

WITNESSES



WITNESSES

CURATED BY

Tina Knowles Lawson
Genel Ambrose

COVER IMAGE: Amber Valley Evangelista, *Spring Fields on Easter* (2023). Courtesy of the artist.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

**Alexis Hunley
Amber Evangelista
Amber J. Phillips
April Bey
Cara Elise Taylor
Dana Davenport
Dee Williams
Deun Ivory
Elise Peterson**

**Gabrielle Morse
House of Aama
Liam Woods
Madison Green
Sade Ndya
Sophia Nahli Allison
Stephanie Mei-Ling
Sydney Dinkins**

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CURATORIAL STATEMENT

*What do we witness
when we see through the
eyes of Black women?*

What becomes visible?

*How does looking
alongside Black women
shift our point-of-view?*

WITNESS brings together Black women, genderqueer and non-binary artists to share their vision of society, community, and themselves through art – in the tradition of Black feminist thought.

We are continually tasked with defining and redefining ourselves in order to navigate societal misrepresentations of our humanity. WITNESS is a visual record of Black women's ability to harness identity, lineage and ancestral wisdom as super powers enabling us to see (and be) what others cannot.

The installations, portraiture, audio and film works that comprise WITNESS act as portals to a world where distractions of racism, sexism and homophobia cease to exist. The image makers demonstrate how Black women are innate artists, worldbuilders, visionaries and conjurers who employ creativity as a practice of self-preservation -rendering ourselves, our children and our communities whole in a world that attempts to diminish us.

Exploring themes of identity, girlhood, womanhood, family, community care, adornment, future-making and dreaming, WITNESS invites you to look alongside and through the eyes of these artists to bear witness to Black subjects existing wholly and beautifully. While doing so, we encourage you to reflect upon your own experiences of unfolding, blooming and becoming the person you are today.

Finally, this space is a call for you to be a witness and steward of memory. In the current culture war that is attempting to erase our stories from the history books, stewarding them is a critical act of self care that will allow us to continue to thrive throughout generations. To be a Black woman is to exist as a divine being in the flesh with a paranormal ability to soar despite the odds. Knowing our stories makes this possible.

Alexis Hunley

PHOTOGRAPHER



Based in Los Angeles, California, Alexis Hunley is a photographer and archivist whose art centers the intersectional experiences of underrepresented individuals. Over the years she has had the privilege of collaborating with many esteemed organizations, including: The National Center for Civil and Human Rights, TIME, Essence, L’Oreal, Foley Gallery, Cedars-Sinai. Hunley’s work serves as a testament to the power of storytelling, centering emotional vulnerability and encouraging viewers to embrace their most authentic selves while examining the depths of their own lived experiences.

Experience more of Alexis’ work by visiting their Instagram profile [@byalexishunley](#) and their website [alexishunley.com](#).

WITNESS Artist Alexis Hunley

TOP LEFT IMAGE:

Alexis Hunley,
Untitled (Camille & Lynn) (1970).

BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE:

Alexis Hunley,
Untitled (MaryJane & Rita) (2020).

TOP RIGHT IMAGE:

Alexis Hunley,
Middle Room (2020).

BOTTOM RIGHT IMAGE:

Alexis Hunley,
Untitled (Geraldine & Lynn) (1972).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*May you all bear witness to
the courage that is required
when we are seeking freedom.*

Amber Valley Evangelista

PHOTOGRAPHER



Amber Valley Evangelista is a full-time mom of four children, a photographer, and a curator. Her specialized interest in vintage film cameras and Polaroids brings a nostalgic tone to her captured images. This passion for photography eventually led to her starting her own company. She is the founder of Valley in Film. A company that focuses on portraiture and other creative assistance, including fashion, campaigns, and workshops. Her company's mission is to make film photography more accessible to all audiences by sharing fun techniques and tips through social media, studio classes, and mentorships; and by providing affordable photo sessions to help resuscitate a dying art form.

As a full-time photographer, Amber uses portraiture to document her family moments, showcase her passion for fashion, and amplify the stories of minorities. Her passion for working with various artists and connecting with the community has secured sponsorships and partnerships with companies such as Cinestill Film and Topa Topa Brewery.

Amber can provide additional free experiences to the community through exhibitions and other events. Through her relationship with Black Women Photographers, Amber has had the honor of co-creating and being featured in Our Black Experience at The Perfect Image Gallery in 2022. Additionally, she collaborated with other talented artists as a female & non-binary-led committee member for this project.

Experience more of Ambers' work by visiting their Instagram profile [@valleyinfilm](#) and their website [valleyinfilm.com](#).

WITNESS Artist Amber Valley Evangelista

LEFT IMAGE:

Amber Valley Evangelista,
Kennedy's Flowers (2023).

RIGHT IMAGE:

Amber Valley Evangelista,
Spring Fields on Easter (2023).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

I want people to witness intimate moments through my imagery. Share my experiences and bring a feeling of comfort, home, and nostalgia.

Amber J. Phillips

VISUAL ARTIST



Amber J. Phillips is a storyteller, filmmaker, and creative director. Amber is devoted to using radical Black queer imagination to create stories, art, culture, and community. In 2021, Amber released her first short film *Abundance* about the limitations and radical possibilities of identity. You can watch *Abundance* and experience more of Amber's work on Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok as [@AmberAbundance](#) and at [AmberAbundance.com](#).

Experience more of Ambers' work by visiting their Instagram profile [@amberabundance](#) and their website [amberabundance.com](#).

IMAGES:

Amber J. Phillips,
Stills from *Abundance* (2021).

**WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO
WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*I want people to witness the potential
of their vulnerability. I want you to be
comfortable enough in viewing my
stories and art to see yourselves in
the nuances and depths of my story.*



April Bey

VISUAL ARTIST



April Bey grew up in The Bahamas (New Providence) and now resides and works in Los Angeles, CA as a visual artist and art educator. Bey's interdisciplinary artwork is an introspective and social critique of American and Bahamian culture, feminism, generational theory, social media, AfroFuturism, AfroSurrealism, post-colonialism Speculative futurism and Blerd culture.

Bey's work is in the collection of The California African American Museum, The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, The Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Escalette Collection, The 21C Museum, Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA, and more. Bey has exhibited in biennials NE7, NE8, NE9 and NE10 in The Bahamas.

Bey has also exhibited internationally in Italy, Spain, Ghana, Vienna, London and Paris. Bey is both a practicing contemporary artist and art educator having taught a controversial course at Art Center College of Design called Pretty Hurts analyzing process-based art and Beyoncé hashtag faux feminism. Bey is currently a tenured professor at Glendale College.

Experience more of April's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@aprilbey](#) and their website [april-bey.com](#).

IMAGES:
April Bey,
Sankofa: They/Them (2023).



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?

I want people to WITNESS the past and future in my work. I want the tapestries to appear as if they are ancient visualities of the future — an old authoritative depiction of the future and this future has wise Black they/them deities that ask you to remember the past while illustrating and creating the future. When you present people with artifacts they are treasured and believed — treasure and believe that Black women are the future, period. As if there was no other existence.

Cara Elise Taylor

PHOTOGRAPHER



Cara Elise Taylor is a Black woman from the Midwest, raised by Afro-Latino parents, making images that see the depth and multitudes of Black people globally. The themes in her work include nostalgia, history, Blackness, health & wellness, community, food/cooking, and Caribbean/Afro-Latin culture. Her motivation for photography has always been the importance of preserving history by making an archive of the world as it is now, through the divinity and depth of a Black woman's perspective.

Experience more of Cara's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@caraelisetaylorr](#) and their website [caraelisetaylor.com](#).

TOP LEFT IMAGE:

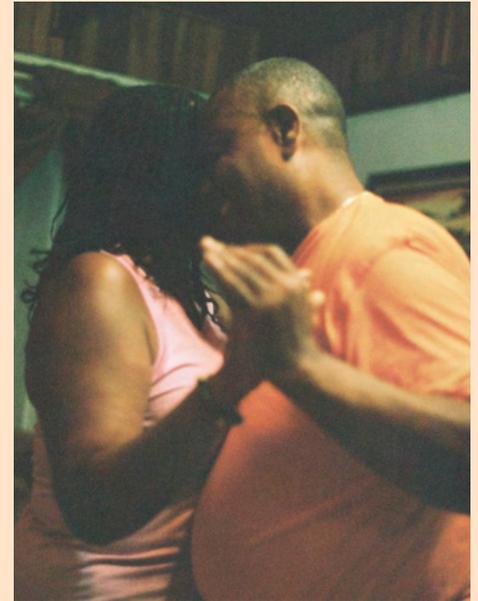
Cara Elise Taylor,
Mirna's Place (2021).

TOP RIGHT IMAGE:

Cara Elise Taylor,
Home, At Last (2019).

BOTTOM IMAGE:

Cara Elise Taylor,
Black Generations, (2022).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

I want people to witness themselves and/or the people they know and love. To me, art exists most remarkably in the ordinary. Art is in the curve of a Caribbean woman's wrist as she seasons a pot of stewed meat. It is in the way my parent's cheeks touch as they dance. Seeing ourselves reflected in art I believe leads to feeling more whole, more real, less alone, appreciative of our own past, and zealous for our future.

I hope my work inspires my community of "others" to realize we are the world, and we deserve to continue establishing our place in it.



Dana Davenport

INTERDISCIPLINARY
ARTIST



Dana Davenport (1994) is a Korean and Black American interdisciplinary artist shifting between installation, sculpture, video, and performance. Within her practice, she addresses the complexities that surround interminority racism as a foundation for envisioning her own and the collective futurity of Black and Asian peoples. Davenport utilizes synthetic hair as a proxy for her body to discuss the strained relationship between Black and Asian peoples, specifically in America. As a product overwhelmingly sold by Koreans to Black Americans, she considers the implications of the material as it sits on the beauty supply shelf and how it is activated in the hands of Black folks through love and labor.

Experience more of Dana's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@dana_dav](#) and their website [danadav.com](#).

WITNESS Artist Dana Davenport

TOP LEFT IMAGE:

Dana Davenport,
Box Braid Chandelier #1 (2018).

TOP RIGHT IMAGE:

Dana Davenport,
Box Braid Chandelier #5, 한
(han)-collective grief and resentment we
carry because of oppression (2022).

BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE:

Dana Davenport,
Box Braid Flip Flops (2022).

BOTTOM RIGHT IMAGE:

Dana Davenport,
Box Braid Chandelier #4, 여름 훈
(yeoleum hunnyeo) -Hot Girl Summer (2021).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO
WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*I hope that folks will see within
themselves the power of imagining and
re-imagining worlds that are built for us.*

Dee Williams

PHOTOGRAPHER



Dee Williams is a queer Jamaican-American photographer and visual artist whose work centers around stories of the African diaspora. Inspired by the rich diversity of unique cultures and communities, Dee seeks to celebrate those stories through fashion and portraiture, while deconstructing and redefining the outside monolithic views, ideas, and representation of Black culture and people.

Using fashion as the background for social commentary and taking in her experience in Social Media Management for publications like Ebony Magazine, iOneDigital, and Thrillist, she is able to shift those perspectives, especially in media and entertainment, to a more inclusive and diverse spotlight across multiple platforms. Her work has caught the eye of various publications, such as GQ, Wired, and Essence.

After spending 8 years in New York City, Dee is now based in Los Angeles, California, where she continues to make her name in digital marketing and commercial + editorial photography.

Experience more of Dee's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@deewilliamsphoto](#) and their website [deewilliamsphoto.com](#).

TOP LEFT IMAGE:

Dee Williams,
Ebony Pisces (2022).

BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE:

Dee Williams,
Warmth of the Double Dutch (2022).

RIGHT IMAGE:

Dee Williams,
Golden Hour (2022).



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?

When people experience my art I would love for them to witness how community is built through image-making. As someone who isn't much of a writer or talker I use my lens to build family and community. I love taking pictures of the everyday people I see in my life, whether it's candid, event photography or pre-planned editorial-style shoots. My camera is a vessel for the people around me to tell stories.

Deun Ivory

VISUAL ARTIST



Deun Ivory is a Texas based creative wellness visionary, multi-disciplinary artist & photographer whose work centers and celebrates black women. widely known for her ethereal aesthetic & creative ingenuity, Ivory curates visual experiences that inspire those who engage with her work to restore and reclaim narratives rooted in self-empowerment, joy & worthiness. Ivory draws from the belief that beauty is wellness, which informs her exploration of art, spaces and design as healing mechanisms for marginalized communities.

As a visionary, Ivory serves as the founder and creative director of two influential brands: the body: a home for love, a 501(c)3 non-profit helping black women heal through photography and black women are worthy, a social impact initiative specializing in conceptual design and immersive art installations.

Experience more of Deun's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@deunivory](#) and their website [deunivory.co](#).

TOP LEFT IMAGE:

Deun Ivory,
vision (2019).

BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE:

Deun Ivory,
kellee & adi (2020).

RIGHT IMAGE:

Deun Ivory,
simi (2019).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO
WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

through my work i want people to witness the undeniable beauty & magnetic essence of black women just simply breathing & being. i want my work to feel like a celebration, a visual love letter and a reminder that black women are worthy. my intention is rooted in the need to remind the world and us that we are enough. that we deserve to be acknowledged & seen, and that the essence of who we are is something to delight in.

Elise Peterson

PHOTOGRAPHER



Elise R. Peterson began her visual arts practice illustrating two published children's books *How Mamas Love Their Babies* (Feminist Press) and *The Nightlife of Jacuzzi Gasket* (Dottir Press). Elise works parallel in animated collage, recorded audio, and installation, encapsulating intimate storied moments, void of linear timing, pasted against portals of fantasy while joining moments of internal and external existence. Elise R. Peterson's work has been shown at Jeffrey Deitch, Eduardo Secci Gallery, and acquired by Baie-Saint-Paul Museum of Contemporary Art, among others.

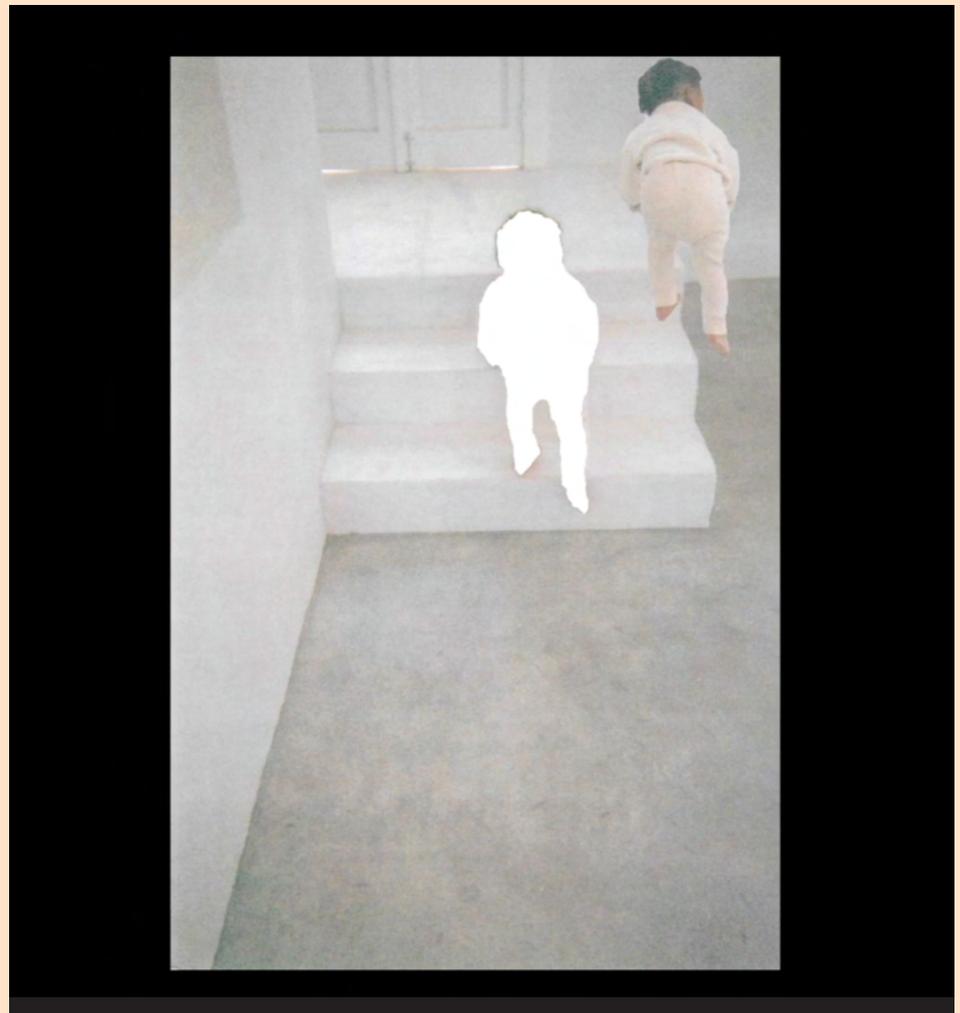
Experience more of Elise's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@eliserpeterson](#) and their website [eliserpeterson.com](#).

TOP IMAGE:

Elise R. Peterson,
A Meditation on Thug Life (2020).

BOTTOM IMAGE:

Elise R. Peterson, *In Due time* (2017).

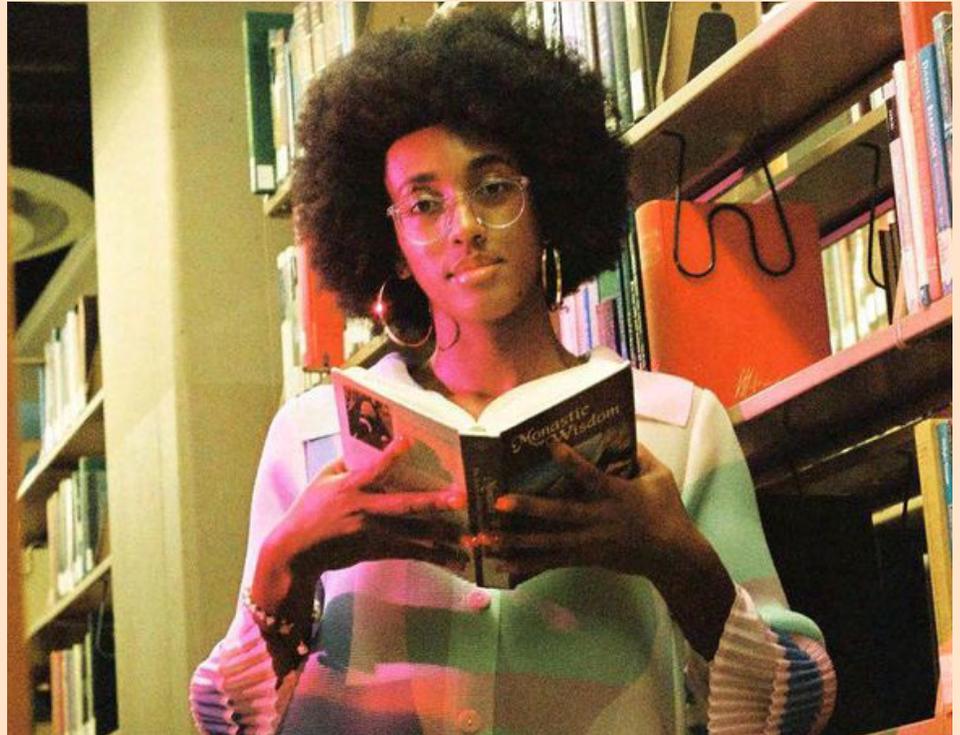


**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*The timeless power of
cross-generational storytelling.*

Gabrielle Morse

PHOTOGRAPHER



Gabrielle Morse is an Atlanta-born Photographer and Film Maker. She began her dedicated involvement in the arts in her sophomore year of high school. During her time at Spelman College, she studied different artistic mediums and developed a wide range of skills. Gabrielle has been featured in multiple publications such as VALID Magazine, LOOKS Magazine, and VoyageATL. Her photography is known for its vibrant use of color, striking composition, and attention to detail.

As a recent graduate, Gabrielle’s mission as a creative visual artist is to create imagery that best represents the things she finds most valuable in life. Each work she sets out to create is completed with pride and care. The work she does is born from the inspiration she finds in the people who have helped shape her into the person she is becoming.

“Photography is a medium that came naturally to me. It is a way to capture a moment in time, but also make it a moment all your own,” Morse explained. “By being able to create these scenes and share them with others, I feel like I am leaving some kind of mark on the world, proving that I was here.”

Experience more of Gabrielle’s work by visiting their website gabrielleamphotography.com

TOP IMAGE:

Gabrielle Morse,
My Loophole (2022).

BOTTOM IMAGE:

Gabrielle Morse
Self Portrait (2022).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

I want people to witness beautiful things and all their many forms. For me, beauty often exists in the details.

The details of my life, my friends, my loved ones, my surroundings. They help me to remember that we were here and had this moment and that although it may have looked small, it felt all-consuming. Even if just for that second.



House of Aama

FASHION HOUSE



House of Aama is the spiritual expression of mother and daughter design duo, Rebecca Henry and Akua Shabaka in material form. Manufactured 100% in Los Angeles, California.

House of Aama explores the folkways of the Black experience by designing timeless garments with nostalgic references in-formed by historical research, archival analysis, and storytelling. We aim to evoke dialogue, social commentary and conversations around heritage, remembrance and shed light on nuanced histo-ries. House of Aama presents its fashion items as an offering for raw, primal energy to exist in physical form.

Experience more of House of Aama's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@houseofaama](#) and website [houseofaama.com](#).

WITNESS Artist House of Aama

IMAGES:

House of Aama,
Still from Sanctuary: Salt Water Installation (2022).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*A sense of exploration,
discovery and remembrance
through the tangible and
spiritual parts of our existence.*

Liam Woods

they / them
PHOTOGRAPHER



Liam Woods is a Trans + Non Binary Image Maker based out of LA. Their work is characterized by the vulnerable, candidly intimate storytelling of Queer people, People of Color and other marginalized communities.

In their 5 year experience as a photographer, Liam has partnered with brands and companies such as Apple, Adidas, Facebook, Spotify, John-son&Johnson and Warby Parker. They have also shot for publications such as People, Washington Post, Bloomberg, Vogue Paris, The New York Times, LA Times, Cosmopolitan, and Playgirl Magazine. With their brand experience, Liam has formed over 50 creative job opportunities (and counting) for BIPOC and Queer People both in front of and behind the camera. The main mission in their work is to continue to build upon community and provide resources/ access for the betterment of BIPOC and Queer creatives as a whole.

Experience more of Liam's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@analoguepapi](#) and website [analoguepapi.com](#).

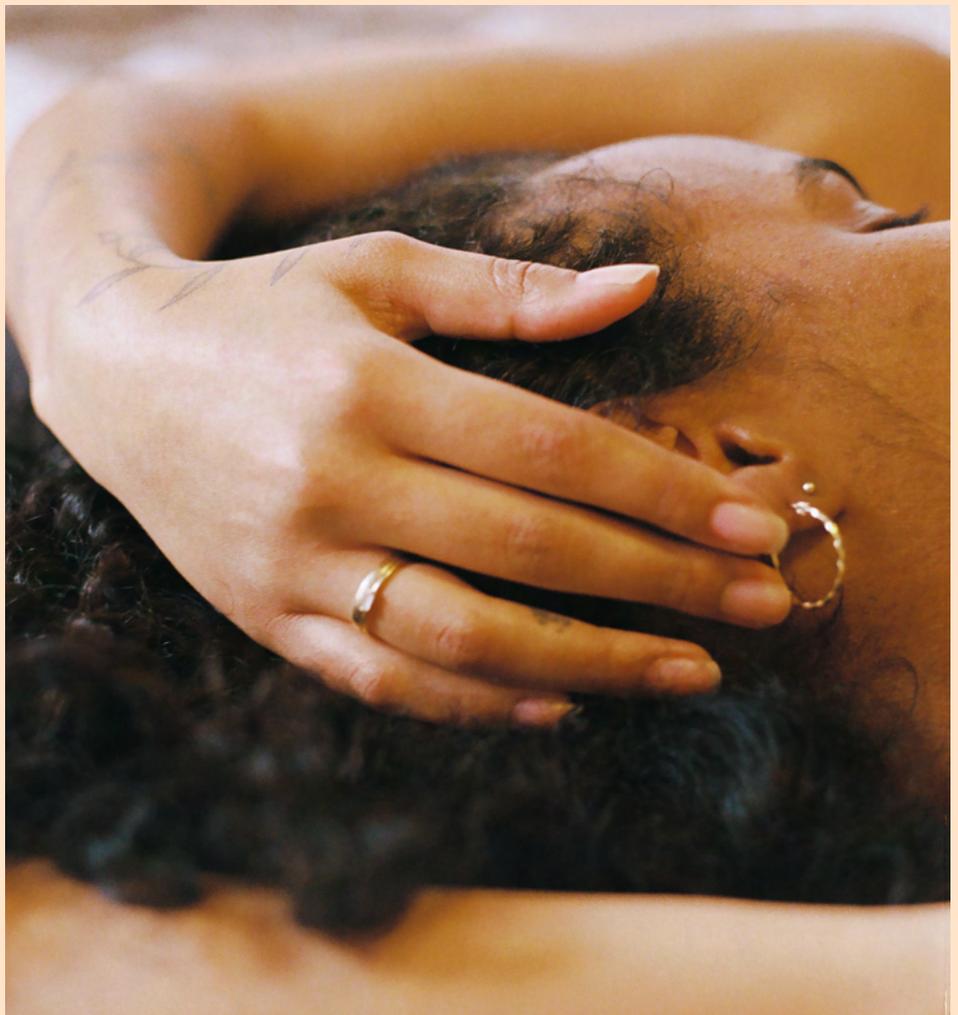
IMAGES:

Liam Woods,
Welcome Home (Photography Series)
(2023).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

I want people to bear witness to the resilient joy of my queer friends. The media can be so dark when depicting Queer stories and rear its ugly head. As a queer person myself, I want people to see the beautiful celebration that I witness on my day to day that I am so fully grateful for. I wouldn't be where I am without my community. Your safe haven is here when you are here with us. To be free, to feel celebrated, to feel joy, to feel home. Through my storytelling, I want everyone to feel seen and to feel relaxed in a space where they can authentically be themselves.



Madison Green

VISUAL ARTIST



Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Madison Green (they/them, b. 2001) is a visual artist and writer with a BA in art from Spelman College. Madison's practice meditates on the multidimensionality of the body via various mediums and modes of making, including but not limited to painting, papermaking, installation, and writing. Their work speaks to the love and consciousness they've developed around the body — a conceptual framework worth investigating and a vessel of innate wisdom worth trusting. Having started as a self-taught painter, the artist continues to seek more ways to both learn and deconstruct all that characterizes one's humanness, concerning both flesh and spirit. Whether it's an abstract self-portrait immortalizing the self they have yet to become or a handmade paper installation drawing connections between the earth and our inner child, Madison's work answers the profound callings of one's spirit not with shame but pure joy.

Experience more of Madison's work
by visiting their Instagram profile
[@maddifrankart](#).

LEFT IMAGE:

Madison Green,
*how often do you pray to the
deity in your head?* (2023).

RIGHT IMAGE:

Madison Green,
the body is a person (2023).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

My work is the manifestation of every prayer, epiphany, and testimony leading up to its creation. Through this work, I want people to witness the unveiling of the rawest versions of myself — everything I was once urged to conceal. Whether it is the unconventionality of my appearance or my unrelenting sensitive nature, these aspects of my being are brought to the surface here. My art is both an act of refusal and acceptance; in viewing it, one will witness the coexistence of the two.



Sade Ndya

CINEMATOGRAPHER



Sade Ndya is an LA based Cinematographer, who also specializes in Fine Art and Community Organizing. Sade's creative style is grounded in surreal-like imagery, intricate attention to production design and dynamic lighting dedicated to portraying the beauty in being black.

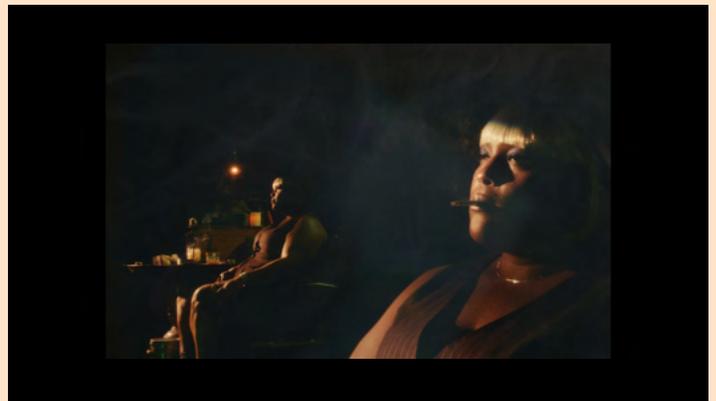
Sade is represented by The Gersh Agency. Her work has been published on platforms like The LA Times and Netflix, where her work was highlighted in the recent documentary 'Strong Black Lens'. She has freelanced working for notable companies like BET, Disney, NBC, Hillman Grad and Hoorae. Through her organizing work, Sade works with Made In Her Image, a non-profit that provides women and non-binary youth of color with education, resources and industry opportunities in film, media, and technology.

Experience more of Sade's work by visiting their Instagram profile [@sadendya](#) and website [sadendya.co](#).

WITNESS Artist **Sade Ndya**

IMAGES:

Sade Ndya,
Stills from *Re-Imagining Black _____*.
(2023).



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?

*With *Re-Imagining Black _____*, I encourage audiences to witness the past and future history of how black women are portrayed on screen. From surreal storylines to candid experiences, Black women deserve to be captured through our many nuanced forms of life.*

Sophia Nahli Allison

FILMMAKER AND
PHOTOGRAPHER



Sophia Nahli Allison is a Black lesbian myth. She is a self-portrait photographer, academy award nominated filmmaker, and artist from South Central LA.

Experience more of Sophia's work by visiting their Instagram profile [**@yagurlsophia**](#) and website [**sophianahliallison.com**](#).

WITNESS Artist **Sophia Nahli Allison**

TOP IMAGE:

Sophia Nahli Allison,
1839 to the Present (2018).

BOTTOM IMAGE:

Sophia Nahli Allison,
Still of Flight: Prologue (2023).



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?

Within my work, you'll witness a portal through time, where Black women are liberated through flight.



Stephanie Mei-Ling

PHOTOGRAPHER



Stephanie Mei-Ling is a Black-American/Taiwanese documentary photographer based between Brooklyn and Los Angeles. Through her work she explores such layered issues as the complexity of intersectional identity; elevating the narrative of invisible communities; society's fetishization of marginalized subcultures; the universality of otherness through a global lens; and the appropriation, re-appropriation and reclaiming of cultural narratives.

Experience more of Stephanie's work by visiting their Instagram profile [**@stephaniemeiling**](#) and website [**stephaniemeiling.com**](#).

IMAGES:
Stephanie Mei-Ling,
Epiphany (Photography Series).



**WHAT DO YOU WANT
PEOPLE TO WITNESS
THROUGH YOUR WORK?**

*I want people to witness
truth and authenticity,
empathy and connection.*

Sydney Dinkins

VISUAL ARTIST



Eunoia means a pure, well-balanced mind and a good spirit. Eunoia is an accessory company specializing in jewelry that embraces confidence, all while obtaining positive energies and creating a condition of well-being. The founder, Sydney Dinkins, began designing jewelry in the summer of 2020. Throughout the year, she struggled with various hardships following the pandemic lockdown that substantially impacted her mental health. She found it was stress and anxiety-relieving as she continued creating jewelry pieces. “I found that when I took various pieces of crystals and different colored beads, I could put them together to make something beautiful and feel beautiful wearing it,” she says. Each of the crystals and beads in the jewelry is intentionally crafted to elude a significant meaning that may call your attention and resonate with you in different ways. The pieces you choose from Eunoia aim to acknowledge your past experiences and future wishes and enhance how you carry yourself now. While wearing the jewelry, we hope you embrace authenticity and feel the utmost beauty and confidence in the mind and body.

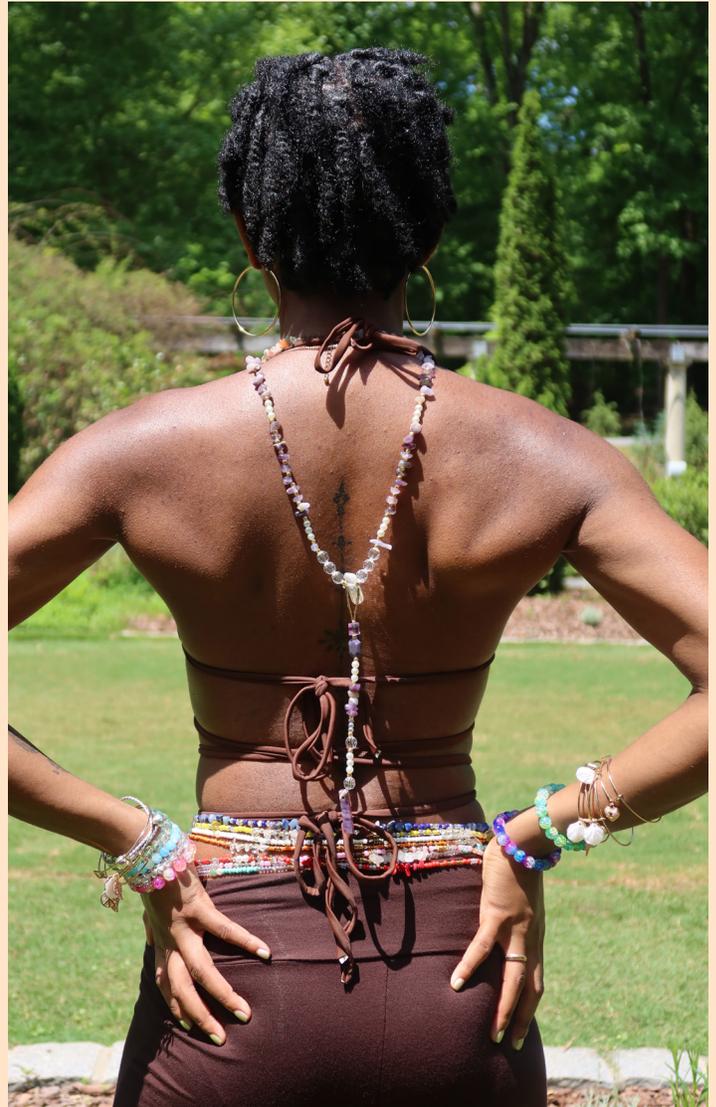
Experience more of Sydney’s work by visiting their Instagram profile @ [_itssyd_](#) and website eunoiaabyessence.com.

TOP IMAGE:
Sydney Dinkins,
Waist Beads (2021).



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO WITNESS THROUGH YOUR WORK?

When individuals WITNESS my artwork, my goal is to inspire a feeling of connection to the beauty that Africa has nurtured across its lands and among its diasporas. Whether or not people are aware of their African heritage, my aspiration is to empower them by awakening their awareness of the qualities of beauty, excellence, and resilience running through their veins. I envision that when someone encounters one of my creations, they will resonate with it, whether through its colors, energy, or aesthetic appeal, prompting them to enhance their well-being through an introspective connection with its silent yet compelling message.



TRUTH Portal



TRUTH Portal is an interactive installation and web platform that collects and transmits audio-based stories of Black women, by Black women in an effort to combat algorithmic bias and expand the data that informs how Black women and girls are depicted online. As a digital universe of ancestral knowledge, TRUTH Portal seeks to provide Black femmes an alternative experience on the internet through storytelling and community. Experience the portal online at TRUTHPortal.xyz

Creator:
Genel Ambrose

Collaborators:
Aisha Shillingford
and Shanna Sabio

Research Manager:
Nzinga Muhammad

Data Scientist:
Lauren Schores

Syllabus Development:
Mali Collins

Art Directors:
Sulamita Javier
and Nia Acosta

Design:
Elisa Slaton

Web Development:
Carleton Maybell

TRUTH DIGITAL PORTAL:

They told us our stories aren't worth remembering, this is where you find your truth.



TRUTH PORTAL INSTALLATION:

an affirming dreamscape with interactive storytelling booth.



ABOUT THE PARTNERS

About the Partners



Founded by Melinda French Gates, Pivotal Ventures accelerates social progress in the United States by removing barriers that hold people back. Pivotal Ventures expands opportunity and accelerates equality in the United States through high-impact investments, partnerships, and advocacy. We focus on areas where social progress has stalled – and where we can have the biggest impact.

Learn more at: pivotalventures.org



Founded in 2017 by Richard and Tina Knowles Lawson, WACO (Where Art Can Occur) Theater Center is a community arts and youth mentorship organization in Los Angeles. WACO provides Black artists and young people platforms to showcase their creativity, in order to manifest their dreams.

Learn more at: wacothatercenter.com



Founded by Genel Ambrose in 2018, GOOD MIRRORS is a cultural institution committed to reflecting Black women and girls as whole and dignified beings through storytelling, social impact initiatives, and community empowerment projects.

Learn more at: goodmirrors.institute



Established in July 2020 by Polly Irungu, Black Women Photographers (BWP) is a global community, directory, and hub of over 1,500 Black women and non-binary identifying photographers, spanning over 60+ countries and 35+ U.S. states.

Learn more at: blackwomenphotographers.com

MEET THE CURATORS

Tina Knowles Lawson

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,
WACO THEATER CENTER



Passionate about her philanthropic endeavors, Tina Knowles Lawson is a noted designer, entrepreneur and art collector. Lawson, her family and extended family members have built and established a number of space for young people, including the Knowles-Rowland Center for Youth located in Houston, Texas. In 2010, Tina partnered with her daughter Beyoncé to create the Beyoncé Cosmetology Center at Phoenix House in Brooklyn, New York as a resource to empower women, while providing them the life skills that would give them hope and a means of support after leaving the center. She founded WACO (Where Art Can Occur) Theater Center in 2017 with her husband Richard Lawson, providing a platform for artists and youth to live out their dreams through mentorship. She has received many awards including the prestigious Ace Awards, the International Global Leadership Award and the Golden Hanger Award. In 2011, Tina was honored by the University of Houston as part of their Living Archive Series and in 2014 by the Texas Women's Empowerment.

Genel Ambrose

FOUNDER,
GOOD MIRRORS



Genel is a cultural strategist and curator with a passion for social impact and community building. She has a track record for creating public programs and initiatives which spark powerful affinity and meaningful engagement - while driving positive social change. Through her social practice, GOOD MIRRORS, Genel is unwaveringly committed to creating a future that accurately reflects the wholeness and dignity of Black women and girls through storytelling, experiential and community empowerment projects. As an artist, Genel's work interrogates memory, identity and the role that technology plays in sharing and preserving the stories of Black women and girls. Genel has earned dual bachelor degrees in Journalism and Sociology from New York University and a Creative Writing MFA from The New School. She is a proud alum of the Jackie Robinson Foundation and the New Museum incubator, New Inc.

EXHIBITION TEAM

Exhibition Team



Chardae Adams

EXHIBITION DESIGNER,
WITNESS II EXHIBITION

Chardae is a Texas based designer. She previously worked for many years as a hospitality interior designer designing branded & boutique hotels. Chardae has continued to hone her skills in crafting overall lifestyle stories through the designing of photo-shoots for major brand campaigns, as well as design for feature films and television.



Lavonda Manning

CURATORIAL CONSULTANT,
WITNESS I EXHIBITION

Lavonda Manning is an accomplished and skilled cultural producer, archivist, independent curator and photographer. A polymath with an intense interest in the cultural histories of the African Diaspora, she has a career history of working at art institutions as well as, in the industries of music, fashion, advertising and publishing.



Jennifer Williams

CURATORIAL CONSULTANT,
WITNESS I EXHIBITION

Jennifer Williams is a visual art curator with more than fifteen years of experience producing multidisciplinary public arts programs. She is currently the Programs & Marketing Manager for the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta. Previously, Williams has held positions at Art Papers, Communications Manager for Alternate ROOTS, Public Programs Manager at the New Orleans Museum of Art, and Deputy Director for the Public Experience for Prospect.4.



Mariana Sheppard

CURATORIAL CONSULTANT,
WITNESS I EXHIBITION

Mariana is a curator and photographer based in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her photography has been featured in OWN, Essence, GQ, The Hollywood Reporter, Tidal, and more.

Exhibition Team



Nailah Reine Barnes

HBCU ARTIST RECOMMENDATIONS,
WITNESS II EXHIBITION

Nailah Reine Barnes, an accomplished writer and curator based in Senegal, is a Fulbright and Pulitzer Research Fellow exploring the global impact of Black women creatives. She is the founder of The Brains with Beauty Project, a nonprofit equipping Black girls with tools for academic success and holistic wellness (brainswithbeauty.org).



Nijeul X

DIR. OF COMMUNICATIONS AND STRATEGY, WACO THEATER CENTER,
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WITNESS I & II EXHIBITION

Nijeul X. Porter is a cultural organizer, educator, and producer with the wholehearted belief that art is at the tipping point for social change and is always excited about opportunities to facilitate the intersections of art, education, and community. Nijeul has produced campaigns, initiatives, and events around social justice issues of criminal justice reform, immigration, education, and health. He has worked on campaigns including #IAmAnImmigrant, @SonsAndBros, and Vote For Justice.



Polly Irungu

FOUNDER,
BLACK WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Polly Irungu is a multimedia journalist and the founder of Black Women Photographers, a global community and directory comprising 1000+ Black women and non-binary photographers. Most recently, she served as a Photo Editor for the Office of the Vice President in the Biden-Harris Administration. As a self-taught photographer, writer, and founder, Polly's work has been featured in numerous publications, including Adobe's Create Magazine, The New York Times, Reuters, Global Citizen, NPR, BBC News, MEFeater, Refinery29, The Washington Post, BuzzFeed, CNN, and others.

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Richard Lawson, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Elisa Slaton, DESIGNER

Jaunice Sills, CONSULTANT

Jordan Warren, PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, WITNESS II

Linda Lee, ADVISING PRODUCER

Malaia Simms, PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, WITNESS II

Nakeya Samuels, PROJECT MANAGER, WITNESS II

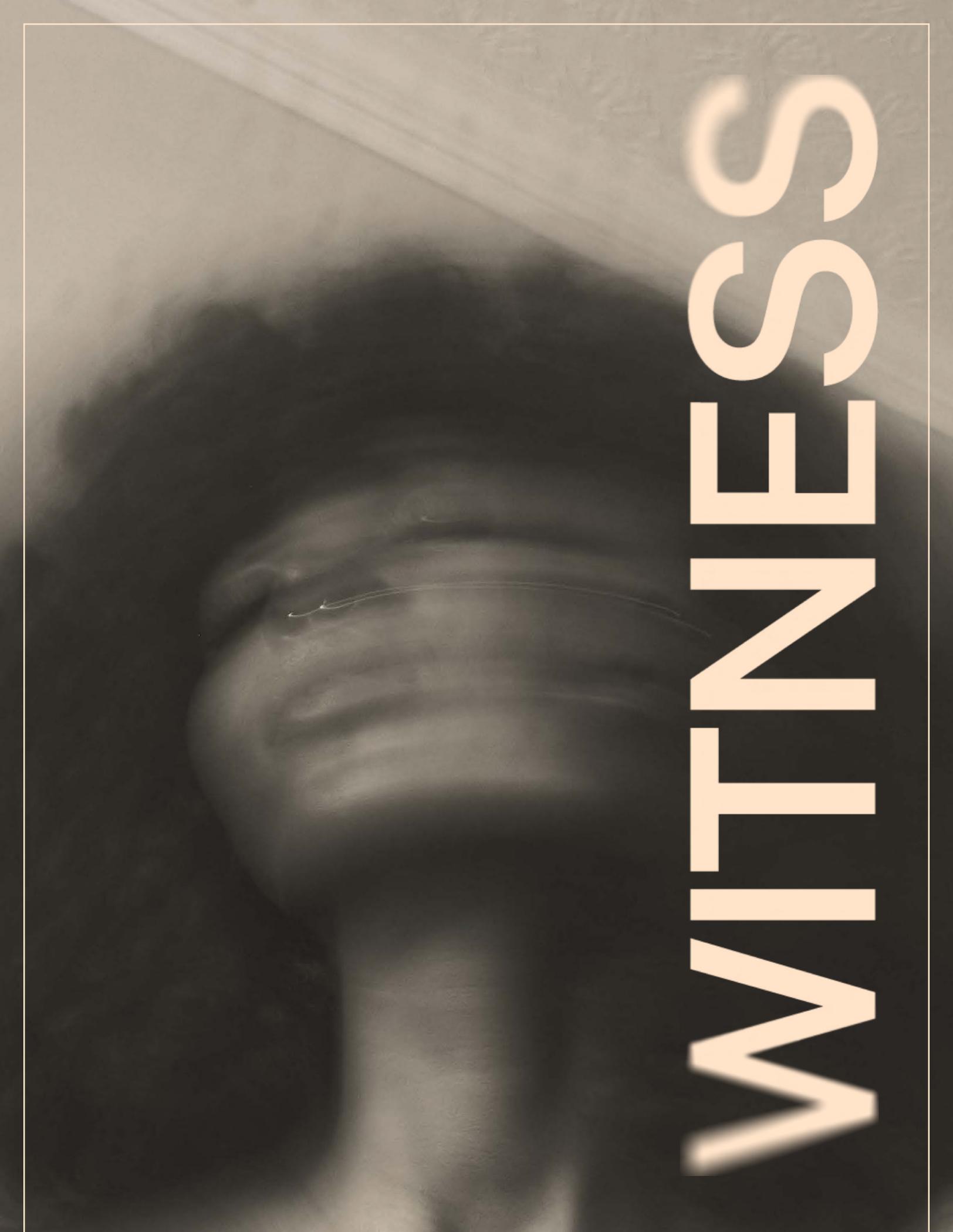
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