Latest News in Black Art: Sherrill Roland Repped by Tanya Bonakdar, New Hires at Toledo and Harvard Museums, Vision & Justice at Frieze NY, David Hammons Hudson River Installation Complete & More

by VICTORIA L. VALENTINE on May 2, 2021 - 10:58 pm No Comments

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A snapshot of the latest news in Black visual art and related culture

News

In South Africa, a major wild fire claimed invaluable archives at the **University of Cape Town Libraries,** including first-edition books, manuscripts, photographs, and primary sources documenting African history, and destroyed the institution's film collection, one of the largest in the world. | Hyperallergic

Archeologists said they found the home where **Harriet Tubman** lived with her family on Maryland's Eastern Shore as a teen in the 1840s, before she escaped enslavement. | The Washington Post

Mia Locks, senior curator and head of new initiatives since July 2019 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, resigned over diversity issues. | ARTnews

From left, Artists Helina Metaferia and Sherrill Rowland. / Courtesy of Yu Young Dong, the artist and Addis Fine Art; Photo by Giancarlo Valentine, Courtesy Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

Representation

Sherrill Roland, whose interdisciplinary practice spans performance, drawings, sculptures, multimedia objects, and participatory activities, joined Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York. Exploring the social and political implications of innocence, identity, and community, the artist's work is informed by the 10 months he spent in prison for a crime he didn't commit and for which he was exonerated. As a part of the Vision & Justice programming at Frieze New York, Tonya Bonakdar is showing Roland's work in its booth and hosting a virtual conversation between the artist and Studio Museum in Harlem Curator Connie Choi on May 7. The Durham, N.C.-based Roland will have his first solo show at the gallery in 2022.

Yossi Milo Gallery in New York announced its representation of **Shikeith,** a conceptual artist who works in film, sculpture, and installation. Shikeith currently has an exhibition on view at the Mattress Factory ("Peeling The Spirit In The Dark") in Pittsburgh, the city where he lives and works. His first solo show with Yossi Milo is scheduled for 2022.

With locations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and London, Addis Fine Art announced its European representation of **Helina Metaferia,** an Ethiopian American artist. Metaferia will make her solo debut with the gallery during Frieze New York (May 4-15), where a series of collage works and a film by the interdisciplinary artist will be showcased in Addis Fine Art's online viewing room.

From left, Rhonda Sewell and Tracey McCants Lewis. / Courtesy Toledo Museum of Art; Courtesy of the August Wilson African American Cultural Center

Appointments

Brenda D. Tindal (right) is joining Harvard University as executive director of the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture (HMSC). She will lead six research museums under the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, including the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, University Herbaria, the Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments, and the Mineralogical and Geological Museum. Tindal previously served as founding director of education and engagement at the International African American Museum in Charleston, S.C. She starts at HMSC on May 17. | Harvard Crimson

Tracey McCants Lewis has been appointed chair of the board of directors at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center (AWAACC) in Pittsburgh. McCants Lewis, who is deputy general counsel and director of human resources for the National Hockey League's Pittsburgh Penguins, has served on AWAACC's board since 2015. Four new trustees were also elected to the center's board: Dr. Rahmon Hart, Tony Murphy, Shiv Seth, and Dr. James Taylor.

The Toledo Museum of Art hired its first director of belonging and community engagement, **Rhonda Sewell** officially joined the Ohio museum on April 26. The role reports directly to the institution's director. Sewell previously worked for 15 years at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, where she served most recently as director of governmental and external affairs.

The RISD Museum announced several staff changes, including **Kajette Solomon** who has been serving as social equity and inclusion program specialist since last fall. Previously, Solomon was the museum's education program coordinator. In addition, **Ahmari Benton** is the 2021-2022 Nancy Prophet Fellow. Benton earned an interdisciplinary BFA from Howard University and is pursuing an MA in museum studies at Johns Hopkins University. | ArtDaily

Chicago Architecture Center announced nine new members of its board of trustees on April 23, including **Kelly Powers Baria, Andreason Brown,** and **Brandi Pitts.**

IMAGE: Above right, Brenda D. Tindal. / via Harvard Gazette

From left, CHRISTOPHER MYERS, "Actaeon 3," 2020 (appliqué fabric, 72 x 48 inches). / © Christopher Myers, Courtesy the artist, Fort Gansevoort, and MCA Chicago; SIMONE LEIGH, "Sentinel IV," 2020 (bronze). / Photo by Jeff McLane, Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Acquisitions

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago acquired "Actaeon 3" (2020), an appliqué textile work by **Christopher Myers.** "I'm always interested in the reversal of power represented in the myth of Diana and Actaeon, in which Diana turns the hunter into a deer and he is subsequently hunted by his compatriots," Myers has said. "Stories that deal directly with the sources and repercussions of wielding power in various ways are always of interest."

Simone Leigh's "Sentinel IV" (2020) was acquired by Landmarks, the public art collection at the University of Texas at Austin. Standing more than 10-feet tall, the bronze sculpture "honors Black femininity while also investigating historical and intersecting ideas of race, beauty, and the association of Black women's bodies with work." The work will be unveiled on campus in July.

Public Art

"Day's End," the public art installation by **David Hammons** on Hudson River Park, near the Whitney Museum of American Art is finally complete and will be unveiled May 16. | The Art Newspaper

Newark, N.J. Mayor Ras J. Baraka announced five finalists selected to design a new Harriet Tubman Monument—artists **Jules Arthur, Vinnie Bagwell, Abigail DeVille, Nina Cooke John,** and **Dread Scott**—and asked residents to weigh in on their proposals.

Marking its 125th anniversary, the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh commissioned four local African American artists—**Takara Canty, Cue Perry, Janel Young,** and **D.S. Kinsel**—to design library cards reflecting their visual interpretation of "Free to the People," the motto of the city's public libraries since 1895. | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

IMAGE: Vision & Justice Project – AWOL ERIZKU, "Untitled (Forces of Nature #1)," 2014. / Courtesy of Ben Brown Fine Arts and the artist

Art Fairs

Frieze New York is happening this week, May 5-9. The 2020 edition of the annual art fair was initially canceled altogether, due to the pandemic. Then was reinvented as an exclusively online event. This year the venue has changed from Randall's Island Park to The Shed, presenting a smaller fair with more than 60 gallery booths and programming on site, along with additional online viewing rooms and virtual events. A major attraction is a special tribute to the Vision & Justice Project founded by Harvard University Professor **Sarah Lewis.** The project examines the role of art, photography in particular, in understanding the intersection of race, representation, citizenship and democracy. Galleries and institutions are celebrating the project through artworks, talks, screenings, and other programming. | Read More

Biennials

Bamako Encounters – African Biennale of Photography in Mali announced the curatorial team and theme for its next edition. **Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung** is returning as artistic director. Responding to the theme "Maa ka Maaya ka ca a yere kono: On Multiplicity, Difference, Becoming, and Heritage," his curatorial team will include artist and independent curator **Akinbode Akinbiyi**; **Meriem Berrada,** artistic director of Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) in Marrakech; **Tandazani Dhlakama,** assistant curator at Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town; and **Liz Ikiriko,** artist and assistant curator at Art Gallery York University in Toronto. The 13th edition of the biennale runs from Nov. 20, 2021 to Jan. 20, 2022.

Awards & Honors

Meg Onli (right), associate curator at ICA Philadelphia, was awarded the inaugural Figure Skating Prize, an annual recognition of the recipient's dedication to advancing equity and racial justice in the arts. Established by Virgil Abloh, Mahfuz Sultan and Chloe Wayne, the prize includes $25,000 in unrestricted funds and $50,000 to support a research project that will culminate with a publication and public programming. | via email

The American Academy in Rome announced the winners of the 2021–22 Rome Prize and Italian Fellowships awarded to 35 Americans and 5 Italian artists and scholars, all working in a spectrum of disciplines across the arts and humanities. The visual artists include **Firelei Báez, Autumn Knight, Eric N. Mack,** and **William Villalongo.**

IMAGE: Above right, Meg Onli. / Photo by Marcus Maddox

Grants & Fellowships

The Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Va., and the Hampton University Museum in Hampton, Va., have partnered on a paid, post-graduate fellowship. A $500,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is funding Diversifying the Field of Curation and Conservation, a three-year pilot program providing opportunities for one curatorial fellow and one conservation fellow. Working with **Kimberli Gant,** curator of modern and contemporary art at the Chrysler, the fellows will study the museum's traditional African collection. At Hampton University, fellows will explore the Harmon Foundation Collection of Modern African Art and be mentored by **Vanessa Thaxton-Ward,** the university museum's director and chief curator.

Artadia is partnering with **21c Museum Hotels** to support artists living and working in the communities where the hotels are located. Each year, one artist will receive $10,000 in unrestricted funds, launching with an inaugural fellowship in Louisville, Ky., opportunities will follow in Kansas City, Mo. (2022), Durham, N.C. (2023), and Nashville, Tenn. (2024).

The **August Wilson African American Cultural Center** (AWAACC) in Pittsburgh received a $1.35 million grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, providing general funding for the center's work, following a $350,000 grant from the foundation earlier this year supporting B.U.I.L.D. (Build, Utilize, Inform, Lead, and Develop), its artist-in-residence program. **CT**

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