

**KANTARA SOUFFRANT, Ph.D.**  
Curator of Community Dialogue – Milwaukee Arts Museum  
Assistant Professor, Art History and Visual Culture  
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts – Illinois State University  
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### **Teaching and Research Interests**

African and African diasporic art history; ritual and performance; Yoruba, KiKongo, and Haitian art; Black feminist aesthetics; museums and public pedagogy; diaspora aesthetics; postcolonial theory and visual culture; curatorial practice and community engagements.

### **Education**

Ph.D., Performance Studies, Northwestern University, 2017

Dissertation Title: *Circling the Cosmograms: Feminist Art, Vodou and Diasporic (Re)turns to Post-Quake Haiti*

Cognate: Postcolonial Theory

Certificates: Teaching (The Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching at Northwestern); African American and Diaspora Studies and Critical Theory

M.A., Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, 2010

B.A., Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, 2008

### **Teaching Appointments**

Assistant Professor, Art History/Visual Culture School of Art, Illinois State University, Normal, IL	August 2019 – Present
Visiting Assistant Professor, Arts of Africa and the Black Atlantic Art History, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH	July 2018 – June 2019
Guest Instructor, “Object Lab: Diaspora” Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee, WI	June 2018
Graduate Fellow, Brady Scholars Program in Ethics and Civic Life Northwestern University, Evanston, IL	June 2013-June 2016
The Arts Integrated Mentorship Project (Project AIM) Columbia College, Teaching artist residency, Nichols Middle School, Evanston, IL	June 2014-July 2015
Instructor, Communications 203: Performance, Culture, and Communication Northwestern University, Evanston, IL	Winter 2013
Haitian Kreyòl Instructor Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti, Evanston, IL	June-August 2012

### **Museum and Cultural Appointments**

Curator of Community Dialogue Milwaukee Arts Museum, Milwaukee, WI	January 2021 – Present
Manager of Schools and Teachers Program Milwaukee Arts Museum, Milwaukee, WI	August 2015 – July 2018
Curatorial Liaison, Haitian American Museum of Chicago	September 2012 – August 2013
Executive Board Member/Co-Curator Doukan 7002, Experimental Art Space Chicago, IL	November 2011-August 2013
Intern, The Field Museum Environment, Culture, and Conservation Division (ECCo), Chicago, IL	September – December 2011

Intern, *praxis place* : performance space, Chicago, IL

January 2010-July 2011

### **Publications**

“Subtle Time and Refusals: A Conversation with Nazafarin Lotfi” June 2020  
Interview published as part of *Nazafarin Lotfi: Subtle Time* (Curated by Teen Arts Group)  
University Galleries of Illinois State University, Normal IL

“Faith, Flags, and Flashes of Spirit” December 2019  
*Faena Festival: The Last Supper* Catalogue Entry on Myrlande Constant

“Putting Ego Aside: Strategies for Building Inclusive Black Academic Spaces” November 2019  
Black Perspectives, Digital arm of African American Intellectual History Society  
Part of online forum, “Researching, Teaching, and Embodying the Black Diaspora”

“Milwaukee is Home to One of the Longest Youth-Led Mass Protests in U.S. History” October 2017  
Huffington Post article, part of the “Listen to America” series

“Circling Dantò’s Daughter:  
Reflections on Lenelle Moïse’s Performances of Shamelessness” May 2017  
*Nou Mache Asanm* (We Walk Together): *Queer Haitian Performance and Affiliation*  
Special Issue, *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* (Peer Reviewed)

“Circling the Cosmogram: Vodou Aesthetics, Feminism, and Art April 2016  
in the Second-Generation Haitian *Diaspora*”  
*Vodou in Haitian Memory: The Idea and Representation of Vodou in Haitian Imagination* (Lexington Books, Peer Reviewed)

*Nan Domi: An Initiate’s Journey into Haitian Vodou* (Book Review) October 2014  
“Haiti: Then and Now” (Academic Blog)

“Tavares Strachan” October 2014  
Artist Profile, U.S. Biennale/Prospect New Orleans, Prospect 3 Catalogue

“An’n Pale with Didier Williams” (Review) February 2011  
Haitian Cultural Exchange, Program Review ([haitianculturalx.org](http://haitianculturalx.org))

*Senior arts* May 2008  
Featured artist in publication, Oberlin College

*Ritual Cleansing: Bunches of Hooked Up Blues Business* May 2006  
Featured artist in publication, Oberlin College

### **Projects in Progress**

*What I Give My Daughters: A Gathering of Wisdom for Black Girls*  
Socially engaged art project with Black mothers in Urbana-Champaign and Bloomington-

Normal. Final product will include a digital archive and publication. Collaborators include Normal Public Library and Mocha Moms of Central Illinois.

*A Radical Reimagining of Museums: A Handbook for Institutional Change (or a Rejection of Racists Institutions)*  
Book proposal for a co-edited volume between Drs. Kantara Souffrant and Marianna Pegno that examines and envisions the future of museums.

“Guest Facilitator: Black Caribbean Waters: Decolonizing the Archives”

Invited guest artist-scholar presenter and respondent to Northwestern University graduate seminar “Black Caribbean Waters: Decolonizing the Archives” co-taught by Drs. Ramon Rivera-Servera and E. Patrick Johnson (January 2021).

“Roundtable Speaker: Black Caribbean Waters: Decolonizing the Archive Symposium”

Invited participant to the Northwestern Symposium “Black Caribbean Waters: Decolonizing the Archives” (February 2021).

*Vodou: Performing Sacred Things* (working title, arts catalogue, Boston College)

Invited catalogue submission for the exhibition *Haitian Holy Art, Sacred Art: Spirits and Saints of Haitian Vodou* curated by Dr. Kyras Malika Daniels and exhibited Boston College’s McMullen Museum (Spring 2022).

### **Lectures and Conference Presentations**

“Artist-Scholar Talk”

December 2020

Teen Arts Group, University Galleries  
Illinois State University, Bloomington, IL

“The Ringshout + Kongo Cosmograms”

November 2020

Guest Lecture, African Dance (Sections 01 and 02)  
University of Oklahoma, Normal, OK  
Invited by Professor Marie Casimir

“Teaching Diaspora in Museums: A Haitian Art Case Study”

October 2020

*Conversando Entre Nostros*, Latin American and Latino/a Studies Program  
Illinois State University, Bloomington-Normal, IL

“Teaching Diaspora in Museums”

March 2020

Milwaukee Art Museum, Docent Lecture, Milwaukee, WI

“Words, Language, and Representation”: Q & A with Dr. Patrick Bellegarde-Smith February 2020

Invited as to be a respondent and facilitator for Dr. Patrick Bellegarde-Smiths keynote presentation. “Words, Language, and Representation.”  
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

“From Brooklyn to Benin: The Art of Ritual Remembrance and (Re)turns of Régine Romain”

March 2019

Midwest Art History Society, 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Cincinnati, OH

- SXSW EDU Session: Amping Up Access to Culturally Responsive Arts March 2019  
Invited panelist, Wolf Trap Foundation panel at SXSW Edu, Austin, TX
- Curating Black Art Now November 2018  
Invited panelist, Oberlin College, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH
- “The Role of the Faith Community in Advancing Social Justice” November 2017  
Co-Moderator, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Panel, Milwaukee, WI  
Part of the “50 Year-Ache Series”
- “Teaching ‘Diaspora’ Making Discourse and Dissent Accessible through Performing Objects” November 2017  
Panelist, American Studies Association, Material Culture Caucus, Chicago, IL
- “Housing and Segregation in Milwaukee, Then and Now” September 2017  
Co-Moderator, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Panel, Milwaukee, WI  
Part of the “50 Year-Ache” Series
- “Rive Gauche: Interview at Haitian Art Exhibit at Green Gallery” April 2017  
Radio Interview on Alliance Française Milwaukee
- “From Partnership to Collaboration: Changing Practices in Art Museums” March 2017  
Panelist, National Arts Education Association, New York, NY
- “Art by Artists of the African Diaspora” February 2017  
Keynote Black History Lecture, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Milwaukee, WI
- “Art+Value: Affective Labor” November 2016  
Panelist, *Art + Value* symposium, Hume Gallery, Chicago, IL
- “Humanities Without Walls: Alumni Session” July 2016  
Alumni Presenter at Humanities Without Wall Workshop for Graduate Students in the humanities
- Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti* April 2016  
Book launch panelist, Haitian American Museum of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- “On Sister Selva: Thoughts on Race, Gender, Sensuality and the Dancing Brown Body” May 2015  
Guest Lecture, Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary Asian Performance
- “Why Ferguson Matters to Us: Rethinking Haiti’s Revolutionary Legacy on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Earthquake and the 211<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Independence” January 2015  
Keynote Lecture, Haitian Congress in Evanston, Unity Day Event
- “Dreaming of Love, Art, and Rebuilding Post-Quake Haiti” November 2013  
Panelist, Haitian Studies Association, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
- “‘No One Thinks of Love When They Think Of Haiti’: In Search of a Vodou Art” October 2013

Praxis of Love”

Panelist, KOSANBA Congress of Santa Barbara, an Association for the Study of Haitian Vodou, Harvard University

“‘To Me With Love’ – Performing Self-Care Post Quake” August 2013  
Co-Convener, Panelist, Association for Theater in Higher Education, Orlando, FL

“Seeing Dyasporically: Working to Find Post-Quake Haiti” November 2012  
Co-Panelist, “Caribbean Ambivalence,” American Studies Association

“From *Masisi* to *Madivinez*: Queer Ritual and Performance Epistemologies April 2012  
In Dyaspora” Invited Presenter/Performer, Transnational Hispaniola Conference  
Rutgers University

“Post-Quake’ Haiti: Visuality, Memory, and (Per)forming the January 2012  
Haitian-Dyasporic Imaginary”  
Roots and Branches Conferences, NYU

“Dancing the Haitian Dyasporic Imaginary” May 2010  
Master’s Symposium, New York University

“Performing the Haitian Diasporic Imaginary” November 2009  
21st Annual Haitian Studies Association Conference  
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

“Roots of Discrimination: Contextualizing Student Voices at Oberlin College” May 2009  
Panelist and Moderator, Oberlin College

“One Bad Cat: The Reverend Albert Wagner Story” (documentary) Interviewee May 2008

“Krik...KraK (?): A Response to the Search for One’s Haitian Consciousness; April 2008  
The Uses of Art in Creating A Transnational Identity”  
McNair Research Presentation, Oberlin College

“Parlay Cheval Ou’ (‘Talk To Your Horse’): Summer-Fall 2006  
Vodou Art and Visual Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding The Spiritual  
Traditions, Ritual Arts, and Politics of a Nation”  
McNair Research Presentation, Oberlin College

### **Performances, Workshops and Exhibitions**

“At the Table: Virtual Dinners + Dialogues” September – December 2020  
A series of virtual dinners and facilitated conversations that aimed to build community and embrace vulnerability during the difficult times of COVID-19 Pandemic and build up to November 2020 elections, Bloomington-Normal, IL

“What I Give My Daughters: A Socially-Engaged Art Project (In Progress)” February – March 2020  
A digital project description featuring prompts and documentation.

2020 Faculty Biennale, University Galleries of Illinois State University, Normal, IL

- “Honor? Respect!: Stories from Haiti” February 2020  
Solo performance, Kohl’s Art Generation Haitian Lab, Milwaukee Art Museum  
Milwaukee, WI
- “Seeing Sally Hemmings” June 2018  
Featured performer for Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Presented story on Sally Hemmings,  
museums, and the narrative role of Black women.
- Ko-Thi Dance Company February 2016 – July 2018  
African diasporic dance company, Milwaukee, WI
- “Ex-Fabula: Power, Dissent, and Youth Empowerment” September 2017  
Featured storyteller-performer, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI
- “I Shout to Keep My Devils at Bay: The Sacred and/of/in the Profane” May-June 2016  
Links Hall Artistic Associates Curatorial Residency, Chicago, IL  
A curated performance, visual art, and dialogue series that examines the relationship between  
crisis, art activism, and healing practices within the sacred and secular realms.
- “No One Thinks of Love When They Think of Haiti” February 2016  
Solo Performance, MPAACT, Greenhouse Theatre, Chicago, IL
- “Kohl’s Art Generation: Haitian Art - Rara Performance” February 2016  
Ensemble Performance, Milwaukee Art Museum
- “Haitian Storytelling Performance and Presentation” November 2015  
Solo Folk Storytelling Performance, Milwaukee Art Museum
- SummerStage New York: “Dance Diaspora Collective: Louis Armstrong Tribute” July 2014  
Presented as part of SummerStage: Queens Family Day in association with the Jazz at  
Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis
- “Fragments: Haiti Four Years After the Earthquake” January 2014  
Exhibition opening, Headline Performer, DeKalb University, DeKalb, IL
- “Think. Love. Haiti.” November-December 2013  
Invited performer at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ghetto Biennale, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
- “Run Mary Run: The Ring Shout and  
the foundation of American Music and Dance” November 2013  
Dance Diaspora Collective Ensemble Performance  
Columbia University’s Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life’s  
“Spirit and Sound Concert Series”
- “A City So Real” Ensemble Member June 2013

Performance adaptation of *Never A City So Real*, written and directed by D. Soyini Madison  
Block Museum, Northwestern University

“Ayibobo! A Haitian Love-Hate Story” Solo Performance May 2013  
MPAACT, Greenhouse Theatre, Chicago, IL

“Facets” March 2013  
Ensemble member, directed and conceived by Terry Adkins, Northwestern University

“To Me With Love” A six-week durational performance of self-care Nov.-December 2012

“Run Mary Run” Whitney Biennial, featured soloist May 2012  
Dance Performance, featured as part of Bleed series co-curated  
by Alice and Jason Moran

Black Arts Workshop Workshop Participant July 2011  
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL  
2-week intensive performance workshop with sessions led by Sharon Bridgforth  
and Lenelle Moïse

“Women’s Choreographic Voices” June 2011  
featured dancer-performer, *praxis place*, Chicago, IL

“Picking Up Stones” June 2011  
PhD Recital, Performance Studies, Northwestern University

“Blood Sun,” Part of the “Incubator” Showcase: The State Theatre of Chicago February 2011

“Standing with Papa Legba: Vodou at the Crossroads” January 2011  
Group Exhibit, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diasporic Institute, NYC

Mikerline Dance Company 2009-2010  
Professional Haitian Dance Troupe, New York

“Jiggly Boo Dance Crew: Fat Movement and Body Workshop” June 2010  
Judson Church, New York, NY

“Alchemy” Dance Performance April 2010  
Part of “Chaos and Order: Art as Survival” Gallatin Art Festival, New York, NY

Aesthetics of You January-June 2010  
New York University, New York, NY  
Semester-long performance course taught by Anna Deveare Smith  
Focus on using text to embody individuals, their emotions, and developing  
nuanced performances.

“Madam Kinter’s Tell It Like it is Honesty Booth” September 2009

East Coast Artists: NYU Workshop New York University, New York, NY Workshop Participant Workshop led by Richard Schechner, focus included RasaBoxes workshops and embodiment of various texts.	July 2009
Ilu Aiye West African Drum Ensemble Performance The Kitchen Museum, Block Party, New York,	September 2009
“A Shout House for Katrina” Installation Project Crew Member, Project Row Houses, Inc., Houston, TX	November 2006

**SERVICE**

Humanities Without Walls Alumni Advisory Board	September 2020 – Present
University Service Awards Election Committee Academic Senate, Illinois State University	May 2020 - Present
Curriculum Committee Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, Illinois State University	September 2020 - Present
Visiting Artist Committee Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, Illinois State University	October 2019-Present
Multi-Ethnic Cultural and Cocurricular Programming Advisory Committee (MECCPAC) Dean of Students Office, Illinois State University	October 2019 - Present
Committee Member, March on Milwaukee 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Education Committee Chair	June 2016-July 2018
Chair, Beyond Coasts Symposium Steering Committee Symposium, “Beyond Coasts: Haiti in the Midwest” Northwestern University, April 24-25, 2015	April 2014-April 2015
Vice President, Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) Northwestern University	June 2011-June 2012
Co-Chair, BGSA Conference	September 2011-April 2012

**Awards and Honors**

The Gwen and Ted Crowley Grant Recipient Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, Illinois State University	October 2019
Faculty Development Support Grant Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, Illinois State University	September 2019
National Endowment for the Arts Creativity Connects Performing Arts Fellowship, Milwaukee Recipient	April 2018
Ford Foundations Dissertation Fellowship, Alternate	April 2015
Links Hall Artistic Associate Curatorial Residency	April 2015
Humanities Without Walls Pre-Doctoral Fellow	January 2015
Chicago Consortium for Art and Society Fellow	September 2014
Global Midwest Seed Grant Recipient	May 2014
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Honorable Mention	May 2014



Performance Studies Fellowship  
Robert S. and Gertrude B. Breen Memorial Award  
New York University Tisch School of the Arts Scholarship

September 2013-June 2014  
June 2013  
June 2009-July 2010

### **Facilitation and Community Discussion Leader**

“Welcoming Students: A Faculty Workshop” **June 2020**  
Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, Illinois State University  
Part of the “DIY a La Carte” faculty support series, 28 participants  
“200 Nights of Freedom: Community Forum on Milwaukee Fair Housing Marches” **March 2017**  
Body and Soul Healing Arts Center, Milwaukee Wisconsin, 36 participants  
Rashid Johnson, Exhibition Advisory Council Meeting **February 2017**  
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI, 50 participants  
“200 Nights of Freedom: Community Forum on Milwaukee Fair Housing Marches” **February 2017**  
Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, 108 participants  
“The Future of Diversity & Inclusion at the Museum” **November 2016**  
Milwaukee Art Museum, 60 participants  
“All Staff Discussion on Diversity & Inclusion” **September 2016**  
Milwaukee Art Museum, 30 participants

### **Internal Affiliations**

Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty  
Associate Member of the Women’s Gender Studies Program (WGS)  
Associate Member of Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS)

### **External Affiliations**

Caribbean Studies Association  
African and Diasporic Religious Studies Association  
KOSANBA: Congress of Santa Barbara, An Association for the Study of Haitian Vodou  
American Studies Association  
Haitian Studies Association

### **Trainings and Certifications**

LiberatED Educational Training, “What Does It Mean to Lead Black and Brown Kids in THIS Moment? Putting Culturally Relevant Leadership into ACTION,” January 2017  
Teaching, Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching, Northwestern University, 2016  
Provisional Doula, Ancient Songs (Brooklyn, NY), 2013  
African American and Diaspora Studies, Northwestern, 2012  
Critical Theory, Northwestern, 2011  
Certified Mediator, Oberlin College Dialogue Center (OCDC), 2005