

WELCOME

If the role of the artist is to provoke thought, unveil truths, inspire dialogue, and delight and challenge us then who better to hold the lantern in the night than the prodigious Carrie Mae Weems, who, for nearly four decades, has courageously deployed multiple disciplinary approaches to ask the hard questions and demand that we confront our biases, our fears, and our weaknesses as a nation and as an ever-divided people.

It was important to me that our very first major project in the Lindemann Performing Arts Center at Brown be as brave and bold and flexible as the building itself. That the work expands beyond the doors, out into and across campus, symbolic of how art paves unexpected paths in our understanding of the human condition, especially in troubled times.

Carrie Mae Weems meets this challenge with tenacity and deep thought about the history of this campus in relation to American history. Aided by the work of the students of *ARTS 1910A: Artist@Work: Carrie Mae Weems* (Spring 2023) and BAI staff, Weems invites us into an artistic journey that demands that we slow down and contemplate and stop for a moment.

We invite you to consider this Convening and this project as a space for Carrie, and the artists, scholars, activists, and thinkers she has invited to Brown, to navigate complicated questions and open up new possibilities for engagement and enlightenment.

In moments of darkness, sometimes we must look towards the ethereal skies at dusk and *Remember to Dream*.

Avery Willis Hoffman

Artistic Director, Brown Arts Institute and Professor of the Practice of Arts & Classics

November 10, 2023

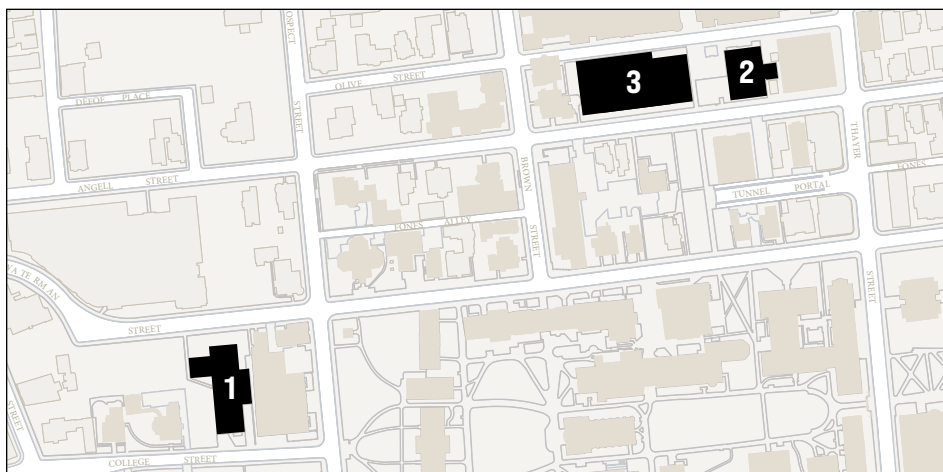
VARYING SHADES OF BROWN

Inaugurating Brown Arts' IGNITE Series, *Varying Shades of Brown* is a campus-wide project featuring major installations and programs by artist Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953, Portland, OR), whose conceptual, image-focused work has been revered for over four decades. Through a variety of mediums and activations, Weems renders historical moments uncanny to draw out the complexities of racial and gendered violence. Integrating artistic practice and arts research, Weems — in her role as the first Agnes Gund Professor of the Practice of Art and Social Justice at Brown Arts Institute (BAI) — collaborated closely with students in her course *Artist@Work: Carrie Mae Weems* to develop *Varying Shades of Brown*. Sites include the David Winton Bell Gallery and List Lobby Gallery in the List Art Center; Cohen Gallery in the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts; the Main Hall and Attanasio Family Promenade of the new Lindemann Performing Arts Center; and various public spaces across campus.

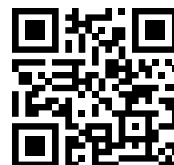
Across the fall semester, Carrie Mae Weems and Brown Arts Institute invite artists, thinkers, and waymakers to engage in an array of conversations, performances, and gatherings, including one of Weems' large-scale convenings. Members of the Brown and Providence communities, and beyond, are encouraged to join these ongoing dialogues and debates around the career-spanning themes of her work.



Brown Arts' IGNITE Series uplifts the spirit of artistic collaboration across Brown, Providence, the Rhode Island region, and beyond. Ignite your creative curiosity through this multi-year series of programs, activations, interventions, and investigations.



1. David Winton Bell Gallery, Albert and Vera List Art Center
2. Cohen Gallery, The Perry and Marty Granoff Center for the Creative Arts
3. The Lindemann Performing Arts Center



FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE VISIT: [ARTS.BROWN.EDU](https://arts.brown.edu)



CARRIE MAE WEEMS

VARYING SHADES OF BROWN

CONVENING

NOVEMBER 10 - 11, 2023



Varying Shades of Brown is produced by Brown Arts Institute at Brown University with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Brown Arts Institute would also like to thank Jeffrey F. Hines '83 M.D.'86 and Sivan Hines '84 M.D.'87, as well as the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, for their support.

THE PARTICIPANTS

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

with

JAMES ALTON

JUSTIN AUSTIN

BERNICESTINE MCLEOD BAILEY

HAROLD BAILEY, JR.

KYLE BASS

KYLE BELL

SANFORD BIGGERS

SUZANNE BOCANEGRA

ANTHONY BOGUES

LERONN BROOKS

MARÍA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS

ROMI CRAWFORD

HELGA DAVIS

PAUL FARBER

RUBY AIYO GERBER

RICKY IAN GORDON

LONNIE GRAHAM

SAISHA GRAYSON

CATHERINE GUND

CRAIG HARRIS

NONA HENDRYX

AVERY WILLIS HOFFMAN

JENNIFER HSU

VIJAY IYER

TESIA KWARTENG

KHARY LAZARRE-WHITE

ALICIA HALL MORAN

LYNN NOTTAGE

CHIDI NWAUBANI

KARYN OLIVIER

ITOHAN OSAYIMWESE

TOSHI REAGON

CARL HANCOCK RUX

CHERISE SMITH

DSHAWN SMITH

JAWWAAD TAYLOR

CAMILA RODRÍGUEZ TRIANA

IMANI UZURI

LENA WAITHE

CHRISTOPHER WEST

BRANDON WILLIS

DEBORAH WILLIS

SANDYE WILSON

JADA WOOTEN

JOANN MARIA YARROW

ZEHRA ZEHRA

JAMES ALTON

James Alton is a 2018 graduate of University North Carolina School of the Arts (Drama), originally hailing from Hickory, North Carolina, now based in Brooklyn, NY. He'd like to give a special thanks to Brown University for the opportunity to present such a special piece that holds a monolithic space in his heart. Special thanks to Kyle Bass for his beautiful words, as well as Joann for being the reinforced backbone of this piece. One last special thanks to James Baldwin himself, without whom the show wouldn't be possible.

JUSTIN AUSTIN

Justin Austin is a Drama Desk Award–nominated baritone who has been a principal artist with the Bayerische Staatsoper, Metropolitan Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, LA Opera, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Carnegie Hall, Landestheater Linz, St. Louis Symphony, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Cleveland Orchestra, Lincoln Center Theater, Park Avenue Armory, and the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Originally from Stuttgart, Germany, Austin received his training at the Choir Academy of Harlem, LaGuardia Arts, and the Manhattan School of Music, having earned the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees. This season, Austin returns to the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Austin also makes recital debuts at Spivey Hall, Pickman Hall, and the University of Delaware.

BERNICESTINE MCLEOD BAILEY

Bernicestine McLeod Bailey is an accomplished information technology leader, a longtime champion of the Pembroke Center at Brown University, and an advocate for the inclusive engagement of alumni of color. She earned her bachelor's degree in economics from Brown in 1968. Following her career as an IBM systems engineer, she established McLeod Associates, a pioneering minority-owned IT consulting firm. She is board chair of the Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community and a founding member of Westport, Connecticut's diversity committee, TEAM. Her dedication to community engagement includes terms on the boards of Fairfield County's Community Foundation and the Westport Library. At Brown, McLeod Bailey is a longtime member of the Pembroke Center Advisory Council and served as founding chair of its Archives Committee with a focus on elevating gender history. She has passionately championed engagement with alumni of color and the establishment of funds to support undergraduate diversity and initiatives highlighting Black history at the University. She served as a Brown trustee from 2001 to 2007 and is an honorary lifetime member of the President's Advisory Council on Diversity.

HAROLD BAILEY, JR.

Harold Bailey, Jr. is president of Aisha & Co. LLC, a family gift company. He was formerly CEO, Americas for Show Business Software, Ltd. Prior to his retirement as IBM's vice president of Lotus Marketing Integration, he worked at IBM for 30 years in marketing, sales and services. He is a trustee emeritus of Brown University, his alma mater, from which he also received an honorary Ph.D. He is also a board member of the Westport Country Playhouse and a founding member of the Stamford chapter of 100 Black Men. Bailey received the Anti-Defamation League's Distinguished Community Leadership award in 2005. He is also a trustee of the Tilton School (NH), from which he received the George L. Plimpton Award for outstanding contribution to society.

KYLE BASS

Kyle Bass's plays include *Possessing Harriet* (Standing Stone Books), premiered at Syracuse Stage, and produced at Franklin Stage Company, East Lynne Theater Company, and HartBeat Ensemble; *Toliver & Wakeman*, premiered at Franklin Stage Company; *Tender Rain*, and *Salt City Blues*, produced at Syracuse Stage; and *Citizen James, or The Young Man Without a Country*, under film option. With Ping Chong, Bass co-authored *Cry for Peace: Voices from the Congo*, produced at Syracuse Stage and La MaMa Experimental Theatre. Bass collaborated with Carrie Mae Weems on her *Grace Notes: Reflections for Now* and was script consultant on *Thoughts of a Colored Man*, which opened on Broadway in 2021. Syracuse Stage's resident playwright and an assistant professor of theater at Colgate University, Bass descends from people enslaved in colonial New England and the American South and resides and writes in upstate New York, where his family has lived free and owned land since 1799.

KYLE BELL

Kyle Bell, Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative – Protégé 2020-22 (mentor: Spike Lee), is a Native American filmmaker from the Thlopthlocco Creek community who grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he still lives. His documentary films about his people and his tribe have a powerful eloquence and a quiet sense of passion. They seem in stark contrast to the fast-talking, urban-based work of his mentor Spike Lee, director of classic films such as *She's Gotta Have It*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Malcolm X*, yet through the mentorship, the two filmmakers have discovered a lot in common.

SANFORD BIGGERS

Sanford Biggers is a conceptual artist who examines the inherent tensions of history and culture, of language and symbol, and of myth and narrative. In a practice that encompasses painting, sculpture, video, photography, mixed media, music, and performance, Biggers interrupts established narratives, intervenes directly into historical forms, and remixes recognizable cultural symbols and signifiers to offer new understandings of collective mythologies and traditions. Biggers's solo exhibitions include: the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA; Chazen Museum of Art, WI; and the Brooklyn Museum, NY. His work has been shown in numerous group exhibitions, including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Menil Collection, and the Tate Modern, among others. In 2023, Biggers received The Amistad Center's Spirit of Juneteenth Award, Morehouse College's Bennie Trailblazer Award, a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, and he was elected to the National Academy of Design. Biggers was raised in Los Angeles; he lives and works in New York, NY.

SUZANNE BOCANEGRA

Suzanne Bocanegra is a visual artist who uses theater and theater craft to interrogate the history and practice of visual art, employing large-scale video, performance, and installation. She is the recipient of the 2020 Robert Rauschenberg Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts and a 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship, among other awards. In 2019, a major show of Bocanegra's work was presented at the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia. Bocanegra's most recent performance, *Honor*, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and has traveled to LAMoCA, ICA Boston, and the Walker. Previous performances have been commissioned and/or presented by the Museum of Modern Art, BAM, UCLA's Center for Performance, the Wexner, the Hammer Museum, and the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, among others. Bocanegra's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts (Houston) and the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), among others.

ANTHONY BOGUES

Anthony Bogue is a writer, scholar, and curator. He is the author of *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James* (1997); *Black Heretics and Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (2003); and *Empire of Liberty: Power, Freedom and Desire* (2010). He is the editor of *From Revolution in the Tropics to Imagined Landscapes: the Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié* (2014) and *Metamorphosis: The Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié* (2017), *The Art of Haiti: Loas, History, and Memory* (2019). Bogue has curated and co-curated shows in the United States, South Africa, and the Caribbean, and has published numerous essays and articles on the history of criticism, critical theory, political thought, political philosophy, intellectual and cultural history, as well as Haitian art. He is a member of the scientific committee of Le Centre d'Art in Haiti.

LERONN BROOKS

LeRonn P. Brooks is curator of the African American Art History Initiative at the Getty Research Institute as well as curator of African American collections and acquisitions at the GRI. In this capacity, Brooks is also the curator and co-curator of several archives including those of the Johnson Publishing Company, architect Paul Revere Williams, sculptor Richard Hunt, and Dr. Robert Farris Thompson, among others. What's more, his interviews and essays on African American art have been featured in *Callaloo Journal*, *The International Review of African American Art*, and the Aperture Foundation, as well as in many exhibition catalogs: *Dawoud Bey: Elegy* (2023), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; *Torkwase Dyson: A Liquid Belonging* (2023), Pace Gallery; *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South Since 1845; Faith Ringgold: American People* (2022), the New Museum; *Richard Hunt* (monograph) (2022); *Witness: Themes of Social Justice in Contemporary Printmaking and Photography from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation* (2018), Hallie Ford Museum of Art; *Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017: Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise* (2018), the Mississippi Museum of Art; *NARI WARD: G.O.A.T., AGAIN* (2017), Socrates Sculpture Park; and *Black Romantic: The Figurative in Contemporary African-American Art* (2002), the Studio Museum in Harlem. He holds a Ph.D. in art history from City University of New York and a B.F.A. in painting from Hunter College.

MARÍA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS

María Magdalena Campos-Pons is the Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair Professor of Fine Arts at Vanderbilt University, the founder of Engine for Art Democracy and Justice (EADJ), and the consultant curator of the Tennessee Triennial under the topic of "Re-Pair." Campos-Pons founded GASP in 2003 and *Ríos Intermitentes (Intermittent Rivers)* in 2019. Her work addresses history, memory, gender, and religion, investigating the role of each in identity formation. Her practice intermixes photography, painting, sculpture, film, video, and performance. Campos-Pons's art has featured in solo museum shows in the MoMA and Indianapolis Museum, and is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Pérez Art Museum, and Harvard Art Museums. She has performed at countless venues including the Venice Biennale, Havana Biennial, Johannesburg Biennale, Pacific Standard Time, and National Portrait Gallery, and has exhibited in documenta 14 Athens and Kassel. This fall, Brooklyn Museum and J. Paul Getty Museum present *Behold*, a major traveling multimedia survey of her work. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog published by the Getty.

ROMI CRAWFORD

Romi Crawford, Ph.D., has a research practice that explores areas of race and ethnicity as they relate to American visual culture (including art, film, and photography). Her work often centers on and expands the bounds of Black Arts Movement ideas and aesthetics, and positions pedagogical impulses in relation to art making. Select publications include: co-author of *The Wall of Respect: Public Art and Black Liberation in 1960s Chicago* (Northwestern University Press, 2017); *Fleeting Monuments for the Wall of Respect* (Green Lantern Press, 2021); "Reading Between the Photographs: Serious Sociality in the Kamoinge Photographic Workshop," in *Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop* (Duke University Press, 2020); and "Surface and Soul in the Work of Nick Cave" in *Nick Cave: Forthmore* (DelMonico Books/Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2022). Curatorial projects include *Citing Black Geographies* (Richard Gray Gallery, 2022) and *So Be It! Ase!: Photographic Echoes of FESTAC '77* (Richard Gray, 2023). She conceived and founded the Black Arts Movement School Modality and the New Art School Modality, and is a professor in the Visual and Critical Studies department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

HELGA DAVIS

Helga Davis is a vocalist and performance artist, and was principal actor in the 25th-anniversary international revival of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass's seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach*. She is an artist in residence at National Sawdust and is a teaching artist with Youth Corps at the Park Avenue Armory. She is host of the eponymous podcast *HELGA* on WQXR, winner of the 2019 Greenfield Prize in Music, 2019 Alpert Award finalist, and the 2018-21 visiting curator for the performing arts at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Her new artistic venture is the study and application of *CONDUCTION*, a method of spontaneous composition developed by Lawrence Douglas "Butch" Morris.

PAUL FARBER

Paul Farber, the director and co-founder of Monument Lab, is among the nation's thought leaders on monuments, memory, and public space. Farber is author and co-editor of several books, including *A Wall of Our Own: An American History of the Berlin Wall*, *Monument Lab: Creative Speculations on Philadelphia*, and the *National Monument Audit*. Farber's curatorial work includes *Beyond Granite: Pulling Together*, the first curated multi-artist public art exhibition on the National Mall (2023), as well as Philadelphia-based projects *Citywide Exhibition* (2017) and *Staying Power* (2021). He is the host and creator of *The Statue*, a podcast series from WHYY/NPR. Farber serves as Senior Research Scholar at the Center for Public Art & Space at the University of Pennsylvania and holds a Ph.D. in American culture from the University of Michigan.

RUBY AIYO GERBER

Ruby Aiyo Gerber, a graduate of Brown University with a focus on Africana studies, is a versatile artist, combining her talents as a poet, nonfiction writer, and librettist. Her creative mission revolves around the exploration of Black temporality and the disruption of traditional storytelling norms. Gerber's work seeks to decolonize language and challenge established narratives, offering fresh perspectives on the Black experience. *This House*, an opera by Lynn Nottage, Ruby Aiyo Gerber, and Ricky Ian Gordon, will premiere at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2024/2025. She has also been commissioned by the Met/Lincoln Center Theater to write a new opera, *The Highlands*, with Lynn Nottage and composer Carlos Simon.

RICKY IAN GORDON

Ricky Ian Gordon is a New York-based composer and writer whose works have been performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and all over the USA and Europe. He is known primarily for his vocal works, operas, songs, and musicals, is widely recorded and published, and has won many awards. Recently, within one week, he premiered two new operas in New York City, *The Garden of the Finzi Continis*, with librettist Michael Korie, for New York City Opera and The Yiddish Folksbiene, and *Intimate Apparel*, with librettist Lynn Nottage, for the Metropolitan Opera and the Lincoln Center Theater. About his work, *The New York Times* had this to say: "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence infusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim. It's caviar for a world gorging on pizza!"

LONNIE GRAHAM

Lonnie Graham is an artist, photographer, and cultural activist whose work addresses the integral role of the artist in society and seeks to re-establish artists as creative problem solvers. He is a Pew Fellow and professor at Pennsylvania State University. Graham is formerly the acting associate director of the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. Graham also served as director of photography at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, an urban arts organization dedicated to arts and education for at-risk youth. There, Graham developed innovative pilot projects merging arts and academics, which were ultimately cited by then First Lady Hillary Clinton as a national model for arts education. Graham also served as an instructor of special projects and oral historian for the original Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania. In 1986, Graham authored a project entitled *A Conversation with the World*, which has been commissioned in various iterations in a number of countries around the world.

SAISHA GRAYSON

Saisha Grayson is a curator, writer, art historian and teacher focused on the intersections of contemporary art, performance, film, video, feminist politics, and cultural activism. In March 2018, she was named Curator of Time-Based Media at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) in Washington, D.C. She was assistant curator at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, where she provided key support on each of the Center's special exhibitions, including the award-winning *Materializing 'Six Years': Lucy Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art and Chicago in L.A.: Judy Chicago's Early Work, 1963-74*. Recently published writing includes the catalog for *Archival Alchemy: South Asian Women's Creative Collective 20th Anniversary Visual Arts Exhibition*, essays on Andrea Geyer for her catalog *Travels on a Slender Thread*, on Tracey Moffatt in *Moving Image Review and Art Journal (MIRA)*, and on Chitra Ganesh in *n.paradoxa*.

CATHERINE GUND

Catherine Gund is founder and director of Aubin Pictures, and an Emmy-nominated and Academy-shortlisted producer, director, writer, and activist. Her media work focuses on strategic and sustainable social transformation, racial justice, arts and culture, HIV/AIDS and reproductive justice, and the environment. Her films have screened around the world in festivals, theaters, museums, and schools, as well as on PBS, HBO, Paramount+, the Discovery Channel, Sundance Channel, Netflix, and Amazon Prime. She won the 2023 Gracie Award for Producer - Documentary. Her recent films include: *Paint Me a Road Out of Here* (forthcoming), *Meanwhile* (forthcoming), *Angola Do You Hear Us? Voices From a Plantation Prison*, *Primera*, and *Aggie*. An alumnus of Brown University and the Whitney Independent Study Program, she has four children and lives in NYC.

CRAIG HARRIS

Craig Harris is a trombonist, composer, and gifted sonic shaman. A musical journey that began when touring with the inimitable Sun Ra led Craig on a path that affirmed his place in performance with and among the ranks of creative music's most progressive thought-leaders. A prolific composer and bandleader of various-sized ensembles, Craig has amassed an extensive discography of his own influential work, in addition to contributing to the projects of his esteemed colleagues. Steeped in the tradition of using his musical voice to comment on social injustice and humanity, Craig is a 2022 nominee for the NAACP Image Awards as co-composer of the score for the Oscar-winning film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. Craig's newest recording is *Managing the Mask*.

NONA HENDRYX

Nona Hendryx is a multidisciplinary artist, vocalist, and songwriter with 10 studio albums. Hendryx was a founding member of Labelle, and is most notably known for her work as a solo artist and for being one third of the music trio who made the hit song "Lady Marmalade." She's a Grammy nominee, the first recipient of the Joe's Pub Vanguard Residency Award, and an Ambassador for Artistry in Music for Berklee College of Music, Boston. Hendryx is a 2023 Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Mellon Foundation Grant Recipient supporting the Nonaverse and her *Dream Machine Experience*, to be presented at Lincoln Center in June, 2024. Hendryx creates, develops, and presents music-driven storytelling AI/AR/VR immersive experiences.

AVERY WILLIS HOFFMAN

Avery Willis Hoffman is the inaugural artistic director of the Brown Arts Institute and a Professor of the Practice of Arts and Classics at Brown University. Previous positions include Program Director at Park Avenue Armory (2015-2021), and Senior Project Developer at Ralph Appelbaum Associates (Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., 2010-2015). Hoffman's professional career in the arts includes multiple collaborations with acclaimed director Peter Sellars (2006-present). Hoffman earned a M.St. and D.Phil. in Classics from Oxford, where she was a Marshall Scholar, and a B.A. in Classics and English from Stanford.

JENNIFER HSU

Jennifer Hsu is an artist working in dissidence and dissonance via video, writing, collage and painting. Hsu has worked on various social justice projects including the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement; with Palestinian refugees living in Syria; social architecture in Niger; Institute of Sound and Style with Carrie Mae Weems; the Women in the Director's Chair Film Festival in Chicago; and Reverend Jesse Jackson's television show among others. She has taught transmedia art and theory at Syracuse University and Marymount Manhattan College. Hsu currently manages the studio of artist Lorna Simpson and collaborates with partner James Wang to investigate China's neocolonialism and trap-neuter-release cats in Brooklyn, New York. BA Philosophy, University of Chicago; MA Media Philosophy, the European Graduate School, with thesis publication by Atropos Press.

VIJAY IYER

Vijay Iyer, a Grammy-nominated composer-pianist, was named DownBeat Magazine's Jazz Artist of the Year for 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2018 and Artist of the Year in Jazz Times's Critics' Poll and Readers' Poll for 2017. He received a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship, 2012 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, and 2011 Grammy nomination. He has released twenty-five albums of his music, most recently *Love In Exile* (Verve Records, 2023), a collaborative trio record with Grammy-winning vocalist Arooj Aftab and multi-instrumentalist Shahzad Ismaily. At Harvard, he holds a joint appointment in the Department of Music and the Department of African and African American Studies, and he founded the Department of Music's doctoral program in Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry.

TESIA KWARTENG

Tesia Kwarteng is an award-winning Ghanaian-American artist who is equally at home on the operatic stage, on screen, and in the studio. Kwarteng recently made her Broadway debut as Lady Catherine in Lincoln Center Theater's new production of Lerner & Lowe's *Camelot* and a role debut as Carmen at Opera Columbus. During the 2021-2022 season, Kwarteng made her principal debut at the Metropolitan Opera as a pit singer in *Hamlet*, and also made her off-Broadway debut at Lincoln Center Theater in *Intimate Apparel*. In concert, Kwarteng has been seen at 54 Below, as Consuelo in *West Side Story* at the Kennedy Center with the National Symphony Orchestra, and as a soloist in Laura Karpman's Grammy Award-winning *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz* at the Apollo Theater. Kwarteng holds a master's degree from Manhattan School of Music and bachelor's degree in voice performance and journalism from the University of Texas at Arlington.

KHARY LAZARRE-WHITE

Khary Lazzarre-White is a writer, educator, activist, and civil rights lawyer whose work centers on the intersection of race, class, gender, education, organizing, and the law. At the age of 21, Lazzarre-White co-founded The Brotherhood Sister Sol, a nationally renowned, Harlem-based social justice organization that educates young people, organizes with them to achieve structural change, and trains the field on politically conscious and culturally relevant youth development. His novel, *Passage*, focuses on similar themes and was named among "Best New Fiction" by The Wall Street Journal. Lazzarre-White writes op-eds and essays for national publications. He has received awards from Oprah Winfrey and from institutions including the Ford Foundation, Black Girls Rock, the Union Square Awards, Brown University, the National Recreation Foundation, and the African American Literature Awards, and was a resident fellow at The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center.

ALICIA HALL MORAN

Alicia Hall Moran is a multidimensional conceptual vocal artist and award-winning creative partner with credits in contemporary art, feature film, music composition, music journalism, Broadway, dance, symphonic music, and chamber music, with two critically-acclaimed albums to her name (the third coming in 2024). A Jerome Hill fellow, VanLier fellow, and Ford Foundation Art for Change fellow, Moran's produced works of her own imagination for the Whitney Biennial, Venice Biennial, The Kitchen, PROTOTYPE opera festival, Washington National Opera, ArtPublic/Miami Art Basel, and in residence at MASSMoCA, National Sawdust/Brooklyn, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Frost School of Music as the inaugural Chamber Music Artist in Residence, and on ice in her episodic *Cold Blooded* as Bryant Park's inaugural Ice Skating artist in residence while remaining a sought-after interpreter of song and culture by today's most exciting composers, visual artists, and musicians. She made her Broadway debut in the Tony Award-winning *Porgy & Bess*, starring as Bess in the 21-city national tour.

LYNN NOTTAGE

Lynn Nottage is a playwright, screenwriter, and co-founder of production company Market Road Films. She is the first and only woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice. Her work includes: *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Lilly Award, Drama Desk Nomination — Second Stage/Signature Theater), *Ruined* (Pulitzer Prize, Obie Award, Lucille Lortel, New York Drama Critics' Circle, Audelco, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award — MTC/Goodman Theater), and *Sweat* (Pulitzer Prize, Evening Standard Award, Obie Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Tony Nomination, Drama Desk Nomination). She is a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama.

CHIDI NWAUBANI

Chidi Nwaubani, the founder of Looty, is a visionary designer, artist, and tech practitioner. His contributions have been recognized with a Webby Award and featured in BBC News, Reuters, and The New York Times, among other publications. As a member of Snapchat's Lens Creator Network, Nwaubani experiments with XR/AR to redefine art by providing captivating experiences. Looty's genesis reflects Nwaubani's vision to empower artists and reimagine ideas of memorializing history and culture using tech like the blockchain and NFTs. Nwaubani is a member of the African Futures Institute's "Pinpoint," an archive of the top 100+ innovative African and African diaspora practitioners created by Lesley Lokko. Nwaubani recently spoke at the globally recognized initiative Doha Debates and currently is exhibiting at the Venice Biennale Architettura. His insights contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the role of art, technology, and culture.

KARYN OLIVIER

Karyn Olivier's artistic practice merges multiple histories and collective memory with present-day narratives. Actively engaged in reinterpreting the role of monuments, she has created both temporary and permanent public installations. Absence, invisibility, and displacement are explored through intervention in "blind spots" — unseen and under-considered spaces. In 2024, Olivier will unveil two memorials in Philadelphia — honoring a former slave at Stenton House, and commemorating more than 5,000 African Americans buried at Bethel Burying Ground.

ITOHAN OSAYIMWESE

Itohan Osayimwese is chair and associate professor of the History of Art and Architecture and Urban Studies, and affiliate faculty in Africana Studies and at the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Brown University. Her research engages with theories of modernity, postcolonialism, and globalization to analyze built environments in nineteenth and twentieth-century West Africa, the Anglo-Caribbean, and Germany. She is author of *Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany* (Pittsburgh, 2017), and editor of *German Colonialism in Africa and its Legacies: Architecture, Art, Urbanism, and Visual Culture* (Bloomsbury, 2023). Osayimwese's work has also been published in the *Journal of Architecture*, *Journal of Architectural Education*, *Architectural Theory Review*, *Traditional Dwelling and Settlements Review*, *Perspecta*, *Thresholds*, *African Art*, and *ABE Journal*. Most recently, Osayimwese was awarded the 2020 Schelling Foundation Prize for Architectural Theory. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Society of Architectural Historians, and is currently a board member of the European Architectural History Network and Thresholds. Her current research explores Western expropriation of Africa's architectural heritage; the problem of translation in the historiography of African architecture; and migration, property, and emancipation in the Anglo-Caribbean.

TOSHI REAGON

Toshi Reagon is a multitalented and versatile singer, composer, musician, curator, and producer with a profound ear for sonic Americana. Her expansive career includes residences at Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House, and multiple festivals and venues nationally and internationally. A highly collaborative artist, she has worked with many musicians, choreographers, film makers, and theater makers, including Urban Bush Women, Nona Hendryx, Carl Hancock Rux, and her band BIGLovely. Reagon co-composed music for two Peabody Award-winning films. She is a 2015 Art of Change Fellow by the Ford Foundation. In 2011, she founded the community festival Word*Rock*& Sword. In 2018, Reagon started the production company Wise Reagon Arts. Reagon continues to tour as a solo artist and with her band Toshi Reagon and BIGLovely.

CARL HANCOCK RUX

Carl Hancock Rux is an American poet, playwright, novelist, essayist, recording artist, actor, theater director, and radio journalist, as well as a frequent collaborator in the fields of film, modern dance, and contemporary art. He is the author of several books, including the Village Voice Literary Prize-winning collection of poetry *Pagan Operetta*, the novel *Asphalt*, and the Obie Award-winning play *Talk*. His music has been released internationally on several labels including Sony/550, Thirsty Ear, and Giant Step. Rux is also co-artistic director of Mabou Mines, an experimental theater company founded in 1970 and based in New York City.

CHERISE SMITH

Cherise Smith (Ph.D.) is chair of the Black Studies Collective and a professor of Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the award-winning author of *Michael Ray Charles: Studies in Blackness* (University of Texas Press, 2020), which places the artist's work in the context of the 1990s, the rise in collecting of Black "memorabilia," and pop art, as well as *Enacting Others: the Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Anna Deavere Smith, Nikki S. Lee, and Adrian Piper* (Duke University Press, 2011). Curator, culture worker, and art historian, Smith is the founding executive director of the Art Galleries at Black Studies, the only museum dedicated to Black art on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Her most recent exhibition, *Old Wounds, Dark Dreams*, featured works by artists Carrie Mae Weems, Cauleen Smith, Rodney McMillian, and Charles Gaines, who are also the subjects of her current book project.

DSHAWN SMITH

DShawn Smith performs as SMiFF, a multitalented musician making waves in the world of jazz-influenced hip hop and neo soul. Collaborating with Grammy Award winner Cleo "Pookie" Sample, Grammy-nominated Josiah Bassegy, and Emmy Award-winning Maxx Moor, SMiFF's music is a fusion of influences that include his father, Pastor Jour'dan Smith Sr., Cleo Sample, Stevie Wonder, Thundercat, and Miles Davis. From hitting pots and pans at two years old to becoming a self-taught multi-instrumentalist, composer, and engineer, SMiFF's musical journey is as diverse as his influences. Currently working on his personal album, SMiFF is set to make his mark in the music industry.

JAWWAAD TAYLOR

Jawwaad Taylor is a trumpeter, composer, producer, educator, and social activist. He is a founding member of the group Shape of Broad Minds, whose critically acclaimed album, *Craft of the Lost Ark*, brought Taylor international attention. Taylor performs with jazz, free jazz, improvisors, and hip hop artists from around the world. As co-founder and producer of the band The Young Mothers, he merges modern jazz, improvisation, hip hop, indie rock, and Afro-grooves. He collaborates regularly and performs with MacArthur Fellow Carrie Mae Weems and other visual artists. Taylor's performances include countless national and international festivals such as the Hove Festival, Sonar Festival, Meltdown Festival, and the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. Taylor is an alumnus of the Red Bull Music Academy.

CAMILA RODRÍGUEZ TRIANA

Camila Rodríguez Triana is a Colombian filmmaker and visual artist and a participant in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative – Protégée 2020-22 (mentor: Carrie Mae Weems). Triana works on the processes of decolonization from exercises of re-appropriation of elements of the indigenous culture from which she descends, the Muiscas. She uses art to re-pare violence and pain that began during the conquest and persist to this day. Triana is an Honorary Master in Contemporary Art and Cinema at Le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains in France. She has won several awards such as the Emerging Artist Award at the Rencontres Artistiques de Carré sur Seine in France and the Artécámara Award at ARTBO 2020 Colombia. Her art has been exhibited in solo and group shows in South America and Europe. As founder of Heka Films SAS, Triana has been responsible for several acclaimed feature films that explore the limits between cinema and the arts, such as performance, painting, etc.

IMANI UZURI

Imani Uzuri is an award-winning vocalist, composer, experimental librettist, and improviser. She composes, performs, and creates interdisciplinary works, ritual performances, immersive concerts, sound art, and compositions for chamber ensemble, chorale, experimental opera, film, and theater. Uzuri has been commissioned by Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, NY Philharmonic, Park Avenue Armory, the Fromm Players, the Ford Foundation, and her recent Chamber Music America New Jazz Works commission "She Knows Suite," premiered at Lincoln Center Atrium. Uzuri is a recent Harvard University W. E. B. Du Bois Hutchins Center Fellow in support of her forthcoming experimental chamber opera *Hush Arbor (The Opera)*.

LENA WAITHE

Lena Waithe is an Emmy-winning writer, producer, actor, and founder of Hillman Grad, a media company created to empower and provide industry access to underrepresented artists and to amplify the stories of diverse, historically marginalized communities across all industries. Known for *Master of None*, *The Chi*, and *Queen & Slim*, Waithe's latest credits include the Emmy-nominated documentary film *Being Mary Tyler Moore*, the 2023 Sundance Film Festival award-winning films *A Thousand and One*, which received the Grand Jury Prize in the U.S. Dramatic Competition, the film *Kokomo City*, which received the NEXT Audience and NEXT Innovator awards, and the Tony-nominated play *Ain't No Mo'*.

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

Carrie Mae Weems, inaugural Agnes Gund Professor of the Practice of Arts and Social Justice at Brown University (Spring 2023), is a conceptual artist who unpacks and confronts constructions of race and femininity in the pursuit of new models to live by. Grounded in the specificity of her lived experience as a Black woman but universal in its explorations of family relationships, cultural identity, power structures, and social hierarchy, her artistic practice is primarily photographic but also incorporates text, fabric, audio, installation, and video. Through image and text, film, performance, and her many convenings with individuals across a multitude of disciplines, Weems has created a complex body of art that investigates family relationships, gender roles, racism, and the consequences of power. Weems has received a multitude of awards, grants, and fellowships, including the MacArthur Award and the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1993), among many others. She serves as a mentor for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative - Mentor 2020-22 (protégée: Camila Rodríguez Triana). She is represented by the Jack Shainman Gallery and is currently the Artist in Residence at Syracuse University. She lives in Syracuse, New York with her husband Jeffrey Hoone, who directed *Light Work* for almost four decades.

CHRISTOPHER WEST

Christopher West, Ph.D., is the inaugural Curator for the Black Diaspora at the John Hay Library at Brown University, where he curates special collections, provides instruction and outreach, contributes to programming, and strengthens relationships with key partners including the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice and the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America. Prior to Brown, Christopher served as the Black Culture Literacy Librarian Assistant at the Central Branch of the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon; the College Diversity Initiative Coordinator and Assistant Professor of History at Pasadena City College; and Curator and Program Manager at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. Examples of Christopher's collaborative work include *Reckoning: Racism & Resistance in Glendale*, an exhibit exploring Glendale, CA's racist history of anti-Blackness, and *Historic Central Avenue: A Public History Resource Website*, which focuses on mid-20th century Central Avenue, a commercial and business district in South Central Los Angeles, based on a 1930s Black business directory with supporting materials, including oral histories and thematic essays. In 2007, Christopher was awarded a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Southern California.

DEBORAH WILLIS

Deborah Willis, Ph.D., is a university professor and chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and has affiliated appointments with the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Social & Cultural Analysis, and the Institute of Fine Arts, where she teaches courses on photography and imaging, iconicity, and cultural histories visualizing the Black body, women, and gender. She is also the director of NYU's Center for Black Visual Culture/Institute for African American Affairs. Her research examines photography's multifaceted histories, visual culture, contemporary women photographers, and beauty.

SANDYE WILSON

Sandy Wilson is a filmmaker, writer, and actor based in New York City. She grew up on New York's Lower East Side, and went on to study theater at Bennington College. Her acting career took her from the New York stage to the Cannes Film Festival as a featured actor in Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Stories*. As a filmmaker, Wilson's ten-minute short *SO MANY THINGS TO CONSIDER*, an autobiographical journey about love, sex, and death, was selected for the New York Film Festival and the Sundance Film Festival. Her second short, *notsoprivate*, featuring Carrie Mae Weems, explores themes of sex and desire through commentary by African-American women. Wilson is co-creator and host of *Pop Pairings* with Sally Stewart, a wine show focused on BIPOC winemakers, owners, and master distillers.

BRANDON WILLIS

Brandon Willis is a multitalented musician hailing from Houston, Texas, who blends neo soul, jazz, R&B, hip-hop, and classical music into his signature sound. With a B.A. in vocal performance from Prairie View A&M University, he has toured with The Suffers and is a key member of Jawwad Taylor's trio. Willis's notable collaboration with Carrie Mae Weems includes performances at the Park Avenue Armory in NYC (2021) and music composition for her video exhibit *The Shape of Things*. As a solo artist, he's graced prestigious venues worldwide and earned recognition as a rising artist. In 2022, he became a Houston Arts Alliance multi-grant recipient.

JADA WOOTEN

Jada Wooten '24 comes to this conversation as a student, educator, artist, and activist. Wooten studies education and dance. She explores her studies through Brown Arts Institute's Arts Education course, designing curricula for Carrie Mae Weems's exhibitions. The course also helps Wooten improve her lesson-planning and facilitation skills as a teaching artist at Hattie Ide Chaffee Nursing Home and Fusionworks Dance Center. As an arts educator, Wooten aims to implement accessible arts programming into community spaces while promoting social change and spreading Black joy. Wooten also advocates for change and joy through the Black Student Union, Brown Activist Coalition, and Students for Educational Equity.

JOANN MARIA YARROW

Joann Maria Yarrow is a director and producer who specializes in story development across several platforms. She was artistic director of Teatro Prometeo, where she directed and produced over 80 productions in Spanish, and translated, adapted, and commissioned new works that have toured nationally and internationally in multilingual communities. Yarrow co-founded A Laboratory for Actor Training with Vernice Miller, inspired by collaborations with Odin Teatret in Denmark, and worked for Hal Prince on seven Broadway productions. Navigating between film, animation, and stage, Yarrow founded Distinctive Voices, LLC, focusing on narrative consulting, commercial voice-over, and media production. She has created projects with ADA Animation in Nairobi, Kenya, and LauLapides Company in Boston. Yarrow works at Syracuse Stage, where she is directing the touring productions of *Commanding Space* by Stephanie Leary, *Citizen James* by Kyle Bass, and *Our Words Are Seeds* by Ty Defoe.

ZEHRA ZEHRA

Zehra Zehra, raised in Karachi, Pakistan, is a curator and creative producer based in Los Angeles. She founded Womxn in Windows in 2019 to share the perspectives of women on culture, identity, and society. What started as an annual public exhibition of women-made art films in storefront windows is now on a mission to support global cross-cultural dialogue. Centered around the idea that individual differences advance societal strength, WxW provides a platform for diverse and underrepresented voices and their stories. WxW has been regarded by the *LA Times* as "a video art show made for this moment" and by *LA Weekly* as "an installation that challenges conventions of female representation." Through the years, WxW has partnered with arts organizations including Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Times Square Arts, Oxy Arts, and Hauser & Wirth to curate and produce exhibitions and events. WxW has shown works by digital artists and filmmakers such as Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, Martine Syms, Ja'Tovia Gary, Kilo Kish, Alima Lee, Christine Yuan, Yumna Al-Arashi, Savanah Leaf, and Meriem Bennani, among many others.

BROWN ARTS INSTITUTE

Established in 2021, Brown Arts Institute (BAI) is a university-wide research enterprise and catalyst for the arts at Brown that creates new work and supports, amplifies, and adds new dimensions to the creative practices of Brown's arts departments, faculty, students, and community. Through year-round programming, research-focused courses, initiatives, collaborations, and partnerships, along with rigorous artistic and academic programs, BAI commissions and presents new work on campus, across Providence, Rhode Island, and beyond, from students, faculty, and on-campus arts groups, as well as in collaboration with forward-focused visiting artists and other performing arts organizations.

BROWN ARTS INSTITUTE STAFF

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Producing Assistant

Sean Martin

Stage Hand

Jaylah O'Connor

Video Operator

Jess Panton

Assistant Stage Manager

Janet Rucker

Company Manager

Pamela Salling

Stage Manager

Tony Santos

Audio Engineer

NEXT UP

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE AND THE CENTRE FOR THE LESS GOOD IDEA

PUBLIC SHARINGS

February 2024:

Presentation of *Houseboy*

Collaborative Residency Work-in-Process

Film Installation

Embracing the central methodologies of The Centre for the Less Good Idea – collaborative making, free-spirited engagement with materials, the act of allowing oneself to be led by image, sound, and impulse – William Kentridge and members of The Centre invite participants from across the Brown community to join in surfacing, rupturing, re-reading, and activating the heavy histories and enduring realities. The Centre asks: How do we begin to look at an image collectively? What are the ways in which a visual archive – entrenched in the heavy histories – begins to speak? In provoking and surfacing the narratives embedded in these archives, it is music, performance, improvisation, and collaboration that can become vital tools for re-reading images in a contemporary way.

The Brown Collaborative Residency includes The Centre's presentation of the acclaimed *Houseboy* in The Lindemann. Developed at The Centre for the Less Good Idea in Johannesburg, South Africa, and directed by William Kentridge, *Houseboy* is based on the 1956 novel by Cameroonian diplomat Ferdinand Oyono. Told through the diary of the protagonist Toundi Ondoua, *Houseboy* makes use of an ensemble cast to explore themes of narrative history, archival memory, and post-colonial identity through the lens of the colonised. A large backdrop produced by Kentridge – palm trees and dense foliage in black – sets the scene, and each character remains present on stage throughout, while myriad live percussive sounds from just off stage both punctuate and set the pace of the narrative.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

William Kentridge is a draughtsman, performer, filmmaker, and is the founder of The Centre for the Less Good Idea. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Kentridge is internationally acclaimed for his drawings, films, theatre, and opera productions. Embracing collaboration and cross-pollination of various media and genres, including performance, film, literature, and more, his work frequently responds to the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, within the context of South Africa's sociopolitical landscape.

In 2016, William Kentridge and Bronwyn Lace founded The Centre for the Less Good Idea, a space for responsive thinking through experimental, collaborative and cross-disciplinary arts practices, based in Maboneng, Johannesburg. The Centre has quickly gathered momentum and by 2022 has become a formative space for arts projects in South Africa and beyond. Between 2016 and 2022, over 400 individual performances, films, and installations have been created and shown at The Centre, and more than 700 artists of all disciplines have worked on projects at The Centre.



Brown Arts' IGNITE Series uplifts the spirit of artistic collaboration across Brown, Providence, the Rhode Island region, and beyond. Ignite your creative curiosity through this multi-year series of programs, activations, interventions, and investigations. For more information, please visit: arts.brown.edu.



Top: Credit to Zivanai Matangi

Bottom: William Kentridge, courtesy of The Centre for the Less Good Idea

Front Cover: *Let It Be Known*, 2004. Vinyl print. ©Carrie Mae Weems. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Back Cover: *If I Ruled The World*, 2006. Vinyl print. ©Carrie Mae Weems. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

