



For Immediate Release:

QUEEN:

A Symposium on Black Beauty at Xavier University Art Gallery February 22, 2018 4:00-7:00 PM

New Orleans, La. – January 25, 2018 – As part of the 2017-2018 Prospect New Orleans international art exhibition, Xavier University of Louisiana is hosting “Queen: A Symposium on Black Beauty,” featuring works from the exhibition, QUEEN: From the Collection of CCH Pounder. This Symposium takes place on February 22, 2018 in the Xavier University Administration Building in both the Auditorium and the University Art Gallery, located at 1 Drexel Drive, New Orleans, LA. The symposium takes place from 4:00pm-7:00pm.

The Xavier University and Greater New Orleans Community are invited to experience a performance by artist, Satch Hoyt entitled the *Hair Combing Cycle*, as well as a round table discussion on issues around Black Beauty, a Beauty Fair with vendors of hair, skin, make-up and self-care products for Women of Color, and access to the Xavier University Art Gallery and Ms. Pounder’s extraordinary collection of works by such artists as Betye and Alison Saar, Kehinde Wiley, Mickalene Thomas, Harmonia Rosales, Robert Pruitt, and Xavier alumnus Steve Prince, focusing on the beauty and strength of Black women, in all of its many forms. There will be food and refreshments and this event is free and open to the public.



CCH Pounder

CCH Pounder is an accomplished veteran of stage, screen and TV. From her breakout role in *BAGDAD CAFÉ*, to her roles on the critically acclaimed series, *THE SHIELD*, *WAREHOUSE 13*, *SONS OF ANARCHY*, *ER*, *THE X-FILES*, *LAW & ORDER: SVU* and *THE NO. 1 LADIES' DETECTIVE AGENCY*, as well as films such as *PRIZZI'S HONOR*, *POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE*, *ORPHAN* and *AVATAR*. She also received a Grammy® nomination for "Best Spoken Word Album." Most recently, Ms. Pounder, a four-time Emmy® nominee, has also become familiar to New Orleans locals for her role as "Dr. Loretta Wade" on the CBS series, *NCIS: NEW ORLEANS*.

A graduate of Ithaca College, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the school and was their 2010 Commencement Speaker. Pounder serves on the Board of the African Millennium Foundation and was a founding member of Artists for a New South Africa. An advocate of the arts, she is active in the Creative Coalition and recent accolades for Pounder include the Visionary Leadership Award in Performing Arts from the Museum of the African Diaspora (MOAD) in San Francisco, the 2015 Carney Awards, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Chase Brexton Health Care in Baltimore, 2015 Honoree at the Grand Performances Gala in Los Angeles, the 2016 SweetArts Performing Arts honoree from the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans and the National Urban League's 2017 Women of Power Award.

Satch Hoyt

Satch Hoyt, born in London of British and African-Jamaican ancestry, is currently living and working in Berlin, Germany. He makes sculptures, installations and performances accompanied with sound as well as paintings and drawings. Hoyt has composed a number of songs with Grace Jones; including *7 Day Weekend* which is on the triple platinum soundtrack album of the Eddie Murphy movie *Boomerang*.



Satch Hoyt, *Hair Combing Cycle*

Hoyt has also worked with master percussionist composer Stomu Yamashta, played flute on Louise Bourgeois' *OTTE*, and is flautist - percussionist in Burt Sugar The Arkestra Chamber since 2001. Hoyt has sung and played on numerous recordings and has recently recorded a new album in Berlin, *Battlefields Of Peace*, under the pseudonym Pharoah Dreams which includes guest musicians Julia Kent (Anthony and the Johnsons), Cass Lewis (Skunk Anansie), Earl Harvin (Me'shell Ndegocello) and Dave Smoota Smith (TV On The Radio). The album is co-written and co-produced with Dirk Leyers.

Selected exhibitions and projects include, *The Beautiful Game*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); *Rehearsal* at Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah GA (2013); *Radical Presence*, Black Performance in contemporary Art, Grey Art Gallery, New York University (2013); *Newtopia: The State of Human Rights*, Museum for the Holocaust and Human Rights, Mechelen Belgium (2012); *Radical Presence*, CAMH Texas (2012); *The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl*, ICA Boston (2011); *Art is a Combat Sport*, Museum of Fine Art, Calais, France (2011), *The Global Africa Project*, Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2010).

The following distinguished guests will participate in the roundtable discussion on Black Beauty scheduled to begin at 4:00 pm:

QUEEN

A Symposium on Black Beauty

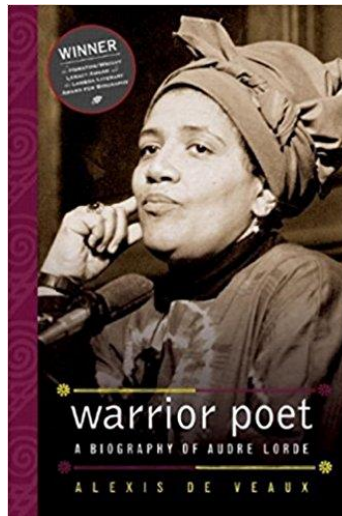


Alexis De Veaux was born and raised in Harlem, the product of two merging streams of black history in New York City –immigrants from the Caribbean on her mother’s side and migrants from North Carolina on her father’s side –who settled in Harlem in the early decades of the Twentieth Century. The second of eight children, that history was embedded in her mother’s view of life: “You got three strikes against you. You poor, you black, and you female.” But Alexis was drawn to the world of words and books, and literature soon became the means by which she re-imagined the world her mother understood.

The social movements of the 1960s, and the black writers associated with them, had a determining impact. Alexis began to envision the possibilities of living as a writer. In the early 1970s she joined the writer’s workshop of the Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center in Harlem. The workshop was run by the late writer Fred Hudson. Under his guidance she won first place in a national black fiction writers’ contest (1972); published her first children’s book, *Na-ni* (1973); and the fictionalized memoir, *Spirits in the Street* (1973). By the end of the 1970s, Alexis’s reputation as a writer bridged multiple genres: fiction, children’s literature, playwriting and poetry.

In the ensuing decades, the tensions between the Black Arts Movement, an emerging black feminist movement, and, later, the Third World Gay and Lesbian Liberation

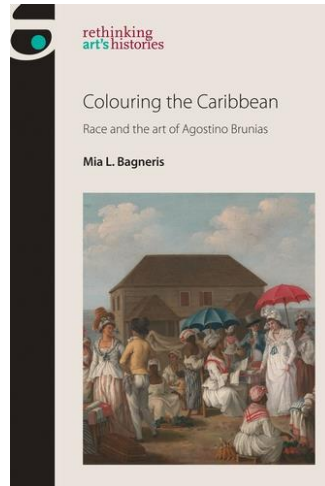
Movement, were the backdrop for Alexis's writing. Her work began to be defined by two critical concerns: making the racial and sexual experiences of black female characters central to her work, and disrupting boundaries between forms. In 1980 she published *Don't Explain*, an award-winning biography of jazz great Billie Holiday, written as a prose poem. Her short stories were also exercises in disrupting the lines between poetry and prose. As a freelance writer and contributing editor for *Essence Magazine* in the 1980s, Alexis penned a number of socially relevant articles, traveling on behalf of the magazine to Zimbabwe, Kenya and Egypt. She was chosen by the magazine to go to South Africa in 1990 to interview Nelson Mandela upon his historic release from prison, making her the first North American writer to do so. As an artist and lecturer she has traveled extensively in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America, Japan and Europe. Alexis published a second award-winning children's book, *An Enchanted Hair Tale* (1987) before moving to Buffalo, where she finished graduate school, earning a doctorate in American Studies in 1992. A project nearly ten years in the making, her biography of Audre Lorde, *Warrior Poet* (2004) has been the recipient of several awards, including the Gustavus Meyers Outstanding Book Award (2004), the Lambda Literary Award for Biography (2004), the Hurston/Wright Foundation Legacy Award, Nonfiction (2005). In 2015 Alexis's 2014 book, *Yabo* (Redbone Press) was awarded the Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Fiction. Her work is available in English, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian.



Today, Alexis is a celebrated writer and activist recognized for her lifelong contributions to a number of women's and literary organizations. She has collaborated with the visual artist Valerie Maynard and poet Kathy Engel on the digital project, "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been Terrorized?" (available on YouTube); and co-founded with Kathy Engel, Lyrical Democracies (www.lyricaldemocracies.com), a cultural partnership aimed at communities interested in working with poets to enhance existing social projects.



Mia L. Bagneris teaches African American/Diaspora art history and studies of race in Western Art. Her own work concentrates on the construction of race in British and American art and visual culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She is particularly interested in the place of images in the history of slavery, colonialism, empire, and the construction of national identities and in images of interracial contact and the mixed-race body. Her current project, *Coloring the Caribbean: Agostino Brunias and the Painting of Race in the British West Indies, c. 1765-1800*, challenges conventional designations of Brunias's paintings as uncomplicated plantocratic propaganda that functioned as visual "field guides" for reading racial identity and social status, examining instead how the artist's images reflected and refracted ideas about race commonly held by Britons in the colonial Caribbean during the late eighteenth century. Mia's most recent publication, *Colouring the Caribbean* was just released from the University of Manchester Press and offers the first comprehensive study of Agostino Brunias's intriguing pictures of colonial West Indians of colour - so called 'Red' and 'Black' Caribs, dark-skinned Africans and Afro-Creoles, and people of mixed race - made for colonial officials and plantocratic elites during the late-eighteenth century. Although Brunias's paintings have often been understood as straightforward documents of visual ethnography that functioned as field guides for reading race, this book investigates how the images both reflected and refracted ideas about race commonly held by eighteenth-century Britons, helping to construct racial categories while simultaneously exposing their constructedness and underscoring their contradictions. The book offers provocative new insights about Brunias's work gleaned from a broad survey of his paintings, many of which are reproduced here for the first time.

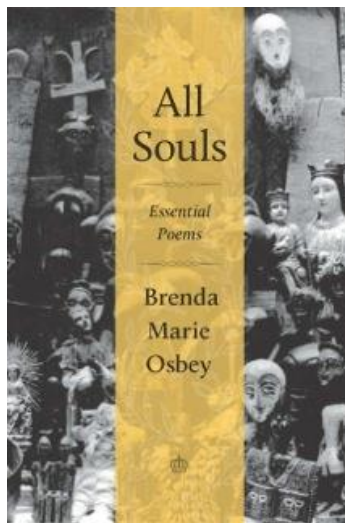


Mia graduated magna cum laude (AB Women's Studies and Afro-American Studies) from Harvard University in 1999 and received her PhD, also from Harvard, in 2009. She is the winner of several prestigious fellowships including research fellowships at the Yale Center for British Art and the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research and a Mellon Dissertation Fellowship. A proud New Orleans native, Mia is thrilled to be home and teaching in a city that offers such rich resources related her interests.



Brenda Marie Osbey, a New Orleans native, is an author of poetry and prose nonfiction in English and French. Her books include her collected poems, *All Souls: Essential Poems* (LSU Press, 2015); *History and Other Poems* (Time Being Books, 2013); *All Saints: New and Selected Poems* (LSU Press, 1997), which received the American Book Award; *Desperate Circumstance, Dangerous Woman* (Story Line Press, 1991); *In These Houses* (Wesleyan University Press, 1988); and *Ceremony for Minneconjoux* (Callaloo Poetry Series, 1983; University Press of Virginia, 1985). She is the author also of a series of Kongo-New Orleans libretti, including *Sultane au Grand Marais* (Rites & Reason Theatre, December, 2011). Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, anthologies and collections including *Callaloo*; *Obsidian*;

Essence; Renaissance Noire; Southern Review; Early Ripening: American Women's Writing Now; The Made Thing: An Anthology of Contemporary Southern Poetry; 2PLUS2: A Collection of International Writing; Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology; Epoch; The American Voice; Illuminations: An International Magazine of Contemporary Writing; Poet Lore; Southern Literary Journal; Atlantic Studies: Literary, Historical and Cultural Perspectives; and The American Poetry Review. Her essays on art, music and culture have been published in The American Voice, The Georgia Review, BrightLeaf, Mondes Francophones, Southern Literary Journal, Creative Nonfiction and Renaissance Noire. Edited works include poetry features for Indiana Review, Poet Lore, War|Scapes, Illuminations and, most recently, Gabriel Okara: Collected Poems, Edited and with an Introduction by Brenda Marie Osbey (African Poetry Book Series, 2016).



For more than twenty-five years she has researched and recorded the history of the Faubourg Tremé, a community founded by free Blacks in New Orleans. Her series, "Faubourg Tremé: Community in Transition," was published as a regular feature in the New Orleans Tribune (1990–97). "Notes from France," her series on racism in contemporary France, was featured in the Gambit (2004). Her essay, "Les indigènes sont agités: la Nouvelle-Orléans à la Suite de l'Orage" ("The Natives Are Restless: New Orleans in the Wake of the Storm") was commissioned by the Plaine Commune district of France and the Consulat Général de la Nouvelle-Orléans and published by Médiathèques de Plaine Commune in 2007. Studies of her work appear in such texts as *Summoning Our Saints: Poetry and Prose of Brenda Marie Osbey* by John Wharton Lowe (forthcoming); *Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region and Literature* by Thadious M. Davis (University of North Carolina Press, 2011); *Forms of Expansion: Recent Long Poems by Women* by Lynn Keller (U. Chiago Press, 1997); *The Future of Southern Letters*, edited by Jefferson Humphries and John Lowe (Oxford, 1996); and such reference works as *Contemporary Authors*; *Oxford Companion to African American Literature* (1997); *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1997); and *Dictionnaire des Créatrices* (Editions des Femmes, 2011). Her work has been the subject of panels at conferences of the Society for the Study of

Southern Literature (SSSL), Modern Language Association (MLA), College Language Association (CLA) and Furious Flower African American Poetry Conference. She has been a resident fellow of the MacDowell Colony, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Kentucky Foundation for Women, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Millay Colony, the Camargo Foundation (Cassis, France), Maison Dora Maar (Ménerbes, France) and the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, Harvard University. She is the recipient of the 2014 Langston Hughes Award, and has received fellowships and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louisiana Division of the Arts, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation and others. In 2005–2007, she served as the first peer-selected poet laureate of Louisiana. During her tenure of service, she toured the United States presenting weekly readings, lectures and symposia advocating the rebuilding of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. From 2011 through 2015, she served as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University.



Lakeesha J. Harris is the Reproductive Justice and Sexual Health Program Manager at WWAV. Previous positions held by Lakeesha include being a Health Educator, Community Health Worker, and Alternative Insemination Coordinator at Chicago Women’s Health Center, one of the last remaining feminist health centers in the country. As a community healer Lakeesha’s primary focus is on centering the complete health and health care access for Black people, specifically queer and trans Black people, who are often shut out of services that are culturally affirming, financially accessible, and whole being centered. Lakeesha holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Women and Gender Studies from Northeastern Illinois University and Master’s level credits in Political Science. In 2011 she was selected as a Student Laureate of NEIU and received numerous awards for her work as a community

activist, poet, and one of the Founders of Seeds Literary Arts Journal of NEIU. She is a Playwright whose collaborative political literary work, Spirit House, was commissioned by the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center for the educational engagement and healing of the community. As a practicing healer, her work has spanned more than two decades and evolved from her roots as a Certified Nurse Assistant, Doula, Apprentice Midwife and Community Health Worker. Lakeesha was recently trained as a Street Medic with Chicago Action Medical and is a practicing Reiki Master – Teacher.

Lakeesha is also a founding member of The Black Witch Chronicles whose focus is on the “growth and well-being of the global movement of healers, artists, changemakers, and visionaries who resonate with their mission and vision”. The group states: “In a society where the images and voices of Black womyn over the age of 40 are rarely seen or heard, we are here to reflect the wisdom, joy, and vision that our community embodies. We communicate from our collective wisdom as mothers, healers, artists, visionaries, and change makers connected to the ongoing story that sings to us from our ancestral roots.”



Niki Lopez is a multi-media artist who works primarily in acrylics; “My representational work allows me to share and explore stories, symbols and concepts from ancient cultures and ideologies, as well as provoke thought as to the probability of life in other dimensions, multiple universes and galaxies, how they are all inter-connected with us here on planet earth”.

Lopez’ unusual upbringing as a member of the Nuwaubian Nation, An Afro-centric cult that was founded in 1967 in New York and was eventually based in Eaton, Georgia has had a profound effect on her artistic output and her activism. The Nuwaubian’s interconnected the tenets of Islam, Judaism, Ancient Kemetic religions and UFO religion. Isolated from the rest of the world and bound to the doctrine of a charismatic, manipulative and abusive cult leader, the children of the members of the Nuwaubian Nation became the victims of severe emotional and sexual abuse.

Lopez did not emerge from this experience unscathed but she did mine her experience for artistic fodder and utilizes many of the prevalent themes of her upbringing in her artistic iconography as a medium for healing herself and other victims of violence and injustice.

Known for her vibrant color palate, Niki's often 'other-worldly' art has been exhibited across South Florida (including the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art), New York and California.

Niki is an independent Graphic Designer and Social Media enthusiast and well known for her community spirit and avant-garde art shows. She is passionate about grass root initiatives and community outreach, and is affiliated with non-profits like [SWAN Sisters Spoken Soul Festival](#), [Drag It Out](#), [ArtHeart](#), [Love Thy Neighbor](#), [F.O.C.U.S.](#), the [VSA Florida](#), and organizations such as [Sailboat Bend Civic Association](#), [Broward Arts Guild](#), and [Broward Artists as Entrepreneur Institute](#) alumni.

She has also donated art work for fundraising initiatives for breast cancer and children orphanages in Haiti and Rwanda.

As an original member of [Sailboat Bend Artist Lofts](#) (2009 recipient of the Louis Davis Sailboat Bend Artist Lofts "Resident of the Year" award), Niki has been an integral part of the creation of the 1310 Gallery space located within the lofts, where residents create monthly art exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs. As Web Master, Niki created the community's on-line presence, and is a contributor to the 1310 Gallery brand via Social Media.

Schedule of Events:

Round Table Discussion on Black Beauty: 4:00-5:00

Refreshments and Beauty fair: 5:00-6:00

Satch Hoyt Performance: 6:00

Prospect New Orleans is a citywide triennial of contemporary art. Emphasizing collaborative partnerships, Prospect presents the work of diverse local, national, and international artists in unique and culturally exceptional venues, creating an optimistic cartography through the education and engagement of residents and visitors.

Xavier University is a Historical Black and Catholic university located at 1 Drexel Drive, New Orleans, La. For further information contact Ron Bechet at rbechet@xula.edu or Sarah Clunis at saclunis@xula.edu.

This event has been partially funded by Endowed Professor, Ron Bechet, The Division of Fine Arts and Humanities, The Xavier University Art Gallery, and Prospect 4 New Orleans.

With generous thanks for her patronage and continued support to Ms. CCH Pounder.

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