



TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA
TESTING THE NAME

Feb. 20 - Sept. 9, 2018





SCAD: The University for Creative Careers

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Hong Kong; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning.

With more than 37,000 alumni worldwide, SCAD demonstrates an exceptional education and unparalleled career preparation. The diverse student body, consisting of nearly 14,000, comes from across the U.S. and more than 100 countries worldwide. Each student is nurtured and motivated by a faculty of nearly 700 professors with extraordinary academic credentials and valuable professional experience. These professors emphasize learning through individual attention in an inspiring university environment. The innovative SCAD curriculum is enhanced by advanced professional-level technology, equipment and learning resources, and has garnered acclaim from respected organizations and publications, including 3D World, American Institute of Architects, Businessweek, DesignIntelligence, U.S. News & World Report and the Los Angeles Times.

For more information, visit scad.edu.

Cover Image: **Toyin Ojih Odutola**, *The Proposal*, 2017, charcoal, pastel and pencil on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

About the Artist

SCAD Museum of Art presents *Testing the Name*, an exhibition of new drawings by Toyin Ojih Odutola that continues her episodic exploration of the merger of two fictional aristocratic Nigerian families through the marriage of two men. In her practice, the artist both critiques and embraces traditional portraiture, and its association with the representation of power within a Western art historical context. Working primarily in pastel on paper Ojih Odutola creates rich, layered surfaces that seduce and compel.

The artist's unusual approach to the depiction of skin is a comment on the representation of blackness. Ojih Odutola's radical black skins seemingly bend light, resisting a logical visual comprehension that speaks as

complex metaphor. Her velvet, seductive surfaces claim territory within the art historical canon of portraiture, which historically favored whiteness.

Ojih Odutola places individuals and couples in opulent interiors and rich landscapes, at leisure and in social interactions. Architectural details and objects surrounding her subjects receive equal attention. Of Nigerian descent, she grew up in the American South and developed a seemingly plausible narrative incorporating themes that, in reality, might not be so straightforward.

Testing the Name is curated by Storm Janse van Rensburg, head curator of SCAD exhibitions.

About the Curriculum Guide

SCAD curriculum guides provide learning opportunities that fulfill the requirements of national education standards and are designed for use within the museum's exhibition spaces and in classrooms. The guides enhance understanding of art and design through investigations that reveal relevant personal, historical and cultural connections while promoting cross-disciplinary links necessary for today's innovative careers.

Recognizing the guides' overall design excellence and ingenuity, the American Alliance of Museums' Museum Publications Design Competition twice awarded SCAD curriculum guides first place in the education category, in 2015 and 2016, as well as honorable mentions for the guides

accompanying *Threads of History: Two Hundred Years of Fashion* and the 2016 SCAD deFINE ART exhibitions.

This Toyin Ojih Odutola guide challenges students to question assumptions and expand their knowledge through research. The activities include opportunities to reflect, revise and refine — interdisciplinary essentials to creative, solutions-oriented approaches.

SCAD gives special thanks to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, Inc. for its generous support of SCAD's award-winning curriculum guides.

Educational standards are listed on page 6.

Highlighted glossary terms are found on page 7.

Additional learning resources are located in the Curriculum Connections section on page 7.

1 Question the answer

Grades 6–8

“My brother always walks in and says, “**Why do you draw me so weird?**””

Toyin Ojih Odutola

Toyin Ojih Odutola, born in Nigeria and raised in Alabama, developed her **signature** style in a quest to move beyond broad assumptions based on skin color. She transforms skin into complexly shaded strands, describing the effect as a way of “questioning that surface and seeing the ways I could expand on it.”

Choose a work by Ojih Odutola and write an **interpretive** statement about it. Consider how subject matter, setting and mood contribute to its message.



Toyin Ojih Odutola, *At Study*, 2017–2018, charcoal, pastel and pencil on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

“There is a brilliant James Baldwin quote I always keep in mind on what is at the heart of any creative endeavor: ‘to expose the question the answer hides.’”

Toyin Ojih Odutola

Baldwin’s words suggest that answers are limiting, while questions challenge norms and speak to possibilities.

Use a questioning technique to expand your way of seeing. Carefully question your response on the facing page — challenge assumptions and seek out alternative possibilities. Asking friends for their perspectives will be helpful. Describe what you discover below. What was your previous answer hiding? What did your questions expose?



Toyin Ojih Odutola, *Picnic on the Grounds*, 2017-2018, charcoal, pastel and pencil on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

James Baldwin (1924-1987), novelist, essayist, playwright, poet and social critic, was known for his wisdom and eloquence. Explore excerpts from his writings here:
www.brainpickings.org/2017/05/24/james-baldwin-life-magazine-1963/

2 Research and release

High School

Art research is a **consuming** part of Toyin Ojih Odutola's process. Her Instagram account (@toyinojihodutola) combines images of her work with a **discerning**, wide-ranging selection of artworks from the past and present, each one tagged #Research. She believes that creating original work requires a knowledge of art history, plus the ability to fuse elements from different times and cultures in new ways.

**“...what my work brings for me is the
freedom to investigate ideas
and express that in my drawings.”**

Toyin Ojih Odutola

*Add research to your creative process. Begin by carefully considering Ojih Odutola's work and that of the wide variety of artists featured in SCAD deFINE ART 2018. Which ones would you tag #Research? Identify three pieces and examine them closely. Record your impressions by making **thumbnail sketches** and writing notes about the subjects and techniques that appeal to you most.*

Thumbnail:	Thumbnail:
Thumbnail:	Notes:



Toyin Ojih Odutola, *First Impressions*, 2017, charcoal, pastel and pencil on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Review your research for ideas that inspire you to try a new art-making approach. In the space below, as Ojih Odutola advises, “go for it.”

“...When I first start, I have no idea what’s going to happen ... **then I see something** ... It just kind of builds from there.”

Toyin Ojih Odutola

Check in with your classmates as you work. Research, plus **critiques**, revisions and refinements, are all part of the creative process.

Represent

Lee Daniels, co-creator of the hit series *Empire*, speaks about the importance of the show’s representation of black artists, among them Ojih Odutola and SCAD alumnus Jon Moody (M.A., painting, 2015; B.F.A., visual effects, 2014).
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgV7gyX7X9Y

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

National Core Arts Standards

Activity 1 – Sixth through Eighth Grade

Responding 8.1

Anchor: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

6: Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

7: Interpret art by analyzing art-making approaches, the characteristics of form and structure, relevant contextual information, subject matter, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

8: Interpret art by analyzing how the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, use of media, art-making approaches and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed.

Activity 2 – High School

Creating 3.1

Anchor: Refine and complete artistic work.

HSI: Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress.

HSII: Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

HSIII: Reflect on, re-engage, revise and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic vision.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

Activity 1 – Sixth through Eighth Grade

**CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.W.
6.5**

Production and Distribution of Writing: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach.

**CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.W.
7.5, 8.5**

Production and Distribution of Writing: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

GLOSSARY

consuming *adj.* Overwhelming, intense

critique *n.* A careful analysis or judgement of something

discerning *adj.* Having keen insight and judgment

interpretive *adj.* Something that explains one form of communication in another form; for instance, using words to explain an image

signature *adj.* Having a distinctively personal quality

thumbnail sketch *n.* A small initial sketch used to record impressions or develop a concept

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Additional Resources **Article** Interviewer Kilo Kish created a hand-drawn interview worksheet that Ojih Odutola then completed with earnest, candid responses. creators.vice.com/en_us/article/vvyxz4/toyin-kilo-kish

Video Ojih Odutola and Solange Knowles, mutual admirers of each other's work, talk about art, inspiration and collaboration. www.nowness.com/series/on-collaboration/on-collaboration-solange-knowles-x-toyin-odutola

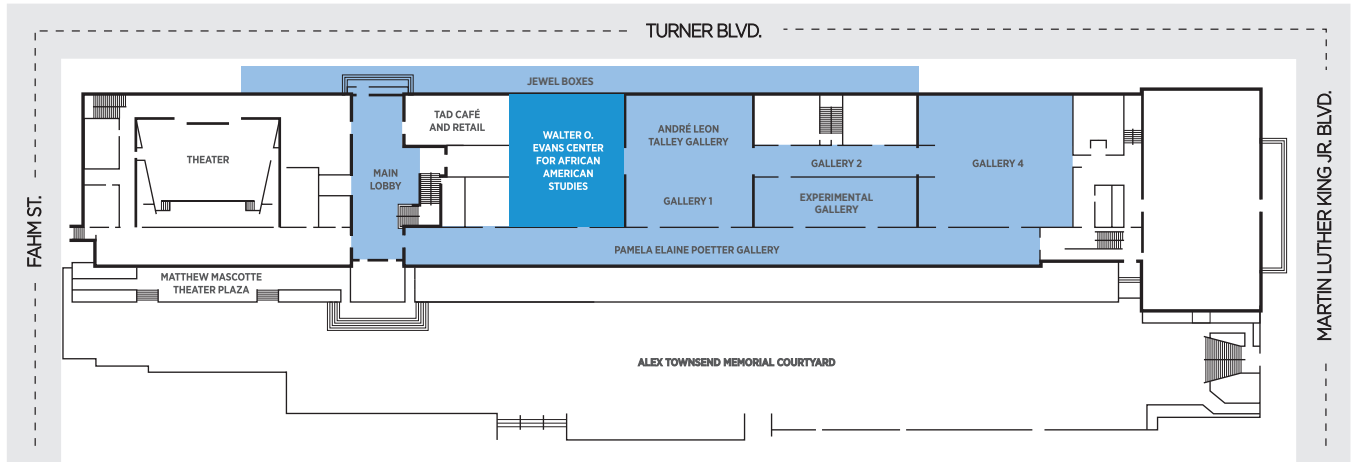
Citations p. 2 Bell, Alexandra. "Q&A: Toyin Odutola on Drawing, Chinese Art, and What It Really Means to Have a Big Head." *The Village Voice*, 7 Nov. 2012. www.villagevoice.com/2012/11/07/qa-toyin-odutola-on-drawing-chinese-art-and-what-it-really-means-to-have-a-big-head. Accessed 30 Jan. 2018.

pp. 3, 4 Gore, Sydney. "Toyin Ojih Odutola Uses Art To Challenge Invented Constructs Of The Self: And Emphasizes 'being alone and working on yourself.'" *Nylon*, 26 Feb. 2017. nylon.com/articles/toyin-ojih-odutola-interview. Accessed 30 Jan. 2018.

p. 5 Kitololo, Lulu. "Interview with artist Toyin Odutola." *Afri-love*, 15 Aug. 2012. www.afri-love.com/2012/08/interview-with-artist-toyin-odutola. Accessed 20 Feb. 2018.

MUSEUM MAPS

SCAD Museum of Art



Main Level

■ Galleries

■ Featured exhibition



SCAD de:FINEART 2018 EXHIBITIONS

SAVANNAH EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Museum of Art // 601 Turner Blvd.

No Access • Tom Burr

Dec. 14, 2017 – Sept. 17, 2018

Fade Into Black • Pia Camil

Jan. 25 – July 15, 2018

You Have Nothing to Worry About • Melissa Spitz

Jan. 30 – April 29, 2018

LIVESTRONG Savannah • Christopher Chiappa

Feb. 1 – July 1, 2018

Two Works • Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

Feb. 13 – July 18, 2018

Sedimental • Tom Burr

Feb. 15 – Aug. 26, 2018

Moving Mountains • Yang Fudong

Feb. 20 – July 8, 2018

To-Day, February 20th • Mariana Castillo Deball

Feb. 20 – Aug. 5, 2018

Huh • Lily van der Stokker

Feb. 20 – Aug. 19, 2018

I did it again • Paola Pivi

Feb. 20 – Aug. 19, 2018

SAVANNAH GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

This Land Is Your Land • Group Exhibition

Jan. 19 – Feb. 25, 2018

Alexander Hall Gallery // 668 Indian St.

Alter Ego • Group Exhibition

Jan. 25 – March 31, 2018

Gutstein Gallery // 201 E. Broughton St.

ATLANTA EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Atlanta // 1600 Peachtree St. NW

Carry the Ocean • Shine Huang

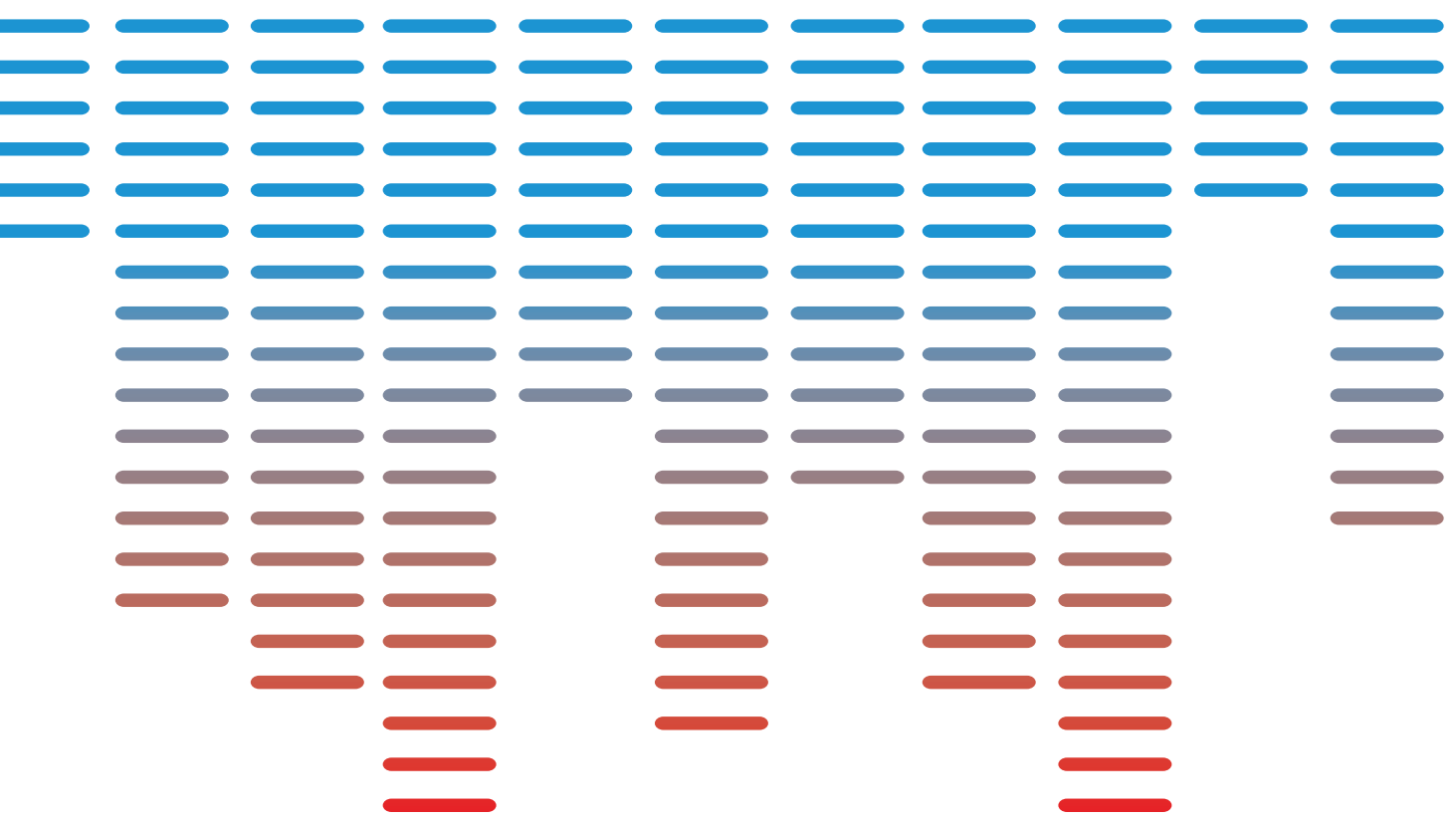
Feb. 9 – March 2, 2018

Trois Gallery

Loves • Wendy White

Feb. 20 – June 8, 2018

Gallery 1600



SCAD
MUSEUM OF ART

601 Turner Blvd.
Savannah, Georgia
912.525.7191
scadmoa.org

Support for SCAD deFINE ART 2018 has been generously provided by Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee.