

The descriptions, information, and interpretations on the artwork labels have been written by:

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Ella Ray, The Kress Interpretative Fellow/Community Partnerships Coordinator for the exhibition;

Hank Willis Thomas, exhibiting artist;

Adam, Aimee, Aleese, Clo, Da'marion, Diana, Enrique, Erica, Gianna, Jimya, Kiyan, Lorenzo, and Mehki, student-participants from Mrs. Jones's fifth-grade class at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School, a KSMoCA Creative Research Center partnership with the Portland Art Museum. KSMoCA is a contemporary art museum embedded in the elementary school and facilitated by Portland State University's School of Art.

A Place to Call Home (Africa-America), 2009

Polished aluminum with powdered coat

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.30

Some of this looks like animals. We see a dog's head and we see a horse head. If you put both sections together it looks like a planet. The bottom is Africa and the artist might be from there and then came to the United States. Is that why he put it together?

—Enrique, Clo, and Erica, students, KSMoCA

Black Righteous Space, 2012

Video and microphone

Courtesy of Will Sylvester, L2018.100.1

Black Righteous Space is an interactive animation that features looped songs, speeches, and dialogue from over fifty noted Black leaders, celebrities, and poets. As these individuals share their experiences and observations on Blackness, the civil rights movement, equity, and injustice, a pulsating barrage of voice-activated imagery is projected onto the wall, including a Confederate flag recolored to the hues of the Black Power movement. This exhibition space becomes a sensory experience of individual ideals and thoughts, encouraging those who choose to take up the mic, during times of silence, to consider ideas of agency by taking control of symbols and their meanings.

—Chloe King

All Power to All People, 2017

Aluminum and stainless steel

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Museum
Purchase, L2018.96.1

I Am. Amen., 2009

Liquitex on canvas

Collection of Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, L2018.87.1

All of these pictures matter because everyone has a right to be proud of who they are. We have the right to be proud of being Black girls. Most people treat us differently for being Black and being girls. We should be treated equally! Someone needs to stand up for us.

—Aleese and Gianna, students, KSMoCA

For this work, Thomas was inspired by Ernest Withers's photograph of men holding placards declaring I AM A MAN during the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike. The artist recalls: "I was born in 1976, and I was amazed that just eight years before I was born it was necessary for people to hold up signs affirming their humanity. The phrase that I grew up with was 'I am the man,' which is also influenced by African American culture but takes a very different starting point. What I was interested in was, how many other ways could I read that phrase?" The first row represents a timeline from 1789 to 1968; the last row becomes a poem. "When I read it, I think about rather than validating ourselves based off anyone else's standard of reality or value, the greatest validation we could all have is to perhaps recognize that our consciousness is our greatest gift."

—Sara Krajewski

Liberty, 2015

Fiberglass and chameleon auto paint

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the artist and Jack Shainman in honor of Arnold Lehman,
L2018.80.1

The model for this sculpture is former NBA player Juwan Howard.

Absolut Power, 2003

Duratrans, Plexiglas, lightbox

Collection of Williams College Museum of Art, Museum purchase, Kathryn Hurd Fund, L2018.88.1

Strange Fruit, 2011

Chromogenic print

Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, L2018.81.1

Strange Fruit takes its title from a poem about lynching that was set to music and hauntingly recorded by Billie Holiday in 1939. Here Thomas combines symbols of lynching and sports excellence in a layered consideration of how African Americans continue to be placed on public display. In 2012, he stated that *Strange Fruit* “explores the Black body as a spectacle in an age of a multibillion-dollar NCAA industry that’s built primarily off of the free labor of descendants of slaves. It’s not far-fetched to think that someone in the NBA is related to someone who was lynched.”

—Julia Dolan

Scarred Chest, 2006

Chromogenic print

Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund,
L2018.81.2

The Cotton Bowl, 2011

Chromogenic print

Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, L2018.82.1

Priceless #1, 2004

Chromogenic print

Purchase, with funds provided by Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz, 2006, Courtesy of the International Center of Photography, L2018.83.1

Black Imitates White, 2012

Lenticular

Courtesy the artist, KADIST collection, L2018.84.1

Intentionally Left Blanc, 2010

Screenprint on retroreflective paper

Courtesy the artist, KADIST collection, L2018.84.2

Opportunity, 2015

Fiberglass and chameleon auto paint

Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida, Purchase, R. H. Norton Trust,
L2018.86.1

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around, 2015–16

Installation of 17 glass, silver, and digital prints

Collection of Nasher Museum of Art of Duke University. Museum purchase with additional funds provided by JoAnn Busutti, L2018.85.1

Here Thomas reproduces details of photographs of the Selma to Montgomery, Alabama civil rights marches, taken by James “Spider” Martin for the *Birmingham News* in the mid-1960s. Moments of violence—including the Bloody Sunday confrontation with state and local lawmen—and of triumph—Martin Luther King Jr. speaking on the steps of the Alabama state house—are printed on reflective surfaces, bringing the past into the present. Thomas asks us to look at ourselves in relation to these transformative events.

The work’s title references a song popular among civil rights activists of the time:

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round / Turn me 'round, turn me 'round /
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round / I'm gonna keep on walkin' Keep
on talkin' / Marchin' to that freedom land

Ain't gonna let segregation turn me 'round / Turn me 'round, turn me
'round / Ain't gonna let segregation turn me 'round / I'm gonna keep on
walkin' Keep on talkin'/Marchin' to that freedom land

—Sara Krajewski

Freedom for Soweto, 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

BBK Collection, L2018.98.1

The original photograph, made in Soweto, South Africa, on June 16, 1976, records Black high school students protesting unequal education standards for white and Black children and the incorporation of Afrikaans—the Dutch-derived language that Black South Africans associated with colonialism, apartheid, and oppression—into schools as an official language. Thousands of students marched that day; government forces used tear gas and then ammunition to contain them. Official records claim that twenty-three protesters died, but later research suggests the number was nearly two hundred. As in the three-dimensional *Raise Up*, on view nearby, *Freedom for Soweto*'s punctum echoes and reinforces the power of modern-day protest posture and symbolism.

—Julia Dolan

I am the Greatest, 2012

Mixed media

Rennie Collection, Vancouver, L2018.99.1

I would wear this button because I am the best at basketball and football. I tell people that I am the GOAT so they know what's coming. It's about style and politics.

—Jimya, student, KSMoCA

In 1964, the young boxer Cassius Clay instantly and irrevocably tagged himself when he uttered this phrase: “I am the greatest! I'm the greatest thing that ever lived. I'm so great I don't have a mark on my face and I upset Sonny Liston, and I just turned twenty-two years old. I must be the greatest.”

As he grew as a champion, brilliant athlete, and galvanizing civil rights activist, Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali and continued to live up to his self-determination and to inspire many.

—Sara Krajewski

Victoria Spencer, 2018

Glass mirror and silver

Rennie Collection, Vancouver, L2018.99.2

She's somewhat of a drag, 1959/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.11

Guernica, 2016

Mixed media and sports jerseys

Anonymous, L2018.105.1

With this large-scale quilt, Thomas reimagines Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica*, which takes its title from the Basque town that was bombed by Nazi forces in 1937. Picasso's *Guernica* was seen in its day as a provocative political statement.

Nearly the same scale as Picasso's canvas, the quilt is pieced together from professional basketball jerseys. Thomas reminds us that combative team sports like football are proxies for war. He also points out how athletes can emerge as important political figures and social justice activists: "[athletes] are not supposed to be political. They're supposed to do their job. They don't get paid for speaking. If [Muhammad] Ali, if Jim Brown, if Paul Robeson hadn't spoken, what would the world look like?" Superstars LeBron James, Colin Kaepernick, Venus and Serena Williams, Megan Rapinoe, and others continue this momentum toward greater civil rights.

—Sara Krajewski

The Fall of Icarus, 2017

Mixed media and sports jerseys

Anonymous, L2018.105.2

This quilt originates with Henri Matisse's *The Fall of Icarus* from 1943. For his work, Matisse cut out large pieces of solid color paper, arranging them to create an image of Icarus, a figure from Greek mythology. Icarus longed to fly and fashioned wings that were held together with wax. Disregarding his father's warning, Icarus flew too close to the sun, which melted his wings, and he plummeted to earth. Thomas's version uses jerseys of NBA superstars from teams in New York, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles. These places symbolize American cities plagued by gun violence. The youthful figure's heart explodes in its chest.

—Sara Krajewski

Crossroads, 2012

Chromogenic print and Plexiglas with Lumisty film

Collection of Vicki and Seth Kogan, L2018.106.1

It looks like the right is Black and the left is white and then they flip. Hank put a fence between them. Is that a border? Separation? I think if you go over the fence you pass away. White people were racist back then and Black people got shot because of their skin tone. The world is working on it still, but it's a lot better than it used to be.

—Mekhi, student, KSMoCA

Freedom Now (red and gold), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Courtesy of Guillermo Nicolas, L2018.108.1

The source photograph for this work is from July 4, 1963, and documents a rally in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Refusal, 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Nerman Family Collection, L2018.107.1

Refusal references a photograph taken on June 13, 1936, at a shipyard in Hamburg, Germany. Thomas highlights one man's stance of crossed arms within a sea of men raising their hands in the Nazi salute, an action of conformity required in the totalitarian regime. The individual pictured here has been identified as August Landmesser, a shipyard worker who joined the Nazi Party with the hope of advancing in his profession. He was later expelled from the party and imprisoned for marrying and having a family with Irma Eckler, a Jewish woman.

The Nazis sent Eckler to a series of concentration camps; she is believed to have perished in 1942 at the Bernburg psychiatric institution where nearly 14,000 people were killed. Landmesser himself was released from a concentration camp in 1941; he was killed in action in 1944 after being drafted into a Nazi battalion of former and current prisoners.

—Sara Krajewski

Power to the People/I'm too young to vote (blue and gold), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Collection of Wayee Chu and Ethan Beard, L2018.110.1

In May 1968, the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) was formed at the University of California at Berkeley, with the aim of educating and mobilizing students in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Branded Head, 2003

Chromogenic print

Beth Rudin DeWoody, L2018.114.1

Raise Up, 2014

Bronze

Courtesy of Goodman Gallery South Africa & Jack Shainman Gallery NYC,
L2018.111.1

Black people putting their hands up. They must be brothers, family or friends. The man in the middle shows his back and some are bent down. Some arms are touching and some wear bracelets. Some might be old and some might be young.

—Kiyon, student, KSMoCA

In the source image made by Ernest Cole, a Black freelance photographer working in apartheid-era South Africa, thirteen nude Black men stand facing a wall, their arms raised above their heads. They submit to a group medical exam required to gain employment in a South African mine. Thomas isolates his chosen punctum—heads and extended arms—and transforms it into three dimensions, lowering the wall's symbolic dividing

line between black and white. The men's raised arms suggest both urgency and a desperate plea for recognition.

On August 9, 2014, just a few months after Thomas created *Raise Up*, a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer shot and killed unarmed eighteen-year-old Michael Brown. The raised-arms gesture and chorus of "hands up, don't shoot," invoked nationwide during subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, echo both Thomas's sculpture and Cole's photograph.

In 2018, a larger version of *Raise Up* was installed at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, which honors victims of lynching and racial terrorism in the United States.

—Julia Dolan

Stars and Bars, 2015

Decommissioned prison uniforms

Collection of Doreen and Gilbert Bassin, L2018.116.1

What happened on that day really set me on a path (red and blue), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

The Collection of Richard Gerrig and Timothy Peterson, L2018.133.1

The young woman pictured here is Dorothy Counts, who was fifteen years old when she entered the newly desegregated Harry Harding High School in Charlotte, North Carolina. The man walking beside her is probably Dr. Edwin Tompkins, a friend of the family and a professor at the historically Black college Johnson C. Smith University.

South Bend, 2012

Mixed media and sports jerseys

Private Collection, L2018.134.1

Race Riot (With Interference), 2017

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Courtesy/Collection of Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, 21c Museum Hotels,
L2018.137.1

The source image is a photograph by Charles Moore, taken at a civil rights protest in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963.

Life Imitates Ads / Art Imitates Life / Art Imitates Ads, 2009

Lenticular

The Studio Museum in Harlem, bequest of Peggy Cooper Cafritz (1947–2018), Washington, D.C., collector, educator, and activist, L2018.135.1

In *Life Imitates Ads/Imitates Life/Art Imitates Ads*, Thomas used lenticular printing to create dynamic text that changes both the visual and contextual perspective when reading. As you move from print to print, the text is isolated or revealed in full, illustrating the way that a change in perspective can provide a more nuanced understanding of language and culture.

—Chloe King

Wounded Knee (red and gold), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Bill and Christy Gautreaux Collection, Kansas City, MO, L2018.138.1

I see a man holding a rifle. It looks like back in the day. I see white and Black people. It kind of looks like the street or a like they are in a tunnel. There's a truck in the background.

—Da'marion, student, KSMoCA

Wounded Knee is located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. This photograph references the seventy-one day standoff between US government forces and Oglala Lakota (Sioux) activists and members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) that took place there in 1973. Wounded Knee also was the site of a massacre of nearly two hundred Native Americans by US troops in 1890. This photograph shows a member of AIM guarding FBI agents.

—Sara Krajewski

If they don't give you a seat bring a folding chair (Shirley Chisholm), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Collection of Liz Christensen, L2019.1

Shirley Chisholm (1924–2005) was an American politician, educator, and author. In 1968, she became the first Black woman elected to the US Congress; she represented New York's twelfth congressional district for seven terms, from 1969 to 1983. Chisholm was also the first African American woman in either of the two major political parties to seek nomination for president.

Hank Willis Thomas and Kambui Olujimi

Winter in America, 2005

Video

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.1

Ode to CMB: Folks Say, “Take That Chain Off Boy Ya Blindin’ Me” / Lucy is a Slave with Diamonds / Am I Not a Man and a Brother?, 2006–07

24-karat gold and cubic zirconia

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.2

This set of large pendants on thick gold chains reimagines eighteenth- and nineteenth-century images of enslaved people as bling. “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” refers to a medallion created in 1787 that became a popular icon in the British movement to abolish slavery. The kneeling man adopts a pose of penitence, piety, or pleading, depending on how you look at it. The other two pendants give shape to printed images circulated in the early 1800s by slaveholders seeking the return of enslaved people who had escaped bondage. “Folks say take off that chain boy, ya blindin' me” is a lyric from rapper B.G.’s “Bling Bling” (2007). Thomas’s cousin Songha Willis was murdered in a dispute over a chain, a reality that complicates our understanding of the many meanings these works might suggest to us.

—Sara Krajewski

The men cheered! 1945/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.3

Only in America..., 1952/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.4

Absolut No Return, 2008

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.5

Fútbol and Chain, 2017

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.7

The soccer player has a chain around his leg. He is playing soccer in the dark and he kicks the ball so hard that it jumps in the air. We hope the ball doesn't drag him, he can only kick it so far. Can he break the chain if he kicks it into the goal?

—Lorenzo, student, KSMoCA

Afro-American Express, 2007

Chromogenic prints and epoxy resin

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.6

Interwoven in Thomas's *Branded* series are composite objects disguised as everyday products. In producing seemingly ordinary objects like these resin-encased credit cards, Thomas underscores the "histories often forgotten or avoided in our commerce-infused daily lives." The work also makes explicit reference to chattel slavery, lynching, and the Middle Passage. In contempt of the concept of "post-raciality," Thomas draws a link between our contemporary economic structures and America's history of anti-Blackness—honing in on the former's dependency on the latter. The dichotomy of the perceived financial freedom provided by quotidian commodities like the credit card is that it is completely dependent on the continued enslavement and colonization of Black people.

—Ella Ray

Trouble the Water, 2013

Chromogenic prints and stained African mahogany

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.8

The title of this work comes from the centuries-old spiritual *Wade in the Water*, which references baptism and deliverance from oppression. Some historians suggest that the song's chorus was a code used to guide African Americans escaping enslavement along the Underground Railroad, advising them to throw off the scent of pursuing bloodhounds by wading through water:

Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children
Wade in the water
God's gonna trouble the water

The photograph documents a Pentecostal baptism performed by Bishop “Sweet Daddy” Grace in Washington, DC in 1949. The frames are organized in the bow tie quilt block pattern. Abolitionists may have used such quilts to encourage escaping slaves to change into new clothes to avoid recognition. Together, the photograph and bow tie pattern suggest the hope of earthly as well as spiritual salvation.

—Julia Dolan

The Law of the Land is Our Demand, 2017

Screen print on retroreflective vinyl

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.9

Thomas's photograph references the Freedom Riders, student activists who organized in 1961 to protest the continuation of segregation in public transportation despite the 1960 Supreme Court ruling that deemed it unconstitutional.

Public Enemy (Black and Gold), 2017

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.10

In July 1967, residents of Newark, New Jersey endured five consecutive nights of confrontation and violence, sparked by a rumor of police killing a Black cab driver. The source photograph for Thomas's work originally appeared in *The New York Times*.

She's somewhat of a drag, 1959/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.11

All Things Being Equal..., 2010

Polished stainless steel

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.15

A Person Is More Important than Anything Else, 2014

Video

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.12

Thomas created this video for New York Live Arts' *James Baldwin: This Time!* a festival of art, spoken word, and performance dedicated to groundbreaking author James Baldwin (1924–1987). Thomas builds the work's driving rhythm through archival audio and video footage that feature Baldwin's forceful ideas and observations on being a Black person in the United States. Thomas layers Baldwin's words, some read by Professor Angela Y. Davis, with contemporary images: police shootings of unarmed African Americans, income inequality, war, terrorism, and other moments of moral breakdown. Baldwin's clear explanation of racism's cause and effect are heard over pictures of pain and pictures of joy, too. His perspectives call on us to honor and love each other; as he stated in 1963: "From my point of view, no label, no slogan, no party, no skin color, and indeed no religion is more important than the human being."

—Sara Krajewski

Die Dompas Moet Brand! (The Passbook Must Burn!), 2013

Bronze and copper shim

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.13

For much of the apartheid era (1948–1994), Black South Africans were required to carry identity passbooks at all times. These books controlled travel inside the country and dictated where Black people could work. Typically, passbook holders' movements were severely restricted and monitored in urban areas, while white residents lived and worked freely. Commonly referred to as *dompas* (dumb pass) by their holders, passbooks were often burned during anti-apartheid protests. It is estimated that more than 15 million Black South Africans were arrested for passbook violations between 1952, when the pass laws went into effect, and 1986, the year that the laws were repealed.

—Julia Dolan

What's A Brotha Gotta Do?, 2014

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.14

Thomas once said, “When a person wears a button, they are wearing a question they are waiting to activate in others.”

Individuals who identify with a cause might wear a button to demonstrate their support or participation. By scaling up pinback buttons normally seen on lapels or backpacks, the artist broadcasts the collective language in a greater public display. Phrases initially wedded to a historical moment take on fresh meaning for us today.

—Sara Krajewski

Why Wait Another Day to be Adorable?, 1968/2007

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.1

This is an advertisement for makeup but the words aren't on the picture. It reminds me of people posing for pictures after a play. It also makes me think about how they used to wear makeup in the old days and how they used to dress. It makes me feel happy and sad. It makes me sad because how they used to dress has faded away. It makes me happy because sometimes people still get dressed up. It's such a blank picture—it's just a face with two hands.

—Clo, student, KSMoCA

Slack Power, 1969/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.2

The Oft Forgotten Black Power Children of Harlem,
1969/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.3

**Kama Mama, Kama Binti (Like Mother, Like Daughter),
1971/2008**

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.4

We think she's about to kiss her Mom. They are like twins, same fro and same earrings. Maybe she's saying goodbye before school or going to her Grandma's house or Dad's house. It looks like they are connected. They have a really close bond and that's why they are the same.

—Erica and Enrique, students, KSMoCA

Farewell Uncle Tom, 1971/2007

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.5

The Mandingo of Sandwiches, 1977/2007

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.7

Are You the Right Kind of Woman for It?, 1974/2007

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.6

I look at *Are You the Right Kind of Woman for It?* and think of my white mom and Black dad, and I wonder what it even means to be the right kind of white woman for a Black man. I think about when a Black man getting with a white woman became a symbol of Black status, and wonder who, if any, out of the two really gets said social capital. I think about how this ad promotes a rickety way to whiteness and sells it. I think about the heterosexual fetish in it all—the ability to convince both parties that they have attained an object to be displayed and not a person to be loved, and how I still see it today.

—Chloe King

We the People, 2015

Decommissioned prison uniforms

Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Gift of Mrs. George A. Forman, by exchange, 2016, L2018.79.1

This image looks like when you think about going in the maze. We the people are smart, we the people will know how to go in even without a map and will know if they are lost and know where they are. We the people can be able to do anything if we just think about it and learn more about it. We the people are curious. That means we have a lot of curiosity so we can ask lots of questions. If you're alone and you're young and you don't know where you are, you can ask.

—Aimee, student, KSMoCA

So Glad We Made It, 1979/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.8

Smokin' Joe Ain't J'mama, 1978/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.9

Petey Wheatstraw: The Devil's Son-in-law, 2000/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.11

How to Market Kitty Litter to Black People: Ebony Magazine, 2005/2006

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.13

After 61 Years of Service, I Ben, Promoted,
2007/2007

Chromogenic print

Courtesy the artist and Jenkins Johnson Collection, L2019.24.14

Looking for America, 2018

Bronze and steel

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.17

Two Little Prisoners, 2014

Glass mirror and silver

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.16

In overlaying this image from *Life Magazine* of two very young Black boys and a single white police officer onto a mirror, Thomas brings us into his ongoing conversation about power. The artist's redaction of the original background and text renders the scene timeless and personal. While the officer's uniform and the style of photography may allude to the Jim Crow era, our reflection in this piece asks us to consider the thread between past and present. As Black boys are continually targets of police violence, made examples of by white officers to exert their dominance, we should ask ourselves what role we play in understanding Black children as guilty from birth.

—Ella Ray

Strike, 2018

Stainless steel with mirrored finish

The Dean Collection, L2019.25.1

The Lives of Others, 2014

Black urethane resin

Collection of Vicki and Seth Kogan, L2018.106.2

Promise, 2016

Fiberglass and chameleon auto paint

Private Collection, L2019.47.1

We think he is tipping off the ball. That's an NBA ball. It looks like he got the tip off. We think Hank took a picture and took off the face and everything except the arm. When people start basketball games there is a jump ball. If you get the tip off your team wins control of the ball. That type of thing brings excitement depending on which team gets the tip and if you are fans of that team. That's the start of the game and that's probably why Hank made the sculpture.

—Kyan and Adam, students, KSMoCA

The gaze, 2001/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Robert M. Shapiro, L2019.48.1

Bearing Witness: Murder's Wake, 2000–08

Duratrans Backlit Film

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.35.2

No anxious moments, 1918/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.18

The results are obvious, 1925/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.19

Bounce back to normal, 1933/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.20

It's done with a simple push of the hand...

1946/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.21

The Taming of the Shrewd, 1966/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.22

There's no hiding from it, 1982/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.24

Give your daughter a daughter, 1971/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.23

In *Unbranded: A Century of White Women*, Thomas explores commercial interest in white womanhood as antithetical to Blackness. Even without the presence of a Black person or the original copy, *Give Your Daughter a Daughter* signals mass media's investment in making this comparison. Seated in a rattan peacock chair, popularized by the 1967 portrait of Huey P. Newton by Blair Stapp, a mother, a daughter, and her babydoll assume the position of inheritors of purity and femininity. Despite the tendency to associate anti-Blackness with white men, the possession of this visual space at the peak of the Black Power movement marks white women's role as disruptors of Black Liberation. While the photo of Newton established the movement's dedication to a militant anticolonial praxis, this ad strips away those correlations between object and politics, allowing the white female form to confiscate this visual language. Thomas acknowledges the reproduction of white women (through both visual and literal means) as beneficial to white supremacist ideologies.

—Ella Ray

By the way, it tastes great, 1989/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.25

Betcha can't have just one, 1995/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.26

Keep the Faith Baby, 2014

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.27

Keep the Faith Baby is both a slogan that originated in the civil rights era and the title of Harlem minister Adam Clayton Powell's 1967 book of sermons. (Powell was also New York's first Black congressman, representing Harlem from 1945 to 1971.) *Keep the Faith Baby* embodies the ongoing struggle to both keep faith in the civil rights movement and to continue moving forward, individually and collectively. The button itself is a larger-than-life version of one from Thomas's personal collection.

—Chloe King

History is Past, Past is Present, 2017

Lenticular

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.28

We feel like this means we are making history now. The past is the past, now it's time to make new history. We need to learn from history to move forward.

—Aleese and Gianna, students, KSMoCA

She keeps me warm, 2014/2015, 2015

Chromogenic print

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.29

Remember Me, 2014

Neon

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.31

Pitch Blackness Off Whiteness, 2009

Neon

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.6.32

If the Leader Only Knew, 2014

Bronze

Collection Jack Shainman, New York, L2019.6.33

Amandla, 2013

Silicone, fiberglass, and metal finish

Collection Jack Shainman, New York, L2019.6.35

It looks like a sign of strength. It is unique in its own way. The hand shows that you should never give up. If I could touch it, I would give it a fist bump.

—Adam, student, KSMoCA

American Gothic, 2014

Chromogenic prints and stained African Mahogany

Collection of Victoria Rogers, New York City, L2019.62.1

I think that this piece shows people in a secret way. Hank does a lot of secretive art pieces. The polka dots represent the original painting, *American Gothic* by Grant Wood. The face looks like the man with glasses in the painting but it's a woman named Ella. I think the flag represents when soldiers die and they fold the flag into a triangle.

—Diana, student, KSMoCA

The patterns of Thomas's *Flag Frames* series echo those used in traditional quilting, including the popular flying geese block design, while the mahogany wood frames recall the flag cases offered to families of deceased veterans. Here, Gordon Parks's photograph *American Gothic, Washington, DC* (1942), which echoes Grant Wood's 1930 painting, is featured within the frames: charwoman Ella Watson stands behind a flag on display in a US government building she cleaned. An American flag in its iconic colors looms over Watson, who appears in the gray tones of Parks's photograph. Only part of her face is visible, suggesting that historical narratives selectively reveal and withhold information.

—Julia Dolan

Attica (white stripes), 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Collection of the artist, Courtesy Kayne Griffin Corcoran, L2019.3.1

Attica Correctional Facility (New York) was the site of a famous 1971 prison uprising, in which over one thousand inmates rioted and took control of the prison to demand better living conditions and political rights. Forty-three people died, including thirty-three inmates and ten guards and prison employees. The uprising is one of the most significant in the prisoners' rights movement.

EXTERIOR, ABOVE ENTRANCE:

LOVERULES, 2019

Neon

Courtesy of Jordan D. Schnitzer, L2019.65.1

All Deliberate Speed, 2018

Screenprint on retroreflective vinyl

Photographic credit: Stanley Forman

Museum Purchase: Funds provided by the Contemporary Collectors Circle, 2019.41.1

Some of the picture is clear but some is not. In the museum, the rules are that you can't take pictures or touch the art but the artist says we can break the rules so we can see what is really in the picture.

—Erica and Enrique, students, KSMoCA

Before activation with light, we see an American flag cutting across the composition, the surrounding scene a latent image. Spectral light returns the photograph to its original, chaotic state: a white student protesting school desegregation uses an American flag as a weapon during a 1976 anti-busing rally in Boston. He swings both the flag and its staff at Ted Landsmark, a civil rights attorney who happened by the protest on his way to a meeting at Boston's City Hall. The Pulitzer-prize winning photograph was taken by Stanley Forman. *The Soiling of Old Glory*, its original title, is renamed *All Deliberate Speed* in Thomas's reinterpretation, a quote from the 1955 Supreme Court Decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which struck down school segregation.

—Julia Dolan

Bearing Witness: Murder's Wake, 2000–08

Duratrans Backlit Film

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.35.2

Bearing Witness: Murder's Wake, 2000–08

Duratrans Backlit Film

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, L2019.35.2

Community Partners in Residence Space Furniture:

Sling Sofa

George Nelson for Herman Miller

Designed in 1964

BRNO Chairs

Mies Van Der Rohe for Knoll

Designed in 1929

MR Side Table

Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe for Knoll

Designed in 1927

Laccio Coffee Table

Marcel Breuer for Knoll

Designed in 1924

Courtesy of **lookmodern**

Rug courtesy of Tufenkian Artisan Carpets

Stars and Bars, 2015

Decommissioned prison uniforms

Collection of Doreen and Gilbert Bassin, L2018.116.1

