

Black Miami and Urban Coastal Transformations

July 18-25, 2025 | University of Miami Center for Global Black Studies

****UPDATED 7/17/2025****



Black Point Park, Cutler Bay, FL by Donette Francis

This July, the Center for Global Black Studies welcomes you to a week of collective study and exploration at the intersections of Black and coastal studies. The program deploys a Black Atlantic framework that understands waterways and coastlines as key sites in the making and unmaking of Black Subjects through racial capitalism's pursuit of modernity. The one-week intensive centers coastal Miami as our case study, focusing on the linked sites of swamps, beaches and ports, and their entanglements with urban development, building, and construction. While the sea is constitutive to being in Miami, so is a sensibility shaped by hurricane seasons, flooding, and neighborhoods underwater. The line between land and water is constantly being made and remade, by a range of human and nonhuman forces. We begin with a Miami-informed orientation that understands Black subjectivities shaped by the laws of the land, the risks and possibilities of the sea, and the increasing instability of the land-water divide.

Schedule At a Glance

Thursday, July 17th

3:00 PM Participants Begin Arriving

Friday, July 18th

12:00 PM Meet at Stanford Circle for bus to Key Biscayne

1:00 PM Virginia Key Beach visit

2:00 PM Tour of Ocean Sciences Lab at Rosenstiel School

3:00 PM Film Screening

5:00 PM Opening Reception

Saturday, July 19th

MORNING Everglades tour with Houston Cypress (all day)

Sunday, July 20th

MORNING Dania Beach trip (optional, half day)

Monday, July 21st

MORNING Openings: Convener remarks + participant intros + group discussion

AFTERNOON Participant workshops

Tuesday July 22nd

MORNING Collective Study: Swamps

AFTERNOON Cape Florida Lighthouse Tour

Wednesday, July 23rd

MORNING Collective Study: Beaches

AFTERNOON Participant workshops

Thursday, July 24th

MORNING Port of Miami Tour

AFTERNOON Collective Study: Ports

Participant workshops

Friday, July 25th

MORNING Participant workshops

AFTERNOON Concluding remarks and Focus group discussion

EVENING Closing Reception

Saturday, 7/26

MORNING Farewell breakfast

Detailed Daily Schedule

Thursday, July 17th

Participants begin arriving. Prepaid Dining Dollars provided for on campus meals.

Friday, July 18th

WELCOME

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 12:00 PM | Bus to Key Biscayne
Meet at Stanford Circle
Boxed lunch provided |
| 1:00 PM | Tour of Virginia Key Beach |
| 2:00 PM | Tour of Ocean Sciences Lab with Professor Brian Haus
Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science
4600 Rickenbacker Causeway |
| 3:00 PM | Opening Film Program: Miami Waters and the Black Diaspora <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Wade in the Water</i> (Cathleen Dean, 2022, 15 min)• <i>Swimming in Your Skin Again</i> (Terence Nance, 2015, 22 min)• <i>Wey Dey Move: A Dance of the Mangroves</i> (Dele Adeyemo, 2023, 35 min) <p>Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science Auditorium</p> |
| 5:00 PM | Welcome Reception at SALT Waterfront Restaurant
Transportation back to UM will be provided. |

Saturday, July 19th

THE EVERGLADES

How might we think about the spatiality and texture of land, ground, swamp, air, and temperature as we move on our trip through the Miccosukee territory?

- 8:45 AM **Bus to the Everglades**
Meet at Stanford Circle
Boxed breakfast provided
Bus leaves promptly at 9:00 AM
- 10:00 AM – **Guided Swamp Tour of Miccosukee Territory with Houston Cypress**
2:00 PM Morning visit into the Everglades with Houston Cypress of Love the Everglades Movement. Lunch provided during the tour.
- 4:30 PM **Group Dinner**

Sunday, July 20

DANIA BEACH

What does the beach as a site of leisure – and its entanglement with sound – mean in histories of Black Miami?

- 8:30 AM **Breakfast**
Center for Global Black Studies lounge, 306 Merrick Building
- 9:30 AM **Bus to Beaches**
Meet at Stanford Circle
- 10:00 AM **Optional Day at Dania Beach**
Group trip to Dania Beach. Time for rest.
- 1:00 PM **Group Lunch**

Monday, July 21st

OPENINGS

What interdisciplinary methods of analysis can we draw upon to read South Florida's coastal landscapes?

- 9:00 AM **Breakfast**
Center for Global Black Studies lounge, 306 Merrick Building
- 10:00 AM **Opening Remarks**
Donette Francis, Director of the Center for Global Black Studies and Principal Investigator, Black Miami Studies Initiative, Mellon Foundation.
Ben Mendelsohn, Visiting Research Fellow in Global Coastal Cultures.
- 10:30 AM **Participant Introductions**
- 12:30 PM **Lunch**
- 1:30 PM **Discussion of Opening Readings**
See below for the list of readings and additional discussion questions.
Includes a coffee break at 3:00 pm.
- 3:00 PM **Participant Workshops**
Collective discussion of participant works-in-progress.
- 4:30 PM **Library Time**
An unscheduled period for participants to use the library, read, or prepare for the next day.
- Dinner on Campus using Dining Dollars**
No formal group dinner.

Tuesday, July 22nd

SWAMPS

How do South Florida's mangroves function as archives of knowledge? What are some of the representations of swamps with which we are most familiar?

- 9:00 AM **Breakfast**
English Department Conference Room, 427 Ashe Building
- 10:00 AM **Film Screening**
Mangrove School (Sónia Vaz Borges and Filipa César, 2022, 35 minutes)
- 11:00 AM **Swamp Reading: Group Discussion**
See below for the list of readings and additional discussion questions.
- 1:00 PM **Lunch**
- 2:00 PM **Bus to Cape Florida Lighthouse**
Meet behind Ashe Building
- 2:30 PM **Tour of Cape Florida Lighthouse**
Bill Baggs State Park
- Built in 1825, the oldest structure in Miami-Dade and site of Saltwater railroad
- 5:00 PM **Group Dinner**
The Cleat, Key Biscayne



Wednesday, July 23rd

BEACHES

How do we make sense of the shoreline as a site of pleasure and possibility as well as a site of risk, regulation, and border making?

- 9:00 AM **Breakfast**
English Department Conference Room, 427 Ashe Building
- 10:00 AM **Beach Reading: Collective Study and discussion**
See below for the list of readings and additional discussion questions.
- 12:00 PM **Participant Workshops**
Collective discussion of participant works-in-progress.
- 1:00 PM **Lunch**
English Department Conference Room, 427 Ashe Building
- 2:00 PM **Participant Workshops**
Collective discussion of participant works-in-progress. Includes a coffee break at 3:00 pm.
- 4:00 PM **Library Time**
An unscheduled period for participants to use the library, read, or prepare for the next day.
- 6:00 PM **Dinner on Campus using Dining Dollars**
No formal group dinner.

Thursday, July 24th

PORTS

What does the port represent or reveal as an infrastructure for the circulation of bodies, goods, and cultures?

- 8:15 AM **Bus to PortMiami**
Meet at Stanford Circle
Boxed breakfast provided
Bus departs promptly at 8:30 AM
- 9:00 AM **Tour of PortMiami Cargo and Cruise Terminals with Eric Olafson, Director of Global Trade and Business Development**
- 12:00 PM **Group Lunch**
English Department Conference Room, 427 Ashe Building
- 1:00 PM **Port Reading: Collective Study and Discussion**
English Department Conference Room, 427 Ashe Building
- See below for the list of readings and additional discussion questions.
Includes a coffee break at 3:00 PM.
- 3:00 PM **Participant Workshops**
Collective discussion of participant works-in-progress.
- 6:00 PM **Dinner on Campus using Dining Dollars**
No formal group dinner.

Friday, July 25th

- 9:00 AM **Breakfast**
Center for Global Black Studies lounge, 306 Merrick Building
- 10:00 AM **Participant Workshops**
Collective discussion of participant works-in-progress.
- 12:00 PM **Lunch**
- 1:00 PM **Concluding Discussion, Focus Group, and Closing Remarks**
- 6:00 PM **Closing Reception**
Cesarano Plaza, Business School

Saturday, July 26th

- 10:00 AM **Farewell Breakfast**
Lakeside Training Room

Readings and Guiding Questions

A significant component of this convening is collective study focused on each of our core themes: swamps, beaches, and ports. We have assembled readings, videos, and audio pieces to shape each discussion, and we will continue to build a bigger bibliography collectively. We ask you to please review the following materials, and we invite you to lead a discussion of any text that is particularly attractive to you.

EVERGLADES TOUR

Read / View / Listen before Saturday, July 19th

- Houston Cypress, "...what-endures..." (2021, 5 minutes). [YouTube](#)
- Houston Cypress Study Guide, Court Filing, and Maps
- Zora Neale Hurston, "Storm in the Everglades" excerpt in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).
- CBS News Miami, "Juneteenth: Florida's Saltwater Underground Railroad" (2023, 4 minutes). [YouTube](#)
- Melissa Grant, "The Grand Opening of an American Concentration Camp," *The New Republic* (July 2, 2025).
- American Experience, "The Swamp: Chapter 1" (2019, 10 minutes). [pbs.org](#)

Guiding Questions

1. How might we think about the spatiality and texture of land, ground, swamp, air, and temperature as we move through our trip through the Miccosukee territory?
2. In what ways do the Everglades embody intersecting migratory histories of Indigenous peoples and African marronage?
3. How does the current spectacle of prison building in the Everglades echo the swamp's history as a site of racialized otherness?

- Black Broward Film Project, “The Tale of Sibling Communities Liberia and Danie (2020, 30 minutes).
- NPR Music, “Doechii: Tiny Desk Concert” (2024, 24 minutes). [YouTube](#)

Guiding Questions

1. The history of Virginia Key Beach is ever present in the memories of Black Miamians. What does Dania Beach—as well as the histories of other Black beaches along the South Florida coastline—add to our understand of Black Miami?
2. What does the beach as a site of leisure – and its entanglement with sound -- mean in histories of Black Miami?

- Tiffany Lethabo King, "Introduction" in *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, Duke University Press (2019).
- Donette Francis and Allison Harris, "Introduction: Looking for Black Miami," in *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal* (2020).
- Ben Mendelsohn, "Making the Urban Coast: A Geosocial Reading of Land, Sand, and Water in Lagos, Nigeria," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* (2019).
- Michele Navakas, Introduction "Porous Foundations" and Chapter 1 "Liquid Landscape: Estuary, Marsh, Sink, Spring, Shore" in *Liquid Landscape: Geography and Settlement at the Edge of Early America*, University of Pennsylvania Press (2017).
- Charley Hailey, Chapter 5 "Rational and Irrational: Developing Biscayne Bay's Lagoon" and Chapter 6 "Real and Surreal: Surrounding Biscayne Bay's Spoil Islands" in *Spoil Island: Reading the Makeshift Archipelago*, Lexington Books (2013).

Guiding Questions

1. Tiffany King characterizes the Black shoal as a meeting place near the shoreline's shallow edge where earth and water meet, and this provides a framework for thinking about the intersections of Black and Indigenous studies. How does this inspire us to think about the intersection of Black and Indigenous studies in South Florida?
2. Michelle Navakas asserts: "In a place given to sudden, unpredictable fluctuations in the water level, rooting firmly to the earth is perilous; floating or moving continually best achieves stability" (5). How do Black Miamians and their expressive cultures create ways of thinking and being in place -- in a landscape that will never have solid ground?
3. Charley Hailey and Ben Mendelsohn both provide frameworks for reading man-made coastal land as an intersection of technological, aesthetic, capitalistic, and ideological endeavors. What do these interdisciplinary methods of reading enable us to ask about South Florida landscapes?

- Tim Watson, Plant Infrastructure: Mangoes, Race, and Empire in Early Twentieth-Century Miami, *Environmental Humanities Journal* (2024).
- Morgan P. Vickers, "On Swampification: Black Ecologies, Moral Geographies, and Racialized Swampland Destruction," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* (2023).
- Fresh Air, "The Swamp of Florida Politics," an interview with Michael Grunwald, author of *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (2006, 20 minutes). [npr.org](https://www.npr.org)
- C. Riley Snorton, *The Wild Man in the Green Swamp and Other Stories about Race in America* (2021, 60 minutes). [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8333333333)

Suggested

- Roane, J. T. "Black Ecologies, Subaquatic Life, and the Jim Crow Enclosure of the Tidewater." *Journal of Rural Studies* (2022).

Guiding Questions

1. How do South Florida's mangroves function as archives of knowledge?
2. How much of the ground beneath our feet was once swamp, and under what conditions does it return to its water state? Is the ground haunted by the swamp?
3. What is the historical connection between the swamp as a "wasteland" and histories of antiblackness?
4. What can we learn from an inventory of swamp genres, tropes, clichés, myths, fantasies, archetypes? What are some of the representations and imaginings of swamps with which we are most familiar?

- David L. Kelly and Renato Molina, "Adaptation Infrastructure and Its Effects on Property Values in the Face of Climate Risk," *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists* (2023).
- Jesse M Keenan, Thomas Hill and Anurag Gumber, "Climate gentrification: from theory to empiricism in Miami Dade County, Florida," *Environmental Research Letters* (2018).
- Gregory Bush, Chapter 3 "Island Pleasures: Memories of African American Life at Virginia Key Beach" in *White Sand Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space, and Miami's Virginia Key*, University of Florida Press (2018).

Suggested:

- Bonjour, Rakiah, "Flooding the Cities: How Land Use Policies Contribute to Climate Gentrification," *Seton Hall Journal of Legislation and Public Policy* (2020).

Guiding Questions

1. How do we make sense of the shoreline as a site of pleasure and possibility as well as a site of risk, regulation, and border making? How is this complicated by the realities of climate change and sea level rise?
2. How does the shoreline embody entanglements of race, value, and power?

- Richard Grant et. al., "No Port Stands Alone: PortMiami and the Resilience of Its Caribbean and Mesoamerican Maritime Network." *Maritime Economics & Logistics* (2024).
- Jenny Staletovich, "New NOAA report confirms widespread coral damage from Port Miami dredge," *WLRN Public Media* (2023). [wlrn.org](https://www.wlrn.org)
- Philip Hamer, "Great Britain, the United States, and the Negro Seamen Acts, 1822-1848," *The Journal of Southern History* (1935).
- Anita Gonzalez, Chapter 1 "Onboarding" in *Shipping Out: Race, Performance, and Labor at Sea*, University of Michigan Press (2025).

Guiding Questions

1. What does the port represent or reveal as an infrastructure for the circulation of bodies, goods, and cultures?
2. How is the history of Miami entangled with the history of its port?
3. How are PortMiami's container and cruise terminals connected to the Miami's self-image and ambitions as a global city?
4. How does the port refashion nature in the service of racialized capital accumulation?

Guiding Questions

1. How have the activities of the past week opened possibilities for ongoing work? Please write a one-page summary of your thoughts to help document this initiative.

Participant Bios



Mysia Anderson

Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts, University of California, San Diego

A scholar-artist whose multi-disciplinary practice seeks to uplift stories rooted in African Diasporic world-making. Mysia's teaching and scholarship flow through the contours of Black feminisms, Black Studies, and Black Performance Theory, weaving together critical ethnography, embodied practice, and archival storytelling. She will be workshoping a chapter from her book manuscript-in-progress *Black Miami in the Eye of the Storm: Performing Black Sustainability*.



Lauren Baccus

Coral Gables Museum

Textile artist, educator, and independent researcher whose career is deeply rooted in art education and engagement. Baccus's creative and research practice is centered on reframing and retelling Caribbean stories through textile art and costume design, strongly influenced by masquerade and the region's legacy of resistance through clothing. Her ongoing project, *Salt and Aloes*, serves as a digital archive of Caribbean material culture, blending historical research with artistic expression to educate and inspire. This project, along with works like *Our Gordon is Gone* (2022), highlights her use of textiles as a medium for storytelling and cultural preservation. Lauren will be workshoping a forthcoming article, *Venus Rising: The work of Andrea Chun*.



Dejha Carrington

Co-founder of Commissioner, Creative Futures Fellow UM Center for Global Black Studies

Practitioner and leader in the arts, who in 2017 co-founded Commissioner, an art membership that helps people collect the work of contemporary artists in their cities. From 2015 to 2022, Dejha served as Vice President of Strategic Communications for YoungArts, the national foundation for the advancement of artists. Previously, she led public relations initiatives with Kimball Art Museum, the Medellín Biennial in Colombia, and the National Film Board of Canada. Dejha is a board member of the national performance arts funder MAP Fund in New York and The Black School, an experimental schoolhouse in New Orleans. She is also a professional advisory member of Miami-Dade Art In Public Places and New York University's Center for Black Visual Culture. Dejha teaches the Business of Art at New World School of the Arts at Miami-Dade College. Dejha will be workshoping a book manuscript in progress, *Commissioner as Social Practice*.



Felicia Casanova

Medical Sociologist, University of Miami

Research Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing and Health Studies. Medical Sociologist and Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration Scholar who recently completed the CHANGE T32 Training Program. Research employs community-based participatory methods and mixed methods to examine how global and environmental health factors contribute to cancer and HIV inequities among minoritized Black and Latine, highly mobile, and displaced populations. Currently leading an NIH K01 study on HIV care continuity in Puerto Rico during extreme climate events. My overall research mission is to create equitable health care systems for historically marginalized groups in Miami. Felicia will be workshopping her project, *The impacts of displacement and gentrification on healthcare in Black Miami Communities, West Coconut Grove and South Miami*.



Corbin Covington

PhD Student in Black Studies, Northwestern University

Researcher, educator, and writer from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He is dedicated to teaching in 'fugitive spaces' that honor and respect student learners outside of formal educational institutions that negatively value 'non-traditional' students. Corbin is currently pursuing a PhD in Black Studies and Critical Theory at Northwestern University where he specializes in Africana Philosophy, the history of ideas, Social and Political Philosophy, and black feminist theories of gender and sexuality. At present, Corbin's work investigates how the theme of cannibalism pervades instances of racial violence in the 20th century (namely, lynchings). Corbin will be workshopping his project, *Eco-Esotericism: Obscuring Fugitivity in Florida Swamplands*.



Donette Francis

Director, UM Center for Global Black Studies and Principal Investigator, Black Miami Studies Initiative Mellon Foundation

An interdisciplinary scholar of Caribbean, American and African Diaspora Studies and intellectual histories. Born in Kingston, she spent her early years in West Palm Beach before moving to Brooklyn. Deeply engaged in placemaking in Miami, her research and scholarship explore connections between race, place and Black Diaspora Aesthetics. Donette will be workshopping her book manuscript, *Creole Miami: Black Arts at the Crossroads of the Americas*.



Génesis Lara

Assistant Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies, UC Irvine

A scholar of Caribbean and Afro-Latinx Studies. Raised in both Bronx, New York and later Miami, Florida, Génesis's research focuses on gender, Blackness, social movements, human rights, and diaspora world making. She explores the ways Afro-Caribbean women mobilized grief and mourning as ways to contest state violence in the twentieth century. Her work poses larger questions of ways Black people have conceived and fought for human rights. Génesis completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Florida and her PhD at the University of California, Davis. She will be workshopping an article in progress, *Creating a New Miami: Black Latinidad & Political Asylum in Cold War Miami*.



Valencia Gunder

Black Collective

A multi-generational resident of Miami's Liberty City neighborhood, and is co-director of The Smile Trust, executive director of The Black Collective and The Freedom Lab, and founder of the Community Emergency Operations Center -- all of which she runs from the Freedom Lab in Liberty City. For the past 15 years, Valencia has provided coordination and support for diverse, low-wealth communities addressing climate change impacts. A recognized leader in the climate- and environmental-justice movements, Valencia has launched path-breaking climate and environmental justice initiatives including the Black Hive (which is the Movement for Black Lives' climate and environmental justice program run in 200 cities) and the Black Climate Manifesto (an organizing platform introduced at COP26 in Cairo and signed by CBO leaders worldwide). Each of these efforts was originally developed in Liberty City. Valencia will be workshopping *The Noir Project* powered by The Black Collective.



Jaleyna Lawes

Yale University

Mellon Mays Fellow studying the History of Science and Medicine. Her research explores intimate entanglements between captive women aboard the Middle Passage and the more-than-human world, both as instruments of captivity and vessels for embodiment and relation otherwise. Jaleyna's interests are rooted in an upbringing among Afro-Jamaican communities in South Florida, where intimate relationships with diasporic plants shaped networks of kinship, care, and survival. Her work centers how Black diasporic communities, through intimate relationships with more-than-human life, cultivate worlds of healing, nourishment, and knowledge-keeping amidst the material and epistemic displacements of slavery, colonialism, and their afterlives. She will be workshopping an essay, "Yaad Geographies: Plant-Human Intimacies and Afro-Jamaican Worldmaking in Miami."



Nhadya Lawes

Knight Foundation

A scholar and arts professional, Nhadya graduated the University of Miami with an English BA and concentrations in Africana studies, art history, and sociology. Her research centers Black geographies and alternative archival memory. Much of this work has included artist-scholar convenings with the Black Miami Studies Initiative at UM's Center for Global Black Studies. She also co-curated the exhibition, *As We Move Forward*, with artist-faculty Juana Valdes at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2024. Nhadya is currently a Program Officer in the Arts Program at the Knight Foundation, supporting thriving communities through key arts and culture investments. She will be workshopping "Some Place Past Nowhere."



Sydney Rose Maubert

A Haitian-Cuban artist and architect based in Miami and Chicago. She is the founder of Sydney R. Maubert LLC., her art and mural practice, which has been acknowledged and awarded by the Graham Foundation, Oolite Ellies Creator Award, NALAC Foundation, and 21C Museum. She is the Jeanne and John Rowe Fellow at the Illinois Institute of Technology College of Architecture (2024- ongoing). She was the Strauch Fellow at Cornell College of Architecture (2022-2024). She will be workshopping “Queen of the Swamp: The Saltwater Railroad.”



Arsimmer McCoy

Poet, interdisciplinary artist, and educator from Richmond Heights, FL currently residing in Carol City (Miami Gardens). A 2024 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Poetry Award winner and 2025 Arts and Environment Awardee, McCoy's work blends poetry, performance, and environmental storytelling. She has been in residence at Locust Projects, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Bakehouse, and internationally performed in Ghana, Thailand, the UK, and Italy. She is the founder of The Carol City Museum, a hub for cultural preservation and community building. She will be workshopping her project, “Where My Mother Planted Me: Spells for Survival, Land & Liberation.”



Tatiana McInnis

Educator, writer, and researcher currently based in Durham, North Carolina where they are an instructor at the North Carolina School of Science and Math. At NCSSM, they teach American Studies, Critical Legal Studies, and Humanities research classes on reparations and pandemics. They are the author of *To Tell a Black Story of Miami*, 2022 UP of Florida. They will be workshopping essay, “They told me I have heart failure”: Navigating South Florida's Anti-Black Medical System.”



Sharon McIntyre

Political Science, University of Miami

Lecturer in the Political Science Department at the University of Miami. She is involved in research and practice related to policy analysis, public sector ethics, public sector DEI initiatives, human rights, social change, intercultural communication, and various levels of peacebuilding programs (civil society and government). She emphasizes experiential and applied learning of viable, multi-track peacebuilding theories, models, and practices, particularly for marginalized communities. Additionally, she has researched the narratives of people living within 20 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. Dr. McIntyre is a member of the American Society for Public Administration and the Association for Conflict Resolution. She will be workshopping new work, "The Impact of Gentrification on Black Neighborhoods in Miami: West Coconut Grove, Overtown, and Little Haiti."



Ben Mendelsohn

Assistant Professor of Film and Digital Culture, Portland State University

Ben Mendelsohn is an Assistant Professor of Film and Digital Culture at Portland State University where he teaches courses in film and media history, theory, and production. Previously, he was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow with the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities (PPEH). He is currently writing a book about the intersections of visual culture, documentary media, and urban coastal ecologies in Lagos, Nigeria. His films have screened at the Rockaway Film Festival, Batalha Centro de Cinema, and the Block Museum, among other venues. He will be workshopping a chapter, "Sonic Ecologies, Afrobeats, and the Politics of Pleasure," from his book manuscript in progress, *Urban Coastal Archives: Land Reclamation and Visual Culture in Lagos, Nigeria*.



Nate Moreau

The Black Collective

Organizer and strategist committed to building powerful organizations dedicated to developing people and fighting for Black liberation. A 2018 graduate of Florida International University with a double major in International Relations and Public Administration, he has led large-scale community initiatives, including directing The Black Collective and overseeing the largest survey in his state's history. Nathaniel specializes in turning ideas into impactful programs, campaigns, and trainings. He has also designed cultural initiatives and a fellowship program training over 90 organizers, all driven by his deep commitment to community empowerment and social justice.



Alexandra O'Neale

ICA, Miami

Alexandra Fields O'Neale is a Miami born and based visual artist whose practice engages photography, video, fiber and sound to examine Black identity, historical narratives, and ancestral trauma. Through immersive and interdisciplinary works, she creates space for collective reflection and dialogue around marginalized histories. Her practice seeks to guide audiences through layered explorations of history and memory, fostering a deeper, shared understanding of self and community. Her work has been featured at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2024), Black Box Gallery (2020) in Portland, Oregon, Collective 62 in Miami, Florida (2025). She is the recipient of the Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge award and Oolite's Ellies Creator Award (2022). She earned a degree in Culture and Media from The New School in New York. O'Neale is currently the Institutional Giving Manager at ICA Miami, supporting development initiatives and community programming. She will be workshopping her ongoing project, "Black Maroon Ecologies and Mangrove Sanctuaries."



Neri Torres

Amherst College

Neri Torres is an artist, choreographer, and scholar born in Havana, Cuba, with an extensive background in dance. She honed her craft at the prestigious Instituto Superior de Artes and Escuela Nacional de Instructores de Artes in Havana, Cuba, before obtaining an MFA in dance and a minor in film from the University of Colorado, Boulder. As the founder and artistic director of the IFE-ILE Afro-Cuban Dance Company in Miami, she seamlessly blends traditional and contemporary dance and curates an annual Afro-Cuban dance festival in Miami. Neri has left her mark on international tours, film, television, and stage productions, collaborating with A-list artists such as Andy Garcia and Gloria Estefan. In addition to her stellar performances, she's also the main editor of the book "Perspectives on Dance Fusion in the Caribbean and Dance Sustainability: Rituals of Modern Society." Currently pursuing a doctorate in Cultural Studies at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill, Barbados, Neri's research delves into dance and migration, Afro-Cuban dance spirituality, dance in popular culture, cultural appropriation vs. appreciation, and Caribbean dance. Her talent and dedication were recognized in March 2013 when she received the prestigious State of Florida Folk Heritage Award from Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner for her exceptional contributions to Florida's cultural heritage as a performer and advocate of Afro-Cuban traditional dance.

University of Miami Center for Global Black Studies

The University of Miami Center for Global Black Studies provides translocal linkages, infrastructure, and public education on high-impact, problem-solving research and teaching on race and social justice. Significantly advancing the University's ambition toward global excellence and relevance, the center serves as a future-facing hub for policy solutions, student empowerment, and community and global engagement.