GUGGENHEIM

PRESS RELEASE

The Guggenheim Museum Presents Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility

The large-scale exhibition features a multigenerational, multiracial group of artists who address pressing questions around what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased in society, through formal experimentations with the figure.

Exhibition: Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility **Venue:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York

Location: Rotunda

Date: October 20, 2023-April 7, 2024

(NEW YORK, NY—October 20, 2023) The Guggenheim Museum presents *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility,* a major exhibition predicated on a duality: works of art that present the figure, yet obscure it in some way, thus existing at the "edge of visibility." The exhibition asserts that these experimentations in figuration across media—painting, photography, drawing, prints, sculpture, video, and installation—articulate pressing questions around what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased in society. On view from October 20, 2023, through April 7, 2024, the exhibition features 28 artists and fills all six ramps of the museum's Frank Lloyd Wright—designed rotunda.

The artists in this exhibition "go dark" through a range of formal moves, including, but not limited to, literal darkening by way of shadowing or other lighting techniques; paint selections; reversing or otherwise concealing the body; and post-production tools like "chroma-keying." *Going Dark* suggests that these approaches to the figure allow for engagement with urgent and ongoing discussions around visibility in its *social* context: both invisibility and hypervisibility within public and private spaces, as well as within institutions, (art) history, popular media, social media, and more. Through revealing and concealing the body, *Going Dark* probes a key point of conflict in representation: both the desire to be seen and the desire for obscurity, especially as technology offers more opportunities for (and dangers in) exposure than ever before.

Going Dark features over 100 works of art by a multigenerational, multiracial group of artists, the majority of whom are Black and more than half of whom are women. Chronologically, the show proceeds from the mid-1980s, with paintings and photographs by Kerry James Marshall, Lorna Simpson,

and Ming Smith, through to the present, with photography, sculpture and video works by Sandra Mujinga, Sondra Perry, Stephanie Syjuco, and others. Works from the late 1960s to early 1970s by David Hammons, Faith Ringgold, and Charles White offer earlier reference points for the contemporary history this show presents. Tiona Nekkia McClodden and WangShui debut new paintings, and American Artist presents a new site-specific installation.

While focused on the social contexts of visibility, *Going Dark* also argues that this "semi-visible" figuration as a genre is one of art historical significance, intervening upon discourses of modernism and the monochrome. The works in the show move fluidly between figuration and abstraction, thus blurring the lines in that staid binary frame. Recognizing that making art at the limits of the visible requires new materials, tools, and processes, many of the artists featured in *Going Dark* inventively manipulate color and light to obscure both social and optical perception, challenging the very biology of how we see.

A robust catalogue has been published alongside the exhibition featuring newly commissioned essays by curators and scholars Jordan Carter, Ayanna Dozier, Ashley James, Key Jo Lee, Abbe Schriber, and Legacy Russell. Also included are creative responses to the concept of "going dark" by seven poets and graphic designers: Rio Cortez, Harmony Holiday, Marwa Helal, Kristian Henson, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, and Hassan Rahim, and Kevin Young. The book is designed by Fahad AlHunaif.

Artist List

American Artist Sandra Mujinga Chris Ofili Kevin Beasley Rebecca Belmore Sondra Perry Dawoud Bey Farah Al Qasimi John Edmonds Faith Ringgold Ellen Gallagher Doris Salcedo David Hammons Lorna Simpson Lyle Ashton Harris Ming Smith

Tomashi Jackson Sable Elyse Smith
Titus Kaphar Stephanie Syjuco
Glenn Ligon Hank Willis Thomas

Kerry James Marshall WangShui

Tiona Nekkia McClodden Carrie Mae Weems Joiri Minaya Charles White

Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility is organized by Ashley James, Associate Curator, Contemporary Art, with Faith Hunter, Curatorial Assistant.

Events

Several programs will be presented in the museum on the occasion of *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility* beginning in early 2024. Event details are subject to change. Please visit <u>guggenheim.org/calendar</u> for more information.

Thirty-Fourth Annual Hilla Rebay Lecture: Dr. Simone Browne

January 9, 2024, 6:30pm | Free with RSVP

Dr. Simone Browne, Associate Professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin will deliver the upcoming Hilla Rebay Lecture–which brings distinguished scholars to the Guggenheim Museum to examine significant issues in the theory, criticism, and history of art.

Going Dark: Symposium

Date to be announced, 1-6pm | Tickets: \$30 general, \$25 members, \$20 students

Exhibition artists will gather for a discursive exploration of themes and topics drawn from *Going Dark* and will engage in a series of panel discussions around their work and practice. The program will conclude with an exhibition viewing.

Works & Process Underground Uptown Dance Festival: Kayla Farrish's *Put Away the Fire, dear* (in process)

January 10, 7:30 pm | Tickets: \$55, \$45, \$35, and Choose-What-You-Pay

Choreographer Kayla Farrish's newest work maps the journey of marginalized characters taking the reins of their own narrative. A dance-theater work set to a score of reclaimed Black American music, *Put Away the Fire, dear* explores Old Hollywood cinema techniques, revamped and remixed for live performance that intentionally disrupts oppressive tropes.

Support

Major support for *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility* is provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity, with special thanks to Amy and David Abrams, Glenstone Museum, Agnes Gund, Pamela Joyner and Alfred Giuffrida, Noel E.D. Kirnon, Arthur Lewis and Hau Nguyen, Amitha Raman, Jessica and Brian Robinson, ARTNOIR, Elisa Durrette and Ruth McFarlane, Marilyn and Larry Fields, Alteronce Gumby, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Bernard I. Lumpkin and Carmine D. Boccuzzi, Suzanne McFayden, Jack Shainman Gallery, and George Wells.

Support is also generously provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Henry Luce Foundation, The Kate Cassidy Foundation, The Mondriaan Fund, The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, and Royal Norwegian Consulate General in New York.

Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's Photography Council and Young Collectors Council.

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and "temple of spirit" where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is now among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

#GoingDarkGuggenheim @Guggenheim

October 20, 2023

For additional information and requests:

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GUGGENHEIM

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Exhibition Checklist

Going Dark

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Sunday, April 7, 2024)

High Gallery

Sandra Mujinga

Sandra Mujinga Spectral Keepers 2020

Tulle fabric, cotton fabric, nylon thread, threaded rods, wire clamps,

cellular concrete

Each Figure: 109 7/16 × 31 1/2 × 15 3/4 inches (278 × 80 × 40 cm) Each Basket: 30 5/16 × 30 5/16 × 38 3/16 inches (77 × 77 × 97 cm)

X.2022.311



Ramp 2

Ming Smith

Ming Smith
No Money (Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.136

Ming Smith

Native Sons (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.299



Ming Smith
Cadillac Man (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
36 x 24 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.300



Ming Smith

Prodigal Son (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.302



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Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 2

Ming Smith

Ming Smith

Lost (from Invisible Man Series)

1988

Inkjet print

24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)

X.2023.290



Ming Smith

Past Any Reason For Song (from Invisible Man Series)

1988

Inkjet print

24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)

X.2023.29



Ming Smith Happy Mother's Day (from Invisible Man Series) 1988 Inkjet print 36 x 24 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm) X.2023.292



Ming Smith
Window Washer, Pan Handler (from Invisible Man Series)
1988
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.294



Ramp 2

Ming Smith

Ming Smith
The Stoop (Invisible Man Series)
1988-1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.143



Ming Smith August Blues (from Invisible Man Series) 1991 Inkjet print 36 x 24 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm) X.2023.296



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 2

Ming Smith

Ming Smith
"Lil Brown Baby Wif Spa'klin Eyes" Paul Lawrence Dunbar (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.295



Ming Smith

Pass the Plate – Abyssinia Church (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.298



Ming Smith
Family Amen (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
36 x 24 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.301



Ming Smith Weeping Time (Invisible Man Series) 1988-1991 Inkjet print 24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm) X.2023.147



Ramp 2 Ming Smith

Ming Smith
Do Not Cross (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
36 x 24 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.303



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 2

Ming Smith

Ming Smith Shango (from Invisible Man Series) 1991 Inkjet print 24 × 36 inches (60.96 × 91.44 cm) X.2023.289



Ming Smith
Fragmentation (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.293



Ming Smith

African Burial Ground, Sacred Space (from Invisible Man Series)
1991
Inkjet print
24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)
X.2023.297



Ramp 2

Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold

Black Light Series #11: US America Black
1957

Oil on canvas
60 × 84 inches (152.4 × 213.4 cm)
X.2022.182



Faith Ringgold

Black Light Series #3: Soul Sister
1967
Oil on canvas
36 × 18 inches (91.4 × 45.7 cm)
X.2022.184



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 2

Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold

Black Light Series #4: Mommy and Daddy
1969
Oil on canvas
30 × 24.25 inches (76.2 × 61.6 cm)
X.2022.185



Ramp 2

Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold

Black Light Series #1: Big Black
1967
Oil on canvas
301/4 × 421/4 inches (76.8 × 107.3 cm)
X.2022.183



Faith Ringgold

Black Light #3.1: Invisible Man #1
1968
Oil on canvas
30 × 19 inches (76.2 × 48.3 cm)
X.2022.216



Faith Ringgold

Black Light Series #3.2: Invisible Woman #1
1968
Oil on canvas
30 × 24 3/4 inches (76.2 × 62.9 cm)
X.2022.231



Ramp 3

Titus Kaphar

Titus Kaphar

The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) III

2014

Chalk on asphalt paper

49 × 36 inches (124.5 × 91.4 cm)

X.2023.3



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 3

Titus Kaphar

Titus Kaphar

Dontrell Stephens, John Crawford, Jonathan Ferrell
2015

Chalk on asphalt paper
49 × 35 1/2 inches (124.5 × 90.2 cm)
X.2023.4



Titus Kaphar

The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) XXI
2015

Chalk on asphalt paper
49 × 36 inches (124.5 × 91.4 cm)
X.2023.5

Titus Kaphar

The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) XVII

2015

Chalk on asphalt paper
sheet: 49 inches × 35 1/2 inches (124.5 × 90.2 cm)
frame: 54 3/8 × 40 15/16 × 2 1/8 inches (138.1 × 104 × 5.4 cm)

X.2023.320

Ramp 3

Kerry James Marshall

Kerry James Marshall

La Venus Negra

1984
acrylic on paper

70 3/8 × 45 inches (178.8 × 114.3 cm)
X.2023.114

Kerry James Marshall Invisible Man 1986 Acrylic on canvas 50 x 37 ½ inches X.2022.205





Kerry James Marshall Two Invisible Men (The Lost Portraits) 1985 Acrylic on board 13 × 16 inches (33 × 40.6 cm) X.2022.318



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 3

Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore

Mixed Blessing
2011
Cotton jacket, synthetic hair, beads, Hydrocal
28 3/8 × 83 7/16 × 38 3/16 inches (72 × 212 × 97 cm)
X.2023.109
Lender's Number: 2017.52



Ramp 3

Carrie Mae Weems

Carrie Mae Weems Slow Fade to Black II 2009-2010 Inkjet on paper Each: 11 $3/4 \times 8$ 3/4 inches (29.8 × 22.2 cm) Each frame: 13 inches × 10 1/16 inches × 1 1/2 inches (33 × 25.6 × 3.8 cm) X.2022.289 Lender's Number: 2014.84.1.a-q



Ramp 3

Sable Elyse Smith

Sable Elyse Smith
8400 Days
2020
digital c-print, suede, artist frame
48 × 40 inches (121.9 × 101.6 cm)
X.2023.6



Ramp 3

Sable Elyse Smith

Sable Elyse Smith 8345 Nights 2020 digital c-print, suede, artist frame 48 × 40 inches (121.9 × 101.6 cm) X.2023.7



Sable Elyse Smith
8401 Nights
2020
digital c-print, suede, artist frame
48 × 40 inches (121.9 × 101.6 cm)
X.2023.26



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 3

Hank Willis Thomas

Hank Willis Thomas

Pledge

2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl, mounted on Dibond edition 2/2

78 13/16 x 97 3/4 x 2 inches (200.2 x 248.3 x 5.1 cm)

2018.77



Hank Willis Thomas

One Million Second Chances (The Invisible Men)

2018

screenprint on retroreflective vinyl, mounted on Dibond

54 × 36 inches (137.2 × 91.4 cm)

frame: 54 5/8 inches × 37 inches × 1 3/4 inches (138.7 × 94 × 4.4 cm)



Ramp 3

Tomashi Jackson

X.2023.47

Tomashi Jackson

Day Glow (Backlash)

2022

acrylic, Yule Quarry marble dust, and paper bags on canvas, linen, and textile with PVC marine vinyl mounted on a handcrafted wood awning structure with brass hooks and grommets

76 1/2 × 77 × 9 inches (194.3 × 195.6 × 22.9 cm)

X.2023.111



Ramp 3

Doris Salcedo

Doris Salcedo

Disremembered X

2020/2021

Sewing needles and silk thread (four pieces)

Dimensions variable

X.2023.8



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 3

Charles White

Charles White
Nobody Knows My Name #1
1965
Wolff crayon and charcoal on Crescent illustration board
30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)
composition: 29 1/2 × 39 1/2 inches (74.9 × 100.3 cm)
X.2022.177



Charles White J'Accuse! No. 3 1965 Wolff crayon and charcoal on paper 33 5/8 × 34 inches (85.4 × 86.4 cm) composition: 30 1/2 inches × 30 inches (77.5 × 76.2 cm) X.2022.178



Charles White *Untitled* 1960s 25 × 25 inches (63.5 × 63.5 cm) X.2023.100



Ramp 4 Lorna Simpson

Lorna Simpson

Double Negative
1990-2022

Silver gelatin print

Ed. 3 of 3 +2 AP

45 × 36 inches (114.3 × 91.4 cm)

X.2023.102



Lorna Simpson
Time Piece
1990
8 dye diffusion color Polaroid prints, 1 engraved plastic plaque
Ed. of 4
49 1/2 × 113 1/2 × 2 inches (125.7 × 288.3 × 5.1 cm)
X.2023.103



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

David Hammons

David Hammons In The Hood 1993 athletic sweatshirt hood with wire 23 × 10 × 5 inches (58.4 × 25.4 × 12.7 cm) X.2023.101



Ramp 4

Lyle Ashton Harris

Lyle Ashton Harris Untitled (Back #150 Lyle) 2010 24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm) X.2023.10



Lyle Ashton Harris Untitled (Face #92 Cindy) Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) 24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)

X.2023.11

Current Location: FuncArt (37 Broad St, Kinderhook, NY 12106)



Lyle Ashton Harris Untitled (Back #92 Cindy) Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) 24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm) X.2023.12

Current Location: FuncArt (37 Broad St, Kinderhook, NY 12106)



Lyle Ashton Harris Untitled (Face #127 Greg) Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) 24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm) X.2023.304



Lyle Ashton Harris Untitled (Back #127 Greg) Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) 24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm) X.2023.305

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

Lyle Ashton Harris

Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (Face #1 Joella)
1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)
24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.13



Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (Back #1 Joella)
1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)
24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.14

Current Location: FuncArt (37 Broad St, Kinderhook, NY 12106)



Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (#90 Okwui)

1998

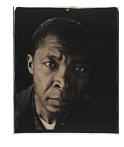
Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)

X.2023.15

Current Legation: Cormentown

Current Location: Germantown



Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (Back #90 Okwui)

1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)

X.2023.16

Current Location: Germantown



Lyle Ashton Harris
Untitled (Face #171 Thelma)
2006
Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)
24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.17
Current Location: Germantown



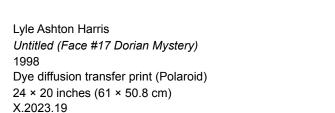
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Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

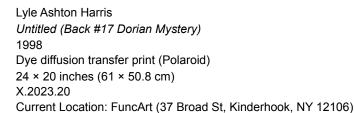
Ramp 4

Lyle Ashton Harris

Lyle Ashton Harris
Untitled (#171 Thelma)
2006
Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)
24 × 20 inches (61 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.18
Current Location: Germantown



Current Location: FuncArt (37 Broad St, Kinderhook, NY 12106)



Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (Back #27 Cheryl)

1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

X.2023.282

Lyle Ashton Harris

Untitled (Face #27 Cheryl)

1998

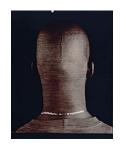
Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

X.2023.283











Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

John Edmonds

John Edmonds
Untitled (Hood 1)
2016
Archival pigment print
50 × 33 inches (127 × 83.8 cm)
X.2023.54



John Edmonds
Untitled (Hood 16)
2018
Inkjet print
50 x 33 inches
X.2023.279



Ramp 4

John Edmonds

John Edmonds
Untitled (Hood 12)
2018
archival pigment photograph
50 x 33 inches
X.2022.195



John Edmonds
Untitled (Hood 13)
2018
archival pigment photograph 50
x 33 inches
X.2022.196



John Edmonds *Untitled (Hood 7)* 2016 50 × 33 inches (127 × 83.8 cm) X.2023.50



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

Dawoud Bey

Dawoud Bey
Untitled #13 (Trees and Reflections)
2017
gelatin silver print
44 × 55 inches (111.8 × 139.7 cm)
sheet: 48 × 59 inches (121.9 × 149.9 cm)
frame: 48 1/2 inches × 59 1/4 inches × 2 inches (123.2 × 150.5 × 5.1 cm)
X.2023.22



Dawoud Bey Untitled #14 (Site of John Brown's Tannery) 2017 Gelatin silver print 44×55 inches (111.8 × 139.7 cm) sheet: 48×59 inches (121.9 × 149.9 cm) frame: $48 \times 1/4$ inches × $59 \times 1/4$ inches



Dawoud Bey
Untitled #25 (Lake Erie and Sky)
2017
gelatin silver print
44 × 55 inches (111.8 × 139.7 cm)
X.2023.49



Ramp 4

Sondra Perry

Sondra Perry

Double Quadruple Etcetera Etcetera I & II

2013

2 channel video installation, loop, color, silent
4/5

duration: 9 min. 45 sec.

X.2022.332



Ramp 4

Stephanie Syjuco

Stephanie Syjuco

Total Transparency Filter (Portrait of N) 2017
ink-jet print
40 × 30 inches (101.6 × 76.2 cm)
X.2022.331



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

Stephanie Syjuco

X.2022.334

Stephanie Syjuco
Shutter/Release
2021
Selection of 14 out of 30 altered photographs transferred on aluminum
Dibond.
30 × 24 inches (76.2 × 61 cm)



Stephanie Syjuco

Block Out the Sun (Shadow)

2019-2022

16 × 20 inches framed (40.6 × 50.8 cm)

X.2023.51



Stephanie Syjuco
Block Out the Sun (Shield)
2019-2022
16 × 20 inches framed (40.6 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.52



Ramp 4

David Hammons

David Hammons
Close Your Eyes and See Black
1969
Pigment on gold-coated paperboard
35 7/8 x 24 3/4 inches (91.1 x 62.9 cm)
2018.56



Ramp 4

Stephanievsyldemmons

Black First, America Second
1970
Grease, pigment, and screenprint on paper
41 1/4 × 31 1/4 inches (104.8 × 79.4 cm)
X.2023.112



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 4

David Hammons

X.2023.113

David Hammons
Spade (Power for the Spade)
1969
Body print and silkscreen
51 1/2 × 33 1/2 inches (130.8 × 85.1 cm)



David Hammons
Summhour
1974
Watercolor and ink on paper
25 1/4 x 19 1/4 inches (64.1 x 48.9 cm)
X.2023.284



Ramp 4

John Edmonds

John Edmonds

Untitled 4 (Facial Expression)

2018

Solarized gelatin silver print

14 5/8 × 12 1/8 inches (37.1 × 30.8 cm)

2019.62



John Edmonds *Untitled 5*2018
Solarized gelatin silver print
X.2023.159



Ramp 4

Stephanie Syjuco

Stephanie Syjuco
Chromakey aftermath (standard bearers)
2019
Pigment print
Edition of 8
40 × 30 inches (101.6 × 76.2 cm)
X.2022.336



Ramp 5

Glenn Ligon

Glenn Ligon

Figure

2001

Set of fifty screenprints

9 × 6 inches each (22.9 × 15.2 cm each)

X.2023.46

Lender's Number: 289.2015.a-xx



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 5

Sondra Perry

Sondra Perry
Lineage for a Multiple-Monitor Workstation: Number One
2015
1/5
X.2022.333



Ramp 5

Sandra Mujinga

Sandra Mujinga

Camouflage Waves 1

2018
Inkjet print on film, soft pvc, gormets, threaded rods
76 3/8 × 50 3/8 inches (194 × 128 cm)

X.2022.283



Sandra Mujinga

Camouflage Waves 2

2018
Inkjet print on film, soft pvc, gormets, threaded rods
76 3/8 × 50 3/8 inches (194 × 128 cm)

X.2022.284



Sandra Mujinga
Camouflage Waves 3
2018
Inkjet print on film, soft pvc, gormets, threaded rods
76 3/8 × 50 3/8 inches (194 × 128 cm)
X.2022.285



Ramp 5

Farah Al Qasimi

Farah Al Qasimi

Woman in Leopard Print

2019
Inkjet print

Edition 4/5

40 x 30 inches (101.6 x 76.2 cm)

2022.6



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 5

Farah Al Qasimi

Farah Al Qasimi

It's Not Easy Being Seen 2

2016

Archival inkjet print

AP 2

47 1/4 × 37 13/16 inches (120 × 96 cm)

X.2022.337



Farah Al Qasimi

It's Not Easy Being Seen 7

2016

Archival inkjet print

AP 1

47 1/4 × 37 13/16 inches (120 × 96 cm)

X.2022.338



Farah Al Qasimi

It's Not Easy Being Seen 3

2016

Archival inkjet print

AP 1

47 1/4 × 37 13/16 inches (120 × 96 cm)

X.2022.339



Farah Al Qasimi
Signature Hookah Lounge
2019
photograph
29 × 20 inches (73.7 × 50.8 cm)
X.2023.104



Farah Al Qasimi
Absolute Radiance, Instant Fairness
2017
video
dimensions variable
X.2023.105



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 5

Tiona McClodden

Tiona McClodden

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.I

2023

Leather painting

30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.122



Tiona McClodden

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.II

2023

Leather painting

30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.123

Tiona McClodden

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.III

2023

Leather painting

30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.124

Tiona McClodden

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.IV

2023

Leather painting

30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.125

Tiona McClodden

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.V

2023

Leather painting

30 × 40 inches (76.2 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.126

Ramp 5

Joiri Minaya

Joiri Minaya
Shedding
2020
Archival pigment print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta paper
Edition 3 of 3 (+1 AP)
60 × 40 inches (152.4 × 101.6 cm)
X.2023.155



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 5

Joiri Minaya

Joiri Minaya
Irreducible convergence
2020
Archival pigment print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta paper
Edition 3 of 3 (+1 AP)
60 × 40 inches (152.4 × 101.6 cm)
X.2023.156



Joiri Minaya

Away from prying eyes
2020

Archival pigment print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta paper
Edition 3 of 3 (+1 AP)
60 × 40 inches (152.4 × 101.6 cm)

X.2023.157



Ramp 5

Kevin Beasley

Kevin Beasley
...ain't it?
2014
Hooded sweatshirt, resin
21 x 37 x 1.5 inches
X.2022.194



Kevin Beasley
To be Titled
2016
House dresses, resin, wood support
56 × 57 × 30 inches (142.2 × 144.8 × 76.2 cm)
X.2023.25



Kevin Beasley
Untitled (Standing Block 002.18)
2018
Housedresses, kaftans, t-shirts, du-rags, polyurethane resin
72 × 20 1/4 × 23 1/2 inches (182.9 × 51.4 × 59.7 cm)
X.2023.121



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 5

Sandra Mujinga

Sandra Mujinga Pervasive Light 2021 Three channel video dimensions variable X.2022.198

Lender's Number: 5.2022



Ramp 6

Ellen Gallagher

Ellen Gallagher Psychoalphadiscobetabioaquadoloop 2002 rubber, paper and enamel on linen 96 1/16 × 120 1/16 inches (244 × 305 cm) X.2023.171 Current Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands



Ramp 6

Chris Ofili

Chris Ofili Blue Bathers 2014 Oil, acrylic, and charcoal on linen 109 9/16 x 79 inches X.2022.210 Lender's Number: 35.2014



Ramp 6

Lorna Simpson

Lorna Simpson Specific Notation 2019 Ink and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass 144 x 102 x 1 3/8 inches X.2022.213



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 - Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 6

Lorna Simpson

Lorna Simpson

Vertigo
2021
Ink and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass
102 x 144 x 1 3/8
X.2022.212



Ramp 6

Glenn Ligon

Glenn Ligon

Hands (Diptych)

1997

Silkscreen ink on canvas

78 inches × 23 feet (198.1 × 701 cm)

X.2022.222



Ramp 6

WangShui

WangShui Inferno 2023 Oil on aluminum honeycomb panel 96 x 252 inches (640.1 x 243.8 cm) X.2023.180



Carrie Mae Weems

Carrie Mae Weems
Repeating the Obvious
2019
39 digital archival prints of various sizes
109 H x Left to corner 145" W x Right to corner 236 inches (overall dimensions)
X.2022.288



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 20, 2023 – Monday, April 8, 2024)

Ramp 6

Kerry James Marshall

Kerry James Marshall Black Painting 2003/6 Acrylic on fiberglass 72 in. x 108 in. X.2022.206



Kerry James Marshall Black Artist (Studio View) 2002 Inkjet print on paper 50 ½ X 63 inches X.2022.209



Ramp 6

Sondra Perry

Sondra Perry *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation*2016

Video, bicycle workstation
duration: 9 min. 5 sec.

X.2022.290

Lender's Number: 2019.137.1-.4



115 artworks

10/19/2023 Page 23 of 23

AMERICAN ARTIST b. 1989, Altadena, California

Security Theater, 2023

CCTV cameras, AI, acrylic, cable, 4K monitors, television mounts, computer, tandem sling seating, phone security pouches, messenger bags, aluminum, steel, hardware, desk, and signage
Courtesy the artist

In Security Theater, American Artist marks the formal similarities between the Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, and philosopher Jeremy Bentham's late-eighteenth-century concept of the panopticon, an idealized structure for prison surveillance and productivity. It is defined, like Wright's building, by a cylindrical, multilevel form with individual bays along the perimeter that are viewable from a central point. This installation thus correlates the Guggenheim's high-brow, midcentury aesthetics with the omnipresence of carceral architectures and protocols, which can be observed across public sites, including schools, libraries, universities, airports, and even museums. The artist suggests that the overabundance of these carceral technologies - 360-degree surveillance, CCTV, turnstiles, and security guards - reflects their infiltration into and normalization within everyday life in the United States.

While engaging with the installation, visitors are invited to both be observed and to observe others, an intervention that makes a theater of watching. The massive orb hanging from the oculus at the center of the museum draws attention to itself conspicuously, mimicking the exaggerated tactics of security firms such as the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, whose practices tend to promote a culture of intimidation before offering utility or safety.

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Access audio to guide your engagement with this work.

SANDRA MUJINGA b. 1989, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Spectral Keepers, 2020

Tulle fabric, cotton fabric, nylon thread, threaded rods, wire clamps, and cellular concrete; four figures and four baskets Private collection

In Spectral Keepers, four figures (each approximately 9 feet tall) loom large in a room saturated with an acid-green light. Swimming in netted jackets and pants that appear to extend beyond the length of their limbs, they are heavily concealed and thus seem mysterious. Hoodies shield "heads" that are completely hidden from view. This billowing attire presents an apparent contradiction: even as these beings have great presence, they are never wholly perceptible. Through the installation's semi-visibility, Sandra Mujinga stages the question of what it means to be simultaneously seen and not seen. Hers is not only a literal inquiry into the nature of seeing, but also a theoretical and philosophical one: what does it mean to be perceived or recognized—in public spaces, institutions, or otherwise-especially, though not exclusively, as a Black person or person of color? The vibrant light in Spectral Keepers is further implicated in the artist's consideration of sight(lessness): though the green is vivid and bright, its saturation ultimately serves to cloak those who stand within it.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility

The art in this exhibition rests upon a duality: the works simultaneously depict and obscure the body, or figure, positioning it at the "edge of visibility." Through formal experimentations with figuration, the artists featured question what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased in society. Spanning the 1980s to the present, *Going Dark* presents 114 works across media – painting, photography, drawing, prints, sculpture, video, and installation. Also included are works dating from the 1960s to '70s by three iconic artists – Faith Ringgold, Charles White, and David Hammons–suggesting that the development of Conceptual art launched new pathways of expression that laid the groundwork for artists tackling "the edge of visibility" today.

The term *going dark* is a colloquialism for the removal of a person or entity from public access, which might include, for example, an abrupt cessation of communication or a company's withdrawal from the open market. Artists in this exhibition use the notion of *going dark* as a tactic for addressing urgent and ongoing discourses around the stakes of recognition in society, or the lack thereof. They *go dark* by way of formal strategies such as the use of shadowing or other lighting techniques; rotating the body or otherwise reconfiguring it; pigment choices; novel materials and printing methods; and postproduction tools such as chroma-key, or green/blue screen, and others that enhance blurring or brightening.

Going Dark pivots on two primary concepts: will and power. In some of the works on view, the vanishing figure reflects a state of invisibility that is imposed against an individual by outside forces such as institutions, Western (art) history, and popular media. In other works, concealment mirrors a self-propelled form of invisibility, often understood as an evasion chosen by the individual. The latter mode suggests that power can be accessed by withdrawing from full view, whether from the United States government or other entities or persons, especially as a response to ever-advancing surveillance technologies. While this bifurcation of invisibility has provided rich ground for those artists who choose to dwell on one or the other aspect of the concept, other artists in *Going Dark* effectively address many of its facets, even seemingly contradictory ones, in a single work.

While the art highlights many of the social and political conditions of visibility, its obscured bodies exist in an experimental space between figuration and abstraction. In this context, artists manipulate color and light in inventive ways to shade both social and optical perception, while also challenging the very biology of how the eye sees. Through revealing and concealing the body, *Going Dark* probes a key point of conflict in representation: both the desire to be seen and the need to be hidden from sight.

Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility is organized by Ashley James, Associate Curator, Contemporary Art, with Faith Hunter, Curatorial Assistant.

Major support for this exhibition is provided by



The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity, with special thanks to Amy and David Abrams, Glenstone Museum, Agnes Gund, Pamela Joyner and Alfred Giuffrida, Noel E. D. Kirnon, Arthur Lewis and Hau Nguyen, Amitha Raman, Jessica and Brian Robinson, ARTNOIR, Elisa Durrette and Ruth McFarlane, Marilyn and Larry Fields, Alteronce Gumby, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Bernard I. Lumpkin and Carmine D. Boccuzzi, Suzanne McFayden, Jack Shainman Gallery, and George Wells.

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Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's Photography Council and Young Collectors Council.

Explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a series of slow-looking exercises on the Guggenheim Digital Guide, a part of the Bloomberg Connects app. Typically intended for blind and low-vision visitors, these exercises offer an illuminating and thought-provoking way to experience the artworks. Also featured on the app are an introduction to the exhibition by curator Ashley James and responses to select artworks made in collaboration with the Guggenheim's 2023 Poet-in-Residence program. Content about this exhibition is available in English, Español, and 普通话.

්) 300 #GoingDarkGuggenheim

IN/VISIBILITY AS INQUIRY

The works of two Black women artists—Ming Smith and Faith Ringgold—introduce themes of the exhibition, particularly through their discrete conceptual series—*Invisible Man* and *Black Light*, respectively. While the aim of each series is unique and comprises different media, important commonality is found under the rubric of *going dark* wherein each examines the visibility and value of Black life through formal experiments using light/shadow and the color black.

Beginning in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, Smith made the low-lit *Invisible Man* photographs, which reflect the precarious yet spirited state of Black life in a postrecession Harlem. Ringgold's *Black Light* paintings, made in the late 1960s, explore the politics and potentials of Blackness by reducing the presence of white paint in her portraits. Here, a selection of these works, along with 1960s and 1970s works by Charles White and David Hammons, are presented as *Going Dark* precursors.

Both Ringgold and Smith cite as inspiration *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison's groundbreaking 1952 novel that explores the compounding strictures on Black subjects in the United States through rich metaphors revolving around the concept of light. For more than seventy years, this book, with its articulation of the complexities surrounding invisibility, has served as an enduring reference for these and many other artists, including Kerry James Marshall and Glenn Ligon, also on view.

MING SMITH b. 1947, Detroit

Cadillac Man (from Invisible Man Series)
Inkjet print
Courtesy the artist

Native Sons (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Prodigal Son (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

No Money (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

MING SMITH b. 1947, Detroit

Past Any Reason For Song (from Invisible Man Series), 1988 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Happy Mother's Day (from Invisible Man Series), 1988 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Lost (from Invisible Man Series), 1988 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Window Washer, Pan Handler (from Invisible Man Series), 1988 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to Ming Smith's *Invisible Man Series*.

MING SMITH b. 1947, Detroit

Stoop (from Invisible Man Series), 1988 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

August Blues (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Þ 303

Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to Ming Smith's *Invisible Man Series*.

MING SMITH b. 1947, Detroit

"Lil Brown Baby Wif Spa'klin Eyes" Paul Laurence Dunbar (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Pass the Plate—Abyssinia Church (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Family Amen (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Weeping Time (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Þ 303

Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to Ming Smith's *Invisible Man Series*.

MING SMITH b. 1947, Detroit

African Burial Ground, Sacred Space (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Shango (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Do Not Cross (from Invisible Man Series), 1991 (printed 2023) Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

FAITH RINGGOLD b. 1930, New York

Black Light Series #3.2: Invisible Woman #1, 1968 Oil on canvas Courtesy the artist and ACA Galleries, New York

Black Light Series #1: Big Black, 1967
Oil on canvas
Collection Pérez Art Museum Miami, Museum purchase with funds provided by Jorge M. Pérez and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Black Light Series #3.1: Invisible Man #1, 1968
Oil on canvas
Courtesy the artist and ACA Galleries, New York

Faith Ringgold created the paintings that constitute *Black Light Series* from 1967 to 1970, years marked by intense political agitation on the domestic and global scenes. She initiated these works as a response to the Black Arts Movement, the 1960s network of artists and writers who sought to mobilize their art for the goal of Black political liberation, in part through the development of a "Black aesthetic"—art forms unique to Black people. Ringgold advanced her articulation of a Black aesthetic through an innovative approach to the color spectrum: by greatly reducing the presence of white pigment in her palette, she darkened the color range, and thus the countenances, of her rendered figures. In so doing, Ringgold literally refused a reliance on inherited European traditions that prioritize whiteness as both a material and a social formation.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) served as an inspiration for Ringgold's body of work; on view here are two canvases titled after the novel. Through engagement with Ellison's text, Ringgold formulated in these dark paintings a means not only to reconstitute notions of race and value (in both palette and society), but also to productively call to mind questions of Blackness and visibility. She theorized, "How much of the hatred directed at Black people had to do with their lack of high visibility?"

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Black Light Series #3.2: Invisible Woman #1*.

FAITH RINGGOLD b. 1930, New York

Black Light Series #3: Soul Sister, 1967
Oil on canvas
Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, Purchased with funds from The Phyllis Cannon Wattis Endowment Fund

Black Light Series #11: US America Black, 1969 Oil on canvas Courtesy the artist and ACA Galleries, New York

Black Light Series #4: Mommy and Daddy, 1969 Oil on canvas Courtesy the artist and ACA Galleries, New York

Through experiments in blackness as an aesthetic ideal, the works in Faith Ringgold's *Black Light Series* are radical for their critique of whiteness and racism. Portraits like *Soul Sister* and *Invisible Woman #1* also reflect the artist's decades-long commitment to the centering of Black women across her art practice, including in her quilting.

Beyond these sociopolitical contexts, Ringgold's *Black Light Series* must also be understood in dialogue with various Western art historical legacies—the history of the monochrome especially. She once affirmed, "I was interested in Ad Reinhardt and Josef Albers since they, too, had created black paintings. Reinhardt's paintings are so hard to see. . . . Only after intense concentration do they become visible."

IMPOSED INVISIBILITY

To reflect the invisibility that external forces impose upon marginalized subjects, artists *go dark* not only through the manipulation of light, but also through postproduction photographic tools, idiosyncratic print methods, and innovative materials. These various techniques enable artists to confront the realms of power that have eliminated or otherwise oppressed peoples. A number of artists in this section incorporate archival images of historical events and individuals in their works to articulate the ways in which certain stories have been erased from the official record and Western art history. Some of their art evokes acts of murder—removals from sight in its most literal extreme—in private and public spaces.

Kerry James Marshall's near-total black monochromes from the 1980s, on view nearby, are among the first works to present invisibility as both a formal and a social concern. In the past two decades, artists have shown particular interest in sites of incarceration, as seen in Titus Kaphar's ghostly profiles (at left) and in Sable Elyse Smith's monochrome redactions (nearby). Recurring investigations into erasure by artists over the last few decades point to the perpetual diminishment that continues to define the lives of many, especially in the Black community, who live outside of heteronormative whiteness.

TITUS KAPHAR b. 1976, Kalamazoo, Michigan

The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) XVII, 2015 Chalk on asphalt paper The Speyer Family Collection, New York

The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) XXI, 2015 Chalk on asphalt paper Collection of Eric T. and Cheryl Mayberry McKissack

Dontrell Stephens, John Crawford, Jonathan Ferrell, 2015 Chalk on asphalt paper The Speyer Family Collection, New York

Titus Kaphar's series of drawings titled Asphalt and Chalk focuses on the legacy of racial violence tied to the public and carceral spaces where Black men in the United States are systematically traced and violated. Kaphar's outlinessome named after Black men whose murders by police or civilians gained public attention-are thin, faint white lines against a black background. In each work, multiple outlined faces exist in excess, one superimposed atop the other; the layering of images evokes a confusion, if not the complete obstruction, of identity. Through this illegibility, Kaphar poetically expresses how society renders Black people invisible and, in some cases, extinguished-from the streets to the prison cell. He mobilizes Asphalt and Chalk as a critique of mass incarceration and to memorialize the individual lives lost to the anti-Black state, one in which excessive punishment and imprisonment is central to the criminal justice system.

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL b. 1955, Birmingham, Alabama

Two Invisible Men (The Lost Portraits), 1985 Acrylic on board Collection of Martha Koplin

Invisible Man, 1986 Acrylic on canvas Rennie Collection, Vancouver

La Venus Negra, 1984 Acrylic on paper Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Invisible Man is one of the earliest among several works by Kerry James Marshall that examine race and visibility through the color black. The near-total blackness of the painting speaks to the erasure of Black people under the intertwined and persistent legacies of racial discrimination at the level of the state, as well as in psychological and art historical spheres. Like Faith Ringgold's Black Light Series, and as the title evinces, Marshall's Invisible Man drew inspiration from the 1952 Ralph Ellison novel of the same name. Marshall has said that the book "presented me with an idea that struck me as being really meaningful and worth exploring, the way in which a thing could be two things at once—the condition of simultaneously being present and absent in the world . . . [as] a psychological invisibility."

Marshall darkens his compositions—but also brightens them, as in the case of *Two Invisible Men (The Lost Portraits)*—to reflect states of social in/visibility. Yet, he does so with full knowledge of how this approach intersects with art historical precedents. The artist expands the legacy of the monochrome—often presumed to be in opposition to representation—by turning toward figuration, rather than away from it, within all-encompassing, occlusive color.

REBECCA BELMORE b. 1960, Upsala, Canada

Mixed Blessing, 2011
Cotton jacket, synthetic hair, beads, and gypsum cement
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Purchase, Louise Lalonde-Lamarre Memorial Fund

Indigenous artist Rebecca Belmore addresses the erasure of marginalized identities globally through sculpture, performance, and installation. In *Mixed Blessing*, Belmore features a supplicant, kneeling figure with long, draped hair that resembles an elaborate fringe and conceals its identity. Printed on a black hooded sweatshirt are the phrases "FUCKIN INDIAN" and "FUCKIN ARTIST" presented in the shape of a cross to signify the intersection of racism, lack of recognition, and exploitation that Indigenous artists of all races must bear. At the same time, as the title suggests, these identities can also be understood as a source of great pride, and the figure's upturned hands can be read as a sign of gratitude.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

CARRIE MAE WEEMS b. 1953, Portland, Oregon

Slow Fade to Black II, 2009–10 Seventeen inkjet prints National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

In Slow Fade to Black II, Carrie Mae Weems considers the unstable legacies of groundbreaking twentieth-century Black women performers within the cultural imaginary. Here, the artist digitally manipulated seventeen portraits of notable women-Josephine Baker, Nina Simone, Leontyne Price, Dinah Washington, Mahalia Jackson, Shirley Bassey, Ella Fitzgerald, Abbey Lincoln, Eartha Kitt, Koko Taylor, and Katherine Dunham—so that they appear out of focus. By literally blurring or "fading" these images and effectively occluding their legibility, Weems communicates both the subjects' eroded places within dominant white cultural history and the necessity for their restoration within that narrative. This need for focused care and attention extends. to the depicted performers' nebulous bodies, a reflection of the physical disintegration that can occur after years of touring and performing before audiences.

SABLE ELYSE SMITH b. 1986, Los Angeles

8400 Days, 2020 Chromogenic print and suede in artist's frame Private collection

8345 Nights, 2020 Chromogenic print and suede in artist's frame The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection

8401 Nights, 2020 Chromogenic print and suede in artist's frame Courtesy Sable Elyse Smith and Naima Green

Sable Elyse Smith's 8345 Nights—one of a series of works that takes up issues regarding the penal system in the United States-mobilizes near-monochromatic blackness. A single, diminutive photograph sits in the lower-left corner of a dense plane of black suede. It depicts an individual, whom the artist identifies as imprisoned, in a colorful shirt facing the camera in a conventional portrait pose. Yet, where the viewer might expect to find facial features, there is instead an abstracted swirl pattern, an occlusion, made by way of a digital photographic tool. Smith's darkening and erasures operate in a dual capacity. On the one hand, these obfuscations function for the subjects as a kind of protection from the gaze, and can be perceived as an evasion. By another reading, the blackening of the backgrounds reflects the particular invisibility of the incarcerated population within society at large. This exclusion is further emphasized through the works' titles, which refer to a stark tally of unfreedom days and nights spent in prison.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this series.

HANK WILLIS THOMAS b. 1976, Plainfield, New Jersey

Pledge, 2018
UV-cure inkjet on retroreflective vinyl, mounted to aluminum, edition 2/2
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2018.77

One Million Second Chances (The Invisible Men), 2018 UV-cure inkjet on retroreflective vinyl, mounted to aluminum The Rose Collection

Hank Willis Thomas's so-called retroreflectives utilize documentary photographs of historical events with a particular emphasis on civil rights contexts (including 1950s–60s images of the civil rights movement proper, along with those from the more recent 1995 Million Man March). The artist printed these images on a special reflective paper that makes them appear underdeveloped, and thus difficult to discern with the naked eye. In order to fully see one of these works, one must take a flash photograph of it with a phone or camera, which, at the moment of capture, brightens the composition and reveals its details. This literal, material obscurity metaphorically represents all past (yet ongoing) erasures of history. Through flash photography, the viewer becomes an actor in the process of historical recuperation.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Pledge*.

TOMASHI JACKSON b. 1980, Houston

Day Glow (Backlash), 2022

Acrylic, Yule Quarry marble dust, and paper bags on canvas, linen, and textile with PVC marine vinyl, mounted to wood with brass hooks and grommets
Tilton Gallery, New York

Tomashi Jackson creates vivid, research-based works in various media to investigate underacknowledged histories primarily related to the civil rights movement, a time that held great (unrealized) promise for the democratic ideals of equality and justice. Jackson's Day Glow (Backlash) incorporates images from this period that are printed on vinyl in halftone, a method of printing with ink dots of varying sizes, and greatly enlarged, thus rendering them only partially legible. Because the images are more difficult to see at close range than from afar, discerning the work requires movement around the piece, thus implicating the viewer in the codification and transmission of history. In their semi-visibility, Jackson's diffuse figures also engage art historical legacies of abstraction, particularly as they relate to color theories advanced by Josef Albers, an influential artist and teacher whose book on the subject, Interaction of Color, was published in 1963.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

DORIS SALCEDO b. 1958, Bogotá, Colombia

Disremembered X, 2020/2021 Sewing needles and silk thread, four pieces Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

Comprising raw silk thread and needles, Doris Salcedo's sculptures are formulated through the contours of a smock, shroud, or otherwise slouchy garment, though its porosity is such that any wholeness eludes the eye. Born in Bogotá, Salcedo often engages with Colombia's brutal political past in her work, but for *Disremembered X* she takes up the quintessentially American phenomenon of escalating gun violence, particularly mass shootings. When viewed in light of the thousands of lives lost to guns each year, Salcedo's vanishing shrouds, empty of bodies, can be seen as a reflection on the failure of national news media to place appropriate emphasis on this epidemic, and of politicians to help stop the violence through legislation. The exertion required to view the work also mimics the effort to hold onto the memory of a lost loved one through and against the passage of time.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

CHARLES WHITE b. 1918, Chicago; d. 1979, Los Angeles

Nobody Knows My Name #1, 1965 Wolff crayon and charcoal on illustration board Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, and ACA Galleries, New York

Untitled, 1960s
Ink on wood
The Charles White Archives

J'Accuse! No. 3, 1965 Wolff crayon and charcoal on paper Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

Charles White's *Nobody Knows My Name #1* depicts the partial illumination of a young person's face within an expansive and amorphous darkness. The work is a significant example of White's progressive aims: the morass from which the face is emerging may be perceived as the absence of social and political recognition and the sliver of light on the face as a harbinger of the potential for acknowledgment in these spheres.

These works predate the 1980s-to-present chronological framework of this exhibition, and, because White considered communal visibility through material form, they serve as a precedent for the artists who followed him. Here White applied crayon and charcoal so delicately that negative and positive space remain in flux, a manifestation of the still ambivalent status of the Black subject. White's untitled, unfinished work from the 1960s, also on view, further exemplifies the artist's keen attention to materials and form in the articulation of "negative" and "positive" social issues.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *J'Accuse! No. 3.*

DESIRED INVISIBILITY

The works featured here intentionally *go dark*, or conceal the figure, as a deliberate evasion or protection against threatening forces. These artists formally occlude the body by darkening or using other low-lighting methods, but also by drawing upon postproduction tools that blur the form. Lorna Simpson's works from the 1980s to the early 1990s (at left) were among the first to critique the potential violence of the white gaze, which manifested, for example, in the objectification of Black women in popular culture and medicine, among other spheres. Importantly, Simpson brought forth another mode of *going dark*: rotating the (Black woman's) body 180 degrees and presenting the back to the viewer. Other artists in this section conceal the body in ways similar to Simpson, yet they also seek to complicate notions of a person's identity as fixed and of the concept of personhood itself. They *go dark* to unsettle established categories and to critique institutional power.

Drawing these ideas into the present, the following section features some of the most recent works in the show. Here, artists such as Sondra Perry, Farah Al Qasimi, and Sandra Mujinga smudge and estrange the body by hacking the capacities of the chroma-key, or green/blue screen. American Artist channels the powers of *going dark* to implicate the Guggenheim Museum itself, exposing the art institution's own engagement in high-level surveillance.

While this group of works is critical of the power of political and cultural institutions, it also brings to the fore the idea of play, an important layer of meaning in *going dark*. Through the use of effusive color and pattern—and even the erotic—artists here and elsewhere in the exhibition remind viewers that within the partially obscured lies the potential for pleasure.

LORNA SIMPSON b. 1960, New York

Double Negative, 1990–2022
Gelatin silver print, edition 3/3
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

In the 1980s, artist Lorna Simpson galvanized a sea change through a slight one: a 180-degree rotation. Rather than take a conventional frontal-view photograph of a person, Simpson turned her subject away from the camera, inhibiting recognition by the viewer and any resulting determinations about status. Through the pivot, Simpson renders her figures semi-legible, an act that both acknowledges and refutes the negative framing of Black people, particularly Black women, in popular media and other arenas. Simpson's *Rückenfigur*—a compositional device in which the subject is depicted facing away from the viewer—can be understood as a rejection (or refusal), but also a mode of protection, in response to the long history of physical violation and subjugation of Black women.

In *Double Negative*, multiple valences of visibility come together. The title refers in part to the formal repetition of the figures, the result of a photographic technique known as double exposure. However, this duplication is also metaphorical, a reference to the discriminations that Black women face at the intersection of race and gender.

LORNA SIMPSON b. 1960, New York

Time Piece, 1990
Eight dye diffusion transfer prints (Polaroids) and engraved plastic plaque, edition of 4
The Eileen Harris Norton Collection

Like *Double Negative*, on view nearby, *Time Piece* features figures with their backs turned toward the camera, thus obstructing a full view. Beyond the reversed subject, this work also incorporates words, another key element in Lorna Simpson's oeuvre. In its proximity to the images, the text may appear to be a kind of caption, yet rather than describing the photographs, its inclusion complicates and adds new layers of meaning. Here, phrases indicating mortality—"dead last year," "dead a year ago," et cetera—point broadly to the reality of Black life, marked by ever-pervasive death.

DAVID HAMMONS b. 1943, Springfield, Illinois

In the Hood, 1993
Athletic sweatshirt hood with wire
Tilton Family Collection

While David Hammons's practice defies generalizations and categorizations, one of his primary driving forces is the lived Black experience. *In the Hood* features a sweatshirt hood that is given shape by wire and hung by itself on a wall. In the work, Hammons highlights the precarity of the Black subject through the irony of the garment's function, namely as a vestment with the express purpose of concealment and/or protection. Paradoxically, for some it is a potential target for punishment or violence.

LYLE ASHTON HARRIS b. 1965, New York

Untitled (Back #150 Lyle), 2000

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Collection of Gregory R. Miller and Michael Wiener

Center wall, left to right, from top row:

LYLE ASHTON HARRIS b. 1965, New York Collection of the artist

Untitled (Face #171 Thelma), 2006 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #171 Thelma), 2006 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Face #127 Greg), 1999

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #127 Greg), 1999 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Face #1 Joella), 1998 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #1 Joella), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Face #92 Cindy), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #92 Cindy), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Face #27 Cheryl), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #27 Cheryl), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Face #90 Okwui), 1998 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

Untitled (Back #90 Okwui), 1998

Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)

As early as the 1990s, some artists utilized methods of going dark in order to complicate preconceived notions of identity. For his *Chocolate Portrait* series, begun in 1998 and proceeding over the course of a decade, Lyle Ashton Harris captured various members of his chosen community—family, friends, and other artists—both frontally and in reverse, using Polaroid's so-called Chocolate film, which produces images in moody, earthy brown tones. Closely cropped and sharp, these works constitute a significant genealogical and cultural record. At the same time, they invite questions around differences manufactured by society across spectrums of gender, race, and age. Under a "chocolate" light, Harris's photographs, especially his reversed or "anti-portraits," ultimately reveal identity to be both fluid and constructed.

5 3 12

Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Untitled* (Back #150 Lyle).

LYLE ASHTON HARRIS b. 1965, New York

Untitled (Face #17 Dorian Mystery), 1998 Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid) Collection of the artist

Untitled (Back #17 Dorian Mystery), 1998
Dye diffusion transfer print (Polaroid)
Collection of the artist

JOHN EDMONDS b. 1989, Washington, D.C.

Untitled (Hood 12), 2018 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Untitled (Hood 13), 2018 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Untitled (Hood 16), 2018 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

Untitled (Hood 1), 2016 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist

John Edmonds's *Hood* series features individuals wearing hooded jackets or sweatshirts and facing away from the camera. By focusing on the hoodie—a critical and perpetually recurrent icon of Black (urban) life—Edmonds calls to mind the precarity and peril that attends that population. With their bodies turned away (see Lorna Simpson's innovations, on view on this level), the people depicted in these portraits remain anonymous and thus imperceptible.

Beyond their sociopolitical implications, Edmonds's hoods engage questions of form and abstraction. Taken together as a series, the garments are notable for their properties of shape, color, and pattern.

JOHN EDMONDS b. 1989, Washington, D.C.

Untitled (Hood 7), 2016 Inkjet print Collection of Billie Tsien and Tod Williams

DAWOUD BEY b. 1953, New York

Untitled #14 (Site of John Brown's Tannery), 2017 Gelatin silver print Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly

Untitled #25 (Lake Erie and Sky), 2017 Gelatin silver print Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Untitled #13 (Trees and Reflections), 2017 Gelatin silver print Collection of Bruce and Liz Fiedorek, courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

In his 2017 series Night Come Tenderly Black, Dawoud Bey takes as his subject real and imagined Ohio-based sites along the Underground Railroad, the clandestine routes by which tens of thousands of enslaved people sought their freedom from the violence of the plantation, which included but was not limited to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; forced labor; and extreme poverty. Captured in low light and printed in dark tonalities, the scenes depicted in Bey's photographs are difficult to resolve. The artist has cited the deep shadows of influential mid-twentieth-century photographer Roy DeCarava as an inspiration. But the low light here also represents evasion as a literal and necessary act. Darkness is the condition under which enslaved Black people mounted their attempts at freedom, which was a matter of life or death.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Untitled #14* (Site of John Brown's Tannery).

SONDRA PERRY b. 1986, Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Double Quadruple Etcetera Etcetera I & II, 2013
Two-channel digital color video installation, silent,
9 min., 45 sec., performed by Danny Giles and
Joiri Minaya, edition 4/5
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York

Double Quadruple Etcetera Etcetera I & II features blurred and whitened bodies—performed by Danny Giles and Joiri Minaya, another artist in this exhibition—shifting, dancing, and writhing across a white background. Their fractured forms bleed and blend into their surroundings, at times to the point of near total obfuscation. Like Lorna Simpson's Rückenfigur (a subject seen from behind), Perry's occluded figures manifest a refusal to be contained by historic racist assumptions. The artist also finds in this work a certain freedom that can occur when and only when the body is removed from sight and its attendant impositions; here Perry articulates erasure as an aspiration.

Formally Perry achieves this blending through a sophisticated and rebellious understanding of postproduction techniques. Digital whitening tools, which might conventionally be used to balance light, are here applied for the purposes of radical redaction. Importantly, though, the artist leaves the hair of her subjects untouched and clear: ultimately, she suggests, Black people cannot fully escape visibility in their daily lives.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO b. 1974, Manila, Philippines

Block Out the Sun (Shadow), 2019–22 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and Silverlens, Manila

Block Out the Sun (Shield), 2019–22 Inkjet print Courtesy the artist; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and Silverlens, Manila Stephanie Syjuco's practice is defined by investigations into the opaque and complicated sociopolitical histories of the Southeast Asian diaspora. Oftentimes she engages these legacies by approaching historical images with digital tools. In *Block Out the Sun (Shadow)* and *Block Out the Sun (Shield)*, Syjuco uses her hands to cover archival photographs of the Filipino inhabitants of the so-called villages built for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. These constructions were essentially human "zoos," created by the racist, imperialist operators of the fair. In one sense, Syjuco's fingers protect those depicted from the xenophobic narratives imposed upon them. At the same time, her fingers represent her personal perspective, suggesting that history is ultimately a subjective enterprise.

In a second series, *Shutter/Release*, Syjuco grapples with a particularly vexed archive of the Filipino diaspora: identification photographs of prisoners held at the Bilibid Prison, which was established in Manila under Spanish rule in the mid-nineteenth century and is still in use today. It is notorious for the part it has played in the violent colonialism of the country. For this work, the artist turned to the "healing brush" feature in Photoshop, which is conventionally used for the purposes of airbrushing blemishes. Syjuco hijacks and deploys this erasure tool to offer the subjects a protection from both literal sight and punitive oversight in prison. Importantly, the images are not wholly erased, with remnants of their facial characteristics still visible, ultimately marking and honoring the lives of those pictured.

Center wall:

STEPHANIE SYJUCO b. 1974, Manila, Philippines

Shutter/Release, 2021
Fourteen of thirty dye sublimation prints on aluminum
Courtesy the artist; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York;
Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and
Silverlens, Manila

STEPHANIE SYJUCO b. 1974, Manila, Philippines

Total Transparency Filter (Portrait of N), 2017 Inkjet print, edition of 8 Courtesy the artist; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and Silverlens, Manila

Stephanie Syjuco's Total Transparency Filter (Portrait of N) turns its attention to the hostilities of the United States' immigration policy. The work presents a figure, whom the artist identifies as a student in the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, draped in a gray-and-white checkered cloth and seated in a plain studio setting. Rendering the subject present but not completely visible, this concealment can be understood as a protective gesture that removes a young person from the gaze of a punitive government. Notably Syjuco created this portrait in 2017, the same year that former President Donald Trump announced his plan to eliminate DACA, placing an estimated 800,000 individuals under threat of immediate deportation. At the same time, Syjuco's occlusion speaks broadly to the forced erasure of undocumented migrants from public life.

The checkered cloth may be instantly recognized by some as the default background of the image manipulation software Photoshop. It is the "transparency filter" to which the title of this work refers, so called because it offers a space of neutrality for editing photographs. While Syjuco's haunting imagery stands for those at risk of being removed or otherwise extracted, it also implicates the fraught legacy of the studio portrait, which historically has been used to objectify marginalized subjects in order to categorize or dehumanize them.

Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

DAVID HAMMONS b. 1943, Springfield, Illinois

Summhour, 1974
Watercolor and ink on paper
Tilton Family Collection

Center wall, from left:

DAVID HAMMONS b. 1943, Springfield, Illinois

Black First, America Second, 1970
Body print (grease and powdered pigments) and silkscreen on paper
Tilton Family Collection

Spade (Power for the Spade), 1969
Body print (grease and powdered pigments) and silkscreen on paper
Tilton Family Collection

Close Your Eyes and See Black, 1969
Pigment on gold-coated paperboard
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased
through prior gifts of Daimler-Benz in honor of Thomas
M. Messer, the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., William C. Edwards, Jr., in memory of Sibyl
H. Edwards, the Estate of Karl Nierendorf, Mr. and Mrs.
Morton L. Ostow, and Dr. Solomon W. Schaefer 2018.56

When David Hammons began his "body prints" in the late 1960s, they were revolutionary to make in their form, process, and conceptual aims. Hammons made the works by coating himself (or others) in pigments and grease of various "types," and subsequently pressing the inked bodies onto paper. The resulting figural images are not fully rendered and thus not wholly perceptible. In some of the artist's earliest body prints, like *Black First, America Second* and *Spade (Power for the Spade)*, he mobilizes these obscured figures as a critique of racism in the United States and a reflection of Black agency. In the first work, an American flag wraps two Black subjects—one seemingly crying out in distress, while the other appears more content. Here, the nation is a site of oppression, though not consummately.

While Hammons's 1960s body prints are outside of the exhibition's otherwise post-1980s chronological frame, they set an important precedent for *Going Dark*'s art history because they articulate—in both experimental form and content—questions of visibility. The artist's works from the 1970s, such as *Summhour*, expand the conceptual potential of the body print. In *Summhour*, the jumbled figure opens up to theories of the fragmented, and at times erotic, human form.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Close Your Eyes and See Black* and a poetic response from the Guggenheim's 2023 Poet-in-Residence Ama Codjoe.

JOHN EDMONDS b. 1989, Washington, D.C.

Untitled 5, 2018 Solarized gelatin silver print Courtesy the artist

Untitled 4 (Facial Expression), 2018 Solarized gelatin silver print Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with funds contributed by the Photography Council 2019.62

John Edmonds produced these two works by way of the solarized print process, a photographic technique that requires extended exposure to light. The result is an image that is ghostly in appearance, offering only outlines and contours of that which is depicted in lieu of a full, brightened, or clarified view.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Untitled 4* (*Facial Expression*) and a poetic reponse from Cameron Awkward-Rich.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO b. 1974, Manila, Philippines

Chromakey Aftermath (Standard Bearers), 2019 Inkjet print, edition of 8 Courtesy the artist; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and Silverlens, Manila

After witnessing collective actions in the San Francisco Bay Area, Stephanie Syjuco, in her words, "became fascinated with the detritus and objects left at the scenes, as well as items confiscated by police that were interpreted as potential weapons." Later, as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, she worked with students to create photographs that represented youth as an oppressed-though resistant-class under the constant threat of erasure or capture through nationalism, racialized xenophobia, and increasing surveillance. In Chromakey Aftermath (Standard Bearers), Syjuco presents two such subjects who appear to be enveloped in waste, such as accessories and flags, that was generated by demonstrations. Like those in other works in this exhibition, the figures here turn away, offering only their backs and thus concealing their identities.

The artist covers or produces these political figures and detritus in green chroma-key, or a green screen, a post-production tool that acts as a backdrop behind the action and contrasts with flesh tones in order to facilitate the compositing or layering of images or video streams behind a subject. By engaging this digital material, Syjuco points to the hyperdigital age in which her students, and the young population more broadly, exist, and suggests that its attendant technologies offer risk and potential in tandem.

AMERICAN ARTIST b. 1989, Altadena, California

Security Theater, 2023 CCTV cameras, AI, acrylic, cable, 4K monitors, television mounts, computer, tandem sling seating, phone security pouches, messenger bags, aluminum, steel, hardware, desk, and signage Courtesy the artist

GLENN LIGON b. 1960, New York

Figure, 2001

Fifty unique screenprints on Color-aid paper
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Acquired through
the generosity of the Contemporary Arts Council of The
Museum of Modern Art, Committee on Drawings and Prints
Fund and Lonti Ebers

Glenn Ligon's *Figure* explores the multiplicity of identity through methods of concealment, in this case smudges, erasures, and other incompletions. The series consists of fifty self-portraits, each screenprinted onto different color papers and with varying degrees of legibility. In some iterations, the artist's facial features are clearly defined, while in others a mere outline blocks recognition. The conceptual thrust of this illegibility is manifold: on the one hand, it may represent an imposed invisibility on a marginalized (Black and queer) subject; by another reading, Ligon's obfuscations might be seen as a purposeful retreat for self-protection.

SONDRA PERRY b. 1986, Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Lineage for a Multiple-Monitor Workstation:
Number One, 2015
Two-channel digital color video, with sound,
25 min., 24 sec., edition 1/5
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York

In this video, Sondra Perry directs her New Jersey–based family in layered vignettes that function as conventional portraits, reenacting family customs and oral histories. Yet, Perry makes important aesthetic alterations using the digital technology of chroma-key green, also known as green screen, which complicates the genre of the "family video": each person, for example, wears a green ski mask, which obstructs a view of the face, while the footage itself streams alongside a computer desktop with a chroma-key green background. By deploying this postproduction tool – often used to facilitate the compositing of images behind a subject – Perry reiterates the ultimate artificiality and constructed nature of narrative formation, pointing to how easily a marginalized subject can be manipulated across media.

Importantly, while critique can be found in Perry's video, there is also possibility in the fluidity of the green screen, which offers opportunities to form new stories. "There's a responsibility to image folks in a way that offers them the freedom to code themselves," Perry has said. "Subjecthood needs to be extended."

SANDRA MUJINGA b. 1989, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Camouflage Waves 1, 2018
Inkjet print on acrylic film, soft PVC, grommets, and threaded rods
Courtesy the artist and Croy Nielsen, Vienna

Camouflage Waves 2, 2018
Inkjet print on acrylic film, soft PVC, grommets, and threaded rods
Courtesy the artist and Croy Nielsen, Vienna

Camouflage Waves 3, 2018
Inkjet print on acrylic film, soft PVC, grommets, and threaded rods
Courtesy the artist and the Approach, London

In her series *Camouflage Waves*, Sandra Mujinga examines the status of Black life, as well as that of humanity more broadly, in the contemporary moment. The works on view present figures, whose poses indicate that they are in motion, printed upon a semi-transparent covering created by fusing an inkjet print onto acrylic film with soft (heated) polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Though each piece in the series varies in degree of visibility, in all cases it is impossible to determine what exactly, or who, is depicted. Mujinga's figures avoid identification as a matter of necessity, yet at the same time this evasion offers possibilities.

FARAH AL QASIMI b. 1991, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Absolute Radiance, Instant Fairness, 2017
Digital color video, with sound, 2 min., 58 sec., edition 1/3
Courtesy the artist and François Ghebaly Gallery

Farah Al Qasimi's varied photographic practice questions the prevailing narratives around Arab culture. In her cheekily titled *It's Not Easy Being Seen* series, Al Qasimi engages chroma-key green, or green screen, as a physical material through which to express the dual condition of in/visibility for Muslim women in the Western imaginary. By capturing her subjects—presumably women, though the sitters are not wholly identifiable—wearing full chroma-key green bodysuits under their everyday attire, including the hijab, and by keeping the green in place rather than "keying" it out in postproduction, the artist points to Muslim women's estrangement within society, both in form and metaphor.

In other works, Al Qasimi approaches visibility and concealment more ambiguously, paying keen attention to pattern and self-adornment. In the portrait *Woman in Leopard Print*, a figure in a bold-printed hijab turns away from the camera toward a mirrored compact, which reflects back to the viewer a heavily made-up eye—a gaze that is at once evasive and direct.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Woman in Leopard Print*.

Center wall, from left:

FARAH AL QASIMI b. 1991, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Woman in Leopard Print, 2019
Inkjet print, edition 4/5
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Purchased with funds contributed by the Photography
Council, with additional funds contributed by an anonymous donor 2022.6

It's Not Easy Being Seen 2, 2016 Inkjet print, A.P. 2/2 Courtesy the artist and François Ghebaly Gallery

It's Not Easy Being Seen 3, 2016 Inkjet print, A.P. 2/2 Courtesy the artist and François Ghebaly Gallery

It's Not Easy Being Seen 7, 2016
Inkjet print, A.P. 2/2
Courtesy the artist and François Ghebaly Gallery

b. 1991, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

FARAH AL QASIMI

Inkjet print

Signature Hookah Lounge, 2019

François Ghebaly Gallery, New York

From left:

TIONA NEKKIA McCLODDEN b. 1981, Blytheville, Arkansas

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.I, 2023 Hand-cut leather; black, red, and blue dyes; Saphir black shoe polish; and diamond dust Collection of the artist

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.IV, 2023 Hand-cut leather; black, red, and blue dyes; Saphir black shoe polish; and diamond dust Collection of the artist

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.V, 2023 Hand-cut leather; black, red, and blue dyes; Saphir black shoe polish; and diamond dust Collection of the artist

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.II, 2023 Hand-cut leather; black, red, and blue dyes; Saphir black shoe polish; and diamond dust Collection of the artist

Very, Very Slightly - VVS.III, 2023 Hand-cut leather; black, red, and blue dyes; Saphir black shoe polish; and diamond dust Collection of the artist In her *Very, Very Slightly* works, Tiona Nekkia McClodden employs source material images related to the BDSM (bondage-discipline, dominance-submission, sadism, masochism) community, in particular advertisements for Black femme mistresses. Through a sophisticated process, the artist printed these images on leather, resulting in their partial legibility. Their concealment is thus twofold, indicating both the obfuscation of the women themselves and the literal darkness of McClodden's paintings. With these works, the artist shows that evasion may be not only a site for critique, but also a tool for the erotic. Here, the act of withholding from view is both protective and tantalizing.

The title of this series alludes in part to the notion of obscuring the figure. It also refers to a type of diamond known as "very, very slightly," or VVS, so called because it contains numerous microscopic flaws that together create an exceptional radiance, or sparkle; these diamonds have become popular among music performers. In these works, McClodden incorporates diamond dust to advance questions of value and to formally experiment with visibility.

5 3 18

Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Very, Very Slightly - VVS.I*.

Please feel free to kneel on a prayer bench, if desired.

From left:

JOIRI MINAYA b. 1990, New York

Shedding, 2020 Inkjet print Bill and Christy Gautreaux Collection, Kansas City, Missouri

Irreducible Convergence, 2020 Inkjet print Bill and Christy Gautreaux Collection, Kansas City, Missouri

Away from Prying Eyes, 2020 Inkjet print Bill and Christy Gautreaux Collection, Kansas City, Missouri

Joiri Minaya reveals and interrogates constructs of the Caribbean and its people (especially women) through an engagement with certain tropes of the tropics, including the ubiquitous floral-print textiles that are one of the region's principal exports, as both souvenir and ideology. Minaya's *Divergences* series features portraits of women in various stages of undress—a nod toward the logics of libidinal imperialism, whereby Caribbean women are often presumed to be sexually available. At the same time, the floral patterning partially conceals and thus protects Minaya's subjects from full exposure or identification. In *Irreducible Convergence*, the sitter's body is fragmented. In this way, the same print made complicit in the woman's commodification is here mobilized as an act of rebellion.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Irreducible Convergence*.

From left:

KEVIN BEASLEY b. 1985, Lynchburg, Virginia

Untitled (Standing Block 002.18), 2018
Polyester housedresses, polyester kaftans, cotton t-shirts, du-rags, and polyurethane resin
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomilson Hill

. . . ain't it?, 2014

Cotton hooded sweatshirt and polyurethane resin Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Untitled (backups), 2016
Polyurethane resin, wood, polyester housedresses, and polyester kaftans
The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection

Kevin Beasley's resin-encased garment sculptures encompass a spectrum of references, from peril to abstract expression. Consisting of a single hooded sweatshirt rendered stiff with resin and intended to be placed on the ground, . . . aint it? calls forth associations of racial violence and threat, if not death: the work's display lying flat on the floor tends to conjure up a crime scene.

In later works by the artist, the garments multiply and are forged into intricate, often organic, formations. They sometimes appear as faceless figures or apparitions, as in the case of *Untitled* (backups). In *Untitled* (Standing Block 002.18), Beasley twists the work's dresses and kaftans to a degree that the resulting form foregoes human contours altogether, becoming almost completely nonfigural. In such sculptures, clothing is at once a stand-in for the human body and a material for abstraction.

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SANDRA MUJINGA b. 1989, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Pervasive Light, 2021

Three-channel digital color video installation, with sound, 15 min., 15 sec.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Fund for the Twenty-First Century

In Sandra Mujinga's *Pervasive Light*, a figure slinks across a triple screen, entirely covered save for the head, which, throughout its undulating stroll, is mostly cloaked by a slouchy hood. The body is in flux—it appears to both emerge from and retreat into the screen's darkness as a bassheavy techno track plays in the background. Perhaps the figure is seeking to evade violence and misinterpretation? Here, it exists in a never-ending loop of hypervisibility, imposed invisibility, and desired invisibility, a cycle of representation that is persistent for the contemporary Black subject.

CODA: PERCEPTION AND THE MONOCHROME

Artists go dark to call attention to the ways in which certain people or histories have been erased, to identify the potential for protection in darkness, to call into question the stability of the concept of a figure, or person, and more. In this section, occlusion becomes the means by which artists map entirely new worlds (oceanic, extraterrestrial, digital) that expand notions of Blackness and, especially in the last two decades, what it means to be human.

Moreover, with their works of black and blue (in ink, paint, or chroma-key), these artists remind viewers that even as they and their peers examine heady social concepts, they do so in close conversation with multiple art histories. This includes that of the modernist monochrome, a category that is often left out of discourses around the figure due in part to its assumptions of nonpolitical engagement. In Kerry James Marshall's *Black Painting* (nearby), the monochrome sets the stage for a meditation on the radical politics of the Black Panther Party. Faith Ringgold explicitly engages the monochrome in her celebration of Black Power in the *Black Light* paintings, seen earlier in this exhibition.

Finally, artists in this last group collectively draw out another important aspect of going dark: the viewer's body. By the logic of concealment, these works are necessarily difficult to see. Thus, the physical process of perceiving the works—how the distance one stands from a painting impacts one's visual capacity, or how the angle of light can determine or even deter what is seen -becomes critical to an understanding of them. An observance of what at first appears to be a joyous gathering of revelers in Chris Ofili's Blue Bathers is predicated in part upon the viewer's inability to see it with clarity. WangShui posits the figure as a fluctuation in part through the use of a material—aluminum—that reflects the undulating light filtering down from the Guggenheim Museum's oculus. By going dark, artists engage the social effects of perception through its physical mechanics, where a glance holds power and a glare of light meets the glower of the state. These works suggest that to make art at the edge of visibility is to implicate both the institution and the eye.

ELLEN GALLAGHER b. 1965, Providence, Rhode Island

Psychoalphadiscobetabioaquadoloop, 2002 Rubber, paper, and enamel on linen Courtesy the artist

It may be difficult to determine what is depicted in this work. At first glance, one can see a circular formation at center, but upon closer inspection, the image coalesces into that of a Black woman's head, delineated by her afro, which also resembles a halo. Psychoalphadiscobetabioaquadoloop is one of a number of black paintings made by Ellen Gallagher during the late 1990s to early 2000s that question the socialized assumptions made in the production of meaning. Here, Gallagher's work invokes the process of recognition by which, especially when one cannot see clearly, the mind may fill in any gaps in perception with past experiences and suppositions. In this case, though a Black woman's head eventually crystallizes, Gallagher calls upon the viewer to reflect on the act of perceiving her subject.

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CHRIS OFILI b. 1968, Manchester, England

Blue Bathers, 2014
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal on linen
Scott Mueller Collection

In his "blue" paintings, Chris Ofili draws upon the depth of the color to explore concepts ranging from secrecy and threat to jubilance and revelry. A significant reference for the artist is the Caribbean: following his move from London to Trinidad in 2005, Ofili was struck by the "strong presence" of night there, a phenomenon due in part to its geographical location near the equator.

Though its faintly visible imagery welcomes a range of possible meanings, *Blue Bathers* depicts a sensuous mythological scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, suggesting that the cover of darkness may give license to forbidden pleasures. The painting also initiates a perceptual exercise: any attempt by the viewer to resolve all that is happening in this indistinct scene requires movement around the work.

Þ 322

LORNA SIMPSON b. 1960, New York

Specific Notation, 2019
Ink and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass
Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

In Lorna Simpson's Specific Notation, a woman's headher eyes peering out steadily at the viewer-breaches a fissure in a craggy, cerulean ground. Though her gaze is piercing, all that is visible of the woman is her face from the mouth up; the rest is obscured by (or perhaps buried in) a plane of inky blue. Here Simpson's obfuscation does not simply protect the identity of her subject, but raises larger questions about the status of the human: who is this figure that appears before the viewer, seemingly content in her concealment and tethered to an unknown landscape? There is a certain irony in the title, too, as there is little visual material to confirm the location of the scene, earthly or otherwise. Through this anonymity, the artist transmits power.

LORNA SIMPSON b. 1960, New York

Vertigo, 2021
Ink and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Like Specific Notation, on view nearby, Vertigo is one of several predominantly blue works in which Lorna Simpson explores expansive, arctic, or extraterrestrial landscapes through deep, intense shades of blue that at times approximate blackness. While the landscape in Specific Notation conceals a semi-visible figure, that in Vertigo is all encompassing, with washes of blues dominating the composition. Upon closer inspection of the work, figures become apparent in a narrow strip of paper, which turns out to be photographs of Black women featured in advertisements for wigs. The women are engulfed in an aspirational setting, an imagined terrain that is untethered from Earth with all its attendant vagaries and subjugations.

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GLENN LIGON b. 1960, New York

Hands (Diptych), 1997 Silkscreen ink and gesso on canvas Denver Art Museum, Gift from Vicki and Kent Logan to the Collection of the Denver Art Museum

Glenn Ligon's Hands (Diptych) is one in a series of works that deploys darkness to consider the construction and meaning of (masculinist) history. In the work, the left panel features a photograph taken at the 1995 Million Man March in Washington, D.C.-a demonstration for the empowerment of Black men within an oppressive societythat is greatly enlarged and cropped to frame a sea of hands raised against pitch-dark blackness. The right panel is monochromatic black. By placing an image of collective struggle alongside a black void, Ligon calls into question the perspectives and voices that were missing on that day as well as those absent from the general discourse around the liberation of Black (presumably cisgender and straight) men. Beyond his social critique, Ligon's engagement with the black monochrome places this work within the history of abstraction and its link to the political.

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WANGSHUI b. 1986, New York

Ambiguous Congress, 2023
Oil on aluminum
Courtesy the artist and Kurimanzutto,
Mexico City/New York

WangShui's practice explores the liminal spaces of human consciousness through a distinct painting process that dissolves the line between human- and machine-made imaging via recursive mark-making loops, among other techniques. *Ambiguous Congress* depicts, in part, a scene from a live simulation in which surreal narratives and forms were generated by AI.

The work's materials, oil paint on aluminum, further activate these ambiguities: there is an instability inherent to the physical experience of viewing the work. Both the position of the body and the Guggenheim Museum's signature oculus, which allows in the day's ever shifting light, help determine what the viewer sees and how they interpret the composition.

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CARRIE MAE WEEMS b. 1953, Portland, Oregon

Repeating the Obvious, 2019
Thirty-nine inkjet prints
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

In Repeating the Obvious, Carrie Mae Weems draws upon the persistent symbol of the hoodie to critique the transmission of racial violence. Each print in the work features the image of (the same) young person in a hoodie, reproduced at different scales and intended to be hung across multiple walls. In their repetition and proliferation, Weems's wide-spanning portraits mimic and thus question what it means for an image or event to "go viral," which often occurs with incidents of racially motivated violence. Further, while the artist's blurred presentation could be thought of as a protective gesture, it might also illustrate how marginalized (Black) people can be easily reduced to symbols or signifiers, lacking all substance, especially in the postdigital age.

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KERRY JAMES MARSHALL b. 1955, Birmingham, Alabama

Black Artist (Studio View), 2002 Inkjet print Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery

Kerry James Marshall's Black Painting is a critical work within the history traced by this exhibition. It depicts the hours surrounding an important scene in American political history: the 1969 assassination of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton as he slept alongside his pregnant girlfriend in their Chicago bedroom. Significantly, Marshall's scene is occluded: the black of the painted figures merges into the black of the setting. On the one hand, Marshall here mobilizes blackness as a protective gesture, a privacy extended to a couple in an intimate space; on the other, this obfuscation activates the viewer, who is forced to exert effort to examine the image, to absorb and internalize a critical moment in history. Through this monochromatic work, Marshall further blurs the line between abstraction and figuration, as well as between the political and social spheres.

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Further explore the exhibition's theme of semi-visibility through a slow-looking exercise related to *Black Painting* and a poetic response from the Guggenheim's 2023 Poetin-Residence Ama Codjoe.

Center wall:

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL b. 1955, Birmingham, Alabama

Black Painting, 2003/2006 Acrylic on fiberglass Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

SONDRA PERRY b. 1986, Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation, 2016 Digital color video, with sound, 9 min., 5 sec.; and bicycle workstation, edition 3/5 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of Jim Cahn and Jeremy Collatz, 2019

For Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation, Sondra Perry questions how race (and identity in a broader sense) is understood in the postdigital age. The installation centers a three-channel video projecting footage of an avatar created in Perry's likeness that drifts in and out of a virtual chroma-key blue space. The video screen is mounted on an operable exercise bike, the "workstation" mentioned in the title. Here, the artist employs chroma-key blue technology (the same as so-called green screen but less commonly used), but rather than layer a new image onto her scene, she creates an abstract plane in its own right. The video of her avatar is spliced in with footage of the artist's skin, which undulates like a wave through postproduction manipulation.

This work is predicated upon failure and exertion: the avatar experiences intentional "malfunctions" or glitches in its programming, while pedaling the bike is its own kind of exhaustion. Through these gestures, Perry interrogates the pervasive pressures of existence as a racialized and gendered body, which are felt even in unexpected places like the wellness industry. "Productivity is painful," says Perry's avatar while staring into the camera, "and we haven't been feeling well."

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