

# BALTIMORE RISING

MARYLAND  
INSTITUTE  
COLLEGE  
OF ART

**M | I | C | A**

Derrick Adams  
Lauren F. Adams  
Devin Allen  
Sonya Clark  
J.M. Giordano  
Logan Hicks  
Jeffrey Kent  
Nate Larson  
Nether  
Olivia Robinson  
Paul Rucker  
Joyce J. Scott  
Tony Shore  
Shinique Smith  
Susan Waters-Eller

# BALTIMORE RISING

November 2 – 23, 2016

## **SAMUEL HOI / FOREWORD**

In April 2015, the city of Baltimore erupted in civic unrest after a young African-American man, Freddie Gray, died while in police custody. It was a significant and traumatic uprising in our city that was part of a larger protesting cry occurring across this nation, propelling the Black Lives Matter movement. Each time a city is added to a roll that now includes Charlotte, Tulsa, Dallas, Baton Rouge, and St. Paul, the need for our country and peoples to come together to understand and make real change becomes more urgent. Why, despite notable progress in civic liberties, do racism and social inequities persist so insidiously and structurally to this date?

When Tony Shore considered creating an exhibition that evolved into *Baltimore Rising*, he recognized that the selected artists needed time – time to reflect back on what happened and time to consider the smaller and larger contexts. Each of the 15 featured artists, all of whom are connected to Baltimore, used that time to create thoughtful and thought-provoking works that shed light on multiple facets of the uprising – of broken systems and disenfranchised communities of color, of institutional racism and socioeconomic divides, of anger and hope. Their works compel us to ponder in a complex manner the events, their causes, and their aftermath.

This exhibition evidences anew the invaluable role artists have in our society as observers, chroniclers, storytellers, commentators, activists, and healers. They and their art present inimitable ways to help us see and explore realities as they unfold, work with communities to express individual voices, register human frailty and strengths, inspire hope through darkness, and call out injustice with nuance, poetry and power.

Artists play an increasingly vital role in social change, and this exhibition is particularly important in this context. The artists in *Baltimore Rising*, through a variety of artistic strategies, present works that illuminate the forces at play in the Baltimore Uprising while showcasing how pain and anger can be catalytic for healing and progress.

MICA takes great pride in this city – a city that we have called home since our inception in 1826. We know that its future depends on its ability to be just and equitable and to create opportunity for all residents. We want to be partners in this future. As a community, we are committed to fostering an environment where understanding and new ideas can be generated through creativity, art, and design. We invite members of the city into our space for discussion and debate and illumination, as much as we engage in partnerships and activities across Baltimore. I hope you consider carefully – and are challenged by – the work of the artists in *Baltimore Rising*. While not trying to present a definitive narrative of the Baltimore unrest, this work presents a deep look at it and the underlying dynamics, which will resonate far beyond Baltimore.

I would like to thank Tony Shore, chair of MICA's Undergraduate Painting Department and exhibition organizer, and all of the 15 artists who are represented here for creating an exhibition that can be viewed and experienced on many levels.

Samuel Hoi  
President, MICA  
November 2016

**TONY SHORE / BALTIMORE RISING**

The Arts have always played an important role in revolution. Artists are often the first to speak out fearlessly on inequality and unfair circumstance, challenging viewers to assess their own experience, and to question authority.

Within days after the riots in Baltimore, which followed the death of Freddie Gray, the arts community was quick to react. Many were asking how and what they could do to help. Almost immediately citizens were on the street coming together to clean up the aftermath while murals, performances, and fundraising events began happening throughout the North Avenue corridor. MICA's Art Education students prepared and served sandwiches to those involved in the cleanup effort, while a photography class came out to document the positive efforts to contrast the negative images of Baltimore promoted by the national media. Street artist Nether's mural of Freddie Gray, at the corner of Mount and Presbury Streets, would become the backdrop for many Freddie Gray-related newscasts and a powerful symbol of the arts community's embracing of the Baltimore Uprising.

While some artists were participating in the continued protests and documenting the events as they happened, others were struggling with these issues in private, glued to the news and each new update, contemplating and responding to not just these events, but also the systemic issues that had led to the uprising.

My friend and *City Paper* photographer, J.M. Giordano, was working in the very midst of the unrest and experienced some of the worst actions of protestors and police. Joe's photos were incredible and cast a spotlight on the intensity and severity of the situation. But too often these images can be forgotten with the disposal of the day's periodicals; even important movements like Occupy can lessen or lose steam over time. I approached Joe to suggest a collaboration using his of-the-moment photos as subject matter for my paintings, to which he generously agreed. I wanted to engage the viewer in a lasting and impactful relationship with the imagery and the content from this incredibly important time in our city, symbolic reminders of the monumental power of this particular moment.

I needed to find a date and location to exhibit this new series of paintings and approached Gerald Ross, MICA's Director of Exhibitions, about mounting a show at MICA. When we began discussing this, I realized I had an opportunity to broaden the scope of the exhibition: this show could be so much larger than my individual perspective and an opportunity to bring together a group of amazing artists who are strongly connected to Baltimore and making work about this historic moment in our city's history. I immediately thought of the Riggs and Leidy galleries in the Lazarus Center located at 131 W. North Avenue. Just one and a half miles east of the Penn/North intersection that became the epicenter of the Uprising, these street-level galleries would provide accessibility and be open to the communities directly affected by the Uprising.

I reached out to a diverse group of 15 artists whose work, content, and ideas are largely forged by their relationships to Baltimore. After conversations and studio visits with many of the artists, I knew that several had no immediately new work to contribute, but many had been addressing these issues long before Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, or Travon Martin became headlines. Some pieces included in the show date back as far as 16 years, but regrettably are as relevant today as ever.

After nearly a year of planning and curating the show, *Baltimore Rising*, I'm gratified to bring together this incredible group of participants – who range from an established artist/recent MacArthur "Genius" Fellow to a self-taught documentary photographer-turned-activist to a Baltimore street artist – for this vital exhibition and accompanying programming. Works included in the show speak to many powerful issues affecting Baltimore including race, class, police violence, and white privilege.

It is my hope that this exhibition engages the public while challenging them to examine not only recent events, but also continued injustice and intolerance.



**Show Down**

2014  
mixed media collage  
on paper  
48 x 72 inches



**DERRICK ADAMS** "In times of crisis it is so important for all artists to be active contributors in their surrounding community. The contribution could be a product of one's artistic practice donated to a cause, volunteering time to local organizations, or simply mentoring others."

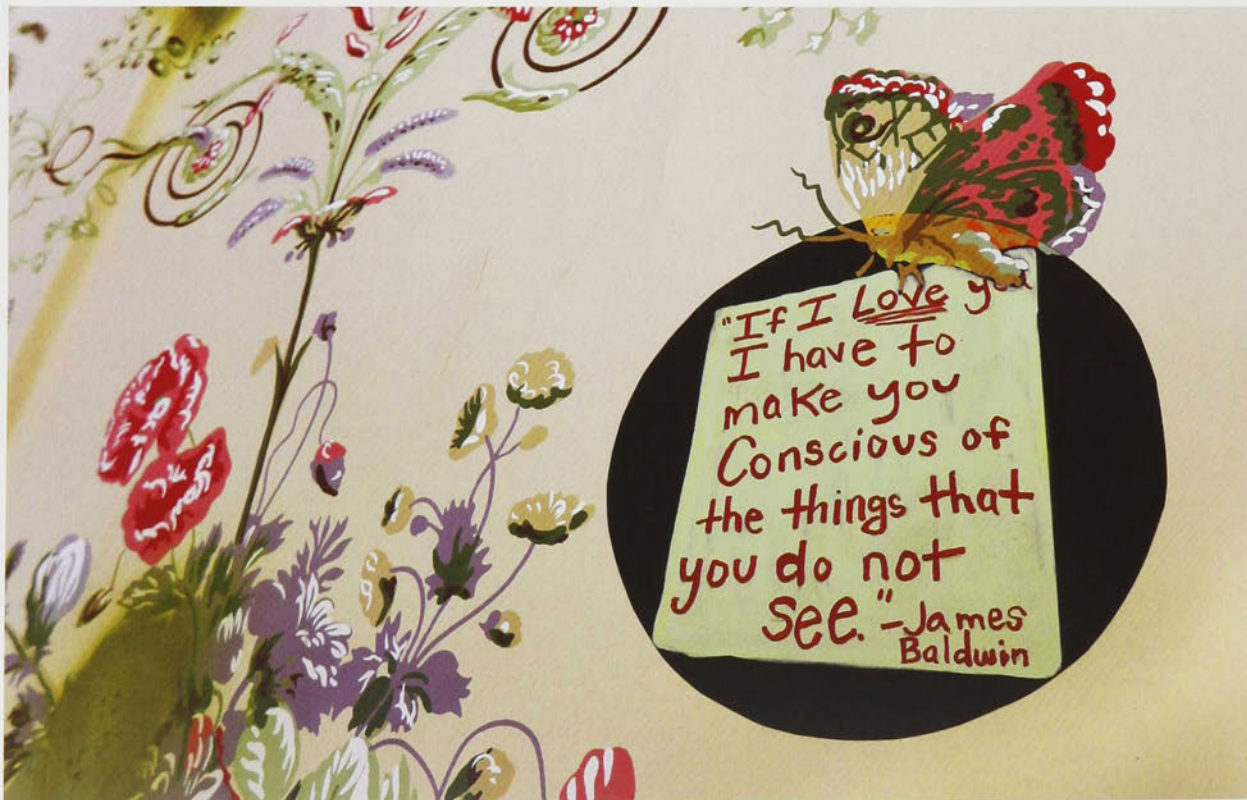


**King**  
2010  
faux brick, tempera,  
acrylic, glitter,  
spray paint, leather jacket  
24 x 63 x 7 inches

**LAUREN F. ADAMS** "At the core of my work are critical explorations of labor and class in visual culture. I draw heavily upon the historical decorative arts to find contradictions within the contexts they originated."



**Today's Cake**  
(wall installation, details)  
2015  
acrylic on  
silkscreened wallpaper,  
with footstool  
dimensions variable





WHITE SILENCE  
=  
WHITE CONSENT

CAPITALISM  
HAS OUTLIVED  
ITS USEFULNESS



**DEVIN ALLEN** "My life has been a roller coaster. I am truly living a dream. I am from West Baltimore, and I lost two friends in the same week. This is the time for the artist to tell the story. I set my camera on black and white. I shoot to kill. I am a concerned citizen."

Untitled (opposite)  
2015  
archival inkjet print  
mounted on board  
24 x 36 inches

Untitled  
2015  
archival inkjet print  
mounted on board  
24 x 36 inches





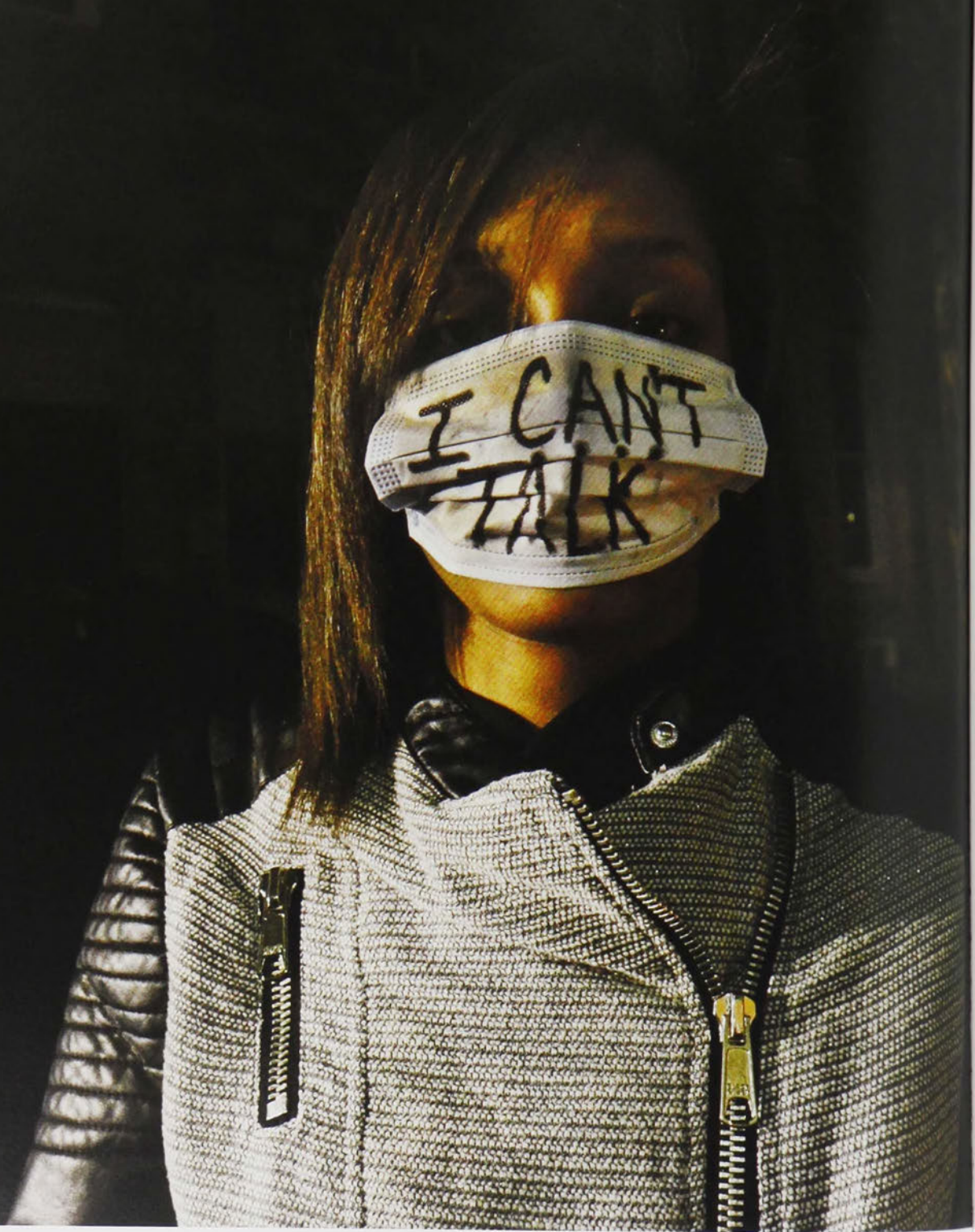
**SONYA CLARK** "I trust that my stories, your stories, our stories are held in the object. In this way, the everyday 'thing' becomes a lens through which we may better see one another. A visual vocabulary derived from object and image forms a language ranging from the vernacular to the political to the poetic."



**3/5 ths (opposite)**  
2015  
men's dress shirt,  
cotton thread  
14 x 30 x 7 inches

**Unraveled**  
2015  
deconstructed cotton  
confederate battle flag  
14 x 30 x 7 inches

Untitled  
(from the series  
The Battle of  
Sandtown-Winchester,  
detail)





**Untitled**  
(from the series  
The Battle of  
Sandtown-Winchester)  
2015  
archival inkjet print  
mounted on panel  
24 x 36 inches



**Untitled**  
(from the series  
The Battle of  
Sandtown-Winchester)



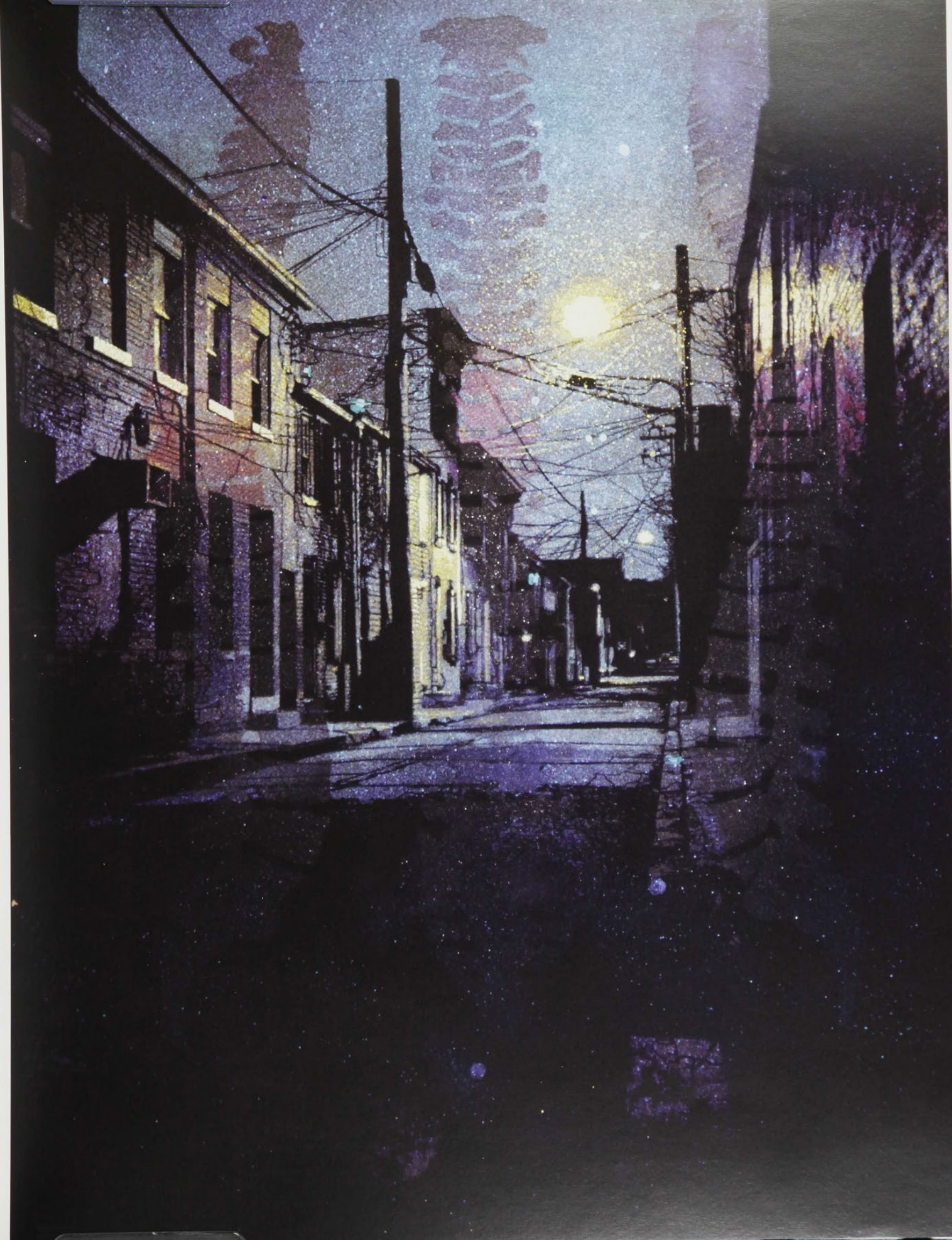
**J.M. GIORDANO** "My photographs of the aftermath of the death of Freddie Gray are not art. They are scenes from a neighborhood in turmoil exactly as they played out. They are the result of years of simmering pressure between the residents and the local police precinct, who have been living together in a tenuous relationship for dozens of years."

**LOGAN HICKS** "The job of an artist – at least my job as an artist – is to put a visual to stories of a city. To act as a conduit to new life. Not to talk about the city with facts and statistics, but to talk from a point of emotion."



**Hotspot**  
2016  
aerosol on linen  
48 x 48 inches

**Freddie Gray's Day (opposite)**  
2015  
aerosol on linen  
48 x 36 inches



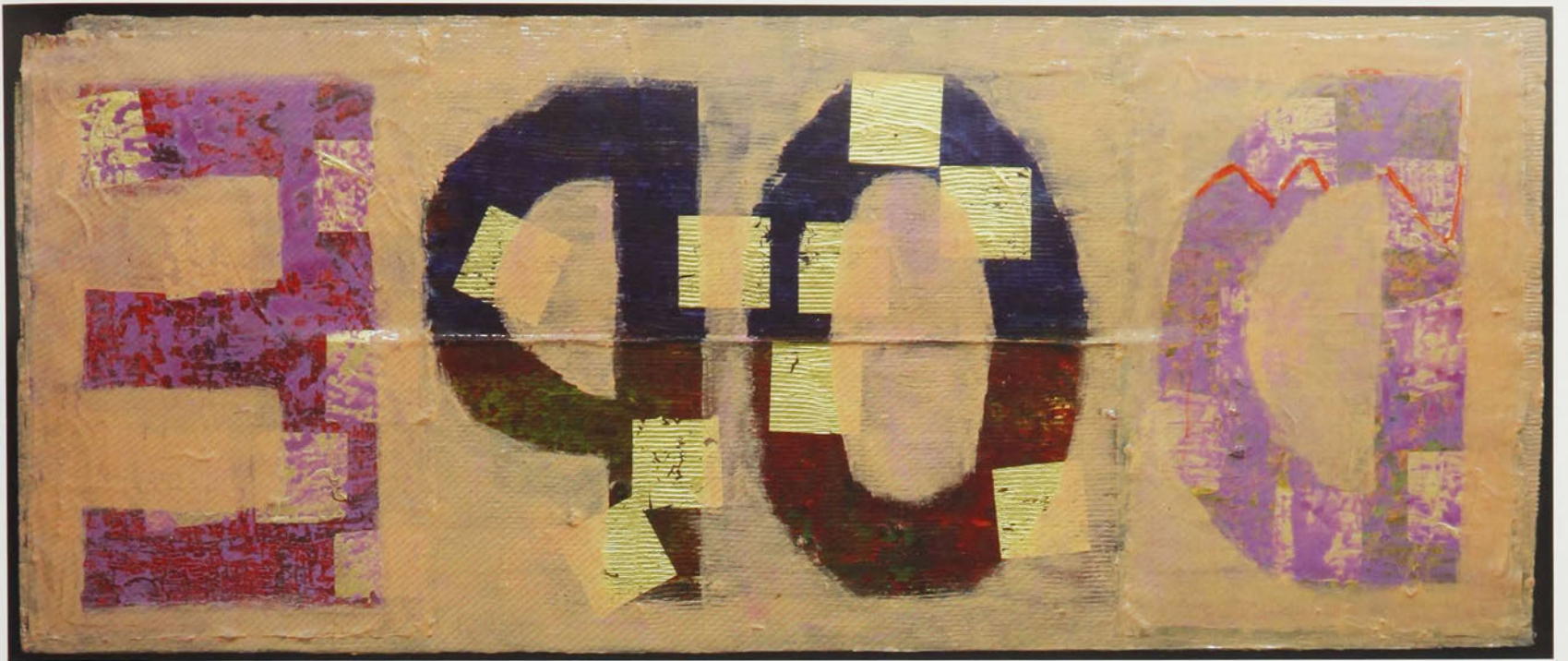
**The N-word**

2010

acrylic, metallic confetti,  
cement, and oil stick  
on canvas

66 x 90 inches





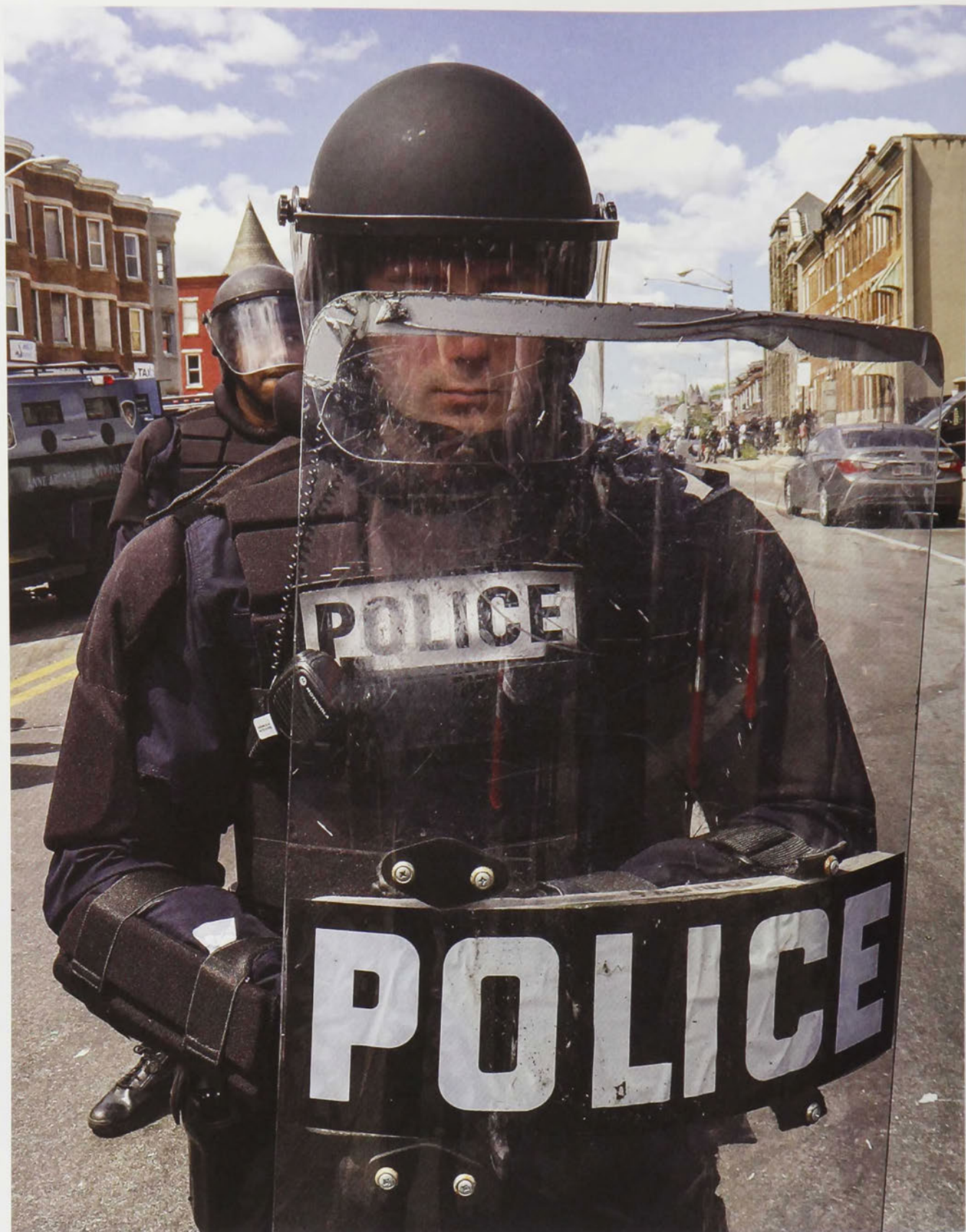
**Colored Art (RACE)**

2002-2016

oil bar on reclaimed wood

25.75 x 59 inches

**JEFFREY KENT** "My artwork uses interdisciplinary practices to convey a recognizable urban perspective from my experiences as 'A Black' growing up in Baltimore, as well as a past life as a cocaine dealer/addict."



**Holding that Line,**  
**Part One: Police Line from**  
**South to North, Blockading North Avenue**  
**at Pennsylvania Avenue,**  
**Baltimore, Maryland, April 28, 2015**  
(detail)  
2015  
pigment ink on polyester  
5 x 135 inches



Holding that Line,  
Part Two: Citizen Protection Line from  
North to South, on North Avenue  
at Pennsylvania Avenue,  
Baltimore, Maryland, April 28, 2015

(detail)

2015

pigment ink on polyester

5 x 110 inches

**NATE LARSON** "I photographed the Baltimore protests at North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue... 26 citizens forming a human wall, separating the crowd from the police, to protect the crowd from provoking a police response... My heart was heavy all day but lifted at this spirit of self-sacrifice and generosity."



**Survival, 1301 N. Monroe Street**

2015

exterior latex and spray paint

18 x 40 feet



**NETHER** "I don't want to have any part in telling the official state history or the history of those it has elevated; that's not what's honest or what being a social documentarian in a city of untold stories means to me."

**Satyagraha**

2016

digital mock-up for mural to be completed as a part of *Baltimore Rising* dimensions variable

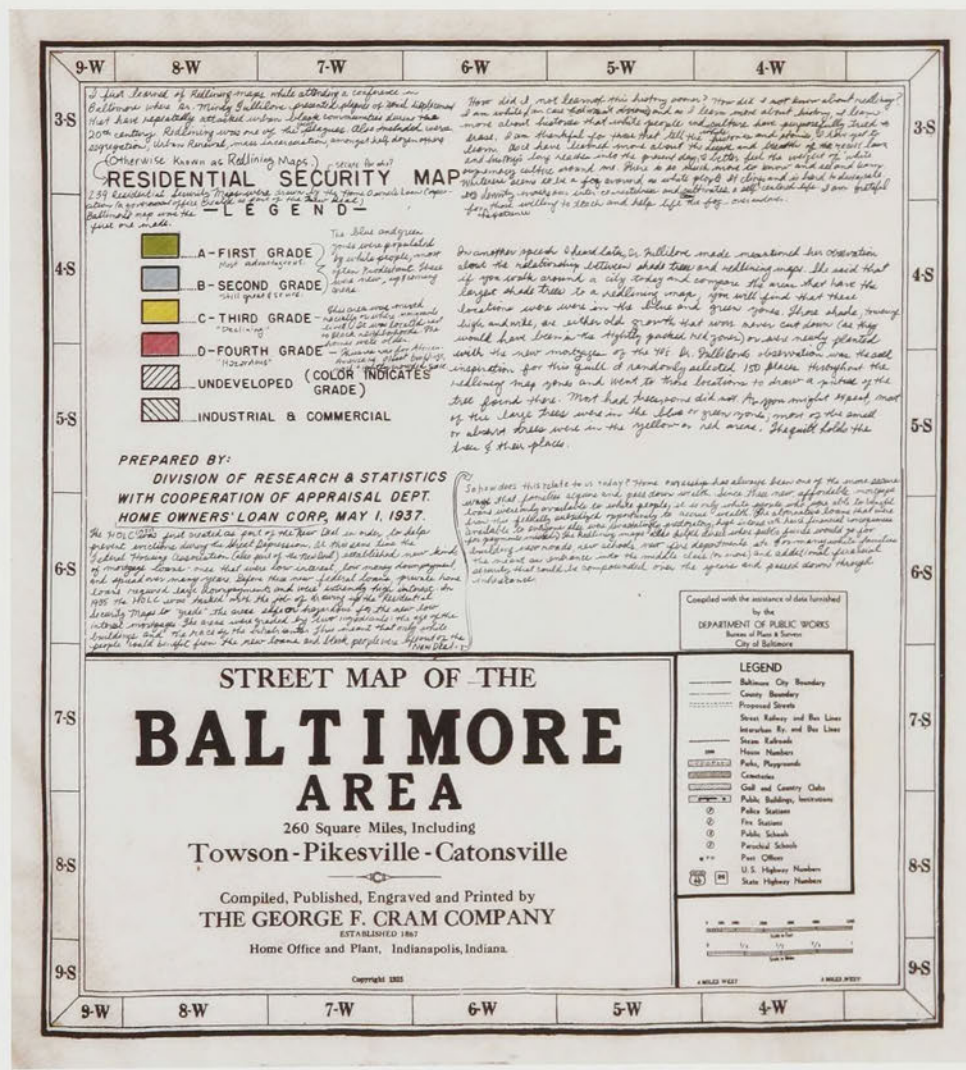




**OLIVIA ROBINSON** "I have found that Baltimore has demanded of me to give more attention to racism – and to specifically hear the civil rights era call that white people work together to undo racism. As I work this personally – through study, collaboration, in relationships, in activism – I also work through this artistically."



Near and Far Enemies:  
Shade  
(quilt 1, left and detail top)  
(quilt 2, left and detail top)



Near and Far Enemies:  
Shade  
2015  
two quilts, cotton fabric, copper  
taffeta, steel thread, LEDs,  
microcontroller, electronics  
quilt 1, 216 x 96 inches  
quilt 2, 48 x 48 inches

**PAUL RUCKER** "My work is about research around incarceration, the prison system, slavery, racial disparities, and this history that affects what's going on today. So Baltimore, for me, is one of the best places to live. It's a very unique place. This is a city that needs to address the elephants in the room."

**20 minutes of action  
in 20 years of life**  
2016  
video projection  
dimensions variable





**Soul Erased**

(from the Soul Erased  
Print Series)

1999

lithograph, screenprint,  
and embossing

30 x 22 inches



*2/20 Soul Erased*

*Joyce J. Scott '99*

**JOYCE J. SCOTT** "Sandtown is still a community of families who progress in spite of extreme adversities. I am a product of that and that is a major reason for me not to leave."

**Head Shot**

2008

seedbeads, thread, glass,  
and bullets

18.5 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches



**TONY SHORE** “Young black men face to face with the police officers who they felt were there to shut them down and take away their voice the way they took away the life of Freddie Gray. There were beautiful images of horrible things. It was a moment of reckoning. It needed to be recorded, and we needed to bear witness.”







**Hands Up, Don't Shoot**

2015

acrylic on velvet

30 x 44 inches

**Confrontation** (opposite)

2016

acrylic on velvet

32 x 46 inches

**SHINIQUE SMITH** "The charged feelings that flamed as a result of the death of Freddie Gray and the charges against the officers involved being dropped reignited this distinctive feeling that was always present growing up in Baltimore."

**Elegy**

2010

acrylic, fabric collage,  
and studs on wood panel

36 x 60 x 1.5 inches



**Black Cluster**

2015

clothing, ribbon, rope,  
and air fresheners

28 x 24 x 24 inches



**SUSAN WATERS-ELLER** "An image then changes the way something is seen at a deeper level and hopefully enlarges the viewer's perspective on an issue. Because a work of art conveys associated feelings and emotions, it can be deeply persuasive."

**City Planning**  
2016  
oil and collage on panel  
39 x 98 inches





**DERAY MCKESSON / STILL RISING**

Growing up in Baltimore I'd always known that the city was segregated, even when I didn't yet know the world itself. I grew up around Poplar Grove and Presbury St. on the west side of Baltimore, and my grandmother lived in the same house in Hilton for my entire life. These remain almost entirely black neighborhoods. As a kid, though, I didn't yet understand that there was a deep disparity in resources as a result of segregation. I didn't realize that the playground near my house looked quite different than the playground in all-white neighborhoods – I thought that all playgrounds were run down. I didn't realize that people actually lived close to supermarkets, as going to Giant, the supermarket that my great-grandmother loved, was always something we had to carve out time to do.

In many ways, the murder of Freddie Gray and the ensuing uprising forced the first public conversation about inequity, racism, and injustice in the City of Baltimore that I can remember. Yes, the philanthropic core of the city had been discussing and funding many of these issues for decades, and so had the academy, the advocates, and activists. But it took the uprising and this singular public exposure of police violence in the context of nationwide unrest, to bring these conversations to the public square, to force people in neighborhoods all across Baltimore to think about the type of city that we live in, its history, and the impact of this history on the lives of black folks and poor folks citywide.

Protest at its root is the act of telling the truth in public. We stood in the streets all across the country to tell the truth with our bodies, that Mike Brown, Tyrone West, Rekia Boyd, Tamir Rice, and Freddie Gray should be alive. We disrupted board meetings and commission hearings to tell the truth, that these public institutions were not using their institutional power in ways that served either equity or justice.

Artists, in this current context of unrest, have helped us to both interpret our current reality and to imagine new realities as they use song, paintings, spoken word, and dance to tell the truth about the experiences that we have lived and about the possibilities ahead in our collective future.

I think of the artists in the *Baltimore Rising* exhibit as protestors, in the sense that they are truth-tellers, telling a sometimes uncomfortable truth about the challenges in our city and telling the truth about the sense of hope and joy that has endured despite the intentional and persistent trauma. From Devin Allen to Shinique Smith, the work of all these artists begins to challenge our conception of how the world should be relative to how it is, and most importantly, how it implicates us all in grappling with the role that we will play in ushering in a changed city in which justice and equity are afforded to everyone, not simply those in wealthier zip codes or with advanced degrees.

In moments of unrest, we understandably spend most of our time processing the trauma, working through with others and ourselves the impact of specific acts, how we will respond to them, and emotionally and mentally steeling ourselves as we anticipate the very real possibility of future trauma. I often worry that we do not find enough time to process the conditions that led to the unrest or to imagine solutions at a scale that can mitigate the devastation of institutional racism, inequity, and persistent injustice.

I am hopeful that art, in its fullness, can help us think differently and more deeply about why our city is the way that it is and that art can allow us to ask the questions that can push our city to be better than it has ever been.

In 2009, I opened and led an after-school/out-of-school program in Ashburton. One morning, I needed to get to the school building early and a cop stopped behind me and put his lights on. He approached my car window with his weapon drawn and cursing at me – I'll never forget it. I didn't get a ticket or even a warning in the end, as the officer realized that he'd overreacted. But I'll never forget having a loaded gun pointed at my face, for the first time, as an officer had his finger close to the trigger over what wasn't even a traffic stop. I remember telling my family members about this and they seemed to know that this happened often, but I hadn't heard stories from people I knew about police violence before. I didn't even think about filing a complaint because I hadn't recorded anything and didn't have the officer's full name – I was too shaken to ask him for any identifying information.

Then Mike Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014, and everything changed. I quickly realized that police violence was an issue that many people had proximity to, that so many people in communities of color all over the country had experienced the trauma of police violence. Until the protests, there wasn't yet public space to discuss it.

Everything changed because of Ferguson. It was the resistance of the protestors in Ferguson and St. Louis that helped a new generation (of activists) find its voice and its power; that changed the landscape of unrest, activism, and organizing for a generation. Ferguson became a catalyst for activism in cities across the country, including Baltimore.

In all, we must commit to telling the truth about the world that we live in, how the world became the way that it is, and what we imagine to be our best future – all in public. This public discourse allows us to speak and hear truths that have heretofore remained hidden while pushing us to dream about our world with more clarity. Art is a powerful tool for change and I think art will be key to Baltimore's future success. *Baltimore is still rising.*

DeRay Mckesson is an American civil rights activist and educator. Mckesson is a member of the Black Lives Matter movement and is known for his activism via social media outlets such as Twitter and Instagram.



Devin Allen  
**Untitled**  
2015  
archival inkjet print  
mounted on board  
24 x 36 inches





**LESLIE KING-HAMMOND / BALTIMORE RISING...ON THE WINGS OF A RAVEN**

"As a Sandtown girl who has evolved into a successful artist, it pains me to remember what a warm, mini-hometown Sandtown was and to see the battleground that the media portrays now. It is still a community of families who progress in spite of extreme adversities. I am a product of that and that is a major reason for me not to leave...How does one truly run away from oneself? I am because of you Baltimore."

*Joyce J. Scott '70,  
MacArthur Fellow 2016*

*Baltimore Rising* is a difficult exhibition to place into the context of contemporary American art. The relentless, terroristic physical assaults, intimidations, and humiliations to the minds, bodies, and spirits of its own American citizens – especially people of color, and more specifically, Black people – challenge the imagination to find an aesthetic path to express and interpret these abhorrent conditions. Yet the history of art is full of artists who created iconic works that capture the agony, fury, and passion of their eras – Francesco de Goya, Pablo Picasso, Käthe Kollwit, George Grosz, and Jacob Lawrence to mention a few of this vast pool of artists who have addressed the gravity of lives, liberties, and nations in peril. The individuals in this exhibition represent a diverse collective of artists who were born, educated, migrated, and became contributors to Baltimore's vibrant creative community. Like Joyce J. Scott, the other artists are seriously disturbed by the negative portrayals of Baltimore. Paramount to this concern is their deep commitment to the rich vitality and life force of Baltimore's unique neighborhoods, communities, and its people. Yet the identity and agency of Baltimore within the realm of public or national consciousness are only marginal to the awareness of its heritage, or depth of its historical legacy, not to mention the endearing characteristics of Baltimore's local "charm." In a recent conversation with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg Distinguished Professor Lawrence Jackson, he observed that "part of the reason that American audiences need to be reminded of the significance of Baltimore is the lacuna of our era, the missing stories, the missing people, the missing history, that need cultivation." Baltimorean writer and MacArthur Fellow, Ta-Nehisi Coates, in his pivotal narrative of growing up in Baltimore City, *Between the World and Me*, sheds a prophetic, glaring light on the long smoldering fuel that ignited Baltimore's Uprising.

*"And you know now, if you did not before, that the police departments of your country have been endowed with the authority to destroy your body. It does not matter if the destruction is the result of an unfortunate overreaction. It does not matter if it*

*originates in a misunderstanding. It does not matter if the destruction springs from a foolish policy... The destroyers will rarely be held accountable. Mostly they will receive pensions. And destruction is merely the superlative form of a dominion whose prerogatives include friskings, detainings, beatings, and humiliations. All this is common to black people. And all of this is old for black people. No one is held responsible."*

*Baltimore Rising* is designed to document, comment, reflect, inspire, and, more importantly, to make visual the urgency of human conditions and denial of civil rights so poignantly described by Coates. Hopefully, it will inspire a new era of evolution and change. America in the twenty-first century faces complex challenges that have long been denied and ignored. Too few voices have contributed to defining and giving context and meaning to this nation in crisis. *Baltimore Rising* grants an important opportunity to present visual challenges to the public audiences. This exhibition mandates artists to be engaged in the fullest level of participation – social, civic, and political – to document and interpret the stories, histories, and experiences of Baltimore's citizens and witnesses that are crucial visible yet denied realities of this city. Baltimore is inextricably tied to the legacy of the Raven, an iconic symbol, from the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe to Baltimoreans' impassioned love affair with their football team. There is, however, a deeper, more profound significance that must be recognized. In traditional America Indian culture, the raven is a trickster god who signifies change, transformation, and metamorphosis. As Baltimore rebuilds to greater achievements and recognition, it will do so symbolically, on the wings of the raven. The artists in *Baltimore Rising* are taking a decisive step forward to begin the arduous process to creatively rebuild a city, not just for themselves, but for all the citizens of Baltimore City. This essay would not be complete without the voices of the artists in this exhibition who were asked to contribute their perspectives on issues that address living in Baltimore, their role as artists, and the future impact of the arts in the community.

**Leslie King-Hammond (LKH): What does living in the Baltimore community mean to you as an artist and a citizen?**

**Tony Shore:** While sitting at home glued to the television watching Baltimore City erupt on a national stage, I wondered what I could do. I watched as residents of Baltimore burned down their own communities in frustration at the city and its lack of justice for people of color. This wasn't about Freddie Gray; his death was a tipping point that released decades of pent-up anger. People of color had suffered enough of the abuse of power directed at them. The DOJ report only later confirmed what residents of Baltimore had been saying all along. There is more than one Baltimore. The images of Baltimore in flames were seen around the world. Young black men face to face with the police officers who they felt were there to shut them down and take away their voice the way they took away the life of Freddie Gray. There were beautiful images of horrible things. It was a moment of reckoning. It needed to be recorded, and we needed to bear witness.

**Jeffrey Kent:** My artwork uses interdisciplinary practices to convey a recognizable urban perspective from my experiences as "A Black" growing up in Baltimore, as well as a past life as a cocaine dealer/addict, to conceptually project the racial, political, and thus economic disparity that occurs to non-whites in society. My work uses language's obfuscations like "civil rights" and "justice for all" to examine layers of tribal identification, providing viewers an opportunity to feel what it might be like to experience injustice and everyday struggles simply for being non-white.

**Nether:** Baltimore is a culture of resistance. Baltimore is a city where unofficial cultures and the power of the residents in their own neighborhoods often have a lot more pull and history of support within communities than the state or initiatives that trickle down from city hall. As art intertwines itself with this autonomous reality and culture of dissent in Baltimore, the artist serves as a social documentarian...as a result, I don't want to have any part in telling the official state history or the history of those it has elevated; that's not what's honest or what being a social documentarian in a city of untold stories means to me.

**Shinique Smith:** I watched the protests and unrest from New York, fearing for the safety of my friends and family and the city that raised me. My uncle's

house was broken into, but luckily no one was hurt and there was no major loss. The charged feelings that flamed as a result of the death of Freddie Gray and the charges against the officers involved being dropped reignited this distinctive feeling that was always present growing up in Baltimore. Through my art, I seek to make connections among people, emotions, and histories, real and imagined, with materials that we share as humans in our daily lives linked together by ribbon and rope and calligraphic script influenced by the fire and graffiti of my youth.

**Nate Larson:** Earlier that day, I photographed the Baltimore protests at North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue. I was struck by the line of police blockading the street and made a portrait of each of the 27 officers that comprised the human wall, seeking in the absence of badge numbers or nameplates. That evening, I went back, and there were 26 citizens forming a human wall, separating the crowd from the police, to protect the crowd from provoking a police response. Someone kept calling out, "Don't give them an excuse to hurt us." My heart was heavy all day but lifted at this spirit of self-sacrifice and generosity.

**J.M. Giordano:** My photographs of the aftermath of the death of Freddie Gray are not art. They are scenes from a neighborhood in turmoil exactly as they played out. They are the result of years of simmering pressure between the residents and the local police precinct, who have been living together in a tenuous relationship for dozens of years. The photos presented here are reminders of what happens when residents are pushed to the brink by police brutality. With each fist, hand, glare, stare, and angry gesture, they scream at the top of their lungs "Black Lives Matter," and we're going to make sure you hear us.

**LKH: In times of crisis, how do you feel the role of the artist should function in or for the community?**

**Susan Waters-Eller:** It's an honor to be part of a show like this that marks needed change in the community. It's a great example of how the artist underscores the importance of the parts of the issues that get left out. When so much is written and spoken, an image can cut through the verbiage and show what's missing from the picture. An image then changes the way something is seen at a deeper level and hopefully enlarges the viewer's

perspective on an issue. Because a work of art conveys associated feelings and emotions, it can be deeply persuasive. Perhaps the viewer will never be able to look at the situation the same way again.

**Derrick Adams:** In times of crisis it is so important for all artists to be active contributors in their surrounding community. The contribution could be a product of one's artistic practice donated to a cause, volunteering time to local organizations, or simply mentoring others. Positive impact can be achieved on many levels without compromising the creative and imaginative essence. I've found that a commitment to positive change energizes the imagination, which creates a positive social cycle.

**Sonya Clark:** I keep thinking about something artist David Hammons said about art being "both commentary and oath-taking." I use craft to investigate identity. Simple objects become cultural interfaces. Through them, I navigate accord and discord. Charged with agency, objects have the mysterious ability to reflect or absorb us. I find my image, my personal story, in an object. But it is also the object's ability to act as a rhizome, the multiple ways in which it can be discovered or read by a wide audience, that draws me in...I milk the object, its potential, its image, and its materiality. I manipulate the object in a formal manner to engage the viewer in conversation about collective meaning. I trust that my stories, your stories, our stories are held in the object. In this way, the everyday "thing" becomes a lens through which we may better see one another. A visual vocabulary derived from object and image forms a language ranging from the vernacular to the political to the poetic.

**Paul Rucker:** Baltimore is America amplified – the good and the bad. There are a lot of places where you can avoid talking about these issues. My work is about research around incarceration, the prison system, slavery, racial disparities, and this history that affects what's going on today. So Baltimore, for me, is one of the best places to live. It's a very unique place. This is a city that needs to address the elephants in the room. Why is the white community average income twice that of the black community? Does one group have what they have because they are smarter or they work harder? Or is there something else that got us to where we are today, including the selective enforcement of law?

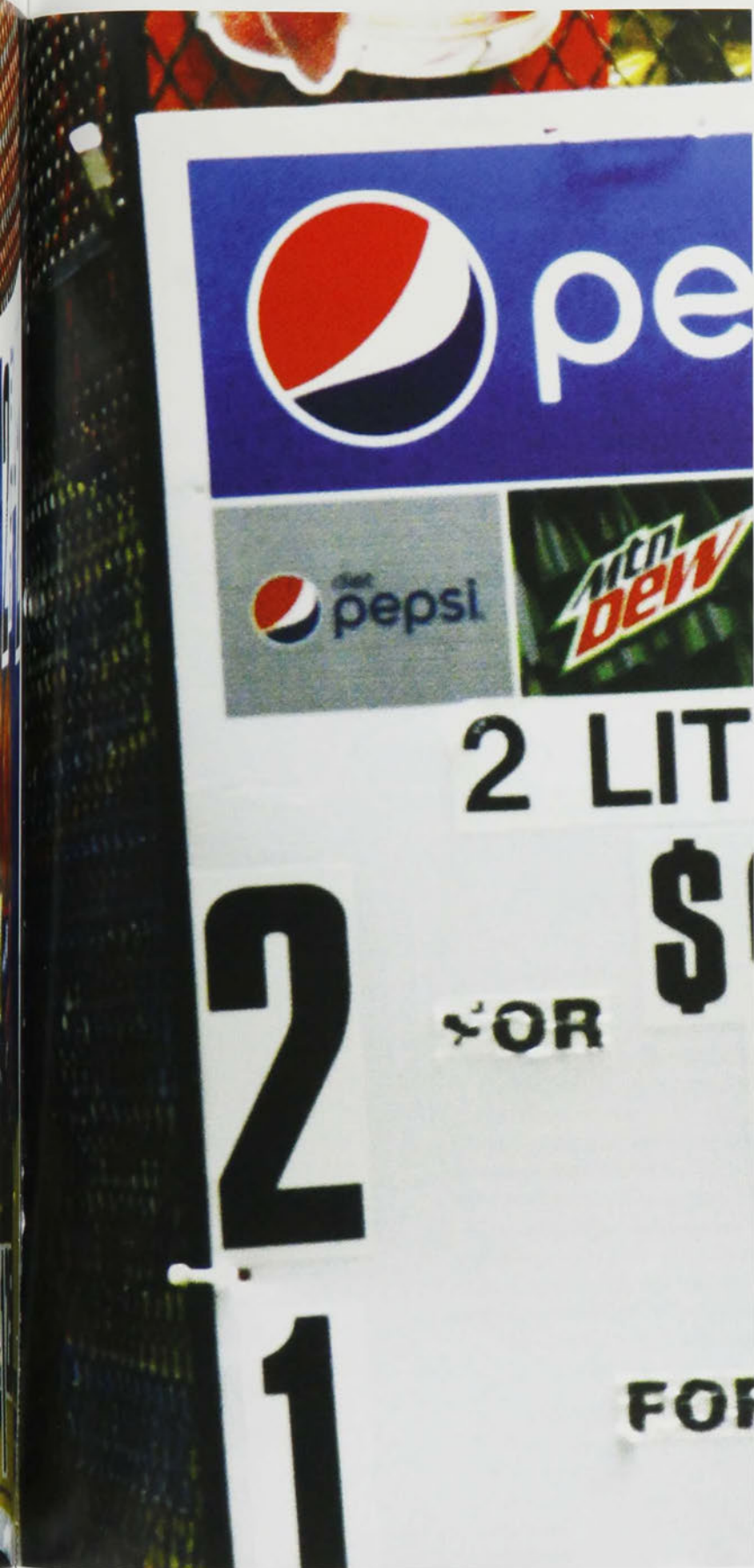
## **LKH: How do you envision the creative community can make an impact on the quality of life in Baltimore?**

**Olivia Robinson:** The people I have met in Baltimore have made me a smarter, more connected person and artist. I have found that Baltimore has demanded of me to give more attention to racism – and to specifically hear the civil rights era call that white people work together to undo racism. As I work this personally – through study, collaboration, in relationships, in activism – I also work through this artistically. My plans for the next quilt have shifted to creating a piece about the construction of whiteness. I have learned from researcher Diane Kuthy at Towson University about troves of media and material culture that were propaganda tools that encouraged white people to become a "norm," i.e. to give up their culture in return for the material benefits of joining the vast "norm" of being white. A recent workshop with The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond helped me see the question: What was given up in order to reap the privileges of being white?

**Logan Hicks:** Just like the plants that spread over the earth in the fields I grew up around, artists populate underserved neighborhoods and move there when nobody else wants to. They grow in between the cracks. They make work based on their experiences, and introduce experiences and positivity into places that have become barren. The job of an artist – at least my job as an artist – is to put a visual to stories of a city. To act as a conduit to new life. Not to talk about the city with facts and statistics, but to talk from a point of emotion. When I was in Baltimore, I would host large parties that combined music and art...it brought in new life. It brought people from the county into the city that wouldn't normally have come on a Friday night. Ironically, many of the people I knew that used to live out in the counties have since moved back to the neighborhood I used to throw parties in.

**Lauren F. Adams:** At the core of my work are critical explorations of labor and class in visual culture. I draw heavily upon the historical decorative arts to find contradictions within the contexts they originated. In my work, objects such as wallpaper patterns, ceramics, and paintings do not simply reflect the mood of a given culture but are also tools for critique.





J.M. Giordano  
**Untitled**  
(from the series  
The Battle of  
Sandtown-Winchester)  
2015  
archival inkjet print  
mounted on panel  
24 x 36 inches

My most recent project is an ongoing index of histories of enslaved people from antiquity to the present... Archival remnants of slave narratives, ornament, and my own personal inquiries constitute an open-ended process of asking how the decorative arts participate, either actively or silently, in promoting or reflecting dominant ideologies of social hierarchy, political authority, and cultural fantasy.

**Devin Allen:** My life has been a roller coaster. I am truly living a dream. I am from West Baltimore, and I lost two friends in the same week. This is the time for the artist to tell the story. I set my camera on black and white. I shoot to kill. I am a concerned citizen. Samsung took a liking to me and sponsored my youth program. This outreach is going well, but it's harder than I thought. I teach some youth from the Penn North Safe Zone where we just put up a mural of my photos of kids from the Uprising. I'm also working with a middle school in my old neighborhood; it feels good to connect with them and inspire them. I just want to continue giving back to my community. I want to document issues I feel connected to.

This exhibition is a new beginning for Baltimore's creative community, who will no longer be silenced in the face of gross injustice, inhumanity, and benign neglect. Baltimore will rise on the symbolic wings of a raven to embrace an era of much needed transformation, metamorphosis, and change, buoyed by the imagination, artistry, and intellect of the creative community.

Leslie King-Hammond is the Graduate Dean Emerita, Professor Emerita, and the Founding Director of the Center for Race and Culture at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

**Derrick Adams** is a multidisciplinary New York-based artist working in performance, video, sound, and 2D and 3D realms. A recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award and S.J. Weiler Award, Adams received his MFA from Columbia University, BFA from Pratt Institute, and is a Skowhegan and Marie Walsh Sharpe alumnus. His exhibition and performance highlights include: *Greater New York '05*, MoMA PS1; *Open House: Working In Brooklyn '04*, Brooklyn Museum of Art; *PERFORMA '05, '13, '15; Radical Presence & The Shadows Took Shape*, Studio Museum in Harlem; and is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Studio Museum in Harlem, and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. His work can be seen in New York at Tilton Gallery; Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago; Galerie Anne de Villepoix, Paris; and Vigo Gallery, London.

**Lauren F. Adams** has a BFA from UNC-Chapel Hill and MFA from Carnegie Mellon University. She has exhibited at the North Carolina Museum of Art; Nymans House National Trust, England; The Mattress Factory, Pennsylvania; Conner Contemporary, Washington, D.C.; and Smack Mellon, New York. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and has held residencies at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, and the Sacatar Foundation in Brazil. She is the recipient of a 2016 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and the 2016 Trawick Prize. Her work has been reviewed in *frieze* magazine, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *Hyperallergic*. Adams, who was born in North Carolina on a pig farm, is a founding member of Ortega y Gasset Projects in New York, and teaches painting at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

**Devin Allen** is a widely acclaimed photographer and activist from West Baltimore best known for his commanding photographs of the Baltimore Uprising. Shared through his personal Instagram account, his photographs went viral and were featured on the cover of *TIME*. Allen recently had his first solo exhibition at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore, and his work is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Allen also organizes "Inspire the Youth," a youth photography program at the Kids Safe Zone in the Penn-North neighborhood of West Baltimore. He regularly engages inner city youth in schools, museums, and other settings.

**Sonya Clark** is chair of the Craft and Material Studies Department at Virginia Commonwealth University. She holds an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and was awarded their first Mid-career Distinguished Alumni Award. She has a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and an honorary doctorate from Amherst College, where she received a BA in psychology. Her honors include the Grand Juror's Award at ArtPrize for the Hair Craft Project, a Pollock-Krasner Grant, a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and a United States Artist Fellowship. Clark has exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and has been reviewed favorably in noted publications included in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Time* magazine.

Baltimore native **J.M. Giordano** is photo editor and staff photographer at the *Baltimore City Paper*. In 2013, he left fashion and advertising photography in favor of documentary and photojournalism. Since then, he has covered Baltimore through series such as *Summer of the Gun*, about the homicides during summer 2013 and was the subject of an *Al Jazeera America* segment; and *Camp 83*, which called attention to homeless living under the I-83 highway. Camp was followed in 2015 with *Kid Row: Baltimore's homeless youth* problem. Giordano has also covered the local heroin trade and the events of the Freddie Gray Uprising. While shooting the above series, *Battle of Sandtown-Winchester*, he was beaten by police in Freddie Gray's neighborhood. His work has appeared in *The Guardian*, *GQ*, *Vice*, *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and more.

**Logan Hicks** is a New York-based artist known for using multiple layers of stencils to achieve photorealistic imagery. He studied at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in the 1990s, cutting his teeth as a screen printer before branching into stencils. Called a painter with a photographer's eye, Hicks' work has largely focused on the perception of the urban environment, at times humanizing its architectural angles and structures, and at other times using its vastness to explore identity, awe, and loneliness. Through an almost old masters approach to lighting, Hicks has learned to manipulate ordinary architectural scenes into deeply metaphorical and contemplative imagery, compounded with his usage of color in the studio. His mastery has gained worldwide respect and given the artist the opportunity to create permanent stencil murals in Miami, Baltimore, New York, Istanbul, Paris, and beyond.

Baltimore-based artist **Jeffrey Kent** was born in Boston. His commitment to communicating ideas through creative expression and dedication to community service are ideals he learned as a youth. He learned the importance of sharing his time and knowledge with young people, teaching them to set goals and to recognize the possibilities within their grasp. In 2003, Kent founded Sub-Basement Artists Studios, a 12,000-foot underground artists' studio and gallery space in downtown Baltimore. He was awarded Best Visual artist by *Baltimore City Paper* in 2008 and was featured in Baltimore's 2008 Top Ten Artist list by the *Examiner*. Kent received his MFA from the prestigious LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). The artistic vision of Kent is an important contribution to this continuous spectrum of urban cultural expression and identity.

**Nate Larson** is a contemporary artist working with photographic media, artist books, and digital video. His projects have been shown across the U.S. and internationally, as well as been featured in *The Guardian*, *CNN*, and *The New York Times*, among other major media outlets. Larson's recent project, *Geolocation*, includes site-specific work for the Atlanta Celebrates Photography Public Art Commission, the Indianapolis International Airport, and the DUMBO Business Improvement District, and was featured in the "State of the Art" survey exhibition at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2014. Larson is a full-time faculty member in the photography department at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). He was the Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel Visiting Artist Fellow at Duke University and a Rubys Artist Project Grant recipient from the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance.



**Nether** is a Baltimore-based street artist driven by vacant lot beautification, civil disobedience, and tactical activism aimed at sparking a dialogue on disdained urban issues. In a broken city, radical actions are needed to bring attention to ignored issues and tell forgotten histories. His artwork brings dignity and attention to ignored citizens, while highlighting the negative forces that have brought the city to its shameful state. Nether sees his work as a positive force that solidifies people's relationships to locations throughout Baltimore. His own quest is to reclaim and recycle the urban landscape, while emphasizing the city's pride and capturing the beautiful chaos that is Baltimore.

**Olivia Robinson** is a multimedia artist whose diverse body of work investigates issues of justice, identity, community, and transformation. She has received the Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award and a Rubys Award, as well as awards and honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, Sculpture Space, and The Land Use Interpretation, among others. Her work has been recognized in books, journals, and CD/DVD releases and has been presented at internationally recognized venues. Robinson received her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), and she holds an MFA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where she studied under legendary composer/performer Pauline Oliveros. Robinson currently serves on the board of Oliveros' Deep Listening Institute. She is a member of Baltimore Racial Justice Action and teaches at MICA.

**Paul Rucker's** work as a visual artist, composer, and musician is deeply influenced by his Southern upbringing. In his birthplace in Anderson, South Carolina – attending church where his mom played piano and organ, gardening and selling produce with his father, and working in a textile plant – his ideas about art, equity, and social justice were formed. The impact of slavery was still very much felt as he grew up in South Carolina, where in 1860, slaves outnumbered free people. Rucker investigates slavery's long-term social and economic effects in this country, and draws parallels to racially motivated violence, police brutality, mass incarceration, and the disproportionate criminalization of African Americans.

Recipient of a 2016 MacArthur "genius" grant, **Joyce J. Scott** has a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and an MFA from the Instituto Allende in Mexico. She's best known for her figurative sculptures and jewelry using free form, off-loom bead weaving techniques. Scott is renowned for her social commentary on issues such as racism, sexism, violence, and stereotypes as well as themes of spiritual healing. Her work, which is held by the American Craft Museum, Baltimore Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Museum of American Art, among other noteworthy institutions, has appeared in numerous solo and group exhibitions. She has been awarded honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council, and Anonymous was a Woman.

**Tony Shore** is chair of the Painting Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). He studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, received his BFA from MICA and his MFA from Yale University School of Art. His awards include The Janet and Walter Sondheim Prize, The Bethesda Painting Prize, several Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Awards, and most recently, the Baltimore Rubys Artist Project Grant. Recognized for his black velvet paintings of blue-collar life in Baltimore, he has exhibited his work at the Baltimore Museum of Art, The Delaware Art Museum, The Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, The Noyes Museum, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts/Kunsthalle Beacon, George Adams Gallery, and Grimaldis Gallery, as well as many other galleries throughout the U.S.

**Shinique Smith** is a New York-based artist whose mixed media painting, sculpture, and installations are inspired by the vast nature of 'things' that we consume and discard, which resonate on a personal and social scale. A recipient of a Louis Comfort Tiffany Award and a Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, Smith's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions at venues such as The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, MOMA/PS1 (New York), and the Studio Museum in Harlem, among others. A comprehensive publication of her work, *Wonder and Rainbows*, was recently released by The Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville. Smith earned her BFA and MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), where she now serves on the Board of Trustees, and her MAT from Tufts University.

**Susan Waters-Eller** has been on the fine arts faculty at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) since 1978 and was a three-time winner of the Trustees Award for Excellence in Teaching. A native of Baltimore, she received a BFA, MFA and M.A. from MICA. Included in *Contemporary American Oil Painting*, published in China, her forty-year career has included numerous solo and group shows. Presenting visual art as a vehicle for philosophical inquiry, she has given talks and delivered papers in a wide variety of venues from a prison to an experimental workshop to an international conference on art and technology. She co-edited the book *Beyond Critique: Different Ways to Talk About Art* and contributed an essay, "What Creates Response," that describes how she applies ideas from neuroscience to the art of critique.

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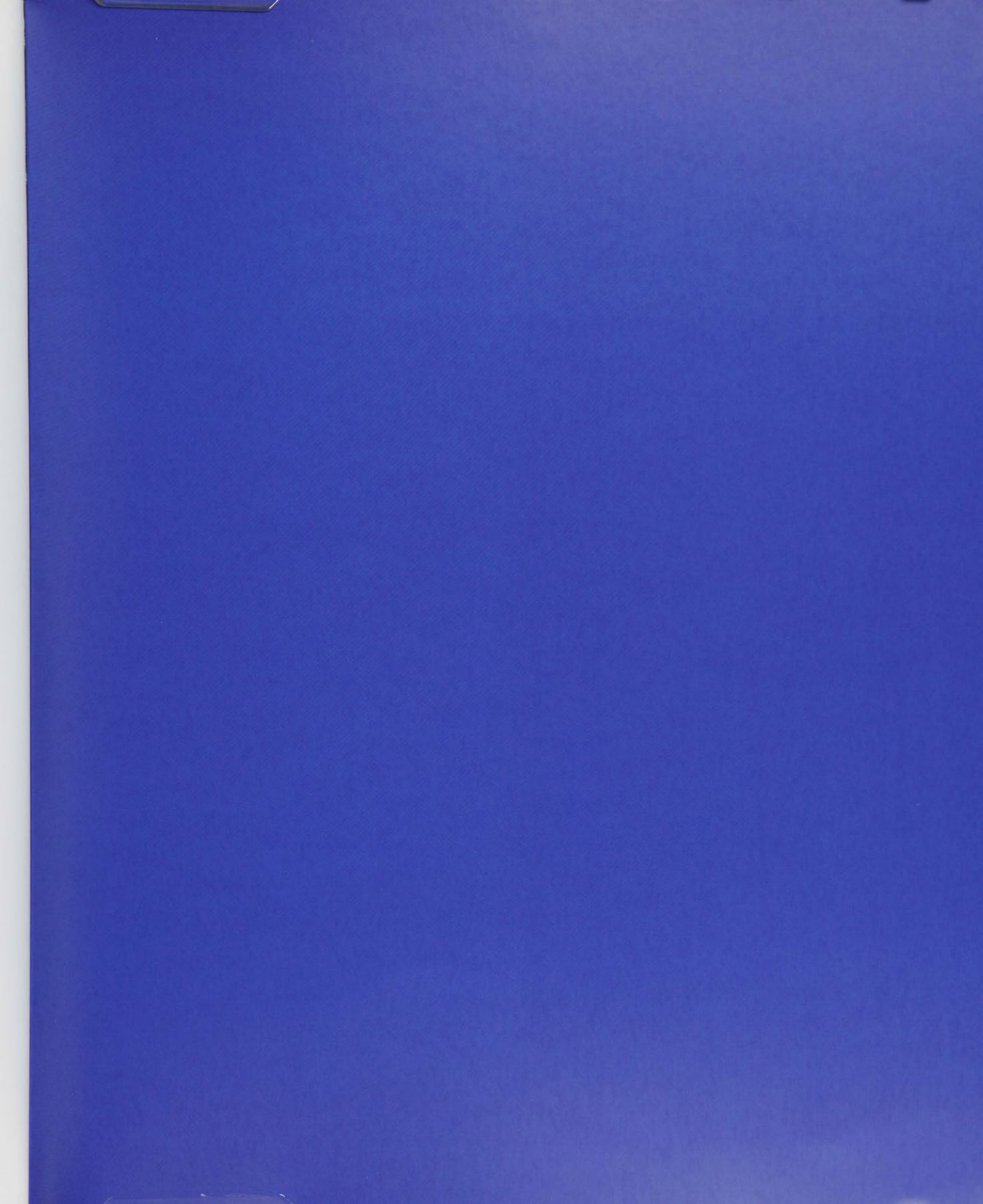
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