

VISUAL STUDIES WORK SHOP

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DECEMBER 4: VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP HOSTS DECOLONIZING PHOTOGRAPHY HISTORY EVENT WITH QIANA MESTRICH & CARLA J. WILLIAMS



Qiana Mestrich and Carla J. Williams

EVENT: Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) will host a discussion with Qiana Mestrich and Carla Williams about diversity in photographic history. Mestrich and Williams are dynamic artists, educators and historians who are concerned with amplifying the works of photographers of color.

Mestrich is the author of *Decolonization and Diversity in Contemporary Photography*, a seminal text based off of her long-running photography blog, [Dodge and Burn](#), which features interviews with artists such as Keisha Scarville, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Lola Flash, Chester Higgins, Jr., Hernease Davis and Nakeya Brown. Williams, who wrote the foreword to Mestrich's book, is a groundbreaking photographer, educator and author. Williams also co-authored

The Black Female Body: A Photographic History with Deborah Willis, and her first monograph, *Tender*, won the 2023 Aperture Foundation First Photobook Award.

The event is organized in relation to VSW's current exhibition, [*Diasporas are the Landscape*](#). Decolonial histories are an integral component in the exhibition and a perspective that VSW has been confronting through archival collaborations with artists. This conversation will be moderated by the exhibition's curator and artist, Hernease Davis.

DATE: Thursday, December 4
7-9pm

LOCATION: Visual Studies Workshop, 36 King Street, Rochester NY 14608

COST: [\\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members](#)

ARTIST BIOS: Qiana Mestrich is a photography-focused interdisciplinary artist, photo historian, writer and SEO professional. Mestrich is the founder of Dodge & Burn: Decolonizing Photography History, a blog diversifying the medium's history by advocating for photographers of color. Born and raised in New York City to immigrant parents from Panama and Croatia, Mestrich's autobiographical artwork and research engages issues around Black, mixed-race identity, motherhood/mothering and women's corporate labor.

Carla J. Williams is a photographer, archivist, editor, and writer, and the author of two histories of photography, including *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* with Deborah Willis. Her first monograph, *Tender*, was published in 2023 by TBW Books. She is a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow and exhibits with Higher Pictures, New York City.

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by photographer, educator and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW Exhibitions and Salon events, Project Space Artist Residencies, and VSW Press. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds substantial photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. vsw.org

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