

Bio of
Sojourner
Truth



Shadow to Substance

Sojourner Truth (born Isabella “Belle” Baumfree, c. 1797–1883) was a charismatic public speaker who preached abolitionism and women’s rights. Her friend Frederick Douglass said she was a “compound of wit and wisdom, of wild enthusiasm, and flint-like common sense.” Truth was at the peak of her career in the 1850s as photography gained popularity in the United States, and became one of the most photographed women of her generation. Selling her portrait at her lectures for 25 cents supported her travel and publications.

Photography in the 19th century was often referred to as “fixing a shadow.” Truth embraced the power of the medium because it informed people. On the margin of her photos, she had printed, “I sell the Shadow to Support the Substance.” This reminded her listeners that photographs gave substance to not only the specificity of her own life and physiognomy, but other Black lives too. She wanted all Black people to become more vivid, individual, and complex unto themselves as well as to her largely white audiences. Hence, her photographs became a “critical tool of abolition ... and an example of self-actualization.”¹

A tall, thin Black woman, Truth willingly sold her image to fund the cause of liberation, the shadow of herself indelibly documented by the alchemy of photography. While we know her by the moniker Truth, it is Isabella Baumfree, born enslaved, that also appears here; an amalgamation of the substance of Black humanity unfaded. Making history, she copyrighted her own image and the once-enslaved began to profit from the curve and line of her own body.

This exhibition expresses Truth’s appeal to let the shadow support the substance.

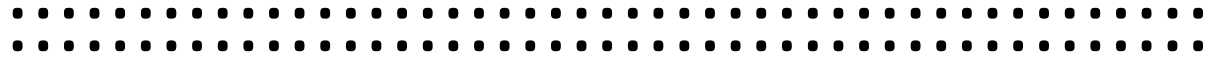
¹ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Enduring Truths: Sojourner’s Shadows and Substance*, see “Sojourner Truth” link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

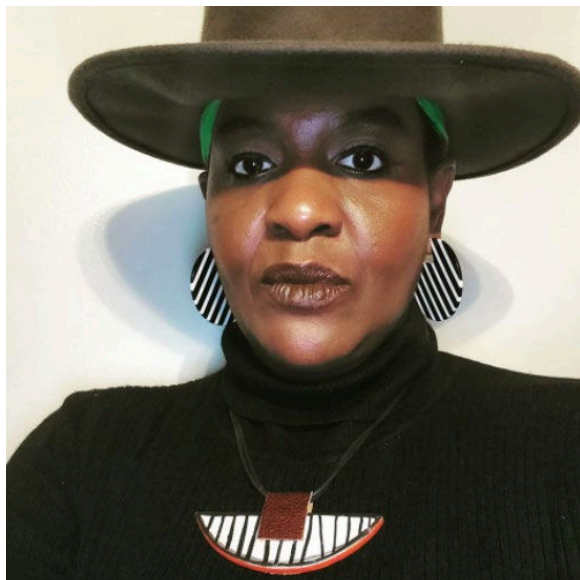
From the curators ...

Dr. Porchia Moore
statement

Kimberly Williams
statement

Dr. Carol McCusker
statement





Dr. Porchia Moore

Department Head/Assist. Prof. of Museum Studies at the University of Florida. She is a Critical Race Scholar examining the role and function of race in museums and the cultural heritage sector.



Kimberly Williams

Kimberly is a third-year doctoral student in the English Department at the University of Florida. She is studying Black sound, Black healing, and nonbeing across multimedia.



Dr. Carol McCusker

Curator of Photography at the Harn Museum at the University of Florida. As often as possible she uses exhibitions as visual spaces for examining the worst and the best of humanity.

The photographs in this exhibition are at once provocation and inquiry, joy and inspection, reverie and pain, expansion into infinite. It is my vision to center Black photographers and Black photography by inviting the viewer to expand their understanding of Blackness. In the great Visual Information and Media Age, photographs in the mainstream often depict Black lives in ways that are incongruent to the lives that Black people truly live—fleshy, juicy, whole, electric, complex. Contributing new frameworks, innovative lighting techniques, and ways of knowing only gained through lived experience, Black photographers have helped shape photography into the most viable archival artistry of our time.

It is my hope that each of these photographs disrupts historical narratives, meaningless tropes, and the common imagery associated with Blackness portrayed in our never-ending visual media. I ask you to stop and ask new questions about photography, Black photographers, Black bodies, and Black people. In this exhibition I call upon you to commit to the wisdom that there is abundance in Blackness. See in Black.

—Dr. Porchia Moore,
Guest Curator

This exhibition reveals the full breadth of Black life—the refusal, the wounding, and the tenderness of living in what Rinaldo Walcott calls, “the long emancipation”¹—the contention of Black legislative *freedom* in a world that refuses to “break with the social relations that underpin slavery.”

Note the wall colors: they were inspired by the Fort Mose uniform and the St. Augustine crest to honor the formerly enslaved communities that created a personhood after captivity. St. Augustine, the nation’s oldest city, shelters the myth of eternal youth immortality across its mint ocean. Tucked away from the beach, and lost to history until 1968, is Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or Fort Mose—the first freed settlement for formerly enslaved people.

Historically, Black people have and will continue to create newness out of “starshine and clay.”² This includes the ability to conjure, heal, and love. And so this exhibition reveals the legacy of dreaming, flying, and carving a life—in the same world that has failed to give Black people freedom.

—Kimberly Williams,
Guest Curator

¹ Rinaldo Walcott, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Director of Women and Gender Studies, University of Toronto, *The Long Emancipation: Moving Towards Freedom*

² Lucille Clifton, “won’t you celebrate with me,” *Book of Light*

“Where we stand determines what we’re able to see.”

—Octavia Butler

I see because I stand beside Dr. Porchia Moore and Kimberly Williams. They expand my understanding of Black lives, Black scholarship, and white privilege, through conversations, books, table reads, and the discovery of Black photographers working today—16 of their photographs were purchased by the Harn for this exhibition.

Dr. Moore and Kimberly Williams created the content of *Shadow to Substance*. I championed historic photographs from the Harn’s and Smathers’ collections, which anchor Moore’s and Williams’ commanding visual narrative, so that when you enter the gallery, you’ll experience a pictorial timeline starting with Sojourner Truth and the Underground Railroad, into the era of Jim Crow and the Great Migration. These are followed by images selected by Williams and Moore who poignantly interpret Childhood, Men, the Civil Rights Movement, and Zora Neale Hurston, and conclude with powerful photographs that document events or celebrate lives of the past decade—a crucible of resistance against America’s shameful legacy of racial injustice.

The work needed to repair the wound of anti-Blackness is immense. *Shadow to Substance* is our collective, humble offering of human communication, empathy, and understanding essential to healing. Let us all become agents of change. Look at the photographs; read the texts with open minds and hearts. Leave standing in a place where you are able to see.

—Dr. Carol McCusker
Curator of Photography, Harn Museum of Art



Text





Doug Prince
Untitled #07



[Ayana V. Jackson](#)
Moments of Sweet Reprieve,
 from the series *Intimate Justice in the Stolen Moment*

When looking at these two photographs, what is the same and what is different?

The two artists here reveal a central theme in this exhibition of bringing substance to the shadow (a 19th-century term for photography) through the expressions, clothing, and environment of the women in each image.

Sojourner Truth's argument in her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech would call on us to *fully see* the two women in the composite image (left). Artist Doug Prince appropriated their photograph, titled *Jail, Washington, DC, 1919*, from the Library of Congress's online archive. He superimposed at its center a painting fragment of a white woman's lace cuffs and unsullied hands holding a teacup indicative of a privileged Eurocentric world built on servitude, thereby defining these Black women's lives (even in prison, their labor would assure her privilege). The original 1919 photograph (photographer unknown) inserts the substantive lives of these two women into perpetuity. It declares, "we once lived!" never to be erased. It is unknown why the photograph was made: Are they newly arrived? Being sentenced? Or has their sorority worried the authorities? Here, for a split second of photographic time, they stand at once strong and uncertain at a literal and inauspicious threshold.

Ayana Jackson's photograph (right) reimagines the lives of the two women from 1919, undoing the conflation of Black womanhood with servitude. We see confidence, beauty, rich fabrics. The gold-hued silk pillows mimic the square painting at left, but with different connotations: the women own them, they rest on them. One looks at the camera, the other in quiet reverie—a sisterhood made of complex and discerning interior lives. Both images look as if from the same era, but Jackson's art (she knows well the history of photography) amends past images of Black women. Her restaging of alternative histories shows a dignified past, hence a restored present and limitless future.

Sojourner
Truth



Harriet
Tubman



Frederick
Douglass



19th c
Civil
Rights



Under-
ground
Railroad



Underground Railroad

These Underground Railroad photographs by Jeanine Michna-Bales are four out of 100 which she made during 10 years of research and 1,400 miles of travel with a large camera and tripod, going into the woods at night, alone or with a companion. Night photography necessitates knowledge of camera technology. It also demands much from the body: stillness, patience, vulnerability, and faith, as camera and photographer struggle to see the darkness.

Travel on the 19th-century "Railroad" was active from 1810 through the Civil War; it freed roughly 100,000 people. The freedom seeker had to embrace life and death simultaneously in the form of extreme leave-taking (quickly, at night, with little-to-nothing carried) through obscure paths dotted with safe houses (some owned by Native Americans), in and out of swamps and forests from the South to Canada's border. Nighttime was liberating—or punishing. Blackness could merge with night. But if detected, violence followed. Vigilantes hunted runaway slaves for profit. It took extreme bravery and anguish to travel the Railroad; the darkness a comforting cloak made of relief—and dread.

When your vision has gone, no part of the world can find you.
Time to go into the dark, where the night has eyes to recognize its own.
There you can be sure you are not beyond love.
The night will give you a horizon, further than you can see.

—David Whyte, "Sweet Darkness"

Underground Railroad chromogenic prints, 2013–2014, by Jeanine Michna-Bales (American, born 1971)



Jeanine Michna-Bales
from the series, *Through Darkness to Light: Photographs along the Underground Railroad*



Jeanine Michna-Bales
from the series, *Through Darkness to Light: Photographs along the Underground Railroad*

Jim
Crow



Great
Migration



Jim Crow

Jim Crow was an anti-Black caste system in effect from the 1870s, its first era, and continuing to today, the second era called the New Jim Crow.¹ It consists of laws that fluctuate to suit the perceived “offense”—laws that deny voting, incarcerate men and women without trial, create sundowner towns, and breed mobs that “police” Black people who step out of line. Jim Crow’s persecution of a single population is not found in any other democratic country. In these photographs from north Florida and Mississippi, we see turpentine laborers alongside well-dressed women, proud community elders and female students, and a wagon going into town, all with strong self-sufficiency and pride despite the oppression around them.

¹ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*



Florida Cooperative Service Home Demonstration Agents



Jim Crow north Florida

UF Smathers' Library
Archive



Turpentine Industry
South Central Fla, 1941

Imprisoned turpentine workers,
circa 1925



WWI soldiers with the
French Croix de Guerre
Medal, 1919



Family leaving
Florida, 1940

Enjoying a crowded
bar scene, c. 1942



Family arriving
in Chicago, 1922



The Great Migration

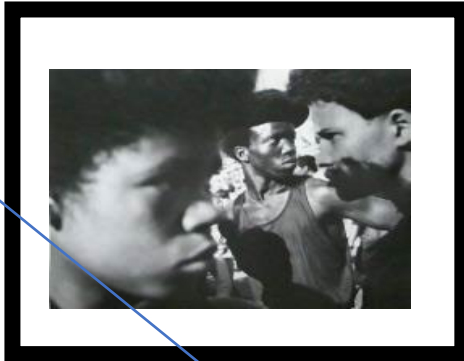
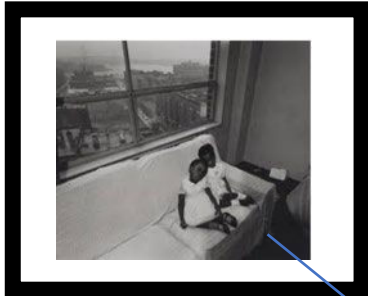
From 1916 through the 1940s, The Great Migration was the largest movement of African Americans in the United States. Six million people left the South for the north and west (Chicago, New York, Detroit, and beyond). Its cause was primarily Jim Crow's lethal laws, the Great Depression, and not least, the boll weevil. By the mid-1920s, the agrarian devastation that the boll weevil wreaked on cotton fields from Texas to Florida was total, and had a domino effect on sharecropping and landowning sovereignty. Unable to make a living, the industrial north beckoned Black workers through the influential Black-owned *Chicago Defender* newspaper, to leave the agrarian life for urban factory jobs.

Migration did not always yield a better life. Black labor was paid less, often dangerous, and sometimes used to break strikes, giving further rise to racial tensions. Yet, by being beyond the grasp of Jim Crow, men and women could travel more freely, influence politics, enroll in university, join the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). By breaking free of the South *en masse*, "they brought their families, labor, culture and energy to the rest of the nation, changing it in ways that still reverberate to this day."¹

¹ Preston Smith, Professor of Politics specializing in postwar Black politics, Mount Holyoke College, see "Explore the Great Migration" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>



Childhood



Unknown
Lincoln High Homecoming, 1947



Bruce Davidson
East 100th Street Harlem

Childhood

A child's birth actualizes hope and futurism because it represents a newness or a portal to promise and innocence. Youth provides an opportunity to change tradition. How does America view children across different identities? How does racism steal humanity from childhood?

A 2020 study by the Equal Justice Initiative revealed that Hispanic children were three times more likely to be shot to death by police than white children. Shootings of Black children were almost six times higher than those of white children. Tamir Rice was 12 years old; Aiyana Stanley-Jones was 7 years old, and Ma'Khia Bryant was 16 years old when they were all killed by police violence.

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity examines how "cultural deficit thinking" leads educators to "harbor negative assumptions about the ability, aspirations and work ethic of these students—especially poor students of color—based on the assumption that they and their families do not value education."¹ This racist bias shapes childhood esteem and development.

The school-to-prison pipeline encompasses a terrible threat to children, especially boys. Jacqui Greadington, chair of the National Education Association Black Caucus, says, "Studies have shown that a Black child, especially a male, is seen to be a bigger threat just because they are. They are. They exist."²

The faces of the children in these photographs display varying emotions rejuvenating hope: innocence; joy and energy on a swing or in performing together; while the adolescents show a growing wariness as well as strength and pride.

¹ Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, "Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated," February 5, 2014, see "Kirwan Institute" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

² NEA Today, "The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Time to Shut it Down," January 5, 2015, see "School-to-Prison Pipeline" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

Black
Masculinity



Benji Reid, *Work of Heart*

Men

In these images, we seek to bring the dark discourse surrounding Black men to light, depicting the deep love of men towards themselves, their community and kin, and one another. These images disrupt the visual canon and reframe Black men, restoring their dignity and shaping new narratives around Black masculinity in a time when gender is expanding. Long before Trayvon Martin's murder electrified hoodies as symbols of racial justice and martyrdom, Black male bodies have been in tension with White Imagination in public spaces. While hoodies are universal for casual wear and the optics of leisure, for masculine-presenting bodies hoodies at once shield the self from the outside world and make one a visual target.

Pervasive are tropes, from enraged Black men gorilla-like in nature to all-encompassing wide-smiling grins lounging about shiftless or jobless. Thug. Suspect. Criminal. Thief. Arrestee. Loiterer. Wanted. Murderer. Super Predator. More often the discourse connecting Black men with society is to view them as "menace." Yet, the mantra of Black Boy Joy found on Instagram, and other collective spaces, seeks reparations for lost time, and grows positive representations of Black boys and men. The result: joy and peace untampered. Self-defined safety. Father. Brother. Generous. Kind. Uncle. Dreamer. Lover. Friend. Giver. Nurturer. Beloved. Human. Free.



*There was a great outcryin. The bent backs straightened up.
Old and young, who were called slaves and could fly,
joined hands ... and rose in the air.
They flew in a flock that was black against the heavenly blue.
Way above the plantation, way over the slavery land.
Say they flew away to Free-dom.*

—*The People Could Fly* (Virginia Hamilton, 1985)
based on accounts of flying Africans and slaves in
Black folktale literature

photograph
Michael Kenna

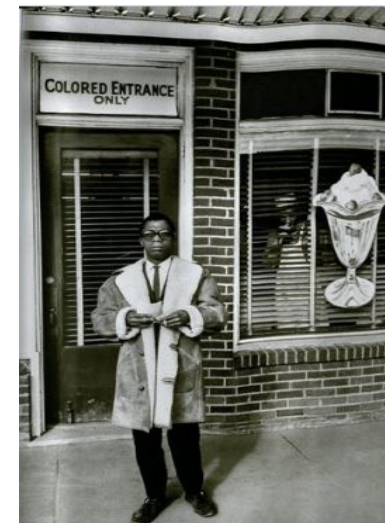


Mother
Brown

Steve Schapiro



Bruce Davidson



Civil
Rights
Movement



ZNH
Text

Zora Neale Hurston
Unknown photographers

Farms
in
north
Florida
circa 1910



Soul Fire Farm
New York
2016—to the present

The Land

The history of the South's economy is largely about agriculture. After the Civil War, Black farmers were indentured into the system of sharecropping; the fruits of their labor were demanded by white landowners who rented them the land, since Black families were denied, or robbed of land ownership. This inequality stole generational wealth, in the form of land resources that could be passed down from parent to child. Nonetheless, raising crops and animals through their own labor and knowledge fed thriving Black communities, seen here, through farming practices rooted in Africa.

Soul Fire Farm, located in New York, is a thriving "Afro-Indigenous centered community farm committed to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the food system."¹ Reaching over 10,000 people annually, they teach "activist-farming, food security, health, environmental justice, reparations and land return initiatives."¹

Through their book, *Farming While Black*, the cooperative continues "the legacy of our ancestral grandmothers, who braided seeds in their hair before boarding transatlantic slave ships, believing against odds in a future of sovereignty on land."¹

¹ *Farming While Black* and soulfirefarm.org, see also "Soul Fire Farm" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

Trayvon
Martin



Diop represents each story of Black resistance through allegorical portraits. In this image, he plays the role of young Trayvon Martin, who was wearing a hoodie and had just bought a pack of Skittles when he was killed. Credit: Omar Victor Diop

Omar Victor Diop

In 2012, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin ventured to a Sanford, Florida, convenience store for a pack of Skittles and a can of Arizona Iced Tea. George Zimmerman followed Martin and accused the teen of “being up to no good.” Zimmerman shot and killed Martin and was later acquitted in 2013 citing Florida’s Stand Your Ground Law as a defense.

Martin’s death was a catalyst for the Movement for Black Lives that has grown into an international sociopolitical effort to reform policing and abolish police violence against Black people. Nine months after Trayvon Martin was killed, 17-year-old Jordan Davis was killed in Jacksonville, Florida, by a pedestrian who deemed Davis’s music too loud. The traumatic deaths continue.

In this photograph, a young Black man in a hoodie lays on the floor surrounded by a corona of Skittles and soda cans outlined by dried leaves and red flowers. The subject looks pensive yet protected. Is he in the afterlife, or is he sprawled in his bedroom nursing a stomachache from all his confections?—a scenario that could have been an alternative evening for Trayvon Martin.



Protest



Jonathan Bachman



Michael McCoy

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Movement for Black Lives reveal anti-Blackness as a systemic, interworking American machine. Black, Hispanic, and indigenous people are overwhelmingly at a higher risk of COVID-19 death because of medical racism, somatic traumas, and comorbidity ailments from socioeconomic and wellness disparities (e.g., obesity, heart disease, asthma).

COVID-19 is literally breathtaking, and disrupts respiratory functioning that can potentially cause septic shock. It is a virus that latches onto and changes the machination of breathing and movement.

This means that exposing Black life to a white healthcare atmosphere further suffocates Black breath. Eric Garner's death and his battle cry of "I can't breathe" reverberates and is inextricably linked to the death of Deborah Gatewood, a Black healthcare worker who was denied hospital intervention and diagnosis four times before she died from the coronavirus.

Ieshia Evans shows extreme grace in the face of aggressive arrest. Of this image, Teju Cole (also in this exhibition) wrote in *The New York Times Magazine*, "In spite of, or because of, its simple narrative, Bachman's photograph became an icon."¹ Indeed, Evans' image is compared to the iconic image of "Tank Man," who, in 1989, fatefully faced down a column of tanks in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Also arrested before many cameras, he was never seen again. Evans, however, has not stopped speaking out and taking action on social issues. An admirer of 1960s–1970s Civil Rights and Black Power movements, she says, "I'd like to see a lot more of that *fight*, and not just from 'my people.'"²

¹ Teju Cole, "The Superhero Photographs of the Black Lives Matter Movement," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 26, 2016, see "BLM Photos" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

² Huffington Post, "2 Years After Going Viral, Ieshia Evans Reflects On Her Iconic Protest Photo," July 5, 2018, see "Iesha Evans" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>



Nap
Ministry



Tricia Hersey
in collaboration with photographer Charlotte Watts

<https://vimeo.com/483708762>

Minute 20:18 – 23:28

Nap Ministry

Preacher of the People, Minister of Naps, and the Gospel of sleeping as a reparations practice of self-care, Tricia Hersey (seen in these photographs) is the abolitionist theologian of the 21st century that none of us knew we needed. An erudite scholar and theologian, Hersey's message of rest as liberation has set fire to the cultural landscape and has even penetrated the corporate world where she is often paid to share her gospel of rest. Hersey's ministry is based on her archival research of Black people whose leisure time and self-care were stolen from them through irrational, archaic, racist laws that policed Black people's ability to rest. Rest was not afforded them because it meant a reduction of labor and service to whites. Stereotypes around "lazy negroes" became the root of loitering laws such that Black people were unable to gather in fellowship and community.

These photographs are a direct response to the brutality of capitalism. Hersey believes it robs everyone of the ability to dream, learn, practice wisdom, sow pleasure, and heal. Because to exist in this system one must be equated with labor, service, productivity, and value in such complex ways that impact mental and physical health, and the ability to function as *more* than product.¹ These images encourage the liberation that can be found in collective sleeping and dreaming. They demand rest as a foundation for humanity and joyful living.

¹ The Atlantic, "Social Distance: You Are Worthy of Sleep," April 30, 2020, see "Nap Ministry" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>



Afro
Futurism

Ayana V. Jackson
Sighting in the Abyss II, from the series *Take Me to the Water*

Artist Ayana V. Jackson, the subject in her own photograph here, rides on simulated Atlantic waves of lace meshing. She wears a gown with an Edwardian collar that denotes prestige, but her black dress and wrist chains imply a perpetual grieving. Jackson declares she is a deity welcoming a new baby in the supernatural aquatopia that is *Drexciya*—a mythical, Atlantic world composed of mothers and their unborn children who drowned during the Middle Passage.

The Atlantic Ocean served as a witness to 12 million enslaved Africans that were forced from their families and livelihood during the Middle Passage. Millions died during the voyage from sickness, torture, or suicide. *Drexciya* is a metaphor on how *to bear* the unimaginable aftermath of mass, oceanic death. Jackson imagines water spirits that guide mothers and their infants into a new mytho-world, recreating a “telling of water” that preserves imagination and grief on the ocean. “Throughout the world, you will find myth and folklore related to the water,” she says. “This is nothing other than a testimony to humanity’s respect for their source material. We are all mostly water, after all.”¹

What does the Atlantic hold in its depths? What testimonies can the Atlantic Ocean offer us today? In *Undrowned*, scholar Alexis Pauline Gumbs examines Black feminism in relation to ancestral voices and testimonies of salvation through a poetic study of marine animals (whales, dolphins, etc.). Later Gumbs asks of her ancestors, “What would I be like if there never was a break between me and those on the other side of the passage?”²

¹ Nuvo Magazine, “Exploring African Mythic Worlds with Photographer Ayana V. Jackson: Reconstructing the African Diasporic Identity,” June 2, 2020, see “African Mythic Worlds” link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>

² Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminism from Marine Mammals*

Rev Dr
William
Barber II



Endia Beal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7PeqxTKd9I>

From the beginning to minute 1:32

Invisible
Empire



Sheila
Pree Bright

Rev. Dr. William Barber II is one of the most inspirational and controversial men in cloth today. A Protestant minister, he is also a kind of trickster figure—unconventional in his approach in his faith, walk, and religion. He has made the pulpit a kind of Main Street for all people. A frequent protester for civil rights, his platform re-frames the Civil Rights Movement to fit our times. As co-chair of The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, founded in 2013, he advocates for the poor, for LGBTQIA+ individuals, for ending systemic, institutional racism, for protection of the environment, and more.

Barber is a frequent figure on television and other media. Endia Beal’s photograph by him here was among *Time Magazine’s* Best Portraits of 2020. The photographic backdrop that Beal made, and suspends behind him, is of the North Carolina Chambers where Barber was arrested for standing up to right-wing policies in that state. His movement, including Moral Mondays, began a major wave of civil disobedience and arrest, with thousands of participants. Barber asserts North Carolina Republicans are introducing “mean-spirited quadruple attacks” on the vulnerable—an anti-human agenda.¹

¹ Endia Beal, *Performance Review*

Invisible Empire

For residents and visitors to Georgia, Stone Mountain is the pinnacle of outdoor recreation, rest, adventure, and spiritual contemplation. Standing firm and resolute, it is in direct contrast to the bustle of surrounding Atlanta. Sheila Pree Bright’s series, *Invisible Empire*, interrogates landscapes and objects as spaces for liberation, such as the natural wonders of the South, Stone Mountain, or a vast river; also, a cotton boll, a Confederate flag, the Bible. Small things that can escape human notice, or large spaces that represent the harrowing terrorism of the KKK.

Bright explores systems of power, construction, and the interrogation of land both visible and invisible, human and creature kind. Her series title comes from W.E.B. DuBois who said Georgia was an “Invisible Empire. ... Beautiful. Yet on its beauty rests something disturbing and strange.”¹ A century later, the world uttered similar sentiments as it watched the brutal death of Ahmaud Arbery, a Georgia resident gunned down by his neighbors as he jogged through an all-white neighborhood.

The relationship between notions of freedom and fear, safety and terrorism are ever-present for Black Americans whose increased presence in farming, outdoor recreation, and land ownership and conservation demand a reckoning/restoration with the historic legacy of exclusion, becoming instead inclusion, joy, agency, and autonomy. In Bright’s series, she photographs a Bible open to Romans 12, which urges love, blessings, harmony, and peace.

¹ W.E.B. DuBois, “Georgia: Invisible Empire State,” *These United States: A Symposium, Volume 2*, edited by Ernest Gruening, 1923, pp. 322–345.

[Ericka
Hart](#)

Brittanny
Taylor



The Rebirth of Us
Sheila Pree Bright

Best known for a viral photograph taken at New York's renowned music festival, Afropunk, that bared her/their naked chest and scars from a double mastectomy, Ericka Hart is a visual icon for queer Black sexuality, post-cancer body positivity, and revolutionary identity politics. A sex educator, professor, LGBTQIA+ advocate, and writer on antiracism, Hart stands for social justice, sex positivity, and queer love. She/they have modeled, mostly bare chested, for magazines such as *Paper*, *ELLE*, and *Out*, and walked in New York Fashion Week. In this photograph, Hart evokes power, strength, and audacious vitality. The sheer, soft, blush-toned bodysuit contrasts the line and curve of her/their athletic build. She/they shares, "I still feel really sexy with my body this way, and I want to be received as sexy, not just as a survivor."¹

Like Sojourner Truth from 150 years ago, an archive of Ericka Hart photographs grows, insisting on strength, vulnerability, and beauty, with an unyielding dedication to uproot oppression.

¹ Refinery29, "The Amazing Reason This Woman Went Topless at Afropunk," September 21, 2016, see "Ericka Hart" link at <http://bit.ly/shadowtosubstance>



Shadow to Substance

Aftercare Reading and Resource List

NEW GEOGRAPHIES TO READ, VISIT, WALK, WATCH, LISTEN

By confronting the archive, new systems of knowledge can be created.
New knowledge can, and should, include new memories.

- Ayana V. Jackson, artist

Beyond the physical site of *Shadow to Substance*, we invite you to continue the journey of learning and evoking its many themes through multidisciplinary readings, media and local explorations. This is a meaningful opportunity to expand your geographies of worlds, histories, cultures and theories. This is also a time to reimagine and build community! We encourage this list for integration into courses and beyond. Feel free to host a book club or a public film screening with the following material.



[https://harn.ufl.edu/sites/default/files/img/Shadow%20to%20Substance
Aftercare%20Resource%20List 8.5x11 0.pdf](https://harn.ufl.edu/sites/default/files/img/Shadow%20to%20Substance%20Aftercare%20Resource%20List%208.5x11%200.pdf)