

17 BLACK ARTISTS TO KNOW

MARK BRADFORD

Bradford constructs massive works with everyday materials and multiple layers and then digs down to find incredible abstractions.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/22/what-else-can-art-do>

NICK CAVE

Cave is a joyful artist who works with sound, music, sculpture, and more.

LEARN MORE: <https://publicdelivery.org/nick-cave-soundsuits/>

MICKALENE THOMAS

Thomas creates huge portraits with acrylic, enamel, and her signature rhinestones, usually with an eye toward art history.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/arts-and-culture/a29762435/mickalene-thomas-artist-interview/>

RASHID JOHNSON

Johnson works with 2D and 3D materials, installations, and videos dealing with racial and cultural identity and contemporary issues.

LEARN MORE: <https://art21.org/artist/rashid-johnson/>

JULIE MEHRETU

Mehretu creates layered, expressive, and beautiful large-scale paintings of abstracted landscapes.

LEARN MORE: <https://art21.org/artist/julie-mehretu/>

SAM GILLIAM

Gilliam pushes the envelope with painting and fibers, creating gorgeous tapestries that blur the line between 2D and 3D work.

LEARN MORE: <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/sam-gilliam-1811>

BETYE SAAR

Saar utilizes assemblage, printmaking, and a lot of storytelling in her work that highlights politics and directly fights racism.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7CFz9xzhIM>

KARA WALKER

Walker creates room-size black paper silhouettes that explore issues of race, identity, violence, sexuality, and gender.

LEARN MORE: <https://walkerart.org/collections/artists/kara-walker>

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

Weems is one of the most incredible photographers in art history.

LEARN MORE: <http://carriemaeweems.net/bio.html>

KEHINDE WILEY

Wiley designs beautiful, hyperrealistic portraits that celebrate black identity and culture while critiquing art history.

LEARN MORE: <https://kehindewiley.com/>

MARTIN PURYEAR

Puryear is a sculptor who works within the traditions of craft but challenges materials to create unique, evocative sculptures.

LEARN MORE: <https://art21.org/artist/martin-puryear/>

TATYANA FAZLALIZADEH

Fazlalizadeh produces thought-provoking street art and portraits, including her campaign Stop Telling Women to Smile.

LEARN MORE: <http://tlynnfaz.com/>

MAYA FREELON

Freelon uses tissue paper, texture, and color to compose wonderfully vibrant works.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.mayafreelon.com/>

FAITH RINGGOLD

Ringgold paints, writes, sculpts, incorporates mixed media and creates iconic quilts, including Tar Beach.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.faithringgold.com/>

GLENN LIGON

Ligon is a conceptual artist who deals with race and sexuality, bringing in elements of language, literature, and history.

LEARN MORE: <http://www.glennligonstudio.com/>

AMY SHERALD

Sherald breaks tradition with her unique style of portraiture.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/09/23/the-amy-sherald-effect>

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

Marshall creates paintings that capture the black experience from the civil rights movement up to contemporary culture.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/17/t-magazine/kerry-james-marshall-artist.html>