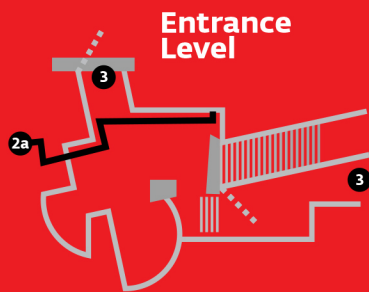




# LEARNING GUIDE Fall 2024

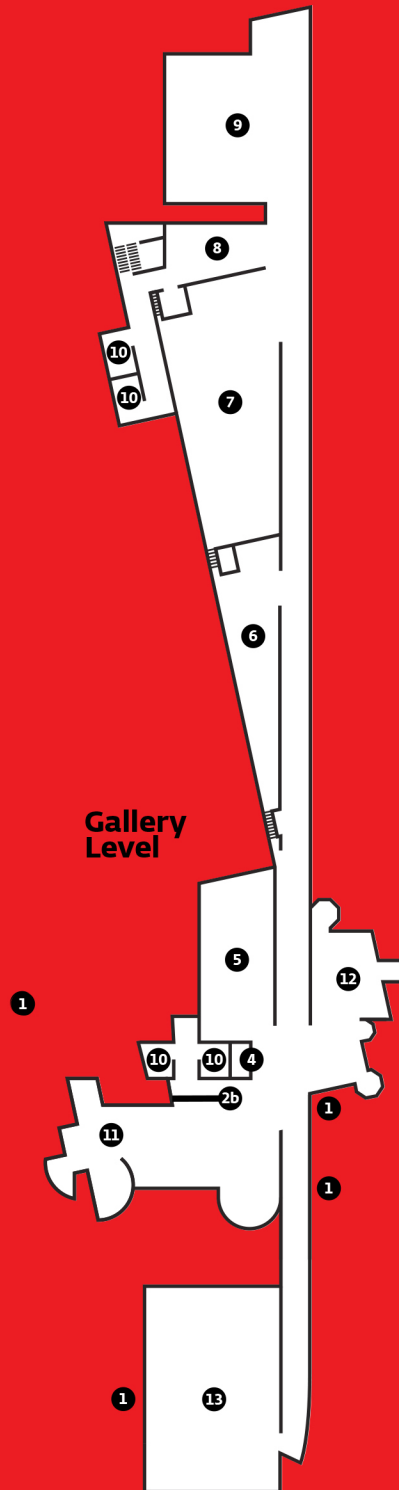
wexner center for the arts AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

# GALLERY MAP



## Map Key

- 1 Outpost Office\*
  - 2a Nancy Holt\*
  - 2b Nancy Holt
  - 3 Entrance
  - 4 The Box
  - 5 Gallery A
  - 6 Gallery B
  - 7 Gallery C
  - 8 Reading Room
  - 9 Gallery D
  - 10 Bathrooms
  - 11 Heirloom Café
  - 12 Wexner Center Store
  - 13 Film/Video Theater
- \* Outdoor Locations



# CONTENTS

- 2 What is the Learning Guide?
- 4 **THE PLAZA**  
Outpost Office: *Color Block No. 2*
- 6 **BUILDING EXTERIOR AND LOBBY**  
Nancy Holt: *Pipeline*
- 8 **THE BOX**  
Awilda Rodríguez Lora: *Sustento*
- 10 Exhibition Summary  
*Ming Smith: Wind Chime*
- 12 **GALLERY A**  
Ming Smith *New Works*
- 14 **GALLERY B**  
Ming Smith *Africa Series*
- 16 Exhibition Summary  
*Rotimi Fani-Kayode: Tranquility of Communion*
- 18 **GALLERY C**  
Rotimi Fani-Kayode *The Theater, The Archive*
- 22 **READING ROOM**  
Rotimi Fani-Kayode *The Studio*
- 24 **GALLERY D**  
Rotimi Fani-Kayode *The Museum*
- 26 Dialogues between the Photography  
of Ming Smith and Rotimi Fani-Kayode
- 30 Guided Activities
- 31 Glossary
- 34 Curators' Biographical Notes
- 35 Related Public Events

# WHAT IS THE LEARNING GUIDE?



The Learning Guide is a resource intended to share information and inspire engagement with the exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Artworks are on view around, in front of, and on the building; in the lobby area; in The Box; and within our five gallery spaces.

Around the building, visitors are invited to engage with Outpost Office's four architectural furniture pieces *Color Block No. 2*. Nancy Holt's sculptural installation *Pipeline* wraps the building's exterior architecture and descends into the lower lobby. Awilda Rodríguez Lora's short film *Sustento* is featured in The Box, an intimate gallery dedicated to experimental short films. Galleries A and B feature the photography exhibition *Wind Chime* by Ming Smith, and Galleries C and D present the photography of Rotimi Fani-Kayode in the exhibition *Tranquility of Communion*.



[Opposite] Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Dan Mask*, 1989. Silver gelatin print, 30 x 30 in.

[Left] Ming Smith, *Womb, (Cairo, Egypt)*, 1992. Archival pigment print, 16 x 24 in.

[Above] Nancy Holt, *Pipeline* (detail), 1986. Steel and oil. Installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2024. Copyright Holt/Smithson Foundation. Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York.

This guide focuses on key themes in each exhibition. It considers them through analysis of featured artworks and prompts for thinking or discussion.

The guide also includes a glossary of key terms, highlighted in **bold** throughout the text, and activities to extend the experience beyond the galleries. The Learning Guide can be paired with resources featured in the Reading Room (located between Galleries C and D) for deeper engagement.

In addition, a series of public programs accompany the exhibitions, some of which can be found on page 35. Check out the Wexner Center calendar at [www.wexarts.org/calendar](http://www.wexarts.org/calendar) to learn more.

# THE PLAZA

## **Outpost Office: Color Block No. 2**

November 14, 2023–April 6, 2025

Curated by Kelly Kivland

In 2023, Outpost Office was commissioned to respond to the architecture of the Wexner Center for the Arts by producing a series of four works titled *Color Block No. 2 (1–4)*. These are four large-scale, modular furniture units that activate various in-between spaces at the center. The Wexner Center building is one of the first realized examples of deconstructivism in the United States because it reimagined a historical campus armory building colliding with a modern grid. The center opened in 1989 and was designed by architects Peter Eisenman and Richard Trott.

Notice the similarities and differences between Outpost Office’s installations and the architecture of the center. These installations change the way we experience a building through context—reframing spaces, even those that we think we know well, into something new. People are encouraged to interact with the pieces by sitting and relaxing on them, rather than simply viewing them, changing the dynamic usually experienced in a gallery or museum.

- **Are the colors in the same family, or are they opposites?**
- **Do the shapes mimic forms seen in the Wexner Center’s design or do they contrast its angles and grids?**



Outpost Office, *Color Block No. 2 (4 of 4)*, installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2024. Photo: Phil Arnold.

### **Outpost Office**

Ashley Bigham (b. 1986, Cornersville, Tennessee) and Erik Herrmann (b. 1984, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), both Associate Professors of Architecture at The Ohio State University's Knowlton School, founded Outpost Office in 2013. Outpost Office designs installations and buildings that challenge architecture's tendencies to build up a space with permanent structures. Outpost Office designs temporary structures and installations, including an award-winning series of robotic paintings called *Drawing Fields*, that reimagine engagement in public spaces.

# BUILDING EXTERIOR AND LOBBY

## **Nancy Holt: *Pipeline***

August 16, 2024–July 27, 2025

Curated by Lisa Le Feuvre

- **What is a system?**
- **What systems do you rely on in your everyday life?**
- **How do they work?**

Nancy Holt created artworks that explored the underlying systems that we encounter in our everyday lives. These systems can be natural, like the movement of the sun, or man-made, such as those that control our heating, cooling, and electricity. Holt created *Pipeline* on a 1986 visit to Alaska, after she observed the Trans-Alaska Pipeline cutting across the natural landscape. This system for extracting oil was imperfect, causing oil to spill across previously undisturbed natural areas. *Pipeline* weaves its way from the exterior of the building to the interior. It lands in the lower lobby, slowly dripping an oil-like substance from a crack in the metal. We might ask ourselves, where does the oil go and what impact might that have on other living things? Is our reliance on oil worth the environmental cost? *Pipeline* is one of several works that will be featured in the upcoming Spring 2025 exhibition *Nancy Holt: Power Systems*.





Nancy Holt, *Pipeline* (detail), 1986. Steel and oil. Installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2024. Copyright Holt/Smithson Foundation. Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York.

**Nancy Holt** (b. 1938, Worcester, Massachusetts; d. 2014, New York, New York) was a member of the earth and conceptual art movements. Holt's rich artistic output spans concrete poetry, audio works, film and video, photography, ephemeral gestures, drawings, room-sized installations, earthworks, artists' books, and public sculpture commissions. Holt is most known for her site-specific installations, including *Sun Tunnels* (1973–1976), a configuration of concrete tubes aligned with the solstices in the Great Basin Desert of Utah.

# THE BOX

## **Awilda Rodríguez Lora: *Sustento***

September 1–December 31, 2024

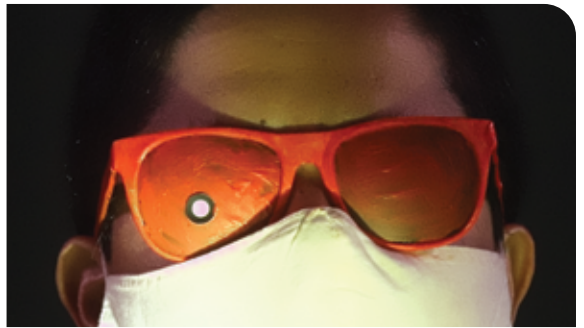
Curated by Jennifer Lange

- Complete the sentence “Sustenance is....”
- How do you sustain yourself?

The culmination of a Wexner Center Performing Arts residency that unfolded before and during the pandemic, *Sustento* explores the idea of sustenance: What is it and why is it important?

Puerto Rican artist Awilda Rodríguez Lora came to the Wex in early 2019 and posed this timely and foreshadowing question during a memorable performative talk held on March 5, 2019, in our Film/Video Theater. Puerto Rico was still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane María and the world was a year away from a global pandemic.

Following the talk, Rodríguez Lora’s relationship with the Wex continued through both virtual and in-person residencies and performances. The video *Sustento* is the culminating work of this project and features Rodríguez Lora performing in the Wex’s black box Performance Space and in the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design’s motion capture lab, where an animated avatar is created as a twin to Rodríguez Lora. *Sustento* poses the universal question of how we humans can sustain ourselves in the face of constant demands and oppression.



Awilda Rodríguez Lora, *Sustento*, 2023 (stills). HD video with 5.1 sound; 21:13 mins. Courtesy of the artist.

**Awilda Rodríguez Lora**, La Performera (b. 1978, Veracruz, Mexico) is a performer, choreographer, and cultural producer. Born in Mexico and raised in Puerto Rico, Rodríguez Lora works in between North and South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Her artistic practice includes the creation of La Rosario Proyectos, a production house for queer, collective, healthy, and sustainable live art. Additionally, she collaborates on transgressive artistic projects, promoting freedom and expression through performance, dance, video, and voice.

## EXHIBITION SUMMARY

### ***Ming Smith: Wind Chime***

September 22, 2024–January 5, 2025

Curated by Kelly Kivland

Ming Smith's exhibition *Wind Chime* showcases the breadth of her practice across black-and-white, color, and multimedia **photography** over the past six decades. The exhibition reflects on Smith's focus then and now, pairing her first photographic series with new works. Through a range of traditional and experimental photographic techniques, Smith considers the African American experience through her personal, poetic **point of view**. The exhibition begins with works in color, including collage studies of the human figure and sweeping landscapes. They are paired with a new photo projection installation, animating key images from throughout her career. An ambient **soundscape** by her son, musical artist Mingus Murray, accompanies the works.

The exhibition progresses to reveal photographs from Smith's *Africa* series. Smith began this series on her first trip to Senegal for a modeling assignment in 1972. She continued to add to it on future trips to the African continent. The *Africa* photographs are predominantly shot on black-and-white film, but a selection of color prints and painted photographs convey a more vibrant energy, captured by Smith on her travels. This exhibition is part of a landmark simultaneous presentation of Ming Smith's works—*Ming Smith: Jazz Requiem*, on view at The Gund at Kenyon College June 25–December 15, 2024, and *Ming Smith: Transcendence* and *Ming Smith: August Moon*, both on view at the Columbus Museum of Art September 19, 2024–January 26, 2025.



Ming Smith, *Ethiopian Crew*  
(*Ethiopia*), 1973. Archival  
pigment print, 16 x 24 in.

Ming Smith,  
*Self-portrait with Camera*,  
New York, NY, 1989.



**Ming Smith** (b. 1947, Detroit, Michigan) is a contemporary photographer known for capturing authentic moments of Black experience. She was raised in the Hilltop neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. Although many members of her family attended The Ohio State University, Smith left Columbus to attend Howard University in Washington, DC. She then settled in New York City, where she started a career in modeling while pursuing her creative endeavors in photography. She was the first female to join the **Kamoinge Workshop**, a collective of Black photographers in New York in the 1960s, and the first Black woman photographer included in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. She has traveled extensively throughout the world and currently resides in Harlem.

## GALLERY A

# Ming Smith

## New Works

Ming Smith's photography is responsive and reflective, showing us a glimpse into her experience as an African American female artist. Smith's practice spans most of her life; she began taking photographs of her friends at school in Columbus, Ohio, when she was just a child. After graduating from Howard University in 1973, Smith moved to New York City. She began to find her voice as an artist, capturing images of the African American community. Though many of these individuals are famous models, musicians, or artists, Smith photographed them in casual, unposed moments. Her images are often praised for revealing the true character of her subjects, while simultaneously conveying her own feminist perspective and personal connection to the people and places she photographed.

The recent color photographs on view in this gallery showcase the intimate, instinctual character of Smith's imagery. Because she rarely photographs in a studio setting, her technique can be categorized as **street photography**. Street photography is captured in real time; it isn't staged or posed. The photographer senses the opportunity to create a compelling image and has the skill set to act. In photography, this is often called the **decisive moment**, when all the visual elements in the frame fall into place to create **balance** in a **composition**.

- **If you could take a picture of a memory, what would it be?**
- **Is there a singular moment that means something important to you?**

Ming Smith's photographs also capture a feeling. Her compositions have a flow—a visual **rhythm** that reflects her interests in dance, movement, and music, particularly **jazz** and the blues. Shapes and lines, both actual and implied,



Ming Smith, *Birds (Miami, Florida)* 2022, c. 2023. Archival pigment print, 40 x 60 in.

may guide our eye across an image, drifting one direction, then another. In many images, Smith's expertly wielded technique renders her subjects with the precise amount of blur; with just enough **focus** for us to see a trace of a person as they blend into the background. The tension between what we can see and what we can't implies that there is a story to be told. This intentional blur is the result of low light conditions (on the streets at night or in dark city clubs), long **exposure**, and the movements of both the subject and the photographer.

- ✎ Consider the photographs and collages in this gallery. How do these images convey movement?
- ✎ What feelings do they capture?

## GALLERY B

# Ming Smith

## *Africa Series*



Ming Smith, *Masque (Cairo, Egypt)*, 1992.  
Archival pigment print, 24 x 16 in.

Throughout her life, Ming Smith photographed the African American communities of which she was a part. She photographed the places she lived, the people she knew, and the social and artistic scenes that she belonged to. Though her placement behind the camera kept her at a distance, she was a member of those communities, an insider in those spaces.

Smith first traveled to the African continent on a modeling assignment around African fashion in 1972. While she was in Dakar, Senegal, for work, she documented what she saw, capturing the **portraits** and actions of the everyday people she interacted with. In this situation, Smith was an outsider, an observer of a culture that she was not a part of, but felt spiritually connected to. Over the next three decades, Smith returned to Senegal, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, and Egypt many times and experimented with a wide range of photography techniques to capture her experiences.

In the photograph *Masque (Cairo, Egypt)* (1992), Smith visually connects herself and the people and places in Africa in a layered self-portrait. The image is a



**multiple exposure**, created by shooting a roll of film, rewinding it, and shooting with it again. The perfectly aligned images (the figures in the pyramid and the flowers across her face) happened by chance, a stroke of luck that the artist recognized when she reviewed the film. The accumulated images are ethereal, shifting in and out of one another to create a unified whole. Smith places herself in the center, facing the camera with the iconic Pyramids of Giza and Great Sphinx behind her. Her placement with these monuments of Egyptian history, surrounded by other people, suggests the personal, spiritual connection she felt with the African continent.

- ✎ **Imagine if you created a self-portrait.  
What elements would you surround yourself with?**

Other photographs in the *Africa* series are more **documentary** in style. They capture a snapshot of the everyday lives of people in markets, along roadsides, or going about their daily chores.

- ✎ **Look closely. What shapes or objects do you see?  
How do they interact?**
- ✎ **What might be going on in this image?  
Why do you think that?**

In other images, Smith made a more personal connection with her subjects. Individuals or groups stand facing the camera, acknowledging its presence. They aren't quite posing, but their acceptance of the exchange between photographer and subject reveals a bit of themselves for Smith to capture. In *Trio in Gambela Painted* (1973, 2003), Smith enhances the character of the boys by painting swirls of blue, white, and yellow on top of the print.

- ✎ **How would you describe this photograph?  
What makes you say that?**
- ✎ **Does the color of the paint added by the artist impact  
your perception?**

## EXHIBITION SUMMARY

# **Rotimi Fani-Kayode: Tranquility of Communion**

September 22, 2024–January 5, 2025

Curated by Mark Sealy

*Tranquility of Communion*<sup>1</sup> is the first North American survey of the photography and archives of Nigerian British photographer Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Though his career spanned less than a decade in the mid to late 1980s, Fani-Kayode produced an extensive body of photographic works. His genre-defying images combine elements of his personal experience as a social outsider, the history of art, and religious **iconography**. This exhibition features Fani-Kayode's broad photographic practice and reveals unseen works from his archive, including **Polaroids**, prints made with **alternative photographic processes**, and early student drawings. The title, *Tranquility of Communion*, is a direct quote from the artist that refers to the spiritual, reflective qualities of his practice, in dialogue with the queer and artistic communities that he surrounded himself with.

The exhibition is arranged thematically, organizing Fani-Kayode's practice into four distinct categories. The first, The Theater, in Gallery C, showcases Fani-Kayode's late photographic series in color, *Nothing Left to Lose (Bodies of Experience)*. In a nearby space, The Archive includes light-sensitive, multimedia photographs and drawings. The Studio presents samples of Fani-Kayode's **contact sheets**, installed as a wallpaper in the Reading Room. Finally, The Museum, in Gallery D, displays an extensive collection of Fani-Kayode's black-and-white **silver gelatin** prints. Together, these works immerse us into Fani-Kayode's unique photographic depiction of spirituality and desire.

<sup>1</sup> The title *Tranquility of Communion* is a quote from the last paragraph of the artist's influential text, *Traces of Ecstasy*. Rotimi Fani-Kayode, "Traces of Ecstasy," *Ten.8*, no. 28: "Rage & Desire" (1988).



Sunil Gupta, *Rotimi Fani-Kayode*, Newcastle, 1989.  
Copyright Sunil Gupta.  
All rights reserved,  
DACS/Artimage 2023.  
Image courtesy of the  
artist and Hales Gallery,  
Materià Gallery, Stephen  
Bulger Gallery, and  
Vadehra Art Gallery.

**Rotimi Fani-Kayode** (b. 1955, Lagos, Nigeria; d. 1989, London, United Kingdom) produced genre-defying photographs that speak to his experience as a gay African man living in England in the 1980s. He emigrated with his family to London in the 1960s, escaping civil war as political exiles. He relocated to the United States in 1976 to pursue undergraduate art studies at Georgetown University and continued his studies at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute. Returning to London in 1983, Fani-Kayode became an active participant in the Black British art scene, exhibiting at London's Brixton Art Gallery, among other community-oriented spaces, and publishing his photography in magazines such as *Ten.8* and *Square Peg*. In 1988, he became a cofounding signatory of Autograph (London), a visual-arts charity devoted to supporting photographic inquiries into race, rights, and representation.

## GALLERY C

# Rotimi Fani-Kayode

## The Theater

Fani-Kayode created *Nothing to Lose (Bodies of Experience)* shortly before his untimely death in 1989 during the height of the AIDS epidemic. The series is a meditation on the fragility of existence and his personal status as an outsider in relation to traditional society and within his own family. These large-scale color prints are often considered to be the masterworks of Fani-Kayode's photographic practice, seamlessly combining references to the **Yoruba** religious culture of his **ancestry** with classical fine art references. Created in a studio setting, these photographs are staged, posed, and lit against a backdrop. Their theatricality is directed by the photographer. The resulting images are lush and vibrant; their warm brown tones accentuate the sensuality of the Black male bodies. The depiction of strong Black men in these images furthers their transgressive quality. They outwardly portray and elevate queer desire in a time and culture where it was not permitted.

In *Every Moment Counts (Ecstatic Antibodies)* (1989), Fani-Kayode draws upon traditional images from the history of art to reflect on themes of spirituality and mortality in a contemporary context. Two young Black men are draped in a deep red cloak, reminiscent of garments worn in Renaissance and Baroque Christian paintings. One figure wears a crown on his head, looking nobly toward the light while his companion wraps his arm around him in an intimate embrace.

- ↘ **What feelings does this scene convey?**
- ↘ **Why might an artist place contemporary figures in a historical context?**



Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Every Moment Counts (Ecstatic Antibodies)*, 1989. Archival C-type print, 48 x 48 in.



Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Adebiyi*, 1989. Archival C-type print, 48 x 48 in.

Throughout this series, Fani-Kayode meticulously stages, illuminates, and directs his models to embody a combination of Western and African religious symbolism. Fani-Kayode draws Yoruban images from his own ancestry, contemplating his family's political exile from Nigeria and the effect it had on his identity. Fani-Kayode's family are religious nobility, the keepers of the shrine of Ife. In images like *Adebiyi* (1989), Fani-Kayode uses specific costumes, poses, and props (such as the mask) to transform the sitter into personifications of specific Yoruba **Orishas** or deities. For Fani-Kayode, the practice of photographing in the studio was an act of spiritual transcendence.

↘ **Imagine the stories behind these images.**

## GALLERY C

# Rotimi Fani-Kayode

## The Archive

Beginning during his time as an art-school student in the United States, Rotimi Fani-Kayode depicted LGBTQ+ communities in his artwork. The drawings, Polaroids, and vintage photographic prints in this room evidence the artist's exploration of identity and encounters among these communities through play and experimentation.

Photographs like this one (at right) are hand colored on top of the original black-and-white print. The addition of vibrant hair colors and lightning bolts—reminiscent of the makeup worn by people who were part of the New Romantic movement, the band Visage, and the singer and performer David Bowie—shift the serious tone of this image to a performative one, filled with queer recognition and a celebration of 1980s counterculture.

The collection of Polaroids in this room are also performative, imagining the moments before a night of encounters at the club. With figures dressed up in elaborate, theatrical outfits and captured in dramatic poses, these works express a spirit of social liberation.

- ↘ **Reflect on how you discover your sense of self.  
How do you find yourself among community?**



[Above] Rotimi Fani-Kayode,  
*Untitled*, n.d. Vintage silver gelatin  
print with paint, approx. 19 3/4 x 15 3/4 in.



[Left] Rotimi Fani-Kayode,  
*Untitled*, n.d. Polaroid.

## READING ROOM

# Rotimi Fani-Kayode

## The Studio

For Rotimi Fani-Kayode, the photography studio was both a space of intense spiritual communion and a place to practice community building. The artist's contact sheets, entire rolls of film printed onto a single piece of paper, trace the progression of various photoshoots. Contact sheets are not typically shared publicly as artworks; they are part of the photographer's process to select the best images. The ability to see all the images taken in order reveals a behind-the-scenes look at the personal dynamic and collaboration between the photographer and his models.

- **Look closely, what can you learn about a photographer's practice from examining their contact sheets?**







Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Untitled*, 1988. Hand-printed contact sheet with artist marks.

## GALLERY D

# Rotimi Fani-Kayode

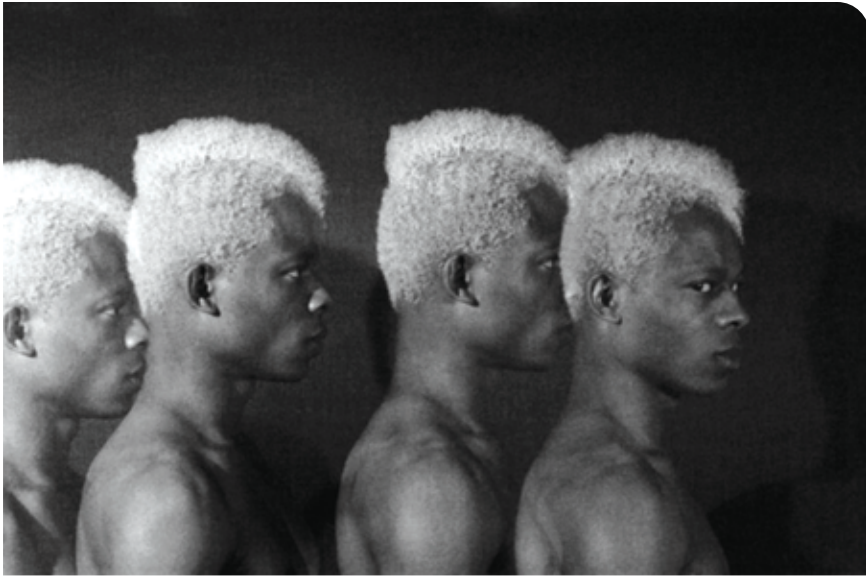
## The Museum

The works in this gallery represent what many consider to be the most traditional photography practice in the twentieth century. The photographs are **silver gelatin prints**, a highly accessible darkroom process that renders images in a range of black-and-white tones. They are displayed one after another in this space, reminiscent of customary museum and gallery presentations of photography collections.

The prints in this gallery are not only classical examples of photography in their presentation, but also in their composition and print quality. The images are sharp and crisp, displaying a full range of **value** from the brightest white to the darkest black. The striking range of tones emphasizes the perfectly balanced movement of figures in front of the backdrop, reminiscent of formal studies in Greek, Roman, and later Renaissance sculpture.

These images are made fully contemporary, however, because of their emphasis on queer desire. Rotimi Fani-Kayode often collaborated with his partner, photographer Alex Hirst, on these images. They reflected on their own interracial relationship, creating a body of work that embodies the possibilities of relationships and connection across difference.

As in the later color photographs, Fani-Kayode includes symbolism and imagery from Yoruba culture in these earlier images. In *Four Twins* (1985), Fani-Kayode uses a multiple exposure technique to capture the image of a model four times across a single **frame**. This creates two sets of twins. Twins, or *ibeji*, are revered in Yoruba culture. The *Ibeji* is a popular Orisha deity, believed to have magical qualities.



- Notice the juxtaposition of black and white in these images.
- How does the use of photography as a medium inform their subject matter?



[Top] Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Four Twins*, 1985.  
Silver gelatin print, 21 1/2 in. x 14 1/4 in.

[Above] Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *In Gods We Trust*, n.d.  
Silver gelatin print, 12 x 16 in.

# Dialogues between the Photography

## of Ming Smith and Rotimi Fani-Kayode

Technically and visually, the photographs of Ming Smith and Rotimi Fani-Kayode are very different. Smith photographs primarily on the street, responding to and capturing moments in real time. Fani-Kayode creates works in the studio, staging models into balanced, symbolic compositions. Thematically though, their works have much in common.

Both artists focus their lens on Black life, conveying their personal identities in relation to their own communities and the African **diaspora**. They also both consider photography a spiritual practice, a transcendent process in the search for authenticity of self. The following inquiries consider these connecting themes between the two artists. Discuss them with a group or respond to them on your own.

CONNECTING THEMES		
<b>Depicting community through personal lived experience</b>	<b>Visibility of individuals and groups (the insider and the outsider)</b>	<b>Photography as a spiritual practice</b>
What communities do you identify with the most?	In what moments do you feel invisible?	How does art hold or convey emotion?
How do you connect to these communities?	When do you feel most visible to others?	How do we think about a world that's bigger than ourselves?
	To yourself?	Are there moments in your life where you move beyond yourself?



Ming Smith, *Child Porter (Abidjan, Ivory Coast)*, 1972.  
Archival pigment print, 36 x 24 in.



Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *City Gent*, 1988.  
Silver gelatin print, 12 x 16 in.

- **Consider.... In what ways are these artists' photography practices similar and different?**
- **What dialogues do they have when viewed together?**
- **What can we learn from exploring a subject in diverse ways?**



Ming Smith, *Katherine Dunham and Her Legacy* (East Saint Louis, Illinois 1984), 1984.  
Archival pigment print, 36 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Nicola Vassell Gallery.



Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Nothing to Lose I (Bodies of Experience)*, 1989. Archival C-type print, 48 x 48 in.

Scan the QR code to view complete checklists for the exhibitions discussed in this Learning Guide.



# GUIDED ACTIVITIES

## Pieces of You

### A Multimedia Self-Portrait Project

**CONSIDER** Identify five traits that make you, you.  
Consider your social identity, traits you love about yourself, and traits you are challenged by.  
Think about why you chose these traits and their features.  
How do these traits connect to you?

Turn the five traits you identified into characters.  
What details symbolize these traits?  
What color, texture, or shape would they be?  
What facial expressions would they have?

**RESPOND** These activities can be explored through many different types of art.  
Choose the medium(s) that are most accessible to you.

#### **PHOTOGRAPH**

##### **OPTION 1**

Take a self-portrait. Draw the characters of your five traits on your self-portrait with any traditional media or use a digital application to draw on the image.

##### **OPTION 2**

Make a series of self-portraits that capture each trait you identified.  
Think about the colors, symbols, and expressions you gave your trait characters.  
How could you express these traits in your self-portraits?

#### **WRITE**

Craft a personal narrative that describes your vision of yourself.  
What are key traits that represent you?  
How do they make you unique?  
If they were visual images, what would they look like?



# GLOSSARY

**alternative photographic process:** Photographs that are captured or printed without a camera. They often utilize nontraditional chemical photo processing or historical processes.

**ancestry:** A person's family lineage that evidences their ethnic origin or heritage.

**composition:** The layout of visual elements within an image. Photographers consider design principles such as balance, alignment, contrast, repetition, proportion, movement, and positive or negative space to create an interesting image.

**contact sheet:** The printing of an entire roll of film negatives onto a single sheet for image review. Contact sheets are used to identify images suitable for printing within a roll of photographic film.

**balance:** The equal distribution of visual weight among objects, tones, or colors throughout an image.

**documentary:** A style of photography that objectively records a moment without interference by the photographer. This implies that the narrative about the captured subject is true to life.

**decisive moment:** A moment when a photographer feels that all the visual elements in the frame fall perfectly into place to create a balanced composition. The term was popularized in 1952 by French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, a pioneer in the genre of street photography.

**diaspora:** A culturally similar group of people displaced or separated from their place of origin and now living in different communities.

**exposure:** Determined by a combination of three factors—shutter speed, aperture, and sensitivity of medium, or ISO—exposure describes how much light enters the camera lens in a specific amount of time.

**focus:** The range of sharpness in an image.

**frame:** A scene within the limits of the viewfinder or display screen on a camera. A frame can also refer to a single photographic image within a series.

**iconography:** Visual images or symbols in a work of art that carry specific meaning. Their meaning is derived from political, social, cultural, or religious context. They are often repeated over time until they carry a universal meaning.

**jazz:** A style of music developed by the African American community in New Orleans, Louisiana, in the late nineteenth century. Jazz is notable for off-beat syncopated rhythms and improvisation, which is playing music on the spot without a prewritten score. Jazz is often played by a group of musicians on different instruments, called an ensemble. Jazz is heavily influenced by the blues, an earlier African American musical style that emphasized somber musical ballads about life in the American South after the Civil War.

**Kamoinge Workshop:** A social group of Black photographers interested in the art and aesthetics of photography established in New York City in 1963. Kamoinge was the first artist collective of Black photographers and is still active today. Members each had their own style and supported each other's practice. Ming Smith was the group's first female member. Other notable members of the group include Anthony Barboza, Roy DeCarava, Louis Draper, Albert Fennar, and Herb Randall.

**multiple exposure:** An in-camera technique where a single frame of film is exposed more than one time. This creates a layered image directly on the negative.

**negative:** An inverted photographic image captured on a sheet of transparent film. The light portions of an image appear dark, and the dark portions of an image appear light. Negatives are exposed to light to print a photograph onto light-sensitive paper.

**Orisha:** A spiritual deity in West African Yoruba culture. The word comes from the Yoruban words *ori*, meaning head and *se*, meaning source. There are an untold number of Orishas, each with their own characteristics. Orishas act as intermediaries between humans and the divine spirit, called *Oloдумаре*.

**photography:** A technical and artistic process developed in the 1820s to capture an image with a light-based medium. From the Greek words, *photo*, meaning light, and *graph*, meaning writing. This process is often done through a device called a camera, which can be film or digital, or through a camera-less process, to produce a photograph.

**point of view:** The perspective of an artist based on their lived experience.

**portrait:** A photograph or a painting that represents a particular person. A self-portrait is a portrait of the artist who is creating the portrait.

**Polaroid:** A brand of cameras and instant photographic film developed by the Polaroid corporation in the 1940s. Polaroids are often recognizable as square images with thick white borders. Polaroid cameras became popular, particularly in social settings, for their instantaneous development of a single print straight from the camera.

**rhythm:** The movement, flow, or repetition of elements in an artwork or piece of music.

**silver gelatin prints:** A photographic print on paper coated in light-sensitive silver particles suspended in gelatin. They are printed in a darkroom chemical process and render images in a range of black-and-white tones.

**soundscape:** A composition of musical or nonmusical sounds that create an ambient environment.

**street photography:** A style of photography that takes place in a public space or social environment and captures people, objects, and events in real time.

**Yoruba:** A West African culture and religion encompassing several ethnic groups across Nigeria, Benin, and Togo. Yoruba religion is cosmology-based (focused on the origins and evolution of the universe) and worships a central life force through a series of demigods.

**value:** In art, value describes the level of darkness or lightness of the color of an object. Value is often represented along a gradient scale, ranging from the darkest tones to the lightest ones.

# CURATORS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**Kelly Kivland** is the inaugural Director and Lead Curator of the Art Program at Michigan Central. As an interdisciplinary curator, her collaborative practice explores the intersection of digital art, new media, performance, sound, and spatial practice. Her prior roles include Head of Exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts (2021–2024) and Curator at Dia Art Foundation (2011–2021). Recent projects include Wexner Center exhibitions featuring artists Tanya Lukin Linklater (2024), Harold Mendez (2023), and A.K. Burns (2023). She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and a master's degree from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

**Lisa Le Feuvre** is a curator, writer, and editor. She is the inaugural Executive Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation, the artist-endowed foundation dedicated to the creative legacies of Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson. Between 2010 and 2017 Le Feuvre was Head of Sculpture Studies at the Henry Moore Institute. She has curated more than 60 exhibitions as an institutional and independent curator, played a pivotal role in shaping academic and arts organizations, edited over 30 books and journals, spoken at museums and universities across the world, and has published more than 100 essays and interviews with artists.

**Jennifer Lange** is Director of the Wexner Center's Film/Video Studio, a residency program that offers postproduction support to filmmakers and video artists. She has also curated exhibitions, including *Meditation Ocean*, *Barbara Hammer: In This Body*, *Cruzamentos: Contemporary Art in Brazil*, and *Sadie Benning: Suspended Animation*. In addition to leading the Film/Video Studio, Lange curates screening programs in The Box, the Wexner Center's dedicated video exhibition space. She holds a master's degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Mark Sealy** is Director of Autograph (London) and Professor of Photography – Rights and Representation at University of the Arts London, London College of Communication. Author of two celebrated books published by Lawrence Wishart, *Photography: Race, Rights and Representation* (2022) and *Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time* (2019), Sealy is interested in the relationship between art, photography, social change, identity politics, race, and human rights. He has written for many of the world's leading photographic journals, produced numerous artist publications, curated exhibitions, and commissioned photographers and filmmakers worldwide.

# RELATED PUBLIC EVENTS

## EXHIBITION OPENING AND TALK

**Friday, September 20, 2024**

**Talk: Mark Sealy and Ming Smith.** Moderated by Yasmina Price

5:30–6:15 PM in Film/Video Theater

**Opening Reception**

5–9 PM in Galleries

## TALKS AND SYMPOSIUM

**Tuesday, September 24, 2024**

**Awilda Rodríguez Lora in Conversation**

Featuring Norah Zuniga Shaw and Paloma Martinez-Cruz. Moderated by Ashley Stanton

4:30–5:45 PM in Film/Video Theater

**Thursday, October 24, 2024**

**Lambert Family Photography Symposium**

9 AM–3:30 PM in Galleries and Performance Space

**Lambert Family Lecture**

**Dawoud Bey**

6 PM in Film/Video Theater

**Friday, October 25, 2024**

**Lambert Family Photography Symposium**

10 AM–1:30 PM in Galleries and Performance Space

## PERFORMING ARTS

**Sunday, November 17, 2024**

**Counterpoints: Ohio State University Student Performances**

3 PM in Galleries

Scan the QR code  
to visit [wexarts.org](https://wexarts.org)  
for details.



# PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY

---

OUTPOST OFFICE'S PRESENTATION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY  
**Ohio State's Integrated Physical Planning Liaison Group**

---

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR NANCY HOLT: *PIPELINE* IS MADE POSSIBLE BY  
**HOLT ● SMITHSON FOUNDATION**

---

MING SMITH: *WIND CHIME* IS MADE POSSIBLE BY



**Mike and  
Paige Crane**



---

ROTIMI FANI-KAYODE: *TRANQUILITY OF COMMUNION* IS MADE POSSIBLE BY



**Carol and David  
Aronowitz**

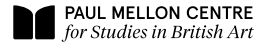
---

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR ROTIMI FANI-KAYODE'S PRESENTATION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**AUTOGRAPH**



---

EXHIBITIONS 2024–25 SEASON MADE POSSIBLE BY

**Bill and Sheila  
Lambert**

**Crane Family  
Foundation**

---

FREE GALLERIES MADE POSSIBLE BY

**Adam Flatto**



---

ROTIMI FANI-KAYODE AND MING SMITH'S PRESENTATIONS ARE FEATURED PROJECTS IN  
THE 2024 FOTOFOCUS BIENNIAL: *BACKSTORIES*.

[Cover] Ming Smith, *Dakar Roadside with Figures (Dakar, Senegal)*, 1972. Archival pigment print, 24 x 36 in.

[Back cover] Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Adebiji*, 1989. Archival C-type print, 48 x 48 in.

This Learning Guide was produced in conjunction with the following exhibitions: *Outpost Office: Color Block No. 2*, curated by Kelly Kivland, on view November 14, 2023–April 6, 2025; *Nancy Holt: Pipeline*, curated by Lisa Le Feuvre, developed in partnership with Holt/Smithson Foundation, on view August 16, 2024–July 27, 2025; *Awilda Rodríguez Lora: Sustento*, curated by Jennifer Lange, presented September 1, 2024–December 31, 2024; *Ming Smith: Wind Chime*, curated by Kelly Kivland, on view September 22, 2024–January 5, 2025; *Rotimi Fani-Kayode: Tranquility of Communion*, co-organized by Autograph, London, and the Wexner Center for the Arts, curated by Mark Sealy, presented September 22, 2024–January 5, 2025.

ISBN: 978-1-881390-72-5 [print] / ISBN: 978-1-881390-73-2 [pdf]

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024943259

© Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University, the artists, and the authors.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

Unless otherwise noted, all images of works by Rotimi Fani-Kayode are © Rotimi Fani-Kayode; courtesy of Autograph, London; all images of works by Ming Smith are courtesy of Ming Smith.

#### WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Executive Director **Gaëtane Verna**

Interim Head of Exhibitions

**Kimberly Kollman**

Head of Learning & Public Practice

**Dionne Custer Edwards**

Head of Film/Video **David Filipi**

Co-interim Heads of Performing Arts

**Kathleen Felder and Elena Perantoni**

Head of Finance and Administration

**Steve Pruchnicki**

Head of Communications and Marketing

**Cathy Predmore**

#### PUBLICATION

Project Management **Jessica Knapp**

Texts **Dionne Custer Edwards, Jennifer Lange,**

**Rebecca Richardson, Sarah Robison**

Copyediting **Jessica Knapp**

Proofreading **Ryan Shafer**

Graphic Design **Pata Macedo**

Printing **Hopkins Printing**

Published by the Wexner Center for the Arts

at The Ohio State University, 1871 North

High Street, Columbus, OH 43210.

This book was printed and bound by Hopkins Printing on acid-free 100-percent postconsumer recycled content paper. The text is set in Fedra Sans and Fedra Serif, designed by Peter Bilak and issued by Typotheque.



FIND EVENT SCHEDULES,  
DETAILS, TICKETS, AND MORE  
AT **WEXARTS.ORG**.

Share your feedback on the  
Learning Guide with us!

