

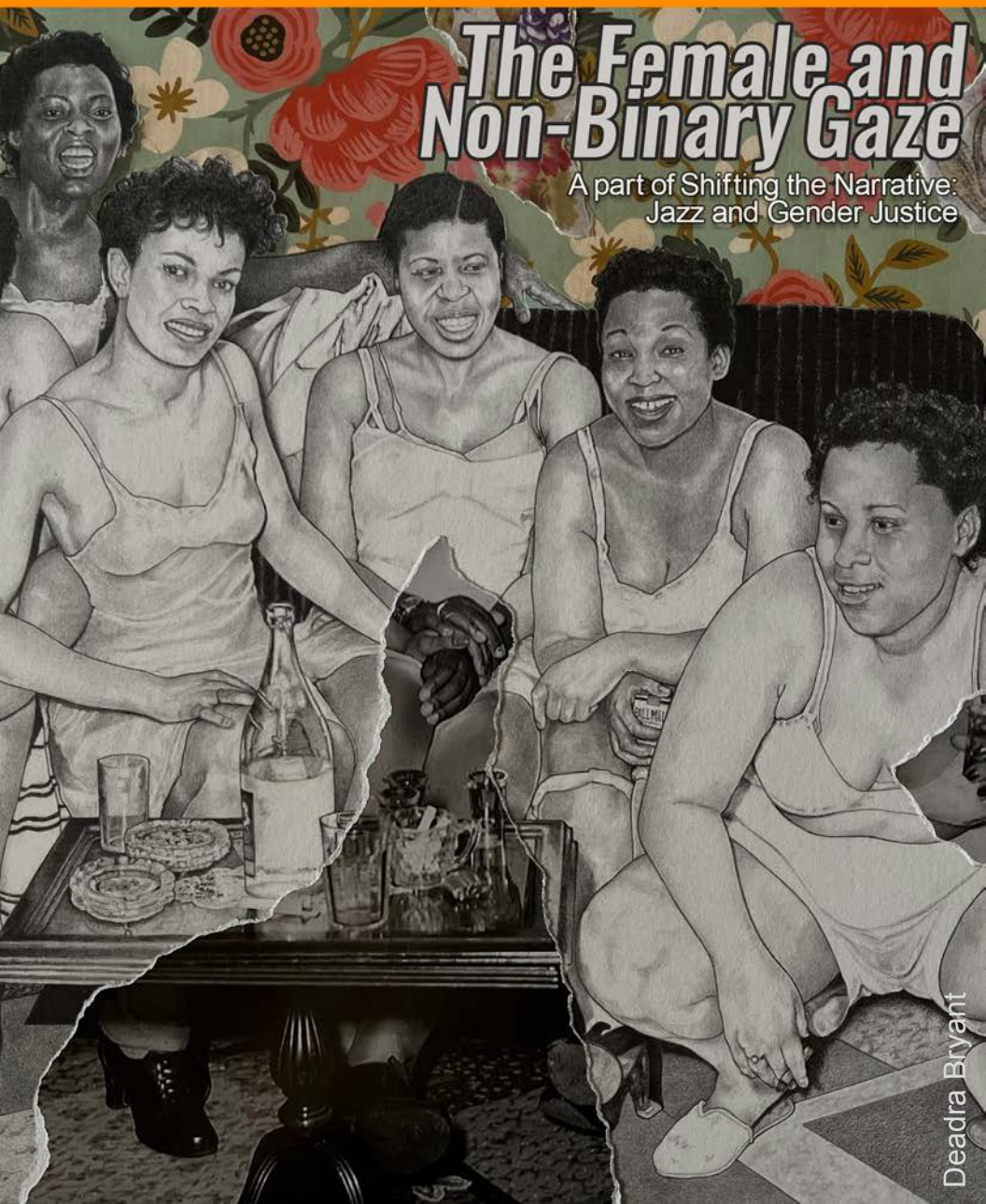
# CARRBILL

The Carr Center Gallery

May 7 – June 2, 2023

## The Female and Non-Binary Gaze

A part of Shifting the Narrative:  
Jazz and Gender Justice



Deadra Bryant

**The Female and Non-Binary Gaze** is a part of *Shifting The Narrative*, Terri Lyne Carrington's groundbreaking multidisciplinary exploration of jazz without the lens of gender bias, developed in collaboration with the Carr Center and the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice.

**Curated** by Terri Lyne Carrington

**Co-Curated** by Tia Nichols



**Berklee**

Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice

**With support from:**

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The Ford Foundation

Kresge Foundation

Hudson-Webber Foundation

Erb Family Foundation





## TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

### *Curatorial Statement*

#### THE FEMALE AND NON-BINARY GAZE

**A gaze immediately** renders that which is visible and invisible. In contemporary usage, the female gaze has been used to refer to the perspective that a female artist brings to their art that would be different from a male view of the subject. What would we experience if our iconography and visual and sonic culture centered the gaze of women?

**For this installation,** *The Female and Non-Binary Gaze* provides commentary on the current renaissance of Black feminist thought through artistic conversations between scholars, visual artists, filmmakers and photographers. Over a dozen visual artists display their “gaze” through themes of gender justice, racial justice and the realities brought forth by being both seen and unseen.

**Carrington also expressed** gratitude for all her collaborators, “Many thanks to all the amazing artists that contributed to this exhibit, and a special thanks to Carrie Mae Weems and Mickalene Thomas for their artistic excellence and commitment to breaking down barriers and assessing gender bias’ in the arts.”



## CARRIE MAE WEEMS

### *Meet the Artist*

**Considered one of the** most influential contemporary American artists, Carrie Mae Weems has investigated family relationships, cultural identity, sexism, class, political systems, and the consequences of power. Determined to enter the picture—both literally and metaphorically—Weems has sustained an on-going dialogue within contemporary discourse for over thirty years.

**She has had numerous** solo and group exhibitions at national and international museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Frist Center for Visual Art and The Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 2013 Weems received the MacArthur “Genius” grant as well as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award. She has also received the Lucie Award for Fine Art photography and The W. E.B. Dubois Award from Harvard University.

**She is represented** in public and private collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, NY, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and The Tate Modern, London.





*image by Carrie Mae Weems*

## THE ROAD TO CARRINGTON

A Carrie Mae Weems Project 2023

A part of *Shifting the Narrative: Jazz and Gender Justice*

**Created by Carrie Mae Weems**, one of the world's most influential contemporary artists, *The Road To Carrington*, was commissioned by The Carr Center. It is a video project that centers on the breadth of Terri Lyne Carrington's work.

**It is not a traditional "documentary"**, but rather a conceptual artwork based on the life of the extraordinary woman, musician, artist, activist, and teacher as told through the lens of Weems, the brilliant, award-winning photographer and multi-disciplinary artist.



**TIA NICHOLS**  
*Co-Curator Statement*

## THE FEMALE AND NON-BINARY GAZE

**Look steadily and intently gaze;** embrace, envelop, encompass that which is perceivable. Consciousness requires a degree of awareness and surrender to pre disclosed and undisclosed material to grasp the unforeseen. To be seen is more than being recognized or validated, it invites reflection, discernment, and dissection for further realization; not only of the self through actualization, but of the collective. *The Female and Non-Binary Gaze* offers the realization of visionaries, particularly Black feminists, whose work encompasses the realities of those whose lives and labor often go unnoticed.

# THE FEMALE AND NON-BINARY GAZE

## *Exhibiting Artists*

Nadia Alexis .....	7
Deadra Bryant .....	9
Mira Gandy .....	11
Donna Jackson .....	13
Carole Morisseau .....	15
Tia Nichols .....	17
Karmala Sherwood .....	19
April Anue Shipp .....	21
Naomi Tajonera .....	23
Asha Walidah .....	25
Jennifer White-Johnson .....	27
Cara Marie Young .....	29

## *Also included are works from* **NEW STANDARDS**

Carmen Lundy.....	<i>Shero</i>
Carmen Lundy.....	<i>Daughter of the Universe</i>
Jazzmeia Horn.....	<i>Ella Reimagined</i>
Kokayi.....	<i>Consuelo en B-639</i>
Tracy Love & Terri Lyne Carington.....	<i>Jazzwoman</i>
Tracy Love.....	<i>Rest: Space Between the Notes (2022)</i>





**N**adia Alexis is a poet, writer, photographer, and educator born in Harlem, NYC to Haitian immigrants. Her debut full-length collection of poems and photographs, *Watersheds*, is forthcoming from CavanKerry Press in Spring 2025, and it was also a finalist for the 2022 Ghost Peach Press Prize. Her poetry and essays have been published or are forthcoming in *Poets & Writers*, *Indiana Review*, *MQR: Mixtape*, *Shenandoah*, *The Global South*, and others. Her poetry has also been anthologized in *Wild Imperfections: An Anthology of Womanist Poems* and *Wild Gods: The Ecstatic in Contemporary American Poetry and Prose*. Her photography publications include *Forgotten Lands*, *MQR: Mixtape*, *TORCH Journal*, *MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora*, and others. She is the 2019 honorable mention poetry prize winner of the Hurston/Wright College Writers Award, 2020 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters photography award nominee, and 2020 semifinalist of the 92Y Discovery Poetry Contest. She is also a fellow of the Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop and The Watering Hole. Her photographs have been shown in several exhibitions in the U.S. and Cuba. She holds a PhD in English with Creative Writing Concentration as well as an MFA in Poetry from the University of Mississippi.



# NADIA ALEXIS

## Artist Statement



This image is from my Family Photos series where I document the everyday life of my Haitian immigrant working class family living in New York. In the series, I investigate ideas of identity, class, language, and familial relationships while archiving how they engage with Harlem's changing landscape. The image depicts a common occurrence in Black households—a haircut in the comfort of one's own home. But the haircut is more than an act of grooming. It can be a space for intimacy, transformation, expression, new beginnings, and more.



**D**eadra began her artistic journey as a teen studying illustration at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington D.C. Following classes at The Chicago Art Institute and Pratt in Brooklyn, she opened her first solo exhibit at Little Black Pearl, a new art and design center in Chicago. She was chosen from a number of artists to be the first to exhibit there.

**Ms. Bryant has an** uncanny ability to capture life's raw emotions. Whether it's the deep sadness in one's eyes, the pure joy displayed in a facial expression or the solitude of a snow-covered country road. She draws you in. Her art also conveys her deep love for her southern roots, which is prominently displayed in a number of her works.

**In spite of years** of artistic experience, Deadra feels that she's really just getting started and that the best is yet to come. Private collectors include...

Patrick Ewing, Snoop Dog, Monica Haslip, Eamonn Walker, Tracy Morgan, Quincy Jones, Lizz Wright, Vernee Watson, Pauletta Washington and Phylicia Rashad





**I**n my art, I attempt to capture individuals in their purest form without filters or techniques to mask the essence of their human experience. It's important that facial lines, blemishes and unique characteristics are there to help convey that person's humanity and life's journey.

**While not formally** trained, my knowledge of photography is basically self-taught. Combined with a formal background in illustration, an absolute love for taking photos and a self-professed good eye, my vision as an artist has evolved to where I am today.



**M**ira Gandy is a visual artist who celebrates women through multimedia art forms. Her mixed media paintings, collages, drawings, and photographs initiate conversations about women, beauty, self-identity, and their intersection in media and culture. The artist grew up in New York City's Greenwich Village and currently lives in Los Angeles, California. She studied abroad at the American University in Paris, France, and has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Southern California Roski School of Art and Design.

**Gandy is passionate** about making art accessible and has spent years providing art instruction to thousands of youth and adults of all ages. The artist is the recipient of the National Action Network Woman of Excellence Award for her advancement of women and children in the community.

**In May 2020**, amidst the Covid -19 Pandemic, Gandy expanded her community reach to launch "The Gandy Art House". This non- profit organization provides creative opportunities for youth, families, and the LGBTQ+ community to engage in visual arts.. She has been featured on WABC -TV's "Here Now", on NY1, and Sirius XM Radio Fox 5 TV, Good Day - Street Talk, discussing the importance of art as a therapeutic avenue to self-expression and creativity.





**M**y work explores themes centered on women, beauty, and self-identity. I create mixed media paintings, collages, drawings, and photographs using color, texture, abstraction, and portraiture to create images that go beyond stereotypes and celebrate the inherent beauty and power of the human spirit.

**“Phenomenal Women”** celebrates Black women and our collective impact on society and the world through raising our voices, marching our bodies, supporting communities, and bringing our unique beauty and creativity to the world. I created Phenomenal Women by first making small collages on paper. I then photographed and combined them to make two sizeable digital collage paintings. When deciding which women to portray, I was interested in making and inclusive representation of Black women from all spheres of life that I admire, including transgender women Jari Jones, Janet Mock, and Indya Moore. In addition, I added an interactive component, a QR code displayed alongside the work, for viewers to scan and learn more about these impactful women.

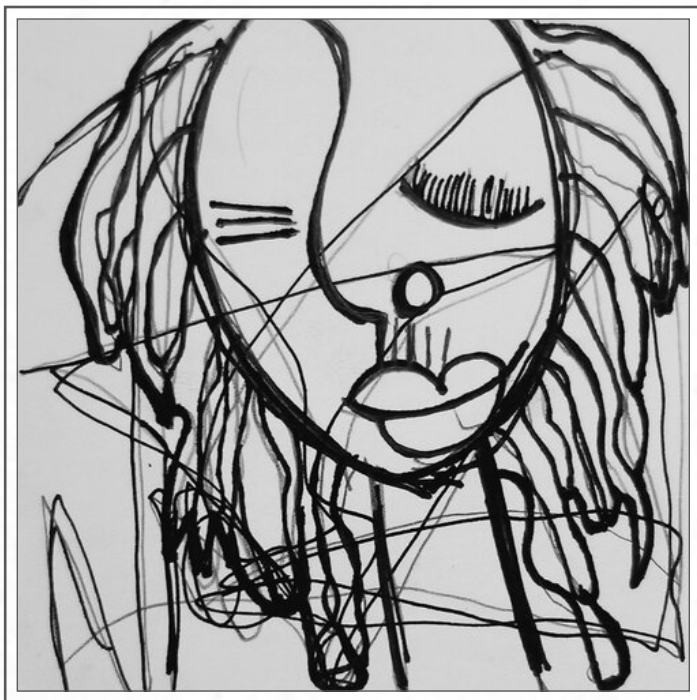


**F**or the past 20 years, Donna has dedicated her skills as a designer and project manager to develop marketing and promotional materials for urban libraries and non-profits. She has been a graphic/web designer for Detroit Public Library and Houston Public Library systems and brand manager and consultant for Houston Public Library. She attended Western Michigan University in the College of Engineering and also attended the College for Creative Studies as a Graphic Communications major.

**She is the founder** of DMJStudio, a creative studio that focuses on narratives that matter to us as women, people of color, urban dwellers and global citizens. The studio is devoted to developing art projects and events that closes gaps between community and culture through public art, exhibits, film, and social collaboration. The studio's desire is to make art and culture accessible everywhere and to everyone. To ensure DMJStudio events and projects are free, Donna works and provides branding and project management services to cultural and non-profit institutions and individuals.

**Some of her recent** projects include, In Pursuit of Hope, a film on the 1967 Rebellion in Detroit, Posters on Politics, an exhibition of posters from around the world, Souls of Black Folk, a local group exhibition of works by Detroit artists on the life and legacy of W.E.B. DuBois and YOU Belong, the inaugural exhibition at Chroma Detroit. She has helped curate and support several exhibits at Norwest Gallery and considers it her art home away from home.





**M**ost artists began the journey of creating to find out more about themselves or the world around them. I'm no different. My bodies of work are the results of what I've learned about womanhood and what I want to share about my hometown.

**COLORFUL WOMEN:** A series of illustrations, writings, and paintings of women in abstract form. Through color, shape, and the use of the human female figure, this series' objective is to open viewers' eyes to another type of feminine beauty that is beyond the curves, clothes, makeup and teased hair. These images convey a beauty that comes from the colorful nuisances of women's personalities, emotions, and experiences. The paintings in this series are acrylic on canvas or wooden panels: the illustrations and drawings and mixed media and range from 4" x 6" to 3" x 3" inches. I am currently developing an illustrated series of 1000 3x3 cards, depicting women's portraits, bodies, and words. The small and detailed mixed media cards create an intimate relationship between the artist and the viewer and display women in the only way they should be experienced; up close and personal.

**SHE SAID NO:** This series of black and white acrylic paintings size 16 x 20 is a collection of narratives about the word NO. How many times as a woman, you hear the word NO as you make a life for yourself and how many times a woman must say NO to grow, empower, and protect herself in society. Such a small word with so much power. The installation includes 48 panels, also includes a small book of stories entitled "She Said No."



**C**arole Morisseau is a prize-winning American Artist, Most recently her sculpture place 2nd. in the regional Gilda Snowden Memorial Exhibition, 2023 at the Scarab Club – Detroit, Mi. Her work was also selected as “Best in Show” at the Detroit Artists Market, 2020.

**Morisseau's work** is represented in local and national collections, including the prestigious collection of CCH. Pounder and Public commissions of Henry Ford Health, University of Detroit Mercy and HGTV. Carole is a Fulbright Hays Fellow GPA to Brazil, 2018. Carole was selected for the Cuttyhunk Island Artist Residency, Massachusetts, 2019. She has been featured in several articles in the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News. Morisseau sits on the Board of Directors of two historical arts organizations, Scarab Club Detroit (Vice President) and Detroit Artists Market. She has been honored by the Arab American Artists organization as an “Outstanding African American Artist.



**M**y practice is focused on creating work that expresses concerns and points of view of the African American experience and documents the beauty of our people and its culture. My intent is to capture the beauty of the African diaspora and document the era in which we live. I am consistently absorbing, reacting and then creating works that address the changes and subtleties in our society. Thus creating themes in my work that are diverse and range in topic. I have become much more environmentally conscientious than in my past practice. I am now excited to employ the use of soil and recycled and natural materials to create and enhance my work. My use of soil can determine tonal qualities, value or accent pigment when used on paper or canvas. The act of the use soil in my art is also an act of resistance when one considers the importance of land ownership and the disenfranchised black, brown, indigenous or enslaved peoples of not only the USA but of the world. The soil that I use in my work is from the countryside Quilombos or compounds founded by escaped enslaved people of Brazil. The extremely rich red-brown color of the soil reminds one of the soil of Georgia and the Southern United States which helps to emphasize the long parallel history of slavery of the United States and Brazil. Aesthetically, the soil is a striking complement to my use compressed charcoal. I have in addition, developed a series of drawings that utilize the charcoal and soil to document an ongoing art installation. This series has been widely received by the arts community.





**T**ia Nichols is from Newport News, Virginia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art: Printmaking and a Minor in American Sign Language & Deaf Studies from the University of Virginia. She completed her Master's in Fine Arts in Art & Art History: Printmaking, from Wayne State University. She is the Gallery Director and Visual Arts Coordinator of the Carr Center and Chief Curator of Mack Alive in Detroit. Nichols has exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally. Nichols hopes to continue mentorship and education with youth and young adults. She plans to launch a fine and performing arts center for underrepresented community members.



I have become interested in breaking down the language and processes of printmaking and papermaking. My exploration has grown into an understanding of how to deteriorate substances with hopes to increase sustainability. Though these materials may not have much longevity, and the question of archival stability may arise, my goal is simply to create. I am choosing to work with materials that raise awareness of substance abuse, comfort, and my intersectional background.

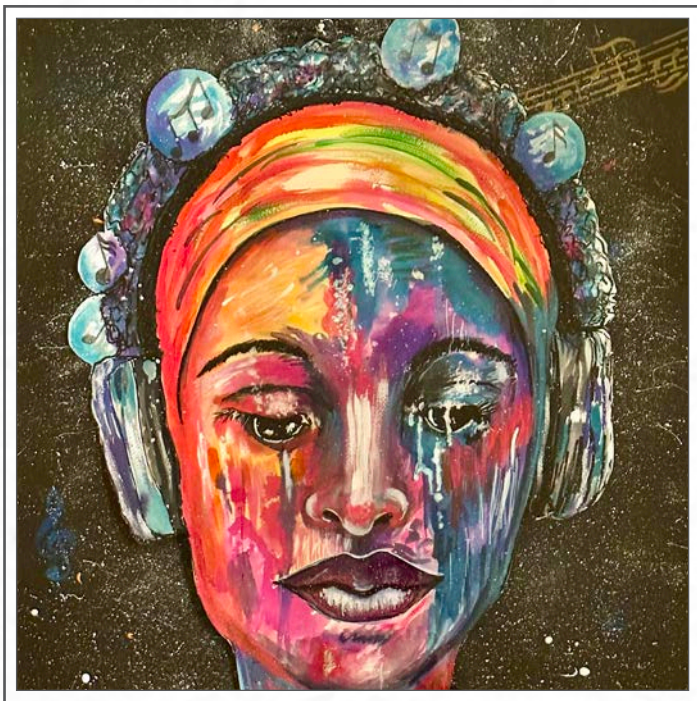
**My recent work** focuses on the continued development of my interests in supporting our environment, how we impact the environment, and how we occupy and develop in environments. I also bring to life some stories on those who are living with mental challenges associated with post traumatic slave syndrome. Finally, I am curious about endangerment. To live, but only as though there were no tomorrow.

**Endangered species** are “anyone or anything whose continued existence is threatened.” Society has normalized the dwindling population of chickens, various bird species, pigs, and cows for mass consumer culture. However, media desensitization to the dwindling population of black bodies for God knows what, will always leave pits of stomachs palpitant. My work often compares studies of endangered animal species to populations of targeted minorities. I focus on the identities of Black women and our battle regarding mental health, triggers, coping mechanisms, African myths, Black religion, effects of war, beauty standards, and being a “strong Black woman”. However, I also focus on the identities of Black men and women experiencing Black joy. A form of resistance designed to combat trauma and guarantee a glimpse of hope.



**K**armala Sherwood, Visual Arts Specialist, received a certificate of advanced studies from UCLA, earned her M.Ed. from Lesley University in Reading Supervision and Administration, attended Tufts University, and received her B.A. in Visual Arts and Art History from Albion College. Karmala is a native of Detroit, Michigan, and grew up taking piano lessons on Kirby St. Her love of art began in high school as she spent significant time at the Detroit Institute of Art, eventually volunteering there on Saturday afternoons. She started teaching as a middle school teacher in Detroit, Michigan. Karmala continued her career in education in Troy, Michigan, and gained experience as an elementary and middle school teacher for six years. She then traveled to Boston and began teaching before transitioning to several roles as an administrator for Boston Public Schools for almost 35 years. She has served as a Principal and Executive Director during her educational career. After moving to Sacramento, California, in 2018, Karmala began teaching visual arts to students K-8 for the San Juan Unified School District at Gold River Discovery Center in Gold River. Students have received district-wide and state-wide recognition. Most recently, the California Arts Education Association chose her student as the “2022 Youth Art Month” state winner for the grades 3-5 category.





**M**y work reflects my personal experiences and observations of the world around me. Through my art, I aim to communicate my thoughts and emotions to the viewer while inviting them to interpret and engage with the piece uniquely. My inspiration comes from various sources, including nature, culture, and the human condition; I experiment with multiple mediums and techniques to create a visually engaging piece. Ultimately, my goal as an artist is to create aesthetically pleasing and thought-provoking works. I want to inspire others to see the world in new ways and to appreciate the beauty, pain, and complexity of the world.

**My art, “Take Note,”** reflects the pain and struggles many black people face. This work aims to shed light on the injustices and inequalities while celebrating the resilience and strength of the black community.

**In this particular piece,** I depict a woman listening to music to cope with the pain and trauma of the ongoing violence and discrimination against black people. Her tears represent the deep emotional wounds she and many others carry, while the music symbolizes the healing power of art and culture.

**As an artist,** I must use my platform to raise awareness and inspire change. My work will catalyze meaningful conversations and actions toward a more just and equitable society.



*I am April the daughter of Nellie  
Nellie the daughter of Savannah  
Savannah daughter of Anna  
Anna the daughter of Easter  
These are my foremothers;  
all were dressmakers and quilt makers  
Quilt making is in my DNA*

**A**pril is a Detroit born and raised quilt maker, fiber artist and autodidactic figurative sculptor. April's love of sewing began at the feet of her mother as a child. April enjoys making quilts with spiritual and historical significance. April thinks of herself as a storyteller—a Griot of the Cloth.

**April's works** have been featured in numerous Catalogs, Newspapers and Magazines. April has shown her works in Museums, Galleries, Colleges and Universities all across the United States, and as far away as the U.K. and Johannesburg, South Africa.

**April began sculpting** in clay, a new medium for her two years ago on a whim. "Once my hands touched clay, it was like being reacquainted with an old friend". "The cloth and clay speak to me, telling me how it wants to be used". She believes she is the conduit. Each of her works tells its own unique story. "Some are painful stories from our nation's past, while others celebrate our beauty and unity".





**I**njustice and inhumanity have influenced some of my pieces, while others were influenced by my love of music, namely jazz and the blues. Nina Simone music is the soundtrack of my life. I can honestly say she is a great influence and inspiration in my work. Nina Simone's quote is apropos for today.

**"An artist's duty,** as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times. I think that is true of painters, sculptors, poets, musicians. As far as I'm concerned, it's their choice, but I CHOOSE to reflect the times and situations in which I find myself. That, to me, is my duty. And at this crucial time in our lives, when everything is so desperate, when every day is a matter of survival, I don't think you can help but be involved. Young people, black and white, know this. That's why they're so involved in politics. We will shape and mold this country or it will not be molded and shaped at all anymore. So I don't think you have a choice. How can you be an artist and NOT reflect the times? That to me is the definition of an artist." Nina Simone

**Eunice Kathleen Waymon** (February 21, 1933 – April 21, 2003), known professionally as Nina Simone was an American singer, songwriter, pianist, and civil right activist. Her music spanned styles including classical, folk, gospel, blues, jazz, R&B, and pop.

**The sixth of eight children** born into a poor family in Tryon, North Carolina, Simone initially aspired to be a concert pianist. With the help of a few supporters in her hometown, she enrolled in the Juilliard school of Music in New York City. She then applied for a scholarship to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where, despite a well-received audition, she was denied admission, which she attributed to racism. In 2003, just days before her death, the Institute awarded her an honorary degree.

**Materials are made** using only 100% cotton fabrics, machine applique and quilted.





**I**'m a photographer and artist based in Detroit. I'm mostly known for my work in portrait photography and as your favorite framer at the Sherwood Forest Art Gallery. In my 10+ year career, I've made it a point to make sure the people on the other side of my lens feel special in a safe space. I've incorporated that same approach with everyone, whether it's a 36-hour newborn or a 90-something first time author.

**I began freelancing** during my sophomore year of college, starting out with family portraits and headshots for amateur models. This later expanded into newborn photography, engagements, weddings, fashion and even some graphic design. I have since ventured into printmaking, branding content and collaborating with other creatives on their projects.

**I am currently** a resident artist at the Marygrove Conservancy in Detroit, and the project manager at Sherwood Forest Art Gallery.



“Village Girls” was taken during Naomi’s trip to Ghana, West Africa in 2014. After attending a Chief’s funeral in the Pepease mountains, a group of young girls followed her to her van. Before departing, Naomi met with the girls and had a few giggles, as little girls do. Noticeably, in between the laughs the girls would latch on to each other like a linked chain, acting as each other’s protection, with one girl acting as the main link, “big sister”. As an oldest sibling, Naomi understood that role very well, and asked the “big sister” if she could snap a picture, big sis allowed it.



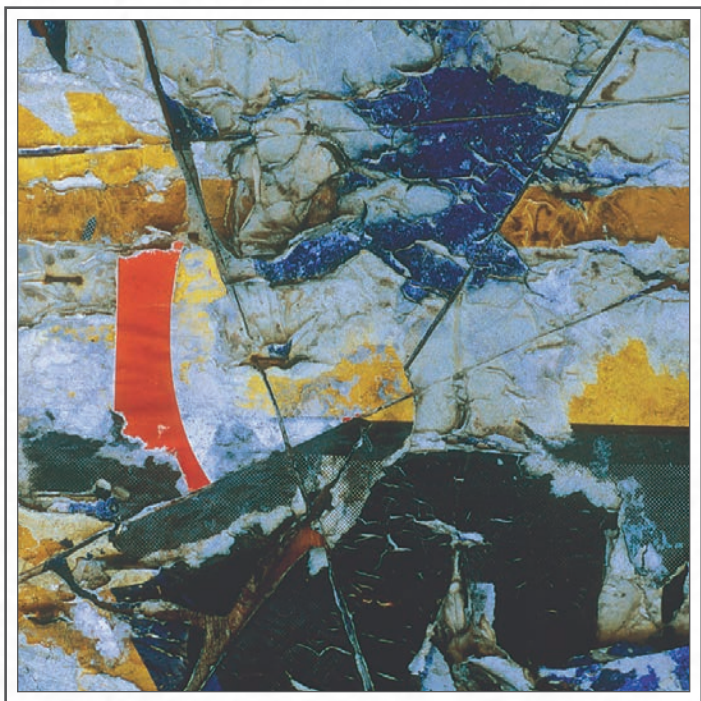
**A**s if a Director on a Broadway stage, I enjoy developing an unnoticed character, molding and shaping, enhancing their lines, and waiting in anticipation for the applause. Asha Walidah is a retired Senior Chemist from the Detroit Water Department, a fine arts photographer, activist, and world traveler. In 1972, she earned a B.S. Degree from Howard University, and a Masters Degree in Biochemistry from Atlanta University in 1976. She received an education in fine arts photography, taught by Jim Wilson, while in attendance at Wayne County Community College.

**She learned dark room** development techniques and the art of photography while being the head photographer at the Shrine of the Black Madonna Church where she learned how to capture and document the peaks of religious spirituality. In the early 90's Walidah traveled to South Africa due largely to her heartfelt concern for the apartheid oppression in the country at the time. While in South Africa, she experienced free-lance journalism from a Johannesburg photographer which enabled her to see first-hand the effects of apartheid on the indigenous people. As a result of documenting this struggle, the then editor of the Michigan Chronicle Newspaper, Danton Wilson, published a weekly series covering her travels in South Africa. She also exhibited, lectured, and gave many slide presentations to the Public and the Detroit Public Schools.



# ASHA WALIDAH

## *Artist Statement*



**I** photograph subject matter which is evident to everyone in our community, but is often ignored. My goal is a visual transformation relating the abstract art form to challenges, yet beauty of this real world.



**J**en White-Johnson is a disabled and Neurodivergent Afro-Latina, art activist and design educator whose visual work aims to uplift disability justice narratives in design. Jen uses visual art to explore the intersection of content and caregiving, emphasizing redesigning ableist visual culture. Her creative practice shines best when she can infuse design justice, disability justice, and art activism to center Afro-Latina and Neurodivergent creativity, care work, and joy as essential acts of resistance. Jen lives with Graves disease and ADHD, and her heart-centered and electric approach to disability advocacy bolsters these movements with invaluable currencies: influential, dynamic art and media that all at once educates, bridges divergent worlds, and builds a future that mirrors her Autistic son's experience.

**Jen has presented** her work and collaborated with a number of brands and art spaces such as Twitter, Target, and Apple. Her photo and design work has been featured in The Washington Post, AfroPunk, and Art in America. In 2020 she was an honoree on Diversability's D-30 Disability Impact List. In 2021 she was listed as one of 20 Latino Artists to watch on Today.com Jen is also permanently archived at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The NMAAHC (National Museum of African American History and Culture.) Her work is included in publications: *Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation*, (Routledge, 2023), *Extra Bold: A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-racist, Nonbinary Field Guide for Graphic Designers*, (Princeton Architectural Press, 2021,) and *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression & Reflection*, (Skyhorse Publishing, 2022)



**I**nspired by revolutionary mothering, disabled and radical feminists of color, My heart work reexamines the role of socially engaged practitioners, educators, and art agitators, highlighting care and community work through the lens of Neurodivergent parenting and anti-ableist creative resistance. Growing up in the 80s and 90s disability rights and advocacy culture weren't taught in many schools.

**The American Disabilities Act** wasn't passed until 1991, until then and still, disabled people were often viewed as burdens, institutionalized, and discriminated against in the workplace and in their communities. I didn't begin thinking about my own disability and neurodivergence until my son was diagnosed as Autistic at the age of 3. I felt it essential to begin redefining my role as a disabled parent and raising a disabled child by exploring how my art and design practice could inform a framework for community engagement advocating for Autistic communities. This includes breaking the visual cycle of unjust stigmas within social and clinical practices. This led me to release an advocacy photo zine in 2018 entitled "KnoxRoxs" dedicated to my Autistic son, as a way to give visibility to children of color in Neurodiverse communities. My definition of Mothering as an act of Resistance aims to empower and activate change - encouraging families and communities to engage in conversations about acceptance and joy starting with how Neurodivergent children and adults are treated, valued, and seen.



# CARA MARIE YOUNG

## *About the Artist*



**C**ara Marie Young is an artist from Atlanta, Georgia based in Detroit, Michigan. Her current interdisciplinary painting practice is an evolving response to the human experience, concerned with issues of race in the American landscape and the reality of life in her own skin. The artist seeks to engage with the community around her, recently exhibiting work at the 101st Michigan House of Representatives in 2022, Olayami Dabls Mbad African Bead Museum and The Feminist Art Museum in 2020. She was an exhibiting artist and speaker in the Race Forward Facing Race Conference in Fall 2016 at the Hilton Atlanta and a Dean's Diversity Fellow at Wayne State University from 2019-21. The artist has recently completed her MFA at Wayne State University and is seeking to engage with new opportunities in the future.



**M**y work addresses how Black communities have persisted despite the traumatic experiences of chattel slavery and the oppressive barriers of racism. Among my current projects is a series of paintings, utilizing lemon juice on paper as the primary medium. This method is based on a particular property of lemon juice which, after it dries, becomes a kind of invisible ink, when the paper is exposed to intense heat, the once-imperceptible image vividly appears. I chose to use this phenomenon as a means of exposing the lived realities of Black historical figures and honoring their contributions. This ghostly method of painting also speaks to the hidden history and sometimes indescribable nature of the Black experience.

**I am responding** to life lived in a black body. With an urge to envision new futures that are inclusive of blackness, I am driven to use a variety of media to reveal and expose black life and contemporary systems seeking to erase their presence and history. Through dissecting the various strands within the cord that connects us all as human beings, the mediums of paint, paper, rope, clay and harvested materials merge to express the social displacement of skin color and the colored boundaries between our communities.

**Knowing the diaspora** that Black Americans share will always connect us, I feel driven to use my platform to observe and combat the injustices of racism, promoting transnational healing and cross-cultural understanding. In addition to this, I am seeking to break the derogatory of the black body as perpetuated through American popular culture and consumerism... that which has continued to cripple the image of Black beauty, Black joy, and Black liberation.