





# RACHEL KABUKALA

## CURATOR & ART HISTORIAN

### CONTACT

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-  www.rachelkabukala.com
-  Bloomington, Indiana

### SKILLS

Exhibition development, collections management, object acquisition, cross-institutional collaboration, and community engagement

### RESEARCH INTERESTS

The past, present, and future of art museums in the United States; connectivity, hybridity, and cross-cultural exchange; arts of Africa and its Diaspora; women textile artists; and vernacular artistic traditions

### EDUCATION

**PhD Candidate**  
**Indiana University**  
Bloomington, IN  
2019 - Expected 2024

Major: Art History  
Minor: African Studies

Advisor: Bárbaro Martínez-Ruiz

Examination Fields: the past, present, and future of art museums in the US; arts of Africa and its Diaspora with a focus on Kuba textile traditions

Advanced to Candidacy: March 10, 2023

**Graduate Certificate**  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
Philadelphia, PA  
2017

Executive Program in Arts & Culture Strategy  
with National Arts Strategies

**Bachelor of Arts (cum laude)**  
**St. Olaf College**  
Northfield, MN  
2005

Major: Studio Art  
Minors: Africa & the Americas; American Racial & Multicultural Studies

Education Licensure Program: Visual Arts (K-12)

### PROFILE

Rachel Kabukala is a curator and art historian with nine years of experience in public and private art institutions. Accomplished in all aspects of collection management and exhibition development, she has initiated important acquisitions at multiple museums, contributed to exhibition and collection catalogues, supported interpretation initiatives, and produced public programs that foster genuine community connections. Rachel is committed to engaging in collaborative curatorial practices and synergistic scholarship as means towards mutual liberation and positive transformation for our shared futures.

### EXHIBITIONS

#### Guest Curator

2021 - 2022

#### ***Congo Gravitational Waves // A Metadigital & Tantalean Tale***

**College of Visual Arts & Design Galleries, University of North Texas**  
Denton, TX - June 14 - September 2, 2022

- Curated exhibition featuring Kinshasa-based artist collective Kongo Astronauts in their first ever solo show
- Produced all didactic, educational, and marketing materials
- Led tours for classes and key university stakeholders
- Exhibition was incorporated into campus programming and orientation activities for fall 2022 semester
- Exhibition intro and gallery images linked [here](#)
- Exhibition review on *Glasstire* linked [here](#)

#### Guest Curator

2019 - 2020

#### ***Radical Revisionists: Contemporary African Artists Confronting Past and Present***

**Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University**  
Houston, TX - January 24 - May 16, 2020\*

- Curated exhibition featuring work by Sammy Baloji, Serge Attukwei Clottey, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Omar Victor Diop, Adama Delphine Fawundu, Zanele Muholi, Robin Rhode, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Mary Sibande, and Pascale Marthine Tayou, and shown in conjunction with FotoFest 2020
- Coordinated a site-specific installation and public performance by Serge Attukwei Clottey, worked to secure Robin Rhode for the adjacent artist-in-residence program, and facilitated a VR experience designed by Mary Sibande as part of the exhibition
- Produced all exhibition content and press materials
- Led special tours for donors and funders
- Provided training for the Moody's gallery guides and volunteers
- Managed logistics surrounding the transportation of art and installation of works
- Acted as the primary liaison between the Moody staff, lenders, and international galleries and artists
- Exhibition intro and gallery images linked [here](#)
- Exhibition review on *Glasstire* linked [here](#)
- \*Exhibition closed to the public early due to COVID-19 pandemic

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## EXHIBITIONS CONTINUED

### **Curatorial Assistant, *Through the Eyes of Picasso***

2017 - 2018

#### **The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

Kansas City, MO

- Provided initial English translation of French object checklist, labels, and catalogue essays
- Managed exhibition checklist and coordinated with lending institutions
- Assisted head registrar with all necessary documentation for The National Endowment for the Arts Indemnity Program
- Assisted with logistics of exhibition installation and deinstallation
- Served on the publication team which edited the English language exhibition catalogue and created interpretive elements, label copy and marketing materials in collaboration with the museum's education and PR departments
- Led public tours and assisted with docent training

## EXPERIENCE

### **Provenance Researcher**

2022 - present

#### **The Eskenazi Museum of Art, Indiana University**

Bloomington, IN

- Support ongoing provenance research and documentation of the objects in the African art collection, which includes reviewing and augmenting existing object records, documentation of ownership history, exhibition history, and publication references for objects in the collection
- Implement policies and procedures that are in keeping with best practices for provenance research in museum institutions
- Create provenance files (both analog and digital) containing accumulated research notes for each object's ownership history
- Update The Museum System (TMS) records as necessary

### **Publication Project Assistant**

2021 - 2022

#### **The Eskenazi Museum of Art, Indiana University**

Bloomington, IN

- Assisted Registrar in developing an internal database for a large collection of African ceramics and textiles
- Catalogued African ceramics that will appear in a printed collection catalogue through reviewing and compiling information in the museum's records and conducting research on comparable works for valuation and contextual information
- Researched comparable works for valuation and contextual information
- Examined works to offer more detailed information about techniques employed in making them
- Execute condition reports for African ceramics included in the project

### **Consultant, Collection Reinstallation Project**

2020

#### **Irma Stern Museum, University of Cape Town**

Cape Town, South Africa

- Part of a working group made up of faculty and staff at the University of Cape Town, as well as scholars from around the globe, to reimagine the interpretation and display of the Irma Stern African Collection as part of a larger "recreation" project
- Worked on early website overhaul ideas
- Wrote new extended object labels to include increased contextualization and address complex issues within the colle

### **Curatorial Assistant, African Art**

2018 - 2019

#### **The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

Kansas City, MO

- Oversaw all aspects of departmental operations as the sole African Department employee
- Initiated and facilitated art acquisition through major auction houses and galleries
- Cultivated donor relations and stewardship projects
- Focused on community relations and outreach
- Conducted scholarly research and produced departmental programming
- Monitored and maintained departmental budget a served on the grant writing team that successfully secured a \$750,000 Mellon Foundation Grant
- Curated two permanent collection rotations and one loaned rotation annually
- Co-organized with Dr. Kristina Van Dyke a major international conference, A State of the Field Convening: The Future of African Art, held at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art March 22-24, 2018
- Worked with interpretive planner and education and IT departments to create four original digital interactives for the African galleries

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## EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

### Department Assistant, African Art

2014 - 2018

#### The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Kansas City, MO

- Acted as department liaison within the museum, with other institutions and the public
- Oversaw maintenance of all departmental files and records
- Conducted research for exhibition proposals and specific objects in the collection
- Curated six large-scale rotations in the African galleries
- Served as project coordinator for the reinstallation of the African galleries

### Owner & Creative Director

2009 - 2016

#### Rachel Kabukala Photography

Jackson, MS and Kansas City, MO

- Served as chief operating officer of an S-Corp specializing in wedding and portrait photography
- Responsibilities included creating branding and marketing materials, budgeting and bookkeeping, and order fulfillment for the studio
- Managed client and vendor meetings for large-scale events (including events at the Mississippi Museum of art, and a wedding at the Mississippi Governor's mansion)
- Completed necessary post-production tasks and editing in Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom

### Managing Editor

2009 - 2012

#### Parent & Kids Magazine

Jackson, MS

- Met with publisher on a quarterly basis to discuss editorial needs for the largest print publication in Mississippi with a monthly circulation of over 100,000 and readership of over 250,000 each issue
- Served as a liaison between the owner/publisher and writers
- Assigned all articles and sought out new writers
- Edited all content submissions
- Wrote two original columns each month
- Created and submitted invoices for freelance authors

### Art & French Teacher

2006 - 2009

#### Jim Hill High School, Jackson Public Schools

Jackson, MS

- Taught art and French as part of traditional classes and International Baccalaureate High School program courses
- Incorporated social justice issues into lesson plans for both subject areas
- Helped facilitate the student-led organization, "Civil Rights, Civil Liberties"

### Photography Teacher

01/2006 - 06/2006

#### Austin High School, Austin Public Schools

Austin, MN

- Served as long-term substitute for the photography teacher in the Austin High art department
- Taught students basic mechanics of SLR cameras, as well as film and print development
- Maintained darkroom and photo lab
- Developed a curriculum that incorporated diverse artists and subject matter in a community with a recent growth in BIPOC families

## CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

### Organizer

**Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA)**, Triennial Conference (Virtual), 2021

**A State of the Field Convening: The Future of African Art**, Conference co-Organizer with Dr. Kristina Van Dyke  
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 2018

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## CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS CONTINUED

### Presenter

**Congo Gravitational Waves: A Metadigital and Tantalean Tale**, for the panel "African Artistic Imaginaries, from the Jet Age to the Space Race," Co-chairs Kate Cowcher and Abel Tilahun, European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), *African Futures*, Cologne, Germany, May 31-June 3, 2023

**Creating the Kuba Canon: The Collecting Practices and Legacies of William Henry Sheppard and Joseph Cornet**, The Sainsbury Research Unit Graduate Conference, *Missionary Collecting in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Catholic and Protestant Missions*, University of East Anglia, Norwich, England, May 25-26, 2023

**Archive as Site of Resistance: Rejecting the Colonial Gaze Through African Portraiture, Past and Present**, The Clark Art Institute Graduate Symposium, *Refraction and Resistance: Writing African Art*, Williamstown, MA, April 14, 2023

**Activating the Spectator through Site-Specific Performance and Installation: Serge Attukwei Clottey and a New Typology of Socially Engaged Artistic Practice**, Graduate Students in African Studies 10th Annual Symposium, *African Urbanities: Mobility, Creativity, and Challenges*, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, March 24-25, 2023

**Perennial Resilience: Botanical Refusal in the Work of Joiri Minaya**, Art History Association Graduate Student Symposium, *Envisioning Resilience: Narratives and Counter Narratives*, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, March 26, 2022

**Remembering the Future to Imagine the Past: Artists Envisioning a New Normal**, for the panel "How Not to Return to Normal," Co-chairs Francesca Cavallo and Emily Candela, College Art Association (CAA), virtual, February 12-15, 2020

## PUBLICATIONS

Kabukala, Rachel. "Remembering the Future to Imagine the Past: Artists Imagining a New State of Being." *emerge journal, Irresistible Futures*, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, (2020-2021). <https://saicemerge.com/irresistible-futures>

Kabukala, Rachel. "Through the Eyes of Picasso." *ÌMÒ DÁRA* (blog), School of the Art Institute of Chicago, February 27, 2018. <https://www.imodara.com/magazine/through-the-eyes-of-picasso/>

## COMMITTEE & ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE

**Bloomington Arts Commission**, Commissioner (appointed by the Mayor), Bloomington, IN. 2021-present

**Graduate Students in African Studies**, Indiana University, member. 2019-present

**College Art Association (CAA)**, member, 2017-present

**Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA)**, member 2017-present

**Art History Association**, Indiana University, President, 2021-2022

**IU African Studies Program Executive Committee**, Student Representative, 2020-2022

**Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA)**, Executive Board member, Treasurer, 2019-2021

**ArtsKC**, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group, Member, 2018-2019

**Association of Art Museum Curators**, Member, 2017-2021

**Diversity & Inclusion Committee**, Chair, Junior League of Kansas City, MO, 2016-2018

**Diversity Committee – Académie Lafayette**, Founding Member, Kansas City, MO 2016-18

**Junior League of Kansas City, MO**, Member, 2013-2019

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## FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

- **Tanner-Opperman Fellowship for Research & Travel**, Indiana University, Summer 2023
- **College of Arts and Sciences Academic Year Fellowship**, Indiana University, 2022-2023
- **Theodore R Bowie Fellowship for Research & Travel**, Indiana University Summer 2022
- **Art History Graduate Fellowship**, Indiana University, Fall 2021
- **Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship**, Indiana University, 2020-2021
- **Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship**, Indiana University, Summer 2020
- **Tanner-Opperman Chair in Honor of Roy Sieber Fellowship**, Indiana University, 2019-2023
- **Kloeck-Jenson Endowment for Peace and Justice Scholarship**, awarded for a self-directed, five-week program in Africa, including time in Kenya, Zambia, and Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2004

## RELATED PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES


- French: fluent in speaking, proficient in reading and writing
- Lingala: intermediate
- TMS (The Museum System) collections database
- Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom


## REFERENCES

### Catherine Futter

Director of Curatorial Affairs


Brooklyn Museum


 913-593-7844

 [Catherine.Futter@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:Catherine.Futter@brooklynmuseum.org)

### Kristina Van Dyke

Independent Curator & Scholar


 314-562-0246


 [kristinavandyke@gmail.com](mailto:kristinavandyke@gmail.com)

### Bárbaro Martínez-Ruiz

Tanner-Opperman Chair  
of African Art History

Indiana University

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