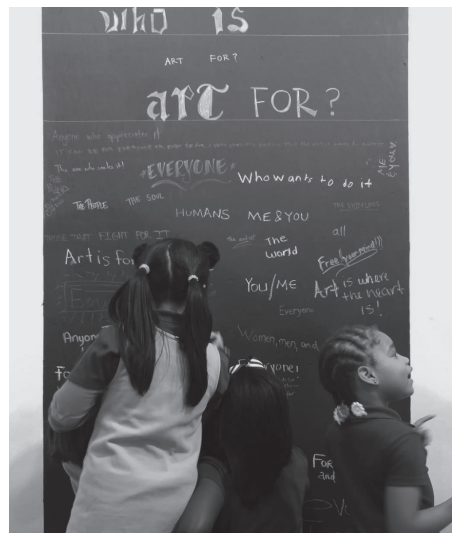


# WMM

PHILADELPHIA  
PHOTO  
ARTS CENTER





PHILADELPHIA PHOTO ARTS CENTER presents  
**WOMEN'S MOBILE MUSEUM**

What is WMM—

# Seeing the world through a new lens.

The *Women's Mobile Museum* (WMM) is a collaboration between the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center (PPAC), the South African visual activist Zanele Muholi, and 10 Philadelphia artists who identify as women and femmes. It is an ambitious project that comes at a time when women are re-examining the barriers they face to achieving political and economic legitimacy and to effecting social change towards equal rights. It includes an artist residency for Muholi; a year-long, paid apprenticeship in the media arts for the participants; an exhibition that will have toured three locations in Philadelphia; and a culminating exhibition at the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center January 24–March 30, 2019.

When Muholi accepted PPAC's offer of an artist residency, they generously proposed to work with Philadelphia women and share with them their legacy of tools, experience, and knowledge. They also invited the South African teaching artist Lindeka Qampi and Autograph ABP London Curator Renée Mussai to help train and mentor the artists.

The *Women's Mobile Museum* is a vehicle in the metaphorical sense. It is both a manifesto and a delivery system for reclaiming the space and function of presenting art. It challenges the current hierarchy of the art world and, more broadly, of the intellectual world. The artists of the *Women's Mobile Museum* envision a decolonized art museum that welcomes all people. Who is art for? Us too.

**COVER ARTWORK:**  
*Bester IX, Philadelphia, 2018*  
by Zanele Muholi

**BACK COVER ARTWORK:**  
*renaissance* by Danielle Morris

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*I Whisper In Silence My Presence* by Shana-Adina Roberts  
Next page: *Flagged* by Andrea Walls



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# Occupy and Share

WRITING &  
PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Lori Waselchuk

PHOTO (BELOW):  
Left to right: Andrea Walls, Tash  
Billington, Danielle Morris, Lerato  
Dumse, afaq, Davelle Barnes,  
Zanele Muholi



“Radical social change had to be viewed as a two-sided transformational process, of ourselves and of our institutions, a process requiring protracted struggle and not just a D-day replacement of one set of rulers with another.”

—Grace Lee Boggs

Zanele Muholi’s *Women’s Mobile Museum* began with a challenge to the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center (PPAC) to create a museum that would break down barriers to access, acceptance, and representation for women in art institutions in Philadelphia.

Muholi and I have known each other since 2003, when I was an instructor at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg, where Muholi was a student. I cannot forget their earliest images—unflinching, compassionate portraits of loved ones, of friends from within their Black LGBTQI community; photographs of physical scars on bodies, evidence of the aftermath of gender-based violence. Every image was an urgent plea to see the women they loved, and know that the artist and subject’s very existence placed them in danger. These early images prefaced Muholi’s collaborative portraiture project, *Faces and Phases*, which forces public discussion about the homophobia, prejudice, and extreme violence perpetrated on this community. Muholi describes their artistic practice as visual activism—their work looks at Black existence, resistance, and insistence.

In 2016, Muholi accepted PPAC’s invitation to an artist residency in Philadelphia. Since their practice includes sharing resources and opportunities with women, girls, and gender nonconforming people, Muholi asked to collaborate with Philadelphia women who have been unable to access arts education or opportunities. As we planned the project over transatlantic phone calls, Muholi’s ideas flowed more urgent and radical than ever: train women in photography, video, museum studies, public speaking, archive research; empower their stories, their histories; teach self-love; challenge their representation in and access to museums; create a museum that can travel to communities underserved by the city’s arts institutions; create opportunities for the women’s photographs to be seen and included in collections, archives, and museums.

Muholi named the project the *Women’s Mobile Museum* (also known as WMM) and hoped that ultimately, it would build artistic careers and provide jobs. Muholi insisted that every contracted creative position in the project—artist, curator, coordinator, graphic designer, and filmmaker—must agree to mentor participants. Finally, they wanted the *Women’s Mobile Museum* to partner with other arts organizations to create opportunities for the women participants to travel and present their work in exhibitions and lectures.

PPAC welcomed Muholi’s vision. We recognized that the social and political climate—locally, nationally, and globally—critically needed a project that would amplify women’s stories and creative work. PPAC is a small arts organization, but we felt emboldened to take on this project. We had just completed *The Philly Block Project with Hank Willis Thomas* in 2016—an 18-month project in which Thomas collaborated with residents in PPAC’s immediate neighborhood of South Kensington to create a contemporary series of portraits that documented its people and its history. Muholi’s *Women’s Mobile Museum* would focus less on public engagement. Instead, it would require sustained and intimate interaction between practicing artists.

Most of the *Women’s Mobile Museum*’s work took place in a studio near PPAC’s premises. We brought on board Dr. Kathleen Walls, a psychologist, to help the participants cope with the stressful demands of the project and the changes that they would experience. We connected with two community partners in two Philadelphia neighborhoods, the Juniata Action Committee in Juniata Park, and Diversified Community Services in Point Breeze. First, these organizations helped PPAC recruit participants for the neighborhoods; then, in the later stages of the program, they would provide community exhibition spaces for the *Women’s Mobile Museum*’s traveling show.

PPAC wanted WMM to be a co-op and curative space, a true collaboration with women who have not felt welcome in arts institutions nor have had the financial resources to engage with photography before.

PPAC reached out citywide to recruit interested applicants. Our application was simple: we wanted the women to describe themselves and explain why they were interested in the program. Applicants could type, handwrite, or even phone in their answers. We didn't ask for a portfolio or resume. We wanted to make sure to clear away as many barriers to participation in the program as possible. We interviewed each of the 59 applicants in person.

When the project launched last February, only two of the 10 women we had selected to take part in the program had worked with a DSLR camera before. Several of the participants had never visited an art museum. All had felt that their creative ideas and interests were not encouraged within their communities. For the first three months, we trained in photography and video. We studied photography technique, theory, and history. We attended lectures and artist talks. We heard lectures from guest artists and learned about professional sustainability and development from Artists U. We participated in a community parade in Juniata Park and set up a free family portrait studio in Point Breeze.

From the beginning, the *Women's Mobile Museum* engaged directly with the politics of art and institutional representation. The politics are complicated and painful, so I sought advice from my friend Anna West, a poet and radical educator in Baton Rouge, LA. In our conversation she asked, "What happens when art becomes the false point of contact—when audience is made to believe that they have experienced the 'other' in a museum?" West continued, "It is a domesticating encounter, managed by the institution." The questions WMM poses are similar: Who is art for? Who is represented in our art

institutions? How can we challenge the mainstream curatorship that mediates by way of colonial gaze? We visited major art museums in the city and met with curators. We visited historical collections and spoke with archivists. By exploring Philadelphia's institutions, we formed a clearer picture of what lives and experiences were obscured from the record, and a stronger sense of how our work might assert and reclaim them.

In May, Muholi arrived in Philadelphia for an intensive six-week workshop with the WMM artists. Renée Mussai, Head Curator at Autograph ABP London, joined Muholi to share her curatorial practice and visit the two community exhibition sites with WMM artists. A second teaching artist, Lindeka Qampi, arrived in June, and the women presented their work in weekly critiques. By August, we were building our exhibition and preparing to launch our first community exhibition of the mobile museum in Juniata Park in late September.

As we prepared for the first exhibition, we began to explore how to make the museum accessible. Sister M. Elaine George, the president of the Juniata Action Committee, is a teacher at the St. Lucy Day School for Children with Visual Impairments. She trained the WMM artists to develop tools to help visually impaired people experience the photographs. We created an audio tour, built tactile representations of the photographs, and directed live modeling, using props featured in the photographs.

It was also during the summer that WMM artists began to feel the pressure and the fears of showing their work in public. Deadlines, critiques, production decisions and marketing placed high demands on the artists' time, and compounded the self-doubt and nerves that every artist feels before presenting work in public. Yet the opening of the first community exhibition at the Juniata Park Boys & Girls Club marked a new experience in the apprenticeship:



meeting and sharing stories with museum visitors. WMM's first visitors were two boys, one teenager and the other a few years younger, and their puppy. They wandered in to see what was happening in their clubhouse. It was a warm day and both boys were shirtless, but the younger one put on his shirt, noting that there were "ladies" inside. They explored the museum and stayed throughout the afternoon. As the women shared their work with family, friends, and local community members, they were met with enthusiasm and appreciation. For many viewers, the *Women's Mobile Museum* marked their first time they experiencing a museum and meeting real artists. The artists saw that their exhibition was a site of connection.

After three weeks in Juniata Park, the women moved the exhibition to Dixon House in Point Breeze. They occupied one-half of Dixon House's gymnasium. The other half remained open for job fairs, baby showers, and a voting station for the 2018 national election. One woman came to vote, but stayed to tour the museum. In her visitor comments she wrote: "I felt the art touch my soul to look beyond and see."

In December, the project moved for the first time into a traditional museum with an exhibition in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Through its presence in this historic space, the *Women's Mobile Museum* affirmed its artistic achievement.

In entering the *Women's Mobile Museum*, the 10 women trusted PPAC to share resources, skills, and knowledge, and provide a safe space for them to grow as artists. As the project progressed, the artists also trusted PPAC to hear and learn from difficult conversations and critiques. This project required that PPAC reckon with institutional blind spots, and meet its missteps with honesty and vulnerability.

Ultimately, occupying and sharing space are fundamental tenets of the *Women's Mobile Museum*. The project requires that we give enough of ourselves, co-create a safe place to be ourselves, understand our connections, and experience solidarity. This process continues. It cannot be rushed. It requires courage and inner strength. It is often painful, and it is urgently necessary.





LEARNING TO SEE  
(cont'd)  
Andrea Walls

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Left: Lit



This is when I first began to wade in the generations-deep waters of melancholy. This is how I acquired an overwhelming capacity to feel and clock time through suffering. This, I believe, is how I became a poet. How I first learned to see and know where I stand and what it costs to take up space as a light-skinned Black woman in Philadelphia, in America. It's a matter of absorption and reflection—of sensitivity to darkness and light.

As a poet, I've always "looked" at things through a linguistic lens—"seeing" and processing the world through a relationship with language. Poetry helps me achieve an emotional equilibrium that eludes me in 21st-century contexts. I've found comfort on the page, in the translation of intuition and experience into words; words into specificity and meaning; and meaning into understanding and action. This is a slow and deliberate process, layered and non-linear, like assembling a 5,000-piece puzzle of an abstract painting, reaching for and connecting fragments to reveal a complex landscape of color and hue and symmetry—nuance and metaphor as expressive equivalencies for texture and brush strokes.

But, lately, I've felt alienated from linguistic expression. As the culture becomes more captivated with technology and more adept at communication through iconography and meme-ography, with a distinct preference for expediency and brevity and a predilection to trade in economies of distraction, I find myself at a loss. I am missing the depth of reflection and thought that comes from long, languid, and seemingly aimless conversations that allow ideas to unfold, nuances to be revealed, and subconscious quandaries to be clarified and expanded upon, holistically, in their own good time.

I've been experimenting with visual arts and photography as a way to express myself creatively during my temporary estrangement from literary pursuits. Still, when I look at a photograph or a painting, I am drawn to the poetry first—the saddest lyric and the arc of the story precede any particular awareness of line or color or pattern or space. I experience life and art, primarily, as an ongoing, inter-weaving, personally and profoundly felt narrative. With this in mind, I find myself wondering what it even means—to see.

I am learning to interrogate this question differently as I develop my practice as a visual artist and photographer. My apprenticeship with the *Women's Mobile Museum* has challenged me to develop my "eye" for visual storytelling. The process has helped me realize that what I had been calling sight has nothing to do with my eyes or with the physical act of seeing or with visual culture. When I say "I see," what I really mean is: I feel, I understand, I acknowledge it to be so. My ability to "see" has always been more emotional than visual, more conceptual than optical, more abstract than exact. So, when Zanele Muholi first asked me to frame and compose my shot, to see the photograph, to know what the picture should be before I click the shutter—I was confused. Not only did I not yet know what I was looking for, I did not even know, exactly, what I was looking at.

To further complicate matters, I am a life-long myopic, which means I can only see, clearly, those things closest to me. I must squint or wear artificial lenses to focus at a distance. This, too, is a perfect metaphor for what and how I see. The world, as I see it, is not and has never been clear. It's, mostly, not

**“I guess this is what comes of being incubated and born to a world that has always been hostile to my existence and to the existence of the people who matter most to me.”**

sharp, has few definite lines or borders, and is most often blurred with brackish tint—an epic, unedited, noir film with omniscient, though cryptic, narrator.

I guess this is what comes of being incubated and born to a world that has always been hostile to my existence and to the existence of the people who matter most to me. In response to the erasure that accompanies such systemic oppression, I've developed a forensic capacity to see what is gone, what is absent from the scene—like indigenous language and histories as defined through griot culture and collective memory. In seeing what is missing, what hurts, what's been taken or lost or disappeared, I see what I/we need: a refreshed and referential context that questions neither our beauty, our worth, or our humanity.

The inherent agitation of my mind, coupled with a life-long myopia, makes it a precarious experience to pick up a camera and point it in any direction. It's as if the lens is a kaleidoscope and my eye is a magnet, picking up pieces of things—the fragments, the broken bits of people, places, and the stories that hold them/us together.

This is how I'm learning to see—

like a kintsugi artist rejoining errant shards of pottery with molten slices of gold. I am trying to make sense of rupture in ways that do not discard or erase the body where it breaks.



# Andrea Walls

## *North From Here: A Series of Disembodied Portraits*

**This series of photographs responds to the global experience of forced displacement...**

The images included here represent my immediate and visceral response to news of families being separated at borders, mothers being criminalized as they risk everything, seeking safety for themselves and their children—children who are jailed, lost, trafficked, or given away by representatives of a nation that proclaims itself to be the only true destination for anyone seeking independence, liberty, justice and freedom.

In constructing these visual stories, I am thinking of what it means, what it costs, to leave (or be ejected from) home, to move toward some abstract promise of “freedom;” and to endure the hostile distances between. I am thinking of the things we leave behind or that are taken from us along our various escape routes, including aspects of our identity. I am thinking of all the bodies, lost souls and ghosts still following “The North Star,” traveling along some rendition of The Underground Railroad. I am thinking of the original and contemporary Fugitive Slave Laws that brand and punish certain bodies as “illegal,” and therefore expendable. I am thinking of the risk of believing in things we have heard exist, somewhere, *North From Here*.

This series of photographs responds to the global experience of forced displacement of both wild and human populations. It recognizes the capitalist

structures and priorities that facilitate and enforce generational cycles of war, famine, resource depletion, and poverty, while making escape from these conditions illegal and life-threatening. It recognizes the ways in which power structures perpetuate violence through gender indoctrination, economic and racial caste systems and through the same educational and linguistic traditions that rationalized and promoted chattel slavery.

Because I wanted to address the emotional trauma of these experiences without visually inscribing that trauma onto the bodies of black and brown people, I staged a series of disembodied portraits to carry the weight of the narrative. I consider them forensic in nature: evidence of existence, evidence of disappearance, evidence of the theft and loss of life and/or dignity.

NEIGHBORHOOD:  
Cobbs Creek

RECOMMENDS:  
Cane by Jean Toomer



*Railroaded*



North From Here



Lost In Traffic



Global Toyman Symmetry



*Like A Fish Off Its Ladder*



*Wade In The Water*





# afaq

*untitled [zola] / [zola] untitled*

in taking control of my own image, i no longer have  
to choose between erasure and exotification.

my work seeks to return,  
disrupt and disarm the  
western gaze. in taking  
control of my own image,  
i no longer have to choose  
between erasure and  
exotification. i use fabric  
to represent identity and  
the barriers i 'face' because  
of it. here and every day,  
i battle with religion,  
culture, blackness, love,  
gender, nationality, and  
what it means to be seen  
as other in a world of  
everyone else.

*if i speak to  
god and you  
speak to god  
and we are  
both left  
unanswered  
does it mean  
we are finally  
having a  
conversation  
with each  
other*



guardian

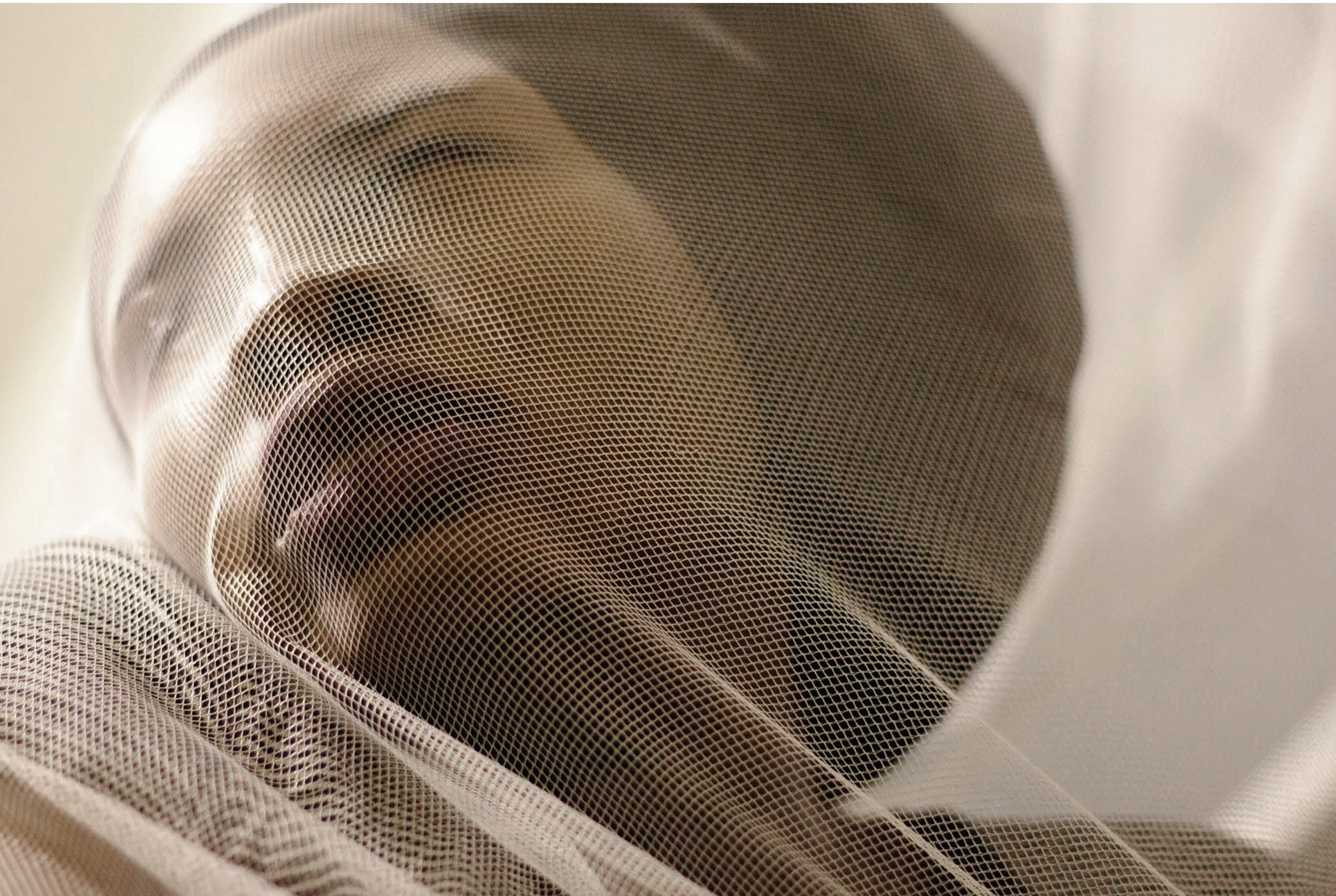


still



midnight

*the stars are just as far  
from each other  
as they are from me  
some days this eases my lonely  
some days this feeds her*



noname

*my mother  
was my first  
country  
country is  
not a word  
for home*

*and when i say  
black lives matter  
i mean that they do  
i mean that the first  
time i heard it was  
from my own mouth  
that i was never  
welcome here  
until i let myself in*



shards

*i am angry and  
i am not wrong  
i am angry and no one  
has died from it  
that's the saddest story  
that someone new  
has to die from it  
before they believe me  
what i say questioned  
more than what  
they've done  
for me to say it*

*the imam says to  
hide our sins but  
i cannot accept  
that she is one*



gone

*if you put bones in a fire  
it is called cremation  
if you put me in a fire  
it is called the law  
my country cremates me  
my family lights  
the flame  
i do not see god during  
the execution  
if you die willingly  
it is still an execution*

*i know everyone who is not a man has had cause to run from one  
although love is not victimless it is not a crime*

# Declaration of Independence

WORD CURATION  
& PHOTOGRAPHY:  
afaq

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Below: heavy



When [redacted] human [redacted] it becomes necessary [redacted] to dissolve [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted] Nature's God [redacted]  
[redacted] requires that [redacted]  
[redacted] separation.  
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are [redacted]  
their Creator [redacted] are Life, [redacted] and the pursuit  
[redacted] to secure [redacted]  
[redacted] Government  
becomes destructive [redacted]  
[redacted] its foundation on [redacted]  
[redacted] them [redacted]  
[redacted] dictate that [redacted] light [redacted]  
[redacted] causes [redacted] mankind [redacted]  
[redacted] while [redacted] they  
[redacted] abuse [redacted] the [redacted]  
Object [redacted] reduce them [redacted]  
to [redacted] security [redacted]  
[redacted] the necessity [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted] the [redacted] public good.  
[redacted] has [redacted]  
[redacted] neglected to attend [redacted] them.  
[redacted] refused [redacted] accommodation [redacted] of people [redacted]  
to them [redacted] only [redacted]  
[redacted] bodies [redacted] unusual, uncomfortable, and distant [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted] dissolved [redacted] repeatedly [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] these States [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] eat [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] peace [REDACTED] without [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] us [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] these States [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] cut [REDACTED] the world [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] without [REDACTED] Consent [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] these [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Governments [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] our own [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] declaring us out [REDACTED] waging War against  
us.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] a civilized nation.  
[REDACTED] has [REDACTED] taken Captive [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] their [REDACTED] Brethren [REDACTED] by their  
Hands.  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] merciless [REDACTED] warfare [REDACTED]  
undistinguished destruction [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] repeated injury [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] of a free people.  
[REDACTED] wanting [REDACTED] time  
[REDACTED] time [REDACTED] attempts [REDACTED] to extend [REDACTED] over us [REDACTED] We [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] native justice and [REDACTED] them [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] deaf [REDACTED] justice and [REDACTED] We [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] denounces [REDACTED] them [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
We [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] the world [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] good People [REDACTED]  
declare [REDACTED] That these [REDACTED] States [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] are Absolved [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] dissolved [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Free  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] other [REDACTED] Things [REDACTED] right  
[REDACTED] And [REDACTED] this Declaration [REDACTED] Divine



# Iris Maldonado

## *Earthly*

---

I am to define my identity through self-knowledge and through my art.

These images open a door to my inner self. They go a little deeper into what is for me self healing, self acceptance, and self love. The same consciousness that connects me to the universe, my ancestors, and my land, gives vibrancy to my soul. This evokes in me an exquisite parade of feelings, from loneliness to enlightenment.

I am inspired by Frida Kahlo's use of frames in her self portraiture, Felisa Rincón's use of fans, the teachings of Buddhism, my love of botany, and my choice of healing through Reiki. My work reflects all the spiritual influences that affect my life. Missing my father and my grandparents, who taught me my love of plants and trees. The rose bushes that my grandmother cultivated in my childhood. Ferns that are hard to grow, but as gentle and delicate as I sometimes am. Coffee grounds that express my love for my homeland, and the sadness that I cannot be there.

In making this work, I have envisioned and rediscovered myself with a new sense of freedom that I have never had before. Here I am being kind and generous to myself. I am unashamed to explore how I'm feeling and who I am. This feeling of belonging and being present is something that I have only been able to find through photography. This journey of hating my body and disliking my skin becomes a past experience. This series is about being born from there.





Connection



Tribute to Frida Kahlo

# My Dream, My Vision, My Reality

WRITING &  
PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Iris Maldonado

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Below: Earth Portrait

EDITOR'S  
NOTE

*We invite the reader to listen closely to Iris' voice, a music of Puerto Rican and North Philadelphian descent. This piece has been edited to its completion, and any grammatical happenings within it are correct.*



Two years ago I meet my friend Rita very early in the morning to go for a walk along Forbidden Drive, with the intention to exercise and talk about life. It was a beautiful day, with clear skies—not too hot or too cold. The river water was calm, but sparkling with the sun's rays hitting it. While we were walking we talked about life and the future. During the conversation we talked about how a positive mindset can be transforming. She wanted to show me how I can change my future with my thoughts.

We did a meditation exercise and she asked me what I would like to do in a few years? How do I see this opportunity? I responded that I would like to do something, maybe a new job; but I was not sure. I see myself in a place that I am able to create and I am accepted, loved, and appreciated. But, definitely, it has to be something that I love. I remember saying that I see this place, maybe with lots of pictures, bright colors, and people that understand my love for the arts. I felt in my heart how good will it feels to be in this space and the sensation of happiness. After this mental exercise, I was not convinced that it works, to be honest. But I felt very happy, hopeful, and alive! At least I felt happy, so it was worth it.

I totally forgot that mental exercise and probably a few months after that walk in the trail, Starla invited Rita to a vision board party. A vision board is a collection of images and phrases that help you connect with your future self. Rita invited me to go along with her. That was when my future as a photographer took shape. When I was looking through magazines, I selected things that resonated with my teenage years. Things that I always wanted to do, but I didn't have a chance, or the courage.

The desire of being a writer, a photographer and a model was still burning inside, so I decided to add it to my vision board. For my vision board, I selected pictures of photographers taking pictures of a model then I placed my picture over it.

Modeling was something that I always wanted to do since I was a child. I used to dream of being part of the Spanish magazines. But I notice that no one looked like me. I had very curly hair. I was very skinny and extremely shy and knew that having an overbite was not going to make me a cover model. Not in this “perfect” society. Only beautiful and outgoing women are given this opportunity. My parents were willing to enroll me in modeling school, but then things got rough and the money was needed for food. So that was the end of it. Now I am not only the photographer, but I am also the model in my pictures—even though I am perfectly imperfect. Now I get to create beautiful art using my body.

I stuffed my vision board in my closet for months. I didn't look at this vision board for a long time and when I took a look at it, it just strike me that some part of the vision board was transformed into reality. Many months passed since that vision board party, when I got the Juniata Newspaper for my boss and I took a glance and I see the ad for the *Women's Mobile Museum*—I decided to apply. It was the hardest decision I have ever taken because it means that I have to be vulnerable to all my insecurities. But this time around I was not going to let it go.

As a result, I got the blessing to meet 10 extraordinary women, plus more, because I have met more wonderful people along the way that brings joy to my heart and always make my day seeing and talking to them. People that has accepted me how I am and share the same love for art and photography. I can't

leave out an important detail of the vision board: I now have “A ticket to write”. I am developing my skills as a writer and poet. Sure there are parts of the vision board that hasn't materialized yet, but now I'm sure they will.

I have had so many positive experiences in this mobile museum. I been able to learn photography, gain knowledge of the curatorial process and visit places that I never imagine. I also gain confidence in myself, as well as, not being so hard on myself. I have been able to grow spiritually as well, but my hopes are to inspire younger generations to believe that everything is possible.





Reflecting Healing



Acceptance



*Paper Tales*

You hear a groan you hear  
a lament of my soul crying  
because I no longer have you.

You think it's because of you  
that every day little by little I die.

Yet this pain that kills me inside  
is not for you, but for losing  
my soul, myself, my inner child.

I have no strength left to fight  
but today, for me, I will move  
a mountain.

RECOMMENDS:  
*The Four Agreements: A  
Practical Guide to Personal  
Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz

INSTAGRAM:  
@bills\_in\_tons

# Tash Billington

*Philly Natives*

—  
We define ourselves.



Kevin



## Artist Statement

**CURRENTLY READING:**  
*Black Ink: Literary Legends  
on the Peril, Power, and Pleasure  
of Reading and Writing* by  
Stephanie Stokes Oliver

**RECOMMENDS:**  
*The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho

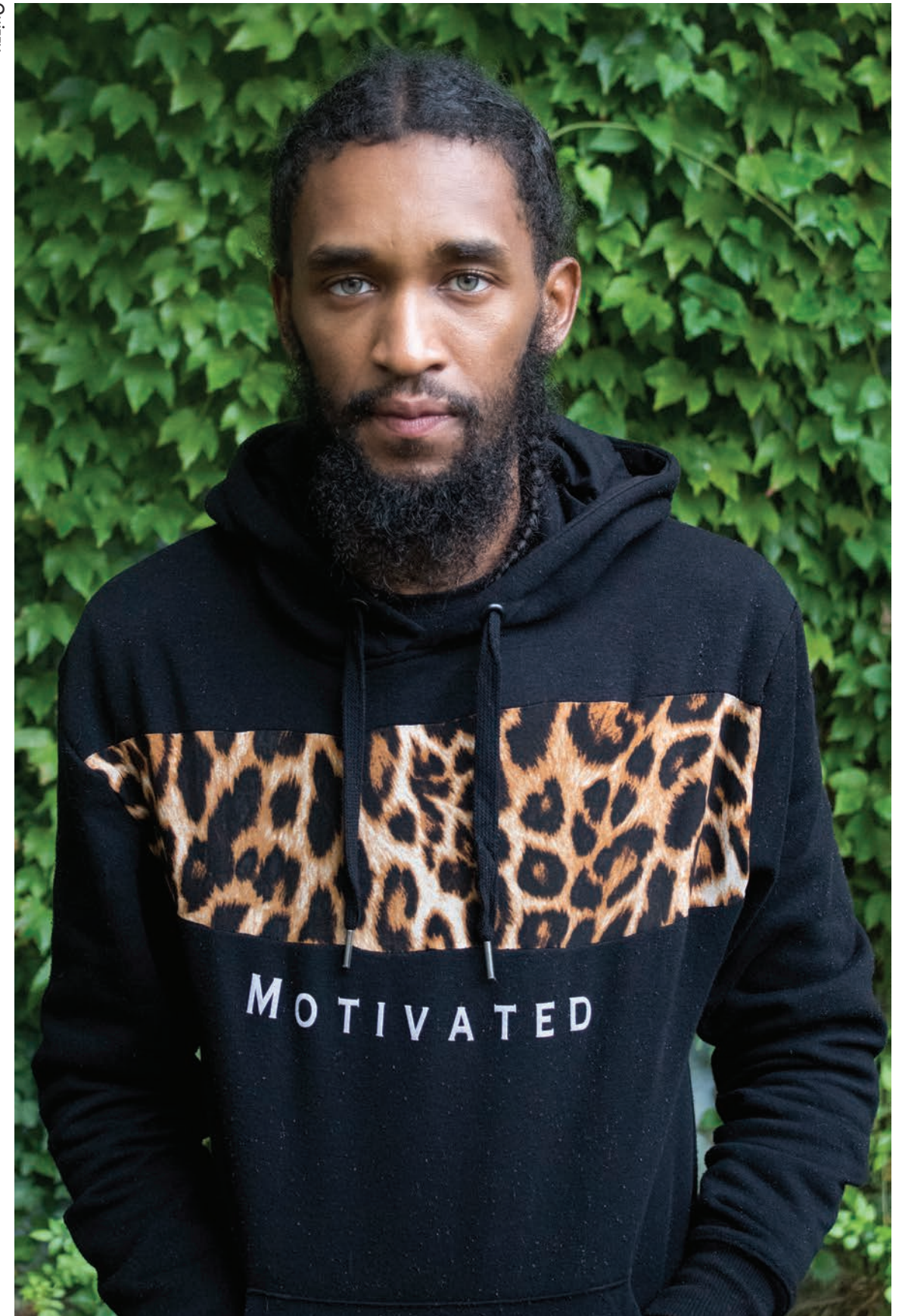
*Philly Natives* is an archive of street portraits of people born and raised in Philadelphia. The series pays homage to those who have survived various obstacles and injustices such as poverty, violence, racism, classism, over-incarceration, and the public school-to-prison pipeline. This series represents a rejection of the outsider's gaze. We define ourselves. I use photography and conversation to acknowledge the beauty and resilience often overlooked in the people of this city.



Hodges



Dao



Quizzy



Dollar Bill Origami



Karee Celebration Huddle



Amber Sunset Egyptian Musk For Cool Money Polo Blue Dior Savage Pomegranate Jamaican Fruit Fahrenheit Mr Burberry Blue Nile Blue Hawaiian Gain Hawaiian Black Cherry Rose Cherry Berry Vintage Black

Black Women Prada Le RiRi English Ivy Fresh Linen Fresh Lien Lagerfeld 24 Art Gold Intense Peppermint JPG Obama Sea Breez Black Coconut Harvest Lavender Fuchsia Sandalwood Egyptian

Black to Black Rain Miyake Intense Crystal Blue Lily Tangerine Sugar Pink Eucalyptus Spearmint Nolita#9 Patchouli Mango Butter Amber Blue Butt Naked English Laundry Milk Honey Hawaiian Butter White Diamond Cotton Candy Hug My Neck

uli Paris H Gold Bahama Sandalwood Egyptian Sea Salt Blossom J Choo Caribbean Peace Blessing Miss Dior Picked VS Red 2 Amber Ginger Oriental Amber Mountain Water Lavender Lemon Cottage Breeze

Black Tea Frankin Myrrh Sandalwood Rose Avocado Diamond Rubies R Sandalwood Lavender Vanilla Calvin K IN 2U Caramel Pecan Love Soap Ricci 2 Lavendar Silk Drakkar Noir Polo Black



DK

POETRY:  
Tash Billington

### Philly Streets

I'm feelin low, don't wanna get high  
Wanna hijack a plane to reach the blue sky  
It's no joke take a look in both of my eyes  
If my cuzin call I'm goin for a fast ride  
Couldn't tell you all this anger built up inside //  
Anger smells like fire, alcohol & weed  
Even smell like rotten food left in the streets  
Taste bittersweet, like food cooked incomplete  
Sounds like Lies, Sounds like Cries //  
When people lie to me, I don't lie back  
Truth or silence my reply back  
I choose to bring the truth cuz truth resembles  
Freedom  
Born in these Philly streets,  
lack of luv  
One thing you won't find is a lack of thugs  
Uh... Remember family wasn't there for me  
My sister left her 40 inch tv  
I turn around, all I see is me  
Uh... I ain't tryna leave these Philly Streets  
I might be needed in these Philly Streets



SWI

# Shana— Adina Roberts

## *Black Incandescence*

The head of a man is all that is detected.  
The man has the skin of a fudge brownie.  
He sleeps on his side.  
His nose is defined by light.

This body of work is a visual reflection of our turmoil and resilience. It's hard to remain calm when acts of violence are constantly inflicted upon Black people. When I hear about a Black man being shot, or a Black teen being lynched, or a Black woman being harassed, it feels like it is happening to me, because it could be me... 'Violent' and 'criminal' are amongst the many derogatory words we are called too often.

There is a societal pressure on us to be submissive in order to shirk off these caricatures they try to make us out to be. We are repeatedly burdened with having to prove our innocence to our attacker and yet still having the label of 'aggressive' placed on us, regardless of our actions. We try to remain calm and find happiness in the lives we've struggled to make for ourselves, while these lives are perpetually threatened.

Sleep is an important aspect of this series of photographs. Rest should be a time of peace, but for many Black people in America, the constant threat makes it impossible to feel at ease. How we feel is so often overlooked; I want our feelings to be emphasized. I use direct light, to create texture, reflect on the absence of light, and experiment with shadows to portray our experience.

I have attempted to create an environment where trauma, both emotional and physical, are acknowledged and healed. The trees are guides in the healing process: they allow for a still and meditative space. Trees emit fresh air; breathing is a significant part of meditation. Portrayed almost timelessly, the people in the photos are given an unlimited amount of time to reflect, a space where they can be self-possessed. The surreal environment I've created is a place where Black people are projected as Gods, where they can exist at their own convenience and be appreciated.

POETRY:  
Shana-Adina Roberts

Things you heard as a child you now say.  
You mimic them as you slap your hand across their face.  
As you put your hand on your hip.  
As you separate yourself from the other.  
You silence them with your voice.  
When you turn back to say it again.

Untitled









*Untitled Photo of Mustafah Sleeping*

Previous page: *The People*



*Untitled (Erica)*



*Perception*



Untitled



Untitled



*Strain*

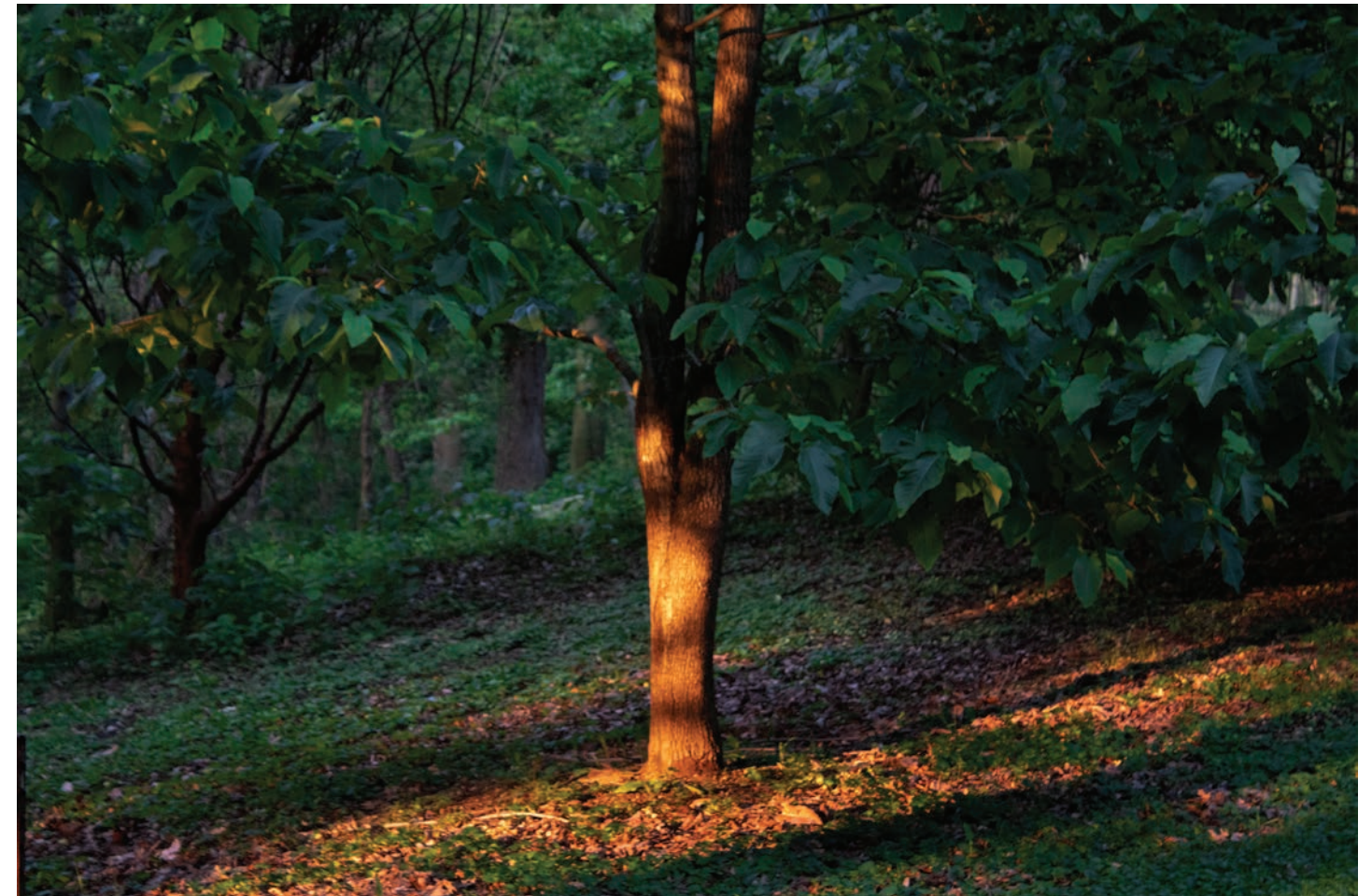
POETRY:  
Shana-Adina Roberts

Instead of a minute  
It was 2 hours  
when you told me to lock the car doors  
that did not mean  
I love you or I care for you

It meant

I'll forget you when I've had a glass  
So protect yourself  
And when I have a second, surely your seat gets warmer  
As mine does  
And when 2 hours turn into 2 days  
Certainly, your stomach will be filled with possessions  
And the tv will distract you

And you will only have you  
in the car  
the apartment  
the room  
the house on thanksgiving  
Christmas  
New Year's eve  
And in 2 hours and 2 days loneliness will become your companion



*The Thinking Place*

# Women. Mobile. Museum.

## Why Your Voices Matter

### PART I — PRELUDE: IT IS NECESSARY

In an era where women still have to speak so much louder than men in order to be heard; where #MeToo movements require us to muster the courage to publicly recount traumatic private past experiences instead of investing our energies emotionally and professionally in our presents and in our futures; in an era when decades of systemic exclusion leave us [burdened] with the unfortunate task to continuously “correct history”—in this era, ignorance or indifference are not luxuries we can afford, as the brilliant conceptual artist Lina Iris Viktor recently reminded me in one of many illuminating conversations: because who is going to be correcting these “fallacies,” but us? Fallacies of erasure, omission, misrepresentation, or appropriation. Of opportunities compromised by the “force of circumstance,” to paraphrase the great feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir,<sup>2</sup> or opportunities that simply never manifest in truly leveled playing fields. In this era, it is *necessary*: necessary to take action, necessary to be vigilant, necessary to break down barriers, collectively; necessary to demand access, to open doors and necessary to be honest; necessary to continue to speak out. In this era, more than ever, it is necessary to create. To create, to collaborate—and to advocate. For ourselves, and for one another.

WRITING:  
Renée Mussai

PHOTO (RIGHT):  
Top left moving clockwise:  
Muffy Ashley Torres, Lerato  
Dumse, afaq, Andrea Walls,  
Shasta Bady, Renée Mussai,  
Lori Waselchuk, Shana-  
Adina Roberts, Danielle  
Morris, Zanele Muholi, Tash  
Billington, Iris Maldonado,  
Carrie-Anne Shimborski.  
Photo by Amber Rivera.

In late 2018 Britain, the Tate gallery announced that it is to temporarily rehang the last 60 years of its gallery displays with only female artists; while the UK Government Art Collection is only buying works by female artists to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which granted some women the right to vote. Both institutions cite the desire to remedy an institutional bias towards—or obsession with—“male genius” as their reason.<sup>3</sup>

It comes as no surprise that the galleries and collections responsible for the preservation of our nation’s [art]historical narratives and cultural treasures, institutionally privileged and prejudiced, traditionally look not only spectacularly white, but also “spectacularly masculine.”<sup>4</sup> In addition to addressing gender representation within their permanent collections, these organizations, in tandem with peer institutions worldwide, are also slowly waking up to the urgent need to diversify their workforce, and their general artistic programming in relation to “race”—though not nearly fast, radically, or consistently enough: this is happening more than 30 years after the feminist-activist art collective Guerrilla Girls first pledged to fight gender and racial inequality within the greater arts community. With shifting socio-cultural and political landscapes, slow-burning recognitions, and women’s marches and #MeToo related movements unfolding globally, proclaiming our visual rights, presences, and identities is as necessary now as it was then.



### PART II — INTRODUCTION: MUHOLI MUHOLI

Two years ago, sometime in early 2017, Zanele Muholi asked me whether I might consider collaborating and supporting a new initiative they were in the early stages of developing. The project, entitled *Women’s Mobile Museum* (WMM), would enable a constituency of women from culturally diverse and disenfranchised socio-economic backgrounds in Philadelphia to engage in the visual arts, create new work, be trained in photography, and, importantly, be paid to do so: an apprenticeship, as it were, to coincide with an artist residency Muholi had been offered at PPAC, the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center. Muholi, a close friend and one of the most courageous, most complex, and most important artists working in photography today—we were at the time in the middle of curating their traveling solo show and monographic publication, *Somnyama Ngonyama*—has long been committed to developing a visual activism that empowers black, female, lesbian, queer, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals in South Africa and beyond through collaborative, participatory, inclusive engagement that aims to support and recognize those who

are too often marginalized. As I write, they are busy setting up a Mobile School of Photography in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, to benefit 10- to 12-year-old girls.

One time, during the program’s fundraising campaign led by PPAC, I was asked to Skype into a presentation given by its director, Sarah Stolfa, to a group of patrons of a prestigious US funding body. In the middle of the night, I delivered a mildly delirious five-minute stream of consciousness—entirely void of commas, full stops, or moments to breathe, for it was way past midnight my time—on why there is no contemporary practitioner more perfectly suited than Muholi, whose practice is governed by the same three R’s—race, rights, representation—that has also defined much of my own curatorial activism at Autograph, London for the past decade, to spearhead this program in 2018, 70 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.<sup>5</sup>

I, for my part, needed no convincing.

**PART III – EYES THAT COMMIT / TRUST YOUR VISUAL VOICE**

What I remember most vividly about my initial visit in early May 2018 is being moved beyond words after meeting the project's participants for the first time, and witnessing a range of deeply personal presentations by each of the 10 women selected for the program. That eye-opening evening ended with a riveting, unexpected spoken word performance by afaq that momentarily transformed PPAC's education studio into a secular suite of worship, trembling with gospel, emotion, and intensity. Sitting in the presenters chair as the last speaker of the evening, I felt 'drunk' on the wealth of embodied knowledge, generosity, and lived experience that had been shared. Looking into the room, searching for words, I thought of a fragment/poem by nayyirah waheed, two lines I have summoned on numerous occasions this past year, when writing about artists whose work I admire, when conducting research in archives, or when thinking of a [curatorial] manifesto for the future:

*eyes that commit.  
that is what I am looking for.*

From waheed's *Salt*<sup>6</sup>, written to suture diasporic wounds and inspire self-love, I turned to Christina Sharpe's *In The Wake*—a book of sublime insight and profundity: to "inhabit and rupture this episteme with our known lived and un/imaginable lives," to "make present the someone that those eyes look out to," to "stay in the wake to sound an ordinary note of care"—"as part and as crowd."<sup>7</sup>

And all I could tell this remarkable room of women was to please trust your work, to trust your [visual] voices. I wanted my eyes to say: Don't be afraid. Be honest. Courageous. Revolutionary. *Revelationary*. Speak to what matters to you most, express those concerns that manifest most urgently for you today. Trust yourselves to channel what we often fear the most: to be seen, to be heard, to take up space.

That night, in Muholi's absence, I conjured for them *Somnyama Ngonyama*—Muholi's intimate visual memoir, their growing archive of de-colonial, socially-engaged self-portraiture inspired by personal experiences and collective histories: a

visually seductive call to arms, a protective mantle, recapture, occupation, invitation. I explained that, for me, these portraits are, essentially, about courage—the courage to emerge, the courage to resist, the courage to exist, the courage to persist, the courage to insist; the courage to return the gaze, to look, to be looked at; the courage to see, to be seen: to stand in front of the camera, to "face" oneself.<sup>8</sup>

**PART IV – SHARING SPACE**

In the course of the next few days—Muholi began their six-week artist residency together with their collaborator, the photographer and journalist Lerato Dumse, and I joined for a short curatorial residency—we traversed many visual oceans together, in seminars and during several group and individual discussions.

We talked about *Without Sanctuary*, the horrific archive of lynching photography from the American South, and why I no longer show these images as freely as I used to, in lectures or talks. Together we reflected on how the circulation of images that depict bodies in distress or death may perpetuate a cycle of visual violence, and considered different strategies of resistance—including a discussion on how to avoid visually re-inscribing [trauma] onto the bodies of black and brown people, a sentiment WMM artist Andrea Walls continued to explore in her work.<sup>9</sup> We talked about counter archives. Family archives. About photographs "lost" in archives for decades, about the need for "different" eyes committed to their excavation from the vaults of oblivion... We talked about curatorial care, and curatorial responsibility.

We talked about memory, and forgetting. We spoke about friends and fellow artists practicing today, some celebrated, others not yet widely known—such as Marcia Michael, whose intimate portraits visualize the act of matrilineage through her own body and the body of her mother, an exercise in what I call "ancestral visual femininity;"<sup>10</sup> and multidisciplinary artist Phoebe Boswell, whose US debut exhibition I had just visited, who draws with a skill so remarkable it takes my breath away each time, and whose profound practice I wanted to share with the group to illustrate the work of an artist

reflecting on the rupture of her physical, spiritual, and emotional health, amplifying personal histories that—like her own, like theirs—ours—are so often systemically marginalized.<sup>11</sup> I also wanted to convey the curatorial pleasure I felt the day before, inspired and enveloped by the ultramarine, gold-leafed cocoon in the artist studio of Lina Iris Viktor, whose abstract paintings possess a unique visual cosmology so distinctively her own, so gloriously singular—and to share with the group Viktor's affirming spirit of resistance, her fearlessness to take a stand, to protect her rights and, by extension, the rights of other artists in the broader arts community. We spoke of the legendary queer photographer Lola Flash, and three decades of championing LGTBQIA+ visibility in photography, and her most recent portraits of pioneering women who de-segregated America's schools. I wanted everyone to know about Aida Silvestri, whose compelling practice, like Muholi's, is both deeply personal and acutely political, and operates skillfully in the contested terrains where art and advocacy meet, photography and human rights converse, courageously and creatively addressing critical conditions of our time.<sup>12</sup>

I was deeply touched when Andrea 'Philly' Walls taught me about the horrors of living memory as she spoke quietly about the police-engineered bomb attack that killed eleven people in a residential West Philadelphia neighborhood on May 13, 1985. In her eyes, haunted by the events surrounding the MOVE bombing, I saw the unspeakable pain of remembering a day when precious lives of adults and children were lost to a malicious act sanctioned by official bodies in charge of deadly explosives. Andrea's story expressed, so powerfully, and with such dignity, its lingering afterlife, its reverberations in the present.

Inspired by Muholi, we contemplated the relationship between different personal and collective traumas—inflicted by [the legacies of] apartheid, slavery, colonialism, or the ongoing institutions of sexism, racism, homophobia, or islamophobia; the experience of forced exile, displacement, poverty, poor education systems, or PTSD. Later on, after my departure, Lindeka Qampi—one of the WMM artist-mentors from

South Africa—would speak about using photography as a therapeutic tool to break the silences surrounding sexual violence, generously sharing with the group her personal narrative as a survivor of rape, and her striking self-portraiture.

We talked about the notion of home and belonging... and the importance of a shared language. Muholi introduced us to their mother tongue, isiZulu, with its intrinsic pronunciations, and clicking sounds, while reminding the group to always consider 5WiH, or the mantra 5 Ws and 1 How, when developing their projects. The abiding message: be specific, and forensic—and then turn the camera to what matters to you most, what you most fear, and most love.

**PART V – WOMEN'S MOBILE MUSEUM:  
STRUCTURAL AFFECTIVE LABOR**

In these conversations, a recurring theme emerged that seemed to connect all 10 artists of the *Women's Mobile Museum* program: gentrification. The distressing story of Muffy Ashley Torres's demolished family home became the genesis for the conceptual realization of the mobile museum's architectural structure: dominated by beams of hard word—construction timber, raw, untreated. No colors or patterns to distract from the art works the structures would hold, the natural hardwood contrasting with their high production values and dark-stained frames.

It was important, too, that the mobile museum design, which was developed in close collaboration with Philadelphia-based artist Petra Floyd, engaged as the project's set designer, was built in a way that evoked the white walls of a gallery to display each artist's works respectfully, yet also allowed for an openness in its structure—inviting a conversation with its surroundings, for the environment "occupied" to be seen... To dialogue with the space, its locale, and intricacies—at Juanita Park Boys and Girls Club, for instance, the checkerboard laminate, the suspended disco mirror ball, the glass vitrines full of sporting trophies, the stamps, nails, and remnants of colorful tape still clinging to its community walls; at Dixon House: the basketball hoops, gym floor markings, and exercise mats.



These temporary walls would not only hold the women's art in a framework that reflects the sense of gentrification and urban development each of the participants mentioned in their presentations, but also evokes the notion of identity-under-construction: a structural, intersecting conversation that is ever-evolving, often unfinished, shifting, and sometimes broken. Constantly in flux, fixed, unfixed: personally, culturally, psycho-socially. And finally, the structure would also reflect the idea of change, of transformation—because what is the purpose of creative practice if not to transform? To elicit the kind of affective labor necessary to touch, stir or shift something within us; to inspire us to feel, sense, act.

#### PART VI — THE WORKS

Three evocative self-portraits depict the artist Muffy Ashley Torres amidst the ruins of her family home destroyed by the collapse of a new development, crushed under the seismic waves generated by relentless neighborhood gentrification. Here she is, her body, wrapped in protective plastic sheets, precariously positioned between wooden beams; sitting on top of rubble, cradling a brick, contemplating the future; and, finally, resting on a silk patchwork blanket, surrounded by yellow cut [sun]flowers, brown skin warmly lit, arms wrapped around her body, caressing herself: a deeply personal tale of displacement, endurance, and perseverance.

A lone figure perched over a sink, water running from the tap behind, an orange comb burrowed at the nape, gently resting its teeth against the back of the neck, in a darkly lit kitchen—a hand raised high, turquoise fingernails, wrist adorned with a plethora of watches, each clock displaying a different hour, rendering time itself irrelevant... Danielle Morris's series *Larchwood* constitutes an intimate meditation on collective memory and survival, on blackness and being, presenting a portrait of home that is both uncanny and comforting—imparting that inheritance is more than the sum of our worldly possessions, but also an emotional, spiritual, and intellectual state of consciousness passed on through generations, imprinted in the skin, the sweat, the tears of our mothers and fathers.

PHOTO (RIGHT):  
Installation view of the *Women's Mobile Museum* at  
the Juniata Park Boys & Girls Club, September 2018.

In a series of self-portraits entitled *UNSAT*, Davelle Barnes, a US army veteran, explores the difficulties of serving under the discriminatory “don't ask, don't tell” policy, which between 1993 and 2011 prohibited qualified gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans from openly serving in the armed forces. Her work addresses post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), body politics, as well as the environmental impact of war. In one frame we encounter her semi-uniformed body recumbent on the ground, eyes half shut, gazing into the distance, a camouflage binder pressed against her naked chest; in another frame, a standing figure salutes their own reflection in a pool of oil surrounded by cracked slabs of concrete, as if seen through a broken mirror.

The small figure of a boy against a burning sky, hands in the air, triumphant; a photograph of a young man, the artist's late brother, on the shore, enveloped by the sea... a tale of family, of loss and love: glimpses into Carrie-Anne Shimborski's personal-poetic archive urge us to cherish those closest to us and to remember, always. Because forgetting equals death, and if nothing else, a photograph can promise [visual] immortality...

In Shana-Adina Roberts' disquiet portraits of friends and lovers, layers of light illuminate intimate encounters, rendering fleeting presences as visible markers of our existence and togetherness. Trees become alive through movement, texture, and feeling. In the confinement of the home, Roberts' camera unveils, and obscures—protects, deflects. It reveals back to us, in the irradiated eyes, lips, and skin of Roberts and her kin, the passionate turmoil of being/seeing, at once acutely present and painfully absent. *Black Incandescence*.

In a world where you are deemed invisible, you have to become your own muse: this sentiment, recalling the words of Mexican painter Frida Kahlo<sup>3</sup>, is evoked powerfully by afaq's insistence to will herself—her Sudanese, queer, Muslim self—into visibility, fortified by eloquently written, hard-hitting poetry, words trembling with desire: “to love the world until it loves her back.”<sup>14</sup> Disarmingly close-up, unapologetic, and unafraid to be vulnerable and powerful; defiantly returning the



gaze, or directing her focus elsewhere, this exquisite face is framed only by afaq's own, piercing eyes. To give yourself permission to be seen, to become the representation you long to see. Beauty and desire, pain and survival.

Iris Maldonado steps inside the frame, literally, in a body of courageous self-portraits produced to embrace a new vision of womanhood that contemplate the newly found freedom offered by imag[in]ing herself through the photographic lens. With passion, and without boundaries: liberated, emancipated, yet devoted and undivorced from her role as mother and carer. The camera becomes a healing aid to practice self-care, to help release the embodied knowledge carried within, locked away by years of emotional abuse that perpetually makes women believe that they are not [good] “enough:” femininity stripped bare, unvarnished, accentuated only by flowers and soil, nature and nurture.

*Railroaded*: a ghostly figure shrouded in white walking along train tracks, a solitary spectre from another time and place: Andrea Walls' compassionate eye conjures the past to comment on distressing socio-cultural politics unfolding in the present. Here, the camera serves as a trusted accomplice in an attempt to process the ongoing violence inflicted against people, against the environment: the global experiences of forced displacement of both human and animal populations. Each portrait a scripted act of resistance, Walls' composite/disembodied images beg the question: how do we expect our children to grow up sane, when we continuously encourage them to, in her words, “play at death, play at war, play at rape, play at murder? As a nation what kind of humanity do we preach, when we allow families to be torn apart at borders, incarcerated, disappeared?”<sup>15</sup>

These charged, constructed images are underscored by the immediacy of Tash Billington's uplifting documentary photographs from her *Philly Natives* series, portraying "ordinary" people—friends, lovers, neighbors, strangers, passers-by—as local warriors and everyday heroes, their portraits proclaiming, in a language of which only the camera is capable, that their lives *matter*, and that even if society at large may not always recognize them, that they are seen.

Similarly, Shasta Bady focuses her lens on commuters in what she describes as "a love affair with constant motion and the unknown."<sup>16</sup> For Bady, the train symbolizes a sense of independence and inherently, freedom: the freedom to be mobile, to transition from one space to the next, while also acknowledging that for many years unrestricted access to public transportation was historically denied to people of color in a racially segregated America. Her candid portraits reveal a group of strangers united by collective movement, quietly celebrating a space of diversity and individuality without judgement, or interference.

#### PART VII — IN CLOSING: WHO IS ART?

Freedom: the freedom to create, the freedom to speak, the freedom to heal. The freedom to return, to disrupt and disarm [the gaze]. The freedom to be. The freedom to allow yourself a voice you never heard/had before—the freedom to acknowledge that, as Audre Lorde has said, "your silence will not protect you."<sup>17</sup> The freedom to speak from a space where we are recognized fully as human beings with rights, the freedom to articulate ourselves, without fear of being judged or told that we are not "good enough." The freedom to say "we want to be counted" [in history]. The freedom to transgress, to change one's mind, one's body, one's gender, one's pronoun, one's name. The freedom to choose your family, build alliances, form collectives, to inspire future generations, to become the women/humans who will change history... the freedom to be seen, to be heard, to be respected; the freedom to say: I exist. The freedom to penetrate spaces—to exhibit inside the ivory towers of national museums, and display our work outside those confines, too. The freedom to imagine many possible futures.

These "freedoms" are threads from many conversations with Muholi over the years. The freedom to create: On May 2, 2018, when we gathered in Philadelphia to meet the participants of the *Women's Mobile Museum* for the first time, I encouraged Muholi to create a new, overdue portrait for *Somnyama Ngonyama*. That same afternoon, there and then, we continued a tradition that began in London in 2014... Inhabiting several of my pleated garments, Muholi created *Bester IX, Philadelphia, 2018*: their eyes beckoning, knowingly, seductively, daringly, from inside the circular aluminum studio light lamp shade held on their face. In this evocation—a provocation, a request, and a challenge—I see above all an invitation, in their eyes, to commit.

Muholi's vision for this program was "to work with a group of humans—producing photographs on us, by us, for us"<sup>18</sup>, and to create a space of agency where each participant can find their own voice, in an environment that is safe and supportive. Visual language, like any other language, is dangerous—and vulnerable. One of the great privileges of my work as a curator and scholar has been to collaborate with allied friends and colleagues at the intersection of art, culture, and social justice, to nurture platforms where photography as a medium, and the camera as a tool, can become curative, pleasurable instruments of remediation: channeling complex emotions and associations into transformative, creative encounters, undoing centuries of visual violence inflicted, in particular, on black and brown, female, non-binary and trans bodies; bodies deemed "other," locked for too long in unequal epistemes of power, and troubling ontologies of "difference." The challenge going forward is to sustain this freedom, and to infuse it with visual agency and visual pleasure—as advocates, as producers, as witnesses.

It has been an honor to play a small part in the realization of the *Women's Mobile Museum*, and I am grateful for the opportunity to offer my curatorial support to the artists, to Muholi, and to Lori Waselchuk, the program's coordinator who has been shepherding the project with such care and expertise for the past 12 months. Four gallery iterations, four museum interventions, five artist

portfolios now held in permanent public and private collections, and a printed publication: the program's success is a testament to everyone's deep commitment, dedication beyond professional obligation; leadership, guidance, friendship.

The *Women's Mobile Museum's* legacy will be as a necessary project of Collective Care across geopolitical or socio-cultural boundaries: the care that fueled its conception, the care invested in the art it produced, and the care extended to one another in the process, in solidarity, as caring "acts of political warfare."<sup>19</sup> In the spirit of Audre Lorde, I urge you all to keep dismantling the [master's] house. "Who is Art?" You Are: afaq. Andrea. Carrie. Danielle. Davelle. Iris. Lindeka. Muffy. Muholi. Shana. Shasta. Tash.

Thank You.

Renée Mussai  
London, December 2018



Renée Mussai and Zanele Muholi outside the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center in May 2018. Photo by Lerato Dumse

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See *Mothering Blackness Supreme: Renée Mussai in Conversation with Lina Iris Viktor*, in: *A Heaven. A Hell. A Dream Deferred*. Edited by Allison K. Young. Skira Editions: Milano, 2019. Page 68.

<sup>2</sup> de Beauvoir, Simone (1963). *The Force of Circumstance*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Penguin Books: London, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> See also: Mason, Rowena, (Jan 5, 2018). *Institutional' male bias in government's art collection, says Labour* <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/jan/05/institutional-male-bias-in-governments-art-collection-says-labour>. Sherwin, Adam (Sept 24, 2018). *Government Art Collection buys up female artists to correct historic 'male bias'* <https://inews.co.uk/culture/arts/government-art-collection-buys-up-female-works-to-correct-historic-male-bias/>.

<sup>4</sup> Rf. Gorrill, Helen (Aug 13, 2018). *Are female artists worth collecting? Tate doesn't seem to think so* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/13/tate-female-artists-museum-diversity-acquisitions-art-collect>.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Sealy, Director of Autograph, has written extensively about the relationship between photography and human rights, frequently citing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in relation to photographic practices and 'race'. See for example, his curatorial project and accompanying publication, *Human Rights, Human Wrongs*, first presented at the Ryerson Image Center in Toronto, Canada (January 23–April 14, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> waheed, nayyirah (2013). *salt*. Printed by Amazon in Great Britain. Page 98 and ff

<sup>7</sup> Sharpe, Christina (2016). *In The Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press: Durham and London. Page 17, and 132/33. In the last line of the citation, "as part and as crowd", Sharpe quotes the French thinker Édouard Glissant.

<sup>8</sup> See also *Archive of The Self: Renée Mussai in Conversation with Zanele Muholi*. In: *Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail The Dark Lioness*. Aperture, New York. First edition 2018.

<sup>9</sup> See also Andrea Walls artist statement. Page 19.

<sup>10</sup> I am currently developing the term 'Visual feminitude' in my research in relation to afrodiasporic visual culture. *Feminitude* is a blending of terms that suggests both the ideological influence of negritude, and a universal feminism, as defined by French-Cameroonian writer Calixthe Beyala, and adapted by Trinh T. Minh-Ha as 'reactive feminism'. See *Calixthe Beyala: Performances of Migration*, by Nicki Hitchcott, p.26. (University of Chicago Press: 2012); and Trinh Minh-ha, *Bold Omissions and Minute Depictions*, in: Bhavnani, Kum-Kum (ed), *Feminism and 'Race'*, p. 163. (Oxford University Press: 2001).

<sup>11</sup> I am partially quoting here from my curatorial introductory wall text panel and artist biography profile panel from *Phoebe Boswell: The Space Between Things* at Autograph, London (14 December 2018–30 March 2019).

<sup>12</sup> For further reading, see also Mussai, Renée (2017), *Aida Silvestri: Even This Will Pass/Unsterile Clinic*. Autograph, London.; and Mussai, Renée (2017), *Eyes That Commit*, in: *Lola Flash: 1986 to Present*. Pen+Brush, New York.

<sup>13</sup> Frida Kalo: *I am my own muse, I am the subject I know best. The subject I want to know better.*

<sup>14</sup> See also afaq artist bio. Page 188.

<sup>15</sup> The artist speaking at panel discussion 'Making Space: Leeway @25', 20 September 2018. *Conversations@Moore*, produced in partnership with the Leeway Foundation, Philadelphia Photo Arts Center and The Galleries at Moore. Moore College of Art & Design, Philadelphia.

<sup>16</sup> See also Shasta Bady artist statement. Page 129.

<sup>17</sup> Lorde, Audre—"My silences had not protected me. Your silences will not protect you", from *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action* Republished in: *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. Silver Press, London: 2017.

<sup>18</sup> See in this publication, p. 103 *Renée Mussai in Conversation with Zanele Muholi: On Women's Mobile Museum: Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*. London and Durban, November/December 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Lorde, Audre (1988). *A Burst of Light, Essays*. London; Sheba Feminist Publishers.

WMM Founder  
and Lead Artist

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Right: Cebo I,  
West Philadelphia, 2018

# Zanele Muholi

*Somnyama Ngonyama  
Hail The Dark Lioness*

I'm reclaiming my blackness, which I feel  
is continuously performed by the privileged other.



## Artist Statement

These portraits were produced during a six-week residency with the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center. They form part of their ongoing series of black and white self-portraits *Somnyama Ngonyama* (meaning ‘Hail, the Dark Lioness’), which confront and challenge the politics of race in the photographic archive.

In contrast to their life-long project of documenting members of the black LGBTQIA+ community of South Africa, for this body of work Muholi turns the camera on herself. The self-portraits in the series are taken while traveling in South Africa, America, Asia, and Europe; they reference fine art portraiture and fashion photography, using a range of materials and every-day objects. In their own words,

*“Experimenting with different characters and archetypes, I have portrayed myself in highly stylised fashion using the performative and expressive language of theatre. My face becomes the focal point, forcing the viewer to question their desire to gaze at images of my black figure. By highlighting the contrast of my skin tone, I’m reclaiming my blackness, which I feel is continuously performed by the privileged other.”*



Bester III, Philadelphia, 2018



Mald, Philadelphia, 2018

Renée Mussai in Conversation  
with Zanele Muholi:

NOVEMBER/  
DECEMBER 2018

## On Women's Mobile Museum: *Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*

**RENÉE MUSSAI:** You were initially offered an artist residency at the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center (PPAC), yet, instead of simply accepting the opportunity to be in residence, you proposed a year-long multifaceted mentoring and apprenticeship project to benefit a constituency of aspiring women artists. What made you do so?

**ZANELE MUHOLI:** I accepted the residency but with a specific goal in mind: to open it up to other women who I know are deserving but cannot necessarily access such spaces, even though their work might be on par with established artists. Several factors—including lack of funding, knowledge about opportunities, support, et cetera—tend to keep them shut out. I felt it would be more meaningful to enable them with exposure, and be introduced to other photographers, experts such as journalists and curators, and spaces such as galleries and museums. The idea was to learn through field trips, provide access to professionals, learn how to write proposals, showcase, curate, market, and sell their work. It helps to be educated about art history, which is not offered to many members of my community.

**RM:** While the *Women's Mobile Museum* (WMM) is a debut in the US, in terms of collaborative community based practice, this is not the first time you have instituted an outreach program to benefit others. We have spoken on several occasions about your long-standing commitment to open doors and unlock places—especially within the so-called “art world,” a space too often out of reach for many from complex socio-economic and culturally or sexually diverse backgrounds.

**ZM:** Yes, it isn't the first time I have done this. My convictions are informed by my own direct experiences: historically, we—as black people—have a disenfranchised and painful past. Immersing myself in visual arts has been therapeutic. Being able to start reversing the effects of inadequately archived or undocumented black visual history is a cathartic way of healing wounds, while at the same time claiming those inaccessible spaces.

**RM:** Your outreach focus is usually on women, and members of LGBTQIA+ communities—I am thinking of FEW, the Forum for the Empowerment of Women, for instance, or the queer media platform Inkanyiso; you were instrumental in setting up both organizations. So in many ways, I think opening up your practice to others constitutes an integral aspect of your socially engaged practice as a Visual Activist.

**ZM:** Yes. I like to stress that I do not work alone, and that the principle of collaboration guides my work. I have turned my home into a hub for queer writers, especially for those individuals featured in my works. Community leadership was important to me at a time when the queer South African community was witnessing an epidemic of hate crimes, “curative” rapes, and brutal murders—that's when I decided that visibility and having a voice mattered. My first opportunity at empowering others was in 2004, when I trained fourteen black lesbians in photography. *WomensNet* offered us a space in which to exhibit our works... The inaugural exhibition was entitled *Indawo Yami*—meaning, *My Place/Environment*, since the theme was for them

to photograph their experiences and surroundings. I continued to train [the women], and we produced two calendars, in 2006 and 2007 respectively, under the auspice of the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), which I co-founded. Although confidence was growing, I realized that there weren't any positive visuals of black lesbians in the mainstream media, and so I started *Inkanyiso*, which translates from isiZulu to "light" or "illumination." *Inkanyiso* has become the voice and visual documenting the existence of the everyday black lesbian [in South Africa]; the organization has since grown and we have facilitated, trained, and collaborated at home and beyond.

RM: Has the community-based work felt different in the United States—and if so, how did the experience differ between here [Philadelphia], and there [Durban, Cape Town, or Johannesburg]?

ZM: Well, geography certainly doesn't change shared concerns, but if I were to speak on anything, I would say language was perhaps a barrier for me, because sometimes I cannot articulate as passionately in English as I would if I were delivering in Zulu... I think in Zulu and emote with my whole body—which may sometimes be perceived as aggressive or/and make people feel uncomfortable, but that's not the intent. We are just emotive with our expressions, as people. Other professionals who were present in Philadelphia for the project helped bridge that gap.

RM: Please tell me a little more about your vision for the *Women's Mobile Museum*—what did you have in mind when you first suggested the idea?

ZM: My vision was that a group of women are given access—to resources, to people, and to share knowledge and be able to create without worrying about affordability, or feeling that they were being boxed in. That way I felt they would be able to express themselves through photography with sincerity and authenticity.

RM: As the name implies, the program was aimed at women exclusively, but I also know from our conversations that first and foremost your desire was to "work with a group of humans."

ZM: Yes, I was comfortable to express myself and name the project that way, although my own preferred pronouns are *they/them*. I wanted it to feel inclusive, yet specific at the same time.

RM: I remember the day in May 2018 when you and Lerato [Dumse] arrived in Philadelphia from South Africa, and met the 10 participants for the first time at PPAC's education studio. I had already been here for 24 hours, and the night before had witnessed their deeply moving presentations. Everyone was anticipating your arrival. You were warm, open... and the group seemed to relax in your presence very quickly. How did it feel, to see your vision realized, embodied, if you will, by this incredible "group of humans" gathered to meet you?

ZM: That day, I was so jet lagged, and I was also recovering from an illness, hence I was a bit drained. 2018 had not been a good year for me, as I also lost some loved ones and was in mourning... When I walked into that room, however, I met people with great energy who were welcoming, and I felt it healed my wounds. Being amongst people who looked like me, sharing the space, made me feel at home.





*Sizwe I, Philadelphia, 2018*



*Isiqhaza I, Philadelphia, 2018*

RM: This was evident, and lovely to see... That night I was blown away not only by their courage, and their talent, but also by how different and yet how committed to one another the women were. This, I believe, has been one of the key strengths of the program—the kind of collective spirit, support and care that has become a pillar for the WMM artists, extending far beyond the shared space of art-making...

ZM: That was precisely the point of starting the *Women's Mobile Museum*. The idea was to bring people from different walks of life who share a common cause into the same space to share their experiences. We call this *Ubuntu* in South Africa—a spirit of humanity that is ingrained in us. We believe that *umuntu, ngumuntu ngabantu*, literally meaning “a person is a person who thrives through, or because of, others (community).” I am because we are.

RM: Beautiful. Several things happened that week, in May 2018: seeing you work with afaq on her first self-portraits was inspiring and wonderful to witness. That same week, you and I worked together on staging a new portrait for *Somnyama Ngonyama*—you wrapping yourself in my pleats, once again. Three “Bester” portraits emerged, and several other images, too. Can you speak a little about these works, please?

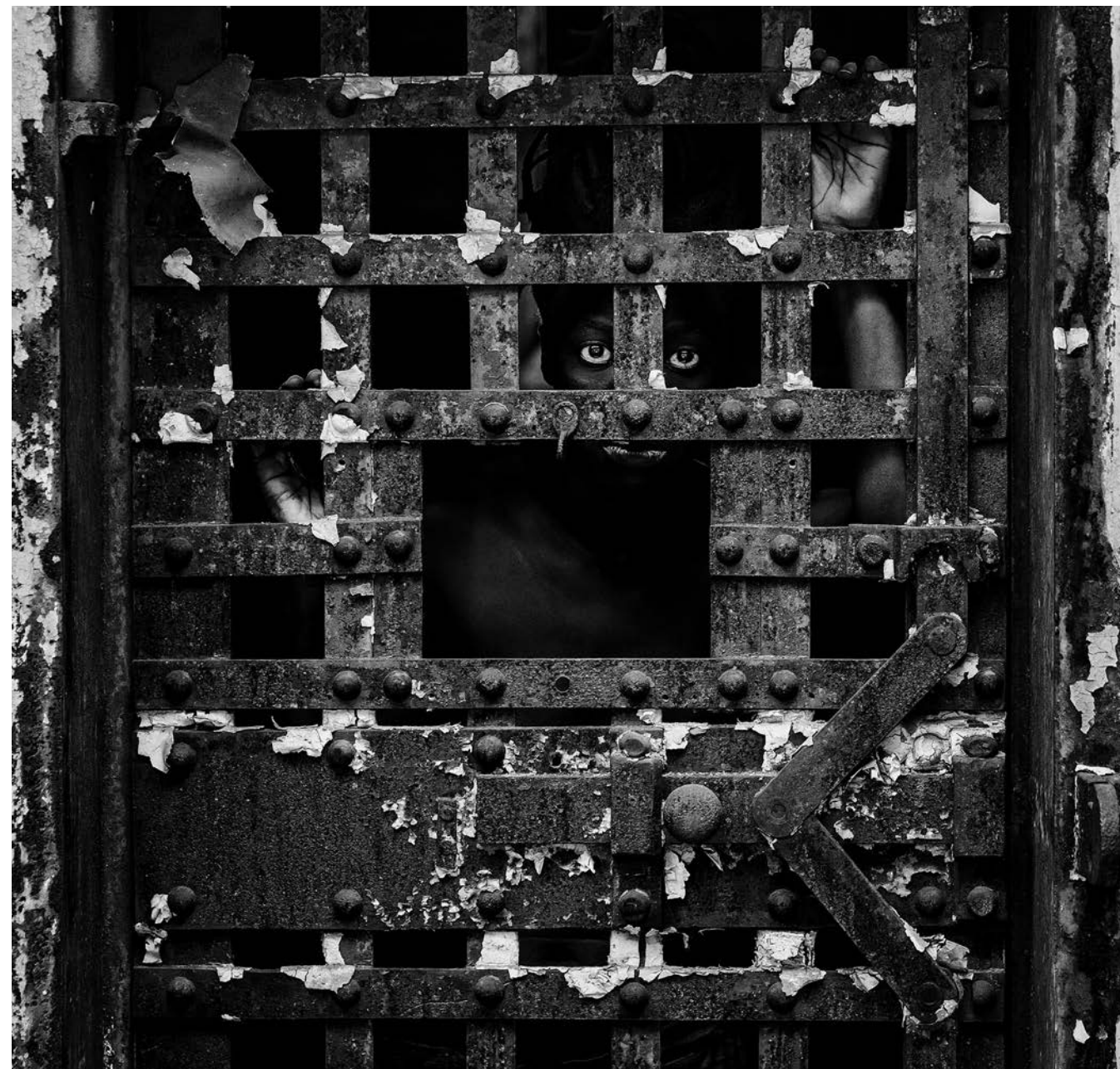
ZM: Bester [Muholi] is my late mother's name (1936–2009). I go everywhere with her spirit. As I have mentioned, 2018 had already been a challenging year for me and all I could think of throughout was the rock that was my mom. I feel challenged as I try to respond to this question... It almost feels like I am coming out again. It makes me think of my ancestors and where they have walked, and what they have endured. Those pictures are a reincarnation of my mother: *I am her and she is me*. She lives in me forever. Whenever I cannot sleep or am contemplating deeply, she shows up for me. She is the woman whom I love the most. I get deep in conversation with her whenever I am in awe, or upset. She is the one whose story was never told because she was black and poor—a domestic

worker, a breadwinner, and a single mother of eight. She lost her husband, my dad, when I was only a few months old. I feel the need to speak his name as well: Tanji Aswell Mahone, a Malawian tradesman who came to South Africa to work and faced xenophobia, racism, and many other unjust experiences.

But, without speaking in depth about my late parents, who are referenced extensively in *Somnyama Ngonyama*, this is my way of encouraging every person to value their voice, their visual narratives, and create content that speaks to them; to acknowledge their roots, their families; and to recognize the worthiness of their black bodies in many spaces... By that I mean how black existence contributes to our economies. Black bodies are at ‘work’ all the time—engaging in research projects, experimental initiatives, in galleries, universities, laboratories, as artists, thinkers, and intellectuals. It then boggles my mind why those in positions of power do not acknowledge us positively... It saddens me and makes me want to work harder to bridge the gap on both sides.

RM: Which is why we must continue to work tirelessly for the cause. Can you speak a little about the six-week artist residency between May and June 2018—were there any activities that you felt were particularly inspiring for yourself and/or the program—turning points, perhaps, or defining moments?

ZM: The fact that I was already burdened because of illness and grief made my time in Philadelphia somewhat challenging, but, nonetheless, it was an experience that I enjoyed. I particularly cherished visiting The Colored Girls Museum, as it is a concept I would like to see for my community in South Africa. I also enjoyed capturing portraits under the bridge, where I worked with Andrea Walls and Lindeka Qampi.



MalD VII, Philadelphia, 2018





Zona I, Philadelphia, 2018

RENÉE MUSSAI IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ZANELE MUHOLI  
(cont'd)

**RM:** I understand that bringing together friends and allies with different skills, sharing expertise and experience and, crucially, continuously learning from and with one another was a critical aspect for your vision for program.

**ZM:** It's very important for people to know that I don't work alone. *Ubuntu* guides my work philosophy. Most of my visual activism projects are done with the collective—Inkanyiso.org. And yes—for WMM, I wanted to work with two artists whose cause is closely aligned with our own: PhotoXP co-facilitators Lindeka Qampi, and Lerato Dumse. They both came on board with a lot of expertise. [Dumse] is a young South African photojournalist; she has produced and edited a number of articles for *Inkanyiso* and is the proprietor of *DuLove Media*. [Qampi] is a South African award-winning photographer and mother of four, who shared her experience living as black female photographer in South Africa. She has also presented a personal narrative of being a survivor of sexual violence, sharing how photography became the vehicle to her healing.

**RM:** We spoke at length during one of the seminars at PPAC about how different traumas affect us as individuals in different spaces—the trauma of everyday micro/macro aggressions in relation to sexism, domestic or cultural violence, mental health and well-being, poverty, displacement, homophobia, xenophobia—whether channeled through the apartheid system, systematic discrimination, or the kind of institutionalized racism ingrained in American and other societies globally. One of the big questions you posed to the group was how one might share space, collectively process emotional trauma, and support each other.

**ZM:** Yes, and the response led me to understand that the black experience of oppression is just as daunting everywhere, and that the resulting traumas, although varied, are similar. Expressing oneself through visual arts has led many to finding a voice that says: *I am here, I exist, and you will acknowledge me.*

**RM:** One of the notions we continuously return to in our ongoing conversations is freedom: The freedom to create, the freedom to be seen, to be heard, to be respected, acknowledged. The freedom to “infiltrate” spaces one might have never imagined to be yours to occupy. It's so important that these women's voices are heard, that the “art world” recognizes them, acknowledges their existence.

**ZM:** Yes, you are correct. More so especially in these trying times where racism, sexism, patriarchy, xenophobia, queerphobia, homophobia are rife. We need to create meaningful artworks that are human rights-based to make a difference...

**RM:** What do you envision as the legacy for the *Women's Mobile Museum*?

**ZM:** For me, its legacy is to empower black human beings and people of color in Philadelphia, especially those in need of visual literacy, and to foster arts activism across the USA and beyond. Hopefully, the participants will go on to show their works, write books, and be able to market their work, thus generating an income for themselves and teaching others. I hope to see the WMM exhibition(s) travel, and to see more collaborations between different institutions and amongst participants.

**RM:** Anything else you would like to share, before we close?

**ZM:** I would like to just say let us share the knowledge without fear of being vilified or losing anything. Let us share brilliance, let us share wealth, let us publish more books featuring the works of black people by black people—for us, by us, on us—for posterity.

# Davelle Barnes

*UNSAT*

---

A veteran artist on a mission.

*UNSAT* is a visual response to the racist, body-shaming rules and regulations I was subjected to during my time in the United States Army. This body of work developed as a collaboration between artists Lindeka Qampi, Zanele Muholi, and myself. As we navigated through the gentrified blocks of Kensington, Lower Northeast Philadelphia, I was reminded of the rapid construction of military forward operating bases in Afghanistan; it felt as though the war was following me.

In the photograph entitled *Personal Statement*, I appear cold and detached; my body on the ground, chest covered only by my camouflage binder. This image represents the silence of having served under the discriminatory Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT) policy, which between 1993 and 2011 prohibited qualified gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans from openly serving in the armed forces. In *Present Sky*, I salute to signal to the world: black women are participating in war at record numbers despite the public perception created by the mainstream media which favors hero stories about white men. *Oil and Concrete* is a reflective portrait to illustrate the 'hurry up and wait' culture of the military, and the environmental impact of war. *Front Leaning Rest* symbolizes the strength and resilience to keep pushing despite battling with P.T.S.D..

**POETRY:**  
Davelle Barnes

**Soldier No Longer**

And one day  
packing  
leads to  
panic attack.

You are an expert at  
stuffing and packing  
no longer.

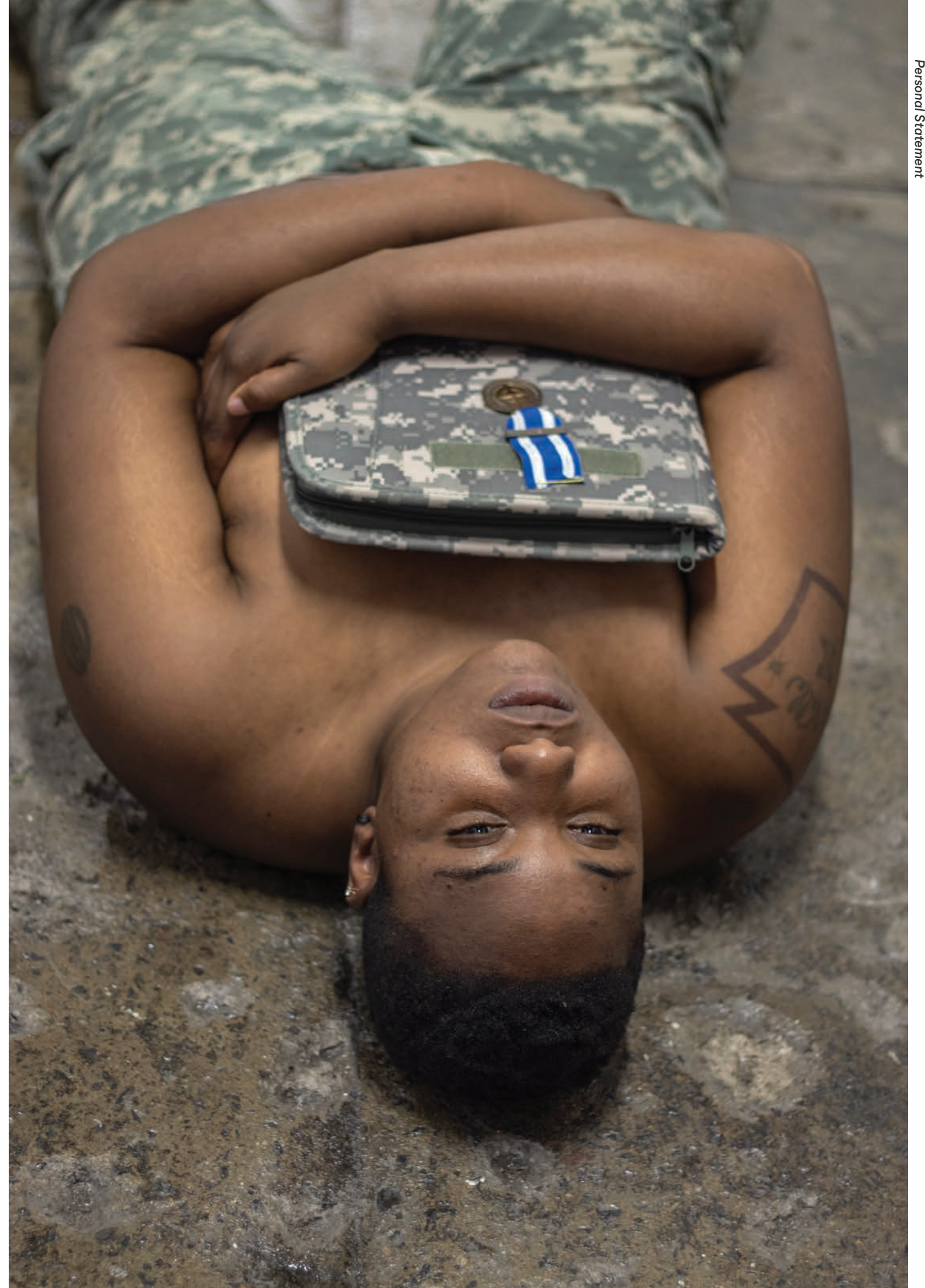
You trade in your  
M16 for a camera  
and an ink pen.

Here there  
are no enemy combatants.

Just art and community.

Just your conscience  
and freewill.

You are a soldier,  
no longer.



**Too Often**

Too often  
we soldiers  
discover  
we are breakable  
for the first time  
in Anesthesia,  
we wake up  
stitched together with  
the fibers  
of our past beliefs.

Too often  
us soldiers  
don't realize  
the woman  
in the middle of the road  
has a soul  
until we return home  
and can no longer  
find our own.

Too often  
We as soldiers  
don't notice  
we have a story  
until we read  
many others  
that move our eyes  
maybe even our lips  
but never touching home.

That will always be warzone.

Too often  
us soldiers  
have unpacking to do,  
have duffels lasting  
longer than our love ones.  
Stuffed with regrets  
heavy and enduring.  
Carrying sorrow  
well beyond  
our service obligation.

Too many soldiers  
posses gifts  
drilled out of our  
feet and skulls  
in the name of discipline,  
valor and the science  
of military psychology.

Too often  
the rhetoric  
outlined in  
the uniformed code of military  
justice  
punishes our humanity  
in the spirit of freedom.

Too often. Too many. Too much.



Present Sky



Front Leaning Rest



Oil and Concrete

# Lindeka Qampi

*Inside My Heart*

Using different art forms—poetry,  
lens-based media, and visual arts—to create  
a dialogue around self-expression.



# Artist Statement

**RECOMMENDS:**  
*Julius Caesar* by  
William Shakespeare

**FAVORITE SONG:**  
“Asimbonanga (Mandela)” by  
Sipho Mchunu and Johnny Clegg

My work addresses the experiences of violence. I use visual poetry as a tool to break the silence of being a survivor of rape. I turn the lens onto myself in order to manage past experiences and emotions, which I have tried to suppress psychologically.

I am using different art forms—poetry, lens-based media, and visual arts—to create a dialogue around self-expression, as both a form of therapy and a way of zooming out my voice to the voiceless survivors who are still facing fears of violence. I use props in my images to highlight the gravity of the subject matter; recycling as a metaphor of bringing back life and creating a space of dignity for identity expression.

This latest work is a continuation of a series of images developed through my ongoing exploration of self-portraiture.



Amunxaba



*Idyolo Lolahleko*





Umthwalo II



Umthwalo I

# Shasta Bady

*As Above, So Below*

It's a love affair with constant motion and the unknown...

*As Above, So Below* is a sanguine study of public transportation in the city of Philadelphia—a photographic exploration of its architecture, its passengers, in a space of continuous movement.

SEPTA serves a diverse community of riders. Access to Philadelphia's public transportation system is today open to a majority of the population—with the exception of people with disabilities, who still cannot access every station.

As a black woman simultaneously riding and documenting, I see another aspect that links my present occupation of the trains to our history of segregation. Access to public transportation was denied to people of color: a series of Supreme Court decisions have dictated who can ride and where to. Thirty years after the Civil War, the Withdraw Car Act of 1890 was the first official law mandating segregation on trains in Louisiana. In 1896, Plessy

vs. Ferguson upheld racial segregation laws for public facilities, and more than half a century later in 1954, *Brown vs. the Board of Education* decided that "separate facilities are inherently unequal." In 1956 the Supreme Court finally ruled that segregation on public buses and transportation was against the law.

I am a daily passenger. No ride is ever the same. The trains give me a sense of independence. The trains are consistent, they run on a schedule. What I don't know is what I will experience or whom I will encounter on each journey. It's a love affair with constant motion and the unknown... and meeting new people whose lives would otherwise not intersect with mine.





Thousands  
Previous page: East/West



Hollywood

**POETRY:**  
Shasta Bady

**Accident**

It only took 31,649 lbs of spinning metal  
Through cotton & flesh  
A literal knock  
Of Sense

And sight

four rubber tires  
Opening,  
Now closing,  
my own *doors*

The timed doors  
The electric voice  
The kinetic energy of  
100 passengers  
Steel meeting steel and  
train cars uncouple like marriage

In the midst of madness  
Chasing it is not recommended

Alter the playing field  
& *I prefer a life of watermelons over watercress.*

grasp nothing for too long

Here in these cars...  
Reverence & resource  
are partners for survival

Someone's exit is another person's  
Entrance  
Into  
Alternate routes

Here in these cars...

We carried nothing  
and now, heavy

We are here

Muslimah

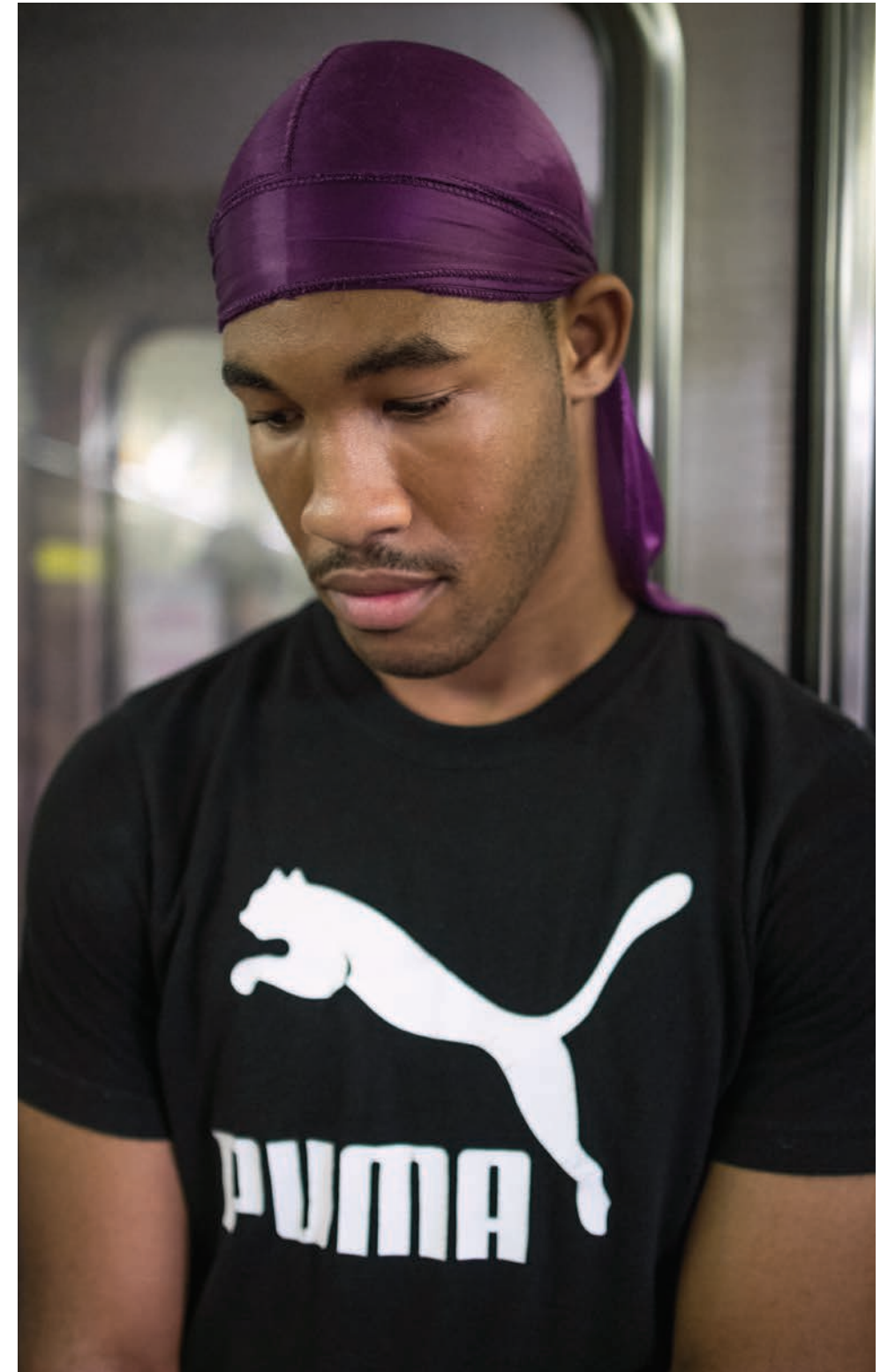




Curio-Child of Eshu



Velvet



Hari sulit



Frankford Sunset



FIELD NOTES

—a poem of passengers

like the needle/he made  
time for what he could.

So young and full of life, she can't afford school,  
What happens to her  
Passion

Curious and awkward  
He decided to participate.

Fearless  
Committed,  
preserved vulnerability.  
He was lovely to touch  
And  
Unable to grasp.

He carries  
Emotions  
Tries to run from  
Holding  
the most unstable treasure.  
His son.

POETRY:  
Shasta Bady

Mother died without anyone.  
They will never be the same.

Essentials for survival:  
Powerful in stature,  
Selling his body  
Cloaked  
in hopelessness

Innocent  
Exhausted  
Cradled against her  
Shoulder without  
Reservation  
In deep  
Sleep  
Loud conversations  
Bolstering boom box  
Emergency vehicles  
She slept peacefully

Cigarettes and alcohol  
some relief  
Until love arrives



# Carrie-Anne Shimborski

*Thirty-Seven*

---

The best thing about a picture is that it never  
changes, even when the people in it do.

— *Andy Warhol*

These photos are part of my personal-poetic archive, glimpses of the men I love and the places I treasure. They represent my own time capsules. My brother Peske, whom I lost to addiction. My lover Delmar, who loves me, or loves me not. My son, Luca, my forever love... reminding me on the daily to capture as much as humanly possible. The river is my peace. Sunsets appear painted by hand, skies with colors so fierce they calm the storm within.



Sterling Paper Co.



*Delmar's Den*



*Bank Avenue*



*Peske Tide*

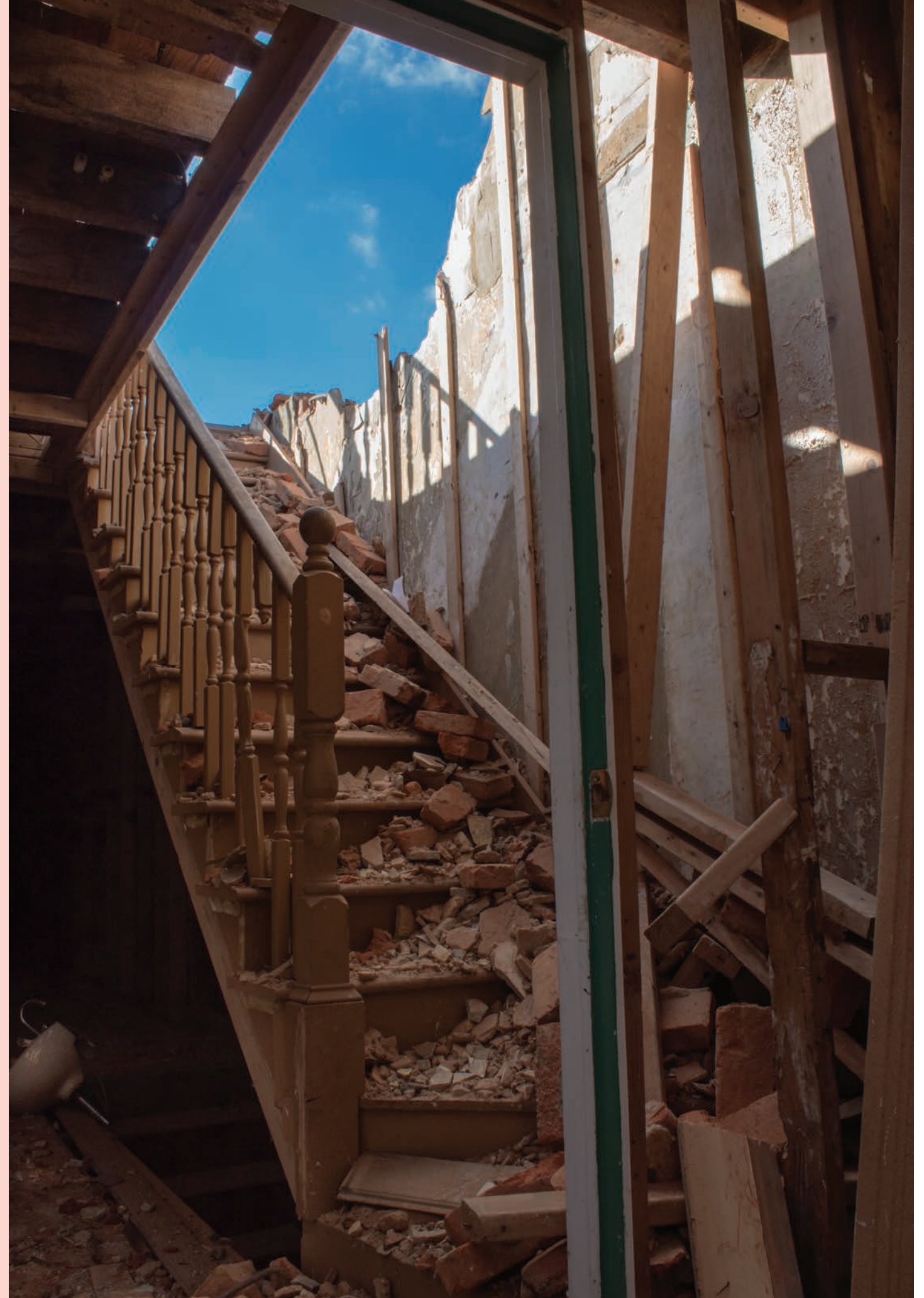


*Sunset Kid*

# Muffy Ashley Torres

*Fundación Fuerte*

Love is a genetic force that flows through  
my veins and allows me to walk this earth  
in abundance, even in heartache.



# Artist Statement

INFLUENCED BY:  
Priya Kambli

SUSTAINED BY:  
My mother's love

For my family, loss has been a recurrent theme. Shortly after losing our beloved abuela, we also lost our home. A development collapsed onto our family house and made it uninhabitable. Our house was home to many and its doors were always open. Mama Agustina taught us to share by taking in loved ones and those who needed more love. This work is dedicated to her.

Within this pain, we are aware of how privileged we still are. Since Hurricane Maria struck Puerto on September 20, 2018, our extended family has also felt extreme loss. Loss of property, electricity, and resources, but they hold on with an incredible amount of hope. I want to honor their experiences, as well as our own.

Living in separate housing, we are displaced. Now, our home has been demolished. We intend to rebuild, despite the aggressive offers to buy our land. My family is among many who are resisting to sell to those who prey on lower income neighborhoods in order to make profit.

These photos channel the emotions of our entire family's resistance.



Mami y Papi





Pre-Owned



Homeland

# Beast Within

WRITING &  
PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Muffy Ashley Torres

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Below: Gutted



*Pain is a siren with no stop button, a ravenous beast within,  
eating away at all my good parts, leaving just crumbs*

When I excuse myself for the first time, it burns. When I explain that I have lupus, I feel my skin peel to expose a vulnerability over which I have no control. Once exposed, I am stamped with a permanent identifier of being “sick.” I am no longer dependable, which is sometimes true. Especially when the beast feasts. Confined in my bed, I push everyone away as my will to get up and fight fades.

*Because my pain is furious and relentless,  
I try my best to rise above it  
Only to fall over, undoing all the rest and letting  
it feed once again*

Maybe it is just an internalized perception, but after I tell most people about the struggle, they reduce me to a simplistic understanding of being “sick.” And once they do, the vicious cycle begins. It happens in the realms of my family, work, and creative life. This is when I re-enter the ring and work 10 times harder to prove my identity apart from my diagnosis. Because my pain causes me to miss so much, I feel the need to catch up at an unreasonable pace. Inevitably, I crash.

*Picking myself back up gets tiring  
and others rarely understand what it takes,  
In a society that values productivity above all else,  
my worth is null.*

How do you deal with a person who cries as much as I do?  
You turn up the volume on your headphones and look away.

How do you profit from my pain? You monetize any healing that I deem necessary and guilt me when I cannot afford it. My healing should not be dependent on whether I can make it to all of the appointments I have set up this week. My pain should be understood by the doctors who doubt me. Healthcare should be accessible, without jumping through hoops with walking cane in hand. How hard is it to listen without inflicting more pain?

*If only people could be kind,  
without being condescending,  
If they could open their hearts,  
without pointing fingers to blame.*

Instead of offering another diet I cannot afford, you can help me lift this up the stairs. Instead of making me pity-porn or your resilient poster child, give me credit where it is due. I am more than my pain. I am not this gnawing beast. Once you choose to understand, you realize how the cycle hurts. There is this constant pressure to make something. Deadlines, meetings, sacrifices, and money all to exhaust me into another flare up. That is when I turn to art.

*I gather what's left and bury it deep,  
tend and work to heal all else.  
When the rain clears and siren fades, the beast sleeps  
and I can create again.*

Art is patient and forgiving. It allows me to pick up where I left off, with no judgment. Art is always there to soothe. It reminds me that others, like me, have felt my suffering. Art proves to be triumphant. The beast cowers to my expression. When I am able to convey my pain, then paint a life without it, I can breathe again.

*Because when the beast is understood by others,  
it loosens its grip  
and I can finally shine through.*





# Danielle Morris

*Larchwood*

—  
These images are the backdrop of my childhood  
and the roots of my existence.



# Artist Statement

RECOMMENDS:  
1984 by George Orwell

PRONOUN:  
\*shrugs\*

For Vera, Tracye, Thomas, Hilda, Michael, and Jerome. I am because of you.

*Larchwood* takes place in a space where time doesn't exist as we know it. Memories manifest themselves and play in an infinite loop. The people and feelings that generated, and were generated by these happenings thus live forever.

This anthology is Black memory. The inheritance of worldly, emotional, and intellectual possessions have shaped my life. Familiar scenes from a Black childhood have become ritual, decor is shrine worthy, and nostalgia is a spiritual connection to another plane of existence.

The household, and the walls that contain it, has produced and protected my sense of self. *Larchwood* is a portrait of my home. These images are the backdrop of my childhood and the roots of my existence. This is an acknowledgment and a profession of thanks to the hands that raised and raise me, and all that was poured into me by generations of strength and the will of survival.



rites





static



negro kitch



i hate my arms  
for not being long enough to reach you  
and my body  
for being too far away  
but never you  
for not reaching back

---

you asked for my heart  
so i wrapped it in silk  
and dipped it in gold  
so it was beautiful enough for you  
but strong enough to withstand  
the trauma of careless hands

---

i called  
wanting time you didn't have  
and attention you couldn't afford  
your mailbox was full

---

im funny  
hilarity woven carefully into my lingo  
a bellyache begotten belly ache  
sides split in half  
looking for completion in the ribs of others  
don't forget to breathe  
can you tell im being serious  
...just kidding



untitled

**POETRY:**  
Danielle Morris

i heard my name  
dripping in a mutilated half southern accent  
smooth as silk  
but heavy with jim crow  
and emmitt till  
and cornbread  
and collard greens

ghetto  
like the title we never asked for  
cool  
like a summer breeze

"danielle"  
off the lips of my grandmother  
liquid gold  
sweet as honey  
music to my ears



*hands of the giver*

# Traumatic Black Experience

WRITING &  
PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Danielle Morris

FEATURED  
ARTWORK:  
Below: *carted*  
Right: *love, sugar*



In elementary school, I remember casual conversations between kids about how hungry they were, and how they hadn't eaten because their parent or guardian worked late. I remember them not getting to school in time for breakfast, having to wait too many hours for lunch and lunch not being enough. We learned about the food pyramid, and then taught ourselves that it didn't apply to us. As we grew older, trips to the corner store and the Chinese store became more necessary. Growing kids got hungrier, but that didn't mean that parents and caretakers suddenly had the time or money to compensate.

Into adolescence and young adulthood I fervently chased beauty standards that weren't meant for me. I tried to find acceptance in a country that is constantly teaching me not to love myself, and teaches everyone else that I am less than. We've grown up with a flawed sense of self and waning self-love at the hands of oppression. When we laugh and express joy we are too loud. When we are upset, we are irate and unnecessary. Our individuality is "ghetto" and unprofessional except when capitalism gropes it—and then we must be thankful that people are finally taking an interest in us. We are silenced while our culture, image, and stories are being mined.

This recipe for unhappiness follows us throughout life. It has cooked up a brand of distress that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemies. It has caused complacency through lack of hope. This misery is centuries in the making. This is not an accident. This is not bad luck. This is purposeful and well orchestrated. It's no secret that capitalism does not work without a cheap labor force. Wage disparities keep the rich, rich and the poor, poor. By keeping people in positions that require them to work hard as they remain unable to better their life, corporations



are able to sustain a pool of cheap labor. Black people have long been categorized as livestock, cheap workforce. Why would this day and age to be any different?

So where does that leave us? Tired, heartbroken, self-loathing, pushed out, and quiet. We've adopted the "hush-hush" method of dealing with issues and trauma that has been bestowed upon us by previous generations. Because complaining won't get you anywhere, right? However, the same generations that equates silence with strength also gave us such gems as "a closed mouth does not get fed." We cannot be silent, we cannot pretend that nothing bothers us. We cannot just continue doing what we're doing because what we are doing does not work. Black America is suffering, and nobody can save us but ourselves. The emotional literacy that has not been afforded to us is necessary for us. We have not been dealt a bad hand, the entire game is rigged.



Top: *moving*  
Bottom Left: *xan*  
Bottom Right: *west philly on a sunday*



# The Art of Fully Living

WRITING:  
Kathleen E. Walls, Psy.D.

PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Lori Waselchuk

PHOTO (LEFT):  
Wit Lopez, right, a fiber artist, performer and independent curator, led a workshop with WMM focusing on laughter and joy.



For many artists, creating a professional life and fully living the lifestyle they desire can be difficult. I know and work with many artists, and enjoy helping them explore, clarify, and connect with their art while working through their uncertainty, disappointment, resistance, and life changes. I also help individuals through their processes of deciding if they are going to share their artistic expression with the world and in what way. Thus, when asked to work with the *Women's Mobile Museum*, I knew that both the participants and the organizers would need courage to forge through this project.

As I read the grant, I remember immediately feeling stress and loss. The program was asking 10 women, 10 strangers, to come together, bond, and support one another through an intense and rigorous year-long arts apprenticeship in a medium unfamiliar to them. These 10 women would be giving up a life that they knew to begin taking steps toward a life they

dreamt about. There was the strong probability of these individuals feeling alone, misunderstood, and different from whom they had known themselves to be in relation to themselves, others, and the world. This new life would highlight and challenge their beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and misperceptions. I imagined that some had been told, by family and/or friends, that being an artist was a hobby instead of a viable career option. Thus, I envisioned these women giving up the comfort of the customary and possibly going against family and friends to pursue their passion, goals, and dreams.

The stress I imagined increased as I thought about the demands of the year. The women would actively participate in a challenging class and project schedule, work with international artists, and be thrust into the public eye. As one who has participated in, as well as taught, intensive programming, I am acquainted with the internal challenges, conflicts, and growing pains

that accompany such a journey. I am also aware of the need for support during a program of such intensity, and the disappointment that participants frequently experienced because those closest to them often didn't or couldn't support the participants in the ways that they needed.

At the same time, as I intellectually and emotionally imagined the path upon which the women were about to embark, I found myself filled with excitement about what would unfold along with anxiousness of the ambiguity. What was a *Women's Mobile Museum*? What did it look like? Would the women get along? How would their lives change? How would the world receive them? As the questions swirled in my head, tentative answers followed. I began grasping for changes that seemed certain: the participants would acquire new information and new skills; they would be pushed to explore new ways of creating; they would learn new ways of expressing themselves. The project would be a vehicle that could lead the women to a new way of being and interacting in and with the world. These women would literally see the world through a new lens, while others would be looking at and seeing them differently as well.

With all of these changes afoot, at some point, it seemed inevitable that the *Women's Mobile Museum* participants might ask themselves: "What have I done and what am I doing here?" When they reached the edge of their comfort zone, they would have to decide if they would continue down the new path, push the limits and expand their comfort zone, or turn back around and stay in the familiar. Only time would tell what they would decide. My background in systems thinking reminded me that one change in the system causes changes throughout the system; therefore, when an individual does something new or different, there is going to be a ripple effect throughout their entire life. With all of this in mind, I quickly felt the need to be available for more than

just advising on the grant, and to offer ongoing support to the women and project leaders throughout the process.

The inclusion of a mental health clinician proved to be a proactive step for the *Women's Mobile Museum* and could be a model for other programs that are designed to have a lasting impact on the lives of its participants. A clinician can be utilized to assess the social, emotional, and mental health components, as well as the stressors and changes that arise over time. The clinician can also be utilized throughout the program in a variety of ways, such as providing support as needed, conducting processing groups, managing relationship dynamics, providing and teaching healthy coping skills and stress relief, and helping the members move through resistances individually and collectively, as well as personally and professionally. For instance, there were assignments and activities—such as self-portraits, artist statements, and panel discussions—that at times the participants unexpectedly met with resistance. Once the clinician identified and named the resistance, the women actively explored the self in relation to society, expectations, accomplishments, value, confidence, competence, and self-esteem. This exploration led the women artists to individuals acknowledging, confronting, challenging, and refining their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about themselves, artistic communities, and the society-at-large. They identified areas of growth and the courage they needed to use their voice and be present in spaces where they had felt silenced, unheard, underappreciated, and underrepresented. With each experience, and each exposure, these women were becoming fuller expressions of themselves and active agents of change in the midst of their changes, as the clinician assisted and encouraged the artists in the art of fully living.

# The Women's Mobile Museum: A Revolutionary Model

**WRITING:**  
Sister M. Elaine George, IHM

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**  
Lori Waselchuk

**PHOTO (BELOW):**  
Students from the St. Lucy Day School for Children with Visual Impairments with Danielle Morris' tactile representation of the photo *chrono*.

What does the term museum call to mind? To me, it has always been a formidable building displaying historical artifacts or works by well-known artists—an attempt to preserve the past. Museums explain the history (not herstory) of where we have come from, but rarely ask ‘Where do we go from here?’ Works of art are left for personal interpretation with only the artists’ names and titles of work inscribed.

The *Women's Mobile Museum* (WMM) challenges all my preconceived notions about museums. This museum is a display of women's stories. Their stories are not of the past, but of current/recurring social and cultural experiences. These works of art seek public understanding and individual interpretation. The artists themselves staff the museum, providing the opportunity for interactive discussions with visitors, and encourage a deeper understanding of the works.

Museums are usually located in the heart of a city, the attractive and economically favored center of tourism. But the *Women's Mobile Museum* is housed in neighborhood community centers, inviting those who do not ordinarily frequent museums to have the experience of communing with art. When the residents of Juniata Park, a neighborhood in northeastern Philadelphia, learned that a museum was coming to their community, their spirits were lifted: to them, the museum meant “we are

somebody and our neighborhood has arrived!” Neighbors who answered the invitation and visited the museum were transformed by the depth of the experience cutting to the heart, truths about who we are and whom we need to become. Powerful photographs etched messages of rising above challenges and hurts to healing and hope in hearts and minds.

I am a teacher at the St. Lucy Day School for Children with Visual Impairments and Archbishop Ryan Academy for the Deaf (grades pre-K through 8). Museums are difficult experiences for people who require different forms of accessibility. Visual displays are behind glass or ropes—barriers to people whose only access to visual work is through sound and touch.

Early in its development, the *Women's Mobile Museum* embraced the challenge of making photographs accessible to my students at St. Lucy Day School, which is a mere block and a half from the Juniata Park Boys and Girls Club, where the museum was installed. WMM photographers participated in a workshop to learn how to make photographs accessible to those who are blind by creating tactile graphics, audio descriptions, and object displays. The artists trained in 3-D modeling through live models and visitor staging of photographs.



“I commend the Women’s Mobile Museum for bringing to life what I hope is the future of all museums...”

THE WOMEN’S MOBILE MUSEUM: A REVOLUTIONARY MODEL (cont’d)  
Sister M. Elaine George, IHM

PHOTOS (RIGHT):  
Top: *Global Toy Symmetry* by Andrea Walls  
Bottom: Students from the St. Lucy Day School for Children with Visual Impairments pick up smooth stones and play with plastic toy soldiers to experience, through touch, Andrea Walls’ image (top).

Students from St. Lucy Day School were welcomed not only by WMM artists, but also by the accessibility to exhibits. They enjoyed encountering the photographs in ways they could understand. Teachers read the artists’ statements and photograph descriptions conveying the content in American Sign Language. Braille labels identified works and corresponded to audio descriptions. Headsets broadcast the photographers’ voice recording of their artist statements and personal description of photographs. These descriptions included prominent features of the photos, photo effects the artists had employed, as well as the emotion or message the images conveyed.

Interaction with object displays brought further understanding and delight. In the self-portrait taken by Zanele Muholi, *MaID, Philadelphia, 2018*, Muholi’s head and body are covered with rough rope and she wears safety goggles. The children found the same rope and goggles they could touch in a box in front of the framed photograph. They delighted in taking turns wrapping the rope around their shoulders and wearing the goggles. One student commented how thick and scratchy the rope was.

Andrea Wall’s video collage, *In The Wake*, included rich music, voiced poetry, and vivid descriptions aiding an understanding of images the students couldn’t see. Kindergarteners playfully rearranged

the smooth pebbles and plastic toy soldiers Wall had arranged in her tactile box to mimic her piece, *Global Toyman Symmetry*. Every child curiously explored Danielle Morris’ tactile sculpture of a mannequin’s arm decorated with four different watches to mimic her piece, *chrono*. And no one missed the chance to hug the same stuffed pink dog that was featured in Iris Maldonado’s self portrait, *Memories*. The all-time favorite experience for the children was Shasta Bady’s multimedia installation, *As Above, So Below*, where they could sit in a real subway seat and listen to the sounds of Philadelphia’s Frankford Market Line run along its tracks, voicing all stops. Throughout their visits the children asked questions and had conversations with the WMM artists.

I commend the *Women’s Mobile Museum* for bringing to life what I hope is the future of all museums: a traveling exhibit that showcases works of the not-so-famous; a fair representation of women’s perspective; a space for current artists who are the prophets of our day calling forth transformative understanding and individual response; accessibility to all (especially those who are blind or deaf), and encountering the artist as well as the art. This would truly be revolutionary.



# Contributor Biographies

FEATURING:  
WMM Artists + Collaborators

**afaq** is a Philly-based daughter, with grandmother tendencies. assembled in yemen (from sudanese parts) afaq considers herself a global citizen of her own country. she is an artist, activist, and educator who seeks to love the world until it loves her back.

**Shasta Bady** is an aspiring scientist, visual artist, and sporadic papermaker. Her influences include Lyndsey Addario, Sebastiao Salgado, and Malick Sidibe. She enjoys exploring the subtleties of light, color, and staying available to visual spontaneity. Through her art she aims to celebrate the depth of our connectedness and commonalities.

**Tash Billington** is a Philadelphia native who uses art as a way to heal, motivate, and give back to underserved communities. Tash specializes in visual art, spoken word, and engaging with community members. She is best known for assisting on large-scale public mural projects. She can often be seen operating aerial boom lifts or maintaining a smooth flow during community paint days. Tash is currently working with Philadelphia Mural Arts, the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, and Amber Art and Design. Her motto is to enlighten, inspire, and elevate.

**Davelle Barnes** is a meme curator, a film ethnographer, a social poet, and a dapper rapper. Barnes is a multidisciplinary teaching artist is a 2018 *Women's Mobile Museum* Project Apprentice at the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, a UPENN CAMRA Fellow, a Philly-CAM Digital Media Literacy Fellow, and a Warrior Writer. Drawing from her intersecting identities and lived experience, the former Army Sergeant is quickly becoming a veteran media maker.

**Sister M. Elaine George, IHM** is the current president of the Juniata Action Committee, which partnered with the *Women's Mobile Museum* project. This organization assisted with arranging meeting times and places for candidates to apply for the program, locating a site for the mobile museum,

and encouraging neighbors to visit the museum. For the past 27 years, she has served in ministry at St. Lucy Day School for Children with Visual Impairments. Work includes production of braille materials, tactile graphics, and models.

**Iris Maldonado** grew up in Farjardo, Puerto Rico. She graduated from Thomas A. Edison High School in Philadelphia. A single mother of three and grandmother of three beautiful children, Maldonado is a Reiki practitioner, poet, and photographer. She holds an associate degree in Human Services. Her passion for helping people motivates her work as a peer support coach. In her work, she helps people to be the best they can be and inspires them to not let their limitations separate them from their goals. Having discovered the medium at a young age, photography helps her to see things from a different perspective; she particularly enjoys how photographs can freeze time, feelings, and memories in one frame. Her photographs come, in her own words, *'from the eyes of her soul'*.

**Danielle Morris** (°1993, Philadelphia) is a self-taught photographer who mainly works in street and self-portraiture. With a conceptual approach, Morris absorbs the tradition of remembrance art into daily practice. Her works are often about the contact between urban architecture and the living elements of feminism. Morris focuses on the idea of the feminine in “public space” and more specifically on spaces where anyone can do anything at any given moment: the non-private space, the non-privately owned space, and space that is expressed through proximity to her subjects and their otherness to her sense of femininity. Morris was a contributing artist to the 2018 SPACES Residency, “Home Court” lead by visual artist Shawn Theodore. She has exhibited at The Barnes Foundation through Let's Connect Philly, where she placed in the top 20 of the participating artists. Morris is a former assistant teacher of photography at the Village of Arts and Humanities.

**Zanele Muholi** is a South African visual activist and photographer. Muholi's self-proclaimed mission is “to re-write a Black queer and trans visual history of South Africa for the world to know of our resistance and existence at the height of hate crimes in South Africa and beyond.”

Muholi co-founded the Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW) in 2002 and Inkanyiso (www.inkanyiso.org), a forum for queer and visual (activist) media, in 2009. Muholi studied Advanced Photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, and in 2009 completed an MFA: Documentary Media at Ryerson University in Toronto. In 2013, they became an honorary professor at the University of the Arts/Hochschule für Künste Bremen. In 2017, Muholi was bestowed France's highest cultural honor, the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts des Lettres. Recent exhibitions include the traveling show *Somnyama Ngonyama* (2017-2020), which premiered at Autograph, London, and currently on view at Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta. Their latest monograph was published in 2018 by Aperture Foundation, New York. Their work was shown at Performa, New York (2017); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017); Brooklyn Museum, New York (2015); they were also included in the South African pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); the São Paulo Biennial (2010); and documenta 13, Kassel (2013).

**Renée Mussai** is Senior Curator and Head of Curatorial, Archive, and Research at Autograph, London. A scholar-curator with a special interest in African, Black European, and diasporic lens-based practices, Mussai publishes and lectures internationally on photography, visual culture, curatorial activism, and cultural politics. She has been a regular guest curator and former non-resident fellow at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, and is presently a Research Associate in the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research

Centre, University of Johannesburg, and part-time PhD candidate in Art History at University College London. Her writing has appeared in numerous artist monographs, anthologies, and journals; recent exhibitions (and publications) include the critically acclaimed and internationally touring gallery installations, *'Black Chronicles'* (2014-2019), *'Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness'* (2017-2021), and *'Phoebe Boswell: The Space Between Things'* (2018/19). Mussai holds under- and postgraduate degrees in Photography from the University of the Arts, and previously studied at the University of Vienna, Austria.

**Lindeka Qampi** is a self-taught photographer who primarily works in the genre of street photography. In 2006, she made photography her career after joining a consortium of photographers known as *Iliso Labantu*. Since 2012, Qampi has worked as a project facilitator alongside fellow South African photographer and visual activist Zanele Muholi. In 2014 they co-organized Photo XP at Aurora Girls School, Soweto, introducing photography as a life skill and empowering tool to young women. In 2015, Qampi began photographing herself and immediate family with a new series of work entitled *Inside My Heart*. Qampi's work has been exhibited internationally and is part of the collections in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Qampi is the co-recipient of the Brave Award (with Zanele Muholi, 2016), and the Mbokodo Award for Creative Photography (2015).

**Shana-Adina Roberts** is an artist from West Philadelphia. She is a multi-disciplinary artist who continuously explores and discovers new ways to express herself. Her work moves from the figurative to the avantgarde. For Shana, the creative process naturally forms a part of who she is, and always has been. She is an artist who is interested in creating art that speaks to her experience and can speak for her.



**Carrie-Anne Shimborski** is a Philadelphia native, abstract painter, Master Doodler, and an emerging photographer. Throughout her work, Shimborski seeks to capture the raw, real, and present emotion of her subjects. As a self-taught artist, Shimborski has created numerous pieces of artwork; however, her greatest creation thus far is the light of her life, her son Luca!

**Muffy Ashley Torres** Born in and ‘repping’ Philadelphia while having her heart on the U.S./ Mexico border, Muffy Ashley Torres is a multifaceted, self-taught artist. With a diagnosis of a chronic illness at a young age, she “*found in art a way to navigate and deal with the physical pain I often endure. Through photography, I embrace the opportunity to freeze moments and make a statement against the current socio-political climate... I believe visual art has the ability to strike emotions that can pave the way for a revolution and capture the beauty within the struggle. Striving for social justice through the process of learning and unlearning whom and what society has deemed significant for too long, I find my greatest motivation in resistance: dancing in and out of the closet, I hope that the art I create resonates with others who often struggle with being unheard.*”

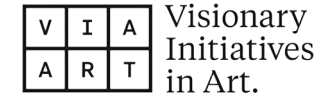
**Andrea “Philly” Walls** feels brutalized by stories of global injustice, including poverty, human displacement, and violence against the environment. She makes art across genres as an act of resistance. She is grateful to the Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation, The Leeway Foundation, The Hedgebrook Community for Women Authoring Change, and the *Women’s Mobile Museum* for their ongoing support and sustenance. She is pleased that her poetry and visual art have found homes in publications she admires, including Callaloo, Journal of African Diaspora Arts & Letters; Solstice Literary Magazine; Tidal Basin Review; Kweli; The Fourth River; bozalta: Arts, Activism & Scholarship, and heart (human equity through art) online journal. She lives and makes art in Philadelphia and continues to seek creative ways to disengage with capitalist structures, racist institutions, and all systems of oppression.

**Kathleen Walls, Psy.D.** is the Project Advisor for the residency portion of the *Women’s Mobile Museum*. A clinical and systems change psychologist, Dr. Kathleen Walls delivers leadership development seminars, assessments, strategic direction, meeting facilitation, and executive coaching nationwide to a wide range of civic, educational, healthcare, and business enterprises. Dr. Walls graduated from Temple University and earned her M.S. and Psy.D. degrees from Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Walls has enjoyed a triad psychologist career—as college professor, psychotherapist, and strategic advisor to leaders and organizations on their people, process, and performance challenges. She lectures, consults, coaches, delivers interactive seminars and motivational speeches on self- and systems-mastery. She is a passionate practitioner and learner: Dr. Walls embraces and facilitates cross-cultural exchange, integrates spiritual and holistic healing paradigms into her leadership development practice, and mentors young rising professionals.

**Lori Waselchuk** is a visual storyteller whose photographs have appeared in print and online media worldwide. Her work is exhibited internationally and is part of many collections including the New Orleans Museum of Art, Portland Museum of Art, and South African National Gallery. Waselchuk also curates and coordinates exhibitions and special projects that prioritize creative social engagement. Most notable of those is *Grace Before Dying*, a collaborative photographic documentary about a hospice program in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Waselchuk coordinated *The Philly Block Project*, PPAC’s 16-month visual collaboration with Hank Willis Thomas and residents of the South Kensington neighborhood. Waselchuk is a recipient of the 2014 Leeway Foundation’s Transformation Award, the 2012 Pew Fellowship for the Arts, the Aaron Siskind Foundation’s 2009 Individual Photographer Fellowship, and the 2004 Southern African Gender and Media Award.

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### WMM COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Diversified Community Services/  
Dixon House  
Juniata Action Committee  
Juniata Park Boys and Girls Club

### WMM MUSEUM PARTNER

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
(PAFA) Museum

### WMM COMMUNITY EXHIBITION

Curatorial Mentor: Renée Mussai  
Exhibition Design: Petra Floyd  
Construction Team: Amy June Breesman,  
KT and Molly Fischer

### THANK YOU TO OUR CORE MENTORS

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Debbie Lerman  
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Juniata News  
Leeway Foundation  
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Moore College of Art & Design  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
PhillyCAM  
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Taller Puertorriqueño  
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William Way LGBT Community Center  
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# MEMBERSHIP MEMORIALS

2019