Contents

1 From the Director
GERARD ACHING

4 Africana Development Priorities

5 Faculty Activities and Accomplishments

9 Undergraduate Study at Africana
GRANT FARRED

10 When My Friends First Came to Visit
NOLIWE ROOKS on Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye

11 Graduate Study at Africana
NOLIWE ROOKS

13 Donald Trump Redefines Republicans’ Rules for Coded, Racist Language and Deniability
KEVIN K. GAINES

15 What Scandal’s Civil Rights-Era Critique Says About Contemporary Black Women and Girls
ONEKA LABENNET

17 Jeremiah Grant ’17: “I began to see what was between the world and me.”
ANNA CARMICHAEL

19 Engaged Art and its Critique at Cornell
LINDA B. GLASER

21 From Why We Don’t Let Black Girls Rock
NOELANA GABRIEL

23 Languages at Africana

24 John Henrik Clarke Africana Library

25 The Institute for Comparative Modernities

26 Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature

27 Upcoming Events

29 2015-2016 Events

31 2015-2016 Co-Sponsored Events

33 Graduate Students

35 Jaz Nsubuga ’11: Alum Manages Marketing Campaign at MTV
KATHY HOSYS

37 Recent Books by Africana Faculty
(2013-2016)

41 Faculty

43 Keep in Touch

44 Harriet Tubman 2016
The 2015-16 academic year saw our faculty continuing to bolster Africana’s status as a leading and generative research center and home for scholarly and activist engagement with a number of issues of continuing importance to Africa, the Diaspora, and beyond. In November 2015, Professor Salah Hassan brought together resources from the American University in Cairo, the Sharjah Art Foundation, and the Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell, which also featured an event with political activist Professor Angela Davis, who, as president of the Caribbean Studies Association, organized the association’s annual conference from June 5-11, 2016 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where it had never before been held. This historic meeting, which also featured an event with African languages symposium at Cornell, which was attended by colleagues teaching African languages at universities in the northeastern United States. We look forward to our language program’s continuing leadership and innovation in these areas.

Faculty also made important strides in bringing their research to bear on the courses they have developed and taught or plan to teach presently. The Center received word this summer that Professor Oluwafemi Babatunde’s spring 2016 course, “Women in Hip Hop,” ranked in the top ten among sixty-three college courses nationwide that Elle magazine considered the “most compelling” for examining the experiences of women and girls. Students in the course who was a member of the first MC and DJ all women crew, and participated in the first ever and very successful African and Caribbean Studies enrich our scholarship, course offerings, and mission as a center for research and public engagement. In addition to these contributions, he has also been active in highly visible events and initiatives on campus, such as moderating a discussion with and interviewing Debra L. Lee, Chairman and CEO of Black Entertainment Television (BET) on April 4, 2016, working closely with Professor Steve Pond (Music Department, Cornell), and in celebration of its New York City’s Afro-Caribbean neighborhood, and an A.D. White Professor-at-Large for a six-year period beginning in 2015; and, finally, serving as the lead organizer for the forthcoming dedication of the original site of the Africana Center.

On October 6, 2015, we launched an Africana Alumni Forum, which aims to provide distinguished alumni with the opportunity to describe and reflect on the relationship between their studies at the center and their professional paths and to offer students the chance to interact with our alumni. For the inauguration of the forum, which was entitled, “Forum on Environmental Justice,” Leslie Fields, Esq. (’82), the Sierra Club’s Director of Environmental Justice and Community Partnerships, and Professor Kenneth L. Robinson (’71), Associate Professor and Community Development Specialist at Clemson
University, spoke to our audience about environmental justice and how their educational experiences at Africana helped them to arrive at their involvement in the subject. Screened immediately before the forum, Leah Mahan’s (’88) Come Hell or High Water: The Battle for Turkey Creek (2013), a documentary about a Mississippi Gulf Coast community, settled by former slaves, that created powerful alliances in order to protect itself from urban sprawl and contamination, provided inspiration for the conversation between Fields and Robinson. The Africana Center very much looks forward to continuing to provide this forum and dialogue for our alumni and students.

This academic year marks the end of my term as Africana’s director. I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the Center’s faculty, our graduate field faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, staff, the College of Arts and Sciences, and our many colleagues and friends across campus, who have warmly supported and actively contributed to Africana’s intellectual, pedagogical, and community engagement goals. It has been exciting and a genuine honor to witness, facilitate, and participate in the wide and substantive spectrum of activities and projects that the Center generates and sponsors on our campus and beyond. I look forward to the fall 2016 events commemorating Africana’s initial site on campus as well as to our approaching fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Center and of the idea of Africana as a field of inquiry and as a source of both inspiration and aspiration. At the same time, I am very pleased to announce the interim directorship of Professor Noliwe Rooks for the 2016-2017 academic year and of Professor Kevin Gaines’ directorship for a five-year term beginning in the fall of 2017. I look forward to their leadership and expect the Africana Center to benefit greatly from their experience, goodwill, and energy.

The year 2019 marks the Africana Studies & Research Center’s fiftieth year of existence as a site borne of the struggle against antiblack racism and its attendant social injustices and as the historical origin of the idea of Africana as a field of scholarship. Today, the Center, by the very nature of the work that it accomplishes, stands uniquely poised to continue to strengthen its role on our campus and beyond as a place for examining and addressing the serious challenges—as our programming did last year—that the deaths of unarmed African American men and women pose for our black communities and for the social fabric of the United States as a whole. In a university such as ours, the freedom to discuss these challenges openly and safely is valued and respected. Ithaca’s now established branch of the Black Lives Matter movement held some of its initial meetings in Africana’s Hoyt Fuller Room. We invite you to engage in this dialogue and in the many others that the Africana Center fosters in our classrooms, lecture halls, and public spaces for the benefit of all.

Gerard Aching
Director of Africana Studies

Africana Development Priorities

The Africana Studies & Research Center faculty are extremely active researchers, teachers, mentors, and community partners. Borrowing from our colleagues in the sciences, Africana is offering courses with the idea of a humanities-based “solutions lab.” As molecular biologist Bonnie Bassler has written, laboratories are places populated overwhelmingly by young people who have the energy and creativity to think outside the box and propose and test out solutions to long-standing problems. A gift of $250,000 will ensure that “solutions lab” style courses will be institutionalized at Africana.

The Africana Studies & Research Center is one of the most international departments on the Cornell campus and is committed to training our students to understand themselves as global citizens with the skills, perspectives and outlook engendered by international travel and engagement with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. A gift of $100,000 would ensure that our majors will have the opportunity to travel internationally and that we can host students from other countries who are interested in learning more about Africa and the African Diaspora by taking classes here in Africana.
Gerard Aching, outgoing director of the Africana Studies & Research Center and professor of Africana and Romance Studies, delivered the 2016 Society for the Humanities Invitational Lecture on March 2, 2016. In his lecture, Aching drew parallels between the calls to action in books by Franz Fanon, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and the unfolding of the Black Lives Matter movement. He began his lecture with Fanon’s phrase, “Oh my body, always make me a man who questions,” and noted Coates’s central question, “How do I live free in this black body?” According to him, these inquiries inform the Black Lives Matter movement as the latter addresses and counters the historical dispossession of the black body and undervaluation of black life.

N’Di Thérèse Assié-Lumumba, professor of Africana Studies, co-edited a special issue of the International Review of Education-Journal of Lifelong Learning (RIE) titled, “Rediscovering the Ubuntu Paradigm in Education”. This is one of several publications to come from the 2015 59th annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), organized by Assié-Lumumba during her term as President-Elect. The theme of that conference was “Ubuntu! Imagining a Humanist Education Globally.”

Carole Boyce-Davies, professor of Africana Studies and English, served as the 2015-2016 President of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) and organized its 41st Annual Conference, “Caribbean Global Movements: People, Ideas, Culture, Arts and Economic Sustainability,” which was held in June 2016 in Port-au-Prince. An historic meeting, the CSA conference had never before taken place in Haiti, the world’s first black republic. Haitian author Edwidge Danticat headlined the writers and Hartian intellectuals at the conference, along with radical intellectuals and activist Angela Davis. Participating scholars hailed from Universities across the U.S., Latin America, the Caribbean, and Australia. A publication will be forthcoming.

Locksley Edmondson, professor of Africana Studies, has participated in Cornell’s PreFreshman Summer Program (PSP) for fourteen years. PSP brings students from different backgrounds and ethnicities together for six weeks of college-level classes, enrichment and orientation activities designed to help pre-froshmen become successful Cornell students. In Edmondson’s writing seminar, “Pan-African Freedom Fighters in their Own Words,” students examine autobiographical writings, advocacy statements, and speeches by selected freedom fighters from Black America, Africa and the Caribbean, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Ella Baker, Septima Clark, Fannie Lou Hamm, Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela, Ruth Mampati, Masivi Manzini, Albertina Sisulu, and Bob Marley. One student remarked, “Edmondson’s class changed the way I think about my life and heritage.”

Grant Farred, professor of Africana Studies, organized the conference “African Thinking And/At Its Limits” in June 2015. Hosted by the Africana Studies & Research Center, the two day seminar was attended by scholars specializing in African philosophy and politics from the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, as well as several African faculty members (Aching, Grovogui, Táíwò and Farred) and graduate students from various Cornell departments. The seminar papers ranged from contemporary African culture to Francophone philosophy, from cinema to Frantz Fanon, and from Caribbean thinking to Karl Marx. The presentations will be published in the Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy in the fall of 2016.

Africana welcomed its new faculty member Kevin K. Gaines, W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of Africana Studies and History, in 2015-2016. He is the author of Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture During the Twentieth Century, which was awarded the John Hope Franklin Prize of the American Studies Association, as well as American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era which was a Choice Outstanding Academic Title. His essays, columns and reviews on African American history, art, music, literature, and contemporary culture have been published in the New York Times, Ebony, The Providence Journal, American Quarterly, American Historical Review, The Journal of American History, American Literary History, Small Axe, Radical History Review, Truthout, and Social Text. He has lectured at universities throughout the U.S. as well as internationally, and is a past president of the American Studies Association.

Professor Siba N. Grovogui organized a conference entitled “ Governing Extraction” with Professor Lori Leonard from Cornell’s Department of Development Sociology in October 2015. The full-day forum, hosted by the Africana Studies & Research Center, focused on the effects of the Chad Oil and Pipeline Project in this region of the world, as well as emergent forms of governance in the context of the global rush for oil, gas, and other mineral resources. Presenters included scholars from universities in Canada and across the United States. An edited volume that will include papers from the conference and additional papers will be published in 2017 by Routledge. The conference was followed by a two-volume publication that will follow the conference, with the first to accompany the conference and the second to serve as the catalogue of the proposed exhibition.

Travis L. Gosa, assistant professor of Africana Studies, together with Erik Nielson (University of Richmond) released their new edited volume The Hip Hop & Obama Reader (Oxford University Press) in November 2015. The Hip Hop & Obama Reader includes a range of new perspectives from leading scholars, journalists, and activists who examine the shifting relationship between popular culture, race, youth and national politics through a systematic analysis of hip hop and politics during the Obama era. As the book explores, hip hop is now altering political mobilization, grassroots organizing, campaign branding, and voter turnout, while politics is altering hip hop’s dimensions and scope in terms of linguistics, culture, race, and gender – both domestically and internationally.

In collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation and the Visual Cultures Program at the American University in Cairo, the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM) at Cornell University organized an international conference entitled “The Egyptian Surrealists in Global Perspective” in November 2015.

Salah M. Hassan, who is the Goldwin Smith Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture, served in both the Africana Studies & Research Center and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, as well as the Director of the ICM, served on the Conference and Cultural Team. The conference will be followed by a travelling exhibition entitled When Arts Become Liberty: The Egyptian Surrealists (1938-1963) to be inaugurated at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2017 in Sharjah, UAE, followed by an exhibition in Cairo, Egypt. A two-volume publication will follow the conference, with the first to accompany the conference and the second to serve as the catalogue of the proposed exhibition.
Cornell Mellon Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship Seminar, which accomplishes the important work of preparing recent doctoral students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in academia to excel in their intellectual and professional endeavors.

Nolive Rooks, associate professor of Africana Studies and Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and the incoming Interim Chair of Africana Studies for the 2016-2017 academic year, guest edited a special issue of NKA: A Journal of Contemporary African Art published by Duke University Press on the subject of “Black Fashion-Art. Pleasure. Politics.” She also received the 2016 Kaplan Family Faculty Fellowship in Service-Learning award to support a fall 2016 course, “Race and Social Entrepreneurship: Food Justice and Urban Reform.” The course will examine food justice in Ithaca and surrounding areas and explore innovative approaches to bring about social equity and justice in relation to food availability, access and sustainability for those with low or fixed income. Students will work in concert with farmers, nonprofits and community activists to learn about local food justice strategies, conduct research, and propose approaches to heighten access to healthy food for senior citizens on a fixed income in the Ithaca area.

C. Riley Snorton, assistant professor of Africana Studies and Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies, won the coveted National Endowment for the Humanities Schomburg Center Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship 2015-2016. Fellowships funded by the Center allow recipients to be in residence with access to resources at the Schomburg Center and other centers of The New York Public Library. The program encourages research and writing on black history and culture, facilitates interaction among academic and professional endeavors.

Associate Professor Oneka LaBennett’s Spring 2016 course, “Women in Hip Hop,” received national recognition when it was ranked #10 on Elle magazine’s list, “10 College Classes That Give Us Hope for the Next Generation.” The list identified “the most compelling offerings for today’s college students to examine the female experience,” and noted that LaBennett’s course asks questions such as: “What do the sexual politics of rap music reveal about Black women’s conceptualizations of feminism? How can we apply early ‘hip hop feminism’ to understand current debates about Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj?”

How are hetero-normative gender ideologies reinforced in hip hop culture? Students who were enrolled in the course benefited from a visit LaBennett hosted with Sheri Sher, a member of the first MC and DJ crew comprised entirely of women, and author of the book, Merenid (adies. LaBennett and her students also participated in the filming of She Will Be Heard, a documentary exploring hip hop’s relationship with women artists.

Associate Professor Riché Richardson has developed a new course for next year entitled “The Willard Straight Takeover.” The course will focus on the complex history related to this famous incident from 1969, when black students occupied the student union on campus during Parent’s Weekend and, when threatened, returned with firearms in self-defense. This pivotal event, one of the most important in Cornell’s history, remains misunderstood and misrepresented. The main goal of this course is to make a scholarly framework available in which students might reinforce and expand their knowledge of this topic. Richardson was also selected to participate in the 2016-17 ENGAGED CURRICULUM GRANTS AWARDED

A team of Africana faculty are among select recipients of Engaged Cornell’s inaugural Engaged Curriculum Grants, announced fall 2015, which support work that places community-engaged learning at the heart of the Cornell student experience. Knowing that it takes time and effort to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with community organizations, faculty from the Africana Studies & Research Center are building relationships with social justice/cultural organizations in Ithaca and New York City, which will be central to two Africana courses that will be tested as capstone experiences for Africana majors. Both courses will include living case study scenarios that involve students, faculty, and community organizations as conscious partners working toward solutions in food, social, racial, and economic justice. Throughout the courses, students will become familiar with community leadership skills, ethics, and strategies in these fields. Africana team members are Associate Professor Oneka LaBennett, Associate Professor Nolive Rooks, and Professor Gerard Aching. The community partners for these learning experiences are Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming in Ithaca and CanBeING in New York City.
Undergraduate Study at Africana

It was a very good way to end the 2015-16 academic year. At our May graduation, two of our minors, independently of each other, went out of their way to tell me that a class they had taken in Africana was “the best” they had enrolled in at Cornell. These students, and others, remarked on how transformative their experience in Africana had been and how it had shaped their decisions about their future. These responses are an endorsement of the work being done in Africana classes and a testament to our ability to teach, reach and serve – pedagogically, socially, and a wide range of courses on Africa, the African diaspora in the fields of literature, art history, philosophy, international relations, history, sociology, and anthropology and a variety of analytical approaches and methods that train students to view such fields in light of Africana’s long tradition of interdisciplinary study, scholarship, and public engagement. Our gateway courses to the major and minor continue to inspire students, and we look forward to their increased ranks in our classrooms and lecture halls.

Grant Farred
Director of Undergraduate Studies

When My Friends First Came to Visit

NOLIWE ROOKS ON TONI MORRISON’S THE BLUEST EYE

By the time I was ten I had both inhabited and inhabited a lot of books. I knew well the escape of imagining myself as one of Nancy Drew’s friends who sleuthed. I understood the shape-shifting required to spend an entire day imagining myself to be one, and then another of Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women. When Edgar Allen Poe’s House of Usher fell, I lived for days with a self-congratulatory satisfaction for disbelief well and willfully suspended.

However, it was not until I read Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye that I understood the difference between my inhabiting the world of a book, and a book-inhabiting me. When turning those particular pages, I didn’t need to leave and join the characters to sit at their fictional kitchen table and drink milk out of a Shirley Temple glass. Shirley and I were already regular acquaintances. We met weekly on Sunday mornings to sip chocolate milk from a Shirley Temple glass. Shirley and I were already regular acquaintances. We met weekly on Sunday mornings to smile and tap dance our way through hardship before rushing together toward our triumphant ending. For the first time that I didn’t need to read in order to escape loneliness. My time alone could transform.

The Bluest Eye was the first book to help me understand the mundane and immediate nature of evil, the fragile yet precious nature of Black girl friendships, and the truth of the matter about love and its ability to both protect and destroy. There would of course be other works that deepened those truths and revealed others but that story and those friends were the first to introduce me to the power of literature. For me, that first love is still the truest.
Our doctoral program is ready to enter its third year and this spring we admitted our third cohort. It is now clear that the PhD program in Africana at Cornell is poised to make a mark on the scholarly landscape that is the global study of Blackness in Africa and her diaspora. Given our newly defined research fields in Gender and Sexuality, Africana Political and Philosophical Thought, Global Black Radical Tradition, Black Feminist Thought, Youth and/or Popular Culture Studies, and Literary, Art and Visual, Performance and Cultural Studies, we believe our doctoral program is as rigorous, stimulating, and relevant as it is geographically broad. Given our depth and breadth in these areas and others, we are pleased to announce that, beginning in the fall of 2016, we will offer a graduate minor available to graduate students currently enrolled in any doctoral program at Cornell. Interested students will take four courses in Africana, including our two introductory seminars, and have a member of our graduate field on their committee.

The four newest students who will join us in the fall are themselves diverse in terms of where they call home, encompassing four of the seven continents. In addition, they have scholarly projects that span the globe. Their intellectual interests include: feminism, Blackness and religion in Tunisia; Maoist China, propaganda, and U.S. Black liberation struggles; formations of gender, Blackness and race in Colombia, South America; and queering race and gender in U.S. Black literary studies.

These incoming students, Zifeng Liu, Afifa Ltifi, Amaris Brown, and Natalia Santiesteban, will join the second year class, Kristen Wright and Mayowa Willoughby, whose scholarly work focuses respectively on Black feminist playwrights and their melding and interventions in literary theory and history, and a project on Blackness and Arab identity in Turkey. Finally, this year our first class of students, Marsha Jean-Charles, Nadia Sasso, Kanyinsola Obayan, and Marshall Smith, all passed their initial exams admitting them to candidacy, the Q-exam. Their work focuses on the tension between Atlopolitanism and indigenous forms of knowledge on the African continent; literary studies of Black girlhood in Cuba, Haiti and Brazil; the meaning and range of Black ethnic identities in the United States; and Black literary studies in French and the Caribbean in relation to Louisiana.

Collectively, in the past year our students have won competitive fellowships, grants, and residencies. In addition, a number of them have presented at national and even international conferences and have all moved closer to successfully completing their degrees. For these reasons, we believe that the future of graduate study in Africana is very bright indeed.

Noliwe Rooks
Director of Graduate Studies

Applications are open for Fall 2017 admission at africana.cornell.edu/graduate
Donald Trump Redefines Republicans’ Rules for Coded, Racist Language and Deniability

KEVIN K. GAINES

Where would we be without plausible deniability? A gift from the Reagan presidency that keeps on giving, that phrase lowered the bar for truthfulness and accountability. The concept gained currency after Ronald Reagan used it to absolve himself of involvement for the Iran-Contra scandal. The verbal arsonist Donald Trump has done away with the deniability? A gift from the Reagan campaign of 1948. Caught up in the occasion of Thurmond’s 100th birthday, Lott claimed that the nation would have been better off had Thurmond won and somehow prevented civil rights reforms. For transgressing the rule of deniability with his expression of hidebound views, Lott fell on his sword.

One wonders how Lott must feel as Atwater explained: “When Trump and many of his supporters say they refuse to be “politically correct,” they want to eliminate public taboos on racist, sexist and bigoted speech.”

where civil rights workers were killed by white supremacist in 1964. Though polarizing, such manipulation helped advance Reagan’s anti-government, tax-cuts for the rich, deregulatory economic agenda, whose benefits did not trickle-down to white, blue-collar supporters.

It was Republican Party political operative Lee Atwater, however, who perfected the alchemy of turning base, anti-black racism into electoral gold. Toning down the racial demagoguery of a Thurmond or George Wallace, Atwater mined the racial fears and resentments of whites with a subtlety that proved effective in national, as well as statewide elections.

As Atwater explained: “You start out in 1954… saying ‘n*****, n*****’— that hurts you. So you say stuff like forced busing, state’s rights…. You’re getting so abstract now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things… are totally economic, and a byproduct of this is Blacks get hurt worse than whites…. Because … saying ‘we want to cut this’ is much more abstract than the busing thing, and saying ‘n*****, n*****’

Much of Trump’s support comes from this constituency, forged during the 1980s and 1990s, motivated largely by white racial fear and loathing. Atwater’s notorious “Wille Horton” ad yoked the crimes of an African-American man to Democratic Party nominee Michael Dukakis. Though widely condemned, the ad helped propel George H.W. Bush to victory in 1988.

Though his 1990s campaigns for statewide office in Louisiana were unsuccessful, David Duke ran viable campaigns as a Republican and attracted funding from a national network of contributors spouting racism and anti-semitism unvarnished enough to make Republicans uneasy. Duke stoked the resentments of poor and struggling whites, even those on government assistance themselves, by portraying African Americans as undeserving beneficiaries of government programs and worse.

The investigative journalist Jane Mayer has noted the irony of the far-right, anti-government billionaire Koch brothers’ objection to Trump’s xenophobic, authoritarian campaign. Mayer reminds us of the Koch-financed “grassroots” opposition to the Affordable Care Act. Then, in 2010, the Koch brothers had no problem whatsoever with the hate-filled mob atmosphere of a rally on Capital Hill, where some whites yelled homophobic and racial slurs and spat upon three African-American members of Congress.

The use of racial euphemism in US politics goes back to President Richard Nixon’s Southern strategy. Using coded appeals to “law and order” and fear of crime to demorize Black demands for equality, Nixon triggered a mass exodus of white southern Democrats angered by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into the Republican Party.

Ronald Reagan announced his campaign for the presidency in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where civil rights workers were killed by white supremacists in 1964. Though polarizing, such manipulation helped advance Reagan’s anti-government, tax-cuts for the rich, deregulatory economic agenda, whose benefits did not trickle-down to white, blue-collar supporters.

It was Republican Party political operative Lee Atwater, however, who perfected the alchemy of turning base, anti-black racism into electoral gold. Toning down the racial demagoguery of a Thurmond or George Wallace, Atwater mined the racial fears and resentments of whites with a subtlety that proved effective in national, as well as statewide elections.

As Atwater explained: “You start out in 1954… saying ‘n*****, n*****’— that hurts you. So you say stuff like forced busing, state’s rights…. You’re getting so abstract now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things… are totally economic, and a byproduct of this is Blacks get hurt worse than whites…. Because … saying ‘we want to cut this’ is much more abstract than the busing thing, and saying ‘n*****, n*****’

Much of Trump’s support comes from this constituency, forged during the 1980s and 1990s, motivated largely by white racial fear and loathing. Atwater’s notorious “Wille Horton” ad yoked the crimes of an African-American man to Democratic Party nominee Michael Dukakis. Though widely condemned, the ad helped propel George H.W. Bush to victory in 1988.

Though his 1990s campaigns for statewide office in Louisiana were unsuccessful, David Duke ran viable campaigns as a Republican and attracted funding from a national network of contributors spouting racism and anti-semitism unvarnished enough to make Republicans uneasy. Duke stoked the resentments of poor and struggling whites, even those on government assistance themselves, by portraying African Americans as undeserving beneficiaries of government programs and worse.

It seems fitting that Duke has figured in Trump’s own effort to go beyond the GOP establishment’s disturbing protocol of dog-whistle appeals to white prejudice. When Trump and many of his supporters say they refuse to be “politically correct,” they want to eliminate public taboos on racist, sexist and bigoted speech.

Even more concerning than his legitimizing hate speech is Trump’s complete denial that his words have consequences. His rallies have become rituals of hate and physical violence against outsiders and people his supporters disagree with. Trump insists that he is not responsible for the chaos we are witnessing. And now he has predicted there will be riots if he doesn’t get the Republican nomination.

Of course, not all of Trump’s supporters are afflicted with the sickness of racism. Many have legitimate economic grievances. Job flight, falling wages, the Great Recession and Republican-led cuts of the social safety net have plunged many into a desperate struggle to survive. Tragically, those who have benefited so little from backing the GOP establishment are now submitting to the dangerous manipulations of a demagogue unworthy of their support and unfit for office.

Kevin K. Gaines is the W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of Africana Studies and History. This article originally appeared on and has been reprinted with permission. Copyright, Truthout.org.
What Scandal’s Civil Rights-Era Critique Says About Contemporary Black Women and Girls

ONEKA LABENNETT

“…Do the impossible, raise an African American girl who felt as fully entitled to own the world as much as any white man,” I recalled that line, uttered in a recent episode of Scandal, when I saw the viral video of a white South Carolina school police officer violently ripping a Black teenage girl from a desk, then dragging her and slamming her to the floor.

The line resonated with me, and many other Black women I know, because it cast the protagonist Olivia Pope’s entire persona as a “what if” scenario within and beyond the program’s confines: What if a Black girl-turned-woman actually felt that entitled? What would it mean for how we interpret a powerful Black female character like Pope, who is involved in an affair with the president of the United States? And what might it mean for real Black girls who get in trouble with police, such as the Spring Valley High School student?

Last week’s Scandal teaser put regular viewers on edge by suggesting an impending wedding between Pope and the president. Thursday’s episode will reveal if the show’s bold move to expose Fitzgerald Grant and Olivia Pope’s affair will result in a seismic shift to Scandal’s narrative thrust—one premised on the impropriety of a Black woman and her intentional use of classic soul artists, such as Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, and Sly and the Family Stone, is due to the “strong sense of nostalgia [of these songs].” So although Kerry Washington (who plays Pope) was born in the Bronx at the dawn of hip-hop’s materialization, Olivia and Fitz’s love affair unfolds to tracks by Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, and Booker T. and the M.G.’s.

Like its soundtrack, Scandal’s central premise transports us to a pre-Obama White House. It offers Americans: a nostalgic fantasy world in which we can attempt to reconcile our disbelief at Michelle Obama’s presence as “Morn-in-Chief.” In many ways, Pope is Michelle Obama’s alter ego, embodying all that she is not. On Scandal, the Black woman sharing the president’s bed is not Black, respectable but approachable “Southern Girl,” and moral compass to the president that is Michelle Obama. Olivia is a childless, career-minded home-wrecker who fell in love with, and helping to elect a Republican president. Of course, these are facile dichotomies that situate Obama as little more than a travesty of Michelle Obama’s historic past for a blast-from-the-past politician that smacked of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings (a connection Olivia acknowledged in Season 1). While it routinely features ripped-from-the-headlines subplots, Scandal’s narrative thread portrays and foregrounds civil rights-era and racial-gender norms in which Black women did not get to be “ladies,” let alone, The First Lady. At a time when hip-hop dominates popular music and TV, on shows like Empire, Scandal’s Motown-era soundtrack underscores the nostalgia on which it is predicated. Executive producer and creator Shonda Rhimes has said her intentional use of classic soul
Jeremiah Grant ‘17: “I began to see what was between the world and me.”

ANNA CARMICHAEL

MAJOR: Africana Studies with a concentration on the Caribbean

HOMETOWN: Queens, NY

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE CORNELL? It just felt right. You’re looking at colleges and wondering which one would be the best fit for you. And there came a time when everyone who was entering my life had some connection to Cornell and the people I met here were just genuinely nice and willing to help people. At the same time Cornell is an Ivy League institution and one of the best of the best—I would argue that Cornell is the best—and so when I received the acceptance letter I knew this is where I belonged.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE AFRICANA STUDIES? I started off as a biology major, and while studying biology I took a genetics course. We took a genetics test to find out where your ancestors were from. It gave me a result from the East Indies, and this made no sense to me, so later on I took an introductory course in African Studies. It was amazing to see some of my history and I wanted to learn more about it. I knew it was what I had to study. It’s self-discovery as well as education.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE CLASS AT CORNELL? Taekwondo. Taekwondo gives you structure. It teaches you self-discipline. Most people think it’s just physical, but after taking it here at Cornell, I realized there was so much more to learn about it. It’s not just physical; it goes into history and philosophy and taught me what it was like to be a team.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE STUDY SPOT AT CORNELL? 3rd floor Uris Library.

WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH AT CORNELL? Africana Studies with a concentration on the Caribbean.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE CORNELL MEMORY? It was meeting Bill Gates. It was a special memory because he is the man who gives me the funding to pursue my education. I got to thank him, which was definitely a highlight.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN 10 YEARS? I see myself working with my B.A in Africana Studies from Cornell, my Ph.D in Epidemiology and Human Genetics and crafting alternative solutions to positively increase health outcomes for minority communities. I see myself researching the haplogroup diversity of people of African descent and traveling the world and understanding the cultures of diverse human populations. I see myself advocating for equal access to health data for minority patients to make educated decisions and serving as advisor to the White House’s, the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS? I see myself with with my B.A in Africana Studies from Cornell, my Ph.D in Epidemiology and Human Genetics and crafting alternative solutions to positively increase health outcomes for minority communities. I see myself researching the haplogroup diversity of people of African descent and traveling the world and understanding the cultures of diverse human populations. I see myself advocating for equal access to health data for minority patients to make educated decisions and serving as advisor to the White House’s, the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO RESEARCH? Right now, I am interested in population health in diverse, underestimated, underserved communities, globally. I want to understand how public health can work in combination with the private healthcare sector to bring about meaningful change.

Anna Carmichael is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission.
Engaged Art and its Critique at Cornell

LINDA B. GLASER

Artists today engage with a world very different from that of their predecessors: globally connected, technologically advanced and highly diverse. In the last 50 years, the Western canon has been displaced as the benchmark for “good” and worthwhile art, opening the door to works intended to challenge viewers, rather than simply to aesthetically please. “It’s an exciting time to be an artist,” says Iftikhar Dadi, M.A. ’01, Ph.D. ’03, Associate Professor of History of Art and Interim Director of the South Asia Program. “A lot of contemporary art is very provocative, pointing us at things that we need to look at but we don’t always.”

Cornell faculty are engaged in the creation of contemporary art as well as in its study and curation. Because contemporary art mediums are limited only by the artist’s imagination and have become unbounded by geographical borders, the wide range of cultural expertise at Cornell lends an important depth to the study of contemporary art. Visual artists today even engage with the boundedness of time, in different forms of performance media. Says Dadi: “Contemporary art doesn’t give you easy solutions. It makes you think in more complex, less instrumental ways and identifies things to which you should be attentive. It offers ways of thinking and experiencing that go beyond established norms, and that’s its value.”

His own work, created with his partner, Elizabeth Dadi, is a good example of this. “Efflorescence,” the Dadis’ recent project, uses the language of pop art and commercial signage in a large-scale commentary on sovereignty and the nation-state. The series consists of six giant industrially fabricated neon flowers, each the national symbol of a country or region with disputed borders. Notes Salah Hassan, the Goldwin Smith Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture, “The field of art history itself has moved away from a Eurocentric linear model toward a more global one of studying art movements and artists, and in the process it incorporates new methodologies engendered by imperatives of race, gender, sexualities and other intersectionalities that truly define our world. The field has also moved away from linear narratives of art history that center on the West toward a more comparativist global approach in the study of modernism and modernity.”

Riché Richardson, associate professor of Africana Studies, says that for a long time she kept her art and her academics in separate compartments, “but I’ve been astonished at how frequently the subjects I’m working on in my research are paralleled by subjects I end up making into quilts. In that sense, the processes are dialectical. I’m able to frame similar questions in my art to ones I develop in my research but for a different audience.”

Fifty-eight of Richardson’s quilts were featured in an exhibition at the Rosa Parks Museum when the national commemoration of the Selma-to-Montgomery March was held in 2015. Her Rosa Parks quilt is now on permanent display at the museum.

Linda B. Glaser is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission from the Cornell Chronicle.

“Contemporary art doesn’t give you easy solutions. It makes you think in more complex, less instrumental ways and identifies things to which you should be attentive.”

LEFT: Malcolm X art quilt by Riché Richardson
RIGHT: Rosa Parks art quilt by Riché Richardson
From Why We Don’t Let Black Girls Rock: School Discipline, Zero Tolerance, and the Politics of Attitude

NOELANI GABRIEL ’16

LOUDNESS, ATTITUDE, AND INNOCENCE

“Loud, disruptive, confrontational, aggressive, unladylike, ratchet, ghetto — these are all disparaging adjectives commonly used to describe the behavior of African American women and girls.” This is how Janel George describes the way Black women and girls are figured in the public imagination. Black girls find themselves at the crossroads of a system that sees their identities as a threat to order. George’s article in the Arkansas Law Review discusses much of what has already been included; however, she makes several key associations between cultural stereotypes and school discipline.

She continues: “By failing to acknowledge the unique ways that African American girls’ educational experiences are impacted by explicit and implicit bias and the underlying racial and gender stereotypes which fuel them, we enable the phenomena known as ‘school pushout’ and the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’, which are currently operating to make African American girls the fastest-growing segment of the juvenile justice system.”

These negative associations and labels projected onto Black girls and women are grounded in America’s dark past. Black women and girls are oft held as the antithesis of (white) womanhood. In her formative book, Black Feminist Thought, Patricia Hill Collins explains that both white and African-American institutions perpetuate limiting images of Black women who are hailed as sexually promiscuous, incapable of rational or logical thought, or brash and domineering, and any combination thereof. Thus, it follows that these negative stereotypes must influence interactions between Black girls and school officials.

Both cultural competency and an explicitly antiracist and antirestposte posture is necessary for educators to reverse and eliminate this trend. If schools do not celebrate a confident feminine identity — they stamp it down. Fordham argues that silence can also be an act of defiance against the school culture. She tells the story of many Black girls who chose to fly under the radar by avoiding much conversation — which defies the common stereotype. Both of these patterns of behavior — loudness or silence — can be punishable under zero tolerance policies in school. A student who refuses to answer will likely be treated like a student who talks back. These are both oppositional acts against the ideal social hierarchy of the educator – student relationship.

Research shows that teachers are actually more concerned with these small behaviors than the academic progress of the same students. This is striking considering that several scholars have concluded Black girls with more confidence in their femininity do better in school despite their constant exposure to racism, sexism, and classism. Edward Morris suggests that this relates to the teachers’ emphasis on acting like a “lady”, a construct that immediately signals the politics of respectability. Teachers may have positive outlooks about Black girls’ academic achievement but may simultaneously view them as poorly behaved because of their loudness, just like Rita. Many teachers encouraged girls to exemplify a docile femininity, emblazoned in the prescription to act like “ladies.” Most teachers, Morris observed, viewed the existing femininity of these girls as coarse and overly assertive, leading one teacher to go so far as to describe them “in the way to the principal’s office.”

“Both cultural competency and an explicitly antiracist and antirestposte posture is necessary for educators to reverse and eliminate this trend.”

“In 2015 – 2016, 32% of Black girls were referred to law enforcement like so many other Black girls in our public schools. Schools do not celebrate a positive feminine identity. She uses the example of one student, Rita, who does very well in her academics but is often reprimanded by her teachers for her being carted off in handcuffs and put at the worst-case scenario would result in their personalities are seen as inherently oppositional and disruptive to the school culture and power dynamic in the classroom even if they are not being violent or severely distracting.

In the worst-case scenario, Rita may be shielded from academic or extracurricular opportunities because her teachers think she is prone to misbehavior; the worst-case scenario would result in her being carted off in handcuffs and referred to law enforcement like so many other Black girls in our public schools. Schools do not celebrate a confident feminine identity — they stamp it down.

Fordham argues that silence can also be an act of defiance against the school culture. She tells the story of many Black girls who chose to fly under the radar by avoiding much conversation — which defies the common stereotype.

Both of these patterns of behavior — loudness or silence — can be punishable under zero tolerance policies in school. A student who refuses to answer will likely be treated like a student who talks back. These are both oppositional acts against the ideal social hierarchy of the educator student relationship.

Research shows that teachers are actually more concerned with these small behaviors than the academic progress of the same students. This is striking considering that several scholars have concluded Black girls with more confidence in their femininity do better in school despite their constant exposure to racism, sexism, and classism. Edward Morris suggests that this relates to the teachers’ emphasis on acting like a lady, a construct that immediately signals the politics of respectability.

Teachers may have positive outlooks about Black girls’ academic achievement but may simultaneously view them as poorly behaved because of their loudness, just like Rita. Many teachers encouraged girls to exemplify a docile femininity, emblazoned in the prescription to act like ladies. Most teachers, Morris observed, viewed the existing femininity of these girls as coarse and overly assertive, leading one teacher to go so far as to describe them as ‘ladies.’ Again, Black girls are placed as the very antithesis of respectability.

Verus Evans-Winters weighs in with an incisive description of how Black women and girls are othered by these standards. ‘At this historical moment young Black women are socially constructed as the epitome of exactly what whiteness (as maleness) and femininity (as whiteness) is not: dark, sinister, raunchy, belligerent, burly, and licentious. Other’s identities are constructed around young Black women’s identity as the Other.” It is by now clear that Black women and girls, even if academically successful, experience gendered and raced labeling due to historical, cultural, and social stereotypes endorsed by their teachers and school officials.

In the context of school discipline, this creates an environment in which ‘Black girls’ are structurally positioned as guilty subjects who warrant punishment. Unless this changes, Black girls will never be seen as innocent or confident or creative, but rather loud, obnoxious, and on the way to the principal’s office.


“Both cultural competency and an explicitly antiracist and antirestposte posture is necessary for educators to reverse and eliminate this trend.”
The John Henrik Clarke Africana Library

In 1985, faculty of the Africana Studies & Research Center named the Africana Library in honor of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, a distinguished African/African American historian who was a trail-blazer in the field of Afrocentrism or migration in their native or heritage language. "We talk about issues that affect people of African ancestry. This would include collecting resources on Africa as well as those in the African Diaspora with special focus on the Americas and the Caribbean.

Another way that the library endeavors to embrace the words of Dr. Clarke is by providing a specialized collection focusing on the history and culture of people of African ancestry. This would include collecting resources on Africa as well as those in the African Diaspora with special focus on the Americas and the Caribbean. The Africana Library created a display on the #BlackLivesMatter movement. It showcased photos and books that captured the meaning of the movement. Among the books on display were Angela Davis' Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine and the Foundations of a Movement, Radley Balko's Rise of Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces, and Lisa Bloom's Suspect Nation: The Inside Story of the Trayvon Martin Injustice and Why We Continue to Repeat It. The Africana Library also played a role in bringing two of the founders of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi, to Cornell.

During the fall of 2016, the Africana Library is playing a leading role in the Ithaca community read of Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow.

Languages at Africana

In spring 2016 a total of 81 students were enrolled in Arabic, Mandarin, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and Yoruba FLAC courses at Cornell. The courses averaged 6 to 7 students per class and were focused on active discussion in the target language.

Students in the Yoruba FLAC, taught by our senior language lecturer Adeolu Ademoye, have shared they find it powerful to discuss concepts such as Afrocentrism or migration in their native or heritage language. “We talk about issues that affect people of the African diaspora in America,” says Ololade Olawale, a sophomore in Arts and Sciences, and a participant in the Yoruba FLAC class. “This is truly a novel learning experience, as I get to discuss the stances of revolutionary minds in the African American community—just in Yoruba.”

Demand for FLAC courses is strong among both faculty and students across the university. Next year, the FLAC program will expand to include courses in French, German, Modern Greek, Hebrew, Portuguese, as well as a Swahili course taught by Lecturer Happiness Patrick Bulugu, which combines language learning with cultural orientation. This classroom-based learning is applied and enhanced by experiential learning in the course of daily life abroad. The goals of the eight-week summer program in Tanzania are to enhance the cross-cultural competence of participants and to provide students with the opportunity to gain broad knowledge about global health issues in the Tanzanian context. Participants live with a local family, enroll in a local college, and contribute 160 service hours to a local non-governmental organization, hospital, government agency, or research project. This direct experience deepens students’ understanding of the health problems that disproportionately affect the resource poor.

GLOBAL HEALTH SWAHILI COURSE

Each summer, select students in Cornell’s Global Health Program travel to Moshi, Tanzania. In preparation for the trip, students take the Global Health Swahili Course, taught by Lecturer Happiness Patrick Bulugu, which combines language learning with cultural orientation. This classroom-based learning is applied and enhanced by experiential learning in the course of daily life abroad. The goals of the eight-week summer program in Tanzania are to enhance the cross-cultural competence of participants and to provide students with the opportunity to gain broad knowledge about global health issues in the Tanzanian context. Participants live with a local family, enroll in a local college, and contribute 160 service hours to a local non-governmental organization, hospital, government agency, or research project. This direct experience deepens students’ understanding of the health problems that disproportionately affect the resource poor.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: YORUBA AND SWAHILI

Formally launched in 2015–2016, the FLAC program at Cornell offers optional one-credit foreign language courses that are connected to a variety of existing academic courses offered by departments across the university. FLAC courses are not traditional language courses, as the only language issues included are oral and written discourse conventions in the target language, or how people speak and write in the academic field in that language. The overall objective of the FLAC program is to give Cornell students an opportunity to practice and develop their fluency in the target language.
The Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM) brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars from the humanities and the social sciences who are interested in the issue of comparative/global modernities. It aims to contribute to the intellectual environment at Cornell University through seminars, lecture series, symposia, and publications, and by encouraging related on-going initiatives and research projects.

During the 2015-2016 year, the ICM hosted a series of events and workshops, ranging in subject from the connections between 19th century abolitionists, modern anti-slavery movements, and #BlackLivesMatter; a screening and panel discussion of Négritude, a documentary by Mantha Ovaren posing an imagined conversation between Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the founding fathers of Négritude, and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka; a feminist critique of the works of Negritude, and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka; a feminist critique of the ways in which Ghanaian activists and civil servants both fetishize the law and reckon with its violence; the history of the global spice trade and the ways in which it has shaped the modern world; internationalist and surrealism aspects in the work of Egyptian writer and critic Edwar al-Kharrat; and a workshop on philosopher Jacques Derrida as a figure of African thought. The ICM also provided funding and administrative support for six interdisciplinary graduate reading groups, each working on their own collaborative project and culminating in a public presentation at the end of the academic year.

Off campus, the ICM co-organized with the Sharjah Art Foundation a three-day conference on “The Egyptian Surrealists in Global Perspective.” Held in Cairo, Egypt, the conference gathered participants including scholars, literary and art critics, filmmakers, poets, and artists in order to document one of the most interesting chapters of modernism in the late 1930s up to the early 1960s, highlighting the multifaceted aspects of modernity and its global interconnectedness in the 20th century. The conference precedes a travelling exhibition entitled When Arts Became Liberty: The Egyptian Surrealists (1938–1960) to be inaugurated at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2017 in Sharjah, U.A.E., followed by an exhibition in Cairo, Egypt. A two-volume publication will follow the conference with the first to accompany the exhibition and the second to serve as the catalogue of the proposed exhibition.

ICM is an affiliate of the Africana Studies & Research Center at Cornell University.

First Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prizes Announced

LINDA B. GLASER

Winners of the new Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature, selected from among 65 entries, have been announced. The award recognizes excellent writing in African languages and encourages translation from, between and into African languages. It is supported primarily by Mabati Rolling Mills of Kenya, Cornell’s Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs and the Africana Studies & Research Center.

Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Assistant Professor of English and co-founder of the prize, said, “The amount of support we have received for the prize shows that there is hunger and room for writing in African languages, that the African literary tradition can flourish in African languages and that is possible to fund the growth of African languages through African-led philanthropy.”

Anna Samwel received first prize for fiction for “Penzi la Damu,” and Mohammed K. Ghassani received first prize for poetry for “N’na Kwetu.” Second prize went to Enock Maregesi for “Kolonia Santita” (fiction) and third prize to Christopher Bundala Budebah for “Kifaurongi” (poetry).

The six judges said that the winners used “captivating, measured, flowing and sometimes humorous poetic language” to address issues facing East African societies, such as drugs and the harm they unleash globally; gender relations and women’s rights; and political corruption. “This is African neo-realism in an African language at its best,” they said.

Linda B. Glaser is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission from the Cornell Chronicle.

The prizes were presented at the Kwanj Literary Festival Dec. 3rd at the Capital Club in Nairobi, Kenya. First-prize winners receive $5,000 in the categories of fiction and poetry; second prize is $3,000 and third prize is $2,000. Samwel’s winning entry will be published in Kiswahili by East African Educational Publishers, and Ghassani’s book of poetry will be translated and published by the Africa Poetry Book Fund.

The judges said that the winners used “captivating, measured, flowing and sometimes humorous poetic language” to address issues facing East African societies, such as drugs and the harm they unleash globally; gender relations and women’s rights; and political corruption. “This is African neo-realism in an African language at its best,” they said.

Linda B. Glaser is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission from the Cornell Chronicle.
Upcoming Events for Fall 2016

SEPTEMBER 23 & 24
Two events will honor Africana Center’s history LINDA B. GLASER

Nearly half a century ago, student protests led to the creation of Cornell’s Africana Studies & Research Center. Since then, the Africana Center has trained generations of leaders in academia, the professions, business, and public service.

This fall during Homecoming Weekend, Cornell will sponsor a series of commemorative events culminating in a dedication of the site of the original Africana Center building. On Friday, Sept. 23, at 2:30pm, the Africana commemoration will kick off with a multigenerational panel discussion featuring alumni, faculty and students that will place the Willard Straight Hall takeover in the context of black student activism at Cornell and nationwide. The event will also feature a screening of the new hourlong documentary Agents of Change. On Sept. 24th, the events are free, and the public is invited.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Africana Center’s important contributions to the entire university and the Ithaca community, and to commemorate the tragic destruction of Africanas original home, which is tied so deeply to Cornell’s history,” said Hunter Ravilings, interim President and Professor Emeritus of Classics.

On Saturday, Sept. 24th, the dedication ceremony will be held at 11am at 320 Wait Ave. The establishment of the site was requested by Black Students United in their November 2015 letter to President Elizabeth Garrett and Vice President Ryan Lombardi. The site will include a bench, landscaping and plaque bearing an image of the original Africana Center building.

“We are both inspired and energized by the rich history of black student activism at Cornell. It is a legacy we take seriously; the story of the old Africana building must be told wholly and truthfully,” said Amber Aspinall ’17 and Jaylessa Clark ’19, co-chairs of Black Students United.

“In order to repair and strengthen our community, it is important for the university to acknowledge the criminal destruction of the original Africana house,” said Kevin Gaines, the W.E.B. DuBois Professor of Africana Studies and an event organizer.

The dedication ceremony will include performances by student groups, remarks by student, faculty and alumni speakers; and remarks by Rev. Kenneth Clarke, director of Cornell United Religious Work. A photographic exhibition, ‘Black Life on the Hill, 1966-1970,’ with photographs by Fenton SandS, ’70, will be on display at the Africana Studies & Research Center during the month of September.

Sponsors for the events include the Africana Studies & Research Center, Black Students United, Alumni & Sciences, Africana Studies & Research Center, Black Students United, Alumni Affairs and Development, and the Division of University Relations.

Linda B. Glaser is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission from the Cornell Chronicle.

OCTOBER 4: ELAINE BROWN

Throughout the last four decades, Elaine Brown has committed her life to effecting progressive change in the United States. Brown’s recent work focuses on the radical reform of the criminal justice system.

OCTOBER 17: “WITNESS PROJECT WE SEE YOU” LAUNCH
The Africana Studies & Research Center presents “Witness Project/We See You,” a multisite installation of records, responses and representations of police violence. This exhibit is part of a campus-wide yearlong series “Freedom Interrupted: Race, Gender, Nation and Policing” organized by Africana Studies & Research Center, American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program, Asian American Studies Program, Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, African Diaspora Studies Program, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Program, and Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability. This collaboration comprises symbolic, artistic, and scholarly events to foster ongoing discussions of race, gender, nation, and policing, and raise awareness about victims of police violence who have not received much national attention.

OCTOBER 27: EUGENE ROBINSON

Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and political analyst Eugene Robinson will deliver the 2016 Reuben A. and Cheryl Casselberry Munday Distinguished Lecture at the Africana Studies & Research Center on Thursday, Oct. 27th at 4:30pm.

This distinguished lecture series brings to campus a leading scholar in the field of Africana Studies annually to highlight issues pertaining to the Africana and African Diaspora communities.
“Africana Studies has a global bibliography that aids students in offering solutions to intractable social, economic and cultural problems.”

– NOLIWE ROOKS


TOP: Participants, including moderator Chad Coates (Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Admissions & Advising), in one of six campus-wide small group discussions of Ta-Nehisi Coates’ 2015 National Book Award-winning publication Between the World and Me.

LEFT/BELLO: Reverend Dr. Kenneth Clarke, Sr. (Director, Cornell United Religious Work) and Ross Brann (Milton R. Komvitz Professor of Judeo-Islamic Studies, Department of Near Eastern Studies), “Blacks and Jews in America: A Conversation.”
AMARIS BROWN

Amaris Brown is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Brooklyn, New York and has a B.A. in African & Afro-American Studies and Sociology from Brandeis University. Her research interests focus on the relationship between the injustices black women face and the gendered consciousness black women’s unique oppressions establish. She focuses on black women’s experiences as represented in Afriluturism by privileging black women’s narratives, knowledge and culture in order to situate their contributions within social movement histories.

MARSHA JEAN-CHARLES

Marsha Jean-Charles is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and received one of only ten Engaged Graduate Student Grants through Engaged Cornell. These grants support and enhance community partnerships while providing opportunities for Cornell doctoral students to conduct critical research and scholarship. For her community-engaged research project, Jean-Charles co-facilitated an International Study Program (ISP) trip to Haiti and Cuba in summer 2016 for The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Bro/Sis) youth program.

ZIFENG LIU

Zifeng Liu is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Qingdao, China and has a M.A. in American Studies from Brown University. B.A. in English from South-Central University for Nationalities, and is completing a second M.A. in International Relations at Beijing Foreign Studies University. His research interests include black transnationalism/internationalism, the African diaspora, black feminism, black radicalism, modern China, U.S. foreign relations, and the Cold War and examines post-World War II African diasporic-Chinese encounters and exchanges and in particular the incorporation of China into African radical thought and praxis during the Cold War era.

AFIFA LTIFI

Afifa Lthfi is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Marrakech, Tunisia and has a M.A. in Cross-Cultural Studies and a B.A. in English from the University of Languages of Tunis. She is an occasional web-writer editor and a contributor for various media outlets such as Urban Africa, Al Jazeera English, and Medium. Her research interests include racial formation of blackness in the maghreb, black minority rights, and youth culture in the newly found spaces of freedom in post-revolutionary Tunisia.

KANYINSOLA OYABAN

Kanyinsola Oyabain is a second year Africana Ph.D. student and was granted a 2016 pre-doctoral fellowship, courtesy of the West African Research Association (WARA) located at Boston University’s African Studies Center, for research in Nigeria: “Igba Migration, Entrepreneurship and the Creation of the Igbo Scarf in British Southern Cameroons, 1930–1970.” WARA’s mission is to foster the production and dissemination of current research on West Africa and the diaspora, to promote scholarly exchange among West African scholars and institutions and their counterparts in the U.S. and beyond.

NADIA SASSO

Nadia Sasso is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and has been traveling extensively with her documentary film, “Am I Too African to be American? Am I the Too American to be African?” Her film explores the complex identity formations of young African women living in America and West Africa who identify bi-culturally. It is a multimedia intervention with a discussion on the politics of identity with respect to immigrant populations and movements back and forth of the diaspora. The film explores seven women’s histories with their bi-cultural identity and how they wrestle with concepts of race, complexion, gender, and heritage, among other issues.

MARSHALL SMITH

Marshall Smith is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and was asked by conference organizers to chair a panel at the 20th-21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium in St. Louis. He paper dealt with the specters of the “French Transatlantic Slave Trade in Contemporary French Popular Culture and Politics.” Smith also presented a paper at the Council for European Studies at Columbia University’s annual conference, held in Philadelphia in mid-April. He also presented two papers and participated in the panel “Changing Creole Narratives in Common Places: Comparative Perspectives” at the Caribbean Studies Association conference in Fort-au-Prince, Haiti in June 2016.

KANYINSOLA OYABAN

Kanyinsola Oyabain is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Brooklyn, New York and has a B.A. in African & Afro-American Studies and Sociology from Brandeis University. Her research interests focus on the relationship between the injustices black women face and the gendered consciousness black women’s unique oppressions establish. She focuses on black women’s experiences as represented in Afriluturism by privileging black women’s narratives, knowledge and culture in order to situate their contributions within social movement histories.

MARSHA JEAN-CHARLES

Marsha Jean-Charles is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and received one of only ten Engaged Graduate Student Grants through Engaged Cornell. These grants support and enhance community partnerships while providing opportunities for Cornell doctoral students to conduct critical research and scholarship. For her community-engaged research project, Jean-Charles co-facilitated an International Study Program (ISP) trip to Haiti and Cuba in summer 2016 for The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Bro/Sis) youth program.

ZIFENG LIU

Zifeng Liu is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Qingdao, China and has a M.A. in American Studies from Brown University. B.A. in English from South-Central University for Nationalities, and is completing a second M.A. in International Relations at Beijing Foreign Studies University. His research interests include black transnationalism/internationalism, the African diaspora, black feminism, black radicalism, modern China, U.S. foreign relations, and the Cold War and examines post-World War II African diasporic-Chinese encounters and exchanges and in particular the incorporation of China into African radical thought and praxis during the Cold War era.

AFIFA LTIFI

Afifa Lthfi is a first year Africana Ph.D. student from Marrakech, Tunisia and has a M.A. in Cross-Cultural Studies and a B.A. in English from the University of Languages of Tunis. She is an occasional web-writer editor and a contributor for various media outlets such as Urban Africa, Al Jazeera English, and Medium. Her research interests include racial formation of blackness in the maghreb, black minority rights, and youth culture in the newly found spaces of freedom in post-revolutionary Tunisia.

KANYINSOLA OYABAN

Kanyinsola Oyabain is a second year Africana Ph.D. student and was granted a 2016 pre-doctoral fellowship, courtesy of the West African Research Association (WARA) located at Boston University’s African Studies Center, for research in Nigeria: “Igba Migration, Entrepreneurship and the Creation of the Igbo Scarf in British Southern Cameroons, 1930–1970.” WARA’s mission is to foster the production and dissemination of current research on West Africa and the diaspora, to promote scholarly exchange among West African scholars and institutions and their counterparts in the U.S. and beyond.

NADIA SASSO

Nadia Sasso is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and has been traveling extensively with her documentary film, “Am I Too African to be American? Am I the Too American to be African?” Her film explores the complex identity formations of young African women living in America and West Africa who identify bi-culturally. It is a multimedia intervention with a discussion on the politics of identity with respect to immigrant populations and movements back and forth of the diaspora. The film explores seven women’s histories with their bi-cultural identity and how they wrestle with concepts of race, complexion, gender, and heritage, among other issues.

MARSHALL SMITH

Marshall Smith is a third year Africana Ph.D. student and was asked by conference organizers to chair a panel at the 20th-21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium in St. Louis. He paper dealt with the specters of the “French Transatlantic Slave Trade in Contemporary French Popular Culture and Politics.” Smith also presented a paper at the Council for European Studies at Columbia University’s annual conference, held in Philadelphia in mid-April. He also presented two papers and participated in the panel “Changing Creole Narratives in Common Places: Comparative Perspectives” at the Caribbean Studies Association conference in Fort-au-Prince, Haiti in June 2016.

OLUMAYOWA WILLOUGHBY

Olmayowa Willoughby is a second year Africana Ph.D. student and received a summer Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship to study Turkish at Bogazici University in Istanbul. FLAS fellowships aim to provide training in modern Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish in order to meet the national need for specialists on the Middle East region. Willoughby’s current work draws upon Africana, indigenous, and so-called Near Eastern studies in an attempt to explore the relationship between the position of Africa within the Ottoman imaginary and the interpellation of black and blackened persons within the Turkish national landscape.

KRISTEN WRIGHT

Kristen Wright is a second year Africana Ph.D. student and won the 2016 Marvin Carlson Award for Best Student Essay in Theatre and Performance from Cornell’s Department of Performing and Media Arts for her article “The Killing of My Mother I Claim Myself: Adrienne Kennedy’s Elektra and Orestes, Aeschylus’ Orestes, and the Question of Justice.” The award consists of a cash prize and certificate and is given to the best essay in theatre and performance by a Cornell student. Wright’s work is focused on African-American women’s drama, particularly the works of Adrienne Kennedy. She is particularly interested in the ways that Kennedy and other black female playwrights transform canonical works by white playwrights. Wright is also a playwright, and her play Apple Core will be produced as a part of Cornell’s 10 Minute Play Festival this fall.
In the last few years, Jaz Nsubuga ‘11 has become an expert on the following:

- Men’s shaving habits,
- Digital and social marketing campaign strategies,
- Women’s facial cleaning products,
- Credit card habits of wealthy people, and
- Coca Cola, among other things.

As manager of integrated marketing at MTV, Nsubuga knows that the best way to market a company or product is to understand it inside-out. And, as a History and Africana Studies major, that’s the part of her job she loves the most – the research.

Nsubuga was on campus in mid-September for a Career Conversations event with the College of Arts & Sciences Career Development Center, sharing her strategies for networking and career success with students.

Nsubuga is still riding the waves from her latest success, a Coca-Cola campaign she created for MTV’s Fandom Awards and Fest in July that generated buzz with a Tumblr social media effort that brought in 28 million votes. She also designed campaigns for Apple and American Legacy that aired during MTV’s Video Music Awards in August.

She joined MTV in January of this year, after starting out in account management at Grey Advertising and at Digitas and then working with the men’s grooming division of Birchbox.

“I become our team historian,” Nsubuga said of the role she’s played at her various companies. “I always want to know the brand a little better than the clients do.”

This deep knowledge involves hours of reading, researching, scouring the Internet for obscure resources and sorting through mounds of data.

“As an historian, I learned how to be objective about my subject matter so it helps me to understand these various types of consumers and relate my messages to them,” she said. For Grey, Nsubuga actually created an onboarding program to help teach new employees everything they needed to know about men’s shaving – from the pricing strategy for shaving tools in Brazil to why shaving habits are declining in North America to cultural rules about shaving in India.

Her Cornell classes allowed her to “dabble in so many different things,” Nsubuga said. She supplemented her liberal arts education with strong internships.

Nsubuga was also involved in the Tesza Belly DANCE troupe and Slope Media, started a group for East African students at Cornell (her parents immigrated from Uganda) and had a campus radio show, Traffic Jam, which featured new music and faculty guests.

“I was an eager beaver and used so many of Cornell’s resources,” she said, from Career Conversation events starting as a freshman, to career fairs and networking lunches. She also connected with alumni in advertising and marketing for numerous informational interviews, prepared with some key questions about their company or specialty. While working with the Cornell Annual Fund, she also met alumni who were willing to give advice.

As manager of integrated marketing at MTV, Nsubuga knows that the best way to market a company or product is to understand it inside-out. And, as a History and Africana Studies major, that’s the part of her job she loves the most – the research.

Nsubuga was on campus in mid-September for a Career Conversations event with the College of Arts & Sciences Career Development Center, sharing her strategies for networking and career success with students.

Nsubuga is still riding the waves from her latest success, a Coca-Cola campaign she created for MTV’s Fandom Awards and Fest in July that generated buzz with a Tumblr social media effort that brought in 28 million votes. She also designed campaigns for Apple and American Legacy that aired during MTV’s Video Music Awards in August.

She joined MTV in January of this year, after starting out in account management at Grey Advertising and at Digitas and then working with the men’s grooming division of Birchbox.

“I become our team historian,” Nsubuga said of the role she’s played at her various companies. “I always want to know the brand a little better than the clients do.”

This deep knowledge involves hours of reading, researching, scouring the Internet for obscure resources and sorting through mounds of data.

“As an historian, I learned how to be objective about my subject matter so it helps me to understand these various types of consumers and relate my messages to them,” she said. For Grey, Nsubuga actually created an onboarding program to help teach new employees everything they needed to know about men’s shaving – from the pricing strategy for shaving tools in Brazil to why shaving habits are declining in North America to cultural rules about shaving in India.

Her Cornell classes allowed her to “dabble in so many different things,” Nsubuga said. She supplemented her liberal arts education with strong internships.

Nsubuga was also involved in the Tesza Belly DANCE troupe and Slope Media, started a group for East African students at Cornell (her parents immigrated from Uganda) and had a campus radio show, Traffic Jam, which featured new music and faculty guests.

“I was an eager beaver and used so many of Cornell’s resources,” she said, from Career Conversation events starting as a freshman, to career fairs and networking lunches. She also connected with alumni in advertising and marketing for numerous informational interviews, prepared with some key questions about their company or specialty. While working with the Cornell Annual Fund, she also met alumni who were willing to give advice.

She landed summer internships in hospitality and non-profit management, then a key internship with the McCann Erickson agency before her junior year, where she worked on campaigns for Kohl’s and Clean & Clear.

“I used my history major as a selling point,” she said. “I’m intellectually curious, I know a lot about global policy and economics, I’m able to do strong analysis and research and I can write a 40-page paper at the drop of a hat.”

Kathy Hovis is a writer for the College of Arts & Sciences at Cornell University. This article was reprinted with permission.
**Freedom from Liberation: Slavery, Sentiment, and Literature in Cuba**

**GERARD ACHING**

By exploring the complexities of enslavement in the autobiography of Cuban slave-poet Juan Francisco Manzano (1797–1854), Gerard Aching complicates the universally recognized assumption that a slave’s foremost desire is to be freed from bondage. It explores the experiences of male and female combatants, peasant producers, women-traders, missionaries, and sex workers.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Retrospect: Africa’s Development Beyond 2015**

**NDRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA**

This volume examines the impact of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on Africa’s development post-2015. It assesses the current state of the MDGs in Africa by outlining the successes, gaps and failures of the state goals, including lessons learned. A unique feature of the book is the exposition on post-MDGs agenda for Africa’s development.

**We Are an African People: Independent Education, BlackPower, and the Radical Imagination**

**RUSSELL RICKFORD**

This book presents an intellectual history of subaltern education, a critical analysis of the fate of Black Power ideologies in the post-segregation era, and a portrait of African-American self-activity at the neighborhood level. Rickford puts forth a groundbreaking explanation of Black Power’s preoccupation with forging a new people.

**Measuring and Analyzing Informal Learning in the Digital Age**

**OLUFÉMI TÁÍWÒ**

Investigating some of the primary technologies being used in educational settings and how a less structured and more open learning environment can effectively motivate students and non-traditional learners, this premiere reference is a crucial source of information for educators, administrators, theorists, and other professionals in the field of education.

**Africa & World War II**

**JUDITH BYFIELD**

This volume considers the military, economic, and political significance of Africa during WWII. The essays feature new research and innovative approaches to the historiography of Africa and bring to the fore issues of race, gender, and labor during the war, topics that have not yet received much critical attention.

**Martin Heidegger Saved My Life**

**GRANT FARRED**

In Martin Heidegger Saved My Life. Grant Farred combines autobiography with philosophical rumination to offer this unusual meditation on American racism. Farred grapples with why it is that Heidegger resonates so deeply with him instead of other, more predictable figures such as Malcolm X, W. E. B. DuBois, or Frantz Fanon.

**African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade: Vol. 2**

**SANDRA GREENE**

This volume explores diverse sources such as oral testimonies, possession rituals, Arabic language sources, European missionary, administrative and court records and African intellectual writings to discover what they can tell us about slavery and the slave trade in Africa. This book will be invaluable for students and researchers interested in the history of slavery, the slave trade and post-slavery in Africa.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Retrospect: Africa’s Development Beyond 2015**

**N’DRI ASSIÉ-LUMUMBA**

This volume examines the impact of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on Africa’s development post-2015. It assesses the current state of the MDGs in Africa by outlining the successes, gaps and failures of the state goals, including lessons learned. A unique feature of the book is the exposition on post-MDG’s agenda for Africa’s development.

**The Hip Hop & Obama Reader**

**TRAVIS GOSA**

Before the presidential candidacy and election of Barack Obama, hip hop was clearly in trouble. Nas’s 2006 album, Hip Hop is Dead, seemed to articulate the growing concern among many performers, fans, and academics that nihilistic gangsterism and a lack of musical creativity were eclipsing three decades of hip hop’s creative innovation, as well as its dedication to counter-hegemonic movements and discourse.
The Calendar of Loss: Race, Sexuality, and Mourning in the Early Era of Aids

DAGMAWI WOUBSHET

His world view colored by growing up in 1980s Ethiopia, where death, governed time and temperament, Dagmawi Woubshet offers a startlingly fresh interpretation of melancholy and mourning during the early years of the AIDS epidemic in The Calendar of Loss.

Africa Must Be Modern: A Manifesto

OLUPEMI TAWO

In a forthright and uncompromising manner, Olupemi Tawo explores Africa’s hostility toward modernity and how that hostility has impeded economic development and social and political transformation. What has to change for Africa to be able to respond to the challenges of modernity and globalization? Tawo insists that Africa can renew itself only by fully engaging with democracy and capitalism and by mining its untapped intellectual resources.

Problems, Promises, and Paradoxes of Aid: Africa’s Experience

NICHOLAS VAN DE WALLE

This book is an anthology of essays contributing new scholarship to the contemporary discourse on the concept of aid. It provides an interdisciplinary investigation of the role of aid in African development, compiling the work of historians, political scientists, legal scholars, and economists to examine where aid has failed and to offer new perspectives on how aid can be made more effective.

The Down Low: Know: Black Sexuality on Nobody Is Supposed to Know

C. RILEY SNORTON

This book traces the emergence and circulation of the down low in contemporary media and popular culture to show how these portrayals reinforce troubling perceptions of black sexuality. Reworking Eve Sedgwick’s notion of the “glass closet,” Snorton advances a new theory of such representations in which black sexuality is marked by hypervisibility and confinement, spectacle and speculation.

Gender/Class Intersections and African Women’s Rights

CAROLE BOYCE DAVIES

African women’s rights, in its early expressions, was linked to the critique of particular economic/class systems which disempowered the majority of women in contemporary Africa. The way gender and class intersect in an African context continues to be an ongoing critical lever of analysis.

“Inticate Entanglement: The ICC and the Pursuit of Peace, Reconciliation and Justice in Libya, Guinea, and Mali”

SIBA GROVOUGU

International justice is not merely a function of legislation and adjudication. It depends on the extent to which it is viewed as legitimate by litigants and others based on perceptions of the relationships of the operations of existing regimes of dispensation of justice.


NKA JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART

NKA focuses on publishing critical work that examines the newly developing field of contemporary African and African diaspora art within the modernist and postmodernist experience and therefore contributes significantly to the intellectual dialogue on world art and the discourse on internationalism and multiculturalism in the arts. Nka mainly includes scholarly articles, reviews (exhibits and books), interviews, and roundtable discussions.

No. 37, “Black fashion: Art. Pleasure. Politics.” Special issue editor Noliwe Rooks argues that black fashion is a key, though underexplored, facet of black history, culture, and identity in the African diaspora. Contributors to the issue include academics, artists, journalists and writers, and a filmmaker. From the introduction: “While it is not an encyclopedic compilation of thinking about race, art, politics, or fashion, each contribution functions as an individual lens, so to speak, capturing crucial snapshots of particular moments, figures, and events that are central to understanding the whole. Taken together, the texts in this volume explore various definitions and meanings of black fashion as a launching point for thinking about race, gender, politics, power, and class.”

Nka is an affiliate of the Africana Studies & Research Center at Cornell University and is published by Duke University Press.
Gerard Aching  
Professor  
Director Of Africana Studies  
19th- and 20th-century Caribbean literatures; slavery and philosophy

N'Dri Assié-Lumumba  
Professor  
African and African diaspora education, gender issues, family and social structure

Carole Boyce-Davies  
Professor  
African and Caribbean literature, African diaspora studies, Black feminist theories, Black women's writing

Locksley Edmondson  
Professor  
African and Caribbean politics

Grant Farred  
Professor  
Theory, formation of intellectuals, literature

Kevin Gaines  
W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of Africana Studies  
U.S. and African American intellectual and cultural history

Travis Gosa  
Assistant Professor  
Sociology of education, sociology of the family, race and ethnicity, popular and youth culture

Siba Grovogui  
Professor  
International relations, political theory

Salah M. Hassan  
Goldwin Smith Professor  
African and African diaspora art history and visual cultures

Oneka LaBennett  
Associate Professor  
Race and gender, migration, transnationalism and globalization

Riché Richardson  
Associate Professor  
African-American literature, gender studies, and Southern studies

Noliwe Rooks  
Associate Professor  
Race and politics of education, aesthetics of race and gender, 19th- and 20th century mass culture and periodicals

C. Riley Snorton  
Assistant Professor  
Cultural theory, queer and transgender theory, Africana studies, performance studies and popular culture

Olúfémi Táíwò  
Professor  
African/Africana Philosophy, late transitions to modernity, African political thought, law and philosophy

Ricardo A. Wilson II  
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow  
20th- and 21st-century literature and film from the Americas, blackness and collective memory

Africana Studies is the multidisciplinary analysis of the lives and thought of people of African ancestry throughout the world.

Harriet Tubman triptych, by Frederick J. Brown, on display at Africana

Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew announced in April 2016 the most sweeping and historically symbolic makeover of American currency in a century, proposing to replace the slaveholding Andrew Jackson on the $20 bill with Harriet Tubman, the former slave and abolitionist.

Riché Richardson, associate professor of Africana Studies, says: “This move profoundly illustrates one of the major points of my book-in-progress, which focuses on how black women, over time, have impacted national femininity and emerged as national emblems and voices in our political culture, in ways that go well beyond familiar stereotypes such as Aunt Jemima. In a nation where Rosa Parks catalyzed change by remaining seated, Shirley Chisholm became the first woman to run for president, Condoleezza Rice became the most powerful woman in the world, and Michelle Obama became the nation’s first black First Lady, choosing Harriet Tubman as the new emblem for the $20 bill further illustrates the power that black women sometimes have had to help represent and define America.”

Keep in Touch with Africana

Share amazing things about our students and alumni by email at africana@cornell.edu