

ELLEN Y. TANI, PHD

A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, 2020-2022
Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

History of modern and contemporary art; African American art; American art; comparative racial and ethnic studies; museum studies; Black Studies; disability studies; feminist studies; and sound studies.

EDUCATION

PhD in Art & Art History, Stanford University, 2015

Dissertation: “Black Conceptualism and the Atmospheric Turn, 1968-2008.” Advisor: Pamela Lee

Affiliations: 2008-2011 Graduate Fellow, Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity

BA in Art History, Dartmouth College, 2005

Awards: *magna cum laude*, Adelbert Ames Fine Arts Award

EXTERNAL AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Library Research Grant, The Getty Research Institute (2022)

Research Fellow, Clark Art Institute (summer 2021)

A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (2020-22)

Luce/ACLS Postdoctoral Fellowship (2020-21; declined)

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellowship, Bowdoin College Museum of Art (2015-18)

Predocotrinal Residential Research Fellowship, Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies, University of Virginia (2013-15)

Luce/ACLS Dissertation Fellowship (2013-14; declined)

Inaugural ACAC writing fellow, Asian Contemporary Arts Consortium and *Art Practical* (2011)

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

When Home Won't Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art, ed. Ruth Erickson and Eva Respini. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019 (publication coordinator and contributor).

Second Sight: the Paradox of Vision in Contemporary Art. Exh. Cat, Bowdoin College Museum of Art. New York: Scala, 2017 (editor and contributor).

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

“Un-Disciplining the Archive: Jerome Reyes and Maia Cruz Palileo.” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Issue 7.1 “Asian American Art: Past and Futures” (Spring 2021).

“‘Come Out to Show Them’: Speech and Ambivalence in the work of Steve Reich and Glenn Ligon.” *Art Journal* Volume 78, Issue 4, 2019.

“Paul Pfeiffer,” *Apricota Journal*, Issue 1: Fights (Fall 2017): 88-93.

“Keeping Time in the Hands of Betye Saar: ‘Betye Saar: Still Tickin’” *American Quarterly* v. 68, no. 4 (December 2016): 1081-1109.

LONG-FORM WRITING

“‘Very African, and Very Kabuki Too’: Transnational Ritual in the work of Senga Nengudi.”

Transnational Perspectives on Feminism and Art, 1960-1985. Ed. Jen Kennedy, Trista Mallory, and Angelique Szymanek (London; New York: Routledge, 2021), 169-184.

- “Review: Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Stick to the Skin: African American and Black British Art, 1965–2015.*” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Issue 6.2, November 2020.
- “I might not be here when you come.” Published on the occasion of the exhibition “Erin Johnson: Unnamed for Decades.” Rockland, ME: Center for Maine Contemporary Art, 2020.
- “What You Missed: Senga Nengudi’s Performed Objects.” *Senga Nengudi* (New York: Dominique Levy Gallery, 2015): 18-23.
- “The Face is a Politics.” *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989* (New York: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 2014): 57-63.

SHORT FORM

- “State of the Union: Faith Ringgold at Glenstone,” *Art in America*, May 3, 2021.
- “To Carry Them Forth” for the exhibition “Maia Cruz Palileo: The Answer is the Waves of the Sea,” Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago IL, March 6 – April 10, 2021.
- “Chords of Reverence” in *Theaster Gates: Facsimile Cabinet of Women Origin Stories* (Colby College Museum of Art, 2021).
- “A Decolonial Portrait and Its Impossibilities” in *Oskar Schmidt: Centro* (Berlin: DISTANZ Verlag GmbH, 2020), 41-51. In English and German.
- “Darkening Atmospheres,” *Venti: Air, Experience, and Aesthetics*, Issue 1: Atmosphere, September 2020.
- “African American Art: General Overview” (contributor), *Grove Dictionary of Art*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- “Maren Hassinger,” *Grove Dictionary of Art*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- “Practice,” “atmos/sphere,” “counter/Cartesian plane,” “chroma/light.” Leslie Hewitt, *Set Theory*. New York: Perrotin, 2018.
- “Airing out ambivalence: on cultural care and the allure of judgment.” *The Chart* v. 3, no. 1: Fall 2017, Field Perspectives 2017.
- “Spectacular Black Death,” *Temporary Art Review*, August 2016.
- “The World of Groundbreaking Artist Kerry James Marshall,” *Artsy*, April 21, 2016.

For links to the above, and additional short form writing, editing and art criticism:

<http://ellentani.com/writing/>

WRITING IN PROCESS

- “Press, Release, Collapse: Gina Osterloh in the Mind of the Camera.” Catalog essay for *Gina Osterloh*, Columbus Museum of Art, August – December 2022.
- Book review: Stephanie Sparling Williams, *Speaking Out of Turn: Lorraine O’Grady and the Art of Language*, caa.reviews.
- “Distortion and Transformation: Senga Nengudi and the ‘Afro Asian.’” *Third Text*, special issue on Performance & Museums (under review).
- Black Conceptual Practice in Contemporary Art, 1975-1985*. Book manuscript in process.
- Charles Gaines*. Book manuscript in process.

INVITED PAPERS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 **Session chair:** “Reading Kerry James Marshall’s ‘Rhythm Mastr’” College Art Association Annual Conference, May 4, online.
- 2021 **Panelist:** “Locating/Dislocating: Transnational Perspectives on Feminism and Art, 1960-1985,” College Art Association Annual Conference, February 10-13, online.
- Panelist:** “‘Enmeshed: Senga Nengudi’s Performative Nylon Sculptures and Afro-Asian Ritual,’” Sixth Biennial Symposium of the Association for Historians of American Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum and University of Maryland, October 15-16, online.

- Seminar participant:** “Hidden in the Landscape,” the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present Conference, October 27-30, online.
- 2020 **Panelist:** “Toward an Antiracist Contemporary Art History” convened by the Society for Contemporary Art Historians, online.
- Invited speaker:** “Vernacular Legacy and Dislocated Histories,” Lesley University MFA in Visual Art “Art Talks” series
- 2019 **Invited speaker:** “Inclusion and Diversity in Museums: What Does That Mean?” Symposium *The New Now: Art, Museum, and the Future*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College.
- Session co-organizer:** “When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art.” College Art Association, New York.
- 2018 **Panelist:** “Come out to show them: speech, error, and ambiguity in the work of Steve Reich and Glenn Ligon.” College Art Association, Los Angeles CA.
- Panelist:** Art + Politics Symposium, in conjunction with the exhibition *Making Migration Visible: Traces, Tracks & Pathways*, Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art.
- 2017 **Session co-chair:** “Sensing Difference: New Artistic Approaches to Embodied Knowledge.” Southeastern College Art Conference, Columbus, Ohio (co-chair: Amanda Cachia, Moreno Valley College)
- Session co-organizer:** “The Meteorological Impulse: Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Atmospheric Turn.” College Art Association, New York (co-chair: John Tyson, National Gallery of Art/University of Massachusetts Boston).
- Discussant:** “Leslie Hewitt: Propositions in Still Photography & Film Vignettes.” In conjunction with the exhibition *New Pictures: Leslie Hewitt, A Series of Projections*, Minneapolis Institute of Art.
- 2016 **Panelist:** “‘There’s no place you can’t get to from here’: Kerry James Marshall’s *Rythm Mastr* as Revisionist Art History.” Black Portraiture III: Reinventions: Strains of Histories and Cultures, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Panelist:** “Audiovisual Grammar: Photoconceptualism and Racial Meaning in the Work of Lorna Simpson and Leslie Hewitt.” Across the Divide: Intermediality and American Art, Bowdoin College.
- 2015 **Panelist:** “Writing in Space: The Black & White Show and Lorraine O’Grady’s Performative Critique.” Black Arts Initiative, Northwestern University.
- Panelist:** “Post-Black in Sight and Hindsight: Freedom, Duration, and Diffusion.” New Attitudes: Varied Perspectives on Black Identity and Changing Artistic Expressions conference, Detroit Institute of Arts, in conjunction with the exhibition *30 Americans*.
- 2013 **Invited speaker:** “Critique and Resistance in the American Avant-Garde Since 1945.” Iris and Gerald B. Cantor Center for the Arts, Stanford University.
- Panelist:** “Invisible Signifiers: Race and Conceptual Art.” Southeastern College Art Conference, Greensboro NC.
- 2012 **Panelist:** “Vandalizing Discourse: Richard Serra and David Hammons.” Ontario College of Art and Design Graduate Symposium, Toronto, Ontario.
- 2011 **Conference co-organizer:** inaugural Bay Area Graduate Symposium in Art History, Film and Media.
- Panelist:** “Art History as Reverb: Post(black)production.” American Art History Graduate Symposium, Yale University, New Haven, NY.
- Panelist:** “Post-Race Atmospherics: Nadine Robinson’s Revelatory Soundscapes.” College Art Association, New York, NY.

2009 **Panelist:** “Re-Populating the Page: *The Brownies’ Book* and Literary Reconstruction of the Black Child in the Early Twentieth Century.” National Association of African American Studies, Baton Rouge, LA.

Panelist: “Light Sculpture / Sculpture Lite: Isamu Noguchi’s *Akari* lamps, postwar nationhood and artistic identity.” Art History Graduate Symposium, Stanford University.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

I have taught college-level courses on contemporary art, American art, film studies, and architectural history at Stanford University and Brandeis University, and have guest lectured on contemporary art, African Diaspora art, African American art, and critical race art history at various institutions. At the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, I drew on critical pedagogy to teach hundreds of object-based class sessions and delivered guest lectures in classrooms within Africana Studies, Art History, History, Environmental Studies, and Sociology. In interdisciplinary, object-based pedagogy workshops for faculty, I explored the museum as an experiential learning site in response to thematic concerns (art and revolution; ecocriticism in the museum) and demonstrated need for student skill development (i.e. active learning; speech and oral presentation).

- 2021 Instructor, “Black Studies and Art History,” graduate seminar, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts
Guest lecturer: University of Massachusetts Boston (John Tyson); University of the South (Allison Miller)
- 2020 Lecturer, Brandeis University: History of African American Art (Fine Arts / African American Studies)
Curatorial Intensive elective course, Lesley University
Guest lecturer: Temple University (James Merle Thomas), Maryland Institute College of the Arts (Rael Salley), University of Arkansas (John Blakinger), Fashion Institute of Technology (John Tyson)
- 2015-18 Co-organizer, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Faculty Workshops at Bowdoin College Museum of Art and Colby College Museum of Art. Topics included: “Art and Nature: Environment, Ecocriticism, and the History of Science”; “Art and Revolution: Visions of Change”; “Talking through Artworks: Teaching Speech and Oral Presentation in the Museum”; and “Active Learning: Beyond the Visit”
- 2017 Guest Lecturer, Stanford University: Who We Be: Art, Images & Race in Post-Civil Rights America (African American Studies / Art History / Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity)

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF ART & ART HISTORY

- 2014 Instructor: What is Contemporary Art?
- 2012 Instructor: American Art Since 1945
- 2012-13 Teaching Assistant, New York Arts Immersion (Stanford Arts Institute)
- 2011 Thesis Mentor, Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity
- 2009-11 Teaching Assistant
Film Studies 100: Silent Cinema
Art History 142: Architecture Since 1900
Art History 001: Introduction to the Visual Arts
Art History 003: Introduction to Architecture

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2020-2022 A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts
- Summer 2020 Co-curator, AREA CODE art fair, Boston MA
Curator, Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Minneapolis, MN (national print triennial show)

- 2018-2020 Assistant Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. Projects included *Nina Chanel Abney* (2019-2020); *Huma Bhabha: They Live* (assisted, spring 2019); *Beyond Infinity: Contemporary Art After Kusama* (fall 2019); *When Home Won't Let You Stay: Migration Through Contemporary Art* (assisted, fall 2019); and *Tschabalala Self: Out of Body* (winter 2020).
- 2015-18 Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Projects include *Second Sight: The Paradox of Vision in Contemporary Art* (2018); *Art & Resolution, 1900 to Today* (2017-18); *Sosaku Hanga: Twentieth-Century Japanese Creative Prints* (2017); and *To Count Art an Intimate Friend: Highlights from Bowdoin Collections, 1794 to the Present* (2015-16).
- 2013-15 Contributor, The Art Genome Project, Artsy.net
- 2010 Curatorial intern, Whitney Museum of American Art

COMMITTEES AND SERVICE

In addition to serving as a juror for grants, fellowships, and artist awards, I have also been a peer review reader for *American Art*, *Art Journal*, and the Museum of Modern Art.

Vice President, Society for Contemporary Art Historians (2021-2023)

Curatorial advisory committee, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Grant review committee, Mortimer Hays Brandeis Travelling Fellowship (\$19,000 grant)

Juror, 2021 Ellis-Beauregard Fellowship (\$25,000 grant); 2020 Stephen D. Paine Scholarship, Boston Art Dealers Association; 2020 Triennial Faculty Exhibition, ICA at Maine College of Art; 2019 Walter Feldman Fellowship for Emerging Artists; 2018 Visiting Critic program, *The Chart*; 2018 Hewnoaks Artist Colony Residency program; 2018 Percent for Art Program/Maine Arts Commission, Mt. Ararat High School, Topsham

Visiting critic: Harvard University Visual and Environmental Studies; Boston University Undergraduate and MFA Studio Art; School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University

Working group on Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion, ICA/Boston (2018-2020)

Editorial Committee, *Apricota* journal (2016-2019)

Resources for Academic Art Museum Professionals, College Art Association (2015-2018).

Digitization Committee, Bowdoin College (2015-2018)

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND AFFILIATIONS

The Dark Room Race and Visual Culture Studies Seminar, College Art Association, Association for Critical Race Art History, Society for Contemporary Art Historians, Association of Art Museum Curators, Dartmouth Alumni Club.

OTHER SKILLS

Proficient in TMS/Embark, Microsoft Office (PC/Mac), Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator)

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (*WRITTEN)

French*, German*, Italian, Spanish