



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application, which conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the application guidelines for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Research Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: In a Speculative Light: The Arts of Writer James Baldwin (1924-1987) and Painter Beauford Delaney (1901-1979)

Institution: University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Project Director: Amy Elias

Grant Program: Collaborative Research

Statement of Significance and Impact

This project, hosted by the University of Tennessee Humanities Center, is a symposium that will create new knowledge about Black arts history and American late modernism by looking closely, for the first time, at work by two friends—James Baldwin (1924-1987) and painter Beauford Delaney (1901-1979)—who were also among the greatest 20th-century Black American artists. Baldwin's international reputation as a fiction writer and essayist was augmented by his prominence as a US Civil Rights activist; today he is cited in social justice struggles such as Black Lives Matter. Delaney in his day was a revered figure in Boston, New York, and Parisian avant-garde circles; born in Knoxville, Tennessee and plagued by poverty and mental illness, he travelled among the *beau monde* on two continents. They had much in common, for neither man fit easy artistic or identity categories. Both were prolific craftsmen yet were faulted for moving erratically through many artistic genres and modes. They both were influenced by jazz and blues, were obsessed with the properties of color and light, and were expatriates from the US and alienated by homophobia and racism that permeated society and arts cultures. But while the story of their 38-year friendship is well known, and their respective influence among peers was extensive, there has been to date no study clarifying how their relationship shaped their works or influenced 20th-century arts.

“In a Speculative Light” will be a symposium held in Knoxville, TN in conjunction with a major exhibition on Delaney and Baldwin at the Knoxville Museum of Art that will use the optic of the Baldwin/Delaney friendship to analyze work on jazz and blues music, ethics, and Black aesthetics in order to remake established histories concerning postwar Black arts. Papers will posit models for how Baldwin and Delaney's intergenerational friendship alters intergenerational aesthetics and Black modernism beyond the Harlem Renaissance. The framing idea for the symposium is the idea of “speculative light.” Alluding to the obsessions with light and color in both artists' works, the phrase also refers to how Baldwin and Delaney, as artists who embrace their Black identities, speculate on a better future and create spaces in their lives and in their art works that allow thinking anew about Blackness and creativity. Presenters may explore research questions such as the following: How might the works of Baldwin or Delaney be seen to presage new definitions of Black aesthetics? Whom did they influence, and how? What roles do the sonic arts play in Black modernism and postwar arts and how might examining their love of music help us to see Delaney and/or Baldwin in a new way historically, artistically, or politically? In what ways does mentorship become redefined for them as an aesthetic relation, a relation of Black care, and a redefined form of Black masculinity? Answering such questions has the potential to help us not only to rethink the respective arts of Baldwin and Delaney but also to remake established stories in art and literary histories about the continuities between expressionism, abstract expressionism, and political realism as arts “movements” spanning the 20th century. Baldwin and Delaney, representing different generations and different artistic forms in constant dialogue, may open the door to new, forward-thinking interpretations of Black arts and their development through the century.

The UT Humanities Center is partnering with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in NYC and with the Knoxville Museum of Art (KMA) in Knoxville, TN; it will synchronize the symposium with a KMA exhibition featuring 40+ works by Delaney and Baldwin and hold opening-night activities at the museum. The following two days of the symposium will be held on the University of Tennessee campus and feature livestreamed talks by 26-34 junior and senior arts and humanities scholars—eight to ten invited plenary speakers and others selected from respondents to a call for papers distributed on social media and international listservs. The UT Humanities Center and the KMA will provide cost sharing for the symposium, and the Humanities Center will utilize its own staff and established procedures for meeting organization and publicity. Within one year of the symposium, selected conference papers will be revised and edited for publication by a university press as a volume of collected essays. Working with the two collaborators, the project director, Amy Elias, will obtain a contract for, and edit, the essay collection; Elias has extensive experience organizing international conferences and editing both journal issues and essay collections concerning the postwar arts.

**Project Narrative
In a Speculative Light:
The Arts of Writer James Baldwin (1924-1987) and Painter Beauford Delaney (1901-1979)**

Substance and Context

This project, hosted by the University of Tennessee Humanities Center, is a symposium that will create new knowledge about Black arts history and American late modernism for scholars working in literary studies, musicology, and the visual arts by looking closely, for the first time, at work by two men—writer James Baldwin and painter Beauford Delaney—who were also among the greatest 20th-century Black American artists. Friends for more than thirty-eight years, they had much in common, for neither man fit easy artistic or identity categories. Both were sons of preachers from the American South. Both were prolific craftsmen yet were faulted for moving erratically through many artistic genres and modes; both were influenced by jazz and blues, were obsessed with the connotations and properties of color and light, and were gay expatriates from the US alienated by homophobia and racism that permeated society and arts cultures. But while the story of their friendship is well known, and their respective influence among peers was extensive, there has been to date no study clarifying how their relationship shaped their works or influenced 20th-century arts. This project is intended to remedy this significant gap in the critical discourse.

Context

The younger of the artists, the fiction writer, essayist, and activist James Baldwin (New York 1924-1987 Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France), is by far the better known. Because Baldwin's career was long, his writing prolific (by some reckonings, more than 6800 pages), and his status as a cultural figure iconic, the literature about him and his work is vast and includes his own nonfiction essays about his life. Scholarship on James Baldwin's life and writing is flourishing today, with international conferences, entire journals, and books solely devoted to his life and work.¹ Baldwin's reputation as a writer was

¹ See recently the International James Baldwin Conference at the American University in Paris, 26-28 May 2016, and “‘The Evidence of Things Not Seen’: Queering Europe with James Baldwin” conference, 22-23 February 2018, University of Bern, Switzerland, 16 November 2016; see also the open

augmented by his prominence as a speaker; an “out” gay man and a voice of Black radical resistance, he also became a prominent national activist during the US Civil Rights era. Many see his writing as fundamentally relevant today to Black Lives Matter, LGBTQIA, and other social justice struggles. For example, Darryl Pinckney has noted that a new book edited by the novelist and memoirist Jesmyn Ward and rehearsing the title of one of Baldwin’s texts, *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race*, “originated in her search for community and consolation after the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012,” and quotes her as noting, “I couldn’t fully satisfy my need for kinship in this struggle. . . . In desperation, I sought James Baldwin. [. . .] Baldwin was so brutally honest.”² In 2015, digital sound artists Mendi and Keith Obadike created *Blues Speaker [For James Baldwin]*, a 12-hour work of sound art based on Baldwin’s short story “Sonny’s Blues” (1948), his most anthologized work. The digital work is modelled on “Praise Songs” after the classical African mode and digitally renders sound in an architectural surrounding—the actual walls of the New School’s University Center in New York City. These and other projects attest to an urgent return to Baldwin’s work today.³ But the archive of Baldwin’s letters had been sealed by his estate for many years and was purchased and made available to scholars only recently by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in NYC. We are, as a result, right now in the midst of a renaissance concerning Baldwin’s writing.⁴ As Jennifer Schuessler notes, “James Baldwin died in 1987, but his moment is now. His books are flying off the shelves. He has inspired homages like Raoul Peck’s documentary *I Am Not Your Negro* and Ta-Nehisi Coates’s memoir *Between the World and Me*. Baldwin’s prophetic essays on race read like today’s news.”⁵

access journal *James Baldwin Review*, published for the first time in 2015 by Manchester UP and edited by Douglas Field, Justin A. Joyce, and Dwight A. McBride.

² Darryl Pinckney, “Catching Up to James Baldwin,” *New York Times Book Review*, May 25, 2017, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/05/25/catching-up-to-james-baldwin/>.

³ Julie Beth Napolin, “On *Blues Speaker [for James Baldwin]*: A Conversation with Mendi and Keith Obadike,” *Social Text Online*, August 21, 2018, <https://socialtextjournal.org/on-blues-speaker-for-james-baldwin-a-conversation-with-mendi-and-keith-obadike/>

⁴ See Ernest L. Gibson, “Trends in James Baldwin Criticism,” *James Baldwin Review* 4.1 (2018): <https://doi.org/10.7227/JBR.4.10>

⁵ Jennifer Schuessler, “James Baldwin’s Archive, Long Hidden, Comes (Mostly) Into View,” *The New York Times*, April 12, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/12/arts/james-baldwins-archive-long-hidden-comes-mostly-into-view.html>

There is to date no full-length study about Baldwin and Delaney as artists and friends, but one can mine the primary and secondary sources for references. Baldwin's short story collection *Going to Meet the Man* (1965) is dedicated to Delaney, and Delaney is included in the dedication to Baldwin's *No Name in the Street* (1972). Baldwin found in Delaney a father figure, an artistic genius, and model of perseverance as a Southern gay man of color; he called Delaney his "principle witness."⁶ Baldwin wrote eloquently of the older painter in his 1985 essay "The Price of the Ticket": "Beauford was the first walking, living proof, for me, that a black man could be an artist. In a warmer time, a less blasphemous place, he would have been recognized as my Master and I as his Pupil. He became, for me, an example of courage and integrity, humility and passion. An absolute integrity: I saw him shaken many times and I lived to see him broken but I never saw him bow."⁷ Notably, in his remembrances, Baldwin aligned Delaney with both light and music: "I learned about light from Beauford Delaney, the light contained in every thing, in every surface, in every face. [...] and this light held the power to illuminate, even to redeem and reconcile and heal. For Beauford's work leads the inner and the outer eye, directly and inexorably, to a new confrontation with reality. [...] he is a great painter, among the very greatest."⁸ Baldwin writes of the first time he walked into Delaney's studio: "I had grown up with music, but, now, on Beauford's small black record player, I began to hear what I had never dared or been able to hear. [...] In his studio and because of his presence, I really began to *hear* Ella Fitzgerald, Ma Rainey, Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Paul Robeson, Lena Horne, Fats Waller. [...] And these people were not meant to be looked on by me as celebrities, but as a part of Beauford's life and as part of my inheritance."⁹ In a 1976 interview with *Esquire*, Baldwin noted that "the most important person in my life [as a writer] was and is a very great but not very well-known Black painter named Botha [sic] Delaney."¹⁰

⁶ David Leeming, *Amazing Grace: The Life of Beauford Delaney*, 68.

⁷ James Baldwin, "The Price of the Ticket," in *Baldwin: Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, 832.

⁸ James Baldwin, "On the Painter Beauford Delaney," *Transition* 75/76 (1965): 88, 89.

⁹ James Baldwin, in "The Price of the Ticket," 831.

¹⁰ Fred L. Standley and Louis H. Pratt, eds. *Conversations with James Baldwin*, 163.

One sees glimpses of Delaney in photographs throughout the biographical film about Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket*, which premiered at Sundance in 1970.¹¹ And Joan Dempsey has written convincingly that the main mentor figure in Baldwin's most famous and anthologized short story, "Sonny's Blues," first published in the *Partisan Review* in 1957 and republished in 1965 in his only short story collection, *Going to Meet the Man*, is Beauford Delaney.¹² Because Baldwin's own essays point us in this direction, the connection between Delaney and Baldwin through jazz is often mentioned in secondary studies as a passing observation—with the exception of David Leeming's authoritative biography of Baldwin, which deals with the friendship extensively.¹³ Other Baldwin biographies usually build off Leeming's work.¹⁴ Such discussions have deepened to some degree as Delaney comes back on to the arts scene and theories such as queer-of-color and critical race studies open up new platforms for considering the men's identities and relationships. But for the most part, the Baldwin/Delaney relationship is mentioned only in passing or as a biographically important detail; no study exists that fleshes out and historicizes the important artistic re-visioning that this relationship may have had for both artists or how their relationship—a new kind of father/son relation between Black men who together produced some of the most important work of the mid-twentieth century—may revise how we understand Black masculinity or the development of postwar Black aesthetics.

The older friend, the painter Beauford Delaney (Knoxville 1901-1979 Paris), was lost to history for a time. In the mid-twentieth century, Delaney was considered an important artist of his generation. Born and initially taught to draw in Knoxville, Tennessee, he was a central figure in Boston, New York, and Parisian high-art circles, exhibiting his paintings in Europe and in the United States. Delaney was a

¹¹ *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, dir. Karen Thorsen, dist. California Newsreel, released August 14, 1989.

¹² Joan Dempsey, "Waiting for You: Beauford Delaney as James Baldwin's Inspiration for the Character Creole in 'Sonny's Blues,'" 60-78.

¹³ David Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography*. See for example Walton M. Muyumba, *The Shadow and the Act*, 38-39; Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), 231.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Magdalena J. Zaborowska, *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile* (Durham: Duke UP, 2009).

devotee of jazz and blues: he painted portraits and impressions of jazz artists such as Ella Fitzgerald (*Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald*, 1968) and Charlie Parker (*Charlie Parker*, 1969 and *Charlie Parker Yardbird*, 1958), and when lonely in Paris he copied blues lyrics into his sketchbooks.¹⁵ He was a beloved figure among writers, painters, and filmmakers, promoted by numerous patrons of the arts such as American cultural ambassador and art dealer Dorothea Speyer (1919–2014), and befriended by notable figures such as Georgia O’Keeffe (who drew charcoal and pastel portraits of Delaney in 1943), Henry Miller (who wrote a tribute to him), Countee Cullen, Louis Armstrong, Carl Van Vechten, and, later, Henry Louis Gates.¹⁶ He painted writer Jean Genet, singer Marian Anderson, and the Surrealist poet Stanislas Rodanski. Moving among such luminaries, Delaney was often seen as a kind of “Buddha” or teacher, though he fought extreme poverty and mental illness throughout his life.

Delaney met Baldwin in New York in 1940 when the writer was just fifteen years old and did a now-famous painting of him about a year later titled *Dark Rapture* (1941)—the first of many paintings of Baldwin that Delaney would complete during his lifetime. There is no record of their being lovers; the two would remain close as mentor/protégé and friends. Delaney introduced Baldwin to classical music, jazz and blues, took him to galleries and introduced him to friends, and made the funeral arrangements after Baldwin’s father’s death. Delaney, from an older generation that felt viscerally the policies of Jim Crow, found in Baldwin a powerful intellectual with a fearless social conscience and commitment to Civil Rights causes. He also found a spiritual partner and muse who provided emotional comfort, stability, and creative validation. Encouraged by Baldwin, Delaney left the US in 1953 and settled in Paris, where he lived until his death in 1979. In Delaney’s last years in a sanitarium in France, Baldwin was appointed one of his primary trustees and helped see to his needs. A famous picture by Max Petrus taken in 1976 shows them standing together in a garden, holding hands, Baldwin in 1970s dress, Delaney an old man in a white bathrobe, looking peacefully into the camera.¹⁷ Tragically, however, after Delaney died in 1979 in

¹⁵ David Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 119.

¹⁶ Henry Miller, *The Amazing and Invariable Beauford DeLaney* (NY: Alicat Book Shop, 1945).

¹⁷ Information here is from Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, particularly pages 194-97.

Saint Anne's Hospital for the Insane and was buried in a something like a pauper's grave outside of Paris, his work was nearly forgotten. Today, his reputation is being restored through the work of artists, critics, curators, and amateur enthusiasts worldwide. Grave and tourist markers now signal his historical presence in Paris and Knoxville, TN. His work is sold in galleries for increasingly high prices, and his paintings hang prominently among modernist and postwar works in New York's Museum of Modern Art (where his yellow *Composition 16*, 1954-56 is hung next to a work by Mark Rothko), the Smithsonian's American Art Museum, and the National Portrait Gallery (notably a portrait of Baldwin). The American artist Glenn Ligon curated a 2015 exhibition at the Tate Liverpool titled "Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions" that featured two works by Delaney (one a portrait of Baldwin) and put Delaney in the company of the Abstract Expressionists, next to a picture by Franz Kline.¹⁸

Because his estate has been largely closed to scholars to the present day, and because his reputation waned after his death, critical writing about Delaney is almost nonexistent, even with the flourishing of Baldwin studies across disciplines.¹⁹ The Studio Museum of Harlem broke ground with the first major posthumous exhibition of Delaney on US soil with *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective* (1979) and included the full text of Baldwin's previously published essay "Introduction to Exhibition of Beauford Delaney Opening December 4, 1964 at the Gallery Lambert."²⁰ There have been other exhibitions of Delaney's work since 2000 that include Baldwin in minor ways and whose catalogues have provided most of the critical work done recently on Delaney to date: these include *Beauford Delaney: Liquid Light: Paris Abstractions 1954-1970*, organized by Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in 1999; *An Artistic Friendship: Beauford Delaney and Lawrence Calcagno* at the Palmer Museum of Art at the Pennsylvania

¹⁸ Adrianna Campbell, "Glenn Ligon: Glenn Ligon speaks about his curatorial project 'Encounters and Collisions,'" *Artforum*, June 05, 2015, <https://www.artforum.com/interviews/glenn-ligon-speaks-about-his-curatorial-project-encounters-and-collisions-52580>. Ligon has a lifelong engagement with Baldwin's writing.

¹⁹ For example, in Matt Brim's *James Baldwin and the Queer Imagination*, Delaney receives only one sentence in chapter 1 though his influence is said to be formative on the younger writer.

²⁰ For a full chronology of exhibitions of Delaney's work, and good critical essays on his art that mention his relationship with Baldwin, see the catalogue edited by Patricia Sue Canterbury, *Beauford Delaney: From New York To Paris*. A useful exhibition chronology, "Beauford Delaney (1901-1079)," can also be found in the catalog for *Stroke! Beauford Delaney, Norman Lewis and Alma Thomas*.

State University in 2001; *Beauford Delaney: The Color Yellow*, organized by the High Museum of Art in 2002 and curated by Richard J. Powell, who contributed a groundbreaking essay about Delaney's use of color; *Beauford Delaney: New York to Paris* (2005), organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art, whose robust catalog features several scholarly essays mentioning James Baldwin; *Beauford Delaney: Renaissance of Form and Vibration of Color* (2016) at Montparnasse's Reid Hall and sponsored by Wells International Foundation and Les Amis de Beauford Delaney, along with Columbia Global Centers/Reid Hall Exposition; and *Gathering Light: Works by Beauford Delaney* (2017) at the Knoxville Museum of Art in Tennessee. Aside from the catalogue essays from these and other exhibitions, the only monograph devoted to Delaney is the 1998 biography by David Leeming, *Amazing Grace: A Life of Beauford Delaney* (1998). Leeming outlines the broad arc of Delaney's life and artistic development while emphasizing the contrast between the artist's vibrant social life and troubled inner life that led to his institutionalization in the late 1970s. It is encouraging to see, however, that references to Delaney are now appearing in cutting-edge work on Black aesthetics, such as Fred Moten's theoretical work, and in reconstructions of LGBTQIA arts.²¹ While previous Delaney exhibitions and publications have almost exclusively emphasized Delaney's stylistic evolution from the 1940s to the 1960s, from representation to pure abstraction, as a function of his move from New York to Paris and/or his worsening mental health, the proposed symposium will put Delaney into conversation with new and radical theories about the techniques and politics of Black arts, affording him some of the first serious treatment by academic criticism to date. Because of Delaney's stature among abstract expressionists, the project will contribute to a growing interest in the past ten years concerning "Black Abstraction" in the arts, as evidence by shows at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery (2014), the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston (2014), Pace Gallery (2016), and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. (2018). It is time to bring Delaney also into the sphere of queer theory, new Black aesthetics, and new theories of Black care that are transforming the critical landscape in academe and in which Baldwin is now frequently found.

²¹ See Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* and Christopher Capozzola, "Beauford Delaney and the Art of Exile," *The Gay and Lesbian Review* (2003): 10-12.

Substance

The arts of these two internationally renowned Black artists embodied new and complex aesthetics that we are today just beginning to see critically and historicize. New work on their arts is crucial to establishing revised and more accurate histories for Black art—to show not only artists' struggles to overcome social obstacles, but to establish positive histories of artistic genius, intellectual community, and aesthetic theory that have been lost, covered over, or appropriated. Delaney's work in particular has been historically situated only in relation to precursor artistic movements and seldom focused on the innovative aesthetics and future-oriented vision of his painting. This project corrects both of these limiting perspectives. It asserts that rethinking these artists' works is important both to new discussions about the complexity and unique performance of Black aesthetics across arts of the twentieth century and also to the recovery of art histories that have been lost.

In the hope that a new multidisciplinary inquiry will help to break previously confining disciplinary siloes and generate new knowledge, the symposium features scholars who work in art history, performance studies, film, literary studies, music, and curatorial practice. The host, the UT Humanities Center, represents nine arts and humanities departments in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and its mission is to support research at the university, connect the university to its surrounding communities, and to generate internationally significant scholarly research. This project accomplishes all of these objectives.

The framing idea for the symposium will be the idea of “speculative light.” This builds from the notion—extremely important in arts theories today—of “speculative arts,” redefined in Africana studies to connote artistic techniques and values specific to Black diasporic peoples' histories and arts. Linked to artistic movements such as Afrofuturism, Black speculative arts combine genres such as science fiction and historical fiction with non-Western cosmologies to revisit and reimagine the past, critique the social conditions of African-descended people in the present, and imagine liberating alternative worlds and existences. As a U.S. cultural phenomenon, Black speculative aesthetics have roots in the mythologies and traditions that African Americans brought with them during the transatlantic slave trade and must be

understood as an integral component of an ongoing social movement for equality. Literary critics such as Michelle Commander have further defined “speculation” as a frame of mind as well as hypothetical journey through geography (often back to Africa) for Black people in diaspora.²² No longer limited to science fiction or pure fantasy literature, Black speculative arts simultaneously “speculate” as a form of cogitation and conversational conjecture about people’s relation to both the African historical past and the lived and open future, and also “speculate” on the future in the terms of a wager, a gamble, and an investment.

James Baldwin’s fiction is generally categorized as “realism”; he was not primarily a writer of science fiction or fantasy. And Beauford Delaney was an expressionist painter, moving toward abstract expressionism late in his career; he did not paint pictures that would today be termed “futurist.” Yet situating Baldwin and Delaney not in relation to their precursors and the past but to their inheritors and the future allows us to think about Baldwin’s social realism and Delaney’s use of color and abstraction in new, speculative terms. The subject of this project is how Baldwin and Delaney together and separately speculate on the present and bet on the future as artists who embrace their diasporic Black identities. It asks how they create spaces in their lives and in their art works that allow thinking anew about Blackness and the social realities in which they move, and how they wager and gamble on a different future through the very *forms* of their respective arts.

The symposium will call for scholarly work concerning six categories of research questions: arts history and Black aesthetics, music and sonic arts, ethics and social values, style and form, gender and sexuality, and biography and legacies. The following are the research questions that speakers will be asked to explore:

- Arts History and Black Aesthetics: How should we understand the delight in, and despair with, the exploration of light and color in Baldwin’s and Delaney’s works and lives? What frame is needed to understand their fascination with and withdrawal from pellucidity? Richard J. Powell has

²² Michelle Commander, *Afro-Atlantic Flight: Speculative Returns and the Black Fantastic*.

written that Delaney’s colors have affective charge, indicative of emotional interiority: in what ways might form and affect merge or serve new aesthetic ends in these artists’ works?²³ In what ways do expressionism and abstraction contend? How might the works of Baldwin or Delaney be seen to presage new definitions of Black aesthetics, such as new definitions of synesthesia or opacity or contemporary re-visionings of Black abstraction? Whom did they influence, and how?

- Music and Sonic Arts: How might we reconfigure our understandings of the arts of these two mid-century artists—or the aesthetics of their artistic surround—in relation to the sonic arts, specifically jazz and blues but also other kinds of sonic form? In what ways does “transmedial consonance” resonate through their respective works or shared aesthetics?²⁴ What roles do the sonic arts play in Black modernism and postwar arts and how might these resituate Delaney and/or Baldwin historically, artistically, bodily, politically—and vice versa?
- Ethics and Social Values: How might the friendship between these men be reassessed through the lens of Black care? In what ways might care ethics help us to situate their expatriation and chosen diasporas?²⁵ In what ways do mentorship and love become redefined as an aesthetic relation *and* a relation of care? What is a formal consequence of this friendship in their works and on their philosophies of art and life? How does viewing them through the lens of care ethics help us to rethink Black masculinity or Black creativity in relation to history?
- Style and Genre: What are the contexts and framing discourses that might allow us to reevaluate Baldwin’s and/or Delaney’s promiscuous play with genre, style, and form? How might their expatriate wanderings and their generic wanderings demand a new descriptive vocabulary? What are the stakes of their wager on a multiplicity of expression or a polyphony of discourse, or what Fred Moten has called a “categorical blur”?

²³ Richard J. Powell, “The Color of Ecstasy,” in *Beauford Delaney: The Color Yellow*.

²⁴ A term used by Brent Hayes Edwards in his *Epistrophes: Jazz and the Literary Imagination*, 7.

²⁵ See Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016).

- Gender and Sexuality: What can queer theory now bring to our understanding of these artists and their productions, and vice versa? On what are they speculating in their cross-generational and improvisational familial / lovers' relation? What role does gender, sexuality, love, or the reproductive future play in the lives of these men and in their arts? In their lives and aesthetics, what is the interplay and resonance of exile as the basis for creative erotics?²⁶
- Biography and Legacies: How might Baldwin and Delaney see the theory that now wishes to include them? Are our current theories congenial to them, or is a more radical revisioning (or more conservative separation of historical periods) required to see the true relation between their speculations and our own time and desires? What arts/artists today are influenced directly by their work and/or philosophies of art? What new arts, such as digital arts, have adopted their aesthetic practices or philosophies?

Scholars from multiple arts and humanities fields are being invited to address these questions. The threads holding this tapestry of disciplines together will be Delaney and Baldwin—their times, arts, friendship, politics, and influence. With Delaney and Baldwin as a fulcrum, papers should generate new insights about the mid-century arts and how they contributed to new definitions of Black identity, creative expression, and confraternity and thus have the potential together to construct new genealogies for contemporary Black arts.

History of the Project and its Productivity

This project began with an invitation extended to Amy Elias, University of Tennessee Professor of English and Director of the UT Humanities Center, by a regional arts initiative called “The Delaney Project.” This was a Knoxville consortium gathered first in 2015 and formally organized in 2016 by curators or directors of the Knoxville Museum of Art, the Beck Cultural Exchange Center (a nonprofit museum and cultural center centered on Black regional history), the East Tennessee History Center (a

²⁶ For use of this term, see Magdalena J. Zaborowska, *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade*.

nonprofit center that is one of the preeminent genealogical research facilities in the Southeastern United States), Marble City Opera Company (dedicated to creating opportunities for local, regional, and emerging artists), The Links, Incorporated (one of the nation's oldest volunteer service organizations for women of color committed to enriching and sustaining the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry), and the Beauford Delaney Estate. In 2015 members of the Delaney organizing group had gone to Paris for the opening of an exhibition titled *Beauford Delaney: Resonance of Form and Vibration of Color*; it was financed by the Wells International Foundation partnering with the nonprofit "Les Amis de Beauford Delaney" and Columbia Global Centers Europe at Reid Hall in Paris.²⁷ Inspired by that trip, the group formed "Gathering Light/Beauford Delaney Project," a consortium of organizations and individuals dedicated to making the Delaney brothers better known in their Knoxville hometown, educating the local community about its rich, diverse cultural heritage, and enhancing Knoxville's status as an international hub for Beauford Delaney scholarship.²⁸ In the summer of 2017 the Knoxville Museum of Art organized *Gathering Light: Works by Beauford Delaney* from the KMA's extensive collection, its first-ever showing of its own holdings. *Gathering Light* kicked off a multi-year, community-wide initiative to honor the legacy of Beauford Delaney and his brother Joseph, under the rubric of the Delaney Project. The East Tennessee Historical Society has spearheaded efforts to place historic markers at the sites connected with the early years of Beauford and Joseph Delaney and is actively working to become the depository for Beauford Delaney's papers; Beck Cultural Exchange Center has recently acquired the Delaney family home and is developing plans to restore it and make the historic structure an artists' retreat; Marble City Opera has commissioned a chamber opera about Beauford Delaney's life that will premier in Knoxville in late 2019.

²⁷ See a review of the exhibition by Joseph Nechvatal, "Beauford Delaney: Resonance of Form and Vibration of Color," *The Brooklyn Rail: Critical Perspectives on Art, Politics, and Culture*, May 3, 2016, <https://brooklynrail.org/2016/05/artseen/beauford-delaney-resonance-of-form-and-vibrationnbspofnbspcolor>

²⁸ See "Les Amis de Beauford Delaney" website updated by Dr. Monique Y. Wells. at <http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/>. See the website-in-progress for "Gathering Light: The Delaney Project" at <https://thedelaneyproject.org/>.

Most importantly, the Knoxville Museum of Art will hold a major exposition of Delaney's work in spring, 2020. Titled *Beauford Delaney: Through the Unusual Door*, it will feature 40+ paintings, works on paper, documentary photographs, and letters and will examine the 38-year relationship between Delaney and Baldwin and the ways they shaped one another's creative output and worldview. The KMA now owns the world's largest public collection of Delaney's works, and curator Stephen Wicks, who has been active in Delaney studies for decades, is organizing the exhibition. The exhibition will draw from the KMA's extensive Delaney holdings, loans from collections in the United States and France, and archival material held by the Delaney estate and housed at the KMA. The title of the exhibition comes from a passage in Baldwin's essay "The Price of the Ticket" describing the author's reaction to his initial encounter with Delaney in the doorway of the artist's Greenwich Village studio: "Lord, I was to hear Beauford sing, later, and for many years, open the unusual door." The KMA has been encouraged by NYC galleries and major arts museums to take the show on the road because of its potential importance.

Because the UT Humanities Center wishes to develop public programming of key importance to humanities scholarship, its director, Amy Elias, volunteered to organize a scholarly symposium through the UT Humanities Center (in partnership with UT faculty in the departments of English and Art and with the KMA and others) that would dovetail with these regional efforts, and in particular partner with the KMA's Delaney exhibit. The UT Humanities Center's symposium will invite local organizations—whose directors are part of the local Delaney Project—to participate as destination centers during the run of the symposium and will hold the symposium's opening-night activities at the KMA. Such collaboration has the potential to open doors and break down the social, cultural, and racial barriers that separate people in our community.

However, it is important to stress that the purpose of this project is not merely commemorative, to produce a hagiography of some kind. The proposed symposium will speak primarily to a national community of scholars and generate new and provocative research on Black aesthetics for this constituency. In summer and fall of 2018, Elias began contacting potential national collaborators and presenters, settled on a theme for the symposium, and investigated internal university funding sources as

matching funds possibilities. The UT Humanities Center can provide \$18,420 of cost sharing toward this grant and will be applying for UT institutional grants for up to an additional \$12,000. Because the symposium will run during academic year 2019-2020, it will be under a new fiscal year and will disallow most applications for internal funds before spring 2019. The specific conference date of February 19-21, 2020 is now set, and symposium activities will take place both at the Knoxville Museum of Art and at the University of Tennessee campus at either the Black Cultural Center or conference facilities at the new Student Union (see “Methods and Execution” below). A site developer, Daniel Wallace, has been hired to construct a symposium website; a “proof of concept/placeholder” is located at <https://delaneybaldwin.home.blog/>, and the final version will have its own domain, be hosted on a professional server (Siteground), and will be built with a fully featured Wordpress page builder.

In the months following the symposium, Elias (in collaboration with artistic editor Stephen Wicks) will collaborate on phase 2 of the project, a collection of essays culled from the best revised symposium papers. Elias has begun soliciting presses for expressions of interest. Ideally, between spring and fall of 2019, she can obtain an advance contract for the volume. The planned date of completion for the publishing project (i.e. the date of publication production for the edited collection of essays) would be 18 months after the symposium.

Collaborators

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville will administer the grant and Amy J. Elias, Professor of English, will be the principal project director, attending to all details of its execution. As director of the UT Humanities Center she will have available the resources and staff of the Center to help with the project. Elias has accrued an international reputation for her research in the postwar arts, and she has established a track record for creating scholarly communities that have international respect, are known for inclusivity, and that produce esteemed scholarly outcomes.²⁹ As the principal founder in 2005 of

²⁹ See ASAP at <https://www.artsofthepresent.org/about/>. See *ASAP/Journal* at <https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/684>.

ASAP: The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, she hosted the launch conference of the society in Knoxville in 2009 and served at one point in every office on its executive board. She is the founding co-editor-in-chief of ASAP's scholarly journal *ASAP/Journal* (published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, and winner of two of the three major journal awards from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals since its launch with an issue solely edited by Elias). She has been special issue editor of two issues of *ASAP/Journal* and co-edited two collections of scholarly essays published by top university presses, *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present* (NYU Press, 2017) and *The Planetary Turn: Relationality, and Geoaesthetics in the 21st-Century* (Northwestern UP, 2016). She was co-organizer of the 2017 "The Futures of Afrofuturism" symposium at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (<http://english.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Afrofuturism-Program-03303117.pdf>) and was on the steering committee for the symposium "Democracy and Tradition" (2006), hosted jointly by the UTK departments of philosophy, English, and religious studies. Elias will not be presenting a paper at the symposium in order to oversee the symposium's implementation. Her roles will include finding funding for the symposium, managing finances, insuring that staff understand and carry out their tasks, handling speaker arrangements, arranging facilities and publicity for the event, and implementing the program. Because she has staff to help with organizational details, Elias's time is estimated at approximately 20 hours per week during each of the 14 months of planning (from December 2018). The time commitment for Elias is built into her role as director of the UT Humanities Center, for which she receives institutional compensation and teaching buyouts.

The UT Humanities Center will be principally collaborating with the Knoxville Museum of Art for this symposium. Elias will be working closely with Stephen Wicks, Barbara W. and Bernard E. Bernstein Curator, on both conference activities and on publishing outcomes. As noted above, the symposium will synergize with an exhibition at the Knoxville Museum of Art titled *Beauford Delaney: Through the Unusual Door* (February 7 to May 10, 2020). Wicks is the author of more than 27 publications and 25 exhibitions, has served as a speaker, panelist, or juror on numerous national panels and competitions, and worked as a curator in Tennessee, Georgia, and Ohio. The exhibition will be

separate from the UT symposium in terms of its funding and planning; however, the opening night's keynote, gallery tour, and reception will take place at the KMA to give symposium participants an opportunity to see this groundbreaking exhibition. The KMA has donated \$4500 in cost-share toward this. Wicks will also be the artistic editor for the volume of essays resulting from the symposium and will work with Amy Elias to determine what art to reprint, to help facilitate reprint permissions, and to aid in editing citations. Because he too has staff to help with these tasks, Wicks' time is estimated at approximately 10 hours per week over the course of 14 months of planning (from December 2018), but we are making no request for NEH funds to support this effort from the convening grant.

A second collaborator with the UT Humanities Center is the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library, New York City. Michelle Commander, Associate Director and Curator of the Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery, will be presenting at the conference and will help locate materials from the Schomburg's Baldwin archive for the planned volume of essays resulting from the symposium. Time allotment for work for Michelle Commander will be limited to preparing a paper to deliver at the symposium and revising that paper for publication (see below) and advising about materials for the planned essay collection, perhaps on the order of 115 hours. Symposium speakers/participants' collaboration is listed below. Speakers' time commitment will be limited to preparing a paper to deliver at the symposium and revising that paper for publication.

1. **Stephen M. Best**, Associate Professor, University of California, Berkeley. Invited to be a plenary panelist and contribute to "Gender and Sexuality" categories. A specialist in American and African-American literature and culture, cinema and technology, rhetoric and the law, and critical theory, Best is the author of two books, his most recent titled *None Like Us: Blackness, Belonging, Aesthetic Life* (Duke UP, 2018) that merges discussions of Black aesthetics, Black history, and queer studies.
2. **Mary Campbell**, Associate Professor of Art History, University of Tennessee. Campbell is the first scholar in years allowed in to work with the Beauford Delaney estate archives at the Knoxville Museum of Art for her new book on the work of Beauford Delaney and will discuss that archive. Such work with

archives informed her award-winning book *Charles Ellis Johnson and the Erotic Mormon Image* (U of Chicago Press, 2016).

3. **Michelle Commander**, Associate Director and Curator, Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Invited to be a plenary panelist and contribute to the “Ethics and Social Values” category. Commander is the author of numerous articles on Black care ethics and the author of *Afro-Atlantic Flight: Speculative Returns and the Black Fantastic* (Duke UP, 2017) which redefines the notion of “speculative fiction” to apply the term to future-oriented social and artistic vision by Black peoples.
4. **Brent Hayes Edwards**, Professor of English and Comparative Literature and the Center for Jazz Studies, Columbia University; Director, Scholars-in-Residence Program, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Invited to be a plenary panelist and contribute to the “Music and Sonic Arts” category. Edwards is the author of *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard UP, 2017) and he co-edited the collection *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*. His interdisciplinary work crosses Black aesthetics, jazz studies, and literary studies.
5. **Frederick Moten**, Professor, Department of Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; Professor, The European Graduate School. Invited as a Keynote Speaker to contribute to the “Arts History and Black Aesthetics” category. A poet and theorist, he conducts research in black studies, performance studies, poetics, and critical theory. He is author of *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003) and a three-volume collection of essays whose general title is *consent not to be a single being* (Duke UP, 2017, 2018).
6. **Walton M. Muyumba**, Associate Professor of American and African Diasporic Literature, Indiana University Bloomington. Invited to as a plenary panelist to contribute to the “Biography and Legacies” category, he is an expert in philosophical approaches to Black social identity and is author of *The Shadow and the Act: Black Intellectual Practice, Jazz Improvisation, and Philosophical Pragmatism* (University of Chicago Press).

7. **Alessandra Raengo**, Associate Professor, Film, Media & Theatre, and Coordinator, Liquid Blackness Research Group, Georgia State University. Raengo's scholarship is located at the intersection of Film Studies, Visual Culture Studies, Black Studies, Art Theory, and Critical Theory, particularly in Black diasporic cinema. Her work includes *On the Sleeve of the Visual* (Dartmouth, 2013) and *Critical Race Theory and Bamboozled* (Bloomsbury, 2016).
8. **Robert Reid-Pharr**, Professor of Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Harvard University. Invited to be a plenary panelist and contribute to the "Gender and Sexuality" category. A specialist in African American culture and a prominent scholar in the field of race and sexuality studies, he has published four books including *Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American* (Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Black, Gay, Man: Essays* (NYU Press, 2001).
9. **Monique Wells**, Founder, Les Amis de Beauford Delaney, Paris, France. Ms. Wells has been instrumental in resuscitating Delaney's life history in Paris and helped to host the important Paris exhibition *Beauford Delaney: Renaissance of Form and Vibration of Color* (2016) with the Columbia Global enters/Reed Hall Exposition.
10. **Stephen Wicks**, Barbara W. and Bernard E. Bernstein Curator, Knoxville Museum of Art. Wicks is the curator of the Knoxville Museum of Art's exhibition "Through the Unusual Door" and will serve as host for symposium's opening night gallery tour and discussion.
11. **Magdalena J. Zaborowska**, Associate Professor, Program in American Culture and The Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan. Invited to be a plenary panelist and contribute to the "Biography and Legacy" category. An internationally recognized expert on Baldwin, her work includes *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile* (Duke UP, 2009) and *Me and My House: James Baldwin and Black Domesticity* (Duke UP, 2018).

Invited but not yet confirmed:

12. **Douglas Field**, senior lecturer in 20th-Century American Literature, Manchester University. Invited as plenary speaker for "Ethics and Social Values," Field is a founding editor of the *James Baldwin*

Review, editor of the collection *James Baldwin Now* (NYU Press, 1999), and author of *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin* (Oxford UP, 2015).

13. **Richard J. Powell**, John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History, in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, Duke University. Invited to be a Keynote speaker, Powell specializes in American art, the arts of the African Diaspora, and contemporary visual studies. He has written extensively on topics ranging from primitivism to postmodernism, including *Black Art: A Cultural History* (1997 & 2002), *Cutting a Figure: Fashioning Black Portraiture* (2008), and *Beauford Delaney: The Color Yellow*.

Other participants will be invited and also drawn from those responding to a call for papers distributed internationally.

Methods and Execution

Convening Event: The convening event, the “In a Speculative Light” symposium, will produce drafts of essays that will be expanded and revised for publication: the symposium and the publication project are bound together as one continuous process. The project director’s extensive experience with interdisciplinary symposium and conference planning for *ASAP: The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present* has proven that face-to-face, in-person scholarly interactions can lead to unexpected and outstanding research collaborations and insights. The intimate nature of the proposed symposium will doubly encourage such interactions and also, we hope, start collegial friendships that will help later stages of the project—namely, the essay collection—to move more smoothly along.

As noted above, for the symposium, plenary presenters will be invited but others will have the opportunity to respond to a publicly disseminated call for papers; this should assure a wide range of disciplinary expertise and researcher diversity. The call for papers will be posted on the symposium website, the UT Humanities Center website, the University of Pennsylvania’s CFP site (<https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/>), Call4paper.com (<https://www.call4paper.com/>), The cfpList (<https://www.cfpList.com/>), WikiCFP (<http://www.wikicfp.com/cfp/>), the Modern Language

Association's Call for Papers (<https://www.mla.org/Convention/Planning-a-Convention-Session/Calls-for-Papers>), and various scholarly society's listservs, such as the listservs for ASAP and the International Society for the Study of Narrative. The call for papers will also be sent to the editors of journals related to the conference subject—such as *Mosaic*, *Callaloo*, *African American Review*, and the *James Baldwin Review*. The call for papers will be issued in May of 2019 with a deadline of September 1, 2019. Papers will be selected by a committee including Amy Elias, the associate director of the Humanities Center, Stephen Wicks from the KMA, and one faculty member at UT working centrally in Africana studies. The six categories of research topics will guide selections.

Publicity for the event will be handled by the UT Humanities Center, which runs numerous events each year and has established procedures for creating and disseminating event publicity such as posters, mailers, and html email announcements. As noted above, we have hired a website developer for the symposium website. The UT Humanities Center also will handle arrangements for program printing, event security, podium arrangements, webcasting and/or livestreaming of lectures, and arrangement of meals and receptions. Humanities Center staff that will be assisting with the event includes our associate director, office coordinator, and graduate-student programs intern; Amy Elias is also creating a local programming collective comprised of faculty from the departments of Art, Music, English, History, and Africana Studies to help with the symposium, get UT students involved, and create campus events during the run of the symposium that might be related to the symposium topic and be of interest to symposium attendees. (For example, the Ewing Gallery in the UT School of Art has a significant collection of works by Joseph Delaney, Beauford Delaney's brother; Joseph was also a very well known and respected artist and at one time was a visiting professor at UT. An on-campus exhibition of his work might interest those attending the "In the Speculative Light" symposium.)

There will be no registration fees, but attendees other than plenary speakers will pay for their own travel and lodging expenses. Lodging will be at downtown hotels, which will be listed on our symposium website. Knoxville is a destination city for tourism, football events, and numerous large arts festivals, and there are a number of excellent, low-cost hotels within walking distance or free trolley ride to the

university and the Knoxville Museum of Art, which are just two short city blocks from one another and on the free city trolley routes.

The roster of speakers will be comprised of two keynote speakers, eight invited plenary scholars (giving 30-minute papers on four 2-person panels), and 16-24 speakers on eight 3-person panels open to a call for papers (see Appendix 3: Symposium Program, for detailed day plans). This should yield a productive mix of perspectives and approaches and supports the open and democratic ethos espoused by Baldwin while also guaranteeing that senior scholars working centrally in the field direct the primary symposium conversations. Invited plenary speakers will be asked to submit short abstracts of their papers two months before the symposium; these will be posted on the conference website and will be used in other publicity.

We plan to convene the first evening with a reception, gallery tour, and keynote talk at the Knoxville Museum of Art. The KMA will be running its nationally important exhibition “Beauford Delaney: Through the Unusual Door” at this time, and this will constitute the gallery tour. The keynote presentation for this opening night is still undetermined: at this time we have one invitation pending and another—to an internationally known installation artist who has some connections to Knoxville artists—is in process. The following two days of the symposium will be held on the campus of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, at either the Frieson Black Cultural Center or the conference facilities within the new UT Student Union that will open in January of 2019; both are centrally located on the UTK campus and within a few short blocks of any hotels downtown. Because booking for these presentation venues is difficult so far in advance of the symposium, we cannot lock in these venues at this time but have reservations pending. We have chosen these locations rather than a hotel conferencing location because the symposium will intersect with the interests of several constituencies and student groups on campus, including the UT School of Art, Africana Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, the School of Music, the Center for Social Justice, the Department of English, and other humanities departments. Attendance at the opening night reception and keynote will be invitation-only but open to both symposium participants and members of the public who have an interest in the Delaney project. All sessions on the UT campus will be

open to UT students, faculty, and staff, and the keynote on day 2 will be open to the general public and also advertised through the UT Humanities Center's Visiting Speakers Program. Audience size for different sessions will inevitably vary: certainly, the keynote sessions have the possibility of drawing more than 100 attendees and will be scheduled in auditoriums large enough to accommodate the public.

Symposium plenary speakers have been selected for one or more of the following reasons: because they work centrally in Baldwin or Delaney studies and have established excellent credentials in those areas; because they work in Africana music, literary, or visual arts studies and their previous publications both have established them as experts in these fields and indicate that they might productively resituate their work in relation to one or more of the six topic categories of the symposium; because their work has the potential to move Baldwin and Delaney studies into new and unexpected investigative territories. A draft agenda of the program can be found in Appendix 3. Because the symposium is somewhat distant from the date of this grant submission, speakers were reluctant to commit to specific titles at this time. However, following is a listing of topic categories and the plenary speakers who will pursue them.

(1) arts history and Black aesthetics:

Frederick Moten, Professor, Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU (Keynote)

(2) music and sonic arts:

- Brent Hayes Edwards, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Center for Jazz Studies, Columbia University
- Walton M. Muyumba, Associate Professor of American and African Diasporic Literature, Indiana University Bloomington

(3) ethics and social values:

- Michelle Commander, Associate Director and Curator, Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

- Douglas Field, Senior Lecturer, 20th-century American Literature, University of Manchester
(invited but not confirmed)

(4) style and form:

Richard J. Powell, John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History, Duke University
(invited but not confirmed Keynote)

(5) gender and sexuality:

- Robert Reid-Pharr, Professor of Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Harvard University
- Stephen M. Best, Associate Professor, University of California, Berkeley

(6) biography and legacies

- Magdalena J. Zaborowska, Associate Professor, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
- [invitation pending]

If the unconfirmed speakers do not accept our invitation, we will invite other plenary speakers from the list below. As noted above, other participants will be drawn from those responding to a call for papers distributed internationally. (We are committed to professional and ethical justifications for opening the symposium up to this democratic structure, though we are aware that funding agencies may look askance at a call for papers in this proposal.) In addition to broadcasting the call for papers, however, the plan is to target people who have been identified as leading scholars in the above areas and invite them to submit proposals whether in plenary or open panels. Among those recommended are the following:

1. Nicholas Boggs, Clinical Assistant Professor of English, NYU. Discoverer and editor of *Little Man, Little Man: A Story of Childhood by James Baldwin and Yoran Cazac* (Duke UP, 2018)
2. Adrienne Edwards, Curator, Performa, NYC; Curator at Large at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Curated exhibition *Blackness in Abstraction* (2016)

3. Michele Elam, Martin Luther King, Jr. Centennial Professor, Stanford University. Author of *Race, Work, and Desire in American Literature, 1860-1930* (Cambridge UP, 2003), *The Souls of Mixed Folks* (Stanford UP, 2010), and Ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin*
4. Nadia Ellis, Associate Professor of English, University of California, Berkeley. Author of *Territories of the Soul: Queered Belonging in the Black Diaspora* (Duke UP, 2015)
5. Douglas Field, Senior Lecturer in 20th-Century American Literature, University of Manchester, UK. Author of *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin* (Oxford UP) and editor of *A Historical Guide to James Baldwin* (Oxford UP, 2009)
6. Randall Garrett Kenan, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Editor of *The Cross of Redemption: The Uncollected Writings of James Baldwin* (Pantheon, 2010)
7. Chris Labron, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University. Author of *The Color of Our Shame: Race and Justice In Our Time* (Oxford UP, 2013)
8. D. Quentin Miller, Professor, Department of English, University of Suffolk, UK. Author of *James Baldwin in Context* (Cambridge UP), *Re-Viewing James Baldwin: Things Not Seen* (Temple UP)
9. Karen Thorsen, Writer, Producer, and Director of the film *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*
10. Michelle M. Wright, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet Professor of English, Emory University. Author of *Becoming Black: Creating an Identity in the African Diaspora* (Duke UP 2004).

Book of Essays: The six categories of research questions for the symposium also will form topics within the essay collection: (1) arts history and Black aesthetics, (2) music and sonic arts, (3) ethics and social values, (4) style and form, (5) gender and sexuality, and (6) biography and legacies. The eight plenary speakers have been invited with the understanding that they will be contributing to the planned volume of essays. Amy Elias will work with them, Stephen Wicks, and Michelle Commander to identify another seven papers presented at the symposium as the most promising for publication in the volume of essays. These authors will be invited to the collection. Stephen Wicks will be well situated to determine what Delaney artworks should be reprinted in the collection of published essays. Michelle Commander will be

likewise well situated to recommend Baldwin materials to reprint in the collection and help us to obtain reprint permissions for this material.

Workplan

September-December 2019	Identify symposium speakers, apply for external funding
January 2019	All plenary speakers and keynotes accepted to symposium
June 2019	Call for papers for general session participants out on all social media, website, and cfp listservs
October 1, 2019	Deadline for submission of paper proposals for general sessions
November 1, 2019	Acceptances and rejections of paper proposals for general sessions announced
December 1, 2019	Final program announced at website
February 2020	Symposium and invitations to select presenters to revise papers for publication
Jan-August 2020	Negotiation for book contract
December 2020	Authors submit revised essays to Elias for first editing
May 2021	Authors' revised final essays compiled
August 2021	Essay collection goes into production with press

Final Products and Dissemination

The final products resulting from this grant will be a three-day scholarly symposium and a volume of published essays revised from the symposium papers and edited by Amy J. Elias, in collaboration with Stephen Wicks and Michelle Commander. For the symposium, paper presentations will be live-streamed and keynote lectures will be taped and permanently online at UTHC website and YouTube. A streamlined symposium website and social media publicity will be overseen and updated by UT Humanities Center staff. Based on her previous experience as an editor of collected essay volumes, Elias will market a proposal for an essay collection titled "In a Speculative Light" with university presses with the intention of having a book at press within 18 months of the symposium; she has solicited Duke University Press, which has a strong list in African American Studies and Black Diaspora scholarship, but her contact is right now at initial stages.