

ARTISTS-IN-SCHOOLS PROGRAM (AISP) CURRICULAR CONTEXT

Spring 2025: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “AMERICAN”

ABOUT THE CURRICULAR CONTEXT

AISP curricular contexts are based on exhibitions at The Print Center and change each semester. This document provides teaching-artists with the scaffolding and information necessary to inspire the curriculum that will be designed for each individual classroom. For more information about writing your curriculum, please refer to the “Guidelines for Curriculum Adaptation” and “Suggestions for Curriculum Plan Structure” sections in the AISP Handbook.

CURRICULAR FRAMING: EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

The spring 2025 curricular context responds to The Print Center’s 99th Annual International Competition solo exhibitions, featuring work by 3 artists: *Alanna Airitam: Black Diamonds: The Black Outlaw Bikers*, *William Camargo: The Sense of Brown* and *Juana Estrada Hernandez: ¡Echale Ganas!*

This year’s ANNUAL solo exhibition winners all create work that explores their experience of living in the United States as people of color. The prints and photographs by Alanna Airitam, William Camargo and Juana Estrada Hernández confront myriad American myths through powerful portraits of Black motorcyclists, performative interventions into the landscape and meaningful scenes of the immigrant experience.

A review of the exhibition: <https://www.broadstreetreview.com/reviews/the-print-center-presents-its-99th-annual-solo-exhibitions>

FEATURED ARTIST INFORMATION:

Alanna Airitam (born 1971, Queens, NY; lives Tucson, AZ) is a photo-based, conceptual artist who uses non-traditional materials and techniques to question contemporary and historical narratives. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, and is in the permanent collections of New Orleans Museum of Art, LA; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; and the Center for Creative Photography and Tucson Museum of Art, both Tucson, AZ. Airitam is the cofounder of the Southwest Black Arts Collective.



Alanna Airitam, *Boss Mike, Chosen Few Nomad President*, 2023, pigment with resin, 42" x 56"

Airitam uses lighting, staging and photographic process to reframe portraits by invoking art-historical references, such as 17th century Renaissance painting, to honor people of color. The works often “take on a painterly quality that invites viewers to explore hidden histories and stories that have led to a lack of fair and honest representation of Black Americans,” (from the artist’s website, link below). In the 2018 short film, *Haarlem to Harlem*, Airitam discussed noticing a lack of representation of Black faces when viewing art in museums and galleries: “It was not even a question of whether we were represented or

not, we just weren’t. Probably the first time I ever went into a museum and I walked into a room full of portraits, I probably looked around for somebody that looked like me and was just like, ‘They’re not here. They will never be here.’ So no I’m not sure when the first time was, but it’s every time.” She describes her work as inspired by the “power and beauty of Black people, the strength and creativity of women, and the dream of a world where individuals are free to shape their own lives without interference.”

Airitam’s expansive portrait project *Black Diamonds* includes three historically significant Black outlaw motorcycle clubs founded in the late 1950s and early 1960s: the Chosen Few (founded in Los Angeles, CA); the East Bay Dragons MC (founded in Oakland, CA); and Outcast MC (founded in Detroit, MI). She is dedicated to securing the trust of club members through her deep commitment to honoring their codes of conduct and their place in American culture. In her pictures, Airitam juxtaposes the motorcyclists’ personal spaces and possessions with backdrops depicting 19th century American Hudson River School landscapes. Airitam said, “My overarching objective is to illuminate their profound connections to the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Panther Party and broader American history, while striving to demystify their subculture and celebrate their invaluable cultural contributions. Moreover, I aim to initiate meaningful dialogues surrounding racial stereotypes within the outlaw motorcycle culture and examine the nuanced dynamics of freedom in motorcycle travel.”

In this short video, Airitam discusses her practice and connection to art history as a Black artist: *From Haarlem to Harlem*, directed by Barabarella and David Fokos, 2018
<https://vimeo.com/258664088?&signup=true>

Artist’s website: <https://www.alannaairitam.com>

Southwest Black Arts Collective website: <https://www.southwestblackarts.net/>

William Camargo (born 1989, Anaheim, CA; lives Anaheim) has a Professional Photography Certificate from Fullerton College, a BFA from California State University, Fullerton, and an MFA from Claremont Graduate University, all CA. Camargo has been exhibited and collected widely. Camargo has had residencies at the Herron School of Art and Design; Center for

Photography at Woodstock; The Latinx Project, New York University; Light Work; Penumbra Foundation and TILT Institute for the Contemporary Image in Philadelphia.



William Camargo, "A Little Brown Interference," 2022-ongoing, inkjet print on vinyl, each 8" x 10"

Camargo is the founder and curator of *Latinx Diaspora Archives*, an Instagram feed that elevates communities of color through the documentation and sharing of family photos. Camargo says that through archiving POC vernacular photography, he seeks to "center communities of color as part of the "American" experience. [*The Latinx Diaspora Archives*] aims to center family photos of the Latinx Diaspora through the Instagram account in order to combat erasure throughout the United States and the Americas." (from the artist's website).

Camargo's work both draws influence from and offers critique of the history of photography, comprised mainly of work by White males. The work in Camargo's exhibition *The Sense of Brown* revives suppressed histories and subverts them into dominant narratives for recent photographs that restage images by well-known artists. With this project, he interrogates a photographic history that continuously omits or tokenizes BIPOC and Queer perspectives in the medium. He uses his body to intervene in the dominant photographic canon made by predominantly White males. Works by influential photographers, including John Divola and Duane Michals, serve as references and source material for Camargo's images to myriad ends.

Like contemporary British photographer Gillian Wearing, who dons a plastic mask to embody her photographic subject, in *Me As Subcomandante Marcos, Holding A 3d "Aztec" Mask, After Gillian Wearing, 2024*, Camargo is dressed and masked as the anti-capitalist leader of the Zapatista militant group of primarily indigenous people in Mexico. This embodied staging challenges the idea of a stable personal or political identity and the omnipresence of mass-produced goods to stand in for cultural heritage.

The exhibition's title comes from a book of the same name by José Esteban Muñoz (1967-2013), a highly influential scholar of Queer, Latinx and Performance Studies. Muñoz theorizes a group identification and shared commonality of *latinidad* that is crafted beyond the nation-state, aptly writing, "Brownness is already here. Brownness is vast, present, and vital." (Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 2020)

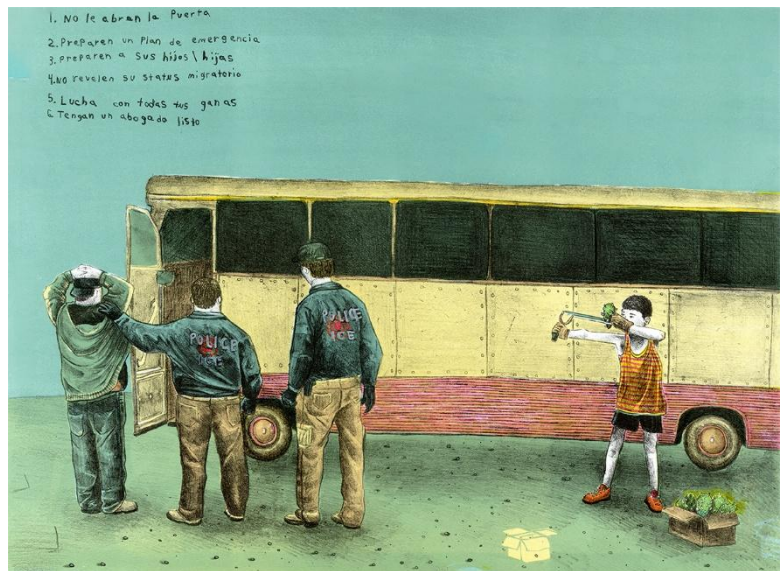
A 2021 article in *Bomb Magazine* discusses Camargo's reference to John Divola's series "As Far As I Could Get." "In Divola's images, the photographer sets his camera on a timer and runs away from it in the ten seconds before the shutter fires. As Camargo wrote in the Instagram post that introduced his series, a person of color running away, across a parking lot or down an alley, takes on an entirely different resonance. Camargo wrote of Divola's work, 'Running as a white dude is a form of privilege, making work that is about 'nothing' because he is not afraid of anything happening to him as he runs carelessly to create that work. I made this work to make fun of him but also as a response to that privilege.' Camargo posted *As Close As I Can Get To the Liquor Store From the Swapmeet Parking Lot in 10 Seconds After Divola* in late May of 2020, a couple months after Ahmaud Arbery was chased down and murdered while running near his home. Camargo concludes the post, "I meant this work to be

comedic at first, but it feels like something else now.” (from Kim Beil, “Archive and Place: William Camargo Interviewed,” *Bomb Magazine*, March 26, 2021, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/2021/03/26/archive-and-place-william-camargo-interviewed/>)

Artist’s website:
<https://www.williamcamargo.com/>

Camargo’s *Latinx Diasporic Archives*:
https://www.instagram.com/latinx_diaspora_archives/

Juana Estrada Hernández has a BFA from Fort Hays State University, KS, and an MFA from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. She has exhibited nationally and internationally. She has received awards and residencies including the Bloom Artist Residency, Chicago Printmakers Collaborative; Elkard Artist-in-Residence, Bucknell University; Fulcrum Fund Grant, 516 Arts; International Artist Residency, Megalo Print Studios and New Voices Program, Print Center New York. Estrada Hernández is Assistant Professor of Printmaking at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.



Juana Estrada Hernández, *Nopalaso en nombre de nuestras familias!*, 2021, lithograph, 15” x 20”

Estrada Hernandez moved to the United States with her family as a child, living and attending school without attaining permanent residency status until adulthood. During her early childhood, her interest in drawing and graphic novels lead her to use sketched images as a visual aid to communicate with teachers and peers. Her artistic process is driven by her strong connection to drawing; she begins by making drawings that record first-person narratives, imagine the gaps in their memories and respond to their intimate reflections. She then creates bold lithographs and detailed etchings depicting these experiences, as well as Mexican and Mexican Americans’ cultural and economic contributions to the United States.

“My artwork centers on socio-political issues related to immigration, particularly for communities affected by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—a United States immigration policy that provides administrative relief from deportation and work permits for some immigrants who arrived as minors without legal resident status. As an individual who emigrated to the United States from another country, I was forced to assimilate to a new culture to survive and thrive. Within my work, I highlight the importance of holding on to one’s own culture as a method of resistance, pride, and celebration. My work is visually informed by my love of drawing, my family’s inter-generational migration stories, cultural traditions, foods and language. It interrogates the false promises, limitations, and contradictions of the

'American Dream.' As a DACA-mented artist, I accept the responsibility to use my work and voice to advocate for and expose my audience to social-political issues that impact my community." (from the artist's website).

Artist's website: <https://juanaseemyprints.weebly.com/>

CURRICULAR THEMES:

What Does It Mean to Be "American"

Each artist in these three exhibitions presents experiences of living in the United States from the perspective of populations whose contributions to American culture have historically been under recognized, and whose pursuit of the stereotypical "American Dream" is often inhibited. Alanna Airitam's portraits of members of Black motorcycle clubs honor their connection to the American landscape by depicting sitters in front of iconic American landscape paintings. William Camargo's work provides commentary on the absence of people of color in the history of photography as well as in representations of the American West. Juana Estrada Hernandez uses objects and landscapes from her family's celebration of Mexican culture and experience as undocumented residents to record personal histories common to many living in America today. Her exhibition invites viewers to consider the complexity of what it means to be "American."

Visual Storytelling

The artists featured in these exhibitions use visual elements such as objects and landscapes to tell a story about themselves or their subject. Estrada Hernandez uses actual discarded items and documents, as well as depictions of cultural traditions, to reveal her experience as an immigrant. To highlight the context of his own experience as a Latinx photographer, Camargo references the work of other photographers through his use of landscape, signs and props. Airitam uses objects and settings personal to her subjects along with backdrops that reference art history to place her sitters into the larger context of American art and history. Estrada Hernandez has said that her work was strongly influenced by graphic novels she read as a young person, showing her the power of visual narrative. The works in this exhibition invite viewers to consider the connection between storytelling and images.

POSSIBLE PROJECTS:

Relics of my American Experience

Examine the works of Juana Estrada Hernandez and Alanna Airitam, and ask students to find and list objects within the works (articles of clothing, food, water cartons, a piñata, motorcycles, tools). Discuss the relevance of these objects and how they reveal something about the artist or portrait subject. Invite students to have a show-and-tell, in which they bring objects from home, or share items photographs on their phones, and tell stories about how these items relate to their experience living in United States. Then guide students to use these objects to create photographs or prints centered around their personal stories; this can be done using:

- Photography – (analog or digital, black and white or color) students can create still lifes using the objects
- Cyanotype – students can lay objects on treated paper or fabric to create cyanotype prints
- Collagraph – students can create collagraph plates by gluing personal items and textiles to

- cardboard, coating with modge-podge and printing the plates
- Monotype – students can experiment with inking objects directly or using gel plates to create layered, textured imagery
- Stop-motion animation – students can create animated shorts using the objects

Staged Photographic Portraits

Examine works by Alanna Airitam and William Camargo. Discuss Airitam’s use of elements chosen by her subjects (location, objects, clothing, posture), and those selected and staged by the artist (backdrops, frames, lighting). Discuss Camargo’s use of historical references, photo history, location and his own body.

Have students decide choose to create self-portraits or portraits of their peers. Have students collect objects and reference images to use as symbols in their portraits. Have students create backdrops by hand or using projection. Using collected props and backdrops, create staged photographic portraits.

Graphic Memoirs

Examine works by Juan Estrada Hernandez. Discuss her illustrative style and the combination of image and text in her work. Invite students to share a short oral or written autobiographical story with the class, focusing on a pivotal moment or event in their lives. Guide students to create storyboards, and then short graphic narratives (with or without text); assemble these into books. Students can create hand-printed covers using screenprinting, block printing, or other technique to add another technical element.

Reframing Art History

Examine works by William Camargo that make reference to other artists (John Divola’s series “As Far As I Could Get;” Duane Michals, *I Build a Pyramid*; Gillian Wearing’s series “Wearing Masks”), as well as Alanna Airitam’s use of Hudson River School paintings as backdrops. Have a class discussion about why artists choose to reference or sample other artist’s work - to draw inspiration from make a commentary on similarities or differences between themselves and the artists who created the work? To what degree is “copying” acceptable in art; to what extent must an artist alter an idea to make it their own and what credit should be given to the source of reference? Ask students to consider what Camargo and Airitam are doing for each of these pieces. Have students select a piece of art from history to reframe or recreate, adding their own perspective. This can be done using a variety of techniques.

ADDITIONAL ARTISTS FOR REFERENCE:



Laura Aguilar, *Three Eagles Flying*, 1990, three gelatin silver prints, each 24” x 20”

Laura Aguilar (born 1959; died 2018), was an American photographer. She was born with auditory dyslexia and attributed her start in photography to her brother, who showed her how to develop in the darkroom. She was mostly self-taught, although she took some photography courses at East Los Angeles College, where her second solo exhibition, *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell*, was held. Aguilar used visual art to bring forth marginalized identities, especially within the LA Queer scene and Latinx communities. Before the term “Intersectionality” was used commonly, Aguilar captured the largely invisible identities of large bodied, queer, working-class, brown people in the form of portraits. Often using her naked body as a subject, she used photography to empower herself and her inner struggles to reclaim her own identity as “Laura”- a lesbian, fat, disabled and brown person. Although work on Chicana/os is limited, Aguilar has become an essential figure in Chicano art history and is often regarded as an early “pioneer of intersectional feminism” for her outright and uncensored work, (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/laura-aguilar-compassionate-photographer-marginalized-groups-dies-58-10196/>).

William Camargo has cited Aguilar as one of his strongest influences.

Artist’s website: <https://www.lauraaguilarphotography.com/>



Gary Burnley, *Twilight #2*, 2022, collage, 45" x 33"



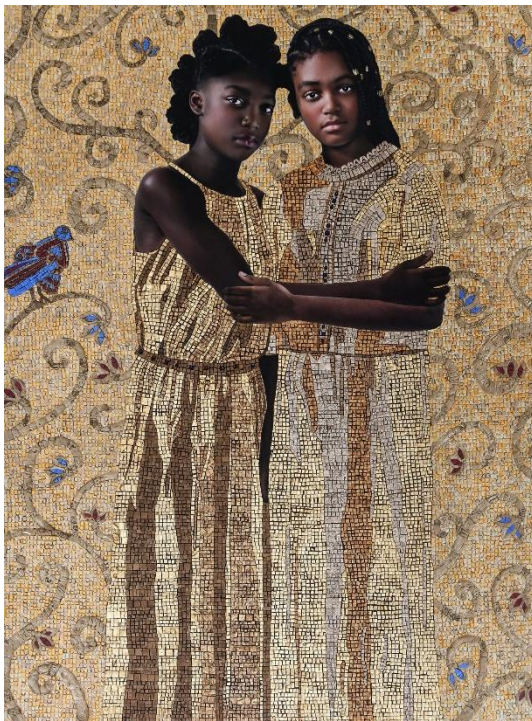
Gary Burnley, *Watson and the Shark*, 2020, collage, 23" x 20"

Gary Burnley (born St. Louis, MO; lives Ridgefield, CT), received a BFA from Washington University, St. Louis and an MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT. He has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally. In Gary Burnley’s collages, reproductions of historic portrait paintings are layered with black and white photographs of African American subjects from yearbooks and family snapshots. The resulting images – what the artist terms “optical rivalries” – prompt consideration of the function of portraiture across lines of class, race, gender, medium and time, while revealing parallels between the science of optics and the act

of looking. Burnley says of his work: "It is not about the white man's vision, his concept of beauty, history, language, meaning or reason. It is about the particulars of that narrative, a disruption of what has always been uncomplicated, characterizations, false assumptions, inconsistencies. It is about memory and insertion into that which otherwise could not have been imagined," (the artist's website, link below)

Burnley describes his process in terms of coverage, building, exposure and fragmentation, emphasized by the deliberately raw edges of the cut material. Many collages feature circular cutouts or "peepholes" that reveal various layers, a device that both suggests a temporal window and, as Burnley notes, "places the viewer outside, into a world I have created," (Gary Burnley, untitled interview with Paige McCray and Aysegul Ersin, November 2019, in *Gary Burnley: Facing History*, Bronxville, NY: Sarah Lawrence College, 2020).

Artist's website: <https://www.garyburnley.com/>



Tawny Chatmon, *A Hopeful Truth*, acrylic, gold leaf, semiprecious stones on pigment print, 56" x 42"



Tawny Chatmon, *Covered/Vienna*, acrylic, gold leaf on pigment print, 36" x 24"

Tawny Chatmon (b.1979, Tokyo, Japan; lives MD) has a background in commercial photography and began to create fine art work after documenting her father's battle with cancer and his subsequent death. The self-taught artist takes a multi-layered approach, overlapping digital collage and illustration. She frequently experiments with various techniques such as hand-embellishing with acrylic paint or gold leaf, and materials such as paper, semi-precious stones, glass and other media. A Black woman and mother of three Black children, she is motivated by "leaving something important behind," to the world her children will grow up in. She creates imagery that celebrates and honors the beauty of Black childhood and familial bonds, while at times addresses the absence and exclusion of the Black body in

Western art by juxtaposing photographic portraits of black sitters with visual references to historically white art-historic references.

“For my series *The Redemption*, the painted dresses and clothing are directly influenced by Gustav Klimt's works created during his Golden Phase. Visually, the decorative quality and the feeling those qualities brought about in me when I first discovered them are the same feelings I'm looking to evoke in the viewer of this series. Also, throughout history, gold has been reserved for those that the artist wants the viewer to see as important. I am conveying a similar message: my sitters are to be viewed as precious, valued and loved,” (from interview with Chatmon, link below).

Chatmon was among the eight artists featured in the exhibition *The Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined*, presented in association with the 2022 Venice Biennale, curated by Myrtis Bedolla of Galerie Myrtis. The exhibition explored the theme of Black life on the continuum of its imagined future.

Artist's website:

<https://www.tawnychatmon.com/>

A 2022 interview with the artist: <https://herclique.com/blogs/stories/interview-with-tawny-chatmon>



John Divola, "As Far as I Could Get," 1996-97, pigment print, 34" x 24"



John Divola, #70, "Zuma," 1977-2006, pigment print, 40" x 50"

John Divola (born 1949, Los Angeles, CA) received a BA from California State University, Northridge, and an MFA in 1974, from the University of California, Los Angeles. Since 1975 he has taught photography and art at numerous institutions including California Institute of the Arts, and since 1988 he has been a Professor of Art at the University of California, Riverside. Divola's work has been exhibited extensively nationally and internationally.

John Divola "is currently moving through the landscape looking for the oscillating edge between the abstract and the specific," (from the artist's website, link below). His

experimental photography explores a combination of found and staged, representational and abstract elements. In 2004, while photographing abandoned spaces in the desert, he began to document chance encounters with stray dogs. “Contemplating a dog chasing a car invites any number of metaphors and juxtapositions: culture and nature, the domestic and the wild, love and hate, joy and fear, the heroic and the idiotic. It could be viewed as a visceral and kinetic dance. Here we have two vectors and velocities, that of a dog and that of a car and, seeing that a camera will never capture reality and that a dog will never catch a car, evidence of devotion to a hopeless enterprise,” (from the artist’s website).

In the late ‘90s, Divola made a series of photographs by pushing the self-timer button on his camera and running as fast as he could away from the camera - an exposure was made in 10 seconds. Divola’s series “As Far As I Could Get (10 seconds),” became a reference in William Camargo’s work, with added commentary on the difference context of race and privilege has on the same action. Camargo’s critical commentary on Divola’s practice led to a notable Instagram feud between the two artists.

Artist’s website: <http://divola.com/>



Robert S. Duncanson, *Landscape with Rainbow*, 1859, oil on canvas, 30" x 52 ½"

Robert S. Duncanson (born 1821, Fayetteville, NY; died 1872, Detroit, MI), was a self-taught portrait and landscape painter who is considered the first African American artist to gain international recognition, and the only known African American artist of the Hudson River School. The grandchild of freed slaves, the son of a carpenter/house painter, Duncanson learned the trades of his father, starting his own house-painting business until he left it in 1839 to pursue a career as a portrait painter. In 1942, three of Duncanson’s paintings were accepted into an exhibition at The Cincinnati Academy of Fine Arts, which served as his public debut, but none of Duncanson’s family members were permitted to attend the show because of their race.

Duncanson became interested in landscape painting after his first encounter with work by Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole, inspiring him “to focus on landscape as a metaphor for expressing American ideals,” (Joseph D. Ketner, *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson, 1821-1872*, 1993). Around this time,

Duncanson was also commissioned by anti-slavery activist Charles Avery to paint the landscape, *Cliff Mine, Lake Superior*. Duncanson formed a friendship with Hudson River School painter William Sonntag, and they continued to travel and work together.

Reproductions of Duncanson's paintings have been used as backdrops by artist Alanna Airitam in her portraits of black motorcyclists, drawing connections between different generations of black Americans making claim to the American landscape.

David Levine, "The Black Artist Who Mastered the Hudson River School of Painting," *Times Union*, February 1, 2024. <https://www.timesunion.com/hudsonvalley/history/article/hudson-river-school-painter-robert-duncanson-18635954.php>



Fidencio Fifield Perez, *Cutting & Pruning*, linocut reduction, 18" x 24"



Fidencio Fifield Perez, *The Garden*, acrylic on canvas, 58" x 56"

Fidencio Fifield-Perez (born: Oaxaca, Mexico; lives Davis, CA) was raised in the United States after his family migrated during his childhood. "His current work examines borders, edges, and the people who must traverse them. In his work, Fifield-Perez's interdisciplinary practice centers the materiality of paper ephemera, everyday self-documents discarded after having fulfilled their purpose. For Fifield-Perez, printmaking, collage, and painting are ways to visualize and connect mental landscapes of past and present," (from the artist's website, link below).

In his *Dacaments* series, Perez utilizes discarded envelopes documenting his experience as a DACA-mented artist. "Painted envelopes are configured into intimate portraits of the only home I have made for myself, moved across the country, and mourned for with the imminent threat of DACA's repeal," the artist says, adding: "The plant paintings are physical and metaphorical maps of personal and official correspondence. The rubber plant abandoned outside the University of Iowa's art studios painted on the mailer envelope of my graduate degree; the split-leaf monstera gifted to my husband and me for our wedding ceremony; the jade plant given to me by the only other dacamented professor I've met," (from *Colossal*, link below).

Grace Egbert, "Used Envelopes Hold Thriving Potted Plants in Fidencio Fifield-Perez's 'Dacaments'," *Colossal*, May 2, 2024. <https://www.thiscolossal.com/2024/05/fidencio-fifield-perez-dacaments/>

Fifield-Perez's testimony featured on *The New York Times*, "American Dreamers" story wall project, 2017: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/storywall/american-dreamers/stories/fidencio-fifield-perez>

Artist's website: <https://www.fidenciofperetz.com/>



Ken Gonzalez-Day, *The Wonder Gaze: Lynching of Thomas Thurmond & John Holmes, Saint James Park, San Jose, CA, 1933*, "Erased Lynching Series," 2006

Ken Gonzales-Day (born 1964, Santa Clara, CA; lives Los Angeles, CA), is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice considers the historical construction of race and the limits of representational systems ranging from lynching photographs to educational museum displays. For his widely exhibited series "Erased Lynching" (ongoing), Gonzalez-Day staged and photographed undocumented lynchings with the intent of drawing attention to "the historic absence of Latinx, Asian, Native American victims from the history of lynching in California and has since extended to instances across the nation as a way address the erasure of African American and other histories from institutions of learning across the nation." Drawing on newspaper articles, periodicals, court records, historical photographs and souvenir postcards, he attempted to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding the lynchings that had occurred in the spaces he was photographing. The result is an unprecedented textual and visual record of a largely unacknowledged manifestation of racial violence in the United States. The work "transformed the understanding of racialized violence in the United States and raised awareness of the lynching of Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, and African-Americans in California, and helped to ground these anti-immigration and collective acts of violence and racial terror, within the larger discussion of policing, migration, and racial justice," (from the artist's website).

Artist's website: <https://kengonzalesday.com/>

J. Gonzo (born Cypress, CA, lives in Phoenix, AZ), is a Chicano artist whose formative years were shaped by the rigid tradition and Byzantine iconography of the Catholic school he attended juxtaposed with the DIY aesthetic of the late 70s, Orange County Punk counterculture peppered with the bright, bold, Latino hues of his grandparent's generation. He attended the Orange County High School of the Arts' Visual Arts Program and went to what he calls a "terrible trade school" for a degree in Graphic Design. He also apprenticed and tattooed professionally for a number of years and worked in advertising and design.



J. Gonzo, illustration from "La Mano Del Destino," 2011

Gonzo is most known for writing and illustrating his own comic book title *La Mano del Destino*. Using Mesoamerican myth and visual styles and colors referencing Mexican papel picado, *La Mano del Destino* tells the tale of a once-champion Luchador—who, after being betrayed by his friends and unmasked in the ring, agrees to a Faustian bargain with a mysterious promoter. Gonzo says of his story's imperfect hero: "Heroism just looks different in Mexico than it does in American people," Gonzo said. "Western culture heroes tend to succeed because of who they are. I like the kind of definition by result more than by identity," (from LA Times interview, link below)

Gonzo has worked on art for *La Voz de MAYO: Tata Rambo*, by Henry Barajas for Top Cow & Image Comics, as well as created an Aztec inspired cover for "Ghost Rider" for Marvel comics, and a Dia De Los Muertos inspired cover image for "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

Daniel Eduardo Hernandez, "A self-published lucha libre tale put J. Gonzo on Marvel's radar. He almost refused the offer," *Los Angeles Times*, October 15th, 2024:

<https://www.latimes.com/delos/story/2024-10-15/marvel-comics-ghost-rider-j-gonzo-la-mano-del-destino-robbie-reyes>

Gillian Wearing (born 1963, Birmingham, UK; lives London, UK), is an interdisciplinary artist who received a Bachelor of Technology, Chelsea School of Art, London in 1987 and a BFA from Goldsmiths' College, University of London, in 1990. An important member of the

so-called “Young British Artists,” Wearing was awarded the Turner Prize in 1997. Wearing’s films, photographs and sculptures investigate public personas and private lives. Wearing uses masks, costumes and role-play to explore her interest in social constructions. She says “throughout my work, I have been interested in what is real and what is not real. It’s such a complex question because we live mostly in our heads: we have thousands of thoughts a day, some of those thoughts are projections of ideas, of how our days or weeks might be. They are subjective, but real to us,” (from “Gillian Wearing, on Life, Art, and Tim,” link below).



Gillian Wearing, *Self-Portrait at Three Years Old*, 2004, chromogenic print, 71 5/8" x 8 1/16"

In Wearing’s series “Album and Spiritual Family,” she combines portraiture with performance by wearing elaborately crafted, realistic masks to pose in the roles of family members and celebrities. The masks are made with great care to detail and realism, inhibiting the viewer from recognizing the image as the artist in a mask until looking close enough to see Wearing’s eyes peering through holes.

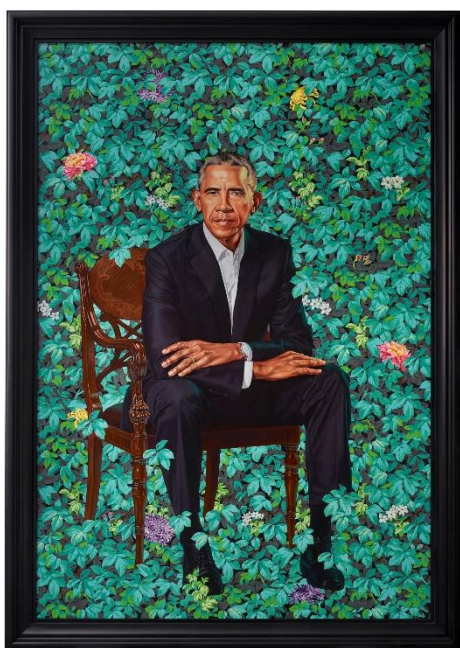
Interview with the artist: Osman Can Yerebakan, “Gillian Wearing, on Life, Art, and Time,” *AnOther Magazine*, November 17, 2021. <https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/13717/we-carry-our-younger-selves-around-gillian-wearing-on-life-art-and-time>

In this video, Nat Trotman, Guggenheim Museum of American Art, NY, NY, Curator, Performance and Media, reflects on Gillian Wearing’s three-decade career and the ways masks in her practice serve as both literal props and metaphors for the performances each of us stage every day.

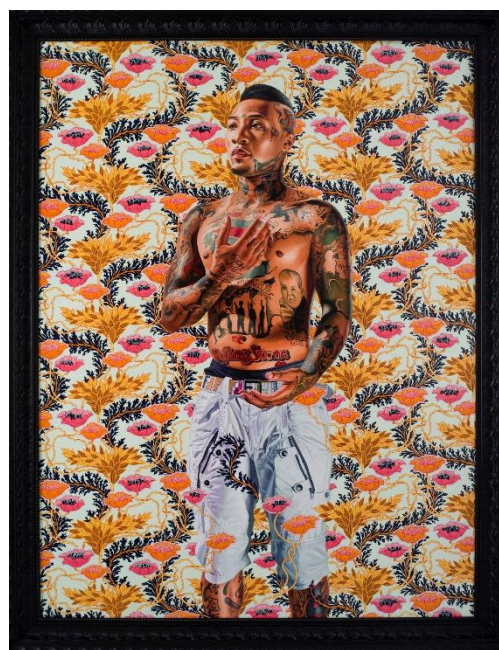
<https://www.guggenheim.org/video/gillian-wearing-wearing-masks>

Kehinde Wiley (born 1977, Los Angeles, CA) has a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, CA; an MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT and honorary PhDs from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; and the San Francisco Art Institute. He has held solo exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally.

Wiley is an American artist best known for his portraits that render people of color in the traditional settings of Old Master paintings. “Kehinde Wiley has firmly situated himself within art history’s portrait painting tradition. As a contemporary descendent of a long line of portraitists, including Reynolds, Gainsborough, Titian, Ingres, among others, Wiley, engages the signs and visual rhetoric of the heroic, powerful, majestic and the sublime in his



Kehinde Wiley, *Barack Obama*, 2017, oil on canvas, 84" x 58"



Kehinde Wiley, *Simeon The Go Receiver*, 2015, oil on canvas, 90 11/16" x 62 3/4"

representation of urban, Black and Brown men found throughout the world. Wiley's work brings art history face-to-face with contemporary culture, using the visual rhetoric of the heroic, the powerful, the majestic and the sublime to celebrate Black and brown people the artist has met throughout the world. Working in the mediums of painting, sculpture, and video, Wiley's portraits challenge and reorient art-historical narratives, awakening complex issues that many would prefer remain muted." (from the artist's website, link below). In 2018, Wiley became the first African American artist to paint an official United States Presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. President Barack Obama selected Wiley for this honor. In 2019, Wiley founded Black Rock Senegal, a multidisciplinary artist-in-residence program that invites artists from around the world to live and create work in Dakar, Senegal.

Artist's website: <https://www.kehindewiley.com/>

Artist-In-Residence program founded by the artist: <https://blackrocksenegal.org/>

ADDITIONAL TEACHING REFERENCES:

This article discusses the impact of **Los Four**, a Chicano art collect mostly active during the 1970s and 80s: Eva Recinos, "Bicultural and Bilingual: Los Four's Legacy and Impact on Art History," PBS SoCal, June 16th, 2022, <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/artbound/los-four>

Members and affiliates of **Asco** reflect on the influence of the Los Angeles avant-garde group and the events that inspired its creation in this article: Sean Carrillo, Harry Gamboa Jr., Willie Herrón, Glugio 'Gronk' Nicandro, Humberto Sandoval, Joey Terrill AND Patssi Valdez, "¡Tenemos Asco!: An Oral History of the Chicano Art Group," Frieze Magazine, January 4th, 2022: <https://www.frieze.com/article/tenemos-asco-oral-history-chicano-art-group>

New York Times' interactive project Interactive project collecting and sharing stories from young immigrants who were spared from deportation by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program that temporarily shields some young immigrants from deportation and allows them to work legally – originally posted in 2017:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/storywall/american-dreamers>