



Authors & Artists Magazine

***THE Source
for News & Information
on Authors, Artists
& the Creative Arts***

**Black Artists
Looking to
Increase
Representation
in Fine Art Museums**

**Getting
to Know
Idris Elba**

Authors and Artists Magazine
August 2019

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SHERRI
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A man who wouldn't break.

BRIAN BANKS

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

AUGUST

FROM THE CREATORS OF **WAR ROOM**



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TO DEFINE
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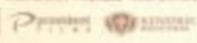
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AND INTRODUCING ARYN
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FILM INDEPENDENT



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Tony Smith, Editor-in-Chief

Taste. The sense by which we distinguish the flavor of our likes has produced, in all known languages, the metaphor expressed by the word "Taste"— a feeling of beauty and defects in all the arts.

To constitute taste, it is not sufficient to see and to know the beauty of a work. We must feel and be affected by it.

This bodes true for our Tastes in literature, theater, fashion, music and more. Even if we are not seeking to be moved by these things, invariably, we are, knowingly and many times unknowingly.

We at *Authors and Artist Magazine* are truly humbled and very appreciative by the love and support of all of our readers. As you enjoy your journey through the pages of *Authors and Artist Magazine*, being informed as you read our editorial. Keeping up-to-date on the happenings in our world of arts and entertainment, seeing our exciting and eye-catching images of your favorite celebrities, red carpet photo ops and the latest in theater and music. Know that you, our readers, are what inspires us to do what we do and to the best of our ability. It is what you expect.

Thank you,

Tony Smith, Editor-in-Chief

Authors & Artists Magazine

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Meet the Authors



Aaron Coleman

Threat Come Close

Longlisted for The Believer Book Award.

2019 Society of Midlands Poetry Honoree.



In his debut collection, Aaron Coleman writes an American anthem for the 21st century, a full-throated lyric composed of pain, faith, lust and vulnerability. Coleman’s poems comment on and interrogate the meaning of home and identity for a black man in America, past and present. Guided by a belief system comprising an eclectic array of invented saints — Trigger, Seduction, Doubt and Who — Coleman’s quest locates new ways of being in the natural world where “[t]he trees teach me how to break and keep on living.”

Aaron Coleman


A Fulbright Scholar and Cave Canem Fellow, Aaron Coleman received his MFA from Washington University in St. Louis. From Metro-Detroit, Aaron has lived and worked with youth in locations including Chicago, St. Louis, Spain, South Africa, and Kalamazoo. Former Public Projects Assistant at Pulitzer Arts Foundation, winner of the Tupelo Quarterly TQ5 Poetry Con-

test, The Cincinnati Review Robert and Adele Schiff Award, and a two-time semi-finalist for the 92Y Discovery Award, Aaron is currently a Chancellor’s Graduate Fellow in Washington University’s Comparative Literature PhD program. His debut collection *Threat Come Close* was published by Four Way Books in 2018. His chapbook *St. Trigger* won the 2015 Button Poetry Prize, judged by Adrian Matejka.

Catch him at the upcoming BookFest St. Louis on September 21st.



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Misa Sugiura

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT

Hardcover: 400 pages

Publisher: HarperTeen (June 4, 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062473441



Misa Sugiura's ancestors include a poet, a priestess, a samurai, and a stowaway. Her first novel, *It's Not Like It's a Secret*, was the winner of the Asian/Pacific American Award for YA Literature. Her second novel, *This Time Will be Different*, is the HarperCollins Children's Books Lead Read for Summer 2019. Misa lives under a giant oak tree in Silicon Valley with her husband, two sons, two cats, and a graybanded king snake.

ABOUT THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT

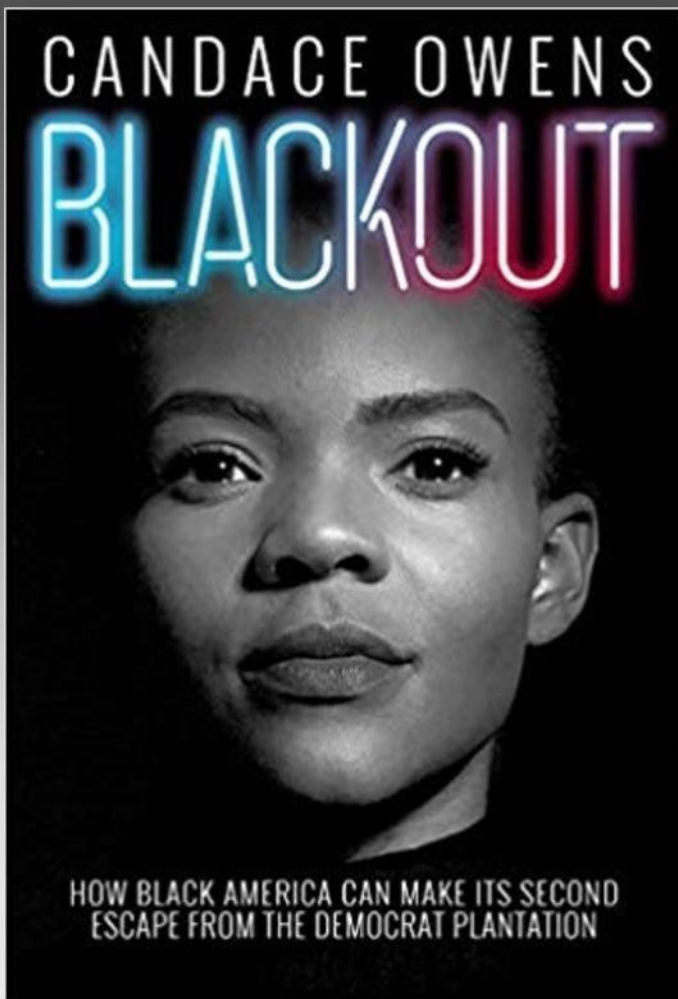
Katsuyamas never quit—but seventeen-year-old CJ doesn't even know where to start. She's never lived up to her mom's type A ambition, and she's perfectly happy just helping her aunt, Hannah, at their family's flower shop.

She doesn't buy into Hannah's romantic ideas about flowers and their hidden meanings, but when it comes to arranging the perfect bouquet, CJ discovers a knack she never knew she had. A skill she might even be proud of.

Then her mom decides to sell the shop—to the family who swindled CJ's grandparents when thousands of Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps during WWII. Soon a rift threatens to splinter CJ's family, friends, and their entire Northern California community; and for the first time, CJ has found something she wants to fight for.

Learn more at www.misasugiura.com





Blackout: How Black America Can Make Its Second Escape from the Democrat Plantation



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Candace Owens is a political commentator and the former Director of Communications for Turning Point USA. She is the founder of the #Blexit movement. She now tours the country delivering speeches to sold out crowds. Originally from Stamford, Connecticut, she now lives in New York City.

Political activist and social media star Candace Owens explains all the reasons how the Democratic Party policies hurt, rather than help, the African-American community, and why she and many others are turning right.

What do you have to lose? This question, posed by then-presidential candidate Donald Trump to potential black voters, was mocked and dismissed by the mainstream media. But for Candace Owens and many others, it was a wake-up call. A staunch Democrat for all of her life, she began to question the left's policies toward black Americans, and investigate the harm they inflict on the community.

In *Blackout*, social media star and conservative commentator Owens addresses the many ways that liberal policies and ideals are actually harmful to African Americans and hinder their ability to rise above pov-

erty, live independent and successful lives, and be an active part of the American Dream. Weaving in her personal story that brought her from the projects to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, she demonstrates how she overcame her setbacks and challenges despite the cultural expectation that she should embrace a victim mentality.

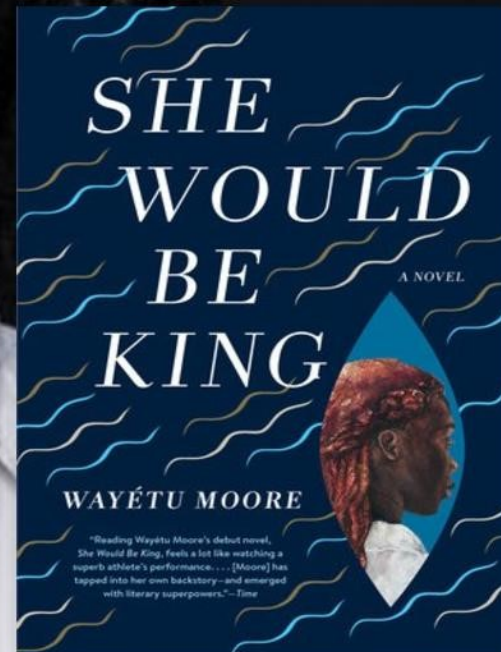
Owens argues that government assistance is a double-edged sword, that the left dismisses the faith so important to the black community, that Democratic permissiveness toward abortion disproportionately affects the black babies, that the #MeToo movement hurts black men, and much more. Well-researched and intelligently argued, *Blackout* lays bare the myth that all black people should vote Democrat—and shows why turning to the right will leave them happier, more successful, and more self-sufficient.

WAYÉTU MOORE

She Would Be King, reimagines the dramatic story of Liberia's early years through three unforgettable characters who share an uncommon bond. Gbessa, exiled from the West African village of Lai, is starved, bitten by a viper, and left for dead, but still she survives. June Dey, raised on a plantation in Virginia, hides his unusual strength until a confrontation with the overseer forces him to flee. Norman Aragon, the child of a white British colonizer and a Maroon slave from Jamaica, can fade from sight at will, just as his mother could. When the three meet in the settlement of Monrovia, their gifts help them salvage the tense relationship between the African American settlers and the

indigenous tribes, as a new nation forms around them.

Moore's intermingling of history and magical realism finds voice not just in these three characters but also in the fleeting spirit of the wind, who embodies an ancient wisdom. "If she was not a woman," the wind says of Gbessa, "she would be king." In this vibrant story of the African diaspora, Moore, a talented storyteller and a daring writer, illuminates with radiant and exacting prose the tumultuous roots of a country inextricably bound to the United States. *She Would Be King* is a novel of profound depth set against a vast canvas and a transcendent debut from a major new author.



Wayétu Moore is the founder of OneMoore Book and is a graduate of Howard University, Columbia University, and the University of Southern California. She is the author of the novel *She Would Be King* and *The Dragons, the Giant, the Women*, a memoir forthcoming in 2020. She teaches at the City University of New York's John Jay College and lives in Brooklyn. Learn more at <https://www.wayetu.com>

Getting to

Know

Idris Elba



Idrissa Akuna Elba OBE, professionally known as Idris Elba is an English actor, writer, producer, and musician. He is known for roles including Stringer Bell in the HBO series *The Wire*, DCI John Luther in the BBC One series *Luther*, and Nelson Mandela in the biographical film *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* (2013). He has been nominated four times for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor – Miniseries or Television Film, winning one, and was nominated five times for a Primetime Emmy Award.

Elba appeared in Ridley Scott's *American Gangster* (2007) and *Prometheus* (2012). Elba portrayed Heimdall in *Thor* (2011) and its sequels *Thor: The Dark World* (2013) and

Thor: Ragnarok (2017), as well as *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015) and *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018). He also starred in *Pacific Rim* (2013), *Beasts of No Nation* (2015), for which he received BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations for Best Supporting Actor, and *Molly's Game* (2017). In 2016, he voiced Chief Bogo in *Zootopia*, Shere Khan in the live action/CGI adaptation of *The Jungle Book*, Fluke in *Finding Dory*, and played the role of Krall in *Star Trek Beyond*. He made his directorial debut in 2018 with an adaptation of the 1992 novel *Yardie* by Victor Headley.

In addition to his acting work, Elba performs as a DJ under the moniker DJ Big Driis (or Big Driis the Londoner) and as an R&B musician.



In 2016, he was named in the *Time 100 list of the Most Influential People* in the World. As of May 2019, his films have grossed over \$9.8 billion at the global box office, including over \$3.6 billion in North America, where he is one of the top 20 highest-grossing actors.

Currently Elba starred in *Hobbs & Shaw*, a spin-off of *The Fast and the Furious* franchise. He is also set to star as Macavity in Tom Hooper's film adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, *Cats*.

Elba and Caleb McLaughlin are also teaming up for a new project. Elba, 46, and McLaughlin, 17, are set to star in *Concrete Cowboys* as an estranged father and son, according to Deadline.

The film follows 15-year-old Cole (McLaughlin) who moves in with his father Harp (Elba) in North Philadelphia, where Cole comes to find the city's cowboy subculture, according to the outlet. Jharrel Jerome, who recently starred in Ava DuVernay's *When They See Us*, also stars alongside Lorraine Toussaint and Byron Bowers.

Elba was born on 6 September 1972 at Forest Gate Hospital in Hackney, London, the son of Winston, a Sierra Leonean man who worked at the Ford Dagenham plant, and Eve, a Ghanaian woman. Elba's parents were married in Sierra Leone and later moved to London. Elba was brought up in Hackney and East Ham, and shortened his first name to "Idris" at school in Canning Town, where he first became involved in acting. He credits The Stage with giving him his first big break, having seen an advertisement for a play in it; he auditioned and met his first agent while performing in the role. In 1986, he began helping an uncle with his wedding DJ business; within a year, he had started his own DJ company with some of his friends. Elba left school in 1988, and won a place in the National Youth Music Theatre thanks to a £1,500 Prince's Trust grant. To sup-

port himself between roles in his early career, he worked in odd jobs including: tyre-fitting, cold-calling, and night shifts at Ford Dagenham. He was working in nightclubs under the DJ nickname "Big Driis" during his adolescence, but began auditioning for television roles in his early twenties.



Winston Elba, father and Idris Elba



Idris Elba and his Mom Eve Elba





Elba, an established DJ and recording artist, sees music as central to the mission of his production company. Same for his family. His five-year-old son, Winston – named for Elba’s father – is close by. Elba has a

teenage daughter from his first marriage, though they don’t live together. Several months ago, Elba married his long-time girlfriend Sabrina Dhowre in a lovely Marrakech ceremony. Married twice before, he never pictured himself tying the knot again. But he changed his mind after their ‘love at first sight’ meeting.

While filming *The Mountain Between Us* in Canada in late 2016, he made the acquaintance of Somali-born Dhowre, a former Miss Vancouver. And by the following September, the normally press-shy star was so smitten he was finding it hard to stay quiet.

“Falling in love while making a movie about falling in love is pretty special,” the actor told PEOPLE’s former Editor-in-Chief Jess Cagle in an episode of *The Jess Cagle Interview*.

Elba praises Dhowre’s impact on his life, saying, ‘Sabrina has deepened friendships with people I’ve known longer than her, nurturing the best side of me to make me connect to my friends more.’ The two tied the knot over a year after Elba’s proposal.

The two exchanged vows in April 2019 at the Ksar Char Bagh hotel in Marrakesh. The Ksar Char Bagh is a small luxury hotel with extensive gardens in the palm grove of Marrakesh.

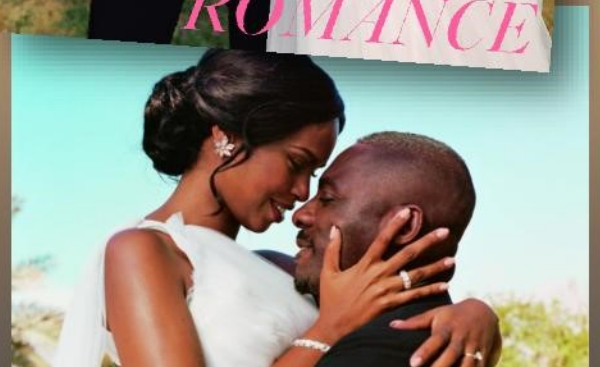
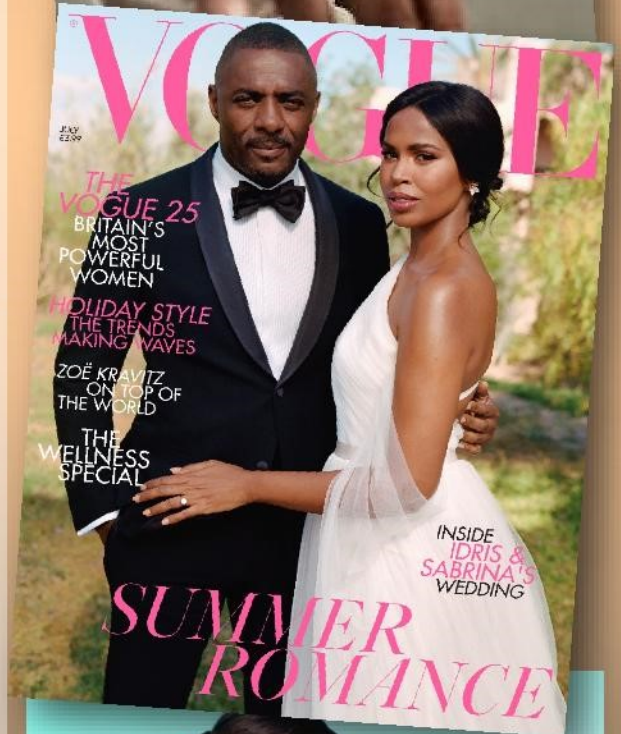
The bride wore two custom Vera Wang gowns for the big day while Elba kept his look classic in a black suit by Ozward Boateng.

Before the ceremony, Elba and Dhowre hosted an extravagant rehearsal dinner at Amanjena on Thursday, according to *Vogue*.

‘There was a huge festive party with camels and fire dancers and dancing,’ says a close family friend.

A day after her wedding, Dhowre wrote on Instagram: “The best day of my life, thank you to everyone who helped make it so special.”

We’re keeping an eye on him!



Writing News

Skydance Television Strikes Overall Deal With Writer Olivia Purnell



Writer Olivia Purnell (Y) has signed an exclusive multi-year overall production deal with Skydance Television to create, develop and produce original scripted series for the studio. Purnell currently has multiple projects in development with Skydance that will be announced in the coming months.

“We fell in love with Olivia’s writing while working with her in the writers’ room for *Foundation* and knew immediately this was a creative talent we wanted to partner with,” said Marcy Ross, President of Skydance Television. “Olivia has a powerful point of view for both her characters and her storytelling. We’re thrilled to have her join our team and couldn’t be happier she chose Skydance as her creative home.”

Most recently, Purnell was a writer on *Y*, based on *Y: The Last Man* DC comic book series at FX. Prior to that, she was a staff writer on *Foundation* the Skydance Television series for Apple TV+ and for *St. Luke’s* for AMC. Purnell got her start as a staff writer on season two of *American Gods* on Starz. Prior to becoming a full-time writer, Purnell worked as a stylist, collaborating with designers, artists, publications and styling everything from editorial shoots for *Flaunt* and *Paper* magazines to musical performances on *The Today Show* and *Saturday Night Live*.

“It’s a gift to find collaborators who want to tell new kinds of stories with boldness and precision,” said Purnell. “I’m thrilled to partner with the creative team at Skydance Television. We share a passion for making great television, and I can’t wait to get started.”

Profits Rise 6% at HarperCollins in Fiscal 2019



HarperCollins posted a 6% rise in earnings in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, despite a small (0.2%) dip in revenue compared to fiscal 2018, parent company News Corp reported. EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) was \$253 million in fiscal 2019, up from \$239 million a year ago, while revenue was \$1.75 billion, compared to \$1.76 in fiscal 2018.

HC faced a host of challenges in trying to match last year’s results, which included \$28 million in licensing revenue from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the \$27 million negative impact from foreign currency fluctuations, and \$65 million worth of lower revenues as a result of the adoption of the new revenue recognition standard. HC CEO Brian Murray said that, excluding the currency and accounting factors, HC’s revenue were “up substantially” in the year. In a conference call with analysts discussing the year end results, News Corp executives said the publisher had outperformed expectations.

Murray said HC was able to overcome the \$28 million in licensing revenue from the Tolkien deal by strong performances by four authors, Rachel Hollis, Joanna Gaines, Mark Manson, and, in the U.K., David Walliams. Over all, Murray said, all major divisions in both the U.S. and U.K. saw sales rise in fiscal 2019 over 2018.



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music



HYPEBAE: Shavone Charles

HYPEBAE: *The multihyphenate expands on her creative projects and her time at Instagram.*

Shavone Charles started this year with a dream gig, the Head of Global Music and Youth Culture Communications at Instagram, a role she held for three years. As the year progressed, she eventually stepped down from her post and set her eyes on entrepreneurial pursuits. To many, she's known as somewhat of a renaissance woman due to her commanding personality in addition to her impact on the tech community. While at the social media platform, Forbes reports that she spearheaded the company's global music and youth culture communications by creating social campaigns and collaborating with the platform's highly followed musicians and public figures.

Prior to Instagram, she worked in a culture-centric role at Twitter for over three years. According to Forbes, she oversaw the company's communications programs and led curation for the official @TwitterMusic account.

The Southern California native grew up with a special interest in music which stems from her exposure to instruments. In addition to music, Charles was surrounded by black-owned businesses which she notes provided a glimpse of what it means to serve one's community. Throughout her younger life, she took notice to the fact that her family had a strong communal tie, she shares that this kept her inspired as a creative. While in grade school she played the classical flute and soon after began performing original poetry and rapping over beats. By way of her mother's introduction to hip-hop, Shavone grew to appreciate and love artists like Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott and others. Her father preferred musicians like Eek-a-Mouse, Bootsy Collins and Battlecat which provided a bit of a contrast.



Earlier this year, Shavone was included in the 2019 Forbes' 30 under 30 list. Following this prestigious title she launched "Magic in her Melanin," a creative collective and in-house agency. This platform serves as a key way for all of the creative direction surrounding her work. Back in March, she unveiled a special video project "4C" which shed light on the Internet's #BlackGirlMagic community while paying homage to black hair rituals. The video showcased an array of black creatives and was a poignant look at blackness.

HYPEBAE recently caught up with Shavone as she passed through New York. Read their interview below to get insight on her creative career path in tech and insight on her current work.

You're from California, can you express how being from the West Coast has influenced you career-wise and on a personal level?

Being from Southern California, specifically from Southeast San Diego, much of who I am is a result of my family and the community and culture around me. I grew up in the neighborhood, in gang territory, with my parents and brothers, where music and creativity were some of the only means of channeling struggle through self-expression and positive outlets. That piece of my life has always kept me hungry and inspired to demand more as an underrepresented person and creative.

Our family has always had a strong tie to the community on a lot of levels and my parents fought to make sure I had the resources necessary to pave my own path and seek art-focused hobbies and ways to express myself in a positive way, outside of what I was exposed to. My parents both had black-owned businesses, a hair

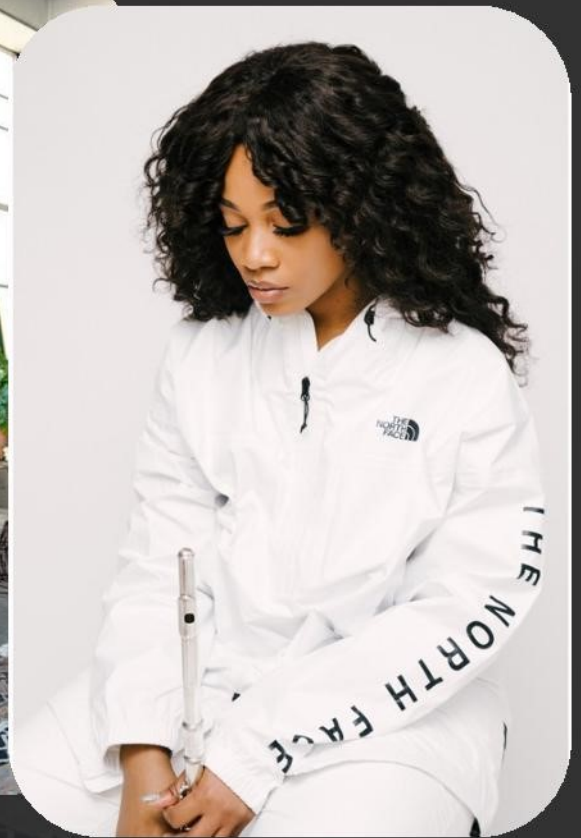
salon and a restaurant in Southeast San Diego, serving our community for over 20 years.

Can you give us an idea of your creative background prior to your role at Instagram?

All of my nine to five work in music and tech literally came as a result of my artistry and dedication to musicianship. Music has been the sole vehicle and source of inspiration powering my entire career path, as an artist, multi-hyphenate creative and women of color in tech.

All throughout my early childhood, my uncle and older brother JJ exposed me to musicianship and jazz, through piano and a series of woodwind instruments [including the] flute, saxophone and clarinet. My uncle is a multi-instrumentalist and one of the most-talented jazz flutists I've ever heard still to this day. I decided to pick up my own instruments and started early piano lessons in elementary school. I decided to start with flute and piano and that established a strong part of my classical music foundation and ability to read and write music. After starting, I began competitively playing the flute while attending grade school.

I eventually evolved to performing original poetry and rapping over beats toward the end of middle school. After sharpening up my rapping a bit more, I dropped my first hard-copy mixtape in high school, then released my second official tape *The Famish* in college and ended up opening up for Talib Kweli at Howard University's homecoming and kept performing at open mics, clubs and showcases from there.



Can you break down when you realized you wanted to branch out on your own and step into your purpose?

I always knew I would one day end up pursuing a more entrepreneurial life and career trajectory because of my childhood and everything I've been exposed to from seeing my parents run their own businesses and set their own path. As a person who will forever be a student of life, dedicated to learning and discovery, I wholeheartedly believe my experiences in school and working in tech have always been a core part of the journey to where I am right at this moment. To build toward what you want and truly prepare yourself to stand in purpose, you have to have tools, a specific skill-

set even – and character. In a way, you have to get yourself ready for your blessings and you have to have clarity in your life to truly sense and discover what self-purpose looks like for you.

What was the most rewarding part about working at Instagram?

I'm grateful for my time building community across different industries and using my resources to create access and support for underrepresented creatives. [In addition to] learning priceless lessons about unapologetically knowing your value and fighting for your value in corporate spaces, as a creative of color. [During my time there I was] a thought leader and student in music and tech, during a powerful time of transition, where technology emerged as the most important

part of the music industry.

What are your thoughts on the current state of the music and entertainment industry?

The industry today is the "Wild Wild West." The beauty in that is, because of the Internet, our world is more open and you have creativity and accessibility at your fingertips. The key is to weave through the noise and use data to make informed decisions, while you also minimize compromising your art form – that's the true test and ongoing tension that keeps being an artist in 2019 challenging. **READ MORE** at <https://hypebae.com/2019/8/shavone-charles-4c-music-tech-instagram-interview>



ANG LEE: “NO ONE CAN SEE WHAT’S COMING”

By RÜDIGER STURM for The Talks

Mr. Lee, what does new filmmaking technology really add to our viewing experience?

I hate to call it technology — a movie is technology already. I think multidimensional filmmaking is a format. It's a cinematic language. There's more resolution, more brightness, there's a clarity to it, a sensation, a dimension. It's a truthful image. The biggest difference I would say is the way you engage with the movie. In 2D, you watch somebody else's business as a voyeur as the French call it, but with these formats, it's more personal, it can be first person perspective. You're in the movie. You need a kind of excuse to compare the clarity along with the flatter, older movies we know...

But even if this format had always existed, we probably

wouldn't have wanted to see *Gone with the Wind* in 3D.

Actually, I think once you're used to it, once you know what to do with it, I think you should be able to do anything: comedies, musicals, you can do anything. This is a transitional moment. It used to be that widescreen cinema scope was only used for spectacles not for dramas. That's not true anymore. And certain color techniques were for color films, while dramas were in black and white — not anymore. It's a matter of getting used to it and finding the artistry in that media, and I think this will be the same thing.

Are we missing something, an extra layer of aesthetics, if we don't see a film in its 3D iteration?

I think multidimensional films have three axes, X, Y and Z. So you'll miss the Z-axis! (Laughs) The staging of the movie, where

things are placed and of course, with two eyes, you might just watch the movie differently. I think you do see the same intensity in lower formats, but you miss not only the clarity but the dimensions of the frames, and of course the 3D part of it. 3D not only as 3D but as a dimensional language, which you see in a clear and bright way.

When did your interest in multidimensional filmmaking start?

It started from *Life of Pi*. I didn't know how to crack the book and I thought if I have a different dimension... That's a silly thought to begin with but I actually thought a different dimension might help me to philosophically crack the book. So I used first person and third person storytelling because that's what the book does.

That's their emotional connection to it.

Exactly, so I thought with a different dimension, with a Z-axis, if I can place them differently, maybe I could get away with it. So that's how I began. I had never done anything like that, but I quickly realized that's what digital cinema should be doing. It should have dimension, it shouldn't be doing what film is doing. It should have its own thing. So that's where I started this journey. And I think we haven't even scratched the surface. That's why I keep wanting to do it, because I'm curious... I don't have a lot of curiosity to do 2D movies anymore. I think we've known most of what we know since the seventies. Nowadays, it's a matter of doing it well.

There are still some adjustments to be made to 3D films before we completely accept them as the go-to medium though.

Of course. My own personal experience... The right way to watch a 3D film is more clarity, higher frame rate. You just have to do that. Once you get there, there is something very clear to me which is doing drama, studying face, you get a lot more than action spectacles because, well, nothing is more rich in expression than the human face. Of course, they have to be good enough, the performance has to be natural, it has to be complex, has to be good enough for you to study. Nothing is more interesting to study than our own faces. That's our most important job in life is to study each other's faces. That's a tough sell, though. Associations are already established: people associate 3D with gimmicks, with spectacle or action. I don't think from 2D to 3D you get that much — you do, but I don't think you get that much in 3D doing action... You get so much more in the close-up face and that was, I think, the biggest advantage to Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk.

So you think the quality of these films depends as much on how we watch them as on how they're made?

Well, Wim Wenders and I were talking to a group of film students in Berlin right after Pi. And he's the only filmmaker I talked to who said that the performance in 3D has to be adjusted. I've never heard anybody else say that, people watching dimensional movies still thinking about flat movies, the artifice of the flat movie with scopes... That's interesting. Do they react to these hyperreal or 3D movies that take them out of their comfort zones? I don't know. Sometimes movies get hot and cold. Nobody knows, the studios, the execs, no one can see what's coming. When Life of Pi was released, everybody including myself, expected to lose a lot of money. [READ MORE](#) or <https://the-talks.com/interview/ang-lee/>



“I believe in the space of the theatrical experience where you have a high priest — the director. You preach to your audience and sell them a movie, tell them a story.”

Fashion



Arthur McGee, Fashion Designer Who Dressed Cicely Tyson and Stevie Wonder Dies at 86

Arthur L. McGee was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1933. In 1951 at the age of 18 he saw a contest being promoted by the famous Traphagen School of Design on the back of a local paper in Detroit. He entered the contest and won a scholarship to attend the school. Inspired by his mother who often created her own fashions, Arthur submitted the winning design and set his course for Manhattan.

Mr. McGee went on to study at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) where he honed his talent for millinery and apparel design. He began working for the American couturier Charles James while still a student at FIT and later produced his own designs while pursuing employment in New York's apparel manufacturing industry.

In 1957, Mr. McGee became the first African-American to run the design room of an established Seventh Avenue apparel company, Bobby Brooks. His remarkable talent and the broad appeal of his work transcended racial barriers, selling to such stores as Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, Henri Bendel,

Bonwit Teller, Bergdorf Goodman, and Lord & Taylor. He opened his first store in the early 1960s on St. Mark's Place in New York City where his clients included Cybil Burton and Arthur Mitchell of the Dance Theater of Harlem. He became the designer of choice for many celebrities, including Lena Horne, Cicely Tyson, and Stevie Wonder.

Known as the dean of African-American designers, Mr. McGee mentored many young talents, including Aziza Braithwaite Bey (Elena Braith) and the late Willi Smith, paving the way for designers of color.

Born in Detroit in 1933 to a dressmaker mother, McGee began to make hats for his mom at age 15. "My mother liked hats and I said, 'I'm going to make hats for her,'" he told the MET.

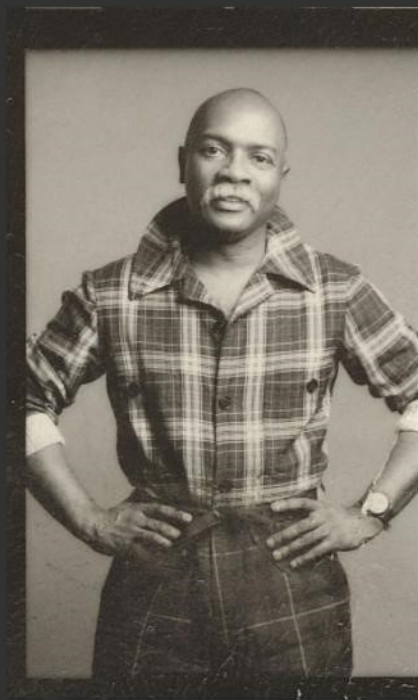
McGee left for New York at age 18 after winning a scholarship contest for the Traphagen School of Design, and later attended the Fashion Institute of Technology, where he studied apparel design and millinery, in which he was placed due to his experience making hats growing up.

During his six months at FIT, McGee worked for English-American designer Charles James, who was a "genius in the art of sculpting fabric," according to the MET. McGee said, "I quit [FIT] because they said to me, 'There's no jobs for a black designer.' So I left."

He went on to create Broadway costumes and work on Seventh Avenue, making pieces for Sibyl Burton and Josephine Premice.

But it was in 1957 that McGee made history as the first African-American designer to run a design studio — Bobbie Brooks — on Seventh Avenue in the garment district in New York. "When I'd go to look at lines of fabric, I'd go to the fabric company and they'd say, 'Well, where's the designer?' They'd walk right by me. I'd say, 'It's me,'" McGee said. "It was always like that. It was just ridiculous."

McGee sold his line to stores Henri Bendel, Bergdorf Goodman and Lord & Taylor, according to the New York Amsterdam News, which wrote, "Transcending racial barriers, his talent was remarkable."



"In the '50s, I could make \$8,000 designing two dresses for an ad where the clothes matched the car," McGee told *Ebony* in 1980. "Then I would walk into an office in a custom-made suit and they still assumed I was a messenger. Today there are probably 99 black designers instead of just one exception as I was, but the system will not allow talented people of dark skin to become owners of a business or millionaires like the white designers

who often built careers copying the technique of someone like Stephen Burrows. But when you love fashion, you do it, no matter what. They try to keep us in a corner, but I know I'm good, and I'll be designing when I'm 95."

McGee opened his store in the '60s on St. Marks Place, which was "becoming a street style runway," wrote author and local Ada Calhoun in the book *St. Marks Is Dead: The Many Lives of America's Hippest Street*. "People paraded in their beads, bell-bottoms, flowing prints and Sergeant Pepper jackets." Calhoun wrote that St. Marks Place became "a gathering place for black power activists" and quotes McGee as adding, "There was always something nice happening there."

McGee also spent a lot of time in Miami and sold thousands of kimono-sleeve shirts using African fabrics at a reasonable price point. "Now, you can't wear any of the stuff that you buy. It costs two arms and three legs, plus some more," he said. His inspirations included Charles James, Claire McCardell and Adrian for his plain suits. "That's the kind of clothes I wanted to make and that's what I did," McGee said of his mudcloth dresses and other apparel (adding that wedding dresses were his nemeses after making countless gowns).

In cementing his legacy, McGee mentored many young designers who came behind him, said Braith after his death, including as a guest teacher to the many students she taught at schools such as Virginia Commonwealth Universi-

ty, College of Saint Elizabeth and FIT. "Arthur will be missed by his family, many friends, mentees, muse, clients & students. McGee was a kind & giving spirit with a great sense of humor. I pray that he is joyfully dancing with the ancestors," said Braith, his former assistant designer in the 1960s (also known as Aziza Braithwaite Bey).

In 2010, FIT honored McGee with a Lifetime Achievement Award. He is survived by his brother Gordon.





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Museums



African American Artists Are More Visible Than Ever. So Why Are Museums Giving Them Short Shrift?

Julia Halperin & Charlotte Burns, for ArtNews

This story is a collaboration between artnet News and In Other Words

As a child growing up in Alabama in the 1950s and '60s, Jack Whitten was not permitted inside his segregated local museum in Birmingham. Now, the late artist is the subject of a major exhibition at the Met Breuer in New York. Its title, aptly, is "Odyssey: Jack Whitten Sculpture 1963–2017" (on view through December 2).

As recently as 1992, a proposed tour of the Whitney Museum of American Art's Jean-Michel Basquiat retrospective was canceled when no other museums came forward to take it. Last spring, one of Basquiat's paintings sold for \$110.5 million, becoming the most expensive work by an American artist ever sold at auction.

Such landmark moments make it easy to assume that there has been a fundamental shift in the way the work of African American artists is valued. But since 2008, just 2.37 percent of all acquisitions and gifts and 7.6 percent of all exhibitions at 30 prominent American museums have

been of work by African American artists, according to a joint investigation by In Other Words and artnet News.

Our data, coupled with conversations with more than 30 prominent curators, collectors, dealers, museum directors, academics, and philanthropists, reveals that progress is much more recent—and benefits far fewer artists—than high-profile exceptions might lead one to believe.

"When they look at the totality, people will realize they have a lot of work to do," says Naima Keith, the deputy director and chief curator of the California African American Museum.

The Most Compelling Art of Our Time

These figures are particularly sobering at a time when African Americans comprise more than 12 percent of the US population and are creating some of the most visible and compelling art of our time: from Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sutherland's wildly popular portraits of Barack

and Michelle Obama to the towering public sculptures by Martin Puryear (who is set to become the second consecutive African American artist to represent the US at the Venice Biennale), not to mention the paintings by Kerry James Marshall that recently toured the country in a blockbuster retrospective.



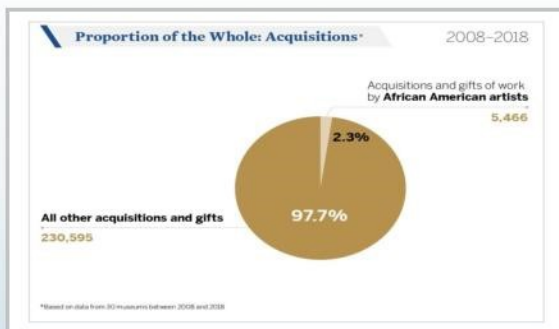
This fall, several critically acclaimed traveling exhibitions focus on the work of an older generation of African American artists, including “Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power” at the Brooklyn Museum, New York (on view through February 3, 2019), “Howardena Pindell: What Remains To Be Seen” at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (through November 25), and “Charles White: A Retrospective” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (October 7–January 13, 2019).

“If you deal with contemporary art, it is self-evident that many of the most interesting artists are African American,” says MoMA’s director Glenn Lowry. “And you realize that there were always important African American artists, even if they were not as visible to museums as they should have been. So then you need to address that as well.”

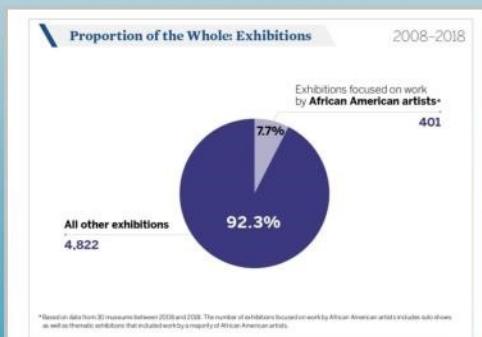
The Numbers

There are signs of change. Last year, the number of solo and thematic exhibitions focusing on the work of African American artists jumped almost 66 percent (to 63 shows, from 38 in 2016). Just nine months into 2018, the combined number of works by African American artists acquired by museums (439 total, so far) is on track to become a 10-year record.

Nonetheless, this shift is extraordinarily recent. Over the past decade, purchases and gifts of work by African American artists accounted for a mere 2.4 percent of all acquisitions by the 30 museums we surveyed. Even starker is the fact that at four of these museums, this work accounted for less than one percent of all acquisitions.



Meanwhile, the museums we examined have dedicated only 7.6 percent of all their exhibitions to the work of African American artists. (Notably, New York’s Studio Museum in Harlem accounts for 2.7 percent of that figure.)



"I would have thought the needle would have moved more," says Margaret Morton, the director of creativity and free expression at the Ford Foundation.

A Moment of Change?

Our research suggests that, despite recent efforts, work by African American artists continues to be sidelined within American museums. The perception of progress is buoyed by a handful of important exhibitions, a—very gently—increasing number of acquisitions, and a smattering of headline auction prices. These, however, belie the extent to which entrenched systems of power and influence contribute to institutional racism that impedes significant structural change.

"Historically, what curators have been asked to do is follow a particular storyline—and then when things fall outside that, they are rendered invisible," says Naomi Beckwith, a senior curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. But the stories of African American artists "don't just belong to the bodies that hold the narrative. These stories belong to culture. It is a way of seeing the world."

African American artists are certainly not the only population that has been pushed to the margins by major institutions. Several people we spoke to suggested we would be likely to find even starker underrepresentation of other groups, including Native American and Latino artists.

These challenges, of course, are not confined to the art world. "We would similarly 'be surprised' by the findings in many other industries that would no doubt show equivalently disproportionate statistics—which just speaks to the vastness of the issue," says Valentino Carloti, the global head of business development at Sotheby's.

Alternate Histories

Make no mistake: African American artists, critics, and historians have long been doing important and influential work out of sight of the mainstream.

"There have been many concurrent art histories that have often been on parallel tracks but rarely aligned," says Brooke Davis Anderson, the director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The institution has acquired 393 works by African American artists over the past decade—more than almost any other museum. "If you're not part of the mainstream canon, then your narrative is a community one," she says. "That doesn't mean it is less academic and scholarly and smart."

It is only recently that the country's largest museums have begun to seriously consider the fact that their collections should better reflect the demographics of their communities. But "historically black colleges and universities have made this a priority for a very long time," says Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, the director of the Museum of Fine Art at Spelman, the historically black women's college in Atlanta, Georgia. "They were certainly looking at acquiring this work before major institutions were and so there is a much greater context to their collections."

The same is true of smaller museums that have made it a priority to support their local constituents. The Columbus Museum in Georgia, for example, was one of the first to acquire major works by Alma Thomas and Amy Sherald, who were both born in the city. (The museum plans to co-organize a major Thomas exhibition in 2020.)

Now, access to comparable works is tightly controlled—and far too expensive for most institutions to afford. "We couldn't consider buying work by Barkley L. Hendricks or Njideka Akunyili Crosby now, but we have wonderful examples of both because we invested early in those artists' careers," says Trevor Schoonmaker, the deputy director of curatorial affairs and chief curator of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in North Carolina. New auction records were set this past May at Sotheby's for work by both Hendricks (\$2.2 million for the 1974 painting *Brenda P*) and Crosby (\$3.4 million for the 2017 work *Bush Babies*).

Of the 628 works to have entered the Nasher's permanent collection during the past decade, 132 are by African American artists—21 percent of the total. "We couldn't afford to follow trends, even if we wanted to," Schoonmaker says.

What appears to many to be a recent phenomenon is, in fact, the product of decades of dedication by both institutions and individuals. Trailblazing curatorial giants such as Okwui Enwezor, the former artistic director of the Haus der Kunst in Munich, and Thelma Golden, the director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem, have been making steadfast claim to the excellence of work created by artists of the African diaspora for a long time. "For more than 50 years, we have worked to support the voices of black artists locally, nationally, and internationally through exhibitions, publications, educational programs, and public dialogue," Golden says.

Meanwhile, many of the country's oldest museums are playing catch-up—and being honest about it. In a frank admission of institutional fallibility, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York posted a wall text to accompany its current exhibition of African American portrait photographs from the 1940s and '50s (through October 8). "The museum has until recently acquired few likenesses of African Americans," the label reads. Acquisitions made between 2015 and 2017 "are part of an initiative, long overdue, to build such a collection."

Shifting the Status Quo

To date, larger museums have mainly chosen to lavish resources and attention on a small number of agreed-upon artists, limiting the amount of new scholarship that could reshape the canon. Of the 216 solo exhibitions dedicated to work by African American artists staged during the past decade at the 30 museums we examined, almost a quarter focused on the same 10 names.

"There is no reward system for museums to take chances," says Maxwell Anderson, the president of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation. "Curators have to sell the exhibition or the acquisition to the board or director. The default is to go to people who are much in the news, much discussed."

Anderson recalls clashing with certain board members when he was the director of the Whitney Museum over an exhibition of work by African American quilters from Gee's Bend. One disgruntled board member asked: "'How many mid-career artists haven't had shows, and you want to do an exhibition of women quilters from Alabama?'" he recalls. (The works in the 2002 show were ultimately described by New York Times critic Michael Kimmelman as "some of the most miraculous works of modern art America has produced.")

As in any field, some power brokers are reluctant to see the status quo change. Despite the reality that most American museums have not significantly adjusted their acquisition and exhibition priorities, there is quiet questioning in some quarters about whether change has, in fact, gone too far.

This is nothing new. In her studies of demographic representation in museums and galleries in the 1980s and '90s, the artist Howardena Pindell—who was one of the first black curators at MoMA—wrote in 1987: "The art world will state that all white exhibitions, year after year... are not a reflection of racism. The lie or denial is cloaked in phrases such as 'artistic choice' or 'artistic quality' when the pattern reveals a different intent."

Others express their concerns more explicitly. One museum

director, speaking anonymously, tells us that a board member recently took him aside to sound a note of caution: "Just don't forget about the white guys."

What's Taken So Long?

Without institutional buy-in, progress can be slow. "It's not an easy thing—you have to really want it," says Melissa Chiu, the director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, which has staged three exhibitions and acquired nine works by African American artists since 2008.

Acquisitions and exhibitions require expertise and resources that museums are constantly under pressure to invest elsewhere. Several museum directors told us off the record that their institutions are struggling to gain ground on the many fronts on which they have lagged behind. "It took years for us to have as many women artists on our schedule," says one prominent director. "Now you're seeing the fruits of that. This all takes time."

Not Just a Matter of Getting People in the Room

There have been episodic efforts to alter the balance of power in institutions before. In the late 1980s and early '90s, the multiculturalism movement put pressure on museums to diversify both their personnel and their programs.

But these efforts fizzled out as dedicated funding dried up, museums shifted their priorities, and some institutions faced acute blowback in response to exhibitions like the 1993 Whitney Biennial. That controversial survey, which became known as the "identity politics biennial," included George Holliday's 10-minute video of the Rodney King beating as a work of art and dispensed admission buttons designed by the artist Daniel J. Martinez that read, "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white." Critic Robert Hughes declared it "a fiesta of whining." Kimmelman wrote, more simply, "I hate the show."

In the aftermath, optimism quickly fractured as "political correctness became a kind of buzzword," says Bridget Cooks, a professor of African American studies and art history at the University of California, Irvine. "There had been a blossoming of visibility and then this became a way to handle it, wrap it up, and shut it down. There was a sense that 'this is no longer art.' It further polarized people in terms of next steps."

[READ MORE AT NEWS.ARTNET.COM](https://www.artnet.com/news/2018/05/10/museums-diversity)

ART

ARTIST TO WATCH: Nigerian Artist Ayo Filade



Ayo Filade, known better as AyoDraws, was first encouraged to draw and paint by his artist father.

He is largely concerned with the contrasts in lighting and textures, as well as with details. Titling his art “Disparate Realism”, Filade’s pre-occupation with hyper-realism and surrealism by representing his subjects in their raw and imperfect states manifests in his interrogation of the consequences of conflict (action and reaction), separation and break, and how we deal with their rising tensions individually and as a society.

REBIRTH

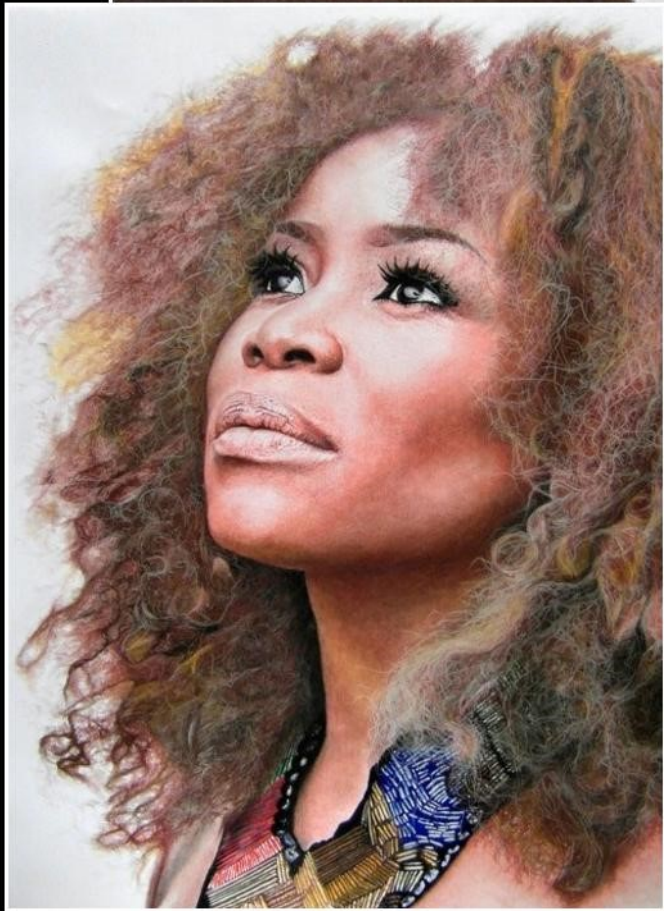
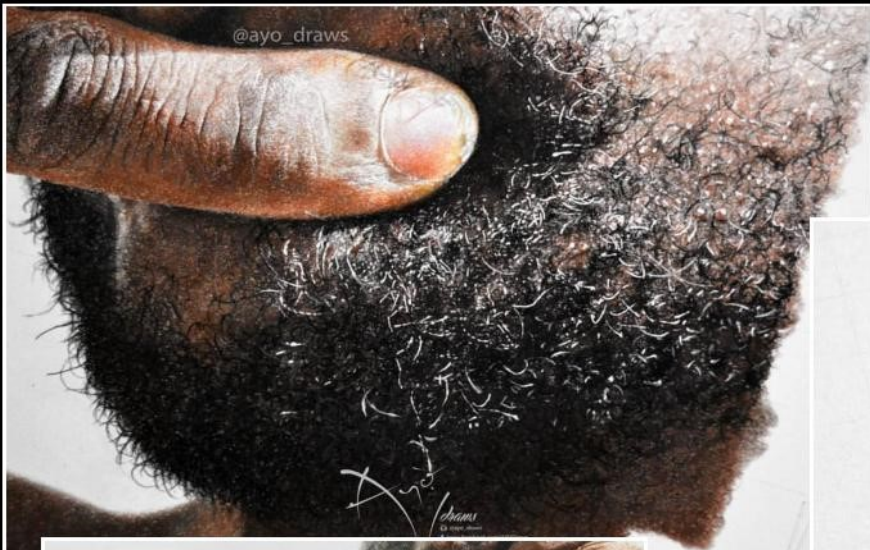
“Following the emergence of the 20 Naira note in 1977, other de-

nominations of currency such as the N1, N5, N10, N50 etc notes were introduced. Using distinctively separate colours to aid easy identification, the engravings on the notes were also made to symbolise the cultural characteristics of Nigeria at the time.

With the successful introduction of these currency notes which all paid tribute to symbolic National Heroes from Alvan Ikoku to Civilian farmers, this ensured the foothold “by Nigeria for Nigeria” was retained in the financial sector.

Rebirth 1 and 2 educates, celebrates and freezes the aforementioned moments in Nigeria’s Rich Cultural History.”

Learn more about Ayo Filade, visit <https://www.ayodraws.com/>



Sharon Rae North

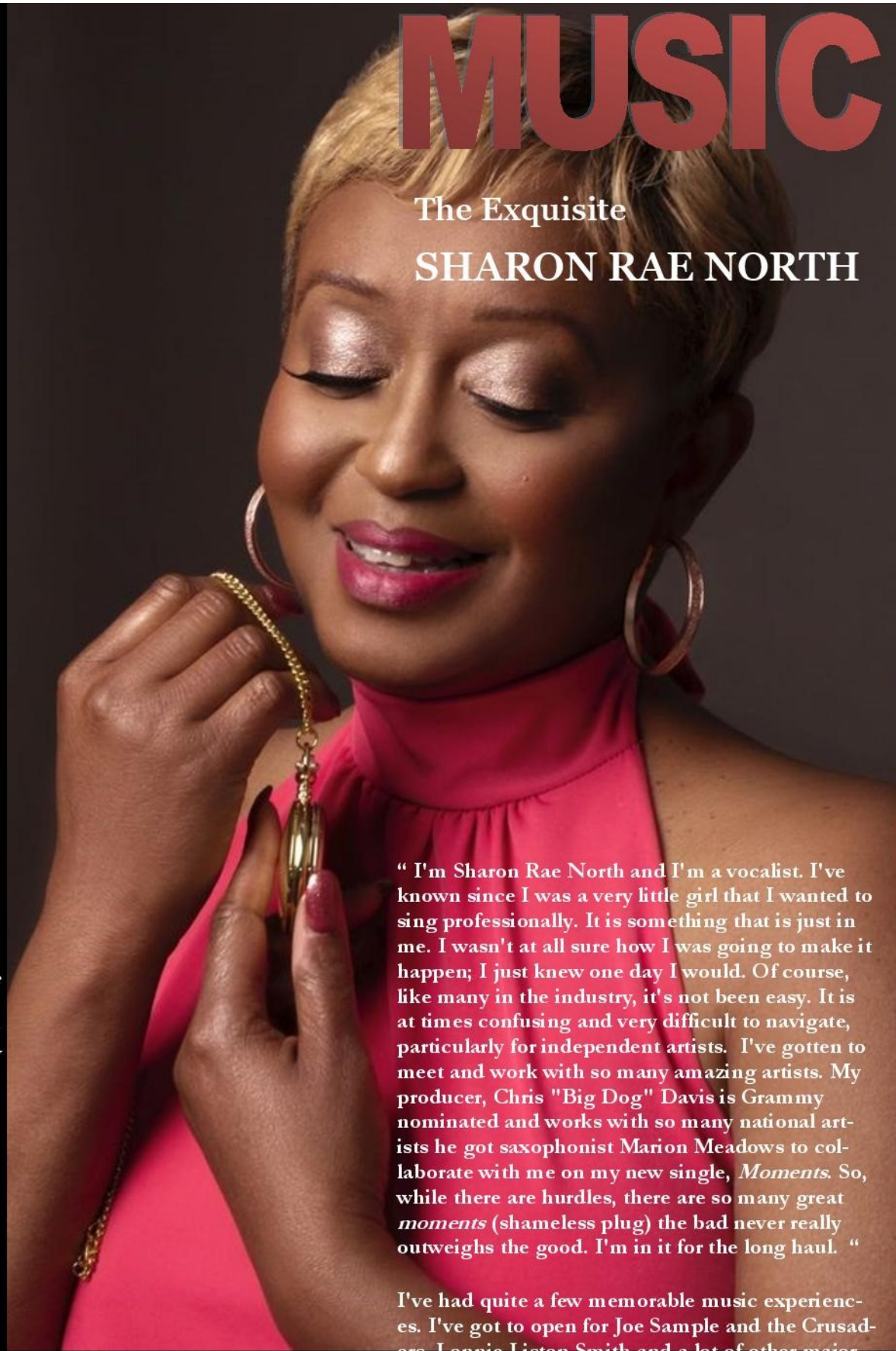
MOMENTS
FEATURING: MARION MEADOWS



MUSIC

The Exquisite

SHARON RAE NORTH



On June 3 *Moments* released globally and immediately took the #2 spot on the Billboard Smooth Jazz Most Added chart. In week #2 it made the top 5 on Billboards Most Increased Plays chart and took the #61 spot in its debut on The Smooth Jazz Top 100 chart, while being added to playlists globally. Featuring Marion Meadows, the song was written by Sharon Rae North, Chris "Big Dog" Davis and Fred "Freddyboy" Sawyers.

Download *Moments* at www.cdbaby.com/cd/SharonRaeNorth6 or on major digital platforms.

Moments hit the **BILLBOARD SMOOTH JAZZ CHART** in July 2019. The single dropped in early June 2019. This marks the 3rd consecutive summer with a song on the Billboard Smooth Jazz Chart. In 2018 it was *Sincerely Yours*, the title cut from the last EP. In 2017 *Lonely Nites*, a single from "*Sincerely Yours*", spent 11 weeks on the chart, peaking at #11.

sharonraenorth.com



Sharon Rae North is a talented vocalist who sings Jazz (straight-ahead, contemporary, smooth jazz) and Adult Contemporary music.

" I'm Sharon Rae North and I'm a vocalist. I've known since I was a very little girl that I wanted to sing professionally. It is something that is just in me. I wasn't at all sure how I was going to make it happen; I just knew one day I would. Of course, like many in the industry, it's not been easy. It is at times confusing and very difficult to navigate, particularly for independent artists. I've gotten to meet and work with so many amazing artists. My producer, Chris "Big Dog" Davis is Grammy nominated and works with so many national artists he got saxophonist Marion Meadows to collaborate with me on my new single, *Moments*. So, while there are hurdles, there are so many great *moments* (shameless plug) the bad never really outweighs the good. I'm in it for the long haul. "

I've had quite a few memorable music experiences. I've got to open for Joe Sample and the Crusaders, Lonnie Liston Smith and a lot of other major artists who I've admired since I was a kid. I've gotten to perform on huge stages in front of huge audiences. I've had songs on the Billboard Smooth Jazz Chart and had an EP make the first ballot in the Grammy Awards in the Best Jazz Vocal Album Category "

Pedro Costa's 'Vitalina Varela' Triumphs at Locarno Film Festival

Hinstin's first edition as festival director. Other awards in the main section went to Park Jung-bum's "Height of the Wave" (Special Jury Prize) and Damien Manivel as best director for "Isadora's Children," with the top actor going to Regis Myrupu in Maya Da-Rin's "The Fever." All the prizes reflected the jury's marked preference for a well-established trend in contemporary art-house cinema favoring form over content, aestheticized atmosphere over traditional storytelling.

The

72nd Locarno Film Festival drew to a close

Saturday with Portuguese auteur Pedro Costa's dark and detached film "Vitalina Varela" coming away with several awards together with superlatives from segments of the hardcore cinephile crowd, including jury president Catherine Breillat.

In announcing the Golden Leopard prize for the film, as well as best actress to its eponymous star, Breillat was emphatic in saying that Costa's achievement goes beyond mere awards, insisting on its place in the cinema pantheon.

Costa was the most prominent name in the International Competition selection this year, which marked Lili



Few words can describe the life of Vitalina Varela, her journey, her wait. Few words can comment on our chat with her, interrupted by a violent emotion that was too strong to hold in, inside a body and a heart that only one person could recount: her. [SEE VIDEO HERE](#)



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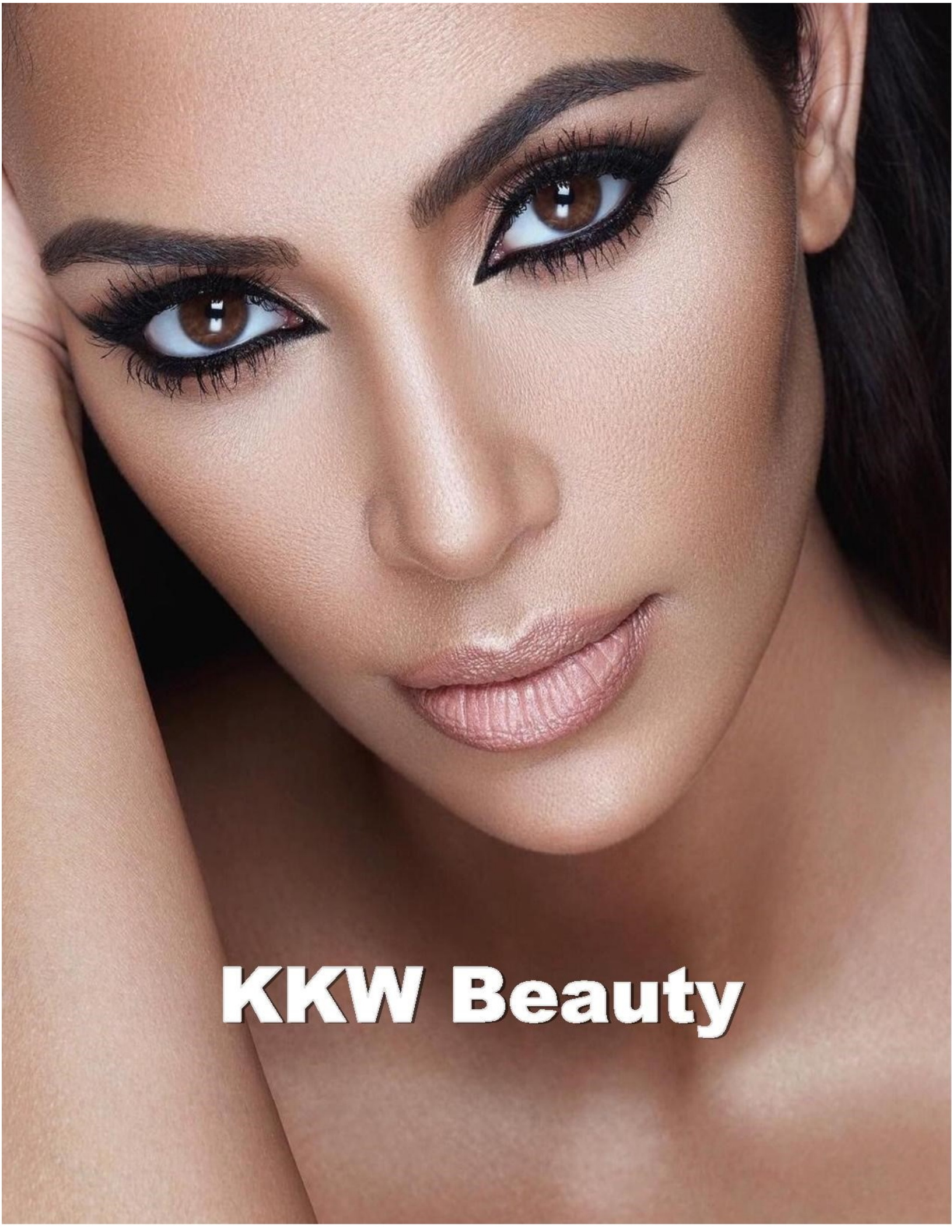
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