



The Year in Black Art: January 2015

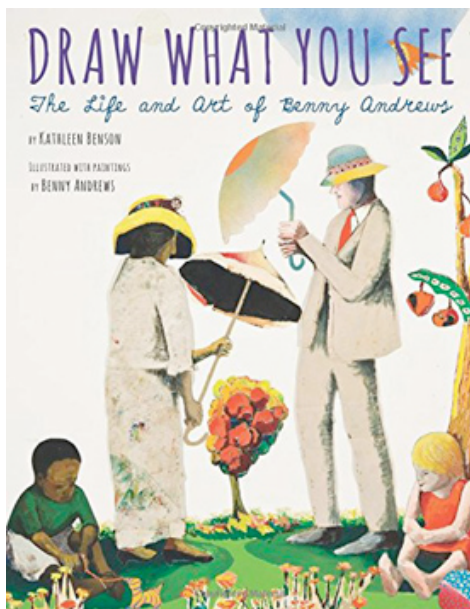
by [Victoria L. Valentine](#) on Dec 13, 2015 • 11:12 am

CULTURE TYPE IS REVIEWING [The Year in Black Art 2015](#) in monthly installments over the coming days. The report began with a look at [The Newsmakers](#), seven artists and curators who continue to advance their practices and their projects with fresh approaches and new ideas—efforts that are recognized and often garner significant news coverage.

The review continues with the year's most significant moments, major events such as the opening of Okwui Enwezor's Venice Biennale in May and Art Basel Miami Beach in December, and important exhibitions including "Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and "Processions: The Art of Norman Lewis" at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. A plethora of art news, new books, appointments, awards and honors, acquisitions, and other developments in African American art and throughout the diaspora, is also highlighted. First up, January.

ACQUISITION | In early January, the Brooklyn Museum [announces the acquisition](#) of its first **Beauford Delaney** painting, "[Untitled \(Fang, Crow, and Fruit\)](#)," a 1945 oil on canvas still life (shown above), purchased from Michael Rosenfeld Gallery with money from the museum's African American Purchase Fund.

According to the [New York Times](#), the painting's original owner, Emanuel Redfield, was a celebrated civil liberties lawyer and counsel to the New York chapter of the Artists Equity Association. "Delaney probably gave the painting to Redfield for services rendered," Teresa A. Carbone, curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum, told the Times.



BOOK > | "[Draw What You See: The Life and Art of Benny Andrews](#)" a children's book about **Benny Andrews**, the rural Georgia-born artist who spent his career in New York painting and standing up for the rights of artists of color, is published on Jan. 6.

AWARD/HONOR | [Foundation for Contemporary Arts](#) announces 2015 [Grants to Artists](#) wards on Jan. 6, 14 unrestricted grants of \$35,000. Recipients in visual art include **Xaviera Simmons** and **David Hartt**.

MEDIA | [BOMB Magazine](#) catches up with Brooklyn-based **Gary Simmons** to talk about his work on view in the Treme, as a part of Prospect.3. In a Q&A with Jody Bass published online Jan. 7, he discusses the project and working in New Orleans for the first time.

AWARD/HONOR | 2015 Creative Capital Artists are [announced](#) on Jan. 7 providing funds for 50 projects. Recipients include **Shola Lynch** (Moving Image awardee), and visual artists **Titus Kaphar**, **Lorraine O'Grady** and **Abigail DeVille**.

REPRESENTATION | Sean Kelly Gallery in New York [announces its representation](#) of **Hugo McCloud** on Jan. 7 in advance of "[Palindrome](#)," the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery (Jan. 30-March 14, 2015). McCloud, who worked

on construction sites for more than a dozen years, transitioned from design to visual art and now utilizes the industrial materials, tools and equipment with which he is so familiar, in combination with traditional pigment and woodblock printing techniques, to create his works.

EXHIBITION | “Represent: 200 Years of African American Art” opens at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on Jan. 10, presenting the breadth and depth of the museum’s collection of African American art assembled over the past century, beginning with its 1899 purchase of Henry O. Tanner’s “The Annunciation” and coinciding with the exhibition’s catalog. EXHIBITION | In his first exhibition since joining Jack Shainman Gallery in 2014, **Titus Kaphar**’s work is on view in both Chelsea spaces beginning Jan. 15. “Drawing the Blinds” features new works and “Asphalt and Chalk” expands on the Jerome Project, concurrently installed at the Studio Museum.

NEWS | Artnet News reports on Jan. 16 that Andres Serrano is considering his legal options with AP regarding copyright theft of his controversial work “Piss Christ.”



EXHIBITION | Drawing attention to the personal and artistic connections of two important African American women artists, “The Art of Elizabeth Catlett: Selections from the Collection of Samella Lewis” at Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco opens on Jan. 16. The presentation features nearly 40 works drawn from the personal collection of **Samella Lewis**. Sculptures and prints by **Elizabeth Catlett** are presented in context with a handful of works by Lewis and Francisco Mora, Catlett’s husband. Catlett taught Lewis in the 1940s and the two artists became lifelong friends.

ELIZABETH CATLETT, “Roots,” 1981 (mixed media). | Art © Catlett Mora Family Trust/Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.

EXHIBITION | Also opening this month is a pair of exhibitions at the Hampton University Museum marking **Elizabeth Catlett**’s centennial. “Elizabeth Catlett: A Celebration of 100 Years” and “Elizabeth Catlett and the Hampton Art Tradition” are on view Jan. 30-Nov. 14, 2015. The former features university’s impressive and extensive collection of Catlett works on paper, including 25 never shown at Hampton. The latter presentation includes works by artists **Charles White, John Biggers, Samella Lewis, Persis Jennings** and **Annabelle Baker**.

MEDIA | On Jan. 17 in The New York Times, **Peggy Cooper Cafritz**, a Washington, D.C. patron of the arts reflects on rebuilding her collection of African and African American art after a major loss due to fire five years ago. Later in the year, the philanthropist and co-founder of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts discusses the subject with The Washington Post.

EXHIBITION | “Gordon Parks: Back to Fort Scott” opens on Jan. 17 at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. **Gordon Parks** returned to his Kansas hometown in 1950 to take the photographs featured in this exhibition, which were slated to appear in Life magazine in April 1951. The photos were never published and “this exhibition represents a rarely seen view of everyday lives of African American citizens, years before the Civil Rights movement began in earnest” and includes a coinciding catalog.

EVENT | The inaugural Black Comix Art Festival at Yerba Buena Gardens is held Jan. 18-19. Sponsored by the Northern California Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Foundation, the theme for the gathering



featuring panel discussions, films, a vendors expo and children's events, is the "March to Freedom." The 2016 festival is Jan. 17-18 in San Francisco.

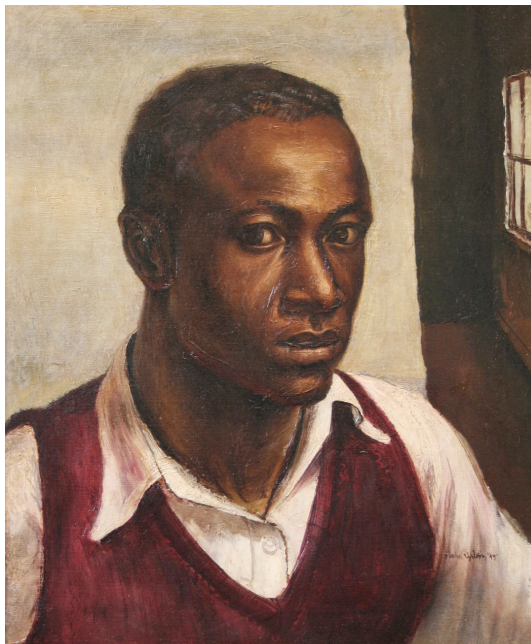
The second edition of the Black Comix Festival is Jan. 17-18 in San Francisco.



NEWS | Jan. 19: Commissioned by Google, Boston-based painter and collage artist **Ekua Holmes** creates daily doodle graphic commemorating the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday.

BOOK | "Clementine Hunter: American Folk Artist." about **Clementine Hunter**, the celebrated self-taught Louisiana artist, is published on Jan. 20, about one month after "Clementine Hunter: A Sketchbook" appears.

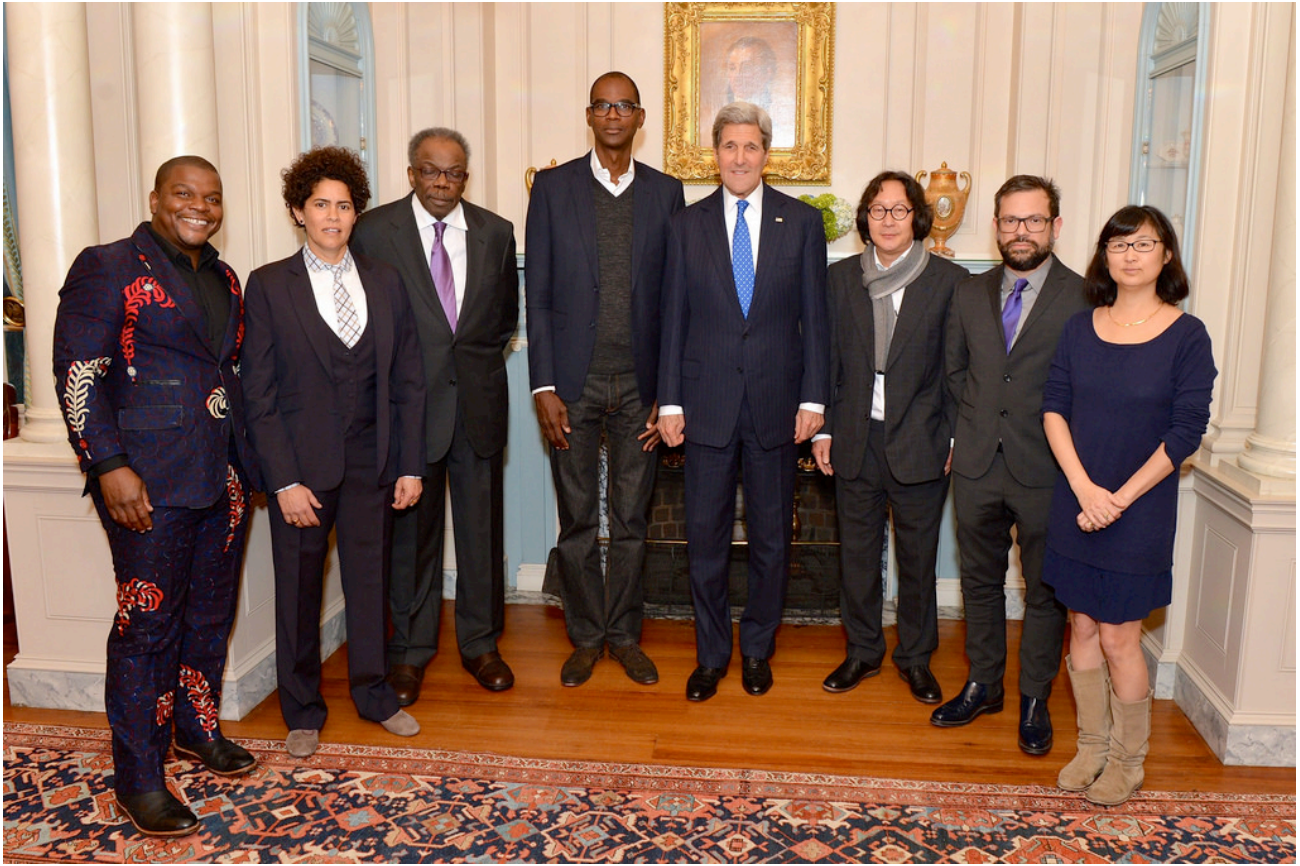
APPOINTMENT | New York Mayor Bill de Blasio nominates **Hank Willis Thomas** to the city's Public Design Commission on Jan. 21. PDC reviews permanent works of art, architecture and landscape architecture proposed on or over City-owned property, and acts as caretaker and curator of the City's public art collection.



JOHN WILSON, "Self Portrait," 1943 (oil on canvas). | Courtesy of Martha Richardson Fine Art, Boston

LIVES | Printmaker and sculptor **John Wilson**, 92, dies on Jan. 22. Born in Roxbury, Mass., he produced work that explored politics and social justice in his Brookline studio, including a bust of Martin Luther King Jr. installed in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol and the sketches for the commission. "Essentially, he felt that his main objective as an artist was to deliver a message to people about black dignity, about racial justice, about poor people trying to get a better deal in life," his wife Julie Wilson told the Boston Globe. Next year, "John Wilson: Boston's Native Son," opens in the St. Botolph Club in Boston on Feb. 18.

AWARD/HONOR | Theaster Gates accepts the Artes Mundi 6, described as the UK's leading prize for international contemporary art, on Jan. 22 in Cardiff, Wales and announces he will split the prize money (40,000 pounds, about \$60,000) among fellow artists shortlisted for the honor. Gates was recognized for an installation titled "A Complicated Relationship between Heaven and Earth, or When We Believe."



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (center) with recipients of the second U.S. Department of State-Medal of Arts, from left Kehinde Wiley, Julie Mehretu, Sam Gilliam, Mark Bradford, Xu Bing, Pedro Reyes and Maya Lin, before ceremony at Department of State in Washington, D.C., on January 21, 2015. | Courtesy U.S. State Department



AWARD/HONOR | U.S. State Department honors **Mark Bradford, Sam Gilliam, Julie Mehretu and Kehinde Wiley**, among others, with Medal of Arts awards presented by Secretary of State John Kerry on Jan. 21. Gilliam receives the first-ever Medal of Arts Lifetime Achievement Award.

NEWS | Chicago Tribune reports on Jan. 23 that Johnson Publishing, the Chicago-based publisher of Ebony magazine, is selling its historic photography archive which documents 70 years of the African American experience.

BOOK > | Edited by **Lowery Stokes Sims**, “Common Wealth: Art by African Americans in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston” (published Jan. 27) delves into the museum’s collection to explore the story of African Americans in the visual arts from enslaved craftspersons, to painters, printmakers and sculptors.

AWARD/HONOR | 2015 Joyce Awards are announced on Jan. 27, supporting “four collaborations between artists of color and leading arts and cultural organizations in the Great Lakes region,” including partnerships between **Sanford Biggers** and the Museum of

Contemporary Art of Detroit and **Nari Ward** and Detroit’s Powerhouse Productions.

EXHIBITION | Featuring more than 30 projects, [“David Adjaye: Form, Heft, and Material”](#) opens Jan. 30 at Haus der Kunst in Munich. The presentation includes the premiere of “David Adjaye: Collaborations,” a documentary film by Oliver Hardt that presents a portrait of the architect through the eyes of people with whom he has worked. The exhibition is the most extensive survey of **David Adjaye**’s career (and travels to the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), Sept. 19).

EXHIBITION | [“Tears of a Tree,”](#) **Mark Bradford**’s first major exhibition in Asia opens Jan. 31 at Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai, China and includes a coinciding [catalog](#). **CT**

MEDIA | In the January/February 2015 edition of Frieze magazine, co-editor Jennifer Higgie asks eight artists, including London-based **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye** and Los Angeles-based **Henry Taylor**, why they paint and what it means to them. Both artists explain why they prefer to be called “figurative” painters and how politics factors in their work: [READ MORE](#)

TOP IMAGE: BEAUFORD DELANEY (1901-1979), “Untitled (Fang, Crow and Fruit),” 1945 (oil on canvas). | Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Museum Fund for African American Art in honor of Arnold Lehman, A. Augustus Healy Fund and Ella C. Woodward Memorial Fund, 2014.73. © Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esq., Court Appointed Administrator