SCMA
SMITH COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

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Smith College Museum of Art Presents Art Historian Dr. Tiffany E. Barber for Annual Miller Lecture



Annual Miller Lecture on November 4 connects W. E. B. Du Bois's groundbreaking data visualizations with Alma Thomas's vibrant abstract paintings

SMITH COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

NORTHAMPTON, MA — The Smith College Museum of Art (SCMA) will present art historian, curator, and critic Dr. Tiffany E. Barber as the featured speaker for the Miller Lecture in Art and Art History on Wednesday, November 4, at 5 p.m. Her lecture, *Data Consciousness and Luminous Abstraction*, will examine the relationship between visual representation, Black history, and artistic expression through the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and Alma Thomas. The lecture will take place in the Carroll Room at the Smith College Campus Center, with a virtual attendance option available.

In this thought-provoking presentation, Barber brings W. E. B. Du Bois's pioneering data visualizations into dialogue with artist Alma Thomas's luminous abstract paintings, exploring their shared commitment to representing Black life beyond the limitations of statistics and traditional representation. By examining the intersections of art, history, and visual culture, Barber reveals how data can serve as both evidence and imagination, opening new possibilities for aesthetic expression, historical interpretation, and collective liberation.

Barber is an award-winning scholar, curator, and critic whose work challenges and expands understandings of race, gender, and representation. Currently Assistant Professor of African American Art at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), she brings together art history, performance theory, and Black feminist thought to illuminate new perspectives on contemporary art and culture.

Her scholarship and criticism have appeared in major publications, including *The Nation*, *HuffPost*, *Frieze*, and *Tate Etc.* Among her numerous honors is the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery Director's Essay Prize. Her curatorial projects have been featured in *Essence*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Surface Magazine*, and Google Arts & Culture.

Barber's debut monograph, *Undesirability and Her Sisters: Black Women's Visual Work and the Ethics of Representation* (NYU Press, 2025), further establishes her as an influential voice in contemporary art history and cultural criticism.

The November 4 lecture is open to the public, with opportunities to attend in person or virtually. Special seating is available for Friends of the Museum. A public reception will follow the in-person lecture.

Event Details

What: Miller Lecture in Art and Art History: *Data Consciousness and Luminous Abstraction*, featuring Dr. Tiffany E. Barber
When: Wednesday, November 4, 2026, at 5–6 p.m.
Where: Carroll Room, Smith College Campus Center, Northampton, MA
Virtual Attendance: The lecture will also be presented virtually. Registration is open to all. Register to attend virtually.
Friends of the Museum Special Seating: Friends of the Museum are invited to register for special seating at the in-person lecture. Reserve special seating.

Reception: A public reception will follow the in-person lecture.
Event Information: For additional details, visit scma.smith.edu/millerlecture2026.

For accommodation requests, contact artmuseum@smith.edu.

About the Miller Lecture

The Miller Lecture in Art and Art History is an endowed program established by Dr. Michael Miller in memory of his wife, Dulcy Blume Miller, who was a member of the class of 1946.

Each year, SCMA invites a distinguished artist, art historian, or curator to present a public lecture, creating opportunities for audiences to engage with leading voices in art and visual culture. Each year, SCMA invites a distinguished artist, art historian, or curator to deliver a public lecture; previous lecturers have included Isaac Julien, Asma Naeem, Amanda Williams, Anne Pasternak, Maya Lin, William Kentridge, Shahzia Sikander, Lorna Simpson, Robert Rosenblum, and Philip Pearlstein.

About the Smith College Museum of Art

As a teaching museum at Smith College, Smith College Museum of Art connects people to art, ideas, and each other through firsthand experiences with art, artists, and museum practice. Its collection spans ancient times to the present and includes art from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

SCMA is open Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., except for select holidays, and is located at 20 Elm Street at Bedford Terrace in Northampton, Massachusetts. SCMA is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a founding member of Museums10.

SCMA is free and open to all.

Media Contact

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