



Artist Reception

October 25, 2023, 5:30 – 7 pm

Stacy Bloom Rexrode

Curator of Exhibitions and Collections

Leticia Clementina

Guest Curator

Cover Image: Cornell Watson, *Boot Straps*, 2020, 24" x 36", Pigmented ink on archival paper

BLOCK GALLERY

It Ain't All Black And White

OCTOBER 4, 2023 – FEBRUARY 23, 2024

It Ain't All Black And White

is an exhibition of photographic works curated by North Carolina-based photographer Leticia Clementina.

Black people are often asked to shrink their complex emotions into two categories, joy and pain; sitting high on joy as a reaction against the impact of colonization or burdened by pain that is exploited as the focal element in galleries, news, and social media. ***It Ain't All Black and White*** is a photography exhibition that encourages us to consider emotions such as serenity, apprehension, yearning, and more. Captured by 10 dynamic photographers dedicated to documenting the fullness and complexity of Black life, this exhibition offers each of us an opportunity to see ourselves with renewed attention.

Black people need to unapologetically center their stories, free of the white gaze, in order to examine our emotions and their relationship to our ancestors, community, and environment. These emotions have roots. They are living and breathing, steering our experiences and how we show up in the world. Examining the life source of our emotions provides an opportunity for us to welcome the liberation of introspection.

The images in this exhibition are black and white to demand that we focus on the subject, challenging the viewer to explore how the abundance of sophisticated emotions manifest in our physical, mental, and spiritual being. This abundance ultimately influences how we show up for ourselves, our families, our community, and beyond. What are they expressing in their face and/or body? How are they loving, living, and healing?

– Leticia Clementina

Guest Curator

Leticia Clementina

📸 EyeMakePictures



Leticia Clementina, *Into the Light*, 2023, 30" x 20", Digital Photograph on Archival Inkjet Paper

Leticia Clementina is a Durham, NC-based photographer and program director for a community-based nonprofit. Raised in Eastern North Carolina, her curiosity about the obscure realities that exist within the human experience was nurtured in family photo albums that held snapshots of lived moments she desired to know more about.

Leticia's current photography practice seeks to explore, document, and reveal the intricate and less obvious aspects of the lives of those around her and her personal experiences as she learns more about herself, her family, and the environment that nurtures them. Her master's degree in social work and professional practice creates an opportunity for Leticia's photography to combine evidence-based knowledge with symbolic representation. Leticia's ongoing photography series *Fruit of the Black Man's Hand* aspires to recognize the fruitful contributions of Black men in her life and community and how those contributions impact their loved ones and beyond. Work from this series and other projects have been shown in numerous exhibitions throughout the Triangle and Piedmont areas in North Carolina.

About the Artists

Derrick Beasley

derrickbeasley.art

@ brobeas

Derrick Beasley is a multidisciplinary artist from Durham, NC. His works explore Black life and its intersections with the environment. Derrick's work often uses surrealism to stretch ideas around what is possible and imagine new realities for Black masculinity and relationships with the environment.

Beasley received a BA at North Carolina A&T and a MPA from Georgia State University. Derrick's work has been exhibited and published nationally, with his most notable solo exhibition and residency being at NorthStar Church of the Arts in Durham, NC. He has received multiple grants and awards including from the Pivotal Fund, the Ella Fountain Pratt Emerging Artist Grant, and the Awesome Foundation Grant.

Beasley's work aims to facilitate the exploration of possibilities and the imagining, designing, and unearthing of just and equitable worlds.



Derrick Beasley, *Holding On*, 2019, 15" x 10", Photography

Mark Anthony Brown Jr.

markanthonybrownjr.us

@ markanthonybrownjr

Mark Anthony Brown Jr. is a photographer and interdisciplinary artist living and working in the American South. He migrated from Ohio and settled throughout the South, from Georgia to North Carolina.

Mark is currently an MFA Candidate at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and received his Bachelor of Science Technology from Bowling Green State University. He has received numerous fellowships and awards, including a Visiting Researcher Fellowship and the Southern Futures Emerging Scholar Award, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. He has completed residencies at the Penland School of Craft, Penland, North Carolina, and at Remerge, Atlanta, Georgia, and has exhibited his work nationally.

Mark's art practices consist of narrative and abstraction, that utilize whichever medium is the best fit to achieve the goal of the work being made. Mediums and materials range around and through the

medium of photography, including collage, video, vernacular photographs, family archives, institutional archives, "found" photographs, portraiture, and landscape, in addition to the use of "found" objects, painting, and drawing. With Mark's interest in aesthetics, materials, and perception, themes within the work are found at the intersection of the overarching human experience and the Black experience.



Mark Anthony Brown Jr., *Before You Jumped Off the Porch*, 2021, printed 2023, 11" x 14", Gelatin Silver Print

Samantha Everette

Samanthaeverette.com

📷 [theshootingbeauty](#)

Samantha Everette is a lifelong artist, designer, world traveler, and photographer. She is a Durham native and graduated Summa Cum Laude from North Carolina State with a BA in Industrial Design. After graduating, Samantha spent ten years as a shoe designer. As a designer, Samantha spent half of the year living in China and traveling throughout Asia. Samantha was inspired to capture the world around her during these travels. This interest has since blossomed into a full-on passion for photography.

Everette has shown her work internationally and throughout North Carolina. She was a Regional Emerging Artist in Residence at Artspace, Raleigh, NC, and an Artist in Residence at Durham Fruit, Durham, NC. Her works have appeared in numerous publications.

The definition of Photography is "drawing with light," and Samantha Everette believes that the brightest light is the one that shines from within. Her mission is to help her subjects show their light to the world. Samantha has a knack for finding everyday



Samantha Everette, *Shannon*, 2018, 30" x 20", Photography

people and capturing something extraordinary within them. Her subjects range from travel, fashion, and beauty to lifestyle. But one thing remains constant, and that is her dedication to celebrating Blackness.

Chris Facey

cocobuttershutter.com

📷 [coco.butter.shutter](#)

🐦 [cocobuttrshuttr](#)

Chris Facey is a Brooklyn, NY-raised photographer currently based in Raleigh, NC. His photographic journey encapsulates the powerful yet tender moments that shape our world. Drawn to the impactful works of Gordon Parks and W. Eugene Smith, Chris documents communities, primarily the African American community, with a unique sensitivity, carving space for emotional resonance while delving into significant issues such as racial injustices during the current civil rights movement to combat stereotypes within these communities.

With a keen eye and passionate spirit, Chris has dedicated his career to spotlighting the African American community's stories. As a father, he's embarked on "*The Dad Duty Project*," aiming to challenge the misconception of absentee fathers within the black and brown communities. Additionally, his "*Even In Death*" project shows the preservation of an African-American cemetery and its fight against erasure and revisionist history in North Carolina.

A graduate of The School of Visual Arts with a BFA, Chris's journey is further enriched by his service as a United States Army veteran. His trajectory in the world of photo documentary has led to significant recognition, including features in eminent publications like *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine* and *The New York Times*, as well as exhibited in galleries such as *The Golden Belt Gallery*, *The Bronx River Art Center*, and *The Gage Gallery at Roosevelt University*.

Through his evocative storytelling and a commitment to visual activism, Chris Facey continues to wield his camera as a tool for social change. His work, steeped in both empathy and insight, serves as a testament to the capacity of photography to provoke thought, provoke emotions, and initiate dialogue on matters of crucial importance.



Chris Facey, *Dear Black Man Smile*, 2022, 22" x 28", Inkjet Print

Titus Brooks Heagins

titusbrooksheagins.art

© [titusbrooksheagins](#)

Titus Brooks Heagins is a documentary photographer who is obsessed with creating beautiful images regardless of the subject matter. He photographs in ways that the beauty in the experiences of the "outsider" simply doesn't escape his eye. That photography is rooted in and dedicated to the expressive documentary spirit and tradition. Within that spirit, authorship and a personal visual aesthetic are grounded in humanistic stories and themes.

Heagins was born in Chicago but grew up in a small rural neighborhood in Houston, Texas. His practice is deeply rooted in the lessons learned and experiences of those who lived within the confines of the segregated South and dreams unattained as a result.

Heagins graduated from Duke University and the University of Michigan with a Master of Fine Art. He taught photography at universities afterward. For the past twenty years, Heagins has created extensive bodies of work throughout the Black Diaspora, including Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, Ghana, South Africa, and Brazil. His projects have

carried him to China, photographing those displaced by the building of the Three Gorges Dam, Japan, photographing Lolita Girls, and Vietnam, creating portraits of the children of African American soldiers.

He has portfolios of his photography in the Smithsonian Museums in Washington DC, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Do Good Fund. He is included in the exhibition and book *Southbound: Photography of and About the New South*, the largest exhibition of 21st century photography about the American South.

He lives in Durham with his wife, Maureen, and their English Springer Spaniel, Carter.



Titus Brooks Heagins, *Sandy*, 2018, 20" x 30", Black and White Glicée Fine Art Print

Gadisse Lee

leegadisse.wixsite.com/my-site

© [gadisselee](#)



Gadisse Lee, *In My Own Strength*, 2023, 20" x 16", Photography

Gadisse Lee is an emerging fine art and self-portrait photographer who blends creativity, life experiences, and cultural influences in her work. With a Fine Arts degree specializing in Photography from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Gadisse captures her life's essence. Her art reflects an unconventional upbringing and adapting to a new culture during her formative years. This background shapes Gadisse's self-portrait photography, infusing each image with introspection and identity.

Currently, Gadisse's art graces the Greenhill Art Center in Greensboro, NC, alongside artist John Rosenthal. She recently showcased evocative works at Durham's Apple Art and has previously exhibited at the Block Gallery, Raleigh, NC, and the Peel Gallery, Carrboro, NC. She'll have her second solo exhibition at the Horace Williams House Preservation in Chapel Hill, NC, in 2024.

Gadisse's impact is recognized, earning her a top-three spot for the Artadia Research Triangle Artists Grant. Her motivation stems from artists' raw vulnerability and visibility. Being part of this artistic community fulfills Gadisse profoundly.

“King Phill” Loken

kingphill.us

📷 KingPhill

Currently based in Mebane, North Carolina, Phillip “King Phill” Loken was born in Texas and has lived in various cities and towns across North Carolina since age four. His photography is intimately tied to his lived experiences as a Black man in the American South. He wants to capture the rich history and vibrant cultural expressions that influence his subjects’ lives.

Loken’s work has been exhibited nationally. Most recently, his work was part of the group exhibition *Black and White: 2023* at Black Box Gallery in Portland, Oregon (2023). In 2022, Loken participated in the *Give Black Raleigh Her Flowers’* exhibition at Anchorlight Gallery in Raleigh, N.C. (2022). In 2021, Loken participated in the exhibition *BLACK GAZE: Representation, Identity, and Expression* at The Light Factory Photo Arts Center (2021).

As a professional photographer, Loken has worked with a variety of organizations and companies, including the City of Raleigh, CreativeMornings, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and Special Olympics North Carolina. His photographs have also been

licensed for use by the Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau, Verizon’s Go90 docuseries *American Down Low*, and *Walter Magazine*. Loken was featured in a documentary film, *Creative NC: An Introspective Look at Creative Culture*, which premiered in 2017 at the North Carolina Museum of History.



Phillip “King Phill” Loken, *Big P’s 2nd Birthday in VA I, 2023*, 36” x 24” (unframed), 41” x 29” (framed), [1 of 3 prints + 3 artist proofs], Digital Photograph on Archival Inkjet Paper



Jaylan Rhea, *Jmale*, 2022, 18” x 24”, Digital Print

Jaylan Rhea

📷 nonbinaryonthecouch

Hailing from Durham, North Carolina, Jaylan Rhea draws inspiration from the rich tapestry of life often on view in his community, intertwining personal experiences and universal themes in their work. Rhea is an interdisciplinary artist with a focus on portrait photography, highlighting diversity, gender, sexuality, and performance art. Rhea has shot for a range of publications such as *Human Shift Magazine*, *Bricks Magazine*, and *Vogue.com* and has had works featured in the “*To Be Young: Coming of Age in the Contemporary*” exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

Cornell Watson

cornellwatson.com

 [cornwhizzle](#)

Cornell Watson is a Dope-Ass Black photographer based in Durham, North Carolina. He frequently contributes photography to national publications such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, NPR, ESPN, and Bloomberg. He has also photographed national ad campaigns for companies such as T-Mobile, MeUndies, Bombas, and Adidas. With his photography centered around sharing the stories of Black people, he has won several awards, including The Alexia for his photo series "Behind the Mask." When he's not watching the 1000th episode of CoComelon, being the best spouse in the world, or editing photos while his four-year-old daughter edits the furniture with non-washable crayons, you can find him passed out from exhaustion on the living room couch.

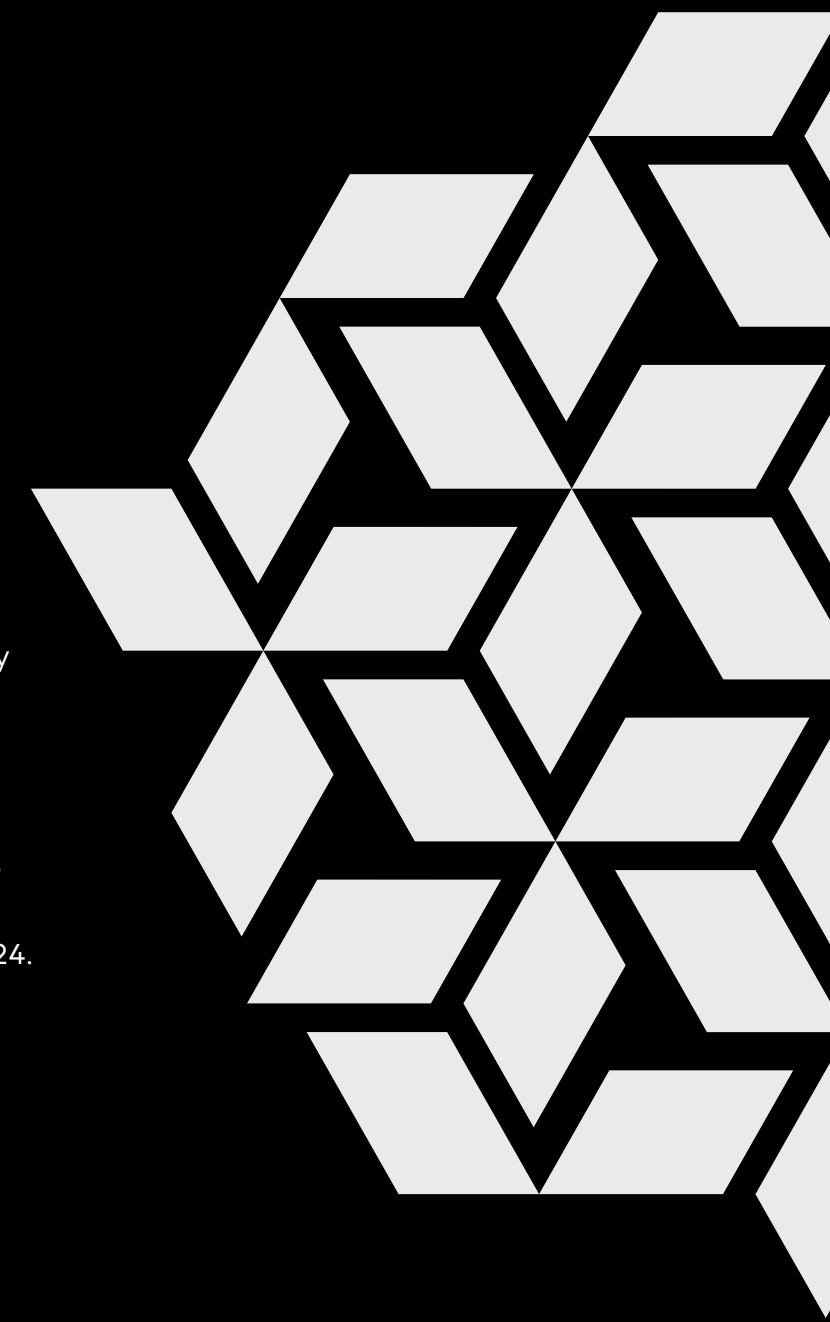


Cornell Watson, *Feeling Frosty*, 2020, 24" x 36", Pigmented ink on archival paper

Project Partner

Click! Photography Festival

This photographic exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Click! Photography Festival which celebrates the medium and its cultural influence by engaging the photography community with exceptional photo-based works, artists, and programming. ***It Ain't All Black and White*** will be on view at Block Gallery from October 4, 2023, through February 23, 2024.



Raleigh Arts

Raleigh Arts, a part of the City of Raleigh's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, fosters and promotes the arts in Raleigh by administering the programs of the Raleigh Arts Commission and the Public Art and Design Board and supporting the Pullen and Sertoma Arts Centers.

Block Gallery

Connecting local artists to the community through ongoing exhibitions and public outreach, the Block Gallery was dedicated in 2006 to honor Miriam Preston Block, a former Raleigh City Council member, and community leader. Greeting all visitors to the Raleigh Municipal Building at the Upchurch Government Complex in Downtown Raleigh, the gallery's marble walls, and elegant staircase provide an ideal setting for showcasing original artworks. Exhibits change every eight to twelve weeks.

Raleigh Arts Commissioners




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Raleigh Municipal Building

222 West Hargett Street
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M-F, 8:30am – 5:15pm

For more information, please contact:

Raleigh Arts
919-996-3610

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