



# SOUNDS of EXPO

## Art, Artists, and Cultural Spaces Since the 1960s

**Friday, April 29 and  
Saturday, April 30, 2022**

**At USC and the California African  
American Museum**

University of Southern California

### **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

- This two-day series of events features art, artists, and cultural organizations in South L.A. since the 1960s.
- The presentations, panels, and reception will take place at the USC Roski School of Art and Design, California African American Museum, and USC Fisher Museum of Art.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Subject to change

## FRIDAY, APRIL 29

### 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.: Keynote Lecture by Dr. Kellie Jones

USC Gin Wong Auditorium, 829 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089

- **Kellie Jones**, historian, curator, and author of *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s*
- **Essence Harden** (moderator), curator at CAAM
- **Naima J. Keith** (moderator), vice president of education and public programs at LACMA

## SATURDAY, APRIL 30

### 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.: Roundtables with Artists, Activists, Curators, and Scholars

California African American Museum Atrium, 600 State Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90037

#### 10 to 10:30 a.m.: Coffee and Welcome

#### 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.: Roundtable 1

**Postwar Histories: Black Arts Institutions and Community-Bases Practices in South L.A.**

- **Ben Caldwell**, filmmaker and founder of KAOS Network
- **Kellie Jones**, historian, curator, and author
- **Amitis Motevalli**, artist and director of the William Grant Still Art Center
- **Roger Guenveur Smith**, actor, director, and collaborator of Spike Lee
- **Robeson Taj Frazier** (moderator), USC Annenberg professor

#### 1 to 2:45 p.m.: Roundtable 2

**Museums and Artist-Run Spaces in South L.A. Today**

- **Sophia Belsheim**, director of ART + PRACTICE
- **Bethany Montagano**, director of the USC Museums
- **Pilar Tompkins Rivas**, chief curator at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art
- **Lisa Diane Wedgworth**, artist and executive director of arts at Blue Roof
- **Cameron Shaw** (moderator), executive director at CAAM

#### 3 to 4:45 p.m.: Roundtable 3

**A New Generation of Art and Artists in South L.A.**

- **Ray Anthony Barrett**, visual artist and chef
- **Alicia Piller**, mixed media artist
- **Felix Quintana**, artist and educator
- **Tiffany E. Barber** (moderator), assistant professor at the University of Delaware and Scholar in Residence at the Getty Research Institute

### 5 to 6:30 p.m.: Closing Reception

USC Fisher Museum of Art Courtyard, 823 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089

- Drinks, light bites, music by **DJ Anna Krylova**, and spoken word by **Edwin Bodney** and **PoeticMoment**

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS AND ARTISTS



**Tiffany E. Barber** is an assistant professor of Africana studies and art history at the University of Delaware, curator in residence at the Delaware Contemporary, and a scholar in residence at the Getty Research Institute. Her latest curatorial project is a virtual multimedia

exhibition for Google Arts and Culture that examines the value of Afrofuturism in times of crisis.



**Robeson Taj Frazier** is a cultural historian and professor of communication at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism who explores the arts, politics, and expressive cultures of the people of the African diaspora in the United

States and elsewhere.



**Ray Anthony Barrett** is an L.A.-based visual artist and chef. His pop-up, CINQVÉ, is devoted to tracing soul food from California to its West African origins.



**Essence Harden** is a curator and program manager at the California African American Museum (CAAM) and an independent arts writer. Harden has curated exhibitions at CAAM, Charlie James Gallery, Antenna Gallery (New Orleans), LACE, and Museum of the African Diaspora.



**Sophia Belsheim** is the director of Art + Practice, a foundation and space in Leimert Park that organizes programs for transition-age foster youth and provides Angelenos with free access to museum-curated contemporary art.



**Kellie Jones** is the author of *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s* and *EyeMinded: Living and Writing Contemporary Art*. She is a professor of art history, archaeology, and African American and African Diaspora

studies at Columbia University.



**Edwin Bodney** is a poet, performer, and former host of L.A.'s Da Poetry Lounge. Bodney is also a violence prevention specialist at USC Student Health's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services.

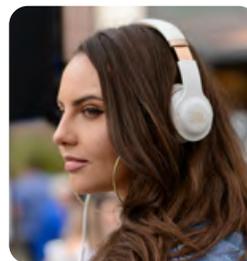


**Naima J. Keith** is the vice president of education and public programs at LACMA. She was previously the deputy director and chief curator at CAAM.



**Ben Caldwell** is an L.A.-based arts educator, filmmaker, and founder of KAOS network, a community art/tech accelerator center dedicated to providing training in digital arts, media arts, and multimedia in Leimert Park. Caldwell's work has been shown around

the world, most recently at LAMAG and Tate Modern. Caldwell taught for fifteen years at CalArts and was a founding force in CAP (Community Arts Partnership).



**Anna Krylova** splits her time between DJing and modeling. She blogs at [annakrylova.com/blog](http://annakrylova.com/blog).



**Bethany Montagano** is the director of the USC Museums. She was previously a senior curator at the Skirball Center and played roles in opening the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and in exhibitions and publications at the Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian.



**Pilar Tompkins Rivas** is the chief curator and deputy director of curatorial and collections at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. She was previously the director and chief curator at the Vincent Price Art Museum. She has launched programs to increase diversity in the museum field.



**Amitis Motevalli** is an artist and the director of the William Grant Still Arts Center. Through many mediums, her work asks questions about violence, occupation, and the path to decolonization, while invoking the significance of a secular grassroots struggle.



**Cameron Shaw** is the executive director at CAAM. She was previously the executive director of Pelican Bomb, an art nonprofit based in New Orleans, and is a widely published writer and editor.



**Alicia Piller** is an L.A.-based mixed media artist. Her sculptures and installations conceive of past atrocities, suffering, and accomplishments as biological forms broken down to a cellular level.



**Roger Guenveur Smith** is an actor, director, and writer whose Obie-winning solo show *A Huey P. Newton Story* was turned into a Peabody-winning telefilm by director and frequent collaborator Spike Lee.



**PoeticMoment** is an award-winning poet, spoken-word artist, filmmaker, and educator. She competes in national slams and showcases, and shares her work in classrooms as a way to advocate for students of color.



**Lisa Diane Wedgeworth** is an artist and the executive director of arts at Blue Roof, an artist-run nonprofit in South L.A. She teaches at L.A. City College and Glendale Community College, and is a recipient of the Georgia Fee Artist/Writer Residency (Paris) and the 2020 COLA Individual Artist Fellowship.



**Felix Quintana** is an artist and educator best known for his experimental photographs of the Los Angeles urban landscape. Quintana's work has been exhibited at the Vincent Price Art Museum, Residency Art Gallery, Vox Populi Gallery, Southern Exposure, SOMArts,

Museum of Art and History in Lancaster, and LAXART. He is the inaugural artist in residence for the Art of Movement Building residency at MACLA in San Jose.



Felix Quintana, *fantasma paraíso*

## ARTISTS FEATURED IN SOUTH OF PICO

Artists featured in Kellie Jones's book *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s* include

**Senga Nengudi** was born in Chicago in 1943 and moved to Pasadena as a child. She earned a bachelor's degree in art and dance from Cal State L.A., followed by a master's in sculpture. Nengudi has been exhibiting work since the 1970s, amid the avant-garde Black arts scenes of L.A. and New York. She works in sculpture as well as conceptual and performance art, often integrating everyday and discarded materials, and elements of nature, in her artworks. Nengudi was a member of the Studio Z collective, a group of African American artists in 1970s L.A. whose work focused on improvisation, collaboration, and experiment.

**Noah Purifoy** (1917–2004) was an artist, sculptor, and co-founder of the Watts Towers Art Center. He lived and worked mostly in L.A. and Joshua Tree, and created the Noah Purifoy Outdoor Museum. Purifoy earned a BFA from Chouinard (now CalArts) in 1956, and his earliest body of sculpture was constructed out of debris from the 1965 Watts rebellion.

**Betye Saar** is an artist best known for her assemblage works, including the iconic *Liberation of Aunt Jemima* (1972). She was at the center of the Black Arts Movement in the 1970s. Saar was born in L.A. in 1926 and grew up in L.A. and Pasadena; she studied design at Pasadena City College and UCLA.

**Charles White** (1918–1979) was a painter and printmaker known for chronicling the African American experience. He was one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. Born in Chicago, he spent most of his career in Chicago and Los Angeles. While teaching at Otis, he mentored students who would go on to become leading artists themselves, among them David Hammons and Kerry James Marshall.

*“Art must be an integral part of the struggle. It can't simply mirror what's taking place. It must adapt itself to human needs. It must ally itself with the forces of liberation.”*

—Charles White

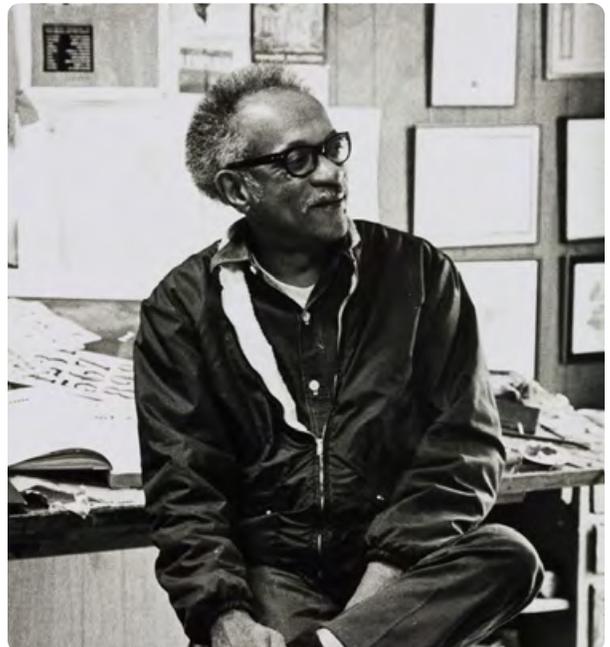


Senga Nengudi

Photo by Harmon Outlaw



Betye Saar



Charles White

Photo by Ed Glendinning

## ARTIST RUN SPACES IN SOUTH LA

### WATTS TOWERS ARTS CENTER

Artist and educator Noah Purifoy co-founded the Watts Towers Arts Center (WTAC) in 1964, along with Judson Powell and Sue Welsh, as a site of creative freedom where Black artists could exhibit their work and develop their practices. With a background in social work and education, Purifoy was dedicated to serving the Watts neighborhood. He established a range of visual and performance art classes, including workshops, collaborative community projects, and concerts, forming a vibrant cultural network that was constantly buzzing with activity. Watts Towers was also a place of employment for several artists who would teach classes and lead workshops, including Senga Nengudi, Suzanne Jackson, Judson Powell, and John Outerbridge. Following the Uprising in 1965, the Watts Towers Art Center became a site of resurgence that understood art as a source of transformation and inspiration. The space provided social access and fostered self and community actualization through creativity and support.

Situated within the larger context of the Black Arts Movement, the Watts Towers Arts Center proved to be an important incubator for Black artists of the 1960s and 1970s such as David Hammonds, Betye Saar, John Outerbridge, Maren Hassinger, Houston Conwill, Senga Nengudi, Melvin Edwards, John Riddle, Judson Powell, Noah Purifoy, and countless others—within the visual arts as well as, music, literature, and film. During this period, the practices of African American artists working in Los Angeles varied conceptually and materially but they were strongly aligned in terms of their social-political agenda rooted in Black liberation. The Watts Towers Arts Center served as a space for activism and artistic experimentation.

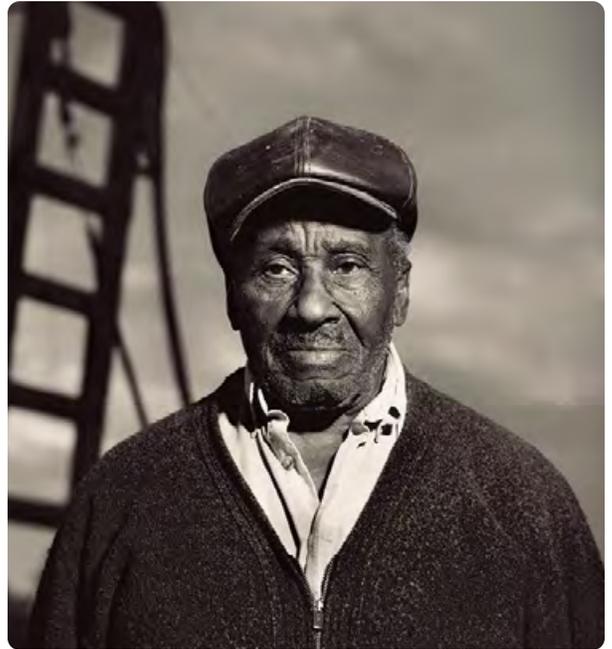
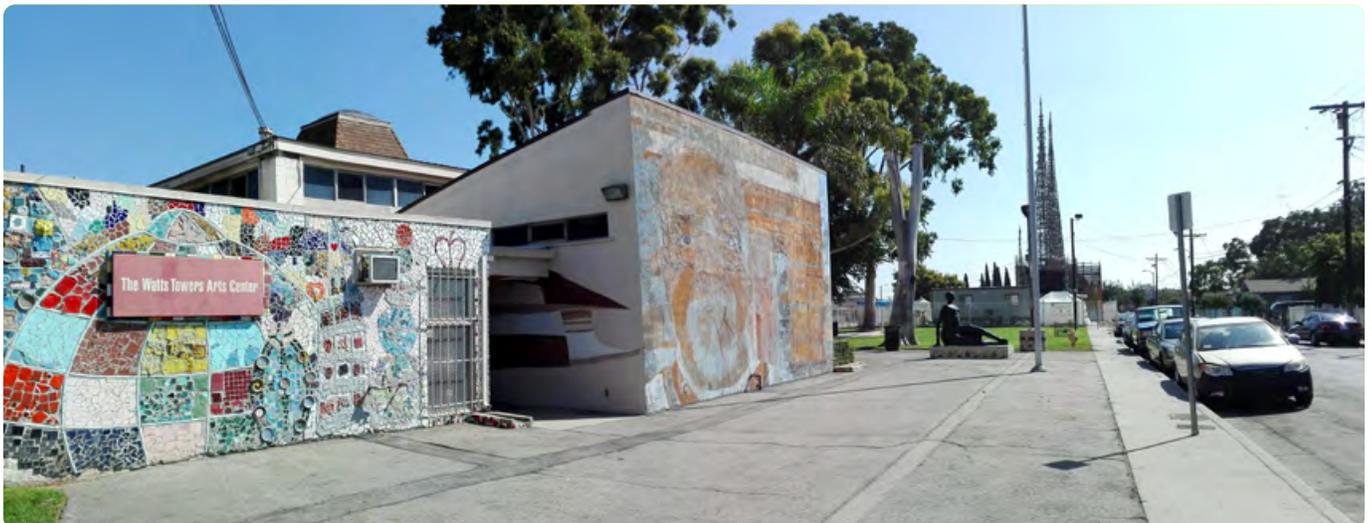


Photo by Jim McHugh

Noah Purifoy co-founded the Watts Towers Arts Center



Watts Towers



Watts Towers Arts Center located in Simon Rodia State Historic Park, Los Angeles

## BROCKMAN GALLERY

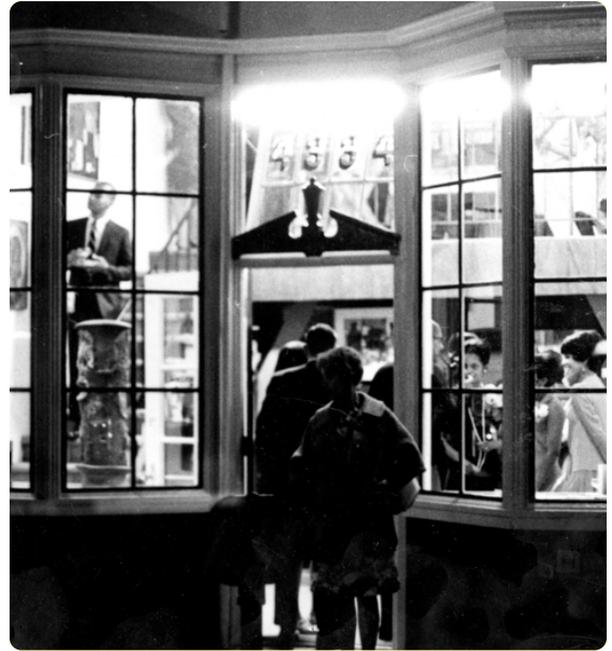
Brockman Gallery was founded by brothers and artists Dale and Alfonso Davis in Leimert Park in 1967, just a few years after the Watts Towers Arts Center. Brockman was more than just a commercial gallery, it also provided studio space, collaborated with surrounding institutions, and organized neighborhood festivals, talks, and special projects. Brockman also lobbied to help generate funds and resources for specific artist projects. For instance, Brockman worked with the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) to help fund Senga Nengudi's important performance piece *Ceremony for Freeway Fets* (1978), among many other projects across LA. The gallery served as an important hub for Black artists and thinkers and played an important role in shaping the Leimert Park and Los Angeles art scene, paving the way for other Black arts organizations in the neighborhood today such as Mark Bradford's Art + Practice space which is situated directly across the street from where Brockman Gallery used to stand.

## GALLERY 32

Gallery 32 was founded by artist Suzanne Jackson in 1968 and remained open for only one year. During the gallery's short lifespan, it organized prolific and important shows. Gallery 32 was located in Jackson's loft space in the Granada building near McArthur Park (just around the corner from Otis where she was a student of Charles White). Like Brockman, Gallery 32 was far from your typical white cube commercial gallery. While it did facilitate art sales, the space functioned more as a site for artists, activists, and thinkers to exchange ideas and exhibit Black artists who received little support from mainstream institutions. The gallery was also an important space for activism and held fund-raising exhibitions for the Black Arts Council, the Black Panther Party, and Watts Towers Arts Center. Gallery 32 and Brockman were close collaborators and often coordinated their exhibitions and programming. Galleries and alternative spaces—Watts Towers Arts Center, Brockman, and Gallery 32—played a foundational role in the Black Arts Movement that shaped the Los Angeles art scene in the 1960s and 1970s, championing Black artists and insisting on their value and futurity.

## CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

The California African American Museum (CAAM) was founded in 1977. The first African American museum of art, history, and culture fully supported by a state, CAAM was established as a direct result of years of activism by visionary founders and community members. CAAM moved to its permanent home in Exposition Park in 1984. The museum's permanent collection houses 5,000 objects, including paintings, historical objects, print materials, and mixed-media artworks. CAAM's mission is to research, collect, preserve, and interpret for public enrichment the history, art, and culture of African Americans with an emphasis on California and the western United States.



Brockman Gallery



Gallery 32



California African American Museum (CAAM)

## WILLIAM GRANT STILL ARTS CENTER

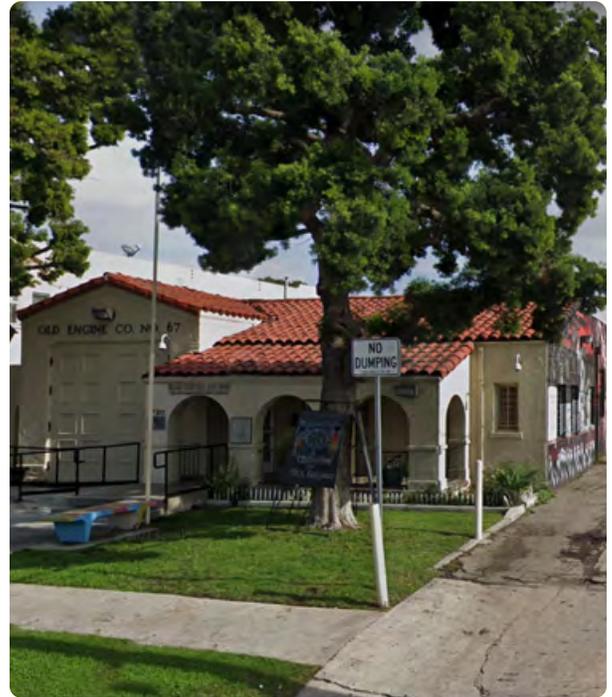
The William Grant Still Arts Center is a facility of the L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs that offers creative workshops, music and art classes for adults and youth, an exhibition space, concerts, summer camp, and places for community meetings and gatherings. The center was founded in 1977 and named after Dr. William Grant Still (1895–1978), an acclaimed African American composer who lived in the West Adams neighborhood.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What is the significance of community art spaces?
- What is the role of cultural organizations in communities, societies, individual lives?
- What do you think Charles White meant by “Art must . . . ally itself with the forces of liberation”? Do you agree? How can art “adapt itself to human needs” and ally with liberation?

## IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- California African American Museum  
[caamuseum.org](http://caamuseum.org)
- William Grant Still Arts Center  
[wgsac.wordpress.com](http://wgsac.wordpress.com)
- Noah Purifoy Outdoor Museum in Joshua Tree  
[noahpurifoy.com](http://noahpurifoy.com)
- Blue Roof  
[bluroofstudios.org](http://bluroofstudios.org)
- Art + Practice  
[artandpractice.org](http://artandpractice.org)
- KAOS Network  
[On Facebook @KaosNetwork](#)
- CINQUÉ  
[cinquelosangeles.com](http://cinquelosangeles.com)



William Grant Still Arts Center



Art + Practice, located in the neighborhood of Leimert Park



Noah Purifoy Outdoor Museum in Joshua Tree

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**Christina Snider** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu) but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

### BOOKS

- ⦿ Kellie Jones, *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2017).
- ⦿ Mark Godfrey, Zoé Whitley, Susan Cahan, et al., *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* (London: Tate Publishing, 2017).
- ⦿ Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2010).
- ⦿ Jan Lin, *Taking Back the Boulevard: Art, Activism, and Gentrification in Los Angeles* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2019).
- ⦿ Leigh Raiford and Heike Raphael-Hernandez, *Migrating the Black Body: The African Diaspora and Visual Culture* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2017).
- ⦿ Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Asha Bandele, and Angela Y. Davis, *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018).

### DATABASES

- ⦿ [Black Studies Center](#)
- ⦿ [Black Thought and Culture](#)
- ⦿ [African American Studies Center \(Oxford\)](#)

### JOURNALS

- ⦿ [Black American Literature Forum](#)
- ⦿ [Black Scholar Online](#)
- ⦿ [Journal of African American History](#)
- ⦿ [Journal of African American Studies](#)
- ⦿ [Journal of Black Studies](#)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ⦿ [African American Studies Research Guide](#)

