

ARTFORUM

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THELMA GOLDEN

DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR OF NEW YORK'S STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, THELMA GOLDEN IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2016 AUDREY IRMAS AWARD FOR CURATORIAL EXCELLENCE. (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

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TA-NEHISI COATES, *BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME* (SPIEGEL & GRAU) Like many of us, I am trying—and often failing—to make sense of the ongoing racial violence against black Americans in this country. It feels personal and it feels political. The collective voices of the Black Lives Matter movement on the streets of New York, Ferguson, Baltimore, and elsewhere have galvanized powerful statements of resistance and defiance. Against that backdrop and history is Coates's singular, essential voice in the current dialogue. This volume is a grand achievement of reflection and recognition. Written as a letter to the author's fifteen-year-old son, *Between the World and Me* speaks to us all about the causes and effects of who we are right now.

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FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK RIBBON CUTTING (APRIL 30) "There are so many kids in this country who look at places like museums and concert halls and other cultural centers and they think to themselves, Well, that's not a place for me, for someone who looks like me, for someone who comes from my neighborhood. . . . You're telling them that their story is part of the American story, and that they deserve to be seen": The first lady's words precisely express what we should aspire to as we work to reimagine what museums can be.

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THE 56TH VENICE BIENNALE: "ALL THE WORLD'S FUTURES" (VARIOUS VENUES; CURATED BY OKWUI ENWEZOR) "All the World's Futures" made a profound statement about the present, positioning an extraordinary constellation of 136 artists from fifty-three countries not as a reflection of the world but as the world itself, with the artists as narrators of our condition. As Enwezor does brilliantly in each large group show he curates, he turned the axis and opened the lens on ideas and practices that root themselves in truth. For me, his exhibition also served as a glorious echo chamber of the artists and ideas that have inspired my work for the past twenty years—and a beacon of light from those who will continue to define my own curatorial aspirations.



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SPRING IN LOS ANGELES I remember when my birthday fell on a Saturday as a kid: I couldn't believe the good fortune of not one but two fantastic occurrences at once, which magnified the joy. (I think it happened the year that my present was tickets to a Jackson 5 concert at Madison Square Garden.) That's how LA felt this past spring, with William Pope.L at the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (in an exhibition curated by Bennett Simpson), Charles Gaines at Art + Practice Foundation (curated by Anne Ellegood and Jamillah James), and Noah Purifoy at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (curated by Franklin Sirmans and Yael Lipschutz)—a magnification of brilliance. Each of these exhibitions was a revelation on its own. But all three happening across the same stretch of time created a unique vortex of artistic power.



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