

krista thompson
mary jane crowe professor in art history
northwestern university,
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curriculum vitae
(current may 2026)

Major Research and Teaching Area:

*Modern and Contemporary Art and Visual Culture of the African Diaspora and Caribbean;
History of Photography and Lens-based Practices, Theories of Archives and Archival Absence*

Employment:

Professor, Department of Art History

Mary Jane Crowe Professor in Art History (appointed Fall 2018)
Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
Affiliated Faculty in the Departments of Black Studies and Performance Studies
Fall 2005 - Present (tenured in 2009) (full professor in 2015) (investiture 2019)

Co-Facilitator

Black Arts Movement School Modality taught by Black Arts Movement Faculty
with Romi Crawford (SAIC) (organizer), Fred Moten (NYU) Stefano Harney,
Sampada Aranke (SAIC), and Theaster Gates (U of C).
August 2021

Assistant Professor, Department of Art History

African Diaspora and African Art History
University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois
Fall 2002 - Spring 2005

Postdoctoral Fellow/Visiting Professor

Caribbean Art History
The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora
The University of Maryland, College Park
Fall 2003 - 2004

Education:

Emory University

Atlanta, Georgia.
Ph.D., Culture, History, Theory. African Diaspora Art History, May 2002.
Dissertation: The Tropicalization of the Anglophone Caribbean: The Picturesque
and the Aesthetics and Politics of Space in Jamaica and the Bahamas

Emory University

Atlanta, Georgia.
M.A., Art History, July 1999
Major: African Diaspora Art. Minor: African Art
Thesis: 'Life as the Natives Live It': The Tourist Search for Authenticity and the
Selling of Amos Ferguson

McGill University

Montreal, Canada
B.A., Art History. Honors, May 1995

Fellowships/Awards:Post-doctoral:

Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship	2024-25
Dedalus Foundation Senior Fellowship	2024
Prospect-6 Exhibition Honoree, New Orleans	2024
Election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences	2023
George Gurney Senior Fellowship, Smithsonian American Art Museum	2019
James A. Porter Book Award in African American Art History from the James A. Porter Colloquium for <i>Shine</i>	2019
Charles Rufus Morey Award for Distinguished Book in the History of Art from the College Art Association for <i>Shine</i>	2016
Gordon K. and Sybil Lewis Award for Best Book About the Caribbean Published Over the Previous Three-year Period in Spanish, English, French or Dutch from the Caribbean Studies Association for <i>Shine</i>	2016
Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities Northwestern University (quarter-long residential)	2013-2014
Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (selected for two week-long intensive summer program)	2013
American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship (academic-year non-residential)	2012-2013
The David C. Driskell Prize in Art History The High Museum, Atlanta, Georgia	2009
The J. Paul Getty Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship (academic year non-residential)	2008-2009
Institute for the Humanities Fellowship University of Illinois, Chicago (Fall) (semester-long residential)	2004
David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora Fellowship University of Maryland, College Park (academic-year residential)	2003-2004

Pre-doctoral:

Organization of American States, Graduate Student Fellowship	1999-2001
Smithsonian Institution, Center for Folklife and Cultural Studies Research Fellowship	1997
University Fellowship, Emory University	1995-2000
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Internship	1995

Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, Internship 1994

Grants and Research Support:

Graham Foundation for Advanced Study in the Fine Arts 2022
for *Antonius Roberts: Art, Ecology, and Sacred Space* (\$12,000)

Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Grant
(co-organizer with E. Patrick Johnson (PI), Ramon Rivera-Servera, Huey Copeland,
and Aymar Christian), for The Black Arts Archive: The Challenge of Translation,
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation John E. Sawyer Seminar, October 2019-September 2021
(\$225,000) 2019

Andy Warhol Foundation Creative Capital Art Writer's Grant 2013
for *Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Practice*
book and related visual essay (\$37,500)

Andy Warhol Foundation Curatorial Grant 2013
with co-curator Claire Tancons for
En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean (\$100,000)

University Research Grants Committee 2013
Northwestern University for *Black Light: Tom Lloyd*
and the Effect of Art Historical Disappearance book (\$5000)

Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award 2012
with co-curator Claire Tancons for
En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean (\$150,000)

University Research Grants Committee 2012
Northwestern University for *Shine: The Visual Economy of Light*
in African Diasporic Practice book (\$5000)

Publications:

Books and Volumes

In Another Man's Yard: John Beadle, Lavar Munroe, and the Spirit of (Posthumous) Collaboration. Editor. Milan:Skira, 2026. (96 pages) (in production)

Antonius Roberts: Art, Ecology and Sacred Space. Editor. Nassau, Bahamas: The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, 2023. (280 pages)

Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015. (349 pages)

En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean. Co-editor with Claire Tancons. New York and New Orleans: Independent Curators International and Contemporary Arts Center, 2015. (230 pages)

Developing Blackness: Studio Photographs of "Over the Hill" Nassau in the Independence Era. Nassau, Bahamas: The National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, 2008. (exhibition catalogue) (84 pages)

An Eye for the Tropics: Photography, Tourism, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. (366 pages)

Edited Journal Issues

Co-Editor (with Huey Copeland), Afrotropes- Special multi-issue series. *Art Journal* (May 2016—ongoing). Contributions by Emma Chubb (Spring 2016); Krista Thompson and Huey Copeland (Fall 2017): 7-9; Allison Young (Fall 2017); Krista Thompson (Summer 2018); Faye Gleisser (Winter 2019); and C.C. McKee (Summer 2019).

Co-Editor (with Huey Copeland and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby), New World Slavery and the Matter of the Visual- Special Issue. *Representations* 113 (Winter 2011). Contributions by Huey Copeland, Stephen Best, Christopher Cozier, Hank Willis Thomas, Krista Thompson Fred Wilson, Marcus Wood.

Co-Editor (with Annie Paul), Caribbean Locales/Global Artworlds- Special Issue. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 16 (September 2004). Contributions by Rocío Aranda-Alvarado, Khary Darby, Andrea N. Douglas, Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Jerry Philogene, Catherine Amidon, John D. Beadle, Petrina Dacres, Carolyn Cooper, Narda Graham, Susan Mains, Peter Dean Richards, Grant Farred, Harvey Neptune, Nadi Edwards, and Krista Thompson.

Articles and Essays

Forthcoming

54. “*An Eye for the Tropics* at Twenty Years: Krista Thompson and O’Neil Lawrence in conversation,” *History of Photography*. (under review)

53. “Housing Memory/Housing Spirt: John Beadle, Lavar Munroe and the Art of Collaboration,” Editor. *In Another Man’s Yard: John Beadle, Lavar Munroe, and the Spirit of (Posthumous) Collaboration*. Editor. Milan:Skira, 2026. (96 pages) (in production) (lead essayist)

52. “‘Negro Sunshine’:Figuring Blackness in the Neon Art of Glenn Ligon,” *October* Files. Ed. Huey Copeland.

2025

51. “‘Freeing’ the Museum: Tom Lloyd and the Art Workers’ Coalition.” *Tom Lloyd*. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.

2024

49. “The Sound of Light: Reflections on Art History in the Visual Culture of Hip-Hop” (selected by Amanda Williams). Feulmer, Thomas, and Lisa Le Feuvre, eds. *For what It’s Worth: Value Systems in Art Since 1960*. Monacelli Press, 2024. 294-296. (a part of *Shine* reprinted in book)

48. “Postcolonial Performance and Installation Art.” *Joyce J. Scott: Walk a Mile in My Dreams*. Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art. 208-209.

47. “Surface Viewing: On Blackness, Skin, and Photography in Contemporary Jamaican Art.” *Image of the Black in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Ed. David Bindman. Harvard University Press, 2024: 458-478. (peer-reviewed edited volume)

2023

46. “Antonius Roberts: Art, Ecology, and Sacred Space in The Bahamas.” *Antonius Roberts: Art, Ecology, and Sacred Space*. Ed. Krista Thompson. Nassau, Bahamas: The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, 2023: 11-32. (catalogue essay)

2022

45. Nina Cramer and Emil Elg, "Invested in Light: A Conversation with Krista Thompson." *Periskop* NR. 28 (2022): 42-49. (interview)

44. "Nick Cave's *Tondos*: The Weather and the Force of Bodies Mobilizing *En Mas*.'" *Nick Cave: Forevermore*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2022: 202-211. (catalogue essay)

2021

43. "Seeing Diasporically: Hurvin Anderson's Caribbean 'Territories of Soul.'" *Hurvin Anderson: Anywhere but Nowhere*. Chicago: The Arts Club of Chicago, 2021: Npag. (catalogue essay)

2020

42. "Video Light: Dancehall and the Aesthetics of Spectacular Un-visibility in Jamaica." *Dancehall: A Reader on Jamaican Music and Culture*. Ed. Sonjah N. Stanley Niaah. Mona, JA: The University of the West Indies Press. (a part of *Shine* reprinted in volume)

41. "Hank Willis Thomas: *Available in a Variety of Sizes and Colors, 1977/2007*." *Thinking About History*. Ed. Essi Rönkkö. Evanston: Block Museum of Art, 2020: 158-159. (catalogue essay)

40. "History on the Underside: Refiguring the *Rückenfigur* in Frank Walter's Painted Landscapes and Photographs." *Frank Walter*. Frankfurt: Museum MMK für Moderne, Kunst, 2020: 371-375. (catalogue essay)

2019

39. "Kerry James Marshall: The Land that Time Forgot." *The American Art Collection at the Columbus Museum of Art*. Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 2019. (catalogue essay)

2018

38. "Castleton Gardens, 1908." *Victorian Jamaica*. Eds. Tim Barringer and Wayne Modest. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018: 115. (edited volume essay)

37. "'I WAS HERE BUT I DISAPPEAR': Ivanhoe 'Rhygin' Martin and Photographic Disappearance in Jamaica." *Art Journal* (Summer 2018): 80-99. (peer-reviewed article)

36. "Afrotropes: A User's Guide." (with Huey Copeland), *Art Journal* 76 3-4 (2018): 7-9. (peer-reviewed article)

2017

35. "Afrotropes: A Conversation with Huey Copeland & Krista Thompson." *October* 162 (Fall 2017): 3-18. (conversation)

34. Discussion with Mark Ledbury, Pierre Wat and Olivier Weller, moderated by Anne Lafont. "L'histoire de l'art à l'aune de la fiction. Pour une extension du domaine de la recherche." *Perspective* 1 (2017) : 31-46. (conversation)

2016

33. "The Black Body as Photographic Image: Video Light in Postcolonial Jamaica." *Migrating the Black Body: The African Diaspora and Visual Culture*. Eds. Leigh Raiford and Heike Raphael Hernandez. Seattle: University of Washington Press. (edited volume essay)

2015

32. “‘Our Good Democracy’: The Social Practice of Carnival and Junkanoo Aesthetics,” *En Mas’: Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean*. Eds. Claire Tancons and Krista Thompson. New York and New Orleans: Independent Curators International and Contemporary Arts Center: 30-45. (edited volume essay)

2014

31. “I am Rendered Speechless by your Idea of Beauty: The Picturesque in History and Art in the Postcolony.” *Empires of Vision: A Reader*. Eds. Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy. Durham and London: Duke University Press. (a part of *An Eye for the Tropics* reprinted in volume)

2013

30. “‘Negro Sunshine’: Figuring Blackness in the Neon Art of Glenn Ligon.” *Black Is, Black Ain’t*. Ed. Hamza Walker. Chicago: The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2013: 13-25. (catalogue essay)

29. “Postcolonial Insecurity: John Beadle’s Iron Silhouettes.” *The John Beadle Project: Personal Space...Secure Space*. Nassau: National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, 2013. 2-5. (catalogue essay)

28. “Destroying While Preserving Junkanoo: The Junkanoo Museum in the Bahamas.” *Plantation to Nation: Caribbean Museums and National Identity*. Eds. Alissandra Cummins, Kevin Farmer, and Roslyn Russell. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013. 241-244. (reprinted essay)

2012

27. “On Masking and Performance Art in the Postcolonial Caribbean.” *Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World*. Eds. Deborah Cullen, Elvis Fuentes, Yolanda Wood, and Derek Walcott. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. 284-303. (catalogue essay)

26. “How to Install Art as a Caribbeanist.” *Curating the Caribbean*. Eds. Axel Lapp, David A. Bailey, Alissandra Cummins, and Allison Thompson. Berlin: The Green Box, 2012. 97-112. (article)

25. “Ivan Karp (1943-2011).” *African Arts* 452 (Summer 2012): 8-11. (article)

2011

24. “A Sidelong Glance: The Practice of African Diaspora Art History in the United States.” *Art Journal* (Fall 2011): 6-31. (centennial year commemorative essay) (peer-reviewed article)

23. (With Huey Copeland), “Perpetual Returns: New World Slavery and the Matter of the Visual.” *Representations* 113 (Winter 2011): 1-15. (peer-reviewed article)

22. “The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies.” *Representations* 113 (Winter 2011): 39-71. (peer-reviewed article)

21. “Youth Culture, Diasporic Aesthetics, and the Art of Being Seen in the Bahamas.” *African Arts* 44.1(Spring 2011): 26-39. (peer-reviewed article)

2010

20. “Beyond the Tropical Veneer: Sunscreen and the Aesthetics of Leisure.” *NN (Working Title)*. Ed. Eva Martsschnig. Graz: Forum Stadtpark, 2010. 13-15. (catalogue essay)

2009

19. “The Sound of Light: Reflections on Art History in the Visual Culture of Hip Hop.” *Art Bulletin*

(December 2009): 481-505. (peer-reviewed article)

18. "How to See a Work of Art in Blinding Light." *Black Light*. New York: powerHouse Cultural Entertainment Inc., 2009. 11-13. (catalogue essay)

2008

17. "'Find Your Father': Figuring Africa Between Colonial, Postcolonial, and Diasporic Worlds." *Kehinde Wiley: The World Stage: Africa, Lagos Dakar*. Ed. Christine Kim. New York: The Studio Museum of Harlem, 2008: 18-22 (catalogue essay).

16. "'Call the Police. Call the Army. Call God. And Let's Have One Helluva Big Story': On Writing Caribbean Art Histories After Postcoloniality." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 13.1 (February 2008): 169-181. (peer-reviewed article)

15. "Beyond Tarzan and National Geographic: The Politics and Poetics of Presenting African Diasporic Cultures on the Mall." *Journal of American Folklore* 121. 479 (Winter 2008): 97-111. (peer-reviewed article)

2007

14. "Performing Visibility: Freaknec and the Spatial Politics of Sexuality, Race, and Class in Atlanta." *The Drama Review* 51. 4 (Winter 2007): 26-46. (peer-reviewed article)

13. "Preoccupied with Haiti: The Dream of Diaspora in African American Art, 1915-1942." *American Art* 21. 3 (Fall 2007): 75-97. (peer-reviewed article)

12. "'No Abstract Art Here': The Problem of the Visual in Anglo Caribbean Art." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 23 (June 2007): 119-137. (peer-reviewed article)

2006

11. "The Junkanoo Museum in the Bahamas." *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. Eds. Ivan Karp, Cory Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. 500-503. (article)

10. "Junkanoo Rush." *Caribbean Beat* 82 (November/ December 2006): 48-53. (article)

9. "Visualizing the Unseen: The Counter-Picturesque in Contemporary Bahamian Art." *Third National Exhibition*. Nassau, Bahamas: The National Art Gallery of the Bahamas. 7-13. (sole author of exhibition catalogue)

2005

8. "Postcards to History: Tourist Representations and the Construction of Postcolonial Histories in the Anglophone Caribbean." *Sargasso: A Journal of Caribbean Literature, Language and Culture* 1 (2005): 29-50. (peer-reviewed article)

7. "Art in the Anglophone Caribbean." *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History: The Black Experience in the Americas*. Ed. Colin Palmer. Michigan: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. 143-145. (encyclopedia entry)

6. "Albert Huie." *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History: The Black Experience in the Americas*. Ed. Colin Palmer. Michigan: Macmillan Reference USA. 1079-1080. (encyclopedia entry)

2004

5. Co-Editor with Annie Paul, Special Issue on Caribbean Art. "Introduction: Caribbean Locales/Global

Artworlds.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 16 (September 2004): v-x. (peer-reviewed article)

4. “‘Black Skin, Blue Eyes’: Visualizing Blackness in Modern Jamaican Art, 1922-1938.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 16 (September 2004): 1-32. (peer-reviewed article)

2003

3. *Bahamian Visions: Colonial Photographs of the Bahamas*. Nassau, Bahamas: National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, 2003. 1-31. (sole author of exhibition catalogue)

2. “Passage through the Islands of Shallow Water: An Exploration of Migration in Contemporary Bahamian Art.” *Marginal Migrations: Cultural Circulation in the Caribbean*. Ed. Shalini Puri. London: Macmillan Press, 2003. 109-137. (article)

1997

1. “Chronology.” *Transforming the Crown: African, Caribbean, and Asian Artists in Britain, 1966-1996*. Ed. Mora Byrd. New York: The Caribbean Cultural Center. 149-166. (catalogue essay)

Current Book Manuscripts:

The Evidence of Things Not Captured: On Photographic Disappearance and the Archive in Jamaica (under contract Duke University Press)

This book explores significant absences in the photographic record in colonial and postcolonial Jamaica and examines how they have become productive and figurative sites of representation, memory, and history. The book begins with a consideration of the fact that no photographs exist of slavery in Jamaica because the medium of photography was invented just as slavery came to an end in 1838. It goes on to consider a newly discovered photography album that relates to the Morant Bay Rebellion on the island (1865), to examine the lack of police photographs that sparked an island-wide search for the folk hero Ivanhoe Martin, who famously disappeared from local authorities in the 1940s, and to investigate the redacted surveillance footage of the state incursion into Tivoli Gardens for the wanted U.S. fugitive Christopher Coke, which left 70 residents of the island dead in 2010. A chapter from this project, “The Evidence of Things Not Photographed,” appeared in *Representations* in Winter 2011 and another chapter “‘I WAS HERE BUT I DISAPPEAR’: Ivanhoe ‘Rhygin’ Martin and Photographic Disappearance in Jamaica,” was published in *Art Journal* (Summer 2018): 80-99.

Refracting Light: Tom Lloyd and the Effect of Art Historical Disregard (under contract University of Chicago Press)

The book centers on Tom Lloyd, an African American artist who was among a wave of artists working with light and electronic technologies in the 1960s. Lloyd contributed to Minimalist and electronic art exhibitions throughout the mid 1960s-1970s, was involved with the avant-garde Howard Wise gallery in New York, and was a founding member of the activist group, the Art Workers’ Coalition (AWC) (1969-1971).

Thompson’s book will explore Lloyd’s artistic practice and his visibility in the art world in New York and seek to understand why the artist, until recently, has been largely disregarded from the art historical record. More broadly, this book will explore what futures are activated or short-circuited for artists, objects, and archives that are disregarded. Light is not simply examined as Lloyd’s chosen medium but operates as a metaphor for visibility, knowledge, and knowledge production in art history, for what and who becomes legible, and what and who does not. *Refracting Light* ultimately offers a counter history, a history of the artist’s unrealized work, drawing on statements, studies, and proposals Lloyd made about work he wanted to create in the future.