

## **Ernestine White-Mifetu**

Ernestine White-Mifetu is the Sills Foundation Curator of African Art at the Brooklyn Museum. Specializing in the Arts of the African continent, she has twenty years of experience working in the African arts and culture sector, with twelve years working exclusively in national African art museums in curatorial and directorial positions. Throughout her career, her exhibitions have focused on making visible the silenced and forgotten narratives of women of color, explored issues of dislocation and hybridity, perceptions of identity, and the interrogation of colonial narratives imposed on the black and brown body in the work of classical, modern and contemporary artists of and from the African continent. Her current project is reinstalling the African Art Galleries to open in 2026 at the Brooklyn Museum, where she will showcase diverse modes of creative expression from the African continent in conversation with its diasporas. A key focus will be to expand the regionality and temporality of narratives, lived realities, and works of art.

## **Victoria Collis-Buthelezi**

Victoria J. Collis-Buthelezi is an Associate Professor in English, and Director of the University of Johannesburg's **Victoria J. Collis-Buthelezi** is Director of the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS) and the Centre for the Study of Race, Gender, and Class (RGC), University of Johannesburg (UJ). She is also an Associate Professor in English at UJ and a research associate at the Institute for Research in African American Studies (IRAAS) at Columbia University. Prof Collis-Buthelezi's research centres Black intellectual and literary histories and has appeared in *Small Axe*, *Callaloo*, *boundary2* and the *UK Journal of Arts and the Humanities*. Her current book project, *Ends of Empire, Black Liberation*, explores global frames for understanding Blackness through early twentieth century Cape Town. She is co-editor of the first edited collection of primary sources and thought on race in the Caribbean, entitled *The Caribbean Race Reader*, set for release later this year. Prof Collis-Buthelezi is on the editorial committee for *Small Axe* and an editor of the *Polity Critical South* book series as well as Peter Lang's *Race and Resistance in the Long Twentieth Century*.

## **Cheryl Finley**

Cheryl Finley, Ph.D., is director of the Atlanta University Center Art History + Curatorial Studies Collective and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Art History at Spelman College. Committed to engaging strategic partners to transform the African and Diaspora arts ecosystem, Dr. Finley leads an innovative undergraduate program at the world's largest historically Black college and university (HBCU) consortium in

preparing the next generation of African American museum and visual arts professionals. Her research and teaching amplify the contributions of artists, archives and artifacts of the African Diaspora and of historically underrepresented groups through interdisciplinary programming, community engagement and experiential learning.

Dr. Finley is a curator, contemporary art critic, and award-winning author noted for *Committed to Memory: The Art of the Slave Ship Icon* (2018), the first in-depth study of the most famous image associated with the memory of slavery—a schematic engraving of a packed slave ship hold—and the art, architecture, poetry, and film it has inspired since its creation in Britain in 1788. Dr. Finley’s current projects include *Black Art Futures*, a social history of Black artists, curators and patrons, and *Pictures in My Mother’s House*, a memoir. Her critically acclaimed traveling exhibition, ‘Free as they want to be’: Artists Committed to Memory, cocurated with Deborah Willis, opens at the Clark Atlanta University Art Museum later this month.

### **Cecile Fremont**

Cécile Fromont is an art historian specializing on the visual, material, and religious cultures of Africa, Latin America, and Europe in the early modern period (1500-1800). Her scholarship sheds light on the cross-cultural ebbs and flows that unfolded during this period across and around the Atlantic Ocean. Her research and writing center on African expressive, spiritual, and material cultures and their ramifications in Latin America and Europe, demonstrating how the often violent, but vital connections between the three continents gave contours to the early modern world and continue to shape our own times.

In current projects, she investigates the nature and material manifestations of political and spiritual power in the era of chattel slavery, the aesthetic entanglements that the Atlantic slave trade created and sustained between Europe and Africa, and the conditions of visibility and invisibility of colonialism and racialized slavery in France’s public monuments and collections from the seventeenth century to today.

She is the author of several award-winning books, including *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (2014) and *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola* (2022). The latter appeared alongside two digital-humanities publications (find them [here](#) and [here](#)). Co-authorship and editorship are central to her field-building scholarly practice. She has edited, co-edited and co-authored several essays and volumes, including the book *Afro-Catholic Festivals in the Americas Performance, Representation, and the Making of Black Atlantic Tradition* and, with Esther Chadwick, a special issue of the journal *Art History* on the theme of the Vast Atlantic.

Her work also unfolds at the intersection of art and scholarship. Recent projects in this realm include *Debris of History*, *Matters of Memory* a collaboration with Gloria Cabral and Sammy Baloji at the 2023 Venice Architectural Biennial.

Beyond academia, she collaborates internationally with museums and other public-facing institutions on publications, exhibitions, and programming aimed at broad audiences. She lends her expertise to news stories and media productions in venues such as Netflix, NPR, PBS, Arte, the New York Times, and Le Monde.

Born and raised in Martinique, her ancestors came to the island from Africa, South Asia, and Burgundy. She graduated from Sciences-Po Paris before receiving her AM and PhD from Harvard.

### **Aude Mgba**

Aude Christel Mgba (1991, CM) is an independent curator and art historian based between Cameroon and the Netherlands. She's currently curator of contemporary art at the Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle and advisor for the Kadist Africa Collection.

Aude engages with decoloniality through research projects and creating platforms that aim to transcribe, translate, and embody ancestral knowledge. Her curatorial experiences include collaborations that question forms of making and showing art which tend to be centered between art institutions and art workers. She is more interested in collaborations that expand beyond these spaces to embrace other communities.

Mgba was the founder and coordinator of *Rencontre* (2014-2016), an exchange platform focusing on the work of art professionals from the contemporary art scene in Cameroon. Before moving to the Netherlands, she worked as a curator at Doual'art in Douala (2017-2018).

Among many projects, Mgba was assistant curator for the 4th edition of the triennial SUD(Salon Urbain de Douala (2017), co-curator of *Sonsbeek20->24* (2019-2022), co-curator of the Hartwig Art Foundation Special Project (2020-2021), curator of the Curated section of *Art X Lagos* (2021), and curator of the *Prix Region Sud* in Marseille (2022) artistic director and curator of the next edition of the *Luleåbiennialen* in Norrbotten, Sweden (2024).

### **Simon Njami**

Simon Njami is a Paris-based independent curator, lecturer, art critic and novelist. Njami was the co-founder and editor-in-chief of *Revue Noire*, a journal of contemporary African and extra-occidental art. He served as artistic director of the first

Johannesburg art fair in 2008, the Bamako photography biennale for ten years, and the Dak'Art Biennale (2016/2018). He co-curated the first African pavilion at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale in 2007. Member and spokesperson of the Finding Committee of Documenta 16. Njami has curated numerous exhibitions of contemporary art and photography, including *Africa Remix* (2004/2007) and the first African Art Fair, held in Johannesburg in 2008. In 1998, he created the Pan African master classes in photography, with the Goethe Institute and directed it for over 12 years. He published and edited numerous books among which two biographies, *James Baldwin* and *Leopold Sédar Senghor*, and four novels. His latest publication is *Stories Histories, the story of Revue noire* (2021). He was the curator of the Côte d'Ivoire pavilion in the last Venice Biennale.

### **Azu Nwagbogu**

Azu Nwagbogu is an internationally acclaimed curator, interested in evolving new models of engagement with questions of decolonization, restitution, and repatriation. In his practice, the exhibition becomes an experimental site for reflection, civic engagement, ecology and repatriation – both tangible and symbolic. Nwagbogu is the Founder and Director of African Artists' Foundation (AAF), a non-profit organisation based in Lagos, Nigeria. He also serves as Founder and Director of LagosPhoto Festival, an annual international arts festival of photography held in Lagos. He is the publisher of Art Base Africa, a virtual space to discover and learn about contemporary art from Africa and its diasporas. In 2021, Nwagbogu was awarded "Curator of Year 2021" by the Royal Photographic Society, UK, and also listed amongst the hundred most influential people in the art world by ArtReview. In 2021, Nwagbogu launched the project "Dig Where You Stand (DWYS) - From Coast to Coast" which offers a new model for institutional building and engagement, with questions of decolonization, restitution and repatriation, the exhibition took place in Ibrahim's Mahama's culture hub SCCA in Tamale, Ghana. In 2023, Nwagbogu was appointed "Explorer at Large" by National Geographic Society to serve as an ambassador for the Organization and receive support to continue his storytelling work across Africa and globally, a title bestowed on a select few global change makers. Most recently in 2024, Nwagbogu curated the first ever Benin Pavilion at the 60th edition of the Venice Biennale. Nwagbogu's primary interest is in reinventing the idea of the museum and its role as a civic space for engagement for society at large.