

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Thank you to Krista and Amanda for sharing their dream and incredible talent, to Cliff, Eileen, Tenille, and the entire Blanc Gallery staff for supporting the show, to Stephen Flemister and Edgar Rodriguez for their skill in mounting the show, to Kathi Beste for volunteering her catalog layout skills, to Kwame Shorter for his journalistic support, and to our wonderful professional networks, countless friends and loved ones who encouraged us the whole way.

Blanc Gallery, curator and artists extend our gratitude to partnering organization Chicago Artists Month, and sponsoring business, Illinois Service Federal Savings and Loan Association.



Blanc Gallery

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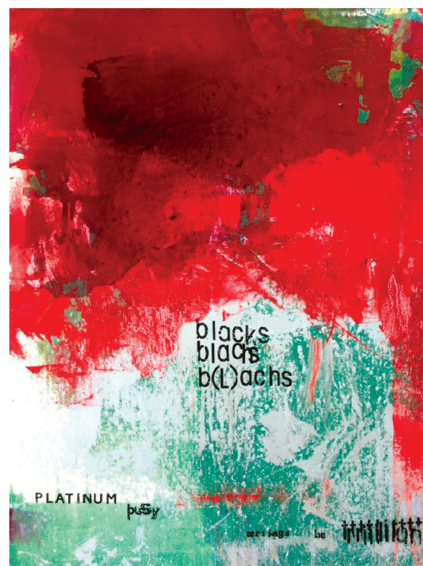
Hours:

Wednesdays, 4:00–6:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m.
And by appointment



Krista Franklin, *Black Power 1*, 2012

Amanda Williams, *Bring 'em On Home*, 2012



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CHICAGO ARTISTS MONTH
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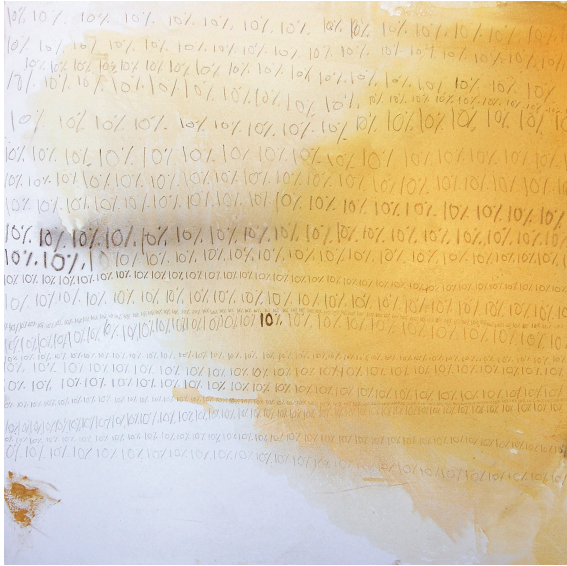
Dreams in Jay-Z Minor:

**New works from
Amanda Williams
+ Krista Franklin**

**October 5, 2012—December 29, 2012
at Blanc Gallery, Chicago**

Dreams in Jay-Z Minor:

New works from Amanda Williams + Krista Franklin



Amanda Williams, *10% Dis (after HCL)*, 2012, Oil on canvas

Amanda Williams

Architect, teacher, artist, and mentor, Amanda Williams is a powerhouse of abstraction. In her most recent series of works we witness an intimately personal journey through the loss of her father, a career accountant and owner of his firm. A self-described “daddy’s girl,” Williams explores the relationship between her father’s incredible love and adoration of her and the literal trappings of financial documentation and the detritus of value that in a sense, was his other love. How do you measure someone? Through her use of gold leaf, blank checks, deposit slips and stamps, American currency, piles, repetition and washes of blood red she obsessively seeks to answer this question. In other works, she reaches for words - snippets of broken, slanting, frenetic hip hop lyrics and flashes of religious text, the word of God. Both keep their subjects alive, long after they’ve gone. Viewing these works, one can’t help turning the costly gaze inward to ponder the weight of one’s value to self and society.

Inspired by their clandestine dream world connection, in which hip-hop artist Jay-Z has made dual appearances, this exhibit presents new works from two contemporary artists exploring the illusion of the Black American Dream. 2D and 3D works of sculpture, mixed media, painting, handmade paper, print, altered books and collage, re-envision the hopes and aspirations of African Diasporic peoples. As Black women, simultaneously indispensable and expendable within American culture, the artists are uniquely positioned to elucidate discussions on Black opulence, Black excellence, and excess.

Underscored by the hyper-reality of hip-hop lyrics, *Dreams* is about the personal and political disfigurement of value, pushing one to consider the easy fluidity between our love for people and our love of things. Observing the comfort and abstractions of familial relationships, religion, hip-hop luxuries, and redundant materiality, we are rocked into a fitful reverie. Artworks not only highlight the confusion of overstimulation of life, but also reflect the collective yearning that allow it flourish.

—Camille Morgan



Krista Franklin, *(Roc)oco*, 2012, Rhinestones on paper

Krista Franklin

Krista Franklin muffles Black culture in handmade paper and exalts her surfaces with visceral materials, from sparkling rhinestones and laser-cut paper to melted beeswax in a permanent state of drip. Franklin’s vision of Blackness is both cryptic and alluring but most of all, fearless. In her new works we not only see the influence of famous black musicians and their symbols, but also the trauma they can inflict on an entire culture. Ghostly cyanotypes reveal cassette tapes, chicken bones, feathers— cultural items once instilled with power... and superstition. Excess fake hair, diluted and exploited vestiges of Black power (both aesthetic: afro picks and economic: cowrie shells) give one pause to consider how we let this happen. Have the commandments of historic black “role models” been replaced by those falling off the lips of Jay-Z and his counterparts, and to whose gain? Franklin responds to this best with one of her most beautifully quiet pieces, *(Roc)oco*. The title, a play on Jay-Z’s popular fashion brand Rocawear, is curled into rhinestone script refracting brilliantly on a sea of bubble gum pink. If you look too long, it’s blinding.