# To Make Their Own Way in the World

## *The Enduring Legacy of the Zealy Daguerreotypes*

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*With a foreword by*
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## *Daguerreotypes in the Museum and Beyond*

Ilisa Barbash

> I knew that I couldn't leave them where they were. I couldn't leave them where I found them. So, I should reconstruct and build a new context for them so that they could take on a new life, a new imagery, a new meaning, something that would question their historical paths and at the same time propel them forward to the future.
>
> —Carrie Mae Weems, on seeing the Zealy daguerreotypes for the first time

## Discovery

Anthropologists thrive on narratives of discovery. Traditionally, we have gone to the ends of the earth to find people whose lives we can discover, explore, and reveal. And yet increasingly we find ourselves looking closer to home. Sometimes this is deliberate, and in other cases it is accidental. The history of the Zealy daguerreotypes at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology is rife with such stories.

One tale begins in 1846, when the Swiss-born zoologist Louis Agassiz had his first glimpse of African Americans in the United States. The scientist described his shock in a letter to his mother in Switzerland: "The feeling that they inspired in me is contrary to all our ideas about the confraternity of the human type [*genre*] and the unique origin of our species. . . . [I]t is impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us."[1]

Subsequently instated as a professor of zoology and geology at the newly founded Lawrence School of Science at Harvard University, Agassiz was in great demand as a public speaker and widely considered an authority on all matters scientific, including those beyond his initial training.[2] Four years later, after lecturing at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, he was invited to visit Columbia by Robert W. Gibbes, a doctor who administered medical care at

local plantations. Gibbes took Agassiz to Richland County plantations and businesses, where they selected Africans and African Americans to compare: Renty, whom Agassiz identified as being from Congo, and his American-born daughter Delia; Jem, a Gullah; Jack, from Guinea, and his American-born daughter Drana; Fassena, a Mandingo, and Alfred, a Foulah.[3] After Agassiz returned to his office in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gibbes arranged to have studio photographs taken of these seven enslaved people and sent some fifteen daguerreotypes to Agassiz.[4] The zoologist hoped the images would prove the theory of original diversity, later called "polygenesis," and that the slaves were of a different species that was inferior to his own.[5] According to newspapers,[6] Agassiz brought the daguerreotypes to a meeting of the Cambridge Scientific Club in autumn 1850,[7] but the lack of records about what happened next suggests that they were probably not well received. Agassiz never published the images, and they seemed to disappear.

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In 1976, Peabody Museum staff were rummaging through storage for back issues of museum publications in a remote attic near the front of the museum (fig. 13.1). Chancing upon a wooden cabinet tucked under the eaves, they opened a drawer. There, they saw a number of small flat cases neatly laid out. As they carefully unlatched and raised the lids, they immediately realized they had found something unusual. While one researcher ran downstairs to tell their colleagues, the other stayed behind to guard the daguerreotypes. It was "mind boggling," said then publications assistant Lorna Condon. There was great excitement as the staff speculated: "How did they get there? And who were these people?"[8]

The people they saw were identified by name—Alfred, Delia, Drana, Fassena, Jack, Jem, and Renty—on handwritten paper labels. Although nothing linked the daguerreotypes directly to Louis Agassiz, museum paperwork indicated that they had been moved to the Peabody Museum in 1935 from Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ), which Agassiz had founded in the 1850s. The images had been given museum accession numbers, and the collector was tentatively listed as Alexander Agassiz, Louis's son and his successor as director of the MCZ.

Under the supervision of Elinor Reichlin, the Peabody's registrar, the staff looked for more clues. The red velvet lining of the cases' interiors bore the floral stamp of "J. T. Zealy, Columbia, S.C.," the images' photographer. In addition, there were small paper labels attached to the cases that gave the subjects' names, their supposed ethnicities, and some of their occupations. Once these led to Alexander's father, Louis, and to their supposed scientific purpose, it was clear to Reichlin and the museum staff that the significance of these images would not and could not be what the original producers had intended.

**Figure 13.1.**
Unknown photographer, The Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 1901. Glass-plate collodion

The discovery was announced in June 1977, in newspapers around the country, including the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*; in the Associated Press news service; and in an *American Heritage* article penned by Reichlin.[9] Peabody Museum director Stephen Williams claimed in one article that these were the earliest images of American slaves born in Africa.[10]

As twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars, including the authors in this volume, began to discover these daguerreotypes for themselves, they used them in scholarly writings, newspapers, magazines, websites, and documentaries as illustrations in examinations of race, slavery, photography, vision, gender, power, the body, and anthropology.[11] Artists, too, from around the world, such as Carrie Mae Weems, Shawn Naphtali Sobers, Heidi Fancher, and Sasha Huber, repurposed the daguerreotypes to construct visual narratives, giving the images a wider viewership and expanding the dialogues about them. This essay explores this chapter in the history of the Peabody Museum's collection of Zealy daguerreotypes: how the images have been reproduced and altered by artists who essentially seized control of them from Agassiz, using the scientist's chosen means of domination and communication—photography.

## Life in the Museum

Housed in a museum of anthropology, the daguerreotypes, rather than serving as scientific proof for polygenesis, now testify to the problematic and colonialist roots of the discipline. They have gone from being evidence for one of the four traditional fields of anthropology—biological or physical—to eliciting the concern of cultural and visual anthropologists.[12] Although the individual people were chosen by Agassiz and Gibbes as putatively visual examples of various ethnicities—Foulah, Guinea, Gullah, and Mandingo—they were literally stripped of their culture for the taking of the daguerreotypes. Zealy photographed them entirely removed from any context, against a dark backdrop in his studio in Columbia. The absence of clothing and identifiable surroundings in the daguerreotypes communicates nothing about the subjects' ethnic origins and reveals even less about their daily lives in slavery.[13] The images do, however, touch on the institution of slavery itself—the practice of examining and degrading bodies on auction blocks—and they reveal the capacity and strength of these particular individuals to endure the appalling indignity of sitting and standing partially or completely naked in a photography studio.

It is not just their content that gives these daguerreotypes a unique position in an anthropological museum. The visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards has pointed to the "uncertain status of photographs in museums. Are they objects? Documents? Artistic statements? Or mere bits of information?" Responding to her own questions, she adds: "Of course they are all these things, and it is this indeterminate status intersecting with the recordability and reproducibility of the photograph that frames this slippage of categories and allows photographs to be that 'highly flexible platform' for interpretations."[14]

Packed securely in cases, compact enough to fit in a hand or a pocket, the Zealy daguerreotypes are three-dimensional objects, the most material of photographs. Daguerreotypes are one-of-a-kind photographs produced as positive images without negatives. Before they left South Carolina, the daguerreotypes in the Peabody's collection were firmly secured under layers of mats, glass, and preservers within velvet-lined, carved wooden cases outfitted with tiny latches to keep them closed. The daguerreotypes of Renty, Jem, Delia, Drana, Jack, Fassena, and Alfred are quarter plates, measuring three and a half by four and a half inches.[15] Yet, of the Peabody's enormous number of delicate museum objects requiring careful handling, these are among the most fragile. They are especially sensitive to light, as well as to gases and chemicals in the environment. Thus, their materiality is rarely experienced. They are kept in a cool storage room and brought out only twice a year for academic classes and researcher viewings. They are regularly monitored for stability. Only a few have been included in three exhibitions to this day, and conservators have

advised limiting their future exhibition to three-month periods at least three years apart.[16]

Because they do not have negatives, daguerreotypes must be reproduced by rephotography and/or scanning. When the daguerreotypes were first discovered at the Peabody Museum in 1976, the institution's staff photographer, Hillel S. Burger, went to tremendous effort to rephotograph them. Although the Peabody Museum already had a photographic studio, Burger converted an unused storeroom into another makeshift studio because he needed an especially low, white ceiling off of which to bounce a single light onto the daguerreotypes without creating any reflection on their shiny, mirrorlike surfaces. Using a 3-by-5 view camera with a flat field lens, he removed both the lens and the back of the camera, which held the film. Peering through the camera's tubelike body, he adjusted the light onto the opened daguerreotypes. He reassembled the camera, adjusted the fine focus, and produced a negative for each image. (Burger did not photograph the cases at the time.)[17]

Between 2007 and 2009, the Weissman Preservation Center at Harvard University Library undertook the extensive conservation of the daguerreotypes.[18] As they worked, the Weissman conservators took numerous digital photographs, including new versions of the daguerreotype portraits, as well as shots of both sides of the open cases, the cases themselves, and the portraits with and without their mats. The removal of the mats revealed new visual information, especially in the foregrounds of the images, such as hand and arm placement and folds of clothing. Because of the high-resolution digitization, new details are visible: we can now see that there are flowers on Delia's dress. Because of the blurriness of Jem's right leg in his side-view portrait, we can gather that he moved slightly, likely because he was uncomfortable standing for the long exposure period. We can also discern evidence of possible violence, rituals, or medical conditions—such as abrasions on the front of Jem's shins and what appear to be indented ritual scarification on Jack's cheeks and raised scars of an indeterminate origin on his back.

## Reproduction

In addition to extraordinary care for their physical condition, the daguerreotypes have required special curatorial attention. Both Elinor Reichlin and Stephen Williams had voiced concern about their content from the outset. Reichlin admitted: "The circumstances under which the photos were made were degrading. I don't feel quite comfortable about them." She wondered: "If these were my ancestors, would I want them to be seen this way?"[19] Williams conferred with African American associates before deciding to release the images to the public. He then restricted these to

"views from the waist up" of Renty, Jack, and Fassena. The photographs of the women were not circulated, he said, "for obvious reasons."[20] Into the twenty-first century, staff debated how the museum could best ethically shepherd the publication of the daguerreotypes. Although Brian Wallis was allowed to incorporate all fifteen daguerreotypes into a 1995 article, "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," the Peabody Museum generally withheld permission to publish the daguerreotypes of Delia, Drana, Jem, and Alfred, citing their nudity and the coercive nature of the photography—an ironic concern given the nature of slavery itself and the colonial conditions under which many other images in the institution's collections were taken. Recognizing this, in 2009, the museum adapted its policies to permit scholarly publication of all of its daguerreotypes.

The Peabody Museum now receives an average of fifteen requests a year to reproduce the daguerreotypes taken by Zealy. Researchers can request any of the Peabody Museum's versions, and, indeed, some scholars are beginning to reproduce the portraits both with and without the case. The stewardship of the daguerreotypes highlights some of the fundamental changes in the concerns of anthropologists over the years, with contemporary and past policies in direct confrontation with each other. The American Anthropological Association's 2012 ethical code prioritizes "obligations to research participants."[21] This includes "to do no harm," "to be open and honest regarding your work," and "to obtain informed consent and necessary permissions."[22] But how do these concerns apply to photographs taken more than a century before such an ethical code existed? The majority of the nude subjects in the Peabody Museum's large collection of anthropological images were photographed in their cultural environments, and for the most part, their decision to not wear clothing was their choice based on their own cultural norms.[23]

Another Peabody Museum policy has been to prohibit alteration or cropping of the images it provides for publication. Again, the American Anthropological Association's 2012 code of ethics dictates: "Anthropologists have an ethical responsibility for ensuring the integrity, preservation, and protection of their work."[24] There are a number of reasons for this. The museum tracks the use of the objects in its collection by assigning each version of an image a different number. Should a researcher seek a cropped version, the museum would be able to readily find it. Additionally, the museum is committed to protecting, to the best of its ability, the dignity of photographic subjects. While some alterations or appropriations may seem aesthetically pleasing or conceptually important, it is impossible for an anthropological museum to make such subjective judgments, and so it applies a blanket policy. Consider the impact of the images of Delia and Drana if their bare breasts were regularly cropped out of the reproductions of their images. Would that restore some dignity to them? Or would that ignore the fact that they were forced to strip down for a camera?[25] Likewise,

if the nude portraits of Jem and Alfred were not permitted to surface, would these men have borne their indignity in vain? By looking at them as specific individuals, do we forget the millions whose faces are lost to history? Is it fair to force the possible burden of representing these countless others upon them? Is their original condition as slaves perpetuated by their exhibition, or should their images be allowed to circulate in order to encourage productive dialogue about them? The museum's current reproduction policies and this very book are an attempt at the latter.

Most reproductions of the daguerreotypes have been in scholarly publications that link the images to the history of their production, using them to illustrate discussions of slavery, daguerreotypes, and historic and anthropological photography. The stories of Alfred, Delia, Drana, Fassena, Jack, Jem, and Renty have thus been subsumed under and inextricably bound to the story of Agassiz and, to a lesser extent, that of the photographer, Zealy.[26] But Zealy's artistry is extraordinary, from his range of black, white, and gray tonalities to his contoured lighting and symmetric compositions. The direct gazes of Renty, Jack, Fassena, Delia, and Drana into the camera lens create a visual connection with viewers, despite the drastic distance of time and space between them. Yet the daguerreotypes have rarely been considered solely for their aesthetic qualities, and it seems almost shameful to admire them as objects of beauty.[27] That may be why an assault on this beauty, an indelible transformation of Zealy's work, makes visual appropriations of the daguerreotypes especially powerful.

## Appropriation

It is because of the daguerreotypes' complex history and extraordinary visual power that they have inspired numerous important creative visual responses. The strategies employed by Carrie Mae Weems, Shawn Naphtali Sobers, Heidi Fancher, and Sasha Huber (to explore but a few) blend art and scholarship, and logic and emotion, in extraordinarily varied manners. Each, in his or her own way, has sought to transform Agassiz's original agenda, not only to discredit it, but also to repurpose it and thus symbolically rescue the supposedly distant, isolated subjects of Zealy's portraiture. More than that, however, these artists call attention to the fact that time, and the exploitation of African Americans, did not stop once these images were taken. While much of the writing about the daguerreotypes focuses on their being the product of Agassiz's and Zealy's actions in the 1850s, these visual artists use the daguerreotypes not just as a bridge to the past, but as a channel to explore what has happened between 1850 and today.

In her photo-essay *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* (1995–96), Weems reproduces four of the daguerreotypes. She literally rephotographed the images from prints provided by the Peabody Museum.

She framed and matted her portraits (reshaping the images) and recast them in a new narrative to comment on the scientific, anthropological, and photographic uses of and dialogues about such images and the individuals pictured in them.[28] Weems's work, which includes some thirty[29] large rephotographed images in total, was commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 13.2) to open in tandem with and respond to another Getty Museum exhibition, *Hidden Witness: African Americans in Early Photography* (1995), curated by Weston Naef. In considering the commission, Weems said, "I also had to think about what kind of relationship I could have with an institution that has positioned itself on a hill."[30] She added at the time, "I want to implode Weston's show, add a different level of experience and issues of race and gender. Everything will get turned upside-down."[31]

In order to enter the exhibition *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, Getty Museum visitors had to first pass through *Hidden Witness*, which contained rare photographs of African Americans from the 1840s to the 1860s, a span that includes slavery and emancipation.[32] In keeping with the time period, most of these images were in ornate gilded frames. Each had a label with a straightforward title, technical information, and one to three didactic, descriptive paragraphs. Weems's exhibition, on the other hand, employed "appropriated images from other historical sources" up through the 1960s.[33] These included photographs from the Getty's collections, six of which appeared in *Hidden Witness*, as well as four daguerreotypes from the Peabody Museum.

Weems's exhibition presented a photo-essay, rather than a curated collection of one-off images. While Zealy's daguerreotypes were created as a set for comparing ethnic features, Weems incorporated four of his images into a sequence of her own. She bookended it with a repurposed portrait by

**Figure 13.2.**
Ellen M. Rosenbery, *Gardens and Plants of the Getty Villa*, 2011

Léon Poirier of Nobosodrou, a Mangbetu woman with an elongated head and coiffure.[34] While Nobosodrou—the witness/stand-in for Weems and the audience, who sees and cries[35]—is colorized in blue, the others emerge eerily out of road-sign red, beginning with life-size copies of the images of Delia in profile; her father Renty in a frontal view; and both Jack and Jack's daughter, Drana, facing forward. They are followed by other historical photographs. As Weems explained, "these beginning images . . . seemed to me to really crystalize and compress in four images the history of African Americans in the history of photography."[36]

Weems frames them identically and inscribes text directly onto the inside of the glass placed over the images so that they become part of a continuous "narrative." Rather than functioning as an informative device, the words explode *out* of the image both physically and through their meaning. For example, when Weems reproduced, colorized, and reframed an image from *Hidden Witness* described as "Portrait of a Father, Daughters, and Nurse. ca. 1850," she etched: "YOUR RESISTANCE WAS FOUND IN THE FOOD YOU PLACED ON THE MASTER'S TABLE—HA."

Throughout *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, Weems's tenor is satirical and often angry. She employs direct address, beginning with "you" as "a way of both speaking out of the image [to the viewers] and to the subject of the image."[37] Her text is rife with wordplay. And in the scroll on the Zealy daguerreotypes, she blends the direct address with the authoritarian voice of a scientist: "A narrative like 'You became a scientific profile.' 'A negroid type.' 'An anthropological debate.' 'A photographic subject.'"[38]

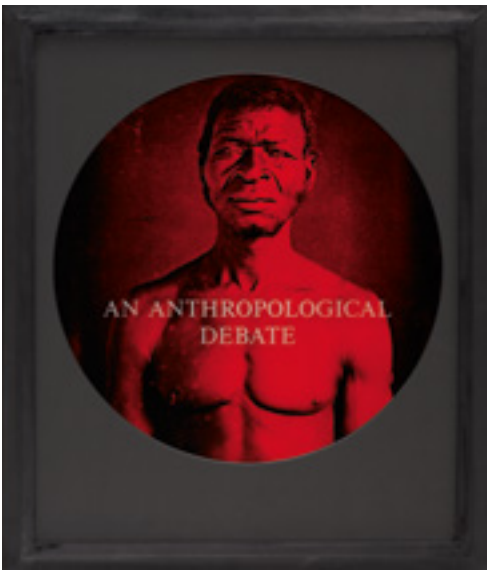
In this way, Weems calls attention to the conditions under which the images were taken and exposes the irony of anthropological terminology. The "scientific profile" of Delia is literally a profile portrait, created as scientific evidence but falling short as such. Renty himself, as well as his representation, was among countless others who were regarded in early anthropology as a particular (in this case "negroid") type.[39] Jack and the others in the Zealy daguerreotypes were metaphorically at the crux of an anthropological debate between Agassiz and the Darwinists. And Drana, her condition as an enslaved person, and the daguerreotype of her are certainly "photographic subjects" (fig. 13.3).

Weems's framing deliberately calls attention to the fact that she employs appropriated images. The edges of the original frames around the pictures of Drana and Renty are visible. Weems explains, "I . . . added text on glass in order to distance the original photograph and make clear that this was something taken from something else, [that] this was lifted."[40] The uniformity of the mats as well as the repetition of words and their placement carry the narrative along, creating visual and textual rhythms, as Weems says, "that allow(s) for the image to be amplified."[41] The new mats change the shape and content of the images themselves.


**Figure 13.3.**
Carrie Mae Weems, *You Became a Scientific Profile, a Negroid Type, an Anthropological Debate, and a Photographic Subject*, 1995–96, from the series *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. Four monochrome C-prints with sandblasted text on glass

Each portrait is circled in the middle of the frame, as if contained in a photographic lens. Each repeated circle focuses and refocuses the viewers' attention, from one targetlike image to the next. The roundness of the matting left Weems with few options for fitting the almost-square daguerreotype within its confines. In some cases, the circle cuts off most of the folds of the sitter's pulled-down clothing; the bar of a chair or support to the left side of Delia in the portrait is not visible, nor are Drana's forearms, which point toward each other over her lap without quite touching. Weems zooms in on Jack so that the edges of Zealy's mat, the top of Jack's pants, and the top of Jack's head are covered by *her* mat. Yet she also frames out their forearms, which on Jack and Renty are especially muscular, making them seem even more disembodied than they originally did when encased in Zealy's frames.

This disembodiment is especially apparent when viewing the quartet in person, rather than in reproduction in print or online. Because of the shiny glass Weems used for the work, the viewer is reflected onto the life-size image in front of them. At a certain distance, the viewer's body seems to emerge under the waists of the former daguerreotype subjects, creating a macabre mismatch of body parts: Renty's, Jack's, and Drana's torsos on top of the viewer's waist and legs.[42] Try as they might to avoid this, observers





become part of the picture and are thus implicated in Weems's narratives. What makes this especially significant is that when looking at the original daguerreotypes in person, viewers must struggle to angle themselves to avoid seeing their own reflection in the daguerreotypes' mirrorlike surfaces.[43] And in an ironic twist, as Robin Bernstein remarks in this volume (chap. 14), the lighter a viewer's skin, the harder it is to avoid a reflection, and the more difficult it is to see the actual subjects of the daguerreotypes.[44]

Weems is celebrated for her creative color tinting of black-and-white originals, and in *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried,* she employs a shade described by Holland Cotter in the *New York Times* as "blood red."[45] The red also evokes the irony of the crimson velvet linings of Zealy's original cases, which function as plush cushions to balance and protect the glass of the daguerreotypes. Less well known are Weems's earlier constructions of three watery blue triptychs of Delia, Drana, and Jack in the *Sea Islands Series* (1991–92). In this series, their profiles are in bluish circles, one facing right and the other artificially reversed so that both are "looking" toward a square black-and-white, frontal image of themselves in the center. And in so doing, Weems "frees these captured icons and she reinvents their purpose by declaring them her images with their inclusion into the framework of the gallery installation as art objects," wrote William T. Dooley in his introduction to the *Sea Islands Series* catalogue.[46] Indeed, as Houston A. Baker stated, "in taking up the anthropological depictions of the black presence represented by daguerreotypes of slaves she has begun a careful process of revision,"[47] a way to reconsider the original daguerreotypes as objects that may empower its subjects, rather than denigrate them.

Thelma Golden has described Weems's work as "not simply a response but a corrective gesture."[48] This gesture is a departure from the straightforward, written contextualization of images seen in *Hidden Witness* and in exhibitions in which the original Zealy daguerreotypes have appeared. Instead, Weems's strategies of colorizing, framing, writing, and organizing release the emotional impact of the original photographs in a way that is not possible through conventional label text alone. Her appropriation is a gesture of kinship, empathy, and redressing. It is, moreover, an expression of anger, not only at the condition of the image subjects themselves, but also at their tragic historical circumstances.

## Identification

> So the disconnect with the generation of my enslaved ancestors is apparent—I feel their pain but I can only imagine, not feel through direct experience as I exist in a different time and space, but the kinship system and bond still exists. Anger I hold on modern day racism will also be part-percentage of anger on behalf of my ancestors such as Jack and Delia, asking—"why is this still happening today, after all my ancestors have had to go through?"

The artist and visual anthropologist Shawn Naphtali Sobers (quoted above[49]) explores the notion of transgenerational trauma evoked by the daguerreotypes by casting himself snapping a naked, mirror "selfie" in the center of *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, a triptych of low-resolution images of Delia and Jack (2014). A bright-red banner declaring "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" crosses the images, which appear on his website (fig. 13.4).[50] He also uses this triptych at conferences and in his classes at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he is associate professor of lens media for the Department of Film and Journalism.

On his website, Sobers anticipates the questions that might be asked of an Afro-Caribbean Englishman: "Why anthropology?" and "By aligning myself with anthropology, am I supping with the devil?" He answers that he is consciously thwarting the long-term convention of "bearded Caucasian men travelling to far off lands full of dark-skinned people" and is instead engaging with the practice in which some contemporary anthropologists—a number of whom "now have brown skin"—look closer to home for their objects of study, sometimes in their own communities, both present and past. In this project, as a visual anthropologist and artist, Sobers occupies himself with archival images of people who, like his direct ancestors, were slaves of African descent.

While Sobers's single piece *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (part of his *Afrikan Kinship System* series) is materially and aesthetically less complicated than Weems's projects, it is meant to engage the viewer, as he says, in a kind


**Figure 13.4.**
Shawn Naphtali Sobers, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, 2014. Cell phone image

of social inquiry.[51] Like Weems, he brands the images with verbal wordplay and uses red for visual effect. He attributes the phrase "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" (PTSS) to the book of the same name by Joy Angela DeGruy Leary.[52] Despite the frisson of recognition the terms "post traumatic" and "syndrome" may provoke, the addition of the concept of slavery to trauma calls attention to a host of issues: Whose trauma is this? That of the enslaved Jack and Delia? That of Sobers, the artist, a descendant of slaves? That of the viewers of Sobers's work, some descended from slaves, some descended from slave owners, some from both? The lack of specificity—even the binary suggested by Weems's use of direct address—leaves this question wide open. Moreover, its generality hints that even if the taking of, existence of, working with, and viewing of the daguerreotypes are traumatic for all, each participant in the succession of events and emotions provoked by the initial daguerreotyping does not and cannot experience the same trauma in the same way.

Sobers has explained that he was interested in "the empathetic links between my generation and my ancestors who were enslaved, and the raw wound that . . . transatlantic slavery still is in the conscious and unconscious mind/lives of the African diaspora and related discourse."[53] This suggests traumas that extend over centuries, both immediate and historical or "post traumatic." According to DeGruy Leary, "These cycles of oppression leave scars on the victims and victors alike, scars that embed themselves in our collective psyches and are passed down through generations."[54] Yet Sobers acknowledges certain pitfalls, saying, "I do not want to be bound by that impact nor want to explain/excuse any behaviour away simply as PTSS and deny the responsibility of human agency and individual life choices." By articulating and understanding "PTSS," Sobers posits that it becomes possible to transcend it.[55]

Sobers has not seen the original daguerreotypes nor does he feel they are essential for his project. Rather than rephotograph them as Weems did, he pulled his images off the internet. While one of the more powerful aspects of seeing the actual daguerreotypes is the recognition that these precise objects were in the same room as their subjects, more than 150 years earlier, this is not important to Sobers. He explains that, "Even as historical artifacts, it is Zealy's and Agassiz's fingertips that would have touched the photographic surface, not Delia's or Jack's, so they would not hold that potency for me. It's all about the indexical, and the images off the Internet serve that purpose clearly."[56]

Sobers notes that the "strength of the indexical nature of these images is also why . . . they have not managed to shake their literal history." He continues,

> The power dynamics of the Zealy/Agassiz agenda notwithstanding, the resulting portraits, when viewed with a post-structuralist, pan-African and sympathetic eye, still do show Jack, Delia and the others photographed as nothing other than human beings. For me that is the irony of these images. They were captured (used this word deliberately!) in the context of oppressions, but through that they have presented a humanity. For me that is the power of the indexical with these images, and also the unexpected power of photography, divorced from the actual agenda of the photographers themselves.[57]

Sobers's analysis raises the question of what that indexical power might be. *Indexical* implies a reference to something a viewer would know. Are these images as recognizably about slaves and exploitation as a nineteenth-century photograph of a black woman with a white child would be? If a viewer does not know the daguerreotypes' literal history, a text is essential to understand it. Because Sobers uses the word *slave* and the bookending photographs look old, one can assume those images are of slaves. The presence of the selfie, because it is taken in a mirror, indicates that the person in the center is deliberately linking the past to the present and is probably the artist. Complicating or enhancing the indexical power of Sobers's images is that he presents this work not in a museum, as a one-off piece of art, but at conferences, where he can explain it and answer questions about it.[58]

Just as Weems's *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* is a comment about photography as much as it is in itself photographic, Sobers's work is reflexive about his photographic practice. He reveals the golden edge of the mirror to show that he is photographing a reflection of himself. (This is also perhaps an unconscious reference to the gilded edges of the daguerreotype frames, which he omits in his work by choosing to include the daguerreotypes rephotographed during their conservation, before their mats and cases were replaced.) Sobers describes his casting of himself in the piece as consistent with his own documentary film practice and is

similarly guided by the principle that one should not ask others to do something one would not do oneself. Therefore, aligning an image of himself, as both a photographer and a subject, naked, between Jack and Delia was a "gesture" of kinship, "though without trying to hide certain differences in how these portraits were constructed and the related power dynamics." He explains: "I am in control of my own representation. I'm naked but not vulnerable. The camera phone is clearly visible in my hand, showing the power relations of the making of the image is very different to the conditions Jack and Delia would have experienced."[59] He is in present-day color, and they surround him in the black-and-white of the past. They are posing stiffly, while he is clearly performing the action of photography. Sobers's choice of Jack and Delia (rather than Renty and Delia, who were father and daughter) was based purely on aesthetics: their composition within the frame and head positions are relatively similar. Sobers's selection and re-cropping of the portraits without their frames seem to have been meant to liberate them from Zealy's and Agassiz's confines. His placement of the text is significant, as well. The word *slave* is over the artist's picture of himself, and the text crosses Jack's chest and Sobers's phone camera and covers Delia's naked breasts. This placement was a deliberate attempt to diminish Delia's objectification, because, as he says, "I did not want to be complicit in furthering Delia's exploitation."[60]

## Embodiment

The photographer Heidi Fancher, on the other hand, takes on this potential "exploitation" in her work *For Delia* (2010), which was installed in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery as part of the 2013 Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition (fig. 13.5). The model for the photograph was Fancher herself, and she was also the photographer. Fancher's work is part of an ongoing trend, noted in 2002 by Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, of "[a] growing number [of black female artists] . . . turning the camera on their own bodies."[61] Both Weems and artist Sasha Huber cast themselves in their work, employing their own bodies as characters in an image or a series, notably in Weems's *While Sitting upon the Ruins of Your Remains, I Pondered the Course of History* (2016–17) and in Huber's *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~* (2008–10), discussed later in this essay.[62] Fancher's work, though, differs not only because she acts as an identifiable historical figure, who is clearly someone other than herself, but also because she uses her own nudity as her costume.

The exploitation of black women's partial or complete nudity has historical roots in both slavery—where they were scrutinized on auction blocks, raped in the households where they served, and acted as "wet nurses" to children not their own—and in eighteenth- and

**Figure 13.5.**
Heidi Fancher, *For Delia*, 2010. Medium-format color transparency

nineteenth-century imagery, including photography.[63] Delia and Drana are only two of the examples. Engaging with this history, Fancher's practice is closer to that of artists like Renée Cox, Carla Williams, and Lorna Simpson, all of whom photograph their own nudity to assert their authority over their own bodies and to reclaim the power of the representation of black women's bodies in general. Cox often creates visual parodies by posing nude as iconic figures, such as the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, and Sara Baartman; for *Venus Hottentot* (2000), made in collaboration with Lyle Ashton Harris, Cox posed, wearing prosthetic breasts and buttocks, as Baartman, the exploited "Hottentot" woman.[64]

In performing the roles of historically subjugated women, these female photographers assume manifold identities in their work both in content and in process. As Weems has explained, "Through the act of performance, with our own bodies, we are allowed to experience and connect the historical past to the present—to the now, to the moment . . . we live the experience; we stand in the shadows of others and come to know firsthand what is often only imagined, lost, forgotten."[65]

Rather than calling *For Delia* a "self-portrait" or a "portrait *of* Delia," Fancher tries to explore multiple personalities, as the photographer, the investigator, the indexical subject Delia, and the many other women Delia represents: "Who is the person in the picture? Most people ask me that and I can honestly say it's not a self-portrait. It is me but I feel that that portrait embodies many different women. . . . I think it really gets to the heart of who Delia is. . . . I used myself as a tool to investigate who she was."[66]

While Gregg Hecimovich has unearthed more details about Delia's life (discussed in chapter 2 of this volume), the question of *who* Delia was as an individual cannot be entirely answered. Is she crying, as Molly Rogers implies in her 2010 book entitled *Delia's Tears*? Is she angry? Defiant? All of the above? Fancher looked into the faces of the individuals depicted in the daguerreotypes in the Peabody Museum Archives, where she was "struck by . . . [their] gaze, their stare transcending time." But it was Delia's portrait that affected her the most: "The gaze is what got me. She became a really important figure for me. I wanted her skin. I wanted every part of her being in that photograph, that daguerreotype to come over me. I really wanted to take on that subject, take on what I saw in the gaze."[67]

After ten years of mulling over how to work with Delia's image, Fancher decided to make the portrait. She explains that, "Emotionally at that time I was just trying to understand my own body as a black woman, in America, my place as an African American woman."[68] Once she was ready, she undressed and covered herself with body paint and black latex. She set her camera, then the shutter release, and posed.

> In that moment, I was sitting in front of the camera . . . in a studio. It was quiet. [I went] through the process of thinking how she looked at the camera and what was going on in my head, in her head. . . . I took four or five different frames, got the film processed. . . . Boom! There was that one. I finally got that look I think she would have had, I had. I had done that. I didn't get it until then. That breath, that spirit came over me, the spirit. We were connected.[69]

Fancher imagines Delia as facing her predicament with defiance because of the intensity of her gaze and employs additional means to recreate and redress Delia's predicament. She tries to take on Delia's burden, her "cultural trauma." As Sarah Elizabeth Lewis discusses in this volume (chap. 11), Delia's, Drana's, Jack's, and Renty's states of *undress*, with their clothes visibly pulled down, is especially exploitative. As Lewis asserts, "The index of ownership that allowed this stripping and its attendant violence is what gives the Zealy daguerreotypes such tension."[70] In *For Delia*, Fancher, in fact, is not dressed; at least no pulled-away clothes are visible in the frame. Her hands cover the bottom of her breasts—in a way that Delia and Drana were not permitted to do—physically protecting them from the intense scrutiny the daguerreotypes allow. Her skin, shiny and artificially darkened, visually calls attention to itself and serves as a mask against the possibility of an effective scientific analysis of race through photography. Moreover, the blackness contrasts with the whiteness of her eyes, evoking the historical and horrible phenomenon of blackface performance. And thus, by recreating and intensifying the gaze in *For Delia*, Fancher refocuses Delia's eyes to look right back, defiantly, at the viewer, restoring her power over her representation.


**Figure 13.6.**
Sasha Huber, *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~*, 2008.
Video, 4:30 min. Video screenshots

## Derivation

The Swiss Haitian performance artist Sasha Huber also redresses the history of the daguerreotypes, but she does so by focusing on Agassiz and by casting herself as a new personage in dramatic performances, which she documents and shows in art installations. On August 21, 2008, a helicopter circled over the cantons of Bern and Valais in the Swiss Alps bearing an unusual cargo. It hovered over a nearly 13,000-foot mountain peak known as Agassizhorn, named for the Swiss-born Agassiz. It landed, dropping off Huber, who was carrying a large aluminum plaque bearing the likeness of Renty. She planted the plaque and proclaimed that she was there to rename the peak Rentyhorn (fig. 13.6).[71]

Huber's project, which resulted in an installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, in Helsinki, in 2008 and a book, called *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~*, was part of a larger campaign started by the political activist and teacher Hans Fässler to condemn Agassiz as a racist and to call attention to Switzerland's role in the slave trade. As Fässler stated, "I must admit that the whole Agassizhorn thing might have started as a marketing tool for the French edition of my book on Swiss participation in slavery and the slave trade. . . . I founded the campaign whose name works so wonderfully in French: 'Dé-monter Louis Agassiz' implies both the dismantling of a heroic figure . . . and the demand to take his mountain away from him."[72]

Huber and Fässler submitted a request to rename the mountain to the government councils whose jurisdiction included Agassizhorn: the communes of Grindelwald, Guttannen, and Fieschertal; the cantons of Bern and Valais; and the executive board and advisory committee of the public trust responsible for UNESCO's Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn World Natural Heritage Area. They also contacted various Swiss CEOs and even the former UN secretary general Kofi Annan (whose staff submitted a polite but noncommittal response). In addition, the team launched an online international petition addressed to the Swiss government.[73] By the end of 2010, however, the Swiss government had rejected the petition, along with a "compromise" of assigning the name Rentyhorn to an unnamed peak near Agassizhorn. The petition remains online, and Huber is still involved with an international campaign to remove Agassiz's name from various streets, institutions, and peaks around the world, recently in New Zealand.

Huber's and Weems's works could hardly be more different formally. While Weems's appropriation of the daguerreotypes resulted in powerful and meaningful images whether seen individually or as a series, Huber's installation pieces derive their strength less from the resulting photographs themselves than from the dramatic act of making them and documenting that process. The material parts of Huber's work are the plaque, which she then removed from the mountaintop "for the lack of permission and of reasons of environmental protection"[74]; a portrait of Agassiz made of

**Figure 13.7.**
Sasha Huber, *Shooting Back: Louis Agassiz (1807–1973)*, 2008. Metal staples shot into abandoned wood boards

shiny metal staples "shot into abandoned wood boards,"[75] (fig. 13.7); an ink drawing of Renty in "traditional clothes"; and drafts of letters and petitions associated with the campaign.[76]

The images of Renty on both the plaque and the ink drawing are deceptively simple. Agassiz sought to use the precision of photography to highlight Renty's skin color, facial features, hair, and physique to "prove" his inferiority. Huber's cartoonlike rendition of Renty blurs these clear external traits, disrupting and almost parodying Agassiz's intentions.[77] Additionally, by portraying Renty in formal African dress in the ink drawing, "Huber has disrupted the power relationship established by Agassiz and reimagines a past for Renty outside the dehumanizing effects of slavery. Huber's decision to represent Renty in the formalized modes of traditional portraiture disrupts the idea of individual portraits as spaces retained for the rich and powerful."[78]

Huber continues to produce stapled portraits to a number of ends, some of which may seem contradictory. For *Shooting Back: Reflections on Haitian Roots* (2004), Huber created portraits of three infamous figures in Haitian history: Christopher Columbus, François Duvalier (Papa Doc), and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc).[79] The act of using an automatic

staple gun involved figuratively and noisily shooting the explorer and the dictators, who were backed against a wooden surface. The image of Agassiz in *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~* builds on this technique by creating a portrait of Agassiz, a portrait-producer himself, and contrasting it with Huber's rendition of Renty. More recently, Huber has used staples in the ongoing series *Shooting Stars* (2014–), which, she states, "is dedicated to victims of gunshot assassinations and killing perpetrated for political, ethnic, hate crime, ideological or economic reasons."[80] Among the historical figures she includes are Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the recent shooting victims Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, Jr. Rather than replicate the deliberate crudeness of her Duvalier, Columbus, and Agassiz portraits, for this latter project Huber stapled onto "larch wood and covered each one with leaf silver, making them reminiscent of religious icons."[81]

The *art* of Huber's work in *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~*, however, lies less in the material pieces than in their combination with the performance of the helicopter ride and its video and photographic documentation for museum installations, online sites, and in the corresponding book, *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~* (fig. 13.8). Huber calls the act of placing the plaque on the mountaintop her "first intervention."[82] The video of that act casts the artist as a heroine, flying through the clouds to remedy the wrongs of Agassiz, and his supporters, by appropriating his images, his methodology,

**Figure 13.8.**
Sasha Huber, *Self-portrait holding the book* Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~, Rentyhorn installation, 2010

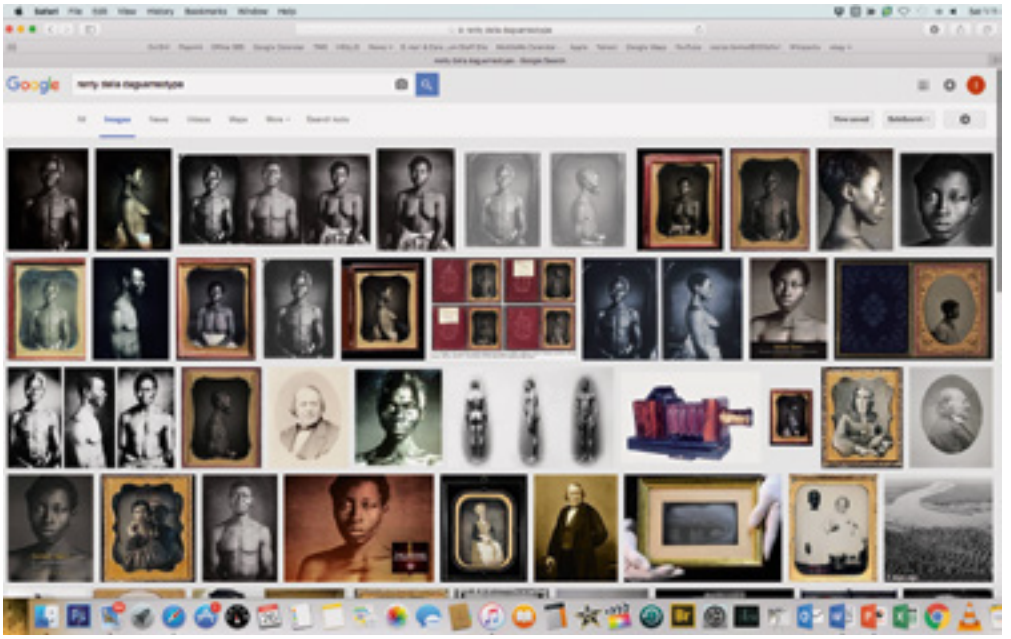


**Figure 13.9.**
Google search screenshot, November 26, 2016. Google and the Google logo are registered trademarks of Google LLC, used with permission.

his namesake, and his reputation. Huber has continued such interventions, including in Brazil, where she collaborated with historian Maria Helena P. T. Machado on installations and on the book *(T)races of Louis Agassiz: Photography, Body and Science, Yesterday and Today*, which challenges an 1860s photographic project conducted by Agassiz in Brazil.[83]

## Resolution?

When Weems "stumbled across the Agassiz images," her reaction was emotional: "I remember just looking at them over and over. And over."[84] In an essay about emotion and materiality in photographs, the visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards asserts that "photographs constitute one of the most emotionally intense classes of museum objects: they are not imprinted representation in abstract, but imprinted objects that are both representational and material."[85] Although photographs record a particular moment in history, they also call to mind images and ideas that may have originated before, during, or after the shutter snapped. Although Edwards was not talking about *these* photographs, she might as well have been.

When viewers discover the daguerreotypes personally, whether there is a shock of recognition in the faces of Renty, Jem, Delia, Drana, Jack, Fassena, and Alfred, or in the acts of Zealy or Agassiz, there is often a compulsion to *do* something about them, whether it involves personal contemplation, writing, or artistic transformation. There seems to be a drive verging between heralding their existence and attempting to right the past wrongs in the act of their original creation.[86] As one daguerreotype viewer remarked, "I just wanted to give them back their clothes."[87]

More dramatically, Weems, Sobers, Fancher, and Huber wrest the images out of their original cases and out of their home, where they are tucked away, at the Peabody Museum. As they physically recreate, reframe, resize, and rebrand them with new text, they both call attention to the images' original, inescapable meanings and generate new dialogues about them by bridging the past and the present significance of these powerful images. They do this in museums, galleries, books, lectures, petitions, and cyberspace, figuratively—and literally, in the case of Huber—shouting from a mountaintop.

As the images move from the rarified sphere of the anthropology museum and farther into the digital world (fig. 13.9), they reach new viewers and have new opportunities for transformation, through which their multiple narratives and complexity can be explored. Not all of these new interpretations will be as carefully considered and skillfully executed as those by Weems, Sobers, Fancher, and Huber, but the digital democratization of the photographs will allow other new viewers to judge the merits of the interpretations for themselves. There is a risk that the historical circumstances, until now so tightly bound to the daguerreotypes, may become untangled along the way and that the identities of Alfred, Delia, Drana, Fassena, Jack, Jem, and Renty will be co-opted in completely new directions.[88] One thing is certain, though: Elinor Reichlin was right. Agassiz's original purpose was thwarted the moment these images were taken.

**Notes**

Epigraph from "Carrie Mae Weems Interview" in Thomas Allen Harris's documentary film, *Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People* (Greenwood Lake, N.Y.: Chimpanzee Productions, 2014).

**1.** Louis Agassiz quoted in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981; repr. 2006), p. 77.

**2.** In 1850 alone, newspapers reported on Louis Agassiz weighing in on the significance of egg yolks, the ambulatory ability of certain ancient fish, the identification of linen as an Egyptian mummy-bandaging material, the divine purpose of roses (for the "comfort and happiness" of man), and the origins of the human race and human diversity. See *Brooklyn Evening Star*, August 30, 1850, p. 2; "Four Legged Fish," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 31, 1850, p. 2; "Unrolling of the Mummy," *Boston Traveller*, June 5, 1850; *Richmond Enquirer*, June 14, 1850, p. 4; Annual Scientific Discovery, "The Rose," *Hillsborough Recorder*, May 22, 1850, p. 1; and "Unity of the Human Races," *Southern Press*, July 9, 1850, p. 3. Agassiz also married Elizabeth Cabot Cary that same year.

**3.** Molly Rogers discusses Louis Agassiz's possibly unwarranted suspicion that some of the Africans Agassiz met in the South had tried to deceive him about their ethnicity but that "he could determine their origin from their physical features." See Molly Rogers, "This Intricate Question: The 'American

School' of Ethnology and the Zealy Daguerreotypes," chap. 1, this vol. Some spellings of ethnic terms used on the daguerreotypes' labels are now outdated: "Mandingo" likely refers to the Mandinka people of West Africa; "Foulah" to the Fula or Fulani.

**4.** The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology holds fifteen daguerreotypes taken by Joseph T. Zealy. Because one man, Jem, was photographed standing from the front, the side, and the back, it seems likely that Alfred, too, was similarly photographed, yet only images taken from the side and the back have been found. I suggest that there was a third daguerreotype made of Alfred from the front, which was lost, broken, and/or removed before 1976. That would make a total of *at least* sixteen.

**5.** See Rogers, chap. 1, this vol.

**6.** See John Stauffer, "'Not Suitable for Public Notice': Agassiz's Evidence," chap. 10, this vol.

**7.** Molly Rogers, *Delia's Tears: Race, Science, and Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 233–34.

**8.** Lorna Condon, interview by the author, April 28, 2016.

**9.** Most writers, including the late Elinor Reichlin, stated that Reichlin made the discovery herself. Some described Reichlin, archivist Daniel Jones, and Lorna Condon as having been present. In interviews with the author, Jones denied having been there, while Condon claimed it was she and an unnamed coworker who found the daguerreotypes. In an email message to the author (April 29, 2019), Harvard University Archives wrote that Reichlin's husband, Seymour Reichlin, maintains that it was Reichlin herself who discovered the daguerreotypes while conducting a routine inventory.

**10.** "Slave Photo Finder Questions Circulation," *Tennessean*, June 1, 1977, p. 3. This claim was immediately questioned by Ewart Guinier, Harvard's first chairman of the then Afro-American Studies Department. "Photos of Early Slaves Discovered," *The Town Talk*, June 1, 1977. In addition, there are at least four images of American slaves from 1847 to 1850 listed by the National Humanities Center, but it is not clear whether they were born in Africa. "African Americans in Slavery, Photographs: 1847–1863," National Humanities Center, 2013, http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enslavement/text1/photosenslaved.pdf.

**11.** See Orlando Bagwell and Susan Bellows, dirs., *Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery* (Boston: PBS, 1998), DVD; Sabin Streeter, dir., *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* (Arlington, Va.: PBS, 2013), DVD; and Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, dirs., *Prohibition*, aired on PBS (Arlington, Va., and Walpole, N.H.: Prohibition Film Project Inc. and Florentine Films, 2011), DVD.

**12.** The other two fields are archaeology and linguistic anthropology. These divisions are no longer as clearly delineated as they had been in the past.

**13.** Tanya Sheehan believes differently and writes, "the strips of cloth at [Renty's] waist . . . do not resemble Western-style garments of the period." Tanya Sheehan, "Business as Usual? Scientific Operations in the Early Photographic Studio," chap. 6, this vol.

**14.** Elizabeth Edwards and Sigrid Lien, *Uncertain Images: Museums and the Work of Photographs* (New York: Routledge and Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2014), p. 14.

**15.** Elinor Reichlin, "Faces of Slavery: A Historical Find," *American Heritage*, June 1977, p. 4.

**16.** The frontal and profile views of Renty and Drana and the back view of Alfred were included in *Police Pictures: The Photograph as Evidence*, curated by Sandra Phillips, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1997–98) and the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University (1998); the frontal and profile views of Renty were featured in *Ghost in the Shell: Photography and the Human Soul, 1850–2000*, curated by Robert A. Sobieszek, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1999); and the frontal views of Renty and Fassena and the profile views of Delia and Jack were displayed in *A Curious and Ingenious Art: Reflections on Daguerreotypes at Harvard*, curated by Melissa Banta, at the Fogg Museum, Harvard University (2002).

**17.** I am grateful to Daniel Jones, former Peabody Museum archivist, for this information. Daniel Jones, interview by the author, November 7, 2015.

**18.** For an overview of the Weissman Preservation Center's conservation project, please see Elena Bulat, India Spartz, Brenda Bernier, and T. Rose Holdcraft, "A Case for Preservation: Revisiting the Agassiz Collection of Daguerreotypes from the Peabody Museum Archives at Harvard University," *Topics in Photographic Preservation* 13, no. 21 (2009), pp. 147–59.

**19.** "Slave Photo Finder Questions Circulation," p. 3.

**20.** Ibid.

**21.** "Weigh Competing Ethical Obligations Due Collaborators and Affected Parties," AAA Ethics Forum, American Anthropological Association, November 1, 2012, http://ethics.americananthro.org/ethics-statement-4-weigh-competing-ethical-obligations-due-collaborators-and-affected-parties/.

**22.** Ibid.

**23.** This does not belie the fact that some photographers, like Edward Curtis—and more recently, the Laurence and Lorna Marshall family, working with Bushmen groups in the Kalahari the 1950s and '60s—asked their subjects to wear traditional outfits, despite the fact that Western clothes had already been introduced to their societies.

**24.** The AAA code of ethics (see note 21) also states, "Further, priority must be given to the protection of research participants, as well as the preservation and protection of research records. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to take precautions that raw data and collected materials will not be used for unauthorized ends. To the extent possible at the time of data collection, the researcher is responsible for considering and communicating likely or foreseeable uses of collected data and materials as

part of the process of informed consent or obtaining permission."

**25.** When the publishers of *Delia's Tears* by Molly Rogers asked to crop the portrait of Delia to avoid showing her breasts in the book's cover image, the Peabody consented but did the cropping itself in order to assign a new number to the altered portrait. Initially, too, the cover designer had made Delia's skin much darker than it appears in most reproductions. This was corrected per the museum's request.

**26.** Following Elinor Reichlin's initial efforts, no additional research on the individuals' lives had been published until Molly Rogers's groundbreaking book *Delia's Tears* (2010); see also Gregg Hecimovich's "The Life and Times of Alfred, Delia, Drana, Fassena, Jack, Jem, and Renty," chap. 2, this vol.

**27.** An exception appears in John Wood, "The Curious Art and Science of the Daguerreotype," chap. 5, this vol.

**28.** The ensuing legal suit over the artist's use and disparate rumors about the situation are also worthy of examination. See Yxta Maya Murray, "From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried: Carrie Mae Weems' Challenge to the Harvard Archive," *Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal Left* 8 (2012–13), https://legalleft.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2014/07/Murray.pdf.

**29.** These numbers seem to vary depending on where the work was exhibited.

**30.** Suzanne Muchnic, "Going for a Gut Reaction: Outspoken African American Artist Carrie Mae Weems Could Be Expected to Provide a Hot Response to Historical Images of Blacks. The Getty Only Had to Ask. Many Times," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1995. pp. 7, 89.

**31.** Ibid.

**32.** Ibid.

**33.** "Compassion," *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, season 5, episode 2, 2009.

**34.** The Mangbetu comprise a number of peoples of the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. See Enid Schildkrout, "*Les Parisiens d'Afrique*: Mangbetu Women as Works of Art," in *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*, Barbara Thompson, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 70–93.

**35.** Claire Raymond, "The Crucible of Witnessing: Projects of Identity in Carrie Mae Weems's *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 13, no. 1 (2015), pp. 26–52.

**36.** "Compassion."

**37.** Getty Museum, "Carrie Mae Weems on Her Series *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*," YouTube, November 4, 2011.

**38.** Ibid.

**39.** For a discussion of type photography in anthropology, see David Odo, *The Journey of "A Good Type": From Artistry to Ethnography in Early Japanese Photographs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum Press, 2015).

**40.** Getty Museum, "Carrie Mae Weems on Her Series."

**41.** Ibid. It is not clear whether Carrie Mae Weems means the original image or the image she creates with the original. I would suggest that it is the latter, because the red obscures some of the originals' details, such as pupils, while highlighting others, such as folds and scars.

**42.** This is less apparent in Delia's image, as she is in profile.

**43.** In his seminal article, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility," Walter Benjamin suggests that once mechanically reproduced, a work of art loses its aura, or authenticity. In the case of Weems's appropriation, the work seems to take on a new aura or authenticity of its own. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 19–55.

**44.** See Robin Bernstein, "Teaching, Feeling," chap. 14, this vol.

**45.** Holland Cotter, "Testimony of a Cleareyed Witness," *New York Times*, January 24, 2014, p. 72. The Teacher Resource Guide "Carrie Mae Weems: Three Decades of Photography and Video," states "*Colored People* investigates the beauty found in the range of skin colors encompassed within the term 'black' while also critiquing the self-perpetuating hierarchy of social values assigned to skin tones within the African American community. The tinted colors and ascribed labels of the photographs highlight the artificiality of these naming traditions and also underscore the vibrancy of this diversity. 'Colorism' continues to be a concept of interest to Carrie Mae Weems, especially in this so-called postracial era. She reworked the series almost twenty years later by removing the classifying labels, rearranging the individual portraits, and adding bright monochromatic square panels." https://fristartmuseum.org/content/uploads/pdf_downloads/CMW_Teacher_Guide_v3.pdf

**46.** William T. Dooley, introduction to *In These Islands: South Carolina and Georgia*, by Carrie Mae Weems (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Sarah Moody Gallery of Art, 1995), p. 10.

**47.** Houston A. Baker, Jr., "Islands of Identity: Inside the Pictures of Carrie Mae Weems," in *In These Islands: South Carolina and Georgia*, by Carrie Mae Weems (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Sarah Moody Gallery of Art, 1995), p. 14.

**48.** Thelma Golden, "Some Thoughts on Carrie Mae Weems," in *Carrie Mae Weems: Recent Work, 1992–1998*, Thomas Piché, Jr., and Thelma Golden, eds. (New York: George Braziller, 1998), p. 31.

**49.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, email to the author, November 6, 2015.

**50.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, "Small Anthropologies," http://www.shawnsobers.com/portfolio/visual-things/60-second-portraits/.

**51.** Although Sobers sees the triptych as a "one-off," he also considers it a continuum of his earlier film about Ghana (https://vimeo.com/106883018), in which he examines "Inconsequential Monuments," a gesture to acknowledge sacrifice, which although destined to fall short, is "the best we can do given our particular circumstances and what we believe to be appropriate and respectful." Shawn Naphtali Sobers, email exchange with the author, November 13, 2015.

**52.** Joy Angela DeGruy Leary, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Milwaukie, Ore.: Uptone Press: 2005).

**53.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, personal communication, November 7, 2015.

**54.** DeGruy Leary, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, p. iv.

**55.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, personal communication, November 7, 2015.

**56.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, personal communication, November 13, 2015.

**57.** Ibid.

**58.** In the four photographic history conferences I have attended in the last three years, I have seen one or more of the daguerreotypes pop up in PowerPoint presentations at least four times.

**59.** Shawn Naphtali Sobers, personal communication with the author, November 6, 2015.

**60.** Ibid.

**61.** Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p. x.

**62.** Carrie Mae Weems has employed this method in her photographic essay "While Sitting upon the Ruins of Your Remains, . . ." pp. 329–92, this vol., in the *Kitchen Table Series* (1990), and in the *Sea Islands Series* (1991–92).

**63.** See Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, "The Insistent Reveal," chap. 11, this vol.

**64.** See Lewis, "The Insistent Reveal," as well as Deborah Willis, *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

**65.** Carrie Mae Weems, *Constructing History: A Requiem to Mark the Moment* (Savannah, Ga.: Savannah College of Art and Design, 2009).

**66.** National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, "Heidi Fancher, Commended Artist, Portrait Competition 2013," YouTube, June 13, 2013, video, 1:57, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5KkoqbL-yI.

**67.** Heidi Fancher, personal communication, August 22 and 23, 2016.

**68.** Ibid.

**69.** Ibid.

**70.** See Lewis, "The Insistent Reveal."

**71.** A precedent for this action occurred in 2001, when a young student, Nathan Vogel, led a campaign to rename the Agassiz School, an elementary school a few blocks away from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology. In 2002, the Cambridge School Committee voted unanimously to change the name to the Maria L. Baldwin School, commemorating its long-serving African American principal. "Eighth-Grader Leading Drive to Change Name of Cambridge School," Associated Press, March 19, 2001, http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20010319/news/303199988; "History of Baldwin School," Maria L. Baldwin School, https://baldwin.cpsd.us/about_our_school/baldwin_school_history/history_of_baldwin_school/.

**72.** Hans Fässler, "What's in a Name? Louis Agassiz, the Mountain and the Politics of Remembrance," in *(T)races of Louis Agassiz: Photography, Body and Science, Yesterday and Today*, eds. Sasha Huber and Maria Helena P. T. Machado (São Paulo: Capacete Entretenimentos, 2010), p. 149.

**73.** "Rentyhorn," Sasha Huber, http://www.sashahuber.com/?cat=5&lang=fi&mstr=4; and "Rentyhorn Petition," www.rentyhorn.ch.

**74.** Sasha Huber, letter to Kofi Annan, "Request to Rename the Agassizhorn," September 15, 2008, in *Rentyhorn ~~Agassizhorn~~* (Helsinki: Kiasma, 2010), p. 86.

**75.** Ibid., p. 83.

**76.** Ibid., p. 84. See Jerry Philogene, "Wrapped in Images and the Materiality of Art Practices: Vladimir Cybil Charlier, Sasha Huber, and Pascale Monnin," *Emisférica* 12, no. 1 (2015). https://hemisphericinstitute.org.

**77.** Janice Cheddie, "Landscape, Visibility and Memory in the Work of Sasha Huber," *ARC Magazine | Contemporary Caribbean Visual Art & Culture* 6 (May 8, 2013). http://arcthemagazine.com.

**78.** Ibid.

**79.** See Philogene, "Wrapped in Images."

**80.** "Shooting Stars," Sasha Huber, http://www.sashahuber.com.

**81.** "Artist Statement," Sasha Huber, http://www.sashahuber.com.

**82.** Ibid.

**83.** See Christoph Irmscher, "Mr. Agassiz's 'Photographic Saloon,'" chap. 7, this vol.

**84.** Thomas Allen Harris, dir., "Carrie Mae Weems Interview," *Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People* (Boston: PBS, 2015), DVD.

**85.** Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographs and History: Emotion and Materiality," in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, Sandra H. Dudley, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 21.

**86.** The photographer Eric Etheridge is one of a number of people who locate the Zealy portraits as examples of early mug shots. On his website, he juxtaposes images of Delia and Jack, respectively, with mug shots of the arrested Freedom Riders Catherine Burks-Brooks and Robert Singleton. Eric Etheridge, "The Zealy Slave Daguerreotypes and the Freedom Rider Mug Shots," *Eric's Posthaven*, October 18, 2011, http://eetheridge.posthaven.com/private/yqImwHcnvo. See also Eric Etheridge, *Breach of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Mississippi Freedom Riders* (New York: Atlas and Co., 2008). More recently, Vanessa German has turned to the age-old African American tradition of quilting to sew fabric cutouts of Delia's frontal portrait into two quilts, called *Delia I* (2015) and *Delia II* (2015), shown in the 2018 exhibition *Piecework* at the Pavel Zoubok Gallery in New York. See "Piecework, Pavel Zoubok Fine Art," Artsy, https://www.artsy.net/show/pavel-zoubok-gallery-piecework. Finally, in his three-screen installation *A Willing Suspension of Disbelief and Photography and Fetish* (2014), Christopher Harris reimagines Delia's photographic sitting, with an actress cast as Delia disrobing and re-dressing, reading and thinking aloud, and eventually becoming an inverted photographic negative image of herself.

**87.** The artist Toni Scott did actually digitally dress up Delia in what seem to be torn book pages, shaped like an evening gown. See her works *Delia Dem Daze Was Hell Slave Narrative* and *Delia Slave Daughter of Renty*, 2010, https://www.toniscott.com.

**88.** In John Akomfrah's video installation *Vertigo Sea* at New York City's New Museum (2015), unlabeled photographs of Delia, Renty, Jack, Drana, and Fassena were included to represent nameless victims of the Middle Passage. Publicity and news articles about the three-channel video installation also omitted references to their specific histories.

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**Gallery of Daguerreotypes**

**Plate I:** PM 35-5-10/53043

**Plate II:** PM 35-5-10/53044

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**Plate IV:** PM 35-5-10/53042

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**Figure 1.1.** Molly Rogers

**Figure 1.2.** Public Domain. Plate 8 from Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (Philadelphia, 1839)

**Figure 1.3.** The Alabama Department of Archives and History

**Figure 1.4.** Public domain. From Catherine L. Bachman, *John Bachman the Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church* (Charleston, 1888)

**Figure 1.5.** South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia

**Chapter 2**

**Figure 2.1A:** PM 35-5-10/53045 (detail); B: PM 35-5-10/53051 (detail); C: PM 35-5-10/53040 (detail); D: PM 35-5-10/53041 (detail); E: PM 35-5-10/53043 (detail); F: PM 35-5-10/53049 (detail); G: PM 35-5-10/53038 (detail)

**Figure 2.2.** Benjamin Taylor, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 59, Package 1475, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

**Figure 2.3.** Benjamin Taylor, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 59, Package 1475, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

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**Figure 2.6.** Thomas Taylor, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 30, Package 738, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

**Figure 2.7.** Thomas Taylor, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 30, Package 738, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

**Figure 2.8.** Benjamin Taylor, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 59, Package 1475, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

**Figure 2.9.** County Court, Richland, South Carolina, "Town of Columbia, District of Richland County, South Carolina, United States of America Bureau of the Census. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

**Figure 2.10.** The South Caroliniana Map Collection, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia

**Figure 2.11.** Frank Hampton, Richland County Estate Papers, Box 47, Package 1157, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia

**Figure 2.12.** Historic American Buildings Survey, Columbia, Richland County, S.C., 1960. Photograph retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sc0096/

**Figure 2.13.** South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S213192, Secretary of State, Recorded Instruments, State Plats (Columbia Series), vol. 54, p. 221

**Figure 2.14.** South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S213192, Secretary of State, Recorded Instruments, State Plats (Columbia Series), vol. 54, p. 221

**Figure 2.15.** Robert Mills and Marmaduke Coates. Richland District, South Carolina. Map [1820]. https://www.loc.gov/item/2007627903/

**Figure 2.16.** Gregg Hecimovich, April 14, 2016

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**Figure 2.18.** Historic Columbia Collection, Columbia S.C.; HCF 1972.105.1

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**Figure 3.1.** Copyright © the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of Charles Allen Munn, 1924; 24.109.88; Image source: Art Resource, New York

**Figure 3.2.** The Valentine, Richmond, Va.; Cook Collection

**Figure 3.3.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.4.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.5.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.6.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

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**Figure 3.8.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.9.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.10.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.11.** The Valentine, Richmond, Va.; W. Palmer Gray Collection

**Figure 3.12.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.13.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.14.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.15.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.16.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.17.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

**Figure 3.18.** Courtesy Brooks Family Collection

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**Figure 5.7.** George Eastman Museum, Rochester, N.Y., Gift of Eastman Kodak Company, ex-collection Gabriel Cromer, 1976.01680043

**Figure 5.8.** Copyright © the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Edward S. Hawes, Alice Mary Hawes, and Marion Augusta Hawes; 1937 (37.14.16); Image source: Art Resource, New York

**Figure 5.9.** *The Liberator*, Boston

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**Figure 6.3.** National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Elliot Collection, bequeathed 1950; PGP HA 2728

**Figure 6.4.** Published in M. B. Sampson, *Rationale of Crime, and Its Appropriate Treatment; Being a Treatise on Criminal Jurisprudence Considered in Relation to Cerebral Organization* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1846), p. 156

**Figure 6.5.** Published in Brady, *The Gallery of Illustrious Americans, Containing the Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Twenty-Four of the Most Eminent Citizens of the American Republic* (New York: Brady, D'Avignon and Company, 1850)

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**Figure 8.1.** Maryland Historical Society, Banneker Astronomical Journal. Special Collections Department, MS2700

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**Figure 8.6.** John W. Stauffer

**Figure 8.7.** Public domain. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. From *Narrative of William W. Brown, a fugitive slave / Written by himself.* Boston: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, no. 25, Cornhill, 1847

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**Figure 9.5.** Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library—College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C.; Special Collections. From John Edwards Holbrook, *North American Herpetology: or, a Description of the Reptiles Inhabiting the United States,* 1842

**Figure 9.6.** Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library—College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C.; Special Collections. From John Edwards Holbrook, *North American Herpetology: or, a Description of the Reptiles Inhabiting the United States*, 1842

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**Figure 10.4.** Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., based on a photograph by Dr. Gustavo in Louis and Elizabeth Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil* (Boston, 1868)

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**Figure 11.11.** National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

**Figure 11.12.** Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

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**Gallery: While Sitting upon the Ruins of Your Remains, I Pondered the Course of History**

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