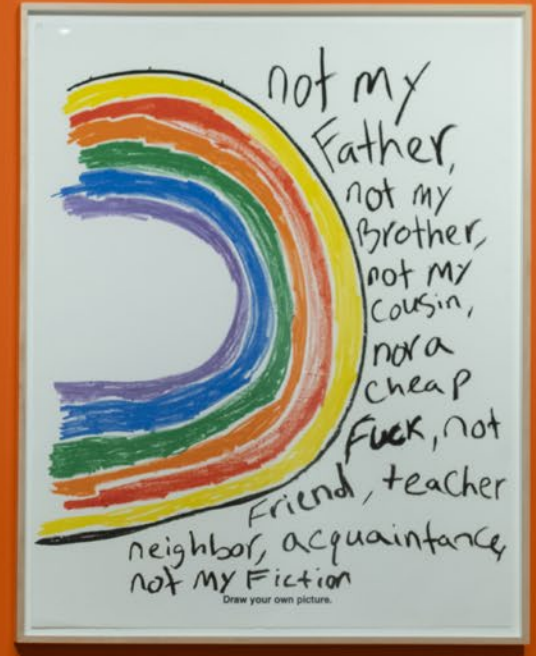


MIT List Visual Arts Center
20 Ames Street, Building E15
Cambridge MA 02139

listart.mit.edu

Colored People Time

February 7 – April 12, 2020



MIT List Visual Arts Center

Colored People Time

Hayden Gallery February 7–April 12, 2020

In his 1972 article “Some Notes on the Blues, Style and Space,” Ronald Walcott wrote “time is the very condition of Western civilization which oppresses so brutally.” Published under the Johnson Publishing Company’s imprint *Black World*, Walcott’s essay examined the works of three prominent black cultural producers—author Ralph Ellison, playwright Charles Gordone, and poet Melvin B. Tolson—through their shared depictions of “Colored People’s Time” (aka CPT or CP Time.) As Walcott observes, black people occupy and deploy CPT as a political performance to “evade, frustrate, and ridicule” the enforcement of punctuality and productivity, key disciplinary structures of capitalism.¹ For many, CPT is the time-space of the struggle.² It emerges from conditions of ongoing oppression that stretch back to the beginning of Transatlantic slavery. CPT challenges and disavows the predominant opinion that being “on time” is the only way of being “in time.”

I began thinking about CPT while developing an exhibition that examined how a group of artists, activists, and writers have considered how white supremacy and the legacy of chattel slavery have existed so insidiously in our current moment(s).

I was drawn to CPT as both a living and liberatory phrase. It has provided a linguistic tool for black people to navigate their own temporality, within and against the construct of Western time. Not surprisingly, white supremacist logics have attempted to distort and co-opt CPT, constructing a dual meaning through racial stereotype. In spite of this, CPT has remained part of the vernacular of racially marginalized groups, to think and act differently in time.

Colored People Time is structured as an experimental exhibition in three chapters—*Mundane Futures*, *Banal Presents*, and *Quotidian Pasts*. Within the exhibition, I wanted to explore the plural and malleable nature of the term. CPT connects to the tradition of black expressions grounded in counter-language, ones performed as part of “resistance discourse, created as a communication system unintelligible to speakers of the dominant master class.”³ Like the constructs of race and gender, time is an experience and subject that escapes the limitations of language.

Meg Onli
Andrea B. Laporte Associate Curator
Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania

-
- 1 Walcott, Ronald, “Ellison, Gordone and Tolson: Some Notes on the Blues, Style and Space.” *Black World*, December 1972, pp. 4-29.
 - 2 John Streamas, “Closure and ‘Colored Peoples Time’” in *Time: Limits and Constraints*, ed. Jo Alyson Packer, et al. (Boston: Brill Publishing, 2010).
 - 3 Geneva, Smitherman, *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 5.

MUNDANE FUTURES | CHAPTER 1

Aria Dean, Kevin Jerome Everson, Dave McKenzie, Martine Syms.

With historical works by the Black Panther Party, Sutton E. Griggs, and the National Institutes of Health / Getty Images

“For me, the relationship of black communities, black feminism, and the temporality of futurity must be thought about through the concept of grammar. How do we conjugate our relationship of being to the future?”

Tina M. Campt, *Black Futurity in a Photographic Frame* (2016)

Aria Dean, *Notes on Blacceleration*, 2017

In her essay/lecture *Notes on Blacceleration*, the artist, critic, and curator Aria Dean ruminates on intersections between the Black Radical Tradition and the theory of accelerationism. Accelerationism is a political and social theory that posits the end to global capitalism lies not outside of its structures, but through them. This theory proposes that our economic and political systems must be expanded, increased, and “accelerated” in order to

provoke an anti-capitalist revolt. Originally recorded as a Skype lecture for Reed College’s Home School lecture series and later published as an essay, Dean outlines accelerationism’s lineage and critiques the theory’s oversight in addressing chattel slavery as a foundation for capital accumulation. By doing so, Dean re-centers the black subject and speculates that we may inherently play a pivotal role in the destruction of capitalism.

Black Panther Party, *The Black Panther*, April 1 and May 13, 1972

The Black Panther Party (founded 1966; ceased 1982) was a political organization established by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale that incorporated Black Nationalist and Marxist ideologies to combat systemic white supremacy through armed self-defense, community programming, and publishing. The *Ten-Point Program*, authored by Newton and Seale in 1966 and updated in 1972, presents the philosophical principles of the organization. The platform appeared in every issue of the Panther’s monthly newspaper and summarized the “wants of the people.” Although villainized by the US Government as an extremist group, the Panthers’ program reads as a call for basic rights: food, housing, education, fair

trial, the right to self-govern, and an end to police brutality.

This vitrine contains two issues of *The Black Panther*. In the April edition there appears a notice that the *Ten-Point Program* will be revised to reflect changing principals of the party. The May issue presents the Panthers’ final program, which added a call for free healthcare and shifted ideologically from Black Nationalist separatism towards solidarity between oppressed people. The *Ten-Point Program* is a demand for a mundane future yet to be attained and serves as a reminder that our doctrines should be re-examined and updated when necessary.

National Institutes of Health / Getty Images, *Scanning electron micrograph of just-divided HeLa cells*, purchased 2018, stock image

While undergoing treatment for cervical cancer in 1951 at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD, doctors removed cells from the body of Henrietta Lacks (1920–1951) without her or her family’s consent or knowledge. A former tobacco worker and mother of five, Lacks died at Hopkins from metastasized cancer within the year and was buried in an unmarked grave in Lackstown, Virginia. Her seized cells—dubbed HeLa cells, but rarely credited to her for over fifty years—continue to this day and are the first immortal cell line. An immortalized cell line is a group of cells that proliferate indefinitely due to mutation. Because of the cells’ unique capabilities, HeLa cells have been integral in numerous

medical breakthroughs including the development of the polio vaccine, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and cloning, generating billions of dollars in revenue for pharmaceutical and biotech companies. This photograph, whose copyright is owned by the National Institutes of Health and Getty Images, captures Lacks’s cells right after they divided. The story of Lacks is troubling in its illustration that black bodies, when confronted by institutions and organizations, are always denied agency. It is likely that Lacks—like her cells—will circulate throughout the medical industrial complex indefinitely. Maybe most haunting is the realization that she may be *the* central material in the quest for immortal life.

BANAL PRESENTS | CHAPTER 2

Carolyn Lazard, Cameron Rowland, Sable Elyse Smith

“The now is present, is past, is future. The past is now, as is the future, and all we have is meaning, our fear of, flight from, or embrace of it, in its fragile and fractally fragmented multiplicity.”

M. NourbeSe Philip, email to the curator, June 25, 2019

Cameron Rowland, *Depreciation*, 2018

Restrictive covenant; 1 acre on Edisto Island, South Carolina.

40 acres and a mule as reparations for slavery originates in General William Tecumseh Sherman’s Special Field Orders No. 15, issued on January 16, 1865. Sherman’s Field Order 15 was issued out of concern for a potential uprising of the thousands of ex-slaves who were following his army by the time it arrived in Savannah.¹

The field order stipulated that “The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the Saint Johns River, Florida, are reserved and

set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States. Each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground.”²

This was followed by the formation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in March 1865. In the months immediately following the issue of the field orders, approximately 40,000 former slaves settled in the area designated by Sherman on the basis of possessory

title.³ 10,000 of these former slaves were settled on Edisto Island, South Carolina.⁴

In 1866, following Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson effectively rescinded Field Order 15 by ordering these lands be returned to their previous Confederate owners.

Former slaves were given the option to work for their former masters as sharecroppers or be evicted. If evicted, former slaves could be arrested for homelessness under vagrancy clauses of the Black Codes. Those who refused to leave and refused to sign sharecrop contracts were threatened with arrest.

Although restoration of the land to the previous Confederate owners was slowed in some cases by court challenges filed by ex-slaves, nearly all the land settled was returned by the 1870s. As Eric Foner writes, "Johnson had in effect abrogated the Confiscation Act and unilaterally amended the law creating the [Freedmen's] Bureau. The idea of a Freedmen's Bureau actively promoting black landownership had come to an abrupt end."⁵ The Freedmen's Bureau agents became primary proponents of labor contracts inducting former slaves into the sharecropping system.⁶

Among the lands that were repossessed in 1866 by former Confederate owners was

the Maxcy Place plantation. "A group of freed people were at Maxcy Place in January 1866. ...The people contracted to work for the proprietor, but no contract or list of names has been found."⁷

The one-acre piece of land at 8060 Maxie Road, Edisto Island, South Carolina, was part of the Maxcy Place plantation. This land was purchased at market value on August 6, 2018, by 8060 Maxie Road, Inc., a nonprofit company formed for the sole purpose of buying this land and recording a restrictive covenant on its use. This covenant has as its explicit purpose the restriction of all development and use of the property by the owner.

The property is now appraised at \$0. By rendering it legally unusable, this restrictive covenant eliminates the market value of the land. These restrictions run with the land, regardless of the owner. As such, they will last indefinitely.

As reparation, this covenant asks how land might exist outside of the legal-economic regime of property that was instituted by slavery and colonization. Rather than redistributing the property, the restriction imposed on 8060 Maxie Road's status as valuable and transactable real estate asserts antagonism to the regime of property as a means of reparation.

Carolyn Lazard, *Pre-Existing Condition*, 2019

Between 1951 and 1974, Dr. Albert M. Kligman (1916–2010)—a professor of dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania—oversaw medical experiments conducted on incarcerated people at Holmesburg Prison in Philadelphia. These nontherapeutic tests ranged from athlete's foot powders, dandruff shampoos, deodorants, and detergents, as well as more hazardous materials such as dioxin, radioactive isotopes, and mind-altering psychotropics. During his tenure at Holmesburg, Dr. Kligman worked for companies such as Johnson & Johnson—developing the acne medicine Retin-A—and Dow Chemical Company and the U.S. Department of Defense—testing the "tactical herbicide" Agent Orange. Although the people that participated in these tests at Holmesburg received small financial payments, none were provided information on the substances that were being used—including the long-term health risks involved. In 1974 the experiments ended in congressional

hearings and lawsuits that declared the tests a breach of the Nuremberg Code of 1947 (a set of research ethics for human testing that were a result of medical experimentation conducted by Nazi Germany). Many of the people who underwent these experiments continue to live with long-term health conditions as a consequence of their participation and are still seeking financial compensation and an acknowledgement from the University of Pennsylvania.

Carolyn Lazard's *Pre-Existing Condition* delves into the history of Dr. Kligman's testing and the University of Pennsylvania's complicity in the Holmesburg experiments through two archives: The University of Pennsylvania Archives and the Philadelphia City Archives. Over the course of the video, Lazard moves us through a series of documents and a conversation with the Holmesburg experimentation survivor and advocate Edward Yusuf Anthony, locating the tension between personal history and official records.

Sable Elyse Smith, *Coloring Book 33*, 2019

Sable Elyse Smith, *Pivot I*, 2019

In the August 14, 2019 edition of *The New York Times* the executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative Bryan Stevenson outlined the staggering numbers of Americans who are currently or formerly incarcerated: "The United States has the highest rate of incarceration of any nation on Earth: We represent 4 percent of the planet's population but 22 percent of its imprisoned. In the early 1970s, our prisons held fewer than 300,000 people; since then, that number has grown to more than 2.2 million, with 4.5 million more on probation or parole. Central to understanding this practice of mass incarceration and excessive punishment is the legacy of slavery."

Sable Elyse Smith's work contends with this history by examining the prison-industrial complex as it exists in America today. Smith's practice is multifaceted, working with mediums that range from painting and sculpture to writing and video. In *Banal Presents*, both *Coloring Book 33* and *Pivot I* utilize the vernacular of correctional facilities through the appropriation of coloring books and furniture found in visitation rooms. Smith's reconstructions of these seemingly mundane materials point not only to the violence of mass incarceration, but particularly the trauma that is endured by children who come into daily contact with this institution.

1 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, updated ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 71.

2 Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, Special Field Orders No. 15 (1865).

3 Foner, *Reconstruction*, 71.

4 Charles Spencer, *Edisto Island, 1861 to 2006: Ruin, Recovery and Rebirth* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 87.

5 Foner, *Reconstruction*, 161.

6 Foner, *ibid.*, 161.

7 Spencer, 95.

QUOTIDIAN PASTS | CHAPTER 3

Matthew Angelo Harrison

With objects from the African Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

"In what tense does one write an ethnographic account? This grammatical detail has considerable intellectual and political significance.... To many readers, using the past tense about an out-of-the-way place suggests not that people 'have' history but that they are history."

Anna Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (1993)

***F16-4023 (African Heritage)*, 1968**

In this educational film produced by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Dr. Froelich G. Rainey (who appears elsewhere in this exhibition via the television show, *What in the World*) guides visitors through a selection of the Museum's collection of sculptures from Sudan, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, and Gabon. Throughout the film, Rainey describes the aesthetic qualities and original purpose of each sculpture and directly links these unnamed artists to their influence upon European painters, such as Henri Matisse, Amedeo Modigliani, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso.

In addition to the Penn Museum's collection, *F16-4023 (African Heritage)* features a series of dances spliced throughout the film. Choreographed and performed by the Philadelphia based Afro-American Dance Ensemble—led by the American choreographer Arthur Hall—these dances aimed to activate the sculptures and imagine how they might exist in the world outside of the museum. This strategy, however, conflates the objects with the black bodies of the dancers by placing them both on display. The film's peculiarity becomes even more apparent when it is revealed through the Penn Museum's archive that these dances were not performed on the sandy beaches of West Africa, but rather at the Jersey Shore.

***What in the World, Episode 4*, c. 1952**

What in the World? was the Penn Museum's Peabody Award-winning weekly television program. Developed by the museum's director, Dr. Froelich G. Rainey (1907–1992) in 1951, the show was considered a new form of engagement between museums and their broader audiences. *What in the World?* aired for fourteen years. In each episode, a panel of experts was asked to guess the location, age, and use of five to ten objects from the Penn Museum's collection.

For this episode, produced sometime in the early 1950s, sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, anthropologist Dr. Carleton Coon, and actor Vincent Price examined objects from New Guinea, Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire, Scandinavia, Panama, and Borneo—indicating the extensive reach of the Museum's collecting habits. As the objects are handled without gloves—and at times worn by the participants—*What in the World?* demonstrates the lax conservation practices of the time. While inspecting a late

nineteenth-century mask from the Baoulé tribe of Côte d'Ivoire, Lipchitz commented upon the mask's slight damage, to which

Price quipped, "No, that is from being in this country."

***Frances J. Hall Household Book, Sierra Leone*, 1937**

Former curator Henry Usher Hall (1876–1944) was largely responsible for the founding of the Penn Museum's African collections. He was on the curatorial staff of the Penn Museum from 1914 to 1935; as assistant curator from 1916 to 1923; and full curator from 1924 to 1935.

In 1936, shortly following his retirement, Hall proposed an expedition to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia to study the institutions of the Sherbro people of Sierra Leone. In November 1936, Hall arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with his wife, Frances Jones Hall (referred to as F. J. Hall), and worked across the island with missionaries, colonial commissioners, and the chief of the Yoni people. During this time, F. J. Hall kept a diary detailing her

everyday experiences in Sierra Leone. Here, Hall included recipes, lists of household expenses, and domestic workers' wages, as well as illustrations of the people she encountered. As an artifact, Hall's journal becomes a window into one white woman's observations as cultural tourist and amateur ethnographer. She observes, for example: "The natives are most picturesque, but not so nice looking as though from Dakar." In another vein, she writes, "We bobbed around in harbor all day, in blistering heat, because natives couldn't be induced to work." In her diary, Hall effortlessly moves from admiration to condemnation, revealing inconsistent and competing reflections upon physical and psychological perspectives of the Sierra Leoneans around her.

***W.O. Oldman with masks and headdresses*, circa 1920, Te Papa (0.027326)**

William Ockleford Oldman (1879–1949) was an influential early twentieth century British collector and dealer of art objects from around the world. Based in London, Oldman amassed prominent acquisitions, with a particular focus on the African continent and Oceanic region. His business, "W.O. Oldman: Ethnographical Specimens," conducted transactions with private collectors, art galleries, and anthropological museums across Europe and the United States. Artworks and objects with a provenance to

Oldman and his business can be found at the British Museum, Oxford's Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archeology, to name only a few.

Shortly before his death, in 1948, Oldman sold his entire collection to the New Zealand government. This image, which depicts Oldman with a range of masks from his personal collection, appears courtesy of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

***Oldman to Hall, 3 Dec. 1930 [first page]*, 1930**

The Kingdom of Benin, in what is now southern Nigeria, has been widely recognized for producing some of the most renowned artworks from the African continent. Dating back to approximately the eleventh

century CE, the Benin Kingdom is most widely known for its bronze plaques and heads. In 1897, Great Britain invaded the Benin Royal Palace—famed for its wealth, opulence, and artwork—and burned it

to the ground, capturing or murdering many of its occupants. Much of the work that was stolen from Benin accumulated in the collections of art dealers such as W.O. Oldman, and subsequently sold to museums around the world. The majority of Benin's bronze plaques are held by the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum, the British Museum, the National Museum of Nigeria in Lagos and Benin City, the Weltmuseum Wien, Chicago's Field Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In this vitrine are two letters sent between W.O. Oldman and George Byron Gordon, the Penn Museum's director at the time. In letters such as these, Oldman attempts to sell his recently acquired African collections by noting their uniqueness and escalating value. He claims to have a "representative collection of the whole of Africa" and guarantees its "perfection" and authenticity, boasting that his collection comprises rather pristine objects gathered prior to growing mass-market demand.

In another letter, dated July 29, 1912, Oldman calls specific attention to his collections from Benin. Interestingly, his assertions often come with a hint of

hesitation: "I am quite satisfied that the specimens are all genuine Benin work... as far as I can remember." Or, "I will guarantee these to be genuine examples to the best of my knowledge and will take back at any time any pieces which can be proved unsatisfactory." The letters and inventory catalogues that Oldman sent to museums reveal both the confident and cavalier ways in which early twentieth century art dealers referred to their African collections, in particular how they were casually objectified and trafficked, alongside other ethnographic objects or "tribal art" from non-western cultures. The circulation of these words, ideas, and objects from hand to hand and collection to collection, became central to the ways in which the image of Africa simultaneously grew and was contained by western discourse. Institutions such as the Penn Museum are now actively working to reframe their acquisitions of Beninese artwork. The Penn Museum's new Africa Galleries (opening in Fall 2019), curated by Penn sociologist Tukufu Zuberi, will delve deeply into the colonial history of African objects, examine how African objects are exhibited in the West, and place the objects in their social context.

and authenticity of Johnson's research in Angola may always remain uncertain, but it is evident that this photo bears witness to many competing stories and histories.

In his papers, Johnson documented his exchange of malaria medicine for what he calls "the wooden fetish" that appears in this image. Capturing not only Johnson's acquisition, this photograph additionally reveals the anthropological campsite

as construction of colonial ideal, staged in a hierarchy of power, beginning with a sculpture held in the hands of sitting black men, and extending to the casually posed white men centered at the campsite above them. This image positions the camera as a weapon of imperialism, used to train the western eye to see blackness (and otherness) as subordinate to whiteness.

Amandus Johnson in Angola. At encampment with natives and other explorers, [n.d.]

"A lazy indifference, with no thought of tomorrow, is written on every face."

—Amandus Johnson, "The Educational West-African Expedition," from *In the Land of the Marimba* (1922-24)

Amandus Johnson (1877–1974) was a professor of Scandinavian languages at the University of Pennsylvania and founder of the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia. On the basis of his linguistic research, Johnson was appointed director of the African Ethnological Expedition to Angola (then known under the colonial

name, "Portuguese East Africa") in order to conduct research in the region between 1922 and 1925. After returning from Angola, Johnson embarked on a popular lecture tour in Philadelphia about his travels and gained local fame. Johnson attained further notoriety for purportedly conducting the Angolan ethnographic research under false pretenses. In a letter from a colleague to the Penn Museum, Johnson was accused of traveling to Angola to "lift a cache of Diamonds," which a German traveler had "buried in Africa years ago." The depth

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

MUNDANE FUTURES

Martine Syms, *The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto*, 2013. Acrylic paint. Courtesy the artist, Bridget Donahue, NYC, and Sadie Coles HQ, London.

Sutton E. Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio*, 1899, 2018. Paperback books designed by ELLA with a new foreword by Meg Onli, courtesy Project Gutenberg—www.gutenberg.org.

Kevin Jerome Everson, *IFO*, 2017. 16mm film, color, sound 10 minutes. © Kevin Jerome Everson. Courtesy the artist; Trilobite-Arts DAC; Picture Palace Pictures.

QUOTIDIAN PASTS

Matthew Angelo Harrison, *Queen Mother (Edo, Oldman)*, 2019. Ceramic, acrylic, aluminum. Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

Matthew Angelo Harrison, *Queen Mother adapted (Edo, Oldman)*, 2019. Ceramic, acrylic, aluminum. Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

Matthew Angelo Harrison, *Sowei Actuation (Bundu, J.L. Buck)*, 2019. Ceramic, acrylic, aluminum. Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

Matthew Angelo Harrison, *Seated Female (Kisi, J. Laporte)*, 2019. Ceramic, acrylic, aluminum. Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

African Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, *Amandus Johnson in Angola. At encampment with natives and other explorers*, [n.d.]. University of Pennsylvania Museum Photographic Archives; Standard Size Prints;

BANAL PRESENTS

Sable Elyse Smith, *Coloring Book 33*, 2019. Screen printing ink and oil stick on paper, Courtesy of the artist, Cal Siegel, and JTT, New York.

Sable Elyse Smith, *Pivot I*, 2019. Powder coated aluminum. Courtesy of the artist and JTT, New York.

Carolyn Lazard, *Pre-Existing Condition*, 2019. Digital Video 15 min., Courtesy of the artist and Essex Street, New York, Collection of Dr. Murray A. Abramson, Massachusetts.

Dave McKenzie, *Futuro*, 2013. Inkjet print mounted on aluminum. Edition 1 of 5 + 1 AP. Collection of Ben and Aileen Krohn.

Aria Dean, *Notes on Blacelerationism*, 2017. Digital video, color, sound, 75 min. Courtesy the artist and Chateau Shatto.

Black Panther Party, *The Black Panther April 1 and May 13, 1972*, Newspapers. Courtesy the Kislak Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

National Institutes of Health / Getty Images, *Scanning electron micrograph of just-divided HeLa cells*, purchased 2018. Stock image.

Africa, Box AF 4: Amandus Johnson in Angola; Penn Museum.

F16-4023 "African Heritage", 1968, Digital video transferred from 16mm film, color, sound, 27:9 min. Courtesy of the Penn Museum.

WHAT IN THE WORLD 4, c. 1952. Digital video transferred from 16mm, film, color, sound, 28:28 min. Courtesy of the Penn Museum

Collection of African Specimens arranged in Ethnographical Groups, Price £865.00, [n.d.], Director's Office, Gordon; W. O. Oldman; Penn Museum Archives.

Oldman to Hall, 3 Dec. 1930 [first page], 1930, Oceanian Section; W. O. Oldman Correspondence, 1930–1939; Penn Museum Archives.

Frances J. Hall Household Book, Sierra Leone, 1937, Sierra Leone Field Notes; F. J. Hall Diary; Penn Museum.

"I take, you take..." [Word list] by Henry U. Hall, 1937, Sierra Leone Expedition Records; Notebook G inclusions; Penn Museum Archives.

Cameron Rowland, *Depreciation*, 2018. Restrictive covenant; 1 acre on Edisto Island, South Carolina. Courtesy of the artist and Essex Street, New York

40 acres and a mule as reparations for slavery originates in General William Tecumseh Sherman's Special Field Orders No. 15, issued on January 16, 1865. Sherman's Field Order 15 was issued out of concern for a potential uprising of the thousands of ex-slaves who were following his army by the time it arrived in Savannah.¹

The field order stipulated that "The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the Saint Johns River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States. Each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground."² This was followed by the formation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in March 1865. In the months immediately following the issue of the field orders, approximately 40,000 former slaves settled in the area designated by Sherman on the basis of possessory title.³ 10,000 of these former slaves were settled on Edisto Island, South Carolina.⁴ In 1866, following Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson effectively rescinded Field Order 15 by ordering these lands be returned to their previous Confederate owners. Former slaves were given the option to work for their former masters as sharecroppers or be evicted. If evicted, former slaves could be arrested for homelessness under vagrancy clauses of the Black Codes. Those who refused to leave and refused to sign sharecrop contracts were threatened with arrest. Although restoration of the land to the previous Confederate owners was slowed in some cases by court challenges filed by ex-slaves, nearly all the land settled was returned by the 1870s. As Eric Foner writes, "Johnson had in effect abrogated the Confiscation Act and unilaterally amended the law creating the [Freedmen's]

Bureau. The idea of a Freedmen's Bureau actively promoting black landownership had come to an abrupt end."⁵ The Freedmen's Bureau agents became primary proponents of labor contracts inducing former slaves into the sharecropping system.⁶

Among the lands that were repossessed in 1866 by former Confederate owners was the Maxcy Place plantation. "A group of freed people were at Maxcy Place in January 1866. ... The people contracted to work for the proprietor, but no contract or list of names has been found."⁷ The one-acre piece of land at 8060 Maxie Road, Edisto Island, South Carolina, was part of the Maxcy Place plantation. This land was purchased at market value on August 6, 2018, by 8060 Maxie Road, Inc., a nonprofit company formed for the sole purpose of buying this land and recording a restrictive covenant on its use. This covenant has as its explicit purpose the restriction of all development and use of the property by the owner.

The property is now appraised at \$0. By rendering it legally unusable, this restrictive covenant eliminates the market value of the land. These restrictions run with the land, regardless of the owner. As such, they will last indefinitely. As reparation, this covenant asks how land might exist outside of the legal-economic regime of property that was instituted by slavery and colonization. Rather than redistributing the property, the restriction imposed on 8060 Maxie Road's status as valuable and transactable real estate asserts antagonism to the regime of property as a means of reparation.

- 1 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, updated ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 71.
- 2 Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, Special Field Orders No. 15 (1865).
- 3 Foner, *Reconstruction*, 71.
- 4 Charles Spencer, *Edisto Island, 1861 to 2006: Ruin, Recovery and Rebirth* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 87.
- 5 Foner, *Reconstruction*, 161.
- 6 Foner, *ibid*, 161.
- 7 Spencer, 95.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception

Thursday, February 6, 6:30-8:30 PM

Panel Discussion

Friday, February 7, 2 PM

Colored People Time Examined

Panelists: Aria Dean, Carolyn Lazard and Meg Onli

Moderated by Tina Campt

Curator Tour

Friday, April 3, 12:30 PM

Speaker: Meg Onli, Andrea B. Laporte Associate Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania

Reading Resource Area

A reading lounge featuring a diverse selection of articles, books, and other pertinent materials has been provided for visitors to learn more about themes and issues in the exhibition.

All programs are free and open to the public. RSVPs are required.

For more information about these events and to RSVP: listart.mit.edu/events-programs.



MEMBERSHIP

The List Center is pleased to offer special programming for museum members including behind-the-scenes experiences, exclusive events, and travel opportunities. We are deeply grateful to members of the List Center Director's Circle whose philanthropic support ensures our ability to present outstanding art and artist of our time. To join or for more information: listart.mit.edu/support

SPONSORS

Colored People Time: Mundane Futures, Quotidian Pasts, Banal Presents is organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania and is curated by ICA Andrea B. Laporte Associate Curator Meg Onli. *Quotidian Pasts* is co-curated with Monique Scott, Director of Museum Studies, Bryn Mawr College.

Original support for *Colored People Time* was provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia. Additional support has been provided by Dorothy & Martin Bandier, Arthur Cohen & Daryl Otte. Cheri & Steven Friedman, and Brett & Daniel Sundheim.

Exhibitions at the List Center are made possible with the support of Fotene & Tom Coté, Audrey & James Foster, Idee German Schoenheimer, Joyce Linde, and Cynthia & John Reed.

General operating support is provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the Council for the Arts at MIT; Philip S. Khoury, Associate Provost at MIT; the MIT School of Architecture + Planning; the Mass Cultural Council; and many generous individual donors. In-kind media sponsorship provided by 90.9 WBUR. The Advisory Committee Members of the List Visual Arts Center are gratefully acknowledged.



IMAGE CREDITS

FRONT: Sable Elyse Smith, *Coloring Book 33*, 2019, screen printing ink and oil stick on paper
Courtesy the artist, Cal Siegel, and JTT, New York

BACK: Sable Elyse Smith, *Pivot I*, 2019, powder coated aluminum
Courtesy the artist and JTT, New York

Installation view: *Colored People Time: Banal Presents*, September 13–December 22, 2019
Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania
Photo: Constance Mensh