

THE MOON IS MY ONLY LUXURY

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Fig 1 *The Ants*, 2011
Oil on canvas panel, 24 x 18 inches

I named the exhibition, *The Moon is my only luxury*, for several reasons. In part, the title sounded iambic, a single line of poetry alluding to the lyricism of the visual language in Elizabeth Colomba's portraits of women. The moon is a feminine symbol.¹ And while the moon itself does not appear in any of her works here, the artist has been (consciously or unconsciously) conceptually engaged with many of the themes the moon represents. Those themes include: the cyclical passing of time (her in-progress series in oil of the four seasons embodied by women, *Winter, Summer, Fall* (2012); enlightenment, *The Book* (2003),^{Plate X} and the dark side of nature, *Daphne* (2013).^{Plate V} A full moon also symbolizes maturity and pregnancy, *The Ants* (2011).^{Fig 1} Last, "luxury" suggests Colomba's aesthetic: exquisite formal elements, the use of gold leaf, and the ostensibly lavish settings in which she places her subjects—environments that often belie the complexity of her protagonists' actual histories.

For example, historical figure Bridget Bidy Mason is the subject of Colomba's *Biddy Mason* (2006).^{Fig 2} Mason was an enslaved woman, born in Georgia in 1818, who belonged to slaver Robert Smith. Smith migrated

cross-country with his family and slaves to the West Coast, eventually arriving in California in the mid-1850s. Before continuing on to Texas, then a slave state, Mason discovered that under California laws, her status changed to that of a freewoman. She refused to leave the state, petitioning a California court for manumission, which it granted in 1860 to her and her three children, as well as several other enslaved women and children held by Smith. Mason remained in California and became quite wealthy even, making her fortune by obtaining property and practicing midwifery and other enterprises.²



Fig 2 *Biddy Mason*, 2006
Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches

The portrait is painted in a monochrome palette, sepia in tone like that of a daguerreotype. She combines that aesthetic with that of the Dutch Masters. The composition includes an apothecary, suggesting Mason's practice as a healer and midwife and a map of the state of California, indicating her success as a real estate magnate (Colomba's attention to detail includes an historically accurate map of the period). Mason's pose is one of a heroine, perhaps sage. In spite of her many accomplishments, however, her story is not widely known; she died with very few possessions and was buried in an unmarked grave. In her historical paintings, Colomba is just as concerned with who is included as she is with who is excluded, inspiring the viewer to locate herself within the new narratives she creates.

In his landmark essay, "The Artist as Historian," Mark Godfrey asserts that "fluent historical narratives tend to conceal the power of the narrator and tend not to make explicit what is or is not selected for inclusion." He continues, "it is not just necessary to present new revisionist narratives, but to reconsider the role of narrative itself in historical representation. [Using] the formal strategies and modes of display and distribution inherited from [the canon] break up and reconfigure narrative, and

[...] make viewers aware of their role in the reconfiguration."³ In *Armelle* (1997),^{Plate XVII} Colomba quotes John Singer Sargent's portrait of American expatriate Amélie Gautreau (*Madame X*, 1883-84) to employ these 'strategies and modes' for a portrait of her cousin, Armelle. Gautreau was born in New Orleans in 1859, and became a highly sought-after socialite in Paris. Her portrait was painted by many other prominent artists of the day. Both Amélie and Armelle are Creole; Gautreau was descended from French nobility and her father was a major in the Confederate army during the American Civil War.⁴ Colomba supplants Gautreau with Armelle, who is, in fact, a descendant of enslaved people. As Armelle looks demurely towards the painting within, (*Under A Palm Tree*, Winslow Homer, 1886) Colomba links to herself and her kinswoman not only to their Caribbean roots but also to the history of art.

One of Colomba's most recent works is a portrait of Matilda Sissieretta Joyner Jones, *Sempre Libera (Matilda Sissieretta Jones)* (2016).^{Plate XIX} Born in 1868, just three years after the end of the Civil War, Jones, a classically trained soprano, became one of the most accomplished singers in the history of black performance, comparable only perhaps to Paul Robeson or Bert Williams in

stature. Now essentially lost to history, she once had engagements to sing around the world, and had the audience of four consecutive American presidents and the British royal family. In 1892, the apex of her career, she sang to an audience of seventy-five thousand at New York's Madison Square Garden. That spring, she went on to sing at the Music Hall in New York City, currently known as Carnegie Hall. One of the selections from the program was the aria *Sempre Libera* (Italian for "always free") from the opera *La Traviata (The Fallen Woman)*, Giuseppe Verdi, 1853), a signature work in Jones's repertoire.⁵

In *Sempre Libera*, Colomba captures Jones's Carnegie Hall moment. The work is presented here as a *non finito*, a technical term for an incomplete work. As Godfrey writes, "The artist as historian is able to work with a methodological freedom and creativity without sacrificing rigor." At this stage of the work, the painting is distinctly expressive; Jones looks celestial, evocative of a woman and performer metamorphosed. At the height of her international success, Jones had to return to her native Rhode Island to care for her invalid mother. Because of the deeply segregated entertainment industry in the United States at the time, she was unable to tour American opera houses. Instead, she created her

own minstrel show, the eponymous Black Patti Troubadours (she was nicknamed as the black version of the famous Italian soprano and contemporary Adelina Patti and was widely known as such). She died destitute, having been forced to sell her possessions including her award metals, encrusted with precious stones, in order to support herself and her mother. Colomba's unfinished portrait can be interpreted as metaphor; an artist such as Jones not fully realized due to the limitations of her circumstances. Jones's story can be read as a parable about how race unfolds in the history of American entertainment for which there are several examples: Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, and Josephine Baker are just a few artists who met similar fates. However, ethnomusicologist Fredara Hadley notes, "For Jones, a cultural form such as minstrelsy, with all of its complexities, becomes a subversive means of serving the opera repertoire she dearly loved to the American masses. This same woman who traveled the country with her Troubadours, had the ear of influential composers such as Antonín Dvořák. When we think about her, it is tempting to linger on how her life ended, but there is dynamism and versatility in her artistic life that still refuses to be defined by the constraints of the racism and poverty that plagued her.

A place of her artistic freedom is where we should begin our exploration of The Black Patti.”⁶ Colomba immortalizes these women in noble paint in order to document their glorious beauty and compelling lives and in doing so, exalts their place in history.

This catalogue includes an essay by Anna Arabindan-Kesson who discusses the characteristics of black mastery, comparing the paintings of master portraitist Barkley L. Hendricks to Elizabeth Colomba’s, and an interview conducted by Kalia Brooks, during

which Elizabeth talks about her philosophy as a painter and the development of her style.

I would like to personally thank both Anna and Kalia. Their important inquiries are invaluable contributions to the catalogue; Lewis Long for his support of the exhibition, monograph, and his engagement with Elizabeth’s work; and Elizabeth Colomba. This project has helped me gain a deeper understanding of her practice and I look forward with excitement to her future projects.

- 1 Matilde Battistini, *Symbols and Allegories in Art* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005).
- 2 DeEtta Demaratus, *The Force of a Feather: The Search for a Lost Story of Slavery and Freedom* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2002).
- 3 Mark Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian,” *October* 120 (2007): 140–72, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40368473>.
- 4 Deborah Davis, *Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004).
- 5 Maureen D. Lee, *Sissieretta Jones: “the greatest singer of her race” 1868-1933* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2012).
- 6 Interview. Fredara Mareva Hadley, Ph.D., Visiting Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, Oberlin College & Conservatory with Monique Long by phone, Tuesday, March 15, 2016

PORTRAITS IN BLACK: Styling, Space, and Self in the work of Barkley L. Hendricks and Elizabeth Colomba

Anna Arabindan-Kesson

Black intellectuals, including Phyllis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass, have always been aware of the power of (self)-representation. They radicalized the visual technologies and aesthetic principles of their moment to project their personhood beyond the strictures of racist constructions that denied their subjectivity. Their self-representation¹ was, on one hand, a response to negative, caricatured, and violent forms of visual erasure. Rather than merely translating blackness into readable forms for white audiences, they used portraiture as self-actualization. They created a mode of representation whose starting point was black subjecthood on its own terms, in which we see both the performance of self and the knowing use of the black subject as a “deliberate vehicle in art and cultural discourse.”²

It marks what scholars have pointed out are the “counter-narratives... critical genealogies and archives”³ produced by black artists and intellectuals. In approaching the ways the black body has been imagined across mediums and across times, I want to examine this act of self-actualization in contemporary portraiture. More specifically, I will look at how two contemporary artists reformulate portraiture as a response to the black body and its histories rather than use portraits of black subjects to challenge art history’s status quo.

Replete with different, evocative histories and produced decades apart, the paintings I will discuss here by Barkley L. Hendricks and Elizabeth Colomba resonate in their shared attention to surface. Upon first glancing at either of these two artists’ works, one is immediately engaged by their glistening immediacy expressed in strong matte colors and sensitive detail. While Hendricks plays with a certain kind of pop-art abstraction, juxtaposing a monochrome background with a bold gesture to the court portraiture of artists like Anthony Van Dyck,⁴ Colomba combines the symbolism, mannered coloring, and precise detail of French still life and Flemish genre painting in her mysterious and mythical portraits of black women. Both present us with portraits of black subjects. Both use the foundational space-making gestures of earlier explorations around the representation

of black bodies in Western art, such as David Dabydeen's groundbreaking *Hogarth's Blacks*, to propel us toward new discussions that open up the picture plane to consider other ways of exploring the relationship between surface and depth and interior and exterior that underpin the genre of portraiture.⁵ While Hendricks draws on the aesthetics of vernacular street culture, Colomba reassembles the canonical language used to aestheticize the female form.

Barkley L. Hendricks's striking painting, *APB's (Afro-Parisian Brothers)*.^{Fig 1} In the latter years of the nineteen-sixties the artist spent a week in Paris.⁶ On one particular day he walked through Pigalle, an area immortalized in the songs of Edith Piaf and the posters of Toulouse Lautrec and notorious as the thriving center of Paris's red-light district. The area is also close to the Goutte d'Or, where a large number of the city's African and Arab populations have lived for years.⁷ Hendricks remembers it as a place of continual movement and change, where urban grit and sensuality combine. He was particularly taken by two gentlemen, wearing the well-tailored, close-fitting suits he recalls were fashionable at the time. He asked if they would mind having their photographs taken; they agreed. The photograph inspired the double portrait and its pendant piece, *Noir*.^{Fig 2} In these portraits, like his others, Hendricks explores the possibilities of sartorial style and the projection of identity. In the process, he reclaims the black body—here the black male body—as a serious subject for art historical study, using the idealized language of the Grand Manner portrait that reached its apotheosis in the eighteenth century.

Influenced by the dramatic court portraits of seventeenth-century painters such as Anthony Van Dyck and Peter Paul Rubens, the genre's greatest expositors included the eighteenth-century British artists Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, as well as the nineteenth-century American painter John Singer Sargent.⁸ Conceived as a corollary to the elevating ideals of history painting, the Grand Manner portrait displayed sitters in an aggrandizing aesthetic and narrative style that recalled the Italian old masters.⁹ The Grand Manner portrait is itself a kind of costume drama, where theatricality and performance coalesce in the atmospheric gestures of impasto, brush stroke, and composition. Women and men are transformed, idealized as historical actors. They are both of their time while also existing beyond it.

In their size and sharp detail, both works allude to this painterly style. They are large in scale and sensual in detail. Carefully modulated tones and sharply observed bodily posturing dramatically conveys these men as psychologically



Fig 1 *A.P.B.'s (Afro Parisian Brothers)*, 1978
Oil and acrylic on linen canvas,
72 x 50 inches



Fig 2 *Noir*, 1978
Oil and acrylic on canvas,
72 x 48 inches

heightened subjects—personas, not mere likenesses. Such idealized projection has long been associated with whiteness.¹⁰ Hendricks's decision to draw on the aesthetics of the Grand Manner portrait to paint subjects deemed outside the realms of canonical art history destabilizes the cultural hierarchies signified by painting. As I briefly outlined earlier, black subjects have always been creators of their own portraits.¹¹ But I would argue that here Hendricks's self-conscious reconceptualization of the mythologizing tendencies of the Grand Manner portrait radically alters the ways in which the black body, and particularly the black male body, could be viewed in the politicized, cultural milieu of mid-century America, the era when he began painting, and still today.

By the time Hendricks came to paint these men, he had already traveled to Nigeria more than once, participating in the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture and visiting various cultural sites. For Hendricks it was a time of racial and political awareness, the beginnings of a black diasporic consciousness that continues to shape his understanding of particularly black masculinity today.¹² It was also for Hendricks a time of artistic exploration that allowed him to express his fascination with sartorial splendor across national boundaries.

Hendricks's collapse of the aesthetic relationship between surface/depth is, then, a response to the sartorial gestures he witnessed around him. It is fundamentally a spatial move. Hendricks transforms the canvas into something like a catwalk across which these two brothers project themselves. The monochrome background of *APB's* and *Noir* is not intended as a screen or support for the projection of figures; rather, it is more like a stage across which subjects dramatically enact their personhood. Their effortless cosmopolitanism, worn in their confident brashness and stylized swagger—their finished “look”—rhymes with Hendricks's own painterly style that recreates the culture of artifice underpinning the projection of subjecthood.

In attending to artifice as a presentation of self, Hendricks recalls the language of the street and the language of street photographers, from James Atget to Gordon Parks to James Barnor, who saw the street as stage, as platform, as runway.¹³ In turning to street culture, the urban youth culture he saw around him in Paris, Nigeria, New Haven, and Philadelphia, Hendricks finds other sources, cadences, and spaces from which to approach, appropriate, and refine the genre. Portraiture relies on the surface to evoke depth below, but Hendricks's portraits almost always conflate the two. Artifice is not superficial, but in the historical language of the black dandy, it is a form of composition. Harnessing the tailored slickness of their fashionable suits, Hendricks's own painterly slickness creates an image of black masculinity, which like their outfits seems instantly recognizable yet remains aloof, is expressive yet uncategorized. Blackness is less a characteristic than a form of expression, carried sometimes easily and sometimes ambiguously.¹⁴ Here it is given a corporeal subjectivity that art historian and artist Rick Powell has defined as an “in-process identity formation.”¹⁵

Their blackness does not ground them; rather, it seems to give them space to exist beyond the confines of temporality. His dandies exude what Monica L. Miller has elsewhere described as “black cosmopolitanism,” a sense of sartorial projection that “functions as a kind of eye on the world in which limitations imposed by race, gender, sexuality, economics or the demands of an artistic movement were, for moments, not impermeable... a kind of freedom dream.”¹⁶ It is this spatial movement that Hendricks appears to draw on most fully here, an aesthetic that mirrors, perhaps, his own hopes for a diasporic expression of black subjectivity that could exist beyond the boundaries of nation.

Hendricks uses the language of the Grand Manner portrait to harness the spatial maneuvers of street culture and transform portraiture into a moving

spectacle, where the transnational meanings of black masculinity are spatially expressed. Elizabeth Colomba's paintings also revolve around a spatial disruption to the traditions of Western art in order to express alternative histories of blackness and representation. Her paintings are a study in tensions between movement and stillness. In many of her oils, she uses surfaces to render her astute observation into luxurious form: tapestries fall thickly, dresses form stiff coverings around lithe bodies that glide or sit or stand. Furnishings glisten, while ornate chairs and tables of dark woods anchor her interiors, whose stillness is activated by the interaction of objects, artistic references, and figures.

In *Mama Legba* (2011)^{Fig 3} Colomba draws on the religious themes of Haitian voodoo, refiguring Papa Legba, the interlocutor, intermediary, and voice of God, as a woman. The painting is full of symbolism—the rooster symbolizing vigilance, the cat as a symbol of freedom, and the cornucopia of fruit and bread a symbol of abundance and fertility.¹⁷ *Mama Legba* has the charisma and power of a John Singer Sargent portrait. With her red-gloved hand on her hip, she shimmers in the haute couture of a feathery bodice overlaid with beads and pearls. Silver jewelry flowers over an ivory-rustled silk gown. She stands on thick carpet, a rich floral design that is rhymed with the curvature and carvings on the green chair and the basket of fruit it holds. Portraying an allegorical, mythical figure—one that Colomba associates with the Caribbean island of Haiti—this painting theatrically brings together myth and portraiture to construct a powerful narrative of black femininity.¹⁸ On one hand, it draws on the society portraits of artists like Sargent, in which the female form and fashion coalesce into a powerful portrayal of personality and status.¹⁹ Colomba's black subject perfectly adapts to this narrative of portraiture with her haute couture, powerful posing, and steely gaze; however, she evokes an alternate history of black identity, expression, and community. Like Hendricks, this defamiliarization involves the recreation of a movement in space. We move into a space that lies beyond the upper-class drawing rooms and salons of Europe yet seems to exist simultaneously alongside them. This is a space where alternate visual genealogies might be created from the networks of black diasporic heritage.

This becomes clearer in the painting *Seated* (1997).^{Fig 4} Here Colomba makes specific reference to James Abbot McNeil Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother* (1871), replacing the white mother with this reflective black woman. In *Seated* the woman is painted in grey, white, and inky blue. She is silent and smooth; her features and form are powerfully



Fig 3 *Mama Legba*, 2011
Oil on canvas panel, 48 x 36 inches



Fig 4 *Seated*, 1998
Oil on canvas panel, 18 x 15 inches

sculpted and thickly textured; her impassive body anchors the painting. Framed into the landscape behind her is a portrait of a topless black woman, which she looks past. The lines of their sight form a dynamic movement within the painting that punctuates its stillness. Into the background Colomba has inserted Marie-Guillemine Benoist's *Portrait d'une Nègresse* (1800), a painting inspired by the decree to abolish slavery. In the paintings by Benoist and Whistler, the female form figures as allegory and surrogate. In one, she asserts a new understanding of the materiality of figuration as pure color. In the other, she stands as a symbol of socio-political critique. In both, the women represent the artist's desire for a new aesthetic language.²⁰

Colomba's reformulation of these historical works suggests a similar aesthetic maneuver. In other words, her work is not simply concerned with acts of omission. Behind the elderly woman in *Seated* is a second painting of a tropical

picturesque scene. It rises above her like an exteriorization of a private reflection. While the landscape painting might reflect a point of origin, grounding the painting, it also troubles this connection. It evokes histories of trauma, spaces of encounter, creolization, and hybridity that reflect the complicated networks of movement shaping black diasporic identity.²¹ Like Hendricks, Colomba draws on the iconicity of portraiture as a genre, only to reassemble its formulation around the black body. Hendricks uses his monochrome backdrop to evoke the vernacular aesthetics of a transnational black self-fashioning. Colomba's paintings reconceptualize the (domestic) space of portraiture as a site of encounter, or what Mary Louise Pratt has called a "contact zone."²² Colomba turns the power dynamics of this encounter on its head, however. Her portraits do not point to an origin so much as embody the constant sense of translation that takes place in any kind of encounter— what Stuart Hall has called the "logic of cultural translation" within Caribbean, diasporic cultures.²³ Here she stages the interaction of two visual histories: that of the black body and its canonical referents. By using the language of portraiture to embody this interaction, she collapses the hierarchical classifying ideals of the canon and instead uses them to create an alternate mythology, an alternative genealogy of visuality drawn from the networks of black diasporic movement and history. Colomba's portraits become the space in which these mythologies take shape; her interiors stage these transnational routes, histories, and dreams as they coalesce into paint.

Rather than inserting black bodies into the canon, both Hendricks and Colomba imagine what a history of art might look like in which black bodies are not only subjects, but also whose presence requires new modes of aesthetic expression. Like artists who came before them, they draw on the vernacular and the diasporic experiences of their communities to reconceptualize the idealizing language of canonical art history.²⁴

- 1 Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and Emily K. Shubert, *Portraits of a People: Picturing African Americans in the Nineteenth Century* (Andover, MA: Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Characters of Blood: Black Heroism in the Transatlantic Imagination* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012); Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997); John Stauffer et al., *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* (New York: Liveright, 2015).
- 2 Powell, *Cutting a Figure*, 13.
- 3 Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 113.
- 4 For more on this see Kobena Mercer, *Discrepant Abstraction* (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2006); Kobena Mercer, *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). See also Trevor Schoonmaker, "Birth of the Cool," in *Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool*, ed. Trevor Schoonmaker (Durham, NC: Nasher Museum of Art and Duke University Press, 2008), 14–38.
- 5 David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987). I highlight this text because it ushered in an important new direction in art history, and social art history in particular. Dabydeen's text was significant for its close reading of portraiture and genre painting that included black Figures. He highlighted the way these Figures were positioned as marginal, as accessories, and as property in order to argue against their invisibility in (British) art history and to question why these kinds of paintings and subjects had long been ignored in art history. As significant as this text has been, its attempts to "make space" for black Figures in the canon of art history and its reading of race and aesthetics through the lens of center/margin is now being expanded and reformulated by historians and art historians. See for example Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal, *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Shaw and Shubert, *Portraits of a People*; Powell, *Cutting a Figure*.
- 6 All discussions with Barkley L. Hendricks took place via personal communication among author, Susan Hendricks, and artist. Barkley L. Hendricks and Susan Hendricks, interview by author, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, April 12, 2010.
- 7 *Centralité immigré—Le quartier de la Goutte d'Or—Dynamique d'un espace pluriethnique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990). See also Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (Routledge, London and New York, 1995).
- 8 Marcia R. Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Interpreting Sargent* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1999); Victoria Charles, *Anthony van Dyck* (Parkstone International, 2011); Christopher White, *Anthony Van Dyck: Thomas Howard, the Earl of Arundel* (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995); Amal Asfour and Paul Williamson, *Gainsborough's Vision* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999); Joanna Woodall, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).
- 9 Andrew Graham-Dixon, *A History of British Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 38; Pointon, *Hanging the Head*.
- 10 Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*, 113.
- 11 Powell, *Cutting a Figure*; Shaw and Shubert, *Portraits of a People*; Lisa E. Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

- 12 Barkley L. Hendricks and Susan Hendricks, interview by author, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, April 12, 2010
- 13 Deborah Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers 1840 to the Present*, (1948; repr. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002 [I have only found 2002 in the editions I saw. I think it was originally published in 2000, but on Amazon, Google Books, Deb's website and in my own copy, it says 2002]); *Ever Young: James Barnor* (Autograph ABP, 2010); Vanessa K. Valdés, *The Future Is Now: A New Look at African Diaspora Studies* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).
- 14 Monica L. Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 219.
- 15 Powell, *Cutting a Figure*, 24.
- 16 Monica L. Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*, 219.
- 17 Elizabeth Colomba, artist statement, <http://elizabethcolomba.net/Oils/24FD01CF-6A3B-4DD9-A6FE-854F892F4B5F.html> (accessed December 12, 2012).
- 18 Ibid.; Elizabeth Colomba, email interview by author, December 27, 2012.
- 19 Prettejohn, *Interpreting Sargent*; Susan Sidlauskas, "Painting Skin: John Singer Sargent's 'Madame X,'" *American Art* 15, no. 3 (October 1, 2001): 9–33.
- 20 James Smalls, "Slavery is a Woman: 'Race, Gender, and Visuality in Marie Benoist's *Portrait d'une Nègresse* (1800)," www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring04/70-spring04/spring04article/286-slavery-is-a-woman-race-gender-and-visibility-in-marie-benoists-portrait-dune-negresse-1800 (accessed July 31, 2015).
- 21 Stuart Hall, "*Créolité and the Process of Creolization*," in *Créolité and Creolization: Documenta 11_Platform 3*, ed. Okwui Enwezor (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2003), 27–42.
- 22 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 4
- 23 Hall, "*Créolité and the Process of Creolization*," 31.
- 24 See especially Richard J Powell, "Becoming Motley, Becoming Modern," in Powell, *Archibald Motley*, 109–147.