



Image by Chantal James

# INTER | SECTIONALITY: DIASPORA ART FROM THE CREOLE CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*THE CORCORAN SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND DESIGN AND  
DIASPORA VIBE CULTURAL ARTS INCUBATOR PRESENT*

## **INTER | SECTIONALITY: DIASPORA ART FROM THE CREOLE CITY**

25 of artists from 17 countries explore identity and intersectionality

**What:** INTERSECTIONALITY: DIASPORA ART FROM THE CREOLE CITY

**Where:** THE CORCORAN SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND DESIGN,  
The George Washington University, Flagg Building  
500 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

**When:** NOVEMBER 14, 2019 - MARCH 20, 2020, Free and open to the public  
Tuesday - Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Weekends 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.



Corcoran School  
of the Arts & Design  
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**Opening Reception for Inter | Sectionality: Diaspora Art from the Creole City** will take place on November 14, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. The evening's MC, Miami Journalist and Blogger Kalyn James will greet the crowd and introduce a special performance by Aisha Tandiwe Bell.

Through contemporary art, scholarship, and the power of place, the curatorial team and the Corcoran have produced an exhibition that fearlessly challenges social justice issues while celebrating identities by bridging communities.

"The work goes well beyond traditional survey type exhibitions, and delves into complex, deep terrain of the trauma that is the inevitable result of a diaspora tradition," said Sanjit Sethi, President, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and Exhibition Co-Curator.

Miami, dubbed the Creole City, sits at the crossroads of the Americas and houses the hemisphere's entangled identities; providing a lens into the broader politics of race, class, gender, and nationality in the global South. DVCAI Collaborator Donette A. Francis, Ph.D., succinctly describes the concept of Miami's intersectionality stating that "Miami is not just Latin, if by that term somehow it is also implied white, occidental, and modernist - it is also tribal, black and brown, indigenous, postmodernist, folkloric, colonial and postcolonial, traditional, ethnic, and hybrid. In its insistence that we always inhabit and account for multiple subject positions, intersectionality is always an unfinished project."

The 17 countries represented in this exhibition include South Africa, The Caribbean, Latin America, South America, and the United States.

The 25 visual artists, and two guest artists, will present poignant cultural programs that encompass life stories, memory, politics, myth, religion, and popular culture through painting, sculpture, photography, prints, drawings, video works, and installations.

**Participating Artists:** Moisés Aragón, Aisha Tandiwe Bell, Minia Biabiany, Christopher Carter, Katrina Coombs, Esperanza Cortés, Michael Elliott, Guy Gabon, Rosa Naday Garmendia, GeoVanna Gonzalez, Juan Erman Gonzalez, Kearra Amaya Gopee, Grettel Arrate Hechavarría, Caroline Holder, Izia Lee Lindsay, Anja Marais, Jared McGriff, Petrona Morrison, Kurt Nahar, Charo Oquet, Devora Perez, Evelyn Politzer, Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz, Juan Ernesto Requena, Asser Saint-Val,

The exhibition's guest artists at the George Washington University's Corcoran School of the Arts and Design are Deborah Willis and Tyler Mitchell. Their artworks create a conversation about intergenerational artistic voices between this renowned professor and her acclaimed former student.

**Deborah Willis, Ph.D.** is chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Since 2006 she has co-organized thematic conferences exploring imaging the black body in the west. Her works in this exhibition are digital prints and two-channel video called Reflections on Joan Baez's Civil War.

**Tyler Mitchell** is an Atlanta born photographer and filmmaker now based in Brooklyn, N.Y. In 2018 he made history as the first black photographer to shoot a cover of American Vogue. In 2019 one of Mitchell's portraits of Beyoncé was acquired by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. Mitchell will show photography pieces.

### **About Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, Inc.**

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, Inc. (DVCAI) is a Miami-based 501(c)3 organization. The mission of DVCAI is to promote, nurture and cultivate the vision and diverse talent of emerging artists from the Caribbean and Latin Diaspora through our exhibition programs, artist-in-residence programs, international exchange programs and educational and outreach activities that celebrate Miami-Dade's rich cultural and social fabric.

For more information, please visit [www.dvcai.org](http://www.dvcai.org) and follow our activities at <https://www.facebook.com/DVCAI/>, <https://twitter.com/DiasporaVibe>, <https://www.instagram.com/dvcai/>.

### **About the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design**

The Corcoran School of the Arts and Design bridges the George Washington University's academically robust programs in the arts with Corcoran's creative and inspired scholarship. Part of GWS Columbian College of the Arts and Sciences, the school functions as an incubator for artists and practitioners in arts related fields and serves to enrich students who are taking classes in other areas of the University. At the very core of the Corcoran is a question: How can creativity become a catalyst for transformation and change? For more information, please visit <https://corcoran.gwu.edu>.

Exhibition and programs are made possible with leading support from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and The Ford Foundation. With the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami Dade-County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, National Performance Network (NPN), and Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) Presented by and in collaboration with Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, Inc. and The George Washington University's Corcoran School of the Arts and Design.

## **BIOGRAPHIES SUPPLEMENT**

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#### **CO-CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES**

##### **Rosie Gordon-Wallace co-curator**

Co-curator Rosie Gordon-Wallace, founder, director and lead curator for Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI) is a recognized arts advocate and community leader with over 25 years of experience. She has created key relationships and with a multitude of artists and art organizations worldwide such as Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts and the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and has served on several prominent non-profit boards. Her experiences with DVCAI are enhanced by her community work, which accelerates careers and advocates for arts funding. She is an active member of the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) Fund for African-American Art and serves on panels for the Cultural Affairs Council for Miami Dade County and for the Florida Department of Cultural Affairs. Her awards include The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center Third Annual Calabash Amadlozi Visual Arts Award, International Businesswoman of the Year, and being named one of South Florida's 50 Most Powerful Black Professionals of 2007. She is the current Art Consultant for the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, Art of Black Miami initiative. For contact with curator, please email [rosie@dvcai.org](mailto:rosie@dvcai.org)

##### **Sanjit Sethi co-curator**

Co-curator Sanjit Sethi, MFA, MA is an accomplished artist administrator skilled in facilitating partnerships, and is recognized for his commitment to interdisciplinary work. He has displayed a rare sensitivity to connecting with communities and for promoting art for the greater good. Sethi served as director of the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design at George Washington University from 2015 to 2019. In his insightful description of the upcoming exhibit Inter I Sectionality: Diaspora Art from the Creole City, he states, "Artists have always been at the forefront of cultural and institutional critique, and these artists are no exception to that. They produce work intended to make us think; it can sometimes make us feel uncomfortable, but it provides searing commentary on the way the world operates. One of the Corcoran's key goals is to exhibit work which deals with subjects and complex issues that are often hidden, unseen or overlooked and to provide an opportunity for the viewer to come away with a deeper understanding about their place within these complex systems." Selected as incoming president of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Sethi will continue to engage students and the community in support of the next generation of artists. For contact with curator, please email [Sanjit.sethi@gmail.com](mailto:Sanjit.sethi@gmail.com)

## **ARTISTS AND NATIONALITIES**

Moisés Aragón **Cuba**

Aisha Tandiwe Bell **Jamaica**

Minia Biabiany **Guadeloupe**

Christopher Carter **United States**

Katrina Coombs **Jamaica**

Esperanza Cortés **Colombia | US**

Michael Elliott **Jamaica**

Guy Gabon **Guadeloupe**

Rosa Naday Garmendia **Cuba | US**

GeoVanna Gonzalez **US | Germany**

Juan Erman Gonzalez **Cuba | US**

Kearra Amaya Gopee **Trinidad & Tobago**

Grettel Arrate Hechavarría **Cuba**

Caroline Holder **Barbados | Canada**

Izia Lee Lindsay **Trinidad & Tobago**

Anja Marais **South Africa | US**

Jared McGriff **United States**

Petrona Morrison **Jamaica**

Kurt Nahar **Suriname**

Charo Oquet **Dominican Republic | US**

Devora Perez **Nicaragua**

Evelyn Politzer **Uruguay**

Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz **Puerto Rico | US**

Juan Ernesto Requena **Venezuela**

Asser Saint-Val **Haiti | US**

## **Guest Artists**

Tyler Mitchell **United States**

Deborah Willis, Ph.D. **United States**

## Brief Artist Biographies

**Moisés Aragón** is a self-taught interdisciplinary artist from Cuba, whose work interprets personal mythology with his reality. Moisés' interest in the arts started at a young age when he was introduced to the act of "artistic recognition" having had his self-portrait drawing assignment exhibited in the school's cafeteria. During his formative years after the "9/11" incident, his focus became attuned to questioning his relation to the "American empire" as it stood as a beacon of expansion during those initial years of war and occupation in the Middle East. Intrepid curiosity led to the acknowledgement that he had been born in exile and would like to return home.

**Aisha Tandiwe Bell** is a first-generation Jamaican and ninth-generation traceable Black American. Her parents met at City College. Conceived in Tanzania and born in Manhattan, she was Raised Bobo Shanti Rasta spending her early childhood on Bobo hill in Bull Bay, Jamaica. Inspired by the fragmentation of our multiple identities, Bell's practice is committed to creating myth & ritual through sculpture, performance, video, sound, drawing & installation. Bell holds a BFA, a MS from Pratt Institute, and an MFA from Hunter College. Bell received a New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) in Performance Art and Multidisciplinary Work.

**Minia Biabiany** works and lives between Mexico City and Guadeloupe. In her practice, Minia Biabiany uses the deconstruction of narratives in installations, videos and drawings, by building up ephemeral poetics of forms in relation with colonial presence, past or present. Her work proceeds from an investigation on the perception of space to the use of the paradigms of weaving and opacity on language. She initiated the artistic and pedagogical collective project Semillero Caribe in 2016 in Mexico City and continue to explore the deconstruction of narratives with the body and concepts from Caribbean authors with the experimental platform Doukou.

**Christopher Carter** was born in Albuquerque, NM, and raised in Boston, MA. Carter infuses a blend of ethnic and urban influences in all of his artistic work. His bold and decisively organic sculptures strongly reflect his African-American, Native American and European heritage. His assemblages embody power and energy accentuated by the source materials he selects for his creations. Rarely using anything "new," Carter fashions a chorus of images composed of recycled woods, metals, glass shards, ropes, resins and a variety of discarded objects, that when united seek to depict traditional concepts in an innovative and creative way.

**Katrina Coombs** was born in St. Andrew, Jamaica. She has a MFA in Creative Practice from Transart Institute via The University of Plymouth. Coombs has a passion for fiber and an understanding of the sensitivity of threads and fabric which has grown beyond design and into sculptural forms. Her practice focuses on the impact of the Other on the "I" and the quintessence of gender politics of the Other. She weaves and stitches fibers and textiles into tactile and sometimes large-scale sculptural forms, engaging the sometimes ambivalent and stigmatizing ways society engages the female persona. Coombs's current works are an exploration into the notion of the woman's body as a form of carriage, and how the womb becomes an unspoken voice of another for women's existence and identity.

**Esperanza Cortés** is a Colombian born contemporary, multidisciplinary artist based in New York City. Cortés has exhibited in the United States and internationally. Esperanza (hope) is a guiding force in the making of the work, which is a call and response to people, culture, place and history. Cortés' installations are organic and improvisational constructions, infused with hope and renewal. Her artwork is poetically and intricately crafted. It encourages viewers to reconsider their learned social and historical narratives, especially when dealing with colonialism and raises critical questions about the politics of erasure and exclusion.

**Michael Elliott's** artistic journey has taken him into a socio-political realm over the years, mainly focusing on painting as his medium but also photography at times. It is fair to say that photography has indeed influenced his style of painting, i.e. photorealism. Attending the Edna Manley College of The Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica in 1998, Michael honed his skill as a painter, developing different techniques in varying mediums while developing an awareness of social issues in Jamaica and throughout the world. Michael's work can be said to feature a wide use of symbolism to represent his themes especially in the intimately tuned still life pieces.

**Guy Gabon** is a visual artist, eco-designer and filmmaker from Guadeloupe. How can we act today to stimulate dialogue to instill political, social and ecological action in our societies? This vital question animates the reflection and works of this sensitive artist who is committed to transform the way we look at things. A landscape poetess, she draws inspiration from generous nature to question the links that man has with his natural and urban environment. It implements multidisciplinary and protean artistic and environmental experiments. She creates works based on land art, eco-design, cinema, vegetable graffiti and reverse graffiti. She questions and warns about the imbalances generated by our consumer society.

**Rosa Naday Garmendia** is from La Habana, Cuba and lives and works in Miami, Florida. She is a socially engaged, multidisciplinary artist who produces work at the nexus of contemporary art and activism. Her work is rooted in social issues, particularly the intersectionality of her identity as a woman, immigrant, and industrial worker. The driving impulse is her desire to use art as a tool for self-reflection, create discourse, challenge traditional views and build understanding among people. She reflects on and analyzes norms and values in contemporary society. She focuses on projects that critically view the role of police, acts of racism, poverty, and military intervention abroad. Her artistic practice is a daily act of resistance.

**GeoVanna Gonzalez** is a Miami/Berlin-based artist. GeoVanna was born and raised in Los Angeles, California where she received her BFA at Otis College of Art and Design. GeoVanna experiments with materials to understand the notion of tactility, by transforming one material to look like another. The desire to transform materials is influenced by both organic and technological environments and its relationship to our shifting notions of gender and identity. She constructs and combines sculptures and installations, and uses video and photography to re-contextualize, obscure and interfere with how digital platforms curate and dictate the way we experience various and multiplying realities.

**Juan Erman Gonzalez** is a Cuban born artist living and working in Miami, Florida. As an exile, he addresses migration, up rootedness, and displacement by using manipulated, repurposed, and post-production recycled goods to create narratives of imagined worlds and their inhabitants. He often reflects on “el camino.” the metaphorical and actual path he has traveled since first working with DVCAI in 2002. With a background in fiber arts and couture, his visual art practice utilizes his practical experiences of sewing, pattern-making and drawing. He considers his materials gifts, precious elements to be honored, re-used, and re-contextualized.

**Kearra Amaya Gopee** is a multidisciplinary visual artist from Carapichaima, Trinidad and Tobago and based in Los Angeles. Their research-based practice focuses on the nature of violence and erasure, and the particularities of those that are inflicted on the Caribbean and its diasporas by the global north. While complicating the viewer's understanding of economic and social marginalization in the region, Gopee's practice also desires to test the mettle of these frameworks. Through interventions, Gopee aims to temper what we have known to be true with the potential of intuitive knowledge that has been historically cast aside in favor of Western assimilation. She holds a BFA in Photography and Imaging from New York University and is an alumna of the 10 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Currently, she is an MFA candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Grettel Arrate Hechavarría** is a painter, mural painter, illustrator and graphic designer from Santiago de Cuba. She graduated in painting and drawing from the Provincial Academy of Plastic Arts José Joaquín Tejada of Santiago de Cuba. She holds a Bachelor of Art History from the Universidad de Oriente. She is a member of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and a Member of the Association of Publicists of Cuba. Hechavarría has had 14 solo exhibitions in important museums and galleries in Cuba and around the world.

**Caroline Holder** was born in England to a Jamaican mother and Barbadian father. When she was four years old, the family returned to the Caribbean, settling in Barbados, where she completed her formative education. Holder left the island after high school to study Design and Painting at York University in Toronto, and Art Education at McGill in Montreal. She relocated to New York City in the early 90's where, except for a sojourn at NSCAD University, Nova Scotia to complete an MFA in Ceramics, she has maintained a continuous studio practice, while teaching art at the Professional Children's School. Holder's primary medium is clay, from which she crafts object-sculptures combined with drawings and text. Her influences include a background in printmaking, a love of pen and ink drawing, experiences of intersectional identity as a Caribbean immigrant in North America, and the life-altering experience of late motherhood.

**Izia Lee Lindsay** is a mixed media artist who explores with both digital and traditional media. His artwork addresses symbolism in Caribbean iconography that is rooted in tradition but interpreted with contemporary ideas. Lindsay uses bold, geometric shapes that juxtapose and intersperse to form his multilayered artistic pieces. The thematic whole is a cultural narrative reproducing the dualities of his turbulent, cosmopolitan, Caribbean life. His research examines material culture, indigenous societies and the ever-changing landscape of the Caribbean while his subject matter tackles issues of identity and class in a post-colonial society. Lindsay is currently and adjunct lecturer in Miami, Florida.

**Anja Marias** is a multi-disciplinary artist who was born and raised in the countryside of South Africa. She graduated from the University of South Africa with a BFA. She currently works and lives in Miami, FL, and exhibits her work in the national and international arena. Marais' interest in the nature of inanimate objects comes from African animistic religions. Uninterested in the boundary between human and the nonhuman world, she focuses on inviolable memories left in landscapes. Her sculptures are both traditional and contemporary - totemic installations of found objects infused with a given history, resonating with the lives of those who lived with them before.

**Jared McGriff** is a Los Angeles born Oakland-based artist. His abstract, figurative and portrait watercolor and acrylic paintings are inspired by visual distortions, memory fragments and ephemera. Capturing the expressions, cultural cues and transitory familiarity of his surroundings, Jared's work is at once accessible and universal in its depiction of the human condition. His approach to the collective conscious is informed by both his international travels and time in the American West. His voyages distilled in his paintings, simple line, color, and composition. "I'm interested in the spaces that exist between our vision and cognition. Our memory only registers a fraction of what we see on any given day. What gets lost in the mechanics of vision - this visual waste or unstructured data - informs my work, and how I approach my practice."

**Petrona Morrison** is a Jamaican artist who lives in Kingston, Jamaica. For the past thirty years her work has engaged deeply personal, as well as socio-political concerns through assemblages and installations. Her totemic assemblages made from discarded objects culled from the streets of Kingston, and installations which evoke 11 ritual spaces serve as metaphors for transformation, renewal and healing, and themes of fragility, survival and resilience reoccur in her practice. She incorporates digital photographs, text, and video into her installations, a process she describes by saying "I use fragments – conversations, photographs, recorded images appropriated from the internet, to create narratives which explore ideas". Her recent work has become less autobiographical and more overtly political. Her video installation "Selfie", a collaboration with theatre artist, Rachael Allen, signals a new direction in her practice. The work, which explores the construction of identity through social media, has opened new possibilities through its performance and collaborative process. Morrison holds a BA (Fine Arts) from McMaster University, Canada and an MFA from Howard University, USA.

**Kurt Nahar**, from Paramaribo, Suriname started his art education at the Nola Hatterman Art Academy in Suriname and continued his studies at the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica. Nahar uses his art to express his thoughts and emotions on various subjects related to questionable social and political circumstances in Suriname and in other countries worldwide. He believes that artists have a responsibility to expose their viewers to the social reality. He does so in a bold and often confrontational manner and thus hopes to increase awareness and stimulate discussion about the sensitive subjects that he brings to light. Political injustices, social inequality and the widespread abuse of power, are among his main themes. His technique is inspired by the methods of his predecessors from the era of Dadaism. The use of collage techniques and simple objects are characteristic for his art.

**Charo Oquet**, Dominican born and Miami-based artist. In 2004 she founded Edge Zones, in Miami, FL non-profit artist-run art space. Her work, entering a Rara Garden is inspired by memories of her grandmother's garden in Santo Domingo. Oquet explores themes of "uncertainty" within a context of mobility, exile and migration around the world. It emerges from her own life, from the constant challenge of uprooting and relocating, and is inspired by deliberations on the meanings of permanence and place.

**Devora Perez**, originally from Nicaragua, lives and works in Miami. She received her bachelor's degree from New World School of the Arts, and is currently an MFA candidate at Florida International University. Perez is interested in the domestic setting and its influence on gender, race, and class in society. In her work she challenges domesticity through the use of everyday materials such as caulk, cement, plastic, and wood, and uses them in unconventional ways. Through formal and minimal design, Perez emphasizes color, texture, and even the industrial material itself. While some pieces may seem fragile and light, others are heavy and dense both visually and physically. These discrepancies in weight between the works and the use of shadows are meant to construct divisions and separate spaces. Her work, *Man-Made Environment (here, there, everywhere)*, challenges issues of gentrification in Miami.

**Evelyn Politzer**, originally from Uruguay, now lives and works in Miami, Florida. After attending law school in Montevideo, Uruguay and moving to the United States she pursued her passion for art. Her beginnings were in tapestry and knitting. Creating with wool was only natural in her native country of Uruguay, where the number of sheep far exceeds the number of inhabitants. Even though she creates through traditional methods like knitting, crochet and embroidery, the objects she makes are unconventional and seek to spark a conversation on subjects such as place, motherhood, breast cancer, and the fragility of the natural environment. These fiber works give her a sense of comfort and belonging while she strives "to knit the impossible, and give voice to the voiceless."

**Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz** is a nationally and internationally recognized, award winning interdisciplinary visual and performance artist. Through personal narratives and experiences, her work dissects cultural and social constructs designed to isolate, "herd" and manage Otherness. Needing the immediacy of a live audience she developed the *Las Reinas (The Queens)*, a suite of allegorical self-portrait performances where she become imagined royal archetypes anchored in personal trauma. Most recently she debuted *Exodus I Pilgrimage*, an endurance performance addressing the forced migration of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the United States as a result of the current humanitarian crisis post-hurricane Mari, the artist dressed in attire made completely from debris recovered from the island.

**Juan Ernesto Requena** is a Venezuelan born artist with his studio practice in Mumbai and Miami. Through textile, powder, film, sound and digital works he provides a visual narrative of his life on themes that revolve around memory, nature and the human condition. He was part of the artist collective that exhibited at the inaugural Kochi-Muziris Biennale at Mattancherry Palace, Kochi, India in 2012 and recently exhibited at the Tout Monde Festival 2019 in Miami presented by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the USA. Juan considers himself an archivist whose goal is to preserve human history.

**Asser Saint-Val** originally from Haiti, Asser moved to South Florida where he earned BFAs in painting and graphic design from the New World School of the Arts. His art has been exhibited in Florida, New York and throughout the Caribbean and is represented in numerous private collections. Saint-Val is a painter, sculptor and installation artist. His quasi-figurative images, by turns humorous and grotesque, bring together ideas, people and incidents central to modern debates about the definition and valence of Neuromelanin. Rendered in a blend of traditional art mediums and a wide range of unconventional, organic materials - coffee, chocolate, ginger, tea and chocolate among them - his pictures, objects and environments are a surreal fantasia on such loosely linked themes as under-recognized African American inventors, the politics of sexual desire, and the complex aesthetics, narratives and metaphors that attach to the organic compounds neuromelanin.

## Guest Artists

**Tyler Mitchell** is a photographer and filmmaker based in Brooklyn, NY. He was born and raised in Atlanta, GA where he got his start making skate videos and taking pictures of music, fashion, and youth culture. He received his BFA in Film and Television from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. His work has been featured in American Vogue, British Vogue, Teen Vogue, M Le Monde, i-D Magazine, Another Magazine, Dazed Magazine, Document Journal, The Guardian and The FADER. Selected clients include Calvin Klein, Prada, Mercedes Benz, Simone Rocha x Moncler, Marc Jacobs, Givenchy, Converse, Nike and Ray-Ban.

**Deborah Willis, Ph.D.** is University Professor and Chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and has an affiliated appointment with the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, Africana Studies, where she teaches courses on Photography & Imaging, iconicity, and cultural histories visualizing the black body, women, and gender. She is the director of the NYU Institute of African American Affairs and the founder of the Center for Black Visual Culture. Her research examines photography's multifaceted histories, visual culture, the photographic history of Slavery and Emancipation; contemporary women photographers and beauty. She received the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Willis is the author of *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present*; and co-author of *The Black Female Body A Photographic History*; *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery*; and *Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs* (both titles a NAACP Image Award Winner). Professor Willis's curated exhibitions include: "In Pursuit of Beauty" at Express Newark; "Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits" at the International Center of Photography and "Reframing Beauty: Intimate Moments" at Indiana University. Since 2006, she has co-organized thematic conferences exploring imaging the black body in the West such as the conference titled Black Portraiture[s], soon to be held in NYC in October 2019. She has appeared and consulted on media projects including documentary films such as *Through A Lens Darkly* and *Question Bridge: Black Males*, 13 a transmedia project, which received the ICP Infinity Award 2015, and *American Photography*, PBS Documentary. Her most recent project *Deborah Willis: In Pursuit of Beauty, Imaging Closets in Newark and Beyond* was published by Shine Studios in 2019.

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