Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America
Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America

Concurrent Exhibitions at Swarthmore College
March 6–April 7, 2024

List Gallery

McCabe Library Atrium Gallery
Selections from Manifest (2009–present)
Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America guides us to knowable history through the artist’s attention to the disposition and place of memory and Black custodial care.1 Drawn from three bodies of Wendel White’s photographic work—Small Towns, Black Lives (1989–2002), Schools for the Colored (2002–2010), and Manifest (2009–present)—the selected works highlight the artist’s decades-long attention to the material and psychic evidence of the Black past in present-day America. He foregrounds mnemonics of Black resilience and liberation dwelling in the American landscape and our material culture. As he has remarked, “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 that is uniquely suited to artistic exploration.”2 Black thought, fellowship, activism, and a focus on the tools of education and liberation are particularly prominent. White’s worldmaking offers lessons in curiosity and discovery that kindle marvel and inquiry. Among the most recent works on view are those motivated by the artist’s 2023 campus visit to source artifacts for the Manifest portfolio from Swarthmore College Libraries. He chose materials in the care of the Friends Historical Library and the Peace Collection, repositories devoted to Quaker history, social reform, and peace movements. The moral, political, and pacifist dimensions of the collections resonate in the objects selected for Manifest.3 Comprising more than one hundred photographs of historical objects from special collections and public repositories across the United States, Manifest foregrounds White’s interest in the power of material culture to convey history and memory. Artifacts migrate to repositories from previous places of belonging and sociality and these repositories become keepers of material and psychic evidence. Often, the object and its displacement invite curiosity—for example, the tape recorder used by Malcolm X at New York City Temple No. 7 in the Smithsonian collections (above), or a fabric scrapbook in Friends Historical Library collection that includes muslin samples “worn by Slaves in Virginia.”4 The scrapbook was presented to Swarthmore College in 1872 by Rachel D. Griscom, a schoolteacher and member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). White prizes open and re-presents Griscom’s gift in his Manifest photograph (at left). Focused on the haptic relationship of the clothes to enslavement, he obscures the impersonal text written above the fabric: “Winter fabrics worn by Slaves in Virginia. White and blue checks were used for summer dresses. The muslins used were osnab[urgs].”5 The artist does not shy away from representing deeply fraught object-repository relationships, as evident in his Skull Inscribed “Negro” in the Mütter Museum, College of Physicians of Philadelphia (below). Manifest implicitly questions postcustodial and decolonial archiving.

Comprising more than one hundred photographs of historical objects from special collections and public repositories across the United States, Manifest foregrounds White’s interest in the power of material culture to convey history and memory. Artifacts migrate to repositories from previous places of belonging and sociality and these repositories become keepers of material and psychic evidence. Often, the object and its displacement invite curiosity—for example, the tape recorder used by Malcolm X at New York City Temple No. 7 in the Smithsonian collections (above), or a fabric scrapbook in Friends Historical Library collection that includes muslin samples “worn by Slaves in Virginia.” The scrapbook was presented to Swarthmore College in 1872 by Rachel D. Griscom, a schoolteacher and member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). White prizes open and re-presents Griscom’s gift in his Manifest photograph (at left). Focused on the haptic relationship of the clothes to enslavement, he obscures the impersonal text written above the fabric: “Winter fabrics worn by Slaves in Virginia. White and blue checks were used for summer dresses. The muslins used were osnabur..." The artist does not shy away from representing deeply fraught object-repository relationships, as evident in his Skull Inscribed “Negro” in the Mütter Museum, College of Physicians of Philadelphia (below). Manifest implicitly questions postcustodial and decolonial archiving.

Photographed against a black velvet cloth and seen from different vantage points, each object within the portfolio is identified by description and repository, wayfinders akin to footnotes: Scrapbook with Slave Cloth, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 32 x 40 inches. In Small Towns, Black Lives and Schools for the Colored, geographic location is an important binder for the artificial material brought into focus by White. With Manifest, the objects’ black backgrounds unite the myriad subjects into a connected network of Black affiliation. Like Dorothy A. Porter’s national infrastructure for a Black bibliography that “mapped black subjectivity as a system with hundreds of points of entry,” White’s library of things is similarly expansive and expressive.6 Indeed, the artist’s interest in the potency of artifacts developed from his rapport with Black communities in southern New Jersey. As he researched the Small Towns, Black Lives project, he was invited into homes that were repositories of history and generational wisdom.
conveyed through objects held dear by their custodians. Photographing heirlooms, including family photographs, became integral to his narrative, as seen in Boling Children at School (1911), Port Republic, New Jersey (below). The artist’s travels from private collections to institutional repositories recalls the journeys made by many of the objects featured in Manifest. Each home, town, object, and collection is an access point for Black memory and history.

The objects chosen from Swarthmore’s collections are diverse in scope and media and underscore critical and paradoxical associations between African Americans and Quakers. Among these is the Anti-Slavery Alphabet, a reader attributed to Quaker sisters Hannah and Mary Townsend and printed for the 1846 Anti-Slavery Fair in Philadelphia. Many Quakers were early and staunch abolitionists; nonetheless, some were enslavers prior to the mid-late 18th century, or benefited from the slave trade.

In 1761, the Congregationalist Wheatley family purchased African-born Phillis in Boston for domestic service in their New England home; they were said to have encouraged her education and writing. With the 1773 appearance of Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral (published in London), Phillis Wheatley became the first Black woman enslaved in the United States to be published. The frontispiece and title page of printed volumes of Poems on Various Subjects identified the author as “Negro Servant to Mr. John Wheatley.” White was drawn to a handwritten, re-arranged copy of Wheatley’s poems (at left), and photographed the first page, attentive to where the transcriber had repeated the text denoting Wheatley’s enslaved position.

At Swarthmore, White selected what might be considered to be canonical objects, such as the Wedgwood Free Produce Sugar Bowl (below), along with lesser-known but no less instructive items, such as the Quaker human-rights activist Bayard Rustin’s LP, Elizabethan Songs & Negro Spirituals (page 6). Released around 1952, it was recorded for an interfaith peace organization, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and belongs to Swarthmore’s Peace Collection. These juxtapositions create a more elastic and reflective understanding of what represents the long durée of Black and Quaker associations in American history.

Consistent with White’s vision for the portfolio, each object appears as one might encounter it in a reading room or in use. White works with the natural and artificial light of each reading room, an ambience often reflected in the photographed object, as with Free Produce Sugar Bowl, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 39 x 47 inches. This method is not one of taxonomy but of sociality, and is one that personalizes our view. In some photographs, White toys with what might be called a nearsighted perspective: objects blur as they recede into a flat, inky space of immeasurable

Above: Copy of “Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral” by Phillis Wheatley, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 32 x 40 inches

Right: Free Produce Sugar Bowl, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 39 x 47 inches
THE RESTORATIVE VISION OF WENDEL WHITE

This partial legibility is seen in his handling of The Anti-Slavery Alphabet and the Bayard Rustin album cover. In the former, we are enticed into reading folio pages for the letters A through D; however, only text near “A is an Abolitionist” is sharply defined (page 41). With the latter, there is a handsome clarity to Rustin’s singing countenance, but few of the song titles listed on the cover are discernible (at left). Our perception is shaped by what we think we see or already know. Nearsightedness is considered a refractive error that is created by “an inaccurate focusing of the light passing into the eye.” White brings objects close, but deflects straightforward readings. His photographic language becomes a metaphor for oblique comprehension—the sidelong glance—and questions the very meaning of discernible, a synonym of manifest. How and where do you see history? Constructing histories from the tangible is already a refractive error; conjecture and the unseen fill the inky space of immeasurable volume.

Manifest is White’s most distilled series to date. The works succinctly convey his longtime concern for chronicling the terrain of African American life and the resonances of “once occupied geographic spaces” that underpin Small Towns, Black Lives and Schools for the Colored, which also deploy camerawork to rebuild history. There is an urgency to White’s witnessing and to his serial photographic record. His attentiveness to historical remainders honors their disappearing legacies. White’s pictorial and formal placemaking is fundamental to his creative vision. He began the project Small Towns, Black Lives in 1989 with Whitesboro, in Cape May County, New Jersey, one of many Black-owned settlements that had been established in the United States by the early twentieth century; these became beacons of freedom and self-determination. Named after George H. White (no relation to the artist), a prominent African American investor and former North Carolina congressman, Whitesboro was established in 1902 on land purchased the previous year. While many of these settlements are unincorporated—Whitesboro is part of Middle Township, for example—these communities are considered towns by their inhabitants. Of the twelve places featured in White’s portfolio, only Lawnside, New Jersey, incorporated in 1926, has official state borough status. Lawnside, once known as Free Haven, supported Black habitation before and after the Civil War.

White launched Small Towns, Block Lives “without a thesis,” but with a fundamental commitment to engaging with the Black communities whose lives were layered within the storied sites and their histories. He drew perspective from his conversations with local and descendant communities, archival and genealogical research, and astute observations. Having assembled these diverse sources, he structured them into compositions with two “speaking” parts. Small Towns, Block Lives, is a collection of organized visual dialogues that leverages portraiture, maps, architecture, landscape photography, and oral history to create intimate and accessible entry points for viewers. Drawn into the pictorial archive of White’s making, we meet local educators, pastors, town historians, and torch bearers, and we witness the commemoration of Civil War veterans laid to rest in the Black-owned Mount Peace Cemetery in Lawnside (below). The land purchased by African Americans in 1903 to organize the cemetery came from a Quaker abolitionist.

While only ten photographs from Small Towns, Block Lives are included in Swarthmore’s List Gallery exhibition, they strategically support the presentation of Schools for the Colored and Manifest. Testaments to the importance of community and place as worldmaking, they foreground histories of American education and its entanglement with race, class, and identity formation. As White developed Small Towns, Block Lives, his conversations with community members

Manifest is White’s most distilled series to date. The works succinctly convey his longtime concern for chronicling the terrain of African American life and the resonances of “once occupied geographic spaces” that underpin Small Towns, Black Lives and Schools for the Colored, which also deploy camerawork to rebuild history. There is an urgency to White’s witnessing and to his serial photographic record. His attentiveness to historical remainders honors their disappearing legacies. White’s pictorial and formal placemaking is fundamental to his creative vision. He began the project Small Towns, Black Lives in 1989 with Whitesboro, in Cape May County, New Jersey, one of many Black-owned settlements that had been established in the United States by the early twentieth century; these became beacons of freedom and self-determination. Named after George H. White (no relation to the artist), a prominent African American investor and former North Carolina congressman, Whitesboro was established in 1902 on land purchased the previous year. While many of these settlements are unincorporated—Whitesboro is part of Middle Township, for example—these communities are considered towns by their inhabitants. Of the twelve places featured in White’s portfolio, only Lawnside, New Jersey, incorporated in 1926, has official state borough status. Lawnside, once known as Free Haven, supported Black habitation before and after the Civil War.

White launched Small Towns, Block Lives “without a thesis,” but with a fundamental commitment to engaging with the Black communities whose lives were layered within the storied sites and their histories. He drew perspective from his conversations with local and descendant communities, archival and genealogical research, and astute observations. Having assembled these diverse sources, he structured them into compositions with two “speaking” parts. Small Towns, Block Lives, is a collection of organized visual dialogues that leverages portraiture, maps, architecture, landscape photography, and oral history to create intimate and accessible entry points for viewers. Drawn into the pictorial archive of White’s making, we meet local educators, pastors, town historians, and torch bearers, and we witness the commemoration of Civil War veterans laid to rest in the Black-owned Mount Peace Cemetery in Lawnside (below). The land purchased by African Americans in 1903 to organize the cemetery came from a Quaker abolitionist.

While only ten photographs from Small Towns, Block Lives are included in Swarthmore’s List Gallery exhibition, they strategically support the presentation of Schools for the Colored and Manifest. Testaments to the importance of community and place as worldmaking, they foreground histories of American education and its entanglement with race, class, and identity formation. As White developed Small Towns, Block Lives, his conversations with community members

Manifest is White’s most distilled series to date. The works succinctly convey his longtime concern for chronicling the terrain of African American life and the resonances of “once occupied geographic spaces” that underpin Small Towns, Black Lives and Schools for the Colored, which also deploy camerawork to rebuild history. There is an urgency to White’s witnessing and to his serial photographic record. His attentiveness to historical remainders honors their disappearing legacies. White’s pictorial and formal placemaking is fundamental to his creative vision. He began the project Small Towns, Black Lives in 1989 with Whitesboro, in Cape May County, New Jersey, one of many Black-owned settlements that had been established in the United States by the early twentieth century; these became beacons of freedom and self-determination. Named after George H. White (no relation to the artist), a prominent African American investor and former North Carolina congressman, Whitesboro was established in 1902 on land purchased the previous year. While many of these settlements are unincorporated—Whitesboro is part of Middle Township, for example—these communities are considered towns by their inhabitants. Of the twelve places featured in White’s portfolio, only Lawnside, New Jersey, incorporated in 1926, has official state borough status. Lawnside, once known as Free Haven, supported Black habitation before and after the Civil War.
inevitably turned to the subject of Black schools and Schools for the Colored emerged organically. This kinship is evident in the appearance of the Whitesboro School in both portfolios. Founded in the early 1900s for Black youth, the Whitesboro School later became home to Whitesboro Head Start (at left), as seen in Small Towns, Black Lives. Today it services the nonprofit organization Concerned Citizens of Whitesboro, Inc. White’s later photograph of the site, in Schools for the Colored (below), includes the brick-encased historic marker that commemorates the site as the home of the Whitesboro Grammar School from 1910 to 1967. White’s representations of the school speak to place, memorializing layered histories of a site in ways a cast plaque may not. In the photograph from Small Towns, Black Lives, the artist uses narrative to draw us back to the school’s founding and its first educator, Mamie White, the daughter of George H. White. His text signals the paradox that northern Black settlements faced under the “separate but equal” doctrine that prevailed in the United States at that time. According to the Supreme Court decision Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), racially separate facilities were not in violation of the Constitution if they were equal. Accordingly, Black towns were obliged to create segregated schools.

Schools for the Colored engages with fifty sites historically connected to the system of educational apartheid, with a particular focus on New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois—places marked by their proximity to American enslavement and legalized segregation under Jim Crow laws. As White notes, “The architectural remains of the ‘colored schools’ are not simply ghostly apparitions of our segregated past; they are the unresolved ideologies (neither living nor dead) which still haunt the American landscape.” Photographing what remains of segregated schools, like the foundation of the Longwood School in Charlestown, Pennsylvania (page 9, top), and silhouetting placeholders when they have disappeared, as with the George Jones School in Chester, Pennsylvania (page 9, middle), he emphasizes the racialized strata of the American landscape. White developed a “new photographic language” for Schools for the Colored, obscuring select aspects of the space around the school site—a tribute to W. E. B. Du Bois’s concept of the veil articulated in The Souls of Black Folk—and occupying redeveloped areas with opaque black silhouettes that serve as stand-ins for the original building. As artist Dawoud Bey remarked, “Using digital technology to create a veiled layering that plays with the spaces and the structures in two separate physical and psychic spaces, he effectively calls forth the segregation that had Blacks both present and absent in society.” White creates an architecture of absence and presence within the photograph that extends the metaphor to which Bey alludes. This is especially evident in Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth, Bordentown, New Jersey, where the imposing brick structure appears to be little more than a curtain wall punctuated by windows that frame a postmodern world. Schools for the Colored invites us on a journey across a topography of segregated America that lays bare “unsolved ideologies” that inhabit our world today. The construction of our segregated education extends far beyond brick and mortar.

From disappeared structures to a soundless tape deck, White returns to the place of the seen and the unseen across these portfolios. Deploying a photographic language for the incompleteness of memory that haunts the geography of Black history, he moves our gaze toward architecture, artifact, and historical resonance. Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America is a testament to the artist’s determined placemaking and restorative vision.

JULIE L. MCGEE is associate professor of Africana Studies and Art History and director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Center at the University of Delaware.

Above: Whitesboro Headstart, Cape May, New Jersey, 1990, 22 x 44 inches
Below: Whitesboro School, Whitesboro, New Jersey, 2009, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Top: Longwood School, Charlestown, Pennsylvania, 2007, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Middle: George Jones School, Chester, Pennsylvania, 2008, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Bottom: Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth, Bordentown, New Jersey, 2008, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Notes


3. White photographed thirty objects from Swarthmore College Library Special Collections and selected ten of them for the exhibition in McClellan Library Annex. The Friends Historical Library was established in 1871 and the Peace Collection formed in the 1970s.


5. The handwritten text reads: “Winter Fabrics work by Slaves in Virginia. White and blue cloths were used for summer dresses. The muslins used, were Donabergs.” The muslin was an imported, durable textile prevalent in colonial America and named after the German town of Osnabruck (Osnaburg). Variant spellings exist, including Osnaberg, also Donaberg in common usage today. Katherine Gruber, “Clothing and Adornment of Enslaved People in Nineteenth-Century Virginia,” Encyclopedia Virginia (December 7, 2020). https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/clothing-and-adornment-of-enslaved-people-in-nineteenth-century-virginia/.


8. The transcriber used a 1786 edition of Wheatley’s work. Information for more on the historic cemetery see https://www.mtpeacecemeteryassociation.org.


10. As White remarks, this is markedly different perspective from that provided by institutional cataloging and digitization.

SELECTIONS FROM SMALL TOWNS, BLACK LIVES (1989–2002)
Franklin Street School, Cape May, New Jersey, 2002, 22 x 44 inches

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey, 1996

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey, 1996, 22 x 39 inches

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey, 2002, 22 x 44 inches

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey (1989-2002)

Franklin Street School in Cape May opened in 1927 and functioned as a racially separated elementary school for the African American community in Cape May until 1966. It was among the last of the segregated schools in the state, emphasizing its separate status for nearly one year beyond the passage of the 1954 Supreme Court constitution that ended racial segregation in public institutions. The Franklin Street School is currently being run by the Center for Community Services.

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey (1989-2002), 22 x 44 inches

Franklin Street School
Cape May, New Jersey, 2002, 22 x 44 inches
Reverend James Saylor
Chechuan, New Jersey, 1993

James Saylor was born in Alberville, North Carolina, and
he moved to Chechuan in 1963. He became
pastor of the Church of God in Christ in 1976 and has
been pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in
Chechuan, New Jersey, since 1969. Reverend Saylor is
married with four children.

Mrs. Alice Jones, Whitesboro, New Jersey, 1989, 22 x 39 inches

Alice Jones Bell moved to Whitesboro in 1967. She was
a school teacher in Whitesboro and for the
majority of her career was the director of the community
Centennial Day
School. She was a member of the community and one of the
people who helped to maintain her. (Alice Jones Bell
August 1989).
Richardson Avenue School
Swedesboro, New Jersey, 1999

The Mount Lebanon College Masonic Hall on Richardson Avenue served as a "separate but equal" school from 1931 until 1962. The Richardson Avenue School is listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

Robert Tucker
Elsmere, New Jersey, 2002

Robert Tucker is an active civil leader and community historian. Originally from Detroit, he briefly served several years during his childhood but finally removed to the community having attended junior and graduate degrees in chemistry, MS. Tucker was teacher, guidance counselor, and superintendent of schools in满意度.

New Jersey, involved with NAACP he teaches photography to teens.
Lincoln School, East St. Louis, Illinois, 2007, 13⅛ x 20 inches

Bruce School, Future City, Illinois, 2007, 13⅛ x 20 inches
Millers Grove, Shawnee National Forest, Illinois, 2003, 13 ⅓ x 20 inches

Washington School, Mt. Vernon, Illinois, 2007, 13 ⅓ x 20 inches
Ambidexter Institute, Springfield, Illinois, 2008, 13⅓ x 20 inches

Booker T. Washington School, Columbus, Indiana, 2007, 13⅓ x 20 inches
South Lynn Street School, Seymour, Indiana, 2007, 13 ⅓ x 20 inches

Franklin Street School, Cape May, New Jersey, 2002, 13 ⅓ x 20 inches
Manitou Park School, Berkeley, New Jersey, 2004, 13⅓ x 20 inches

Carpenter Street School, Woodbury, New Jersey, 2004, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Elizabeth Harvey School, Harveysburg, Ohio, 2007, 13 1/3 x 20 inches

Red Hill, Ohio, 2007, 13 1/3 x 20 inches
East High School, Xenia, Ohio, 2007, 13⅓ x 20 inches

South School, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 2007, 13⅓ x 20 inches

James Adams School, Coatesville, Pennsylvania, 2009, 13⅓ x 20 inches

Thomas Meehan School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2010, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Ellen Craft, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 32 x 40 inches

Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, 1882, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, 2023, 32 x 40 inches
Drum, Dan Desdunes Band, Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, 2011, 32 x 40 inches.

Ambrotype of Frederick Douglass, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC, 2016, 32 x 40 inches.
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 taught photography at the School of Visual Arts, NY; The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, NY; the International Center for Photography, NY; Rochester Institute of Technology, NY. He is currently Distinguished Professor of Art at Stockton University, NJ.

White has received various awards and fellowships including Doctor of Arts (h.c.), Oakland University, MI; the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, Peabody Museum of Archeology and 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.

White’s work is represented in distinguished 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 in Philadelphia. 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.
This catalog was published on the occasion of Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America—concurrent exhibitions presented at the List Gallery and McCabe Library Atrium, Swarthmore College, March 6–April 7, 2024.

Design: Phillip Unetic, UneticDesign.com
Catalog editor: Andrea Packard
Copyeditor: Mary Christian
Printing: Brilliant Graphics, Exton, PA
© 2024, List Gallery, Swarthmore College
© 2024, Julie L. McGee for her text
All artworks are reproduced courtesy of Wendel White. All rights reserved.
This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publisher.

Cover: Marshalltown School, Norristown, New Jersey (detail), 2008, 13⅓ x 20 inches
Frontispiece: "Old Charlotte," Daguerreotype, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania (detail), 2023, 32 x 40 inches
Back cover: The History of the Rise, Progress, & Accomplishment of Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament, Thomas Clarkson, 1808, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania (detail), 2023, 32 x 40 inches

Acknowledgements

Wendel White’s concurrent exhibitions at Swarthmore College and this accompanying catalog were jointly organized by staff in both the List Gallery and Swarthmore College Libraries, including Andrea Packard, director of the Swarthmore College Art Collection and List Gallery curator; Tess Wei, List Gallery exhibitions manager and associate curator; Susan Drehler, visual initiatives and exhibitions librarian; and Celilia Caust-Ellenbogen, associate curator, Friends Historical Library. Additional support was provided by Caitlin Goodman, Friends Historical Library archivist, and Amy McColl, associate director, collection management and discovery and tricollege licensing librarian. Our work was also made possible through the leadership of Ron Tarver, associate professor and chair in the Program in Art; Jordan Landes, curator, Friends Historical Library; and Anne Houston, director of libraries and College librarian, Swarthmore College.

We are deeply grateful to Wendel White for his wide-ranging expertise and close attention to historical sites and objects—both at Swarthmore and throughout the country. His creative practice and extensive photographic portfolios embody exemplary standards of civic engagement, creativity, and collaboration. We are also grateful to Julie L. McGee, associate professor of Africana Studies and Art History and director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Center at the University of Delaware, for her insightful essay.

Funding for Wendel White: Black Lives, Resistance, and Agency in America was provided by the Heilman Visiting Artist Fund and the Program in Art at Swarthmore College. The exhibition and accompanying catalog were also made possible through the generosity of Joan Gordon. Additional support was provided by the List Gallery and Swarthmore College Libraries.