

John Akomfrah's *Unfinished Conversation* is a large-scale three-channel video installation that traces the life and work of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall. Hall was born in Jamaica, arrived in England as a student, and went on to become an influential figure of the British New Left and a foremost public intellectual.

This work interweaves his biography with key national and international events, such as the attack on the working class in Britain and the Suez Crisis, thereby linking the personal with the historical. Akomfrah—a founding member of the Black Audio Film Collective, which was established in the 1980s—uses archival footage and original interviews. Throughout, he evokes Hall's concept of "becoming," which Hall explains in the video by describing identity as "an ever-unfinished conversation." Made two years before Hall's death in 2014, the installation is a testament to the ongoing impact of the thinker's ideas on artists and cultural institutions.

Jonathas de Andrade lives and works in Recife, in Brazil's northeast region—the first part of the country to be colonized by the Portuguese. The city is marked by a contrast between its peasant class and rural traditions, on the one hand, and its status as a quickly developing industrial center and film capital, on the other.

*The Uprising (O Levante)* was made in Recife and captures a horse-drawn cart race in the city center, which the artist himself organized in response to a proposed ordinance that would ban animals hauling carts from the city streets. De Andrade was only able to stage the race by asking the authorities for a permit to make a movie. The horse owners, however, were invited to participate in a real horse race, giving each participant a different understanding of the work's context. The video features an *aboiador*—a traditional regional singer who narrates the difficulties of country living, responding to prompts with improvised rhyming verse. This *aboiador* came to the event and was then invited by the artist to his studio, where he responded to the horse race he had witnessed as if it was the beginning of a rural revolt, turning the events into a folk fiction.

In his series African Spirits, the photographer Samuel Fosso assumes the guises of political, intellectual, and cultural figures from Africa and the African diaspora. In large-scale, meticulous formal portraits, Fosso dons the distinctive garb and characteristics of his subjects, recognizable from their widely disseminated photographic likenesses. These include the impeccable afro of American activist and educator Angela Davis and the browline spectacles of Patrice Lumumba, who was imprisoned and then executed shortly after becoming the first prime minister of the Republic of the Congo after it gained independence from Belgium.

Fosso opened a commercial portrait studio at the age of thirteen in Bangui, in the Central African Republic, where he had settled after fleeing the Biafran War in Nigeria. He began taking self-portraits, in which he modeled the styles of the day, to send home to his grandmother in Nigeria. His embrace of costuming also refers to his Igbo heritage, especially seasonal masquerades that include exuberant performances with vibrant masks and garments, providing entertainment and linking the living with their ancestors. Fosso's African Spirits, made in 2008, likewise revive the energies of these groundbreaking forebears.

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye calls her works “figurative paintings” instead of “portraits” and emphasizes that they are not meant to be likenesses of specific people. Rather, they originate largely from her imagination as well as a range of collected source material and visual observations. Yet despite their fictional foundations—in fact, perhaps because of them—the figures have the potential to transcend the everyday. As Yiadom-Boakye has said, “Although they are not real I think of them as people known to me. They are imbued with a power of their own; they have a resonance—something emphatic and other-worldly.” Her painting *The Myriad Motives of Men*, for example, portrays two seated black men against a spare background and is rendered in a reduced color palette, preventing the viewer from locating the subjects in a particular time or place.

*Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast I* may initially appear abstract or generic, yet it is actually the enlarged pixel pattern of television static, which can occur when there is no transmission signal or because of censorship or other, more forceful restrictions.

Tillmans captured this image in 2014 from a hotel television in St. Petersburg, Russia, where he was participating in *Manifesta 10*, an international exhibition of contemporary art. At the time, the Russian government was carrying out military interventions in eastern Ukraine, annexing Crimea, enacting anti-gay legislation, and restricting the dissemination of images of protests against the state. Given this context, *Sendeschluss/End of Broadcast I* can be seen as a picture of protest, and the artist has said that the works in this series “are a quite clear critique of the state, but don’t have political meanings spelt out all over them.”

To make these drawings, Paul Chan appropriated erotic texts by figures as diverse as the early Christian theologian Saint Augustine, the French novelist Marquis de Sade's libertine character Bishop X, and the infamous White House intern Monica Lewinsky. He assigned short excerpts from these texts to letters of the alphabet, creating new "fonts."

Sitting atop men's and women's shoes, these drawings are human-scaled, which makes the typefaces like bodies and bridges the gap between the virtual and the physical. One is more abstract, while the other is more explicit. The two drawings serve different functions: *The body of Oh Untitled (truetype font)*, with its horizontal ink strokes, is a sort of blank template for the project, while *The body of Oh Marys (truetype font)* is inspired by Mary Magdalene's relationships with male figures in the Bible. Operating at the junction of politics, poetics, and pornography, Chan's drawings remind us of the close relations between body, desire, and voice.

Anna Boghiguan began working in the 1980s and later showed illustrated books of poetry in bookstores in her native Egypt. In recent years she has worked in a diaristic, expressive, and figurative style, and her references range from the ancient past of her home country to the revolutionary unrest of today.

These twelve drawings, produced over the course of 2011, loosely chronicle the events in and around Tahrir Square in Cairo following the January 25, 2011, Egyptian revolution. Some sheets feature dense compositions of recognizable places, while others provide a graffiti-like commentary through scribbled text. They shift focus and viewpoint quickly and only together produce a multifaceted mosaic of the unfolding events.

Erik van Lieshout's large-scale drawing takes as its reference news images of demonstrations that occurred in August 2014 in Schilderswijk, a working-class district of The Hague, in the Netherlands. Groups with a variety of ideological viewpoints clashed; pro-ISIS demonstrators faced off with Dutch skinheads, as well as anti-nationalists and anti-jihadists, in a series of events that embarrassed the Hague mayor and marked the rising tensions over extremism in Europe. Van Lieshout channels the menacing force and energy of the protests, without clearly indicating who is marching against whom. The artist augments sharp, expressive lines with cutouts of bright commercial vinyl and slabs of acrylic paint that both electrify and fracture the surface, heightening the sense of fury depicted in the image.

In 2013, former United States government contractor Edward Snowden leaked classified National Security Agency (NSA) documents regarding global surveillance programs run by the government in cooperation with telecommunication companies. The leak included PowerPoint slides, indicating that the NSA, like many entities, uses imagery to internally communicate its ideas, goals, and methods. Artist Simon Denny makes use of the slides in his art, arguing that they “have become retroactively some of the most important artistic images created today.”

In this work, Denny also incorporates the presentation tactics of government and corporate trade shows. Raised up on a platform, the structure’s main frame is built from computer server racks. Inside, Denny has arranged a series of printed signs and three-dimensional dioramas, bringing together graphics, charts, and language borrowed from the NSA’s internal marketing. All of the imagery has been appropriated from the website of the graphic designer David Darchicourt, who worked as creative director for the NSA from 1996 to 2012. Denny hopes that by bringing these communication tools into an “art context, where we are used to looking at images and unpacking them,” we might better understand why and how such visual methods were employed by the NSA in its treatment of classified information and gain insight into the culture produced by this powerful government organization.

In her latest sculpture series, Heritage Studies, Iman Issa explores the contemporary resonance of historical artifacts. The three sculptures in this gallery take inspiration from objects the artist encountered in museums. To accompany her historical riffs, Issa provides museum-style didactics that reference their original sources, identifying material, time period, and provenance. Rather than describing the objects in the gallery, the artist's texts point to her historical inspiration. Operating at the junction where the contemporary objects and their historical contexts meet, Heritage Studies proposes a new iconography that is shaped by an alternative reading of official history.

For Adrián Villar Rojas, clay suggests a time before and after human existence. “I tried to imagine how it would be to look at the planet and human culture from the perspective of an alien: absolute horizontality and lack of prejudice,” he has stated. “There are no scales of values, but commitment to a deep state of detachment and distance, which is also reflected in the use of time: remote future and absence of humans; remote past and origins of life.” Made to be exhibited outdoors in Kassel, Germany, the work was fabricated and first shown at the international exhibition *documenta (13)* as part of *Return the World*, a series that originated with the study of organic detritus and fragments of raw materials found at the site. The sculpture appears to be a life-size cast of the remains of a tree trunk, although it was actually inspired by an animal bone. Villar Rojas used unfired clay combined with cement to create a porous and cracking surface that seems to be on the verge of decomposing. The notion of ephemerality is a central aspect of the artist’s work. As the title implies, the sculpture can be seen as an appeal to halt human activities that negatively impact Earth’s geology. Villar Rojas’s art focuses on processes of accumulation, displacement, and entropy to reveal the principle of causality as captured in the transformation of materials.

Kara Walker creates historical allegories in which characters play out repulsive dramas of racial and gender bigotry with cool detachment and biting humor. This three-part drawing was inspired by a trip the artist took to Stone Mountain Park, outside Atlanta. Considered by some to be the spiritual home of the Ku Klux Klan, the park houses the infamous granite relief sculpture depicting three Confederate leaders of the Civil War: Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson. Walker’s large-scale drawing shows the generals and their horses, Klansmen, the Confederate flag, nude figures, and mules in a swirling, quasi-apocalyptic scene of domination and degradation. The central figure, a black man, his hands bound by rope, takes on the role of the martyr of Western history paintings. This work was made in 2015, a moment marked by Black Lives Matter, a mass mobilization to protest racial profiling and police brutality. The title refers to the undelivered reparations promised to emancipated slaves under the phrase “forty acres and a mule,” or land and an animal to work it. It also calls to mind the mule-led funeral procession for Martin Luther King, Jr., whose 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech proclaimed, “Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!”

Andrea Bowers is a lifelong activist who has focused on women's rights, immigration advocacy, civil rights, and climate justice. Drawing is an essential medium for Bowers, whose works on paper are extremely labor-intensive projects with carefully selected subjects. She edits and redraws her source material (extensively researched archival photographs from various media outlets) to highlight the essential message, event, or protagonist of the topic she chooses to address. By isolating and monumentalizing her subjects, Bowers moves away from the concrete occasion where the image was first used and imbues it with a more universal, transcendent, but no less urgent and powerful message. This monumental work reproduces the cover of a 1914 issue of the radical political activist Emma Goldman's journal *Mother Earth*, which contained her essay "Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty." Composed of collaged pieces of found cardboard and executed in permanent marker, the drawing is inspired by the do-it-yourself strategies of political protesters' handmade signs.

In each work in his most recent series of paintings, begun in 2008 and titled *Intimate Suffering*, Kim Beom creates a visual riddle by mapping a massive network of lines that zigzag across a ten-by-seven foot canvas. In laboring over such an absurd task, Kim interrogates the idea of art as a leisure activity. At the same time, the viewer is challenged to solve this colossal labyrinth—certainly a visual endurance test. As Kim notes, “Life comes with its share of problems, and solving problems and finding the right way is hard, but it seems to be human instinct and nature to do so.”

Manhole leveler rings are cast by prisoners in Elmira Correctional Facility. When roads are repaved, they are used to adjust the height of manhole openings and maintain the smooth surface of the road. Work on public roads, which was central to the transition from convict leasing to the chain gang, continues within many prison labor programs. The road is a public asset, instrumental to commercial development.

Rental at cost: Artworks indicated as “Rental at cost” are not sold. Each of these artworks may be rented for 5 years for the total cost of the Corcraft products that constitute it.

Lloyd’s of London monopolized the marine insurance of the slave trade by the early eighteenth century. Lloyd’s Register was established in 1760 as the first classification society in order to provide insurance underwriters information on the quality of vessels. The classification of the ship allows for a more accurate assessment of its risk. Lloyd’s Register and other classification societies continue to survey and certify shipping vessels and their equipment. Lashing equipment physically secures goods to the deck of the ship, while its certification is established to insure the value of the goods regardless of their potential loss.

Aetna, amongst other insurance companies, issued slave insurance policies, which combined property and life insurance. These policies were taken out by slave masters on the lives of slaves, and provided partial payments for damage to the slave and full payment for the death of the slave. Death or damage inflicted by the master could not be claimed. The profits incurred by these policies are still intact within Aetna.

In 1989 U.S. Representative John Conyers of Michigan first introduced Congressional Bill H.R. 40, which would “establish the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans to examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies.” The bill would convene a research commission that would, among other responsibilities, make a recommendation as to whether a formal apology for slavery is owed, whether reparations are owed, what form reparations would then take, and who would receive them. Conyers has reintroduced the bill to every session of Congress since then through 2016. This bill acquired 48 cosponsors in 1999–2000. In 2015–16 it had 2 cosponsors.

In 2000 the state of California passed the bill SB 2199, which required all insurance companies conducting business in the state of California to publish documentation of slave insurance policies that they or their parent companies had issued previously. In 2002 a lawyer named Deadria Farmer-Paellmann filed the first corporate reparations class-action lawsuit seeking disgorgement from 17 contemporary financial institutions including Aetna, which had profited from slavery. Farmer-Paellmann pursued property law claims on the basis that these institutions had been enriched unjustly by slaves who were neither compensated nor agreed to be uncompensated. Farmer-Paellmann called for these profits and gains to be disgorged from these institutions to descendants of slaves.

The Reparations Purpose Trust forms a conditionality between the time of deferral and continued corporate growth. The general purpose of this trust is “to acquire and administer shares in Aetna, Inc. and to hold such shares until the effective date of any official action by any branch of the United States government to make financial reparations for slavery, including but not limited to the enactment and subsequent adoption of any recommendations pursuant to H.R. 40 – Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act.” As a purpose trust registered in the state of Delaware this trust can last indefinitely and has no named beneficiaries.

The initial holdings of Reparations Purpose Trust consists of 90 Aetna shares. In the event that federal financial reparations are paid, the trust will terminate and its shares will be liquidated and granted to the federal agency charged with distributions as a corporate addendum to these payments. The grantor of the Reparations Purpose Trust is Artists Space, its trustee is Michael M. Gordon, and its enforcer is Cameron Rowland. The Reparations Purpose Trust gains tax exemption from its grantor’s nonprofit status.

MoMA has agreed to continue the trust if Artists Space is no longer able to serve as the grantor.

An Autograph ABP and Smoking Dogs Films Commission, produced by Lina Gopaul and David Lawson and made in collaboration with Stuart Hall. Executive producer: Mark Sealy, director of Autograph ABP.

Project funded by Grants for the Arts, Arts Council England, and supported by Bluecoat, Liverpool; New Art Exchange, Nottingham; the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, Harvard University, Boston; Royal College of Art Inspire Programme; and Smoking Dogs Films.

With kind support from NAXOS Books, The Open University, BBC, Time/Image, and Getty Images.