

BLACK | ROCK

JULY 2019

PRESS RELEASE



BLACK ROCK SENEGAL ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL SELECTION OF ARTISTS FOR FIRST YEAR

DAKAR, SENEGAL

Black Rock Senegal today announced the official selection of artists for the inaugural year of its artist-in-residence program developed by Kehinde Wiley. Between August 2019 and April 2020, Black Rock will host 16 international, multi-disciplinary artists to live and work in Dakar, Senegal, on the westernmost point of continental Africa.

For the inaugural year, Black Rock received over 700 applications from around the world.

The selected artists for Black Rock 2019-20 are: **Tunji Adeniyi-Jones** (UK, Painting), **Laurence Bonvin** (Switzerland, Film), **Sonya Clark** (USA, Sculpture), **Yagazie Emezi** (Nigeria, Photography), **Nona Faustine** (USA, Photography), **Devin B. Johnson** (USA, Painting), **Heather Jones** (USA, Textiles), **Grace Lynne** (USA, Painting), **Zanoxolo Sylvester Mqeku** (South Africa, Sculpture), **Kelechi Njoku** (Nigeria, Writing), **Chelsea Odufu** (USA, Film), **Kambui Olujimi** (USA, Mixed Media), **Zohra Opoku** (Ghana, Mixed Media), **Rafael RG** (Brazil, Mixed Media), **Tajh Rust** (USA, Painting) and **Ytasha Womack** (USA, Writing).

This year's artists have been selected by an esteemed committee of artists and museum professionals comprised of: **Swizz Beatz**, Artist and Producer; **Thelma Golden**, Director and Chief Curator, Studio Museum in Harlem; **Thomas Lax**, Curator of Performance and Media Art, The Museum of Modern Art; Christine Riding, Head of the Curatorial Department, The National Gallery in London; **Mickalene Thomas**, Artist; and **Carrie Mae Weems**, Artist.



ABOUT THE RESIDENCY

Named for the volcanic rocks that blanket its shoreline, Black Rock is a residency program created by renowned artist Kehinde Wiley which seeks to incite change in the global discourse around West Africa in the context of creative evolution. The residency brings together international artists to live and work in Dakar, Senegal for 1-3 month stays.

Black Rock residents are provided room, board, individual studio space, a local staff to aid in navigating Dakar and a language tutor to assist with English, French, and Wolof– the three primary languages of the program. Residents are also supported by a stipend for incidentals and additional art supplies.

The Black Rock compound design was conceived by Senegalese architect Abib Djenne with interior collaboration between Wiley, Fatiya Djenne, and Aissa Dione. The complex includes a residence and studio space for Wiley along with three single-occupancy residency apartments with adjacent studio spaces.

For additional information about the residency please visit blackrocksenegal.org and follow us on Instagram @blackrocksenegal.



RECENT UPDATES FROM

BLACK ROCK

On May 26, 2019, Kehinde Wiley opened the doors to Black Rock inviting friends, collaborators, and supporters to join him in celebration of the opening of his artists residency program. We were thrilled to host live performances by Guiss Guiss Bou Bess and Alibeta, a runway show featuring Tongoro's latest collection by designer Sarah Diouf, DJ sets by Ibaaku, Amine Bendriouich, and Young Wavy Fox, and signature Black Rock beverages created by Chef Dior. The launch event in Dakar marked the start of an exciting year for Black Rock.



KEHINDE WILEY



At the core of Kehinde Wiley's practice is an analysis of the intersecting points between cultural and aesthetic values and existing historical narratives. In this charged moment, these discourses reveal how relations of power produce, sustain, and reinforce particular interpretations of transcultural exchanges and subject positions.



In 2018 Wiley became the first African-American artist to paint an official U.S. Presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Former U.S. President Barack Obama selected Wiley for this honor. Wiley has held solo exhibitions at Brooklyn Museum, Jewish Museum in New York, Columbus Museum of Art, and Studio Museum in Harlem. His works are included in the collections of numerous public institutions.

For additional information
about Kehinde Wiley please visit:

kehindewiley.com

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ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

2019 - 2020

TUNJI ADENIYI-JONES

b. United Kingdom; Painting



Tunji Adeniyi-Jones uses figurative painting as a means to explore West African history and its associated mythology. Adeniyi-Jones renders colourful and vibrant bodies that are larger than life, taking inspiration from both his Yoruba heritage and his British upbringing. Centralizing himself firmly within the modern African diaspora Adeniyi-Jones seeks to expand upon cultural themes and practices originated by the likes of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ben Enwonwu, drawing from each of these legacies to further highlight the rich substance of West African history and philosophy. Born in London, Adeniyi-Jones received his BFA in Fine Art from Oxford University and his MFA in Painting/Printmaking from Yale University. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

LAURENCE BONVIN

b. Switzerland; Film



Laurence Bonvin is an artist working since many years with photography and more recently also with video. She was born in Switzerland and studied in Arles, France at the National School for Photography. Her practice, which has a strong documentary base, has been centred on the transformations of urban peripheries, of natural and social landscapes, on segregation, human displacements and architecture of power. Bonvin realized her projects first in Switzerland, before extending to Holland, Georgia, Berlin, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Abidjan and Dakar. Her photographs and videos have been extensively showcased in exhibitions as well as screened internationally in film festivals. She is currently based between Berlin, Germany and Switzerland.

SONYA CLARK

b. USA; Textiles, Sculpture



Sonya Clark's work draws from the legacy of crafted objects and the embodiment of skill. She uses textiles, hair, beads, combs, and sound to address issues of justice and identity. Clark is a full professor of Art at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, her alma mater where she received an honorary doctorate. She holds art degrees from Cranbrook Academy of Art and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Clark is the recipient of awards including Anonymous Was a Woman, Art Prize, Pollock-Krasner, Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowship, a Red Gate Residency in China, a Civitella Ranieri Residency in Italy, United States Artist Fellowship and an Art Matters Grant. Her work has been viewed in over 350 exhibitions in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas and is held in many museums.

YAGAZIE LEDI FRANCISCA

b. Nigeria; Photography, Digital Media



Yagazie Emezi is an artist and self-taught photographer from Aba, Nigeria focused on stories surrounding African women and their health, sexuality, education and human rights. Her ongoing project “Re-learning Bodies” explores how trauma survivors, outside the narrative of violence and abuse, adapt to their new bodies, marking the absence of an effusive culture around body positivity as a noteworthy cultural phenomenon while drawing comparisons between scars and Earth’s natural environment. Her more recent personal works pull from history and current affairs, using fantasy and folktales to address social issues.

NONA FAUSTINE

b. USA; Photography, Video



Nona Faustine is a photographer, visual artist and Brooklyn native. Her work focuses on identity, representation and history. Faustine’s images have received world-wide acclaim and have been published in a variety of national and international media outlets including the New York Times, Artforum and the Guardian. Exhibited throughout the United States, in addition to Brazil and Mexico, Faustine’s images are in the collection of the Studio Museum of Harlem, David C. Driskell Center at Maryland State University, Brooklyn Museum and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburg. She is a Finalist of the 2019 Outwin Boochever Competition at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery.

DEVIN B. JOHNSON

b. USA; Multi-Disciplinary, Painting



Devin B. Johnson was born in Los Angeles, California. Johnson obtained his BA in Fine Arts from the California State University of Channel Islands and received a Masters of Fine Arts at Pratt institute. He has shown abroad and has shown in various group shows across Los Angeles including a recent group show this summer with Nicodim Gallery Trans World. He is preparing for his first solo exhibition with Residency Gallery in Los Angeles for September 2019. Johnson was awarded the recent honor of being featured in the 2019 Northeast and MFA issue of New American Paintings.

HEATHER JONES

b. USA, Textile



Heather Jones is an artist whose work questions and pushes traditional conceptions of both quilt making and painting by exploring the formal possibilities of color and design, often through geometric and striped compositions. She is interested in the historical and socio-political relationship between women and textiles, and explores the relationship between gender, place, time, and culture. Her work has been exhibited widely at national and international venues such as the Taft Museum of Art, Ohio; New England Quilt Museum, Massachusetts; and dr. julius | ap, Berlin, Germany. A native Cincinnati, she currently lives outside of the city on a small farm with her husband and two children.

GRACE LYNNE HAYNES

b. USA; Painting, Collage



Grace Lynne Haynes is a Los Angeles born painter and designer who centers her work around the modern day Afro-American woman and her relationship to femininity. She strives to explore the intersections between culture, color, femininity and the African Diaspora at large. Haynes received her BA in Illustration and Social Practice. Her work has been published in *New American Paintings*, *Creative Quarterly*, and the *American Illustration Annual*. She has exhibited at the Ontario Museum of History and Art, Paul Robeson Gallery, Band of Vices Gallery, Los Angeles Municipal Gallery and the New Image Art Gallery.

ZANOXOLO SYLVESTER MQEKU

b. South Africa; Sculpture



Zanoxolo Mqeku was born in Mount Fletcher, a small town on the edges of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. In early 2016 Mqeku enrolled at the Tshwane University of Technology. After completing a B-Tech in Fine Art, Mqeku began a Master's in Design and Studio Art at the Central University of Bloemfontein. On a quest to develop research into the innovative studio practice of sand cast ceramics, Mqeku was commissioned as part of the Goethe Project Space (GPS) by the Goethe Institut, Johannesburg. Between September and October 2018, Mqeku hosted a public workshop on sandcast ceramics at the Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein.

KELECHI NJOKU

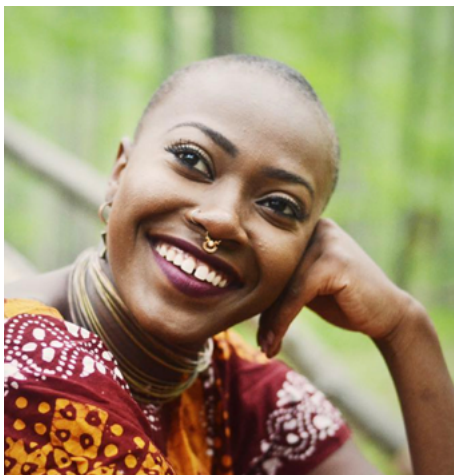
b. Nigeria; Writing



Kelechi Njoku's writing has appeared in *adda*, *Litro*, *This Is Africa*, *Brittle Paper*, *The Muse*, and other venues. He was shortlisted for the 2017 Commonwealth Short Story Prize and previously won the Writivism Short Story Prize, West Africa Region. His work has been spotlighted by *The Book Banque* ("9 Stories You Should Read") and *Brittle Paper* ("79 notable pieces of 2017"). He lives in Lagos, where he is Senior Editor at *Kachifo* and Editor at *Bakwa* and 14.

CHELSEA ODUFU

b. USA; Film



Chelsea Odufu is an award winning Nigerian, Guyanese, American filmmaker who fuses her passion for culture and afro-futurism to highlight the uniqueness of underrepresented groups on screen. Her award winning film "Ori Inu: In Search of Self" screened globally and at institutions such as Harvard and Yale. She has directed content for brands including Cadillac, Gillette Venus and Fiverr. She has worked for Spike Lee on his projects "Chi-Raq" and "She's Gotta Have it." Her film work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Forbes Magazine* and *The Huffington Post* etc. Chelsea is currently in Post Production for her new afro-futuristic TV pilot "Black Lady Goddess."

KAMBUI OLUJIMI

b. USA; Installation, Multi-Disciplinary



Kambui Olujimi was born and raised in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. He received his MFA from Columbia University and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His work challenges established modes of thinking that commonly function as "inevitable." This pursuit takes shape through interdisciplinary bodies of work spanning sculpture, installation, photography, writing, video and performance. His works have premiered nationally at The Sundance Film Festival, the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles) and Mass MoCA. Internationally his work has been featured Museo Nacional Reina Sofia in Madrid, Kiasma Museum in Finland and Para Site in Hong Kong among others.

ZOHRA OPOKU

b. Ghana; Installation, Photography, Print, Video



Zohra Opoku examines political, historical, cultural, and socio-economic influences in the formation of personal identities, particularly in the context of contemporary Ghana. Her practice centers around its traditional textiles and dress codes, which have been an inherent part of the country's identity and industry throughout West Africa's complex history and serve as vehicles for her to connect to the abstraction of identity in a tangible way. Her explorations have been mostly carried out through the lens of her camera; her photography is expressed via screen-printing and alternative photo processing on varieties of natural fabrics, predominantly Western Second Hand trade products found on the local market. Additionally, she experiments with video, new and found wood as well as garments used in different manifestations of site-specific installations.

RAFAEL RODRIGUES GOMES DA SILVA

b. Brazil; Conceptual, Multi-Disciplinary



Rafael RG is a visual artist and writer. Was born and raised in Guarulhos and now lives and works between Belo Horizonte and Salvador, Brazil. His practice focuses on sexual and affective relationships and their political implications as well as issues of racial identity. Working with institutional and personal archives, he presents his research through workshops, installations, performative texts, publications and objects. The materials he works with are often closely associated with narratives that involve himself or an alter ego in some way and the resulting projects that are close to or resemble fiction.

TAJH RUST

b. USA; Painting



Tajh Rust was born in Brooklyn, New York, and graduated from Cooper Union in 2011 with a BFA in Painting and Film and from Yale University in 2019 with an MFA in Painting. He currently lives and works in New Haven, Connecticut. Selected exhibitions include August Wilson African American Cultural Center, Pittsburgh; Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, Brooklyn; Bronx Art Space, Bronx; Stems Gallery, Brussels, Belgium; Artspace, New Haven; De Buck Gallery, New York; Green Hall Gallery, New Haven; Rush Arts, Philadelphia; Welancora Gallery, Brooklyn; and Fridman Gallery, New York.

YTASHA WOMACK

b. USA; Writing, Film



Ytasha L. Womack is an author, filmmaker, dancer and independent scholar. Her book *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture* is a Locus Awards Nonfiction Finalist and taught in universities around the world. Her books include *Post Black*, the *Rayla Universe* series and *Eartha 2198*. Her latest, *A Spaceship in Bronzeville* (Mouse Books) is a product of her residency with Kickstarter and will be released in August 2019. Her films include “A Love Letter to the Ancestors From Chicago” (producer/director) and “Couples Night” (screenwriter). She’s created an Afrofuturism Dance Therapy program and lectures on Afrofuturism and the imagination around the world. A resident of Chicago, she received her BA in Mass Media Arts from Clark Atlanta University and studied Arts, Entertainment, and Media Management at Columbia College Chicago.

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