



**INTER | SECTIONALITY:**  
**DIASPORA ART**  
**FROM THE CREOLE CITY**

## ABOUT HARVEY B. GANTT CENTER

The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture is a multi-disciplinary arts institution located in the heart of Charlotte, North Carolina. Founded in 1974, The Gantt Center's mission is to resent, preserve and celebrate excellence in the art, history and culture of African-Americans and those of African descent through visual and literary arts, dance music, film, educational programs, theatre productions and community outreach. The Gantt Center features fine art exhibitions from around the world and is home to the nationally celebrated John and Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art, which was generously donated by Bank of America, and is accessible online.

Our primary purpose is to bring awareness to the social injustices that impact communities of color, through powerful exhibitions and community-focused programs. Named for Charlotte civic leader and former mayor Harvey Bernard Gantt, the Gantt Center is housed in an inspired and distinguished award-winning structure designed by architect Philip Freelon, co-designer of the Smithsonian National Museum for African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). For more information about the Gantt Center, visit [ganttcenter.org](http://ganttcenter.org). Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @hbganttcenter.

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*Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture*

*551 S Tryon St, Charlotte, NC 28202*

*Phone: (704) 547-3700 | Email: [info@ganttcenter.org](mailto:info@ganttcenter.org)*



*Image by Minia Biabiany*



## Acknowledgement



For nearly half a century, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture (The Gantt) has preserved and celebrated Black culture through powerful exhibitions and related programs. Influential in curatorial delivery yet open to drawing upon new perspectives – we feature shows that speak to pan-humanistic challenges while uplifting artists of African descent.

Our decision to exhibit *Inter|Sectionality: Diaspora Art from the Creole City* comes from a commitment to showcase the works of artists that represent a broad spectrum of the African Diaspora. This global exhibition represents 25 Miami based artists, 17 countries and two Charlotte guest artists—Monique Luck and Stephanie J. Woods. This multidisciplinary body of curated work highlights the need for communities to embrace diverse thought and possibilities, at a time when the preservation of social justice is critical to combatting the heightened disparities people of color continue to face.

The Gantt is uniquely positioned to host this exhibition, particularly at a time when world-wide tensions challenge the status-quo. As our global community perseveres through the recent pandemic, there has never been a more suitable time to bring awareness to the international impact of art and artists that exemplify Black culture. The purpose of *Inter|Sectionality* aligns with our Initiative for Equity + Innovation— a permanent strategy that seeks to foster change by empowering individuals within our communities to explore how they live, learn and work with one another. This critical bold direction enables our institution to reach beyond the traditional meaning of art, while also responding to the ever-changing needs of local, regional and national communities that are grappling with the traumatic impact of social injustice. The Initiative allows us to be progressive and proactive in how we respond to changing dynamics and *Inter|Sectionality* aligns with this important strategy.

Through our work, we continue to influence societal interdependencies through the exploration of racism, sexism, identity, classism, socio-political activism, faith, and status. These elements are not confined to geographical boundaries, but rather intersect with one another on a global scale. Our work as an institution exists to help bridge these intersections by moving one from awareness to understanding and compassion, while allowing discomfort to be a natural part of the process for progression towards behavioral change. Intentionality fuels our ability to remain mission focused and propels our ability to deepen bonds within our community.

*Inter|Sectionality: Diaspora Art from the Creole City* is made possible by the generous support of our Harper-Roddey Society Members — our major society of donors — and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. We welcome *Inter|Sectionality* and hope your experience ignites your passion and curiosity.

David R. Taylor  
President & CEO

## About the Curator



Rosie Gordon-Wallace, founder, director and lead curator for Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI) is a recognized arts advocate and community leader with over 25 years of experience. She has created key relationships with a multitude of artists and art organizations worldwide such as Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, the Joan Mitchell

Foundation and ReadyTex Art Gallery, and has served on several prominent nonprofit boards. Her experiences with DVCAI are enhanced by her community work, which accelerates careers and advocates for arts funding. She is an active member of the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) Fund for African-American Art and is a frequent panelist for funder Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, National Young Arts Foundation and Florida Department of Cultural Affairs. Her awards include The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center Third Annual Calabash Amadlozi Visual Arts Award, International Businesswoman of the Year, and being named one of South Florida's 50 Most Powerful Black Professionals of 2007. She is the current art consultant for the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, Art of Black Miami initiative.



## About the Organization

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator Inc. (DVCAI) is a Miami-based 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of DVCAI is to promote, nurture and cultivate the vision and diverse talent of emerging artists from the Caribbean and Latin diaspora through our exhibition, artist-in-residence, international exchange and outreach programs that celebrate Miami-Dade's rich cultural and social fabric.

[www.dvcai.org](http://www.dvcai.org)

## FEATURED ARTISTS



**Moisés Aragón** is a self-taught interdisciplinary artist from Cuba whose work interprets personal mythology with his reality. Moisés' interest in the arts started when he was introduced at a young age to the act of "artistic recognition," having had his self-portrait drawing assignment exhibited in the school's cafeteria. During his formative years after the 9/11 incident, he began to question his relation to the "American empire" as it stood as a beacon of expansion during those initial years of war and occupation in the Middle East. Intrepid curiosity led to the acknowledgment that he had been born in exile and would like to return home.



**Aisha Tandiwe Bell** is a first-generation Jamaican and ninth-generation traceable Black American. Her parents met at City College. Conceived in Tanzania and born in Manhattan, she was raised in Bobo Shanti Rasta, spending her early childhood on Bobo Hill in Bull Bay, Jamaica. Inspired by the fragmentation of our multiple identities, Bell's practice is committed to creating myth and ritual through sculpture, performance, video, sound, drawing and installation. Bell holds a B.F.A., an M.S. from Pratt Institute and an M.F.A. from Hunter College. Bell received a New York Foundation for the Arts grant in Performance Art and Multidisciplinary Work.



**Minia Biabiany** works and lives between Mexico City and Guadeloupe. In her practice, Biabiany uses the deconstruction of narratives in installations, videos and drawings by building up ephemeral poetics of forms in relation with colonial presence, past or present. Her work proceeds from an investigation of the perception of space to the use of the paradigms of weaving and opacity on language. She initiated the artistic and pedagogical collective project Semillero Caribe in 2016 in Mexico City and continues to explore the deconstruction of narratives with the body and concepts from Caribbean authors with the experimental platform Doukou.



**Christopher Carter** was born in Albuquerque, N.M., and raised in Boston. Carter infuses a blend of ethnic and urban influences in all of his artistic work. His bold and decisively organic sculptures strongly reflect his African American, Native American and European heritage. His assemblages embody power and energy accentuated by the source materials he selects for his creations. Rarely using anything "new," Carter fashions a chorus of images composed of recycled woods, metals, glass shards, ropes, resins and a variety of discarded objects that, when united, seek to depict traditional concepts in an innovative and creative way.



**Katrina Coombs** was born in St. Andrew, Jamaica. She has an M.F.A. in creative practice from Transart Institute via The University of Plymouth. Coombs has a passion for fiber and an understanding of the sensitivity of threads and fabric, which has grown beyond design and into sculptural forms. Her practice focuses on the impact of the Other on the “I” and the quintessence of gender politics of the Other. She weaves and stitches fibers and textiles into tactile and sometimes large-scale sculptural forms, exploring the sometimes ambivalent and stigmatizing ways society engages the female persona. Coombs’ current works are an exploration of the notion of the woman’s body as a form of carriage, and how the womb becomes an unspoken voice of another for women’s existence and identity.



**Esperanza Cortés** is a Colombian-born contemporary, multidisciplinary artist based in New York City. Cortés has exhibited in the United States and internationally. Esperanza (hope) is a guiding force in the making of the work, which is a call and response to people, culture, place and history. Cortés’ installations are organic and improvisational constructions, infused with hope and renewal. Her artwork is poetically and intricately crafted. It encourages viewers to reconsider their learned social and historical narratives, especially when dealing with colonialism, and raises critical questions about the politics of erasure and exclusion.



**Michael Elliott’s** artistic journey has taken him into a socio-political realm over the years, mainly focusing on painting as his medium but also photography at times. It is fair to say that photography has indeed influenced his style of painting, i.e., photorealism. Attending the Edna Manley College of The Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica in 1998, Michael honed his skill as a painter, developing different techniques in varying mediums while developing an awareness of social issues in Jamaica and throughout the world. Michael’s work can be said to feature a wide use of symbolism to represent his themes, especially in the intimately tuned still life pieces.



**Guy Gabon** is a visual artist, eco-designer and filmmaker from Guadeloupe. How can we act today to stimulate dialogue to instill political, social and ecological action in our societies? This vital question animates the reflection and works of this sensitive artist who is committed to transforming the way we look at things. A landscape poetess, she draws inspiration from generous nature to question the links that man has with his natural and urban environment. Her art implements multidisciplinary and protean artistic and environmental experiments. She creates works based on land art, eco-design, cinema, vegetable graffiti and reverse graffiti. She questions and warns about the imbalances generated by our consumer society.



**Rosa Naday Garmendia** is from La Habana, Cuba, and lives and works in Miami, Fla. She is a socially engaged, multidisciplinary artist who produces work at the nexus of contemporary art and activism. Her work is rooted in social issues, particularly the intersectionality of her identity as a woman, immigrant and industrial worker. The driving impulse is her desire to use art as a tool for self-reflection, create discourse, challenge traditional views and build understanding among people. She reflects on and analyzes norms and values in contemporary society. She focuses on projects that critically view the role of police, acts of racism, poverty and military intervention abroad. Her artistic practice is a daily act of resistance.



**GeoVanna Gonzalez** is a Miami/Berlin-based artist. GeoVanna was born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif., where she received her B.F.A. at Otis College of Art and Design. GeoVanna experiments with materials to understand the notion of tactility by transforming one material to look like another. The desire to transform materials is influenced by both organic and technological environments and their relationship to our shifting notions of gender and identity. She constructs and combines sculptures and installations, and uses video and photography to recontextualize, obscure and interfere with how digital platforms curate and dictate the way we experience various and multiplying realities.



**Juan Erman Gonzalez** is a Cuban-born artist living and working in Miami, Fla. As an exile, he addresses migration, uprootedness and displacement by using manipulated, repurposed and post-production recycled goods to create narratives of imagined worlds and their inhabitants. He often reflects on “el camino,” the metaphorical and actual path he has traveled since first working with DVCAI in 2002. With a background in fiber arts and couture, he utilizes his practical experiences of sewing, pattern-making and drawing. He considers his materials gifts precious elements to be honored, reused and recontextualized.



**Izia Lee Lindsay** is a mixed media artist who explores with both digital and traditional media. His artwork addresses symbolism in Caribbean iconography that is rooted in tradition but interpreted with contemporary ideas. Lindsay uses bold, geometric shapes that juxtapose and intersperse to form his multilayered artistic pieces. The thematic whole is a cultural narrative reproducing the dualities of his turbulent, cosmopolitan, Caribbean life. His research examines material culture, indigenous societies and the ever-changing landscape of the Caribbean while his subject matter tackles issues of identity and class in a post-colonial society. Lindsay is currently a lecturer in Miami, Fla.





**Monique Luck** has been the recipient of several awards including: Judges Choice Award and Best in Show Award at Festival in the Park, Charlotte, NC; Honorable Mention, Beverly Hills Art Show, and Best Bearden Inspired Collage at the Mint Museum. Last year she was honored to be chosen as one of Charlotte's ArtPop artists and received a billboard featuring her artwork. She was also chosen by the Creative Loafing's readers as the favorite visual artist for 2014. Currently her artwork can be found at The Harvey B. Gantt Center Museum in Charlotte.



**Kearra Amaya Gopee** is a multidisciplinary visual artist from Carapichaima, Trinidad and Tobago, and is based in Los Angeles. Their research-based practice focuses on the nature of violence and erasure, and the particularities of those that are inflicted on the Caribbean and its diasporas by the global north. While complicating the viewer's understanding of economic and social marginalization in the region, Gopee's practice also desires to test the mettle of these frameworks. Through interventions, Gopee aims to temper what we have known to be true with the potential of intuitive knowledge that has been historically cast aside in favor of Western assimilation. Gopee holds a B.F.A. in photography and imaging from New York University and is an alumni of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Currently, they are an M.F.A. candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles.



**Grettel Arrate Hechavaría** is a painter, muralist, illustrator and graphic designer from Santiago de Cuba. She graduated in painting and drawing from the Provincial Academy of Plastic Arts José Joaquín Tejada of Santiago de Cuba, and she holds a Bachelor of Art History from the Universidad de Oriente. She is a member of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba and a member of the Association of Publicists of Cuba. Hechavaría has had 14 solo exhibitions in important museums and galleries in Cuba and around the world.



**Caroline Holder** was born in England to a Jamaican mother and Barbadian father. When she was 4 years old, the family returned to the Caribbean, settling in Barbados, where she completed her formative education. Holder left the island after high school to study design and painting at York University in Toronto, and art education at McGill in Montreal. She relocated to New York City in the early '90s, where, except for a sojourn at NSCAD University, Nova Scotia, to complete an M.F.A. in ceramics, she has maintained a continuous studio practice, while teaching art at the Professional Children's School. Holder's primary medium is clay, from which she crafts object-sculptures combined with drawings and text. Her influences include a background in printmaking, a love of pen and ink drawing, experiences of intersectional identity as a Caribbean immigrant in North America, and the life-altering experience of late motherhood.



**Anja Marais** is a multidisciplinary artist who was born and raised in the countryside of South Africa. She graduated from the University of South Africa with a B.F.A. She currently works and lives in Miami, Fla, and exhibits her work in the national and international arena. Marais' interest in the nature of inanimate objects comes from African animistic religions. Uninterested in the boundary between the human and the nonhuman worlds, she focuses on inviolable memories left in landscapes. Her sculptures are both traditional and contemporary — totemic installations of found objects infused with a given history, resonating with the lives of those who lived with them before.



**Jared McGriff** is a Los Angeles-born, Oakland-based artist. His abstract, figurative and portrait watercolor and acrylic paintings are inspired by visual distortions, memory fragments and ephemera. Capturing the expressions, cultural cues and transitory familiarity of his surroundings, Jared's work is at once accessible and universal in its depiction of the human condition. His approach to the collective conscious is informed by both his international travels and his time in the American West. His voyages are distilled in his paintings, with their simple line, color and composition. "I'm interested in the spaces that exist between our vision and cognition. Our memory only registers a fraction of what we see on any given day. What gets lost in the mechanics of vision — this visual waste or unstructured data - informs my work and how I approach my practice."



**Petrona Morrison** is a Jamaican artist who lives in Kingston, Jamaica. For the past 30 years, her work has engaged deeply personal as well as sociopolitical concerns through assemblages and installations. Her totemic assemblages made from discarded objects culled from the streets of Kingston, and installations that evoke ritual spaces, serve as metaphors for transformation, renewal and healing, and themes of fragility, survival and resilience reoccur in her practice. She incorporates digital photographs, text and video into her installations, a process she describes by saying, "I use fragments — conversations, photographs, recorded images appropriated from the internet — to create narratives which explore ideas." Her recent work has become less autobiographical and more overtly political. Her video installation "Selfie," a collaboration with theater artist Rachael Allen, signals a new direction in her practice. The work, which explores the construction of identity through social media, has opened new possibilities through its performance and collaborative process. Morrison holds a B.A. in Fine Arts from McMaster University, Canada, and an M.F.A. from Howard University, United States.



**Kurt Nahar**, from Paramaribo, Suriname, started his art education at the Nola Hatterman Art Academy in Suriname and continued his studies at the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica. Nahar uses his art to express his thoughts and emotions on various subjects related to questionable social and political circumstances in Suriname and other countries worldwide. He believes that artists have a responsibility to expose their viewers to the social reality. He does so in a bold and often confrontational manner and thus hopes to increase awareness and stimulate discussion about the sensitive subjects that he brings to light. Political injustices, social inequality and the widespread abuse of power are among his main themes. His technique is inspired by the methods of his predecessors from the era of Dadaism. The use of collage techniques and simple objects is characteristic of his art.



**Devora Perez** is originally from Nicaragua and now lives and works in Miami. She received her bachelor's degree from New World School of the Arts and holds an M.F.A. from Florida International University. Perez is interested in the domestic setting and its influence on gender, race and class in society. In her work she challenges domesticity through the use of everyday materials such as caulk, cement, plastic and wood, and uses them in unconventional ways. Through formal and minimal design, Perez emphasizes color, texture and even the industrial material itself. While some pieces may seem fragile and light, others are heavy and dense both visually and physically. These discrepancies in weight between the works and the use of shadows are meant to construct divisions and separate spaces. Her work "Man-Made Environment (here, there, everywhere)" challenges issues of gentrification in Miami.



**Evelyn Politzer**, originally from Uruguay, now lives and works in Miami, Fla. After attending law school in Montevideo, Uruguay, and moving to the United States, she pursued her passion for art. Her beginnings were in tapestry and knitting. Creating with wool was only natural in her native country of Uruguay, where the number of sheep far exceeds the number of human inhabitants. Even though she creates through traditional methods like knitting, crochet and embroidery, the objects she makes are unconventional and seek to spark a conversation on subjects such as place, motherhood, breast cancer and the fragility of the natural environment. These fiber works give her a sense of comfort and belonging while she strives "to knit the impossible, and give voice to the voiceless."



**Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz** is a nationally and internationally recognized, award-winning interdisciplinary visual and performance artist. Through personal narratives and experiences, her work dissects cultural and social constructs designed to isolate, “herd” and manage Otherness. Needing the immediacy of a live audience, she developed “Las Reinas (The Queens),” a suite of allegorical self-portrait performances in which she becomes imagined royal archetypes anchored in personal trauma. Most recently she debuted “Exodus|Pilgrimage,” an endurance performance addressing the forced migration of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the United States as a result of the current humanitarian crisis post-hurricane Maria, the artist dressed in attire made completely from debris recovered from the island.



**Juan Ernesto Requena** is a Venezuelan-born artist with his studio practice in Mumbai and Miami. Through textile, powder, film, sound and digital works, he provides a visual narrative of his life on themes that revolve around memory, nature and the human condition. He was part of the artist collective that exhibited at the inaugural Kochi-Muziris Biennale at Mattancherry Palace, Kochi, India, in 2012, and recently exhibited at the Tout Monde Festival 2019 in Miami, presented by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States. Juan considers himself an archivist whose goal is to preserve human history.



**Asser Saint-Val**, originally from Haiti, moved to South Florida, where he earned B.F.A.s in painting and graphic design from the New World School of the Arts. His art has been exhibited in Florida and New York and throughout the Caribbean and is represented in numerous private collections. Saint-Val is a painter, sculptor and installation artist. His quasi-figurative images, by turns humorous and grotesque, bring together ideas, people and incidents central to modern debates about the definition and valence of neuromelanin. Rendered in a blend of traditional art mediums and a wide range of unconventional, organic materials — coffee, chocolate, ginger and, tea among them - his pictures, objects and environments are a surreal fantasia on such loosely linked themes as under-recognized African American inventors, the politics of sexual desire, and the complex aesthetics, narratives and metaphors that attach to the organic compound neuromelanin.





**Stephanie J. Woods** is a multi-media artist from Charlotte, NC creating textile, photography, video, and community-engaged projects. Through the use of symbolic materials and imagery referencing Black American culture and the southern experience, her body of work examines the cognitive effects of forced cultural assimilation, and how performance is ingrained in identity. Woods earned an MFA in Studio Art from UNC-Greensboro and is the recipient of several residencies and fellowships; including Halcyon Arts Lab, a nine-month art and social impact fellowship, the Fine Arts Work Center, a seven-month visual artist fellowship, ACRE Residency, the McColl Center for Art + Innovation, Oxbow School of Art and Artists' Residency, and Penland School of Crafts. Her work has also been notably recognized by the Chenven Foundation, the South Arts State Fellowship, and the NC Arts Council Fellowship.



**Deborah Willis, Ph.D.** is an university professor and Chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, and has an affiliated appointment with the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, Africana Studies, where she teaches courses on photography and imaging, iconicity, and cultural histories visualizing the black body, women, and gender. She is the director of the NYU Institute of African American Affairs and the founder of the Center for Black Visual Culture. Her research examines photography's multifaceted histories, visual culture, the photographic history of slavery and emancipation, contemporary women photographers, and beauty. She received the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Willis is the author of *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present*, and co-author of *The Black Female Body, A Photographic History; Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery*, and *Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs* (titles were NAACP Image Award Winner). Professor Willis curated exhibitions include: *In Pursuit of Beauty at Express Newark*, *Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits at the International Center of Photography and Reframing Beauty: Intimate Moments* at Indiana University.

## Special Thanks:

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*Presented by Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator Inc.*

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Minia Biabiany <i>Guadeloupe</i>	Jared McGriff <i>United States</i>
Christopher Carter <i>United States</i>	Petrona Morrison <i>Jamaica</i>
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Caroline Holder <i>Barbados   Canada</i>	



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