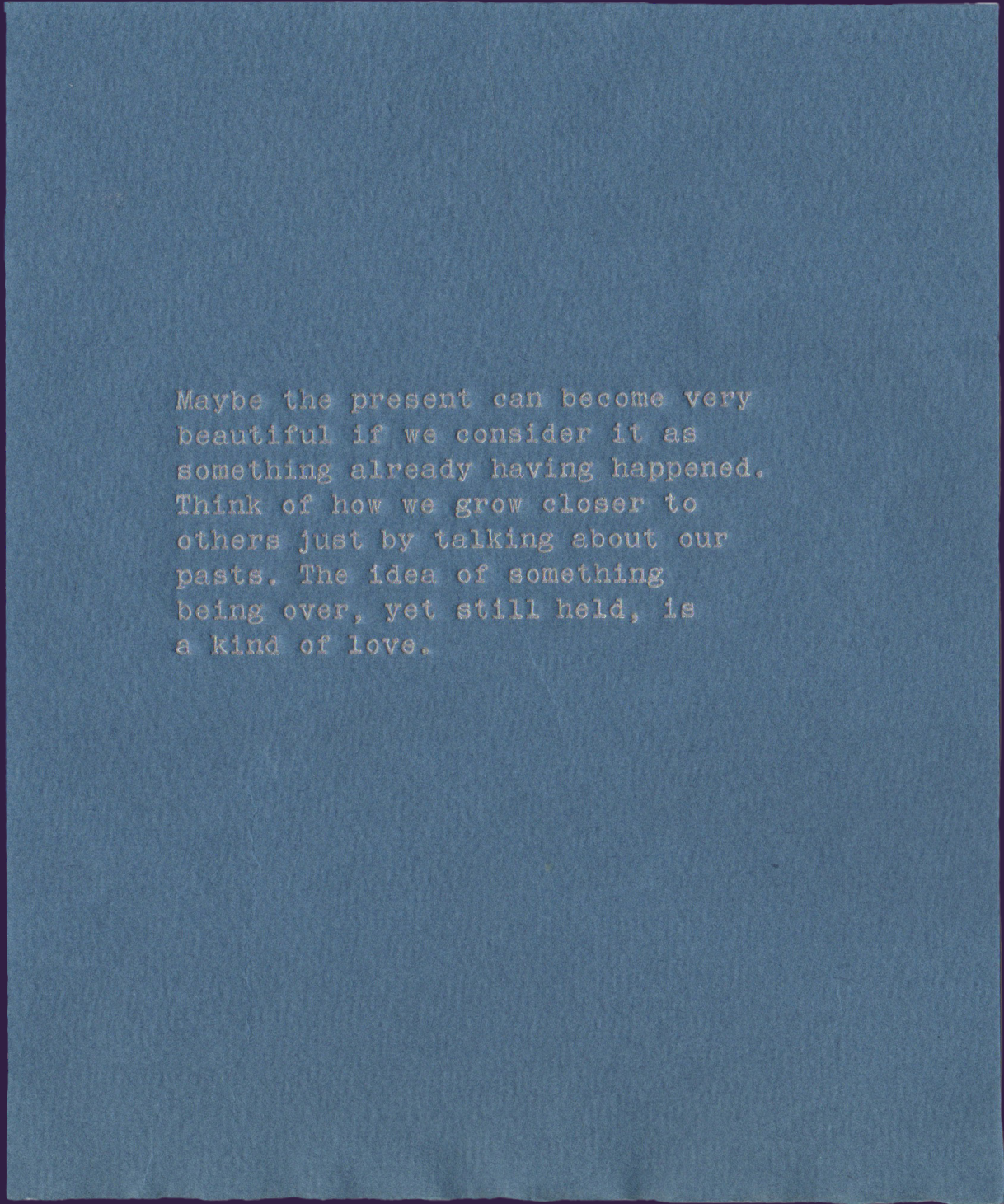
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OPPOSITE: Installation view of *Chloë Bass | #sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America* at Art + Practice. September 17, 2022–January 21, 2023.





Maybe the present can become very beautiful if we consider it as something already having happened. Think of how we grow closer to others just by talking about our pasts. The idea of something being over, yet still held, is a kind of love.

OPPOSITE: Installation view of *Chloë Bass* | *#sky #nofilter: Hindsight for a Future America* at Art + Practice. September 17, 2022–January 21, 2023.

ABOVE: *Chloë Bass*, *#sky #nofilter* (Paper Studies), 2017. Letterpress printing on found paper. Courtesy the artist.



# Justen LeRoy: Lay Me Down in Praise

*It is to prefer not to, in stuttered, melismatic,  
gestural withdrawal*

—Fred Moten, *Stolen Life*

*So here we are in the weather, here in the  
singularity. Here there is disaster and possibility*

—Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake:  
On Blackness and Being*

Justen LeRoy's *Lay Me Down in Praise* is a Black environmentalist strategy. Exhibited as a three-channel film, the installation structures the melisma—also known as the vocal run—as a Black liberatory practice inextricably tied to geology. The practice of singing multiple notes for one syllable of text is rooted in the sound of the Black American church and was popularized by R&B singers. Think Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, The Clark Sisters, and Stevie Wonder with elongated vocal stretches wavering while sweeping up. Hear Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and B.B. King hold onto the note and run it downward. Melisma is the cry and the reach, breaking sonic vibrations from the body and releasing them toward freedom.

Composed of archival footage, computer-generated graphics, and original scenes, LeRoy's film combines and stretches sequences and clips of Black performers and geological activity to consider how both the wordless screeches of the earth and the disfluencies in Black sound are acts of refusal. *Lay Me Down in Praise* insists the earth's aches, felt in volcanic eruptions, tectonic shifts, and other cataclysmic events, are entangled with tones of Black being. LeRoy's original score swells throughout the gallery, drawing on the sonic theories of Fred Moten and the tenets of Ornette Coleman's harmolodics. As Coleman writes, "My music doesn't have any real time, no metric time. It has time, but not in the sense that you can time it. It's more like breathing—a natural, freer time."<sup>1</sup> *Lay Me Down in Praise* builds upon the legacies and possibilities of Black radical tradition,

collapsing time, acoustics, and bodies into freer expressions.

Justen LeRoy (b. 1994, Los Angeles, CA) is a multidisciplinary artist and curator, currently living in Los Angeles, who focuses on unearthing expression through sound and performance works that investigate Black vocal nuance. Recently, he co-curated the exhibition *Noah Davis* with Helen Molesworth at The Underground Museum and contributed his sound work *LEAVE A MESSAGE* to the Hammer Museum's *Made In LA 2020: a version*.



*Lay Me Down in Praise* is curated by Essence Harden, Visual Arts Curator, California African American Museum (CAAM). The exhibition is co-organized by CAAM and Art + Practice (A+P). CAAM at A+P is a five-year collaboration.

The film is commissioned by CAAM with support from the Teiger Foundation, Serial Pictures, and Los Angeles Nomadic Division (LAND).

1. Ornette Coleman, *Harmolodics Manifesto*

FOLLOWING SPREAD, P. 104 TOP, AND P. 105 BOTTOM:  
Installation views of *Justen LeRoy:  
Lay Me Down in Praise* at Art + Practice.  
September 17, 2022–January 21, 2023.

ABOVE, P. 104 BOTTOM, AND P. 105 TOP: Opening for  
*Justen LeRoy: Lay Me Down in Praise*













## Thaddeus Mosley: Forest

For six decades, Thaddeus Mosley (b. 1926, New Castle, PA) has taken felled trees near his home in Pittsburgh and transformed them into inventive abstract forms. These five walnut sculptures, created from 2015 onward, reward close looking. The range and expertise of Mosley's woodworking techniques—carving, chiseling, and joining—are revealed as light shimmers along each work's surface. From a distance, they stand together and unlock shapeshifting experiences before the eye. Mosley describes his compositional experimentation as the pursuit of presence, "the alchemy of turning something natural into something alive."

Jazz infuses the air of Mosley's studio and inflects his improvisational approach. Unlike sculptors who meticulously plan, Mosley roughly chalks out lines on the surface of logs and then begins hand-chiseling and carving. This slow build up yields surprises. Solid, monumental forms bend and stretch, revealing themselves as cavernous and delicate. Mosley echoes the contrasts and quotations of jazz, whether by suspending geometric shapes in mid-air feats of gravity, or nodding to the Dogon stepladders of Mali with masks, grooves, and chevrons. From each vantage point, his commanding forms and life-size scale explore space, human experience, and our relationship to nature.

The title of this exhibition takes its inspiration from artist Sam Gilliam's description of his friend:

*He was a jazz critic, post-man father,  
Keeper of trees anywhere—  
Old trees, round trees, big trees, heavy trees.  
Thad is not very big,  
he is short and close to the ground.  
Thad is the forest.*

Thaddeus Mosley is a Pittsburgh-based artist who transforms wood into inventive abstract forms inspired by the visual culture of the African diaspora, jazz, and the 20th-century modernist avant-garde. His work has been exhibited and acquired by museums and foundations since 1959, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the High Museum in Atlanta, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, and the Brooklyn Museum.

*Thaddeus Mosley: Forest* is curated by Jessica Bell Brown, Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) Curator and Department Head of Contemporary Art. This exhibition is organized by the BMA and is presented in Los Angeles by Art + Practice with loans facilitated by Karma.

P. 109, P. 110, AND P. 111 BOTTOM: Installation view of *Thaddeus Mosley: Forest* exhibition at Art + Practice. September 17, 2022–January 21, 2023.

OPPOSITE, FOLLOWING PAGE, P. 111 TOP: Opening for *Thaddeus Mosley: Forest*













## Helen Cammock *I Will Keep My Soul*

February 11–August 5, 2023

*Helen Cammock: I Will Keep My Soul* is organized by the Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought and the California African American Museum (CAAM) and presented at Art + Practice (A+P). CAAM at A+P is a five-year collaboration.

**ABOVE:** Helen Cammock, *I Will Keep My Soul*, 2022 (film still). Courtesy of the artist  
© Helen Cammock 2022.



## Bahia Reverb *Artists and Place*

September 16, 2023–March 2, 2024

*Bahia Reverb: Artists and Place* is curated by Bia Gayotto, and co-organized by the California African American Museum (CAAM) and Art + Practice (A+P). CAAM at A+P is a five-year collaboration.

**BELOW:** Karen Hampton, *Shape Shifter*, 2016. Repurposed cotton textile, pigment, (cotton, silk, synthetic yarn and thread), 78 × 46.5 inches. Courtesy the artist.





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Exhibition Space  
3401 W. 43rd Place  
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## Artworks Pictured

### Chloë Bass

*#sky #nofilter*, 2017. Digital video, no  
sound. 30 × 30 inches. p. 75, p. 96, p. 98

*#sky #nofilter: Glass Study 1*, 2022.  
Engraved glass panel. 12 × 12 inches.  
p. 75, p. 96, pp. 98

*#sky #nofilter: Glass Study 2*, 2022.  
Engraved glass panel. 12 × 12 inches.  
p. 75, p. 96

*#sky #nofilter: Glass Study 3*, 2022.  
Engraved glass panel. 12 × 12 inches.  
p. 75, p. 96, p. 98

*#sky #nofilter (Open Edition)*, 2017.  
Framed posted. 8 × 11 inches. p. 75,  
p. 96, p. 98

*#sky #nofilter (Paper Studies)*, 2017.  
Works on paper (1 suite of 4  
framed works). 13 × 10 inches. p. 75,  
p. 96, p. 98, p. 99

All images courtesy the artist.

### Justen LeRoy

*Lay Me Down in Praise*, 2022 (video).  
Images courtesy the artist. p. 74,  
pp. 100–105

### Thaddeus Mosley

*Opposing Parallels - Blues Up and Down  
for G. Ammons and S. Stitt*, 2015.  
Walnut. 89 × 36 × 38 inches. p. 106  
(right), p. 109 (detail left), p. 111 (right),  
p. 111 (bottom left), p. 111 (top right)

*Off Minor*, 2019. Walnut. 55 × 27 ×  
24 inches. p. 111 (top left)

*Katz Kurve*, 2021. Walnut. 60 × 36 ×  
18 inches. p. 106 (left), p. 110 (bottom  
right)

*Tatum Scales*, 2020. Walnut. Piece 3a:  
92 × 37 × 24 inches. Piece 3b: 12 × 12 ×  
18 inches. The Baltimore Museum of  
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Mrs. Edgar F. Berman, Equitable  
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Arts, Lawrence Rubin, Philip M.  
Stern, and Alan J. Zakon BMA  
2022.10. p. 108, p. 109 (detail right),  
p. 110 (left)

All images courtesy the artist  
and Karma.

### Deborah Roberts

*I see you (#9, #13, #14, #16, #19, #20,  
#22, #26, #27 of 27)*, 2019. Serigraph  
on paper. Each: 17 × 11 inches.  
pp. 80–81, p. 85 (top right)

*Good Trouble*, 2020. Mixed media  
collage on canvas. 72 × 100 inches.  
Love, Luck & Faith Foundation.  
p. 82 (top right)

*Kings get their heads cut off*, 2019.  
Mixed media collage on canvas.  
65 × 45 inches. Ovitiz Family Collec-  
tion, Los Angeles. p. 79

*Little man, little man*, 2020. Collage  
printed on weather-resistant vinyl.  
Dimensions variable. Commissioned  
by The Contemporary Austin.  
p. 70, p. 84

*Portraits: When they look back (No. 1)*,  
2020. Mixed media collage on  
canvas. Sammlung Scharpff-  
Striebich Collection. 45 × 35 inches.  
p. 82 (bottom right)

*Portraits: When they look back (No. 2)*,  
2020. Mixed media collage on  
canvas. 45 × 35 inches. Purchased  
with funds by Beth Rudin DeWoody  
for museum acquisition. p. 82  
(bottom right)

*Portraits: When they look back (No. 3)*,  
2020. Mixed media collage on  
canvas. 45 × 35 inches. The Nelson  
Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.  
Gift of Bill and Christy Gautreaux,  
Kansas City. p. 82 (bottom right)

*Portraits: When they look back (No. 4)*,  
2020. Mixed media collage on canvas.  
45 × 35 inches. Rennie Collection,  
Vancouver. p. 82 (bottom right)

*Pluralism #10, #12, #18, and #22*, 2016.  
Serigraph on paper. 8.5 × 10 inches  
each. p. 4, p. 82 (bottom)

*The duty of disobedience*, 2020. Mixed  
media collage on canvas. 72 ×  
100 inches. pp. 66–67, p. 82 (top left)

*The looking glass*, 2019. Mixed media  
collage on panel. 60 × 48 inches. The  
Tim & Danny Art Foundation. p. 83,  
p. 85 (top left)

*This is who I am*, 2020. Mixed media  
collage on canvas. Private Collection.  
70 × 70 inches. p. 85 (bottom)

All images courtesy the artist;  
Stephen Friedman Gallery, London;  
and Vielmetter Los Angeles.

## Photography Captions

**COVER:** Metro train approaches the  
Leimert Park station on the Metro K  
Rail Line. October 9, 2022. **p. 2:** A  
young adult in First Place for Youth's  
program attends a Roundtable  
Discussion with Mario Vincent  
Johanson at Art + Practice. July 13,

2022. **pp. 6–7:** A+P Scholar Antwon  
walks around Leimert Park. June 30,  
2022. **pp. 40–41:** A skateboarder uses  
Neighbors Skate Shop's ramp in  
Leimert Park. July 26, 2022. **pp. 66–67:**  
California African American Museum  
Visual Arts Curator Essence Harden  
leads an exhibition walkthrough of  
*Deborah Roberts: I'm* at Art + Practice.  
July 14, 2022. **p. 116:** Metro K Rail  
Line Billboard Advertisement on  
Leimert Boulevard. November 16,  
2022. **BACK COVER:** Expo/Crenshaw  
station on the Metro K Rail Line.  
October 9, 2022.

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p. 98, pp. 100–101, p. 104 (bottom),  
p. 105 (top), p. 106, p. 108, p. 111 (top);  
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pp. 74–77, p. 86; **JAMES MICHAEL  
JUAREZ:** p. 2, pp. 6–13, pp. 16–31;  
**CHARLES WHITE:** p. 82, p. 84, p. 96;  
**JOSHUA WHITE:** pp. 102–103, p. 104  
(top), p. 105 (bottom), pp. 109–110,  
p. 111 (bottom)

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