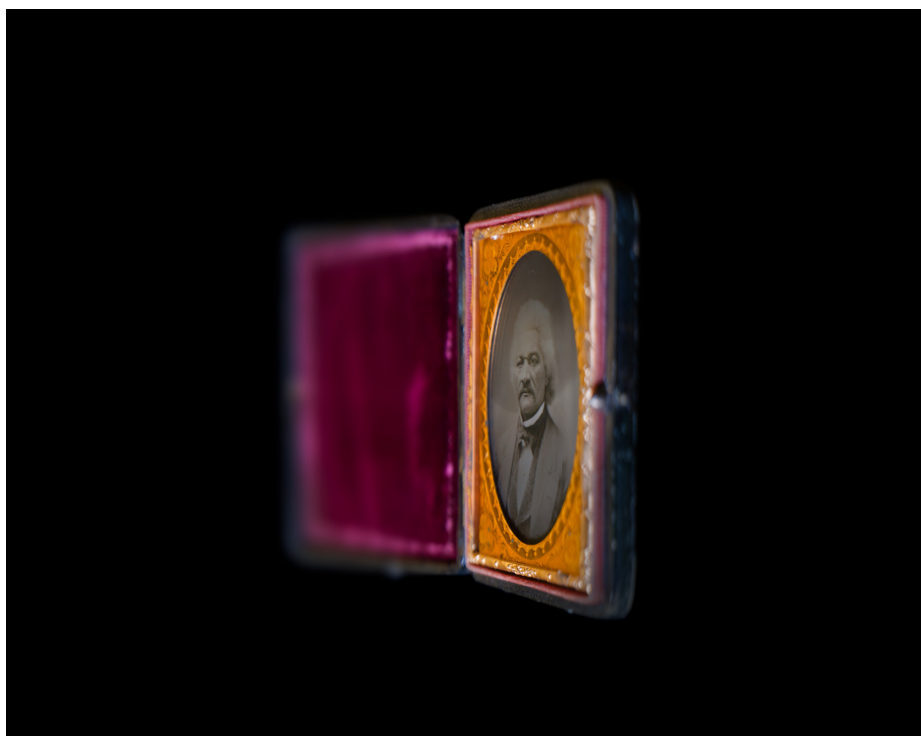


Wendel White

Folding Time

Exhibition on view
September 3 -
October 26, 2024



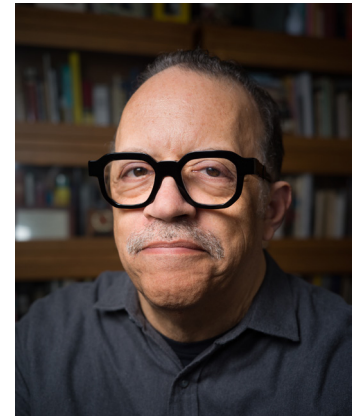
ROWAN UNIVERSITY
ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Wendel White is a distinguished photographer renowned for his focus on Black history and the legacy of slavery presented through his foundational projects: *Schools for the Colored*, *Red Summer*, and *Manifest*.

Manifest explores Black material culture across public collections in the original thirteen English colonies and Washington, DC, showcasing artifacts that range from receipts for human purchases to everyday items, illuminating the historical narrative of the Black community in America. *Schools for the Colored* documents segregation with historical African American school buildings, particularly in the northern “Up-South” states. The digital imaging technique that obscures the landscape surrounding the schools, and in some cases the schools themselves, is a visual representation of the W.E.B. DuBois literary metaphor of the “veil” as a social barrier. *Red Summer* delves into locations where racial violence erupted between 1917 and 1923, combining contemporary landscapes with fragments of historical newspaper reporting to bridge past and present perspectives.

Through these bodies of work White is folding time by bringing the past and the present into a shared space.

Wendel A. White was born in Newark, New Jersey and grew up in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. He was awarded a BFA in photography from the School of Visual Arts in New York and an MFA in photography from the University of Texas at Austin. White is currently Distinguished Professor of Art at Stockton University, NJ.



He has received various awards and fellowships including an honorary Doctor of Arts from Oakland University, MI; the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University; John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Photography; three artist fellowships from the New Jersey State Council for the Arts; Bunn Lectureship in Photography and grants from EnFoco, Center Santa Fe, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and various artist’s residencies.

His work is represented in museum, public, and private collections including National Gallery of Art, DC; Mint Museum, NC; Duke University, NC; New Jersey State Museum, NJ; California Institute for Integral Studies, CA; Graham Foundation for the Advancement of the Fine Arts, IL; En Foco, NY; Rochester Institute of Technology, NY; The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; Haverford College, PA; University of Delaware, DE; University of Alabama, AL; and Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NY.

White has served on the boards of directors for the Society for Photographic Education, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and The Print Center (PA). He has also served on the Kodak Educational Advisory Council, NJ Save Outdoor Sculpture, the Atlantic City Historical Museum, Atlantic City Free Library Foundation, New Jersey Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, and the New Jersey Black Culture and Heritage Foundation.

Recent projects include *Manifest: Thirteen Colonies*; *Red Summer*; *Schools for the Colored*; *Village of Peace: An African American Community in Israel*; *Small Towns*, *Black Lives*; and others.

Manifest: Thirteen Colonies

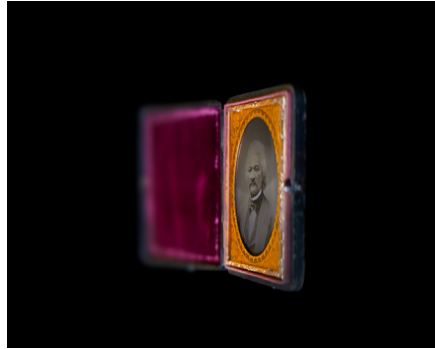
“America is an old house. We can never declare the work over. Wind, flood, drought, and human upheavals batter a structure that is already fighting whatever flaws were left unattended in the original foundation. When you live in an old house, you may not want to go into the basement after a storm to see what the rains have wrought. Choose not to look, however, at your own peril.

The owner of an old house knows that whatever you are ignoring will never go away. Whatever is lurking will fester whether you choose to look or not. Ignorance is no protection from the consequences of inaction.”
 -Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste*

The *Manifest: Thirteen Colonies* portfolio is an iteration of an ongoing project (*Manifest*), producing photographs of African American material culture within public collections in the original thirteen English colonies and Washington, DC. These repositories have accumulated collections including, diaries, documents, receipts for the purchase of humans, musical instruments, doors, hair, photographs, souvenirs, and other artifacts—some with great significance and as well as the commonplace, quotidian material from the history of the Black community.

The photographs are a response to the collective physical remnants of the American concept and representation of race. The ability of objects to transcend lives, centuries, and millennia suggests a remarkable mechanism for folding time, bringing the past and the present into a shared space is uniquely suited to artistic exploration. These artifacts are the forensic evidence of Black life and events in the United States. This portfolio has become a reliquary and a survey of the African American narrative, as constructed within public archives.

Various projects have occupied my attention during the past three decades, in retrospect, each has been part of a singular effort to seek out the ghosts and resonant memories of the material world. I am drawn to the stories “dwelling within” a spoon, a cowbell, a book, a photograph, or a partially burned document.



Vest, Jimi Hendrix, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



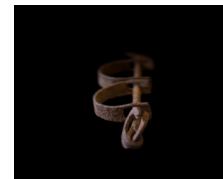
Skull Inscribed 'Negro.', The Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA



Tintype, Fenton Historical Center, Jamestown, NY



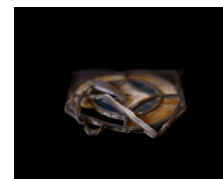
Hair Straightener, Apex News and Hair Company, Atlantic City, NJ, Vicki Gold Levi Collection, New York



Slave Shackles, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



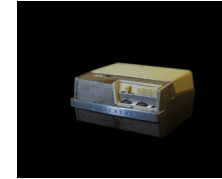
Hair, Frederick Douglass, Rush Rhees Library, Special Collections, University of Rochester, NY



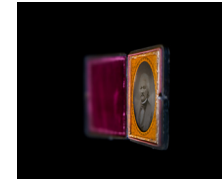
Stained Glass Shard, 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



The Works of Robert Burns, First Book Purchased After Slavery by Frederick Douglass, Rush Rhees Library, Special Collections, University of Rochester, NY



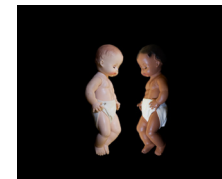
Tape recorder used by Malcolm X at Mosque #7, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



Ambrotype of Frederick Douglass, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



Woman's Hood NJ WKKK, Southern NJ Cultural Organization



Baby Dolls, Kenneth and Mamie Clark, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC



Slave Collar, Special Collections and University Archives, Alexander Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ



Broken Glass, Paul Robeson House Collection and the Arts Council of Princeton, Princeton, NJ

Red Summer: Racial Violence in the American Landscape, 1917-1923

The *Red Summer* portfolio represents the stories of various locations in the American landscape

where racial violence (often characterized as “Race Wars” at the time) erupted between 1917 and 1923. These years of conflict reveal several aspects of racial anxiety that inform our contemporary experience, including, though not limited to; racism, fear of violent black revolt, lynching, poverty, mass incarceration, and competition for employment. The term “Red Summer” was first used by James Weldon Johnson to describe the violent attacks against black communities during 1919.

Though the events of the early twentieth century seem to be remote and fading apparitions of an American past; my work is concerned with the power and influence of our shared historical narrative upon the present. The upheaval of Red Summer occurred approximately fifty years after the American Civil War, fifty years before the height of the Civil Rights Era, and three centuries after the first enslaved Africans arrived in English colonies that would become the United States.

The project combines photographs of the contemporary landscape made at or near the site of racial conflict with fragmented selections of contemporaneous newspaper reporting (1917-1923). In many cases, the newsprint images include the surrounding stories or advertisements. The combination of the landscape photograph and the reproduction of newspaper fragments (which invade the contemporary with a narrative from the past), is a rupture and a conversation on the timeline between past and present.

The conceptualization of “the veil” as expressed by DuBois, has been a visual metaphor for the representation of race within my work for several decades; particularly in the two projects known as, *Schools for the Colored* and *Red Summer*. The newspaper, in its role as a public record, commentary, and historic archive, is a veil of information through which most of the country as well as many in the international community, understood and misunderstood these events.



East St. Louis, IL, Jul 2, 1917, *The Washington Herald*, Washington, DC, July 3, 1917



Corbin, KY, Oct 30, 1919, *El Paso Herald*, El Paso, TX, Oct 31, 1919



Longview TX, Jul 10, 1919, *The Dallas Express*, Dallas, TX, Jul 19, 1919



Millen, GA, Big Buckhead Church, Apr 13, 1919. *The New York Age*, New York, NY, Apr 19, 1919



Donora, PA, Oct 9, 1919, *Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, Bridgeport, CT, Oct 9, 1919



Camp Logan, Houston, TX, Aug 23, 1917, *The Kingston Daily Freeman*, Kingston, NY, Aug 24, 1917

Pigment Inkjet Print on Canvas, 36 x 60 inches

Schools for the Colored

In W.E.B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk* he describes an early school experience, "... I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil"



Schools for the Colored portfolio is an extension of the photographic work and social concepts in the project *Small Towns, Black Lives*, in that; it is a continuation of my journey through the African American landscape. I began making photographs of historically African American school buildings during the very first weeks of the *Small Towns, Black Lives* project more than twenty-five years ago. In this project I began to pay attention to the many structures and sites (also making photographs of places where buildings once stood) that operated as segregated schools.

The photographs depict the buildings and surrounding landscapes that were associated with the system of racially segregated schools established at the southern boundaries of the northern United States. This area, sometimes referred to as "Up-South," encompasses the northern "free" states that bordered the slave states. *Schools for the Colored* is the representation the duality of racial distinction within American culture. The "veil" (the digital imaging technique of obscuring the landscape surrounding the schools) is a visual representation of the W. E. B. DuBois literary metaphor of the veil as a social barrier. Some of the images depict sites where the original structure is no longer present and, as a placeholder, I have inserted silhouettes of the original building or what I imagine of the appearance of the original building. The remains of the "colored schools" are not simply ghostly apparitions of our segregated past but the unresolved ideologies (neither living nor dead) that still haunt the American landscape. The architecture and geography of America's educational Apartheid, in the form of a system of "colored schools," within southern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois is the central concern of this project.



Newtonville School, Newtonville, New Jersey 1/15



Longwood School, Charlestown, Pennsylvania 4/15



Lincoln School, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 1/15



South Lynn Street School, Seymour, Indiana



Red Hill, Ohio 1/15



Indiana Avenue School, Atlantic City, New Jersey 1/15



Lincoln School, Edwardsville, Illinois 1/15



Whitfield House, Nazareth, Pennsylvania 1/15



Marshalltown School, Mannington, New Jersey



Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth, Bordentown, New Jersey



School for White Children, Brooklyn, Illinois 1/15



James Adams School, Coatesville, Pennsylvania



Lyles Station Consolidated School, Lyles Station, Indiana 3/15



Ironton, Ohio 2/15



Whitesboro School, Whitesboro, New Jersey 1/15



Thomas Meehan Public School, Philadelphia (Germantown), Pennsylvania 1/15



Yellow Springs, Ohio 2/15



Wayne School, Lockland Park, Ohio 1/15



Frederick Douglass School, Chester, Pennsylvania 1/15



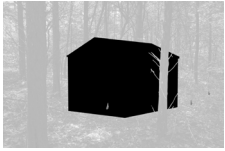
City School, Jeffersonville, Indiana 1/15



East High School, Xenia, Ohio 2/15



Manitou Park School, Berkeley, New Jersey 2/15



Miller Grove, Shawnee National Forest, Illinois 1/15



Hygienic School, Steelton, Pennsylvania 3/15



Bellevue Avenue School, Trenton, New Jersey 2/15



Banneker School, Bloomington, Indiana 1/15



Leora Brown School, Corydon, Indiana 1/15



George Jones School, Chester, Pennsylvania 2/15



Division Street School, New Albany, Indiana 2/15



Elizabeth Harvey School, Harveysburg, Ohio 4/15



Harriet Beecher Stowe School, Cincinnati, Ohio 2/15



Court Street School, Freehold, New Jersey 2/15



Crispus Attucks High School, Carbondale Illinois 2/15



Carpenter Street School, Woodbury, New Jersey 1/15



Bruce School, Future City, Illinois 3/15



Douglass-Singerly School, North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1/15



Franklin Street School, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 2/15



Booker T. Washington School, Rushville, Indiana 1/15



Dunbar Middle School, Dayton, Ohio 1/15



Ambidexter Institute, Springfield, Illinois 3/15



Franklin Street School, Cape May, New Jersey 1/15



Lincoln School, East St. Louis, Illinois 3/15

Pigment Inkjet on Paper, 13.3 x 20 inches;
framed size: 22.75 x 28.75 x 1.5 inches

ROWAN UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum serves as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that encourages dialogue and collaboration between exhibiting artists, students, faculty, and the general public through the presentation of interdisciplinary art exhibitions, artist talks and other public programming. Our mission is to present diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists with content that is thought provoking, relevant, and timely. With our exhibitions and programming, we seek to engender curiosity and a passion for contemporary art, enrich the quality of life for area residents, and create a welcoming and inclusive cultural destination at Rowan University.

301 High Street Gallery
301 High Street West
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Information
rowan.edu/artgallery
artgallery@rowan.edu

Gallery Hours
Mon-Fri, 10:00 - 5:00 PM
Sat, 11:00 - 5:00 PM

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FREE ADMISSION



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New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner
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