

Deborah Willis, Ph.D.
University Professor and Chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging
The Tisch School of the Arts, New York University
www.debwillisphoto.com

Academic Positions

University Professor, 2007 – present
New York University, New York, NY
2018 – present: Director, Center for Black Visual Culture and Institute for African American Affairs
2006 – present: Chair, Department of Photography and Imaging, Tisch School of the Arts
2000 – present: Professor, Department of Photography and Imaging, Tisch School of the Arts

Visiting Stuart B. Cooper Endowed Chair in Photography, The Photography Department, 2020
Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD

Visiting Professor in African American Studies, 2006
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Visiting Professor in African American Studies and Art History, 2003
Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

Lehman Brady Professor in Documentary Studies and American Studies, 2000-2001
Duke University, Durham, NC and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Adjunct Professor in the History of Photography, 1989-1990
City University of New York, New York, NY

Instructor in Museum Studies, 1984-86
New York Theological Seminary, College of New Rochelle, New York, NY

Education

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
Ph.D. in the Program of Cultural Studies

City College of New York, Art History Department
M.A. in Art History and Museum Studies

Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

M.F.A. in Photography

Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA

B.F.A. in Photography

Research Interests

Photography's multifaceted histories, new media imagining, museum studies, and cultural histories visualizing the black body, women, and gender; visual culture, the photographic history of Slavery and Emancipation; contemporary women photographers, beauty, and artistic activism; African American art and material culture; aesthetics and popular culture

Publications

Books

Free As They Want To Be: Artists Committed to Memory. eds: Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis. Damiani Editore, 2022. Editor.

Women and Migration(s) II, (eds: Kalia Brooks, Cheryl Finley, Ellyn Toscano and Deborah Willis) Open Book Publishers, 2022. Editor.

Pierre Fatumbi Verger: United States of America 1934 & 1937, ed. Javier Escudero Rodriguez, Damiani Editore, 2022. Contributor.

Art the Arts Essential, (eds: Alberta Arthurs and Michael F. DiNiscia, New York University Press, 2021. Essayist.

Lessons of the Hour; Frederick Douglass by Isaac Julien contributor, DelMonico Books/MAG/Tang/Isaac Julien Studio, 2021.

Designing Motherhood: Things that Make and Break our Births, eds. Michelle Millar Fisher and Amber Winick, The MIT Press, 2021, contributor.

Carrie Mae Weems in October 25, ed. Sarah E. Lewis, (contributor) 2021.

The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship. New York: New York University Press, 2020-1.

*Longlisted for the 2021 National Book Awards

To Make Their Own Way in the World: The Peabody Museum's Daguerreotypes. Eds. Ilia Barbash, Molly Rogers, and Deborah Willis. Aperture 2020.

Women and Migrations: Responses in Art and History. Eds. Deborah Willis, Ellyn Toscano, and Kalia Brooks Nelson. Köln, Germany: Open Press, 2019.

Black: A Celebration of Culture. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2014.

*Second edition; originally published 2004.

Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery. Philadelphia: Temple University, 2013.

Gordon Parks Life Works, Volume II. Ed. Deborah Willis. Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2012.

Obama: The Historic Campaign in Photographs. Eds. Deborah Willis and Kevin Merida. New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins, 2011.

Harlem: A Century in Images. With Thelma Golden, Cheryl Finley, and Elizabeth Alexander. New York, N.Y.: Skira Rizzoli International Publications with the Studio Museum in Harlem, 2010.

Posing Beauty in African American Images from the 1890s to the Present. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African-American Portraits. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2008.

African American Vernacular Photography: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection. With Brian Wallis. New York, N.Y.: International Center of Photography, 2005.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title at the International Center of Photography.

Family, History, and Memory: Recording African-American Life. Hylas Publishing, 2005.

The Black Female Body: A Photographic History. Written with Carla Williams. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.

Finalist for the Publishers Marketing Association's Ben Franklin Award, Reference Category, 2003.

Outstanding Academic Title, *Choice*, 2002.

National Gold Ink Bronze Award, 2002.

VanDerZee, photographer, 1886-1983. With Rodger C. Birt. New York, N.Y.: H.N. Abrams (in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery), 1998.

*Second edition, originally published 1993.

Visual Journal: Harlem and D.C. in the Thirties and Forties. Eds. Deborah Willis and Jane Lusaka. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1996.

Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography. Editor. The New Press, 1996.

J.P. Ball: Daguerrean and Studio Photographer.

Articles, Book Chapters, Catalogue Essays, and Contributions

“Watch! Watch! Watch!” by Henri Cartier-Bresson: Black and White America, in the Bucerius Kunst Forum, Germany in 2024.

“Amy Sherald: Chasing Happiness,” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Becoming or Belonging: Belle’s Portraits, The Morgan Library & Museum

“At ‘Rising Sun,’ a Philly-born mother and son meditate on the life and death of Black men” by Julia Shipley, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 2023.

“The Visual Power of Black Rest” by Emily Lordi, The New Yorker, 2023.

“Visual Narratives from the Black Rest Project: Rest Is Power” by Samuel Getachew, office magazine, 2023.

“Deborah Willis’s Photography and Scholarship Foreground Beauty in Black Portraiture” by Ayanna Dozier, Artsy, 2023.

“Telling the stories left out of history books: Catch celebrated photographer Deborah Willis at the Norton Museum” by Yvonne Bertucci zum Tobel, WLRN, 2023.

“Harn Museum hosts discussion with NYU professor Deborah Willis on Black art history” by Ben Crosbie, the independent florida alligator, 2023.

“Exhibit at New York University’s Kimmel Center focuses on Black Civil War soldiers” by Jessi Mitchell, CBS New York, 2023.

“Isaac Julien Uses Archives as a Springboard for Reinvention” by Deborah Willis and Isaac Julien, Frieze Issue 234, 2023.

“AAMP and PAFA partner for the ‘Rising Sun’ of America exhibit” by Rita Charleston, The Philadelphia Tribune, 2023.

“Legendary Photo Historian and Artist Deborah Willis Wins \$200,000 award” by Alex Greenberger, ARTnews, 2022.

“In a Fascinating New Book, Deborah Willis Salutes the Black Civil War Soldier” by Marley Marius, Vogue, 2021.

“College Art Association 2021 Awards Honor Samella Lewis, Deborah Willis, Nicole R. Fleetwood, Simone Leigh, Charles L. Davis II, and Maren Hassinger” by Victoria L. Valentine, *culture type*, 2021.

“Visualizing Slavery: Image and Text.” *Afro-Atlantic Histories*. Ed. Adriano Pedrosa and Tomás Toledo. New York, NY: DelMonico Books, 2021.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Museu de Art São Paulo (MASP). Catalogue listed at Best Art Book of 2021 by ArtNews

Designing Motherhood: Things That Make and Break Our Births, eds. Michelle Millar Fisher and Amber Winick, contributor with images, MIT Press, 2021.

“Deana Lawson in Conversation with Deborah Willis” *Deana Lawson*, eds. Peter Eleey and Eve Respini. Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston) and MoMA PS1 (Long Island City): MACK, 2021.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by ICA Boston.

Une histoire mondiale des femmes photographes (A Global History of Women Photographers). Eds. Luce Lebart and Marie Robert. Paris, France: Paris Textuel, 2021.

“Encounters with Color Photography.” *The Colors of Photography*. Ed. Bettina Gockel. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020.

“Sources of Self-Regard: Self-Portraits From Black Photographers Reflecting on America” by Deborah Willis, *The New York Times*, 2020.

“Deborah Willis’s Writings and Exhibitions Have Shaped Scholarship on African-American Photography” by Cheryl Finley, *ARTnews*, 2020.

“Robert H. McNeill and the Bronx Slave Market.” *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019.

“Frame by Frame: Hugh Mangum’s Portraits,” Foreword in *Where We Find Ourselves: Hugh Mangum*. Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University North Carolina Press, 2019.

“Picturing Black Freemasons from Emancipation to the 1990s.” With Cheryl Finley. *Freemasonry and the Visual Arts from the Eighteenth Century Forward: Historical and Global Perspectives*. Eds. Reva Wolf and Alisa Luxenberg. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury, 2019.

“Seven Artists and Curators Reveal a Cherished, Overlooked Black Artist” by Jasmine Weber, *HYPERALLERGIC*, 2019.

“Picture Stories: Deborah Willis merges two collections at the Jefferson School” by erinohare, c ville, 2019.

“Gordon Parks: Haute Couture and The Everyday.” *The New Tide, Early Work, 1940–1950*. Ed. Philip Brookman. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2018.
In conjunction with an exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. in collaboration with The Gordon Parks Foundation.

“The Folk-Life of the Photograph: Black and White Dolls – Memory and Materiality.” *Black Dolls, the Deborah Neff collection*. Ed. Nora Philippe. Paris: La Maison Rouge, 2018. In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by La Maison Rouge, Paris.

“In Search of Beauty: Charles White’s Exposures.” *Charles White: A Retrospective*. Eds. Sarah Kelly Oehler and Esther Adler. New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 2018.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and The Museum of Modern Art in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

“The Black Portrait and the Black Body Politic.” *Portraits of Who We Are: The David C. Driskell at the University of Maryland, College Park*. College Park, M.D.: David C. Driskell Center, 2018.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora.

“The Philly Block.” *The Philly Block Project*. Eds. Lori Waselchuk and Sara Stolf. Philadelphia, PA: The Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, 2017.

“Preface.” *North of Dixie: Civil Rights Photography Beyond the South*. By Mark Speltz. Los Angeles, C.A.: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2016.

“Art, turned on its ear” by Corydon Ireland, *The Harvard Gazette*, 2014.

With Cheryl Finley. *Carrie Mae Weems: Three Decades of Photography and Video*. Ed. Kathryn E. Delmez. New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 2013.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, Tennessee.

“Imagining Themselves: Photography, Race and Representation, 1945-1980.” *Identity and Affirmation: African American Post War Photography*. Ed. Kent Kirkton. Northridge, C.A.: Institute for Arts and Media, California State University, 2011.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the California State University, Northridge in collaboration with the Getty Foundation sponsored project, *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945-1980*.

“Introduction.” *Teenie Harris, Photographer: Image, Memory, History*. By Cheryl Finley, Laurence Glasco, Joseph William Trotter, Jr. Pittsburgh, P.A.: University of Pittsburgh Press (in cooperation with Carnegie Museum of Art), 2011.

“Malick Sidibé: The Front of the Back View.” *Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity*. Ed. Okwui Enwezor. Göttingen: Steidl and the Walther Collection, 2010.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same titled organized by the Walther Collection in Burlafingen, Southern Germany.

“Picturing the New Negro Woman.” *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*. Ed. Barbara Thompson. Dartmouth, Seattle: Hood Museum of Art and University of Washington Press, 2008.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College.

“Eudora Welty: The Intrepid Observer.” *Eudora Welty as Photographer*. Ed. Pearl Amelia McHaney. Jackson, M.S.: University Press of Mississippi, 2009.

“Photographing Memphis: The *Memphis World*.” *Photographs from the Memphis World, 1949-1964*. Ed. Marina Pacini. Memphis, T.N.: University Press of Mississippi, 2008. In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and Clough Hanson Gallery, Rhodes College.

“Looks and Gazes: Photographic Fragmentation and the Found Object.” *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*. Ann Arbor, Berkeley: University of Michigan Museum of Art, the University of California Press, 2005.
In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

Contributor. *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*. Ed. Robin Lenman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Contributor. *The Polaroid Book: Selections from the Polaroid Collections of Photography*. New York: Taschen, 2005.

“The Space in Between: Research and Advocacy.” *Legacy: Treasures of Black History*. Ed. Thomas C. Battle. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2006.

“Visualizing political struggle: civil rights-era photography.” *American Visual culture*. Ed. David Holloway. London: Continuum, 2005.

“Exposure: Civil Rights Photography.” *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*. Ed. Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis. New York: International Center of Photography in association with Harry Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 2003.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the International Center of Photography.

“Visual Testimony: The Photographs of Wendel A. White.” *Small Towns, Black Lives: African American Communities in Southern New Jersey*. Ed. Wendel White. Oceanville, N.J.: Noyes Museum of Art, 2003.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Noyes Museum of Art.

“Introduction” *Time of Change: Civil Rights Photographs: 1961-1965*. By Bruce Davidson. Los Angeles: St. Ann’s Press, 2002.

“Afterword.” *One Shot: The Photographs of Charles “Teenie” Harris*. By Stanley Crouch. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002.

“Searching for Memories.” *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work*. Ed. Sharon Harley. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

Contributor. *In Their Mothers’ Eyes: Women Photographers and Their Children*. New York: Edition Stemmle, 2002.

“African American Photography.” *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (Vol. 3). Eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates. New York: Civitas Books, 1999.

“A Search for Self: The Photograph and Black Family Life.” *The Familial Gaze*. Ed. Marianne Hirsch. Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 1999.

Contributed photograph and essay. *Our Grandmothers: Loving Portraits by 74 Granddaughters*. Ed. Linda Sunshine. New York: Welcome Enterprises, 1998.

“The Image and Paul Robeson.” *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*. Ed. Jeffrey C. Stewart. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press in cooperation with Paul Robeson Cultural Center, 1998.

“Talking Back: Black Women’s Visual Liberation Through Photography.” *Transforming The Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966-1996*. Eds. M. Franklin Sirmans and Mora J. Beauchamp-Byrd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

In conjunction with an exhibition of the same title organized by the Caribbean Cultural Center/African Diaspora Institute, The Bronx Museum of Arts, and Studio Museum in Harlem.

Photo Editor for *Million Man March* by Michael Cottman. The University of Michigan: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1995.

Photography, *A Yearbook on Blacks in the Arts*. Ed. Donald Bogle. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, 1990, and 1991.

Photobiographers, Atlanta, GA: ARTPAPERS, 1992.

“The Harmon Foundation and Photography.” *Against the Odds: The Harmon Foundation*. Eds. Gary Reynolds and Beryl Wright. Newark, NJ: Newark Museum and the Luce Foundation, 1988.

“James VanDerZee.” *Harlem Renaissance: The Art of Black America*. Ed. Mary Schmidt Campbell. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987.

“Black Women Photographers.” *Houston Fotofest*. Houston, TX, 1988.

“RECKONING: PROTEST. DEFIANCE. RESILIENCE.” By Kevin Young, 2024.
Essay Interview

“Wendel A. White: Manifest | Thirteen Colonies.” Co-published with the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University. July 2024.
Interview with Wendel A. White and Dr. Deborah Willis.

Exhibition Catalogues

Re-Imagining A Safe Space. New York, NY: University and Nathan Cummings Foundation, 2017.

Framing Beauty: Intimate Visions. Bloomington, IN: Grunwald Gallery of Art, Indiana University, 2017.

Convergence. New Orleans, LA: Joan Mitchell Center, 2014.

Locating the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in African American Art. Washington, D.C.: Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1999.

TechnoSeduction. New York, NY: The Cooper Union and the College Art Association, 1997.

In Search of Balance: The Artist Scholar. Washington, DC: Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, 1997.

Life on the Road: The Photographs of Milt Hinton. Washington, DC: Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, 1997.

Imagining Families: Images and Voices. Washington, DC: Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1995.

Meg Andrews: Photographer. Hartford, CT: The CRT's Craftery Gallery, 1989.

Convergence: 8 Photographers. Boston, MA: The Photographic Resource Center, 1989.

Black Photographers Bear Witness: 100 Years of Social Protest. Williamstown, MA: The Williams College Museum of Art, 1989.

"A Likeness Preserved" Afro-American Philadelphians: Color, Class and Style. Philadelphia, PA: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1988.

Moneta Sleet, Jr. Pulitzer Prize Winning Journalist. With Julia Van Haaften. New York, NY: New York Public Library, 1987.

On Freedom: The Art of Photojournalism. New York, NY: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1986.

Carl Van Vechten Photographs. New York, NY: The New York Public Library, 1986.

Reflections of Self: Women Photographers. New York, NY: Fordham University, 1986.

New World Images, New World African: 19th Century Images of Blacks in South America and the Caribbean. New York, NY: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1985.

John Pinderhughes, Photographer. New York, NY: Gallery 62, National Urban League, 1984.

Fourteen Photographers: A Contemporary Exhibition. New York, NY: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1983.

Black Images in Film: A Photographic Exhibition. New York, NY: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1983.

Bert Andrews: Photography of Black Theatre. New York, NY: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1982.

Introspect: Photography by Anthony Barboza. New York, NY: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1982.

Harlem Heyday: Photographs by James VanDerZee. New York, NY: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1982.

Doris Ullman: Photographs of the Gullah People. New York, NY: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1981.

Magazine, Newspaper, and General Interest Contributions

FOAM, In Limbo, 2020

“Zanele Muholi” in Aperture Special Issue, 2018

Essay, “We the People: Triumph and Image,” Aperture, Fall 2012 Essay

“The Fashionable Mr. Parks,” New York Times (Nov. 30, 2012)

<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/30/thefashionablemrparks/>

Essay, “Heroes of the Storm: Five Years After Katrina” – Photographs by Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick in Aperture, 2010.

“Appreciation” Gordon Parks’s Hungry Heart, The Crisis Magazine Spring 2006

“Angola Bound: Angola Prison: No Place to Be” Aperture Spring 2006, Issue 82.

Clarissa Sligh, Aperture 138 On Location II, 1995.

“Cancer Diary,” CRMagazine, Spring 2006 (photo essay-self-portrait)

Clarissa Sligh, Aperture 138 On Location II, 1995.

"Historical Photographic Collections", Ten:8, Quarterly Magazine, London, England, 1987.

"Jack Franklin, Photographer", Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Philadelphia, PA (newsletter, Feb. 1989)

Ron Lee: Women With Wet Hair. Atlanta, GA: ARTPAPERS. November/December 1988.

"Collecting African American Resources", SCRIPT, African American Museums Association Newsletter, 1983.

Exhibitions

Participant

2026

Looking for America, Ogunquit Museum of American

	Art, Ogunquit, ME
	<i>Ascendancy: The Self in Contemporary Art</i> , Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT
2024	Art Basel Miami Beach, solo booth with Welancora Gallery, Miami, FL
2023	<i>Rising Sun Artists In An Uncertain America</i> , African American Museum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
	Mary Lucille Dauray Artist-in-Residence, Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach, FL
	<i>The Black Civil War Soldier</i> , NYU Kimmel Windows, New York University, New York, NY
2022	<i>Deborah Willis: Meditations</i> , Sugar Hill Museum of Art and Storytelling, New York, NY
	<i>Framing the Field: Photography's Histories in American Institutions</i>
	<i>Black American Portraits</i> , Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
2021	<i>Exhibition and Sale to Benefit the Foundation for Contemporary Arts</i> , Greene Naftali Gallery, New York, NY
2020	<i>30 Years of Women Photographers</i> , Jackson Fine Art Gallery, Atlanta, GA
	<i>In Conversation: Visual Meditations on Black Masculinity</i> , African American Museum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
	<i>MFON: Black Women Photographers</i> , African American Museum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
	<i>Décrochanges des oeuvres des Recontres de Bamako</i>
2019	<i>In Pursuit of Beauty</i> , Express Newark, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
2017	<i>Went Looking for Beauty: Refashioning Self</i> , August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh, PA
	<i>Regarding Women in the Acton Collection</i> , New York University, Florence, Villa La Pietra, Italy
	<i>Songs of My People: African Americans: A Self Portrait</i> , The George Washington University, Washington, DC
2016	<i>We Speak: Black Artists in Philadelphia, 1920s–1970s</i> , Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA
2015	<i>A Family Affair</i> , University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
	<i>Interventions in Printmaking: Three Generations of African-American Women</i> , Allentown Museum of Art, Allentown, PA
	<i>Ancient Rhythms Remixed</i> , Art in the Atrium,

	Morristown, NJ
2014	<i>Exhibiting Blackness</i> , Evolve the Gallery, Sacramento, CA
2013	<i>The Leica Show</i> , Leica Gallery, New York, NY <i>Deb Willis: Framing Beauty</i> , International Visions Gallery, Washington, DC
2012	<i>I Am Going to Eatonville</i> , Zora Neale Hurston Museum, Eatonville, FL <i>CPT: Time, History, and Memory</i> , Gallatin Galleries, New York, NY <i>Celebrating Our Legacy</i> , The Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ <i>Objectives Objectivity</i> , Rome, Italy <i>Progeny: Deborah Willis + Hank Willis Thomas</i> , Gantt Center, Charlotte, NC
2011	<i>What Matters Now</i> , Aperture Gallery, New York, NY <i>In My Father's House: An Installation</i> , Deb Willis and Lonnie Graham, August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh, PA
2010	<i>Afrique: See You, See Me</i> , Commissioned by Africa.Cont of Lisbon, Museu de Cidade (Pavilhão Preto), Lisbon, Portugal <i>High Water Marks: Art and Renewal After Katrina</i> , Amistad Collection, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
2009	<i>Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery</i> , Columbia University, New York, NY
2006	<i>Double Exposure</i> , Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
2005	<i>A Sense of Place: Contemporary African-American Art</i> , University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA <i>The Places in Which We Pray Are Made Sacred by Our Presence</i> , Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, Miami, FL <i>African Queen</i> , Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY <i>Family Matters: Mother to Son</i> , Light Factory, Charlotte, NC
2004	<i>Through the Gates: Brown v. Board of Education</i> , California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA <i>Screenings/Public & Private</i> , The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ <i>HairStories</i> , Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ <i>Embracing Eatonville: A Photographic Survey</i> , Light Work, Syracuse, NY

- 2003** *Beggars and Choosers*, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL
Mother to Son: Deborah Willis + Hank Thomas, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX
Deborah Willis: Appearances, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
Through Our Lenses: Personal and Political Views of 18 Photographers, Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY
- 2001** *Off the Record*, The Skylight Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Over the Sofa, Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, Miami, FL
Response to 9.11: Faculty and Staff Exhibition, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, New York, NY
Deborah Willis: Regarding Beauty, Solo exhibition, Steinbaum Gallery, Miami, FL
Three Contemporary Artists in the Classroom, Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, Durham, NC
Reading Between the Lines: Image, Text, and the African American Experience, Salt Lake City Art Center, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2000** *Tied to Memory*, Sarah Moody Art Gallery, University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL
Picturing the Modern Amazon, New Museum, New York, NY
Collections Show, William Benton Museum of Art, Storrs, CT
Fabricated Memories, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX
Eye of the Beholder, DC Public Library, Washington, DC
- 1999** *The Comforts of Home*, Hand Workshop Art Center, Richmond, VA
Black Women in the Academy, Howard University, Washington, DC
Re/Righting History: Counternarratives by Contemporary African-American Artists, Katonah Museum of Art, Westchester County, NY
- 1998** *Memorable Histories and Historic Memories*, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bowdoin, OH
Alternatives '98, Ohio State University, Athens, OH
Patchwork, Islip Museum, East Islip, NY
- 1997** *Eye of the Beholder: Photographers from the Avon Collection*, International Center of Photography, New

York, NY

1996 *Family Stories*, Hartwick Gallery, Oneonta, NY
Labor of Love, Chastain Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Artists at Work, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Visual Griots, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD
Aspects of African American Art, Walsh Gallery, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ
Deborah Willis: Photo/Quilt Stories, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX
Conceptual Textiles, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI

1995 *Deborah Willis: Family Matter*, Steinbaum–Krauss Gallery, New York, NY
Cultural Baggage, Rice University, Houston, TX
Searching for Memories: Black Women and the 1895 Exposition, Atlanta Arts Festival, Atlanta, GA
Photo Stories, Spelman College, Atlanta, GA
Hand Me Down: Innovation Within a Tradition, The Afro-American Cultural Center, Charlotte, NC
Personal Narrative: Women Photographs of Color, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC

1994 *Encounters 6: Deborah Willis*, Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ
Thru the Eyes of Sisters, CRT Craftery Gallery, Hartford, CT
The African American Women Quilt Show

1993 *A Common Thread: Innovations and Improvisations in Contemporary Textiles*, Bomani Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1992 *Prisoners of War: In My Native Land and On Foreign Soil*, The New School, New York, NY
Words and Pictures, The Light Factory, Charlotte, NC
Deborah Willis/Christian Walker, Jane Jackson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Four African American Artists, Young Hughley Gallery, Atlanta, GA

1991 *Faculty Show*, Photo Center Gallery, New York University, New York, NY
Coast to Coast: Women of Color Book Project, WHERE, New York, NY

1990 *Occupation and Resistance*, Alternative Museum, New York, NY

- 1989** Group Exhibition, Borough President's Gallery, New York, NY
Visual Diaries, John Jay College Wall Gallery, New York, NY
- 1988** *Women Photographers*, Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
 Faculty Exhibition, Photo Art Center, New York University, New York, NY
- 1986** *Reflections of Self: Women Photographers*, Fordham University, New York, NY
Autobiography: Herstory, Castillo Gallery, New York, NY
- 1981** *Women on the Scene*, Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Six Photographers, Western Electric, New York, NY
- 1979** MFA Thesis Exhibition, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
 Alumni Show, Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
- 1977** *FESTAC*, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Curator

- 2026** *Free As They Want to Be*, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA
- 2023** *Rest is Power*, Center for Black Visual Culture, 20 Cooper Gallery, New York, NY
- 2022** *Free As They Want To Be: Artists Committed to Memory*, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Fotofocus Biennial, Cincinnati, OH
Home: Reimagining Interiority, In Collaboration with YoungArts and New York University
An Imaginative Arrangement of Things Before Me, Gordon Parks Foundation, Pleasantville, New York
- 2021** *Framing Moments: Photography from the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts*, Kalamazoo Institute of Art, Kalamazoo, MI
- 2020** *Migrations and Meaning(s) in Art*, Group exhibition, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
- 2019** International Artists-in-Residence Exhibition, Artpace, San Antonio, TX
- 2017-2018** *Re-imagining A Safe Space*, New York University Tisch School of the Arts with Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY
- 2016** *Framing Beauty: Intimate Visions*, Grunwald Gallery of Art, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

2015	<i>Convergence</i> , Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans, LA
2014	<i>Social in Practice: The Art of Collaboration</i> , Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY
2013	<i>Out [o] Fashion Photography: Embracing Beauty</i> , Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA <i>Visualizing Emancipation</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
2012	<i>Gordon Parks: 100 Moments</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
2009–2021	<i>Posing Beauty in African American Culture</i> , Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, New York, NY; traveled to Kent, OH, Trenton, NJ, Flint, MI, Wilmington, DE, College Park, MD, Mobile, AL, Seattle, WA, Richmond, VA, Los Angeles, CA, Williamston, MA
2008	<i>1968: Then And Now</i> , New York University and Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY
2008	<i>Obama, The Historic Campaign in Photographs</i> , Leica Gallery, New York, NY
2005	<i>Saturday Night / Sunday Morning</i> , African American Museum in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
2000	<i>Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840s to the Present</i> , Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; traveled to Chestnut Hill, MA, Oakland, CA, Nashville, TN, Los Angeles, CA, Atlanta, GA, Hanover, NH, Albany, NY
1997–1998	<i>Half-Past Autumn: Gordon Parks</i> , Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; traveled to St. Paul, MN, New York, NY, Detroit, MI, West Palm Beach, FL, Atlanta, GA, New Orleans, LA, Los Angeles, CA, Cincinnati, OH, Chicago, IL
1997	<i>In Search of Balance: The Artist/Scholar</i> , Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC <i>Life on the Road: The Photographs of Milt Hinton</i> , Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
1996–1997	<i>Techno-Seduction</i> , Cooper Union and College Art Association, New York, NY
1996	<i>Visual Journal: Photography in Harlem in the Thirties and Forties</i> , Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
1995–1996	<i>Reflections on Rights</i> , Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
1994–1995	<i>Imagining Families: “Images and Voices”</i> , Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution,

- Washington, DC
1993 *VanDerZee*, Center for African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Contemplative Moments: Photographic Works by Clarissa Sligh, African American Museum in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
- 1992** *Photobiographers*, Atlanta Gallery of Photography, Atlanta, GA
- 1990** *Convergence: 8 Photographers*, Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA
- 1989** *New Works by Black Women Photographers*, Le Mois de la Photo, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Constructed Images: New Photography, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; traveled to Houston, TX, Atlanta, GA, Baltimore, MD, Berkeley, CA
Black Photographers Bear Witness: 100 Years of Social Protest, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA; traveled to Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA, St. Louis, MO
Meg Andrews: Emerging Artist, CRT's Craftery Gallery, Hartford, CT
Photographers and Diaries, Photo Center Gallery, New York University, New York, NY
- 1988** *Curator's Choice: The Photographer's Mind*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Herstory: Black Women Photographers, Houston Fotofest, Firehouse Gallery, Houston, TX
- 1987** *Gordon Parks: A Retrospective*, New York Public Library, New York, NY
HerStory/HerSpace/HerMoments: 7 Women Photographers, The Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Seven Photographers: 1920–1980, Cooper Union, New York, NY
Moneta Sleet, Jr.: Pulitzer Prize Photojournalist, New York Public Library, New York, NY
Autobiography/HerStory, The Castillo Gallery, New York, NY
- 1986** *The Art of Photojournalism: 5 Photographers*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
O, Write My Name: American Portraits: Harlem Heroes (Carl Van Vechten Photographs), New York Public Library, New York, NY
America: Another Perspective (13 Photographers), Photo Center Gallery, New York, NY
Black Photographers: 1840–1940, Fleming Museum of Art,

	University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, and CRT's Craftery Gallery, Hartford, CT
1985	<i>New World Africans: 19th Century Images of Blacks in South America and the Caribbean</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
1984	<i>Art Against Apartheid: A Photographic Exhibition</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
	<i>Black Images in Film: A Photographic Exhibition</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
1983	<i>14 Photographers: Contemporary Photographers in the Schomburg Collection</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
	<i>Scenes from the 20th Century Stage: Black Theatre in Photographs</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
	<i>Introspect: Photographs by Anthony Barboza</i> , Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
1982	<i>8 Contemporary Photographs in the Schomburg Collection</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
	<i>Black Dance in Photographs: Images from the 19th Century to the Present</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
	<i>Harlem HeyDay: Photographs by James VanDerZee</i> , Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
1981	<i>Doris Ullman: Photographs of the Gullah People</i> , Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY

Awards, Fellowships, and Funded Proposals

2026	2026 AIPAD Award
2024	Honorary Doctorate, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA
2023	Honorary Doctorate, Yale University, New Haven, CT Honorary Doctorate, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
2022	Don Tyson Prize for the Advancement of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Photo Educator of the Year, Lucie Awards Laurie M. Tisch Award for Leadership, Children's Museum of Manhattan
2021	Legends Honoree, Pratt Institute

	Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing on Art, College Art Association (CAA) Awarded Membership, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
2020	Award for Outstanding Service, The Royal Photographic Society Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award, New York University
2019	Visionary Woman Award, Moore College of Art & Design, Philadelphia, PA
2018	Silver Camera Award, Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL
2017	CPW Vision Award, Center for Photography at Woodstock
2016	Laundromat Project Award, The Laundromat Project, New York, NY Emmy Nomination in Outstanding Arts and Culture Programming as Producer of <i>Through a Lens Darkly</i> (Director: Thomas Allen Harris), Academy of Television Arts and Sciences
2015	Faculty Fellowship for <i>C.M. Battey, Portrait Photographer</i> , New York University Ford Foundation Fellowship to support <i>Black Portraiture II</i> Conference, Florence, Italy
2014	Richard D. Cohen Fellowship in African and African American Art, W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University NAACP Image Award, Non-Fiction, for <i>Envisioning Emancipation</i>
2013	Visual Arts Initiative Award, New York University Ford Foundation Fellowship to support <i>Black Portraiture I</i> , Paris, France
2011	Susan Koppelman Award for the Best Anthology, Multi-Authored, or Edited Book in Feminist Studies in Popular and American Culture for <i>Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"</i> , The Popular Culture Association Honor for Service in Photography, En Foco, New York, NY President's Award, The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, Inc. at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT Aljira Art Achievement Award, Aljira: A Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ

2010	NAACP Image Award, Biography/Autobiography, for <i>Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs</i> W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship, W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University New York University Humanities Institute Fellowship Honored Educator, Society for Photographic Education
2007	Honorary Doctorate, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
2005	John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow Alphonse Fletcher, Jr. Fellowship, Fletcher Foundation (Member of the Inaugural Award Cohort)
2003	Planning Grant for the documentary film <i>Reflections in Black</i> , National Endowment for the Humanities Honorary Doctorate, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
2002	James VanDerZee Award, Brandywine Printmaking Workshop, Philadelphia, PA John H. Johnson Award for Lifetime Achievement in Photography, The Exposure Group African American Photographer Association, Washington, DC
2001	Townsend Harris Medalist, Alumni Association of the City College of New York (CCNY) Missouri Honor Medal, University of Missouri School of Journalism Award for Achievement in Scholarship, Studio Museum in Harlem Women of Color Research Grant, Ford Foundation and the University of Maryland
2000	The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship, The MacArthur Foundation
1999	The Trellis Fund Support for the Exhibition and Colloquium, <i>Locating the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in African American Art</i> The Nathan Cummings Foundation Support for the Colloquium, <i>Religion and Spirituality in African American Art</i>
1995-1998	Ford Foundation Funding for <i>Sister Scholars: Black Women and Work Project</i> , in conjunction with the University of Maryland
1996	Anonymous Was a Woman Award, Anonymous Was a Woman Foundation
1995	Infinity Award for Writing in Photography, International Center of Photography Alumni of the Year, University of the Arts,

	Philadelphia, PA
1994	The Glen Eagles Foundation Support for the Exhibition <i>Imagining Families: Images and Voices</i> The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Support for the Exhibition <i>Imagining Families: Images and Voices</i>
1993	The Golden Light Photographic Book of the Year Award for <i>J.P. Ball: Daguerrean and Studio Photographer</i> Alumni Achievement Award in Education, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
1990	Funding for Travel to Collections, National Endowment for the Humanities Skeel Fund Research Support for <i>J.P. Ball: Daguerrean and Studio Photographer</i> , New York Public Library
1986	Manhattan Borough President's Award for Excellence in the Arts Excellence in Photography Award, Greater Hartford Community College, Hartford, CT

Collections

The Studio Museum in Harlem (New York, NY)
 William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut (Storrs, CT)
 Storrs Avon Collection (New York, NY)
 Sarah Moody Gallery of Art and the Department of Art and Art History, University of
 Alabama (Birmingham, AL)
 Center for Creative Photography (Tucson, AZ)
 Light Work (Syracuse, NY)
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) (Los Angeles, CA)
 Center for Creative Photography, Duke University (Durham, NC)
 Montclair Museum of Art (Montclair, NJ)
 Mattatuck Museum (Waterbury, CT)
 Sugar Hill Museum of Art and Storytelling (New York, NY)
 Multiple Private Collections

Visiting Artist, Scholar, or Critic Positions

Master Class: Home Reimagining Interiority, Instructor, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Aspen,

CO, 2023

Curatorial Workshop Instructor, Exhibition Basics, NXTHVN, New Haven, CT, 2022

Stuart B. Cooper Endowed Chair in Photography and Critic-in-Residence, Maryland

Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, 2019–2020

Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 2013

Artist-in-Residence, African American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 2011

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 2008

Visiting Artist, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 2008

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2002

Visiting Artist, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1996

Visiting Artist, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, 1996

Visiting Artist, Art Institute of Boston, Boston, MA, 1996

Visiting Artist, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, 1996

Critic-in-Residence, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, 1995

Visiting Artist, Columbia College, Chicago, IL, 1995

Visiting Artist, Mills College, Oakland, CA, 1994

Workshop Instructor, The Friends of Photography, San Francisco, CA, 1992

Critic-in-Residence, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD, 1990

Artist-in-Residence, Light Work, Syracuse, NY, 1990

Historian-in-Residence, Department of Photography and Imaging, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, New York, NY, 1988–1989

Instructor of Photography and Research Consultant, Brooklyn Museum Education

Department, Brooklyn, NY, Summers 1978 and 1979

Museum and Curatorial Professional Experience

1992-2000 Associate Director for Research and Collections and Exhibitions Curator. Center for African American History & Culture and National African American Museum Project, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

1980-1992 Curator, Photography and Prints. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY

Museum and Academic Consultant: 1988-2022 (partial list)

School of Visual Arts, New York, NY

Getty Images for HBCU
YoungArts, Miami, FL
Smithsonian and Getty Research Initiative – Johnson Publishing Ebony Collection
National Museum of African American History & Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY
American Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
Photography Department, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
American Studies, New York University, New York, NY
International Center of Photography, New York, NY
Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, FL
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
American Studies, George Washington University, Washington, DC
American Studies Department, Howard University, Washington, DC
Photography Department, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
Art Department, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
Graduate Photography Department, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
Museum Studies Program, City College of New York, New York, NY
Photography Department, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
Photography Department, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
Photography Department, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

Institutional, Text, and Film Consultant

National Museum of African American History and Culture (Washington, DC)
University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)
Photo District News (New York, NY)
Cincinnati Museum of Art (Cincinnati, OH)
International Center of Photography (New York, NY)
Department of Art & Design, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ)
California College of Arts and Crafts (Oakland, CA)
Weeksville Society (Brooklyn, NY)
MacArthur Foundation (Chicago, IL)
The Whitney Museum of Art (New York, NY)
Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, DC)
Paul Robeson Cultural Center, Rutgers University (Newark, NJ)
Photography consultation for KCAT-TV, Minneapolis Public Television (Minneapolis, MN)
African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO) (Oakland, CA)

Time-Life Books, Inc. (Alexandria, VA)
 Pew Charitable Trusts and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Re-Grant Program
 (Philadelphia, NY and Washington, DC)
 Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University (Durham, NC)
 International Center of Photography (New York, NY)
 Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC)
 Studio Museum in Harlem (New York, NY)
 Harlem Urban Development Corporation (New York, NY)
 Kenkeleba Gallery (New York, NY)
Essence Magazine on the occasion of the magazine's 15th anniversary (New York, NY)
 Arthur & Elizabeth Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard
 University (Cambridge, MA)
 University of Maryland (Catonsville, MD)
 Film, Television, and Publications consultation at the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum
 (Birmingham, AL)
Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey (dir. William Greaves) for William Greaves Production,
 2001
American Photography: A Century of Images (dir. Vicki Goldberg and Robert Silverman) for
 PBS Broadcasting, 1999
The Liberators (dir. Bill Miles and Nina Rosenblum) for Miles Educational Film Productions,
 1991–1992
A Question of Color (dir. Kathe Sandler) for Independent Television Service (ITVS), 1993
Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers by Jeanne Moutoussamy, 1993
Conversations with Roy DeCarava (dir. Carroll Blue), 1983–1984
A Different Drummer: Blacks in the Military (dir. William Miles), 1983–1984

Panelist/Reviewer

Eldredge Prize, 2007
 Capricious Photo Award, 2017
 August Sander Project, Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY), 2016–2017
 Local Artists Awards, 3Arts (Chicago, IL), 2015
 Infinity Award, International Center of Photography (New York, NY), 2015
 Venice Biennale United States Review Panel, State Department, 2013–2014
 Art Department External Art Reviewer, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2013
 Art Journal, College Art Association
 Alpert Award in the Arts, California Institute of the Arts (Los Angeles, CA)
 The Scholastic Portfolio Review, Alliance for Young Artists and Writers

Peer Reviewer, American Studies Association, 2003–2005
Duke University Press, 2004
Pew Fellowship in the Arts, 2001
Maryland Arts Council, 1999
National Endowment for the Humanities, 1996–1997
National Endowment for the Arts, 1995
Illinois Arts Council, 1995
Cleveland Public Art Program (Cleveland, OH), 1994
The Jewish Museum (New York, NY), 1994
McKnight Artist Fellowship in Photography, 1994
National Endowment for the Arts, 1994
National Endowment for the Arts: Miami-Dade, 1993
Opsis Foundation (New York, NY), 1992
W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund, 1991
National Endowment for the Arts – WESTAF, 1991
National Endowment for the Arts/Mid America Arts Alliance, 1991
Ohio Arts Council, 1990
Eureka Photography Fellowship, Fleishacker Foundation, 1990
Museum Aid Panel, New York State Council on the Arts, 1986–1989
New York Foundation for the Arts (New York, NY), 1988
Department of Cultural Affairs (New York, NY), 1988
National Endowment for the Humanities, 1988
Art In Transit, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (New York, NY), 1988
Artists Foundation (Boston, MA), 1988
Polaroid Corporation (Cambridge, MA), 1988
Borough of Manhattan Award for Excellence in the Arts (New York, NY), 1987
New York Council for the Humanities, 1986
Kentucky State Council for the Arts, 1986

Professional Consulting, Advisory Activities, Reviewer

Manuscript Reviewer, Duke University Press
Reviewer: State University of New York Press (Albany, NY), University of Carolina Press,
Harvard University Press
Advisor, Mentor, and Reader for Universities and Art Schools
 Sarah Lewis, Yale University, Ph.D. Student in Art History
 Dana Davenport, School of Visual Arts, M.A. Student in Studio Art
 Jovonna Jones, Emory University, B.A. Student in History

Advisory Boards

Advisory Board Member, J. Paul Getty African American Art History
Advisory Board Member, AUC Art Collective
Advisory Board Member, The Gordon Parks Foundation
Board Member, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
Board Member, Aperture Foundation
Advisory Board Member Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts
Advisory Board, Laundromat Project
Board of Commissioners, National Geographic Society
Board of Commissioners, Smithsonian National Museum of American Art
Board Member, the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University
Advisory Board Member, Institute for the Study of Canadian Slavery
Advisory Board Member, Photoville
Board Member, College Art Association (1994-1997)
Executive Committee Member, College Art Association (1994-1996)
Board Member, Society for Photographic Education (1986-1996) Board
Chair, Society for Photographic Education (1994-1996)
Board Member, ORACLE
American Studies Association
Society for Photographic Education

Film and Television, Participation and Production

Art21 Season 11 “Bodies of Knowledge,” PBS. 2023.

Posing Beauty in African American Culture, State of the Arts, PBS. 2021.

Conversation alongside Hank Willis Thomas and moderated by Michael B. Gillespie for the reissue of Gordon Parks’ *The Learning Tree* by Criterion Collection, 2021.

Special thanks for assistance on the documentary *Mr. Soul!*, 2018.

Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People. Documentary Film, Writer and Producer, 2015.

2015 NAACP Image Award in Documentary

Part of documentary series *Independent Lens*

Question Bridge: Black Males. Transmedia Project, Executive Producer, 2011-present.

ICP Infinity Award, 2015

Conferences – Co-Planner and Organizer

Black Portraiture[s] – Shifting Paradigm, Hosted by Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello. Venice, Italy. April 2024

Black Portraiture[s] – Enduring Blackness: A Decade of Black Portraiture[s], Hosted by Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac. Paris, France. May 2023

Black Portraiture[s] VII: Enduring Blackness, Hosted by Wake Forest University at Casa Artom. Venice, Italy. June 2022.

Black Portraiture[s] VII: Play and Performance, Hosted by Rutgers University. Newark, New Jersey. February 2022

WOPHA Congress: Women, Photography, and Feminisms, Co-hosted by WOPHA and Pérez Art Museum Miami. Miami, Florida. November 18–19, 2021.

Black Portraiture[s] VI: Absent/ed Presence, Hosted by Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University. Toronto, Canada. Presented virtually. October 14–16, 2021.

For Freedoms Congress (FFCON). Conference and exhibition co-hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Japanese American National Museum, Hammer Museum, and the Crenshaw Dairy Mart. Los Angeles, California. February 27–29, 2020

Black Portraiture[s] V: Memory and the Archive: Past. Present. Future, Hosted by New York University, Washington Square Campus. New York, New York. October 17–19, 2019

Women and Migrations Conference, Hosted by New York University Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. May–June 2019.

Black Portraiture[s] IV: The Color of Silence, Hosted by the W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University. Boston, Massachusetts. March 22–24, 2018.

Women and Migrations Conference, Hosted by New York University Florence at Villa La Pietra. Florence, Italy.

Black Portraiture[s] III: Reinventions: Strains of Histories and Cultures, Hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) at Turbine Hall. Johannesburg, South Africa. November 17–19, 2016.

Black Portraiture[s] II: Revisited, Hosted by New York University Florence at Villa La Pietra.
Florence, Italy. February 19–20, 2016.

Black Portraiture[s] I: The Black Body in the West / Représentation du corps noir en occident, Hosted by Musée du quai Branly. Paris, France. January 17–20, 2013.

Beauty and Fashion: The Black Portrait Symposium, Hosted by New York University,
Washington Square Campus. New York, New York. April 2011.

Venus 2010, Hosted by New York University, Washington Square Campus. New York, New York. April 2010.

Here and Now: African and African American Art and Film Conference, Hosted by New York University, Washington Square Campus. New York, New York. November 15–18, 2007.

Bridging the Gaps: African American Art Conference 2004. Co-hosted by the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research and the Fogg Art Museum. November 5–7, 2004.

Lectures and Presentations

The Black Civil War Soldier 2021-22

Princeton University, NJ
IRAAS, Columbia University, NY
Clark Art Institute, MA
Emory University, Atlanta, GA
Bennington College, VT
Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA
Auburn University, GA
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Maryland Institute College of Art

Gordon Parks

Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

Social Justice Lecture

School of Visual Arts
Mural Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Monument Lab, Philadelphia, PA

Posing Beauty in African American Culture

Harn Museum

Flint Museum of Art

Isaac Julien on JP Ball and Frederick Douglass
UC Santa Cruz

Selected Lectures, Keynotes, and Presentations

“Keynote Conversation: Dr. Deborah Willis in Discussion with Dr. Kalia Brooks,” NXTHVN, New Haven, CT, 2024

“CURATION,” with Kalia Brooks and Key Jo Lee, moderated by Keely Orgeman, Mickalene Thomas: Portrait of an Unlikely Space, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, 2023

“Awol Erizku and Deborah Willis,” with Sarah Meister, The Momentary, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR, 2023

“Carrie Mae Weems: Reflections for Now,” Barbican Centre, London, England, 2023

“Renee Cox and Deborah Willis in Conversation,” Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY, July 9, 2023

“Artists Committed to Memory,” 60th Anniversary of Art in Embassies, Lisbon, PT, 2023

“Artists Committed to the Archive,” Hangar Conference, Lisbon, PT, 2023

“Artists Committed to the Archive,” Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, 2023

“Picture Me As I Am: Mirror and Memory in the Age of Black Resistance,” Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, Charlottesville, VA, 2023

“Lorna Simpson’s Details,” MoMA Forum on Contemporary Photography, virtual, 2023

“Black Curators Matter Oral History,” panel with Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, Dr. Ashley James, and Dr. Kalia Brooks, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY, 2023

“50th Anniversary Moment,” keynote, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY, 2023

“Simmons Talk,” with Amy Sherald and Bisa Butler, moderator, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC, 2023

“Picturing Us: The Photographic History of Black America,” panel with Cassandra Illidge, A Dream Deferred & HBCU Conferences, Chicago, IL, 2023

“Telling Stories Through Portraits of the Black Civil War Soldier,” Black American Portraits Symposium, Spelman Museum, 2023

- “Photography Now: Deborah Willis on Deana Lawson,” High Museum of Art, 2023
- “Art as Social Justice,” panel discussion with Sheila Pree Bright and Dr. Cheryl Finley, Night of Ideas, National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, GA, 2023
- “Picturing Beauty, Race, and Identity Through Fashion,” Norton Museum of Art, 2023
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Annual Arturo Schomburg Keynote, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY, 2023
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Civil War History Journal Roundtable, Yale MacMillan Center, 2022
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Sam Wagstaff Lecture, New York, NY, 2022
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Center for Black Visual Culture/Institute of African American Affairs, New York University, New York, NY, February 2021
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, October 2014
- “The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship,” Civil War in Art and Memory Symposium, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2013
- “Comrade Sisters | In a Time of Panthers,” moderator, NYU CBVC, 2022.
- “(Re)telling Stories in Photography,” Picture Gallery of the Soul, Katherine E. Nash Gallery, MN, 2022
- “Black Visualities,” Centro Cultural de Belém Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal, 2022
- “Conversations on Deana Lawson: Deborah Willis and Oluremi Onabanjo,” ICA Boston, Boston, MA, January 20, 2022
- “The Illustrious Career of Adger Cowans,” with Adger Cowans and Halima Taha, Fairfield University, 2022
- “Deborah Willis and Tyler Mitchell,” 42nd Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series, Black Portraiture[s] Newark, 2021
- “Home: What Does It Look Like? Gordon Parks Responds,” talk and conversation organized by Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Manhattan, KS, November 4, 2021

“Tyler Mitchell and Deborah Willis in Conversation,” The Gordon Parks Foundation, Pleasantville, NY, October 28, 2021

Keynote, “Women, Memory, and Transmission: Postcolonial Perspectives from the Arts and Literature,” conference hosted by Maison Française d’Oxford, Oxford, UK, October 18, 2021

“Storytelling in Photography: From Portraiture to Social Protest to Constructions!,” as part of Convening: A Critical Dialogue on the History and Future of Media Arts, organized by Maine Media, Rockport, ME, September 30, 2021

“To Make Their Own Way in the World,” a conversation with Deborah Willis, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, moderated by Ilisa Barbash, hosted by ASALH and PBS Books, May 2021

“Photography and Racial Justice: Honoring the Work of Maurice Berger,” panel discussion with Brian Palmer and Nona Faustine, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, April 13, 2021

The Paul R. Jones Lecture, University of Delaware, Newark, NJ, March 3, 2021

“Isaac Julien and Deborah Willis in Conversation,” hosted by Aperture Foundation, New York, NY, January 19, 2021

TEDWomen, Palm Springs, CA, November 2018

TEDWomen, New Orleans, LA, November 2017

“Imagining Social Movements in America from Emancipation to Black Lives Matter,” University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, NM, August 2017

“Gordon Parks,” keynote for Black Representation Through Photography Symposium, FOAM, Amsterdam, August 17, 2017

“What Is Art For?,” lecturer, IHME Contemporary Art Festival, Helsinki, Finland, April 2017

“Shifting: African American Women Artists and the Power of Their Gaze,” David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, March 2, 2017

“Critical Narratives in Visualizing the Black Body in Photography and Popular Culture,” SUNY Old Westbury, November 3, 2016

Keynote, Society of Photographic Education Midwest Regional Conference, October 6, 2016

“A Family Affair,” moderator with Renee Cox and Kalup Linzy, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, August 2015

“From Selfie to Self Portraiture,” Clay Art Center, Charleston, WV, August 2015.

“From Selfie to Self Portraiture,” Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR, July 2015

“Critical Narratives in African American Photography,” Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, March 2015

“Critical Narratives in African American Photography,” University of Maryland, College Park, MD, April 2015

“Reimagining Gender, Place and Race in the Making of Gone with the Wind,” University of Texas, Austin, TX, September 2014

“Reimagining Gender, Place and Race in the Making of Gone with the Wind,” Columbia University, New York, NY, March 2015

“Through A Lens Darkly,” George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, July 2015

“Through A Lens Darkly,” University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, June 2015

Lecture on Photography and Emancipation, National Archives, Washington, DC, January 2013

“A Second Life: A Du Boisian Articulation of New Identities,” Dislocating Europe, Travels and Theories in Times of Recolonization: Re-Engaging with Cabral, Césaire, and Du Bois, hosted by University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal, 2013

“Visualizing Emancipation: What Did Freedom Look Like?,” Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, 2013

“Visualizing Emancipation: What Did Freedom Look Like?,” Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY, 2013

“Visualizing Emancipation: What Did Freedom Look Like?,” United Nations in conjunction with the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, New York, NY, 2013

“Freedom Rising: 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and Black Military Service,” Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, March 2013

“Out [o] Fashion Photography: Embracing Beauty,” Henry Art Gallery at University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 2013

“Imaging the Blackamoor,” ReSignifications: European Blackamoors and Africana Readings, New York University Florence, La Pietra, Italy, 2013

- “Unruly Politics,” University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 2013
- “Visualizing Emancipation: Photography as an Intervention,” Brown University, Providence, RI, April 2013
- “Africana Studies: The Future of the Field,” University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, October 2013
- “Mixing Metaphors in African American Art,” Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL, August 2013
- “Deborah Willis in Conversation with Carrie Mae Weems,” Look3: The Festival of the Photograph, Charlottesville, VA, June 2013
- “Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery,” Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum, Atlanta, GA, February 2013
- “The Photography of Charles ‘Teenie’ Harris,” Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA, March 2013
- “Posing Beauty in African American Culture,” Spelman College Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, October 2013
- “Leonard Freed and the March on Washington,” New York Public Library, New York, NY, August 2013
- CAUSE Lecture on Emancipation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, February 2013
- “Posing Beauty,” Inaugural University Professorship Lecture, New York University, New York, NY, 2009
- “The Black Female Body in Photography,” Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT, 2006
- “The Black Female Body in Photography,” Community Studies–Social Documentation Department, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, 2006
- “The Black Female Body in Photography,” Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2006
- “Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers,” Griffin Museum of Photography and Boston Arts Academy
- “Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers,” Union College, Schenectady, NY

“Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers,” Kent State University, Kent, OH

“Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers,” The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2004

Participant, Romare Bearden/Conjuring Women: A Colloquium, Duke University, Durham, NC

“A Photographic Market,” Art Miami, Miami, FL

Co-Chair and Panelist, “Visual Gossip,” CAA Annual Conference, Boston, MA, 2006

“Beauty Matters,” Brown University, Providence, RI, 2004

“The Black Female Body in Photography,” Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2004

“A Small Nation of People,” Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2004

“A Small Nation of People,” John Hope Franklin Center, Duke University, Durham, NC, 2004

“Imaging Black Culture,” Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, 2004

“Contemporary Photography,” Stedman Gallery of Art, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2001

“The New Negro in Photography,” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston, TX, 1999

“Gordon Parks: Unveiling and Unmasking,” Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, FL, 1999

Lecture, Scurlock Studies, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1999

“The Black Female Body in Photography,” City University of New York Graduate Center, New York, NY, 1998.

“Constructing the New Negro Image in Photography,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, 1998.

“Family Photographs,” Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, FL, 1997.

“VanDerZee,” Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, 1997.

“Family Photographs and Art,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 1994.

“African American Photography and Its Continuum,” Southeast Museum of Photography,

Daytona Beach, FL, 1994.

“Autobiography in Photography,” Mills College, Oakland, CA, 1994.

“Frames of Reference: Cultural Diversity and the Arts,” Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, 1993.

“African American Identity in 20th Century,” University of Delaware, Newark, DE, 1993.

“Photobiographers,” Women in Photography Conference, Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ, 1992.

“African-American Museums & Photography in the Sixties,” International Museum of Photography, Rochester, NY, 1990.

“Contemporary Photographers in the United States,” International Conference on Photography, Newcastle, England, 1989.

“James VanDerZee and Richard S. Roberts,” Cheekwood Fine Arts Center, Nashville, TN, 1989.

“Photography and the Harlem Renaissance,” High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, 1988.

“Black Women Photographers,” FotoFest, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, 1988.

“Richard S. Roberts, Studio Photographer,” 25th Annual Meeting, Society for Photographic Education, Houston, TX, 1988.

“Contemporary Black Photographers,” 25th Annual Meeting, Society for Photographic Education, Houston, TX, 1988.

“Contemporary Black Photographers,” National History Museum, New York, NY, 1988.

“Richard S. Roberts and Photography of the South,” Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY, 1988.

“Women in Photography,” Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, 1986.

“History of Photojournalism,” Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY, 1986.

“Photography: 1900–1939,” Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, 1986.

“Civil Rights Photography Reviewed,” Society for Photographic Education, Minneapolis, MN, 1985.

Moderator, “Harlem Photographers Look at Harlem: 1920–1960,” Countee Cullen Library, New York Public Library, New York, NY, 1985.

“Photography of Midwifery,” an illustrated talk, Spelman College, 1984.

“Collecting African Americana,” African American Museums Association Workshop, Charleston, SC, 1983.

“Photography in America,” selected sites, 1981–2006: Rutgers University, Newark, NJ; Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT; University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL; Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, New Castle County, DE; Cameraworks, San Francisco, CA; Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME; Mercer County College, West Windsor, NJ; University of Vermont, Burlington, VT; Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; Albright-Knox Art Museum, Buffalo, NY; Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA; State University of New York, Albany, NY; State University of New York, Buffalo, NY; Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA; DeWitt Historical Society, Ithaca, NY; Empire State College, New York, NY.

“Open Forum: Home / Belonging / Longing,” facilitated by Deborah Willis with guests Adar Howard, Deborah R. Grayson, Beverly Price, Martina Dodd, and Michelle A. May Curry, STABLE Arts, Washington, DC, June 2024.

“Framing Freedom: A Conversation with Makeda Best,” Boston Athenæum, Boston, MA, June 2024.