

## ANTAWAN I. BYRD

Assistant Professor  
Department of Art History  
Northwestern University  
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### OTHER AFFILIATIONS

2021- Associate Curator (Special Projects), Photography and Media, Art Institute of Chicago

### RESEARCH INTERESTS / TEACHING AREAS

Art History > Modern/Contemporary Art and Material Culture > Africa and the African Diaspora > early to mid-twentieth century studio photography, histories and legacies of colonialism, theories and cultural histories of Pan-Africanism, historiography of African art, aesthetic and political uses of sound/loudspeaker technologies, the visual culture of listening, Black vernacular print cultures

### EDUCATION

Ph.D., Northwestern University, Art History, 2022

Dissertation: "Interferences: Sound, Technology, and the Politics of Listening in Afro-Atlantic Art."

Advisor: Krista Thompson

Committee: Huey Copeland, Hannah Feldman, and Alexander Weheliye

M.A., Northwestern University, Art History, 2013

French Immersion Language Studies, Middlebury Language School (Summer 2011); Alliance française, Lagos (Summer 2010)

B.A., Temple University, Tyler School of Art, Art History/Digital Media, magna cum laude, 2008  
Temple University Temple University Rome, Semester Abroad (2007)

### FELLOWSHIPS

Northwestern University, WCAS, College Fellowship, Art History, 2022-2023 (post-doctoral)

Northwestern University, WCAS, Weinberg Fellowship, Art History, 2021-2022 (pre-doctoral)

Andrew Mellon-COSI Curatorial Fellowship, Art Institute of Chicago, Department of Photography and Media (pre-doctoral), 2017-2018

University of Rochester, Frederick Douglass Institute for African/African-American Studies Pre-doctoral Fellowship, 2017-2018 (pre-doctoral; declined)

Andrew Mellon Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Original Sources, 2015-2016 (pre-doctoral)

Block Museum of Art, Graduate Curatorial Fellowship, 2014-2015

Fulbright Fellowship, Nigeria, 2009-2011, Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos

Pennsylvania Historic Commission Diversity Fellowship, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008

### AWARDS / GRANTS

Winner, Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award - \$150,000 to the Art Institute of Chicago in support of the exhibition, *Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica* (forthcoming December 2024)

Co-organizer (with Elvira Dyangani Ose, Adom Getachew, and Matthew Witkovsky), "Panafrica: Histories, Aesthetics, Politics," a multi-year series of scholarly convenings (2021-2024) in Chicago, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Rabat, São Paulo, Sharjah, and Port-of-Spain. Awarded by the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, University of Chicago.

Winner (with Yves Chatap), [Inaugural] Award for Curatorial Excellence, 2017, Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA) for *[Re]Génération: Une exploration des archives des Rencontres de Bamako*, 10th Bamako Encounters Biennale of African Photography, 2015  
Recipient, Buffett Institute for International Studies Graduate Research Award, 2015  
Recipient, Professional Development Grant Award, The Graduate School, Northwestern University, 2013  
Recipient, Barbara Shanley Travel Research Grant, Northwestern University, 2012, 2013  
Recipient, International Programs Art History Scholarship, Temple University Rome, 2007  
Recipient, Neil Kosh International Studies Scholarship, Temple University Rome, 2007

## EDITED VOLUMES, EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

Editor (with Elizabeth Siegel), *The Art Institute of Chicago Field Guide to Photography and Media*, collection catalogue, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023). 424 Pages, 9.25 x 11.50 in, 400 illustrations. Contributions by Byrd, Siegel, Carl Fuldner, Matthew Witkovsky as well as Carol Armstrong, Leticia Alvarado, Geoffrey Batchen, Ali Behdad, Dawoud Bey, Emilie Boone, Zahid Chaudhary, Grace Deveney, Patricia Hayes, Georges Didi-Huberman, Hannah Feldman, Tamar Garb, Robin Kelsey, Carrie Lambert-Beatty, Martha Rosler, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Drew Thompson, Laura Wexler, Leslie Wilson, Amanda Williams, Solveig Nelson, Oluremi C. Onabanjo, Claire Zimmerman, et. al.  
Editor (with Felicia Mings), *The People Shall Govern! Medu Art Ensemble and the Anti-Apartheid Poster (1979-1985)*, exhibition catalogue, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New Haven, Yale University Press, 2020). 160 Pages, 8.50 x 11.50 in, 132 illustrations. Contributions by Byrd, Mings, Khwezi Gule, Ashraf Jamal, Mongane Wally Serote, and Warren Siebrits. Named among the “Best Art Books of 2020” by the *New York Times*; Review: Sindi-Leigh McBride, “[The Anti-Apartheid Posters of Medu](#),” *New Frame* 9 April 2021.  
Editor (with Yves Chatap and Bisi Silva), *Telling Time: Rencontres de Bamako, Biennial of African Photography 10<sup>th</sup> edition*, exhibition catalogue (Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 2015). 488 pages, 6.6 x 9.4 inches, color & bw illus, French & English. Contributions by Byrd, Chatap, Silva, Teju Cole, Madame N'diaye Ramatoulaye Diallo, Candace Keller, Abdoulaye Konaté, Moussa Konaté, Erika Nimis, Simon Njami, Samuel Sidibé, Moses Serubiri, et. al.

## ARTICLES / ESSAYS / INTERVIEWS

“Marilyn Nance’s Pan-African Crowdwork,” in *Marilyn Nance: Last Day in Lagos*, ed. Oluremi C. Onabanjo (Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2022), 114-129.  
“The Body and the Tropics: Antawan I. Byrd on Mimi Cheron Ng’ok” and “Instruments of Circulation and Resistance: Frieda Ekotto in Conversation with François Vergès, Moderated by Antawan I. Byrd,” in *Lucid Knowledge: On the Currency of the Photographic Image*, eds. Koyo Kouoh and Rasha Salti (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2022), 84-100; 162-175.  
“Demas Nwoko’s *Folly*,” in *African Modernism in America*, ed. Perrin M. Lathrop (New York: American Federation of Arts, 2022), 164-165.  
“Admire Kamudzengerere and Rachel Monosov,” in *Who Says, Who Shows, Who Counts: Thinking about History with the Block’s Collection*, eds. Essi Ronkko and Kate Hadley Toftness (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2021), 142-143.  
“Ernest Cole’s House of Bondage,” in *Aperture / The Photobook Review*, No. 018, ed. Deborah Willis (Fall 2020), 9.  
“Introduction” and “Medu Art Ensemble’s Operative and Aesthetic Montage,” in *The People Shall Govern: Medu Art Ensemble and the Anti-Apartheid Poster 1979-1985*, eds. Antawan I. Byrd and Felicia Mings (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 14-19; 25-35.  
“Kiluanji Kia Henda: In the Days of the Dark Safari,” *FOAM: International Photography Magazine*, No. 56, The Other Issue: Elsewhere (February 2020), 153-164.  
“Amplifications: Sanlé Sory’s Great Movements Between Photography and Music,” in *Sanlé Sory: Volta Photo* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; Göttingen: Steidl, 2018), 144-157.

- “On the Origins and Evolution of Àsikò: A Conversation between Bisi Silva and Antawan I. Byrd,” *Àsikò: On the Future of Artistic and Curatorial Pedagogies in Africa*, ed. Bisi Silva (Lagos: CCA, 2017), 243-254.
- “By Sight and Sound: Along the Wayfarings of Em’kal Eyongakpa and Dawit L. Petros” in *Recent Histories: Contemporary African Photography & Video Art*, ed. Oluremi C. Onabanjo (Neu-Ulm: The Walther Collection; Göttingen: Steidl, 2017), 267-273.
- “Malala Andrialavidrizana’s Figures” *Aperture*, No. 227, Platform Africa (Summer 2017): 68-73.
- “Turning Heads: Process and Production in Ojeikere’s Hairstyles,” in *J.D. ‘Okhai Ojeikere*, ed. Bisi Silva (Lagos: Centre for Contemporary Art, 2014), 128-137.
- “Lagos” in *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avant-Gardes*, ed. Kari Rittenbach (London: Phaidon, 2013), 166-189.
- “Face Me I Face You: ‘Agbo Rago’ and the Performance Art of Jelili Atiku,” in *Agbo Rago in Performance*, ed. Jelili Atiku (Lagos: Ateckhu Press, 2011), 19-25.

## INVITED LECTURES / PRESENTATIONS / CONVERSATIONS

- “Pan-Africanism, Photography, and the Public Square,” paper presentation, *Panafrika: Image, Sound, Text* Symposium, KANAL-Centre Pompidou, Brussels, June 9, 2023.
- “Medu Art Ensemble’s Photographic Reinventions,” panel presentation, *Not All Realisms: Photography, Africa, and the long 1960s*, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago (virtual), June 1, 2023.
- “Virtual Play in African Pasts and Futures: A Conversation with Craig Stevens,” Augmented Reality Dialogues, Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University, May 18, 2023.
- “The Chicago 00 Project: A Conversation with John Russick,” Augmented Reality Dialogues, Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University, May 11, 2023.
- “INFINITY minus Infinity: A Conversation with Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun of the Otolith Group,” Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, May 7, 2023.
- Respondent, “Violent Possessions: Cultural Heritage and the Politics of Knowledge,” lecture by Banu Karaca, Critical Theory Program, Northwestern University, May 2, 2023.
- “On Harlem’s National African Memorial Bookstore,” panel presentation, *Decentering the Document: Forum on Contemporary Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (virtual), April 19, 2023.
- “Pan-Africanism at the ‘Home of Proper Propaganda,’” paper presentation, Black Arts Consortium, *Work-In-Progress Colloquium*, Northwestern University, February 15, 2023.
- “Globetrotting: Yinka Shonibare CBE’s Pan-African Imagination,” lecture in conjunction with the exhibition, *Yinka Shonibare CBE: Planets in My Head*, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, October 1, 2022.
- “On the 2nd Lagos Biennial of Contemporary Art,” lecture, Arts Club of Chicago, January 21, 2020.
- “Turning In: Self-Portraits and Photography,” panel presentation, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, March 9, 2019.
- “Listening Out: Seydou Kèita’s Radio and the Problem of Decolonization,” lecture, C-MAP Initiative, Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 6, 2019.
- “Technosonic Episodes from the History of Photography in Africa,” paper presentation, Àsikò Curatorial Intensive at ACASA, University of Ghana-Legon, Accra, August 8, 2017.
- “Africa’s Photographic Futures,” paper presentation, 17th Triennial Symposium, University of Ghana-Legon, Accra, Arts Council of the African Studies Association, August 8, 2017.
- “Kader Attia: Reflecting Memory,” moderator, roundtable discussion with Kader Attia and anthropologists Peter Locke and Caroline Bledsoe, Block Museum of Art, Evanston, Illinois, January 21, 2017.
- “Photography Platforms in Africa,” paper presentation, *Beyond the Frame: Contemporary Photography from Africa and the Diaspora*, Symposium, Columbia University, NY, October 21, 2016.
- “On Art Publishing in Africa,” panel moderator, professional week, 10th Bamako Encounters Biennale of African Photography, Musée National du Mali, November 4, 2015.
- “Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey,” gallery talk, Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University,

- November 19, 2014.
- “Sabelo Mlangeni’s Country Girls,” gallery talk, Iceberg Projects, Chicago, November 10, 2012.
- “Being There/Being Seen: Locality and Afterlife in Jelili Atiku’s *Agbo Rago*,” panelist, *Shifting Plane of Performance Symposium*, University of Toronto Art Museum, August 27, 2012.
- “Where Is There? On the “Local” and “Global” in Contemporary Art,” panelist, Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, May 23, 2011.
- “On Contemporary Nigerian Art,” gallery talk, Museum of Contemporary Art, KIASMA, Helsinki, March 11, 2011.
- “Safaa Erruas & Pinar Yolacan,” presentation on CCA, Lagos’ exhibition program, Sharjah Art Foundation, March Meeting Conference, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, March 15, 2011.
- “On Digital Media in Contemporary Art,” lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Department of Art and Art History, November 25, 2009.
- “Revisiting Globalization: Transnationalism in the work of Yinka Shonibare & Fatimah Tuggar,” Temple University, Global Studies Conference, November 11, 2008.
- “The Evolution of Brancusi’s Mademoiselle Pogany,” gallery talk, Philadelphia Museum of Art, August 12, 2008.

## TEACHING

Primary Instructor – Northwestern University

- “Museum Seminar: Art & Culture of Pan-Africanism,” Art History 395, undergraduate, Spring 2023
- “First-Year Seminar: Black Portraiture,” Art History 101, undergraduate, Spring 2023
- “Photography and Africa,” Art History 386, undergraduate lecture, Winter 2021

Graduate Student Instructor – Northwestern University

- “Introduction to Modernism,” Art History 255, Winter 2014, Christina Kiaer
- “Black Visual Culture,” Art History 385, Spring 2014, Krista Thompson
- “Introduction to African Art,” Art History 220, Fall 2013, Leslie Wilson
- “Introduction to Modernism,” Art History 155, Spring 2013, Huey Copeland
- “Introduction to Contemporary Art,” Art History 260, Winter 2013, Hannah Feldman
- “Impressionism,” Art History 359, Fall 2012, S. Holly Clayson

## CURATORIAL POSITIONS / INTERNSHIPS / RESIDENCIES

- Associate Curator, Department of Photography and Media, Art Institute of Chicago, 2019-2021
- Assistant Curator, Department of Photography and Media, Art Institute of Chicago, 2018-2019
- Faculty Member, Àsikò: International Art and Curatorial Program, “Curatorial Intensive,” Accra, Ghana, August 1-9, 2017.
- Curatorial Residency, Alice Yard, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, two months, 2016
- Curatorial Residency, Suomenlinna, Helsinki, Finland, Helsinki International Artist Program in conjunction with the Museum of Contemporary Art, KIASMA, Ars 11, one month, 2011
- Program Coordinator, Inaugural edition of Àsikò International Art and Curatorial Program, “On Independence and the Ambivalence of Promise,” Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, 2010
- Curatorial Assistant, Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, 2009-2011
- Curatorial Intern, exhibition, “Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe,” curated by Joaneath Spicer at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 2009
- Museum Studies Internship Program, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008

## CURATORIAL EXHIBITIONS / PROJECTS

- Curator (with Adom Getachew, Elvira Dyangani Ose, and Matthew Witkovsky), *Project A Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrika*, forthcoming, Art Institute of Chicago, December 2024; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona (2025); KANAL-Centre Pompidou (2025)
- Curator, *Mimi Cheron Ng'ok: Closer to the Earth, Closer to My Own Body*, Art Institute of Chicago, June 18, 2021 – February 7, 2022.
- Curator (with Felicia Mings), *The People Shall Govern! Medu Art Ensemble and the Anti-Apartheid Poster*, Galleries 1 – 4, Art Institute of Chicago, April 27 – September 2, 2019.
- Curator (with Tosin Oshinowo and Oyindamola Fakeye), *How to Build a Lagoon with Just a Bottle of Wine?* The Second Lagos Biennial of Contemporary Art, Independence House, Lagos, October – November 2019.
- Co-Organizer (with Matthew Witkovsky), *Volta Photo: Starring Sanlé Sory and the People of Bobo-Dioulasso in the Small but Musically Mighty Country of Burkina Faso*, Bucksbaum Gallery, Modern Wing, Art Institute of Chicago, April 26 – August 19, 2018.
- Curator (with Kathleen Bickford Berzock and Janet Dees), *Kader Attia: Reflecting Memory*, Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Alsdorf Gallery, January 21 – April 16, 2017.
- Associate Curator (with Bisi Silva, Artistic Director, and Yves Chatap, Associate Curator), *Telling Time*, the 10th Bamako Encounters Biennale of African Photography, Mali, October 31 – December 31, 2015. Co-Curator (with Silva), *William Kentridge: Secondhand Reading*, Musée Modibo Keita; Co-Curator (with Chatap), *[Re]Génération: Une exploration des archives des Rencontres de Bamako*, Musée de Bamako.
- Research and Editorial Assistant (under Abdellah Karroum), *Inventer le Monde: L'artiste Citoyen*, the 2012 Biennale Bénin, Cotonou.
- Curatorial Assistant (under Bisi Silva and Aura Seikkula), *J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere: Moments of Beauty*, Museum of Contemporary Art, KIASMA / ARS 11, 2011, April 15 – November 27, 2011.

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

African Studies Association  
Arts Council of the African Studies Association  
Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora  
Association for the Study of Arts of the Present  
College Art Association  
Photography Network  
Society of Contemporary Art Historians

## LANGUAGES

French: Proficient Reading, Intermediate Speaking and Writing;  
Portuguese: Intermediate Reading

## UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Northwestern University

### Department of Art History

Chicago Objects Study Initiative Steering Committee, 2023 – Present  
Committee of Undergraduate Affairs, 2022 - Present  
Faculty Advisor, Northwestern Art Review, 2022 - Present  
Curriculum Committee, (At Large) Winter 2023 - Spring 2023

Black Arts Consortium  
Advisory Board, 2022 - Present

Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art  
Search Committee, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art (Janet Dees), 2014-2015

## **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

Peer Reviews: *Art Journal*

Nominator, the 2022 Norval Sovereign African Art Prize, The Norval Art Foundation

Juror, 2022 Sarr Prize, The Sarr Collection, Chicago

Co-Chair, Black Caucus, 2020-2021, Art Institute of Chicago

Nominator, 2021 Aperture–Baxter Street Next Step Award, Aperture Foundation NY

Juror, 2020 ACASA Award for Curatorial Excellence, Arts Council of the African Studies Association

Juror, 2020 Lucie Photo Book Prize, Lucie Foundation, Los Angeles

Nominator, 2020 Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, Peabody Museum of Archaeology  
and Ethnology at Harvard University

Nominator, 2020 Smithsonian Artists Research Fellowship (SARF), Smithsonian Institution

ICP Infinity Awards 2019 Nominating Committee, International Center of Photography, New York

Nominator & Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics, 2018, Vera List  
Center for Art and Politics at The New School, New York