

# EyeMinded

**KELLIE JONES**

LIVING AND WRITING  
CONTEMPORARY ART



WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY  
AMIRI BARAKA, HETTIE JONES, LISA JONES, AND GUTHRIE P. RAMSEY JR.

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*For my parents*

—

**Hettie Jones**

and

**Amiri Baraka**

—

*The first writers*

*I ever met*

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### Art in the Family

On Tuesday February 17, 2009, a drawing by Charles White (*Move On Up a Little Higher*, 1961) and a painting by Al Loving (*Cube 27*, 1970) were sold by Swann Galleries in New York. Swann is known for its auctions of art by African Americans as well as ephemera, documents, and material culture relating to black life. Prices were solid, only beginning to show the effects of the current economic downturn.

For me these two pieces signified something somewhat outside the strict register of monetary gain or notable historical fact. These were works of art made by my friends' parents, people I grew up with, hung out with, learned about life with. They signal the parameters of the community in which I was born, raised, and became an intellectual. In my world, art is not only part of history—even a living history—it is part of and makes community, it is part of and makes family.

What I want to think about here is how art objects, and the activities around their making and display—in exhibitions, homes, studios—as well as their materiality and life, are integral to forming relationships, connections, and kinship among sometimes diverse constituencies. How is art a connective force, a glue between people, creating the sense of community whole but also of family and affiliation? Indeed how does the circulation of art forms in public and private arenas create dialogues and sites of collectivity, personal and communal meaning, and how are these formations part of how we craft individual and larger social and political involvements? How do objects coalesce a public, create a life for artists and audiences and a circle of friendships from the particular to the collective? In what ways does

art become a catalyst for the invention of forms of and places for modes of familial and civic recognition and representation?<sup>1</sup>

Trying to think through concepts of family and community and how these might intersect with and inflect notions of art, I picked up Barack Obama's book *Dreams from My Father* (1995). Inspired by his missives from the campaign trail, I turned to the president's writing because of our generational link and similar biographies. We were both born and raised in the United States in the urban, multiracial settings of Honolulu and New York City respectively. We had mixed ethnic backgrounds with one black and one white parent, though his was certainly the more complex transnational context with Kenya, Kansas, and Indonesia as part of the picture, as opposed to my Newark, New Jersey, and Brooklyn, New York, roots. Our histories (and perhaps those of our generation) led us to ideas of politics and community in different valences. (Plus we both married cool people from Chicago!)

For Obama, navigating what he identifies as separate black and white realms leads him to continually recast and reimagine structures of kinship and society. He describes slipping back and forth between worlds, hoping that they would eventually cohere without the pain and tragedy of confrontation which often marks the American story. He asks, "What is family? . . . a genetic chain . . . a social construct [or] economic unit . . . shared memories. . . . An ambit of love? A reach across the void? . . . The insistent pleasure of other people's company, the joy of human warmth[?] . . . And how does one reconcile blood family with the larger idea of human association?"<sup>2</sup> In one scenario Obama imagines a series of ever-widening circles around himself, expanding from an inner core to a loop embracing the planet. Within this framework, commitments to a larger world are also commitments to self.

Paul Gilroy has cast this pursuit of common ground as a search for a "planetary humanism" devoted to a certain "conviviality," which he explains as "the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multi-culture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in post-colonial cities elsewhere."<sup>3</sup> It looks for solidarity across boundaries real and imagined, seeing differences whether national, ethnic, or religious, neither absolute nor unbridgeable.

It is Obama's active and perpetual visualizing of the reaches of family that eventually translates into political organizing. He searches for collectivity and common ground, looking for commonalities and intersections between communities and constituencies which allow room for people to come together with greater ease. Interestingly, he observes it is when we escape from what we know, placing ourselves in a liminal or marginal situa-

tion, that we find more room for union with others. Gilroy, too, calls for a certain distancing or estrangement from the familiarities of one's own situation, culture, and history, a repositioning that is both "anthropological and indeed ethical method."<sup>4</sup> It is a space that can be unsettling and agonistic yet which allows us to move toward others with greater equanimity, the minor conflicts of difference as a pedagogical opening, a route to knowledge rather than a reason to turn away. In the words of poet Adrienne Rich our divergences should not be determinative, causing us to reject the other and "flee from our likeness."<sup>5</sup>

Gilroy's conviviality is an expansion of activist or critical multiculturalism that is forward looking, political, and antiracist, and that intercedes in institutional structures of power relations and domination. It is the notion that the twenty-first century (Western) societies in which we live are not just recognized superficially as multiple but reflect an egalitarian notion of polis. It is based on the idea that intellectual culture reflects the realities of multicultural (one, as Gilroy points out, lived daily as mundane proximity in friendship and vernacular practices) rather than as a monoculture that fashions itself as core values to a plural periphery. Even the use of the term conviviality itself is meant to move discourse away from the pitfalls of so-called identity politics toward a cosmopolitan and political, or "cosmopolitical," intercultural, one that is tolerant and humane.<sup>6</sup>

The location where uneasy agonisms are yet productive, jostling to form bonds and coherence across boundaries and through difference, this is the place for the type of flexible and active relations Obama values as well. According to his first boss, Obama becomes a community organizer because he is angry. "Well-adjusted people," the man quips, "find more relaxing work."<sup>7</sup> I would say the same about some of the intellectual work I do; it is not always relaxing, but it is in my mind a necessity, an ongoing and ever-present commitment to notions of equality, multicultural, and activism that is "aesthetic, cultural and scholarly."<sup>8</sup>

I was born in the years soon after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case that outlawed de jure segregation in the nation. Still even in that post-desegregation moment it remained illegal, in fact a felony in the majority of the United States, for my African American father and Jewish mother to marry. It was not until 1967 with *Loving v. Virginia* that miscegenation laws were dismantled by the federal government. Raised by poets, a larger community, and a world committed to justice and social change, I have been marked in my creative output as a writer and curator by the hopes and dreams of the *Brown* decision. I was born into a world bent on change, and I took my job quite seriously.

Coming into consciousness as a person in the 1960s and 1970s was an amazing experience, as many books today tell us. Growing up as a colored child in New York's East Village—the Lower East Side or LoIsaida as we called it then, using the name that our Latino neighbors gave our home—was a great gift. It was filled with neighbors of all kinds—hippies, a variety of black folk, Ukrainians, Puerto Ricans, and above all, creative people of every stripe and creed—musicians, writers, visual artists, and dancers. The notion that people lived their dreams and possibilities was just a given; they had gathered in this neighborhood to do just that. These were my mentors, the adults in my life. The four-story tenement building at Cooper Square where I lived from about three years of age until going off to college presented this landscape in microcosm. Not only did it face Cooper Union, one of the country's oldest art schools (so prestigious that if you were talented enough to get in you paid no tuition), but over the years that building was home to many, many creative souls, beginning at least with my parents, the poets Amiri Baraka (then LeRoi Jones) and Hettie Jones. The jazz saxophonist Archie Shepp (along with his wife, Garth, and their four children) lived there for a while with bands rehearsing all the time. The cover photograph of Shepp's *Attica Blues* (1972) shows him in his studio, perhaps composing songs that form his response to New York's Attica Prison massacre the year before. Free jazz became my lullaby and comfort music. The painter Elizabeth Murray with her first husband, Don Sunseri (my elementary school art and woodshop teachers respectively), resided there with their son when they first arrived in New York from Chicago. Through them I eventually met the painters Martha Diamond and Jennifer Barlett and the sculptor Joel Shapiro, who all contributed to creating a revitalized space for figuration as the 1970s headed toward the 1980s. The jazz bassist Sirone later became a resident of the building on Cooper Square as well as the artist, scholar, and curator C. Daniel Dawson. The painter George Mingo called the place home and his partner, the photographer Coreen Simpson, came by often.

From my multicultural preschool aptly called the Church of All Nations to the independent Downtown Community School several blocks away, my full world continued to be shaped. My sister, Lisa, and I attended the latter together, along with Shepp's sons Pavel and Accra. In my six years there I came to know many kids whose parents were making art happen in New York and who themselves would do so in their own time: Sidonia Gross, whose mother, Sally, was a member of Judson Dance Theater; Sara Kirschenbaum, whose parents were both artists—her father, Bernard, a sculptor who

showed with the early experimental cooperative Park Place, and her mother, Susan Weil, a painter first married to Robert Rauschenberg; Cicely Khan, daughter to the painter Wolf who grew up to be a successful one in her own right. And I made lifelong friends: Saritha Clements whose father, Millard, was an early environmentalist at New York University, and Alicia and Ann Loving Cortes, stepdaughters of Al Loving.

The Lovings had arrived in New York and into my world from Ann Arbor, Michigan, in January 1969. By December Al would become the first African American to have a solo exhibition in the thirty-eight-year history of the Whitney Museum of American Art, inaugurating an unprecedented twelve-show series of works by black artists. Two essays in this collection discuss Loving and his generation of abstractionists, “It’s Not Enough to Say ‘Black is Beautiful’: Abstraction at the Whitney 1969–1974” (2006) and “To The Max: Energy and Experimentation,” from my exhibition “Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction, 1964–1980,” which opened at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2006. I dedicated the latter essay, really the show itself, to Loving, who had passed on a year before in the midst of my organizing the project. It was only when I got to college that I had realized not everyone knew artists, watched or listened to their magic unfold. When I spoke to Al about participating in “Energy/Experimentation” he was excited and said he would help in any way he could. He also thanked me. Not for doing the show per se but for joining their special club, signing up for the work of organizer, writer, interpreter. He thanked me for continuing on this journey with him.

Along with Al, the painter and designer Wyn Loving was a part of a generation that stepped out of its comfort zone, intent on demolishing pat orthodoxies and challenging the United States to live up to its creed of equality and justice for all. Both were graduate students with children when they met at the University of Michigan. At that time Ann Arbor was the home of various activist movements—in art, education, and politics and seen in the presence of the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Children’s Community School, and Students for a Democratic Society. Al and Wyn both took jobs after graduation at nearby Eastern Michigan State University. When their friendship developed into a serious relationship, Al was fired from his position and Wyn resigned very publicly in protest. Think of this taking place in the context of urban rebellions that swept Detroit in 1967 as well as the country during that time, in addition to the new legality of interracial unions that had been handed down that same year. Their radical perspectives and friendships continued in New York where Wyn was the anchor of

a very lively community of artists and political activists on the Bowery from the 1960s onward.<sup>9</sup>

With Alicia I spent many hours in this Bowery loft where Al and Wyn also made paintings. And perhaps through them my connection to the world of visual artists grew and began to captivate me. In that building at 262 Bowery alone there was Kenneth Noland, who gained recognition for color and staining that defined some new directions for painting as the 1950s made room for the 1960s—he was father to Cady Noland, who would make important sculptural statements a few decades later—and the dancer Batya Zamir, who pioneered her own suspension dances in the 1960s and 1970s (Al Loving danced with her for some time), and her husband, the sculptor Richard Van Buren, who also showed with the Park Place group.<sup>10</sup> I met the abstract painters Jack Whitten and William T. Williams and babysat for their children. In many ways I learned about looking at and making art with this generation of artists. I came to understand what was inspiration, what was at stake, and certainly that creativity was not the exclusive province of specific types of people, as most art history books professed.

I took my first trip to Europe with Jack Whitten and his family as an au pair for his daughter. That summer the painter Norman Lewis and his wife, Ouida, joined us in Greece. Knowing the paintings he made as a result of that trip, such as *Blue Seascape*, 1978, or *Seascape XIV*, 1976, remind me of the time we shared there. I remember his great talent, wisdom, and commitment to making a place and leaving a legacy for young black artists, as well as his amiably cantankerous nature. Some of my earliest curatorial and critical projects collected here—the essay “Norman Lewis: The Black Paintings” (1985) and the exhibition “Abstract Expressionism: The Missing Link” (1989)—were inspired by thinking about and contextualizing his art and legacy.

The sculptor Melvin Edwards and his wife, the poet Jayne Cortez, were always very clear about their politics as well as the aesthetics of their work; later I would find their practice ever more intriguing when I discovered their roots in the Los Angeles art scene. The sculptor, filmmaker, and archivist Camille Billops and her husband, the theater historian James Hatch, gave me an appreciation for the notion of archive, visualized in the words of the playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, “You should write it down and you should hide it under a rock.”<sup>11</sup> For decades they have interviewed writers and performing and visual artists of all walks of life, from the recognizable to the lesser known. Every year a portion of these are published in their journal *Artist and Influence*. Their mentorship led to several collaborations, one of

which—"Interview with Howardena Pindell" (1990)—appears here. Pindell was another important figure for me who insisted on both aesthetic and political freedom with a feminist edge. These were some of the people in my life and some of the people who made SoHo.

However, along with this great rainbow of New York's downtown culture there was another equally important if very different experience that had a great impact on me during those years. It was the Black Arts Movement and black culture generally that I found in Newark in the lives of my father and grandparents.

Unlike Obama's narrative where he sees black and white as exclusive and exclusionary universes that often meet in distress and misery, my worlds were not so clearly delineated in that way. There were creative people of color that were major fixtures in my New York life, so much so that in my later study of art history I was baffled and angered by a body of literature that left out all the fullness and diversity I had known to exist. What differentiated the two realms was the fact of Black Cultural Nationalism, a political program that while seeking human rights and social justice, designed a plan of self-fashioning, and self-respect, and whose structures and emotional power also resulted in a certain insularity.<sup>12</sup>

Many volumes have been written, including by my father himself, of his cultivation of a Black Cultural Nationalist program in Newark at this moment, and its influence not only on that community but also on the nation and the world during that time.<sup>13</sup> In Newark my sister and I were part of a larger, very purposeful reality, one about politics and liberation, "freeing black people from intellectual chains." We studied Africa and learned some Kiswahili. We celebrated Kwanzaa, learned African dance, marched in African Liberation Day parades, even performed in the play *Slave Ship, 1969* as voices of screaming children.<sup>14</sup> We learned about culture as a powerful tool. At my grandparents' home in Newark it was a different thing. Fun and backyard parties, plenty of "play cousins," aunts, and uncles. Music, drinking, and popular dance of people who worked hard and enjoyed their weekends and who were part of "the cause" in their own way.

Marianne Hirsch has written eloquently about photography, memory and the circulation of meaning through the configurations of family. She speaks of generational transmission, how experience and remembrance are passed along via creative form, through stories and images as well as gesture. Family photographs in particular also become a site for a nexus of mul-

tiple gazes, among families but also with viewers. There is also a conceptual interface between such visual mementos and the larger world of media images, and representations of family as well as family mythologies.<sup>15</sup>

The structure of *EyeMinded* engages Hirsch's concepts in a number of ways. I pondered how notions of family are constructed and transmitted through acts of art, thinking about the creative work of four family members: my parents, the poets Amiri Baraka and Hettie Jones; my sister, the writer and filmmaker Lisa Jones; and my husband, the scholar and musician Guthrie Ramsey.<sup>16</sup> I was interested not only in how creativity is learned and passed on, but in understanding it as a place where we speak to and from each other; where our discussions intersect and diverge. However, if these exchanges are personal and familial to a certain extent, they are very much public, addressed to a wider creative community and the world at large.

Hirsch has discussed family or group memory as many times embodied in behavior, gesture, conversation, or tales, while cultural and archival memory is known through the circulation of symbolic forms and systems. However, in considering notions of cultural transmission and expression in the case of survivors of the Holocaust and the subsequent generation, she notes that the dearth of personal and family images or keepsakes are addressed by the adoption of public images as part of an ancestral trove or archive. Thus the "familial gaze" is mediated through the remnants found in the public record. It is there that mutual recognition as ascribed to the circle of kin is found. In this way family stories and histories become at once private and personal as well as public and archival. One thinks of family photos as unique with no meaning outside the context of a specific clan or lineage. Yet in many ways these images are interchangeable, mining poses and gestures that emanate feeling and affiliation. These ideas are transmitted between families but also to a wider community of viewers who recognize these structures of feeling that are available to them as well. So it is with cultural forms, like writing, that are addressed to a general audience but that in doing so also speak back to the collective/family, the place writing and cultural meaning was learned.

The writings in *EyeMinded* also bear witness to the notion of the personal and family archive, one created in and through our writings across space and time. *Archive Fever* is the term Jacques Derrida uses to explain the notion of archivization, as both public or state and more private and personal functions. These actions and techniques are a consignment—a unification, classification, and ordering—we use to forestall the breakdown of memory and evade death. These perpetual and repetitious actions move us

into the future. In this way the notion of archive is always transgenerational, moving from one period to the next. But the archive's assemblage also anticipates the glance backward. It opens toward "historicity and with the obligation of memory."<sup>17</sup> To the lacuna of the official archive language speaks. Specifically, as Giorgio Agamben has outlined, spoken communication addresses the archive in the form of the testimony and speech of the witness/subject.<sup>18</sup> Thus the pages of *EyeMinded* are at once a family archive, a collection of documents that map the trajectory of these intimate relationships across time, but they also speak back to the official record, to the histories that would ignore, erase, or rewrite our existence and interconnection, creatively or otherwise.

How has my existence, in the embrace of the arts, developed and shared in childhood, and continued as an avocation and a life journey, shaped what I write and how I write about it? Since birth and perhaps before, I feel I have been in a constant dialogue about culture with my family. Learning about art and life from a community of artists in the New York of the 1960s and 1970s, now labeled a neo-avant-garde, and absorbing art's instrumental uses from Black Nationalists in another universe across the river in New Jersey. This was the way we lived whether on the Lower East Side or in Newark. To look back and see that I myself have generated two decades of cultural commentary is amazing and humbling. It is a testament to my family no matter how unorthodox my reality seemed to others or looks like in retrospect. Like all stories of human existence it is an account both unique and universal.

In a sense these pages reveal the "obligation of the archive" as a personal, familial, or community structure and as it is assessed in documents, images, language, stories, and material culture.<sup>19</sup> I also want to think about such transmission through art. One artist who works through objects in this way is Vivan Sundaram. Using the format of installation as well as family photographs and letters, Sundaram illuminates and weaves histories of her relatives through three generations. In it are accounts of modernity and culture that maps Anglo-Indian connections across the twentieth century. It begins with the marriage of the artist's grandfather, the Sanskrit scholar Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, and her Hungarian grandmother, Marie Antoinette, and their voluminous collection of family photographs, and it persists in the important paintings by Amrita Sher-Gil, Sundaram's aunt, that navigate Indian modernism; this legacy is maintained in the body of work of Sundaram herself.<sup>20</sup> More recently the exhibition "Progeny" held in Miami, New York, and Sacramento featured individual photographs and objects by

Deborah Willis and her son Hank Willis Thomas. The show also highlighted collaborative pieces that engaged memory and the forward motion of its generational inscription.<sup>21</sup>

These examples, as well as my own history lived among artists and many creative people, compel me toward narration not only through texts—mine and a familial assembly—but to consider how some artworks (such as the pieces by Loving and White), like family photographs, hold similar associations, private but also lived in public. How do these notions—both of transgenerational creativity and visual art’s role in narrating life’s meaning—empower and energize my notion of art and writing? Stories, Obama tells us, and, thinking expansively, I would hazard art in general, become ways for people to explain themselves, give themselves a sense of place and a sense of purpose. In the fabric of the tale we find the “the messy, contradictory details of our existence.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, how might such cultural forms help us navigate our existence and its “messy details”? As painting, sculpture, mixed-media assemblies, and so on move from studio to exhibition to home or museum, in these diremptions and cycles, how do they create narratives of their own histories but also generate communities of artists, families, friends, supporters, viewers who are linked across space and time and in doing so find and create common ground, and a platform for new and advanced forms of affiliation?

#### ON MUSEUM ROW

Multiculturalism flourished in the space and time of the postmodern museum. Poststructuralist critics offered us a postwar landscape that rejected History as a grand and singular narrative for a more general concept of mundane planetary chronicle composed of various and competing as well as overlapping stories. Such talk confirmed the presence of a multiplicity of artists and aesthetics, viewpoints that were continuing to find greater visibility in museums and other exhibition spaces.<sup>23</sup> Ideas of heterogeneity made space for multiculturalism on an intellectual level. In theory, a wide range of American art, made by a variety of practitioners, should exist. However, as Chon Noriega points out, oftentimes these inclusions operated on the level of theoretical construct rather than real integration of museum spaces. Sometimes even when the museum demographic was enlarged there was a sense of the restriction of the type of art and representation that was allowed, one where “minorities never [got] to represent more than their marginality.”<sup>24</sup> In other instances diversity became a code word for internationalism rather than forcing a look inside the United States and outside the confines of culturally dominant trend.

What theory many times did not acknowledge was the politics and struggles on the ground that forced actual inclusion rather than just its understanding as an intellectual construct. Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s were battles for equity and visibility in social and cultural spheres. Protests by artists against the museum status quo led to the unlocking of these cultural citadels. This same energy also led to the development of alternative nonprofit galleries and ethnically specific museums.<sup>25</sup>

Such social action opened up places for a wide array of artists to exist, show, and develop. At the same time there was the insistence on equivalent curatorial and critical voices, an understanding of the need to expand what constituted expertise to frame an emerging discourse, which is where I felt my contribution lay. I was drawn to museums and curatorial and critical practices as a way to support artists and culture generally. There was a role for cultural workers. Yet in retrospect it was also transgenerational inheritance: seeing art and culture as activist, as modes in which to move society forward.<sup>26</sup>

I was and continue to be interested in museums as locales where people can come in contact with visual and intellectual thought, consider public culture and discourse. If the concept of the museum as strictly a playground for the elite is in ruins, the institution has been reconfigured, to a certain degree, to provide for different constituencies, in part by showing things to serve and develop new audiences. My “Basquiat” exhibition—represented here with the catalogue essay “Lost in Translation: Jean-Michel in the (Re) Mix” (2005)—for instance, produced record-breaking attendance everywhere it toured.<sup>27</sup> The museum remains a site to expand viewers, for the works of African American artists and others, and not just for the sake of African American viewers alone. It is still a spot in the public sphere for conversation but also a space to carry on a “discourse of recognition,” a setting for performances of acknowledgment and worth.<sup>28</sup> As we learned from Frantz Fanon, the revision of preconceived cultural images is also part of the fight for equity and freedom.<sup>29</sup> Museums are locales where evidence of such shifts of visual meaning can be collected and found. They are places to see art by a diverse range of practitioners as emblematic of the flows of culture in general.

My writing speaks to family ties but also to the many relationships I built as an adult, the world I created with my peers and with my sister Lisa. Though I fancied that I would work in the United Nations when I left college, that I wanted to be a Romance language major and a translator, instead I picked the next best thing: art historian. In this field one needs to know languages and in some ways translates what is going on in the work of art for

a broader population. I came to art also through the High School of Music and Art (now the Fiorello H. LaGuardia School of the Arts), another public multicultural community where my buddies were the impeccable draftsman Whitfield Lovell, the singer-actress Alva Rogers, and the writer Hilton Als. In the early 1980s I worked first at the Studio Museum in Harlem, in its initial incarnation at 2033 Fifth Avenue and later when it made its move to 125th Street where Mary Schmidt Campbell—now dean of Tisch School of the Arts at New York University—was the director, and C. Daniel Dawson worked as a curator. I also came to know the scholar Leslie King Hammond—who had already started her long career as dean of graduate studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art—while working on one of her exhibitions, “Ritual and Myth,” which opened the Studio Museum’s new 125th Street space in 1982. The photographer and filmmaker Lorna Simpson and the painter Glenn Ligon, like me, began as interns at the Studio Museum in Harlem, as did Thelma Golden, who later worked with me at the Jamaica Arts Center before continuing her career at the Whitney Museum and then moving to run the museum at which she once interned.

A commitment to living artists had always been at the core of the Studio Museum in Harlem’s existence. Working in the curatorial department there I interacted with the famed artist-in-residence program and the prolific painter Candida Alvarez, and the sculptors Tyrone Mitchell, Alison Saar, and Terry Adkins, who were exploring various approaches to notions of accumulation and construction. The multimedia artists David Hammons, Charles Abramson, and Jorge Rodriguez were still around having finished their residencies right before the museum’s move from Fifth Avenue to 125th Street.

I gained mentors and friends: Lowery Sims, whose long tenure as a curator in the department of twentieth-century art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was ever valuable, and Deborah Willis, then a photography specialist at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. I hung around Linda Goode Bryant’s Just Above Midtown Gallery (JAM) in Tribeca, the first to commit to artists like Hammons, Houston Conwill, Senga Nengudi, and Maren Hassinger, whose postminimalist practices muddled the East Coast’s more puritanical categorizations. Goode Bryant’s support of this vein of abstraction by black artists was bold and exciting for its time. At JAM I met the sculptor Fred Wilson, who was working there before moving on to PS 39/Longwood Arts Project in the Bronx as director and hiring me for one of my first curated shows.

“In the Tropics” tackled the notion of the “tropical” world—the carto-

graphic expanse between latitudes of the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, also known as the Torrid Zone. Covering five continents and countries from Cuba to Thailand, this nebulous area was a site of shifting and multiple definitions, from tourist fantasies to war-torn lands, from non-aligned or “third world” nations to home; places lived in as well as imagined. The exhibition featured eighteen artists, and on the final night Lisa’s performance piece “Carmella and King Kong” had its premiere.<sup>30</sup> The show was on view during the spring of 1986, a year before Wilson’s own groundbreaking project “Rooms with a View” appeared there. At that moment he began to blur the lines between curator and artist and move toward an art practice that would take as its central force the explosion of antediluvian museum frameworks, from the taxonomies of display to the logics of collecting. Through an increasingly installation-based practice Wilson addressed not only viewers but also people working inside such cultural institutions.<sup>31</sup> This was the lure of the museum space for me as well. It was a place to interrogate how “truth” was produced and think about power relations: who was allowed to speak, and to and for whom. It was a place of address: to get a casual viewer thinking or touch like-minded souls who too were intervening in other arenas, seeing them with new eyes and giving them new life. Through curatorial action one could fill in historical and archival gaps in our understanding of the world.

From the Studio Museum I moved to the fledgling Broida Museum, the collector Edward R. Broida’s personal museum which never did open to the public.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, as it tried to come into existence in the mid-1980s, I worked as an assistant curator there with founding director Joan Simon, who came to the institution from her job as managing editor of *Art in America*. I came to know Robert Storr and Charles Stuckey, who had both written for the magazine and would also eventually transition to the museum field, and came in contact with artists like the painters Susan Rothenberg and Anselm Kiefer and the conceptualist Bruce Nauman. When Broida decided after three years not to go ahead with the project I moved on to the Jamaica Arts Center, a community art center in southeast Queens, founded in the early 1970s as part of the decentralization of culture from “Museum Row” to urban neighborhoods.<sup>33</sup> Besides offering historical, local and contemporary exhibitions, it became the launching pad for my international work. In the fall of 1989, from this small arts center, I sent one show to London and another to Brazil. I presented the sculpture of Martin Puryear as the commissioner from the United States to the São Paulo Bienal; it is the essay for that catalogue from which this book takes its name.<sup>34</sup> Weeks

after the Puryear project opened and we won the prize for best individual exhibition, I headed to London to install “us-uk Photography Exchange” at the Camerawork Gallery in London.<sup>35</sup>

The appeal of photography grew as I realized the potential for exchange: one could carry a whole exhibition around the world in a three-by-four-foot portfolio.<sup>36</sup> And artists were using the medium in more and more exciting and critical ways, combining images with text and as the fulcrum for larger installations. My interest in photo practice is revealed in the many essays on it in this book, writings on Dawoud Bey, Lorna Simpson, and Pat Ward Williams from the United States and the Mexican neoconceptualist Silvia Gruner. The expanded scale artists were working in was the subject of an early exhibition as well, “Large As Life: Contemporary Photography” (1987). In photography I also remarked on transnational and feminist practice that I found in the dialogue between black British and American artists in “In Their Own Image” (1990).

During the 1980s critic and artist Coco Fusco and I both became fascinated with black British culture. Here was a transnational practice—and a generation—that mirrored so much of our own, in its formulation of broader platforms for creative and intellectual work. In that moment the use of the term “black” by nonwhite as well as immigrant artists in England had a political valence and signified an oppositional aesthetics; as scholar Courtney J. Martin explains, “*black* was not simply what one was, but rather, how one made art.”<sup>37</sup> We were impressed by how these practitioners manipulated traditional and new media to reveal the rapid, if uneasy, development of a multiracial Europe. Fusco connected with the filmmakers, like Isaac Julien, John Akomfrah, and Martina Attille. I engaged with the painters, sculptors, and photographers, Ingrid Pollard, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, Roshini Kempadoo, and others who were curators and critics as well as artists like Maud Sulter, Lubaina Himid, and David A. Bailey. In this moment I also met Paul Gilroy and Vron Ware and family along with Kobena Mercer. It was Lisa who had first introduced me to this community, when she lived in Europe for a year after graduating from college early in the decade.<sup>38</sup>

As young critics, curators, artists, actors, directors, filmmakers, and musicians we were excited about the world we were making then. Lisa was part of the “make black film movement,” collaborating with Spike Lee on his films and books. She was also a journalist at *The Village Voice* with Greg Tate, Nelson George, and Harry Allen. Tate and writer Trey Ellis both remarked at the time on the way our generation was making what Trey nominated as

the “New Black Aesthetic,” one that appreciated the beauty of art and the nationalist object but felt confident enough to leave strict dogma behind.<sup>39</sup> And we knew black wasn’t the only thing on the block, working with critics and curators like Coco Fusco; Margo Machida—an expert on Asian American artists; Yasmin Ramirez, who wrote for the East Village Eye and Art in America; and Geno Rodriguez, who ran SoHo’s Alternative Museum; and with the artist Papo Colo, who along with his partner Jeanette Ingberman founded Exit Art; and artists like the painters Candida Alvarez, Juan Sanchez, Martin Wong, and the multimedia artist Yong Soon Min; the list goes on.

The 1990s of course brought greater professionalism and more exciting opportunities: deciding to go for a doctorate in art history and studying with the amazing Robert Farris Thompson at Yale University, who named the Afro-Atlantic cultural world that we now know as the African diaspora; serving as an adjunct curator at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis with the visionary director Kathy Halbreich for most of the decade; curating a show for the Second Johannesburg Biennale in 1997 and working with Okwui Enwezor, the biennale’s artistic director, were some of the highlights. My time at the Walker, one of the beacons of contemporary art and experimentation in this country and worldwide, is framed by an interview with one of Cuba’s important sculptors, Kcho (Alexis Leyva Machado), and essays on the photographer Dawoud Bey and the performer Bill T. Jones, who has contributed to our changing notions of dance over the last three decades. The experience in South Africa was far briefer but in ways more influential.

As someone who had grown up thinking about and studying aspects of African culture and who had been schooled in the evils of apartheid since childhood, it was an amazing opportunity. It was also my first visit to the continent. I held onto the honor even while experiencing the difficulty of producing an international exhibition without the comparative comfort of the type of official United States support that I had in Brazil, and in a place where white supremacy was the rule of law until three years prior. Visiting the infamous prison at Robben Island at the end of the project put everything into perspective. Only recently reopened as a museum, here I was able to see the “president’s cell,” the space hardly larger than a king-sized bed where Nelson Mandela had spent eighteen of his twenty-seven years of imprisonment. From here nothing I had gone through with my exhibition appeared to have the level of difficulty I had initially imagined. Even Mandela himself had seen museums as places where new democratic ideals could

be worked out, opening the Robben Island space several weeks before the biennale with the call for such institutions to “reflect history in a way that respects the heritage of all our citizens.”<sup>40</sup>

The exhibition I conceived, “Life’s Little Necessities: Installation by Women in the 1990s,” focused on women artists as bearers of the complexities of the global. In addition to the catalogue essay, my time spent there sparked two other writing projects on aspects of feminism, transnationalism, and art, “A.K.A. Saartjie: The Hottentot Venus in Context (Some Reflections and a Dialogue)” (2004) and “Tracey Rose: Postapartheid Playground” (2003).

In the 1990s and the new millennium my writing matured. But the themes and interests remained colored by the life and world I wanted to make and continue to work toward today. While I might approach a few of these topics somewhat differently now, I remained impressed by my directness and the confidence I had in my young voice.

#### WRITING/ART

“This was it, I thought to myself. My inheritance. I rearranged the letters in a neat stack and set them under the registry book.”<sup>41</sup> In this passage Obama muses on letters and documents from his father and grandfather that he is given in Kenya, which both enhance and detract from the family narratives he has imbibed throughout the years. How do these items, objects invested with their own official and state meanings, augment or contradict the inheritance of oral histories that have lived in Obama’s head as cultural patrimony for years? How do these papers displace or erase his memories, even those acquired as tales, and lived with, almost as myth?

Story and art do live as trace or fragment that destabilizes the notion of archive as an ordered document of state and official history. Artistic practices have often involved practices of countermemory, and visual artists have worked against the regulation of the archive by using its formations—film, photography, media, documents—in ways that trouble the recall of these official histories and, as Okwui Enwezor points out, “in their inconsistency perforate the membrane of private and public memory.”<sup>42</sup> Some of these are antimonuments, particularly sculpture which wonders about history and performs as modest remains, antiheroic and unmonumental elements conceptualized as pieces of the world which narrate their own journeys. They are sometimes raw in formal presentation, testing the limits of what is acceptable, and in doing so “deliberately situate themselves in a minor place in an attempt to restore the power of opacity, difficulty and doubt.”<sup>43</sup> They do not narrate holistic, sanctioned, or hegemonic history; in-

stead they live in the interstices and the caesuras of the standard record, in “the messy, contradictory details of our existence,” as Obama has observed.

Their fragmentedness makes them enigmatic, pieces whose meaning oscillates. They mirror the trajectory of memory and postmemory pieced together through stories, images, materials that themselves are on their second, third, or *n*th iteration. There is also gesture, where memory becomes emanation, an “embodied living connection,” an indexical performance shaped by the artist’s and “the viewer’s needs and desires.”<sup>44</sup> Such is the remnant as a site or “machine” of redemption. These speculative forms are posited against amnesia, toward preservation of local personal knowledge, and toward remembering and renewal. And artists mining this sense of the archival often create alternative utopic spaces, sites of counter-memory beyond the empirical and the manifest.<sup>45</sup>

Giorgio Agamben has analyzed Michel Foucault’s discussion of archive as a “system of relations between the unsaid and the said,” the inside and outside of language. Agamben amplifies this concept to embrace the “possibility and impossibility of speech,” and inserts into this liminal space between the two positions—in the interstices and caesuras—the notion of testimony.<sup>46</sup> Along the trajectory between imminent and achievable notions of evidence and its remoteness or unattainability resides the musings and substantiations of the witness/subject. These thoughts and objects, oral or otherwise, are mobile remnants, defined by Agamben in their most concise form as the poetic word; he imagines the mobility and power of the single word, the simple self-contained fragment, the “redemptive machine.” Obama concurs. In human accounts, at once inimitable and common, “There was poetry as well—a luminous world always present beneath the surface, a world that people might offer up as a gift to me, if I only remembered to ask.”<sup>47</sup> These chronicles, words, traces, and fragments also suggest and point to something larger. If people make sense of their existence through stories and art generally, it is not done necessarily in isolation (though it can be) but often with and through community, in whatever way one chooses to define it.

Organizing my own essays spurred me to think about how art makes community and how that was manifest in my own life of writing. How the art object’s movements from studio to museum or gallery in the twists and turns from public to private accumulates and draws community over time. I wondered how my practice might have performed the same action: both reflecting family traditions (if intellectual ones) and coalescing and building a new world, understanding writing and culture generally as a vocation, intellectual voyage, and political charge. These thoughts brought me to the

notion of community archives: theorizing how artistic communities—be they families of origin, groups, movements, neighborhoods, and so on—create and theorize their pasts, illuminating the dialogic among individuals and the collectives to which they belong, and in which artistic meaning is derived. And seeing this idea of community archives posited in opposition to the official text or document, positioning the notion of the fragmentary versus holistic monuments, as well as the conceptions of multiculturalism against that of a single calcified monoculture. Pieces written into and from the world, carrying knowledge of that time and moment embedded in them and in this way narrating the story of their migration, their history, and time in the world in form as well as content.<sup>48</sup>

The four-chapter structure of *EyeMinded* seeks to both illuminate and honor the familial dialogues that have shaped my creative output over two decades, as a writer and curator. While my writing is not poetry or plays, personal or social essays of my parents, Hettie Jones and Amiri Baraka, their love of both objects as well as the people who create art, and the appreciation of culture generally, was something I learned early on. My most constant fellow traveler in this world of culture, however, has been my multitalented sister Lisa Jones, a writer and filmmaker. We collaborated as sisters, friends, creative women, and feminists; we made the world in our own image and in the image of each other, from birth. I have also been blessed to meet another cultural traveler in this lifetime, my husband, Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., a music historian and piano player from Chicago. We started out with a writing collaboration and have been doing things together ever since.

Poems or essays by family members frame the sections of *EyeMinded* and I have selected my own writings that I feel are in dialogue with the person's work. Another interchange is then created when each family member reads the section and responds to the pairings I have created, offering an introduction to that segment. The more indirect conversations we have as writers are made front and center here. They reflect the writing life and the circulation of ideas, aesthetics, and the creation of meaning, the intersection of voices, as well as the outlines and reaches of each of our own creative concerns. Here the themes that have compelled me again and again—chronicles of African American, contemporary, and women artists, and the communities that form around these creators and their works; sensibilities and ways of making that remain outside mainstream and canonical histories—are found too in the pages of these other family productions.

The collection opens with Part I, “On Diaspora,” and my father’s poem “Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note” (1957), written before I was born, but dedicated to me upon my arrival. This section includes the essays

that grew out of my experience as a curator for the Johannesburg Biennale and focuses primarily on notions of diaspora and the work of women artists.

Here diaspora is considered in both concrete and abstract valences. On the one hand it is the act of African global dispersion and the subsequent will to reconnection. These linkages are forged across national boundaries, are not bound by the fixities of the nation-state, and attest to the transnationalism of political consciousness and black cultural and political work. However, such black internationalism, as Brent Hayes Edwards points out, also comes with certain risks, embodied in the inadequacies of translation.<sup>49</sup> Yet the fact of translation itself—even that which is putatively “unhappy”—also suggests the substitution of exactitude for flexibility, and notions of suppleness and accommodation, cooperation and forgiveness in the work of transnational process. Diaspora in its more conceptual mode takes as fulcrum the restoration of origins, with migration as exodus, and return as redemption and the promise of new possibilities. Here, Saidiya Hartman tells us, desire for kinship and a sense of place for the dispersed are worked out in the symbolic mirror of the African motherland.<sup>50</sup>

Like me, Amiri too has thought about “America” in its hemispheric equation, the fullness of its linguistic and cultural reach. This impacts what the United States is. As he writes, “it is simply that we want to include the real lives of the people of our world, the whole world. American culture is the creation, for instance, of all Americans. It is the combining of all the nationalities and cultures here that makes up the national character of American culture.”<sup>51</sup> In his introductory essay for this volume, which he also calls “EyeMinded,” Amiri finds in his assignment the challenge of responding to issues of art in the postnationalist era. He wades through the realities of gender as well as the ambivalent voice of conceptualism and a visual arena that resists didacticism, a singularity of voice, location, and purpose. Baraka dives into it also as an experiential maneuver, and as always finds his place in the new world.

The poem “Eye of the Beholder” by my mother provides the framing for Part II, “In Visioning.” Written in the 1970s, it muses on my sense of vision even at that moment, and is what Hettie extrapolates on in her introduction, “Seeing Through.” It is an idea of seeing that Jonathan Crary has described as embedded in changes in knowledge and its systems, and elucidated by an “observer” who is inextricably part of the era. The action of observation for Crary takes place intellectually as well as bodily, and demonstrates a body demarcated by “the operation of social power.”<sup>52</sup> This too is what I saw and what my mother saw in me. For Hettie, it is the joining of vision in this expanded computation with the “precise language [that] was

important in our house” which was key, along with my notion that there existed an audience for art made up of all manner of intelligent witnesses; these parameters, she insists, molded my writing voice.

In this part of the book the selections reflect on artistic periods and styles through the imagery and profiles of individual artists. It includes writings on Dawoud Bey, Silvia Gruner, and Pat Ward Williams, my well-known interview with David Hammons from 1986, and the essay “Eye-Minded” on Martin Puryear.

“How I Invented Multiculturalism,” one of my favorite essays from my sister’s collection *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair* (1994), introduces Part III, “Making Multiculturalism.” I am fascinated by how she so eloquently sums up so much of what we lived through in just a few pages. And I love her humor, her “lip and nerve” as she calls it.<sup>53</sup> She found her language in the genre of satire, yet still in her discussions of contemporary life and culture (popular and otherwise) her investment in the multi-racial is always critical and political. Her audacity and self-possession reveal a woman charged and charged up with defining the world she saw and letting the rest of us in on what things looked like now, how landscapes had changed, and where our generation would take it. Hers is a voice resolutely feminist, compelled by the culture of women, but energized as we were by the lessons and textures of African American life and art, living Ntozake Shange’s feisty words, “I am a daughter of the black arts movement (even though they didn’t know they were going to have a girl!).”<sup>54</sup>

For us art was an actant; there was always a correlation between all manner of cultural productions and their actions in the world. Art allowed us to boldly fly the political flag we knew. “Welcome to my America,” Lisa writes, where “cultural pluralism was more than a performance piece for well-heeled art house patrons, but an everyday life led by thousands of Americans, black, yellow, brown, red, and yes, even white.”<sup>55</sup> In her essay for this book, “Excuse Me While I Kiss the Sky & Then Fly and Touch Down,” she elaborates further on the perspective we share as sisters and collaborators—co-conspirators really—in this grand universe of letters, art, and culture. While I have most often couched my observations in the so-called “objective” voice of scholar and art historian, she has always been the more bold and fearless writer. With a journalist’s eye for detail and a novelist’s ear for language, Lisa’s voice remains distinctly her own, a clear-eyed chronicle (politically astute and hilarious) which shows us how issues of power, race, and gender are lived on a daily basis. My writing in Part III, as the title of her earlier essay suggests, explores the notion of multiculturalism, along with issues

of transnationalism and postcolonialism, and include pieces on Jean-Michel Basquiat, Pepón Osorio, Cuban artists, and black British artists.

I commissioned my husband Guthrie Ramsey to write “Free Jazz and the Price of Black Musical Abstraction” for my exhibition “Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction, 1964–1980.” The artists of the generation who were the focus of the show looked to jazz for directions in their own practice, and particularly to the “free jazz” experimentation that developed in the 1960s.

Guthrie’s essay opens the fourth section, which focuses on African American artists’ pursuit of “Abstract Truths,” their desire to escape the expectation to constantly perform representation. It is an aspiration instantiated, to a certain extent, by the relative newness of their ability to actually control their own images after many centuries of enforced sublimation to others’ portrayals; it is a power concomitant with the very notion of the ownership of the body itself. The desire for a utopic imaginary has been an important overarching factor for African American modern artists, one based in the charge to present a narrative that captures their significant and unique perspective. Yet it has also been a burden, a constraint at times on visual creativity. Ann Gibson, among others, has written of the pull toward figuration for African American practitioners occasioned by factors both external and internal.<sup>56</sup> This ambivalence and the movement between the space of bodily representation and the site of total nonobjective ground can be observed in the works of painters like Hale Woodruff, Norman Lewis, Al Loving, and Howardena Pindell. The momentum toward visualization of the recognizable, the knowable, fights the historical loss of the black body, one that has been disappeared by violence and social forces as much as through visual erasure. Another explanation may also be simply the context of American art, for Yve-Alain Bois the “ambiguity of the figure/ground relationship as the very theme of American painting.”<sup>57</sup>

Bois’s interest in thought that is pictorial and anti-illustrative, whose theorems lie within the technics and phenomenology of the matter/acts/knowledge that is painting, is something the artists in this section attest to. Yet I would also not limit such notions of art’s intellectual perceptions or truth to painting alone for each medium or material assembly has its own way of telling us about the world. As Guthrie points out in his piece opening this section—“Them There Eyes: On Connections and the Visual”—the lessons and models of art’s knowledge have circulated easily among us as thought, information, almost as “family gossip.” Of course there is meaning in art outside of its life in the social world, knowledge that is made there,

then made available to us. Art is thought and art is history, sometimes the only reliable idea or evidence. The truth telling of art's making offers intellectual formations, ones that can, among other things, give us models of community. The partnership between Guthrie and myself indeed began with our shared wonder at the historical diremptions of things visual as well as musical.

In this final section of *EyeMinded* my writing concerns the Black Arts Movement and its legacy, issues for African American artists choosing to work in abstract styles, and notions of artistic freedom. It includes my essay for the "Energy/Experimentation" catalogue, a piece on abstract shows by black artists at the Whitney Museum in the 1970s, and writing on California conceptualists.

In the pages of *EyeMinded*, myself and others perform our conversations. This book makes public the dialogues that one has with family, friends, mentors, but also with the world one writes from and to. Here the writing life is revealed and celebrated. One may write alone, but it seems to always be in concert.

#### INTO THE ARCHIVE

In 2008 Columbia University acquired Amiri Baraka's archive, two hundred boxes of manuscripts, audio- and videotapes, correspondence, photographs, and other ephemera.

Recently I visited this material now housed in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department at Butler Library. Given the format of my essay collection I thought I needed to take at least one initial glance to get some sense of it. Was there anything there of use to me? Was this too my inheritance of manuscripts, letters, pictures, and sounds—much like the letters and registry book Obama accepted with expectations as well as not a little trepidation? Or was this something whose meaning lay elsewhere?

What fascinated me was the raw, unprocessed nature of its elements at that moment—rickety bankers boxes, still covered with the "patina of time"—new to Columbia, as well as new to the official archive. In these containers I witnessed things moving from being part of the fabric of life, along the trajectory toward official knowledge. Yet all told, what they revealed are the materials and the business of being a writer and activist. They show the wear, tear, and use. They narrate their movement through the world.

The artist Renee Green, whose own art has mined and mimed archival practices, has written: "How does one return? To a country, to a place of birth? To a location which reeks of remembered sensations? But what are these sensations? Is it possible to trace how they are triggered and why they

are accompanied with as much dread as anticipation? . . . What does an archive allow?”<sup>58</sup> Indeed, I do see myself passing through these boxes at Butler Library, I remember these times and places written and talked about; find myself too in the images, sounds, and pages and pages and pages. I am there in these pages, and these pages are there in my memory.

In the place of a single linear history with distinct lines of antecedents and succession, the theorist Michel Foucault thinks instead about the synchrony of manifold and coincident universes of knowledge and meaning.<sup>59</sup> This was and is a boon to those of us who study so-called alternative histories—diasporic, planetary—that appear different from canonical narrations, that are modern in ways distinct from a singular Western hegemonic model. We thrive in the multiplicity of synchronic worlds which are finally recognized as existing with their own logic and power, embracing the concept of multiculturalism as a reality that is quotidian, mundane. In Foucault’s schema such discursive formations are multiple, and they are repetitive in their construction. But this repetition is not progression or advance in a hierarchical or linear formulation, it is not a return, it is “not tradition.”<sup>60</sup> The density of these practices creates the archive according to Foucault, that which is:

at once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us. The description of the archive deploys its possibilities (and the mastery of its possibilities) on the basis of the discourses that have just ceased to be ours; its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say, and from that which falls outside our discursive practice; it begins with the outside of our own language.<sup>61</sup>

The archive is what becomes past as we move toward the future, and its boundaries “deprive . . . us of our continuities.”<sup>62</sup> The way we access the archival past, Foucault tells us, is through motions that are at their base archeological—sifting and combing through things already left behind.

Foucault’s paradigm for archive is in some ways best thought of on the order of a metaschema, and addresses the notion of archival practice as a fixture of historical and national constructs. In some ways it is a more uncomfortable fit for those microcommunities of users—those creating what I am referring to as community archives—those leaving traces of their existence through material, oral, written, performative cultures that belie their erasure by larger institutional formations. For these users the dismissal of

tradition in Foucault's framework is problematic. The logic of the community archive is on the one hand a site of dialogic relations through cultural formations and the creation and maintenance of cultural meanings. Here "tradition" becomes a way to mark and explain difference, a method to in fact signal that it is one of many discursive units. The rubric of diasporic dispersion embodies migration across the boundaries of space and time. Yet hand in hand with this mobility is the grounding in remembrance: that while one cannot necessarily go back to live in the past as it was lived, one can and does return, revisits. And in doing so one brings a piece, a fragment, forward, making it new, refiguring and re-forming a continuity.<sup>63</sup>

Similarly concerned with dismantling the hierarchy and hegemony of the authorial mode, Foucault and others empty the author function as a regulator of meaning and history. Yet Agamben sees testimony as an authorial role which creates a bridge between the inside and outside of language, a witness who speaks back to the archive, forming a connection between the lived realm and that of the past, the place of community archives. Figures found in the cracks, crevices, breaches, and breaks in the archive, in the shards that prod and prick, and emerge. "It is because there is testimony only where there is an impossibility of speaking, because there is a witness only where there has been desubjectification," as Agamben reminds us.<sup>64</sup> Testimony through trace, sometimes voluminous, is where communities of users—unaccounted for and sublimated by the prescribed boundaries of larger institutional formations and its official archive—inscribe, create, and enjoy meaning.

Thinking through these ideas in the face of my family's capacious archive I ask myself is it really ever over, really ever done with? How is one's mission as an intellectual and citizen of the world, learned from birth, with social justice at the center, how is this life, a move back and forth, not always excavating but actually living this charge to bring histories (one's own?) to light? The histories of African American and diaspora cultures, of American culture lived in its full glory, its untidy inconsistency and ambiguities. Is this past or past lived in the present brought forward made new; is it legacy; is it life?

And does my relationship to the archive at Columbia (as well as others) suggest or frame an approach to my own intellectual work?<sup>65</sup> The constant mining back into the history of art; reconsidering and seeing more fully that which has been erased or denied even when it lives in the archive, lives in the works of art, lives in the stories of those who made these things? How does this activity not only reconstruct history but community and family? Does the archive ever indeed have the final word? Isn't it always being re-

framed and interpreted, seen by new eyes with different information and contexts? In that sense does this discourse indeed “cease to be ours” as Foucault suggests? Or in the exhortations of the talmudic text, “Is it possible that the antonym of ‘forgetting’ is not ‘remembering’ but justice?”<sup>66</sup>

How do our actions as historians, intellectuals, people who walk the streets of the metropolis and the countryside intersect with larger global formations of progress? In the manner of Obama’s schematic, I want to see my bond to family and community through art as part of a pact with the planet linked through a network of ever-growing circles where planetary commitments are also obligations to self. Is it the place where archives, and my family archives, including literature and art, as documents both private and public, offer a site for mutual recognition, a mediatory interval informed and expanded from the familial gaze, in the oscillating space of engaged tensions, in the area between memory and its future tense, “between continuity and rupture,” that moves us forward?<sup>67</sup>

To quote Obama once more: “What is our community, and how might that community be reconciled with our freedom? How far do our obligations reach? How do we transform mere power into justice, mere sentiment into love?”<sup>68</sup>

Toward the end of *Dreams from My Father*, Obama has an epiphany about his search for making family and community while viewing an album of photographs. With his Kenyan sister Auma, he visits the comfortable Nairobi home of his father’s third wife, the white American Ruth, who returned with Obama Senior to Africa and raised a family together, until they too split. While leafing through Ruth’s family album he sees an “alternate universe”—the places where black and white come together as harmonious, and whole—“fantasies” he’d “kept secret” even from himself. After what he describes as an uncomfortable and tense family encounter, he returns with Auma to her apartment, only to now recognize on her wall one of the same happy family portraits from Ruth’s collection.<sup>69</sup>

This visit allows Obama to understand and honor his personal narrative. One that is part of, but not wholly defined by, this situation and from which he creates something new: in Kenya but also within the rest of his family and world. He realizes the history that the photo album represents is not the only story but a partial tale, something that in its materiality is yet unfinished and incomplete. This contextualizes his own interest and investment in countermemory, and universes of microcommunities that contribute to a larger whole.

Sometime in the early 1960s Joseph Hirshhorn purchased the canvas *LeRoi Jones and Family* (1964) from the artist Bob Thompson. It was un-

finished. My mother and father are painted in; my sister and I are only outlines, sketched out in chalk. Thompson painted over another work and a single gnome-like figure shows through, in some ways a substitute for us children. Standing before this painting, as I have on numerous occasions, I am confronted perhaps with some of the same feelings that Obama acknowledges opening the Kenyan photo album: loss, craving the happy, holistic notions of the nuclear family; wishing away the stigma of America's problematic history and inability to accept or acknowledge its own life of multiculturalism, where "to have mixed is to have been party to a great civilizational betrayal;"<sup>70</sup> seeing in miscegenation a word "humpbacked, ugly, portending a monstrous outcome."<sup>71</sup> A notion perhaps even inscribed in this very painting; in the place where beautiful babies are replaced by a strange deformed creature.

But then there is life! My own memories of a life lived in worlds different but exciting, full of things to learn, understand, enjoy, dance and listen to, see, and live for. Life as fun but life as mission. To tell it, to make people see, know, and accept all of it at whatever cost; a responsibility to the past but also to the present and to the future. To write oneself back into history, as a continual action, as a responsibility not just to oneself but also to community. And in doing so making claims to a notion of community—national and outernational—one where we choose the better parts of our histories and ourselves. To live a conviviality that is spontaneous and organic, an intermixture that is at once banal and subversive in its ordinariness. To contribute to, in Gilroy's words, "contemporary cosmopolitics . . . in the service of planetary humanism and global multiculturalism . . . openness and undifferentiated love."<sup>72</sup>

In the lower right hand corner of Bob Thompson's *LeRoi Jones and Family*, ghostly chalk letters hover over the unfinished portion of the painting; ever more faded, a blocky signature emerges. *KELLIE*, I signed, and in doing so claimed what was partial and provisional, emerged where I was never supposed to, declared this space and my liminality not as a failure but as a site of layering, multiplicity, and possibility, a space even utopic.

Art, like family photography, "is not just about how the family looks in the pictures: it's also about how the pictures look in the family."<sup>73</sup> That is, the manner in which sculpture, painting, and other forms mediate the intersection of human gazes and needs. It is how we recognize the power, desire, and possibilities as well as the uncertainties and vulnerabilities that settle on objects and the methods and actions we find to maintain the emotional connection that flows between us there. It is thinking about the contexts in which art can "reactivate and rembody more distant social/national

and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression,” its role in communal life, tradition, and patterns of remembrance.<sup>74</sup> These are among art’s gifts, its ability to provide a manner for people to see, know, and understand themselves in the world.

Wilmington, Del. | July 2009

#### NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. For a discussion of some of these ideas see Marianne Hirsch, “Introduction: Familial Looking,” in Marianne Hirsch, ed., *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999).
2. Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (New York: Random House, 2004, originally 1995), 327, 329, 331.
3. Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), xv.
4. *Ibid.*, 70. Other recent writings on communities as collectives of uncommonness include Elizabeth Grosz, “Architectures of Excess,” in *Architecture from the Outside, Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), and Kobena Mercer, ed., *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).
5. Adrienne Rich, “Disloyal to Civilization,” in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966–1978* (1979), quoted in Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 71 n. 9. The structure of intercultural defined by “teaching the conflicts” is from Gerald Graff, “‘Teach the Conflicts’: An Alternative to Educational Fundamentalism,” in Betty Jean Craig, ed., *Literature, Language and Politics* (1988), quoted in David Theo Goldberg, “Introduction: Multicultural Conditions,” in *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 19.
6. Theories of multiculturalism abounded in the 1990s. Largely addressing the experience in the United States, it was seen as the outcome of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and the expansion of identity formation emerging in structures of late capitalism and postmodernism. Among many useful texts see Goldberg, *Multiculturalism*; Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield, eds., *Mapping Multiculturalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Hazel V. Carby, *Cultures in Babylon, Black Britain and African America* (New York: Verso, 1999), particularly “Dispatches from the Multicultural Wars.” Like Paul Gilroy, Vijay Prashad has created another term—polycultural—to replace “multicultural” as a way to talk about multiracial societies in a global world. See Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).
7. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 141.
8. Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 99.
9. Some of this information and more can be found on the New Museum of Contem-

porary Art's website ([www.newmuseum.org](http://www.newmuseum.org)), as part of the Bowery Artist Tribute, a continuing project documenting artists' development of the Bowery area of SoHo, the museum's new home. I provided content for the Wyn Loving entry as well as that of my own.

10. The Park Place group championed sculpture, painting, and music whose versions of illusionism and minimalism have only recently made it into canonical accounts of art making in that period. Paula Cooper was an integral force in the gallery aspect of the group's project and with its shuttering in 1967 she opened her own space. See Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York* (Austin, Tex.: Blanton Museum of Art, 2008).
11. Suzan-Lori Parks, *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* (1989).
12. The embrace of Black Nationalism generally and the rise in organizing along racial lines in the 1950s and 1960s was a response to continuing segregation and unremitting discrimination in the United States. As a strategic political stance it became a model of organizing that energized others throughout the country—youth, Latinos, Native and Asian Americans—and which would be adopted for a time to gain greater footholds into U.S. institutional structures. From 1974 on Amiri increasingly eschewed this form of political organization for one that embraced multiracial coalitions and a greater critique of class, based on international socialism. These changes over time by my father framed my understanding of multicultural politics as well. See Komozi Woodard, "It's Nation Time in NewArk: Amiri Baraka and the Black Power Experiment in Newark, New Jersey," Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), and Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting*, 136.
13. Amiri Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1997); James Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
14. For a compelling reading of *Slave Ship* as environmental theater see the chapter entitled "1969: Black Art and the Aesthetics of Memory," in Cheryl Finley's forthcoming *Committed to Memory: The Slave Ship Icon in the Black Atlantic Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
15. Hirsch, "Introduction: Familial Looking," in Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze*; and Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29 (1) (2008): 103–28.
16. I chose these four family members to structure the dialogic approach to this book. However, there are other creative kin to acknowledge that remain a part of this conversation: in the literary realm there is my brother Ras Baraka and my cousin Loretta Green, a journalist for many years with the *San Jose Mercury News* [California]. In the worlds of writing, music, and media there is my stepmother Amina Baraka; and of media production my brother Amiri Baraka Jr. and sister Dominique DiPrima along with her husband Guillermo Cespedes. There are, of course, younger generations, poised to step into the public realm very soon.

17. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 75.
18. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).
19. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 75.
20. For a discussion of this project see Okwui Enwezor, "Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument," in *Archive Fever: The Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2008), 45–46.
21. "Progeny" traveled to Bernice Steinbaum Gallery in Miami, Florida, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University in New York, and Forty Acres and a Mule Gallery in Sacramento, California, during 2008–2009. The exhibition was curated by Kalia Brooks, Deborah Willis's niece. Artist and scholar Deborah Willis has also addressed similar ideas of family creativity and transmission in her own writings. See Deborah Willis, *Family History Memory: Recording African American Life* (New York: Hylas, 2005); and Deborah Willis, ed., *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography* (New York: New Press, 1994).
22. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 204.
23. This acceptance of heterogeneity was accompanied by ideas of institutional critique, with the notions that museums, historically, had been spaces whose coherence depended on the homogeneity of viewpoints and practitioners, and frameworks that coalesced the power of the elite and nation-state. See Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997). Jennifer Gonzalez offers a new appraisal of "institutional critique" in *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 67–68; see also John C. Welchman, ed., *Institutional Critique and After* (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2006), and Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).
24. Chon Noriega, "On Museum Row: Aesthetics and the Politics of Style," *Daedalus* 128 (3), "America's Museum" (1999): 59. See also Jennifer Gonzalez, *Subject to Display*, 11. For more on the concept of the representation of "marginality" within the museum see Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Ethnicities and Global Multiculture* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), particularly "Multiculturalism and Museums."
25. See Noriega, "On Museum Row," Julie Ault, ed., *Alternative Art New York, 1965–1985* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1999); and Kellie Jones, "To the Max: Energy and Experimentation," and "It's Not Enough to Say 'Black Is Beautiful': Abstraction at the Whitney 1969–1974," in this book.
26. Indeed, Obama becomes a community organizer in 1983 to create change in the government and the country from the grass roots.
27. This is not to discount the intersection of desires on the part of everyday viewing audiences interested in Basquiat's art and life and those of powerful collectors with a strong financial stake in the work. See Noriega, "On Museum Row"; and Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, eds., *Museum*

*Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

28. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
29. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).
30. "In the Tropics" was shown at ps 39/Longwood Arts Project in the Bronx, March 22—April 19, 1986. It included Charles Abramson, Terry Adkins, Roger Anthony, Keiko Bonk, Robert Colescott, Papo Colo, Thom Corn, Marina Gutierrez, Skoman Hastanan, Janet Henry, Kate Kennedy, Marilyn Lerner, Manuel Macarrulla, Pepón Osorio, Catalina Parra, Lorna Simpson, Vincent Smith, and David Wojnarowicz. For a detailed description of "Carmella and King Kong" see Lisa Jones, "She Came with the Rodeo," in *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

Housed in a former elementary school, ps 39/Longwood Arts Project had both gallery and artist studio spaces. It formed part of the activities of the Bronx Council on the Arts then run by Bill Aguado, who in that position supported the arts in the Bronx for thirty years. See David Gonzalez, "Arts Leader Who Gave Bronx Culture Respect and Renaissance," *New York Times*, July 10, 2009, A19–A20.
31. For a wonderful account of Wilson's artistic development see Jennifer Gonzalez, *Subject to Display*, chapter 2.
32. Broida eventually donated his collection to the Museum of Modern Art. See Carol Vogel, "The Modern Gets a Sizable Gift of Contemporary Art," *New York Times*, October 12, 2005, E1.
33. The Jamaica Arts Center, now known as the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, is still in existence.
34. My ability to organize a major international exhibition from the precincts of an urban community art center was occasioned by major funding in place just for this purpose. In 1988 the National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts joined with the United States Information Agency to support the Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions. Administered by the Institute of International Education (which manages the Fulbright awards), the fund was set up to provide greater exposure for U.S. artists abroad. Given that it was the late 1980s, one prominent goal was to have the United States represented by a diversity of artists, not the just the status quo. This funding enabled smaller organizations like the Jamaica Arts Center to apply to participate on the international stage. After fifteen years the fund was disbanded in 2003 for financial reasons. Unfortunately this allowed selection for major international exhibitions to default to large institutions with bigger budgets which had been the previous model for all but that decade and a half. Case in point: the 2009 participation at the Venice Biennale was organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See Nan Robertson, "U.S. Agencies and Foundation Join to Aid Artists," *New York Times*, February 24, 1988, C19.
35. "US-UK Photography Exchange" had been my summer show at the Jamaica Arts Center and I managed to bring all the artists to the openings in New York as well as London. The exhibition was on view in Queens July 12—September 1, 1989. It

- opened in London sometime in November of that year and toured England for eighteen months. The photographers included Dawoud Bey, Mikki Ferrell, and Charles Biasiny-Rivera from the United States and Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Maxine Walker, and Ingrid Pollard from England. David A. Bailey was the guest essayist.
36. This was the case with two of the exhibitions I did in London. "US-UK Photography Exchange" was done in this manner. It was in the previous year, however, that I first worked this way. "TransAtlantic Traditions: Women Photographers from the USA and Puerto Rico" went to Camerawork Gallery from September 13 to October 15, 1988. It was part of the Spectrum Women's Photography Festival and included works by Lorna Simpson, Coreen Simpson, Nina Kuo, and Freda Medin. The British photographer Ingrid Pollard helped me make the original contact and championed the project for the festival, attesting to the strong feminist connections that we were also building during this time.
  37. My emphasis. Courtney J. Martin, "Cyclones in the Metropole: British Artists, 1968–1989," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2009, 7. See also Coco Fusco, "A Black Avant-Garde? Notes on Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa," in *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: The New Press, 1995).
  38. My last large project dealing with Black Britain in this period was the exhibition "Interrogating Identity." The show considered the notion of what we would now call the African diaspora through an interrogation of the designation "black" in the United States, England, and Canada. I was co-curator of the exhibition with Thomas Sokolowski, then director of the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center at New York University. "Interrogating Identity" was on view in New York March 12–May 18, 1991. The show's extensive tour included the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Madison Art Center, Wisconsin; Center for the Fine Arts, Miami; Oberlin College Gallery, Ohio; Duke University Museum of Art, Durham, N.C. It was among the first museum exhibitions to present these artists in the United States. It paralleled the exposure of this work in the mainstream of Britain itself with the exhibition "The Other Story" at London's Hayward Gallery in 1989, and the subsequent mainstreaming of black British artists. The artists who participated in "Interrogating Identity" were Rasheed Araeen, Rebecca Belmore, Nadine Chan, Albert Chong, Allan deSouza, Jamelie Hassan, Mona Hatoum, Roshini Kempadoo, Glenn Ligon, Whitfield Lovell, Lani Maestro, Lillian Mulero, Ming Mur-Ray, Keith Piper, Ingrid Pollard, Donald Rodney, Yinka Shonibare, and Gary Simmons. From 1990 to 1993 I was also a board member of the London-based journal *Third Text*.
  39. Trey Ellis, "The New Black Aesthetic," *Callaloo* 12 (1) (1989): 233–43; and Greg Tate, "Nobody Loves a Genius Child: Jean Michel Basquiat, Flyboy in the Buttermilk" (1989), as well as his earlier "Cult-Nats Meet Freaky Deke" (1986), both originally published in *The Village Voice* and collected in Greg Tate, *Flyboy in the Buttermilk* (New York: Fireside, 1992). For a feminist perspective see Lisa Jones, "She Came with the Rodeo."
  40. Nelson Mandela quoted in Jovial Rantao, "Museums Must Rewrite History, Says Mandela," *Cape Argus*, September 25, 1997; see also Leslie Witz, "Transforming

Museums on Postapartheid Tourist Routes,” in Karp, Kratz, Szwaja, and Ybarra-Frausto, *Museum Frictions*.

41. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 427.
42. Enwezor, “Archive Fever,” 30.
43. Trevor Smith, “Sculpture: A Minor Place,” in *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007), 190. Hal Foster has labeled these unexpected constructions “bad combinations,” at once “preposterous [and] tendentious” as well as utopic. Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” *October* 110 (fall 2004): 20–21.
44. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 111, 124.
45. The notion of remnant as “redemptive machine” comes from Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 163. It also parallels Foster’s concept of the utopic found in the uneasy amalgamations of some contemporary art practices.
46. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 144–45.
47. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 191.
48. Thanks to Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. for helping me think through the idea of community archives, which shares similarities with his concept of “community theaters.” See Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
49. Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 66 (spring 2001): 45–73. See also the special issue of *Radical History Review*—“Reconceptualizations of the African Diaspora” 103 (winter 2009).
50. Saidiya Hartman, “The Time of Slavery,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 (4) (2002): 757–77; and Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).
51. Amiri Baraka, “Multinational, Multicultural America versus White Supremacy,” in Ismael Reed, ed., *MultiAmerica: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace* (New York: Viking, 1997), 393.
52. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 3.
53. Lisa Jones, *Bulletproof Diva*, 3.
54. Ntozake Shange cited in Alan Read, ed., *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), 159.
55. Lisa Jones, *Bulletproof Diva*, 4, 10.
56. Ann Gibson, “Recasting the Canon: Norman Lewis and Jackson Pollock,” *Artforum* 30 (March 1992): 66–72. See also Paul Gilroy, “Cruciality and the Frog’s Perspective,” *Third Text* 5 (winter 1988–1989), 33–44; and Kobena Mercer, “Black Art and the Burden of Representation,” *Third Text* 10 (Spring 1990), 61–78.
57. Yve-Alain Bois, *Painting as Model* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 249.
58. Renee Green, “Survival: Ruminations on Archival Lacunae,” in Beatrice von Bismarck et al., *Interarchive: Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Art Field* (Cologne: Konig, 2002), 149, 150.

59. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 167.
60. *Ibid.*, 130.
61. *Ibid.*, 130–31.
62. *Ibid.*, 131.
63. On art and structures of remembrance see Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” in Geneviève Fabre and Robert O’Meally, eds., *History and Memory in African American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Cheryl Finley, “Committed to Memory: The Slave-Ship Icon and the Black-Atlantic Imagination,” *Chicago Art Journal* 9 (1999): 2–21.  
 Chon Noriega has discussed the material formations of memory in the paintings of Carmen Lomas Garza. As he points out, remembrance of the Chicano presence in Texas does not dwell on exterminating violence but on the linkage of culture and tradition. Similarly, African American artists, especially in the nineteenth century and early twentieth, focus on compositions of lush beauty and captivating figures as elements that are forward and progressive. They are more concerned with sketching a utopic imaginary than outlining the contours of a more brutal reality. Noriega, “On Museum Row,” 65.
64. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 158.
65. Hettie Jones’s archive was acquired by Columbia University in 2009. A baby picture of mine was recently discovered in the Charles Olson Archive at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. Thanks to Hettie Jones and Fred Buck for this information.
66. Talmud Yerushalmi quoted in Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 77.
67. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 106.
68. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 438.
69. *Ibid.*, 342–43, 345.
70. Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 125.
71. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, 9.
72. Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 80; on intermixture see also 124 and 150.
73. Jane Gallop and Dick Blau, “Observations of a Mother,” in Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze*, 82.
74. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 111.