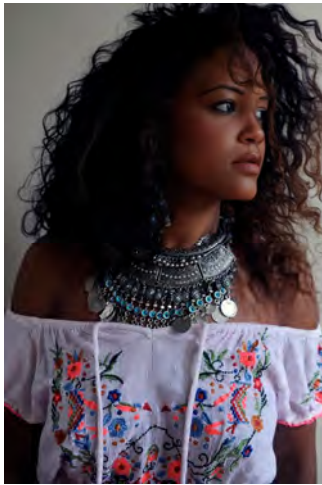


TAWNY CHATMON

PHOTOGRAPHER

BIOGRAPHY



Tawny Chatmon (b. 1979, Tokyo, Japan) is a self-taught, award winning artist who has been working in the field of photography for more than 17 years. Born in Tokyo, growing up an ‘army brat’ she had the unique opportunity to take in the cultures of three different continents, all before the age of 12. By then, Chatmon was in the United States and elbow-deep in her aunt’s theatre company. She studied theatrical arts from the age of 12 to early adulthood. After briefly attending a dramatic arts conservatory after high school, she switched paths and focused her interests on being behind the camera.

For Chatmon, her photographs are the first layer she manipulates and unites with other photographic components. She often adds over-lapping layers of gold leaf, paint, digital collage, semi-precious stones, and illustration. Doing so, she produces a work of art that is more than just a photograph but a new compositional expression.

Chatmon’s work and life have gone through many phases that lead her to create the photographs she produces today. She attributes this evolution to three major shifts: The decision to no longer pursue a career in dramatic arts, the birth of her first child and the death of her father.

Chatmon has received several photography awards, including the People Photographer of the Year, International Photo Award 2, Prix de la Photographie (2018), and the Fine Art Photography Awards (2015). Her work is in the Minneapolis Institute of Art’s permanent collection and acquired by noted collectors Jayz Carter and Beyoncé Knowles, and Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz.

Publications featuring Chatmon’s work, include, but not limited to The Boston Globe, Fast Company, Musée Magazine, Women’s Wear Daily, and PDN Photo of the Day.

TAWNY CHATMON

PHOTOGRAPHER



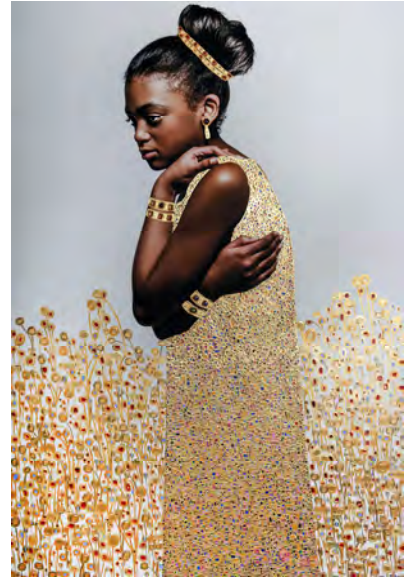
Created in Her Image, 2020

24k gold leaf, Acrylic on Archival
Pigment Print



It Was Never Your Burden to Carry

2020, 24k gold leaf, Acrylic, Watercolor
on Archival Pigment Print, 47" x 63"



But She Already Knew They Were More Precious

Than all the Jewels and Gold in the World
2020-2021, 24k gold leaf, Acrylic, Ink, Precious
& Semi-Precious Stones on Archival Pigment

ARTIST STATEMENT

It is my belief that our memories and experiences are solely responsible for who we become. What we are exposed to, what we read, the toys we play with as children, what we view... I attribute this thought to my deep-seated desire to make sure I'm sending a clear message (with my work) and that the message I am sending is "saying something" important; because if I believe we are shaped by our memories, as an artist, I must also believe that I too play a small part in shaping and shifting the views of anyone who comes in contact with my life's work. I did not always think this way, but once I realized this, the thought never left me.

The primary theme that drives my art practice today is celebrating the beauty of black childhood. I am currently devoted to creating portraits that are inspired by artworks spanning various art periods in Western Art with the intent of bringing to the forefront faces that were often under-celebrated in this style of work.

LARRY COOK

PHOTOGRAPHER

BIOGRAPHY



Larry Cook (b. 1986, Silver Spring, Maryland) is a conceptual artist whose work spans installation, video, and photography. Originally from Landover, Maryland, Cook received his MFA from George Washington University and BA from Plattsburgh State University of New York, Plattsburgh, NY.

Cook has exhibited his work nationally at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (2019), National Gallery of Art (2017), and the Baltimore Museum of Art (2016), and internationally during the 13th Havana Biennial (2019). He was awarded the 2020 Nicholson Project Artist-in-Residency.

In 2017, Cook received the Trawick Prize and was the 2013 and 2016 Sondheim finalist. In 2014, his photography was featured in a large-scale public artwork as part of Ceremonies of Dark Men, part of the 5 X 5 Project Public Art, organized by the D.C. Commission on the Arts curated by AM Weaver.

Cook was the recipient of the Savage-Lewis Residency, Art on the Vine in Martha's Vineyard (2018). He completed a fellowship at the Hamiltonian Gallery (2013-2015) and later became an artist-in-residence at the Washington Project for the Arts (2017).

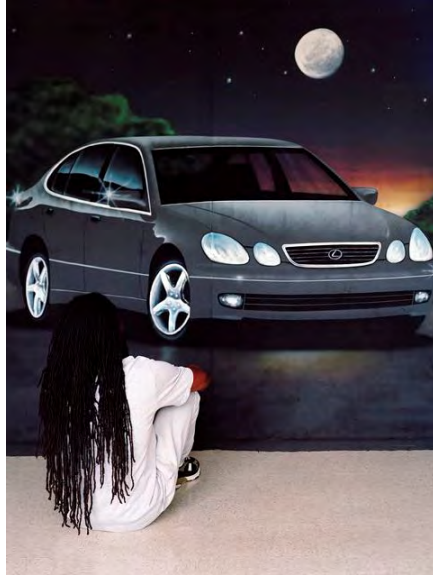
He is a recipient of the MASC Individual Artist Grant (2017) and Department of General Services Public Art Grant (2018, a two-time Janet and Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize Finalist (2013 and 2016), and a finalist for the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (2019).

Cook is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography at Howard University.

LARRY COOK
PHOTOGRAPHER



The Visiting Room, #4, 2019
Digital Print, 40" x 30"



The Visiting Room, #3, 2019
Digital Print, 40" x 30"



The Visiting Room, #2, 2019
Digital Print, 40" x 30"

ARTIST STATEMENT

In "Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood" Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson describe the posing and posturing of black men as a tool "to communicate power, toughness, detachment, and style-self - a carefully crafted persona that is key to the negotiation of black urban environments." I am interested in how photography encapsulates this persona—specifically within prison and club photography aesthetics. Posing for the camera provides an outlet in which the subject can reclaim agency.

My work explores the cultural aesthetic of "club" photography to examine how urban culture and incarceration systems become entwined through backdrops. The backdrop is central for its relationship to the formal, social, and cultural aspects of photographic history. I employ elements of pictorial realism and fantasy to examine the broader questions of status, individualism, and materialism within black culture.

MOREL DOUCET

CERAMISTS, PAINTER, VIDEOGRAPHER

BIOGRAPHY



Morel Doucet (b. 1990, Pilate, Haiti) is a Miami-based multidisciplinary artist and arts educator that hails from Haiti. He employs ceramics, illustrations, and prints to examine the realities of climate-gentrification, migration, and displacement within the Black diaspora communities. Through a contemporary reconfiguration of the black experience, his work catalogs a powerful record of environmental decay at the intersection of economic inequity, the commodification of industry, personal labor, and race.

Doucet Emmy-nominated work has been featured and reviewed in numerous publications, including Vogue Mexico, Oxford University Press, Hyperallergic, Biscayne Times, and Hypebeast. He graduated from the New World School of the Arts with the Distinguished Dean's Award for Ceramics. From there, he formalized his education at the Maryland Institute College of Art, receiving his BFA in Ceramics with a minor in creative writing and a concentration in illustration.

Doucet has exhibited extensively in prestigious national and international institutions, including the Havana Biennial; the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, Miami, FL; National Council on Education for Ceramic Arts, Pittsburgh, PA; American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami; Flaten Art Museum, St. Olaf College, São Tomé et Príncipe, Haitian Heritage Museum, Miami, FL and Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL.

His current endeavor as the Curriculum and Tour Coordinator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA MIAMI), is helmed by an interest in immersing young audiences in personalized courses that instigate curiosity, sensory perception, and visual literacy.

MOREL DOUCET

CERAMISTS, PAINTER, VIDEOGRAPHER



Stop and Smell the Roses (Black Bodies Stain the Pavement in Crimson Red), 2020, Acrylic on wood, mylar, aerosol paint, flora and fauna, 40" x 30"



The Blacker the Berry the Sweeter the Juice 2020, Porcelain Ceramics, Slip-cast, and hand altered-forms, 9" x 7.5" x 8"



Night Garden: In the Moonlight the Stars Chatter 2020, Acrylic on wood, mylar, aerosol paint, impression of indigenous flora and fauna

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work explores the cultural disparity of self-realization, assimilation, and transnational identity as a Haitian immigrant. Using direct or implied human figures, I explore narratives of vulnerability, isolation, and alienation within various cultures across the globe. Within the vocabulary of indigenous art and my dreams, I create whimsical forms resulting in a diary of self-mythology.

These exchanges allude to a larger conversation about sea-level rise, environmental pollution, and the displacement between descendants of the African diaspora and their physical environments. Through intensive, detailed labor, my work mimics the current state of Black fragility. I employ ceramics, illustrations, and prints to examine the realities of climate-gentrification, migration, and displacement within the Black diaspora communities. In addressing these issues, I merge my Afro-Caribbean culture with indigenous flora and fauna and draw from the concerns of the collective consciousness of my community.

In my quest to illustrate the impact of climate-gentrification, I present work with visual impact and sensitivity—and draw inspiration from the indigenous cultures of the Amazon, Aboriginal people of Australia, and the Yoruba tribe of West Africa.

MONICA IKEGWU

PAINTER

BIOGRAPHY



Monica Ikegwu (b.1998, Baltimore, Maryland) is a figurative painter. She presents her ideas of the figure in a way that is not only captivating, but also unconventional in her use of color, texture, and composition. The ideas for her work stems from her surroundings, experiences, and encounters with people in Baltimore. The figures presented in her work are often her friends, siblings and other family members from whom she draws most of her inspiration, as she watches them progress through life.

She has been awarded first place winner in the XL Catlin Art prize (2018), a YoungArts Finalist (2017), a Gold medal winner in the NAACP ACT-SO National competition (2016), and as a Scholastic silver medal portfolio winner (2016). Her work was recently displayed and exhibited at the XL Catlin Art Prize traveling exhibition as well as the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in 2018.

In 2020, Ikegwu graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art with a Bachelor's in Fine Art. She is currently attending the New York Academy of Art earning an MFA in painting.

MONICA IKEGWU

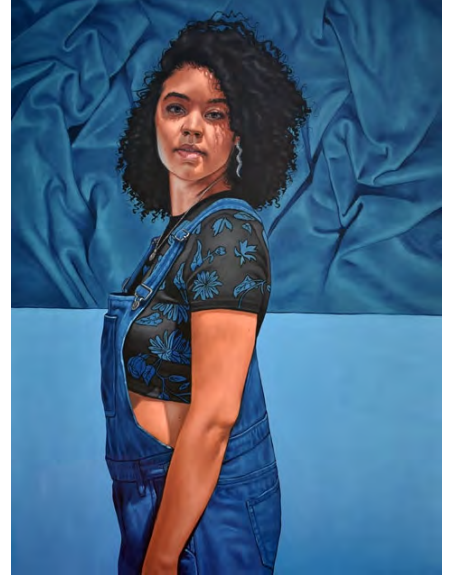
PAINTER



Olivia, 2020
Oil on Canvas, 48" x 36"



Jacob, 2020
Oil on Canvas, 36" x 36"



Shannon, 2020
Oil on Canvas, 48" x 36"

ARTIST STATEMENT

I strive to capture the essence of my subjects through photo-realistic portraits. I enhance the figure by rendering dramatic textured backgrounds with hues that complement their clothing and flesh tones.

When people outside of the African American race observe my work, I want them to try and imagine who the individual is while placing all preconceived notions and stereotypes aside. I hope they will recognize that one's outward appearance should be considered a positive expression of self-identity and not be threatened by it.

I hope African Americans will view my work with a sense of connectivity and pride—and discover a familiar face within, one that reminds them of themselves, a friend, or a family member.

When creating portraits, I collaborate with the sitter, who directs their pose and clothing, thus taking charge of their image. My friends and family members are featured in my work. But I also venture outside of that circle, and deliberately select African Americans of varied skin colors to elevate and celebrate the diversity within our race.

M. SCOTT JOHNSON

SCULPTOR

BIOGRAPHY



M. Scott Johnson (b. 1968, Inkster, Michigan) New York City-based artist and educator has carved out a legacy as one of the most stimulating and unique artists of his generation. M. Scott has explored, both in his practice and through his 20-year visual arts teaching residency at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York a rich vision of contemporary Afro-aesthetics. Johnson was born and raised in the Detroit suburb of Inkster, Michigan. As an undergraduate student, Johnson was recognized and intellectually mentored by noted African American anthropologist, Dr. Warren Perry. Perry was instrumental in Johnson being selected to participate in Operation Crossroads Africa, as a member of its first group entering post-apartheid South Africa and Zimbabwe in 1994.

Johnson's formal education as an artist began in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. While there he explored traditional and contemporary stone sculpting methods under the tutelage of the local artists who occupied the endless alleyways of the city. At the time Zimbabwe was producing several of the most significant sculptors in the contemporary art world. One of his greatest opportunities came when he auditioned and was invited to apprentice (1996-1999) with master sculptor and national hero Nicholas Mukomberanwa (1940 - 2002) in Ruwa, Zimbabwe. Under Nicolas, Johnson explored more than just the techniques of sculpting; it became a period of re-mapping the landscape of his imagination. Driven to explore the ancient connections between rhythm, line, and pattern in Black material culture, in 1999 Scott expanded his aesthetic palette by working with Makonde Shetani sculptors in Beira, Mozambique.

Sculpture, mixed media, and photography are triggered by what Johnson describes as atavistic/cultural memory. Blurring the lines between Afrosurrealism and Afrofuturism, Johnson embraces an imaginative mixture of Astro Blackness, Afrocentricity, and magic realism. Coming of age during the blossoming of Techno music in Detroit, early on M. Scott discovered this to be a magnificent point of departure into the sonic and visual metaphysics of the African Diaspora and the potential of Black abstraction.

Scott has participated in exhibitions held at Columbia University, the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana, Galerie Myrtis, Harvard University, Hampton University Museum, Kenkeleba House, Fabric Projects Gallery, Wilber Jennings Gallery, TransAfrica Forum, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Grey Gallery New York University, Museum of Contemporary Diasporan Art, Rush Arts Gallery, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Botanical Gardens. In 2019 he was invited and exhibited his work in the 13th Havana Biennial.

Johnson is the recipient of the 2005 Dr. Viktor Lowenfeld Sculpture prize an honor bestowed upon him by the Hampton University Museum.

M. SCOTT JOHNSON

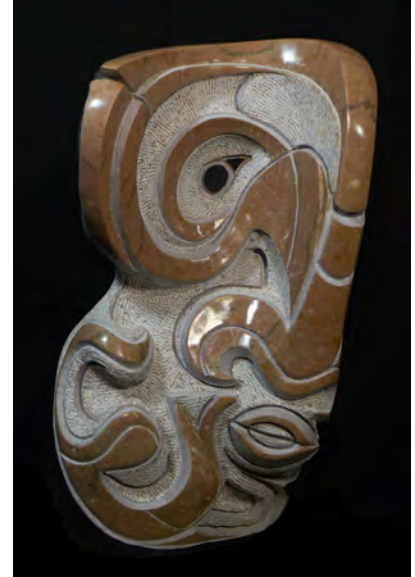
SCULPTOR



*Bust of Benjamin Banneker:
Father of Afrofuturism, 2004*
Blanco Macael Marble
26" x 12" x 6"



High John the Conqueror, 2009
Bardiglio Nuvolato marble
54"x 20"x 20"



Head of Negro Stargazer, 2019
Boticino Marble
24" x 12" x 10"

ARTIST STATEMENT

My aesthetic and philosophical explorations are shaped by the landscape of my atavistic memories. For the past 20 years, I have held a residency at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black culture in Harlem, New York. Having direct access to the world's largest collection of manuscripts and artifacts from the African world has profoundly impacted my practice, facilitating a richer understanding of the revelatory power of Black aesthetic syncretism. A disciple of contemporary Shona and Makonde sculpting techniques, I employ their interpretation of direct carving with Afro-diasporic sensibilities. I see my sculptures, paintings, and photographs as votive offerings in the cosmic temple of the Black collective unconscious. Thematically, my work lives in the land of myth and enchantment, honoring the divine archetypes of a new Negro pantheon.

My most visceral and focused statements are achieved through improvisation. Improvisation allows me to snatch an image at birth, creating a balance between imposing and communicating with the natural life force resonating from within my materials. Ultimately, what will always excite me is the opportunity to deconstruct/reconstruct inner visions and impulses unique to Black culture...the call and response/the space within space.

DELITA MARTIN

PRINTMAKER

BIOGRAPHY



Delita Martin (b. 1972, Conroe, Texas) is currently based in Huffman, Texas. Martin received her BFA in drawing from Texas Southern University and MFA in printmaking from Purdue University. Formally a member of the fine arts faculty at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Martin is currently working as a full-time artist in her studio.

Martin's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. Her solo museum exhibitions include "Conjure" presented at The Art Museum of Southeast Texas, 2021 and "Delita Martin: Calling Down the Spirits" held at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2020. Martin's work toured the country (2016-17) in the Crystal Bridges Museum exhibition, "State of the Arts: Discovering American Art Now" that included 101 artists from across the United States.

Having garnered the attention of many art critics, reviews of Martin's work has appeared in numerous online and print publications including but not limited to Hyperallergic, Luxe Interiors + Design, Marie Claire, The Hand, and the International Review of African American Art which recognized her in 2015 as one of sixteen "African American Artists to Watch" who are gaining national and international recognition.

Permanent Collections (selected): Bradbury Art Museum, C.N. Gorman Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum, David Driskell Center, Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, Library of Congress, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota Museum of American Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Petrucci Family Foundation, Studio Museum in Harlem, Thrivent Financial, William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, and the U.S. Embassy, Nouachott, Mauritania.

DELITA MARTIN

PRINTMAKER



Sitting in Silence, 2020
Acrylic, Charcoal, Decorative Papers,
Fabric, Hand Stitching
72" x 51.5"



Untitled (Bird Cage), 2020
Relief printing, Charcoal, Acrylic,
Gelatin printing, Decorative papers,
Hand stitching
72" x 51.5"



Night Bird, 2020
Relief printing, Charcoal, Acrylic,
Liquid gold leaf, Decorative
papers, Hand stitching
42" x 30"

ARTIST STATEMENT

My works is not only layered in textures and techniques but also symbolism. The color blue is used throughout in varying shades. The color is a symbol of the night and representative of a magical and spiritual place; a place that is deeply grounded in cultural and oral histories that allow for the acceptance of magic in an otherwise rational world. The women in the works are magical beings that possess the power to transcend their black skin and existence in a spiritual form. Through the weaving of history and storytelling, they offer a new narrative on the power of women.

Working from oral traditions, vintage, and family photographs as a source of inspiration; my work explores the power of the narrative impulse. My process of layering various printmaking, drawing, sewing, collaging, and painting techniques allows me to create portraits that fuse the real and the fantastic. In my work, I combine signs and symbols to create a visual language. By fusing this language with oral storytelling, I offer identities and narratives for women of color.

ARVIE SMITH

PAINTER

BIOGRAPHY



Arvie Smith (b.1938, Houston, TX) transforms the history of oppressed and stereotyped segments of the American experience into lyrical two-dimensional master works. His paintings are commonly of psychological images revealing deep sympathy for the dispossessed and marginalized members of society in an unrelenting search for beauty, meaning, and equality. Smith's work reflects powerful injustices and the will to resist and survive. His memories of growing up in the South add to his awareness of the legacy that the slavery of African American's has left with all Americans today. His intention is to solidify the memory of atrocities and

oppression so they will never be forgotten nor duplicated. Smith creates this work because he must.

Smith spent his childhood in rural Texas and South Central and Watts Los Angeles, California. He received his BFA from Pacific Northwest College of Art in 1984 and his MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art, Hoffberger School of Painting under Grace Hartigan in 1992. During a sojourn to Italy, Smith studied at Il Bisonte and SACI in Florence in 1983. From 1998 to the present, he has traveled extensively through Ghana, Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso, West Africa.

In 2011, Smith completed a public arts project through RACC where he worked with incarcerated youth of the Juvenile Detention Justice Center of Multnomah County. Five, 7'x15' murals resulted from his work with primarily Measure 11 inmates based on the prospect of hope. As of 9.2012 four of these works are installed in Multnomah County Courthouse and the fifth is on display at Donald E Long detention facility.

ARVIE SMITH

PAINTER



Best Man, 2016
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"



Bojango Ascending the Stairs, 2013
Oil on Canvas, 78" x 68"



2Up and 2Back, 2019
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"

ARTIST STATEMENT

It is imperative that within the annals of social discourse and visual culture, African Americans have a voice in portraying and critiquing the world we live in. Without this, our democracy is denying essential input from the sector of the population for which civil liberties were created. This is as critical as ever at this time when civil rights in our country are being questioned and blatantly defunded and it is time for African Americans and all marginalized peoples to not only be heard but be recorded for their truths and historical significance. It is my intent that my paintings reveal the dignity, significance, and genius of African Americans while evoking dialogue and reflection on the unending injustices committed toward us throughout the history of building America to the present day. Where we are as a people, where we have been and where we are going are complexly interwoven and inseparable. With humor, seduction, and emotion I create narratives about the Black experience and throw them out to the audience and ask members to wrestle with any discomfort it might create. I want my work to be a catalyst for change by depicting the strength, bravery, heroics, and endurance of African Americans. As an artist who spent my early formative years in the Jim Crow south and who lived under the separate and unequal apartheid system of Los Angeles in the 50s, 60s, and 70s I feel qualified to critique the social impact of racism on America culture through my paintings.

For the entirety of my career as an artist, I have studied and learned from European centric art history which, minimize the contributions of people of African descent. In my work, I consider the evolution of Black identity shaped by the slanted accounting of black contribution in the building of America and expose the inequity and marginalization bestowed on people of color with callous impunity.

FELANDUS THAMES

CONCEPTUAL ARTIST

BIOGRAPHY



Felandus Thames (b. 19, Mississippi) is a conceptual artist living and practicing in the greater New York area. Thames attended the graduate program in Painting and Printmaking at the Yale University where he received his MFA in 2010.

He has been included in exhibitions at the Galerie Myrtis, Kravets Wehby Gallery, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Tilton Gallery, Heather James Gallery, Charles H. Wright Museum, USF Contemporary Art Museum, International Center for Printmaking New York, African American Museum of Philadelphia, Mississippi Museum of Art, Yale University, Wesleyan University, Columbia University, Art Hamptons, Art LA, The Texas Contemporary, and Miami Basel.

Thames serves as Visiting Critic to Rhode Island School of Design's MFA in Printmaking program. Media appearances are numerous, and periodicals include the New York Times, Politico Magazine, International Review of African American Art and Art in America. Thames' work can be found in myriad of private and public collections both in the United States and abroad.

FELANDUS THAMES

CONCEPTUAL ARTIST



Stolen Moments, 2019-202
Hair beads on coated wire and
aluminum rod, 39" x 24" x 1"



Black and Blue, 2016
Hairbrushes, Varied



Reframed, (Mike Tyson), 2020
Hair beads on coated wire and
aluminum rod, 80" x 48" x 1"

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am interested in our relationship to the ready-made and how they can become surrogates for their user's ethnology and gender. My work attempts to transcend didacticisms that are typically associated with anachronistic understandings of representation and instead aligns itself with ideas around the taxonomy of human difference. I am also interested in the interplay between the personal narrative and the imagined. And I use humor, increasingly important to the work, as it allows the viewer to ease into disconcerting motifs. Because I desire to make objects that have a life beyond that of my initial intent, the work-often probing and unsettling-poses questions rather than answers them. It shifts the beholder's role from voyeur to participant and complicates my personal relationship to the work.