

**SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT:
DIGITAL COLLAGE AS A PRACTICE OF BLACK MEMORY**

by
Marie Pinkney

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Africana Studies

Spring 2025

© 2025 Marie Pinkney
All Rights Reserved

**SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT:
DIGITAL COLLAGE AS A PRACTICE OF BLACK MEMORY**

by

Marie Pinkney

Approved: _____
Durell M. Callier, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Cheryl D. Hicks, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Monica A. Coleman, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies, Africana Studies

Approved: _____
Kimberly Blockett, PhD
Chair of the Department of Africana Studies

Approved: _____
Caleb Everett, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Approved:

Louis F. Rossi, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and
Dean of the Graduate College

Dedication:

I dedicate this thesis project first to all of the Black Americans who fought for the right to exist in a world that would rather erase them. I dedicate it to every Black child and their right to smile without a care in the world.

I dedicate this thesis to my mama and daddy...I made it and it's because of you both and the selfless sacrifice that you made by taking me in over 30 years ago. Every day I wake up determined to ensure that sacrifice was not made in vain. THANK YOU!

I dedicate this thesis to my girls Jas, Mimi, Weezy, and Pooh. I don't think there are enough words or ways to say I love you. Our friendship is a testament to what it means to be a girl's girl and I thank you for all of the times I may have let y'all down or not shown up as the friend I always intend to be. I thank you for the support, for the forgiveness and most of all for the love.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to me. To the girl who people wondered if I've even live and the girl who defied every odd and statistic. I appreciate you. ITS UP!!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
Chapter	
1: Introduction.....	1
2: Historiographical Context.....	5
The Riot and Police Violence.....	5
Black Resistance.....	11
The Photographer.....	16
Art and Memory.....	19
3: Theoretical Framework.	22
Critical Fabulation.....	22
Critical Black Memory and Hauntology.....	24
4: Artistic and Methodological Approach.....	28
Artistic Inspiration.....	28
Race Riots on Display.....	30
Forms of Art.....	33
5: In Closing.....	37
Scholarly Contributions.....	37
Final Thoughts.....	39
Bibliography.....	40

ABSTRACT

This thesis paper serves as the supportive document in a thesis project that addresses the role of police violence in the persistence of anti-Black violence alongside the historic persistence and contemporary relevance of Black resistance to anti-Black violence. *The Water Remembers: Correcting the Archive Through Black Joy, Memory, and Resistance* is a digital exhibition that examines the police response to the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 as a microcosm of police behavior nationally.

As a supportive paper *Setting the Record Straight* argues that art can fill gaps left in the archive by creating a more complete picture of both police behavior and Black Resistance. Viewers of *The Water Remembers* are welcomed to explore a digital exhibition that consists of 6 collages that address police violence, emboldened vigilantes, and Black resistance. Each issue has two corresponding photographs that help the viewer to connect the police violence of the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 to the anti-Black violence that remains prevalent today.

Critical fabulation is used as a methodology to make connections between what we can easily discern from the historical photographic archives and what scholars have uncovered overtime. Police refusal to protect Black communities and their willingness to engage in violence emboldens white supremacy and anti-Black violence; yet Black Americans have always fought back against it.

The Water Remembers and *Setting the Record Straight* offer a bold and intentional declaration that police violence is at least partly to blame for anti-Black violence.

**CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION:
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

During the sweltering summer days between July 27 and August 3, 1919, a young photographer moved through the streets of Chicago, documenting one of the deadliest riots of the year. Not yet 30 years old, Jun Fujita captured what would become the most widely recognized photographs of the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. Over the course of six days, the violence claimed at least 38 lives. The unrest was sparked by the drowning of 17-year-old Eugene Williams, a Black teenager, at the hands of George Stauber, a white man. Despite credible evidence of his guilt local police refused to arrest him for the murder. In the aftermath, the city erupted, with racial tensions exploding into widespread violence. Rather than putting an end to the violence, the local police conspired with vigilante white mobs and acted as the armed wing of the state. They were ultimately responsible for the death of at least seven Black men.¹ Further, local police arrested Black men disproportionately, while allowing white men to roam free terrorizing the city's streets. Meanwhile, personal, and political differences between the city's Mayor and the state's Governor, led to a delay in action being taken at the executive branch.²

¹ William Tuttle. *Race Riot Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: 1970), 10.

² William Tuttle. *Race Riot Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: 1970), 14.

Thanks to the photographs captured by Jun Fujita, there is a significant archival record of the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 and the anti-Black violence that engulfed the city. Leigh Raiford

invokes the memory of inventor, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who believed that photography was a historical artifact with the power to produce and store memory. While Dr. Cheryl Finley and Dr. Deborah Willis argue that photographs can create an opportunity for viewers to study “social, aesthetic, economic, political, and environmental norms—past, present, and future—through the creative process.”³ Photography has long been recognized for its role in documenting history, shaping historical narratives, and influencing collective memory.⁴ Jun Fujita’s photographs have certainly made their impact on the historical narrative of Chicago’s 1919 Race Riot. His photographs show the citywide mob violence, the victimization of Black Chicagoans, the police investigations, and the National Guard occupation. Fujita’s photographs document the racial terror that took over the city for nearly a week. His work enshrines the aftermath of Eugene Williams murder in history while also providing an opportunity to reconsider the story that we have been told about the race riot and racial violence in America. When theoretical frameworks and artistic aims are combined to reconsider the content of Jun

³ Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis, *Free as they want to be: Artist Committed to Memory* (Bologna, Italy: Damiani, 2022), 14.

⁴ Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis, *Free as they want to be*, 9.

Fujita's photographs, a door to a new understanding of history is opened. That is at the heart of this project.

Through the usage of digital collage, *The Water Remembers*, explores the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 as a critical case study to document and resituate police violence as a catalyst for the historic and systemic pattern of anti-Black violence that has persisted in the United States. It also aims to underscore the long-silenced history of Black resistance to such violence. This digital collage exhibition provides viewers an opportunity to reconsider the historical narrative of the 1919 Chicago Race Riot. It does this by challenging the notion that the local police were objective peacekeepers and instead highlight their role as perpetrators and instigators of anti-Black violence. The use of collage to prove this point is a form of critical fabulation, a term coined by Saidiya Hartman. Critical fabulation is best described as a method of working against archival limitations to uncover a different cultural history or narrative. By creating photo collages that highlight the persistence of police violence over time, the viewer is challenged to rethink the officer's role in the perpetuation of anti-Black violence. Fujita's photographs, while invaluable, do not intentionally shed light on the true actions of the local police during the riot. This project seeks to illuminate the influence of police neglect and violence on other forms of anti-Black violence that have not been accurately reflected in the archive. It also underscores that Black resistance to anti-Black violence has always existed despite an archival record reflective of docile and passive responses from Black Americans. The project is guided by two specific research questions, 1) How can digital collage be used to explore and reimagine the historic and enduring issue of police

violence? And 2) What does the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 archive reveal about the enduring legacy of police violence and Black resistance? Together, *The Water Remembers* and *Setting the Record Straight* uses the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 to invoke a conversation about the pervasiveness of police violence and its influence on anti-Black violence throughout the United States.

Chapter 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Riot and Police Violence

On Sunday, July 27th, 1919, after riding on the back of a produce truck and racing through an Irish neighborhood, five Black boys made their way to a secluded beach area. With recorded temperatures reaching at least 100 degrees the boys had plans to cool off at their self-proclaimed refuge.⁵ In the early 20th century Chicago's beaches were segregated but the boys found an isolated location that they called the "hot and cold". During a previous trip the boys had built a small raft out of old logs. They pushed their raft into the hot and cold eager to ride it and play in the water alongside it.⁶ As the boys were enjoying their time, they noticed a white man about 75 feet away on land. 23-year-old George Stauber began throwing rocks at the boys. For some time, they thought Stauber was playing a game with them, and they would bob in-and-out of the water to avoid the rocks. Until one of the rocks hit 17-year-old Eugene Williams in the head and he suddenly sank back down into the water.⁷ When his friends were unable to rescue him,

⁵ David F. Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 105; Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the AWAKENING of BLACK AMERICA* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2011), 127.

⁶ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 128.

⁷ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 128; David F. Krugler, *1919*, 107.

they immediately went to find a lifeguard for help. Unfortunately, it was too late, and Eugene's lifeless body was pulled from the water 30 minutes later.

Distraught and angry about the loss of their friend, the remaining boys went to the 29th Street Beach where they located Detective Sergeant William Middleton, a Black officer. They recruited Middleton for help and together they went to look for Stauber, to arrest him. When they finally located him Daniel Callahan, a white Patrolman, refused to arrest Stauber and prohibited Middleton from taking him into custody as well.⁸ As King points out "the patrolman on the beat had considerable autonomy. The police had the authority to define crime and, therefore, determine whom to detain, arrest, and criminalize."⁹ Callahan's discriminatory practices did not stop there; he went on to arrest a Black man based on the complaints of white beachgoers. There was also a rumor that he may have "held his gun on the colored crowd and permitted white rioters to throw bricks and stones at the colored."¹⁰ As Black and white patrons gathered on the 29th Street beach, a patrol wagon arrived to take the Black man, who had been arrested by Callahan, into custody. Tensions between the police and Black Chicagoans escalated, resulting in a barrage of bricks and rocks being thrown, until eventually a Black man named James Crawford fired his gun into a group of policemen, wounding one of them.

⁸ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 107.

⁹ Shannon King, *The Politics of Safety: The Black Struggle for Police Accountability in La Guardia's New York* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2024), 23.

¹⁰ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 8.

A Black officer returned a fatal shot that struck Crawford, marking the beginning of the race riot.¹¹

The Chicago Race Riot raged on for over a week, claiming at least 38 lives—23 Black and 15 white—and leaving more than 170 people injured.¹² As the chaos unfolded, local police consistently acted as perpetrators of racial violence, serving as agents of the state in upholding racist practices and institutions. Further, executive inaction allowed the violence to rage on despite urges for help from individual police officers, Black clergy, local news media, and others. Neither the mayor nor the governor took action to quell the violence. On the first night of the riot, Mayor Thompson was aware that the chaos was serious, and he urged Governor Lowden to organize the state militia and have them ready for action. That same evening 3,500 troops were ordered to the Chicago armories, unfortunately they remained there for several days before being called in for action.¹³ State inaction or neglect only serves to perpetuate and reinforce racism and violence. When the state responds to racial violence with apathy, vigilantes are emboldened to carry out their own agendas with little fear of consequence.

On Tuesday the 29th, the violence was again in full swing, yet the state militia had still not been called in. Governor Lowden initially attempted to leave for a trip to Nebraska but rushed back by train upon learning of the escalating violence. Despite issuing a press statement urging cooperation among public officials, he still failed to call

¹¹ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 8.

¹² Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 147.

¹³ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 42.

in the state militia. Arguing instead, that he could not order them in, because Mayor Thompson must first request their services, stating “we will act on the advices of the mayor.”¹⁴ On July 30th, 3 days after the racial terror broke out Mayor Thompson took action and moved to call in the militia. This call came only after 200 gang members “started throwing rocks, bricks, and other missiles and shooting into houses. Then they began storming through the front doors, smashing furniture, and throwing it through windows, and putting the torch to everything.”¹⁵ With three days of state inaction the local police had complete power to manage the rioting and racial terror as they saw fit.

For years Black Chicagoans had claimed that the local police, many of whom were Irish Americans, were supportive of the city’s white gangs, that were predominately made up of other Irish Americans. Yet, with continued hope for equity a group of Black leaders met with Police Chief James T. Garrity to express their concerns. He assured them that he had the situation under control. Yet by Monday evening it became clear that the local police did not have the resources necessary to quell the violence.¹⁶ Many believed the police's failure to intervene was typical, as gang members were often their relatives or loved ones.¹⁷ Yet, the officers were not only apathetic to the violence, but they also often went as far as to participate in it.

¹⁴ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 46.

¹⁵ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 55.

¹⁶ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 152.

¹⁷ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 128; David F. Krugler, *1919, 118*.

Local police were responsible for the deaths of seven Black men during the riot. When Horace Jennings saw a patrolman approaching, he exhaled in relief, believing help had arrived. But his relief was short-lived. The officer immediately began berating him, shouting, "Where's your gun, you Black son of a bitch? You damn n*s are raising hell!" Before Jennings could react, the officer swung his nightstick, striking him with such force that he collapsed, unconscious.¹⁸ While Joseph Scott was being attacked on a streetcar, he too, believed that the local police were coming to his rescue. Instead, he was directed to "come out of there, you big rusty brute, you. I ought to shoot you" before he was smacked in the head and shoved into the police wagon. He was then jailed for a week and forbade from contacting his family.¹⁹ According to McWhirter

The worst incident that night stemmed from a false rumor circulating in the Black community that a sniper was firing from a white-occupied four-story apartment building the Angelus, at the edge of the Black Belt. The phantom sniper supposedly shot a Black boy near 35th and Wabash. In the late afternoon, about 1,500 Black people gathered outside the Angelus and demanded the shooter. One hundred police arrived to protect the inhabitants of the building. Police searched the Angelus but found no sniper and no weapons. Still, the mob demanded the sniper. About 8p.m., a brick hit a police officer. Police fired into the crowd, killing three Blacks—Joseph Sanford, Hymes Taylor, and John Walter Humphrey. Many others were wounded, and the crowd fled.²⁰

¹⁸ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 43.

¹⁹ Claire Hartfield, *A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919* (Boston: Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018) 145; William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 43.

²⁰ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 152.

Local police's conduct during the riot ranged from apathetic to racially violent. They disproportionately arrested Black men while allowing white assailants to roam free. Officers often vanished from crime scenes rather than apprehend white mobsters who made no attempt to hide their lawlessness.²¹ As the riot tore through the city the inaction of the state could be seen as an endorsement of the violence. Mayor Thompson and Governor Lowden's refusal to call in the state militia, despite urgent pleas, resulted in unnecessary deaths and preventable destruction. It also empowered local police to act with impunity, whether by turning a blind eye to racial terror or actively participating in it.

Black Chicagoans found themselves lacking true police protection and often living in communities that were overpoliced and under protected. Instead, they were met with harassment, violence, and neglect from a police department that was dutybound to protect them. The Chicago Race Riot of 1919 only exacerbated these issues and became a defining moment in the relationship between Black Chicagoans and the city police. As the riot raged on the refusal of local police to protect Black Americans was on full display. Chicago police not only failed to serve and protect all Chicagoans but were often seen turning a blind eye to anti-Black violence or even participating in it.²²

Officer Callahan's refusal to arrest George Stauber was the first act of police neglect to occur just before the start of the riot. It could even be considered a catalyst

²¹ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 43.

²² Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 29.

event.²³ According to Balto, Callahan's refusal to act, served as a clear accelerant to the riot. He notes the findings of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations "the drowning and the refusal to arrest, or widely circulated reports of such refusal, must be considered together as marking the inception of the riot... There was every possibility that the clash, without the further stimulus of reports of the policeman's conduct, would have quieted down".²⁴ As Krugler adds, Callahan's actions "looked like yet another dereliction of duty" to Black Chicagoans who had already experienced police condoning violence by white gangs and turning a blind eye to their homes being bombed. He underscores that there was an understanding amongst Black Chicagoans that to the local police crimes that were committed against Black Americans were not truly crimes at all.²⁵

As the riot continued the violence exhibited by the local police intensified. Balto described the story of Kin Lumpkin who was trying to return home from his job at the stockyards when he was cornered on the train platform by a white mob. After the mob beat him mercilessly a police officer arrested Lumpkin and charged him with rioting.²⁶ Similarly, three other stockyard employees had just left work when a white mob boarded their streetcar and attacked them. Cornered on the streetcar the men fought back and one—Joseph Scott—fatally stabbed his attacker. Scott was subsequently arrested and

²³ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 8.

²⁴ Simon Blato, *Occupied Territory*, 31-32.

²⁵ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 108.

²⁶ Simon Blato, *Occupied Territory*, 27.

spent a week in jail without receiving medical attention while his attackers went free.²⁷ Horrifyingly, Balto adds that after the mob beat Scott and left him laid out on the streetcar a Chicago Police Officer threatened to shoot him if he did not get out of the car. Although the officer did not shoot Scott, he did beat him again before arresting him without so much as questioning his attackers.²⁸ Unfortunately, Black Chicagoans—like most Black Americans—were familiar with police neglect and acts of violence and as the riot raged on Black Americans were actively resisting anti-Black violence.

Black Resistance

Nationwide, Black Americans' resistance surged in response to the relentless barrage of violent attacks. During the Red Summer white mobs frequently, antagonized Black Americans and provoked violence, with the confidence that they were unlikely to face consequences from the local law enforcement. These white mobs formed for many reasons including “to drive blacks from industrial jobs or white neighborhoods; to punish blacks for their wartime prosperity; or to “protect” white women against the alleged depredations of black men”.²⁹ In response Black Americans across the country took up arms and found creative ways to respond to and resist white mob violence, including violence from the local police.

Black Chicagoans resistance during the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 took multiple forms. Harry Haywood was a veteran of the 370th Regiment, Ninety-third Division, a

²⁷ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 119.

²⁸ Simon Blato, *Occupied Territory*, 27.

²⁹ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 4-5.

Black unit that was locally referred to as the Eighth Illinois National Guard or the Eighth. In February 1919 the unit had returned to Chicago after a deployment to France where they were nicknamed the “Black Devils” by the Germans for their determination in battle.³⁰ By July, 21-year-old Harry Haywood was working as a waiter on the New York-Chicago route of the Michigan Central. On Monday, July 28, 1919,—the day after Eugene Williams was murdered— Harry Haywood disembarked the train in Chicago after being warned that “there’s a big race riot going on out there”.³¹

Haywood had no trouble believing that a race riot was underway. Krugler notes that despite knowing little about the riot Haywood understood that it was likely the result of ongoing efforts throughout the country to maintain the prewar subjugation of Black Americans. Haywood also knew just how he intended to respond. He and other veterans in the area reunited to guard the regiment’s South Side armory and recruit other Chicagoans to do the same. Haywood and his comrades discovered that white gangs planned to march on 51st Street that night, in response they set up in a defensive position in an apartment building that overlooked the street armed with army-issue Springfield rifles and a Browning submachine gun.”³² Fortunately, the white gang never arrived, and Harry Haywood and his comrades returned home safely that evening.

Black Chicagoans were not afraid to engage in direct forms of resistance. In the hours before Eugene Williams was murdered a group of Black Chicagoans walked on to

³⁰ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 99.

³¹ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 115.

³² David F. Krugler, *1919*, 115.

the 29th Street beach and declared their intention to swim in the informally segregated white beach. They were initially run off by whites who were cursing and throwing rocks at them. Moments later, they returned in greater numbers and began throwing their own rocks, temporarily driving off the white beachgoers—until those beachgoers came back with reinforcements, and a brief battle between the two groups erupted, almost as a harbinger of what was to come.³³ Also, Black Chicagoans who had to travel through white areas of the city carried weapons to protect themselves. This was also an intentional form of resistance since there was a city-wide ordinance that made it illegal to conceal weapons. If they did not carry a weapon, they risked being attacked by white mobs, but they also risked being arrested if they did arm themselves.³⁴

Black Chicagoans also engaged in passive forms of resistance including infiltration of white spaces. Between March 1918 and July 1919 at least 25 bombings targeted the homes and offices of Black and white realtors. Over half of those attacks occurred in the first 7 months of 1919. Many of these bombings took place after white property association meetings. During a May 1919 meeting of Kenwood and Hyde Park Property Owners Association one property owner urged that the value of their homes had decreased over \$200 million because Black Americans were moving into the area insisting “if someone told you that there was to be an invasion that would injure your homes to that extent, wouldn’t you rise up.”³⁵ The NAACP dispatched Assistant

³³ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 107; William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 5.

³⁴ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer*, 141.

³⁵ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 101.

Secretary Walter White to Chicago to investigate. Walter White was fair skinned with blue eyes and was easily able to pass for a white man and subsequently infiltrated the June property association meeting. Although, a plan for bombing was not formally discussed during the meeting, White listened intently as several speakers discussed how to stop rentals and sales to Black Americans and as “inflammatory and incendiary remarks, tending to create a spirit of great racial animosity and ill will, were made by various speakers.”³⁶ During a subsequent meeting White listened uncomfortably as a Kenwood resident declared “if we can’t get them out any other way we are going to put them in with the bolsheveki and bomb them out.”³⁷ Infiltration and other acts of passive resistance allowed Black Americans to prepare themselves and understand what white Chicagoans may be planning.

Black Chicagoans also directed their resistance at police officers, who they felt did little to protect them and often participated in the violence they endured. As Krugler explains to Black people, Patrolman Callahan’s refusal to arrest George Stauber for the murder of Eugene Williams felt like yet another evasion of their responsibility to protect Black Chicagoans or another endorsement of the violence inflicted on them by white gangs and the Kenwood-Hyde Park bombings.³⁸ Black Chicagoans believed local police had now allowed a white man who had murdered a Black teenager to walk free because it was not truly a crime to harm a Black person so long as the violence served to uphold

³⁶ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 102.

³⁷ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 102.

³⁸ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 108.

racial segregation in the city. They refused to accept this attitude any longer and once it was discovered that Officer Callahan had arrested a Black man based on the complaints of a white man mere hours after Eugene Williams was killed and his murderer still walked free. Around 6 p.m. Black and white Chicagoans were gathered on the beach when a patrol wagon arrived to detain the Black man who had been arrested by Officer Callahan. The patrol wagon was met with a barrage of rocks just before James Crawford—a Black man—shot at a white police officer, who returned fire—killing Crawford. Resulting in a blaze of bullets being exchanged and signaling the start of the Chicago Race Riot.³⁹

Black resistance to anti-Black violence has taken many forms from passive to direct action, it was reactionary and incendiary. According to Krugler, during the Chicago Race Riot of 1919, the New Negro movement was bolstered by Black Americans who warned that if the United States failed to become a safe nation for all its citizens, racial violence would persist—because Black Americans would no longer accept violence committed in the name of white supremacy. While Black veterans referred to their military training and tactics to stop mobs of white gangs and Black community leaders denounced the failure of the state to take substantive action to stop anti-Black violence.⁴⁰ These different forms of resistance allowed Black Chicagoans to defend and protect themselves in a city—and a country—that was consistently willing to harm them.

³⁹ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 8.

⁴⁰ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 5.

The willingness to invoke anti-Black violence and police violence have remained persistent in the United States—just as enduring are the tactics of Black resistance in response to this violence. It is important to understand that there has always been resistance to anti-Black violence despite archival evidence typically depicting Black Americans as passive and docile. Discussing the portrayal of persistent and enduring anti-Black violence and Black resistance Berger argues that pictures of victimized Black Americans tend to be met with sympathy from whites because they believed that Black Americans were in no position to take power or force change. He adds that the most well-known movement photographs depict “passive resistance” and Black protestors being brutalized by white police officers despite the consistent use of direct resistance tactics by Black Americans.⁴¹ This thesis project and accompanying paper do not simply highlight passive forms of resistance but go a step further by filling the archival silence on acts of active Black resistance.

The Photographer

Born in 1888 near Hiroshima, Japan, Jun Fujita emigrated to Canada in 1906 and eventually made his way to Chicago, in 1915. In hopes of attending engineering school Fujita picked up a camera intending to earn enough money to fund his education.⁴² First generation Japanese immigrants who arrived in the U.S. and Canada were referred to as

⁴¹ Martin A. Berger, *Freedom Now*, 10.

⁴² Patty Wetli, “*The Man behind the Powerful, Disturbing Images of the 1919 Race Riots Emerges from Obscurity*,” *Block Club Chicago*, (2019), <https://blockclubchicago.org/2019/07/24/jun-fujita-1919-race-riots-chicago-photographer/>; David F. Krugler, *1919*, 15.

the Issei, a term that translates to first generation in Japanese. As one of the Issei, Fujita was one of over 400,000 immigrants to settle in the United States and or its territories. In many ways Fujita was an unlikely figure to capture some of the most notable photographs from the Chicago Race Riot. However, his personal experiences offered a unique lens through which to document that historical moment. By the time Fujita arrived in the U.S. a movement aimed at limiting the number of Japanese immigrants in the country was already well underway.⁴³ Laws were passed to ban miscegenation in states across the country, ensuring that Asian and white people would not be able to marry. In 1915, while on assignment Fujita was investigated by the Department of Justice who noted “the Jap came out at 11:00 a.m. and took two pictures of an automobile”. Although nothing further came of this investigation the mention of Fujita’s race may shed light on his experience as a Japanese American in Chicago in the early 20th century.⁴⁴

Despite the country’s anti-Asian rhetoric, Fujita was able to build a life in Chicago. He married a white woman named Florence Carr. Notably, the couple decided against having children out of concerns for having mixed race children in a country that was unlikely to accept them. He is also responsible for the photographic documentation of several historically significant events that occurred in Chicago in the early 20th century. Besides his photographs from the riot, Fujita was also the photojournalist responsible for documenting the 1915 sinking of the S.S. Eastland, a tour boat that left

⁴³ Patty Wetli, “*The Man behind the Powerful, Disturbing Images of the 1919 Race Riots Emerges from Obscurity,*”

⁴⁴ Michelle Zurawski, *Behind the Camera*, Poetry Foundation, July 26, 2018, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/92104/behind-the-camera>.

over 800 people dead after capsizing in the Chicago River. He also captured the aftermath of the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre and the trial of teen murderers Leopold and Lob.⁴⁵

Fujita's documentation of the Chicago Race Riot are arguably the most well-known photographs from the massacre. Unafraid to walk amongst the violence Fujita's photographs document the racial terror that broke out all over the city. He captured the moment that a group of teenagers relentlessly pursued and attacked a Black man in addition to the murder of another Black man who was fatally stoned by white men and children.⁴⁶ Fujita's photographs are most often chosen to depict the mayhem when scholars write about the Chicago Race Riot. He captured those images while working freelance for the *Chicago Evening Post*.

Fujita's photographs serve as the base of the collages created for this exhibition. They help to place the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 squarely in the middle of a broader conversation about police violence and its pervasive nature. Fujita's photographs do not capture the violent acts committed by the local police that many scholars have documented. Nor are they truly reflective of Black resistance to violence. However, they do create an opportunity for a conversation about what is missing from the archive. Fujita himself was critical of the ability of a photograph to truly capture the full picture of a moment once asking if "I go out on a winter morning, when snow covers the ground and

⁴⁵ Michelle Zurawski, *Behind the Camera*.

⁴⁶ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 111-112.

the stillness is so great that a falling leaf is heard...Can I take a photograph of this?".⁴⁷ By using his photographs as the basis of this exhibition the viewer is forced to consider several questions: Did the photographer witness acts of police violence and refuse to photograph them? If he did photograph these attacks why didn't the local media publish those photographs? The moments captured by Jun Fujita tell a piece of the story, but this exhibition has incorporated those photographs as a basis to tell a more complete story about the origins of anti-Black violence and Black resistance in the United States.

Art and Memory

In 1926, W. E. B. DuBois argued that Black art must be used to stir up a reaction, stating "all art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has always been used for propaganda for gaining the right of Black folk to love and enjoy".⁴⁸ While Dr. Martin Luther King lauded the unique ability of photographs to "capture fugitive, brutality, holding, it still for scrutiny and transmitting this naked truth to watching and judging audiences."⁴⁹ However, photography not only evokes emotional reactions but also shapes the historical narrative. In many respects, the way that we recall historical events is shaped by the photographs that we have seen.⁵⁰ Keown, notes that portraits of Frederick

⁴⁷ Michelle Zurawski, *Behind the Camera*.

⁴⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32, no. 6 (October 1926): 290.

⁴⁹ Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1.

⁵⁰ Martin A. Berger, *Freedom Now!: Forgotten Photographs of the Civil Rights Struggle* (Berkeley, CA: University Of California Press, 2013), 6.

Douglass have been immortalized in our collective memory “reminding us of the greatness within each of us if only we are free to unleash it.”⁵¹ Returning to Raiford, who leans on Oliver Wendell Holmes’ description of photography as a mirror with memory and adds that it offers the ability to record—rather than simply depict—what is happening in a specific moment.⁵² Photographic archives share a narrative and create ongoing opportunities for the study and reconsideration of that narrative.

However, the photographic archive has been incomplete, silent, and misrepresentative of important aspects of history. As Berger emphasizes, despite the vast number of images captured and preserved from the civil rights movement, its memory and representation are shaped by a narrow selection of recurring images.⁵³ He notes that the dominant historical narrative of Black Americans during the civil rights movement has been one of well-behaved Black protestors who were merely victims of violent white attacks⁵⁴, despite Black activism being the true driver of societal change. In discussing anti-lynching photographs, Raiford emphasizes their power as a battleground for shaping the understanding of racial violence and the Black experience in America.⁵⁵ Finley and Willis, go a step further by pointing out that the anonymity of many of the individuals

⁵¹ Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis, *Free as they want to*, 11.

⁵² Leigh Raiford, “*Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory*,” *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (2009): 113, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2009.00522.x>.

⁵³ Martin A. Berger, *Freedom Now*, 9.

⁵⁴ Martin A. Berger, *Freedom Now*, 9.

⁵⁵ Leigh Raiford, *Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory*, 114.

reflected in the photographic archive presents a silence in the archive⁵⁶ and therefore an incompleteness in our collective memory. While Hartman adds that this anonymity and silence almost certainly means that the individuals in our photographic archive will eventually become lost to us, “elude our grasp, or collapse under the pressure of inquiry.”⁵⁷ The archive offers us invaluable insight into the past. We are given an opportunity to peer into the mirror of a specific moment that then informs our memories of that event. Yet it is crucial that those memories be challenged and questioned for what they do not reflect. The intention of the challenge is not necessarily to rewrite the historical narrative, but to resituate the facts, and provide a more complete picture for our collective memory.

⁵⁶ Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis, *Free as they want to be*, 13.

⁵⁷ Saidiya Hartman, “*Venus in Two Acts*.” *Small Axe: A Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008), 6. <https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1>.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Fabulation

In her groundbreaking work, *Venus in Two Acts*, Saidiya Hartman describes Venus as being found everywhere in the Atlantic diaspora. She states “the barracoon, the hollow of the slave ship, the pest-house, the brothel, the cage, the surgeon’s laboratory, the prison, the cane-field, the kitchen, the master’s bedroom—turn out to be exactly the same space and in all of them she is called Venus.”⁵⁸ Hartman highlights the idea that although Venus is all throughout the archive it is still rare to capture her and emphasizes that even when we do, our knowledge of her is limited to what can be extracted directly from the archival records.⁵⁹ We then must consider what questions we have about the available archival information and what we can truthfully answer. It becomes easy to imagine, to ponder, and to create; however, it is the responsibility of the archivist not to break the boundaries of what the archive *actually* tells us. To walk this fine line Hartman employs critical fabulation—a framework best described as the use of available archival information to craft a narrative of what is known and what could have been. Critical fabulation does not seek to claim a true knowledge of what occurred rather it highlights

⁵⁸ Saidiya Hartman, *Venus in Two Acts*, 1.

⁵⁹ Saidiya Hartman, *Venus in Two Acts*, 2.

the possibilities based on facts mined from the archive. Hartman uses this framework to imagine what [her] Venus may have experienced. She uses it as a method to address the gaps in the archive without constructing a narrative based solely out of curiosity.

Critical fabulation is an invaluable tool that also allows for the re-evaluation of photographs from the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. For instance, Krugler implies that in one of Fujita's most referenced photographs from the riot officers are depicted showing no sense of urgency as they investigate a crime scene. Yet, he acknowledges there is a discrepancy in who the victim may be. According to Krugler, the lack of urgency implies that the victim is John Mills, as Mills was declared deceased at the scene. While the other possible victim, Edward Jackson, survived for a week before passing away from his injuries. In Krugler's view had the victim still been alive when the officers arrived, they would have acted with more urgency to save his life.⁶⁰ However, Tuttle, warns that Black Chicagoans had come to have few expectations of the police force viewing them as "the armed representative of white hostility...who were biased in favor of white hoodlums."⁶¹ In fact, Krugler also acknowledges that local law enforcement regularly ignored and sanctioned anti-Black violence and, in these instances, Black Chicagoans were killed.⁶²

Employing critical fabulation becomes invaluable in this moment. One piece *The Water Remembers* titled *Police=violence?* uses this same photograph as a base—while rearranging its elements, amplifying the haunting presence of the police, and

⁶⁰ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 113.

⁶¹ William Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 33.

⁶² David F. Krugler, *1919*, 104.

manipulating time within the composition—this piece specifically challenges the dominant narrative of police actions, not only during the Chicago Race Riot but throughout U.S. history. In the collage several instances of police violence are on display. Including the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Derek Chauvin who stares menacingly back at the viewer. Further a consistent method utilized throughout the exhibition is selective colorization. By keeping the officers in black-and-white while bringing the rest of the base photograph into color, the viewer is compelled to pause and reevaluate their presence from 1919 to the present day. As Hartman argues by creating a crisis in the mind, based on the available information the disposability of Black lives becomes visible.

Critical Black Memory & Hauntology

In her seminal piece *Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory*, Leigh Raiford explores Emory Douglas' photographic collage "*Freedom is a Constant Struggle*". She describes Douglas' piece as producing "a narrative whose visual and metaphorical arc begins with the lyncher/slave owner, crescendos with the lynched Black man, and descends into the powerless aged Black man. It is a story of white supremacy's persistent pursuit and destruction of Black masculinity across generations. The narrative attempts to make whole the fractured Black male self by ending with two boys at the very beginning of their lives."⁶³ Raiford is underscoring the ability of collage to inform contemporary racial discourse. She points out the "persistent return" of lynching photography since their introduction to galvanize racial terror, from its production for

⁶³ Leigh Raiford, *Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory*, 123.

early twentieth-century anti-lynching activists, to posters created by civil rights organizations, and their recirculation in contemporary art and popular culture. Raiford is describing this tendency of photographs to inspire conversation about the past's impact on the current moment. She employs critical Black memory to describe this practice of using "historical interpretation and political critique that has functioned as an important resource for framing and mobilizing African American social and political identities and movements."⁶⁴

It is fitting at this moment to also consider the concept of hauntology—the tendency for the specter of history to linger in the present moment.⁶⁵ Marianna Michalowska, has applied the concept of hauntology to photographs, stating "hauntology allows me to discuss photography as a carrier of eeriness as well as an invisible tool of disclosure. What's more, it seems that hauntology may explain the role of photography in discussing the political and social contexts of the past."⁶⁶ When applied to photographs, hauntology identifies the traces of the past that remain present in the contemporary moment. By merging critical Black memory with hauntology, viewers are compelled to recognize how remnants of the past persist in the present, prompting reflection on what has been done and what actions should be taken moving forward.

⁶⁴ Leigh Raiford, *Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory*, 113.

⁶⁵ Marianna Michałowska, *Invisible Presence of the Past: Hauntology of Photography*, *Membrana Journal of Photography*, no. Vol. 5, 1 (2020): 80, <https://doi.org/10.47659/m8.080.art>.

⁶⁶ Marianna Michałowska, *Invisible Presence of the Past*, 80.

Black Americans felt the weight of these questions during the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. Krugler notes that Black Chicagoans were so accustomed to police failure that they had come to see the police as “another mob in uniform”. This view of the police led Black Chicagoans to take up arms to defend themselves.⁶⁷ He shares the story of three Black couples—two of whom were army officers—who were walking home after an evening at the theater. They were attacked by a group of at least six white men and boys who shouted, “let’s get the n*s, let’s get the n*s”. The three Black men defended their families, and one white teenager was stabbed in the chest. His friends ran off and left him to bleed to death in the street. When the police arrived, they arrested Lois C. Washington—a Black army officer who served in the Eighth Illinois who also suffered a stab wound—but none of his attackers.⁶⁸

Yet, the combination of critical Black memory and hauntology asks us to go a step further and consider how this apathetic behavior displayed by local police still haunts us today. Revisiting, *Police = Violence?* (figure 1) I incorporated the pavilion from the park where 12-year-old Tamir Rice was murdered. The pavilion is strategically placed between the officers and the body of a victim from the Chicago Race Riot, protecting the body from the heat. Many scholars have noted Chicago’s sweltering heat during the riot. Yet, these officers appear to display little to no urgency for what Krugler tells us is either the deceased body of John Mills or that of Edward Jackson who would

⁶⁷ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 118-119.

⁶⁸ David F. Krugler, *1919*, 119.

CHAPTER 4: ARTISTIC AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Artistic Inspiration

In 2003, *The Louisiana Project*, curated by Carrie Mae Weems, debuted in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. I was directed to Weems' project as a source for artistic reference and inspiration for this thesis project. In *The Louisiana Project*, Weems combines “photographs, video projection, and a series of laser prints on canvas, all choreographed to present a portrait of New Orleans that situates the present city within its complicated past”.⁷¹ What makes Weems' work so striking is the haunting presence she creates and the way she seemingly plays with time. Discussing *The Louisiana Project*, Susan Cahan describes one of the projections that was displayed as a centerpiece during the exhibition. The projection captures television footage of a Mardi Gras ball and Cahan states “the footage of the ball has an eerie, old-fashioned feel”. She goes on to say “but lest one think this dress-up event is only a vestige from the past, think again. The images displayed are of recent vintage—from 2003”. After viewing a still shot of the projection I concur with Cahan's assertion that the viewer is immediately transported back in time to what they may believe is the antebellum; yet in all actuality was present day. Also, writing of Weems' work, Kaila T. Schedeen invokes Tina's

⁷¹ Carrie Mae Weems et al., *Carrie Mae Weems: The Louisiana Project* (New Orleans, LA: Newcomb Art Gallery, 2004), 10.

Campt's tool of listening to images. She argues that by listening to the photographs viewers are pulled into Weems' web which collapses past and present but also creates space for an imagined future that exists without the reproduction of systemic racism and systematic failure.

Though Weems does not necessarily claim the use of hauntology in her work she deploys it expertly. As Michalowska describes hauntology in art brings about a sense of eeriness and serves as a tool of disclosure.⁷² Weems has done this flawlessly throughout *The Louisiana Project*. Describing Weems' work, Pamela R. Metzger argues "Weems is literally a witness; her photographs are self-portraits, in which she is a time-traveler, visiting and reflecting upon Louisiana's racial and economic history pre- and post-Civil War."⁷³ Weems' use of black and white art and her refusal to face the camera force the viewer to ask questions about the timing of her photographs. Her work gives a strange and uncomfortable stillness that as viewers we are forced to contend with. One of the elements of the projects that struck me most was Weems' refusal to face the camera. This to me felt like an eerie insistence that we follow her along on this voyage. As viewers we are forced to see what Weems' sees as she uncovers Louisiana's origin story. She also masterfully plays with time throughout the project. Her use of black and white photography truly calls into question when the image was captured creating a connection between the historical and contemporary moment. In many photographs Weems' uses only shadows to tell a story this is one of the most haunting scenes in the project. The use

⁷² Marianna Michałowska, *Invisible Presence of the Past*, 80.

⁷³ Carrie Mae Weems, *The Louisiana Project*, 17.

of shadows denotes a lingering presence that we cannot grasp or fully view yet we also cannot deny that it is present. *The Louisiana Project* skillfully weaves together Black memory—foregrounding the Black experience during the era of the Louisiana Purchase—and hauntology, by drawing upon the contemporary moment to expose how the past continues to echo, unsettle, and shape Black life in the present.

The Louisiana Project heavily influenced my work, I was inspired by the discomfort Weems' work created and sought to recreate it in this exhibition. I endeavored to make viewers question why there is so much similarity in the behavior of the police in the base photographs compared to that of the contemporary moment. I was inspired by Weems' ability to play with time in a way that forces the viewer to look a little closer to determine if they are looking at moments from 1919, 1968, or 2020. Yet, I also hoped to reproduce the eeriness that Weems so masterfully displayed throughout her project. I incorporated the use of selective colorization to recreate the ghostly presence that Weems' accomplishes throughout *The Louisiana Project*. I intended for the viewer to be haunted by the officers and other perpetrators of anti-Black violence who remain black-in-white and the transcendence through time of their behaviors on display by other officers and vigilantes.

Race Riots on Display

Many artists have taken up racial violence as a subject matter in their work. This exhibition was inspired by two artists in particular. Casey Ruble's *Red Summer: A Look At, and Away From, America's Deadliest Year of Interracial Violence Through a Re-rendering of Forty-Seven Objects from That Year in the Smithsonian's National Portrait*

Gallery was completed as part of a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. Ruble reimagined the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery that aimed to “acquire and display portraits of men and women who have made significant contributions to the history, development, and culture of the people of the United States”.⁷⁴ Acknowledging that all the subjects admitted into the exhibition were white and most held a racist disposition; Ruble created an exhibition that reconsidered each piece admitted to the project.

Ruble’s project serves as a form of anti-portraiture. She has reconstructed each of the 47 paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs from the National Portrait Gallery’s collection by removing the sitter from each portrait, leaving behind only their outline and the background of the original portrait. This use of erasure “reorients our gaze away from the individuals who have been canonized as important historical figures and turn it toward the space surrounding them, thereby challenging the dominant narrative of our country’s past and implicitly asking: Whom have we been missing?”⁷⁵ The erasure of canonized images and figures informed the digital exhibition of this project. I chose to erase the background of the photographs used within *The Water Remembers* that were incorporated into this project. The intent was to reorient the viewers gaze to the subject and ensure they were not distracted by the background of the photos placed in the collages. In a piece titled *Resist Joy Does Exist* (Figure 2) I chose to remove the lunch

⁷⁴ Casey Ruble, *Red Summer*, accessed April 10, 2025, <https://caseyruble.com/projects/red-summer/>.

⁷⁵ Casey Ruble, *Red Summer*.

counter where Black students were conducting a sit in. I understood that this could jeopardize whether the viewer would recognize what the students were doing but I felt it was more important to highlight the faces and smiles of the subjects. Ruble's influence of erasure was critical for this project and inspired how other photographs were chosen and incorporated into the collage.



Figure 2: Resist Joy Does Exist

Similarly, Wendel A. White took up the issue of racial violence in his *Red Summer* Project. White utilized collage to address the violence that tore through the country in 1919. He chose to focus on the location where violence broke out by using large landscape images of these communities from present day and placing those images next to newspaper clippings that covered the riots in the corresponding location.⁷⁶ White's exhibition takes up silence in the archive by putting very ordinary images in conversation with the violence that occurred there. If the viewer were to walk through these locations today, they may have no knowledge of the blood that was shed in each

⁷⁶ Wendel White, *Red Summer*, accessed April 10, 2025, <https://wendelwhite.com/projects/redsummer/>.

location yet White forces this recognition with his collages.⁷⁷ This digital exhibition draws inspiration from White's *Red Summer*, particularly its engagement with archival silences. Historical acts of police violence have been shrouded or not at all included within the archive making it difficult to address directly in this project. However, —like White's approach—when combined with images from the contemporary moment the pervasive nature of anti-Blackness is on full display.

Forms of Art

The Water Remembers tells a story hidden from the archive using the archive. This was a difficult task to accomplish while allowing Jun Fujita's photographs to serve as the base of the artwork despite none of his images truly capturing police violence in the act. I in fact created the depiction of a well-documented but intentionally hidden story. The decision to utilize collage as the artistic form came after reading Danielle Buckingham's *The Pieces of Me: Black collage artists on what their work means to them*. In *Pieces of Me* collage as a form of art is described as “world building”.⁷⁸ After reading this I immediately knew that collage was the right art form for this project because the project has put a world on display that does not truly exist within the archive. Collage is the composition of abstract experiences with layers of meaningful subjects and messages

⁷⁷ Wendel White, *Red Summer*.

⁷⁸ Danielle Buckingham, *The Pieces of Me: Black Collage Artists on What Their Work Means to Them*, *Reckon News*, January 31, 2023, <https://www.reckon.news/black-joy/2023/01/the-pieces-of-me-black-collage-artists-on-what-their-work-means-to-them.html>.

that are not always immediately clear.⁷⁹ Artist Mickalene Thomas describes collage as an “intricate means of discovery and exploration of all my ideas”.⁸⁰ I wanted to be able to play with my ideas and put them all on—metaphorical—paper. Collage allowed me the space to put several instances of subjects in conversation with one another and to see where they intersected and where their opposition would be useful to the overall message. When I started imagining the piece *What Actually is a Blue Life?* (Figure 3) I had a list of over ten⁸¹ subjects that I intended to include in the piece however as I was constructing the collage, I realized that not all those subjects were needed to construct the world I was seeking to display. Collage offered me the space to play with time, shape, color, and more.

⁷⁹ Kerry James Marshall et al., *Mastry* (Chicago, IL: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Skira Rizzoli Publications, 2016).

⁸⁰ Hannah Silver, *Artist Mickalene Thomas Wrestles with Notions of Black Beauty, Female Empowerment and Love*, *Wallpaper*, February 7, 2025, <https://www.wallpaper.com/art/exhibitions-shows/artist-mickalene-thomas-wrestles-with-notions-of-black-beauty-female-empowerment-complexity-and-love>.

⁸¹ The original subject list included “Black people standing in protest against the police in during the 2020 protests, the police attacking Rodney King, pictures from the civil rights and Black power movements, white protestors outside of Ruby Bridges school, the Nat Turner rebellion, anti Black Lives Matters protestors, and the Tulsa Race Massacre.



Figure 3: What Actually is a Blue Life?

Colorization—the intentional addition of color to black-and-white film by computer—forces the viewer to reconsider what they feel and see and how they understand history.⁸² The act of colorization deconstructs and reconstructs the original photograph to make a new work that ushers in new questions and considerations.⁸³ In *Free as They Want to Be: Artists Committed to Memory*, Bisa Butler discusses her piece *The Storm, the Whirlwind, and the Earthquake*, she describes the process of adding color to a 200-year-old photograph of Frederick Douglass claiming “I use intense colors to illustrate intense emotion, opulent textures to evoke sensory memories.”⁸⁴ By employing

⁸² Kathryn McMillan, *Colourization of Photographs as Remix*, 1.

⁸³ Kathryn McMillan, *Colourization of Photographs as Remix*, 2.

⁸⁴ Bisa Butler, *The Storm, the Whirlwind, and the Earthquake*. In *Free as They Want to Be: Artists Committed to Memory*, by Cheryl Finley and Deborah Willis, 54. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023.

these selective methods of colorization the artists have attempted to force a new conversation about historic events and in our collective memory.

Colorization of photographs brings a certain modernization to the historic event that was captured. McMillan argues that colorization is “unique because it presents both the present and the past.”⁸⁵ By being selective in the use of colorization the project creates a heavier emphasis on the fractured timeline between the past and present. The juxtaposition of Black lives and white officers in the same photograph also forces the viewer to consider when the base photograph was taken. They are reminded that in 1919, the officers involved in the Chicago Race Riot deployed acts of neglect, much like those who stood idly by while Derek Chauvin held his knee in George Floyd’s neck for over 8 minutes in 2020. Colorization offers a statement about time and provides viewers with a deeper glimpse into what life was like when the photograph was captured.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Kathryn McMillan, *Colourization of Photographs as Remix*, 4.

⁸⁶ Kathryn McMillan, *Colourization of Photographs as Remix*, 6.

CHAPTER 5: IN CLOSING

Scholarly Contributions

This project leaves an indelible mark on the field of Africana Studies. *The Water Remembers* and *Setting the Record Straight* are not just about art or history. Rather they are about how the two speak to one another and the conversation that results from that. The project goes beyond filling a gap in the archive. Although, many scholars have found and referenced the verbal threats, physical beatings, and disproportionate arrests that local police rendered during the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 the photographic archive fails to reflect those findings. *The Water Remembers* has filled the holes in the archive by creating photographic evidence of the persistent nature of police violence. While *Setting the Record Straight* has offered up a critique of the role of police violence in emboldening other forms of anti-Black violence. As Tina Campt stated, “rather than looking at these images solely for what we see, I want to hear them—to listen attentively to the quiet intensities they express, the unsanctioned practices they enact, and the alternate modes of being they call into existence.”⁸⁷ This project insists that police violence can no longer be understood as separate from anti-Black violence. Rather, it must be recognized as a constitutive form of anti-Black violence—one that not only enacts racial harm but also has legitimized and sustained it within broader structures that have persisted into the contemporary moment.

⁸⁷ Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 8.

This project has also highlighted Black Resistance in a way that has historically been silenced within the archive. Although, there is no shortage of photographs of passive Black resistance *The Water Remembers* has taken up the conversation of active Black Resistance. As Berger notes America has been able to digest the docile and passive Black American.⁸⁸ However, this project offers photographic evidence that active resistance has historical roots in this country as well. It highlights the power of art and photography not only to document history, but to intervene in it—offering counter-narratives that reframe the Black experience in America. This project uncovers a richer, more layered account of Black life, both historical and contemporary, challenging dominant narratives that have rendered it incomplete or distorted. *The Water Remembers* and *Setting the Record Straight* offers to the field it's dedication to the correction of the historical record and Black American's response to the constant attacks from police officers and vigilantes.

Finally, *The Water Remembers*, adheres to one of the main foci of Africana Studies of being in service and accessible to the Black community. The decision to present this project as an online exhibition was driven, in part, by a commitment to accessibility—ensuring that it could reach the broadest possible audience beyond traditional institutional boundaries. This project is offered up as a statement about the endurance of Black joy despite historic and contemporary silencing and persistent violent attacks. The decision to ensure the widest possible reach for this statement was both intentional and urgent, driven by a deep commitment to making “joy despite it all” visible

⁸⁸ Martin A. Berger, *Freedom Now*, 10.

and unmissable. *Setting the Record Straight* boldly and unapologetically asserts that Black joy is not secondary to violence and erasure instead it persists in defiance of them, refusing to be diminished or extinguished.

Final Thoughts

Although this project has centered the Chicago Race Riot of 1919; it offers up a broader conversation about the racial violence exhibited in 1919 in the United States. Similar to Balto, this project was hyper focused on a local area that has national implications that are relevant to most major cities in this country.⁸⁹ Art offers a unique way to explore truly traumatic topics that have shaped not only the Black American experience but also policing and white supremacy. This project insists that because local police have—at best—neglected their responsibility to protect Black Americans and—in the worst case—participated in acts of racial violence, vigilantes have historically been empowered to commit acts of violence without fear of repercussion.

However, this project also demands recognition of the Black response to police and racial violence. It requires the viewer to acknowledge that Black Americans took up arms, fired their weapons, utilized their military knowledge all to fight back. It uplifts the Black Americans of the New Negro Movement who proclaimed that if America did not become safe for all Americans the violence would not stop because Black Americans would refuse to accept the enforcement of white supremacy. *The Water Remembers* uplifts the men of the Eighth Illinois National Guard who utilized their military knowledge to protect their families and their communities. This project is offered up as a

⁸⁹ Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory*, 4.

love letter to the Black Americans whose—like other Venuses before and after— names we will never know because their stories were kept from the archive because they resisted subjugation and white supremacy even when it meant risking their live.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Balto, Simon. *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Berger, Martin A. *Freedom Now!: Forgotten Photographs of the Civil Rights Struggle*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013.
- Buckingham, Danielle. "The Pieces of Me: Black Collage Artists on What Their Work Means to Them." *Reckon News*, January 31, 2023.
<https://www.reckon.news/black-joy/2023/01/the-pieces-of-me-black-collage-artists-on-what-their-work-means-to-them.html>
- Crossley, Callie. "Michael Brown, One Year Later: A Tragic Civil Rights Moment That Ignited a Movement." *The World*, August 3, 2015.
<https://theworld.org/stories/2015/08/03/michael-brown-one-year-later-tragic-civil-rights-moment-ignited-movement>
- Finley, Cheryl, and Deborah Willis, eds. *Free as They Want to Be: Artists Committed to Memory*. Bologna: Damiani, 2022.
- Hartfield, Claire. *A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919*. Boston: Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.
- Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe: A Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 6. <https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1>
- King Shannon, *The Politics of Safety: The Black Struggle for Police Accountability in La Guardia's New York* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2024), 23.
- Krugler, David F. *1919, The Year of Racial Violence*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Marshall, Kerry James, Dieter Roelstraete, Helen Molesworth, and Ian Alteveer. *Kerry James Marshall: Mastry*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications, 2016

- McWhirter, Cameron. *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2011.
- Michałowska, Marianna. "Invisible Presence of the Past: Hauntology of Photography." *Membrana Journal of Photography* 5, no. 1 (2020): 80. <https://doi.org/10.47659/m8.080.art>
- Raiford, Leigh. *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011
- Raiford, Leigh. "Photography and the Practices of Critical Black Memory." *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (2009): 113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2009.00522.x>
- Ruble, Casey. *Red Summer*. Accessed April 10, 2025. <https://caseyruble.com/projects/red-summer/>
- Silver, Hannah, "Artist Mickalene Thomas Wrestles with Notions of Black Beauty, Female Empowerment and Love." *Wallpaper*, February 7, 2025. <https://www.wallpaper.com/art/exhibitions-shows/artist-mickalene-thomas-wrestles-with-notions-of-black-beauty-female-empowerment-complexity-and-love>
- Tuttle, William. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. New York: 1970.
- White, Wendel, *Red Summer*. Accessed April 10, 2025. <https://wendelwhite.com/projects/redsummer/>.
- Weems, Carrie Mae, et al. *Carrie Mae Weems: The Louisiana Project*. New Orleans, LA: Newcomb Art Gallery, 2004
- Wetli, Patty. "The Man behind the Powerful, Disturbing Images of the 1919 Race Riots Emerges from Obscurity." *Block Club Chicago*, July 24, 2019. <https://blockclubchicago.org/2019/07/24/jun-fujita-1919-race-riots-chicago-photographer/>
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32, no. 6 (October 1926): 290.
- Zurawski, Michelle. "Behind the Camera." *Poetry Foundation*, July 26, 2018. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/92104/behind-the-camera>