

**“QUESTIONING AESTHETICS SYMPOSIUM: BLACK AESTHETICS”**  
HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE  
March 31-April 1, 2017

**PROGRAM & SPEAKER BIOS**

**Friday, March 31, 2017**

9:00 AM — Introductions:

**Monique Roelofs** (Philosophy, Hampshire College)

**Michael Kelly** (Philosophy, UNC Charlotte & Transdisciplinary Aesthetics Foundation)

9:30 AM—11:30 AM

*Moderator:* **Daniel Kojo Schrade** (Art, Hampshire College)

*Speakers:*

**Amy Abugo Ongiri** (Film Studies, Lawrence College):

“Seeing Black: Visual Culture and the Black Arts Movement”

**GerShun Avilez** (English & Comparative Literature, UNC Chapel Hill):

“Queerness and the Black Radical Imaginary”

**Jeremy Matthew Glick** (English, Hunter College, CUNY):

“Black Aesthetics: Questions on Method”

11:45 AM — 1:45 PM

*Moderator:* **Gabriel Arboleda** (Architecture, Hampshire College)

*Speakers:*

**Mabel O. Wilson** (Architecture, Columbia University):

“Notes of Virginia Statehouse: Race and Nation in Jefferson’s America”

**Caitlin Cherry** (Artist, Brooklyn):

“Black Military Aesthetics”

**Paul C. Taylor** (Philosophy & African-American Studies, Penn State):

“‘Kindness and Good Usage’: Ambivalence, Africanism, and the Dialectics of Appropriation”

1:45 PM—3:15 PM – Lunch

3:30 PM — 5:45 PM

*Moderator:* **Jennifer Bajorek** (Comparative Literature, Hampshire College)

*Speakers:*

**Simone White** (Literary Studies, The New School (Lang) & The Poetry Project):

“Black/Poetry/Now”

**Phillip Brian Harper** (English & Social and Cultural Analysis, NYU):

“Knowing It When We See It: On Blackness and Anti-Representational Aesthetics”

**Kevin Quashie** (Africana Studies, Smith College):

“Aesthetics in Terrible Times”

## **Saturday, April 1, 2017**

9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

*Moderator:* **Albert Mosley** (Philosophy, Smith College)

*Speakers:*

**Daphne Lamothe** (Africana Studies, Smith College):

"Black Aesthetics and the Event of the Self"

**James Haile III** (Philosophy, University of Rhode Island):

"Picturing Blackness"

**Meleko Mokgosi** (Art, New York University):

"Black Skin, Black Paint"

11:45 AM – 1:45 PM

*Moderator:* **Jason Robinson** (Music, Amherst College)

*Speakers:*

**Mickaella Perina** (Philosophy, University of Massachusetts, Boston):

"Questioning Aimé Césaire's Plays: Aesthetics of Difference, Aesthetics of Resistance and Relationality"

**Deborah Goffe** (Dance, Hampshire College):

"See Me Here: Asserting Identity as Choreographic Strategy"

**Anthony Cokes** (Modern Culture and Music, Brown University):

"pause (2004) a double reframing of text by james snead vs. notes on "pause: coda (hidden track - 2004)"

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM -- Lunch

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Roundtable

*Moderators:* **Michael Kelly & Monique Roelofs**

*Speakers:* **All Symposium Participants**

## SPEAKER BIOS

**GerShun Avilez** is an Associate Professor of English & Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is also the Director of the UNC Program in Sexuality Studies. Avilez is a cultural studies scholar who specializes in African American literature and visual culture, and much of his scholarship explores how questions of gender and sexuality inform artistic production. He is the author of *Radical Aesthetics & Modern Black Nationalism* (2016). His essays appear in critical journals, such as *African American Review*, *Callaloo*, and *Obsidian*, as well as in the edited volumes *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature* and *The Psychic Legacies of Slavery*. He is at work on a new project on Black gay and lesbian art and activism.

**Caitlin Cherry** was born 1987 in Chicago, IL and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. In a hybrid practice that combines painting, sculpture, and installation with reference to history and present-day politics, she connects diverse categories and methods. Caitlin begins each painting by making a small three-dimensional model, which serves as a sketch that she translates into canvas. Her installations involve the institutions in which they are shown to playfully suggest art's ability to potentially critique and inflict damage on the bastions of cultural authority. Caitlin received her MFA from Columbia University in 2012 and graduated with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010. Caitlin had her debut solo exhibition in 2013 titled "Hero Safe" at the Brooklyn Museum. She has participated in group exhibitions including "Fore," 2012, Studio Museum in Harlem; "This is What Sculpture Looks Like," 2014, Postmasters Gallery; "Banksy's Dismaland Bemusement Park," 2015, in the UK; and "Object[ed]: Shaping Sculpture in Contemporary Art," 2016, UMOCA in Utah.

**Anthony Cokes** makes video and installation projects that reframe appropriated texts. The media works reflect upon capitalism, subjectivity, knowledge, and pleasure. Sound always functions in his practice as a crucial, intertextual element, complicating minimal visuals. His works have been exhibited internationally at venues including Centre Georges Pompidou, Whitney Museum, Museum of Modern Art (NYC), SF MOMA, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, and La Cinémathèque Française. Cokes has received fellowships from The Guggenheim Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Getty Research Institute. He resides in Providence, RI, where he is a Professor in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University.

**Jeremy Matthew Glick** is an Associate Professor of African Diaspora literature and modern drama. He is currently working on long-form essays on Frantz Fanon, Sam Greenlee's Black Power Detective Fiction, and Century-Methodological Approaches to African American Literature. His second book project is entitled "Coriolanus Against Liberalism/ Coriolanus & Pan-Africanist Loss." He is also the Hunter College Chapter Chair of the PSC-CUNY Union. He has recently received the Nicolas Guillen Philosophical Literature Prize from the Caribbean Philosophical Association for his 2016 book, *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution*.

**Deborah Goffe** is a performer, dance maker, dance educator, video artist, and performance curator. She is an Assistant Professor of Modern/Contemporary Dance at Hampshire College, and Founder/Director of Scapegoat Garden, a Connecticut-based collaborative dance theater company. A graduate of the University of the Arts (BFA, Modern Dance) and

California Institute of the Arts (MFA, Dance Performance and Choreography), Deborah also earned a Professional Certificate from Wesleyan University's Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance. Her work has centered on body-based performance making and curatorial practice as a way to nurture the health and vitality of local communities.

**James Haile III** is currently a Diversity Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at The University of Rhode Island, where he will be an Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Fall. Professor Haile received his MA from The University of Memphis and his PhD from Duquesne University. His areas of specialization are Philosophy and Literature (in particular, African American Literature and Poetics), African American Philosophy, and Philosophy of Art (or Philosophical Aesthetics). His publications include an edited collection, *Philosophical Meditations on Richard Wright* (Lexington Press, 2012 [2014]), which is now in its second edition (paperback). He is currently working on another edited collection on James Baldwin, *Thinking through Baldwin*, and a single authored book, *Refiguring the Black Male Literary Canon 1850 to Present* for Northwestern University Press. In addition to his published works, he also runs a speaker series, *Black Aesthetics as Politics*, now in its fourth year.

**Phillip Brian Harper** is Remarque Professor of Literature, Departments of Social and Cultural Analysis, English, New York University. A scholar of modern and contemporary U.S. literature and culture, of African-American expressive culture, and of gender and sexuality, Phil Harper is the author of numerous publications in these fields and the intersections thereof, most recently, *Abstractionist Aesthetics: Artistic Form and Social Critique in African American Culture* (NYU Press, 2015).

**Michael Kelly**, Professor of Philosophy at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford University Press, 2014, 2nd edition); author of *A Hunger for Aesthetics: Enacting the Demands of Art* (Columbia University Press, 2012; paperback 2016) and *Iconoclasm in Aesthetics* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Founder & President, Transdisciplinary Aesthetics Foundation: <https://transaestheticsfoundation.org/>.

**Daphne Lamothe** is Associate Professor in Smith College's Department of Africana Studies. She is currently working on a book, *Blackness, Being and Event*, which situates urban space and migratory communities as sites that rupture the facticity of black nonbeing to enable reckonings with experiences of black selfhood. She has published articles on African-American and immigrant Caribbean texts that focus on questions of spatiality and sociality, cultural memory and belonging, and symbolic geographies within the Black Atlantic imagination. Her first book, *Inventing the New Negro: Narrative, Culture and Ethnography*, a study of the ethnographic imagination in the development of New Negro identity, was published in 2008 by University of Pennsylvania Press. She teaches courses like the Harlem Renaissance, Migration Stories in African-American Literature, Literatures of the African Diaspora, and Ruptures in Time: Blackness and the City.

**Meleko Mokgosi** (born in Francistown, Botswana) works across history painting, cinematic tropes, psychoanalysis, and post-colonial theory to create large-scale project-based installations. His work interrogates narrative tropes and the fundamental models for the inscription and transmission of history along side established European notions of representation in order to address questions of nationhood, anti-colonial sentiments, and the

perception of historicized events. His artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including the Botswana National Gallery, The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Culture Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art.

**Amy Abugo Ongiri** is Associate Professor and the Jill Beck Director of Film Studies at Lawrence University. Her book, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*, explores the cultural politics of the Black Power movement, particularly the Black Arts movement search to define a "Black Aesthetic." Her research interests include Film and Media Studies, Africana Literature and Culture, Cultural Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her scholarly work has been published in *College Literature*, *Journal of African American History*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Camera Obscura*, *Postmodern Culture*, *Black Filmmaker* and *Nka: The Journal of Contemporary African Art*. She has also published creative non-fiction in *Mutha Magazine*, *Black Girl Dangerous*, *Glitterwolf*, *Black Lesbian Love Lab*, and *The Rad Families Anthology*. She and her partner are proud foster parents.

**Mickaella Perina** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Her areas of expertise include social and political philosophy, legal philosophy, philosophy of race, contemporary French philosophy, and Caribbean Philosophy. She is the author of *Citoyenneté et Sujétion aux Antilles Francophones [Citizenship and Subjection in the Francophone Antilles]* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997. Her main research interests are: 1) liberal democracy theory and slavery, 2) race, identity, and political membership/citizenship, and 3) transnationalism and human rights. She is the author of numerous articles including "Encountering the Other: Aesthetics, Race and Relationality," *Contemporary Aesthetics* (special issue on aesthetics and race, Monique Roelofs, ed. (2009)). She is a co-organizer of the California Roundtable on Philosophy and Race.

**Kevin Quashie** is a professor in the department of Africana Studies at Smith College, where he teaches cultural studies and theory. He is the author or editor of three books, most recently *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*.

**Monique Roelofs** is Professor of Philosophy at Hampshire College. Her book *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* (2014) grounds the notion of the aesthetic in webs of relationality, modes of address, and constellations of promises and threats. The book offers a framework for theorizing the connections of the aesthetic with intersecting modalities of race, class, gender, and coloniality, among other forms of difference. She is currently completing a new monograph, "Arts of Address: How We Relate to Language, People, Things, and Places." With Norman S. Holland, she is coauthoring the book "Streetwalkers, Waifs, and Malefactors: Aesthetics and Temporality in Latin America."

**Paul C. Taylor** is an associate professor of philosophy and African American Studies at Pennsylvania State University, where he also serves as associate dean for undergraduate studies. He received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Morehouse College, a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Rutgers University. He has written three books, including *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics* and *On Obama*, and he has provided commentary on race and politics for newspapers and radio shows on four

continents.

**Simone White** is the author of *Of Being Dispersed* (Futurepoem Books), *Unrest* (Ugly Duckling Presse), *House Envy of All the World* (Factory School), and the collaborative poem/painting chapbook *Dolly*, with Kim Thomas (Q Avenue Press). *Dear Angel of Death*, a book of criticism and poems, will be published by Ugly Duckling Presse in 2017. She is Program Director at The Poetry Project and Visiting Assistant Professor of Literary Studies at The New School, Eugene Lang College. She lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

**Mabel O. Wilson** is a Professor of Architecture at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where she co-directs the Global Africa Lab and is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Research in African American Studies. She has authored *Begin with the Past: Building the National Museum of African American History and Culture* (2016) and *Negro Building: African Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (2012). Exhibitions of her work have been featured at the Art Institute of Chicago, Istanbul Design Biennale, Wexner Center for the Arts, and the Smithsonian's Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum's Triennial. She was honored as a United States Artists Ford Fellow in architecture and design (2011) and named a YBCA 100, San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts annual list of inspirational creative minds (2016). She is a founding member of *Who Builds Your Architecture?* – an advocacy project to educate the architectural profession about the problems of globalization and labor.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The co-organizers would like to thank these generous co-sponsors:

*Hampshire College*: Humanities; Studio Arts; Dance; Film, Photo, and Video; Architecture, Art History, and Architectural Theory; Institute for Curatorial Practice; Ethics and the Common Good; President's Office; Dean of Faculty Office; Dean of Students' Office; Office of the Dean of Multicultural Education and Inclusion; Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies; Cognitive Science; Critical Social Inquiry; Interdisciplinary Arts

*The Transdisciplinary Aesthetics Foundation*

*The American Society for Aesthetics*

*Five Colleges*: Five College Lecture Fund; Five College Dance

*Amherst College*: English; Music; Philosophy

*Mount Holyoke College*: Philosophy

*Smith College*: Art; Africana Studies; English; Philosophy

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*: Afro-American Studies; English; History of Art and Architecture; Philosophy

**Special thanks also to** Jocelyn Edens, Cynthia Freeland, Linda Green, Norman S. Holland, Tripp Johnson, Karen Koehler, Mary Malo, Annabel Manning, Mike McKenna, Emily Pierce, Elizabeth V. Spelman, and Julie Van Camp.