

# FREDERICK DOUGLASS

EMBERS OF FREEDOM

OCT. 3, 2019 - JAN. 5, 2020



one who so dearly loves you  
one whose love all the  
treasures of the earth can  
not purchase from me,  
the love of your own dear  
self. Charles is sick in  
the hospital. I trust nothing  
serious he has a severe cold  
he is however somewhat  
better than he has been.  
My dear girl while I am  
away, do not fret yourself  
to death, oh! I beg of you, do  
not. Remember that if I  
fall that it is in the  
cause of humanity, that  
I am striking a blow for  
the welfare of the most  
abused and despised race  
on the face of the earth, that  
in the solution of this  
strife rests the question

of our elevation, or our  
degradation, our happi-  
ness or our misery.  
Would you wish me ab-  
sent from such a strife?  
I know that your <sup>kind</sup> heart wishes  
that it were not <sup>that I should go</sup> necessary  
but I trust, that your love  
of the happiness of your race  
and my race, reconciles you  
to our separation which may  
be forever!

Think of me often you will  
but do not let your thoughts  
be worrying, do not think of  
me in pain, do not think  
of me enduring hardships, do  
not think of me grappling  
with that non-resister of  
persons death! But think  
of me as aiding in the  
glorious work of hastening

# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The SCAD Museum of Art presents an exhibition centered on the Frederick Douglass Family Archive from the Walter O. Evans Collection. This historic register of the Douglass family's manuscripts, letters, newspaper clippings, and photographs is displayed in dialogue with artworks by modern and contemporary artists whose work reflects the aesthetic and political values espoused by this revolutionary leader.

For Douglass (1818–1895), an individual who was born into slavery and went on to become one of the most world-renowned social justice campaigners, the right to the imagination was the right to life. In his work as an orator, author, and fierce intellectual, the abolitionist believed that not only words but works of art were tools in the path for freedom. As a prolific creator and collector of autobiographies, essays, diaries, poems, photographs, paintings, drawings, and sculptures — many of which now reside in the Walter O. Evans Collection and are included in this exhibition — Douglass ultimately believed in art as a means to individual and collective liberation.

*Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom* is a dynamic exhibition that addresses critical subjects that shaped the life's work of Douglass and continue to be at the forefront of today's sociopolitical discourse. This project reveals the historic narrative of the Douglasses and their unwavering commitment to transatlantic abolitionism and radical reform, not only for African Americans but for society as a whole. Additionally, this exhibition offers an expanded definition of Douglass, as it considers him not only as a key figure for civil rights but also an advocate for women's suffrage, one of the first proponents of photographic theory, and, perhaps most distinctively, as a family man.

Key issues examined within this exhibition include the value of family, representation and visibility, archival methodologies, the legacy of slavery, black resistance, and intergenerational struggle. The Douglass family's archival materials have been brought into view alongside special commissions by artists Onyedika Chuke, TR Ericsson,

Glyneisha Johnson, Le'Andra LeSeur (B.F.A., photography, 2014), and Charles Edward Williams (B.F.A., advertising, 2006), as well as master works by Jacob Lawrence and Charles White held within Walter O. Evans' private collection, on loan to SCAD, and critical objects by some of the leading figures of contemporary art such as Lyle Ashton Harris, Titus Kaphar, LaToya Ruby Frazier, and Betye Saar. Together, this holistic grouping of artwork provides viewers with the opportunity to consider the past and present circumstances in which the ongoing fight for social justice has taken place. In this exhibition, there is hope that viewers will be galvanized by the monumental feats of this "First Family of African American History" to carry on the torch of activism.

## Artists featured:

Raphaël Barontini  
Kevin Beasley  
Onyedika Chuke  
Scott Covert  
Omar Victor Diop  
TR Ericsson  
LaToya Ruby Frazier  
Lyle Ashton Harris  
Lubaina Himid  
Glyneisha Johnson  
Titus Kaphar

Jacob Lawrence  
Le'Andra LeSeur  
Meleko Mokgosi  
Martha Rosler  
Betye Saar  
James Van Der Zee  
Barbara Walker  
Gillian Wearing  
Charles White  
Charles Edward Williams  
Wilmer Wilson IV

Douglass-related projects *The Golden March* by Raphaël Barontini and *Frederick Douglass: Lessons of the Hour* by Isaac Julien are presented in the museum's Jewel Boxes and Experimental Gallery, working in conversation with this exhibition.

*Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom* is curated by Humberto Moro, curator of SCAD exhibitions; Ben Tollefson, assistant curator of SCAD exhibitions; Ariella Wolens, assistant curator of SCAD exhibitions; Storm Janse Van Rensburg, former head curator of SCAD exhibitions; and Celeste-Marie Bernier, professor of black studies and personal chair in English literature at the University of Edinburgh.





# ABOUT SCAD AND SCAD MUSEUM OF ART

Offering more degree programs and specializations than any other art and design university, SCAD is uniquely qualified to prepare talented students for creative professions. The SCAD Museum of Art, a resource for SCAD students and alumni during their academic careers and beyond, features emerging and established international artists through commissioned works and rotating exhibitions, and involves local communities with special initiatives of international scope.

SCAD Museum of Art educational materials engage K-12 audiences in activities that enhance understanding

of art and design — 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 Southeastern Museums Conference as well as the American Alliance of Museum's Museum Publications Design Competition have awarded SCAD curriculum guides first- and second-place prizes, a medal, and honorable mentions for four consecutive years.

For more information, visit [scad.edu](http://scad.edu) and [scadmoa.org](http://scadmoa.org).

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Left: **Gillian Wearing**, *Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere*, mixed media, 2018, Edition 4 of 6 + 3 APs. Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles.

Educational standards are listed on pages 24–25.

**Highlighted** glossary terms are found on page 27.

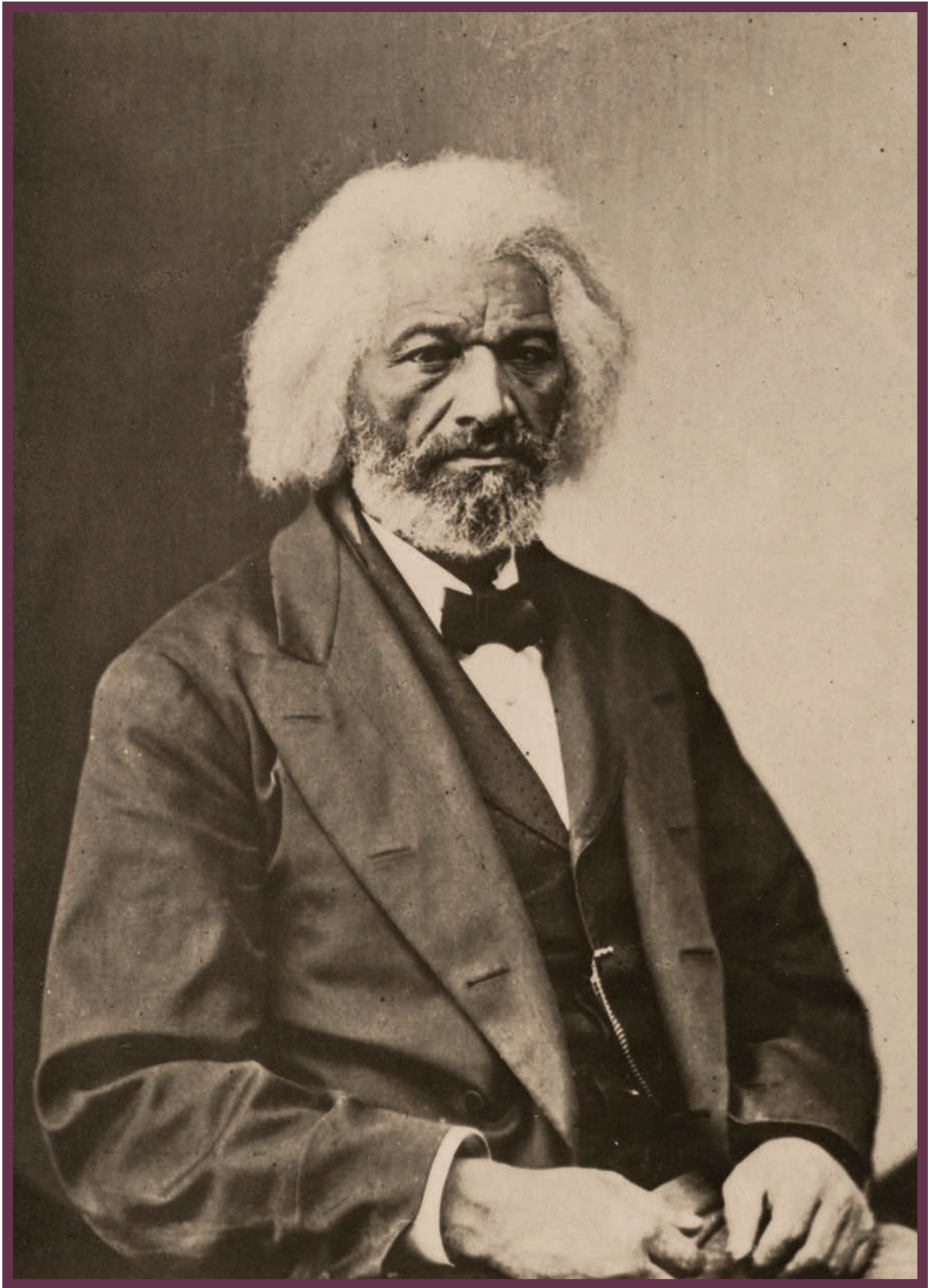
Additional learning resources are located in the Curriculum Connections section on pages 30–31.

**“...PICTURES MUST EXERT  
A POWERFUL, THOUGH SILENT,  
INFLUENCE UPON THE IDEAS AND  
SENTIMENT OF PRESENT  
AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”<sup>1</sup>**

- Frederick Douglass



Scott Covert, *Frederick Douglass*, Acrylic and oilstick on linen, n.d. Courtesy of the artist.



Famed photographer **Mathew Brady** took this portrait of Douglass. Years earlier, Brady's 1860 portrait of presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln proved so popular that it was widely credited with helping secure his election, further convincing Douglass of photography's unique potential to shape public perception.



# Activity 1

Frederick Douglass, famed African-American statesman, author, orator, and human rights activist, was born into slavery. Separated as an infant from his mother, Douglass was still a child when he was taken from his grandmother, who had raised him. He was then passed through a series of slaveholders, one of whom taught him the basics of literacy. Exposed for this and other acts of defiance, Douglass was sent to a brutal overseer, whose unrelenting beatings were intended to break his spirit. Instead, Douglass planned and carried out a courageous escape, found freedom, and joined the abolitionist movement. Bearing witness to the horrors of slavery in public forums, Douglass quickly earned a reputation as an eloquent speaker and then as a writer and publisher, launching his lifelong mission of civil rights advocacy.

Douglass holds the remarkable distinction of being the most photographed American of the 19th century. Photography's democratic nature appealed to Douglass. Objective and visible to all through newspaper reproductions and **cartes de visite**, this relatively new medium provided convincing truths with the potential to challenge racist stereotypes.

Douglass was acutely aware of the influence of imagery. Reacting with indignation to caricatures of black people, he took steps to ensure that his portraits conveyed the **gravitas** of the causes for which he fought. Maintaining a somber expression and forgoing the popular use of props and decorative backdrops, Douglass' consistent, dignified solemnity communicated both his steadfast position and the profound weight of his ongoing struggle to end racism.

**"I WILL NOT BE REPRESENTED AS  
A FIXED FACT, A PIECE OF PUBLIC  
PROPERTY. INSTEAD, I WILL BE A  
WORK OF ART."**<sup>2</sup>

- Frederick Douglass

When Douglass refused to be a "fixed fact," he asserted his right to self-determination. What does he mean by a "piece of public property," and more significantly, why does he equate this with a fixed fact?

Douglass offers being a "work of art" as a contrasting alternative to a fixed fact. Based on your responses to the questions above, and combined with what you know about Douglass' aesthetic and humanitarian values, list the characteristics of what he would define as a work of art.

Left: Stereographic copy of photographic print of Frederick Douglass by Mathew Brady, circa 1877. Collection of Walter and Linda Evans.



Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. From left to right: **Charles Edward Williams**, *Untitled*, oil and ink on mylar and Plexiglas, 2019. Courtesy of the artist; specially commissioned by SCAD Museum of Art. **Jacob Lawrence**, *Douglass*, silkscreen on rising two-ply rag paper, 1999, AP Edition 16 of 16. The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art.



**“I USED IMAGES TO  
TELL STORIES ABOUT  
MY PEOPLE AND ABOUT  
THEMES OF COURAGE.”<sup>3</sup>**

— Jacob Lawrence



## Activity 2



Jacob Lawrence, *Douglass*, silkscreen on rising two-ply rag paper, 1999, AP Edition 16 of 16. The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art.

Jacob Lawrence grew up under the guidance of **Harlem Renaissance** artists, who introduced him to black history and encouraged his distinctive approach. Lawrence was barely into his twenties when he began researching Douglass as the subject for one of his first series of works honoring African Americans. *The Life of Frederick Douglass* is composed of 32 painted panels, rendered in Lawrence's bold graphic style, each accompanied by descriptive captions. Among these is the painting upon which this print is based. Lawrence shows Douglass at work on *The North Star*, the abolitionist paper Douglass founded.

**"... JUSTICE MUST BE DONE, TRUTH MUST BE TOLD ... I WILL NOT BE SILENT."**<sup>4</sup>

— Frederick Douglass

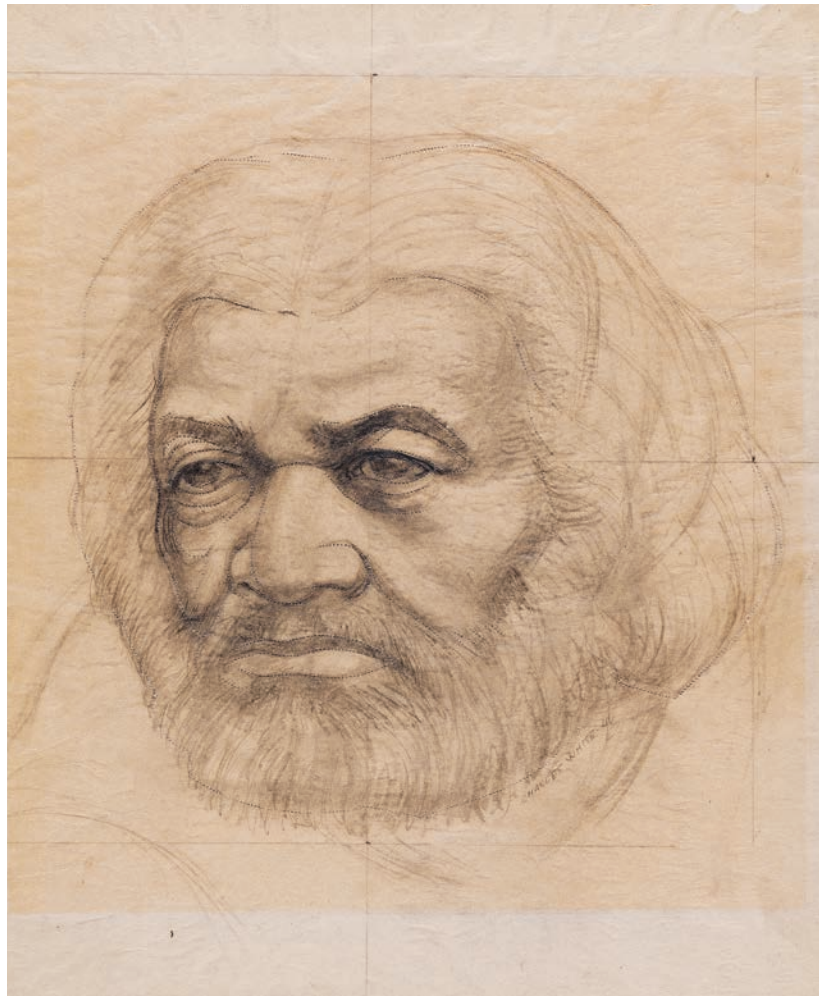
# “ART MUST BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE STRUGGLE.”<sup>5</sup>

— Charles White

Charles White’s determination to become an artist was evident at an early age. He practiced diligently and analyzed artworks in museums. A studious reader, he spent hours in libraries and was troubled by the exclusion of black history from his schoolbooks. Like Lawrence, White was primarily concerned with portraying African American experiences and histories. Similar to both Douglass and Lawrence, he believed art communicated perspectives that held the power to influence humanity.

White drew the sketch to the right in preparation for his first public mural, the monumental *Five Great American Negroes*. In this work, White depicts Douglass standing at its center, his eyes fixed on the distance with an expression of resolve, while he supports a figure in the tattered clothing of a slave, a man who might easily represent Douglass’ younger self.

Jacob Lawrence and Charles White speak of their art as representing “courage” and “struggle.” How are these themes related? Share your thoughts and then explore the exhibition, looking for artworks and artifacts that express both courage and struggle. Compare your findings with friends. Relying on your observations, consider this question: Regarding the themes of courage and struggle within this exhibition, do you find evidence of change, continuity, or a combination of both?



Charles White, *Frederick Douglass*, pencil on paper, 1940. SCAD Museum of Art Permanent Collection; gift of Walter and Linda Evans.



Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. From left to right: **Titus Kaphar**, *Falling from the Gaze*, oil on canvas, 2014. Collection of Tracey and Phillip Riese, New York. **Lubaina Himid**, *Portrait of Frederick Douglass Lapels*, Oil on canvas with wooden frame, 2015, Collection of Celeste-Marie Bernier, Edinburgh.





**“POETS, PROPHETS AND REFORMERS ARE ALL PICTURE-MAKERS—AND THIS ABILITY IS THE SECRET OF THEIR POWER AND OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. THEY SEE WHAT OUGHT TO BE BY THE REFLECTION OF WHAT IS, AND ENDEAVOR TO REMOVE THE CONTRADICTION.”<sup>6</sup>**

— Frederick Douglass

## Activity 3

Titus Kaphar is fascinated by all kinds of history — his love of art history, for example, is evident in the classical realism he brings to his portraits. Kaphar is also interested in the history of individuals and the world at large, particularly how accounts of the past are “recorded, distorted, exploited, reimagined, and understood.”<sup>7</sup> His work literally covers and uncovers the past, revealing what were narrow views, hidden events, and experiences.

**“I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IF WE DON’T AMEND HISTORY BY MAKING NEW IMAGES, WE WILL ALWAYS EXCLUDE THE HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED IN OUR SOCIETY AS WELL AS IN OUR ART.”<sup>8</sup>**

— Titus Kaphar



Titus Kaphar, *Falling from the Gaze*, oil on canvas, 2014.  
Collection of Tracey and Phillip Riese, New York.

Kaphar's *The Jerome Project* originated with the artist's online search for his estranged father. The results confronted Kaphar with 99 incarcerated men, all bearing his father's name. He was struck by their similar pasts and by how many of them were black. *The Jerome Project* addresses the artist's concerns regarding the criminalization of black men and youth, the fearful stereotyping that portrays them as threats, and their over-representation in prison populations.

These works make no assumptions regarding guilt or innocence. Instead, Kaphar asks the viewer to consider the lifelong impact of incarceration. The portraits are placed on a gold-leaf background, recalling a **devotional painting**, and prompting the viewer to contemplate forgiveness. Partially submerged in tar, they physically demonstrate the tenacious, sticky grasp of a criminal conviction.

**“RATHER THAN MAKING  
PAINTINGS ABOUT SOMETHING,  
YOU MAKE PAINTINGS THAT  
REFLECT THAT THING.”<sup>9</sup>**

— Titus Kaphar



**Titus Kaphar**, Detail from *The Jerome Project (My Loss)*, oil, gold leaf and tar on wood panel (4 panels) 2014. Collection of Tracey and Phillip Riese, New York.

Examine the works on this page and observe how Kaphar’s materials and methods physically show the real-life effects of the issues he addresses. For instance, the tar acts the same as incarceration, adhering to the reputations of these men, obscuring what others see of them and effectively silencing them.

Consider Kaphar’s way of working. Collaborate with friends to select an issue, a concern, or worry that you would like to express. Investigate your topic and brainstorm ways to visually communicate that concern. Keep your criteria in mind: choosing and manipulating materials in ways that demonstrate influences and consequences related to your topic.





Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. From left to right, works by **LaToya Ruby Frazier**, courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York/Rome: *Grandma Ruby, J.C. and Me Watching Soap Operas in her Living Room*, gelatin silver print, 2007, Edition 1 of 3 + 2APs. *Grandma Ruby Combing and Braiding J.C.'s Hair*, gelatin silver print, 2007, Edition 1 of 5 + 2 APs. *Grandma Ruby's Refrigerator*, gelatin silver print, 2007, Edition 1 of 3 + 2 APs. *Landscape of the Body*, (Ajax Way/Sergeant Frazier), gelatin silver print, 2011, Edition 1 of 5 + 2 APs.



**"IT IS THE PICTURE OF LIFE CONTRASTED WITH THE FACT OF LIFE, THE IDEAL CONTRASTED WITH THE REAL, WHICH MAKES CRITICISM POSSIBLE ... THE WANT OF PROGRESS IS NOT FELT WHERE SUCH WANT IS NOT MADE VISIBLE..."<sup>10</sup>**

— Frederick Douglass

## Activity 4



LaToya Ruby Frazier, *Grandma Ruby, J.C. and Me Watching Soap Operas in her Living Room*, gelatin silver print, 2007, Edition 1 of 3 + 2APs. Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, NewYork/Rome.

LaToya Ruby Frazier was 17 when she began documenting her family's life in Braddock, Pennsylvania. This once-thriving steel town disintegrated over the course of three generations, including those of her grandmother, her mother, and herself. **Deindustrialization** brought the loss of businesses, stable communities, and critical services such as medical care. Rising rates of poverty, crime, and addiction were accompanied by ill health related to environmental toxins left by long-gone industries. Frazier and her family became a part of a struggling populace, trapped in a rapid socioeconomic decline.

Frazier's photographs recording this time include collaborative efforts with her grandmother and mother, creating images that exist on a line between social documentation and self-portraiture. Frazier speaks through her work "not as a curious or concerned outsider but as a vulnerable insider,"<sup>11</sup> employing photography as an avenue for regaining her power of self-determination.



**"... PRODUCING THE PORTRAITS WITH BOTH MY MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER WAS A DETOX AND TRANSFORMATION ... EACH PHOTOGRAPH I MADE GOT ME CLOSER TO MY FUTURE SELF..."<sup>12</sup>**

— LaToya Ruby Frazier

Revisit Douglass' and Frazier's quotes on this page and page 17. Douglass' dignified approach to forging his own image appears opposed to Frazier's, yet both are fundamentally committed to advocating for oppressed people. Collaborate with friends to create lists of descriptive words and phrases that explain both Douglass' and Frazier's approaches to photography. Use these lists to craft a statement that summarizes the differences and similarities in the way these two place photography in the service of advocacy.

**"MY FAMILY DID NOT HAVE A FAMILY ALBUM. WE WEREN'T THAT KIND OF FAMILY. SO IN A WAY I BECAME THAT PERSON, BUT I WAS DOCUMENTING THE PICTURES THAT NO FAMILY WOULD WANT TO SHOW."<sup>13</sup>** — LaToya Ruby Frazier



LaToya Ruby Frazier, *Grandma Ruby's Refrigerator*, gelatin silver print, 2007, Edition 1 of 3 + 2 APs. Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York/Rome.



Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. From left to right: Lyle Ashton Harris, *Mother and Sons II*, unique polaroid, 1994. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York. Lyle Ashton Harris, *The Beautiful Ones II*, unique polaroid, 1994. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York. Betye Saar, *Migration: Africa to America I*, mixed media assemblage, 2006. Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles.

**“ALL WISHES, ALL ASPIRATIONS, ALL  
HOPES, ALL FEARS, ALL DOUBTS, ALL  
DETERMINATIONS GROW STRONGER AND  
STRONGER PRECISELY IN PROPORTION AS  
THEY GET THEMSELVES EXPRESSED IN  
WORDS, FORMS, COLOURS, AND ACTION.”<sup>14</sup>**

— Frederick Douglass





## Activity 5

Lyle Ashton Harris frequently includes family and friends within his work. In the large-scale color Polaroid on the facing page we see the artist, his mother, and brother. Behind them are the colors of the **pan-African** flag: red, black, and green.

Harris was close to his grandparents — his grandfather was a keen observer and devoted amateur photographer who captured over 10,000 images documenting the life of his family and community. His mother was a university professor who, for a time, raised her sons in the East African country of Tanzania. Harris and his brother, filmmaker Thomas Harris, are both committed to using visual arts as a tool for social change, and both identify as queer. Harris' work addresses topics of community and belonging, and of identities based on diverse ethnicities and sexualities.

**"... IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT ALL THE TRUTH AND VERACITY OF PHOTOGRAPHY ... THE IDEA OF THE DOCUMENT IS SOMETHING I FIND DEEPLY SUSTAINING ... ALSO ITS ABILITY TO REIMAGINE IDENTITY."**<sup>15</sup>

— Lyle Ashton Harris

Harris acknowledges the contradictions in his description of what attracts him to photography — its potential to represent what is and what might be. Like Douglass, he is aware of both the authority of the visual and the influential power of visualization, or imagination.

**"... THE CAMERA, IN THE SPACES I FOUND MYSELF IN, BECAME A TOOL OR A WEAPON OR A COMFORT OR CONTROL THAT HELPED ME NEGOTIATE SPACE."**<sup>16</sup>

— Lyle Ashton Harris

Consider Harris' reflections regarding the camera as tool, weapon, comfort, and control. Brainstorm with friends, identifying ways an artist could use a camera for these purposes. Share your thoughts on how these motivations reveal themselves in Harris' photographs and in work throughout the exhibition. Choose one or more examples and write a brief statement that describes and supports your observations.



Lyle Ashton Harris, *Mother and Sons II*, unique polaroid, 1994. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York.

# EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

## College, Career, and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

<https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>

- D2.His.2.6-8.** Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.
- D2.His.2.9-12.** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- D2.His.9.6-8.** Classify the kinds of historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.
- D2.His.9.9-12.** Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

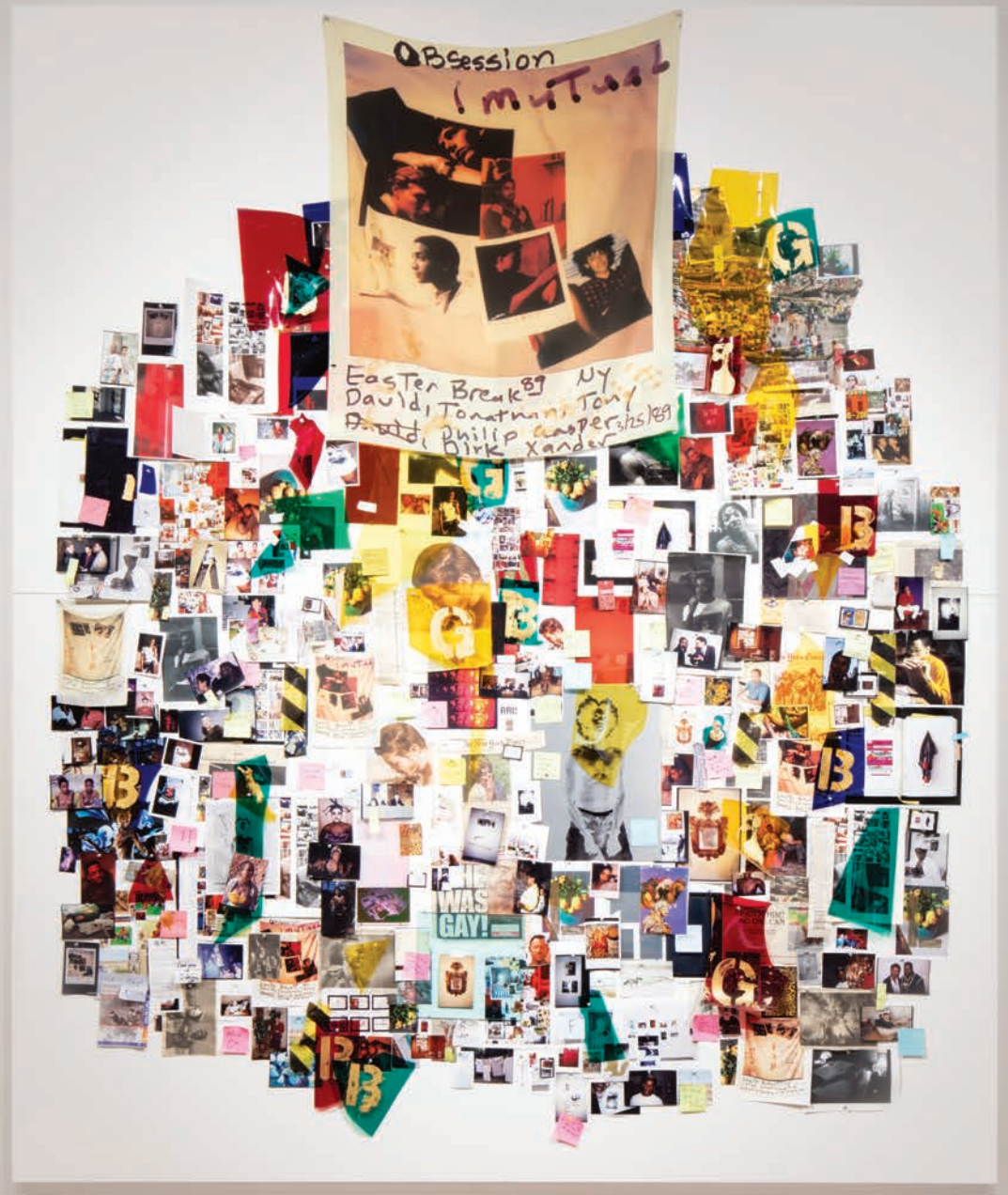
## Common Core English Language Arts Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



## National Core Arts Standards

- Creating 1.2** **Anchor:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.  
**6:** Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.  
**7:** Develop criteria to guide making a work of art or design to meet an identified goal.  
**8:** Collaboratively shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art and design.  
**HSI:** Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.  
**HSII:** Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.  
**HSIII:** Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea, or concept.
- Responding 7.2** **Anchor:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.  
**6:** Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations suggested by images influence ideas, emotions, and actions.  
**7:** Analyze multiple ways that images influence specific audiences.  
**8:** Compare and contrast contexts and media in which viewers encounter images that influence ideas, emotions, and actions.  
**HSI:** Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.  
**HSII:** Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.  
**HSIII:** Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.
- Responding 8.1** **Anchor:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
**HSI:** Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.  
**HSII:** Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.  
**HSIII:** Analyze differing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works in order to select and defend a plausible critical analysis.
- Connecting 11.1** **Anchor:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.  
**6:** Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.  
**7:** Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses.  
**8:** Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.  
**HSII:** Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.



# GLOSSARY

**carte de visite** *n.* A mid-19th-century social convention resembling today's business cards, a *carte de visite* was left at the home of an acquaintance or friend to let the receiver know that a visit had been attempted in their absence. As photographic reproduction became more economical, *cartes de visite* evolved to include portraits. Prized as collectibles, they eventually expanded to include images of celebrities.

**deindustrialization** *n.* The economic and social changes that follow the decline of a region's primary industries, such as mining, automotive manufacturing, steelmaking, or chemical processing.

**devotional painting** *n.* A devotion refers to a prayer or religious observance. Often featuring gilded backgrounds and depicting holy figures, Christian devotional paintings serve as a focus for worship.

**gravitas** *n.* A dignified formality in bearing or appearance.

**Harlem Renaissance** A period from the 1920s to 1930s when the Harlem neighborhood of New York City became the cultural center for African American achievements in art, dance, literature, and music.

**Mathew Brady** (1823–1896) A popular portrait photographer turned documentarian, Brady and his staff are best known for their images of Civil War battlefields.

**pan-African** *adj.* Of or relating to a movement to support the bonds between worldwide peoples of African descent.

Left: Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. Lyle Ashton Harris, *Obsessão II*, mixed media collage on panel, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York.



# CITATIONS

- <sup>1</sup> Douglass, F., “Lecture on Pictures,” reproduced in Stauffer, J., Trodd, Z., Bernier, C., & Gates, H. L. (2015). *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company
- <sup>2</sup> Douglass, F., quoted by Bernier, C. (2018, December 9). *The Activism, Artistry, and Authorship of Frederick Douglass* [video]. Retrieved from [thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/2018/12/09/video-the-activism-artistry-and-authorship-of-frederick-douglass-by-prof-celeste-marie-bernier-national-gallery-of-art/feed](http://thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/2018/12/09/video-the-activism-artistry-and-authorship-of-frederick-douglass-by-prof-celeste-marie-bernier-national-gallery-of-art/feed)
- <sup>3</sup> Lawrence, J., quoted by Donohue, M. (1994, February 4). Telling History in Brushstrokes. Retrieved from [csmonitor.com/1994/0204/04121.html](http://csmonitor.com/1994/0204/04121.html)
- <sup>4</sup> Douglass, F., & McKivigan, J. R. (2010). *The Frederick Douglass papers*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
- <sup>5</sup> White, C., interviewed by Elliot, J. (1978). Charles White: Portrait of an Artist. *Negro History Bulletin*, 41, no. 3 (May–June)
- <sup>6</sup> Douglass, F., “Pictures and Progress” reproduced in Stauffer, J., Trodd, Z., Bernier, C., & Gates, H. L. (2015). *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company
- <sup>7</sup> Kaphar, T. (n.d.). Retrieved from [jackshainman.com/artists/artists-2/titus-kaphar](http://jackshainman.com/artists/artists-2/titus-kaphar)
- <sup>8</sup> Kaphar, T., interviewed by Stanley, J. (2019, June 13). Titus Kaphar. Retrieved from [bombmagazine.org/articles/titus-kaphar](http://bombmagazine.org/articles/titus-kaphar)
- <sup>9</sup> Kaphar, T., interviewed by Kelly, M. L. (2018, October 4). “Meet the MacArthur Fellow Disrupting Racism in Art.” Retrieved from [npr.org/2018/10/04/654476095/meet-the-macarthur-fellow-disrupting-racism-in-art](http://npr.org/2018/10/04/654476095/meet-the-macarthur-fellow-disrupting-racism-in-art)
- <sup>10</sup> Douglass, F., Pictures and Progress, reproduced in Stauffer, J., Trodd, Z., Bernier, C., & Gates, H. L. (2015). *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company
- <sup>11</sup> Frazier, L., interviewed by St. Félix, D. (2017, October 31). A Black Woman, Steel Worker, and Artist, Through the Eyes of LaToya Ruby Frazier. Retrieved from [newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/a-black-woman-steel-worker-and-artist-through-the-eyes-of-latoya-ruby-frazier](http://newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/a-black-woman-steel-worker-and-artist-through-the-eyes-of-latoya-ruby-frazier)
- <sup>12</sup> Frazier, L., interviewed by Donoghue, K. (2018, April 30). “LaToya Ruby Frazier: Artist as Advocate.” Retrieved from [latoyarubyfrazier.com/news/latoya-ruby-frazier-artist-advocate-whitewall-magazine](http://latoyarubyfrazier.com/news/latoya-ruby-frazier-artist-advocate-whitewall-magazine)
- <sup>13</sup> Frazier, L., interviewed by Mallonee, L. (2017, November 20). LaToya Ruby Frazier’s 12-Year Project Captures a Dying Town. Retrieved from [wired.com/2015/10/interview-photographer-latoya-ruby-frazier](http://wired.com/2015/10/interview-photographer-latoya-ruby-frazier)
- <sup>14</sup> Douglass, *supra* note 6
- <sup>15</sup> Harris, L., interviewed by Sargent, A. (2018, November 14). Lyle Ashton Harris on Basquiat, Black Panther, and Afrofuturism’s Queer Roots. Retrieved from [vulture.com/2018/11/lyle-ashton-harris-returns-afrofuturism-to-its-queer-roots.html](http://vulture.com/2018/11/lyle-ashton-harris-returns-afrofuturism-to-its-queer-roots.html)
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*



Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*. From left to right, works by **Martha Rosler**. *Off the Shelf: About Women, By Women*, C-print, 2018, Edition of 10 + 2 APs. *Off the Shelf: Colonialism, Slavery, Race*, C-print, 2018, Edition of 10 + 2 APs. *Off the Shelf: Capitalism, Democracy*, C-print, 2018, Edition of 10 + 2 APs. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York.

# CONNECTIONS

Savannahian Dr. Walter O. Evans' collection of African American art includes the documents and photography that inspired this exhibition. Learn about these works and how Dr. Evans became a collector.

[nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/frederick-douglass-walter-evans.html](http://nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/frederick-douglass-walter-evans.html)

[traditionalhome.com/lifestyle/antiques-collecting/collecting-eye-art](http://traditionalhome.com/lifestyle/antiques-collecting/collecting-eye-art)

In 1883 *Harper's Weekly* featured Douglass as the cover story. View the original article and the accompanying portrait.

[thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/tag/harpers-weekly](http://thelionofanacostia.wordpress.com/tag/harpers-weekly)

View the series of 32 tempera-on-hardboard panels belonging to Jacob Lawrence's "The Life of Frederick Douglass."

[jacobandgwenlawrence.org/gallery.php?page=16](http://jacobandgwenlawrence.org/gallery.php?page=16)

Read about Charles White's artistic career and view the image of Douglass included in *Five Great American Negroes*.

[altaonline.com/muscle-soul-and-vision](http://altaonline.com/muscle-soul-and-vision)

Watch Titus Kaphar deliver the TED Talk, "Can Art Amend History?"

[ted.com/talks/titus\\_kaphar\\_can\\_art\\_amend\\_history](http://ted.com/talks/titus_kaphar_can_art_amend_history)

Explore LaToya Frazier's recent work and projects.

[latoyarubyfrazier.com](http://latoyarubyfrazier.com)

This trailer for *Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People* includes the work of Lyle Ashton Harris.

[pbs.org/independentlens/videos/family-photo-albums](http://pbs.org/independentlens/videos/family-photo-albums)



March 3, 1994

Dear Tomlet,

I was half asleep when you called last night and an old inappropriate  
article greeted a good night.

Over since Kelly moved in here, he has been on the warpath. He  
tells me that he is very "discontented" with me, with Mike  
and the family, with Bill and his life and wants to sell  
out and go to California (including, I presume, this house so we  
will be homeless like a lot of other people). He has been  
especially weird ever since Kelly moved in. I wonder, unless how  
many times he is to me and quite frankly ever since my birthday  
he has been really nasty because I think he has a guilty conscience  
for reminding me on my birthday so I wouldn't go with him. I  
have been on quest living in his house with the nasty attitude  
that about a month ago I made an appointment with my psychiatrist.  
Dr. Schwartz for March 19th whom I intend to keep. My hatred for  
him has become substance that is in becoming unbearable. He does  
not like you having a girlfriend up there and is always  
also dissatisfied that you are spending all of his money when he is  
also dissatisfied with you spending to him and the reason for all  
of this discontentment is one word — MONEY. When I told him I  
of this discontentment he was just about to burst. As he  
couldn't say the best this month he was just about to burst. As he  
said older he gets grimmer and everything in him knows it. I  
told him that really high attitude because of the cold weather  
he was about your future and growth and other things and that we  
also about each other very much. He doesn't understand what  
— someone immediately a bit because he never has. When he moved to  
— I think when I was young he never called. He was the one who  
— Mike and I think he has become distant and she does not hurt  
— Mike. When she had to change beds she had to take her and his  
— free (except) and he questioned her so badly later that she got  
— all frustrated and got the answer story all mixed up so he ripped  
— it to himself and figured we were up to us and said he was against  
— all over John's wife and anyone else who would listen. How he could  
— all your father and consider from our conversation that you were  
— Mike is beyond me. If he had some young boy he wouldn't have  
— like to manipulate him. His own mother would not open to him  
— in the last years after life, neither would his father. They  
— said he killed their last years and broke their way from their family  
— when they had also been very close to. He is immature and dangerous  
— as Mike and I have mentioned to me and he has been talking  
— and have or is power. He ignores Mike and has been talking  
— stories about John's mother which Mike is furious about and Mike  
— now talks like to just shut up and if you don't like it you can jump to.  
— I have not wanted to tell you how bad he has been for the last year  
— because I didn't want you to experience your living money.

I never told you that but about six months ago he told me some pretty  
shocking stories about how he had also heard about it and wouldn't  
have anything to do with him. He finally apologized after about two  
months but she still hates him. She says herself she just says his  
for him to the group and small stuff. Actually, I think  
all of this hatred of to his bitterness over money and being not  
money to you thought he never says anything about that. Almost little  
shameless of hand money.

There discussed this latest fight with Mike and she feels it will  
have no effect on your stay up there for the rest of his life. She  
says he gave me and he would give you a year or there and she  
believes he will keep it even though it is getting the more to part  
with money.

Mike and I think he is a functioning mental deficient who is "over  
sensitive" but someone else to just get along. For example, he did an  
apartment of home recently for some fancy lawyer and didn't attack  
a bill for his services. He has been screaming for the last week  
because the guy didn't pay him. Does that make sense? That's  
just one small example.

His hatred of everyone and everything is terrible. He even tells  
terrible stories about his own friends like Bill (Mike's brother)  
Mike, Mike and I don't believe him and Mike said if Bill knew what  
he was screaming about then about him he probably was him. I  
hope he finds out.

Mike and I do not want to talk about his affairs and I am not going  
to mention his affairs. I intend to stay totally away from him but he  
will be to feeling bad and try to call here so I have the opportunity  
to tell him all the time as when you call just wait till I hear what it  
is and then I will talk it up if it is you. We are looking for  
another place possibly on the west side where you used to live but the  
rent is so high we can't even pay for the security deposit. Mike  
does not have any money which is not unfortunate because he  
doesn't change as a security deposit but we will keep looking. Mike  
didn't want to say me at his place or maybe we can get lucky here.  
I hope you don't have any sentimental attachment to this place and to  
to see you like it he left it to you but I can't live under Mike  
thumb and all his money affairs with his life and stories that he  
can't believe.

I don't say strongly because enough there is nothing wrong with  
you and he knows nothing. All of that is over and done with Mike and  
has been so quit your feeling. You just have to live with us have  
all been through with him.

We do not want you to hate him as we do but he is not at us because  
he thought up in his face the facts that he never spent one day or  
one night for education, culture, food, medicine, etc., etc. That  
is the point Mike. You have to realize that it is all his life he has  
never been a life, a child-rearing and money. He spent every  
day of his life on himself and underneath nothing else.

I don't believe I will ever see or speak to him again. I just can't  
take his life and indifference about everything and everybody.  
Mike Mike will make him to die as he and live in house and Mike  
wishes Mike dead, too. I had to say this, but so do I. I want  
Mike to have a few years of peace. I believe I can take care of  
her quite nicely.

Well now enough of that angry subject.

Valerie said over the phone that she was coming over today around  
11:30, but it is 11:20 and she is not here yet. Hope she forgets.  
I don't know what she wants. I haven't seen or talked to her since  
before Christmas yet ever since you were about to come to she is  
always willing to come over. It's very weird. I am going to have  
to be very careful and careful about what I say to her. She's another  
tricky one.

The person I said your painting of the man and the woman is in waiting  
for her house but before Mike. Since she filed early in February  
I should have the money in about two or three weeks at the most and  
will send it immediately. I will deposit it in my checking account  
and send you my check for the \$200,00 and have the \$200,00 for the  
house over at Mike's for him to pick up.

Please say hi to Grandma for me. I send you both my love and  
quit your damn worrying. There is nothing to worry about.

I look forward to talking to you on Monday.

All My Love Always  
Mom and  
"The Girls"

TR Ericsson, *Letter (March 3, 1994)*, Graphite, resin and funerary ash on muslin, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Harlan Levy Projects; specially commissioned by SCAD Museum of Art.

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Installation view, *Frederick Douglass: Embers of Freedom*.



Photographer unknown, Lewis Henry Douglass in military uniform, circa 1863, encased tintype photograph. Collection of Walter and Linda Evans.



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Cover image: Photographer unknown (likely Dennis Bourdon, Notman Photographic Company), *Joseph Henry Douglass and Frederick Douglass*, May 10, 1894, cabinet card photograph. Collection of Walter and Linda Evans.



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