

Benjamin L. Jones
(He/Him/His)

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History of Art Department
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Major Research Interests

History and theory of contemporary art; the speculative analysis of oppressed peoples; Black feminist thought; contemporary intersections of art and politics, with a particular interest in Black radical visual culture and performance; critical ethnic studies; pedagogical, artistic, and other insurgent networks; interdisciplinary approaches to speculative analysis; critical pedagogy in visual and performing arts.

Education

Northwestern University Evanston, IL, Ph.D., Department of Art History, Interdisciplinary Certificate in Critical Theory 2017-2024 (Major Field: Contemporary Art; Concentration: African American Art History; Specialization: Black Feminist Thought)

San Francisco Art Institute San Francisco, CA, B.A. in The History and Theory of Contemporary Art, Highest Honors 2014-2016

Southeast Community College Lincoln, NE, A.S., Academic Transfer Program 2006-2014

Ongoing Book Projects

What We Cain't Do: The Pedagogy of the Black Radical Aesthetic Tradition (solicited by Duke University Press)

What We Fin'na Do: Afterlives of the Underground Railroad in Art

Academic Appointments

2025- Assistant Professor, The Ohio State University, Department of History of Art.

2023-2025 Provost's Fellow (Instructor), The Ohio State University, Department of History of Art.

2022-2023 Dissertation Fellow, University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Black Studies, (Winter Quarter) BLST 155, "Dreams and Conflicts: Black Visual Culture"

2022 Facilitator, Black Art Movement School Modality, (Iteration 2, East Coast), Co-Facilitators: Romi Crawford, Theaster Gates, Sampada Aranke, Fred Moten, Stefano Harney, Kamau Patton, and

Michael Simanga.

2021 Adjunct Assistant Professor, University of Illinois, Chicago (Fall Semester), Art History, AH 264 Introduction to African American Art, asynchronous online class

2020 Lecturer, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Fall Semester), Art History 206- 01 Introduction to African American Art, modified in-person classes

Lecturer, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Fall Semester), Art History 206- 02 Introduction to African American Art, online classes

2019 Teaching Assistant, Huey Copeland, Northwestern University (Fall quarter), Art History 255: "Modernity and Modernism"

Research Assistant, Hannah Feldman, Northwestern University (Winter quarter).

2018 Teaching Assistant, Alex Weheliye, Northwestern University, (Fall quarter), African American Studies 360: "Theorizing Blackness"

2017 Research Assistant (for *Afropessimism*, 2020) Frank B. Wilderson III, University of California, Irvine.

2016 Dedicated Tutor and Notetaker, Armin Fardis, San Francisco Art Institute (Fall semester), "Special Topics: On Suspicion"

2015-2016 Digital Imaging Specialist, San Francisco Art Institute.

Publications

"The Development of Power: Artists Modulate Discourse," in *The Routledge Companion to African American Art Practice*, Eddie Chambers. (forthcoming)

"Mildred Howard: *Thirty-eight Double Dee* (1995)," and "Sam Gilliam: *Black* (1984)" in *Roll Call: 200 Years of Black American Art*, Birmingham Museum of Art, Giles Ltd., June 2026. (catalogue essays)

"No Man Can Serve Two Masters: A Critique of Mastery in Charles White's *Sound of Silence*." *Art Journal* 84 (1): 58–73, 2025. doi:10.1080/00043249.2025.2485847.

"The Void and Waves of Ideas: Dewey Crumpler's Work," in *Dewey Crumpler: Life Studies*, Ed. Jordanna Saggesse. The Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, August 2024. (catalogue essay)

"Black Space against Colorblind Modernism: Interview with Mildred Howard and Adrian Burrell," in *Blood, Sweat, and Time: Commerce and Labor in Black Contemporary Art*, Ed. Lucas Williams. Sming Sming Books and San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, Winter 2023.

“Jeff Donaldson” in Thinking about History, Block Museum of Art, Fall 2020. (catalogue essay)

“The Black Panther as African Cat: Mondo We Langa and Criminal Blackness,” in *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System*, Eds. Risa Puleo and Lucie Steinberg. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and [Name] Publications, January 2019. (catalogue essay)

“Untitled Essay,” in Collapse: Recent Works by Dewey Crumpler, edited by Sampada Aranke, Hedreen Gallery, Seattle University, March 2018, 20-23. (catalogue essay)

“Conjuring an Afrofuturist Classroom with Paint and Chalk.” Hyperallergic. December 27, 2016. <http://hyperallergic.com/347730/conjuring-an-afrofuturist-classroom-with-paint-and-chalk/> (essay)

“Black As Space: Reflecting on the Bay Bridge Shutdown Parts 1&2” Solicited publication artandactivism.org quarterly newsletter. August 2016. (essay)

“Black as Space: Reflecting on the Bay Bridge Shutdown Parts 3&4” for artandactivism.org. Special issue newsletter specifically for this article. November 2016.

<http://artandactivism.org/blog/2016/11/27/black-as-space-cont/> (essay)

“Notes on the Duty of Artists,” Untitled Magazine, February 2016. (essay)

Select Awards and Grants

2023-2025 Provost’s Fellow (Instructor) The Ohio State University, Department of History of Art.

2024 Andrew W. Mellon Sawyer Seminar Program “Afterlives of the Underground Railroad: Black Studies and Insurgent Networks for Equity, Access, and Public Accountability in Higher Education. Proposal amount: \$300,000.00 (Note: After winning the university-level down-select, Mellon’s grant process was halted due to the political climate in the U.S., including laws passed in Ohio that ban land acknowledgements and teaching toward equity.)

2022-2023 Department of Black Studies Dissertation Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara (offered, accepted)

2022-2023 Buffet Institute for Global Affairs Graduate Fellowship, Northwestern University (offered, declined)

2019 Dissertation Development Program, Social Science Research Council (2017) Mellon Cluster Fellowship in Critical Theory, Northwestern University (2014-2016) Presidential Scholarship, San Francisco Art Institute

2014-2016 Adversity Scholarship, San Francisco Art Institute

Select Honors

2016 Student Recognition Award, San Francisco Art Institute

2015, 2016 Outstanding Bachelor of Arts Award, San Francisco Art Institute

2015 Rising Leader Award, San Francisco Art Institute

2014 Dean's List, Southeast Community College

Invited Talks

2025 "Civic Inquiry Salon: Wesaam Al-Badry and Peter van Agtmael," For Freedoms, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. September 2025.

"SFAA Spotlight: Dewey Crumpler in Conversation," San Francisco Artists Alumni, Berkely, California, April 2025.

"Figures in Music: Charles White's Portraits," at Between Sound & Sight: Mapping the Sonic Imprint of Charles White's Vision, University of Chicago, Logan Center for the Arts, February 2024

2024 "Artist X Writer: Benjamin L. Jones and Wesaam Al-Badry," The Samella Lewis Initiative for the Study of Black Art at The Ohio State University, March 2024.

2022 "Artist Conversation: Benjamin L. Jones and Wesaam Al-Badry" Jenkins Johnson Gallery at Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, September 2022.

2021 "What We Cain't Do: Pedagogy and the Art of Charles White, Elizabeth Catlett, and Dewey Crumpler," University of Illinois Chicago, November 2021.

2020 "On Black Photography," In conversation with Adrian L. Burrell, *Artists' Showcase*, Hosted on Minnesota Street Project Adjacent, SF Cameraworks September 2020.

2019 "My Art Speaks for Both My Peoples": A Symposium on Elizabeth Catlett. University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, October 2019.

2018 Axelle Karera, "Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics" *Decolonizing Critical Theory: Decolonial Aesthetics and Epistemic Violence*. Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, December, 2018. (Respondent)

2017 "Sankofa post-screening discussion," *Black Arts International: Temporalities and Territories*, Northwestern University. Panelists: Haile Gerima, Michael Boyce Gillespie, Amma Y. Gharthey-Tagoe Kootin, Tukufu Zuberi. Northwestern University, Evanston Illinois, October 2017. (Moderator)

2016 "Introduction to Afrofuturism," De Anza College, Cupertino, California, November 2016.

- 2016 “What We Fin’na Do: A Preface to a 5,000 Year Almanac,” *Un(____)ing the Future Symposium*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California, April 2016.
- 2014 “Speaking to a Mostly White Audience About Diversity” Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska, September 2014.
- 2014 “The Labor of Labor in Omaha and Nebraska” *Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed International Conference*, University of Nebraska Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, July 2014.
- 2013 “Selfie-Esteem,” William H. Thompson Scholars Program at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, March 2013.
- 2011 “Intro to Anarcho-syndicalism and Movements Against Oppression,” Doane College, Crete, Nebraska, September 2011.
- 2011 “A Primer on Critical Literacy in Reading Art,” Doane College, Crete, Nebraska, September 2011.
- 2009 “On the Ethics of Fanon and Freire” *Nebraska Appleseed Student organizing Conference*, Lincoln, Nebraska, September 2009.
- 2008 “Art and Activism” *Nebraska Student Organizing Conference*, University of Nebraska Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, September 2008.

Select Curatorial Work

- 2017 San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California, February 2017. (invited)
- 2017 “*Femme-Futures*” Diego Rivera Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco California. March.
- 2006-2014 Anti-oppression Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska. March 2006 – Dec. 2014 (founder)

Select Commissions and Residencies

- 2025 *Untitled (Betty Shabazz Portrait)*, Commissioned by Black Men Build, for *Wartime Issue #7: 100 Years of Malcolm X (Omowale) El Hajj Malik El Shabazz*.
- 2016-2019 *Living Sculpture Mural #1*, Commissioned by the William J. Thompson Scholars at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, for the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center at UNL.
- 2015 *MAMA*, Commissioned by Midwestern African Museum of Art (MAMA), Lincoln, Nebraska. (mural)
- 2014 *Ancestors and Descendants in Four Directions*, Commissioned by The Nebraska Ponca Tribe, Osni (Northern) Ponca Tribal Headquarters, Niobrara, Nebraska. (mural)
- 2014 *The Love Mural*, with Cey Adams at Bemis Center for the Arts, (two-week summer residency,

during the completion of the mural). The Mural is located at Love's Jazz & Art Center, 24th and Lake Streets, Omaha, NE

2014 "*Loren Eiseley, Willa Cather, Malcolm X, and Sitting Bull*" Commissioned by Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska October 2014. (performance art, public talk, and mural)

2009 "*COINTELPRO Art Exhibit*" Commissioned by the University of Nebraska, African and African American Studies Program as part of its bi-annual Film Festival.

2009 "Real to Reel: Documenting Empowerment, Equality, Inclusion," Lincoln, Nebraska, March.

Institutional Service

2023- The Samella Lewis Initiative for the Study of Black Art, (founding co-chair). <https://history-of-art.osu.edu/about-department/samella-lewis-initiative-study-black-art>

2025-2026 Group for the Intellectual Life of the Department (GILD)/Curatorial Committee, History of Art Department, The Ohio State University.

2023-2025 Fergus Scholarship Review Committee, The Ohio State University, art exhibition and scholarship. (juror)

2023-2024 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, History of Art Department, The Ohio State University.

2015-2016 Committee on Diversity and Equity (CODE), San Francisco Art Institute.

2015-2016 Founding President of CHANGE, a QPOC student group at San Francisco Art Institute.

2015 Organized the West Coast satellite of "Ferguson is the Future" at San Francisco Art Institute in conjunction with Princeton University

2013 Founding President of Psychology/Sociology Club at Southeast Community College, Lincoln, Nebraska

Community-Based Arts Education May 2006 – 2014

- Lincoln North Star High (street art club)
- W. H. Thompson Scholars University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed University of Nebraska, Omaha National Conference
- Zoo Bar Zoo Fest kid's zone
- Girl Scouts of America Outreach Lancaster County Juvenile Detention Center
- Girl Scouts ArtVenture Eastridge Presbyterian Church
- State Of Nebraska World Day on the Mall (Nebraska State Office Building)
- The Lied Center for performing Arts Clyde Malone Community Center
- Sheldon Museum of Art Lincoln High School, Bryan High, Sheldon Museum

- University Of Nebraska Lincoln, Progressive Student Coalition Conference
- Doane College Hispanic Heritage Month

Major Research Languages

English
Spanish
French

References

Available upon request