

Contributors

Rick Banks, an Atlanta native, heard his calling at a very young age. His love of photography was born at the age of eight, after seeing a print develop in a tray. This intense photographic passion has afforded him opportunities that allowed him to work in various capacities in his professional photographic career. His artistic eye has been developed and sharpened by thirty plus years of experience in photography, advertising, and print design/production. His work has been published in books, magazines, catalogs, and news publications, and it has been used in marketing and promotional materials for various clients. Banks has exhibited his work at different venues and some of his images are part of the permanent art collection of the City of Atlanta. He has photographed giants of business and entertainment in addition to "just folk." Before he opens his camera case, he opens his ears to ensure that he understands the needs of his client. His shooting style has ultimately been called "intense and detail-driven" at times and very relaxed at others. An open mind and a stylized eye are the most essential tools he utilizes in every shoot.

Abdi Farah began his art education at the George Washington Carver Center for Art and Technology in Towson, Maryland after his dreams of playing in the NBA were eclipsed by a greater passion to be the next Basquiat. Farah received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 2009, graduating with honors. Farah has been fortunate to exhibit work across the country and internationally at institutions including the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Margulies Collection, the Institute for American Universities in Aix en Provence, France, and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, to name a few. He also highlighted a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. Farah was a 2005 Presidential Scholar in the Arts, a recipient of the Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship through the Yale Norfolk School of Music and Art, and a 2017 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture participant. In 2018, Farah received his MFA in painting from Tulane University in New Orleans, where he continues to live and work. For more on his art, visit his website at <http://www.abdifarah.com>.

Dr. Nettrice R. Gaskins is an African American digital artist, academic, cultural critic, and advocate of STEAM fields. In her work, she explores "techno-vernacular creativity" and Afrofuturism. She has worked for several years in K-12 and post-secondary education, community media, and technology before receiving a doctorate in Digital Media from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2014. Gaskins has focused on the application of cultural art and technologies in STEAM learning for underrepresented ethnic groups in public schools in the United States and around the world. She has also worked as a teaching artist for the Boston 100K Artscience Innovation Prize and was a youth media/technology trainer for Adobe Youth Voices. She served as Board President of the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture and was on the board of the Community Technology Centers Network (CTCNet). Dr. Gaskins has also received funding from the National Science Foundation for Advancing STEM Through Culturally Situated Arts-Based Learning. Gaskins provides expert advice on how to include people from underrepresented communities. For more on her art, visit her website at <http://www.nettricegaskins.com>.

Dr. Cheryl R. Hopson is an assistant professor professor of English and African American Studies at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. She received her PhD in English from the University of Kentucky in 2008 and specializes in twentieth century American and African Amer-

ican literature and culture as well as Black and Third Wave feminist autobiographical, philosophical, and life writing. In addition, Hopson is an essayist and poet. She has published essays on Zora Neale Hurston, Alice and Rebecca Walker, and Black Feminist sisterhood. Finishing Line Press published her chapbooks *Fragile* (2017) and *Black Notes* (2013). Additionally, Hopson's poems can be found in the *Toronto Quarterly*, *Border Crossings*, and *Not Very Quiet*, in the anthology *Writing for Peace* (2017), and in other publications.

Myrtle Jones, a Chicago native residing in Harlem, is an assistant professor in Media Sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology. She teaches courses on the digital distribution of intellectual property, database publishing, and media law. She received MA's from NYU's Gallatin Division, focusing on Publishing Studies, and Teachers College in Anthropology and Education. She is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at Columbia University. She also attended IESE's Institute for Media Entertainment. Jones has been an information connoisseur since childhood, learning the Dewey Decimal System by heart working alongside her mother, a library clerk. She was the first online director of a suburban newspaper in New York in 2000. She started her career as a researcher at Harpo, Inc, where she was first exposed to FoxPro databases. She was a member of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) and her poetry has been featured in *Nommo*. Her academic work on media entrepreneurs has been featured in the *International Journal of Media Management*. She researches the Black Elite in Harlem and she has performed her work at the Potter's House in Washington, DC. Autoethnography and Performative Ethnography are just two of the many tools she uses to inject decoloniality into her scholarship and work.

Leah, TheActivistArtist, Smith is a community advocate, poet, and Neo-retro R&B musician in Augusta, GA. Committed to healing and self-awareness, Smith writes and performs music that raises awareness about mental illness and uses her platform to help her community navigate the ebbs and flows of love and loss. Her debut album, *Fire2Feelings*, was released in December 2018. She is a graduate of Augusta University.

Dr. Christopher Allen Varlack is a lecturer at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he teaches for the Individualized Study Program and the Honors College. He offers courses in graphic memoirs and novels of the African diaspora, African-American socio-political thought, civil rights literature, taboo and transgressive texts, and more. He received his MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Southern Maine in 2010 and his doctorate in English from Morgan State University in 2016. In 2015, he served as editor for *Critical Insights: Harlem Renaissance* and in 2017, he served as editor for *Critical Insights: Civil Rights Literature, Past and Present*. Now, as co-managing editor of *Third Stone* and president of the Langston Hughes Society, he works to increase awareness of Black culture and the ways in which writers across the diaspora have affirm their own voices and control their own narratives. For more on his work, visit his website at <http://www.christopherallenvarlack.com>.

Donald Vincent, also known as Mr. Hip, earned his MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College and a BA in Writing and Public Relations from Loyola University Maryland. He is a poet, educator, recording artist, and founder of [le pamplémuse™](#), a content development platform dedicated to spreading awareness of healthier lifestyles. Under [@le_pamp](#), Vincent also created [That's So Vegan](#), a visual project merging creativity and education on plant-based foods and products

with uplifting information on veganism. Vincent also contributed content for Wellvyl, an organization dedicated to redefining the concept of wellness and making it accessible for all. Currently, he teaches English Composition at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). He completed working as the Community Outreach Coordinator for PEN America, traveling throughout the country organizing press freedom advocacy events. Vincent learned technical writing and program management after working as an Emergency Management Program Specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Since then, he continues using storytelling as an instrument for change and awareness of advancing an understanding of justice and compassion. His poems have been published in a variety of different literary magazines and journals, and his [music](#) can be found on all streaming platforms.

Dr. Seretha D. Williams is professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at Augusta University. She earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Georgia. Her research areas are in Africana Studies, women's literature, trauma theory, the Black Chicago Renaissance, and the Black Arts Movement. She focuses on the work of Margaret Walker (Alexander). Williams is co-editor of the collection *Afterimages of Slavery: Essays on Appearances in Recent American Films, Literature, Television and Other Media*. Williams is a digital humanities fellow at Augusta University, a graduate student in Library Information Science at Valdosta State University, and an Extending the Reach scholar with the Black Book Interactive Project at the University of Kansas. She is also the co-managing editor of *Third Stone*.