

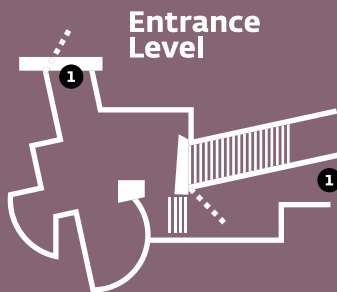


LEARNING GUIDE

Fall 2026

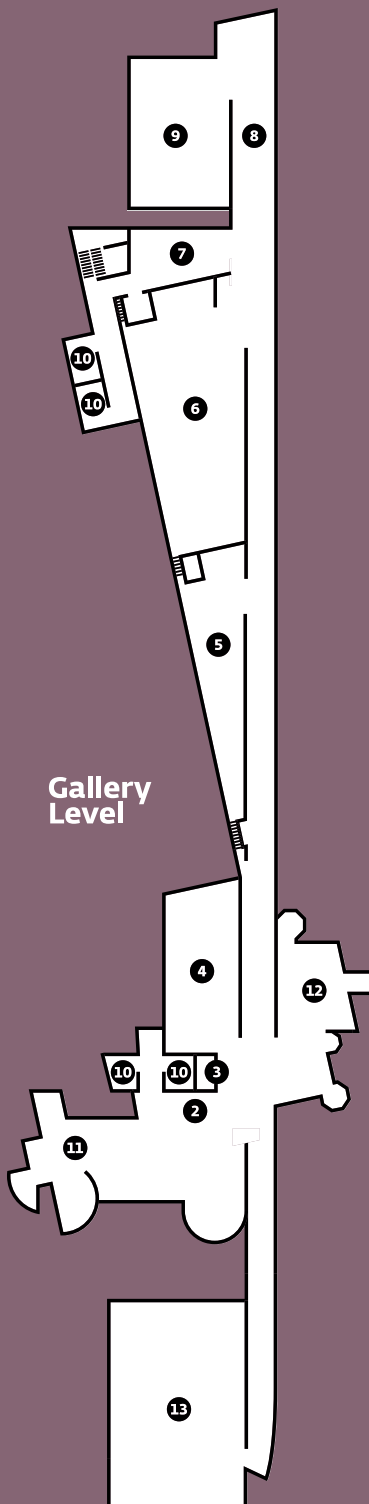
wexner center for the arts AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

GALLERY MAP



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WHAT IS THE LEARNING GUIDE?



The Learning Guide is an educational resource intended to share information and inspire engagement with the exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Artworks are on view within our five gallery spaces. *Tales from the Source*, a film by Belgian Congolese artist and filmmaker Léonard Pongo, and *Machini*, a film by artists Frank Mukunday and Tétshim, are screening September through October and November through December, respectively, in The Box, our video exhibition space dedicated to the presentation of experimental short films. Galleries A and B feature *Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will have revelations along felled branches and longer roots/routes*. Galleries C and D I feature *Sammy Baloji: When Extraction Becomes Form It Speaks in Borrowed Tongues*. Gallery D II features *sweat variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born): where you go full, volume 5*. This guide focuses on key themes in each exhibition. It considers them through analysis of featured artworks and prompts for thinking and discussion.



The guide also includes a glossary of important 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 our Reading Room (located between Galleries C and D) for deeper engagement. Additional public programs accompany the exhibitions, some of which can be found on page 35. View the Wexner Center calendar at www.wexarts.org/calendar to learn more.

[Far left] Sammy Baloji, *Still Kongo II*, 2024. Engraved wooden frame with prints glued on Dibond, approx. 59 1/16 x 59 1/16 x 5 7/8 in. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris. © Pauwels. Photo: Rob Harris.

[Center] Temitayo Ogunbiyi: *You will have revelations along felled branches and longer roots/routes*. Installation view at The Arts Club of Chicago, 2025. Photo: Michael Tropea.

[Right] sweat variant, *Swallow the moon*, performance at Jacob's Pillow, 2021. Photo: Cherylynn Tsushima.

THE BOX

Curated by Jennifer Lange

The films presented in The Box this fall connect to the exhibition *Sammy Baloji: When Extraction Becomes Form It Speaks in Borrowed Tongues*. They were produced by Twenty Nine Studio & Production, a Brussels-based production company founded by Baloji that supports artist-driven moving-image work that engages with the histories and cultural memory of Central Africa. These artists share an interest in the legacies of colonialism and the ways land bears the traces of labor, industry, and displacement.



Tales from the Source, image courtesy of the artist.

Léonard Pongo

Tales from the Source (2024)

HD Video, 39 mins.

September 1–October 31, 2026

Tales from the Source presents an immersive vision of the varied natural landscapes of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Shifting between fields, forests, rivers, and caves, the film is inspired by Congolese stories and traditions. It utilizes multispectral imaging technology combined with an original score of experimental music by Bear Bones, Lay Low to meditate on histories of land and memory.

- **Ease into the gallery and find a comfortable spot. Let the images and sounds wash over you. What connections or associations come up? What do you think this film is saying?**



Machini, courtesy of Twenty Nine Studio & Production and Atelier Graphoui.

Frank Mukunday and Tétshim

Machini (2019)

Video, 10 mins., French with English subtitles

November 1–December 31, 2026

- **Make a list of the different materials in this stop-motion animation. How does their use support the narrative of the film?**

Machini explores the impacts of the mineral mining industry in Lubumbashi, Congo. The film follows the daily lives of the people in the city, depicted as humanlike figures made from rocks. They work and play, eventually becoming ill and perishing from the harmful effects of local mining practices. The film points to the contradictions of green energy consumption, as the minerals being mined here—copper, cobalt, and lithium—are used to power electric vehicles. It asks, should the promise of a global greener future come at the expense of the countries who hold the resources needed to make it possible?

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will have revelations along felled branches and longer roots/routes

September 20, 2026–February 14, 2027

Curated by Rebecca Lowery

Temitayo Ogunbiyi's artistic **practice** centers on themes of healing and well-being, friendship, family, and community. Her work focuses on connections between people, the places they inhabit, and the cultures they carry with them. This exhibition is inspired by the cancer journey of the artist's friend, who lived in Chicago. The theme of well-being is considered through the healing properties of native plants. Ogunbiyi's art often features plants native to West Africa—particularly Nigeria, where she currently resides—and the Caribbean. The artist has situated the plants, such as okra, jute, and tamarind, with plants that are native to the Midwest, like pawpaw and milkweed. These plants embody distinct botanical and cultural histories, including practices of growing, preparing, and consuming them. Over time, they have traveled—carried to faraway places by people who know and use them. Together, these native plants of the Midwest and African **diaspora** remind us of our shared humanity and the communities and connections we build as we travel.

The exhibition features paintings, drawings, **sculptures**, and **installations**. Large-**scale abstract** paintings of Midwest-native prairie plants are mingled with reclaimed furniture sourced from local secondhand shops. Ogunbiyi invites visitors to open the drawers of the **found objects**, revealing botanical drawings. Sculptures made of stacked cast-copper grinding stones reach the ceiling, while wrapped fiber and stainless-steel sculptures wind their way across the floor. The experience is immersive, inviting visitors to wander among these objects and get lost in their details and tactile qualities.



Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will have revelations along felled branches and longer roots/routes. Installation view at The Arts Club of Chicago, 2025. Photo: Michael Tropea.

- Consider the first two words in the exhibition title: “You will.” Ogunbiyi has regularly used them in her titles since 2016. What impression does this give of the artwork? How are we, the audience, called to engage with it?



*Temitayo Ogunbiyi in front of her installation *You will follow the Rhein and compose play*, Solitude Park, 2023. Steel and manila rope, dimensions variable. © Museum Tinguely. Photo: Matthias Willi.*

Temitayo Ogunbiyi (b. 1984, Rochester, New York) explores the relationships between environment, line, and representation. Moving between mediums, her work links current events, botanical cultures, and anthropological histories and aims to build diverse communities from her perspective as a Nigerian Jamaican American. In 2018, she built her first functional playground, appropriating construction materials and conventional household items into a **composition** of nonprescriptive stimuli. The artist has made 14 functional playgrounds to date. She currently lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria, with her young family.

GALLERIES A AND B

Temitayo Ogunbiyi

The Meaning of a Line

- **Take a moment to notice the different types of lines in the artworks throughout these galleries. How would you describe them? What are they made of?**

Consider the possibilities of a line. A line might trace a path, connecting a starting point to an end. It might curve and twist, leading us in unexpected directions. A line can be drawn, it can be spoken, or it can be written. It conveys thoughts, images, or ideas. It might even mark connections that can be felt but not seen, like the lines of a family tree that connect us to our ancestors. Lines also convey movement and energy. They can be stable, straight, and unyielding—direct in their path and intention. They can also be organic and unruly—full of life, playfulness, and energy. Lines have endless meanings and endless possibilities.

Line is one of the most important elements in Temitayo Ogunbiyi's art. In Gallery B, visitors are greeted by several of the artist's play sculptures emerging from the floor and twisting their way through space. Notice how you move as you explore them. Did you change your direction or interact with others around you?

Ogunbiyi has constructed many play sculptures in both indoor and outdoor spaces. As a mother with young children, she noticed a lack of public playgrounds in Lagos and worked to fill this gap with her art. The wrapped natural abaca or Manila hemp plant fibers recall traditions of African hair braiding, while the linear forms themselves are a form of mapping. They are traced from Google map routes from the artist's home in Nigeria to the locations where



Temitayo Ogunbiyi, *You will pave paths of life with play*, 2025. Stainless steel, Manila rope, toupilier wood, and paint, dimensions variable. Installation view in *Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will wonder if we would have been friends* at The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York, 2025. Commissioned for The Noguchi Museum. Courtesy of the artist. © Temitayo Ogunbiyi / The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum / ARS. Photo: Nicholas Knight.

the sculptures are installed. The lines of these sculptures convey many layers of meaning both personally for the artist as she moves about the world and for the communities that her work brings together. Cultural and botanical histories converge, encouraging gathering and play.

- **Consider the routes you take in your everyday life. Where do you go, how do you travel, and what do your paths look like? What connections do you make along the way?**

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

Sammy Baloji: When Extraction Becomes Form It Speaks in Borrowed Tongues

September 20, 2026–February 14, 2027

Curated by Julieta González

When Extraction Becomes Form It Speaks in Borrowed Tongues is **multidisciplinary** artist Sammy Baloji's first US solo exhibition. Working in photography, film, sculpture, **textile**, and installation, Baloji recontextualizes historical images and references. His research reveals the complex mechanisms and legacies of present-day Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its colonization by Belgium from the late 1800s through 1960, when DRC gained independence. Baloji is particularly interested in the **extraction** of Congo's resources, such as copper and uranium, and the **ornamental** Belgian Art Nouveau architectural style, also known as **Style Kongo** or Style Congo, which used Congolese materials and natural forms.

This exhibition focuses on the **decorative arts** and **architecture** as translators of colonial history. It begins outside of Gallery C with Baloji's mortar-shell installation. Gallery C explores the devastating impacts of the deforestation of Congolese rainforests in the photography series *Still Kongo* (2024) and the film *Aequare. The Future That Never Was* (2023). At the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale, this film was shown with a separate work, a copper model for an unrealized Belgian Congo architectural pavilion planned for the 1935 **World's Fair** in Brussels, Belgium. The model is also on display in Gallery C. In addition, this gallery includes Baloji's textile-based works, which relate to a wall-sized **tapestry** collaboration with art historian Cécile Fromont in Gallery D I. This space also continues Baloji's exploration of **colonialism**'s remnants in architecture in a new installation with architect Gloria Cabral. The collaboration across the fields of visual art, art history, and architecture allows for a diversified approach to unpacking or separating and analyzing the ways that Congolese resources and culture have been embedded in the cultural heritage of its colonizers.



- ✧ “I’m not interested in colonialism as nostalgia, or in it as a thing of the past, but in the continuation of that system.”—Sammy Baloji



Sammy Baloji (b. 1978, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo) is a Congolese photographer and artist. He is known for his compelling work that explores the complexities of memory, identity, and colonial history through photography, videography, and sculpture. Baloji’s art often juxtaposes contemporary images with archival photographs, particularly focusing on the social and environmental impacts of mining in his home region of Katanga. Baloji currently lives and works in Brussels, Belgium, and Lubumbashi, DRC.

Sammy Baloji, interviewed by Kristian Vistrup Madsen, *studio international*, February 9, 2019. www.studiointernational.com/sammy-baloji-im-not-interested-in-colonialism-as-a-thing-of-the-past-but-in-continuation-of-that-system/.

[Top] Sammy Baloji, *Aequare. The Future that never was*, 2023. Installation view in *The Laboratory of the Future* at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition—Venice Biennale, Italy. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris. Photo © Andrea Avezzù.

[Left] Sammy Baloji. Photo © Kevin Faingnaert.

GALLERIES C AND D |

Sammy Baloji

Tracing History through Material

- ✎ **Consider an object that you use often. Where did it come from? How was it made and what materials were used? Who made it? How did it make its way to you?**

These seemingly simple questions can have complex answers, revealing a global network of resource extraction, manufacture, distribution, and market capitalism. These complicated systems become even more entangled when objects are reappropriated—adapted from their original use for new purposes.

- ✎ **Is there an object in your life that has had many different uses through time? How have its previous lives informed how you use or understand it?**

Sammy Baloji's untitled installation from 2018 focuses on one such object, mortar-shell casings that have been repurposed as decorative planters. They are made from copper, which was mined in Congo's Katanga region. The shells were widely used as ammunition in World War I and World War II. They were decorated by soldiers and later collected and displayed as ornament in Belgian homes, where they were prized for the metal's beauty. Baloji problematizes this decorative reuse as a kind of collective forgetting of the shell casings' violent origins. While produced for war, these objects also represent decades of exploitation and natural-resource degradation.



Sammy Baloji, *Untitled*, 2018. 41 mortar shells and interior plants, dimensions variable. Installation view in *Notre monde brûle* at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2020. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris. Photo © Aurélien Mole.

Baloji reclaims these shell casings from the Congolese perspective, pairing them with tropical plants that are native to Katanga's rainforests. The plants may be recognizable, as they too have been widely distributed around the world and can be found in local garden centers.

- **Discuss: How does the use of living plants affect the meaning of this artwork?**

GALLERY D I

Sammy Baloji and Gloria Cabral with Cécile Fromont

Suspension (Debris of History, Matters of Memory)

Notice how *Suspension (Debris of History, Matters of Memory)* is situated within the galleries.

- How does the work, which takes the form of a cascading wall, interact with the Wex's architecture? Does it use the building for support? How does the design create a dialogue with the space's gridded structures, metal beams, and vast open window walls?
- Start to notice the installation's details. What materials do you think it is made of? How might it have been built? What histories might these materials and forms hold?

Architecture has been a subject of interest for Sammy Baloji for many years. In *Suspension*, he embarked on a research and design project with architect Gloria Cabral and art historian Cécile Fromont. This structure is a new Wexner Center **commission** that explores global histories of material extraction through patterns and forms inspired by Congolese textiles.

The interlocking components of this wall are made from sidewalk paving stones from the exterior walkways at the Wex. They are woven together to create an undulating form. The paver material was reclaimed after recent construction on the center, connecting this installation to the building structurally, materially, and historically. This sustainable construction and design method, including the sourcing of local architectural debris, is part of Cabral's architecture practice.



[Above] Sammy Baloji and Gloria Cabral with Cécile Fromont, *Debris of History, Matters of Memory*, 2023. Installation view in *The Laboratory of the Future* at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – Venice Biennale, Italy. Image courtesy of the architect. Photo: Federico Cairoli.

[Below] Gloria Cabral. Image courtesy of the architect.

After spending some time with this installation, explore the exhibition to find other references to textile design or tapestries. What dialogues do these works have when presented together?



Gloria Cabral (b. 1982, São Paulo, Brazil) is a Brazilian Paraguayan architect. Cabral moved to Asunción, Paraguay, at age six and later studied architecture at the Universidad Nacional de Asunción. Her practice centers on pertinence and belonging to place. She explores the relationship between structure, landscape, and community, combining adaptive reuse, specific constructive systems, and a deep sensitivity to the cultural and climatic contexts in which she intervenes. She was a longtime partner at Gabinete de Arquitectura, one of the most influential architecture firms in Latin America. She currently leads Studio 4.4 in Laguna, Brazil, from where she advances initiatives that articulate heritage, collective housing, and community participation.

GALLERY D I

Sammy Baloji and Cécile Fromont

Rethreaded Indies

▼ Why might an artist decide to remake a historical work of art?

Take some time to look closely at the large-scale tapestry titled *Rethreaded Indies* in this gallery. What is it made of? How might it have been manufactured? Where and when was this object created? Who made it, and why?

At first glance, *Rethreaded Indies* might appear to be from a different time than our own. This type of tapestry, with its highly realistic style and balanced composition, is more characteristic of Baroque Europe. Tapestries like this one were commissioned by wealthy patrons or the church to decorate grand spaces. Tapestry has a long history in Europe as a form of storytelling through images. Past or present events of great importance were woven into their fibers. They acted as a symbol of the sociopolitical power of the people who hired artists to make them.

What do you notice about the people, place, or event being depicted in *Rethreaded Indies*? Although this woven scene was created in 2025, it replicates the techniques and style of a famous Baroque-era series called the *Tenture des Indes*, or the *Indies Tapestry*. King Louis XIV of France commissioned the original tapestries. They depicted exoticized images of the New World to promote colonial rule in the Americas. When studying these **weavings**, Baloji and Fromont noted the depiction of Black people and the presence of Kongo Style textile designs, revealing connections to the African slave trade. While the original tapestries

othered Africans, *Rethreaded Indies* creates a contemporary version that recenters the African perspective. The image woven into Baloji's and Fromont's tapestry, based on a historical engraving by Olfert Dapper, shows King Garcia II of the **Kingdom of Kongo** receiving Dutch ambassadors in 1642. This was a moment when the two empires worked collaboratively in a diplomatic alliance.

- Turn the page to compare both the original *Indies Tapestry* and the engraving used as inspiration to *Rethreaded Indies*. What do you notice about the similarities and differences between them?



Cécile Fromont. Photo: Stephanie Mitchell, Harvard University.

Cécile Fromont (b. 1980, Martinique) is a French-born American art historian and educator. She specializes in the visual, material, and religious cultures of Africa, Latin America, and Europe during the early modern period (1500–1800). Fromont's influential scholarship examines the cross-cultural exchanges in the Portuguese-speaking Atlantic world, particularly related to the Kingdom of Kongo. She has authored several notable works, including *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (2014) and *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola* (2022). After earning her degrees from Sciences Po Paris and Harvard University, she held professorships at the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, and Yale University, and she is currently a professor at Harvard University.



[Above] Olfert Dapper, *Dutch Ambassadors at the Court of Garcia II, King of Kongo*, 1668. Engraving. From Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge*, p. 580. Image courtesy of New York Public Library / Science Source.

[Left] Gobelins Tapestry Manufactory, after designs by Albert Eckhout and Frans Post, *The Kongolesse Dignitary carried by Two Porters*, 1687–88. Wool and silk weft, 15 ft. 4 in. x 10 ft. 8 in. Courtesy of Robert Simon Fine Art, New York.



[Above and left] Sammy Baloji and Cécile Fromont, *Rethreaded Indies*, 2025 (overall and detail). Wool, cotton, and linen, 11 ft. 3 1/16 in. x 15 ft. 1 1/2 in. Installation views in *Shapeshifters: On Wounds, Wonders and Transformation* at Framer Framed, Amsterdam, 2025. Designed by Silvana de Bari. Produced by Textiellab, Tilburg. Supported by the Mondrian Prize. Images courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris. Photos © Ben Yau.

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

sweat variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born): where you go full, volume 5

September 20, 2026–January 24, 2027

Curated by Rebecca Lowery

The immersive installation by sweat variant *where you go full, volume 5* explores **embodied** cultural memory through intersections of movement, space, and design. The installation includes a series of abstract paneled projection screens displaying performance-based images. The imagery is accompanied by audio, which, along with movement and **scenic design**, is part of sweat variant's **multimedia** artistic practice.

Complementing this exhibition, sweat variant will premiere a new performance titled *adaku, part 2* at the center October 20–22, 2026. The performance, commissioned by the Wex's Department of Performing Arts, is the second in a trilogy about how one family in precolonial West Africa becomes entangled in the transatlantic slave trade.

As part of their commission, sweat variant will be participating in a **technical residency** at the center. They will be provided with the space, resources, and creative support to complete the lighting, sound, video, and set design for this new production. Earlier performances provided a place for the artists to develop their ideas for the **choreography** and narrative. Technical residencies are one way that institutions like the Wex can support artists' creative processes.

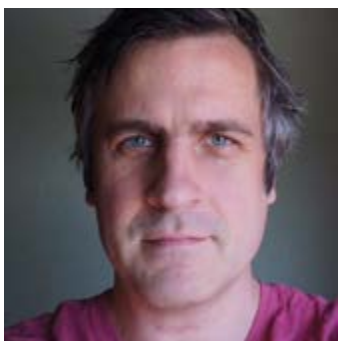
The name sweat variant describes the collaborative practice of Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born. They are partners in their work and their lives. Since 1996, they have been working at the intersection of dance, theater, and visual art to make challenging and rigorous work that reaffirms the true centrality of that which has been deemed marginal through the exploration of **Black interiority**.



[Top] sweat variant, *My tongue is a blade*. Performance at Hudson Hall, 2026. Pictured: Okwui Okpokwasili and Bria Bacon. Photo: Ava Pellor. [Below] Okwui Okpokwasili. Photo: Michael Avedon. [Bottom] Peter Born. Courtesy of the artist.



Okwui Okpokwasili (b. 1972, Bronx, New York) is a Brooklyn-based performer, actor, choreographer, and writer creating multidisciplinary performance pieces. The child of Nigerian immigrants, Okpokwasili was raised in the Bronx, and the histories of these places and the girls and women who inhabit them feature prominently in much of her work. Okpokwasili has earned numerous accolades, including a 2025 Art Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a 2018 MacArthur Fellowship.



Peter Born (b. 1972, Madison, Wisconsin) works as a director, composer, and designer of performance and installation. In collaboration with Okpokwasili, Born's work has been featured in numerous museums and biennales. His work as an art director and prop stylist has been featured in video and photo projects with *Vogue*, Bloomingdale's, Old Navy, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Born is a former New York public high school teacher, itinerant floral designer, corporate actor-facilitator, video maker, and furniture designer.

GALLERY D II

sweat variant

Movement and Meaning

- How does dance tell stories? What elements of the movement, sounds, costumes, lighting, or sets do you notice? What do you think they mean, and why?

Take some time to watch the performance practice—where performers are participating in an ongoing improvisation rather than following choreography—in this installation. What does it mean for you? As with any art form, a performance like this one will have different meanings for each person viewing it. Writer, choreographer, performer, and director Okwui Okpokwasili describes the *adaku* trilogy as a **speculative mythology**. In *adaku, part 2*, she imagines a near future where histories of colonial trauma and erasure emerge from the subconscious of a young woman. One source of trauma could be the story presented in *adaku, part 1: the road opens*, where the children of a West African village have suddenly disappeared. Cycles of ritual and embodied acts of remembering are explored in this work. The performance asks how we might imagine a future of repair. The immersive nature of this piece allows us to experience it both as a viewer and as a participant.

- Reflect on how interacting with the installation might help you understand this performance practice. How do you connect with it physically and emotionally?

This gesture of inviting viewers to engage with a performance differently, and even become part of it, creates a sense of community. It asks us to be active participants and feel a deeper sense of connection or create different meanings. Consider seeing the live performance in our Performance Space in October to experience this work in a new way!



sweat variant, *let slip, hold sway*, performance at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 2025. Pictured: Okwui Okpokwasili and Kris Lee. Photo: Maria Baranova.

PROJECT CREDITS

Directors: Okwui Okpokwasili
and Peter Born

Performers: Bria Bacon, Kris Lee, Okwui
Okpokwasili, Ny Opong, AJ Wilmore

Video Producer: Kearra Gopee

Cinematography: Oresti
Tsonopoulos and Alex Munro

Gaffer: Maria Cabra

SWEAT VARIANT TEAM

Company Producer: Annabel Heacock

Studio and Initiatives
Manager: Kearra Gopee

Development and Touring
Producer: Linsey Bostwick

Studio Apprentice: Sonia Xiang

Dialogues between

the Exhibitions on View

The artists Temitayo Ogunbiyi, Sammy Baloji, and sweat variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born) explore a shared history of African culture and diaspora through their unique artistic practices. Though Ogunbiyi and Okpokwasili are of Nigerian heritage and Baloji is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, they all consider global legacies of colonialism and the process of healing and repair. They look to the past to imagine the future. Shared themes include natural resources and labor. The artists' works consider the impacts of extractive practices on both nature and the human body. In turn, nature can be a source of well-being and grounding.

CONNECTING THEMES

Diaspora

How might objects or stories connect us to a particular location? How do places, or the memories of a particular place, connect us to each other?

How does your nationality, background, or heritage inform your understanding of the world? How do you relate to cultures that are different from your own?

How is cultural memory formed? How do we care for cultural memory?

Legacies of Colonialism

Reflect on your understanding of colonialism. What were you taught in school? Where might you go to find more information?

Look back at the last 100 years. How do global histories of colonialism structure society today?

How do the harms of the past impact us in the present?

How might art support healing? How can art be a practice of **decolonization**?

Resources, Labor, and Extraction

What natural resources, such as plants, minerals, sunlight, or water, do these artists work with? How do the histories of these resources create meaning?

How does the theme of labor resonate across the artists' work? Is it physical, physiological, or spiritual?

Consider the impacts of extraction. What or who is harmed in the process of removing materials, resources, or knowledge from their places of origin?



[Left] Temitayo Ogunbiyi, *You will find mothering at every turn (Sweet Mother)*, 2022–25 (detail). Swarovski crystals and copper alloy, dimensions variable. Installation view of *Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will wonder if we would have been friends* at The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York, 2025. Courtesy of the artist. © Temitayo Ogunbiyi / The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum / ARS. Photo: Chanel Matsunami Govreau.

[Right] Sammy Baloji, *Goods Trades Roots*, 2020. Weaving loom in afzelia wood and weaving in copper acrylic and cotton yarns, 76 3/4 x 63 3/4 x 4 3/4 in. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris. Photo © Martin Argyroglou.

- As you explore the exhibitions, reflect on how these shared themes unfold across the works on view.



sweat variant, *let slip, hold sway*, performance at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 2025. Pictured: Okwui Okpokwasili and Kris Lee. Photo: Maria Baranova.

GUIDED ACTIVITY

Make a Pin Loom!

From the 11th century Romanesque *Bayeux Tapestry*, which documents the Norman Conquest of England, to contemporary jacquard weavings made on digital **looms**, tapestry is a customary way to document events, people, places, and sentiments. Sammy Baloji's interest in tapestry is related to the craft's potential to recontextualize national histories. This activity invites you to construct a simple wooden pin loom. A frame loom of this size can be used to make small hand towels, washcloths, pot holders, and tapestries. Try using yarn, ribbon, electrical wire, **plarn**, or even thin strips of paper as the vertical **warp** and horizontal **weft** threads.



Loom with yarn secured to the pins to create the vertical warp threads and a variety of yarns used to create a horizontal weft thread pattern. All loom photos: Akeylah Wellington.

Step 1

Gather your materials

To make your loom, you will need:

Frame Components

- Four 8-in. long 1x2-in. poplar boards*
- Eight 1¼ in. nails
- Fifty 18-gauge brad nails

Tools

- Ruler
- Wood glue
- Hammer

Weaving Supplies

- Fiber of your choice
- Needle or **shuttle** of your choice

*Don't have any boards? Use a second-hand picture frame instead and follow steps 6 and 7 of these instructions.



1

Step 2

Mark where the 1¼ inch nails go to secure the frame

Gather two of the 8-inch lengths of wood. On one of the wider faces of each piece, draw a thin vertical line about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch from both ends using a pencil. Mark two small dots about an inch apart along the line.



2

Step 3

Dry fit the frame

Arrange all wood pieces into a rectangle. Notice the horizontal boards are placed above and below the vertical boards. This allows for a stronger joint.



Step 4

Assemble the frame

Apply a thin layer of wood glue to the end grain of one end of the two 8-inch vertical boards. Abut one of the horizontal boards against the glue-coated ends to create right angles. Working on one corner at a time, press the boards together firmly and drive 1¼ inch nails into the holes marked on the horizontal boards in step 2 to join the frame together. Repeat the process for the other side to complete the frame.



Step 5

Clean the joints

Do you notice any wood glue squeezing out of the corner joints? Use a wet cloth, sponge, or paper towel to wipe away any excess glue while it is still wet.



Step 6

Mark where the brad-nail loom pins will go

For this loom design, the loom pins are essential for aligning the warp fiber correctly. Use a pencil to draw a straight line bisecting each horizontal length. Along each line, make small dots $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart.



Step 7

Drive in the pins

With a hammer, drive a nail halfway into your frame at each marked dot. Tap lightly to set the nail into the wood. Once it is set, swing your arm more and allow the weight of the hammer to drive the nail halfway in. Repeat the process at each dot.



Step 8

Use it!

Tie your fiber to a corner nail and run it vertically from top to bottom around each loom pin to create a continuous warp. Attach a tapestry needle or shuttle to another length of fiber. Working from side to side, weave your needle or shuttle in between every other thread.



GLOSSARY

abstract: In art, nonrepresentational or nonfigurative works that do not seek to replicate objects from life. Abstraction emphasizes art's formal qualities—line, color, shape, and texture—to create meaning.

architecture: The practice of designing and constructing the built environment or, more broadly, the structure of an object.

Black interiority: A field in Black studies focused on the vast and complex inner lives of Black individuals. This self-determined way of constructing Black selfhood seeks to move beyond the social and systemic confines of race and racism.

choreography: A series of movements or gestures that are arranged to create a performance. Choreography can be preplanned and repeated or it can be improvised in the moment.

colonialism: The process of foreigners settling or taking control of a territory or people to use for their own purposes. Colonization often involves the use of force against the people native to the area to gain and keep control.

commission: In art, the act of paying an artist to create a new work, often for a specific location, purpose, or owner. Once complete, the new work itself can also be called a commission.

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

concept: The idea behind or meaning of an artwork

decolonization: The process of dismantling colonial control of a region or people. This can involve liberating occupied territories and peoples or the healing and recovery of colonized peoples to establish their own self-determination.

decorative arts: Everyday or functional objects that are considered both for their appearance and ornamentation as well as their utility. Craftmanship and choice of quality materials are important considerations. Disciplines include woodworking, ceramics, textiles, glass, and metalworking, among others.

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

embodied: To be felt or understood through the act of movement or the awareness of the physicality, feeling, or sensations of one's body. Practices of embodiment are often used in mindfulness or to address histories of trauma.

extraction: To take something, often by force, from its place or people of origin. The process can refer to the removal of physical resources (such as natural fuels, minerals, or plants) or to the appropriation of cultural knowledge or heritage.

found object: In art, any object that is chosen to be incorporated into an artwork in its original form. These objects are found rather than made.

installation: A designed construction, usually within a specific indoor or outdoor space, intended to be considered as art. Installations can feature a single medium or many different types of art.

Kingdom of Kongo: A former kingdom (1390–1914) in Central Africa. It was located in the current-day region of northern Angola, western Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, and southern Gabon. The kingdom's culture was highly sophisticated, with a rich history of global trade, arts and textile production, and strong oral traditions. Diplomatic relations with Portugal informed their adoption of Catholicism, which was blended with indigenous spirituality. Portugal increasingly extracted Kongo's mineral resources and enslaved its people in the transatlantic slave trade. It eventually colonized the region and abolished the Kingdom of Kongo in 1914.

loom: A tool that is used to weave textiles. A loom holds vertically oriented threads under tension so horizontally oriented threads can be woven around them. The form of a loom ranges from a simple frame to a more complex machine, depending on the textile it is designed to make.

media: In art, media refers to a type of art material (also called an artistic medium) or art-making technique. Common media in visual art include pencil, ink, marker, crayon, paint, clay, fiber, stone, metal, film, video, and found or natural materials.

modernism: A movement that refers to sociocultural change in response to industrialization, urbanization, and global military conflicts that occurred in the mid- to late-1800s through the mid-1900s. In art and design, these greater societal shifts informed the evolution of experimental, abstract, materials-focused, and expressive artforms in place of traditional representational styles.

multidisciplinary: Belonging to more than one discipline or practice. In art, multidisciplinary typically refers to an artist, artistic style, practice, or space that engages with more than one type of art. These include visual art (painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.); performance; music; design; or film, among others. Multidisciplinary artists may also work in other fields, such as science, technology, and the humanities.

ornament: A decorative element, as opposed to a functional one, intended to grab attention or beautify an object. Ornament is often visually interesting or alluring.

plarn: Plastic yarn, usually made from plastic bags cut into strips and knotted together.

practice: In art, practice refers to an artist's ongoing body of work, including their **concepts** and ideas, methods, personal style, or preferred materials used for artmaking.

scale: How large or small an object is in relation to other objects around it.

scenic design/set design: Built environments for stage, theater, or television, including architectural spaces, furniture and furnishings, props, scenery, and lighting. These elements can establish a production's feel, mood, location, or time period.

sculpture: A three-dimensional art object.

shuttle: In weaving, this refers to a slim wooden, plastic, or metal tool used to wind weft fiber. Using a shuttle is a convenient way to pass the weft fiber between warp fibers and minimizes tangling between passes.

speculative mythology: A form of mythology—storytelling with humanistic or moral themes—that imagines fictitious worlds or alternate realities to offer new opportunities for imagining the future.

Style Kongo: A Belgian Art Nouveau design and architectural style dating to the Brussels International Exposition of 1897 (a world's fair). It is an imperial **modern** style inspired by Congolese culture after the colonization of the Kingdom of Kongo. Style Kongo features organic forms and Congolese textile designs, wood carving, and material resources, for example tropical afzelia hardwoods.

tapestry: A decorative textile woven to commemorate an event, people, places, and feelings. More intricate tapestries may depict a complex combination of these categories.

technical residency: In the arts, this is a temporary, work-focused opportunity that provides an artist or producer with resources, support, and expertise to develop new skills or projects. In theater, dance, or music, this might include a stipend and access to stages, lighting, equipment, and a trained production crew.

textile: A material made of interlaced fibers. The fibers can be natural or synthetic. There are numerous types of textiles including thread, yarn, and different types of fabric. Textiles can be woven, knitted, crocheted, sewn, spun, or chemically or mechanically processed.

warp: In woven fabric, this refers to the series of vertical fibers that determine the length of a textile.

weaving: The process of interlacing fiber (thread, yarn, etc.) into a pattern, producing textiles. Weaving can be done by hand, with the assistance of tools like looms and needles, or a combination of the two approaches. Weaving can also refer to the finished textile.

weft: In woven fabric, this term is used to refer to the series of horizontal fibers that determine the width of a textile.

world's fair: An annual international exhibition hosted by cities around the world. They were particularly popular in the early 20th century but continue today in the form of World Expos. World's fairs showcase the latest achievements in art and culture and feature elaborate temporary pavilions dedicated to specific countries.

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CURATORS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Julieta González, head of the Department of Visual Arts at the Wexner Center and curator-at-large at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, works at the intersection of anthropology, cybernetics, architecture, design, and the visual arts. She specializes in decolonial aesthetics in Latin America and the Global South. Her previous roles include chief curator at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. She also held curatorial roles at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; Tate Modern, London; and the Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, Venezuela. González holds an MA in cultural studies from Goldsmiths, University of London; was a curatorial fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program; and previously studied architecture.

Jennifer Lange is the director of the Wexner Center's Film/Video Studio, which has 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*, as well as 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.

Rebecca Lowery is curator of exhibitions at the Wexner Center. She was formerly associate curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles. Lowery began her career in New York, where she held curatorial positions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) and Grey Art Gallery at New York University, held research positions at The Met and The Museum of Modern Art, and taught at New York University. Lowery has written essays and texts for many exhibition catalogues and scholarly publications. She holds a PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University.

RELATED EVENTS

FALL EXHIBITIONS OPENING CELEBRATION

Fri, Sep 18 | 4–8 PM

FILM

Sun, Sep 20 | 1 PM

DOCUMENTARY

The Tree of Authenticity
(Sammy Baloji, 2025)

PERFORMING ARTS

DANCE

Tue–Thu, Oct 20–22 | 7 PM

sweat variant
adaku, part 2

MUSIC

Sun, Nov 22 | 3 PM

Counterpoints: Art-
Inspired Performance

TALKS & MORE

LAMBERT FAMILY LECTURE

Thu, Oct 1 | 6 PM

Cécile Fromont

WORKSHOPS

Thursdays, Sep 24, Oct 8, Nov 5 | 6–8 PM

Sketch Series

Sundays, Oct 4–Nov 8 | 1 PM

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TOURS

Sun, Oct 11 | 1 PM

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The Wexner Center for the Arts' presentations of Léonard Pongo's and Frank Mukunday's and Tétshim's films are organized by Film/Video Studio Director Jennifer Lange. Temitayo Ogunbiyi's exhibition was organized by The Arts Club of Chicago. Its presentation at the Wexner Center includes elements of an additional exhibition organized by The Noguchi Museum and is coordinated by Curator of Exhibitions Rebecca Lowery. Sammy Baloji's presentation is organized by the Wexner Center and curated by Head of Visual Arts Julieta González. The presentation is part of the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial: *The Long View*. The exhibition of sweat variant's work is organized by the Wexner Center and curated by Rebecca Lowery. The installation is co-commissioned by the Wexner Center and the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston.

ISBN: 978-1-881390-85-5 [print]

ISBN: 978-1-881390-86-2 [digital]

Library of Congress Control Number: 2026940988

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[Cover] Sammy Baloji, *Aequare. The Future that never was*, 2023 (film still). Video, color, sound; 21:04 mins. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris.

[Back cover] Temitayo Ogunbiyi, *You will carry the fruits of your past into present perspectives*, 2025. Varnished Japanese ink and acrylic on found fabric, 36 x 54 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist and The Arts Club of Chicago.

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



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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 FSC- and SFI-certified, 10-percent postconsumer recycled content paper. The text is set in Fedra Sans and Fedra Serif, designed by Peter Bilak and issued by Typotheque.



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