

**Paul Stephen Benjamin**

born 1966, Chicago, Illinois, United States

**Black is Beautiful**, 2020–ongoing

black vinyl, black paint, performance

Courtesy of the artist

This installation by Atlanta-based artist Paul Stephen Benjamin documents his daily meditative practice of typing the words “Black is Beautiful.” The text is always influenced by his surroundings, including music, the news, or people passing through the room. For this installation, Benjamin embedded references to Black history in Kansas. He has preserved this work as a wall rubbing and performed his typing meditation for the public in the gallery space.

**Bethany Collins**

born 1984, Montgomery, Alabama, United States

**No Name in the Street, 1972**, 2018

from *The Loss*

graphite, toner, Pink Pearl eraser on Somerset paper

Collection of Jack and Sandra Guthman

**Bethany Collins**

born 1984, Montgomery, Alabama, United States

**Speech Sounds, 1983**, 2018

from *The Loss*

graphite, toner, Pink Pearl eraser on Somerset paper

Courtesy of Amanda and Craig Napoliello

*The Loss* series by Bethany Collins is a search for the language of “The End,” or an end in Black literature. The series includes James Baldwin’s 1972 non-fiction book *No Name in the Street* and Octavia Butler’s 1983 science fiction short story “Speech Sounds,” which describes a pandemic that limits the capacity of citizens to read, write, or speak. Collins writes and erases passages from these works except for the exact moment when writers describe the end of the world.

**Bethany Collins**

born 1984, Montgomery, Alabama, United States

**Find, 1982**, 2015

from *Cononyms*

American Masters paper, Black Magic eraser

Courtesy of the artist and PATRON Gallery, Chicago

**Bethany Collins**

born 1984, Montgomery, Alabama, United States

**Bound, 1968**, 2015

from *Cononyms*

American Masters paper, Pink Pearl eraser

Courtesy of the artist and Alexander Gray Associates, New York; PATRON Gallery, Chicago

Bethany Collins uses language to explore the nuance of racial and national identities. In her *Cononyms* series (2014–2018), Collins selected dictionary entries that contained contradicting definitions. For example, the word “bound” can mean tied in bonds or to leap onward. These definitions often contain political references from the time the dictionary was published. Collins erased all the words except the contrary definitions to expose a need to revisit them. These sculptures are made of the shavings produced by erasing.

**Jamal Cyrus**

born 1973, Houston, Texas, United States

**Numerologies (class notes from Black Man in the Cosmos, Spring ‘71)**, 2023

denim, cotton, cotton batting

Courtesy of the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston

Jamal Cyrus transforms old jeans and their cotton thread into quilt-like works that, in his words, “document aspects of Black political history.” The numbers reference FBI surveillance files about the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/ School (BARTS), a Harlem arts organization founded by poet, scholar, and activist Amiri Baraka. They also reference “dream books” popular during the Harlem Renaissance used to interpret dreams and convert them into numbers. The title references a course taught by musician Sun Ra at the University of California, Berkeley in 1971. In this work, Cyrus collages together histories of suppression with celebratory commemoration.

**Stephanie Dinkins**

born 1964, Amboy, New Jersey, United States

**Not The Only One V1. Beta (N’TOO)**, 2018

deep learning AI, computer, Arduino, sensors, electronics,

black glass sculpture

Courtesy of the artist

Using interviews among herself, her aunt, and her niece, Stephanie Dinkins is creating a multigenerational memoir of a Black American family using artificial intelligence (AI). *Not The Only One (N’TOO)* is a voice-interactive AI designed, trained, and aligned with concerns and ideals of people who are underrepresented in the tech sector. It pursues the goals of this community through deep learning algorithms, creating a new kind of conversation-based archive. Because the large data sets that enable AI are filled with cultural bias, *N’TOO* is built on a small data set. This means it often refuses to speak.

**Fahamu Pecou**

born 1975, Brooklyn, New York, United States

**Parable of the Sower: Oya’s Dream**, 2023

from *Trapademia: Lit*

acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of Dr. Fahamu Pecou

Fahamu Pecou’s *Trapademia: Lit* series juxtaposes Black bodies with famous literary works by Black authors. The series title refers to trap music, a sub-genre of hip-hop, and the euphemism “lit” means aroused or excited and is also an abbreviation for literature. Pecou explains, “Literature provides a lens into other possibilities and potentials of Blackness.” The Spencer Museum commissioned this painting for the 2023–2024 KU Common Work of Art.

**Carrie Schneider**

born 1979, Chicago, Illinois, United States

**Reading Women (Angela Davis edit)**, 2012–2014

video 6 minutes 50 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and CHART, New York and

Candice Madey, New York

Carrie Schneider has produced both a photographic and video series in which she sits with women who are reading. This video was composed for the exhibition *Angela Davis—Seize the Time*. It presents women reading works by Angela Davis and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, in which the authors address the U.S. prison system and the disproportionate percentage of the African American population who are incarcerated.

**Dread Scott**

born 1965, Chicago, Illinois, United States

**I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free**, 2023

body print, screenprint, gold leaf, tar and feathers on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery

Dread Scott’s body and screenprint on canvas interprets themes from Nina Simone’s 20th-century protest songs with contemporary vocabulary and iconography. Although decades have passed since Simone first performed Billy Taylor’s “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free,” white supremacy and patriarchy continue to influence American culture. The injustices Simone addressed have clear counterparts in recent history, and Scott’s work provides a link between past and present.