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Book Launch: “Black Women as/and the Living Archive”
Tsedaye Makonnen in Conversation with Nydia A. Swaby

Event Date: Sunday, July 18, 2021 from 3:00–4:30 pm EDT
Location: Online via Zoom – [RSVP Here](#)

Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is thrilled to announce the publication of “Black Women as/and the Living Archive,” edited by DC-based artist **Tsedaye Makonnen** and WPA’s Jordan Martin. To celebrate, please join us for an intimate conversation between Makonnen and ICA London Curator of Learning **Nydia A. Swaby** to discuss how this project archives the ways in which Black women encode, preserve, and share memory through community.

The book is a part of a larger project of the same name that Makonnen organized in the spring and summer of 2020 with WPA. Central to Makonnen’s inquiry is **Alisha B. Wormsley’s** *Children of NAN: Mothership*, a film that functions as a metaphor for the survival and power of Black women in a dystopic future. The cast and collaborators of the film all participated in the multi-event project including **Lisa E. Harris**, **Jasmine Hearn**, **Autumn Knight**, **Ingrid LaFleur**, and **Jamila Raegan**. The publication archive’s of the project’s development and realization during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout the Black Lives Matter uprisings. It captures the relationships and interactions between participants and the audience, and documents the participating artists’ visionary contributions, which included new performances. Additionally, it includes newly commissioned writing

by **Jessica Lanay**, **Jo Stewart**, **Ladi'Sasha Jones**, and **Yona Harvey**, and an annotated bibliography by **Ola Ronke**, creator of **The Free Black Women's Library**. The publication has been beautifully designed by **Rheagen King**.

Makonnen and Swaby's conversation will serve as an extension of this living archive. They will discuss how Black women use the practice of archiving and relationship-building for their survival and joy, and how this project is very much alive and in continuum due to the ongoing nature of its relationships.

The first printing of "Black Women as/and the Living Archive" sold out early but the second is on its way. The publication costs \$50 plus shipping and tax and can be [pre-ordered here](#).

EVENT PARTICIPANTS

Nydia A. Swaby is a black feminist researcher, writer, and curator based in London. Her practice builds on theories of racial, gendered, and diasporic formation, black feminism, black studies, and her previous experience working at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Nydia is a member of Feminist Review's Editorial Collective and co-edited a recent issue on Archives (July 2020). She is currently writing an experimental biography about pan-African feminist Amy Ashwood Garvey that uses her archive, life, and activism to ask broader questions about the futurity of black feminist archives and archival research (Lawrence Wishart, Summer 2022). Nydia is Curator of Learning at the London Institute of Contemporary Arts and will soon begin a Caird Research Fellowship in Caribbean, African, Atlantic histories, and material cultures at Royal Museums Greenwich. She has a PhD in gender studies from SOAS University of London.

Tsedaye Makonnen is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and researcher. She has exhibited at Art Dubai, UAE; The Momentary, Bentonville, AR; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Park Avenue Armory, New York, NY; UNTITLED Art Fair, Miami, FL; and 1:54 Art Fair London, UK. Makonnen is currently exhibiting her work at CFHILL, Stockholm, Sweden, National Museum of Women in the Arts in DC and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Md. Her light sculptures were recently acquired by the Smithsonian for their permanent collection. She will join the Clark Art Institute in 2022 as their Futures Fellow. Makonnen is represented by Addis Fine Art.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PROJECT FOR THE ARTS (WPA)

Founded in 1975, [WPA](#) supports experimental artist-driven research, production, and exchange. We value artists as public intellectuals, critical thinkers, idea generators, and organizers, and believe that through collaboration and partnership, artists can shape the meaningful discourses of our time.

In 2016, WPA became the first arts organization between New York and Miami to become W.A.G.E.-certified, meaning that WPA is one of a handful of entities nationwide that pays artists according to W.A.G.E.'s minimum payment standards. In 2017, we elected artists to our board of

directors and invited artists to begin setting the agenda for our program activities. In 2018, this new artist-driven approach was officially adopted in the form of a new mission statement. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts recognized the change with an \$80,000, two-year grant in support of this new direction. Two years later, they have stepped up their investment in local arts organizations and artists by partnering with WPA on Wherewithal Grants and supporting its programs with another two-year grant from 2021–22.

SUPPORTERS

This and other WPA projects are made possible by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts; Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Hickok Cole Architects, and many other generous foundations, corporations, and individuals.