

MEDIA RELEASE

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THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM OPENS ITS SUMMER SEASON ON JULY 14, PRESENTING FIVE EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS SPANNING GENERATIONS



Alma Thomas, Apollo 12 "Splash Down" (cropped), 1970. Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY

NEW YORK, NY, June 21, 2016—The Studio Museum in Harlem today announced that its summer season of exhibitions and projects will open to the public on July 14, 2016, celebrating the work of multiple generations of modern and contemporary artists of African descent.

This season, the exhibitions focus strongly on the achievements of two venerated artists working in abstraction—the late painter Alma Thomas, and master sculptor Richard Hunt—while also showcasing the diverse approaches of an emerging generation with this year's artists in residence Jordan Casteel, EJ Hill and Jibade-Khalil Huffman. Also on view are the photographs of the high-school-age artists who have participated in this year's *Expanding the Walls* program, and the latest installment of the Museum's signature *Harlem Postcards* series.

Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem, said, "Whether presenting a long-awaited exhibition of the visionary Alma Thomas, offering a focused look into lesser-known aspects of the celebrated sculptor Richard Hunt, delving into a range of contemporary concerns and formal issues with our artists in residence or looking at Harlem through the fresh eyes of our *Expanding the Walls* participants, these exhibitions will immerse Studio Museum

visitors in the depth, complexity, nuance and vigor that run through the work of generations of artists of African descent."

Summer 2016 exhibitions and projects are on view from July 14 through October 30.

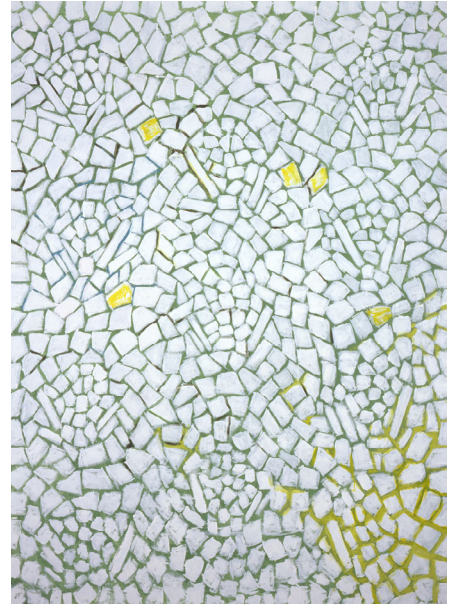
Alma Thomas

The Studio Museum in Harlem is proud to present the first comprehensive overview in almost two decades of the singular achievement of Alma Thomas (1891-1978), featuring more than fifty paintings and works on paper from every phase of this trailblazing artist's practice.

The first graduate in Fine Arts from Howard University, Alma Thomas was active in artistic circles throughout her adult life, frequenting Lois Mailou Jones's salons in the late 1940s, helping to form the Barnett-Aden Gallery (at the time one of the country's few private galleries presenting the works of African-American artists) and circulating with Color Field painters including Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland. When she retired in 1960 from her job as an art teacher at a Washington, DC junior high school she was at last able to paint full time, and went on to be the first African-American woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the first African-American woman to be represented in the White House art collection.

The four sections of *Alma Thomas* chart the full course of her evolving practice, with works drawn from a range of public and private collections. "Move to Abstraction" traces her evolution from a figurative style to a full commitment in the mid-1960s to color and pattern, based on abstraction of natural forms. The second section, "Earth," focuses on the paintings of the late 1960s that won Thomas the attention of local and national audiences. The third section, "Space," presents the extraordinary series of paintings that were inspired by NASA's Apollo missions to the moon. The final section, "Mosaic," includes the artist's astonishingly free, almost calligraphic abstractions.

Alma Thomas is organized by Lauren Haynes, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, at The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, where the exhibition debuted in February 2016.



Alma Thomas, *White Roses Sing and Sing*, 1976. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Bequest of the artist

Tenses: Artists in Residence 2015–16



Jordan Casteel, *Glass Man Michael*, 2016. Courtesy the artist

The *Artist-in-Residence* program is at the core of the mission of The Studio Museum in Harlem and gives the institution its name. Since the Museum's founding in 1968, more than one hundred artists in residence have created and shown work in the studios and galleries.

In the latest of its annual exhibition from the *Artist-in-Residence* program, titled *Tenses* to suggest the range of shifting possibilities in the artists' practices, the Studio Museum proudly presents recent works by painter Jordan Casteel (b. 1989), and multimedia artists EJ Hill (b. 1985) and Jibade-Khalil Huffman (b. 1981).

The six large-scale paintings by Casteel—an extension of the investigations she has been pursuing for several years into the complexity of black male identity—use vibrant, textured colors to capture the spirit of the vendors who operate every day on the sidewalks of West 125th Street. EJ Hill's installation *A Monumental Offering of*

Potential Energy has a platform stage and a scaled-down wooden roller-coaster track as its central elements, suggesting the highs and lows, thrills and terrors, of life. Hill's work will be activated by the presence of the artist's body, which is intended to rest there, inertly, throughout the exhibition, as a meditation on the space of queer black bodies. Jibade-Khalil Huffman's installation will be a complex layering of photo-based inkjet prints, video and sculpture, challenging the viewer's normal understanding of visual perception while creating strategic overlaps between the digital and the analog, the projected and the real.

Tenses: Artists in Residence 2015–16 is organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator.

Richard Hunt: Framed and Extended



Richard Hunt, *Hybrid Form #3*, 1970.
The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of Mr. and Mrs.
Samuel Shore. Photo: Marc Bernier

Chicago-based sculptor Richard Hunt (b. 1935) is best known for his public commissions sited in more than 125 parks, schools and public areas across the nation, including the intersection of 125th Street and Morningside Avenue in New York, where the abstract forms of his *Harlem Hybrid* (1972) seem to draw together elements of the surroundings while creating a dynamic environment of their own. His work has been the subject of many exhibitions, including *The Sculpture of Richard Hunt* (1971) at the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago and *Growing Forward* (1996) at The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame.

Richard Hunt: Framed and Extended explores three lesser-known but integral aspects of Hunt's art—printmaking, small-scale sculpture and wall sculpture—that share a vocabulary with the public commissions and express the same sense of lightness and vitality. The exhibition's title, drawn from one of Hunt's wall sculptures, testifies to the artist's practice of sculpture as the three-dimensional counterpart to drawing.

The exhibition brings together some seventeen works that span Hunt's career. These range from the bold, angular lines of his print *Untitled* (1965, collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem) and the sweeping, gestural combination of abstracted organic forms and hard-edged geometry in the freestanding *Hybrid Form #3* (1970) to his *Wall Piece Two* and *Wall Piece Seven* (both 1989) and the recent freestanding *Spiral Odyssey II* (2014).

Richard Hunt: Framed and Extended is organized by Lauren Haynes, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, and Hallie Ringle, Assistant Curator.

Color in Shadow: Expanding the Walls 2016

The Studio Museum's *Expanding the Walls* program, founded in 2001, is a photography-based residency for young emerging artists enrolled in high schools or GED programs in New York City, providing them with workshops with a diverse group of arts professionals, intensive instruction in the techniques of digital photography, opportunities to build community and a culminating exhibition. Each eight-month residency is based on the young artists' investigation of the work of James VanDerZee (1886–1983), the iconic chronicler of Harlem life, whose archives are housed at the Studio Museum.

The fifteen young artists in the 2015–16 program took an interest in particular methods of VanDerZee's practice such as his use of hyperreal studio backdrops and etching notes on his negatives. They were also

drawn to the performative and conceptual strategies of other photographers, including Xaviera Simmons, Christina de Middel, Miguel Luciano and Roy DeCarava. The resulting exhibition, *Color in Shadow*, reflects the young artists' fascination with these formal aspects of photography, while also testifying to their close attention to the nuances of visual life in Harlem and other New York City neighborhoods.

Color in Shadow: Expanding the Walls 2016 is organized by the 2016 *Expanding the Walls* participants with Gerald L. Leavell II, Expanding the Walls/Youth Programs Coordinator, Adeze Wilford, Curatorial Fellow and Doris Zhao, 2014–16 Curatorial Fellow.

Harlem Postcards

Harlem Postcards Summer 2016 is the latest installment in an ongoing project that invites contemporary artists to reflect on the many sides of Harlem: as a site of cultural activity, political vitality, visual stimulation, artistic contemplation and creative production. This season, *Harlem Postcards* features photographs by Alannis Alba, John Jennings, Miatta Kawinzi and Nontsikelelo Mutiti, whose images, both intimate and dynamic, reflect the idiosyncratic visions of artists from a wide range of backgrounds and locations. Each photograph has been reproduced as a limited-edition postcard and is available free to Studio Museum visitors.

Public Programs

The Studio Museum will offer a full slate of public programs in conjunction with the summer exhibition season, including artist talks, panels, book clubs and hands-on art-making workshops designed for adult audiences.

Extending the reach of *Tenses: Artists in Residence 2015-16*, the Studio Museum will collaborate with WNYC for the second year in a row by presenting a satellite installation in the street-level windows of the station's Jerome L. Greene Performance Space, as well as related public programs downtown. The collaboration will kick off on Tuesday, July 26, at 7 pm with *on AIR: Jordan Casteel, EJ Hill and Jibade-Khalil Huffman live from WNYC!*, a conversation between the current Studio Museum artists in residence and program alumni Kevin Beasley, Kerry James Marshall and Dave McKenzie.

on AIR is organized by Nico Wheadon, Director, Public Programs & Community Engagement. For more information on upcoming programs and events, please check studiomuseum.org/event-calendar.

Hours and Admission

The Studio Museum is open Thursday and Friday, noon–9pm; Saturday, 10am–6pm; and Sunday, noon–6pm. The museum is closed to the public but available for school and group tours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Museum admission is by suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid ID) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. Sundays are free at the Studio Museum, thanks to generous support from Target. For more information visit studiomuseum.org.

About The Studio Museum in Harlem

Founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, community activists and philanthropists, The Studio Museum in Harlem is internationally known for its catalytic role in promoting the work of outstanding artists of African descent. Now approaching its 50th anniversary, the Studio Museum is preparing to construct a new home at

its current location on Manhattan's West 125th Street, designed by internationally renowned architect David Adjaye as the first building created expressly for the institution's program. The new building will enable the Studio Museum to better serve a growing and diverse audience, provide additional educational opportunities for people of all ages, expand its program of world-renowned exhibitions, effectively display its singular collection and strengthen its trailblazing *Artist-in-Residence* program.

The *Artist-in-Residence* program was one of the institution's founding initiatives and is the reason why "Studio" is in the name. The program has supported more than one hundred emerging artists of African or Latino descent, many of whom who have gone on to highly regarded careers. Alumni include Chakaia Booker, David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, Julie Mehretu, Wangechi Mutu, Mickalene Thomas and Kehinde Wiley.

The collection includes over 2,200 paintings, sculptures, works on paper, prints, photographs, mixed-media works and installations dating from the nineteenth century to the present. Artists represented include Romare Bearden, Robert Colescott, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Chris Ofili, Betye Saar, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker and Hale Woodruff, as well as many former artists in residence. The Studio Museum is the custodian of an extensive archive of the work of photographer James VanDerZee, the renowned chronicler of the Harlem community from 1906 to 1983.

The Studio Museum's exhibitions expand the personal, public and academic understanding of modern and contemporary work by artists of African descent. A wide variety of on- and off-site programs brings art alive for audiences of all ages—from toddlers to seniors—while serving as a bridge between artists of African descent and a broad and diverse public. A leader in scholarship about artists of African descent, the Studio Museum publishes *Studio* magazine twice a year and creates award-winning books, exhibition catalogues and brochures.

Support

Exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem are made possible thanks to support from the following government agencies: The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Council.

Additional support is generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Expanding the Walls is made possible with support from The Keith Haring Foundation, Conscious Kids, Susan and Thomas Dunn, Colgate-Palmolive, and Joy of Giving Something.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is deeply grateful for Donna Mussenden VanDerZee's continued support of *Expanding the Walls*.

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