

THE BLACK INDEX

Dennis Delgado

Alicia Henry

Titus Kaphar

Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle

Whitfield Lovell

Lava Thomas

Hunter College Art Galleries,

Bertha & Karl Leubsdorf Gallery

132 East 68th Street, New York, NY

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Sunday, April 3, 2022

Curated by Bridget R. Cooks, PhD, Associate Professor in the Departments of African American Studies and Art History at the University of California Irvine. Presentation at the Hunter College Art Galleries curated in collaboration with Chief Curator Sarah Watson and Lazarus Graduate Curatorial Fellow Re'al Christian. The exhibition and publication are organized by the Hunter College Art Galleries, Hunter College, CUNY.

Hunter College Art Galleries are pleased to announce the traveling group exhibition *The Black Index* featuring the work of Dennis Delgado, Alicia Henry, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Titus Kaphar, Whitfield Lovell, and Lava Thomas. The artists included in *The Black Index* build upon the tradition of Black self-representation as an antidote to colonialist images. Using drawing, performance, printmaking, sculpture, and digital technology to transform the recorded image, these artists question our reliance on photography as a privileged source for documentary objectivity and understanding. Their works offer an alternative practice—a Black index—that still serves as a finding aid for information about Black subjects, but also challenges viewers' desire for classification. As Bridget R. Cooks, the curator of *The Black Index* explains:

“*The Black Index* is a strategy to contest the overwhelming number of photographs of Black people as victims of violent crimes that are circulated with such regularity and volume that they no longer refer to the persons they depict. Instead, the photographs become a non-event that marks the monotonous unremarkable, and numbing condition of the normality of Blackness as death.”

The works in *The Black Index* make viewers aware of their own expectations of Black figuration by interrupting traditional epistemologies of portraiture through unexpected and unconventional depictions. These works image the Black body through a conceptual lens that acknowledges the legacy of Black containment that is always present in viewing strategies. The approaches used by Delgado, Henry, Hinkle, Kaphar, Lovell, and Thomas suggest understandings of Blackness and the racial terms of our neo-liberal condition that counter legal and popular interpretations and, in turn, offer a paradigmatic shift within Black visual culture. For more information about *The Black Index* visit: www.theblackindex.art

This exhibition is dedicated to David C. Driskell.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Hunter College Art Galleries with Hirmer Publishers have produced a full-color illustrated catalogue. Edited by Bridget R. Cooks and Sarah Watson, the publication includes a comprehensive curatorial essay by Cooks, with additional essays by CalvinJohn Smiley, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Sociology department at Hunter College, CUNY, as well as artist bios written by Re'al Christian, Hunter College MA Art History, and Ella Turenne, Visual Studies Ph.D. Candidate at UC Irvine. The publication is available through University of Chicago Press.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Dennis Delgado was born in the South Bronx and received an M.F.A. from the City College of New York, CUNY. His work examines the ideologies of colonialism and their historical presence in the current moment. Whether working with video games, drone images, or looking at historical sites (such as the Bronx Zoo), his practice reflects on the Eurocentric perspectives present in popular institutions and in American visual culture. His work has been exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, El Museo del Barrio, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the Cooper Union. www.delgadostudio.net

Alicia Henry received her B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute and an M.F.A. from Yale University. Her work explores the complexities surrounding familial relationships and how perceptions of societal differences inform both individual and collective identities. She has garnered numerous awards and grants from various foundations including the Ford Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. She has exhibited at the Atlanta Biennial, Cheekwood Museum, the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, the Tennessee State Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the South Bend Museum of Art, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Henry currently teaches at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle is an interdisciplinary visual artist, writer and performer. Her artwork and experimental writing has been exhibited and performed at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Project Row Houses, The Hammer Museum, The Museum of Art at The University of New Hampshire, The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco, The Made in LA 2012 Biennial and The BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. Hinkle's work has been reviewed by the Los Angeles Times, LA Weekly, Artforum, Hyperallergic, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post and The New York Times. She is also the recipient of several awards including: The Cultural Center for Innovation's Investing in Artists Grant, Social Practice in Art (SPart-LA), Jacob K Javits Fellowship for Graduate Study, The Fulbright Student Fellowship, and The Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artists Award. www.kachstudio.com

Titus Kaphar was born in 1976 in Kalamazoo, MI, and lives and works in New Haven, CT. Kaphar received an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Art and is a distinguished recipient of numerous prizes and awards including the MacArthur Fellowship (2018), Art for Justice Fund grant (2018), Robert R. Rauschenberg Artist as Activist grant (2016), and Creative Capital grant (2015). Kaphar's work, *Analogous Colors* (2020), was featured on the cover of the June 15, 2020 issue of TIME. He gave a TED talk at the annual conference in Vancouver 2017, where he completed one of his whitewash paintings, *Shifting the Gaze*, onstage. Kaphar's work has been included in solo exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, MoMA PS1, and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, among others. His work is held in the collections including the Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, AK; the 21C Museum Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; and the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM). Miami, FL, amongst others. www.kapharstudio.com

Whitfield Lovell is internationally renowned for his installations that incorporate masterful Conté crayon portraits of anonymous African Americans from between the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil Rights Movement. In 2007, Lovell was awarded with a MacArthur Foundation fellowship. Works by Lovell are featured in major museum collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; The Smithsonian American Art Museum, DC; The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, DC; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, PA; the Yale University Art Gallery; the Hunter Museum of American Art, Chattanooga, TN; Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; Seattle Art Museum, WA, and many others. www.dcmooregallery.com/artists/whitfield-lovell

Lava Thomas was born in Los Angeles, CA. She studied at UCLA's School of Art Practice and received a B.F.A. from California College of the Arts. Thomas is a recipient of the 2020 San Francisco Artadia Award and a Lucas Artists Fellowship Award at Montalvo Arts Center (2019–21). Thomas's work is included in the National Portrait Gallery's triennial exhibition, *The Outwin 2019: American Portraiture Today*. Her work has been exhibited in various institutions including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, the International Print Center, New York, NY; the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA; and the California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA. Her work is held in the permanent collections of the United States Consulate General in Johannesburg, South Africa; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; the M.H. de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA and the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, CA. Thomas's work has been written about in *Artforum*, *Hyperallergic*, *SF Chronicle*, *The Guardian*, *KQED Arts*, *The Art Newspaper*, and *LA Weekly*. www.lavathomas.com

The Black Index tour is organized by Hunter College Art Galleries in collaboration with the University Art Galleries at UC Irvine, Palo Alto Art Center, and Art Galleries at Black Studies, University of Texas at Austin. Lead support for *The Black Index* is provided by The Ford Foundation with additional support by UCI Confronting Extremism Program, Getty Research Institute, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte, Carol and Arthur Goldberg, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Leubsdorf Fund at Hunter College, Joan Lazarus Fellowship program at Hunter College, Loren and Mike Gordon, Pamela and David Hornik, University of California Office of the President Multi-campus Research Programs and Initiative Funding, University of California Humanities Research Institute, Applied Materials Foundation, Illuminations: The Chancellor's Arts and Culture Initiative, UCI Humanities Center, Department of African American Studies, Department of Art History, The Reparations Project, the Lehman Foundation, and the UC Irvine Black Alumni Chapter. *The Black Index* was made possible with support from California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit calhum.org, and was funded in part by Humanities New York with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

TOUR DATES

University Art Galleries UC Irvine: January 9–March 20, 2021 (online only); Palo Alto Art Center: May 1–August 14, 2021; Art Galleries at Black Studies, University of Texas at Austin: September 16–December 11, 2021; Hunter College Art Galleries, Leubsdorf Gallery: February 1– April 3, 2022

INSTALLATION

Installation views of *The Black Index* at Hunter College Art Galleries' Leubsdorf Gallery, 2022. Photos by Stan Narten.

The Black Index

The artists featured in *The Black Index*—Dennis Delgado, Alicia Henry, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Tins Kaphar, Whitfield Lovell, and Lava Thomas—build upon the tradition of Black self-representation as an antidote to colonialist images. Using drawing, performance, printmaking, sculpture, and digital technology to transform the recorded image, these artists question our reliance on photography as a privileged source for documentary objectivity and understanding. Their works offer an alternative practice—a Black index—that still serves as a finding aid for information about Black subjects, but also challenges viewers' desire for classification.

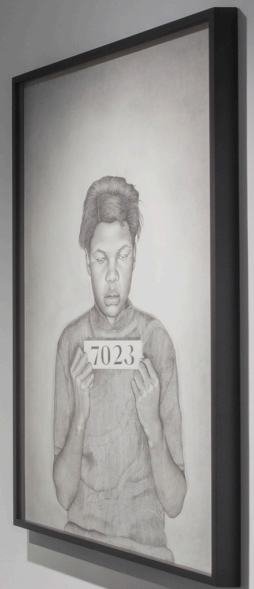
The works in *The Black Index* make viewers aware of their own expectations of Black figuration by interrupting traditional epistemologies of portraiture through unexpected and unconventional depictions. These works image the Black body through a conceptual lens that acknowledges the legacy of Black containment that is always present in viewing strategies. The approaches used by Delgado, Henry, Hinkle, Kaphar, Lovell, and Thomas suggest understandings of Blackness and the racial terms of our neo-liberal condition that counter legal and popular interpretations and, in turn, offer a paradigmatic shift within Black visual culture.

The Black Index exhibition is dedicated to David C. Driskell.

Curated by Bridget R. Cooks Associate Professor, Department of African American Studies and the Department of Art History, University of California, Irvine. Presentation at the Hunter College Art Galleries curated in collaboration with Sarah Watson and Rea Christian.

Exhibition installation by Phi Nguyen, Joe Gannon, Anna Lee, George Simonds, and Montana Mathis.

The presentation of *The Black Index* at the Hunter College Art Galleries honors the memory of our colleague and collaborator Ella Tureane (1974–2021).







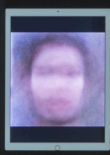














CHECKLIST



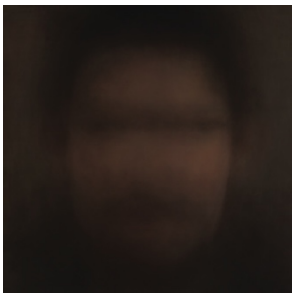
Dennis Delgado, *Do the Right Thing*, 2020
Tagged image format file 7 5/8 × 7 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Dennis Delgado, *Higher Learning*, 2020
Tagged image format file 7 5/8 × 7 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Dennis Delgado, *Training Day*, 2020
Tagged image format file 7 5/8 × 7 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Dennis Delgado, *Black Panther*, 2020
Tagged image format file 7 5/8 × 7 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Alicia Henry, *Analogous III*, 2020

Acrylic, thread, yarn, dyed leather Variable dimensions

Courtesy of the artist



Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, *The Evanesced: The Untouchables*, 2020

100 drawings, India ink and watercolor on recycled, acid-free paper 12 × 9 inches each

Courtesy of the artist



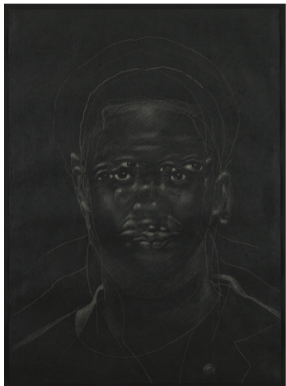
Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts, *Redaction (Habeas Corpus)*, 2020
Etching and silkscreen on paper, 30 × 20 inches
Courtesy of Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts



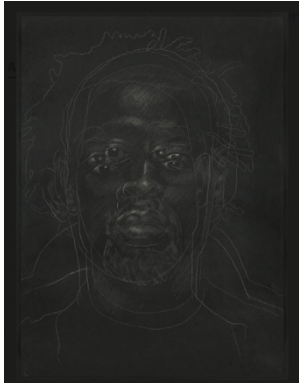
Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts, *Redaction (San Francisco)*, 2020
Etching and silkscreen on paper, 30 × 20 inches each
Courtesy of Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts



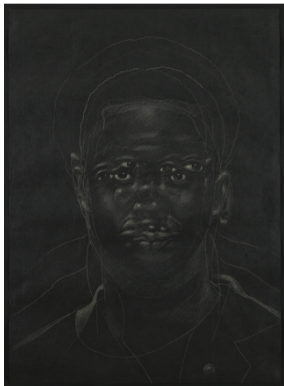
Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts *Redaction (In Missouri)*, 2020
Etching and silkscreen on paper, 30 × 20 inches each
Courtesy of Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts



Titus Kaphar, * *The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) XV*, 2015*
Chalk on asphalt paper, 49 × 36 inches
Museum of Modern Art, Fund for the Twenty-First Century. © Titus Kaphar



Titus Kaphar, * *The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) V*, 2014
Chalk on asphalt paper, 49 × 36 inches
Museum of Modern Art, Fund for the Twenty-First Century. © Titus Kaphar



Titus Kaphar, * *The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) V*, 2015
Chalk on asphalt paper 48 1/4 × 36 13/16 inches
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, Museum Purchase, Barbara Cooney Porter Fund. © Titus Kaphar

*Hunter College Art Galleries' presentation only



Whitfield Lovell, *The Card Pieces*, 2020
Charcoal pencil on paper with attached playing cards 12 × 9 inches each
Courtesy of the artist and DC Moore Gallery, New York



Lava Thomas

Mugshot Portraits: Women of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Jo Ann Robinson, 2018

Graphite and Conté pencil on paper, 47 × 33 1/4 inches.

Collection of Janet Mohle-Boetani, MD

Lava Thomas

Mugshot Portraits: Women of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Addie J. Hamerter, 2018

Graphite and Conté pencil on paper, 47 × 33 1/4 inches

Courtesy of Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco

Lava Thomas

Mugshot Portraits: Women of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Alberta J. James, 2018

Graphite and Conté pencil on paper, 47 × 33 1/4 inches

Collection of Doree Friedman