

Adrienne L. Childs, PhD
Curriculum Vitae
2025
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Adrienne L. Childs is an art historian and curator.

CURRENT POSITIONS AND PROJECTS

- Senior Consulting Curator: The Phillips Collection, Washington DC
- Co-Curator: *Vivian Browne: My Kind of Protest*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati and The Phillips Collection, 2025
- Co-Curator: *Out of Many: Reframing an American Art Collection*, The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., 2025
- Curator: *Beauford Delaney: So Much Love and Beauty*, The Phillips Collection, 2027
- Curator: Driskell Center 25th Anniversary Exhibition, Fall, 2026

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Ornamental Blackness: The Black Figure in the European Imaginary, Yale University Press, 2025

Co-Editor, *Out of Many: Reframing and American Art Collection*, The Phillips Collection and Giles, LTD, 2025

Co-Editor, *Vivian Browne: My Kind of Protest*, The Phillips Collection and Giles, LTD, 2025

Co-Editor, *The Colour of Anxiety: Race, Sexuality and Disorder in Victorian Sculpture*, Henry Moore Institute, *Essays on Sculpture*, Issue 81, April 2023

Riffs and Relations: African American Artists and the European Modernist Tradition, Rizzoli, 2020. * Winner of the 2020 James A Porter and David C. Driskell Book Award in African American Art History

Co-Author, *The Black Figure in the European Imaginary*, Giles in association with the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, Florida, 2017.

Co-Editor, *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century*, Routledge, 2014

Evolution: Five Decades of Printmaking by David C. Driskell, Pomegranate, 2007

Margo Humphrey, The David C. Driskell Series of African American Art, Pomegranate, Fall, 2009

Peer-reviewed and Invited Articles/Essays:

“Preston Sampson: The Color of Kinship,” in *Preston Sampson: Letters from Home*, University of Maryland Global Campus, 2025

“But What of *His* Fashionability, His Beauty, His Blackness?” in *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, ed. Monica L. Miller, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

“The Spaces Between: Black American Painters in Paris,” in *Paris Noir*, Centre Pompidou, March 2025

“Enchantment: Black Women Artists and the Mythic Imaginary,” in *Century: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM*, Montclair Art Museum, February 2024

“Philemona Williamson: The Borders of Innocence,” Galerie Semoise, Paris, 2023 ([online](#))

“Blood Bronze and Stone: Fictions of Slavery in Victorian Era Sculpture,” *Essays on Sculpture*, Issue 81, April 2023

“A Conversation with Richard Hunt,” in *Richard Hunt*, Gregory R. Miller and Co., 2022

“The Vanquished Unchained: Abolition and Emancipation in Sculpture of the Atlantic World,” in *Figments of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast*, ed. Elyse Nelson and Wendy S. Walters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2022

“Variations and Old Master Narratives: Bob Thompson in the Wake of Art History” in *Bob Thompson: This House is Mine*, ed. Diana K Tuite, Yale University Press, 2021

“La splendeur des Maures,” in *La Sculpture Triomphante: 1850-1880*, Fine Arts, Paris, 2018

Introduction, “Riff: Black Artists and the European Canon,” special section of *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Spring, 2018

Co-Editor, Riff: Black Artists and the European Canon,” special section of *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Spring 2018

“A Blackamoor’s Progress: The Ornamental Black Body in European Furniture” in *Resignifications: European Blackamoors, Africana Readings*. Awam Amka, ed., Postcard, Rome, 2016

“Unbändige Schönheit. Die Kronleuchter aus Murano-Glas von Fred Wilson” (Uncontrollable Beauty: Murano Glass Chandeliers by Fred Wilson), *Bildpunkt*, Summer 2016, <http://www.igbildendekunst.at/bildpunkt/2016/andere-in-der-ferne.htm>

“Porcelain Blackness: Thoughts on Race and Representation in Ceramic Arts,” *NCECA Journal*, volume 36, 2015

“Exceeding Blackness: African Women in the Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme,” in *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century*, Ashgate, 2014

“Activism and the Shaping of Black Identities, 1964-1988,” in *The Image of the Black in Western Art, The Twentieth Century*, David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. eds., Harvard University Press, 2014.

“Tanner and “Oriental” Africa” in *Henry Ossawa Tanner: Modern Spirit*, The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, University of California Press, 2012.

“Sugarboxes and Blackamoors: Ornamental Blackness in Early Meissen Porcelain,” in *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain*, ed. Michael Yonan and Alden Cavanaugh, Routledge, 2010

Review Articles:

“Kara Walker: A Black Hole is Everything a Star Longs to Be,” ed. Anita Haldemann, *Women’s Art Journal*, Volume 43, Spring/Summer 2022

“Witnessing Slavery: Art and Travel in the Age of Abolition,” by Sarah Thomas, CAA Reviews, November 2021. <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/3819#.YhUGTi-B0bQ>

“Designing a New Tradition: Lois Mailou Jones and the Aesthetics of Blackness,” by Rebecca VanDiver, RACAR, *Journal of the Universities Art Association of Canada*, 46, no2, Fall 2021 https://www.racar-racar.com/uploads/5/7/7/4/57749791/racar_46_2_digital_zz_childs.pdf

“Le Modèle Noir de Géricault à Matisse,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 18, no. 2, Autumn 2019 <https://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/autumn19/chlds-reviews-le-modele-noir-de-gericault-a-matisse>

“Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power,” CAA Reviews, August 2018

“Presence of Mind: Revealing Africans in Renaissance Art,” *Transition Magazine*, April 2013.

“Material Girls: Contemporary Black Women Artists,” *The Journal of Modern Craft*, March 2012.

“Portraits of A People: Picturing African Americans in the Nineteenth Century,” Review article, *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, Autumn, 2006, www.19thc-artworldwide.org/

CURATORIAL EXPERIENCE

Co-Curator, *Century: 100 Years of Black Art at MAM*, Montclair Art Museum, 2024

Co-Curator, *The Colour of Anxiety: Race, Sexuality and Disorder in Victorian Sculpture*, The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK, 2022

Curator, *Imagine: Celebrating Black Female Creativity*, Featherstone Center for the Arts, Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, 2022

Curator, *Riffs and Relations: African American Artists and the European Modernist Tradition*, The Phillips Collection, Washington DC, February, 2020

Co-Curator, *The Black Figure in the European Imaginary*, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, January – May 2017

Curatorial team, *Conversations: African and African American Artworks in Dialogue: From the collections of William H. and Camille O. Cosby and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art*, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, November 2014

Co-Curator, *African American Art since 1950: Perspectives from the David C. Driskell Center*,

The David C. Driskell Center, 2012

Co-Curator, *Creative Spirit: The Arts of David C. Driskell*, The David C. Driskell Center, Fall, 2011

Co-Curator, *Abstract Relations*, The University of Delaware University Museums, Spring, 2010

Curator, *Her Story: Margo Humphrey Lithographs and Works on Paper*, The David C. Driskell Center, Spring 2010

Curator, *Tradition Redefined: The Larry and Brenda Thompson Collection of African American Art*, The David C. Driskell Center, Spring, 2009

Curator, *Arabesque: The Art of Stephanie E. Pogue*, The David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, Fall 2008

Curator, *Evolution: Five Decades of Printmaking by David C. Driskell*, The David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, Fall, 2007

Curatorial Consultant, *Holding our Own: Selections from the Collectors Club of Washington D.C. Inc.*, University of Maryland University College, October 2005 – October 2006

Curator, *Successions: Prints by African American Artists from the Jean and Robert Steele Collection*, The Art Gallery, University of Maryland, April 2002

Curator, *Echoes: The Art of David C. Driskell*, 1998

Assistant Curator, *Narratives of African American Art and Identity: The David C. Driskell Collection*, The Art Gallery, University of Maryland, 1996 to 1998

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

- Distinguished Scholar, Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art, Metropolitan Art Museum, Fall 2024 – Spring 2025
- Inaugural Lunder Institute Research Fellow, Colby College Museum of Art, 2019-2020
- Curatorial Fellow, The Clark Art Institute, Williams College, Williamstown, MA, Fall 2019
- Visiting Senior Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, November-December, 2018
- Shelia Biddle Ford Foundation Fellow, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University, Fall, 2012
- Getty Library Research Grant, The Getty Foundation, Los Angeles, 2012
- Shelia Biddle Ford Foundation Fellow, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University, Fall 2010
- Fellow, Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Summer 2010

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS/LECTURES/PRESENTATIONS

“Pearl Drops and Blackamoors: The Black Body and Pearlescent Adornment in European Art,” Wadsworth Athenaeum, October, 2024

“The Art of Response,” Cincinnati Art Museum, June, 2024

“Black Men in Red,” Milwaukee Art Museum, April 2024

“Ornamental Blackness: What, Why, So What?” What’s Race Got To Do With It?, Historians of Eighteenth Century Art and Architecture conference, Boston, October 2023

“Fraught: On Sculpting Abolition,” Plenary Speaker, Abolitionism and the Arts, Symposium, Columbia University, May 2023

“Black Baroque: Contemporary Art and Spectacular Presence,” High Museum of Art, April 2023

“The Colour of Anxiety: Race, Sexuality and Disorder in Victorian Sculpture, in Conversation with Nicola Jennings and Lynda Nead” -Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide, Video, Volume 22, Issue 1, Spring 2023

“Race and Ornament: Seeing the Black Body in European Porcelain,” Gardiner Signature Lecture Series, the Helen E. Gardiner Lecture, Gardiner Museum, April 2022

“David Driskell’s Intimate Landscapes,” American Landscapes: Nature, Beauty, History, David C. Driskell Center and The Phillips Collection, October 2021.

Bernard Osher Lecture, “David C. Driskell: Interiors, Objects and the Spirit of Form,” Portland Museum of Art, July 2021

“In the Vortex of Art and Identity: The Black Female as Object and Subject,” Keynote lecture, Emerging Scholars Symposium, University of Georgia, March 2021

“Bob Thompson, Goya and the Caprice of Art History,” Research Symposium, Art by African Americans, Lunder Institute, Colby College Museum of Art, March 2020.

“Material Matters: Race and Materiality in the Decorative Arts,” Keynote Address, The Clark Art Institute, Williams College, November 1, 2019

The Eda G. Diskant Memorial Lecture, “Ornamental Blackness and the Decorative Arts,” Philadelphia Museum of Art, October 5, 2019

“Ornamental Blackness: Seeing the Black Body in European Luxury Arts,” Keynote Address, 9th Annual Rutgers Art History Graduate Student Symposium, April 19, 2019

“Silver, Slavery, and the Laboring Black Body,” College Art Association, New York, February 15, 2019

Keynote Discussion, Shared Ground: Cross Disciplinary Approaches to Craft Studies, Bard Graduate Center, September, 2018

“The Moorish Bath: Women of Color in Nineteenth-Century Orientalist Art,” The Devens Lecture Series, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, December, 2017

“Race, Exoticism, and the Decorative Conceit: Black Figures in Fine and Decorative Arts” Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, March 2017

“The Marble Moor,” Black Portraitures II: Revisited, New York University, February 2016

“The Marble Moor,” Black Portraitures II, The Black Body in the West, New York University and Harvard University, Florence, Italy, June 2015

“Uncontrollable Beauty: Fred Wilson’s Murano Glass Chandeliers,” College Art Association, New York, February 2015

“The Glazed Blackamoor: Minton’s Majolica Jardinières and the African Body (1867)” *La Sculpture entre 1850 and 1880*, INHA and École du Louvre, Paris, France, May 2014

“Beauty and the Blackamoor,” Black Portraits in the West, NYU, Harvard University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France, January 2013

“A Blackamoor’s Progress: The Black Male Body in European Decorative Arts,” Fall

Colloquium Series, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University, November 2012

ONLINE EXHIBITIONS

Curator, *Race Matters: Seeing the Black Figure in the European Tradition*, Robilant + Voena, London, 2020 <https://www.robilantvoena.com/exhibitions/225/>

Co-Curator, *Backtalk: Artists on Native, African, and African American Stereotypes*, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, 2020, <https://stereotypes.africa.si.edu/>

MEDIA

“The absurdity of the backlash over the MLK statue,” CNN Opinion, January 26, 2023 ([online](#))

“Why the Obama’s portraits matter,” CNN Opinion, September, 2022 ([online](#))

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Art History, University of Maryland, May 2005

Dissertation: *The Black Exotic: Tradition and Ethnography in Nineteenth-Century Orientalist Art*. Minor field: 20th Century African American Art

M.A. Art History, University of Maryland, May 1999

Thesis: *Serving Exoticism: The Black Female in French Exotic Imagery 1733-1885*

M.B.A. General Business Administration, Howard University, May 1985

B.A. Art History, Georgetown University, Cum Laude, August 1982