

• Jacob Lawrence’s *Migration Series* <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2015/onewayticket/>

• Zanele Muholi: *Isibonelo/Evidence* https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/zanele_muholi

• *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now* <https://mcachicago.org/Exhibitions/2015/The-Freedom-Principle-Experiments-In-Art-And-Music-1965-To-Now>

Notes:

¹ National Core Arts Standards, <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

² Ibid.

³ Common Core State Standards Initiative, <http://www.corestandards.org/>

⁴ See this video segment to learn more about this strategy: “Interpreting Ancient Art in Social Studies,” Teaching Channel, <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/interpreting-ancient-art-getty>

⁵ National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, “Glossary for National Core Arts: Visual Arts Standards,” <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/NCCAS%20GLOSSARY%20for%20Visual%20Arts%20Standards%201%20column.pdf>

⁶ See this video clip for approaches to examining the stories behind art: “Examining the Stories Behind Art,” Teaching Channel, <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-young-students-art>

⁷ This video segment presents an idea of how students can create art based on key ideas/vocabulary. “Illustrating Democracy: Art Brings Words to Life,” Teaching Channel, <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-democracy-through-art>

⁸ This webpage offers another tool for thinking about artistic habits of mind: “8 Habits of Thinking Learned from Artists,” *Tchrs’ Voice* (blog), March 3, 2015, <https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2015/03/03/8-habits-of-thinking>

⁹ “Visual Arts Model Cornerstone Assessments,” National Core Arts Standards, <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/mca/visual-arts>

AFTERWORD: REIMAGINING THE RACIAL PROJECT OF BLACK YOUTH ACTIVISM

By **Conra D. Gist**

I am becoming more convinced that the role of a scholar should be more closely aligned with Baldwin’s conceptualization of an artist. That is, our role should be not only to inform, but also to inspire and foster a collective imagination about how to make the world a more humane dwelling place . . . making the world a more humane dwelling place, however, requires that our research and advocacy create space to foster a collective imagination among youth. While rare, these spaces hold the possibilities to reframe and reimagine the type of world in which we choose to live.¹

The critical scholar, as artist, must cultivate intellectual spaces that invite and encourage the generation of transformational and emancipatory ideas. Thus, my vision as the guest editor of the *Black History Bulletin* Volume 79, No. 1: *Youth Empowerment: Hope, Action, and Freedom* was to portray a collective radical imagination by featuring freeing-hopeful-movement-building knowledge developed by scholars and practitioners in the field. To do so, however, required assembling an eclectic and dynamic group of cultural and justice-focused contributors who could rewrite youth narratives of criminality and disposability² to instead situate youth as leaders who will make the world a more humane dwelling place. In order to highlight this type of scholarship,³ the construct of Black youth activism was situated for practitioner and scholarly rumination in a cross-disciplinary fashion to look through a prism of epistemologies and ideological perspectives, cultural legacies and traditions, and social and political practices as a type of intellectual activism.

Franklin’s opening article demonstrates the ways in which political scientists can illuminate the politics of youth activism by exploring how youth have been politically active historically while also wrestling with possibilities and challenges for working on the side of justice in the current times of the Black Lives Matter Movement. Marsh’s essay demonstrates how educators can use critical and public pedagogies as liberatory educational vehicles for youth by challenging them to consume and generate emancipatory

knowledge that elevates their social and political status. St. Bernard's preacher testimony about his experiences during the Baltimore Uprising encourages contemplation on the potential of Black Liberation Theology⁴ for challenging youth to work towards social change. Davis Johnson's work illustrates how artists can evoke and inspire an aesthetic vision of justice and the manner in which art can function as a creative tool to advance Black youth activism.

Though legislative action and institutional reform are vital for building a more equal and just society, this issue is specifically focused on grassroots and organic knowledge and practices that are accessible and relevant to schools and community-based organizations in an effort to move forward the racial project of Black youth activism through a collage of interdisciplinary perspectives. By sidestepping narrow conceptualization of Black youth activism and strategies as primarily about affirmation and legislative advancements, the teacher, preacher, artist, and political scientist reframe possibilities for Black youth activism through the sharing of inspirational testimonies, historical legacies, and pedagogies that educators, community organizers, and youth leaders can utilize to equip and inspire the lives of those they lead.

In this sense, as a form of intellectual activism, this issue continues the racial project of producing and disseminating knowledge that counters symbolic violence of misrepresentation, exclusion, and inferiority that can be (intentionally or unintentionally) perpetuated in curriculum, pedagogies, and school practices devoid of a racial consciousness committed to social justice. Carter G. Woodson was concerned with "revising and repudiating the onslaught of racial meanings that ontologically sealed Black life."⁵ By answering Ginwright's call "to foster a collective imagination about how to make the world a more humane dwelling place,"⁶ the contributors, each in their own way, carry forward the legacy of Woodson's ontological work: the racial project of education as the practice of freedom.

At a time when Black youth activism is swelling at universities across the nation,⁷ justice workers (regardless of discipline and professional background) must reimagine more humane dwelling places for those of us often experiencing marginalization, invisibility, and/or erasure in the spaces and places in which we serve, work, love, and live. Yet still, not only must we reimagine the racial project of Black youth activism, we must act on our visions by working out lives that embody and reflect what Black youth activism can foster—the ongoing actualization of personal and collective freedom.



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Notes:

¹ Shawn Ginwright, "Collective Radical Imagination: Youth Participatory Action Research and the Art of Emancipatory Knowledge," in *Revolutionizing Education*, ed. Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine (New York: Routledge, 2008), 14.

² Mark Naison, *Bad*** Teachers Unite!: Reflections on Education, History, and Youth Activism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), 146.

³ "African American Youth Activism," last modified June 7, 2006, <http://ya.ssrc.org/african/>

⁴ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997)

⁵ Carl A. Grant, Keffrelyn D. Brown, and Anthony L. Brown, *Black Intellectual Thought in Education: The Missing Traditions of Anna Julia Cooper, Carter G. Woodson, and Alan LeRoy Locke* (New York: Routledge), 94.

⁶ Ginwright, "Collective Radical Imagination," 14.

⁷ "Campus Protesters across the Country Swap Ideas, Information," *NPR*, December 13, 2015, accessed December 23, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/12/13/459514516/campus-protesters-across-the-country-swap-ideas-information/>