

Elissa Blount Moorhead and Bradford Young:

Back and Song

This meditative four-channel film and art installation reflects on the pursuit of health and well-being at the root of how life, breath, joy, and pain manifest in black experience from cradle to grave. *Back and Song* considers the labor and care provided by generations of black healers—doctors, nurses, midwives, morticians, therapists, and health aides—and their histories of contribution to and resistance from the flawed and discriminatory structures of Western medicine. Working with archivists from around the world, Moorhead and Young synthesized images of quotidian black family life into a time-based archive of expression. Paired with new footage, archival compilations reflect on how music, movement, sound therapy, dance, rest, and meditation are brought together as a spectrum of individual and communal pursuits.



Image: Elissa Blount Moorhead (photo by Shaun Champion) and Bradford Young for [BMA Stories: ELISSA BLOUNT MOORHEAD AND BRADFORD YOUNG IN CONVERSATION WITH ARTHUR JAJA](#). February 28, 2020

Artists' Selections: Listen / Watch / Read

Listen:

[Back and Song Spotify Playlist](#) created for the Baltimore Museum of Art, 2020

Watch:

Khalik Allah. [Black Mother](#). 2018. Grasshopper Films.

Nuotama Frances Bodomo. [BONESHAKER](#). 2013.

Nuotama Frances Bodomo. [Afronauts](#). 2014.

Ben Caldwell. [Medea](#). 1973.

Ben Caldwell. [I & I: An African Allegory](#). 1979.

Ben Caldwell and David P. Cline. [Civil Rights History Project \(U.S.\)](#). 2013.

Tina Campt & Jenn Nkiru. [Call & Response: Tina Campt & Jenn Nkiru on haptic images](#). 2018.

Kathleen Collins. *Losing Ground*. 1982. Milestone Film & Video.

Maya Deren. *Meshes of the Afternoon*. 1943.

Maya Deren. *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*. 1985.

Stephanie Etienne and Kanika Harris. [Listen to Me](#).

Ja'Tovia Gary. [An Ecstatic Experience](#). 2015

Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas. *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Spanish language). 1968.

Herbie Hancock, Esperanza Spalding, Leo Genovese, Wayne Shorter, Terri Lyne Carrington. [Solidarity Of Arts, 2014 live in Gdansk, Poland, August 16, 2014](#).

Kahlil Joseph and Malik Sayeed. [Wildcat](#). 2013.

Kahlil Joseph. [BLKNWS](#). 2019.

Barbara McCullough. [Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification](#). 1979.

Terence Nance. *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty*. 2012. Variance Films.

Terence Nance. [Random Acts of Flyness](#). August 4, 2018-present. HBO.

Sidney Poitier. *Brother John*. 1971.

JAY-Z. [4:44](#). Directed by TNEG. 2017.

Clement Virgo. *The Planet of Junior Brown*. 1997.

The Ummah Chroma (Bradford Young, Terence Nance, Jenn Nkiru, Marc Thomas, Kamasi Washington). [As Told To G/D Thyself](#). 2019.

Matt Wolf. [Recorder: The Marion Stokes Project [<https://recorderfilm.com/>]. 2019.

Bradford Young. [Black America Again](#). 2016.

Read:

Llaila O. Afrika. *African Holistic Health: Complete Herbal Remedy Guide, Dis-Ease Treatments*. 4th ed. Brooklyn, NY: A&B Books, 1993.

Queen Afua. *Heal Thyself for Health and Longevity*. Brooklyn, NY: A&B Publishers Group, 2002.

Marimba Ani. *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994.

Ayi Kwei Armah. *The Healers: A Novel*. Penguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2000.

Asfa-Wossen Assef. *King of Kings: The Triumph and Tragedy of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia*. Trans. Peter Lewis. London: Haus Publishing Ltd., 2015.

Toni Cade Bambara. *The Salt Eaters*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

Octavia E. Butler. *Parable of the Sower*. New York, NY: Warner Books, 1993

Tina Campt. *Image Matters : Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Tina Campt. *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Tina Campt. *The New Black Gaze*. Forthcoming essay collection.

Jason Daley. "San People of South Africa Issue Code of Ethics for Researchers." *Smithsonian Magazine*. March 23, 2017.

Gina Dent. *Black Popular Culture*. Discussion in *Contemporary Culture / Dia Center for the Arts*, No. 8. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1992.

Sylviane Diouf. [Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas](#). New York, NY: NYU Press, 1998.

Milford Graves. "[Milford Graves by Aakash Mittal](#)". BOMB. January 9, 2018.

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013.

Saidiya Hartman. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019.

Kelly M. Hoffmana, Sophie Trawaltera, Jordan R. Axta, and M. Norman Oliver. "[Racial Bias in Pain Assessment and Treatment Recommendations, and False Beliefs About Biological Differences between Blacks and Whites](#)." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 113, no. 16 (April 4, 2016): 4296–430.

Imar Hutchins. *Delights of the Garden: Vegetarian Cuisine Prepared Without Heat*. From *Delights of the Garden Restaurants*. New York, NY: Main Street Books, 1996.

Arthur Jafa and TNEG. *Love Is The Message, The Message Is Death*. New York, NY: Gavin

Brown's Enterprise, 2016

Arthur Jafa. *A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extraordinary Renditions*. Edited by Amira Gad and Joseph Constable. London: Serpentine Galleries, 2018.

N. K. Jemisin. *The Broken Earth Book Series*. Orbit Books. Book 1: *The Fifth Season*, 2015; Book 2: *The Obelisk Gate*, 2016; Book 3: *The Stone Sky*, 2017.

Meeta Rani Jha. "Black is Beautiful: Anti-racist Aesthetic and Cultural Resistance." In *Black Is Beautiful*, 31–51, 2015. ([download PDF](#))

Katherine McKittrick. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human As Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Wes Moore and Mark Gunnery. "[A Toxic Legacy: Confronting Lead Poisoning In Baltimore](#)." Interview with Harriet Washington, David Rosner, Ruth Ann Norton, and Lawrence Brown. *Future City*. WYPR. 49:24 min. October 16, 2019 .

Elissa Blount Moorhead, Melinda Nugent, Gina Harrell, and Ericka Blount Danois. "[Meet The Creative Women Behind Jay-Z's '4:44' Music Video :Interview:](#)." Okayplayer. July 12, 2017.

Fred Moten. "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (Fall 2013)[[download PDF](#)]

Fred Moten. *Consent Not to Be a Single Being*. Volumes 1–3. Vol 1: *Black and Blur*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017; Vol 2: *Stolen Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018; Vol 3: *The Universal Machine*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Elijah Muhammad and Fard Muhammad. How to Eat to Live, Book 1. Chicago, IL: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1967. & How to Eat to Live, Book 2. Chicago, IL: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1972.

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Ben Okri. The Famished Road. London: J. Cape, 1991.

Laura Osborne and Ivor Osbourne. The Rasta Cookbook: Vegetarian Cuisine, Eaten with the Salt of the Earth. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992.

Deirdre Cooper Owens. Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2017.

Antero Pietila. Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2010.

Nathaniel Rich. "[Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change.](#)" New York Times. August 1, 2018.

Nathaniel Rich. Losing Earth: A Recent History. New York: MCD x FSG, 2019.

Christina Elizabeth Sharpe. In the Wake: On Blackness and Being. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Akiba Solomon and Kenrya Rankin. How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance. New York, NY: Bold Type Books, 2019.

Harriet A. Washington. A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind. New York, NY: Little, Brown Spark, 2019.

Frank B. Wilderson. Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.