

UTA ARTIST SPACE

ATL

**APRIL BEY & KIM DACRES**

We Insist Upon Ourselves  
in Perpetuity  
Throughout the Universe

JUNE 14-JULY 13, 2024

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## A WORD AND A PRAYER

UTA Artist Space Atlanta is pleased to present a two-person exhibition by artists April Bey and Kim Dacres. The exhibition, *We Insist Upon Ourselves in Perpetuity Throughout the Universe*, which will be on view from June 14, 2024 to July 13, 2024.

April Bey's work centers on the artist's imagined alternate universe where glitter is the currency and where visitors travel via portals of flora and fauna. Bey's work is deeply rooted in her rigorous reading practice, her love of books and her obsession with Sci-Fi. She incorporates colorful faux fur, glitter, vinyl and woven textiles such as brocade and velvet— materials rich in queerness— to craft icons around the images of real-life figures from her community. Her work, which spans across multiple media such as printed textiles, synthography, weaving and elaborate stitching, reflects her background in printmaking and design and results in richly layered works rooted in the intersections of post-colonialism, Speculative Futurism, internet culture, and feminism.

A bona fide bibliophile and self-described "Blerd", Bey draws inspiration from a myriad of different sources, many of them books in the fantasy, sci-fi, and futuristic realm including comics and graphic novels. These various wells of inspiration come together to form her world: Atlantica. The origin of Atlantica comes from a formative conversation with her father who used the language of sci-fi to describe the experience of otherness and racial oppression, positioning the artist as an alien on a mission to observe and report on the conditions of Earth. They may also encounter Pineapple Afrovenuses, deities that can cut down travel time and aid in transportation at a rapid speed, leaving the traveler with pineapple scented hair and skin. Populating the library are Calathea Crotalus Cerastes, a hybrid plant which fruits the hands of Black femmes with freshly manicured nails—they too act as transportation devices that grow naturally on Atlantica. On Atlantica, librarians are the custodians of the history of the world, their job is of the utmost import and crucial to the fundamental operations of Atlantica (VIELMETTER LOS ANGELES, 2024).

Kim Dacres' work focuses on the multifaceted tensions inherent within Black women's

self-presentation, and the reception of that presentation, in our contemporary social environment. Her work highlights the sculptural role that hairstyles and adornments play in the daily gendered lives of Black women, girls, and queer people. Dacres underscores the power of such styles to assert the validity of one's lived, but at times concealed, life experiences. Dacres uses rubber from recycled tires to create sculptures celebrating these influential forces in her life. Her works are acts of sculptural translation, embodying the assertive energy and presence of the people, particularly the Black women, that shape her identity-based and geographic communities— women the artist may personally know or encounter, as well as fictional characters, performers, athletes, and musicians that have forged her experience.

While drawn initially to the rubber tire material for its uniquely accessible, forgiving, and malleable nature, the artist further mines the material's metaphorical resonances with her own personal experience and the broader cycle of injustice and oppression inflicted upon Black and Brown people in America; all in spite of the contributions these very same individuals give as teachable moments to move the world and forward. Through the alchemical transformation of object into art, Dacres infuses the discarded materials with new life and joy, one reaching far beyond its preordained purpose.

This exhibition brings together artists and friends April Bey and Kim Dacres. The two friends bonded together over three key ideas: First, the wonder and beauty of Black queer folks and women. Second, the legalese (legal language) fluency required to be a successful artist and to advocate for one's work in the creative industry. Third, a love of reading and magical stories, where individuals are Gods unto themselves. The two artists began with the legends of Anansi, the mythical shape-shifter and trickster and Mami Wata, the mythical mermaid of West African and Caribbean lore, and culminating in an activation and photoshoot of Black folks, Black women, and Black queer peoples in the Atlanta area hosted by UTA Artist Space Atlanta in the summer of Beyoncé 2023. This exhibition came together with all these in mind to celebrate the beautiful and magical presence of the people of Atlanta.

## THE ARTISTS

**April Bey** (b. 1987) grew up in the Bahamas (New Providence) and now resides and works in Los Angeles as a visual artist and art educator. She is currently a tenured professor at Glendale College. Bey's work is currently the subject of solo exhibitions at Pasadena Community College and Glendale Community College. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at The Nevada Museum of Art, Reno NV; The Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA; The California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA, among others. It has been included in group exhibitions at The Modern Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX; The Southwestern Center for Contemporary Art, NC; Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Portland State University, Portland, OR; The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ; Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA; The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, Nassau, Bahamas; New Orleans African American Museum, New Orleans, LA, among others. Her work is in the public collections of California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Norwalk, CT; Escalette Collection, Chapman University, Orange, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, Nassau, The Bahamas; Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA; Fullerton College Art Gallery, Fullerton, CA, among others. She is represented by Tern Gallery in Nassau, Bahamas and Vielmetter Los Angeles.



Pictured: Dacres (left) and Bey (right)  
Photograph by Curtis Bryant

**Kim Dacres** (b. 1986) lives and works between Harlem and the Bronx, New York. Kim has her Masters from CUNY Lehman College in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and a BA from Williams College, Political Science, Art Studio, and Africana Studies. Dacres's work has been exhibited around the world, including recent solo exhibitions at Charles Moffett Gallery in NY, NY (2023), Gavlak Gallery in Los Angeles, CA (2020) and Palm Beach, FL (2021), as well as group exhibitions internationally and within the U.S., including Black American Portraits at Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta, GA (2023) and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2021), Sounds of Blackness at The Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines (2023), Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis at Lustwarande 12th Edition, Tilburg, Netherlands (2022), Arrangements in Black at Phillips, New York, NY (2022), From a Place, Of a Place, presented by ArtNoir X regularnormal X Meatpacking District, New York, NY (2021), Through the Looking Glass, presented by UTA Artist Space, Beverly Hills, CA (2021), Dueling Consciousness, presented by Zidoun-Bossuyt, Luxembourg (2023), and Surrealism and Us: African and Caribbean Diasporic Artists since 1940 at the The Modern, Fort Worth, TX. Dacres is the recipient of the Artadia New York Award Grant (2022) and the Bronx Recognizes Its Own (BRIO) Grant in 2023. Her work is included in the public collections at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; The Nasher Museum at Duke University, Durham, NC; and The International African American Museum, Charleston, SC. Dacres is currently collaborating with Charles Moffett (NYC) and Zidoun-Bossuyt (Dubai | Luxembourg | Paris).





**Aimee**  
Studying Environmental  
Science at UGA  
Photograph by Chip Moody

Anansi, the trickster god from African folklore, is often depicted as a shape-shifter and a master of disguise. In some stories, Anansi's gender is fluid or undefined, allowing the character to transcend conventional gender boundaries. This ambiguity adds to Anansi's mysterious and unpredictable nature, highlighting themes of fluidity and transformation in the tales where Anansi appears.

In the TV show "American Gods," (Neil Gaiman) the character Anansi, also known as Mr. Nancy, portrayed by Orlando Jones, sparked controversy when Jones claimed he was fired from the series due to issues related to race and representation. Many fans and critics expressed disappointment over the handling of Anansi's character, as Jones brought a dynamic and impactful portrayal to the role. The controversy raised questions about diversity and creative decision-making in the entertainment industry.

**April Bey**  
*Anansi Judgementorizing:  
You Look Like You Snuck on to  
Earth, 2024*

Jacquard, sherpa, crushed  
velour, metallic thread, beads,  
adorned clothespins

80 x 240 in



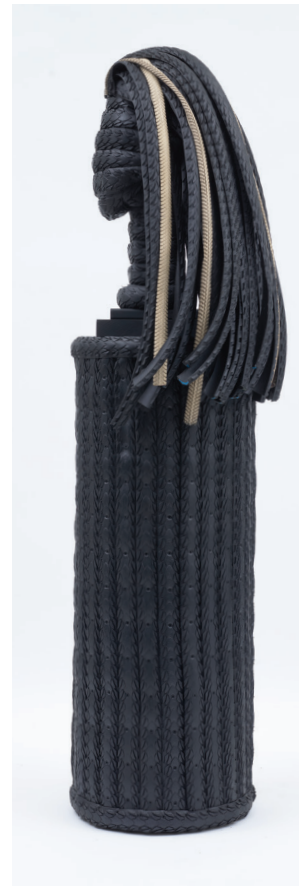




**Crystal aka DJ C. Devone**

Bronx Born, Atlanta based  
entrepreneur

Photographs by Chip Moody



**Kim Dacres**

*DJ Crystal, Keep Playing My Mami Wata  
Vibes, 2024*

Recycled tires, wood, screws, and spray  
paint; Fabrication Assistance Cerra  
Cardwell & RJ Custom NYC

68 x 15 x 15 in, 112lbs





#### Curtis

A Bronx born artist and creative now thriving in Atlanta. Curtis first met Kim through mutual friend in New York City. Curtis was one of the first people who encouraged and inspired Kim to be a full-time artist.

Photograph by Chip Moody

#### Scene from Beyoncé's Renaissance Film:

In the film, she reflects on the different communication she faces as a Black woman, describing it as a constant struggle. She mentions how people often attempt to deceive her until they realize her determination. The scene shifts to her requesting a wider fisheye lens from a crew member, who initially claims it's the widest available. However, she persists, prompting him to reconsider and admit there might be a wider option.



"I feel like being a Black woman, the way people communicate with me is different," she says at one point in the film. "Everything is a fight." She mentions that people try to "bullshit" her until she gives up. "Eventually, they realize, 'This bitch will not give up.'"

#### April Bey

*Well, Beyoncé Say She Look It Up and It Does Exist So...*, 2024

Canvas, resin, glitter (currency), crushed velvet, warm leather, yarn, metallic cord on wood panel

60 x 48 x 2 in





**Sharmell Bey**

April's cousin and fellow health warrior

Photographs by Chip Moody



**Kim Dacres**

*Cuzzo Sharmell, Fighting Battles and Slaying Demons Unseen, 2024*

Recycled tires, bicycle parts, wood, screws, braided bicycle tubes, zip ties, and spray paint; Fabrication Assistance Cerra Cardwell, RJ Custom NYC and Brenda Doctor

69.5 x 16 x 15.5 in, 121lbs





**Marryam**  
Tanzanian and Nigerian Atlanta  
Based Artist and Mother

Photographs by Chip Moody  
(left) and Curtis Bryant (below)



In Neil Gaiman's "American Gods" series, Yetide Badaki portrays Bilquis, an ancient goddess of love and sexuality who sustains herself by consuming her worshippers through her vagina.

Badaki, who plays Bilquis, recently revealed her bisexuality, crediting the American Gods project as a factor in her coming out

#### April Bey

*Miss Bilquis! How is Your Life? / Up and Not Crying, 2024*

Canvas, resin, glitter (currency), crushed velour, warm leather, yarn, metallic cord on wood panel

60 x 48 x 2 in







**Kim Dacres**

*Marryam, Imma Show My Face Real  
Quick Then I Got Things to Do, 2024*

Recycled tires, bicycle parts, braided bicycle  
inner tubes, zip ties, pressure treated wood,  
screws, and spray paint

60 x 11.25 x 14 in, 55.5lbs



**Patrice – Sonja – Revonda**

Atlanta Muses with the fades (from left to right)

This dynamic trip came together at Atlanta  
Pride one year when Sonja played  
matchmaker for her friend Revonda by  
introducing her to Patrice.

Photograph by Chip Moody



**Patrice** had a super friendly aura about her. She explained that her family had deep Gullah Roots by way of South Carolina, Nassau Florida, West Palm Beach. She met Revonda via Sonja at Atlanta Black Pride.

Photograph by Chip Moody

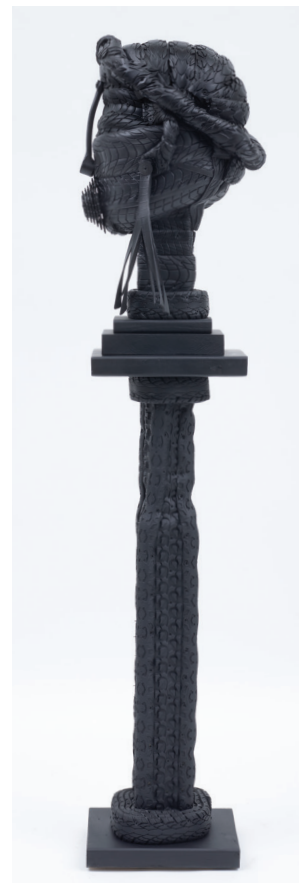


**Kim Dacres**

*Patrice, My Gullah Gullah Roots Go Deeper Than Your Dusty Lies, 2024*

Recycled tires, bicycle parts, pressure treated wood, screws, and spray paint

59.5 x 13.25 x 14 in, 55lbs





**Revonda** works with Arabia National Park in Lithonia, Ga. Home to the Bruce Street School, the first Black public school in DeKalb County formerly Lithonia Negro School. Met Patrice via Sonja at Atlanta Black Pride.

Photograph by Chip Moody

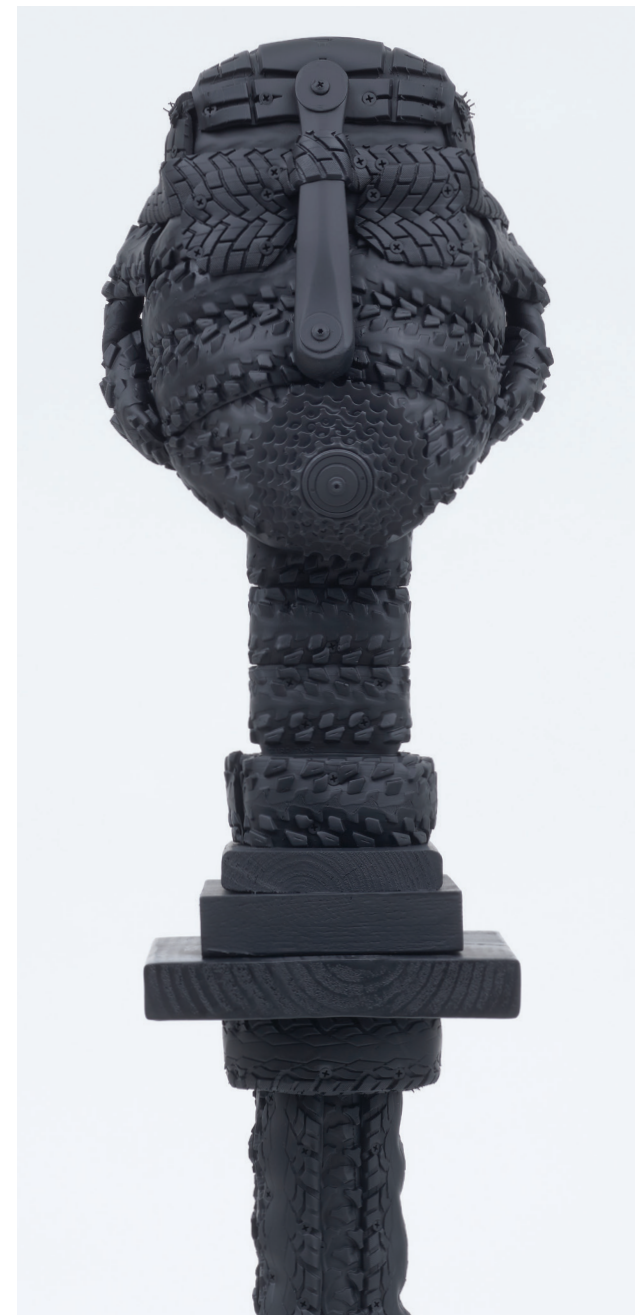
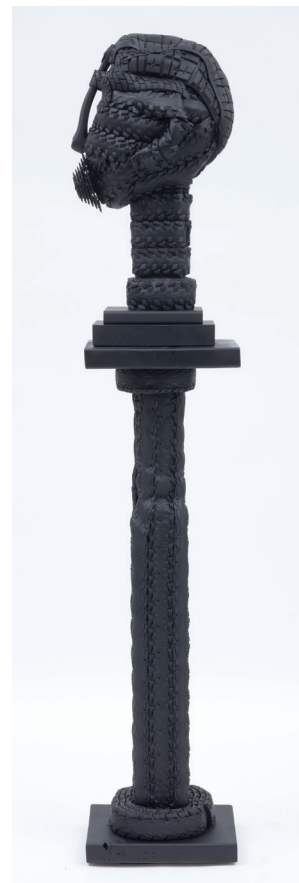


**Kim Dacres**

*Revonda, Preserving Black History on Bruce Street, 2024*

Recycled tires, bicycle parts, pressure treated wood, screws, and spray paint

60.5 x 11.5 x 9.75, 46lbs







Model taken into AI/synthography Atlantica Magazine pulled from Atlantican Archives and Colonial Swag Advertisement. Mami Wata exists cyclically bridging the gaps between life and death, good and evil, guardian and trickster. These works are about the fallacy of binary thinking and the hubris of underestimating divergent identities.

Screengrab from video tweeted by @shannonsharpeee



**April Bey**

*ATLANTICA MAGAZINE: How to Push Your Bloodclat Chest, So Phucking High, 2024*

CMYK halftone hand-printed image transfer, watercolor on gesso board hand-sewn into metallic vinyl wrapped wood panel

32 x 28 x 2.5 in



**April Bey**

*COLONIAL SWAG: Good Fortune, Wealth, and Healing but Also the Threat of Destruction, 2024*

Crushed velvet, sherpa, jacquard, metallic brocade, adorned giant clothespins, beads and bamboo earrings

70 x 60 in



Atlantican Movie Poster pulled from Atlantican Archives. Judgementorializing is when an Earth sign (Capricorn, Virgo or Taurus) judges someone or something harshly but fairly while adding their own opinions about causation and what they would do instead. Advice produced from such an act should be followed dearly.

# April Bey

*They Spend Their Currency on Things Like War and Genocide but Don't Even Have Lime Green Peace, 2024*

CMYK halftone hand-printed image transfer, watercolor, hand-sewn crushed velour on gessoboard sewn (framed) into fur wrapped wood panel

48 x 36 x 2.5 in

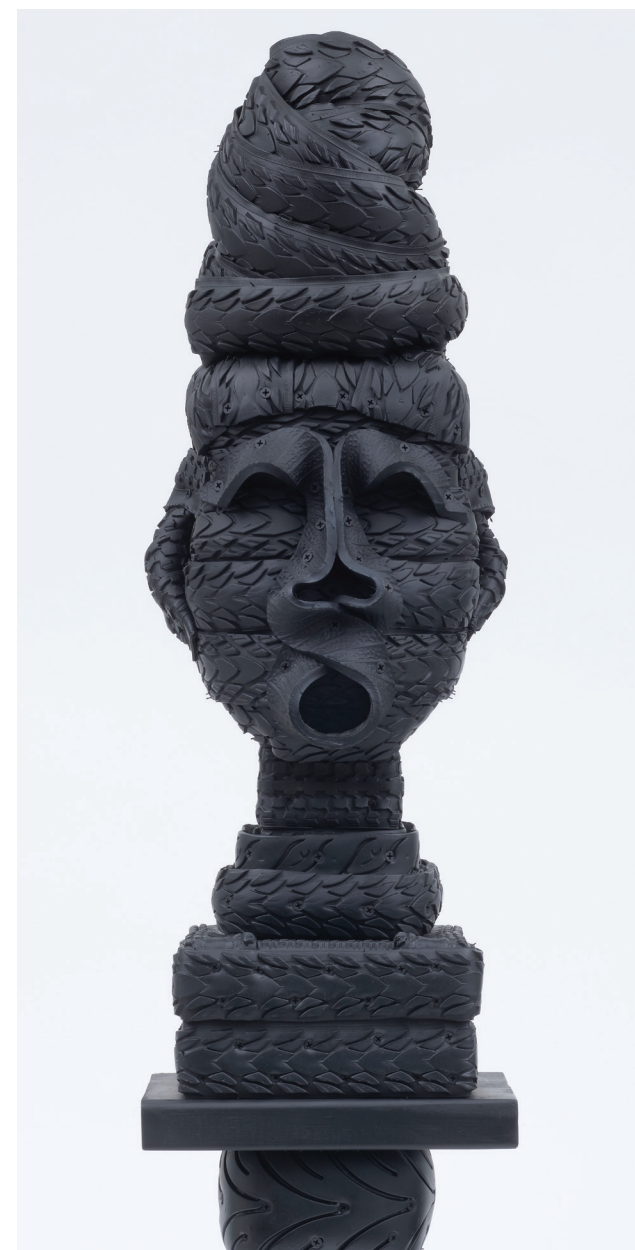
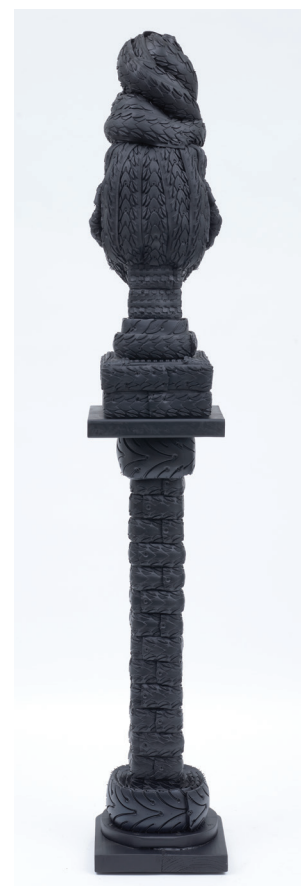


# Kim Dacres

*Liberty, 2022/2024*

Recycled motorcycle, auto, and bicycle tires, pressure treated wood, screws, and spray paint

67.65 x 10.75 x 11.5 in, 63.5lbs





## COLLABORATIVE WORK

**April Bey & Kim Dacres**  
*FINEAPPLE PORTAL, 2024*

Mint Green Faux Fur, Artificial plants, plant lights, plant stands, sculptures of recycled rubber, pressured treated wood, screws, and spray paint, glossy photo prints and mixed media textile painting.



**Kim Dacres**  
*Fineapple (It's not a pineapple, it's a fineapple), 2024*

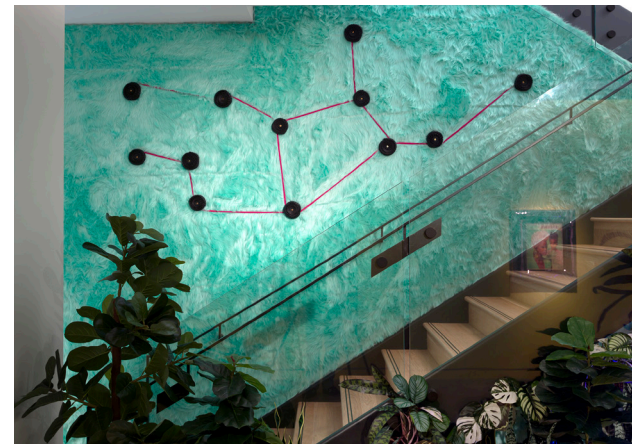
Recycled tires, pressure treated wood, screws, and spray paint

42 x 16.5 x 16.5 in, 65lbs

**Kim Dacres**  
*Mini Fineapples x 4 (Amber, Alaina, Tasia, Eileen), 2024*

Recycled tires, pressure treated wood, screws, and spray paint

21 x 10.5 x 10.5 in



**Kim Dacres**  
*Never Stop a Virgo In Their Groove Installation, 2024*

Arrangement of twelve spirals of recycled tires, screws, yarn, and spray paint

Dimensions variable



## OF COURSE THERE IS A BOOK LIST...

### **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Half of a Yellow Sun (2006)  
Americanah (2013)

### **Tomi Adeyemi**

Children of Blood and Bone (2018)  
Children of Virtue and Vengeance (2019)  
*Third Book Comes Out in June 2024*

### **James Baldwin**

The Fire Next Time (1963)

### **Joy Harden Bradford, Ph.D**

Sisterhood Heals (2023)

### **Octavia Butler**

Patternist Series  
Xenogenesis Trilogy (Lilith's Brood)  
Parable Series

*Standalone Novels:* Kindred (1979),  
Fledgling (2005)

### **Patricia Collins**

Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge,  
Consciousness, and the Politics of  
Empowerment

### **Akwaeke Emezi**

Freshwater (2018)  
Pet (2019)  
The Death of Vivek Oji (2020)

*Short Stories:* You Made a Fool of Death with  
Your Beauty (2014)

*NonFiction:* Beyond Nollywood: A Guide to New  
Nigerian Cinema (2016)

### **Neil Gaiman**

Good Omens (1990)  
Neverwhere (1996)  
Stardust (1999)  
American Gods (2001)  
Anansi Boys (2005)  
The Ocean at the End of the Lane (2013)  
The Graveyard Book (2008)  
Norse Mythology (2017)  
The Sleeper and the Spindle (2014)

*Graphic Novels:* The Sandman (1989—1996),  
Death: The High Cost of Living (1993) and The  
Books of Magic (1990—1991)

*Short Story Collections:* Smoke and Mirrors:  
Short Fictions and Illusions (1998), Fragile  
Things: Short Fictions and Wonders (2006)

*Children's Books:* Coraline (2002) (and the  
subsequent stop-motion film), The Wolves in  
the Walls (2003), Fortunately, the Milk (2013),  
The Ocean at the End of the Lane (2021)

### **Marlon James**

John Crow's Devil (2005)  
The Book of Night Women (2009)  
A Brief History of Seven Killings (2014)  
Black Leopard, Red Wolf (2019)  
Moon Witch, Spider King (2022)

### **Mikki Kendall**

Hood Feminism (2020)

### **Michael Harriot**

Black AF History (2023)

### **N.K. Jemisin**

The Inheritance Trilogy  
The Dreamblood Duology  
The Broken Earth Trilogy

*Standalone Novels:* The City We Became  
(2020), The World We Make (2023)

*Short Story Collections:* How Long 'til Black  
Future Month? (2018)

*Other Works:* The Awakened Kingdom (2014)

### **Nnedi Okorafor**

Zahrah the Windseeker (2005)  
The Shadow Speaker (2007)  
Who Fears Death (2010)  
Akata Witch (2011)  
Akata Warrior (2017)  
Lagoon (2014)  
The Book of Phoenix (2015)  
Binti Trilogy  
Remote Control (2021)

### **Dr. Oyeronke Oyewumi**

The invention of women: Making an African  
Sense of Western Gender Discourses (1997)

### **Legacy Russell**

Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto (2020)

### **Lola Shoneyin**

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives (2010)  
Guillermo del Toro

Pan's Labyrinth: The Labyrinth of the Faun  
(2019)  
The Shape of Water (2018)  
The Strain Trilogy

### **Dr. Londa Schiebinger**

Nature's Body Gender in the Making of Modern  
Science (1993)

### **Michael Shnayerson**

T-Boom: Mad Money, Mega Dealers and the  
Rise of Contemporary Art (2019)

## GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

**BRIDGETTE BALDO**  
**BLAKE BELCHER**  
**CURTIS BRYANT**  
**CERRA CARDWELL**  
**ZUZANNA CIOLEK**  
**BRENDA DOCTOR**  
**KAYLA GASKIN**  
**DEMETRIO & GIANNA KERRISON**  
**ARTHUR LEWIS**  
**BLANCA MALDONANDO**  
**CHIP MOODY**  
**SAVANNAH SPOTSWOOD**  
**UTA ARTIST SPACE ATLANTA**  
**RJ CUSTOM FABRICATION**

## ATLANTA ACTIVATION FAMILY

Johnathan, Sonja, Dad (Mr. Bey),  
Uncle Wyman, Latonya, Marryam Moma,  
Crystal, Will, Sharmell, Curtis Bryant,  
Hilton, Aimee, Christian, Khristen,  
Patrice, Revonda, Honey Pierre, Kierra,  
Auntie Dacia, Gina, Desean, Ben, Rivanne,  
Joey, Moriah, Christell, and Renata

**AND EVERYONE ELSE, HUMAN OR  
OTHERWISE, THAT TOUCHED THIS  
PROJECT AND SUPPORTED US**

## ARTWORK PHOTOGRAPHED BY

Mike Jensen, Jackson Marcovic, Prince Williams